HSPV742 : Architectural Archaeology
Graduate Program in Historic Preservation
University of Pennsylvania
Spring, 2010

Investigation of Sellers Hall, Upper Darby, PA
INTRODUCTION

SELLERS HALL & ST. ALICE’S

PHILADELPHIA

UPPER DARBY
Introduction
Description of Existing Conditions

Basement Plan

First Floor Plan

Second Floor Plan

Third Floor Plan
Description of Existing Conditions
Description of Existing Conditions

North elevation, 2010

East elevation, 2010

South elevation, 2010

West elevation, 2010
Description of Existing Conditions

1st floor, room 101, 2010

2nd floor, room 201, 2010

2nd floor, room 202, 2010

3rd floor, room 306B, 2010
Sellers Family Tree, as relevant to Sellers Hall

George Sellers (d. 1683)
- Anna
- Sarah
- Mary

Samuel Sellers (1655 - 1732)
- Samuel, III.
  - Joseph
  - Elizabeth
    - Hannah
    - Mary

Samuel Sellers, Jr. (1696 - 1773)
- John Sellers (1728 - 1804)
  - Ann Evans Ash
  - George Sellers (1768 - 1853)
    - Mary Coleman
    - Rachel Coleman
      - John, Jr.
        - David
      - Elizabeth Coleman
        - Nathan
      - Coleman (1781-1834)
        - Sophonisba Peale (granddaughter of C.W. Peale)
History, c. 1860.

Source: Upper Darby Historical Society

Rural Pennsylvania, 1897
History: c. 1900

SOURCE: UdHS
"Sellers Hall at present stands with south wall facing the meadow, and with a detached kitchen to the east separated from the main building by a brick passageway resembling the passageway at Valley Forge. At the west end of the home, and west over the building with them, they concealed the walls and came to the conclusion that the far end of the building from the kitchen was the oldest portion. Between this portion and the main house was a double stone wall 40 inches thick, and from the lapping of the stones, they said it was evident this part had been erected before the rest of the homestead. Another proof in favor of the small building separated by the double stone wall being the original house was that it was nearer the spring than the detached house.

"The original entrance to Sellers' Hall was on Marshall Road, west of Nayler's Run, as the Marshall Road is older than the West Chester Road. The entrance used later was off the West Chester Road, east of the building called the cowpenery. The present Long Lane was given by James Sellers and George Sellers for a public road, the land being taken from both farms. The entrance to Sellers' Hall is now from Long Lane."

"In 1862 I knew Sellers Hall was owned by the Sellers family. In 1865, I think Thomas H. Power owned it, but I do not know the exact date of his purchase."
History, 1922-1936

Photos depicting exterior changes from St. Alice’s occupation in 1922 to 1936. Credit: UDHS.
Landscape Evolution

View from the Farm, Sellers Hall, c. 1860. Credit: UPHS.

Naylor’s Run, 1906. Credit: UPHS.

C.W. Peale, 1818. “Landscape Looking Towards Sellers Hall from Mill Bank,” Credit: MFA, Houston, TX.
**LANDSCAPE EVOLUTION**

**View of Sellers Hall, c. 1830-1900**
Drawing by Anna Sellers

**Depictions of Farm Life**
Images from the family scrapbook of tenant farmer, Jesse Fullerton, late 19th c.
Landscape Evolution

Detail of Elim Farm, c. 1909.
Credit: A.H. Mueller. Delaware County Archives.

J.L. Smith, Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1889.
Credit: UDHS.
**LANDSCAPE EVOLUTION**

**Sellers Hall, 2005. Credit: “SAVING SELLERS HALL,” DelCo Daily Times.**

**Sellers Hall, c.1990s. Credit: UDHS.**

**Bird’s eye view, St. Alice Parish. Credit: Bing Maps.**
Developmental History of Building Phases

1st Phase: Samuel Sellers (1684 - 1714)

2nd Phase: Samuel Sellers, Jr. (1714 - 1752)

3rd Phase: John Sellers (1752-1804)

4th Phase: George Sellers (1808-1853)

5th Phase: Thomas Powers (1863-1920)

6th Phase: Parish of St. Alice (1922-Present)
Developmental History of Building

Phases

1

2

3

4

Developmental History of Building

Phases

1

2

3

4
Developmental History of Building

Fireplace
Developmental History of Building

Partitions
Framing is...The wooden structural framework of a building.
IT IS LIKELY THAT THE SUMMER BEAM AND CHIMNEY GIRT IN THE SECOND FLOOR FRAMING IS FROM 1684.
Developmental History of Building

Second Floor

Chimney Girt

Summer Beam
WOOD SHAPING
Developmental History of Building

Third Floor

Third Floor Framing

North
Developmental History of Building

Stairs
Developmental History of Building

Chamfered section of the summer beam, 2010.

Riser board attached to the summer beam, view from second floor, 2010.
Developmental History of Building

Stairs

107
106
105
UP
101
102

First Floor Plan

Section

Note: 1'-0" = 1'-0"

2'-0" = 2'-0"
Developmental History of Building

Stairs

Framing of Rm 106; before, during and after ceiling removal, 2010.

Third floor: three original steps

Interior elevation of east wall, exhibiting staircase evidence, 2010.

Plaster outline below the current stairs, 2010.
South Elevation
Developmental History of Building

Windows

Window S1-A

Conjectural Casement

Window N1-D

Conjectural Casement

Pintle
DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY OF BUILDING

MORTAR & PLASTER ANALYSIS
Developmental History of Building

Mortar & Plaster Analysis

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<th>Sample</th>
<th>Aggregate</th>
<th>Binder</th>
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<td>Sample 1</td>
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<td>Sample 26</td>
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Developmental History of Building

Comparison of Mortar Aggregates

Sieve Screen Size (μm)

Percent Passing

Sample 1
Sample 2
Sample 3
Sample 6
Sample 7
Sample 14
Sample 15
Sample 16
Sample 17
Sample 22
Sample 26
Developmental History of Building

First Floor

Findings: All of the plastering in rooms 102 and 202 was done in one campaign, when the fireplace was pushed back.
SECOND FLOOR

Findings: The east side of the house was replastered at the same time that the north section was added.
THIRD FLOOR

FINDINGS: PLASTER IN THE ROOMS WEST OF THE FIREPLACE WAS DONE EARLY ON AND THE SECOND AND THIRD FLOORS WERE REPLASTERED WHEN THE BRICK CHIMNEY FLUE WAS ADDED.
**Developmental History of Building**

**First Floor**

Dramatically changed over time -- not studied extensively

Most rooms wallpapered

Trim mostly neutral (off-whites, creams)

Parlor, 1908. Delaware County Historical Society.

Window in Rm 102. Rogers, 2010.
Developmental History of Building

Second Floor

Mostly neutrals (white, off-white, cream)

Windows are not original

Walls do not match first floor

Chair rail in Rm 201. Rogers, 2010.

Wall in Rm 201. Rogers, 2010.
Developmental History of Building

Third Floor: Rm 302 & 303

Historic photos show wall paper, but no traces found.

Walls’ early layers neutrals like second floor.

Source: Garrett, 1908. Delaware County Historical Society.
THIRD FLOOR: RM 306B

COMPLETE ANALYSIS PERFORMED: WALLS, TRIM, WINDOWS, CLOSET, ETC.

DROPPED CEILING LINE USEFUL FOR DATING WALL CAMPAIGNS

EARLY LAYERS MOSTLY WHITE, LATER LAYERS ARE MOSTLY PINK

ABOVE: WOOD TRIM. LAYER.


LEFT: WALL ABOVE CEILING LINE.

**Conclusions**

Early wall and trim campaigns were mostly white, off-white, and cream -- common for 18th century interiors

Later campaigns varied in palette

Wallpaper was present, but no traces have yet been found

Further analysis will likely provide better answers

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<th>Scheme</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Blue-gray</td>
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<td>White</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gray (2 layers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dark yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Light gray</td>
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Developmental History of Building

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<th>Wall</th>
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<th>Period</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>◇</td>
<td>17th, 18th c. (exact date unknown)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>◇</td>
<td>1780 - 1810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>◇</td>
<td>mid 1790’s - 1805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>◇</td>
<td>1790’s - mid 1820’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>◇</td>
<td>1815’s - late 1830’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>◇</td>
<td>late 1830’s - present</td>
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Nail & Screw Analysis

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Developmental History of Building

Nail Chronology
Third Floor

301-1: Modern
Machine-Cut, Finish

301-2: Early Machine-Cut,
Springs and Brads

301-3: Hand-Wrought, T-Head

302-1: Modern Wire, Finish
Conclusions

Building Evolution

1st Phase
Samuel Sellers (1684 - 1714)

2nd Phase
Samuel Sellers, Jr. (1714 - 1752)

4th Phase
George Sellers (1808-1853)
THANK YOU!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
ST. ALICE’S PARISH
FATHER QUINN
FRIENDS OF SELLERS HALL
BILL McDEVITT, BARBARA MARINELLI AND MORTIMER “TIM” SELLERS
AT THE UPPER DARBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
THE DELAWARE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND ARCHIVES
THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
JOHN HANSON AND HANSON GENERAL CONTRACTING INC.
CHRISTINA CARTER, AIA: JOHN MILNER ARCHITECTS
DANIEL CAMPBELL, AIA: JOHN MILNER ARCHITECTS

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ALANNA STEWART, LAUREN VOLLONO,
JACQUELINE WIESE, RIE YAMAKAWA