

# Dr. Samuel Marshall Orr House

## Anderson, Anderson County

### South Carolina Historic Preservation Grants



DR. SAMUEL MARSHALL ORR HOUSE

#### EXTERIOR FEATURES

**Columns**  
Four massive masonry columns with entablature support a broad entablature and tympanum at the gabled front porch. Stylically, these columns are unique. Located based on the Roman Doric order, the 10'-0" diameter circular columns are fluted and have tapered shafts and a simply tapered and entablature. The base is concavely ogee seated in proportion, with an exaggerated scotia molding between the shaft and molding. The capital resembles that from the molding in concave rings, and terminates in a finely proportioned abacus. The column sits on a subcapitalized shaft with recessed panels on the outside face.

To the rear and east of the front porch, six-story pilasters are supported by 7'-1 1/2" diameter, solid wood columns. Each column has a straight, tapered shaft, a fluted entablature with a tapered balustrade at the top. The capital consists of a simple ogee and a base molding, with a circular square block from the bottom of the porch roof beam. These columns may have been commercially produced and lengthened with the additional section.

**Brick Masonry**  
The brick chimney is integral to the house and is seen only above the roof line. Only the rear chimney is original with corbeling typical for the late 1800s. All of the other chimneys have had their corner walls with modern brick. The chimney near the rear of the house was constructed when a coal-burning furnace was installed. This chimney was significantly increased in height, probably in the mid-1900s.

The house was originally supported on a series of regularly spaced brick piers with an open substructure. These were filled with brick underpinning, probably in the early 1900s, and all of the foundation brick was painted. The exterior areas on the front and sides are also of brick, and may date from this period.

**Exterior Siding and Trim**  
The exterior of the house is finished with horizontal wood clapboards 4-4 1/2 inch measured with plain trim around windows and doors. The pediment at the front porch is finished with 1/2 inch by 1 1/2 inch by 6 inch wood siding. Small trim ornaments all the corners at the porch and the rear roof. The well-proportioned front entrance is framed with molded pilasters that support a paneled entablature. Floor finish is tongue and groove wood throughout, which has been replaced.

Photo 11: Front porch columns. The fluted columns supporting the porch entablature.

Photo 12: Columns and base typically have been painted over in masonry substrate.

Photo 13: Detail of original wood siding.

Photo 14: Detail of original wood siding.

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#### CONDITION ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Visual inspections of the Orr House were made during the fall of 2006. The observations and recommendations that follow are based solely on the visual inspections. Further investigation of hidden conditions may be needed in the future.

**Paintwork**  
These massive columns and their bases are constructed of either cast in place concrete or masonry with a thick stucco coating. With the exception of the paint, which is cracked and peeling in places, the columns appear to be in good condition. No obvious displacement, settlement or significant cracking is noted.

Recommendations: Unless this work will be part of a complete repainting, the exposed areas should be touched up as soon as possible to prevent accelerated paint failure.

- Existing cracked and peeling paint should be removed by hand scraping or chemical to sound substrate.
  - Sandblasting or other harsh means of paint removal is not recommended as such methods could pit the surface of the substrate and permit water infiltration.
  - Paint removal using chemicals should be tested in an out-of-view area and the effects thoroughly evaluated prior to widespread removal.
- Areas of cracking or failure should be repaired in accordance with NPS Preservation Brief 22, The Preservation and Repair of Historic Masonry.
- Prime and paint.

**Brick Foundation**  
The original brick piers along the exterior of the house are in poor condition overall. The single wythe brick underpinning that was added between the piers is also in poor condition. There are several sections where settlement and/or deterioration are noted. The exterior faces of the piers may have been repaired when the underpinning was installed, however the mortar joints in the interior sides of the piers have deteriorated significantly, leaving nothing but loose sand in some joints. The brickwork is sagging on several piers.

The interior brick piers which the wood piers are in good condition overall, with limited deterioration. However, several of the piers have been damaged by installation of ductwork. Crawlspace ventilation is minimal and may not meet current Code requirements.

Recommendations: The following work should be undertaken as soon as possible to avoid potential settlement of the structural frame.

- Deteriorated mortar joints should be repaired in all of the exterior brick piers and all deteriorated interior piers. All repointing work should be executed in accordance with NPS Preservation Brief 2, Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings.
- Piers that exhibit extreme deflection should be taken down and reconstructed to match the historic dimensions and coursing. It is assumed that footings for piers are constructed of brick and are unreinforced. Existing brick footings at these piers should be replaced with reinforced concrete to meet current code requirements.
- Piers damaged due to installation of ductwork should be repaired to their original dimensions, or other provisions for support of framing should be installed.

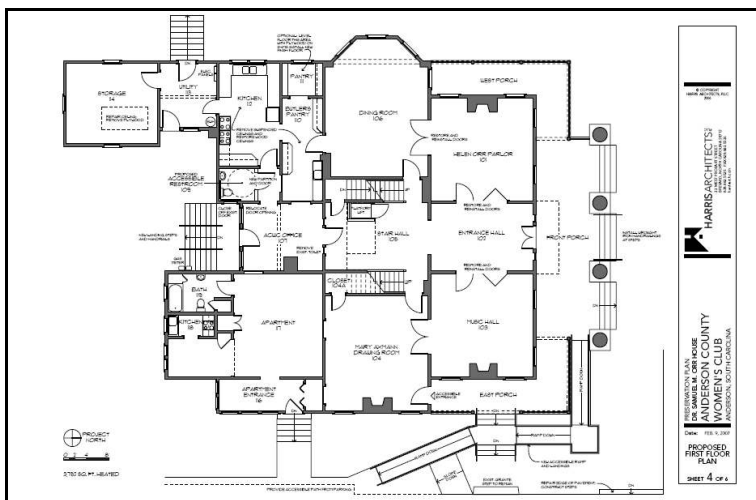
Photo 15: Detail of exterior brick pier.

Photo 16: Detail of exterior brick pier.

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Proposed

*"The grant enabled us to hire the services of a professional preservation architectural firm which not only provided the information we need but served to stimulate more interest within the club, the community and descendants of the home's builder."*

Jean Diehl

President, Anderson County Woman's Club

This imposing Greek Revival inspired house was constructed in 1883 for Dr. Samuel Marshall Orr, a prominent Anderson physician, businessman, and politician. The Anderson County Woman's Club applied to the State Historic Preservation Office for a Federal Preservation Fund Grant in 2006 in order to produce a preservation plan for this historic property. The matching grant was used to hire an architect who prepared a historic and architectural description, a conditions assessment, cost estimates, and a list of priorities for maintaining the property. Seventy photographs and six architectural drawings document the current state of the building and provide guidance for the current stewards of the property and future generations of the Anderson County Woman's Club.

**Original Use:** Residential  
**Current Use:** Non-Profit Community Organization  
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