

PROPERTY REPORT

Property ID: -817081925

Property Name: Dr. Benjamin S. and Mary H. Van Dyke House
Address: 124 N Main ST

Ownership: Private
Apartment #:
ZIP: 08512

PROPERTY LOCATION(S):

County:	Municipality:	Local Place Name:	USGS Quad:	Block:	Lot:
MIDDLESEX	Cranbury township	Cranbury	Hightstown	26.01	24

Property Photo:



Old HSI Number:

NRIS Number:

HABS/HAER Number:

Description:

The Dr. Benjamin S. and Mary H. Van Dyke House at 124 North Main Street is a frame, Cape Cod-style dwelling constructed in 1937. The dwelling consists of a one-and-one-half-story tall, three-bay-wide, two-bay-deep, side-gabled main block, with a one-story, side-gabled, attached garage to the northeast and a one-story, side-gabled porch to the southwest. The garage and porch are one-bay deep, with the garage offset from the main block to the southeast, and the porch centrally placed. A slightly off-center, interior brick chimney pierces the roof ridge (historic, likely original). A central, shed-roof dormer interrupts the rear (southeast) roof slope. The roofs are all steeply pitched and sheathed in slate shingles (historic, likely original). Metal louvered vents are located in the northeast and southwest gable ends of the main block. The exterior of the dwelling is clad in wood shingles (historic, likely original). Windows on the main block (northwest, northeast, and southwest elevations) consist of eight-over-twelve, double-hung, wood-sash units with wood lintels (historic, likely original), flanked by operable wood louvered shutters with metal shutter dogs (historic, likely original). The central, primary (northwest) entrance contains an eight-light, wood storm door set into a wood surround with fluted pilasters and a frieze with triglyphs and dentils (historic, likely original). A concrete stoop bounded by rowlock brick courses leads to the primary entrance. The northeast garage features six-over-six, wood-sash windows, flanked by typical shutters, placed symmetrically on the primary and northeast elevations (historic, likely original). The southwest porch features elliptically arched spandrels supported by square wood posts. A glazed wood door provides a secondary entrance in the northwest bay. The rear (southeast) elevation is not visible from the public right-of-way.

A modern shed stands in the southeast corner of the property, approximately 85 feet from the dwelling.

Character-defining elements of the Dr. Benjamin S. and Mary H. Van Dyke House include its massing, particularly its one-and-one-half-story height; wood and slate shingles; and other hallmarks of the Cape Cod style including its steeply pitched, side-gabled roof; central brick chimney; primary entrance with wood storm door, pilasters, and frieze; and wood-sash windows with wood lintels and paneled wood shutters.

Setting:

The Dr. Benjamin S. and Mary H. Van Dyke House at 124 North Main Street is sited on a rectangular parcel (Block 26.01, Lot 24) located on the southeast side of North Main Street in Cranbury Township, Middlesex County, New Jersey. The dwelling is oriented with its primary elevation facing northwest and is set back approximately 70 feet from the road. A concrete sidewalk extends along the northwest border of

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the parcel. A gravel driveway extends along the northeast border of the property and leads to the garage's rear (southeast) opening. Mature trees and shrubs are planted within close proximity to the dwelling. The subject property is located in a residential neighborhood surrounded by properties dating from the mid-nineteenth to the late twentieth centuries.

**Registration
and Status
Dates:**

National Historic Landmark?: ☐

National Register: 9/18/1980

New Jersey Register: 8/9/1979

Determination of Eligibility: 3/25/1977

Certification of Eligibility:

SHPO Opinion:

Local Designation: 9/26/1988

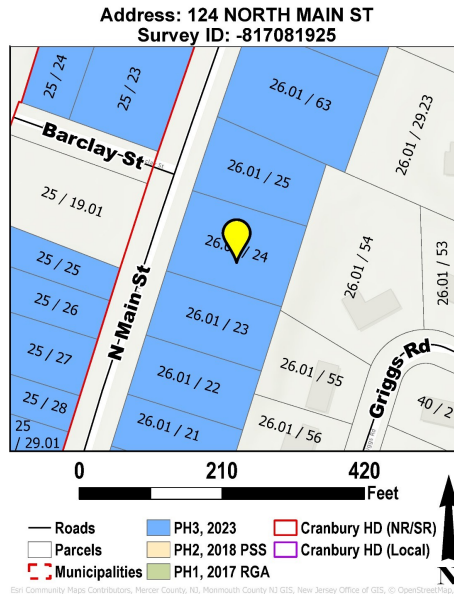
Other Designation:

Other Designation Date:

☒ **Eligibility Worksheet included in present survey?**

☐ **Is this Property an identifiable farm or former farm?**

Location Map:



Site Map:



BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Author:	Title:	Year:	HPO Accession #:	(if applicable)
The Central New Jersey Home News	Cranbury Doctor Builds Air-Conditioned House. 1 Augsut:30. New Brunswick, New Jersey.	1937		
The Central New Jersey Home News	Dr. Van Dyke will Retire Sept. 15. 6 May:6. New Brunswick, New Jersey.	1937		
The Central New Jersey Home News	Building Contracts Promise to Surpass Total Last Month. 15 September:25. New Brunswick, New Jersey.	1940		
The Central New Jersey Home News	Kuhlthau Home in Milltown is Occupied. 20 April:18. New Brunswick, New Jersey.	1941		
The Central New Jersey Home News	Seidel- Architect with an Open Mind. 31 August:22. New Brunswick, New Jersey.	1960		
The Central New Jersey Home News	Mrs. Benjamin S. Van Dyke. 23 April:4. New Brunswick, New Jersey.	1963		
Heritage Studies	Preserving Historic Cranbury Village. Prepared for the Cranbury Township Historic Preservation Advisory Committee. On file, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, Trenton, New Jersey.	1989		
Middlesex County Clerk's Office	On file, Middlesex County Clerk's Office, New Brunswick, New Jersey.			
Nationwide Environmental Title Research (NETR)	Historic Aerial Photograph. Electronic Document, http://www.historicaerials.com , accessed May 2023.	1940		
Nationwide Environmental Title Research (NETR)	Historic Aerial Photograph. Electronic Document, http://www.historicaerials.com , accessed May 2023.	1957		
Nationwide	Historic Aerial Photograph. Electronic Document,	1979		

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Environmental Title Research (NETR)	http://www.historicaerials.com, accessed May 2023.	
Nationwide Environmental Title Research (NETR)	Historic Aerial Photograph. Electronic Document, http://www.historicaerials.com, accessed May 2023.	2012
United States Bureau of the Census (US Census)	Population Schedule, Township of Cranbury, Middlesex County, New Jersey.	1910
United States Bureau of the Census (US Census)	Population Schedule, Township of Cranbury, Middlesex County, New Jersey.	1940
Walsh, Ruth	National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Cranbury Historic District, Cranbury Township, Middlesex County, New Jersey. On file, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, Cranbury, New Jersey.	1980

Additional Information:

Although the Dr. Benjamin S. and Mary H. Van Dyke House at 124 North Main Street was not identified in the 1980 Cranbury Historic District National Register of Historic Places nomination, it was evaluated in the 1989 Heritage Studies inventory of the district as a non-contributing (harmonious) resource (Walsh 1980; Heritage Studies 1989). Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc. recommends the Dr. Benjamin S. and Mary H. Van Dyke House at 124 North Main Street as a key-contributing resource to the Cranbury Historic District due to its date of construction and design. The dwelling is an excellent, well-preserved example of an early twentieth-century, Cape Cod-style dwelling and retains sufficient integrity of materials, design, workmanship, setting, location, feeling and association to convey the significance of the historic district.

More Research Needed? ☐ (checked=Yes)

INTENSIVE-LEVEL USE ONLY:

Attachments Included:	1 Building	0 Bridge
	0 Structure	0 Landscape
	0 Object	0 Industry

Historic District ? ☒

District Name: Cranbury Historic District

Status: Key Contributing

Associated Archeological Site/Deposits? ☐

(known or potential sites. If Yes, please describe briefly)

Conversion Problem? ☐ ConversionNote: 1202_26.01_24

Date form completed: 6/21/2023

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BUILDING ATTACHMENT

Common Name: Dr. Benjamin S. and Mary H. Van Dyke House, 124 North Main Street

Historic Name: Dr. Benjamin S. and Mary H. Van Dyke House

Present Use: Residential, permanent

Historic Use: Residential, permanent

ConstructionDate:

Source:

Construction 1937

Construction 1937

Start Date:

End Date:

Style: Colonial Revival

☐ Vernacular Style?

Form: Cape Cod

Physical Condition: Excellent

Type: Other

Remaining Historic Fabric: High

Roof Finish Materials: Slate

Stories: 1.5

Exterior Finish Materials: Wood, Shingles

Bays: 3

Exterior Description:

See property form.

Interior Description:

Not accessible.

Alteration Dates:

Architect/Designer::

Type:

Name:

Person/Firm Description:

Architect

Edward Hickey

Architect

William Seidel

Date form completed:

8/10/2023

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ELIGIBILITY WORKSHEET - Properties

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History:

The dwelling at 124 North Main Street was constructed in 1937 for Dr. Benjamin S. Van Dyke and his wife, Mary. Dr. Van Dyke, born in Thailand in 1877, was the son of a Presbyterian missionary and immigrated to the U.S. at the age of three (The Central New Jersey Home News [CNJHN], 6 May 1937:6). He graduated with a medical degree from Columbia University in 1903 (United States Bureau of the Census [US Census] 1910; CNJHN, 6 May 1937:6). After four years of residency and private practice in the City of East Orange, Essex County, Dr. Van Dyke assumed the position of Cranbury Township physician. In 1914, his role expanded to include Plainsboro and Monroe townships (CNJHN, 6 May 1937:6). He married Mary Hake in 1916, a Highland, Pennsylvania native, and daughter of William and Mary Biesecker Hake (CNJHN 23 April 1963:4). An automobile accident affected Dr. Van Dyke's hearing, leading to an early retirement in 1937 (CNJHN, 6 May 1937:6). In preparation for his retirement, Benjamin and Mary made plans to construct the subject dwelling. In May 1937, the Van Dykes purchased the lot from Raymond S. and Jennie H. Griggs, on land formerly part of the Ezekiel S. Barclay Farmstead (Middlesex County Clerk's Office [MCCO] 1937 Deed Book 1114:172).

A newspaper article written during the construction of the subject dwelling refers to the dwelling's location as the "Barclay Estates Section" and describes its form in detail. Noted as costing \$10,000, the plans for the Cape Cod-style dwelling were drawn by architects Edward Hickey of Plainfield and William Seidel of Cranbury. Hickey, an architect of both public buildings and residences, also designed an identical dwelling at 64 Chestnut Street in Milltown, New Jersey (CNJHN 20 April 1941:18). As of 1960, Seidel, Hickey, and Alexander Merchant had formed a partnership, known for their school designs (CNJHN 31 August 1960:22). Construction was managed by Albert E. Appleget, also of Cranbury. Appleget was a prominent builder throughout the county, who had partnered with Edward Hickey in 1940 on the Pioneer Grange Hall in Dayton, New Jersey (CNJHN 15 September 1940:25). The exterior of the subject dwelling was described as featuring a "green slate tile" roof, white shingle cladding, a shorter attached garage and porch for irregularity, rear Dutch dormers, and two small dormers on the primary elevation. While the rear dormer is extant today, the dormers on the primary elevation appear to never have been constructed. The interior of the six-room dwelling was described as featuring a central arched hallway leading from the primary entry to a living room to the right, dining room to the left, and a rear staircase. A sun parlor was to be located behind the living room. Connected to a rear hall was to be the lavatory, kitchen, pantry, and staircase to the basement. The basement was to feature steel girders to support a double flooring system, and create space for a recreation room, an air conditioning system, and laundry drying tubs. The design of the second floor included two bedrooms separated by a central bathroom (CNJHN, 1 August 1937:30). The dwelling first appears in a 1940 aerial photograph, showing its current footprint (Nationwide Environmental Title [NETR] 1940).

Dr. Van Dyke passed away in 1950, followed by Mary in 1963. In accordance with Mary's will, ownership of the subject dwelling was transferred to a trust of which the First National Bank of Hightstown and Samuel Bard, Esq. were trustees. Edith M. Appleget, wife of Albert E. Appleget, dwelling's builder, received a life estate within the subject dwelling, where she resided until moving to an assisted living facility circa 2005. In 2005, current owners Brien W. and Kathryn A. Wiseman purchased the subject dwelling (MCCO Deeds 5563:52; US Census 1940). Aerial imagery throughout the second half of the twentieth century to the present indicates no alterations to the subject dwelling but show the planting and removal of trees and other vegetation on the property (NETR 1940, 1957, 1979, 2012).

Statement of Significance:

The Dr. Benjamin S. and Mary H. Van Dyke House at 124 North Main Street is significant as a well-preserved Cape Cod-style dwelling. While the Colonial Revival style is well-represented throughout Cranbury, the Cape Cod subtype is a rare example. Such dwellings, based on an eastern Massachusetts vernacular form, were popular between circa 1910-1950 and were particularly common in the 1940s. Built for the locally prominent Dr. Benjamin S. Van Dyke and his wife, Mary, the dwelling remained in the Van Dyke family until 1963. The property was then occupied by Edith M. Appleget, wife of the dwelling's builder, into the twenty-first century.

Eligibility for New Jersey and National Registers: ☒ Yes ☐ No

National Register Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Level of Significance: ☒ Local ☐ State ☐ National

Justification of Eligibility/Ineligibility:

The Dr. Benjamin S. and Mary H. Van Dyke House at 124 North Main Street is recommended individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a well-preserved example of an early twentieth-century, Cape Cod-style dwelling. The building retains a high degree of integrity of materials, design, location, setting, feeling, and association. The recommended period of significance for the Dr. Benjamin S. and Mary H. Van Dyke House is limited to 1937, the year of its construction.

Total Number of Attachments: 1

List of Element Names: Dr. Benjamin S. and Mary H. Van Dyke House, 124 North Main Street

Narrative Boundary Description:

The recommended boundary is limited to the tax parcel on which it stands: Block 26.01, Lot 24.

Date Form Completed: 7/25/2023

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PROPERTY REPORT: PHOTO CONTINUATION SHEET

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Property Name: Dr. Benjamin S. and Mary H. Van Dyke House

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Photo 2



Photo 3

Property Name: Dr. Benjamin S. and Mary H. Van Dyke House

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Photo 4