

JENKINS HOUSE

South side of Dover Road, Route 4,  
0.2 miles west of Main Street  
Chichester  
Merrimack County  
New Hampshire

HABS No. NH-217

HABS  
NH,  
7-CHIS,  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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**Location:** South side of Dover Road, Route 4, .2 miles west of Main Street, Chichester, Merrimack County, New Hampshire

USGS Suncook Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator  
Coordinates: 19.304500.4790520

**Present Owner:** Shirley Marden

**Use:** Residence

**Significance:** The Jenkins House is significant architecturally as the most extensive and intact early twentieth century residential complex along Route 4 in Chichester. It is representative of the type of World War I era suburban house built during a major transitional period in the life of the highway, when horses gave way to the automobile. Its detached two-car garage, a building type then still in its infancy, and shop were designed to complement the house and site. In recent years, Route 4, a major transportation corridor since it was laid out as New Hampshire's first turnpike route, has given way to increasing commercialization, causing rapid physical changes and threatening the existence of residences along its length.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. **Date of erection:** ca. 1925-26. The land on which the property stands was sold to Bessie Jenkins in 1908. The next deed transaction is in 1941. Bessie Jenkins married Alfred Jenkins in 1925, and it is likely that the house was built shortly afterward, particularly since the shop on the site, built for Alfred Jenkins' granite cutting business, is contemporaneous with the main house. Stylistically, the house matches a mid-1920s date, and a similar bungalow across the street, built in 1928, is generally believed to be the work of the same builder (source: Shirley Marden). Chichester lacks early tax records to determine a more accurate date.
2. **Architect:** None
3. **Original and subsequent owners:** References to the chain of title to the land and buildings are in the Merrimack County Registry of Deeds, Concord, New Hampshire.  

1908 Deed, May 1, 1908, recorded in Book 379, Page 515.  
Frederic D. Chandler to Bessie Jenkins (land only)

1941 Deed, February 11, 1941, recorded in Book 584, Page 24  
Bessie Jenkins (widow) to Bryant S. Jenkins

1949 Deed, October 3, 1949, recorded in Book 671, Page 246  
Bryant S. Jenkins to R.G. Horle

1952 Deed, April 4, 1952, recorded in Book 712, Page 343  
Richard G. and M. Edith Horle to Paul E. Tracy, etc.

1957 Deed, May 3, 1957, recorded in Book 807, Page 501  
Paul E. and Clara C. Tracy to Shirley and Eleanor Marden
4. **Builder, contractor, suppliers:** Unknown
5. **Original plans and construction:** No original drawings or plans are known to exist. The garage and shop were built at the same time as the main house.

The partition wall between the dining room and middle bedroom originally stood approximately five feet to the east, and the house lacked a bathroom. The original privy was moved

to the rear of the lot (ca. 1940s-early 1950s). The south bedroom was an unfinished shed. (Source: Shirley Marden, substantiated by visual inspection.)

6. **Alterations and additions:** The rear addition of the shop was built shortly after the shop was completed. The rear gabled section of the house, originally a shed, was remodeled into a bedroom in the late 1950s. The sheds at the southern end were added after the main house was completed, but likely within ten years. (Source: Shirley Marden, substantiated by visual inspection)

#### B. Historical Context

The Jenkins House is one of several early twentieth century houses erected on the Chichester stretch of the former New Hampshire Turnpike. Though primary transportation means had shifted from horses and carriages to the automobile, the highway's importance as the primary west-east route from Concord to Portsmouth remained unchallenged.

Bessie Sanborn Jenkins, a native of Chichester, and her second husband, Alfred Jenkins, were the original occupants. Her first husband, John Jenkins and brother of Alfred, died in 1887. Both Jenkins were born in Cornwell, England and were trained as stone cutters, as was their father. After moving to the United States, the brothers were employed in the burgeoning granite quarries in Concord. Alfred eventually set up his own business and specialized in gravestones. The shop he erected on this property is still standing west of the garage.

Following Alfred Jenkin's death in 1941, his widow bequeathed the property to her son Bryant. In 1949 Bryant Jenkins sold the property, with its twelve acre lot now reduced to two. Ten years later the current owners purchased it. The buildings remain in their original use, although the shop is no longer used for stone cutting.

### PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

#### A. General Statement

1. **Architectural character:** This is an intact example of an early twentieth century bungalow of simple design built in a semi-rural area.

2. **Condition of fabric:** The main house is in sound condition and contains all its original fabric save lighting fixtures. The garage and shop are in good condition.

**B. Description of Exterior**

1. **Overall dimensions:** The one-and-a-half story house is rectangular in plan, measuring 26' across and 45' deep, including the front porch. The attached rear sheds bring the entire depth to 69'.
2. **Foundation:** The foundation material is stone, with concrete block that is rusticated on the outer face above grade level.
3. **Walls:** Exterior walls of all three buildings are clapboard with flat board trim.
4. **Structural system:** Exterior walls and major partitions are wood, load-bearing. Floor joists are full 2x8's, 16" on center beneath the first floor and full 2x6's, 16" on center beneath the attic. Roof rafters are full 2x5's, 16" on center.
5. **Porches:** A full-width, wood-framed enclosed porch (26'x9') extends across the front (north elevation) of the house. Grouped, multi-paned sash separated by battered square, splayed pilasters with simple cap molding extends around the three outer faces, with a battered, clapboard-clad wall beneath. The main entrance to the house is located within the porch. Narrow Southern pine boards line the floor, and the ceiling is unpainted matchboard. Beneath the windows, the wall is finished with a matchboard wainscot.
6. **Chimneys:** A square brick chimney approximately 18" high rises from the roof ridge at the west gable intersection.
7. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** The main entry door is wooden with two elongated vertical panels that are recessed and molded. Above the panels are four vertical lights. The porch door has twelve lights and a single horizontal panel beneath. A recessed side entrance on the west elevation has a door with glass and wood panels.
  - b. **Windows and shutters:** The wooden window sash is double-hung, with four vertical lights in the upper sash and a single

light in the lower. Windows are grouped in pairs on the west elevation. The north gable has a group of three small casement windows with single divided vertical lights. A diamond-shaped window in the west cross-gable has four vertical lights. There are no shutters or blinds.

8. **Roof:**

- a. **Shape, covering:** The cross-gable roof is clad in asphalt. On the west elevation above the eaves is an aluminum snow belt.
- b. **Eaves:** The roof has a wide eave overhang. There are no gutters or cornice.

C. **Description of Interior:**

1. **Floor plans:** The main house consists of one finished floor and an unfinished full attic and cellar. The first floor includes a living room and bedroom in the front of the house, a second bedroom and dining room in the mid-section, and a kitchen, bathroom, and narrow hall stairs in the rear. A third bedroom, back hall and inset entry are found in the former rear shed. (See attached floor plan sketch)
2. **Stairways:** Stairs to the attic and cellar are located in the southeast corner of the main section of the house. They are fully enclosed and functional, lacking any architectural detail.
3. **Flooring:** Flooring throughout most of the first floor is hard Southern pine. In the kitchen and third bedroom it is covered with linoleum tiles.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** All interior walls are plaster and lack any decorative details. A 7" flat, unpainted baseboard with a simple cove cap molding encircles each room. Ceilings in each room of the main section are tin. The living and dining room ceilings feature a wide classical border with a raised edge, and 6"x6" field panels ornamented with a fleur-de-lis pattern. The bedroom ceilings employ 2"x2" ornamented panels and lack a border. The kitchen ceiling consists of 6"x6" panels with raised crosses at each juncture and a raised edge. All are in excellent condition. A narrow, wooden, painted cornice separates the ceiling from the wall.
5. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** All doors and door casings are unpainted

pine with an open grain. Casings consist of flat boards with a narrow cap molding. Doors are two-panel. Between the living and dining rooms is a wide opening with inset splayed posts set on a paneled kneewall.

- b. **Windows:** All window casings and sash are unpainted pine with an open grain. Casings consist of flat boards with a narrow cap molding.
6. **Hardware:** All interior door and window hardware is original. Plain brass door knobs are mounted on flat brass plates. Window hardware consists of brass sash fasteners.
7. **Mechanical equipment:**
  - a. **Heating:** The heating system is a hot air system fed by an oil furnace. The original furnace was likely fueled by wood.
  - b. **Lighting:** There are no surviving original or early lighting fixtures, although ceiling plates indicate the presence of overhead fixtures at one time.
  - c. **Plumbing:** The house lacked an indoor bathroom when built and was serviced by a privy that probably stood next to the woodshed, but has since been moved to the rear of the lot. The present bathroom was installed ca. 1940s.

**D. Site:**

1. **General setting and orientation:** The house, garage and shed all face north toward Route 4. The buildings are located at the eastern end of the two acre lot. A spruce and pine grove occupies much of the western end. Stone walls follow the perimeter of the lot except along the road directly in front of the buildings.
2. **Outbuildings:**
  - a. **Garage:** Sited west and slightly south of the main house is a contemporary two-car garage. The wood frame structure measures 18'x20', is covered with clapboards and includes mid-1970s additions on the south and west elevations. The north elevation contains two sets of double, hinged doors with lights in the upper section and vertical wooden panels beneath. A fifth door, constructed of vertical boards, leads into the addition. On the east elevation

a standard-width doorway that contains a door with two elongated panels leads into the main garage. The window sash on the east elevation matches that of the main house.

- b. **Shop:** Sited west of the garage and set slightly north of it is a one-story shop (16'x18') with a rear addition (8'x14') that was built shortly after to house an engine. The structure is sided with clapboards and has a set of double doors on its north elevation that match those on the garage. A four-panel door accesses the shop from the east side; double-hung window sash is two-over-two. The addition contains a door built of vertical matchboards. Roof rafters are exposed along the rear eave.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. **Interviews:** Shirley Marden, owner  
Interviewed January 11, 1990 at building site

B. **Bibliography:**

1. **Primary and unpublished sources:**

Deeds and probates, Merrimack County Registry of Deeds and Probates, Concord, New Hampshire  
Henderson, Oren V., "The First New Hampshire Turnpike".  
Unpublished manuscript in New Hampshire Historical Society library, 1935.  
New Hampshire Division of Vital Records

2. **Secondary and published sources:**

Brown, D.T., "History of Chichester". In History of Merrimack and Belknap Counties, New Hampshire. D. Hamilton Hurd, ed. Philadelphia: J.W. Lewis & Co., 1885  
Chichester History Committee, A History of Chichester, written on the occasion of our 250th anniversary 1727-1977.  
Goldthwait, J.W., "Six Old New Hampshire Turnpikes". In New Hampshire Highways, vol. 10, no. 1., July 1932.  
Concord and Merrimack County Directory, 1898-1929  
"New Hampshire Turnpikes". In New Hampshire Highways, vol. 2, no. 4, July 1924.  
The Town Register, "Chichester". Augusta, ME: Mitchell Cony Co., 1909.

3. **Maps and Atlases:**

1805	Plan of Chichester
1816	Plan of Chichester
1858	Map of Merrimack County
1892	"Chichester", in Atlas of the State of New Hampshire

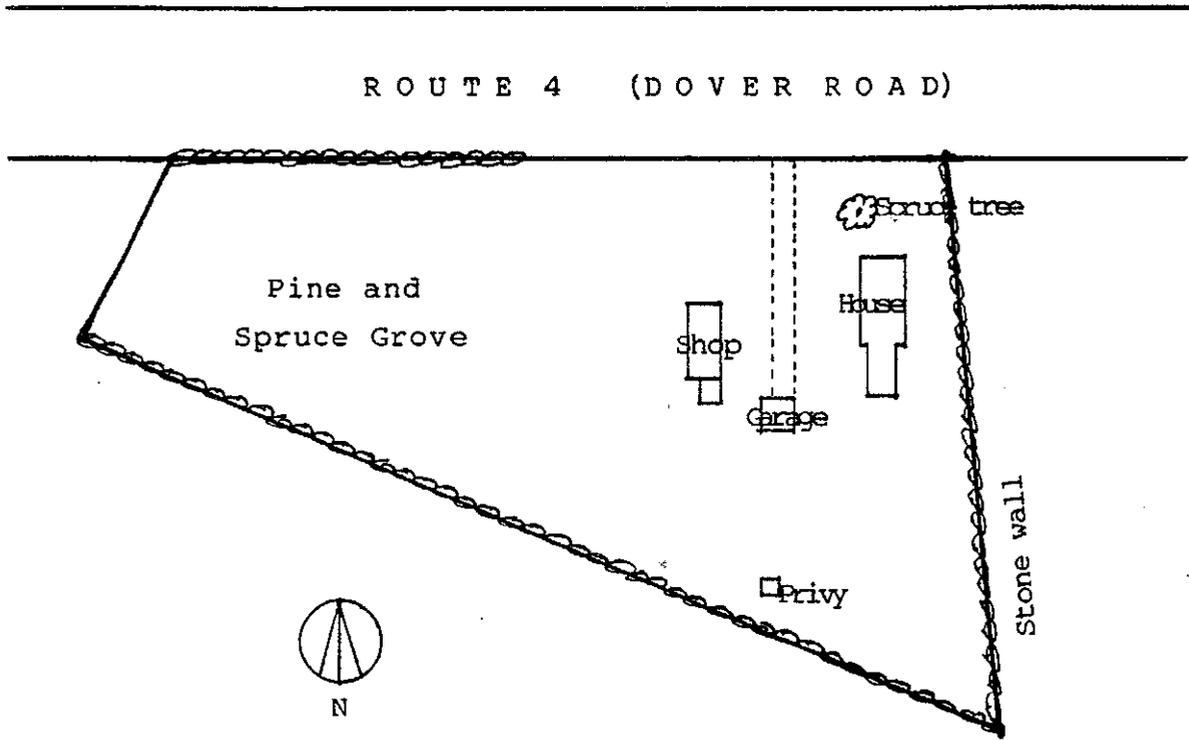
- E. **Likely sources not yet investigated:** Chichester is unfortunate in that it is lacking in research and materials documenting its history and architecture. The first town history was not published until 1977, and it has little material to draw from. A local historical society was not organized until the same period. There are no surviving early tax records. Thus, much of the town's history has been lost, and assessments of buildings within the community must rely strongly on physical evidence.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Federal Highway Administration and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation propose to reconstruct a segment of US Route 4 in Chichester, New Hampshire (Project Name: Chichester, F-012-2(17), P4809-K). Pursuant to this end and the implementation of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 USC, Sec. 470(f)), a Memorandum of Agreement dated April 11, 1988 was entered into by the Federal Highway Administration and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. In accordance with the terms of this agreement, the documentation herein is undertaken.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Durfee Hengen  
Title: Preservation Consultant, Concord, New Hampshire  
Date: March 15, 1990

SKETCH SITE PLAN  
1" = 100'



FLOOR PLAN  
1" = 10'

