

HISTORIC RED HOOK

The Elmendorph Inn, *A Community Restoration Project*

The Elmendorph Inn is the oldest public building in the Town of Red Hook, NY and one of the oldest in the Hudson Valley. It was a popular stopover on the stagecoach run between New York City and Albany. Mail was delivered, horses changed and passengers refreshed as townspeople, farmers and travelers relaxed in convivial fellowship.



The original portion of the building was built in the 1760s as a farmhouse at the intersection of Albany Post Road and the road to Connecticut. By 1785 it had become an inn. Extensive remodeling to the building was performed in the early 1800s. Changes consisted of raising the roof on the front of the building (originally a gambrel roof), adding the south rooms and changing the windows to the more delicate Federal style.

The South Room was added circa 1803. It has high ceilings, spacious dimensions and an elaborate Federal mantle. This style suggests the room was intended for public gatherings as it is used today. The north-west corner of the room houses a display of the exterior wall of the original building with mud and straw “insulation.” The chandelier in the South room is a handmade reproduction of a Hudson Valley example in a private collection. The Windsor chairs in the room were donated by community members. Each bears a brass plaque under the seat listing the donor.



The Parlor, the “Best” room in the Inn, has an elaborate mantle and was the only room with wallpaper on the walls. This was probably a multi-purpose room: private dining, social gatherings or sleeping in adjacent chamber (now an office and bathroom). The room was part of the original c. 1760 building. The door to South Room, added c. 1803, was a window. The room was “Federalized”, possibly at the same time the South Room was added or slightly later.

The Federal mantle and fireplace replace an earlier, larger fireplace. There is a display on the south wall of 12 layers of original wallpaper; examples include a c. 1810 English wood block design and exceedingly rare French copper plate paper. The floor boards are original northern yellow pine. They were never painted.

Furnishings throughout the Inn are antique or appropriate reproductions allowing the rooms to be used for community functions.

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The Tap Room was used for dining as well as drinking, games playing and socializing. It was an important place to keep up with news and gossip – a social center of the community. This room was part of the original c. 1760 building and had been remodeled several times. Throughout the restoration of the Inn, evidences of changes throughout the inn’s history were preserved. The Tap Room once had a typical “bar with grill”. A plastic panel on the ceiling preserves a piece of plaster with holes for a grill curving to the south wall to match the stair wall. You can also see a black mark on floorboards indicating the location of the bar.



The Historic Kitchen wing was added c. 1820 - 1830. It consists of the kitchen and an adjacent room, possibly used as a private dining room or chamber. When wallboard was removed in the kitchen, the fireplace and bake oven openings were discovered, as well as the original yellow ochre ceiling. Cast iron cook stoves were already in use in England and in finer houses in this country by 1830, but not here at the Elmendorph Inn. The bake oven is exceptionally large – suitable for an eating establishment. It is put to use during the Inn’s Christmas Open House with many loaves of hearty bread baked and sampled by visitors.



The Elmendorph Inn was purchased by the Friends of Elmendorph in 1977. After years of research and careful restoration, the Inn is once again used for meetings, exhibitions, celebrations and programs for local school children. It houses the Rosemary Coons Archive Room with historical materials and research assistance available. To reserve the Inn for an event, contact Historic Red Hook at 845-758-1920 or visit www.historicredhook.org .