

= Camak House =

Camak House , at 279 Meigs Street , Athens , Georgia , was built in about 1834 by James Camak and featured in Georgia 's early railroad history . An example of Federal architecture , it has a number of features unusual for its period , including a kitchen within the raised basement and closets . Both main floors have four rooms ; the stairwell has a mahogany railing , and moldings and trim were made using a Greek key pattern . After long service as a family home , it was used as a Masonic Lodge before being bought by Coca @-@ Cola Enterprises . In 1975 Camak House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places , but the building had by then fallen into disrepair . It was restored and used as the offices of a law firm . As of December 2011 , it is for sale .

= = Architecture and early history = =

Built atop a hill , Camak House was the first dwelling constructed on Prince Avenue ; Meigs Street was added later , cutting off a portion of the original property . The architecture is Federal style , " relatively unusual in Athens " , with locally produced ironwork in the front . The fanlight of the central doorway and the white @-@ washed brick construction are typical elements of the style . The house has two stories , with a " four @-@ over @-@ four room , central hall plan " ? a style " based on the standard Greek Revival floor plan " with a " raised basement , a low @-@ hipped roof , and two @-@ story pilasters " . The basement originally housed slave quarters and the kitchen ; the hazard of fire made it unusual for houses of the period to include a kitchen , but because of Camak House 's brick construction the risk was thought to be low .

The floors were constructed using " knot @-@ free heart @-@ pine " , and solid mahogany was used for the railing of the stairwell . Details include silver @-@ plated doorknobs , " hand @-@ forged locks and latches " , and " a simple but visually striking Greek key pattern " for moldings and trim . Camak House was built with closets ? a very unusual feature for the time .

Camak House was the location for a meeting to organize what became " the first successful railroad company in Georgia and only the third such company in the United States " . James Camak was named president of the company , and later served as the first president of Georgia Railroad Bank .

Five generations of Camaks lived in the house until 1947 . In her book Historic Houses of Athens , Charlotte Thomas Marshall notes that " It was not until 1904 , eleven years after Dr. Camak 's [son of the James Camak who built the house] death , that the first deed relating to the Camak house lot was recorded . At that time his sons , Louis and James Wellborn Camak , executed a quitclaim deed to their mother , Mary Wellborn Camak , acknowledging that the lot has been given to her by their father without a deed being made . " In 1949 , the house was purchased to serve as the Mount Vernon Lodge No. 22 , F. & A. M (Masonic lodge) ; then in 1979 by the Athens Coca @-@ Cola Bottling Company .

= = Restoration and current use = =

Albert Sams was president of the Athens Coca @-@ Cola Bottling Company when it acquired Camak House . He " was an active member of the Athens @-@ Clarke Heritage Foundation and a generous philanthropist , particularly with regard to historic houses " , and he planned to renovate Camak House for administrative offices ; corporate mergers (ultimately with Coca @-@ Cola Enterprises) in the 1980s ended those plans . However , it was the Sams family that sought Camak House 's listing on the National Register of Historic Places .

The house and grounds had fallen into decay by 1993 , when the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation and the law firm of Winburn , Lewis and Barrow formed a partnership to purchase Camak House from Coca @-@ Cola Enterprises . The trust added protective covenants before selling the property on to the law firm , one of whose partners was John Barrow , who served as the " prime mover in these negotiations " . A local company , S & W Development Corp , whose owner , Smith Wilson had been working in historic preservation for 18 years , was contracted to carry out the restoration work . The original floor plans , which had been altered during the Masons ' tenure , were

reinstated ; Wilson was able to use drawings made of Camak House during the 1930s as part of the Works Progress Administration 's documentation of historic buildings .

The house 's restoration for use as law offices has been described by Elizabeth Dalton of the Athens @-@ Clarke Heritage Foundation as " an excellent example of adaptive use " . As of 2011 , Camak House is owned by the law firm of Lewis , Frierson and Grayson , LLP .

= = Historic status = =

Camak House was listed as a " point of interest " in the WPA Guide to Georgia (which characterized the architecture as Georgian Colonial) . The Athens Historical Society dedicated a historical marker on the grounds in 1963 . The Historic American Buildings Survey documented Camak House (GA @-@ 14 @-@ 67) ; on July 7 , 1975 , it was added to the National Register of Historic Places ; on March 6 , 1990 , it was locally designated a Historic Landmark ; and recognized by the Georgia Historical Marker Program (029 ? 10) .