

CT Trust Resource ID: 2390

HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY – BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

State Historic Preservation Office, DECD, One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford, CT 06103

*Note: Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.

Inventory form modified for the Creative Places - Arts & Letters Project

GENERAL INFORMATION

Building Name (Common): Jehiel Hurd HouseOther Name(s) (Historic): Alexander Calder House and StudioStreet Address or Location: 314 Painter Hill Rd., RoxburyTown/City: Roxbury

Village:

County: Litchfield

Designation(s):

Owner(s): Alexander and Holton RowerPublic/Private: PrivateLatitude: 41.5846 Longitude: -73.2754

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Residential propertyHistoric Use: Residential propertyAccessibility to public: No Exterior visible from public road? YesInterior accessible? If yes, explain: NAStyle of building: Date of Construction: c. 1750 or c. 1790Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate) Wood ShingleStructural Systems(s): Wood FrameRoof(Type): Gable (Material): Asphalt ShingleNumber of Stories: Approximate Dimensions:Structural Condition: GoodExterior Condition: GoodLocational Integrity: On original site Moved, When: NAAlterations?: Yes If yes, explain: Addition added to the southwest corner during the 1950s.Related outbuildings or landscape features: Shop, Barn, stone wallsSurrounding Environment: Residential

Interrelationship of building and surroundings: This property consists of 18 acres of land and is located on the south side of Painter Hill Road which at this point runs approximately east-west. The house sits close to the road, and a short driveway extends to the south, leading to a parking area just to the east of the house. An outbuilding that was once a studio is to the southeast of the house, and a pond with another outbuilding once used as a studio is to the west of the house. Calder stables are seen on the property. A stone wall lines the eastern border of the property and on the west half of the parcel is wooded.

Other notable features of building or site: As noted by Jan Cunningham in the Historical and Architectural Resource Survey of the Town of Roxbury, "314 Painter Hill Road is a full-size Colonial with a five-bay façade and center chimney. A c. 1940 studio is attached at the rear. Most of the changes to the exterior took place in the 1840s. They include the Greek Revival-style doorway surround, which has a multi-paned transom and wide frieze over the divided, raised-panel door. The large rectangular windows in the gable peaks, also multi-paned with geometric design, were also added at the time. A side entrance, near the rear of the left elevation is more simply detailed in the Colonial manner and contains an old five-panel door. The lower height of the second floor is reflected in the shorter windows there, which have 12-over-8 sash. Those on the first floor are full size, with 12-over-12 lights."

Architect: Unknown Builder/Maker: Unknown

Historical or Architectural importance:

Alexander Calder was born in 1898 in Pennsylvania to parents, Alexander Stirling Calder (who went by Stirling) and Nanette Calder. Both Calder's parents were artists and his father and grandfather were both sculptors. Calder moved with his family often during his childhood and in each place, his parents made sure to have a basement to be used as studio space for him. In 1915, Calder elected to study mechanical engineering at Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey. He received his degree in 1919. In 1923, Calder moved to New York City to attend the Art Students League after deciding earlier in the year to become a painter. Three years later, Calder moved to Paris and established a studio. While traveling from Paris to New York in 1929, he met his future wife, Louisa James (1905-1996). They married in 1931 and resided in Paris until 1933. While in Paris, Calder became friends with avant-garde artists such as Joan Miro, Jean Arp, and Marcel Duchamp. When Calder and his wife moved back to the United States in 1933, they purchased a farmhouse in Roxbury, Connecticut, where

they raised their daughters.

In 1929, Calder had his first showing of his wire sculptures. In 1931, Marcel Duchamp termed Calder's hanging sculptures with moving parts that were powered by wind and air currents, mobiles. A year later, his self-supporting, static, abstract sculptures were termed as stables by Jean Arp to differentiate them from his mobiles. In 1934, Calder made his first outdoor works in his studio in Roxbury. These first pieces were unable to withstand strong winds. He began to create small scale maquettes and then enlarge them to monumental size. Places such as Segre's Iron Works in Waterbury, Connecticut would produce these monumental structures for Calder. In the 1950s, Calder focused his attentions on these monumental sculptures and continued to work on them throughout the 1960s and 1970s. In 1976, he died of a heart attack.

Sources:

<http://www.calder.org/>, <http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/calder/realsp/roomenter-foyer.htm>, <http://whitney.org/Collection/AlexanderCalder>, <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/exhibitions/publications/from-the-archives/items/view/67>, <http://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/calder-and-abstraction-avant-garde-iconic>, http://rogallery.com/Calder_Alexander/calder-biography.htm, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/alexander-calder/about-the-artist/78/>, <http://www.antiquetalk.com/index.php/antique-talk/21-antique-talk/biographies/138-biography-alexander-calder>, Cunningham, Jan, Roxbury: A Historic and Architectural Resource Survey, Cunningham Associates Ltd., Middletown, CT 1996-1997

Photographer: Charlotte Hitchcock **Date:** 11/23/2012

View:

Organization: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address: 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517-4002

Form completed by: Kristen Nietering **Printed On:** January 24, 2016

Threats: None known

Subsequent field evaluations:



Northwest view of the Jehiel Hurd House, also known as the Alexander Calder House. Camera facing southeast.

FOR OFFICE USE:

Town # _____ **Site#** _____ **UTM** _____

District ☐ S ☐ NR **If NR, specify:** ☐ Actual ☐ Potential