



CT Trust Resource ID: 2501

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): Minor Memorial LibraryOther Name(s) (Historic): Alexander Calder Mountains Maquette/Rulley M. Bernhardt StoreStreet Address or Location: 23 South St., RoxburyTown/City: Roxbury

Village:

County: Litchfield

Designation(s):

Owner(s): Minor Memorial LibraryPublic/Private: PublicLatitude: 41.5529 Longitude: -73.3071

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: LibraryHistoric Use: LibraryAccessibility to public: No Exterior visible from public road? NoInterior accessible? If yes, explain: Public buildingStyle of building: Date of Construction: 1994, 1976Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate) Aluminum SidingStructural Systems(s): Wood FrameRoof(Type): Gable (Material): Asphalt ShingleNumber of Stories: 2 Approximate Dimensions:Structural Condition: ExcellentExterior Condition: ExcellentLocational Integrity: Moved, When: NAAlterations?: If yes, explain: NARelated outbuildings or landscape features: ShopSurrounding Environment: Residential

Interrelationship of building and surroundings: The maquette of Mountains is situated on the Minor Memorial Library property in Roxbury which consists of a 3.45 acre parcel. South Street runs north-south through the southern portion of town, and this parcel is located in the center of Roxbury. It is approximately three miles to the southwest of Painter Hill Road, where Calder's home and studio are located. The maquette is situated close to the street, to the southeast of the library building. A short driveway extends to the west off the road, and leads to a parking area just to the south of the library. A small white building is found in the northeast corner of the parcel. Roxbury is a town located in Litchfield County and surrounded by Woodbury, Washington, New Milford, Bridgewater, and Southbury. It is a rural area that was once populated by numerous farming families, and today many barns are still extant. Roxbury is close to the New York State border.

Other notable features of building or site: On the grounds of the Minor Memorial Library in Roxbury, Connecticut, is an intermediate maquette of the Mountains portion of Alexander Calder's Mountains and Clouds steel structure. Mountains and Clouds was a stabile/mobile that is located in the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C. An intermediate maquette was created for structural tests. A smaller maquette was initially created for the commission approval and fabrication purposes. The intermediate maquette was created in 1976 and painted black to stand out in the stark white marble atrium of the building where the final product would be placed. Calder had decided to make a simple structure to fit the space. The Mountains maquette consists of five triangular mountains of varying heights, the largest pierced with a circular hole, and two curving arcs

Architect: Alexander Calder Builder/Maker: Segre's Iron Works

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 moves 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, Sandra (born in 1935) and Mary (born in 1939).

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 stabiles 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 was working on a combined mobile and stabile structure called Mountains and Clouds to go in the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington D.C. At the end of a meeting he had in Washington about this structure, he had a heart attack and died upon his return home. Since the maquette had been approved, the Mountains and Clouds structure was still scheduled to be created. However, due to budgeting setbacks, it was finally erected in 1985.

Sources:

<http://www.calder.org/>, http://rogallery.com/Calder_Alexander/calder-biography.htm, Roxbury: A Historic and Architectural Resource Survey, Jan Cunningham, Cunningham Associates Ltd., Middletown, CT 1996-1997, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyZStMB9vyM&feature=youtu.be>, Alexander calder dies; sculptor on large scale. (1976, Nov 12). The Hartford Courant (1923-1990) Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/544748197?accountid=10341>, By, J. R. (1976, Nov 12). Alexander calder, leading U.S. artist, dies. New York Times (1923-Current File) Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/122807277?accountid=47114>

Photographer: Kristen Nietering **Date:** 9/12/2014

View:

Form completed by: Kristen Nietering **Printed On:** February 23, 2016

Organization: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address: 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517-4002

Threats: None known

Subsequent field evaluations:



Southeast view of Mountains and the library. Camera facing northwest.

FOR OFFICE USE:

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

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