

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Providence	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 71.6.44.0015	DATE 6/21/71

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Dexter (Edward) House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
72 Waterman Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Providence

STATE: Rhode Island, 02906      CODE: 44      COUNTY: Providence      CODE: 007

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____
Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Frank L. Hinckley, Jr.

STREET AND NUMBER:  
72 Waterman Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence      STATE: Rhode Island      CODE: 44

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Dorrance and Washington Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Providence      STATE: Rhode Island      CODE: 44

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1937       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S. E.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington      STATE: District of Columbia      CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

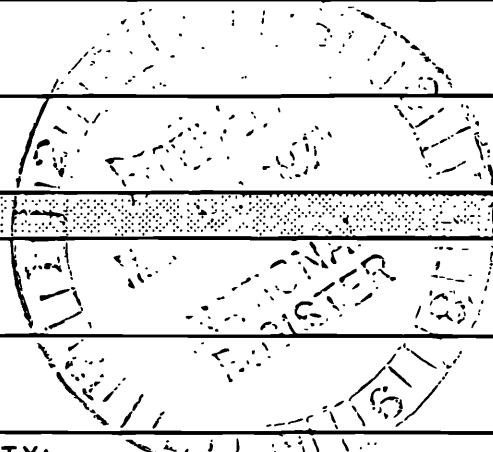
STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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6/21/71

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered *	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

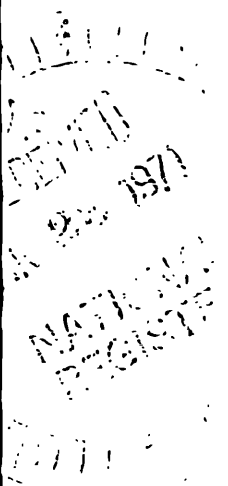
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE  
\*only by enlargement

The Dexter house, whose architect is unknown, was built between 1795 and 1797 and is of timber-frame, clapboarded construction above a sandstone basement, excepting the two exterior walls (formerly the north and south and now the east and west ones)<sup>when</sup> are faced in brick for weather protection. It is of two-and-a-half storeys under a low hipped roof with a square monitor. Originally located on the north-east corner of George and Prospect Streets--roughly two blocks away--and facing west, the house was sawn into two sections and moved in 1860 to its new location, where it was turned to face south. Subsequently it was enlarged by extensions at the east which run off to the rear of the house and by the insertion of dormers in the roof. Beyond these obvious but harmoniously handled additions its basic proportions, trim and appearance have not been altered.

In external architectural treatment, the Dexter house is transitional between the Georgian and Federal styles. (Its façade scheme belongs to the type used for the Vassall house of 1759 on Brattle Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts.) It is more architecturally adorned than other contemporary houses of similarly moderate size in Providence. Quoins support a fretted and modillioned cornice. The central bay of the entrance front is marked by a pediment (open at its bottom) supported by two-storey pilasters of the Tuscan order, fluted (these in turn supported on pedestals and topped by narrow slices of entablature with single triglyphs). Between the pilasters is, on the first floor, a one-storey entrance porch with smooth Tuscan columns backed by pilasters and carrying a turned balustrade with urns. At second-floor level is a Palladian window whose rusticated centre arch rises into the pediment; glazing in the arched part of the window is "dummy-glazing," for interior ceiling height does not permit the actual window-opening to rise above the spring of the arch. First-floor windows at the front have pediments, while those at the sides and rear, and throughout the second storey, have simple architraves. At the eaves is an urn-topped parapet, panelled above solid wall areas and having opened sections of balusters above windows. An open balustrade topped by urns caps the monitor.

Internally, the house is of central-hall plan, having four principal rooms on each floor, these served by four externally flush chimneys in the end walls. On each side of the hall, front and rear rooms are separated by a space wide or deep enough to provide an arched recess for sofa or sideboard in each front room, the recesses flanked by cupboards or passageways. Antoinette F. Downing further describes the interior: "The scale of the interior decoration is lighter than was common previously ... Bands of reeding decorate the two-story pedimented mantelpiece in the southeast parlour, while the frieze section just above the fireplace opening is ornamented with applied mouldings having quad-

(See Continuation Sheet)



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

7. Description.

rants taken from the corners. The cornices, chair rails and mantel mouldings in all the rooms show a great variety of patterns--reeding, gouge cuts, borings, circles, losenges, key designs, and dentils in various combinations ... The doors ... are crowned with broken-scroll pediments. The stairway belongs to the type common during the first decade of the nineteenth century: its two-run plan and ramped railings conform to colonial precedents, but the balusters have become slender Doric columns, and the landing window is simplified from the Palladian form to a plain round-headed window."

The house, importantly, displays its basic form and its original decorative elements unchanged; those additions of accomodation which have been made are visible as such but fortunately have been sympathetically applied. The building continues in the good state of maintenance it has always had.

8. Significance.

The Dexter house is perhaps soon to be put up for sale, and it needs protection--not to mention assured preservation over--all--lest the often brutal exigencies of the university add it to the total of surrounding XVIII- and early XIX-Century houses already destroyed thereby. (The house is flanked by university-owned properties, some also of architectural value--though unappreciated, and one has no idea what may be the construction or other plans for this block.)



**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1795-1797

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Dexter house is one of the lamentably few XVIII-Century residences which have survived on the cresting plateau of Providence's College Hill, in the vicinity of Brown University, whose building programs have caused the destruction of many old dwellings. Even when there were more houses of its period nearby, this one took a primacy among them because of its architectural distinction--having an amount of thoughtful elaboration not possessed by its neighbours. It has in fact been stated that in Providence there was only one other dwelling (now vanished) coeval with the Dexter house which also displayed a full two-storey or colossal pilaster order. In its class or size, the Dexter house is as important in Providence and Rhode Island architectural history as are the great John Brown and Nightingale houses in theirs. And it is, to all purposes, architecturally completely intact.

After occupation by the Dexters, a family which remained active and prominent locally well on into the middle and latter XIX Century, the house was acquired by Charles L. Pendleton. While he owned it, it became a setting for his collection of antique American furniture and decorative objects. (When, around 1906, this collection was transferred to the Rhode Island School of Design a museum-house was built on school property to contain it. Internally, this structure greatly copied the plan and décor of the Dexter house.) Subsequently the house came into ownership of the Hinckley family, who still reside there.

Always occupied as a residence and excellently maintained, it deserves to continue in such a state and--hopefully--in such a use. It is centred, above a retaining wall and embankment, in the middle of a city block which faces the older buildings of Brown University and is a visual joy as one emerges from the campus or drives by in the street. (Contrastingly now, and unfortunately, the same cannot be said for adjacent blocks of the same street. It is an important part of its district, a conspicuous bit of local beauty and a small architectural monument.

(See Continuation Sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Downing, Antoinette Forrester: Early Homes of Rhode Island (Richmond, Virginia, 1937) , pp. 332, 333, 353, 367, 371, 375-379, 381, 382.  
 Hitchcock, Henry-Russell, Jr.: Rhode Island Architecture (Providence, Rhode Island, 1939), p. 32.  
 Isham, Norman M.: ... Providence & Its Colonial Houses. The White Pine Series ..., Volume 4, Number 3 (New York, 1918), pp. 9-10.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41 ° 49 ' 30 " N	71 ° 24 ' 16 " W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Less than one acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Richard B. Harrington, Consultant**

ORGANIZATION: **Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission**      DATE: **January 2, 1971**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**State House, 90 Smith Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Providence**      STATE: **Rhode Island, 02903**      CODE: **44**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name *Frederick E. Williams*

Title State Liaison Officer

Date March 18, 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

*Ernest A. Connally*  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

**JUN 21 1971**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:  
*William H. Huntley*  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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