

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

SEP 15 1989 NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name "Zions Hill" other names/site number Ralph Owen Brewster House

2. Location

street & number 37 Zions Hill city, town Dexter state Maine code ME county Penobscot code 019 zip code 04930

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/district/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: [Signature] SHPO Date: 9/8/89 State or Federal agency and bureau: Maine Historic Preservation Commission

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: _____ Date: _____ State or Federal agency and bureau: _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: [X] entered in the National Register. [] See continuation sheet. [] determined eligible for the National Register. [] See continuation sheet. [] determined not eligible for the National Register. [] removed from the the National Register. [] other, (explain): _____

Entered in the National Register 10/16/89 [Signature]

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action [Signature]

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granitewalls Wood/Weatherboard

roof Stone/Slateother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Zions Hill is a two-story Colonial Revival style residence on a two acre site with landscaped grounds. Located on a hill above Dexter's commercial district, the nominated property is surrounded by late nineteenth and early twentieth century residential buildings on smaller lots. To the northeast of the property is Crosby Park and the high school which command the crest of the hill that gives the house its name. This district is composed of one contributing building, one contributing site and seven contributing structures.

The house is sited on the southeast corner of the nominated property and features a semi-circular driveway with two entries off Zions Hill Road. A fieldstone wall marks the south boundary along that road. On the west and northwest portions of the nominated property there are shrubs and trees which provide a border for the open lawn areas on that side of the grounds. More formal landscaping features are found closer to the house itself. These include terraced grading, a stone retaining wall with steps, flagstone paths and architectural features such as an arbor, a pergola and neo-classical benches. Adjacent to the sunroom on the west side of the house is a small reflecting pool bordered by four Japanese Yews. Two freestanding arched trellises mark the locations for the semi-circular rose beds which originally enclosed the pool on its west side. These and other historic landscape features are identified on the architect's original landscape plans. No comprehensive survey of the plantings has been undertaken, although there is evidence for the existence of important components such as the symmetrically arranged perennial garden and the asymmetrically arranged annual garden, both located immediately behind the house. Other lost features included a lilly pond in the lawn area and a tea house on the north edge of the property. The latter was sited on axis with the dining room windows and visible through the columned pergola.

The northeast section of the grounds contains the original tennis court and the site of the vegetable gardens. These areas are bordered by large hedgerows.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 2

The house itself is a two-story wood frame building with hipped roofs and wide clapboards. The sash are double-hung with six-over-one lights. The main section of the house is rectangular with a narrow two bay facade that includes a porte cochere extending from the main entrance to the circular drive. On the east side of this section of the house is a large fieldstone chimney, and on the west side is a one-story sun room, a long veranda and, over part of the veranda, a second story sleeping porch.

A two-story ell connects the main section of the house with the east wing. A one-story hall and conservatory, lighted with a row of double-hung sash and a bow window, extends across the front (south) of this ell. This section of the building is visually linked to the western portion of the house by a pent roof which forms a continuous line from the conservatory to the porte cochere on the front of the house. The east wing, which is also two stories high, contains the Brewster office and game room. Attached to its north side is the garage with servants' quarters above.

The interior of the house contains all of the original woodwork. This is designed with simple moldings more characteristic of Federal period architecture than eighteenth century Colonial. Important features in the hall include the staircase and railings, under which are a closet and bathroom with round arched paneled doors. The living room, which flanks the east side of the hall, has a mantelpiece, boxed ceiling beams, French doors and paneled walls. It also contains original drapes, wallpaper, glass chandelier, and wall sconces. Paneled woodwork also ornaments the dining room, which is situated behind the hall and the livingroom.

Above the hall and living room in the main section of the house is the master bedroom and the sleeping porch, which contains an original "Murphy bed". Both the first and second floor halls also have original wallpaper.

In addition to the conservatory, the ell connecting the east and west wings contains the kitchen and other service rooms on the first floor, and bedrooms on the second floor. The two major rooms in the east wing are the former office and game room, both of which have original vertical pine paneling.

No significant alterations have been made to the house except for the replacement of most of the green Monson slate roofs with metal or asphalt shingles.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1934 - 35

Significant Dates

1934 - 35

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Stevens, John Calvin
Stevens, John Howard

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Zions Hill, the residence of Owen and Dorothy Brewster, is the largest and most architecturally significant early twentieth century house in Dexter and meets criteria C. Designed in the Colonial Revival style by the firm of John Calvin Stevens and John Howard Stevens, it was built at the peak of Senator Brewster's career as one of Maine's leading politicians. As a major reconstruction of an older building, the Stevens firm developed an imaginative floor plan which departed from the symmetry of traditional Colonial Revival. With its landscaped grounds and prominent siting, Zions Hill was for many years one of the major architectural showplaces of northern Maine. It meets National Register criterion C.

The framing for the main section of this house dates from the 1870s when a residence was built on this site by William E. Brewster, the father of Ralph Owen Brewster who constructed the property being nominated. Owen Brewster, who grew up in the original dwelling, attended Bowdoin College, Harvard University and the University of Maine before practicing law in Portland. he served in the Maine State Legislature in 1917-1918 and 1921-1922, the Maine State Senate in 1923-1924, and was elected Governor for two terms, serving 1924-1929. In 1929 Brewster and his wife, the former Dorothy Foss, returned to Dexter where he practiced law. At that time he acquired his father's house on Zions Hill. In 1934 the decision was made to hire the Portland firm of John Calvin Stevens and John Howard Stevens to construct a new residence using the frame of the old building. John Calvin Stevens was the most important architect produced by the State of Maine and had been practicing since the 1880s. His son, John Howard, had been a partner in the firm since the early 1900s. Brewster's wife Dorothy played an important role in working with the architects, especially in regard to the landscaping. Mrs. Brewster, a consummate hostess and prominent "club-woman", was by all accounts highly effective as a politician's wife.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Architectural drawings and correspondence in possession of owners.

Eastern Gazette, April 5, May 10, 1962.

Lewiston Evening Journal, August 10, 1935.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2.2

UTM References

A

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 9 |
|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Zone Easting Northing

C

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

B

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Zone Easting Northing

D

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property of 2.2 acres occupies the Town of Dexter tax map 9, lot 33.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the property embraces the entire lot historically associated with the Brewster house.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roger G. Reed, Architectural Historian
organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date July, 1989
street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone (207) 289-2132
city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 2

During the period the house in Dexter was under construction Owen Brewster was elected to the United States House of Representatives, where he served from 1935-1941. He then served two terms in the United States Senate, from 1941-1953, but was defeated for a third term. Zions Hill remained the Brewster's Maine residence throughout this period and was visited by prominent politicians such as President Harry Truman and Robert A. Taft. Both the Senator, who died in 1961, and Dorothy, who died in 1971, lived out their lives at Zions Hill.

In designing the Brewster House Stevens architects had to work around an existing framework of the older L-shaped house. In doing so, the architects arrived at an effective solution to meet the needs of the family residence and the career demands of a successful politician. The original rectangular structure's two bay fenestration with an entrance flanked by a bay window was retained in the form of a new side hall entry and tripartite bay window. The entrance hall was enlarged on the west side by adding a one-story sun room which enabled the architects to develop a more spacious entrance hall. Adjacent to the hall is a large living room with the bay window, and behind both is the dining room with views out onto the garden. Directly above is the Brewster master bedroom and childrens' rooms.

A conservatory and service rooms are contained in the ell, which links to the east wing. In the latter can be found Senator Brewster's office and game room. On the second floor of the ell are additional rooms for family and guests. Thus, the traditional symmetrical plan for Colonial Revival style houses is abandoned in favor of a room arrangement that provides a transition between the more private areas of the house and the governor's meeting areas.

Zions Hill is equally distinguished for its landscaping, which was designed by the Stevens firm. Two houses west of the Brewster home were removed to allow for extensive gardens and lawns. Architectural plans document the original plantings and establish that the essential features of the landscape design are still intact. The house and its site, therefore, retain much of the design integrity of the original 1934-35 design. The property was recently converted into a bed and breakfast, a use which will contribute to the preservation of the architectural integrity of the site.

ZION'S HILL
Dexter, Maine
Not to Scale

