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HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT  
PART I  
ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION  
ON  
SAGAMORE HILL  
HOME OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT  
Sagamore Hill National Historic Site

Prepared by  
Norman M. Souder  
Architect  
July 1964

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Design and Construction  
Division of Architecture

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HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART I

ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION

ON

SAGAMORE HILL

HOME OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Sagamore Hill National Historic Site

A P P R O V A L   S H E E T

RECOMMENDED

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, EODC

Date 7-29-64

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Director, Northeast Region

Date 12-4-64

APPROVED

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director

Date 1-8-65



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. FOREWORD.....	i
II. PHYSICAL HISTORY.....	1
III. EXISTING CONDITIONS	
A. Exterior.....	3
1. Walls	
2. Roof	
3. Chimneys	
4. Fenestration	
5. Porches	
6. Trophy Room Wing	
7. Exterior Painting	
B. Interior.....	5
1. Basement	
2. First Floor	
3. Second Floor	
4. Third Floor	
5. Attic	
6. Interior Finishes	
7. Fireplaces	
8. Lighting Fixtures	
IV. PROPOSED WORK.....	8
ILLUSTRATIONS	



## I. FOREWORD

The Theodore Roosevelt House, "Sagamore Hill" on Oyster Bay, Long Island, is a Victorian house remarkably free from post-period alterations and additions. It represents the occupancy of one family from its erection in 1884 until 1948, when it was acquired by the Theodore Roosevelt Association together with the furnishings and accessories accumulated by the Roosevelt family through those years.

Through the interest of the Association and under the guidance of the Advisory Committee, the house and its contents have been carefully preserved. Repairs and the addition of facilities necessary for the operation of the building as a museum have been handled well.

Repairs to the house have become necessary. Areas such as the porches, brick and stone painting, stabilization of the main staircase and interior painting and repairs are of primary importance to the preservation of "Sagamore Hill."

The Architectural Data Section, Part II of the Historic Structures Report will deal with the rehabilitation and repair of the building.

Management Assistant John Townsley, Curator Mrs. Harold Krent, and the entire staff at Sagamore Hill National Historic Site



1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that this is crucial for ensuring the integrity of the financial system and for providing a clear audit trail. The text also mentions that this practice helps in identifying any discrepancies or errors early on, which can then be corrected before they become a problem.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the role of the accounting department in providing accurate and timely financial information to management. It states that this information is essential for making informed decisions about the company's future. The text also notes that the accounting department should work closely with other departments to ensure that all transactions are properly recorded and that the financial statements are accurate.

3. The third part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that this is crucial for ensuring the integrity of the financial system and for providing a clear audit trail. The text also mentions that this practice helps in identifying any discrepancies or errors early on, which can then be corrected before they become a problem.





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deserve special mention for their complete cooperation in the gathering of data and in the examination of the house, the results of which will be included in this and subsequent Historic Structures Reports.

Norman M. Souder  
Architect  
July 1964

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## II. PHYSICAL HISTORY

Theodore Roosevelt commissioned the New York architects Lamb and Rich to design his new house on Oyster Bay. His comments on the matter indicate how many of his own ideas went into the design.

I had perfectly definite views what I wanted, what I desired to live in and with; I arranged all this, so as to get what I desired in so far as my money permitted; and then Rich put on the outside cover with little help from me. I wished a big piazza.... where we could sit in rocking chairs and look at the sunset; a library with a shallow bay window looking south, the parlor or drawing room occupying all the western end of the lower floor....big fireplaces for logs....I had to live inside and not outside the house; and while I should have liked to 'express myself' in both, as I had to choose, I chose the former.<sup>1</sup>

Roosevelt signed the contract on March 1, 1884 for the construction of the late Victorian style house at a cost of \$16,750.00 with the contractors, John Wood and Son.

A north wing was constructed in 1904, designed by Grant LaFarge, to provide a 30' x 40' trophy room.

Additional work was done on the house by the Theodore Roosevelt Association between 1949 and 1952, mostly in the line of general repairs. In this period the present roof was applied, a fire protection system was installed, an additional stair to the

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<sup>1</sup>Hermann Hagedorn, Sagamore Hill, MacMillan, 1944.



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third floor constructed, and the service porch was enlarged and enclosed to provide a kitchen for the use of the Curator and her staff. Also during this time the rear stair was widened to permit its use for circulation.



### III. EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### A. Exterior

##### 1. Walls

The house at Sagamore Hill consists of three stories, basement and attic. The foundation is of local stone in a form of mica schist laid in rubble fashion terminating in a denticulated brick water table at the first floor window sill line. Red brick is used from the water table to the second floor level and relieved at intervals with terra cotta medallions let into the brickwork.

The second floor, third floor gables, and dormers are constructed of frame and covered with wood shingles. Designs have been worked into the shingled walls by the use of curved-end and wave-cut shingles.

##### 2. Roof

The house and porch roofs were originally covered with wood shingles but are presently covered with asbestos shingles.

##### 3. Chimneys

The three large chimneys on the main house are of brick with decorative motifs achieved by means of rustication.

##### 4. Penetration

Window styles are varied, ranging from large single light sash to leaded, stained glass sash. Many upper sash are divided into small paned patterns. Two over two light sash are used in the service areas. Most of the windows on the first and second floors are fitted with exterior blinds. Early photographs show blinds on the third floor windows but those are now missing.



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#### 5. Porches

The large front porch extends from the porte-cochere on the south front around the west side where it becomes 18'-6" wide in the half-octagon portion. At the north side of the drawing room extension, the porch extends a short distance along the west side of the north wing.

A lattice-sided service porch with a pergola top extends from the staff's kitchen, and another servants' porch is on the east side of the house opening from the Curator's office.

A small shingled porch extends on the west, opening from the President's bedroom and two small open decks are located, one on the west side of, and opening from, the President's bath and another on the east side of the bath, opening off the Single Guest Room.

#### 6. Trophy Room Wing

The north wing, erected twenty years later than the main house, blends well in that the walls are red brick and the shingled gable is similar to the gables on the house.

A plaster or composition eagle and wreath decoration is set on a wood panel on the gable. A cut stone water table extends from grade to the window sill line.

The long windows are nine over nine and twelve over sixteen light. In the projecting west alcove bay they are nine over one light.

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The large chimney on the wing is similar in scale to the main house chimneys but without the brick ornamentation.

#### 7. Exterior Painting

The shingled portion of the house is painted a salmon color. The trim, sash, shutters, porches and cornice are painted dark green. The brick wall is painted a brick red. This was apparently done in the middle or late period of the house.

#### B. Interior

The interior arrangements consist of twenty three rooms, baths, and numerous storage areas.

The Victorian influence is more pronounced in the interior than the exterior, especially in the treatment of mantels, doors and trim, stairs and oak paneling.

##### 1. Basement

The basement is divided into a number of storage, toilet and heater room areas. There are three warm air furnaces and a hot water heater in separate fireproofed areas. The floor throughout is concrete. The walls painted or whitewashed. Ceiling areas were covered with rocklath in 1951.

##### 2. First Floor

The first floor is composed of a large oak paneled and beamed entrance and stair hall, drawing room, library, dining room, pantry, kitchen, Curator's office and staff's kitchen. In the

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north wing, the "trophy room" with a platformed entrance, is done in more classical taste, ornamented with engaged and free standing Ionic columns. The room is paneled in a variety of woods; mahogany, black walnut, swamp cypress and hazel. The centers of the large panels are covered with embossed wallpaper.

### 3. Second Floor

The second floor consists of ten rooms and four baths. The stair hall is centrally located and is lighted by a stained glass skylight. The rear (service) stair extends from the basement to the third floor. An additional stair to the third floor was added by the Theodore Roosevelt Association in the 1950's to provide circulation for visitation.

### 4. Third Floor

The third floor contains six major rooms, former bedrooms for the servants and children of the family. The largest, the "gun room," was also the headquarters for the "Boone and Crockett Club" and served as a study for the President. The third floor has numerous cubby-holes and storage spaces under the eaves.

### 5. Attic

The unfinished attic is reached by a ship's ladder stair in a third floor hall closet. Metal louvers, recently installed in the north and south gables provide exhaust areas for the large ventilating fan housed in the attic.



1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the members of the committee who have been appointed to study the problem of the distribution of the land in the district of the city of Moscow.

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## 6. Interior Finishes

Most of the interior woodwork is stained or varnished. The woodwork in the Drawing Room, Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt's bedrooms and in the south bedroom are painted. The walls in the drawing room, halls, baths, and some of the attic rooms are painted, the remainder of the rooms are covered with wallpaper of the period.

## 7. Fireplaces

Fireplaces are located in the following rooms: the entrance hall, the trophy room, drawing room, library and dining room on the first floor. On the second floor in the south bedroom, the double guest room, Mrs. Roosevelt's bedroom, the President's bedroom, and in the boys' room. On the third floor the only fireplace is in the gun room.

The coal burning kitchen range is set in a brick recess and on a cement hearth similar to fireplace construction.

The Victorian treatment of the mantels, over-mantels and surrounds of the fireplaces vary with the importance of the room and size of the fireplace. The most elaborate fireplace treatments are in the first floor rooms. The mantel treatment in the 1904 trophy room is columned in a classic interpretation of the period.

## 8. Lighting Fixtures

Lighting fixtures in the house date mainly from the gas-light era and have been electrified. The supplemental modern electrical fixtures are inconspicuous.





#### IV. PROPOSED WORK

The Part II Section of the report will be based on the following areas requiring repair and rehabilitation:

The west porches and the two service porches where deterioration and structural failure is pronounced.

The repointing of the stone masonry and brick areas.

The structural reinforcement of the main staircase due to failure caused by heavy visitor traffic.

Repainting of the exterior and specified interior areas based on analysis of original paint colors.



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ILLUSTRATION NO. 1

Photograph showing the south elevation of "Sagamore Hill." The house, built in 1884 by Theodore Roosevelt, has remained much the same. The only changes shown on this photograph are an extension on the right of the second floor of the center wing to add a bathroom and the louver added to the gable at the attic level.

Photo by: National Park Service, EODC  
Boucher, February 25, 1964

EODC Neg. No. 483







ILLUSTRATION NO. 2

Photograph showing the north side of house. The 1904 Trophy room wing is in the right foreground. The latticed service porch on the left is a later addition.

Photo by: National Park Service, EODC  
Boucher, February 20, 1944

EODC Neg. No. 4836





