

NEWS & VIEWS

Summer 2017

Expanding the Architectural Record of the Recent Past



PHOTO: CHARLOTTE HITCHCOCK

It's been almost ten years since the New Haven Preservation Trust launched its Modernism project. This endeavor seeks to recognize and highlight New Haven's era of urban renewal, during which a generation of Modernist architects and planners participated in a rebuilding of both the city and the Yale campus.

In 2008 the Preservation Trust began the Modernism project with an overview essay by historian Rachel Carley entitled "Tomorrow is Here." A survey of over one hundred examples of Modernist architecture in New Haven was started two years later. Historic Resources Inventory forms are used in Connecticut, as

First Presbyterian Church, 704 Whitney Avenue. Architect: John G. Dinkeloo, James P. Owens, Jr. (1966), Christiaan Dinkeloo (2005).

throughout the United States, to document buildings of historical interest, creating a statewide inventory. The Modernist buildings that this project tackled had been too new to be included in the comprehensive inventory of New Haven's "historic" buildings compiled by the Preservation Trust in the early 1980s under a state grant program. In 2010 a group of interns and volunteers was formed to survey New Haven's overlooked Modern-

ist resources, most having now reached the 50-year mark. The survey was anchored by Christopher Wigren, architectural historian and advisor to the Preservation Trust, and Charlotte Hitchcock, an architect, who worked with then-students Lucas Karmazinas and Julie Rosen, who have gone on to become respected preservation professionals, and Preservation Trust board member Chad Chadderdon.

Another phase of the project saw the launch in 2014 of the website newhaven-modern.org, "celebrating modern architecture in New Haven – the mid-century architects' playground" as its title proclaims. The website has been recognized by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation and received an award from the United States chapter of Docomomo, an international organization dedicated to the documentation and conservation of buildings, sites, and neighborhoods of the Modernist movement.

Now the New Haven Preservation Trust is continuing the project by adding to and fleshing out information on some of the most noteworthy Modernist buildings in New Haven that to date have received only superficial attention. These buildings were designed by the "starchitects" of the 1950s and 1960s – people like Louis Kahn, Paul Rudolph, and Eero Saarinen. Some have met the wrecking ball, like the New Haven Coliseum, a portion of the Church Street South housing complex, the J. W. Gibbs Laboratory at Yale, and Helene Grant School. Oriental Masonic Gardens, a modular housing development designed by Paul Rudolph, lasted only ten years. Some have benefited from ongoing maintenance and incremental upgrades, as have Trade Union Plaza, Harry A. Conte Elementary School, and the Leavy Residence. Some are old enough and sufficiently valued by their owners to have undergone full restoration or rehabilitation, as with the Yale Art and Architecture building (Rudolph Hall), Beinecke Library, Greeley Memorial Lab-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Contents

- 1 Expanding the Architectural Record of the Recent Past
- 2 Learning about Tax Credits for the Rehabilitation of Historic Homes
- 3 President's Letter
- 4 "The Future of the Past": The National Historic Preservation Act Turns Fifty
Dating Our Community's Architectural Heritage
- 5 2016 Annual Meeting: Preservation Trust Stays Healthy
- 6 Saint Ronan Modern: Preservation Trust Participates in Annual DOCOMOMO-US Tour Day
- 7 Preservation Trust Collaborates in Restoration at Trinity Church on the Green

EXPANDING THE ARCHITECTURAL RECORD, CONTINUED

oratory, the Yale Art Gallery, and the Yale Center for British Art. Morse and Stiles Colleges at Yale, substantially refurbished in 2011, were designated a New Haven Landmark by the Preservation Trust at its annual Preservation Awards Ceremony, held at City Hall on May 16, 2017.

The focus of the current work is on rewriting Historic Resources Inventory forms for some of these major buildings and on adding color and digital photographs. The Modernism website will include new photographs, along with additional information on these often arresting buildings – some rehabilitated, others demolished – while

the Historic Resources Inventory forms describe the significance of the buildings from our present perspective, fifty years on. The project is capturing several buildings soon to be demolished and several recently restored. And it highlights Southern Connecticut State University, a campus that was laid out on farmland in the 1950s and built out with buildings designed in a Modernist style by architects practicing locally.

The documentation and photography for this phase are by Charlotte Hitchcock. The new information is now available on our website, newhavenmodern.org.

Learning about Tax Credits for the Rehabilitation of Historic Homes

By assisting homeowners with property renovations and maintenance, the Connecticut Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program has helped stem the cycle of urban blight, abandonment, and disinvestment in the state's urban residential neighborhoods.

Fifty percent of applications to the program since 2000 have come from New

Preservation Trust's active outreach.

Since 2004, the Preservation Trust has hosted approximately thirty local workshops throughout the city to introduce New Haveners to the historic homes tax credit and to explain the program's application process and rehabilitation guidelines. The Preservation Trust's most recent tax-credit workshop took place on

tax credit for qualified expenses associated with the renovation of owner-occupied historic homes with one to four dwelling units; in the case of multiple dwelling units at least one unit must be owner-occupied. The relevant building must be listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, either individually or as

Partly due to the Preservation Trust's outreach, fifty percent of applications to the program since 2000 have come from New Haven.

part of a historic district. The minimum expenditure for a project to qualify for the program is \$15,000. All work, which must comply with the program's standards for rehabilitation, has to be approved by the State Historic Preservation Office prior to the start of the project.

For program details contact Alyssa Lozupone, the Historic Homes Tax Credit Program Administrator, at the State Historic Preservation Office, alyssa.lozupone@ct.gov; 860-256-2726. The next Tax Credit Workshop will be held on June 24, 2017, at Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven; register by e-mailing the Preservation Trust at info@nhpt.org or calling 203.562.5919.



Haven, and to date over four hundred New Haven residents have benefited from the economic incentives it affords in support of their efforts to maintain and repair historical features and materials. The high number of New Haven applicants and recipients is in large part due to the

Saturday, March 25, 2017, at the Corsair Apartments at 1050 State Street. Twenty-two people attended the event, which included a particularly engaged and lively question period.

The Connecticut Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit is a thirty percent

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Since 1973, May has been celebrated throughout the country as Preservation Month. As I write this president's letter, preservation groups like ours are joining with state historical societies and other civic organizations in honoring preservation achievements and their cultural, social, and economic impact on local communities.

At a reception held in New Haven City Hall on May 16, 2017, the Preservation Trust presented its annual Preservation Awards, which celebrate New Haven's distinctive historic buildings, outstanding rehabilitation projects, and gifted preservation leaders.



PHOTO: KARIN KROCHMAL

From left: **Dev Hawley and Cathy Jackson representing Morse and Stiles Colleges, Yale University; Christopher Schaefer, owner of the Lane-Hubbard House; Henry Dynia representing Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven; Betsy Grauer and Len Grauer, owners of the Laura Sargent House.**

While May is a month of special celebration for the Preservation Trust, we continue to advocate, educate, and collaborate in the cause of New Haven's historic built environment throughout the entire year. We serve property owners, architects, and developers in all city neighborhoods and provide professional and technical help to organizations and individuals at no cost. Preservation Trust staff respond to approximately 250 inquiries annually about historic status, preservation standards, and best practices for rehabilitation. We welcome a cumulative annual attendance of about 1,200 at our lecture series, walking tours, homeowner tax-credit workshops, annual meeting, and other events.

The Preservation Trust thanks all of our members and donors for their support, financial and practical, of all of our efforts year round.

Bruce R. Peabody

LANDMARK PLAQUE

Morse and Stiles Colleges Yale University

Characterized as a medieval village for the mid-20th century, the colleges designed by Eero Saarinen in 1960 have been fully updated and invisibly expanded.

MERIT PLAQUE

Lane-Hubbard House 84 Second Street

Constructed in 1871 and one of the oldest houses in City Point, this small structure was built by a shell-fishing family; the award applauds the current owner's dedication to research, stewardship, and care for historic integrity, which are evident in every restored detail.

THE MARGARET FLINT AWARD

Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven

NHS's over-forty-year commitment to New Haven's neighborhoods has supported increased homeownership, helped residents take charge of their neighborhoods, and made houses affordable and energy-efficient. Its mission statement specifies that those homes should also be "beautiful". We applaud NHS for their outstanding success in saving and rehabilitating New Haven's architectural heritage.

HOUSE PRESERVATION AWARD

Laura Sargent House 178 Bishop Street

Designed in 1912 by leading society architect Henry Murphy, this casually majestic house has been fully restored, with many features and finishes reflective of their original condition.

“The Future of the Past”: The National Historic Preservation Act Turns Fifty

The road to broad-based historic preservation in the United States has not been easy, but it took a decisive turn with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, enacted into law fifty years ago, on October 15, 1966. In providing a national framework for preservation activities, the law is, according to the New Haven Preservation Trust’s Preservation Officer, “the government’s historic-preservation conscience.”

To commemorate the passing of the act and to mark the succeeding five decades, on October 29, 2016, “The Future of the Past,” a jointly sponsored symposium, was held at the New Haven Museum. The museum took the lead in arranging this gathering, which was also supported by the New Haven Preservation Trust, the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office. Speakers, panelists, architects,

preservationists, and interested citizens came together to think collectively about the past, present, and future of preservation. The opening speaker, John Shannahan, former Preservation Officer for the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office, told the somewhat tortured history of the process that led from brilliant idea, to tabled proposal, and finally to established law. Since 1966 the law has been a saving grace for so many historic buildings and for efforts to preserve visible and tangible evidence of people’s lives, both personal and public.

During the panel discussions, speakers focused on prevailing attitudes through the years, from Jane Jacobs’ ground-breaking focus on saving neighborhoods and public spaces, to the view that demolition of the historic environment must be reviewed, to the current approach that sees historic buildings and communities used to attract business, provide jobs, and

create both tourism and interest, especially in cities.

In the afternoon, the glaring question of how to ensure the voices of minorities are heard within the movement to save historic buildings and places was addressed. Brent Leggs, Senior Field Officer of the National Trust, discussed the historic impact of African American communities throughout the United States. His stimulating theme was that places of African American accomplishment and contribution should be celebrated as frequently as are places of injustice.

Led by major figures in state and national historical organizations, the symposium raised vital, relevant questions and helped preservationists and others see the broad sweep of collective efforts to save evidence of past accomplishments. The landmark law was truly honored.

Dating Our Community’s Architectural Heritage

Here’s a riddle: How can you add elegance to the façade of your house without a renovation contractor, bank loan, or dumpster? The answer: Mount a decorative ceramic plaque from the Preservation Trust, custom-fired with the date of construction of your building.

In 2011, the Preservation Trust introduced the Community Heritage Date Plaque program, celebrating the longevity of our community – over 350 years old – and building pride in New Haven’s architectural diversity. All buildings in New Haven are eligible to display a heritage date plaque. No particular historic significance is necessary, and no renovation or restoration is required.

Homeowners apply to the Preservation Trust to purchase, at nominal cost, a distinctive cream-colored date plaque. After confirming the year of construction of their building, the Preservation Trust delivers a high-fired oval plaque painted with the date and an elm leaf in recognition of the Elm City, complete with mounting hardware.

Over 157 date plaques have been mounted in twenty-one city neighborhoods, with dates ranging from 1816 to 1934. Although the plaques are most common in Westville and Newhallville, they can be seen throughout the city.

Since its inception the date-plaque program has been generously supported by People’s United Bank. In addition, the Preservation Trust is pleased to have a partnership with Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven, which places a date plaque on each house it renovates.

Historic date plaques are a powerful symbol. The visibility of date plaques around the city encourages neighborhood pride and property maintenance and, at the same time, expands awareness of the Preservation Trust and its mission.

Call the Preservation Trust today for more information about acquiring your own date plaque, or email info@nhpt.org for a form.



PHOTO: JEAN POGWIZD

2016 Annual Meeting: Preservation Trust Stays Healthy

Each year the New Haven Preservation Trust hosts its annual meeting in a noteworthy space within New Haven that is not normally open to its membership or to the general public. Previous annual meetings have been held, for example, in the Masonic Temple on Whitney Avenue and at the Davies Mansion (now Betts House) on Prospect Street. On September 22, 2016, the Preservation Trust held its fifty-fifth Annual Meeting, at the new Fernando Pastor–designed mActivity Fitness Center, at 285 Nicoll Street, in East Rock, part of the former Rockbestos Co. building. All members and the public are invited to attend the annual meeting. The Board was delighted to welcome an overflowing crowd into this multipurpose facility which functions as gym, coffee shop, and community space.

The Honorable Toni Harp, Mayor of New Haven, welcomed the more than one hundred guests as they gathered in the



PHOTOS: KARIN KROCHMAL

facility's group fitness room. Following receipt of the Preservation Trust's annual reports and the election of new board members, the podium was turned over to speaker Charles Kramer from CANY Architecture + Engineering DPC. Kramer was the lead architect for the restoration of the TWA Flight Center at JFK Airport in New York, originally designed in 1962 by Eero Saarinen for what was then Idlewild Airport. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on September 7, 2005.

"Adaptive Use" was the Preservation Trust's theme in 2016. Both lecture and location picked up on that leitmotif. The restoration and repurposing (as a hotel) of the iconic TWA Flight Center was the subject of a lively slide lecture given in a setting that had also been saved and adapted. The dynamic interplay of history, preservation, and repurposing affirmed the Preservation Trust's commitment to championing and facilitating the sustainable reworking of distinctive architectural assets.

After the lecture the audience enjoyed a reception with wine and hors d'oeuvres, and completed final bidding on items in the silent auction, which this year focused on experiences, including private tours, led by Preservation Trust members, of historic buildings and neighborhoods. The gathered guests adjourned content, and with renewed purpose and enthusiasm.

As the Preservation Trust confronts a challenging time of government-funding cutbacks, the enthusiastic support of the owners of mActivity and of the many Trust members and friends in attendance was evidence of a commitment to historic preservation in New Haven.

The Preservation Trust's Annual Meeting was made possible by the generous support of Post Road Residential, Carter Management Corp., UIL Holdings Corporation, and Southern Connecticut Gas Co.

Saint Ronan Modern: Preservation Trust Participates in Annual DOCOMOMO-US Tour Day

The Preservation Trust combined its focus on Modernism in New Haven and its outreach to the community with a well-attended tour in early October 2016. Anulfo Baez, who blogs on architecture from his base in Boston, joined the tour, and the Preservation Trust invited him to record his impressions for the Newsletter.

In early October 2016, I hopped on a train from Boston to New Haven, Connecticut, to join the New Haven Preservation Trust, New Haven Modern (which is an initiative of the Preservation Trust), and DOCOMOMO-US on a tour of the Modern architecture of the Prospect Hill Historic District in New Haven. Largely characterized by its outstanding examples of Queen Anne, Shingle Style, Colonial Revival, Italian Renaissance Revival, French Renaissance Revival, and Spanish Colonial Revival-style houses, the Saint Ronan/Edgehill neigh-

borhood is also home to a handful of Mid-Century Modernist infill houses.

than thirty buildings, the bulk of which were buildings of the Modern movement.

The tour started at Bethesda Lutheran Church on Saint Ronan Street (shown below, left) and ended on Canner Street with the 1950s Yale Divinity School apartments and a Postmodern-style house, designed by Peter Tagiuri in 1986, located at 320 Canner Street.

signed between 1905 and 1967. Parallel to Saint Ronan Street, Autumn Street is home to several Mid-Century Modernist houses built as infill on subdivided parcels.

One of my favorite buildings on the tour was the Stanley and Margaret Leavy House at 70 Autumn Street. Designed in 1967 by Granbery, Cash & Associates, the house has become the poster child for



PHOTOS: KARIN KROCHMAL



borhood is also home to a handful of Mid-Century Modernist infill houses.

Led by architectural historians Christopher Wigren and Charlotte Hitchcock, the tour was loosely based around the theme of fitting Modernism into an existing neighborhood like Saint Ronan/Edgehill. The Saint Ronan Modern tour attracted more than fifty people and included more

For some context to the Modernist houses we were about to see, the tour guides stopped at several houses on Saint Ronan Street, including the Adolph Mendel House, designed in 1913 by R. W. Foote, and the J. Edward Heaton House, designed in 1903 by Leoni W. Robinson.

After this brief stop, we walked over to Autumn Street to look at four houses de-

Saint Ronan Modern. While setback from the street, it is impossible to miss this bold, stunning house in an otherwise architecturally quaint street.

One of the more striking houses on the tour was the John and Ruth Martin House at 55 Loomis Place (shown above). Designed in 1967 by Sidney T. Miller, the house is a two-story frame house with features that recall the Prairie Style houses of Frank Lloyd Wright. Unfortunately, there is very little out there on the architecture of S. T. Miller, but from what I have been able to see, his work deserves a second look.

New Haven was a hotbed for Modernism—an idea that was emphasized throughout the Saint Ronan Modern tour. For those of us looking to quench our thirst for more buildings of the Modern movement, the Preservation Trust provided a list of nearby Modernist buildings, many designed by some of the leading architects of the time, including John Dinkeloo. To get a copy of this list, email info@nhpt.org.

Preservation Trust Collaborates in Restoration at Trinity Church on the Green

In October 2016, two new decorative wooden spandrels were put in place above the main entrance of Trinity Church on the Green. The accurate re-creation and

tower “contains a large pointed arch . . . ornamented with a bold architrave, with tracery in the spandrels of its arch, which are recessed within a hewn stone margin.”

These elements can be seen in an 1817 print of the exterior view and a photograph from 1860/70, taken from the opposite angle. The tracery shapes are sufficiently idiosyncratic to have come from the doodling geometries loved by Town and found in his sketchbook.

The contract for the new church building for Trinity Church is preserved in the New Haven Museum. Dated July 15, 1814, the agreement was drawn up between Ithiel

brown. Evidently the Building Committee had indeed preferred a different color, one which would provide a contrast when the spandrel was viewed from below. Canning Studios concurred that the surviving spandrel fragments are as old as the building itself, which was completed in 1815.

The modern re-creation of the spandrels, which are mirror images of each other, was aided by a template constructed from salvaged original clear cedar fragments. Thomas Leary Woodworking of Hamden, Connecticut, played an instrumental role, with member volunteers from the church priming and painting the new pieces. The template will be kept in the church archives.

The Preservation Trust’s Historic Structures Fund provides small matching grants to support the preservation of historic buildings, sites, and monuments throughout the City of New Haven. As the grant made to Trinity Church illustrates, the funds are allocated to help property owners conserve or restore noteworthy elements of a historic building. For further information about the Historic Structures Fund, see the Preservation Trust website, www.nhpt.org, or contact Preservation Services Officer John Herzan at johnherzan@nhpt.org.

installation of the spandrels undertaken by the church were supported by a matching grant from the New Haven Preservation Trust’s Historic Structures Fund.

In 1816 architect/builder Ithiel Town published his “Description of the Building Lately Erected for Public Worship by Trinity Church in the City of New Haven” along with the sermon given by Bishop John Henry Hobart at the consecration of the new church. Town stated that the “lower compartment” of the

Town and the Building Committee of Trinity Church. The terms specified, “Mullions, Tracery, Architraves, Belts & carved ornaments about the tower and front doors . . . to be wrought in wood and painted . . . three times of the colour of face stone unless some other colour equal in expense should be preferred [by the Building Committee].” Paint-chip analysis by Canning Painting Restoration Studios in Cheshire, Connecticut, has revealed that the original color was a milk chocolate



PHOTO: DUO DICKINSON

Join the New Haven Preservation Trust

Please become a member of the New Haven Preservation Trust today. Membership support is a key part of our operating budget. We need you to support preservation in New Haven!

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL

LEVELS OF MEMBERSHIP

- Member \$50
- Preservation Fellow \$75
- Alice Washburn Fellow \$100
- Ithiel Town Fellow \$150
- Henry Austin Fellow \$250
- The Proprietors’ Circle \$500
- James Hillhouse Fellow \$1000

- I am interested in volunteering for the Trust.

Please enclose completed form and your check made payable to:
The New Haven Preservation Trust, 922 State Street, P.O. Box 8968, New Haven, CT 06532

Donations can be made by credit card on our website: www.nhpt.org

The New Haven Preservation Trust
922 State Street
P.O. Box 8968
New Haven, CT 06532

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 235
NEW HAVEN, CT

The New Haven Preservation Trust's mission is to honor and preserve New Haven's architectural heritage—historic buildings and neighborhoods—through advocacy, education, and collaboration.

EDITOR: Rona Johnston
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Anulfo Baez, Margaret J. (Peg) Chambers, Duo Dickinson, Susan Godshall, Channing Harris, John Herzan, Charlotte Hitchcock, and Charlotte Rea
DESIGN: SML Graphic Design, s-ml.org

Support for this publication comes from the Connecticut Department of Community & Economic Development and from members, friends, and sponsors of the New Haven Preservation Trust.

© 2017, The New Haven Preservation Trust.
All rights reserved.

BELOW Lee High School, 165 Columbus Avenue.
Architect: Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo and Associates (1964).
PHOTOGRAPH BY KARIN KROCHMAL

Inside

Architectural Record of the Recent Past

Learn About Tax Credits

2017 New Haven Preservation Trust Awards

NEWS & VIEWS NHPT

The New Haven
Preservation Trust

Summer 2017