

ABCs of Architecture



THE NEW HAVEN PRESERVATION TRUST would love to share some architectural vocabulary with you! Learn about New Haven's built heritage through its architectural features.



A

Arcade

A series of arches carried by columns or piers or a covered walkway that provides access to adjacent shops. When supporting weight above, an arcade gains strength from the lateral thrusts of its arches. The building illustrated here features a modern take on the arcade with branched, precast concrete pillars.

Becton Engineering and Applied Science Center, 15 Prospect Street, Marcel Breuer and Associates, 1968–1970.



B

Bargeboard

Exposed board running underneath the slopes of a projecting gable roof. Often richly decorated with carved, cut-out, or painted patterns, it is a common feature of houses built in the Gothic Revival and Tudor Revival styles.

"Miss Terry's School," 210 Saint Ronan Street, 1860.



C

Cupola

From the Italian word for dome, a small structure that sits at the roof ridge designed to bring light and air into dark attic spaces. Large cupolas, such as those used in grand 19th-century Italianate houses, including the one pictured above, can feature windows and occupiable space inside.

Graves-Dwight House, 51 Hillhouse Avenue, 1862.

Head to [NHPT.ORG/ABCS-OF-ARCHITECTURE](https://www.nhpt.org/abcs-of-architecture) or scan the QR code to see the rest of the alphabet and learn more architectural terms and discover local buildings.



X

X-Bracing

A structural element consisting of two diagonal members that intersect. X-bracing, or cross bracing, is used to reinforce and strengthen a structure in both compression and tension. It is often used in bridges or structural foundations as well as High-Tech architecture of the 1970s and 80s.

Grand Avenue Bridge, H. C. Keith and C. W. Kelly, 1896–98. Rebuilt 1984, renovated 2021.



Y

Yankee Gutter

A drainage system built inconspicuously into the roof so it is not visible along the roofline of the house. Dating to the 18th century, Yankee gutters can be simple or ornate to match the architectural style of the house. They have the advantage of being able to handle larger volumes of water because they are wider and more structurally secure than modern aluminum gutters.

Jesse and Julia Ludington House, 88 East Pearl Street, 1850.



Z

Zigzag Motif

A highly decorative, geometric ornamental pattern. The zigzag motif has been a common architectural embellishment throughout history and used for the adornment of arches in medieval Byzantine, Islamic, Norman, and Romanesque buildings. More recently, it gained popularity in the 1920s and 30s in Art Deco buildings.

Henry Hotchkiss House, 576 Chapel Street, 1841. Reconstructed by Lester Julianelle in 1935.