

# HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY - BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism, One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford, CT 06103

**\* Note:** Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Building Name (Common) Gene and Mae Festa House

Building Name (Historic) Gene and Mae Festa House

Street Address or Location 255 Ogden Street

Town/City New Haven Village Saint Ronan-Edgehill County New Haven

Owner(s) Gene J. and Mae L. Festa  Public  Private

**PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Present Use: Residential - Single family dwelling

Historic Use: Residential - Single family dwelling

Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road?  Yes  No

Interior accessible?  Yes  No If yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_

Style of building Modernist Date of Construction 1974

**Material(s)** (Indicate use or location when appropriate):

- |  |   |  |                                       |  |
|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clapboard             | <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding        | <input type="checkbox"/> Brick                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle | <input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone            | <input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stucco             | <input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone  | <input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete (Type _____) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type _____) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Glass</u> |                                       |  |

**Structural System**

- Wood Frame  Post & Beam  Balloon  Load bearing masonry  Structural iron or steel
- Other Concrete Block Masonry

**Roof** (Type)

- Gable  Flat  Mansard  Monitor  Sawtooth
- Gambrel  Shed  Hip  Round  Other \_\_\_\_\_

(Material)

- Wood Shingle  Roll Asphalt  Tin  Slate  Asphalt Shingle
- Built up  Tile  Other Rubber Membrane

Number of Stories: 1 and 2 Approximate Dimensions 45' x 60'

Structural Condition:  Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated

Exterior Condition:  Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated

Location Integrity:  On original site  Moved When? \_\_\_\_\_

Alterations?  Yes  No If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR OFFICE USE:** Town # \_\_\_\_\_ Site # \_\_\_\_\_ UTM \_\_\_\_\_

District:  S  NR If NR, Specify:  Actual  Potential

**PROPERTY INFORMATION (CONT'D)**

**Related outbuildings or landscape features:**

- Barn     Shed     Garage     Carriage House     Shop     Garden
- Other landscape features or buildings: \_\_\_\_\_

**Surrounding Environment:**

- Open land     Woodland     Residential     Commercial     Industrial     Rural
- High building density     Scattered buildings visible from site

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The house sits on a narrow hillside lot, one of a group of Modernist homes on a larger estate property which was subdivided in the 1970s. Adjacent homes are contemporary, while nearby homes are late 19th- and early 20th-century residential style designs ranging from modest-sized to large mansions. Mature trees were preserved.

• Other notable features of building or site (*Interior and/or Exterior*)

The house consists of a 2-story rectangular box, the narrow side facing the street, with a 1-story box intended as a "pavilion" between the front and back gardens attached to the east side by a sloping skylight of 15 panels. With no windows visible from the street, the house presents a wall to the street. Although the only openings on the south (street) façade are a wide garage door, a narrow front door, and French doors which form a large, square window behind the vine-covered wall enclosing the front yard, the north side has generous fenestration.

Architect Gene J. Festa Builder Murdock and Sons, West Haven CT

• Historical or Architectural importance:

The architect-owner, Gene Festa, bought the historic Trowbridge estate at Edgehill Road, bounded by Ogden, Reservoir, and Cliff Streets, including the mansion, which he subsequently sold. The grounds were developed with contemporary (1970s) houses of his own and others' designs. In the center of the block, a strip about 100' X 60', was retained as a private park, owned jointly by the homeowners whose back yards abut it. This infill represents one of the few locations in New Haven where new homes could be built in the experimental Modernist styles by the emerging architects of the post-World War II generation. This is an example of a common Modernist solution to the problem of preserving privacy on a narrow lot in an expensive neighborhood: the boxy walled-in plain stucco house which emphasizes the interior and garden spaces.

Architect: Gene Festa (1927- ) has worked in the office of Eero Saarinen and later Roche and Dinkeloo.

• Sources: Brown, Elizabeth Mills; New Haven: *A Guide to Architecture & Urban Design*, Yale U. Press, New Haven, 1976.

Carley, Rachel D., *Tomorrow is Here: New Haven and the Modern Movement* (Privately printed by the New Haven Preservation Trust, New Haven CT) June, 2008.

New Haven Tax Assessor's Record: Map/Block/Parcel: 251/1073/ 00600, Building Department permit files.

Interview with Gene Festa, architect and owner, April, 2010.

St. Ronan-Edgehill Neighborhood Study Subcommittee, James Sexton, *Study Report: St. Ronan-Edgehill Historic District, New Haven Historic District Commission, New Haven, April 2008.*

Photographer Arnold Chadderdon Date 4/15/2010

View South Street Elevation Negative on File NHPT

Name Arnold Chadderdon Date 5/20/2010

Organization The New Haven Preservation Trust

Address 934 State Street, P.O. Box 1671, New Haven, CT 06507

• Subsequent field evaluations:

**Threats to the building or site:**

- None known     Highways     Vandalism     Developers     Renewal     Private
- Deterioration     Zoning     Other \_\_\_\_\_     Explanation \_\_\_\_\_



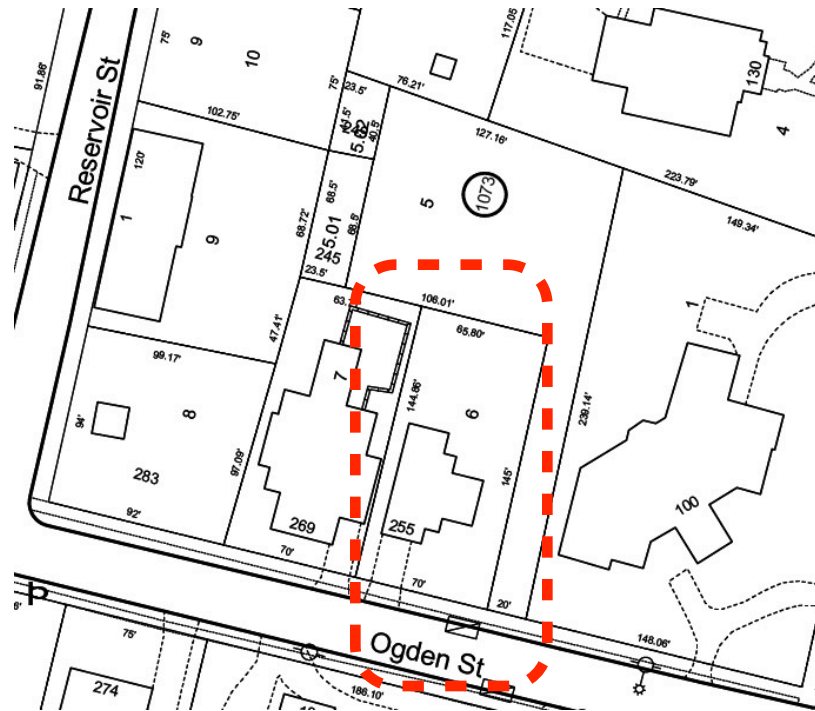
1. South view from Ogden Street, camera facing north.



2. Southeast view from Ogden Street, camera facing northwest.



3. East aerial view, from Bing Maps <http://www.bing.com/maps/>, accessed 5/20/2010.



4. Site Plan – detail from City of New Haven Tax Map 251/1073/ 006, not to scale, North ↑ .