

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY - BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

Please send completed form to: National Register and State Register Coordinator,
State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Economic and Community Development,
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) Dixwell Community House (Q House)
 Building Name (Historic) Dixwell Community House (Q House)
 Street Address or Location 197 Dixwell Avenue
 Town/City New Haven Village _____ County New Haven
 Owner(s) City of New Haven Public Private

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Vacant
 Historic Use: SOCIAL: Community center

Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road? Yes No
 Interior accessible? Yes No If yes, explain _____
 Style of building MODERN MOVEMENT: Brutalism Date of Construction 1967

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 type="checkbox"/> Stucco | <input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone | <input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concrete (Type <u>block masonry</u>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type _____) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

Structural System

- Wood Frame Post & Beam Balloon Load bearing masonry Structural iron or steel
 Other _____

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 _____

Number of Stories: 2 Approximate Dimensions 80' x 110'

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: paved plaza, walls, fencing, athletic fields

Surrounding Environment:

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

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

Dixwell Community House is located on an 82' x 102' site on the east side of Dixwell Avenue between Foote Street and Gregory Street. To the northwest is the Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church, a contemporary modernist building. The two buildings are surrounded by public land - a plaza, parking, and an athletic field. The surrounding area consists of late nineteenth-century buildings, mid-twentieth-century Modernist (Dixwell Plaza) and late twentieth-century (Monterey Place) redevelopment.

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

The building is a two-story Modernist concrete block masonry structure with a flat roof and an irregular abstract geometric plan. The entire property is surrounded by high walls, either those of the building itself or landscape features. There are few windows facing the exterior but in several areas, windows face onto private interior courts. The building wraps around an upper level plaza with a wide flight of steps descending to the ground level, creating the effect of an elevated stage facing west. The tapering of the stair as it rises, provides an exaggerated perspective sense of height and distance. A square block adjacent to the upper plaza is turned on the diagonal, and is surrounded by an L-shaped block wrapping across the east and south sides of the building footprint. The roof is flat; there is also interior space below the plaza level.

Architect Herbert S. Newman & Edward E. Cherry Builder _____

• Historical or Architectural importance:

See continuation sheet.

• Sources:

Brown, Elizabeth Mills; *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture and Urban Design*, Yale University 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.
 Loether, Paul and Peter Haller. 1983. HRI 3195. New Haven Architectural Survey Phase IV. Map/Block/Lot 282/ 0348/ 00502.
 See continuation sheet.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock Date 6/22/2016

View Multiple Views Negative on File NHPT

Name Charlotte Hitchcock Date 10/26/2016

Organization New Haven Preservation Trust

Address 922 State Street, P.O. Box 8968, New Haven, CT 06532

• Subsequent field evaluations:

Latitude, Longitude: 41.318801, -72.932832

Threats to the building or site:

- None known Highways Vandalism Developers Renewal Private
 Deterioration Zoning Other Demolition planned Explanation Replacement

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Dixwell Community House, 197 Dixwell Avenue, New Haven, CT

Historical or Architectural importance (*continued*):

Historical: New Haven Building Department Records show the building built in 1967 for the City of New Haven as the Dixwell Avenue Community Center at a cost of \$548,000. The building replaced the first “Q House” opened in 1924, and was a centerpiece of the redevelopment of the Dixwell neighborhood (Carley, 47-48). The Community Center was a private non-profit organization; it owned and operated the building until 2003. In 2010 the property was purchased by the City of New Haven. The building is subject to demolition for a planned replacement.

Architectural: The Q House is an example of Modernist design in the Dixwell redevelopment area during the “Model City” urban renewal program of the 1960s. The abstract geometric forms represented a high-style mode of design known as “Brutalist” in the mid-century period. The term derived from the use of rough-surfaced raw concrete (“beton brut” in French) by European architects of the early- to mid-twentieth century, particularly Le Corbusier. It came to include a style of design in which formal abstractness resulted in a lack of perceived human scale and at its least successful, a severity that was perceived as fortress-like. Prominent New Haven buildings in the Brutalist idiom include several designed by architect Paul Rudolph: the 1963 Yale Art and Architecture building (now Rudolph Hall), the 1961 Temple Street Garage (both built of reinforced concrete) and the 1965 Crawford Manor senior housing (built using a concrete block masonry exterior).

The use of scored concrete block masonry represents a popular building material of the time. It provided durable and economical masonry which was engineered with a higher strength than traditional cinder block and with special finish treatments. The scored or split-faced surfaces emulated the appearance of more expensive materials such as solid cast concrete or ashlar masonry. Over time, this material has come to identify and stigmatize some buildings as cheaply built or industrial in character.

Architects:

Herbert S. Newman and **Edward E. Cherry** were associated architects for the project. Herbert S. Newman (b. 1934) studied at Brown and Yale Universities, and established his architectural practice on York Street in New Haven where it remains as Newman Architects. Edward E. Cherry (b. 1926) studied at Howard University and practiced architecture from an office in Hamden. Each designed additional projects nearby during the 1960s (see Inventory items for Newman’s Edith M. Johnson Tower at 114 Bristol Street and Cherry’s Goffe-Orchard Housing at 244-250 Goffe Street).

Sources (*continued*):

AIA Historical Directory of American Architects,

<http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/What's%20here.aspx>

Fitch, James Marston. 1973. *American Building: the Historical Forces That Shaped It, Second Edition*. New York: Shoken Books.

Maps and aerial views:

Bing Maps accessed at: <https://www.bing.com/mapspreview>

Google Maps accessed at: <https://www.google.com/maps/>

Cunningham, Jan. 2002. State Register Nomination for Art & Architecture Building, Yale University. Hartford: State Historic Preservation Office.

Metz, Don and Yuji Noga. 1966. *New Architecture in New Haven*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Wright, Gwendolyn. 2008. *USA: modern architectures in history*. London: Reaktion Books.

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Dixwell Community House, 197 Dixwell Avenue, New Haven, CT

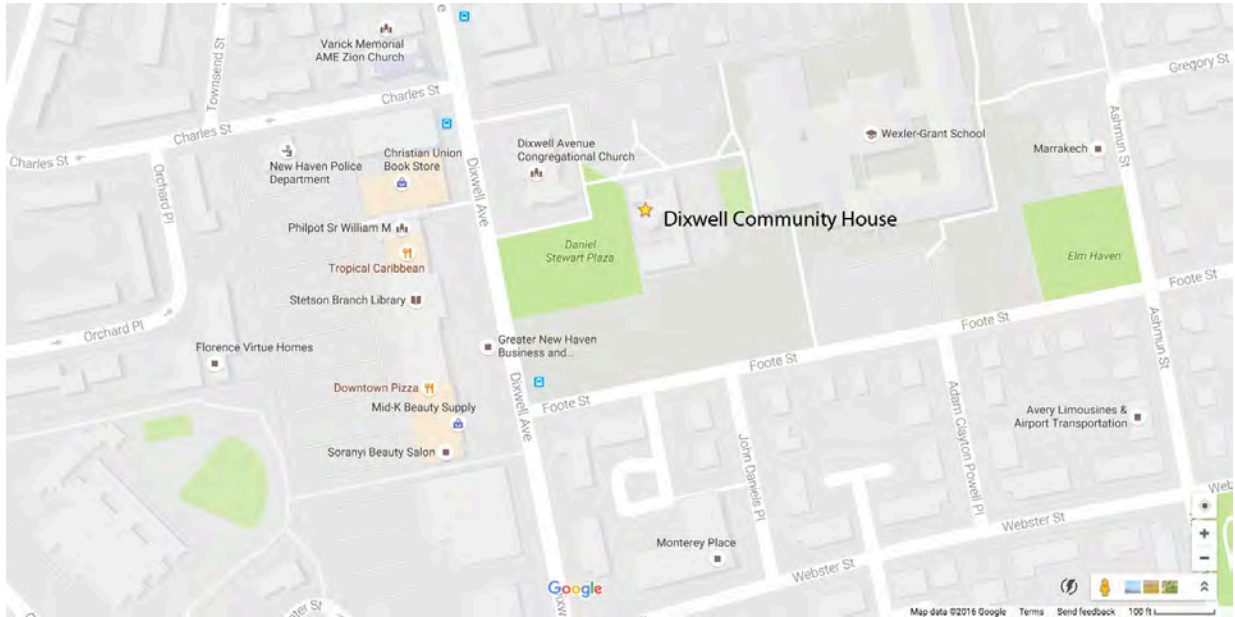


Figure 1. Location map of Dixwell Community House. Image from Google Maps accessed 10/28/2016.

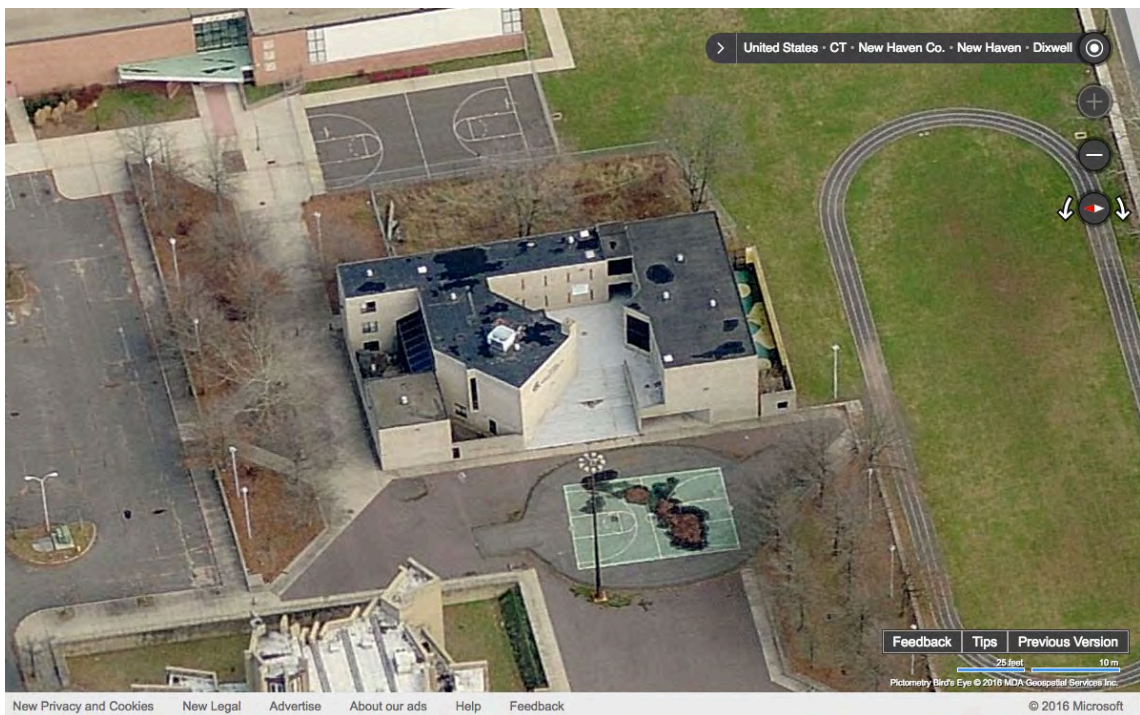


Figure 2. West aerial view of Dixwell Community House. Image from Bing Maps accessed 10/28/2016.

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Dixwell Community House, 197 Dixwell Avenue, New Haven, CT



Photo 3. West view from the plaza along Dixwell Avenue, camera facing east.



Photo 4. Southwest view, camera facing northeast.

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Dixwell Community House, 197 Dixwell Avenue, New Haven, CT



Photo 5. South view from adjacent Wexler-Grant School athletic field; camera facing north.



Photo 6. East view; camera facing southwest.

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Dixwell Community House, 197 Dixwell Avenue, New Haven, CT



Photo 7. North view; camera facing southwest.

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Dixwell Community House, 197 Dixwell Avenue, New Haven, CT



Photo 8. View of the upper plaza; camera facing north.



Photo 9. View west from upper plaza; camera facing northwest toward the Dixwell Congregational Church and Dixwell Plaza shopping.