

## 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) Gibbs, Josiah Willard, Laboratory

Building Name (Historic) Gibbs, Josiah Willard, Laboratory

Street Address or Location 223 Prospect Street aka 260 Whitney Avenue, Pierson-Sage Square

Town/City New Haven Village \_\_\_\_\_ County New Haven

Owner(s) Yale University, PO Box 208372, New Haven, CT 06520-8372  Public  Private

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: EDUCATION: research facility; laboratory

Historic Use: EDUCATION: research facility; laboratory

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

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

Style of building MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style Date of Construction 1954-55

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 type="checkbox"/> Concrete (Type _____) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type <u>Marble veneer</u> ) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Steel &amp; glass curtain walls</u> |                                       |  |

### Structural System

- Wood Frame  Post & Beam  Balloon  Load bearing masonry  Structural iron or steel
- Other Reinforced concrete frame

### 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: 6, B Approximate Dimensions 55' x 326'

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: Sixth floor added 1958; demolition planned 2016

**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: Academic buildings, landscaped grounds, parking lot to the east

**Surrounding Environment:**

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

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

Located on the Yale University campus, on the east side of a rectangular plaza at the crest of Science Hill, north of the intersection of Hillhouse Avenue and Sachem Street. To the south a sloping lawn with shade trees extends to Sachem Street. To the west are the modern Kline Biology Tower and Bass Center, framing a central plaza planted with lawn. A covered walkway follows the perimeter of the plaza. To the east the hill slopes steeply down to a parking area and to Whitney Avenue.

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

The Gibbs Laboratory is a rectangular block 326' long by 55' deep, with a reinforced concrete frame, glass and steel curtain walls, and flat roof. It is banked into the hill, with a five story height at the west plaza level, and six stories exposed on the east. The frame is 27 12-foot bays in length by three bays in width. The plan has a double-loaded corridor with offices or laboratories opening east and west. The center three bays accommodate a recessed entry at the plaza level. The concrete columns are situated outside the plane of the curtain wall and are sheathed in metal cladding, with a slender horizontal fascia at the roof line capping the heads of the columns. The curtain wall consists of alternating horizontal bands of green-tinted glazing and dark gray metal spandrel panels. The windowless end walls were originally clad in Tennessee marble veneer which has been removed. A 1955 photograph (Scully et al, 307) shows that the center five bays were the full six story height, with an extant barrel-vaulted penthouse projecting above. In 1958 the remainder of the building was extended to six stories.

Architect Paul Schweikher, associated with the    Builder Office of Douglas Orr

• 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.  
 Ryan, Susan. 1981. HRI 702. New Haven Architectural Survey. Map/block/lot: 245/0363/00201.  
 See continuation sheet.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock    Date 6/17/2016  
 View Multiple Views    Negative on File NHPT  
 Name Charlotte Hitchcock    Date 9/30/2016  
 Organization New Haven Preservation Trust  
 Address 922 State Street, P.O. Box 8968, New Haven, CT 06532

• Subsequent field evaluations:

Latitude, Longitude: 41.317366, -72.921775

**Threats to the building or site:**

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

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Gibbs Laboratory, 223 Prospect Street, New Haven, CT

### Historical or Architectural importance (*continued*):

The Yale School of the Fine Arts had been in existence since 1869 but instruction in architecture was not explicitly provided until the early 1920s (Scully et al, 199ff). By 1953, when Paul Schweikher was appointed chair of the architecture department, President A. Whitney Griswold (1906-1963) had been president of Yale University for two years, and had begun sponsoring Modernist architecture and also the preferential selection of alumni for the designs of new campus buildings. The 30-acre Hillhouse estate, Sachem's Wood, had been purchased and donated to the university in 1910 (Scully et al, 186), but the crest of the hill remained undeveloped until after World War II. Eero Saarinen, an alumnus, began a university master plan including the area of hill, and the first building commission for a site on the hill was awarded to the new department chair. The building was sited by Schweikher to lie along the east slope of the hill, leaving an open hilltop from which there would be views south to Hillhouse Avenue and the main campus (Scully et al, 306). The International-style laboratory was among the first Modernist buildings at Yale, along with the Yale University Art Gallery, designed by Louis Kahn in 1953, and the Ingalls Rink designed by Saarinen in 1957. As a simple rectangular box with its glass and steel curtain wall, it was exactly contemporary with Mies van der Rohe's Crown Hall at the Illinois Institute of Technology. At Yale, however, it was outclassed by the next wave of construction including works by Saarinen, Paul Rudolph, Philip Johnson, and Marcel Breuer, which exemplified strong "star" design personalities making bold sculptural design statements. Recently the building has been slated for demolition.

### Architects:

**Paul Schweikher** (1903-1997) grew up in Denver, and studied architecture in Chicago and at Yale University. He was working in Chicago until he came to New Haven in 1953 to take on the chairmanship of the architecture department at Yale University, a position he held from 1953-58. He subsequently moved to Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh. He was much influenced by Japanese design as well as by his experience in Chicago, where he was an early proponent of Modernism. In addition to the Gibbs Lab, he designed Seabury Hall at Southern Connecticut State Teachers College in 1959 (demolished).

**Douglas Orr** (1892-1966), a prominent New Haven-based architect, practiced in various architectural styles throughout his career, adapting to new design trends. He served as President of the American Institute of Architects (1947-1949), and left a strong architectural imprint on commercial, social, and religious New Haven by virtue of the local dominance of his office. Trained in Beaux-Arts architectural principles at Yale University, Orr became known for his Colonial Revival designs in the 1920s and for his Art Deco work in the 1930s. By the 1950s much of his work was Modernist, with his staff architects taking the lead design role. Orr's firm worked with a number of out-of-state architects including Schweikher, Louis Kahn, and Philip Johnson, functioning as the Architect of Record for prominent structures sponsored by Yale University and the New Haven Redevelopment Agency during the Redevelopment Era of the 1960s.

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Sources (*continued*):

Maps and aerial views:

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

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

AIA Historical Directory of American Architects,

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

Condit, Carl W. 1968. *American Building: Materials and Techniques*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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

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

New Haven Modern web site. New Haven Preservation Trust. Accessed at: <http://newhavenmodern.org/>

Scully, Vincent et al. 2004. *Yale in New Haven: Architecture & Urbanism*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Schweikher, Paul, biography. Chicago Bauhaus and Beyond web site, accessed 11/02/2016 at <http://www.chicagobauhausbeyond.org/architects-designers/name/paul-schweikher/>

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

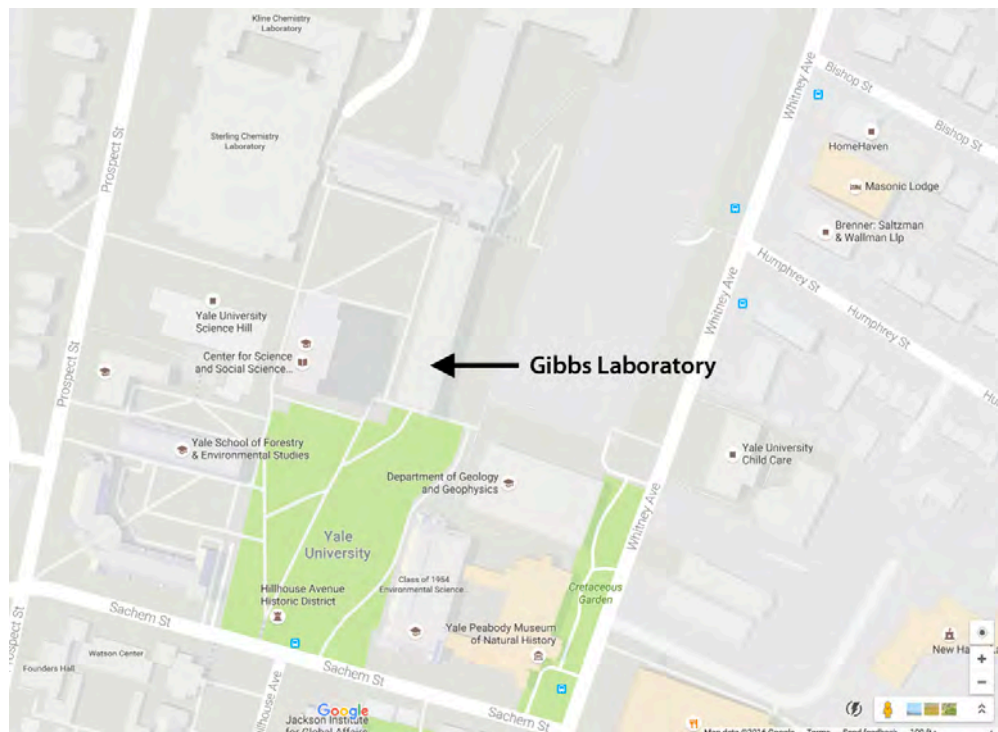


Figure 1. Location map of Gibbs Laboratory. Image from Google Maps accessed 11/03/2016.

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Figure 2. East aerial view of Yale University Science Hill. Gibbs Lab is at the center with Kline Biology Tower beyond. Image from Bing Maps accessed 6/06/2016.



Photo 3. Southwest view of Gibbs Laboratory, camera facing northeast. The covered walkway was added along with the construction of the Kline Biology Tower and was designed by Philip Johnson.

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Photo 4. East view of Gibbs Laboratory, camera facing west. The Kline Geology Lab is at left and Kline Biology Tower is visible at rear projecting above Gibbs.

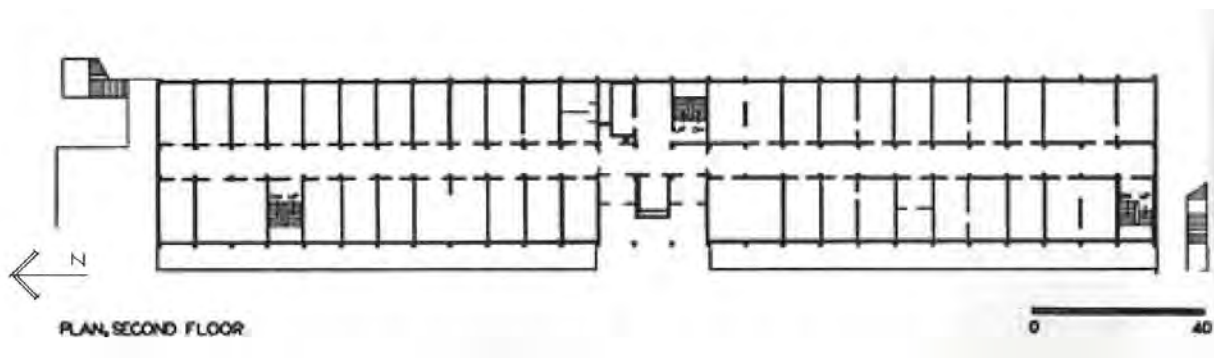


Figure 5. Second floor plan (Metz, 39). North is to left; the recessed entry in the west side is at bottom center.

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Photo 6. Detail view of the east side showing the first level entry doors and typical curtain wall; camera facing west.



Photo 7. Detail view of the west side at the plaza level; camera facing northeast. Exploratory demolition has exposed the concrete column construction.

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Photo 8. West view of the recessed entry at the plaza level (second floor); camera facing east.



Photo 9. South view of the building end wall; camera facing west. Note the open riser stair cantilevered on a central line of support.



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Photo 10. Southeast view of the building end wall; camera facing west. The original marble veneer cladding on the north and south end walls has been removed.