

## 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) Knights of Columbus Museum

Building Name (Historic) Community Services Building

Street Address or Location 1 State Street

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

Owner(s) Knights of Columbus, Inc.  Public  Private

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: RECREATION & CULTURE: Museum

Historic Use: COMMERCE/TRADE: Offices

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

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

Style of building MODERN MOVEMENT: Brutalism, Expressionism Date of Construction 1965

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>cast-in-place</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 Cast-in-place reinforced concrete

#### 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: 3 Approximate Dimensions 118' x 734'

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: Conversion to museum - opened in 2001.

**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: Lower level parking, landscaped courtyard with water feature & sculpture

**Surrounding Environment:**

Open land     Woodland     Residential     Commercial     Industrial     Rural

High building density     Scattered buildings visible from site

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The site is a 1.55-acre parcel bounded by Fair, State, and Water streets, and State St. North adjacent to Amtrak's rail right-of-way. The site is located at the eastern tip of the Church Street Redevelopment Project area of the 1960s. A surrounding wall of ribbed concrete encloses a sunken level containing parking and a landscaped courtyard with a water feature and groves of bamboo. The building above is supported on columns, and has a curving flight of entry steps from the west (State St.) side.

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

This is a reinforced concrete structure consisting of columns (or pilotis, to use the International Style's language) and slabs in an irregular quadrilateral plan surrounding a central open space. Curtain walls of glazing and of ribbed concrete enclose the first and second floor levels. Circular or elongated oval forms projecting from the main volume contain exit stairs, elevators, and service spaces including toilet rooms. The original layout included offices on the two levels, with the first floor having views out toward the city as well as inward to the courtyard. The second level views focused inward, and its solid exterior wall gives the building the outward appearance of a single floor with a heavy cornice. At the northwest corner where the stair curves up from the sidewalk, a sculptural composition of towers and a small penthouse capped by a projecting cornice, provide a dramatic emphasis to the entrance area.

Architect Orr, DeCossy, Winder and Associates    Builder W. J. Megin, Inc.  
Landscape architect: Zion & Breen

• Historical or Architectural importance:

Architect for Knights of Columbus Museum: Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates    Builder: Petra Construction

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.  
Maynard, Preston. 1981. HRI 892. *New Haven Architectural Survey*. Map/block/lot: 225/ 0521/ 00100.  
See continuation sheet.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock    Date 7/10/2017

View Multiple Views    Negative on File NHPT

Name Charlotte Hitchcock    Date 7/10/2017

Organization New Haven Preservation Trust

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

• Subsequent field evaluations:

Latitude, Longitude: 41.30239, -72.92425

**Threats to the building or site:**

None known     Highways     Vandalism     Developers     Renewal     Private

Deterioration     Zoning     Other \_\_\_\_\_     Explanation \_\_\_\_\_

## HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY – BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

CONTINUATION SHEET

Community Services Building, 1 State Street, New Haven, CT

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

Early in the redevelopment period, there was discussion of providing a home for the major community health and social service agencies in a single location. In 1962 a corporation was established, the Community Services Building, Inc. with funding from the New Haven Foundation. The New Haven Redevelopment Agency offered a choice of sites, and 1 State Street was chosen. Although a small and constricted site, it has an important location at the gateway to the city along the Oak Street Connector.

The building was designed by Yale alumnus Edwin William (Bill) deCossy, who had joined the firm of the locally and nationally prominent architect Douglas Orr (1892–1966) in the last few years of Orr’s life. The Community Services Building was dedicated on October 29, 1967. The dedication program described the building:

deCossy has achieved a feeling of interrelatedness among the mix of governmental and voluntary agencies housed in the building. Modern, efficient office space tailored to meet the needs of clients, patients, volunteers and professional and administrative personnel within these agencies has been provided. Attractive Jackson Courtyard is the unifying point of the building. Interior windows line an inner corridor affording an eye-catching view of the garden with its water cascade. The glass-enclosed third floor provides an all-points view. Mounted on concrete pillars, the structure provides 97 parking spaces beneath it. Aesthetically pleasing towers, the focal point of the view, are functional ... containing stairs, elevator and mechanical equipment. The combination of aesthetic beauty and functional design has been fully realized (Knights of Columbus Museum, 1).

The 77,000-square foot building was organized as a condominium, with unit owners including the Visiting Nurse Association of South Central Connecticut, United Way of Greater New Haven, Family Counseling of Greater New Haven, the New Haven Health Department, and Connecticut Trails Council of Girl Scouts. The agencies shared some common services, and this was the first such office condominium in Connecticut. The arrangement was successful until around 1990. At that point some agencies began to move out as their needs changed (*New Haven Register*, 1994).

The Knights of Columbus, a Roman Catholic fraternal order that sells insurance to members and is involved in social service, purchased the building in 1994, and began planning to re-use it for a museum portraying the history and mission of the organization from its permanent collection as well as changing exhibitions. They retained the firm of Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates, designers of the Knights of Columbus headquarters building at 1 Columbus Plaza (see HRI) to re-design the building. The interior was fully renovated, while the exterior was carefully conserved. The major visible change has been the replacement of some glazed walls at the first floor level with solid panels as required for museum installations. An interior opening connecting the two floors with an open skylit stair, forms another significant alteration. The Knights of Columbus Museum opened in March, 2001.

The Community Services Building is significant as an example of the many buildings designed during the redevelopment period by architects of local or regional reputation, in contrast with the nationally known names who brought attention to New Haven’s dramatic reinvention of itself. Somewhat dwarfed by the adjacent Veterans Memorial Coliseum (built in 1968-72, demolished in 2007), this building similarly acted as a visual gateway to the city, and with its dramatic abstract sculptural character it sought to attract attention as a “sign-post” structure.

The design and structure are significant as an example of a style inspired by the work of architects including Le Corbusier (1887-1965) and Paul Rudolph (1918-1997). DeCossy was a recent graduate and also taught at the Yale School of Architecture (*New York Times*, Bernstein) when Rudolph was the chair from 1958-65.

## HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY – BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

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Design features that connect this building to the traditions of Le Corbusier’s late International Style and to Rudolph’s expressive modernism include: the building raised on columns (known as “pilotis” for the French term used by Le Corbusier); the use of exposed concrete with a ribbed surface (known as “beton brut”); and the way building elements are abstracted into expressive sculptural forms barely perceptible as floors, windows, or roofs. This building is a tour de force of modernist design at a small scale. At a time when many of Rudolph’s own works are falling to demolition, this building is fortunate to have been skillfully re-used for a compatible new function.

Architect:

**William deCossy** of Douglas Orr, deCossy & Winder Architects. Born in 1929, deCossy grew up in Larchmont, NY. Following military service he studied at Yale and earned a Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1957. He worked for Paul Rudolph in Florida. In 1963 deCossy and Frank Winder joined the firm of Douglas Orr (1892–1966), bringing their skills in Modernism into a firm known more for Colonial Revival and Art Deco modes of design. The firm of Douglas Orr, deCossy, Winder & Associates was organized as a successor firm to the Office of Douglas Orr, and continued in practice for several more decades. DeCossy was a member of the New Haven Citizens Action Commission (Carley, 19, 65) during the redevelopment period of the late 1960s when the Commission included architectural reviewers. He is recognized as the primary designer of the Community Services Building. He also designed buildings for college campuses and other commercial clients. In the late 1970s, problems with substance abuse caused him to withdraw from the firm; he subsequently experienced modest success with a second career in the 2000s (Bernstein).

Sources (*continued*):

AIA Historical Directory of American Architects,

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

Bernstein, Fred A. 9/5/2008. “A Home that offered a second chance.” *New York Times*.

“Earth Forms and Abstract Building Forms are Scaled to be Read by Motorists on the Connecticut Turnpike,” *Progressive Architecture*, January 1969.

Knights of Columbus Museum Archives. 2017. Finding aid for building record group.

Maps and aerial views:

Bing Maps accessed 2011 at: <https://www.bing.com/mapspreview>

Google Maps accessed 2017 at: <https://www.google.com/maps/>

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

“New Haven Coliseum Imploded – Today in History: January 20.” Connecticut Humanities.

ConnecticutHistory web site, accessed 7/28/2017 at <https://connecticuthistory.org/new-haven-coliseum-imploded-today-in-history/>

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

New Haven Museum aka New Haven Colony Historical Society, Archives and Manuscript Collections.

Douglas Orr: plans, photographs, papers.

New Haven Redevelopment Collection.

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*New Haven Register.*

“Community Service Building: First Condominium Structure Complete,” 10/29/1967.

Leder, Michelle. 7/14/1993. “K of C offer accepted for 1 State St. building.”

Higgins, Stephen. 3/16/1994. “Knights pay \$600,000 for building.”

Alcedo, Gladys. 4/19/2000. \$10 million transformation; Knights of Columbus rehabs 1 State St. into museum.”

Fried, Fran. 3/9/2001. “Knights open big new museum Saturday.”

Wiedersheim, William A. “Douglas Orr’s New Haven,” *New Haven Colony Historical Society Journal*, 26, Summer 1979.

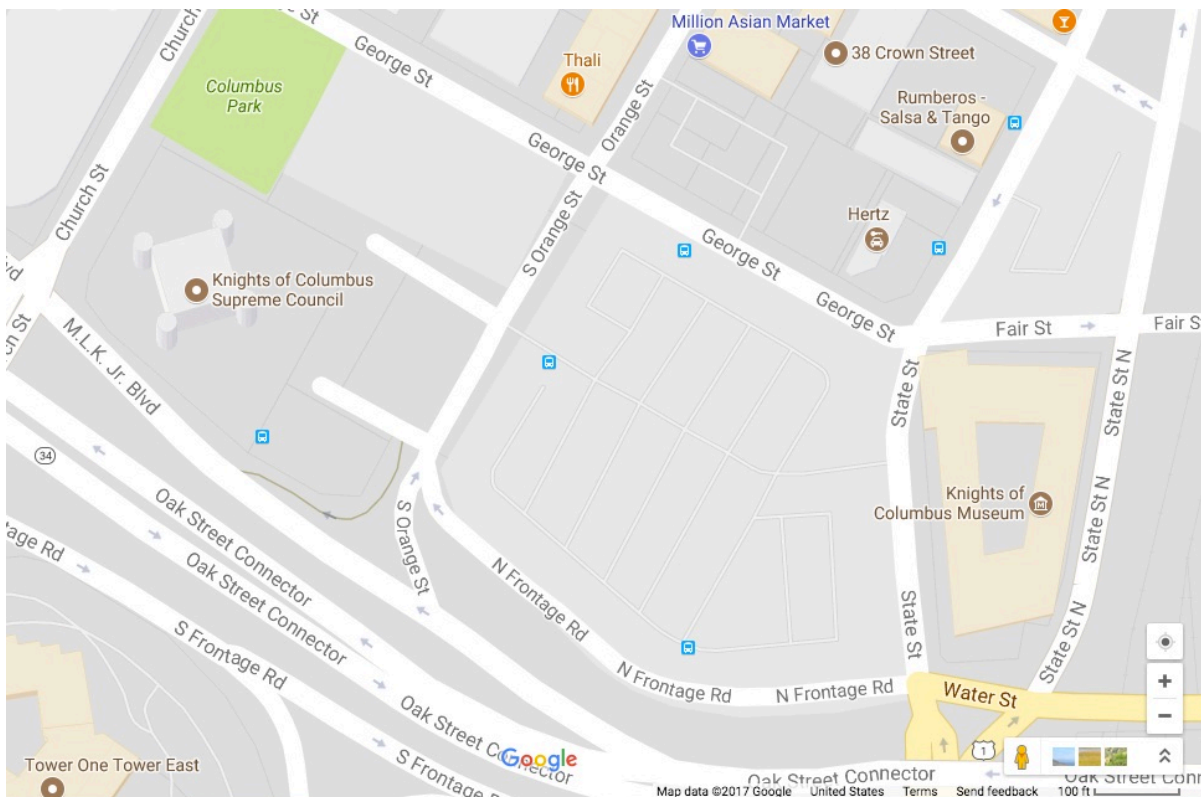


Figure 1. Location map of 1 State Street, New Haven. Image from Google Maps accessed 7/22/2017. 1 State Street, originally the Community Services Building, now Knights of Columbus Museum, is at right.



**HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY – BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES**

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Community Services Building, 1 State Street, New Haven, CT



Figure 2. Southwest aerial view of 1 Columbus Plaza, the Coliseum, and 1 State Street (at rear) in 2006 during the demolition of the Coliseum, which was imploded in January 2007. Image from Microsoft Bing Maps accessed 6/15/2011.

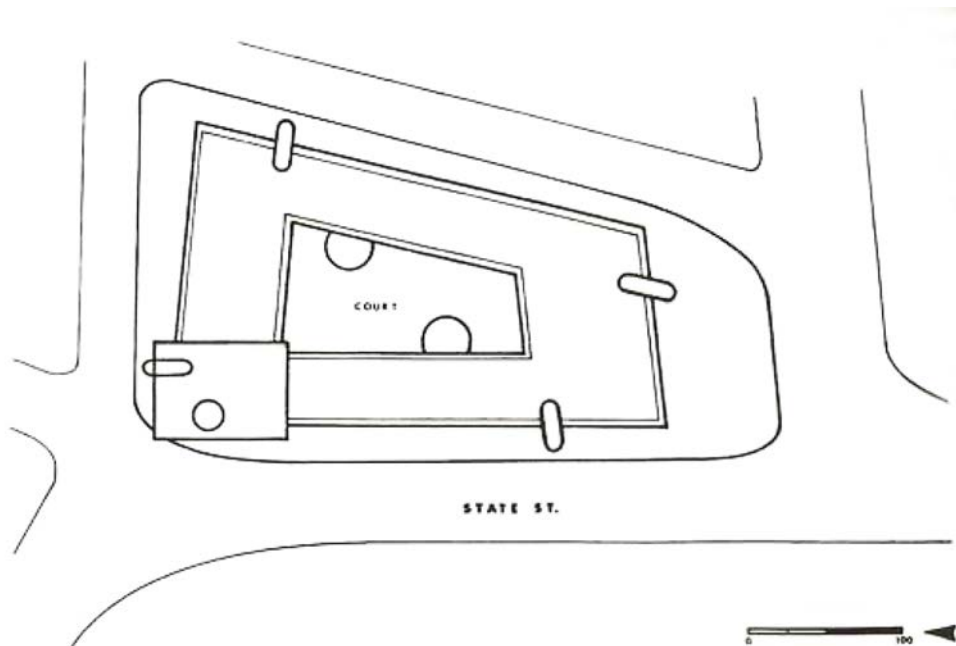


Figure 3. Site and roof plan of Community Services Building (Metz, 58).

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Community Services Building, 1 State Street, New Haven, CT



Photo 4. West aerial view of 1 State Street, camera facing east. Date approximately 1967, prior to construction of the Coliseum. Photo from New Haven Redevelopment Collection, New Haven Museum.



Photo 5. Northwest historical view of Community Services Building in 1971, camera facing southeast. New Haven Redevelopment Collection, New Haven Museum.



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Photo 6. Northwest view of 1 State Street, camera facing southeast along George Street.



Photo 7. West detail view of 1 State Street, camera facing east, showing the main entrance and sculptural massing at the northwest corner.



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Photo 8. Southwest view of 1 State Street, camera facing northeast along State Street. The parking entrance drive is at right.



Photo 9. South detail view of the perimeter wall, camera facing east. The finish of exposed concrete is a narrow ribbed texture which gives the building a surprising refinement, contrasting with the hardness of the material.

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Photo 10. East view of 1 State Street, camera facing north.



Photo 11. South view of east stair exit to State St. North, camera facing northwest, showing concrete details.



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Community Services Building, 1 State Street, New Haven, CT



Photo 12. North view, camera facing west, showing the building corner with the Knights of Columbus headquarters at 1 Columbus Plaza in the distance beyond the former Coliseum site.



Photo 13. Lower level view of parking and courtyard, camera facing southeast.

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Photo 14. Lower level view of courtyard, camera facing southwest.



Photo 15. Interior first floor view of courtyard, camera facing southeast.



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Community Services Building, 1 State Street, New Haven, CT



Photo 16. Lower level view of parking and side view of the entry stair, camera facing north, showing the relationship of the sunken parking level to street and first floor elevations.