



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) English Shelter - East Rock Park

Building Name (Historic) English Shelter - East Rock Park

Street Address or Location Hillhouse Drive, East Rock Summit

Town/City New Haven Village East Rock County New Haven

Owner(s) City of New Haven Department of Parks and Recreation Public Private

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Picnic Shelter

Historic Use: Picnic Shelter

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

Interior accessible? Yes No If yes, explain _____

Style of building Modernist - Neo-Expressionist - Wrightian Date of Construction 1953

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type _____) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Steel pipe, beams</u> | | |

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 Triangular hip

(Material)

- Wood Shingle Roll Asphalt Tin Slate Asphalt Shingle
 Built up Tile Other Corrugated steel

Number of Stories: 1 Approximate Dimensions 20' x 30'

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: Steps, patio paving, and walls blending with natural landscape

Surrounding Environment:

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

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The shelter is located near the top of the cliff edge of East Rock overlooking the city, accessible from Hillhouse Drive or by a hiking path. The triangular shelter roof is echoed by low stone walls and steps of local basalt – abstract geometry emerges organically from the native bedrock of East Rock summit.

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

A triangular hip roof of corrugated metal panels is supported at the corners by sets of 3 metal posts splaying out from triangular base plates set on 3-foot high fieldstone walls which enclose the picnic area below the roof. Floor and steps are of basalt paving in abstract triangular forms; original triangular picnic benches are extant. The original design incorporated a drinking fountain into the stone wall, but this may not have been constructed. There are dramatic views to south and west over the East Rock and downtown sections of the city to Long Island Sound, and West Rock Ridge.

Architect Robert T. & Jean Coolidge Builder Joseph N. Rice, Inc.

• Historical or Architectural importance:

This is a locally unique example of Modernist design utilizing the abstract geometry of the triangle in steel and stone, to integrate structure and site. This picnic shelter design made a radical departure from traditional rustic park architecture which was usually modeled on the stone and log structures erected during the 1930s. Robert and Jean Coolidge were architects trained at Harvard in the 1940s. Robert Coolidge practiced for a time with E. Carleton Granbery (see Inventory form for 34 Middletown Avenue).

- Sources: Brown, Elizabeth Mills; *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture & Urban Design*, Yale U. Press, New Haven, 1976, p. 33.
- 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.
- Coolidge, Robert T., (son of the designer) interview, 7/08/2009, Branford CT, original drawings property of R. T. Coolidge.
- East Rock Park National Register Nomination, 84001143 NRIS, National Park Service 1984.
- New Haven Building Department permit files.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock Date 06/02/09

View Multiple views Negative on File NHPT

Name Charlotte Hitchcock Date 07/08/09

Organization The New Haven Preservation Trust

Address 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 of picnic shelter roof, fieldstone walls, paving, and architect-designed picnic tables, camera facing north.



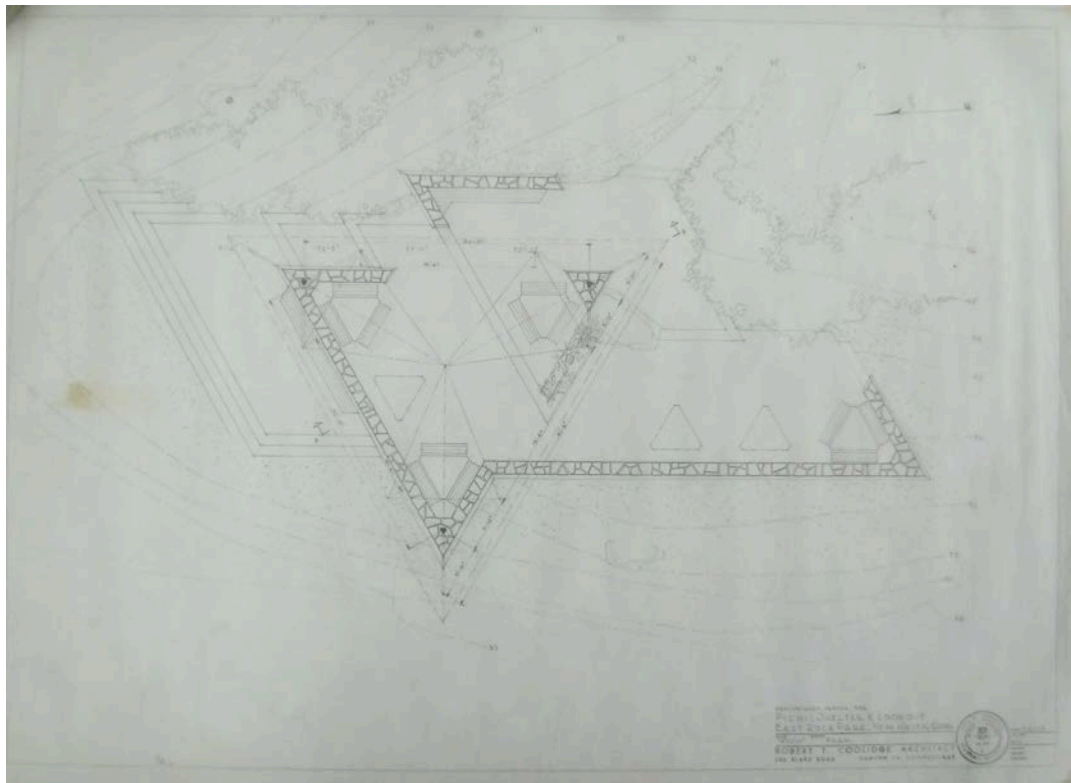
2. East view of pier, underside of roof, picnic tables, view to city below, camera facing west.



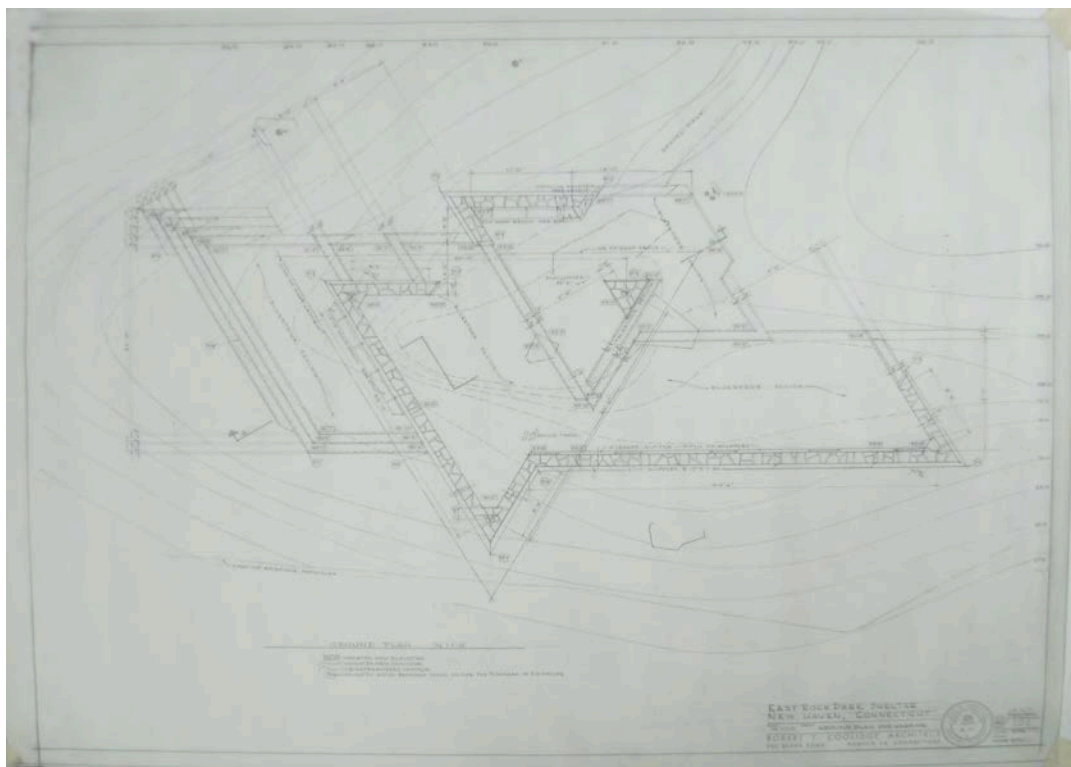
3. Northeast view, camera facing southwest.



4. Detail of steel column base, camera facing west.



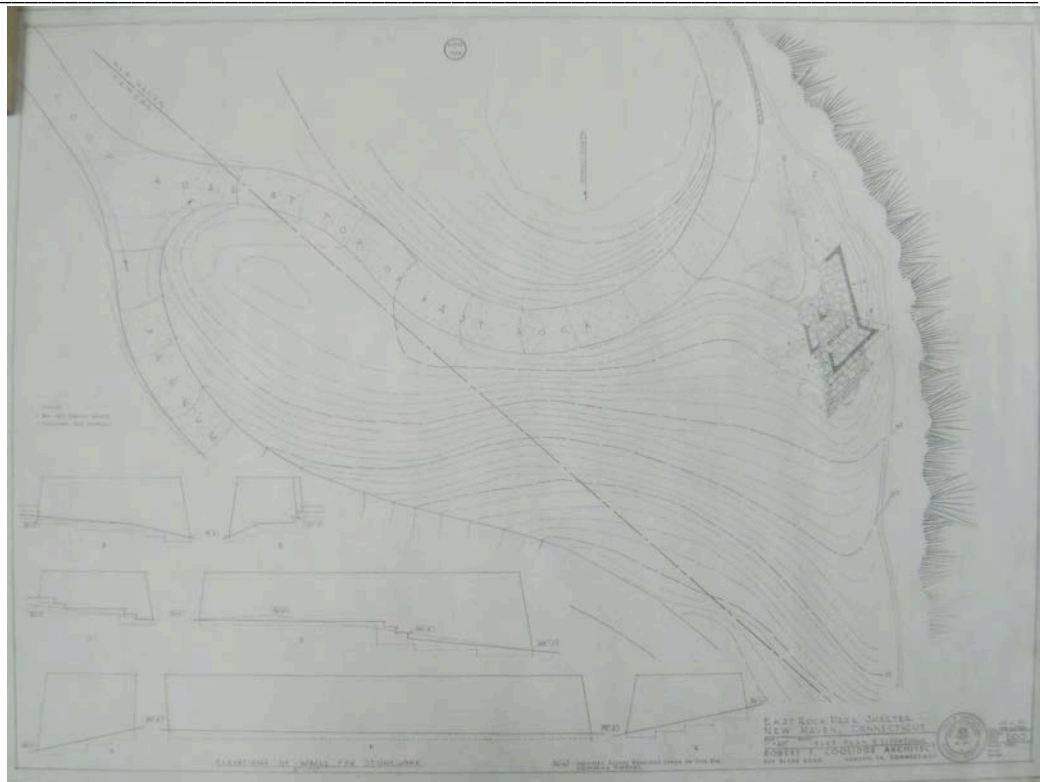
5. Preliminary Plan showing benches – Original Drawings: ink on vellum, courtesy of Robert T. Coolidge.



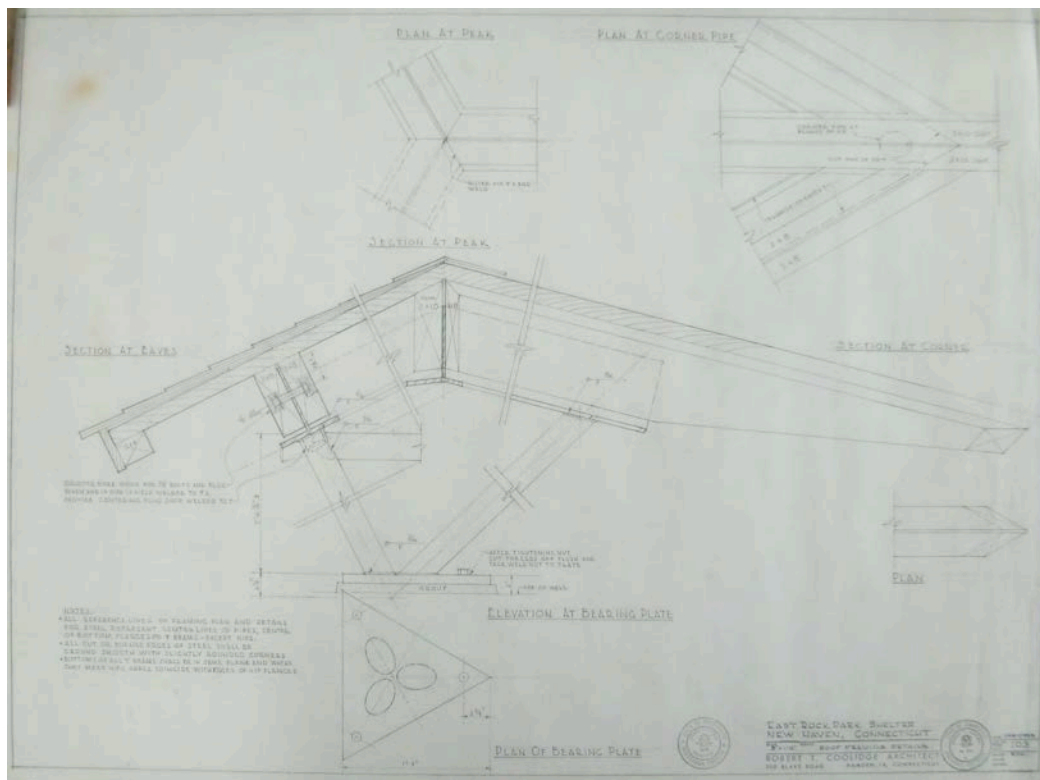
6. Ground Plan – Original Drawings: ink on vellum, courtesy of Robert T. Coolidge.

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM - BUILDING AND STRUCTURES continuation sheet

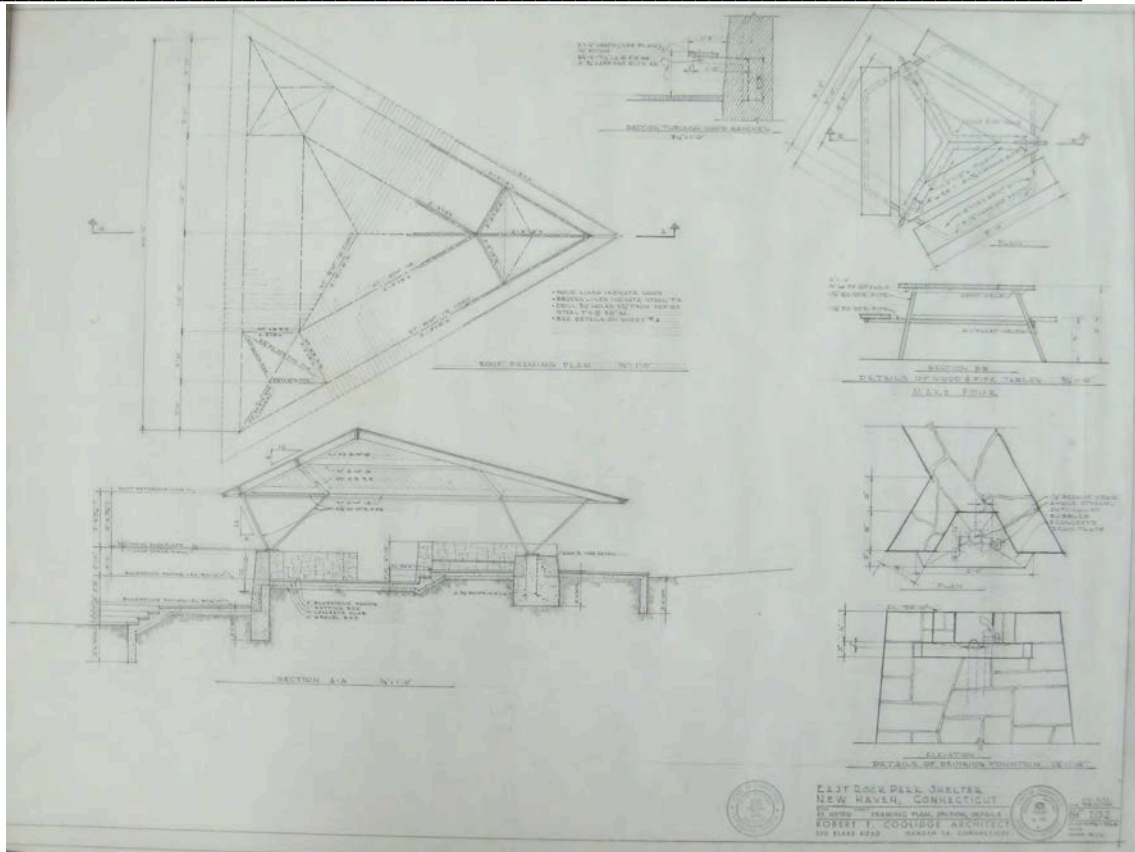
English Shelter, Hillhouse Drive, East Rock Park, New Haven, CT



7. Site Plan – Original Drawings: ink on vellum, courtesy of Robert T. Coolidge.



8. Framing Details – Original Drawings: ink on vellum, courtesy of Robert T. Coolidge.



9. Framing Details – Original Drawings: ink on vellum, courtesy of Robert T. Coolidge.



10. Aerial view – Google Maps, <http://maps.google.com/> accessed 7/08/2009.