



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) 55 Whitney Avenue
 Building Name (Historic) 55 Whitney Avenue
 Street Address or Location 55 Whitney Avenue
 Town/City New Haven Village _____ County New Haven
 Owner(s) Yale University Public Private

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Administrative Offices
 Historic Use: Offices (Leased)

Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road? Yes No
 Interior accessible? Yes No If yes, explain Lobby accessible during business hours
 Style of building Modernist - Post-modern Date of Construction 1988

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

- | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clapboard | <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding | <input checked="" 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 stone</u>) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type <u>Granite</u>) | <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 Simulated slate

Number of Stories: 5 & garage Approximate Dimensions 175' x 120'

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: Garage occupies ground level below office floors.

Surrounding Environment:

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

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

55 Whitney Avenue is located at the northeast corner of Whitney Avenue and Audubon Street. With the rehabilitated McLagon Foundry building across Audubon, it forms a gateway from the higher-density commercial district into the arts-related and residential buildings lining Audubon Street to the east.

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

See continuation sheet.

Architect Roth and Moore Builder Fusco Corporation

• Historical or Architectural importance:

See continuation sheet.

• Sources:

Brown, Elizabeth Mills; *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture & Urban Design*, Yale U. Press, New Haven, 1976, p.154-6.

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: 223/0382/00168-174.

New Haven Redevelopment Agency, State Street Redevelopment and Renewal Plan, 1968.

See continuation sheet.

Photographer Arnold Chadderdon Date 2/20/2010

View Southwest Negative on File NHPT

Name Arnold Chadderdon-Charlotte Hitchcock Date 9/30/2010

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 _____

- Other notable features of building or site (*Interior and exterior*):

The lower 2 stories are of solid masonry construction with bays at street level defined by buttresses of granite and brick, each bay terminating in a segmental arch in which are recessed shop windows and entrances trimmed with mahogany. Each bay has two oval windows at the second story level. A perfectly circular stained glass window highlights the main lobby entrance. The entire surface of the building's two-story base is red brick with diaper patterns of burnt headers with a visual glaze which contrast with the red bricks. The 3rd through 5th stories feature vertical columns of triangular bay windows projecting from the plane of the brick walls. The sixth story is sloped like a mansard with sloped studio-type skylight windows.

Upon entering through the Whitney Avenue lobby doors, one proceeds down a long interior hall paved in Italian marble and lit by office lights behind glass brick to a rotunda giving access to the elevators and the rest of the interior. A double-height garage entrance on Audubon Street accesses an interior service drive which curves around the east and north sides of the building, with exits to the garage of 95 Audubon and to Whitney Avenue.

- Historical or Architectural importance:

Though not completed until 1988, this building was envisioned as an essential part of the Audubon Arts District, planned by the New Haven Redevelopment Agency during the 1960s. The Redevelopment Plan specified reuse of some historic factory structures (part of the former McLagon Foundry) and the former Temple Mishkan Israel; thus setting a tone for the use of brick as a unifying material. It specified a strong street wall, the circular plaza at the center of the block, and a mix of uses along with the arts centers (Brown, p.155), such as elderly low-income housing, market-rate housing, and commercial space to help finance the Arts Council of Greater New Haven, which owns the land and originally contracted with the developer Charles Lawrence to build 55 Whitney for office rentals. The building, but not the land, was eventually bought by Yale University, which uses it for offices.

The restrained Post-modern style of the last buildings to be constructed, 55 Whitney and 95 Audubon on the north side of the street, contrast with the strongly abstract Modernist designs of the arts buildings – the Neighborhood Music School and the Creative Arts Workshop, built or designed in the early 1960s. Along with the re-used McLagon Foundry buildings and the twice-rehabbed Temple Mishkan Israel (ECA high school of the arts program), Audubon Street illustrates the full range of architectural treatments through the Modernist period, partially unified by similarities of scale and material enforced through the Redevelopment Plan controls.

- Sources (*continuation*):

Alliance for Architecture, "New Haven 1950-1966," Arts Council of Greater New Haven, 1977.
Roth, Harold, Interview, February 2010.



1. Southwest view from Whitney Avenue, camera facing northeast.
McLagon Foundry building at right.



2. South detail view of Audubon Street façade, garage entry at right, camera facing east.



3. Aerial view from Google Maps, <http://maps.google.com> accessed 9/30/2010.



4. Site Plan – from City of New Haven Tax Map 223/0382/00168, not to scale, North ↑