



## 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) Old Student Center (Southern Connecticut State University)

Building Name (Historic) College Memorial Union (Southern Connecticut State College)

Street Address or Location 501 Crescent Street

Town/City New Haven Village Westville County New Haven

Owner(s) State of Connecticut  Public  Private

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Academic - Re-use/renovation for School of Business

Historic Use: Academic - Student Center

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

Interior accessible?  Yes  No If yes, explain Closed during construction

Style of building Modernist - Formalist Date of Construction 1959

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 _____) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type _____) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Glass</u> |                                       |  |

### Structural System

- Wood Frame  Post & Beam  Balloon  Load bearing masonry  Structural iron or steel
- Other Concrete Folded Plate Slabs and Columns

### 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 90' x 90'

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: South block is under construction - conversion to School of Business; Tecton Architects, Hartford CT; Nosal Builders, Inc., Durham CT

**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: Sunken patio at south face of building with brick and stone retaining walls; surrounded by the university grounds, other buildings, parking to east.

**Surrounding Environment:**

Open land     Woodland     Residential     Commercial     Industrial     Rural

High building density     Scattered buildings visible from site

## • Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

Located in the southeast corner of the Southern Connecticut State University campus, the building stands just to the northeast of the intersection of Crescent Street and Roger White Drive. The building is surrounded by other university buildings, most of which are of mid-20th-century construction. The adjoining Engleman Hall to the west was renovated and expanded since 2000. To the south is a residential area; to the east is the Beaver Ponds Park with a residential area beyond to the east.

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

See continuation sheet.

Architect Carl R. Blanchard, Jr., 1959  
Tecton Architects, Inc., 2011

Builder P. Francini and Company, Inc., 1959  
Nosal Builders, Inc., Durham CT, 2011

## • Historical or Architectural importance:

See continuation sheet.

• Sources: Brown, Elizabeth Mills; *A Guide to Architecture & Urban Design*, Yale U. 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.

New Haven Tax Assessor's Record: Map/Block/Parcel: 323/ 0429/ 001, Building Department permit files.

SCSC Names 3 Buildings: Plans Dedication Saturday," New Haven Register, October 19, 1959.

Photographer Lucas Karmazinas Date 8/20/2009

View Multiple Views Negative on File NHPT

Name Lucas Karmazinas Date 7/07/2010

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/or Exterior*):

The College Memorial Union, its original name, consists of three rectangular blocks arranged in a T-shape, oriented roughly north-south. Grade slopes upward from south to north; the front (south) block has its lower floor facing a campus circulation route leading west to a central plaza. The northern blocks are sited on higher ground, one floor up.

The front (south) block is 3 stories high and eight bays wide. Two floors are formed with narrow square concrete columns supporting a folded plate concrete floor structure, which terminates at the exterior in inverted pyramid shapes. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor supports a conventional roof slab forming a flat cornice. The glass curtain wall infill is set back from the front plane of the pyramids, at the center-line of the square columns; the overhang forms a shade structure. The full-height glazing is divided into two vertical panels per bay, each panel having a metal-framed fixed lower section, a horizontal hopper sash at approximately waist-height, and a fixed glass panel above with a sloped head fitted to the concrete surface. On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors the base panels are solid; at the 2<sup>nd</sup> they are clear glass. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor has pairs of windows above the base panel. The sides of this block are brick with full-height vertical openings dividing the wall into 8 bays; in the openings window glazing alternates with spandrel panels. The west wall is set into the slope of the hill. At the south of the building a sunken patio paved with bluestone is at the ground floor elevation and transitions to the surrounding higher grades with low masonry retaining walls with bluestone caps and stone benches. An oval planting bed with 2 maple trees is located at the center of the patio.

The tall 1-story rear (northern) block, containing a large high-ceilinged hall, mimics the design of the front block. It is a series of bays formed by narrow square concrete columns terminating in inverted concrete pyramids which act as a cornice. Full-height glazed infill on the north side affords views of the campus pond and the adjacent Beaver Pond Park. The masonry side elevations are windowless.

The middle block has one-story brick masonry walls adorned by projecting concrete piers rising into triangular concrete and metal features. These are connected for the length of the side elevations and, similar to the rear block, run just below the roofline forming a broad, zigzagging cornice. The middle and rear blocks are connected by a low flat-roofed element with exit doors at the east and west.

The middle and south blocks are separated by a walkway which may have been planned as a campus circulation route. It is covered by a flat-roofed canopy that extends 20' beyond the building on the west and east sides and is enclosed at the center section by transparent glass walls with entry doors.

• Historical or Architectural importance:

Southern Connecticut State University's College Memorial Union opened in the fall of 1959. The building was dedicated in honor of Southern Connecticut State University students who had served in the armed forces and was located adjacent to the first campus building, Engleman Hall (1954, Office of Douglas Orr, renovated/expanded 2005, Herbert Newman Architects). The combined recreational, residential, and dining center was completed at a cost of \$1,000,000 and was part of a \$2,500,000 building project that also included Earl and Seabury Halls.

The arcade-like rhythms of these facades appear classical in their repetitive simplicity, giving the style the label New Formalism. While the symmetry and order appear calm and classical, the use of new technology to form the folded plate thin concrete shell structures was advanced and bold. A number of the Modernist architects were intrigued by concrete, and used it in innovative ways during the period; structure was valued for its decorative quality as well. The patio at the south has an intimate feel and creates a flow of space uniting inside and out.

Architect: Carl Richard Blanchard, Jr. (1912-1996) was a New Haven native who studied architecture at Pratt Institute and returned to Connecticut to practice. He worked first for Fletcher-Thompson before establishing his own office; Blanchard associated on some work with local architect Lester Julianelle, and with Schilling and Goldbecker on several projects including Katharine Brennan School in New Haven. He later designed Connecticut Hall as a replacement dining facility (see Inventory form).



1. South (front) and east (side) elevations, camera facing northwest.

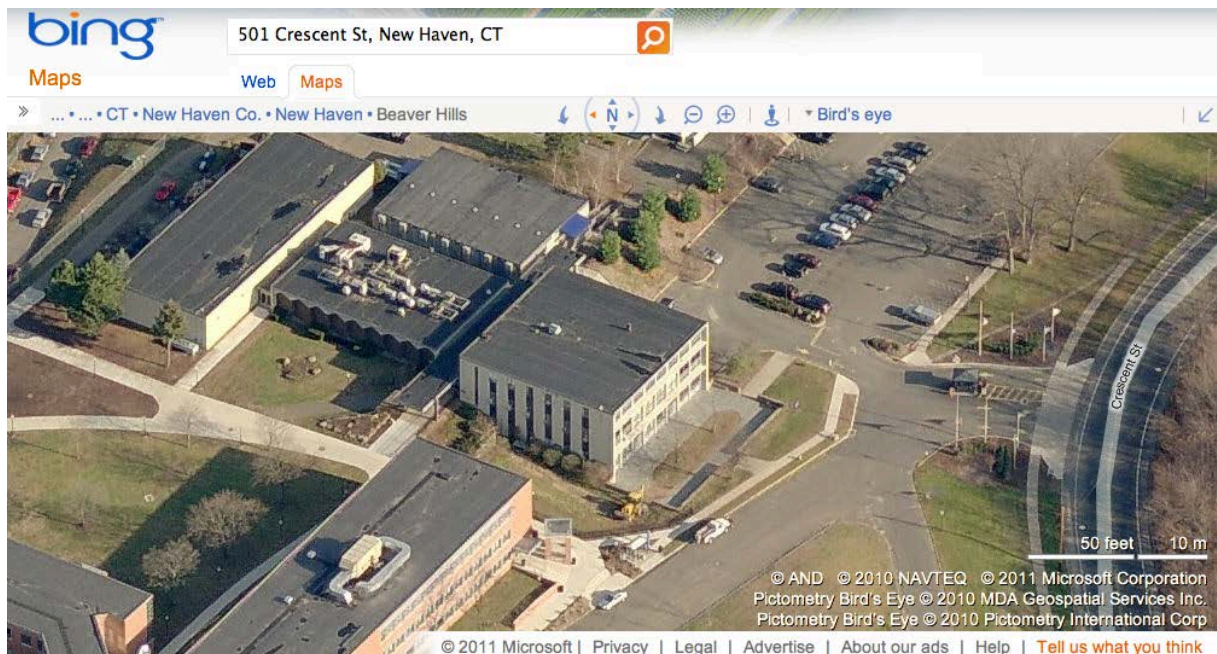


2. North and west elevations, camera facing southeast; the middle block is visible at right.

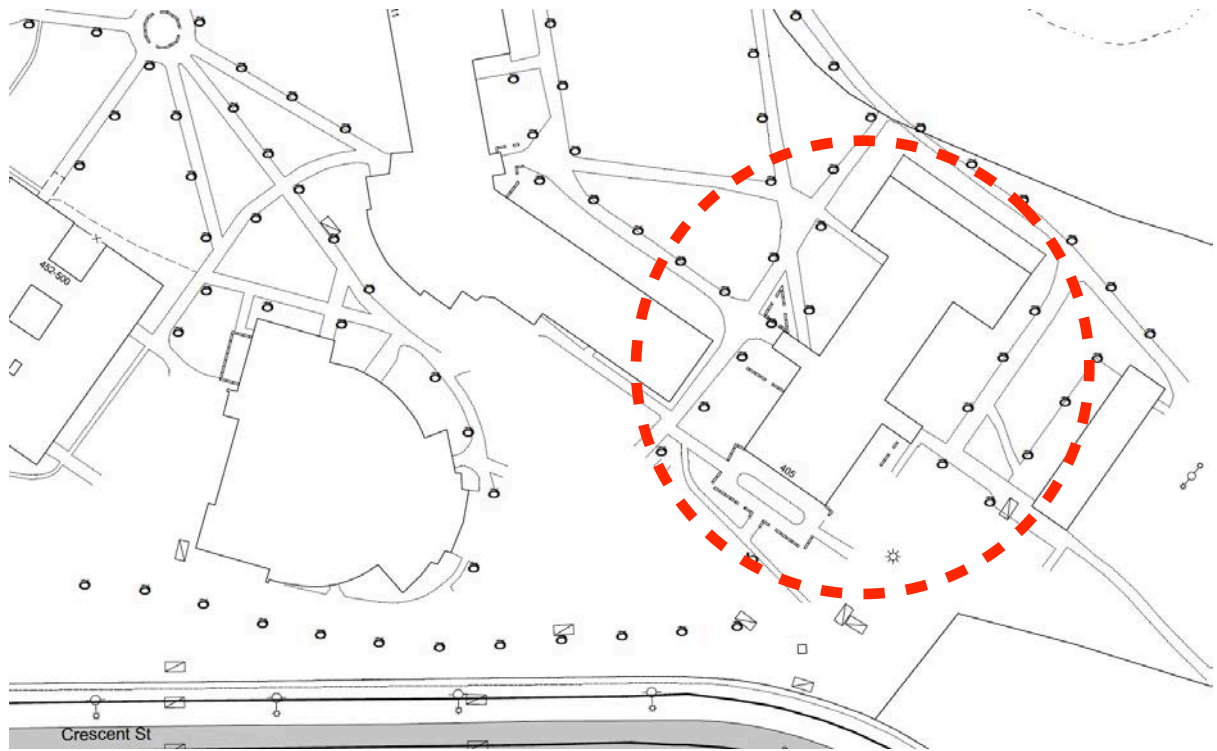


3. South patio detail, camera facing northwest.

4. South patio and structure details, camera facing north.



5. West aerial view from Bing Maps <http://www.bing.com/maps/> accessed 6/21/2011.



6. Site Plan – detail from City of New Haven Tax Map 323/0429/001, not to scale, North ↑, showing the original campus circulation plan through the Student Union's covered walkway, across the north side of Engleman Hall (center top) and through its lobby to the central plaza facing Buley Library and Earl Hall (extreme left). Seabury Hall is at right.