

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) Lyman Center Auditorium, Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU)
 Building Name (Historic) Lyman Center Auditorium, 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, Southern Connecticut State University Public Private

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: EDUCATION/college: auditorium
 Historic Use: EDUCATION/college: auditorium

Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road? Yes No
 Interior accessible? Yes No If yes, explain During events or by appointment
 Style of building MODERN MOVEMENT Date of Construction 1968

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

Structural System

- Wood Frame Post & Beam Balloon Load bearing masonry Structural iron or steel
 Other Precast 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: 1 1/2, B Approximate Dimensions 200' x 210'

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: Drama Lab addition in 1969 at northwest corner of the building.

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, lawns, landscape plantings, paved walks and driveways.

Surrounding Environment:

Open land Woodland Residential Commercial Industrial Rural

High building density Scattered buildings visible from site

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

Lyman Auditorium is located at the southeast corner of the SCSU campus on the north side of Crescent Street. The entrance faces east toward a loop drive which leads to the eastern campus entrance from Crescent Street. To the south is the Beaver Hills residential neighborhood. To the north and west are campus buildings contemporary with Lyman Auditorium. The Beaver Ponds are a series of lakes to the north and east of the campus.

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

Lyman Auditorium is a 1,572 seat auditorium/theater. The building volume is a semi-circular shape in plan with a flat roof. The 1 1/2-story high curved facade expresses the interior seating arrangement which surrounds a thrust stage. A lower one-story projection wraps around the main facade and contains the entry doors and lobby. The building includes main level and basement space for the Theater Department, dressing rooms, toilet rooms, and storage and mechanical rooms.

The exterior is red brick with aluminum windows. Trim includes limestone sills and slender white brick pilasters. Typical windows are aluminum fixed and operable awning sash. The building has excellent integrity, with its original features and materials intact with the exception of replacement insulated windows which replicate the original glazing patterns.

Architect Polak & Sullivan Builder _____

• Historical or Architectural importance:

The campus of New Haven State Teachers College relocated from central New Haven after the 1947 purchase by the State of Connecticut of farmland surrounding Fitch and Crescent Streets. A campus plan was prepared by the office of Architect Douglas Orr, and the first buildings in the early 1950s were Pelz Gym and Engleman Hall. Lyman Auditorium and Buley Library concluded the first building campaign by 1969. All campus buildings were Modernist in design though, as public institutional structures, they were economically constructed. The abstract geometrical volume and spare use of ornamental trim mark the building as a type of Modernism, with characteristics of the earlier Bauhaus such as the minimalist use of ornament and the industrial type metal windows. The use of a thrust stage for in-the-round dramatic productions marks the theater as progressive at the time of its 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.

See continuation sheet.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock Date 10/23/2016

View Multiple Views Negative on File NHPT

Name Charlotte Hitchcock Date 10/26/2016

Organization New Haven Preservation Trust

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

• Subsequent field evaluations:

Latitude, Longitude: 41.331507, -72.947039

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

John Lyman Center, SCSU, 501 Crescent Street, New Haven, CT

Historical or Architectural importance (*continued*):

Architects:

David Polak (1903-1983) and **Howard J. Sullivan** (1908-1990) both studied at the New Haven College (also known as YMCA College, a branch of Northeastern University which later became the University of New Haven) and worked as draftsmen in the architectural office of the prominent local firm of Brown and von Beren. Polak and Sullivan opened their partnership in 1931. They continued in practice until 1975 and designed Eli Whitney Regional Technical School in Hamden; Lyman Center Auditorium at Southern Connecticut State College (now University); the St. Martin de Porres Townhouses on Goffe Street (see New Haven Modern inventory item), New Haven; buildings at Albertus Magnus College, New Haven; and a number of Roman Catholic church facilities. Their work was Modernist with characteristics of Bauhaus or International Style design. It was often utilitarian in appearance and construction, in part due to budget constraints.

Sources (*continued*):

AIA Historical Directory of American Architects,

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

DeCarlo & Doll, Inc. 1992. Existing Facilities Condition Survey for Southern Connecticut State University. SCSU Facilities Files.

Farnham, Thomas J. 2008. *A History of the Connecticut State University System*. Hartford: Connecticut State University System.

Maps and aerial views:

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

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

HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY – BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

CONTINUATION SHEET

John Lyman Center, SCSU, 501 Crescent Street, New Haven, CT

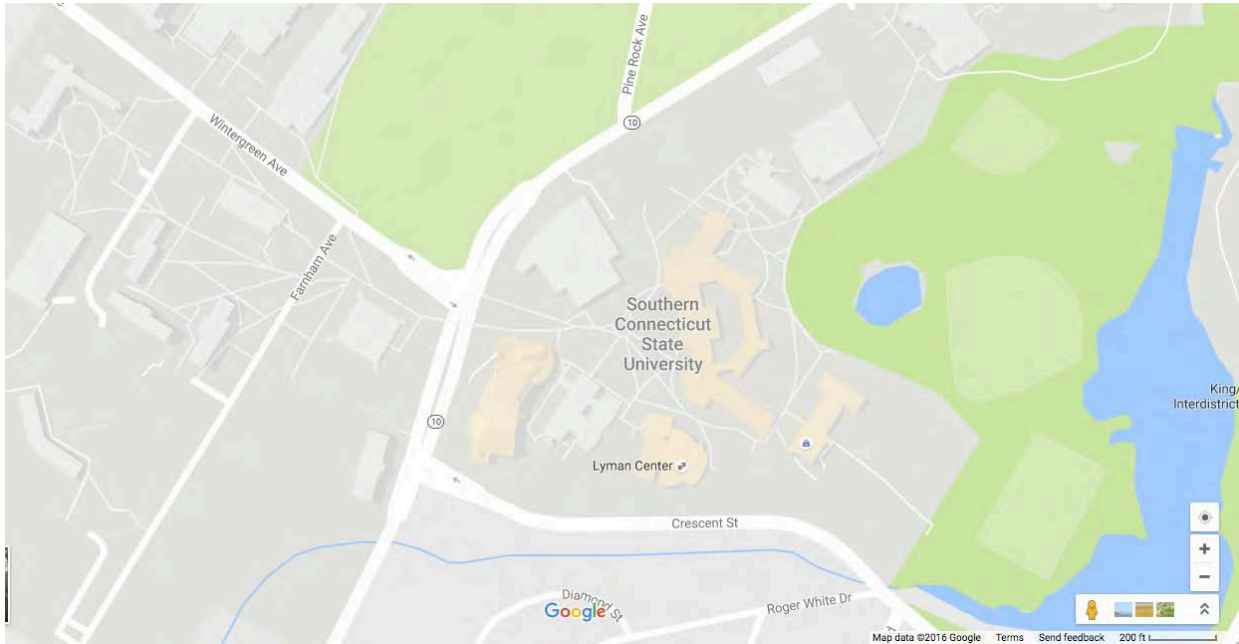


Figure 1. Location map of John Lyman Center. Image from Google Maps accessed 10/26/2016.

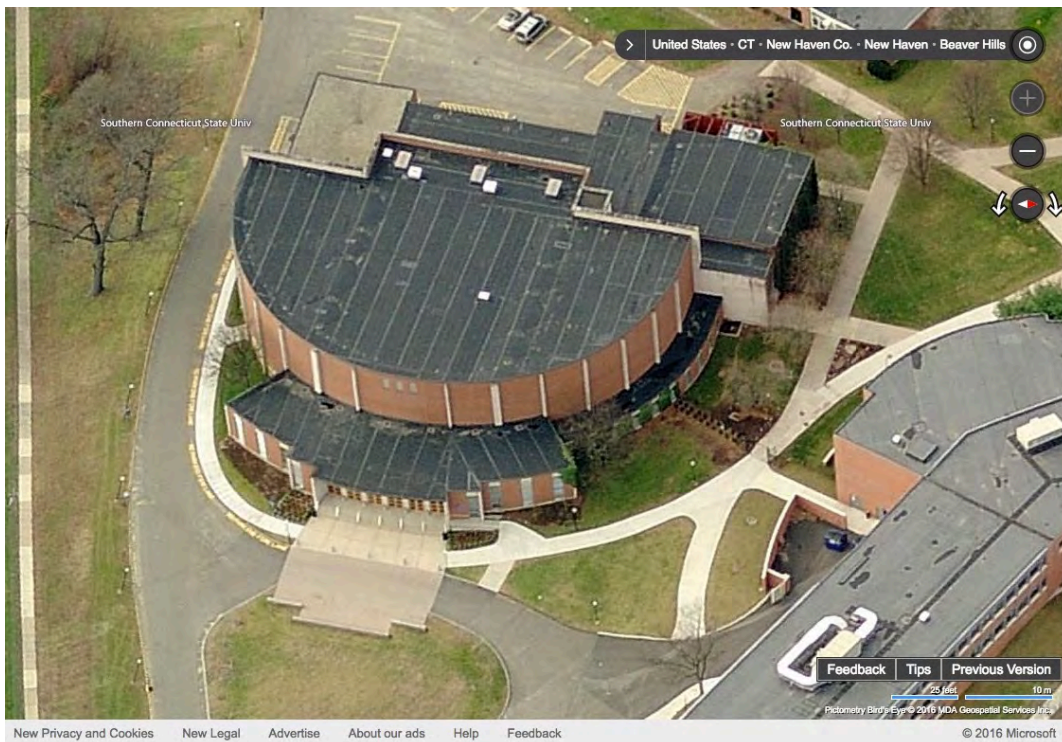


Figure 2. Aerial view of John Lyman Center Auditorium. Image from Bing Maps accessed 10/26/2016.

HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY – BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

CONTINUATION SHEET

John Lyman Center, SCSU, 501 Crescent Street, New Haven, CT



Photo 3. East view of John Lyman Center Auditorium, camera facing west.



Photo 4. Northeast view of John Lyman Center Auditorium, camera facing southwest.

HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY – BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

CONTINUATION SHEET

John Lyman Center, SCSU, 501 Crescent Street, New Haven, CT



Photo 5. Exterior wall detail of the south side showing contrasting brick pilasters; camera facing west.



Photo 6. Interior view of entrance vestibule; camera facing north.