

CT Trust Resource ID: 4158

HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY – BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

State Historic Preservation Office, DECD, One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford, CT 06103

*Note: Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.

Inventory form modified for the Creative Places - Arts & Letters Project

GENERAL INFORMATION

Building Name (Common): Burr, Alfred E., Mall and Stegosaurus

Other Name(s) (Historic): Burr, Alfred E., Mall and Stegosaurus

Street Address or Location: 580 Main Street, Hartford

Town/City: Hartford

Village:

County: Hartford

Designation(s):

Owner(s): Ella Burr McManus Trust

Public/Private: Public

Latitude: 41.7630 Longitude: -72.6741

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: LANDSCAPE: Public plaza; RECREATION & CULTURE: Work of art

Historic Use: LANDSCAPE: Public plaza; RECREATION & CULTURE: Work of art

Accessibility to public: Yes Exterior visible from public road? Yes

Interior accessible? If yes, explain: NA

Style of building: Modern movement Date of Construction: 1973

Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate) Cut Stone

Structural Systems(s): Structural iron or steel

Roof(Type): (Material):

Number of Stories: n/a Approximate Dimensions: 140' x 356'

Structural Condition: Excellent

Exterior Condition: Excellent

Locational Integrity: On original site Moved, When: NA

Alterations?: Yes If yes, explain: Redesign of the mall landscape, late 1980s.

Related outbuildings or landscape features: Barn

Surrounding Environment: High building density

Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The Alfred E. Burr Memorial Mall, formerly a one-block street, was transformed into a public plaza in the mid-twentieth century. It has a paved central plaza with the 1973 Stegosaurus stabile by Alexander Calder as its centerpiece. The east and west ends are landscaped with lawn and shade trees. The site is a 1.14-acre plaza to the south of the Wadsworth Atheneum and north of the City of Hartford Municipal Building. The extent of the Alfred E. Burr Memorial Mall was ceded to the Ella Burr McManus Trust by the Wadsworth Atheneum, and now comprises the public open space of the Mall on which the object, the Stegosaurus sculpture by Alexander Calder, is sited.

Other notable features of building or site:

The mall is a pedestrian plaza designed by landscape architect Daniel Urban Kiley (1912-2004) and later partially re-designed by landscape architects CR3, a Simsbury firm. The plaza is symmetrical across both its east-west and north-south axes. The outer sections near Main Street on the west and Prospect Street on the east, are lawns with sycamore trees lining the perimeter of low cut-stone walls forming parabolic curves in plan. Brick-paved pedestrian paths follow these walls inward toward the center, where a marble oval surrounds a splash fountain. A rectangular area enclosed by a low cut-stone wall is inset into the niche at the north side, formed by the wall of the Atheneum's Morgan Memorial block. This has been planted with honey locust trees arrayed in a grid. A row of ginkgo trees lines the south edge of the plaza adjacent to the Municipal Building.

Stegosaurus is a 50' by 32' by 32', 40-ton, steel sculpture or stabile by Alexander Calder. Forty-five curved and ribbed steel plates are bolted together to form a 'semi-abstract figure of a Stegosaurus dinosaur from the Jurassic period' (Smithsonian). The figure is painted a bright orange-red and stands on five supports forming a series of arched openings. Four large fin-like ribbed triangular plates jut upward from the arches. Whether the elements can be seen as tail, head, or as armor plates, is left to the viewer's imagination. The Stegosaurus stabile is placed in the central plaza, off-center at the east end of the fountain, facing southwest toward the water source.

A monogram, 'AC,' and the copyright year, '72,' are on the west leg of the sculpture. A plate is attached to another leg and inscribed: Trustees of the Ella Burr McManus Trust.

Architect: Kiley, Daniel Urban, Landscape Architecy Builder/Maker: Calder, Alexander - Sculptor

Historical or Architectural importance:

These resources derive significance from the association with the artist Alexander Calder (1898-1976), one of the pre-eminent American sculptors of the modern period and a long-time Connecticut resident; and with the association with landscape architect Dan Kiley (1912-2004), a prominent landscape designer of the modern period.

The Stegosaurus sculpture is highly significant as a major public artwork by Alexander Calder. Few examples of Calder's large-scale work are on permanent public view, making the Stegosaurus a valuable public resource. It also represents one of the Hartford community's periodic moves to adopt modern art, between periods of relative conservatism (see also the 1977 Stone Field on Gold Street, Hartford, by Carl Andre). Stegosaurus has become one of the iconic symbols of Hartford.

Sources:

Interview with Eugene Gaddis of the Wadsworth Atheneum, by phone and email, 7/31/2014.

City of Hartford Assessor's Records: <http://gis1.hartford.gov/propertyviewer/index.html> Parcel ID: 269362005.

Aerial views from: <http://maps.google.com/> and <http://www.bing.com/maps/> accessed 7/31/2014.

Barlow, W. Phillips, ASLA. Spring 2012. 'Connecticut's Iconic Landscapes: Alfred E. Burr Memorial Mall.' The Connecticut Landscape Architect. Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Walker, Peter. Biography of Dan Kiley. The Cultural Landscape Foundation. Accessed 7/31/2014 at <http://tclf.org/pioneer/dan-kiley/biography-dan-kiley>.

Calder Foundation web site. Accessed 7/31/2014 at <http://calder.org/life/chronology>.

ConnecticutHistory.org. "Calder's Stegosaurus Dedicated – Today in History." a project of Connecticut Humanities. Accessed at <http://connecticuthistory.org/calders-stegosaurus-dedicated-today-in-history/>.

Hartford History Center. Hartford Public Library. 10/09/2008. Burr Mall 'Re-opening' Celebration October 15. HartfordInfo.org reprinted from The Hartford News. Accessed 7/31/2014.

Hartford Times Photography archives. Accessed 11/05/2014 at <http://hplct-encore.iii.com/iii/cpro/DigitalItemViewPage.external?lang=eng&sp=1000073&sp=T&sp=1&suite=def>.

Kuckro, Anne C. 1978. Hartford Architecture Volume One: Downtown. Hartford: Hartford Architecture Conservancy.

McEnroe, Colin. 7/31/1991. "Tiny Downtown Plot Generates Mammoth Debate." Hartford Courant. Accessed 8/01/2014 at http://articles.courant.com/1991-07-31/features/0000213596_1_hartford-times-mall-mall-brawl-mall-plenty/2.

Smithsonian American Art Museum Art Inventories Catalog. "Stegosaurus (sculpture)." SIRIS, Control No. IAS CT000074. Accessed 8/01/2014 at <http://siris-artinventories.si.edu/>

Sullivan, Mary Ann. "Stegosaurus, Alfred E. Burr Mall." Bluffton University Digital Imaging Project. Accessed 8/01/2014 at <http://www.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/index/index.html>.

The Mobile Factory blog by Unigami. 4/20/2012. "Alexander Calder and Segre's Iron Works." Photography by Robert Hicks. Accessed 8/01/2014 <http://the-mobile-factory.blogspot.com/2012/04/alexander-calder-and-segres-iron-works.html>.

Photographer: Charlotte Hitchcock **Date:** 6/14/2014

View: Northeast view

Form completed by: Charlotte Hitchcock **Printed On:** April 28, 2016

Organization: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address: 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517-4002

Threats: None known

Subsequent field evaluations:



Burr Mall & Calder Stegosaurus - Northwest view

FOR OFFICE USE:

Town # _____ **Site#** _____ **UTM** _____
District ☐ S ☐ NR **If NR, specify:** ☐ Actual ☐ Potential