

CT Trust Resource ID: 3475

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): Center for Advanced Studies

Other Name(s) (Historic): Wesleyan U. Center for Advanced Studies/ Center for the Humanities

Street Address or Location: 95 Pearl Street, Middletown

Town/City: Middletown

Village:

County: Middlesex

Designation(s):

Owner(s): Wesleyan University

Public/Private: Non-Profit

Latitude: 41.5606 Longitude: -72.6542

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Education: school

Historic Use: Education: school

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

Interior accessible? If yes, explain: NA

Style of building: Modern movement Date of Construction: 1960

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

Structural Systems(s): Concrete frame

Roof(Type): Flat (Material): Built up

Number of Stories: 2 Approximate Dimensions: 60' x 130'

Structural Condition: Excellent

Exterior Condition: Excellent

Locational Integrity: On original site Moved, When: NA

Alterations?: No If yes, explain: NA

Related outbuildings or landscape features: Shed

Surrounding Environment: High building density

Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The building is located at the northeast corner of the Wesleyan University campus. The parcel was apparently subdivided from that of the Samuel Russell House at 350 High Street, with the former Russell Carriage House (now Horgan House) remaining on the Pearl Street parcel. A nineteenth-century brownstone retaining wall edges the perimeter along Pearl and Washington Streets. West and south of the building there are expanses of lawn and scattered shade trees surrounding the Russell House, a National Historic Landmark.

Other notable features of building or site:

The Center is a two-story modernist building with a reinforced concrete structural frame, tan brick exterior walls, and flat roof. Window openings on the west side, face toward an interior green space between the building and the Russell House to the west. A cantilevered balcony at the second floor shades the full-height glazed openings of the ground floor. A terrace is located at the interior corner of the building along the west side. Expansive glazing in the north wall faces Washington Street and extends full height with spandrel panels masking the floor structure. The east side forms a solid brick façade with few openings. Minimal detailing marks the characteristic Bauhaus-inspired modernist design.

Architect: Ward & Kerrigan - Leroy Ward Builder/Maker: J. Warren Mylchreest, Inc.

Historical or Architectural importance:

The Center for Advanced Study was established at Wesleyan University in 1959. The mission of the Center was to enrich the academic life of the University through lectures, seminars, and teaching and to support the Fellows of the Center in their own work. President Victor Butterfield created the Center in 1959 and was able to fund it with profits from 'My Weekly Reader,' a publication owned by the university. Built in a modernist style, the Center was intended to expose Wesleyan's academic culture to thinking from outside (Wesleyan Magazine 2010). With the aid of its first director, Professor Sigmund Neumann, followed by Paul Horgan, the Center hosted 84 fellows in the first ten years. The Center was designed by Architects Ward & Kerrigan with Landscape Architects Clarke & Rapuano, both of New York City. The builder was J. Warren Mylchreest, Inc., of Middletown. The design was notable for its modernism, the attempt to fit contextually with its

neighbor, the Russell House, through color and landscaping, and for its central air conditioning system.

Paul Horgan (1903-1995), Director of the Center for most of its first decade, was a novelist, historian, and biographer whose work earned him two Pulitzer Prizes. Horgan won both a Pulitzer and a Bancroft Prize in 1955 for a two-volume historical epic, 'Great River: The Rio Grande in American History' and a second Pulitzer in 1975. Paul Horgan was born in Buffalo. When he was 12, his father contracted tuberculosis, and the family moved to New Mexico. Horgan went to high school in Albuquerque and then enrolled in the Eastman School of Music in Rochester in 1923. He left after a year, never returning to college. He returned to New Mexico to begin his writing career. During World War II, he was chief of the Army Information Branch of the War Department, winning the Legion of Merit. Horgan taught at Yale, the University of Iowa, and Wesleyan. He published 17 novels, as well as short stories, children's books, biographies and history.

William Manchester (1922-2004), a prominent biographer, grew up in western Massachusetts. He served in the Marines, in intelligence, during World War II, where he fought in the Pacific, and was wounded twice. After his discharge, Manchester began working as a journalist, but returned to Massachusetts for college. He became friends with John F. Kennedy, also wounded in the war, and graduated in 1946. During graduate study, he became interested in H.L. Mencken, and moved to Baltimore, where Mencken helped him find a job at the Baltimore Sun. Manchester developed his writing career as both a reporter and novelist. William Manchester moved to Middletown, Connecticut as a managing editor for American Education Publications, then owned by Wesleyan University (and best known as the publisher of My Weekly Reader). In 1959 he was named one of the first group of fellows in the Center for Advanced Studies (now the Center for Humanities). The author of 18 books, Manchester first acquired an international reputation in 1967 with his account of the assassination of President Kennedy, 'The Death of a President: November 1963,' which he had written at the request of Jacqueline Kennedy and Robert F. Kennedy. Other books include 'Goodbye Darkness: A Memoir of the Pacific War,' nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, and his biography of Douglas MacArthur, 'American Caesar,' nominated for a National Book Award.

Sources:

Bernstein, Richard. 3/09/1995. Obituary. Paul Horgan, 91, Historian and Novelist of the Southwest. New York Times.
 Center for Humanities Celebrates 50 Years. 1/20/2010. Wesleyan Magazine. Accessed at: <http://magazine.wesleyan.edu/2010/01/20/center-for-humanities-celebrates-50-years-2/>
 Drake, Olivia. 1/22/2009. "Manchester's Life, Writing Celebrated." News@Wesleyan. Accessed 8/17/2015 at <http://newsletter.blogs.wesleyan.edu/2009/01/22/manchesters-life-writing-celebrated-feb-5/> .
 Manchester, William. Obituary. 10/25/2013. Wesleyan Magazine.
 Manchester, William, Papers. "Biographical note." Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. Accessed 8/17/2015 at <https://www.wesleyan.edu/libr/schome/FAs/ma1000-169.xml> .
 Wesleyan Center for the Humanities web site. Accessed at: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/humanities/about.html>
 Wesleyan University Library, Special Collections & Archives. Accessed 5/02/2016 courtesy of Professor Joseph Siry. '\$360,000 Center for Advanced Studies will go up Immediately.' 3/01/1960. Wesleyan Argus. Boone, Robert D. 9/27/1960. 'Advanced Center Brick to Change Color One Way or Another: Interior Considered Success.' Wesleyan Argus.

Photographer: Charlotte Hitchcock Date: 11/08/2015

View: Southwest view

Form completed by: Charlotte Hitchcock Printed On: May 6, 2016

Organization: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address: 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517-4002

Threats: None known

Subsequent field evaluations:



Center for Advanced Studies, 95 Pearl Street - southwest view

FOR OFFICE USE:

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