

CT Trust Resource ID: 3041

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): Castle Court, Connecticut CollegeOther Name(s) (Historic): Castle Court, Connecticut CollegeStreet Address or Location: 270 Mohegan Avenue, New LondonTown/City: New London

Village:

County: New London

Designation(s):

Owner(s): Connecticut CollegePublic/Private: Non-ProfitLatitude: 41.3769 Longitude: -72.1048

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Education: school; Recreation & culture: works of artHistoric Use: Education: school; Recreation & culture: works of artAccessibility to public: Yes Exterior visible from public road? YesInterior accessible? If yes, explain: with permission of ownerStyle of building: Modern movement Date of Construction: 1969Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate) Concrete, Cut StoneStructural Systems(s): Load bearing masonry

Roof(Type): (Material):

Number of Stories: n/a Approximate Dimensions: 100' x 120'Structural Condition: ExcellentExterior Condition: ExcellentLocational Integrity: On original site Moved, When: NAAlterations?: No If yes, explain: NARelated outbuildings or landscape features: ShedSurrounding Environment: High building density

Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

Castle Court is a walled open space between academic buildings and is located at the southeast corner of the central Connecticut College campus, along the eastern edge of Tempel Green, the central lawn at the heart of the campus. A perimeter loop drive runs along the east side of Castle Court while Tempel Green is along the west side.

Other notable features of building or site:

Castle Court is a landscaped outdoor sculpture court located between Cummings Art Center (1969, Gordon Bunshaft, Architect; Skidmore Owings and Merrill) and Palmer Auditorium (1939, Shreve Lamb and Harmon, Architects). The court is set into a slope, with a high retaining wall along the west side and steps leading up to the level of Tempel Green. The north side is the south wall of Palmer Auditorium and has a pergola along the full width of the auditorium elevation. The east wall is a full-story-high cast-in-place concrete wall with a gate opening to the perimeter drive. The south side is the glazed north wall of the Cummings Art Center. The surface of the court is square pavers, with a circular lawn area at the center. A single multi-stemmed birch tree grows asymmetrically in the lawn. Large-scale sculptures are sited in the court and on the upper terrace to the west.

Architect: Skidmore Owings & Merrill Builder/Maker: Unknown

Historical or Architectural importance:

The design and construction of the Cummings Art Center and Castle Court occurred contemporary with the change from a women's to a co-educational college. The court is a modernist landscape, designed by Skidmore Owings & Merrill as part of the ensemble of the Cummings Art Center and as a place for modernist sculpture. Several pieces represent the work of college faculty including William Ashby McCloy's 'The Dangers and Pleasures of Co-Education' of 1968 (at right in photo) and David Smalley's 1976 'Wave Form' (left side in photo).

William Ashby McCloy (1913-2000), born in Baltimore, lived in Nanking and Shanghai, China until the age of thirteen, returning to the United States in 1926. He received training in art at the State University of Iowa in 1930 and graduated with a BA in Art. He spent one-year at Yale

School of Fine Arts before returning to Iowa for graduate study in the Psychology of Art receiving a M.A. in 1936. McCloy was Mural Assistant to John Steuart Curry from 1939 to 1943. He spent 1943-1946 in the US Army where he served as a Clinical Psychologist. Returning to the State University of Iowa, McCloy received a MFA in Painting in 1949 under the G.I. Bill and later a PhD in Art History in 1958. He had a 40-year teaching career including 24 years at Connecticut College where he was hired in the mid-1950s. He chaired Connecticut's Art Department from 1954-1972, and retired in 1978. McCloy was an accomplished painter and sculptor. His work evolved from a Regionalist figurative style toward an increasing abstraction. McCloy's long, collegial friendship with former Slater Museum director Joseph Gualtieri led him to create Aspirations, a weathering steel outdoor sculpture, in 1975-76 specifically for the Slater Memorial Museum grounds (Zoe 2012). His sculpture is also displayed at Castle Court in the arts complex at Connecticut College, while his paintings are in the collections of the Slater Memorial and other museums.

David Smalley (1940-2015) was born in New London and graduated from the University of Connecticut. He earned a master of fine arts degree from Indiana University. Smalley's work was primarily large-scale sculpture in metal - stainless steel, brass, and aluminum. In addition to work as a sculptor, Smalley taught at Connecticut College from 1965 to 2002 and founded its Center for Arts and Technology, pioneering the use of the computer as a tool for sculptors. The majority of his work is abstract but still contains recognizable references to nature. Many of Smalley's works are kinetic. He had over 50 exhibitions in the United States, Britain, and Japan.

Sources:

Zabel, Barbara, personal interview with C. Hitchcock, at New London, Connecticut. 3/13/2015.

Lyman Allyn Museum web site. Accessed at: <http://www.lymanallyn.org/about-us/outdoor-sculpture-tour/>

McCloy, William Ashby, papers and oral history interview, 1926-1988. Archives of American Art. Smithsonian Institution. Accessed at: <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/william-ashby-mccloy-papers-7941>

McCloy, William Ashby. Obituary. 6/06/2000. Hartford Courant.

McDonald, Thomas Blake. 2010. 'The Architecture of Connecticut College.' Architectural Studies Honors Paper. Accessed at:

<http://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/archstudhp/1> Smalley, David. Artist's web site. Accessed at:

<http://www.davidsmalleysculpture.net/index.html>

Smalley, David. Obituary: 10/04/2015. New London Day. Accessed at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/theday/obituary.aspx?pid=176009085>

Zabel, Barbara. Exhibition catalog, Smalley Retrospective, Lyman Allyn Museum, 1997.

Zimmer, William. 'Art; Blend of Sculpture and Technology in the Abstract and Real World. New York Times, October 26, 1997. Accessed at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/10/26/nyregion/art-blend-of-sculpture-and-technology-in-the-abstract-and-real-world.html>

Zoe, Vivian. 2012. The Muse: Newsletter of the Slater Memorial Museum. Fall 2012, p. 5. Accessed at:

http://www.slatermuseum.org/uploaded/Slater_Museum_Files/Newsletters/Slater_Newsletter_fall_2012.pdf

Photographer: Charlotte Hitchcock **Date:** 3/13/2015

View: Facing north

Form completed by: Charlotte Hitchcock **Printed On:** May 14, 2016

Organization: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address: 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517-4002

Threats: None known

Subsequent field evaluations:



Castle Court, Connecticut College - facing north

FOR OFFICE USE:

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