

CT Trust Resource ID: 2305

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): Westport Town Hall

Other Name(s) (Historic): Westport Town Hall, Bedford Elementary School

Street Address or Location: 110 Myrtle Avenue, Westport

Town/City: Westport

Village:

County:

Designation(s):

Owner(s): Town of Westport

Public/Private: Public

Latitude: 41.1450 Longitude: -73.3599

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Town Hall

Historic Use: Elementary School

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

Interior accessible? If yes, explain: Public building

Style of building: Neoclassical Date of Construction: c. 1916

Material(s) (*Indicate use or location when appropriate*): Concrete, Stucco, Fieldstone

Structural Systems(s): Load bearing masonry

Roof(Type): Hip (*Material*): Asphalt Shingle

Number of Stories: 2 **Approximate Dimensions:** 165' x 200'

Structural Condition Excellent

Exterior Condition: Excellent

Locational Integrity: On original site **Moved, When:** NA

Alterations?: Yes **If yes, explain:** wings and addition added c. 1923

Related outbuildings or landscape features: parking lots, athletic field

Surrounding Environment: Residential

Interrelationship of building and surroundings: The Town Hall is located on a hill to the east side of Myrtle Avenue, on approximately 5 acres of land. The property is roughly bound by Myrtle Avenue along the west and south, Evergreen Avenue to the east, and Teragram Avenue to the north. Directly in front (to the west) of the building is a small parking area, and directly in back (to the east) is a large parking lot. Also found on this parcel is an athletic field, just to the east of the large parking lot.

Other notable features of building or site: The Westport Town Hall is a two-story, nine-bay, cross-shaped, Neoclassical style building. The hip-roof is clad in asphalt shingles, the walls are sided in stucco, and the foundation consists of stone and concrete. The wings that form the cross-shape are hip-roofed and extend from the north and south elevations of the building. The façade of the building faces west, and the main entry is reached by a concrete staircase with metal railings. As noted in the Historic Resources Inventory form by PAL, Inc. in 2011, 'The primary entrance consists of a pair of wood panel double-doors with narrow side-lights and a transom. The east [west] (façade) elevation is dominated by a full-height porch with a denticulated pediment supported by fluted Corinthian columns. The symmetrical fenestration consists of nine-over-nine and twelve-over-twelve, double-hung sash windows.' Along the frieze board of the façade reads, 'Westport Town Hall,' and a fanlight is found in the pediment.

Architect: Unknown Builder/Maker: Unknown

Historical or Architectural importance:

In the 1960s, Burt Chernow (an artist, teacher, and art collector) realized the benefits of continuing to display works of art throughout the public schools in town. He felt art should be integrated into the curriculum as well as surround children throughout their school years to not only help them realize the importance of art, but to also help explain Westport's cultural heritage.

Burt Chernow was born in New York City in 1933. He studied art education at New York University and earned his master's degree in 1960. He and his wife, Ann (an artist), moved to Westport in the 1960s where Burt began his career as an art teacher in the public school system. He later joined the faculty in the Art Department at the Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport where he would go on to become the director of the department. While teaching there, he also founded the Housatonic Museum of Art which now has over 4,000 pieces in their

collection making it one of the largest art collections owned by a two year college. Chernow also taught at the Museum of Modern Art, the Silvermine School of Arts, the A.B.C.D. Arts Center in Bridgeport, and the Stamford Museum. He founded the Westport Schools Permanent Art Collection in 1964, helped to found the Westport Arts Center, and the Westport Arts Awards, as well as serving on the Westport Arts Advisory Council. In 1997, Chernow died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 63.

Robert Lambdin was born in Kansas in 1886. At the age of 7, he moved with his family to Denver, Colorado. Lambdin studied at the Reid School of Art in Denver and started his professional career as a newspaper artist. In 1917, he moved to New York City where he illustrated for notable magazines such as Collier's, Cosmopolitan, and Red Book. Lambdin moved to Westport in 1918. He often made trips to the West to paint mountain landscapes and life on the Great Plains. During the Depression, he was commissioned to paint WPA murals in Westport schools. He also won the competition to paint three murals in the Bridgeport Post Office. In these murals he depicted the history of mail transportation. He also received commissions from Bridgeport Brass Company, the Beekman-Downtown Hospital in New York City, and from other industrial companies in Chicago. Among these commissions, he also painted many murals in Westport. He was involved in some local committees in Westport, and became a trustee of the Westport Public Library and director of the Westport-Weston Arts Council. Lambdin died in Southport, Connecticut in 1981 at the age of 94.

Sources:

Robert Lambdin Article - New York Times - 1944-1-5, Robert Lambdin Article - New York Times - 1984-12-9, Robert Lambdin Son Article - New York Times - 1932-12-31; Carley, Rachel. Creative Places: Modern Arts and Letters in Connecticut. Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation & State Historic Preservation Office, 2014; Westport Town Hall files accessed 7/22/2014 in the Historic District Commission Office, Rm. 108 in the Westport Town Hall:
PAL, Inc., Westport Town Hall Historic Resources Inventory – October 2011
McWeeney, L & Salvo, B., Westport Town Hall Historic Resources Inventory – 1983-84; The Hour; Robert L. Lambdin, 94, Painter, Illustrator, June 5, 1981 – accessed 7/24/2013 at <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1916&dat=19810605&id=TidJAAAAIbAJ&sjid=fAYNAAAAIbAJ&pg=1466,923482> Westport Town Hall files accessed 7/22/2014 in the Historic District Commission Office, Rm. 108 in the Westport Town Hall:
PAL, Inc., Westport Town Hall Historic Resources Inventory – October 2011
McWeeney, L & Salvo, B., Westport Town Hall Historic Resources Inventory – 1983-84; <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/06/15/us/burt-chernow-63-art-historian-and-writer.html>; http://www.westportnow.com/index.php?v2/comments/honoring_burt_chernow/; <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/burt-chernow-papers-6021>

Photographer: Kristen Nietering **Date:** 7/24/2014

View:

Organization: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address: 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517-4002

Form completed by: Kristen Nietering **Printed On:** December 21, 2015

Threats: None known

Subsequent field evaluations:



West view (main facade) of the Westport Town Hall

FOR OFFICE USE:

Town # _____ **Site#** _____ **UTM** _____

District S NR **If NR, specify:** Actual Potential