NPS Form 10-900
1024-0018

OMB No. SG31418

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ
Other names/site number: N/A
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 217 Dixwell Avenue
City or town: New Haven State: CT County: New Haven
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national X statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B X C ___D

Mary B. Dunne / Deputy SHPO 10/10/18
Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

for

Signature of the Keeper

11/29/18

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	x
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	x
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
RELIGION: religious facility: church

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
RELIGION: religious facility: church

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)
Modern Movement: Brutalist

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ (Dixwell Church) is a monumental ecclesiastical building in New Haven, Connecticut, designed in 1968-69 by American architect John MacLane Johansen, FAIA (1916-2012). Rudolph Besier and John L. Altierl, P.E., were consulting engineers. This Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern, split-concrete-block church illustrates the Brutalist architectural movement in its integration of site plan, building plan, scale, proportion, materials, and geometry to create a sculptural building that relates to its urban context, embodies Modernist design ideology, and achieves the aspirations of the architectural program for the creation of contemporary sacred space (Photograph 1). This imposing building occupies a 0.57-acre site on Dixwell Avenue, a major north-south artery in New Haven. Its two-story composition radiates from a projecting central lantern marking the chancel. The church is located within a "superblock," defined by Dixwell, Admiral, Ashmun, and Foote streets, which was created through the consolidation of three predominantly residential blocks in the 1960s as part of New Haven's urban renewal program. Daniel Stewart Plaza, a brick-paved public space, is directly south of the church. The church occupies a prominent location fronting Dixwell Avenue (W). It is adjoined to the north, east, and south by paved parking and Stewart Plaza (Photographs 2-5).

Narrative Description

Site

The Dixwell Church occupies a sunken rectangular site extending along Dixwell Avenue (Photographs 6-13). The site, measuring 180 feet by 140 feet, is five feet below the surrounding grade. It is delineated from the streetscape, south plaza, and north and east parking areas by a low cast-concrete perimeter wall that incorporates a continuous projecting concrete cap. The excavated site occupied by the church and surrounded by a shallow expanse of lawn creates a depressed building platform that visually separates the church from the surrounding low-scale urban landscape, affording uninterrupted views of the sculptural design.

The church was designed as the northwest anchor of a large public plaza, only partially realized, that was designed by Johansen as part of the redevelopment plan for the Dixwell neighborhood under New Haven's ambitious mid-century urban renewal program. A photograph of a model included in the Johansen papers archived at the Avery Library, Columbia University depicts an early proposal for a monumental public space that incorporated the church, an expansive plaza with formal landscaping, an eastern range of commercial buildings, and a southern range of low-scale townhouses (Dixwell Church Box 11.24) (Figure 1). The church and plaza, which was reduced in size, were the only elements constructed from this earlier design that integrated religious, commercial, residential, and public spaces.

A consolidated range of low-scale commercial and public buildings dating from the same period was constructed opposing the church on Dixwell Avenue. The Brutalist two-story, masonry-block Dixwell Community House, locally known as Q House, was designed by architects Herbert S. Newman and Edward E. Cherry in 1967 and occupied a site southeast of the church at 197 Dixwell Avenue. It was demolished in 2017. The interior of the block currently is dominated by the complex and grounds of the public Wexler-Grant Community School, which underwent substantial design renovation in 2000 and is oriented towards Foote Street. The church is the sole surviving building associated with the 1960s redesign of the superblock and remains a prominent anchor building on Dixwell Avenue; it retains its spatial relationship with the low-scale commercial and public buildings constructed during the same period within the Dixwell Avenue streetscape.

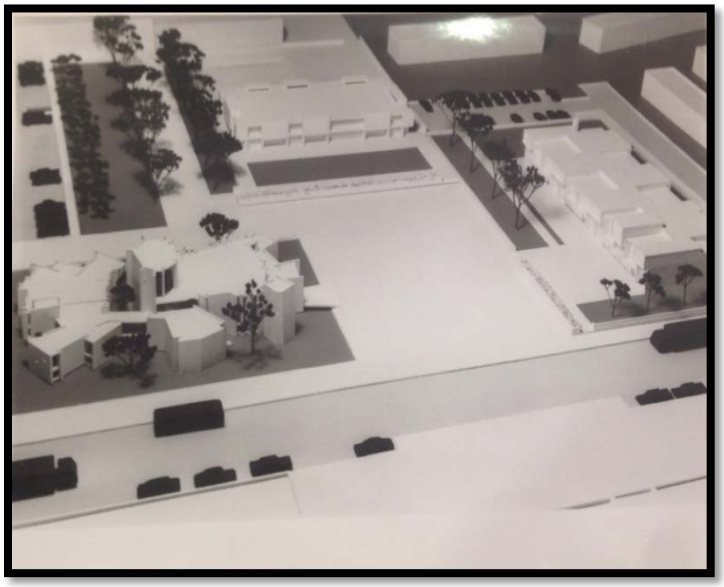

Figure 1. John M. Johansen, FAIA. 1968. Model of Proposed Dixwell Plaza
(Avery Library, Columbia University. New York)

While the scale, use, and spatial relationships between buildings and public space initially envisioned for the plaza design subsequently changed, elements of the early design were retained in the executed plan for the church. The church and its primary access were oriented toward the plaza. The church, as constructed, became a dominant element of the Dixwell Avenue streetscape with physical connections to the plaza, street, and parking areas.

The sunken building site is spanned by five concrete bridges linking the grade of the street, parking areas, and plaza to the main floor of the structure (Photographs 14–18). A hierarchy of entries to the building is reinforced by the size of bridge walkways and their elevation levels. The main covered entry leading into the narthex extends from the plaza at an elevation of 100 feet, while more modest bridges extend from Dixwell Avenue and from the southeast plaza to a secondary entry at an elevation of 97 feet. The two secondary bridges that provide access from the north parking area rise to an elevation of 95 feet. The bridge walkways are defined by simple metal tube railings. Railings of similar design are found interior to the perimeter wall adjoining the rear parking area; they also were used in the interior stairwell.

Exterior

The building has a highly sculptural composition that visually rises directly from the earth, although the building is supported structurally by a complex system of below-grade concrete piers (Figure 2). Johansen characterized the design as “an interesting ever-changing experience of form and light” in an undated summary of the project (Avery Library Dixwell Church Box 11.24).

The circular chancel, which corresponds in location to the lantern, is the main organizing element of both the interior and exterior designs (Photographs 19–21). The lantern, which functions as a light well for the main worship space, extends above the cap course of the exterior walls of the nave by approximately 15 feet. Massive, coursed split-concrete walls of staggered height and length radiate from the chancel. These walls create secondary interior spaces, as well as deeply recessed two-story window bays housing vertical stacks of fixed single-light windows.

The staggered heights of the exterior walls extend above the building's complex flat and slightly sloping roof planes, forming parapets that mask the roof from the street (Photographs 22–24). The rhythm established by the extension of exterior walls beyond the building envelope is reminiscent of church buttresses. The austere character of the unornamented exterior is enlivened by the use of textured split-concrete block. The design creates a fortress-like exterior achieved through both structural clarity and the manipulation of exterior-wall geometry to create dramatic vertical contrasts of light and shadow.

The main entrance from the plaza is delineated by a monumental open porch of simple design; split-concrete block walls project from the building face and support a suspended flat roof below the parapet walls. The scale of this element creates an open transom over the entry. The entrance proper incorporates an oversized transom with three lights that correspond in vertical light divisions to the three door bays located below. A single-light, double-aluminum-frame door occupies the center bay; it is flanked by single-light aluminum frame doors of identical design.

The secondary entrance leading from the parking area to church administration on the upper level and to a lower-level assembly area incorporates aluminum doors identical to those found on the main entrance. The doors are set within a transparent entrance bay created by a five-light composition consisting of an oversized central light flanked by attenuated "sidelights" with lower single-light panels. The proportion of the horizontal division found on the entry is repeated in the window design of the fixed-light windows of the primary floor; lower-level windows are single-light fixed units set in simple surrounds.

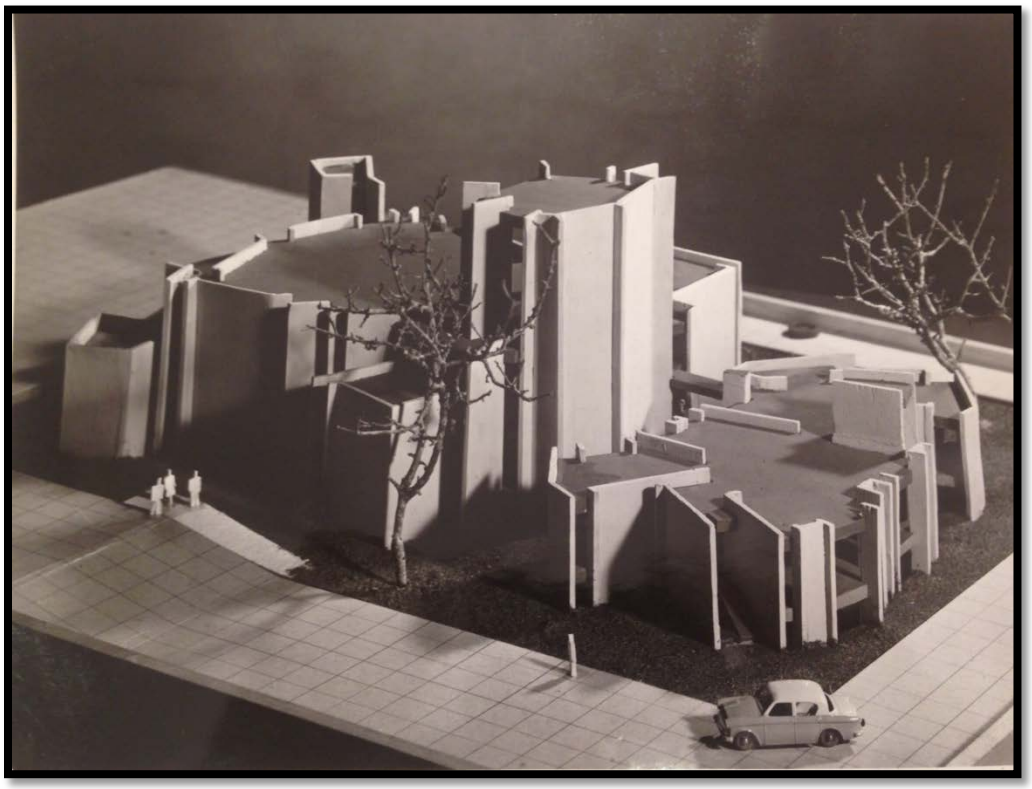

Figure 2. John M. Johansen, FAIA. 1968. Model of Dixwell Church
(Avery Library, Columbia University, New York)

Interior

The irregular interior plan encompasses 15,400 square feet of total area on two levels. The original architectural program included sanctuary seating for 300; an assembly hall to accommodate 300 with a stage, kitchen, and services; eight classrooms; administrative spaces; informal lounge areas; a choir loft; an organ chamber; a rehearsal room; a robing room; and storage (Avery Library Dixwell Church Box 11.24).

The two levels of the building are distinguished by their uses. The main level incorporates the primary worship space on the south side of the building; classrooms and offices extend behind the north walls of the central chancel (Figure 3, Photographs 25–29). The austere character of the exterior contrasts with the light-drenched quality of the open worship space. The chancel is delineated from the nave by a raised and nearly circular platform defined by split-concrete block columns. Seating in the nave radiates from the chancel to the south wall that divides the nave from the narthex. The exposed exterior walls of the nave between the chancel and the narthex are staggered, creating a balanced plan of overlapping leaves that house full-story window bays. Interior finishes include exposed split-concrete block walls, simple wood window surrounds, simple wood doors, and tile flooring. Pews are simple backed wood benches of Modernist design. A review of the original plans and existing finishes could not confirm that all original finishes were executed in accordance with the architect's design; modifications may have been undertaken during the intervening 49 years.

The lower level houses secondary church spaces, including an assembly hall below the nave, a kitchen, mechanicals, and services (Photographs 30–31). Natural lighting for the partially below-grade floor is provided by light wells and light radiating from the lower levels of the building's two-story window bays. Interior finishes on the lower level are modern and utilitarian in character, with exposed concrete block.

Figure 3. John M. Johansen, FAIA. 1968. Main Level Plan (Avery Library, Columbia University, New York)

Alterations to the building since its construction include roof repairs and replacement of structural window bays in the lantern and on the upper level. Work within the window bays is differentiated from the original building materials by panels of narrow siding and single-light windows in simple surrounds. In 2011, significant water damage to the main floor of the church necessitated major structural repair and rehabilitation (Street 2015). Rehabilitation work has not affected the historical integrity of the property.

Integrity Statement

The church retains a high degree of historic integrity as measured in its aspects of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Minor changes to the building over the years have not detracted from its overall integrity.

The church occupies its original prominent site on Dixwell Avenue and maintains its original spatial relationship with the Dixwell Avenue streetscape. Its dramatic Brutalist design built in economical materials exhibits a high degree of integrity in design, materials, and workmanship. The church is occupied by its original users, the Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ, whose congregation commissioned the building.

The church's integrity of setting has been altered by ongoing redevelopment within the interior of the adjoining redevelopment "superblock." The Brutalist Dixwell Community House, which occupied a site southeast of the church at 197 Dixwell Avenue was demolished in 2017. The interior of the block currently is dominated by the complex and grounds of the public Wexler-Grant Community School, which underwent substantial design renovation in 2000. While the setting of the Dixwell Church within the superblock has been altered over time, the building continues to illustrate the public-private partnerships between the City of New Haven and community institutions during the 1960s redevelopment program and is an outstanding example of Brutalist architectural design.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [ ] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

- [x] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Community Planning and Development
Architecture

Period of Significance
1968-1969

Significant Dates
1968-1969: Construction of church

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Johansen, John MacLane FAIA (1916 -2012)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ (Dixwell Church) is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the category of Community Planning and Development and in the category of Architecture. The church possesses state-level significance for its association with the City of New Haven's aggressive urban redevelopment program during the 1960s. The Dixwell Church possesses state-level significance under the category of Architecture for the quality of its Brutalist design by renowned architect John Johansen. The building also meets the requirements established for the listing of religious properties in the National Register under Criteria Consideration A because it derives its primary significance from its architectural importance and non-religious historic associations. The period of significance is limited to the construction of the building, from 1968 to 1969.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion C: Community Planning and Development

Dixwell Church is significant for its association with the City of New Haven's mid-twentieth-century urban redevelopment program and for its role as a principal building of the Dixwell public plaza, designed as a center for community activities. As completed, the building met several of the City's urban renewal goals through the creation and activation of public space; racial integration in specific use zones; and Modern-style design.

Twentieth-century urban planning in the City of New Haven had a complex historical trajectory that was influenced by economic changes; shifting demographics; local, state, and national politics; federal and local programs for urban redevelopment; changes in transportation technologies and networks; and by evolving theories of social engineering and architectural determinism in urban planning and architecture. In essence, the mid-century urban renewal program sought to reshape the functional and architectural character of much of the City. Renewal and redirection of "blighted" residential neighborhoods were major objectives of this comprehensive program and the Dixwell area was among the targeted zones in New Haven. The church was the anchor building for the plaza, and it was both a symbolic and a physical link between a revered local institution and the City's vision for the neighborhood's future.

Early Twentieth-Century Origins of New Haven's Redevelopment Program

Two predecessor plans influenced New Haven's urban renewal efforts of the 1950s through 1970s. The first was a 1910 study undertaken by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and architect Cass Gilbert, which proposed an approach consistent with the City Beautiful movement and Beaux-Arts design principles to direct future development. Transportation improvements were emphasized in that report. A formal, tree-lined major avenue between the primary transportation hub and downtown was proposed. Widening of Temple Street, which bisects the New Haven Green, and the construction of a subway were recommended, as were the establishment of "pleasure drives, a system of shoreline parks, and two major circuits (inner and outer) of park ways and parkland" (Carley 2008:9). While never formally adopted, the

Olmsted/Gilbert plan led to the establishment of the New Haven City Planning Commission in 1913 (Hasbrouck 1965:6).

Transportation improvements were addressed again in the 1942 Rotival Plan, named for Maurice E.H. Rotival (1892-1980), who chaired a committee of experts formed to address City growth and redevelopment. In addition to Rotival, the committee included Yale professors Maynard W. Meyer and George A. Dudley. Rotival, a French engineer and planner, had an international reputation in urban planning. A professor of planning at Yale University, he was a proponent of Modernism (Carley 2008:13). The Rotival Plan provided a blueprint for future development and foreshadowed Yale's future involvement in the city's design and development.

The New Haven plan for directing development in the city was released in 1942 and included recommendations for economic growth, population density, and traffic circulation (Carley 2008:14). Many of the concerns raised in the 1942 plan had been raised previously in the Olmsted/Gilbert document. Noteworthy differences between these plans reflect their divergent architectural and stylistic approaches to development. The Rotival plan was "modernist in allowing for radical intervention in the form of the massive highways and large-scale demolition," and reflected the Modernist design theories of the influential Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, 1887-1965) (Carley 2008:15).

In 1946 the City of New Haven created the New Haven Redevelopment Agency (NHRA) to implement the objectives outlined in the Rotival master plan. The agency was vested with broad redevelopment power through its authority to purchase and redevelop property. The NHRA assumed greater importance in reshaping the City with the 1953 election of Mayor Richard C. Lee. Drawing on the resources made available by federal housing legislation enacted in 1949 and 1954, Lee launched an extensive redevelopment program that became the model for cities across the country (Rae 2003:313).

New Haven lawyer Edward J. Logue oversaw the NHRA as Department Administrator. Logue was authorized to coordinate development activities among major city agencies including the City Plan Commission, the Parking Authority and Traffic Engineer, and the Bureau of Sanitation. Mayor Lee sought support from neighborhood leaders and downtown businesses through the establishment of a Citizens Action Committee (CAC). In addition to an organizing government agency (NHRA) and business support (CAC), participation from Yale University was critical to the success of urban redevelopment. Members of the Yale community, including University President Alfred Whitney Griswold (known as Whitney Griswold) and a number of Yale professors, were involved in redevelopment efforts through their service on boards and tenures in public offices (Carley 2008:20).

Many of the resulting redevelopment projects were designed in the Modern architectural idiom. Indeed, the Modern style became the public image of urban renewal, in New Haven and across the country. The style had been adopted by the federal government as an appropriate architectural expression for governmental expansion during the postwar period (General Services Administration 2003). The style and its underlying social theories also were seen as means to address urban poverty and associated social issues through reshaping the built environment (Carley 2008:20). Urban planners, architects, and proponents of urban renewal often held that an effective strategy to combat poverty, blight, and urban decay was through removal and replacement with a functionally and aesthetically defined environment.

Technology, architectural theory, and international architectural practice all influenced American perspective and stylistic choices of the period. The era of urban redevelopment is often associated with the second generation of practicing Modernist architects who embraced the theories advanced by such

architects as Le Corbusier and the tenets of the Conference International Moderne (CIAM). CIAM, an international association of architects, planners, and theorists, held that architecture had a social responsibility to break with classical traditions of the past through the design of buildings that expressed their purpose in structure, materials, and new technologies. The Second World War revolutionized the construction industry through the introduction of new materials, construction standardization, prefabrication, and new building practices. Team 10, composed of architects, planners, and theorists who broke with CIAM in the 1950s over its stringent approach to urbanism, further advocated a new approach to contemporary problems that required the redefinition and reformulation of the role of the architect/urbanist and the technologies involved (Boyer 2017:52). Faced with the pragmatic challenges of postwar rebuilding, European counterparts in architecture and planning increasingly adopted Modern design for expedient, cost-effective projects that maximized architectural impact through the integration of functional plans, exposed structural systems, and innovative materials.

Plans for routing the Connecticut Turnpike through New Haven also advanced transportation in the priorities for redevelopment in the City. The shift in the American transportation system to prioritize a surface road network with nationwide links via the interstate highway system supported greater dependence on vehicular travel and was supported by such legislation as the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 (Public Law 647). The shift in the transportation paradigm lead to the reengineering of urban space to accommodate greater volumes of traffic, greater numbers of cars, increased parking, and altered circulation patterns. In New Haven, the NHRA focused on four areas of concern: traffic circulation, downtown business development, industrial and harbor development, and neighborhood redevelopment (Carley 2008:21). Eleven areas in New Haven were targeted for redevelopment, including the downtown neighborhoods on Oak, Church, and State streets, Wooster Square, and Dixwell Avenue.

By the 1960s the City of New Haven had become expert in leveraging federal funds for large-scale public improvement projects. Although smaller than many cities that embraced urban redevelopment, New Haven secured more federal dollars per capital during the 1960s than any city in the United States, including the much larger cities of New York, Boston, Baltimore, and Detroit. New Haven's per capita investment of $745.38 far exceeded larger cities, including Boston (n = $218.16), Philadelphia (n = $104.66), and New York (n = $36.77) (Rae 2003:324). Much of this success was due to the political acumen of Mayor Lee and the determination of Lee and his team at NHRA.

Dixwell Neighborhood and the *Dixwell Redevelopment and Renewal Plan* (1960)

City intervention in the Dixwell neighborhood predated New Haven's post-World War II urban renewal program, which altered the architectural and urban character of much of the city. During the early 1940s, Dixwell was characterized as a working-class neighborhood largely occupied by employees of the Winchester-Western Company and the company's suppliers. It contained an estimated 3,000 frame dwellings, associated retailers, and community and religious institutions. Houses frequently were owner-occupied but often included subdivided rental spaces that generated additional income for their owners (Rae 2003:256).

In addition to residents from southern and eastern Europe and Germany, the neighborhood attracted African Americans from the American south moving north as part of the Great Migration (1916-70). By 1910, Dixwell was known as the Harlem of New Haven (Brown 1976:169). By 1930, the neighborhood's African American population grew to 50 percent (New Haven Colony Historical Society 1982:113-122). The community grew through the 1950s, and lower Dixwell Avenue became a commercial center of the African American community in the City (Warner 1940:195).

However, private investment in the neighborhood had been discouraged through its "D" rating on the A-D scale applied in the preparation of the 1937 Residential Security Map used to target New Haven homeowners for assistance under the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration's federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation (Rae 2003:264). Financial institutions were reluctant to lend to distressed property owners in the neighborhood; its official "D" assessment was depicted on maps in red, for declining or deteriorated housing stock.

The area subsequently was selected as the site of Elm Haven, one of the City's first public housing projects. The project was funded under the federal Housing Act of 1937. Elm Haven first was occupied in 1940; it contained 487 units in 36 buildings (Rae 2003:275). High-rise buildings were added to Elm Haven in the 1950s and 1960s (Carley 2008:13). This large-scale public housing project initially was received as a design and housing success but by the mid-1960s had attracted local criticism for creating a physically isolated and racially segregated enclave (Hasbrouck 1965:49).

Despite the construction of the Elm Haven project, the Dixwell neighborhood continued to be characterized as blighted. In 1942 and 1943 the New Haven Housing Authority measured housing quality in the City's most deteriorated neighborhoods under a pilot program funded by American Public Health Association. Dixwell was among the areas surveyed, and much of its housing stock was found substandard (Hasbrouck 1965:7). The City's 1950 Housing Census divided the Dixwell area into a "core area," where 57 percent of the 220 housing units were assessed as substandard (no private baths or dilapidated), and the "larger Dixwell area," where 20 percent of the 1955 units were categorized as substandard (Hasbrouck 1965:67). A survey of building conditions in the neighborhood again was undertaken in 1958 and updated in 1960. Of the 861 dwellings included in the 1958-60 surveys, 45 were rated satisfactory, 469 were found in need of major repairs, and 347 required minor repairs. The 178 commercial buildings in the area included 16 in satisfactory condition, 77 in need of major repairs, and 85 requiring minor repairs (New Haven Redevelopment Office 1960:40).

To address the deteriorated conditions identified in the neighborhood, the City of New Haven released the *Dixwell Redevelopment and Renewal Plan* in 1960 (Figure 4). That plan combined redevelopment with targeted rehabilitation of an estimated 24 blocks of existing residential and commercial areas. With the overall objective of making New Haven a slumless city, the plan proposed demolition of deteriorated commercial and residential buildings, relocation of displaced families and businesses, new sites for housing and commercial development, an attractive public square, an improved traffic circulation pattern, reorientation of land use, and privately sponsored rehabilitation of buildings excluded from demolition (New Haven Redevelopment Office 1960). The plan estimated the displacement of 503 multi-member families and 116 single-member families (New Haven Redevelopment Office1960:41). Final figures for residential displacement were much greater.

Thirty-two parcels were slated for redevelopment under the 1960 plan, which applied functional zoning requirements for public, residential, commercial, and institutional uses. While design in a specified architectural style was not mandated for any allowable use, high standards were established through design review and the requirement that "… the structures to be erected must reflect distinguished architectural expression and technique so as to signify quality and permanence" (New Haven Redevelopment Office 1960).

Seven parcels were made available to the City of New Haven for public use in the redevelopment plan. They included the site of a central plaza to unify residential, commercial, and institutional uses through a

common focus on an energized public space. The plan envisioned that adjoining parcels and an associated park would be designed to complement the proposed plaza, which was proposed to be "…an attractive public space on which to focus community activities…" (New Haven Redevelopment Office 1960:15).

Residential zoning was established at medium density (22 to 30 units per acre), with 25-foot setbacks and off-street parking (one space per unit), landscaped areas, and open space (New Haven Redevelopment Office 1960:9-11). The plan's General Restrictions banned housing discrimination:

> Furthermore, no covenant, agreement, lease, conveyance or other instrument shall be effected or executed by the City of New Haven, or by the purchasers or leases from it (or any successor in interest of such purchasers or leases), by which land in the project area to be used for residential purposes is restricted in occupancy to persons who have or do not have children in their households or because of race, creed or color, nor shall the occupants thereof be segregated because of race, creed or color (New Haven Redevelopment Office 1960:8).

Allowable commercial uses were identified as those that would be consistent with retail-food, retail-goods, amusement and recreation, retail service, and office spaces with maximum floor areas ranging from a ratio of 80 percent of the parcel size to 13,500 square feet. Street setbacks were established at 20 feet, and requirements for off-street parking were set at a rate of one space per 500 square feet of floor area. Commercial sign controls were established, and landscape buffers were required for surface parking lots containing more than 15 spaces (New Haven Redevelopment Office 1960:11-14).

> General requirements for institutional use also were specified in the plan. Institutional redevelopment was subject to setbacks of 15 feet; the inclusion off-street parking with screening of surface lots exceeding 15 spaces; and landscaping (New Haven Redevelopment Office 1960:16).

The targeted area in the *Dixwell Redevelopment and Renewal Plan* favored the expansion of Yale University's campus, which surrounded the section of Dixwell between the Howe Street Extension and York Street, based on the belief that "the encouragement of Yale's expansion …will upgrade Dixwell" (New Haven Redevelopment Office 1960:31). Land use for property developed or rehabilitated by Yale University was restricted to uses related to the functions of teaching or research; student and faculty housing and support; student parking; or uses primarily of benefit to students and faculty (New Haven Redevelopment Office:6).

Industry, whose location in the vicinity of the neighborhood once contributed to the area's appeal, was not included in the 1960 plan as an allowable use. Provisions banning noxious uses reinforced this passive prohibition. Noxious uses were defined as the emission of smoke, fumes, odors, or other objectionable by-products; excessive noise or truck traffic; or uses out of character with the area (New Haven Redevelopment Office 1960:27-28).

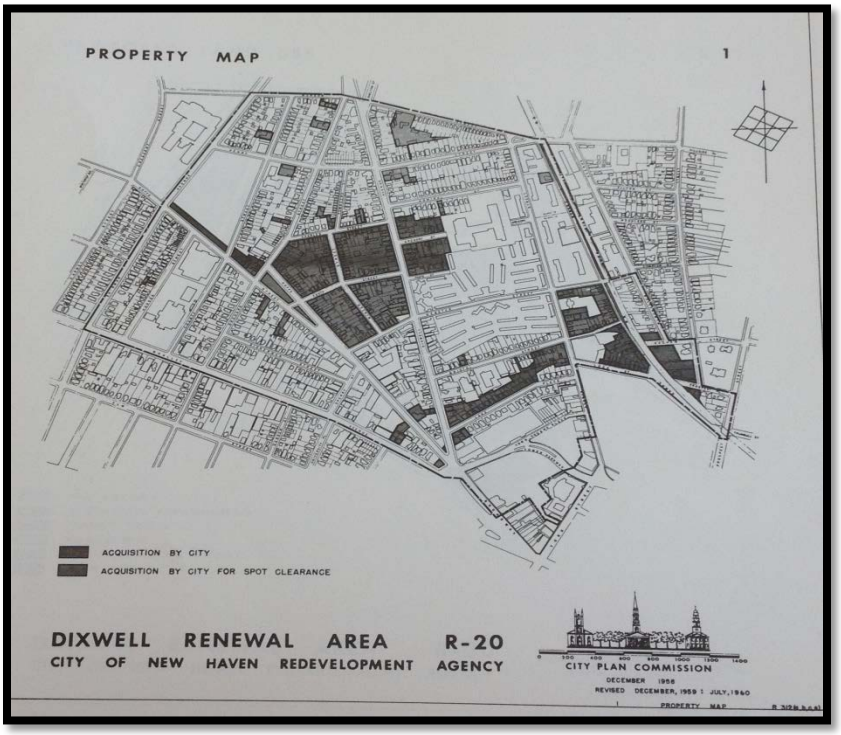

Figure 4. Dixwell Redevelopment and Renewal Area (New Haven Redevelopment Office 1960)

As a result of the large urban renewal project, the triangle created by the intersection of Dixwell Avenue and Goffe Street was widened and slated for demolition, making it the largest redevelopment area in the city (Brown 1976:173). The plaza was the central design focus of the redevelopment plan and featured both housing and public spaces. The footprints of the Winchester School (1952) and the Community Center (1967) dominated the 1960 proposal; the proposed public plaza extended across Dixwell Avenue to the opposing street frontage. The preliminary plan and land use map (Figure 5) were modified as the project progressed. The overall redevelopment plan, with its emphasis on medium density, control of uses through functional zoning, design review, transportation circulation, off-street parking, public space, and landscaping sought to transform the architectural character and land use in a dense organic urban neighborhood into a quasi-suburban image.

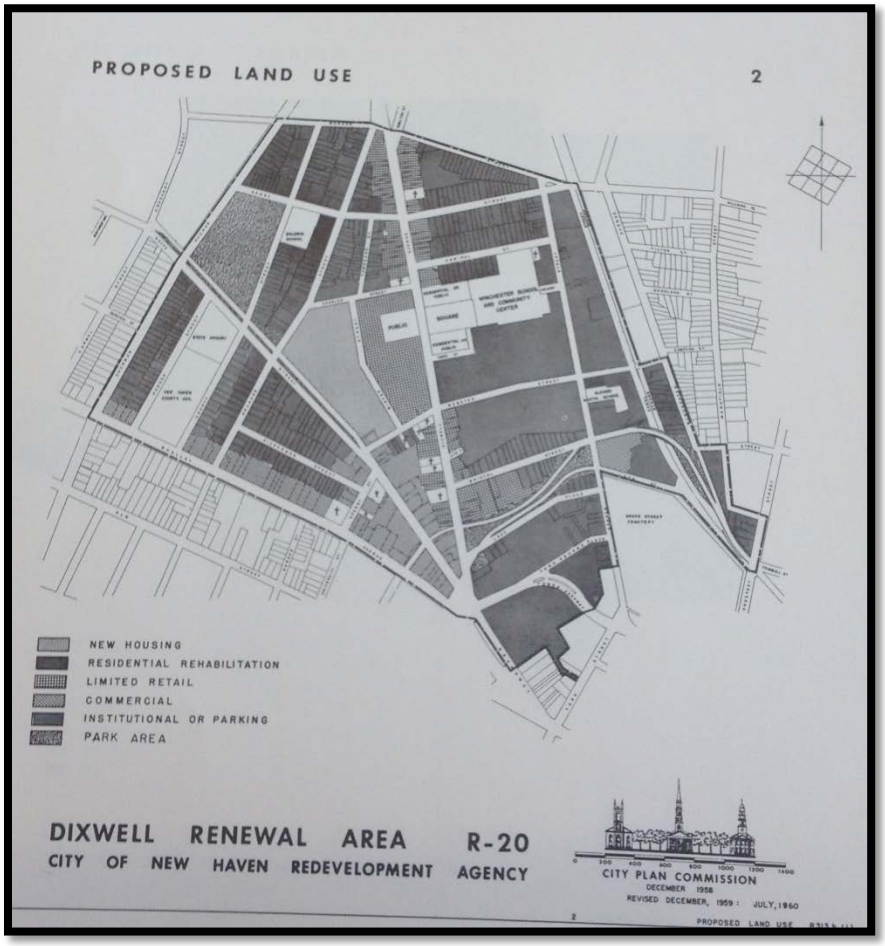

Figure 5. Proposed Land Use in Dixwell Area (New Haven Redevelopment Office 1960)

By 1964, the design of the central plaza had been refined (Figure 6). The *Dixwell Renewal News*, a brochure published by the New Haven Redevelopment Office, included an architectural rendering of the plaza as its frontispiece. The redevelopment area had been rechristened "New Haven's Newest Neighborhood—the new University Park Dixwell." The proposed Dixwell Church occupied its current prominent location on the plaza and was depicted as the tallest and most architecturally refined building. The plaza fronted directly on Dixwell Avenue, and a range of low-rise commercial buildings was depicted on the opposing street front. The two areas were linked by a pedestrian bridge spanning the street. This pedestrian link was not built (New Haven Redevelopment Office 1964).

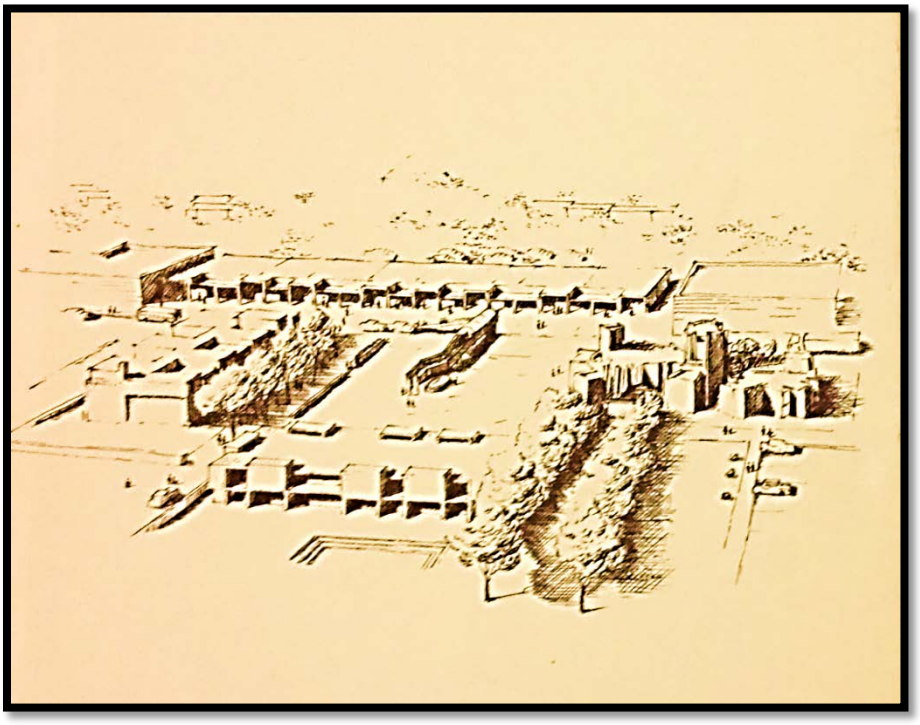

Figure 6. Rendering of the Public Plaza in the Dixwell Renewal Area
(New Haven Redevelopment Agency 1964)

The brochure recounted:

> The Dixwell Renewal Plan is being carried out by the Dixwell Redevelopment Office in cooperation with the Dixwell Community Council, area churches, other institutions and organizations, and businessmen. It is the nation's outstanding example of the revitalization and improvement of an entire neighborhood through the dedicated efforts of residents and public-private agencies and institutions (New Haven Redevelopment Agency 1964).

Sixteen public, residential, commercial, and institutional projects were highlighted in the brochure. The six residential projects included five new housing projects (Fred Smith Housing , 20 units; St. Martin dePorres Town House, 34 units; Florence Virtue Town Houses, 129 units; Winter Garden Town Houses, 36 units; and Housing for the Elderly – unspecified number of units), and applied public-private investments of $4,225,925. Residential rehabilitation and modernization were projected for a block of townhouses on Henry Street. Commercial development included the Public Plaza and Shopping Center. The investment for new commercial development was projected at $2 million in the vicinity of the public center of the neighborhood, the Dixwell Plaza (Figure 7). Three new churches were also showcased in the brochure: Trinity Temple Church of God in Christ, Beulah Heights 1st Pentecostal Church, and the Dixwell Congregational Church. The Dixwell Church was characterized as the "focal point of the new Dixwell Plaza." It was the largest and most architecturally elaborate design of the churches depicted (New Haven Redevelopment Agency 1964). The Dixwell Church also sponsored the construction of the Florence Virtue Town Houses, which were designed by John Johansen and completed in 1965 (Carley 2008:48).

Figure 7. Detail depicting the plan of the central plaza within the Dixwell Renewal Area. The footprint of Dixwell Church is labeled 15 (New Haven Redevelopment Agency 1964)

The public-private partnership forged to advance redevelopment in Dixwell included the City, social groups, churches, businesses, Yale University, and private citizens. Racial integration was perceived as a prerequisite to the success of the redevelopment project. The construction of the Dixwell Church not only secured a monumental anchor building as the focal point for the public plaza but also symbolically evidenced the support of an influential African American institution known for its civic and social activism and its longstanding historical ties to the community. The Dixwell Church is the oldest African American Congregational Church, UCC, in the world. Founded as the African Ecclesiastical Society in 1820 by New Haven abolitionist Simeon S. Jocelyn and 24 freed slaves, the church purchased its first building at 105 Temple Street in New Haven in 1824. The congregation moved to the Dixwell area in 1886 and occupied a church at 100 Dixwell Avenue prior to construction of the current building at 217 Dixwell Avenue. The congregation adopted the Dixwell name after moving to the neighborhood. Church historian Margo Johnson-Taylor noted in a 2012 *New Haven Register* article on the history of the church, that the Dixwell Church was a leading advocate for equal justice through such initiatives as education reform, open housing, and minority empowerment (Johnson-Taylor 2012).

Reverend Edwin R. Edmonds, then pastor of Dixwell Church, commented on the construction project in the September-October 1969 issue of *Connecticut Architect*:

> The congregation first conceived the dream of building a new Dixwell in 1958. Our people contributed much time and effort to planning and working for this new church. We are much indebted to the leadership of Mr. Harold Taylor, Chairman of the Building Committee, to the help of the Redevelopment Agency, and to the guidance of Attorney Author Sachs. We are particularly grateful to the dynamism and vision of the good Mayor Richard C. Lee who has encouraged us and supported us throughout our efforts. (Connecticut Society of Architects 1968:22).

While the final design for the public plaza was more modest than originally proposed, it retained evidence of its original design intent as a public space defined by community institutions and commercial space. Indeed, the Dixwell project garnered national attention is publications such as the *Architectural Forum* (Homann 1966). The Dixwell Church established the dominant northwest element along Dixwell Avenue. The Dixwell Community House, commonly known as Q-House, was constructed in 1967 as the eastern terminus according to designs by architects Herbert S. Newman and Edward E. Cherry. That building, demolished in 2017, also was an example of Brutalist design. Other buildings enclosing the plaza included the now demolished Fred Smith housing, which was designed by Gilbert Switzer and completed in 1965. The reduced plaza faced the surviving row of low-scale commercial and public buildings on the opposing site of Dixwell Avenue. By 1999 the triangle created by Dixwell Avenue and Goffe and Webster Streets had become the commercial and service core of the local community, with more than two dozen public, nonprofit, and religious agencies operating in the area (Skocpol, & Flioriana 1999:236).

The Impact of Urban Renewal on the City of New Haven

Urban renewal projects, including the Dixwell project, altered the physical fabric of New Haven as well as the demographic composition of select neighborhoods. Relocation of both residents and businesses led to opposition as redevelopment efforts extended into the 1960s. Between 1954 and 1968, approximately 22,496 residents were displaced from New Haven neighborhoods as a result of urban renewal projects. This figure included approximately 3,291 people in 1,127 households that were relocated from Dixwell. New Haven's Family Relocation Office attempted to mitigate the effects of displacement through new housing opportunities for relocated households (Rae 2003:338-339). The results of the relocation efforts were disproportionate: more than three times as many non-white families than white families were placed into public housing, while white families dominated those moving into owner-occupied houses in the city (Rae 2003:341).

Residents of the Dixwell neighborhood were not exempt from the economic displacement related to the replacement of affordable housing with the more expensive co-op housing. The new housing option provided by co-ops was promoted as a tool to racially and economically integrate the Dixwell community. Indeed, the rebranded University Park Dixwell project advertised amenities, such as secured parking and manicured landscaping, and reduced housing prices to appeal to middle-class suburbanites (Lin 2015:129-131). Despite goals to integrate the Dixwell neighborhood, by 1968, *Progressive Architecture* reported that only 17 per cent (923 of 5,291) of the housing units built under the renewal plan were low-income units affordable to the neighborhood's formerly African American and immigrant residents (Green & Cheney 1968:139).

Urban renewal projects also affected the city's business districts as many businesses were required to relocate. Working-class neighborhoods and the central business district were hit the hardest. Over one-third of the displaced businesses, many of which were smaller, specialized retailers, relocated from downtown areas. By the time the city's urban renewal projects were completed, approximately 1,400 local retailers were no longer in business (Rae 2003:343-345).

Displacement of residents and local businesses coupled with the lower, local retail customer bases were cited as concerns by opponents to urban renewal; the loss of retail establishments drove much of the opposition. Some retailers, such as the Edward Malley Company, were concerned that urban renewal projects would result in the proliferation of national chains in renewal areas and opposed the federal projects (Edwards 2018). Early opposition initially focused on the Oak Street Connector project. Small businesses attempted to halt redevelopment efforts by filing lawsuits against the New Haven Redevelopment Agency.

Ultimately, these legal efforts were unsuccessful and the Oak Street Connector project was completed (Lin 2015:118-121).

Local activists were not the only ones to oppose urban renewal projects. The *New Haven Register* expressed disapproval in a 1956 article titled "Making a Business of Being Destructive," which likened cleared neighborhoods to post-war devastation in Europe (Lin 2015:118). In response to the negative outcry, Mayor Lee's administration created the Progress Pavilion at the intersection of Church and Chapel streets, which was a World's Fair-inspired concrete hall that highlighted the city's vision. While urban renewal generally was favored by government, schools, and other civic institutions, opposition to the widespread demolition of historic neighborhoods eventually led to the creation of a citywide preservation organization, the New Haven Preservation Trust, in 1961.

Criterion C: Architecture

The Dixwell Church is a monumental-scale ecclesiastical building designed for the established local congregation in 1968-69 by noted Modern architect and theorist John MacLane Johansen, FAIA (1916-2012). The split-concrete-block church illustrates the Brutalist design approach within the Modern movement through its successful integration of site plan, building plan, scale, proportion, materials, and geometry to create a highly sculptural building that relates to its urban context, embodies late Modern design ideology, and achieves the aspirations of the architectural program for the creation of contemporary sacred space.[1] The property possesses high artistic value as an expression of the Brutalist Style.

Johansen began his career in 1943 in the office of Marcel Breuer after graduating from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he studied with Breuer (1902-81), Walter Gropius (1883-1969), and Josef Albers (1888-1976). Johansen moved to New Canaan, Connecticut, in 1949 where he joined an influential network of professional friends, known as the "Harvard Five," who had moved to the state. Noted for their innovative Modern residential design, this group included Breuer, Eliot Noyes (1910-77), Philip Johnson (1906-2005), and Landis Gores (1919-91). The residential work of this group was recognized in *Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residences in Connecticut, 1930 – 1979*, *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form* (2010).

Johansen established an architectural office in New Canaan in 1949 and designed 16 houses that were constructed in Connecticut from 1950 to 1977. His total constructed work also included 20 major national and international public buildings including schools, libraries, theaters, and office complexes. Connecticut buildings represented in Johansen's public work are Saint Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church, Norwich (1962), the Museum of Art, Science, and Industry, Bridgeport (1961), Florence Virtue Housing, New Haven (1965), Helene W. Grant School, New Haven (1965; demolished 2015), and Dixwell Church (1969).

The Dixwell Church was designed by Johansen during his most innovative and prolific decade of architectural practice and illustrates his mastery of the Brutalist idiom. His portfolio of constructed buildings (completed 1948-88) consisted of 46 residential, public, and institutional buildings, 18 of which were under design or construction during the 1960s. Johansen has been characterized as an eclectic designer (Carley 2008:49). However, a review of his 50-year-plus architectural career also reveals a professional life distinguished by active engagement in the field on an international level, by the development of innovative architectural solutions that frequently challenged mainstream aesthetics, and by professional evolution as

[1] The term "brutalism" does not refer to the English word brutal, but rather, it is derived from the French word for raw.

an architectural theorist and educator concerned with organic design and the relationship between architecture, technology, and society. His career spanned an intellectually turbulent period during which the second generation of Modern architects pushed the theoretical and aesthetic envelope of earlier Modern design to develop architectural theories and building paradigms responsive to users, society, and the urban fabric. Johansen significantly contributed to advancing the field through his realized designs, scholarship, and uncompromising dedication to responsive quality design. His public work and innovation as an architectural theorist illustrates the transition between second-generation Modernism and the Post-Modern Deconstructivism of the late twentieth century.

The sources of the Brutalist style are easier to trace than its branding as an architectural movement. The 1950s was a decade characterized by postwar recovery, social alienation, and growing distance between architectural theory and executed designs. The 1960s was a period of social and civic engagement, cultural experimentation, and technological change. Brutalism and the Modern movement responded to the zeitgeists of both decades.

The sheer strength expressed in Brutalist design through massing, texture, and workmanship has been credited to the influence of Le Corbusier's postwar projects for the Marseilles Apartment House (1952), Maisons Jaoul (1954-56), and the Chapelle Notre Dame du Haut (1954), as well as to the influential designer's use of rough concrete, or *beton brut*, as an exterior material (Drexler 1979:18-28). English architects Alison and Peter Smithson received wide recognition for their design of the Hunstanton School Norwich (1949-54), a work often cited as the first Brutalist building. The Smithsons also have been credited with coining the term "The New Brutalism," an architectural expression that sought to renew the Modern movement and to respond through architecture to the desires, needs, and aspirations of the postwar consumer society (Boyer 2017:88-89). Architectural critic Peter Reyner Banham (1922-1988) entered the discussion on the meaning of "The New Brutalism" in 1955, which largely played out in the architectural journals. In his 1966 book, *The New Brutalism*, Banham recognizes the contributions of Le Corbusier and the Smithsons as sources, noting that "… even if the high style of Brutalism is Le Corbusier's, the ethic behind the aesthetic was British …"(Banham 1966:134).

The design principles of Team 10 evolved from the earlier international architectural congress, CIAM, and from advanced international discussions among the professional community on architectural theory. Johansen was among the architects practicing in the United States who were approached by Alison and Peter Smithson in 1959 to participate in the new network for the exchange of architectural ideas. In his monograph on his work, Johansen cited several principles of Team 10 as influential to the work of the second generation of American Modernists: movement as order of design, open-ended planning, incorporation of the organic process, relatedness to nature, humanistic concern, user participation, and an acceptance of a position of Modern architecture in history (Johansen et al. 1995:63).

Overview of Johansen's Work in the 1960s

Born in New York City in 1916, John M. Johansen traveled through England, France, and Italy in his formative years. A graduate of Harvard University (1939), Johansen also graduated from the Harvard Graduate School of Design (1942). The School of Design was among the first American architectural schools to embrace Modernism. While there, Johansen studied with Marcel Breuer, Walter Gropius, and Josef Albers. During World War II, he was employed by the Fuller Construction Company for the National Housing Agency in Washington, D.C. After the war, he worked at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in New York, serving as a design assistant from 1946 to 1949 on the United Nations project. The New York City

complex was designed by a collaboration of architects including Brazilian modernist Oscar Niemeyer (1907-2012) and Le Corbusier, and was built by Harrison & Abramovitz.

Johansen received his license to practice architecture in 1947. In 1949 he moved his family and practice to New Canaan, Connecticut, where he joined fellow architects Marcel Breuer, Eliot Noyes, Philip Johnson, and Landis Gores. The innovative Modern houses built by the group later were documented in William Earls's book, *The Harvard Five in New Canaan* (Earls 2006). Johansen's work in the 1950s focused on residential design and theoretical work involving spray concrete and biomorphism. The architect used residential design to explore and to challenge expectations of domestic space, an exploration that continued throughout his career.

The 1960s was a prolific decade for Johansen, distinguished by its range in public and institutional buildings, residential designs, writing, and teaching. Although much of his public work during this period was in the Brutalist mode, Johansen approached each commission through site- and building-specific design. In the 1960s he produced well-designed buildings responsive to their sites and contexts. As the decade progressed, Johansen increasingly explored the architectural response to dynamic shifts in culture and technology. His work is noted for its theoretical progression rather than the refinement of signature architectural imagery. It frequently was controversial, always intellectually engaging, and it often challenged popular preconceptions of architecture.

Johansen maintained a high professional profile throughout the decade through commissions, teaching, lectures, exhibits, and submissions to such professional journals as *Architectural Forum* and the *AIA Journal*. His buildings, combined with his 1966 article "An Architecture for the Electronic Age" in *The American Scholar*, offer perhaps the best insights into his evolution as an applied architectural theorist. Citing the influence of Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media*, Johansen argued for architecture that was responsive to the electronic age. This new architectural paradigm was envisioned as influenced by the interchangeability of parts with different "circuit patterns for various building performances," the use of computers in architectural design, smart buildings designs that were "extensions of man," expansion of electronic communications, reconditioning minds and senses to the electronic age, and aesthetics governed by changing technology and environment (Johansen 1966:461:471). Johansen's futurist approach anticipated now accepted practices and aesthetics in contemporary architecture, included computer aided design, "smart" buildings, and "green" design.

The architect recognized a clear distinction between his earlier public work and those exemplifying his new paradigm for the electronic age. The Goddard Library at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts (1968), marked the first building in this new phase of work. Johansen considered the Goddard Library to be his first "modern building" that was "attuned to contemporary thinking in science, in philosophy, in the arts. I regard my earlier works as Renaissance buildings by comparison" (Johansen 1995:75).

Johansen's "Renaissance Period" of the 1960s

Johansen's first major commission for a public building was the 1961 Museum of Art, Science and Industry in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Also notable among his early public work is the U.S. Embassy in Dublin, Ireland (1963). That controversial design was not well received by the host country; however, the support of U.S. President John F. Kennedy ensured its construction. The design adopts a dramatic drum configuration in response to a challenging site. This integration of circular forms foreshadowed the clean geometry of Johansen's later work. The massive circular concrete screen that creates the exterior of the building achieves a composition noted for its strength in materials even as it floods the interior with light.

This dichotomy of massive exterior design and light-flooded interiors characterized the architect's early work. The inspiration for this characteristic contrast may be traced to Le Corbussier's Chapelle Notre Dame du Haut (1954), which achieved a revolutionary balance between building mass and interior light; the design influenced a generation of architects.

In the Clowes Memorial Hall and Opera House at Butler University in Indiana (1964), Johansen introduced the exterior vertical massing later seen in the Dixwell Church. Faced in shot-sawn Indiana limestone, the building was designed to complement the Neo-Gothic campus. The staggered height and stepped geometry of the theater's exterior design contrasts with the regular balance and symmetry of the building's plan. Stylistically, Clowes Memorial Hall is most closely related in architectural "image" to the Dixwell Church (1969). Although the church was not completed until 1969, early renderings document that the design was well developed by 1964, and therefore part of the early phase of his pubic design work. The architect's undated schematic suggests that the design developed from an organic composition of staggered walls and apse-like extensions (Figure 8).

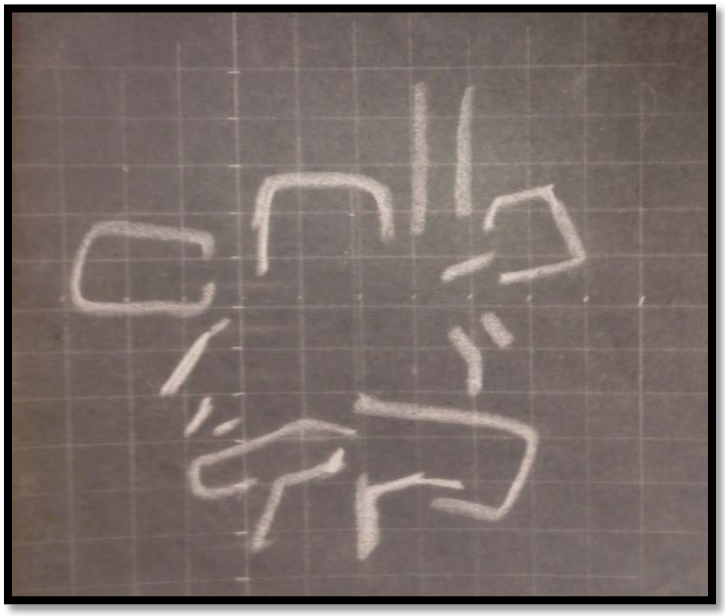

Figure 8. John M. Johansen. Schematic for Dixwell Church (Avery Library, Columbia University, New York)

As noted above, the Dixwell Church was designed as the northwest anchor of a partially unrealized plan for a public plaza as part of the redevelopment plan for the Dixwell neighborhood under New Haven's mid-twentieth-century urban redevelopment program. Johansen expanded upon his design intent for the church:

> The Chancel, as the most sacred space, became the center around which all other spaces and forms revolved or spread out centrifugally. The masonry piers and walls radiate so that from any position one may take in the entire composition and know his relationship to the Sanctuary.
>
> The church design with simple, economic construction achieves an interesting and ever-changing experience of form and light. It expresses the mystery and awe of life rather than

> the rationalism and secularism of religious feeling today (Johansen Undated Project Summary. Avery Library, Columbia University).

The mid-1960s also marked Johansen's association with the Dixwell redevelopment area through two other commissions: the Florence Virtue Housing Project (1965), and the Helene W. Grant School (1965, demolished 2015), an elementary school. The Florence Virtue project, also sponsored by the Dixwell Church, reflected a pragamatic and cost-effective design (Figures 9 and 10). The ranges of these two-story townhouses were constructed using exposed concrete-block walls that divided two-story window walls and rose to parapets above the flat-roof planes. The strength of the design was found in the regularity of the overall project composition and in the vertical emphasis of the masonry walls. The houses in the Florence Virtue project have been subject to alternations, including the removal of parapets, the addition of pitched roofs, the application of stucco to walls, and the reduction in size of window openings.

Figure 9. John M. Johansen. Plan for the Florence Virtue Housing Project (1965)
(Avery Library, Columbia University, New York)

Figure 10. John M. Johansen. Florence Virtue Housing Project (1965)
(Avery Library, Columbia University, New York)

The buildings constructed during the "renaissance" phase of Johansen's public work reflect a proficiency in design and applied knowledge of historical precedence. Although noteworthy as individual designs, as a body of work they reflect the distillation, reinterpretation, and refinement of historical architectural paradigms through the Modern idiom. The Dixwell Church exemplifies this "Modern historicism."

Two high-profile theater commissions established Johansen's critical reputation during the late 1960s as an innovative and original designer. The Morris Mechanic Theater (1967; demolished 2014) was a sculptural composition, purely Brutalist in style, that was built as part of the Charles Center in downtown Baltimore. The concrete building was cast in rough-sawn forms and created, according to Johansen, "…rough, craggy forms with imprudent, almost irreverent disregard for current good taste, eloquence, or pretension of beauty" (Johansen et al. 1995:66). While the vertical massing introduced in the Butler University theater was echoed in the Mechanic Theater, in the latter it was mitigated by broken horizontal blocks of concrete and expanses of glass. The building both floated and loomed above its site.

The second theater design was perhaps Johansen's best known, most critically acclaimed, and most controversial design of the decade. The Mummers Theater in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (1970; demolished 2013), illustrated Johansen's realization of architecture for the electronic age. The inspiration for the design for the three-theater complex, begun in 1965, was a circuit board divided into major components (theaters) and subcomponents (support spaces), which were discrete and linked by corridors and bridges. The resulting concrete and primary-colored steel-and-glass composition challenged the user through complex geometries of elevated boxes, bridges, and tubed mechanicals. Architecture was stripped to process.

The Mummers Theater, underwritten by a Ford Foundation grant, was locally controversial from the start. Johansen's fellow architects praised it, however, and it received a National Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects in 1972. Johansen reflected on the building:

> The experience one feels in moving through the forms of these assemblages is volatile and disordered, as these forms relate back to separate subgroup centers, yet not to each other. The entire anti-composition gives the impression of something in-process. One is made to identify, becomes involved, feels empathy, in fact becomes part of the total process (Johansen et al. 1995:99).

Johansen went on to design five additional public buildings during the 1970s and 1980s, but his role as a theorist and educator assumed greater importance in the late 1980s. He returned to his early interest in biomorphism and the interface between architecture and technology in his theories on nanoarchitecture—molecular-engineered buildings (Johansen 2002:151:157). Characteristically, he was an enthusiastic proponent of electronic communication and embraced the Internet through the development of an extensive website, which continues to serve as a platform for his work.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
_____previously determined eligible by the National Register
_____designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
_____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

__X__ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 282-348-501 (CT SHPO, 1983)_____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ___0.57 acres_____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 41.318981 Longitude: -72.933494

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries of the nominated property follow the current property boundaries as depicted in Map 282, Block 0348, Lot 0200 filed with the City of New Haven's Assessor's Office.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries for the nominated property encompass the Dixwell Avenue parcel acquired for the construction of the church in 1969 (Figure 11). The Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ is the focus of this National Register nomination; therefore, the other buildings located on the plaza have been excluded from the boundaries.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kathryn M. Kuranda, M.Arch.Hist; Scott V. Goodwin, B.A., with Kirsten Peeler, M.S.
organization: R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc.
street & number: 241 East 4th Street
city or town: Frederick state: MD zip code: 21701
e-mail KKuranda@rcgoodwin.com
telephone: 301-694-0428
date: September 2018

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ

City or Vicinity: New Haven

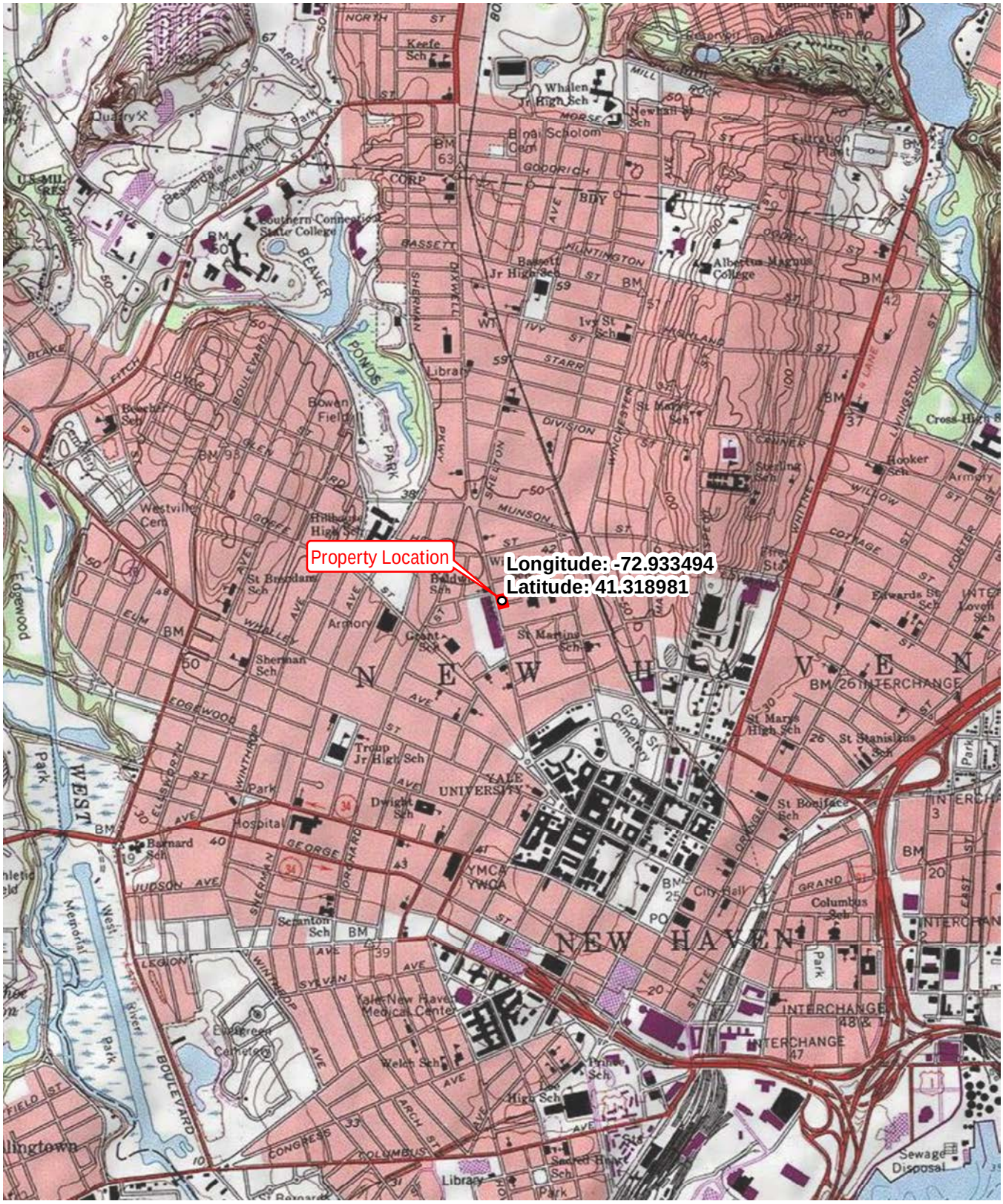
County: New Haven State: Connecticut

Photographer: Kathryn Kuranda

Date Photographed: November 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photograph #1 of 31: Southwest elevation. Camera facing NE.
Photograph #2 of 31: Setting along Dixwell Avenue. Camera facing S.
Photograph #3 of 31: West elevation. Camera looking E.
Photograph #4 of 31: Southwest elevation. Camera looking NE.
Photograph #5 of 31: South elevation. Camera facing N.
Photograph #6 of 31: South elevation. Camera facing N.
Photograph #7 of 31: Southeast elevation. Camera facing NW.
Photograph #8 of 31: Exterior detail. Camera facing NE.
Photograph #9 of 31. West elevation. Camera facing E.
Photograph #10 of 31: Northwest elevation. Camera facing SE.
Photograph #11 of 31 Northwest elevation. Camera facing SE.
Photograph #12 of 31.North elevation. Camera facing S.
Photograph #13 of 31: East entrance. Camera facing W.
Photograph #14 of 31: Exterior detail. Camera facing NW.
Photograph #15 of 31: South entrance. Camera facing N.
Photograph #16 of 31: South entrance. Camera facing NE.
Photograph #17 of 31: South entrance. Camera facing NW.
Photograph #18 of 31: West entrance. Camera facing NE.
Photograph #19 of 31: Exterior detail. Camera facing W.
Photograph #20 of 31: North handicapped entrance. Camera facing S.
Photograph #21 of 31: Exterior detail. Camera facing W.
Photograph #22 of 31: Exterior detail. Camera facing SE.
Photograph #23 of 31: Exterior detail. Camera facing SW.
Photograph #24 of 31: Exterior detail. Camera facing NW.
Photograph #25 of 31: Interior of main worship area. Camera facing SE.
Photograph #26 of 31: Interior window detail, main worship area. Camera facing NW.
Photograph #27 of 31: Interior, view from nave toward chancel. Camera facing NE.
Photograph #28 of 31: Interior, nave window detail. Camera facing SW.
Photograph #29 of 31: Interior, side chapel, main worship area. Camera facing NW.
Photograph #30 of 31: Interior, lower level assembly hall. Camera facing N.
Photograph #31 of 31: Interior pier detail, lower level. Camera facing NE.



N
W E
S

MSR: 1:24000
UTM 18N / NAD 83 (M)

FEET
0 1,000 2,000

METERS
0 200 400

Service Layer Credits: Copyright:© 2013 National Geographic Society, i-cubed; USGS New Haven Quad (rev. '82, pub. '85)

National Register Boundary

Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church
217 Dixwell Avenue
New Haven, Connecticut

Quad Locator

Figure 11

R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc. 241 East Fourth Street, Suite 100 Frederick, Maryland 21701

N
W E
S

MSR: 1:600
UTM 18N / NAD 83 (M)

FEET
0 25 50

METERS
0 10 20

Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

National Register Boundary

Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church
217 Dixwell Avenue
New Haven, Connecticut

Current Aerial Overview

Figure 12

R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc. 241 East Fourth Street, Suite 100 Frederick, Maryland 21701


217
Dixwell Ave.
Congregational
United Church
of Christ
Founded 1820


Congr al
United rch
of Christ
1820


217
Dixwell Ave.
Congregational
United Church
of Christ
Founded 1630


217
Dixwell Ave.
Congregational
United Church
of Christ
founded 1820


217
Dixwell Ave.
Congregational
United Church
of Christ
founded 1820


Rejoicing in Faith and Fellowship


Rejoicing in Faith and Fellowship


217
Dixwell Ave.
Congregational
United Church
of Christ
founded 1820
NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Dream.


Dream


EXIT
PRIDE IN OUR PAST,
FAITH IN OUR FUTURE


EXIT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination
Property Name:	Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ
Multiple Name:	
State & County:	CONNECTICUT, New Haven

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
10/15/2018	11/5/2018	11/20/2018	11/29/2018	

Reference number:	SG100003148
Nominator:	State

Reason For Review:

__ Appeal	__ PDIL	__ Text/Data Issue
__ SHPO Request	__ Landscape	__ Photo
__ Waiver	__ National	__ Map/Boundary
__ Resubmission	__ Mobile Resource	__ Period
X Other	__ TCP	__ Less than 50 years
	X CLG	

__X__ Accept _____ Return _____ Reject **11/29/2018** Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The property is an important example of Brutalist design by a major mid-century modern Connecticut architect, John Johansen. The justification under Community Planning and Development is due to its role as a major surviving element of New Haven's aggressive and well-funded urban renewal program. Although the New Haven urban renewal plans for the target neighborhood (Dixwell) for which this church was associated were only partially completed (and has been altered), its significance is well documented in this nomination.

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Roger Reed Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2278 Date 11/29/18

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

Received JS
6/18/18

June 13. 2018

Jenny Scofield, National Register Coordinator

State Historic Preservation Office

450 Columbus Blvd, Suite 5

Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Ms. Scofield,

I am Historian Emerita, and a lifelong member of the Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. My late parents and other family members were members of Dixwell before me.

We are proud and thankful that our church will be 200 years old in 2020. That is no small achievement. The church was founded in 1820 by Simeon Jocelyn and 24 former slaves. Mr. Jocelyn founded the African Ecclesiastical Society. The Society met at various homes throughout the New Haven area until establishing itself in a building on Temple Street. In 1829, the Society was formally recognized by the United African Society as a Congregational Church. Mr. Jocelyn and his brother Nathaniel, played significant roles in the Underground Railroad, and the Amistad Incident, 1839.

In the 20th century, Dixwell Church was known for its leadership of its pastors and members in being on the forefront of advocacy for justice and equality for all people. In 1942, The Dixwell Community House became a reality at 98 Dixwell Avenue under the leadership of Rev. Edward Goin. It is notable that the Rev. Dr. Edwin R. Edmonds, who served as pastor from 1959 t0 1994 served as Chair of the New Haven Board of Education for a period of time. The first African-American mayor of the city of New Haven was John Daniels, a Deacon of the church. During this period, the church built affordable housing (the Florence Virtue Homes, named for another of its Deacons), and created the Dixwell Creative Arts Center.

The church has had 3 locations: Temple St. Church, 1824-1886; 100 Dixwell Avenue, 1886-1969, and its present location, 217 Dixwell Avenue, since 1969. The present building is known for the architecture of the redevelopment era. The church recently was awarded a Landmark Plaque by the New Haven Preservation Trust.

In this the 21st century, our church, its leaders and members continue to be a beacon of vision, hope, and faith for the future. The current leadership of Rev. Frederick Streets, and the membership continue to strive for a better community and a better world. Education of our youth is and always has been a priority of the Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church, UCC.

Thank you for this consideration.

Sincerely, Margo Johnson-Taylor

Margo Johnson-Taylor

Historian Emerita

Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church, UCC

NEW HAVEN HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
165 Church Street, 5th Floor, New Haven, Connecticut 06510

June 15, 2018

Ms. Jenny Scofield
National Register Coordinator
State Historic Preservation Office
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford CT 06103

Re: 217 Dixwell Avenue, New Haven CT
Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ

Dear Ms. Scofield:

The New Haven Historic District Commission received a copy of your letter to Reverend Frederick Streets informing him that the Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ will be considered for nomination by the State Historic Preservation Office for addition to the National Register of Historic Places. We are pleased to see this significant structure recognized for its architectural quality and historic merit.

The New Haven Historic District Commission resolved at our regular meeting of June 13, 2018 to support the nomination. We believe that preservation is essential due not only to its superior representation of a particular architectural form but also due to its role as a defining physical feature of the surrounding area. Furthermore, the Brutalist nature of the structure and the era which it reflects provide an enduring reminder of a time of great hope and promise for the City of New Haven.

We believe that inclusion of this building in the National Register of Historic Places will not only preserve a building that is architecturally significant but will also serve to preserve the spirit of the time and circumstance which resulted in its construction.

Sincerely;

Katharine M. Learned
Chair

Cc John Herzan, New Haven Preservation Trust

Certified Local Government Program
Chief Elected Official's Comment Form
For Nominations to the National Register of Historic Places

District/Property Name: Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ

Address (For individual nomination): 217 Dixwell Avenue

As Chief Elected Official for: City of New Haven
(Name of Municipality)

I hereby:

☒ Approve
☐ Do not Approve

of the submission by the State Historic Preservation Officer of the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the district/property noted above to the National Park Service for review and listing of the resource on the National Register of Historic Places.

Name /Signature

Mayor
Title

June 7, 2018
Date

Connecticut
still revolutionary

Department of Economic and Community Development

State Historic Preservation Office

October 10, 2018

Mr. Roger Reed
National Park Service
National Register and National Historic Landmarks Programs
1849 C St., NW
Mail Stop 7228
Washington, D.C. 20240

Subject: Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ, New Haven County, Connecticut, National Register Nomination

Dear Mr. Reed:

The following National Register nomination materials are submitted for your review:

- Printed cover sheet
- CD of National Register text. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ to the National Register of Historic Places.
- 2 CDs of Digital Photographs
- 2 letters of support and 1 CLG response form.

This National Register nomination was approved by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Review Board (SRB) on June 22, 2018. The Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church Incorporated is the owner of the property and initiated the nomination with the State Historic Preservation Office. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to Reverend Frederick Streets as representative for the church, the mayor of New Haven, City Plan Department, New Haven Historic District Commission, and New Haven Preservation Trust. The City of New Haven is a Certified Local Government and the CLG response was positive; a letter from the Historic District Commission is enclosed along with a CLG response form from the City. The church historian also sent a letter in support of the nomination. No letters of objection were received. Six members of the church attended the SRB meeting in support of the nomination; two spoke about how the nomination will provide recognition to the history of the church.

If you have any questions, or if this office can be of assistance, please call Jenny Scofield at 860-500-2343.

Sincerely,

Jenny F. Scofield

Jenny F. Scofield,
National Register Coordinator

Enclosures