

HARTFORD SEMINARY FOUNDATION / UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT SCHOOL OF LAW ARCHITECTURAL WALKING TOUR

Companion Guide



Speaking at the dedication of the campus and its new buildings in 1927, Hartford Seminary Foundation President, Dr. William Douglas Mackenzie stated: “When the turf was cut for the first building, the Residence Hall for Women, in June 1921, only a small part of the money for that building was in sight. But by gifts from a very large number of people, almost all of them **citizens of Hartford and its neighborhood**, the whole cost of it, amounting to more than two hundred thousand dollars, has been paid.”

A New Campus for a Growing Institution

The foundations of the Hartford International University for Religion and Peace date to 1834 when the Theological Institute of Connecticut was established in East Windsor to prepare young men for the ministry. In 1865 the Institute moved to Hartford, first to Prospect Street (the location of the current Avery Memorial of the Wadsworth Atheneum), and then to Broad Street in 1879. By 1913, it joined with the School of Religious Education of Springfield and the Kennedy School of Missions. A new and larger campus was needed to accommodate the affiliation of several institutions under the banner of the Hartford Seminary Foundation.

A parcel of land measuring approximately 30 acres in Hartford's West End, abutting the North Branch of the Park River, was purchased from James J. Goodwin. The architect, Charles Collens (1873-1956), a graduate of Yale University and the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, was selected to design the new campus - perhaps chosen partly because of his connection to the old Hartford Collins family (spelled with an "i"). Collens described the plan as "Collegiate Gothic of Buckingham granite on rubble ashlar used on exterior walls and blends with the style. Windows are glazed with leaded glass." The construction of five of the six planned buildings began in 1921, and the campus and buildings were dedicated on May 17 and 18, 1927.

The entire concept of a north-facing open quadrangle was never fully realized, and the Hartford Seminary moved out of the campus in the 1970's and into its current building in 1981. The campus now houses the University of Connecticut School of Law.

This guide was written as a companion to a walking tour of the original six buildings of the Collens plan, but it would be disingenuous to exclude a mention of the modern structure in the middle of the present campus. Completed in 1996, the five story 120,000 square-foot Thomas J. Meskill Law Library is one of the largest Law Libraries in the country. Designed to be compatible with and sensitive to the original collegiate gothic style buildings of the 1920's, even the granite facade was cut from the same quarry as those on the original buildings. Following its completion, however, major construction flaws were discovered which necessitated massive remedial work in order to make the building structurally safe and water tight.

Historical Precedent



Gloucester Cathedral

Practiced in Europe from the mid-12th to the 16th century, and made possible by new structural technology and advanced engineering skills, Gothic architecture allowed for tall and massive structures with pointed arches and large windows. Tracery allowed in as much natural light as possible. Evolving styles throughout this period include the Cathedral of St. Dennis and Chartres Cathedral in France, Gloucester Cathedral in England, Segovia Cathedral in Spain, and Frankfurt Blackfriars in Germany, to name just a fraction of significant examples.

Timeline of Gothic Revival Architecture



c1820-c1860

English Perpendicular

Horizontal with one major tower or spire

Former St. John's Episcopal Church, Hartford, 1841



c1860-c1890

High Victorian

Eclectic Combination of styles and details

Trinity College Long Walk, Northam Tower, Hartford, 1883



c1900-c1940

English Vernacular

Return to English influence, but with superb craftsmanship

St. Michael's Church, Litchfield, 1921

Leading Gothic Revival Architects in Hartford



Ithiel Towne

Christ Church Cathedral (1827)



Edward Tuckerman Potter

Church of the Good Shepherd (1869)



Ralph Adams Cram

Nativity Chapel, Christ Church Cathedral (1907)



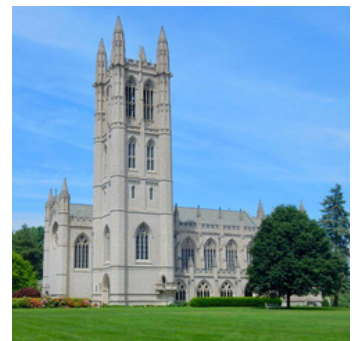
Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue

St. John's Episcopal Church, West Hartford (1909)



Charles Collens

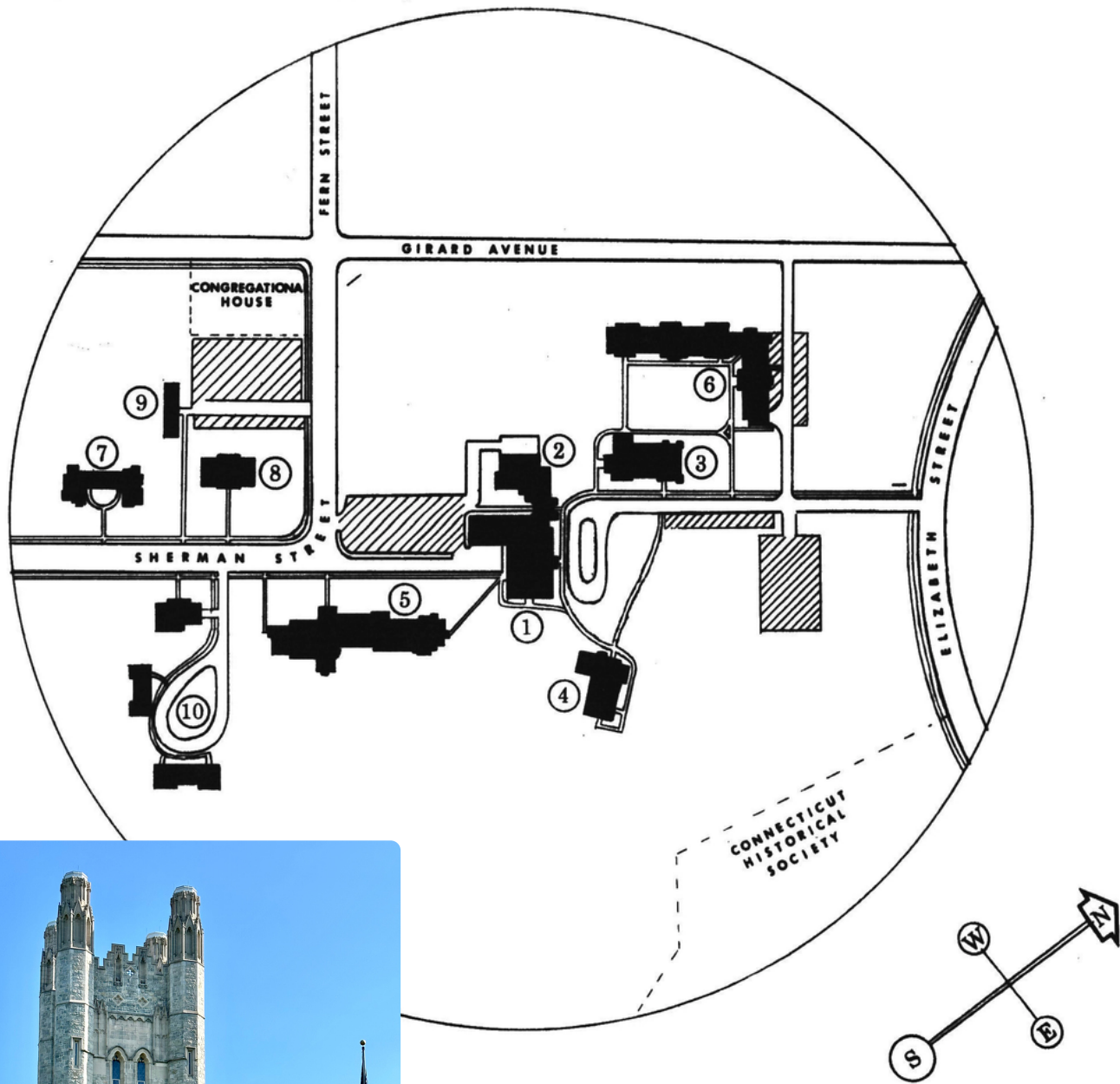
Gross Chapel, Asylum Hill Congregational Church (1939)
(Architect of the Hartford Seminary Foundation Campus)



Philip H. Frohman

Trinity College Chapel (1932)

Campus Map



Above: Map representing the campus of the Hartford Seminary Foundation. Numbers 1 through 6 are detailed on the opposite page. Numbers 7 through 9 have since been demolished to make room for the 1981 building by architect Richard Meier, which now houses the Hartford International University for Religion and Peace. Number 10 notes the Faculty Housing Loop. Insert: Avery and Gillett Halls today.



1. Avery Hall

Housing the Case Memorial Library and "temporarily" housing the Kennedy School of Missions



2. Gillett Hall

Connected to the west side of Avery Hall, dedicated in 1955 to complete the original campus complex



3. Hartranft Hall

Constructed for use by the Theological Seminary and as a chapel for all schools



4. Knight Hall

Opened in January, 1926 as classrooms and offices for the School of Religious Education



5. Mackenzie Hall

Construction began in 1921 and opened in 1924 as the Women's Student Dormitory



6. Hosmer Hall

Constructed for the Men's Student Dormitory and Refectory (rear of building facing Girard Avenue)

Architectural Terms

Ashlar: The finest stone masonry unit, finely hewn or squared stone which can be dressing for a wall face of rubble or brick.

Buckingham Granite: An engagement announcement in the Glastonbury column of the "Hartford Times" (1928) noted that the groom was employed by the "Buckingham Granite Quarry". Buckingham was a subsection of Glastonbury, most likely the Carline Quarry which produced granite gneiss.

Corbel: A structural piece of stone protruding from a wall to carry specific weight.

Crenel: The space between two merlons.

Crenellation: Any of the embrasures alternating with merlons in a battlement.

Embrasure: An opening with sides flaring outward in a wall or parapet of a fortification usually for allowing the firing of cannon.

Gargoyle: A spout in the form of a grotesque human or animal figure projecting from a roof gutter to throw rainwater clear of a building.

Gothic Arch: Also called a pointed arch or ogival arch, a Gothic arch is one with a pointed crown, whose two curving sides meet at a relatively sharp angle pointed upward at the top of the arch. This architectural element was particularly important in Gothic architecture.



Ashlar (Hartranft Hall)



Gargoyle (Mackenzie Hall)



Gothic Arch (Avery Hall)



Crenellations (Hartranft Hall)



Grotesques (Below the parapet, Knight Hall)



Oriel Window (Interior, Knight Hall)



Quoining (Avery Hall)

Grotesque: A style of decorative art characterized by fanciful or fantastic human and animal forms often interwoven with foliage or similar figures that may distort the natural into absurdity, ugliness, or caricature.

Merlon: The solid upright section of a battlement, sometimes pierced by narrow vertical embrasures (a crenellated parapet).

Oriel Window: A window or set of windows arranged in a bay which protrudes from an upper floor braced by a bracket or corbel. Meant to allow light to enter from various directions.

Parapet: A low protective wall along the edge of a roof.

Quatrefoils: A shielded flower-like rounded shape typical in Islamic and African architecture.

Quoining: Masonry blocks at the corner of a wall which may provide strength to a wall of inferior stone or merely to add aesthetic detail suggesting permanence.

Rubble: Pieces of rough or undressed stone used in building walls, especially for filling cavities.

Tracery: Ornamental stone work separating glass in windows.



Tracery (Knight Hall)

Sources and Credits

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10. Thanks to Marie Rovero, acquisitions and cataloging, Hartford International University for Religion and Peace for research assistance and documents

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