

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN COLLEGE: A GUIDE TO THE STONE ORNAMENT

PATRICK L. PINNELL
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Front cover: Benjamin Franklin College, view north into Nyburg Baker Court toward the dining hall and servery. Peter Aaron/Otto.

Back cover: Benjamin Franklin College quincunx board ornament on the north facade of the Head of College house. Peter Aaron/Otto.

Design: Robert A.M. Stern Architects, 2017

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Benjamin Franklin College
Yale University, New Haven, CT, 06511

The stone ornament on Benjamin Franklin College and Pauli Murray College is intended to create a “memory theater” of the ideas, objects, buildings, practices, and people important to the history of New Haven and Yale. Visiting the colleges, there is no single path to be followed in sequence. Instead the commemorative plaques are intended to be seen and wondered about, both individually and in local groups, and to act as motivating prompts illuminating select aspects of the long history and fascinating interactions between the city and Yale.

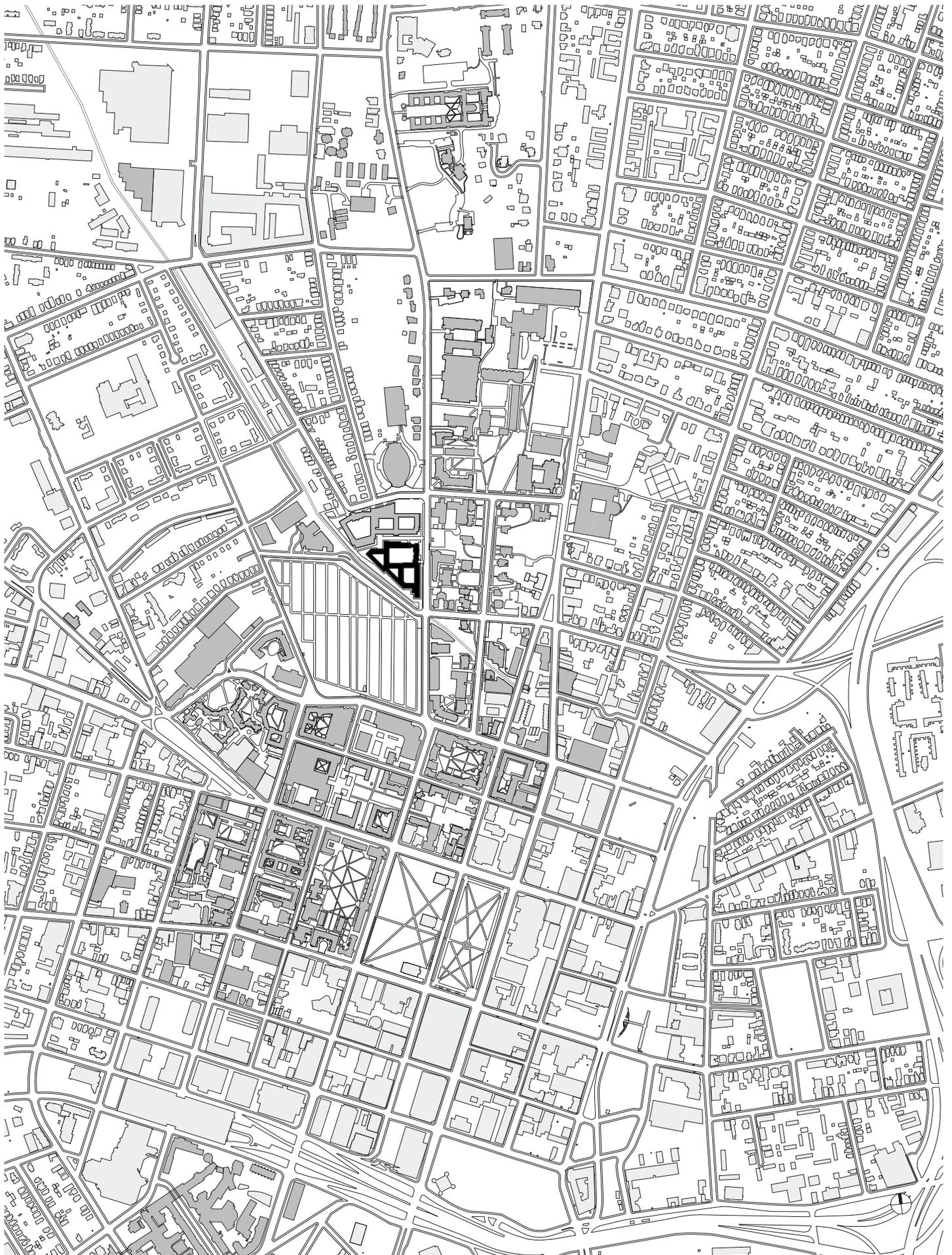
The process of topic selection and ornamental design made and carved in stone was reasonably straightforward. At the outset, Patrick Pinnell was given two sets of documents. The first, the extensive results of several Yale focus groups about whom and what to include in the program which was worked out before the colleges were named, and second, the plan and elevation drawings from the office of Robert A.M. Stern Architects.

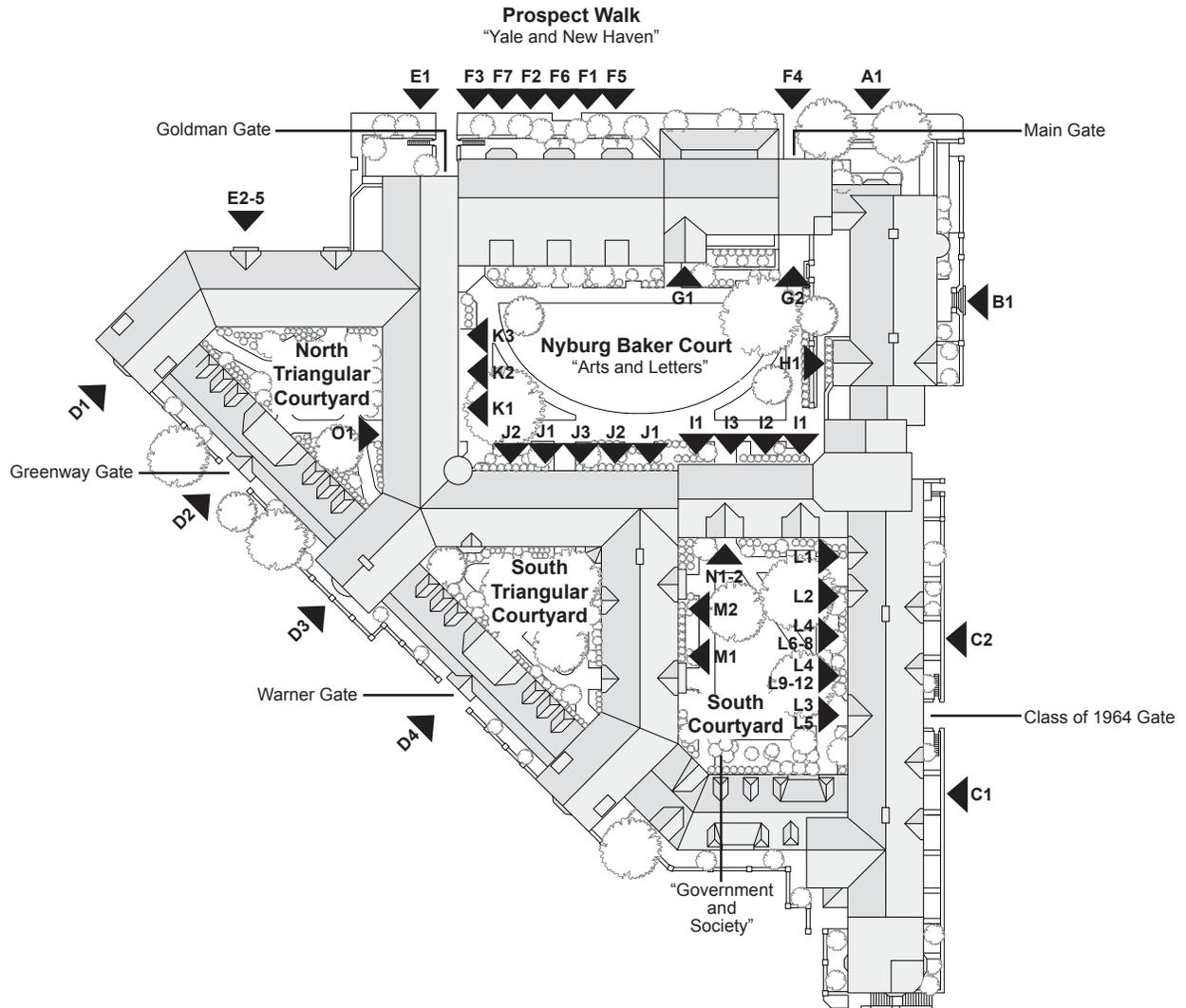
In designing the ornaments, Pinnell decided that rather than take responsibility for justifying the choices from the focus group topics, it would be best to accept them all, counting the number of courtyards and exterior facades on the colleges and distributing the topics between them. The larger courtyards and Prospect Walk came to represent meta-themes: “Science and Technology,” “Communication,” “Ways of Thinking,” “Arts and Letters,” “Government and Society,” and “Yale and New Haven.” This enabled the production process to get started.

RAMSA’s drawings specified the location and size of all stone pieces and Dimeo Construction, the general contractor, planned the sequence in which the courts and facades would be constructed. Pinnell, basing his work on that of the focus groups, proposed ornament guided by the different themes to a Yale Facilities committee led by Alice Raucher, Yale’s senior architect and major projects planner from 2007 to 2015. If approved, the ornament was developed and accurately drawn with shadows to illustrate appropriate depths. The drawings were used by Traditional Cut Stone in Ontario to create plasticene maquettes that would be scanned and converted into digital point cloud models. CNC machines did about eighty percent of the carving, which was then finished by hand before the ornament pieces were shipped to a storage warehouse in New Haven. Despite the complexity of themes, production, and construction, the entire process ran smoothly.

The hope, on the part of all involved, is that we have helped make Benjamin Franklin College and Pauli Murray College places that keep alive the memory and ideas of Yale and New Haven.

Patrick L. Pinnell
Robert A.M. Stern





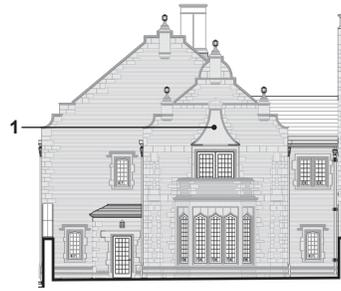
LEGEND

- | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|---|
| A | 1 Quincunx board | I | 1 Allium / nine squares
2 Y leaves and buds |
| B | 1 Gothic triglyph using Yale College initials | J | 1 Y leaves and buds
2 Acanthus / berry / angry birds
3 Allium / nine squares |
| C | 1, 2 Beatrix Farrand (1872–1959; Hon. MA 1926) emblems | K | 1, 2, 3 River Lethe / forgetting |
| D | 1 Yale and Towne lock
2 Canal Railway
3 Grove Street Cemetery
4 Farmington Canal–Canal Railway | L | 1 Yale-connected planning I, social – Bushnell
2 Yale-connected planning II, solitary – Olmsted
3 Yale-connected planning III, mechanical – Moses
4 Gothic panels
5 Angelus Novus / Walter Benjamin
6 William Howard Taft (1857–1930; BA 1878)
7 Gerald R. Ford (1913–2006; LLB 1941)
8 Yale in the White House
9 George H.W. Bush (1924– ; BA 1948)
10 William Jefferson Clinton (1946– ; JD 1973)
11 George W. Bush (1946– ; BA 1968)
12 Yale in the White House |
| E | 1 Old Campus, 19th century vendors
2 New Haven products, US coin minted in New Haven
3 New Haven products, woman’s corset
4 New Haven products, A.C. Gilbert Erector Set “G” | M | 1 Phoenix and dragon / Eastern thought
2 Daedalus / Western thought |
| F | 1 Villalpando I / Encampment
2 New Haven Seal
3 Villalpando II / Temple
4 Benjamin Franklin College Main Gate
5 Connecticut State Capitol in New Haven I, 1717–1763
6 Connecticut State Capitol in New Haven II, 1763–1829
7 Connecticut State Capitol in New Haven III, 1829–1889 | N | 1 Crown of laurel / Apollonian
2 Bunch of grapes / Dionysian |
| G | 1 Arts and letters
2 Time and change | O | 1 Oikos / Yale House / ecology |
| H | 1 Mnemosyne / Memory, mother of the Muses | | |

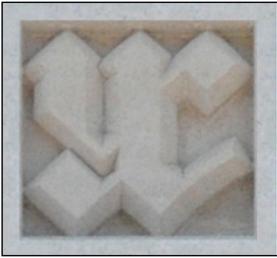


A1
Quincunx board

The quincunx board is a device for demonstrating how the curve of a normal random distribution is obtained; a ball dropped in at the top will randomly fall striking pegs at each level and, at each strike, going one of two directions. The ornament is an emblem of statistical mathematics used by the social and natural sciences which populate this region of the campus. The piece, suggested by the Dutch gable end of the Head of College house, hybridizes a garden trellis with the quincunx board and shows a normal distribution "bell curve" inscribed beneath the assembly.

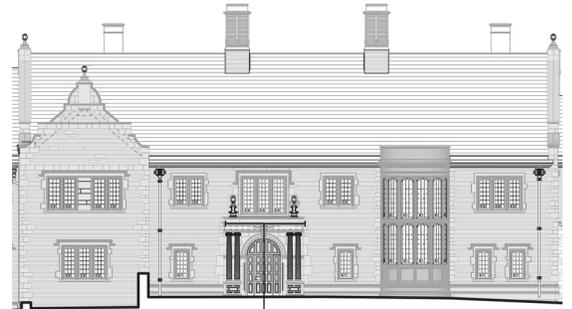


ELEVATION A



B1
Gothic triglyph using Yale College initials

Above the doorway of the Head of College house is a frieze band of ten glyphs composed of YC initials in the style of broad-penned medieval calligraphy.

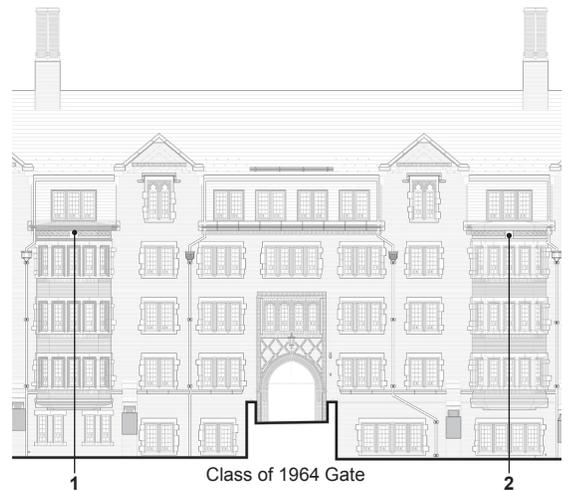


ELEVATION B

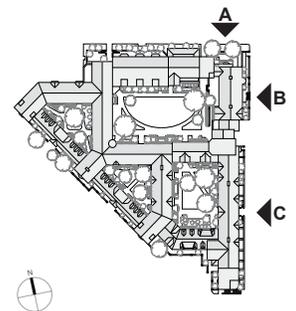


C1, C2
Beatrix Farrand (1872–1959; Hon. MA 1926) emblems

Beatrix Farrand was the consulting landscape gardener to Yale, responsible for the landscape design and plant selection of many of its public spaces. Tradition accords her a role in the conception of the "moats" critical to the functional and urbanistic success of the residential colleges. Symmetrically flanking Benjamin Franklin College's Class of 1964 Gate, the two mirror-image plaques show Farrand's initials and a cross-section of the moat with symbolic ivy.



ELEVATION C





D1
Yale and Towne lock

Located at the corner of Canal and Lock Streets, this plaque commemorates the agri-industrial forces at work in the Canal Era. The Farmington Canal was designed to run from New Haven harbor north through Farmington, CT, to Northampton, in western Massachusetts—in essence to draw trade and industry away from the Connecticut River and Hartford. The plaque shows the swinging doors of a canal lock. Here, as an emblem of the college and New Haven acting together, a Yale and Towne lock (founded by Linus Yale, Jr., a distant relative of Elihu Yale) keeps the canal lock doors shut.



D3
Grove Street Cemetery

Prominent on the center gable facing Canal Street, this plaque acknowledges the importance of the Grove Street Cemetery (across the street). Founded by James Hillhouse (1754–1832; BA 1773) and others in 1796, the cemetery is historically significant nationally for its role in pioneering the rural garden cemetery type and locally for its role in the planning of New Haven. Flanking the date of establishment are two hourglasses, symbols of mortality, which form the supports for a traditional table-tomb. An ornamental moth, one traditional emblem of the soul, rests on the front gable of the cemetery's gatekeeper house.



D4 **Farmington Canal–Canal Railway: New Haven & Northampton Railway plaque**

Canal Railway Stock Certificate and cameos of Joseph Earl Sheffield (1793–1882) and Alexander Catlin Twining (1801–1884; BA 1820).

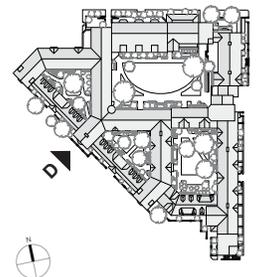
New Haven notables James Hillhouse (1754–1832; BA 1773) and Eli Whitney (1765–1825; BA 1792) had great expectations for the canal they named for a neighboring town. The first boat on the canal, the James Hillhouse, left Farmington in June of 1828, but railroads would soon eclipse the canals. The founders and their supporters' best efforts couldn't keep the canal from being repurposed for rail use in 1846 by The New Haven and Northampton Company and Joseph Earl Sheffield and Henry Farnam (1803–1883) led the project to install tracks in the canal bed and towpath. After the Civil War, it was clear that The New Haven & Northampton Company would eventually be subsumed under the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company.



ELEVATION D

Greenway Gate

Warner Gate





E1
Old Campus, 19th century vendors

The 18th century Brick Row was gradually demolished in the post-Civil War years and replaced with Durfee and Lawrence Halls and others to form what came to be called the Old Campus. Although a walled-in enclave separate from New Haven's streets, New Haveners roamed through the Old Campus to sell things and provide services. Eminent among them were the candy sellers George Joseph Hannibal, L.W. Silliman, and the blind "Candy Sam," Theodore Ferris, who often came with his wife. They, and other vendors and characters, are affectionately remembered in a chapter of Clarence Deming's (1848–1913; BA 1872) *Yale Yesterdays* published in 1915. This plaque continues a theme of New Haven foods and eateries begun on the elevations of Pauli Murray College, diagonally opposite this piece.



E 2
**New Haven products,
 US coin minted in New Haven**

This plaque shows one of the first US coins, a copper penny with thirteen interlinked circles symbolic of the first states. The coin was designed and minted in New Haven in 1786.



E 3
**New Haven products,
 woman's corset**

In the 19th century and well into the 20th century, New Haven was a center of undergarment manufacturing and the home of the first US corset manufacturer, the Strouse, Adler Company. Several former factories still stand in the Wooster Square neighborhood.



E 4
**New Haven products,
 A.C. Gilbert Erector Set "G"**

Alfred Carlton Gilbert (1884–1961; BA 1909), athlete, magician, and inventor, studied medicine at Yale. In 1913 he invented the Erector Set, a popular children's game manufactured in New Haven. This ornament piece shows Gilbert's initial made from Erector components.



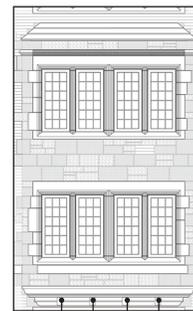
E 5
**New Haven products,
 first telephone exchange**

George Willard Coy (1836–1915) designed and built the world's first commercial switchboard in New Haven in January 1878. This piece is an abstract representation of the rotating connector and contact points with a contemporary earpiece.

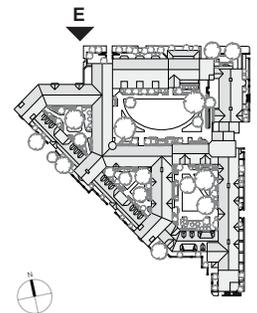


ELEVATION E

BAY E

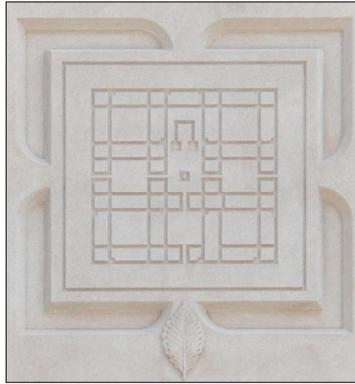


ENLARGED BAY E





F1
Villalpando I / Encampment



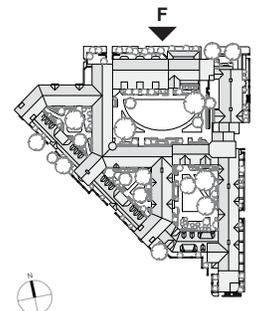
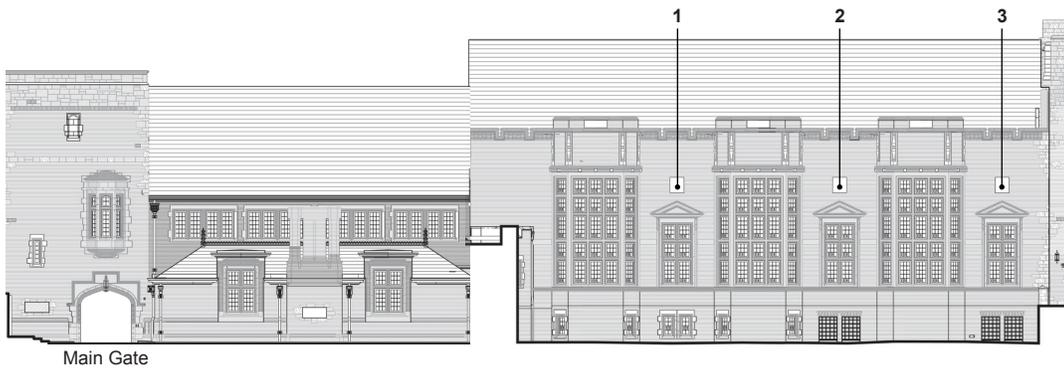
F3
Villalpando II / Temple

Juan Bautista Villalpando (1552–1608) was a Spanish Jesuit who published reconstruction drawings of the Camp of the Tribes of Israel in the Wilderness and Solomon's Temple of Jerusalem. Both were based on a diagram of a square subdivided into nine smaller, equal squares. One explanation of the origin of New Haven's Nine Square Plan of 1638 is that Theophilus Eaton (1590–1658) and John Davenport (1597–1670), the colony's leaders, encountered Villalpando's drawings while in exile in Holland in the 1620s at which time Holland was part of the Spanish empire. Thinking in terms of the doctrine of typological repetition, popular in Calvinism, they used Villalpando's drawings as the basis of their town plan for New Haven, implying that the site was sacred and representing the planting of tribes in the wilderness.



F2
New Haven Seal

The seal of the City of New Haven shows a helmeted warrior above the image of the "Great Shippe" or Ghost Ship, the vessel filled with local products and great hopes of profit sent to England in 1646. The ship vanished but was supposedly seen in a vision in the clouds over New Haven Harbor in 1648, a sign from God that the ship was gone forever. The seal can be interpreted as asserting strength in the face of difficulty. This is the center piece in a set of three.



ELEVATION F



F4
Benjamin Franklin College Main Gate



F5
Connecticut State Capitol in New Haven I, 1717–1763

In granting a charter to the Connecticut Colony in 1662, Charles II redefined New Haven, formerly a separate colony, as part of Connecticut. First a county seat and then in 1701, as part of the political bargain chartering the Collegiate School that became Yale, New Haven was named co-capitol with Hartford. Sessions of the assembly met alternately in the two towns. From 1701 until 1717, New Haven sessions were in the Meetinghouse on what is now the site of Center Church. In 1717 the town constructed the building represented in this piece, essentially a standard dwelling house with a service wing located on the northwest side of the Green. The structure is shown framed in an arch modeled on a pedestal on Rome's Capitoline Hill, center of ancient Roman governance. This piece and its two siblings are on the Prospect Walk facade of the Benjamin Franklin College dining hall.



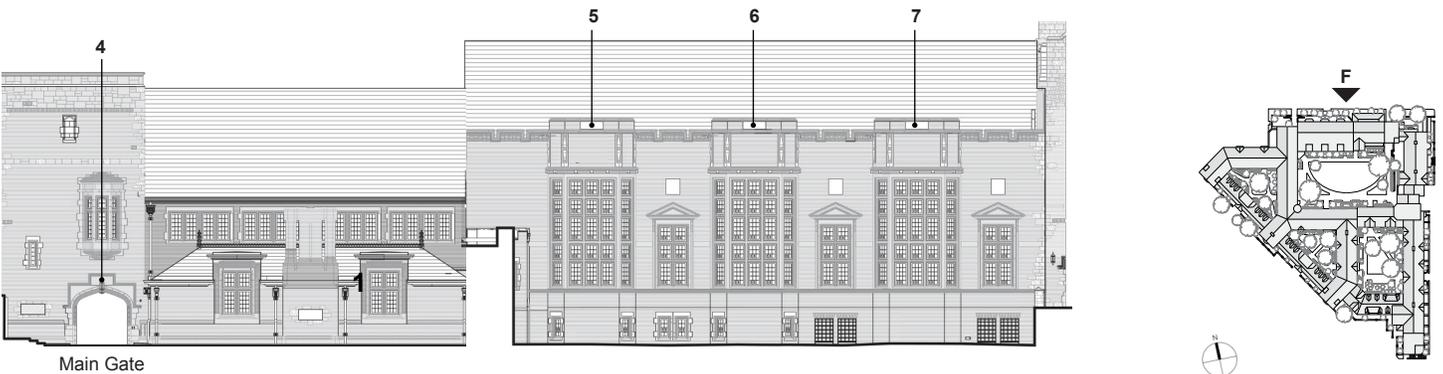
F6
Connecticut State Capitol in New Haven II, 1763–1829

The second Connecticut Capitol building in New Haven was on the Green, sited between Trinity (Episcopal) Church and Center (Congregational) Church. It was constructed before the center path across the Green was formalized as Temple Street and before the elm planting campaign initiated by James Hillhouse (1754–1832; BA 1773). The imposing two-and-a-half story brick structure with four chimney stacks and a central cupola was broadside to the passing traffic, like the Congregational Church, and still in meetinghouse form like Connecticut Hall (1752).



F7
Connecticut State Capitol in New Haven III, 1829–1889

Connecticut's third and last New Haven Capitol was designed by Town & Davis. An early, impressive example of Greek Revival, it was amphiprostyle, equipped with two open but covered entry porches each with six monumental Doric columns. Curiously, the building's main axis was still parallel with the nearby College Street at the top of the Green. The site was released for use when Grove Street Cemetery opened in 1796. Not all graves were moved to Grove Street, so this capitol building was constructed over the remains of a century and a half of New Haven citizens. When it was determined in a close statewide vote in 1875 to make Hartford the sole state capitol, the building lingered on for a while as the Art and Industry Museum before it was demolished in 1889.



ELEVATION F



G1
Arts and letters

A door head on the north facade of Nyburg Baker Court holds emblems of the overall courtyard theme commemorating the arts. Flanking an open book are a sculptor's hammer, painter's brush, architect's compass, ink bottle, pen, flute, drumsticks, and jaw harp.



G2
Time and change

Passageway ornament on the north facade of Nyburg Baker Court.

The left side of the arch is inscribed with the words *But Time and Change shall naught avail*, the second to last line of Yale's alma mater "Bright College Years."

The right side of the portal is inscribed with *To break the friendships formed at Yale*, the final words of "Bright College Years."



ELEVATION G



H1
Mnemosyne / Memory, mother of the Muses

On the east facade of Nyburg Baker Court there is only one ornamental piece, located high on the end gable of the Head of College house. In Greek myth, long studied at Yale, Zeus fathered the nine Muses, each symbolic of one form of rhythmic public speech. Their mother was Memory, Mnemosyne. The piece shows Memory's Doric chiton robe, clipped to a large Yale Y with traditional scapulae pins. Her sandals are hung by their straps from the pins.



ELEVATION H



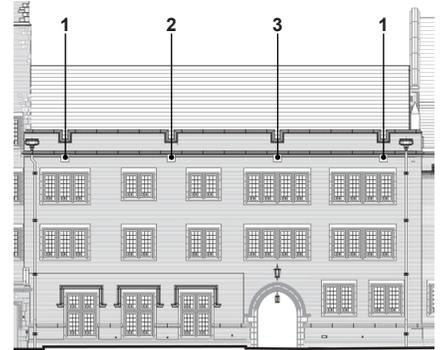
I1
Allium / nine squares



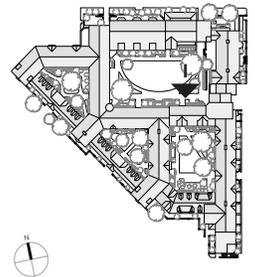
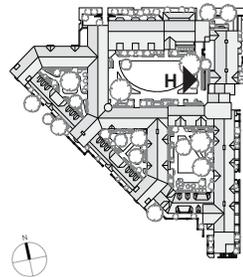
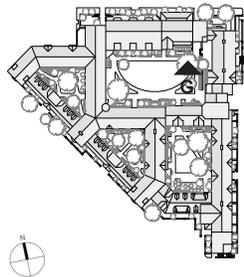
I2
Leaves and buds



I3
Acanthus / berry / angry birds



ELEVATION I





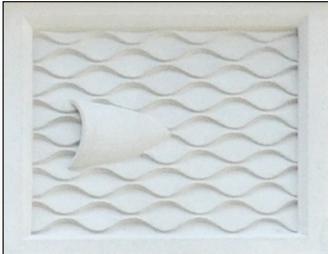
J1
Leaves and buds



J2
Acanthus / berry / angry birds



J3
Allium / nine squares



K1
River Lethe / forgetting

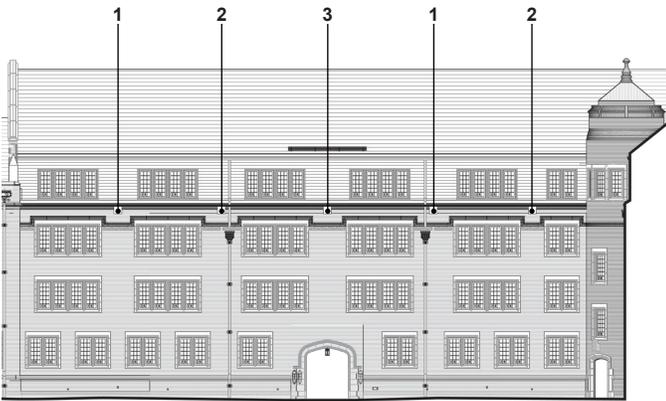


K2

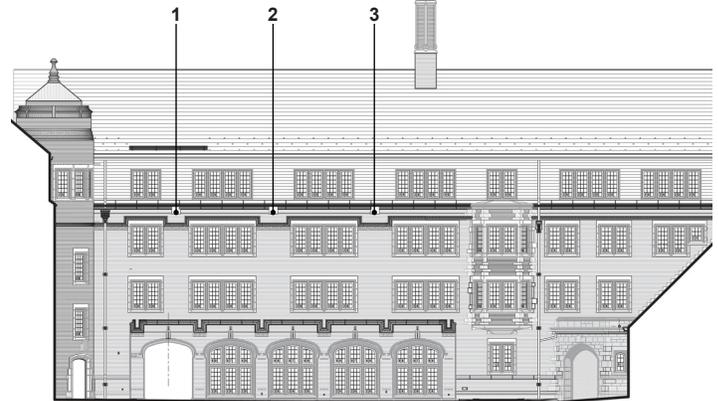


K3

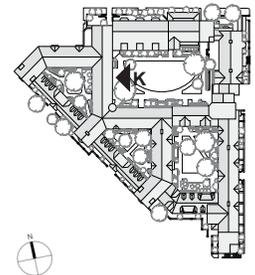
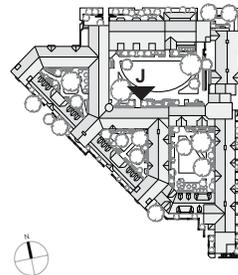
In a courtyard dominated by a portal carrying the lines *Time and Change shall naught avail / To break the friendships formed at Yale* from Yale's alma mater "Bright College Years," this group of ornamental plaques presents a graphic allegory of the loss of memory. According to Greek mythology, the newly dead drink a cup of water from the River Lethe to make them forget their lives and pass into the afterlife. The three panels show a cup immersed in a current of water which gradually fades in relief depth, from left to right across the three panels, ending in flat blankness. The three plaques face Mnemosyne / Memory, their opposite, across Nyburg Baker Court.



ELEVATION J



ELEVATION K



Three gable blocks on the east facade of South Courtyard depict American city plans. Although differing in their ideas regarding the relationships of human beings and societies to the natural world, all are propounded by planners with Yale connections.



L1
Yale-connected planning I, social – Bushnell

The plaque depicts the plan of Bushnell Park in Hartford. It is named in honor of Rev. Horace Bushnell (1802–1876; BA 1827) who advocated for parks, in and near cities, as places where various religious and ethnic groups could find harmony in spiritual recreation and activities. Parks, he thought, would reinvigorate societal institutions and be proper locations for civic buildings. Bushnell Park is shown with the footprints of Trinity College and the Connecticut Capitol. The plan is surrounded by pomegranates, a symbol of the cyclical return of renewal and growth, both human and natural.



L2
Yale-connected planning II, solitary – Olmsted

Frederick Law Olmsted (1822–1903) gave up a seat in the class of 1842 when poison sumac damaged his eyesight. Olmsted was a renowned pioneer in landscape architecture and advocated for parks as places in which individuals could recoup from the intense experience of cities. This piece shows Olmsted's "Greensward" plan for New York City's Central Park above a Roland, an oak tree on a mound, central and sacred to northern European medieval communities. The two, in turn, surmount an acorn, a symbol of individuality and growth.



L3
Yale-connected planning III, mechanical – Moses

Robert Moses (1888–1981; BA 1909) was a powerful advocate for infrastructure improvements to better the operation of cities and improve their citizens' lives by speeding access to the recreational countryside, for the most part, by automobile. This piece shows a plan of the New York City region overlaid with the highways and parkways for which Moses was responsible. Frieze bands above and below depict the Triborough Bridge and a cross-section of a typical parkway.



L4
Gothic panels



L5
Angelus Novus / Walter Benjamin

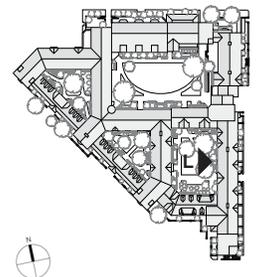
Above the Benjamin Franklin College passageway to Prospect Street, in a courtyard with general themes of government and society, this piece invokes the long tradition of stylized portal guardian figures. But here, more specifically, the ninth thesis of the German philosopher and critic Walter Benjamin's (1892–1940) "Theses on the Philosophy of History" is recalled:

A Klee painting named Angelus Novus shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

The figures are drawn to recall Leonardo da Vinci's famous *Vitruvian Man* and angelic figures by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Louis Sullivan, and others, but with an unbalanced posture showing them blown by a wind beyond control.



ELEVATION L



On the base of two bays on the east elevation of South Courtyard, five blocks commemorate Yale-connected Presidents of the United States, alternating with a repeated Y in the White House block.



L 6
William Howard Taft (1857–1930; BA 1878)

William Howard Taft, 27th President, served from 1909 to 1913, when he was appointed professor of law and legal history at the Yale Law School. Taft was the 10th Chief Justice of the United States (1921–1930), the only person to have held both offices.



L 7
Gerald R. Ford (1913–2006; LLB 1941)

Gerald R. Ford, 38th President, served from 1974 to 1977, following the resignation of Richard Nixon.



L 8,12
Yale in the White House

As a placeholder for possible additional Yale-connected Presidents, the block shows a simplified outline of the William Thornton plan of the President's mansion, now known as the White House. It is set within a section of Pierre Charles L'Enfant's 1791 drawing of the original Plan of the City of Washington.



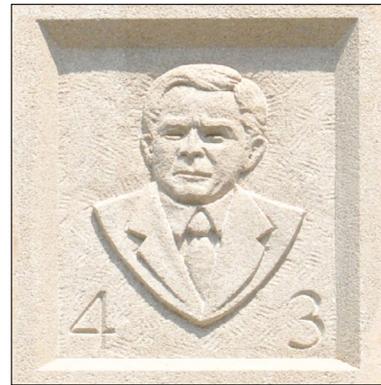
L 9
George H. W. Bush (1924– ; BA 1948)

George H. W. Bush, 41st President, served from 1989 to 1993. He is descended from families with long histories of Yale connections.



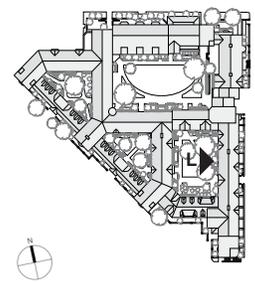
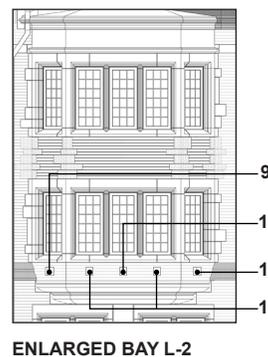
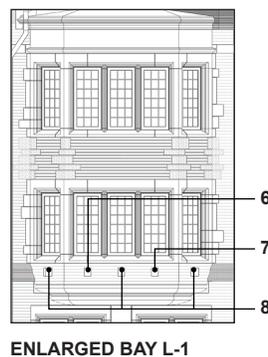
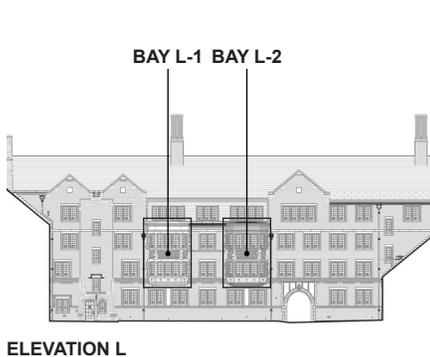
L 10
William Jefferson Clinton (1946– ; JD 1973)

Bill Clinton, 42nd President, served from 1993 to 2001.



L 11
George W. Bush (1946– ; BA 1968)

George W. Bush, 43rd President, served from 2001 to 2009.





M1
Phoenix and dragon / Eastern thought

The general themes of the South Courtyard are government and society (internationalism, history and politics, and ways of organizing human settlement). Contributing to that, the two identically-framed openings on the west facade—the southern above a passageway, the northern above a doorway—are treated as a complementary pair. Both refer to cultural emblems of Eastern and Western thought. In Chinese art, dragons are typically portrayed as serpentine creatures with four legs. Phoenixes are long-tailed birds born anew in flame. In yin and yang terminology, a dragon is yang and complements a yin phoenix. The two are complementary opposites, interconnected and interdependent. Many physical dualities—water/fire, male/female, light/dark, high/low, hot/ cold—are traditionally regarded as embodying the yin-yang principle. This plaque depicts a phoenix, looking upward, and a dragon, facing down, together on a wide scroll. They flank the circular yin-yang symbol. The ornament was conceived to be paired with Daedalus / Western thought, on the same courtyard facade.

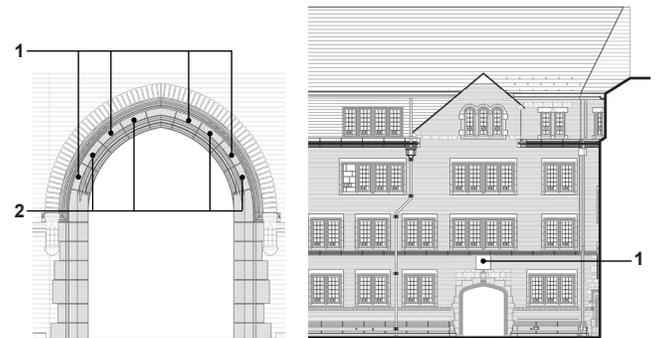


M2
Daedalus / Western thought

Daedalus ("clever worker" in Greek) was the omni-skilled craftsman, artist, and inventor in Greek myth. He created the Labyrinth to hide and house the Minotaur, the half-human, half-bull offspring of Poseidon and Pasiphaë, wife of King Minos of Crete. Eventually, to escape from the island of Crete, Daedalus made wings for himself and his son Icarus, attached to their bodies with beeswax; Icarus flew too close to the sun, lost his wings and died in the sea. Daedalus also invented the lost wax process of making metal sculpture using, as a demonstration, a honeycomb and the bees themselves. This piece shows a maze and bees set in a frame which is both a Cretan beehive tomb and a Gothic arch flanked by a hexagonal honeycomb pattern.



ELEVATION M



PASSAGEWAY N

ELEVATION O



N1
Crown of laurel / Apollonian

Dating to ancient Greece, the custom continues today of awarding the winners of various kinds of competitions with a laurel wreath. The four voussoir blocks in the arch symbolize the Apollonian side of college life.



N2
Bunch of grapes / Dionysian

Dating to ancient Greece, grapes have symbolized revelry. The four voussoir blocks in the arch symbolize the Dionysian side of college life.



O1
Oikos / Yale House / ecology

This piece is a plaque over the portal leading from the North Triangular Courtyard to Nyburg Baker Court. Shown at the top of the plaque is a map of the world (in Robinson Projection). Below, and visually supporting it, are two Yale Y's. Together they form the shape of an archetypal peaked-roof house. Within the form is the Greek term for "house," oikos. It is the etymological source of the term "ecology." Yale's home is the world of which it must take care.

