

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	<p>The Yale Center for British Art, an iconic modern building in New Haven, Connecticut, designed by the American architect Louis I. Kahn to house Paul Mellon's extraordinary gift to Yale University, reopened to the public on May 11, 2016, after completing the third phase of a multiyear building conservation project.</p> <p>Led by Knight Architecture, LLC, this was the most complex building conservation work undertaken at the Center to date, comprising the entire structure, from roof to basement. It renewed the Center's public galleries, internal systems, spaces, and amenities, and has provided an opportunity to reimagine and reinstall the Center's renowned collections of more than five centuries of British art—the largest outside of the United Kingdom.</p>
PROJECT HISTORY	<p>After more than a decade of research on the history of the design and construction of Kahn's final building, the reopening of the Center marked the completion of a three-phase renovation plan. The first phase of work included the rehabilitation of the Center's exterior Lower Court (2008–2011) and extensive repairs to the adjacent Lecture Hall lobby (2011–2013). This was followed by two additional phases addressing the building's interior spaces: the second phase focused on refurbishing the areas used by the departments of Prints & Drawings and Rare Books & Manuscripts (2013); the third phase included enhancing the Center's public spaces (namely the galleries and Lecture Hall), extensive building-wide mechanical and electrical upgrades, and improvements to fire protection, security systems, and accessibility (2015–2016).</p>
LOCATION	<p>1080 Chapel Street, New Haven, CT 06520–8280 (corner of Chapel and High Streets)</p>
REOPENED	<p>May 11, 2016</p>
LEADERSHIP	<p>Amy Meyers, Director Constance Clement, Deputy Director Scott Wilcox, Deputy Director for Collections Matthew Hargraves, Chief Curator of Art Collections and Head of Collections Information and Access</p>
ARCHITECTS	<p>Louis I. Kahn Architects (1969–1974), architect Pellechia & Meyers Architects (1974–1977), successor architect</p>

CONSERVATION PROJECT

BUILDING **Knight Architecture, LLC**, architect
CONSERVATION **Peter Inskip + Peter Jenkins Architects Limited**, conservation architect
PROJECT **Yale University Office of Facilities**, project planner and manager
Turner Construction Company, construction manager

PROJECT COST The total cost of the three phases of the building conservation project is approximately \$33 million (provided by the Center’s endowment).

OVERALL AREA **114,153 square feet**
The Louis I. Kahn building on Chapel Street includes the Yale Center for British Art, five independent retail shops, a restaurant, and a shared exterior courtyard.

MUSEUM AREA **95,311 square feet (five stories)**

EXHIBITION AREA **29,100 square feet**
(second-, third-, and fourth-floor galleries: 25,600 square feet;
Entrance Court: 1,600 square feet; Library Court: 1,900 square feet)

DESIGN & PRINCIPAL MATERIALS The Center’s **concrete exterior structural frame**, featuring **matte steel and reflective glass** infill panels, confers a monumental presence in downtown New Haven. The **geometric five-floor interior** is designed around **two interior courtyards**, and comprised of a restrained palette of **natural materials**, including travertine, white oak, and Belgian linen. The majority of the Center’s intimate galleries were designed by Kahn to maximize **natural daylight**. The building’s design, materials, and skylit rooms provide an environment for the works of art that is simple and dignified.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

LONG GALLERY (FOURTH FLOOR) The **Long Gallery was transformed into a teaching and study gallery** as originally envisioned by Jules Prown, the Center’s founding director. Finishes were revived similarly to those found in the main galleries, circulation adjacent to public areas on the fourth floor was improved, and pogo walls (which had previously subdivided the space) were removed, allowing for an unobstructed view of the 140 foot-long space housing the collection in a floor-to-ceiling salon-style hang.

COLLECTIONS SEMINAR ROOM (FOURTH FLOOR) A **new Collections Seminar Room** was created from a former administrative office at the east end of the Long Gallery. New floor-to-ceiling white oak wall panels incorporate discreet yet flexible art display systems, which allow faculty, students, and visiting scholars to engage in close study of objects from the collection under diffused natural light. The room also features new custom white oak furniture and cabinetry, as well as updated electrical and telecommunications systems.

CONSERVATION PROJECT

GALLERIES (SECOND, THIRD, & FOURTH FLOORS)

The **public galleries on the second, third, and fourth floors were renewed and reconfigured** to preserve Kahn’s vision of intimate viewing spaces echoing the domestic setting of an English country house. Exterior walls were reinsulated and corrosion treated, the interior of the walls was rebuilt, and the display walls were refreshed with new natural Belgian linen. Worn synthetic carpeting was replaced with new wool carpet, existing white oak trim was refinished, and select damaged travertine floor tiles were repaired or replaced. Existing moveable gallery partitions, known as “pogo” walls, were replaced with new pogos, based closely on Kahn’s original design. A revitalized version of the original Chadwick modular gallery seating from the 1970s, which features an ergonomically correct seat height and fabric made from 100% British wool, has been introduced into the public galleries.

LIBRARY COURT (SECOND FLOOR)

Evoking the spirit of a Great Hall in an English country house and featuring the **iconic cylindrical stair tower**, the **three-story Library Court** is at the heart of the Center and links the galleries, **Reference Library and Archives**, and **Study Room**. The original white oak wall panels and wood flooring also were refurbished during the building conservation project.

ENTRANCE COURT (FIRST FLOOR)

The sun-bleached white oak wall panels of the **four-story Entrance Court**, the only top-lit space within the Center receiving unfiltered natural light, were refurbished in place and by hand using Greenguard Certified refinishing products.

LECTURE HALL (FIRST FLOOR)

Refurbished for the first time, the Lecture Hall features a completely renovated audiovisual system with state-of-the-art recording and presentation capabilities, new theatrical and house lighting, and enhanced Wi-Fi coverage. A central seating layout, which improves the original capacity of the Lecture Hall, was introduced to accommodate two hundred new fixed seats and five wheelchair and accessible spaces for a more comfortable patron experience. New stainless steel handrails and LED step lights flank the aisles for added safety. Worn carpeting and wood flooring were replaced to match the original materials.

CIRCULAR STAIRS

The **iconic concrete cylindrical staircase** now has improved patron accessibility and safety features, including a standardized height for steps, fire and smoke precautions, and improved emergency lighting.

FIRST FLOOR

A **new egress door** was added to the lobby, and an **accessible lift** was installed at the Center’s loading dock.

LOWER LEVEL

Improved patron amenities and accessibility, including the addition of new white oak storage lockers and two gender-neutral restrooms, were added in the basement lobby.

CONSERVATION PROJECT

INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

Major building infrastructure **improvements to mechanical, electrical, fire protection, telecommunication, and safety services** were implemented throughout the Center in order to expand resiliency, ensure the stability of the collections environment, and enhance the patron experience. The design team developed collaboratively a holistic approach to the infrastructure upgrades to meet the changing needs of the Center and conform to Kahn’s design principles regarding systems integration. Highlights of the upgrades include the following:

Fire Protection: New stainless steel sprinklers, fire pump, aspirating smoke detection system (VESDA) in the two interior courts, motorized fire shutters at the court openings

Electrical: New switchgear, digital lighting control system, rewiring of lighting circuits, emergency lighting control

HVAC: Rebuilding of air handling units in place, new digital control system, improved humidification and filtration system

Telecommunications: Improved Wi-Fi coverage to support the Center’s extensive exhibitions and educational programs

Security and Safety: Monitoring, motion detection, and access control

KEY DATES

1966	The gift of Paul Mellon’s British art collection to Yale University is announced
1969	Louis I. Kahn receives the commission to design the Yale Center for British Art
1973	Construction of the Center begins
MARCH 17, 1974	Louis I. Kahn dies
1974–1976	Pellecchia & Meyers Architects complete building project (Pellecchia & Meyers worked in Kahn’s office)
APRIL 15, 1977	The Center opens to the public
2008–2013 (PHASE 1)	The Center’s exterior Lower Court and the adjacent Lecture Hall lobby are refurbished
2011	<i>Louis I. Kahn and the Yale Center for British Art: A Conservation Plan</i> , by Peter Inskip and Stephen Gee, in association with Constance Clement, is published by the Center in association with Yale University Press
2013 (PHASE 2)	The offices and spaces for the departments of Prints & Drawings and Rare Books & Manuscripts are refurbished
JANUARY 2015	The Center closes temporarily for conservation

CONSERVATION PROJECT

JANUARY 2015–
FEBRUARY 2016
(PHASE 3) Enhancements are made to the Center’s public spaces, including the galleries and Lecture Hall, improvements related to safety and accessibility, and extensive building-wide mechanical and electrical upgrades

SPRING 2016 The collections are reinstalled

MAY 11, 2016 The Center reopens to the public

ADDITIONAL CONSERVATION & DESIGN TEAM

Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., building envelope consultant, and structural engineer
Stephen Saitas Designs, exhibition designer
BVH Integrated Services, engineer–mechanical, electrical, and fire protection
Staples & Charles Limited, furnishings, fixtures, and equipment consultant
Hefferan Partnership Lighting Design, lighting consultant
Cavanaugh Tocci Associates, acoustics, audiovisual, and theater consultant
Philip R. Sherman, P. E., code consultant
Michael Morris, Metropolitan Museum of Art, architectural materials conservator
Strong Cohen Graphic Designers, graphic designer
Architect’s Security Group, Inc., security consultant
Nationwide Security Corporation, security consultant
Honeywell Security Group, security consultant
Vermeulens, cost estimator
Genesys Engineering P.C., commissioning consultant
LMB Facilities Solutions, LLC, move consultant

REINSTALLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The Center’s inaugural presentation, *Britain in the World*, features more than **five hundred works from the Center’s holdings** installed across two floors of the museum. The display traces the development of British art from the Protestant Reformation to the present, exploring the impact of foreign influences on British art and culture, and the role the arts have played in the history of Britain’s imperial vision. Highlights include many of the Center’s renowned treasures, by artists such as **George Stubbs, Joseph Wright of Derby, J. M. W. Turner, and John Constable**, as well as masterpieces by artists from abroad, such as Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck (Flemish), Canaletto (Italian), Johan Zoffany (German), and John Singleton Copley and Benjamin West (American). Twentieth-century artists are also on display, including works by **Francis Bacon and Rachel Whiteread**.

CONSERVATION PROJECT

In addition, the Center reopened with two special exhibitions – one highlighting Rhoda Pritzker’s unique and highly personal collection of twentieth-century British art and another featuring a Yale student-curated exhibition of nineteenth-century photographs that capture London’s architectural past.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Yale Center for British Art houses the largest collection of British art outside the United Kingdom. Presented to the university by Paul Mellon (Yale College, Class of 1929), the collection reflects the development of British art and culture from the Elizabethan period onward. The Center’s collections include more than 2,000 paintings, 250 sculptures, 20,000 drawings and watercolors, 40,000 prints, and 35,000 rare books and manuscripts. More than 40,000 volumes supporting research in British art and related fields are available in the Center’s Reference Library.

Located across the street from Kahn’s first major commission, the Yale University Art Gallery (completed 1953), the Center is Kahn’s final building and was completed after his death. The structure integrates the dual functions of study center and public museum and was the first museum in the United States to incorporate retail shops in its design.

Visit the Center online at britishart.yale.edu.

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