

Maritime Bus Stop Debuts

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The city's first-ever designer bus shelter emblazoned with the name of the nearby educational institution made its spiffy debut on the corner of Grand and Blatchley.

The Christopher Columbus Family Academy not only has a new school whose architectural and design elements hail wind, waves, and discovery. As of this week it now has a bus stop that echoes these themes as well.

School architect Barry Svigals and his colleagues consulted with the city's traffic department and with Alderwoman Migdalia Castro to create a bus shelter that heralds as well as mirrors its nearby school.

There are designs of curving waves and aquatic swirling on the Plexiglas facing the street. Principal Abby Benitez showed off blue stars inserted in the concrete in the floor of the shelter.

"These are materials," she said, "unused from the terrazzo flooring in the lobby."

These particular blue stone chips, she said, are meant to suggest the night sky that must have enveloped Columbus's little fleet, the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria on their historic voyage of discovery.

In case any boats (pulled by trailers we presume) pause at this particular bus stop, they are sure to feel a frisson of kinship.

School construction chief Sue Weisselberg said that a coordinated bus shelter of this kind is a first for New Haven, although many municipal subway systems worldwide, of course, post the names of nearby educational institutions, museums, or hospitals.

Weisselberg said that none of the other rebuilt New Haven schools have this feature planned. She said that she could not recall the precise details of the funding. "However," she added, "we were very careful."

A formal dedication of the maritime-themed bus stop will take place on May 12 in the afternoon.

"Only at Christopher Columbus," said Principal Benitez, "and only in Fair Haven."



Allan Appel Photo

