



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY - BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism, One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford, CT 06103

*** Note:** Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Building Name (Common) Firestone Complete Auto Care

Building Name (Historic) Firestone Tire Company

Street Address or Location 680 Chapel Street at Union Street

Town/City New Haven Village Wooster Square County New Haven

Owner(s) BRIDGESTONE RETAIL OPER. LLC -TAX DEPT Public Private

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Automotive service and parts

Historic Use: Automotive service and parts

Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road? Yes No

Interior accessible? Yes No If yes, explain During business hours

Style of building Modernist - Bauhaus Date of Construction 1962

Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate):

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clapboard | <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brick | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle | <input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone | <input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten | <input type="checkbox"/> Stucco | <input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone | <input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concrete (Type <u>Block Masonry</u>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type _____) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Steel, glass</u> | | |

Structural System

- Wood Frame
 Post & Beam
 Balloon
 Load bearing masonry
 Structural iron or steel
 Other _____

Roof (Type)

- Gable
 Flat
 Mansard
 Monitor
 Sawtooth
 Gambrel
 Shed
 Hip
 Round
 Other _____

(Material)

- Wood Shingle
 Roll Asphalt
 Tin
 Slate
 Asphalt Shingle
 Built up
 Tile
 Other Rubber Membrane

Number of Stories: 1 Approximate Dimensions 44' x 84' and 32' x 124'

Structural Condition: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

Exterior Condition: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

Location Integrity: On original site Moved When? _____

Alterations? Yes No If yes, explain: _____

FOR OFFICE USE: Town # _____ Site # _____ UTM _____

District: S NR If NR, Specify: Actual Potential

PROPERTY INFORMATION (CONT'D)

Related outbuildings or landscape features:

- Barn Shed Garage Carriage House Shop Garden
- Other landscape features or buildings: Pedestrian plaza, asphalt parking and driveways

Surrounding Environment:

- Open land Woodland Residential Commercial Industrial Rural
- High building density Scattered buildings visible from site

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings: The site is the southeast corner of Chapel and Union Streets, between the residential Wooster Square neighborhood and commercial Downtown. Light industrial and service businesses about a pedestrian route along Chapel Street connecting homes with shopping and work. The residential area is a mix of 19th- and mid-20th-century 2- and 3-story buildings while north of this site along the railroad are taller 19th-century brick factory structures (now apartments).

• Other notable features of building or site (*Interior and/or Exterior*)

See continuation sheet.

Architect D. W. Goodwin, Firestone Company, Akron, OH Builder Fusco Amatruda Company

• Historical or Architectural importance:

This building is well-preserved and still continues to provide automotive services to local residents. The original design exhibits a high level of detail. The use of a special brick coursing pattern, integration of exposed steel structure with glazing and masonry, attention to the transparency of the building, and use of the built elements as signage and advertising, work to making the building both functional and an advertisement. The philosophy of the Redevelopment Agency and its staff architect was to require a high level of design in their projects, intending to re-make the image of the city. This project looked ahead to the importance of the automobile. It integrated automotive services into the design of the area by separating the working service bays from the pedestrian scale of Chapel Street, yet at the same time making the romance of the automobile a positive aspect of the streetscape by incorporating festive neon signage, canopy, and transparent show windows.

• Sources: Brown, Elizabeth Mills, *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture & Urban Design*, Yale U.Press, New Haven,1976, p.178-81. Carley, Rachel D., *Tomorrow is Here: New Haven and the Modern Movement* (Privately printed by the New Haven Preservation Trust, New Haven CT) June, 2008.

New Haven Tax Assessor's Record: Map/Block/Parcel: 225/0532/00500, Building Department permit files.

Hommann, Mary; Wooster Square Design, The New Haven Redevelopment Authority, 1965.

Interview, Vincent C. Amore, 7/01/2010 (Amore was the staff architect for the Redevelopment Agency in the early 1960s).

New Haven Museum and Historical Society, Redevelopment collection, [nhchs_ph_nhrapc_f545_ph33.jpg](#).

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock Date 6/27/2010

View Multiple views Negative on File NHPT

Name Charlotte Hitchcock Date 7/12/2010

Organization The New Haven Preservation Trust

Address 934 State Street, P.O. Box 1671, New Haven, CT 06507

• Subsequent field evaluations:

Threats to the building or site:

- None known Highways Vandalism Developers Renewal Private
- Deterioration Zoning Other _____ Explanation _____

• Other notable features of building or site (*Interior and exterior*):

The Firestone sales and auto repair facility consists of two wings. The sales room is a tall 1-story block oriented east-west along the Chapel Street sidewalk line. A main entry plaza occupies the corner of Chapel and Union Streets. The service wing extends south parallel to Union Street, is a lower 1-story block, and has eight service bays opening to an asphalt apron facing the Union Street frontage.

The sales room is an exposed painted steel-frame structure six bays long by three bays wide at the façade (two structural bays at the interior). At the corner a half-bay cantilever allows the ground-level glazing to form an open corner effect. The building envelope is glazed at grade level with large sheets of glass between steel columns and intermediate vertical steel fins. Above on the north (Chapel Street) façade, a series of yellow-tan brick spandrels form a band that acts as a sign board for applied neon letters in Old English font spelling the name "Firestone." At the far east end of the north façade a service and storage area is clad in red brick; similarly the west façade and other areas of the building are clad in red brick. All the masonry is over-sized 12-inch-long bricks laid up in a header course alternating with four stretcher courses, the horizontality giving it a Modernist proportion. At the west plaza, a canopy of steel columns and a steel folded plate roof, creates a zig-zag accent highlighting the entry. On the brick wall above this canopy, the lettering is repeated, creating signage visible from all directions. The landscape design of the entry plaza incorporates two lozenge-shaped planters and the motif is repeated in the concrete sidewalk's joint pattern.

The service wing is open on its west side, with partially glazed overhead doors alternating with glass walls which bring light into the work space and allow the public to view the work ongoing. The south end of the service wing is anchored by a thick masonry slab of the same red brick used on the sales room block. The rear wall of this wing is constructed of concrete masonry with brick veneer and overhead doors corresponding to the front, allowing vehicles to continue out the back. A period photograph appears to show a gasoline pump at the Union Street side near the street line; this is no longer extant.



1. Northwest view from Chapel Street, camera facing southeast.



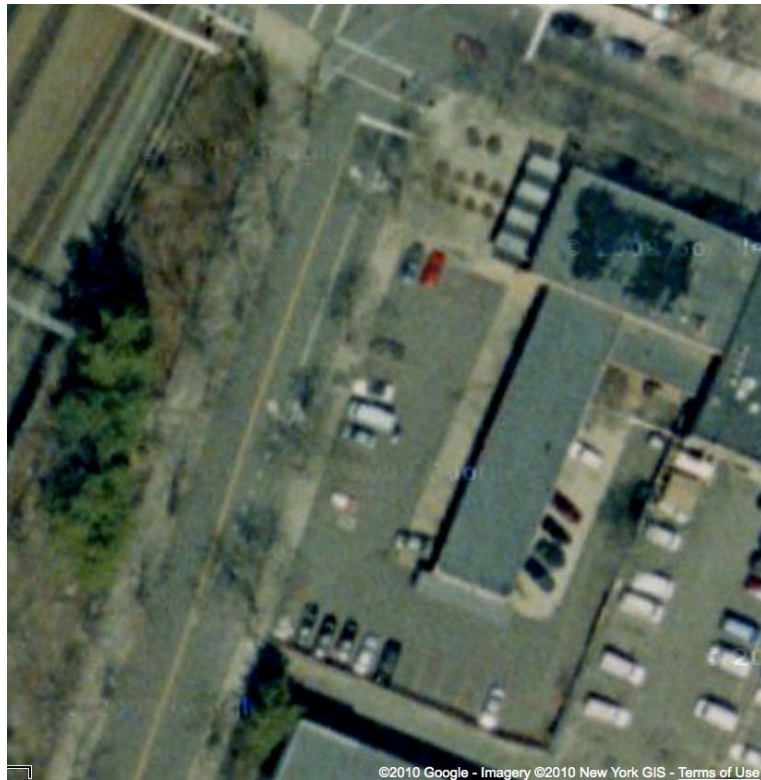
2. Southwest view of service bays from Union Street, camera facing northeast.



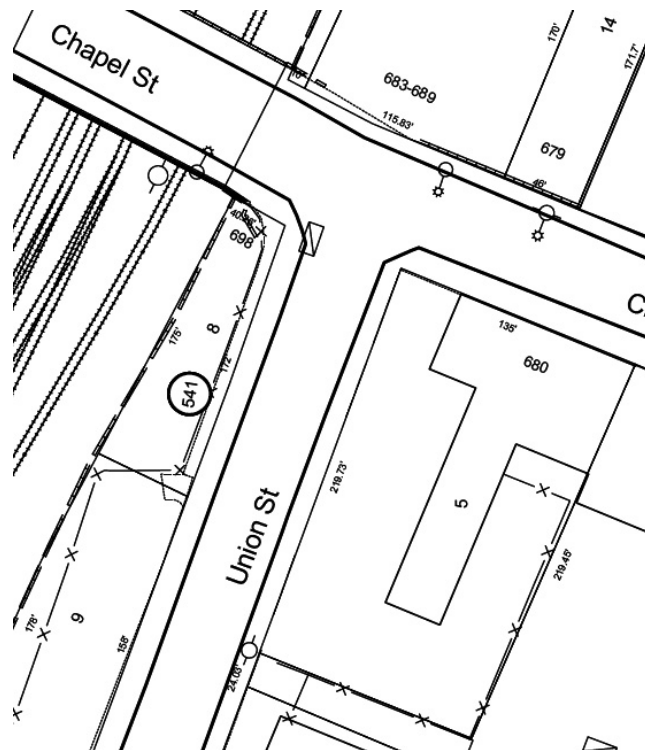
3. Northwest corner window detail



4. Landscape detail at west plaza



5. Aerial view from Google Maps: <http://maps.google.com/> accessed 7/12/2010.



6. Site Plan – from City of New Haven Tax Map 225/0532/00500.