

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) Union Street Park
 Building Name (Historic) Union Street Park
 Street Address or Location 698 Chapel Street & 59 Fair Street
 Town/City New Haven Village _____ County New Haven
 Owner(s) City of New Haven Department of Parks and Recreation Public Private

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Public park
 Historic Use: Public park - Site of 19th-century Railroad Station

Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road? Yes No
 Interior accessible? Yes No If yes, explain _____
 Style of building N/A Date of Construction 1965

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

- Clapboard Asbestos Siding Brick Wood Shingle Asphalt Siding
- Fieldstone Board & Batten Stucco Cobblestone Aluminum Siding
- Concrete (Type _____) Cut Stone (Type _____) Other _____

Structural System

- Wood Frame Post & Beam Balloon Load bearing masonry Structural iron or steel
- Other Concrete, painted steel fencing

Roof (Type)

- Gable Flat Mansard Monitor Sawtooth
- Gambrel Shed Hip Round Other n/a

(Material)

- Wood Shingle Roll Asphalt Tin Slate Asphalt Shingle
- Built up Tile Other n/a

Number of Stories: n/a **Approximate Dimensions** .85 acre park

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: Lighting removal, abandoned Crown St. right-of-way added c.1995.

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: Fencing, plantings, benches

Surrounding Environment:

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

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

Location is a narrow site between Union Street, a street extended to Chapel in the Redevelopment Plan of 1958, and the Amtrak (formerly New York, New Haven, and Hartford) railroad tracks in a sunken cut. Together with landscaping on the opposite side of Union Street, the park provides passive recreation and enhances a pedestrian route connecting Wooster Square and Downtown.

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

The park consists of a high ornamental fence along its western edge roughly parallel to the retaining wall of the railroad cut, groves of evergreen trees at the north and south ends, a more open lawn near the center, and an asymmetrical grouping of square and rectangular backless concrete benches with round concrete supports. Along the sidewalk line at the east edge a row of extant concrete bollards was originally linked by lengths of chain. Pedestrian-scaled street lights shown in early photographs are no longer extant. The park has suffered from neglect as the trees are quite overgrown, lighting levels reduced, and the sidewalk paving split in some places.

Architect James Skerritt, Landscape Architect Builder _____

• Historical or Architectural importance: Union Street Park was designed by the New Haven Redevelopment Agency's staff landscape architect, James Skerritt, as part of a pedestrian link between the Wooster Square neighborhood to the east and Downtown to the west, as a passive recreation amenity for employees of adjacent businesses, and for railroad buffs to observe the passing trains (Hommann, p. 149). Oddly in light of this expressed intent, a 1965 photograph shows a solid fence material adjacent to the railroad tracks. This park and similar landscaping on the east side of Union Street in front of a wholesale plumbing business, frame and beautify the street as well as softening the appearance of the pedestrian sidewalk route, a major change from the dense matrix of buildings that preceded the Redevelopment period. Similar linear park treatments along pedestrian routes can be seen in Lenzi Park on Jefferson Street near Grand Avenue (see Inventory form) and in Russo Park between Chapel and Wooster Streets. This was the site of the railroad station designed by Henry Austin, which stood from 1848 to 1875. This block of Union Street appears to have been abandoned after 1975, and was re-established in the 1960s.

• Sources: Brown, Elizabeth Mills; New Haven: *A Guide to Architecture & Urban Design*, Yale U.Press, New Haven, 1976, p. 154-6.
 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.
 City of New Haven Assessor's Records: Map/Block/Parcel 225/ 541/ 8 - 225/541/9 - 225/540/4.
 Website "The Evolution of a Railroad Capitol," <http://tylercystation.info/id6.html>
 See continuation sheet.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock Date 12/03/2009

View Multiple views facing west Negative on File NHPT

Name Charlotte Hitchcock Date 1/30/2010

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:

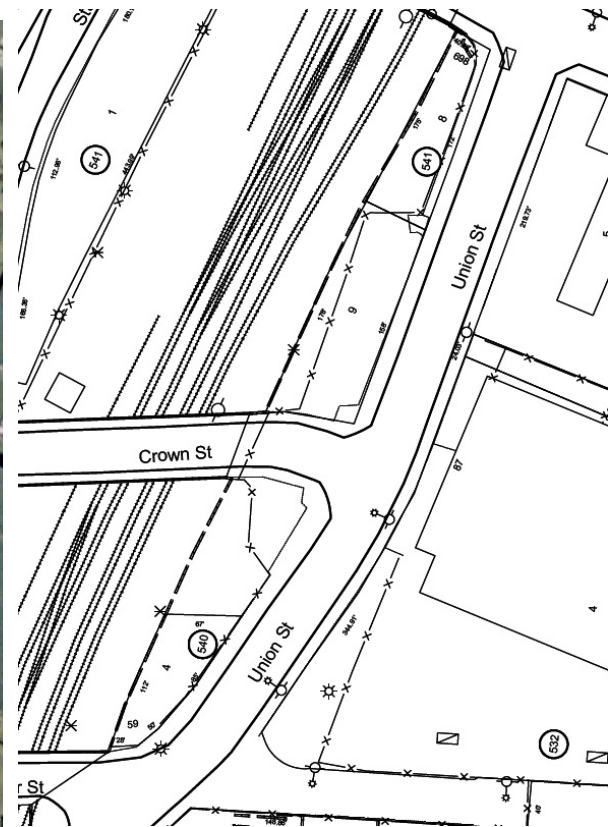
- None known Highways Vandalism Developers Renewal Private
 Deterioration Zoning Other _____ Explanation _____



3. North view, camera facing southeast toward Union Street and Fair Street.



4. Aerial view – Google Maps



5. Site Plan - from City of New Haven Tax Map 225/541/8 – 225/541/9 - 225/540/4.

Note: the City Tax Map shows Crown Street continuous to Union Street; aerial view shows the Crown Street right-of-way as a part of the park, as it has been since c. 1995.