

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) DeLauro Park
 Building Name (Historic) DeLauro Park
 Street Address or Location 657 Grand Avenue
 Town/City New Haven Village Wooster Square County New Haven
 Owner(s) City of New Haven Department of Parks, Recreation, and Trees Public Private

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Public Park / Recreational Facility
 Historic Use: Public Park / Recreational Facility

Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road? Yes No
 Interior accessible? Yes No If yes, explain Open during daylight hours
 Style of building Modernist Landscape Date of Construction 1971

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 Lawn

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 _____

Number of Stories: N/A Approximate Dimensions 1 acre

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: Ornamental metal fence (1995); new playground equipment

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: Playg structure, sitting areas, fencing, concrete and asphalt paving

Surrounding Environment:

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

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

DeLauro Park is located along the north side of Grand Avenue, between Franklin and Hamilton Streets. It borders Farnam Courts, a public housing complex, that lies immediately to the north. To the south and east, the park is surrounded by streets of commercial buildings. To the west is the Interstate 91 highway, which separates the park from the main Wooster Square residential neighborhood (west of the highway).

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

DeLauro Park is a roughly rectangular park that contains three clearly defined sections connected by a central walkway: a playground, a strolling and seating area, and a gathering place. A circular poured-concrete wall, with a pattern left by wooden formwork, creates segments of a circle and delineates a sunken playground space at the east end of the park (new play structures added c. 2000); the circle is completed by three steps (original) and a contemporary iron fence. A three-quarter-circle concrete bench creates a continuous seating area at the west end of the park. This seating area is reminiscent of a council ring, a popular aspect in early twentieth-century parks that was used as an intimate, friendly gathering place for visitors. Grassy patches are present in the center of the park and contain intermittently-placed round concrete tables and stools. Sycamore trees are planted throughout, and in addition there are basswoods in the eastern play circle and honey locust trees along the street at the eastern edge of the park. Perimeter metal ornamental fencing is recent.

Architect Landscape - Dan Kiley Builder _____

• Historical or Architectural importance: Built in 1971, DeLauro Park was part of the New Haven "playground modernization program" which placed numerous parks on designated lots in commercial-industrial as well as residential sectors of the city. Named after Ted DeLauro (1902-1971), a prominent citizen of the Wooster Square area, the site was proposed as a public park as early as 1952. In her guide to New Haven architecture, Elizabeth Mills Brown stated, "DeLauro Park [was] the most elaborate of the distinguished series of pocket playgrounds which the Redevelopment Agency has been putting on vacant lots around the New Township." Aesthetic decline has plagued the park for many years, resulting in plans for condition improvements throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Renowned landscape architect Dan Kiley designed DeLauro Park, and incorporated concrete details that continue to lend a Modernist quality to the park. Round concrete tables and stools are a distinguishing feature (see Kiley's nearby Lenzi Park, 1970). Kiley (1912- 2004) is known for his Modernist landscapes, particularly for such large-scale projects as the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis and the South Garden at the Art Institute of Chicago. Here the abstract geometry of the landscape elements and site furnishings act in counterpoint to the natural plant materials.

• Sources:

Brown, Elizabeth Mills; *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture and Urban Design*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976, 228 pp.
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: 200/582/002.
See continuation sheet.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock Date 1/29/2010

View Multiple views Negative on File NHPT

Name Julie Rosen Date 12/26/2010

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 _____

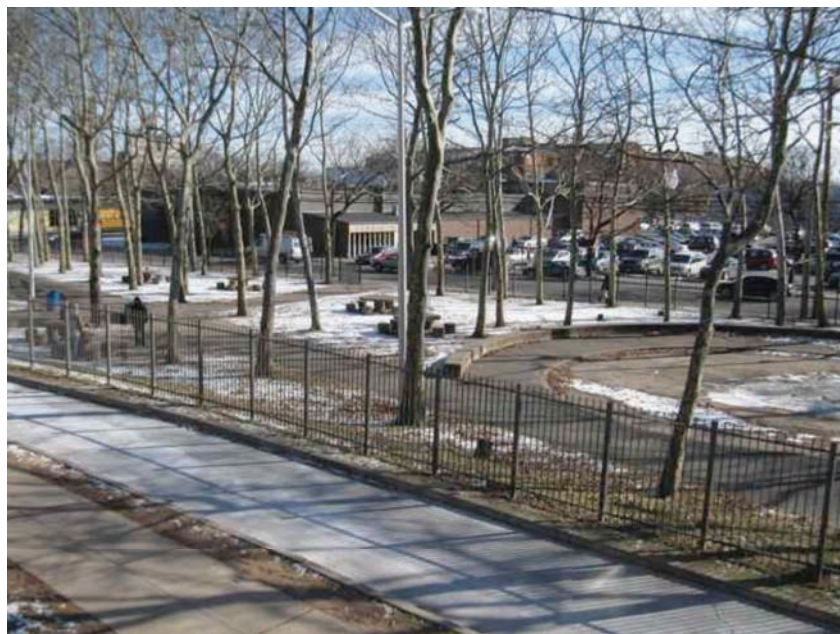
• Sources (*continuation*):

"The Council Ring in Landscape Design," Campus Gardens, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth,
<http://www1.umassd.edu/garden/gardens/gardens-03.cfm>.

"Wooster Square Renewal Advances," May 22, 1952, New Haven Playgrounds File, Local History Room, New Haven Public Library.



1. View of eastern playground circle, camera facing northeast.



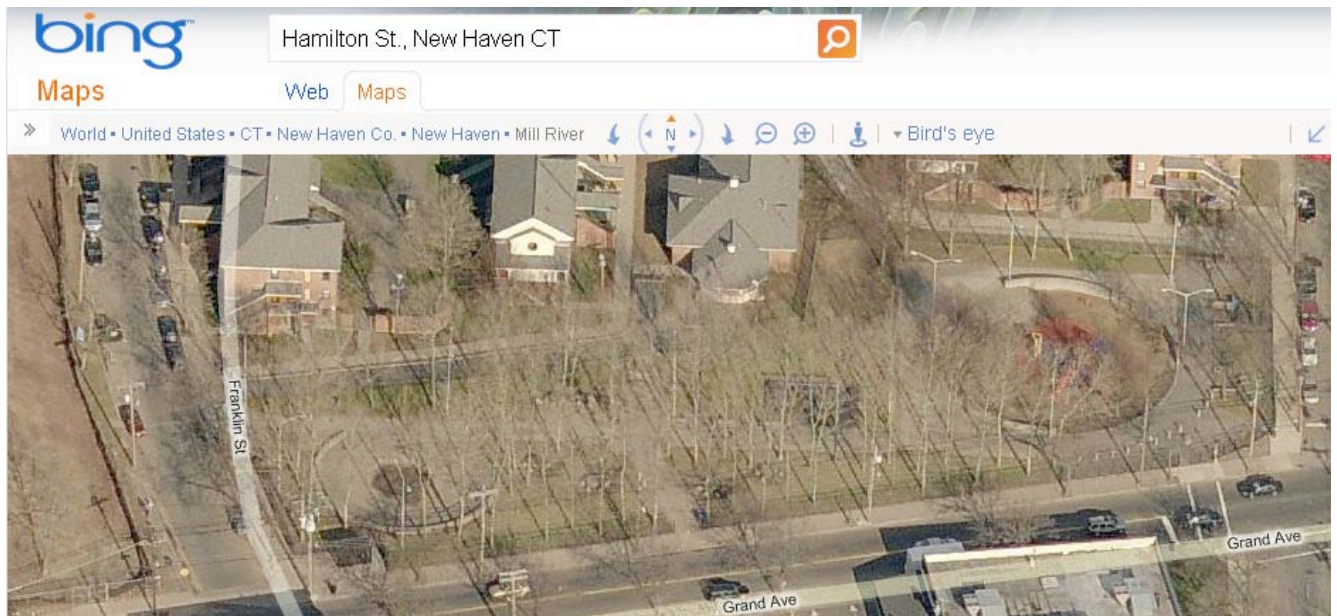
2. View from Grand Avenue, camera facing northwest.



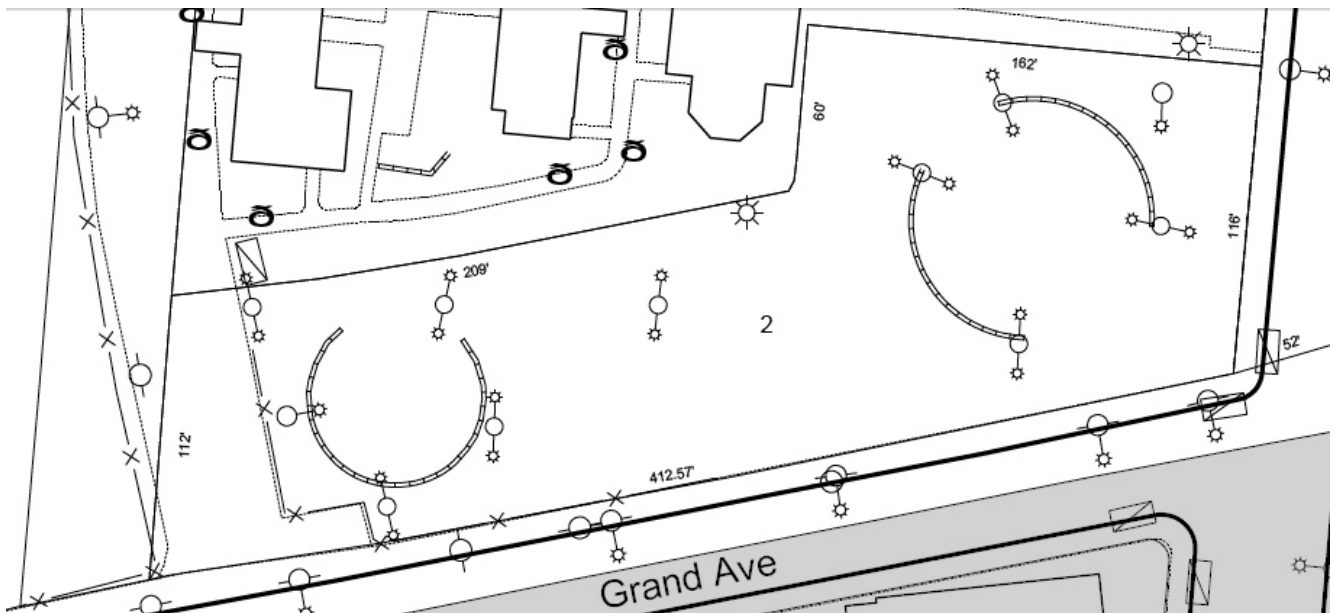
3. View from park, camera facing southeast toward Grand Avenue and Hamilton Street..



4. View of western circle from Grand Avenue, camera facing north.



5. Aerial view from Bing Maps <http://www.bing.com/maps/> accessed 1/11/2011.



6. Site Plan – detail from City of New Haven Assessor's Map 200/582/002/ not to scale, North ↑.