



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) Gateway Center / 54 Meadow Street
 Building Name (Historic) The New York New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company Headquarters
 Street Address or Location 54 Meadow Street
 Town/City New Haven Village _____ County New Haven
 Owner(s) Gateway Partners LLC, City of New Haven Public Private

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Commercial - Office Condominium (New Haven Board of Education, Health Department, others)
 Historic Use: Commercial - Railroad Company Corporate Headquarters

Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road? Yes No
 Interior accessible? Yes No If yes, explain During business hours
 Style of building Modernist - Moderne Date of Construction 1946-48

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 type="checkbox"/> Concrete (Type _____) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type <u>Limestone, Granite</u>) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Glass block</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: 9 Approximate Dimensions 116' x 122'

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: Conversion to office condominium, Parking garage (1988)

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: Parking garage (1988) south of building, loading areas, sidewalks, landscaping

Surrounding Environment:

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

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings: The structure is located at the northern end of Meadow Street which meets Union Avenue just north of Union Station. Sited south of the Oak Street Connector between South Orange and West Water Streets, 54 Meadow Street is in a residential and commercial area with public housing to the west, the New Haven Police Headquarters to the east, Knights of Columbus printing plant to the north, and the railroad tracks (now Amtrak/Metro North) to the south across Union Avenue (US Route 1). Prior to the 1960s, Meadow Street extended north to meet George Street.

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

The 9-story Railroad Company headquarters is a composition in limestone, granite, and glass oriented to echo the structural system. Long vertical and horizontal expanses of sand-colored limestone follow the lines of the steel columns and beams that support the building. Large windows (framed with copper-colored brownstone) are grouped together to form ribbon windows that grace each facade. Each window band is in turn crowned with five rows of glass blocks, drawing additional attention to the expanses of glass that are possible with a steel-framed building. The windows and glass blocks also lend an air of lightness to an otherwise large and somewhat blocky structure. A cube-shaped penthouse on the roof provides a distinctive profile in the distant view. A cornerstone at the northeast corner is inscribed with "The New York New Haven and Hartford Railroad Co. 1946." The lobby also has a terrazzo floor with the same inscription.

Architect Office of Douglas Orr & Associates (see below) Builder Robert Glenn Builders, New York NY

• Historical or Architectural importance:
See continuation sheet.

Wilcox, Erickson & Pfisterer, Consulting Engineers

Architect for 1988 Garage: Sapienza & Lessig
Abba A. Tor, Engineer

• Sources:

Brown, Elizabeth Mills; *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture and Urban Design*, Yale U.Press, New Haven, 1976, pp. 95-6.
Carley, Rachel D., *Tomorrow is Here: New Haven and the Modern Movement* (Privately published by the New Haven Preservation Trust, New Haven CT) June, 2008.
New Haven Tax Assessor's Record: Map/Block/Parcel: 238/0106/001 (multiple ownership), Building Department permit files.
See continuation sheet.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock Date 1/29/2010

View Multiple Views Negative on File NHPT

Name Julie Rosen Date 8/10/10

Organization The New Haven Preservation Trust

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

• Subsequent field evaluations:

Originally had a steam-heated sidewalk outside the front entrance (eventually fell into disrepair and was removed).

Robert Glenn (NYC)- General Contractor
Wilcox, Erickson and Pfisterer- Structural Engineers

Threats to the building or site:

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

• Historical or Architectural Importance (*continuation*):

The corporate headquarters building for the New York New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company sits on a plot of land that was originally part of New Haven Harbor, eventually filled in to create more land. The foundation of the structure was composed of piers and footings (instead of piles) so as not to disturb the older buildings around it. Stylistically this building, as a corporate symbol of the railroad, has features of the Moderne in the opulent use of stone and glass block, while turning towards Modernism with its minimal ornament and in the stone cladding which expresses the lines of the structural skeleton within. Compare the solidity of this design with 1 Church Street (see Inventory form), a fully International Style/Miesian tower designed by the same architectural firm in 1961.

The New Haven Railroad was established in 1826 and was a primary mode of passenger and freight transportation in Connecticut. In 1872, the New Haven Railroad merged with both the New York and Hartford Railroads, creating a direct connection between New York and Boston. Almost a century later, in 1969, the Railroad was absorbed into the Penn Central Railroad, which in turn filed for bankruptcy in 1972, ending the 150-year history of the New Haven Railroad.

Douglas Orr (1892-1966), a prominent New Haven-based architect, practiced in many architectural styles throughout his career, always adapting himself to the latest trends. He served as President of the American Institute of Architects (1947-1949), and “left a stronger architectural imprint on commercial, social, and religious New Haven than any man since Henry Austin.” (Wiedersheim, p. 3) Trained in Beaux-Arts architectural principles at Yale, Orr became known for his Colonial Revival designs in the 1920s and for his Art Deco work in the 1930s. By the 1950s much of the firm’s work was based on a Modernist philosophy although they continued to work in Colonial Revival styles. Orr’s firm worked with a number of out-of-state architects including Louis Kahn and Philip Johnson, functioning as the Architect of Record for prominent structures sponsored by Yale University and the New Haven Redevelopment Agency.

• Sources (*continuation*):

Wiedersheim, William A., *Journal of The New Haven Colony Historical Society: Douglas W. Orr, F.A.I.A., Exhibition Catalogue*. New Haven: New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1980.

“Foundations For the New Office Building,” *Along the Line, the magazine of the New York New Haven & Hartford Railroad*, August-September, 1946.

History of the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad: <http://doddcenter.uconn.edu/findaids/NHRR/nhtrains.htm>

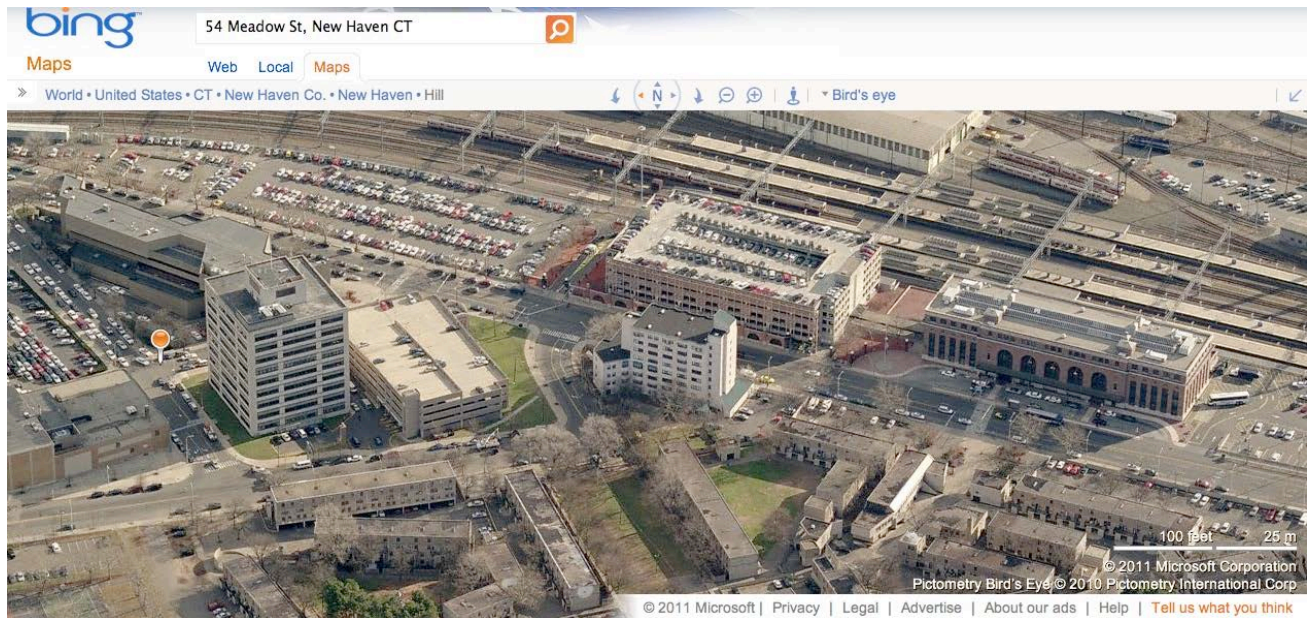
Walker Lithograph & Publishing Co., Atlas of New Haven Connecticut 1911, www.wardmaps.com.



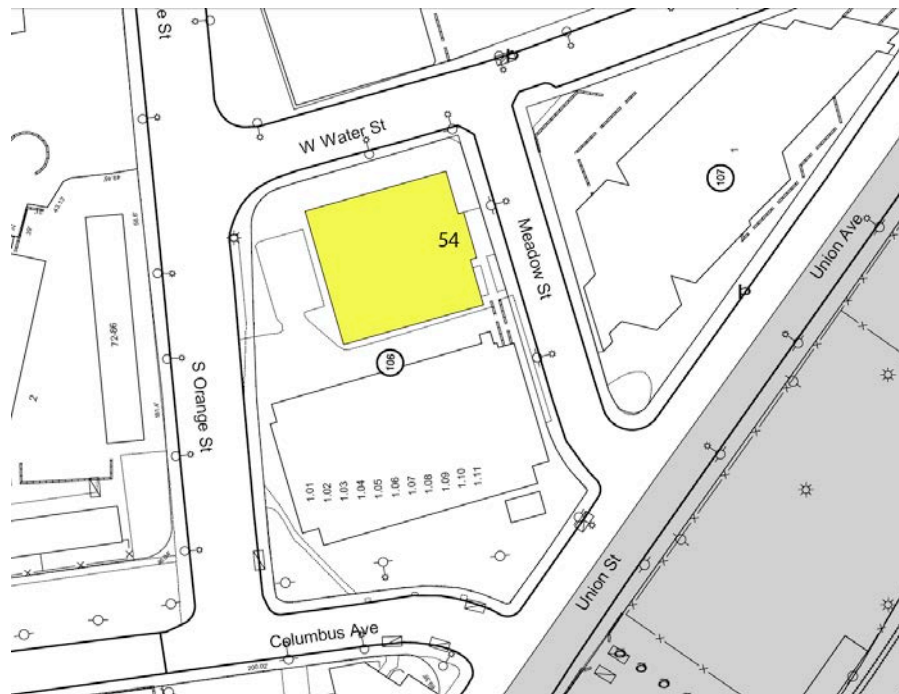
1. Southwest view from street, camera facing northwest.



2. East view from street, window detail, camera facing west.



3. Aerial view – 54 Meadow at left, Union Station at right – Bing Maps <http://www.bing.com/maps>, accessed 6/14/2011.



4. Site Plan – detail from City of New Haven Tax Map 238/0106/00102-00111, not to scale, North ↑.