

## HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY - BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

Please send completed form to: National Register and State Register Coordinator,  
State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Economic and Community Development,  
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) Knights of Columbus Headquarters  
 Building Name (Historic) Knights of Columbus Building  
 Street Address or Location 1 Columbus Plaza  
 Town/City New Haven Village \_\_\_\_\_ County New Haven  
 Owner(s) Knights of Columbus, Inc.  Public  Private

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: COMMERCE/TRADE: Offices  
 Historic Use: COMMERCE/TRADE: Offices

Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road?  Yes  No  
 Interior accessible?  Yes  No If yes, explain Lobby during business hours  
 Style of building MODERN MOVEMENT: New Formalism Date of Construction 1967-69

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

- |                                                |                                                 |                                                                       |                                       |                                          |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clapboard             | <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding        | <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type _____) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Structural clay tile</u> |                                       |                                          |

#### Structural System

- Wood Frame  Post & Beam  Balloon  Load bearing masonry  Structural iron or steel  
 Other Concrete, cast-in-place

#### 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: 23, B Approximate Dimensions 130' x 130' x 320' high

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: Demolition of adjacent Coliseum building and parking garage.

**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: Paved and landscaped entry plaza, lawn and trees to the east, paved park with trees to the north (currently closed).

**Surrounding Environment:**

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

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The office tower, with its surrounding landscaped plaza and below-grade service access, forms part of the Church Street Redevelopment Project of the 1950s-60s. The adjacent Veterans Memorial Coliseum and Knights of Columbus tower were conceived as a sculptural ensemble of monumental scale, to be viewed from moving vehicles on the multi-lane access road known as the Oak Street Connector (CT Route 34). The site comprises three parcels totalling 2.34 acres.

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

The structure consists of four cylindrical reinforced concrete towers clad in dark brown structural clay tile with a central concrete elevator core. These elements are linked by steel floor structures. The lobby and mezzanine levels are set back and clad in reflective glazing. The 20 upper floors have 90-foot long girders of exposed weathering steel connecting the corner cylinders. Steel framing supports the floors within this perimeter, with the glazing set back five feet behind the primary girders. All four sides are identical. The floors contain primarily open-plan office space while exit stairs and support services including rest rooms are in the corner cylinders.

Mature groves of honey locust trees flank the tower to the north (the paved Columbus Park, currently closed) and to the southeast (lawn, trees, and signage). A driveway from the east is infrastructure which remains from the original combined Coliseum and Knights of Columbus complex. It provides basement service access.

Architect Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates    Builder Koppers Co., Inc.  
 Structural engineer: Pfisterer Tor & Associates

• Historical or Architectural importance:

See continuation sheet.

• Sources:

Brown, Elizabeth Mills; *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture and Urban Design*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976.  
 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.  
 Maynard, Preston. 1981. HRI 199. *New Haven Architectural Survey*. Map/block/lot: 239/ 0206/ 00100, 239/ 0206/ 00300, 239/ 0206/ 00400.

See continuation sheet.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock    Date 7/10/2017

View Multiple Views    Negative on File NHPT

Name Charlotte Hitchcock    Date 7/10/2017

Organization New Haven Preservation Trust

Address 922 State Street, P.O. Box 8968, New Haven, CT 06532

• Subsequent field evaluations:

Latitude, Longitude: 41.302818, -72.92762

**Threats to the building or site:**

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

## HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY – BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

CONTINUATION SHEET

Knights of Columbus Building, 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT

### Historical or Architectural importance (*continued*):

As reported by the magazine *Architectural Forum* in “New Haven: test for downtown renewal,” the Church Street Redevelopment Project was taking shape by 1958 (*Forum*, July 1958, 78ff). Plans for the new Knights of Columbus Building, headquarters for the Roman Catholic fraternal benefit society founded in New Haven in 1882, showed a tower roughly double the height of the tallest existing commercial buildings. The headquarters tower was planned as a dramatic skyscraper located at the pivot point where vehicle traffic would leave the new high-speed road, the Route 34 Connector, and people would move up Church Street toward the heart of the downtown, the Green. Mayor Richard C. Lee presented plans for the \$8 million tower at a press conference in 1965, and proclaimed it to be “fashioned for the 21st century” (Carley, 28).

The choice of the architectural firm of Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates (Roche-Dinkeloo) was calculated to bring publicity to the City of New Haven. As successors to Eero Saarinen upon his sudden death in 1961, the firm, based in Hamden, completed the work of the Saarinen office and began to make a name for themselves with high-profile commissions like the Ford Foundation building in New York City.

Kevin Roche was working toward a multi-directional building design at this pivotal location, something that would look good on all sides. He described his design process in interviews with Francesco Dal Co, including his interest at the time in large-scale buildings that related to the scale and technology of bridge and highway construction. The use of concrete for columns (exaggerated in size for this building) and exposed steel for beams, is emblematic of this concern (Dal Co, 43). At the same time, inspiration came to Roche from industrial forms, in this case a power plant in Springfield, Massachusetts that he passed repeatedly during drives to a project site. The functional plan evolved from this sculptural image as it meshed with the limitations of the small site, the program of open-plan office space, and a desire for a dramatic iconic building (Dal Co, 77).

The tile-clad concrete columns, poured using a continuous slip-form technique adapted from grain-silo construction, shouldered the building’s 35,000-ton weight in balanced loads and delivered the powerful symmetry the architects wanted. An oxidation process previously tested in 1963 at Roche-Dinkeloo’s Ford Foundation Building in New York achieved the dark reddish-brown patina [of the steel girders], designed to prevent corrosion. (Carley, 28).

Parking for the Knights of Columbus Building was in the adjacent Veterans Memorial Coliseum structure, where the roof of the building was formed by a huge horizontal expanse of parking to serve both facilities. The visual emphasis was on the monumental scale of forms to be seen from a moving vehicle, in contrast with the older human scale of New Haven’s downtown.

For the most part, the architects of the Oak Street Connector buildings were not concerned with creating pedestrian-friendly structures, and monumental towers like the Knights of Columbus Building thus appeared cool and remote from the sidewalk vantage (Carley, 30).

Today after 50 years, the tower retains its “sign-post” character and its monumentality of scale, set apart from other tall buildings of the downtown area to the north. The removal of the Coliseum and its parking decks has altered the interplay of vertical and horizontal, leaving a gap between the Knights of Columbus Building and the Knights’ Museum at 1 State Street (acquired in 1994). The groves of honey locust trees in Columbus Park to the north (originally a city-owned park but acquired in 2010) and planted in the tongue of land extending eastward along Route 34, have matured. The trees form a softer counterpoint to the severity of masonry and steel.

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Knights of Columbus Building, 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT

Architect:

**Kevin Roche** (b. 1922) Born in Dublin, Ireland, Roche received his undergraduate degree in architecture from the University College Dublin in 1945. He continued his studies in the United States in 1948 with Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969) at Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, but left after only one semester. His search for the humanist side of architecture led him to the office of Eero Saarinen (1910–1961) in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. From 1954 until Eero Saarinen's death, Roche was the principal associate in design. After that, Kevin Roche and John Dinkeloo continued the firm's work, completing projects in progress and forming their own partnership, Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates (Roche-Dinkeloo). Their first design was the Oakland Museum. Roche gave them a unique concept, a building that is a series of low-level concrete structures on three levels, the terrace of each level forming the roof of the one below — a museum with a park on its roof. This kind of innovative solution was characteristic of Roche's work.

The firm of Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates and its successor KRJDA have worked throughout the United States and the world. The firm has a long history of work for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, carrying forward his 1971 master plan under three successive directors, completing a total of 46 different interventions to the building complex, while revisiting early portions of the project.

Kevin Roche has received honorary degrees from institutions including the National University of Ireland, Wesleyan University, and Yale University. The American Institute of Architects New York Chapter recognized him with the 1968 Medal of Honor, and in 1974 Roche-Dinkeloo received the national AIA Architectural Firm of the Year Award. The French Académie d'Architecture presented Roche with their Grand Gold Medal in 1977, and elected him a member in 1979. Roche was awarded the Pritzker Prize in 1982, the Gold Medal Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1990, and the AIA Gold Medal in 1993.

**John Gerard Dinkeloo** (1918-1981) was born in Holland, Michigan. He received a Bachelor of Architecture in Architectural Engineering from the University of Michigan in 1942. He served in the Naval Construction Battalion during World War II. After the war he was head of production for Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in Chicago until he joined the firm of Eero Saarinen in 1950. Dinkeloo was involved in work on the General Motors Technical Center in Warren, Michigan (1948-56), at the time one of the largest and most technically sophisticated postwar projects. He became a Saarinen partner in 1956, and moved to Hamden, Connecticut when the firm relocated. After Saarinen's death in 1961, Dinkeloo continued the firm's work with Kevin Roche and together they formed the subsequent partnership. An unassuming man, John Dinkeloo was well known and widely respected. He innovated in technical building components including the design of reflective curtain wall glazing, with structural Neoprene gasket seals, and the use of weathering steel in exposed structures.

Sources (*continued*):

AIA Historical Directory of American Architects,  
<http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/What's%20here.aspx>

Dal Co, Francesco. 1985. *Kevin Roche*. New York: Rizzoli.

“Earth Forms and Abstract Building Forms are Scaled to be Read by Motorists on the Connecticut Turnpike,” *Progressive Architecture*, January 1969.

“Knights of Columbus Headquarters,” *Architectural Record*, May 1968.

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Knights of Columbus Building, 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT

“Knights of the Round Towers,” *Progressive Architecture*, September 1970.

Maps and aerial views:

Bing Maps accessed 2011 at: <https://www.bing.com/mapspreview>

Google Maps accessed 2017 at: <https://www.google.com/maps/>

Metz, Don and Yuji Noga. 1966. *New Architecture in New Haven*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

“New Haven Coliseum Imploded – Today in History: January 20.” Connecticut Humanities.

ConnecticutHistory web site, accessed 7/28/2017 at <https://connecticuthistory.org/new-haven-coliseum-imploded-today-in-history/>

New Haven Modern web site. New Haven Preservation Trust. Accessed at: <http://newhavenmodern.org/>

Pelkonen, Eeva-Liisa. 2011. *Kevin Roche: Architecture as Environment*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Roche, Kevin, biography. The Pritzker Architecture Prize web site, accessed 7/28/2017 at:

<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/1982/bio>

Sveiven, Megan. 2010. “AD Classics: Knights of Columbus Building / Kevin Roche & John Dinkeloo.”

ArchDaily web site, accessed 7/28/2017 at <http://www.archdaily.com/98976/ad-classics-knights-of-columbus-building-kevin-roche-john-dinkeloo/>

“Yale School of Architecture Honors Kevin Roche with Exhibition, Symposium.” 2011. Yale Daily News, accessed 7/28/2017 at <https://news.yale.edu/2011/01/20/yale-school-architecture-honors-kevin-roche-exhibition-symposium>

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Knights of Columbus Building, 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT

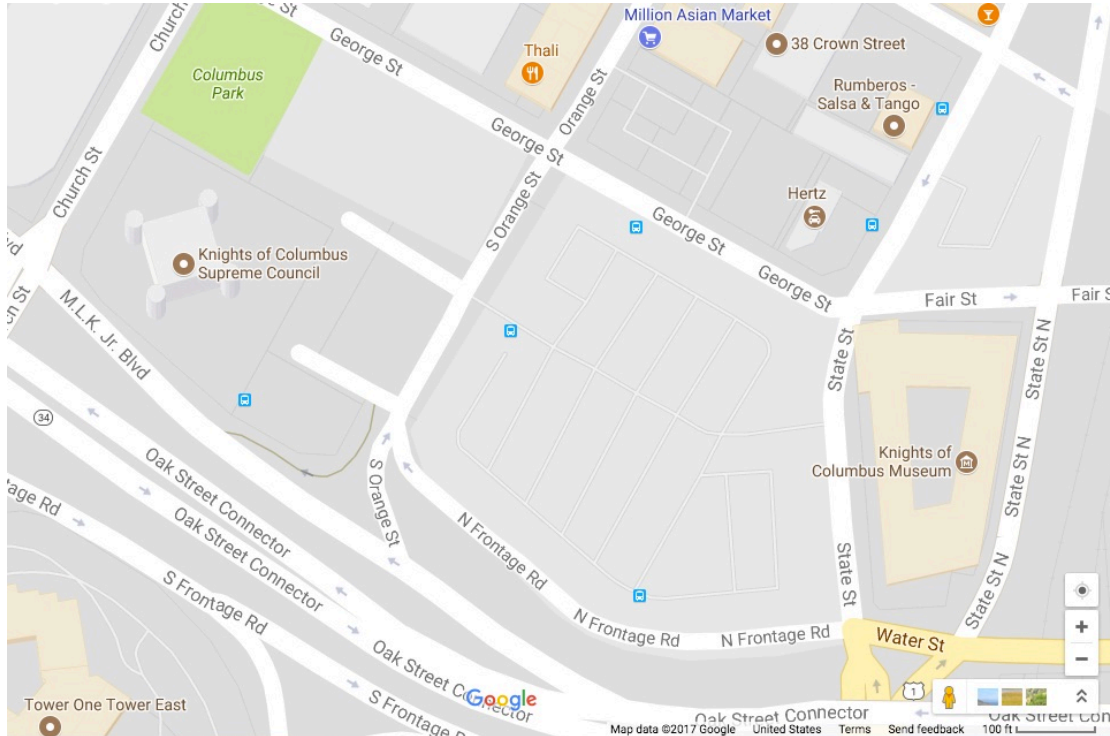


Figure 1. Location map of 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven. Image from Google Maps accessed 7/22/2017. The Knights of Columbus Building is at the far left. 1 State Street, now the Knights of Columbus Museum, is at the far right (see HRI).

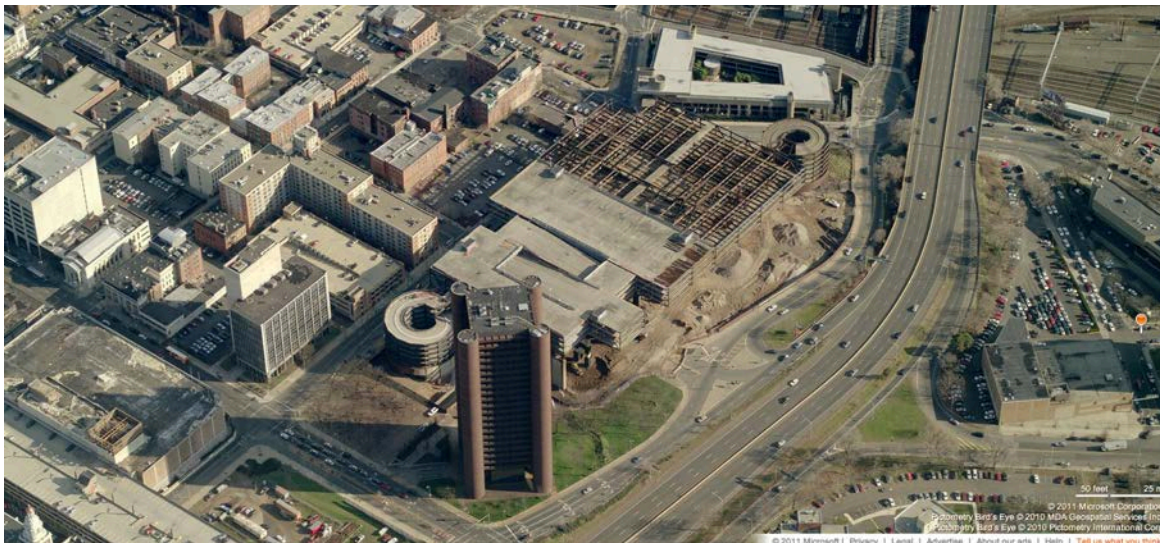


Figure 2. Southwest aerial view of 1 Columbus Plaza, the Coliseum, and 1 State Street in 2006 during the demolition of the Coliseum, which was imploded in January 2007. Image from Microsoft Bing Maps accessed 6/15/2011.

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Knights of Columbus Building, 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT

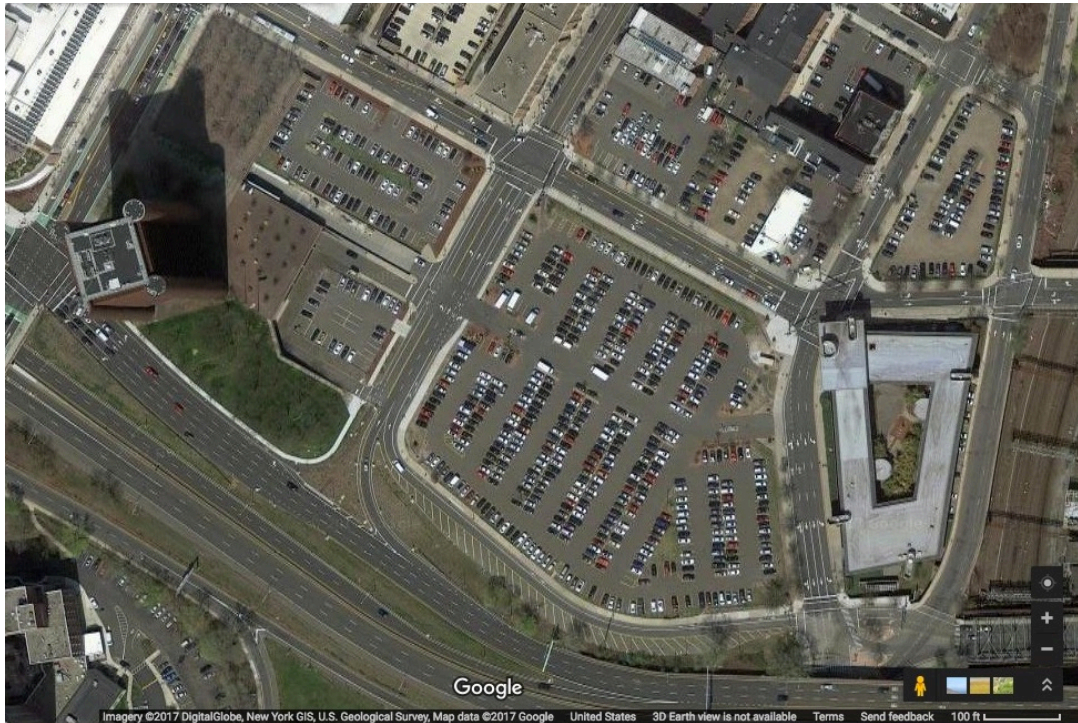


Figure 3. Aerial view of 1 Columbus Plaza at left, the former Coliseum site, and 1 State Street at right. Image from Google Maps, accessed 7/26/2017.

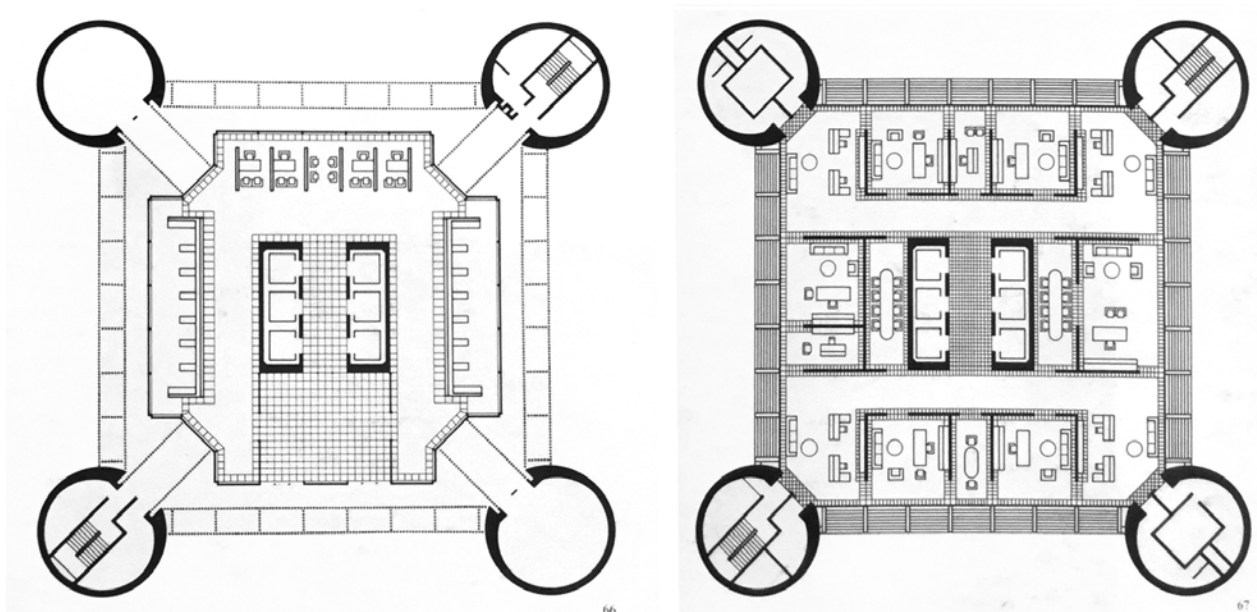


Figure 4. Plan views of the Mezzanine and selected upper level. Drawings provided by the architect for publication (Dal Co 1985, 117).

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Photo 5. Southeast historical view of the New Haven Veterans Memorial Coliseum and 1 Columbus Plaza, Knights of Columbus Building; camera facing northwest. New Haven Redevelopment Collection, New Haven Museum.



Photo 6. Southeast view of 1 Columbus Plaza during construction, camera facing northwest. Note the reinforced concrete corner pillars with masonry cladding partially installed. Photo courtesy of KRJDA, accessed 7/28/2017 at [http://www.krjda.com/Images/KofC%20Images/KofC\\_16.jpg](http://www.krjda.com/Images/KofC%20Images/KofC_16.jpg)



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Knights of Columbus Building, 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT



Photo 7. East view of 1 Columbus Plaza, camera facing west, showing the building's function as a gateway "sign-post" as seen from the road.

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Knights of Columbus Building, 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT



Photo 8. North sidewalk view from Church and George Streets, camera facing south, showing the pedestrian approach through Columbus Park (currently closed due to poor condition of paving).

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Knights of Columbus Building, 1 Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT

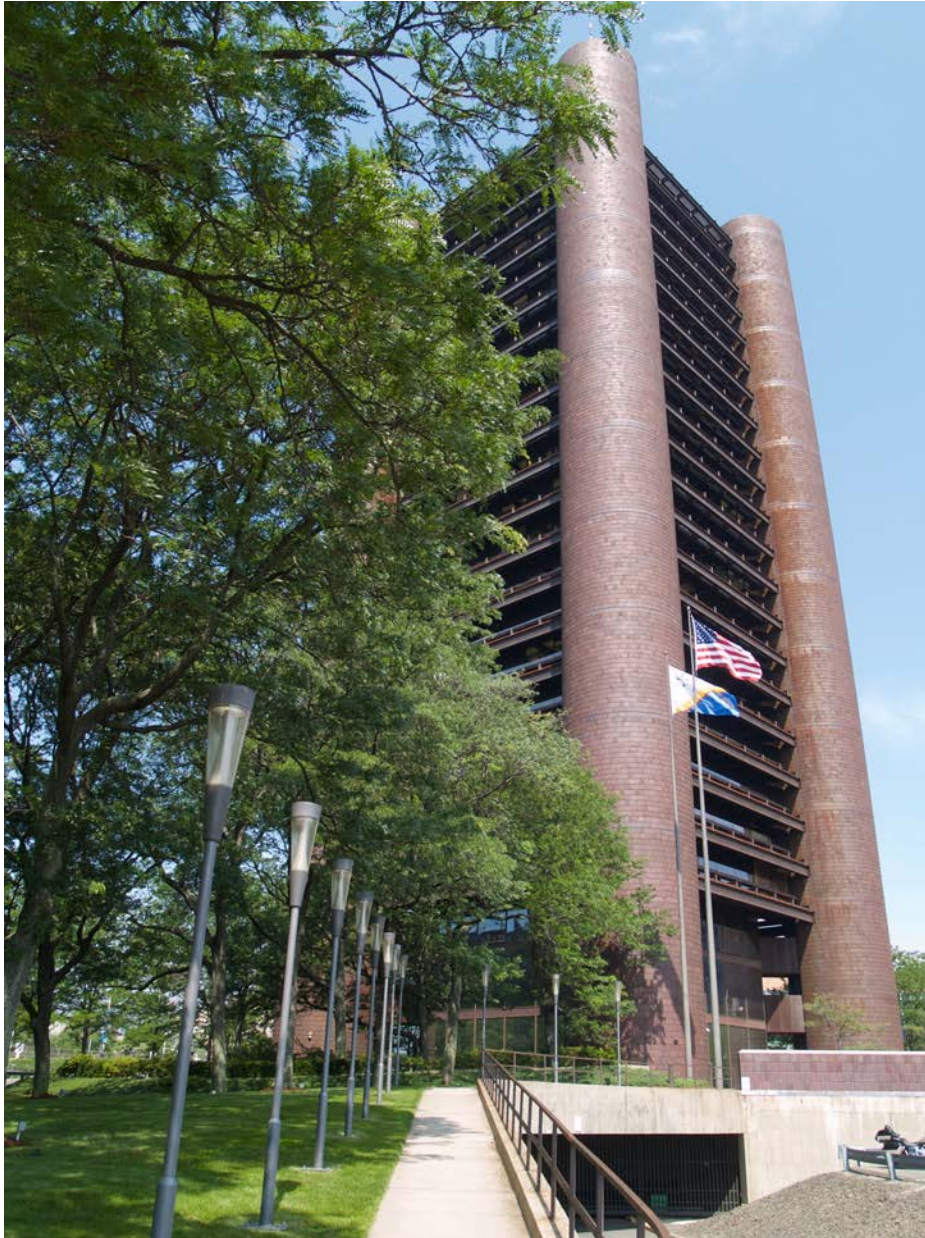


Photo 9. East view of 1 Columbus Plaza, camera facing west. Service access drive is at lower right; further to the right is the former Coliseum site.

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Photo 10. Detail view of ground level at south corner, camera facing northeast. The Museum at 1 State Street is glimpsed in the distance across the former Coliseum site (awaiting future redevelopment).



Photo 11. Detail southwest view of upper facade, camera facing north.