



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) 200 Fountain Apartment Homes

Building Name (Historic) Executive House

Street Address or Location 200 Fountain Street (200-226)

Town/City New Haven Village Westville County New Haven

Owner(s) West Dale National Associates LP Public Private

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: rental apartments

Historic Use: rental apartments

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

Interior accessible? Yes No If yes, explain Some units available to rent

Style of building International - Corbusian - Brutalist Date of Construction 1963-5

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>Cast-in-place</u>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type _____) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

Structural System

- Wood Frame
 Post & Beam
 Balloon
 Load bearing masonry
 Structural iron or steel
 Other Reinforced 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 rubber membrane

Number of Stories: 6 **Approximate Dimensions** 2 buildings each 49' x 255'

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: New clubhouse constructed connecting the two buildings 2001.

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: Asphalt paved parking, existing 3-family house at 216 Fountain, metal perimeter fencing

Surrounding Environment:

Open land Woodland Residential Commercial Industrial Rural

High building density Scattered buildings visible from site

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

These two massive 6 1/2-story buildings tower over a neighborhood of 2- and 3-story 19th-century homes interspersed with 3-story apartment developments of the first half of the 20th century. Contrary to the Corbusian ideal of towers in a park, these buildings closely abut their neighbors, leaving little open space. The ground plane is almost entirely utilized for resident parking.

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

See continuation sheet.

Architect Gilbert Switzer Architect

Builder Bernard Stolnick

• 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, p. 59.
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: 406/1133/010, /011, /012, Building Department permit files.
See continuation sheet.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock Date 2/04/2010

View Multiple views Negative on File NHPT

Name Charlotte Hitchcock Date 4/28/2010

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*):

These two 6-story apartment buildings are constructed on concrete pilotis (piers) raised one story above the ground plane. The two buildings are not quite parallel, tilting slightly closer at the interior part of the site. An exposed reinforced concrete frame with deep girders and coffered slabs supports the floors and within each story the exterior walls are infilled with non-structural brick cladding in a tan color similar to the concrete. Projecting concrete balcony walls and the deep shadows formed by the recessed balcony spaces, provide dramatic massing. Narrow metal-framed slit windows in the brick cladding are oddly small, given the potential for expanses of light in these buildings that rise well above their neighbors. There is a penthouse at the top of each building, set approximately two thirds of the way along the depth of the structure. Along with the tall elevator shaft, the penthouse provides further sculptural variety to the building masses as seen from a distance, such as from the carriage road at the top of nearby West Rock.

Concrete stairs descend from the central corridor down to grade near the ends of the buildings, and an elevator lobby is at grade as well. Otherwise, the ground plane is asphalt paving allocated for tenant parking spaces. In addition to the two concrete apartment buildings (at 200 and 226 Fountain Street) the site contains two older homes (c. 1880 and 1909), one between the tall structures and the other to the north, with another apartment building extending from its rear, also built in the 1960s but of conventional design and construction (two-story brick veneer with gable roofs).

During renovations in the early 2000s, a clubhouse was constructed joining the two buildings, and the site was gated with a high metal fence.

- Historical or Architectural importance:

The design of these two linear buildings on pilotis, with their exposed “beton brut” concrete frames and sculptural penthouses, pay direct homage to the “Ville Radieuse” concept of Le Corbusier, conceived in the 1920s and most fully realized in his Unite d’Habitation in Marseilles, France of the 1940s. These are odd, however, in that they are shoehorned into an existing densely-developed matrix of 2- and 3-story homes in traditional style and scale, rather than sitting in a cleared open landscape as Le Corbusier would have envisioned and as in the Rotival plan for downtown New Haven of 1942. These were not the product of Redevelopment Agency slum clearance, but rather the private market at work in a prosperous area of the city. Each of the gigantic megaliths occupied the narrow house lots of one or two homes, with the developer owning additional properties between and around but choosing to retain the older buildings. Compare with 60 Warren Street (see Inventory form), a similarly inspired complex sited in an open area of lawn.

The plans for these 6-story apartment buildings came just at the time that New Haven was revising its comprehensive zoning code (1963). Fountain Street and the surrounding neighborhood streets are littered with bulky 3-story U-shaped brick apartment buildings, erected in the decades of the 1920s to 1950s, allowing no outdoor space and often no parking for cars. These two buildings took the formula a step further by rising to twice the height of the surrounding neighborhood. By the time construction was complete, the area had a height limit of 3 stories, and area and use limitations that would prevent other structures on this scale from being approved.

Architect: Gilbert Switzer was a native of Knoxville, Tennessee who studied to be a sculptor at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. During World War II he served in the Corps of Engineers before earning an architecture degree at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1960. By 1963 he had moved to New Haven and established an office at 315 Whitney Avenue, where two other architects, Margaret V. Vilas and Augusta S. Breed, also had office space. Switzer established a practice dominated by multi-family residential work, much of it in a Brutalist mode using concrete or ribbed concrete block masonry. Several projects involved adaptive reuse of historic buildings, including the de-accessioned firehouse at 15-19 Edwards Street where he moved his office in the early 1970s. Gilbert Switzer died in 1976. The practice was continued by his partner, John A. Matthews.

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM - BUILDING AND STRUCTURES continuation sheet

200 Fountain Street, New Haven, CT

4

• Sources (*continuation*):

Bowker, R.R. LLC, American Architects Directory Third Edition, American Institute of Architects, 1970, <http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/1970%20American%20Architects%20Directory.aspx>

Le Corbusier, *Creation is a Patient Search*, Palmes, James, translator, Praeger, New York, 1960, pp. 162-5.

Pannenberg, Frank, personal communication, 2011.

Price & Lee City Directories, Architect listings, 1959-1966.

Rae, Douglas, *City: Urbanism and its End*, Yale U Press, New Haven, 2003, 516 pp.

Walker Lithograph & Publishing Co., *Atlas of New Haven Connecticut 1911*, <http://www.wardmaps.com/viewasset.php?aid=73>



1. Northeast view from Fountain Street, camera facing southwest; 200 Fountain Street with 226 Fountain Street beyond.



2. Northeast view from Fountain Street, camera facing southwest. 226 Fountain Street with 19th-century house in foreground and new clubhouse behind and to the left.



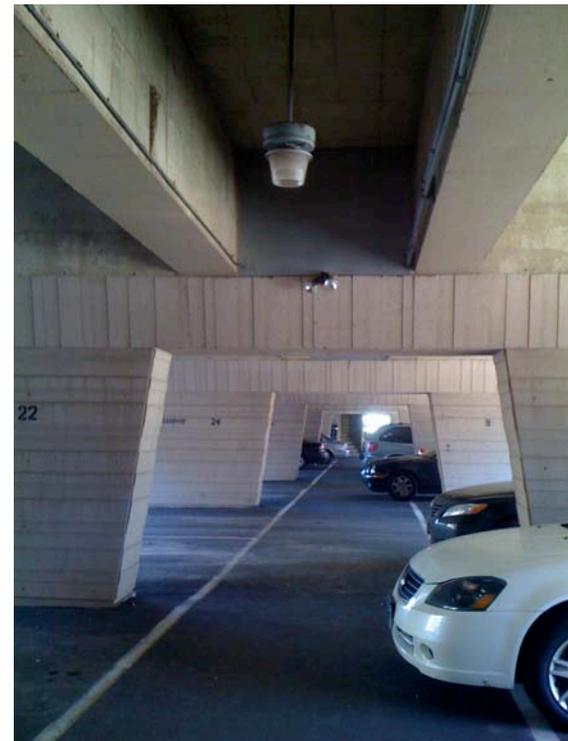
3. Detail views – South (rear) facade ground level pilotis



4. West facade concrete masonry screen at elevator lobby.



5. Grade level – construction detail views of first floor concrete beams and coffer.





6. View from West Rock summit carriage road, camera facing south.



7. Site aerial view from Google Maps, <http://maps.google.com/> accessed 4/28/2010.

