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) William T. Rowe Tower		
Building Name (Historic) William T. Rowe Tower		
Street Address or Location 904-912 Howard Avenue		
New Haven Village Hill North County New Haven		
Owner(s) Housing Authority of New Haven (HANH) O Public Private		
PROPERTY INFORMATION Present Use: Vacant - planned demolition		
Historic Use: Residential - Senior Rental Housing / Commercial - Retail		
Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road? \bigcirc Yes \bigcirc No		
Interior accessible? O Yes O No If yes, explain		
Style of building Modernist - Brutalist - Post-modern Date of Construction 1975		
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 <u>Precast Panels</u>) Cut Stone (Type) Other		
Structural System		
□ Wood Frame □ Post & Beam □ Balloon ✓ Load bearing masonry □ Structural iron or steel		
✓ Other <u>Precast Concrete Planks & Pan</u> els		
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: 12 - 16 Approximate Dimensions 147' x 56' x 168' height		
Structural Condition: 🔲 Excellent 🗌 Good 🗹 Fair 🛄 Deteriorated		
Exterior Condition: 🗌 Excellent 🗌 Good 🔲 Fair 🗹 Deteriorated		
Location Integrity: On original site O Moved When?		
Alterations? • Yes O No If yes, explain: <u>ADA renovations of 5 units, 1994.</u>		
FOR OFFICE USE: Town # Site # UTM		
District: S NR If NR, Specify: Actual Potential		

904-912 Howard Avenue, New Haven CT	Historic Resources Inventory	
PROPERTY INFORMATION (CONT'D)		
Related outbuildings or landscape features: □ Barn □ Shed ✓ Garage □ Carriage House ✓ Other landscape features or buildings: Covered parking with landscape	☐ Shop ✔ Garden	
Surrounding Environment: □ Open land □ Woodland ✔ High building density □ Scattered buildings visible from si		
 Interrelationship of building and surroundings: The .87-acre site is at the not Avenue, which intersect forming an acute-angled corner. It is just south of Route 3 health-related facilities including the Connecticut Mental Health Center, Yale-New facilities. To the west and south is a residential neighborhood of 19th- and early 20 and some mixed use buildings. Other notable features of building or site (Interior and/ or Exterior) 	34 and is adjacent on the east and north to Haven Hospital, and medical research	
See continuation sheet.		
for the pr • Historical or Architectural importance: See continuation sheet. Brown, Elizabeth Mills; <i>A Guide to Architecture & Urban Design</i> , Yale U		
• Sources: Carley, Rachel D., <i>Tomorrow is Here: New Haven and the Modern Movement</i> , (Privately printed by the New Haven Preservation Trust, New Haven CT) June, 2008. New Haven Tax Assessor's Record: Map/Block/Parcel: 298/ 0161/021, Building Department permit files. Hotchkiss, A.R., Bison Large Panel System Dwellings, Report 118, 1988, Construction Information Service/Building Research Establishment, http://products.ihs.com/cis/Doc.aspx?AuthCode=&DocNum=83851 Livable City Initiative web site: http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/LCI/HousingDevelopments/. Newman, Herbert S., interview, August 2009.		
	Date _6/12/2011	
View Multiple Views		
Name Arnold Chadderdon / Charlotte Hitchcock	Date <u>6/12/2011</u>	
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 □ Deterioration □ Zoning □ Other		

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

The building mass consists of 4 tower volumes or modules, each roughly 36' x 56,' oriented east-west and each offset from its neighbor so that the building steps back from south to north, meeting the angled street line of Howard Avenue along the east side of the site. The walls are sheer vertical planes the full height, which varies, stepping up one story each module from the southernmost to the 3rd, and back down one at the north end. Mechanical equipment is screened by projecting screen walls.

The building is constructed of brown-tinted precast concrete planks and full floor-height panels which are joined by connections at the floor level, utilizing reinforcing bars and concrete infill poured in-situ. Recessed balconies behind some openings and window glazing at the surface plane in others, provide subtle variety. The ground floor has retail spaces, and entries to the upper floors, where storefront openings alternate with large circular openings filled with dome-shaped plastic glazing (some replaced by flat glass), a Post-modern feature in an otherwise Brutalist style design. The second floor has smaller window openings for office space (for the Housing Authority). These two lower floors form a solid podium above which the residential floors, with their larger openings on the east and west elevations, show a greater openness. The north and south elevations have fewer openings, only a pair of unequal-sized windows near the center of the wall. Windows are metal-framed sliding units. Walls are a ribbed textured brown-tinted concrete with an inset reveal indicating the floor levels and a minimalist ornamental recessed panel at the corners. At the roof-level screen wall on both north and south elevations, a large circular opening echoes the ground-floor circular windows.

To the west of the building there is a parking garage with a landscaped garden level on its roof. This is connected to the apartment building by a 2nd-floor bridge. Further west on the site is an open parking area which is entered from Sylvan Avenue on the south through a gateway of 8" x 8" scored concrete block masonry, also brown-tinted, sloped up from the curb cut to form wide triangular piers framing the opening.

• Historical or Architectural importance:

The building was built for the Housing Authority of New Haven in 1975 as senior rental housing. It later came to include senior and disabled tenants. The building site has been traded to Yale University in return for an adjacent site on which new affordable rental housing is being constructed.

The use of the Bison precast panel system was innovative in 1975; the panels were fabricated at the local C.W. Blakeslee and Sons factory. Like the use of split-ribbed or scored concrete masonry a few years earlier in buildings such as Crawford Manor, Ruoppolo Manor, Columbus Mall, and the Robert T. Wolfe building (see Inventory forms for 90 Park Street, 480 Ferry Street, 158 Wooster Street, and 49 Union Avenue), designers were looking for ways to achieve the powerful hard-edged and abstract monumentality that was in vogue, using materials other than cast-in-place concrete as at the Yale Art and Architecture Building or New Haven Fire Headquarters (see Inventory form for 182 York Street). The precast panel and plank system permitted a high level of quality control as well as fire-resistance, and became the standard for much high-rise residential and hotel construction (see Inventory form for 400 Sargent Drive).

Here the detailing of wall texture, floor and window reveals, and the pattern of light and shade, are refined and subtle, making skillful use of the limitations of the precasting technology. However, the building appears slated for demolition; its layout apparently has been unsuitable for re-use or its reputation as a failed public housing high-rise has doomed it.



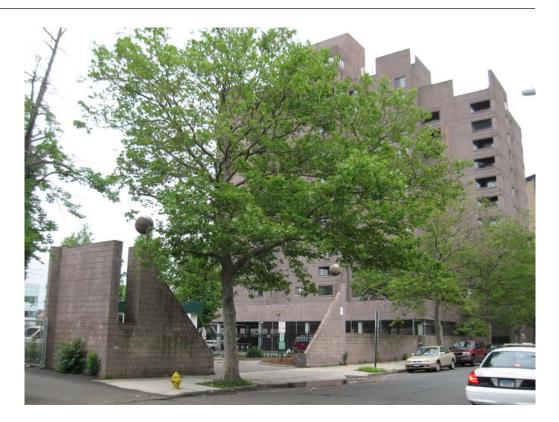
1. East view from Howard Avenue, camera facing southwest.



2. Southeast view from corner of Howard Avenue and Sylvan Avenue, camera facing northwest.



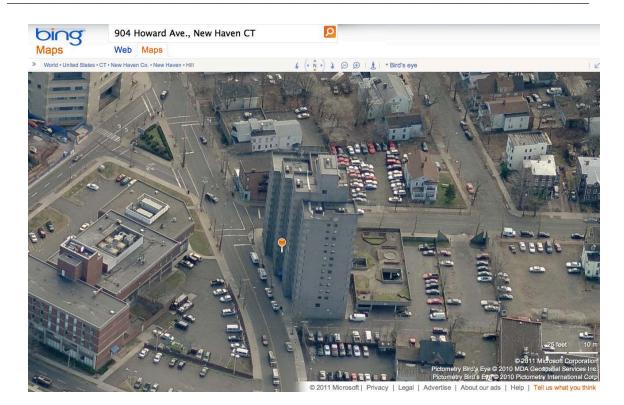
3. Northeast view from Howard Avenue, camera facing southwest.



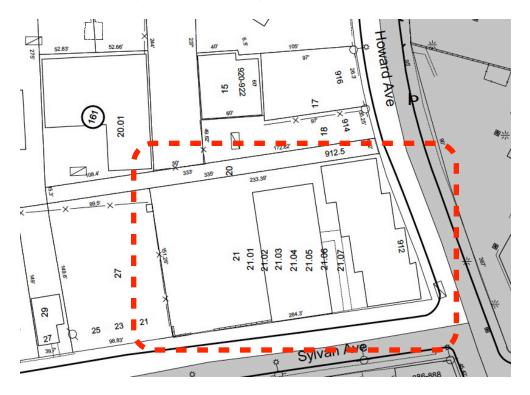
4. Southwest view from Sylvan Avenue showing parking entrance gateway, parking structure, and building; camera facing northeast.



5. Partial view of south elevation showing precast concrete details and dome window, camera facing northwest.



6. North aerial view from Bing Maps <u>http://www.bing.com/maps/</u> accessed 6/12/2011.



7. Site Plan – detail from City of New Haven Tax Map 298/161/021, not to scale, North \uparrow .