### GENERAL INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Name (Common)</th>
<th>Trade Union Plaza</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Name (Historic)</td>
<td>Trade Union Plaza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Address or Location</td>
<td>450 George Street aka 65 Dwight Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town/City</td>
<td>New Haven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>New Haven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner(s)</td>
<td>65 Dwight Street LLC, 65 Dwight St., New Haven, CT 06511</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

**Present Use:** DOMESTIC: Multiple dwellings

**Historic Use:** DOMESTIC: Multiple dwellings

**Accessibility to public:** Exterior visible from public road? ☐ Yes ☑ No

Interior accessible? ☐ Yes ☑ No If yes, explain __________________________________________________

**Style of building:** MODERN MOVEMENT

**Date of Construction:** 1968

**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 Custom masonry units)
- ☐ Cut Stone (Type ______________)
- ☐ Other ______________

**Structural System**

- ☐ Wood Frame
- ☐ Post & Beam
- ☐ Balloon
- ☑ Load bearing masonry
- ☐ Structural iron or steel
- ☑ Other Precast prestressed concrete plank

**Roof (Type)**

- ☐ Gable
- ☑ Flat
- ☐ Mansard
- ☐ Monitor
- ☐ Sawtooth
- ☐ Gambrel
- ☐ Shed
- ☐ Hip
- ☐ Round
- ☐ Other ______________

**Roof (Material)**

- ☐ Wood Shingle
- ☐ Roll Asphalt
- ☐ Tin
- ☐ Slate
- ☐ Asphalt Shingle
- ☑ Built up
- ☐ Tile
- ☐ Other ______________

**Number of Stories:** 3

**Approximate Dimensions:** multiple buildings - see continuation sheet

**Structural Condition:** ☑ Excellent

**Exterior Condition:** ☑ Excellent

**Location Integrity:** ☐ On original site ☑ Moved When? ______________

**Alterations?** ☑ Yes ☐ No If yes, explain: Window replacement, garage doors at carports, fencing, painting

### FOR OFFICE USE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town #</th>
<th>Site #</th>
<th>UTM</th>
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<tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>NR</th>
<th>If NR, Specify: Actual</th>
<th>Potential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
PROPERTY INFORMATION (CONT’D)

Related outbuildings or landscape features:

☐ Barn  ☐ Shed  ☐ Garage  ☐ Carriage House  ☐ Shop  ☑ Garden

☑ Other landscape features or buildings: Retaining walls, iron & chain link fencing, paved driveways

Surrounding Environment:

☐ Open land  ☐ Woodland  ☑ Residential  ☑ Commercial  ☐ Industrial  ☐ Rural

☐ High building density  ☐ Scattered buildings visible from site

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:
The 2.32-acre site is the entire block bounded by George St. on the north, Howe St. on the east, Frontage Rd. (Route 34) on the south, and Dwight St. on the west. To the west, north, and east is the Dwight Street Historic District, a predominantly residential neighborhood of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Route 34, known as the Oak Street Connector, abuts the south edge.

• Other notable features of building or site (Interior and/or Exterior)
This complex consists of nine rectangular 3-story buildings. Six buildings of various lengths are placed around the perimeter enclosing an interior garden. These have parking bays below the 3 residential floors (duplexes above flats); the cars reach the parking from sunken drives around the perimeter, partially shielded from street view by low walls and landscaping. Three shorter buildings are placed in the interior, dividing the garden into two areas. The complex is built of custom cast concrete block masonry with a shingle-like surface pattern. The facades originally had casement windows, small cantilevered concrete balconies, and open car ports at the basement level. In the mid-1980s, the car ports were fitted with garage doors while landscaping and fencing established a more secure boundary for the interior courtyard areas. The rental complex includes 45 flats and 42 duplex apartments. Flats are entered at grade from the interior garden courts. Duplexes above are reached by a second-level walkway overlooking the gardens. See continuation sheet.

Architect  Victor Christ-Janer & Davis Cochran & Miller  Builder  Ocone Construction Company

• Historical or Architectural importance:
See continuation sheet.

Sources:
Map/block/lot: 298/0176/00600.
See continuation sheet.

Photographer  Charlotte Hitchcock  Date 8/22/2016

View  Multiple Views  Negative on File  NHPT

Name  Charlotte Hitchcock  Date 11/15/2016

Organization  New Haven Preservation Trust

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

• Subsequent field evaluations:
Latitude, Longitude: 41.307743, -72.937843

Threats to the building or site:

☑ None known  ☐ Highways  ☐ Vandalism  ☐ Developers  ☐ Renewal  ☐ Private

☐ Deterioration  ☐ Zoning  ☐ Other  ☐ Explanation

450 George Street, New Haven, CT
Other notable features of building or site (continued):

Data table – list of buildings with dimensions and number of Dwelling Units (DU). See Figure 3.

1. 30' x 73'  8 DU finished basement
2. 30' x 107' 9 DU  B: 10 carports
3. 30' x 107' 9 DU  B: 10 carports
4. 30' x 40'   3 DU finished basement
5. 30' x 40'   3 DU  B: 3 carports
6. 30' x 100'  9 DU  B: 9 carports
7. 30' x 94'   12 DU finished basement
8. 30' x 213' 18 DU  B: 20 carports
9. 30' x 66'   6 DU  B: 6 carports

Historical or Architectural importance (continued):

This is one several projects built during the Redevelopment Era, where there was an attempt to establish a new ownership model — sponsorship by a non-profit such as a religious, labor, or community group along with a co-op ownership structure providing opportunities for first-time home owners. A sizeable parcel of cleared land was assembled through the redevelopment process, and the planning of new homes aimed to create an attractive development that would be competitive with suburban development in nearby towns. Here the design balances urban density with amenities like covered parking and green interior open spaces. Although smaller in scale, the layout of interior courts and a sunken parking level, bears a close resemblance to Church Street South as well as to others like Columbus Mall (Wooster Street). At Trade Union Plaza, the use of a custom concrete block textured somewhat like wood shakes, gives the complex a more substantial ambience than the standard block at Church Street South.

The structural system consists of custom-designed concrete block masonry bearing walls with floors made of pre-stressed concrete block planks known as Dox Plank (Nicholes interview; Dolhon 2008). Steel cables threaded through voids in the blocks allowed the concrete blocks to be tensioned and to form structural floor and roof beams. A common thread of experimentation in the construction projects of the 1960s in New Haven, was the innovative use of concrete masonry and various types of pre-cast structural concrete beams and slabs. For Christ-Janer, these investigations dovetailed with his concern to provide disaster-resistant forms of construction.

Perhaps most significant for this development, the scale here was an advantage as the small project was more manageable. When co-op ownership by low-income residents proved financially problematic, the complex was foreclosed by HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development). It was purchased in the mid-1980s by a partnership, Union Plaza 85 Associates (managing partner Ron Nicholes), who managed it under the terms of its original HUD rent subsidy program. Through attentiveness to tenant relations, modifications to improve security, restoration of the landscaping, and careful building maintenance, the management was able to retain both the quality of life and Modernist appearance, enhanced by a cheerful paint color and accent awnings.
In recent years, with the expiration of the subsidized financing period, the complex has been sold again and has moved into a market rate management. It stands as an enduring example of the aspiration of Modernist design to provide a successful environment for urban life. It remains the only example of Christ-Janer’s work in New Haven, and illustrates his concerns with innovative structural systems and the provision of durable construction resistant to natural disasters.

Architect:

**Victor F. Christ-Janer** (1915 – 2008) was an architect who helped define the Modernist architectural movement in New Canaan, Connecticut. He was also an educator, artist and inventor.

Victor Christ-Janer grew up in Minnesota. He trained in liberal arts, sculpting, painting, and architecture at St. Olaf College from 1933–1935. From 1937 to 1939, he served along with his friend, the late Adolf Dehn (water colorist, lithographer) as director of a summer art school. From 1941 to 1942, he was the chief graphic designer for Nelson Rockefeller, who served as the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, a government office for promoting international economic cooperation in the Americas. Christ-Janer continued his education at Yale University, where he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts with honors in 1940. His studies were interrupted by service in World War II. Christ-Janer was a pacifist who applied for and secured a conscientious objector status after being drafted in November 1941. He served in the European theater as a camouflage artist and also in intelligence for the Army’s Department of Engineers and Military Intelligence. His wartime experiences made a deep and lasting impression and the theme of non-violence followed Christ-Janer throughout his life. He later kept in his office photographs of the devastation and suffering he had encountered in Europe. After the war, Christ-Janer returned to Yale University where he received a Bachelor of Architecture in 1947.

Christ-Janer designed and built his own home in New Canaan, Connecticut in 1949 and lived there until his death in 2008. In 1955, he founded the Victor Christ-Janer and Associates architectural firm in New Canaan. Christ-Janer's love of Pop Art led to his opening a gallery within the office, showing work including Andy Warhol, Claes Oldenburg, Jasper Johns and Roy Lichtenstein. Christ-Janer's career included his architectural practice, best known for a number of Modernist homes in the New Canaan area, and teaching at Columbia University and other schools. Later in his career Christ-Janer also worked on developing building materials resistant to natural disasters.
Sources (continued):


Maps and aerial views:
Bing Maps accessed at: https://www.bing.com/mapspreview
Google Maps accessed at: https://www.google.com/maps/


Nicholes, Ron, former owner of Trade Union Plaza. Interview 8/30/2016 at his home in New Haven, by C. Hitchcock.


Figure 1. Location map of Trade Union Plaza. Image from Google Maps accessed 10/27/2016, with annotation to indicate the extent of the site.

Figure 2. West aerial view of Trade Union Plaza. Image from Bing Maps accessed 10/27/2016.
Figure 3. Site plan of Trade Union Plaza. Image from New Haven GIS mapping, accessed 10/27/2016. Note the surrounding smaller lots reflecting the development patterns of the historic Dwight neighborhood. Annotation indicates building identification for Data Table.

Photo 4. North elevation view of the George Street side of Trade Union Plaza, camera facing east. In the distance at rear is the 1965 Crawford Manor senior housing tower designed by Paul Rudolph.
Photo 5. North elevation view of the George Street side of Trade Union Plaza, camera facing southwest. Note the pedestrian entry to the interior garden court, at left, and the sunken parking level below the homes, screened from street view by landscaping and the low elevation.

Photo 6. North elevation view of the George Street side of Trade Union Plaza, camera facing east.
Photo 7. West elevation view of the Dwight Street side of Trade Union Plaza, camera facing north. The perimeter wall consists of the same custom block masonry as the building walls.
Photo 8. West elevation view of the Dwight Street side of Trade Union Plaza, camera facing south, including detail view of the perimeter landscape wall.