



New Haven Industrial Heritage Trails

*International Festival
of Arts & Ideas
June 2019*

Welcome!

The New Haven Industrial Heritage Trails invite you to explore a group of buildings and landscapes that reflect New Haven's history of an industrial city—a city of factories, coal-fired power plants, railroads and trolleys. The built legacy of industry is distributed across the city in different ways. Some buildings have been adapted and reused. Others remain dormant. And there are those that are threatened by neglect. In some cases, the buildings themselves are gone, but have left traces that can still be perceived.

Each Trail is a physical and imaginative journey created by a student in the Ghost Town seminar at the Yale School of Architecture, delving into the history of a particular site and the “ghosted networks” that were once prominent but may have faded over time, and proposing an interpretive strategy for building curiosity and engagement with these places.

The New Haven Industrial Heritage Trails are embedded in the physical city. But as an imaginative space, the Trails suggest a way of observing the present city with a sensitivity to historical narratives and meanings. Our intention is to provoke public consideration of these places and to propose creative ways to mark their diverse and sometimes dissonant narratives. What have these buildings and landscapes meant in the past and what might they mean for the future of New Haven?

As a frame of mind, the Heritage Trails are not mutually exclusive: you may occupy more than one at the same time. The Trails are also an interactive space and a forum to share information, to build coalitions, and to advance proposals. Please share your reactions, suggestions, and corrections with us. And if there is a building or landscape that should be investigated by the New Haven Industrial Heritage Trails, please let us know.

All in Good Time:

The industrial world depended on regularized time as a form of human management. Today we take this for granted, but it wasn't until the railroad-age that modern, standardized time took its current form. Factory complexes were frequently anchored by clock towers, looking over the workers and marking shift-changes.

Consider the **New Haven Gas-light Company** site on Chapel Street, where the empty and deteriorating administration building remains one of the last structures to mark this once-sprawling gas-works. The building is designed like a rustic, Renaissance-revival shed, with arched window headers, decorative keystones, and clay roof tiles. Architect Leoni Robinson was prolific during the high tide of New Haven's industrial period, designing buildings for a range of big clients, like the Quinipiac Brewery and the New Haven Water Company. **Dylan Lee's** heritage trail ***On the Intersection of Industry and Design*** connects a sequence of Leoni Robinson-designed buildings with markers that recall the clocks and worker time-tables that were central to the cultural landscape of industrial New Haven, and has built a mock-up.



Photo: Chad Herzog, 2018

One element that unifies the New Haven Industrial Heritage Trails is that each suggests “ghosted” networks: connections between buildings, places, materials, and people that may have been severed when the company folded or moved away. In his study of the ***New Haven Clock Company Building***, **Rukshan Vathupola** suggests six different networks, which he has graphically illustrated in a website--<http://campuspress.yale.edu/nhccf/>

Factory Lofts and Foundries

New Haven was well known for its carriage industry and a number of firms clustered in Wooster Square. One of the city's most resilient carriage-related businesses is **C. Cowles & Company**, which produced lanterns and other components. In 2014, Cowles finally decamped to North Haven, leaving a complex of buildings at Water and Chestnut Street now occupied by UHaul which has converted some of the buildings to storage.

The Cowles buildings are special because as a group they record at least four different eras of industrial building, from brick and timber structures in the 19th century to poured-concrete in the early 20th century, to a light, metal-frame structure in the 1960s designed to enclose a huge space for the placement of metal-stamping machines. These buildings could be re-used for almost anything (an early proposal for housing failed) and **David Bransfield** has developed an idea for a temporary use for artist storage, studios, and workshops called ***Restoring Artistry in Industrial Crafts***—a plan that UHaul, which has become a frequent tenant in adapted loft buildings—might deploy in other situations.

The legacy of the **Armstrong Carriage Company** is not far away on Chapel Street. **Tony Yeboah** has excavated the past of this structure to reveal many different uses over time. Created for a single client and a single process—the manufacture of carriages—over time the space was broken up and used by a number of small tenants. This was easy to achieve in a “loft” building like this one, in which a skeleton of posts and beams form the structure of the building and interior spaces can be cut up and repurposed in many different ways. Research in New Haven City Directories provide evidence that many garment makers occupied spaces vacated by carriage makers in Wooster Square. Today,

owners are attempting to renovate the building for its next use as residential apartments.

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From the 1969 City Directory of New Haven, showing when the Armstrong Carriage Building. Tenants of the Armstrong Carriage Factory building include Pats Barber Shop, Golia Dress Manufacturing Company, Golia Belt & Novelty Co., Blue Flame Oil Co., Kenny J Frocks (Dresses) Inc., La Bella Luncheonette, J E M Products Co. (Die Makers), Chapel Metal Finishing Co. (Platers), and one Vacant sub-unit.

The Armstrong factory's neighbor is the **Yale Iron Works** building, which has also housed a number of different users over its history. Not a loft building, the foundry features a large and dramatic interior space lit by its iconic monitor and clerestory windows. **Dimitris Hartonas**, who has created a timeline as well as architectural drawings

of the building, believes the interior space should remain open—not cut up into smaller spaces—to retain and celebrate this soaring industrial space.

New Haven was a major manufacturing and sales center for bird cages. Do you have a pet bird? They were very popular in the early twentieth century when the **Hendryx Company**

occupied a group of brick buildings between Audubon Street and the Farmington Canal Railroad. They made bird cages of all variety and marketed the practice of keeping birds. In the home, birds and their songs were purported to help buffer the harsh sounds of the industrial city and bring a bit of levity to the homes of workers. The Hendryx buildings are gone, but in **Davis Butner's** project, **Elm City Minstrels**, the mem-



Ad for Hendryx Bird Cages

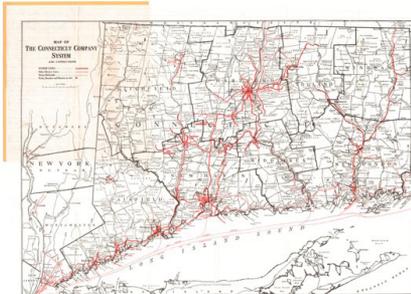
ory of the birds are recalled. Scan the QR code with your phone and access some of the bird calls.

The birdsongs were meant to bring harmony into the city. But there is also dissonant heritage evoked in the New Haven Industrial Heritage Trails—difficult or challenging aspects of history. For example, in **Sharmin Bhagwagar’s** proposal for the **Strouse Adler Company** building (the “Smoothie” factory), which made corsets and other undergarments for women, she explores the physical qualities of corsets (early models were made from whale bones) as well as the cultural aspects of these products, which relate to social pressures around an idealized body image. In ***Undressing the History of New Haven’s Undergarment Production***, Sharmin proposes to convert the interior courtyard into a public space that revives the history of the corset industry in New Haven from the perspective of feminist politics.



Advertisement for Strouse Adler

Infrastructure and Electricity



Map of the Connecticut Company System, 1920

New Haven was a street-car city, a city of tracks and trolleys, their noise vibrating on metal wires strung overhead and grinding beneath along the rails embedded in the street. Outside the Nine Squares—the colonial grid built on Quinnipiac lands—radiating avenues with trolley lines gave shape to urban form. The **Connecticut Company** ran these trolleys, having bought up and consolidated smaller street railway systems in New Haven, across Connecticut, and beyond. It was an electrified system, and the Connecticut Company made its own electricity in a **Power House** on Grand Avenue not far

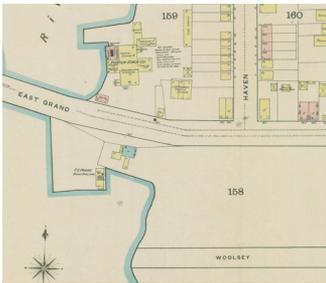
from the United Illuminating facilities on Ball Island.

The Power House lives on—it has been renovated and is now used for offices—though it has been altered. A graceful string of arches along the Mill River are gone. The front section remains, a noble presence on Grand Avenue. A long wooden trestle would have fed coal into the engine room that ran day and night. The network of trolleys, and the rituals of mobility they fostered, has disappeared. They were replaced entirely with buses in 1948, substituting petroleum for coal. In her project **Off the Rails**, Orli Hakano-glu charts a building trail of Connecticut Company-related sites, including the Powerhouse and Trolley Barns where cars were stored and repaired.

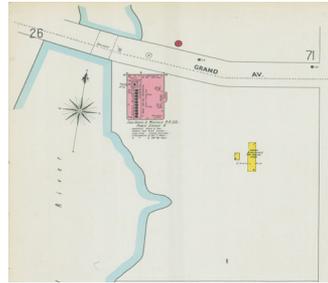
Chapel and Temple Street, New Haven, 1946 (Yale Visual Resources Collection).



To the Yale Bowl!



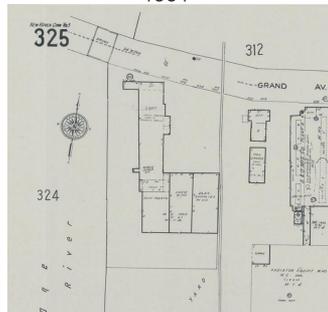
1886: Not yet built



1901



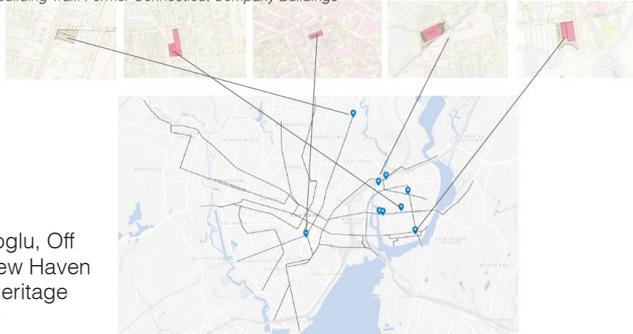
1924



1973: No longer operated by Conn. Co.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, New Haven (1886, 1901, 1924, 1973)

Building Trail: Former Connecticut Company Buildings



Orli Hakanoglu, Off the Rails New Haven Industrial Heritage Trails, 2019

The **Connecticut Co. Power House** was part of a coal-fired electricity district, with **English Station** and **Station B** on Ball Island. This wonderful ensemble remains and forms a **New Haven Power District**.



New Haven Power District: Connecticut Company Powerhouse, English Station, Station B. Google Maps, accessed June 14, 2019.

The area is in transition once again. United Illuminating is paying for a clean-up of the English Station site, which is owned privately by two LLCs. **Station B** has been condemned by the City and is slated for demolition as part of the remediation effort. If that comes to pass, the building's physical presence on Grand Avenue will be missed. It is a landmark that shapes the street linking Downtown and Wooster Square to Fair Haven. **Varoon Kelekar** would like to see it preserved, even just the façade. His trail starts at the railroad fragment north of the site and follows the Mill River Trail to Ball Island, which he imagines as an

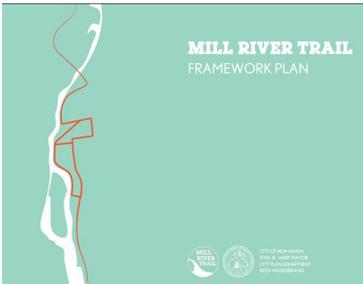


Varoon Kelekar, Station B: Soil Museum, New Haven Industrial Heritage Trails, 2019

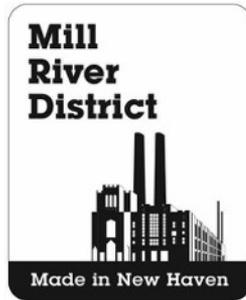
open and accessible space. This will mark an ephemeral moment before other programs, both semi-permanent and temporary, take hold. As an inaugural installation, Varoon proposes a **Museum of Dirt**: core samples of the earth that expose the history of contamination at the site and share the story of remediation. A bit of toxic heritage amidst new parkland.



“Near the start of the Trail to Station B.”



Mill River Trail Framework Plan, 2017, City of New Haven and Reed Hilderbrand, Landscape Architects. <http://dev-millriver-trail.pantheon-site.io/mill-river-trail-framework-plan/>, accessed June 14, 2019.

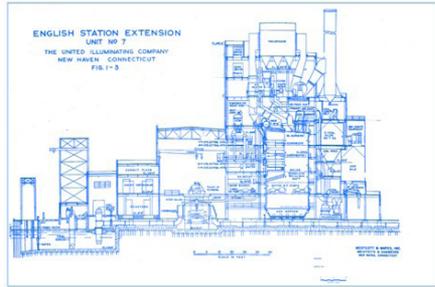


Mill River District Signage, New Haven's Mill River District: Planning + Redevelopment Framework, Prepared by Utile and Ninigret Partners for: City of New Haven Economic Development, EDC New Haven, and Mayor John DeStefano, Jr., July 1, 2012.

The central figure and looming presence over the New Haven Power District and, indeed, the entire Industrial Heritage Trails, is **English Station**, the coal-fired plant that cannot be separated from the growth and development of the city. One half looks like it could be a building on the Yale Campus; the other half is a box from the 1950s that once blazed in bright lights the name of its patron, the United Illuminating Co.

The Mill River Framework, commissioned by the City of New Haven at public expense in 2012, made English Station its icon in a number of signs placed around the district. But its future is not assured. In her project, **Rachel Lefevre** hopes to build the constituency of people who want to see

it preserved. For now, on contaminated Ball Island, it is to be seen and not touched; but she invites you to imagine what might happen in its cavernous interior with large-scale projections that would also light it like a beacon.



Sectional drawing, English Station, Westcott & Maps, architects and engineers, 1929

Even if English Station does not have a use, do we want it to remain to stand? What is the tolerance for ruins in our midst? Can we stabilize them for even minimal public occupancy on a temporary basis?

Fuel, everywhere. Coal piles blowing dust across the Mill River. Engine rooms thrumming. A common presence along the banks of the Mill River were fuel storage containers, including large cylindrical gas holders. A mysterious relic of this landscape can be found on the east side of the Mill River: a concrete drum covered with ivy. It sits on private property belonging to Miller Marine Services. **Will James** imagines a public space there for art, performance, music, or something else, with a new path from Mill Street leading to the inside of the former gas holding tank.

Will James, Fuel Holding Tanks and Industrial Land Use in New Haven



For more than one hundred years, located in a complex of buildings on River Street, the **Bigelow Boiler Company** manufactured water tube boilers for factories, foundries, and electric power plants across the country and

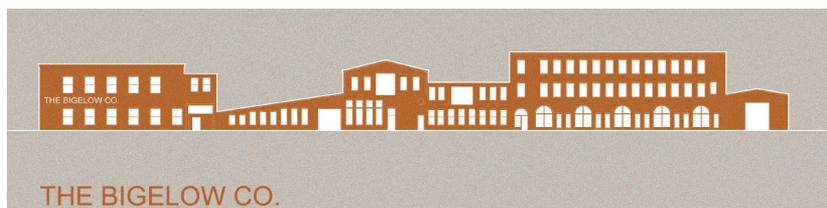
around the world. They are powerful emblems of the age of rail, coal, and steam. The buildings were created between the 1870s and World War I and the entire River Street District is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Photo: Elihu Rubin, 2017

Today the Bigelow buildings are empty. Some are being restored for new uses. Others may not be able to be adapted. The entire ensemble is in the flood plain. But that doesn't mean that the buildings should not be stabilized, even as ruins,

parks, or follies: they create a powerful presence on River Street that is a window into New Haven's industrial heritage. **Paul Wu's** project, ***Bigelow Boiler Co. Redux***, describes the diverse and picturesque facades and imagines retaining them as a kind of industrial stage-set that opens to a sequence of farms and gardens on remediated land between River Street and the water.



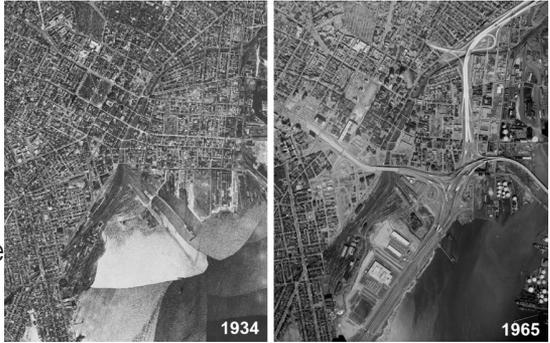
Paul Wu, The Bigelow Co., New Haven Industrial Heritage Trails, 2019.

Postwar Industrial

Railroads, trolleys, power plants, factories—and the residential neighborhoods that clustered around them—shaped New Haven's maturation as an industrial city. This kind of intermingling was anathema to mid-twentieth-century city planners and housing reformers. After World War II, cities everywhere were being remade for the automobile. New highways slashed through the urban fabric and reestablished the water's edge.

Huge swaths of the red-brick industrial landscape of Wooster Square were cleared to make way for the Interstate Highways. New Haven was at the junction of two

major roads, I-91 and I-95, its swirling interchange wiping away acres of buildings, including entire complexes for Sargeant Hardware and Candee Rubber. Planners saw Urban Renewal and highway building as opportunities to modernize the industrial district and to separate it from residential Wooster Square.

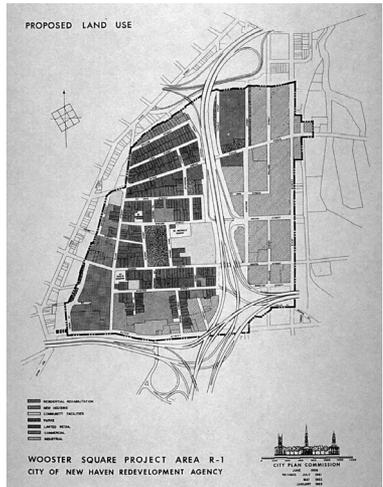


Aerial Photographs, New Haven, 1934 and 1965.

A sequence of boxy, one-story factories, warehouses, wholesale and supply stores, laboratories, and truck and tire shops were built along Hamilton and Wallace Streets. Left behind were small pockets of older industrial buildings: The remnants of the Chapel Street Carriage and Hardware District; the Power District; and the River Street District, for example.

In her 1965 assessment of Wooster Square Design, city planner Mary Hommann wrote:

“Gone are the gloomy and dangerous loft factories. . . . The new factories and wholesale buildings have been attractively designed, demonstrating that good design with a budget is possible. Residential and industrial uses have been satisfactorily separated by the elevated expressway. It is safe to say that when all rehabilitation and new construction are completed, Wooster Square will be one of the most desirable residential neighborhoods in New Haven, as well as a thriving new industrial area.”



Proposed Land Use, Wooster Square Project Area R-1, New Haven Redevelopment Agency, ca. 1963. A large area east of I-91 is coded “Industrial.”

The industrial program of Urban Renewal is not as remarked upon as the highways, office buildings, downtown shopping, hotels, parking garages, civic centers, and housing that were also part of the postwar reconstruction agenda. But cities wanted to compete with the suburbs for prime industrial locations, as well.

A second industrial district was designated for Long Wharf on land created during the construction of the Connecticut Turnpike, I-95, which opened in 1958. It was a tableau for a suite of modern buildings including new digs for Sargeant Hardware and the New Haven Register. Armstrong Rubber Company from West Haven was also lured to a Long Wharf site and Mayor Richard C. Lee helped play matchmaker



Rendering, Armstrong Rubber Company Building, Long Wharf, New Haven, 1963

with noted modernist architect Marcel Breuer who designed what we now call the **Pirelli Building**, named for the second tire company that owned the building.

It is a building both loved and hated. Today it belongs to Ikea, which removed a big chunk of the research and laboratory wing on the ground level for more surface parking. In **Larkin McCann's** project, ***Not Ready to Re-Tire***, he hopes to build public appreciation for this striking example of mid-century "Brutalist" architecture with a signage campaign that draws out six key aspects of the building. Plans for a boutique hotel have been floated for the site which currently sits empty and is sometimes used by Ikea as a massive billboard for product advertisements.

Take-Aways

These have been the New Haven Industrial Heritage Trails for 2019. I hope you enjoy touring the Trails in the 3rd Floor Gallery of the Yale School of Architecture and also in the field (a number of them have individual pamphlets that can help guide visits to the sites). But this is not a closed set. We welcome a proliferation of Trails and itineraries, drawing together existing pieces and adding new ones. Please consider proposing your own Industrial Heritage Trail!

Our goal is to build interest in these buildings, a constituency for their futures, a group of advocates. Many of them have private owners, but they have and will continue to play public roles in the life of the city. And for city-owned properties, we advocate for more active stewardship practices.

For: Public Stewardship: City of New Haven should invest public money in stabilizing the unused buildings it owns.

For: Preserving public access to public buildings, including vacant structures.

For: Night-Lighting Program for buildings (English Station, New Haven Gas Co. Building, Goffe Street Armory, etc.)

For: Temporary uses, events, installations, and ephemeral signage.

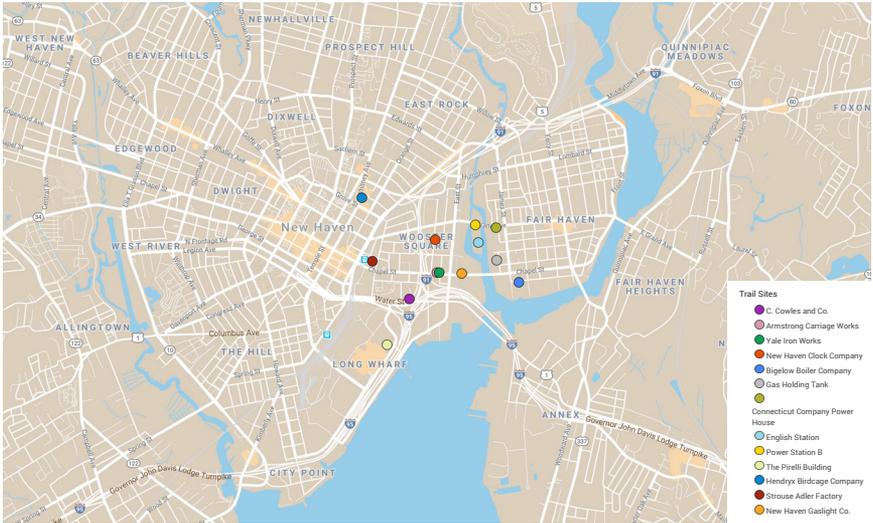
For: Diverse storytelling and engagement with industrial buildings and landscapes.

Against: Demolition by neglect.

Thank You!

Elihu Rubin, Associate Professor of Urbanism, Yale School of Architecture

Industrial Heritage Trail Map



Credits:

Students in Arch 4233, *Ghost Town: Abandonment, Preservation, and the Postindustrial Landscape*, authors of the *New Haven Industrial Heritage Trails*, 2019:

Sharmin Bhagwagar, David Bransfield, Davis Butner, Orli Hakanoglu, Dimitris Hartonas, Will James, Varoon Kelekar, Dylan Lee, Rachel Lefevre, Larkin McCann, Rukshan Vathupola, Paul Wu, Tony Yeboah,

Thank you to our research partners: New Haven Museum, New Haven Free Public Library, Haas Arts Library at Yale, Beinecke Rare Books Library at Yale, Sterling Memorial Library.

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Installation: Kayley Estoesta, Elihu Rubin, Li-Wei Wang, and Alison Walsh of the Yale School of Architecture Exhibitions. We are very thankful to her and to Andrew Benner, Director of Exhibitions.

We Welcome Your Feedback: Please write to elihu.rubin@yale.edu with reactions, suggestions, corrections, or anything else. Thank You!