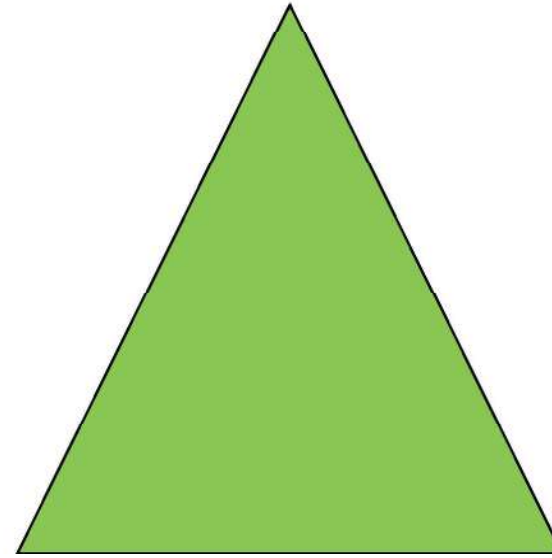


Green Triangle Parks of New Haven

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Urban Field Geography
Fall 2019

a tour

Introduction

New Haven is known for its large green spaces: The Green, Wooster Square, and East Rock Park are among the most recognizable. But there is a collection of secondary green spaces that are embedded in the city's urban form. Many of these spaces are called "triangles," but they include a range of shapes formed when two or three streets meet at an angle. These triangular parks are a window into three central elements of the city: public memory, social life, and urban form.

This tour features six such parks: Monitor Square, Defender's Park, Broadway Triangle, Phelps Triangle, Dog Park (East Rock), and the Cafe Nine-State Street Triangle. Many of them feature war monuments or memorials—two types of statues that serve distinct types of memory. "We erect monuments so that we shall always remember, and build memorials so that we shall never forget," said Arthur Danto, philosopher of art. The difficulty of memorializing war, while still confronting sacrifice, is a conversation that is engaged within these parks. Parks have varying types of use depending on the social life and urban form that surrounds them. Physical elements like fencing, seating, and nearby buildings—from the empty granite benches of Phelps Triangle to the shops owned by Yale around the Broadway Triangle. Historical material like Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of the earlier streetscapes will help illustrate how the urban form has evolved over time to incorporate the triangle park. Elements of design, memory, surroundings, and greenery will be examined in each park. Together, the characteristics will help contextualize what the park may have been planned for and what the park is used for now.

Map of New Haven

1. Defender's Park

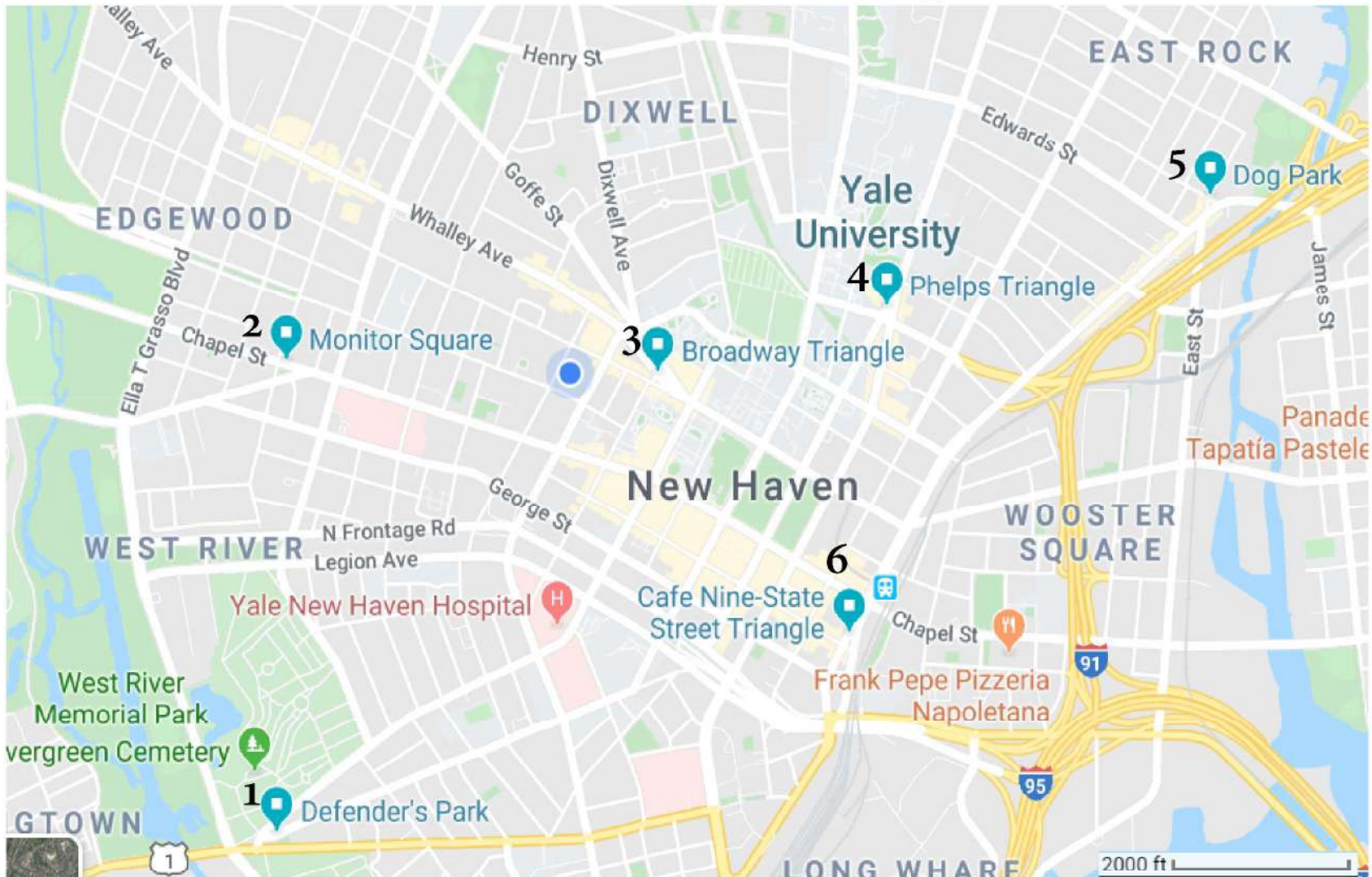
2. Monitor Square

3. Broadway Triangle





4. Phelps Triangle

5. Dog Park

6. Cafe Nine-State St. Triangle

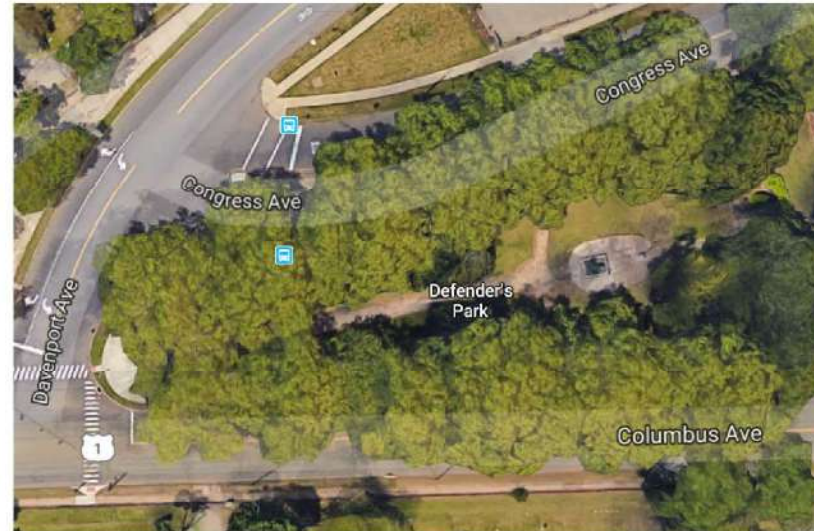
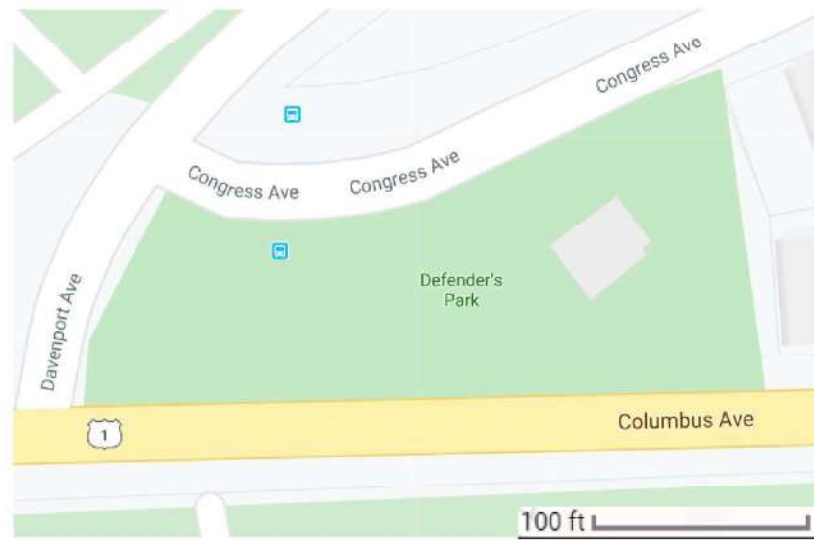


Legend

-  park location
-  green space
-  highway
-  body of water



Defender's Park (Congress Ave/Congress Ave/Columbus Ave)



Defender's Park is located on the western end of New Haven. The park is bordered by two cemeteries on either side: St. Bernard's to the south and Evergreen to the north. Buildings are not present in the area to shape the urban form—rather, it is the streets that channel into the area and intersect to create the park. Columbus Ave provides a powerful flow of traffic entering and exiting New Haven. Slightly slower-paced and sandwiched between two neighborhoods is Congress Ave. It joins into a relatively calm Davenport Ave, which runs along the edge of Evergreen Cemetery. The streets provide three very different atmospheres that converge at the park.



"Defenders of New Haven" monument in Defender's Park .

The walkway through the center of the Defender's Park leads to a monument titled "Defenders of New Haven", featuring a merchant citizen-soldier, a Yale student, and a "prosperous farmer" working to reload and fire a canon. It commemorates a battle in 1779 between 150 local militia and students and British forces who attempted to capture a powder mill in Westville.

The statue was sculpted by James E. Kelly and dedicated in 1910. Along with the Sailors and Soldiers monument in East Rock, it underwent a city-funded restoration in 2014—a testament to the city's interest in historical preservation of war monuments, and perhaps related to the city's colonial legacy as one of the first Puritan colonies.

Monitor Square (Chapel St/Winthrop Ave/Derby Ave)



Like Defender's Park, Monitor Square is located in the western half of New Haven. The park is surrounded by apartment buildings with neoclassical detailing and a monumental Omega Seventh-Day Adventist Church with tall white columns and palladian arched windows. Though the area is generally calm, on a Sunday morning, the street might be full of parked cars and people walking to and from the church. Recently-planted trees were set in place by the Friends of Monitor Square Park, an Urban Resources Initiative group that maintains stewardship of the park.



Cornelius S. Bushnell monument in Monitor Square.

A war monument built in 1906 by Herbert Adams at the center of the park commemorates Cornelius S. Bushnell, a shipping and railroad investor who lived in New Haven and helped develop the USS Monitor—the first steam-powered ironclad warship built for the Union Navy during the Civil War. A large eagle is perched on a bronze sphere with the United States shield, supported by four fish. Bushnell died in 1896 and is buried in the New Haven Evergreen Cemetery, located by Defender's Park.

The adaptations made to fit the neighborhood's needs are evident in the fencing. Some sections have been chain-linked together, while others parts have been removed—providing openings that residents are more likely to pass through. Desire lines are present in the park, cutting across the space from the direction of the church to apartment buildings on the other side of the park.

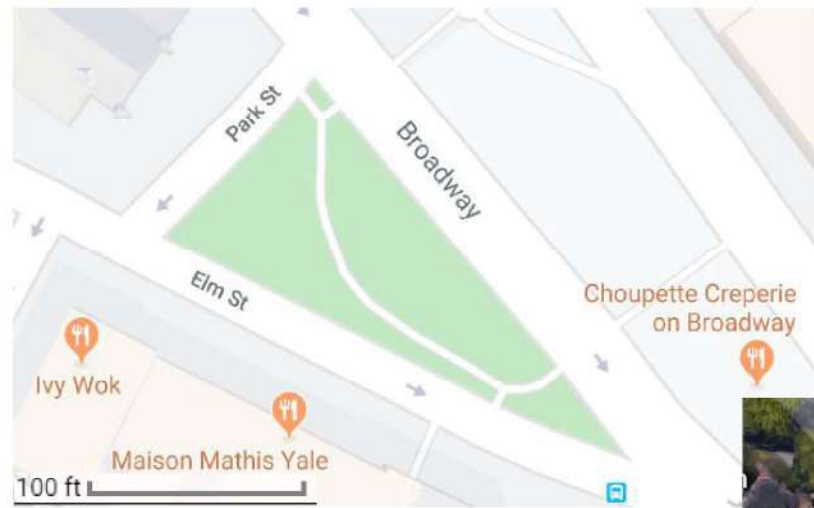


Chained together sections of park fencing.



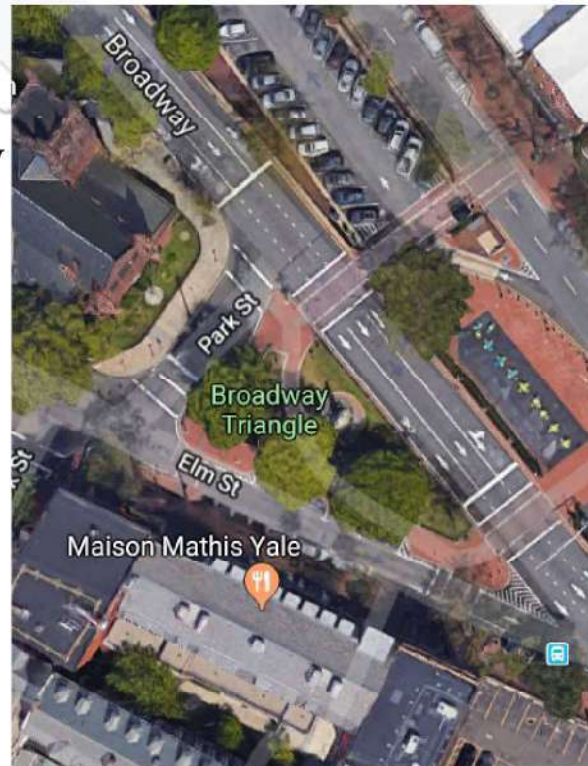
Removed sections of park fencing.

Broadway Triangle (Broadway/Park St/Elm St)



Broadway Triangle is located in the heart of Yale's shopping district. The pedestrian path that curves through the park connects Broadway and Elm Street, two commercial areas lined with restaurants and clothing stores.

As well manicured as the park is—relatively free of trash, oak leaves blown from the side of the path—the park lacks benches. It could be an intentional decision to keep a flow of people moving to the next businesses across the street, rather than make it into a place with stationary possibility. Those who do pass through the park may not register that there is even the possibility for a slower pace in the park from the rest of the area.



Civil War monument of Broadway Triangle

The tension between war monument and memorial emerges between two statues in Broadway Triangle. At the center of the park is a tall Civil War monument dedicated in 1905 to members of the First Connecticut Light Battery and the 6th, 7th, and 10th Connecticut Volunteers. Like the war monument in Monitor Square, it features an eagle on top of a sphere. It is unclear whether the same sculptor made it, but there may be a parallel design in both monuments' memory of the Civil War.

At a corner of the park is a memorial that engages with the conversation about war. A pile of rocks labeled "Iraq Afghanistan, U.S. Military" and with a number of citizens killed is a memorial sponsored by the organization Reclaiming the Prophetic Voice.

Reclaiming the Prophetic Voice war monument for Iraq-Afghanistan U.S. Military.

Each stone in the pile represents one month that has passed since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began and records the number of deaths reported that month. The memorial is much less elaborate compared to the eagle on a globe sculptures featured in the war monument in the same park. The juxtaposition of the monument and the memorial is a combination of heroic celebration, honoring service, and remembering loss.

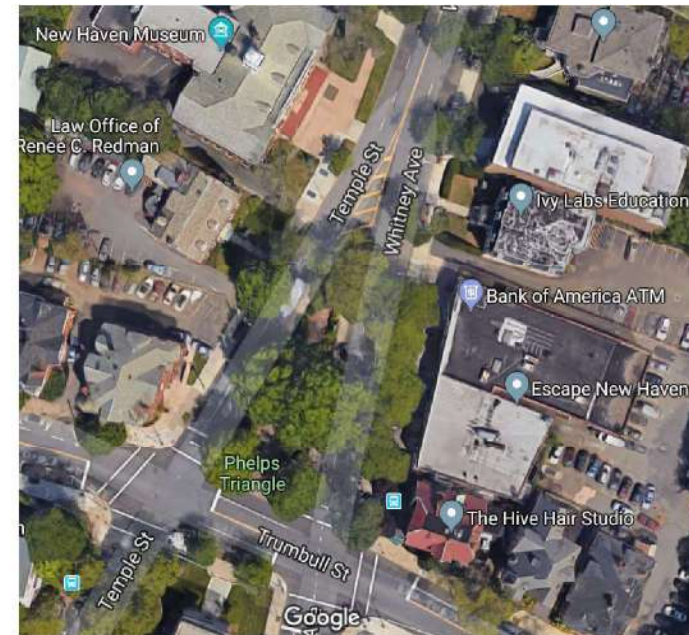
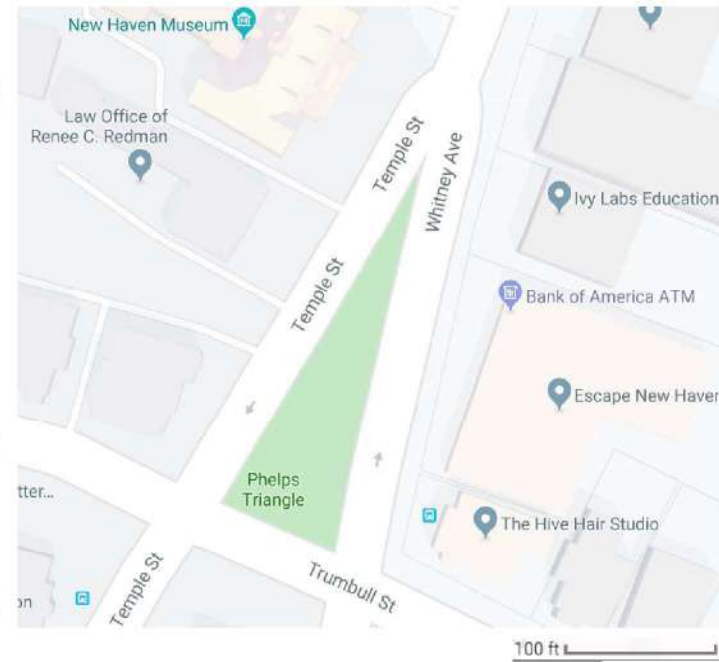


Phelps Triangle

(Temple St/Trumbull St/Whalley Ave)

Phelps Triangle is a seam between many entities from outside of New Haven, downtown New Haven, and Yale. Trumbull Street comes in from the highway, a string of local businesses up Whitney Ave, law offices and the New Haven Museum along Temple Street, and a Yale secret society tomb at the base of Trumbull Street.

The park has one main opening along Trumbull Street that gives a central view of the park. Unlike most parks, it is lined with brick rather than green space. Over a dozen benches line the perimeter of the park, the granite ones inscribed with donors of the landscaping project of the park. It provides seating for many people, yet the park rarely has people in it. Part of this absence could be attributed to its location, which is between three high-traffic streets.



Phelps Triangle Park.

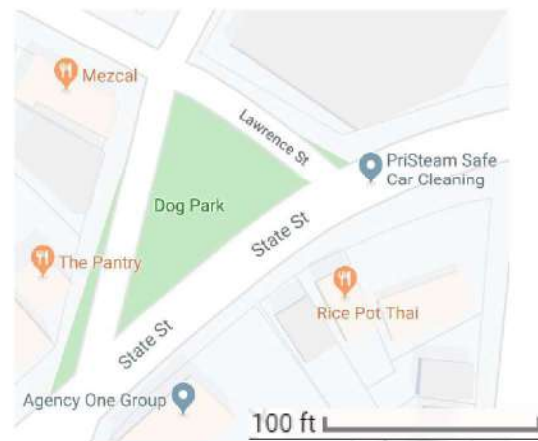
The design of the park is also more display-like than a place to be utilized—the central entrance of the park and almost invisible opening in the back sets up the space like an exhibit, as opposed to a space where people can regularly pass through.



Memorial benches by the New Haven Garden Club.

The granite benches are miniature sites of public memory themselves, inscribed with the names of donors and members of the New Haven Garden Club.

Dog Park (State St/Mechanic St/Lawrence St)



The Dog Park of East Rock is about half or a quarter of the size of some of the other parks in this series, but still gets a good deal of traffic—there isn't so much grass in the park under the four large trees in it, but the dust has many footprints and a hole that maybe a dog has dug. Small but busy neighborhood cafés like The Pantry shape the park's atmosphere of slower, relaxed time, the extra time that's taken to enjoy a meal out and walk the dog.

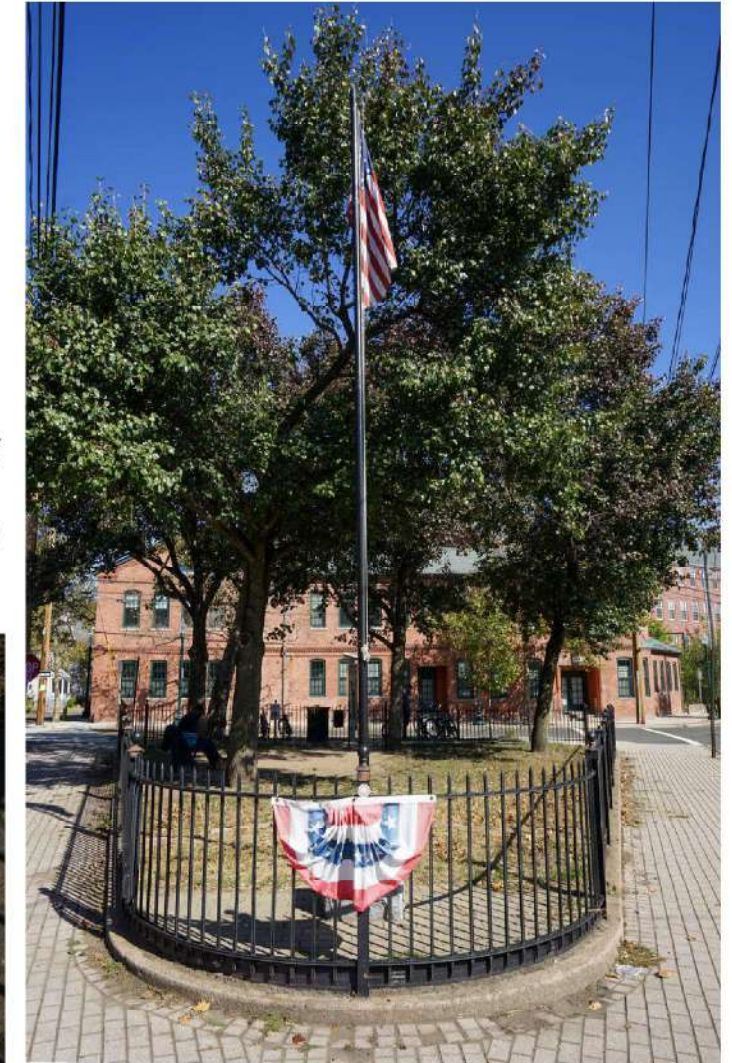


Entrance to Dog Park of the East Rock neighborhood.

As small as the park is, it has a flagpole at one end of the park with an U.S. flag bunting on the fence in front of it. A small granite plaque at the base of the flagpole has inscribed: "In honor of all World War Two Veterans from the New Haven area who valiantly served their country. Your service and sacrifice will never be forgotten." The smaller scale of the Dog Park fits with the role of the memorial as not a celebratory construction, but a source of remembrance for the veterans of WWII, whose names are inscribed on the bricks in the patio that surrounds the flagpole.



WWII veterans memorial.

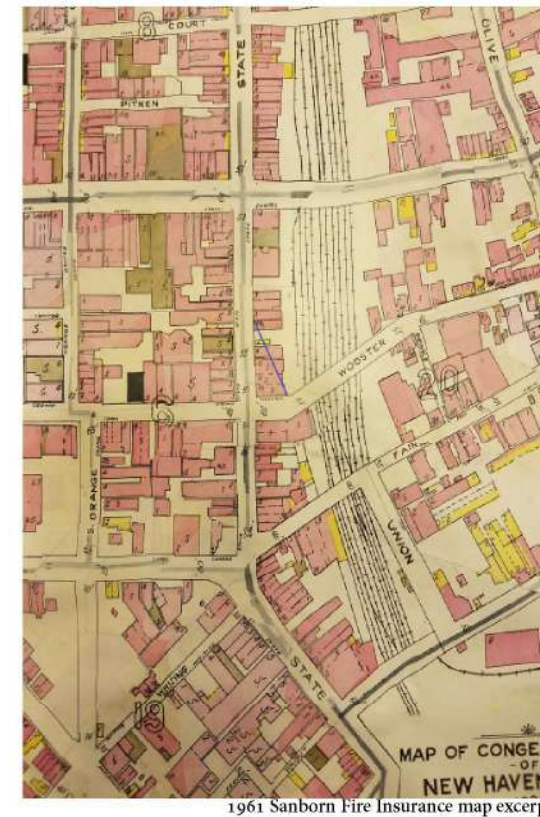
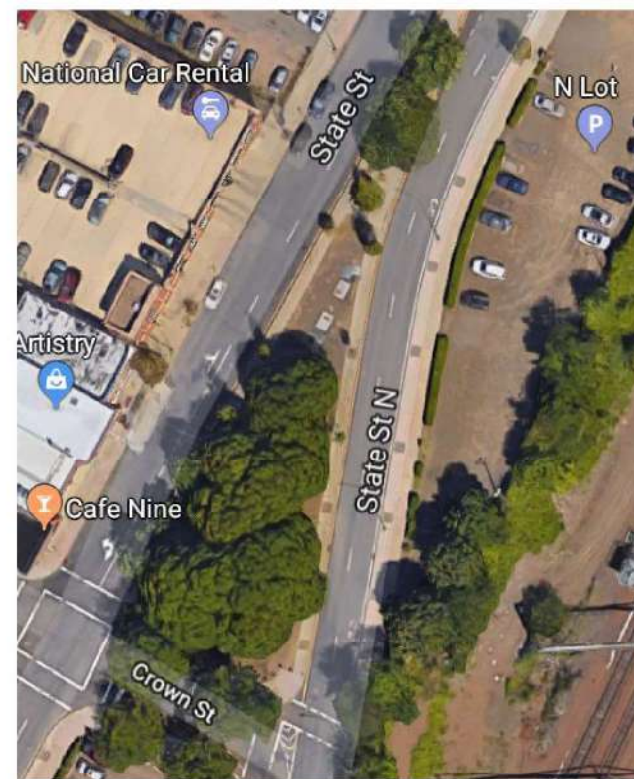
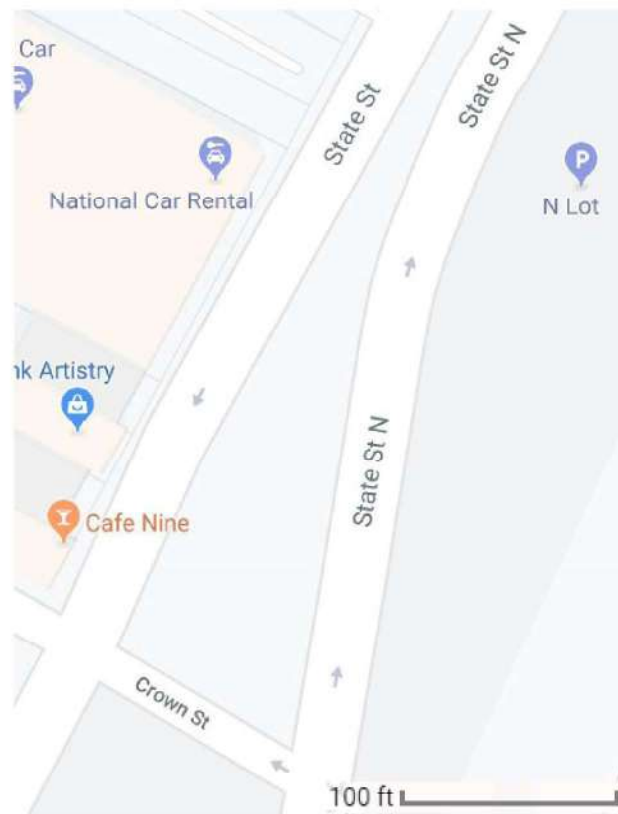


Flagpole and flag bunting in Dog Park.

Cafe Nine-State Street Triangle

(State St/State St N/Crown St)

The Cafe Nine-State Street Triangle is a designated community greenspace site implemented by the Innovation Park Project, with support from the Urban Resources Initiative, the City of New Haven's Parks & Recreation, and the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven. It lies at the southern corner of the city by State Street, an area of urban renewal that molded this park into formation in the process.



A 1961 edition of a Sanborn map of New Haven illustrates the area before State Street North had been constructed. Looking at the area between Fair Street and Wooster Square though, there is already a slant in the way buildings have been constructed relative to the railroads. If one extends that slant beyond Wooster Street to intersect into State Street, a triangle is formed (see blue line in map). By looking at the position of buildings before streets have been formed, one can see how a new triangle space would naturally form from the construction of a street in that area. The park helps to act as a buffer between the downtown area and the train tracks approaching Union Station.

Large trees planted in a raised bed surround a small brick patio in the center of the triangle. The lack of fencing in this park, as opposed to all others featured in this series, creates a larger sense of space. In some ways, the park feels more visible in its permeability with the rest of the area—it can be actively crossed into at any point along the street.

