

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH 0685381

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RECEIVED OCT 2 1978  
DATE ENTERED DEC 20 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC  
Elisha Blackman Building  
AND/OR COMMON  
York-Chapel Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
176 York Street  
CITY, TOWN  
New Haven  
STATE  
Cinnecticut  
VICINITY OF  
Third - Robert N. Giaimo  
COUNTY  
New Haven  
CODE  
007  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED in part	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
Schiavone Realty Corporation of Waterbury  
STREET & NUMBER  
234 Universal Drive  
CITY, TOWN  
North Haven  
STATE  
Connecticut  
VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Hall of Records  
STREET & NUMBER  
200 Orange Street  
CITY, TOWN  
New Haven  
STATE  
Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
DATE  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
CITY, TOWN  
STATE  
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED interior	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD exterior	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Blackman Building is a four-story structure with stores on the first floor and apartments above, constructed in red brick with stone trim in 1883 on the southwest corner of York Street and Chapel Street in downtown New Haven, Connecticut. The other three corners of the intersection are occupied by buildings of Yale University -- the Art and Architecture Building, the Art Gallery, and the Repertory Theater.

The configuration of the building and its lot is determined by the fact that the internal angle of the southwest corner of York and Chapel is less than 90 degrees. Consequently, the plan of the building is a trapezoid with no two sides parallel. The front of the building along York Street is 65 feet long, the Chapel Street front 45 feet, and the other two sides 60 feet and 40 feet. The corner of the building at the street intersection is truncated, and has a window in each floor. The York Street facade jogs in, near the entrance to the upper floors. The roof, not visible from the street, is a low hip.

The ground floor of the Blackman Building provided for three stores facing Chapel Street and, running behind them, one store facing York Street. The entrance to the apartments on the upper floors is on York Street, just before the York Street store. The walls are laid up in common bond using glazed brick with thin mortar joints. The York Street front shows the original arrangement of pilaster strips at the corners and at intervals along the facade dividing tall one-over-one windows that are recessed from the wall plane under decorative scalloped headers. The windows have heavy rectangular lintels and narrow sills of beige sandstone. The landings of the interior stairway over the York Street entrance are lighted by windows at half levels. There is a double window between the first and second stories and a round-arched window between the third and fourth. The arch of this window springs from an impost formed by a string course that is an extension of the fourth floor window lintels. At mid-level of the fourth floor there is a brick molding, while above the fourth floor windows brick corbelling connects the pilasters. The roof line is comprised of a metal clad cornice over modillion blocks and a dentil course and has a low parapet capped by red tiles. The brick and stone work are in good condition.

The present store fronts along York Street were installed during 1920s alterations, and those along Chapel Street are later date. A massive granite pier visible at the southeast corner of the building gives an indication of the original arrangement. More piers like it are in place behind the 1920s store fronts. The piers are connected at their tops by iron, or perhaps low quality steel, beams that support the exterior brick walls. This structural system was obscured in the 1920s when the store fronts were pushed out onto the sidewalk and some of the piers and iron beams were replaced with lolly columns and steel beams, creating room for a fourth store fronting on Chapel Street.

Presumably it was at this time that the entrance received its metal clad broken pediment with reeding and elements of garlands. The floor immediately inside the entrance is tiled in the fashion common in the 1880s, leading to the conclusion that the entranceway has always projected out from the building at this point, and only its exterior treat-

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ment was changed in the 1920s when the store fronts were moved out to their present position.

There are three three-story bow windows, also dating from the 1920s, running from above the store fronts to the roof cornice on the Chapel Street front, evenly spaced so as to cover most of the facade. Two more of these three-sided bows are on the York Street facade, one just before the jog, and the other at the southeast corner of the building. The wooden mullions separating the windows vertically and the spandrels separating them horizontally are metal clad like the cornice, although the bows were added several decades after the building was constructed.

The ground floor of the Blackman Building is now occupied by shops and a restaurant. The upper floors, now vacant, were apartments. There is only one stairway, rising from the York Street entrance. One run of the stairs with closed string still has its balustrade of turned spindles and molded hand rail. Its newell posts have incised decorations.

The building has interior brick bearing walls all the way up to the roof that support the floor load. There are a number of small, shallow fireplaces, some of them bricked up, in the interior and exterior walls, perhaps intended originally for gas fires. The interior trim of the round headed window and the casings for several of the windows in the bows are in place, but the interior has suffered badly from fire and water damage and most of the interior trim either is gone or is badly deteriorated. In particular, the southwest corner of the roof is charred and open.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) commercial ownership
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1883

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Elisha Blackman

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Blackman Building is significant because it is an illustration of commercial building design of the 1880s executed in brick and stone work that is first rate, and because of its well documented history of ownership as an investment by a series of real estate brokers. The account of its construction and management is a capsule history of the life of downtown buildings of 19th century origin, many of which have been demolished.

The masonry of the Blackman Building is a testimonial to the high quality of materials and craftsmanship that went into its construction. The glazed brick with thin mortar joints and the sandstone trim show few signs of deterioration. The arrangement of brick and stone into pilaster strips, corbelling, and string courses shows design sophistication that suggests the hand of an architect, but construction details are not known and the designer remains anonymous. The unknown architect planned a building that fits well on its odd shaped site. His use of granite piers with iron beam lintels harks back to an earlier era; instead of the massive granite slabs, full cast-iron store fronts might have been expected. At the roof line his use of sheet metal sheathing was not uncommon at the time, but has now become an oddity.

In the 1880s York and Chapel were fine residential streets, and had been for 150 years or more. The lot on which the Blackman Building now stands was the site of the home of Dr. Aeneas Munson, Sr., a well known physician earlier in the 19th century. Munsons had lived here since as early as 1748. Elisha Blackman (1812-1888), builder of the present structure, bought the lot, 54 feet on Chapel Street and 109 feet on York Street, and the three houses then standing on the land in 1870 (New Haven Land Records, volume 244, page 205). Born in Oxford, Connecticut, Blackman had a long career in New Haven's famous carriage manufacturing industry. He first appears in the New Haven City Directory in the edition for 1845, listed as a carriage maker. In 1847 he is listed as a coach maker, and in 1852 the listing after his name reads, "E. Blackman & Co., coach makers." Apparently, he was progressing in the trade. By 1858 the firm had become Blackman and Randall and in that year entered into a partnership with Henry Hooker that lasted until 1861 (Atwater, page 564). In 1863 Hooker with James Brewster, the most renowned name in New Haven carriage manufacturing history, bought out G. & D. Cook Co. to become the largest carriage manufacturing establishment in the city, soon known as Henry Hooker & Co. In 1871 Blackman was working for this company, but the association didn't last and the 1877 directory lists him without business association.

In the 1880s, however, he is listed as a broker, although the nature of his brokerage business is not specified. He is not listed with

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.15 prox.

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	67,3010	4,57,4950
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is Lot DBH, Parcel 015.00, Block 0230, Map 280 as described in New Haven Land Records, Volume 2691, Page 365.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David F. Ransom, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

DATE

June 19, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

33 Sunrise Hill Drive

TELEPHONE

203 521-2518

CITY OR TOWN

West Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

September 25, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 ATTEST: Bill Ialovich  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 12/29/78  
~~KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER~~  
 DATE DEC 1, 1978

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the real estate and insurance brokers but his son-in-law, Cleveland S. Thompson, was a conventional real estate and insurance broker. Perhaps it was this association that led him to construct his building. Blackman opened his brokerage office at 174 York Street in one of the buildings he owned on the corner. These buildings appear in an 1879 panoramic view of New Haven engraved by Bailey and Hazen of Boston. In the single year 1883 Blackman's office address is 510 Chapel Street rather than 174 York Street, presumably because he had to move out while his new building was being constructed. The 1886 Sanborn map shows the new brick building in place.

It is quite possible that the construction of the new four-story brick building with stores on the ground floor and apartments above upset the neighborhood. The first of its type in the immediate vicinity, it was the vanguard of change. York and Chapel up to that time were lined with homes, with the exception of a grocery store that had been located for years on the northeast corner of the intersection, diagonally across from Blackman's, and the 1871 Calvary Baptist Church on the southeast corner (now the Repertory Theater). Yale University was still safely a full block away. The value of the land was rising, however, and Blackman was the first, soon followed by others, to take advantage of the changing economics with a multi-story residential building.

71 years old when he built his building, Elisha Blackman died five years later, leaving an estate to be administered by his son-in-law for the benefit of his two daughters and a granddaughter. The building was always mortgaged and at this time the mortgage was bought by Yale (NHLR 416/270). On October 14, 1902 the President and Fellows of Yale College for \$1.00 and other consideration released the ladies from the mortgage when they paid it off (NHLR 550/184). After Thompson died the three ladies sold the building in 1908 to Henry C. Bretzfelder (NHLR 622/362), another real estate broker, taking a mortgage in part payment. Bretzfelder owned a number of properties in New Haven. The Blackman Building was one of his investments, as it had been for Blackman and his heirs.

The 1920 deed of transfer (NHLR 872/154) to the next owner, Peter J. McIntyre, another real estate broker, for the first time conveys not only the land and building but also the household goods on the third and fourth floors -- furniture, fixtures, beds, mattresses, and so on. The second floor at this time was leased to four dentists. Instead of three floors of conventional apartments, the arrangement now included a floor of offices and two floors of furnished apartments. The change indicated that the building had started into a slow decline that was to continue for 50 years, culminating in a 1977 fire followed by vacancy.

McIntyre also made physical changes. New Haven Building Permit 17159, dated September 10, 1920, authorizes 12-foot openings in the wall

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for a four-story bay on the York Street side, covered with galvanized iron, at an estimated cost of \$2000. Architects were Delle Valle and Vece. While only the permit for one bay has come to hand, it is presumed that all bays were constructed at the same time. Such presumption is supported by a picture at the New Haven Colony Historical Society that shows the building without bays early in the 20th century. The picture is a post card view, with the message on the reverse of the card dated 1909.

The present configuration of the store that comes out to nearly a right angle in front of the truncated corner of the building proper was also built by McIntyre (Building Permit 8977, October 31, 1929). In these alterations several of the original granite piers and iron beams were replaced by lolly columns and steel beams, when the store front was moved out from the building. One of the lolly columns is visible now inside the plate glass window of the shoe repair shop.

McIntyre raised money by mortgaging the Blackman Building in 1930 to the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Co. (NHLR 1227/302). When his estate sold the building in 1949 the new owners continued this mortgage until 1963 (NHLR 2406/650). The new owners were restaurant proprietors rather than real estate agents and conducted their restaurant on the premises. The upper floors continued to suffer from lack of maintenance and repairs. The situation did not improve with another change of ownership in 1971 and the building came into its present unsatisfactory condition. Early in 1978 the present owners took title and architect's plans for rehabilitation have been drawn.

The chain of title to the building and its associated mortgages are a case history in ownership and financing of many older downtown commercial buildings. The Blackman Building was the project of one man, who saw an investment opportunity. In similar fashion the successive owners were individuals who considered that the building offered an investment opportunity. The financial commitment then could be managed by one man, in contrast to the syndicate and corporate resources usually needed for development of downtown real estate today.

The craftsmanship of the original brick layers and stone masons made possible the 100-year life of the building and brought it through the vicissitudes of the changing years. The pilasters corbelling, string courses, and metal clad cornice remain in place in good condition, testimony to high quality materials and workmanship in a typical late Victorian design.

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Atlas of the City of New Haven, Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins, 1888.

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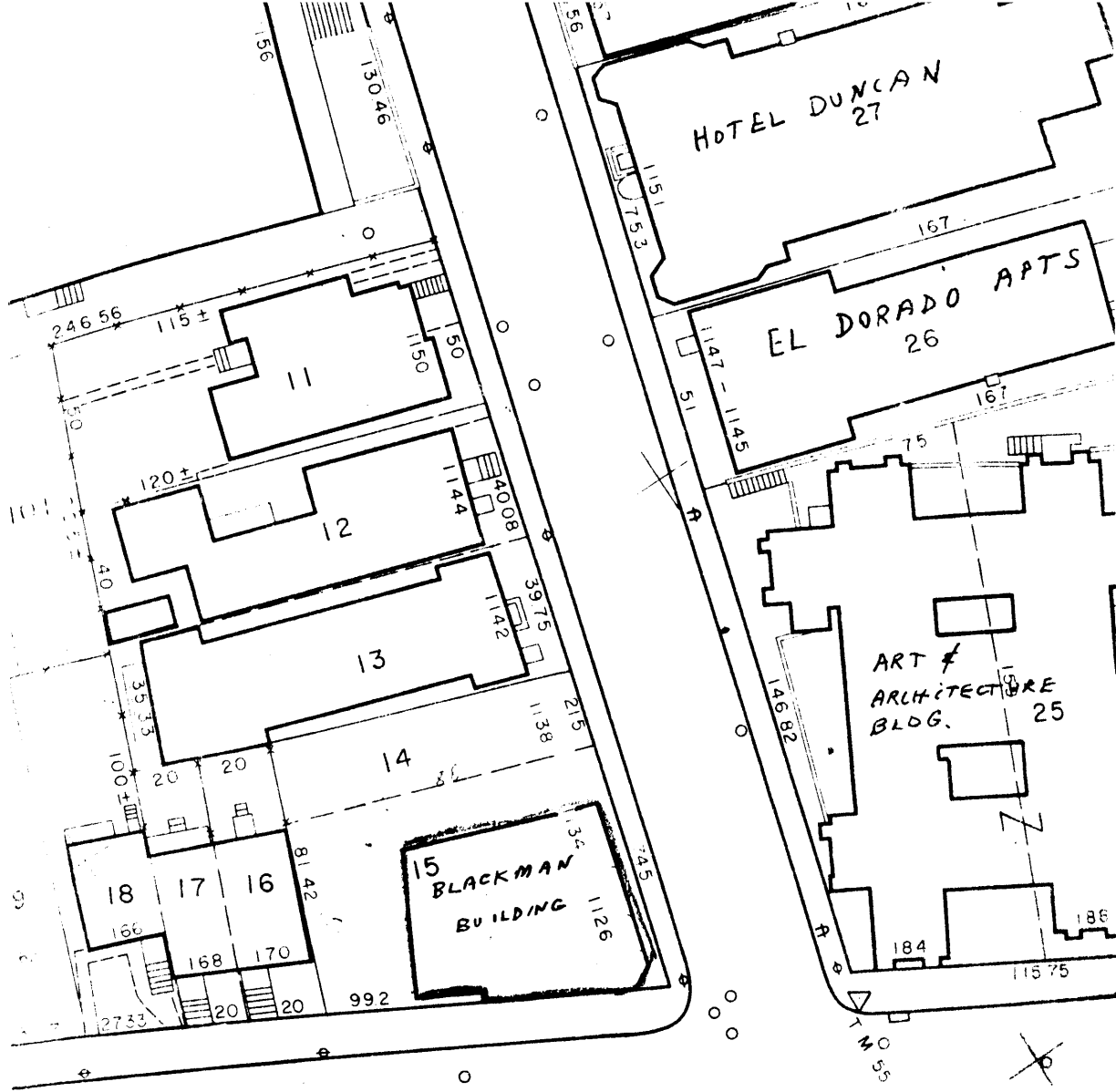
Insurance Maps of New Haven, New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., editions of 1886 and 1901.

New Haven, perspective view, engraving, Boston: Bailey and Hazen, 1879.

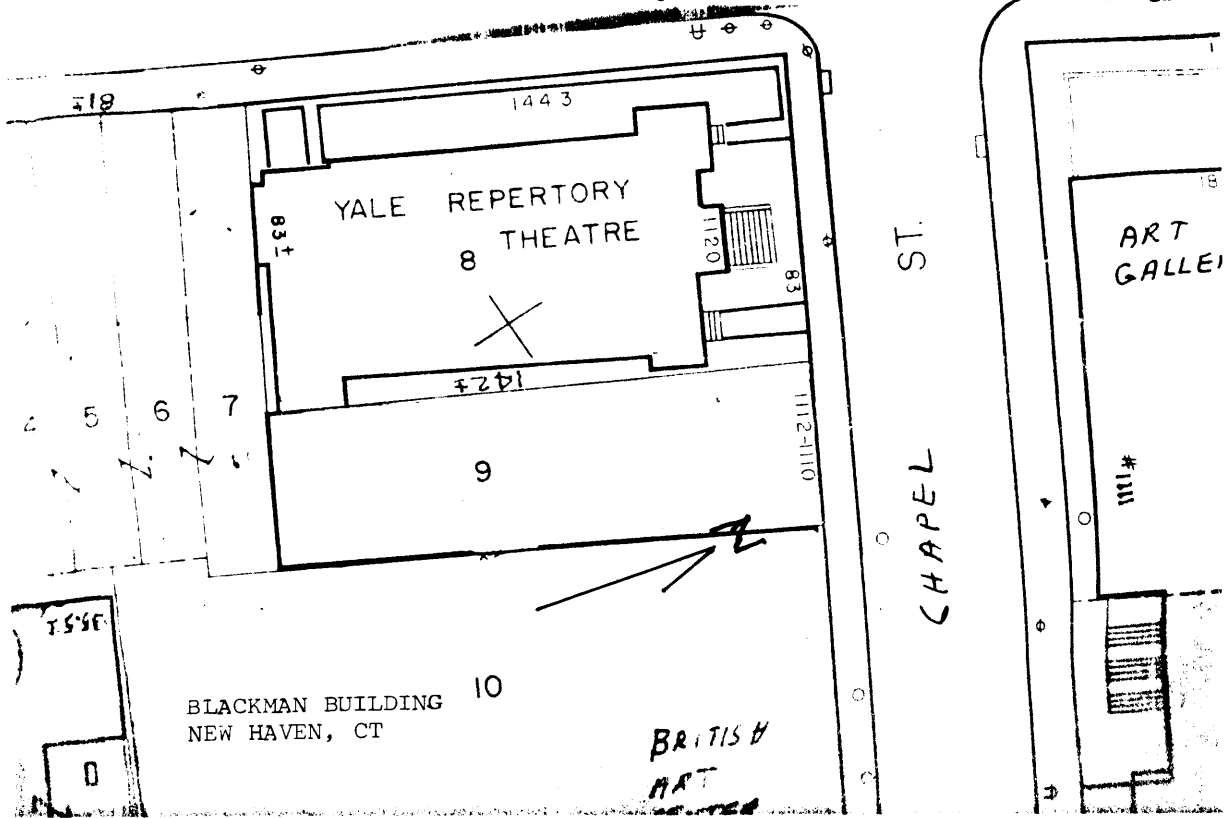
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YORK



CHAPEL ST.

BLACKMAN BUILDING  
NEW HAVEN, CT

BRITISH  
ART