1. **NAME**
   
   **HISTORIC**
   
   Keney Tower

2. **LOCATION**
   
   **STREET & NUMBER**
   Southeast corner Main and Ely Sts.

   **CITY, TOWN**
   Hartford

   **STATE**
   Connecticut

3. **CLASSIFICATION**
   
   **CATEGORY**
   - DISTRICT
   - BUILDING(S)
   - STRUCTURE
   - SITE
   - OBJECT

   **OWNERSHIP**
   - PUBLIC
   - PRIVATE
   - BOTH

   **STATUS**
   - OCCUPIED
   - UNOCCUPIED
   - WORK IN PROGRESS
   - ACCESSIBLE

   **PRESENT USE**
   - AGRICULTURE
   - COMMERCIAL
   - PARK
   - EDUCATIONAL
   - PRIVATE RESIDENCE
   - GOVERNMENT
   - TRANSPORTATION
   - OTHER:

4. **OWNER OF PROPERTY**
   
   **NAME**
   Department of Parks, City of Hartford

   **STREET & NUMBER**
   25 Stonington St.

   **CITY, TOWN**
   Hartford

   **STATE**
   Connecticut

5. **LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**
   
   **COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.**
   Hartford Land Records, Municipal Building

   **STREET & NUMBER**
   550 Main St.

   **CITY, TOWN**
   Hartford

   **STATE**
   Connecticut

6. **REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**
   
   **TITLE**
   Hartford Architecture Conservancy Survey of Hartford

   **DATE**
   1976-77

   **DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS**
   Stowe-Day Memorial Library

   **CITY, TOWN**
   Hartford

   **STATE**
   Connecticut
Keney Tower stands in a small park just north of Hartford's downtown business district at the northeast edge of a major intersection where five streets come together (Main, Ely, Ann, and High Sts. and Albany Avenue). The tower, which is set approximately in the center of the one and one-half acre park, measures 30 feet square and 130 feet tall. It is constructed from reddish brown ashlar from nearby Longmeadow sandstone quarries. The upper portion of the tower is occupied by a clock with faces on each of the four walls, and with chimes which ring the quarter hour.

Ecclesiastical Gothic Revival is the architectural style of the design. The upward thrust of the tower is accentuated by the taper of paired piers at each corner which lead up to four pinnacles at the corners of the roof. The rise of the piers to clock level is three times broken by string courses and at each break the dimensions of the piers in both width and depth are diminished. Above the clock level the piers are turned 90° on their axes so that the vertical edges are outward, helping to carry the eye upward to the pinnacles and at the tops of the pinnacles to their finial crosses.

The top third of the tower is occupied by a clock and by louvers behind which are the chimes. The louvers on each wall are in pairs and over each louver is a molding in the form of a Gothic arch leading up to a cornice which supports a balustraded parapet. At the four corners of the cornice are vigorous bird of prey gargoyles.

The entrance to the tower is approached by a flight of four brownstone steps on the southwest side facing Main St. The steps lead to a series of four receding arches which spring from engaged columns in front of a two leaf wrought iron gate and oak batten door.

The northwest corner of the tower is different from the others. The paired piers here give way to the curved wall of the spiral stairway which rises from the ground floor to the level of the clock and chimes. The Seth Thomas clock with eight foot diameter dials was manufactured in Thomaston, Connecticut. Now electrified, it originally worked from weights, the largest weighing some 1,900 pounds. The chimes and hour bell came from the Methuen Bell Co., of Methuen, Massachusetts.

A high wrought iron fence runs along Main St. in front of the tower. Its posts are worked in a variety of S and C curves and at the top of each post is a cluster of carefully wrought leaves. In the center of the fence is a two leaf gate having intricate strap work under a cipher of the letters K and M for Keney Memorial.

The tower and its site are in good condition other than being in need of cleaning. No intrusions or alterations have occurred.
Keney Tower is a private, memorial clock tower. It is unique in the state and one of a handful of its kind in the nation. Constructed in 1898 to the design of Charles C. Haight (1841-1917), prominent New York architect, it is a good example of the Collegiate Gothic style which was his specialty. In Connecticut other work by Haight included Phelps and Vanderbilt Halls and, in part, the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale University.

Haight was chosen for the commission by the trustees of the estate of Henry Keney (1806-1894) whose will provided for construction of the tower. Henry and his brother, Walter Keney (1809-1889), conducted a successful wholesale grocery business under the firm name of H. & W. Keney and had other business interests besides. An example of their business sagacity was the purchase by Henry in 1849 of 52 shares of stock in Hartford Fire Insurance Co. at a total cost of $260 which at the time of his death, having paid him dividends in the amount of $12,861, had a market value of $80,525. Neither brother had children, and the City of Hartford benefitted from a number of substantial gifts from the Keneys both during their life times and by their wills.

Walter Keney married the aunt of Rev. Francis Goodwin. Goodwin, who throughout his lifetime worked aggressively to enlarge the Hartford park system, in due course became chief among the trustees of the Keney estate. As a Keney trustee he oversaw the establishment of Keney Park, largest of Hartford's parks and another testamentary benefaction of the Keneys, as well as Keney Tower. Thus, Keney Tower and Keney Park are part of the Hartford heritage from both the public spirited career of Rev. Francis Goodwin and the financial generosity of the Keney Brothers.

The question of precisely whom or what is memorialized by the Keney Tower is subject to divergent interpretations. The trustees caused to be erected on the wall of the tower’s vestibule just inside the entrance a bronze plaque reading, "This tower erected to the memory of my mother is designed to preserve from other occupancy the ground sacred to me as her home and to stand in perpetual honor to the wisdom, goodness and womanly nobility of her to whose guidance I owe my success in life and its chief joy -- Henry Keney." This sentiment is consistent with the fact that the Keney home and business formerly occupied the tower's site and with the fact that their mother, as a widow, brought up the brothers through difficult times.
### Major Bibliographical References


### Geographical Data

**Acreage of Nominated Property:** 1.5

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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The small park in which the Keney Tower is located is bounded on the north by Ely St. (261 feet), on the east by land owned by the Board of Education for Barnard-Brown School (206 feet), on the south by land owned by the Board of Education for Barnard-Brown School (230 feet), and on the west by Main St. (227 feet).

### Form Prepared By

**Name/Title:** David F. Ransom, Architectural Historian

**Organization:** Hartford Architecture Conservancy

**Street & Number:** 65 Wethersfield Ave.

**City or Town:** Hartford

**State:** Connecticut

**Telephone:** 203 525-0279

**Date:** 24 April 1977

### State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

**THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:**

- **National:** _
- **State:** _
- **Local:** X

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:** State Historic Pres. Officer and Director, CT Historical Commission

**Date:** 10/19/77

### For NPS Use Only

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

**Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation:**

**Date:** 3.30.76

**Attest:**

**Keeper of the National Register:**

**Date:** 3.10.78
On the other hand, the pertinent clause of the will charged the trustees with removing the existing buildings from the Keney property and with erecting on said land "...some suitable and proper memorial according to their taste and judgement to perpetuate the memory of the firm of H. & W. Keney." Consideration of the difference in emphasis here leads to the presumption that Rev. Francis Goodwin did a little Christian editing whereby the wording in the will was revised to the wording on the bronze plaque.

The Keney trustees deeded the small park and the tower to the City of Hartford on 30 July 1924 (562/437).