

CT Trust Resource ID: 3213

HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY – BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

State Historic Preservation Office, DECD, One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford, CT 06103

*Note: Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.

Inventory form modified for the Creative Places - Arts & Letters Project

GENERAL INFORMATION

Building Name (Common): Willard, O. E., CompanyOther Name(s) (Historic): Willard, O. E., CompanyStreet Address or Location: 196 Valley Street, WindhamTown/City: WindhamVillage: WillimanticCounty: Windham

Designation(s):

Owner(s): GILLARD, ROBERT OPublic/Private: PrivateLatitude: 41.7141 Longitude: -72.2151

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Commerce & trade: commercialHistoric Use: Commerce & trade: commercialAccessibility to public: Yes Exterior visible from public road? YesInterior accessible? If yes, explain: During open hoursStyle of building: 20th century vernacular Date of Construction: early-mid 20th centuryMaterial(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate) Brick, StuccoStructural Systems(s): Wood Frame, Load bearing masonryRoof(Type): Gable, Flat (Material): Built upNumber of Stories: 1 and 2 Approximate Dimensions: 87' x 100', 31' x 81'Structural Condition: ExcellentExterior Condition: ExcellentLocational Integrity: On original site Moved, When: NAAlterations?: Yes If yes, explain: ModernizationRelated outbuildings or landscape features: BarnSurrounding Environment: Commercial

Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The O. E. Willard Lumber Company business occupies the block frontage along Valley Street between Walnut and Bank Streets. At the west end of the block, the property extends through to Meadow Street. At the east end, it abuts a city-owned parking lot. The surrounding area is a mix of religious, social service, residential, and commercial uses.

Other notable features of building or site:

A one-story flat-roofed commercial building at 190 Valley Street is the primary retail store for the O.E. Willard Company. It has multi-paned modern storefront windows and entry doors facing Valley Street and an entry from a parking lot on the east side. A 2 ½-story gable-roofed building next door to the west, at 196 Valley Street belongs to the business as well. This has a brick north façade and the remainder appears to be of frame construction, with some twelve-over-twelve wood sash windows on its side elevations, and asphalt roofing. Along the east and west sides of this building are one-story open-sided lumber sheds with metal industrial siding. The west wall facing Walnut Street is the painted with murals of various locations in Willimantic, and is the work of artist Arnold Prince.

Architect: Unknown Builder/Maker: Unknown

Historical or Architectural importance:

The Willard Company buildings include a pair of buildings dating to the c. 1900 period of Willimantic's industrial dominance, now surrounded by a collection of twentieth-century storage sheds. The company has been a family business in Willimantic and Storrs since the 1920s. The Willard Company welcomed artist Arnold Prince to paint an 18-foot high by 100-foot long mural with scenes of Willimantic, on the blank west wall of their storage shed, running a full block along Walnut Street. For this, Prince received an award from 'Quiet Corner' magazine for community enhancement.

Arnold Prince (1925-2014) was a native of St. Kitts, in the British West Indies, who came to the United States to study at the Art Students League in the 1950s. He began teaching at a high school in Harlem. He taught sculpture at Rhode Island School of Design, at North Adams

State College in Massachusetts and at Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic. He wrote the book 'Carving Wood and Stone, an Illustrated Manual,' published in 1981, and often used as a textbook. He lived and worked in Chaplin with his wife, Claudia Widdiss, also a sculptor and teacher.

Sources:

Telephone interview by C. Hitchcock with Claudia Widdiss, 6/10/2015.
Town of Windham Assessor's Records and GIS viewer: <http://www.mapgeo.com/SCCOGCT/> .
Prince, Arnold. Society of Connecticut Sculptors web site. Accessed 5/30/2016 at: <http://www.ctsculptors.org/Works/Prince/Prince.pdf> .
Prince, Arnold, 1925-2014. Our risd: a place to show and tell. Rhode Island School of Design web site. Accessed at: <http://our.risd.edu/post/82831938770/arnold-prince-19252014> .
Regan, Elizabeth. 6/06/2014. 'Beloved artist, teacher, remembered at memorial.' Norwich Bulletin.
'Spotlight on the Artist – Arnold Prince.' January 2008. Newsletter of the Society of Connecticut Sculptors. Vol. 5, No. 1. Essex, CT.
Van Nes, Claudia. 9/26/1997. 'Sculpture at Juried Art Show.' Hartford Courant. Accessed at: http://articles.courant.com/1997-09-26/news/9709260694_1_annual-juried-show-representational-work-sculpture .

Photographer: Charlotte Hitchcock **Date:** 8/02/2015

View: West view

Form completed by: Charlotte Hitchcock **Printed On:** June 1, 2016

Organization: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address: 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517-4002

Threats: None known

Subsequent field evaluations:



172-196 Valley St., Willimantic - west view of Willard Lumber Co.

FOR OFFICE USE:

Town # _____ **Site#** _____ **UTM** _____
District ☐S ☐NR **If NR, specify:** ☐Actual ☐ Potential