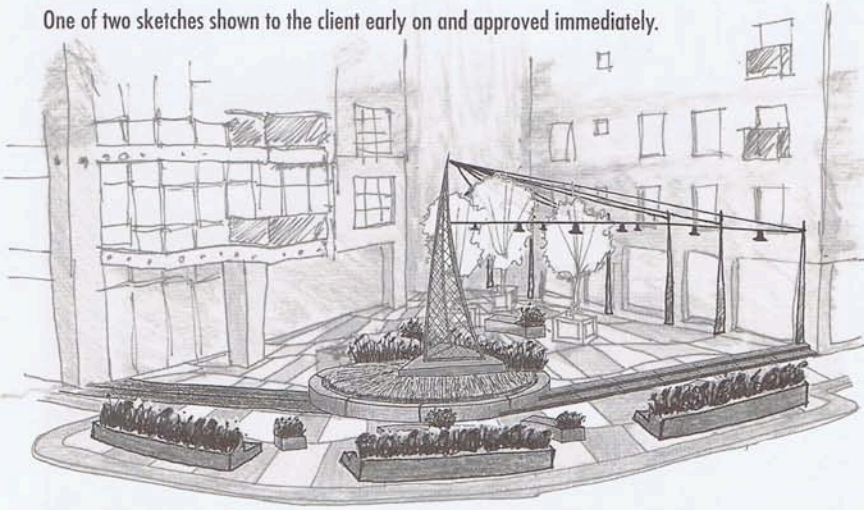


One of two sketches shown to the client early on and approved immediately.



## Maritime Yards South Norwalk

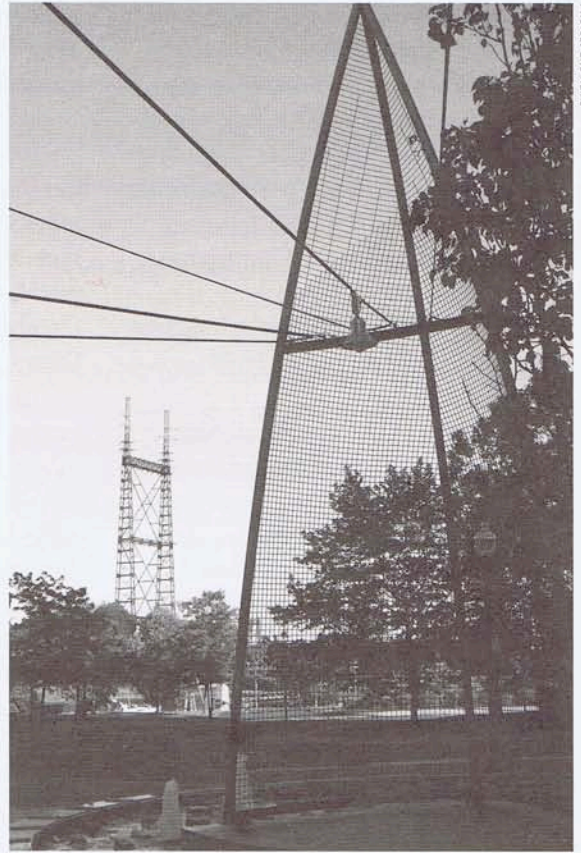
by Eric Rains, ASLA

Maritime Yards is a redevelopment project on the Norwalk River in historic South Norwalk (SoNo). A public plaza was always part of the design program when Spinnaker Real Estate Partners engaged Wesley Stout Associates for the site design. We joined the project team with Beinfield Architecture and together worked closely with the developer to arrive at a site design before initiating the municipal approval process.

The plaza was viewed by the design team and the City of Norwalk as a key component of the design that would also complement the adjacent public amenities along the Norwalk River. The building concepts that Beinfield Architecture developed were reminiscent of historic mill buildings — a theme perfectly suited for SoNo. This

vernacular began to inform the plaza in subtle ways. Other influencing factors were the corporate branding of Spinnaker Real Estate Partners, the site history, and the waterfront environs.

The team agreed that the plaza needed a focal point. When the opportunity to incorporate water arose, we aimed to create a multidimensional space where people could spend time comfortably. The plaza needed to have a strong sense of space distinct from the nearby buildings, the scale of which might feel imposing. Consequently overhead cables, which refer to rigging on a sailboat, were utilized, helping to minimize the effect of the tall building faces that surround the space. These



Photos: Eric Rains

Fred Moore of Total Fab, LLC, and his team masterfully crafted the stainless-steel sculpture, which evokes sails and reaches two and a-half stories high.

cables hold overhead string lights that make the space very inviting at night and bring to mind a waterfront marketplace. ■

*Eric Rains is a project manager at Wesley Stout Associates, New Canaan. He has designed sculptures for other projects and also enjoys making sculpture in his free time, as well as painting and designing jewelry.*



Today the plaza is enjoyed by the residents and businesses of the three buildings at Maritime Yards, as well as visitors of the Maritime Aquarium and SoNo.



The base of the fountain is in the form of a nautilus, and its coping functions as a seat wall. Metal “fins” emerging from the wall at intervals help to discourage skateboarding. Lining the base of the fountain are cobblestones, some placed on end, to provide pattern and texture during winter months when the water is turned off.