

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1085
JUL 12 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Oyster Point
other names/site number Oyster Point Historic District (use for publication)
City Point

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet. not for publication
city, town New Haven vicinity
state Connecticut code CT county New Haven code 009 zip code 06519

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>130</u>	<u>20</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>3</u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>133</u>	<u>20</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: NA
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
John W. Shannahan July 7, 1989
Signature of certifying official John W. Shannahan, State Historic Preservation Officer Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:) _____
Albany Byer 8/10/89
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single/multiple dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure
COMMERCE/office/storage
GOVERNMENT/sewage treatment plant

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single/multiple dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure
COMMERCE/retail store
GOVERNMENT/sewage treatment plant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival
LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate/Queen Anne/Stick
Shingle; LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Colonial Revival; MODERN MOVEMNET/Art Deco

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
walls weather board
shingle
roof asphalt
other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Oyster Point Historic District is a small densely populated peninsula on the west side of New Haven harbor. Part of a larger urban residential community now called City Point, it is a roughly triangular area of 26 acres located between Interstate 95, the Connecticut Turnpike, and the waterfront. The district includes the southern end of three north-south streets: Howard, Greenwich, and Hallock avenues. Before the highway was constructed in 1958, these streets all continued to the north. Today, both Greenwich and Hallock avenues are cut off by the highway; only Howard Avenue remains a thoroughfare, with an overpass at Interstate 95. Three short cross streets complete the district: Sixth, Sea, and South Water streets, the latter running along the waterfront.

Other changes have taken place in the district and the surrounding area. Earlier in the nineteenth century, the high-tide line came up to the houses along the north side of South Water Street. Dredging and landfill in the harbor have pushed the waterline south to its present configuration and reduced the size of the tidal mud flats. Highway construction has impacted another physical feature in the district. The northern edge of Bay View Park, a scenic recreational area of about 16 acres laid out in 1890 with an entrance at Sixth Street, was taken for the highway easement (Inventory #117). The park's artificial pond and part of its scenic harbor drive are no longer extant; the latter was lost when the first sewage treatment plant in New Haven was constructed in 1939 at the east end of the district (Inventory #s 79,80,81). The remaining 12 acres of the park include a narrow two-acre strip with a Civil War monument to the north of Sixth Avenue, and a playing field to the east of Hallock Avenue. The latter portion extends to the waterfront on the east. Both the park and the sewage treatment plant are included in the district. More recently, modern residential condominiums have been constructed on the waterfront to the west of the district. Other waterfront development on the south side of South Water Street is under construction: retail and office buildings, similar in design to the condominiums, but with a lower one-story profile, so that the view of the harbor is not impaired.

The district contains 153 resources; 133 (87%) of these are contributing. In addition to the resources noted above, the district contains 108 single and multi-family houses built between about 1840 and 1925, and several other small buildings which are related to the maritime history of the area. Most of the houses date from the nineteenth century, with only 35% constructed after 1900. The majority retain their original architectural detail. Those that have been sheathed in modern sidings still display their distinguishing stylistic features or their original vernacular plan and form, basically a rectangle with a small projecting side bay. Brick, brownstone, and traprock are used for the foundations. Sited gable-to-street on small narrow lots with a shallow uniform

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven Connecticut

Section number 2 Page 1

LOCATION

Greenwich Avenue: 88, 89, 94-96, 97-99, 100, 105, 106, 109-111, 110, 115-117, 116, 120, 124, 128-130, 134, 138 141-143, 142, 145-147, 146, 148-150, 149.

Hallock Avenue: 14, 16, 22-24, 26, 28, 30

Howard Avenue: 19, 20-22, 24-26, 27, 28, 32, 33, 35, 36-38, 41, 44, 45, 48, 49-51, 52-54, 63, 66, 67, 68-70, 71, 72-74, 75, 76-78, 79-81, 82-84, 83-85, 86, 90-92, 95, 96, 104-106, 108-110

Sea Street: 5, 25-27, 29, 37, 39, 40, 53, 54, 57, 58, 60, 63-65, 68, 70, 71, 73, 74, 75, 80-82, 104-106, 109, 110, 111, 115-117

Sixth Street: Bayview Park, 34, 44, 46, 72-74, 75-77, 78-80, 82, 84-86, 90

South Water Street: 33, 37, 43, 47-49, 57, 61, 65, 67, 73, 81, 98, 99-101, 103, 107, 108, 109-111, 115, 119

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 2

setback from the sidewalk, most of the houses have open porches, some of which are two stories in height. Some contributing barns, carriage houses, and early garages, along with non-contributing sheds or garages, are found at the rear of these lots. All but two of the non-contributing buildings are garages or sheds built after the period of significance of the district.

Because of its waterfront location and history, at least 40 of the district's resources are known to have maritime associations. Most of these are houses built by and for the oystermen who lived and worked at Oyster Point. The oldest of these houses are based on a distinctive domestic building type that is related to the oyster industry. Their major architectural characteristic is a high foundation of traprock or brick with an entrance at basement level so the oyster boats could be unloaded there at high tide. This type is clustered along the waterfront of the district. All but one, the John Sperry House, built as a double house at 47-49 South Water Street (Inventory #135), were designed to be owned or rented by one family, with access by outside stairs to the living quarters on the raised first floor. All the houses have a gable-to-street orientation; the earliest are influenced by the Greek Revival style, with a shallower pitch to the roof and occasionally columned porches or full pediments. The best preserved of these include the Eber Kelsey House at the foot of Howard Avenue, probably the earliest surviving house in the district, and the first Richard W. Law House on South Water Street (Inventory #s 33, 150; Photographs # 1, 2). The waterfront entrance to the Kelsey House is on the south side (facing the water), while the facade, with its miniature colonnade and pediment, faces Howard Avenue. The acanthus capitals are its most distinctive feature. The Law House is one of a group built about 1850. All have the high basements and porches at the first living floor. Here, however, the small cottage takes on the appearance of a villa "in the classical manner," as espoused by A.J. Davis, or derived from A. J. Downing. Only one of the Greek Revival-style houses, the Alexander Foote house at 81 South Water Street, has the more traditional side ell, often found in farmhouses of the period (Inventory 144).

The persistence of this high-basement vernacular type in the district for about 40 years suggests that function rather than style determined the form of the houses. Over time other stylistic influences are evident, but the basic form was retained. For example, see the group of houses on the east end of South Water Street built about 1860 (Photograph #3). The last two houses of this type in the district, built about 1880, display Queen Anne-style side porches but the gable end, there only two bays with a steeper pitch, and high basement are still present (Inventory #s 139, 140; Photograph #4). Built on speculation by Magnus Manson, a shipbuilder who lived next door, these two houses are set off from their neighbors by a slightly more southerly orientation.

Two Italianate houses utilizing the cube form of this style were built in the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 3

district, both on Howard Avenue. The E. H. Smith House has retained all of its original style features, including a facade porch with chamfered posts (Inventory #65). The other building is more unusual, with its three-story height and two-story Eastlake porch (Inventory #44; Photograph #5). This house was raised and the first story added sometime later in the nineteenth century. A third Italianate, which utilizes a gable-to-street orientation, was built at 86 Howard Avenue about 1860 (Inventory #70; Photograph #6). Its two-story porch was added about 1920.

The Queen Anne, the predominant style of the late nineteenth century, persisted in the district into the first decade of the twentieth century. Queen Anne is a general stylistic term used here for vernacular houses that were typical products of the carpenters' style books of the period. Again they are gable-to-street houses displaying a variety of turned and scroll-sawn applied detail. Eastlake influences are evident on a number of the open porches and panelled bargeboards. The larger and often more detailed examples are located on Howard Avenue. The side streets have several good examples of the smaller houses of this generic style. Some of them have lost their applied detail through the application of modern siding, but others have been restored to their original appearance. Typical views of the side streets are shown in Photograph #s 7, 8, 9, 10.

A fine example of the Stick-style influence on the vernacular Queen Anne style is the Jeremiah Smith House at 96 Howard Avenue (Inventory #75; Photograph #11). A more detailed example with an elaborate openwork truss in the facade gable is the single representative example of the Carpenter Gothic style in the district, the Willis M. Smith House at 45 Howard Avenue (Inventory # 48; Photograph #12). Both houses were built for owners of the Smith Brothers oyster firm. A comparable house which displays Eastlake influences in its porch, window hoods, and bargeboards is the one built for Garret Dunbar, a partner with Hulse & Dunbar, at 35 Howard Avenue (Inventory #43; Photograph #13).

Some of the later nineteenth-century carpenter-built houses are combinations of the Queen Anne and the Colonial Revival styles, generally characterized by a Palladian window in one or more gables and grouped porch columns, but retaining the vertical massing of the Queen Anne.¹ Two of the smaller examples of this type are two-family houses with two-story porches on Howard Avenue that are mirror images of each other (Inventory #s 59, 62; Photograph #14). Two of the larger houses of this combination style are identical in their massing, but only the one at 79-81 Howard Avenue was built for more than one family (Inventory #s 55, 66; Photograph #s 15, 16).

Some of the best examples of the Queen Anne/Colonial Revival style are located on Howard Avenue near the entrance to Bayview Park at Sixth Street. William H. Smith, an owner of an oyster firm, built his fashionable house at 95 Howard Avenue in

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 4

1901. The only house in the district with a full tower, it also displays classical swags in the pediments (Inventory #74; Photograph #17). Although the tower gives the illusion of complex massing, the basic plan of this house is still a simple rectangle with a gabled side bay, the same plan that is repeated up and down the streets of the district, as in the two large examples diagonally across the street (Inventory #s 76, 77; Photograph #18).

A few early twentieth-century styles and types are found in the district: Colonial Revival, American Four-Square, several bungalows, and one triple-decker. Again the Howard Street examples are the style leaders, as demonstrated by the Georgian Revival house built by Richard W. Law in 1915, his second house in the district (Inventory # 57; Photograph #19). One of the few houses with a ridge-to-street orientation, it occupies a double corner lot. A pedimented entrance porch, modillion courses, and dormered gables are some of its style features. The glassed-in sunporch on the south side is probably original.

There are several contributing auxiliary buildings in the district associated with the oyster industry. They include the only remaining historic waterfront structures, a commercial building and an oyster barn at the head of a former oyster pier. Built about 1890, they have retained their slate roofs (Inventory #s 145, 149; Photograph # 20). The former store, or office building, has a stepped curved parapet at each gable end. Two nineteenth-century properties have retained their original outbuildings: the Lozelle Foote Carriage House on Sea Street and the Magnus Manson Barn on South Water Street (Inventory #s 105, 138).

The Boulevard Sewage Treatment Plant completes the district. A small complex of buildings and structures built in 1939 of yellow brick and concrete, it was designed by the New Haven Engineering Department and Gascoigne and Associates, sanitary engineers (Inventory #s 79, 80, 81; Photograph #s 21, 22). The main building is rectangular in plan with a tall stack at the rear. A modernistic design influenced by the Art Deco movement, it displays projecting chevron panels of concrete on the parapet of the slightly projecting center pavilion and above the main door. Basketweave and rusticated brick flank the glass block insert above the main door. A concrete belt course forms a continuous first-story lintel. Glass blocks are also used near the top of the stack. An open concrete and brick settling tank, a 1957-1958 addition, is connected to the rear (east) of this building. The digester and settling tanks are south of the main building. The former is oval in shape and set upon a rectangular brick foundation, while the latter is cylindrical. The decorative detail of both of these structures is similar to that of the main building.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 5

A complete inventory of the contributing and non-contributing resources in the district follows. Dates of construction and probable historic owners were taken from the New Haven Historic Resources Inventory 1980-1981, Phase I, carried out by the New Haven Preservation Trust. Dates of construction for buildings not surveyed in 1980-81 were estimated in the field. Architectural styles were based on the remaining architectural detail and form of the buildings. Where architectural detail has been completely lost because of renovation or modern siding, no style is listed. Instead, the period of the building with a circa date of construction based on similar buildings in the neighborhood is entered in the inventory list. Unless otherwise indicated, all buildings in the inventory are houses. Outbuildings, such as garages, barns, and carriage houses, which were built during the period of significance of the district are considering contributing.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 6

INVENTORY OF CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Inv. #	Address	Name/Style/Date	C/NC	Photo #
1.	88 Greenwich Avenue	19th-century, c. 1890	C	
2.	89 "	Colonial Revival, c. 1910	C	
3.	89 "	Garage assoc. with #2, c. 1940	NC	
4.	94-96 "	19th-century, c. 1890	C	
5.	97-99 "	Four-Square, c. 1910	C	
6.	100 "	20th-century, c. 1910	C	
7.	105 "	20th-century, c. 1910	C	
8.	106 "	20th-century, c. 1910	C	
9.	109-111 "	19th-century, 1890	C	
10.	110 "	Modern, c. 1960	NC	
11.	115-117 "	Stick, c. 1890	C	
12.	116 "	20th-century, c. 1910	C	
13.	120 "	Queen Anne, c. 1895	C	10
14.	124 "	19th-century, c.1890	C	10
15.	128-130 "	Stick, c. 1880	C	10
16.	134 "	20th-century, c. 1910	C	
17.	138 "	20th-century, c. 1910	C	
18.	141-143 "	Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	
19.	141-143 "	Garage assoc. w. #18, c. 1915	C	
20.	142 "	20th-century, c. 1910	C	
21.	145-147 "	Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	
22.	146 "	20th-century, c.1910	C	

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 7

23.	148-150 Greenwich Avenue	Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	
24.	149 "	Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	
25.	149 "	Barn assoc. with #24, c. 1890	C	
26.	14 Hallock Avenue	Queen Anne cottage, c. 1880	C	
27.	16 "	Queen Anne cottage, c. 1880	C	
28.	22-24 "	Triple-decker, c. 1900	C	
29.	26 "	Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	
30.	26 "	Garage assoc. with #29, c. 1940	NC	
31.	28 "	Greek Revival, c. 1870		
32.	30 "	19th-century, c. 1880	C	
33.	19 Howard Avenue	EBER KELSEY HOUSE Greek Revival, c. 1840	C	1
34.	19 "	Garage assoc. with #33, c. 1935	NC	
35.	20-22 "	Italianate, c. 1870	C	
36.	24-26 "	Shingle, c. 1910	C	
37.	24-26 "	Garage assoc. with #36, c. 1915	C	
38.	27 "	Bungalow, c. 1915	C	
39.	27 "	Garage assoc. with #38, c. 1935	NC	
40.	28 "	Italianate, c. 1860	C	
41.	32 "	Bungalow, c. 1915	C	
42.	33 "	FRANK EBERTH HOUSE, Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	
43.	35 "	GARRET DUNBAR HOUSE, Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	13
44.	36-38 "	Italianate, c. 1870; Eastlake two-decker porch	C	5

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 8

45.	41 Howard Avenue		Greek Revival, c. 1850 Colonial Revival porch, c. 1910	C	13
46.	44	"	19th-century, c. 1880	C	5
47.	44	"	Garage assoc. with #46, c. 1915	C	
48.	45	"	WILLIS M. SMITH HOUSE, Carpenter Gothic/Stick, c. 1880	C	12, 13
49.	48	"	Colonial Revival, c. 1920	C	5
50.	48	"	Garage assoc. with #49, c. 1920	C	
51.	49-51	"	Queen Anne/Col. Revival, c. 1900	C	12
52.	49-51	"	Garage assoc. with #51, c. 1915	C	
53.	52-54	"	Colonial Revival, c. 1920	C	5
54.	52-54	"	Garage assoc. with #53, c. 1920	C	
55.	63	"	Queen Anne/Col. Revival, c. 1890	C	16
56.	63	"	Garage assoc. with #55 c. 1935	NC	
57.	66	"	RICHARD W. LAW HOUSE, Georgian Revival, 1915	C	19
58.	67	"	EDWARD MANVILLE HOUSE, Four-Square, c. 1900	C	16
59.	68-70	"	WILLIAM STAHL HOUSE, Queen Anne/Col. Revival, c. 1890	C	14, 19
60.	71	"	19th-century, c. 1890	C	16
61.	71	"	Garage assoc. with #60, c. 1935	NC	
62.	72-74	"	DENNIS FITZGERALD HOUSE, Queen Anne/Col. Revival, c. 1900	C	14, 19
63.	75	"	Four-Square, c. 1900	C	16
64.	75	"	Garage assoc. with #63, c. 1915	C	
65.	76-78	"	E. H. SMITH HOUSE, Italianate, c. 1865	C	

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 9

66.	79-81 Howard Avenue		Queen Anne/Col. Revival, c. 1900	C	16, 17
67.	79-81	"	Garage assoc. with #66, c. 1935	NC	
68.	82-84	"	Colonial Revival, c. 1920	C	
69.	83-85	"	Shingle, c. 1890	C	17
70.	86	"	Italianate, c. 1860 Queen Anne porch, c. 1890	C	6
71.	86	"	Garage assoc. with #70, c. 1950	NC	
72.	90-92	"	Queen Anne/Col. Revival, c. 1900	C	6
73.	90-92	"	Garage assoc. with #71, c. 1915	C	
74.	95	"	WILLIAM H. SMITH HOUSE, Queen Anne/Classical Rev., 1901	C	17, 18
75.	96	"	JEREMIAH SMITH HOUSE, Stick, c. 1890	C	6, 11
76.	104-106	"	Queen Anne/Col. Revival, c. 1900	C	11, 15
77.	108-110	"	Queen Anne/Col. Revival, c. 1900	C	15
78.	108-110	"	Garage assoc. with #77, c. 1915	C	
79.	5 Sea Street		Boulevard Sewage Treatment Plant, Art Deco, 1939, additions 1957, 1958	C	21
80.	5	"	Sludge Digester Tank, Art Deco, 1939	C	22
81.	5	"	Settling Tank, Art Deco, 1939	C	
82.	25-27	"	Double-decker, c. 1900	C	
83.	29	"	JAMES B. MUNSON HOUSE Greek Revival, c. 1870, porch, c. 1900	C	
84.	29	"	Garage assoc. with #83, c. 1935	NC	
85.	37	"	20th-century, c. 1910	C	
86.	37	"	Shed assoc. with #37, altered	NC	

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 10

87.	39	Sea Street	CATHERINE DONNEGAN HOUSE Stick, c. 1870	C	
88.	39	"	Garage assoc. with #87, c. 1940	NC	
89.	40	"	WILHEMINA VON GLAHN HOUSE, Queen Anne, 1886	C	
90.	40	"	Barn/garage, c. 1890	C	
91.	53	"	Stick, c. 1880	C	
92.	53	:	Garage assoc. with #91, c. 1950	NC	
93.	54	"	WASHINGTON ROWLAND HOUSE (1st), 19th-century, c. 1880	C	
94.	57	"	Stick, c. 1880	C	
95.	58	"	Colonial Revival, c. 1920	C	
96.	60	"	ASAHEL CURTIS HOUSE, Italianate, c. 1870	C	
97.	63-65	"	Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	
98.	68	"	Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	8
99.	68	"	Garage assoc. with #98, c. 1940	NC	
100.	70	"	Stick, c. 1880	C	8
101.	70	"	Garage assoc. with #100, c. 1935	NC	
102.	71.	"	19th-century, c. 1890	C	9
103.	73	"	Stick, c. 1880	C	9
104.	74	"	LOZELLE FOOTE HOUSE Stick, 1886	C	8
105.	74	"	LOZELLE FOOTE CARRIAGE HOUSE, c. 1890	C	
106.	74	"	Garage assoc. with #103, c. 1915	C	
107.	75	"	Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	9

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 11

108.	75	Sea Street	Garage assoc. with #107, c. 1935	NC	
109.	80-82	"	Stick, c. 1880	C	8
110.	104-106	"	Four-Square, c. 1910	C	
111.	104-106	'	Garage assoc. with #110, c. 1940	NC	
112.	109	"	Stick, c. 1900	C	
113.	110	"	Colonial Revival, c. 1920	C	
114.	110	"	Garage assoc. with #106, c. 1920	C	
115.	111	"	Bungalow, c. 1915	C	
116.	115-117	"	Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	
117.	--	Sixth Street	Bayview Park, 1890	C	
118.	--	"	Civil War Monument, 1903	C	
119.	--	"	Field House, c. 1970	NC	
120.	34	"	Colonial Revival, c. 1920	C	
121.	44	"	WILLIS SMITH HOUSE, Queen Anne/Col. Revival, c. 1890	C	
122.	46	"	WILLIS SMITH GUEST HOUSE, garage conv. 1915	C	
123.	72-74	"	Queen Anne/Col. Revival, c. 1900	C	
124.	72-74	"	Garage assoc. with #123, c. 1915	C	
125.	75-77	"	Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	7
126.	78-80	'	Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	7
127.	78-80	"	Garage assoc. with #126, c. 1915	C	
128.	82	"	19th-century, c. 1860	C	7
129.	84-86	"	19th-century, c. 1890	C	7
130.	90	"	Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 12

131.	33 South Water Street		BENNET ROBINSON HOUSE, Greek Revival, c. 1860	C	
132.	37	"	BARTHOL/HENRY VON GLAHN HOUSE Greek Revival, 1862	C	3
133.	43	"	WASHINGTON ROWLAND HOUSE (2nd), Queen Anne, c. 1890	C	3
134.	43	"	Garage, c. 1915	C	
135.	47-49	"	JOHN L. SPERRY HOUSE, Greek Revival, c. 1870	C	3
136.	47-49	"	Shed, altered	NC	
137.	57	"	MAGNUS MANSON HOUSE, Greek Revival, c. 1860	C	
138.	57	"	MAGNUS MANSON BARN, c. 1870	C	
139.	61.	"	Queen Anne cottage, c. 1880	C	4
140.	65.	"	Queen Anne cottage, c. 1880	C	4
141.	67	"	19th-century, c. 1880	C	
142.	73	"	Colonial Revival, c. 1920	C	
143.	73	"	Garage assoc. with #142, c. 1950	NC	
144.	81	"	ALEXANDER FOOTE HOUSE, Greek Revival, c. 1855	C	
145.	98	"	SMITH BROS. CO., 19th-century commercial, c. 1890, west addition, 1975	C	20
146.	99-101	"	Greek Revival, c. 1850	C	
147.	103	"	HORACE HOADLEY HOUSE, Greek Revival, c. 1850	C	
148.	107	"	Greek Revival, c. 1850	C	
149.	108	"	Oyster barn, c. 1890	C	20

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 13

150.	109-111 South Water Street	RICHARD W. LAW HOUSE (1st), Greek Revival, c. 1850	C	2
151.	115 "	Greek Revival, c. 1850	C	
152.	119 "	Greek Revival, c. 1850 Queen Anne porch, c. 1890	C	
153.	119 "	Barn/garage assoc. with #152, c. 1915	C	

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

MARITIME HISTORY

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1840 - 1925; 1939

1840 - 1925

1840 - 1925

Significant Dates

1939

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

An exceptionally cohesive, well-preserved urban residential neighborhood, the Oyster Point Historic District is historically significant for its maritime associations, specifically the oystering industry which flourished there between 1840 and 1925. The district contains representative examples of vernacular domestic architecture of exceptional quality and variety constructed during its period of significance by carpenter builders. Of particular importance are the oystermen's houses, a distinctive building type built in the mid-nineteenth century and first influenced by the Greek Revival style, and the many fine Queen Anne-style houses of the later nineteenth century. The district also contains the Boulevard Sewage Treatment Plant, which is notable as New Haven's first facility of this type, and significant for the quality of its architecture.

Historical Significance

A microcosm of the oystering industry on Long Island Sound, the Oyster Point Historic District flourished between 1840 and 1925.² Although Oyster Point was never as large an oystering community as Fair Haven at the head of New Haven harbor, oysters had been gathered from its tidal mud flats since the eighteenth century. Oyster shacks, no longer extant, dotted the waterfront there, to be replaced in the early nineteenth century by oystermen's houses, each with its own waterlot and pier in front of the house. Oystering remained exclusively a cottage industry until the mid-nineteenth century. At that time the industry became commercialized and regulated by a number of state statutes. Independent operations with capital were consolidated into major firms. Although the oysters continued to be processed at scattered sites rather than in one centralized building, these firms were typical examples of nineteenth-century rationalization. They controlled the means of production and the marketing of the product, in a fashion very similar to the commercialization of agriculture at this time. Former independents became employees who continued to live and work at the waterfront, processing oysters in their own houses or in rental houses provided by the companies. Oyster Point dealers apparently never participated in the deepwater cultivation carried out in Long Island Sound by Fair Haven firms after 1870, but they prospered because of improved methods of cultivation, the use of seed oysters from as far away as Chesapeake Bay, and ready access to railroad shipping only blocks from the waterfront. By the end of the century,

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Brown, Elizabeth Mills. New Haven: A Guide to Architecture and Design. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976.

Historic and Architectural Resources of Providence (RI). Multiple Resource Nomination, 1989. New Haven Historic Resources Inventory, Phase I & II. New Haven Preservation Trust, 1980-82.

Maps:

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

Atlas of New Haven, Connecticut. Bridgeport, CT: Streuli & Puckhafer, 1911.

Beers, Frederick W. Map of the City of New Haven and Fair Haven. New York: Beers, Hellis & Soule, 1868.

Buckingham, D.W. Map of the City of New Haven. Jocelyn, Darling & Co., 1830.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings

Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering

Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State historic preservation office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Specify repository:

New Haven Preservation Trust

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 26

UTM References

A
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the district are shown on the attached map of the district drawn to scale from the Tax Assessor's Maps of New Haven #231, 232, 2333, revised to 1972.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the district encompass all the remaining area of Oyster Point, including all historic buildings, structures and open land associated with the period of significance of the district (1840-1925; 1939). It is bounded on the north by Interstate 95, on the south by the waterfront of New Haven Harbor, on the east by the waterfront, and the west by the rear property lines of the houses on the west side of Greenwich and lower Howard avenues so as to exclude modern condominiums. See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant, Reviewed by John Herzan, National
organization Cunningham Associates, Ltd. date 2/27/89 Register Coordinator
street & number 7231 Town Place telephone (203) 347 4072
city or town Middletown state CT zip code 06457

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 8 Page 2

one or two firms, notably those that were family-owned, emerged as the leaders of the industry at Oyster Point, and the typical separation of the workplace from the home began to take place, with the owners building larger residences in desirable locations away from the waterfront. Oystering declined in the twentieth century. With increasing pollution in the harbor from untreated industrial and domestic sewage, commercial cultivation was substantially over at Oyster Point by 1925. Although oystering continued from Fair Haven through the 1940s, the few remaining productive oysterbeds on the west side of the harbor harvested by Oyster Point men were extensively damaged by the hurricane of 1938, effectively ending the industry in the district.

Three of the independent oyster dealers at Oyster Point were largely responsible for the residential development there in the nineteenth century. Eber Kelsey, Alexander Foote, and Frederick Lane owned the triangle between South Water Street, the newly laid out Sea Street, and Howard Avenue and developed it for oystermen and their families. Kelsey's fine Greek Revival house was already in place at the corner of Howard Avenue and South Water Street, as were many of the high-basement cottages on the waterfront (Inventory #33). Alexander Foote, his next-door neighbor who eventually owned a large fish market at the Long Wharf, probably built his house soon after the informal development partnership began (Inventory #144). It is not known whether Lane lived in the district.

Two firms were operating at Oyster Point by 1849. R. W. Law was one of the prominent oystermen. His first house in the district is one of the best preserved of the Greek Revival-style oystermen's houses on South Water Street (Inventory #150). Near the end of his career as an oysterman, Law, or a son of the same name, built an exceptional Georgian Revival house on Howard Avenue (Inventory #57). Jeremiah Smith and Sons, which later became the Smith Brothers Company, the largest at the point by the end of the nineteenth century, was another firm established at this time. In addition to two extant dockside commercial buildings associated with this company later in the century (Inventory #s 145, 149), the Smith family were responsible for at least eight houses in the district. The prosperity of the firm is demonstrated by the exceptional examples of the Queen Anne built at the entrance to Bayview Park by Jeremiah, Willis, and William, and an Italianate built by E.H. Smith (Inventory #s 75, 121, 74, 65). Jeremiah and Willis also owned earlier houses on the waterfront, which they probably rented out to employees of the firm (Inventory #s 140, 144). Even middle-management employees were able to build substantial houses in the district. Edward Manville, a clerk for one of the firms, built his Four-Square house on Howard Avenue (Inventory #58).

More modest homes were built on side streets for or by employees of the oyster industry and related maritime occupations, especially in the development area between South Water and Sea streets. Bennett Robinson bought land from Kelsey, Foote, and Lane and built his high-basement oysterman's house at 33 South Water Street in 1860 (Inventory #131). Magnus Manson, variously described as a shipbuilder or shipmaster, built his house at #57 in the 1860s, and divided the adjoining lot to the west to build two high-basement cottages with Queen Anne porches on speculation (Inventory #s 137, 139, 140). Lozelle Foote (relationship to Alexander not known) built his Stick-style house and carriage

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 8 Page 3

house on Sea Street in 1886 (Inventory #104). He was part owner of a fish market, Button & Foote. Washington Rowland and Asahel Curtis, both oyster dealers, built Italianate-style houses on Sea Street between 1860 and 1880 (Inventory #s 93, 96). Rowland also owned another house in the district on South Water Street (Inventory #133).

After the Civil War, oystering was at its peak, with five firms doing business in the district, but the neighborhood's exclusive association with the industry was coming to an end. Commercial transportation opened up the neighborhood to newcomers who were not connected to the oyster business. With the building of the railroad yards on Lamberton Street just blocks north of the district, a number of railroad workers made their homes in the district. A streetcar line on Howard Avenue was in place by the late 1860s, making the district more accessible to the downtown. Because of the demand for housing, multi-family residences began to be built in the district to maximize the small building lots. A number of two-family houses were built on the side streets and even on fashionable Howard Avenue at this time.

Finally, the building of Bayview Park on the last open land in the district made Oyster Point an even more desirable residential area. Although small in size, this miniature park with its artificial pond and harbor drive was popular with New Haven residents. It was designed by Donald Grant Mitchell, a nationally-known New Haven landscape designer. The impact of the park on residential development in the district was predictable. House lots near the park were first developed for the wealthy owners of the oyster firms, but newcomers to the district soon followed, many of whom commuted by streetcar to work in New Haven's industries.

By World War I, the influence of the automobile era is evident in the district as residents began to build small garages behind their houses. Because of the common perception at the time that automobiles were a fire hazard, these garages were often built of rusticated cement block and placed at the very rear of the lot.

Architectural Significance

Despite the encroachment of modern development on the waterfront and the construction of Interstate 95, the Oyster Point Historic District has retained its historic architectural integrity. Indeed, the highway construction which isolated the district from the rest of the city ironically helped to produce an undisturbed cohesive residential enclave which has a readily identifiable historic character. The streetscape appears today much as it did at the turn of the century, when most of the buildings in the district were completed. Modern infill is virtually nonexistent. The distinguishing characteristics of this historic neighborhood, the small deep lots, uniform setbacks, and the use of similar plan and form for the houses, have all been retained. All but one of the houses contribute to the historic character of the district. Although some of these have been sheathed with modern siding, a remarkable number have retained their original siding and distinctive architectural detail. Of particular note is the waterfront streetscape of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 8 Page 4

South Water Street, which contains the oldest houses in the district and vividly recalls the maritime associations of the neighborhood.

Of particular architectural significance are the high-basement oystermen's houses which were constructed between 1840 and 1880.³ Although some of these valuable historic artifacts from the early oystering industry have lost their architectural detail, all of them have retained their original definitive form. Some were influenced by the Greek Revival style, such as the exceptionally well-preserved R. W. Law House and the Eber Kelsey House (Inventory #s 150, 33). Both of these houses are individually significant for their degree of architectural detail, at a level not usually found in primarily functional buildings. Of further interest are the later Queen Anne versions of this type (Inventory #s 133, 139, 140). The adaptation of the high-basement form to the more fashionable Queen Anne style indicates that the original function of these buildings remained important to the industry. In addition to the convenience of the waterfront location, the cool darkness of the windowless basement rooms helped preserve the oysters until they could be processed and shipped in wooden kegs.

The Oyster Point Historic District also contains a significant body of domestic architecture which represents some of the best work of New Haven carpenter builders of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Working with a similar gable-to-street form, they produced an exceptional variety of houses influenced by the Queen Anne style. The quantity and diversity of these houses is one of the most outstanding features of the district. More than one-third of the houses in the district were built in this style, including those influenced by the Colonial Revival style around the turn of the century. Among the number of distinguished examples are the several houses built by the Smith family on Howard Avenue. Because of their excellent state of preservation, the wealth of applied architectural detail lavished on these houses can still be appreciated. The premier examples include the the Willis Smith House, a handsome Stick-style house that has retained its decorative trusswork, open porch, and iron cresting (Inventory #48). The towered William H. Smith House is also well-preserved and features a classic pedimented wrap-around porch (Inventory #74). Among the Queen Anne/Colonial Revival-style houses in the district, the double house at 79-81 is one of the most detailed and best preserved (Inventory # 66). Its distinguishing characteristics, the Palladian window in the overhanging gables, the exposed rafter ends, and the Colonial Revival open porch, set the tone for the many more modest but well-preserved examples of this hybrid style in the district.

The Boulevard Sewage Treatment Plant

Although important as the first sewage treatment plant in New Haven, the Boulevard Plant is primarily significant for its level of architectural style (Inventory #s 79, 80, 81). Working within the requirements imposed by the treatment process selected by the sanitary engineers, the New Haven Engineering Department produced an exceptionally stylish group of buildings. The main building set the pattern for the architectural design of the complex, one that works equally well for the curved wall surfaces of the tanks. A fine

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number 8 Page 5

example of Art Deco, it combines a boldly conceived design of horizontal and vertical elements with a more subtle interplay of scale and pattern.⁴ The heavy cast concrete design features are played off against the more delicate geometry of the brickwork. The concrete chevrons, elements which accentuate the verticality of the classically inspired projecting pavilion, evolve into a stylized bird form over the entrance and add emphasis to the strong horizontal of the concrete belt course at the first-story lintel.

The historical significance of the plant is limited. Many coastal cities had begun treating raw sewage much earlier than New Haven, some as early as the late nineteenth century.⁵ Although the three key structures remain to illustrate the type of sewage treatment process, the "activated sludge" process used there was typical for the period. This method does not represent a new type of treatment or any major innovation in sanitary engineering. The Sludge Digester Tank was the key to this process. Organic matter was oxidized by mixing sewage with compressed air, essentially a biological process which replaced the earlier chemical treatment about 1930. A portion of the so-called activated sludge is returned to the digester tank to keep the process going and the remainder of the treated sludge is dewatered and removed for disposal.

End Notes:

1. This subtype of the Queen Anne is called the Free Classic by Virginia and Lee McAlester in A Field Guide to American Houses, p. 264.
2. The history of the oyster industry in New Haven Harbor is taken from the Quinnipiac Historic District, NR 1986 and the "New Haven Historic Resources Inventory, Phase I and II."
3. Information about this building type and specific examples are found in Elizabeth M. Brown, New Haven: A Guide to Architecture and Urban Design, p. 93, 202.
4. Assistance in analyzing the architectural significance of these structures was provided by Susan Chandler, staff architect at the Connecticut Historical Commission. Personal communication, March 15, 1989.
5. The analysis of the process and the comparative history are taken from the multiple resource nomination: "Historic and Architectural Resources of Providence (RI) 1636-present (The Making of a Metropolis 1865-1945; Public Works & Utilities; Sewage Treatment, 1895-1935)," NR 1989.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven Connecticut

Section number 10 **Page** 1

UTM References:

A	18	673140	4572160
B	18	673170	4571990
C	18	673320	4571800
D	18	673360	4571830
E	18	673580	4572060
F	18	673680	4572020
G	18	673660	4572160
H	18	673580	4572140
I	18	673500	4572250

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

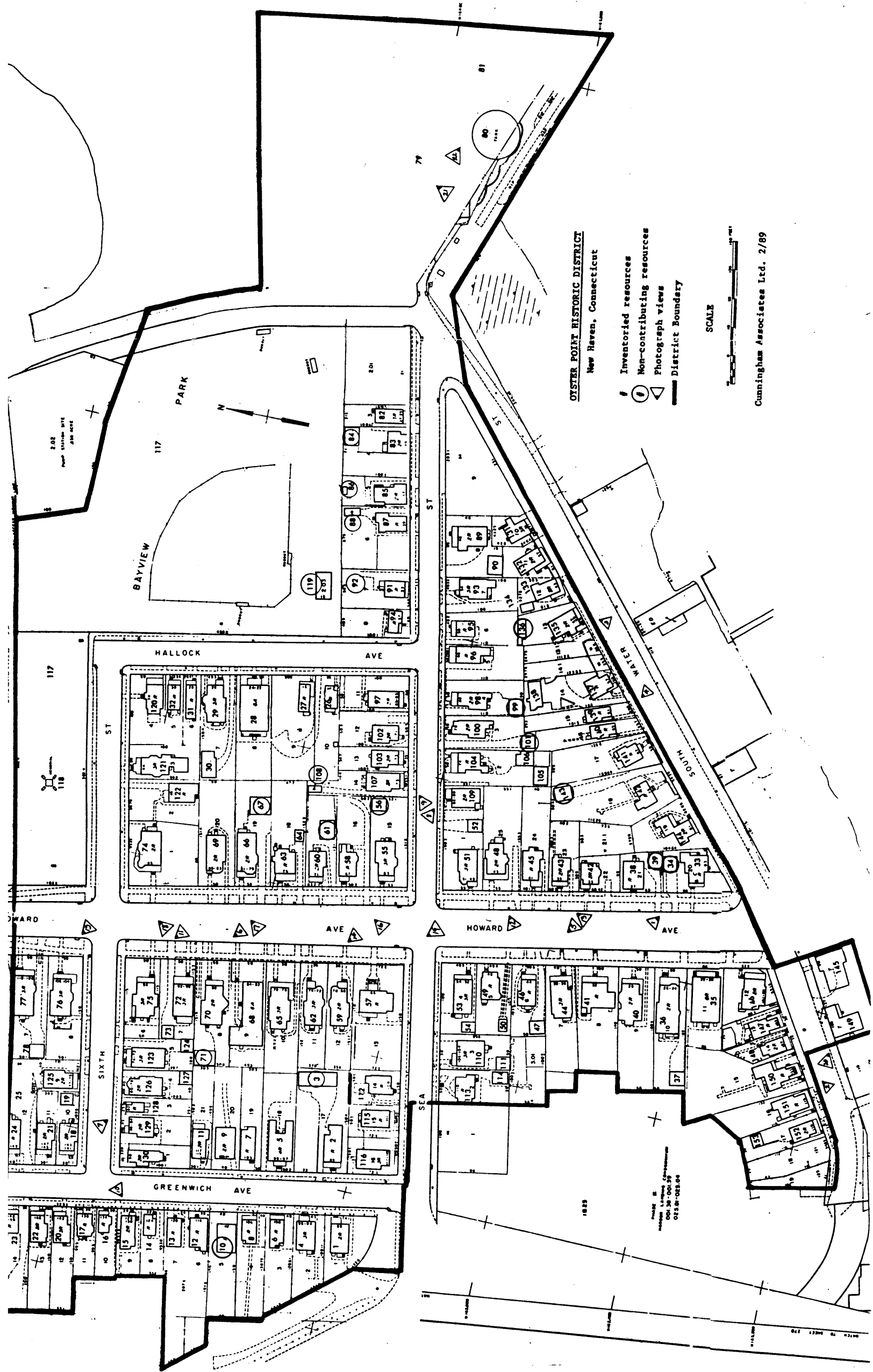
Oyster Point Historic District, New Haven, Connecticut

Section number Photos Page 1

List of Photographs - Oyster Point Historic District

Photographer: Jan Cunningham, Cunningham Associates Ltd.
Negatives on file: Connecticut Historical Commission

#	Name(s) and/or Address(es) L-R	Date	View (facing)
1.	Eber Kelsey House 19 Howard Avenue	2/89	SE
2.	Richard W. Law House, 113 So. Water Street & 115, 119 So. Water Street	2/89	NE
3.	John L. Sperry House; Washington Rowland House; Barthol Von Glahn House 47-49, 43, 37 So. Water Street	2/89	NE
4.	61, 65 South Water Street	2/89	NW
5.	36-38, 44, 48, 52-54 Howard Avenue	2/89	NW
6.	86, 90-92, 96 Howard Avenue	2/89	NW
7.	72-74, 78-80, 82, 84-88 Sixth Street	2/89	SE
8.	68, 70, 74, 80-82 Sea Street	2/89	SE
9.	75, 73, 71 Sea Street	2/89	NE
10.	120, 124, 128-130 Greenwich Avenue	1/89	SW
11.	Jeremiah Smith House, 96 Howard Avenue & 104-106 Howard Avenue	2/89	NW
12.	Willis M. Smith House, 45 Howard Avenue & 49-51 Howard Avenue	2/89	NE
13.	41, 45, & Garret Dunbar House, 35 Howard Avenue	2/89	NE
14.	William Stahl & Dennis Fitzgerald Houses 68-70, 72-74 Howard Avenue	2/898	NW
15.	104-106, 108-110 Howard Avenue	2/89	NW
16.	Streetscape: 81 to 63 Howard Avenue	2/89	NE
17.	79-81, 83-85, 95 Howard Avenue	2/89	NE
18.	William H. Smith House, 95 Howard Avenue	2/89	NE
19.	Richard W. Law House, 66 Howard Avenue & 68-70, 72-74 Howard Avenue	2/89	NE
20.	Smith Bros. Bldg. & Barn 98, 108 So. Water Street	2/89	SE
21.	Boulevard Sewage Treatment Plant	3/89	NE
22.	Sludge Digester Tank	3/89	SE



OYSTER POINT HISTORIC DISTRICT
 New Haven, Connecticut

- Inventoried resources
- Non-contributing resources
- ▲ Photograph views
- District Boundary



Cunningham Associates Ltd. 2/89