NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

1963--Theme-Agriculture

Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

| FOR NPS USE ONLY |
|---|
| RECEIVED |
| DATE ENTERED |

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

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

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC: Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

AND/OR COMMON: Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 123 Huntington Street — NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN: New Haven — VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: third

STATE: Connecticut — CODE: 09

COUNTY: New Haven — CODE: 009

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| __DISTRICT | X PUBLIC | XX OCCUPIED | X AGRICULTURE | __MUSEUM |
| __BUILDING(S) | __PRIVATE | __UNOCCUPIED | __COMMERCIAL | __PARK |
| __STRUCTURE | __BOTH | __WORK IN PROGRESS | __EDUCATIONAL | __PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| X SITE | **PUBLIC ACQUISITION** | **ACCESSIBLE** | __ENTERTAINMENT | __RELIGIOUS |
| __OBJECT | __IN PROCESS | XX YES: RESTRICTED | __GOVERNMENT | XX SCIENTIFIC |
| | __BEING CONSIDERED | __YES: UNRESTRICTED | __INDUSTRIAL | __TRANSPORTATION |
| | | __NO | __MILITARY | __OTHER: |

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: State of Connecticut (a Board of Control, with Governor as Chairman)

STREET & NUMBER: 123 Huntington Street

CITY, TOWN: New Haven — VICINITY OF

STATE: Connecticut

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: New Haven Town Hall, Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER: 200 Orange Street

CITY, TOWN: New Haven

STATE: Connecticut

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: Historic American Buildings Survey (2 photographs)

DATE: 1967 — XX FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN: Washington

STATE: District of Columbia

# 7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|---|---|---|---|
| XX EXCELLENT | __DETERIORATED | __UNALTERED | XX ORIGINAL SITE |
| __GOOD | __RUINS | XX ALTERED | __MOVED DATE_____ |
| __FAIR | __UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

By 1882 the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station had outgrown its limited quarters at the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale and the school needed the space for its own use. In that year the Connecticut legislature appropriated $25,000 for land, buildings and equipment for the station, and authorized purchase of a small private estate, with buildings adaptable for laboratories, in suburban New Haven. About five acres were purchased at the present location, on top of Prospect Hill, in what is today one of the nicest residential areas of the city. None of the structures purchased with the property remain today, although they were undoubtedly used for laboratories and greenhouses. The modern Slate Laboratory apparently is located on the site of one of these first buildings. Surrounding the laboratories and greenhouses of the station are experimental gardens and beautifully maintained lawns and shrubbery.

The following structures are currently located on the six acre station grounds:

Osborne Library, erected in 1882-83, the year the station bought the property, is the oldest building. Thought to be the nation's first structure erected for a state agricultural experiment station, the library is a small, one-story brick building with cross gables and black brick decorations over the arched windows and in imitation belt courses at three levels across the exterior walls. When Atwater used the building it was a chemical laboratory. It then had a number of chimneys which have been removed, and the small front portico is a recent addition. Otherwise the exterior is quite unchanged, while the interior has been remodeled for library use.

Johnson Laboratory, named for the station's first director, is the second oldest building, currently housing the chemistry laboratories. It is a two story, L-shaped brick structure with remarkably large brackets supporting the wide eaves of the hipped roof.

In addition there are four buildings of secondary importance:

Jones Auditorium, a brick building used for lectures and laboratories, was constructed as a Works Progress Administration project during the 1930's, and has a more recent north wing.

Slate Laboratory, a brick building constructed in 1959, contains the administrative offices for the station, but primarily laboratories of the genetics, soils and ecology units.

Jenkins Laboratory, another twentieth century structure houses plant pathology and entomology laboratories.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| __PREHISTORIC | __ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | __COMMUNITY PLANNING | __LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | __RELIGION | |
| __1400-1499 | __ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | __CONSERVATION | __LAW | XX SCIENCE | |
| __1500-1599 | XX AGRICULTURE | __ECONOMICS | __LITERATURE | __SCULPTURE | |
| __1600-1699 | __ARCHITECTURE | __EDUCATION | __MILITARY | __SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN | |
| __1700-1799 | __ART | __ENGINEERING | __MUSIC | __THEATER | |
| X 1800-1899 | __COMMERCE | __EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | __PHILOSOPHY | __TRANSPORTATION | |
| __1900- | __COMMUNICATIONS | __INDUSTRY | __POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | __OTHER (SPECIFY) | |
| | | __INVENTION | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1882 - BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1875 the State of Connecticut created the first state agricultural experiment station. Ever since its establishment the station has remained a leader of its kind and has made notable contributions to American agricultural development.

Within 20 years after its establishment the station had assumed the responsibility of administering a state food law, the first institution of its kind to do so. Additional important contributions to both Connecticut farmers and agriculture in general were work on amino acids in the human diet, and the discovery of vitamins by the station's scientists, as well as significant developments in tobacco production, hybrid corn, pest control and soil and water improvement.

The station did not secure a permanent home for several years. It was initially housed in a building at Wesleyan University and then moved to space in Yale University's Sheffield Scientific School. In 1882-83 Connecticut purchased a small estate on Huntington Avenue in New Haven where the station still has its headquarters.

The station's oldest building is Osborne Library, erected in 1882-83. Generally believed to be the country's first structure built for a state agricultural experiment station, the library is a one-story brick building. It is now only one of several buildings amid the greenhouses and gardens of the six acre station.

## History

Connecticut's founding of an agricultural experiment station largely stemmed from the work of one man, Professor W. O. Atwater. Atwater helped to found the science of agricultural chemistry in America, and his doctoral thesis of 1869 on the chemical composition of maize remains a landmark. In it, Atwater discussed for the first time in this country the possible advantages of applying the results of advances in chemistry to agricultural undertakings. Subsequently, after he had become a professor at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, Atwater stimulated a widespread interest in agricultural chemistry. Atwater's position was strengthened in 1872 after a convention of individuals in Washington, D.C., concerned with farming advocated the creation of agricultural experiment stations throughout the United States.

(Continued)

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

True, A. C. "Agricultural Experiment Stations in the United States," in The Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture, 1899. Washington, D.C., 1900.

U.S. Department of Agriculture. "Agricultural Experiment Stations in the United States." Circular No. 44, June 8, 1900.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 6.23 acres

UTM REFERENCES

| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 18 | 674,000 | 4,577,350 |
| B | | | |
| C | | | |
| D | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The entire property of six acres has been used for important experiments, which have taken place both inside and outside of the permanent laboratory buildings. As the first structure built for a state agricultural experiment station, Osborne Library is undoubtedly the most significant building historically, and Johnson Laboratory is also an historic structure integral to the landmark. However, since the tract of land owned by the station today is essentially the same as that

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 1963, S. Sydney Bradford
Blanche Higgins Schroer, Landmark Review Project

ORGANIZATION Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Historic Sites Survey

DATE January 2, 1975

STREET & NUMBER 1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE 523-5464

CITY OR TOWN Washington

STATE D.C.

## 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

Landmark Designation: July 19, 1964

Cornelius Heine 7-24-75
Chairman, Boundary Committee date

Boundary Approved:

Director, OAHP date

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

| FOR NPS USE ONLY |
| --- |
| RECEIVED |
| DATE ENTERED |

Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station



Britten Laboratory area is a group of buildings of a more temporary nature, mostly shops and utility buildings.

Atwater's struggle to move Connecticut to establish an agricultural experiment station began in 1873 and culminated successfully in 1875. When the State board of agriculture held its winter meeting in December, 1873, at Meridan, Atwater argued for the development of an institute devoted to the study and practical application of agricultural chemistry, basing his scheme on similar institutions in Europe with which he was familiar. A committee was appointed to study Atwater's suggestion, and after it had returned a favorable report, a permanent committee was created. That group had the task of stimulating public and legislative support for an agricultural station. Numerous meetings occurred throughout Connecticut in 1874, and a great deal of enthusiasm for the plan was aroused, in almost everyone but the farmers. The great body of the farmers, perhaps too concerned with their own problems, displayed small interest in the scheme. Nevertheless, a bill calling for the establishment of an experiment station was introduced in the State legislature in 1874. That was a herald of things to come, even though legislators failed to act on the measure.

Although temporarily denied success, the proponents of the measure triumphed in 1874. In an effort to secure state action, a private offer was made to help the contemplated station if the state would authorize it. Thus on July 2, 1874, the legislature approved a bill creating a station, and by October personnel had been hired. Atwater became the director.

Since Atwater saw his plan become a reality, the Connecticut agricultural station has been an outstanding success. Atwater immediately began to study fertilizer in 1875 and quickly produced standards concerning the quality of commercially manufactured fertilizers. These standards became the basis for the state's efforts to eliminate fraud in fertilizer production, the results of the analysis of fertilizer purchased on the open market appearing in print.

After using facilities at Wesleyan University on a trial basis for two years, Atwater and others recommended administrative changes and drafted a bill to establish a permanent station, independent of other institutions. The revised arrangement was approved by the State in 1877 and this statute created the Connecticut State Agricultural Experiment Station, to be governed by a board of control and financed by a continuing annual appropriation of $5,000 from the state treasury. The state charter severed organic connection with a university and specifically assigned to the station a single duty: the conduct of "scientific investigation and experiments."

(Continued)

The new governing board immediately acted to put the statute into effect. It ended the Middletown experiment facility, elected Samuel Johnson, Atwater's former mentor, to the directorship, and leased temporary quarters at Sheffield. These were occupied until 1882 when the state legislature authorized purchase of a small estate, with buildings adaptable for laboratories, in suburban New Haven.

Johnson advocated a suburban site for the Connecticut station, rather than a model farm. There, the necessary facilities for research could be concentrated in a limited area. There also, the scientists could use the laboratory, library, greenhouses and test plot, while being near to the important facilities of the mail, telegraph, express offices and public utilities.[1]

The station was founded on the principle that publication of results of analysis of fertilizer samples purchased on the open market was the most effective deterrentto fraud and deception in this area. The idea was soon extended to many fields. Since 1895, station chemists have analyzed food and drug samples and published the results for consumers to make their judgment and comparisons. The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station was the first institution of its kind in the country to be given the responsibility of administering a State food law.

The turn of the century saw no lessening of the station's valuable work. Research by station personnel led to the development of the shade tent for tobacco in 1900, a success which stimulated the rise of an important crop venture in the Connecticut Valley. Another striking accomplishment came from the work of Thomas B. Osborne, whose study established the significance of amino acids in the human diet. Moreover, Osborne, in conjunction with Lafayette B. Mendel, of Yale, discovered vitamins. Additional important discoveries have come from the station, such as the devising of a new method of producing corn seed and studies that led to the development of hybrid corn.

The importance of the agricultural experiment station, conducted as a scientific institution, was confirmed by the early work at New Haven, and its influence extended throughout the United States.

---

[1]United States Department of Agriculture, State Agricultural Experiment Stations; A History of Research Policy and Procedure, Miscellaneous Publication 904 (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1962), p. 23.

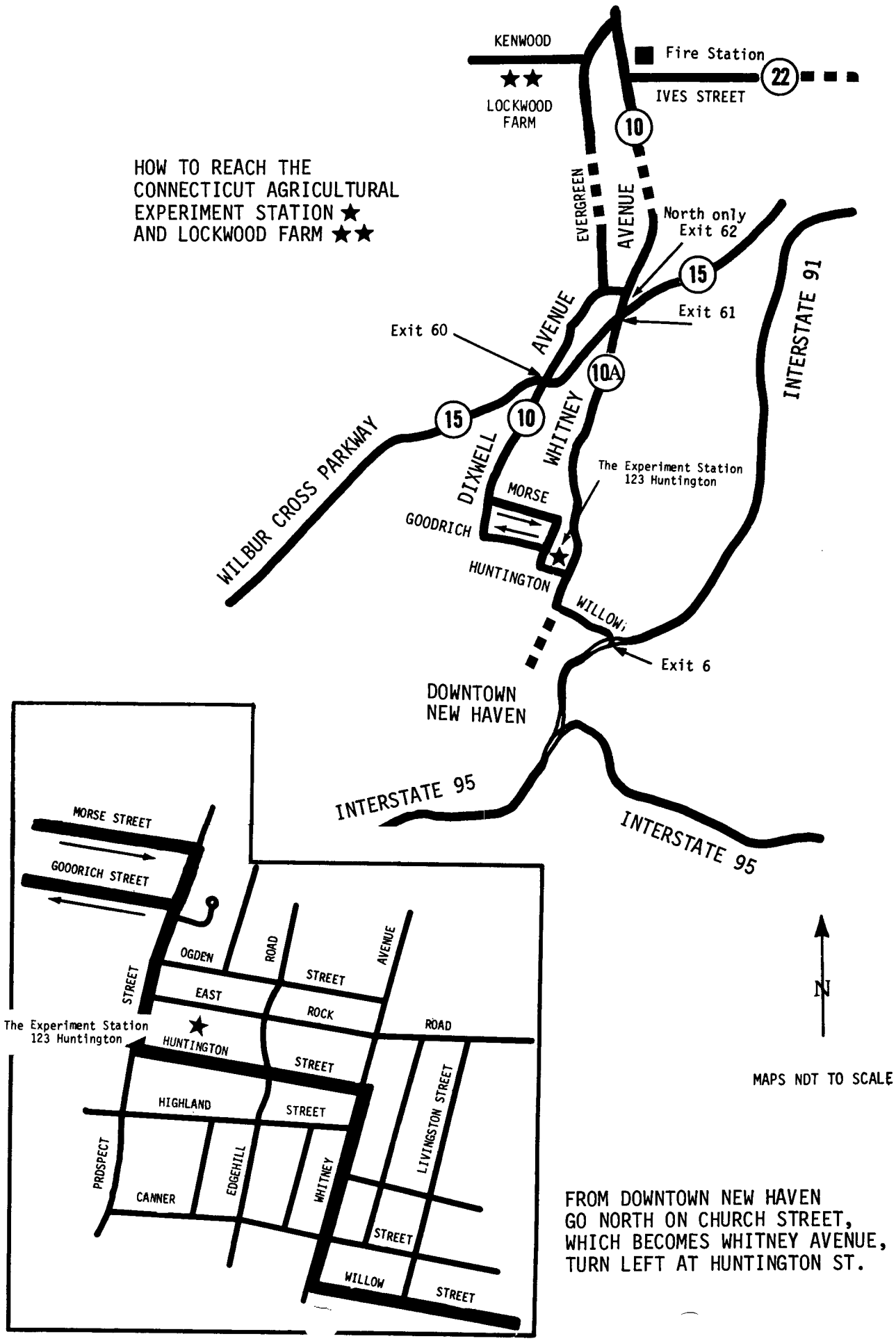
U.S. Department of Agriculture. State Agricultural Experiment Stations; A History of Research Policy and Procedure, Miscellaneous Publication 904. Washington, D.C., 1962.

"The Connecticut Station Story." (n.p., n.d.).

purchased for them in 1882 (except for minor changes when the roads were constructed), and because much of the work of the station has been, and continues to be, done in temporary structures and in the gardens, the whole present property has been included within the landmark boundary.

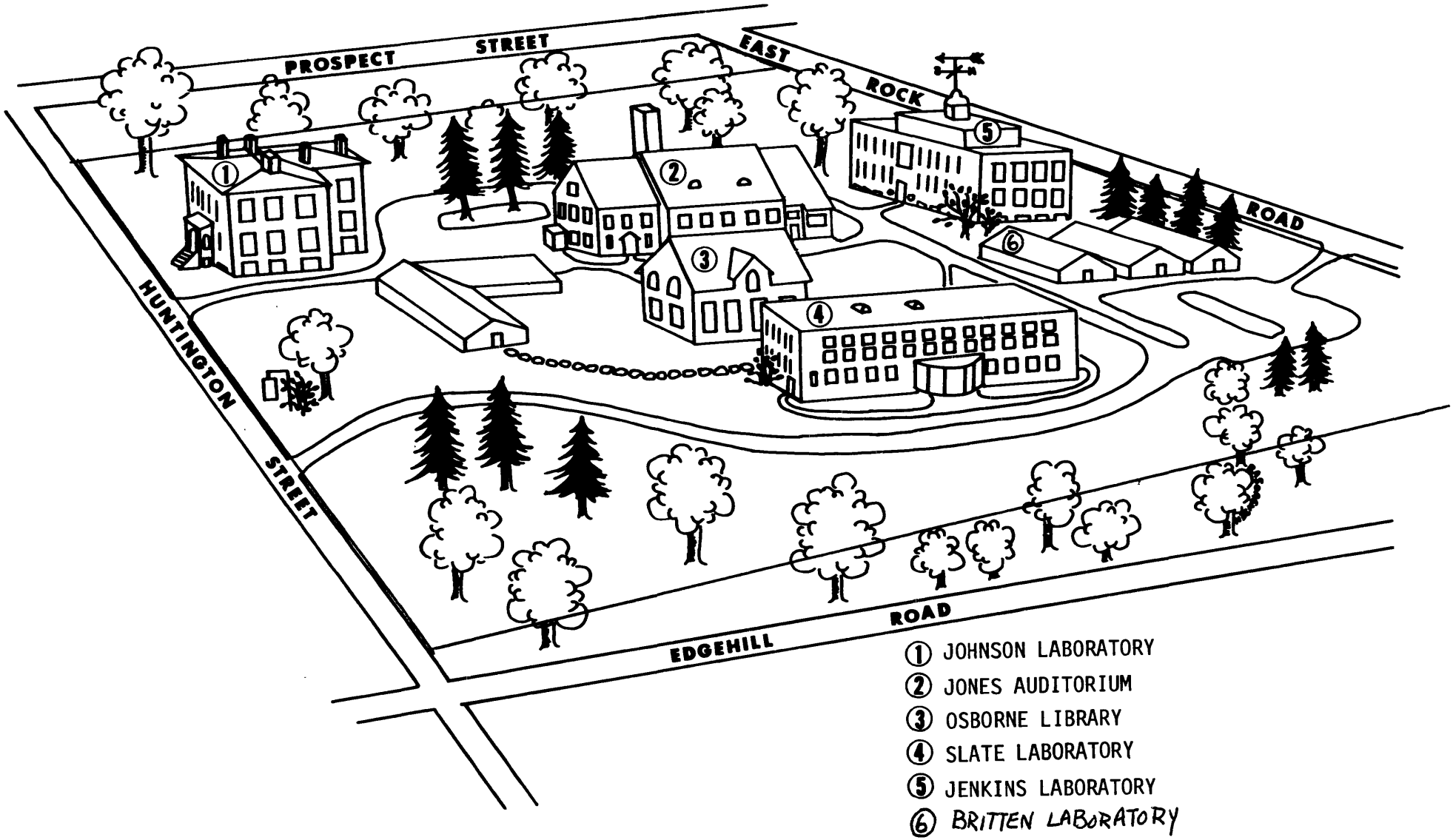
Beginning at the southeast corner of the property, on Huntington Street, east of the station driveway, the boundary follows the northern curb of Huntington Street in a westerly direction for about 646 feet, then runs in a northerly direction along the property lines of the residences at 165 Huntington Street and 280 East Rock Road for about 429 feet, then runs along the southern curb of East Rock Road for 638 feet, then follows the border of the residential properties at 34, 50 and 64 Edgehill Road for 422 feet more or less to the point of beginning on Huntington Street.

# HOW TO REACH THE CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION ★ AND LOCKWOOD FARM ★★




MAPS NOT TO SCALE

FROM DOWNTOWN NEW HAVEN GO NORTH ON CHURCH STREET, WHICH BECOMES WHITNEY AVENUE, TURN LEFT AT HUNTINGTON ST.




Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
New Haven, Connecticut

***this map shows the configuration of the buildings, but is it not to scale
nor does it include the private residences along Edgehill Road and Prospect Street