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National Park Service

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Historic Resources of
Downtown Bridgeport

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Bridgeport Downtown South Historic District

Description

Located in the south-central portion of Bridgeport's central business district, the Bridgeport Downtown South Historic District encompasses a total of 27 acres of land, 62 properties, and 62 major structures. Better than 80% (50) of these major structures remain substantially intact examples of commercial, municipal, or industrial architecture dating from the 1840s through 1930s and contribute to the architectural and/or historical significance of the district.

The southern, eastern, and western, boundaries of the district are defined by a virtually immediate shift which occurs between the substantially intact pre-World War II commercial architecture of the district and the surrounding, predominantly modern commercial construction. The eastern half of the district's northern boundary is defined by a similar transition. The western half of the district's northern boundary, part of which abuts the southern boundary of the downtown area's Golden Hill Historic District, is drawn to include the remaining historic commercial structures in the Elm Street/Fairfield Avenue corridor west of Broad Street. These latter buildings mark the farthest northward extent of pre-World War II commercial construction in the western half of downtown Bridgeport.

Brick, cut stone, cast stone, terra cotta, and reinforced concrete form the principal building materials utilized in the construction of district buildings. However, the area also embraces a handful of examples of buildings featuring wood-frame construction or exterior wall panels of Carrara glass. Most of the few post-World War II buildings located within the district are reinforced-concrete or steel-frame, curtain-wall structures dominated by exterior wall panels of concrete and/or glass. Building heights within the downtown generally range between two and 13 stories. For the most part, buildings are sited close to the street and each other, often forming virtually unbroken and, at times, imposing streetscapes.

Popular 19th- and early 20th-century architectural styles represented in the district range from relatively modest to more elaborate and, in a number of cases, high-style examples of the Greek Revival, Italianate, Romanesque, Islamic Revival, Queen Anne, late Gothic Revival, Beaux Arts, Colonial Revival, Georgian Revival, Neoclassical, and Art Deco modes. The architectural integrity of most individual building exteriors ranges from good to excellent. Significant exterior modifications, where they have occurred, are most often limited to storefront, signage, or window fabric.

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Description (Cont.)

Only a handful of historic structures within the district display irreversible, non-historic exterior alterations to the point where they can no longer be considered to contribute to the area's significance.

The district encompasses a wealth of distinguished individual structures. The designers of a number of these structures, such as the James Staples and Barnum-Thompson Buildings at 171-81 and 189 State Street (photograph 12), the Hincks and Johnson Building at 1083-95 Broad Street (photograph 4), and the Post Building at 49-53 Cannon Street (photograph 3), remain unknown. However, most of the larger, more elaborate, and/or stylistically refined buildings in the district stand as important examples of the work of nationally or locally prominent architects, such as Cass Gilbert, Warren Briggs, George Freeman and Ernest G. Southey, to name but a few. Among the most distinctive individual buildings in the district are four which were individually listed on the National Register prior to 1987. These buildings include: the United Illuminating Company at 1115-19 Broad Street; the Barnum Museum of Science and History at 804-20 Main Street; the Sterling Block and Bishop Arcade at 993-1019 Main Street; and A.J. Davis' 1854 Fairfield County Courthouse at 202 State Street.

An inventory of buildings and properties located within the Bridgeport Downtown South Historic District is provided on the ensuing pages in the following format:

STREET NAME

Street Number (C= contributing)
or
(NC= noncontributing)

**Construction date. Historic Name
(Common Name). A: Architect. B:
Builder. Number of stories; principal
construction materials; architectural
style. Miscellaneous information.

**Information for each category is included only if data is available.

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Bridgeport Downtown South Historic District - Inventory List

BANK STREET

102(C) 1924. Morris Plan Bank of Bridgeport. A: Ernest G. Southey. B: Pardy Construction Co. 2 stories; brick and marble; Colonial Revival. Photograph 10.

110(C) Bridgeport City Trust Company Trust Department (Citytrust). A: Ernest G. Southey. B: E & F Construction Co. 2 1/2 stories; brick and marble; Colonial Revival. Photograph 10.

BROAD STREET

925(C) 1925/1926. Bridgeport Public Library (Burroughs Library). A: F.J. Dickson & C.S. Palmer Associated. B: H.Wales Lines Company. 3 stories; brick and marble; Neoclassical. Photograph 6.

1006-18(NC) 1941/1942. 2 stories; reinforced concrete and brick; mid 20th-century commercial. Photograph 5.

1050(C) 1925. D.M. Read Company. A: Monks and Johnson. B: Pardy Construction Co. 5 stories; brick and concrete; Neoclassical. Photograph 5.

1057(C) 1882/1883. Hincks and Johnson Carriage Factory (Clark's Furniture). 4 stories; brick and cut stone; Italianate. Photograph 4.

1072-94(NC) 1942. North Side Properties Building. A: William Ginsburg. 2 stories, steel and masonry; Art Deco.

1083-95(C) Hincks and Johnson Building (Lafayette Building). 4 stories; brick and cut stone; Georgian Revival. Photograph 4.

1115-19(C)* 1910. United Illuminating Company Building. 2 stories; marble; Art Deco. Remodelled 1930 according to design by E.B. Caldwell.

1187(C) Ca. 1885. J.I.Miller House. 3 stories; brick, cut stone, and terra cotta; Italianate/Queen Anne.

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CANNON STREET

- 33(C) 1896. Maloney's Cafe. 2 stories; brick; commercial. Front remodelled ca. 1930.
- 35(C) Ca. 1930. O'Brien Clothing Company. 3 stories; brick; early 20th-century commercial.
- 39-45(C) Ca. 1925. E.S. Schweratte Building (National Academy of Hairdressing). 4 stories; brick; early 20th-century commercial.
- 49-53(C) 1891. Post Building. 4-stories; brick and cut brownstone; Romanesque. Photograph 3.
- 59-69(C) 1928. W.T. Grant Company. 2 stories; brick; early 20th-century commercial.

ELM STREET

- 166-70(C) 1915/1916. West End Auto Garage and Carriage Company. 3 stories; brick; Colonial Revival.
- 172-76(C) 1916/1917. D.M. Read Company Garage. 4 stories; brick; early 20th-century commercial.

FAIRFIELD AVENUE

- 232-52(NC) 1949. Raffel Building (Modern Electric). 3 stories; brick and concrete; mid 20th-century commercial.
- 239(C) 1910. Fay Building (Pogo's Cafe). 3 stories; brick and cut stone; Second Renaissance Revival. Photograph 2
- 243(C) 1926/1927. Gilman's Music Store (Pogo's Cafe). 2 stories; brick and marble; Classical Revival. Photograph 2.
- 245-47(NC) 1948. Louis Levitt Building (United Beauty Supply Corporation). 2 stories; brick and marble; mid 20th-century commercial.

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- 269-75(C) 1909/1910. Colonial Hall (Studio Cinema). 3 stories; brick and cut stone; Colonial Revival. Photograph 1.
- 274-78(C) 1908/1909. 3 stories; brick; Colonial Revival.
- 277-81(C) 1911. E.M. Jennings Company. 4 stories; brick; early 20th-century commercial.
- 280-84(C) 1914/1915. Clarke Building. 4 stories; brick; Colonial Revival.
- 288(C) 1918/1919. F.N. Anderson Building. 3 stories; brick; Colonial Revival.

JOHN STREET

- 60(C) 1920. Shalet Building (Connecticut News Company). 3 stories; brick and cut stone; Colonial Revival. Photographs 14 and 15.
- 62(C) 1924/1925. Huber Building (Dworken's Package Store). 2 stories; brick; early 20th-century commercial. Photograph 14.
- 66-68(C) 1923/1924. Trager Grocery Store (Hour Glass Cleaners). 2 stories; brick and cut stone; Neoclassical. Photograph 14.
- 69-73(C) Ca. 1925. Davis and Hawley Annex (Wendy's/Victor's Tailor Shop). 2 stories; brick and cut stone; early 20th-century commercial. Photograph 14.
- 134-40(NC) Ca. 1985. 2 stories; brick; late 20th-century commercial.
- 155(NC) 1963. Park Realty Company Parking Garage. 6-level reinforced concrete parking garage.

MAIN STREET

- 804-20(C)* 1892/1893. Barnum Museum of Science and History (Barnum Museum). 2 stories; brick, sandstone and terra cotta; Islamic Revival.

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- 811-15(C) 1923. Bridgeport Gas Light Company. A: Ernest G. Southey. B: The Hewlett Co. 2 stories; brick and cut stone; Colonial Revival. Photograph 7.
- 829-35(C) 1931. Bridgeport Hydraulic Company. A: Ernest G. Southey. B: E.E. Bray Co. 2-story; limestone; Art Deco. Photograph 7.
- 855(NC) 1964-1966. Peoples Savings Bank Building. A: Fletcher Thompson, Inc. B: Fusco Amatruda Co. 11 stories; steel, glass and concrete; late 20th-century commercial. Photograph 7.
- 875(C) 1914. Peoples Savings Bank. 3 stories; marble; Neoclassical.
- 914(NC) 1969. Mechanics and Farmers Savings Bank Annex. A: Lyons and Mather. B: Joseph Vitale Construction Co. 3 stories; concrete and marble; late 20th-century commercial.
- 930(C) 1930. Mechanics and Farmers Savings Bank. A: Ernest G. Southey. B: W.R. Muirhead & Son. 2 stories, marble; Neoclassical. Photograph 8.
- 939-51(C) 1918. Liberty Building. 8 stories; brick and granite; Colonial Revival. Photograph 9.
- 944-52(C) 1912-1914. City Savings Bank. A: Warren Briggs. 5 stories; marble; Classical Revival. Photograph 8.
- 955-57(C) 1927-1929 Bridgeport City Trust Company (Citytrust). A: Dennison & Hiron; B: Dwight P. Robinson. 10 stories; brick and marble with decorative wall panels; Art Deco. Photograph 14.
- 956(NC) Ca. 1970. 3 stories; concrete and brick; late 20th-century commercial. Photograph 8.
- 960(NC) Ca. 1895. Allen Building. 3 stories; brick; late 20th-century commercial. Re-fronted ca. 1970. Photograph 8.
- 966-68(C) 1923/1924. Davis and Hawley Building (News Corner). A: E.B. Caldwell, Jr. B: Pardy Construction Co. 2 stories; brick and cut stone; Colonial Revival.

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- 979-89(C) 1923-1924. Watson Building (Dunkin Doughnuts/ Discount Plus). B: W.M. Tomlinson. 2 stories; marble; Classical Revival. Photograph 14.
- 984-86(C) 1929. Guarantee Bank and Trust Company (Tifon Jewelers). 2 stories; marble; Colonial Revival. Photograph 14.
- 990(C) 1912/1913. Atlantic Pharmacy (Jimmy's Army-Navy). 2 stories; brick and marble; Art Deco. Re-fronted ca. 1930.
- 991(C) Ca. 1879. Sterling Block and Bishop Arcade Annex (Davis Eyeglasses). 1 story; brick; late 20th-century commercial front.
- 993-1019(C)* 1841, ca. 1850, 1889. Sterling Block and Bishop Arcade (Bishop Block and Post Office Arcade). 4 stories; brick and cut stone; Greek Revival/Victorian Gothic.
- 996-98(NC) 1899/1900. Davis and Hawley Building (American Discount Stores). 2 stories; brick and Carrara glass; Art Deco. Re-fronted ca. 1945.
- 1021-29(NC) 1923/1924. Citizen's Building (Shoes by Lara/McDonalds). 3 stories; brick; post World Warr II commercial. Re-fronted ca. 1960.

STATE STREET

- 98-118(C) 1896, ca. 1912. Bridgeport City Market. 3 stories: brick, cut stone and concrete; Colonial Revival.
- 149-65(C) 1917. Bridgeport Savings Bank (Peoples Savings Bank). A: Cass Gilbert. B: E. Brooks and Co. 3 stories; marble; Neoclassical. Photograph 11.
- 167-69(C) 1915. Bridgeport Trust Company (Peoples Savings Bank). A: George A. Freeman. B: Thomas J. Steen Company. 3 stories; marble; Neoclassical. Photograph 11.
- 171-81(C) 1892. Barnum-Thompson Building. 5 stories; brick, cut stone, and terra cotta: Queen Anne. Photograph 12.

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- 189(C) 1892. Staples Building. 5 stories; brick and cut stone; Queen Anne with Islamic Revival influence. Photograph 12.
- 202(C)* 1854. Fairfield County Courthouse/Bridgeport City Hall (McLevy Hall). A: A.J. Davis. 3 1/2 stories; brownstone; Greek Revival. Neoclassical modifications dating from 1905 remodelling according to design by Joseph Northop.
- 207-15(C) 1895/1896. Court Exchange Building. A: attributed to Cass Gilbert. 4 stories; brick and cut stone; Beaux Arts. Photograph 13.

WALL STREET

- 111(C) 1845. Porter and Booth Store Buildings (Leon's Hair
& Stylists). B: probably John S. Benham. 4 stories; brick and
115-17(C) cut stone; Greek Revival/Italianate. Photograph 15.
- 119-21(C) 1841. Smith and Stratton Store Building. 3 1/2 stories; brick
and cut stone; Greek Revival. Photograph 15.

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Bridgeport Downtown South Historic District

Significance

(Criterion C)

The district is significant because it encompasses one of two large groupings of relatively well-preserved structures which effectively illustrate the development of Bridgeport's central business district as the commercial, financial, cultural, and social heart of one of Connecticut's early 20th-century urban-industrial and regional-government centers. For example, downtown Bridgeport's antebellum emergence as the core of an important center of commerce and government continues to be well reflected by structures such as the Porter and Booth (1845) and Smith and Stratton (1841) store buildings at 111-15, 117, and 119-21 Wall Street (photograph 15), as well as the Sterling Block (1841/1850) at 993-1019 Main Street and the monumental Fairfield County Courthouse (1854) at 202 State Street. The downtown's heyday (1890-1930), is particularly well marked by numerous large, high-style commercial or municipal structures in the district which date from this era, such as the Court Exchange Building (ca. 1895) at 207-17 State Street (photograph 13), the D.M. Read Company (1925) at 1050 Broad Street (photograph 5), the Bridgeport Public Library (1925-26) at 925 Broad Street (photograph 6), as well as a host of banks and a number of utility company and office buildings of this same era (photographs 7-12, 14).

The district is also significant because it encompasses a large number of substantially intact buildings which chart the development of a wide variety of popular urban architectural styles between the antebellum era and the early 20th century. While it embraces some relatively modest structures, such as the locally rare Greek Revival-style Smith and Stratton Store Building at 119-21 Wall Street (photograph 15), it is particularly notable for its inclusion of numerous more highly refined examples of modes such as Greek Revival, Romanesque, Queen Anne, Islamic Revival, Beaux Arts, Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, and Art Deco (photographs 3, 8-14). Further, the majority of these more stylistically refined structures stand as important examples of the work of nationally or locally prominent late 19th- and early 20th-century architects, such as Cass Gilbert (149-65 State Street), Warren Briggs (944 Main Street - photograph 8), 30 State Street - photograph 8), Dennison and Hiron (955-67 Main Street - photograph 14),

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Bridgeport Downtown South Historic District

Significance (Cont.)

Monks and Johnson (1050 Broad Street - photograph 5), George Freeman (photograph 11), and Ernest G. Southey (102 and 110 Bank Street; 811-15, 829-35, and 930 Main Street - photographs 10; 7 and 11).

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Bridgeport Downtown South Historic District

Acreage: approximately 27.

Quadrangle Name/Scale: Bridgeport/1:24000

UTM Reference Points:

Point Zone/Easting/Northing

- A. 18/651880/4559940
- B. 18/651860/4559910
- C. 18/651930/4559920
- D. 18/651940/4559820
- E. 18/651990/4559830
- F. 18/651210/4559800
- G. 18/651900/4559750
- H. 18/651940/4559630
- I. 18/651970/4559640
- J. 18/651980/4559610
- K. 18/651900/4559580
- L. 18/651880/4559620
- M. 18/651770/4559580
- N. 18/651720/4559660
- O. 18/651780/4559700
- P. 18/651720/4559820
- Q. 18/651660/4559800
- R. 18/651640/4559850
- S. 18/651660/4559870
- T. 18/651650/4559910
- U. 18/651580/4559860
- V. 18/651540/4559920
- W. 18/651580/4559950
- X. 18/651550/4560000
- Y. 18/651590/4560010
- Z. 18/651600/4559990
- AA. 18/651660/4560000
- BB. 18/651700/4559880

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Bridgeport Downtown South Historic District - Boundary Description

South - From the junction of the western and southern property lines of 925 Broad Street: proceed east along the southern property line of 925 Broad Street, continuing across Broad Street and along the southern line of Gilbert Street to the western property line of 811-15 Main Street; then south along the western property line of 811-15 Main Street to the southern property line of 811-15 Main Street; then east along the southern property line of 811-15 Main Street, continuing across Main Street and along the southern property line of 804-20 Main Street to the eastern property line of 804-20 Main Street.

East - From the junction of the southern and eastern property lines of 804-20 Main Street: proceed north along the eastern property line of 804-20 Main Street, continuing across Gilbert Street to the northern line of Gilbert Street; then west along the northern line of Gilbert Street to the eastern line of Main Street; then north along the eastern line of Main Street to the northern line of State Street; then east along the northern line of State Street to the eastern property line of 98-118 State Street; then north along the eastern property line of 98-118 State Street to the northern line of Bank Street; then west along the northern line of Bank Street to the western property line of 59-63 John Street; then north along the western property line of 59-63 John Street, continuing across John Street to the western line of Middle Street; then north along the western line of Middle Street to the northern line of Wall Street; then west along the northern line of Wall Street to the eastern line of Main Street; then north along the eastern line of Main Street to a point due east of the northern line of Cannon Street.

North - From a point on the eastern line of Main Street due east of the northern line of Cannon Street: proceed west across Main Street and along the northern line of Cannon Street to the eastern line of Broad Street; then north along the eastern line of Broad Street to the southern line of Elm Street; then west along the southern line of Elm Street to a point due south of the eastern property line of 166-70 Elm Street; then north across Elm Street and along the eastern property line of 166-70 Elm Street to the northern property line of 166-70 Elm Street; then west along the northern property lines of 166-70 and 172-76 Elm Street to the western property line of 172-76 Elm Street.

West - From the junction of the northern and western property lines of 172-76 Elm Street: proceed south along the western property line of 172-76 Elm

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Bridgeport Downtown South Historic District - Boundary Description (Cont.)

Street to the northern line of Elm Street; then south/southwest across Elm Street to the norwestern corner of the building located at 288 Fairfield Avenue; then south along the western side of the building located at 288 Fairfield Avenue, continuing southeast across Fairfield Avenue to the western property line of 277-81 Fairfield Avenue; then south along the western property line of 277-81 Fairfield Avenue to the southern property line of 277-81 Fairfield Avenue; then east along the southernmost property lines of 277-81, 269-75, and 245-47 Fairfield Avenue to the westernmost property lines of 1115-25 Broad Street; then south along the westernmost property lines of 1115-25, continuing across Cannon Street and south along the westernmost property lines of 1083-95 and 1057 Broad Street to the southern property line of 1057 Broad Street; then east along the southern property line of 1057 Broad Street to the western line of Broad Street; then south along the western line of Broad Street to the southern line of State Street; then west along the southern line of State Street to the western property line of 925 Broad Street; then south along the western property line of 925 Broad Street to the southern property line of 925 Broad Street.

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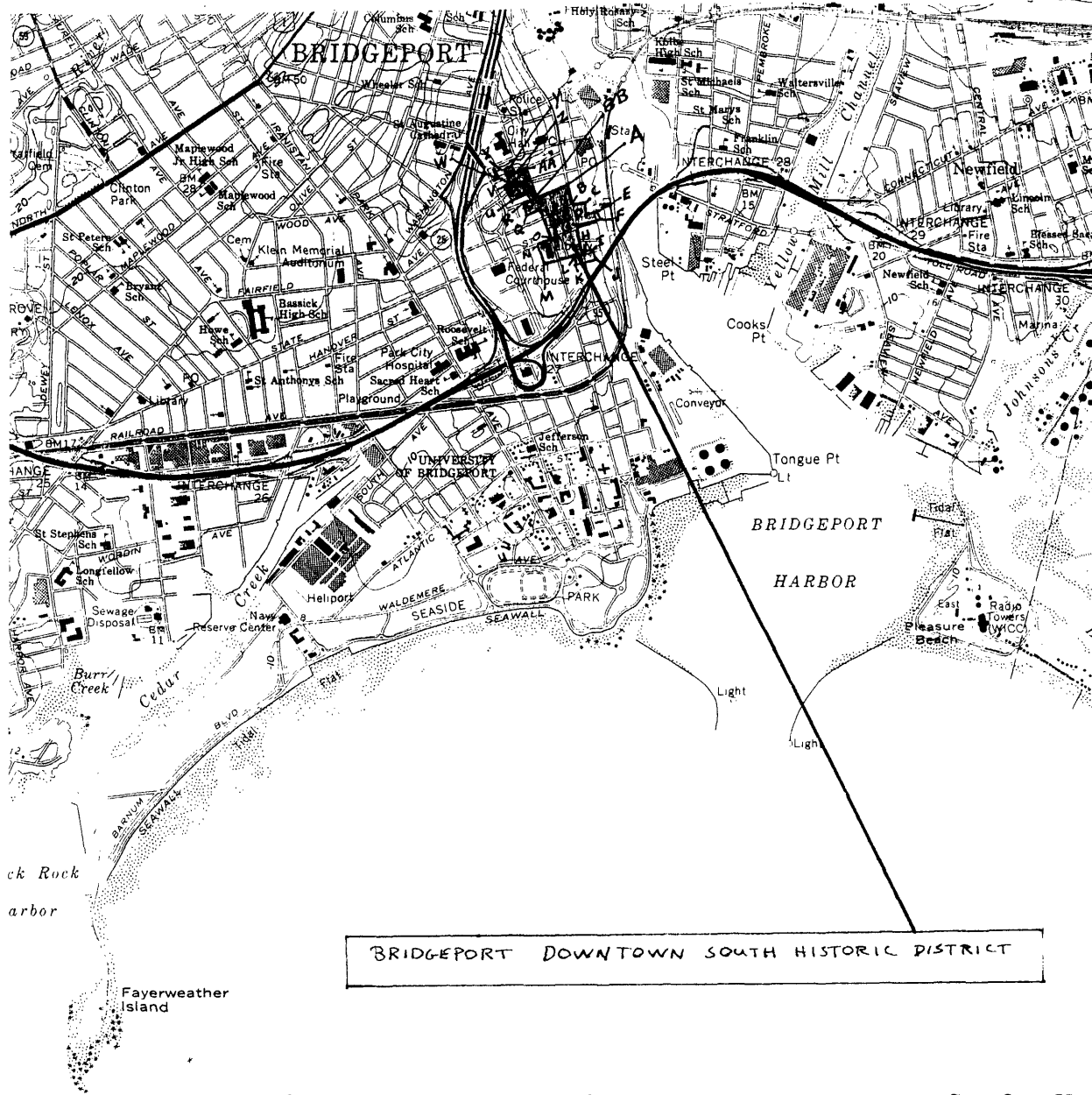
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Bridgeport Downtown South Historic District - Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the Bridgeport Downtown South Historic District were delineated on the basis of the following four general criteria:

- a) The thematic unity of the district as a congregation of substantially intact structures originally designed and built for commercial, municipal, or industrial uses which strongly reflects the historic development of the southern half of Bridgeport's central business district over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries.
- b) Current physical characteristics of the district which visually distinguish the area within Bridgeport's central business district as a whole, including the historic architectural integrity of individual structures and extant sight lines.
- c) The exclusion of properties which do not contribute to the historical or architectural integrity of the district, wherever such exclusions were reasonable and practical.
- d) Conformance with the general National Park Service guideline that structures proposed for listing on the National Register as contributing to the historic or architectural significance of an historic district or site be a minimum of 50 years old.



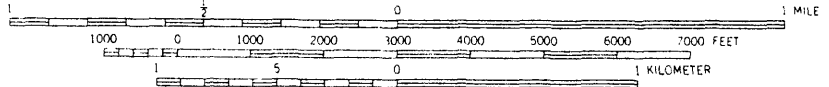
L O N G I S L A N D S O U

170 000 FEET 650 12'30" 651 652 653 10' 654

SCALE 1 24 000

MN
N

13 1/2"
240 MILS
1 1/2"
121 MILS



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
 DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
 (BOUNDARY SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF THE DISTRICT)