

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Downtown Bridgeport

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Golden Hill Historic District

Description

The Golden Hill Historic District is visually defined to the north by a large open parking lot and post-World War II residential and municipal construction; to the south by a major concentration of commercial architecture dating from the early through late 20th century; to the east by open parking lots and early 20th-century hotels, apartment buildings, and commercial structures; and to the west by a post-World War II limited-access highway.

The district encompasses a total of 16 properties, and approximately 10 acres of land located on and around the crest of Golden Hill in the northwestern portion of Bridgeport's central business district. All but two of the district's sixteen major structures contribute to the historical and/or architectural significance of the area as a semi-suburban, residential neighborhood which developed over the course of the latter decades of the 19th and early decades of the 20th centuries. These structures include one garage and 11 modestly sized houses, 10 of which were built between the 1890s and the 1930s (photographs 26, 27, 28). Most of these houses are currently utilized for professional office space. A massive, former high-school building designed by renowned early 20th-century architect James Gambrel Rogers and currently utilized as Bridgeport City Hall dominates the heart of the district (photograph 29), which also embraces a residentially styled, former Y.W.C.A building, a modern office building, and a large church/parish house (photographs 26, 30). One notable park-like space is located at the northwestern corner of Harrison and Golden Hill Street in the western end of the district; one open parking lot is located at 319 Golden Hill Street.

While brick, cut stone, and wood form the predominant building materials found in the district, the area also includes a few buildings incorporating materials such as rusticated concrete block and stucco/half-timbering. Architectural styles represented in the district include Italianate, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Gothic Revival, and Neoclassical modes.

The exteriors of virtually all of the buildings located within the district retain a substantial degree of architectural integrity. While portions of the exterior walls of two houses have been resided with aluminum, significant exterior modifications to buildings' exteriors are, for the most part, limited to the removal and replacement of original window sash and/or entry doors.

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Golden Hill Historic District - Inventory List

CHAPEL STREET

110(C) Ca. 1890. Watson-Lyon Tenant House. 2 1/2 stories; brick;
Queen Anne. Photograph 28.

CONGRESS STREET

267(C) Ca. 1893. Watson-Lyon Tenant House. 2 1/2 stories; brick;
Queen Anne. Photograph 27.

273(C) Ca. 1893. Watson-Lyon Tenant House. 2 1/2 stories; brick;
Queen Anne. Photograph 27.

285(C) Ca. 1893. Watson-Lyon Tenant House. 2 1/2 stories; brick;
Queen Anne. Photograph 27.

293-97(C) Ca. 1893. Watson-Lyon Tenant House. 2 1/2 stories; brick and
frame; Queen Anne. Photograph 27.

GOLDEN HILL STREET

239(C) 1909/1910. John Angevin House. 2 1/2 stories; concrete-block;
Colonial Revival.

263(NC) 1941. Y.W.C.A. (Dwight D. Eisenhower Center). A: C.W. Walker.
B: E & F Construction Co. 2 1/2 stories; brick; Colonial
Revival. 1959 brick rear additions. Photograph 26.

279-97(NC) 1959. Caserta Building. A: Victor Cirikin. B: Country
Builders. 3 stories; brick and marble; Post World War II
commercial.

307(C) Ca. 1850. Peter M. Thorp House. 2 1/2 stories; frame;
Italianate. Ca. 1960 brick rear addition. Photograph 30.

319 (NC) Parking lot.

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333-47(C) 1928/1929. First Methodist Church and Parish House (Golden Hill Methodist Church). A: Southey, Allen, and Collens. B: W.R. Muirhead and Sons. Multi-story limestone Gothic Revival church with attached multi-story brick Tudor Revival parish house. Photograph 30.

LYON TERRACE

- 44(C) 1910. James G. Ludlum House. 2 1/2 stories; stucco; Colonial Revival.
- 45(C) 1914-1916. Bridgeport High School (Bridgeport City Hall). A: James Gamble Rogers. B: Eastern Engineering and Construction Co. 3 stories; brick and cut-stone; Neoclassical. Photograph 29.
- 56(C) 1916. Ray Blumberg House. 2 1/2 stories; brick; Colonial Revival. Garage(C) on rear of property. Photograph 26.
- 64(C) 1924. Alexander DeLaney House. 2 1/2 stories; brick; Tudor Revival. Photograph 26.
- 74(C) 1911. Fannie Hurley House. 2 1/2 stories; brick; Colonial Revival. Photograph 26.

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Golden Hill Historic District

Significance

(Criterion C)

The Golden Hill Historic District is significant as an area which developed over the course of the latter decades of the 19th century and early decades of the 20th century as a semi-suburban, predominantly residential adjunct of Bridgeport's core late 19th- and early 20th-century downtown commercial area. The historic district's principal era of development and significance continues to be effectively illustrated by its remaining historic buildings. These buildings include a massive Neoclassical-style former high school building dominating the western side of Lyon Terrace, and flanked to the south and east by a prominent late Gothic Revival/Tudor Revival-style church and parish house dating from 1928/29, as well as 11 modestly scaled houses built in the Italianate, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, or Tudor Revival modes between the mid 1850s and the late 1920s.

The district is also notable for its association with two members of Bridgeport's prominent late 19th- and early 20th-century Lyon family. It was Frank Lyon and his sister, Alice Lyon Watson, who subdivided their father Hanford's extensive homelot on Golden Hill and fostered much of the development which occurred in the district between the late 1880s and the early 1900s. These two individuals were also responsible for the laying out of Lyon Terrace, one of the district's principal streets, in the early 1900s.

From an architectural standpoint, the district is particularly significant for two reasons. First, most of its 11 extant houses remain good and/or locally unusual or renditions of period residential architectural styles. For example, the Watson-Lyon Tenant Houses at 110 Chapel Street and 293-97 Congress Street, with their steeply pitched multiple gables, asymmetrical massing, decorative exterior brickwork, and (in the case of 293-97 Congress Street) terra-cotta detailing stand as important local examples of the late 19th-century vernacular Queen Anne mode (photographs 28, 27). Of even greater interest are the three well-preserved, highly similar brick and cut-stone cottages located at 267, 273, and 285 Congress Street. Featuring gambrel roofs and projecting stairwell turrets, these cottages stand as relatively unusual variants of local late 19th-century Queen Anne-style speculative construction (photograph 27). The John Angevin House at 239

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Significance (Cont.)

Golden Hill Street, a good modest example of the early 20th-century residential Colonial Revival style, is the only structure within the district or its immediate environs to feature exterior walls of load-bearing, rusticated concrete block. Despite unsympathetic non-historic alterations to its exterior fabric (many of which appear to be reversible), the Peter M. Thorp House at 307 Golden Hill Street remains significant as the only example of the mid 19th-century low-hip roof form of Italianate-style residential frame architecture still standing within the confines of Bridgeport's downtown area.

Finally, the Golden Hill Historic District is significant for its inclusion of two non-residential structures sometimes found in neighborhoods of this type and period. One of these structures is the First Methodist Church and Parish House at 333-47 Golden Hill Street. Built as single structure over the course of 1928 and 1929 in the late Gothic Revival (church wing) and Tudor Revival (parish house wing) styles according to a design provided by the architectural consortium of Southey, Allen, and Collens, this structure is the only example of its type, style, and period still standing downtown Bridgeport (photograph 30). The other non-residential structure in the district is one of Bridgeport's most prominent edifices. Constructed at 45 Lyon Terrace during the years 1914-1916, the massively scaled Neoclassical-style Bridgeport High School (now Bridgeport City Hall) stands today as the downtown's only known example of the work of noted early 20th-century architect James Gamble Rogers (photograph 29).

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Golden Hill Historic District

Acreage: approximately 10

Quadrangle Name/Scale: Bridgeport/1:24000

UTM Reference Points:

Point Zone/Easting/Northing

- A. 18/651600/4560260
- B. 18/651620/4560220
- C. 18/651590/4560200
- D. 18/651630/4560100
- E. 18/651660/4560080
- F. 18/651610/4560060
- G. 18/651630/4560020
- H. 18/651600/4560000
- I. 18/651580/4560030
- J. 18/651540/4560000
- K. 18/651540/4559990
- L. 18/651500/4559950
- M. 18/651420/4560080
- N. 18/651530/4560680

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Golden Hill Historic District - Boundary Description

North - From the junction of the eastern property line of 267 Congress Street and the southern line of Chapel Street: proceed west along the southern line of Chapel Street to the westernmost end of Congress Street; then south/southwest to the southeastern line of the right-of-way of Connecticut Highway Routes 8/25.

West - From a point on the eastern line of the right-of-way of Connecticut Highway Routes 8/25 due southwest of the western end of the southern line of Congress Street; proceed southwest along the southeastern line of the right of way of Connecticut Highway Routes 8/25 to the easternmost line of Harrison Avenue; then southeast and south along the easternmost line of Harrison Avenue to the northern line of Elm Street.

South - From the junction of the easternmost line of Harrison Avenue and the northern line of Elm Street: proceed east along the northern line of Elm Street to the eastern property line of 333-47 Golden Hill Street; then north along the eastern property line of 333-47 Golden Hill Street to the southern property line of 319 Golden Hill Street; then east along the southern property lines of the lots fronting the southern side of Golden Hill Street to the western property line of 263 Golden Hill Street; then south along the western property line of 263 Golden Hill Street to the northern line of Elm Street; then east along the northern line of Elm Street to the eastern property line of 263 Golden Hill Street; then north along the eastern property line of 263 Golden Hill Street to a point directly opposite the junction of the western and southern property lines of 239 Golden Hill Street; then east across the pedestrian extension of Broad Street and continuing along the southern property line of 239 Golden Hill Street to the eastern property line of 239 Golden Hill Street.

East - From the junction of the southern and eastern property lines of 239 Golden Hill Street; proceed north along the eastern property line of 239 Golden Hill Street to the southern line of Golden Hill Street; then west along the southern line of Golden Hill Street to a point due south of the eastern line of Lyon Terrace; then north across Golden Hill Street and along the eastern line of Lyon Terrace to the southern property line of 44 Lyon Terrace; then east along the southern property line of 44 Lyon Terrace to the eastern property line of 44 Lyon Terrace; then north along the eastern property lines of 44, 56, and 64 Lyon Terrace to the southern

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Golden Hill Historic District - Boundary Description (Cont.)

property line of 110 Chapel Street; the east along the southern line of 110 Chapel Street to the westernmost lines of Chapel Street; then north along the westernmost line of Chapel Street to the northern property line of 267 Congress Street.

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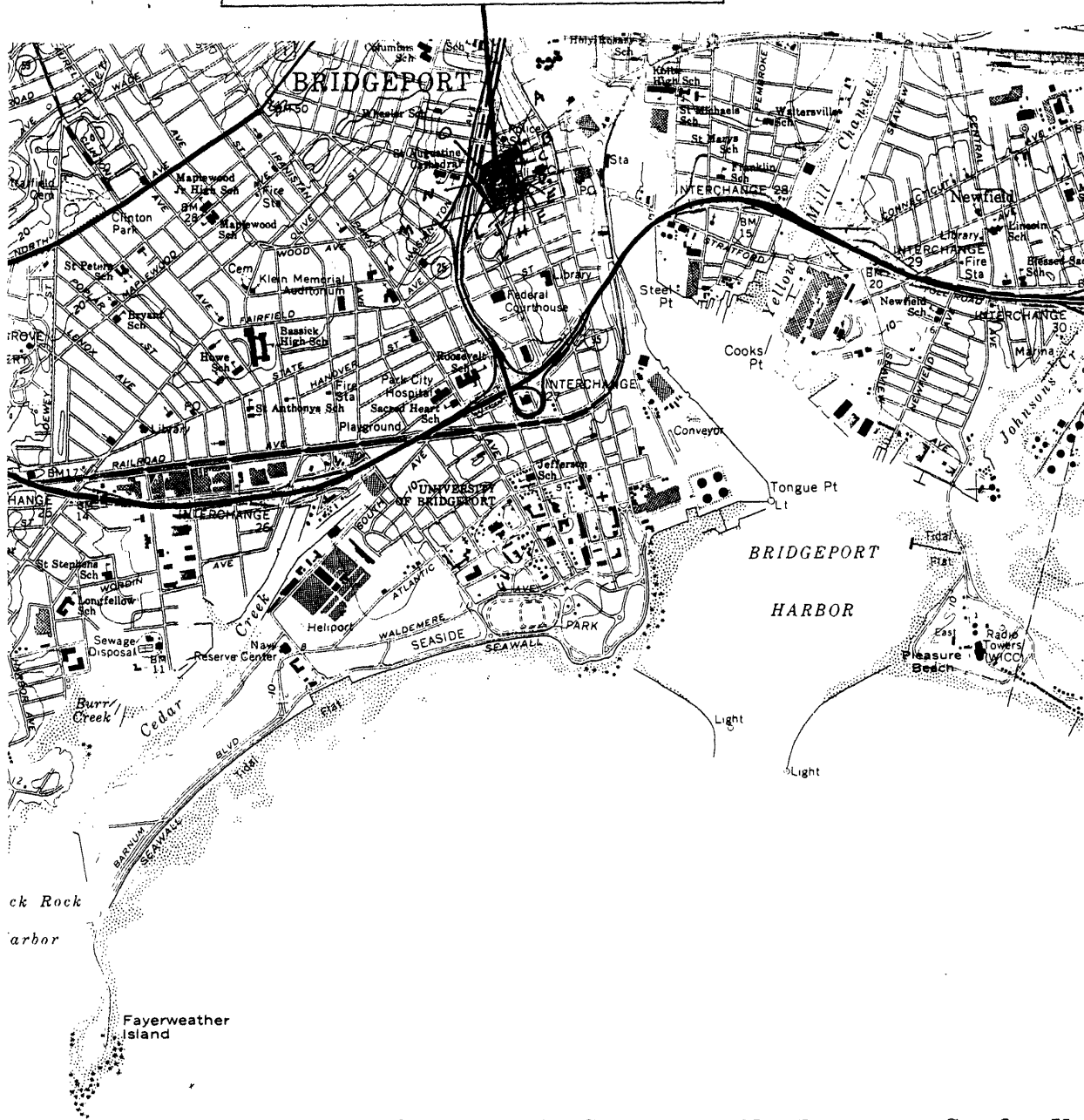
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Golden Hill Historic District - Boundary Justification

The Golden Hill Historic District's boundaries were delineated on the basis of the following four general criteria:

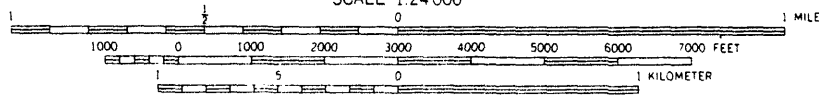
- a) The thematic unity of the district as an area which developed as a semi-suburban, hilltop residential enclave primarily during the latter decades of the 19th and early decades of the 20th centuries.
- b) Current physical characteristics which visually distinguish the district from the surrounding portions of the central business district, including the historic usage and architectural integrity of individual structures, and sight lines.
- c) Exclusion of properties which do not contribute to the historical or architectural significance 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.p

GOLDEN HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT



12000 FEET 650 12'30" 651 652 653 10' 654

SCALE 1:24 000



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
 CURVES SHOWN REPRESENT THE APPROXIMATE