

United Illuminating Company Old Town Substation Cultural Resources Report

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Cultural Resources Report and Determination of Effects for the Old Town Substation Rebuild Project; a United Illuminating Company Electrical Substation Located at 280, 312, and 330 Kaechele Place, Bridgeport, Fairfield County, Connecticut:

Introduction

In August 2019, Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc. (FHI) was tasked with completing a Cultural Resources Report for the proposed rebuild and expansion of the Old Town Substation, an electrical substation maintained by the United Illuminating Company (UI) and located at 280 Kaechele Place in Bridgeport, Connecticut. The project will include the addition of the properties at 312 and 330 Kaechele Place, as well as a portion of the adjacent Eversource Right-of-Way (ROW) (described on the top of page 2, Figures 1 & 2).

The purpose of this study was threefold:

- first, to compile information regarding previously identified cultural resources located in the vicinity of the proposed Project Area;
- second, to determine and investigate the Areas of Potential Effects (APE) for Direct and Visual Effects in order to identify any impacts or adverse effects that might result from the proposed project;
- third, to identify the potential need for more extensive cultural resources investigations due to the presence of previously unidentified cultural resources within the APEs.

In order to complete these tasks a review of cultural resources records maintained by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (CTSHPO) was conducted to identify resources previously listed or determined eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places and/or the State of Connecticut Register of Historic Places, and additional sources, such as historical mapping, historic aerial photography, and GIS data, were consulted so as to identify previously undocumented above-ground cultural resources. A site visit and evaluation of the surrounding area was also completed by FHI staff on August 8, 2019 and it was ultimately determined that there were no historic properties located within the APEs and, as such, there is no need for further investigation of potential impacts to cultural

resources resultant of the proposed project. A full explanation of this determination can be found in the **Findings and Conclusion** section of this report. A study of below-ground cultural resources was not conducted by FHI staff as a separate review of the Project Area was prepared by Heritage Consultants, LLC, on May 11, 2018. This was deemed adequate in terms of its evaluation of potential archaeological resources; however, a more thorough study of above-ground conditions was determined to be necessary.

Description of the Undertaking and Project Area

The United Illuminating Company (UI) is proposing to expand and rebuild the electrical substation presently located on the parcel identified as 280 Kaechele Place (0.7 acres, MBLU #89/2600/7) in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and expand it onto the two abutting undeveloped parcels identified as 312 Kaechele Place (0.28 acres, MBLU #89/2600/6/A) and 330 Kaechele Place (2.77 acres, MBLU #89/2600/6) (Figures 1 & 2). This combined Project Area is located on the east side Kaechele Place approximately 180' northwest of Kaechele Place's intersection with Hillview Street and 300' southeast of Kaechele Place's intersection with Main Street. The existing substation consists of an approximately 21,500 square-foot chain-link fence enclosed equipment area abutted to the southwest by a one-story, 75' x 20' red brick control enclosure with a flat roof. The interior of the equipment area has a gravel base with the various transformers and other distribution equipment set on poured concrete pads. One lattice-style powerline transmission tower is located within the substation near its northwest corner, while a second stands approximately 50' east of the substation. The Eversource right-of-way and transmission lines cross the substation on an east-west course. Access to the substation is located on Kaechele Place.

The proposed undertaking will require expanding the electrical substation footprint to the north and east onto the adjoining parcels. Within the project development area, the existing trees will be removed. Retaining walls will be built along the northern and eastern boundaries and connect to an existing retaining wall on the southern boundary. A new chain-link fence will be erected around the entire Project Area. The existing equipment and transmission tower will remain intact, while a new control house and various equipment will be built and installed to the northeast and north, respectively. The existing control room will remain in place temporarily. The control building is planned to be removed by the end of 2021. The existing 115-kV transmission and distribution line connections, consisting of lattice structure poles, which are located on the adjacent Eversource ROW, will be taken down and replaced by monopoles at the same height as the exiting lattice structure. The portions of the subject property located outside of the fenced-in Project Area will remain undeveloped.

Surrounding Environment, and Area of Potential Effects (APE)

The existing substation is flanked to the east and southeast by thick woods and wetlands, while well-developed residential areas are located to the north, west, and south. Mixed commercial, office, and residential development flanks Main Street, which runs on a generally south-north course between downtown Bridgeport approximately 2.8 miles to the south and the Bridgeport-Trumbull town line approximately 0.25-mile to the north. Lake Forest, a man-made reservoir, and the Merritt Parkway (CT Rt. 15) are located approximately 0.5-mile southeast and 0.5-mile north of the Project Area, respectively.

Due to the nature of the work associated with the project and the character of the surrounding environment, the proposed APEs for Direct and Visual Effects consist of the area of potential ground disturbance and any property, or any portion thereof, that will be physically altered or destroyed by the construction of the proposed electrical substation (APE for Direct Effects), and the geographic area in which the project has the potential to introduce visual elements that alter the setting, including the landscape, where the setting is a character-defining feature of a cultural resource that makes it eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or Connecticut State Register of Historic Places (APE for Visual Effects). As such the APE for Direct Effects is limited to the area where construction and construction-related activities will take place (the Project Area), and the APE for Visual Effects is restricted to select locations along Kaechele Place, Hillview Street, and Main Street due to the presence of mature trees and vegetation and extensive building stock in the surrounding area (see Photographs 1-36, Figure 15).

This being said, while the identified APEs are limited, FHI staff used a 0.25-mile buffer area in an effort to identify above-ground cultural resources potentially eligible for the National and State Registers of Historic Places in the vicinity of the Project Area. As noted, an evaluation of potential archaeological resources was not completed by FHI staff, yet can be found in a separate report prepared by Heritage Consultants, LLC on May 11, 2018 (see Attachments).

Historical Context and Existing Conditions

An evaluation of a historic map of Bridgeport, Connecticut from 1856 indicates that the Project Area consisted of undeveloped land likely either used for agricultural purposes or as a wood lot. Kaechele Place had yet to be laid out and development along Main Street consisted of a mix of dispersed residences to the north and south, and a cluster of industrial sites, including a brickyard, bone works, and tannery, located approximately 0.35-mile to the south in the vicinity of the present intersection of Main and Anton Streets (Figure 3). A map of the area from 1888 shows that no new buildings had been erected in the vicinity by that time and the aforementioned mills were no longer identified (Figure 4). Kaechele Place had, however, been laid out as an unnamed road roughly following its present course and three new reservoirs, the Ox Stream Reservoir, Horse Tavern Reservoir, and Island Brook Reservoir (presently Lake Forest), had been established approximately 0.1-mile to the east, 0.25-mile to the west, and 0.5-mile to the southeast, respectively. Twenty-two years later several buildings had been erected along Main Street to the north and south, among these being the residence of George Kaechele, a farmer, which was located at the northeast corner of the southern intersection of Main Street and Kaechele Place (Figure 5). The Project Area remained undeveloped land owned by Carl Ochsner, a farmer, whose primary property and residence was located on Main Street just south of the Bridgeport-Trumbull town line.

The Project Area remained vacant in 1917, however, notable changes had taken place in the vicinity as the original portion of the building currently located at the northeast corner of Main and Hillview Streets had been erected and most of the southern half of the property bounded to the west by Main Street and to the north, east, and south by Kaechele Place had been subdivided for future residential development (Figure 6). The latter also resulted in the laying out of White Oak and Oliver Streets, however, no houses had been built in the subdivision, which was known as the "Oak Hill Plat". Inflated prices for building materials depressed new house construction during the First World War and this appears to have remained the case in the vicinity of the Project Area through the Great Depression as a

1934 aerial photograph indicates that only ten new residences had been built in the Oak Hill Plat, nearby along Main Street, or along Hillview Street, which had been laid out by that time (Figure 7). The Project Area remained vacant and the neighboring Ox Stream Reservoir had been abandoned and returned to woods and wetland. The Eversource transmission right-of-way is over 90 years old and is visible on the 1934 aerial map, with the present corridor following the same historic route from the subject property eastwards.

The first development of the Project Area took place in 1948 when a four-room house was built on the east side of Kaechele Place just north of the site of the existing electrical substation, this followed by the construction of a garage located immediately south of the house in 1950 (Figure 8). The original portion of the substation, which consisted of a one-story, 60' x 20' red brick control house with a flat roof, several transformers, and two transmission towers located within a chain-link fence enclosed compound, was first erected in 1961, and then was expanded through the construction of a 15' x 20' addition to the control house and installation of several supplementary transformers ca. 1970 (Figures 9 and 10). Significant commercial and office development in the vicinity first occurred during the 1960s when several large complexes were built on the west side of Main Street between its north and south intersections with Kaechele Place (Figure 11). Office, commercial, and residential development continued throughout the nearby area into the early 2000s, with notable residential construction taking place along Kaechele Place, White Oak Street, and Oliver Street during the late 1990s, and along Hillview Street in 2001 (Figures 12 and 13).

The parcel on which the house and garage formerly stood (312 Kaechele Place, MBLU #89/2600/6/A) was purchased by the United Illuminating Company in 2009 and the buildings were demolished in 2011. The abutting parcel to the east (330 Kaechele Place, MBLU #89/2600/6) was also purchased by the United Illuminating at this time, thus giving the company ownership of the three parcels on which the Project Area will be located. The parcel at 330 Kaechele Place was entirely wooded at the time of the transaction, while 312 Kaechele Place has become largely overgrown since the house and garage were razed.

Findings and Conclusion

A review of cultural resources records maintained by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (CTSHPO) failed to identify any above-ground cultural resources previously listed or deemed eligible for the National or State Registers within the aforementioned 0.25-mile buffer area (Figures 1 & 2). In addition, consultation of historical mapping, historic aerial photography, and GIS data, in combination with the site visit and evaluation of the surrounding area completed by FHI staff on August 8, 2019, did not uncover any previously undocumented resources within the APEs for Direct or Visual Effects that were determined potentially eligible for listing on the National or State Registers either individually or as contributing properties within a historic district. Several buildings 50 years or older (the standard evaluation threshold for the National Register of Historic Places) were identified within the APEs for Direct and Visual Effects, however, these were of limited individual historical significance, were heavily altered, and/or were interspersed with numerous non-historic infill construction. These conditions extend well beyond the APEs for Direct and Visual Effects resulting in the determination that no further cultural or architectural evaluation of the area is recommended.

Photographs



Photograph 1: View looking northeast at the Project Area (280, 312, and 330 Kaechele Place, Bridgeport, Connecticut) from Kaechele Place. 8/8/2019.



**Photograph 2: View looking southeast away from the Project Area along Kaechele Place.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 3: View looking southwest away from the Project Area from Kaechele Place.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 4: View looking southwest away from the Project Area from Kaechele Place.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 5: View looking northwest away from the Project Area from Kaechele Place.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 6: View looking southeast at the Project Area from Kaechele Place.
8/8/2019.**



Photograph 7: View looking northeast at the Project Area from Kaechele Place. 8/8/2019.



**Photograph 8: View looking northwest away from the Project Area from Kaechele Place.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 9: View looking southeast at the Project Area from Kaechele Place.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 10: View looking east at the Project Area from Kaechele Place.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 11: View looking southwest away from the Project Area from Kaechele Place.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 12: View looking northwest away from the Project Area from Kaechele Place.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 13: View looking northwest at the Project Area from Kaechele Place.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 14: View looking southwest along Hillview Street from the intersection of Kaechele Place and Hillview Street.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 15: View looking northwest towards the Project Area from Kaechele Place.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 16: View looking northeast at the Project Area from Hillview Street.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 17: View looking northeast at the Project Area from Hillview Street.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 18: View looking northeast towards the Project Area from Hillview Street.
8/8/2019.**



Photograph 19: View looking southwest away from the Project Area from Hillview Street. 8/8/2019.



**Photograph 20: View looking wests away from the Project Area along Hillview Street.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 21: View looking northeast at the Project Area from Hillview Street.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 22: View looking southwest away from the Project Area from Hillview Street.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 23: View looking northeast towards the Project Area from the intersection of Hillview and Main Streets.
8/8/2019.**



Photograph 24: View looking south away from the Project Area along Main Street. 8/8/2019.



Photograph 25: View looking northeast towards the Project Area from Main Street. 8/8/2019.



**Photograph 26: View looking northeast at the Project Area from Main Street.
8/8/2019.**



Photograph 27: View looking southwest away from the Project Area from Main Street. 8/8/2019.



**Photograph 28: View looking west away from the Project Area from Main Street.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 29: View looking northwest away from the Project Area from Main Street.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 30: View looking east at the Project Area from Main Street.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 31: View looking northeast away from the Project Area from Main Street.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 32: View looking southeast at the Project Area from Main Street.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 33: View looking southeast towards the Project Area from the intersection of Main Street and Minturn Road.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 34: View looking south at the Project Area from Sequoia Road.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 35: View looking east away from the Project Area along Sequoia Road.
8/8/2019.**



**Photograph 36: View looking southwest towards the Project Area from Sequoia Road.
8/8/2019.**

Figures



Figure 1: City of Bridgeport parcel map showing the location of the Project Area in Bridgeport, Connecticut, with 1/4-mile buffer.



Figure 2: Aerial imagery map showing the location of the Project Area in Bridgeport, Connecticut, with ¼-mile buffer and City of Bridgeport parcel boundaries.

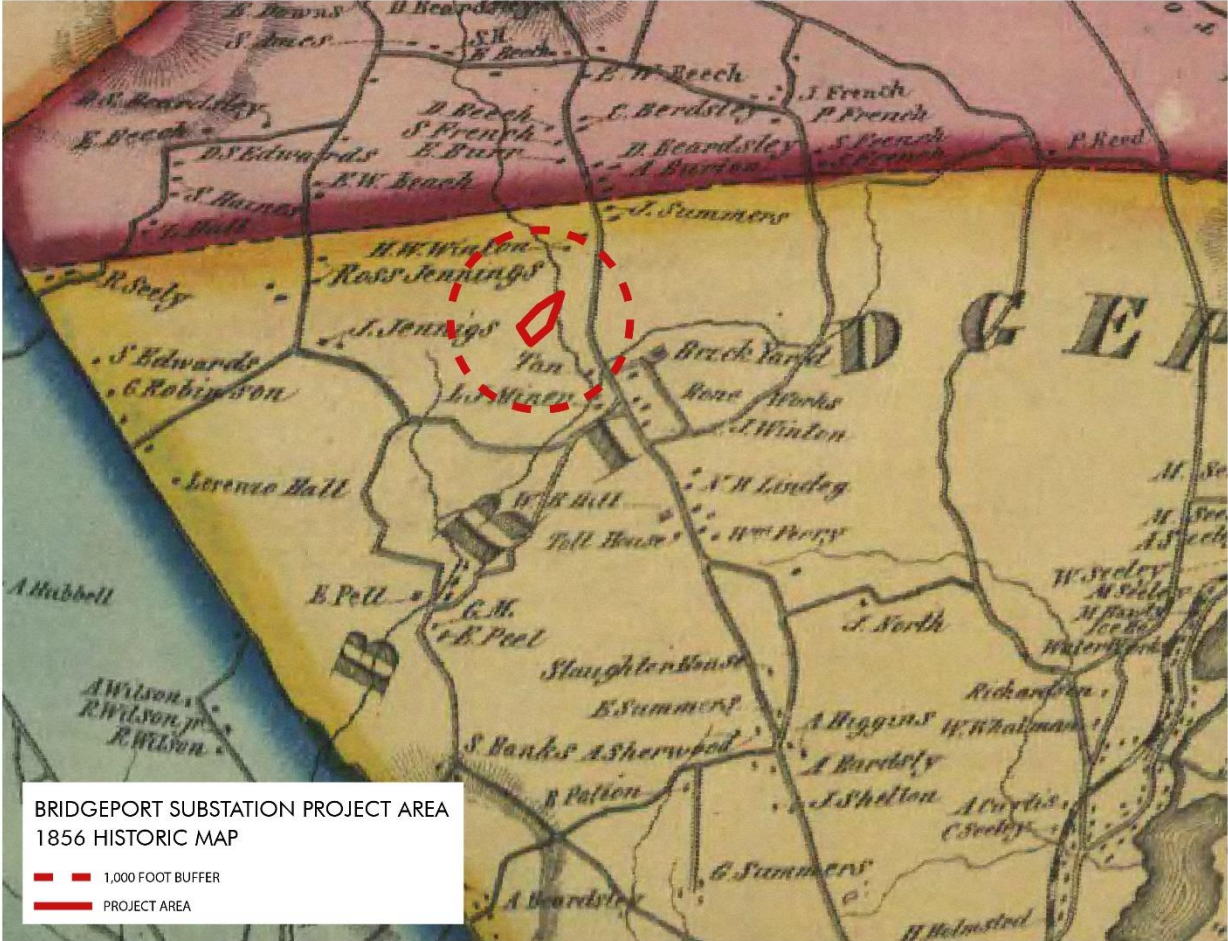


Figure 3: Detail of an 1856 “Atlas of Fairfield County” showing the location of the Project Area in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

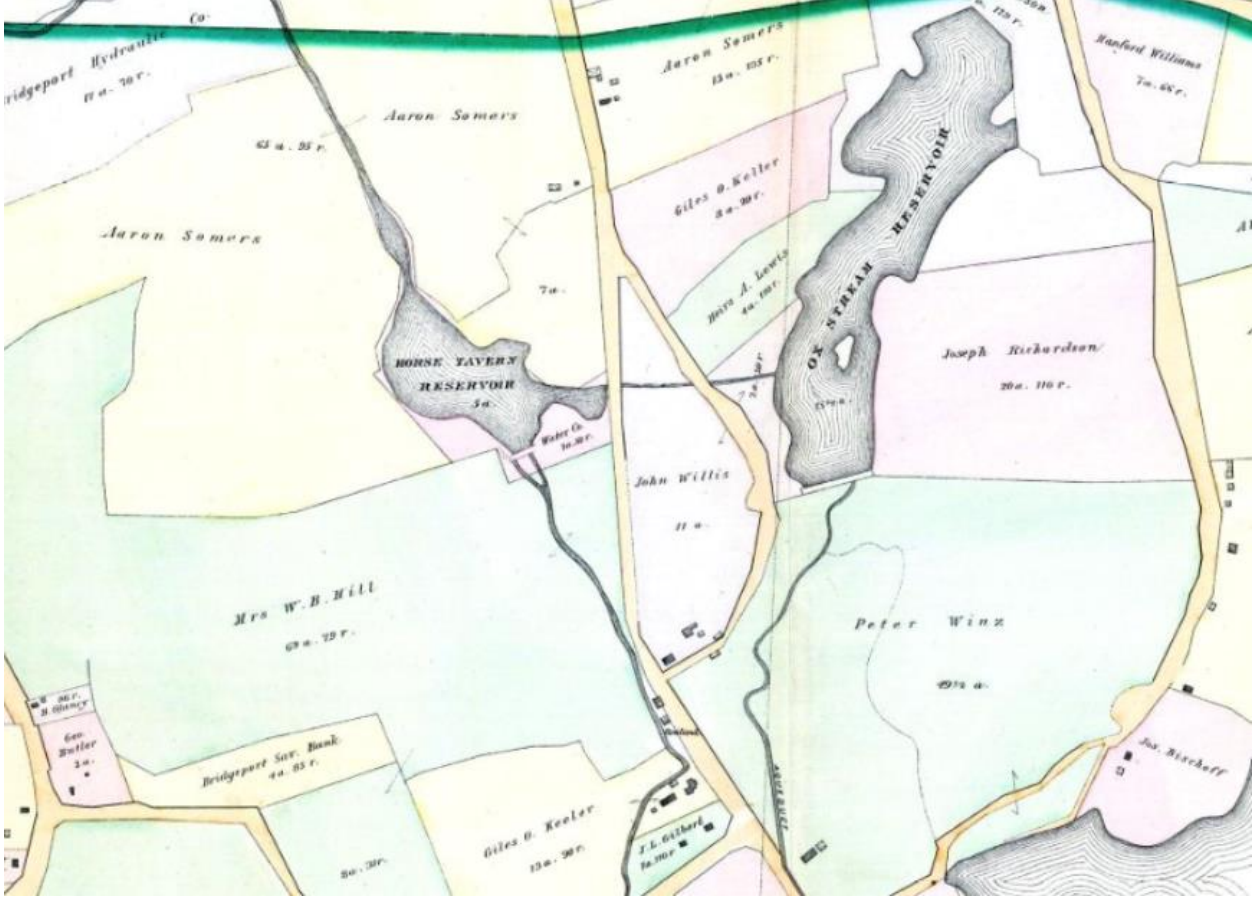


Figure 4: Detail of an 1888 “Atlas of the City and Town of Bridgeport” showing the location of the Project Area in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

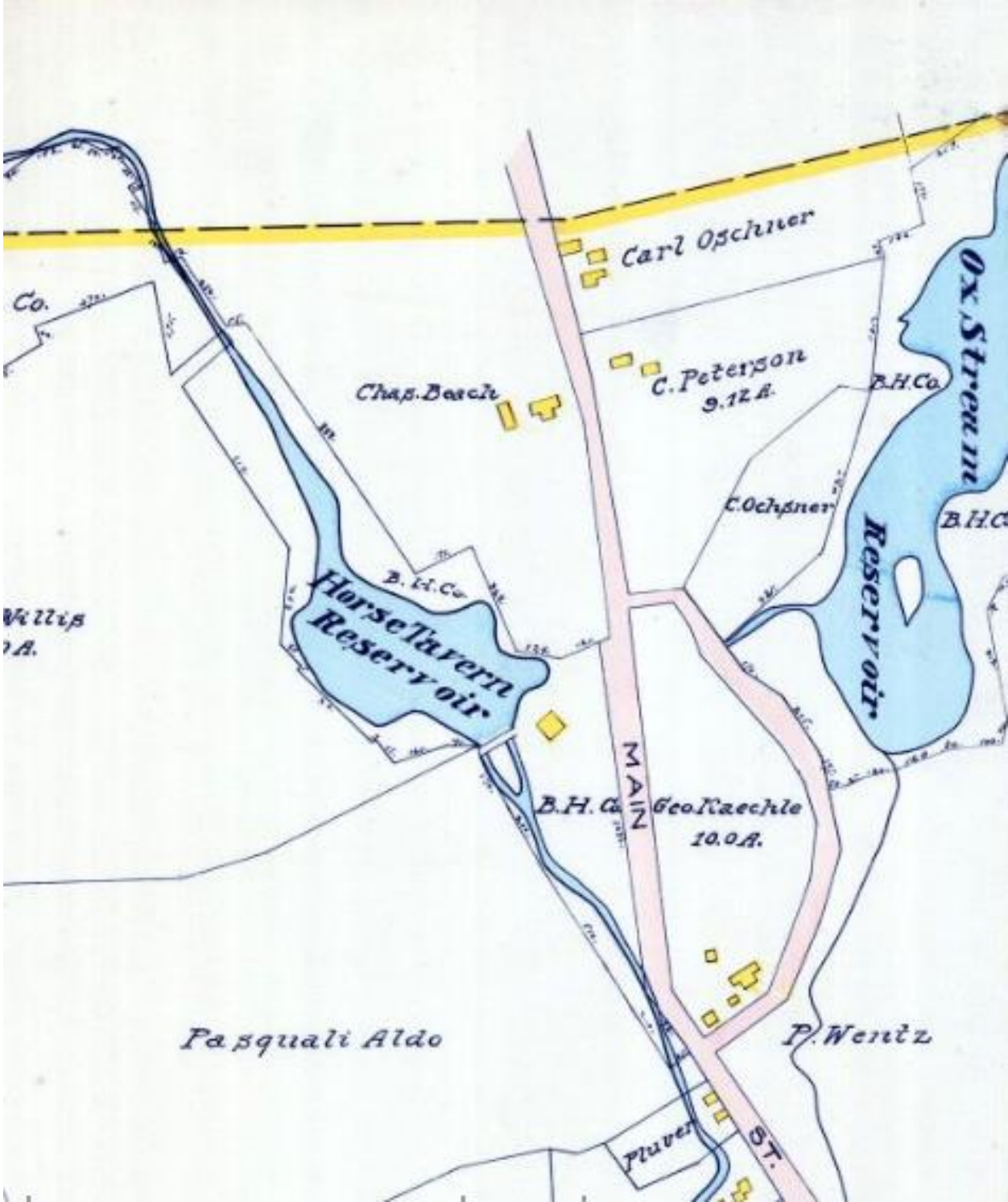


Figure 5: Detail of a 1910 “Atlas of Bridgeport” showing the location of the Project Area in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

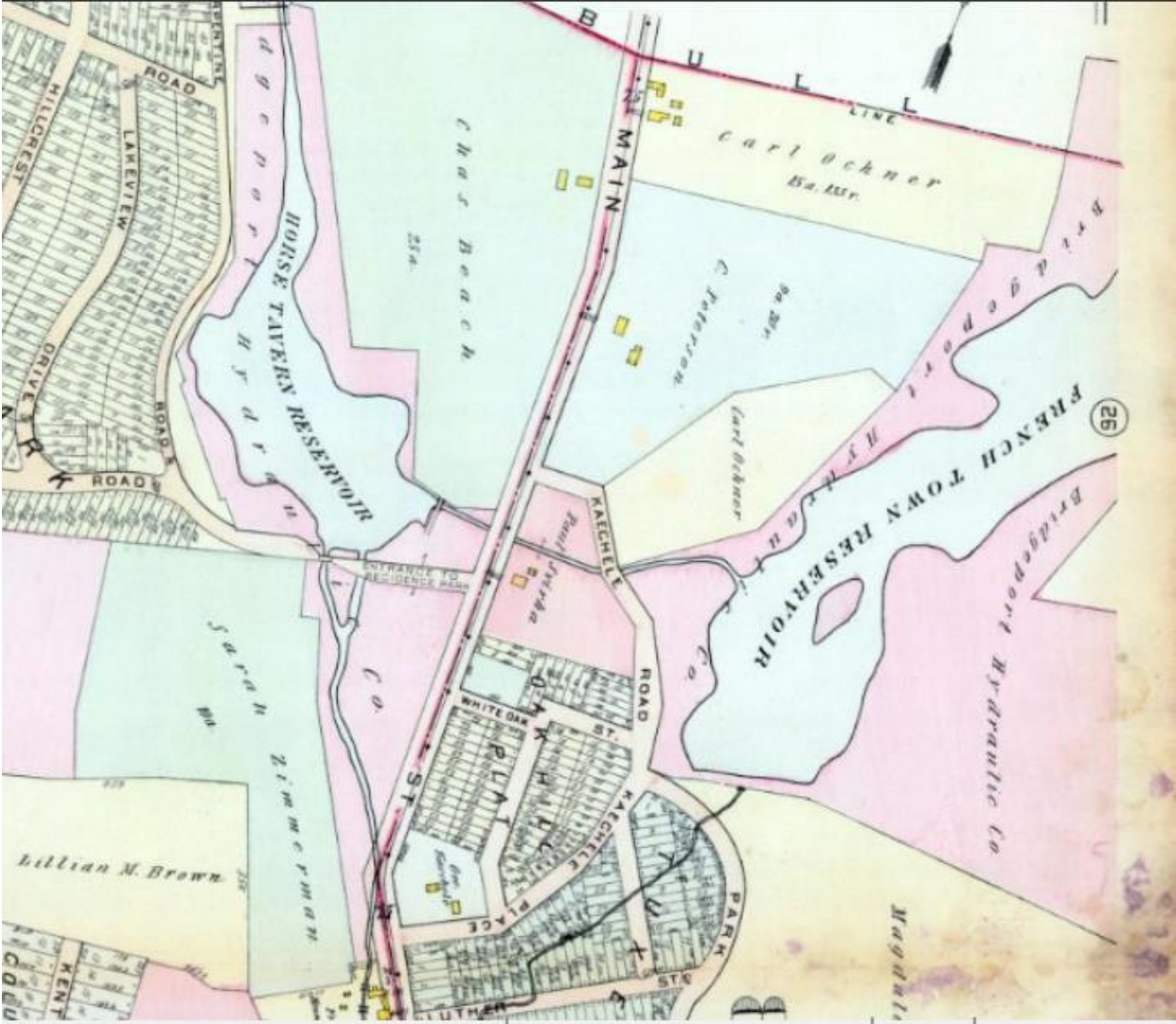


Figure 6: Detail of a 1917 “Plat Book of the City of Bridgeport” showing the location of the Project Area in Bridgeport, Connecticut.



Figure 7: Detail of a 1934 “Aerial Survey of Connecticut” showing the location of the Project Area in Bridgeport, Connecticut.



Figure 8: Detail of a 1951 “Aerial Survey of Connecticut” showing the location of the Project Area in Bridgeport, Connecticut.



Figure 9: Detail of a 1965 “Aerial Survey of Connecticut” showing the location of the Project Area in Bridgeport, Connecticut.



Figure 10: Detail of a 1970 “Aerial Survey of Connecticut” showing the location of the Project Area in Bridgeport, Connecticut.



Figure 11: Detail of a 1965 “Aerial Survey of Connecticut” showing the location of the Project Area in Bridgeport, Connecticut.



Figure 12: Detail of a 1990 “Aerial Survey of Connecticut” showing the location of the Project Area in Bridgeport, Connecticut.



Figure 13: Detail of a 1995 “Aerial Survey of Connecticut” showing the location of the Project Area in Bridgeport, Connecticut.



Figure 14: 2018 Google Earth image of the Project Area in Bridgeport, Connecticut.



Figure 15: Photograph Directions Map.