

May 27, 2021

From Joe Provey

To Melanie Bachman, Walter Bonola, Dan Donovan, Bruce McDermott, CT Siting Council

Dear All,

Here is our answer to interrogatory number 4, including our specific concerns about Petition 1406A.

4. What are the specific concerns of the SVHA regarding the proposed Project? Were these concerns discussed with the SVHA at the February 27, 2021 information meeting with the Petitioner? Did the Petitioner attempt to resolve these concerns?

Yes, our concerns were expressed at the February 27, 2021 meeting with the Petitioner but were not resolved. Our concerns about the project extend to early February when we first learned of it. While we were aware of the on and off again status of the thermal loop project for several years, we were unaware of the proposed siting for the fuel cell tower until February of this year.

Our specific concerns are detailed here and in the attached file (Interrogatory 4 Reasons we oppose).

Reasons We Oppose Fuel-Cell Tower at 600 Iranistan

Many South End residents in Bridgeport are dismayed by the fuel cell tower proposal by Doosan and Nupower to the CT Siting Council, no. 1406A. I represent, per a vote of its board, Seaside Village, Inc. Seaside Village is a model co-operative housing corporation of more than 500 residents located approximately 220 feet from the proposed power plant. As a former board member of Bridgeport's South End NRZ and community organizer, I also represent a larger constituency ... many of whom have signed our petitions.

We feel that siting a multi-fuel cell tower at 600 Iranistan Avenue would damage our community in five areas: cultural resources, health and safety of residents, the environment, and the local economy.

1. Impact on Cultural Resources

In its petition, Nupower/Doosan claim no impact on cultural resources. This conveniently ignores the facts. The proposed site is at one of two primary gateways to Seaside Park, a 375-acre, 2.5 mile long stretch of beach, recreational areas, ball fields, an amphitheater, fishing pier, boat launch, historic monuments, and picnic areas. Designed by Frederick Law Olmstead in the 1860's, it is on the National Historic Register and remains Bridgeport's primary outdoor recreation area. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seaside_Park_\(Connecticut\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seaside_Park_(Connecticut)). We believe the park will become a less attractive place to visit if hemmed in by another power plant. There has already been serious encroachment with a new gas power plant at its eastern end and a trash-burning power plant, and concrete and asphalt plants at its western end.

The 600 Iranistan site is also one of two primary gateways to Bridgeport University, a financially troubled university that will hopefully be transformed thanks to its recent take-over by Goodwin University. In 2018 UB served over 5000 students. It also has served the community as a venue for concerts, lectures, art exhibitions, and sporting events. To place a power plant on the doorstep of this institution, will further harm its chances for a successful future.

The proposed site is at the gateway to Seaside Village, co-operative housing built in 1918 and on the historic register. Described as an architectural gem and studied by architectural schools, including Yale University, Seaside Village offers a model for what housing developments should look like. It's 257 units house over 500 residents of all income levels, ages and ethnicities. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seaside_Village_Historic_District The attached PDF is a history of the Village written as part of our 100-year anniversary in 2018. (See Seaside Village History.)

Building another power plant, especially of this scale, is not in keeping with small town houses in Seaside Village and the cottages of the South End. Although referred to as a 3.5 story structure, that's misleading. At a height that exceeds 70 feet, it is equivalent to a 6 or 7-story residential building ... of which there are none in our community.

There are several other parks and schools within close proximity of the proposed site, including Wentfield Park at 111 Norman Street (one block away), Roosevelt Elementary at 680 Park Ave. (one block away), and the Bridgeport Military Academy at 160 Iranistan Avenue,

There are numerous possible sites for fuel cells, less prominent to residents and visitors, not near parks or schools that would be suitable for a fuel cell installation. Although we are not advocating for the fuel cell tower to be built anywhere in Bridgeport, the proposed 600 Iranistan site is the worst of all options. Connecticut's Environmental Protection Act states that any development, such as the one proposed by petition 1406A, cannot adversely affect cultural (including historic) resources.

Seaside Village and surrounding communities, believe the installation of a large fuel cell tower will undermine its historic and cultural value, and affect the health and wellbeing of its residents.

2. Health of Nearby Residents

The multi-fuel cell tower would use large quantities of natural gas to produce the requisite hydrogen it needs for operation. Doing so produces greenhouse gas (GCG) emissions like any other fossil-fueled power plant. Doosan says in its petition that "when the hydrogen economy arrives," the Iranistan Ave. installation could switch to hydrogen gas ... which of course would raise new concerns. More benign ways to produce electricity are on the way, including battery storage coupled with truly renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar power.

Doosan/Nupower's original argument was that its plant would be part of a thermal loop. By using its waste heat to heat local buildings, less gas and oil would be burned locally and, theoretically, there would be a net reduction in local greenhouse gas emissions. This is a dubious argument given that the thermal loop is far from breaking ground. In fact, the revised petition 1406A barely mentions the thermal loop. Without the thermal loop, the fuel cell tower simply becomes yet another gas-fueled contributor of CO2 and other emissions in our district.

We argue that until the thermal loop moves forward, there is no offset and no benefit to the community. Furthermore, we feel the thermal loop was never a viable idea, has few commitments to it, and is very ambitious for a city that cannot even get its sewer system in order. Thermal loops have been successfully used in several European countries but only because of policies that mandate their use with all new construction and that ban fossil-fueled boilers. <https://cbey.yale.edu/our-stories/renewable-thermal-heating-lessons-from-scandinavia>

The petitioner also argues that statewide, the fuel cell tower would displace the need to produce electricity with less efficient plants. This may be true, but not to a great extent. The Department of Energy states that this type of fuel cell is only marginally more efficient than conventional gas plants. Phosphoric acid fuel cells ... "PAFCs are more than 85% efficient when used for the co-generation of electricity and heat but they are less efficient at generating electricity alone (37%–42%). PAFC efficiency is only slightly more than that of combustion-based power plants, which typically operate at around 33% efficiency." Newer plants, such as the combined-cycle plant, Harbor Station no. 5 recently built in Bridgeport, recover their own heat to power its turbines and are significantly *more efficient* than the proposed fuel cell tower if waste heat is not used. According to Ipieca, such plants are 50 to 60 percent efficient. <https://www.ipieca.org/resources/energy-efficiency-solutions/power-and-heat-generation/combined-cycle-gas-turbines/>

The CO₂ greenhouse gas emissions from the proposed plant would equal about one million tons during the 20-year life of the facility, or about 45,000 tons per year. The plant will also emit a significant amounts of methane CH₄ (10.5 ton/yr.) and nitrous oxide N₂O (.21 ton/yr) as well as Sulfur Hexafluoride SF₆, Hydrofluorocarbon HFC (very detrimental greenhouse gases), and perfluorinated compound PFC, classified as a “persistent organic pollutant,” recently found in mothers’ milk.

In addition to emitting greenhouse gases, which of course add to global warming, these gases are primary contributors to the formation of ground-level ozone. Unlike the protective atmospheric ozone layer, ground-level ozone can harm lung function and irritate the respiratory system (see American Geophysical Union. “Carbon Dioxide Tied to Air Pollution Mortality. Science Daily, 4 March 2008). You can Bridgeport’s smog when driving south on route 8, beginning in Shelton.

According to the EPA’s CBSA Factbook 2019, the greater Bridgeport region has the highest ground-level ozone average east of the Mississippi River (.084 ppm), well above the maximum acceptable level (0.07 ppm). Some of this is due to ozone blowing in from elsewhere, but much of it is due to the proliferation of power plants and other sources in our area. Bridgeport’s South and West End already host two gas-fired power plants, a former coal plant that is just being decommissioned, a trash to energy plant, and several smaller scale, gas-fueled fuel cells. Additional emissions are released by I-95 traffic, nearby concrete and asphalt plants, and associated heavy diesel traffic on our streets.

It is not surprising that the South End of Bridgeport, and Bridgeport in general, see high rates of asthma and allergies in its children – three times as much as its more affluent power-plant free neighbors. (<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/dph/hems/asthma/pdf/Fullreportwithcoverpdf.pdf>, <https://www.aafa.org/asthma-capitals-top-100-cities-ranking/>)

Increasing emissions in this already distressed neighborhood will worsen the situation. A growing body of environmental justice literature examines how unequal exposures to environmental pollutants and social determinants manifest as health disparities (Brulle & Pellow, 2006; Downey, Dubois, Hawkins, & Walker, 2008).

3. Safety

In its petition, Doosan touts its safety record and built-in safety overrides. These are largely untested due to the novelty of proposed ganged-fuel cell installation. (The developers must point to South Korea for projects similar to this one, but even those differ from what is proposed here given that they don’t use natural gas.) Doosan’s primary defense against disaster includes automatic shut-off valves and tanks of nitrogen gas that would theoretically deploy in the event of a fire. Unfortunately, valves are notoriously subject to failure.

Further, on-site equipment is subject to theft, vandalism, and weather events such as lightning and tornadoes. We feel the risk is too great for so unnecessary a project with so little benefit to the host community. There is very little security offered by the proposed fencing, video monitoring, and street side nature of the project. In addition, the proposed site has a minimal setback (12 feet) from a 60-ft. tall raised portion of a major interstate. It is also very close to several on-off ramps, high-voltage electrical cables, and a major rail line that serves both Metro North and Amtrak. We believe that an accident, vandalism-generated damage, or cyberattack (not farfetched given the recent Colonial gas pipeline headlines) would have catastrophic repercussions for not only Bridgeport, but for transportation throughout the Northeast corridor.

The bottom line is this installation would be the first of its kind in the United States, untried and untested, and situated adjacent to critical transportation infrastructure. Such a siting, we feel, would be reckless.

4. Environmental Harm

Putting a power plant in the middle of a residential area (less than 100 feet from homes to north; about 220 feet from the south) will have negative effects on area residents beyond health and safety. No matter how it’s presented, the structure represents a monstrous eyesore that will make noise, and emit light and emit various greenhouse gases. For a visual check of what the facility would look like to the thousands who pass the site every day, see the petitioner’s supplied photos of fuel cell towers in South Korea. Then note that these towers were not installed near residential areas or next to critical transportation infrastructure.

Doosan/Nupower claim the new plant will be compliant with current noise regulations – but if it's not, sound dampening will be added in the form of blankets once the plant has been built. Sound, however, is very difficult to control via absorptive panels alone. Carefully sealing off the source of noise is required. That would be difficult or impossible. The loud cooling fans must, of course, be left open and exposed. So, what if the noise abatement plan doesn't work? Has it been tried on this scale next to residential areas? The argument that the site is already subject to noise from traffic is not a good one. Highway and rail traffic noise is intermittent, with lengthy quiet periods. The fuel cells will make noise all the time. It is also important to consider that the primary noise source (cooling fans) will be within a car's length or two from the I-95 traffic. Passing drivers will likely be startled by the sudden noise.

Our worries about impact on our environment include issues more subtle than noise as well. For example, given that CO₂ is heavier than air, higher concentrations can be expected in the South End under certain conditions. At higher ground-level concentrations, it is known to stimulate growth of vegetation as well as mold. It also stresses our native trees, which are our first line of defense with both CO₂ absorption and high ground water. Anything we put in the air eventually comes down, says Kristina Wagstrom, Assistant professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering at University of Connecticut.

<https://today.uconn.edu/2019/01/changing-air-quality-land-steady-habits/>

CO₂ emissions from yet another fossil fuel powered plant, will further stress our local urban landscape, including our trees and gardens. Seaside Village maintains several hundred trees on its property, in addition to large community vegetable and butterfly gardens. Improved landscaping efforts are also being made in Seaside Park, nearby Went Park and throughout the Windward Commons development. For more on air pollution, including CO₂, see <https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/SP657.pdf>

Of further concern, is water runoff. The South End is just a few feet above high tide and floods frequently. We have been participating with Resilient Bridgeport to find ways to mitigate flooding. The nearby Windward housing development has promised a large catch basin and pump to keep water runoff from the Village. We had hoped that this proposed site would eventually host a catch basin as well.

5. Adverse Economic Impact

The South End of Bridgeport, especially the area west of Park Ave., is virtually devoid of shops and eateries. We have a liquor store, a gas station and a deli, all of which have seen better days. With the advent of the Windward housing development, it is hoped this will change. Placing a power plant at the gateway to this area is likely to have a discouraging effect on any further food store or restaurant openings in the area.

Homeownership will also become less attractive. Who would want their kids to walk past 21 buzzing fuel cells on their way to school every day? (Note that the Korean fuel cell towers, referenced by Doosan in its petition, were installed at an industrial complex, not adjacent to pedestrian and cycling routes.)

Decommissioning of this plant, in 20 years, calls for removal of spent modules and associated equipment, but not of the footings or steel structure itself. So we have concerns that in twenty years, the property becomes just another example of blight. In the past, parcels such as the proposed site have been earmarked by Resilient Bridgeport for permeable open space and catch basins that could be used to mitigate the South End's periodic flooding problems.

<https://resilientbridgeport.com/bridgeport/>

SEASIDE VILLAGE

1918-2018



Seaside Village Centennial Committee

August 2018

The History of Seaside Village

Seaside Village, known as the Crane Development when built, is significant due to its direct association with the U.S. Housing Corporation's efforts to provide emergency housing for workers manning the factories of the city's war-related industries. It is a good example of the first government-subsidized housing built in Bridgeport. It survives with surprising architectural integrity as the last of four U.S. Housing Corporation projects in Bridgeport. It is a local legacy reflecting the high design quality and first national housing standards achieved through the earliest government-owned housing program in the U.S.

It is an excellent example of the collaborative works of R. Clipston Sturgis, Skinner and Walker, and planner Arthur Shurtleff, who created a well-conceived and well-executed model housing complex that maintains a distinct urban character incorporating middle-class housing tastes with English Garden City and American Garden Suburb tenets.

As built, the complex presents a strong visual presence and prominence derived from a cohesive site plan, shared materials, and similar scale, proportion and design quality that set it apart from its immediate urban industrial context.¹

"Seaside Village," National Register of Historic Places, 1990

SUMMARY

Seaside Village was built by the federal government in response to the housing problem for factory workers in WWI. Bridgeport manufacturers had expanded their factories, but were unable to maximize production due to a lack of adequate housing for workers.²

At first, Bridgeport manufacturers attempted to take on the housing issue themselves. They wanted to attract workers to Bridgeport, not just for the short-term war needs, but for the future of the city, and therefore chose to build quality housing. They chose to set a high standard for housing by creating the most desirable model of American working class housing.³ They hired the best architect and the best town planner in the country - Mr. R. Clipston Sturgis of Boston, as the architect, and Mr. Andrew Shurtleff of Boston, as



Figure 1 - Photo of Seaside Village During Construction, Nov. 1918

¹ *Seaside Village Sustainable Master Plan*. Yale University, 2011, pp. 1–77.

² Olmstead, Frederick Law. "Lessons from Housing Developments of the United States Housing Corporation." *Monthly Labor Review*, 8 May 1919, pp. 27-38.

³ Baxter, Sylvester. "The Government's Housing at Bridgeport." *The Architectural Record*, 45, no. 245, 1919, pp. 123–141.

the town planner.⁴ The local housing authority built some housing initially in the Lordship section of Stratford and in the Grasmere section of Fairfield, but could not build housing fast enough to meet the needs of the war effort.⁵

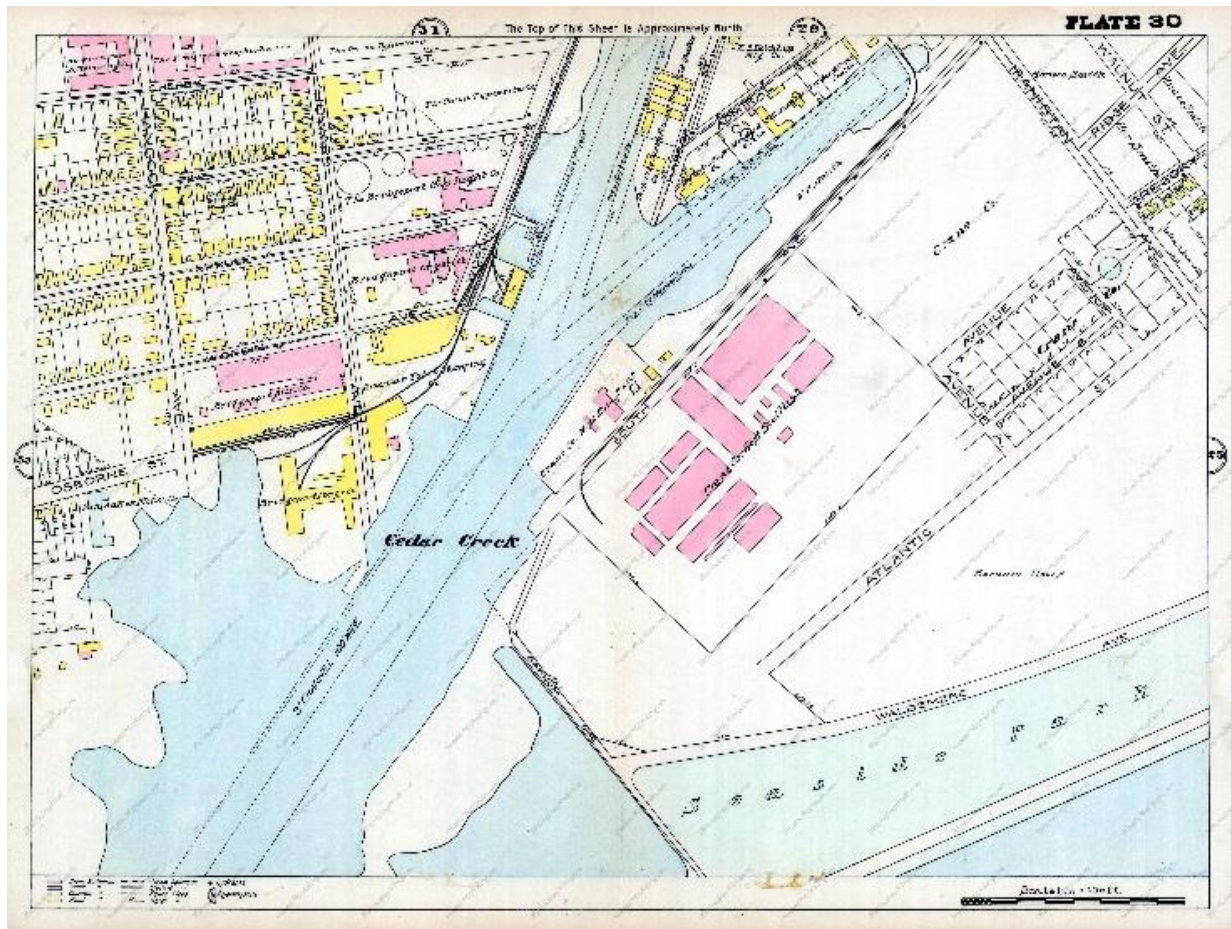


Figure 2 – Map of Crane Field and Crane Factory Buildings (in pink), 1910

The federal government stepped in to help Bridgeport and other cities across the country. Congress authorized and funded the United States Housing Corporation (USHC) in July 1918 with \$100 million in capital. The Director of USHC's town planning division was Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., whose father designed Central Park and Seaside Park.⁶

The USHC chose a number of locations in Bridgeport to build worker housing, but the largest lot was the one owned by The Crane Corporation. It became known as the Crane Lot or the Crane Development until shortly before it was completed, when it was renamed Seaside Village. Its location within walking distance of many factories and its proximity to Seaside Park made it desirable.⁷

⁴ Ames, David L., University of Delaware & Linda Flint McClelland. "Historic Residential Suburbs," *National Register Bulletin*. National Register Publications, 2002.

⁵ Baxter, 1919.

⁶ Donohue, Mary M. "Site Lines: Housing Factory Workers During Wartime." *Connecticut Explored*, 2014, pp. 1–2

⁷ Branch, Mark Alden. "Critique: Two Villages, Two Worlds." *Progressive Architecture*, vol. 74, no. 12, Dec. 1993, pp. 50–53.

Seaside Village was built in approximately 90 days, starting in late October 1918 and ending in early March 1919. 377 homes were planned, but only 257 were built due to the end of the war shortly after construction began.⁸

Seaside Village began as rentals for factory workers and their families, but became owner-occupied by 1955, when 90% of the tenants agreed to become part of cooperative housing.⁹ Whereas most federally funded housing projects have come and gone (including nearby Marina Village built in the 1940's for WWII factory workers), Seaside Village remains a successful model for a high-density urban community to this day.¹⁰

Seaside Village is on the National Historic Register due to its architecture, community planning, and social history.¹¹ It became one of the first collaborations of city planners, architects, and landscape designers for creating a comprehensive approach to community planning.¹² It is cited in architectural textbooks and is of great interest to architectural historians due to the precedents it set for later development, its aesthetics, sustainability, and desirability as a place to live.¹³



Figure 3 – View of Court on Sims Street, 1918

⁸ Hubbard, Henry V. ed. *Report of the United States Housing Corporation*, United States Department of Labor: Washington, D.C. Vol.2, 1919, pp. 120-131.

⁹ "90 Percent Would Buy Apartment Units." *The Bridgeport Telegram*, 28 Oct. 1954, p. 1-6.

¹⁰ Branch, 1993.

¹¹ "Seaside Village Historic District." *National Register of Historic Places*, National Register Information System, ID: 90001424.

¹² Ames, 2002.

¹³ Branch, 1993.

EARLY HISTORY OF SEASIDE VILLAGE

Bridgeport experienced a big influx of immigrants and industrial workers in the late 1800's and early 1900's as the city became the major industrial center in Connecticut.¹⁴ Bridgeport's population increased more than threefold from 1880 to 1914, growing from 30,000 to 115,000 as immigrant labor arrived and manufacturing expanded.¹⁵ World War I brought large munitions orders from the English, French, and Russian armies. Other companies manufactured war-related products, which contributed to the population expansion.

From 1914 to 1916, the population grew from 115,000 to 175,000 as Bridgeport factories supplied European countries and the U.S. with war-related products.¹⁶ By 1918, Bridgeport had over \$60 million in work contracts for the federal government for the war effort.¹⁷ Remington Arms alone produced 50 percent of the U.S. Army's small-arms cartridges and employed 17,000 laborers.¹⁸

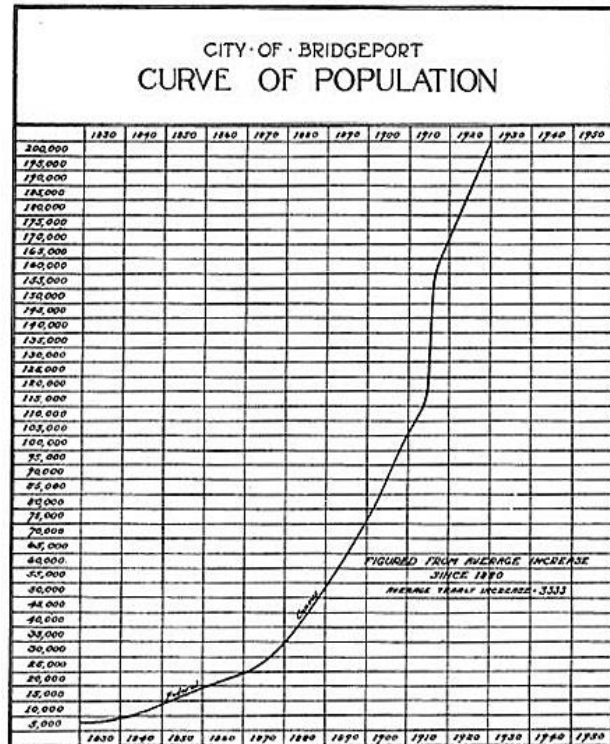


Figure 4 – Better City Planning for Bridgeport, John Nolan, 1916



Figure 5 – Tenement Homes Along Iranistan in Background, Crane Field in Foreground, November 1918

The manufacturers had expanded their factories, but were unable to meet production quotas due to a severe lack of adequate housing for the workers. The housing shortage was so severe that workers were buying train tickets and sleeping in the railway terminal, renting eight hour shifts in rooming houses to sleep, and the City even considered building massive tents for housing up to 10 families.¹⁹

In addition to the housing shortage, the facilities that housed the workers and their families were inadequate. Tenements, the primary housing for factory workers and their families were dark, often windowless, with a

¹⁴ Chisholm, Hugh, ed., "Bridgeport", *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 3 (11th ed.), Cambridge University Press, 1911, p. 532

¹⁵ Nolen, John, and Frank Backus. Williams. Better City Planning for Bridgeport; Some Fundamental Proposals to the City Plan Commission. Brewer-Colgan Co. Printers, 1916.

¹⁶ "WWI-Era Housing Superbly Crafted." *The Bridgeport Post*, 25 Nov. 1990, pp. D1–D1.

¹⁷ Hubbard, 1919.

¹⁸ Donohue, 2015

¹⁹ "Bridgeport's Housing Situation." *Housing Betterment*, vol. 5, no. 2, May 1919, pp. 6–7.

central shaft for ventilation. They were also unsanitary, ugly, flammable, and miserable to live in. The cost of real estate had soared, so buying a home was out of reach of the working class. There was an urgent need for quality rentals to attract and retain workers in the factories.²⁰

The Bridgeport Housing Company was formed in 1916 to deal with this housing problem. It was composed of about a dozen manufacturers and public service companies with capital of \$1,000,000. One of its first actions was to appoint R. Clipston Sturgis of Boston, as the architect and Andrew A. Shurtleff as the town planner. The town planner controlled most aspects of the project.²¹ Mr. W. H. Ham, a Boston engineer, was appointed as the general manager.²²

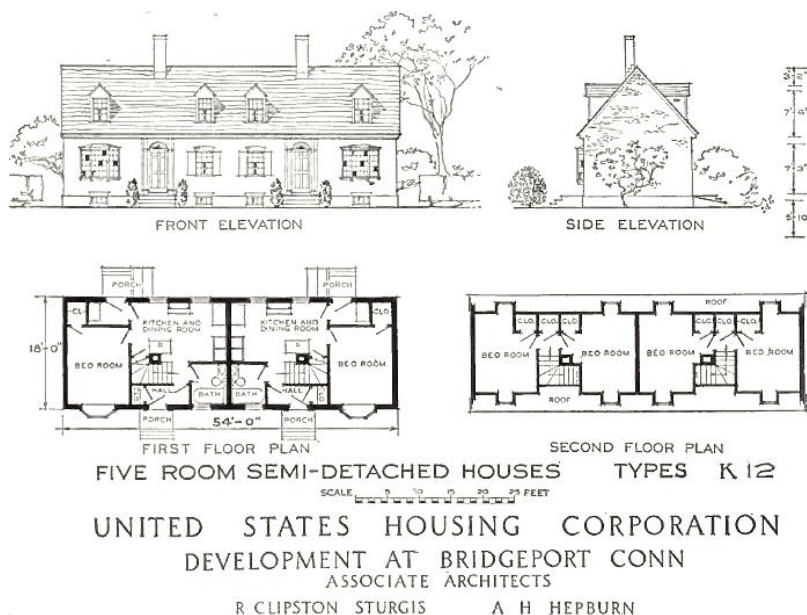


Figure 6 – Exterior and Floor Plans for Row Houses in Seaside Village, 1919 (See Appendix A for more floor plans)

R. Clipston Sturges was the top ranked architect of his time. He served as President of the American Institute of Architects from 1913- 1915. He was involved in designing the wings for Bulfinch's state house in Boston. Sturgis also designed the Perkins Institute for the Blind in Watertown, Massachusetts.²³

A. A. Shurtleff studied under Charles Eliot from 1895 to 1896 at Harvard and worked for Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects from 1896 through 1905, before he opened his own firm in Boston. Along with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., he

was an early faculty member of Harvard University's landscape architecture program, founded in 1900.²⁴

William H. Ham graduated from Dartmouth College in 1897 and in 1898 from the Thayer School (Dartmouth) of Civil Engineering and Architecture. From 1908 to 1916 Mr. Ham was a member of the firm of French and Hubbard, consulting engineers on factory buildings. He then became manager of the Bridgeport Housing Company.²⁵

²⁰ Housing Betterment, 1919

²¹ "Wartime Emergency Housing In Bridgeport, 1916 - 1920." National Register of Historic Places, National Register Information System, ID: 64500081.

²² "Housing at Bridgeport, Conn." *National Builder*, vol. 64, no. 8, 1920, pp. 22–30.

²³ "Seaside Village Historic District." *National Register of Historic Places*.

²⁴ "Wartime Emergency Housing In Bridgeport, 1916 - 1920." *National Register of Historic Places*, National Register Information System, ID: 64500081.

²⁵ Ham, W. H. "The House-Building Industry as Seen by an Engineer." *National Builder*, vol. 65, no. 1, 1922, pp. 29-31.

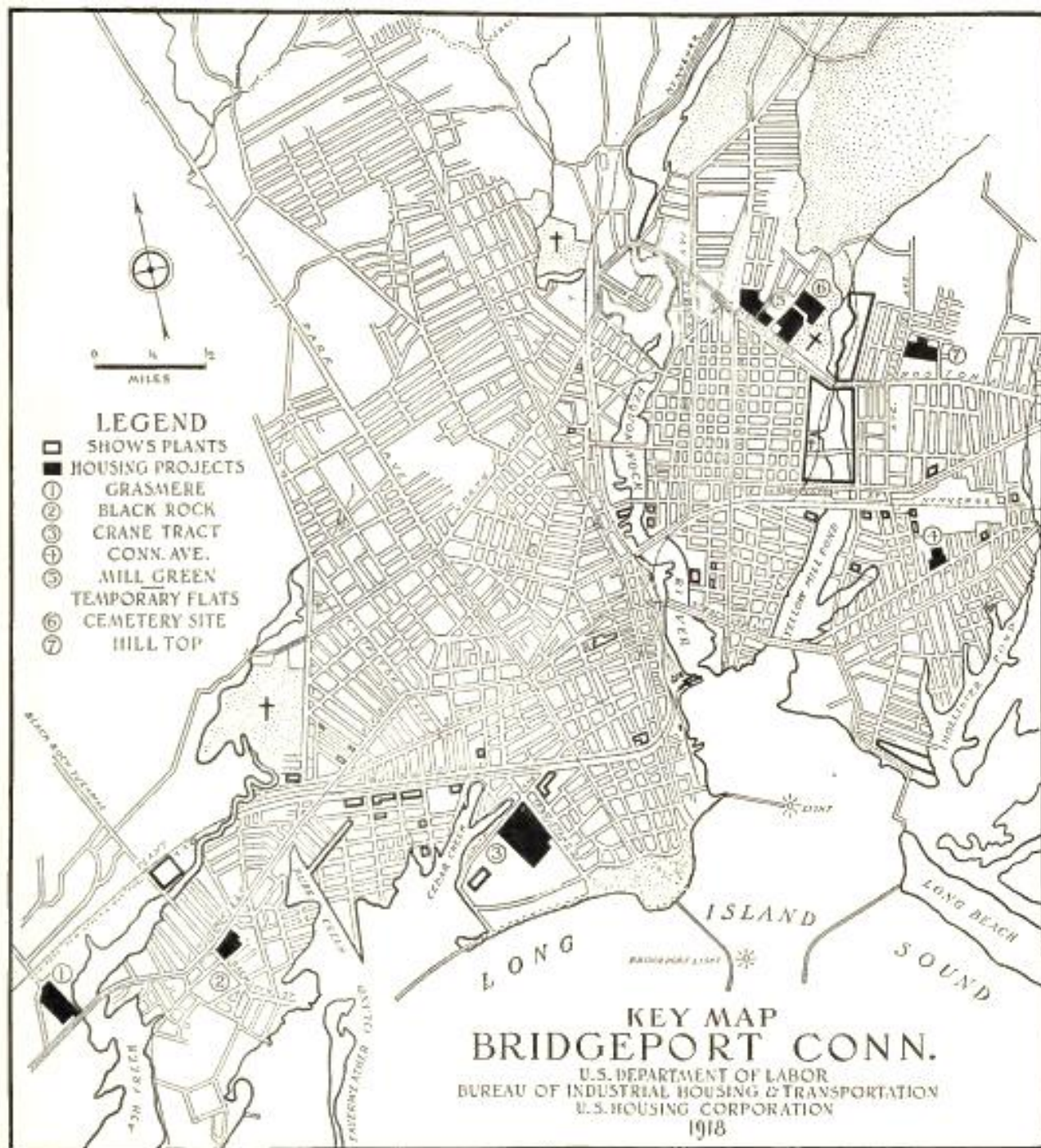


Figure 7 – Seven sites were chosen, but only five were built, 1918

Ham aggressively lobbied Washington D.C. for \$3 million in loans to cover the costs of construction for WWI housing in Bridgeport. The loan had just been approved by Congress, when the federal government decided to directly address the problem since similar problems were occurring in other

cities across the United States.²⁶ The U.S. Housing Corporation asked the Bridgeport Housing group to act as their local agents and gave them the task of selecting the architects, directing the design, and securing the builders.²⁷

To solve the housing crisis for workers serving the war effort, the United States Housing Corporation was formed in July 1918 with \$100 million in capital. They partnered with the Bridgeport Housing Company and examined 20 housing sites in Bridgeport deciding upon 7 of them (two of which, were abandoned on the signing of the armistice). These sites were located to

bring the greatest number of workers within walking distance of their work. They were also designed to serve as models for safe and attractive housing compared to the tenement buildings. This is one reason they were made of brick instead of wood. They were also designed for better ventilation and light than the tenement buildings. The costs were kept down by the small size of the units and the use of only a few building designs.²⁸

The first of the United States Housing Corporation projects to be completed was Black Rock Gardens, followed by the Wilmot Apartments, both designed by Sturgis with Skinner and Walker as associate architects. Seaside Village, the third to be finished, was designed by Sturgis with Andrew H. Hepburn as associate architect.²⁹



Figure 8 – Crane Tract During Construction, Nov. 1918



Figure 9 – View Across Iranistan from Crane Field, July 1918

At this time Seaside Village was known as the “Crane Tract.” The units were designed for regular workers, who would normally live in low grade tenements.³⁰ The houses were planned for “the needs and salary of the man who will never be able to earn more than an ordinary wage. The comfort of his family and conditions which will provide them with a chance to live under good conditions and sanitary surroundings have been carefully studied, and it is thought that the government will favor the plan of selling the houses to tenants if they so desire.”³¹

²⁶ Hubbard, 1919.

²⁷ 1944 article from Bridgeport Library, missing first page

²⁸ Hubbard, 1919.

²⁹ “Wartime Emergency Housing In Bridgeport, 1916 - 1920.” *National Register of Historic Places*

³⁰ National Builder, 1920.

³¹ Government Aids, 1918

The Crane site was chosen because it was within walking distance of the West End shops and would enable most workers to come home for lunch. It was adjacent to the Crane Company plant and had been part of the Crane Company property until the federal government purchased the land. It was renamed as “Seaside Village” prior to completion.³² Proximity to Seaside Park was another reason. At one time it was a marshland and had a creek running through it, but by the time it was chosen for development in 1918, the wetlands had been filled in by industrial waste.³³



Figure 10 – View of South Avenue, Crane Field to left, July 1918

Only two sides of the site had existing streets as boundaries, South Avenue and Iranistan Avenue. Iranistan was an asphalt-paved main thoroughfare leading northwest to the street car line, stores, and other factories. To the southeast, Iranistan Avenue led to Seaside Park on Long Island Sound. Across the street on Iranistan there was a mix of middle and lower income housing, including three-story tenement buildings. There was also a steam freight track leading to the main railroad tracks and various storage yards and facilities on the Crane Tract. The railroad track came in handy later when the bricks were being transported for construction.³⁴

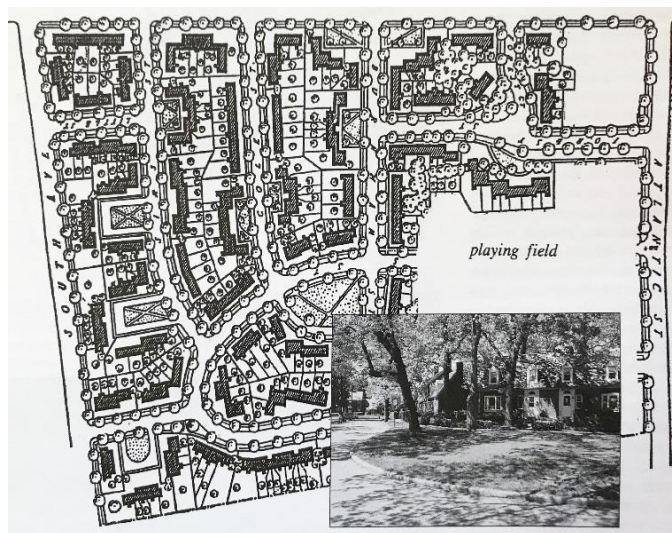


Figure 11 – Village Plan with Plantings

Seaside Village homes were built to be enduring and aesthetically pleasing, which is why they were constructed of brick with slate roofs. They were designed to have a distinctively New England character. Each family would have its own backyard and the village was designed with courtyards and a village square, which could contain plantings and gardens.³⁵

³² “Seaside Village Historic District.” *National Register of Historic Places*.

³³ “Automobile Tour,” Eighth National Conference on Housing in America, December 10, 1920

³⁴ Hubbard, 1919.

³⁵ Baxter, 1919.

Due to Olmstead's influence at the federal level, Seaside Village was one of the first complexes to be built in the "English Garden City" concept of planning small communities to provide lots of green space for sunlight, fresh air, and gardens. Architectural groupings alternated with open parks. Seaside Village remains to this day, one of the six most important examples of the "English Garden City" model in the United States.³⁶

Andrew H. Hepburn of the Boston firm of Hepburn & Parker was brought on as associate architect just for the Crane Development.³⁷ The need for an additional architect was due to the Crane Development being the largest of the developments to be built by the USHC in Bridgeport and it was also considered to the most important one.³⁸



Figure 12 – Horse Drawn Cart with Lumber, 1918

The land was extremely flat, but the developers created an interesting arrangement using curved streets and placing units in varying combinations. Delays in approvals enabled the architects and planners time to create scale models of the entire development and experiment in placing them in different ways. They were able to view the three-dimensional models from every angle to study their relationships to one another.³⁹ The basis of the model was irregularity which was achieved by varying the placement of the limited number of floor plans. They also built around some of the existing trees on the property,

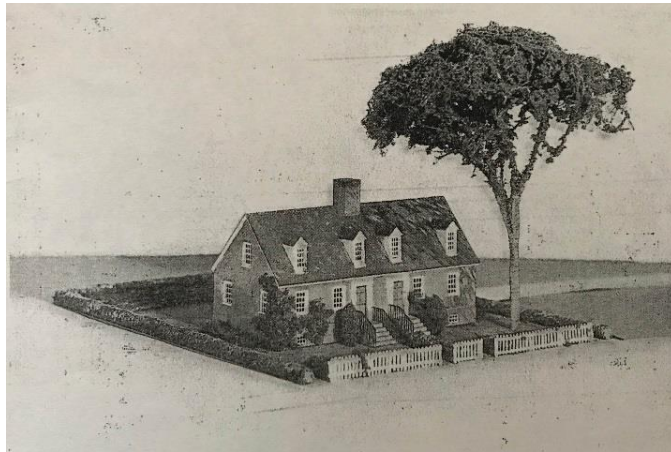


Figure 13 – Scale Models of the Buildings Were Built, 1918

which created variety.⁴⁰ The curvilinear streets followed precedents in European towns and England, rather than the American gridiron pattern.⁴¹

The units were designed primarily as row houses since this allowed for the most density. The longer the row, the more economical the construction, but there was an issue with getting behind the homes for garbage and ash disposal. They solved this problem by installing sunken garbage receptacles in front eliminating the need for rear access to the units.⁴²

³⁶ Ames, 2002.

³⁷ Baxter, 1919.

³⁸ "Government Aids in Building 300 Homes." *The Bridgeport Times*, 3 Sept. 1918, p. 1.

³⁹ Hubbard, 1919.

⁴⁰ National Builder, 1920.

⁴¹ Ames, 2002.

⁴² Hubbard, 1919.

The interiors consisted of a few floor plans of three, four, and five rooms. They were designed to suit the needs of small families in a straight-forward, comfortable way. A combined kitchen/dining area/living room was used in the design.⁴³ No furnaces were installed. The heating was done by the kitchen stove sometimes supplemented by a stove in another room. However, the homes were designed so that the occupants could install a furnace if they desired.⁴⁴ Coal and gas were the main sources of heating at that time, oil heat did not come along until later.⁴⁵



Figure 14 – Under Construction, 1918

The homes and streets were laid out to preserve as many trees as possible. This accounts for the varying setbacks for homes from the street and some of the curves in the roads. For example, Forest Court was diverted to save a group of trees at the corner.⁴⁶ Every street was planted with a specific American tree: Forest Street and Forest Court : White oak (*Quercus Alba*); Burnham Street & Flanders Street : Basswood or American linden (*Tilia Americana*); Cole St : Sweetgum (*Liquidambar Styraciflua*); Sims Street: Sugar maple (*Acer Saccharum*); and Alsace Street: American Elm (*Ulmus Americana*). There



Figure 15 – Excavation of a Basement, Nov. 1918

were probably American ash trees (*Fraxinus Americana*) on Iranistan Avenue, but there's only one left. Many of the original trees have succumbed to emerald ash borer and Dutch elm disease or heavy traffic for the sugar maples. Salt in the ground after the hurricane floods in 2011 and 2012 took out most of the basswood and sweetgum trees.⁴⁷

Each home had their own entrance⁴⁸ with backyard space. Chicken wire fences separated the backyards.⁴⁹ Heating was from a coal stove in the kitchen.⁵⁰ There was no central heating, but a single register furnace could be installed in the basement at the renter's expense, if desired. The units had

⁴³ National Builder, 1920.

⁴⁴ National Builder, 1920.

⁴⁵ Hubbard, 1919.

⁴⁶ Baxter, 1919.

⁴⁷ Email correspondence with Diego Celis. 16 July 2018.

⁴⁸ Branch, 1993.

⁴⁹ Baxter, 1919.

⁵⁰ "Federal Houses Near Completion," *The Bridgeport Times*, March 15, 1919.

built in the area where the field and parking lot are now located. What was finally built consisted of: 6 semi-detached houses, 185 row houses, 12 semi-detached two-flat houses, 54 row two-flat houses for a total of 257 houses.⁵⁷ There were a total of 52 buildings erected.⁵⁸

The site was almost level and “just enough above high tide water to clear itself of storm water when properly graded and provided with storm sewers.” It had a few groups of trees, which were incorporated into the plan.⁵⁹

By October, it was being referred to as the Crane Lot Housing Development. Groundbreaking was expected the week of October 21, 1918.⁶⁰ Just three weeks later, the truce for WWI was signed on November 11, 1918. This was a problem for the Crane Development as it was only one-half of one percent complete as of November 6, 1918.⁶¹ By December, the City was wavering over whether to complete the housing.⁶² Work continued, however, by March 1919, the Housing Company began to lay



Figure 17 -Birdseye View Drawing of Full Build Out for Crane Development, 1918

off workers. At this point, the newspapers began referring to the Crane Development as Seaside Village.⁶³ The units rented for \$15/month at a time when munitions workers were getting paid \$75/week, while the average pay for a worker was \$10/week.⁶⁴

During this same month (March 1919) H. K. Moses of the Architectural Department of the U.S. Housing Corporation and F. L. Olmstead, Jr., Chief of the Town Planning Department visited Bridgeport. While

⁵⁷ Hubbard, 1919.

⁵⁸ Ames, 2002.

⁵⁹ Baxter, 1919.

⁶⁰ “Tracks Laid.” *The Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer*, 21 Oct. 1918, p. 4.

⁶¹ “Gov’t Houses Here Cost Way Above Price Set,” *The Bridgeport Times*, 19 December 1919.

⁶² “DeVer Warner Predicts Fall Boom and Favors Completion of Government Housing Plans.” *The Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer*, 14 Dec. 1918, pp. 1–2.

⁶³ “Federal Houses Near Completion.” *The Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer*, 15 Mar. 1919.

⁶⁴ “Vintage Homes Admired.” *The Connecticut Post*. 24 August 1997.

touring Seaside Village, Mr. Moses said, "It looks like a bit of England." Moses was a key leader in the revival of Colonial architecture in the United States.⁶⁵

By September 1919, the construction of Seaside Village had cost \$1,971,839. Ninety-two of the units were still vacant as the war had ended and the demand for workers had abated. The Senate charged the U.S. Housing Corporation with inefficiencies and improperly spent federal money. The report stated that "A failure to promptly cease building operations on the signing of the armistice proved either a desire to complete their town beautiful experiments or to be helpful, at government expense, to the local communities involved."⁶⁶

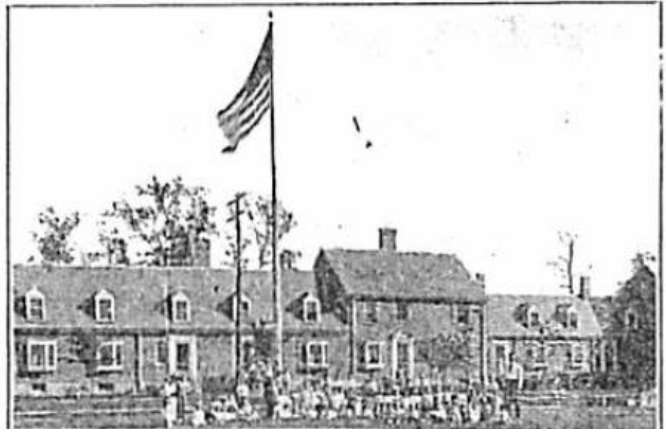


Figure 18 -Photo of People Gathered at Albert Square, 1920

SEASIDE VILLAGE 1920-1950

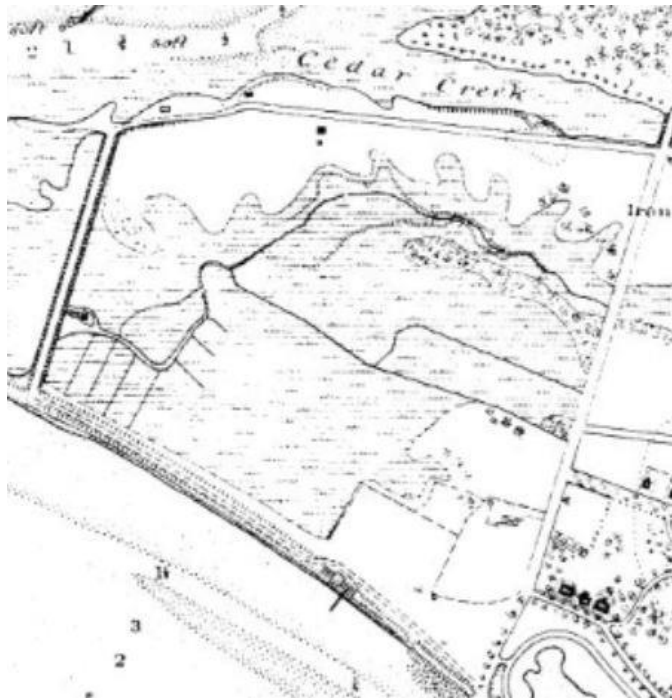


Figure 19 -Map of Crane Tract Showing Wetlands and Creek, 1885

By January 1920, the U.S. Housing Corporation sold Black Rock Apartments (216 units) and Crane Development (257 units) to the Bridgeport Housing Company as well as a few other properties for \$1.3 million.⁶⁷ On December 10, 1920, the Eighth National Conference on Housing in America arranged for an Automobile Tour of points of interest in Bridgeport and included Seaside Village. It is in this pamphlet that reference is made to a creek and cove that had previously existed on the land. "Burnham Street was originally a creek used by the sportsmen of Bridgeport as a storage place for boats in which they went out on the meadows to shoot water fowls. Albert Square was formerly a cove in this inlet and was laid out so as to avoid bad foundation and furnish a breathing space in the village. The site of this village for years as a dump

⁶⁵ "Big Architect Praises Our City." *The Republican Farmer*, 21 Mar. 1919, p. 5.

⁶⁶ Gov't Houses, 1919.

⁶⁷ "Bid of \$1,300,000 Acquired Property of Great Value." *The Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer*, 19 Jan. 1920, pp. 1-6.

used by the City and by the Crane Company for their foundry material and shows the possibility of reclaiming land for housing purposes.”⁶⁸

On December 20, 1922, The Bridgeport Times, wrote an article about how attractive the Seaside Village homes are and that there was a model home open to the public at the corner of Burnham and Iranistan. It mentions that there are kitchen cabinets and ranges that come with the units, which was not always the case in that time period. The house was heated by a one pipe furnace. It did not state the fuel type, which was likely coal, given the time period.⁶⁹

HOMES PROVE VALUE OF SOUND CONSTRUCTION



Figure 20 -From Newspaper Article on Seaside Village, 1944

The Bridgeport Housing Company was renting units for \$22 to \$24 per month for the 3 room units and \$26 to \$28.50 per month for the 4 room units.⁷⁰

There was an active bridge playing group in Seaside Village in the 1920's according to newspaper articles in the Bridgeport Telegram.



Figure 21 -Aerial Photo of Seaside Village, circa 1940

By 1934, Seaside Village had endured the Great Depression. It still consisted of just rental units at this time, but there had not been a vacancy in five years. It was believed the desirability was due to its proximity to Seaside Park, the “excellent neighborhood”, atmosphere of trees and shrubbery, as well as the brick buildings with slate roofs.⁷¹

Marina Village was built in 1940 to house workers for World War II, just as Seaside Village had been built to house workers for World War I. War-related manufacturing was even more important to Bridgeport by WWII and the city was nicknamed the “Arsenal of Democracy.”⁷² Although well-constructed, Marina Village failed to stand the test of time

⁶⁸ *Housing Development: Seaside Village, Automobile Tour* - Eighth National Conference on Housing in America, 1920, pp. 7-8.

⁶⁹ “Model Home Is Attractive Enough to Tempt Anyone into Matrimony and Is Now Open for Inspection.” *The Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer*, 20 Dec. 1922, p. 8.

⁷⁰ Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer classified ads

⁷¹ “Street in Seaside Village.” *The Bridgeport Herald*, 5 May 1934.

⁷² Zimmer, Richard. “Defense Spending Spurs State Boom.” *The Bridgeport Post*, 12 Sept. 1967, p. 1.

and is now being demolished, whereas the planned garden communities of the 1920's and 1930's, such as Seaside Village, are still thriving.⁷³

By 1950, Seaside Village had its own Little League softball team and softball field. In 1950, the softball field was renamed Kilborn Field in memory of Bruce Kilborn, who died in World War II.⁷⁴

SEASIDE VILLAGE 1950-Present

Bridgeport Housing sold Seaside Village along with four other developments to the Farm Bureau Insurance Group in February 1954.⁷⁵ In September 1954, tenants accepted a cooperative ownership plan which was offered to them by the Farm Bureau. The average sales price was \$3,280. Terms were 20% down with the balance paid over 20 years at five percent interest. The average monthly payment was \$18 for the mortgage and \$22 for the common charges. In October 1954, Seaside Village installed gas furnaces in the basements of nearly all of the units. The common charges went up \$5 per month for the units that converted to gas heat.⁷⁶



Figure 22 – Seaside Village Residents at Co-op Plan Meeting, 1954

In 1957 a unit came on the market for \$4,200. The common charges were \$45 per month.⁷⁷ In the 1960's units were listed between \$3,100 to \$8,000. Common charges were \$35 to \$46 per month.⁷⁸ In the 1970's units were listed between \$8,500 to \$15,500. Common charges were between \$35 to \$64 per month.⁷⁹

In 1973 a certificate of beautification was given to Seaside Village based on the "continued cleanliness and beauty that has prevailed in these homes. It is a great source of pride to Bridgeport to have, in its midst, a group of citizens who maintain such standards year in and year out."⁸⁰

In 1975, there was an article in the newspaper about families in Seaside Village burning their 20-year mortgages, which were obtained when the co-op was formed in 1975. Villagers celebrated with a day-long picnic at the Village's Little League field.

⁷³ Branch, 1993.

⁷⁴ "Ball Field to Be Renamed In Memory of War Flier," *The Bridgeport Herald*, 4 June 1950

⁷⁵ "Tenants to Study Cooperative Plan." *The Bridgeport Telegram*, 23 Sept. 1954.

⁷⁶ "Tenants Get Plan for Cooperative." *The Bridgeport Telegram*, 10 Sept. 1954, p. 41.

⁷⁷ Bridgeport Telegram classified ads

⁷⁸ Bridgeport Telegram classified ads

⁷⁹ Bridgeport Telegram classified ads

⁸⁰ Abbamonte, Anna Maria. "Clarifies Award at Seaside Village." *The Bridgeport Post*, 4 Sept. 1973, pp. 24–24.

On September 26, 1990, Seaside Village was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the “Seaside Village Historic District.” It was stated that “alterations to this complex are slight” and goes on to cite the oriel windows, 6/6 windows topped by brick arches, wood shutters, various classically inspired door surrounds, with a predominant theme of Tuscan Doric. “While the steep pitches of the roofs represent an attempt to adapt an early eighteenth-century southern form to a northern climate, the careful massing of the buildings, their Colonial Revival design vocabulary, and studied placement along picturesque, tree-lined streets all consciously recall Old New England villages, where outbuildings and extensions have been added over time to the original house.” They also stated that it “survives with surprising architectural integrity as the last of four U.S. Housing Corporation projects in Bridgeport.”

SEASIDE VILLAGE - RESILIENCY

Over the course of years, changes in lifestyle, population, physical wear and tear, and inconsistent architectural and aesthetic standards began to warrant attention. The charming narrow tree-lined streets that were designed in 1918 for an occasional car were now struggling to accommodate multiple vehicle families. A variety of storm doors and front door overhangs, added in the 1950’s for protection from rain and snow, were not in keeping with the Georgian architectural style. The same was becoming true for replacement windows and other architectural elements. A significant number of the original mature trees were aging out and needing to be replaced. However, one of the biggest concerns was the need for storm water management throughout the Village.

The effects of chronic flooding after significant rain events were causing street and parking lot flooding, soil erosion, occasional basement flooding, and some thought perhaps even some foundation settlement. The concern about the long-term effect of the structure of the buildings, the need to set some architectural standards, and to prioritize the wishes of the community, prompted the formation of the Historic Preservation Committee in 2009.

Soon thereafter, the Committee approached the Yale School of Architecture’s Urban Design Workshop (YUDW) to discuss a possible collaboration for the development of a Master Plan. The Plan would provide the community with direction on the inter-related issues of preservation, design guidelines, storm water management, landscape and streetscape, and traffic and parking, as well as looking at

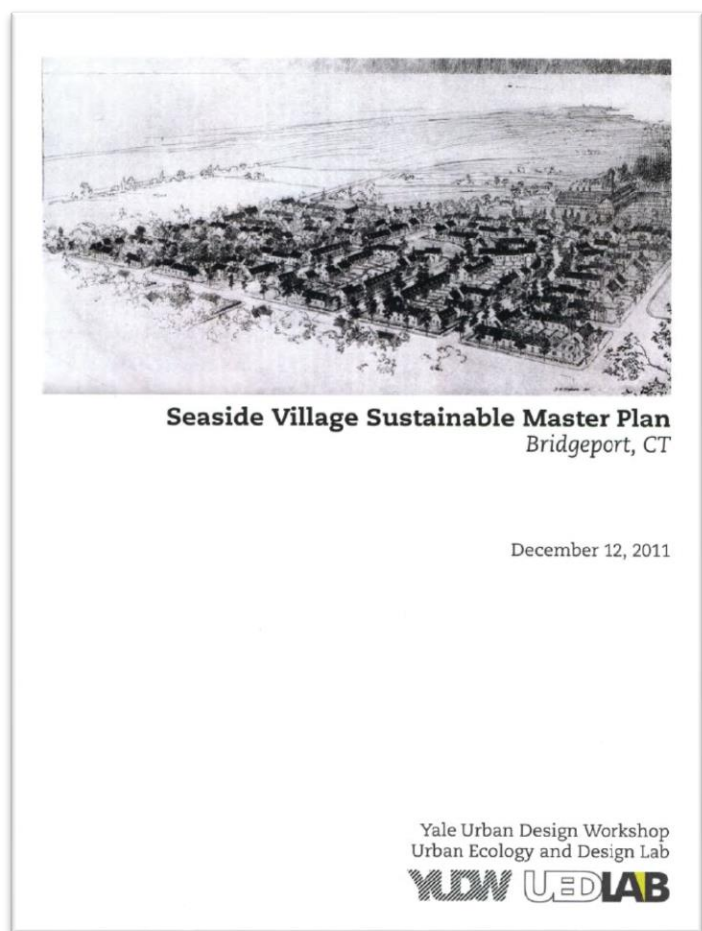


Figure 23 – Cover of Yale Master Plan for Seaside Village, 2011

options for future development. The Board of Directors approved their proposal and the Committee then submitted it to the Fairfield County Community Foundation for funding. Seaside Village was awarded \$24,000 in October of 2010 to begin work on its Master Plan.

The Yale team consisted of Alan Plattus, YUDW Director, Andrei Harwell, YUDW Project Coordinator, and Alex Felson, Landscape Architect. The other partners on this project were the City of Bridgeport, the Regional Plan Association and the Seaside Village community. Two years of works ensued, including surveys and meetings with community members and various city officials to gather data. In addition to the contracted Master Plan, the installation of rain gardens were added to the project. The rain gardens provided the solution to end flooding on the far parking lot.

The Seaside Village Master Plan delivered what it promised in terms of direction on preservation, design guidelines, storm water management, landscape and streetscape, and traffic and parking, as well as options for future development.⁸¹ The *Seaside Village Sustainable Master Plan* consists of a 77-page document published by the Yale Urban Design Workshop and Urban Ecology and Design Lab on December 12, 2011.⁸²



Figure 24 – View of Iranistan Avenue with Seaside Village on right, rendering courtesy of Waggonner & Ball

⁸¹ Email from Lydia Silvas (former Chair of Seaside Village Historic Preservation Committee), 17 Jul 2018.

⁸² *Seaside Village Sustainable Master Plan*. Yale University, 2011, pp. 1–77.

The Master Plan also played a role in the Rebuild by Design project, which had been created in response to the devastation in the northeastern United States caused by Superstorm Sandy. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Presidential Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force initiated the Rebuild by Design Competition (RBD). The competition created innovative community and policy-based proposals to protect coastal communities most at risk due to increasingly severe weather events and future uncertainties. During the final phase of the competition, the team focused on Bridgeport to integrate urban development with natural systems, so that Bridgeport could become a model for other cities along the Long Island Sound and throughout New England.

Seaside Village's Master Plan gave Bridgeport's proposal a credible research and data-based document that addressed the kind of sustainability issues that the Rebuild by Design team would focus on for the city. Yale's prior involvement with Seaside Village's Master Plan and the knowledge base that they acquired from this project enabled them to link their research to the larger scale issues facing Bridgeport that this national competition was addressing and helped to secure funding for Bridgeport.⁸³

The city was awarded \$10 million for planning, design, and construction via the federal government's Rebuild by Design competition. Arcadis, which had been advising Bridgeport on resilience since 2014, helped the city secure another \$41 million in funding through HUD's National Disaster Resilience competition for 2015-16. Construction should begin in the Spring of 2019 and be completed in the Fall of 2022. Projects will include a \$6.5 million storm-water system and a 2.5 acre storm-water park to manage water runoff along Iranistan.⁸⁴

Alan Plattus, Director of the Yale Urban Design Workshop, from the *Seaside Village Sustainable Master Plan*, got involved in the Rebuild by Design and Resilient Bridgeport projects.⁸⁵ Seaside Village became part of the study area, but the final project included the Marina Village area, not the village itself due to budget constraints.



In addition to its role in securing funding to prevent flooding in the South End, the Master Plan was the inspiration for Seaside Village's Rain Garden Project. A major focus of the master plan was on the use of green infrastructure to manage storm water runoff and reduce neighborhood flooding. The Urban Ecology Lab at Yale University came up with possible sites for experimental rain gardens to deal with the extra water in a more natural way, allowing it to be slowly absorbed into the ground after flooding. A corner of the field near the end of the parking lot was selected as the ideal site because of the seasonal flooding of the field all the way to Atlantic Street and adjacent parking lot. University of Connecticut students built the rain

Figure 25 – Rain Garden, 2014

⁸³ Phone call with Lydia Silvas, 18 July 2018.

⁸⁴ Caulfield, John. "Resilience team selected to help protect a vulnerable Bridgeport, Conn., from floods." *Building Design + Construction*, 21 February, 2018. Website. Retrieved 8/4/18.

⁸⁵ Email correspondence with Diego Celis, 16 July 2018

gardens, the city of Bridgeport donated materials, machinery and many plants after construction.⁸⁶



Figure 26 – Rain Garden Path, 2015

The rain garden area consists of six experimental rain gardens, approximately 8' x 22', which receive runoff from the community parking lot via a series of pipes. A few feet below the ground surface, an impermeable clay layer confines underlying groundwater—but in each rain garden, a permeable sand wick perforates the clay. The initial (2011, 2012) wetland plant community failed due to inundation with storm surge from Long Island Sound, brought by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. The most recent replanting event (in 2013) used only salt-tolerant native New England marsh species.⁸⁷

The Nature Conservancy and Groundworks Bridgeport have an annual commitment to maintaining the gardens in partnership with Seaside Village. The day-to-day maintenance and plantings have been handled by a resident volunteer, Diego Celis.⁸⁸

Seaside Village endured two catastrophic floods within a 14 month period with Irene in 2011 and Sandy in 2012. Hurricane Irene's 3 foot storm surge left behind more than \$600,000 in damages.⁸⁹ Sandy's 9 foot storm surge⁹⁰ was worse than Irene, destroying mechanicals in basements that had been replaced a year before after Irene and reaching units that had not been affected by Irene. Approximately 140 units benefited from installation of new electrical panels raised to the first level, sump pumps and other work to help make their units more resilient in future storms thanks to grants from the Robin Hood Relief Fund,⁹¹ United Way,⁹² and other funders.



Figure 27 – Resident Navigating Seaside Village Streets in a Canoe, 2012

⁸⁶ Email correspondence with Diego Celis, 16 July 2018

⁸⁷ Pang, Selena. "Influence of Plan Community and Media Composition on the Water Budgets of Coastal Rain Gardens." *Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies*, 2014.

⁸⁸ Email correspondence with Diego Celis, 16 July 2018

⁸⁹ Allen, Arthur. "Sooner or Later at Seaside." *Landscape Architecture*, Nov. 2013, p. 188-197.

⁹⁰ Burgeson, John & Genevieve Reilly. "Rising Above the Tide: 5 Years Since Sandy." *Connecticut Post*. 28 Oct. 2017.

⁹¹ "Seaside Village Residents Benefit from Robin Hood Relief Fund Grant." *Bridgeport News*, 12 Oct. 2013.

⁹² "Seaside Village Gets Much Needed Storm Recovery Funds." *United Way of Coastal Fairfield County*, www.unitedwaycfc.org/. Website. Retrieved July 20, 2018.

Many of the plantings in the Village and some trees were destroyed by the salt water floods. Villagers have replanted many flowers and shrubs. The Seaside Village Tree Committee worked with Bridgeport's tree warden on stump removal and have replaced 39 trees since the storms. A walk through the village in the spring or summer shows the pride that villagers take in their yards and common areas.



Figure 28 – Rose in New York Botanical Gardens Named for Seaside Village, 2017

Seaside Village's love of gardens has become known to some in the botanical community. Seaside Village even has a rose named after it in the New York Botanical Gardens. A Seaside Village resident, Diego Celis, found a double mutation of a wild beach rose near the village. He brought a few of the cuttings to the New York Botanical Garden, where the curator of the Peggy Rockefeller rose garden, Stephen Scaniello, named it "Seaside Joy" after Seaside Village. Seaside Joy looks like an old rose, with cupped flowers and an intense fragrance.



In 2014, the Seaside Village Garden Committee decided to build a community garden with raised beds for vegetable production as well as a fenced-in dog run.⁹³ Village residents took on the task of building the raised beds. The first season 15 were built. They have since expanded to 50. There will be a maximum of 64 beds when completed.⁹⁴

Figure 29 – Building Community Garden, 2014

⁹³ Mittermaier, Pascal. "Gardens Protect Cities from Flooding, Storms and Climate Change." www.lifegate.com, 20 Oct. 2015

⁹⁴ Email correspondence with Diego Celis, 13 July 2018.

An arbor with a picnic table next to the gardens has created a relaxing location for village potlucks and impromptu picnics.



Figure 30 – Community Garden, 2017



Figure 31 – Residents Enjoying Garden Area, 2017

The following quote from Yale’s Master Plan captures the essence of Seaside Village’s first 100 years succinctly:

*Seaside Village is a jewel in the crown of a proud old industrial city. Not only is it a survivor from a crucial period in the urban and industrial history of Bridgeport, it is a significant and widely known landmark in the history of American housing and community design. While much of the economic, institutional and architectural fabric of the era it represents has lost its purpose and declined or disappeared, Seaside Village is a thriving community whose population has transitioned from factory workers to a diverse group of mixed-income residents, devoted to both the heritage and the current life of the Village.*⁹⁵

Seaside Village Sustainable Master Plan, 2011

⁹⁵ *Seaside Village Sustainable Master Plan*. Yale University, 2011, pp. 1–77.

SEASIDE VILLAGE'S ROLE IN U.S. ARCHITECTURE

"Buildings at Seaside Village in Bridgeport, Connecticut are modulated, articulated, and set about in such a way that one can almost imagine oneself walking through a European village instead of being in a public housing project designed for American shipbuilders during World War One. The simplicity of the neighborhood plan for Seaside is evident from a casual glance at its layout, but a closer look reveals how the individual buildings have been artfully arranged with respect to the street, to open spaces, and to one another to produce spatial relationships of lasting interest"⁹⁶

Randall Arendt, American Planning Association, 1999

"The curvilinear layouts recommended by FHA in the 1930s set the standards for the design of post World War II subdivisions. They evolved from Garden City suburbs such as Seaside Village..."⁹⁷

The "English Garden Style," use of organic curvilinear designs seen in Seaside Village came into widespread use in the post-World War II single family subdivisions which favored cul-de-sacs and curving streets. Cul-de-sacs were used to create a sense of enclosure and privacy. The curving streets created visual interest. This is still a common sight in the suburbs, but remains unusual in an urban environment where most developments are set out in a grid pattern.⁹⁸

David L. Ames & Linda Flint McClelland, National Register of Historic Places, 2002

Bridgeport historian, Charles Brilvitch has stated that Seaside Village is the "first planned garden community in the United States" predating Sunnyside Gardens in Queens⁹⁹ He also said the developments in Bridgeport were the first attempts by the federal government to build "English Garden City" housing. "They were a model of what could be done."¹⁰⁰

Charles Brilvitch, 1997

"The attention to design and the quality of the craftsmanship and architecture – these all are components that make these housing complexes so distinctive."¹⁰¹

John Herzan, National Register Coordinator for the state Historic Commission, 1990

⁹⁶ Arendt, Randall. *Crossroads, Hamlets, Village, Town: Design Characteristics of Traditional Neighborhoods - Old and New*. American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service, Report Number 487/488, 1999, pp. 32–33.

⁹⁷ Ames, 2002.

⁹⁸ "Ames, 2002.

⁹⁹ Branch, 1993.

¹⁰⁰ "Vintage Homes Admired," *Connecticut Post*, August 24, 1997

¹⁰¹ "WWI-era Housing, 1990.

Appendix A – Floor Plans

There were at least eight types of floor plans for Seaside Village as identified in the Report of the United States Housing Corporation Vol. II and National Builder (August, 1920) which were used in the construction:

- H5 Ranch style units – four to a building
- H6 Ranch style units – two to a building
- K8 Townhouse units with straight staircase
- K9 Small capes with entry into hall then kitchen, living room and bath in back on first floor
- K10 Townhouse units with curved staircases
- K11 Large cape with bath upstairs
- K12 Small capes with entry into hallway, then left to kitchen and bath or right to living room

There were also a few three room units built, but I was not able to find floor plans for them.

30

NATIONAL BUILDER

August, 1920

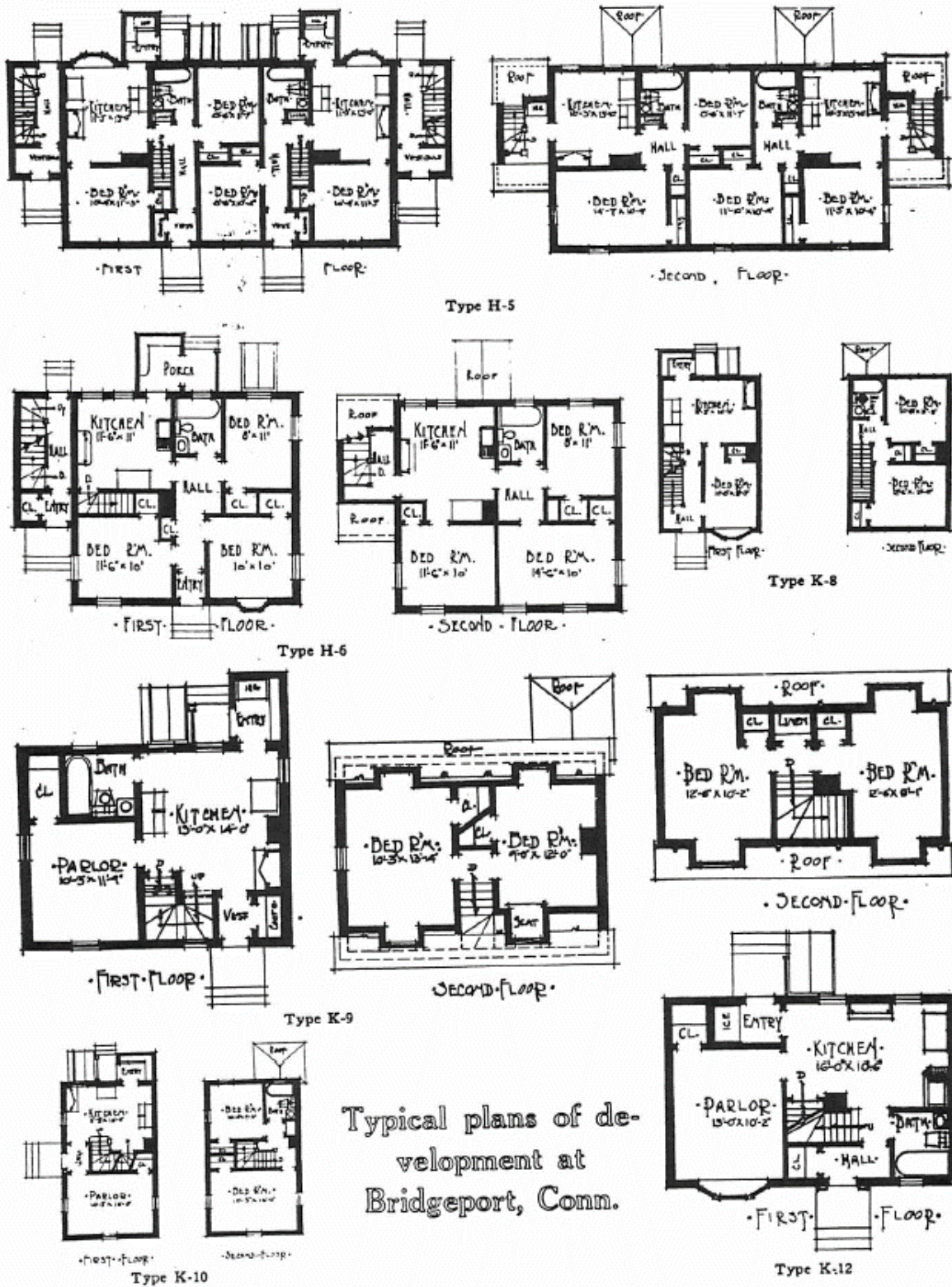


Figure 32 – Floor Plans H5, H6, K9, K10 & K12

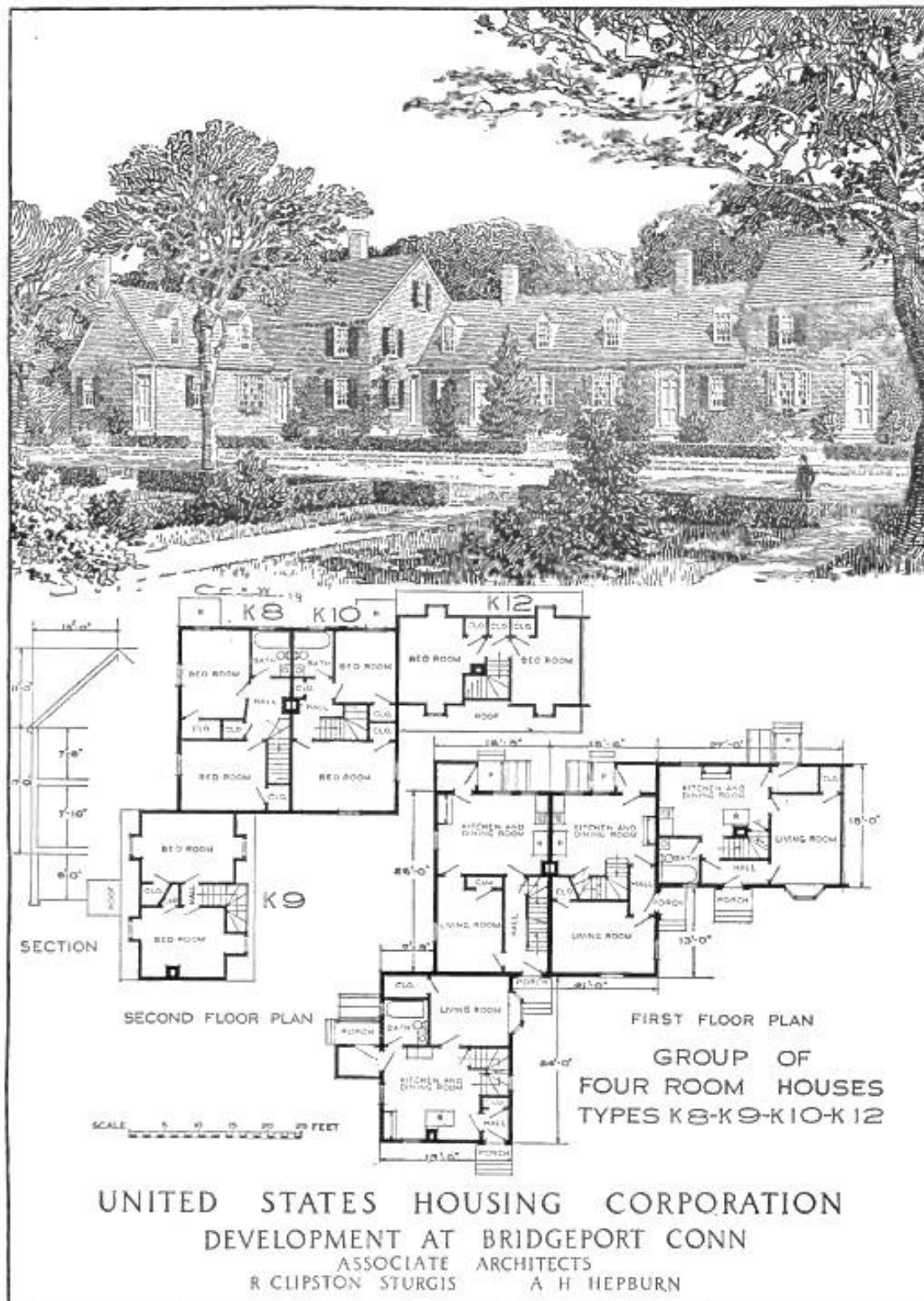


Figure 33 – Floor Plans K8, K9, K10, K11 & K12

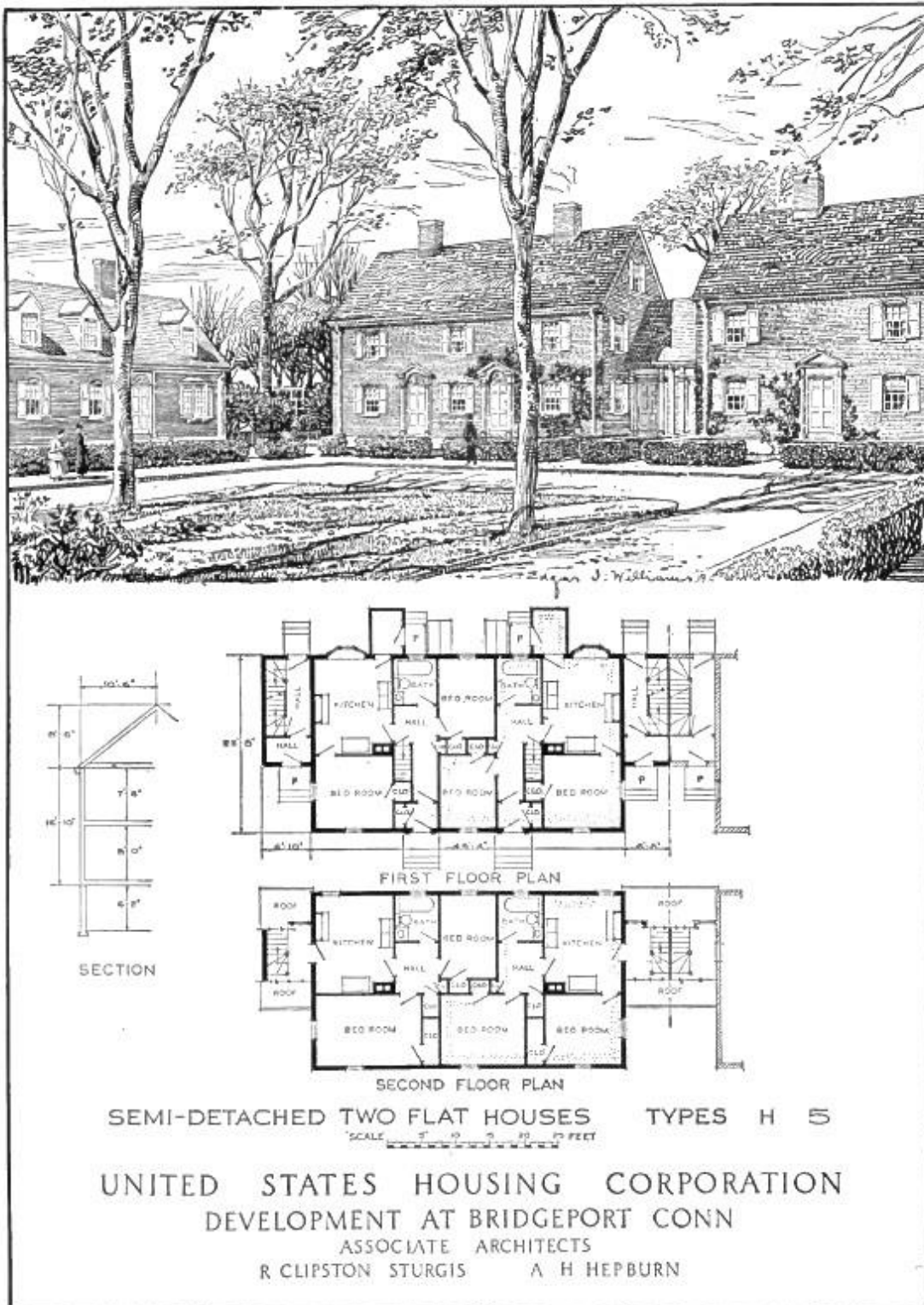


Figure 34 – Floor Plans H5

PROJECT DRAWINGS AND DESCRIPTIONS.

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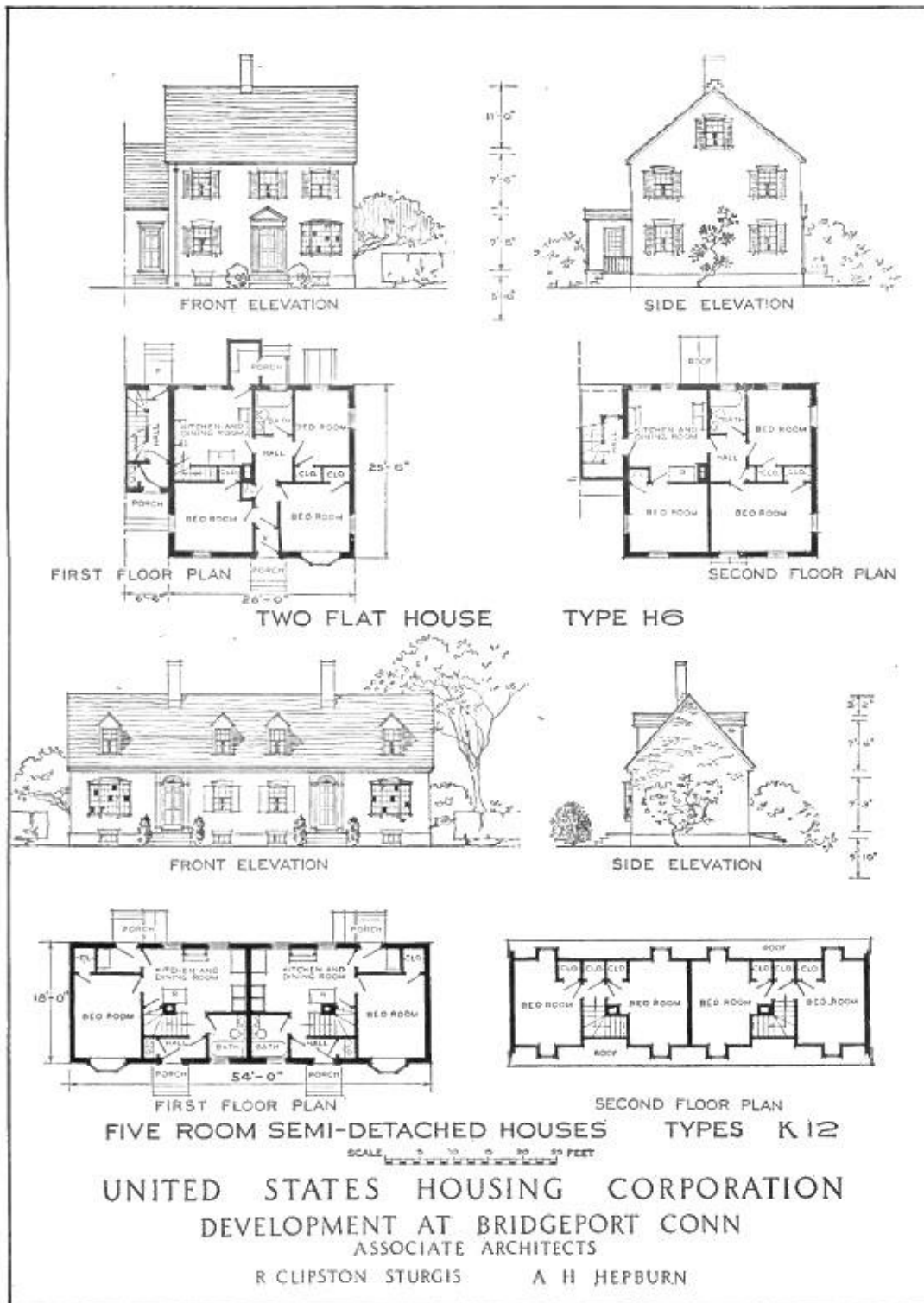


Figure 35 – Floor Plans H6 & K12

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