

SBR Draft

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Bridgeport Commercial Historic District
Other name/site number: NA
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: Halsell Street, roughly between 9th Street and 12th Street
City or town: Bridgeport State: Texas County: Wise
Not for publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property (meets does not meet) the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
 national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Signature of certifying official / Title State Historic Preservation Officer _____
Date
Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official _____
Date

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
- ___ determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ___ removed from the National Register
- ___ other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper _____
Date of Action

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: District

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
20	10	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
20	10	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

COMMERCIAL/Business
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling, Hotel, Apartments
GOVERNMENT/Post office
HEALTHCARE/Sanatorium, Doctor's office, Dentist
SOCIAL/Masonic lodge
TRANSPORTATION/Auto sales
RECREATION/Recreation hall, Skating rink

Current Functions:

COMMERCIAL/Business
SOCIAL/Masonic Lodge
VACANT/Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: One-part Commercial Block, Two-part Commercial Block, Streamlined Moderne, Romanesque Revival

Principal Exterior Materials: Brick, masonry, wood, metal

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 6-11)

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Commerce (*local level of significance*)

Period of Significance: 1893-1964

Significant Dates: 1893

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: NA

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 12-35)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheets 36-38)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin
- Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Approximately 6 Acres

Coordinates: (see continuation sheet page 39)

Verbal Boundary Description: (see continuation sheet page 39)

Boundary Justification: (see continuation sheet page 39)

11. Form Prepared By

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Date: April 14, 2023

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets 40-46)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 47-53)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 54-66)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Photograph Log

Bridgeport Downtown Historic District

Bridgeport, Wise County, Texas

Photographer: Ellis Mumford-Russell, Rebecca Wallisch

Date: April 27, 2023

Photo 1

Streetscape along Halsell Street at 9th Street, showing Resources 12-15 (left), facing east.

Photo 2

Streetscape along Halsell Street at 9th Street, showing Resources 12-15 (left), facing northeast.

Photo 3

Streetscape along Halsell Street at 10th Street, showing Resource 1 (left), facing southwest.

Photo 4

Streetscape along Halsell Street at 10th Street, showing Resource 17 (right), facing northwest.

Photo 5

Streetscape along Halsell Street at 10th Street, showing Resources 18 (left), 20-23, facing northeast.

Photo 6

Streetscape along Halsell Street at 10th Street, showing Resources 2-7 (right), facing southeast.

Photo 7

Streetscape along Halsell Street at 11th Street, showing Resources 4-11 (left), facing southwest.

Photo 8

Streetscape along Halsell Street at 11th Street, showing Resources 27-28 (right), facing northwest.

Photo 9

Representative alleyway streetscape, rear (north) of 1000 block, facing east.

Photo 10

Resource 1, facing southwest.

Photo 11 Resources 5-7, facing southwest.

Photo 12

Resource 9, facing south.

Photo 13

Resource 13, facing north.

Photo 14

Resource 14, facing north.

Photo 15

Resource 15, facing north.

Photo 16

Resource 16, facing northwest.

Photo 17

Resource 18 (Resource 19 at rear), facing northeast.

Photo 18

Resource 19, facing east.

Photo 19

Resource 20, facing north.

Photo 20

Resource 21, facing north.

Photo 21

Resource 23, facing northwest.

Photo 22

Resource 24, facing northwest.

Photo 23

Resource 27, facing north.

Photo 24

Resource 30, facing north.

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Narrative Description

The Bridgeport Commercial Historic District is located within the historic commercial core of Bridgeport, Texas, centered on Halsell Street roughly between 9th Street and 11th Street. At approximately 6 acres, the district contains a total of 30 resources, 20 of which are contributing resources that date from the town's early development through the post-war era when Bridgeport reinvented itself as a lakeside recreation community. The district is oriented in an east-west direction on the western edge of town, roughly 0.20 miles east of the railroad tracks. It is characterized by one and two-part commercial blocks of local brick and sandstone. Stylistic details within the district are modest and are largely characteristic of early to mid-twentieth century commercial architecture, although one resource exhibits Romanesque Revival details. Despite alterations to some of the buildings within the district, it still retains sufficient integrity to convey its long-standing role as the commercial heart of Bridgeport.

Geographic Setting

Bridgeport is located in west-central Wise County, within the Western Cross Timbers ecoregion of North Texas, which is characterized by rolling hills, former prairie land, and forested lowland mountains. It is 77 miles northwest of Dallas and 11 miles west of Decatur, the seat of government for Wise County. Lake Bridgeport, a popular recreational and tourist destination, sits on the western edge of Bridgeport roughly 4 miles from the commercial historic district. As of the 2020 census, Bridgeport had a population of 5,923 people, 46.43% of which were White and 46.45% were Hispanic or Latino.¹ The area immediately surrounding the Bridgeport Commercial Historic District consists of mixed-use neighborhoods, laid out in a grid pattern, with one and two-story residences, municipal and commercial buildings, and Harwood Park just south of the district boundary.

The buildings in the Bridgeport Commercial Historic District are concentrated on the north and south sides of Halsell Street, one of the town's primary east-west thoroughfares. West of the district boundary, Halsell Street is characterized by undeveloped lots with grassy areas or woodlands, an unnamed creek, and some residential and commercial buildings. Roughly three blocks west of 9th Street, Halsell Street intersects with SH 114 and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. Just beyond the district boundary, Halsell Street becomes a four-lane roadway (two in each direction) at 13th Street, with no street parking and intermittent sidewalks. North and south of Halsell Street the area is comprised of a mix of historic-age and modern domestic, commercial, municipal, and religious buildings. Unnamed alleys divide the blocks north and south of Halsell Street, forming the north and south district boundaries.

General District Characteristics

Within the district, Halsell Street is a two-lane roadway with angled street parking on the north side and parallel parking on the south side. The buildings sit tight with the roadway, separated by sidewalks and some areas of planted curbs with metal light poles and street signs. New metal railings with a decorative wagon wheel motif have recently been installed along some areas of the sidewalk, stairs, and ramps, within the district. A number of trees and shrubs are planted within the district to provide shade and greenery to the setting.

Construction dates for historic-age buildings range from ca. 1893 to 1964. The area consists of one- and two-story commercial, government, and social resources. These commercial blocks are generally made of stone or brick masonry with minimal decorative detailing, like corbeling. Exceptions include 1001 Halsell (a modest Romanesque Revival bank) and the former post office at 1304 10th Street (PWA Moderne).

¹ United States Census Bureau, Bridgeport, Texas, Accessed May 31, 2023, <https://data.census.gov/table?g=160XX00US4810264&tid=DECENNIALPL2020.P2>

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Many buildings have modifications, such as rear exterior additions, painted brick, and replacement doors and/or windows; however, many of these modifications took place during the period of significance and did not result in a total loss of integrity. Carefully researched assessments of alterations to both contributing and non-contributing resources in the district are described in the inventory table.

Forms and Styles

One-part Commercial Block (1850s-1950s)

There are 25 one-part commercial blocks. The one-part commercial block is characterized by its single-story, boxy massed footprint, and decorated storefront facade. Originating in the U.S. around the mid-1800s, it became a popular urban building form during the latter half of the nineteenth century. With their compact footprint, they were easy to construct and relatively inexpensive. Other characteristics of the one-part commercial block include narrow street facing facades, large display windows, and broad area between window and cornice for signage, often in the form of a false front.² Although many early one-part commercial block buildings were small and narrow, others could encompass large portions of a city block, and either feature a consistent facade or differentiated treatments between different storefronts. In some cases, like Bridgeport, these commercial buildings were minimally adorned and perfunctory, while some utilized more decorative elements consistent with prevailing architectural trends.

Two-part Commercial Block (1850s-1980s)

Just five resources within the district are two-part commercial blocks with ground floor retail a. Upper levels were historically more private, housing offices, apartments, hotels, or meeting halls. A differentiated treatment between the public (lower) level and private (upper) levels, is characteristic of these buildings. A descendant of the post-revolutionary shop house, with business on the lower level and living on the upper levels, two-part commercial blocks were typically constructed in uniform rows or blocks in commercial centers in cities and towns across the U.S. Early iterations were simplistic and devoid of unnecessary ornament. However, in the late nineteenth century, the more widespread availability of glass saw the introduction of large display windows on the lower level, while increased manufacturing resulted in added ornamentation in the form of decorative patterns set in wood, stone, cast iron, or brick.³ By the turn of the century, two-part commercial block buildings began to leave behind the High Victorian ornamentation in favor of a more restrained, Classical order.⁴ As improvements in technology and manufacturing occurred in the early decades of the twentieth century, materials like brick, terra cotta, and concrete block became popularly used on commercial buildings. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, two-part commercial blocks continued to be popular, and were designed in a variety of styles and materials, often reflecting the architectural preferences of their age.

PWA/WPA Moderne (Ca. 1930-1940)

One building within the district exhibits modest elements of PWA/WPA Moderne style architecture (Resource 19). PWA/WPA Moderne is a term used to describe the subset of buildings constructed in the 1930s with elements of Streamlined Moderne, Art Deco, or Beaux Arts influences funded by the federal Public Works Administration or Works Progress Administration. Often used on monumental institutional buildings like post offices and government buildings in large cities, in smaller communities like Bridgeport, PWA/WPA Moderne was typically more subdued and modest. The buildings are characterized by a sense of stripped classicism, evident in symmetry and order, and the modest use of geometric patterns as a decorative element.⁵

Romanesque Revival

² Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street, Updated Edition* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2000), 54-55.

³ Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street*, 35

⁴ Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street*, 39.

⁵ Hope, Mike. *Art Deco Architecture, The Interwar Years* (Wiltshire: The Crowood Press, 2019).

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

The most prominent historic building in the Bridgeport Commercial Historic District is Resource 18, a modest example of Romanesque Revival architecture. The most recognizable characteristics of the Romanesque Revival style are the use of semicircular arches, heavy stone walls, and towers or projecting bays. Modeled after the architecture of ancient Rome, the Romanesque Revival style was most popular between 1840-1900. Through their stone construction and typically monumental size, Romanesque Revival structures convey a sense of permanence. For this reason (and also in part because of the expense of building with heavy masonry) Romanesque Revival was most commonly employed in churches, universities, and public buildings. Constructed of rusticated concrete block instead of stone, Resource 18 is a modest, interpretation of the Romanesque Revival style that communicated the importance of that financial institution to the local economy. Two large cut stone arches extend from a squat column at the main entrance to the former bank building, and a row of three cut stone arched windows are located along the west facade.⁶

Historic and Current Functions

Commercial

Commercial resources are the dominant resource type within the Bridgeport Commercial Historic District. Resources are concentrated along Halsell Street, with one resource located along a side street (Resource 19 is located along 10th Street). Buildings that currently serve a commercial function were constructed throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth century, reflecting the community's ongoing commitment to maintaining the commercial center on Halsell Street. Commercial property types include primarily one-part commercial buildings and several two-part commercial buildings. As is typical of historic buildings in long-standing communities, commercial buildings within the district have been home to numerous different business endeavors throughout their long history, and changes to buildings to accommodate new functions are commonplace.

Domestic

There are two resources within the Bridgeport historic district that historically served domestic functions. As the historic commercial center of town at the turn of the century, several of the two-part commercial block buildings (Resource 4 and 11) featured hotels or apartments on the upper levels of their buildings to provide convenient access for local workers or travelers to shops, restaurants, and the amenities of downtown. This was typical of early twentieth century two-part commercial block buildings, which often featured public spaces on the lower levels and private spaces on the upper levels.

Government (Municipal)

There are two contributing buildings in the district that historically served a municipal function (Resources 13 and 19). Resources 13 and 19 both functioned as Post Office locations at one time, though they both currently house businesses. Resource 13 was constructed for commercial use ca. 1910 and housed the Post Office from 1920 until the 1930s. Resource 19 was constructed specifically for use as a post office, likely in the late 1930s.

Transportation

Although Bridgeport's early success was largely due to the arrival of the railroad, by the early decades of the twentieth century the proliferation of the automobile saw the establishment of numerous auto retailers within the downtown area. In the 1940s through 1970s White Auto was located in Resource 21 and later relocated to Resource 26 in the 1970s. Western Auto was located on the lower level of Resource 10 in the 1950s and 1960s.

⁶ "Romanesque Revival Style," Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, accessed May 30, 2024, <https://www.in.gov/dnr/historic-preservation/learn-about-topics/buildings-and-bridges/architectural-styles/romanesque-revival-style/>; "Romanesque Revival Style 1840-1900," Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, accessed May 30, 2023 <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/romanesque-revival.html>.

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Social

In the 1920s, the Masonic Lodge #578, which was first established in Bridgeport in 1884, purchased Resource No. 6 (1012 Halsell Street) and set up their lodge in the upper level of the building. Members of the lodge included businessmen, ranchers, miners, and civic leaders of the community, who met in the lodge on Halsell Street and have continued to do so through present day.

Healthcare

Several resources within the historic district historically had healthcare functions, housing doctors' and dentists' offices, as well as a sanitarium. At the turn of the century the coal industry in Bridgeport was booming. Mining was a dangerous occupation prone to injury and disease and, combined with the proliferation of the respiratory illness tuberculosis, the need for medical facilities in Bridgeport was acute. Thus, in 1911 a sanitarium opened in Resource 6. In subsequent decades Halsell Street continued to serve as the heart of the community and in the 1920s a dentist's office operated out of a second-floor office in Resource 18 and in the 1930s a doctor's office was located in Resource 25. However, by the mid-century, advances in medical practices and technology required larger dentists and doctors' offices than could be accommodated in the historic commercial buildings along Halsell Street between 9th and 11th, and new, larger buildings were constructed to house them, including the 1941 Bridgeport Clinic Hospital (no longer extant and outside the district).

Recreation

There are two resources within the historic district that formerly had recreational functions. Resource No. 1, which was originally constructed in the 1960s as the Bridgeport Recreation Center and featured pool tables and other games, and Resource No. 3, which at some point during its history held a skating rink in the basement of the building.

Integrity

Location: The Bridgeport Commercial Historic District was historically located along Halsell Street between 9th Street and 11th Street, expanding to the west in the mid-century as the community continued to grow. The surrounding blocks were historically, and are still currently, mixed-use neighborhoods with residential, commercial, religious, and municipal buildings. Conveniently located several blocks east of the railroad tracks, the Bridgeport Commercial District has remained the heart of the community for over 100 years and the buildings contained therein have been continuously occupied by a variety of local businesses. Downtown Bridgeport continues to attract locals and visitors for dining and shopping and thus, the district retains its integrity of location.

Setting: Although changes have occurred along Halsell Street over time, the setting of the Bridgeport Commercial Historic District remains largely intact. Within the district, Halsell Street remains a two-lane (one in each direction) roadway flanked by sidewalks, with the one and two-story buildings sitting tight to the roadway, creating a quaint, walkable, area of town. Although buildings along the Halsell have been constructed over a period of 100 years and have experienced alterations due to changing uses, a majority retain their original massing, setbacks, and modest brick and stone masonry parapets and cornices, and many maintain their storefront fenestration patterns. Later additions to the district reflect the community's ongoing commitment to its commercial center.

Design: Some changes have occurred to buildings within the district, including replacement of windows, doors, reconfiguration of storefronts, and changing signage as new commercial tenants occupied the buildings. A series of fires throughout the early twentieth century resulted in the demolition of several of the original buildings along Halsell; however, numerous buildings from the early settlement period of the town remain. Furthermore, a majority of the properties that were destroyed by fire were re-developed during the period of significance with an effort to remain consistent with the massing and setbacks already present in the district. Many of the early buildings within the district maintain their original clerestory windows, a character-defining feature of the district. Overall, the integrity of design is

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

sufficiently intact to evoke a turn of the century commercial district located in a small, semi-rural community that has grown organically over time and expanded along with the needs of the community.

Materials: The use of native Bridgeport brick throughout the historic district, along with some wood, masonry, and decorative cast iron elements, has remained consistent throughout the development of the town and the district retains sufficient integrity of materials. Many of the display windows within the district have been replaced, which is commonplace with commercial buildings in continuous use for over 100 years, although in many cases the original fenestration pattern is intact. While some buildings within the district have experienced alterations, including replacement windows, doors, or siding, many of the alterations were completed during the period of significance in order to maintain functionality or accommodate change in use. These alterations do not compromise the district as a whole to such a degree that it is no longer able to convey its integrity of materials.

Workmanship: The Bridgeport Commercial Historic District retains numerous buildings that date to the early period of its development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that are indicative of national trends in one and two-part commercial buildings of that time period. A majority of the buildings are simply adorned brick or masonry structures that were constructed quickly and inexpensively in order to serve the burgeoning community that emerged after the discovery of coal in the region. Subsequent building phases in the district reflect a continuation and evolution of the town's commercial needs, and buildings reflect the design preferences of their era, including slanted glass display windows (Resource 12), while utilizing similar massing and materials, like local Bridgeport brick or sandstone. Thus the district retains sufficient integrity of workmanship to convey its role as the commercial heart of the community.

Feeling: The linear configuration of the district, consisting of a narrow two-lane roadway flanked on the north and south with sidewalks and commercial buildings flush with the sidewalks, has remained consistent since the district was first platted in the late nineteenth century. The low one and two-story buildings have been maintained, and local businesses continue to occupy a majority of the buildings in town; no large franchises are located within the district. The district remains the commercial core of the community, full of retail and restaurants and the integrity of feeling as a small, semi-rural commercial district is intact.

Association: Properties located within the historic district include those that date to the early development of the community, including the prominent former First National Bank building (Resource 18), commercial buildings constructed in the 1920s and 1930s as auto shops or WPA-funded municipal buildings (Resource 19), and several postwar commercial buildings that reflect the rapid commercial and recreational development of the community in the postwar era (Resource 1). The district's association with the development of the small community, spanning over a century, is still legible.

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Table 1. Summary of Resources in the Historic District

Resource numbers correspond to those on Map 3. For a more comprehensive table of resources, see Table 2.

#	C/NC	Address	Year Built/ Alteration	Style/Form	Historic Function	Current Function
1	C	916 Halsell St	1964	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce; Recreation	Vacant
2	NC	1002-1004 Halsell St	1917, c. 1960 and 2000s	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce/Business	Vacant
3	NC	1006 Halsell St	1895	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce; Recreation	Vacant
4	C	1008 Halsell St	Ca. 1910	2-part Commercial Block	Commerce; Domestic	Vacant
5	NC	1010 Halsell St	1918	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Commerce
6	C	1012 Halsell St	Ca. 1910	2-part Commercial Block	Healthcare; Social; Commerce	Commerce; Social
7	C	1014-1016 Halsell St	1917	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Commerce
8	NC	1018 Halsell St	1906	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Commerce
9	C	1020 Halsell St	1908, recon. ca. 2009	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Vacant
10	NC	1024-6 Halsell St	1900	2-part Commercial Block	Commerce; Transportation	Commerce
11	C	1028 Halsell St	1893	2-part Commercial Block	Commerce; Domestic	Commerce
12	C	901-905 Halsell St	1950	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Commerce
13	C	907 Halsell St	Ca. 1910	1-part Commercial Block	Government; Commerce	Commerce
14	C	909 Halsell St	1913	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Commerce
15	C	913 Halsell St	Ca. 1930	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Commerce
16	C	915 Halsell St	Ca. 1920	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Commerce
17	NC	921 Halsell St	Ca. 1900, recon. ca. 1965	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Commerce
18	C	1001 Halsell St	1906-1907	Romanesque Revival (modest) 2-part Commercial Block	Commerce; Healthcare	Vacant
19	C	1304 10 th St	Ca. 1935	PWA Moderne (modest) 1-part Commercial Block	Government; Commerce	Commerce
20	C	1003 Halsell St	Ca. 1910	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Commerce
21	C	1005 Halsell St	Ca. 1910	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce; Transportation	Commerce
22	NC	1009 Halsell St	1946, recons. 1997	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Commerce
23	C	1011 Halsell St	1918	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Commerce
24	C	1013 Halsell St	1918	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Commerce
25	C	1015 Halsell St	1918	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce; Healthcare	Commerce
26	NC	1017-1019 Halsell St	Ca. 1915	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce; Transportation	Commerce
27	C	1021 Halsell St	1915	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce; Healthcare	Commerce
28	NC	1023-1025 Halsell St	Ca. 1900	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Commerce
29	NC	1101 Halsell St	1955	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce	Commerce
30	C	1105 Halsell St	Ca. 1900	1-part Commercial Block	Commerce; Transportation	Vacant

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Statement of Significance

The Bridgeport Commercial Historic District is a physical manifestation of the tremendous growth and development of the town as it capitalized upon its abundant natural resources. Following the discovery of coal near Bridgeport during the late nineteenth century, the Rock Island Railroad was constructed through the coal fields in 1893. Since the coal fields and railroad were located approximately two miles away from the existing town, Bridgeport residents relocated their homes and businesses to a new town site along the railroad corridor. The nominated district consists of buildings that were constructed following the establishment of “new” Bridgeport in 1893 and are reflective of the town’s commercial development through the mid-twentieth century when tourism and recreation fueled the economy. As the longtime center of Bridgeport’s business and industry, the district is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Commerce at the local level of significance. The period of significance is 1893, the construction date of the earliest resource, through 1964 when district development dropped precipitously.

Early Settlement of Wise County and Bridgeport

Spanish conquistador Francisco Vazquez de Coronado traveled through Wise County near the present location of Decatur in 1540, and noted several Native American villages, thought to be Wichita, located between the Trinity and Red Rivers. By 1835, the Wichita were no longer in the area, and it was inhabited by members of the Caddo tribe. Upon the arrival of Anglo settlers to, what is now, Wise County in the 1850s, one village of Delaware Indians was documented as living in the area, as well as several groups of the Kichai. By 1855, most Indigenous peoples were effectively removed from the region by state and federal armed forces.⁷

Colonel William H. Hunt was one of the earliest Anglo settlers in the region. He obtained extensive landholdings in western Wise County and established a cattle ranch called Cactus Hill during the 1850s.⁸ Hunt was instrumental in redirecting the Overland Southern Pacific Mail Route, also known as the Butterfield Stage Line, through Decatur and near the future site of Bridgeport. Established in 1858, the Overland Southern Pacific Mail Route was both a communication and transportation route linking the east and west coasts. The route initially passed through Wise County near Alvord but at the urging of both Decatur citizens and William H. Hunt, it was quickly rerouted to pass further south through Decatur. To facilitate this move, a route was cleared through Wise County to the Jack County line. In addition, Hunt organized a group of individuals who secured a charter from the West Fork Bridge Company to construct a bridge across the West Fork of the Trinity River in 1860.⁹ Upon the construction of the bridge, “Bridgeport” was born, where the stage line made its third and final stop in Wise County.¹⁰

Coal deposits discovered near Bridgeport in the late 19th century sparked the city’s first economic boom. Credit for the discovery is attributed to Charles D. Cates Jr., who arrived in Wise County in 1855. After achieving financial success in the mercantile and cattle businesses, Cates shifted to real estate speculation and amassed large quantities of land. He was initially drawn to Bridgeport by its location along the supply route to Fort Richardson in neighboring Jack County. Established after the Civil War, Fort Richardson required large quantities of supplies, which were shipped via rail to Denison and then hauled to the Fort through Bridgeport. Cates recognized the economic value of bridging the west fork of the Trinity River and in 1873 constructed an iron toll bridge at a cost of \$5,500. He then charged a \$1.00 toll per wagon and \$0.50 per horseman to cross the bridge. Cates built a store on one end of the bridge and a saw, grist mill, and cotton mill on the other end. He also began purchasing large quantities of land near Bridgeport, amassing 2,000 acres. While digging a well on his property, workers discovered a rich coal deposit approximately sixty feet below the surface of the

⁷ B. Jane England, “Wise County,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed April 24, 2023, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/wise-county>.

⁸ Cates, Cliff D. *Pioneer History of Wise County*, (Decatur: Wise County Old Settlers’ Association, 1907), 37; Moore, Mary Cates, *Centennial History of Wise County*, (Dallas: The Story Book Press, 1953).

⁹ David Minor, “Bridgeport, TX,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed April 10, 2023, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/bridgeport-tx>.

¹⁰ Cates, *Pioneer History of Wise County*, 108-9.

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

ground.¹¹ Recognizing the lucrative business opportunities at hand, Cates immediately set about establishing mines on his Bridgeport property and sharing his discovery with other businessmen.¹² By 1881 “coal mine mania” was taking place in Bridgeport.¹³ Together with other prominent businessmen, Cates chartered the Wise County Coal Company in 1882 with J.C. Carpenter, J.G. “Glen” Halsell, J.J. Lang, Henry Greathouse, and Dan Waggoner. The company purchased mining land from Cates upon which they based their operations.¹⁴

The Fort Worth and Denver City Railroad arrived in Decatur in 1882 and was the first railroad to pass through Wise County.¹⁵ The railroad had a tremendous economic impact because it broadened the market for county’s agricultural products and cattle. It also improved transport of Bridgeport’s newfound coal reserves, which could be hauled overland from Bridgeport to Decatur and then shipped by rail.¹⁶ With the railroad’s easier, safer, and faster transport, Wise County’s cattle industry expanded and became the county’s largest export. Cotton production also flourished following the arrival of the railroad, including in Bridgeport where a cotton gin was preparing the town’s cotton for market as early as 1884.¹⁷ Thanks in large part to the advancements afforded by the railroad, the town of Bridgeport saw significant growth during the late nineteenth century. By 1884, the town was home to several dry goods concerns, a saw and grist mill, a cotton gin, two drug stores, two hotels, three doctors, a blacksmith, a liquor dispenser, and a school was under construction.¹⁸

Establishment and Early Development of “New” Bridgeport

Though the discovery of coal had been a boon to Bridgeport’s economy and growth during the 1880s, mining operations were initially limited due to the challenges of transporting the coal overland to the railroad at Decatur.¹⁹ It wasn’t until the Rock Island Railroad arrived in the area in 1893 (and expanded further westward in 1898) that a more direct and efficient means for transporting coal became available.²⁰

The Rock Island Railroad was routed through the Wise County Coal Company’s property, which bypassed the town of Bridgeport by nearly two miles. The Wise County Coal Company gave the Rock Island Railroad right-of-way through their coal fields and allotted 100 acres of land for a depot. In addition, the Wise County Coal Company and the Rock Island Railroad formed the Bridgeport Town Company in order to develop 160 acres of land into a new town site adjacent to the depot.²¹

The new town that is to be founded in [the] Wise County coal field upon the construction of the Rock Island to that place is soon to be christened “Coal City.” The coal company will meet with some of the Rock Island officials next Friday for the purpose of organizing a town site company and to put lots on the market for sale...Bridgeport is within about 2 miles of this new town, and its citizens are making speedy preparations to move.²²

¹¹ Cates, *Pioneer History of Wise County*, 308-310, 458; “Pioneer Citizen of County is Dead,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, November 14, 1919, 1.

¹² *Paradise Messenger*, June 10, 1881

¹³ *Paradise Messenger*, September 2, 1881

¹⁴ Moore, *Centennial History of Wise County*, 70; Doug Bridwell, “1873, Not So Good, But 1973 Excellent Year,” *The Bridgeport Index*, July 19, 1973, 37; Bridgeport Coal Mines Historical Marker, <https://atlas.thc.state.tx.us/Details/5497000506>

¹⁵ Moore, *Centennial History of Wise County*, 64.

¹⁶ *Wise County Messenger*, November 27, 1886.

¹⁷ Moore, *Centennial History of Wise County*, 65, 68; “Bridgeport, Tex.,” *Alvord Messenger*, August 29, 1884.

¹⁸ “Bridgeport, Tex.,” *Alvord Messenger*, August 29, 1884.

¹⁹ “Bridgeport,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, December 18, 1886, 2.

²⁰ Moore, *Centennial History of Wise County*, 68-9.

²¹ *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, February 4, 1893, 8; “Bridgeport, March 18,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger* March 25, 1893, 4; “Prairies, Pecan Trees Dot Area,” *The Bridgeport Index*, July 19, 1973, 102.

²² “Decatur, March 23,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, April 1, 1893, 1.

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Coal City was surveyed by J.M. Kirkman in the spring of 1893 and the Rock Island Railroad Company quickly began laying out the streets in early 1893.²³ Lots were first available for sale on June 3, 1893, and a barbecue picnic was held to welcome the large crowd of buyers that assembled. Over \$10,000 worth of town lots were sold on the first day.²⁴ Local newspapers observed, “Bridgeport is making a general move to Coal City,”²⁵ when residents relocated their homes and businesses to the new town, which soon was known as “New” Bridgeport. By late 1893, all but one of the town’s businesses had deserted “Old” Bridgeport for the new town center, leaving only residences behind.²⁶

The east-west downtown streets of Bridgeport were named for the founders of the Wise County Coal Company, including Halsell, Greathouse, Cates, Stevens, and Carpenter Streets. Halsell Street emerged as the main commercial corridor.²⁷ By 1894, approximately six-hundred people resided in the new town and Bridgeport businesses included: “2 blacksmith shops, 3 general merchandise stores, 2 hotels (one not quite ready for occupancy), 3 barber shops, 2 grocery stores, 3 saloons, 2 butcher shops, 1 livery stable, 1 drug store, 1 shoemaker, 1 furniture store, 1 hardware, 1 lumber yard, 1 restaurant, 1 real estate office, 2 physicians, 1 church house.”²⁸ A \$5,000 stone bank building was under construction in 1893 (Resource 11).²⁹

Coal continued to be a predominant factor in the Bridgeport economy during the first decades of the twentieth century. The Wise County Coal Company continued to operate on the east side of Bridgeport and built railroad spurs to connect the mines directly to the rail line.³⁰ In 1900, the Wise County Coal Company was purchased by Colonel William H. Ashton of Virginia and renamed the Bridgeport Coal Company. M.H. John was sent to Bridgeport to oversee the development and expansion of the mines. Many of the mine workers were immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries, who lived in miner’s cottages adjacent to the mines.³¹

The earliest buildings in the Bridgeport Commercial Historic District are largely concentrated between 10th and 11th Streets and are constructed of sandstone.³² The oldest known extant building is 1028 Halsell Street (Resource 11), which was constructed in 1893, shortly after the “new” Bridgeport town lots were sold. Originally the Coal City Bank, the building was mentioned in several 1893 newspaper articles describing the construction of a \$5,000, two-story stone bank.³³ It was built by J.R. “Bob” Stevens, who founded the Coal City Bank and also served as president of the Wise County Coal Company.³⁴ Stevens was heavily invested in the future of Bridgeport, and even spearheaded an effort to move the Wise County Seat from Decatur to Bridgeport in 1895.³⁵ Stevens also constructed 1024 and 1026 Halsell (non-contributing Resource 10), immediately adjacent to 1028. An iron footplate at the entrance to 1026 reads “J.R. Stevens.” By 1910 the building was home to Bridgeport Drug Company, owned by Pete Alexander and A.J. Galey.³⁶ Another early extant building is located at 1006 Halsell Street (Resource 3), which was built ca. 1895. Built of stone, it was owned by

²³ “Bridgeport, March 18,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger* March 25, 1893, 4.

²⁴ “Searching for Bridgeport Stories,” *Bridgeport Index*, March 16, 2006, 3; “Prairies, Pecan Trees Dot Area,” *Bridgeport Index*, July 19, 1973, 102.; *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, June 17, 1893, 4; “East Mound, June 12,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, June 10, 1893, 8.

²⁵ “Locals,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, July 1, 1893, 5.

²⁶ “Bridgeport,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, November 10, 1893, 5; “Bridgeport,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, August 31, 1894, 1.

²⁷ Sprecher, Ken and the Bridgeport Historical Society, *Images of America: Bridgeport*, (Arcadia Publishing, 2010), 8.

²⁸ “Bridgeport,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, August 31, 1894, 1.; “Bridgeport,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, November 10, 1893, 5; “Bridgeport,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, August 31, 1894, 1.

²⁹ “Bridgeport,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, August 26, 1893, 8.

³⁰ “Bridgeport,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, August 31, 1894.

³¹ Moore, *Centennial History of Wise County*, 70-71.

³² The primary facades of some of Bridgeport’s oldest stone structures feature brick or painted primary facades—an alteration that frequently took place during the period of significance. 1023-1025 is an excellent example (brick facade over stone).

³³ Item # 50: “Plat of Town of Bridgeport Texas in 1900 as Remembered by Gus Funk” Bridgeport Heritage Museum Display; “Bridgeport, July 18, 1893,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, July 22, 1893, 5; “Bridgeport, Nov. 27,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, December 1, 1893, 5

³⁴ Bridgeport Heritage Society Binders: Southside, Volume 3, 1028 Halsell Street; “Bridgeport,” *Decatur Wise Messenger*, August 26, 1893.

³⁵ “After the County Seat,” *Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, January 13, 1895, 8.

³⁶ Bridgeport Heritage Society Binders: Southside, Volume 3, 1028 Halsell Street.

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

B.B. Poore, a jeweler, druggist, and optician whose family operated a combination jewelry and drug store in the building between 1895 and 1964.³⁷ 1020 Halsell Street (Resource 9) is a one-story stone building that was constructed ca. 1908. Between at least 1916 and 1932, it was occupied by R.W. Caldwell Hardware.³⁸

While the oldest surviving buildings on Halsell Street are of stone construction, many of Bridgeport's earliest buildings were constructed of wood. However, several fires took place in Bridgeport's downtown commercial district during the twentieth century, leading many local business owners to rebuild using stone or brick.³⁹ While stone would continue to be a popular building material in Bridgeport due to the readily available local supply, brick increased in popularity during the twentieth century, particularly following the establishment of a local brick industry in 1906. Cast iron storefronts also became popular in the district, indicating that the town of Bridgeport was aware of national building trends and markets. Though unclear if they are original or replicas, the extant cast iron storefronts are consistent with those present in historic photographs of the district. Though research did not indicate which buildings were constructed with locally sourced materials, there is a high probability that many of the buildings within the district were constructed using locally produced stone or brick.

Among the oldest extant brick commercial structures in Bridgeport is 1105 Halsell (Resource 30), constructed circa 1900 by A.B. Conley Jr. as a general merchandise store.⁴⁰ Peter Abdul Boaz constructed several other early brick buildings along the north side of Halsell Street, between 9th and 10th Streets. 907 Halsell Street (Resource 13), constructed circa 1910, served as the Bridgeport Post Office beginning in 1920 and later Boaz Grocery. Boaz constructed a larger brick commercial building at 909 Halsell (Resource 14) in 1913, leasing the western half of this building to A.H. Vardaman, who operated a grocery store there for many years.⁴¹ Constructed ca. 1910, 1003 Halsell Street (Resource 20) was home to H.H. Hardin Hardware from approximately 1913-1928. The business also owned a large lumber yard on the block directly behind the hardware store. 1005 Halsell (Resource 21) originally housed W.A. Brown Grocery store until the 1930s and was later the long-time home of White Auto from 1941 until the 1970s.⁴²

A number of prominent buildings were constructed on Halsell Street during the first decade of the twentieth century. Between 1906 and 1907, the First National Bank was constructed at 1001 Halsell Street (Resource 18). The most prominent building in the Bridgeport Commercial District, the bank was constructed of rusticated concrete block and reflects modest Romanesque Revival architecture. The First National Bank occupied the building until 1959.⁴³ In late 1911, Dr. K.L. Buckner and Dr. B.L. Wyatt opened the Wise County Sanitarium in a two-story brick building at 1012 Halsell Street (Resource 6). Constructed ca. 1907, the building's original use is unknown. At the time of the Sanitarium's opening, both private rooms and an open ward were available to patients. Sanitariums generally focused on the rehabilitation of long-term illnesses, especially tuberculosis during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As the conditions of working in a coal mine put workers at a high risk of contracting tuberculosis and other respiratory illnesses, it is likely that some of Bridgeport's coal miners received treatment at the Sanitarium. The building housed a modern operating room, clinical laboratory, and x-ray equipment, and was equipped with electricity, gas, and running water. Initially, Dr. Buckner served as the Medical Director and Dr. Wyatt as the Surgical Director, though Dr. Wyatt

³⁷ Bridgeport Heritage Society Binders: Southside, Volume 2, 1006 Halsell Street.

³⁸ Bridgeport Heritage Society Binders: Southside, Volume 2, 1020 Halsell Street.

³⁹ "Fire at Bridgeport Destroys a Block," *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, November 8, 1907, 1; "3 Stores Burn at Bridgeport; Loss is Near \$50,000" *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, January 1, 1916.

⁴⁰ Bridgeport Heritage Society Binders: Northside, Volume 3, 1105 Halsell Street.

⁴¹ "County News Notes," *Wise County Messenger*, September 19, 1913, 1.

⁴² Bridgeport Heritage Society Binders: Northside, Volume 2, 1003 and 1005 Halsell Street

⁴³ First National Bank Vertical File, Bridgeport Heritage Society.

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

departed Bridgeport in 1913 and sold his interest in the Sanitarium to Dr. Brazleton.⁴⁴ The building continued to function as the Wise County Sanitarium until the early 1920s, when Dr. Buckner moved to Fort Worth.⁴⁵

Twentieth Century Development in Bridgeport

The *First Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the State of Texas, 1909-1910* captures the continued growth of industry and commerce in Bridgeport 15 years after moving the town to its new location. In addition to the Bridgeport and Wise County Coal Companies, the chief manufacturing industries in Bridgeport included the Bridgeport Light Company, Bridgeport Ice Company, the Trinity Compress Company, and the Wise County Brick Company.⁴⁶

While Bridgeport coal was the primary source of fuel for much of the region during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the completion of the Lone Star Gas Company pipeline in 1910 (which ran from Petrolia in North Texas to Dallas/Fort Worth) introduced a competing energy source that impacted coal production.⁴⁷ In 1915, the Rock Island Railroad converted from coal to oil as a source of fuel. Since the Rock Island was a primary consumer of Bridgeport's coal, this had a significant impact on coal production and shortened the operating hours of the plants.⁴⁸ Diminishing coal production led many immigrant mine workers to leave the town, though some found work in the local brick and stone industries.⁴⁹ By 1929, most of Bridgeport's mines had closed. The Singleton Mine was the last Bridgeport coal mine in operation, closing in the early 1940s.⁵⁰

While coal factored heavily in Bridgeport's early development, other local industries were established in the early twentieth century that furthered the town's development. An unintended benefit of coal mining in Bridgeport was the unearthing of large quantities of high-quality shale: a type of fine-grained sedimentary rock formed from mud. Enormous mounds of soil and shale were piled next to the mines as they were dug, where they remained until it was discovered that the shale could be used to produce clay products such as brick. In 1906, the Wise County Brick Company established the town's first brick plant near Turkey and Ninth Streets.⁵¹ In 1916, the Bridgeport Brick and Tile Company was incorporated by a group of Fort Worth businessmen who purchased the old Wise County Brick Company property.⁵²

When coal mining operations in Bridgeport began to decline in the 1910s, and therefore no longer provided an abundant supply of shale for brickmaking, shale was obtained through excavation.⁵³ During the 1920s, the demand for Bridgeport brick expanded dramatically. The nearby town of Decatur used the brick extensively for some of the town's largest buildings, including the First National Bank and a number of prominent residences.⁵⁴ By 1929, the Bridgeport Brick Company was operating seven plants in Texas, with Acme Brick Company serving as their sales agency.⁵⁵ The Bridgeport

⁴⁴ *Fort Worth Record and Register*, November 6, 1911; "The Wise County Sanitarium," *Wise County Messenger*, April 26, 1912; American Medical Directory 1916, American Medical Association, 1469. Accessed May 19, 2023, https://books.google.com/books?id=QtM5AQAAAJ&pg=PA1469&lpg=PA1469&dq=%22wise+county+sanitarium%22&source=bl&ots=FJUYbCwKHS&sig=ACfU3U2WzjH4M9UM4IVkGBD1gR0wN0pO-Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiAhrOd4oH_AhWGg4kEHQLKAHYQ6AF6BAGaEAM#v=onepage&q=%22wise%20county%20sanitarium%22&f=false

⁴⁵ "News from Bridgeport," *Wise County Messenger*, September 10, 1920.

⁴⁶ First Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of Texas, 1909-1910, 282, 285.

⁴⁷ England, "Wise County."

⁴⁸ "Bridgeport," *Decatur Wise Messenger*, October 15, 1915.

⁴⁹ Moore, *Centennial History of Wise County*, 71; Wise County Library Association, *Tellin' Texas, A Brief History of the Cities & Towns of Wise County*, (Wise County: Humanities Texas,) 8.

⁵⁰ *Tellin' Texas*, 8.

⁵¹ "More Treasure is Discovered from the Land," Bridgeport Heritage Museum display.

⁵² "Charters Issued," *San Antonio Light*, January 27, 1916, 18; *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, January 28, 1916, 16.

⁵³ "Bridgeport Plant Turns Out 110,000 Bricks Each Day," *Denton Record Chronicle*, September 8, 1957, 32.

⁵⁴ "Brick Plant is Going Concern," *Decatur Wise Messenger*, October 3, 1924, 1.

⁵⁵ "Mexia Brick Shipped for Borden Milk Plant at Waco," *Mexia Weekly Herald*, March 1, 1929, 4.

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Brick Company declared bankruptcy in 1930 and the plant was closed for several years. The property, located west of downtown Bridgeport at 102 Main Street, was acquired by Acme Brick Company and reopened in 1935 (the plant officially closed in 2007).⁵⁶

In addition to brick, as early as 1893 newspapers in the region touted the “excellent sandstone” found in Bridgeport, which had become a popular construction material for local commercial buildings.⁵⁷ Though firm documentation has not been found to identify which structures which were definitively constructed of local stone, Resources 9 and 11 (as well as the non-contributing Resources 10 and 28) were likely constructed of local stone. The rear elevations of Resources 7 and 8 also appear to have been constructed of local stone. Stone would continue to be a profitable industry in Bridgeport during the twentieth century, though used for more utilitarian purposes. The Texas Stone Company was established in 1919, and eventually operated six plants in the vicinity of Bridgeport. The company primarily produced crushed stone for use in railroad ballast and road construction. The company was later acquired by Trinity Division-General Portland, Inc.⁵⁸

During the 1920s, Tennessee Dairies (a Dallas-area milk distribution company) established a receiving station in Bridgeport, one of four in Wise County. In 1924, Bridgeport dairy farmers produced 504,968 pounds of milk for the company, which distributed it throughout the Dallas region.⁵⁹ Though Bridgeport ranchers had historically raised a significant number of livestock for the production of beef, many people shifted to raising dairy cows following the establishment of the receiving station, a trend that would only continue in subsequent decades. Increased standardization for the sanitization requirements of milk facilities led to the creation of Grade A barns, many of which were constructed in Bridgeport.⁶⁰

The combined impact of thriving local industries and the general economic prosperity of the 1920s led to a period of increased construction along Bridgeport’s main commercial thoroughfare. New buildings during this period were nearly all constructed of brick, likely using locally produced bricks. 1021 Halsell Street (Resource 27) was constructed in 1915 as Bridgeport Drug (later Alexander Drug in the 1930s and Lester Drug in the 1940s). A grouping of three ca. 1918 commercial buildings are extant along the north side of Halsell Street. James Skinner Variety Store operated at 1011 Halsell Street (Resource 23) from 1918-1953, while 1013 Halsell (Resource 24) was home to Butler and Summers Grocery (later Summers Grocery) from 1920-1936. 1015 Halsell Street (Resource 25) is potentially slightly older than 1011 and 1013 and was believed to have been the location of Sneed Pharmacy in 1918. It was later the office of local physician Dr. Funk. While several hotels were constructed along Halsell Street during the early twentieth century, only one former hotel remains extant (Resource 4). Though the original use of 1008 Halsell Street is unknown, by 1920 the two-story brick building operated as the Iowa Hotel. In 1920 the first floor was renovated and enlarged for use as a moving picture theater by W.F. Box of Dallas.⁶¹

Bridgeport and the Great Depression

With the onset of the Great Depression in the 1930s, the town of Bridgeport faced several significant challenges. A severe drought impacted much of the United States, including Bridgeport and greater Wise County. The lack of rainfall caused crops to fail, and many local ranchers were forced to slaughter their cattle rather than watch them die of thirst or starvation. While cotton production had been on the decline for many years in Wise County, the drought conditions and

⁵⁶ Bill Beck, “Acme Brick Company: 125 Years Across Three Centuries,” https://brick.com/sites/default/files/attach/acme_digital_book_single_pages-sm.pdf, 38.

⁵⁷ “Bridgeport,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, November 10, 1893, 5.

⁵⁸ Sipes, D.C., *From Wagon Wheels to Rocket Ships, Bridgeport: The First 100 Years*, (Bridgeport: Bridgeport Centennial Celebration Committee, 1973), 52.

⁵⁹ “Tennessee Man Quotes Figures,” *Wise County Messenger*, October 31, 1924; “Bridgeport Dairy Prospects Bright,” *Wise County Messenger*, April 6, 1923.

⁶⁰ Moore, *Centennial History of Wise County*, 123-4

⁶¹ “News From Bridgeport,” *Decatur Wise County Messenger*, June 11, 1920, 2.

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

boll weevil infestation that plagued Texas during the Depression led to its near absolute abandonment. A look at the number of bales of cotton ginned in Wise County demonstrates the steep decline in cotton production over the course of the twentieth century: in 1906, Wise County cotton producers ginned 32,238 bales of cotton, but by 1916, that number dropped to 16,329 bales. The decline only steepened during the Depression years: a drop to 10,662 bales in 1926, 5,004 bales in 1936, 2,911 in 1939, and finally 357 bales in 1944.⁶²

Though the Depression certainly brought challenges to Bridgeport, several positive events took place to shape the community. In 1931, the Bridgeport Dam was completed on the Trinity River after two years of construction. In addition to creating a larger water supply for the city of Fort Worth, it also alleviated flooding issues in Bridgeport and created a recreational area along the newly created Lake Bridgeport. Campgrounds, cabins, and other modest tourist amenities were quickly established along the banks of the new lake, and it became a popular swimming and fishing destination.⁶³ The newly formed lake flooded much of the area that had been the former site of “old” Bridgeport, as well as the W.H. Hunt Cactus Ranch.

While new construction slowed considerably during the Great Depression, during the late 1930s a new post office was constructed at the rear of the First National Bank, at 1304 10th Street (Resource 19). Built by W.J. Mann, the new post office was a simple, one-story brick structure with modest architectural details reflective of the popular PWA Moderne style of the 1930s. The Bridgeport post office operated in this location until 1959.⁶⁴

WWII and Post-War Bridgeport

Upon the United States’ entrance into World War II, well-paying defense industry jobs became readily available in Fort Worth, only 51 miles away. Particularly during the war years, this drew many of Bridgeport’s farm laborers to higher paying jobs in the city.⁶⁵ Bridgeport’s brick and stone industries played a role in the tremendous construction boom that took place in the region during the postwar years, providing bricks for residential construction and crushed stone for highways, airports, and other infrastructure projects. During the 1950s, oil and natural gas discoveries near Bridgeport led to the formation of a new industry and economic driver that would impact the community for decades. Finally, development surrounding Lake Bridgeport would bring an influx of tourists and visitors to Bridgeport, who frequented Halsell Street to shop and dine at local establishments.

During the mid-twentieth century, Acme Brick Company became the country’s largest producer of face brick, operating 29 plants and 23 offices in six states.⁶⁶ In 1957, 70 employees worked to produce 110,000 bricks a day at the Bridgeport plant.⁶⁷ “Bridgeport Brick” became a fashionable exterior cladding material on mid-century homes, and was highlighted in profiles of new construction.⁶⁸ While the Bridgeport plant produced several types and sizes of bricks, Bridgeport became known for one style, in particular. The shale excavated in Bridgeport produced bricks with a distinctive pink and white color blend, referred to as “Bridgeport Pink.” The Trinity University Campus in San Antonio (NRHP 2018) was constructed almost entirely of Bridgeport pink brick during the mid-to-late twentieth century, including buildings, walls,

⁶² Moore, *Centennial History of Wise County*, 117, 123, 169

⁶³ Moore, *Centennial History of Wise County*, 111-3

⁶⁴ Bridgeport Heritage Society Binders: Northside, Volume 2, 1001 Halsell Street.

⁶⁵ Moore, *Centennial History of Wise County*, 169-70

⁶⁶ “Acme to Celebrate 75th Anniversary,” *The Bridgeport Index*, September 16, 1966, 1.

⁶⁷ “Bridgeport Plant Turns Out 110,00 Bricks Each Day,” *Denton Record Chronicle*, September 8, 1957, 32.

⁶⁸ “Home Fashion Time,” *Abilene Reporter News*, September 24, 1950; “Spacious Modern Home Overlooks Golf Course,” *Wichita Daily Times*, April 15, 1951, 13C; “About People,” *San Antonio Express and News*, September 16, 1956, 3F; “Floor Plan for Modern Home Stresses Privacy and Light,” *The Amarillo Sunday News-Globe*, June 25, 1950, 14.

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

and curbs.⁶⁹ The Bridgeport Acme Brick plant continued to produce brick for decades until the plant closed amidst the economic downturn of 2007.⁷⁰

Bridgeport's stone industry expanded significantly during the mid-twentieth century. The Bridgeport Stone Plant (a division of Texas Industries, Inc., TXI) was opened near Bridgeport, and produced crushed stone for use in concrete and road building, as well as manufactured sand. Gifford-Hill & Company began operating three miles north of Bridgeport in 1956, and produced stone for a variety of purposes, including road construction and ballast for railroads. During the 1970s, much of the stone quarried near Bridgeport was utilized in the construction of the Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport.⁷¹

In addition to the region's supply of stone, Wise County is located above the Barnett Shale: the largest underground reservoir of natural gas in Texas. During the 1940s, a number of "wildcatters" drilled exploratory wells in Wise County in hopes of finding oil and natural gas, though they were largely unsuccessful. In 1951, Ellison Miles and John A. Jackson of the Miles Production Company made a discovery in Boonsville (less than 15 miles from Bridgeport), that led them to believe that vast quantities of natural gas lay beneath Wise County and surrounding areas.⁷² Miles shared his thoughts with a former Texas A&M classmate, George P. Mitchell, whose company (at the time Oil Drilling, Inc, later Mitchell and Mitchell Oil and Gas Corporation, and eventually Mitchell Energy) purchased a 3,000 acre mineral lease in Wise County and began drilling. Mitchell's drilling efforts were highly successful, and the company purchased the mineral leases on an additional 300,000 acres in 1953.⁷³ While drilling in the Barnett Shale yielded both oil and natural gas, natural gas was found in larger quantities. The rapidly expanding gas and oil industry in Wise County led to new jobs and population growth in Bridgeport.⁷⁴

Following the creation of the Bridgeport Dam in 1931, the newly created Lake Bridgeport gradually became a popular recreation and tourist destination for swimming, fishing, and boating. In the prosperous postwar years, a number of communities were developed around the lake, including Lakevue Estates and Lake Bridgeport.⁷⁵ In 1964, a multi-million-dollar resort community to be located at the south end of Lake Bridgeport was announced, called "Runaway Bay." Developed on 3,800 acres, the community's initial construction took place over the course of a decade.⁷⁶ Bridgeport's close proximity to the lake and surrounding resort communities made it a popular choice for shopping and dining, and tourism became an increasingly important factor in Bridgeport's economy.⁷⁷

A number of mid-century commercial buildings were constructed along Halsell Street during the mid-to-late twentieth century. In 1950, the Boaz family constructed a large store at the corner of 9th Street and Halsell (Resource 12), where a filling station and garage had burned in 1932. Corner Drug opened in 1951 and operated at 901-905 Halsell (Resource 12) until 1989. In 1956, Billie Green's Dry Goods Store opened at 1101 Halsell (Resource 29), a building that was

⁶⁹Tiger, Leeroy, "Bridgeport Pink Bricks," Trinity University, Accessed May 12, 2023, <https://www.trinity.edu/news/bridgeport-pink-bricks>; Trinity University Historic District, San Antonio, Bexar County, National Register of Historic Places, Reference # 100002471.

⁷⁰Sipes, *From Wagon Trains to Rocket Ships*, 88

⁷¹Sipes, *From Wagon Trains to Rocket Ships*, 52, 91

⁷²Steward, Dan B., "George P. Mitchell and the Barnett Shale," *Journal of Petroleum Technology*, October 31, 2013.

⁷³Ron Bass and Laurie E. Jasinski, "Mitchell, George Phydias," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed May 26, 2023, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/mitchell-george-phydias>; "Mitchell's gamble changed an industry, his philanthropy changed the future," *Wise County Messenger*, July 31, 2013, <https://www.wcmessenger.com/articles/mitchells-gamble-changed-an-industry-his-philanthropy-changed-the-future/>, accessed May 26, 2023.

⁷⁴Bridgeport Main Street Vertical File, Bridgeport Heritage Society.

⁷⁵"Lake Bridgeport," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed May 23, 2023, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/lake-bridgeport>.

⁷⁶Lisa C. Maxwell, "Runaway Bay, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed May 23, 2023, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/runaway-bay-tx>.

⁷⁷Sipes, *From Wagon Trails to Rocket Ships*, 42.

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

constructed the year prior on the former site of a filling station. Green's was another long-time Halsell Street business, operating until 1986.⁷⁸

In 1964, J.H. Briscoe opened the Bridgeport Recreation Center in a new building located at 916 Halsell Street (Resource 1). The Recreation Center had pool tables, pinball machines, shuffleboard, and refreshments, and operated for ten years before the building was sold for use as a sewing factory.⁷⁹

During the final decades of the twentieth century, Bridgeport's economy continued to depend upon the local stone, brick, oil and gas, and tourism. With the exception of the brick industry, most of these industries continue to be Bridgeport's primary economic drivers today. Acme Brick Company closed the Bridgeport brick plant in 2007 as a result of the Great Recession, ending a century of brick production in the town. Bridgeport has continued to draw tourists visiting Lake Bridgeport, as well as visitors to the Northwest Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Park, which opened in 2009. Created on over 300 acres of a former rock quarry, the park draws thousands of off-roading enthusiasts to Bridgeport each year.⁸⁰

Conclusion

The Bridgeport Commercial Historic District contains 30 resources, 20 of which are contributing, that represent the development of a town that forged a thriving economy centered on its rich natural resources. Profitable industries revolving around brick and stone, oil and natural gas, and later tourism led to the continued development and evolution of Bridgeport's downtown commercial district. The district includes several stone and brick commercial buildings that were constructed shortly after the town's collective move in 1893. Brick commercial buildings dating to the 1910s and 1920s replaced many of the town's original wood structures, pointing to the town's continued economic success and the increasing number of businesses that emerged to serve Bridgeport's growing population. The community's mid-century resources point to the economic boon that came with the discovery and successful drilling of the area's oil and natural gas reserves, as well as the nascent tourism industry that emerged following the creation of Lake Bridgeport and its surrounding development. The period of significance begins in 1893 with the earliest extant building within the district and extends to 1964 in accordance with NPS guidance and to encompass the significant economic developments that took place in Bridgeport during that period.

The district encompasses the historic commercial core of Bridgeport along Halsell Street. For over 100 years, citizens of Bridgeport operated their commercial enterprises on Halsell Street, alongside civic, social, medical, and government establishments. The district is nominated under Criterion A at the local level in the area of Commerce as a thriving downtown commercial area that emerged amidst tremendous economic development of the Bridgeport community.

Some modern infill is present within the district and some resources have undergone alterations to accommodate the changing needs and functions of the buildings. However, the concentration of commercial structures along Halsell Street, the modest height and massing of the buildings, and the consistent use of stone, brick, and masonry construction materials all convey the district's historic integrity. When examined as a whole, the Bridgeport Commercial Historic District clearly conveys its history as the commercial heart of a small Texas town established during the late nineteenth century

⁷⁸ Bridgeport Heritage Society Binders: Northside Volume 3, 1101 Halsell Street.





⁷⁹ Bridgeport Heritage Society Binders: Southside Volume 1, 916 Halsell Street.

⁸⁰ "Northwest OHV Park," City of Bridgeport, Accessed May 31, 2023, <http://www.cityofbridgeport.net/322/Northwest-OHV-Park>.

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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Table 2. Bridgeport Commercial Historic District Detailed Resource Inventory

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/NC
1	916 Halsell Street		 1965 (courtesy BHM property binders)	1964 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building of CMU construction with brick veneer on the primary (north) elevation. Historically had aluminum enframed window wall. Current entrance is off center to the east end of the north elevation, and a cantilevered canopy with corrugated metal roof shelters the window wall and entrance. No openings on east or west elevations. <i>Alterations:</i> Ca. 1970s addition on west elevation. Some infilled storefront and shifted front entrance door, completed when Bridgeport Index occupied the building. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Bridgeport Recreation Center (1964-1972); Sewing Factory (1972-1982); Bridgeport Index (1992-2002) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Vacant/Not-in-use	C
2	1002-1004 Halsell Street		 Undated, after 1960 remodel (courtesy BHM property binders)	1917, remodeled 1960s and 2000s One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building clad in brick on primary (north) elevation, with native stone at the rear of the property. Symmetrical façade with recessed entrance features glazed wooden doors, possibly original. Display windows and transom sit flush with the building face and are encased in a non-historic faux wood surround. No openings on the east elevation. <i>Alterations:</i> Subdivided into two retail establishments during the period of significance. Replacement storefront. Building was remodeled during the 1960s when original clerestory windows were removed, and new brick was added to the facade. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Bridgeport State Bank (1917-1929); Bird Café (1930s-1948); Joe Way Café (1948-1965); L.A. Brock's Insurance; Halsell Street Boutique and Retail <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Vacant/Not-in-use	NC




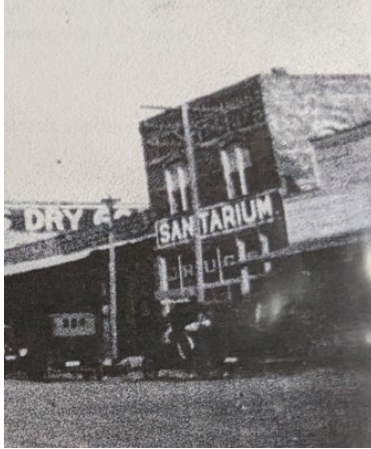
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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/NC
3	1006 Halsell Street		 1952 (courtesy BHM property binders)	1895 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with enframed window wall, central, aluminum-frame entrance, flat roof awning supported by tension rods, and sheet metal slipcover. <i>Alterations:</i> Historically brick building with brick dentils along the cornice and a band of clerestory windows above the cornice. Slipcovered ca. 1960s, remodeled in the 1990s. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/B.B. Poore's Drug Store (1895-1964); Recreation/Skating rink <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Vacant/Not-in-use	NC
4	1008 Halsell Street		 No date (courtesy BHM property binders)	Ca. 1910 Two-part Commercial Block	Two-story, flat roof building with masonry siding, tripartite storefront configuration on lower level separated by decorative cast iron pilasters. Two glazed wooden doors, one on the east end of primary (north) elevation inset into the façade, and one on the west end of the north elevation flush with the façade. Two evenly placed one-over-one windows with masonry lintels and sills on the second level and masonry corbeling along the cornice. <i>Alterations:</i> Lower level has been altered numerous times, including during POS, to accommodate different uses. In 1947 the hotel upstairs was converted to apartments. Remodeled in 2018. Replacement windows and storefront, replacement door. Painted masonry. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce & Domestic/Hotel and Theater; Iowa Hotel (1920 and National Theater); Apartments (1947); Antiques (1967); Tolle's Shoe Shack (1979-1983); Gingerbread House Florist & Gifts (1985-1997); Cook, McDonald, and Company CPA (2019) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Vacant/Not-in-use	C





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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/N/C
5	1010 Halsell Street		 Undated (ca. 1990s) (courtesy BHM property binders)	1918 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with brick siding, sign band inset into the brick at the frieze. Entrance has been recessed and features a central glazed door, a variety of windows, and horizontal wood surround. <i>Alterations:</i> Storefront recessed and new façade treatment, windows, and front doors. Slipcover removed. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Vine’s Café (1918-1933); Walton’s Variety Store (1945-1953); Lester’s Pharmacy; William’s Realty (1960) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Locality Craft Cocktails	NC
6	1012 Halsell Street		 Ca. 1920s (courtesy BHM property binders)	Ca. 1910 Two-part Commercial Block	Two-story, flat roof building with brick siding, central glazed entrance framed in glass block, large display window on the east end of the primary (north) elevation, smaller display window and single metal entrance door leading to the separate level on the west end. Standing seam metal, shed roof awning over the lower level supported by metal posts. Two sets of two-over-two aluminum windows set within arched brick lintels on the second level, and projecting brick courses in the frieze. <i>Alterations:</i> New awning, possibly infilled clerestory windows (post 52), new storefront with glass block (sometime prior to 1988). New windows and infilled windows on rear elevations. Some painted brick. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Health/Hospital and sanitarium (c. 1911-1925); Social/Masonic Lodge #587 (top floor, 1925-) Dentist (bottom floor, 1925-); Commerce/J.C. Frost Dug Store (1925-1942); Lester Drugs Pharmacy (1942-1953); Stationary Shop <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Matting and Framing; Social/Masonic Lodge	C





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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/NC
7	1014/1016 Halsell Street		 1963 (courtesy BHM property binders)	1917 One-part Commercial Block	One-story flat roof building with two storefronts, symmetrical façade consisting of two central, glazed entrance doors, one for each storefront, flanked by display windows. Building features brick siding, shed roof metal awning, and vertical wood sign band. <i>Alterations:</i> Replacement display windows, doors, awning (likely within POS), and sign band. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> East side: Commerce/ Bakery (1921); Luther Brock Tailor Shop (1922-1945); Deluxe Cleaners (1946); Williams Realty (1964-1973); Mitzi's Beauty Boutique (1974-2004) West side: Commerce/Morrison's Barber Shop (1936-1967); Brown's Barber Shop (1969-1986) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/ East side: Barber Shop West side: 1873 Mercantile	C
8	1018 Halsell Street		 2007 (courtesy BHM property binders)	1906 One-part Commercial Block	One story, flat roof building with central, inset double doors flanked by display windows flush with the façade. Six nine-lite clerestory windows, and dentils along the cornice. <i>Alterations:</i> Entirely new façade treatment, new and relocated doors, new windows. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Bridgeport Insurance Company (1906-1909); Continental Bank (1909-1916); Insurance (1924-1948); Margaret's Shop (1954-1972); Sears Merchant (1985-1993); Black Jack Bail Bonds (2014-2017) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Cool Creek Fine Art Gallery	NC



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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/NC
9	1020 Halsell Street		 <p data-bbox="779 829 1115 911">Top, no date (ca. 1915), bottom 1965 (courtesy BHM property binders)</p>	<p data-bbox="1157 337 1295 391">1908, recon. ca.2009</p> <p data-bbox="1157 431 1289 513">One-part Commercial Block</p>	<p data-bbox="1325 337 1885 578">One-story, flat roof, masonry building featuring two distinct storefronts. Each storefront is symmetrical and features a recessed entrance with double glazed doors flanked by display windows, clerestory windows, and wood bulkhead.</p> <p data-bbox="1325 492 1864 578"><i>Alterations:</i> Renovated/reconstructed in the 2000s based on historic photos of the building. Painted masonry.</p> <p data-bbox="1325 583 1864 732"><u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Jones Dry Goods (1908-1910); R.W. Caldwell Hardware (1916-1932); Spot Cash Grocery (1942-1965); Western Auto Associates Store (1965-1975); Auto (1986-1990); Sagebrush Café (2000-2018)</p> <p data-bbox="1325 737 1738 760"><u>Current Use/Name:</u> Vacant/Not-in-use</p>	C
10	1024-1026 Halsell Street		 <p data-bbox="779 1235 1045 1289">C. 1950s (courtesy BHM property binders)</p>	<p data-bbox="1157 922 1213 945">1900</p> <p data-bbox="1157 985 1289 1066">Two-part Commercial Block</p>	<p data-bbox="1325 922 1892 1101">1024: Two-story, flat roof building with symmetrical façade featuring prominent cast stone entrance surround leading to inset entrance with single, glazed door. Entrance flanked by display windows, each topped with two clerestory windows. Second level is recessed to create non-original balcony.</p> <p data-bbox="1325 1105 1892 1344">1026: Two-story, flat roof building with central entrance featuring double glazed doors and flat roof canopy held by tension rods. Flanking the entrance on either side are brick pilasters and large display windows with clerestory windows. The lower-level features brick siding, the upper-level features masonry and horizontal wood siding. Second level is recessed to create non-original balcony.</p> <p data-bbox="1325 1349 1864 1404"><i>Alterations:</i> (1024) Entirely new façade, recessed second story windows.(1026) Second story façade</p>	NC





SBR Draft

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/NC
					recessed, replacement doors, windows, and storefront. <u>1024 Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Fred Green's Barber Shop (1921-1956); Jennings Washateria (1944); Time Shop Watch Repair (1956-1958); Transportation/Western Auto (1958-1965); Commerce/Sears (1969-1974); Valu-Rite Pharmacy (1978-2006) <u>1026 Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Weakley and Lightfoot Hardware (1900-1921) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> (1024) Commerce/Edge Crew Construction (1026) Commerce/Corn Cactus Boutique	
11	1028 Halsell Street		 C. 1950s (courtesy BHM property binders)	1893 Two-part Commercial Block	Two-story, flat roof, masonry building with a tripartite configuration divided by decorative cast iron pilasters on the primary (north) elevation of the lower level. Storefront entrance located on the west end of the primary (north) elevation. The second level of north elevation features two sets of evenly placed windows set within an arched masonry lintel on masonry sills. Additional arched windows along first and second levels of the west elevation. <i>Alterations:</i> Removal of clerestory windows and recessed and relocated entrance. Replacement windows and door. Remodeled in 1982, again in 2018. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Bridgeport Drugs Store (1910-1928); Modern Food Store (1929-1941); Apartments (upstairs 1930s-1940s); Sarah Jane Flower Shop (1969-2018); Bridal Shop (1988-c 1990s) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Edward Jones	C




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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/NC
12	901-905 Halsell Street		 No date, (courtesy BHM property binders)	1950 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with three separate storefronts each featuring brick siding. Eastern-most storefront features enframed window wall with recessed entrance and glazed door, flat roof awning supported by tension rods. Central storefront features slanted display windows and off-center solid metal entrance door with clerestory window. Western-most storefront consists of a window wall of slanted display windows, with an entrance located on the west elevation on 9 th Street. <i>Alterations:</i> Replaced c. 1910 building that burned. West side remodeled in 1956. Original awnings and signage removed, original slanted windows are extant. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/ Corner Drug (1951-1989); Thompkins Department Store (1950s-1979); Albright flower Shop (1956); Bridgeport Carpet (1972-1983) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Haus of Olive	C
13	907 Halsell Street		 Ca. 1955 (courtesy BHM property binders)	Ca. 1910 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with symmetrical façade featuring central inset entrance with single, glazed door flanked on either side by display windows. Clerestory windows above the storefront, brick bulkhead, and decorative brickwork in the frieze and cornice. <i>Alterations:</i> Clerestory windows have been replaced, new storefront windows and door. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Government/Post Office (1920-1930s); Commerce/Thurman Parsons Café (1940-1946); Albright Flower Shop (1955-1980s) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Forty Seven (retail)	C




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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/NC
14	909 Halsell Street		 Ca. 1955 (courtesy BHM property binders)	1913 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with two separate enframed window wall storefronts, each featuring a central, glazed, aluminum door flanked on either side by display windows with brick bulkheads. The building features brick siding, metal shed roof awning, and decorative brickwork at the cornice and frieze. <i>Alterations:</i> Replacement awning, display windows and doors. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Bridgeport Light and Power; Furniture Mart (1945-1950s); Finer Foods Grocery (1953-1964); Rosie Boaz Store (1960-1996) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Hair Daze; Studio 9	C
15	913 Halsell Street			Ca. 1930 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with symmetrical façade featuring central glazed, aluminum frame, double entrance doors flanked by display windows with wood frames, and brick bulkheads. Features brick siding, metal shed roof awning, and decorative brickwork at the cornice and frieze. <i>Alterations:</i> Non-original display windows, entrance doors, and awning. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Empire Southern Light Co. (1936); Triple D Discount (1960s-1980s) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Lucky Nails	C




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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/NC
16	915 Halsell Street			Ca. 1920 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with symmetrical façade consisting of enframed window wall with central entrance, aluminum frame doors and display windows, and brick bulkhead. Features brick siding, fabric awning, and decorative brickwork at the cornice and frieze. <i>Alterations:</i> Replacement storefront windows and doors, new awning. <i>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</i> Commerce/Bill Durham's Cleaners (c. 1925-1945); Weaver's Variety Store (1950s); Lu's Cleaners (1960-c.1975) <i>Current Use/Name:</i> Commerce/Rustic Rose	C
17	921 Halsell Street		 Undated, courtesy of <i>Images of America</i> 'Bridgeport'	Ca. 1900, recon. ca. 1965 One-part Commercial Block	Building occupies nearly 1/3 of the 900 block of Halsell Street on the northwest side of the block. Consists of a flat roof building with textured stucco siding, large display windows, multiple glazed entrance doors, and shed roof metal awning. <i>Alterations:</i> Replaced building that burned in 1963, windows, doors, awning, and siding replaced. Some faux wood trim surrounding the doors and windows on the eastern portion of the building. <i>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</i> Commerce/Kaker Brothers (1899-); Kendall Dry Goods (1900-1946); Kaker Bros Grocery (1951-1963); Ernest Jones Hardware (1946-1962); Commerce/Sellers's Superette (1960s); Hodges Hardware (1960s); Messenger Office Supply (1981-1985); Jodie's Café (1980s); Karate; TNT Video <i>Current Use/Name:</i> Commerce/Relly-Chance	NC





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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/NC
18	1001 Halsell Street		 1944, courtesy of Tellin Texas.	1906-1907 Romanesque Revival (modest) Two-part Commercial Block	Two-story, flat roof with rusticated concrete block siding, prominent corner tower with pagoda roof and cut stone arches over the corner entrance, arched windows along the lower level of the west elevation. It features masonry corbeling along the roofline, masonry lintels and sills, and a secondary entrance at the rear (north) end of the west elevation along 10th Street. Row of single double-hung windows on second level. <i>Alterations:</i> Ca. 1950 the front entrance was altered and partially infilled. The remainder of the building is intact, with some replacement windows during the POS. Retains original pink marble teller station on interior and tile flooring. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/First National Bank (downstairs, 1907-1955); Healthcare/Dentist (upstairs 1920s); Commerce/Telephone Company (upstairs 1920s); Bridgeport Index (1960s) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Vacant/Not-in-use	C
19	1304 10th Street			Ca. 1935 PWA Moderne One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with symmetrical façade featuring central entrance of partially-glazed, wood frame, double entrance doors with three-lite clerestory window. On either side of the entrance are single fixed windows centrally located within the side bays and each topped with three-lite clerestory windows. Modest stepped parapet above the central bay and modest decorative brickwork around the central bay and along the roofline. <i>Alterations:</i> Replacement windows and possibly replaced front entrance door. General fenestration pattern and brick siding intact. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Government/Post Office (1930s-1940s) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Beef Republic	C





SBR Draft

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/NC
20	1003 Halsell Street		 1944, courtesy of Tellin Texas.	Ca. 1910 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with symmetrical façade consisting of enframed window wall with central entrance, metal frame double doors, and multi-lite display windows. Features brick siding, fabric awning, brick bulkhead, and decorative brickwork at the cornice and frieze. <i>Alterations:</i> Clerestory windows currently concealed by signage but appear extant. Replacement display windows and entrance doors. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/H.H. Hardin Hardware (1913-1928); Coffman Shoe Shop (c. 1928-1960s); Boot Shop (1980s); Mann Shoe Repair (1985-1990) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Crazy Pablo's Restaurant	C
21	1005 Halsell Street		 Ca. 1950s (courtesy BHM property binders)	Ca. 1910 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with symmetrical façade consisting of recessed central entrance, partially glazed, wood frame, double entrance doors, and large display windows. Features replacement horizontal wood siding at the storefront and original brick siding above. Decorative brickwork at the cornice and frieze. <i>Alterations:</i> New horizontal wood façade treatment, replacement display windows and entrance doors. General fenestration pattern intact. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/W.A. Brown Grocery (1918-1941); Transportation/White Auto (1941-1970s); Montgomery Ward (1981-1984) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Blessed Bru	C





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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/NC
22	1009 Halsell Street		 <p data-bbox="772 656 1129 737">Undated, prior to 1990s remodel (courtesy BHM property binders)</p>	<p data-bbox="1157 337 1295 391">1946, recon. 1997</p> <p data-bbox="1157 428 1295 514">One-part Commercial Block</p>	<p data-bbox="1325 337 1892 488">Flat roof building with symmetrical facade featuring arched entrance with recessed ticket window flanked on either side by glazed entrance doors. Arched details also flank the entrance and house signage for upcoming events.</p> <p data-bbox="1325 493 1856 514"><i>Alterations:</i> Entirely replaced façade and interior.</p> <p data-bbox="1325 519 1822 605"><u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Arcadia Theater (1946-1963) with upstairs offices; Bridgeport Fine Arts Theater</p> <p data-bbox="1325 610 1745 631"><u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Theater</p>	NC
23	1011 Halsell Street		 <p data-bbox="772 1110 1058 1164">Ca. 1950s (courtesy BHM property binders)</p>	<p data-bbox="1157 747 1211 768">1918</p> <p data-bbox="1157 805 1295 891">One-part Commercial Block</p>	<p data-bbox="1325 747 1892 924">One-story, flat roof building with symmetrical façade consisting of recessed central entrance, single aluminum frame, glazed entrance door with sidelights, display windows under fabric awning, and concealed or infilled clerestory windows. Decorative brickwork at the cornice and frieze.</p> <p data-bbox="1325 928 1877 1073"><i>Alterations:</i> Replacement awning and new entrance and display windows, possibly within POS. Infilled or concealed clerestory windows. General fenestration pattern and original brick on upper section intact.</p> <p data-bbox="1325 1078 1892 1164"><u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/James Skinner Variety Store (1918-1953); Café (1950s); German Coffee Shop (1973-74); Café (1970s-1980s)</p> <p data-bbox="1325 1169 1843 1222"><u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Mama's Gift and Flower Shop</p>	C




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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/NC
24	1013 Halsell Street			1918 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with symmetrical façade consisting of a central, glazed entrance door flanked by display windows, brick bulkhead, and clerestory windows that may have been replaced during POS. Decorative brickwork at the cornice and frieze. <i>Alterations:</i> New wood paneling at door surround and beneath clerestory windows. Replacement door and display windows. General fenestration pattern and original brick on upper section intact. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Butler and Summers Grocery (1920-1936); Hardwood Variety (1930s-1940s) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/1860 Pizza	C
25	1015 Halsell Street			1918 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with symmetrical façade consisting of enframed window wall with central entrance, original clerestory windows, and decorative brickwork at the cornice and frieze. <i>Alterations:</i> Replacement display windows and front door. Overall fenestration pattern and original brick are intact. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Sneed Pharmacy (1910s); Healthcare/Doctors Office (1930s); Commerce/Variety Store (1950s); Man's Shop (1973-1980s) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Marker Cellar's Winery	C
26	1017-1019 Halsell Street			Ca. 1915 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with symmetrical façade consisting of recessed central entrance with partially glazed, wood frame, double doors flanked by sidelights and transom. On either side of the entrance are large display windows framed in non-original wood trim. <i>Alterations:</i> Entirely new façade treatment. Replacement windows and doors.	NC





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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/NC
			Undated (courtesy BHM property binders)		<u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Mack's Dry Good and Shoes (1920s-1970); Transportation/White Auto Store (1972) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Walking Beam Brewery	
27	1021 Halsell Street			1915 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with symmetrical facade consisting of a central, recessed entrance with a single glazed door with a transom, flanked on either side by paired display windows topped with clerestory windows. Modest decorative brick work in frieze. <i>Alterations:</i> Replacement display and clerestory windows and front door. Non-original wood skirting. Fenestration pattern and original brick intact. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Bridgeport Drug (1915-); Alexander Drug (1930s); Lester Drug (1940s); Bridgeport Insurance (1968-1974) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Ink & Stitch Screen Printing	C
28	1023-1025 Halsell Street		 Undated ca. 1990s (courtesy BHM property binders)	Ca. 1900 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with masonry siding, clad in faux brick veneer on the primary (south) elevation. Features enframed window wall with off-center entrance on the east end of south elevation, metal awning supported by tension rods, and non-original display and clerestory windows. <i>Alterations:</i> Entirely new façade treatment, shifted front entrance (was historically two entrances and retail spaces). <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Grocery (1900-1966); Offices (1966-1970s); Bull Pen Café (1980s) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/Oak & Eden	NC

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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

No.	Address	Current Photo	Historic Photo (if available)	Year Built/Type	Description and Function	C/NC
29	1101 Halsell Street		 Undated (courtesy BHM property binders)	1955 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with brick siding, metal awning, two partially glazed entrance doors on primary (south) elevation, and display windows. <i>Alterations:</i> Replaced former filling station that was demolished during POS. Divided into separate retail in 1986. New awning <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/Green's Dry Goods (1956-1986); State Farm Insurance (1986- <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Commerce/ Country Chic Living	NC
30	1105 Halsell Street		 Undated (courtesy BHM property binders)	Ca. 1900 One-part Commercial Block	One-story, flat roof building with symmetrical façade divided into two identical storefronts. Storefronts feature large, partially glazed, wood frame double entrance doors with sidelights, flanked on either side by large display windows with brick bulkheads. Boxed shed roof canopy over entire primary (south) elevation, and modest decorative brickwork at the frieze and cornice. <i>Alterations:</i> Original doors, new awning, new windows. Non-original brick bulkheads beneath display windows. Clerestory windows concealed by awning. <u>Historic Use(s) /Name (s):</u> Commerce/General Merchandise; Cinema (1920-1940s); <u>Transportation/Whites Auto Store</u> (1954-1969) Teen Center (1980s); Antiques (1992) <u>Current Use/Name:</u> Vacant/Not-in-use	C

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

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-----Bridgeport Main Street Vertical File, Bridgeport Heritage Society
-----"Plat of Town of Bridgeport Texas in 1900 as Remembered by Gus Funk" Bridgeport Heritage Museum Display
-----"More Treasure is Discovered from the Land," Bridgeport Heritage Museum display
-----Halsell Street Binders: Northside, Volume 1
-----Halsell Street Binders: Northside, Volume 2
-----Halsell Street Binders: Northside, Volume 3
-----Halsell Street Binders: Southside, Volume 1
-----Halsell Street Binders: Southside, Volume 2
-----Halsell Street Binders: Southside, Volume 3

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----- February 4, 1893, 8.
----- "Bridgeport, March 18," March 25, 1893, 4.
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-----"Bridgeport," November 10, 1893, 5.
-----"Bridgeport, July 18, 1893," July 22, 1893, 5.
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Section 10. Geographical Data

Coordinates:

1. 33.210927°, -97.759092°
2. 33.210513° -97.759104°
3. 33.210504° -97.758404°
4. 33.209910°, -97.758400°
5. 33.209910° -97.756898°
6. 33.210488° -97.756891°
7. 33.210488° -97.756460°
8. 33.210909° -97.756455°

Verbal Boundary Description:

The district includes approximately 6 acres and is delineated on Maps 3 and 4.

Beginning at the southeast corner of the intersection of 9th Street and the unnamed alley between Halsell and Stevens Street, proceed east along the alley to the northeast corner of the property boundary associated with 1105 Halsell Street; proceed south along the property boundary to Halsell Street; proceed west on the north side of Halsell Street to the northwest intersection of Halsell Street and 11th Street; proceed south along 11th Street to the southeast corner of the property boundary associated with 1028 Halsell Street. Thence, proceed west along the north side of the unnamed alley between Halsell and E. Cates Street to the southwest corner of the property boundary associated with 916 Halsell Street; proceed north along the western property boundary associated with 916 Halsell Street to the north side of Halsell Street; proceed west along Halsell Street to the northeast corner of the intersection of 9th Street and Halsell Street; proceed north to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries of the Bridgeport Commercial Historic District were selected to include the highest concentration of intact historic resources associated with the nineteenth and twentieth century commercial development of Bridgeport. Significant resources primarily consist of commercial buildings that represent Bridgeport's historic commercial development along Halsell Street.

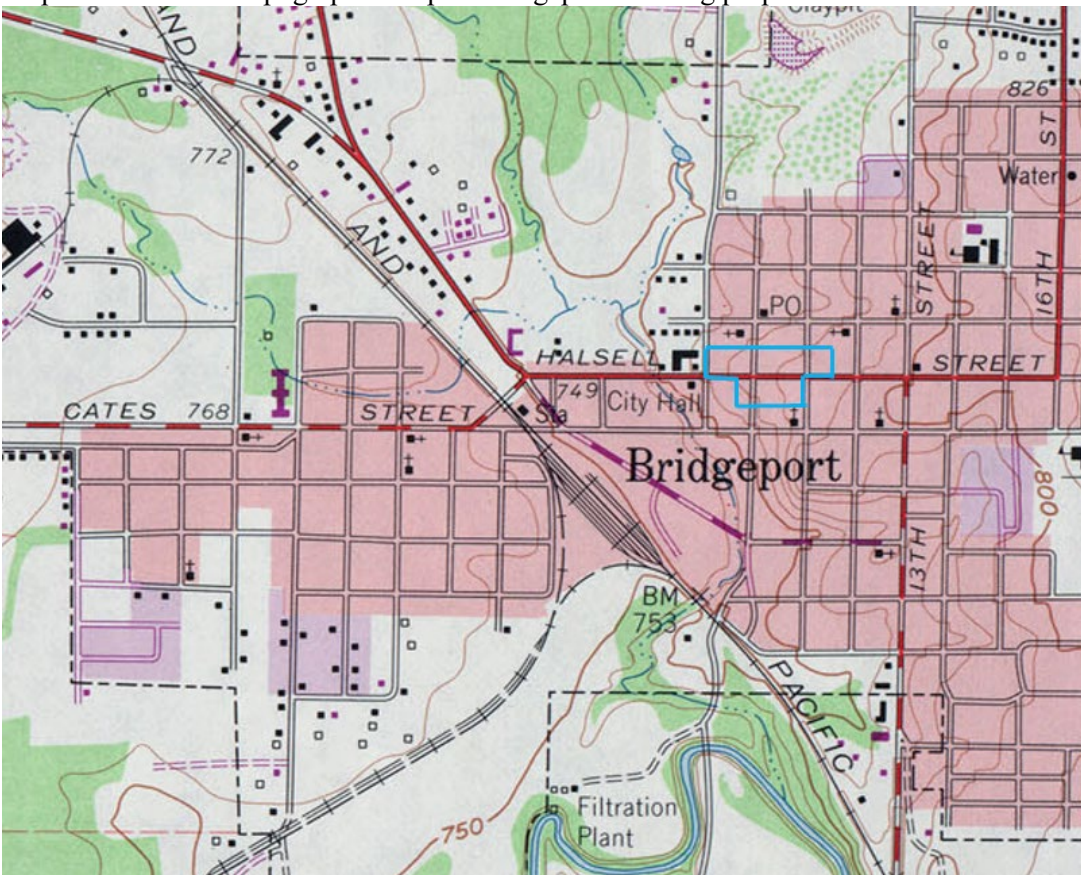
Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Maps

Map 1. Map of Texas showing Wise County in red.



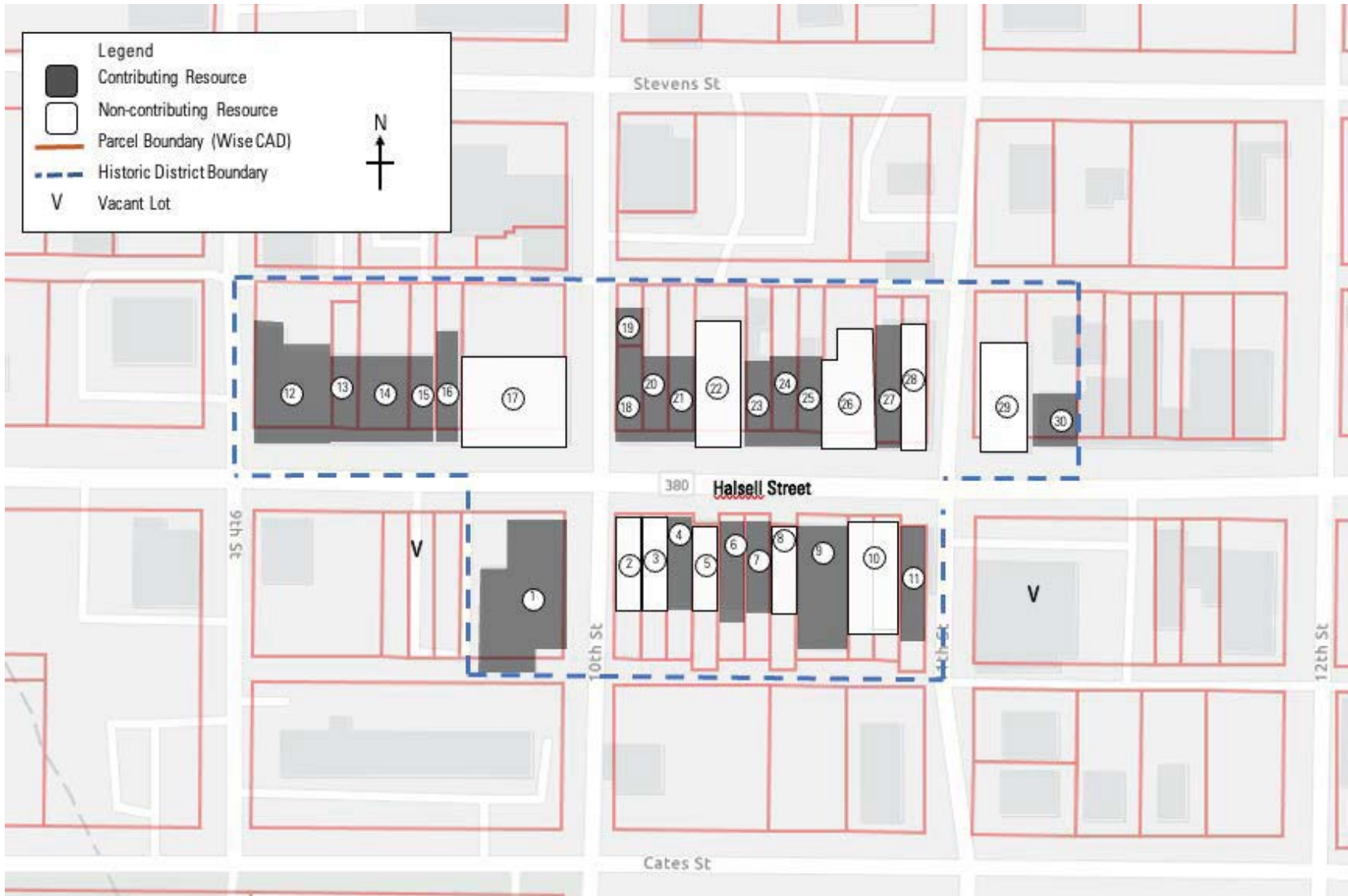
Map 2. 1978 USGS topographic Map of Bridgeport showing proposed historic district boundary outlined in blue.



SBR Draft

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

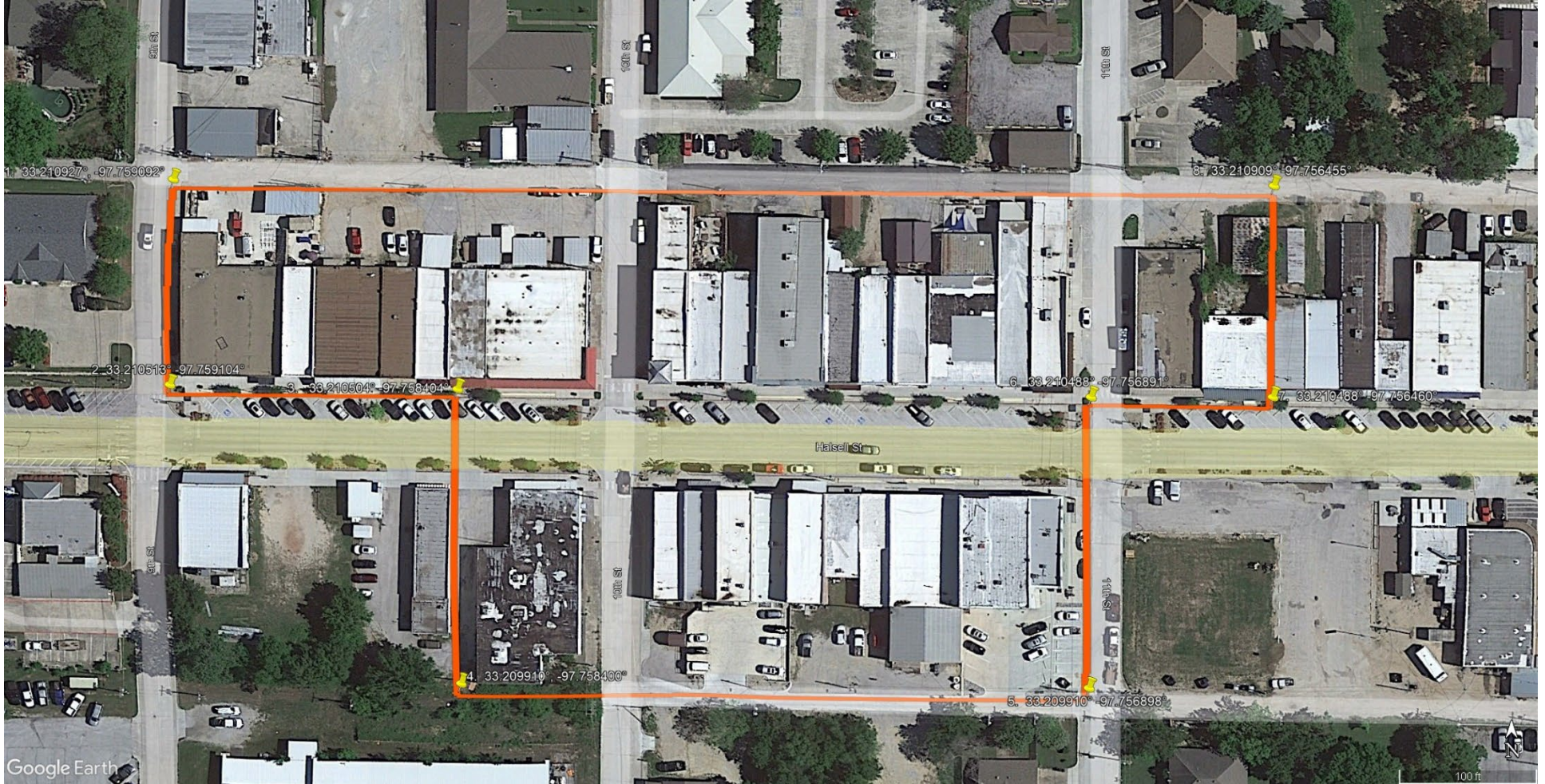
Map 3: Sketch Map of resources within Bridgeport Commercial Historic District



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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

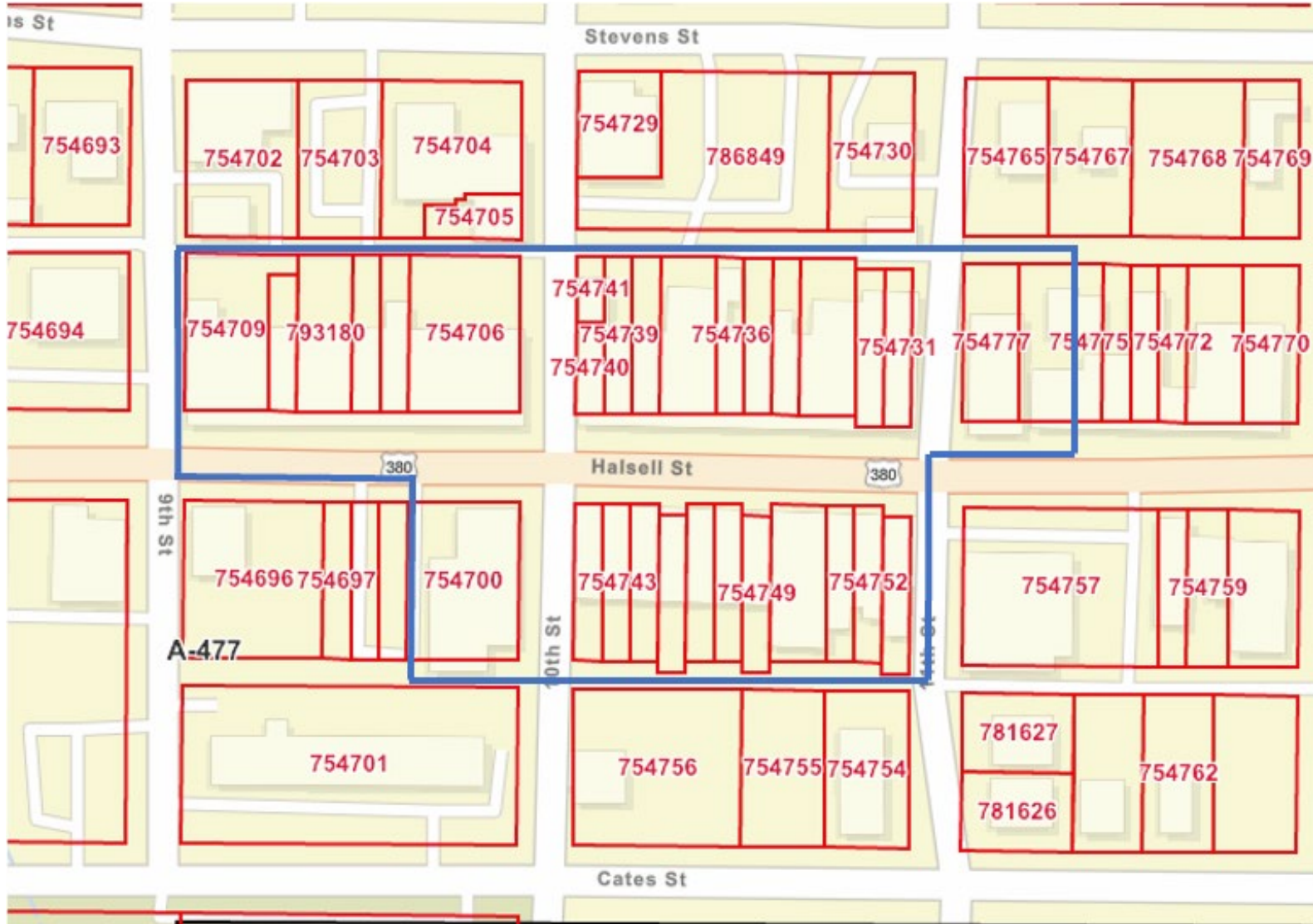
Map 4: Bridgeport Commercial Historic District – Aerial Map (Google Earth – November 2023)



SBR Draft

Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

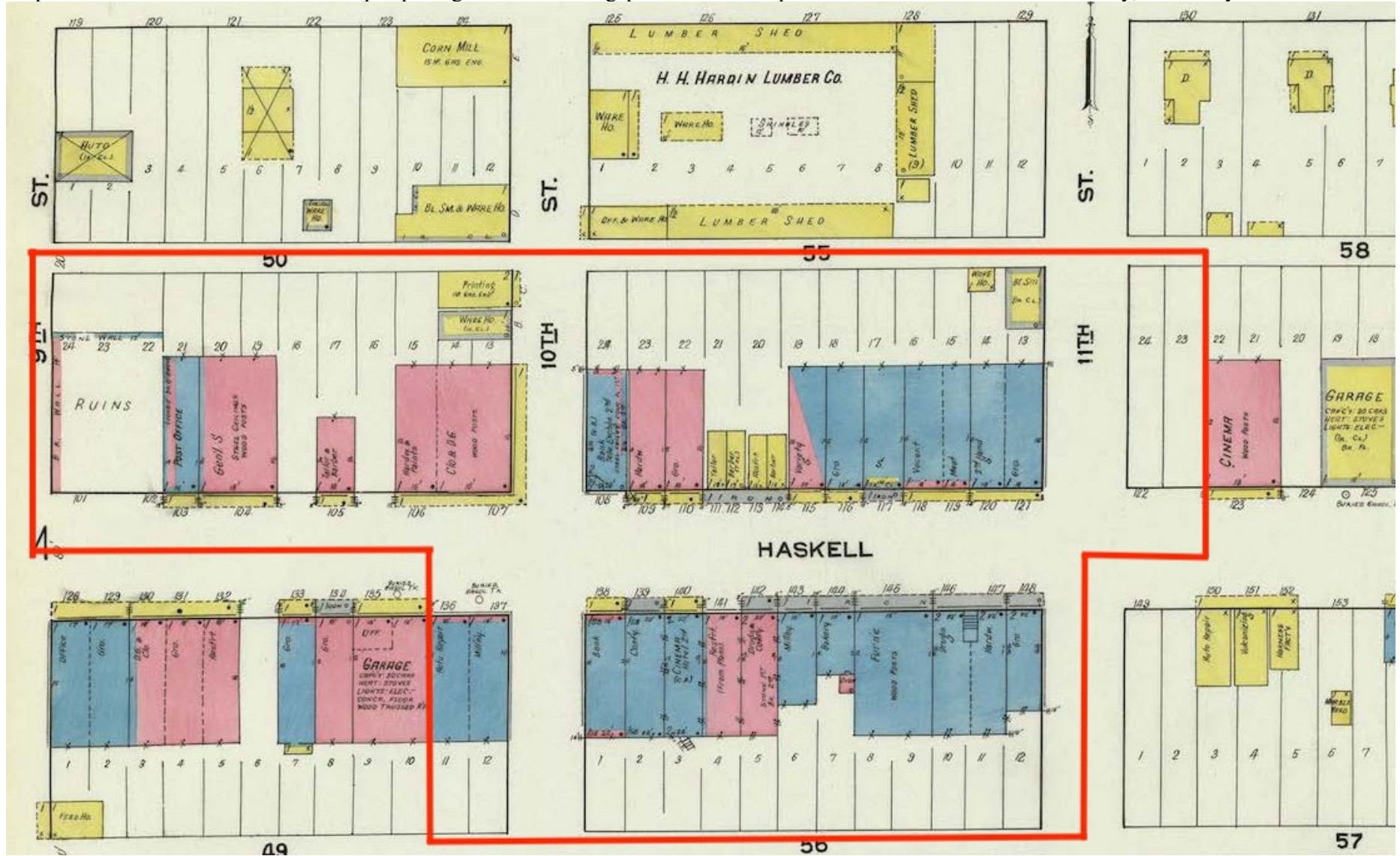
Map 5: Bridgeport Commercial Historic District – Wise County Appraisal District Map showing parcel boundaries and parcel IDs (Wise CAD accessed November 9, 2023). Proposed historic district boundary in blue.



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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

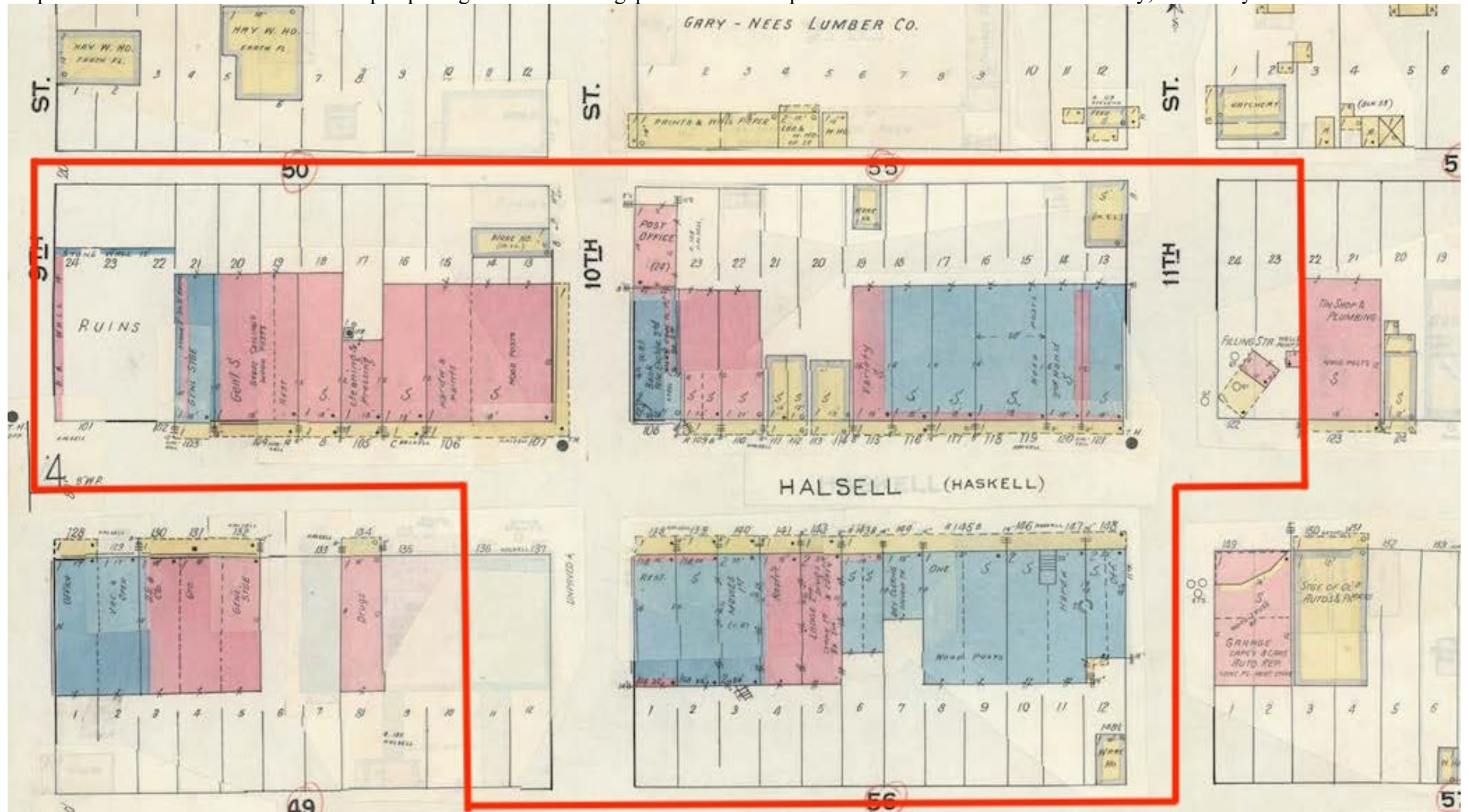
Map 6: 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map depicting downtown Bridgeport. Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.



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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Map 7: 1944 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map depicting downtown Bridgeport. Source: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.



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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Map 8: 1900 Map of Bridgeport drawn by Gus Funk in 1960. Courtesy of Bridgeport Heritage Museum.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Figures

Figure 1: 1953 aerial of Bridgeport. Courtesy of USGS Earth Explorer.

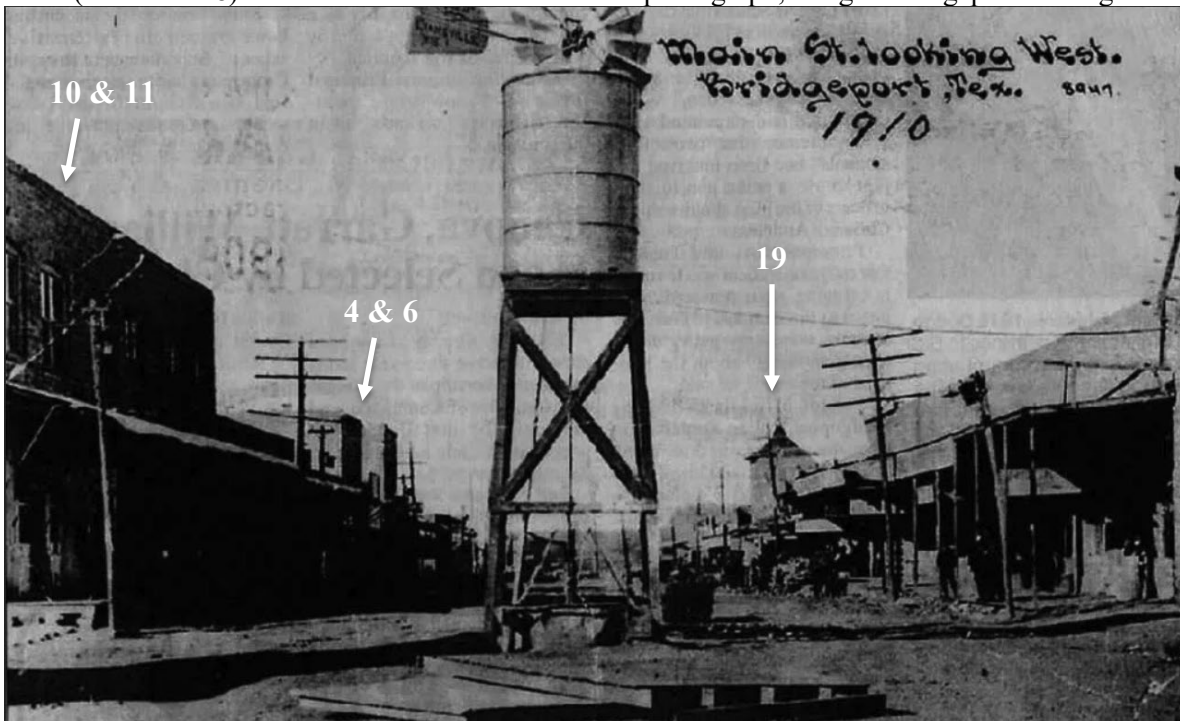


Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Figure 2. Downtown Bridgeport, ca 1908. Halsell Street, facing east. First National Bank (Resource 18) is visible at center, left. Many of the buildings in the foreground are wood construction and later burned in subsequent fires. Bridgeport Heritage Society.



Figure 3. Downtown Bridgeport, 1910, facing west. 1024-1028 Halsell (Resources 10 and 11) are visible at left. 1008 and 1012 Halsell (Resources 4 and 6) are the two-story structures visible on the left side of the photograph. First National Bank (Resource 18) is visible toward the center of the photograph, at right. Bridgeport Heritage Society.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Figure 4. Ca. 1912 downtown Bridgeport, courtesy of *Bridgeport Index*, July 19, 1973, p1.



Figure 5. Undated (ca. 1915) photo of Resource 9, courtesy of *Bridgeport Index*, July 19, 1973.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Figure 6. Undated photo of Resource 4, courtesy of Bridgeport Heritage Society.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Figure 7: Ca. 1920s photo of downtown Bridgeport showing Resources 6-11 on right, Resource 18 at left foreground. Courtesy of Bridgeport Heritage Museum website.



Figure 8. Downtown Bridgeport ca. 1925 during raffle for new automobile, courtesy of Bridgeport Heritage Museum.



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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Figure 9. 1940s parade on Halsell Street showing Resources 2-11, facing southeast. Courtesy of Bridgeport Heritage Society.



Figure 10. Ca. 1955 parade on Halsell Street showing Resources 13 and 14, facing northeast. Bridgeport Heritage Society.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Figure 11. Downtown Bridgeport in 1973, courtesy of *Bridgeport Index*, July 19, 1973, p1.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Photographs

Photo 1: Streetscape along Halsell Street at 9th Street, showing Resources 12-15 (left), facing east.



Photo 2: Streetscape along Halsell Street at 9th Street, showing Resources 12-15 (left), facing northeast.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Photo 3. Streetscape along Halsell Street at 10th Street, showing Resource 1 (left), facing southwest.



Photo 4. Streetscape along Halsell Street at 10th Street, showing Resource 17 (right), facing northwest.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Photo 5. Streetscape along Halsell Street at 10th Street, showing Resources 18 (left), 20-23, facing northeast.



Photo 6. Streetscape along Halsell Street at 10th Street, showing Resources 2-7 (right), facing southeast.



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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Photo 7. Streetscape along Halsell Street at 11th Street, showing Resources 4-11 (left), facing southwest.



Photo 8. Streetscape along Halsell Street at 11th Street, showing Resources 27-28 (right), facing northwest.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Photo 9. Representative alleyway streetscape, rear (north) of 1000 block, facing east.

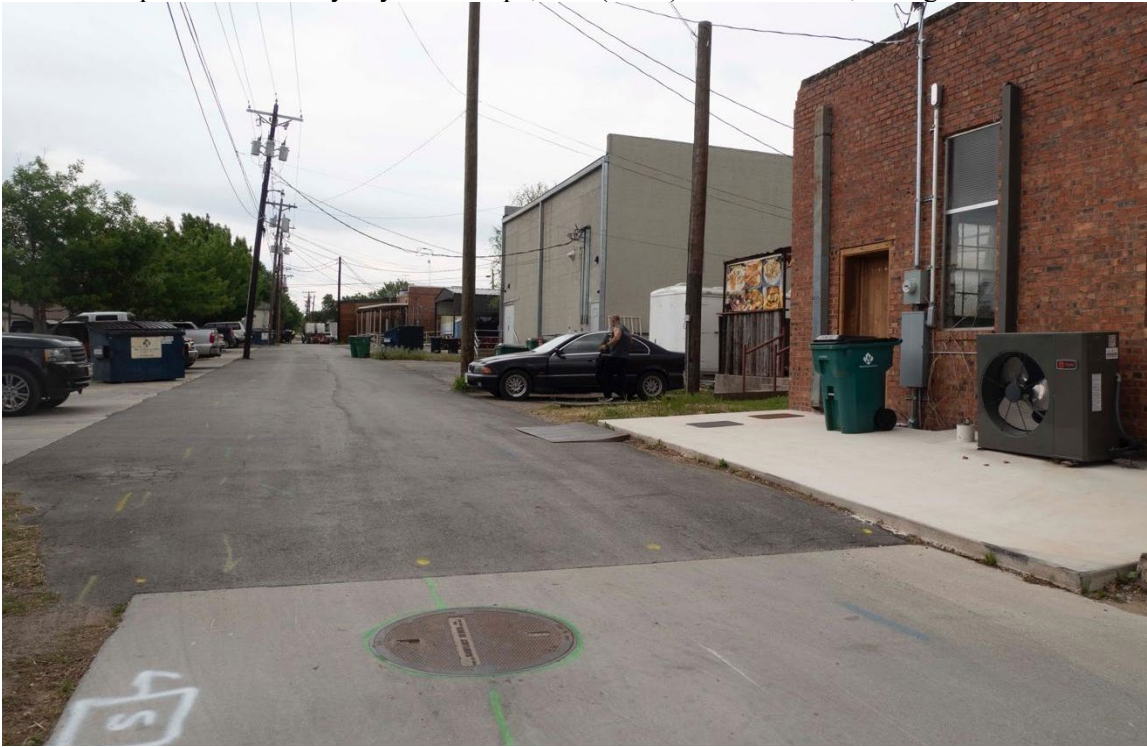


Photo 10. Resource 1, facing southwest.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Photo 11. Resources 5-7, facing southwest.



Photo 12. Resource 9, facing south.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Photo 13. Resource 13, facing north.



Photo 14. Resource 14, facing north.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Photo 15. Resource 15, facing north.



Photo 16. Resource 16, facing northwest.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Photo 17. Resource 18 (Resource 19 at rear), facing northeast.



Photo 18. Resource 19, facing east.



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Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Photo 19. Resource 20, facing north.



Photo 20. Resource 21, facing north.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Photo 21. Resource 23, facing northwest.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Photo 22. Resource 24, facing northwest.



Photo 23: Resource 27, facing north.



Bridgeport Commercial Historic District, Wise County, Texas

Photo 24. Resource 30, facing north.



~end~