

Operational History

A comprehensive operational site history was developed for the Cedar Street Works former MGP site using Brown's Directory, PSC Reports, chain of title, historical maps (Sanborn Maps and Atlas Maps), aerial photographs, and information provided by Con Edison.

The exact construction and starting date for gas production at the site is not known based on the available information. The earliest record of operations of the New Rochelle former MGP site is identified in the chain of title search results, which shows a transaction on July 2, 1863 between Westchester Turnpike Road and the New Rochelle Gas Light Company (Appendix D). The 1868 *Atlas of New York and Vicinity* [Beers, 1868] shows a Gas Works located between Centre (Cedar) and River Streets, slightly south of Spring Street, although the plant is shown to be located on the eastern parcels adjacent to River Street rather than Centre (Cedar) Street. It is likely that this is the former Cedar Street Works. Based on these references, the start of gas production at the site was sometime between 1863 and 1868.

According to PSC Records, the New Rochelle Gas and Fuel Company was incorporated on December 1, 1887. In 1887, the first year that Brown's Directory was published, the New Rochelle Gas Works produced coal gas [Brown's Directory]. According to the 1887 Sanborn Map (earliest available for the site), the Cedar Street Works former MGP consisted of coal gas manufacturing structures located along Centre (Cedar) Street including two gas holders (only one is shown, other is referred to on the map), a retort house, repair shop, coal storage, purifier house, meter house, office, a coal and coke shed, and several small buildings or rooms that can not be identified. The gas holder located adjacent to Centre (Cedar) Street is a 10,000 cubic foot capacity holder, and is likely to have been a below-ground holder since it is the original gas holder.

By 1889, the plant had been converted to water gas production (Brown's Directory). Several additional buildings were constructed in the northwest corner of the site to house the scrubbers and exhausters [1892 Sanborn Map]. A 30,000 cubic foot gas holder is shown to the northeast of the original holder, and a coal shed replaced the former meter room. The 30,000 cubic foot holder may also have been a below-ground holder, since it was constructed prior to 1887 [1887 Sanborn Map], and the 1924 aerial photograph shows it fully retracted to ground level. The former coal gas production buildings had been converted to storage by 1892. The 1896 Sanborn Map indicates that the smaller holder was no longer in use and a larger 230,000 cubic foot holder had been constructed to the southeast of the gas plant buildings. A holder of this size constructed in the 1890s is likely to have been an above-ground holder, although the foundation may have been below-grade. The production building was also expanded to the south. A residence was located in the southwest corner of the site, likely for the site foreman or other site personnel.

Gas production was only cited for the years 1890 through 1900 in Browns Directory. Production was 6 million cubic feet in 1889 [1890 Brown's Directory], and rose to 37 million cubic feet in 1899 [1900 Brown's Directory].

In 1899, the New Rochelle Gas and Fuel Company consolidated with the New York Suburban Gas Company. In 1900, the New York Suburban Gas Company was merged into the Westchester Lighting Company (of Mt. Vernon, New York) [1900 Brown's Directory and PSC Reports]. After that time, Brown's Directory reports combined gas production for all the plants operated by the Westchester Lighting Company under either the Mt. Vernon, New York or Yonkers, New York listing, therefore, it is impossible to distinguish among the different plants or to determine if certain plants were no longer used. At some point prior to 1905, the Consolidated Gas Company of New York gained financial control of the Westchester Lighting Company, although gas production was still reported under the Mt. Vernon listing [1905 Brown's Directory, under financial information for Consolidated Gas Company].

The 1903 site configuration remained essentially unchanged, although the 10,000 cubic foot holder was no longer shown [1903 Sanborn Map]. Until 1908, Brown's Directory maintained a listing for the Westchester Lighting Company in New Rochelle, although it referred to Mt. Vernon for details. After this time, Brown's Directory did not have a listing under New Rochelle. This may be an indication that the gas plant was no longer being operated. The 1911 Sanborn Map confirms that the New Rochelle MGP was no longer in operation and the buildings were used for storage and repairs. At that time, gas was pumped to the site from the works in the Town of Pelham [1911 Sanborn Map]. This indicates that the gas holders were used for gas storage and distribution at this time. The 30,000 cubic foot (northern) holder and the 230,000 cubic foot (southern) holder (southern) were removed by 1931.

The property was expanded to the east by Westchester Lighting Company in 1924 (Chain-of-Title Search), with buildings on the site used for warehousing and a machine shop. A garage was also constructed at the site sometime prior to 1931 (Sanborn Map). The property was sold by Con Edison in 1953.

Other Site Uses

Westchester Lighting Company continued to operate on the property at least into the 1950s [Sanborn Maps]. By 1931, the property had been expanded to the northeast to include the parcel adjacent to the site along Spring and River Streets. Two structures were constructed on this portion of the property. Some of the former MGP production buildings remained and were used for warehouses, a meter shop, and a machine shop, although the two gas holders were no longer shown. A large parking garage had been constructed in the southwestern portion of the property, where the residence had been located [1931 Sanborn Map]. The 1951 configuration remained essentially the same although, some of the buildings had been removed [1951 Sanborn Map].

Sometime between 1951 and 1970 the configuration of the site and the surrounding area was changed during an area-wide urban renewal project conducted by the City. New buildings were constructed on the west and southwest portion of the former site along Cedar Street [Aerial photographs]. Based on the aerial photographs, the buildings are located on property that was part of the former MGP, as well as property to the south of the site between the former site and the Ramada Plaza. North and southeast of the buildings were vacant lots [Aerial photographs]. The 1990 photograph shows the vacant areas as parking lots and the 1990 Sanborn Map indicates that a used auto sales shop is located in the northeast corner of the property [Aerial photograph and Sanborn Maps]. The current site use is for a Toyota car dealership.

Table 5-1 Brown's Directory Summary - New Rochelle, New York

Year	Company Name	Process	Annual Gas Production (cf)	Gas Holder Capacity (cf)	Byproducts Made/Sold	Service Area Population	Operating Information	Holding and Operating Companies	Financial Reports	Other Brown's Information	Reference Page(s)
New Rochelle	Cedar Street										
1887	New Rochelle Gas Works	Coal				8,000					40
1889	New Rochelle Gas and Fuel Co.	McKay-Critchlow				8,000					50
1890	New Rochelle Gas and Fuel Co.	Lowe (by McKay-Critchlow)	6,000,000			8,000					80
1891	New Rochelle Gas and Fuel Co.	Peter English patent	10,000,000			7,500					73
1892	New Rochelle Gas and Fuel Co.	Peter English patent	10,000,000			7,500					79
1893	New Rochelle Gas and Fuel Co.	Peter English patent	19,000,000			10,000					82
1894	New Rochelle Gas and Fuel Co.	Peter English patent	18,000,000			12,000					87
1899	New Rochelle Gas and Fuel Co.	Lowe	28,000,000 (C.P., 24)			12,000 (1898 pop.)				No. consumers-1000	82
1900	New York Suburban Gas Co.	Lowe	37,000,000				Also see Mt. Vernon			New York Suburban Gas Co. is a consolidation of the East Chester Gas Light Co., Mt. Vernon, New Rochelle Gas and Fuel Co., New Rochelle, Pelham Gas Light Co., Pelham, Westchester Gas and Electric Co., Port Chester. No. consumers-1,464. Branch works - includes Pelham, see Mt. Vernon	92
1901	Westchester Lighting Co.						See Mt. Vernon - production information reported in Brown's is for all plants of Westchester Lighting Co. lumped together			Listed under New Rochelle, but refers to Mt. Vernon. Westchester Lighting Co. is a consolidation of the Yonkers Gas Light Co., Yonkers; Municipal Gas Co., Yonkers; The Westchester Gas Light Co., Yonkers; New York Suburban Gas Co., Mt. Vernon [including East Chester Gas Light Co., Mt. Vernon; New Rochelle Gas and Fuel Co., New Rochelle; Pelham Gas Light Co., Pelham; Westchester Gas and Electric Co., Port Chester]; Westchester Gas & Coke Co., Mt. Vernon; East Chester Electric Co., New Rochelle; Larchmont Electric Light Co., New Rochelle; Port Chester Electric Lighting Co., Port Chester; Pehlman Electric Light and Power Co., City Island; and Mt. Kisco Lighting Co., Mt. Kisco	94, 95
1902	Westchester Lighting Co.						See Mt. Vernon				99
1903	Westchester Lighting Co.						See Mt. Vernon				106
1904	Westchester Lighting Co.						See Mt. Vernon				111
1905	Westchester Lighting Co.						See Mt. Vernon	Controlled by Consolidated Gas Co., NY	First year financial reports are provided in Brown's Directory is 1905 - Consolidated Gas Company of New York, New York was organized Nov. 11, 1884 as an consolidation of the New York Gas Municipal, Metropolitan, Harlem. Knickerbocker, and Manhattan Gas Light Companies. Since 1899 acquired control of the New Amsterdam Gas, New York Edison, Mutual Gas Light, Standard Gas Light, and the United Electric Light and Power Companies, giving Con. Gas Co. entire control of the power and lighting supply of the borough of Manhattan. Also secured control of the Westchester Lighting Co.		115
1906	Westchester Lighting Co.						See Mt. Vernon	Controlled by Consolidated Gas Co., NY	same as above		121
1907	Westchester Lighting Co.						See Mt. Vernon	Controlled by Consolidated Gas Co., NY			123
1908	Westchester Lighting Co.						See Mt. Vernon	Controlled by Consolidated Gas Co., NY			129
1909-	No listing after 1908 for New Rochelle										