# Environmental Review Team Report Elderly Housing Ledyard, Connecticut

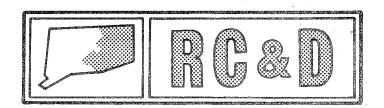


### Environmental Review Team Report

# Elderly Housing

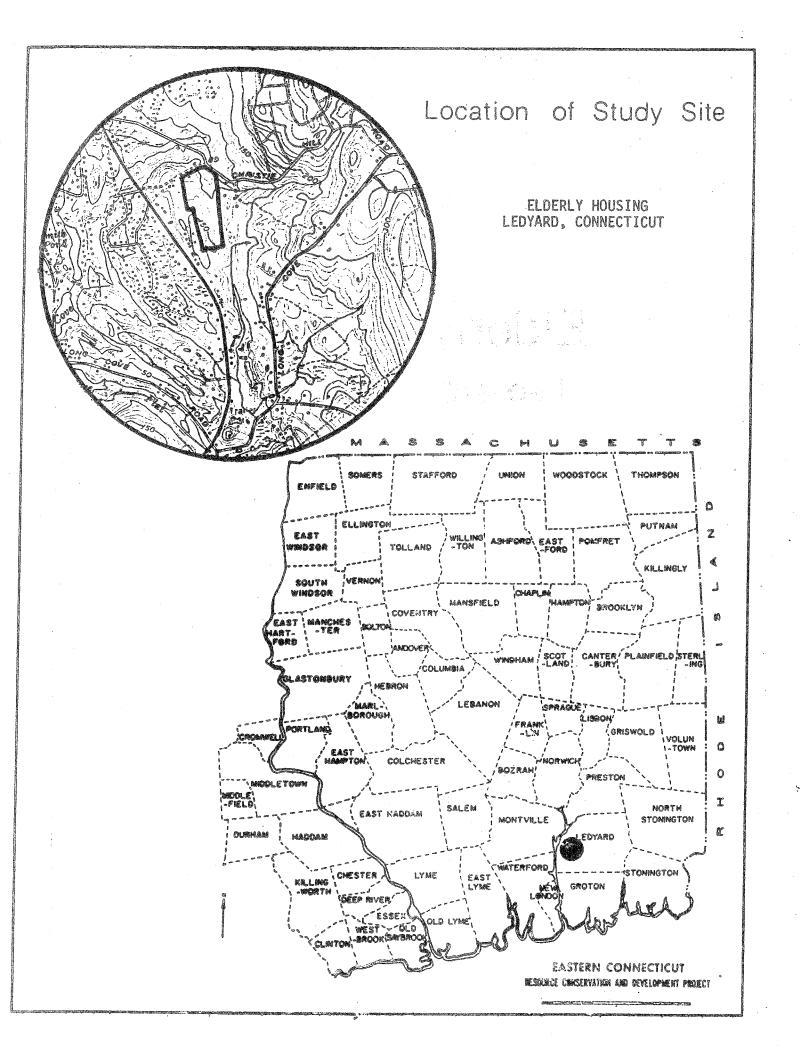
Ledyard, Connecticut

February 1983



Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development Area

Environmental Review Team
PO Box 198
Brooklyn, Connecticut 06234



# ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TEAM REPORT ON ELDERLY HOUSING LEDYARD. CONNECTICUT

This report is an outgrowth of a request from the Ledyard Housing Authority to the New London Soil and Water Conservation District (S&WCD). The S&WCD referred this request to the Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area Executive Committee for their consideration and approval as a project measure. The request was approved and the measure reviewed by the Eastern Connecticut Environmental Review Team (ERT).

The soils of the site were mapped by a soil scientist of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Soil Conservation Service (SCS). Reproductions of the soil survey map as well as a topographic map of the site were distributed to all ERT participants prior to their field review of the site.

The ERT that field checked the site consisted of the following personnel: Barry Cavanna, District Conservationist, Soil Conservation Service (SCS); Bill Warzecha, Geologist, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); Pete Merrill, Forester, (DEP); Gerhard Amt, Regional Planner, Southeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency; Liz Cook, Soil Conservationist, SCS; and Jeanne Shelburn, ERT Coordinator, Eastern Connecticut RC&D Area.

The Team met and field checked the site on Thursday, January 6, 1983. Reports from each Team member were sent to the ERT Coordinator for review and summarization for the final report.

This report is not meant to compete with private consultants by supplying site designs or detailed solutions to development problems. This report identifies the existing resource base and evaluates its significance to the proposed development and also suggests considerations that should be of concern to the developer and the Town of Ledyard. The results of this Team action are oriented toward the development of a better environmental quality and the long-term economics of the land use.

The Eastern Connecticut RC&D Project Committee hopes you will find this report of value and assistance in making your decisions on this particular site.

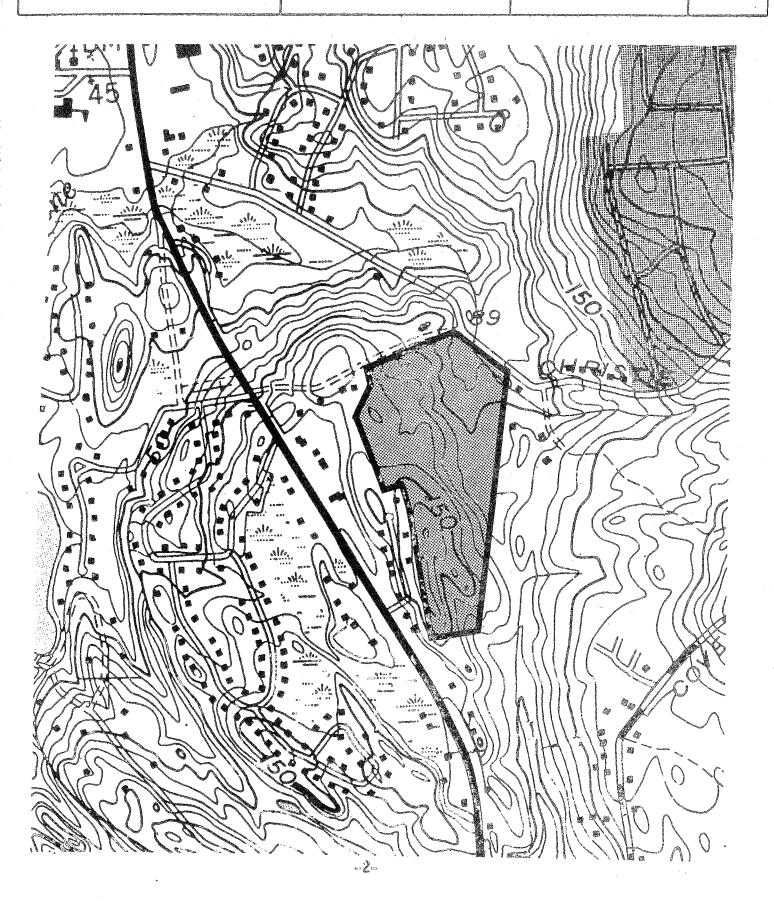
If you require any additional information, please contact: Ms. Jeanne Shelburn, Environmental Review Team Coordinator, Eastern Connecticut RC&D Area, Box 198, Brooklyn, Connecticut 06234, 774-1253.

Topography

Site Boundary

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#### INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Connecticut Environmental Review Team was asked to prepare an environmental assessment of a proposed elderly housing complex in the town of Ledyard. The Ledyard Housing Authority has retained Urbahn-Nafie Associates of Stonington to prepare preliminary plans for this proposal. The project site is approximately 26 acres in size and is located on the southern side of King's Highway, a short dirt road which connects with Christy Hill Road and Route 12.

The parcel is mostly wooded, although a portion towards the lower front section (Christy Hill and Kings Highway) is open. Apparently at one time sand and gravel was taken from this part of the property. A stream crosses the lowest part of the parcel flowing in a north westerly direction. This area also contains wetlands. The watercourse eventually joins with Pine Swamp Brook near Christy Hill Road and Route 12. Towards the upper part of the parcel a dirt roadway from Kings Highway extends into the property and runs to the rear or southern end. From about half way in the roadway runs near and parallel with Van Tassel Drive. A number of houses exist along this drive. Both roadways end in cul-de-sacs. Although the elderly housing parcel generally slopes in a west to east direction (high, short ridge is in the area near Van Tassel Drive) it is much more pronounced from about 1/3 of the way south from Kings Highway, extending towards the rear. This area also tends to be quite rocky with bedrock at or close to the surface.

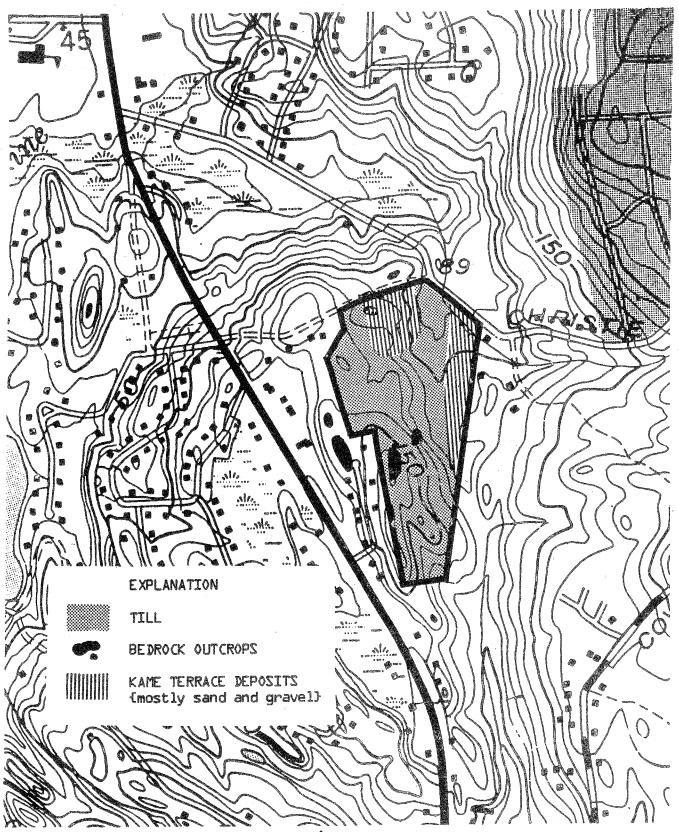
The preliminary proposal shows a development of 30 units in a cluster of six buildings. These buildings are to be arranged around a central "green". A single access road which ends in a cul-de-sac will serve the development. Parking areas will be provided directly off of this road, adjacent to the units. An on-site water supply and septic system(s) would service these buildings as no public systems are available to the site. Future housing expansion is planned to the south and a senior center may be developed in the northern portion of the property. The town of Ledyard allows a maximum density of two units of attached housing per acre and a 0% increase in stormwater runoff.

The Team is concerned with the effect of this proposed development on the natural resource base of this site. Severe limitations to development can often be overcome with proper engineering techniques, these measures however, can become costly, making a project financially unfeasible for a developer. It is the Team's objective to identify these severe natural limitations and suggest alternatives to development in those areas. The following secions of this report will discuss these natural conditions and development constraints in detail.

## Surficial Geology







#### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

#### TOPOGRAPHY

As shown in the accompanying illustration, the topography of the property for the proposed elderly housing project gently slopes in the northern section and becomes more steep in the southeastern section. As was indicated by the representative for the architectural firm, the proposed development is to be located in the northwest portion of the property. This area appeared to be relatively flat.

The land surface elevation of the property is highest (170 feet above mean sea level) at a point east of residences on Van Tassel Road and lowest (90 feet above mean sea level) at the front portion of the property near Christy Hill Road.

There is one unnamed intermittent watercourse which runs parallel to the steeply sloped area in the southeastern portion of the property. This watercourse receives drainage from most of the property. It then flows in a northerly direction until it meets another unnamed watercourse at the front part of the property. This watercourse then flows westerly from the site for approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles where it discharges into Pine Swamp Brook.

The land surrounding the property is moderately developed with residential buildings in the western section and just a few residences to the northeast. Land to the southeast portion of the property is undeveloped until one reaches Long Cove Road.

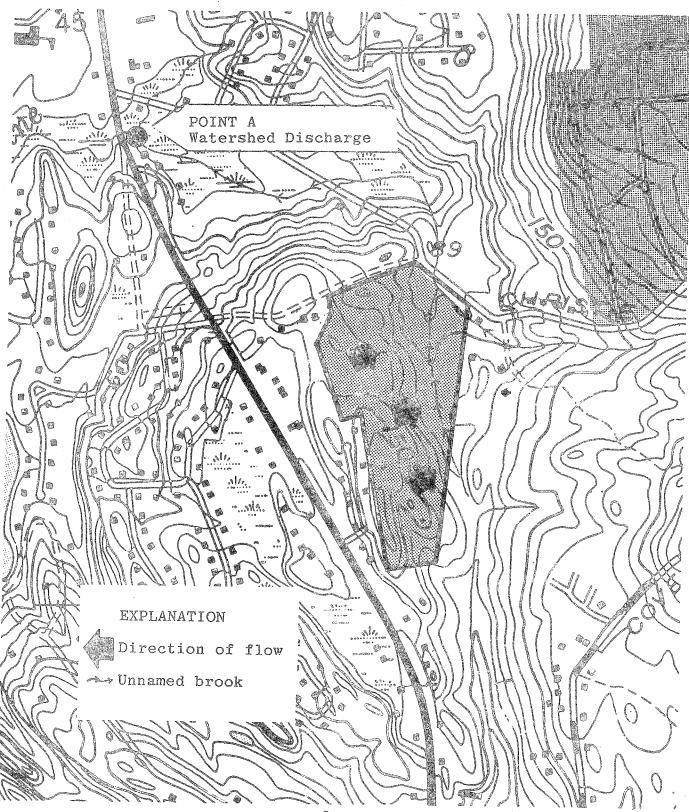
#### **GEOLOGY**

The proposed elderly housing site consists of a blanket of unconsolidated glacial deposits which overlies bedrock. The surficial geology of the property was developed from site inspection and the published U.S. Geological Survey Map GQ-138 "Geological Map of the Uncasville Quadrangle, New London County, Connecticut," by Richard Goldsmith (1960). Glacial deposits on the property consist of ground moraine and kame deposits. Ground moraine is defined as a sheet of glacial till deposited as a thin veneer over pre-existing topography. These deposits, which are primarily found in the southern half of the property are composed of a light gray, sandy gravelly till or a more compact till containing silt and clay particles. Till soil is a product of glacial erosion of a previous geologic landscape and direct deposition of the transported debris by ice. Till is characteristically composed of rock particles that range in size from clay to boulders. They may vary from a very friable, sandy, less compacted till, relatively low in fine particles, to a very compact till that is relatively high in silt and clays.

## Drainage Areas







The glacial material found in the northern or front portion of the property consists of kame deposits. A kame is a low hill of stratified drift formed in contact with glacial ice. Stratified drift consists of sand and gravel deposited by meltwater streams. Soil testing conducted by town officials substantiated the presence of sand and gravel deposits in this portion of the property.

The bedrock geology of the property is described in the U.S. Geological Survey Map GQ-576 "Geological Map of the Uncasville Quadrangle, New London, Connecticut by Richard Goldsmith (1967)."

Bedrock outcrops were evident in the southwestern portion of the property. The rock unit found in this area consists of a granite gneiss which is orange-pink to light gray, medium grained gneissic biotite granite with minerals consisting of quartz, microcline, oligoclase with a small percentage of biotite and iron oxides. In the northern section of the property, the rock unit consists of a gray gneiss with lenses of microcline, plagioclase and quartz. A "gneiss" is a banded or streaked crystalline rock formed by regional metamorphism. Regional metamorphism can be defined as any alternation in composition, texture or structure of rock masses caused by great heat or pressure, affecting an extensive region.

Bedrock outcrops indicate shallow depth of soil conditions in these areas. Steep slopes, as previously discussed, were also observed in the southern section of this site. Due to these geologic limitations, development of housing sites and on-site sewage disposal systems should be located in the more favorable northern section of this parcel.

#### HYDROLOGY

Most of the surface runoff from the site (see Drainage Map) drains eastward into unnamed watercourse and wetland area. The watercourse, which originates in the southeast portion of the property flows north where it joins another unnamed watercourse before crossing Christy Hill Road. The watercourse eventually flows into Pine Swamp Brook approximately 1½ miles to the northwest of the site.

Development of the site will generate additional runoff volume for a given storm. Factors affecting the actual increase of runoff would include removal of vegetation, compaction of soils and the creation of impervious surfaces such as roofs and paved areas. It appears that runoff conditions would be more significant at the rear portion of the property as opposed to the front and mid-section of the property. This is a result of till soils, which have slow infiltration rates compounded by the moderate slope. The sandy/gravelly soils found in the front portion and middle portion of the property are well drained and would have low runoff potential.

If development is concentrated in proximity to the northwest portion of the property, it would be easier to control runoff because of the favorable slope and soil conditions.

Since the Town of Ledyard requires 0% increase in runoff, the developer must take steps to provide properly designed and installed stormwater control measures for runoff created by paved roads, roofs and other impervious surfaces.

One possible way of controlling the runoff from the proposed development would be to install a stormwater detention bond. This pond could be aesthetically located in the wetland area along the northeast side of the property. This pond would also serve as a sediment retention function. If sediment does accumulate in the pond, the material would have to be removed periodically. Proper maintenance of the retention pond will assure that the runoff storage capacity of the pond is not diminished. Since residents downstream from the proposed development have expressed concern with regard to runoff and possible flooding conditions, the stormwater detention pond should be designed to accommodate major storms.

#### SOILS

A detailed soils map of this site and detailed soils descriptions are included in the Appendix to this report, accompanied by a chart which indicates soil limitations for various urban uses. As the soil map is an enlargement from the original 1,320'/inch scale to 660'/inch, the soil boundary lines should not be viewed as absolute boundaries, but as guidelines to the distribution of soil types on the site. The soil limitation chart indicates the probable limitations of each of the soils for on-site sewage disposal, buildings with basements, streets and parking, and landscaping. However, limitations, even though severe, do not preclude the use of the land for development. If economics permit large expenditures for land development and the intended objective is consistent with the objectives of local and regional development, many soils and sites with difficult problems can be used. The soils map, with the publication, New London County Interim Soil Survey Report, can aid in the identification and interpretation of soils and their uses on this site. "Know Your Land: Natural Soil Groups for Connecticut" can also give insight to the development potentials of the soils and their relationship to the surficial geology of the site.

The moderately steep to steep land forms adjacent to the highest elevations in the landscape are occupied by Charlton-Hollis fine sandy loams, very rocky. The soil mapping unit is 17LD. The letter"L" denotes very rocky, and "D" denotes a slope range of 15 to 45 percent. Both soils are well drained. Charlton soils formed in deep, friable glacial till, and the Hollis soils formed in shallow glacial till less than 20 inches deep over bedrock. Charlton soils have moderate to moderately rapid permeability and Hollis soils have moderate permeability. Surface runoff is medium to very rapid for Hollis soils and medium to rapid for Charlton soils.

The gently sloping to sloping land forms adjacent to the highest elevations in the landscape are occupied by Charlton-Hollis fine sandy loams, very rocky. The soil mapping unit symbol is 17LC. The letter "L" denotes very rocky, and "C" denotes a slope range of 3 to 15 percent. Both these soils are well drained.

Charlton soils formed in deep, friable glacial till and the Hollis soils formed in shallow glacial till less than 20 inches deep over bedrock. Charlton soils have moderate to moderately rapid permeability and Hollis soils have moderate permeability. Surface runoff is medium to very rapid for Hollis soils and medium to rapid for Charlton soils.

The low lying, nearly level areas along drainageways in the uplands are occupied by Ridgebury, Leicester and Whitman extremely stony fine sandy loams. The soils are designated by the mapping unit symbol 43M. The letter "M" denotes extremely stony. The Ridgebury and Whitman soils formed in compact glacial till; the Leicester soils formed in friable glacial till. The Ridgebury and Leicester soils have moderate to moderately rapid permeability in the surface layer and subsoil and slow or very slow permeability in the substratum (fragipan). The Leicester soils have moderately rapid permeability throughout. The seasonal highwater table for Ridgebury and Leicester soils is at or near the surface 7 to 9 months of the year. The Whitman soils have high runoff potential. Runoff is slow to medium in Ridgebury soils and slow in Leicester soils. This soil is designated as a wetland soil and is regulated under Public Act 155.

The Narragansett series consists of gently sloping, sloping and moderately steep, well drained soils on uplands. They formed in silt mantled friable glacial till. Narragansett soils have moderate permeability in the surface layer and subsoil, and moderately rapid or rapid permeability in the substratum. Major limitations are related to stoniness.

The Sutton series consists of nearly level and gently sloping, moderately well draining soils on uplands. They formed in friable glacial till. Sutton soils have moderate or moderately rapid permeability, and a seasonal high water table at 18 to 24 inches. Major limitations are related to stoniness and wetness.

After reviewing the proposed elderly Housing Plan for the development of 30 elderly housing units on a parcel of 26 acres located on the south side of Kings Highway in Ledyard the following are comments from the Soil Conservation Service.

A detailed sediment and erosion control plan should be developed. The plan should consist of:

- 1.) Location of areas to be stripped of vegetation and other exposed or unprotected areas.
- 2.) A schedule of operations to include starting and completion dates for major development phases such as land clearing and grading street, sidewalk and storm sewage installation.
- 3.) Seeding, sodding or revegetation plans and specifications for all unprotected or unvegetated areas.
- 4.) Location and design of structural sediment control measures, such as diversions, waterways, grade stabilization structures, debris basins, etc.
  - 5.) Timing of planned sediment control measures.
- 6.) General information relating to the implementation and maintenance of the sediment control measures.
- It will be necessary to install detention basins to control storm water runoff.

#### VEGETATION

This 26 acre parcel which has been proposed as the site for thirty elderly housing units can roughly be divided into two distinctive vegetative areas: upland and lowland.

The upland section is on a north to northeast slope; moderately level on the westerly side and dropping away to quite steep slopes to the east. Species encountered include: scarlet oak, black oak, and white oak, black birch and yellow birch, tulip tree, pig nut, hickory and shagbark hickory, red maple, and white pine. On the north and near the old field area there are a few Douglas fir and Norway spruce. Understory species include the oaks, the birches, flowering dogwood, red maple, with an occasional clump of witch hazel and chestnut sprouts. The white pine has produced some seedlings. Lesser vegetation includes: mountain laurel, wild azalea, blueberries, green brier, and princess pine.

Preserving the laurel and azalea during development and releasing the white pine sablings from competing hardwoods would enhance the aesthetic quality of the area. Planting some white pine on the steep eastern slope would also add variety to the stand.

The lowland or brook area is essentially a red maple swamp, but it does contain other species such as tulip tree, sassafras, white oak and black oak. There were a few weeping willows and Northern white cedar planted near the small pond site. The understory species include spice bush, coast pepperbush, sassafras, blueberry and green brier.

This is a sensitive area in that the trees are shallow-rooted; thinning or a disturbance of any sort in this section is apt to cause excessive tree loss due to wind throw. Also any road building that necessitates filling in the area would impede water movement and cause further tree mortality.

Disturbance of the steep, east facing slope would weaken the tree roots and cause early mortality of trees that are already under excessive stress, trying to survive on this steep droughty slope. Preservation of the large oaks and hickorys will enhance the food crop for the squirrels which are a favorite around elderly housing.

#### WATER SUPPLY

As there is no public water supply available at the site, potable water for the project would be derived by the installation of an on-site central or community well(s). In general, such a well should be properly located in regard to various potential sources of pollution. As the housing units would also be served by on-site sewage disposal it would appear, due to the topography and soil conditions, that a well site should be kept to the higher terrain and towards the central-rear portion of the property. In this general area, however, a rock or drilled well would only be feasible due to the presence of shallow bedrock. Al-

though the yield of a well could be a limiting and certainly a critical factor, overall water usage at an elderly housing project is below that expected for other types of residential housing. Daily water usage for the proposed project would probably be in the range of 3,000 to 4,000 gallons. Generally rock wells will yield 3 or more gallons per minute. It may also be possible to locate a well site in the lower terrain, nearer to the stream, where more permeable soils are present. Sand, and sand and gravel soils are more conducive for moderate to high yield wells. A minimum separating distance of at least 150 feet from any sewage disposal system should probably be observed.

In reviewing well completion reports of bedrock wells in the vicinity of the proposed development; one residential well, located on Van Tassel Road, had a yield of 20 gallons per minute at a depth of 130' into bedrock. Van Tassel Road runs parallel to the western side of the property and is approximately 500' from the proposed developments. Other bedrock wells reviewed, which were primarily located on Long Cove Road had yields ranging from 1 to 10 gallons per minute. It is possible, however, that the combined yield of several wells in series could adequately satisfy the water supply demands. In order to assure sufficient quantities and pressure of water to the development during peak demands, water storage tanks must be properly sized.

It is noted the service areas of several existing community (public) water systems of the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority are relatively close to this site. Therefore, this agency should be contacted regarding possible extension of the service area or the development and operation of an on-site well to supply the project.

#### WASTE DISPOSAL

As no municipal sewers are available the proposed project would be served by on-site subsurface sewage disposal. There has been no preliminary layout plans indicating whether a community (central) type sewage facility or a number of individual systems for the various buildings would be utilized.

Based on soil mapping data, visual observations and review of soil tests previously conducted by local health officials, it is apparent the most suitable area for sewage disposal is towards the front part of the property extending between the upper roadway into the property and the lower open field above wetlands and the stream. Soils in this area are essentially composed of various graduations of sand which have good seepage and drainage. The soils apparently extend for considerable depth as no shallow underlying bedrock was found in the area tested. Also the groundwater that was detected towards the lower end was at considerable depth with tests being taken in the spring of the year.

In contrast to this part of the property, the upper, centralized section extending to the far, southern end is glacial till uplands overlying shallow bedrock. Slopes in this area are also steep. For these reasons this section of the property would not be considered favorable or desirable for sewage disposal purposes. The lower area, off the hillside would, in turn, seem to be too low, bordering right on or being in wetlands.

Construction of the housing units by location should be directed to the upper middle area which would not be particularly suitable for sewage disposal. Also this general area would probably be a reasonable location for a well site. Perhaps the main concern with the front area of the property might be that soils would tend to be excessively drained. If this proves to be the case, provisions for increasing the separating distance between the sewage disposal system(s) and well site and possibly between the leaching area and watercourse may be needed.

If the Town decides to install a community type sewage disposal system and flows are 5,000 gallons of sewage per day or more, a permit to discharge will be required by the Water Compliance Section of the Department of Environmental Protection.

#### PLANNING CONCERNS

The proposed Elderly housing site is located in the Gales Ferry area of Ledyard close to the town's largest concentration of commercial development. It is within a mile of a variety of retail and service establishments, as well as churches and public facilities. However, road grades are steep and there are no sidewalks, so it is not likely that elderly residents would find walking to be a convenient mode of travel for shopping and other purposes. Nevertheless, the short distance avoids the need for lengthy vehicle trips over narrow, winding town roads or busy state highways.

The proposed site contains a variety of natural features. About a third of the property is a level to gently-sloping shelf along the western border, extending the full depth of the property. This is the area appropriately identified for the housing units and associated access and parking. It appears to have ample room for the units presently proposed and could accommodate additional units in the future. Future expansion, however, may require linking the access road to Van Tassel Drive (perhaps near its southern end) to avoid having an excessive number of elderly units totally dependent on a single route of access.

Assuming that storm drainage and utilities can be adequately handled on the site, a possible future senior citizens center could also be located along this margin of high ground. Such a facility should be kept close to Kings Highway to avoid conflicts with the residential area.

The land slopes down from the western part of the site to a narrow valley, accented by a small stream that runs northerly through the middle of the site. A small pond rimmed with large stones adds to the attractiveness of the valley. Other natural drainage features meander through the part of the site adjacent to Christy Hill Road. The entire lower area of the site appears to be well suited for development of nature trails, picnic areas, or other passive uses that could be used by the elderly residents as well as by other occupants of nearby residential subdivisions.

Road access to the site should be improved. Kings Highway is a one-lane unimproved road for most of its length, and there are serious vertical alignment

problems west of the site. The road should be reconstructed prior to use of the site for the intended purposes.

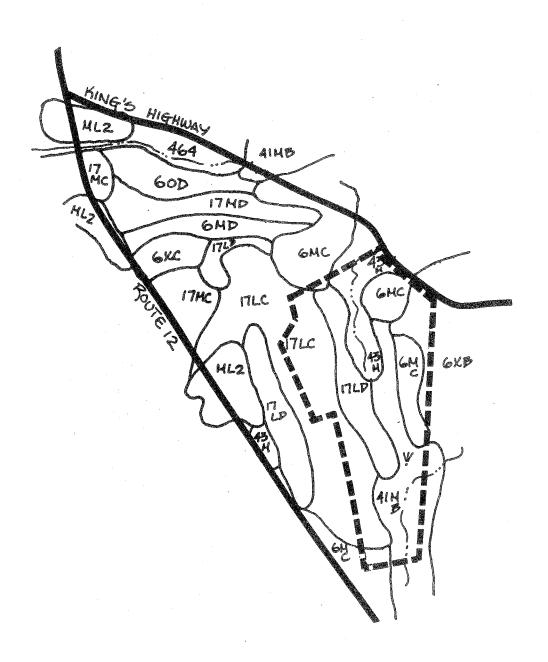
Driveway access to the northern end of the site should be limited to one location, as presently proposed, regardless of possible future uses of the site. Sight distances to the west along Christy Hill Road from the site are limited and could prove dangerous. Therefore, access should be limited to a location on Kings Highway as far west as possible from Christy Hill Road. When Kings Highway is reconstructed, it would be desirable to remove obstacles at the Christy Hill Road/Kings Highway intersection that presently limit the sight distance.

# Appendix

## Soils



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ELDERLY HOUSING COMPLEX LEDYARD, CONNECTICUT

PROPORTIONAL EXTENT OF SOILS AND THEIR LIMITATIONS FOR CERTAIN LAND USES

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| Charlton-Hollis                     | 17LC                  | Ω            | 24%                | 1  | 25   | 2  | 200   | 200   |
| Hollis Part<br>Charlton-Hollis      | 17LD                  | 9            | %<br>%             | stones<br>Slope,<br>depth to             | m  | n n  | n m   | n m   |
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\* Limitations: 1 = Slight, 2 = Moderate, 3 = Severe \*\* Regulated Wetland Soil, P.A. 155.

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#### SOIL INTERPRETATIONS FOR URBAN USES

The ratings of the soils for elements of community and recreational development uses consist of three degrees of "limitations":slight or no limitations; moderate limitations; and severe limitations. In the interpretive scheme various physical properties are weighed before judging their relative severity of limitations.

The user is cautioned that the suitability ratings, degree of limitations and other interpretations are based on the typical soil in each mapping unit. At any given point the actual conditions may differ from the information presented here because of the inclusion of other soils which were impractical to map separately at the scale of mapping used. On site investigations are suggested where the proposed soil use involves heavy loads, deep excavations, or high cost. Limitations, even though severe, do not always preclude the use of land for development. If economics permit greater expenditures for land development and the intended land use is consistant with the objectives of local or regional development, many soils and sites with difficult problems can be used.

#### Slight Limitations

Areas rated as slight have relatively few limitations in terms of soil suitability for a particular use. The degree of suitability is such that time or cost would be needed to overcome relatively minor soil limitations.

#### Moderate Limitations

In areas rated moderate, it is relatively more difficult and more costly to correct the natural limitations of the soil for certain uses than for soils rated as having slight limitations.

#### Severe Limitations

Areas designated as having severe limitations would require more extensive and more costly measures than soils rated with moderate limitations in order to overcome natural soil limitations. The soil may have more than one limiting characteristic causing it to be rated severe.

## About the Team

The Eastern Connecticut Environmental Review Team (ERT) is a group of professionals in environmental fields drawn together from a variety of federal, state, and regional agencies. Specialists on the Team include geologists, biologists, foresters, climatologists, soil scientists, landscape architects, archeologists, recreation specialists, engineers and planners. The ERT operates with state funding under the supervision of the Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area.

The Team is available as a public service at no cost to Connecticut towns.

#### PURPOSE OF THE TEAM

The Environmental Review Team is available to help towns and developers in the review of sites proposed for major land use activitis. To date, the ERT has been involved in reviewing a wide range of projects including subdivisions, sanitary landfills, commercial and industrial developments, sand and gravel operations, elderly housing, recreation/open space projects, watershed studies and resource inventories.

Reviews are conducted in the interest of providing information and analysis that will assist towns and developers in environmentally sound decision-making. This is done through identifying the natural resource base of the project site and highlighting opportunities and limitations for the proposed land use.

#### REQUESTING A REVIEW

Environmental reviews may be requested by the chief elected officials of a municipality or the chairman of town commissions such as planning and zoning, conservation, inland wetlands, parks and recreation or economic development. Requests should be directed to the Chairman of your local Soil and Water Conservation District. This request letter should include a summary of the proposed project, a location map of the project site, written permission from the landowner allowing the Team to enter the property for purposes of review, and a statement identifying the specific areas of concern the Team should address. When this request is approved by the local Soil and Water Conservation District and the Eastern Connecticut RC&D Executive Council, the Team will undertake the review on a priority basis.

For additional information regarding the Environmental Review Team, please contact Jeanne Shelburn (774-1253), Environmental Review Team Coordinator, Eastern Connecticut RC&D Area, P.O. Box 198, Brooklyn, Connecticut 06234.