

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TEAM REPORT  
ON THE  
SACRED HEART PARISH PROPERTY  
STURTEVANT STREET  
NORWICH, CONNECTICUT

*Preparation of this report has been,  
in part, assisted by a grant from the  
New England Regional Commission  
administered by the  
Southeastern Connecticut  
Regional Planning Agency*

EASTERN CONNECTICUT RESOURCE CONSERVATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT  
Environmental Review Team  
139 Boswell Avenue  
Norwich, Connecticut 06360

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TEAM REPORT  
ON THE  
SACRED HEART PARISH PROPERTY  
STURTEVANT STREET  
NORWICH, CONNECTICUT

This report is an outgrowth of a request from Reverend Monsignor Joseph King of the Sacred Heart Parish to the New London County Soil and Water Conservation District (S&WCD). The S&WCD referred this request to the Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Executive Council for their consideration and approval as a project measure. The request has been approved and the measure reviewed by the Environmental Review Team.

The soils of the site were mapped by a soil scientist of the USDA Soil Conservation Service. Reproductions of the soil survey and a table of limitations for urban development were forwarded to all members of the Team prior to their review of the site.

The Team that reviewed the site consisted of the following personnel: Sherman C. Chase, District Conservationist, Soil Conservation Service; Thomas H. Seidel, Planner, Southeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency; Barbara A. Hermann, Team Coordinator, Eastern Connecticut RC&D Project.

Also present on the review were: Reverend Monsignor King; Thomas Dorsey, member of the Sacred Heart Parish; Charles C. Whitty, Norwich City Manager; J. Thomas C. Waram, Norwich Planning Director; Peter Barber, Norwich Building Inspector.

The Team met and reviewed the site on May 13, 1974. Reports from each Team member were sent to the Team Coordinator for review and summarization.

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 both the Sacred Heart Parish and the City of Norwich. 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 Council 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: Miss Barbara A. Hermann (889-2324), Environmental Review Team Coordinator, Eastern Connecticut RC&D Project, 139 Boswell Avenue, Norwich, Connecticut 06360.

## INTRODUCTION

The Sacred Heart Parish owns property extending between West Town Street and Sturtevant Street which encompasses about 3.7 acres in total. Approximately 1.4 acres fronting along West Town Street have been used for the church, rectory, and a small parking lot. The land drops off fairly steeply behind the buildings to the remaining 2.3 acres which is relatively flat and fronts onto Sturtevant Street. The church is interested in the feasibility of using the lower 2.3 acres for the construction of elderly housing and/or parking and recreation facilities.

Due to the small size of the parcel and the availability of municipal utilities, the full Team approach was not used for this site. It was felt that a limited Team could adequately evaluate the site for the proposed use and identify the main problem areas.

The following report will identify the existing natural resources on the site and evaluate them with respect to the proposed uses. In addition, a brief description of the existing regulations which would apply to the proposed developments will be included.

## EXISTING RESOURCES

The soils on the Parish property, as shown on the map on the following page, include soil types 305 and 293. Only the 293 soil would be involved in any proposed development.

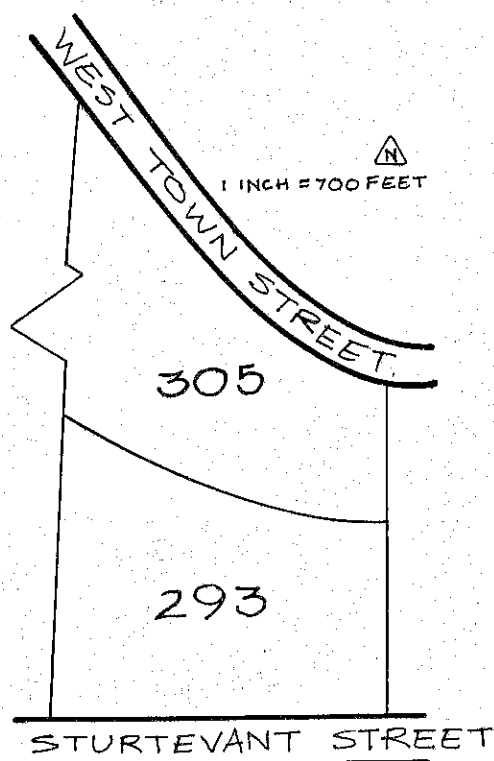
Soil 291 is classified as Unnamed Soil "Y". These are deep silty soils found on the flood plains. These dark-colored alluvial sediments have high water levels that correspond closely to the water level of the adjacent streams.

Under Public Act 155, this soil would be classified as an inland wetlands soil. Therefore, any activity which involves the removal or deposition of material, obstructs, constructs, alters, or pollutes the inland wetlands or water courses would require a permit from the local inland wetlands agency.

This site would also fall under the flood plain zoning regulations in Norwich. The property lies within the area which would be affected by a 180 year flood on the Yantic River.\* However, with the proposed improvements for the Yantic River Flood Control Project, the site would be protected from the 180 year flood.

\* Work Plan For: Watershed Protection-Flood Prevention-Recreational Development-Yantic River Watershed, Commissioner of Environmental Protection, with assistance by the Soil Conservation Service and the Forest Service of the USDA.

SOIL MAP  
 SACRED HEART PARISH  
 WEST TOWN AND STURTEVANT STREETS  
 NORWICH, CONNECTICUT



Prepared by: UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
 Soil Conservation Service

ADVANCE COPY, SUBJECT TO CHANGE

APRIL, 1974

SOILS LIMITATIONS CHART

Mapping Symbol	Soil Name	Limitations for:*			Principal Limiting Factor
		Base-ments	Land-scaping	Streets & Parking	
293	Unnamed "Y"	3	3	3	Flood hazard, high water table.
305	Enfield, shallow	1	1	2	Slope 3-8%

\* Limitations: 1-slight; 2-moderate; 3-severe; 4-very severe.

Therefore, if and when the flood control project is completed, the designation of this property might change.

#### ELDERLY HOUSING

On the basis of surrounding land uses, residential, commercial, and the church, an elderly housing development would appear to be a compatible use. Shopping and medical facilities are located conveniently at the Norwich Shoppers Mall, along West Town Street, and on Case Street. Some of these would be within walking distance for elderly persons.

As far as construction on the site is concerned, by lowering the water table on the site with some subsurface drainage, no major problems should be encountered. The availability of municipal water and sewerage eliminate any concerns in those areas.

Currently, however, the fact that the site is within the Yantic River flood plain and is on inland wetland soils, detracts from its use for elderly housing. The regulatory procedures which would have to be followed in order to obtain permission for elderly housing here are numerous and will be discussed later in this report.

#### RECREATION

Being in the flood plain and on inland wetlands soils indicates that the site would be better suited for recreation uses and would definitely require fewer regulatory procedures. It was noted at the site that seepage was coming out of the steep bank behind the field, resulting in a wet condition along that edge. Tile drainage could correct the wet condition, but it would be necessary to run a pipe under Sturtevant Street and through a private property in order to provide an outlet into the Yantic River.

With drainage and slight grading, the field could be used for parking and/or recreation. This could include one or more of the following activities: baseball, basketball, horseshoes, badminton, and shuffleboard.

#### LOCAL ORDINANCES PERTAINING TO SITE DEVELOPMENT

The property in question presently lies within an R-10 zoning district, which permits single-family dwellings and customary home occupations on lots with a minimum area of 10,000 square feet. Planned Unit Development would not be possible on this site due to its small size. Therefore, in order to construct multi-family housing, it would be necessary to have the property (and adjacent

properties) rezoned to an MF-8 or MF-5 district. According to the City Charter, the zone change must include a minimum of 800 feet of continuous frontage. In this case, rezoning from Pleasant Street east to the easterly property line of the Sacred Heart property would be adequate.

In addition to having the zone changed for multi-family development, a Special Exception from the Zoning Board of Appeals would be required under Section 14.6 of the Zoning Ordinances to permit the building of structures within a flood plain zone. The structures would have to comply with the special provisions set forth in Section 14.7.

Construction on the wetlands soils would require an additional permit from the local inland wetlands agency.

For parking and recreation development, no zone change would be required. However, a Special Exception would be required under Section 8.2.2 for recreational use within the R-10 zone. A Special Exception would also be required for the construction of paved driveways and parking areas within the flood plain (Section 14.6.4). As far as the inland wetlands are concerned, the local inland wetlands agency should be contacted to determine compliance with Public Act 155 as it may affect the recommended drainage for the recreation fields and any paved surfaces.

#### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently, two factors detract from using the site for elderly housing. The first is its location within the Yantic River flood plain. Under the flood plain zoning ordinances, if permitted, the first floor with living space would have to be two feet above the maximum flood level anticipated by the flood plain map. This would probably require fill or construction on piles. The second factor is its location on an inland wetlands soil, subject to the regulations under Public Act 155. This possibly would not permit a housing development. Thus, although the site appears to be good for elderly housing on a land use basis, the above factors indicate that it might be better suited to recreational uses. One possible alternative would be to develop the site for recreational uses now on a semi-permanent basis, and then, if and when the Yantic River Flood Control Project is undertaken and completed, reconsider the construction of elderly housing.