

Report Name: *Report on ASTM Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Hamden Middle School and Surrounding Newhall Neighborhood, Hamden, Connecticut*

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Prepared for: Town of Hamden

What Is This Report About?

This report is about what the Town of Hamden found during their study of Town-owned properties as well as some adjacent private home properties within the overall Newhall Street Study Area. It tells what was done to identify the possibility of contamination on each property studied. It is part of a series of studies that were done for this purpose. The report gives a detailed explanation of what was studied and how. It then has a detailed description of information gathered. It includes numerous appendices that have photographs taken of the properties, maps, a timeline of events related to each property, and selected information about each property (such as Assessor records).

Why Did They Do This Research?

The soil contamination found in the Newhall Street neighborhood is associated with landfills that were located in the area from the late 1800s through the 1950s. A variety of fill materials (such as household garbage, industrial waste, and soil from other places) was thrown away in the dumps. The purpose of this study was to do three things:

- Understand the history of the properties studied
- Understand how the properties are being used today and what condition they are in
- Identify the potential presence of Recognized Environmental Conditions (REC). RECs are any hazardous substances or petroleum products released (spilled or dumped) on a property in the past or any threat of a release of hazardous materials or petroleum products. A release would be a spill or dump of these substances into a building, onto the ground, or into the water.

The information that the Town collected and the conclusions they came to provided a basis for figuring out where to concentrate future efforts for soil testing.

How Did They Research?

The method used to perform the study followed a process spelled out by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This process is known as a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. Basic steps in this process included:

- Reviewing all existing reports, files, databases, newspaper articles, and records about the properties
- Researching old historical information from such things as City Directories, old aerial photos, and old maps.
- Conducting a survey of all Newhall neighborhood residents
- Interviewing state agencies, town employees, property owners and people using the properties today, and anyone else familiar with the property uses and history
- Inspecting the Town properties to look for signs of RECs
- Interpreting all the information gathered and drawing some conclusions about the possibility of there being RECs on each property studied

Where Did They Research?

There were 131 Town-owned and neighboring properties studied. These were separated into seven groups of parcels (see map). One of the parcels is composed of six Town-owned properties, including the Hamden Middle School, Hamden Community Center, Newhall Street Athletic Fields behind the school, Rochford Field, Mill Rock Park, and a sewer pump station. The other six parcels are made up of collections of private home properties located in the same general area, some with multi-family homes. Was Mill Rock a separate parcel?

What Did They Find?

The research found four RECs associated with the properties studied. That is, a strong possibility of contamination was found at the following sites:

REC #1: There is evidence of former landfills with industrial waste on three Town-owned properties including the Hamden Middle School, Newhall Street Athletic Field, and Rochford Field. There is evidence of household waste and illegal dumping on properties immediately next door to these sites as well. And Mill Rock park? Check.

REC #2: Material that was used as fill under several of the parcels may have included ash, cinders, industrial and household waste. Parcels where this material is suspected include Parcel 3, Parcel 2B, and Parcel 2D (see map).

REC #3: There is evidence of former oil or gasoline dumping (probably related to a former landfill) near the site of the existing underground oil tank at the Hamden Middle School. Check this. Confer with Shannon. 424-3546

REC#4: A 6,000 gallon underground oil tank was removed from the Hamden Community Center in 1989. This site has some possibility of oily soils remaining if the tank leaked.

This report also raised some concern about two general problems in the area. First, some homes on six of the seven parcels are settling or sinking. This may be due to the changes in the landfill material underneath them. Second, areas of fill with ash in it were found both inside and outside of the area that was studied. Therefore, the report recommended the area the Town studies in the future be made bigger.