



HERITAGE PARK NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATE MARCH 6, 2024

West Hartford's public review process for our proposed neighborhood village continues to move forward.

Permitting for the project is now procedurally separated into two segments: one for 1700 Asylum Ave. and one for 1800 Asylum Ave., which has helped bring a more specific focus on the impact that the apartment homes, townhomes and mixed-use features will have on the neighborhood and West Hartford in general.

The 1700 Asylum Ave. parcel has gone first and the 1800 parcel will follow.

The Heritage Park residences at 1700 Asylum Ave. have proceeded first, and each step in the rigorous public review process by West Hartford town staff, the Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC), the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency (IWWA) and Town Plan & Zoning (TPZ) Commission has brought refinements and improvements to our scope and designs—as have the comments we have received from neighbors and our discussion with local organizations.

Here is what has happened since our December 2023 update:

IWWA approval

On January 17, 2024, after its public hearing process, the IWWA voted to grant the wetlands permit for 1700 Asylum Ave., with conditions to ensure the minimum impact on site wetlands and the preservation and improvement of the trees and plantings. As we reported in our last mailing, our tree planting and landscape program will bring a net increase of more than 300 trees to this parcel, as well as stormwater collection and treatment improvements where none currently exist.

TPZ approval

On March 4, 2024, TPZ voted to recommend approval of the project to the Town Council based on its conformance with the West Hartford Plan of Conservation & Development. The Town Council is scheduled to begin consideration of the 1700 Asylum Ave. property this coming Monday, March 11.

DRAC approval

Also on March 4—after 8 informal study sessions that stretched well over a year—DRAC voted to recommend approval of the 1700 Asylum Ave. plan to the Town Council, attesting to the appropriateness of the development for this location, and making the following specific findings:

- “The proposed landscaping is of high quality and quantity.”
- “The relationship of the proposed buildings to the site and the adjoining neighborhood is appropriate. While the buildings are collectively substantial, their design, in particular site placement and architecture, are compatible with its surroundings.”
- The location of the buildings “are centralized to the site and placed at points most distance from existing adjacent properties to the north and south which maximizes setbacks.”
- “The building step backs (fourth to fifth story), along Trout Brook Drive help reduce their perceived massing from the public view shed.”

Traffic study

The traffic study that we commissioned and submitted to the Town Council for 1700 Asylum Ave. evaluated the prospective traffic that will be generated by the apartment units and the parking lot adjacent to the existing ball fields. It also took into consideration the projected traffic generation from the proposed mixed-use activities for the next-door 1800 Asylum Ave. at peak morning and evening traffic periods during the week and during the Saturday midday peak hour. The study envisions the following traffic mitigation measures designed to keep the net impact within acceptable ranges:

- A traffic signal at the intersection of Trout Brook Dr. and the 1700/1800 entrances if the 1800 parcel is approved. If not, the installation of a stop sign and stop bar at the 1700 site entrance on Trout Brook will be used.
- Widening of Trout Brook Dr. and a southbound left-turn lane at the 1700 site entrance.
- Left-turn lanes are provided on Trout Brook Drive at both the 1700 site entrance and the ball field parking entrance.
- Improvement of pavement markings and the timing of existing traffic signals in several nearby locations.
- Review and approval by the Connecticut Office of the State Traffic Administration.

A small, vibrant village and a great place to live

We are fortunate to have had the benefit to date of input from the qualified and dedicated persons who sit on West Hartford agencies and the Town's professional staff. They have shaped our proposal throughout the process in ways that have only continued to improve the design, scope, environmental benefits and the end experience for those who will eventually reside on the site. We hope that the permits and recommendations received through this process will give you as our neighbors, confidence that this proposal is worthy of Town Council approval of the 1700 Asylum Ave. portion of our Heritage Park development.

Our goal is to revive these two properties to give West Hartford residents new options to live here at this welcoming, green, walkable village that will fit well into its developed surroundings. We look forward to continuing the review and permitting process with West Hartford's land use authorities and welcome your continued ideas and comments via our website, www.oakwoodparkwh.com.

Thank you very much.