

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

BROWNFIELDS SUCCESS IN NEW ENGLAND

FITCH AVENUE PROPERTY

NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT



Property Details

Property Address:	NW Intersection of Fitch Avenue and Crest Street, New London, CT
Property Size:	Approximately one acre
Former Uses:	Motor lodge; mostly undeveloped land adjacent to I-95
Contaminants Found:	Arsenic, zinc and lead in soil and surface water
Current Use:	Low-income housing, with additional housing in progress
Current Owner:	Habitat for Humanity of Southeastern Connecticut

Project Partners

CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD); CT Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); City of New London, CT

Drivers for Redevelopment: New London, Connecticut is a seaport town of approximately 25,700 residents in the southeast region of the state. With population and local industry in decline over the last several decades, unemployment and poverty levels in New London are higher than state averages. Creating low-income housing is a priority and there is limited land available for development. Approximately half of the one-acre property at the focus of this project had already been developed for low-income housing by Habitat for Humanity of Southeastern Connecticut (HFHSECT); environmental assessments conducted in 1998 characterized areas of contamination on the remaining portion. The need for cleanup of these contaminated areas was all that stood in the way of construction of additional, low-income housing.

Property History: A portion of this approximately one-acre property was used as a motor lodge in the 1960s; the site was purchased by the state Department of Transportation (CT DOT) in the 1970s as part of Interstate 95 construction. Areas of contamination discovered on the property are most likely attributable to the site's industrial use during this time. A private developer, Thomas Sheridan, purchased the land from CT DOT in 1986. In 1997, when HFHSECT expressed interest in the land for low-income housing, Mr. Sheridan donated the property to the organization. Initial environmental assessments funded by HFHSECT in 1998 revealed nearly half of the site to be free from contamination, and the organization built two homes on the uncontaminated portion in 2000. To address the remaining portion, HFHSECT applied for and received a \$200,000 EPA Brownfields Cleanup grant in 2005.

Project Results: The success of this 13-year project is owed to the determination of HFHSECT as well as assistance and collaboration from federal, state and local partners. In 2006, EPA used Targeted Brownfields Assessment funds, with assistance from the CT DEP, to

Funding Details

Brownfields Hazardous Substances Cleanup Grant (2005):	\$200,000 awarded to HFHSECT
Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund Grant (2007):	\$42,500 sub-grant from a \$1.6 million grant awarded to the CT DECD
EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) grant (2006):	\$107,233
Leveraged Funding:	\$100,000 from HFHSECT for cleanup, which includes an \$11,000 Community Development Block Grant from the City of New London and \$48,500 in matching funds for the two EPA Cleanup grants; and \$200,000 from HFHSECT for development of the housing units

Project Highlights

- Characterized and cleaned up areas of contamination on a long-idle property
- Productive collaboration among multiple federal, state and local entities
- Constructed new, energy efficient housing to LEED® specifications
- Provided much-needed low-income housing for two families, including ten children

perform more detailed environmental tests that better characterized areas of arsenic, zinc and lead in the site's soil and surface water. HFHSECT used its Brownfields Cleanup grant—as well as an additional \$42,500 from a \$1.6 million EPA Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund grant awarded to the CT DECD in 2007, and \$11,000 from the City of New London—to excavate these areas of contamination and replace them with clean fill. Construction of two new HFHSECT homes began in 2010 and is expected to be finished by June 2011. The homes are being built to LEED® specifications, with energy-efficient design that includes enhanced joint seals and insulation, water-saving toilets and low-maintenance landscaping. When finished, this project will provide homes for two low-income families with a total of ten children.

Project Timeline

1960s	A portion of the property is used as a motor lodge
1970s	Property is purchased by the CT DOT, which uses the site as part of I-95 construction
1986	Property is purchased by developer Thomas Sheridan
1997	Mr. Sheridan donates the property to Habitat for Humanity of Southeastern CT (HFHSECT)
1998	Initial environmental assessments indicate soil contamination on half of the site
2000	HFHSECT builds two homes on the uncontaminated portion of the property
2008	Additional assessments enabled through an EPA TBA grant
2009	Cleanup begins on contaminated areas
2010-2011	Cleanup is completed, as well as the construction of two homes