

SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS/NEEDS

HOUSING



Pictured to the left is 3-11 Huntington, scheduled for demolition.

To the right is 54 Huntington, also scheduled for demolition.



A unique feature, not necessarily a positive one, is the nature of Asylum Hill's rental housing stock. Nearly 50% of these units are in structures of 10-49 units, and 28% are in structures of 50 or more units. Many of these are efficiency and one-bedroom units, which has made Asylum Hill more transient, and provided less housing for families with children than most neighborhood residents would prefer. (This helps explain why Asylum Hill has only 1.8 persons per household.) Only 10% of the housing units are owner-occupied, well below the City average of 23%. In 1990, there were 7,546 housing units in Asylum Hill and a vacancy rate of 11.3%, 3% higher than the City-wide average. This rate has increased dramatically this decade.

The condominium conversion craze that began in late 1970's through the 1980's had a much greater effect on Asylum Hill than the rest of the City. There are 1,143 condo units on the Hill, 40% of the total in Hartford!! The next highest is downtown with 421. However, only 37.8% of these units are owner-occupied. Of those not owner-occupied, 516 are rented and 94 vacant. The value of condominiums has plummeted since the late 1980's. Since the 1990 Census, some of these condominiums have been reconverted to apartments, while at least two, 54 and 100 Huntington Street, are completely vacant and a blight on the neighborhood.

The large number of vacant residential buildings is a major problem. The City's population has shrunk approximately 10% since the 1990 Census, a loss of 15,540 residents. This has led to widespread abandonment, particularly of mid and large size apartment buildings. There are presently 49 vacant residential buildings on the Hill, according to a survey by the City Planning Division, in November, 1997. (To view the Asylum Hill Vacant Structures Map see Appendix C.) Asylum Hill is also home to approximately 13 Halfway Houses. Generally these institutions fit into the neighborhood fabric. The general feeling of people in the neighborhood is that any more Halfway Houses will over burden Asylum Hill and should not be located here.

The over supply of small apartments in large apartment buildings remains a major problem. Of the 7,546 units in Asylum Hill, 5,538 are efficiencies or one bedrooms (1,393 efficiencies, 4,145 one bedroom units). Of all the efficiency units in Hartford, 47% are in Asylum Hill! This means 74% of the units are not appropriate for families, and contributes to the lack of stability in the neighborhood. However, this could be an opportunity to market the Hill to college and law school students

A major focus of AHRA's Strategic Plan will address these housing problems. Several buildings have recently been rehabbed and redesigned to provide larger units, several vacant houses are being rehabbed through the City's Urban Homesteading program for home ownership, and the City has obtained Urban Act funds from the State that will be targeted for demolition. Hill Housing Incorporated, the local community development corporation, is taking an active role in addressing many of these issues, and is an active participant in AHRA. Hill Housing is working on plans to renovate seven vacant houses on the Hill at this time. These houses will be marketed to first time home owners.