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WEST HARTFORD ZONING

REPORT TO THE ZONING COMMISSION
ON THE ZONING OF
WEST HARTFORD

BY
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ZONING COMMISSION
WEST HARTFORD, CONN.
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THE ZONING OF WEST HARTFORD

In considering the planning and zoning of West Hartford it is necessary first to determine its place and function in the Hartford urban region. It has much the same organic relation to the urban region as a whole as the individual has to the community. It must serve the whole while at the same time promoting its own welfare and preserving its individuality. In its planning work, West Hartford is no less bound to consider adjacent cities and towns and its proper function in the entire Hartford region, than is one of its individual property owners to give thought to his neighbors and the welfare of all in the use that he makes of his own property.

A study of the Hartford region makes it evident that the primary function of West Hartford is the housing of people who will have their work in Hartford. This housing will need to serve all classes and all grades of economic ability. It must provide for factory workers, office employees, and the various business and professional groups. West Hartford has 22 square miles of territory, an area 25 per cent greater than that of Hartford. It has the largest and most conveniently located area to take the excess population of the central city.

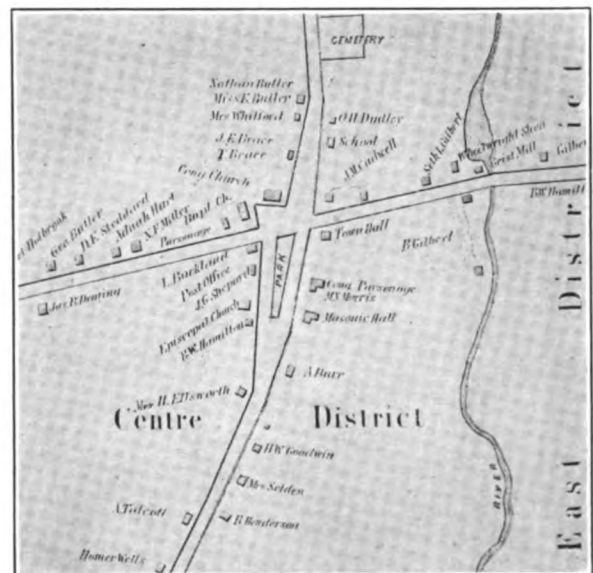
The present urban development in West Hartford is primarily an overflow from Hartford. Prospect Avenue while the dividing line runs through the center of a large residence area. There is little here to indicate a reason for a complete political separation.

Historically, however, West Hartford has a distinct and vigorous personality. This began with the original apportionment of farm lots in the West division by the proprietors of Hartford in 1672. These farm lots were laid out in mile and a half long narrow strips extending from Mountain Road on the west to the vicinity of Quaker Lane on the east. On Main Street running north and south along the ridge through about the center of these strips most of the farm houses were located and it was natural that about midway north and south along Main Street the first community center should develop. The Center then formed has continued to be the natural civic and community center for the town.

The natural demand for the facilities of a complete and self-contained community first



From a sketch made from memory by Miss Sarah W. Talcott
Old Center School House (probably built in 1745.)



From Baker and Tilden's Atlas of Hartford City and County, 1869
The Center in 1869

Outline of Zoning Regulations

The zoning map accompanying the zoning regulations divides the entire area within the limits of West Hartford into residence districts, business districts and industrial districts. These primary divisions controlling the use of property are supplemented by the area district regulations. The area districts are superimposed over the use districts, and control lot widths, side yards and lot areas with reference primarily to the number of families housed on the lot.

Residence Districts. In residence districts all business and industrial uses of property are prohibited. Dwellings, apartment houses, churches, schools, parks, playgrounds, greenhouses, truck gardening and farming are permitted. Institutional buildings are permitted with certain restrictions as to width of side yards and percentage of lot that may be covered.

The residence districts are further sub-divided into what for practical purposes might be called single family dwelling districts, two family dwelling districts and apartment house districts. This is accomplished by the area district regulations. In both the A and B area districts the lot widths and areas required for a two family house will under most conditions, make it uneconomic to build two family houses. In the A area district for a single family house a minimum lot width of 60 feet and a lot area of 9000 square feet is required; and for a two family house a width of 100 feet and an area of 18000 square feet. In the B area district for a single family house a lot width of 50 feet and an area of 6000 square feet is required; and for a two family house a width of 80 feet and an area of 12000 square feet.

The regulations of the C area district are designed to permit the construction of a two family house on the ordinary 50 foot lot. The required lot width for a two family house is 50 feet and the area 6000 square feet. It is provided, however, that a two family house may be erected on any lot existing at the time the zoning regulations are adopted having a width of 40 feet and an area of 3600 square feet. Similarly, a

single family house, though smaller than the required size, may be erected in an A or B area district on any lot existing at the time the zoning regulations are adopted. But in new subdivision or in re-subdivisions of existing lots the prescribed lot areas and widths will be required.

While three family houses and apartment houses are not prohibited in the A, B or C area districts their erection will for the most part be rendered uneconomic by the lot area, lot width and side yard requirements, all of which increase with the number of families to be housed on the lot. The regulations of the D and E area districts are intended to provide for three family house and apartment house construction. In the E area district 750 square feet of lot area is required for each family for which the house is arranged. In a D area district this area requirement is 1500 square feet. The E area regulations are applied where the larger apartment houses are an appropriate development and the D area regulations are applied where it is believed the three family house and the smaller apartments should be provided for.

The state enabling act provides that zoning regulations shall be designed "to avoid undue concentration of population." This injunction is carried out in the lot area per family requirement as applied to apartment house and tenement house construction. The development of crowded tenement house conditions such as exist in many larger communities will be effectively prevented in West Hartford.

Business Districts. In business districts all retail business uses including retail stores, small shops for custom work, offices, theatres, restaurants, etc., are permitted; as well as all buildings and uses authorized in residence districts. Storage uses and light manufacturing may be permitted in a business district by the board of adjustment after public notice and hearing.

A relatively small proportion of the entire area of the town if devoted to business uses will supply the requirements of a residential suburb such as West Hartford. The need for retail stores