



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Determination of Effect on Historic Properties

Author:	C. Scott Speal	Date:	February 7, 2020
Project:	State No.: 88-195 F.A.P. No.: Project Title: Stanley Loop Trail Town: New Britain		
Finding of Effect:	Conditional No Adverse Effect		

Project Description:

The City of New Britain, with technical and logistical assistance from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) and funding support from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), proposes construction of a new segment of multi-use trail through A. W. Stanley Park within its jurisdictional purview. This undertaking is the final phase of a larger project to construct a network of multi-use trails through the City of New Britain's Stanley Quarter / A.W. Stanley Park to connect surrounding neighborhoods and destinations. The current phase of the project is 1.5 miles in length and begins at the intersection of Eddie Glover Boulevard at Stanley Street with a multi-use trail extending westerly to the park entrance at Eddy Glover Boulevard. The proposed multi-use trail then enters the park following the existing roadway and crosses an existing stream on a new prefabricated pedestrian bridge, and then continues northwesterly past the existing Skate Park.

The proposed alignment continues north crossing Blake Road at a proposed mid-block crosswalk with a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB). North of Blake Road the proposed alignment heads north then turns northeast towards the Holmes Elementary School terminating at the existing mid-block crossing at Stanley Street. The project involves the construction of a 10-12' wide bituminous concrete surface multi-use trail with a 2' stone dust shoulder on one side. Design elements will include interpretive signage, drainage improvements, landscaping, fencing, guiderail, parking area, sidewalk, retaining wall, curbing, bike racks,

bollards, and benches. No right-of-way acquisitions are anticipated for this project.

This undertaking was previously subject to Section 106 review with a determination of effect issued in August of 2019. Since that determination, the project has been revised to utilize a short segment of trail currently under construction by the City's parks department. Continuing from the City's new segment of trail, Project 88-195 will now extend the eastern limit further easterly along a former park road, before turning south crossing an unnamed brook with a new prefabricated pedestrian bridge, and terminating at the intersection of Route 71 at Eddie Glover Boulevard.

Under the provisions of the Programmatic Agreement executed between CTDOT, FHWA, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Officer (CT SHPO), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regarding compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for minor transportation projects¹, the Office of Environmental Planning (OEP) intends to make a determination of effect on historic properties for the described undertaking.

Resources Potentially Affected:

The NPGallery online digital database maintained by the National Park Service was consulted for the purpose of locating any historic properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in the project vicinity. No NRHP-listed properties were found to exist within a mile of the project limits. The nearest is the Washington School building, located over a mile to the south. This resource will be subject to no foreseeable impacts from the present undertaking.

A series of historic maps obtained from the University of Connecticut Map and Geographical Information Center were examined to assess the potential for previously unidentified historic properties to be located within the project area of potential effect (APE). The Griswold-Spiess Map of reconstructed Native settlement in Connecticut circa 1625 presents no concentrations of indigenous population in the project vicinity during the Contact Period. The 1811 Warren Map of Connecticut likewise depicts no settlement in the project vicinity, though by that time there was a north-south road coursing through the area—most likely the precursor to Stanley Street. The 1855 Woodford Map of Hartford County presents virtually no development within the path of the proposed multi-use trail. The only exception is in the vicinity of its articulation with Stanley Street to the northeast, where several rural residences appear to have been located. Fairchild Series aerial photos from 1934 reveal that much of the proposed southern trail

¹ *Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding Implementation of Minor Transportation Projects*, signed October 26, 2012 and revised May 4th, 2018. Accessible online at: www.ct.gov/culturalresources

loop was already a cleared and graded road at the beginning of the 20th Century. Two farmsteads in the northeast part of the APE on the Woodford Map are still apparent in the Fairchild photos and are still more or less intact to this day. Most of the remaining northern segment, however, crosses land that has apparently never been cleared or developed.

Cursory review of the history of Stanley Quarter Park revealed that Mr. John Stanley, one of the original settlers of the Town of Farmington, was allotted 120 acres of land in 1644 as a reward for his services in the King Philip's War. This was the beginning of the Stanley land holdings in what is now the City of New Britain. In 1927, Alix W. Stanley deeded 360 acres to the City of New Britain for use as a park to be perpetually held and used for public purposes². The property consisted of forested hills, a small farm and several brooks. It comprises the current A.W. Stanley Park and an adjacent golf course property. The entire property lies in the center of the old settlement known since colonial days as the "Stanley Quarter."³

On July 17, 1933, work was begun to develop the A.W. Stanley Swimming Pool and Recreation Center. Approximately 500 men from the Civil Works Administration (CWA) program were employed on the project. The project included the construction of several fieldstone buildings that contained men's and women's bathing pavilions and lockers. Some raw materials, such as fieldstone and timber used to construct the buildings, were collected from the park. Approximately two miles of paved road and several miles of footpaths were built through the property to provide access to other recreational features. These included a 8 acre pond for fishing and ice skating, a Boy Scout cabin, baseball diamonds, tennis courts, horseshoe pitching courts, playgrounds, and picnic areas supplied with tables, benches and fireplaces. The remains of the fireplaces are still evident today. When completed, A.W. Stanley Recreation Center was considered one of the finest recreation centers in New England. Architectural features dating to the Depression Era, and even the Park itself, could be considered eligible for the NRHP given their association with the CWA and Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs and a prominent family in local New Britain history—the Stanleys.

Digital site records obtained by the Office of the State Archaeologist, as well as OEP's own internally maintained geodatabase, were consulted for the purpose of identifying any previously known archaeological sites within the APE. No recorded archaeological sites were found to exist within a mile of the project limits. A very limited amount of archaeological field survey has been conducted in this part of New Britain, however.

² "City Park A Wilderness Refuge" Hartford Courant Tribune Digital, May 11, 1998

³ Stanley Park Nature Trail Guide

<https://www.ccsu.edu/biology/files/awstanleyparknaturetrailguide2014.pdf>

Soil classification maps developed by the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service were examined in conjunction with predictive models in common use within the State of Connecticut to assess the sensitivity of the project area for previously unknown archaeological resources. The proposed trail route south of Blake Road falls predominantly upon artificially raised gravel road bed generally bereft of archaeological potential. The remainder courses over terrain that has rather clearly been artificially contoured for the recreational aspects of the park. An older stone cobble & mortar bridge possibly dating to the initial development of the Park during the 1930's under the auspices of the Civil Works Administration carries the roadbed over an unnamed brook within the forested area. A second similar bridge crosses the stream again just within the Park entrance immediately adjacent to where the prefabricated pedestrian bridge is proposed. The preponderance of the proposed trail route north of Blake Road falls upon terrain classified as Wethersfield Loams, very stony, of unknown relationship to archaeological potential. The APE falls in proximity to two permanent flowing water sources and one seasonal wetland, however, which would have rendered the area attractive to indigenous populations.

The proposed multi-use trail route was therefore field reviewed by OEP cultural resource Qualified Staff on April 23rd of 2018, and again on March 20th of this year. No evidence of the 19th Century homestead attributed to S. Smith on the Woodford Map near the southeastern project limit in the course of field review. The northern segment between Holmes Middle School and Blake Road courses over an existing unimproved road cut. Erosion is very severe in some places. Though ground visibility was excellent at the time of review and no evidence of intact archaeological resources was observed, occasional accumulations of construction debris was apparent in some places and stone masonry drainage features potentially associated with CWA improvements to the Park were observed. Any ground disturbing work beyond or below the existing road cut north of Blake Road was therefore deemed to merit formal cultural resources field survey.

The requested field survey was conducted by Historical Perspectives, Inc. operating out of Westport, Connecticut, in June of this year. Despite excavation of 53 shovel test pits, no subsurface resources were identified. No stone structures potentially dating to the CWA period were found to exist within the northern segment of the project APE, and no further identification work was recommended. The two stone-arch bridges, the "Spillway Bridge" and "Stanley Quarter Park Drive Bridge," located near the southeast corner of Stanley Quarter Park (the southern segment of the APE), however, were identified as having been constructed in 1925, while the stone masonry bridge located to the west along the off-road portion of the Stanley Loop Trail is thought to have been constructed by the CWA during the mid-1930s. It was also determined that stone drainage features located in both Stanley Quarter Park and A.W. Stanley Park were likely constructed during the WPA project that created the Stanley Loop Trail itself, this completed in 1936.



Example of stone cobble and mortar bridge within Stanley Quarter Park, carrying dirt-track road through undeveloped area.



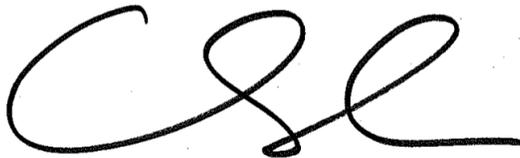
Example of stone cobble and mortar bridge within Stanley Quarter Park, carrying Stanley Quarter Park Drive through park.

It is for this reason that Historical Perspectives, Inc. concurred with a 1994 historical resources survey that determined Stanley Quarter Park eligible for listing on the NRHP due to its connection with the urban park movement in full swing during the 1920s, and New Deal-funded work programs conducted during the Great Depression.⁴ Similar connections and features also justify NRHP eligibility for A.W. Stanley Park, which combines both ruralist designs and the provision for active play, the latter manifested in the presence of the CWA-constructed swimming pool, pavilions, buildings, and ball fields.⁵ These structures should therefore be protected from all impacts during construction aside from pavement improvements.

Determination of Effect:

Consultation was carried out with Federally-recognized Native American Tribal authorities with ancestral ties to the State of Connecticut for this undertaking in July of this year. None of the Tribes solicited responded to the invitation to consult.

Given the involvement of certain stone cobble and mortar bridges within Stanley Quarter Park that appear to date to the 1930's and be associated with Depression-era work programs generally considered to be historically significant—albeit without any anticipated modification to these structures that might diminish the qualities rendering them eligible for the NRHP—OEP hereby determines that there will be *no adverse effect to historic properties* associated with the present undertaking. This determination is made **conditional** upon protection during construction of potentially NRHP-eligible stone cobble and mortar bridges, culverts, and drainage features that have been identified along the proposed Trail alignment. With this determination, FHWA, through OEP, has concluded its responsibility to consider the potential effects of the described project on cultural resources under Section 106 of the NHPA via the provisions of the Programmatic Agreement referenced above.



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⁴ Gregory Andrews, "Stanley Quarter Park, New Britain (Form #446)," Historic Municipal Parks Survey. On file with the New Britain Historic Preservation Commission.

⁵ *Phase I Archaeological Resources Survey, Stanley Loop Trail, A.W. Stanley and Stanley Quarter Park, New Britain, Connecticut, State Project No. 88-195*. Report prepared by Historical Perspectives, Inc. Westport CT, on file at CTDOT OEP.