

### Environment

Environment plays an important part in the valuation of Housing Quality. While many factors influence the physical environment, three are of particular interest here. They are traffic, land use, and structural condition, and all have been discussed previously, so that only references will be made to these factors here.

It has been pointed out that the major problem areas with respect to structural condition are along the Hydraulic Canal and in the southwestern portion of the Village. The same areas appear on the land use maps as the areas where mingling of incompatible land uses is most evident. The concentration of traffic arteries on the southwestern portion of the Village also appear to be a directly contributing cause of blight in this area. The Hydraulic Canal in itself is an undesirable factor to the residential uses in nearby areas and therefore a negative aspect in environmental considerations.

### Dwelling Unit Distribution

In the background study concerned with Population, mention was made of the over-all dispersal of dwelling units throughout the Village and the lack of high concentrations often found. Excessive dwelling unit density therefore appears to have little if any effect upon the distribution of blight in the Village, except in a few isolated cases.

### Community Facilities

The community facilities available to residents in an area play an indirect but still highly important part in the over-all picture of Housing Quality.

These community facilities include municipal services such as the maintenance of streets, fire and police protection, water and sewer services, all of which appear to be well provided, and such facilities as schools and recreational facilities. In the Land Use Analysis, it was indicated that some areas of the Village are deficient in land area devoted to parks and playgrounds and that the locations of schools are not all that could be desired. Those areas of the Village most affected are the newly developed and developing areas and the southern neighborhood in the older area of the Village. From this there would appear to be little relationship between the provision of community facilities and the problem areas, which leads to the conclusion that the level of community facilities is not a contributing factor or a cause of blight and deterioration. On the other hand, improvement of such facilities may well assist in the maintenance of presently sound properties in all parts of the Village and particularly in those areas indicated as problem areas.

#### Age of Structures

According to the Housing Census of 1950, more than 80 percent of the structures in the Village were built before 1920 with an additional 12 percent built in 1920 through 1929. When compared with the national figure of 45.8 percent and the State figure of 52.9 percent built before 1920, it is quite clear that Herkimer is essentially an older community in this respect. This fact apparently is of little consequence however, at least as far as the distribution pattern of poor structures is concerned. On the other hand, the level of housing quality may be somewhat below the level of housing in new structures due to the arrangement of spaces in older homes compared with arrangements in newer structures. Nearly all of the structures classified as poor were older structures which may be more costly to improve

because of their age. It should be noted that the steps that should be taken to prevent blight, such as code enforcement, are of greater importance in communities which have higher average age structures than in newer areas, and the future prevention of blight in Herkimer may well hinge upon such steps.