

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Staff Report

ADDRESS: 630 South Ashley Street
Application Number HDC21-222

DISTRICT: Old West Side Historic District

REPORT DATE: July 8, 2021

REPORT PREPARED BY: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE: Tuesday, July 6, 2021

	OWNER	APPLICANT
Name:	Moiz Bhabhrawala	Derek Delacourt Community Services Area Administrator
Address:	2637 Pin Oak Dr Ann Arbor, MI 48103	301 E Huron St Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Phone:		(734) 794-6000

BACKGROUND: This one-story concrete masonry unit building is a non-contributing structure in the Old West Side Historic District. See staff comments below for more history.

LOCATION: The site is on the northwest corner of South Ashley and West Mosley Streets.

APPLICATION: Staff seeks HDC approval for the building to be demolished

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

- (2) The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

From the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (other SOI Guidelines may also apply):

District or Neighborhood Setting – Alterations, Additions

Recommended: Removing non-significant buildings, additions or landscape features which detract from the historic character of the setting.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. This is a staff-initiated application to demolish an existing single-story building and remove contaminated soil under and around the building. There has been a dry-cleaning business on the site since at least 1946. Contamination from the dry-cleaning solvent tetrachloroethylene (also known as perchloroethylene, PCE or PERC) has been present beneath the building since at least 1985 when the Ann Arbor News reported on soil removal activity undertaken on a neighboring lot. PCE is known to have moved through the ground to a total of three neighboring lots, shown in the EGLE report submitted with the application. Exposure to PCE, often as a vapor coming out of the soil, can cause problems ranging from dizziness and headaches to blood problems, unconsciousness and death. It is carcinogenic to humans and has been linked to several kinds of cancer.
2. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) has worked with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washtenaw County, City of Ann Arbor, and neighborhood residents. They've evaluated remediation options and the first phase (this application) includes demolishing the existing building, removing contaminated soil on the site, and backfilling with clean fill. One white pine tree on the south side of the lot and another tree on the west property line would presumably be removed; neither is from the period of significance for the OWSHD. Treatment of groundwater that has migrated off the 630 S Ashley site is also expected; EGLE plans to perform the work in 2021. At this time, no work is planned on neighboring sites that would require a certificate of appropriateness from the Historic District Commission.
3. *Non-Contributing Status:* An original portion of the Armen Cleaners building proposed to be demolished was present during the period of significance -- a smaller version of the building first appears on the 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map as a hand laundry in the back and sideyard of a house on the corner of West Mosley and South Ashley; in 1931 the same building is shown as an auto repair and sign painting shop. Armen Cleaners opened in January of 1946. A photo from 1947 (see end of staff report) shows the building at half of its current width, with houses to both the north and south. A rear addition in 1947 made the rectangular building into an L shape. At some point the house on the corner to the south was demolished to allow the Armen Cleaners building to double in width in 1972. During the 2007 resurvey of the Old West Side Historic District, it was determined that the building had lost its historic integrity due to these alterations and is therefore a non-contributing structure.
4. Secretary of the Interior's Standard number two says "The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided." Since the historic character of the Armen Cleaners building has been altered beyond recognition, no distinctive materials will be removed and no features, spaces or spatial relationships will be compromised. The SOI Guidelines recommend "Removing non-significant buildings, additions or landscape features which detract from the historic character of the setting." This building is non-significant, and the contamination beneath it is certainly detracting from the historic character of the setting by introducing a dangerous toxin to the neighborhood.
5. If the building is demolished, any new construction on the site must be approved by the HDC. The property owner's intentions regarding future redevelopment are unknown at this time.

- Staff believes the proposed work is necessary to remediate the horrific effects of PCE on living things and the ecosystem. Preventing the further spread of contamination by removing much of it will also lessen its negative effects on nearby historic resources. The work is appropriate since the building is a non-contributing resource.

POSSIBLE MOTIONS: (Note that the motion is only a suggestion. The Review Committee, consisting of staff and at least two Commissioners, will meet with the applicant on site and then make a recommendation at the meeting.)

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 630 S Ashley to demolish the non-contributing dry cleaner building and remove the soil to remediate environmental contamination. The work as proposed is appropriate for the surrounding area and meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standard 2 and the guidelines for District or Neighborhood Setting – Alterations or Additions.

MOTION WORKSHEET:

I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at 630 S Ashley Street in the Old West Side Historic District

_____ Provided the following condition(S) is (ARE) met: 1) STATE CONDITION(s)

The work is generally compatible with the size, scale, massing, and materials and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, standard(S) number(S) (*circle all that apply*): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

ATTACHMENTS: application, photos, EGLE report *Armen Cleaners – Corrective Actions*, Proposed Injections Map, USEPA Bulletin November 2016

630 S Ashley Street, 1947 (courtesy AADL Old News)



630 S Ashley Street, 1975 (courtesy AADL Old News)



630 S Ashley Street, 2021 (staff photo)





HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

City Hall: 301 E. Huron St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104-6120
 Mailing: P.O. Box 8647, Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8647
 Phone: 734.794.6265 ext. 42608 ithacher@a2gov.org
 Fax: 734.994.8460

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Permit Number	HDC# <u>21-222</u>
	BLDG# _____
DATE STAMP	

APPLICATION MUST BE FILLED OUT COMPLETELY

PROPERTY LOCATION/OWNER INFORMATION

NAME OF PROPERTY OWNER Moiz Bhabhrawala		HISTORIC DISTRICT Old West Side	
PROPERTY ADDRESS 630 S Ashley			CITY ANN ARBOR
ZIPCODE 48103	DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER ()	EMAIL ADDRESS	
PROPERTY OWNER'S ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE) 2637 Pin Oak Drive		CITY Ann Arbor	STATE, ZIP MI 48103

PROPERTY OWNER'S SIGNATURE

SIGN HERE →	→ PRINT NAME	DATE →
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APPLICANT INFORMATION

NAME OF APPLICANT <i>(IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE)</i> Derek Delacourt, Community Services Area Administrator			
ADDRESS OF APPLICANT 301 E Huron St			CITY Ann Arbor
STATE MI	ZIPCODE 48104	PHONE / CELL # (734) 794-6000	FAX No ()
EMAIL ADDRESS			

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE *(if different from Property Owner)*

SIGN HERE →	→ PRINT NAME x Derek Delacourt	DATE → 6/18/2021
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BUILDING USE – CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

<input type="checkbox"/> SINGLE FAMILY	<input type="checkbox"/> DUPLEX	<input type="checkbox"/> RENTAL	<input type="checkbox"/> MULTIPLE FAMILY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> INSTITUTIONAL
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PROPOSED WORK

Describe in detail each proposed exterior alteration, improvement and/or repair (use additional paper, if necessary).

Demolish non-contributing structure in order to remove contaminated soil. See attached project description, photos, and contamination information.

DESCRIBE CONDITIONS THAT JUSTIFY THE PROPOSED CHANGES:

The dry cleaning business on this site caused soil contamination from PCE. Since the structure does not contribute to the history of the neighborhood, removing it will result in the most complete remediation and best public health outcome.

For Further Assistance With Required Attachments, please visit www.a2gov.org/hdc



HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION APPLICATION

FEE CHART

DESCRIPTION	
STAFF REVIEW FEES	FEE
Application for Staff Approval	\$35.00
Work started without approvals	Additional \$50.00
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION FEES	
All other proposed work not listed below	\$100.00
Work started without approvals	Additional \$250.00
RESIDENTIAL – Single and 2-story Structure	
Addition: single story	\$300.00
Addition: taller than single story	\$550.00
New Structure - Accessory	\$100.00
New Structure – Principal	\$850.00
Replacement of single and 2-family window(s)	\$100 + \$25/window
COMMERCIAL – includes multi-family (3 or more unit) structures	
Additions	\$700.00
Replacement of multi-family and commercial window (s)	\$100 + \$50/window
Replacement of commercial storefront	\$250.00
DEMOLITION and RELOCATION	
Demolition of a contributing structure	\$1000.0
Demolition of a non-contributing structure	\$250.00
Relocation of a contributing structure	\$750.00
Relocation of a non-contributing structure	\$250.00

FOR COMMISSION REVIEWS:

- Application withdrawals made before public notice is published will qualify for a 50% refund of the application fee.
- Application withdrawals made after public notice is sent but before the public hearing will qualify for a 25% refund of the application fee.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

All HDC applications must be signed by the property owner and the applicant, if different, with the exception of staff approvals, which may be signed by only the applicant.

All completed HDC applications and their attachments may be submitted to Planning and Development Services by mail, in person (paper or digital), faxed, or via email to building@a2gov.org.

We accept CASH, CHECK, and all major credit cards. Checks should be made payable to “City of Ann Arbor”

HDC applications that are incomplete or not submitted with the required documentation or payment will not be processed or approved.

APPLICATION EXPIRATION

HDC applications expire three (3) years after the date of approval.

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date of Hearing:		
Action	<input type="checkbox"/> HDC COA	<input type="checkbox"/> HDC Denial
	<input type="checkbox"/> HDC NTP	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff COA
Staff Signature		
Comments		
Fee:	\$ _____	
Payment Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Check: # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Card	

South and East Elevations



Curmen CLEANERS

NO PARKING
5 MINUTE LIMIT
6AM-6PM
MON-SAT
TOW AWAY ZONE
→

NO PARKING
←

630

OPEN

Mon - Fri 7:30 - 7:00
Saturday 8:00 - 4:00
Closed Sunday

WASH - FOLD

NO PARKING
5 MINUTE LIMIT
6AM-6PM
MON-SAT
TOW AWAY ZONE
←



North Elevation



North Side Elevation



North Side Elevation



West Rear Elevation



RECYCLE
NO 412544

NO 0240332

West Rear Elevation



South Side Elevation









Wash
CLEANERS

277-6378

RECYCLE

STOP

ARMEN CLEANERS – CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

PROJECT UPDATE



CONTACT INFORMATION:

Dan Wilde
EGLE Project Manager
WildeD1@Michigan.gov
517-285-6999

Armen Cleaners in Ann Arbor, MI, building and signage, December 2006

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) will soon begin building demolition and soil removal activities at Armen Cleaners located at 630 South Ashley Street in Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan. **Figure 1** shows the remediation overview. The dry cleaner has been in operation since the 1950s and has had historic releases of the dry-cleaning solvent, tetrachloroethylene (PCE) into the environment. PCE is a volatile organic compound that can form a vapor from soil or groundwater sources and volatilize into indoor air. Exposure to PCE can cause dizziness, headaches, sleepiness, incoordination, nausea, unconsciousness, and even death.

HIGHLIGHT OF ACTIVITIES TO DATE

In **1985**, improper handling of waste was documented and release of PCE to soil and groundwater was first discovered. A soil excavation and groundwater investigation were conducted.

In the **1990s**, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) conducted additional investigations identifying remnant PCE in soil and groundwater. EGLE began further investigations to define the extent of contaminated water and soil.

In the **2000s**, several investigations were conducted by EGLE and the U.S. EPA to delineate the extent of soil, groundwater, and vapor. Investigations showed that PCE may have entered the storm sewer running north to south along Ashley Street. Adjacent storm sewer samples were collected showing PCE concentrations of 7.2 ppb, which exceeds the Part 201 Drinking Water Protection Criteria of 5 ppb, prompting the City of Ann Arbor to conduct a dye test of a sump to evaluate connectivity to the sewer system.

Approximately a dozen other homes were screened for risk associated with the volatilization to indoor air pathway (VIAP). A vapor intrusion investigation resulted in the installation of granulated activated carbon air purifying units at one adjacent property.

In the **2010s**, further vapor intrusion investigations resulted in replacement of the carbon air purifying units in the adjacent residential home with a permanent sub-slab depressurization system (SSDS). The SSDS was installed by the U.S. EPA and has since been monitored on an annual basis for performance by EGLE. Updated groundwater information led to another full round of VIAP screening for more than a dozen properties in the area.

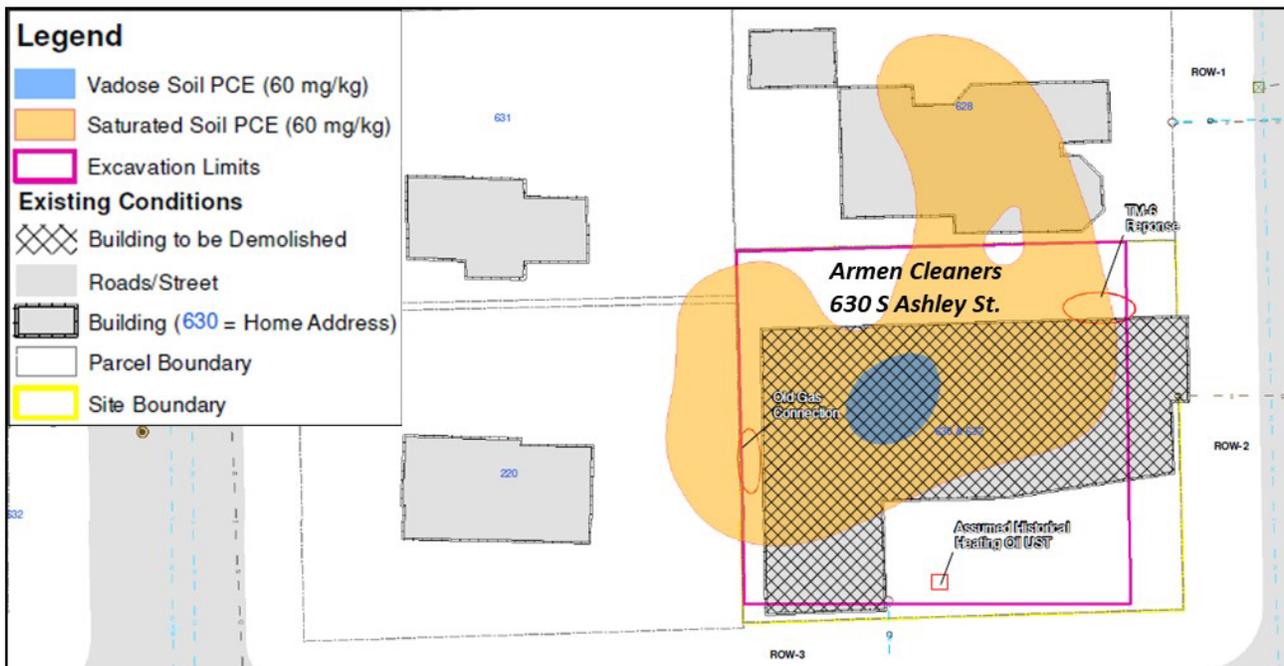


Figure 1 - Remediation overview figure for demolition, excavation, and disposal of hazardous PCE. Taken from Draft Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study Report, Figure 9, February 2021.

In 2020, feasibility and cost analysis for several remediation options were evaluated. After evaluation and with discussion among site stakeholders (City of Ann Arbor, neighbors/citizen of Ann Arbor; Washtenaw County), EGLE began planning for a remedial excavation of the source property. As currently planned, the remediation will also include two phases of biodegradation treatments of the groundwater to help decrease elevated PCE levels that have migrated off-site.

In 2021, EGLE has been planning for the demolition and excavation of contaminated soil at the Armen Cleaners property to take place in the fall of 2021. Building surveys and abatement in preparation for the demolition have begun. Workplan specifications have been finalized and EGLE is working to secure a contractor to complete the work. The work is anticipated to be completed by the end of the year, with site redevelopment activities likely to commence in 2022.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES:

- Demolition of the dry-cleaning building structure.
- Excavation and disposal of contaminated soils.
- Dewatering and treatment of contaminated groundwater during excavation.
- Backfilling of excavation with clean fill material in preparation for redevelopment.
- Continued monitoring of contaminated groundwater and soil vapor.
- Initial planning for off-site remediation of elevated PCE groundwater.

Michigan's Environmental Justice Policy promotes the fair, non-discriminatory treatment and meaningful involvement of Michigan's residents regarding the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies by this state. Fair, non-discriminatory treatment intends that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or low-income populations, will bear a disproportionately greater burden resulting from environmental laws, regulations, policies, and decision-making.

Meaningful involvement of residents ensures an appropriate opportunity to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment and/or health.

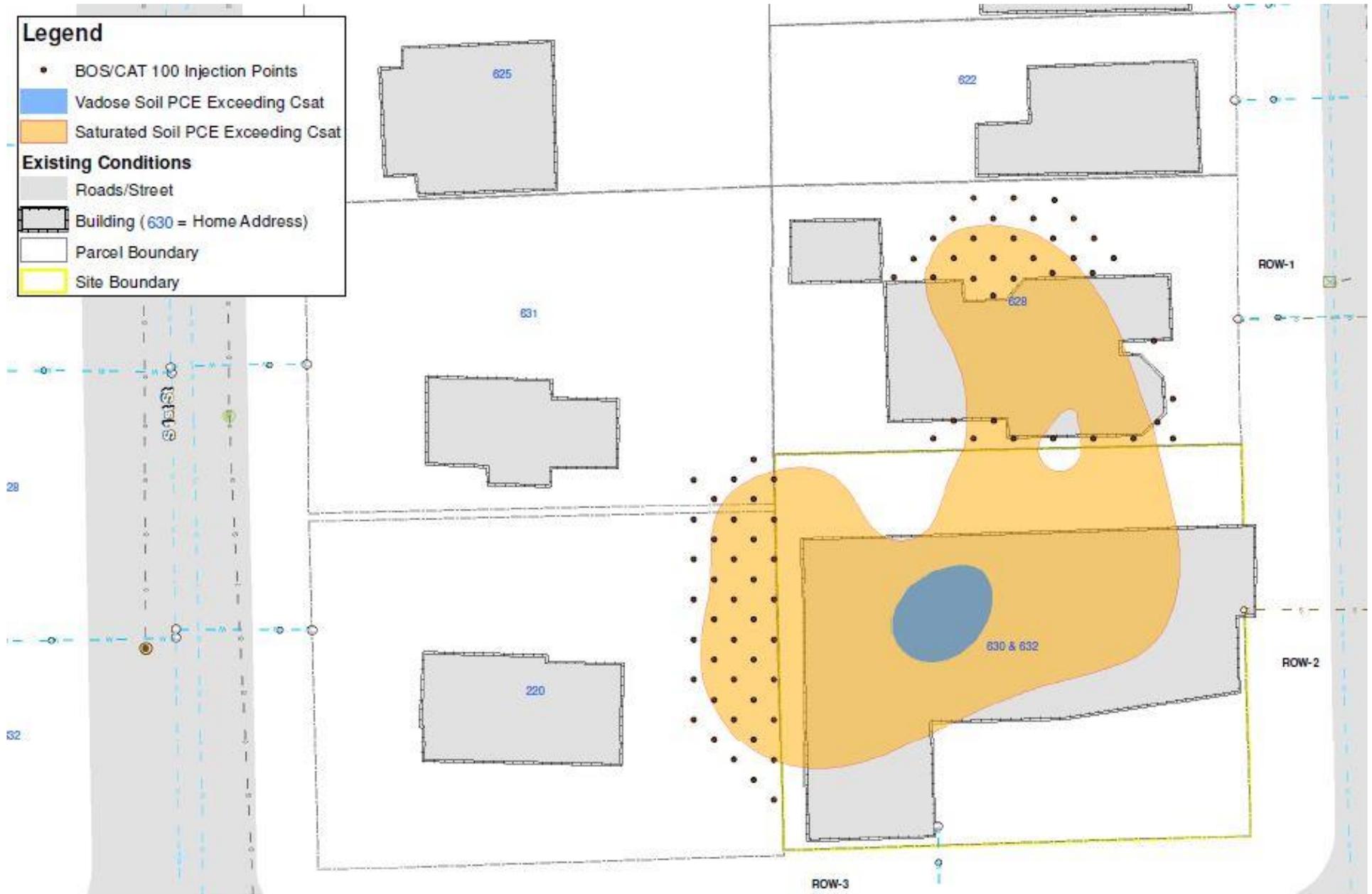
EGLE does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, marital status, disability, political beliefs, height, weight, genetic information, or sexual orientation in the administration of any of its programs or activities, and prohibits intimidation and retaliation, as required by applicable laws and regulations.

Legend

- BOS/CAT 100 Injection Points
- Vadose Soil PCE Exceeding Csat
- Saturated Soil PCE Exceeding Csat

Existing Conditions

- Roads/Street
- Building (630 = Home Address)
- Parcel Boundary
- Site Boundary



EPA Begins Sampling Homes for Unsafe Fumes

Ann Arbor, Michigan

November 2016

For more information

To learn more about the EPA's indoor air testing in Ann Arbor contact:

For technical questions:

Jon Gulch

On-Scene Coordinator
734-692-7686
gulch.jon@epa.gov

For general questions:

Ruth Muhtsun

Community Involvement
Coordinator
312-886-6595
muhtsun.ruth@epa.gov

EPA Chicago Office address:

U.S. EPA Region 5
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604

*For health related questions,
contact:*

Washtenaw County Public Health Department

705 N. Zeeb
Ann Arbor, MI 48107
734-222-3800

Michigan Department of Human and Health Services

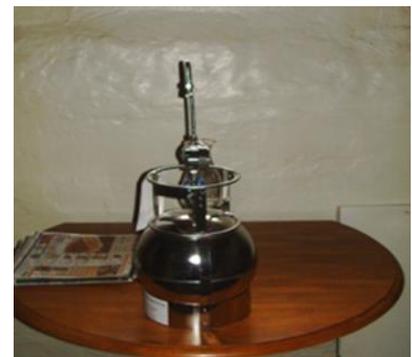
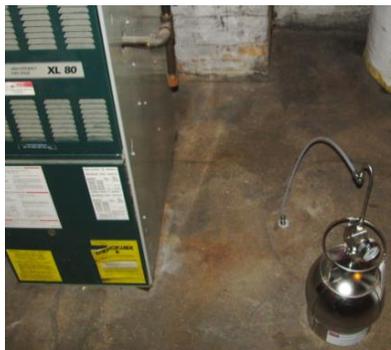
333 S. Grand Ave
Lansing, MI 48909
1-800-648-6942

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is beginning a vapor intrusion study in the residential area near Armen Dry Cleaners to ensure that fumes from volatile organic compounds, or VOC's, are not seeping into homes at unsafe levels. Although VOC's can be found in common household products, exposure to high levels of VOC's can affect your health. Short-term exposure to high levels of VOC's can cause headaches and dizziness; eye, nose and throat discomfort; irritation to your respiratory tract; and also allergic skin reactions. Long-term exposure can cause damage to your liver, kidneys, and nervous system; and may also cause cancer. The VOC of concern at the Armen Cleaners site is a chemical called tetrachloroethylene, or PCE, which is commonly used in the dry cleaning industry.

Beginning this month, EPA will work with owners and residents to schedule appointments for air sampling. The sampling process will take place over a three-day period. EPA crews will start by removing household VOC's from the sampling areas in the basement, first floor, and front or back porches at your property. The products EPA will remove from the sample areas include paints, wood preservatives, cleansers, disinfectants, aerosol sprays, air fresheners, hobby supplies, gasoline, and other automotive products. Removing these products from your home will give EPA a more accurate understanding of the nature and extent of contamination caused by the dry cleaners.

EPA will return on day two to drill a small hole in the basement floor and seal vapor pins in place with cement. Then, EPA will install a device called a SUMMA canister to the sealed vapor pin to collect sub-slab air samples. Drilling will not occur on the first floor or on your front and back porch. Instead, EPA will place a SUMMA canister on a flat surface to collect air samples overnight. The following day, EPA will remove the canisters and fill or cap the drilled hole of the basement floor. The canisters will be sent to an EPA laboratory to be analyzed.

SUMMA canister installed in basement.



Canister placed on table to collect indoor air sample.

Once the results are finalized, an EPA representative will contact you to meet and discuss the sampling results and discuss the next steps necessary to protect your air quality and health. If EPA finds low levels of VOC's from the collected air samples, then no further action will be needed. However, if vapors at harmful levels are discovered, EPA will install a mitigation system that will draw harmful vapors from below your home and disperse them out into the outdoor air. The vapors are significantly diluted when released to the outside air and degraded by sunlight. After a mitigation system is installed, EPA will resample your indoor air to ensure the system is working properly.



Vapor mitigation system installed on the outside of a house.

EPA will also share your air sampling results with the Washtenaw County Public Health Department and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. These local health agencies may determine that certain levels of VOC's will require additional precautionary measures to protect your health. One possibility may be a temporary relocation of residents until indoor air levels are safe. The Washtenaw County Public Health Department will work with residents individually to coordinate any needed relocations.

Site History

The Armen Cleaners site is located near downtown Ann Arbor in a primarily residential area. Armen Cleaners is an active commercial dry cleaners located in the neighborhood and has been in operation since the 1940s. In 1985, improper waste handling was discovered after neighbors complained about strong odors coming from the facility. This investigation also led to the discovery of PCE contaminated soil and groundwater. The owner/operator initially conducted a soil excavation and groundwater investigation, but those efforts were never completed.

In 2000, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality conducted a soil and groundwater investigation to define the extent of contamination. During this investigation, it was discovered that the levels of contamination were higher than expected. As a result, the study was expanded to determine if the indoor air of nearby residential properties was being impacted. One nearby home was found to have high levels of contamination. In 2002, MDEQ placed air purifying units containing carbon filters where the highest indoor air concentrations of PCE had been detected. The carbon filters are replaced every 5 years by the MDEQ, with the most recent replacement occurring in August/September 2016.

From 2003 – 2004, EPA assisted the Michigan Department of Community Health and MDEQ in an investigation of indoor air in the neighborhood surrounding Armen Cleaners to determine whether additional homes were impacted by contaminated groundwater flowing below. During this investigation, PCE was detected in ambient outdoor air at various locations in the residential neighborhood surrounding the Armen Cleaners site. In addition, PCE was measured in air using EPA's Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer coming from roof vents on the Armen Cleaners building. These roof vents are at approximately the same level as the second floor apartments and back porches of the adjacent properties.

MDEQ continued monitoring the air quality of nearby residences but did not see a decrease in PCE levels. In 2016, MDEQ conducted groundwater sampling in preparation for completing an indoor air study at the residences near Armen Cleaners. Based on the results of the groundwater sampling, which indicated that high concentrations of PCE were still present, MDEQ and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services sought assistance from the EPA.