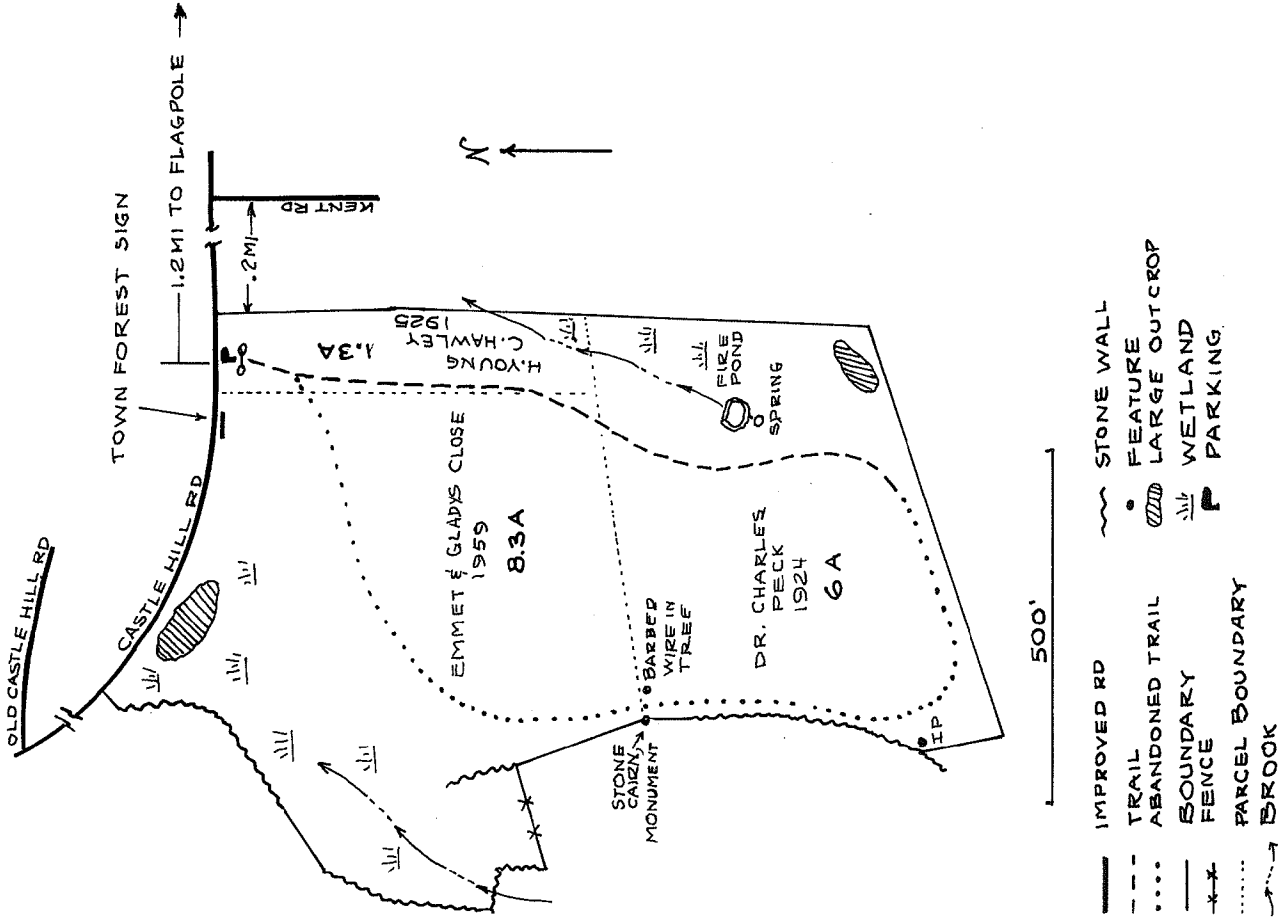


LOCATED IN B3



Ownership: Newtown Forest Assoc., Inc.
15 acres

THE TOWN FOREST
An easy, half-mile walk

Accessible from Castle Hill Road.

Coming from the flagpole, pass Kent Road. Then .2 mile from that Road, watch on left for a break in the roadside curb. Look for the Town Forest sign, somewhat obscured by leaves. Parking for 2 cars bumper to bumper before a mossy log barway.

Just 5 minutes away from the bustle of Main Street, the Forest is an incredible surprise. Here is a swath of woodland as serene and natural as it must have been in 1924 when Dr. Charles Howard Peck gave it to the land trust just forming in Newtown. The soft, leafy trail moves through thick beds of ferns, some knee-high, others brushing your hips. Birds sing and flit through sun-dappled branches. The air smells of fresh, rain-washed leaves and the good earth. A dog's bark, distant and faint, only emphasizes how far away you are from town. It is a kind of Eden in Newtown.

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The name of "Town Forest" derives from a legend that in the early days poorfolk could come and take firewood from the forest. The only sign of man's hand is a curious round depression off to the left near a curve in the trail. It is a fire pond fed by a spring, muddy in summer, icy in winter, dug to provide water in case of fire in the Forest.

The southern parcel of 6 acres may be the first in Connecticut given to what became the State's first land trust. The far-seeing donor, Dr. Peck, was born in Newtown in 1870 and descended from an early Colonial family. After a harrowing experience as Chief Surgeon in the American Hospital in Chaumont, France during World War I, he realized how priceless his farmland was and wanted his hometown to own some of it. His gift in 1924 to "Trustees for holding Forest Land for the Newtown Foresters' Association" (later renamed the Newtown Forest Association), would, he hoped, be "the first of many given to the Association so that everyone could enjoy the beauty of Newtown's woodlands."

To make the original landlocked parcel accessible to Castle Hill Road, in 1925 Cornelia Hawley and Henry Young gave a narrow strip of 1.3 acres running south to open onto the Road. In 1959 the N.F.A. purchased some 8 more acres from Emmet and Gladys Close, to bring the total property to over 15 acres.