

Apartment developers work to stop soil erosion into Asylum Lake

By MIKE MAGNER, Gazette Staff Writer

Developers of two large apartment complexes off Stadium Drive have done "more than they were asked to" in recent weeks to clean up severe erosion problems they caused in nearby Asylum Lake, according to the head of Kalamazoo's building division.

William Bunting, the city's chief building inspector, said builders of both the Stadium Drive Apartments and the Winchell Way planned unit development have removed sand and soils "by hand" that had washed into the lake as a result of heavy rains in September.

In addition, the two developers re-sodded areas around the lake that were impacted by the erosion and have placed bales of straw around their construction sites to prevent rainwater runoff into the lake, Bunting said.

The Winchell Way developers have also installed an underground drain to carry storm water into a leaching basin, Bunting said.

"They've done a pretty good job, even though it took a little pushing at the beginning," he said. "They've done more than they were asked to."

Officials of Western Michigan University, which owns Asylum Lake and surrounding property, agree that the developers have done "a good job" cleaning up the erosion so far, but say some work remains to be done.

"There's still some work to do along the north bank in terms of removal of erosion," said William Kowalski, assistant vice president for facilities engineering at WMU. "They've done a good job so far. They did remove an awful lot of it, but not completely."

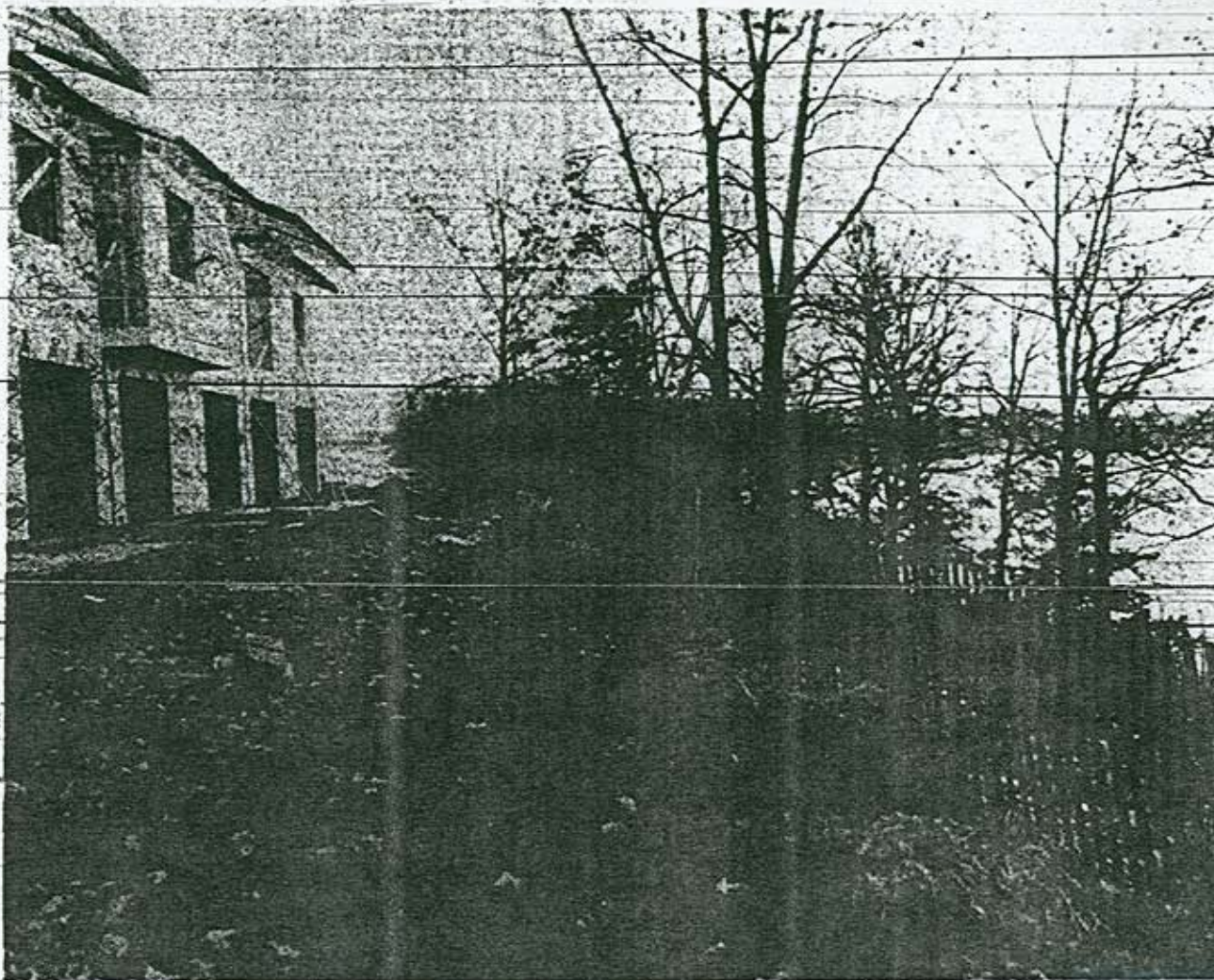
Bunting said that enough cleanup work has been done that he was able to submit a report to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) indicating that most of the erosion problems have been cleaned up — at least for the time being.

"I'm satisfied today," Bunting said. "But we haven't had any real torrential rains like we had in September."

WMU officials brought the erosion problems to the attention of city officials in September and the city asked the DNR to make an inspection in early October. The DNR urged the city to order the developers to restore soil conditions in and around the lake as much as possible to WMU's satisfaction.

Bunting noted that the Winchell Way developers — the Altman Management Co. in East Lansing — have just received an occupancy permit for one of the four apartment buildings on their site northeast of Asylum Lake.

Kowalski said both Altman Management Co. and the developers of the Stadium Drive Apartments — the F & S Development Co. of Lansing — have verbally agreed to share with WMU the costs of erecting a fence to separate the housing projects from the lake property.



STRAW BALES, FENCE AT STADIUM DRIVE DEVELOPMENT TO PREVENT MORE EROSION INTO ASYLUM LAKE
Apartment developers have taken steps to clean up past erosion problems in the lake owned by WMU

Gazette photo by