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# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT FOR ROGER WILLIAMS NATIONAL MEMORIAL





# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT FOR ROGER WILLIAMS NATIONAL MEMORIAL

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

SITE HISTORY

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EXISTING CONDITIONS

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ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

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TREATMENT

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Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
National Park Service, Boston, Massachusetts 2010

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This report was developed by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in partnership with the Department of Landscape Architecture at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse, New York. The Olmsted Center promotes the stewardship of significant landscapes through research, planning, and sustainable preservation maintenance. The Center accomplishes its mission in collaboration with a network of partners including national parks, universities, government agencies, and private nonprofit organizations. Techniques and principles of preservation practice are made available through training and publications. The Olmsted Center perpetuates the tradition of the Olmsted firms and Frederick Law Olmsted's lifelong commitment to people, parks, and public spaces.

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Cover Image: Looking southwest across Roger Williams National Memorial from the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial), 2008. (State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry.)

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## FOREWORD

Roger Williams National Memorial was established by the United States Congress in 1965 to commemorate Roger Williams and his remarkable role in developing the key principles of freedom on which this country was founded. In 1979, the memorial formally opened at the site of the old town spring, around which Williams settled Providence in 1636 as “a shelter for persons distressed of conscience.” The park is appreciated by city residents as a green space in what is now a bustling urban center. It also attracts a steady stream of visitors from outside the city and the state.

Three decades later, however, it was appropriate to evaluate how effective the memorial is in making people aware of the legacy of Roger Williams and offering them the kind of memorable experience the public has come to expect from sites managed by the National Park Service. This Cultural Landscape Report takes a close look at the resources that are present at the site, the condition they are in, their significance in relation to the story of Roger Williams, and whether we are managing them appropriately. In the absence of a General Management Plan for the memorial, this report also creates an opportunity to ask ourselves whether the current design and usage of the site is the best way to serve the purpose for which the memorial was established or whether we should consider changes. Changes that might enhance our ability to attract visitors, provide significant visitor experiences, and have an ongoing conversation with the communities we serve about what “liberty of conscience” or “soul freedom” means, today as well as in the past.

With that in mind, park staff, with assistance and guidance from the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, embarked on a two year planning process. The resulting report includes a comprehensive site history, from pre-colonial times through the urban renewal period of the 1960s, up to the park as it exists today. It also evaluates current conditions and presents several treatment options. We are grateful to Bob Page and Eliot Foulds of the Olmsted Center, and to George Curry and John Auwaerter from the State University of New York, for keeping the project on track, conducting in-depth research of the site’s history, and developing thoughtful and innovative treatment recommendations. Thanks also to John Monroe, Director of Rhode Island & Connecticut Rivers and Trails Projects for the National Park Service, for facilitating a public meeting at which dozens of stakeholders had the opportunity to weigh in on draft recommendations and offer their own suggestions regarding future development and use of the site.

This report is rooted in solid planning and current scholarship. It provides a good framework for programmatic and physical park management over the

coming years. It also reflects our emphasis on public engagement and our desire for ongoing community collaborations. As we look ahead to 2011 and the 375th anniversary of the settlement of Providence by Roger Williams, we hope that this document will not just be accepted at face value, but will stimulate more conversation, more bold thinking, and more collaboration to make Roger Williams National Memorial the best possible tribute to the man and the principles of freedom he put into practice on this site in 1636.

Jan H. Reitsma  
Superintendent

Jennifer W. Smith  
Site Manager

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Located at the foot of College Hill in downtown Providence, Roger Williams National Memorial is a small urban park established by Congress to commemorate the founder of Providence and his significant contributions to the principles of freedom in the United States. Roger Williams landed at the future site of the national memorial in 1636, attracted by the presence of a fresh-water spring. Here, he laid out the Providence settlement and established its government that ensured freedom of religion through the separation of church and state. Williams built his house across the street from the spring, and lived there on and off until his death in 1683. During the subsequent four centuries, the spring—later recognized as a symbolic wellspring of both Rhode Island and the concept of religious freedom in the United States—became hidden by urban development. As interest in the city’s past grew, the spring was revealed in the early twentieth century and finally enshrined within Roger Williams National Memorial, designated in 1965 and substantially completed in 1982. Although mostly a contemporary resource, the 4.5-acre park, with its winding paths, open lawns, and groves of trees, includes an early twentieth-century municipal memorial to Roger Williams and the founding of Providence, as well as an eighteenth-century house that is the only remnant of the residential, commercial, civic, and industrial buildings that existed on the site before it was cleared in the 1970s through the city’s urban renewal program.

The information in this cultural landscape report provides the documentation necessary for appropriate management of historic landscape resources within the site. Planning and treatment recommendations will aid the park in its ongoing efforts to enhance the site’s commemorative purpose and improve the landscape’s use and operation.

## **SCOPE, ORGANIZATION, AND METHODS**

In the National Park Service, a cultural landscape report is the principal treatment document for historic landscapes and the primary tool for their long-term management. The park service defines a cultural landscape as a geographic area that includes both built and natural resources, and is associated with a historic event, activity, or person.<sup>1</sup> A cultural landscape includes not only landforms, roads, walks, and vegetation, but also buildings, views, and small-scale features, such as light standards, signs, and fences.

This report has been developed according to methods outlined in *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques* (National Park Service, 1998). The first chapter, Site History, provides a narrative overview of the physical development and use of the Roger Williams National Memorial site

from prehistory and European settlement through the growth of Providence into a city, clearing of the site in the 1970s, completion of the current landscape in the early 1980s, and minor changes to the present. The chapter is broken down into three periods defined by changes in land use and landscape character. It does not provide a comprehensive history of the site, but rather chronicles the changes in use and character of the landscape. Social history and other historic contexts are described only to the extent they inform the physical history. Chapter 2, Existing Conditions, provides an overview of the present character of the landscape and its use and administration. Chapter 3, Analysis and Evaluation, assesses the historic significance and integrity of the landscape based on the National Register Criteria and the site's enabling legislation, and evaluates the historic character of the landscape according to National Park Service cultural landscape methodology. Chapter 4, Treatment, identifies current landscape treatment issues, defines a treatment philosophy based on the enabling legislation and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, and describes tasks for enhancing the historic character of the Roger Williams Spring as the historic component of the site. For the contemporary landscape, the report provides treatment ideas that are intended as the beginning of a planning process for future improvements.

This report includes graphic plans that document and evaluate the cultural landscape, developed from a combination of historic maps and photographs, field inventory, and construction drawings for the existing landscape. These include two period plans that illustrate the site in 1965 and 2010, showing change over the course of the preceding periods. The first period (pre-1683) does not have a plan due to insufficient documentation on the landscape. The existing conditions chapter contains plans that depict the landscape as it presently exists, including landscape features inventoried in the Analysis and Evaluation (chapter 3). The treatment chapter includes plans showing planning ideas and recommended tasks.

The project area for this cultural landscape report encompasses the 4.5-acre national memorial site defined by its surrounding streets: North Main Street and Canal Street on the east and west, and Park Row and Smith Street on the south and north. The adjoining city blocks and viewsheds are addressed to the extent they inform the site history and existing management of the national memorial.

Research for this report was undertaken at an overall "thorough" level of investigation as defined by NPS DO-28, primarily involving the holdings at the Roger Williams National Memorial archives in Providence.<sup>2</sup> Other repositories consulted included the Rhode Island Historical Society, Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Commission, and the archives of Saint John's Episcopal Cathedral. Primary and secondary sources, such as photographs, aerial images,

city histories and atlases, Sanborn fire insurance maps, and existing park management documents were examined to gain information regarding the physical development of the landscape. Research also included conversations and a site visit with Albert Veri, landscape architect of the contemporary landscape.

Due to voids in the historical record and the limits of the project scope, research focused on the planning and development of the existing memorial since the 1950s. The report does not include primary research into the landscape of Roger Williams's lifetime in Providence between 1636 and 1683, but relies primarily on existing secondary sources. Research into this period would require an exhaustive level of investigation into primary sources, an effort that is beyond the scope of this project. While there is much documentation on the urban development of the site from 1683 through 1974, this period was researched at a limited level because these lost buildings and streets are not part of the site's significance. Research focused on urban fabric that influenced the 1982 design of the national memorial landscape and current park interpretation. Within the park, the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) and Bernon Grove were researched at a thorough level in order to evaluate significance and inform treatment. The eighteenth-century Antram-Gray house has been previously researched through a historic structures report and is not addressed in detail here.

## PROJECT SETTING

**Figure 0.1. Location of Roger Williams National Memorial and Providence in Rhode Island and surrounding area of southeastern New England. (SUNY ESF.)**



Roger Williams National Memorial is located at the northern end of Narragansett Bay in Providence, Rhode Island's capital and largest city (fig. 0.1). Founded in 1636, Providence is the earliest European settlement in Rhode Island, followed by Newport, Portsmouth, and Warwick. Providence is part of a metropolitan

corridor that stretches along Interstate 95 from Boston 50 miles to the northeast, to New York City, 180 miles to the southwest.

The 4.5-acre memorial is located a short distance north of Providence's downtown central business district on a narrow rectangular green space located between North Main Street and Canal Street (fig. 0.2). The Rhode Island capitol is approximately 750 feet west of the memorial, across the channelized Moshassuck River. The neighborhood surrounding the memorial is a mix of low-scale residential, commercial, religious, and civic buildings, most dating back to the eighteenth century. There are

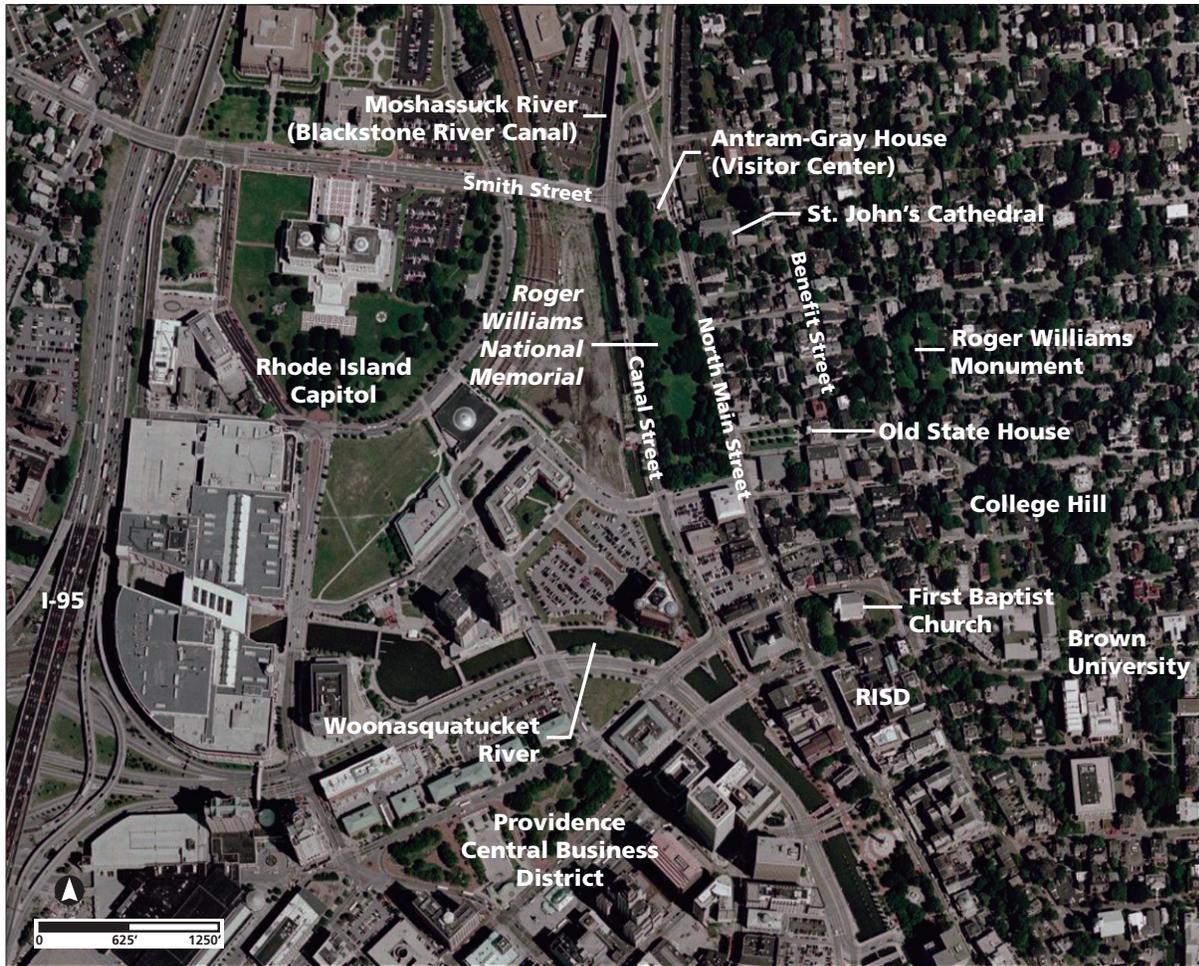


Figure 0.2. Current aerial view of Roger Williams National Memorial showing its context in downtown Providence. (NASA aerial, c.2007, reproduced from Google Earth, annotated by SUNY ESF.)

a number of vacant or open areas, the largest being the national memorial, that were once occupied by buildings and streets removed through the city’s urban renewal program beginning in the 1950s.

On the east side of North Main Street across from the national memorial is the old Rhode Island State House and Saint John’s Cathedral (Episcopal), and across Canal Street to the west is the Moshassuck River (Blackstone River Canal). East of North Main Street is College Hill, a neighborhood of largely eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings that is home to Brown University, the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), and the First Baptist Church that was founded by Roger Williams in 1638 (see fig. 0.2). Numerous narrow streets and alleyways extend up the hill from North Main Street across from the national memorial. The Roger Williams monument in Prospect Park, completed in 1939, overlooks the national memorial from several blocks east on College Hill. The area west of the national memorial between the canal and the capitol, once occupied by rail yards, is being redeveloped for housing and other uses.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### **SITE HISTORY**

#### **Roger Williams and the Providence Wellspring, to 1683**

Prior to European settlement that began in the seventeenth century, the 4.5-acre national memorial site, located at a cove at the head of Narragansett Bay, was within the homeland of the Narragansett people. Little is known about the cultural landscape at this time, except that the site consisted of shoreline with a fresh-water spring, bordering the Pawtucket Trail that roughly corresponded with the present alignment of North Main Street. In 1636, Roger Williams, who had been exiled from the Massachusetts Bay Colony, landed at the site of the future national memorial where he founded Providence as the first English colony in North America based on civil rather than religious law—the ideal that religion was a matter of individual conscience. Williams laid out a settlement that, unlike typical New England villages, followed a linear pattern with home lots extending to the east of Towne Street (North Main Street) up the adjoining hill (College Hill), with common lands reserved to the west of the street along the cove shoreline. Williams built his own house on the home lot across North Main Street from the spring. The settlement grew slowly and remained reliant on an agricultural and fishing economy during the seventeenth century. Williams died in Providence in 1683.

#### **The Urban Period, 1683-1965**

In the decades following Williams's death, Providence grew into a prosperous mercantile city. During the eighteenth century, the town center shifted from the original settlement south toward Weybosset Point (present downtown). After the Revolution and into the early twentieth century, Providence grew into the state's largest city, a center of industry and commerce, and the seat of state government. From a beach and common lands in the late seventeenth century, the site of the future national memorial developed by the mid eighteenth century into dense urban blocks, with wharfs built along the old cove shoreline. Narrow streets known as gangways providing access from the wharfs to North Main Street. The spring was part of a lot sold in 1721 to Gabriel Bernon that contained a provision in the deed guaranteeing public access to its waters in perpetuity. After loss of navigation on the cove and subsequent filling in the mid nineteenth century, the national memorial site was developed for a variety of commercial and manufacturing uses, with meat-packing industries locating along the remnants of the cove that were channelized into an extension of the Moshassuck River.

In the late nineteenth century, interest began to emerge in marking and commemorating sites of early Providence. At this time, the site of the spring was concealed by a building, but its waters remained accessible through a pump and trough on the adjoining streets. By 1900, these last vestiges of the spring were removed. Six years later, the building over the spring was marked with a plaque identifying it as the Roger Williams Spring and the place where Providence was founded in 1636. Development pressures and the approach of Providence's tercentennial in 1936 led to renewed commemorative and preservation efforts in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1922, a house that had been built over the spring well was demolished to make way for a new building, but the developer agreed to preserve the old stone well in the new basement. Six years later, the federal government funded the placement of a granite monument along North Main Street to mark the site of the spring. At the same time, planning had begun to erect a grand monument to Williams at nearby Prospect Park on College Hill. Unsatisfied with the spring remaining concealed in a cellar, Jerome Hahn, a retired state judge and Providence resident, purchased the building over the spring, demolished it, and donated the site to the city for development of a public park that would return public access to the spring. By 1933, the city completed construction of a small Colonial Revival-style landscape courtyard, designed by architect Norman Isham and designated Roger Williams Spring Park. At the same time, parishioners from nearby St. John's Cathedral had acquired buildings to the north of the spring to create a park commemorating Gabriel Bernon, the founder of the cathedral and original owner of the spring lot. The church group had the buildings demolished and gave the land to the city in 1942, but the city did not make improvements to the park until c.1953.

In 1957, the Providence City Plan Commission issued an urban renewal plan that identified the area along North Main Street including Roger Williams Spring Park as a blighted area to be cleared and redeveloped. This plan caused concern among history-minded citizens and led the Providence Preservation Society to spearhead a revised plan to expand the park into a national park honoring Roger Williams. The proposed park extended across eleven adjoining blocks corresponding with the existing national memorial site. In 1960, the first legislation was introduced in Congress to create the new national park.

#### **Establishment and Development of the National Memorial, 1965-Present**

After much deliberation over the name of the new national park, legislation was passed in 1965 to establish Roger Williams National Memorial, the designation chosen due to the park's small size and lack of historic resources related to Williams. Soon after, the Providence Redevelopment Agency began planning for acquisition of the property and by 1969 began condemnation proceedings. Demolition of buildings and streets on the site began in 1971. In 1974, the

National Park Service acquired the entire 4.5-acre site from the Providence Redevelopment Agency. Final demolitions and removal of the side streets were completed in 1975.

While the original plans for the national memorial called for clearing all development on the site, the National Park Service agreed to keep three resources: Roger Williams Spring Park, Bernon Park, and the Antram-Gray house, an eighteenth-century building at the northeast corner of the site that was moved forty feet south in 1974 to accommodate widening of Smith Street. In 1977, the National Park Service accepted a final development concept for the site: a landscape park intended as an open space setting where visitors could contemplate the significance of Roger Williams. The design did not include a built memorial to Williams. After some initial site work and rehabilitation of the Antram-Gray house, the national memorial opened to the public in 1979. Construction of the landscape, designed by Albert Veri and Associates of Providence based on the 1977 park development concept, was undertaken between 1980 and 1982, with some minor work occurring into the next year. In the following decades, the landscape matured and several new features were added, including memorial plaques and monuments, trees, signs, and planting beds.

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Roger Williams National Memorial occupies a 4.5-acre site north of downtown Providence near the Rhode Island Capitol, adjoining the historic College Hill neighborhood that is home to Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design. The site serves a variety of uses for visitors and local residents, from its primary commemorative function, to historical interpretation, low-impact recreation, and as an unofficial welcome center for downtown Providence. The site is surrounded by busy streets, most of which are wide multi-lane arterials dating to urban renewal programs in the 1970s. The southern part of the national memorial landscape is organized around a large open lawn known as the amphitheater, with groves of trees lining the periphery along the streets. The northern half of the site also includes trees and lawn, but is organized in an orthogonal pattern following the old urban blocks and includes three resources predating the national memorial: Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial), Bernon Grove, and the Antram-Gray house that contains the visitor center and park offices. A visitor parking lot is located at the northwest side of the site, accessed off Canal Street. Throughout the landscape are directional signs, interpretive waysides, benches, and Colonial-style lamps. There is also a picnic area, raised beds interpreting Colonial-period gardens, planters with corn, squash, and beans (the Native American Three Sisters), and small beds and planters with flowering annuals.

## **ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION**

Roger Williams National Memorial, established by Congress in 1965 as a historic area of the National Park System, was administratively listed in the National Register of Historic Places upon creation of the program in 1966. At the time, the site was still occupied by buildings and streets dating back to the eighteenth century. The area east of the national memorial across North Main Street was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1970 as the College Hill Historic District. The boundaries of the district were expanded in 1976 under a National Register listing to include the national memorial. There is no accepted National Register documentation for Roger Williams National Memorial, and very limited documentation concerning the site on the historic district nomination forms. In 1996, the Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Officer agreed that the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) and the Antram-Gray House were eligible for listing in the National Register as contributing components of the National Register-listed College Hill Historic District.

The 4.5-acre site is nationally significant due to its designation by Congress as a national memorial. None of the above-ground resources contribute to its national significance. The existing landscape, which contains no intrinsic memorials to Roger Williams, is a result of a National Park Service planning process and does not reflect the specific intent of Congress. The Antram-Gray house and Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) are significant at the local and state levels as contributing resources within the National Register-listed College Hill Historic District. Neither resource contributes to the national significance of the site. This report finds that Bernon Grove is not significant and therefore does not appear eligible for listing as part of the College Hill Historic District.

The findings of the cultural landscape evaluation for Roger Williams National Memorial are organized into the contemporary national memorial landscape (including the Antram-Gray house and Bernon Grove), and the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) as the historic landscape component of the national memorial. The Colonial Revival courtyard is analyzed by its landscape characteristics and associated features. All features that are part of the original 1933 Norman Isham design contribute to the historic character of the landscape. The overgrowth of the plantings, change in planting design at the west end of the courtyard, loss of spatial enclosure, and addition of a brick walkway, detract from the historic character of the landscape.

## **TREATMENT**

Treatment of the national memorial landscape is determined by the site's legislated purpose, National Park Service policies and planning, and existing park operations. The landscape contains both historic and non-historic components

that warrant different approaches to treatment, but both share a primary purpose to commemorate Roger Williams and his significant contributions to the principles of freedom in the United States.

A treatment plan for the landscape is warranted due to a number of issues, which include the site's lack of a memorial feature; presence of secondary memorials that detract from the site's primary commemorative purpose; lack of a distinctive identity; inconspicuousness of the Roger Williams Spring and the loss of historic character in its plantings; absence of documentation on the hydrology of the spring; concerns over public safety; a lack of integration with the surrounding neighborhoods; landscape interpretation that is not aligned with the site's commemorative purpose; insufficiency of the Antram-Gray house as a visitor center and park offices; and inadequacy of the main visitor gathering area.

This report recommends a treatment philosophy for the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) based on the standards for *Rehabilitation* under the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. While definition of a treatment philosophy for the rest of the national memorial is beyond the scope of this report due to the landscape's contemporary origin, general ideas are presented as a basis for planning future improvements. These ideas are drawn from the three concepts in the park's Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan, discussions with park staff, and input from the public. Ideas include adding a primary memorial feature to Roger Williams, incorporating the site of Roger Williams' house into the national memorial, enhancing the identity of the national memorial and integrating it into its urban context, improving the adjoining streetscapes, and expanding the visitor center. The report also includes thirteen specific short-term treatment tasks that include replacement of the shrubs in the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) to enhance its historic character, installation of a fountain in the spring wellcurb, addition of a sidewalk along Park Row, and reopening the view of the capitol from the overlook.

## ENDNOTES

1 Robert Page, Cathy Gilbert, and Susan Dolan. *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource and Stewardship and Partnerships, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program, 1998), 129.

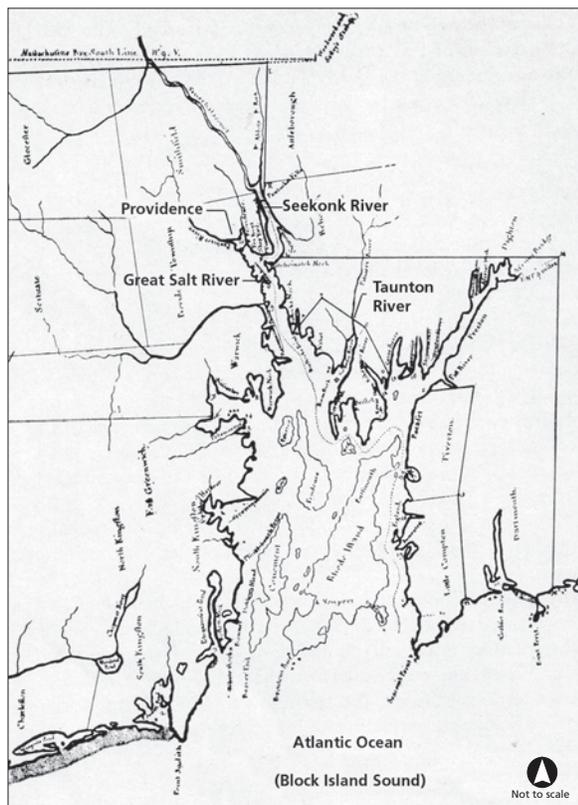
2 According to *NPS-28: Cultural Resource Management*, a "thorough" level of investigation is defined as reviewing "published and documentary sources of known or presumed relevance that are readily accessible without extensive travel and that promise expeditious extraction of relevant data, interviewing all knowledgeable persons who are readily available, and presenting findings in no greater detail than required by the task directive." The other two levels of investigation are "exhaustive" and "limited."



## 1. SITE HISTORY

While much of the landscape of Roger Williams National Memorial is less than three decades old, its significant European associations go back to the earliest history of colonial settlement. Here, Roger Williams landed in 1636 to found Providence, and lived most of his life across present-day North Main Street until his death in 1683. While the history of the site after 1683 lacks association with Williams, the period witnessed the first efforts at commemorating Williams and established urban patterns that would influence the later development of the national memorial landscape. In 1965, Congress designated the site a national memorial, and within a decade, the city had cleared most of the buildings and streets that had stood there since the eighteenth century. In 1977, the National Park Service adopted a design concept for the national memorial. Substantially completed in 1982, the new park was intended to provide an open-space setting where visitors could contemplate Roger Williams and his significant contributions to the principles of freedom in the United States.

**Figure 1.1. Map of Narragansett Bay drawn in 1741 showing its three major tributaries and location of Providence. The illegible text on the original map indicates names of geographic areas and political divisions. (Detail, Map of Rhode Island by James Helme and William Chandler, reproduced in Rhode Island Tercentenary Commission, *Rhode Island's Historic Background*, 1936, annotated by SUNY ESF.)**



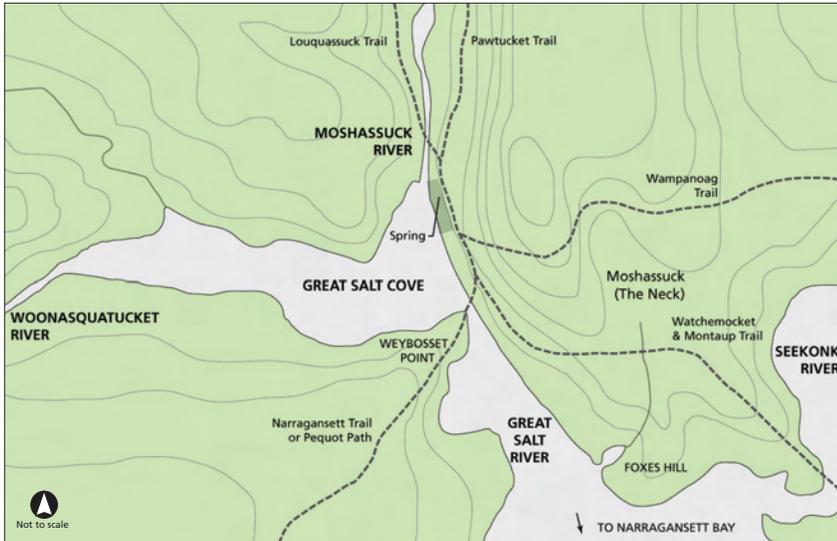
### ROGER WILLIAMS'S PROVIDENCE, TO 1683

The Narragansett Bay region that included the future site of the national memorial had long supported people prior to the arrival of Roger Williams in 1636. Here, in this geographically sheltered place well inland from the Atlantic Ocean, Williams and his fellow colonists, through agreements with the native peoples, established a

haven of religious freedom known as Providence Plantations. Lacking the traditional religious anchor found in Puritanical New England settlements, Providence instead centered on public gathering places including a freshwater spring.

### NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND NARRAGANSETT HOMELAND

Narragansett Bay, the largest estuary in New England extending twenty-six miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean, is primarily a product of the last ice age that ended approximately 12,000 to 14,000 years ago. The bay served as the drainage from three main tributaries flowing into its north end: the Taunton River, Seekonk River, and the Great Salt (Providence) River (fig. 1.1). The retreating glacier and centuries of erosion left the land surrounding the upper bay with plains and rounded hills up to two hundred feet in elevation, covered in soils derived from glacial till transported from the rocky uplands to the north. Lowland areas along rivers and bays typically consisted of loamy soils with deposits



**Figure 1.2.** Map of the natural topography and waterways near the future national memorial site (gray shaded area). Also shown are Native American trails prior to European settlement in 1636. The names reflect seventeenth-century European designations. (SUNY ESF, based on a map of Providence by Charles Wyman Hopkins, *The Home Lots of the Early Settlers of the Providence Plantations*, 1886.)

national memorial site was beach with accumulations of eroded soils, including sandy loam and gravelly glacial till.<sup>2</sup> The beach was at the base of a hill (later named Prospect or College Hill) that rose nearly two hundred feet above the level of the cove and formed a neck of land separating the Great Salt River on the west and the Seekonk River on the east. Uplands on the west side of the river, known as Weybosset Point, created a narrow passage in the Great Salt River to the south of the cove.

The native vegetation of the area in and adjacent to the future national memorial site included deciduous forest that had become established approximately 5,000 to 2,000 years ago. Common tree species included chestnut and eastern white pine, beech, pignut hickory, black walnut, redcedar, hemlock, gray and yellow birch, American elm, pitch pine, and white, red, black, scarlet, and chestnut oak. Poorly drained and swampy soils typically supported red maple, American elm, alder, swamp white oak, yellow and gray birch, white-cedar, and black tupelo (sour gum). Common understory species included blueberry, huckleberry, mountain laurel, summersweet, ferns, bull brier, sumac, and poison ivy.<sup>3</sup> The tidal beach along the Great Salt Cove was bordered by salt marsh between the low and high tide levels, characterized by species such as cordgrass, marine algae, glasswort, salt marsh sand-spurry, and lesser sea blite. Areas between the high tide line and uplands consisted of salt shrub with species such as groundsel-tree, saltmarsh elder, and pasture rose, together with salt meadow grass and switchgrass.<sup>4</sup> The forest, marshlands, and waters of the Great Salt Cove area were rich in animal life, including fox, raccoon, deer, elk, bear, geese, grouse, turkey, sturgeon, salmon, shad, and herring, with rich beds of clams and oysters.

At the time of European contact in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, much of the Narragansett Bay area was home to the Narragansett people, one

of gravel, sand, silt, and clay left by glacial meltwaters.<sup>1</sup>

The site of the national memorial corresponds with what was once the eastern shore of the Great Salt Cove, a small, tidal bay in the Great Salt River that was fed by two tributaries, the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers (fig. 1.2). The shallower, western part of the cove near the Woonasquatucket River was dominated by marshlands, while the east shore of the cove along the future

of five Algonquian tribes living within the present limits of Rhode Island. The Narragansetts, meaning People of the Small Point, were the largest and most powerful of the five tribes in the seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup> The Narragansett people lived in semi-permanent villages inland from the coast, and in temporary villages near the shores of bays and rivers during warm seasons. The inland camps were based on hunting, while the seasonal villages evolved around fishing and agriculture. Roger Williams wrote about the natives' cornfields and summer gardens along coastal plains.<sup>6</sup>

The site of the national memorial was located at a strategic location on the uppermost reaches of Narragansett Bay. Here was the intersection of a number of Indian paths including the Pawtucket and Louquassuck Trails heading north; the Wampanoag and Wachemocket (Montaup) Trails heading east and south east; and the Narragansett Trail (Pequot Path) heading southwest through a ford across the Great Salt River to Weybosset Point (see fig. 1.2).<sup>7</sup> These trails were used by neighboring Native American peoples, including the Massachusett, Nipmuc, and Wampanoag, to reach the Great Salt Cove and its abundant natural resources. Although no evidence of Native American habitation remains within the national memorial site, the area was most likely a nexus of Native American life. At a similar spot across the cove near Weybosset Point, archeologists discovered the remains of native occupation going back more than 7,000 years.<sup>8</sup> The national memorial site may have included or been near a seasonal village, agricultural fields, sacred grounds, or place of contention. In 1785, workers building on the site of a garden at the intersection of North Main and Bowen Streets discovered Indian remains, which according to nineteenth-century historian Henry Dorr, might have been from a burial place or a battlefield.<sup>9</sup>

### **ROGER WILLIAMS AND THE FOUNDING OF RHODE ISLAND**

It was not until more than a century after Giovanni da Verrazano sailed into Narragansett Bay in 1524 that Europeans began to settle in the region. Much sooner, however, the native peoples felt the effects of the arrival of Europeans elsewhere in New England and New Netherlands. From these initial settlements, European diseases spread across southern New England during the second decade of the seventeenth century, decimating many native communities, although largely sparing the Narragansetts.<sup>10</sup>

In 1636, two decades after this scourge and soon after a subsequent smallpox epidemic further ravaged native peoples, Roger Williams established the first European settlement in Narragansett Country with fellow Europeans from the Massachusetts Bay Colony, founded by English Puritans in 1630. Born in London in 1603, Roger Williams and his wife Mary immigrated in 1631 to the Massachusetts town of Boston (fig. 1.3). After some controversy, he accepted



**Figure 1.3. Map of New England drawn in 1675 showing regional context of Providence and its proximity to Roger Williams's prior homes in Boston and Salem. ("A Mapp of New England by John Seller Hydrographer to the King," annotated by SUNY ESF Reproduced courtesy of the Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library.)**

a position as assistant minister at the nearby town of Salem in a parish that shared his desire to separate from the Anglican Church. Williams's outspoken nature and radical views, which centered on his refusal to support civil authority over religious matters and the right of England to grant Native American lands in the name of Christendom, brought him into conflict with Massachusetts Bay authorities. In October 1635, the colonial court sentenced Williams to leave Massachusetts Bay within six weeks, citing his opposition to the authority of the magistrates. By January 1636, the court was informed that Williams had not

left and was preaching his separatist teachings to about twenty supporters in his Salem home. Word also circulated that he intended to establish a new separatist settlement in Narragansett Country. Fearful of the influence of such a settlement so close to Massachusetts Bay, the magistrates ordered Williams's arrest and deportation to England. When authorities came for Williams, they found he had already left Salem and could not find where he had gone.<sup>11</sup>

Williams, with fellow supporters, had indeed left for Narragansett Country to found a new settlement, as the court had been initially informed. The men wandered south and west approximately forty miles through the thick forests to the headwaters of Narragansett Bay, landing along the eastern bank of the Seekonk River (in present East Providence).<sup>12</sup> Here, Williams and his followers began planting fields and building huts for a settlement they named Providence. Soon, Williams received word that he had settled on land belonging to the Plymouth Colony that extended from Cape Cod west to the eastern shore of Narragansett Bay. Williams sailed in search of a new site for his colony in the unclaimed region to the west, heading south on the Seekonk River and then north up the Great Salt River into the Great Salt Cove, landing on its eastern shore near the mouth of the Moshassuck River at or near the present site of the national memorial.<sup>13</sup> Of this second landing, historian Samuel Greene Arnold, in an 1859 history of Rhode Island, wrote "...[after] sailing up what was then a broad and beautiful sheet of water, skirted by a dense forest, their attention was attracted by a spring close on the margin of the stream [probably the Moshassuck River], where they landed, and commenced a settlement. . ." <sup>14</sup> As to the naming of the settlement, Roger Williams later wrote, "Having a sense of God's merciful

providence unto me called this place Providence, I desired it might be for a shelter for persons distressed for conscience.”<sup>15</sup>

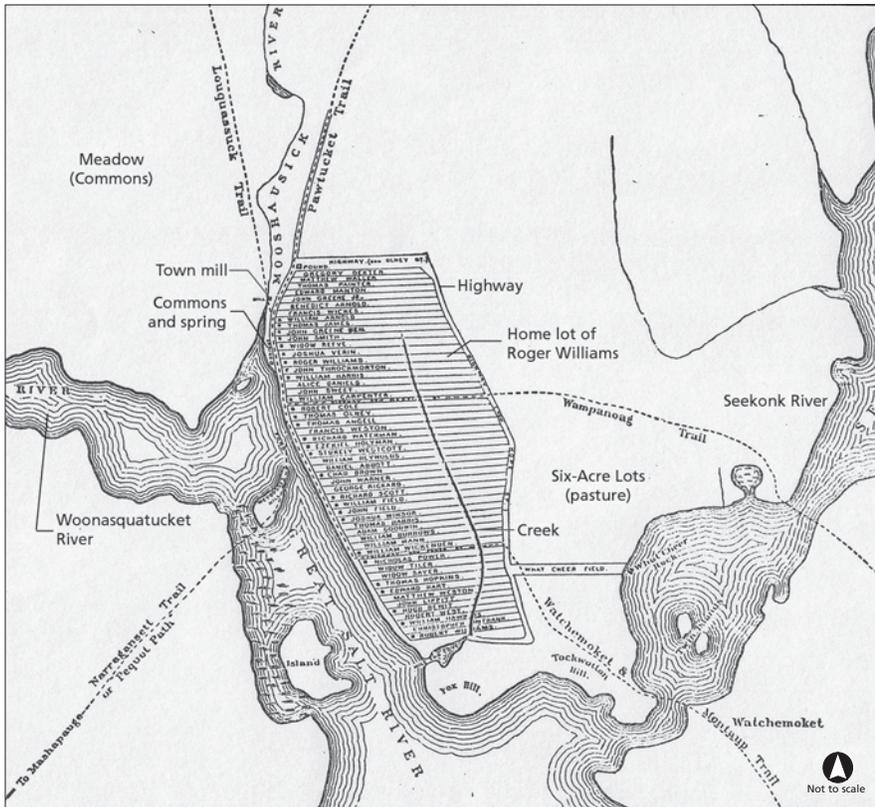
Before Williams brought the others to settle at the second site, he negotiated a purchase of the land (or use of it) from the Narragansett sachems Canonicus and Miantonomi, corresponding with most of present-day Providence County. With this agreement, Williams and his followers began the work of their second settlement in the spring or early summer of 1636. It would be the first permanent European settlement in Rhode Island, and was soon followed by several others, including Portsmouth in 1638 and Newport in 1639, both on the island of Rhode Island (today’s Aquidneck Island) at the mouth of the bay, and Warwick on the western shore, in 1642 (see fig. 0.1).<sup>16</sup>

Without a colonial patent to govern its laws, the settlers at Providence signed a compact in August 1637 that confirmed Williams’s belief in civil rather than religious law with the words: “We do promise to subject ourselves. . .to all such orders or agreements as shall be made for the public good,” but “only in civil things.”<sup>17</sup> This civil legal foundation was carried into a patent granted in 1643-44 that united Providence with the three other settlements of Newport, Portsmouth, and Warwick as the Colony of Providence Plantations. This patent was superseded in 1663 by a royal charter from King Charles II that incorporated the four settlements as the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. The charter, which recognized Roger Williams’s progressive views first embodied at Providence and its sister settlements, proclaimed the colony’s intention “to hold forth a livelie experiment that a most flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintained. . .with full liberty in religious concernments.”<sup>18</sup> This charter would remain the basis for Rhode Island government for nearly two centuries.

### **SETTLEMENT AND GROWTH OF PROVIDENCE**

The foundation of Providence upon civil law influenced the development patterns of the settlement. Unlike Puritan villages in Massachusetts Bay, the Providence settlement did not cluster around a common area or church, but rather took on a linear pattern without a center. This pattern also related to the relatively narrow area of level land along the Pawtucket Trail, between the gravelly beach and the hill to the east. Similar to medieval English agricultural land-use practices, people lived in the core village and farmed outlying lands.<sup>19</sup>

Once Williams obtained permission from the Narragansetts, he and his companions settled in the late spring or early summer of 1636 near the fresh-water spring, creating five lots along the east side of the Pawtucket Trail.<sup>20</sup> They began the hard work of improving the land, building shelter, and planting fields. Williams built his house across the trail from the spring.



**Figure 1.4.** A nineteenth-century map of the home lots of Providence Plantations in 1646. The map shows Towne Street (today's North Main Street) with a spring on its west side across from Roger Williams's home lot. (Detail, A. L. Boswell map in from Charles Hopkins, *The Home Lots of the Early Settlers of the Providence Plantations, with Notes and Plats*, 1886, annotated by SUNY ESF.)

to the east (fig. 1.4). The home lots were 100 to 135 feet wide and 1,600 to 3,000 feet long, comprising between four and eight acres of land. Here, Proprietors built their houses, barns, and gardens. The land along the west side of Towne Street, along the shoreline of the Great Salt Cove including the spring and present-day national memorial site, was held in common. Each Proprietor also received fields, shares of meadow, and rights of commonage in the lands surrounding the town.<sup>21</sup>

Without an official religion, the community did not build a central church, but probably first gathered for religious, civil, and other purposes around the spring on the common lands across from Roger Williams's home lot, and most likely in buildings as well. As the settlement grew, Proprietor John Smith built a town mill in 1646 along falls on the Moshassuck River a short distance north of the cove (see fig. 1.4). This mill became a gathering place for townspeople and for occasional town meetings and religious services, functions it would serve for more than forty years. Throughout the remainder of the seventeenth century, no church building was erected in Providence.<sup>22</sup>

Providence grew slowly during its first two decades, remaining largely a self-reliant agricultural and fishing community that had been quickly eclipsed in size and importance by Newport, which prospered from the sea trade. In 1644, the Providence Proprietors had issued five allotments of home lots, bringing the total to fifty-two.<sup>23</sup> By 1650, there were fifty-one houses in Providence, with thirty-four

In 1637, Rogers Williams signed a deed with the Narragansetts confirming his earlier sole purchase of the lands at the cove and extending a distance into the surrounding countryside. The following year, he executed the so-called Initial Deed in which he divided a portion of his land to twelve fellow settlers known as the Proprietors. Land along the east side of the Great Salt Cove at the original landing place was divided into home lots that formed the settlement's core. Building off the initial five lots, the home lots were rectangular parcels extending east from the Pawtucket Trail, renamed Towne Street, up and over the hill

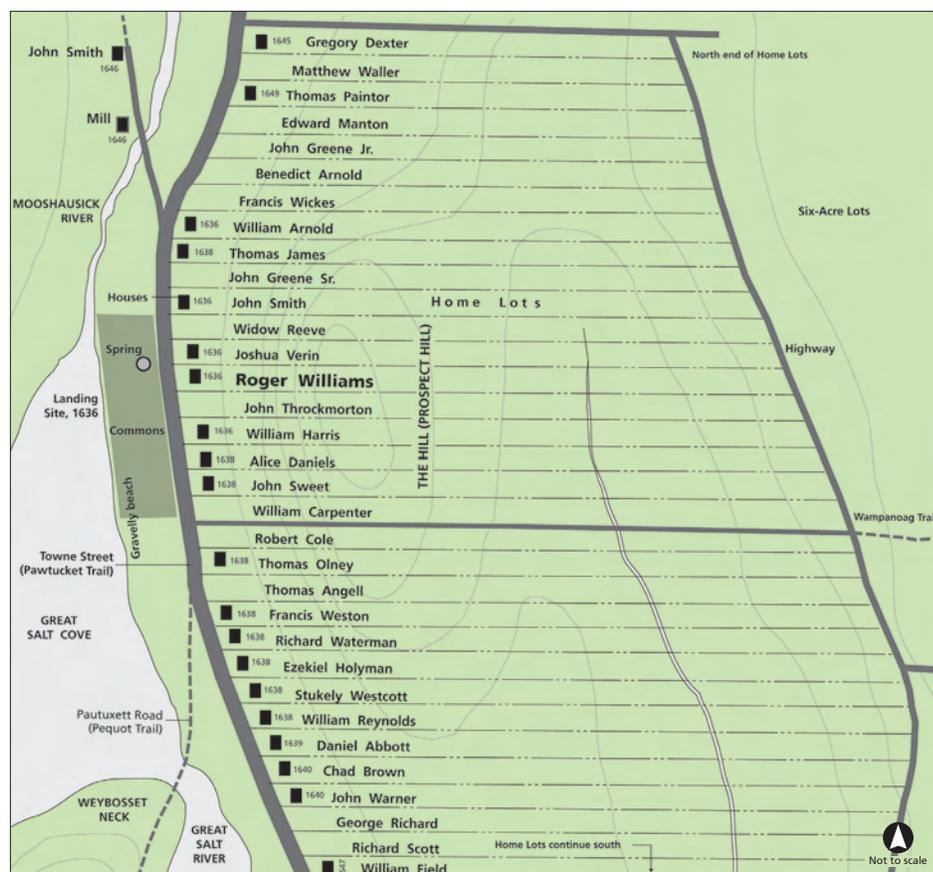


Figure 1.5. Map of the Providence Plantations showing development to 1650 on the home lots and purported location of the fresh-water spring in relation to Roger Williams's home lot and current national memorial site (shaded). The dates indicate when houses were initially constructed. (SUNY ESF based on maps in W. A. Greene, *The Providence Plantations for Two Hundred and Fifty Years*, 1886, and John Hutchins Cady, *The Civil and Architectural Development of Providence*, 1957).

In Providence, the Narragansetts attacked the village and burned most of the houses along Towne Street north of Weybosset Point. Roger Williams purportedly barricaded one house to protect the women and children of the town. Unable to regain their homelands, the Narragansetts watched as residents soon returned to rebuild following the original plan of the home lots. A period of prosperity and increasing settlement soon followed.<sup>25</sup>

Roger Williams remained a resident of Providence through most of its early history until his death in 1683. While there had been much change in the colony over the period since his initial settlement in 1636, the physical character of Providence remained largely a small agricultural and fishing village, although with hopes of building on the growing maritime trade in the region.

### LANDSCAPE OF THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL SITE, 1683

At the time of Roger Williams' death in 1683, the landscape corresponding with the future national memorial site was most likely a largely indistinguishable part of the shoreline west of Towne Street, fronting the home lots of Providence (see fig. 1.5). Most of the shoreline in 1683 was common land belonging to the Proprietors of Providence Plantations, probably used mostly as a place for fishing and landing boats. From here, farmers crossed the cove in canoes and small boats to reach the grazing lands on the other side. The grade of the shoreline, which included

on the home lots along Towne Street and the rest scattered elsewhere in the town. While all of the home lots had been acquired, some had not yet been built upon with houses and barns (fig. 1.5). By 1670, the population of the entire town of Providence had grown to 1,000.<sup>24</sup>

As Providence and other colonial settlements in Rhode Island continued to grow, tensions with the native peoples mounted. In 1676, these erupted into King Phillip's War, which resulted in the end of Native American political influence in southeastern New England.

beach swept by the daily tides of the Great Salt Cove, rose toward Towne Street that bordered the edge of the uplands. Between the high- and low-tide levels, the beach was probably covered in low salt marsh, and closer to Towne Street, by salt shrub, although much of this vegetation may have been removed with development of the village.

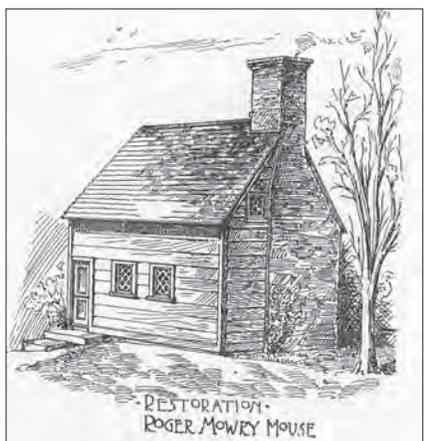
The one distinguishing feature of the future national memorial site was the fresh-water spring that had initially attracted Roger Williams to settle at this spot. Although there is no documentation on its exact location and character during Williams's lifetime, its purported location fits the natural geology. The earliest description of the spring is from a local resident who, writing in the late eighteenth century, recalled its earlier appearance: "The spring gushed forth from the hill-side in a copious stream, issuing from a shallow pool, and from boiling quicksands, and flowed down to the adjacent river" [cove].<sup>26</sup> Owned in common, the spring was purportedly first called Scott's spring, after one of the Proprietors who was Williams' neighbor to the north, and only later took on an association with Roger Williams in memory of his landing place and settlement of Providence.<sup>27</sup>

Although the spring was an early source of fresh water for the Proprietors, it was soon supplemented by dug wells. The nineteenth-century historian Henry Dorr wrote:

The wells of the old town were not within the enclosures [home lots], but were dug in the Town street [sic], in front of the houses, and were free to all. There was, at first, but one for every group of buildings. Later, there was a long row, one before every second or third house. During the first century of the town the wells were dug in the street as a thing of course. The Town street was too wide for the traffic of that time, and no complaint was made of the narrowing of the highway.<sup>28</sup>

As Dorr described, Towne Street was a wide road, built along the route of the old Pawtucket Trail. Defined on its upland or east side by the boundary of the home lots, the side along the beach apparently had no edge and gradually transitioned into the natural beach. Across Towne Street from the current boundaries of the national memorial were nine home lots (see fig. 1.5). Roger Williams's home lot, the first and central one, was across from the spring, and to his north were those owned in c.1650 by Joshua Verin, Widow Reeve, and John Smith. To the south of Williams were the home lots belonging to John Throckmorton, William Harris, Alice Daniels, John Sweet, and William Carpenter. By 1650, six of the lots had houses, while the other three did not.<sup>29</sup>

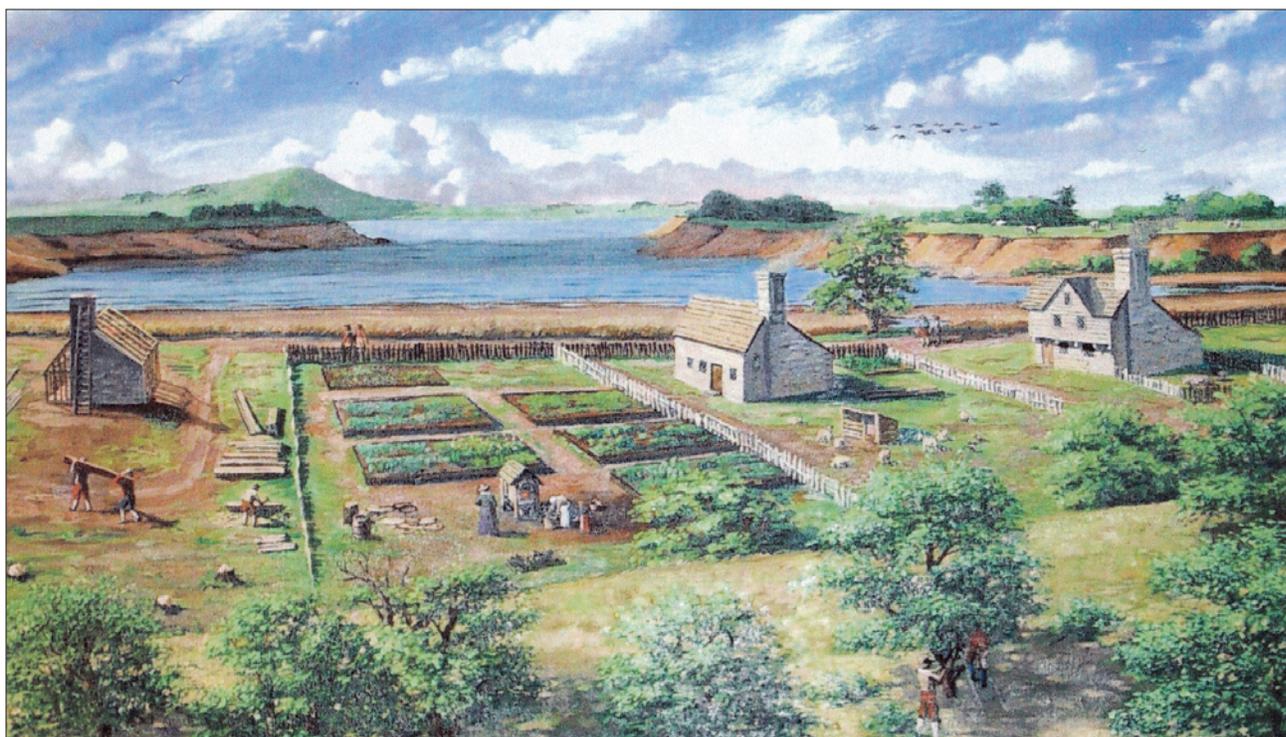
First-generation houses in Rhode Island were often temporary log buildings daubed with clay and lit by oil-paper windows. Once agriculture and trade routes became established, settlers built permanent timber-frame houses with hardware



**Figure 1.6.** Drawing of the first-period stone-end Mowry House built in 1653 a short distance north of the Providence home lots. This house reflects the character of the first milled-timber houses on the home lots along Towne Street. (Norman M. Isham and Albert F. Brown, *Early Rhode Island Houses*, 1895.)

and milled supplies procured from Boston and New Amsterdam. By the middle of the seventeenth century, Rhode Island houses were typically substantial stone-end buildings with gable roofs, shingle or clapboard siding, massive end chimneys, and casement windows, many starting out as a one-room plan and attic (fig. 1.6). The houses along Towne Street were oriented with their gables toward the street and chimneys east toward the hill, and were positioned thirty to forty feet east of the street. The houses varied in size according to the means of the owners, some with two stories and multiple rooms.<sup>30</sup>

With very limited written or physical documentation from the period, historians over the years have tried to describe the landscape of the home lots during Roger Williams's lifetime. An artist has recently translated these descriptions into an illustration looking northwest across his home lot and the site of the national memorial to the Great Salt Cove and agricultural lands beyond (fig. 1.7). This illustration reflects historical accounts, including those of Henry Dorr, who wrote in his 1899 history of Providence that the houses were set back from Towne Street across a narrow "greensward," perhaps meadow or gardens. Behind the houses, Proprietors who kept cattle had barns, and on the slope of the hill were orchards and family burial places near the present line of Benefit Street.<sup>31</sup> Given the size of the home lots, each probably contained domestic gardens close to the house, which would have been fenced to keep out animals. The east end



**Figure 1.7.** Contemporary interpretation of the Providence landscape in c.1650 looking west from an orchard on the hill toward Roger Williams's home lot (center house) across Towne Street and the future site of Roger Williams National Memorial to the Great Salt Cove. (Painting by Jean Blackburn made for Roger Williams National Memorial, c.2003.)

of the home lots, over the top of the hill, ended at a road known as the Highway (later Hope Street). East of the Highway and downhill toward the Seekonk River, about one mile distant from Towne Street, were the Proprietor's pastures within the so-called Six-Acre Lots (see figs. 1.4, 1.5).<sup>32</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1 U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Soil Survey of Providence County, Rhode Island* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), 4; U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Soil Survey of Rhode Island* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, c.1981), 2.

2 John Hutchins Cady, *The Civil and Architectural Development of Providence, 1636-1950* (Providence, Rhode Island: The Book Shop, 1957), 4.

3 USDA, *Soil Survey of Providence County*, 5.

4 New York Natural Heritage Program, *Ecological Communities of New York State* (Albany: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, c.1992), 4-5. The coastal (estuarine) communities of New York (Long Island) are similar to those of Narragansett Bay.

5 Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration, *Rhode Island: A Guide to the Smallest State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1937), 27.

6 William McKenzie Woodward and Edward F. Sanderson, *Providence: A Citywide Survey of Historic Resources* (Providence, Rhode Island: Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, 1986), section "Prehistoric Indian Occupation and Settlement;" Roger Williams to Governor Henry Vane or Deputy Governor John Winthrop, 13 May 1637, in Glenn W. LaFantasie, editor, *The Correspondence of Roger Williams, Volume I: 1629-1653* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Brown University Press/University Press of New England, 1988), 78.

7 Map of Providence Plantations in 1646, in Charles Wyman Hopkins, *The Home Lots of the Early Settlers of the Providence Plantations* (Baltimore, Maryland: Clearfield Company reprint of 1886 edition, 2001).

8 Woodward and Sanderson, section "Prehistoric Indian Occupation and Settlement." Other evidence of Native American habitation near the national memorial site includes the discovery of tools in and around the Brown University campus.

9 Henry C. Dorr, *The Planting and Growth of Providence: Illustrated in the Gradual Accumulation of the Materials for Domestic Comfort, the Means of Internal Communication and the Development of Local Industries* (Providence, Rhode Island: Sidney S. Rider, 1882), 235.

10 Woodward and Sanderson, section "Prehistoric Indian Occupation and Settlement."

11 LaFantasie, "The Road to Bannishment," editorial notes, *The Correspondence of Roger Williams, Volume I: 1629-1653*, 12-22.

12 Samuel Greene Arnold, *History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Vol. I., 1636-1700* (Providence: Preston & Rounds, 1899 reprint of 1859 original), 40-41.

13 Roger Williams to Major John Mason and Governor Thomas Prentice, 22 June 1670, in Glenn LaFantasie, editor, *The Correspondence of Roger Williams, Volume II: 1654-1682* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Brown University Press/University Press of New England, 1988), 610; *Volume I, 1629-1653*, 55 (n).

14 Arnold, 40.

15 Roger Williams, as quoted in William R. Staples, *Annals of the Town of Providence, From its First Settlement, to the Organization of the City Government, in June 1832* (Providence: Knowles and Vose, 1843), 30.

16 Woodward and Sanderson, section "Settlement, 1636-1700;" LaFantasie, 55(n); Howard Willis Preston, *Rhode Island's Historic Background* (Providence: Rhode Island Tercentenary Commission, 1936), 10.

17 Quoted in Woodward and Sanderson, section "Settlement: 1636-1700."

18 Quoted in Woodward and Sanderson, section "Settlement: 1636-1700."

19 Osmund R. Overby, "The Architecture of College Hill, 1770-1900, Residential Development in the Area of the Original Town of Providence, Rhode Island" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1963), 37.

20 Overby, 37.

21 Overby, 29, 37; Cady, 4, 7.

22 Cady, 7; Woodward and Sanderson, section "Settlement: 1636-1700."

23 Overby, 37.

24 Woodward and Sanderson, section "Settlement: 1636-1700."

25 Federal Writers' Project, *Rhode Island: A Guide to the Smallest State*, 256; Cady, 12-13.

26 Quoted in Dorr, *The Planting and Growth of Providence*, 35. Dorr does not cite the author of the quote.

27 Dorr, 34.

28 Dorr, 33-34.

29 Cady, 10. No documentation was found on the owners and houses that existed at the time of Williams's death in 1683.

30 Norman M. Isham and Albert F. Brown, *Early Rhode Island Houses* (Providence: Preston & Rounds, 1895), 26; Cady, 9.

31 Dorr, 44-45.

32 Cady, 10.



## **THE URBAN PERIOD, 1683-1965**

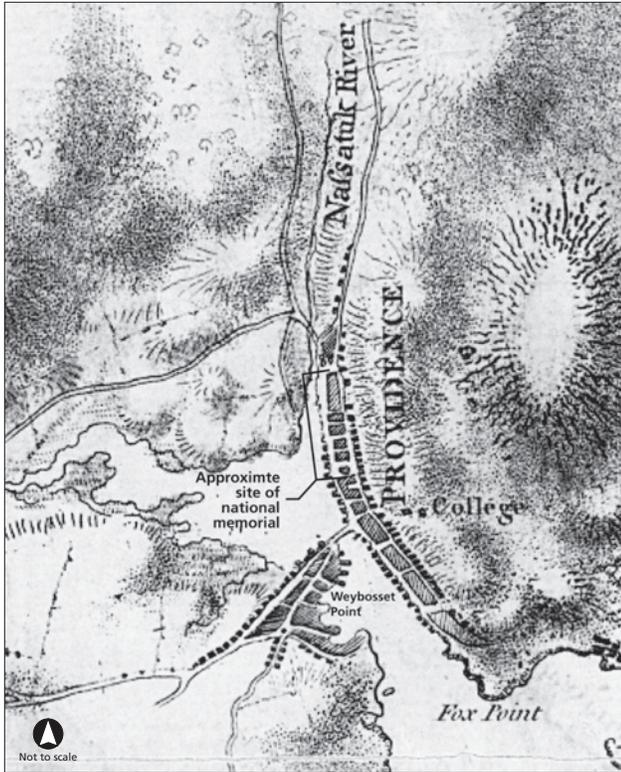
The century following Roger Williams's death in 1683 saw Providence Plantations develop into a thriving mercantile port around the core of the original village on Towne Street, with its center shifting south to Weybosset Point. After the Revolution and into the early twentieth century, Providence grew into the state's largest city, a center of industry and commerce, and the seat of state government. The site of the national memorial over this period of great change went from shoreline and public commons to dense urban blocks that were developed for residential, commercial, industrial, and civic uses.

As Providence expanded, there was growing interest by the nineteenth century in commemorating its founding and association with Roger Williams and the history of religious freedom in the United States. By the early twentieth century, these efforts led to creation of the first memorials marking the site of the fresh-water spring and landing place of Roger Williams at the future national memorial site.

### **FROM RURAL VILLAGE TO INDUSTRIAL CITY**

The transformation of Providence and its original settlement along Towne Street into a bustling city traces back to the shift of the community's economic focus from agriculture to commerce in the late seventeenth century. The beginnings of this shift occurred a few years prior to Roger Williams's death, when in 1680 Pardon Tillinghast received permission from his fellow Proprietors to acquire a lot on the beach on the west side of Towne Street, south of Weybosset Point, to erect a wharf and warehouse for the sea trade. In the following years through the eighteenth century, all of the common lands along the shore were sold off in small lots, most about forty feet wide. These lots were initially developed primarily for warehouses and shops as well as some residences, with wharfs built into the cove and the Great Salt River (Providence River). This development involved filling and construction of bulkheads to create buildable land, although there remained a marked drop in elevation from Towne Street.

While the vast majority of the shoreline commons gave way to commercial interests, there was one feature that the Proprietors wished to preserve for public benefit: the fresh-water spring along Towne Street where Roger Williams landed in 1636. The spring remained in community ownership until 1721, when the Proprietors sold it to Gabriel Bernon, who had built his house to the north of the spring in 1717 and founded the Anglican King's Chapel (later St. John's Episcopal) across the street in 1722. The Proprietors gave Bernon a deed to the spring that stipulated "liberty is reserved for the inhabitants to fetch water at said spring forever."<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1.8.** Map of Providence in 1776 showing wharf-lined shores and spread of the town to Weybosset Point. (Detail, Joseph F. W. Des Barnes, *Map of Providence, 1776*, Library of Congress American Memory Collection, digital ID G3772. N31776.D4, annotated by SUNY ESF.)

As part of the development of the cove shoreline, narrow streets known as gangways, measuring about twelve feet wide, were laid out between the warehouse lots to access the wharfs from Towne Street. Many of these streets were built by 1746, a few later. Smith Street, laid out in 1738 north of the spring, was a wider street that included a bridge across the Moshassuck River to the meadows and the industrial area clustered around the original town mill.<sup>2</sup> During the first half of the eighteenth century, many of the lots were further subdivided with residential and commercial uses fronting on Towne Street. One such building was a two-story frame house at the corner of Smith and Towne Streets built by William Antram in c.1730 as a residence and distillery, with a wharf at the rear of the property along the cove.<sup>3</sup> In addition to growing in density along the east side of the cove and river, Providence also expanded to Weybosset Point, connected to Towne Street by a bridge in 1711 and divided into home lots in 1718.<sup>4</sup> By the time the colonies declared

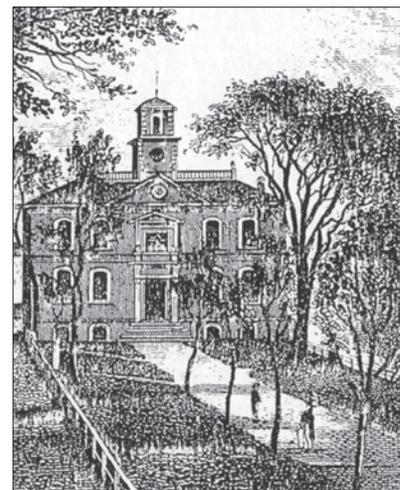
independence in 1776, Providence had grown into a compact village with wharves lining the cove and Providence River (fig. 1.8).

In keeping with the original pattern of settlement, civic and religious institutions during the eighteenth century did not cluster in a central area, but instead were strung out along Towne Street, which remained the main street of the community. The village’s first church building was constructed in 1700 along the west side of Towne Street north of the spring. King’s Chapel (St. John’s Episcopal) was built in 1722 on the east side of the street across from the spring; the First Baptist Church, an institution founded by Roger Williams, erected its building in 1726 on the west side of Towne Street north of Smith Street; and in 1731, the colonial

**Figure 1.9** (near right). Saint John’s Church showing its 1811 building from a c.1885 engraving. (Welcome Arnold Greene, *The Providence Plantations*, 1886.)

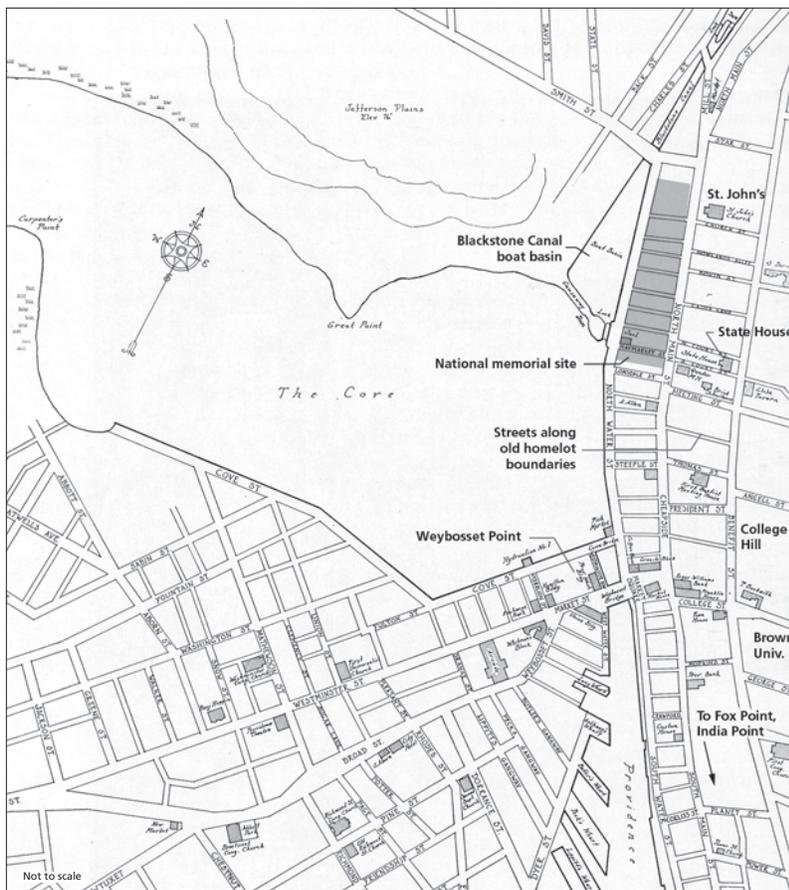


**Figure 1.10** (far right). The Colony House (State House) in its 1762 building, from a 1851 engraving. (Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, reproduced from William Woodward and Edward Sanderson, *Providence: A Citywide Survey of Historic Resources*, c.1986.)



government built the Colony House (State House) on the east side of the street south of Williams's home lot, set back across an open parade (figs. 1.9, 1.10). One of the warehouse lots west of Towne Street across from the State House was set aside as a school lot by c. 1750. Farther south on Towne Street near the bridge to Weybosset Point was the Congregational Church built in 1723.<sup>5</sup>

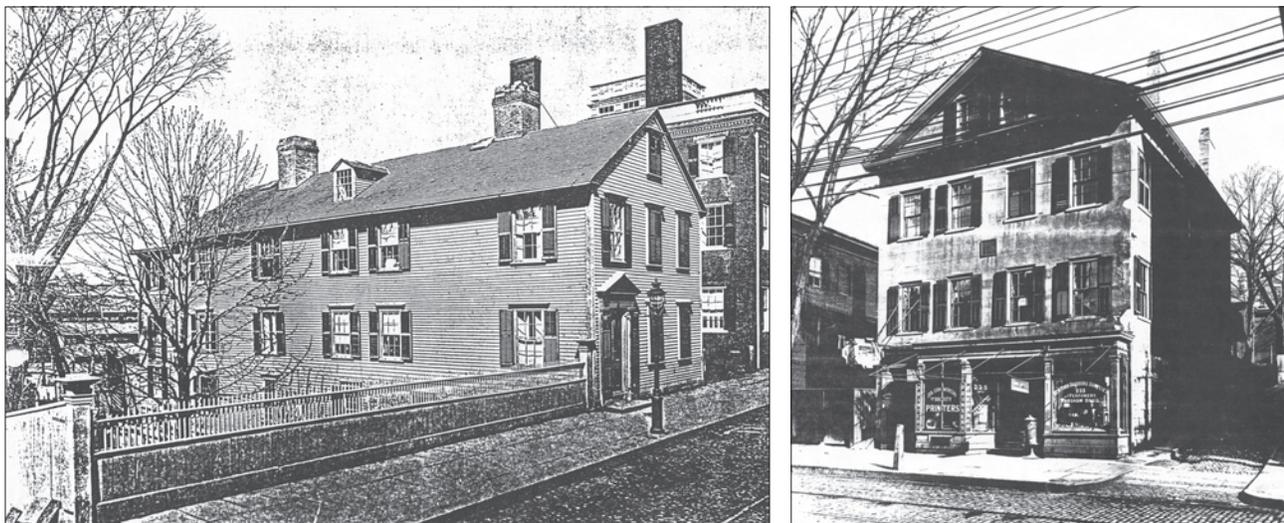
From a seaport town during colonial times, Providence in the century after the Revolution grew into a transportation hub and center of large-scale industry, overshadowing its earlier maritime trade. The rivers that converged at Providence



**Figure 1.11.** Map of Providence showing continued growth on Weybosset Point and addition of the Blackstone River Canal by 1832. The future site of the national memorial is the area between North Main Street and North Water Street shaded in gray. (Detail, John Hutchins Cady, *The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence*, 1957, annotated by SUNY ESF.)

provided the power that made the region an important center of the Industrial Revolution in America, with the first water-powered machine-driven textile factories built upriver from Providence on the banks of the Blackstone River (a branch of the Seekonk River) in the 1790s. Transportation improvements accompanied the industrial growth, leading to new roads, bridges, and a canal. The Blackstone River Canal, which connected Providence with the industrial towns as far north as Worcester, Massachusetts, was completed in 1828. In Providence, the canal followed the Moshassuck River and terminated at a boat basin at the confluence with the cove (fig. 1.11). Several improvements accompanied the building of the canal, including stone retaining walls and extension of North Water Street (present Canal Street) along the east side of the cove. Building of this street, begun in 1823, required removal of the wharfs along the old warehouse lots and obliteration of the last remnants of the shoreline where Roger Williams landed in 1636. Removal of the wharfs apparently had little economic ramification for this area, as much of the maritime trade had earlier moved south following construction of a fixed-span bridge at Weybosset Point in 1816.<sup>6</sup>

Between 1782 and 1830 during its early industrial boom, Providence quadrupled to a population of 16,836, and two years later, it was incorporated as a city.<sup>7</sup> During this time, much of Providence's growth occurred south of the original home lots on Fox Point and adjoining India Point and to the southwest on



**Figure 1.12 (left).** Eighteenth and early nineteenth century houses on the west side of North Main Street within the current national memorial site, looking northwest, c.1880. At right is the brick Dodge house on the present site of Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial). Note the drop in elevation to the left, down to the cove and canal. (Roger Williams National Memorial archives.)

**Figure 1.13 (right).** The building in front of the site of Roger Williams's house, probably constructed in c.1840, looking east across North Main Street. The plaque on the front between the second and third floors indicates the site of Roger Williams's house at the rear. (Roger Williams National Memorial archives.)

Weybosset Point, which was expanded in area through filling in of the shoreline (see fig. 1.11). Towne Street, renamed North and South Main Streets in 1807, continued to be a principal thoroughfare and home to civic and religious institutions as well as commercial and residential uses. A number of grand houses were built along North Main Street in the early years of the nineteenth century, along with more modest houses, some with fenced-in side yards (fig. 1.12). As the century progressed, the area along North Main Street became denser and more commercial, with three and four-story buildings with storefronts constructed on many of the lots (fig. 1.13). The prime residential neighborhood in the city during this time moved uphill from North Main Street. Known as Prospect Hill or College Hill due to its views and the location of Brown University, the neighborhood centered on Benefit Street, which was laid out along the rear of the old home lots, with narrow side streets along the lot boundaries connecting the two streets (see fig. 1.11).<sup>8</sup>

The arrival of the railroads in the 1830s reinforced Providence's place as an transportation hub and industrial center, and led to further changes in the old core of the city. The rail lines, connecting to Boston and New York, entered the city along the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket rivers and converged along the east and south sides of the cove on filled land. In 1846, the city approved a plan by the Providence and Worcester Railroad Company to fill in a large part of the cove to accommodate rail yards and a new central station along the north side of Weybosset Point in the growing central business district. The project, built between 1846 and 1854, created an oval lake within the cove measuring 1,300 by 1,180 feet, surrounded by an eighty-foot-wide tree-lined promenade (fig. 1.14). With the opening of the Providence and Worcester Railroad, the Blackstone Canal was abandoned for shipping.<sup>9</sup>

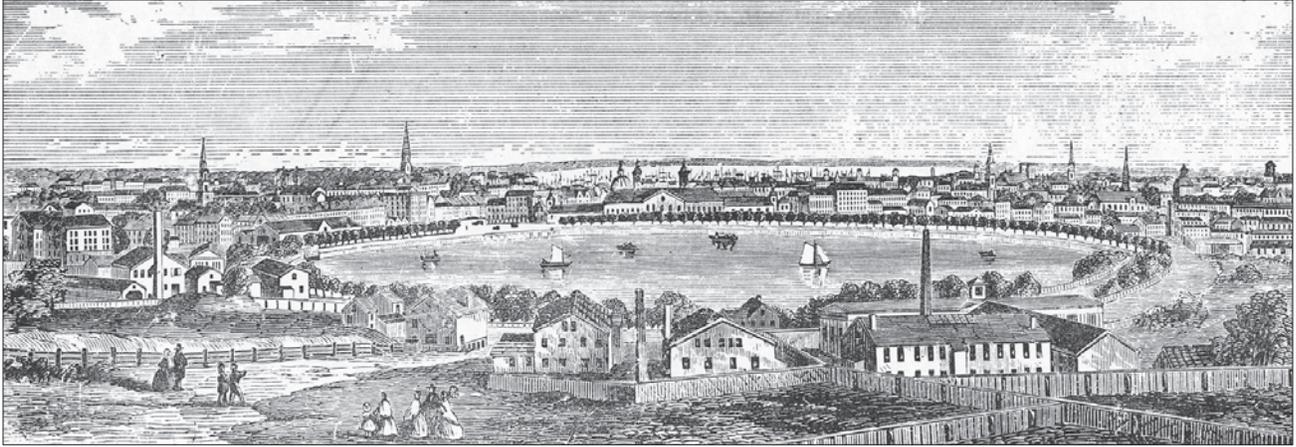


Figure 1.14. View of Providence in c. 1860 looking southeast across the cove showing its reconfiguration into a promenade-lined oval between 1846 and 1856. The Weybosset Point area is in the center distance; industries along the Moshassuck River (Blackstone Canal) are at the left. The site of the national memorial is off the left side of the drawing. (Courtesy of Rhode Island Historical Society.)

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Providence continued to gain industrial might, and its population soared, making the city the country's twentieth largest by 1900.<sup>10</sup> The railroad infrastructure grew along with the city, requiring additional land. In 1889, the city under pressure from the railroads approved a revision of the cove lands that resulted in filling of the entire cove and channelizing the two rivers, large sections of which were covered. In 1892, the city completed work on filling the cove basin, thus removing the last connection of the spring and original town settlement on North Main Street to the water (fig. 1.15).

<sup>11</sup> The filled land provided room for a new rail terminal, rail yards, and streets that

were built in the 1890s, extending the area of the downtown business district. The Moshassuck River still flowed to the west of North Main Street, but was largely invisible in its deep stone-lined channel.

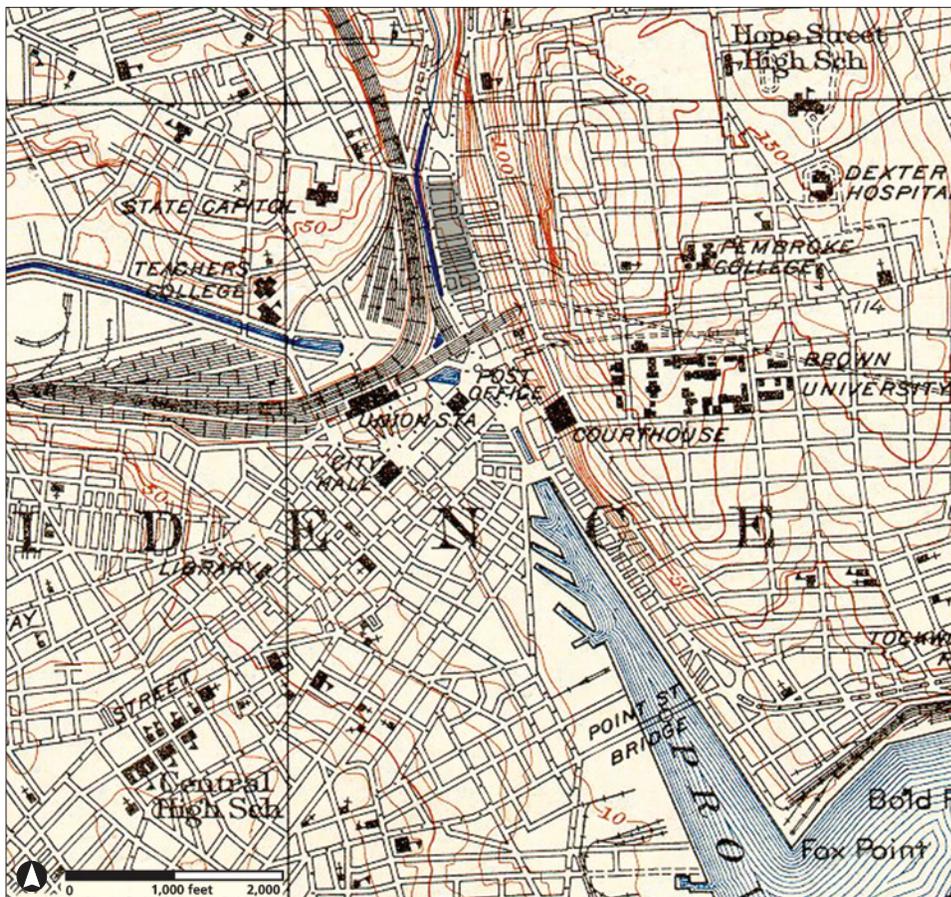


Figure 1.15. A 1939 map of Providence showing filling of the Cove and expansion of the rail yards in the 1890s, and addition of the new state capitol completed in 1900. Downtown Providence, on the site of Weybosset Point, is where Union Station, City Hall, and the Post Office are shown. The future site of the national memorial is shaded in gray. (Detail, USGS topographic 15 minute series, Providence Quadrangle, 1939, annotated by SUNY ESF.)



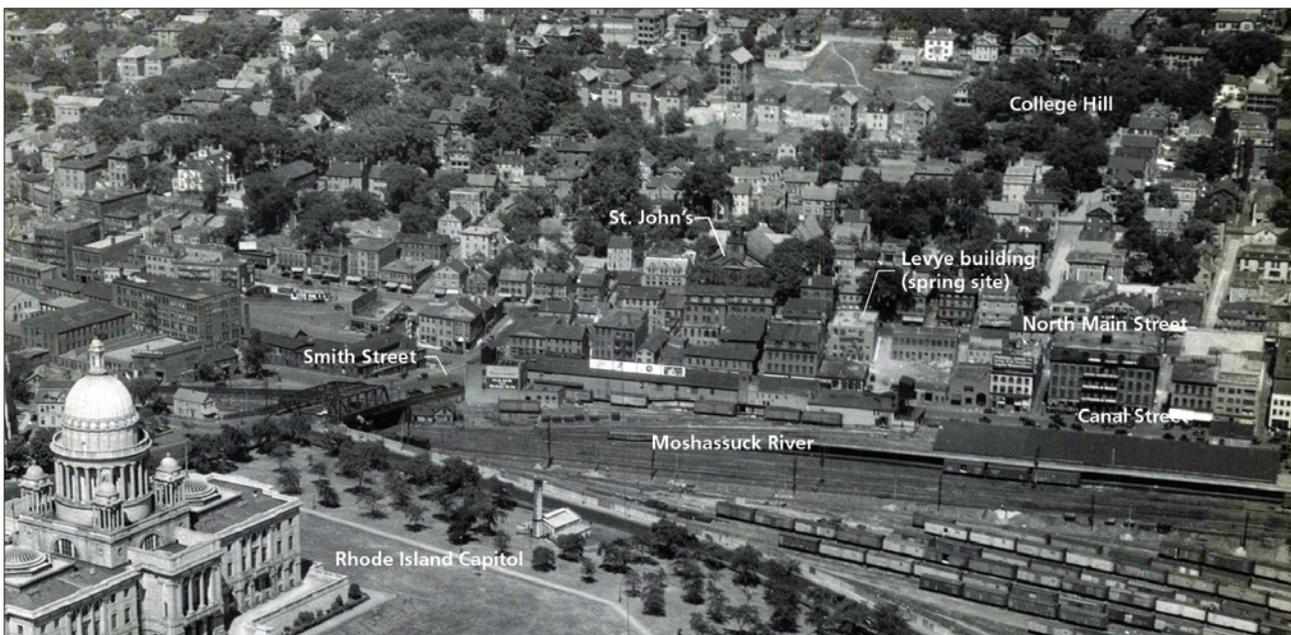
**Figure 1.16.** Aerial photograph of downtown Providence looking northwest with the capitol and rail yard in the distance, c.1924. The site of the national memorial is off the upper right side of the photograph. (Rhode Island Historical Society, RHIX17459.)

The new streets and fill at the site of the cove were also part of a plan begun in 1891 to create a new civic center on Smith Hill, the rise of land north of the former cove and south of Smith Street, to replace the Old State House (Colony House) along North Main Street (see fig. 1.15). The new Rhode Island Capitol, a monumental domed building completed in 1900 to the design of McKim, Mead and White, represented the designation of Providence as the state’s sole capitol instead of the earlier practice of holding the state legislature in county seats.<sup>12</sup> The building’s dome, which reached

an elevation of nearly two hundred feet—the height of College Hill— was visible throughout much of the city including from the Old State House, although partly obscured by the commercial and industrial buildings along North Main Street. The new capitol soon competed visually with tall office buildings that were built during the first three decades of the twentieth century in the booming downtown district on Weybosset Point (fig. 1.16).

**Figure 1.17.** A 1924 aerial photograph looking east showing development at the present site of the national memorial, from Smith Street at left to right edge of photograph. (Courtesy of Providence Department of Planning and Development, annotated by SUNY ESF.)

The area of the original town settlement around the Roger Williams Spring along North Main Street experienced little of the high-rise development that characterized the downtown core in the early twentieth century (fig. 1.17). North Main Street, however, became an increasingly busy automobile artery. In 1934, it was designated as US 44 that led from the vicinity of Poughkeepsie, New York through Connecticut and terminated at Plymouth, Massachusetts.<sup>13</sup> The street



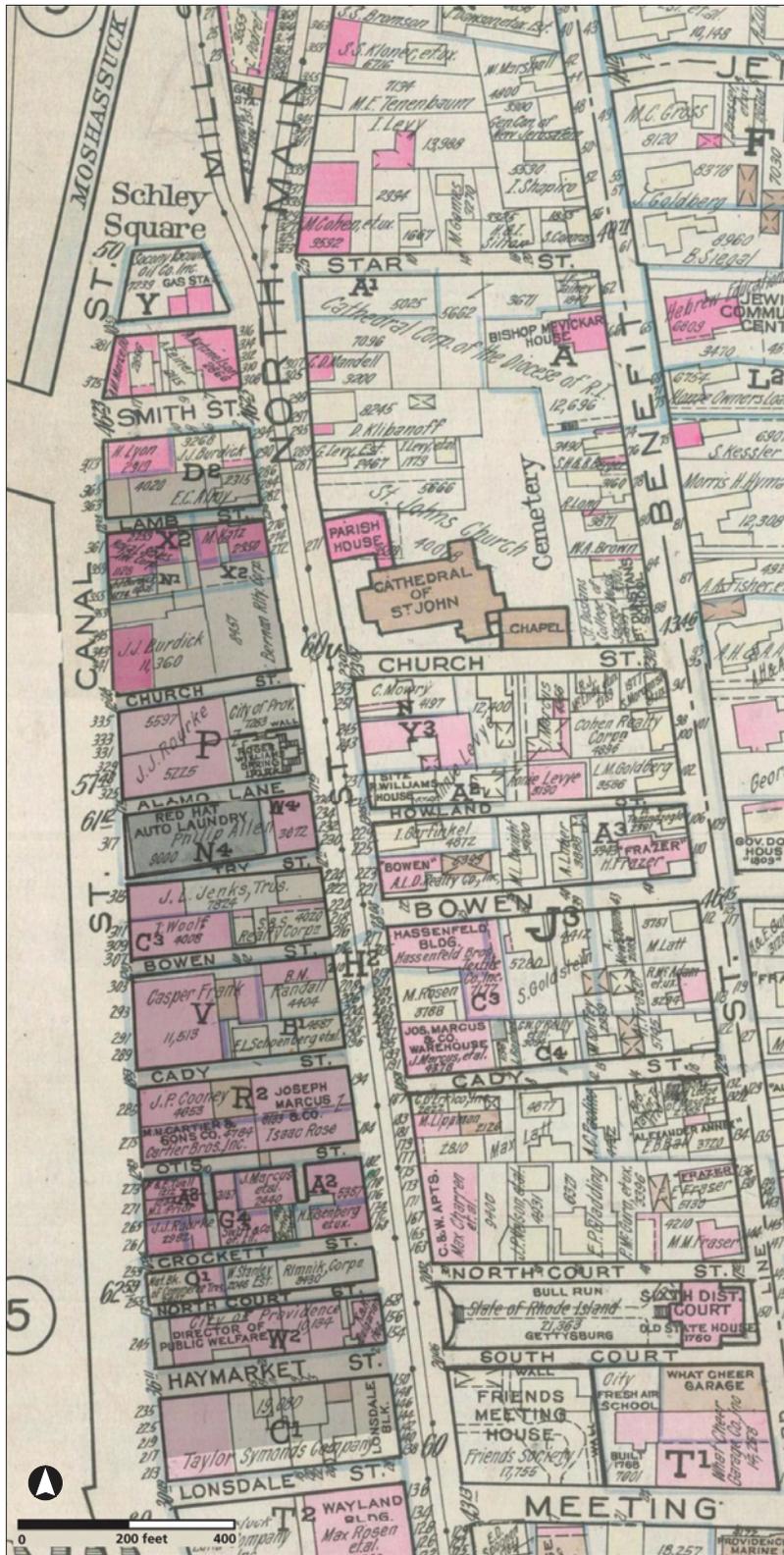


Figure 1.18. Atlas of Providence showing buildings and streets within the national memorial site (shaded area) and adjoining neighborhood, 1937. The buildings in pink (darker shade) are masonry. The former police headquarters between North Court Street and Haymarket Street is listed here as city offices; the Old State House is the Sixth District Court. (Detail, G. M. Hopkins Company, "Atlas of the City of Providence," 1937.)

remained anchored by St. John's and the Old State House, together with the city police headquarters built in 1861 across from the Old State House between North Main Street and Canal Street. A city atlas published in 1937 showed a variety of uses within the future national memorial site (fig. 1.18). Retail shops dominated North Main Street, including the Taylor Symonds Company, a large dry-goods retailer in the Lonsdale Block between Lonsdale and Haymarket Streets, with its storeroom extending back to Canal Street; Joseph Marcus & Company, a furniture retailer located in a c.1922 building on North Main Street between Cady and Otis Streets; and the Thomas B. Gray watch shop in the Antram-Gray house at the corner of North Main and Smith Streets. The upper floors of many of the shops contained apartments. Along Canal Street and the gangways were a mix of commercial, industrial, office, and residential uses. These included the National Bank of Commerce north of the old police headquarters, then housing city offices; several meat-packing plants and butchers, including John Squire Pork Products between Bowen and Try, and an office of Swift & Company along Crockett Street; M. N. Cartier & Sons at Otis Street, wholesalers of roofing materials; the Union Paper Company between Cady and Bowen; and the Red Hat Auto Laundry between Try Street and Alamo Lane. Much of the channelized Moshassuck River was built over with wholesale meat-packing warehouses.<sup>14</sup>

The buildings within the national memorial site along North Main Street were three- and four-story nineteenth-



**Figure 1.19.** An eighteenth-century building at 204-208 North Main Street within the present site of the national memorial looking southwest, c.1935. The adjoining buildings date from the eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries. (Rhode Island Historical Society, RHiX34521.)

**Figure 1.20.** Looking south on Canal Street from Smith Street in c.1950 showing largely nineteenth century buildings with early twentieth-century high-rises of downtown in the background. The buildings at left are within the present site of the national memorial, those at right are meat-packing factories built over the Moshassuck River. (Rhode Island Historical Society, RHiX17467.)



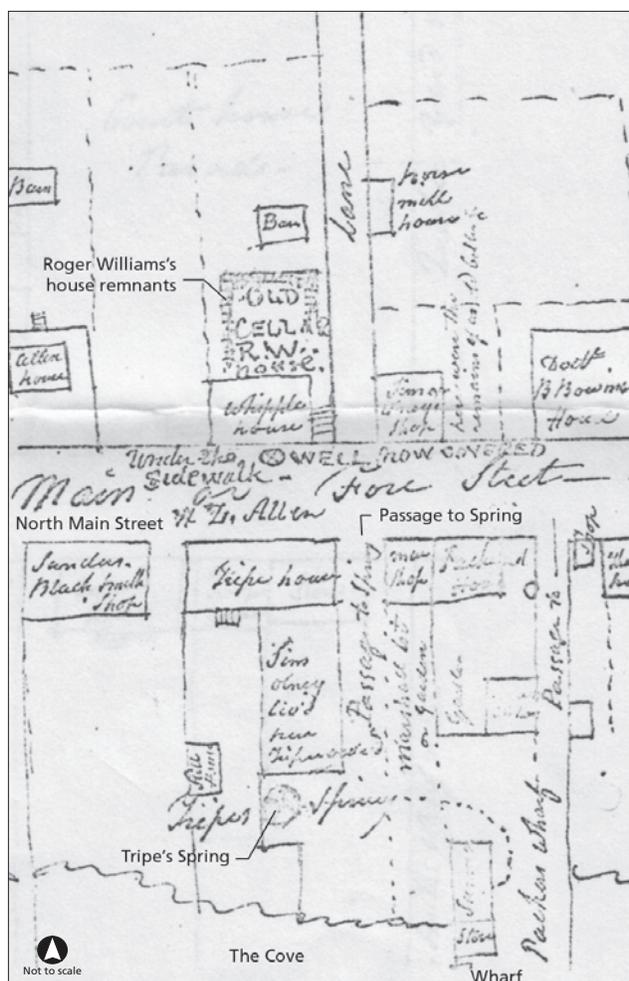
century brick commercial buildings, such as the Lonsdale Block at 168-182 North Main Street, and two- and three-story frame eighteenth-century buildings with later storefronts on the first floors, such as the Antram House at the corner of the Smith Street and the building at 204-208 North Main Street (fig. 1.19). Canal Street was characterized by a mix of brick and frame buildings, generally two to three stories with some taller, the one exception being the large one-story auto laundry building (fig. 1.20). The meat-packing factories on the west side of Canal Street were long frame and masonry buildings spanning the stone retaining walls of the river below.<sup>15</sup>

As in many Northeastern cities, Providence began a long period of decline after World War II due to a variety of issues including loss of industry, racial tensions, mortgage red-lining, flight to the suburbs, shift to automobile transportation, and an anti-urban culture that had roots going back well before the war. By 1950, the city had begun to shrink, with its population declining to 248,674 from its height of 253,504 in 1940. By 1960, the city would lose another seventeen percent of its population.<sup>16</sup>

These shifts corresponded with a number of physical changes to the city beginning in the 1950s, including construction of expressways and interstates, and large-scale demolition and new construction in nine city neighborhoods designated as blighted. One of these neighborhoods was North Main Street and College Hill, including the site of the old town spring and home lot of Roger Williams.

#### **COMMEMORATING ROGER WILLIAMS AND THE FOUNDING OF PROVIDENCE**

Interest in preserving and documenting remnants of Providence's early history along North Main Street was not new to the urban renewal era, but rather had been slowly developing over the previous century and a half. The old town spring—referred to as Roger Williams Spring as early as 1785—and the site of Williams's house were early subjects of this interest. In the 1830s on the eve of Providence's bicentennial, antiquaries examined the oldest standing houses along North and South Main Streets to see if anything might remain from Williams's house and others from the original settlement—apparently the buildings that



**Figure 1.21.** Detail of a map made by T. M. Sumner in 1834 showing his recollection of the original Providence settlement area in 1775-1777, including the site of Roger Williams's house and the old town spring (noted as Tripe's Spring). (Rhode Island Historical Society, Antoinette Downing Papers, RHIX17462, annotated by SUNY ESF.)

stood prior to the Indian attack of 1676. After careful inspection, they reported that there were no buildings left.<sup>17</sup> Around the same time, Providence resident T. M. Sumner located the cellar remains of Roger Williams's house and the location of the old town spring on a sketch map he drew in 1834 based on his recollections of the area in 1775-1777 (fig. 1.21). He showed the cellar remains behind the Whipple house that stood directly on the street, and the spring at the rear of a house belonging to the Tripe family, descendants of Gabriel Bernon who had initially acquired the spring lot. Sumner labeled it "Tripe's Spring" and appears to show it being contained within a circular well. The spring was accessed by a road, later Alamo Lane, that he labeled "Passage to Spring."<sup>18</sup>

When Sumner drew his map, a large three-story Federal-style brick house, built by Nehemiah Dodge in 1816, stood on the site of the old Tripe house (see fig. 1.12). By this point, the spring was contained in the rear garden of the house and had probably fallen out of use as a primary public water supply. Dodge provided a pump from the spring at the rear of his property along the passageway (Alamo Lane), most likely to fulfill the stipulations of the 1717 deed to Gabriel Bernon that guaranteed public access to the water.<sup>19</sup> From the pump, the spring drained to the Moshassuck River through underground pipes, which were probably installed with the extension of Canal Street in 1823.

Efforts to commemorate Roger Williams with civic monuments and markers also began early in the nineteenth century. In 1827, citizens of Providence proposed an ordinance providing funds for erecting a durable monument to Roger Williams as the founder of the city, but the proposal was not passed.<sup>20</sup> The effort was revived in 1850 when the Providence Association of Mechanics and Manufacturers created a fund to erect a memorial to Roger Williams. This group was followed by the Roger Williams Monument Association, which was established in 1860 to erect a monument near the site of Roger Williams's home lot, but apparently not on North Main Street. The association received a major boost in 1865 when Stephen Randall, a direct descendent of Roger Williams, donated \$1,000 to the association for the monument. Two years later, the association purchased a small parcel located on College Hill, uphill from North Main Street near the State House and site of Roger Williams's house, in order to create a small park for the monument. The park, known as Prospect Terrace and completed in 1877, was supported by a



Figure 1.22. Looking northeast over downtown Providence from Prospect Terrace, the proposed site of the city's first monument to Roger Williams, c.1877. The site of the Roger Williams Spring would have been visible to the right; the spire in the middle distance is the First Baptist Church. (Welcome Arnold Greene, *The Providence Plantations for 250 Years*, 1886.)

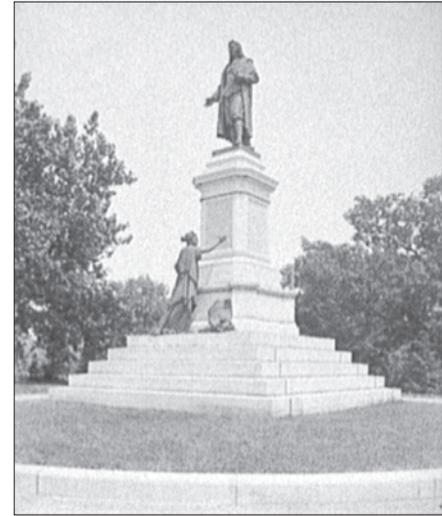


Figure 1.23. The Roger Williams Memorial (1877) in Roger Williams Park, from a c.1910 photograph by the Detroit Publishing Company. (Library of Congress American Memory Collection, digital ID det4a17975.)

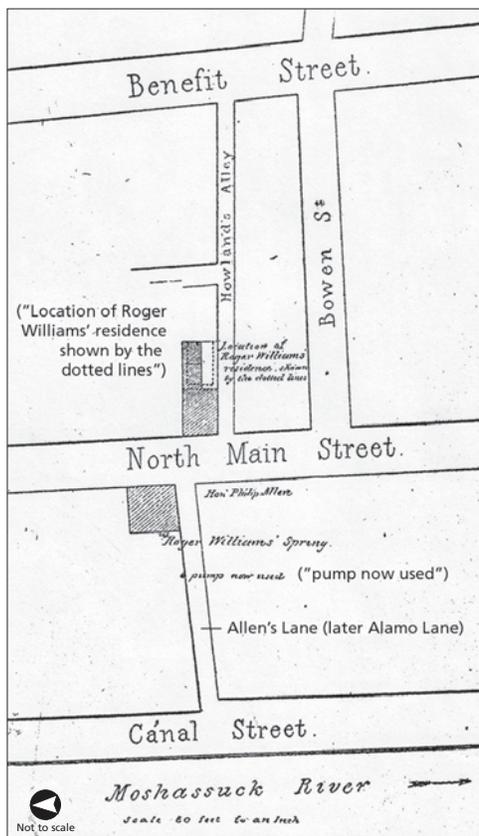


Figure 1.24. Detail of the 1860 Allen's Map showing "Roger Williams' Spring" along the rear wall of Philip Allen's house, a pump from the spring along the gangway (Allen's Lane), and the site of Williams's house. (Rhode Island Historical Society, Antoinette Downing Papers, RHIX17461, annotated by SUNY ESF.)

high stone retaining wall extending out from the steep hillside, offering visitors panoramic views over the city (fig. 1.22). Efforts to place a monument there, however, were unsuccessful.<sup>21</sup>

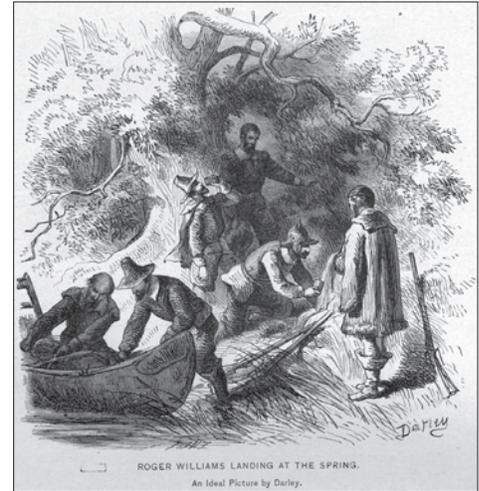
The monument at Prospect Terrace was apparently halted by plans to erect a separate memorial to Roger Williams in a park on the city's south side, west of the Providence River near Cranston. Betsy Williams, a descendent of Roger Williams, donated the one-hundred-acre property, originally the farm of Roger Williams's son, Joseph, to the city in 1871. She specified in her donation that the park, named Roger Williams Park, include a monument to Roger Williams. The city accepted her terms and in 1877, on high ground overlooking a pond, dedicated a large monument with bronze sculptures designed by Franklin Simmons of Rome (fig. 1.23).<sup>22</sup> With this monument in place, interest in commemorating Roger Williams at the original settlement area on North Main Street faded.

Despite this competition, work on documenting the sites associated with Roger Williams and the original Providence settlement on North Main Street continued. Allen's Map, drawn in 1860, documented the location of Roger Williams Spring and site of Williams's house, together with his burial site near Benefit Street (fig. 1.24). The map depicted the spring at the rear side of the Dodge house, then owned by Philip Allen. A second map documenting the location of the spring appeared in 1886 during Providence's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, entitled "Plan



Figure 1.25 (left). Sketches by Antoinette Downing of the wellhead traditionally known as the Roger Williams Spring located in the cellar of the Dodge-Allen house at 242-244 North Main Street, c.1923. (Courtesy of Rhode Island Historical Society, Antoinette Downing Papers, RHIX17464.)

Figure 1.26 (right). A late nineteenth-century idealized scene of Roger Williams's landing along the shores of the Cove, reflecting the growing interest in the city's history upon its 250th anniversary in 1886. (Welcome Arnold Greene, *The Providence Plantations*, 1886.)



showing the approximate location of the Home Lots of the Early Settlers of Providence, R.I.," by C. W. Hopkins. The spring by this time was in the basement of the Dodge-Allen house, then owned by Jacob Seagraves, owing to the building's relocation with the widening of North Main Street in 1875 (fig. 1.25).

The absence of the spring from public view coincided with the appearance of romanticized accounts, such as the drawing of the original spring included in Welcome Arnold Greene's *The Providence Plantations*, published in 1886 (fig. 1.26). Despite the absence of firm documentation, there was apparently little disagreement that the well in the Dodge-Allen-Seagraves house contained the source of the Roger Williams Spring. The well's historic association became official when it appeared on a city map published in 1898 (fig. 1.27).

In 1900, the city removed the spring pump along Allen's (Alamo) Lane, probably along

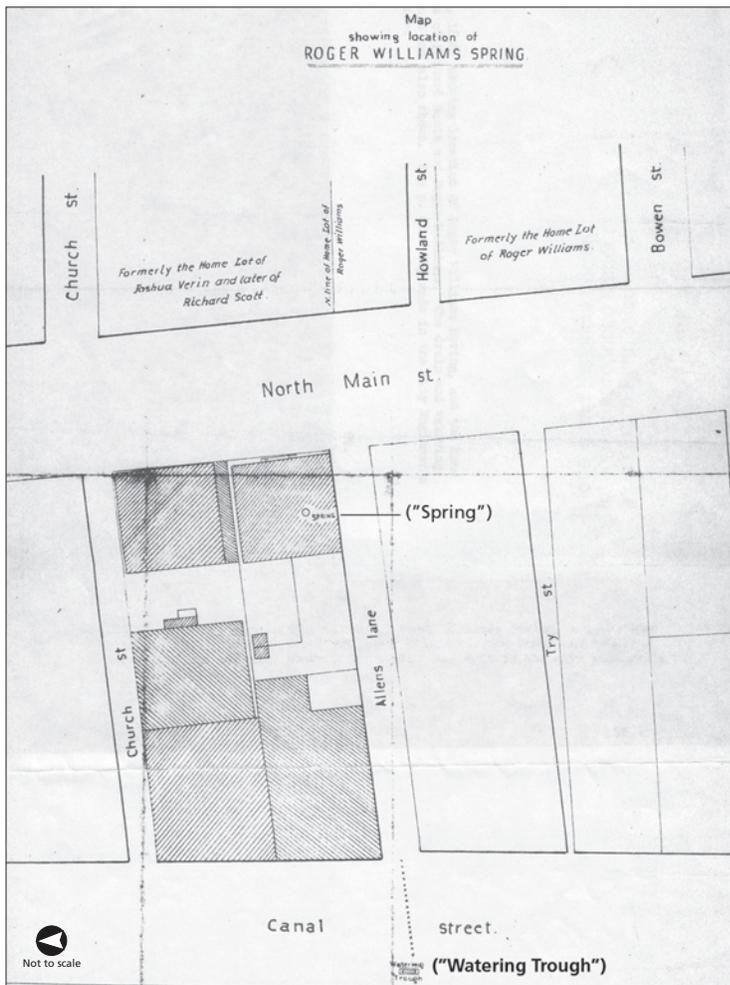


Figure 1.27. Map made by the city engineer's office in 1898 showing location of "Roger Williams Spring" and site of his home lot across North Main Street. The map shows the water trough in Canal Street that was probably an outlet for the spring, but not the spring pump along Allens Lane that was removed in 1900. The trough was probably removed at the same time. (Rhode Island Historical Society, Antoinette Downing Papers, RHIX17460, annotated by SUNY ESF.)

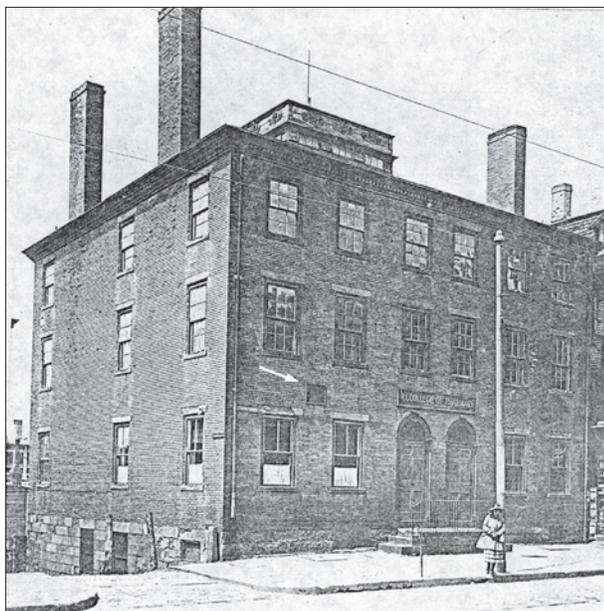


Figure 1.28 (left). The Dodge-Allen-Seagraves house, looking northwest with the 1906 bronze tablet (indicated by white arrow) marking the house as the site of the Roger Williams Spring, photographed 1923. The building at the time was home to the Rhode Island College of Pharmacy. At left is the curb cut to Allen's (Alamo) Lane. (Rhode Island Historical Society, Antoinette Downing Papers, RHiX17465, annotated by SUNY ESF.)

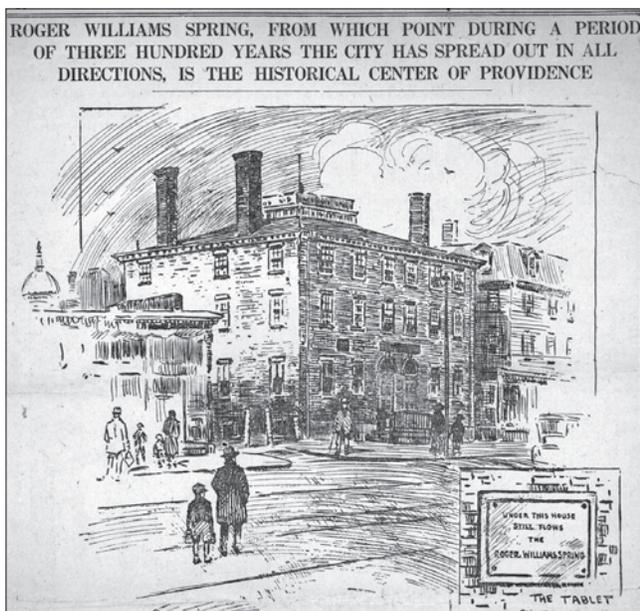


Figure 1.29 (right). Headline and drawing by Whitman Bailey from a 1919 edition of *The Providence News* extolling the historic significance of the site of the Roger Williams Spring. The drawing shows the capitol dome in the background. (Rhode Island Historical Society, Antoinette Downing Papers, RHiX17466.)

with the trough in Canal Street. The water from the spring after this time drained underground to the sewer under Canal Street or to the Moshassuck River. With the disappearance of the spring's last public vestiges, the state placed a bronze plaque on the front of the Dodge-Allen-Seagraves house in 1906 (fig. 1.28). The plaque read: "Under This House Still Flows the Roger Williams Spring."<sup>23</sup>

The nearby site of Roger Williams's house also received attention during this time. In 1906, archeological investigations were undertaken to document foundation remains from the house, then located in the rear yard of a three-story building at 233-235 North Main Street across from the spring. Architect and Brown University professor Norman M. Isham, who had published a book on early Rhode Island houses in 1895, worked on the project that led to verification of the site's association with Williams, as T. M. Sumner had shown on the map he made in 1834. The state affixed a bronze tablet, matching the design of the one on the Dodge-Allen-Seagraves house, to the front of the three-story building identifying it as the site of Roger Williams's house (see fig. 1.13).<sup>24</sup>

The years after World War I, with the approach of the state's tercentennial in 1936 and redevelopment pressures within Providence, saw increased interest in preserving the sites associated with Roger Williams and the founding of Providence. The site of the spring had become widely acknowledged as the birthplace of the city's origin, as evidenced by a full-page article on the site that appeared in *The Providence News* in 1919 (fig. 1.29):

The historical centre of Providence is marked by Roger Williams's spring, from which point, during a period of almost three hundred years, the city has gradually and steadily spread out in all directions, until we have before and around us the Providence of today—The Providence that we know.<sup>25</sup>

Interest in preserving the spring site came to a head in the 1920s with a proposal for its redevelopment. In December 1921, Joseph Levye, a local businessperson who gained great wealth in the textile industry, acquired the Dodge-Allen-Seagraves house from the Rhode Island College of Pharmacy and Allied Sciences, which had occupied the house since 1912. Levye proposed to demolish the house and erect a new commercial building on the site. His plans raised concern among several organizations, which called for the city to acquire the property and preserve the building because of its history. Levye offered to sell the building at cost to those interested in preserving it, but after seven months of waiting, he decided to go ahead with his project and filed a building permit in June 1922. Public concern apparently stalled the city from quickly issuing the permit, but within a year, Levye received his permit and he demolished the old house and erected a new four-story commercial building on the site (see fig. 1.17). In his plans, Levye retained the old stone well that was believed to contain the source of old town spring. He sealed the well within a new concrete vault, and promised to affix the bronze plaque from the Dodge-Allen-Seagraves house to the new building.<sup>26</sup>

**Figure 1.30. Rendering of the proposed Roger Williams Memorial on Prospect Terrace by the architectural firm of Voorhees, Gmelin, and Walker with the sculpture by Leo Friedlander, c.1936. The memorial, completed in 1939, overlooked Roger Williams Spring Park toward the Rhode Island State House. (Rhode Island Historical Society, Roger Williams Monument Association Records, RHiX17463.)**



Soon after Levye's new building went up on the spring site, the long-stalled proposal to erect a monument to Roger Williams at nearby Prospect Park, begun in 1850, was revived in anticipation of the state's tercentennial in 1936. In 1925 and 1926, the city received gifts of land to enlarge Prospect Terrace, apparently with the aim of providing room for a monument. By 1934, the state incorporated a new Roger Williams Memorial Association with authority to erect a monument on Prospect Terrace. In 1936 during the state's tercentennial year, the association held a design competition, which called for the memorial to relate to five specific sites, including the Old State House, Rhode Island Capitol, and the Roger Williams Spring. The association chose the design by architect Ralph Walker of the New York City firm of Voorhees, Gmelin, and Walker for a monumental portal overlooking the city from the edge of Prospect Terrace,

sheltering a statue of Roger Williams and framing a vista of the capitol (fig. 1.30). The design included a fountain at the base of the terrace, apparently intended to symbolize the Roger Williams Spring. Construction of the memorial, restricted only to the portal and sculpture, was funded in part by the federal Works Progress Administration and completed in 1939.<sup>27</sup>

### BUILDING OF ROGER WILLIAMS SPRING PARK AND BERNON PARK

In a 1922 article on the proposed commercial building at the site of Roger Williams Spring, the *Providence Journal* published: “People interested in the history of Providence, and in preserving the old landmarks and relics of the city, have long looked upon the Roger Williams spring [sic] as something that should be preserved, but despite their endeavors nothing has ever been done.”<sup>28</sup> The demolition of the Dodge-Allen-Seagraves house, plans for the Roger Williams monument on Prospect Terrace, and the approach of Rhode Island’s tercentennial in 1936, however, soon energized preservationists and renewed interest in the spring.

The first project undertaken following construction of the new commercial building in 1923 was the addition of a new marker that would have supplemented the 1906 bronze plaque if Joseph Levey had reset it on his new building as

promised. In August 1928, the federal Secretary of War approved the design of a granite monument to mark the site as the landing place of Roger Williams, funded through a \$1,500 appropriation from Congress. The monument was designed by Lieutenant B. F. Vandervoort of the War Department, Millin B. Brondson, Commissioner of Public Works for the city, and H. M. Chapin, librarian of the Rhode Island Historical Society. According to a newspaper account, “The memorial will be of Westerly or other New England granite, with rounded edges, tapering from the base to the top, and with bronze inserted tablets at a convenient height for the reading and to harmonize with the polished granite.”

Shortly after the monument was approved in August 1928, it was installed on the sidewalk near the curb at the intersection of North Main Street and Alamo Lane. The monument featured two bronze tablets. The tablet facing the street read “Roger Williams Founded Providence Here in 1636.” The tablet facing away from the street read “The spring of clear, cold water located 30 feet west of this point led Roger Williams to found Providence here in the year 1636, from which centre it has developed in four directions” (fig. 1.31).<sup>29</sup>



**Figure 1.31.** The granite monument installed on the sidewalk in front of the spring site in 1928. The pictured plaque, one of two, reads: “Roger Williams Founded Providence Here In 1636.” (Howard Willis Preston, *Rhode Island’s Historic Background*, 1936.)

Around the time of the monument’s installation, Jerome Hahn, a Rhode Island Superior Court Judge, became involved in the effort to preserve the Roger Williams Spring. With his retirement from the Superior Court in 1928 after a ten-year term, Hahn most likely had the time and interest to devote to the spring’s preservation. He apparently became interested in the effort because of the association of the site with the history of religious freedom in the United States, a freedom that allowed his Jewish family to gain financial and political success. His father, Isaac Hahn, moved to Providence from Albany where Jerome had been born in 1868, and there established a successful textile factory that produced

worsted and silk braids. His success in Providence led him to seek public office, and in 1884 he was elected as one of the twelve representatives from the city in the state general assembly. This election made Isaac Hahn the first person of the Jewish faith to hold public office in Providence, an achievement that Jerome Hahn felt was closely tied to the ideals of religious freedom symbolized by the spring hidden in the cellar of the commercial building along North Main Street.<sup>30</sup>

By 1929, Jerome Hahn had begun discussions with the city for building a park to reestablish the spring as a public resource as guaranteed in the 1721 deed to Gabriel Bernon. He soon reached a purchase agreement with Joseph Levy, the owner of the commercial building on the spring lot. A fellow Jew and a Russian immigrant, Levy was known as a patriotic figure and probably shared Hahn's interest in commemorating religious freedom. Given his wealth, he could probably afford to sell his relatively new building at a reasonable price, much as he had offered to sell the old Dodge-Allen-Seagraves house to a preservation organization at cost in 1922.<sup>31</sup> With the city's support, Jerome Hahn purchased the spring lot in 1930 and in 1931 gave it to the City of Providence in memory of his father, Isaac Hahn. The name chosen for the site was Roger Williams Spring Park.<sup>32</sup>

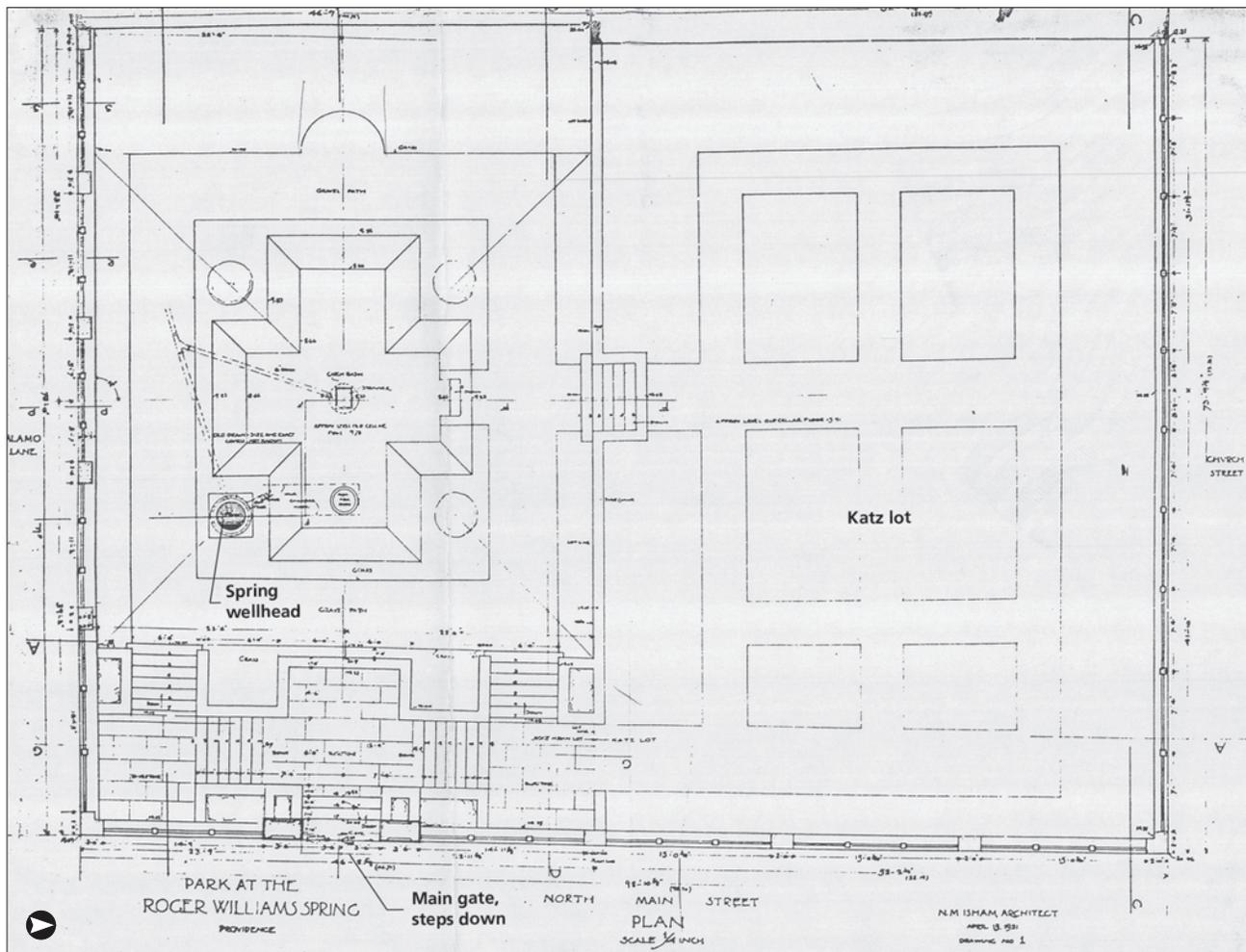
As part of the initial planning, architect Norman M. Isham was contacted prior to May 1929 to develop an initial design for the small park that amounted to about one-tenth of an acre.<sup>33</sup> Isham was certainly well qualified for the project, given his familiarity with the site, preservation work on College Hill, and research at the Roger Williams house site in 1906. With a graduate degree in art from Brown University, Isham began his career in architecture working for various Providence firms during the 1880s and 1890s. With publication of his 1895 treatise on early Rhode Island houses with his then partner, Benjamin Wright, Isham became known as an authority on early American architecture. In 1903, he began his own practice at his home in Wickford, Rhode Island, where in addition to new construction, he planned restoration projects for numerous historic buildings in New England and beyond. At the time of the spring park commission, he was also director of the department of architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design.<sup>34</sup>

In June 1929, Isham presented his plans for the park that included the adjoining lot to the north owned by M. Katz, occupied by a c.1875 three-story brick commercial building. In 1930, the City Council approved the city's acquisition of the two parcels (the Hahn lot through donation and the Katz lot through purchase) and authorized the park commission to improve the site by demolishing the buildings and constructing the park. By September 1930, the city had demolished both the Levy and Katz buildings, allowing Isham to get the levels he needed to finalize his initial design.<sup>35</sup> With the buildings gone, Isham was able to investigate the features associated with the spring. These included the old stone-

lined well assumed to be the source of the historic spring that was enclosed in a concrete box culvert dating to the 1923 construction of the Levey commercial building. An old drain pipe led southwest across the site to Alamo Lane, probably leading to the pump built by Nehemiah Dodge in c.1816. This line probably also led to the trough that had stood on Canal Street until c.1900.<sup>36</sup>

In April 1931, Isham completed his initial plans for the park showing a two-part landscape with formal, geometric lines that reflected the popular Colonial Revival style. Isham’s design for the south half of the park (the spring lot) featured a central parterre surrounding the spring well capped by an ornamental iron fence, and a double flight of stairs leading down from North Main Street (fig. 1.32). The Katz lot was proposed as a simple set of walks extending on axis with the center of the spring lot. Around both lots, Isham called for a substantial fence with stone piers and iron pickets.<sup>37</sup> The estimated construction cost was \$20,000, but with the growing economic crisis, the city decided by June 1931 to provide only half of this amount; by September, the funding was further reduced to \$8,000.<sup>38</sup> Apparently because of this, the portion of the park on the Katz lot was postponed for a future phase, and Isham focused his work on the spring lot.

**Figure 1.32. Initial plan for the Roger Williams Spring Park by Norman Isham, April 13, 1931. Plans at the time called for developing the Katz lot (right half). (Roger Williams National Memorial archives, annotated by SUNY ESF.)**



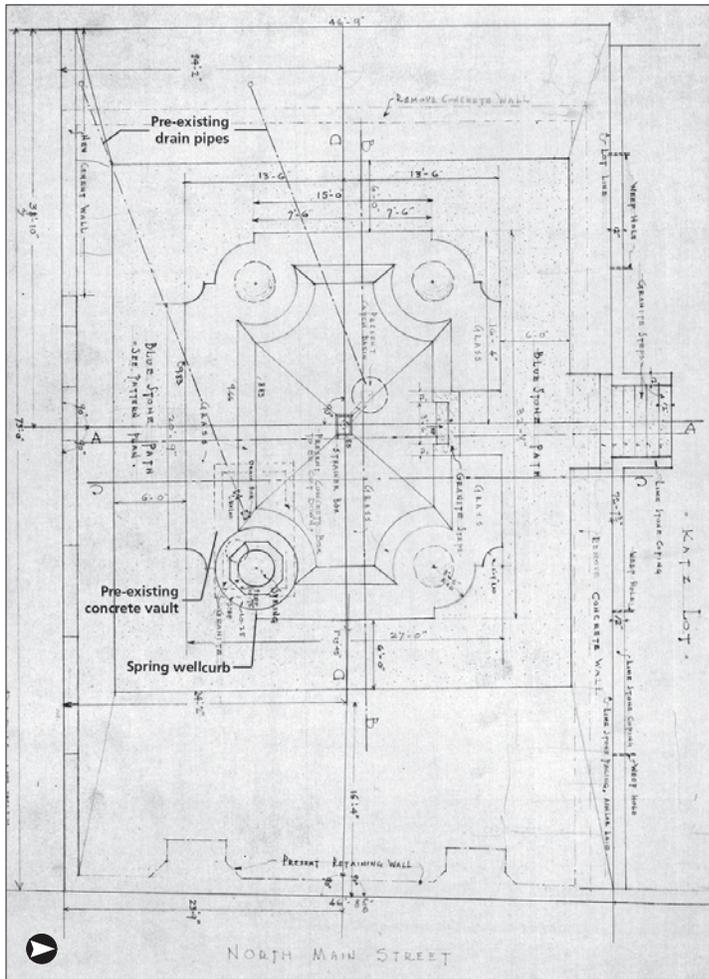
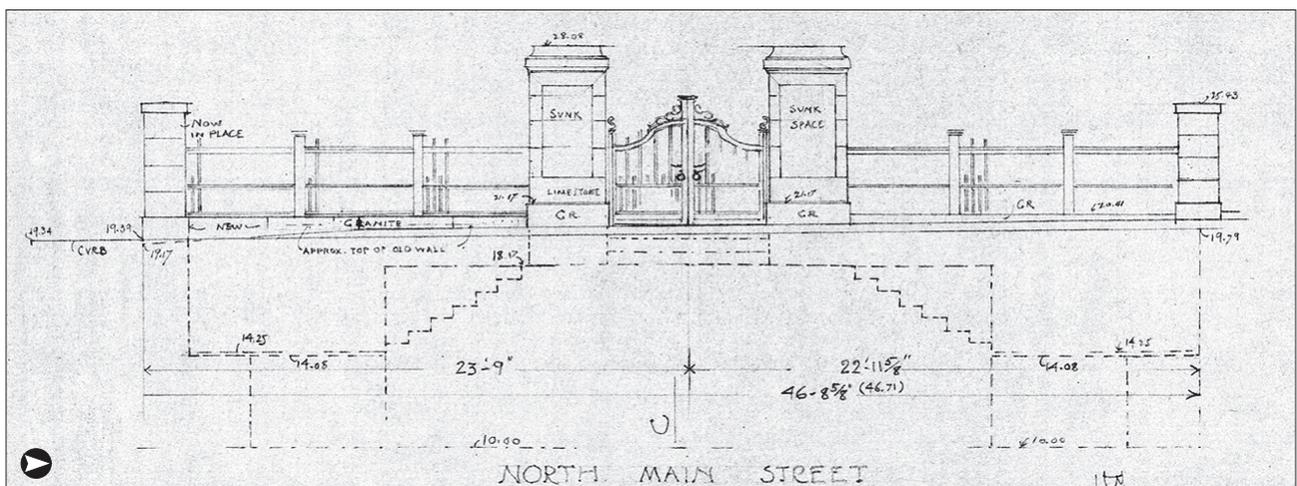


Figure 1.33. Norman Isham's revised plan for Roger Williams Spring Park showing new design for the parterre, October 1931. The steps to North Main Street are not shown. By the time of this plan, the north half of the park on the Katz lot had been postponed due to financial limitations. (Roger Williams National Memorial archives, annotated by SUNY ESF)

By October 1931, Isham had revised his design for parterre, calling for curved instead of angular corners, and use of an octagonal stone wellcurb instead of an iron fence around the spring well (fig. 1.33). As in his original design, the wellcurb served as one of four symmetrical corner anchors to the parterre, to be surrounded by a wide bluestone path. By January 1932, the city had decided to begin work on the masonry parts of the design using the available \$8,000 through contract with the Coleman Construction Company of Barrington, Rhode Island. This work included retaining walls and paths.

In May 1933, the year after the initial construction was undertaken, the city council appropriated the \$5,900 necessary for Coleman Construction to complete the remaining elements, including the stairs to North Main Street and the perimeter fence and gates.<sup>39</sup> Isham finalized plans for these features by the end of the month (fig. 1.34). The perimeter fence featured a pair of monumental entrance gates on North Main Street that opened to a double flight of granite and limestone stairs leading to the lower terrace, ten feet below. Coleman Construction completed this work over the summer of 1933. Soon after, the piers to either side of the main gate were outfitted with bronze tablets. The north plaque commemorated the gift

Figure 1.34. Final design of the fence and gates along North Main Street, May 27, 1933. (Roger Williams National Memorial archives, annotated by SUNY ESF.)



of the park by Judge Jerome Hahn in memory of his father, Isaac Hahn, as the first person of Jewish faith elected to public office in Providence. The south plaque recounted the history of the spring as the site where Providence was founded in

1636 and which was granted a public resource for the citizens of Providence in 1721.

With the structural elements complete, the city park department added the plantings that fall, probably to its own design (figs. 1.35, 1.36).<sup>40</sup> The evergreen plantings differed from the design Isham had shown on his October 1931 plan by adding a narrow border of annuals along the perimeter of the lawn parterre and outer edge of the bluestone walks.<sup>41</sup> At three corners of the parterre were single yew shrubs that balanced the spring wellcurb at the southeast corner, and a small bed of annuals around the center drain. The city planted the sides of the courtyard with alternating rhododendron and evergreen shrubs, probably Norway spruce, with English ivy groundcover. Along the wall of the adjoining two-story building on Alamo Lane at the back of the courtyard, the city planted a screen of Norway spruce and assorted shrubs, probably rhododendron and leatherleaf viburnum. On top of the retaining wall adjoining the unfinished Katz Lot, there was a clipped privet that provided enclosure and screened the adjoining unfinished lot.<sup>42</sup> The city completed these plantings by early November. On November 17, 1933, the city received a letter from

Judge Hahn expressing his appreciation of the park's completion.<sup>43</sup>

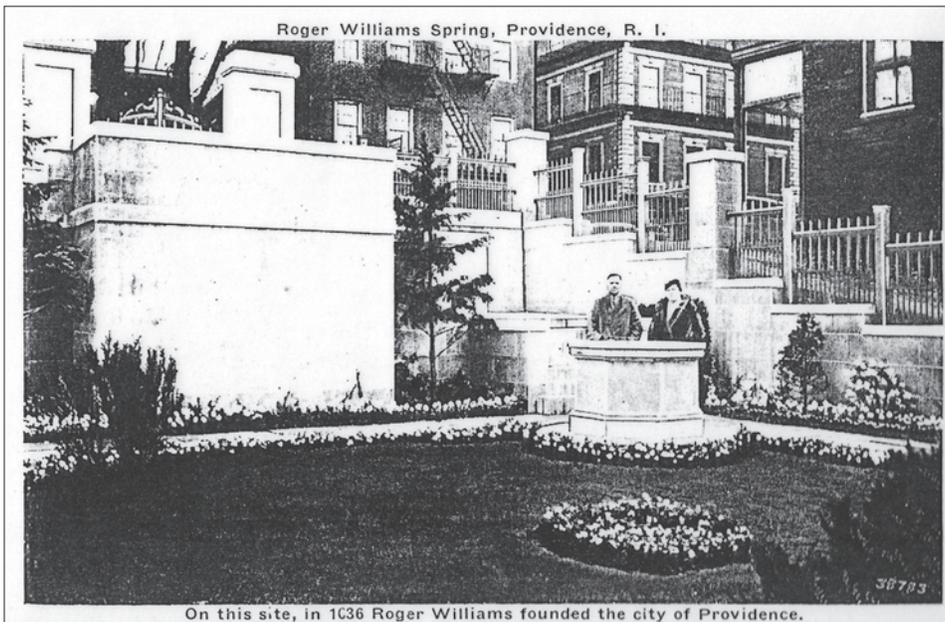
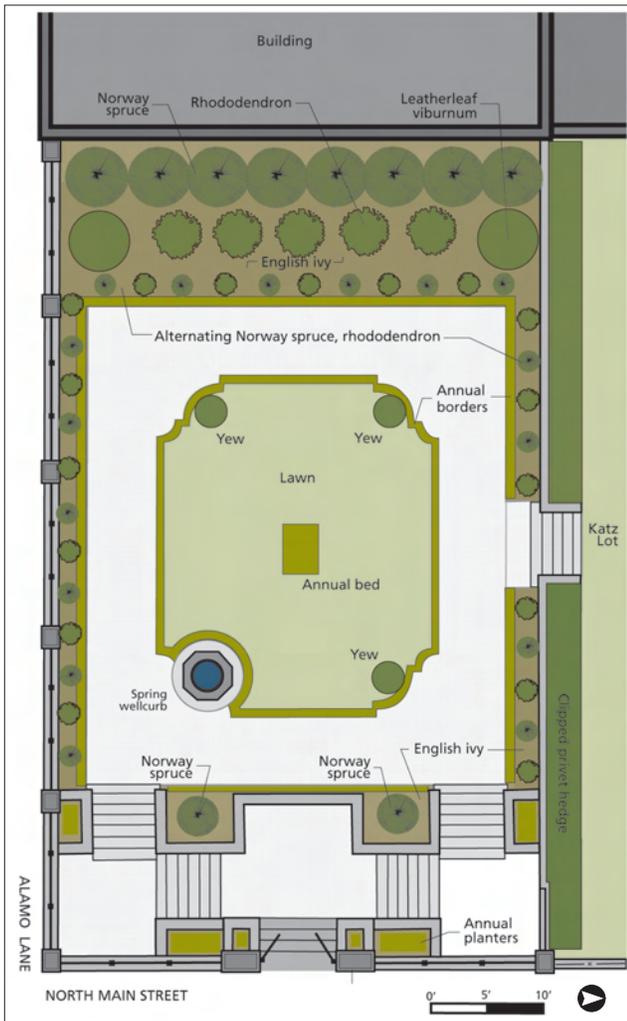
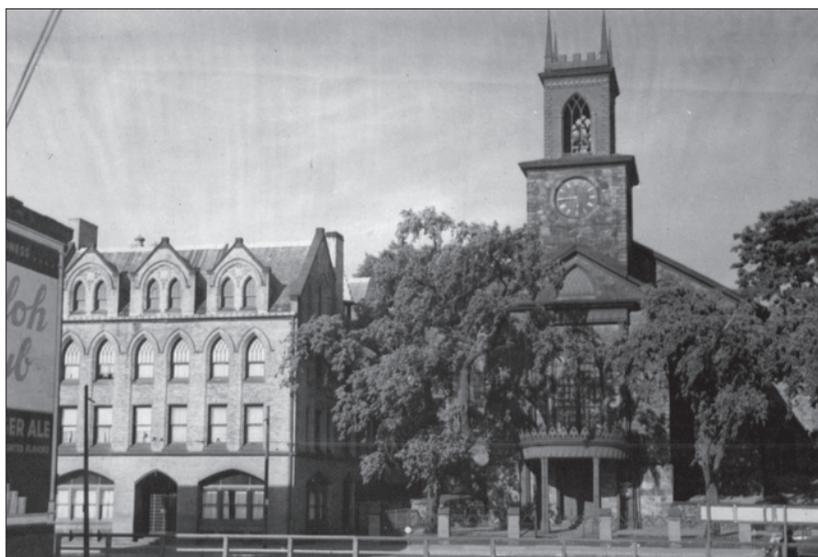


Figure 1.35 (above). Plan showing approximate original planting scheme for Roger Williams Spring Park based on period photographs. (SUNY ESF.)

Figure 1.36 (below). Postcard of Roger Williams Spring Park looking southeast toward North Main Street and Alamo Lane showing original planting scheme, c.1935. The identity of the people is not known. (Roger Williams National Memorial archives.)

The idea of creating parkland along North Main Street was also taken up by others during this time. As the city was planning development of Roger Williams Spring Park in 1930, parishioners of St. John's Church decided to transform the property to the north and across from the church into a park dedicated to the memory of Gabriel Bernon, the founder of St. John's. Bernon had lived on or near the proposed park site across from the chapel on one of the warehouse lots, and was the first owner of the spring lot when the deed securing public access was executed in 1721. He died in 1736 and was buried in the crypt of St. John's.<sup>44</sup> Aside from the city's plans for the spring, the idea of the Bernon park was probably influenced by the designation of St. John's as the cathedral for the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island in 1929. Development of the park would have provided the cathedral with a different setting from the line of old commercial buildings that then faced the church.

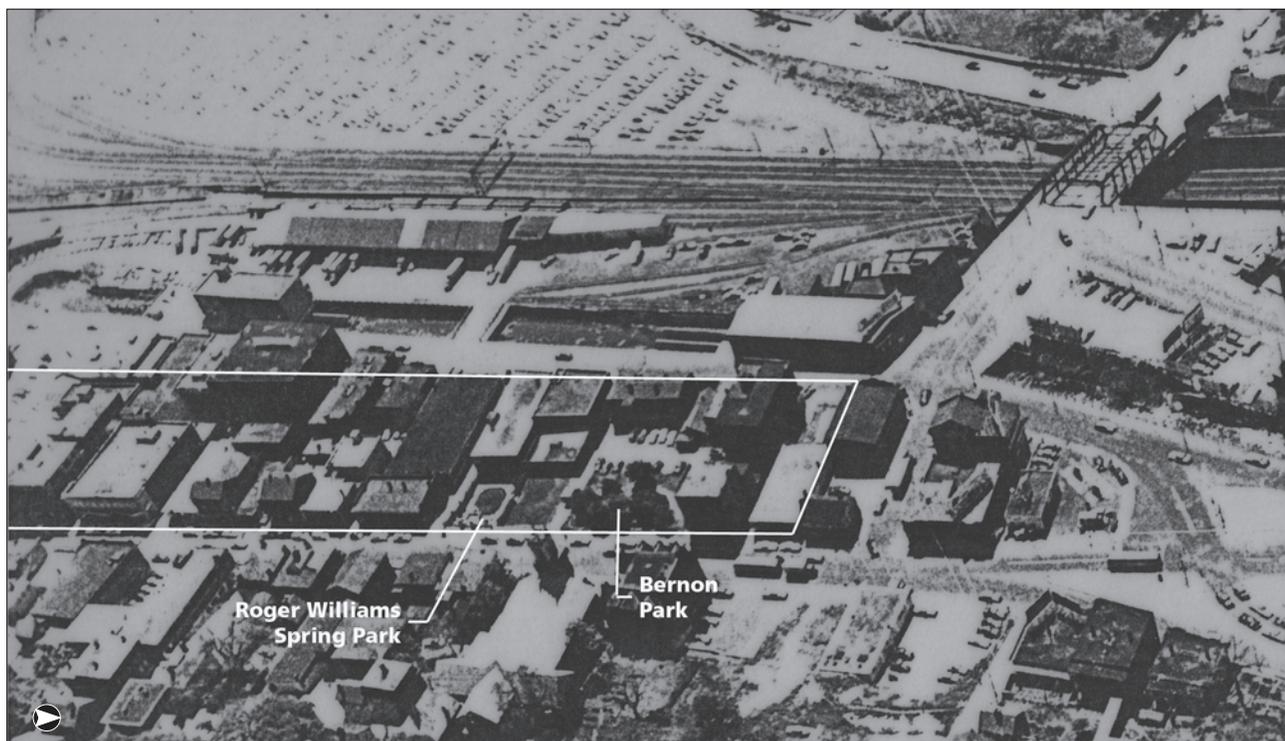


**Figure 1.37. Saint John's Cathedral looking east from the proposed memorial park to Gabriel Bernon, 1940. At this time, the property was an open lot lined by a wooden plank fence, visible along the bottom of the photograph. The building to the left of the church is the parish house, built in c.1895. (Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Rhode Island, Records of St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, Providence, RI, 1715-1994.)**

In 1930, parishioners and Bernon descendents formed the Bernon Realty Corporation to receive monetary donations and hold title to the property while legal interest was cleared. The corporation was headed by The Reverend James De Wolf Perry, Episcopal Bishop of Rhode Island. By 1937, the corporation had acquired property and demolished the row of buildings at 256-268 North Main Street and a tenement at 6 Church Street (see fig. 1.18). The adjoining tenement building at 2-4 Church Street was demolished for a parking lot by the adjoining property owner. The corporation rough graded the empty lots and put up a wood fence along the North Main Street sidewalk because of a drop-off similar to what existed at the Katz Lot (fig. 1.37). The old stone foundation walls from the front walls of the demolished buildings were kept as a retaining wall. The corporation was not able to complete its plans for the park because of financial difficulties stemming from the Depression.<sup>45</sup> Without sufficient funds, the corporation decided to donate the property to the city.

Once the corporation settled remaining encumbrances, it deeded the 8,500-square foot-lot to the city and in June 1942, the City Council accepted the donation as a memorial to Gabriel Bernon. The *Providence Journal* reported, "...the property will be turned over to the park department for improvements and maintenance, and provision is made for the erection of a suitable monument or

tablet in Bernon's memory."<sup>46</sup> The city, however, was slow to commit to the park improvements along North Main Street at either Bernon Park or the Katz Lot section of Roger Williams Spring Park. It was not until 1953, nearly a decade after it acquired Bernon Park, that the park department made some improvements by planting a small grove of Norway maple trees (fig. 1.38). It also installed a small monument to Bernon consisting of a gray granite tablet. The inscription on the stone read: "Near This Spot Lived/Gabriel Bernon/A Huguenot Refugee/Born LaRochelle France/April 6, 1644/Died Providence/February 1, 1736/Merchant Colonizer Churchman."

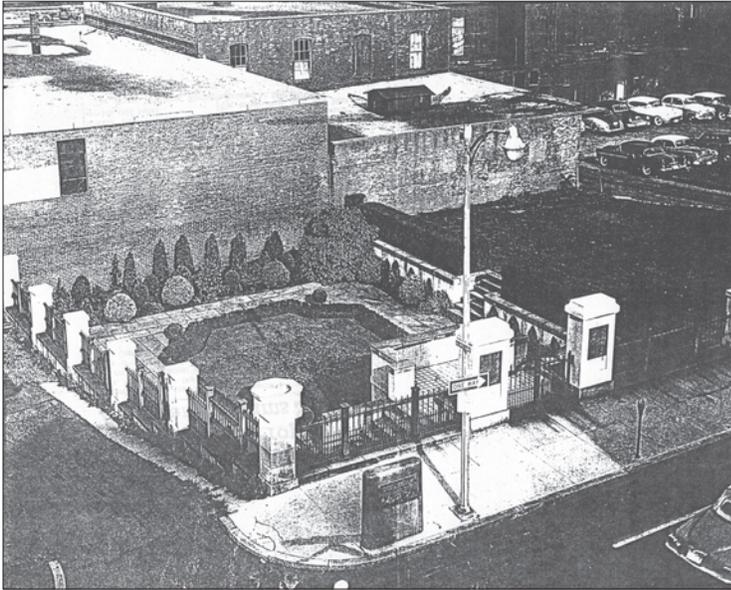


**Figure 1.38.** A c.1959 aerial photograph of North Main Street looking southwest showing trees added to Bernon Park across from St. John's Cathedral. Most of the buildings and streets within the future site of the national memorial (outlined) remained at this time. (Providence City Plan Commission, *College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal*, 1959.)

During the early 1950s, the Providence park department also replaced most of the plantings in Roger Williams Spring Park, perhaps because they had become overgrown during the war from lack of maintenance. This included removal of the annual borders and replacement of the border around the parterre with a low boxwood or privet hedge. Most of the Norway spruce and rhododendron shrubs along the perimeter of the courtyard were replaced with new shrubs, including columnar arborvitae along the west side adjoining the building to the rear, and pyramidal evergreens, probably yew, along the side walls (fig. 1.39). The city made no improvements to the Katz lot and the initial plan by Norman Isham, who died in 1943, remained unexecuted. The only features on the Katz lot aside from a rough lawn was a pipe railing along North Main Street.

There were few major changes along North Main Street and the surrounding area west to Canal Street through the mid-1960s, except for those triggered by the

continued economic downturn, notably the loss of the meatpacking industries and the decline of buildings and retail stores on North Main Street (fig. 1.40). Despite this, most of the buildings within the national memorial site remained



standing (see fig. 1.38). The only notable loss after World War II was the old police headquarters between North Court Street and Haymarket Street, which was replaced by a parking lot that took up most of the narrow block. Across North Main Street, changes included the demolition of the 1844 Quaker Meetinghouse at the corner of South Court Street in 1950 and its replacement by a fire station, and the demolition of several buildings north of St. John's for construction of a new parish house, begun in 1963 (fig. 1.41).

As the new parish house was under construction, the city was planning the fate of the three-century-old urban area surrounding Roger Williams Spring Park. Comprising ten blocks south to Lonsdale Street between North Main and Canal Streets, this area would become the focus of an extensive urban renewal project to create a new memorial to Roger Williams



**Figure 1.39 (top).** Looking northwest across Roger Williams Spring Park in a c.1958 photograph showing replacement plantings. To the right of the courtyard is the undeveloped Katz lot. (Roger Williams National Memorial archives.)



**Figure 1.40 (middle).** View northeast toward the building at the corner of North Main Street and Smith Street, diagonally across from the Antram-Gray house, c.1958. The large three-story building, dating to the eighteenth century, was demolished in 1959 and became part of an expanded campus for St. John's Cathedral. (Providence Preservation Society, records for 295-297 North Main Street.)

**Figure 1.41 (bottom).** Looking west across the construction site of the new St. John's parish house, 1963. The block across North Main Street is anchored by the eighteenth-century Antram-Gray house on the corner of Smith Street. In the distance are the Rhode Island capitol grounds. (Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Rhode Island, Records of St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, Providence, RI, 1715-1994.)

and the founding of Providence, expanding the concept begun with Roger Williams Spring Park.

#### **LANDSCAPE OF THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL SITE, 1965 (DRAWING 1.1)**

In 1965 on the eve of its congressional designation, the site of Roger Williams National Memorial was a dense urban neighborhood that had undergone relatively little redevelopment over the past eighty years. Aside from several newer commercial buildings and parking lots, the most significant change was the construction of Roger Williams Spring Park in 1931-32. Although physically intact, the viability of the neighborhood, located on the northern outskirts of the central business district within a declining commercial and industrial area, had undergone economic and social changes since World War II, paralleling the larger shifts occurring in older industrial cities throughout the country.

The site of the national memorial was defined by two major thoroughfares: North Main Street and Canal Street, part of the secondary regional highway designated as US 44. Within Providence, the route ran along Smith Street by the capitol and split into one-way arterials leading to the central business district, with the southbound traffic on Canal Street and northbound on North Main Street.<sup>47</sup> Between the two streets were the narrow streets known as gangways, some as small as eight feet wide, that extended from the sides of the adjoining buildings without curbs or sidewalks. These small streets defined narrow blocks ranging from fifty to two hundred feet wide from north to south.

The areas immediately adjoining the national memorial site, east of North Main Street and west of Canal Street, varied considerably in character. The east side of North Main Street was still anchored by two major buildings: the Old State House (1762), used as city offices by 1965; and St. John's Cathedral (1811), with its recently built parish house (1963) and work underway on a connecting breezeway and other facilities, known as the Cathedral Close, that required demolition of the old parish house (c.1895). To the south at the corner of Howland Street was a three-story early nineteenth-century building at the site of Roger Williams's house, with an exterior steel fire escape on the front obscuring the 1906 plaque marking the old house site. Uphill and south from this house was the Roger Williams monument on Prospect Terrace dedicated in 1939, overlooking the original settlement area with the Rhode Island capitol in the distance. Back on North Main Street, most of the buildings south of Howland Street were used as stores and apartments. At the south side of the Old State House parade was the new fire house built completed in 1952.

Canal Street, bordering the west side of the existing national memorial site, was largely an industrial and commercial district that was not anchored by any major

buildings or institutions, as was North Main Street. The street was bordered on its west side by the Moshassuck River that ran in its stone-lined channel and was covered by meat-packing plants. Some of the buildings over the river had been torn down by 1965. In contrast with the site of the national memorial, the area west of the Moshassuck River was largely open in character, a development pattern that reflected the area's origin as the open water of the cove. Here was the main rail line leading to Union Station in the central business district, crossed by the steel-truss Smith Street bridge, and remnants of a once-extensive rail yard with several warehouses near the river. An enormous parking lot was west of the rail lines, and beyond it on Smith Hill was the Rhode Island capitol.

The southeast corner of the national memorial site was anchored by the Lonsdale Block, which had been long occupied by the Taylor Simmonds dry goods store. Seven small buildings at the back of the block once used by the store had been demolished since the 1930s, probably to create parking. The entire stretch of the next ten blocks fronting on North Main Street was occupied by two- to four-story commercial buildings, some dating back to the eighteenth century. These housed a range of businesses, including a furniture store, variety store, venetian blind company, and a jeweler. The dense urban character opened in the two blocks north of Alamo Lane at Roger Williams Spring Park and Bernon Park, the two small city parks built on the site of buildings demolished in the 1930s.

In 1965, Roger Williams Spring Park was small city park surrounded by buildings to the south, west, and east. Along North Main Street at the entrance to the park was the monument erected in 1928 by the U.S. War Department to mark the site of the spring where Providence was founded in 1636. The only major change within the park was replacement of the vegetation, probably in the early 1950s. The Katz Lot, forming the north half of the park, was an undeveloped, rough-graded, mown lot with a simple pipe fence to protect pedestrians from the drop off along North Main Street. The fence ran along remnants of stone foundation walls and brick chimney hearths from the buildings that had stood on the site.

Across Church Street from the Katz Lot was Bernon Park, the quarter-acre green space donated to the city in 1942 by parishioners of St. John's Cathedral and descendents of Gabriel Bernon. By 1965, Bernon Park consisted of a grove of approximately seven Norway maple trees that the city had planted a decade earlier and a small granite monument to Gabriel Bernon added around the same time. The park was bounded on the west by a parking lot and on the north by a four-story brick commercial building at the corner of Lamb Street housing a variety store known as Paramount Sales. Across Lamb Street was a one-story twentieth-century commercial building housing the R. I. Venetian Blind Company, and to its north anchoring the corner of Smith Street was the eighteenth-century frame

house occupied by Thomas E. Gray Jewelers (see fig. 1.41). To the rear along Smith Street was a small parking lot where two buildings had stood.

The west side of the national memorial site along Canal Street was anchored at its north end at Smith Street by a three-story brick building. The adjoining building to the south at the corner of Lamb Street had been demolished for a parking lot. The eight blocks to the south retained their mix of commercial and industrial buildings hosting a range of uses including meat markets, cornice works, and a bank. Most of the buildings dated to the nineteenth century except for the Red Hat Auto Laundry, a large one-story building constructed in the 1920s or 1930s between Alamo Lane and Try Street, near Roger Williams Spring Park. The only vacant lot in the block aside from the Lamb Street parking lot was at the site of the old city police station on the narrow block between Haymarket Street and North Court Street that had been demolished in c.1950 for a parking lot.

## ENDNOTES

1 “For Authentication of the Site of Roger Williams Spring, Summary of History of Roger Williams Spring Site” (Unattributed paper, c.1940, Rhode Island Historical Society, MSS 98, box 4B, folder 1), 8. The report contains some inaccurate information.

2 Andrea Gilmore, *Historic Structure Report: The Antram-Gray House* (Boston: National Park Service, 1981), 7.

3 Gilmore, 7.

4 Osmund R. Overby, “The Architecture of College Hill, 1770-1900, Residential Development in the Area of the Original Town of Providence, Rhode Island” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1963), 37-38; Henry C. Dorr, *The Planting and Growth of Providence: Illustrated in the Gradual Accumulation of the Materials for Domestic Comfort, the Means of Internal Communication and the Development of Local Industries* (Providence, Rhode Island: Sidney S. Rider, 1882), 109-110.

5 John Hutchins Cady, *The Civil and Architectural Development of Providence, 1636-1950* (Providence: The Book Shop, 1957), 27, 56.

6 Cady, 95.

7 William McKenzie Woodward and Edward F. Sanderson, *Providence: A Citywide Survey of Historic Resources* (Providence: Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, 1986), section “Rhode Island’s First City: 1783-1832.”

8 Overby, 38-39.

9 Cady, 96, 115-117.

10 Woodward and Sanderson, section “Making a Metropolis, 1865-1945.”

11 Cady, 165, 179.

12 Cady, 195.

13 “U.S. Highways from US 1 to (US 830), [http://www.us-highways.com/us2.htm#US\\_44](http://www.us-highways.com/us2.htm#US_44) (accessed 20 January 2009).

14 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, Providence maps, 1920-21 and update to 1956, volume 2, pages 6-7.

- 15 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, Providence maps, 1889 to 1956.
- 16 U. S. Census figures for Providence; Woodward and Sanderson, section "The Recent Past: 1945-1985."
- 17 Norman M. Isham and Albert F. Brown, *Early Rhode Island Houses* (Providence: Preston & Rounds, 1895), 20. Isham and Brown do not mention the specific findings and interest of the antiquaries.
- 18 Map made in 1834 by T. M. Sumner, Antoinette Downing Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society, MSS 98, box 4b, folder 1; Gilmore, 8. Sumner's map shows a covered well under the sidewalk in front of the Williams house site. This well may have tapped into the same spring that fed Tripe's spring, given its location due uphill.
- 19 "For Authentication of the Site of Roger Williams Spring," 8.
- 20 Welcome Arnold Greene, *The Providence Plantations for Two Hundred and Fifty Years: An Historical Review of the Foundation, Rise, and Progress of the City of Providence* (Providence: J. A. Reid and R. A. Reid, 1886), 74.
- 21 Cady, 147, 268.
- 22 Cady, 147; Howard Willis Preston, *Rhode Island's Historic Background* (Providence: Rhode Island Tercentenary Commission, 1936), 4; Roger Williams Park Zoo website, <http://www.rogerwilliamsparkzoo.org/visit/ParkGrounds.cfm> (accessed 13 January 2009). Design of the park's landscape was made by Horace Cleveland in 1878. A separate monument to Roger Williams was erected in the family burial ground within the park at a later date. Williams's actual grave was on his home lot near Benefit Street.
- 23 "For Authentication of the Site of Roger Williams Spring," 8-9.
- 24 Cady, 11; "For Authentication of the Site of Roger Williams Spring," 4, 9; Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration, *Rhode Island: A Guide to the Smallest State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1937), 267.
- 25 "Roger Williams Spring. . ." *The Providence News*, 1919, page 16, Rhode Island Historical Society, MSS 98, Box 27, "Clippings."
- 26 S. B Goodkind, *Eminent Jews of America: A Collection of Biographical Sketches of Jews who Have Distinguished Themselves in Commercial, Professional and Religious Endeavor* (Toledo, Ohio: American Hebrew Biographical Company, 1918), s. V. "Joseph Levey," <http://books.google.com/books?id=DssbCzsjvEC> (accessed 15 January 2009); "Historic Building to be Torn Down," *The Providence Journal*, 15 June 1922, Rhode Island Historical Society, "Place Files," Drawer 9; *Providence Journal Almanac* 1922, s.V. "R. I. College of Pharmacy and Allied Sciences;" Norman Isham, plan for "Park at the Roger Williams Spring," October 1931, Roger Williams National Memorial archives (hereafter, ROWI archives).
- 27 "Unveil Great Statue of Roger Williams, Leaders at Providence Also See His Dust Put in Memorial," *New York Times*, 30 June 1939, 24; Cady, 269; Voorhees, Walker, Foley & Smith, "Senator Henry B. Anthony Fund for a Public Fountain in the City of Providence" (Unpublished paper, c.1936, Rhode Island Historical Society MSS 692, box 1, folder 25). The heroic-size stylized sculpture of Roger Williams was designed by Leo Friedlander of White Plains, New York. Sealed within the memorial were the reinterred remains of Roger Williams. Aside from the fountain, the original design included monumental sets of stairs leading down the terrace along a wall with bas-relief sculptures and inscriptions. Only the central portal and sculpture at the top of the terrace were constructed.
- 28 "Historic Building to be Torn Down."
- 29 "Williams Shaft Approved, Memorial at Providence, R. I., Will Mark Where Founder Landed," *New York Times*, 18 August 1928, 17; Preston, 9; *Providence Journal*, 5 September 1928, 16.
- 30 Cady, 259; "The Political Graveyard," s.V. Hahn, Jerome J., <http://politicalgraveyard.com/bio/hahn.html> (accessed 15 January 2009); "Statewide County RI Archives History," list of Woolen Manufacturers, 1898, <http://usgwarchives.org/ri/statewide/history/other/woolenma29gms.txt> (accessed 15 January 2009); Richard M. Bayles, editor, *History of Providence County, Rhode Island* (New York: W. W. Preston & Co., 1891), online excerpt, <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~rigenweb/article296.html> (accessed 15 January 2009).
- 31 *Eminent Jews of America*, s. V. "Joseph Levey." No documentation was found stating Levey owned the commercial building at the time of Jerome Hahn's acquisition of the property, but it is assumed he was the owner since he had built the building only five years earlier.

32 Cady, 259; inscription in existing bronze plaques on entrance to the park.

33 Minutes of the Providence Park Commission Meeting, 10 May 1929, in James Skelton, "Historical and Architectural Synopsis, Roger Williams Spring/Hahn Memorial" (Unpublished report, National Park Service North Atlantic Region, December 1978), appendix.

34 Robin P. Flynn, Historical Note on Norman Morrison Isham Papers (Unpublished paper, n.d., Rhode Island Historical Society, MSS 508).

35 Minutes of the Providence Park Commission Meetings, 12 June 1929 to 12 September 1930.

36 Norman M. Isham, Architect, "Park at the Roger Williams Spring, Plan" (April 13, 1931), ROWI archives.

37 Isham, "Park at the Roger Williams Spring, Plan," (April 13, 1931).

38 Minutes of the Providence Park Commission Meeting, 19 June 1931.

39 Minutes of the Providence Park Commission Meetings, 2 September 1931 to 12 May 1933.

40 Cady, 259.

41 Isham's plan had apparently called for a sunken parterre; this was also eliminated from the design as built.

42 No planting plan was located. The original plantings were deduced from 1930s and 1950s photographs.

43 Minutes of the Providence Park Commission Meeting, 17 November 1933.

44 "City Council Accepts Park Land as Memorial to Gabriel Bernon," *Providence Journal*, 5 June 1942, clipping, ROWI archives; Cady, 278.

45 City of Providence Atlas (1937); Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Company, Providence maps, Volume 7, page 101, 1920 updated to 1956; "City Council Accepts Park Land." Bishop Perry stated that the Depression had "retarded our goal." Plans probably included demolition of the four-story brick building at the corner of North Main and Lamb Street to complete the block, but the corporation was unable to acquire the building. It may have been unable to buy this property because its owner, M. Katz, had recently relocated from the lot adjacent to the Roger Williams Spring Park and did not want to move again.

46 "City Council Accepts Park Land."

47 This change in traffic patterns on the formerly two-way streets probably occurred in the 1950s.

# Cultural Landscape Report

## Roger Williams National Memorial

Providence, Rhode Island

### Urban Period, 1683-1965



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
www.nps.gov/oclp

in partnership with:  
Department of Landscape Architecture  
SUNY College of Environmental  
Science and Forestry www.esf.edu/la/

#### SOURCES

1. City Engineer's Office survey, 1898
2. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1889-1951
3. Isham, Hahn Memorial plans, 1931-33
4. Hopkins, Atlas of Providence, 1937
5. C&W, ROWI Existing conditions plan, 5/1981

#### DRAWN BY

John Auwaerter and Karen Cowperthwaite  
Illustrator CS 3, 2010

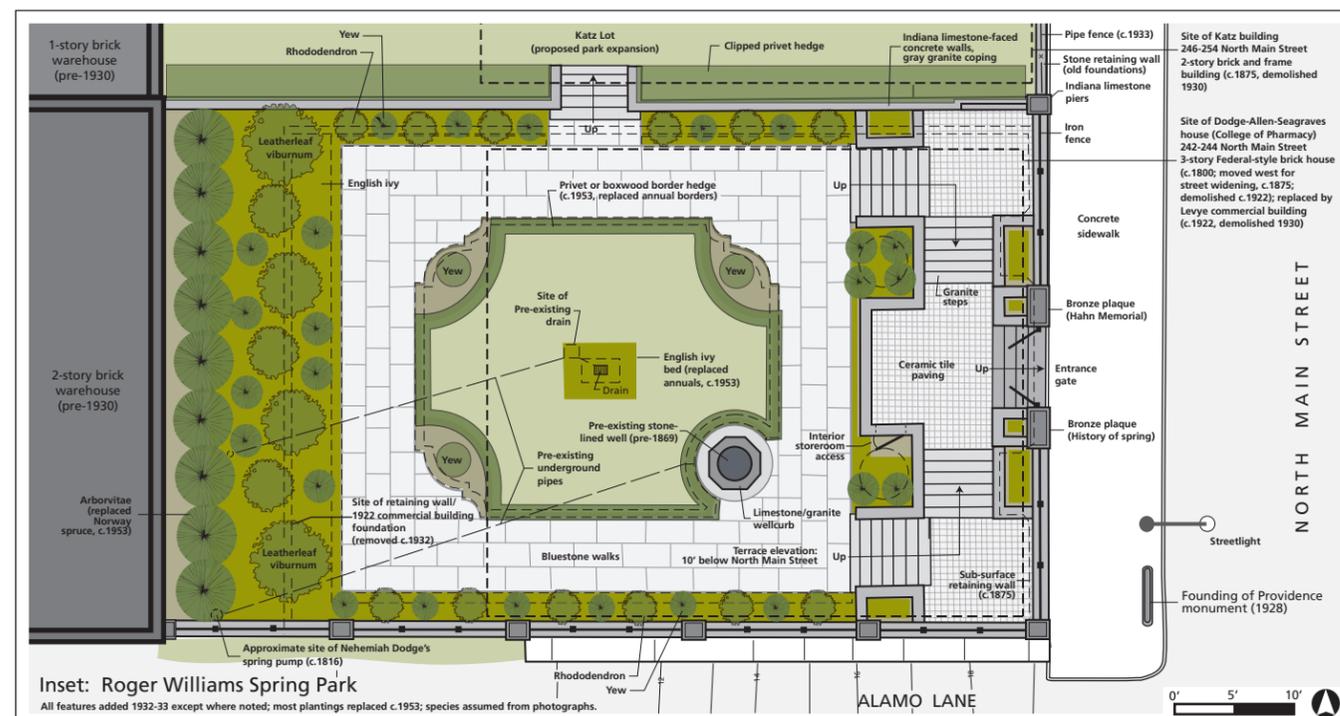
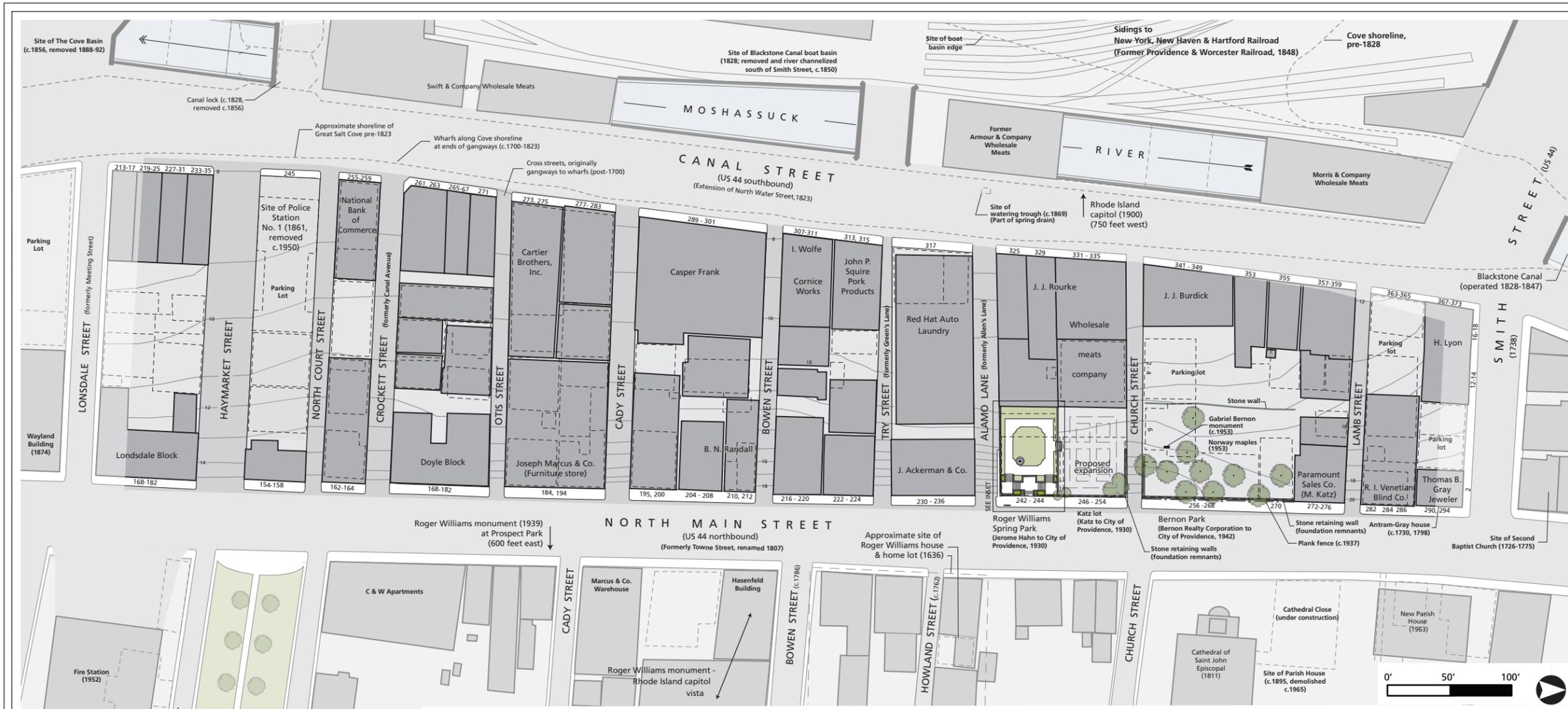
#### LEGEND

- Building
- Removed feature
- Street with sidewalk, street address
- 1' contour
- Lawn
- Open ground (unpaved)
- Groundcover or herbaceous bed
- Deciduous/broadleaf evergreen tree, shrub
- Coniferous tree, shrub
- Clipped individual shrub, hedge
- (1890) Date feature added/built, if known

#### NOTES

1. Plan shows conditions in 1965, with building changes primarily since 1889.
2. Building use & occupants based on 1920-56 Sanborn maps & 1937 city atlas.
3. All features shown in approximate scale and location.
4. Contours approximated based on 1981 survey; shown only in project area and not in Roger Williams Spring Park.
5. Mask indicates limits of CLR project area.

#### Drawing 1.1



Inset: Roger Williams Spring Park  
All features added 1932-33 except where noted; most plantings replaced c.1953; species assumed from photographs.

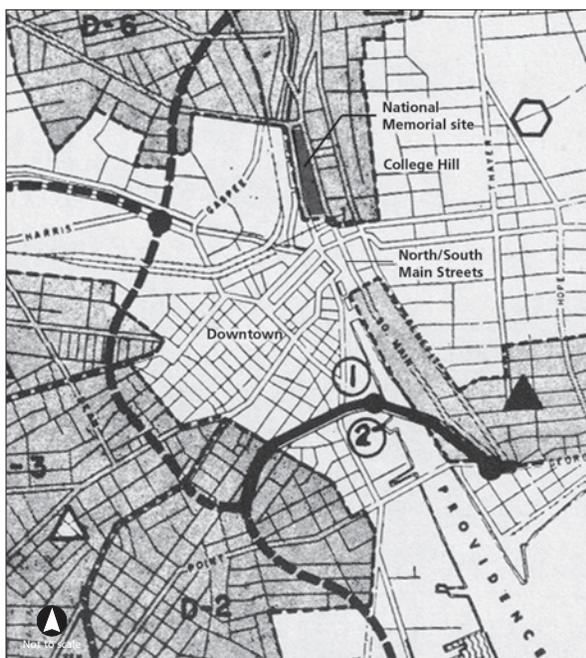


## THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL PERIOD, 1965-PRESENT

After more than six years of planning, Congress passed legislation in 1965 establishing Roger Williams National Memorial on the city blocks between North Main Street and Canal Street surrounding Roger Williams Spring Park. The newly designated national memorial, which included a \$700,000 federal appropriation for acquisition and development, was an expansion in both concept and physical extent of the earlier park, reflecting the ambitious urban redevelopment programs of the post-World War II period.

At the time of the designation in 1965, the national memorial site was a mix of public and private property containing nearly fifty buildings in addition to ten city streets and the two city parks. As the city acquired the properties for the memorial, the National Park Service started planning for the redevelopment of the site, which began in earnest after federal acquisition of the property in 1974. The following year, the city completed demolition of all buildings, streets, and other improvements on the site except for the Antram-Gray house, Roger Williams Spring Park, and Bernon Park. After a multi-year site design and environmental review process, the National Park Service approved the final site design concept in 1977. Most of the construction was undertaken in three phases between 1980 and 1982. In the following decades, the landscape remained largely as designed with only a few minor alterations made to address operations and interpretation.

**Figure 1.42.** Detail of the Providence City Plan Commission's "Proposed Public Improvements" plan of February 1957. The shaded areas indicate "Deteriorated Areas;" the heavy black lines are expressways under construction; the dashed black line are proposed expressways. (John Hutchins Cady, *The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence, 1957*, annotated by SUNY ESF.)

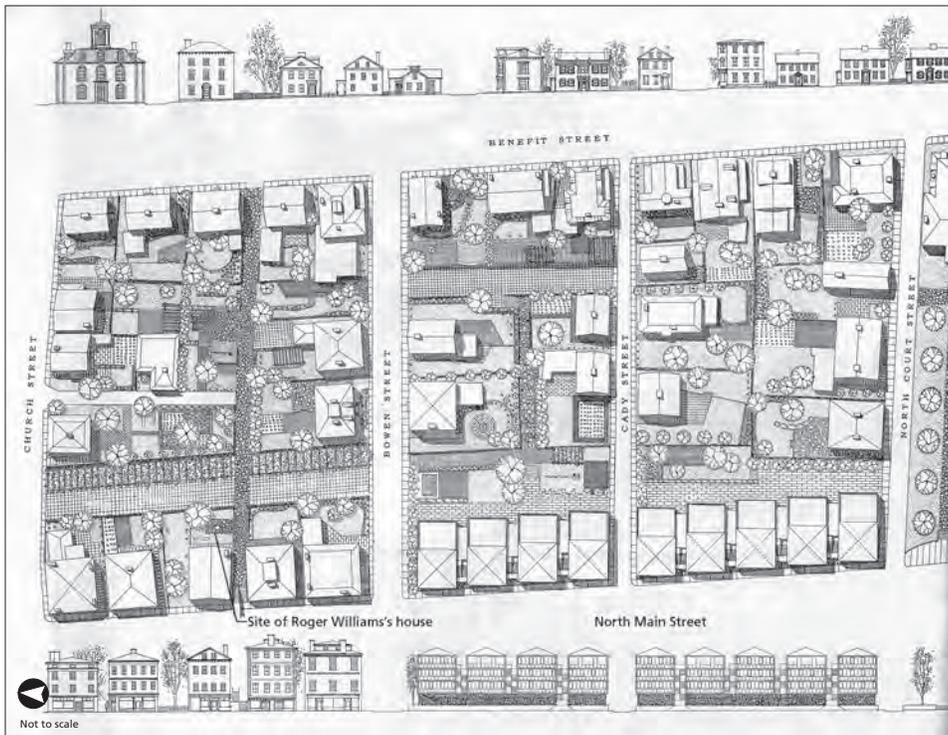


### URBAN RENEWAL AND ORIGINS OF THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL IDEA

The ideals behind the creation of Roger Williams Spring Park and Bernon Park—to commemorate the founding and early history of Providence and to create

green space in a dense, declining urban neighborhood—were continued in the city's post-war urban renewal programs. In 1947, as Providence was entering a period of stark decline in its population and economic base, the city created the Providence Redevelopment Agency to direct the clearing and rebuilding of blighted areas for public parks, housing, industrial sites, and commercial buildings. The work of the agency began in earnest following passage of federal legislation and funding through the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954. A 1957 public works improvements plan by the Providence City Plan Commission directed the redevelopment agency to focus on designated neighborhoods of the city. One of these included the oldest parts of Providence along North and South Main Streets and portions of College Hill, including Roger Williams Spring Park (fig. 1.42).<sup>1</sup>

Reaction to the proposed demolition and redevelopment soon followed, particularly on College Hill with its numerous eighteenth and early nineteenth century buildings. Many city residents raised concerns at a time when historic preservation was generally absent from American city planning prior to passage of the federal Historic Preservation Act of 1966. In response to the proposed urban renewal, residents created the Providence Preservation Society in 1956 “for the encouragement of protecting, improving, and making proper use of our historic sites and buildings.”<sup>2</sup> In 1958, the Society worked with the City Plan Commission



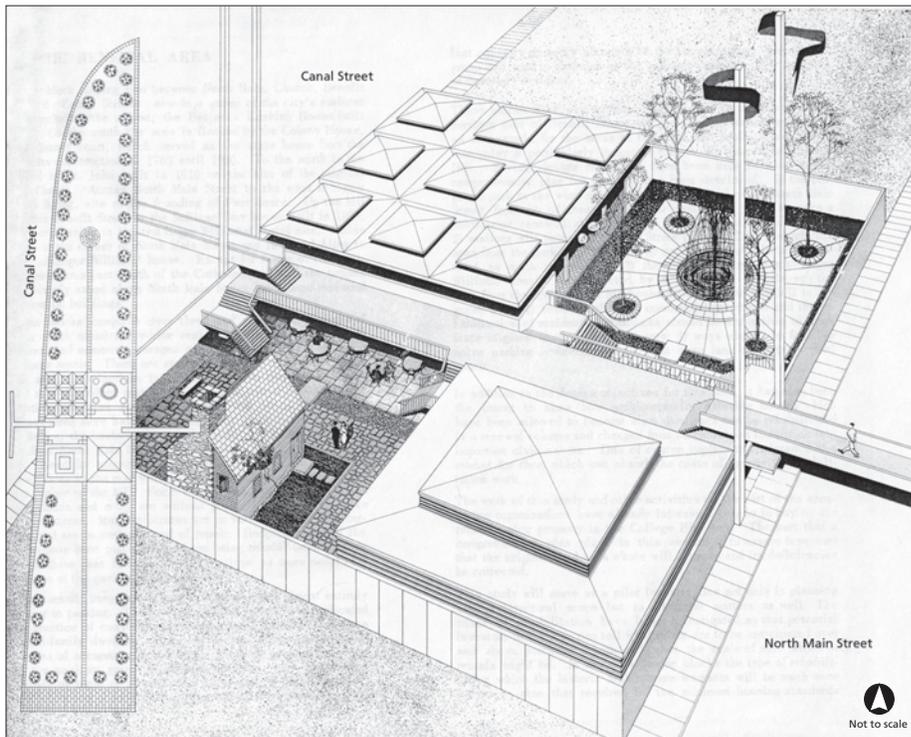
**Figure 1.43. Proposed 1959 plan and sections of “Historic Renewal Area” in the blocks east of North Main Street across from Roger Williams Spring Park. (Providence City Plan Commission, *College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal*, 1959, second edition 1967, annotated by SUNY ESF.)**

to create a special plan for College Hill, funded by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, to take into account preservation of the neighborhood’s historic buildings. Entitled *College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal*, the plan documented the history of the neighborhood and made recommendations for improvements that retained historically significant buildings and designed compatible new

infill construction. As part of the overall study, separate reports were developed to create detailed plans for several small areas within College Hill, two of which were along North Main Street. One of these was the “Historic Renewal Area” pilot study that addressed four blocks east of the spring that contained the site of Roger Williams’s home and some of the city’s oldest standing buildings. While the study called for preservation of many buildings, most along the east side of North Main Street were recommended for removal and replacement with new buildings that maintained the historic massing and setbacks within the neighborhood (fig. 1.43).<sup>3</sup>

The College Hill study recommended a far different approach in its pilot study for the west side of North Main Street across from the Historic Renewal Area. The study recommended the entire area between Haymarket Street (South Court Street) on the south and Smith Street on the north be cleared and redeveloped as a new and expanded Roger Williams Spring Park linked to other historic sites on College Hill through a proposed “Benefit Trail.” In developing the plans, William

Warner, project chief for the College Hill Study, discussed the park proposal with staff of the National Park Service in the spring of 1958. Recognizing Roger Williams's national significance in the history of religious freedom, the College Hill study called for the new park to be built as a national park for the "edification and inspiration of all the people of the United States." Plans included a central one-acre developed area with a surrounding three-acre "landscaped park...to provide a pleasant outlook from the rehabilitated historical section of the hill to the east" (fig. 1.44).<sup>4</sup> Plans for the central developed area, accessed by footbridges over North Main and Canal streets with parking west of Canal Street, featured



**Figure 1.44.** Concept for a proposed Roger Williams national park published by the City Plan Commission in 1959, occupying the area between North Main Street and Canal Street from Haymarket Street to the intersection of Canal and North Main (north of Smith Street), as shown on the inset plan. The built area was proposed on and adjoining Roger Williams Spring Park. (Providence City Plan Commission, *College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal*, 1959, annotated by SUNY ESF.)

a museum, reading room, walled garden with a relocated seventeenth-century house, and a fountain representing the Roger Williams Spring. In July 1958, the City Plan Commission voted unanimously to endorse the national park proposal.<sup>5</sup>

The city quickly acted on ushering the park proposal through the federal government. In August 1958, Providence Mayor Walter Reynolds wrote to Conrad Wirth, director of the National Park Service, urging his

support for the Roger Williams National Park as part of the College Hill renewal program. Soon after, staff from the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments visited the Providence site to assess its eligibility as a national monument rather than as a national park as initially proposed.<sup>6</sup> The Advisory Board proposed this change because the site was too small for a national park, which typically encompassed a variety of resources across a large area of land. The intent of a national monument, in contrast, was to preserve at least one nationally significant resource.<sup>7</sup> Director Wirth followed with a personal visit to the site in March 1960, and was reportedly "favorably impressed."<sup>8</sup>

In May 1960, John Nicholas Brown, chair of the Board of the Providence Preservation Society, asked Rhode Island Senator Theodore F. Green to sponsor a bill establishing the Roger Williams National Monument. On August 9, 1960, Senator Green introduced the bill under the provisions of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and with a \$2,500,000 price tag for acquisition and development. Two

weeks later, the Senate passed the bill, but it failed in the House due to the cost. An identical bill was introduced in the next session of Congress, along with a supporting resolution from the Rhode Island Assembly. In September 1961, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Glen Carver reported that the bill should not be enacted because the spring site could not be authenticated as the significant resource necessary for national monument designation. The bill was ultimately referred back to the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service for further study.<sup>9</sup>

Carver was responding to a recommendation from the Advisory Board that the legislation be deferred because there was no conclusive documentation that the well in the Roger Williams Spring Park was the precise location of the actual 1636 spring. The Advisory Board instead recommended designation of the site as a national memorial because of the lack of a significant existing resource necessary for national monument designation. Within the National Park System, a national memorial was a designation for a site that was primarily commemorative and did not necessarily contain associated historic resources.<sup>10</sup> According to Charles Porter, chief historian of the park service:

The Board and the Service fully appreciated the National importance of Roger Williams. It was felt that the effort to elevate the spring site to National Monument status in his name was misdirected and that the project should be reoriented to place the emphasis where it belonged—on the greatness of Roger Williams rather than on the importance of the spring which had lost its original appearance and the exact location of which was not known.<sup>11</sup>

More than two years later in November 1963, the National Park Service drafted a new bill to designate the site as Roger Williams National Memorial (rather than national monument) based on a feasibility study that recommended development of the four-acre site between Haymarket and Smith Streets. Much like the initial College Hill study, the proposal called for a small museum and “formal park landscaping” on the remainder of the site surrounding the spring site, replacing the two existing city parks, at a total development cost of \$590,000.<sup>12</sup> Part of the plan included funds for moving the Clemence-Irons House, a seventeenth-century house in Johnston, Rhode Island, donated in 1947 to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (now Historic New England) to the memorial. To reduce costs to the federal government, the city of Providence agreed to donate its land within the site to the Providence Redevelopment Agency, and the agency, as part of its larger Eastside Renewal Project, agreed to condemn the private property, demolish all buildings, rough-grade the land, and sell the entire site to the federal government at a reduced cost of \$105,000.<sup>13</sup> The feasibility study was followed by a formal recommendation in October 1964 by the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments supporting the establishment of Roger Williams National Memorial.<sup>14</sup>

In the summer of 1965, legislation for the establishment of the national memorial was ready for introduction into the House and Senate. In September 1965, Allen Edmunds, assistant regional director of the National Park Service, appeared before the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation to provide testimony, stating: “We believe the establishment of a national memorial to Roger Williams at the site proposed in the bill is an appropriate means of commemorating on a national basis his outstanding contributions to the establishment of religious freedom.”<sup>15</sup> Edmunds provided exhibits testifying to the proposed national memorial’s contributions to urban renewal in Providence. He showed the committee an aerial photograph of the proposed site, testifying: “A very small park, locally developed, has already been created here, but the unsightly and miscellaneous character of the surrounding buildings makes it completely inadequate as an expression of the national importance of Roger Williams. This aerial photograph reveals some of the blighted urban conditions this project and related programs are designed to correct.”<sup>16</sup> The photograph Edmunds displayed may have been the 1959 aerial from the College Hill demonstration study (see fig. 1.38).

#### **ESTABLISHMENT AND FEDERAL ACQUISITION OF THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL, 1965-1975**

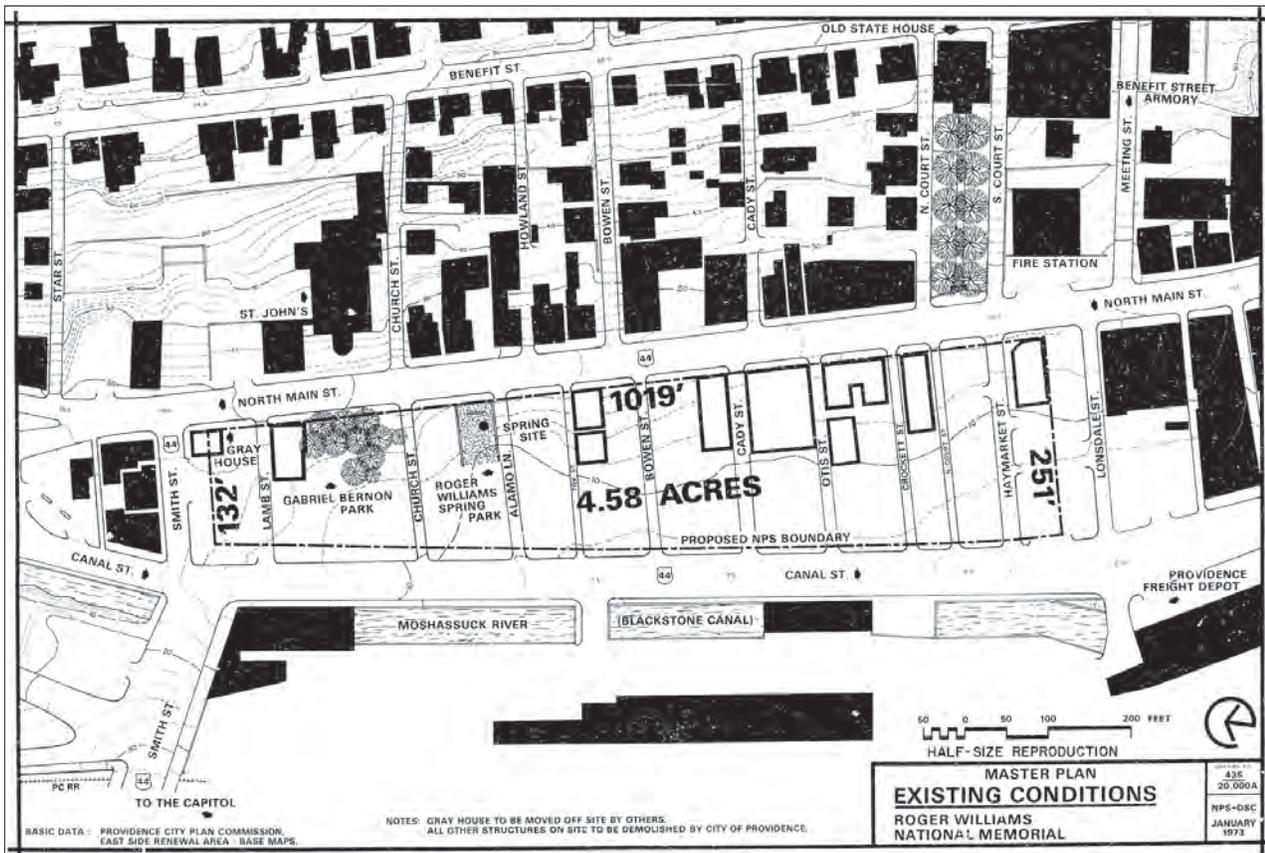
On October 22, 1965, Congress passed a joint House-Senate act establishing Roger Williams National Memorial, signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson. The legislated purpose of the national memorial to Roger Williams was “in commemoration of his outstanding contributions to the development of the principles of freedom in this country.” The legislation allowed the Secretary of the Interior to acquire by gift or purchase up to five acres “at the site of the old town spring, traditionally called Roger Williams Spring,” but did not describe a specific boundary. The legislation also called for the national memorial to be administered as a historic area in accordance with the National Park Service Act of 1916 and the Historic Sites Act of 1935. Congress appropriated \$700,000 for property acquisition and development, but did not provide any specific direction on the planning and design of the national memorial.<sup>17</sup> (See Appendix A for full copy of the legislation.)

Following passage of the legislation, the Providence Redevelopment Agency began planning for acquisition of the national memorial site, which at the time still consisted of numerous properties in city and private ownership. In November 1966, the city council approved the “Redevelopment Plan for the East Side Renewal Project,” which gave the Redevelopment Agency the authority to condemn private property on the site. The agency proposed staging site clearance over a two-year period to allow commercial and residential occupants time to relocate. The agency began condemnation proceedings on the private properties

in 1969 and demolition of some of the buildings was underway by early 1971.<sup>18</sup> During this time, the National Park Service was negotiating with the city and Redevelopment Agency over the boundaries of the national memorial site. In 1970, initial agreement had been reached on a 3.9-acre site between Haymarket and Smith streets, an area reduced from earlier figures due to increased costs and the city's proposed widening of Canal and Smith Streets. By 1971, the National Park Service was requesting a larger site of 4.5 acres. By June 1972, the city reached agreement with the National Park Service on the 4.5-acre site extending from the proposed curbline of widened Lonsdale Street (Park Row) on the south to a widened Smith Street on the north and a widened Canal Street on the west (fig. 1.45). Only the curbline of North Main Street was to remain unchanged.<sup>19</sup>

Figure 1.45. Existing conditions plan of the national memorial site in January 1973 showing boundaries, buildings demolished to date, and features recommended for retention. The surrounding areas do not show 1973 conditions. (National Park Service Denver Service Center, "Master Plan for Roger Williams National Memorial," January 1973.)

As condemnation, demolition, and site boundaries were being worked out between 1969 and 1973, discussions were also underway on the extent of

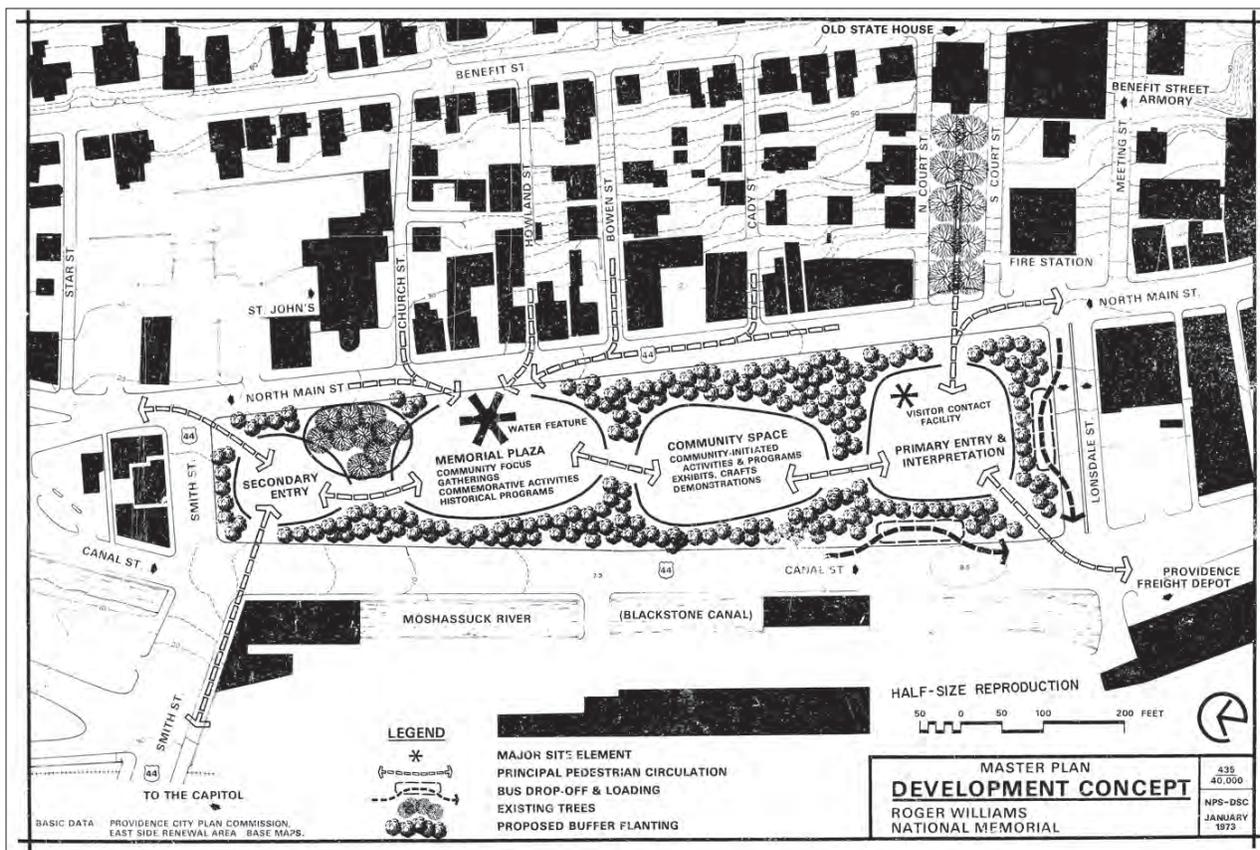


demolition on the site. In a change of position from the 1959 park proposal in the *College Hill Demonstration Study*, the Providence Preservation Society, together with the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission (State Historic Preservation Office), called for retention of the side streets (gangways), Roger Williams Spring Park, Bernon Park, and the Antram-Gray house (see fig. 1.45).<sup>20</sup> Antoinette Downing, chair of the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission, wrote to the National Park Service: "Wiping all this out to establish

a 1972 concept of memorializing Roger Williams and the Spring throws away a part of our story that means something to us all.”<sup>21</sup> In particular, Downing felt that the spring park, although less than fifty years old at the time, was significant for its commemorative value and as a work of architect Norman Isham. Downing also requested that the area at the south end of the site be kept open to maintain a vista from the Old State House to the Rhode Island capitol.<sup>22</sup>

**Figure 1.46. Initial 1973 development concept plan for the national memorial showing a landscaped park with four main areas. The plan does not show retention of the Antram-Gray house, Roger Williams Spring Park, or side streets. (National Park Service Denver Service Center, “Master Plan for Roger Williams National Memorial,” January 1973.)**

Initially, the city and the National Park Service were not interested in retaining these features, stating that agreements had already been reached on abandoning the side streets and for moving the Zachariah Allen House, an eighteenth-century house located on Smith Street about a mile to the west (instead of the originally proposed Clemence-Irons house) to the national memorial site.<sup>23</sup> By January 1973, the park service had completed a preliminary draft master plan that included a design concept similar to the one in the 1959 College Hill study



consisting of an open green space with a cluster of visitor facilities, except that it located these facilities at the south end of the park, on axis with the Old State House (fig. 1.46).<sup>24</sup> The Providence Preservation Society objected to this concept, which did not retain the Antram-Gray house, Roger Williams Spring Park, or side streets.<sup>25</sup> By October 1973, the park service had changed its position based on the recommendations of the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission and decided to retain and relocate the Antram-Gray house as part of its acquisition of



Figure 1.47. Looking south over the national memorial site in c.1975 following completion of demolition and site grading. The only remaining features on the site were the Antram-Gray House, which had been moved forty feet south of Smith Street (not widened until 1976), the Bernon Park grove, and Roger Williams Spring Park. (National Park Service, "Environmental Assessment of Development Concept Alternatives, Roger Williams National Memorial," February 1977.)

the 4.5-acre site.<sup>26</sup> A decision on whether Roger Williams Spring Park and Bernon Park would be retained as part of the national memorial was not made at this point. Both parks were owned and maintained by the Providence Park Department until June 17, 1974 when they were transferred to the Providence Redevelopment Agency.<sup>27</sup>

On June 19, 1974, the National Park Service signed a formal contract with the Providence Redevelopment Agency to purchase the entire 4.5-acre national memorial site for \$149,300.<sup>28</sup> On December 30, 1974, the agency conveyed title to the Department of the Interior. By this time, the park service had moved the Antram-Gray house to the site, forty feet from its original location outside of the widened right-of-way for Smith Street, but still facing North Main Street. Prior to the move, the house was documented by the Historic American Building Survey. Per the agreement for sale of the land, the Providence

Redevelopment Agency cleared the site within a year after the sale of the property, except for the Antram-Gray house, Roger Williams Spring Park, and Bernon Park. The work included demolishing all remaining buildings, removing the side streets, and rough grading (fig. 1.47).

#### **DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL LANDSCAPE, 1974-2009**

As land acquisition and building demolition were being finalized in 1974, the National Park Service's Denver Service Center, a system-wide office for planning, design, and construction, continued to refine design concepts for the national memorial developed in the preliminary draft master plan of January 1973. A revised master plan drafted in 1974 identified the site of the spring (Roger Williams Spring Park) as the historic area within the national memorial. Geoffrey Swan, team captain for the master plan, explained the intent of the master plan to make the spring the central memorial feature, with the remainder of the site serving as the setting:

The rationale for designating such a restricted portion of the site as Class VI [historic area] is that the spring site is the only area within Roger Williams National Memorial that relates directly to Roger Williams. The remainder of the 4.58 acre site has been so disturbed over the years that it cannot be considered historic; rather, most of the adjoining land will serve as the setting for the Class VI portion. . . .<sup>29</sup>

However, it was only the site of the spring, not the Norman Isham-designed courtyard, that the park service considered historic and therefore a basis for a memorial. In 1974, planners were proposing to redevelop the courtyard into a

larger, bi-level plaza connected by a major water feature to symbolize the spring as it existed in Roger Williams's day. Planners expressed several reasons for not retaining the small park in their master plan, including its inappropriateness as a national memorial to Roger Williams, its physical limits reflecting urban conditions that no longer existed, and the likelihood that it could not be successfully integrated into the design of a larger landscape.<sup>30</sup>

On December 2, 1975, the park service presented a set of alternative designs to the public that retained the basic concept of a landscape park with a central memorial feature at the spring site that also retained the Antram-Gray house. Public concerns centered on preservation of Roger Williams Spring Park and the view from the Old State House to the state capitol; keeping the south end of the site free of buildings; creating a simple design for the landscape using native vegetation; and finding an appropriate location for parking. During the spring of 1976 as the nation was celebrating its bicentennial, the park service worked closely with the Providence Preservation Society, Benefit Street Association, Roger Williams Family Association, and other interested groups and individuals to address these concerns. Despite its opinion that the small courtyard was not fitting for a national memorial and could not be successfully integrated into the larger landscape design, the park service ultimately agreed to retain Roger Williams Spring Park in all of the alternatives, rather than to replace it with a new memorial feature on the same site.<sup>31</sup>

Following these public meetings, planners at the Denver Service Center revised the alternative concepts. Common criteria set for each of the four alternatives were divided into two parts: design of the national memorial site (landscape), and design of facilities (visitor/interpretive center) that included keeping the Antram-Gray house on its relocated site. The criteria for the site design were:

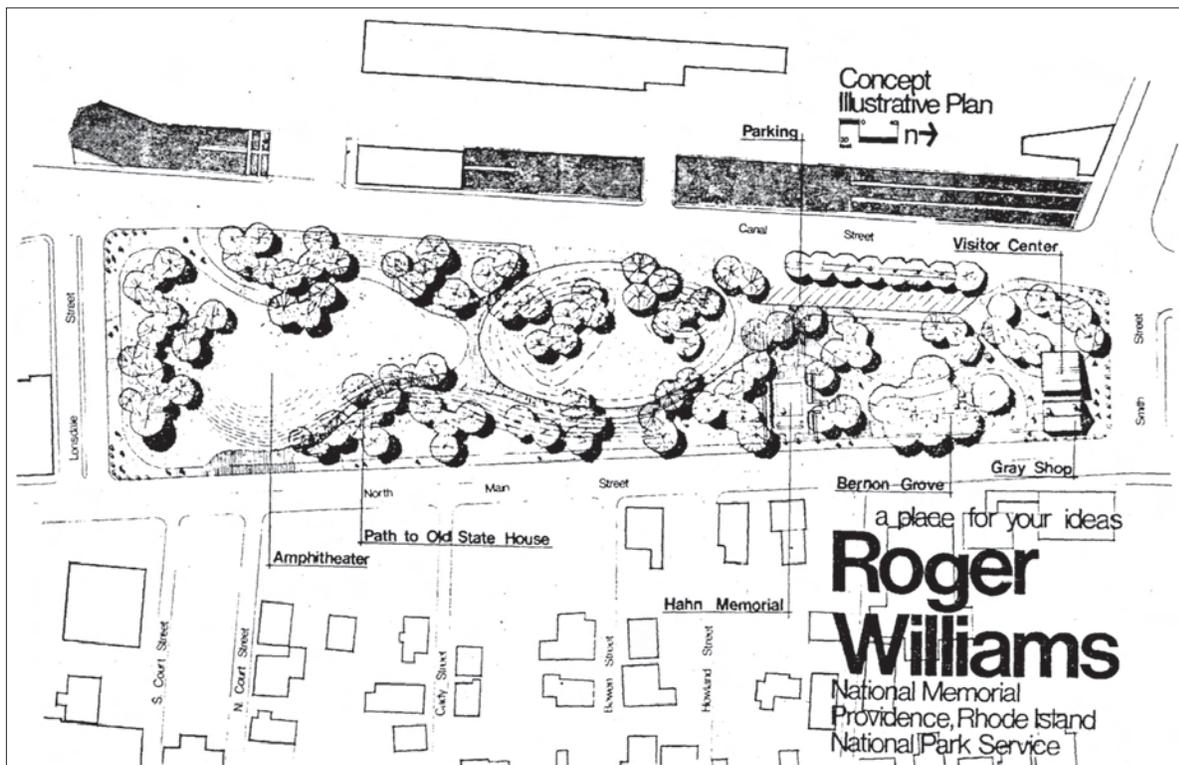
- Retention of the Roger Williams Spring Park (renamed the Hahn Memorial) and Bernon Park (Bernon Grove);
- Establishment of a small outdoor meeting space at the north end of the site;
- Consideration of an amphitheater to accommodate a large number of visitors;
- Provision for a twenty-car parking lot at the north end of the site;
- Use of an overall simple landscape design reminiscent of the natural shoreline environment of Roger Williams's time, using native vegetation where feasible; and design of spaces to discourage active recreation, such as football and baseball, and to maximize the potential of "restful seclusion and contemplation;"

- Establishment of a water feature to symbolically portray the original spring, either through a new feature or by rewatering the well in Roger Williams Spring Park.<sup>32</sup>

The four alternatives retained the original concept of an open, landscaped park with a central memorial feature, but differed in treatment of individual design elements. Concept 1, “Rolling Topography,” designed the site as a natural contrast to the urban environment with winding paths, groves of trees, and a simple central water feature. Concept 2, “Granite Wall,” was organized around a long wall running through the center of the site to serve as a sculptural and functional element. Concept 3, “Sculpture Competition,” designed the site as a landscaped setting for a major work of sculpture. Concept 4, “Lawn Terraces,” envisioned the site as a contemporary interpretation of the natural landscape that existed in 1636.<sup>33</sup> (Concept plans in Appendix C.)

The National Park Service publicized these four concepts, along with a project history, site history, description of the environment, and a record of consultation, in an environmental assessment printed in February 1977 entitled “A Place for Your Ideas.”<sup>34</sup> On September 2, 1977, Ray Weaver, the Superintendent of Roger Williams National Memorial, issued a record of decision that, based on public input, environmental impacts, and park service needs, selected Concept 1, “Rolling Topography,” as the preferred alternative for the site design, with modifications. This concept reflected public preference for a simple, informal design reflective of English landscape gardening and American park design

**Figure 1.48. Final site design concept for the national memorial adopted following environmental review and public comment, September 1977. (National Park Service, Denver Service Center.)**



dating back to Frederick Law Olmsted's Central Park. Public comments on this alternative indicated a desire for minimizing structural development and parking, creating a stronger link to the Old State House, and removing the central water feature—the memorial element. In response, the park service refined the design by removing the fountain and realigning a path to connect with the Old State House, as documented on the final Concept Illustrative Plan appended to the September 1977 record of decision (fig. 1.48). With removal of the central water feature, the national memorial had no built feature commemorating Roger Williams. By renaming the spring park as the Hahn Memorial, it no longer served to commemorate Roger Williams. In addition to the landscape design, the final Concept Illustrative Plan also showed the Antram-Gray house as the site of the memorial's visitor center, with a site to its rear for a new building, if necessary.<sup>35</sup>

#### Initial Improvements, 1976-1979

As plans for the national memorial were being refined, the park service began some initial improvements to the site following completion of the city's widening of Smith Street and construction of new sidewalks along North Main Street in c.1976. The focus of this work was on rehabilitating the Antram-Gray house for park offices and a visitor center, and on creating a temporary parking lot along Canal Street. The regional office contracted for this work with a Boston architect, Richard White. He prepared construction drawings for renovation of the building and for site work including a gravel parking lot off Canal Street with a gravel walk leading to the Antram-Gray House (fig. 1.49). Work on the house, which preserved the exterior including its later store windows, was completed in 1979,

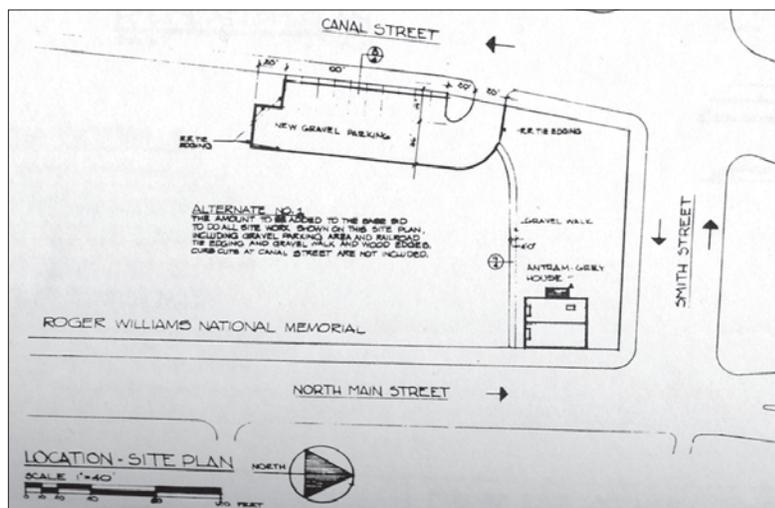


Figure 1.49. Plan of initial site improvements and renovation of the Antram-Gray house by Richard White Architect, July 30, 1976. (From Andrea Gilmore, *Antram-Gray House Historic Structure Report*, 1981.)

allowing the park service to formally open the national memorial to the public. During this time, the entire site was seeded and a standard National Park Service metal signboard was installed facing the southwest corner of Smith and Canal Streets. Repairs were also made to the Hahn Memorial.<sup>36</sup>

#### Landscape Design, 1978-1980

As work was underway on the Antram-Gray house renovations, the park solicited proposals to develop site design plans suitable for construction based on the concept approved in 1977. The National Park Service issued a request for qualifications and interviewed two firms, awarding the contract in c.1977 to Albert Veri & Associates, Inc., Landscape Architects and Planners, an office with about twenty-four staff located at 3 Governor Street in Providence. As an area resident, designer of local parks, and participant in the park service's public meetings on

the site design alternatives in 1976, Albert Veri had a good understanding of the project's constraints and opportunities.<sup>37</sup>

Albert R. Veri received his Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degree from Pennsylvania State University in 1963 and went on to work for Sasaki Associates in Watertown, Massachusetts. In 1969, he earned his Master of Landscape Architecture degree from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, where he was one of the first recipients of the Loeb Fellowship in postgraduate studies. Veri received his first major commission, for India Point Park in Providence, in 1970.<sup>38</sup> Prior to the national memorial commission, Veri completed several other major park and urban design commissions, including Kennedy Plaza and Benefit Street in Providence, and Heritage Waterfront Park in Fall River, Massachusetts, as well as campus plans for the University of Rhode Island in Kingston and St. Andrews School in Barrington, Rhode Island. Veri received awards for his work from the American Society of Landscape Architects Rhode Island Chapter and the American Planning Association, and was elected a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1992.<sup>39</sup>

For the Roger Williams National Memorial project, Albert Veri & Associates formed a joint venture with the engineering firm of Caputo and Wick, Ltd., of Rumford, Rhode Island, and worked in close collaboration with park planners at the National Park Service regional offices in Boston. Veri was particularly interested in revealing the old building foundations then being documented by park archeologists, but park service planners felt this was not appropriate to the approved landscape concept.<sup>40</sup> Ultimately, Veri produced a schematic design that was in keeping with the site design concept finalized by the park service in September 1977, but differed in its details with stronger reference to the site's history of urban development that occurred after Roger Williams's lifetime (fig. 1.50; compare with fig. 1.48).

Veri refined the overall layout of the park service concept by organizing the site into two somewhat distinct areas: the less-developed south half with its idealized rural landscape of rolling topography, winding walks, and groves of trees centered around a bowl-shaped open space referred to as the amphitheater; and a more developed and rectilinear north half incorporating the Hahn Memorial (former Roger Williams Spring Park) and visitor center in the Antram-Gray house.<sup>41</sup> In the south half of the site, Veri adjusted the alignment of the serpentine walks and added an allee on axis with the Old State House to provide a connection between the two sites and to recall the alignment of the old streets. He also added a small circular overlook enclosed by a stone wall along North Main Street to allow views across the open space of the amphitheater toward the Rhode Island capitol in the

distance. Veri intended the overlook to also serve as a performance stage.<sup>42</sup> No sidewalks were specified along Lonsdale Street or Canal Street.

In the north half of the site where Veri made a greater departure from the original park service concept, he redesigned the winding paths into a rectilinear arrangement that reflected the alignment of the old buildings, side streets, and the Hahn Memorial. On the south side of the Antram-Gray house, Veri designed a ramp complex lined by stone walls and planters to provide universal access across the steep grade change from North Main Street. South of the ramp, Veri retained Bernon Grove as shown in the park service concept, and defined it by adding a



Figure 1.50. Plan of Roger Williams National Memorial by Albert Veri & Associates showing a rendered schematic design of c.1979. (Veri | Waterman Associates, Providence, Rhode Island.)

walk along its western edge. At the south end of Bernon Grove, Veri designed a wide walk on the site of Church Street that ramped down from North Main Street to the parking lot along Canal Street. As reference to the old street, Veri designed the upper part of the walk with a broad edge of cobblestone paving and stone retaining walls where building foundations had previously stood. In Bernon Grove, the old stone foundation walls along North Main Street were kept to serve as retaining walls and provide a connection to the buildings that once stood there.

At the Hahn Memorial, Veri integrated the courtyard with the surrounding landscape by extending a short walk to the west on a central axis. He specified replacement of the overgrown plantings using a palette of yews, rhododendrons, and euonymus similar to the original plantings with a clipped privet hedge along the north side, but did not call for replanting the borders around the central parterre. To partially close off the space at the west end where a building had originally stood, Veri specified a hedge of arborvitae. On the adjoining Katz Lot, Veri designed a small rectangular brick terrace inspired by those at the Tuileries Garden in Paris, where bistro chairs could be used as a place to sit and read.<sup>43</sup>

Veri unified the entire national memorial site design through plantings, furnishings, and use of red brick for the walks. Plantings were specified as a mixed evergreen and deciduous palette of native and non-native species. These consisted primarily of London planetree, red and sugar maple, honeylocust, Austrian pine, white fir, white pine, Japanese black pine, privet, Japanese holly, azalea, and yew, with elms in the Old State House allee. On the terrace next to the Hahn Memorial, Veri designed a grove of flowering Siberian crabapple trees with an understory of Japanese holly.<sup>44</sup> Herbaceous plantings were limited to daylilies in the planters at the ramp complex, and annuals in the Hahn Memorial. Benches and garbage cans were designed in a simple contemporary style, while the light standards featured a historic design using the same standard that Veri specified in the Benefit Street improvement project.<sup>45</sup>

#### **Landscape Construction, 1980-1982**

By April 1980, Albert Veri & Associates had produced with partners Caputo and Wick a complete set of existing conditions plans and construction documents, including sections, layout and grading plans, electrical plans, planting plans, and specifications for walls, walks, benches, and garbage cans (fig. 1.51). The plans were reviewed and approved through the park service's Denver Service Center. For funding purposes, the construction was divided into three phases, with Phase I completed in the fall of 1980. This phase was limited to the construction of the ramp structure adjoining the Antram-Gray house, with its stone walls and planters adjoining the grove of Norway maples in Bernon Park (fig. 1.52). A flagpole was installed on the west side of the ramp structure.

Construction of Phase II, scoped to encompass the bulk of the landscape including grading, utilities, parking lot, walls, and a portion of the walks and plantings, began on July 27, 1981 following a ground-breaking ceremony attended by Rhode Island Senator Claiborne Pell and local dignitaries.<sup>46</sup> The park service awarded the construction contract to Soprano Construction Company of Cranston, Rhode Island, based on updated construction drawings dated May

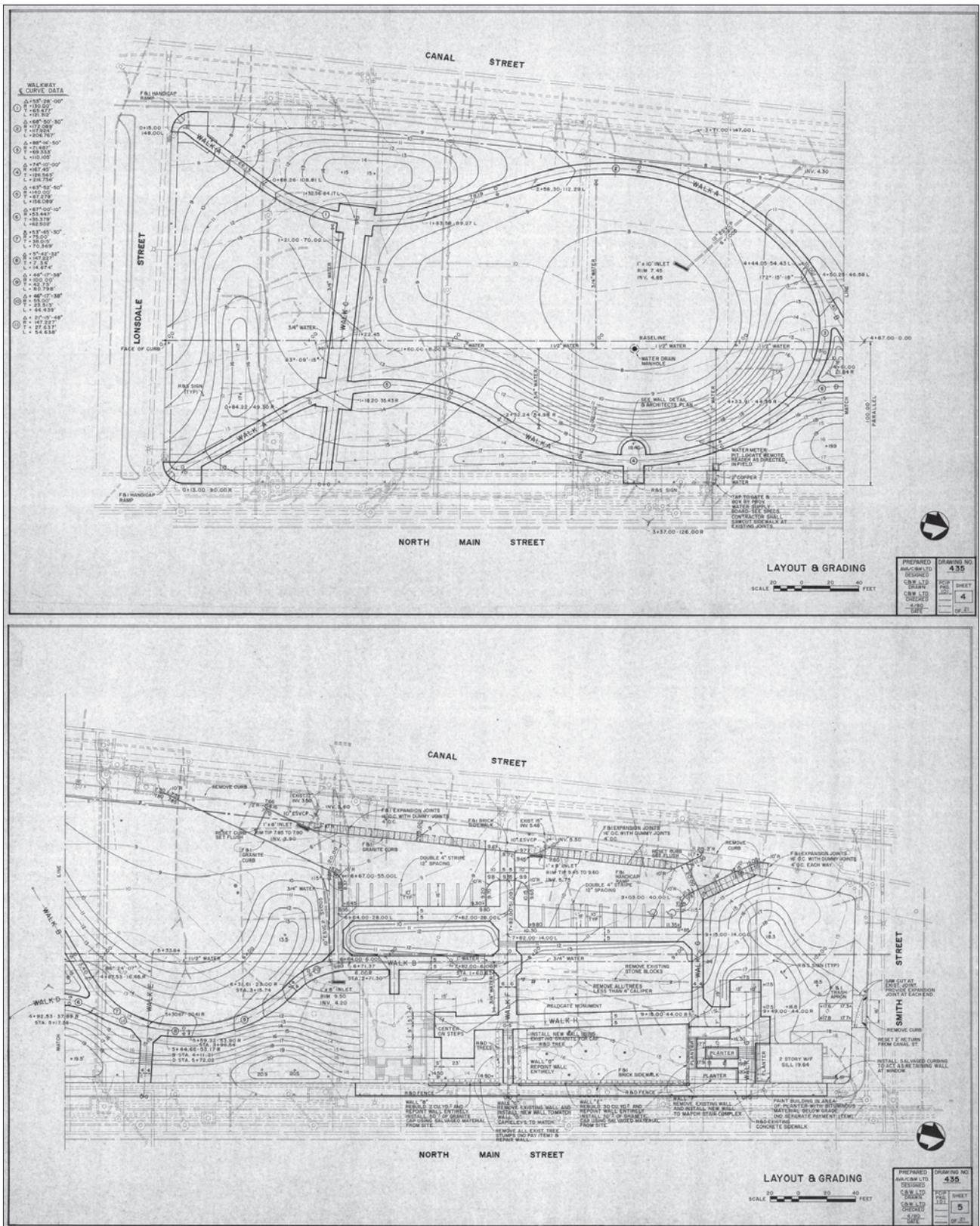
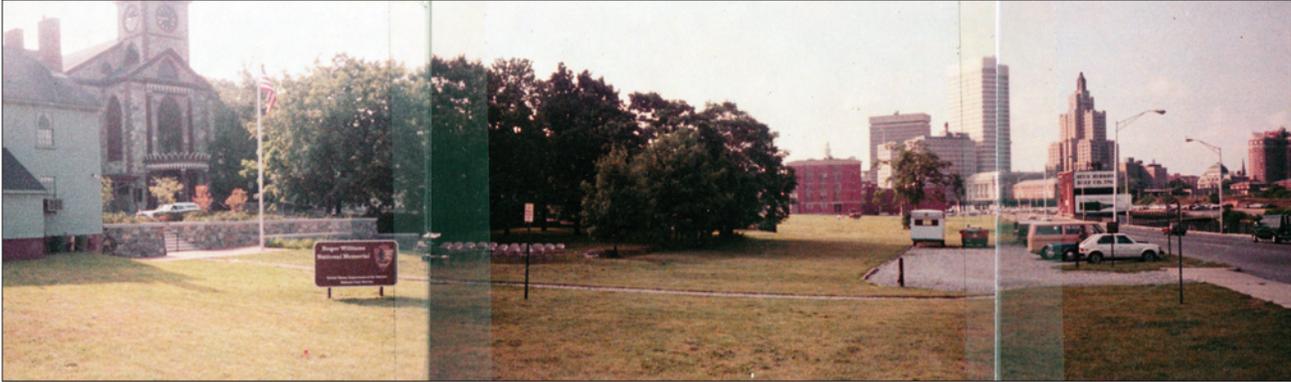


Figure 1.51. Layout and grading plans dated April 1980 for the south (top) and north (bottom) halves of the national memorial site. (National Park Service, Denver Service Center.)



**Figure 1.52. Panorama looking south from Smith Street taken in July 1981 following completion of Phase I that included construction of the ramp-stair structure, visible at the south (right) side of the Antram-Gray house. This photograph also shows the initial improvements made between 1976 and 1979, including renovation of the house with its rear shed addition, the gravel parking lot, sign, and seeding of the site. The grove of trees are the Norway maples planted in Bernon Park in 1953. (Roger Williams National Memorial archives.)**

**Figure 1.53. Looking south along North Main Street showing completed grading and work underway on the topsoil, October 1981. (Roger Williams National Memorial archives.)**



1981. Initial progress on site grading and utilities was slow because the contractors encountered numerous old foundations that required removal, necessitating a change order costing nearly \$20,000. By October 1981, grading and addition of new top soil was well underway, along with seeding of the turf and construction of the brick walks (figs. 1.53, 1.54). In November, crews were planting specimen trees and shrubs, including replacement of the shrubs in the Hahn Memorial, and installing concrete and wood-slat benches (fig. 1.55).

Apparently due to delays from the initial site preparation, Soprano Construction was not able to complete Phase II before the end of the fall 1981 construction season, leaving some of the brick paving and plantings to be finished in the spring of 1982 during Phase III. This final phase included the remaining plantings and construction of the overlook, Old State House allee, and a portion of the walk along the west side of the amphitheater bordering Canal Street. As completed, the landscape was built largely as designed, except for the Old State House allee, which due to an apparent error in construction, was built off the axis with the Old State House parade. Park signage, added within two years of Phase III, included two main site identification signs with granite piers at the corner of North Main Street and Park Row, and at Canal and Smith Streets. Several interpretive waysides with text and illustrations were also installed at the Hahn Memorial, Bernon Grove, and at the overlook.

As completed, the landscape of Roger Williams National Memorial was not a memorial in the traditional sense of having a central commemorative monument to Roger Williams. The landscape was, as intended, an unprogrammed landscape where visitors could contemplate Williams's contributions by quietly sitting on a bench, walking, taking part in a ranger-led tour, or by reading several historical waysides. The Hahn Memorial, originally Roger Williams Spring Park, was the only part of the landscape that formally commemorated Roger Williams and the founding of



Figure 1.54 (left). Looking east at construction underway on the brick walks along the parking lot, October 1981. This photograph also shows recently added turf and Austrian pines in the background. (Roger Williams National Memorial archives.)



Figure 1.55 (right). View looking north toward the Hahn Memorial (former Roger Williams Spring Park) showing landscape as completed at the end of Phase II, November 1981. The brick surface on the walk was not yet installed. (Roger Williams National Memorial archives.)



Figure 1.56. A c.1990 aerial photograph looking southwest across the completed Roger Williams National Memorial landscape. (Veri | Waterman Associates.)

Providence. However, the ancillary nature of the courtyard within the larger landscape design and its renaming downplayed the courtyard's original commemorative function. The city retained the granite monument to Williams and the founding of Providence erected in 1928 along the adjoining sidewalk, but at some point following completion of the national memorial, the bronze plaques were stolen or removed.

#### Post-Construction Changes, 1982-2009

From its forlorn character at the time of park service acquisition in 1974, the site of Roger Williams National Memorial matured into a lush green space following the completion of construction in 1982 (fig. 1.56). By the late 1990s, the site attracted on average more than 12,000 visitors annually to the visitor center in the Antram-Gray house, with about a quarter coming to learn about Roger Williams.<sup>47</sup> While the primary use of the site was for interpretation and commemoration, it also functioned as a public park with diverse uses.

Its success was due not only to the landscape design, but also to its proximity to Providence's revitalized downtown, the state capitol, and to College Hill, which had become a well-preserved and desirable neighborhood. The national



**Figure 1.57 (top).** A c.1990 view looking south toward the amphitheater showing growth of trees screening surrounding streets, and views to downtown high-rise buildings. (Courtesy of Albert Veri.)

**Figure 1.58 (bottom).** A c.1990 view looking east toward North Main Street along the Old State House allee, illustrating the connection of the landscape to the historic College Hill neighborhood. The allee was incorrectly constructed off axis with the Old State House parade. (Courtesy of Albert Veri.)



memorial was also tied into a larger network of historic areas through its 1986 administrative incorporation into the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. A federally-designated area of mostly non-federal lands within the National Park System, the national heritage corridor was created to interpret the history of the Industrial Revolution in the corridor between Worcester, Massachusetts and Providence.<sup>48</sup>

In the years following construction, Albert Veri's design for the national memorial landscape became clear as the plantings grew from small, staked plants to groves and shady specimens. By the early 1990s, trees in the south half of the park screened views to the surrounding streets while also defining interior spaces such as the amphitheater, with evergreens branching down to the ground (fig. 1.57). Visible above the young canopy were the high-rises of downtown Providence to the south. Near the south end of the national memorial, the contrasting form of the Old State House allee connected the landscape with the National Historic Landmark-designated College Hill Historic District (fig. 1.58). In the north half of the

site, growth of the plantings by the 1990s helped to define the more rectilinear spaces and screen views of the parking area and the Canal Street arterial (fig. 1.59).

By the first decade of the 2000s, the park service made several minor changes to the landscape due to continued growth of the plantings and shifting operational, interpretive, and aesthetic needs. These changes included addition of whiskey-barrel planters with flowering annuals along North Main Street and the Old State House allee, along with six rectangular raised beds between the Antram-Gray house and Smith Street planted with herbs grown during the colonial period. The planters in the ramp complex next to the house were also replanted with corn, beans, and squash (the Three Sisters) to interpret Native American agriculture. In the Hahn Memorial, the park planted ornamental grasses in the center bed and placed urns of annuals at the entrance on North Main Street. The greatest change



Figure 1.59 (top). A c.1990 view looking west from North Main Street toward Canal Street and the parking lot showing maturing plantings that screened views and defined spaces. (Courtesy of Albert Veri.)

Figure 1.60 (bottom). Looking south toward the amphitheater in 2008, showing the recent raising of the tree canopy to permit views through the landscape and to the surrounding streets. The temporary volleyball net reflects varied uses of the landscape. (SUNY ESF.)

to the landscape by the early 2000s occurred through the continued growth of trees and shrubs, which limited views of downtown and College Hill and gave a more enclosed character to the site. Some trees were removed or failed to become established, especially pines along the North Main Street side.<sup>49</sup> In an effort to open the site and create a greater sense of safety, the park pruned all of the trees, both evergreen and deciduous, up to a consistent height of approximately twelve feet (fig. 1.60).<sup>50</sup>

While there was no formal memorial to Roger Williams in the landscape, the park did permit the installation of four small monuments and markers that, joining the Gabriel Bernon monument erected in 1953, reflected patriotic efforts and interest in the history of the site after Roger Williams's lifetime. These included a small granite marker added in 1980 to commemorate the planting of the "tree of New Hope" (meaning unknown); a boulder with a brass tablet placed west of the Antram-Gray House in 2002 by the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society to mark the site of the Snowtown Riot, a racial attack that occurred near the site in 1831; a granite tablet marking

a white fir planted in 1987 near the Old State House allee to commemorate the bicentennial of the United States Constitution; and a tuliptree and small bronze marker added in 2007 near the amphitheater to commemorate the spirit of liberty.<sup>51</sup>

#### **LANDSCAPE OF THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL, 2010 (DRAWING 1.2)**

The landscape of Roger Williams National Memorial has remained little changed from the design by Albert Veri & Associates and park service planners implemented in the early 1980s. As intended, the site has been maintained as a small, 4.5-acre urban park bounded by arterial streets, College Hill, and the Rhode Island capitol, with three small signs identifying it as the Roger Williams National Memorial at three of its four corners. The site has remained a landscape park without a primary memorial feature to Roger Williams.

From a dense urban neighborhood in 1965, the landscape was transformed into a cleared urban renewal lot with three remnants retained in large part through federal historic preservation laws and public input: the Hahn Memorial, formerly Roger Williams Spring Park; the Antram-Gray house, rehabilitated into the park visitor center and offices; and a grove of Norway maples from Bernon Park. Earlier plans to relocate a seventeenth-century house to the site were never realized. Between 1980 and 1982, the landscape was again transformed into a park landscape with lawn, evergreen and deciduous trees, winding brick walks, benches, Colonial-style lights, and a visitor parking lot. Changes over the course of the period after 1982 were minor in comparison and characterized primarily by growth and loss of trees, and removal of lower limbs. Planting beds were added along the Antram-Gray house, and several small markers and memorials were installed. A dumpster was added at the south end of the parking lot, along extension of a walk to the Canal Street sidewalk. In the area surrounding the national memorial, the old rail yards and parking lots to the west across Canal Street were redeveloped with multi-story residential buildings, providing the site with urban enclosure where the open waters of the Great Salt Cove once existed.

After nearly thirty years as a national memorial and community park, the National Park Service is considering changes to the landscape to enhance the national memorial's commemorative function, strengthen its identity, and improve its connections with the surrounding city. These considerations reflect shifts in urban planning, continued revival of Providence's historic downtown and College Hill neighborhoods, and changing attitude toward historical interpretation and commemoration. In the years ahead, the National Park Service, city planners, civic organizations, and community residents will reconsider the original design intent for the national memorial as an open-space setting for contemplating the significance of Roger Williams and the legacy of his experiment in religious freedom begun here nearly 375 years ago.

## ENDNOTES

1 John Hutchins Cady, *The Civil and Architectural Development of Providence* (Providence: The Book Shop, 1957), 281-282; William McKenzie Woodward and Edward F. Sanderson, *Providence: A Citywide Survey of Historic Resources* (Providence: Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, 1986), section "The Recent Past: 1945-1985."

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3 Providence City Plan Commission in cooperation with the Providence Preservation Society and Department of Housing and Urban Renewal, *College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal* (Providence: College Hill Press, 1959, second edition 1967), 133.

4 *College Hill: A Demonstration Study*, 130-131.

5 *College Hill: A Demonstration Study*, 130; “The Town Spring and Roger Williams Memorial Common,” chronology of legislative history of Roger Williams Spring Park proposal (Unattributed unpublished article, c.1962), Roger Williams National Memorial archives (hereafter, ROWI archives).

6 Designation as a national park had apparently been dropped prior to the Advisory Board’s visit.

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8 “The Town Spring and Roger Williams Memorial Common;” “National Park Proposed at Roger Williams Spring, *Providence Journal*, 18 October 1959, clipping, ROWI archives.

9 Memorandum, Charles Porter, National Park Service Chief Historian, to Mr. James M. Lambe, “History of Advisory Board action on Roger Williams Project, Providence, Rhode Island,” 29 June 1965, copy, ROWI archives; “The Town Spring and Roger Williams Memorial Common;” Memorandum on Chronology of Events, Robert H. Yeremian, Project Supervisor, Roger Williams National Park/East Side Renewal Project, to Vincent Pallozzi, 10 April 1974, copy, Rhode Island Historical Society, MSS 960, box 1, folder 2.

10 *The National Parks: Index 2009-2011*.

11 Porter to Lambe.

12 Letter, Clarence Pautzke, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior, to Hon. Wayne N. Aspinall, Chairman, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives, 9 August 1965, copy, ROWI archives.

13 Pautzke to Aspinall; Mrs. William Slater Allen, Vice President, Providence Preservation Society, to Stanley Bernstein, Providence Redevelopment Agency, 31 July 1964, copy, ROWI archives.

14 Quoted in Porter to Lambe; Historic New England website for Clemence-Irons House, <http://www.historicnewengland.org/visit/homes/clemence.htm> (accessed 26 January 2009). The house was subsequently listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, on its original site.

15 Allen T. Edmunds, Assistant Director, Northeast Region. . . Statement Before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation. . . in Support of H.R. 7919, a Bill ‘To Provide For the Establishment of Roger Williams National Memorial in the City of Providence, Rhode Island, and for Other Purposes,’ September 1965, copy, ROWI archives.

16 Statement of Allen T. Edmunds.

17 “An Act to Provide for the Establishment of the Roger Williams National Memorial in the city of Providence, Rhode Island, and for other Purposes,” Public Law 89-293, 89th Congress, H. R. 7919, October 22, 1965. The national memorial was not designated under the provisions of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 because that act did not recognize national memorials. Congress, however, wished the site to be administered as a historic site.

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22 Downing to Rickey.

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- 26 Project chronology in Yeremian to Pallozzi, 18 October 1973; Andrea Gilmore, *Historic Structure Report: The Antram-Gray House* (Boston: National Park Service North Atlantic Region, 1981), 16.
- 27 James Skelton, “Historical and Architectural Synopsis, Roger Williams Spring/Hahn Memorial” (Unpublished report, National Park Service North Atlantic Region, December 1978), 1. It is assumed Bernon Park was transferred at the same time as Roger Williams Spring Park. The Antram-Gray house was probably determined National Register eligible by the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission (later renamed the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission). Both parks were less than fifty years old in 1973 and therefore were probably not determined National Register eligible and subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
- 28 “Roger Williams National Memorial,” *Providence Journal*, 20 June 1974, transcript, Roger Williams National Memorial Environmental Impact Statement files, Denver Service Center.
- 29 Memorandum, Team Captain (Geoffrey Swan), Master Plan, Roger Williams National Memorial, to Team Manager, North Atlantic Team, not dated (circa January 1974), 9, Roger Williams National Memorial Environmental Impact Statement files, Denver Service Center.
- 30 Memorandum, Team Captain to Team Manager, 12.
- 31 National Park Service, “Environmental Assessment of Development Concept Alternatives, Roger Williams National Memorial” (North Atlantic Region, National Park Service, February 1977), 52-54.
- 32 National Park Service, “A Place for Your Ideas/Environmental Assessment of Development Concept Alternatives/Roger Williams National Memorial” (Unpublished report, February 1977), 16-18.
- 33 Environmental Assessment, 27-38.
- 34 Environmental Assessment, 24-26.
- 35 Memorandum, Ray Weaver, Superintendent, Roger Williams National Memorial, to Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, “Environmental Review/Negative Declaration, Development Concepts, Roger Williams National Memorial,” 2 September 1977, appended to Environmental Assessment, 67 ff.
- 36 Gilmore, 78; 221; Aerial photograph of St. John’s Cathedral overlooking Antram-Gray house, c.1979, Image m94s5b42f4\_2, MSS Gr. 94, “Records of St. John’s Episcopal Cathedral, Providence, RI, 1715-1994,” box 42, University of Rhode Island; J. D. Skelton, “Roger Williams Spring/Hahn Memorial,” plan showing repairs, 29 June 1977, Antoinette Downing Papers, MSS 98, Box 4b, folder 2, Rhode Island Historical Society.
- 37 National Park Service, “A Place for Your Ideas,” 54; Albert Veri, telephone conversation with John Auwaerter, 29 January 2009; Terry Savage, Superintendent, Boston National Historical Park and former planner with the North Atlantic Region, telephone conversation with John Auwaerter, 4 February 2009.
- 38 Frances Betancourt, “The Creation of India Point Park” (Unpublished paper, US 100, Brown University, May 2002), 6.
- 39 Curricula Vitae for Alert R. Veri, and Veri | Waterman Associates portfolio; Albert Veri, telephone conversation with John Auwaerter, 29 January 2009. Albert Veri & Associates merged with Waterman Design Associates of Westborough, Massachusetts in c.2007.
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- 41 National Park Service, “A Place for Your Ideas,” 54; Albert Veri & Associates, “Roger Williams National Memorial, Schematic Design” (c.1979); Albert Veri, telephone conversation with John Auwaerter, 29 January 2009.
- 42 Albert Veri, telephone conversation with John Auwaerter, 29 January 2009.
- 43 Albert Veri, site visit with Karen Cowperthwaite, 19 September 2008.
- 44 Albert Veri Associates, Planting Details plan, May 1981.

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45 Albert Veri, telephone conversation with John Auwaerter, 29 January 2009.

46 National Park Service, "Completion Report, Site Improvements—Phase II, Roger Williams National Memorial," contract CX 1600-1-0028, 13 November 1981, ROWI archives.

47 Visitation figures cited in National Park Service, "Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan, Roger Williams National Memorial" (Unpublished report, November 2002), 18.

48 National Park Service, brochure for John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (Government Printing Office, 2005).

49 Because as-built planting plans are not available, it is not known which trees were removed or were simply not planted according to the original planting plan.

50 Conversations with park staff by Karen Cowperthwaite and John Auwaerter.

51 Erica Sagrans, "Memorializing the 1824 Hardscrabble Race Riot Takes a Long Route," *Providence Phoenix*, 31 May 2006, <http://thephoenix.com/Providence/News/13888-Memorializing-the-1824-Hardscrabble-race-riot-take/> (accessed 3 February 2009). The brass plaque on the Snowtown Riot monument was made in 1986, but the monument was not installed until 2002. Jennifer Gonsalves, Roger Williams National Monument Site Manager, communication to author, October 2009.



Cultural Landscape Report

Roger Williams National Memorial

Providence, Rhode Island

National Memorial Period  
1965-Present



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
www.nps.gov/oclp

in partnership with:  
Department of Landscape Architecture  
SUNY College of Environmental  
Science and Forestry www.esf.edu/la/

SOURCES

1. C&W, ROWI Exist. condition plans, 5/1981
2. AVA, C&W, ROWI Layout, planting plans, 5/1981
3. AVA, C&W, ROWI Layout, planting plans, 7/1982
4. NPS, ROWI Exist. conditions plan, 1/1973
5. Aerial photograph, c.2006

DRAWN BY

John Auwaerter  
Illustrator CS 3, 2010

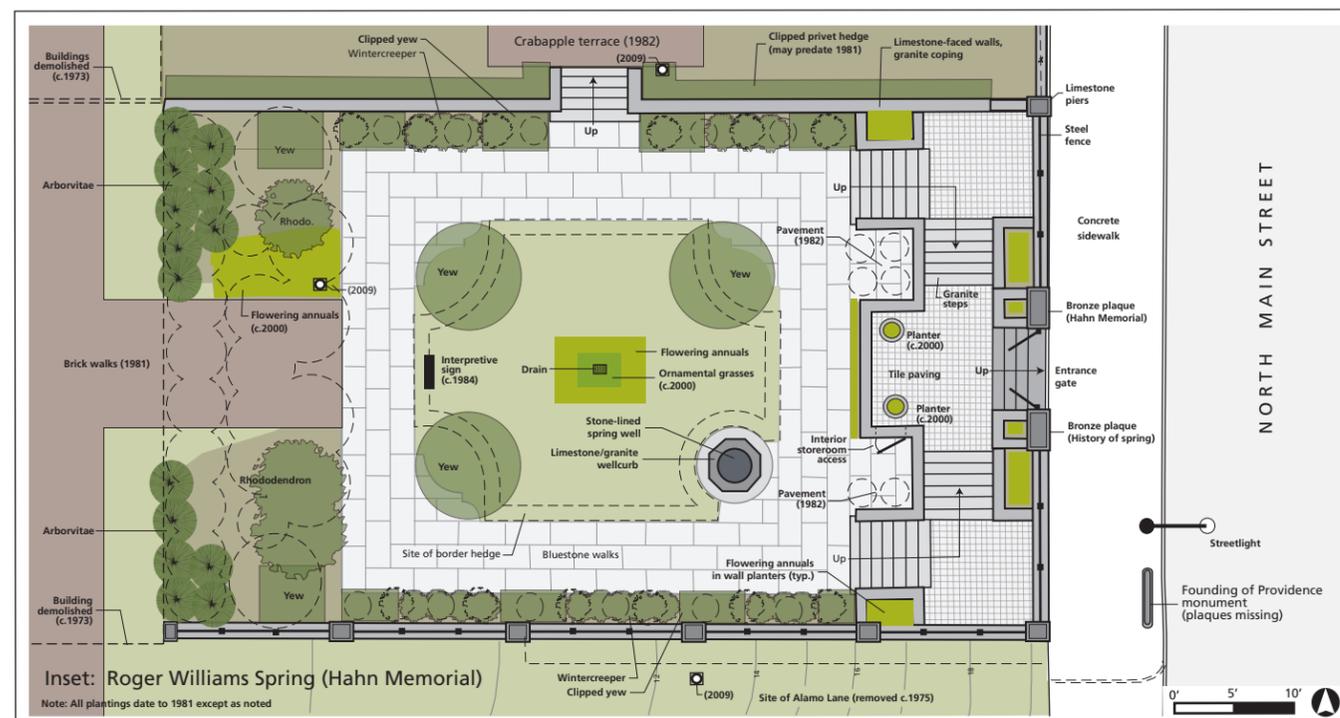
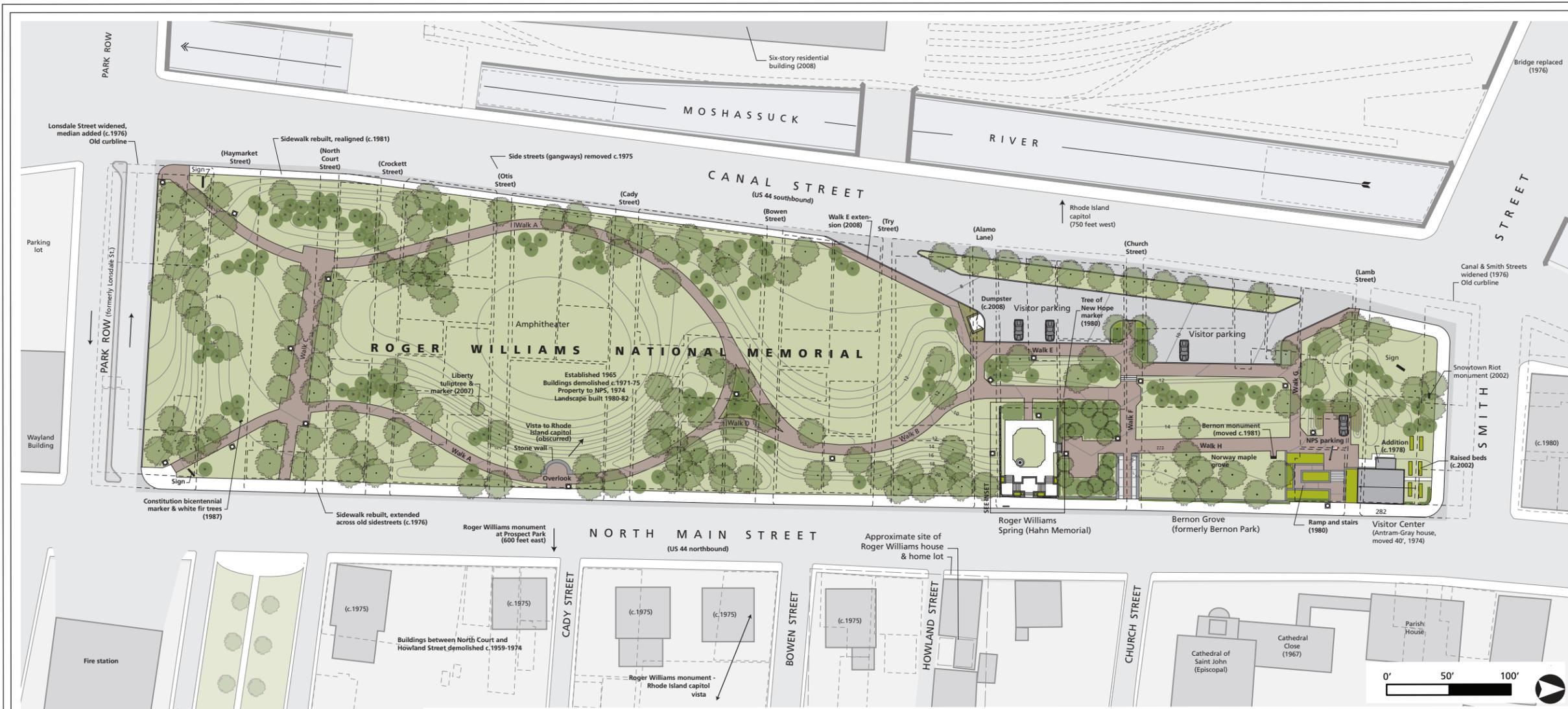
LEGEND

- Building
- Removed feature
- CANAL ST 270  
Street with sidewalk, street address
- 1' contour
- Lawn
- Open ground or mulch
- Groundcover or herbaceous bed
- Deciduous/coniferous tree or shrub
- Clipped shrub, hedge
- Park light standard
- (1982) Date feature added/built, if known

NOTES

1. Plan shows conditions in 2009 with changes since 1965.
2. All features in project area built 1981-82 except as noted.
3. All features shown in approximate scale and location.
4. Plan does not show benches, signs, planters, or species except within the Roger Williams Spring.
5. Trees removed since 1982 are not shown.
6. White mask indicates limits of CLR project area.

Drawing 1.2



Inset: Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial)

Note: All plantings date to 1981 except as noted



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## **2. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Roger Williams National Memorial is today a shady urban park adjoining Providence's College Hill neighborhood and downtown business district. The landscape, constructed in 1980-1982, incorporates two small pre-existing city parks and an eighteenth-century building. This chapter describes the existing conditions of this landscape, along with its use, administration, and setting. Documentation is based on field observation and construction drawings for the national memorial landscape. Existing conditions are graphically documented through photographs and three plans illustrating the south and north halves of the site, and the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial).

### **USE AND ADMINISTRATION**

The primary purpose of Roger Williams National Memorial, as designated by Congress, is to commemorate Roger Williams and his contributions to the nation's principles of freedom. This forms the core of the site's interpretative program along with Native American and colonial life in Rhode Island. These themes are interpreted through displays in the Antram-Gray house visitor center, outdoor waysides, and in guided tours and ranger programs. While interpretation and commemoration are the primary uses of the national memorial, the landscape also serves multiples uses as an urban park for residents of the College Hill and downtown neighborhoods. Many visit the memorial for jogging, walking, dog walking, picnicking, and other low-impact recreational uses. The park is open to public use without fee year-round. Special use permits are available for large gatherings, concerts, and other events, which are typically held in the large oval lawn known as the amphitheater.<sup>1</sup>

The site receives approximately 12,000 visitors per year in the Antram-Gray house, which is open year-round from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Many explore the national memorial, while others use the visitor center as a starting point for touring nearby historic areas including downtown Providence, the Benefit Street Mile of History on College Hill, and the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor that extends north into Massachusetts. The Antram-Gray house also serves as an unofficial visitor center for downtown Providence.<sup>2</sup> Many additional visitors, mostly local residents, come to the site without entering the visitor center.

Roger Williams National Memorial is administered as part of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. The memorial has a full-time site manager and seven other staff who serve administrative, maintenance, and educational functions. The park is also supported by volunteers who assist with interpretation and maintenance through the park service's Volunteers in Parks program.<sup>3</sup>

## LANDSCAPE SETTING

Roger Williams National Memorial is located on lowlands between College Hill to the east and the Moshassuck River to the west. The site is bounded by North Main and Canal streets, two one-way legs of US 44 that extend north from the high-rise central business district of downtown Providence (North Main Street north of the national memorial is designated as US 1). At the north side of the national memorial, US 44 turns west onto Smith Street, a multi-lane arterial that passes the Rhode Island capitol, approximately 750 feet to the west of the national memorial (fig. 2.1). The south side of the national memorial is bordered by Park Row, formerly Lonsdale Street, a divided road that leads west to the central business district and a redevelopment area at the confluence of the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers that contains several recently constructed multi-story residential buildings (fig. 2.2).



Along the national memorial, North Main Street is a one-way, two-lane asphalt road with aluminum mast-arm light standards, parallel parking, and concrete sidewalks (fig. 2.3). The neighborhood along the east side of the road is the College Hill Historic District, a designated National Historic Landmark. The part of the district along North Main Street is characterized by a mix of historic and contemporary buildings, with narrow roads that follow the lines of the original Providence home lots (fig. 2.4). Overlooking the national memorial from approximately six hundred feet east of North Main Street is the city-owned Roger Williams monument at Prospect Park, completed in 1939, with its western views across the city toward the Rhode Island capitol (fig. 2.5). Along North Main Street, the district is anchored by two



Figure 2.1 (top). Looking west along Smith Street (US 44/US 1) from north end of the national memorial with the Rhode Island capitol in the distance, 2008. Between the two trees near the sidewalk is a monument to the Snowtown Riot. (SUNY ESF.)

Figure 2.2 (bottom). Looking west along Park Row at the south edge of the national memorial with the downtown business district and redevelopment area in the background, 2008. This view also shows the dirt path and absence of a sidewalk along Park Row. (SUNY ESF.)



**Figure 2.3 (top left).** View north along North Main Street from the intersection of Park Row at the southeast corner of the national memorial, 2008. (SUNY ESF.)

**Figure 2.4 (top right).** The College Hill historic district looking east from the national memorial along Bowen Street, 2008. This is one of the narrow side streets that follow the boundaries of the original Providence home lots. Many of these streets once continued west across the national memorial site. (SUNY ESF.)

**Figure 2.5 (left).** The city-owned Roger Williams monument (1939) at Prospect Park, view west from the rear of the memorial with the Rhode Island capitol in the distance, 2008. The national memorial is out of view at the base of the hill. (SUNY ESF.)

major buildings. The Old State House, built in 1760 as one of three colonial seats of government in Rhode Island, is presently home to the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, which serves as the Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Office (fig. 2.6). The building is set back from North Main Street along a tree-lined approach walk known as the parade. Several blocks north is St. John's Cathedral (Episcopal), an early Gothic Revival-style building completed in 1811 (fig. 2.7). North of the church is the modern parish house and cathedral close built between 1963 and 1967. South of St. John's at the corner of Howland Street is the site of Roger Williams's house and home lot. Standing at the site of the house is a three-story nineteenth-century building with a 1906 brass plaque that marks the site of Roger Williams's house (fig. 2.8). Between this house

Figure 2.6 (right). The Old State House (1760) looking east from the allee in the national memorial, 2008. This allee was intended to be on axis with the walk to the Old State House. (SUNY ESF.)



Figure 2.7 (above). St. John's Cathedral (1811) looking east from Bernon Grove, 2008. In the foreground is the monument to Gabriel Bernon (c.1953), a founder of the church in 1722. The stone retaining walls are from buildings that were demolished in the 1930s for the creation of Bernon Park. (SUNY ESF.)



Figure 2.8 (above right). The building at 231 North Main Street across from the Hahn Memorial, 2009. The site of Roger Williams's house, commemorated by the plaque between the second and third floors, is at the rear of the building. (Roger Williams National Memorial.)



Figure 2.9 (right). View north along the channelized Moshassuck River with Canal Street and the national memorial to the left, 2009. Along the right are recently completed residential buildings. (Roger Williams National Memorial.)

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and the Old State House are five brick and frame residential buildings constructed in the mid-1970s as part of the Eastside Urban Renewal Plan. At the south corner of the Old State House parade is a city fire station completed in 1952 on the site of a Quaker meetinghouse built in 1844.

Canal Street, a one-way, three-lane asphalt road lined by London planetrees, concrete sidewalks, and ornamental light standards, follows the approximate line of the original shoreline of the Great Salt Cove where Roger Williams landed in 1636 (fig. 2.9). The road now borders the Moshassuck River that runs in a nineteenth-century stone-lined channel. The section of river north of Smith Street was part of the Blackstone Canal, which operated between 1828 and 1848. Several building slabs remain across the channelized river, remnants of the meat-packing plants that dominated the area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Between the river and the state capitol are former rail yards being redeveloped with multi-story residential and commercial buildings.

### **THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL LANDSCAPE**

The following descriptive overview of the Roger Williams National Memorial landscape is organized by two distinct components of the site: the contemporary national memorial landscape designed by Albert Veri & Associates and substantially completed in 1982; and the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial), the memorial completed in 1933 by the city according to the design of architect Norman Isham. The contemporary national memorial landscape includes Bernon Grove and the Antram-Gray house (visitor center), which were altered as part of the national memorial development.

#### **CONTEMPORARY NATIONAL MEMORIAL LANDSCAPE (DRAWINGS 2.1, 2.2)**

The Roger Williams National Memorial landscape recalls elements of American parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in the nineteenth century through its idealized rural character interspersed with formal elements. The landscape consists of open lawn, groves of trees, and brick walks with references to the surrounding neighborhood and prior urban development that existed on the site. Despite these references, the national memorial is largely a self-contained and inward-looking landscape that is separated from adjoining neighborhoods by multi-lane arterial roads.

The operational center of the landscape is the eighteenth-century Antram-Gray house at the northeast corner of the site, which contains the visitor center and park offices (fig. 2.10). The main public entrance to the house faces North Main Street, and the rear faces the interior of the site. While the house serves as the visitor entrance, the national memorial has no obvious main entrance or primary



Figure 2.10 (top left). The Antram-Gray House, location of the visitor center and park offices, looking southwest across North Main Street with the state capitol in the background, 2008. See figure 2.23 for a view of the south side of the building. The main entrance to the building is the door at the left. (SUNY ESF.)



Figure 2.11 (top right). The national memorial entrance sign near the corner of North Main Street and Park Row, one of three such signs, 2008. (SUNY ESF.)



Figure 2.12 (middle left). Steps to the sidewalk and Antram-Gray House visitor center looking east toward North Main Street, 2008. An accessible ramp is to the right of these stairs. In the background is the parish house for St. John's Cathedral. The planters in the ramp structure contain the Native American Three Sisters (corn, beans, squash). (SUNY ESF.)

Figure 2.13 (left). The visitor parking area off Canal Street, view north showing the narrow island planted with London planetrees, 2008. (SUNY ESF.)

access point. Entrance signs are located off three of the four corners of the site (fig. 2.11). The most conspicuous sign for vehicular traffic is at the northwest corner, which faces busy Smith Street and the approach from the state capitol building. Seven walkways and an accessible ramp adjoining the Antram-Gray house provide pedestrian access from the adjoining public sidewalks (fig. 2.12). Parallel parking is available along North Main Street, Park Row, and one side of Canal Street, but the primary vehicular access is from a single-loaded on-site parking lot that is accessed by southbound traffic off Canal Street (fig. 2.13). This asphalt-paved lot, with space for approximately twenty cars, occupies the northwestern edge of the site and is separated from the street by a narrow island planted with London planetrees. As indicated by recently installed metal signs, parking is limited to two hours.

The national memorial landscape is organized into a series of spaces defined by circulation, topography, vegetation, and structures. The north half of the site, from the Roger Williams Spring to Smith Street, has smaller, orthogonal spaces, while the area to the south has larger and more naturalistic spaces. The primary spaces in the northern half include the Roger Williams Spring courtyard, parking lot, Bernon Grove, two gathering areas, a picnic area, and a garden area north of the Antram-Gray house. The southern half of the site is organized around the large oval open space of the amphitheater that is defined by trees and topography. A smaller open lawn is to its north. The grounds peripheral to these areas separate the site from the adjoining streets by their dense plantings of trees.

**Figure 2.14. View south along Walk H, one of the orthogonal walks characteristic of the northern half of the site, 2008. The walk parallels North Main Street (at left) and extends through Bernon Grove. (SUNY ESF.)**



Circulation within the interior of the national memorial consists of a network of brick walks, designated by letters A through H on the original construction drawings. The bricks are laid in running bond, with soldier courses along the edges and a herringbone pattern at the intersections. The walks in the northern

half of the site have an orthogonal pattern that in part follows North Main Street, the Roger Williams Spring, Antram-Gray house, and the former location of narrow side streets known as gangways. Two walks run north-south, one along the parking lot and the other north of the Roger Williams Spring and through Bernon Grove (fig. 2.14). These are connected by three east-west walks, one of which follows the former alignment of Church Street. The eastern end of this walk ramps up to the North Main Street sidewalk and features cobblestone shoulders, stone retaining walls, and stone bollards designed

Figure 2.15 (right). The ramped eastern end of Walk F showing its cobblestone shoulders, stone retaining walls, and stone bollards, looking east with St. John's Cathedral in the background, 2008. The treatment of this walk was intended to recall the character of Church Street, which remains across North Main Street. The walk to the Old State House has a similar cobblestone shoulder. (SUNY ESF.)



Figure 2.16 (above). The gathering place at the flagpole near the ramp structure and Antram-Gray house, looking southeast, 2008. The trees in the background are part of Bernon Grove. (SUNY ESF.)

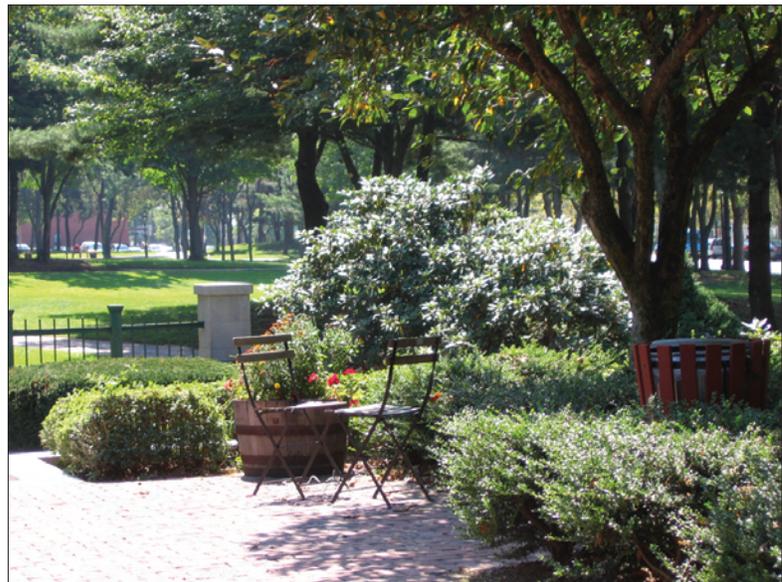


Figure 2.17 (middle right). The crabapple terrace with bistro chairs on the former Katz lot near the Hahn Memorial, looking south, 2008. The terrace serves as one of two visitor gathering areas. (SUNY ESF.)



Figure 2.18 (lower right). View southwest along the northern half of Walk A, the long oval walk that frames the amphitheater, 2008. (SUNY ESF.)

as visual connections to the old street (fig. 2.15). At either end of Walk H, the brick surfaces broaden into rectangular terraces used as visitor gathering areas. The primary one is centered at a flagpole near the Antram-Gray house (2.16). This terrace also extends into a two-space parking area for park vehicles. The second terrace is at the southern end of Walk H on the former undeveloped northern half of Roger Williams Spring Park (former Katz Lot). Known as the crabapple terrace, this area features bistro chairs that are set out seasonally (fig. 2.17).

**Figure 2.19 (below, top).** The stone-wall overlook along Walk A looking northwest with the Rhode Island capitol in the distance, 2008. (SUNY ESF.)

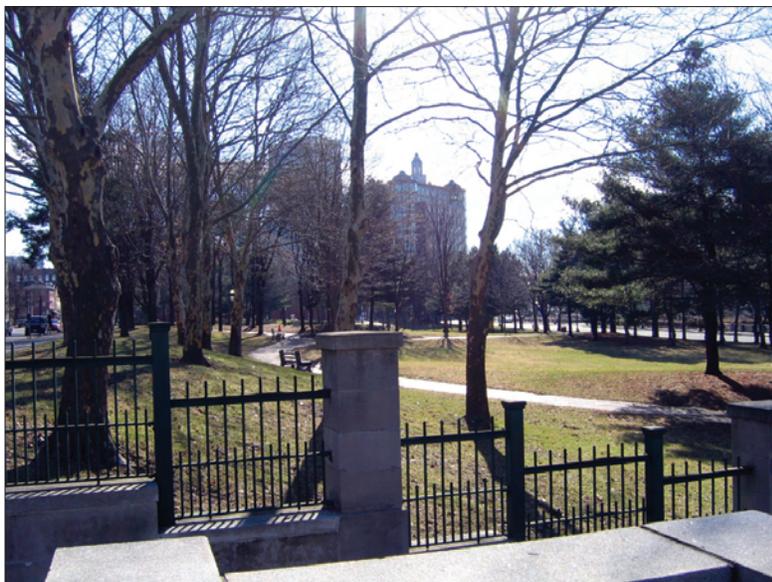
**Figure 2.20 (below, bottom).** View southwest from the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) showing the subtle topography of the southern half of the national memorial landscape, 2008. (SUNY ESF.)

Circulation in the southern half of the landscape is dominated by a large oval walk (Walk A) that frames the amphitheater (fig. 2.18). This walk terminates at the two south entrances to the site. At the middle of the walk off North Main Street is an overlook across the amphitheater lined by a half-circle stone wall (fig. 2.19). This overlook originally provided a vista of the Rhode Island capitol, now partially obstructed by trees. South of the overlook, Walk A is bisected by an allee (Walk

C) that is a continuation of the Old State House parade across North Main Street (see fig. 2.6). The allee is off-center with the Old State House parade.

The national memorial landscape features subtle topographic changes that define spaces and enclose the landscape from the adjoining streets (fig. 2.20). These changes respond to the overall drop in elevation of approximately twelve feet from North Main Street to Canal Street that is a remnant of the natural shoreline of the Great Salt Cove. The primary topographic feature is the bowl of the amphitheater, which has a twelve-foot elevation change from the overlook on the east side along North Main Street and is level with Canal Street on the west. The northern half of the landscape is largely flat due to retaining walls along North Main Street. Low berms screen the parking areas and provide variety to the shaded lawn west of the Antram-Gray house.

Vegetation consists of turf and groves of coniferous and deciduous trees, with small areas of groundcover and understory shrubs. The only trees on the site that





predate construction of the national memorial are the nine Norway maples in Bernon Grove that were planted by the city in 1953 (see fig. 2.14). The majority of the trees elsewhere consist of informal groupings along the perimeter and walks. Species include white fir, red maple, sugar maple, thornless honeylocust, London planetree, Austrian pine, Eastern white pine, and Japanese black pine. The lower canopies of these trees are pruned to a consistent height of approximately twelve feet above the ground (fig. 2.21). The Old State House allee (Walk C) is lined by elms, and the crabapple terrace is surrounded by a grove of pruned Siberian crabapples (fig. 2.22, see also fig 2.6). The triangular intersection of Walks A, B, and D is planted with an understory of rhododendrons, and low clipped hedges of privet and yew line the North Main Street sidewalk from the Roger Williams Spring to the Antram-Gray house.



The landscape outside the spring courtyard contains small herbaceous beds at the three entrance signs and on the berm surrounding the staff parking area. The park also maintains whiskey-barrel planters along



**Figure 2.21 (top).** Looking southwest across the amphitheater from the overlook showing a typical massing of coniferous and deciduous trees, with raised canopies, 2008. The young tree at left is a tuliptree planted in 2007 to commemorate the spirit of liberty. (SUNY ESF.)

**Figure 2.22 (middle).** The grove of pruned Siberian crabapples that enclose the Katz lot terrace, view looking south, 2008. The understory shrubs are Japanese holly. (SUNY ESF.)

**Figure 2.23 (bottom).** Whiskey-barrel planters and the interpretive plantings of the Three Sisters in the ramp structure, looking north toward the Antram-Gray house, 2008. (SUNY ESF.)



Figure 2.24 (above). The six raised beds planted to interpret a colonial kitchen garden, looking east with St. John's Cathedral parish house in the background, 2008. (SUNY ESF.)

Walk H and the North Main Street sidewalk; plantings of corn, squash and beans in the planters of the ramp structure next to the Antram-Gray house to interpret the Native American "Three Sisters;" and herbs, vegetables, and flowers in six raised beds along the north side of the Antram-Gray house to interpret a colonial kitchen garden (figs. 2.23, 2.24).

The national memorial landscape includes a variety of small-scale features. Most prominent are colonial-style cast-iron light standards with gaslight-type luminaires located along the walks with several new

units installed in 2009 along the parking area and in the spring courtyard (fig. 2.25). These light standards match those on nearby Benefit Street in the College Hill Historic District. Park benches and garbage receptacles, sometimes grouped



Figure 2.25 (left) A typical light standard, garbage receptacle, and interpretive wayside near the corner of Walk G and the flagpole terrace, 2008. (SUNY ESF.)



Figure 2.26 (right). A typical directional sign with a bench and picnic tables, looking east toward Bernon Grove, 2008. (SUNY ESF.)

together with light standards on brick and cobblestone pads, feature wood slats painted a deep red. Picnic tables in the picnic area near Bernon Grove are a standard moveable wood design. Directional signs are painted the same deep red as the benches, with contrasting gray wood posts and incised text with a colonial-style uppercase font (fig. 2.26). These signs are one of several types in the national memorial. Others include standard National Park Service brown metal signs and interpretive waysides featuring metal frames and angled signboards (see fig.



Figure 2.27 (top, far left). The Snowtown Riot monument, view southeast from Smith Street, 2008. (SUNY ESF.)



Figure 2.28 (top, left). The Tree of New Hope marker in Walk B near the Hahn Memorial, 2008. (SUNY ESF.)



Figure 2.29 (bottom, far right). The marker for the white fir south of the Old State House alley commemorating the U. S. Constitution bicentennial, 2008. (SUNY ESF.)



Figure 2.30 (bottom, right). The staked marker for the tuliptree along the east side of the amphitheater commemorating the spirit of liberty, 2008. (SUNY ESF.)

2.25). Colonial-style illustrated signs are also used to interpret the colonial kitchen garden raised beds along Smith Street and the Three Sisters plantings at the ramp (see fig. 2.23).

Other small-scale features in the landscape are two monuments and three small markers. These include the Gabriel Bernon monument, an inscribed upright gray granite monument in Bernon Grove dating to c.1953 (see fig. 2.7); a bronze plaque (cast in c.1986) on a granite rock commemorating the 1831 Snowtown Riot, installed in 2002 near the Smith Street sidewalk (fig. 2.27); a flush granite marker set in Walk B just outside the Roger Williams Spring courtyard marking the “Tree of New Hope” and installed in 1980 (fig. 2.28); another flush granite marker placed in 1987 to mark a white fir planted in commemoration of the U.S. Constitution bicentennial (fig. 2.29); and a small bronze plaque on a stake marking a tuliptree planted in 2007 along the east side of the amphitheater to commemorate the spirit of liberty (fig. 2.30). There are no monuments or markers in the contemporary landscape commemorating Roger Williams.

### **ROGER WILLIAMS SPRING (HAHN MEMORIAL) (DRAWING 2.3)**

The courtyard of Roger Williams Spring, originally a city park built in 1931-1933, forms a physically distinct area within the national memorial defined by its enclosing walls and architectural character that contrast with the surrounding landscape (fig. 2.31). It is a tenth-acre Colonial Revival-style landscape with a



monumental, gated entrance on North Main Street and two connecting walks to the national memorial landscape. When viewed from the contemporary west entrance walk, there is a sense of the original urban setting of the Hahn Memorial with the buildings along the east side of North Main Street in the background (fig. 2.32).



The Roger Williams Spring courtyard is spatially organized into a lower terrace and a grand stairway that ascends the approximately eleven-foot grade change up to North Main Street. The terrace is defined by a wall and fence along the south side, a wall and hedge on the north side, the stairway on the east, and plantings on the west side (fig. 2.33). The stairway features three small landings enclosed by waist-high walls that overlook the terrace, and fences and gates that separate the memorial from North Main Street (fig. 2.34, see also fig. 2.31).

The stairway structure is integral to the limestone-clad retaining walls along the

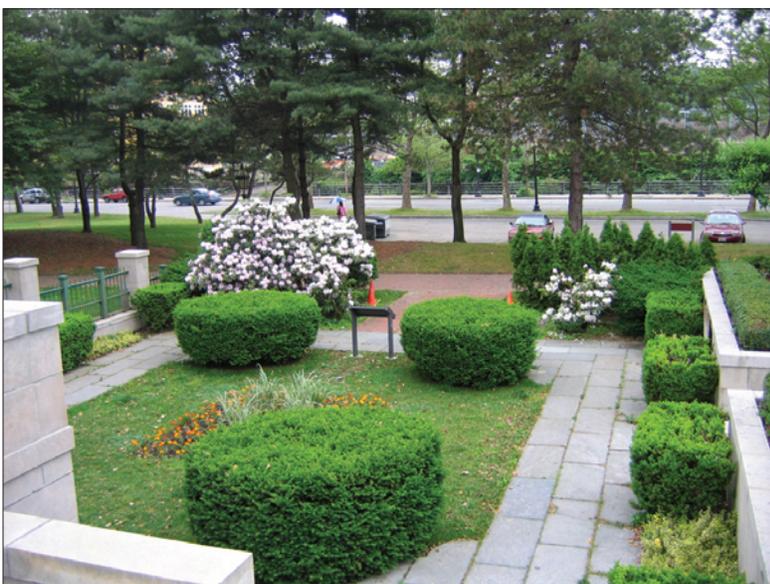


Figure 2.31 (top). The front of the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) looking northwest across North Main Street, 2008. The granite monument along the curb, which commemorates the spring as the site where Williams founded Providence, is not within the national memorial. (SUNY ESF)

Figure 2.32 (middle). The Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) looking east from the adjoining landscape with historic buildings along North Main Street in the background, 2008. The arborvitae hedge in the foreground aligns with the wall of a building that originally enclosed the west side of the courtyard. (SUNY ESF)

Figure 2.33 (bottom). Looking west across the courtyard from the stairway showing enclosure by walls, fences, and vegetation, 2008. In the background is the national memorial parking area and Canal Street. (SUNY ESF)



south, east, and north sides of the courtyard. On the west face of the stairway, the walls step in to form two shallow alcoves to either side of a central section that houses a utility room, accessed from a doorway in the south alcove (fig. 2.35). Along North Main Street and the south side that originally lined Alamo Lane, the perimeter walls are surmounted by limestone piers spanned by green-painted steel fences with posts and pickets. The wall and fence along the south are stepped to accommodate the outside topography (fig. 2.36). Along the north side of the terrace, the wall is a consistent height of approximately three feet (see fig. 2.33). At the west end of this wall is an extension built in c.1981 to accommodate a grade change that resulted from removal of a building that stood on the site.



The original pattern of circulation in the Roger Williams Spring courtyard begins at the main entrance gate on North Main Street. The entrances most used by visitors are at the back (west) side of the courtyard facing the interior of the national memorial landscape and at a set of steps to Walk H and the crabapple terrace to the north (see figs. 2.32, 2.33). The original entrance includes a short flight of steps



**Figure 2.34 (top).** View west through the entrance gates of the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) at the upper stairway landing showing enclosure by low walls, 2008. (SUNY ESF)

**Figure 2.35 (middle).** The steps of the main stairway looking east along the south side of the courtyard, 2008. This photograph also shows the bluestone walks, octagonal well curb, and the doorway into the utility room within the stairway structure. (SUNY ESF)

**Figure 2.36 (bottom).** The stepped south wall and fence along the former site of Alamo Lane, 2008. (SUNY ESF)

from the sidewalk to the first landing. From here, the circulation divides into two symmetrical flanking sets of steps down to the terrace. The steps are gray granite and the landings are paved in replacement off-white square ceramic tiles (see fig. 2.34). Circulation on the terrace is defined by a rectangular bluestone-paved walk that extends out from the stairway structure and defines a central parterre. The inside corners of the walks feature reverse-curve edges that are presently obscured by shrubs. Many of the joints are weedy. The steps on the north side of the walk through the retaining wall originally provided access to the unrealized northern half of Roger Williams Spring Park on the former Katz lot (fig. 2.37). On the west side of the bluestone walk is a brick walk constructed in c.1981 that provides access to Walk B (see fig. 2.32).

Vegetation in the Roger Williams Spring courtyard consists of turf, shrubs, and herbaceous plantings. The perimeter of the terrace is framed on the north and



**Figure 2.37. The north entrance to the Roger Williams Spring courtyard leading to the crabapple terrace and Walk H, view north with the Antram-Gray house visible in the background, 2008. (SUNY ESF)**

south sides by rectangular clipped yews that alternate with variegated wintercreeper in its natural habit (see fig. 2.33). A clipped privet hedge is along the north perimeter wall. The west perimeter is planted in an asymmetrical massing including an unclipped arborvitae hedge along the outer edge, rhododendron, unclipped yew, and annuals including cleome and New Guinea impatiens (2008). The east side of the bluestone walk, adjoining the stairway structure, has a narrow unplanted bed along the central section. The alcoves were originally extensions of this bed, but are now paved in bluestone. The parterre or central area of the terrace is lawn with large clipped yew shrubs at three of the four corners, balancing the fourth corner containing the spring wellcurb. The middle of the parterre contains a rectangular bed surrounding a drain. This bed is planted with ornamental grasses in the center, surrounded by marigolds (2008 plantings). Other flowering annuals are in planters integral to the walls at either side of the upper and lower stairs. These are planted with Fischer geraniums and marigolds (2008).

The primary small-scale feature at the Roger Williams Spring is the wellcurb containing the purported source of the old town spring. This octagonal wellcurb, part of the original 1933 park, is built of limestone and sits on a circular granite plinth (see fig. 2.35). The wellcurb surmounts an earlier stone-lined well, which retains water at a level approximately five feet below the top of the wellcurb (fig.



**Figure 2.38.** The interior of the spring well showing the existing water level (leaf-covered) and lower fern-lined stone walls that predate the courtyard. The upper limestone section was added in c.1933. (Roger Williams National Memorial, 2009.)

2.38). The stone walls are covered in moss and ferns. The source and outlet for the well are not known.

Aside from the wellcurb, other small-scale features within the Roger Williams Spring courtyard include the entrance gates, which are hung from two limestone piers that contain bronze plaques facing North Main Street (see fig. 2.31). The plaque on the south pier commemorates the spring that served as the original water source for Roger Williams and the settlers of Providence that was reserved for perpetual public use in 1721. The plaque on the north pier commemorates the gift of the land by Judge Jerome Hahn in

memory of his father, Isaac Hahn, the first citizen of Jewish faith elected to public office in Providence. Inside the gates, there are two contemporary concrete urns on the landing planted with geraniums and marigolds (2008). On the terrace, the only small-scale feature is an interpretive wayside at the west edge of the parterre (see fig. 2.33).

## ENDNOTES

1 Roger Williams National Memorial website, [www.nps.gov/rowi](http://www.nps.gov/rowi), (accessed 10 July 2009); National Park Service, *The Compass* (Roger Williams National Memorial newsletter), spring 2009, 3; National Park Service, brochure for John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (Government Printing Office, 2005).

2 Roger Williams National Memorial website; communication with park staff by authors, 2008.

3 *The Compass*, 2, 4.

# Cultural Landscape Report

## Roger Williams National Memorial

Providence, Rhode Island

### Existing Conditions (South)



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
www.nps.gov/oclp

in partnership with:  
Department of Landscape Architecture  
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry  
www.esf.edu/la/

#### SOURCES

1. C&W, ROWI Exist. condition plans, 5/1981
2. AVA, C&W, ROWI Layout, planting plans, 5/1981
3. AVA, C&W, ROWI Layout, planting plans, 7/1982
4. Aerial photograph, c.2006
5. Field inspection, 2008-10

#### DRAWN BY

John Auwaerter  
Illustrator CS 3, 2010

#### LEGEND

- Building
- Walk (concrete / brick)
- 1' contour
- Lawn
- Bare earth or mulch
- Groundcover or herbaceous bed
- Deciduous/broadleaf evergreen tree, shrub
- Coniferous tree, shrub
- Clipped shrub, hedge
- Interpretive sign
- Bench, garbage receptacle
- Light standard, park/city

#### NOTES

1. Plan shows conditions in 2008-09.
2. All features shown in approximate scale and location.
3. Contours shown only in project area and not in Roger Williams Spring; plan does not show minor signs.
4. NPS property line is assumed to be inside of sidewalk.

**Drawing 2.1**



Tree & Shrub Key			
Ac	White fir <i>Abies concolor</i>	Pt	Japanese black pine <i>Pinus thunbergi</i>
Ar	Red maple <i>Acer rubrum</i>	Pa	London planetree <i>Platanus acerifolia</i>
As	Sugar maple <i>Acer saccharum</i>	Pn	Austrian pine <i>Pinus nigra</i>
Gt	Thornless honeylocust <i>Gleditsia triacanthos inermis</i>	Ps	Eastern white pine <i>Pinus strobus</i>
		Px	Spruce (species not known) <i>Picea sp.</i>
		Ux	Elm (species not known) <i>Ulmus sp.</i>
		Rh	Rhododendron <i>Rhododendron spp.</i>

Flowering annuals reflect 2008 plantings



# Cultural Landscape Report

## Roger Williams National Memorial

Providence, Rhode Island

### Existing Conditions (North)



**National Park Service**  
**Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation**  
[www.nps.gov/oclp](http://www.nps.gov/oclp)

**in partnership with:**  
**Department of Landscape Architecture**  
**SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry** [www.esf.edu/la/](http://www.esf.edu/la/)

#### SOURCES

1. C&W, ROWI Exist. condition plans, 5/1981
2. AVA, C&W, ROWI Layout, planting plans, 5/1981
3. AVA, C&W, ROWI Layout, planting plans, 7/1982
4. Aerial photograph, c.2006
5. Field inspection, 2008-10

#### DRAWN BY

John Auwaerter  
 Illustrator CS 3, 2010

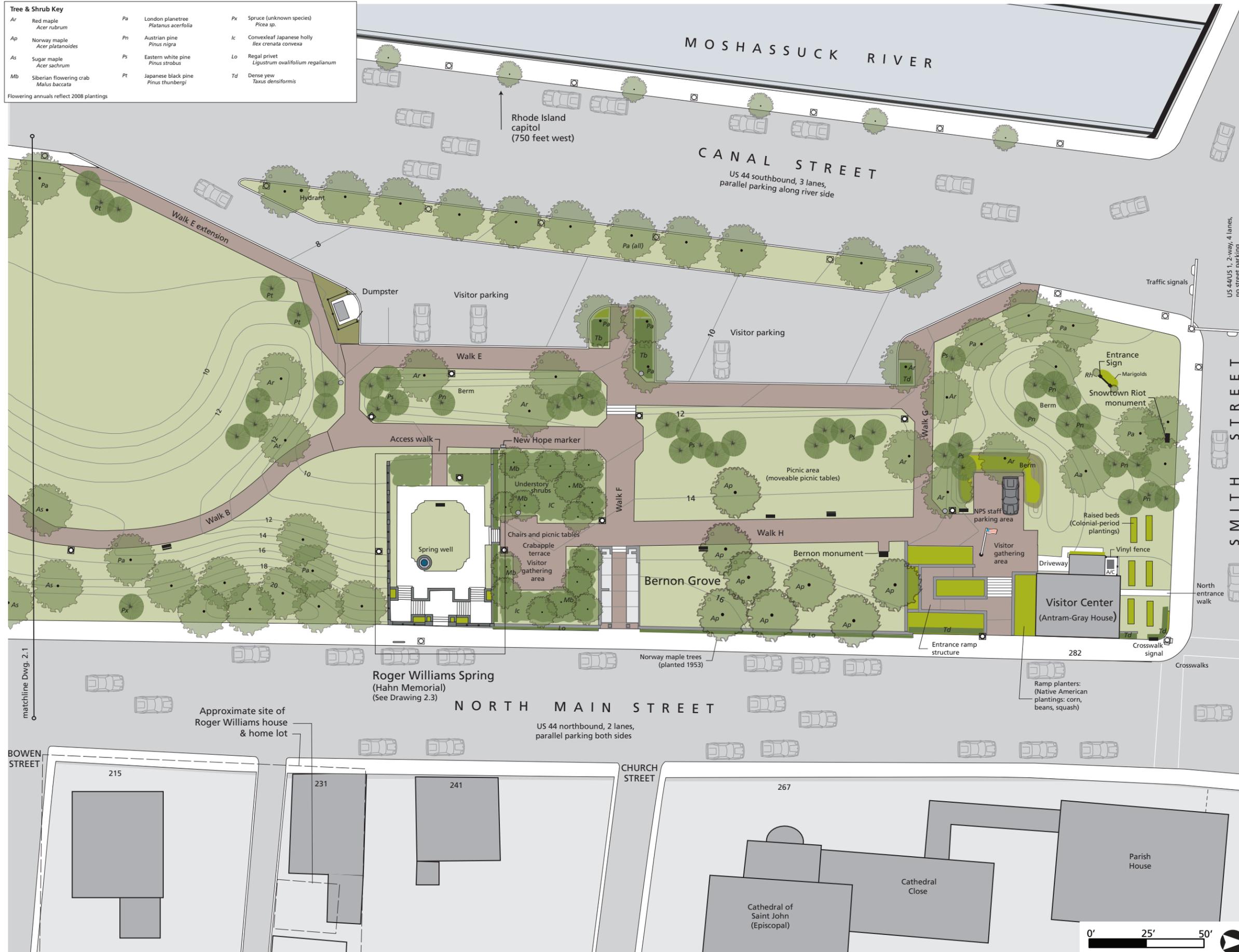
#### LEGEND

- Building
- Street with sidewalk, street address
- 1' contour
- Lawn
- Bare earth or mulch
- Groundcover or herbaceous bed
- Deciduous/broadleaf evergreen tree, shrub
- Coniferous tree, shrub
- Clipped shrub, hedge
- Interpretive sign
- Bench, garbage receptacle
- Light standard, park / city

#### NOTES

1. Plan shows conditions in 2008-09.
2. All features shown in approximate scale and location.
3. Contours not shown in context or in Roger Williams Spring; plan does not show minor signs.
4. NPS property line is assumed to be inside of sidewalk.

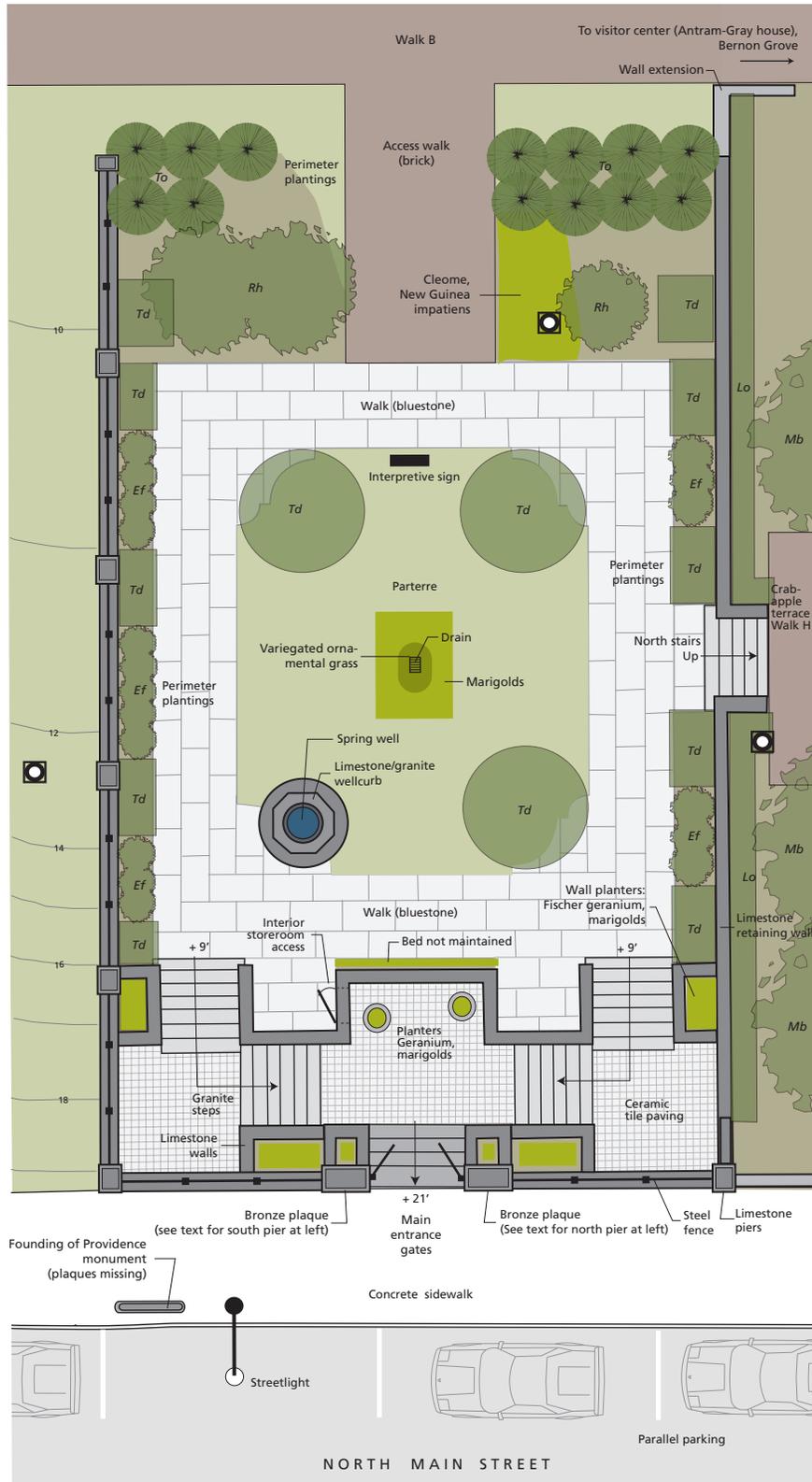
**Drawing 2.2**



Tree & Shrub Key			
Ar	Red maple <i>Acer rubrum</i>	Px	Spruce (unknown species) <i>Picea sp.</i>
Ap	Norway maple <i>Acer platanoides</i>	Pn	Austrian pine <i>Pinus nigra</i>
As	Sugar maple <i>Acer saccharum</i>	Ps	Eastern white pine <i>Pinus strobus</i>
Mb	Siberian flowering crab <i>Malus baccata</i>	Pt	Japanese black pine <i>Pinus thunbergi</i>
		Pa	London planetree <i>Platanus acerifolia</i>
		Pc	Convexleaf Japanese holly <i>Ilex crenata convexa</i>
		Lo	Regal privet <i>Ligustrum ovalifolium regalianum</i>
		Td	Dense yew <i>Taxus densiformis</i>

Flowering annuals reflect 2008 plantings

See drawing 2.2 for surrounding landscape



**South Pier Plaque**

THE  
SPRING ON THIS LOT  
THE ORIGINAL WATER SUPPLY  
AROUND WHICH  
ROGER WILLIAMS  
GATHERED  
THE FIRST SETTLERS  
WAS IN 1721 BY RESERVATION  
IN DEED FROM THE  
PROPRIETORS OF  
PROVIDENCE  
MADE ACCESSIBLE TO  
THE TOWNSPEOPLE  
FOREVER

**North Pier Plaque**

THIS  
PLOT OF GROUND WAS  
IN 1931  
GIVEN TO THE CITY OF  
PROVIDENCE  
BY J JEROME HAHN  
IN MEMORY OF HIS FATHER  
ISAC HAHN  
THE FIRST CITIZEN OF  
JEWISH FAITH TO BE  
ELECTED TO OFFICE  
BY THE VOTERS  
OF  
PROVIDENCE

**Tree & Shrub Key**

- Ef Wintercreeper  
*Euonymus fortunei* "Emerald 'n Gold"
- Lo Regal privet  
*Ligustrum ovalifolium* regalianum
- Mb Siberian flowering crab  
*Malus baccata*
- Rh Rhododendron  
*Rhododendron* sp.
- Td Dense yew  
*Taxus densiformis*
- To American arborvitae  
*Thuja occidentalis*

Flowering annuals reflect 2008 plantings



**Cultural Landscape Report**  
**Roger Williams**  
**National Memorial**  
Providence, Rhode Island

**Existing Conditions**  
**Roger Williams Spring**  
**(Hahn Memorial)**



National Park Service  
**Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation**

www.nps.gov/oclp

in partnership with  
Department of Landscape Architecture  
SUNY College of Environmental Science  
and Forestry www.esf.edu/la/

**SOURCES**

1. Isham, Hahn Memorial plans, 1931-33
2. Field inspection, 2008-2009

**DRAWN BY**

John Auwaerter  
Illustrator CS 3, 2010

**NOTES**

1. Plan shows conditions in 2008-9.
2. All features shown in approximate scale and location.

**Drawing 2.3**





### **3. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION**

The cultural landscape of the Roger Williams National Memorial is largely a contemporary resource on a site designated by Congress as having national significance for commemorating Roger Williams’s outstanding contributions to the nation’s principles of freedom. Only two parts of the landscape—the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) and the Antram-Gray house—contain above-ground historic resources. To assess the overall significance, the first part of this chapter reviews existing National Register documentation for the site and provides recommendations for updating it based on the findings of this cultural landscape report. The second part uses methods described in *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques* (National Park Service, 1998) to evaluate the historic character of the cultural landscape.

#### **NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION**

Roger Williams National Memorial is significant, as legislated by Congress, for commemorating Roger Williams and his contributions to the principals of freedom in the United States. In summary, this cultural landscape report finds that the existing site design (Albert Veri-designed landscape completed in 1982) does not contribute to the significance of the national memorial. The Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) is significant in its own right under National Register Criterion A for its association with the history of commemoration in Providence, and under Criterion C as a representative example of early twentieth-century landscape design by architect Norman M. Isham. Bernon Grove does not appear to meet the criteria due to lack of significance and integrity. The Antram-Gray house, initially constructed in c.1729, is significant under National Register Criteria A and C as one of the earliest surviving buildings in Providence. The Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) and Antram-Gray house are significant at the local and state levels as contributing resources in the National Register-listed College Hill Historic District. Neither resource contributes to the national significance of the national memorial.

#### **EXISTING NATIONAL REGISTER DOCUMENTATION**

As an historic area of the National Park System, Roger Williams National Memorial was administratively listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 15, 1966 upon creation of the program. The listing for Roger Williams National Memorial was entered without documentation under National Register Criterion A (association with historic events) and Criterion B (association with historic persons), with Criteria Considerations A (religious properties) and F (commemorative properties).<sup>1</sup> The site at the time was still occupied by buildings, streets, Roger Williams Spring Park (Hahn Memorial), and Bernon Park (Bernon

Grove). A draft National Register inventory-nomination form was prepared by Ricardo Torres-Reyes, historian in the North Atlantic Region of the National Park Service in 1976. This documentation, written prior to construction of the landscape in 1980-82, was not certified by the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Keeper of the National Register.<sup>2</sup>

Roger Williams National Memorial is also included within the College Hill Historic District. The origins of this district trace back to 1970, when the area east of North Main Street across from the national memorial was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the College Hill Historic District under National Register Criteria A and C, and Criteria Consideration C (graves). The district was documented for its significance as the site of the original settlement of Providence Plantations in 1636, for illustrating the historic growth of the city in its political, social, and educational institutions, and for its architecture spanning the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. The significance of the district was reinforced with its designation as a National Historic Landmark on December 30, 1970. In August 1976, the National Register listing was amended through an expansion of the district that included, among other areas, the site of Roger Williams National Memorial. The National Historic Landmark designation was not expanded to include the enlarged National Register district.<sup>3</sup>

To date, two resources within Roger Williams National Memorial, aside from the congressionally legislated site, have been determined eligible for National Register listing through consultation with the Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). As part of the List of Classified Structures inventory (LCS), the National Park Service requested concurrence with the SHPO on its opinion that the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) was a contributing component of the National Register-listed College Hill Historic District, and that the Antram-Gray house was not due to lack of historic integrity (based on its relocation). In a letter dated February 19, 1996, the SHPO concurred with the park service's opinion on the Roger Williams Spring, but disagreed with its opinion on the Antram-Gray house. The park service subsequently agreed to concur with the SHPO's opinion on the eligibility of the Antram-Gray house.<sup>4</sup>

#### **LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT FOR EVALUATION**

National memorials, established by authority of Congress through individual enabling legislation that articulates purpose and significance, present a number of issues on how to apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.<sup>5</sup> In general, evaluation requires an understanding of how Congress defined the significance of the national memorial and what resources are intrinsic to its commemorative purpose.

Established through acts of Congress as historic areas of the National Park System, all national memorials are administratively listed in the National Register of Historic Places upon their creation.<sup>6</sup> Commemorative properties not listed through an act of Congress or Executive Order generally must meet National Register Criteria Consideration F, which reads: “A property primarily commemorative in intent can be eligible if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance.”<sup>7</sup> The intent of this is to ensure that significance is based on the physical resource rather than on the associated person or event. For national memorials, however, Congress establishes through legislation that the site is invested with its own exceptional significance. Therefore, Criteria Consideration F does not apply.

The definition of what resources are intrinsic to the commemorative purpose of national memorials can be open to interpretation depending on the content of the enabling legislation. The intrinsic resources—generally recognized as “the memorial”—may take a variety of forms, from a sculpture or monument, to a building or landscape. The iconic temple completed in 1922 to the design of Henry Bacon with a sculpture of Lincoln by Daniel Chester French is intrinsic to the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.<sup>8</sup> The 1842 Customs House is intrinsic to Federal Hall National Memorial, designated by Congress to commemorate the site of the nation’s first capitol where George Washington took the oath of office.<sup>9</sup> The Lawrence Halprin-designed series of landscape rooms is intrinsic to the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Memorial in Washington DC. This memorial was completed nearly forty years after Congress designated the site in West Potomac Park in 1959.<sup>10</sup> At other national memorials, the memorial is the site itself. Congress established Chamizal National Memorial near El Paso, Texas, in 1968 on formerly disputed land to commemorate the Chamizal Convention of 1963 that settled a U.S.-Mexico boundary dispute. The memorial is a fifty-five-acre tract of border territory.<sup>11</sup>

When Congress clearly defines a preexisting resource as significant for its commemorative value, then its evaluation as intrinsic to the national memorial is clear. The situation is less clear at the many national memorials that were built after Congress designated the sites. In these cases, the resources within the national memorial are intrinsic or otherwise significant if they were the product of a planning and design process established by Congress in the legislation for the national memorial. At the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Memorial, the Lawrence Halprin-designed memorial is intrinsic to the national memorial because it was built at the direction of a commission created by Congress for that purpose. In other cases, such as DeSoto National Memorial near Tampa Bay, Florida, established in 1948, Congress simply directed the Secretary of the Interior to construct a “suitable memorial, together with such connecting roads

and public facilities as may be desirable.”<sup>12</sup> Congress was not specific about its intent for the memorial and therefore the memorial was designed according to the National Park Service planning process. As a result, the park service did not erect a traditional memorial, but rather commemorated Hernando de Soto’s landing at the site in 1539 by interpreting the site’s natural and cultural history.<sup>13</sup>

For the Roger Williams National Memorial, the legislation passed by Congress on October 22, 1965 directed the Secretary of the Interior to acquire a site for the national memorial not to exceed five acres that would include “. . . the site of the old town spring, traditionally called Roger Williams Spring, in Providence, Rhode Island.” (Complete legislation in Appendix A.) As with DeSoto National Memorial, however, Congress was not specific about its intent for the resource that would be intrinsic to the commemorative purpose of the site. The only resource that Congress deemed intrinsic was the property between Canal and North Main Streets. Congress did not establish a commission to direct the development of Roger Williams National Memorial, nor did it identify resources that existed within the site in 1965 as significant, notably Roger Williams Spring Park (Hahn Memorial) with its well that tradition held to be the source of the spring.

Because there was no legislatively determined design process for the national memorial, the National Park Service implemented its planning process for development of the site. The initial concepts produced in the early 1970s featured memorials ranging from a fountain symbolic of the spring, a central sculptural feature, and a long granite wall with sculpture and inscriptions. The earliest concepts called for removing the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial). Through public comment, however, the park service decided to retain the courtyard intact, but not as the memorial’s commemorative feature, but rather as a distinct historic resource. As documented in the site history chapter of this report, the final design concept selected in 1977 featured a landscape park with a central water feature that would serve as the intrinsic memorial. Based on public comment, however, the park service removed the proposed memorial water feature from the concept.

As built in 1980-82 according to the design of Albert Veri & Associates based on the approved National Park Service concept, the site design for Roger Williams National Memorial was an idealized rural landscape of trees, lawn, and walks intended to serve as the setting for contemplating and interpreting Roger Williams’s significance in American history. Unlike most national memorials, the completed site design did not include any features that were intrinsic to the commemorative purpose as legislated by Congress, nor did the site include major features interpreting the significance of Roger Williams. The National Park Service

did not intend the Hahn Memorial, as its park-designated name implies, as the memorial to Roger Williams.<sup>14</sup>

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL REGISTER DOCUMENTATION**

Although Roger Williams National Memorial is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, it lacks accepted documentation that describes its resources and significance. The following recommendations are intended to address landscape-related resources in future preparation of National Register documentation. This evaluation includes most resources on the property, but does not evaluate architectural significance of the Antram-Gray House under National Register Criterion C, or archeological significance of the property under Criterion D. Additional research and evaluation would be required to fully document all areas of historic significance for all resources, such as through amended National Register documentation and updates to the park's List of Classified Structures (LCS) and Archeological Sites Management Information System (ASMIS).

#### **List of National Register Resources<sup>15</sup>**

##### ***Site of the Old Town Spring (1 contributing site, national significance)***

Traditionally known as the Roger Williams Spring, this water source was located at the center of the original settlement of Providence Plantations. No documentation exists on the exact location and appearance of the spring during Roger Williams's lifetime in Providence between 1636 and 1683. Although the outlet of the spring is traditionally believed to be the wellcurb in the existing Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial), the contributing site is the entire national memorial property.

***Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) (1 contributing site, state/local significance):*** This is the courtyard completed by the city in 1933 according to the design of architect Norman M. Isham.

***Antram-Gray House (1 contributing building, state/local significance):*** This is a relocated eighteenth-century building housing the national memorial visitor center and offices.

***Contemporary National Memorial Landscape (1 non-contributing site):*** This includes the landscape and all of its features built in 1980-82 according to the design of Albert Veri & Associates and park service planners, including berms, walks, walls, ramps, terraces, signs, flagpole, light standards, benches, trees, parking lot, shrubs, and lawn.

***Bernon Grove (1 non-contributing site):*** This is the former city-owned Bernon Park developed in the early 1950s containing a grove of Norway maples. It is surrounded by the contemporary national memorial landscape.

***Gabriel Bernon Monument (1 non-contributing object):*** This is a small upright granite tablet within Bernon Grove that was placed in c.1953 and moved a short distance for construction of the national memorial. The monument reads: “Near This Spot Lived/Gabriel Bernon/A Huguenot Refugee/Born LaRochelle France/April 6, 1644/Died Providence/February 1, 1736/Merchant Colonizer Churchman.”

***Tree of New Hope Marker (1 non-contributing object):*** This is a small granite marker set within the brick walk (Walk B) west of the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial). The marker reads: “This tree was dedicated The Tree of New Hope by People in the State of Hope, March 24, 1980.”

***Snowtown Riot Monument (1 non-contributing object):*** This is a rustic granite monument with a bronze plaque placed near Smith Street in 2002 by the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society to mark the site of the Snowtown Riot of 1831. The plaque reads: “Snowtown Riot 1831/The Site Of The Second Major Riot Between Providence Afro-American Residents And White Workers/A Project Of The Rhode Island Black Heritage Society.”

***U.S. Constitution Bicentennial Marker (1 non-contributing object):*** This is a flush granite tablet placed along Walk A south of the Old State House allee in 1987 to commemorate the bicentennial of the United States Constitution. The inscription reads: “This white fir the Rhode Island/Living Legacy to the/U.S. Constitution Bicentennial/Arbor Day April 24, 1987/R.I. Nurserymens Association/R.I. Division of Forest Environment/R.I. Society of American Foresters/R.I. Tree Farmers.”

***Liberty Tree Marker (1 non-contributing object):*** This is a small bronze plaque marking a tuliptree (yellow poplar) planted during Rhode Island Arbor Day 2007 to commemorate the spirit of liberty. It is located along the eastern edge of the amphitheater. The marker has fourteen lines of text identifying the tuliptree and describing its origin and historical associations.

***Founding of Providence Monument (Outside of national memorial):*** This is the granite monument on the city sidewalk in front of the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) installed with federal funds in 1928. The monument is graffiti covered and is missing its two bronze tablets. The tablet facing the street read: “Roger Williams Founded Providence Here in 1636.” The tablet facing the park read:

“The spring of clear, cold water located 30 feet west of this point led Roger Williams to found Providence here in the year 1636, from which centre it has developed in four directions.” The location of the two tablets is not known. While outside federal ownership, the marker should be considered for inclusion in National Register documentation for the national memorial because of its historic relationship and physical proximity to the Roger Williams Spring.

#### **Proposed Statement of Significance**

Roger Williams National Memorial is significant as a congressionally designated national memorial with resources that are historically significant at the state and local level as part of the National Register-listed College Hill Historic District.<sup>16</sup> The following statement of significance, intended to inform future National Register documentation, pertains to the landscape and does not address the Antram-Gray house that is significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture, or other areas of significance not related to the landscape, such as archeology and collections.

**National Memorial Site:** As designated by Congress in 1965, Roger Williams National Memorial derives its national significance “in commemoration of his [Roger Williams] outstanding contributions to the development of the principles of freedom in this country” (79 Stat. 1069). The property meets two National Register Criteria: Criterion A in the areas of religion and politics/government for its association with the history of religious freedom and the establishment of civil law; and Criterion B for its association with Roger Williams, who founded Providence and championed the separation of church and state.

The primary resource associated with the national memorial is the site that was the location of the old town spring where Roger Williams founded Providence in 1636. The exact location of the spring within the site, now underground, is not known. The stone well in the Roger Williams Spring courtyard (Hahn Memorial) is traditionally held to contain the head (outlet) of the spring. The national memorial site was common land in the Providence settlement. While Williams did not own or live on any part of the site, he did live most of his life across from the site on the east side of North Main Street until his death in 1683.

None of the existing above-ground resources contribute to the significance of the congressionally authorized national memorial site. Congress did not identify the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) as intrinsic to the commemorative purpose of the national memorial in the 1965 legislation. Park planners also did not intend the site design, as built according to plans by Albert Veri & Association in 1980-82, as a commemorative feature of the site, but rather as an enhancement

to the setting. The Roger Williams Spring and the contemporary landscape therefore do not contribute to the significance of the national memorial.

***Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial):*** The Roger Williams Spring, built in 1931-33 as Roger Williams Spring Park, is significant at the state and local levels under National Register Criterion A in the area of commemoration, and under Criterion C in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture. The courtyard meets Criteria Consideration F (commemorative properties) because its significance is derived from its value as a cultural expression at the date of creation. The courtyard is over fifty years old and possesses significance in its own right, rather than through its association with Roger Williams, Isaac Hahn, or the history of religious freedom in the United States.

Under Criterion A, the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) is significant as an expression of an early twentieth century movement to commemorate Roger Williams and the founding of the colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. This movement began in the nineteenth century and culminated with the approach of the tercentennial of Providence's founding in 1936. The Roger Williams Spring Park was one of two major monuments erected in the 1930s to commemorate Roger Williams within the original settlement of Providence Plantations. Long identified as the place where Roger Williams founded Providence, the site of the spring was first marked with a bronze tablet in 1906 and then by a granite monument erected by the U.S. War Department along the curbside in 1928. Judge Jerome Hahn acquired the site of the spring soon after this granite monument was erected, and the small courtyard park was constructed between 1931 and 1933 by the Providence Park Department according to a design by architect Norman Morrison Isham (1864-1943). Development of the Roger Williams Spring Park occurred at the same time that efforts were underway to erect a more elaborate monument to Roger Williams at nearby Prospect Park on College Hill, overlooking the site of the spring and the Rhode Island capitol. (This monument, designed through a competition held in 1936 won by the firm of Voorhees, Gmelin, and Walker, was built by the Works Progress Administration and completed in 1939.)

In addition to its significance under Criterion A, the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) is also significant under Criterion C as a representative example of early twentieth-century architecture and landscape architecture in Providence designed by architect Norman Morrison Isham. The small courtyard, built within a tenth-acre urban lot, reflects Colonial Revival and neoclassical garden design through its axial plan with a central parterre, and classical detailing on its stone piers, fence and gates, staircase, and wellcurb. Isham, who was an important Rhode Island architect considered a foremost authority in the field of early

American architecture and furniture, was best known for his restoration work on first-period Rhode Island buildings. Because of limited available documentation, it is not possible in this report to document the significance of the Roger Williams Spring in Isham's career and work. Further research is warranted to fully document this area of significance and potential of the Roger Williams Spring to reflect the work of a master as defined by the National Register Criteria.<sup>17</sup>

While the original urban setting of the Roger Williams Spring has been lost, the park's original design remains largely intact. Structural alterations since its completion in 1933 date to the National Park Service ownership and are limited to replacement of two planting beds adjacent to the staircase with bluestone paving, in-kind replacement of the ceramic tile surface on the staircase landings, and addition of a walk connecting the courtyard with the circulation system of the national memorial landscape built in 1980-82. The plantings were originally a mixed palette of conifers and broadleaf evergreens, including rhododendron, yew, Norway spruce, arborvitae, and leatherleaf viburnum, with English ivy and a central lawn parterre bordered by annuals. This border was replaced by a privet hedge within a few years. All of the plantings have been replaced. In its replacement of most of the plantings in 1981, the National Park Service retained the overall design and evergreen scheme, but did not replace the border hedges in the parterre.

#### **Eligibility Evaluation for Bernon Grove**

Although it meets the fifty-year threshold for National Register eligibility, Bernon Grove does not appear to meet the National Register criteria at the state or local levels due to lack of significance and integrity. The park, established on or near the purported site of Gabriel Bernon's house (Bernon founded St. John's Episcopal Cathedral as King's Chapel in 1722), does not reflect a historic design or association with historic events. The park was initially conceived in 1930 by the Bernon Realty Corporation made up of descendants of Gabriel Bernon and parishioners of Saint John's Cathedral. The corporation ran out of funds to develop the site and gave it to the city in 1942 as an undeveloped lot that it had cleared of buildings except for remnants of stone foundations along North Main Street. The city apparently never developed a plan for the park's landscape. Its improvements were limited to planting a grove of approximately nine Norway maple trees in 1953, and placing a small stone monument to Gabriel Bernon around the same time. The city owned Bernon Park until 1973. Although the trees were retained in the development of the national memorial landscape in 1980-82, the park service made a number of changes to the site including addition of walks,

relocation of the Gabriel Bernon monument, and reconstruction of the top course of the stone foundation wall.

#### **Periods of Significance**

As defined by the National Register, a period of significance is the time when a property achieved significance as illustrated through its existing physical resources or as determined by Congress. The primary period of significance for Roger Williams National Memorial, as reflected in the site's congressional legislation, begins in 1636, the year that Roger Williams landed there near the site of the spring to found the settlement of Providence and establish a colony based on principles of religious freedom. It is recommended that the period of significance span the years that Williams lived in Providence across from the site until his death in 1683.

The Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) and Antram-Gray house have periods of significance distinct from the national memorial site. As components of the National Register-listed College Hill Historic District, these two resources are part of the district's period of significance that extends from the founding of Providence in 1636 to the mid twentieth century.<sup>18</sup> Significant dates are 1933, the date of completion of the Roger Williams Spring, and c.1729 and 1781 for the initial construction and enlargement of the Antram-Gray house.

#### **Boundaries**

The National Register boundaries of Roger Williams National Memorial are the National Park Service boundaries defined by North Main Street, Canal Street, Smith Street, and Park Row. For the purposes of this report, the national memorial boundaries are assumed to be the inside of the sidewalks and the curb along Park Row. The national memorial is contained within the boundaries of the National Register-listed College Hill Historic District. Consideration should be given to expanding the boundaries of the national memorial to include the city-owned Founding of Providence monument on the sidewalk in front of the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial).

#### **NATIONAL REGISTER INTEGRITY EVALUATION**

According to the National Register, integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance through physical resources. The National Register program identifies seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association.<sup>19</sup> The national memorial landscape retains integrity to its period of significance of 1636-1683 only in location; all other aspects of integrity are not apparent in the landscape as built in 1980-1982 (given its significance legislated by Congress, the site does not need to meet the aspects of integrity). The Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) retains integrity of

location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to its design and construction as completed in 1933. The only aspect of integrity that has been lost is the setting. Evaluation of the integrity of the Antram-Gray house, which does not have any associated historic landscape (the surrounding landscape is the contemporary national memorial landscape), is beyond the scope of this cultural landscape report.

The following evaluation of individual aspects of integrity pertains only to the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) as the historic landscape within the national memorial.

**Location**

Location refers to the place where the cultural landscape was constructed or where the historic event occurred. The Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) remains in the same location as when it was completed in 1933.

Evaluation: Retains integrity of location.

**Design**

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a cultural landscape. The built components of the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) remain largely unchanged from the period of construction in 1931-1933 with the exception of the additional walk that connects the courtyard to the surrounding contemporary landscape, and paving of two planting beds adjoining the staircase. The planting scheme retains the overall organization of the original except for the absence of the border hedge (originally an herbaceous bed) in the central parterre, and English ivy groundcover in the central bed and in the perimeter beds. The present species reflect a 1981 composition except for the yews at the corners of the parterre and the privet hedge along the north side. Despite these changes, the overall design of the courtyard remains intact.

Evaluation: Retains integrity of design.

**Setting**

Setting refers to the physical environment within and adjoining the property. The setting of the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) has changed dramatically since its completion in 1933. Originally designed as a small park partially enclosed by urban buildings, the memorial today is surrounded by the open landscape of the national memorial. The lot to the north of the courtyard, originally conceived as part of Roger Williams Spring Park, was open in 1933 and is today occupied by a brick terrace surrounded by a grove of crabapple trees. The setting along North

Main Street remains, but the intersection with Alamo Lane that defined the south side of the memorial has been lost.

Evaluation: Does not retain integrity of setting.

#### **Materials**

Materials are the physical elements, both natural and constructed, that were used historically within the cultural landscape. The Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) retains integrity of built materials, including the limestone walls, painted steel fences and gates, granite steps, limestone and granite wellcurb, bluestone walks, and bronze tablets. The ceramic tile paving on the stair landings has been replaced in-kind. All of the plant materials except the yews at the corners of the parterre and the privet hedge along the north wall were replaced with different species after 1980, but the palette is similar to the historic species.

Evaluation: Retains integrity of materials.

#### **Workmanship**

Workmanship refers to the physical evidence of the crafts in the construction of the landscape. The Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) retains workmanship in its stone walls, steel fence and gates, bluestone walks, and brass tablets.

Evaluation: Retains integrity of workmanship.

#### **Feeling**

Feeling is an expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period in a cultural landscape. Despite the change in setting, the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) retains the feeling of an enclosed, intimate courtyard entered through a monument gate with flanking commemorative tablets. This feeling is diminished upon entrance along the brick path to the west from within the national memorial.

Evaluation: Retains integrity of feeling.

#### **Association**

Association refers to the direct link between the important historic event or person and the cultural landscape. The Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) retains its historic association with Roger Williams and the history of religious freedom through the presence of the bronze tablets at the main gate. One tablet commemorates the spring as the place where Roger Williams founded Providence in 1636 and as a public water source, and the other commemorates Isaac Hahn as the first person of Jewish faith to be elected to higher office from Providence. The change in name from Roger Williams Spring Park to the Hahn Memorial diminished the integrity of association by shifting the primary association away from Roger Williams. However, the park has recently reinstated use of the name Roger Williams Spring.

Evaluation: Retains integrity of association.

## **CULTURAL LANDSCAPE EVALUATION**

This section evaluates the cultural landscape of Roger Williams National Memorial to determine the extent to which it retains historic character from the periods of significance. The cultural landscape evaluation process, which builds off the preceding National Register evaluation, consists of a comparison of historic conditions (1636-1683; and 1933 for the Roger Williams Spring) with existing conditions (2010) according to the findings of the site history and existing conditions chapters. While the cultural landscape evaluation follows the general guidelines of a National Register evaluation, it goes into more detail and organizes the landscape by characteristics and features, rather than by resources.<sup>20</sup> Each characteristic evaluation is followed by an evaluation of associated extant features that date from the historic periods. Non-historic features are listed under their respective characteristic, but are not individually evaluated. All landscape features are shown on the existing conditions plans (drawings 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3) and in photographs in the existing conditions chapter (figs. 2.1-2.38).

## **NATURAL SYSTEMS AND FEATURES**

This characteristic is comprised of the natural aspects that shape the landscape. The existing landscape of the Roger Williams National Memorial is an entirely constructed landscape and therefore has no natural systems and features (see Vegetation for managed flora, Topography for built landforms). The national significance of the site is, however, derived from a natural system: the fresh-water spring (old town spring) that attracted Roger Williams to land at the site in 1636 and found the settlement of Providence. While the natural hydrology of this spring may remain beneath the ground surface, it is not apparent in the cultural landscape. This natural system did influence the location of the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial), with its wellcurb at the purported site of the spring. The orientation of North Main Street and Canal Street also trace back to the natural landform of the Great Salt Cove, but no trace of this natural system remains visible today.

## **SPATIAL ORGANIZATION**

This characteristic is defined by the arrangement of elements creating the ground, vertical, and overhead planes that define and create spaces. In 1636, the national memorial site consisted of the shoreline along the Great Salt Cove. There may have been a mix of fields and woods in the adjoining uplands, across the Pawtucket Trail (North Main Street). In the initial settlement of Providence, the uplands were developed with houses, gardens, and fields, but the shoreline remained undeveloped as common lands, within which was located the town spring. Over the course of the next three centuries, the shoreline was built up into urban spaces defined by streets and buildings, and the cove was filled for

development of industries and railroads. In the early twentieth century, the urban street corridors were partially opened through development of Roger Williams Spring Park, Bernon Park, and parking lots. By 1975, the entire national memorial site was transformed into open space through demolition of all urban infrastructure except for the Antram-Gray house and the two parks. While this demolition returned in part the open character of the 1636 shoreline, the space was surrounded by urban infrastructure rather than the original cove, woods, and fields. Development of the national memorial landscape in 1980-82 partially enclosed the space through plantings. Overall, the spatial character of the national memorial landscape today retains little similarity to the character that existed during the historic period between 1636 and 1683, but does retain the later spatial character of the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) completed in 1933.

#### **Contributing Spatial Organization Features**

##### ***Roger Williams Spring Courtyard***

The Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) was completed in 1933 as a partially enclosed park whose space was defined by its sunken courtyard framed by walls and fences along North Main Street and Alamo Lane. A two-story brick warehouse framed the west side of the park and a three-story commercial building across Alamo Lane added to the enclosure on the south side. The north side of the park was enclosed by low retaining walls and a privet hedge that separated it from the empty Katz lot to the north (the undeveloped north half of the park). The courtyard lost some of its spatial enclosure with demolition of the buildings on the west and south sides in c.1973. The National Park Service returned some of the western enclosure through planting of an arborvitae hedge along the old west building line in c.1981. Despite the loss of the adjoining buildings, the Roger Williams Spring courtyard overall retains its historic spatial character.

##### ***Non-contributing Spatial Features***

Amphitheater (1982)

Bernon Grove (1953)

#### **LAND USE**

This characteristic describes uses that affect the physical form of the landscape. The site of the national memorial in 1636 and in subsequent years of early Providence was shoreline that was reserved as common lands for the town and used for multiple purposes, including the source of public drinking water, a town meeting place prior to building of the town mill in 1646, and a landing place for boats. After Roger Williams's death in 1683, the Proprietors sold off the shorefront common lands as warehouse lots, and the land was converted to

private commercial, industrial, maritime, and residential uses. The site continued to serve as access to the cove through the construction of narrow streets known as gangways that led from North Main Street to wharves along the shoreline. With the extension of Canal Street in 1823, maritime use of the site largely ceased with removal of the cove shoreline. Public use continued in small areas of the site through a city police station erected in 1861 and building of Roger Williams Spring Park in 1933 and Bernon Park by 1953. The spring park introduced public commemorative uses at the site. Use of the entire site for public commemoration, education, and recreation occurred with completion of the national memorial landscape in 1982. Although the present land uses did not exist during the historic period between 1636 and 1683, the site is in public ownership as it was in Roger Williams' day.

#### ***Non-contributing Land-Use Features***

Picnic area (c.1982)

#### **CIRCULATION**

This characteristic describes systems of movement through the landscape. In 1636 and the early years of Providence, there was most likely no defined circulation within the site. The Pawtucket Trail, later Towne Street (North Main Street), ran along its east side. There may have been a series of paths accessing the spring and the shoreline from the street. After Roger Williams's death in 1683 and development of the shoreline, the site was bisected by ten narrow side streets known as gangways that were built prior to 1747 to provide access from Towne Street to wharves along the cove. In 1823, Canal Street was built along the west side of the site. Aside from walks to houses and sidewalks along North Main and Canal Streets, the only other defined circulation within and adjoining the site prior to the national memorial were walks within Roger Williams Spring Park completed in 1933. All circulation except for the park walks was removed with clearing of the site that was completed in 1975. In c.1979, the National Park Service built a temporary gravel parking lot off Canal Street and a walk to the Antram-Gray house. With construction of the national memorial landscape between 1980 and 1982, the park service built a system of brick walks, a ramp structure off North Main Street, and a parking lot at the site of the temporary lot off Canal Street. While the national memorial walks reflect some of the urban street patterns, none of the circulation within the site is related to what existed during the period of significance between 1636 and 1683.

### **Contributing Circulation Features**

#### ***Roger Williams Spring Main Stairway***

The main stairway in the Roger Williams Spring courtyard was built as part of the original construction of the park, completed in 1933 according to the design of Norman Isham. The stairway is set into the larger structure of limestone retaining walls that border North Main Street and the north and south sides of the courtyard. The steps include a short flight at the main entrance gates that provide access to a central landing area. From here, two symmetrical flights of stairs provide access to two lower landing areas, from which two additional flights of stairs lead to the main level of the courtyard. The steps are gray granite and the three landings are paved in off-white ceramic tiles that are an in-kind replacement of the original materials. Aside from the landing surface, the stairway remains unchanged since 1933. It is a character-defining feature of the Roger Williams Spring that reflects the formality of the landscape design.

#### ***Roger Williams Spring North Stairs***

Along the north side of the Roger Williams Spring is a small flight of steps that was built as part of the original construction of the park, completed in 1933 according to the design of Norman Isham. The steps are located on axis with the center of the parterre within an opening in the limestone retaining wall that borders the north side of the courtyard. These steps were designed to provide access to the adjoining Katz Lot, which was originally intended as the northern half of the park, but which the city never built. Today, the steps provide access to a brick terrace surrounded by a grove of crabapple trees. There have been no changes to these steps since 1933.

#### ***Roger Williams Spring Walks***

The bluestone walks on the main level of the Roger Williams Spring were built as part of the original construction of the park, completed in 1933 according to the design of Norman Isham. The walks consist of a continuous paved area surrounding the central parterre and are made up of individual bluestone slabs measuring approximately three feet by two feet. The outer perimeter of the walks forms a rectangle, while the interior corners that shape the parterre consist of paired convex and concave curves. In c.1980, the National Park Service altered the walks by extending the bluestone paving into two alcoves at the main stairway where there had originally been planting beds. The park also added a new brick walk at the western end to provide access to the system of walks in the national memorial. Aside from these changes, the Roger Williams Spring walks remain unaltered since their construction in 1933. The walks define the organization of the interior of the courtyard.

**Non-contributing Circulation Features**

Antram-Gray house north entrance walk (c.1979)  
 Antram-Gray house driveway (c.1979)  
 NPS staff parking area (c.1980)  
 Entrance ramp structure (1980)  
 Walk A (1981-82)  
 Walk B (1981-82)  
 Walk C/Old State House allee (1982)  
 Walk D (c.1982)  
 Walk E (1981, extension 2007)  
 Walk F/Church Street walk (1981)  
 Walk G (1981)  
 Walk H (1981)  
 Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) access walk (1981)  
 Katz lot terrace (1981)  
 Overlook (1982)  
 Visitor parking lot (1981)  
 Park Row path (post-1981)

**TOPOGRAPHY**

This characteristic is defined as the built, three-dimensional configuration of the landscape. In 1636, the topography of the national memorial site was the natural shoreline that sloped away from the Pawtucket Trail to the Great Salt Cove. After Roger Williams's death in 1683 as the beach was sold off for development, fill was added to create buildable land and bulkheads. The old topography remained evident in the steep slope of the sidestreets (gangways) that extended off North Main Street. With demolition of buildings on the sites of Roger Williams Spring Park and Bernon Park in the 1930s, the level of the ground was brought down to the old cellar floors. The grade change to North Main Street was accommodated through the use of retaining walls. With completion of demolition and clearing in 1975, the entire site was rough graded outside of the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) and Bernon Grove. With the exception of these two areas, the existing landform dates to construction of the national memorial in 1980-82. Aside from a general downward slope away from North Main Street, there is little trace of the topography that existed during the historic period between 1636 and 1683.

**Non-contributing Topographic Features**

Amphitheater bowl (1981)  
 Berms (1981)

**VEGETATION**

This characteristic describes the managed trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, and herbaceous plants in the landscape. In 1636, vegetation within and adjoining the national memorial site was entirely natural—probably beach grasses and low shrubs. During Roger Williams’s lifetime when the site was common lands, there may have been vegetation planted, but no record of this has been found. After Williams’s death in 1683 as the site became urbanized, there were plantings established in gardens associated with residences. As these residences were replaced with industrial and commercial buildings by the early twentieth century, most vegetation disappeared. Completion of Roger Williams Spring Park in 1933 reintroduced vegetation to the site, including lawn, hedges, shrubs, and annual plantings. In 1953, the city replaced some of these plantings around the same time it planted a grove of Norway maple trees at Bernon Park. All vegetation, except at the two parks, was removed from the site with the completion of demolition and clearing in 1975. Construction of the national memorial landscape in 1980-1982 introduced large amounts of vegetation, including lawn, shrubs, and hundreds of coniferous and deciduous trees, both native and exotic. The park service replaced the plantings in the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) at the same time, and retained the Norway maples in Bernon Park. In the years after construction of the national memorial landscape, the National Park Service added planters with flowering annuals along North Main Street and several walks, plantings of annuals at the entrance signs, vegetables (Three Sisters) in the planters of the ramp complex, and six raised beds with herbs along Smith Street. Today, the vegetation of the national memorial does not reflect the historic character of vegetation that existed during the historic period between 1636 and 1683. The only plant materials that predate construction of the national memorial landscape are the Norway maples in Bernon Grove.

**Contributing Vegetation Features*****Roger Williams Spring Perimeter Plantings***

The original construction of Roger Williams Spring Park featured plantings installed by the city park department, probably with input from architect Norman Isham. These included plantings that framed the perimeter of the terrace consisting of alternating rhododendron and yew with English ivy groundcover and a narrow border of flowering annuals along the walks. The varieties of annuals are not known. The west side, adjoining a now removed brick building, featured a screen of Norway spruce, fronted by leatherleaf viburnum and rhododendron. Individual Norway spruce were planted in the alcoves at the main stairway along the east side of the parterre. A clipped privet hedge ran along the top of the north retaining wall. In the late 1930s, the annual borders were replaced with a low clipped privet or boxwood hedge. In c.1953, the city park department

removed the Norway spruce from the alcoves, replaced the screening along the west side with arborvitae, and replaced the rhododendron with yew. In 1981, the park service replaced all of the plantings, with the possible exception of the privet hedge along the north wall. The new plantings maintained the preexisting design and materials by employing yew and rhododendron, but replaced English ivy with wintercreeper euonymus and did not replant the border hedge of privet or boxwood (which probably had been removed by 1981). Although the existing perimeter plantings are not the original plants, they reflect the overall design of the original memorial. The substitution of euonymus for English ivy, loss of rhododendron along the north and south sides, and the loss of the border hedge detract from the historic character of the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial).

#### ***Roger Williams Spring Parterre***

Architect Norman Isham designed the center of Roger Williams Spring Park as a parterre that used the Roger Williams Spring well as one of its four corners. Defined by the surrounding bluestone walks, the parterre featured a lawn edged by annuals with a bed of annuals in the center (varieties unknown), and yews at three of the four corners. In the late 1930s, the city park department replaced the annual border with a low border hedge of privet or boxwood. In 1981, the park service replaced the three corner yews and did not replant the border hedge. The center bed, which surrounds a drain, is presently planted with ornamental grasses and marigolds. The corner yews are overgrown and are not in balance with the scale of the spring wellcurb. This overgrowth, loss of the edging, and use of non-historic ornamental grasses in the center bed detracts from the historic character of the Roger Williams Spring. Despite this, the parterre retains its overall design as initially built in 1933.

#### **Non-contributing Vegetation Features**

Bernon Grove Norway maples (c.1953)  
 Constitution bicentennial tree (1989)  
 Deciduous and coniferous groves (1981-82)  
 Liberty tree (2007)  
 National memorial lawn (1981-82)  
 Old State House allee elms (c.1982)  
 Parking lot island trees (c.1981)  
 Siberian crabapple grove (1982)  
 Understory shrubs (1981-82)

#### **BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES**

This characteristic includes three-dimensional constructs, with buildings defined as shelter such as houses, barns, and garages; and structures as constructs that do

not provide shelter, such as walls and bridges. In 1636, there were no buildings or structures within the site of the national memorial. During Roger Williams's lifetime, the site probably remained free of buildings and structures in its use as common lands for the town. After Williams's death in 1683, the site was sold into private ownership and developed over the next three centuries with numerous buildings and structures, ranging from houses, warehouses, shops, and factories, to sheds, wharfs, and retaining walls. The earliest buildings were frame with side gable roofs, such as the Antram-Gray house. South of this house was the residence of Gabriel Bernon, a founder of St. John's Episcopal Cathedral. Farther south, a three-story Federal-style brick house was built by Nehemiah Dodge adjacent to the Roger Williams Spring in 1816. With the widening of North Main Street in 1875, this building was moved over the spring, which was contained in the basement of the house. In c.1923, Joseph Levy tore down the Dodge house and built a new commercial building over the spring. The city then tore down this building in 1930 to build Roger Williams Spring Park. The adjoining c.1875 brick building was torn down at the same time for the park, except for its front foundation that was kept as a retaining wall. Soon after this, several buildings on the block to the north were torn down by the Bernon Realty Corporation for its proposed memorial park to Gabriel Bernon. The front foundations of these buildings were also kept as retaining walls.

The Providence Redevelopment Agency demolished all remaining buildings within the national memorial site by 1975, except for the Antram-Gray house, which had recently housed the Thomas Gray Jewelry shop. The National Park Service agreed to retain this building and move it forty feet south to accommodate the city's widening of Smith Street. The park service moved this building in 1974 and rehabilitated it into the national memorial visitor center between 1976 and 1979. In construction of the national memorial landscape in 1980-82, the National Park Service did not add any buildings to the site, only several minor structures such as retaining walls. The existing buildings and structures do not reflect the historic character of the landscape during the historic period between 1636 and 1683 because none existed at that time. The existing buildings and structures are remnants of the urban development that occurred on the site during the following three centuries.

#### **Contributing Buildings and Structures**

##### ***Antram-Gray House***

The Antram-Gray house is one of two resources, along with the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial), that are significant apart from the national memorial designation. It is a two-story, side-gable frame and brick building constructed in c.1729 and doubled in size in c.1789. The building, with its storefront windows,

retains changes made through the early twentieth century. A non-historic one-story shed addition at the rear dates to c.1979. The relocation of the building in 1974 retained its orientation to North Main Street. Originally a corner building, the house today is set back from Smith Street by a lawn approximately twenty feet deep. While this change detracts from the setting of this building as a component of the College Hill Historic District, it does not impact the historic character of the national memorial, since the house did not exist during Roger Williams's lifetime.

#### ***Roger Williams Spring Enclosure Walls***

Architect Norman Isham designed Roger Williams Spring Park with an enclosure that defined the park and accommodated the drop in elevation from the adjoining streets. As completed in 1933, the enclosure featured retaining walls finished in limestone ashlar along the south, east, and north sides. The walls along the east side fronting North Main Street were part of a stairway that included a utility room beneath the center portion, accessed by a paneled door in the south alcove. The tops of this wall adjoining the stairs featured recesses used as planters. This wall and the south wall, which originally paralleled Alamo Lane, were surmounted by painted steel fence between limestone piers. The north wall did not have this fence because the park originally was intended to extend north onto the adjoining property known as the Katz Lot (today occupied by the crabapple terrace). The west end of the courtyard had neither the wall or fence because it originally abutted a building, now gone. Since its completion in 1933, the enclosure walls and fence have undergone little change except for an extension to the western end of the north wall. No documentation was found on the historic color of the painted steel fences.

#### ***Roger Williams Spring Main Entrance Gateway***

Architect Norman Isham designed the main entrance to Roger Williams Spring Park with a monumental gateway that was integral to the adjoining enclosure walls. Isham designed this structure with two, eight-foot-tall limestone piers with granite plinths and a pair of iron gates with pickets and ornamental scrollwork. Each pier featured a bronze plaque. The south plaque contained the text: "The/Spring On This Lot/The Original Water Supply/Around Which/Roger Williams Gathered/The First Settlers/Was in 1721 By Reservation/In Deed From The/Proprietors of/Providence/Made Accessible To/The Townspeople/Forever." The north plaque contained the text: "This/Plot of Ground Was/In 1931/Given To The City Of/Providence/By J Jerome Hahn/In Memory Of His Father/Isaac Hahn/The First Citizen Of/Jewish Faith To Be/Elected To Office/By The Voters/ Of/Providence." The main entrance gate today remains as originally constructed. In function, however, the main entrance gate was changed into an ancillary entrance with construction of the national memorial landscape in 1980-82. Most visitors

today enter the courtyard at the north steps or walk along the west side from within the national memorial.

#### **List of Non-contributing Buildings and Structures**

Bernon Grove retaining wall (pre-1930)

Overlook stone wall (1982)

Ramp structure (1980)

Walk F retaining walls (c.1981)

#### **CONSTRUCTED WATER FEATURES**

This characteristic describes structures that use water for aesthetic or utilitarian functions in the landscape. In 1636, the old town spring was a natural feature. During Roger Williams's lifetime, the spring was probably outfitted with a springhead or other structure that allowed for public access and use of the water. No documentation on this feature exists. In 1722, the lot containing the spring was sold into private ownership, but a deed guaranteed public access to the water. The spring may have been contained in a well or springhead known as Tripe's Spring, according to an 1834 map by T. M. Sumner documenting conditions in 1775-1777. This well survived at the rear of the Nehemiah Dodge House, built in 1816. Dodge built a pump along Alamo Lane (Allen Lane) that was piped to the spring well to give the public access to the water. In c.1869, a water trough was constructed in Canal Street along the spring drainpipes. In 1875, the Dodge house was moved back from North Main Street over the well, which was thereafter contained in the house's cellar. In 1900, the city removed the pump (and the trough around the same time), thus ending public access to the spring water. In 1931-33, the spring well was restored to public access in construction of Roger Williams Spring Park. Aside from the spring well, other constructed water features were the Blackstone Canal, built in 1828, and the stone-lined channel of the Moshassuck River to the south, built by c.1850. This stone-lined channel remains today along the west side of Canal Street, outside the national memorial boundaries. Today, constructed water features do not reflect the character of the historic period between 1636 and 1683.

#### **Contributing Constructed Water Features**

##### ***Roger Williams Spring Wellcurb***

As part of Roger Williams Spring Park constructed in 1931-33, architect Norman Isham designed an octagonal wellcurb to surmount the old stone-lined spring well. The wellcurb was constructed of limestone and set on a circular granite plinth. Isham did not design a fountain or other feature to make the spring water visible in the landscape; the water was visible only by peering down into the well.

Today, the spring wellcurb and stone-lined well remain largely as redesigned in 1933 for Roger Williams Spring Park. The water level is approximately five feet below the top of the wellcurb, and the old stone walls of the well are covered by ferns and moss.

### **VIEWS AND VISTAS**

This characteristic describes a prospect, either natural or constructed. Views are generally broad prospects of a general area, while vistas are designed and directed views of a particular scene or feature. In 1636 and through the early years of Providence during Roger Williams's lifetime, the national memorial site had panoramic views across the Great Salt Cove. As urban development occurred on the site after Williams's death, these panoramic views disappeared. Construction of industrial buildings over the stone-lined Moshassuck River in the nineteenth century further obstructed views to the west. Architect Norman Isham did not design outward views or vistas for Roger Williams Spring Park, which was surrounded by buildings, at the time of its completion in 1933. Views to the west from the national memorial site were reopened in the mid twentieth century through the city's urban renewal program, which resulted in demolition of most development on the site and over the Moshassuck River. The national memorial landscape built in 1980-82 established sight lines to several adjoining historic buildings, including a vista of the Rhode Island capitol from an overlook along North Main Street, and a vista to the Old State House along a tree-lined allee. The existing views and vistas do not reflect the character of the landscape during the historic period, 1636-1683, due to loss of the panorama across open water and the surrounding natural and rural landscape.

#### **Non-contributing Views and Vistas**

Vista to Rhode Island capitol (1982)

Vista to Old State House (1982)

### **SMALL-SCALE FEATURES**

This characteristic describes elements that provide detail and diversity in the landscape for utility or aesthetics, including such things as benches, monuments, signs, and monuments. There is no documentation on small-scale features in the landscape in 1636 and the early years of Providence during Roger Williams's lifetime. The landscape, then a natural shoreline reserved as common lands for the town, probably contained moveable objects such as boats and carts. As the site became urbanized after Williams's death in 1683, there was a variety of small-scale features introduced to the site, including fences, lights, pumps, hitching posts, and signs. In 1928, the War Department funded the placement of a granite monument along the curbside that marked the site of the old town spring as the place where

Providence was founded in 1636 (outside of national memorial boundary). Construction of Roger Williams Spring Park in 1931-33 did not introduce small-scale features aside from the addition of a pipe-rail fence along North Main Street on the Katz Lot (undeveloped lot north of the Isham-designed courtyard). A plank fence was installed along the lot to the north cleared by the Bernon Realty Corporation in the late 1930s. In the city's development of this site as Bernon Park in c.1953, a small granite monument was installed to commemorate Gabriel Bernon, an early Providence settler and founder of King's Chapel (later St. John's Episcopal Cathedral). In the city's clearance of the national memorial site completed in 1975, all small-scale features were removed except for the Gabriel Bernon and Providence founding monuments, and the fences along North Main Street. Initial site work and rehabilitation of the Antram-Gray house into a visitor center between 1977 and 1979 included the addition of a flagpole. Construction of the national memorial landscape in 1980-82 introduced a wide variety of small-scale features, including benches, light standards, garbage receptacles, and signs. The national memorial did not include a monument to Roger Williams. By c.1984, the park also added picnic tables, interpretive waysides, and signs marking the entrances to the national memorial. In subsequent years, the park and its partners added additional small-scale features, including several monuments, interpretive signs, planters, and a dumpster. None of the existing small-scale features contributes to the historic character of the landscape during the historic period, 1636-1683, or to the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) as it was completed in 1933. None of the existing monuments relate to the congressional intent of the national memorial.

**Non-contributing Small-Scale Features**

Antram-Gray house A/C unit (c.2000)  
Antram-Gray house A/C unit screening fence (c.2000)  
Benches (c.1982)  
Bike rack (c.2000)  
Brick terrace bistro chairs (c.2000)  
Constitution bicentennial marker (1987)  
Dumpster (2008)  
Dumpster screening fence (2008)  
Flagpole (c.1979)  
Gabriel Bernon monument (c.1953)  
Garbage receptacles (c.1982)  
Roger Williams Spring entrance planter (c.2000)  
Interpretive waysides (c.1984)  
Liberty tree marker (2007)  
Light standards (c.1982)

National memorial entrance signs (c.1984)  
 Pet waste station (c.2000)  
 Picnic tables (c.1984)  
 Planters (c.2000)  
 Signs (c.1984-2006)  
 Snowtown Riot monument (2002)  
 Tree of New Hope marker (1980)

### **ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES**

This characteristic describes surface and subsurface remains related to historic or prehistoric land use. There are presently no significant archeological sites at the Roger Williams National Memorial. The only above-ground remnants of development predating the construction of the national memorial in 1980-82 are the stone foundation walls along North Main Street at Bernon Grove. The site was extensively disturbed during demolition and initial site grading that was completed in 1975. Further excavation and grading were undertaken during construction of the national memorial landscape in 1980-1982. To date, the park has not undertaken archeological investigations to determine the presence of pre-historic or historic archeological resources on the site related to Native American use, to Roger Williams and founding of Providence in 1636, or to later urban development including underground resources related to the old town spring within or near the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial).

### **ENDNOTES**

1 National Register Information Systems (NRIS), Roger Williams National Memorial, 66000942; National Park Service, National Trust for Historic Preservation, and National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, *National Register of Historic Places 1966 to 1994* (Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1994), s.V. "Roger Williams National Memorial." The NRIS identifies the areas of significance Exploration/Settlement and Religion.

2 Ricardo Torres-Reyes, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form [Draft], Roger Williams National Memorial/Scott's Spring, Tripe's Spring, Roger Williams Spring," 12 April 1976.

3 NRIS, College Hill Historic District, 70000019; *National Register of Historic Places 1966 to 1994*, s.V. "College Hill Historic District;" National Historic Landmarks Program, listing for College Hill, <http://tps.cr.nps.gov> (accessed 4 February 2009); Charles W. Snell, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, College Hill Historic District," 6 August 1970; Edward F. Sanderson and Keith N. Morgan, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, College Hill Historic District [Expanded]," 26 January 1976.

4 National Park Service List of Classified Structures, Hahn Memorial, LCS ID 040380; Antram-Gray House, LCS ID 040008; Edward Sanderson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, to Terry W. Savage, Superintendent, National Park Service New England System Support Office, 19 February 1996.

5 The Historic Sites Act of 1935 contains provisions for establishment of national historic sites, but not national memorials.

6 National Register Program Federal Regulations, 36 CFR 60.1(b).

7 National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (National Park Service, 1990), 39.

8 National Park Service, Lincoln Memorial webpage, <http://www.nps.gov/linc/> (accessed 4 February 2009).

9 National Park Service website for Federal Hall National Memorial, <http://www.nps.gov/feha/> (accessed 4 February 2009); 6 USC 461-467. Federal Hall National Memorial was originally designated in 1939 as Federal Hall Memorial National Historic Site; its name changed in 1959.

10 List of Classified Structures entry for Franklin D. Roosevelt National Memorial, Room 1, 625749. The fifty-year rule of Criteria Consideration G requiring exceptional significance was met through the intent of Congress.

11 National Park Service, Chamizal National Memorial website, <http://www.nps.gov/cham/index.htm> (accessed 4 February 2009); List of Classified Structures, Chamizal National Memorial. The only eligible resources presently listed in the LCS are twenty-six concrete fence posts marking the old U.S.-Mexico border.

12 U.S. Code Title 16, Chapter 1, Subchapter 61, section 450dd, DeSoto National Memorial website, [www.nps.gov/deso/parkmgmt/lawsandpolicies.htm](http://www.nps.gov/deso/parkmgmt/lawsandpolicies.htm) (accessed 2 February 2009).

13 DeSoto National Memorial, <http://www.nps.gov/deso/> (accessed 8 July 2009). The national memorial includes living history displays and a nature trail, among other features.

14 Terry Savage, Superintendent, Boston National Historical Park and former planner with the North Atlantic Region, telephone conversation with John Auwaerter, 4 February 2009; and as reflected in National Park Service plans for the site.

15 For further documentation on these resources, refer to the cultural landscape evaluation in the second part of this chapter.

16 The national memorial is outside the boundaries of the National Historic Landmark-listed College Hill Historic District, which is within the National Register district and extends east from North Main Street, across from the national memorial.

17 Rhode Island Historical Society Manuscripts Division, Historical Note for Norman Morrison Isham Papers, MSS 508.

18 The National Register documentation for the College Hill Historic District (1976) does not identify a specific end date for the period of significance, but it is probably interpreted to correspond with the rolling fifty-year National Register limit.

19 *National Register Bulletin 15*, 44.

20 Robert Page, Cathy Gilbert, and Susan Dolan. *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource and Stewardship and Partnerships, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program, 1998).

#### 4. TREATMENT

While the Roger Williams National Memorial is today an attractive and well-maintained urban park, the landscape warrants modification to reinforce the site's legislated purpose and public use, enhance its identity, and better accommodate park operational and educational needs. Unlike most historic units of the National Park System, much of the national memorial landscape consists of non-historic resources that warrant a different approach to treatment than the historic resources.<sup>1</sup> Both, however, share a common purpose to commemorate Roger Williams and his significant contributions to the principles of freedom in the United States.

As defined by the National Park Service, the treatment part of a cultural landscape report sets forth guidelines for preserving and enhancing historic landscape characteristics and features within the context of contemporary park uses.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 2.37. The national memorial landscape looking along North Main Street to the Roger Williams Spring and Antram-Gray house, December 2009. (SUNY ESF)

Treatment essentially describes the future appearance of the landscape at the level of planning and preliminary design; it does not generally provide construction-level details necessary for implementation. A treatment plan also does not address routine and cyclical measures, such as tree pruning and lawn mowing, necessary to maintain the existing character of a landscape.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter provides treatment recommendations focusing on the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) as the historic component of the landscape. For the surrounding landscape built in 1980-82, this chapter outlines broad planning ideas to enhance the site's national significance and its primary commemorative function as a national memorial. These ideas also address the site's relationship to the historic Roger Williams Spring and Antram-Gray house, and its larger setting as part of the National Register-listed College Hill Historic District.

The chapter begins by describing general issues in the landscape that establish the need for treatment, and then articulates a framework for treatment to guide future landscape change. Based on this framework, the third section outlines preliminary ideas for improvement of the contemporary landscape that the park will further develop through its planning process. The last section recommends specific short-term treatment tasks to enhance the historic character of the Roger

Williams Spring and improve the function of several features in the contemporary landscape.

## **GENERAL TREATMENT ISSUES**

### **1. The Landscape Lacks a Memorial Feature**

Roger Williams National Memorial contains no landscape features that are recognized as *the memorial*—the feature or focal point that is intrinsic to the site’s congressionally legislated commemorative purpose. The current function of the site, as designed in the development concept that the National Park Service approved in 1977, is to provide a landscape setting where visitors can reflect on the importance of Roger Williams. Although the park service initially planned to build a memorial feature ranging from a fountain to a sculpture and sitting wall, it was omitted from the final concept based on public input.

From the beginning, the park service did not intend the municipally built memorial, the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) to serve as the memorial feature because the agency did not believe the small courtyard with its spring wellcurb adequately reflected the national significance of the site. Despite its lack of recognition, the courtyard today retains some commemorative function. Two plaques on the gateway to the courtyard commemorate Roger Williams, the founding of Providence in 1636, and the principles of religious freedom that allowed Isaac Hahn to be the first person of Jewish faith to hold public office in Providence. These plaques, however, are outside of the primary visitor circulation, and there is no plaque or sign within the courtyard identifying the spring wellcurb as the actual or symbolic place where Williams established Providence as the first settlement in the British North American colonies founded on civil law.

Most national memorials, such as the Lincoln Memorial and Franklin D. Roosevelt National Memorial in Washington, D.C., the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in Saint Louis, Missouri, and the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial in Lincoln City, Indiana, contain iconic memorial features that are intrinsic to their congressionally legislated purpose. These features range from monumental buildings and sculpture, to a series of landscape rooms and reconstructed buildings that interpret and memorialize the subject person or themes. Each provides their respective sites with a memorable identity.

### **2. Secondary Memorials Do Not Reflect the Site’s Primary Commemorative Purpose**

Over the years since the national memorial was completed in 1982, a number of memorial plaques, trees, and monuments have been installed to commemorate a variety of historical events, but none relate directly to Roger Williams. In the

absence of a primary memorial feature to Roger Williams, these secondary commemorative works divert attention from the national significance of the site. Some of the memorials, however, do have interpretive value.

### **3. Roger Williams National Memorial Lacks a Distinctive Identity**

From the approach on the surrounding streets, the national memorial has the character of a typical neighborhood park and lacks a distinctive identity that conveys its national significance. This issue is due primarily to the lack of an iconic memorial feature as discussed previously, but is also due to the design of the landscape that presents a largely undistinguished green border to the surrounding streets, aside from the entrance to the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial). The lack of a main entrance or prominent gateways at the four corners of the site, and the existing inconspicuous signage further erode the site's identity. The park is presently implementing a signage project that will begin to improve the identity of the memorial as well as visitor wayfinding.

### **4. Roger Williams Spring Is Inconspicuous**

Because of its small size, orientation, and lack of officially recognized commemorative function, the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) is an inconspicuous part of the national memorial landscape. Originally designed as part of an urban line of building fronts, the courtyard today is unanchored in the surrounding landscape. The original monumental entrance to the courtyard along North Main Street is outside of the national memorial's primary visitor circulation. Historically located at a street corner, the entrance is today in the middle of a long block, obscured from view by parallel parking along North Main Street. Access to the courtyard from within the national memorial is by two inconspicuous walkways. One approaches the courtyard from the back, and the other is hidden within a crabapple grove. There are no signs at these interior entrances identifying the courtyard as the Roger Williams Spring.

### **5. Existing Plantings Detract from the Historic Character of the Roger Williams Spring**

The historic character of Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) as designed by Norman Isham and built through the Providence Park Department included a planting palette of evergreen shrubs and flowering borders. These plantings reinforced the formal Colonial Revival-style architecture of the courtyard through a symmetrical design that aligned with walls and walks. During construction of the surrounding national memorial landscape in 1980-1982, new plantings were installed without the flowering borders and using a different species composition. Since then, some of the shrubs have become overgrown, the west bed is no longer symmetrical, and informal contemporary ornamental grasses and mixed annuals were added in the center and west bed. These changes detract from the historic character of the original design.

#### **6. The Hydrology of the Roger Williams Spring is Unknown**

The natural hydrology at the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) has not been investigated to determine if the well is indeed the head of the natural spring where Roger Williams founded Providence in 1636. The National Park Service has questioned the authenticity of the well since efforts to designate the site a national memorial in the 1960s. There is also a lack of documentation on the system of pipes that once led from the well to a pump and trough before emptying in the Moshassuck River. This system provided public access to the spring waters into the early twentieth century in fulfillment of the 1721 deed to Gabriel Bernon that secured public access to the spring waters in perpetuity. There is no known record of archeological investigations within the Roger Williams Spring courtyard.<sup>4</sup>

#### **7. Safety is a Perceived Concern**

As an urban park, there are concerns over safety within the national memorial, especially in concealed areas that provide hiding spots, notably in the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) and within dense vegetation along the memorial's perimeter. To address this issue, the park recently improved sight lines across the landscape by raising tree canopies, lowering the perimeter hedge along the sidewalk bordering Bernon Grove, and adding more lighting.

#### **8. The National Memorial Lacks Integration with Its Neighborhood**

Roger Williams National Memorial was designed as a largely self-contained landscape bounded on all sides by roads. North Main Street retains its width that existed prior to the national memorial, but Canal Street, Smith Street, and Park Row (Lonsdale Street) were widened and realigned in the 1970s as part of the city's urban renewal program into multi-lane arterials that create barriers between the national memorial and surrounding neighborhoods. These widened streets also detract from a traditional pedestrian scale and urban streetscape. While the national memorial contains visual links to the Old State House and the Rhode Island capitol, the landscape remains functionally separate from its surroundings. There is no connection to the Moshassuck River that is a remnant of the Great Salt Cove where Williams landed in 1636. The national memorial parking lot adds to the separation between the site and the Capitol and river, blocking physical and interpretive connections with the Roger Williams Spring.

#### **9. There Is Little Connection To Nearby Sites Associated With Roger Williams**

As a largely self-contained park, the national memorial has few functional or interpretive connections in the landscape with nearby sites associated with Roger Williams. There are no signs or marked circulation routes directing visitors to these historic sites, although they are mentioned in interpretive waysides. One of the two primary sites is the location of the Roger Williams house at #231 North Main Street, across North Main Street from the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn

Memorial). Six hundred feet to the southeast is the Roger Williams monument in Prospect Park on College Hill, where Williams's remains are interred. Other sites near the national memorial that are associated with Williams and the institutions he established include the Old State House on North Main Street, the Rhode Island Capitol to the west, and the First Baptist Church two blocks to the south on North Main Street.

#### **10. Existing Interpretive Devices Are Not Adequate**

Interpretative devices in the landscape do not presently reinforce the purpose of the site to commemorate Roger Williams and his contributions to the principles of freedom in the United States. This issue is due partly to the absence of a primary memorial feature, which leaves the existing interpretive waysides as the only features in the landscape that relate to Williams (ranger-led tours do emphasize Williams's significance). Of the six existing interpretive waysides, three tell about Williams's background and the character of seventeenth-century Providence, but do not interpret or commemorate Williams's significance to the history of the nation. The other waysides, along with plantings, monuments, and plaques, tell the history of the pre-European environment and Native American culture, and the later colonial and urban development of Providence after Roger Williams's death in 1683. While secondary to the site's purpose, these stories do aid visitors' understanding of the local and contextual history of the site and the nature of Williams's life in Providence.

#### **11. The Antram-Gray House is Insufficient as a Visitor Center and Park Offices**

While primarily an architectural issue, the inadequacy of the Antram-Gray house as the site's visitor center and park offices has implications for the landscape. The park service has long recognized the inadequacy of the building for these uses. Each of the site design concepts finalized in 1977 called for building an addition at the rear with a footprint equal to the existing house. The location and orientation of the existing building, which contains no public egress to the interior of the national memorial site, poses problems for visitor use. While the building works well for visitors arriving from the sidewalk along North Main Street, visitors arriving from the parking lot on Canal Street approach the back of the building and must take a circuitous accessible route to reach the entrance. The building's location at the northeast corner of the site also removes it from much of the pedestrian circulation from downtown and College Hill to the south.

#### **12. The Main Visitor Gathering Area is too Small**

The main visitor gathering area surrounding the flagstaff at the base of the ramp structure adjoining the Antram-Gray house is inadequately sized for large groups. The presence of park vehicles in the adjoining parking area detracts from the character of the space.

## FRAMEWORK FOR TREATMENT

Treatment of the Roger Williams National Memorial landscape is defined foremost by the intent of Congress, which set forth the purpose of the site to commemorate Roger Williams's "outstanding contributions to the principles of freedom in this country" and to manage the site as a historic area of the National Park System.<sup>5</sup> Within the hierarchy of National Park Service policies, standards, and guidelines, management of the landscape as a cultural resource is defined by 36 CFR Part 2: *Resource Protection, Public Use and Recreation (Preservation of Natural, Cultural, and Archeological Resources)*. The application of these regulations to cultural landscapes is contained within *National Park Service Management Policies (2006)*, *Director's Order #28 (Cultural Resource Management)*, and *National Park Service Cultural Resource Management Guideline (NPS-28)*.

The aspects of this legal and policy framework that pertain to historic preservation apply primarily to the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) and Antram-Gray house as the two historic resources within the site. The relocated eighteenth-century house does not retain an associated historic landscape, although it does retain its historic orientation to North Main Street. Bernon Grove, a part of the landscape that predates the 1980-82 construction of the national memorial landscape, is not a historic landscape resource for the purposes of this report, as documented in chapter 3.

Cultural landscape reports typically implement the overall treatment direction prescribed in a park's general management plan. Because Roger Williams National Memorial and its administrative unit, the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, do not have a general management plan, this report cannot provide specific treatment direction for the site as a whole. To generate initial planning ideas for the site, this report relies on the "Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan for Roger Williams National Memorial" (2002). This plan proposed three concepts, Open Space, Educational Space, and Memorial Space, each of which contain ideas relevant to landscape treatment. These concepts build off the park's mission statement:

Roger Williams National Memorial, located on the common lot of the original settlement of Providence (1636), commemorates the life and work of Roger Williams who championed many of the great ideas underlying modern democracy. It was Roger Williams who defied the united powers of church and state and demanded for all people the right to freedom of conscience. The park provides for contemplation of the ideas espoused by Williams and a forum to better understand the "principles of freedom" in both a historical and contemporary context.<sup>6</sup>

Under the Open Space concept, the interpretive plan calls for maintaining the national memorial's park-like setting for casual enjoyment but not for organized sports, and for creating additional landscaping to facilitate the use of open space for interpretation of Roger Williams and the principles of freedom. The Open Space concept also calls for building connections to the surrounding city "where Williams' legacy is tangibly evident in contemporary institutions."<sup>7</sup> Elements of the Educational Space concept relevant to the landscape include maintaining the Antram-Gray house as a visitor center and small museum, and identifying the potential need for planning to construct a new facility.<sup>8</sup> Under the Memorial Space concept, the interpretive plan calls for maintaining the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial), but creating a more identifiable, "well-designed and esthetically superior focal point" (memorial feature) to reflect the ideas of Roger Williams and his legacy. According to the plan, "An enhanced focal point for the Memorial is the most critical and basic change that needs to occur during the life of this plan."<sup>9</sup>

#### **TREATMENT PHILOSOPHY: CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE**

Because of the contemporary origin of the national memorial landscape outside of the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial), treatment and future management depend on numerous factors beyond standards for historic preservation.

Treatment will require planning to revisit the original 1977 concept that resulted in design and construction of the landscape in 1980-1982, and to address concepts identified in the Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan and other treatment issues as outlined in the first section of this chapter. The approach to future management of the contemporary landscape may range from minor alterations to the existing landscape, to substantial redesign outside of the Roger Williams Spring.

While it is beyond the scope of this report to define a treatment philosophy for the contemporary landscape, the following are recommendations for future consideration. These are based on the park's legislated purpose and mission statement, Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan, evaluation of existing park uses and operation, park staff concerns, and preliminary input from the public:

- Treatment should focus on the site's legislated purpose to commemorate Roger Williams and his significant contributions to the principles of freedom in the United States. This should be accomplished foremost by creating an iconic memorial feature, which could take many different forms, from a traditional sculptural figure to a landscape narrative.
- Addition of new secondary commemorative features, for subjects not directly related to Roger Williams, should be clearly defined in accordance with the 2006 *National Park Service Management Policies*, which state:

To be permanently commemorated in a national park is a high honor, affording a degree of recognition that implies national importance. At the same time, the excessive or inappropriate use of commemorative works—especially commemorative naming—diminishes its value as a tool for recognizing people or events that are truly noteworthy. This situation can also divert attention from the important resources and values that park visitors need to learn about. Therefore, the National Park Service will discourage and curtail the use and proliferation of commemorative works except when Congress has specifically authorized their placement; or there is compelling justification for the recognition, and the commemorative work is the best way to express the association between the park and the person, group, event, or other subject being commemorated.

In general, compelling justification for a commemorative work will not be considered unless the association between the park and the person, group, or event is of exceptional importance; and in cases where a person or event is proposed for commemoration, at least five years have elapsed since the death of the person (or the last member of a group), or at least 25 years have elapsed since the event.<sup>10</sup>

- Interpretation of themes not directly related to Williams and his principles of freedom should recede in the landscape or be addressed through interior exhibits or hand-held media.
- Treatment should result in a distinctive identity for the national memorial that relates to, and is integrated with, the surrounding historic urban context.
- Treatment should allow for contemporary public uses, continuing the site's historic use as public commons and site of a public water source, the old town spring.
- Treatment should be compatible with adjoining historic resources, including the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) and Antram-Gray house, and the College Hill Historic District. Treatment should be compatible with the historic character of these historic resources in terms of design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling. Given the surrounding context, returning to the character of the landscape during Roger Williams' lifetime in the seventeenth century is not appropriate, although adding symbolic references may be.

**TREATMENT PHILOSOPHY: ROGER WILLIAMS SPRING (HAHN MEMORIAL)**

As an historic landscape, the recommended treatment philosophy for the Roger Williams Spring is based on the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, which form the basis for management of historic resources within the National Park System. The *Standards* outline four approaches to treatment: Preservation (maintenance of the landscape as it currently exists); Restoration (returning the landscape to a prior historic condition); Reconstruction (rebuilding of a lost landscape); and Rehabilitation (enhancing the historic

character of the landscape while making compatible modifications to address contemporary uses and needs; usually incorporates one or more of the other three treatments). These four treatments share a common philosophical approach that emphasizes retention of historic character and repair rather than replacement of historic materials.<sup>11</sup>

The recommended primary (overall) treatment for the Roger Williams Spring is Rehabilitation, which would preserve existing historic features, enhance the historic character of the landscape to reflect the original design intent as completed in 1933, and follow, along with the rest of the site, the commemorative purpose of the national memorial.<sup>12</sup> As described in *National Park Service Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (NPS-28), “Rehabilitation improves the utility or function of a cultural landscape, through repair or alteration, to make possible an efficient compatible use while preserving those portions or features that are important in defining its significance.”<sup>13</sup> The individual standards for Rehabilitation are:

1. A cultural landscape is used as it was historically or given a new or adaptive use that interprets the landscape and its historic period (1933).
2. Materials and features from the historic period are retained and preserved. The removal of materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the period is not undertaken.
3. Each cultural landscape is recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features from other landscapes, are not undertaken. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve materials and features from the historic period is physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Materials, features, finishes, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize other historic periods are documented prior to their alteration or removal.
5. Historic materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the historic period are preserved.
6. Deteriorated features from the historic period are repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a historic feature, the new feature matches the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials.
7. Replacement of missing features from the historic period is substantiated by archeological, documentary, or physical evidence. A false sense of history is not created by adding conjectural features or features from other landscapes, or by combining features that never existed together historically.
8. Chemical or physical treatments that cause damage to historic materials are not used.

9. Archeological and structural resources are protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures are undertaken including recovery, curation, and documentation.
10. Designs that were never executed historically are not constructed.
11. Additions, alterations, or related new construction do not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the cultural landscape. New work is differentiated from the old and is compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing of the landscape.
12. Additions and adjacent or related new construction are undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the cultural landscape would be unimpaired.<sup>14</sup>

Overall, Rehabilitation would enhance the historic character and contemporary function of the Roger Williams Spring courtyard in the short term by reintroducing character-defining plantings, restoring lost planting beds and borders, reinforcing the historic spatial character, providing places for visitors to rest, improving lighting, and making the water in the spring wellcurb visible. Depending on park planning decisions for the surrounding contemporary landscape, Rehabilitation in the long term would allow for compatible changes to strengthen connections with the site and surrounding neighborhood, make the courtyard more of a focal point for the site, and enhance its commemorative function such as by adding signage or a memorial feature.

### **PLANNING IDEAS (DRAWING 4.1)**

The following preliminary planning ideas for improvement of the national memorial landscape are organized by the three broad development concepts defined in the Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan. The ideas under each concept, which reflect input from park staff and the public, were generated as an initial step in planning for future landscape improvements. The ideas are not mutually exclusive and do not reflect a single vision for the landscape. Written public comments in response to these ideas and others are in Appendix D.

#### **MEMORIAL SPACE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT**

This development concept concerns the national memorial's legislated commemorative purpose.

##### **Idea 1: Create a Primary Memorial Feature**

The Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan identified this as the most critical change needed to the site. As stated previously, design of this memorial feature could be

taken in many different directions and therefore warrants thorough planning with park service and community interests. Below are several possible tasks that could implement this idea:

- Redesign the landscape surrounding the existing Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) to enhance the courtyard as the focal point and central feature of the national memorial, and maintain the spring as the place traditionally associated with Roger Williams and the founding of Providence. Potential designs could include extending the architectural character of the courtyard as a sacred space to a larger area, which could serve as a location for the other ideas listed below.
- Design an interpretation of the 1636 landscape, such as by symbolically revealing archeological layers and the original shoreline between the courtyard and the Moshassuck River; or by revealing the natural hydrology of the spring outside of the courtyard.
- Hold a competition to design a major sculptural or other artistic work (one of the original 1977 plans).
- Build a new water feature to symbolize the old town spring and freedom of religion (one of the original 1977 plans).
- Design a landscape narrative (a system or series of landscape features) that tells the story of Roger Williams and his legacy.
- Program the site in a way that commemorates Roger Williams, such as formalizing a space like the amphitheater that would be open to democratic forums.

#### **Idea 2: Focus Commemorative Works on Roger Williams and His Legacy**

This idea enhances the identity of the site as a memorial to Roger Williams by restricting the addition of new commemorative works not directly related to the site's national significance, in keeping with *National Park Service Management Policies* cited earlier. Possible tasks related to this idea include:

- Retain existing commemorative monuments and plaques as record of the site's recent history. The location of these features may be adjusted if necessary, since none are site-specific except for the Bernon monument and the plaques associated with memorial trees (unless the trees can be moved).
- Allow for the addition of secondary commemorative works provided they defer to the proposed primary memorial and relate to Williams's legacy in contemporary American culture and government.
- Use the perimeter public sidewalks as places to mark the post-Williams urban history of the national memorial site (this could be part of a joint streetscape improvement plan with the city). This task could include

using different paving materials to mark the location of the old side streets, or plaques and interpretive waysides to indicate sites of important buildings and events. These features should respect the identity of the site as a national memorial and not clutter its appearance from the street.

**Idea 3: Incorporate Site of the Roger Williams House into the National Memorial**

This idea adds the archeological site of the Roger Williams house at 231 North Main Street into the national memorial as part of the park's commemorative and interpretive program. The addition of this site would reinforce the site-specific location of the national memorial and provide a key feature for interpreting the Providence of Roger Williams's day. (The extent of the foundation remains from the house, which were documented in 1906 and marked by a tablet in 1909, were not determined for this report.) With the existing nineteenth-century building occupying the front of the lot, the site would allow for interpretation of the layered history of Providence, in contrast to the open-space setting of the national memorial. This idea would require creation of a safe and visible pedestrian crossing of North Main Street, and would preserve the existing building, which is a contributing component of the National Historic Landmark College Hill Historic District. This idea could be achieved through National Park Service acquisition of the property, or through a partnership arrangement with another organization. Federal acquisition would require legislation to change the boundaries of the national memorial. Possible tasks related to this idea include:

- Rehabilitate the existing nineteenth-century building; restore its exterior and adapt the interior for park use, such as offices, museum, and visitor center (see Educational Development Concept).
- Conduct additional archeological investigations on the Roger Williams house site.
- Reveal archeological remains of the Roger Williams house site for interpretive purposes, and add a pavilion for protection and access.
- Tie 231 North Main Street into an interpretive walk that connects the national memorial with the College Hill neighborhood and the Roger Williams monument at Prospect Park.

**OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT**

This development concept concerns the national memorial's character within the surrounding urban setting.

**Idea 1: Enhance the Identity of the National Memorial**

This idea enhances the landscape's unique identity as a national memorial within the historic urban setting. The addition of an iconic memorial feature as described

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under the Memorial Space Concept would be the primary task associated with this idea. Other potential tasks include:

- Add a perimeter feature or features to give the site a distinctive character. This feature could be a low wall that ties into the Roger Williams Spring courtyard, or a series of features that define the boundary. This feature should balance the need for enhanced identity with the need for improved connections to the surrounding neighborhood.
- Create gateways at the pedestrian entrances to the site (may be incorporated into the boundary feature described above).
- Create a gateway, sign, building, or other feature at the corner of Smith and Canal Streets to provide an identifiable focal point for vehicles approaching from the state capitol (this could be the proposed new visitor center—see Educational Space component).

#### **Idea 2: Integrate the National Memorial into its Urban Context**

This idea builds connections from the national memorial to nearby features and institutions related to Williams's legacy. It also enhances everyday pedestrian connections to the national memorial, and reflects the site's historic use as public commons during Williams's lifetime. Possible tasks related to this idea include:

- Define walking routes, identified through changes in pavement or other features, to the site of the Roger Williams house, the Roger Williams monument in Prospect Park, the Old State House, St. John's Episcopal Cathedral and burial grounds, and the First Baptist Church.
- Develop pedestrian connections to the Moshassuck River to interpret the river as the remains of the shoreline where Roger Williams landed in 1636.
- Connect the national memorial to the Moshassuck River and the regional river walk by removing traffic from Canal Street, or narrowing the road to one or two lanes (see Appendix D for comments by Gates, Leighton & Associates regarding options for calming traffic on Canal Street and related changes on North Main Street).
- Provide new and more direct pedestrian access from the national memorial to the Rhode Island capitol grounds to reflect symbolic and functional connections between the two landscapes. This could also allow for replacement parking west of the river if the on-site parking lot is removed or reduced.
- Reestablish views from within the national memorial to the state capitol, and between the capitol and the Old State House, to suggest historic relationships.
- Link the national memorial into walking tour routes on College Hill.

**Idea 3: Improve Adjoining Streetscapes**

In this idea, the National Park Service would work with the City of Providence and other interested groups to improve the streetscapes adjoining the national memorial. The objectives of these improvements would be to enhance the historic urban setting of the national memorial and the College Hill Historic District; increase the identity and visibility of the national memorial; reduce the impact of automobile traffic and improve the pedestrian environment; and allow for improved visual and functional connections between the national memorial and adjoining related sites (as described earlier). Specific tasks that could be part of this idea include:

- Restoration of the Founding of Providence Monument on city-owned property along North Main Street, just outside the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial).
- Redesign of the North Main Street sidewalk, plantings, and street lights to enhance historic character and pedestrian use.
- Removal of parallel parking in front of Roger Williams Spring, or along entire west side of North Main Street adjoining the national memorial.
- Expansion of the sidewalk at the Roger Williams Spring (create a neckdown in the road) to distinguish the courtyard and create a pedestrian connection to the site of the Roger Williams house across North Main Street.
- Redesign of Canal Street to improve functional and interpretive access to the river from the national memorial. This may involve narrowing the street from its present use as a three-lane arterial, creating crosswalks to the river, or altering the topography and river channel to bring the water closer (see Appendix D for comments by Gates, Leighton & Associates on redesign of Canal Street).

**Idea 4: Move or Redesign the Visitor Parking Area**

This idea moves the existing visitor parking area to a new location, or redesigns its configuration. Although the existing parking area functions well, its location between the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) and the river could impede future planning to integrate the courtyard into the site, interpret the seventeenth-century landscape, and establish connections with the river and capitol as discussed under the memorial and open space concepts. Possible tasks related to this idea include:

- Maintain fewer parking spaces by removing the south half of the parking area west of the Roger Williams Spring and the river. This would free up space to connect the courtyard with the river.

- Remove the entire parking area and reserve on-street parking along North Main Street for those with disabilities. Possibilities for replacing the lost parking include:
  - Establish a remote lot west of the Moshassuck River, with improved pedestrian connection across Smith and Canal Streets.
  - Establish agreements for shared use of neighboring parking areas.
  - Redesign Canal Street to accommodate on-street diagonal parking.

#### **Idea 5: Reinforce the Identity of the National Memorial as a Public Commons**

This idea reinforces the landscape’s contemporary use as a public gathering area, reflecting the site’s historic function as town common lands during Roger Williams’s lifetime. This use, which is also reflected in the 1721 deed to Gabriel Bernon that secured public access to the spring in perpetuity, would be defined in a manner that complements the primary commemorative purpose of the national memorial. Possible tasks related to this idea include:

- Make the landscape open to its surroundings—in contrast to its existing design that is largely inward looking and closed off from the surrounding city—by thinning perimeter trees, creating spaces that open outward, and building visual and functional connections.
- Provide an expanded area to serve as the park’s official First Amendment space.
- Establish a new feature or adapt existing features to serve a common public use. This could include adding a source of drinking water (in fulfillment of the 1721 deed); formalizing the amphitheater to serve as a place for democratic forums; or installing a multi-media information kiosk where people could learn about historic and current issues in government and public life that reflect Roger Williams’s legacy.

#### **Idea 6: Retain the Existing Landscape Design**

This idea retains the existing landscape as designed by Albert Veri based on a park service concept. It would retain the landscape park in the southern half, and the more developed and formal landscape in the northern half where visitor services are located. Minor changes in vegetation, circulation, and small-scale features, as well as the addition of discreet memorial features (see concept 1) could be accomplished while retaining the original design.

**EDUCATIONAL SPACE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT**

This development concept concerns the national memorial's use as an education facility providing visitor information and interpretation.

**Idea 1: Focus Landscape Interpretation on Roger Williams and His Legacy**

This idea prioritizes interpretive landscape features that are directly related to Roger Williams and his legacy of civil government.<sup>15</sup> Secondary interpretive themes, such as Native American culture, colonial life, and the history of Providence's growth into a city after 1683, would be interpreted in a way that defers to the primary theme of the national memorial. Possible tasks include:

- Redesign the landscape or add interpretive features that educate visitors about the landscape of the site as it existed during Williams's lifetime to 1683.
- Add interpretive features that convey the legacy of Williams's principle of religious freedom as expressed in contemporary American government and society.
- Relocate or redesign interpretive landscape features that do not relate directly to Roger Williams.
- Install electronic display waysides, such as those at Historic Jamestowne (part of Colonial National Historical Park) that give visitors a three-dimensional look at how the landscape may have appeared during Roger Williams's lifetime.

**Idea 2: Expand the Visitor Center**

In this idea, the visitor center is expanded through new construction or acquisition of an existing building to supplement or replace the Antram-Gray house. This idea could provide additional space for a museum, visitor contact station, bookstore, and park offices. Below are the alternative sites with potential benefits and drawbacks:

***New Construction West of the Antram-Gray House***

- Enhance the identity of the national memorial upon the vehicular approach from the west along Smith Street.
- Reestablish the urban line of Smith Street (south side).
- Define the open space of the national memorial to the south.
- Concentrate visitor services and park operations at the north edge of the national memorial.
- Provide direct connections to the Antram-Gray house.
- Recognize that this option would not be highly visible to visitors approaching from downtown.

***New Construction at North Main Street and Park Row***

- Create a southern anchor for the national memorial that would balance the Antram-Gray house to the north, with the Roger Williams Spring in between.
- Reestablish the historic urban character of the street corner at North Main Street and Park Row.
- Provide an entry and gateway for the approach from downtown.
- Accept that this option would be remote from the Antram-Gray house and the visitor parking lot.

***Rehabilitation of #231 North Main Street (Building at Site of the Roger Williams House)***

- Reuse and rehabilitate an existing historic building.
- Provide direct connection between interior museum displays and an historic archeological site.
- Connect the national memorial and the College Hill neighborhood, including the Roger Williams monument at Prospect Park.
- Acquire private property, or establish use through a partnership with an outside organization or agency.
- Add a safe pedestrian crossing on North Main Street.
- Recognize that this option would be remote from the Antram-Gray house and visitor parking lot.

Under the first two sites, the new building would be designed in a style compatible with the historic urban buildings surrounding the national memorial and the Antram-Gray house.

**TREATMENT TASKS (DRAWING 4.2)**

This section describes short-term changes in the landscape to enhance the historic character of the Roger Williams Spring and improve current park operations. These tasks may be implemented outside of planning for improvement of the entire site.

**ROGER WILLIAMS SPRING (HAHN MEMORIAL) TASKS (DRAWING 4.2)**

The overall intent for short-term treatment of the Roger Williams Spring is to enhance its historic character and contemporary function as a contemplative space for the commemoration of Roger Williams and the founding of Providence. The tasks involving vegetation are intended to reestablish a design similar to the original. An accurate restoration is not feasible due to the lack of documentation concerning the original plantings. Although not listed as a task here, the park

should consider paint analysis to determine the historic color of the courtyard railings.

Following implementation of these tasks, a preservation maintenance plan should be completed to guide cyclical maintenance of the lawn, shrub, and herbaceous plantings in the courtyard. This plan would detail tasks, such as annual shearing and pruning, fertilization, and lawn care, and would include a calendar for selection of flowering annuals.

**Task 1: Prune or Replace Corner Yews**

Prune back the existing overgrown yews to a size that corresponds with the inside border of the parterre, approximately 3.5 feet wide and 3 feet tall. Clip the yews into flat-topped cylinders. There should be sufficient space for re-establishment of the planted borders (see Task 5). If the yews cannot be pruned, replace them in-kind using dense yew (*Taxus densiformis*).

**Task 2: Replace Shrub Border**

Remove the existing rhododendron, yews, and euonymus from the narrow beds along the border of the bluestone walk. Plant evenly spaced and alternating rhododendron and pyramidal arborvitae. Use compact varieties or those that can be easily pruned to a small size, such as Wilson rhododendron, *Rhododendron x laetevirens*, and a semi-dwarf American arborvitae, such as *Thuja occidentalis* 'Holmstrup.' The semi-dwarf arborvitae are recommended instead of the original spruce or fir pictured in a 1930s post-card (see fig. 1.36) for ease of maintenance and suitability to shearing to a small size. The arborvitae and rhododendron should be kept below the top of the steel railing (approximately four feet tall), and inside the edge of the bluestone walk. Allow the rhododendron to spread toward the arborvitae. Maintain the beds with natural dark-colored mulch.

**Task 3: Redesign West Perimeter Shrubs**

Remove the arborvitae, rhododendron, and yews in the west perimeter of the courtyard to either side of the brick walk. Plant a hedge of regal privet, *Ligustrum ovalifolium*, to define the western boundary of the courtyard and serve as a continuation of the existing privet hedge along the northern side. Clip the new hedge in a rectangular shape and maintain it at a height matching the existing privet hedge along the northern side of the courtyard (approximately five feet tall). This existing hedge should be maintained at approximately two feet in height (it is presently about one foot tall). These two hedges will together define the western and northern sides of the courtyard. Inside the new hedge, plant a row of large-leaf rhododendron, such as *Rhododendron catawbiense*, and leatherleaf viburnum, *Viburnum rhytidophyllum*. Maintain the shrubs in their natural habit, at a height of

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approximately six feet, symmetrical to either side of the brick walk. Maintain the beds with natural dark-colored mulch.

#### **Task 4: Restore Shrub Beds in Staircase Alcoves**

Remove the non-historic bluestone paving in the alcoves on the eastern side of the courtyard. Plant a single mid-size specimen American arborvitae, such as *Thuja occidentalis* 'Emerald Green.' As with the border shrubs, arborvitae is recommended for these two locations instead of the original fir or spruce (see fig.1.36) for ease of maintenance and suitability to shearing to a small size. Keep the shrubs at a symmetrical scale and at a height below the top of the staircase wall. The shrub on the south side may require extra pruning to maintain access to the utility door beneath the staircase. Maintain the beds with natural dark-colored mulch.

#### **Task 5: Reintroduce Planted Borders**

Reintroduce the planted borders along both perimeters of the bluestone walk to reestablish the historic planting design. Extend the existing narrow bed at the staircase alongside the restored alcove beds (see Task 4). Extend the border along the brick entrance walk at the western side of the courtyard. The border should be approximately one foot wide and one foot tall. Two alternatives for plant materials are:

Alternative 1: Use blooming annuals as shown in a c.1935 postcard (see fig. 1.36). An exact restoration is not possible because the historic plant varieties are not known (and these probably varied yearly or seasonally). Use low-growing, compact annuals, such as new guinea impatiens, wax begonias, heat-tolerant pansies, petunias (a new variety of non-spreading, compact petunias), or dwarf marigolds.<sup>16</sup> Use subdued colors and limited varieties to provide an overall unified effect.

Alternative 2: To reduce maintenance, substitute a boxwood hedge maintained in a clipped rectangular form for the historic flowering border. The hedge should be maintained at approximately one foot high and one foot wide. Use a hardy dwarf boxwood, such as *Buxus x* 'Green Velvet.' The city converted the border to shrubs in c.1953, probably to reduce maintenance.

#### **Task 6: Redesign Central Planting Bed**

Remove the existing ornamental grasses from the central planting bed and reduce the size of the bed to approximately three feet square as shown in a c.1935 postcard (see fig. 1.36). Plant the bed with low-scale, compact, blooming annuals, such as dwarf marigolds, petunias, or impatiens. This bed should match

the plantings in the borders if they are planted with flowering annuals (Task 5, alternative 1).

**Task 7: Maintain Staircase Planters**

Maintain the existing planters in the staircase with flowering annuals that match those used in the central bed or borders (Task 5, alternative 1). Keep the soil level sufficiently high to allow the plants to grow above the masonry and be visible from the courtyard below.

**Task 7: Design New Lighting**

Design a new lighting system for the courtyard that uses inconspicuous light standards, such as down-lit fixtures along the perimeter walls and stairs. The new system should provide sufficient light for safety and visibility, yet create light that enhances the courtyard's historic symmetry, intimate scale, and feeling of enclosure. Remove the existing light standard within the courtyard and the two at the north and south sides.

**Task 8: Install Fountain in Spring Wellcurb**

Install a simple fountain in the spring wellcurb to make the water visible and enhance the contemplative setting of the courtyard. This fountain should be a single jet or foam jet head mounted on a tall pipe hidden within the well (see <http://www.pondappeal.com/maxi-fountain-head-foam-jet.aspx> as an example). The fountain may require a new water supply. The utility box, if necessary, should be sited below ground beneath the bluestone walk. Maintain the existing water level to allow the old stone well to stay visible. Remove accumulated trash on a regular basis.

**Task 9: Install Benches**

Install four simple benches in the courtyard to provide places for visitors to rest and to enhance the contemplative setting. Because there were no benches historically, the new benches should use an inconspicuous contemporary backless design compatible with the Colonial Revival style of the courtyard. Examples of appropriate designs include the four-foot long Linwood backless bench or the Backless Garden Bench in white (see <http://www.benches.com/>, items TW006, PL028). The four benches should be placed symmetrically, two along the north side of the bluestone walk and two on the south side. Place each bench partially within the adjoining bed to minimize projection into the walk. This will require removing part of the planted border and installing footings in the soil.

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**CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE TASKS (DRAWING 4.2)****Task 10: Construct Sidewalk Along Park Row**

Construct a sidewalk along Park Row to replace the existing dirt path. Match the design of the existing sidewalks along North Main Street and Canal Street using concrete, and locate it abutting the curb (without a planting strip).

**Task 11: Reopen View of Capitol from Overlook**

Remove or prune trees between Walk A and Canal Street to reopen the view of the state capitol that was part of the original design of the national memorial. The dome of the capitol should be visible through the trees when looking from the overlook across the amphitheater. The number of trees to be removed or the amount of pruning will need to be determined in the field. The area should retain tree cover as a buffer to Canal Street.

**Task 12: Replace Missing Trees in Bernon Grove**

Replace two missing maple trees at the southern end of Bernon Grove to manage it as a cultural resource for its association with local commemorative efforts in the mid twentieth century. Replanting these trees would therefore perpetuate the overall character of the grove. There are several appropriate alternatives for tree species:

Alternative 1: Use Norway maple, *Acer platanoides*, to match the existing trees in the grove. Although widely considered invasive, Norway maple seedlings are unlikely to become established in natural areas given the urban setting of the national memorial. Plan for replacing the other trees in-kind as they decline and die.

Alternative 2: Remove the entire grove of Norway maples and replant using a native maple or other native tree species. The replacement trees should be a variety not used elsewhere in the national memorial to retain the distinct character of the grove. Possible alternative species include silver maple, *Acer saccharinum*, a native of lowlands such as the national memorial site that is tolerant of urban conditions. Silver maple grows fast and has a high canopy, but has weaker wood than other maples and at maturity may require annual pruning to remove deadwood. Other native trees that would maintain a high understory include Hackberry, *Celtis occidentalis*, a member of the elm family; tuliptree, *Liriodendron tulipifera*; and American linden, *Tilia americana*.<sup>17</sup>

**Task 13: Enlarge Visitor Gathering Area**

Enlarge the main visitor gathering area at the flagpole and base of the ramp by removing the adjoining NPS parking use and enlarging the paved area to the north. Removing the parking area would also enhance the setting of the gathering area. Replace the two lost parking spaces with reserved spaces within the visitor parking area. Regrade the berm on the expanded north side.

**ENDNOTES**

1 “Historic” is used to denote meeting the National Register Criteria. As explained in Chapter 3, the entire national memorial is listed in the National Register as Roger Williams National Memorial and as part of the College Hill Historic District.

2 Robert R. Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1998), 81.

3 Such tasks are addressed in a separate cultural landscape document known in the NPS as a Preservation Maintenance Plan. This plan is not included in the scope of this project.

4 There were archeological studies made prior to construction of the national memorial site. While these were not examined for this report, the studies apparently focused on the surrounding urban development; see Appendix D.

5 Public Law 89-203, 89<sup>th</sup> Congress, H.R. 7919, 22 October 1965. As part of the National Park System, landscape treatment is guided by the mission of the National Park Service “. . .to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations” (Organic Act of 1916). Unlike most national park sites, Roger Williams National Memorial has no natural objects and few historic objects aside from the Hahn Memorial and Antram-Gray house.

6 Roger Williams National Memorial Mission Statement, original prepared as part of the park’s Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) process, in National Park Service, “Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan, Roger Williams National Memorial” (Unpublished report, November 2002), 8.

7 Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan, 11.

8 Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan, 11-12.

9 Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan, 12.

10 National Park Service, *Management Policies 2006* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2006), section 9.6.1.

11 *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (1995), [http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/arch\\_stnds\\_8\\_2.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/arch_stnds_8_2.htm) (accessed 18 December 2006).

12 *Restoration, Preservation, and Reconstruction* are not recommended. *Restoration* would require removal of connections between the courtyard and the surrounding contemporary landscape, resulting in further isolation of the courtyard from its contemporary setting and commemorative purpose. *Preservation* would retain the landscape in its existing appearance with incompatible modern alterations. *Reconstruction* does not apply because it is defined as rebuilding a landscape that no longer exists.

13 National Park Service, “NPS-28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline” (1998), [www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/nps28/](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/nps28/), chapter 7.

14 NPS-28, chapter 7.

15 The Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan states that the national memorial was set aside by Congress “to commemorate a variety of national and local stories.” It is not clear from the enabling legislation and previous park planning that local stories are part of the commemorative purpose of the site.

16 An examination of annuals grown at other parks and residences in Providence should be done to determine which compact flowering annuals do well in the area.

17 Federal Highway Administration, “State Plant Listings (Native), Rhode Island,” <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rdsduse/ri.htm> (accessed 20 January 2010).



Roger Williams National Memorial

Providence, Rhode Island

Planning Ideas



National Park Service  
 Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
[www.nps.gov/oclp](http://www.nps.gov/oclp)

in partnership with:  
 Department of Landscape Architecture  
 SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry  
[www.esf.edu/la/](http://www.esf.edu/la/)

SOURCES

1. C&W, ROWI Exist. condition plans, 5/1981
2. AVA, C&W, ROWI Layout, planting plans, 5/1981
3. AVA, C&W, ROWI Layout, planting plans, 7/1982
4. NPS, ROWI Exist. conditions plan, 1/1973
5. Aerial photograph, c.2006

DRAWN BY

John Auwaerter  
 Illustrator CS 3, 2010

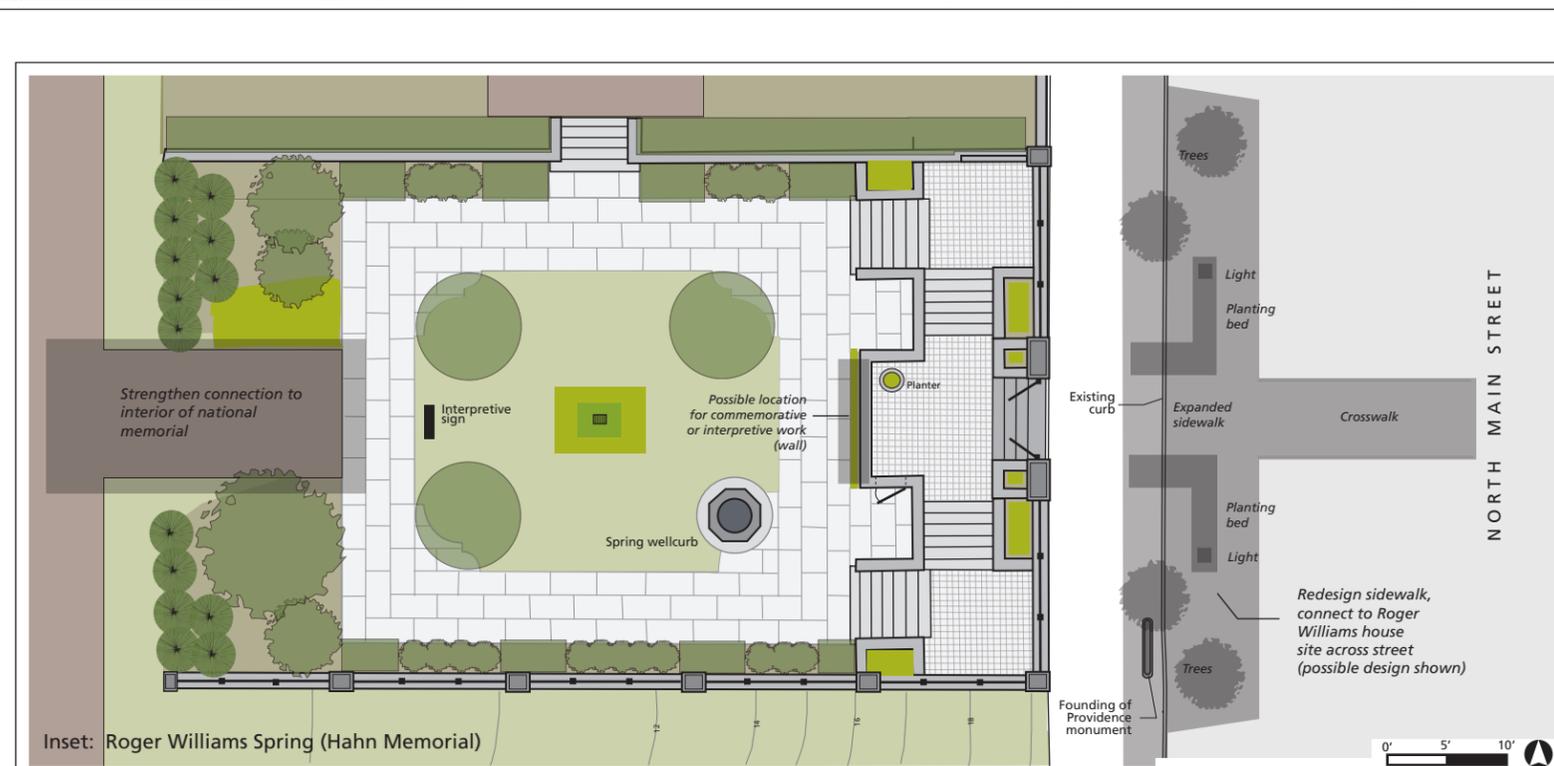
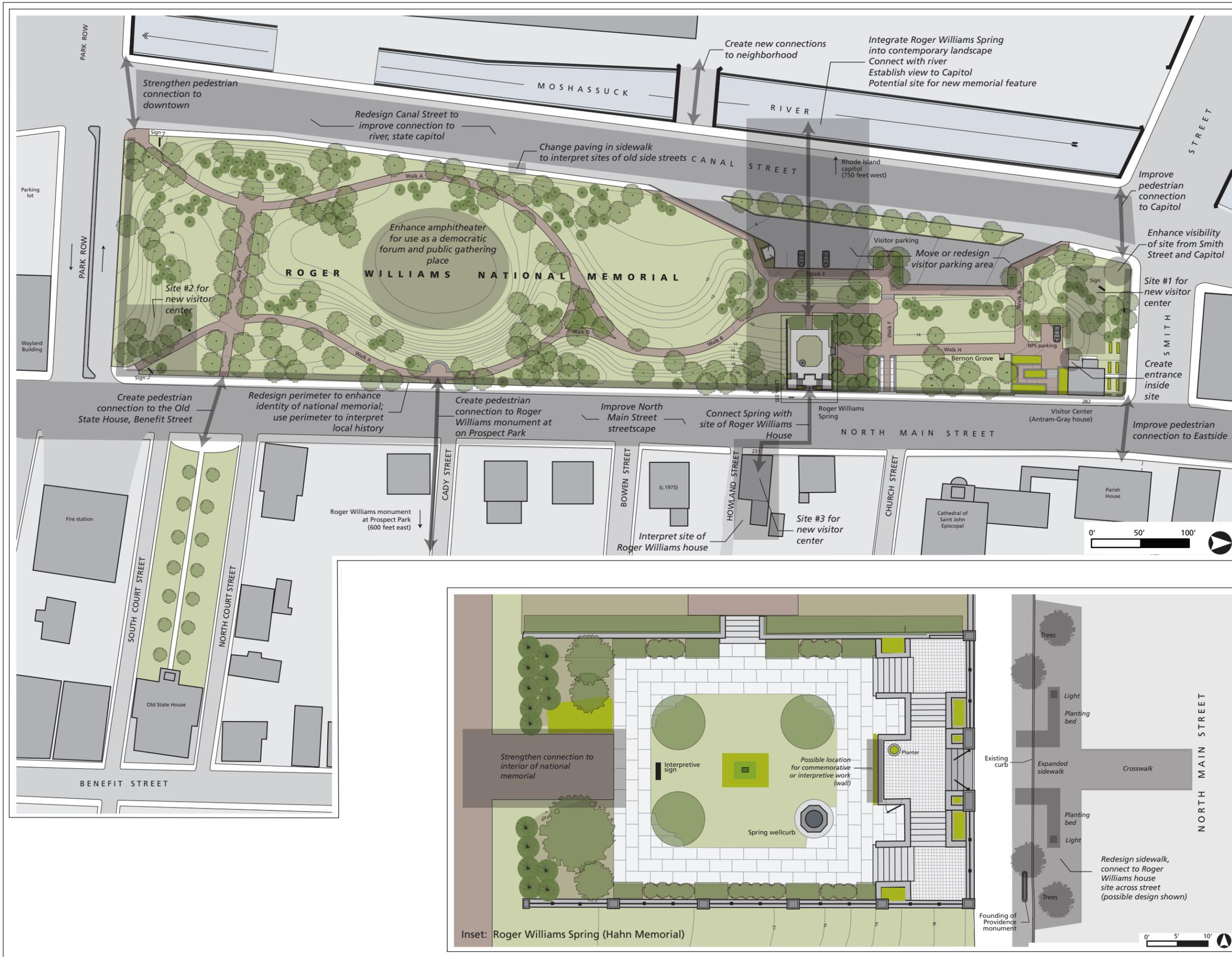
LEGEND

- Building
- CANAL ST 270  
Street with sidewalk, street address
- 1' contour
- Lawn
- Open ground or mulch
- Groundcover or herbaceous bed
- Deciduous/broadleaf evergreen tree, shrub
- Coniferous tree, shrub
- Clipped shrub, hedge
- Planning idea location (gray shade)
- Create pedestr gateway  
Planning idea label (italic)

NOTES

1. Plan shows landscape in 2010; see drawing 2.1 and 2.2 for additional detail on existing conditions.
2. All features shown in approximate scale and location.
3. Plan does not show planning ideas in text that are not site-specific.

Drawing 4.1





Roger Williams National Memorial

Providence, Rhode Island

Treatment Tasks



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
www.nps.gov/oclp

in partnership with:  
Department of Landscape Architecture  
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry www.esf.edu/la/

SOURCES

1. C&W, ROWI Exist. condition plans, 5/1981
2. AVA, C&W, ROWI Layout, planting plans, 5/1981
3. AVA, C&W, ROWI Layout, planting plans, 7/1982
4. NPS, ROWI Exist. conditions plan, 1/1973
5. Aerial photograph, c.2006

DRAWN BY

John Auwaerter  
Illustrator CS 3, 2010

LEGEND

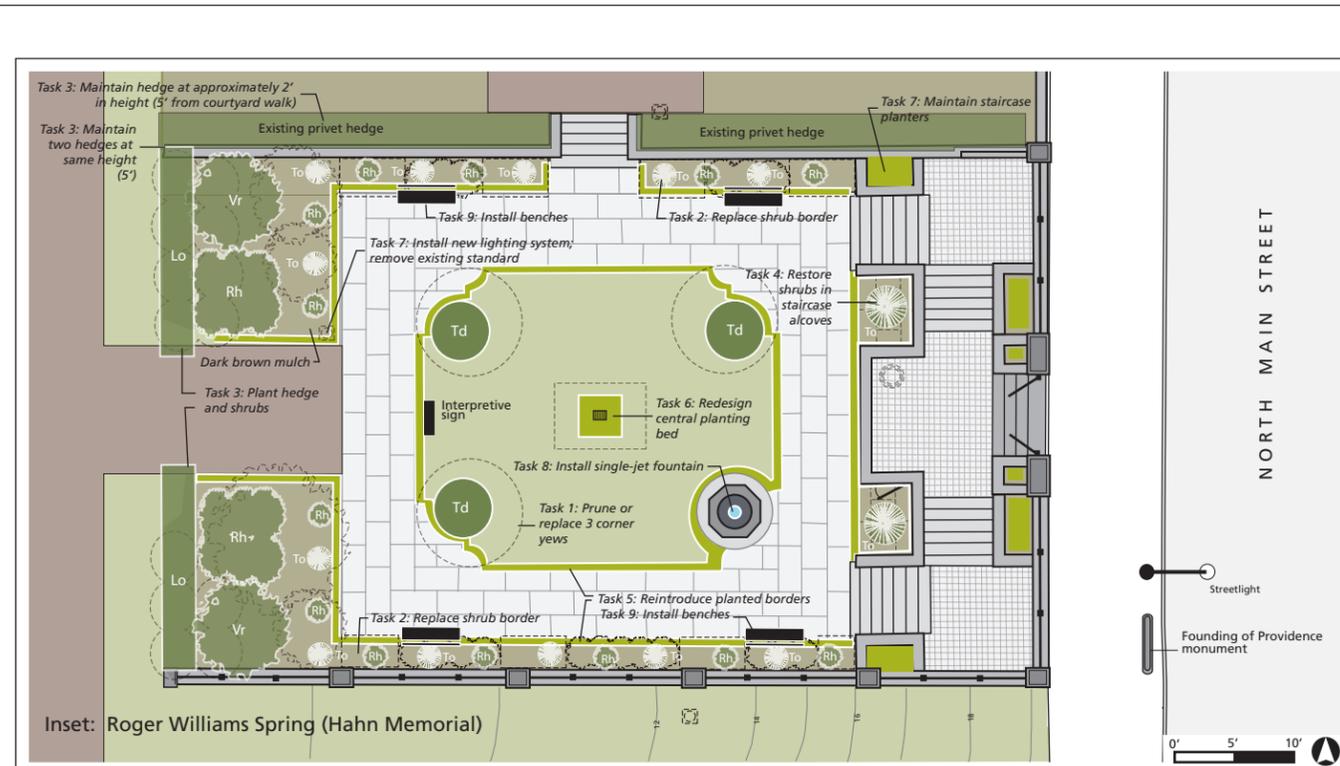
- Building
- CANAL ST  
270 Street with sidewalk, street address
- 1' contour
- Lawn
- Open ground or mulch
- Groundcover or herbaceous bed
- Deciduous/broadleaf evergreen tree, shrub
- Coniferous tree, shrub
- Clipped shrub, hedge
- Feature to remove (dashed line)
- Feature to add or alter (white border)
- Task 2: Repl Treatment task keyed to text

NOTES

1. Plan shows landscape in 2010; see drawing 2.1 and 2.2 for additional detail on existing conditions.
2. All features shown in approximate scale and location.
3. White mask indicates limits of CLR study area.



Tree & Shrub Key	
Lo	Regal privet <i>Ligustrum ovalifolium regalianum</i>
Rh	Rhododendron <i>Rhododendron sp.</i>
Td	Dense yew <i>Taxus densiformis</i>
To	American arborvitae <i>Thuja occidentalis</i>
Vr	Leatherleaf viburnum <i>Viburnum rhytidophyllum</i>





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## APPENDIX A

## ROGER WILLIAMS NATIONAL MEMORIAL LEGISLATION



Public Law 89-293  
89th Congress, H. R. 7919  
October 22, 1965

### En Act

To provide for the establishment of the Roger Williams National Memorial in the city of Providence, Rhode Island, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the Secretary of the Interior may acquire by gift, purchase with appropriated or donated funds, transfer from any Federal agency, exchange, or otherwise, not to exceed five acres of land (together with any buildings or other improvements thereon) and interests in land at the site of the old town spring, traditionally called Roger Williams Spring, in Providence, Rhode Island, for the purpose of establishing thereon a national memorial to Roger Williams in commemoration of his outstanding contributions to the development of the principles of freedom in this country: *Provided,* That property owned by the city of Providence or the Providence Redevelopment Agency may be acquired only with the consent of such owner.

Roger Williams  
National Memorial,  
R. I.  
Establishment.

Sec. 2. The property acquired pursuant to the first section of this Act shall be established as the Roger Williams National Memorial and the Secretary of the Interior shall publish notice of such establishment in the Federal Register. Such national Memorial shall be administered by the Secretary subject to the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes," approved August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535), as amended and supplemented, and the Act entitled "An Act to provide for the preservation of historic American sites, buildings, objects, and antiquities of national significance, and for other purposes," approved August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666).

Publication in  
Federal Register.

16 USC 1-4.

Sec. 3. (a) The Secretary is authorized to cooperate with the city of Providence, local historical and preservation societies, and interested persons in the maintenance and operation of the Roger Williams National Memorial, and he may seek the assistance of and consult with such city, societies, and persons from time to time with respect to matters concerning the development and operation of the memorial.

16 USC 461-  
467.  
79 STAT. 1069.  
79 STAT. 1070.

(b) The Secretary may accept on behalf of the people of the United States gifts of historic objects and records pertaining to Roger Williams for appropriate display or other use in keeping with the commemoration of the founding of the principles of freedom in the United States and of the historical events that took place in the city of Providence in connection therewith.

Sec. 4. There are hereby authorized to be appropriated not more than \$700,000 for the acquisition of lands and interests in land and for the development of the Roger Williams National Memorial, as provided in this Act.

Appropriation.

Approved October 22, 1965.



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**APPENDIX B****SELECT CHRONOLOGY OF ROGER WILLIAMS NATIONAL MEMORIAL**

- 1600s National memorial site is part of the Narragansett homeland.
- 1603 Roger Williams is born in London.
- 1631 Roger and Mary Williams immigrate to the Massachusetts Bay Colony.
- 1635 Roger Williams is sentenced to leave Massachusetts due to his refusal to support civil authority over religious matters and the right of England to grant Native American lands to settlers.
- 1636 Roger Williams flees Massachusetts to the northern reaches of Narragansett Bay and negotiates purchase or use of land along the Great Salt River from the Narragansett Sachems, Canonicus and Miantonomi. Williams purportedly lands near a fresh-water spring along the eastern side of the Great Salt Cove within or near the national memorial site and founds the settlement of Providence.
- 1637 Roger Williams signs a deed with the Narragansetts confirming his purchase of the lands at the cove. He and fellow settlers sign a compact to govern themselves based on civil rather than religious law.
- 1638 Roger Williams divides a portion of the settlement, known as Providence Plantations, to twelve fellow settlers or Proprietors. The core or village center of the settlement, located along the east side of the Pawtucket Trail (renamed Towne Street and presently North Main Street), is subdivided into parcels known as home lots. Roger Williams's home lot is across from the spring that is purportedly within the future national memorial site. The beach on the west side of the street, including the spring, is reserved as common lands.
- 1643-44 Providence is united with other Rhode Island settlements into the Colony of Providence Plantations.
- 1646 John Smith builds a town gristmill along the Moshassuck River, replacing the spring as Providence's public gathering place.
- 1650 There are thirty-four houses in Providence on the home lots.
- 1663 The Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations receives a royal charter.
- 1676 Most of Providence is destroyed in King Phillip's War, a conflict that resulted in the end of Native American power in southeastern New England. The settlers, including Roger Williams, rebuild.

- 1680 Pardon Tillinghast builds Providence's first wharf on the common lands along the east side of the cove, marking the beginning of the town's transformation from a rural village to a commercial city.
- 1683 Roger Williams dies in Providence.
- 1721 As part of the transfer of the shoreline commons to private ownership, the Proprietors sell a lot containing the town spring to Gabriel Bernon, whose house was to the north. The Proprietors reserve public access to the old town spring in perpetuity.
- 1722 Gabriel Bernon founds King's Chapel, later St. John's Church (Episcopal), across Towne Street from his house.
- 1747 By this time, side streets known as gangways had been laid out across the national memorial site to connect Towne Street with wharves along the Great Salt Cove. The properties between the gangways are known as warehouse lots, occupied by maritime commercial and industrial uses, along with residences fronting on Towne Street.
- 1760 The Rhode Island Colony House (later Old State House) is built on the east side of Towne Street.
- 1790s The first textile factories are built upriver from Providence, marking the beginning of the town's transformation into an industrial center.
- 1807 Towne Street is renamed North and South Main streets.
- 1816 A fixed-span bridge is constructed to Weybosset Point, limiting navigation to its north into the Great Salt Cove and marking the decline of maritime commerce within the future site of the national memorial. Nehemiah Dodge builds a larger brick house between the old town spring and North Main Street.
- 1823 Construction of North Water Street (Canal Street) along the east side of the cove is begun; requires removal of the wharves and last remnants of the old shoreline and beach.
- 1826 The Blackstone River Canal is completed, with its terminus in a boat basin at the confluence of the Great Salt Cove and Moshassuck River adjacent to the national memorial site.
- 1832 Providence is incorporated as a city.
- 1830s Railroads are constructed in Providence.
- 1834 The old town spring is identified as Tripe's Spring on a map by T. M. Sumner documenting conditions in c.1775-1777. The Tripe family, descendants of Gabriel Bernon, own the spring lot.

- 1846 The Providence and Worcester Railroad begins a project to fill in portions of the cove to provide space for its tracks and station, further separating the national memorial site from the water.
- 1854 Transformation of the cove into an oval lake with a tree-lined promenade is completed; the Blackstone Canal is abandoned for shipping.
- 1860 Allen's Map locates the old town spring at the rear of the Dodge house as Roger Williams Spring.
- 1875 North Main Street is widened. The Dodge house, later owned by the Allen and Seagraves families, is moved back over the old town spring, which is encased within the cellar of the house.
- 1877 The city dedicates the first monument to Roger Williams in Roger Williams Park located on the city's south side.
- 1898 The city of Providence publishes a map locating the Roger Williams Spring in the basement of the Dodge house.
- 1900 The new Rhode Island capitol, on Smith Hill within view of the national memorial site, is completed. The city removes a pump and trough that provided public access to the waters of the old town spring.
- 1906 The state installs a bronze plaque on the Dodge house noting the presence of the Roger Williams Spring in the cellar. A similar plaque is installed on the building at the site of Roger Williams's house at 233-235 North Main Street.
- 1921 Joseph Levey acquires the Dodge house containing the Roger Williams Spring.
- 1923 Joseph Levey demolishes the Dodge house and builds a commercial building on its site, but retains the Roger Williams Spring in the basement.
- 1928 A granite monument, funded by the U. S. War Department, is erected along the curbside of North Main Street in front of the Levey commercial building to commemorate the founding of Providence. The monument features two bronze plaques, one marking the site as the place where Providence was founded in 1636, and the other marking the site of the spring as the original center of Providence.
- 1929 Jerome Hahn, a retired state judge, begins discussions with the city for removing the Levey commercial building to build a park around the Roger Williams Spring. Architect Norman M. Isham is contacted to develop a design for the park, and in June presents initial plans to the city park commission.

- 1930 Jerome Hahn purchases the Levye commercial building; the city purchases the adjoining property to the north containing a three-story commercial building owned by M. Katz as part of the proposed park. By September, the city demolishes both the Levye and Katz buildings. The purported spring is contained within a concrete box culvert.
- 1930 Parishioners from St. John's Cathedral and descendants of Gabriel Bernon form the Bernon Realty Corporation for the development of a park north of the proposed Roger Williams Spring Park.
- 1931 Jerome Hahn donates his portion of the park property, called the spring lot, to the city of Providence in memory of his father, Isaac Hahn, for the development of Roger Williams Spring Park. Norman Isham completes detailed drawings for the spring lot portion of the park.
- 1932 The city begins work on the masonry components of the park.
- 1933 The city appropriates funds to complete the spring lot portion of Roger Williams Spring Park, and construction is finished in the fall.
- 1934 The state incorporates the Roger Williams Memorial Association with authority to erect a monument to Roger Williams on Prospect Terrace, on College Hill east of the national memorial site.
- 1936 The Rhode Island tercentennial marks three hundred years since Roger Williams landed at the Great Salt Cove to found Providence.
- 1937 By this time, the Bernon Realty Corporation has demolished buildings on the site of its proposed park at 256-268 North Main Street and 6 Church Street. The site is rough-graded.
- 1939 The Roger Williams monument at Prospect Terrace is completed.
- 1942 The Bernon Realty Corporation donates its property north of Roger Williams Spring Park to the city for development as a park in memory of Gabriel Bernon.
- 1947 The Providence Redevelopment Agency is created to coordinate urban renewal.
- 1953 The city park department makes improvements to Bernon Park by planting a small grove of Norway maples and seeding the ground. A small monument to Bernon is also erected around this time.
- 1956 The Providence Preservation Society is founded.
- 1957 The Providence City Plan Commission issues a public works improvements plan that identified the North Main Street and College Hill area, including the future national memorial site, as deteriorated. Much of the area is recommended for demolition and redevelopment.

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- 1958 The Providence Preservation Society and City Plan Commission develop an urban renewal plan for College Hill including the future national memorial site entitled *College Hill: A Demonstration Study of Historic Area Renewal*. The study calls for expanding Roger Williams Spring Park into a national park extending from Haymarket (South Court) Street north to Smith Street and from North Main Street west to Canal Street.
- 1960 Rhode Island Senator Theodore F. Green sponsors a bill establishing Roger Williams National Monument under the Historic Sites Act of 1935, with a \$2,500,000 cost for acquisition and development.
- 1963 The National Park Service drafts a new bill for Roger Williams National Memorial at a cost of \$590,000 for acquisition and development.
- 1964 The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments formally recommends establishment of Roger Williams National Memorial.
- 1965 On October 22, Congress passes a joint House-Senate act establishing Roger Williams National Memorial with an appropriation of \$700,000. The Providence Redevelopment Agency begins planning for acquisition of the national memorial property for eventual clearance and conveyance to the federal government.
- 1969 The Providence Redevelopment Agency begins condemnation proceedings on properties within the national memorial site.
- 1971 The Providence Redevelopment Agency begins demolition within the national memorial site.
- 1972 In June, the city and National Park Service agree on the boundaries of the national memorial, encompassing 4.5 acres. The Providence Preservation Society raises objections over demolition of Roger Williams Spring Park, Antram-Gray house, Bernon Grove, and the gangways.
- 1973 In January of this year, the National Park Service develops a preliminary master plan for the national memorial. The agency agrees to retain the Antram-Gray house as part of the national memorial.
- 1974 The Antram-Gray house is moved forty feet south along North Main Street to accommodate the city's widening of Smith Street.
- 1974 On June 17, Roger Williams Spring Park and Bernon Park are transferred from the Providence Park Department to the Providence Redevelopment Agency. On June 19, the National Park Service signs a formal contract to purchase the 4.5-acre site. On December 30, the Providence Redevelopment Agency conveys title to the site to the federal government.

- 1975 As agreed to in the purchase contract with the federal government, the Providence Redevelopment Agency completes demolition of the gangways and all buildings except for the Antram-Gray house, and rough grades the site. Roger Williams Spring Park and Bernon Park are left standing. The National Park Service holds public meetings over its proposed alternative designs for the national memorial, calling for removal of Roger Williams Spring Park and Bernon Park.
- 1976 Based on public input from the Providence Preservation Society and other concerns, the National Park Service revises its design alternatives to retain Roger Williams Spring Park (renamed the Hahn Memorial), and Bernon Park, and to create a simple, open green space. Work begins on rehabilitating the Antram-Gray house as the visitor center and offices for the national memorial.
- 1977 The National Park Service selects its preferred alternative for the design of the national memorial, entitled Rolling Topography. The agency solicits proposals to develop site design plans and selects Albert Veri & Associates, Landscape Architects and Planners, with offices at 3 Governor Street in Providence. The firm forms a joint venture for the project with the engineering firm of Caputo and Wick, Ltd., of Rumford, Rhode Island.
- 1979 The national memorial formally opens to the public with the completion of the Antram-Gray house rehabilitation. The entire site by this time is seeded, a parking lot is built off Canal Street, and repairs are made to the Hahn Memorial.
- 1980 Veri & Associates and Caputo and Wick complete construction documents. The project is divided into three construction phases; phase 1 begins with construction of a ramp next to the Antram-Gray house. A small granite monument is installed marking the dedication of a tree of “new hope.”
- 1981 Phase II, encompassing most of the site work including grading, circulation, and plantings, is largely completed.
- 1982 Phase III, encompassing remaining plantings and walks and site furnishings, is completed. Several minor features are added over the next two years. The completed landscape does not include a commemorative monument to Roger Williams.
- 1986 Roger Williams National Memorial is administratively incorporated into the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.
- 1987 A small monument commemorating the bicentennial of the U. S. Constitution is installed near the amphitheater.
- 2000 Around this time, the National Park Service adds raised beds north of the Antram-Gray house, and barrel planters along North Main Street and the Old State House allee. Ornamental grasses are added to the central bed of the Hahn Memorial.

- 2002 A monument to the Snowtown Riot is installed west of the Antram-Gray house.
- 2005 Around this time, the National Park Service lowers hedges along the perimeter and raises the canopy of trees to open sight lines.
- 2007 A tuliptree (yellow poplar) and small monument commemorating the spirit of liberty are added near the amphitheater.

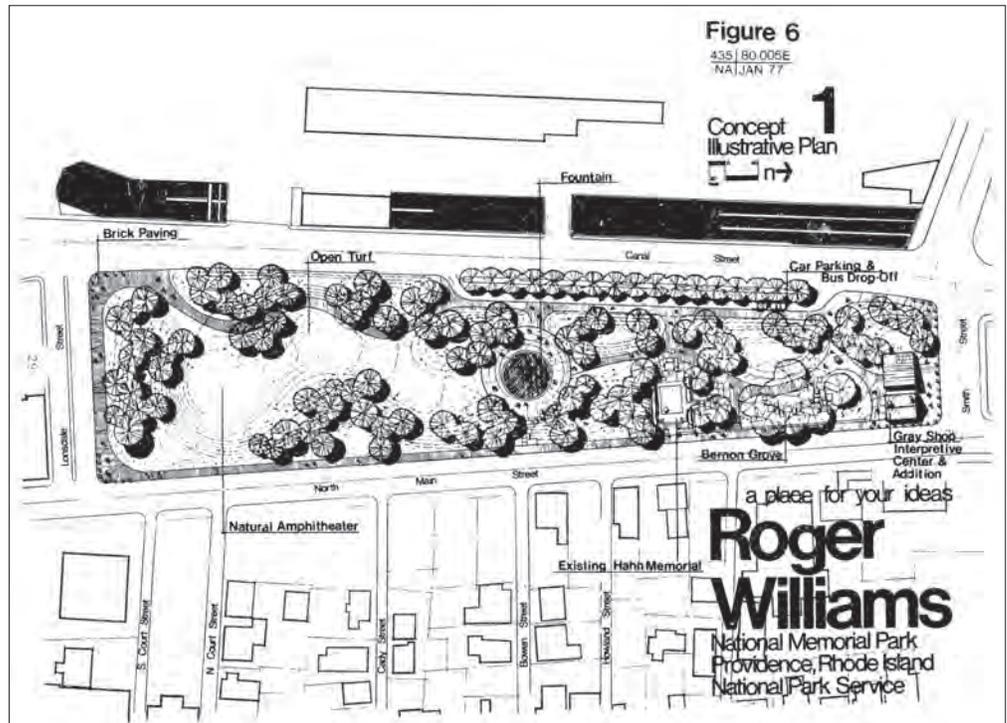


**APPENDIX C**

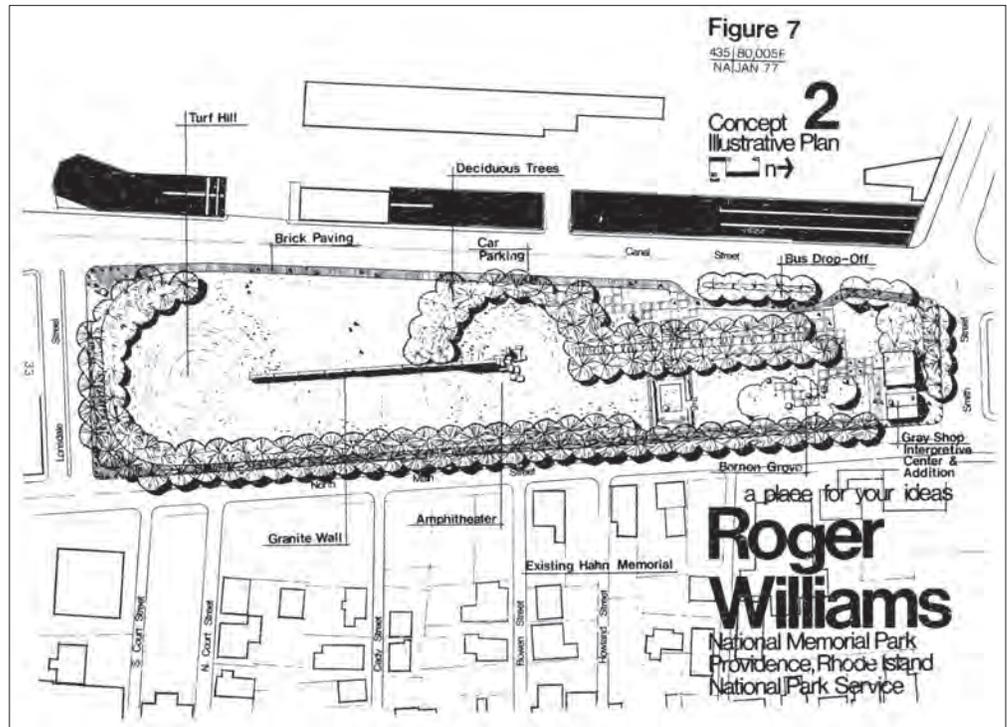
**1977 SITE DESIGN ALTERNATIVES FOR ROGER WILLIAMS NATIONAL MEMORIAL**

Source: National Park Service, "Environmental Assessment of Development Concept Alternatives, Roger Williams National Memorial" (North Atlantic Region, National Park Service, February 1977).

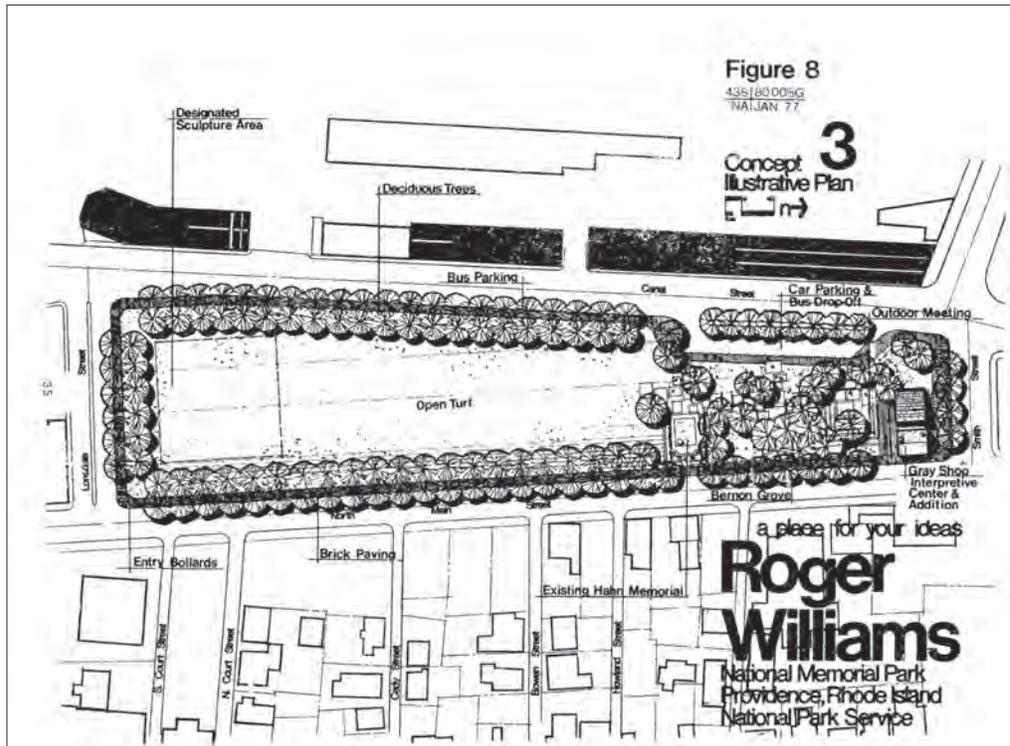
**CONCEPT 1, "ROLLING TOPOGRAPHY"**



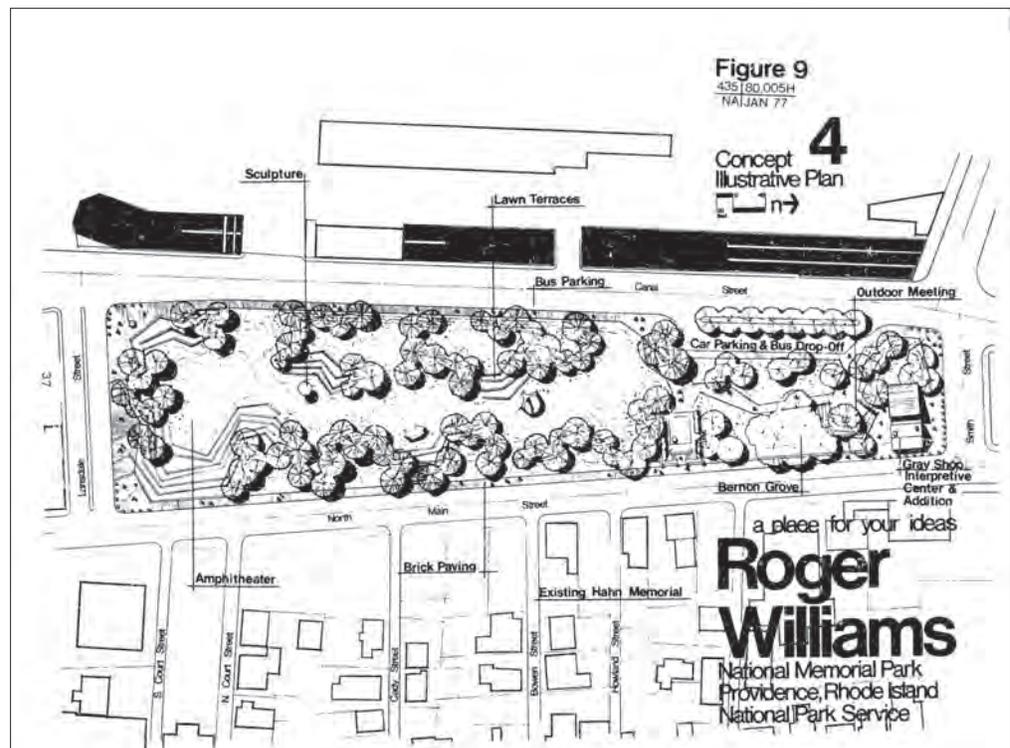
**CONCEPT 2, "GRANITE WALL"**



**CONCEPT 3,  
"SCULPTURE  
COMPETITION"**



**CONCEPT 4, "LAWN  
TERRACES"**



## APPENDIX D

### PUBLIC COMMENTS ON DRAFT CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

This appendix contains a list of attendees at a public meeting on the draft Cultural Landscape Report and unedited comments handed in at the meeting and received separately by mail (post or e-mail). The facilitated meeting was held on December 9, 2009 at the Old State House, 150 Benefit Street, Providence.

The intent of the meeting and presentation, attended by approximately thirty people, was to provide the public with an overview of the findings of the draft cultural landscape report, including site analysis and proposed treatment recommendations and planning ideas; to produce comments on the draft report and additional ideas from participants; and to reach agreement on next steps in the planning process. Superintendent Jan Reitsma provided opening remarks, stating that there is presently no plan for redesigning the national memorial, but that it was time to consider whether the site was fulfilling its purpose. He noted that he wanted the public to weigh in with any concerns and that the discussion was only the beginning of an ongoing process. Site Manager Jennifer Gonsalves encouraged the public to provide bold, broad ideas that may not have been captured in the current draft report. She also encouraged suggestions on how the document's recommendations might be implemented. Bob Page, Director of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, explained that the cultural landscape report was one tool to help the park preserve its resources and to set a foundation for decision-making concerning the park's future management. John Auwaerter, from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, provided a PowerPoint presentation of the site history, existing conditions, and analysis and evaluation, followed by the main planning ideas for discussion purposes.

#### ATTENDEE LIST

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John Auwaerter	SUNY ESF/Olmsted Center partner	315 470-6995	jeauwaer@esf.edu

**COMMENTS HANDED IN AT MEETING**

**Site Deficiencies (Green Cards)**

- Ecological history- Which is why it was the place to settle.
- When did the water stop being clean enough to drink?
- Connections to the river.
- Is the city planning dept. here today?

- How about getting some of the unused open land on the west side of the river? Rebuild a little of the original settlement/ Narragansett camp.
- What will work as a Park as opposed to a Memorial? Which approach should hold sway? What should be the balance?
- Need signs about the life of Roger.
- Lack of parking.
- Leave amphitheater as an open space.
- What is the effect of these (negative?) evaluation findings? Is it not a significant site?
- Speed of traffic at park area.
- Difficulty finding parking.
- Good usability for non-profit groups.
- Emphasis: religious freedom, political freedom, cultural life style, economics, founding families and dispensing to other locations throughout state.
- Daughters & Sons of the American Revolution need to be involved; they were involved between the 1950s, maybe 1930s to at least the 1970s.
- Being a descendent of those that traveled with Roger Williams in the 1600s to this area, I would like to be involved this time, as my Aunt Dorothy did in the past.
- J. Jerome Hahn was the first Jewish superior court judge, and the first Jewish justice of Supreme Court. His gift of property to the city as use for park should not be forgotten. Additionally, the 10-block park site was a significant Jewish neighborhood (part of the “North End”) ca. 1880-1940. I believe that it is highly significant to present Roger Williams’ ideals, especially the separation of church and state. It would be a mistake to suggest however, that his ideas have been widely accepted, especially in RI. The battle over the separation of church and state is perpetual with continual gains and losses.

#### Site Opportunities (white cards)

- Park should connect to other historical landscapes that surround the site (St. John’s cemetery, Prospect Heights).
- Park should be used as a timeline experience starting with the Native American history. Get schools to use it.
- It’s a great irony that the federal government honors Roger Williams, who stood apart from secular government. The NPS must be highly critical of its own role so as not to compromise his vision.
- Showcase spring/well, with water, archaeological display.
- Outdoor section of 1636 landscape of landing.
- New water feature.

- Streetscape Plan: Walkway to 231 North Main St./rear of 231 North Main St.—the site of his house/plot.
- 231 N Main St. repurpose to display, study, lectures.
- Rte 44 (2 way) to Canal St.
- Ken Burns—feature documentary of RI history and implementation of rehab./renovation.
- Use Native plants.
- Signage about canal.
- Paddle Boat access/complete water travel.
- Paddle Boat Access.
- Memorial Space—Friends of the Moshassuck would work with you to extend landscape to Moshassuck River.
- Treatment—Prefer Alter. B [rehabilitation of Roger Williams Spring], improve interpretation.
- Treatment lacks integration to neighborhood and river.
- Take the opportunity to reach out to Roger Williams’ descendants—I believe there is an association. Not only in terms of research but also future planning.
- Why isn’t the 1980/1982 park and its design considered as a significant resource—even though it is less than 50 years? This analysis is focused on components (buildings, plaques. . .). Even though some components are less than 50 yrs., it misses the biggest resource: the park. Modern landscape are endangered; Roger Williams NM has the potential to be historic. Certainly its design, materials, construction, etc are worthy of analysis and development of a treatment plan.
- Maybe this is a flaw in the structure of the CLR format, but native people are not “native environment” comparable with vegetation, topography, etc.
- FYI—often during heavy rains, water bubbles up at the foot of Cady St. @ N. Main. I always figured it was Roger Williams’ spring!
- I think the programming/use has to drive the capital changes.
- Park re-design—could it include areas that are used as archaeological studies/digs?
- The area/site/memorial/park has to be a 4 season place. Therefore there needs to be more indoor space across the river!
- Wide crosswalks (perhaps raised) that connect to College Hill.
- Investigate the original situation of the well/spring as incorporated into Isham’s plan, to help determine its potential for reintroducing a spring.
- Roger Williams trail, driving directions, RWM-Roger Williams landing-Roger Williams Spring.

- 
- Events to draw people—Roger Williams birthday party, Native pow wow, more speaking events.
  - Restrict addition of monuments, commemorations that don't advance the memorial obligation of Roger Williams or are [not] related to a significant historical event that has a strong physical connection to the park and its past history. Add monument expressing words, principles of Roger Williams.
  - Don't forget that Roger Williams was a Puritan-nature, simplicity, love, freedom, religion, politics. And feel that this park/ landscape area should have some of this "feel".
  - Well or Spring: important for colonists (life force), springboard of idea of freedom and amendments. Need lifestyle, use of well in colonial times and life that occurred at well.
  - Educational/Project Use
    - well and develop pump and pump/well piping.
    - archeological research.
    - geological research.
    - river , tributary research.
    - involve elementary - college students in projects, not just AP students.
  - Although I said previously that it is important to acknowledge Justice Hahn and his gift, I question whether Norman Isham's design is truly significant. It occurs to me that an understanding of his work as a preservationist in Providence and elsewhere around RI outshines the quality of this particular monument.
  - Existing park functions successfully as a passive open space for sitting, strolling, eating, games. Organized events are relatively more.
  - Park should facilitate/encourage connections to surrounding historic area. Roger Williams' message/legacy grew and spread; it was not narrow/constrained/inward.
  - Hahn/Spring could be useful symbolic site, reintroducing water.
  - Antram-Gray house has greater historical value and age than is generally interpreted.
  - Park site was center of original Providence settlement and colonial town great from this site.
  - Eliminate the "colonial garden".
  - Restrict placing of memorials not directly related to Roger Williams or directly related to the history of this site.
  - The existing park is not broken, though the connections with Roger Williams' significance could be strengthened.
-

**MAILED COMMENTS**

(Not all respondents provided a mailing address or affiliation.)

**Lucinda Brockway, Past Designs, Kennebunk, Maine**

Background: I have just completed a CLR for Cocumscussoc in North Kingstown, another site intimately connected with Roger Williams and his role in the founding of Rhode Island. I also conducted the landscape survey for the State of Rhode Island Heritage and Historic Preservation Commission, and though that was some time ago, I had the opportunity to see all of Rhode Island's public parks and other historic landscapes so that I can put the Memorial in the context of the rest of the state. I was hoping to attend your public hearing to see your presentation about the CLR, and perhaps some of my comments or questions would have been answered through that vehicle; however the weather today is going to prevent my travel to Rhode Island. Please accept these comments as part of your public review process, and know that they are offered in the spirit of furthering good landscape preservation practices.

General: This third draft of the CLR does a good job of analyzing and evaluating the Memorial, particularly with regards to its current landscape, its history since the establishment of the Memorial, and offers a wonderful analysis of its features and their significance based on Park Service standards for CLR's. This has been an interesting document to read, as it suggests that the real goal of the Memorial has not yet been achieved, (the "memorial" of Roger Williams and ideals of freedom). It values the landscape about the historic well for its 1933 landscape design, and the Antram-Gray house as a significant historic structure, but it emphasizes through the CLR process that there is not much of a historic landscape here to preserve or treat, as the majority of the landscape was designed in the early 1980's and though it meets the goals of a good urban park, does not meet the intent and purpose of the site as a Memorial Site. It is an interesting dilemma, and I would hope that perhaps it could be one of the first documents that defends and suggests that perhaps this conclusion allows for a new landscape to be developed which meets the intents and purposes of the legislation, and the needs of the site for visitor services and interpretation.

Spirit of Place: As I read the document, the spirit of this site was born in the early 19th century as residents hoped to connect a place with the legacy of Roger Williams. They celebrated the historic well (I don't see that this is truly a spring) as a symbol of the spring mentioned in the archival records, but there is no documentation that links this well (spring?) to Roger Williams directly. In fact, I can't see that the CLR proves that this neighborhood was the landing place for Williams, though it is certainly the site where one of the earliest settlements developed for the City of Providence. Though there have been repeated attempts to celebrate this spot as sacred ground linking Williams to this site as the cornerstone of Providence and his ideals of freedom, the physical remains of that linkage are speculative at best.

That being said, this site has, in fact, become a site where Traditional Cultural Practices have endeared it to the residents of Rhode Island. Though we have (up to now) linked Traditional Cultural Practices sites with Native American, Hawaiian or Alaskan cultures, I wonder if we should consider the ramifications of this category on this Memorial, because even though the well (spring), the Antram-Gray House, and the vicinity of the Memorial site are only tenuously connected to Williams, the Memorial has certainly become the cornerstone of interpreting his life, his beliefs, and his tenets for American freedom – as such it has become "sacred ground" for the history of Providence, of Rhode Island, and of the legacy for Roger Williams to American ideals. These tenets are part of our American cultural practices.

The 4.5 acres surrounding the Memorial are more valuable for their spiritual connections to these ideals than for their physical remains as a link to that legacy.

Historic Resources: This does not, however, negate the value of the well, the archaeological remains of the house foundations in the vicinity of the park, and the Antram-Gray house as important artifacts of Providence's early history. Had they not become part of the actual Memorial grounds, they might stand on their own as valuable historic resources; though I think their significance might be evaluated against a different set of criteria. The Isham park surrounding the well is now a historic landscape because of its age, not necessarily because it is the best landscape design ever developed by Isham. In fact, I would argue that there are better plans. Many landscapes of his have been lost, so perhaps this is valuable as one of the few remaining landscape designs executed by Isham, though the CLR does not evaluate its significance based on the larger body of Isham's work.

The Antram-Gray house is a good 18th century building, but I think there are better examples in Rhode Island. Its relocation means that much of its archaeological record has been lost. As a building artifact, it offers the opportunity to discuss 18th century life in Providence. Though that period connects the Williams legacy to the founding of a Nation, it almost distracts from the message about the Williams era, almost two centuries before. As with the Isham park, I think that this house should be evaluated against other 18th century buildings in Providence and in Rhode Island, and then considered for its contributions (or lack thereof) to the overall purpose of the Memorial. Since it was moved once, this building could retain its same historic value in a different location if necessary.

What do we have?: As a cultural landscape, the thrust of the Memorial site today consists of an early well surrounded by a 1933 Colonial Revival park, a relocated 18th century house, and a late 20th century urban park in reasonably good condition. The best sculptural monument to Williams is located up the hill at Prospect Terrace, which also offers one of the better overlooks for the City of Providence. What the 4.5 acre Memorial property does hold, however, is an opportunity to connect today's visitors to the founding of Providence, the legacy of Roger Williams, and his legacy for freedom, particularly religious freedom and the tolerance of diversity. I am not sure that this connection is best made by the feeble physical remains of historic artifacts within the landscape. In fact I would argue that the Memorial is perhaps better represented in a museum, as a work of art, or in a landscape specifically designed to reflect or celebrate that purpose. Therefore, I think the 4.5 acre Memorial site might be better considered as an opportunity to relate its spirit of place, as a place which celebrates our traditional cultural values of freedom, tolerance, and our desire to bring ideals to the frontiers of civilization – wherever and whatever those frontiers might be. Perhaps what the site truly offers us is the opportunity to build a proper Memorial to Williams which can inspire visitors with the heights of his Ideals.

Another spring: There is another spring, which is readily evident above-ground, and can be specifically documented to Williams and to Rhode Island's early. This spring is located at Cocumscussoc - a site that perhaps best relates Williams' relationships with the Native Americans, his appreciation for managing land under their traditional land practices, and his interest in establishing trade and commerce in this emerging colony. This spring is visible, still flows with volumes of water, and held the same attraction for early settlement: readily available fresh water, access to water and land routes, within a landscape that was already tamed by the native inhabitants. I don't think that this spring was physically any different than the spring which Williams wrote about in Providence, though the intent of

the settlement at Cocumscussoc has come to mean something different to us as a culture. Here, its spiritual value links Williams to commerce and trade – a significant and important ingredient in establishing the colony. The spring in Providence has been celebrated for its idyllic link to Williams’ philosophical legacy. It was the partnership between philosophical ideals and successful commerce that bred American freedom, so perhaps these two well-heads should be more intricately linked.

**Broad Thinking:** I think that your letter of introduction is right on task: this is the opportunity to think more broadly about the intent and purpose of the Memorial, and how this intent and purpose can best be realized with this 4.5 acre place. I would argue that perhaps this message is best represented by a landscape, a work of art, or a building that inspires these ideals in our imagination, and links our values with the legacy of Roger Williams in a broader, more spiritual manner than currently exists. I think that the historic resources that exist currently within the Memorial are important, but not directly relevant, to this message unless they can be absolutely documented as a physical link between this man and this place. The Memorial holds another value, as an important public park for the citizens of Providence. Even with the latest round of urban redevelopment, there has been little opportunity for greenswards or ‘green lung’s’ for the city – in fact some of the green space that fronted the state capitol has been give up for roads, malls and urban buildings. Whatever the plans for the Memorial become, I think that it is important to remember the value of green space in allowing the spirit to soar, and the mind to think clearly about the message of this place.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. [Lucinda Brockway’s specific editorial comments on the draft Cultural Landscape Report were omitted and have been addressed in finalization of the report.]

**Kathleen Styger, Preservation & Advocacy Coordinator**

**Providence Preservation Society, kstyger@ppsri.org, 401.831.7440**

**December 11, 2009**

Representatives of the Providence Preservation Society attended the meeting on December 9, 2009, beginning the public involvement in the redesign of the Roger Williams National Memorial Park. Having historically played a role in the formation of the site, our interest remains in seeing the full potential of this cultural and historic resource realized, and we would like to be involved as the planning process continues.

The site needs to be looked at holistically to develop appropriate programming for the entire memorial. We endorse the National Park Service’s intention to partner with other organizations that will actively and more broadly use the site.

From our perspective as preservationists, uncovering the natural spring and using that to memorialize Roger Williams’ legacy of tolerance and freedom through universal access to the spring is laudable. The settlement layout and access to the spring is key to understanding the site and Roger Williams, and can be better illustrated both visually and interpretively.

PPS recommends that further investigation be done into the archaeological evidence that remains from the time of Roger Williams’ original settlement. This material culture, along with architectural evidence of the original layout and buildings of the community, could be used for both educational and commemorative purposes that would serve as an attraction to the site.

Recognizing that there is a critical need for an expanded visitor's center, an authentic stone-ender from the time of Roger Williams, or a modern interpretation of one, could be added to the memorial behind the Antram-Gray House. The memorial would be centered on an interpretation of the historic buildings and landscape present during the time of Roger Williams' settlement, and the community that was formed around the spring.

**Al Klyberg**

I am not sure enlarging the actual visitor center is the answer, though it might be. The answer may be simpler. Many of the current users of the park may not know what it is because the interpretive center is in the far northern corner. People using the grounds for picnics and recreation (frisbee, etc.) enter from the southern area (corner of N. Main and Park Row) or by the Hahn Memorial. Rather than making the Gray House bigger, maybe you need to place more interpretive panels throughout the park to intercept the users. Perhaps an interpretive panel across the street at his home lot. Something up on Benefit Street, or at the First Baptist meeting house. At the Prospect Park, or at the square at Gano, Williams, and Roger Streets. Don't force people to come in through the front door of the building. Meet them where they intercept the site may be a better answer. People today are more curious about Williams and what they should think of him than almost ever before. Address them at the point of their curiosity.

**Chuck Arning, Park Ranger, John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor**

1) Utilizing cobble stones, layout the original streetscape (original streets) of early Providence throughout the park. It would allow the Rangers to tell a story about Roger Williams' Providence right there and interpreting the growth of the city as reflected in those changes seen in the cobblestones.

2) Create a "Free Speech" square with a granite block as the center where on a weekly basis people can come and discuss the idea and news of the day. While guidelines will need to be developed, potentially a very strong partnership potential, it would allow for a National Park to demonstrate what "civil discourse" is all about.

**Arnie McConnell**

Roger Williams was a great debater. He seemed to love nothing better than a doctrinal argument. Perhaps you would consider developing a forum for debate--an open air amphitheater on the park grounds??

Or a yearly public speaking contest?

Or a yearly forum, in conjunction with the R.I. college and university community, on contentious issues that demand our tolerance and consideration.

I hope you get to read these ideas and that you give them serious consideration. Don't hesitate to e-mail me if you wish. I'd willingly help in the implementation.

**Mark Sweberg, Volunteer, Roger Williams National Memorial**

This opinion is informed solely on the basis of brief weekly encounters, over a six month period, with visitors of ROWI in the capacity of volunteer at the visitor desk. Regular perusals of the visitor comment log and observations of the interpretive work of the park rangers have further solidified my opinion as well.

It has been my experience that what resonates with and engages visitors the most is the theme of Roger Williams as the inspiring genius behind Providence, RI as the birthplace of religious liberty and separation of religion from state. Although many associate Thomas Jefferson and the first amendment of the Constitution as the foundational thesis of separation of church and state, it comes as an enlightened surprise for visitors to learn of Roger Williams' forward thinking on this matter. Coached within the context of his times, it becomes apparent to visitors of the extent of his genius. I feel the National Park Service should strive to elevate this man and his ideals as a leading interpretive theme in the park. A national memorial befitting the stature of this champion should contain tangible representation in the form of a monument dedicated to Roger Williams for his founding ideas of religious liberty. Interpretation focused on this theme would appropriately follow. No less than a Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, etc., a statue or monument to Roger Williams would strongly benefit the man and place where America really took seed.

**Gates, Leighton & Associates, Inc.**

Introduction: The inclusion of Roger Williams National Memorial (RWNM) as an active urban park in Downtown Providence is challenging because of the difficulty of crossing four streets that border the property. Because of this common complaint, this brief review focuses primarily on the pedestrian accessibility concerns. Although actual park improvements could be made to enhance its use (i.e. visitor center) GLA envisions greater activity by incorporating safe, walkable connections between the East Side and Downtown area. While the Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) presents strong design concepts for park improvements, we feel the greatest improvement would be incorporating traffic calming features into the vehicular circulation which currently make the park feel like an island; a green oasis that is hard to get to, especially from Canal Street.

We recognize that there are current DOT plans that address possible pedestrian improvements along North Main Street and actually “dovetail” with the CLR’s recommendations for creating “neck downs” or “bump outs” where new crosswalks might be. Because of this on going dialog, our comments are focused on Canal Street where 3 wide lanes of travel and a parallel parking lane create the most daunting crossing for pedestrians. Opportunities exist to connect the park to the Moshassuck River Canal and beyond to the rest of the river walk system which has become so popular, but the key issue is slowing the vehicular traffic so pedestrians don’t have to “dash” across once the lights turn green at the Smith Street intersection. The CLR does note on drawing 4.3 the ‘redesign of Canal Street’ so with that in mind, we offer two approaches to those improvements.

Option One: The initial thought is that the alignment of Canal Street should be changed from the straight “drag race” character to an extended curvilinear alignment that creates a meaningful green space between travel lanes and the canal. This green space would be incorporated into the river walk system and also accommodate a major pedestrian cross-walk (perhaps even raised) from the park to the Downtown area. A new pedestrian bridge could also offer continued connections through the future housing development and on to the train station and State Capitol.

The curvilinear alignment of Canal Street could be designed conservatively to fit between the existing curb alignments meaning that travel lane widths would be reduced slightly and portions of the parallel parking area would be eliminated. A more aggressive design would push into the western edge of the park and “flip flop” green space from the park proper to the canal side of the street.

The outcome of this concept would have vehicles on Canal Street feel like they are driving through the park and not just racing along side it. Two major design features of these traffic calming measures would be:

2-3 major crosswalks between the park and the canal that are highly visible, clearly defined and well lit.

Tree lined pedestrian friendly boulevard extending along both sides of Canal Street from Smith Street to Steeple Street.

Option Two: A far reaching design concept that can truly link the RWNM to the East Side is to relocate the north bound traffic (bordering the East Side of the park) to Canal Street and create a two-way boulevard from Park Row along the canal connecting into the two-way street system at Charles Street. The existing two lanes of north boundary traffic on North Main would not become a single lane of traffic heading south. Reduced traffic flow would allow a greater pedestrian connection to the East Side and the current street width would be converted from parallel parking to diagonal parking thus offsetting the parking that would be lost on Canal Street. Major elements of this concept are:

South End—Modifications to park row to bring north bound traffic from North Main across the south end of the park to Canal Street.

Canal Street—Current 3-lanes southbound/parallel parking to become two-way traffic, two south bound lanes and two north bound lanes.

Smith Street Intersection—A roundabout would replace the existing intersection and allow safer pedestrian crossing but facilitate movements.

North Main/Charles Street—A full signalized “tee” intersection would replace the merge area just north of the existing commercial building.

Infrastructure improvements could reach beyond just roadways and sidewalks and the actual canal bordering Canal Street could be cleaned of debris and modified to extend the river walk enhancements directly to the doorsteps of RWNM.

**Daniel Baudouin, Executive Director, The Providence Foundation**

Sorry that it has taken me so long to respond to the December 9th open house. I appreciate this opportunity to comment.

I write as a resident of the neighborhood (Two Thomas Street, one block away), a frequent user of the park and as the Executive Director of The Providence Foundation, a not-for-profit group dedicated to the proper redevelopment of downtown Providence. I have a few comments to offer:

I was glad to see a sidewalk along the southern boundary of the park (Park Row). This is very much needed and perhaps could be installed this year before the overall plan is finalized.

As a frequent user of the park, I am always amazed how few people use the park, at least on weekends when I use it the most. On a beautiful weekend day, I often sit and read for several hours. I usually see about 5-10 people use the park over a several hour period. Parks are for people; there really should be thinking about activities and design that increase its usage.

The park could be a major educational experience for the history of Providence from Roger Williams' time (and maybe earlier) to the revolution. This period of history is often overlooked. I think that people would be very interested in this experience.

The park should connect with the downtown riverwalk that has been extended along the western edge of the Moshassuck River by the Capital Cove project.

Different alignments, usage, connection regarding Canal Street could be explored. While it is an important arterial, the number of travel lanes and road widths are excessive. Angled parking that can serve the park and others, bump-outs, etc.

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## APPENDIX E

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

1. Research into primary materials from Roger Williams's lifetime, such as diaries, correspondence, government records, etc., may provide additional insight into the landscape of the 1636-1683 period of significance, particularly the location and character of the old town spring. The location of such primary materials, except the published writings of Williams, was not determined for this report. This information would not aid management of the existing landscape, but would enhance interpretation and possibly also provide material to inform future planning and treatment.
2. The Providence Redevelopment Agency, 400 Westminster Street, may have additional documentation on the urban renewal programs and initiatives that led to the creation of the national memorial. The agency may also have specific documentation on the buildings that were demolished on the site.
3. Records of the Providence & Worcester Railroad at the University of Connecticut, Storrs (Dodd Research Center), may contain maps showing urban development on and around the national memorial site. Such documentation would not aid management of the existing landscape, but could enhance interpretation of the site's history after Williams's death.
4. Research into photographic collections at local historical societies and libraries may provide additional photographs on the original construction and subsequent changes to the Roger Williams Spring Park (Hahn Memorial). Only two images predating the creation of the national memorial were found for this report.
5. Research into the Providence city records may reveal documentation pertaining to the Providence Park Department's construction of the Roger Williams Spring Park (Hahn Memorial), notably the plantings. No documentation was found for this report on the park department's design of the plantings aside from a c.1935 postcard. City records may also provide additional history on the development of Bernon Park (Bernon Grove).
6. Three archeological studies at the national memorial site made prior to development of the existing landscape were not examined for this report, but may aid in interpreting the urban development of the site. These reports, listed below, are at the National Park Service Northeast Region library at the Charlestown Navy Yard.
  - Espinosa et al., "Preliminary Excavations in a Colonial Site" (1972, ROWI.001)
  - Gallagher et al., "Archeological Site Examination, A Case Study in Urban Archeology" (1981, ROWI.002)
  - Gibson et al., "Archeological Resource Study, Roger Williams National Memorial" (1979, ROWI.003)

7. Archeological investigation into the Roger Williams Spring (Hahn Memorial) may provide information on the source of the spring, the relationship between the existing wellcurb and the spring, and the system of pipes used to provide public access to its waters through the early twentieth century.
  
8. Archeological investigation into the site of Roger Williams's house at 231 North Main Street is needed to plan for potential public interpretation of the site and incorporation into the national memorial.

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## APPENDIX F

### RESEARCH CONTACTS

#### MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS AND LIBRARIES

National Park Service, Denver Service Center Technical Information Center, Denver, Colorado.

Contacted for park service plans related to the national memorial, including the original concept development plans, environmental assessment, and construction documents.

National Park Service, Northeast Regional Office Library, Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston.

Reviewed Historic Structures Report for the Antram-Gray house; did not visit library to review other documents pertaining to the national memorial (most of these were available at the park archives and library).

Providence Department of Planning and Development, 400 Westminster Street, Providence.

Researched photos, maps, 1957 edition of College Hill study. Spoke with Jason Mirten.

Roger Williams National Memorial, park archives and library, Antram-Gray house, Providence.

Researched park reports and studies, secondary sources, photographs, and documents related to construction of the national memorial landscape.

Rhode Island Historical Society, 121 Hope Street, Providence.

Researched Norman Morrison Isham Papers, 188-1950, 1899-1943 (MSS 508); Roger Williams Association Records (MSS 692); Antoinette Downing Papers (MSS 98); and Roger Williams National Memorial (MSS 960); Providence photograph collection; and skimmed materials in Gabriel Bernon (MSS98 4b), Blackstone Canal (MSS 985), and Benefit Street Association (MSS 960).

Syracuse University Libraries.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1899-1951, secondary sources on Rhode Island history.

University of Rhode Island, Special Collections, Kingston, Rhode Island.

“Records of St. John’s Episcopal Cathedral, Providence, R.I., 1715-1994.” Included information on Gabriel Bernon and twentieth-century photographs of the church and surrounding neighborhood.

#### WEBSITES

Library of Congress, American Memory website, <http://memory.loc.gov/>

Historic maps of Rhode Island and Providence.

Providence city website, Department of Planning, <http://www.providenceplanning.org>

Tax maps of the national memorial site.

University of New Hampshire, collection of historic USGS maps, <http://doc.unh.edu/nhtopos/nhtopos.htm>  
Provided 1894 and 1939 USGS maps of Providence.

#### **INDIVIDUALS**

Albert Veri, FASLA, principal (retired) of Veri/Waterman & Associates, Landscape Architects and Planners. Mr. Veri produced the final design for the national memorial landscape.

Terry Savage, National Park Service Planner (retired), Northeast Regional Office. Mr. Savage worked with Albert Veri on planning the implementation of the 1977 concept development plan for the national memorial.



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