

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Other names/site number: Neutaconkanut Hill Park, Neutaconkanut Park, King Park

Name of related multiple property listing:

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 675 Plainfield Street

City or town: Providence State: Rhode Island County: Providence

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,


I hereby certify that this x nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A ___ B ___ C ___ D

		Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	12/17/2025
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date	
<u>Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission</u>		_____	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government			

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	

Signature of commenting official:	Date

Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>15</u>	<u>5</u>	structures
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>23</u>	<u>9</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Outdoor Recreation

LANDSCAPE/Park

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Outdoor Recreation

LANDSCAPE/Park

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stone, Concrete, Asphalt, Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District (also the “district” or the “park”) in Providence, Rhode Island, is an 85-acre public park managed by the City of Providence for passive and active recreation. The park occupies the northeast and east slopes of Neutaconkanut Hill (summit outside the district at 296 feet above sea level), one of the highest land points in the area, in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Providence at its boundary with the Town of Johnston. It is historically associated with early settlers, namely the Borden family, and recognized as one of the first public parks established by the City of Providence in response to special-interest lobbying and expanded under the guidance of a regional planning commission in the early twentieth century. Much of the district is wooded, with the southeastern part of the park containing vestiges of 18th and 19th-century agriculture and settlement, evident in the remaining stone walls and homestead ruins. The park’s vehicular circulation and pedestrian walking paths ascend Neutaconkanut Hill, affording views of downtown Providence to the northeast. Level terrain at the foot of the hill along Plainfield and Killingly Streets contains athletic fields and other modern recreation facilities. The park encompasses 23 contributing resources (6 sites, 15 structures, and 2 objects) and 9 non-contributing resources (3 buildings, 1 site, 4 structures, and 1 object). Contributing resources are associated with the Borden/King family and 19th-century landowners on Neutaconkanut Hill; early twentieth-century park improvements made by the City of Providence; and park amenities built as public works projects in the 1930s. The non-contributing resources were constructed after 1955.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

Narrative Description

Setting

The Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District occupies 85 acres in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Providence, east of the City's border with the Town of Johnston and about 500 feet north of the border with the City of Cranston (Figure 1). Neutaconkanut Hill is defined geologically by steep slopes on the southwest, south, north, and northeast that rise to a summit at 296 feet above sea level, west and outside of the district. The irregularly-shaped district extends along the steep east and northeast slopes of Neutaconkanut Hill from Plainfield Street, which originated as a colonial-era road, up to approximately 250 feet above sea level. High points within the park provide impressive views to the northeast, east, and southeast. The park is bounded by residential properties, Sunset Avenue, Killingly Street, and Plainfield Street to the east and north; a City-owned parcel containing the 5.5-acre Neutaconkanut Reservoir and pumping facilities to the northwest; and the Johnston border to the west and south. The land in Johnston west of the district is wooded; it contains privately-owned radio and TV towers atop the summit of Neutaconkanut Hill on the south. The hill's environs support a variety of flora and fauna.

Resource Descriptions

Neutaconkanut Hill Park is maintained for a variety of passive and active recreation activities. Woodlands with trails and clearings cover the hillside that runs north-south the length of the park and characterize the majority of the district. Walking trails through successional growth forest provide access to natural points of interest and built features throughout the park. The second highest elevation of the park is near the northwest corner where an open meadow ringed by woodland provides northeasterly views toward downtown Providence. Recreational fields and facilities occupy level terrain near the foot of the hill in the northeast corner of the park, near Plainfield and Killingly Streets and the Silver Lake neighborhood. The south portion of the park is historically associated with 19th-century landowners and with the Borden/King family whose presence on the hill dates back to the 17th century.¹

The **Park Landscape (1903–21st century, contributing site, Photos 1-32)** encompasses the entire park area. It contrasts lawns and recreational facilities at the foot of Neutaconkanut Hill with clearings, created vistas and views, large rock outcroppings, ledges and ravines, Neutaconkanut Spring, Neutaconkanut Brook, and a small pond in the uplands. Oak, beech, and birch trees predominate the second growth woods. Major elements for circulation and infrastructure, recreational amenities, and remnants of agricultural and residential uses are

¹ The Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District occupies a portion of the Neutaconkanut Hill and Park Archaeological Site (RIHPHC Site No. RI-690). The archaeological site, which covers parts of the hill in Johnston and Providence, consists of pre-contact, contact, and historic period features and culturally significant natural features. The historic district includes resources from the contact and historic periods that were also identified in RI-690. This nomination focuses on Neutaconkanut Hill Park's significance as a historic recreational resource and the representation of park planning in Providence; the National Register eligibility of RI-690 was not evaluated as part of this effort.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

present in the Park Landscape and included in the resource count. Other elements like the asphalt footpaths in the lower part of the park, parking lots, playground equipment, basketball court, and small fixtures like benches, boardwalks, lighting, and signage are not included in the resource count.

Circulation and Infrastructure

The park is accessed via two vehicular entrances leading to asphalt-paved parking lots and several trailheads. The northern entrance off Killingly Street is situated between two baseball fields, and the eastern entrance off Plainfield Street is adjacent to the Recreation Center and its associated facilities. An approximately 20-foot-wide, asphalt-paved road, **Circle Road (1905-06, contributing structure, Photo 1)**, historically provided vehicular access up Neutaconkanut Hill. Circle Road extends south in a clockwise arc from a gate at the south end of Legion Memorial Drive towards the center of the park, terminating at Jacqueline Drive (outside boundary). It has concrete curbing and segments of wood guardrail along its length.

The **WPA Path (1930s, contributing structure, Photos 2 and 3)** leads west in a counter-clockwise arc from the northeast base of the hill to connect with Circle Road; it likely overlays a portion of an earlier trail. The concrete-paved WPA Path is accessed by granite steps that ascend from an opening at the south end of the Retaining Wall (see below) and by poured concrete steps that descend from Circle Road. Embedded in the concrete near the upper end of the WPA Path is a bronze WPA plaque in the form of a shield with seven stars across the top and a right-facing eagle at the bottom. In the center of the plaque are the words, “Built by Works Progress Administration 1935–1938.”² An unmarked extension of the earlier trail (see Trail Network, below) continues on the west side of the road, where it ascends several roughly laid fieldstone steps and passes south of the **Bandstand Foundation (1906, contributing structure, Photo 4)**. The foundation consists of low, mortared fieldstone walls approximately 10 feet square, and the top is surfaced with asphalt. The trail ends at the Hilltop Meadow—an open field surrounded by mature trees near the summit of Neutaconkanut Hill. The meadow contains six modern granite benches arranged in a semicircle.

Pedestrian circulation through the uplands is provided by a **Trail Network (1903 et seq.; rehabilitated 2008, contributing structure, Photos 5–7; see Figure 4)**, which includes seven marked trails (Pinnacle Trail, Pond Trail, Hickory Trail, The Shortcut, Monument Loop, Levee Trail, and Blueberry Trail)³ and several unmarked trails. Some trails may have originated as cartways or footpaths when Neutaconkanut Hill was farmland and were then used by hikers visiting the hill before the park was established in 1903.⁴ The trails wind through the woodland landscape and rock outcroppings in the northern, western, and southern portions of the park. Fieldstone steps traverse short segments of steep terrain along several trails. The trails generally have three-foot-wide, packed-earth treadways, some with early 20th-century fieldstone curbs and traces of stone paving. Composite-board and wood boardwalks (21st-century) span waterlogged

² Similar plaques are found on the Rain Shelter, Stone Bleachers, and Retaining Wall. There are traces of removed plaques on the WPA Path and the concrete pad beneath the Rain Shelter.

³ These names date to the 2008 rehabilitation project.

⁴ See footnote 46.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

areas and narrow, wood bridges (21st-century) cross over running water. The 1.5-mile Pinnacle Trail begins at the Plainfield Street entrance and ascends the northeast-sloping hillside, follows Circle Road and ascends to the roadbed via the uppermost portion of the Great Stone Stairs (described below), and then transitions into a U shape. The eastern side of the U features the **Pinnacle Boardwalk/Lookout (21st century, non-contributing structure, Photo 8)**, an L-shaped structure with a wood deck, piers, handrail, and wire railing that hugs the east-sloping hillside. Hickory Trail provides a steep shortcut between the northern Pinnacle Trail and Circle Road. Two or more **Chevrolet Camaro Remnants (early 1970s, non-contributing structure, Photo 9)** are partially buried east of the Pinnacle Trail at the intersection of the Monument Loop and The Shortcut. The Shortcut begins near the western end of Circle Road and travels 0.25 miles south through the middle of the park, transecting the U-shaped Pinnacle Trail. A short trail, known as Monument Loop, branches off the Pinnacle Trail and provides access to a monument to the King family (described below). The Levee Trail, an approximately 0.2-mile-long trail, connects the north end of the Monument Loop with the westernmost boardwalk of the Pinnacle Trail. Blueberry Trail is a 0.45-mile loop off the south end of Pinnacle Trail. The Pond Trail begins at the Plainfield Street entrance and runs 1.35 miles southwesterly, crossing the Pinnacle Trail and terminating at The Shortcut. Near King Pond, the Pond Trail ascends the **Great Stone Stairs (early-mid 20th century, contributing structure, Photo 10)**, a long run of dry-laid fieldstone steps, likely an early park improvement.⁵ Blueberry Trail is a 0.45-mile loop off the south end of Pinnacle Trail. Several narrow **Stone-lined Channels (by early-mid 20th century, contributing structure, Photos 11 and 12)** on the hill's east slope aid in draining wet areas and preventing erosion.⁶ Some of the fieldstone channels may have been built before 1903 to divert runoff away from agricultural fields and meadows, while others could have been installed later or rebuilt for preserving park terrain. A stone-lined channel passes under the Pinnacle Trail via a **Concrete Culvert (mid-late 20th century, non-contributing structure, Photo 12)**, which has poured concrete headwalls.

A 580-foot long **Retaining Wall (1930s, contributing structure, Photos 13-14)** constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) extends north from the lower entrance to the WPA Path and then bends west and north to the entrance to an unmarked trail opposite the Concession Stand/Press Box (described below). It is built of mortared, split-face granite ashlar with beaded joints and concrete copings and incorporates a short stretch of mortared fieldstone wall midway near the bend to the west. A bronze WPA plaque is affixed to the Retaining Wall in front of the Stone Bleachers (described below). From south to north there are seven openings along the Retaining Wall: one at the foot of the WPA Path, five at the Stone Bleachers, and one at the entrance to the unmarked trail mentioned above.

⁵ No primary documentation has been located regarding the installation of the Great Stone Stairs. While several secondary sources attribute this resource to the WPA, no WPA plaques are present. Visual inspection suggests that the fieldstone construction is more consistent with that of other early 20th-century masonry structures like the Bandstand Foundation and early park trails than with the ashlar stone masonry of the WPA-built Stone Bleachers and Rain Shelter. For an example of an attribution to WPA without primary source citation, Nick Taylor included "Stone staircase at Neutaconkanut Hill Park" in a list of "Some Highlights of the WPA" in *American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA* (Bantam Books, 2008), 538.

⁶ No primary documentation has been found regarding the installation of the Stone-lined Channels. Like the Great Stone Steps, the fieldstone construction does not resemble other WPA-built structures found in the park, and no WPA plaques are present.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

Recreational Amenities

Two baseball fields are adjacent to the Killingly Street entrance and parking lot. **Baseball Field 1 (1930s, contributing site, Photos 15 and 16)**, the larger of the two fields was constructed by the WPA in the 1930s. The associated WPA-built, ashlar **Stone Bleachers (1930s, contributing structure, Photos 14 and 16)** are west of Baseball Field 1 and built into the slope west of the Retaining Wall. They consist of a granite ashlar retaining wall in the back against the hillside, concrete terraces containing wide concrete steps and flanking walls, and rows of modern aluminum benches. The bleachers are accessed by entrances located in the Retaining Wall that extends in front of the bleachers. A two-story, concrete block and wood **Press Box (1995, non-contributing building, Photos 15 and 16)** with a shed roof is behind home plate on the Baseball Field 1. **Baseball Field 2 (ca. 1960, non-contributing site, Photo 17)** is the smaller of the two fields, and is situated to the north of Baseball Field 1. A one-to-two-story, concrete block **Concession Stand/Press Box (ca. 1990, non-contributing building, Photos 17 and 18)** is south of Baseball Field 2's home plate and faces north. The three-part building includes a one-story, shed-roof section on the east (used for storage); a two-story, shed-roof section in the center; and a two-story section with a wide hip roof and hip dormer on the west. A **Rain Shelter (1930s, contributing structure, Photo 19)** stands on a concrete pad about 100 feet north of the vehicular entrance on Plainfield Street. It has granite ashlar walls with large arched openings beneath a wood-framed hip roof clad in asphalt shingles. There is a bronze WPA plaque embedded in the keystone on the east elevation.

Several modern recreational amenities are accessed from the parking lot off the Plainfield Street entrance. The **Recreation Center (1993, non-contributing building, Photo 20)** is a two-story, concrete block building south of the parking lot. An in-ground **Pool (1963–70, non-contributing structure, Photo 20)** measuring 100 by 40 feet is located west of the Recreation Center and is surrounded by a wide concrete deck enclosed by a chain-link fence. A concrete **Skate Park (2004, expanded 2024, non-contributing structure, Photo 21)** is sited northwest of the lot.

West of the Pool and Skate Park is the east slope of Neutaconkanut Hill. There are clearings for two resources built by the WPA: the **Toboggan Slope (1935-36, contributing site, Photo 22)** to the south and a **Ski Slope (1936, contributing site, Photo 23)** to the north. The Toboggan Slope has a concave profile and is approximately 80 feet in length, from the upper terrace to the base of the hill, which terminates about 40 feet west of the Skate Park. The Ski Slope is approximately 450 feet long and 40 feet wide. Ascending the hill through the woods near the Ski Slope, about a dozen equally spaced wood posts, each about eight feet tall, are remnants of the former **Tow Rope System (1930s, contributing structure, Photo 24)**.

Remnants of Residential and Agricultural Uses

A dry-laid, uncoursed **System of Stone Walls (17th–19th centuries, contributing structure, Photos 7, 25)**, approximately two-to-three-feet tall, provide evidence of the historic agricultural uses of the land dating back to the 17th century. Most of the stone walls in the district can be found in the wooded uplands south of Circle Road.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

The land encompassed by Neutaconkanut Hill Park was occupied by several historic farms. Eight aboveground resources are associated with the Borden/King family and the Davis brothers. The **Borden/King Homestead Ruins (18th century–1955, contributing site, Photo 26)** are visible at the southeast corner of the park near the intersection of Plainfield Street and Silver Lake Avenue. The ruins are associated with the agricultural use and residential occupation of the east slope of Neutaconkanut Hill by the Borden and King families from the construction of a farmstead complex in the first half of the 18th century to 1955, when remaining buildings were demolished. The ruins consist of fieldstone and parged foundations of multiple buildings (two houses, a barn, and a shop building). The ruins are obscured by fallen trees and debris.

The Borden/King Homestead Drive (by early 20th century, contributing structure, Photo 27) on Plainfield Street opposite Farmington Avenue is an approximately five-foot-wide gravel and earth drive supported by earthen terraces with mortared fieldstone retaining walls. Along the street edge is a pair of square granite **Gate Posts (by early 20th century, contributing object, Photo 28)** with pyramidal tops, approximately four feet high. The gate posts are at a slight angle to the street, and retain metal hinges that once held an iron gate.⁷ A low, two-to-four-course, rusticated hollow concrete block **Boundary Wall (by early 20th century, contributing structure, Photo 28)** flanks the gate and runs along Plainfield Street, from opposite Silver Lake Avenue to a point about 130 feet north of the drive entrance.

The **King Monument (1906, contributing object, Photo 29)**, off the Monument Loop trail north of the William Borden Lot (see below), is a seven-foot-tall granite monument with a four-foot-wide stepped square base with chamfered edges. The monument consists of a three-foot-high octagonal shaft with inscriptions on all four sides (below), atop which rests a square cushion capital topped with a projecting cornice, both of which are ornamented with egg-and-dart carving. Above the cornice is a rounded, tapered capital. A three-foot-high wrought-iron fence with spherical finials at the corner posts and an iron “K” motif on the north and east sides surrounds the monument. Inscriptions on four sides memorialize members of the King family:

A MEMORIAL TO THE FAMILY OF JOHN KING AND LUCRETIA PAINE [east]
THIS MONUMENT ERECTED AUGUST 1906 [south]
RALPH KING // CLEMENT KING // CLEMENT KING 2ND // JOHN KING–1723 //
JOSIAH KING 1717–1800 // WM. BORDEN KING 1751–1829 // JOHN KING [west]
MARY BORDEN 1821–1889 // ANN ELIZA 1823–1893 // HENRY CLAY 1825–1903
// JOHN ALLEN 1827–1831 // WILLIAM BORDEN 1829–1907 // ABBIE ALLEN
1831–1915 // CHILDREN OF JOHN KING 1795–1832 AND LUCRETIA PAINE KING
1791–1852 [north]

About 400 feet south of the homestead, accessed by a footpath and surrounded by trees and low brush, is the **William Borden Lot (1800–34, contributing site, Photos 30 and 31)**. This small

⁷ Album 37: King Homestead, 899 Plainfield Street, Providence, Rhode Island. Photographic albums collection (PC009), Historic New England Library & Archives, Boston, MA, accessed November 2025. <https://www.historicnewengland.org/explore/collections-access/gusn/194151>.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

lot contains seven marked graves, presumably those of individuals related to the Borden family, dating to 1800–34.⁸ Of the marked graves, one has a granite marker that has been broken horizontally, four have slate markers, and two have rough fieldstone markers; all the graves have footstones. The granite marker (Simon Fraley [ca. 1814–1834]) is a rectangular slab with a bas-relief urn in the center of an oval, and above the inscription are swags of bas-relief holly leaves. The slate markers (Huldah Borden [ca. 1747–1827], Richard Borden [ca. 1780–1804], and William Borden [ca. 1778–1800]) have rounded tympanums and shoulders, with incised urns in the tympanum and daisy wheels in the shoulders. Three of the markers were likely carved by the same person or by the same shop based on their stylistic similarities. The other slate marker (William Borden [ca. 1747–1821]) appears to have a thistle carved into the tympanum and may have been produced by a different carver.

Approximately 200 feet to the south of the cemetery, the woodland contains portions of the System of Stone Walls near the **Davis Barn Foundation and Davis Well (1851–70, contributing structures, Photo 32)**. The rectangular barn foundation, approximately 20 feet by 30 feet, is constructed of dry-laid fieldstone and opens to the east toward Plainfield Street, where a gap in a dry-laid stone wall corresponds with the barn location. The wood-frame barn and the well were likely used by butchers George W. Davis (1839–1903), who lived nearby, and his brother John F. Davis (b. 1852). The barn was demolished between 1951 and 1972, based on aerial photographs. The fieldstone-lined well is located west of the barn foundation.

Statement of Integrity

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District possesses integrity of location, design, setting, association, feeling, workmanship, and materials and is therefore able to convey its significance in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation. The park's integrity of location, setting, and feeling is preserved, as its relation to the dense residential neighborhoods that developed to the north and east during the period of significance survives largely unchanged. The park landscape, which contrasts lawns and recreational spaces at the foot of the hill with the rugged uplands, retains integrity of design. While tree cover has increased since the 1940s, vistas from high points along the east slope of Neutaconkanut Hill remain intact. The extant 1906 Bandstand Foundation and WPA-built structures demonstrate integrity of workmanship and materials. Neutaconkanut Hill Park retains integrity of association based on its ongoing use as a public park, from its establishment in 1903 to the present day.

⁸ When it was surveyed in 1891 (before the 1898 annexation by Providence), the William Borden Lot was located in Johnston. The Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries Database currently identifies the burial lot as Providence-40; it was previously recorded as Johnston-81.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

**Neutaconkanut Hill Park National Register District
DISTRICT DATA SHEET**

Resource Name	Assessor No.	Type	Year Built	C/NC*	Photo No(s).
Park Landscape	Multiple	Site	1903-21st century	C	1-32
Circle Road	111-94	Structure	1905-06	C	1
WPA Path	111-94	Structure	1930s	C	2, 3, 13
Bandstand Foundation	111-94	Structure	1906	C	4
Trail Network	Multiple	Structure	1903 et seq.; rehabilitated 2008	C	5-7
Pinnacle Boardwalk/Lookout	111-1	Structure	21 st century	NC	8
Chevrolet Camaro Remnants	111-1	Structure	early 1970s	NC	9
Great Stone Stairs	111-17	Structure	early-mid 20 th century	C	10
Stone-lined Channels	Multiple	Structure	by early-mid 20 th century	C	11, 12
Concrete Culvert	111-1	Structure	mid-late 20th century	NC	12
Retaining Wall	111-94	Structure	1930s	C	13, 14, 16
Baseball Field 1	111-94	Site	1930s	C	15, 16
Stone Bleachers	111-94	Structure	1930s	C	14, 16
Press Box	111-94	Building	1995	NC	15, 16
Baseball Field 2	111-94	Site	ca. 1960	NC	17
Concession Stand/Press Box	111-94	Building	ca. 1990	NC	17, 18
Rain Shelter	111-94	Structure	1930s	C	19
Recreation Center	111-92	Building	1993	NC	20
Pool	111-92	Structure	1963-1970	NC	20
Skate Park	111-94	Structure	2004, expanded 2024	NC	21
Toboggan Slope	111-94	Site	1935-1936	C	22
Ski Slope	111-94	Site	1935	C	23
Tow Rope System	111-94	Structure	1930s	C	24
System of Stone Walls	Multiple	Structure	17 th -19 th century	C	7, 25
Borden/King Homestead Ruins	111-9	Site	18 th century-1955	C	26
Borden/King Homestead Drive	111-9	Structure	by early 20 th century	C	27
Gate Posts	111-9	Object	by early 20 th century	C	28
Boundary Wall	111-9	Structure	by early 20 th century	C	28
King Monument	111-9	Object	1906	C	29
William Borden Lot (Providence-40)	111-18	Site	1800-1834	C	30, 31
Davis Barn Foundation	111-16	Structure	1851-1870	C	32
Davis Well	111-16	Structure	1851-1870	C	None
CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES = 23 (6 sites, 15 structures, 2 objects)					
NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES = 9 (3 buildings, 1 site, 5 structures)					

* National Register status: C: Contributing, NC: Non-contributing.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning and Development

Entertainment/Recreation

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

Period of Significance

1903-1960

Significant Dates

1903 – Neutaconkanut Hill Park established

1960 – 8.75-acre northwest parcel sold

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Works Progress Administration (WPA)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District (hereafter “Neutaconkanut Hill Park,” “the district,” or “the park”) is significant under Criterion A at the local level in the area of Community Planning and Development. It demonstrates the influence of citizen lobbyists and design professionals in developing public parks in Providence and marks the western edge of the important park systems that they devised. Established in 1903, this municipal park is associated with both the Public Parks Association (a local advocacy organization) and its successor, the State-appointed Metropolitan Park Commission (MPC, an early regional planning body). As consultants to the MPC, the Olmsted Brothers landscape architecture firm prepared a parcel acquisition plan in 1908 that guided park expansion for nearly 50 years. They also recommended maintaining the hill’s rugged terrain and natural features while developing the lowlands for varied recreational activities—an approach that endures today. Neutaconkanut Hill Park is also significant under Criterion A at the local level in the area of Entertainment/Recreation as a popular public park with built resources that reflect changing recreational needs of the first half of the twentieth century. Given the substantial overlap of these themes, the arguments for both areas of significance are presented jointly. The 85-acre Neutaconkanut Hill Park encompasses woodlands crisscrossed by trails, a scenic overlook, remnants of 18th-20th century agricultural and residential uses, 1930s park infrastructure, and an expansive open area used for varied recreational activities since the early 20th century. The period of significance begins in 1903, when the first parcel of the park was acquired by the City of Providence and ends in 1960, when the park assumed its current shape. The historic resources constructed prior to 1903 contribute to the character of the park landscape and are therefore significant to the district.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

From Notquonckanet to the King Estate

Neutaconkanut Hill is a prominent fixture on the Providence landscape and is the city's highest point. For Native Americans, the hill (**Neutaconkanut Hill and Park (RI-690)**) afforded a view over the fertile lands and rich fishing and hunting grounds surrounding the Great Salt Cove, Mashapaug Pond, the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket rivers, and the Providence and Seekonk rivers at the head of Narragansett Bay in what is now northern Rhode Island. Neutaconkanut or "Notquonckanet" is first mentioned in Narragansett Indian sachems Canonicus and Miantonomo's March 1637 confirmation deed of Providence to English settler Roger Williams. The record, witnessed by fellow Natives Sotassh and Assotemeweit, reads:

At Nanhiggansick, the 24th of the first month, commonly called March, in y^e second yeare of our plantation or planting at Mooshausick or Providence. Memorandum, that we Cannaunicus and Miantunomi, the two chief sachems of Nanhiggansick, having two years since sold vnto Roger Williams, y^e lands and meadowes beyond the two fresh rivers, called Mooshausick and Wanasquatucket, doe now by these presents, establish and confirme y^e bounds of those lands, from y^e river and fields at Pautuckqut, **y^e great hill of Notquonckanet, on y^e northwest** [*emphasis added*], and the town of Mausapogue on y^e west.⁹

Oral tribal histories describe how at Neutaconkanut Hill the sachems spread their arms to show Williams the limits of the Providence Land Grant. The meaning of Neutaconkanut is unknown, but some have proposed that it means the "shortbounds" of the Mashapaug, Neutaconkanut, and Pawtucket Indian lands; means "home of squirrels"; or is an English corruption of an Algonquin Indian word.¹⁰

In the second half of the 17th century, much of the land comprising present-day Neutaconkanut Hill Park was owned by the Borden family (Figure 5).¹¹ Richard Borden (1600–1671), his wife

⁹ John Russell Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England* (Providence, 1856), 18.

¹⁰ Two Hawks Watson and Joseph Waller, personal conversation, 2022; William Wallace Tooker, "Indian Geographic Names, and Why We Should Study Them; Illustrated by Some Rhode Island Examples," *Publications of the Rhode Island Historical Society, New Series* 5 (1897), 203–15; Sidney B. Rider, *The Lands of Rhode Island as the Great Sachems Knew Them* (Sidney B. Rider, 1904), 206–11. Rider compiled 46 alternative spellings of this place name. Another often-repeated translation is "home of squirrels" (see Mariana M. Tallman, *Pleasant Places in Rhode Island, and How to Reach Them* (Providence, 1893), 123.

¹¹ Much of the information presented about the Borden and King families derives from primary research completed by Steve Merolla and shared in a series of articles for *Johnston Historical Society Historical Notes* between 2015 and 2021. Merolla's articles assert that two houses on Plainfield Street (now Borden/King Homestead Ruins) were erected by members of the Borden family and were later occupied by later generations of the Kings (who also had

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

Joane Fowle (1604–1688), and their two eldest children immigrated from Kent, England to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1635, and settled on Aquidneck Island in Portsmouth, Rhode Island in 1638. In 1659, Richard purchased 80 acres on the north slope of Neutaconkanut Hill, then part of Providence, from William Field; two years later he bought an additional 60 acres on the hill from Shadrach Manton. While Richard Borden remained in Portsmouth, his eldest son, Thomas (1627–1675), acquired approximately 120 acres adjacent to his father’s landholdings and eventually inherited his father’s estate.¹² The first two generations of Bordens likely used the land for woodlot and pasturage and may have built some of the **System of Stone Walls**.

Thomas Borden and wife Mary Harris (1630-1718) amassed a total of 390 acres on or near Neutaconkanut Hill. During King Philip’s War (1675-78), the Bordens and many other settlers left the Providence area for Aquidneck Island, where Thomas died and was buried. Mary Borden and her children returned to Providence in 1679, and Thomas’s land was evenly divided between their three surviving sons Richard (1663–1724), Joseph (1669–1713), and Mercy (1672–1753).¹³ Richard Borden received the southeastern part of the estate, a parcel that largely comprises the historic district, extending over the brow of the hill from the west side of present-day Plainfield Street. This route was historically known as the Providence-Norwich Turnpike, completed in 1714 to link Providence and Plainfield, Connecticut.¹⁴ Either Richard or his son Richard (1687-1768) erected a small, single-cell, wood-frame, gambrel-roof house with an attached barn (Figure 6) (**Borden/King Homestead Ruins**) just west of the turnpike in the first half of the 18th century.¹⁵ Within a few decades, the Borden farm was drawn into the new Town of Johnston, set off from Providence in 1759.

The property later passed to the younger Richard’s sons, Richard Borden (1735-1826), William Borden (1747–1824), and Oliver (1750-1826). In a 2019 article about “The Borden Houses on Neutaconkanut Hill,” Johnston historian Steve Merolla cited a tax document that enumerated William’s holdings in 1779: the house and barn, a cooper’s shop, a corn crib, and 38 acres of land (18 wooded acres and 20 acres cleared for pasture or agriculture). Notably, and unusually for Johnston, a half acre was under cultivation for “Neutaconkanut Hill Tobacco,” producing 500 pounds of leaves a year. William erected the large, gambrel-roof, Federal-style house, set at an oblique angle to the street, between 1785 and 1824 (**Borden/King Homestead Ruins**) (Figure 7).¹⁶ William, his wife Huldah Dyer (1747-1827), and their sons, William (1778–1800) and Richard (1780–1804), are buried in the **William Borden Lot** on their former property. A man

Borden family ancestors). Some earlier secondary sources had attributed construction of the Plainfield Street homestead to the Kings. See R.I. 690 Site File (manuscript on file at Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission), 5.

¹² Steve Merolla, “The Bordens of Neutaconkanut Hill,” *Johnston Historical Society Historical Notes* 25, no. 2 (July 2019), 2.

¹³ Ibid. Merolla confirmed that Mercy is the proper spelling, but “Marcy” was also used. Steve Merolla and Sarah Zurier, personal conversation, 4 August 2025.

¹⁴ Merolla, “The Bordens of Neutaconkanut Hill,” 3.

¹⁵ Architectural historians Antoinette F. Downing and John Hutchins Cady examined the homestead in 1953 and estimated that the older house was erected between 1703 and 1740. Robert N. Cool, “Vandalism Threatens R.I. Landmark,” *Providence Sunday Journal* (22 March 1953), 118.

¹⁶ Merolla, “The Borden Houses on Neutaconkanut Hill,” *Johnston Historical Society Historical Notes* 25, no. 3 (November 2019), 1; Merolla, “The Bordens of Neutaconkanut Hill,” 4.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

named Simon Fraley (1814–1834) and two unknown individuals are buried alongside Borden family members in the cemetery; their relation to the Bordens is unknown.

Following William Sr.'s death in 1824, the probate court recorded that the Borden property contained 57 acres of land with two dwelling houses, outbuildings, and a cider house. Huldah was awarded the older house, along with the cider house and 15 acres; the remainder of the property was to be divided between William and Huldah's daughters Betsey Anthony (dates unknown) and Deliverance Sprague (1768-1848).¹⁷ In 1826, William Sr.'s unmarried brother Richard died, and his land also went to Huldah, who died the next year. The combined property was redivided into two lots of equal value. The 46-acre lot to the north (now in the approximate location of the Ski Slope and baseball fields) passed to Deliverance; the Spragues sold their farm, which had grown to 71 acres, to William Smith in 1832. The 40-acre southern lot passed to the heirs of Betsey Anthony; they sold to Samuel Ward King, who transferred it to his younger brother John King in November 1829, a month later. In 1831, John purchased another part of the farm from the last Anthony heir.¹⁸

John King (1795–1832) was a fifth-generation descendant of Richard Borden (1600-1671). He and his wife, Lucretia Paine (1791–1852) had six children, all of whom remained unmarried and resided at the Borden homestead on Plainfield Street: Mary Borden King (1821–1889), Ann Eliza King (1823–1893), Henry Clay King (1825–1903), John Allen King (1827–1831), William Borden King (1829–1907), and Abbie (or Abby) Allen King (1831–1915). The Kings continued to work the land with Henry serving as farm manager. He and his brother William began to grow grapes on the property in 1882 following a visit to California. Their neighbors to the south, butcher George W. Davis (1839–1903) and his brother John F. Davis (b. 1852) likely operated their business from a pasture and barn complex (**Davis Barn Foundation and Well**) on Plainfield Street (within the district); the barn appears on maps from 1851 and 1870.¹⁹

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the King property was bounded along Plainfield Street by a coursed rusticated concrete block **Boundary Wall** and an iron gate attached to two granite **Gate Posts** that led to the **Borden/King Homestead Drive**. In August 1906, Abbie King installed a family monument (**King Monument**) on the hillside northwest of the homestead. A

¹⁷ Merolla has found several primary sources that identify the daughters as Elizabeth "Betsey" Borden (who married a Mr. Anthony) and Deliverance Borden (who married Solomon Sprague), but Hattie Borden Weld identified the daughters as Ruth (who married William Fraley) and Huldah (who married Sprague). See Weld, *Historical and Genealogical Record of the Descendants as far as Known of Richard and Joan Borden* (Los Angeles, 1899), 137.

¹⁸ Merolla, "The Bordens of Neutaconkanut Hill," 5. Samuel Ward King served as Governor of Rhode Island from 1839 to 1843.

¹⁹ Merolla, "The Borden Houses on Neutaconkanut Hill," 1–2; Cool, "Vandalism Threatens R.I. Landmark"; Kelly Sullivan, "Determined to Remain In Town," *Johnston Sun Rise*, April 23, 2021, <https://johnstonsunrise.net/stories/back-in-the-day-determined-to-remain-in-town,160755>; United States Census Bureau (hereafter US Census), *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*, Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; US Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Henry Francis Walling, *Map of Providence County, Rhode Island*, (Providence, 1851); D.G. Beers, *Atlas of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*, (Philadelphia, 1870).

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

seventh-generation descendant of 17th-century immigrants Richard and Joane Borden, Abbie was the last member of the Borden/King family to reside at the Plainfield Street homestead.

Development around Neutaconkanut Hill Park

While Johnston remained a largely agricultural community through the 19th century, several of its mill villages emerged as nodes for industrial, commercial, and residential development. Olneyville, which also included parts of neighboring Providence, was one of the most densely industrialized and populated areas in Rhode Island by the mid-19th century. Its center was Olneyville Square, just over a mile east of Neutaconkanut Hill. The rural area between Olneyville and the hill was known as Silver Lake for the small pond 300 feet southeast of the bend in Plainfield Street.²⁰

Residential development in Silver Lake started slowly, with two large farms platted out in the 1850s. Though these two early projects stalled, a growing number of small farms and estates were transformed into house lots. Construction began in earnest later in the century, as a result of continued expansion of nearby Olneyville and the completion of the Plainfield Street trolley line in 1882. Development spread west toward Neutaconkanut Hill, which by 1895 was edged by residential neighborhoods to the north and east (Figure 8). The Silver Lake area attracted many Italian immigrants, some of whom may have been employed in Olneyville or on the farms near Neutaconkanut Hill.²¹

By the turn of the century, it was abundantly clear that Olneyville and Silver Lake had stronger economic and social ties with urban Providence than with rural Johnston. Providence business and political leaders, motivated by an opportunity to grow the city's tax base, devised a plan to re-annex a portion of Johnston in exchange for paying down Johnston's \$360,000 town debt. Covering nearly 1.25 square miles in Olneyville and Silver Lake, the area extended west from Benedict Pond to the bend in the Pocasset River, northwest to slightly west of Killingly Street (taking in much of the east slope of Neutaconkanut Hill), and east to the Woonasquatucket River and had a population of about 8,000. The majority of residents voted in favor, eager to gain modern city services like police and fire protection, sewers, and schools. Among the opposed was Henry Clay King whose family homestead was bisected by the new boundary line. After it was incorporated into Providence on June 1, 1898, the area was nicknamed "The Annex." Between 1900 and 1945, the Silver Lake neighborhood was almost completely built out with homes, institutions, and commercial buildings.²²

²⁰ Silver Lake was filled after 1948.

²¹ Wm. Mackenzie Woodward and Edward F. Sanderson, *Providence: A Citywide Survey of Historic Resources* (Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1986), 29; Everts and Richards, *New Topographical Atlas of Surveys: Providence County, Rhode Island* (Philadelphia, 1895).

²² John Hutchins Cady, *Rhode Island Boundaries: 1636-1936* (Rhode Island Tercentenary Commission, 1936), 27; Kim A. Carrera, "The Olneyville Annexation, 1898," *Johnston Sunrise* (26 October 2006); Sullivan, "Determined to remain in town"; Woodward and Sanderson, *Providence*, 28–29, 60–61.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island

County and State

From Common Spaces to Park Systems

From its start as a colonial settlement, Providence developed its own approach to planning and land use. When Roger Williams and his followers planted their new community on the eastern shore of the Great Salt Cove in 1636, they did not follow the pattern of the characteristic Massachusetts Bay or Plymouth Colony village with a meeting house centered on an open common, ringed by private property on the perimeter. Williams notably rejected Puritan strictures of centralized religion—and the hierarchical village form that came with it. Instead, Providence settlers were assigned long narrow home lots perpendicular to a road (now North Main Street) that ran parallel to the waterfront and agricultural lands east, west, and south of the compact part of town. Residents congregated in private homes and at informal gathering spaces, including the fresh water spring (now in College Hill Historic District, NHL 1970) west of Roger Williams’s own home lot and the gristmill (built after 1646, not extant) at the falls of the Moshassuck River.²³

Providence’s earliest designated public open spaces were more functional than recreational. A parade ground (not extant) was established in 1738 on the site of what is today Market Square (College and North Main Streets). In 1746, Daniel Abbott donated land at present-day Broad and Weybosset Streets adjacent to the Congregational meetinghouse (not extant); though much reduced in size, present-day Abbott Park (1746 et seq., in Downtown Providence Historic District, NR 1984) is recognized as Providence’s oldest extant public park. Preparing to erect its new colony house in 1762, Providence acquired the entire block bounded by North Main, North Court, Benefit, and South Court Streets and sited the building at the top of the sloped lot, overlooking an open space that was known as the “Parade” by 1766 (Old State House, 1762 et seq., individual NR 1970). The nine-acre Dexter Training Ground (1824 et seq., in Broadway-Armory Historic District, NR 1974) was originally used for military purposes and repurposed as a neighborhood park by the late 19th century.²⁴

Incorporated as a city in 1831, Providence was the state’s industrial and population center. The number of inhabitants more than quadrupled from 16,836 in 1830 to 68,904 in 1870. Almost half the population were immigrants or the children of immigrants who came from England, Scotland, Canada, Ireland, and Central Europe, while many others had migrated from the rural countryside in search of jobs in the city. Local leaders began to recognize the value of green spaces for the health and enjoyment of city dwellers. Parks in densely developed neighborhoods near industrial areas could provide relief from crowded conditions in homes and workplaces. By 1871, the City owned just 60 acres of parkland at 11 properties—some developed (like the Cove Promenade encircling the Cove Basin (1846, not extant)) and some undeveloped (like the five-acre Blackstone Park on the Seekonk River (1863 et seq., Blackstone Park Historic District, NR

²³ Woodward, *Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island* (Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, 2001), 8; Cady, *The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence: 1636-1950* (The Book Shop, 1957), 6-7.

²⁴ Woodward, *Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island*, 15-16, 109, 112.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

1998)). When the City acquired the 34-acre Fields Point Farm on the west shore of the Providence River in 1869, plans got underway to create Providence's first large-scale park.²⁵

Three years later the City accepted a bequest of 102 acres in the southern Providence neighborhood of Elmwood from Betsey Williams (1790-1871), a descendant of Roger Williams. An early proposal to build parks at both the Fields Point and Williams properties and link them with a landscaped boulevard was scuttled. Instead, the City focused its resources on developing a signature park in Elmwood. Like New York City's Central Park (1858), the precedent-setting public pleasure ground, Roger Williams Park (1871 et seq., Roger Williams Park Historic District, NR 1974) was situated in a remote-but-developing corner of the city, surrounded by taxable property. The designer, landscape architect Horace W.S. Cleveland, worked in the picturesque manner pioneered by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, deliberately enhancing the natural landscape. Cleveland's plan for Roger Williams Park incorporated curvilinear paths and roads, ponds and lakes, grouped plantings, and carefully sited buildings and bridges on the varied terrain.²⁶

While Roger Williams Park was instantly popular and easily accessible by streetcar, more parks were needed for a growing city whose population had more than doubled (to 132,146) between 1870 and 1890. The public parks movement would be promoted both within City government (Providence's City Council had established a Joint Committee on Parks by 1873) and by citizen advocates. At a March 1883 meeting of the Providence Franklin Society, members of its Committee on Parks launched a new organization.²⁷ The Public Parks Association of Providence (PPA) would "encourage the preservation, increase and improvement of public parks and other open spaces in the city of Providence."²⁸ In his book on *Middle Class Providence*, historian John C. Gilkeson pointed out that the PPA was composed of older white men, largely wealthy industrialists and professionals, who represented "a new type of voluntary association to appear in the city: the lobby, or single-interest pressure group, which defined a special relationship between itself and government."²⁹ Despite the failure of their initial project to improve the park and promenade around the Cove Basin, the PPA emerged as a potent advocate for city parks and would later launch the effort to create a metropolitan park system.³⁰

In response to the PPA's expanding activism, City government secured funds and built up its own organizational infrastructure to support park planning, acquisition, and development. Rhode Island's General Assembly authorized Providence to borrow up to \$500,000 for purchasing

²⁵ Woodward and Sanderson, *Providence*, 53; Cady, *Civic and Architectural Development*, 135-47; *Annual Report of the Park Commissioners* (Providence, 1891), 3.

²⁶ Joyce E. Nalewajk, "Horace William Shaler Cleveland" in *Buildings on Paper: Rhode Island Architectural Drawings 1825-1945*, ed. William H. Jordy et al. (Brown University, the Rhode Island Historical Society, and the Rhode Island School of Design, 1982), 48-50.

²⁷ Founded in 1821, the Franklin Society drew members interested in discussing a wide range of subjects and finding practical solutions to community concerns.

²⁸ "Public Parks," *Providence Journal* (2 March 1883), 8. The organization later used the names Public Parks Association and Public Park Association.

²⁹ John S. Gilkeson, Jr., *Middle Class Providence, 1820-1940* (Princeton University Press, 1986), 229.

³⁰ Cady, *Civic and Architectural Development*, 163; Albert T. Klyberg, *100 Years of Rhode Island State Parks, 1909-2009*, (Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, 2009), 4.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

parkland in 1891, and the City spent almost \$1.5 million on parks over the next six years (most of it for expanding Roger Williams Park to 462 acres). Also in 1891, following a recommendation of the PPA, Providence appointed a board of park commissioners, replacing the City Council's joint committee on parks. One of its first projects was a collaboration with the PPA to establish the 34-acre Davis Park (1891) on Chalkstone Avenue in the Smith Hill neighborhood.³¹

By the late 19th century, the national conversation about urban park design was shifting away from signature—and often singular—pleasure grounds like Central Park and Providence's Roger Williams Park. A new approach, influenced by the City Beautiful movement, promoted urban park systems that connected multiple parks with continuous parkways and boulevards. In Buffalo, Olmsted, Vaux, and their successors designed a network of parks, parkways, and landscaped circles (1868-1915) to green and connect the urban landscape. Other cities followed suit, including Boston (1878-95) and Minneapolis (1883-89). In Rhode Island's survey of historic landscapes, architectural historian Wm. McKenzie Woodward noted that the "Public Park Association became the voice of the City Beautiful movement" in Providence.³² PPA President Augustine Jones delivered a speech on "Parks and Tree-Lined Avenues" on October 7, 1891, stating:

We are laying out parks on all sides of Providence. . . .

We are now prepared in completing our park system after the method of our rival cities in the race for prosperity, to connect all these parks in a crescent from the Seekonk to the sea around the north, west and south, terminating with Fields Point, by broad tree-lined boulevards, making them in this way all one park, these connecting boulevards to follow and include the present streets, and to wind in and out with curves of every variety.³³

Two new parkway projects provided access to existing green spaces: elm-lined Elmwood Avenue (1892) approached Roger Williams Park, and Blackstone Boulevard (1890-94 et seq.), planned by Horace Cleveland and completed by Olmsted Brothers, extended to Swan Point Cemetery (1846, individual NR, 1977), a private garden cemetery on the East Side. At the start of the twentieth century, the City oversaw 528 acres of parkland, most of which had originated as bequests (often from old family farms), as small parcels near major intersections, or as unused land from real estate development. Providence's effort to create a municipal park system with a strategic approach to planning and development was underway.³⁴

Another contemporary influence in the development of urban parks was the playground movement, a Progressive-era social reform effort to create supervised play spaces that promoted moral development through physical fitness. With support from the PPA, advocates from private organizations such as the Providence Free Kindergarten Association and the Union for Practical

³¹ "The City Government," *Providence Journal* (3 January 1891), 8; Gilkeson, *Middle Class Providence*, 232-33; Cady, *Civic and Architectural Development*, 141, 184-85, 278. Davis Park now contains 15.5 acres.

³² Woodward, *Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island*, 50.

³³ Augustine Jones, "Parks and Tree-Lined Avenues," *Publications of the Advance Club*, no. 7 (1891): 15-16.

³⁴ Cady, *Civic and Architectural Development*, 177, 197.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

Progress successfully lobbied the City of Providence to host a pilot program at nine staffed playgrounds in 1895. In the decades following, parks, designated playgrounds, and schoolyards were outfitted with playing fields and gymnastic apparatus. With the goal of “providing recreation-spots of several kinds all over the city, especially for little children, so that they would not have to walk too far to reach them,”³⁵ the playground movement represented another approach to systematizing urban recreational development. Eventually, these private initiatives became municipal responsibilities as Providence created a board of recreation and appointed a superintendent of playgrounds in 1913. The contemporary rise of sporting culture also prompted the installation of baseball diamonds, football gridirons, cricket fields, bowling greens, and tennis courts in Providence parks. Matches between school, work, and neighborhood athletic leagues drew older children and adults (mostly boys and men) to the parks and offered a wholesome alternative to the streets or the saloon.³⁶

The emerging disciplines of city, metropolitan, and regional planning would stimulate an even more expansive approach to park-making. Typical city plans of the period prioritized a central core surrounded by and integrated with secondary areas, but metropolitan and regional plans took this concept further. In 1893, Massachusetts established the country’s first Metropolitan Park System to coordinate park planning for 39 municipalities in the Boston area.³⁷ Eleven years later, Rhode Island’s General Assembly created the country’s second, appointing the Metropolitan Park Commission (MPC). Their first activity was the preparation of a report on the feasibility of creating a network of existing and potential parks, boulevards, and public reservations in an area “less than one-eighth of the territory of the State. . . that contains the dwelling places of about three-quarters of its population” (Figure 9).³⁸ The new system would form an arc around Providence, from Cumberland and Lincoln to the north, curving to the southwest to take in Neutaconkanut Hill, and bending southeast to the Warwick shore—echoing the “crescent” of Providence parks envisioned by the PPA in 1891 and almost an exact copy of the “Map of the Metropolitan District of Providence Showing Proposed System of Parks, Boulevards, and Public Reservations” that Henry A. Barker (1866-1931) had prepared for PPA in 1903.³⁹ The MPC’s 20 members may have included three city mayors, six town council presidents, and presidents of key organizations and educational institutions, but as Gilkeson explained in *Middle Class Providence*, “it was the five members representing the Public Park Association who framed policy.”⁴⁰

Led by Barker, the private membership organization PPA directed its advocacy efforts to support the state-appointed MPC. The PPA published pamphlets, delivered lectures, circulated petitions, sponsored school essay contests, and wrote articles for local newspapers and *Providence Magazine* (a publication of the Providence Board of Trade/Chamber of Commerce). They

³⁵ Lincoln, “Development of the City Playgrounds,” *Providence Magazine* (August 1916): 526.

³⁶ Gilkeson, *Middle Class Providence*, 234-37.

³⁷ Norman T. Newton, *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), 323.

³⁸ *Second Annual Report of the Board of Metropolitan Park Commissioners* (1906), 3.

³⁹ Klyberg, *100 Years of Rhode Island State Parks*, 7-8.

⁴⁰ Gilkeson, *Middle Class Providence*, 288. The nine municipalities were Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Johnston, Lincoln, North Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, and Warwick.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

promoted the benefits of public parks for public health, morality, and economic prosperity among businessmen, children, church leaders, and government leaders alike. They gathered endorsements from dozens of local and statewide organizations, including the Rhode Island Medical Society, the Rhode Island Federation of Labor, and the Olneyville Business Men's Association. The PPA's efforts resulted in two State bond issues approved in 1906 and one in 1912 totaling \$550,000 (worth about \$18 million in 2025) and commitments for major land donations, enabling the MPC to assemble 1,216 acres of parkland and land for boulevards in metropolitan Providence between 1909 and 1917. Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts, who inherited the landscape architecture firm started by Frederick Law Olmsted, served as advisors to the MPC, identifying potential parkland and preparing plans for individual sites. Within Providence city limits, the MPC acquired six parks and reservations and formulated plans to expand Neutaconkanut Hill Park (see "The Making of Neutaconkanut Hill Park"). Neutaconkanut Hill Park is the most intact and best example of an MPC-associated park in Providence (Figure 10).⁴¹

As the use of automobiles grew in the decades following World War I, the MPC's scope widened to include beaches and parks throughout the state. State Park historian Albert T. Klyberg explained that "By the mid 1930s, having reached statewide proportions, the Metropolitan Park Commission went out of business."⁴² The State Reorganization Act of 1935 assigned the 34 parks, reservations, and monuments on 4,330 acres owned or controlled by the MPC to the Division of Forests, Parks, and Parkways within a new State Department of Agriculture and Conservation. As Woodward wrote in *Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island*, "While not every recommendation was realized, the Commission's development of more than 4000 acres of parklands by 1934 represented a significant achievement in land-use planning . . . More importantly, it introduced to Rhode Island the concept of regional planning and raised public perception about the importance of planning and land use."⁴³ Protecting vulnerable natural areas from development had an added public benefit: expansive metropolitan parks.

Another factor contributing to the end of the MPC was the infusion of federal funds to cities and towns during the Great Depression at the same time that State appropriations to the MPC had dried up. This allowed the City of Providence to set its own priorities for park projects funded by the Civil Works Administration and then the Works Progress Administration (see "1930s – 1950s Improvements"). Like the State, the City of Providence continued to adjust administration of park planning, development, and operations. Providence appointed its first superintendent of parks in 1909 to oversee 31 properties totaling 640 acres—for a population that would reach 224,326 the following year. The City Council created the City Plan Commission in 1912 to examine engineering and planning issues, but for the most part, parks remained the responsibility of the Board of Park Commissioners and the Parks Department. By 1926, Providence counted 55 parks on 759 acres. The numbers continued to tick up over the next few decades, in part due to

⁴¹ Charles E. Lincoln, "Public Park Association's Notable Work." *Providence Magazine* (August 1916), 589-583; Klyberg, *100 Years*, 8, 13.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴³ Woodward, *Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island*, 52. As of 2025, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management administers State-owned parks, while State-owned parkways are overseen by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

an influx of former MPC properties. In 1959, the city directory listed 33 parks and 61 playgrounds on 1081 acres.⁴⁴

The Making of Neutaconkanut Hill Park

In January 1891, at the seventh annual meeting of the Public Parks Association, board member John E. Bowen proposed that Neutaconkanut Hill would make an ideal setting for a public park. He argued that while the rocky hill was unsuitable for development, here

. . . nature has made a natural park more perfect than the hand of man could devise. The tract is covered with a fine growth of trees, scattered in patches, the whole interspersed with valleys, rock, rills and delightful outlook. There are also available level tracts for play grounds, etc., the whole only wanting the opening avenues of approach, without the expense of any other outlay except purchase of land, to make a park, rivaling in its natural advantages, any belonging to any city in the United States. The varied view from its eminence covers fully one fourth of the area of the State, and the homes of seven eighths of its population.⁴⁵

Bowen's speech launched PPA's campaign for a new municipal park. The PPA devoted 14 pages of its 1892 *Parks of Providence* publication to Neutaconkanut, describing views from the summit, praising its natural features, and strategizing for its acquisition and development. Neutaconkanut Hill was already a recreation destination. Between 1888 and 1901, a guidebook and several articles in the *Providence Journal* described and encouraged walks in the area, which was then largely private property.⁴⁶ Although Neutaconkanut was tantalizingly close to Providence, it was wholly in the Town of Johnston until 1898. With the annexation of Silver Lake and western Olneyville (see "Development around Neutaconkanut Hill Park," above), Neutaconkanut Hill stretched across the boundary of two municipalities.

After ten years of lobbying City leaders and the general public to establish a park at Neutaconkanut, the PPA found a powerful ally in new Mayor Daniel L.D. Granger. His inaugural address in January 1901 echoed PPA's vision of a "rural park," with ample views, natural scenery, and native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers:

I believe it to be eminently desirable that the City should acquire such places in different portions of our City before they are built upon, not with the intention of placing them in the condition of Roger Williams Park, but that they may be kept open in a natural condition, affording to our children the playgrounds so much needed, and to the lovers of

⁴⁴ Cady, *Civic and Architectural Development*, 213, 221; *Providence: The Southern Gateway of New England* (The Historical Publishing Company, 1926), 102, 106; *Polk's Providence City Directory* (R.L. Polk & Co., Publishers: 1959), vii, xv. The directory's list also includes King Park (see footnote 58).

⁴⁵ "Neutaconkanut Hill," *Providence Journal* (8 January 1891), 3. A rill is a small stream.

⁴⁶ Public Park Association of Providence, *Parks of Providence* no. 9 (Providence, 1892), 64-78; "To Prepare for Dinner," *Providence Journal* (29 November 1888), 7; "Neutaconkanut," *Providence Sunday Journal* (11 September 1898), 18; "Neutaconkanut Hill," *Providence Journal* (27 January 1901), 16; Tallman, *Pleasant Places in Rhode Island*, 122-25.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

nature and tired workers the delight and relaxation not always found in the more cultivated parks of our City.⁴⁷

On March 14, 1903, the City Council's committee on parks held a public hearing to consider purchasing property at Neutaconkanut Hill for park purposes. Neighbors and representatives of the Olneyville Business Men's Association came out in support. Neutaconkanut was accessible by streetcar, and especially convenient to Olneyville and its nearly 7,000 mill workers who lacked the time or the fare to visit Roger Williams Park. Former councilman Nathan M. Wright, one of the leading advocates for annexation in 1898, argued that "...it seems almost necessary that they [mill workers] should have some place for a breathing spot."⁴⁸

The City purchased 31.55 acres of the William L. Smith estate (formerly held by Deliverance Borden Sprague) southwest of the corner of Duxbury Street and Killingly Streets for \$32,500 on October 14, 1903 and dedicated it for public park purposes on November 6. Several landscaping and construction projects were completed at Neutaconkanut Hill Park in its first few years. Five acres along Plainfield Street at the foot of the hill were plowed and seeded in 1904, and five more in 1905. In what the *Providence Journal* described as "the first recognition of the new park property," a concert by Reeves American Band was held on July 9, 1904 before a crowd of hundreds (Figure 11).⁴⁹ Two years later, a permanent bandstand "with granite coping, iron railing and concrete floor" (**Bandstand Foundation**) was erected and the **Circle Road** "driveway," which began construction in 1905, was completed.⁵⁰ The City of Providence expanded the park to the north by acquiring the ten-acre Alfred Williams estate in 1906.⁵¹

As the City of Providence began to invest in their new municipal park, the Metropolitan Park Commission also identified Neutaconkanut Hill as a priority for future State investment—with a light touch. In their first report to the General Assembly (1905), the MPC suggested that beyond acquiring additional parkland, little was needed to enhance Neutaconkanut Hill Park (Figure 12):

A curving road to the summit, a few paths and shelters from storms, and the easy alteration of a little swamp into a permanent lake, are about all that is desirable in the way of present improvements for this magnificent hill. Its noble rocky outlines and its pleasant groves, full of the characteristic shrubbery in which Rhode Island is so richly favored, should be left about as they are.⁵²

In December 1908, landscape architect Percy R. Jones (1860-1941) of Olmsted Brothers and MPC engineer Charlton D. Putnam met at Neutaconkanut Hill Park to consider strategies for its development and expansion by the MPC. Jones then prepared a report and marked up a map

⁴⁷ *Providence City Documents for the year 1901* (The Providence Press, 1901): 16.

⁴⁸ "Public Parks: Hearing given on project for Neutaconkanut Hill," *Providence News* (15 March 1901), 7.

⁴⁹ *Fifty-seventh Annual Report of the City Auditor* (The Providence Press, 1903), 166; "Enjoying the First Band Concert at Neutaconkanut Park," *Providence Journal* (10 July 1904), 15.

⁵⁰ *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Park Commissioners* (The Providence Press: 1907): 9.

⁵¹ *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Park Commissioners* (The Providence Press, 1906), 9; *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Park Commissioners*, 8; "Real Estate," *Providence Journal* (29 January 1906), 11.

⁵² *Report of the Metropolitan Park Commission to the General Assembly* (Providence, 1905), 29.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

(Figure 13) of nearby properties that included a noncontiguous 12-acre City-owned parcel to the southeast, formerly owned by George W. Davis. The map depicted Circle Road and the Bandstand (labeled “summer house”). In his report, Jones observed the new road, Bandstand, and a “partially constructed” path from Plainfield Street (now partially overlaid by the WPA Path). Indeed, the *Providence Journal* had reported that installation of a “serpentine” path had begun in October, and that “the Park Commissioners have avoided as far as possible disturbing the natural contours, the object being to preserve the rugged character of the park.”⁵³ Jones concluded that distinctive natural features should be retained, and recommended that the MPC prioritize the purchase of parcels that offered vistas from the summit; “flat land” at the corner of Duxbury Street and Sunset Avenue as a location for a playground; and property along Plainfield Street.⁵⁴ This approach, echoing the Public Park Association’s initial vision for Neutaconkanut Hill, guided acquisition and development at the park for nearly half a century.

Although Neutaconkanut Hill was considered an important link in the chain of metropolitan parks, it did not receive any of the MPC’s first round of funding in January 1909. The park placed second on the MPC’s list of “conspicuously desirable” projects, of which Barker wrote “It will be a monumental blunder and a source of never ending regret if we fail to take advantage of them before it is too late.”⁵⁵ Besides budget limitations, an explanation for passing over Neutaconkanut was its proximity to a higher-priority MPC project at Merino Flats, just a half mile to the north. Also, unlike other projects initiated by MPC, Neutaconkanut Hill Park was already a municipal park. The City of Providence was committed to expanding and developing it, particularly to meet the growing demand for active recreation and athletic facilities and thousands of daily users in the summertime. A November 1910 article in the *Providence Evening Bulletin* described residents’ requests for improvements, including a playground, athletic fields, and winding walks to the summit. In response, the City Council funded a baseball diamond, a cricket field, and a play area for young children managed by the Board of Recreation (all no longer extant). Instead of expanding Providence’s park, the MPC was able to acquire an adjacent 14-acre parcel east of Morgan Avenue and south of Ipswich Street in Johnston (west of the district boundary) in 1917. It became a state park and was used by picnickers and hikers as an unofficial extension of the municipal park.⁵⁶

The 1926 Hopkins Plat Book (Figure 14) reveals that the City of Providence was able to realize much of MPC’s vision for Neutaconkanut Hill Park through a series of purchases, donations, and annexations—though not without some resistance from Abbie Allen King. When she failed to get her asking price for a parcel adjacent to the park in 1908, Abbie resolved “to deed my land in such a way that the City of Providence will never get a foot of it.”⁵⁷ She subsequently

⁵³ Work on Park Pathway,” *Providence Journal* (15 October 1908): 3.

⁵⁴ Percy R. Jones, Trip report, Neutaconkanut Hill, Providence, RI (22 December 1908), Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, - 1971; Files 3500: Metropolitan Park Commission, Providence, RI, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. The name of the firm changed from Olmsted Brothers to Olmsted Associates in 1962.

⁵⁵ “Report of Secretary” (8 March 1909), Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, - 1971; Files 3500: Metropolitan Park Commission, Providence, RI, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

⁵⁶ “Olneyville,” *Evening Bulletin* (30 November 1910): 6. This state-owned park in Johnston was also called “Neutaconkanut Hill Park.”

⁵⁷ “Olneyville,” *Evening Bulletin* (4 August 1908): 8.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

bequeathed a 16-acre parcel to the Town of Johnston for King Park; it contained the King Monument and a Tudor Revival-style concrete block observation tower (built ca. 1910 and no longer extant). A change of heart led Abbie to sell a key seven-acre lot adjoining the former Davis property in 1912, enabling the City of Providence to expand the park to the south. In 1919, four years after Abbie's death, Providence annexed 45 acres of parkland—including King Park—from the Town of Johnston; however, a three-acre parcel encompassing the Borden/King Homestead was reserved for the life tenancy of King family friend Louise E. Blankenburg (1874–1953).⁵⁸

As new parcels were incorporated into Neutaconkanut Hill Park, the Parks Department followed the approach recommended by Olmsted Brothers. The uplands were left largely undeveloped for hikers and birders to explore, though the serpentine path and Circle Drive drew visitors uphill to hear concerts at the Bandstand or to enjoy the scenery and views of the city. Fields off Plainfield Street hosted baseball, football, cricket, soccer, and playground games. Providence's first municipal bowling green, a 120 square foot grass plot (off Killingly Street, not extant), was installed in 1929; within a few years, Italian-American neighbors were using the green for bocce.⁵⁹ Newspapers reported that hundreds of men, women, and children visited the park daily, and that special events like school field days, Fourth of July celebrations, and major sporting events often drew crowds of thousands in the 1910s and 1920s. Neutaconkanut Hill Park was the City's second largest park after Roger Williams, and likely the second most visited due to its location in the rapidly developing neighborhood of Silver Lake and proximity to the Plainfield Street trolley line.

1930s – 1950s Improvements

Rhode Island was stunned by the financial collapse of 1929 and the economic depression that followed. Many of its factories closed or reduced their output, and many Rhode Islanders lost their jobs and homes. Even before President Franklin D. Roosevelt rolled out his New Deal program of relief, recovery, and reform, Providence established its own public works program. From 1931 to 1933, the City funded wages of workers tasked with improving municipal properties. An article in the *Providence Journal* mentioned several projects planned for Neutaconkanut, including “a new ball field” (**Baseball Field 1**) and “a winding path made to the top of the hill” lined with elms, maples, and oaks—what would later become the **WPA Path**.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ The name “King Park” endures to this day as stipulated in Abbie King's will. When the City of Providence annexed the parkland in 1919, it retained the name. R.I. Site File 690, 10; Wendy Nilsson, Superintendent, Providence Parks Department, personal communication with Sarah Zurier, September 5, 2025; Cool, “Vandalism Threatens R.I. Landmark.”

⁵⁹ “Rally Day Picnic,” *Providence Journal* (19 September 1910), 8; “Olneyville,” *Providence Journal* (1 December 1910), 13; Lee F. Hanmer and August H. Brunner, *Recreation Legislation (Revised Edition, 1915)* (Russell Sage Foundation, 1915), 97; “R.I. Junior League Offers Three Contests” *Providence Journal* (19 November 1915), 6; “200 at Dedication of Bowling Green,” *Providence Journal* (2 June 1929), 4; “Johnston,” *Providence Journal* (17 August 1932), 14. The City constructed a reservoir west of the park in 1928.

⁶⁰ Cady, *Civic and Architectural Development*, 255; “City to Pay Need Men \$8250 in Week,” *Providence Journal* (15 November 1931), 4; “Aid Bill Sanctions Local Bond Issues,” *Providence Journal* (25 March 1932), 9; “Fawn at Roger Williams Park is Flourishing as Bottle Baby,” *Providence Sunday Journal* (22 May 1932), 3.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

With the first wave of federal work-relief agencies set up in 1933, Providence applied to the new Civil Works Administration (CWA) for several park projects, including grading fields and constructing stands (**Stone Bleachers**) fronted by a **Retaining Wall**. Additional construction work was supported by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which was established in 1935. By December 1935, there were 400 men assigned to the park to build the **Toboggan Slope**. The workers completed it and a ski jump (probably the **Ski Slope** accessed by the **Tow Rope**) by January 1936.⁶¹ Two months later, a newspaper article catalogued more than \$4 million of WPA projects underway in Providence, with \$189,755 allocated for materials and 308 workers at Neutaconkanut Park. Among the tasks were enlarging the baseball field (**Baseball Field 1**), “building walks and paths” (**WPA Path** and **Trail Network**), and “erection of rain shelter” (**Rain Shelter**).⁶² Many of the amenities constructed in the 1930s are visible in an aerial photograph from 1939 (Figure 15). The photograph also depicts several features that are no longer extant, such as the baseball diamond east of the foot of the Ski Slope and the bowling greens off Killingly Street.

A city recreation survey from 1937 found that the area at the foot of the hill was relatively well-equipped for a “neighborhood playfield-park,” but the rest of Neutaconkanut lacked the attention befitting Providence’s second largest park that was “scenically. . .the finest property the Park Department owns.”⁶³ Newspaper accounts indicate that the athletic fields at Neutaconkanut Hill Park were in regular use by schools, adult athletic leagues, and visitors in the 1930s-1950s. Concerts and other special events continued, including a wartime event on October 11, 1942 that included a parade to the park, an “incendiary bomb demonstration,” and a WPA band concert. The winter sports facilities, unique among Providence parks, were promoted from the 1930s into the 1950s in national media including the Federal Writers’ Project guide to Rhode Island, the *New York Times*, and *Travel* magazine.⁶⁴

Louise E. Blankenburg died in 1953, and the three-acre homestead was incorporated into Neutaconkanut Hill Park. Shortly before her death, the *Providence Journal* reported on a visit to the homestead by Providence architect John Hutchins Cady, architectural historian Antoinette Downing, and officials of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA, now Historic New England). Although Cady urged preservation, all the buildings were razed in March 1955. The City justified this action, citing increased vandalism and numerous brush fires on Neutaconkanut Hill. The park assumed its current shape in 1960, when an 8.75-acre parcel at the northwest corner of the park (most of the land acquired from the Alfred Williams estate) was

⁶¹ “U.S. May Finance Airport Program,” *Providence Journal* (28 November 1933), 3; “400 WPA Workers Walk Out On Job,” *Providence Journal* (13 December 1935), 25; “Snowstorm Toll of Mishaps Rises,” *Providence Journal* (22 January 1936), 2.

⁶² “City Must Pay Million for WPA Projects in Providence; Cost to R. I. to be \$200,000,” *Evening Bulletin* (2 March 1936), 10.

⁶³ L.H. Weir, *Report of a Study of Public Recreation in the City of Providence, R.I.*, (National Recreation Association, 1937), 97. There was no playground equipment at Neutaconkanut at the time of the survey.

⁶⁴ “Civilian Defense News,” *Providence Sunday Journal* (11 October 1942): III9; Federal Writers’ Project, *Rhode Island: A Guide to the Smallest State* (Houghton Mifflin, 1937), 133; “A Directory of Skiing Centers in Canada and the Northeast,” *New York Times* (12 January 1947), X19; “Ski Facilities Around New England,” *Travel*, (January 1956): 11.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

auctioned off for redevelopment. Neutaconkanut Hill Park was one of 33 parks and 61 playgrounds in Providence, which covered a total of 1081 acres in 1960.⁶⁵

Recreational Development after 1960

A survey found the following recreational facilities at Neutaconkanut Hill Park in 1966: athletic fields used for baseball, soccer, and football; a **Pool**; four pieces of playground equipment; a spray pool; and a “shelter house” (Rain Shelter). Beginning in the early 1970s, recreational activity at Neutaconkanut Hill Park dwindled, and the overgrown hill was mostly used by dirt bike riders. Stolen cars were brought to the park, stripped, and abandoned. At least two such cars, partially buried, remain on the hill and serve as a point of interest on the Monument Loop Trail (**Chevrolet Camaro Remnants**). In 1976, local advocates founded the Neutaconkanut Hill Park Association (NHPA) to rehabilitate the park and preserve its resources.⁶⁶

In the 1990s, new investments were made in the lower part of the park. The **Recreation Center** was built in 1993. A **Press Box** and a **Concession Stand/Press Box** were erected near the baseball fields in the early 1990s. In 2005, neighbors revived the NHPA as the Neutaconkanut Hill Association and in 2009, established the non-profit Neutaconkanut Hill Conservancy. Through the efforts of the Conservancy and partner organizations, including the City’s parks and recreation departments, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, and Providence College’s Urban Action Program, the park was revitalized in the early 21st century. A large open lawn was created at the foot of the Ski Slope, and the **Skate Park** was installed in 2004. The Conservancy made improvements to the **Trail Network** in 2008.⁶⁷ Recent projects carried out by the Providence Parks Department include expansion of the Skate Park (2024) and installation of new playground equipment (2025). Even with each improvement, the mix of active and passive recreational activities and their location within the park has remained constant.

An 85-acre green expanse at the western edge of the city, Neutaconkanut Hill Park is now one of 120 properties in the 1600-acre “Providence Parks System.”⁶⁸ The concept of an organized network of public parks and parkways, as promoted by the Public Parks Association and expanded by the Metropolitan Park Commission, remains a guiding framework for the Providence Parks Department to this day. Neutaconkanut Hill Park endures as a favorite “breathing spot” for the people of metropolitan Providence.

⁶⁵ “Louise E. Blankenburg,” *Providence Journal* (19 September 1953), 10; “Roberts Orders Woods Closed As Rash of Fires Plagues R.I.,” *Providence Journal* (14 April 1954), 1; Cool, “Vandalism Threatens R.I. Landmark”; William A. McNamara, “King Homestead Demolished; May Have Been City’s Oldest,” *Providence Journal* (16 March 1955), 12; “City of Providence Auction Sale” [advertisement], *Providence Evening Bulletin* (6 October 1960): 27; *Polk’s Providence City Directory* (R.L. Polk & Co, 1960), 10.

⁶⁶ City Plan Commission, *Master Plan for Public Recreation and Conservation* (1966), 43; R.I. Site File 690, 10; Joan Retsinas, “Elli Panichas: Reviving a Forest,” *Primetime* (May 2013), 26.

⁶⁷ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC (NETR), Historic aerial maps, published 1962–2002, accessed April 2022; Retsinas, “Elli Panichas: Reviving a Forest.”

⁶⁸ “Your Parks,” Providence Parks Department, accessed November 2025, <https://www.providenceri.gov/parks/neighborhood-parks/>.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Primary Sources

Album 37: King Homestead, 899 Plainfield Street, Providence, Rhode Island. Photographic albums collection (PC009). Historic New England Library & Archives, Boston, MA. Accessed November 2025. <https://www.historicnewengland.org/explore/collections-access/gusn/194151>.

Annual Report of the City Auditor. The Providence Press, 1903.

Annual Reports of the Park Commissioners. The Providence Press, 1891-1908.

Bartlett, John Russell, ed.. *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England. Volume 1: 1636 to 1663*. Providence, 1856.

Board of Metropolitan Park Commissioners. *Annual Reports*. 1905-1910, 1912, 1915-1917, 1919-1935.

Cady, John Hutchins. John Hutchins Cady Research Scrapbooks Collection, Providence Public Library Digital Collections, Providence, RI. Accessed March 2022. <https://provlibdigital.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A036-03>, 1925–1965.

City Plan Commission. *Master Plan for Public Recreation and Conservation*. 1966.

Federal Writers' Project. *Rhode Island – A Guide to the Smallest State*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937.

Fifty-seventh Annual Report of the City Auditor. Providence Press, 1903.

Guide Book to the Reservations of the Metropolitan Park System of Rhode Island. 1922.

Hanmer, Lee F. and August H. Brunner. *Recreation Legislation (Revised Edition, 1915)*. Russell Sage Foundation, 1915.

Olmsted Associates. Olmsted Associates Records: Job Files, - 1971; Files 3500: Metropolitan Park Commission, Providence, RI. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Accessed November 2025. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss5257102597/>.

Polk's Providence City Directory. R.L. Polk & Co., 1959 and 1960.

Providence City Documents for the year 1901.

The Providence House Directory and Family Address Book. Sampson & Murdock Company, 1929.

Providence: The Southern Gateway of New England. The Historical Publishing Company, 1926.

Public Park Association of Providence. *Parks of Providence*. Nos. 8 and 9, 1889 and 1892.

Public Parks Association. Miscellaneous Material. Rhode Island Historical Society. Providence, RI.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island

County and State

Recommendations of the Metropolitan Park Commission. 1911.

Resolutions and Ordinances of the City of Providence. 1912-1927.

Tallman, Marianna M. *Pleasant Places in Rhode Island, and How to Reach Them.* Providence, 1893.

The Public Park Association. Providence. 1905.

United States Census Bureau (US Census). *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880.* NARA microfilm publication T9, 1,454 rolls. Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives, 1880.

_____. *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900.* NARA microfilm publication T623, 1854 rolls. Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29, National Archives, 1900.

Weir, L. H. *Report of a study of public recreation in the city of Providence, R.I.* National Recreation Association, 1937.

Secondary Sources

Cady, John Hutchins. *The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence.* The Book Shop, 1957.

_____. *Rhode Island Boundaries.* Rhode Island Tercentenary Commission, 1936.

Cranz, Galen. *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America.* The MIT Press, 1982.

Gilkeson, John S., Jr. *Middle Class Providence, 1820-1940.* Princeton University Press, 1986.

Klyberg, Albert T. *100 Years of Rhode Island State Parks, 1909–2009.* Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, 2009.

Lambert, Lesley. "Diamonds in the Rough: The Development of Public Parks in Providence, R.I." Accessed June 2025. https://exploreri.org/news/fall13/public_parks_in_providence.htm.

Marshall, David. *The Jewel of Providence, An Illustrated History of Roger Williams Park, 1871–1961.* Providence Parks Department, 1987.

Merolla, Steve. "The Borden Houses on Neutaconkanut Hill." *Johnston Historical Society Historical Notes* 25, no. 3 (2019).

_____. "The Bordens & Kings of Neutaconkanut Hill" (unpublished paper). 2010.

_____. "The Bordens of Neutaconkanut Hill." *Johnston Historical Society Historical Notes* 25, no. 2 (2019).

_____. "The Bordens of Neutaconkanut Hill (part 2): The Joseph Borden Story." *Johnston Historical Society Historical Notes* 26, no. 2 (2020).

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

Nalewajk, Joyce E. "Horace William Shaler Cleveland." In *Buildings on Paper: Rhode Island Architectural Drawings 1825-1945*, edited by William H. Jordy et al. Brown University, the Rhode Island Historical Society, and the Rhode Island School of Design, 1982.

Newton, Norman T. *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971.

Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. (PAL). *Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic Resources Survey Report*. Neutaconkanut Hill Conservancy, Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, 2022.

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission. *Preliminary Survey Report: Town of Johnston*. Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1976.

Rhode Island 690 Site File. Manuscript on file at Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission.

Rider, Sidney B. *The Lands of Rhode Island as the Great Sachems Knew Them*. Sidney B. Rider, 1904.

Rubertone, Patricia E. *Native Providence: Memory, Community, and Survivance in the Northeast*. University of Nebraska Press, 2020.

Taylor, Nick. *American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA*. Bantam Books, 2008.

Tischler, William H. *American Landscape Architecture, Designers and Places*. The Preservation Press, 1989.

Tooker, William Wallace. "Indian Geographic Names, and Why We Should Study Them; Illustrated by Some Rhode Island Examples." *Publications of the Rhode Island Historical Society, New Series* 5 (1897).

Weld, Hattie Borden. *Historical and Genealogical Record of the Descendants as far as Known of Richard and Joan Borden*. Los Angeles, 1899.

Woodward, Wm. McKenzie. *Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island*. Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, 2001.

_____ and Edward F. Sanderson. *Providence: A Citywide Survey of Historic Resources*. Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1986.

Maps, Atlases and Aerial Photographs

Beers, D.G. *Atlas of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*. Philadelphia, 1870

Everts and Richards. *New Topographical Atlas of Surveys: Providence County, Rhode Island*. Philadelphia, 1895.

Hopkins, G.M. *City Atlas of Providence, Rhode Island*. Philadelphia, 1875.

_____. *Plat Book of the City of Providence, Rhode Island*. G.M. Hopkins, 1918.

_____. *Plat Book of the City of Providence, Rhode Island*. G.M. Hopkins, 1926.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC (NETR). Historic aerial maps. Published 1962–2002. Accessed April 2022. <https://historicaerials.com/>.

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). Maps and Aerial Photos, 1939-2024/2025. RIDEM Map Room. Accessed September 2025. <https://ridemgis.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html>.

Richards, L.J. & Co. *Atlas of the City of Providence*. L.J. Richards & Co., 1908.

Walling, Henry Francis. *Map of Providence County, Rhode Island*. Providence, 1851.

Newspaper and Magazine Articles

“200 at Dedication of Bowling Green.” *Providence Journal*, 2 June 1929.

“400 WPA Workers Walk Out On Job.” *Providence Journal*, 13 December 1935.

“A Directory of Skiing Centers in Canada and the Northeast.” *New York Times*, 12 January 1947.

“Aid Bill Sanctions Local Bond Issues.” *Providence Journal*, 25 March 1932.

Barker, Henry A. “The Metropolitan Park System of Providence.” *The Apteryx* I, no. 2 (April 1905).

_____. “The Playgrounds of the People.” *Providence Magazine* 28 (August 1916).

“Bird Arrivals for 1905.” *The Apteryx* I, no. 3 (July 1905).

Carrera, Kim A. “OpEd: The Olneyville Annexation, 1898.” *Johnston Sun Rise*, 26 October 2006.

“City of Providence Auction Sale” [advertisement]. *Providence Evening Bulletin*, 6 October 1960.

“City Must Pay Million for WPA Projects in Providence; Cost to R. I. to be \$200,000.” *Evening Bulletin*, 2 March 1936.

“City to Pay Need Men \$8250 in Week.” *Providence Journal*, 15 November 1931.

“Civilian Defense News.” *Providence Sunday Journal*, 11 October 1942.

Cool, Robert N. “Vandalism Threatens RI Landmark.” *Providence Sunday Journal*, 22 March 1953.

“Enjoying the First Band Concert at Neutaconkanut Park.” *Providence Journal*. 10 July 1904.

“Fawn at Roger Williams Park is Flourishing as Bottle Baby.” *Providence Sunday Journal* 22 May 1932.

Item. *Providence Journal*, 1 January 1903.

“Johnston.” *Providence Journal*, 17 August 1932.

Jones, Augustine. “Parks and Tree-Lined Avenues.” *Publications of the Advance Club* no. 7 (1891).

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

Name of Property

“King Observation Tower is Burned.” *Evening Bulletin*, 30 April 1925.

“Large Tract to be Added to Neutaconkanut Park.” *Providence Journal*. 29 April 1914.

Lincoln, Charles E. “Development of the City Playgrounds,” *Providence Magazine* 28 (August 1916).

_____. “How Betsey Williams Inspired Park Acquisitions,” *Providence Magazine* 28 (August 1916).

_____. “Public Park Association’s Notable Work,” *Providence Magazine* 28 (August 1916).

“Louise E. Blankenburg.” *Providence Journal*. 19 September 1953.

McNamara, William A. “King Homestead Demolished; May Have Been City’s Oldest,” *Providence Journal*. 16 March 1955.

“Neutaconkanut.” *Providence Sunday Journal*, 11 September 1898.

“Neutaconkanut Hill.” *Providence Daily Journal*, 8 January 1891.

“Neutaconkanut Hill.” *Providence Journal*, 27 January 1901.

“Neutaconkanut Park.” *Providence Evening Bulletin*, 15 March 1901.

“Olneyville.” *Providence Journal*, 18 October 1903.

“Olneyville.” *Evening Bulletin*, 4 August 1908.

“Olneyville.” *Providence Journal*, 1 December 1910.

“Park Plot Sale Bid Rejected.” *Providence Journal*, 2 March 1957.

“Playground Baseball League Schedule.” *Providence Sunday Journal*, 8 July 1945.

“Prepare for Opening.” *Providence Journal*, 23 April 1909.

“Public Parks.” *Providence Journal*, 2 March 1883.

“Public Parks: Hearing given on project for Neutaconkanut Hill.” *Providence News*, 15 March 1901.

“R.I. Junior League Offers Three Contests.” *Providence Journal*, 19 November 1915.

“Rally Day Picnic.” *Providence Journal*, 19 September 1910.

“Real Estate.” *Providence Journal*. 29 January 1906.

Retsinas, Joan. “Elli Panichas: Reviving a Forest,” *PrimeTime*. May 2013. Accessed April 2022. <http://www.nhill.org/wss/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/PrimeTime-May-2013-2.pdf>.

“Roberts Orders Woods Closed As Rash of Fires Plagues R.I.” *Providence Journal*, 14 April 1954.

“Ski Facilities Around New England.” *Travel*, January 1956. “Snowstorm Toll of Mishaps Rises.” *Providence Journal*, 22 January 1936.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

Sullivan, Kelly. "Determined to Remain In Town." *Johnston Sun Rise*. 23 April 2021.

<https://johnstonsunrise.net/stories/back-in-the-day-determined-to-remain-in-town,160755>.

"The City Government." *Providence Journal*, 3 January 1891.

"To Prepare for Dinner." *Providence Journal*, 29 November 1888.

"U.S. May Finance Airport Program." *Providence Journal*, 28 November 1933.

"Work on Park Pathway." *Providence Journal*, 15 October 1908.

Online Sources

Providence Parks Department. "Your Parks." Accessed November 2025.

<https://www.providenceri.gov/parks/neighborhood-parks/>.

Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries Database. "PV040." Accessed August 2025.

https://rihistoriccemeteries.org/newsearchcemeterydetail.aspx?ceme_no=PV040.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 85 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 41.814464 | Longitude: -71.463993 |
| 2. Latitude: 41.812227 | Longitude: -71.461691 |
| 3. Latitude: 41.804685 | Longitude: -71.466846 |
| 4. Latitude: 41.805223 | Longitude: -71.469293 |
| 5. Latitude: 41.810663 | Longitude: -71.468968 |
| 6. Latitude: 41.813237 | Longitude: -71.467383 |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated historic district consists of Assessor's Plat 111, Lots 1, 3, 4, 9, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 92, and 94, covering an irregularly shaped, 85-acre area on the northeast and east slopes of Neutaconkanut Hill at the western boundary of Providence, Rhode Island. Sunset Avenue,

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

Killingly Street, and Plainfield Street and parcel boundaries form its north and east boundaries. The south and west boundaries conform to the rear parcel lines of abutting properties; running approximately 400 ft south from the intersection of Killingly Street and Sunset Avenue, 4,900 ft west and south in a zigzag pattern along rear parcel lines, and 700 ft east to Plainfield Street approximately 775 ft south of its intersection with Silver Lake Avenue.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District boundary conforms to the land owned by the City of Providence and designated as Neutaconkanut Hill Park. The boundary includes land that was acquired by the City of Providence through purchase, donation, and annexation, and that was designated for use as a public park

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Gretchen Pineo, Sr. Architectural Historian; Jill Miller, Architectural Historian, Virginia H. Adams, Sr. Architectural Historian, and Sophie Zionts, Associate Architectural Historian

organization: The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc.

street & number: 26 Main Street

city or town: Pawtucket state: Rhode Island zip code: 02860

e-mail: gpineo@palinc.com

telephone: 401-728-8780

name/title: Sarah Zurier, Architectural Historian

organization: Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission

street & number: 150 Benefit Street

city or town: Providence state: Rhode Island zip code: 02903

e-mail: sarah.zurier@preservation.ri.gov

telephone: 401-222-2678

date: December 2025

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

City or Vicinity: Providence

County: Providence County State: Rhode Island

Photographer: Jill Miller and Gretchen Pineo, PAL; Sarah Zurier, RIHPHC; Paul Griffin.

Dates Photographed: March 10, 2022 (Pineo), April 15, 2024 (Miller), September 21 and 27, 2025 (Zurier); September 28, 2025 (Griffin). All photographs (including photographs 11, 15, 22, 29, and 32 taken in 2022) still accurately depict the property.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 32. Circle Road, looking north from top of WPA Path (Miller).
- 2 of 32. WPA Path looking southwest (Miller).
- 3 of 32. WPA Path looking southwest toward Circle Road (Miller).
- 4 of 32. Bandstand Foundation, looking northwest (Miller).
- 5 of 32. Intersection of Pinnacle Trail and Pond Trail (Trail Network), looking northwest (Miller).
- 6 of 32. Pinnacle Trail (Trail Network) looking northwest, showing stone edging and paving (Miller).
- 7 of 32. System of Stone Walls, looking north along Pinnacle Trail (Trail Network) (Miller).
- 8 of 32. Pinnacle Boardwalk/Lookout, looking northeast from Pinnacle Trail (Trail Network) (Miller).
- 9 of 32. Chevrolet Camaro Remnants, looking northwest from Monument Loop Trail (Trail Network) (Zurier).
- 10 of 32. Great Stone Stairs, looking west (Miller).
- 11 of 32. Stone-lined Channel and Concrete Culvert headwall, looking west from Pinnacle Trail (Trail Network) (Pineo).

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island

Name of Property

County and State

- 12 of 32. Boundary Wall and Stone-lined Channel, looking northwest from Plainfield Street outlet (Miller).
- 13 of 32. Retaining Wall, looking northwest. Entrance to WPA Path in foreground (Zurier).
- 14 of 32. Stone Bleachers behind Retaining Wall opposite Baseball Field 1 looking southwest (Miller).
- 15 of 32. Baseball Field 1 and Press Box, looking northeast. Retaining Wall and lower entrance to WPA Path in foreground (Pineo).
- 16 of 32. Press Box (center) and Baseball Field 1 (right) with Stone Bleachers/Retaining Wall at left, looking north (Miller).
- 17 of 32. Baseball Field 2 and Concession Stand/Press Box, looking southwest (Miller).
- 18 of 32. Concession Stand/Press Box, looking southwest (Miller).
- 19 of 32. Rain Shelter on Plainfield Street, looking northeast (Miller).
- 20 of 32. Recreation Center (left) and Pool (right), looking southwest from Plainfield Street park entrance (Miller).
- 21 of 32. Skate Park, looking northwest (Griffin).
- 22 of 32. Toboggan Slope, looking southeast (Pineo).
- 23 of 32. Ski Slope, looking northeast (Miller).
- 24 of 32. Remnants of Tow Rope System, looking east (Zurier).
- 25 of 32. System of Stone Walls near south end of park, looking southwest (Miller).
- 26 of 32. Borden/King Homestead ruins, looking southwest toward house foundation at center/right (Miller).
- 27 of 32 Borden/King Homestead Drive, looking south towards Plainfield Street (Miller).
- 28 of 32. Gate Posts and Boundary Wall along Plainfield Street, looking southwest (Miller).
- 29 of 32. King Monument, looking east (Pineo).
- 30 of 32. William Borden Lot, looking west (Miller).
- 31 of 32. William Borden Lot, looking southeast (Pineo).
- 32 of 32. Davis Barn Foundation, looking northeast (Miller).

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District

Providence County, Rhode Island
 County and State

Name of Property
GRAPHICS

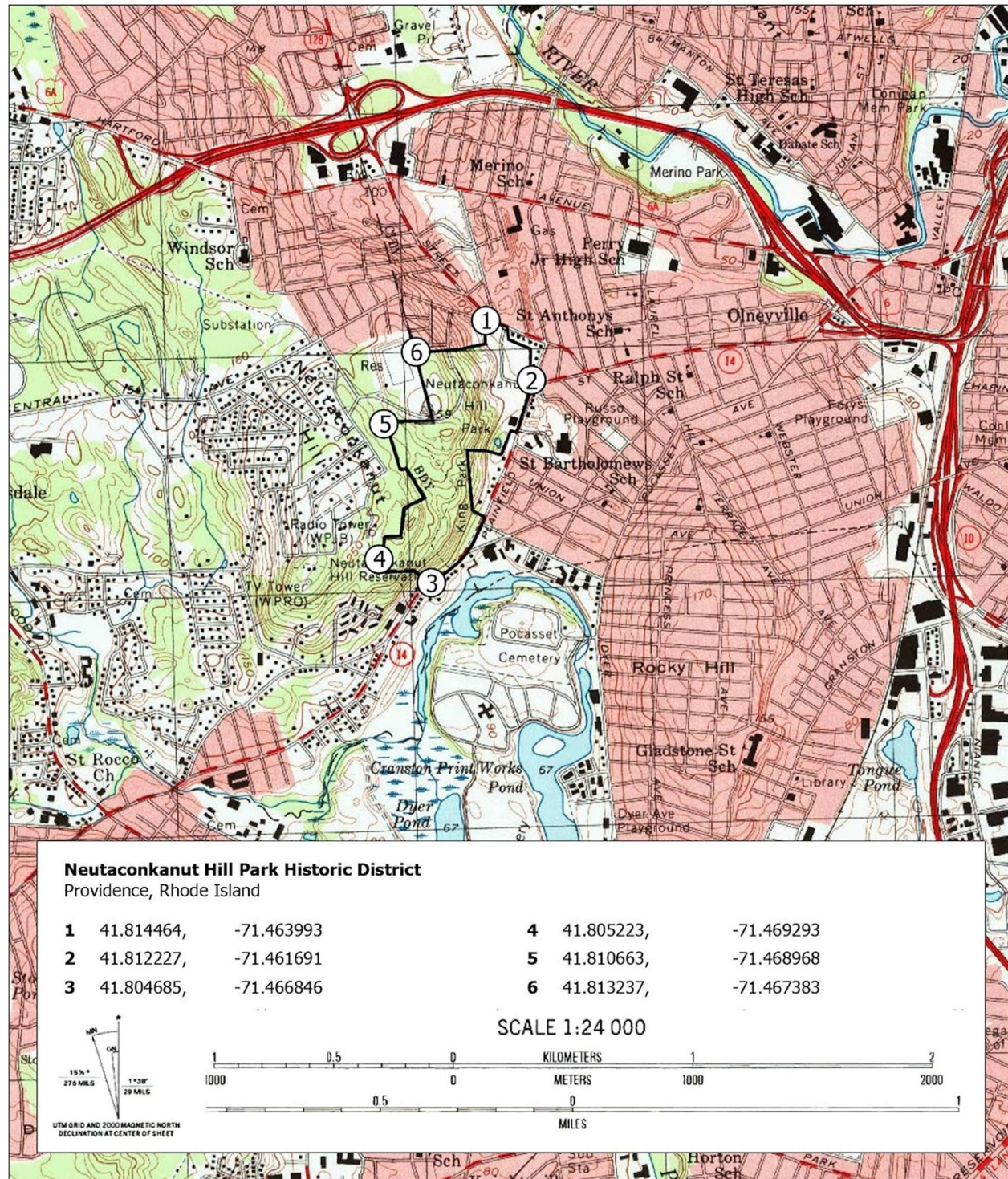


Figure 1. Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District locational map. Providence, USGS Quadrangle, 1996.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State



Figure 2. Neutaconkanut Hill Park sketch map (bing maps, 2025).

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
 Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
 County and State



Figure 3. Neutaconkanut Hill Park sketch map with photo locations/directions.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
 Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
 County and State

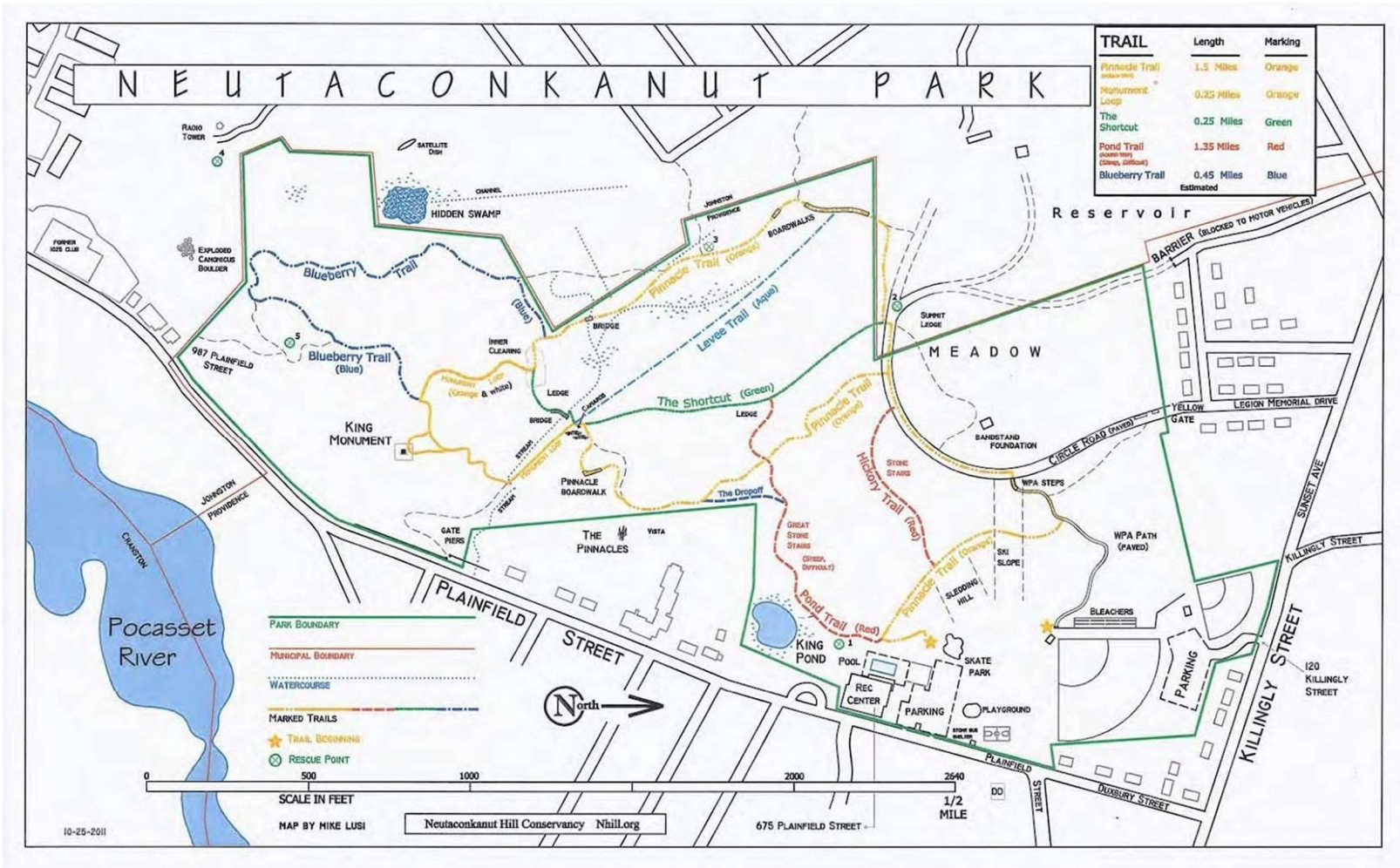
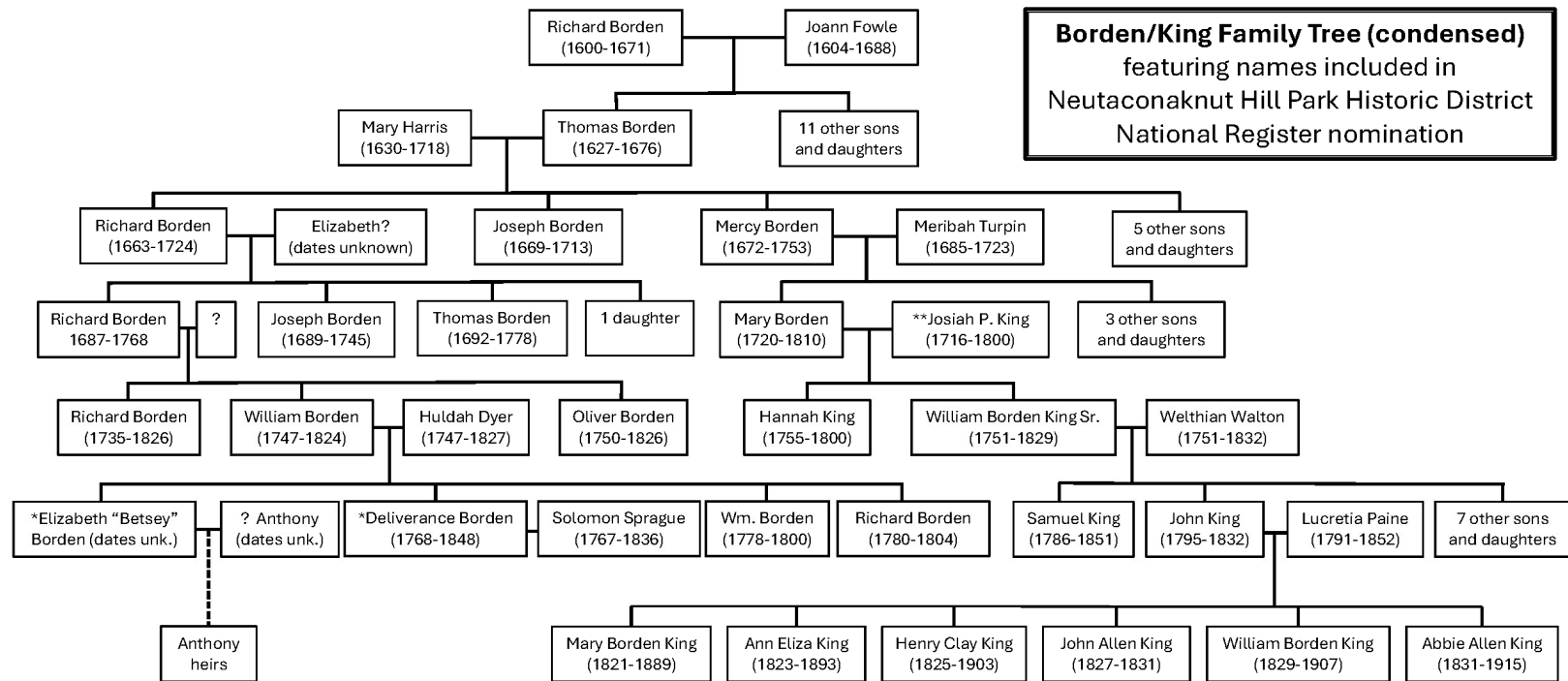


Figure 4. 2011 park map showing recreational facilities and trails (Courtesy Neutaconkanut Hill Conservancy).

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
 Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
 County and State



*Names drawn from research by Steven Merolla. In Hattie Borden Weld's genealogy (1899), William and Huldah's daughters are identified as Ruth and Huldah.
 **The names of several King ancestors are inscribed on the King Monument.

Figure 5. Borden/King Family Tree (condensed) featuring names included in nomination.

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State



Figure 6. Photograph (before 1955) of Borden-King Homestead with ca. 1705-1740 Borden house and attached barn in foreground. (Cady Research Scrapbooks Collection, Providence Public Library).



Figure 7. Photograph (before 1955) of Borden-King Homestead with ca. 1705-1740 Borden house with attached barn in center and ca. 1785-1824 William Borden House to the right; Boundary Wall in foreground. (Cady Research Scrapbooks Collection, Providence Public Library).

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

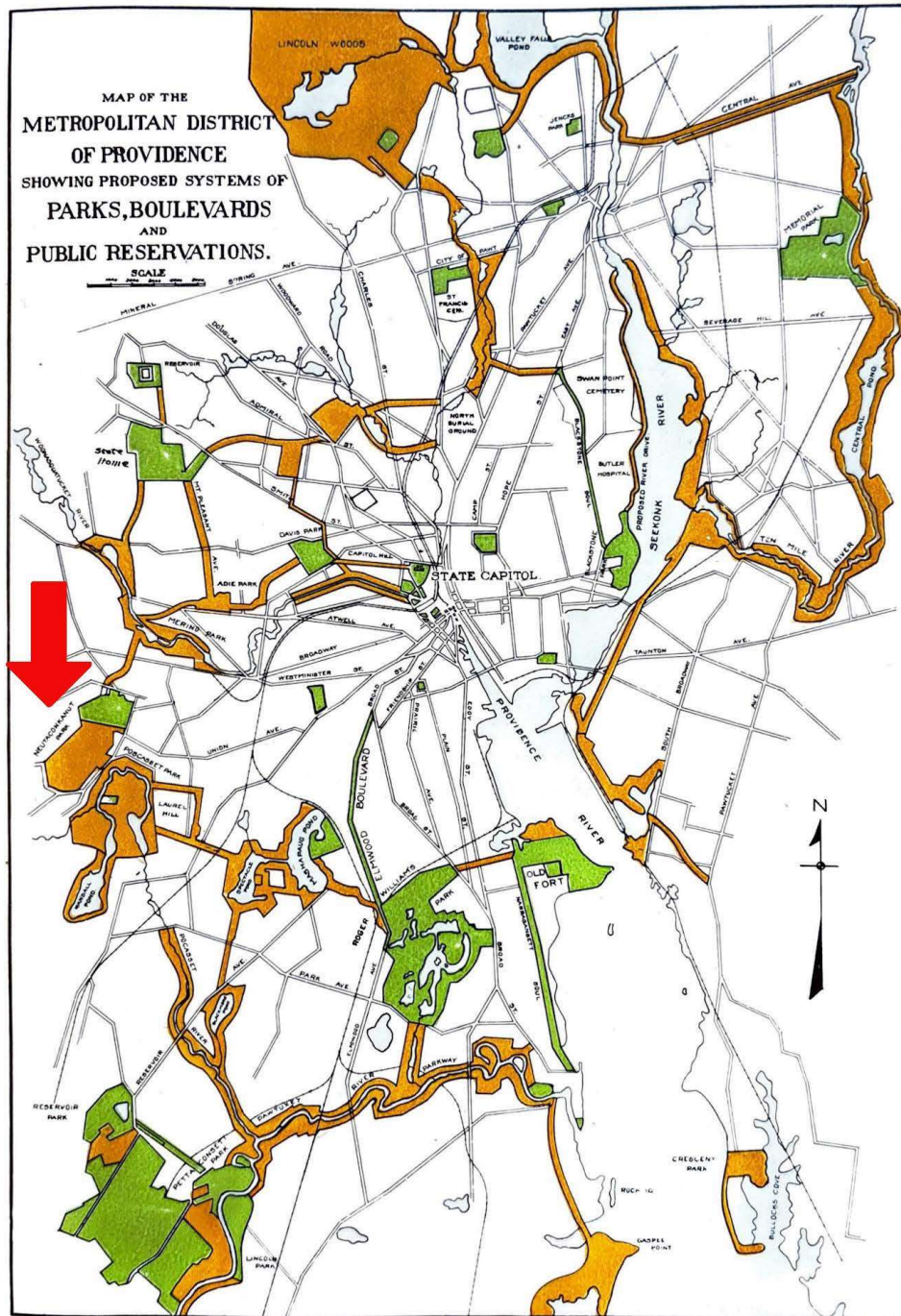


Figure 9. "Map of the Metropolitan District of Providence." Arrow points to Neutaconkanut [Hill] Park—existing Providence city park in green (north) and desired expansion in orange (south).
(Report of the Board of Metropolitan Park Commissioners, 1905).

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
 Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
 County and State

Providence Parks Associated with the Metropolitan Parks Commission (MPC)

DATE	MPC NAME/CURRENT NAME	AREA 1935/AREA 2025	CHANGES SINCE 1935
1903	* Neutaconkanut Hill Park	86.9 acres/85 acres	New amenities added to lowlands; reduced in area by 2.1%
1909	+ Merino Flats/Merino Park	20.24 acres/18.6 acres	Altered; expanded by 1.3%
1913	+ Metcalf Park/Prete-Metcalf Field	6.05 acres/8.4 acres	Altered; expanded by 38.8%
1915	Canada Pond Reservation/--	.92 acres/--	Lost; land used for highway (now R.I. 146)
1915	+ Mashapaug Reservation/John T. Owens Park and part of Mashapaug Park	55 acres (mostly water)/?	Unimproved by MPC; land developed for two small parks in 1948 and 2019
1916	+ Corliss Park	25.15 acres/5.05 acres	Altered; reduced in area by 80%
1917	+ West River Reservation/--	38.3 acres/--	Lost; land redeveloped as industrial area

* MPC project owned by City of Providence for its entire history
 + Acquired by MPC, then transferred to City of Providence after 1935

Figure 10. Providence Parks Associated with the Metropolitan Parks Commission (MPC)

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State



Figure 11. "Enjoying the First Band Concert at Neutaconkanut Park." The accompanying article noted that the concert drew "Hundreds of people, mostly women and children" to a spot "about half-way up the hill." *Providence Sunday Journal* (10 July 1904), 15.



Figure 12. "Views from Neutaconkanut Hill." The image at right depicts the view northeast across Plainfield Street towards the Silver Lake neighborhood and the city beyond. The image at bottom left shows the view south towards the Pocasset River Valley. (*Report of the Board of Metropolitan Park Commissioners*, 1905).

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State



Figure 13. 1908 site plan of Neutaconkanut Hill Park and nearby parcels with annotations by landscape architect Percy R. Jones. The plan depicts Circle Drive and the Bandstand (marked “Summer House”). (Jones 1908; courtesy of the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted NHS, Brookline, MA).

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

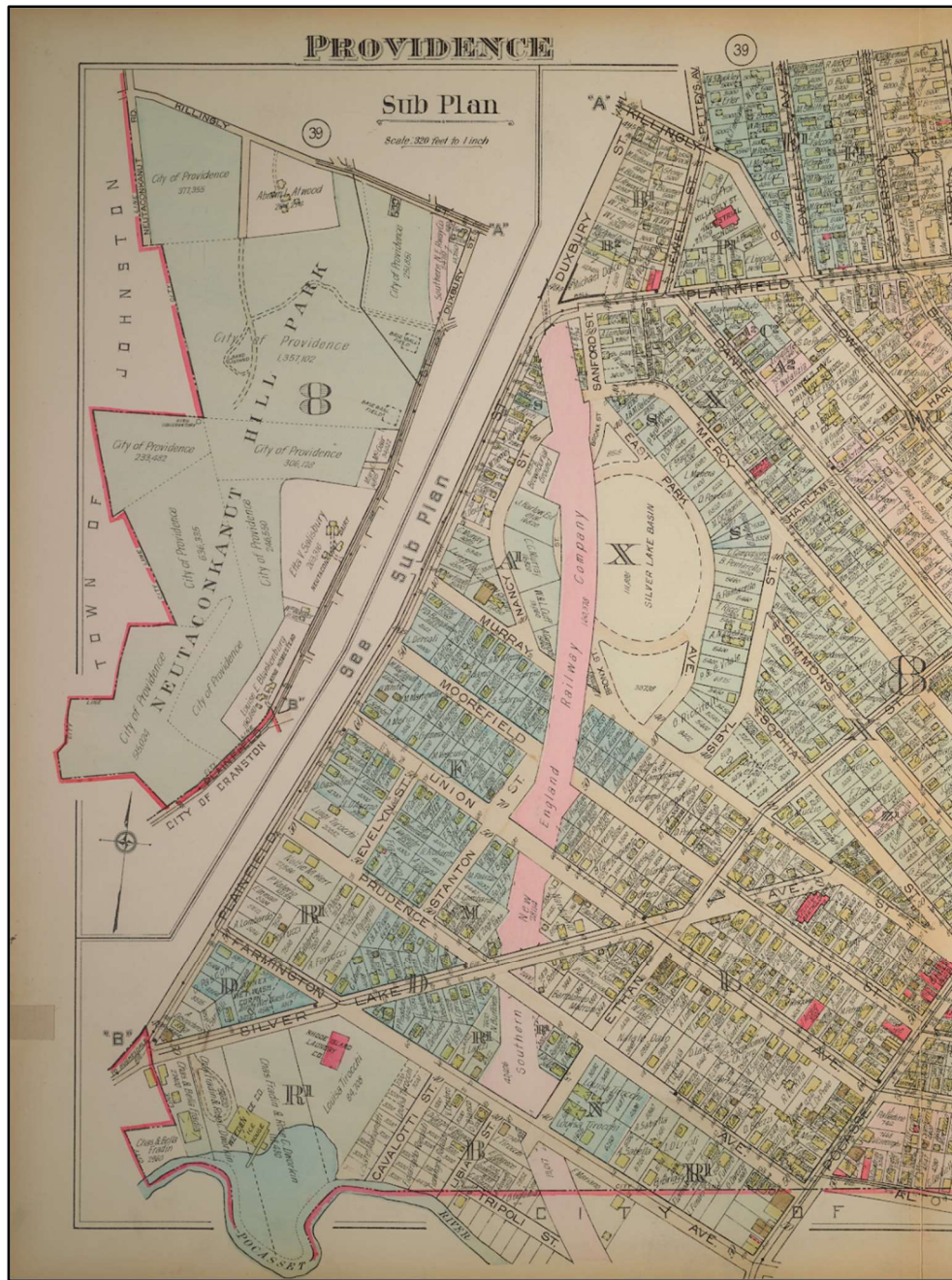


Figure 14. Map showing Neutaconkanut Hill Park and Silver Lake neighborhood in 1926, when Louise Blankenburg resided at the Borden/King homestead. Extant park resources include Circle Drive and Bandstand Foundation. In the 1930s, the WPA Path would overlay a portion of the earlier path that extended west from Plainfield Street. (Hopkins 1926).

Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic District
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State



Figure 15. Aerial photograph of Neutaconkanut Hill Park after 1930s public works improvements; reforestation is underway (Rhode Island GIS, 1939 Aerial Imagery).

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.