

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Edgewood Neighborhood, Cranston, R.I.

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Development of the Edgewood Area of Cranston, R.I. 1636-1975

Domestic Architecture of Edgewood, Cranston, R.I. 1850-1975

C. Form Prepared by

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature and title of certifying official <u>RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission</u> State or Federal Agency or Tribal government	Date
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I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

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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 18 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Development of the Edgewood Area of Cranston, R.I. 1636-1975

Preface

The Edgewood area comprises a large section of the eastern portion of the City of Cranston. Located just south of the Providence city line, Edgewood is roughly bounded by Narragansett Bay¹ on the east, the Pawtuxet River and Pawtuxet Village on the south, and the City of Providence's principal municipal park, Roger Williams Park, on the west.

The area's pattern of development reflects its evolution from a rural agrarian landscape in the Colonial and Federal periods to a borderland and later a suburb of Providence from the mid-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century. Expansion occurred within a framework of primary thoroughfares. As a consequence of Edgewood's position in relation to the region's principal market town, later its metropolitan center, the principal streets run north-south. Broad Street passes through the middle of northern Edgewood and continues southeasterly to Pawtuxet Village, while Warwick Avenue branches off it to the southwest and south. To the east, Narragansett Boulevard is a residential avenue only a block away from the edge of the bay, connecting to an arterial road leading directly into downtown Providence. The only major street deviating from this pattern is Park Avenue, which leads west to connect with other inland village centers in Cranston.

The southern bound of Edgewood is the Pawtuxet River, which has a long history of intensive use. It flows west to east and into Narragansett Bay. The river exits into the bay at the village of Pawtuxet, an important eighteenth- and nineteenth-century seaport and factory village. Pawtuxet Village is a contained nucleated settlement, with commercial, residential, and institutional buildings dating from the earliest settlement of the colony to the present. It is a natural boundary for Edgewood, as it differs both developmentally and visually from the neighborhoods of Edgewood.

¹ Technically, the reach of the upper bay bordering Edgewood is named Providence River. However, in common usage it is referred to as Narragansett Bay, and it will be so called in this document.

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The bay coastline at the eastern edge of Edgewood has been an important amenity throughout the neighborhood's development. Side streets run directly to gravelly shoreline or relatively low bluffs which line the bay, affording water views to neighborhoods off Narragansett Boulevard. Along the length of the coastline are two yacht clubs, a marina, and a waterside park.

Usage Note

The business affairs and real estate transactions of the people involved in Edgewood's physical transformation over three centuries have been closely associated with family relationships. Extensive genealogical information has been included in this essay to illustrate these relationships. Certain conventions have been adopted here to make that information readily available while attempting to minimize confusing intrusions into or diversions from the narrative.

For simplicity, the term "cousin" is used generally to refer to relationships in which the individuals have common grandparents of whatever degree (great-, great-great-, etc.), especially cousins "once removed," "twice removed," etc. Where relationships can be simply expressed directly—"first cousin," "second cousin," etc.—the more precise term is used.

To help readers understand the familial relationships between and among individuals mentioned in the narrative, the lineages of most eighteenth- and nineteenth-century descendants of seventeenth-century settlers have been included. Each appears in a footnote on the page with the first occurrence of the person's name. The lineages use an abbreviated format commonly used in genealogical texts to illustrate a line of direct descent.

Lineage Format

The full name of the subject is followed by a list of names, with superscript numbers, set in parentheses. The name at the beginning of the parenthetical sequence, nearest the subject, is the subject's parent, followed successively by the name of the parent being traced in each generation back to the progenitor of the lineage being illustrated. The superscript indicates the number of generations in the descent, with the progenitor identified as "1," at the far right. If there are no surnames in the lineage, the lineage represents the direct paternal line of the subject. To illustrate how cousins of different surnames are related, through variations in patrilineal and matrilineal descent from a common ancestor, additional surnames are included as necessary within the lineage to indicate which chain of descent is being traced within the sequence.

For example, the following lineages illustrate how Uriah Arnold, Rhodes Arnold, and Nehemiah Rhodes are related:

Uriah Arnold (Ephraim⁴ Elisha³ Stephen² William¹)

Rhodes Arnold (James⁴ Israel³ Stephen² William¹) — Rhodes Arnold (Elizabeth Rhodes³ Peleg² Zachariah¹)

Nehemiah Rhodes (William³ John² Zachariah¹) — Nehemiah Rhodes (William⁴ John³ Joanna Arnold² William¹)

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Uriah and Rhodes Arnold are second cousins by descent from Stephen²Arnold, through different sons of Stephen (Elisha and Israel). Uriah Arnold, Rhodes Arnold, and Nehemiah Rhodes are all third cousins by common descent from William¹Arnold, Nehemiah through his great-grandmother Joanna Arnold, daughter of William Arnold and wife of Zachariah Rhodes. Nehemiah Rhodes and Rhodes Arnold are also second cousins by descent from Zachariah¹Rhodes, Rhodes Arnold through his mother Elizabeth Rhodes, the granddaughter of Zachariah Rhodes and wife of James Arnold.

Early Settlement: 1636–1677

The present Edgewood was part of Roger Williams' Providence Purchase from Canonicus and Miantonomi in 1637, which extended from Pawtucket Falls to Neutaconkanut Hill, the "town of Mashapaug" (an Indian settlement near the present Mashapaug Pond), and the Pawtuxet River. As with many of these early deeds, the exact intention of the deed and extent of the territory were uncertain, and remained the subject of interpretation and dispute for decades.

As early as 1638 a few of the settlers removed from the "compact part" of the town (Providence's present College Hill National Historic Landmark District) to their holdings at Pawtuxet. These included William Arnold (1587–1675), his wife Christian, and their children: Elizabeth Arnold (1611–85) and her husband William Carpenter (1605–1685), Joanna Arnold (1617–92) and her husband Zachariah Rhodes (1602–65), and Stephen Arnold (1622–99) and his wife Sarah Smith (1629–1713). William Harris (1611–82) and his wife Susan (1614–82) also joined the venture. Their daughter Susannah Harris (1642–77) eventually married William and Elizabeth Carpenter's son Ephraim Carpenter (1640–1703), and William Carpenter's niece Joan Vincent (1632–1708) married John Sheldon (1630–1708). These five interrelated families— Arnold, Rhodes, Carpenter, Harris, and Sheldon—dominated land transactions and development in Pawtuxet and Edgewood for nearly three hundred years, and some of their descendants still reside in the area. Otherwise practically nothing survives from the earliest settlement other than the alignment of a few roads and property bounds, the most prominent being the present Broad Street and Warwick Avenue (R. I. Route 117), conforming to the old Pequot Trail leading from Providence to an ancient wading place across Pawtuxet River, and the section of Broad Street from Warwick Avenue to Pawtuxet Bridge, laid out as the "highway...from the country Roade unto Pawtuxett Falls."

A plat of the Pawtuxet lands drawn in 1661 shows what appear to be three homesteads in the study area represented in this document: one north of the vicinity of Pawtuxet Falls labeled "S. A.," clearly for Stephen Arnold, another further west near Pawtuxet River labeled "W. C." for William Carpenter, and another northward from Arnold labeled "S. R.," probably indicating Zachariah Rhodes, with the "S" standing for a "Z."

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Some of Roger Williams' associates induced him to execute an agreement granting thirteen proprietary shares in a section of Providence set aside and designated as the Pawtuxet Purchase (including today's Edgewood). A number of these Pawtuxet Proprietors were involved in intensive land acquisition and speculation, which caused much contention and disruption of little relevance to this study. However, of interest in light of subsequent developments were several attempts made to establish Pawtuxet as an independent town or jurisdiction, all for the time thwarted by the Providence freemen.

The war between the Indians and English in 1675–76 (King Philip's War) was devastating to both communities, most particularly for the former, whose resistance to the colonists was broken. According to an account by William Harris himself, "the enemy hath burnt all ye houses in Warwick all in Pawtuxet and almost all in Providence and the inhabitants are gone some to one place and some to another." After armed conflict ended, the English settlers returned to rebuild and cultivate their holdings.

A Community Takes Shape: 1677–1790

During the last quarter of the seventeenth century and on through the eighteenth, the initial pattern of community development was established. Approximately five miles from Providence center, the Pawtuxet River spills over a falls into a small cove sheltered from Narragansett Bay by a spit of land. Around this natural harbor and the falls grew a seaport and milling village known as Pawtuxet (now Pawtuxet Village Historic District: NR, 1973). By 1743 a highway had been laid out from Pawtuxet to the Meshanticut hinterlands of central Cranston. Long known as the Knightsville Road, this was the precursor of today's Park Avenue. In the lands between Pawtuxet village and Providence center, from the river shore westward to the marshy ground along Mashapaug Brook, the Arnolds, Rhodeses, Carpenters, and Sheldons—joined in time by others, nearly all of whom became part of one great extended family by kin and marriage—bought, sold, quitclaimed, and partitioned properties to assemble their estates. Farmsteads overlaid Edgewood with a patchwork of dwellings, outbuildings, fences, stone walls, lanes, orchards, and fields that attested the rural, agrarian way of life that predominated. Of this, today nothing physical remains above ground except for two cemeteries: the Rhodes-Greene Lot (R. I. Historical Cemetery CR035; ca 1767 et seq) behind 112 Bluff Avenue, and the Philip Sheldon Lot (R. I. Historical Cemetery CR036; ca 1767 et seq) in Park Avenue near the west end of Cliffdale Avenue. They are crucial keys to unraveling the patterns of Edgewood land development that ultimately produced the neighborhood we see today.

Evolution of Political Boundaries

Pawtuxet initially encompassed lands on both sides of the river, though as noted before the exact bounds were subject to debate. By 1690 nearly all of the original participants in the initial title controversies had died, and in 1696 the Pawtuxet River was declared the official boundary between the towns of Providence and Warwick. As population grew, it prompted additional adjustments to municipal bounds for political efficacy.

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Subdivision of the extensive Town of Providence (by 1659 understood to include all of what is today Providence County west of the Blackstone River) began in 1731, and in 1754 the new Town of Cranston was chartered. As constituted at that time, Cranston's northern boundary ran from Narragansett Bay to Pocasset River in a line just south of the present Rhode Island Hospital and Grace Church Cemetery in Providence, and encompassed the areas known today as South Providence, Elmwood, and Washington Park, (now within the city limits of Providence), and Edgewood and the northern part of Pawtuxet (present-day Cranston). South Providence, Elmwood, and Washington Park were reannexed by the City of Providence in 1868, leaving the Providence-Cranston boundary as it is today at Montgomery Street.

Land Acquisition and Disposition

Despite the ever-growing pursuit of mercantile ventures in Providence from 1680, agriculture figured largely in the economy of the region through the eighteenth century. Currency was scarce, and money was only one—and perhaps not the most important—measure of affluence. Under these circumstances, land remained the chief asset and commodity. It had value as a means for the landowner to provide for his family, both during and, through devolution, after his lifetime; as a security to obtain credit if needed; and as an investment for future liquidation. The meticulous municipal records of land evidence that were maintained attest to the tremendous importance of real estate transactions. In the absence of a tangible physical record, these provide the chief glimpse into Edgewood's development during this period. These patterns of eighteenth-century land tenure are important because the farmsteads of this era constitute the framework for later country estates and the suburban subdivisions we see today. While the time-consuming nature of title research and the difficulty of relating seventeenth- and eighteenth-century deed references to modern landmarks limit the ability to formulate a comprehensive account of Edgewood's early development, a general picture can be devised.

Around the time of King Philip's War it appears that most if not all of Edgewood as defined for this study was owned by Stephen Arnold (1622–99; son of William), his brother-in-law Zachariah Rhodes (1605–65), and William Carpenter (1605–85). Arnold's homestead was bounded roughly by the Pawtuxet River, Broad Street, and Park Avenue; Rhodes's lay somewhere north of Arnold's; and Carpenter's lay between Warwick Avenue and Mashapaug Brook, as indicated by an 1860 granite monument at 119 Lyndon Road marking the site of the Carpenter homestead burying ground. These men also owned other parcels both within the area and in other parts of Cranston and other towns as well. A more complicated pattern of ownership emerged along the Providence River east of Broad Street, outlined below.

Stephen Arnold bequeathed the bulk of his Pawtuxet holdings (including sections of present-day Edgewood) to his son Stephen Arnold (1654–1720), reserving smaller portions for his son Elisha Arnold (1662–1710),

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husband of William Carpenter's granddaughter Susannah Carpenter (1670–1753)². Stephen received the homestead farm and a tract bordering on Narragansett Bay just north of Pawtuxet village; Elisha a marsh lot on Pawtuxet River west of Stephen's homestead and also a lot on Narragansett Bay east of Broad Street. The Arnold brothers' Providence River lots were separated by a lot belonging to Zachariah Rhodes' son Peleg Rhodes (c 1660–1724), who also apparently owned another tract north of Stephen Arnold's homestead.

Stephen Arnold junior bequeathed his Pawtuxet lands to his son Edward Arnold (1694–1775), husband of Hannah Sheldon (b. 1705)³, and it appears that Peleg Rhodes left at least part, if not all, of his property to his nephew William Rhodes (1695–1772), son of his brother John and husband of Mary Sheldon (b. 1705)⁴. The old burial ground (CR035) behind 112 Bluff Avenue contains the graves of William and Mary Sheldon Rhodes, helping to fix this as the location of this particular Rhodes family holding.

Mary Rhodes' brother Philip Sheldon (1710–1800) and his wife Barbara Arnold (1715–1802)⁵ occupied property running north from the Pawtuxet-Knightsville Road along the present eastern border of Roger Williams Park. At that time this road's right-of-way followed the present Cliffdale Avenue. The burial ground (CR036) east of the gas station on Park Avenue at Cliffdale is the Sheldon family lot, containing the graves of Philip and Barbara, and again indicating the location of this family farm.

Edward Arnold was a merchant, and financial problems forced him to liquidate real estate to cover his debts. In 1764 he sold to his cousin Rhodes Arnold (b. 1734)⁶ his tract north of Pawtuxet village between Narragansett Bay and Broad Street. In 1768 Rhodes' father James Arnold became trustee of some of his cousin Edward's business affairs. James sold Edward's homestead (which Edward had inherited from his father and grandfather) to Amos Lockwood (c. 1727–1806).

The tract on Narragansett Bay north of Rhodes Arnold, previously belonging to William Rhodes, apparently went to his son Nehemiah Rhodes (1731–1801)⁷, for Nehemiah and his wife Abigail Thomas (1743–1800) are interred in the old Bluff Avenue family burial ground. North of that, Uriah Arnold (1738–69)⁸ received his grandfather Elisha's property along the river. Grave transcriptions from 1890 contain records of the Uriah Arnold burial lot east of Broad Street, in the vicinity of the present back yards of 180 to 190 Albert Avenue and

² Stephen Arnold & Elisha Arnold (Stephen² William¹); Susannah Carpenter (Ephraim² William¹)

³ Edward Arnold (Stephen³ Stephen² William¹); Hannah Sheldon (Nicholas² John¹)

⁴ Peleg Rhodes (Zachariah¹); William Rhodes (John² Zachariah¹); Mary Sheldon (Nehemiah² John¹)

⁵ Philip Sheldon (Nehemiah² John¹);

Barbara Arnold (James⁴ Israel³ Stephen² William¹) & (Elizabeth Rhodes³ Peleg² Zachariah¹)

⁶ Rhodes Arnold (James⁴ Israel³ Stephen² William¹); Rhodes Arnold (Elizabeth Rhodes³ Peleg² Zachariah¹)

⁷ Nehemiah Rhodes (William³ John² Zachariah¹)

⁸ Uriah Arnold (Ephraim⁴ Elisha³ Stephen² William¹)

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169 to 183 Columbia Avenue (the lot no longer exists). After Uriah's death his holdings were divided among his sons Elisha (1763–1849), Nicholas (1767–1814), and Edmund (1769–95).

Roots of Change: 1790–1865

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, revolutionary innovations elsewhere in the region and nation transformed industry, transportation, and economics in a manner that would deeply affect Edgewood in ensuing years. The nature of development in Edgewood during this period is similar to what occurred in other places peripheral to a growing urban industrial center.

Technological and Economic Transformations

After the success of Samuel Slater, Almy & Brown, and Oziel Wilkinson in establishing the first practical, continuously operating American textile factory at Pawtucket in 1790, other entrepreneurs around the country attempted to follow suit. The impulse was of course especially strong in Rhode Island, where the technology was already established and water power was plentiful. Mills sprang up at waterfalls, and where falls did not exist, landowners dammed streams to create hydraulic power sources.

Manufacturing opportunities existed within the Pawtucket / Edgewood area. Brothers Christopher (1776–1864) and William Rhodes (1782–1854)⁹ obtained control over the mill privileges at Pawtucket Falls. They opened a factory on the Warwick side in 1800, and commenced business as textile manufacturers under the firm name C. & W. Rhodes. They erected a second mill on the Cranston side of the falls in 1810, which burned down in 1875 and was not replaced. The City of Providence acquired the mill site and adjoining land, encompassing about 11 acres, and left it undeveloped.

The Rhodeses built another mill upstream, where they dammed Mashapaug Brook just above its junction with the Pawtucket. Here the Bellefonte Mill / Bellefonte Manufacturing Company began operations about 1810, west of Mill Street. These works were largely destroyed by fire in 1870 and replaced the next year by the factory of the Turkey Red Dyeing Company. The Whittle Dye Works (founded 1896, inc. 1899) then occupied the premises, which were again destroyed by fire in 1904. The Whittle Company rebuilt, only to go bankrupt in 1908. Imperial Printing and Finishing Company (inc. 1911) then acquired the property, and operated until 1937. By 1917 the Chester Manufacturing Company had been established on the east side of Mill Street. Atlantic Tubing and Rubber moved to the Bellefont site in 1944, and between 1938 and 1946 the Alrose Chemical Company relocated to the east side of Mill Street and built works. Geigy, later CIBA-Geigy, purchased the Alrose property in 1948 and produced auxiliary chemicals for the textile, soap and cosmetic

⁹ Christopher Rhodes / William Rhodes (Robert⁵ James⁴ Malachi³ Malachi² Zachariah¹)

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industries, vat dyes, pigments for textile printing, UV absorbers, anti-oxidants, and pharmaceuticals. Both manufacturers (Atlantic and CIBA-Geigy) created significant amounts of hazardous waste, and after years of complaints by environmental groups and neighbors, both plants were closed (CIBA-Geigy in 1986). The Geigy works have been demolished and site cleanup is still under way. Now only two early twentieth-century factory buildings remain on the Bellefont site.

Some time before 1833, another dam was erected on Mashapaug Brook above Bellefonte Pond by J. and W. Cunliff, and a small cotton mill built there, which became the nucleus of a tiny settlement later called Elmville. Located near the present Temple Torat Yisrael and the Park Avenue entrance to Roger Williams Park, all above-ground vestiges of this last-named hamlet are gone.

Industrial development increased the demand for better transportation throughout the region. The reliance on water power forced industrialists to situate mills where the hydraulic resources were located, sometimes in sparsely settled areas relatively remote from earlier communities. Initially this provided the impetus for turnpike construction. These improved highways radiated out from Providence to the mill villages in the river valleys or to other centers of population or trade. To the south of Providence, access was improved by the opening of the Pawtuxet Turnpike in 1825. Now called Eddy Street, this provided a more direct route to Edgewood and Pawtuxet than the old "country road," Broad Street.

However, the greatest changes came in response to advances in steam engine technology in the early nineteenth century. The advent of practical, dependable, and efficient stationary steam engines provided an alternative to water power. Factories could be expanded beyond the capacities of the streams that had previously powered them, or even located where water power did not exist at all. Steam was also harnessed to provide motive power, and the appearance of steam boats and locomotives revolutionized transport.

The first factories in Providence operated by steam engines constructed on the Evans patent began operations in 1812 and 1814. The first steam boat to ply the waters of Narragansett Bay (albeit unsuccessfully), the *Firefly*, made its appearance in 1817, and in 1822 regular service between Providence and New York started. Providence became a center for inventors working on improvements to steam-engine technology. Between 1821 and 1826 John Babcock perfected a more functional model of marine steam engine, and founded what became the Providence Steam Engine Company in 1830. The automatic cut-off valve patented by George Corliss in 1848 was perhaps the single most important invention in this line of work. "Corliss put Providence at the forefront of American steam-engine manufacture and accelerated the adoption of steam power in Providence industries."¹⁰

¹⁰ R.I. Historical Preservation Commission, *Providence Industrial Sites*, p. 9.

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Rhode Island's first steam-powered railroad, the Boston & Providence, opened in 1835, operating from the Massachusetts capital through western Seekonk (today's East Providence) across a bridge to a terminal at Providence's India Point. The New York, Providence & Boston Railroad opened in 1837, providing service between Providence and Stonington, Connecticut. As they passed through Cranston, the tracks of the N.Y., P. & B. passed just west of Cunliff Pond, then turned northeasterly toward Burgess Cove and Narragansett Bay. A causeway was constructed over the tidal flats along the shore (this later became Allens Avenue) to a wharf east of the present Rhode Island Hospital, where the depot was located.

Although the railroad bypassed Edgewood and Pawtuxet, its impact on adjacent neighborhoods had regional implications. Providence was growing rapidly between 1790 and 1860, and most of this development, for geographical reasons, occurred on the west side of Providence River. A cluster of industry grew up along the waterfront near the N.Y., P. & B. railroad depot, including the Rhode Island Bleachery (c 1838), the Providence Machine Company (1846), and the New England Screw Company (1852). All these lay just outside the Cranston town line (then approximately at Dudley Street in today's Providence). The provisions industry was to have an even greater impact on eastern Cranston in this period. The opening of stockyards and slaughterhouses around today's Prairie and Willard Avenues spurred development in the South Providence neighborhood, as the outer ring of urban expansion spread slowly outward from the central city.

Land Division and Disposition

Subtle changes in the nature of land disposition evolved during the 1790–1860 period which laid the framework for subsequent development. As before, farm tracts continued to be partitioned among heirs, and traded between family members and neighbors, but with somewhat different implications. As the descendants of colonial proprietors proliferated, the extensive estates of their forebears were broken up into progressively smaller parcels. In one well-documented instance, for example, an eighteenth-century waterfront farmstead of ample dimensions was eventually carved into slivers with narrow frontages on Providence River and Broad Street, creating a configuration that dictated patterns of later activity. It appears that real estate transactions were increasingly the subject of speculation. A number of prominent businessmen purchased old farmsteads in Edgewood which they clearly did not occupy as their own residences. Some parcels were mortgaged to secure promissory notes, and where their mortgagors defaulted, the mortgagees showed inclinations to obtain greater return from such properties. At the same time, some landowners persisted in maintaining traditional modes of land tenure and use, a trend which also had its own impact on development patterns.

Following the division of Uriah Arnold's estate among his three sons, Edmund Arnold sold parts of his inheritance to James Sheldon and his brother Nicholas, and Nicholas bought Elisha Arnold's holdings bounding

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on Providence River. Nicholas Arnold (1767–1814) and his wife Lydia Rhodes (1775–1827)¹¹ resided in the old family homestead, which burned down about 1792. The gambrel-roof dwelling they built to replace it stands today at 200 Albert Avenue, now the oldest surviving house in Edgewood. Nicholas and Lydia's farm devolved in equal shares to their six surviving children: Lavina Arnold (1795–1885), Waite Rhodes Arnold (1797–1852), Mary Arnold (1800–31), Emma Arnold (1808–78), Sarah Fenner Arnold (1811–46), and Albert Nicholas Arnold (1814–83). The five sisters never married and resided on the family homestead. On the other hand, brother Albert had an eventful and peripatetic life, employed variously as a Baptist missionary in Greece, a professor in Massachusetts, New York state, Chicago, and a minister in two Massachusetts towns. He apparently kept a summer cottage on the family property, now moved from its original waterfront site at the south end of the farm to 74 Norwood Avenue, in the Billings Plat subdivision. The sisters repeatedly bought out Albert's interest in their father's estate, first his birthright and then later inheritances, for as each of the unmarried sisters died, Albert as heir-at-law received (together with each surviving sister) a portion of the deceased's share in the property. About 1877 Albert and family left Chicago to return to the family homestead, and Lavina and Albert each held a half-interest in the farm.

After their father's death, the children of Nehemiah Rhodes¹²—Sally Rhodes (b. c 1766), wife of Jonathan Remington; William N. Rhodes (1768–1853), husband of Mary Throop Jenckes (1775–1850); Anstis Rhodes (1772–1849), wife of Arthur Greene (1766–1847); and Abby Rhodes (1774–1848), wife of Richard Thornton (1770–1851)—executed a partition of his estate in 1802. Of Nehemiah's Edgewood lands, the three sisters each received a portion of the seventy-eight acre farm bordering Providence River, with Abby receiving the north lot containing the family homestead, Anstis the middle lot, and Sally the south lot. William received a parcel at the northwest corner of Broad Street and Park Avenue, and Anstis another tract immediately west of her brother, bounded by the present corner of Park and Warwick Avenues. In 1835 Arthur and Anstis Greene sold their son Richard a portion of her inland tract measuring a little over nine acres. Richard subsequently built the house now at 89 Park Avenue between 1835 and 1851, when it appears on a plat of lands belonging to the Heirs of Anstis Greene. In 1853 the heirs of Abby Thornton (the children of her sister Anstis Greene) sold Allen Shaw their Aunt Abby's share of her father's estate. In 1860, the heirs of Sally Rhodes Remington Greene sold her share to Joseph S. Winsor.

Philip Sheldon's son James Sheldon (c 1745–1806)¹³ received his father's farm north of Park Avenue near the present Roger Williams Park. He also owned a tract on the Providence River north of Nicholas Arnold and south of Barnet Hawkins (1749–1823), which apparently extended west across Broad Street, though whether he

¹¹ Nicholas Arnold [Uriah⁵ Ephraim⁴ Elisha³ Stephen² William¹]
Lydia Rhodes [Malachi⁵ James⁴ Malachi³ Malachi² Zachariah¹]

¹² Nehemiah Rhodes [William³ John² Zachariah¹]

¹³ James Sheldon [Philip³ Nehemiah² John¹]

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inherited or purchased the latter is yet unknown. James Sheldon sold his Park Avenue homestead to Nicholas' brother Elisha Arnold (1763–1849)¹⁴ in 1803 (Elisha and his wife Mary Arnold Arnold [d. 1840] are buried in the Sheldon lot, CR036). After his death his son-in-law, Providence merchant Ebenezer Jenckes (b. 1773), husband of Sarah Sheldon (c 1776–1814), bought out his sisters-in-law's interests in the Broad Street–Narragansett Bay tract to give his widowed mother-in-law, Abigail Fenner Sheldon (c 1746–1812), a life estate in the property. After the deaths of Abigail Sheldon and Sarah Jenckes, Ebenezer Jenckes and his children sold this property, now called the Jenckes Farm, to Josiah Whitaker of Providence. Whitaker conveyed about seven acres at the north end of the tract to Benoni Hawkins (1781–1855), son of Bennet, then sold the remainder, with other parcels, to Christopher and William Rhodes in 1822. The Rhodes brothers sold the portion of the Jenckes Farm east of Broad Street to Pardon Sheldon in 1834. Sheldon mortgaged the property in 1839 and then defaulted on the mortgage. His creditors sold it to Sylvester R. Jackson in 1846, who in turn sold it within a few months to John C. Fluhner of Providence.

The old Stephen Arnold homestead that had been purchased by Amos Lockwood went to Amos' son Benoni Lockwood (1777–1852), husband of Phebe Greene (1781–1837)¹⁵, who held it until he experienced financial difficulties in 1812, when he executed an agreement with his creditors appointing Moses Brown as agent to settle his affairs. As part of the division of Lockwood's estate, Moses Brown sold off a tract at the corner of Broad Street and Park Avenue in 1813, measuring a bit over seven acres. Here John Williams built an imposing Federal dwelling (now 1921 Broad St) with a pedimented fanlight center entryway and paired interior chimneys, a very sophisticated design in a country town like Cranston. Benoni also held a tract north of the Nehemiah Rhodes and Philip Sheldon heirs, on both sides of today's Warwick Avenue, which became property of Christopher and William Rhodes. After William's death, his children Robert Rhodes (1804–60) and Phoebe Rhodes Arnold (1810–94) and brother Christopher Rhodes agreed to partition the family holdings in 1858: Bellefonte, the adjoining Silver Hook Farm, and the so-called "Lockwood Lot" and "Little Lockwood Lot."

Rhodes Arnold¹⁶ sold the tract he bought from his cousin Edward Arnold, minus a few small lots he had previously sold along Stillhouse Lane (today's Ocean Avenue), to John Randall (c 1750–1823) and his brother Jeremiah (c 1758–1836) in 1790. In 1808 the brothers gave a lot to Jeremiah's son-in-law James Brattell (c 1775–1853), husband of Bethia E. Randall (c 1789–1870). Seven years later the brothers sold James additional land for a total amounting to six acres. In 1817 James mortgaged this property to George Rathbone, redeemed it within three weeks, mortgaged it again to Brown & Ives, then bought a half-interest in a lot and water privilege in Pawtuxet village from the Randall brothers. In January 1818 James Brattell sold his farm outright to Brown & Ives. In 1860 the heirs of Brown and Ives sold Orray Taft the "Brattle Farm" north of Pawtuxet

¹⁴ Elisha Arnold [Uriah⁵ Ephraim⁴ Elisha³ Stephen² William¹]

¹⁵ Phebe Greene [Rhodes Greene⁶ Mary Rhodes⁵ Malachi⁴ Malachi³ Malachi² Zachariah¹]

¹⁶ Rhodes Arnold [James⁴ Israel³ Stephen² William¹; Elizabeth Rhodes³ Peleg² Zachariah¹]

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village, then measuring about thirty-five acres (it is yet unclear how the farm expanded to this extent, since James Brattell had originally owned a tract of only six acres).

Borderland

At mid-nineteenth century Edgewood began to assume a new position within metropolitan Providence. In 1850 the majority of the built-up area of the central city fell within one mile of Market Square (the chief exceptions being extensions reaching out along Westminster Street and Atwells Avenue to Olneyville and the Woonasquatucket valley mills, and out North Main Street to the Moshassuck–West River mills). Beyond that lay the areas that historical geographers and landscape historians classify as "urban fringe" and "borderland." The urban fringe is characterized by land uses which are integral to urban life but necessarily or preferably removed from the built-up area, including but not limited to undesirable or noxious uses. On Providence's south side, this included the Elmwood and South Providence areas, with their horticultural nurseries, cemeteries, and slaughterhouses. The borderland is that portion of the countryside which has been drawn into the sphere of the central city yet remains largely rural in character. It also has its own particular uses, devised to take advantage of the rustic landscape. Among these are garden cemeteries, resorts, and country estates. Edgewood takes on the nature of borderland at this time, with the appearance of those characteristic uses which serve as the forerunners of suburbanization.

In March 1845, Benoni Hawkins leased to Daniel A. Smith of Providence "the Hawkins Grove, so called, ... a small piece or tract of land ... a considerable portion of which is covered with Trees, on the westerly side of Providence River between Providence and Pawtuxet and is part of the homestead Farm on which the sd. Hawkins now lives...."¹⁷ The wording of the lease suggests that the grove was to be used for assemblies or festivities, and likely that it had been used for such purposes previously. By the end of the year Smith had purchased the farm outright from Hawkins, and also the property adjoining on the north from Stephen H. Williams. Here he opened a shore resort called Smith's Palace, on the site now occupied by the Rosedale Apartments and former Cranston Hilton Hotel. Though little is known about it, it was apparently a typical Victorian recreation ground which featured shore dinners presented to its clientele. Patrons arrived by wagon from Broad Street, or by steamboat at a wharf constructed by Smith. The grove operated until about 1870.

During the second quarter of the century, hygienic and aesthetic concerns curiously culminated in a movement to replace the unkempt and disorderly burial grounds of earlier eras with cemeteries. The nomenclature is deliberate and significant, for "cemetery" is derived from the ancient Greek word for "sleeping place," which connotes a far more agreeable image than "burial ground" or the lugubrious "graveyard." The practice of interring the dead in burial plots on churchyards, commons, or family homesteads was considered

¹⁷ Cranston Deeds, Book 17, p.91

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unsanitary and unbecoming to the memory of the deceased. The creation of "rural gardens for the dead" removed from city centers, modeled on the celebrated, lushly landscaped Père Lachaise Cemetery (1801) in Paris, became an obsession. The first American example, Mount Auburn Cemetery (1831) on the outskirts of Cambridge, Massachusetts, was followed by scores of others during the 1840s, 1850s, and afterward.¹⁸ Providence had its examples, the primary ones being Swan Point Cemetery (1847) and the central section of North Burial Ground (1845–49). In Edgewood, George N. Briggs purchased a portion of the old Jenckes Farm west of Broad Street, together with some land from Benoni Hawkins, in 1848. He commissioned civil engineers Cushing and Walling (Samuel B. Cushing and Henry F. Walling) to design a verdant sward interlaced by a network of meandering paths providing access to burial lots, and opened it as Oakland Cemetery. Though its original plan was not fully executed, Oakland was conceived in the spirit of the garden cemetery, and it provides a welcome green space within the neighborhood to this day.

As steam-powered factories rose along the Woonasquatucket, Moshassuck, Providence, and Seekonk Rivers, Providence's population burgeoned, spilling beyond the boundaries of the city as they had been set in 1767. The South Providence and Elmwood sections of Cranston received many new settlers, many of whom were immigrants, at first primarily from Ireland, and later, in much smaller numbers, from Germany and French Canada. After the Irish, Jewish immigrants constituted the second most populous ethnic community in the South Providence/Elmwood area, first German-speaking Jews from Germany and Austria, and then, in much greater numbers, Jews from Russia, Poland, Lithuania, and Romania. As the central city grew more congested and dirty, people wanted to withdraw to more congenial surroundings, but opportunities for this were limited. For the great majority of the public, walking remained the chief means of personal transportation, since it was too expensive for working- and middle-class people to keep or hire a carriage or take a train on a daily basis. Working people had to reside within convenient walking distance of their jobs, and travel for leisure activities was constrained. For upper-income families circumstances differed. A well-to-do business or professional man was free if he chose to maintain a country as well as a city residence, since he could afford both the expense of another home and the means to travel between them.

As early as 1788 Providence merchant John Brown established a country seat at Spring Green, a 500-acre estate in Warwick, south of Pawtuxet village. His family and their guests shuttled the six miles between the Browns' city mansion on Power Street and Spring Green in horse-drawn carriages. In the ensuing decades others followed suit. Edgewood, lying along the shore of Providence River between Providence and Pawtuxet (and incidentally on the route to Spring Green), offered a prime location for country residences. John C. Fluhrer built a home in Broad Street on the portion of the Jenckes Farm he purchased in 1853. Later moved, this Italianate palazzo style dwelling stands today at 201 Grand Avenue. Orray Taft established a country house on the Brattle Farm tract he purchased from the heirs of Brown & Ives in 1860. Though the main house was

¹⁸ Jones, Robert O., "The Final Repose," *Quix Art Quarterly*, v. 6, no. 3, Fall 1997, pp. 18-19.

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demolished ca 1952, the single-family dwelling surviving at 2064 Broad Street was apparently the residence of the Tafts' coachman and his family.

With the population of Elmwood and South Providence already on the rise, some Edgewood landowners apparently anticipated the spread of development further south into their neighborhood. The first subdivisions of house lots in the area were drawn in the 1850s. As early as 1856 John C. Fluhrer commissioned a plan for a subdivision (later redrawn twice) around his house on his Jenckes Farm tract, and Daniel A. Smith, the proprietor of Smith's Palace, platted out acreage south of the access road to his resort—today's Montgomery Avenue—as the Bay View Plat in 1859. However, in the years before the Civil War, demand did not match the anticipation, and these plats remained undeveloped for some time.

Institutional Development

Edgewood was sparsely settled during this period. It appears from the 1870 map that there were no more than about fifty dwellings in the area, plus a "hotel" (probably a country inn or tavern). As a consequence institutional facilities were meager.

In 1828 the Rhode Island General Assembly mandated the establishment of a statewide, municipally based free public school system. Each town received state financial aid, and was divided into districts whose residents were taxed to support the school within their district. Additional state legislation prescribed improvements in public schools in the 1830s and 1840s. Cranston School District Number 4 corresponded to the present Edgewood, though the district was not originally known by that name. Little if anything is known about the earliest schools in the neighborhood. An 1862 map appears to show a schoolhouse in the northern part of the district, on the west side of Broad Street, opposite the Smith estate and near Oakland Cemetery. For awhile the district was even known as the Smith's Palace District, for a tract located near this site. The 1870 map shows a schoolhouse at the northeast corner of the present Park and Warwick Avenues, where Fire Station 1 is located today. None of these early buildings survive. Notes on later Edgewood schools, including those that currently exist, are included in the Institutions and Facilities Summary below (page 31).

No churches appear on early maps of the area. In 1851 the Mashpaug Free-will Baptist Church, later Auburn Baptist Church (now People's Baptist Church), was established near the Auburn railroad depot on Park Avenue, about one-half mile west of the Edgewood study area. The Pawtuxet Baptist Church was relatively convenient for area residents, and some people (among them seventeen-year-old Albert N. Arnold) affiliated with the First Baptist Church in Providence.

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The Emerging Suburb: 1865–1892

Trends initiated earlier in the nineteenth century flourished in the years following the end of the Civil War. Providence's continued growth placed developmental pressure on eastern Cranston, until the population of the latter town reached 9,177 in 1865. Residents of the more rural central and western sections of Cranston, more likely to be Yankee in descent, Protestant in faith, and Republican in politics, had misgivings about the newcomers crowding into the town's east end, who were more likely to be Irish, Catholic, and Democrat. They also resented being taxed for public works in the built-up area that did not benefit them. The situation climaxed in 1868 with Cranston's cession of South Providence, Elmwood, and Washington Park to the City of Providence. Two years later, the 1870 federal census enumerated 4,822 residents in Cranston. Placement of the city boundary line at today's Montgomery Avenue was a telling reflection of settlement patterns, indicating that Edgewood was still considered sufficiently rural to remain within the limits of Cranston. However, two events were about to lend impetus to a tremendous change in the area: the introduction of streetcars and the creation of a major urban park. Cranston's population rose to 5,940 in 1880 and 8,099 in 1890, with much of this growth occurring in the eastern part of town.

Suburban Infrastructure: Transportation and Utilities

The availability of affordable fixed-rail mass transit in the Providence region, initiated in the 1860s and expanded through the following decades, had an enormous impact on metropolitan development. For the first time, it increased the range of travel beyond comfortable walking distance for people of moderate or limited income, providing more opportunities for choosing place of work and residence. Demand and supply both affected service. The earliest lines ran to areas with established populations and stimulated continued growth there, while later lines and extensions provided access to new territory.

The Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls Railroad was the first streetcar line in the region, incorporated in 1861 and opened in 1864. A few other companies received charters for individual lines at the time—including the Providence & Pawtucket Horse Railroad Company—but before they could begin operations, the A. & W. Sprague Company, one of Rhode Island's preeminent textile manufacturing firms, consolidated those lines as the Union Railroad Company in 1865. One of the original lines opened that year ran through South Providence via Eddy Street to a terminus at Thurbers and Prairie Avenue. In 1868 it was extended to Pawtucket over Broad Street. The cars were rerouted via Prairie Avenue and Broad Street in 1875, and four years later a

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direct line along Broad Street from downtown Providence to Pawtuxet opened.¹⁹ This service had considerable impact on the Edgewood neighborhood.

In June 1881 the Rhode Island General Assembly incorporated the Pawtuxet Water Pipe Company "for the purpose of introducing and continuing a supply of pure water in the towns of Cranston and Warwick, to be used for domestic and manufacturing purposes and fire protection" The company planned to obtain this supply from the City of Providence municipal water system (opened 1871), whose works and reservoir were then located in Cranston, drawing water from the Pawtuxet River a bit over three miles upstream from Pawtuxet Cove. Clearly Edgewood and Pawtuxet were to be the focus of the company's operations. In the years after the establishment of the street railway through Edgewood, about a dozen subdivisions had been platted to this point (discussed at greater length below). The eagerness to develop these properties probably prompted the company's formation, and the availability of a secure water supply certainly enhanced the desirability of these subdivisions and the ones that followed. In addition to city water, piped coal gas was also introduced into the neighborhood, probably in the 1880s, since the availability of gas mains was one of the features cited in marketing for the Arnold Farm Plat of 1889-92.

Betsey Williams's Gift

Betsey Williams (1790–1871)²⁰ inherited 102 acres of her grandfather's farmstead from her father in 1809. After the death of her divorced sister and house-mate Rhoda Williams (1787–1864), the unmarried Betsey, having no direct descendants, designated Providence merchant and Elmwood real-estate promoter Joseph J. Cooke as guardian of her estate. The readjustment of the boundary line between Providence and Cranston in 1868 left portions of Betsey's farm in both municipalities. Betsey consulted Cooke about the ultimate disposition of her property, and decided to leave her real estate to the City of Providence, rather than the Town of Cranston as she had originally intended. Betsey's bequest of 1871 included stipulations that her farm be used for a public purpose such as a park or cemetery, and that the site be named for her illustrious ancestor and furnished with a suitable memorial to him. The Providence City Council accepted the legacy in 1872, and by the end of the year, the Committee on Roger Williams Park noted that the "Park is already being resorted to by a large number of our citizens." The next year the portion of the Williams farm in Cranston was annexed to Providence. In 1878 the prominent Chicago "landscape gardener" Horace Williams Shaler Cleveland presented his design for the original portion of the park, fronting on Elmwood Avenue, with a spur to Broad Street

¹⁹ Joslin in Davis., v. 4, pp. 2518-20; "Providence Trolley History Proves an Elusive Subject for Officials," *Providence Sunday Journal*, Nov. 21, 1915, sec. 5, p. 2.

²⁰ Betsey Williams [James⁵ Nathaniel⁴ James³ Joseph² Roger¹]

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following the farm's original access lane. Land acquisition continued until 1892²¹, when the park reached its present extent of 432 acres.²²

Great Expectations

As transit lines and parkland materialized, the entrepreneurial spirit flourished in Edgewood. With these amenities in place, and given the neighborhood's advantageous position in the expanding metropolitan area, property owners and investors anticipated a surge of interest in the area. From 1867 through 1891 they laid out about fifteen subdivisions. The presence of Roger Williams Park had an especially strong impact on development, directly influencing the layout of at least two plats: the Roger Williams Park Plat of 1872 (a replat of John Butts' 1870 replat of his 1856 subdivision) and the Williams Park Plat of 1873, on the southern portion of Stephen H. Williams's farm (the latter now constitutes the Norwood Avenue Historic District, NR 2002).

The dynamics of economics, transportation technology, regional population growth, the real estate market, and even family affairs all affected the subdivision process. In the days before the institution of formal community planning or zoning, this type of development happened piecemeal, creating a pattern much like a patchwork quilt.²³ Constrained within the framework of existing topographical features, roadways, and property boundaries, these subdivisions exhibited a variety of forms that responded to the transportation technology and the economic and market forces of the times.

Transportation modes define the chief categories of suburb type: in the context of nineteenth-century Edgewood, the standard streetcar suburb format predominated. While streetcars served as the primary mode of transit, the infrastructure of the car tracks made it expedient to plat compact subdivisions near car lines, to provide the most convenient service for commuters. For that reason, streetcar suburbs generally exhibit a relatively concentrated form of development. Typically house lots are deeper than they are wide, and the build-up of streets usually occurs over a long span of time, typically from the layout of the plat in the late 1800s right up to the 1960s or later. This pattern contrasts with that of subdivisions designed to accommodate automobile traffic, which began to appear in the years after 1910.

Economic and market considerations include the demographics of the projected clientele (low, moderate, or upper income; family and household configuration) and return on investment. Environmental factors have their

²¹ Additional parcels in Cranston were successively annexed to Providence in 1887 and 1892.

²² Marshall, David, *The Jewel of Providence*, (Providence: 1987) pp. 5-19. Cady, John Hutchins, *The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence*, (Providence: 1957), p. 130.

²³ See Cambridge Historical Commission, *Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge, Report 5: Northwest Cambridge*, by Arthur J. Krim (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), for an especially perceptive treatment of this process.

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place too, but, in the period before environmental management, only insofar as they affect return. Generally, swamps or steep hills would be avoided, but swamps could be drained and filled or hills graded if the market would bear the cost. Similarly, a particular amenity (such as water view or water access from a parcel) could yield a premium for an astute developer.

Most typically the developer desired the greatest return that could be obtained from the land. Therefore streets were often as narrow and as few as possible (to cut costs), and arranged so that the maximum number of house lots could be carved out. On parcels that were relatively rectangular, the typical orthogonal grid with straight streets and perpendicular intersections was most common. On narrow parcels, a linear arrangement of house lots on each side of a single street was used. On parcels with a roughly triangular or polygonal configuration, streets sometimes were laid out in a modified fan-like pattern to provide access to the tract's edges. The civil engineer hired by the developer typically established a base line oriented to one of the property's boundaries, then platted out streets in a pattern as regular as possible. This sometimes left blocks which were unreasonably deep from the developer's or engineer's viewpoint. In such cases, short dead-end streets or courts were often laid out perpendicular to the primary side street and extending to the property boundary. This allowed the platting out of additional house lots with their own street frontages, avoiding an undesirable double-tier arrangement of back lots and front lots. These patterns informed the development of all Edgewood residential subdivisions from the 1850s through the 1920s. The "garden suburb" or "picturesque" method of designing subdivisions with curvilinear streets and park-like settings, which first appeared in the United States in the 1850s, had almost no influence in the metropolitan Providence region before the 1930s.

In Edgewood, the particular configuration of the neighborhood resulted in an overall pattern of primary side streets running between or off of the area's major arterials—Broad Street, Park and Warwick Avenues, and Narragansett Boulevard—with secondary cross or dead-end streets arranged in practical fashion to create house lots desirable both to the developer and prospective purchasers. In general, the developer paid little attention to whether or not the streets in his plat lined up with those in adjoining plats, which accounts for many of the irregularities in the street pattern. However, in some cases abutting property owners cooperated and laid out cross streets to create continuous through-streets that traversed several plats—Pawtuxet Avenue being the chief example.

Once the street pattern was established, the blocks were usually subdivided into building lots as uniform in size as possible. In the typical streetcar suburb, the standard lot size was 100 feet deep by 40 or 50 feet wide, creating plots measuring 4,000 or 5,000 square feet. When this standard pattern did not fit easily or efficiently on the tract being subdivided, or simply where the developer hoped to maximize profit by sheer volume of sales, lots less than 4,000 square feet were plotted. In most cases, this was done by reducing the lot depth to 80 feet. Common lot sizes resulting from this scheme are 40 by 80 feet (3,200 square feet) and 45 by 80 feet (3,600 square feet). Seldom are lot frontages less than 40 feet or depths less than 80, but there are a few lots in the neighborhood as small as 2,200 and 2,400 square feet.

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Occasionally a property had special qualities that could be exploited (a water view, proximity to parkland), or the developer simply decided to appeal to a more upscale market. In such a case a plat might have broader streets, larger lots, and other amenities, perhaps even restrictive deed covenants to ensure that only "classy" houses were constructed. In a few cases, small "leftover" parcels previously withheld from the market, or larger house lots that could be subdivided further at a profit, were platted with house lots, often on a cul-de-sac. These typically occur later on in the neighborhood subdivision process. Finally, in some cases, plats or portions of them were subsequently replatted in a different configuration, usually attendant upon changes in market or technological forces, and sometimes as a result of a change in ownership.

Subdivisions can be characterized by plan type (grid, linear, fan, with their modifications) and average lot size (below average/less than 4,000 square feet, average/4,000-5,000 square feet, and above average/more than 5,000 square feet). As a result of numerous large- and small-scale lot line adjustments over the past century and a half, all Edgewood subdivisions today have a mix of lot sizes, even in plats which originally were laid out with uniform-size lots.

The following examples illustrate the variety of plat types in Edgewood:

- Bay View Plat (1859): grid plan, with the majority of lots under 4,000 square feet
- Arnold Farm Plat (1889 and 1892): grid plan of wide streets (55 to 60 feet), with the majority of lots measuring 9,000 to 10,000 square feet
- Williams Park Plat (1873): linear plan with an eighty-foot-wide avenue—Norwood Avenue—treated as a grand entrance to Roger Williams Park, lined with uniform house lots originally measuring 16,000 square feet (many later subdivided)
- Edgewood Villa Plat (1898): linear plan with dead-end courts, with the majority of lots under 4,000 square feet
- Bartlett Plat (1881 replatted 1891): modified fan plan, with the majority of lots between 4,000 and 5,000 square feet
- Lockwood Lot (replat 1909): plan roughly in the shape of a tuning fork, with the majority of lots under 4,000 square feet, except for lots 4,000-6,000 square feet along the "handle"
- Henry-Fearney Plat (1900): linear cul-de-sac, with ten house lots further subdivided to allow construction of twelve houses
- Talbot Manor (1926): linear cul-de-sac, where the ca. 1868 James H. Armington House was moved back on its two and one-half-acre lot to create a subdivision with twelve additional houses;
- Brattle Farm Plat (1901): multiple-linear plan with fan, with the majority of lots measuring 6,000 square feet and more; a replat of the 1897 Edward P. Taft Plat, subsequently redrawn in 1901 as the Aberdeen Plat, and replatted again at least ten times.

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The Plats

In 1870 the heirs of Anstis Greene (1772–1849)²⁴—Abby T. Esten, Richard Greene, Charles An, Lory J. C. Andrews, Sarah Henry, and the Anstis Gardiner heirs—came to an agreement for the partition of Anstis' share of her father's estate. Today's Bluff Avenue was surveyed as part of this division. Within the decade Lory Andrews and the Gardiner heirs platted their portions, and Abby Esten's share was acquired and subdivided by a group of partners led by Providence businessman Horatio N. Angell. These were tiny plats, containing from six to nine parcels each, with long, narrow, small-area lots.

A portion of Christopher Rhodes' share of the Lockwood Lot passed to his son-in-law John Russell Bartlett (1805–86), who laid out the John R. Bartlett Plat in 1881. Streets on this wedge-shaped tract (today's Bartlett, Edgewood, and Westwood Avenues) were laid in a fan-like configuration to allow for the maximum number of house lots, which averaged less than 4,000 square feet each in size.

In 1873 Stephen H. Williams decided to capitalize on plans for the great memorial to his famous ancestor Roger, and set off nine acres of his homestead farm west of Broad Street as the Williams Park Plat. Although development of the park had barely begun on the opposite side of Cunliff Pond, a plan of the plat printed for use as a marketing tool explicitly shows the "Proposed Drive Around the Park" intersecting the eighty-foot avenue which formed the axis of the plat—today's Norwood Avenue. The print also depicts the avenue as a tree-lined boulevard providing a majestic approach to the park, lined by generous house lots of 16,000 square feet, about four times the average size for streetcar-suburb lots in that period.

Following Orray Taft's death, his son Edward P. Taft (1835–99) took charge of the Brattle Farm property. He bought the tract north of that, previously the Rhodes-Remington farm, in 1869. During the 1870s, purchases from George C. Calef, Henry G. Tucker, and Elijah Astle gave him control of properties bounding on Silver Hook, Mashapaug Brook, and Cunliff Pond. Taft also acquired lots along Ocean Avenue which had been sold off by previous owners of the Arnold-Randall-Brattle Farm property.

Subdivisions 1850–1891

Name	Date	Streets	Replat(s)
John W. Butts Plat	1856	replatted; see below	1870, 1872; below
Bay View Plat at Smith's Palace	1859	Montgomery (south), Northup, Smith, Bay View, Narragansett (north)	

²⁴ Anstis Greene [Nehemiah Rhodes⁴ William³ John² Zachariah¹]

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Smith's Palace survey	1860		1874; see below
Allen Shaw Plat	1867	Shaw Ave	1872, 1882, 1910; see below
John W. Butts Plat	1870	replatted; see below	of Butts 1856
Division of Anstis Greene Estate	1870	Bluff Ave	1872, 1873, 1874; see below
L.J.C. Andrews	1872	Bluff Ave (northeast)	of Anstis Greene 1870
D.R. Childs Plat	1872	Shaw Ave (north)	of Shaw 1867 1882, 1910; see below
Roger Williams Park Plat	1872	Wheeler (east), Wentworth (east), Grand	of Butts 1870
Angell Plat (Angell, Winsor, Smith & Hopkins)	1873	Bluff Ave (southeast)	of Anstis Greene 1870
Williams Park Plat of Stephen H. Williams	1873	Norwood Ave (west)	later lot divisions
E.J. Billings Plat	1874	Norwood Ave (east)	
Anstis Gardner Heirs Plat	1874	Bluff Ave (northwest)	of Anstis Greene 1870
Lockwood Lot of Phebe Rhodes Arnold	1874	Rhodes Ave	1909, 1954, 1963
Smith's Palace Estate	1874	Narragansett (south), Armington, Marcy, Pawtuxet (part), Central, Narragansett Blvd (part)	of Smith's 1860 partial replat 1915; see below
part of Edward P. Taft Land (Rice & Hayward)	1875		1912; see below
John R. Bartlett Plat	1881	Bartlett, Edgewood, Westwood, Edge, Ivy (part)	1891, 1927, 1941
Edgewood Plat	1882	Shaw Ave	of Shaw 1867 and Childs 1872; revised 1910
Arnold Farm #1	1889	Arnold, Albert (north)	
John R. Bartlett Replat	1891	Bartlett, Edgewood, Westwood	of Bartlett 1881; 1927

In some cases real-estate market demand failed to measure up to the expectations of developers, and the subdivisions optimistically platted out remained "paper streets" for a number of years afterward. A U. S.

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Geological Service map of the Providence area from about 1890²⁵ shows between forty and fifty buildings in the Smith plats east of Broad Street (Montgomery, Northup, Smith, Bay View, Narragansett, and Armington); four buildings in the Roger Williams Park Plat (Grand Avenue and the adjoining sections of Wheeler and Wentworth); three buildings each in the Billings Plat (eastern Norwood Avenue) and the Williams Park Plat (western Norwood Avenue); three houses scattered along Bluff Avenue, with a dense cluster of at least another dozen at the far eastern end of that street in the Andrews and Angell Plats; and a cluster of buildings on Lockwood Street. There were about twenty-five buildings ranged along Broad Street from Montgomery Street to Park Avenue, but practically nothing south of that to Pawtuxet; a half-dozen buildings along Warwick Avenue from Broad Street to Park Avenue; and about a dozen along Park Avenue and three dead-end side streets extending south to the bluffs overlooking the Pawtuxet River marshes.²⁶ Shaw Avenue, the Bartlett Plat, the Gardiner Heirs Plat, and Arnold Farm #1 do not appear at all.

Resort Development

While landowners commissioned civil engineers to lay the framework for suburban settlement, one entrepreneur had different plans for his property. Thomas H. Rhodes decided to follow the lead of earlier businessmen who made a living by providing recreational opportunities for urban dwellers. Capitalizing on the improvement in accessibility the new Broad Street streetcar line provided, Rhodes built a pavilion on his tract bordering the Pawtuxet River in 1872, and began serving clambakes and renting boats to excursionists. Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet became a popular resort, and quickly expanded to include facilities for rowing, canoeing, and dancing. Subject to continual change over the years as buildings were erected, burned, and replaced, Rhodes took its present form after the turn of the twentieth century. Today Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet (NR, 1978) is the sole survivor of the numerous popular resorts and pleasure gardens that sprang up in and around Providence during the Victorian period. Its historical significance as an artifact of a bygone era is immeasurable.

Institutional Growth

As the local population grew, so did the variety of resources that support or enhance daily life.

In Edgewood, the earliest institutions to appear accommodated social and recreational activities. These included the Edgewood Yacht Club (founded 1889), a natural product of the neighborhood's shoreside setting,

²⁵ U. S. Geological Survey, Providence Quadrangle (15 minute series), 1894. Although the initial publication date of this map is listed as 1894, the legend indicates it is based on surveys conducted in 1885 and 1887, and a few features are obviously delineated as they existed before 1892.

²⁶ Note that these counts overlap, since they include buildings at the intersections of the streets enumerated.

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and the Edgewood Casino (founded 1890). Both institutions constructed new facilities after 1900; these are treated in the context of the following chapter.

The Burgeoning Suburb: 1892–1930

The year 1892 marked a real watershed in the history of metropolitan Providence, and for the Edgewood neighborhood in particular. In January the city's first electric trolley commenced operation, and it just happened that the Broad Street line to Pawtuxet was singled out for this improvement.²⁷ By 1894 all the old horse cars had been retired and the entire system electrified. It had taken an entire decade—1880 to 1890—for an increase of 2,159 in Cranston's population; by comparison, the number of town residents rose from 8,099 in 1890 to 10,575 in 1895—an increase of 2,476 in five years. Of course several neighborhoods in the town experienced the impact of this growth, but the effect was especially evident in Edgewood. By 1910, the year it received a city charter from the General Assembly, Cranston numbered 21,107 inhabitants.

The year 1892 was also momentous for Roger Williams Park. All the land surrounding the Cunliffs's old mill pond was acquired and added to the park, and the tracts located in Cranston were annexed to the City of Providence that year. With the completion in 1895 of a serpentine avenue (now Frederick C. Green Memorial Boulevard) linking its chief entrances—at Broad Street, Norwood Avenue, Park Avenue, and Elmwood Avenue—the park basically assumed the overall form it retains today, with later improvements.

The chief civic improvement within the neighborhood at this time—as opposed to abutting it—was the construction and opening of Narragansett Boulevard. The land along the Providence River shore, which once had been part of five large farmsteads (the Hawkins-Smith, Sheldon-Jenckes, Nicholas Arnold, Nehemiah Rhodes, and Brattle Farms), had been divided by 1892 into some ten plats or parcels. Although motives are unclear and details sketchy, it appears a concept had evolved to construct a continuation of Allens Avenue southward from the Providence city line to Ocean Avenue at Pawtuxet. The 1882 and 1895 atlases covering Edgewood show portions of the proposed highway mapped out, at least on paper, but the 1894 U.S.G.S. map of the area shows nothing in place. In 1896 the Taft family and their trustees conveyed property for the highway to the Town of Cranston, which purchased additional land in 1897 "for the laying out, widening, straightening and improving Allen's Avenue from the City line...to the north line of Edward P. Taft." The Metropolitan Park Commission's 1906 map shows Narragansett Boulevard as completed.

²⁷ Joslin in Davis, v. 4, p. 2522. The first U. S. trolley line opened in Richmond, Va., in 1887; that same year, the first R. I. line opened in Woonsocket, but shut down after only two months. Ames and McClelland, p. 17. Bayles, v. 2, p. 298.

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In 1907 a cross-town trolley route along Park Avenue opened, linking Edgewood to the Auburn and Knightsville areas of Cranston,²⁸ and mass transit remained an important factor in municipal development into the 1920s. However, the advent of the automobile and its relatively rapid assimilation eventually had a greater impact on suburban development in metropolitan Providence, as elsewhere. The first practical automobile here intended for continuous operation appeared on Providence's streets in 1896, a year after the first European-built cars were offered for sale in the United States. The Rhode Island General Assembly created the office of State Highway Commissioner in 1895, abolished that office in 1899, and instituted the State Board of Public Roads in 1902. The Assembly established the state highway system in 1903, and a year later the registration of motor vehicles commenced. In 1904 767 autos and 117 motorcycles were registered; by 1910 there were 5,647 cars in the state.²⁹ The introduction of the Ford Model T in 1908 as the first affordable mass-market vehicle contributed to the escalation of car ownership and usage nationwide. In 1909 a reporter for the *Providence Journal* remarked that "Motorcars have played an important part in transforming the resorts along the west shore [of Narragansett Bay] into suburbs....[there are] still a few summer houses at Edgewood, but this is now a residential section." The article also identifies Edgewood, Pawtuxet, and the Lakewood section of Warwick as "suburbanite settlements."³⁰ Streetcar use nationwide continued to increase until 1923, when it began to drop off.³¹ Between 1926 and 1936 trolley ridership in metropolitan Providence declined over thirty percent, and by 1940 only half of the system's trackage was still in use.³²

The automobile caused a reshaping of urban and suburban development. As it came to predominate, movement was not constrained to routes with trolley tracks, and the range and scope of community development expanded, limited only by the availability of decent roads and the perception of what constituted reasonable or convenient travel time. The automobile both permitted and promoted decentralized development, for it provided the means to travel anywhere there was a good road, and the practice of spreading out potential destinations (homes, workplaces, stores, etc.) helped to reduce the inevitable traffic problems caused by concentrations of autos in limited areas (such as the traditional nineteenth-century central business district: the downtown). The arterial routes connecting centers of population, such as Broad Street and Park Avenue, typically became the settings for institutional and commercial buildings, while the sparsely settled tracts back of these routes, which had once been farmland, were subdivided for residential construction. Over time there was an increasing tendency to plat wider streets and larger lots with wider frontages, to accommodate the auto's movements and its storage (i.e., both on- and off-street parking).

²⁸ *Providence Sunday Journal*, November 21, 1915, sec. 5, p. 2

²⁹ Lemons, J. Stanley, "The Automobile Comes to Rhode Island," *Rhode Island History*, 52, 3, August 1994, pp. 77-78, 83-84.

³⁰ "West Bay Has Building Boom," *Providence Sunday Journal*, June 20, 1909, sec. 4, p. 4.

³¹ Ames and McClelland, p. 20.

³² R.I. Hist. Pres. Comm., *East Side*, p. 26.

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The Plats

With the appearance of electric trolleys and automobiles, the long-anticipated neighborhood building boom in Edgewood finally materialized. Construction increased in the plats laid out before 1892, and additional tracts of undeveloped land were brought onto the real-estate market.

There seems to be a general pattern in Edgewood that property closer to downtown Providence was subdivided earlier than property farther away. However, the configuration of land ownership imposed a particular modification to this pattern, creating a sort of "leap-frog" effect. For example, east of Broad Street, Daniel A. Smith, the Nicholas Arnold Heirs, and Edward P. Taft all owned large tracts bordering Narragansett Bay, the first-named closest to downtown Providence on the north, the last-named closest to Pawtuxet village on the south. Each of these owners first platted out the portion of their holdings closest to Providence: Smith the Bay View Plat (1859), north of his Smith's Palace Plat (1874); the Billings Plat (1874), on the northernmost section of the Arnold Farm (which Albert N. Arnold had sold to developer E. J. Billings), followed successively by the Arnold Farm Plat #1 (1889) and Arnold Farm Plat #2 (1892), each one progressively further south of the plat that had preceded it; and Taft the Taft Plat (1897) on the "northern part of the Brattle Farm," before the Taft Estate Plat (1904) on the southern portion of the Brattle Farm. However, it is also true that in each case the owner's own residence and its associated outbuildings were clustered toward the southern end of each tract, which may have had equal if not greater effect on the decision of where to locate the successive subdivisions. Stephen H. Williams' Williams Park Plat of 1873 occupied the southern portion of his farm, due to the particular configuration of his property. Williams' own house was located on the northern portion of the farm; hence that section was the last to be developed.

As noted above, Edward P. Taft (1835–99) had invested heavily in Edgewood real estate. Before he died he commissioned a subdivision of the northern portion of his bay-front property in 1897, on a portion of what had been the Rhodes-Remington Farm (also known as the Sally Greene Homestead). Three years later Edward's administrators—his son Robert and cousin Orray Taft—replatted the "...northerly portion of land known as the Brattle Farm..." and sold the portions not previously purchased to William M. Rhodes, who replatted the tract yet again, and formed the Aberdeen Land Company in 1902 to market the property. In 1904 Edward's widow Eliza Fiske Williams Taft and Eugene W. Mason, the trustee appointed to manage the affairs of Edward's unmarried sister Emma A. Taft, conveyed the remainder of the family home to Stephen B. Brown. The grantors held a mortgage on the property, which was to be subdivided and sold off, with a portion of the proceeds to be applied to the support of Emma Taft.

During the prosperous 1920s, with the trends of suburban development and auto usage well established, the incentives to maximize return on Edgewood property mounted. The Talbot Manor Plat of 1926 serves to illustrate the forces at work. Edgar G. Higgins acquired the two and one-half-acre estate of James H. Armington (1827–1906), with its fine Italianate brick dwelling at 1630 Broad Street, and hired the Frank E.

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Waterman engineering company to prepare a subdivision. The Armington House was moved back from Broad Street and off to one side and a straight dead-end street plotted down the middle of the parcel, creating sites for a dozen houses. The same forces affected western Norwood Avenue, where a number of the 16,000 square-foot lots of the original 1873 Williams Park Plat were cut into smaller ones during the 1920s and 1930s to maximize profits for the property owners.

Subdivisions 1892–1930

Name	Date	Streets	Replat(s)
Arnold Farm #2	1892	Albert (south), Columbia	
Alfred Anthony Estate Co. Plat	1892	Wheeler and Wentworth (west)	
Edward P. Taft Plat	1897	Massasoit, Canonicus*	1901 (below)
Edgewood Villa Plat of Edgar A. Perkins	1898	Villa, Lynn, Lee (Durham), Gail, Pearl, Laurel, Birch (Calvin)	
Brattle Farm Plat of E.P. Taft	1901	Massasoit, Canonicus*	1901 (below)
Aberdeen Plat	1901	Berwick, Sefton, Strathmore, Chiswick * Canonicus Ave replatted to create Berwick La & Sefton Dr	revisions: 1904, 1905, 1909, 1910, 1913 (2), 1917, 1929, 1935 (2)
West Edgewood	1903	Beachmont, Clifden, Western Promenade, Edgewood Blvd, Park Row	
Taft Estate Plat	1904	Windsor, Stratford, Selkirk, Circuit	
Amended Plat of Lockwood Lot	1909	Rhodes, Drowne, Taft	of Lockwood 1874; 1954, 1963
Shaw Avenue Plat	1910	Shaw Ave	of Edgewood Plat 1882
Hayward Plat	1912	Glen Ave	of Rice & Hayward 1875
Highland Terrace	1915	Cherry Rd, Central St, Lookout & Pawtuxet Aves	partial replat of Smith's Palace Estate 1874
Graysonia	1926	Graysonia Dr	
Talbot Manor Plat	1926	Talbot Manor	
John R. Bartlett Replat (partial)	1927	Bartlett, Edgewood, Westwood	of Bartlett 1891

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Institutional, Civic, and Commercial Development

As Edgewood's population swelled, so did the demand for facilities and services that supported daily life. The number of social and cultural institutions and commercial enterprises in the neighborhood increased substantially after the initiation of the electric trolley line in 1892. Many appeared to conform to a pattern of establishment and initial growth during the period between 1890 and circa 1910, followed by the construction or acquisition of new, updated or enlarged quarters some ten or twenty years after their initial founding. As noted above, there was a tendency for institutions and commerce to locate on the "main" roads, where they were readily accessible to the inhabitants, and the noise and dirt of street traffic was of less concern than it would be in residential areas (the one exception being schoolhouses, which by their nature and function belonged—and were sited—in residential areas for the convenience and safety of the pupils and their parents).

Commercial development was shaped largely by the evolution of transportation systems. While the streetcar predominated, the clustering of stores and offices at trolley stops was practical and sensible, since it was more convenient for commuters to run errands on their way to or from home. The commercial concentrations at the intersections of Broad Street and Wheeler Avenue, Broad Street and Norwood Avenue, Broad Street and Shaw Avenue, and Warwick and Park Avenues reflect this pattern. As the auto became more important, there were distinct advantages to spreading out development rather than clustering it, since that helped to mitigate the congestion of traffic and parking. The "strips" along Broad Street and Warwick and Park Avenues began to take a different form. Some large, older houses were converted to commercial uses, such as office buildings, funeral homes, and apartments. Store blocks were sited along the street without regard to the proximity of trolley or bus stops, and, increasingly over time, made provisions for off-street parking. The splendid Art Deco block at 1816-20 Broad Street is a fine example of auto-influenced commercial architecture. During this period a whole new class of commercial establishments emerged: those which housed businesses providing goods and services expressly for automobiles—filling stations, service garages, auto parts and supplies, etc.

While much, if not most, of this development occurred in response to needs or forces within the neighborhood itself, some other institutions and facilities reflect Cranston's and Edgewood's expanding role within the broader community of greater Providence. As the central city expanded to its borders and beyond into the suburbs, the area around upper Narragansett Bay, including Edgewood, was becoming a single urbanized region that transcended municipal boundaries. During the early twentieth century, it became clear that certain issues affecting Providence and its suburbs would be best dealt with in a metropolitan context.

The state's creation of the Metropolitan Park Commission in 1904 was one early response, reflecting a growing understanding that the provision of a comprehensive system of public parks and reservations for the growing urban population was a regional concern. The commission's second annual report in 1906 included an

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inventory of existing parks and parkways and semi-public green spaces, and proposals for the acquisition and development of new parks and an interconnecting system of green ways or parkways.

In Edgewood, the commission enumerated Roger Williams Park and Narragansett Boulevard, municipal undertakings by Providence and Cranston respectively, as key elements in the system, and proposed a parkway along the Pawtuxet River upstream from Pawtuxet Village, connecting to Roger Williams Park via Bellefont Pond and continuing further up the river and some of its tributaries.

In the early 1900s a privately owned tract along the shore at the east end of the Bay View Plat was used by the public as a bathing beach. Located about three miles from the center of Providence, on a trolley line, this was the closest beach accessible to city residents. Although not included in its original 1906 plans, the Metropolitan Park Commission decided to secure this spot for the public. The initial purchase of about ten acres in 1909 was enlarged by additional acquisition in 1915, and by 1922 Edgewood Beach included nineteen and three-quarter acres extending south of the city line at Montgomery Avenue, across the ends of Northrup, Smith, and Bay View, to the end of Narragansett Street. As many as 15,000 visitors a day would congregate here on steamy summer days. Unfortunately, by 1938 the water here was too polluted for bathing, and the beach no longer exists. Landfill for construction of the shipyard at Field's Point during World War II has left the beach site some distance inland today.

In 1915 the Metropolitan Park Commission, by authorization of the General Assembly, condemned the marshlands around Stillhouse Cove for permanent preservation as a public reservation at the southern terminus of Narragansett Boulevard. In 1917-18 the commission began to acquire lands for its proposed linear park along the Pawtuxet River. Though the full parkway scheme as outlined in 1906 was never realized, the property which was acquired formed the nucleus of the commission's Pawtuxet River Reservation, later part of the state parks system. Following establishment of the R. I. Department of Environmental Management in 1977, priorities for state park maintenance and new acquisitions were reevaluated, and some older units in the system were classified as excess property. The Pawtuxet River Reservation became a Cranston municipal park, containing Fay Field, one of the city's major playgrounds.

In 1874 the Rhode Island General Assembly incorporated a Prisoners' Aid Association to help released prisoners from any part of the state to reform and reintegrate into regular daily life as productive and respectable citizens. A Ladies Auxiliary, the Women's Society for Aiding Released Female Prisoners, formed in 1881. That same year, largely through the efforts of the abolitionist/temperance author and poet Sophia Louisa Robbins Little (1799-1893), the ladies opened a temporary home for discharged women prisoners, which was named in honor of Mrs. Little. First located in downtown Providence, the Sophia Little Home moved to South Providence in 1884. In 1900 it moved to a new facility at 135 Norwood Avenue in Edgewood. Over the years the focus of the institution changed, first to the needs of delinquent girls, and later functioning as a home for unwed mothers. Sophia Little Home merged with St. Mary's Home for Children of North Providence. St. Mary's, founded as an

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Episcopal orphanage in East Providence in 1877, is now Rhode Island's largest and most comprehensive treatment facility for children and adolescents with emotional and/or psychiatric problems resulting from abuse or other family problems. The Home's outpatient Shepherd Program, for treatment of sexually abused youth, youth with sexual behavior problems, and other family trauma, operated from the Norwood Avenue facility for a number of years. Today (2010) the building is unused and is for sale.

An association formed in 1931 to establish an osteopathic hospital for Rhode Island. In 1933 the group purchased the former Dewey F. Adams estate on the southwest corner of Norwood Avenue and Broad Street, renovated the existing mansion, and opened it as the Osteopathic General Hospital of Rhode Island. Four modern-style additions were made to the facility through the 1950s and 1960s. The 1970s were troubled years for the hospital, which adopted the name Cranston General Hospital in 1971 in a bid to change its identity, to distance itself from a strictly osteopathic orientation. Despite plans for expansion in 1974, the hospital continued to struggle. It finally closed in 1993. After neighborhood residents successfully opposed plans to convert it into a drug rehabilitation center, the hospital was demolished and a drugstore erected on the site in 1995.

People interested in establishing a retirement home for elderly Rhode Island residents of Scandinavian heritage first met in 1929. In 1930 the group purchased the Joseph Samuels estate in Edgewood at 1811 Broad Street, refurbished the house, and began operating as the Scandinavian Old People's Home in 1932. A new addition opened in 1938, and in 1957 the former Dimond House next door at 1807 Broad was acquired for expansion. A new wing was erected in 1960-61 on the Dimond House site, and another new building opened in 1972 on the Samuels House site. Over the years the name changed, first to Scandinavian Home, now Scandinavian Home for the Aged, serving clients from Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts.

The origin and early development of what is today known as Port Edgewood, a privately owned marina, are obscure. The 1895 and 1917 atlases show, at the shoreline between Narragansett Street and Arlington Avenue, a parcel of filled land in a rectangular configuration, giving the appearance of being a wharf. However, there appear to be no buildings associated with it, beyond some nearby small sheds and possibly summer cottages, and there are no documentary references to a boatyard in the area. The 1921 Sanborn map shows what may be a wharf, but still no buildings. A 1939 aerial photo seems to show a sizeable building at the foot of Narragansett Street, but the terrain here was much reworked during the filling for the Field's Point shipyard in 1942, and the building appears to be gone in a 1951 aerial. In 1943 Christopher Migliaccio purchased property here, referred to then as Thorsten's boatyard (a reference which cannot be traced further), with the intent of developing it after World War II. The 1951 aerial does show a building on a parcel south of Armington Avenue, back of Rushton Drive, with floating docks. The large boat shed now at the foot of Narragansett Street was in place by 1962, when it appears on an aerial photo of that year.

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Institutions & Facilities Summary

Name	Date	Event	Location
Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet	1872	founded	Rhodes Place
	1915	new dance hall	Rhodes Place
Providence Yacht Club now R. I. Yacht Club	1875	founded and chartered	Allens Ave near Henderson St, Providence
	1877	incorporated	
renamed Rhode Island Yacht Club	1887	new building	Big Rock, Stillhouse Cove
	1938	destroyed by September Hurricane	
	1940	second building opened	Big Rock, Stillhouse Cove
	1954	destroyed by Hurricane Carol	
	1956	third building opened	1 Ocean Ave
Edgewood Yacht Club	1889	founded	Shaw Ave @ waterfront
	1908	new building	3 Shaw Ave @ waterfront
Edgewood School later Edgewood Primary School	1889	built	185 Norwood Ave
	ca 1956	demolished	
Edgewood Casino	1890	founded	192-94 Shaw Ave
	1910	new building	10 Bartlett Ave
Edgewood Congregational Church	1891	gathered	Shaw Ave Casino
	1894	organized	
	1901	first church	186 Arnold Ave
	1923-24	addition	Arnold Ave side
	1946	fire destroys church 1923 addition intact	
	1949-54	new church	1796 Broad St
	1966	narthex, portico, belfry, connector to Sunday School added	1796-1802 Broad St
Church of the Transfiguration (Episcopal)	1893	founded	1665 Broad St
	1910	new building	1665 Broad St
Edgewood Free Public Library	1896	founded	Norwood Ave
	1908	new building	201 Norwood Ave
William H. Hall Library	1926	new building	1825 Broad St
Edgewood School replaced by	1897-98	built	160 Shaw Ave
Edward S. Rhodes School	1931	new building	160 Shaw Ave
Sophia Little Home / Prisoners' Aid Association [corporate name]			

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Prisoners' Aid Association	1874	founded	Providence
Women's Society for Aiding Released Female Prisoners Sophia Little Home	1881	founded first building opened	Broad St, Providence
PAA & WSARFP	1882	merged as PAA	
Sophia Little Home	1884	second building	South Providence
Sophia Little Home	1900	third building	135 Norwood Ave
	1989	Home closed merged with St. Mary's Home for Children	
St. Paul Church (Roman Catholic) & Parish	1907	founded	Shaw Ave Casino
	1907	first church	[34] Warwick Ave
	1921	school built	1789 Broad St
	1930	new church	Broad St & Warwick Ave
	1956	rectory built	30 Warwick Ave
Norwood Avenue School later Norwood Junior High	1908	built: 8 rooms, wood	205 Norwood Ave
	1966	renovated: brick veneer & fenestration	
Edgewood Beach	1909	established	shore at Northup, Smith, Bay View, Narragansett
	1915	enlarged	shore at Northup St
	1938	closed	
Stillhouse Cove Reservation	1915	established	Stillhouse Cove at Narragansett Blvd
Palace Theatre	1916		1527 Broad St
Pawtuxet River Reservation	1918	established	Pawtuxet River reached via Dallas Ave
Fire Station #1	1927	built	[125] Warwick Ave
Beachmont Avenue School	1927-28	built	9 Beachmont Ave
renamed Chester W. Barrows School	1932		
Scandinavian Home	1929	founded	
as Scandinavian Old People's Home	1932	opened first building	1811 Broad St
	1938	addition to	1811 Broad St
	1961	new wing opened	1807 Broad St
	1972	new wing opened	1811 Broad St
Osteopathic / Cranston General Hospital	1931	founded	
	1933	opened	1755-63 Broad St
	1952-53	addition	
	1960-61	addition	
	1963	addition	

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	1966-67	addition	
	1993	closed	
	1994	demolished	
Cranston Jewish Center / Temple Beth Torah	1952-53	built	330 Park Ave
	1962	addition	
merger & name change Temple Torat Yisrael	1981		
Hall Manor Elderly Housing	1964	built	70 Warwick Ave
Edgewood Highland School	1964-68	plans debated	
	1969-70	built	160 Pawtuxet Ave

Street numbers in brackets are assigned to indicate location

Interlude: 1930–1945

By 1930 the suburban fabric of Edgewood was largely in place. The Stock Market Crash of October 1929 dramatically ended the prosperity and boosterism of the 1920s, plunging the nation into a depression for the next seven years. Housing starts came practically to a halt and foreclosures rose steadily between 1930 and 1933.

Both the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations instituted federal policies and financial incentives to promote residential development and stabilize homeownership as part of the recovery initiatives. These included the Federal Home Loan Bank Act (1932), creation of the Home Owners Loan Corporation (1933–36), the National Housing Act which established the Federal Housing Administration (1934), and amendments to the 1934 Housing Act in 1938 (creating the Federal National Mortgage Association: "Fannie Mae") and 1941 (providing for housing in areas strategically important in defense and defense manufacturing).

This period also brought changes in transportation policy, vision, and infrastructure. In 1938 the Bureau of Public Roads issued the report *Toll Roads and Free Roads*, which advocated the formulation of a federal master plan for interregional and urban expressways. A year later, industrial designer Norman Bel Geddes' *Futurama* exhibit at the New York World's Fair captivated the public with its image of streamlined vehicles gliding along sweeping expanses of highway lanes and ramps in the far-off future of 1960. The year 1940 witnessed the opening of the Arroyo Seco Freeway in Pasadena, Ca. and the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

There were local initiatives to stimulate recovery as well. In 1935 the *Providence Journal*, the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and the Allied Building Trades Association collaborated on the "Little House" promotion. The Building Trades Association agreed to sponsor construction of a model house based on the design which *Journal* readers selected from among three submissions anonymously contributed to the newspaper by the architects. The readers' preferred choice, a Dutch Colonial cottage, was built on Creston Way in what is now Providence's Summit Historic District (NR, 2003). A year later the *Journal* favorably

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reported about a recent FHA bulletin in an article entitled "Planning Small-House Neighborhood Demands Care — Good Sub-dividing Pays Profits." The efforts apparently paid off. In 1936 and again in 1938, the number of building permits issued in Providence broke previous records.³³

America's entry into World War II at the end of 1941 largely halted this progress, as nearly all the country's endeavors focused on the war effort. Locally this brought intense activity to the Newport Naval Base, the brand new Quonset Point Naval Air Station and Construction Battalion ("SeaBee") base in North Kingstown, and—more pertinent for Edgewood—the Rheem/Walsh-Kaiser Shipyard at Field's Point, just across the Providence city line. Filling operations in 1942 to accommodate the shipyard radically altered the waterfront here, extending Field's Point across the city line into Cranston and eliminating the shoreline at Edgewood Beach (making the latter location useless for maritime recreation). A portion of the shipyard fell within the northeasternmost corner of Edgewood. Part of this site is now occupied by a U.S. Navy and Army Reserve Center. Work continued on some highway projects deemed essential to defense, including the Louisquisset Pike (Route R.I.-146) in Rhode Island, but strict rationing of petroleum products and rubber curtailed civilian travel. The war temporarily stemmed the suburban migration, reinforcing established residential patterns and the use of public transit.

The Plats

The number of plats created in Edgewood after 1930 declined, since the majority of the larger properties in the area had been subdivided during the previous seven decades. However, the plats that were executed after 1930 reflect two distinct design influences: the "garden suburb" model and the accommodation of automobile use. The Federal Housing Administration's standards for housing tracts, published and promoted in numerous reports, brochures, and periodicals, enshrined the garden suburb, with its curvilinear streets, crescents, circles, and cul-de-sacs, as the paradigm of domestic subdivision design. The "Picturesque" manner for residential districts, pioneered in the 1850s as an outgrowth of the rural cemetery movement of the 1830s, had very little impact in Rhode Island during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With the FHA providing most of the financing—as well as planning advice—for the new suburbs, the forms it prescribed became the norm. The influence is seen in the plats for the former Stephen H. Williams farm (Betsey Williams Drive), Roger Williams Terrace, and Alhambra Circle. Even the names for the plats themselves and their streets suggest the new geometry of the latest tracts.

With the automobile likewise ensconced as a dominant element of the modern suburban landscape, its effect on community planning swelled. Roger Williams Terrace, cited above, provides merely one illustration, for

³³ Jones, ...*East Side, Providence*, p. 26.

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right on the plat map itself are notes that on certain lots the "garages are to be attached to the main building directly or by an extended roof."

Subdivisions 1930–1945

Name	Date	Streets	Replat(s)
Williams Farm Plat of Williams Estates, Inc.	1939	Betsy Williams Drive	
Roger Williams Terrace of Old Colony Homes, Inc.	1939	Roger Williams Circle, Robert Circle, Mayflower Dr (north)	
Roger Williams Terrace #2	1941	area bounded by Park Ave, Mayflower Dr, Astle St, Community Dr	

Building Edgewood

Despite the factors militating against growth, construction in Edgewood did not come to a total halt in the 1930s. The appearance locally of a new type of housing—the apartment building—was perhaps the most notable development, partly because these structures became neighborhood landmarks, and partly because the type came to dominate new housing construction after the war. The Tudor Arms (1932) at 1683-91 Broad Street is the earliest apartment building standing in Edgewood. Its picturesque brick and half-timber veneer well complements the English Gothic Church of the Transfiguration standing on the opposite corner of Wheeler Avenue. The Rosedale Apartments (1939) at 1180 Narragansett Boulevard dramatically occupies a waterfront site overlooking Narragansett Bay. In a state with a limited quantity of modern building, it is an architectural landmark significant for its urbane Art Moderne style and as an especially excellent example of early twentieth-century apartment-building construction.

Established Enclave: 1945–1975

As World War II drew to a close, the nation faced a major socio-cultural and economic shift. Armed services personnel had to be reintegrated into the civilian population, industry had to be reoriented away from war materiel production, and pent-up demands for consumer goods that had been deferred during the war had to be satisfied. Already a largely built-up neighborhood, Edgewood was less affected physically by forces that totally transformed other places in metropolitan Providence, the state, and the country. The nature of what occurred reflected the area's role as a mature suburb built to patterns that were about to be immutably altered.

Public Policy

The federal government began planning for postwar readjustment before hostilities ended. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act, the popularly-named "GI Bill," passed in 1944, and included among its many

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provisions authorization for the Veterans' Administration to provide guaranteed home mortgages to veterans. Two years later the Veterans' Emergency Housing Act gave the Federal Housing Administration authority to insure mortgages. Veterans married just before, during, or after the war began to establish new households, which created a tremendous demand for new housing. New Deal policies and programs devised to broaden home ownership, modernize house design (in terms of efficiency and comfort if not in style), lower construction costs, improve community planning, and protect home-owners' and lenders' credit were pressed again into service.³⁴ "Through the development of standards, as well as review and approval of properties for mortgage insurance, the FHA institutionalized principles for both neighborhood planning and small house design."³⁵ These policies and programs both reflected and supported the strong anti-urban bias in American culture, and consumer preference for detached, single-family homes. The federal government not only provided the means to build the postwar suburban landscape; it also played a significant role in determining what its physical form would be.³⁶

As early as 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt, responding in part to the Bureau of Public Road's 1938 report *Toll Roads and Free Roads*, appointed an Interregional Highway Committee to work with the Public Roads administrator on recommendations for national highway planning following the war. The committee's recommendations for an extensive national network of expressways resulted in the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944, which authorized a National System of Interstate Highways, including metropolitan expressways designed to relieve traffic congestion and shape urban redevelopment.³⁷ Factors other than metropolitan growth also came to bear. The Chinese revolution, American engagement in Korea, and hardening of relations with the Soviet bloc that constituted the "Cold War" caused tension in international affairs. Political and military leaders realized that if the United States were attacked, the mobilization of defense would be seriously hindered by the outmoded system of overcrowded highways lacing the country. Passage of "the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 provided the massive funding for accelerated construction of a 41,000-mile national system of interstate and defense highways which included 5,000 miles of urban throughways."³⁸

The Interstate System and Development of the Freeway Suburb

Locally,

"Providence...had acquired a reputation as one of the worst traffic bottlenecks anywhere [in the northeast]. A 1945...survey by the State Board of Public Roads in cooperation with the Federal Public Roads Administration provided the basis for the highway plans which followed. A 1947 consultant

³⁴ Ames and McClelland, p. 30

³⁵ Ames and McClelland, p. 31

³⁶ R.I. Hist. Pres. Comm., *Warwick, Rhode Island*, pp.44-45.

³⁷ Ames and McClelland, p. 24.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

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study, *Expressway System for Metropolitan Providence*, became a key document in dealing with traffic and parking problems in the metropolitan area."³⁹

The system included a "North-South Freeway" from the Massachusetts line at Pawtucket to the Pawtuxet River border between Cranston and Warwick. Although intended to be a replacement of U.S. Route 1 as part of the national highway system proposed in 1944,

"almost 90 percent of the projected traffic [on metropolitan Providence's North-South Freeway] was expected to be local.... Thus, the proposed road was to be predominantly an urban expressway, designed to facilitate the myriad movements of work, business, and recreational trips... [and] to provide the maximum feasible service to the central business districts of Providence and Pawtucket."⁴⁰

This North-South Freeway essentially became part of I-95 as designated by the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956.

The openings of the Blackstone River Bridge (Division Street Bypass) in Pawtucket in 1956 and the Providence River Bridge (Point Street Bypass) in Providence and the Kent County Expressway through parts of East and West Greenwich in 1958 marked the beginning of the Interstate system in Rhode Island. By December 1965, the entire length of the North-South Freeway as proposed in 1947—through Pawtucket, Providence, and Cranston to the Warwick line—was open. The last section of I-195 was opened in December 1968, of I-95 in November 1969, and of I-295 in June 1975, completing the originally planned system in Rhode Island.⁴¹

Although I-95 and I-295 both traverse Cranston, the configuration of highway routes and municipal boundaries and the irregular relationship between the two has had a peculiar effect on development patterns in the city. Although their City Halls are about ten miles apart, the cities of Providence and Warwick are nearly contiguous, the southern edge of Roger Williams Park being less than one-half mile from the Pawtuxet River, which is Warwick's northern boundary. The narrow strip of land separating Providence and Warwick falls within the Cranston city limits, and links the Edgewood and Pawtuxet neighborhoods to the much larger area that comprises the central and western parts of Cranston. As I-95 passes through Cranston it runs west and north of Roger Williams Park, and the Edgewood neighborhood lies to the east of this, effectively bypassed by the interstate. Although there was originally no I-95 interchange projected within Cranston, plans were formulated to extend the Huntingdon Expressway (R.I. Route 10) as an "inner ring" running from I-95 in downtown Providence through that city's southwest quadrant to rejoin I-95 at the Providence-Cranston line. The latter intersection, known as the Friendly Community interchange, was eventually redesigned to provide

³⁹ Hammerschlag, Dieter, Brian K. Barber, and J. Michael Everett, *The Interstate Highway System and Urban Structure: A Force for Change in Rhode Island* ([Providence:] 1976), p. 10.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Hammerschlag et al., p. 15.

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connections between I-95 and Reservoir Avenue (R.I. Route 2), Pontiac Avenue, Elmwood Avenue (here part of U.S. Route 1), and Park Avenue (R.I. Route 12), all located at or near the Providence-Cranston line. The Park Avenue ramps are closest to Edgewood, though they are located outside the present study area. The lack of direct interstate access, coupled with the fact that Edgewood was largely built up before the inception of the expressway system, greatly reduced the impact of the highway on Edgewood. The other means of interstate access for Cranston was a limited-access spur highway (R.I. Route 37) crossing the Cranston-Warwick line further west, and designed to link Post Road (at that point U.S. Route 1), I-95, Reservoir Avenue (R.I. Route 2), and I-295. The completion of another limited-access spur, R.I. Route 195, linking R.I. Route 10 in Providence and I-295 in Johnston (just north of the Cranston line), added another link to the system. I-295, intersecting I-95 in Warwick, R.I. and in Attleboro, Mass., was planned as a bypass around the western rim of metropolitan Providence and intended to emulate Route 128 around Boston. While I-295's impact on Rhode Island's economic expansion did not reach the level of Route 128's effect on Massachusetts, it did increase development west of Providence. Much of this activity was funnelled via R.I. Route 195 and R.I. Route 37 to I-295, and into western Cranston. For the first time, large-scale suburbanization, characterized primarily by the spread of extensive residential subdivisions, was diverted from eastern sections of the city such as Edgewood, Auburn, and Arlington to the western farms and woodlands.

Building Edgewood: Postwar Subdivisions

Even fewer new subdivisions were platted following World War II than there had been in the 1930–45 period. The acquisition and replatting of unbuilt sections of previously platted tracts became the primary trend. A venture by Kelly & Picerne, a large Cranston-based speculative building and development company that played a key role in reshaping metropolitan Providence during the 1950s and 1960s, will serve as illustration. The firm purchased the remaining empty house sites in the Amended Plat of the Lockwood Lot (1909) and reconfigured the lots twice: in 1954 and 1963.

Building Edgewood: Postwar Construction

Despite the fact that it was largely built up while other, more open areas attracted new development, Edgewood remained a stable and very popular residential quarter. This is indicated by the intensification of domestic use in the neighborhood through the construction of multi-unit apartment buildings during the postwar period. Between 1956 and 1972 six new apartment buildings were constructed in Edgewood, ranging in size from eight to thirty-nine units, and averaging twenty units. All are two-story structures of Modern design, their imagery largely derived from that of 1950s and 1960s motels. Contrasting with these is a six-story, seventy-nine unit tower of subsidized apartments for the elderly, erected in 1964 in conformance with the modern unornamented, vertical-slab type that became standard in Rhode Island, and across the nation, during that period.

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In sharp contrast to the rest of the neighborhood is the former Colonial Motor Inn (1959), later the Cranston Hilton. This Modern style structure comprising a five-story vertical slab hovering over low-spreading horizontal wings appears to be the result of development pressures from outside the neighborhood, constructed to take advantage of the views from its waterfront site. It is now a facility of Johnson & Wales University.

Domestic Architecture of Edgewood, Cranston, R.I.: 1850-1945

Domestic Architecture: 1850-1910

Edgewood contains one of the best collections of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century domestic architecture within the greater Providence metropolitan area. The neighborhood's greatest period of growth, from about 1870 to World War II, coincides with the region's tremendous surge in population and prosperity, accompanying the expansion of manufacturing and processing and the ancillary businesses, institutions, and systems that developed to support or augment these industries and enhance the lives of those who made their living by them. During the period between about 1900 and 1910, social, economic, and technological factors evinced a change in the type, style, and scale of domestic buildings. These distinctive subsets of the larger category of suburban residential architecture are treated in separate sections of this essay.

Edgewood's architectural history reflects the area's waves of development, illustrated by the alternating predominance or intermingling of certain building types and styles within particular subsections of the neighborhood. Development occurred within the framework of the farmsteads and country estates laid out on the land in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. The subsequent subdivision of these properties and marketing of house lots were subject to the particular circumstances and motivations of the individual, family, or company that owned a given parcel.

While it is generally true that properties closer to the urban center of Providence tended to be subdivided earlier than ones more distant, there are significant variations to and deviations from that pattern. For example, the earliest known plats, drawn in the 1850s for the Bay View and John W. Butts estates, do occupy the area of the neighborhood closest to Providence (between Montgomery and Norwood Avenues), and the Taft Estate Plat, one of the farthest away from Providence, was not made until 1904. However, the Arnold Farm (Arnold, Albert, and Columbia Avenues) was not subdivided until after the death of the last surviving heir of Nicholas Arnold, Lavina Arnold, in 1885, well after the initial plats for Shaw Avenue (1867) and Bluff Avenue (1870-72), both of which lie further from Providence than the Arnold Farm. An initial—relatively small—wave of construction happened after the introduction of the Broad Street horsecar line in 1868, followed by a building boom after that line's conversion to electric trolley service in 1892. Building accelerated even more as use of automobiles proliferated in the years after 1900.

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Generally streets platted from the 1860s through the 1890s contain a core of dwellings erected in the 1880s and 1890s, mixed with later infill from the 1900s, 1910s, and 1920s. Norwood, Arnold, Albert, and Columbia Avenues are primary examples of this pattern. Of course, later plats contain concentrations of later houses, and tend to be more homogeneous in architectural character. The Edward Taft Plat (1897) and Brattle Farm Plat (1901), both encompassing Massasoit Avenue, were replatted as the Aberdeen Plat (with the addition of Berwick Lane, Sefton Drive, and Strathmore and Chiswick Roads) in 1901, which was subsequently replatted in full or part ten times up until 1935. Of these streets, Massasoit is about evenly divided between houses of 1900-10 vintage, many closely resembling the styles and scale of 1890s dwellings, and houses erected in the 1910s and 1920s. On Strathmore and Chiswick Roads houses of the 1910s and 1920s predominate, with a few of the 1900s-vintage houses. Houses of the 1910s and 1920s are most common on Sefton Drive and Berwick Lane.

Construction in Edgewood was dominated by single-family suburban houses. Multiple-family houses are less common but form a sizable portion of the residential units, especially among houses built after 1900. A few non-suburban vernacular cottages were also built here in the later nineteenth century. Analysis of each type is fundamental to an understanding of Edgewood's architecture.

Single-Family Houses

Most of Edgewood's residential buildings are single-family houses. In general the dwellings here show greater variety of form, plan, and detail than do houses in some other residential neighborhoods of Cranston or metropolitan Providence. The architectural character of many areas is often defined by the prevalence of a few basic building forms with stock detail. Over time these standardized building types underwent little morphological change, though applied ornament was modified to conform with newer architectural styles as they became fashionable. In contrast, many Edgewood houses were individually designed and built by architects or building contractors. The greater individuality of its houses contributes to Edgewood's distinctive ambience. Amid the diversity of forms employed here for single-family houses, several basic building types can be identified, but their close association with particular styles demands their consideration within a stylistic context.

Domestic Architectural Styles

Domestic architectural styles of the period from 1850 to 1910 reflect the cultural and social attitudes and aspirations of the time. The choice of suitable forms was heavily influenced by the aesthetic precepts of Romanticism, which defined beauty in terms of the picturesque effects achieved by asymmetry and irregularity. Nineteenth-century literature and painting, including the writings of the Transcendentalists and the landscapes of the Hudson River School artists, grew out of and helped to promote an increasing appreciation of Nature, and the view that Man should commune with rather than attempt to subdue the natural environment. Andrew Jackson Downing, a landscape gardener and architectural theorist, called for the adoption of building designs

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that harmonized with Nature, a notion that had a significant impact on the development of nineteenth-century suburban residential building through a series of widely read books that Downing wrote. The ethical dimension of architectural romanticism is reflected in the idea that a building should "honestly" express its purpose or function. Design of the period was also informed by a belief that certain architectural elements were vested with evocative powers by association with historical precedents, or national or regional cultural patterns. Associationalism coupled with romanticism stimulated an eclectic approach to architectural design, motivating architects to choose forms from varied sources and assemble them without regard to traditional rules or patterns, producing unique compositions whose expressive character transcended the issue of "correct" usage in the academic sense.

The direct impact of such theoretical considerations on the average homebuilder was probably minimal, however. The dissemination of styles followed a filtering-down process, from architects in cosmopolitan centers, to architects in provincial cities, and to builders and carpenters. The process was aided by the publication of professional periodicals for architects and builders, like *American Architect and Building News*, builder's handbooks, and mass-circulation periodicals, like *The Craftsman*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *House Beautiful*. Personal observation played a part as well—something as simple as riding the streetcar past the mansions of the well-to-do could convey a sense of architectural fashion to the observer. Features of high-style design were then adapted for everyday building, with limitations imposed by the skill of the builder and the financial resources of the client. Mass production of inexpensive machine-made millwork provided a supply of ornamental elements that could be applied to modest cottages. Edgewood is rich in examples of domestic architecture from this era, ranging from high-style, architect-designed houses of the affluent to carpenter-built dwellings of the middle and working class. In many cases the houses are not pure examples of any one style. The styles that appear in some form in Edgewood are discussed below to outline their distinctive features.

Italianate — Bracketed

The Italianate was a product of the quest for the picturesque. Two distinctive house forms were especially associated with this style. The palazzo type is a symmetrical, cubical-mass dwelling, usually three stories tall and covered with a flat or low-pitch hip roof. Modeled after the Renaissance city palaces of Rome and Tuscany, this form was very popular in the greater Providence area, where several early, influential examples were erected in the College Hill section in the 1850s. The asymmetrical villa type, derived from the rural residences of the Italian countryside, followed several forms. Some are cubical dwellings with corner towers of unequal height, some are L-, T-, or staggered-cross-plan dwellings with a tower set in the corner formed by an intersection of the wings. Another variant, found commonly in pattern books, omitted the tower. Many villas had low-pitch hip roofs, but gable roofs were not uncommon, their peaked forms often enhancing a villa's irregular silhouette.

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Ornamentation of Italianate dwellings included quoins, classical window architraves, bold window cornices or hoods, massive door hoods, round-head windows, and narrow windows grouped in twos or threes. The chief decorative element of the Italianate style was the bracket with intricately cut profile, often with incised or applied decoration on the sides. Brackets were mass produced in wood and were a cheap, readily available form of ornament. They were used extensively to support door and window hoods and to embellish the cornices of hoods, door and window lintels, bay windows, and the wide overhanging eaves characteristic of Italianate buildings. The widespread application of brackets to simple buildings with no other aspect of the Italianate style gave rise to the vernacular mode known as the Bracketed Style.

Second Empire — Mansard

The name of the Second Empire style refers to the reign of Napoleon III, second Emperor of France. The style was a revival and elaboration of French Baroque architecture, first utilized for the Emperor's public-building programs in the 1850s. A few isolated examples of the style appeared in the United States at that time, but the Second Empire mode became especially fashionable during the Civil War and the years thereafter. The Second Empire's classical architectural vocabulary and reliance on symmetrical composition seemingly contravened the doctrine of the picturesque, but its employment of projecting and receding wall planes, pavilions, stacked-up columns, and mansard roofs provided an opportunity to create visually rich, plastic structures. The mansard roof, a massive form with steep-pitched, nearly vertical sides and a flat deck or low-pitch hip roof on top, is the hallmark of the style.

The more elaborate version of the Second Empire was usually reserved for important public buildings like Providence City Hall (1874-78). The mansard roof was attractive to home builders, however, for it provided the greatest top-floor space of all roof forms. It thus became popular for use on standard end-to-the-street, side-hall-plan houses and on Italianate palazzo-like structures with contained cubical massing, symmetrical three-bay facades, and classical window trim. The vernacular version of the Second Empire is perhaps better designated the Mansard style in recognition of the importance of its signature roof form.

Modern Gothic

The Modern Gothic—the so-called Stick Style—drew inspiration from the half-timber houses of medieval England, France, and Germany, and the chalets of Switzerland. The style first became popular in seaside resorts of France and the Low Countries before spreading to America in the 1860s and 1870s. Features adapted from the sources include decorative flat-board wall articulation simulating half-timbering, vertical-board siding shaped in "sawtooth" patterns at the bottom, timberwork porches, and gable peaks, eaves, porches, and door and window hoods bedecked with pseudo-structural struts, cross braces, and jigsawn ornamentation. Full-blown Modern Gothic houses are rare in the Providence area. However, elements of the style are sometimes included in eclectic dwellings that combine features of several styles.

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Queen Anne, Modern Colonial, Shingle Style, and Colonial Revival

American architectural practice became increasingly professionalized during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Through education and travel, architects obtained a broader and deeper knowledge of historical architecture, which greatly affected their approach to design. The eclectic reinterpretation of historic styles formed the basis for the highly individualistic and inventive compositions of the period. Transitional architectures of past eras and the vernacular structures of other times and cultures were favorite sources. As before, builders and contractors modeled their efforts after the works of trained architects, producing structures that were usually less sophisticated but often still charming in spite of, or perhaps because of, slight aberrations or awkwardness in design.

This phase occurred at the time that much of Edgewood developed. Styles reflecting these changes dominated local residential construction between 1880 and 1910: the Queen Anne, Modern Colonial, Shingle Style, and Colonial Revival.

The Queen Anne movement, named for the early eighteenth-century British monarch, began in England in the 1860s. The term is associated there with the revival and reinterpretation of several stylistic currents that prevailed in Britain from the late fifteenth through the early eighteenth centuries. Sources ranged from strictly medieval ones, such as the half-timbered structures of the Tudor era, to the mixed styles of later periods: either the Elizabethan and Jacobean modes, in which Renaissance classicism was beginning to influence traditional Gothic design, or provincial Late Stuart and Early Georgian architecture, which incorporated holdovers from the Gothic period in buildings conceived in the Renaissance manner.

Aspects of the English Queen Anne spread to America in the 1870s. In this country, the style bears no relation to actual English architecture of Queen Anne's reign. First to appear here were Tudoresque dwellings modeled after the early works of English architect Richard Norman Shaw; hence the term Shavian sometimes used for this variant. However, the name is most commonly used for a highly picturesque, eclectic style that freely combines elements copied or abstracted from both medieval and classical sources. Not all features were derived from English precedents. French architecture became increasingly influential, as American architects who trained and traveled in France returned with sketches of old buildings which were then published in periodicals. The sixteenth-century transitional Gothic/Renaissance architecture of the reign of Francis I and the late medieval vernacular building tradition of Normandy and Brittany were particularly admired. In addition, interest in our nation's Colonial past, stimulated in part by patriotic sentiment aroused by the Centennial of the Declaration of Independence, encouraged greater attention to American architecture, both seventeenth-century postmedieval structures and classical Georgian and Federal buildings.

These varied sources all come together in Queen Anne building. The influence of medieval England and France is reflected in asymmetrical massing; use of overhangs and jetties; tall chimneys with pilasters, corbeled

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tops, or other patterned brickwork; and richly patterned and textured wall surfaces. Where financial resources permitted, exterior surfaces were covered with several materials: stone, brick, slate, terra cotta, stucco, half-timber, clapboard, and shingle. Stucco might be molded or studded with stones or broken glass to emulate the parquetry found on old English dwellings. Patterned shingles, very common even on inexpensive houses, imitated in wood the sheathing of slates or tiles found on some medieval structures. High hip roofs and cylindrical or polygonal towers or turrets with conical roofs emulate forms derived from the chateaus, manors, and farmhouses of northwestern and central France. Classical applied ornament is usually derived from American Colonial and Federal sources: broken-scroll pediments; Palladian, elliptical, and circular (bull's-eye) windows; and garland-and-swag decoration. The inclusion of projecting and recessed porches and balconies, often decked with spindles and turned posts, is one of the less derivative, more inventive features of the American Queen Anne style.

The Modern Colonial style emerged in the early 1880s. The shingled vernacular houses of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New England served as its inspiration, especially structures of the 1600s with their strong postmedieval character, and transitional dwellings in which Georgian classicism was beginning to supplant lingering Gothic traditions. Some Modern Colonials have very refined, applied Colonial detail similar to that of Queen Anne houses, though a lack of elaborate classical ornament is one of the chief characteristics of the style. Many Modern Colonial dwellings are covered with overscaled gambrel roofs that encompass both the second floor and attic, serving to pull together and anchor the mass. In accordance with the eclectic spirit of the times, Modern Colonial houses often incorporate non-Colonial bay windows or towers. Such towers usually have a distinct French medieval flavor; in some cases they are such emphatic parts of the design the house is really more medieval than colonial in inspiration.

During the past fifty years the term Shingle Style came into popular use to refer to a class of unornamented shingled dwellings freely derived from the historic vernacular architecture of Colonial America and medieval Europe, mixed with some Japanese influences. This designation has supplanted the term Modern Colonial, often used in the late nineteenth century to describe buildings in this mode. The label Shingle Style has been loosely applied to a wide array of shingle-clad buildings, including many which could be more accurately classified on the basis of their readily identifiable historic sources. However, some shingle structures are so simplified and abstract they have virtually no origin in historic precedents; such buildings represent a distinctive, more inventive approach to design which is fittingly characterized by the non-historicizing term Shingle Style. The house at 115-17 Bluff Avenue is a good example.

Growing interest in classical design and greater regard for more "correct" composition encouraged the development of a Colonial Revival style. Colonial Revival houses typically have massing and detail derived from Colonial and Federal prototypes, but the size and scale of Colonial Revival houses are larger than those of the original models. Most Colonial Revival buildings have contained rectilinear massing, broken perhaps by bay windows; symmetrical facades with central entrances; front porches with columns and classical balustrades;

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relatively uniform roofs, sometimes elaborated on the facade by a cross gable or a row of dormers; and window shutters. Palladian windows, corner pilasters, and garland-and-swag trim are common decorative elements. Edgewood is especially rich in Colonial Revival houses, and two basic house forms can be identified.

The high-shouldered, rectangular-mass, gambrel-roof dwelling projects the archetypal image of the first generation of Colonial Revival houses. The second type of Colonial Revival dwelling is the cubical-mass, hip-roof house.

The Queen Anne, Modern Colonial—Shingle Style, and Colonial Revival developed more or less sequentially, but none fully supplanted the others: all remained desirable from the 1890s through the early years of the twentieth century. Indeed, the three were often mixed, and the hybrids of the three styles are closely identified with late nineteenth-century metropolitan Providence architecture. Because of the considerable construction activity during this period, Edgewood has many fine dwellings in these styles. The pure Queen Anne is relatively rare, while the Modern Colonial, Colonial Revival, and hybrid Queen Anne/Modern Colonial and Queen Anne/Colonial Revival styles are plentiful. Further, the influence of the Queen Anne persisted in vernacular building practice, as contractors continued to build projecting bays and towers on residences until the First World War and to use patterned shingle work on dwellings into the 1920s.

Multiple-Family Houses

Edgewood contains a substantial number of two- and three-family residences. Multiple-family houses generally conform to a smaller range of basic shapes and plans than do single-family structures, and are thus better analyzed from a typological approach. Multiple-family housing falls into two categories: the double house and the two- or three-decker. Each category is characterized by the spatial organization of the dwelling units within. Multiple-unit dwellings reflect the same stylistic influences and progressions seen in—and generally first utilized for—single-unit domestic buildings.

The typical double house comprises two mirror-image-plan, multiple-floor units placed side by side. Though plans and massing vary, a few common forms for double houses are identifiable. The earliest form has principal entrances and halls placed next to each other at the facade's center. The T- or cross-plan double house appeared most commonly in two variants: one with main entrances at each end of the house, in the front of each side ell, and one with main entrances in the two sides of the front ell, opening into central hallways placed back to back.

Two- and three-decker residences evolved from the standard side-hall-plan dwelling, expanded and adapted to accommodate identical-plan units stacked on two or three floors. The early two-decker is typically a two-and-one-half-story, rectangular-block building turned narrow end to the street with an end-gable roof. Later two- and three-deckers are enlarged in size and scale, and the simple box-like mass broken out with bay

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windows, towers, or upper-story overhangs. They follow the two-and-one-half-story form with end-gable, cross-gable, or mansard roof.

Vernacular Houses

Some Edgewood construction during the 1840-1910 period was unrelated to the suburbanization process or the stylistic development of suburban domestic architecture. A few cottages were built in the nineteenth-century vernacular mode usually employed for such utilitarian structures as farmers' or workers' housing. This type of building is characterized by very simple form, clapboard wall cover, and flat-board door, window, corner, and fascia trim, sometimes embellished with simple cornice moldings. The architectural and functional differentiation of these vernacular structures set them apart from the more deliberately styled suburban residences that constitute the bulk of the neighborhood

Domestic Architecture: 1900-1975

During the period between 1900 and World War II, a transformation in domestic architecture paralleled early twentieth-century technological, sociological, and cultural changes. Widespread use of the automobile led to the adoption of more spacious layouts of streets and house lots. Dwellings were more often oriented with the broad side parallel to the street, unlike the end-to-street houses on the narrow-frontage lots in streetcar suburbs. Late nineteenth-century inventions like the telephone and the electric light, no longer novelties or luxuries, became common features in the house, and the increasing variety of gas and electric household appliances transformed housekeeping practices—and houses themselves. Reduced rates of immigration after the early 1920s began to limit the availability of cheap domestic help, and made efficiency a key element in planning dwellings. With a decrease in the average number of children per family and a gradual departure from extended-family living arrangements, households became smaller, altering attitudes toward the size and organization of living quarters.

Single-family houses continued to predominate. Two- and three-family houses also were built, particularly along major thoroughfares or near the neighborhood's edge, and developed more distinctive characteristics as a building type. A new form to the Providence area, the apartment building, made its first significant appearance, both as a new type and, less noticeably, as a conversion of large, old houses.

Single-Family Houses

Domestic architecture followed a trend toward smaller scale, smaller size, and simplified design. As building became more costly, there was an increase in standardized, sparsely ornamented contractor-built houses for the middle class, much of it erected on speculation rather than custom built for the client.

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The simplification of dwelling plans and massing in the early twentieth century led to the emergence of some readily identifiable single-family house forms. In contrast to the preceding period, when a house's plan, mass, and detail often were identified with a particular style, there was an ongoing trend toward the use of basic house types that could be clad in any sort of period detailing.

The most common single-family house form of the early twentieth century is the two- or two-and-a-half-story house with cubical massing, a three-bay facade, central entrance, overhanging hip roof, and one-story side porch at one or both ends. The form was occasionally stretched to a five-bay width. The "cube house" format evolved from the prototypical foursquare, hip-roof, sparsely detailed Colonial Revival/Modern Colonial houses of the 1890s, which also served as inspiration for some early works of Frank Lloyd Wright and his Midwestern colleagues. The deep roof overhangs and simple geometry of some Providence cube houses suggest that Prairie School influences were filtering back to inform East Coast domestic architecture. The basic cube form could be dressed with whatever detailing suited the taste of the developer or homeowner.

The Georgian Colonial house was readapted in a more standardized form that differed from dwellings produced during the Colonial Revival of the 1890s and early 1900s. Typically such houses are two-and-a-half stories high with rectangular-block massing, a five-bay facade, a central entrance, and a flank gable or gambrel roof. The form was used extensively throughout the Edgewood neighborhood.

The Dutch Colonial house was adapted from the eighteenth-century farmhouses erected by Dutch settlers in New York. Typically it is a tall one-and-a-half-story structure with a large flank-gambrel roof containing the second floor and attic. The lower roof slopes at both front and rear are broken by large full-width shed dormers on the second story level; the dormers usually dominate the roof, and the gambrel form is sometimes evident only on the end walls.

The bungalow was a new form of dwelling that appeared in the early twentieth century. First used in the 1890s for rustic vacation or resort cottages, it was initially adapted for suburban residential purposes in California, where it evolved into a handsome, distinctive, picturesque form heavily influenced by American Arts and Crafts and Japanese design. The form was much published in popular and professional housing magazines. The typical bungalow was a one- or one-and-a-half-story structure set end to the street, with a boxy mass and a recessed front porch set under a low gable, cross-gable, or hip roof with broad overhanging eaves. Shingle, stone, and stucco, sometimes used in combination, were the most common materials. In the greater Providence area, a local variant developed which typically features a Tuscan-columned porch instead of the Arts and Crafts or Craftsman detailing common in other parts of the country. As a modest, convenient, and economical building type, the bungalow became popular with housing contractors and house buyers of limited means.

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The Four-square house was even more popular than the bungalow in Edgewood and much of metropolitan Providence in the early decades of the 20th century. It generally takes the form of a cube with a double-pile plan of four rooms—two front and two back—on each floor (hence the “four-square”). Typically, the Four-square is 2 or 2½ stories tall, with a hipped roof and front dormer. The façade also appears square, usually featuring two bays with a side-hall entrance and a front porch, which may cover just the front door, or may extend across the entire façade; sometimes the porch or vestibule is enclosed. The Four-square typically has simple detailing on both interior and exterior. Some of them feature elements derived from the mid-western Prairie School (low hip roofs with deep overhanging eaves that give them a hovering effect, and very stylized, linear geometrical detailing in the manner of Frank Lloyd Wright), although in the Providence region most have a very stripped-down Colonial flavor lent by Tuscan-column porches or porticoes and simple molded architrave trim around doors and windows. The Four-square's room layout emphasizes functionality and simplicity. In a typical example, the front entrance opens directly into a combination entrance and stair hall with the living room beside it, the kitchen behind it, and the dining room opening off the living room and connecting to the kitchen. Alternatively, the entrance can open directly into the living room, with a den or study beside it, kitchen behind the den, and dining room behind the living room. In this plan, the staircase is usually either in the living room or a small stair hall located between the den and kitchen. Upstairs rooms are grouped around a compact hall at the head of the stairs: either three bedrooms and a bathroom occupying the corners, or sometimes four corner bedrooms with a small bath inserted between two of the bedrooms.

Domestic Architectural Styles

Architects of the early twentieth century were better educated, more widely traveled, and more knowledgeable about historic American and European architecture than their predecessors. Concern for using forms in a way consistent with historical precedent, an attitude developed in the late nineteenth century, became more important in the years after 1900. In contrast to dwellings of the 1880s and 1890s, houses of the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s were generally less idiosyncratic and more likely to follow a single style or period as a source, adapted with greater regard for consistency and homogeneity. Historicism did not lead inevitably to strict imitation or replication; it could, and often did, serve as a source of creative inspiration. Eclecticism remained an important force, as attested by the number of structures of mixed stylistic character.

Though nineteenth-century architecture fell into disfavor in the 1920s and 1930s, the earlier era's values continued to inform aesthetic choices. Nostalgia and romanticism survived into the twentieth century, and with them, design based on revival of historical styles remained the prevailing standard for domestic architecture. A delight in fantasy partially underlay the aesthetic of this era, referred to as "the period of taste and charm" in contemporary publications. The same sensibility that inspired the dreamy illustrations of Maxfield Parrish, the sentimental tinted photographs of bucolic landscapes and Colonial interiors by Wallace Nutting, and the stunning historical epics produced by the Hollywood motion-picture industry, also informed the fashion for historical and exotic forms in domestic architecture.

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The innovative designs of the Prairie School architects, like Frank Lloyd Wright, and the iconoclastic projects of the International Style originators, like Walter Gropius, had little impact in Providence and these styles were rarely used for residential structures here. The public could accept modernism in commercial structures, such as stores, office buildings, and gas stations, or in instances when the building program specifically called for progressive or futuristic imagery, such as airports. But sleek, streamlined, unornamented forms were not homey enough for most people. Historical styles with supposedly inherent domestic qualities remained popular for the exterior and the main rooms of most houses, while modern design was relegated to limited use in kitchens and bathrooms.

The period-revival houses of the early twentieth century have long been spurned by scholars and critics and undervalued by the general public. They have been seen as nice places to live but not as serious architecture. They deserve analysis, appreciation, and preservation. In addition to their image of prettiness, many have good interior planning and handsome detailing. The best examples—and Edgewood has many—are admirable for their sophisticated and compelling design.

American Revival Styles: Colonial — Neo-Georgian

Neo-Georgian was by far the most popular of all revival styles in Providence and appeared in many variations during the early twentieth century. Increasing academic interest in early American houses influenced design: a wider range of forms and details became known, and the emulation of individual elements was more correct. Eclecticism continued during these years, however, and architects often selected Colonial, Federal, and Greek Revival sources or combined two or three; thus, the broader term Neo-Georgian is probably a more telling description of these early twentieth-century buildings. Architects looked to both local sources and those beyond Rhode Island and New England. The widely publicized restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, begun in 1926, increased public awareness and appreciation of eighteenth-century architecture and decorative arts at this time. This probably accounts for the numerous Providence Neo-Georgian houses of the 1920s and 1930s modeled after dwellings of the Middle Atlantic colonies, especially Virginia and Pennsylvania. Designs inspired by the early architecture of other regions, like the Deep South, were often published in architectural magazines and helped to influence public taste.

More common than the porticoed house is the gable-roof brick dwelling with a five-bay facade and a pedimented fanlight central entranceway. The form was repeated often in Edgewood. While the presence of numerous Neo-Georgian brick houses helps to define the neighborhood's image, wood-frame dwellings remain most common and contribute significantly to the neighborhood's distinctive character

The Greek Revival, then understood as the end of the Colonial building tradition, was also used as source material for new buildings. The Greek Revival plantation house architecture of the antebellum South, dubbed "Southern Colonial" by real-estate agents and tract developers, also became part of the Neo-Georgian repertory.

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English Georgian and Regency Revival

A small number of Edgewood houses are adapted directly from the English sources of the Colonial and Georgian. The Regency style of the early nineteenth century is the English parallel of American Federal architecture; it inspired a less common yet significant variation on the Neo-Georgian theme. The delicate forms and sometimes exotic patterns—especially those used by architect John Nash at the Royal Pavilion (1815-18) at Brighton—served as principal sources. English Regency influence on architecture of the 1920s and 1930s was generally limited to detail: lacy, geometric trelliswork porches; flaring metal door hoods; and octagonal windows. Such elements sometimes appear as discreet, sophisticated, jewel-like highlights on modernistic structures otherwise devoid of historical references, a style characterized as Regency Moderne.

English Medieval Revival: Tudor Revival, English Cottage, Old English, "Jacobethan"

Domestic architecture derived from English medieval styles was very popular during the early twentieth century. Most commonly identified as Tudor Revival, the mode has suffered from inaccurate nomenclature which fails to reflect the full range and character of sources. In this it is like the Queen Anne movement of the nineteenth century—to which it perhaps owes a greater debt than yet suggested. Medieval Revival houses characteristically have asymmetrical massing, steep gable roofs, and medieval detail: Tudor arch doorways, drip molds over windows, banks of multi-pane windows, and molded chimney pots. Some modest houses, however, only have medieval detail applied to standard cubical or rectangular-block massing. Sources range from Tudor and Jacobean manor houses to vernacular cottages of the British countryside, especially the quaint stone or stucco houses of the Cotswold district. Larger houses are often executed in a combination of materials: stone, brick, slate, and stucco with half-timber. Detailing is not strictly limited to English sources but draws from continental building practice as well. In some cases half-timberwork is combined not with stucco but with patterned brickwork.

French Historic Revival: Norman Farmhouse, Provençal, and French Provincial

The French counterparts of the English revival modes also served as inspirations for domestic building. The Norman Farmhouse style imitated the artfully picturesque vernacular architecture of northwestern France. The agricultural complexes of Brittany and Normandy had informed Shingle Style design, but Norman Farmhouse dwellings were more literal translations, built of stucco or richly textured fieldstone. The vernacular structures of Provence and small Renaissance manor houses also were important sources for dwellings identified at the time as Provençal or French Provincial. The French revivalist modes, employed alone or in combination with their English cognates, enjoyed greatest popularity between 1910 and 1940.

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Norman-style dwellings are generally gable-roofed asymmetrical masses, often with an L or rambling plan, and usually incorporate a cylindrical, conical-roof tower. French and English features are sometimes combined on the same house.

Spanish Colonial Revival, Mission, Italian Renaissance Revival, Mediterranean

Neo-Georgian and English Medieval were by far the most popular—but by no means the only—local revival modes. The interest in and publication of the Spanish Colonial buildings of Florida and California, part of a general national interest in the country's early buildings, inspired Spanish Colonial Revival architecture. This style became especially common in areas colonized by Spain, but also spread across the country. A lingering interest in Italian Renaissance architecture, first seen in public buildings like the Rhode Island State House (designed 1890, constructed 1895-1904), began to influence domestic architecture, especially country houses, in the early twentieth century. In New England, characteristic features of Spanish Colonial or Italian Renaissance architecture, such as stucco walls, tile roofs, and classical ornament drawn from Spanish or Italian models, are sometimes inventively combined to produce a style perhaps better labeled with the more generic term Mediterranean.

Post-War Styles

In the years following World War II until the end of the period of significance, new forms that reflected the influence of 20th-century Modernism began to appear within the district. Most of these are Ranch houses, low, horizontally massed one-story designs usually with low gable or hip roofs, the latter often with deep eaves. The earliest of these began to appear in the 1950s.

Multi-Family Houses

After 1910 two- and three-family houses began to develop different characteristics from those of the preceding era. The buildings themselves were generally larger in scale than earlier examples, and their exterior form more frankly distinguished their function as buildings of flats, not houses. A new type developed which resembled a stack of Providence-style bungalows, with a pile of columned front porches stretching across their facades. Another type, used on corner lots, had separate entrances on the front and side, one opening into the first-floor flat, the other giving access to the upper floors, utilized as either two flats or a single two-story unit. After 1920 two- and three-family houses more often have a contained rectilinear shape with porches, either open or glazed, recessed within the building's perimeter. Multiple-family dwellings in Edgewood, in contrast to those in other less prosperous areas, generally were larger and more sophisticated in design and plan: a flat typically had a parlor or double parlor, dining room, pantry, kitchen, two or three bedrooms, and a bathroom. Like single-family dwellings, multiple-family dwellings integrated details from popular styles, especially the

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Colonial Revival and the Arts and Crafts. Many had bay windows, Tuscan-column porches, and multiple-pane windows

The three-decker eventually evolved into a multi-unit dwelling a full three stories high, typically covered with a low-pitch hip roof. Many, if not most, examples have a three-level porch across part or all of the front elevation, a feature imparting great architectural distinction to what is essentially a utilitarian building type.

Apartment Houses

Apartment buildings were constructed in the greater Providence area in substantial numbers for the first time during this period. Apartments were especially desirable to single people, young married couples, older couples whose children had left home, and corporate employees frequently transferred by their companies. Life in a compact apartment eliminated the need for servants, the responsibility for property maintenance, and the bonds of property ownership.

The local preference for detached houses and the lack of need for dense patterns of housing discouraged construction of more than a handful of apartment buildings around Providence until the twentieth century. Two buildings of "French flats" were built on Broad Street in the late 1880s: the Westfield Apartments (1886; Howard Hoppin, architect) has since been demolished; the Aylesworth Apartments (1888-89; NR, 1982), 188-194 Broad Street, is the city's oldest surviving apartment house. These were followed by the Cushing Apartments (1902; Hilton & Jackson, architects) at 311-15 Thayer Street. Apartment construction accelerated after 1910.

Apartment buildings represent the first major shift in scale of residential development in Edgewood. Two- and three-family houses often resemble single-family houses in form, while apartment buildings require larger mass and more complex building programs. The forms of apartment buildings are similar to those of comparable scale built in smaller cities across the country during the period. Small apartment buildings usually assumed a simple block plan, but larger ones used L, U, E, or quadrangle plans to provide all units with ample light and air.

Like single-family houses, apartment buildings used stylish trim to dress basic forms. For apartment buildings, image is as much an issue as style. The connotative message of building names or decorative detail played a role in marketing the units. The image of progress inherent in modernism was appropriate for the apartment as a locally new building type; it was used increasingly after 1930 and carried the connotation of big-city sophistication. In addition, the demand for apartments and declining popularity of large houses encouraged the conversion of some nineteenth-century dwellings in the neighborhood into apartment buildings.

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F. Associated Property Types

1. Name: Residential Subdivision

A. Description:

The Residential Subdivision property type is defined as a parcel or tract of acreage with historic boundaries which has been systematically surveyed and platted into streets and building lots intended primarily for the construction of residential buildings and their appurtenances. The historic parcel in nearly all cases will have originally been used as a farmstead or similar rural, agricultural purpose (e.g. cultivated field, pasture, woodlot, etc.), and have boundaries established in the seventeenth, eighteenth, or nineteenth century. In most cases the buildings associated with this earlier use will have been removed, but in some cases they may remain. If the latter, the remaining structure will most likely be a dwelling, which will be considered an integral, contributing element of the subdivision as illustrative of the evolving character of the landscape. The subdivision typically has one or more adjacent subdivisions, which may or may not be interconnected. The network of contiguous subdivisions reflects the transformation of Edgewood from a rural agricultural area to a borderland and later suburb within the metropolitan Providence region. One or more of these subdivisions may constitute a historic district eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, in accordance with Criteria A and C as outlined in Section E of this multiple property submission,

One of the factors contributing to the subdivision process is the historic parcel's proximity to one or more transportation corridors or modes (arterial road, turnpike, streetcar line, trolley, parkway, etc.) connecting it with one or more population centers—in this case Providence on the north and Pawtuxet Village on the south—that could serve as place of employment or focus of other activities or services needed by the subdivision's residents. The subdivision process may also be influenced by other infrastructure features or improvements such as water, sewer, gas, or electric lines. In the case of Edgewood, proximity to Narragansett Bay, which borders the neighborhood on the east, influenced first the disposition of the historic parcels and later the layout of subdivisions. The low bluffs along a portion of the bay frontage provided scenic overlooks that contributed to the development of a grand residential avenue, Narragansett Boulevard, in this location. The development of Roger Williams Park, a major metropolitan park bordering Edgewood on the west, beginning in 1872 and largely in place by 1895, also had an effect on the subdivision process.

The pattern and dimensions of streets and building lots of the subdivision are typically adapted to the configuration of the parcel subdivided and affected by the factors cited above, together with the needs or desires of the developer and prevailing real-estate market conditions. The result is a variety of linear, orthogonal grid, modified triangular or fan-shaped, and curvilinear plans, with streets, lots, and setbacks of various dimensions. The development process and diverse configurations of subdivisions are detailed in Section E pages 1-31.

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Curvilinear or picturesque "garden suburb" plans are extremely rare in Cranston and generally throughout Rhode Island in the period before World War II. The great majority of subdivisions are characterized by straight streets laid out in a linear or grid plan. In some cases cross streets appear for circulation within the plat or connections to adjoining subdivisions, but the nature and sequence of subdivision within the larger neighborhood tended to minimize inter-subdivision connections, which tends to discourage through-traffic in individual subdivisions.

The great majority of buildings in the subdivision are detached single- and multiple-family dwellings, together with their appurtenances (outbuildings, grounds, landscaping, etc.). The multiple-family category includes double or semi-detached houses, two- or three-deckers (houses containing respectively two or three flats, one on each floor), and multi-unit apartment buildings. The distribution of these building types, from most to least numerous, is single-family houses, two- and three-deckers, double houses, and apartment buildings. Non-residential buildings, structures, or objects may be features of the subdivision, and will be considered as integral elements of the property type if they are physically located within the bounds of the subdivision, as originally platted or subsequently replatted, and they have historically contributed to the support or enhancement of the domestic life of the subdivision's residents. Non-residential properties are typically concentrated along the larger neighborhood's major arterial streets, whose heavy traffic makes them less desirable as sites for dwellings. Some larger, former dwellings along these streets have been converted to non-residential uses. Contributing non-residential properties may include, but not necessarily be limited to, commercial buildings, schools, fire stations, churches, libraries, clubhouses, parks, and playgrounds.

The great majority of residential structures are of wood-frame construction, clad with clapboard, shingle, aluminum, or vinyl siding. A smaller number of houses have brick veneer, stone veneer, or stucco finish. Apartment buildings are generally the exception. These are most likely to be of masonry veneer, masonry bearing-wall, or, for later examples, steel-frame and masonry construction.

The majority of single-family dwellings are two to two and one-half stories high, sometimes with a taller projecting bay or tower. Occasionally a one and one-half or one and three-quarter story cottage will appear. After about 1910 one-story plans start to appear, first the bungalow, and after 1945 the ranch.

The majority of double houses are designed to resemble two mirror-image single-family houses joined together. Occasionally double houses take the form of a much-enlarged single-family house.

The true two- or three-decker typically has substantially identical-plan flats on each floor, a low hip roof, and a stack of porches on the front. A common variant is the two and one-half story house with cross-gable roof or end-gable roof with gable or hip dormers, containing substantially identical-plan flats on the first and second floors and a flat of different plan on the third floor.

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Apartment buildings of the early twentieth century generally take the form of two- or three-story rectilinear blocks with wings arranged on straightforward or modified L- or U-shaped plans, though there are a few examples of simple rectangular-block buildings. These typically have an internal circulation system. A few later examples from the 1950s and 1960s follow an imagery based more on modern motel design of the period, some with external circulation systems involving open galleries giving access to the upper-floor apartments.

The great majority of buildings in the subdivision, both residential and non-residential, are constructed in traditional, period revival, or eclectic styles, following the standard sequence common in the northeastern U.S.A. through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as outlined in Section E pages 32-45. Exceptions include a number of commercial buildings constructed in a stripped-down, utilitarian manner which is in essence conservative rather than Modern in a design sense. There are very few examples of Modern or modernistic architecture, and these are mostly confined to commercial buildings, apartment buildings, and a neighborhood schoolhouse.

B. Significance:

The residential subdivisions of Edgewood document and illustrate the process of suburbanization, one of the most significant trends in American history, as it occurred in the greater Providence metropolitan region from the mid-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries. In the United States, nineteenth-century industrialization contributed to dramatic population growth of cities and undesirable living conditions at or near urban cores. Transportation improvements allowed the expansion of settled areas into previously unbuilt tracts of land at or beyond city limits, at a density lower than in central cities themselves. The distribution of buildings interspersed with open space created less crowded settled areas without the disadvantages of urban life and with some of the amenities of country life. The spread of suburbs around central cities has had a tremendous impact on the American landscape, and the residential subdivision has been the basic structural unit of the suburban landscape. Edgewood's residential subdivisions are products of the growth of metropolitan Providence in accordance with these national trends. The distinctive features of this particular location, between bay shore and lushly landscaped parkland, make them especially interesting in terms of the broader patterns of regional growth. The fabric of these residential subdivisions—their residential and non-residential buildings and their surroundings—document the evolution of Edgewood from rural hinterland to metropolitan suburb. The buildings also have significance as representative examples of either the typical or exceptional character of building construction or architectural design through the period of the subdivision's development.

Criterion A (Community Planning & Development):

Originally part of Roger Williams's Providence Purchase, the Edgewood area was home to a few settlers as early as 1638, but it was not until the last quarter of the seventeenth century and on through the eighteenth that

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the initial pattern of the community was established. Edgewood became part of the Town of Cranston in 1754, and was home to a scattering of farmsteads until the great changes in industry and transport of the nineteenth century. Located on the fringe of the developing metropolis, Edgewood was the location of developments characteristic of such “borderlands”—resorts, a cemetery, and country houses of some of Providence’s well-to-do. In the second half of the century, the advent of streetcar lines through the area and the development of a major park increased the attraction of Edgewood to the growing population of metropolitan Providence, and the area became a desirable suburb. One after another, plats were laid out through the neighborhood, each adapted to particular topographic and market conditions. Each had a characteristic form and pattern and, taken together, they illustrate the story of Edgewood. Well into the twentieth century, developers continued to subdivide land, and these plats, with their residences, neighborhood institutions, and commercial facilities, make up the fabric of the area. The neighborhood was largely developed by the 1930s. Additional building continued, but at a much reduced pace. By the 1940s Edgewood had, for the most part, achieved its present character.

Criterion C (Architecture):

The buildings in the residential subdivisions of Edgewood stand either as typical or exceptional examples of architectural types or styles prevalent at various stages during the neighborhood's development. Buildings will be considered significant under Criterion C if they represent one or more of the types or styles outlined in Section E pages 32-46. Although documentation in Cranston of architects' participation in construction in Edgewood is practically non-existent, a number of buildings in the neighborhood are identical or very similar to buildings in other communities which can be documented as works of prominent individual architects or firms. Among these are Gould & Angell (Thomas J. Gould, Frank W. Angell), Angell & Swift (Frank W. Angell, Frank W. Swift), Hilton & Jackson (Howard K. Hilton, Frederic Ellis Jackson—first name usually abbreviated to the initial F.), and Franklin J. Sawtelle (first name often abbreviated as Frank). A couple of houses bear a close resemblance to a design by George F. Barber, the noted Knoxville, Tennessee architect and pattern book author.

Level of Evaluation:

Examples of this type will be evaluated in a local context. The RIHPHC Historic Preservation Plan establishes contexts for evaluation whose spatial component for historic above-ground resources is determined by municipal and neighborhood boundaries. Most properties are evaluated in a local context and are measured against other similar properties within municipal or neighborhood boundaries.

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Known Related Properties:

A few dozen properties of this type have been identified and mapped, but have not yet been fully recorded and evaluated. Two properties of the type have been evaluated and listed in the National Register. An additional example accompanies this MPS.

Listed on the National Register

Williams Park Plat (1873) / listed as Norwood Avenue Historic District, Cranston, Providence Co., R.I.
Edgewood Historic District – Taft Estate Plat (1904)

Nominated to the National Register

Edgewood Historic District – Arnold Farm Plat (1889, 1892)

Identified and mapped: additional evaluation needed

Abby Thornton Estate / Allen Shaw Plat (1867); D.R. Childs Plat (1872); Edgewood Plat (1882); Shaw Avenue Plat (1910)
Anstis Greene Estate / L.J.C. Andrews Plat (1872); Angell Plat (1873); Anstis Gardner Heirs Plat (1874); Henry-Fearney Plat (1900)
Sally Greene Homestead / Rice & Hayward Plat (1875); Edward P. Taft Plat (1897); Brattle Farm Plat (1901); Hayward Plat (1912)
Aberdeen Plat (1901)
Bay View Plat (1859)
Smith's Palace Plat (1874)
Talbot Manor (1926)
Roger Williams Park Plat (1872)
E.J. Billings Plat (1874)
Alfred Anthony Estate Plat (1892)
Williams Farm Plat (1939)
John R. Bartlett Plat (1881, 1891, 1927)
Lockwood Lot (1874, 1909)
Edgewood Villa (1898)
West Edgewood (1903)
Roger Williams Terrace (1939, 1941)

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C. Property Type Registration Requirements:

Integrity:

In general, a district eligible for the National Register under this context will retain sufficient integrity to illustrate in physical form its significance. Integrity of location will be demonstrated by the survival of a substantial majority of all major structures ever built within the district. Integrity of setting (street width, setbacks, verges, plantings, sidewalks and the like) is expected but is not a requirement. Examples of properties will be considered sufficiently well preserved if they are able to convey in their exterior form, materials, and design their original appearance. Minor alterations to the exterior of the component buildings of districts are expected, but a neighborhood will be considered eligible if a majority of its properties display their original wall coverings, windows, and porches. Interior alterations to component buildings will not disqualify a district from listing in the National Register. The addition of later buildings to a potential district may affect integrity. A district will be considered eligible if a substantial majority of its major component buildings date from the period of significance.

Associative qualities and physical characteristics:

A district will be considered eligible in this context under Criterion A if it exhibits in its history an important aspect of the development of Edgewood as a farming outpost of Providence, as a borderland and the location of summer houses and resorts, as a streetcar suburb of the Providence metropolis, and, finally, as an automobile suburb. To be eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, properties will be either fine or typical examples of the architecture of their period. Some districts nominated under this context may encompass both typical houses and those of additional architectural elaboration.

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G. Geographical Data

This multiple property submission includes the portions of the City of Cranston and the City of Providence, Providence County, Rhode Island, bounded on the north by the Providence city line at Montgomery Street, on the east by Providence River / Narragansett Bay, on the south by the Pawtuxet Village Historic District (NR) and Pawtuxet River, and on the west generally by Mashapaug Brook and Bellefonte Pond, south of Park Avenue, and Roger Williams Park, a City of Providence municipal park, north of Park Avenue.

The boundaries of Roger Williams Park and the City of Providence are not coterminous. Consequently, a small number of properties on the western border of the area covered by this MPS fall wholly or partially within the incorporation limits of the City of Providence, though by association, physical contiguity, and visual linkage they are integral parts of Cranston's Edgewood neighborhood.

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H. Identification & Evaluation Methods

A survey of Cranston's historic resources was begun in 1978 and completed in 1980. The survey was undertaken by the R.I. Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission. Supplemental survey work and updating of the city survey have been undertaken in the years since 1980. A preliminary archaeological survey has been undertaken.

The Cranston survey is part of the RIHPHC's ongoing effort, outlined in the State Historic Preservation Plan, to create a statewide inventory of sites, buildings, districts, and objects important to Rhode Island's history and pre-history. The products of the survey—published survey report, Historic Building Data Sheets, and maps—are resources for local, state, and federal planning. They identify the resources which should be taken into account when projects are undertaken which may affect them.

The Commission's surveys include four phases of work: field survey, mapping, historical research, and preparation of a final preservation report (which may take the form of a booklet or a National Register nomination). A standard survey form, which includes historical and architectural or physical information and an accompanying photograph, is prepared for each site, building, or object included in the survey. Historical information is obtained through historic maps, published and unpublished histories, guidebooks, manuscripts, photographs and other images, newspapers and periodicals, directories, deed research, census materials, and local and state records, as well as from knowledgeable residents.

Essential data is transferred from the survey forms to maps and, once a property is listed, to the National Register Database. These may indicate location (address, plat, lot) and date of construction. Detailed maps for areas of special interest (such as historic districts) are prepared. In addition, properties on the National Register and those which appear to meet the eligibility requirements are entered in the R.I. Statewide Planning division's computerized mapping system (RIGIS) to insure that data is widely available.

A preservation report is usually published for each community survey--it is based on the field survey and additional research. Its core is a comprehensive history of the community which focuses on the physical development of the survey area, from the time of aboriginal inhabitation to the present, as revealed in the community's present morphology, topography, and natural setting, as well as in the physical evidence of human settlement, such as roads, neighborhoods, industrial and commercial centers, and individual buildings. This fieldwork, research, and narrative provide the community and neighborhood context for evaluation of properties for National Register eligibility. When published, the survey report and copies of all the survey materials are placed on file for public consultation at the RIHPHC office. The set of materials for each context and community includes the completed survey forms, the final report, and National Register nominations.

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The survey of Cranston was conducted by qualified historians and architectural historians. Nominations for listing in the National Register are reviewed by the Rhode Island Review Board.

Historic contexts are defined by the process outlined in the R.I. Historic Preservation Plan (2002). The contexts are hierarchical in nature and may be studied in part or full as circumstances allow. The development of the Edgewood section of Cranston is part of a context which includes the historical and architectural development of the City of Cranston. The typology of properties is based on historic function. A standard list of twenty-one property types is used throughout the state. The property type considered here is Residential Subdivisions (identified as "Residential Neighborhoods" in the current version of the Historic Preservation Plan filed with the National Park Service, now being revised). Other property types related to the development of Edgewood may be considered in the future. The requirements for integrity established in Registration Requirements are based on actual knowledge and professional evaluation of the condition of residential neighborhoods of Edgewood.

The Historic and Architectural Resources of Edgewood MPS is the product of additional survey and research conducted in 2002, 2006, and 2008-09. The nomination for the Norwood Avenue Historic District, Cranston, Providence County, R.I. (NR, 2002) provided a preliminary basis for understanding historic suburban development in Edgewood, and encouraged property-owner interest in nominating other parts of Edgewood to the National Register. A reconnaissance survey by RIHPHC staff identified suitable boundaries for the neighborhood study area and portions of the larger neighborhood which appeared to warrant additional investigation to determine their eligibility for the National Register. A geographic framework for the patterns of suburban development was established through detailed research of subdivision plats and land evidence, tax, and probate records. This was augmented by research in genealogical sources (since familial relationships played a large role in the tenure and conveyance of the historic parcels that became the sites of later subdivisions) and city directories, to document sequences of ownership and occupation. Individual buildings in a portion of the neighborhood were surveyed and photographed to develop an understanding of the nature of the historic resources within the study area. The context formulated from this research provided the basis for the statement of significance of the Edgewood Historic District—Taft Estate Plat, Cranston, Providence County, R.I. (NR, 2003). In 2006 the Arnold Farm tract was selected for survey and documentation. The Taft Plat significance statement, augmented with additional research and refinements informed in part by the Arnold Farm study, in turn served as the basis for the present Edgewood MPS.

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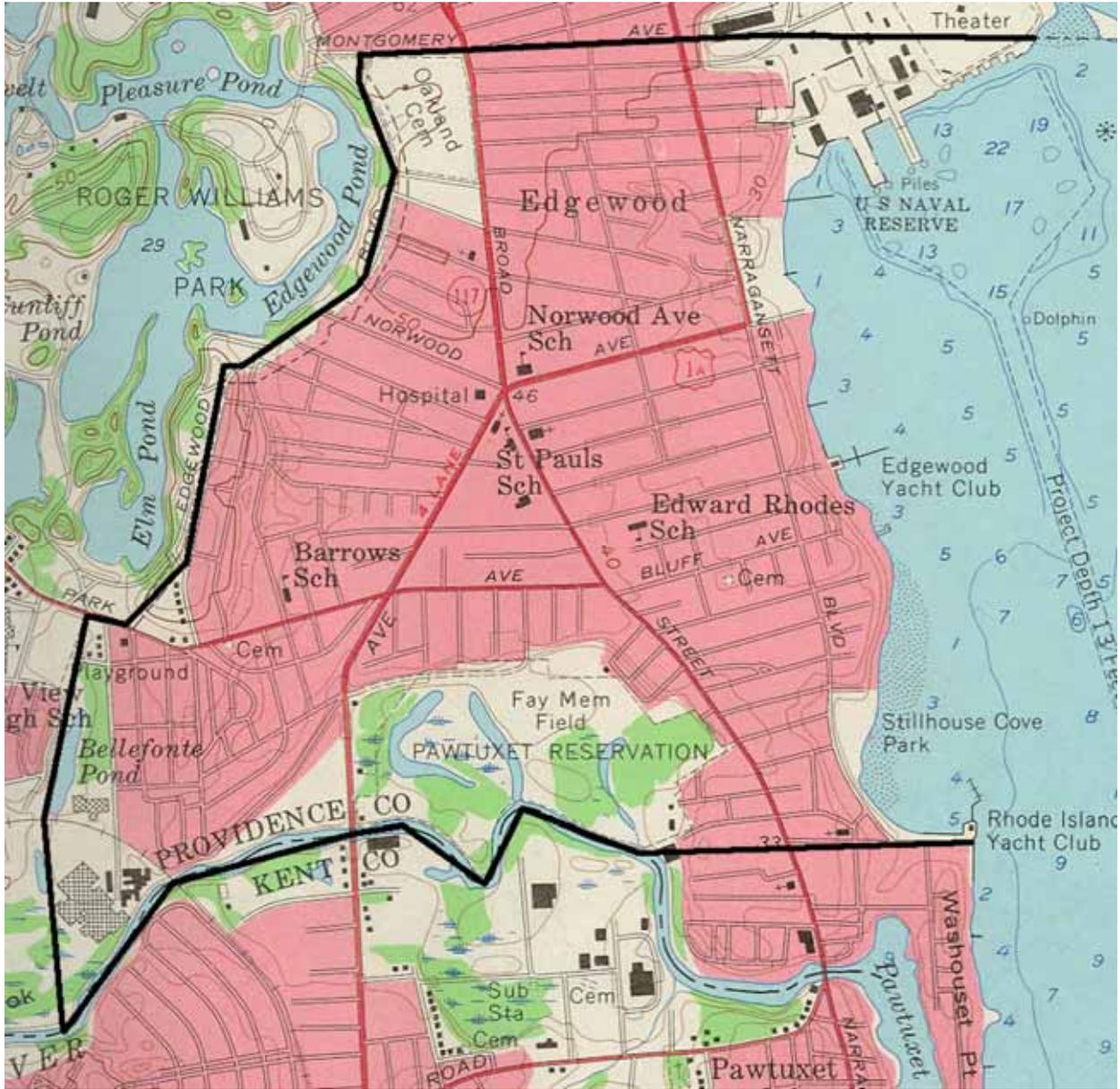
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Maps

Section of 1957 USGS 7.5' Providence Quadrangle showing boundaries of the Edgewood study area for this Multiple Property Submission.

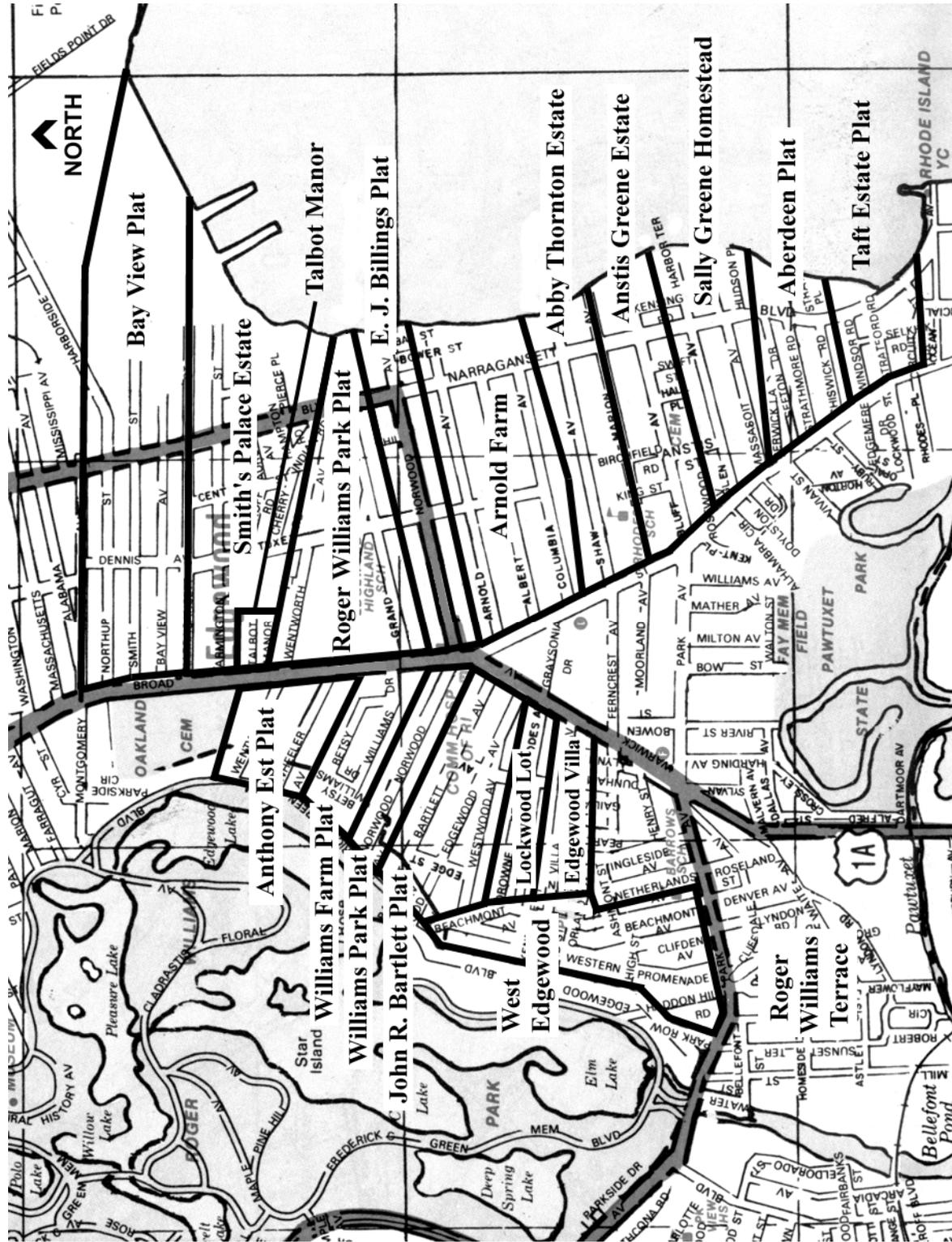
Map of Edgewood subdivisions identified to date (2009).

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Section of 1957 USGS 7.5' Providence Quadrangle showing boundaries of the Edgewood study area for this Multiple Property Submission.

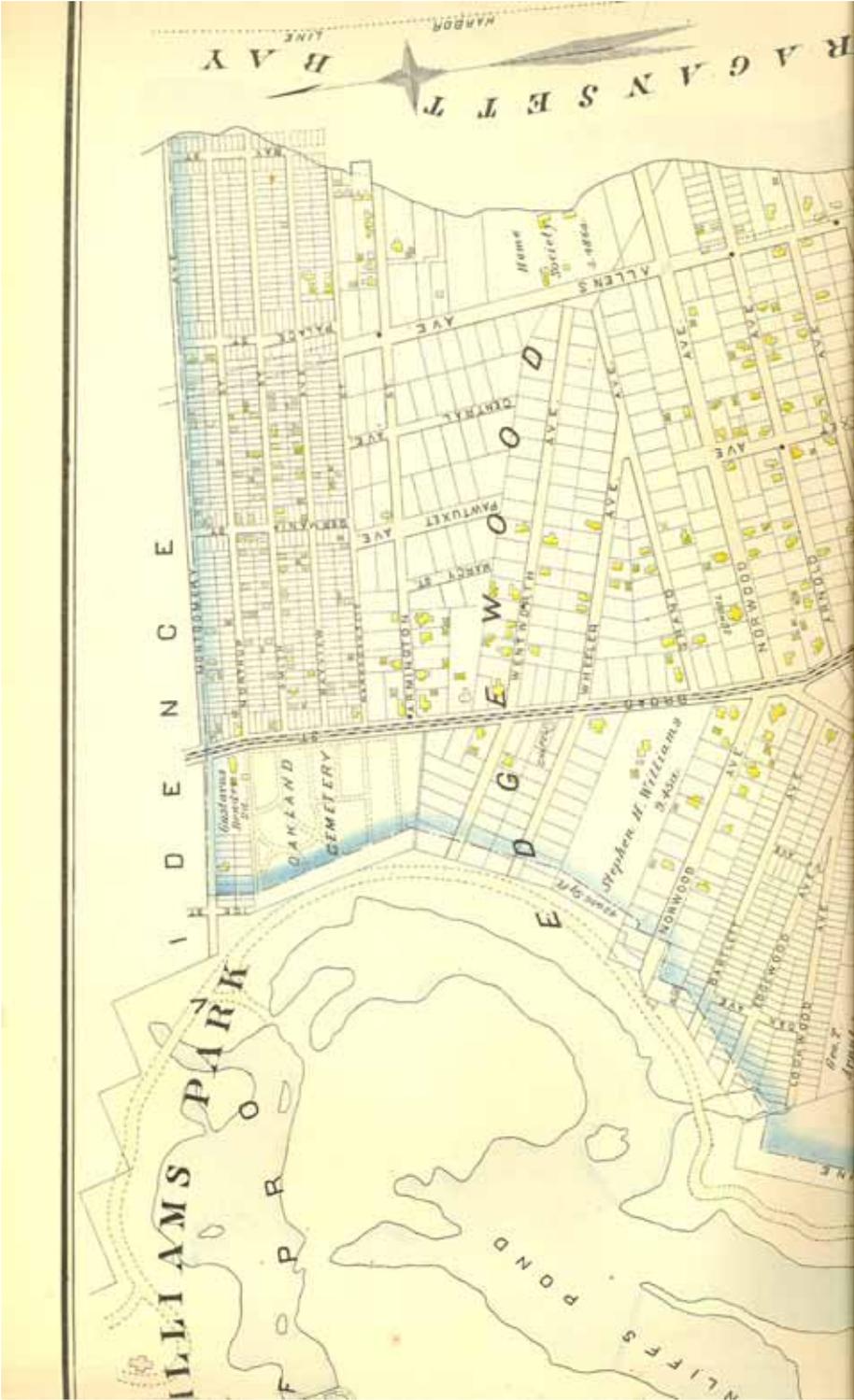
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Map of Edgewood subdivisions identified to date (2009).

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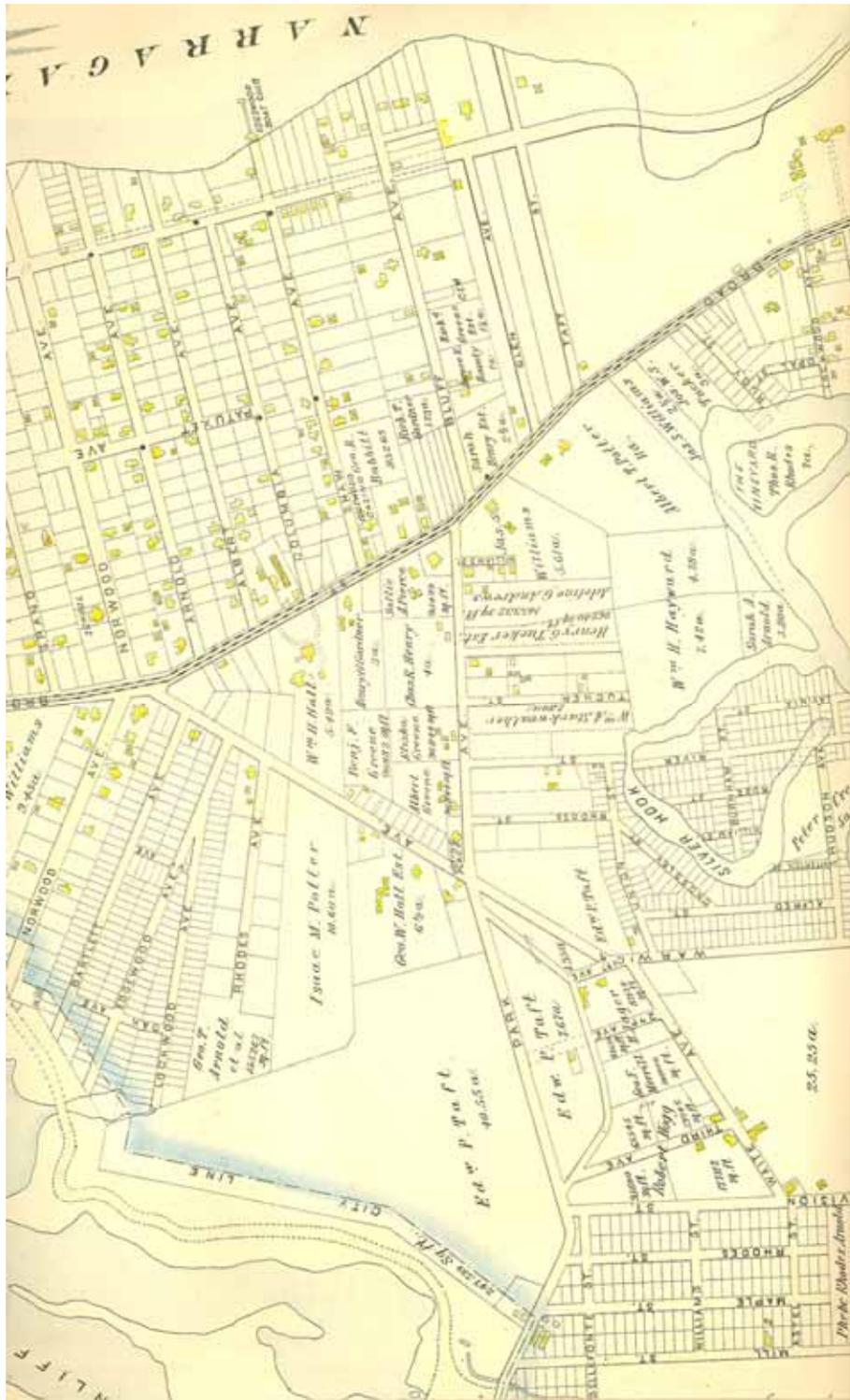
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1895 map of Edgewood, north part.

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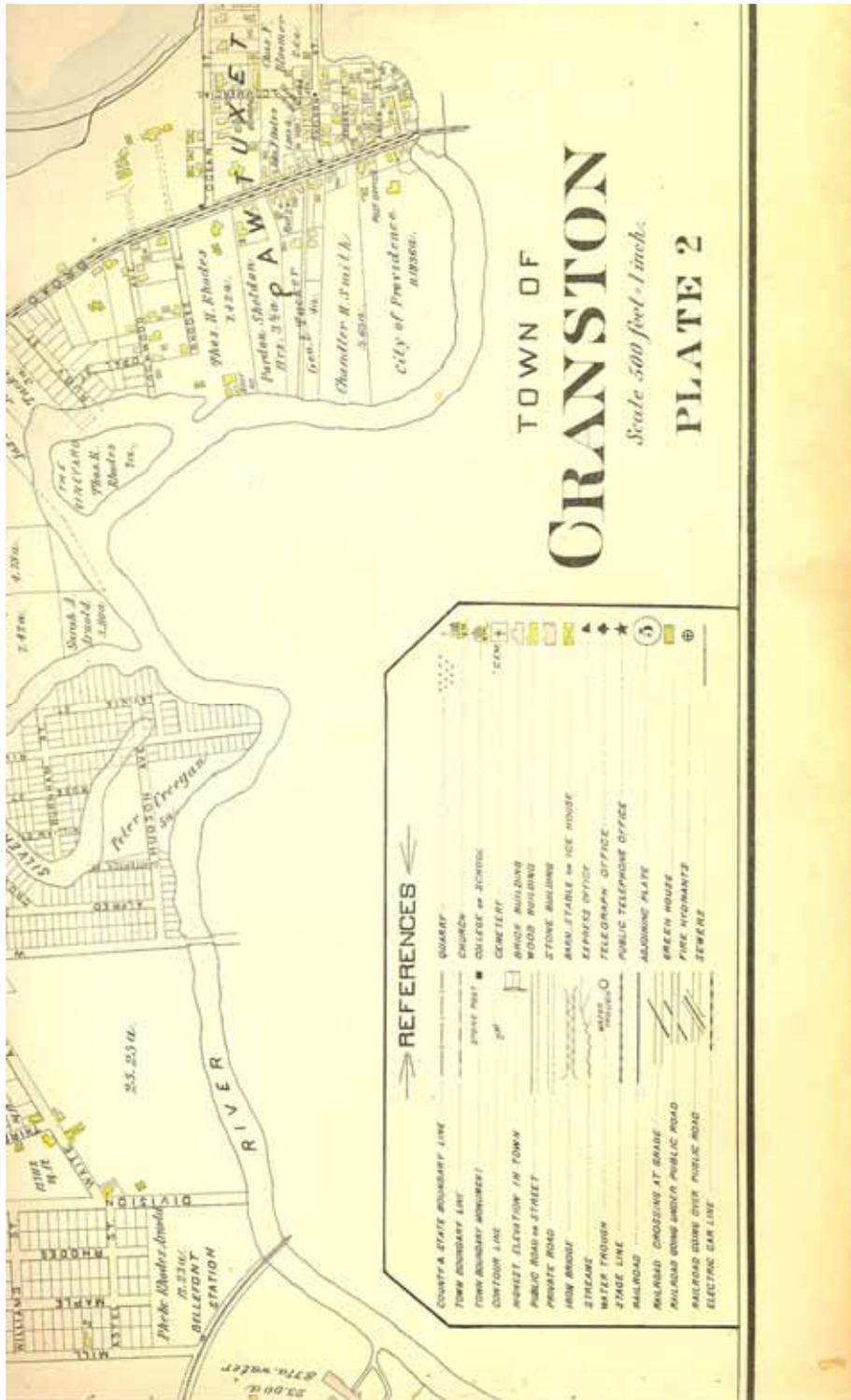
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1895 map of Edgewood, central part.

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1895 map of Edgewood, south part.