

# What's Out There<sup>®</sup> Newport County





Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



**The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF)**

TCLF provides the tools to see, understand and value landscape architecture and its practitioners in the way many people have learned to do with buildings and their designers. Through its Web site, lectures, outreach and publishing, TCLF broadens the support and understanding for cultural landscapes nationwide to help safeguard our priceless heritage for future generations.

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**Welcome to *What's Out There Newport County*, organized by The Cultural Landscape Foundation and The Preservation Society of Newport County, with support from national and local partners.**

This guidebook provides details about the fascinating history and design of many of Aquidneck Island's most significant landscapes. Please keep and enjoy this guidebook for future excursions into the remarkable landscape legacy of Newport, Middletown, Portsmouth, and Jamestown.

Newport County is, by no exaggeration, one of the most extraordinary places in the United States. In his *Proposed Improvements for Newport* written in 1913, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., son of the designer of New York's Central Park, reported: "I am surprised and pleased to find in how large a measure Newport retains the picturesque charm which, with its climate and its harbor, won for it that distinction as an agreeable place of residence which forms the main basis of its prosperity." Calling attention to the natural scenery of Newport's distant views across dramatic topography to the shores and open water, Olmsted was equally impressed by the intimacy of the city's narrow streets and buildings, the intricacy of its parks and gardens, and the magnificence of its majestic tree canopy.

From its establishment in 1639 and the emphasis its founders placed on personal, political, and religious freedoms, Newport has set itself apart. Over the centuries, Newport grew from an agrarian and mercantile economy, developed into a locus of industry and tourism, and became the home of a world famous collection of architecture and gardens. Many of Newport County's landscapes such as Green Animals and Chateau-sur-Mer benefitted from lifelong residencies of immigrant gardeners. Still others were the product of designers such as Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. who developed Rough Point, Horace Trumbauer at The Elms, and John

Russell Pope, who designed the allée at Redwood Library and Athenæum. Vernacular landscapes too reveal the character of Aquidneck Island: Agricultural landscapes such as Prescott Farm reveal stories of subsistence, Fort Adams and Miantonomi Memorial Park display the importance of Newport's strategic military positioning, and the Common Burying Ground and God's Little Acre are testament to equality in death. Overlooking Narragansett Bay, the Cliff Walk—a centuries-old trail used by fishermen—is now a National Recreation Trail constituting a public right-of-way across private property. And Queen Anne Square, a Postmodernist landscape recently designed by Maya Lin, commemorates the lives of Newport's residents and sits comfortably amidst National Historic Landmarks and historic districts.

*What's Out There Newport County* dovetails with TCLF's Web-based *What's Out There*, the nation's most comprehensive searchable database of historic designed landscapes. The database currently features more than 1,700 sites, 10,000 images, and 900 designer profiles. *What's Out There* is optimized for iPhones and similar handheld devices, and now includes *What's Nearby*, a GPS-enabled function that locates all landscapes in the database within a 25-mile radius of any given location.

On behalf of The Cultural Landscape Foundation, I appreciate your interest in *What's Out There Newport County* and I hope you will enjoy experiencing Aquidneck Island's unique and unparalleled landscape legacy.

Sincerely,

**Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR**  
**PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER, THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE FOUNDATION**



Rough Point, photo by Mary Funderburk

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# Eden of America

The landscape of Newport is dramatic and seductive. Rugged cliffs, windswept meadows, and parks dotted by rare trees mingle with European parterres and fountains. The blend of these disparate elements of untamed nature and highly cultivated gardens gives the city its unique and distinctive character. Perched at the picturesque tip of Aquidneck Island, scenery and social life have shaped the cultural landscape of Newport for the past three centuries. The colonial quarter hugs the west facing harbor, while the summer colony of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries sought out ocean views from the fields, cliffs, and rocky coastline to the east and south. As the acknowledged “Queen of Resorts,” nineteenth century Newport attracted the nation’s leading architects, landscape architects, and decorators, who made the town a veritable laboratory of design. Bellevue Avenue, established in the early 1850s, became the site of a construction boom of Gothic and Italianate villas, which were featured in *Newport and Its Cottages* (1875), the first of many publications promoting the city as a place for architectural and horticultural fashion. In the 1860s, Ocean Drive opened the rocky coves and rolling hills of the southern part of Newport to development, providing a popular destination.

During the 1880s, specimen trees, especially beech, arrived in Newport in full force. European, Copper, and Fernleaf beeches flourished in the coastal climate, dominating the picturesque schemes of prominent designers such as Ernest Bowditch and Olmsted Brothers, who worked on over



Photo courtesy The Preservation Society of Newport County

30 Newport commissions. Among the notable landscapes of the period are Chateau-sur-Mer, with its superb collection of trees (1852), the model estate and chicken farm at Vinland (1883), and Frederick Law Olmsted Sr.’s Morton Park (1893). A new spirit in landscape design arrived in the mid-1890s, when Beaux-Arts classicism ushered in axial formality and spatial structure, found in Italian Renaissance-inspired palaces and French châteaux rising along the cliffs. Terraced parterres appeared at The Breakers (1895) while The Elms (1901) displayed Italian Baroque style fountains and French Neo-classical garden pavilions.

Since Newport was a place to both see and be seen, champions and critics offered both praise and blame. In *The American Scene* (1907), Henry James expressed his deep disappointment that the gentle island of his youth had become a “breeding ground for white elephants.” *Munsey’s Magazine* (1900) stated, “everything is measured in the scale of millions. Even the flowers preach the gospel of wealth. Nature made it the most beautiful summer resort in the world; man has made it a monument to his colossal vanity. But it has the merit of being a beautiful and magnificent monument.” The high noon of the Gilded Age, its gardens and social theater was the dedication of the Blue Garden at the Arthur Curtiss and Harriet James estate in August of 1913. Illuminated by electric light, the garden was a stage for a troupe of actors dressed as ancient nymphs who cavorted about the flowers and pools until trumpeters in Renaissance costume interrupted the festivities to announce dinner.

“[T]he island is exceedingly pleasant and healthful, and the women beautiful... Travelers, with propriety, call it the Eden of America.”

— Jedidiah Morse, *American Geography; or A View of the Present Situation of the United States of America* (1789).



Watercolor by Ron Henderson

World wars and economic depression brought decline to Gilded Age Newport and its landscapes. New ideas in garden planning found no home in the fading resort, with one notable exception. In 1949, Mrs. George Henry Warren commissioned Christopher Tunnard to design a Modernist garden with boxwood clipped in the form of question marks and semi-colons. The drama of Newport’s physical setting and architectural heritage allowed for a remarkable juxtaposition of old and new in the 1974 *Monumenta* outdoor sculpture exhibition set among the city’s historic buildings, gardens, and coastline. For the exhibit, Richard Fleischner produced the *Sod Maze* at Chateau-sur-Mer while Christo and Jean-Claude wrapped Price’s Neck on Ocean Drive.

Today, with many organizations tending to the care of the city’s public parks and open spaces, Newport is designated a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation and comprises a number of Historic Landmark Districts and National Register of Historic Places designated properties. It is a richly layered cultural landscape offering scholars and casual visitors alike living examples of the artistic, horticultural, and social forces that shaped this unique American landscape in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The natural and the manufactured coexist in Newport, sometimes comfortably, sometimes not. This dichotomy has always inspired creativity and compromise, often resulting in a lively dialogue among both critics and champions of this so-called “Eden.”

- John R. Tschirch, Architectural Historian

# Beavertail Light

Located on a strategic four-acre parcel at the southernmost tip of Conanicut Island, which divides the east and west passages of Narragansett Bay, this lighthouse was built in 1856 and is the third to occupy the site. During the nineteenth century the lighthouse was critical to advances in gas illumination and auditory fog signal technologies. Constructed of rough-faced grey granite blocks, its ten-foot-square, 65-foot-tall tower is surmounted by an iron, decagonal lantern room accessed on the interior by a spiral staircase. Immediately north of the lighthouse are the oil room and two nineteenth century residences for the keeper and assistant keeper (the latter now occupied by the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum); while to its east is the signal house with projecting fog horns (occupied by the Beavertail Aquarium since the 1980s).

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park – State Park

The surrounding parkland is an open, flat expanse of lawn encircled by an asphalt access road, forming a driveway between the oil room and the garage. Brick walkways on the west and south approach the buildings from the road. A rail fence bisects the property and borders its southern tract, while a low stone wall traces its northern perimeter. Across the road to the south lie the foundations of an earlier lighthouse (built in 1755) exposed by a hurricane in 1938. Along with Fort Burnside on its northern border, the property is now part of Beavertail State Park. Vestiges of the fort's Battery Whiting, a concrete gun battery active from 1942 to 1946, are located nearby. The light was automated in 1972 and the site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.



Photo by Ellen Hassett



Photo by Ellen Hassett



Photo by Ellen Hassett

# Watson Farm

The boundaries of this 265-acre farm on the western coast of Conanicut Island coincide closely with those established in a survey of 1657 by Joshua Fisher, who divided portions of the island into agricultural parcels. The plot was assigned to William Brenton, Governor of the Colony of Rhode Island, who employed tenant farmers to cultivate it. It passed among several owners in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including Job Watson, whose son, Robert, built the present-day farmhouse (circa 1796), and whose heirs would retain the property for five generations. In 1979 Thomas Carr Watson, Jr. bequeathed the parcel to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA, now Historic New England), stipulating its continuation as a working farm.

From North Road on the east, a gravel lane leads through mature trees and wooded swamp, which opens to a yard with a farmhouse, barns, and several outbuildings, as well as a vegetable garden and, in the distance, a windmill. To the south, hayfields are shielded by a hedgerow, while to the west views open to seaside pastures and, eventually, Narragansett Bay. Historic fieldstone walls mark the boundaries of the property, as well as internal divisions of pasturage and orchards, just as they did in the seventeenth century. In the early 1980s SPNEA renovated the farmhouse and barns, and returned the land to the hands of tenant farmers, who have instituted rotational grazing; heritage Red Devon cattle were introduced in 2003. The farm is regularly open for self-guided tours, educational programs, and events.



Photo by Ellen Hassett



Photo by Ellen Hassett



Photo by Ellen Hassett

# Prescott Farm

Owned and operated since 1970 by the Newport Restoration Foundation, this 40-acre parcel is home to a collection of historic buildings rescued from imminent destruction, nearly all of which were dismantled elsewhere and re-constructed at the site. A pond and brook divide the grounds into northern and southern sections, the latter operated as a museum, interpreting the landscape and rural life typical of a farmstead on Aquidneck Island in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. To the north are several historic structures, which have been restored and rented to tenant-stewards. Among them is the gambrel-roofed Nichols-Overing House, built circa 1730 and original to the site. This stately residence belonged to Loyalist Henry Overing, and served as headquarters for the British General Richard Prescott, whose kidnapping by American raiders in 1777 made the property noteworthy. A short footbridge crosses the brook leading to the south, where beaten paths meander among apple trees, additional period houses, and a four-paned windmill (circa 1812), which served a distillery in Warren, Rhode Island, and two subsequent sites in Portsmouth, before being installed at Prescott Farm in 1969. Picket fences surround kitchen and herb gardens, which were researched and planted through the University of Rhode Island's Master Gardeners program, and include plants used for colonial-era foods and medicines. Low stone walls mark the property along West Main Road, from which it is entered, and are used to outline its fields, as well as the pond near the road. The western portion of the parcel is occupied mainly by trees surrounded by low scrub.

**Designed By:**  
Rhode Island Master Gardeners



Photo by Ellen Hassett



Photo by Ellen Hassett



Photo by Ellen Hassett

Photo by Ellen Hassett



# St. George's School

Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Overlooking Sachuest Bay from a broad hilltop north of Easton's Point, this school was founded in 1896 by John Byron Diman as "Mr. Diman's School for Boys," first occupying a building on Hunter Avenue in Newport, and then Swann Villa on Seaview Avenue, near First Beach. Re-named for the third-century saint, the school moved a few miles east to its more expansive setting in 1901, and was re-chartered as a private school affiliated with the Episcopal Church in 1907. Between 1904 and 1906, Olmsted Brothers produced ten plans for the school.

Most of the 125-acre campus lies north of Purgatory Road, with tennis courts and a few faculty residences to the south. Clustered in axial groupings and forming courtyards, 50 buildings are surrounded by expanses of tree-shaded lawn, many of which serve as athletic fields. Lined with Norway maples, Main Drive is the primary access to the property from Purgatory Road, arriving at a circle in front of the Old School building before skirting west to reach the heart of campus, where historic structures are organized in quadrangles. Here, two courtyards—Dragon Quadrangle and Wheeler Close—front three contiguous early twentieth century buildings, all listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2004: the Memorial Schoolhouse, designed by McKim, Mead & White; Ralph Adams Cram's Gothic Revival Church of St. George; and the Little Chapel, designed by Clarke, Howe & Homer, and moved east from its original location in 1924. In 2009 Sasaki Associates produced a master plan to help guide future growth of the campus.

**Landscape Style:**  
Arts & Crafts  
Picturesque or "Romantic"

**Landscape Type:**  
Campus – Quadrangle Plan

**Designed By:**  
Olmsted Brothers  
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.  
Percy Jones  
Edward Whiting  
Horace Trumbauer  
Ralph Adams Cram  
Clarke, Howe & Homer  
Sasaki Associates

Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Louis Walker

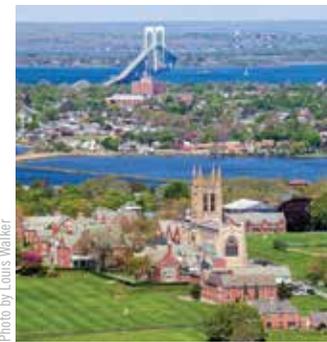


Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



# Paradise Valley

Located in the rural area of Middletown and bounded by Green End Avenue in the north, Second Beach in the south, Paradise Avenue in the west, and Third Beach Road in the east, this coastal valley covers about one square mile and is marked by seven puddingstone ridges, which run from north to south, with one of the more prominent outcroppings known as Hanging Rock. To the south are Nelson and Gardiner Ponds, and, finally, Sachuest Bay, cradled on the west by the 242 acres of peninsular salt marshes and rocky shoreline of Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge. Along the western arm of the bay is Purgatory Chasm, a 50-foot-deep, ten-foot-wide trench created by glacial activity and further eroded by seawater.

Beginning in the 1600s, much of the valley, as well as Sachuest Point, was cleared and used for livestock grazing and farming. Paradise Farm was established in the mid-eighteenth century, and purchased by George Norman in the late nineteenth century, who thereby secured water rights for the Newport Water Works and changed much of the area's topography, doubling the size of Gardiner's Pond and re-routing the Maidford River. The valley was famously frequented by the Irish philosopher George Berkeley, who lived nearby, and its stark ridges and seascapes were often celebrated by painters in the late 1800s, including William Trost Richards, John Frederick Kensett, and John LaFarge. While its northern section is now occupied by housing, nearly half of its acreage belongs to the Norman Bird Sanctuary, established in 1949.



Photo by Ellen Hassett



Photo by Ellen Hassett



Photo by Ellen Hassett

# Norman Bird Sanctuary

Located in Paradise Valley, this 325-acre wildlife refuge and education center is crossed by numerous pedestrian trails among open fields, wetlands, and woodlands, the latter including red cedar, ash, oak, maple, beech, and hickories. At the heart of the sanctuary is an historic coastal farm, with a farmhouse built circa 1750 (with later additions) on land used primarily for sheep grazing, and the production of mixed crops and salt marsh hay. The farm passed among several owners, and beginning circa 1820 was operated by tenant farmers. In the late nineteenth century, Newport businessman George Norman acquired the property to secure water rights for the Newport Water Works, and in 1949, Mabel Norman Cerio deeded much of the farmstead to the bird sanctuary, which later acquired and integrated an additional sixteen acres along Third Beach Road, including the farmhouse.

**Designed By:**  
Mabel Norman Cerio

The sanctuary is still parsed by the fieldstone walls that outlined the original farmstead's orchard, garden, and agricultural fields. Remnants of the orchard are present abutting the north parking area, and a 1/3-acre garden survives between the road and the farmhouse. Originally a colonial-era garden with vegetables and herbs, by the 1930s it had become an ornamental Colonial Revival garden, with cross-axial paths and planting beds organized around four evergreens. Elsewhere on the property are two burial plots, a stone-lined sheep pen, an abandoned quarry, and Hanging Rock, an outcropping often represented in paintings and photography. In 2008 the original farmstead, designated the Smith-Gardiner-Norman Farm Historic District, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Photo courtesy Norman Bird Sanctuary

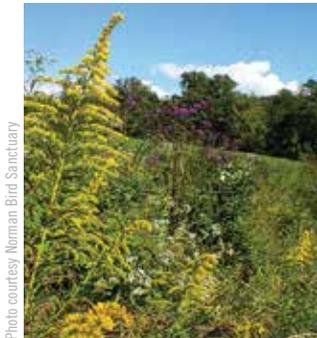


Photo courtesy Norman Bird Sanctuary



Photo courtesy Norman Bird Sanctuary

# Cliff Walk

This 3.5-mile-long path hugs Newport's eastern shoreline, from Easton's Beach at the north to Bailey's Beach at the southwest, affording scenic views of the Atlantic Ocean and passing several Gilded Age mansions along the way. Perhaps created by deer, the cliff-side trail was later used by the Narragansett Indians, followed by colonists. Vested in fisherman's rights granted by King Charles II to colonists in the Rhode Island Royal Charter of 1663—rights further validated in 1843 by the Constitution of Rhode Island—it now constitutes a public right-of-way over private property.

In the 1880s owners of some of the properties adjacent to the trail began to create piecemeal a more unified and amenable pathway, constructing bridges, tunnels, and the like; others planted hedges, erected fences, and introduced various obstructions in a bid for privacy. The northern section of the trail is paved while the southern portion traverses naturally rugged shoreline, skirting 70-foot-high precipices. Formal gardens, wildflowers, and local landmarks such as the Forty Steps can also be glimpsed, as well as geologically significant rock formations containing the fossilized remains of plants. At several points one can re-enter Newport's street grid, and a rocky, natural beach, Belmont, is accessed at Marine Avenue.

Major repairs were necessitated by hurricanes in 1938, 1954, and again in 2012 and retaining walls were built in the 1990s. Designated a National Recreation Trail—the first in New England—the Walk is located within the Ochre Point-Cliffs Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum

Photo by Matthew Traucht



# Ballard Park

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park – Scenic Reservation

Seeking to preserve a large swath of undeveloped land south of central Newport, in 1990 Carol Ballard donated this thirteen-acre parcel to the City. At the same time she sold the abutting 54 acres and placed a conservation easement on the property, creating a wildlife refuge. Once the site of active granite quarries, Ballard stipulated that the park should be used for passive recreation, education, and conservation. Five distinct trails circulate for just over a mile through the park's dense woodlands and ravines, often converging and occasionally ascending to skirt exposed rock faces. Boardwalks cross seasonal streams and wetlands where red swamp maples have taken root; elsewhere a grove of native chokecherry indicates the site of a former pasture. Evidence of quarrying can still be seen throughout the park, whose varying topography is observable from three scenic overlooks. Atop a sheer, 30-foot cliff, Quarry Overlook provides views of the Atlantic Ocean and the three-acre Quarry Meadow below, with its grasses, wildflowers, and grove of quaking aspen. Surrounded by Norway maples, the meadow is the setting for a half-acre, constructed, vernal pond. Notably, eight species of ferns can be found within the park, which is also geologically diverse, with examples of all three basic rock types—igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary—in evidence. Its habitat supports deer, coyote, rabbits, squirrels, and other animals, which also move freely into the neighboring wildlife refuge that includes Goose Neck Cove. Since 1996 the non-profit Friends of Ballard Park has worked with the City to maintain, improve, and promote the park.



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Madeline Berry

# Bellevue Avenue Historic District

Bounded approximately by Spring Street and Coggeshall Avenue on the west, and the Atlantic Ocean on the east, this historic district is formed around a two-mile stretch of Bellevue Avenue that runs from Memorial Boulevard in the north to Bailey's Beach in the south. With magnificent residences and resorts on large lots—most originally surrounded by gardens, greenhouses, stables, and other outbuildings—the northern section developed in the 1830s. With but a handful of commercial blocks (including the Newport Casino), the properties are predominantly residential, and represent a diverse assemblage by illustrious architects such as Richard Morris Hunt, Horace Trumbauer, and McKim, Mead & White and landscape architects including Ernest Bowditch and Olmsted Brothers. Many of the former estates are open to the public and eight properties within the district—The Breakers, Marble House, and Chateau-sur-Mer, for example—are themselves National Historic Landmarks.

It was entrepreneur Alfred Smith, who in 1852 spearheaded the southern extension of Bellevue Avenue through 140 acres of his own farmland, which he then subdivided and sold, with the lots on the eastern (cliffs) side selling first, and the construction of houses—most in the Italianate style—underway even before the road was finished one year later. Along much of its length to the southern end of the island, Bellevue Avenue today is bordered by wide, brick-paved sidewalks interspersed with trees and lampposts, and variously lined by stone walls, hedges, and iron and wooden fences furnished with elaborate gateways. The Bellevue Avenue National Historic Landmark District was so designated in 1976.

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque

**Designed By:**  
Ernest W. Bowditch  
Richard Fleischner  
Richard Morris Hunt  
Olmsted Brothers  
John Russell Pope



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Madeline Berry

# Kay Street / Catherine Street / Old Beach Road Neighborhood

Photo by Madeline Berry



Occupying the high ground beyond the eastern limits of the early settlement of Newport, and formerly known as “The Hill,” this neighborhood developed between 1830 and 1910 on what had been agricultural land. It is approximately bounded by Easton’s Pond, Memorial Boulevard, and Bellevue Avenue, and also includes several blocks between Broadway and Kay Street. Some of the earliest buildings to appear were hotels accommodating visitors to what had become a popular summer resort, clustered around northern Bellevue Avenue and the western terminus of Catherine Street. Among the first structures, the Redwood Library and Athenæum was built by Peter Harrison in 1748 (with gardens designed by John Russell Pope and installed in 1935). From 1845 to 1870, several large estates were built in the neighborhood; but it was over the next 25 years that it reached the height of its development.

Set among wide streets and treed lawns on expansive lots, Greek Revival, Queen Anne, and Shingle Style cottages were designed by some of the nation’s most prominent architects: five by the firm of McKim, Mead & White (including the well-known Coleman House), and at least six were the work of Richard Morris Hunt, who also owned a residence here. While the area became an enclave of illustrious artists, writers, and socialites, new construction ceased almost entirely during the Great Depression, after which homes were no longer built solely for seasonal use. The neighborhood was designated an historic district in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque or “Romantic”

**Landscape Type:**  
Suburb – Picturesque Suburb

**Designed By:**  
Peter Harrison  
McKim, Mead & White  
Richard Morris Hunt  
John Russell Pope

**Related Landscapes:**  
Redwood Library and Athenæum



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Madeline Berry

# Chateau-sur-Mer

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque or “Romantic”

**Landscape Type:**  
Garden and Estate –  
Contemporary Earthwork

**Designed By:**  
Richard Morris Hunt  
Ernest W. Bowditch  
Olmsted Brothers  
John Russell Pope  
Richard Fleischner

Among the earliest Gilded Age mansions along Bellevue Avenue, the “castle by the sea” built for merchant William Wetmore in 1852 is distinct among Newport’s “cottages” as it was intended for year-round use. Designed by Seth Bradford and built of rusticated granite, the mansion was located in a 35-acre coastal meadow stretching to the cliffs overlooking Narragansett Bay. Concurrent with the construction of the house, a red freestone porter’s lodge and entrance arch were built; by 1860 a granite moon gate was erected, reflective of Wetmore’s visits to China. In 1870 Richard Morris Hunt designed granite gates inspired by Egyptian obelisks and three years later Hunt enlarged the mansion. Victorian gardens enveloped the property, designed initially by Wetmore’s gardener Robert Christie and elaborated on by Ernest Bowditch in the 1890s.

Between 1895 and 1940 Swedish gardener Sven Johnson maintained the estate’s landscape, punctuated by greenhouses, stables, and a garden house and bordered by an eight-foot-tall wall on the north and east perimeters. In 1915 John Russell Pope redesigned parts of the mansion and from 1915 to 1918 Olmsted Brothers transformed the property into a picturesque arboretum while reorienting the service road and eliminating an intrusive drive to the south of the mansion. Purchased by the Preservation Society of Newport County in 1966, the seventeen-acre Chateau-sur-Mer was listed in the National Register of Historic Places two years later. In 1974, as part of Newport’s *Monumenta* exhibition of 54 outdoor sculptures, artist Richard Fleischner constructed *Sod Maze*, a 142-foot-diameter earthwork behind the mansion. In 2006 the property was designated a National Historic Landmark.



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum

Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



# Common Burying Ground and Island Cemetery

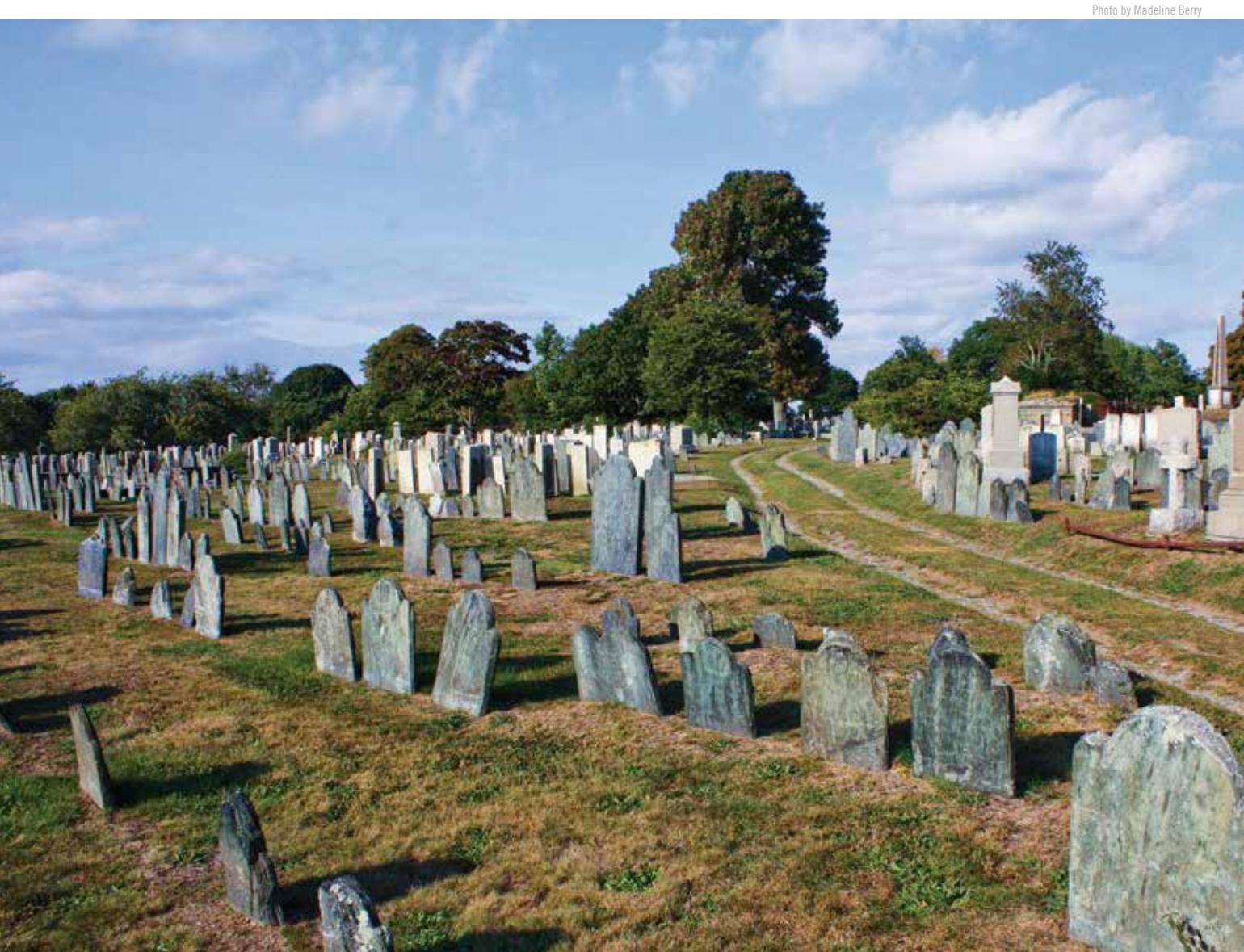


Photo by Madeline Berry

Occupying 31 acres at the northern edge of Newport’s original settlement, these two contiguous cemeteries contain the graves of political, religious, and commercial leaders, as well as Colonial-era slaves. Land for the Common Burying Ground, the oldest public cemetery in Newport, was given to the town in 1640 by one of its founders, the Reverend John Clarke. Containing modest headstones, many dating to the seventeenth century, the cemetery was divided by a road into two sections, one (to the south) for the burial of freemen; the other, for the enslaved, is called God’s Little Acre.

As need grew for increased burial space, in 1836 the town purchased the higher land surrounding the Common Burying Ground on the north and east that would become known as Island Cemetery. Plots in this new cemetery were laid out by Henry Bull and William Freeborn using a grid system, and by 1844 avenues, trees, and plantings were added, creating a park-like setting for its much grander monuments. The circular Belmont plot, for example, includes the marble sarcophagus of Commodore Matthew Perry and a Beaux-Arts exedra designed by Richard Morris Hunt (who is buried nearby). It is abutted by the Belmont Chapel, one of three late Victorian buildings in the cemetery. Some family plots feature carefully designed landscapes. One, the Wetmore plot, is divided and bordered by a privet hedge, while cypress trees mark its entrance and evergreens line the rear of its eastern section. A rich repository of sculpture, Colonial stonework, and history, the two cemeteries were listed as a single entry in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque or “Romantic”

**Landscape Type:**  
Cemetery – Rural Cemetery

**Designed By:**  
Henry Bull  
William Freeborn  
Richard Morris Hunt



Photo by James Yarnell

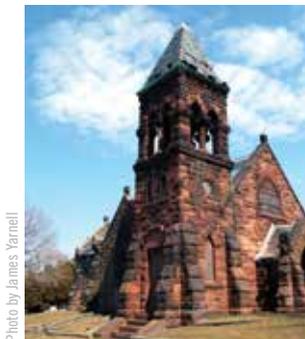


Photo by James Yarnell



Photo by Madeline Berry

# Fort Adams

Located on a peninsula guarding Newport Harbor and the Narragansett Bay, this fortification was constructed between 1824 and 1857 and is one of the largest, most complete nineteenth century military fort complexes in existence. Named for the second President of the United States, the fort was constructed on the site of a colonial observation post built in 1740 and a more extensive coastal defense system erected by 1799. Addressing the continued need for coastal protection, military engineers Simon Bernard and Joseph Totten collaborated on the design of the fort, inspired by French military architecture. Countering potential attacks from both landward and seaward sides and accommodating the site's topography, the masonry, granite, and earthen walls were constructed in an irregular pentagonal shape with a perimeter of 1,749 yards. Executed by Scottish mason Alexander McGregor, the design included outer defenses, subterranean galleries, and extensive ditches.

Fort Adams served as staging grounds through the Civil War, functioned as a command post in World War II, and was utilized by the Eisenhower administration as a summer White House. In 1964 the 80-acre site was acquired by the State of Rhode Island and stabilization of the fort and its associated structures commenced. Interpretive programming provides access to the military history of the fort while soccer fields and a marina accommodate recreational uses. The Fort Adams Trust was formed in 1994 to administer the site and five years later the Sail Newport Barn was constructed. Fort Adams was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1970 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1976.

**Landscape Type:**  
Institutional Grounds –  
Military Institution  
Public Park – State Park

**Designed By:**  
Alexander McGregor  
Simon Bernard  
Joseph Totten



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Madeline Berry

Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



# Miantonomi Memorial Park

Photo by Madeline Berry



The highest natural point in Newport, this hilltop was once the seat of power of the Narragansett tribe. Transferred from Chief Miantonomi to English colonists in 1637, the hilltop was used as a lookout, with a beacon constructed in 1667 and then fortified in 1776. Occupied by colonial, British, and French forces during the Revolutionary War, an American citadel was in place atop the hill from 1796 to 1817. Throughout the nineteenth century, the site was used as picnic grounds until being purchased by Anson Stokes in 1881 for farmland. In 1913, recognizing the value of the picturesque, wooded site, the remains of the historic fort, and the views it provided, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. recommended that the City acquire the property. Seven years later, the Stokes family deeded the 37-acre site to the City and on Armistice Day 1923 the hill was proclaimed a war memorial. In 1929 the 80-foot-tall, arcaded, fieldstone Memorial Tower designed by McKim, Mead & White was erected in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Rhode Island.

In 1977 the City expanded the uses of the wooded park with the introduction of playground equipment, picnic tables, and a four-acre playfield along the eastern section and a stone wall along the eastern perimeter. A network of trails passes through mature stands of oak, birch, pine, and maple; a stone stairway accesses the top of the hill leading to the Tower. Miantonomi Memorial Park was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1968. The Aquidneck Land Trust established a conservation easement on the site in 2005.

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque or "Romantic"

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park – Neighborhood Park  
Commemorative Landscape

**Designed By:**  
McKim, Mead & White



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Madeline Berry

# Portuguese Discovery Monument

Situated within Brenton Point State Park on the southern tip of Aquidneck Island with expansive views of the Atlantic Ocean, this monument on Ocean Drive is dedicated to Portuguese maritime navigators. Brenton Point was a strategic military defensive location during the Revolutionary War and World War II. The State of Rhode Island designated the area a State Park in 1976. In 1988 a site was set aside for a monument, a concept advanced by the Portuguese Cultural Foundation and the Portuguese Federation. Funded jointly by the State of Rhode Island and the Portuguese government, the Point was selected as it is reminiscent of Sagres in southern Portugal, the location of Henry the Navigator's nautical school founded in 1419. Designed by Charters de Almeida and carved in Portugal, sixteen sandstone bollards ranging in height from five to eight feet were organized into a semicircle mimicking the historic pebble compass rose at Sagres Point. In the center, an eight-foot-diameter sandstone sphere representing a Portuguese navigational instrument and a twenty-foot-tall obelisk inscribed with names of explorers were erected.

The exposed location of Brenton Point eroded the sandstone and the monument slowly fell into disrepair. In 2012 the Landscape Architecture Division of BETA Group was commissioned to reinterpret de Almeida's design. Rededicated in 2014, the expanded version of the original is carved from granite and includes interpretive panels and lines of the compass inset into the ground. Occupying less than one acre, the monument is set into a grassy lawn on a promontory extending into the sea.

**Landscape Style:**

Modernist

**Landscape Type:**

Commemorative Landscape

**Designed By:**

Charters de Almeida  
BETA Group, Inc.



Photo courtesy BETA Group, Inc.

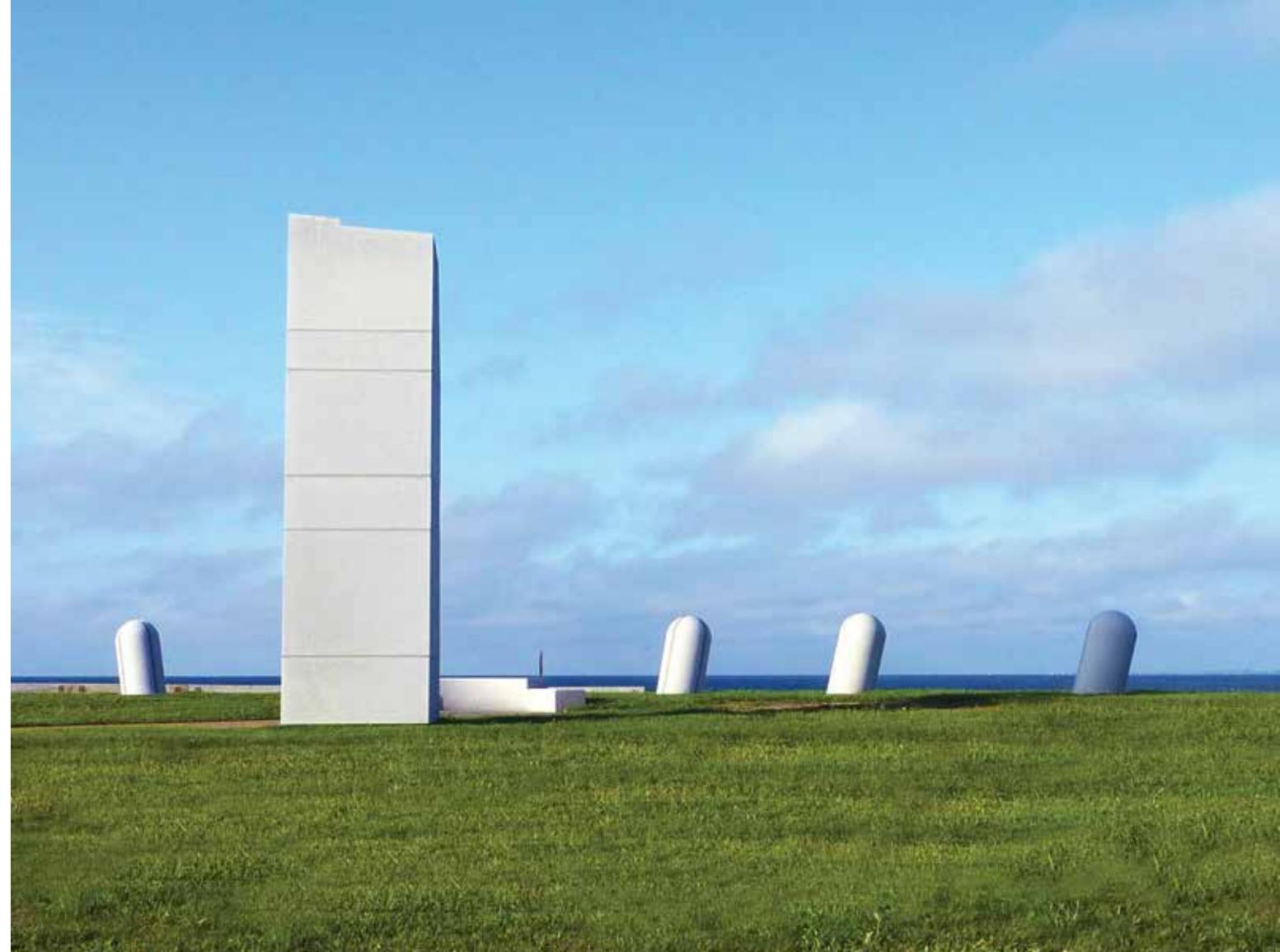


Photo courtesy BETA Group, Inc.



Photo courtesy BETA Group, Inc.

Photo courtesy BETA Group, Inc.



# Rough Point

Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Designed for the Vanderbilts by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. in 1887, this Picturesque landscape overlooking the Atlantic Ocean frames the granite and red sandstone mansion designed by Peabody and Stearns architects. Completed in 1891, the 10.8-acre property perched atop rugged cliffs features sequenced views created by layers of foliage and dramatic topography. Olmsted’s design employs strategically placed specimen trees, a sweeping expanse of lawn, and an arched stone bridge. In 1908 the property was sold to William Leeds who engaged John Russell Pope to renovate the house. To the inland side of the property, Leeds added an enclosed privet garden with tunnel-like openings.

The property was purchased in 1922 by industrialist James Duke who commissioned Horace Trumbauer to renovate the mansion with the addition of two new wings and a sea-side solarium. Duke removed existing croquet and tennis courts, added a driveway, and installed additional hedged formal gardens. In 1925 Duke passed away and bequeathed Rough Point to his thirteen-year-old daughter Doris Duke. Doris, who utilized the property for occasional stays throughout her life, added cutting gardens, vegetable beds surrounded by privet, and a rose arbor and dwarf peach trees near a stand of Olmsted’s hardwoods. Olmsted’s arched bridge, damaged in a 1938 hurricane, was restored to his original design. In 1968 Duke founded the Newport Restoration Foundation to promote Rhode Island’s historic properties. In 1976 Rough Point was included in the National Historic Landmark District for Bellevue Avenue. Duke passed away in 1993 and Rough Point was opened for tours in 2000.

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque or “Romantic”

**Landscape Type:**  
Garden and Estate –  
Picturesque Garden

**Designed By:**  
Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.  
Horace Trumbauer

**Related Landscapes:**  
Bellevue Avenue Historic District



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Mary Funderburk



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum

# The Elms

**Landscape Style:**

Beaux-Arts/Neoclassical

**Landscape Type:**

Garden and Estate –  
Country Place Era Garden

**Designed By:**

Horace Trumbauer

**Related Landscapes:**

Bellevue Avenue Historic District

Designed by Horace Trumbauer for Mr. and Mrs. Edward Julius Berwind of Philadelphia and New York, The Elms was modeled after the 1750 Chateau d’Asnieres in northern France. Built between 1899 and 1901, the grand limestone residence is the centerpiece of 11 acres of formal gardens, developed between 1902 and 1914 under Trumbauer’s direction. Initially of formal French inspiration and influenced by the writings of Charles Platt and Edith Wharton, the gardens evolved to reveal a strong Italianate influence. A massive terrace on the west side of the property serves as an extension of the house, punctuated by a series of fountains and dominated by Pio Fede’s sculpture, *Madness of Athama*. A grand allée on the scale of eighteenth century French palace gardens extends across an expansive lawn toward two formal marble pavilions situated along a minor cross axis above a sunken garden. The grand context for the gardens is a park-like collection of specimen beech, elms, maples, linden, and other large canopy trees. A formal carriage house and stables face the sunken service entrance, camouflaged by a radial pergola. In 1962, The Elms was acquired by the Preservation Society of Newport County. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1996.



Photo by Matthew Traucht



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Matthew Traucht

Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



# Washington Square Historic District



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum

Situated near the natural spring that provided colonists a fresh supply of drinking water, this public square was the civic and symbolic heart of the early settlement of Newport. Linking its neighborhoods to the colonial-era Long Wharf, it is bounded on opposite ends by two historic buildings: On the east is the Colony House, designed by Richard Munday and built in 1739; and, on the west, the arcaded Brick Market, designed by Peter Harrison and completed in 1772. Between them lay an open green, which served as a temporary holding area for livestock en route to market.

By 1800 the town common that encompassed the green was known as Washington Square, and it featured paved pathways, fences and plantings. Within 30 years, additional trees were planted and a cast-iron fountain was installed near its western end. In 1885 sculptor William Green Turner's statue of Oliver Hazard Perry was placed in the park, for which Olmsted Brothers designed a new layout and plantings at the turn of the century. In 1907 a central bandstand was constructed, but it was replaced by the stele dedicated to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, when in 1960 the park was re-named in his honor. The Florence K. Murray Judicial Complex occupies the eastern base of the long triangular green, which is now separated from the edge of the square by vehicular traffic. Notably different from many colonial commons for the absence of a central church, Washington Square is a contributing feature of the 250-acre Newport Historic District, designated a National Historic Landmark in 1968.

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque or "Romantic"

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park –  
Greens/Commons/Squares

**Designed By:**  
Olmsted Brothers



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum

# Memorial Boulevard

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque or “Romantic”

**Landscape Type:**  
Boulevard

**Designed By:**  
Olmsted Brothers  
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

Extending almost two miles, this east-west boulevard connects Newport’s wharf to the residential Purgatory district after traversing a narrow spit of land adjacent to Easton’s Beach. Throughout Newport’s early development, Memorial Boulevard was actually three distinct routes: Bath Road (east of Bellevue Avenue), Levin Street, and Cannon Street (west of Bellevue) were, by the mid-nineteenth century, part of Newport’s network of roads. In his unrealized proposal for the improvement of Easton’s Beach in 1883, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. suggested that a pleasure drive lined with perennials be developed to accommodate traffic to the beach. In 1913, his son, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. provided further recommendations: To preserve the picturesque lawns and mature trees lining the south side, he suggested that Bath Road be widened to the north, with a streetcar line in the center.

The ad hoc development of Bath Road, Levin Street, and Cannon Street continued until the 1960s when downtown Newport underwent revitalization. With the construction of America’s Cup Avenue in 1969, Levin Street was realigned and the three contiguous streets were renamed Memorial Boulevard. Lined by stately homes on the north and commercial structures on the south, the boulevard is divided by a grassy median planted with deciduous canopy trees. Extending from Bellevue to Easton’s Beach, a wide setback, mature trees, and a stone wall parallels the north side of the road. Memorial Boulevard forms the eastern boundary of the Bellevue Avenue Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Madeline Berry

# Redwood Library and Athenæum

Situated on a hill near the colonial town center on land donated in 1748, this library is the earliest example of Palladian architecture in America. Funded by Abraham Redwood and a philosophical society, the library housed a collection of 1,200 books imported from England. Designed by Peter Harrison following a stay in London where he visited Lord Burlington’s Chiswick garden temples, the library was completed in 1750. Overlooking the harbor, the land adjacent to the library was used for militia functions, livestock grazing, and recreation, the latter in the form of a bowling green. In the 1830s several donations resulted in the installation of various plants, the construction of a network of paths, and, in 1835, the planting of a fernleaf European beech, still marking the corner of the property.

Over the next century the library grounds flourished with the planting of several specimen trees, including a Scotch elm, a white horse chestnut, European lindens, and sycamore maples. In 1916 a hexagonal pavilion, also designed by Harrison, was relocated from Redwood’s Portsmouth estate. In 1934 the neighboring property was donated to the Redwood Library and John Russell Pope designed a garden, installed a year later by the Newport Garden Club. Just south of the library, Pope’s garden—comprising an allée of rhododendron, arbor vitae, and mountain laurels—is organized around a cross-axial path system that terminates at the historic pavilion. In 2006 Lucinda Brockway developed a master plan for the grounds and updated the garden. The Redwood Library and Athenæum was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1966.

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque or “Romantic”

**Landscape Type:**  
Institutional Grounds –  
Cultural Institution

**Designed By:**  
John Russell Pope  
Peter Harrison  
Lucinda Brockway

**Related Landscape:**  
Kay Street/Catherine Street/  
Old Beach Road Neighborhood



Photo courtesy Redwood Library & Athenæum



Photo courtesy Redwood Library & Athenæum

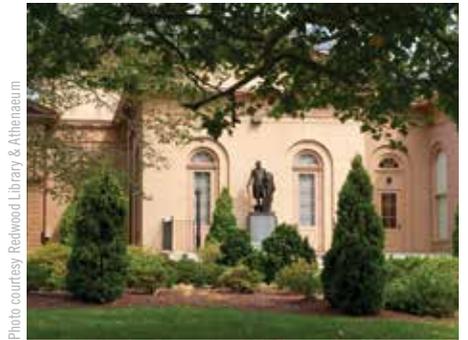


Photo courtesy Redwood Library & Athenæum

# Touro Park and Old Stone Mill

Named for Judah Touro, the Newport-born benefactor who funded its purchase by the City in 1854, this 2.25-acre park is home to the Old Stone Mill. The *Newport Mercury* reported in 1855 that “a Mr. Bourmann of New York” was responsible for the park’s layout; but this was likely a reference to landscape gardener Eugene Baumann, who also landscaped the five-acre grounds of the nearby Beaulieu House, designed by Calvert Vaux. One theory credits Vaux with the design of Touro Park, as well as the music stand installed there in 1871 (but absent by the 1930s). By 1900 a large volume of fill was added to the park, covering serpentine pathways that have since been detected below the current surface.

Comprising a relatively flat city block, the rectangular park is a grassy lawn bordered by four orthogonal streets and is buffered on three sides by sidewalks. Cross-axial concrete paths provide access and converge at a central flagpole. The park is planted with Norway maples, pin oaks, dogwoods, and black walnuts, while Victorian style benches and lampposts line the walks. Prominently displayed is the bronze statue of native Newporter Commodore Matthew Perry, next to which stands the Temple Lantern, a gift of the Japanese Government in 1954 on the centennial of Perry’s opening of Japan to the West. A bronze statue of the Unitarian theologian William Ellery Channing was erected in 1894, facing the church that commemorates his birth. On the western side stands the enigmatic Old Stone Mill, a 28-foot-tall fieldstone-and-mortar structure supported on a ring-shaped arcade of eight pillars, whose original date and function are unknown.

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque or “Romantic”

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park –  
Greens/Commons/Squares

**Designed By:**  
Eugene A. Baumann



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Madeline Berry

# Touro Synagogue National Historic Site

Jews of Spanish and Portuguese origin arrived in Newport from Barbados as early as 1658, forming the second oldest Jewish community in the U.S. In 1677 a Jewish cemetery was established at the corner of what are now Kay and Touro Streets, and in 1759 construction began on a synagogue three blocks to the northwest. Designed by Peter Harrison and finished in 1763, the synagogue is canted to the street, so that worshipers observing the Holy Ark face east towards Jerusalem. In 1822 Abraham Touro bequeathed money to the State of Rhode Island for the maintenance of the street (re-named Touro Street) running between the cemetery and the synagogue, and additional money for maintaining the latter, which was called Touro Synagogue thereafter. In the nineteenth century the congregation waned, and the synagogue was used infrequently; but it re-opened in 1883 with the arrival in Newport of Jews from Eastern Europe.

Located west of the synagogue and opened in 2009 is the Ambassador John L. Loeb Jr. Visitors Center, which contains exhibition spaces, and has annexed the adjacent Barney House (circa 1702) to further its capacity. Between the center and the synagogue is Patriots Park, which honors the roles played by Jews in American history. Created in the 1970s, dedicated in 1980, and renovated in the late 2000s, the park also features a bronze reproduction of George Washington’s letter of 1790, responding to Newport’s Jewish community with an affirmation of religious freedom. Touro Synagogue was designated a National Historic Site in 1946 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966.

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque

**Landscape Type:**  
Institutional Grounds –  
Religious Institution



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Madeline Berry

# Trinity Church

Built for Newport’s Anglican congregation by local master carpenter Richard Munday, who likely worked from plans based upon Christopher Wren’s churches in London, this church was begun in 1725 and replaced a smaller one (circa 1700) on Spring Street. Clad in flush-lapped clapboards, it is notable for its wooden steeple, which includes an arcaded belfry bedecked by finials and surmounted by a lantern, and, finally, a grand spire. In 1762 the nave was lengthened by two bays (some 30 feet), and the steeple was re-built in 1768. From 1985 to 1987 a major restoration campaign was undertaken on the church.

A brick-paved sidewalk separates the plot from Spring Street on the east, while Church Street and Frank Street abut it directly on the north and south, respectively. The church occupies the southeastern quadrant of the rectangular plot, while a graveyard fills the open ground to the north and west. An iron fence surrounds most of the burial ground, with a hedge completing the circuit along the west and south, enclosing rows of headstones and other funerary monuments. These are interrupted only by a flagstone walkway, which enters through a gate from Church Street, before widening to serve two of the church’s entryways. Several early pastors are buried here, as well as the French admiral, Charles D’Arsac deTernay, whose fleet transported Rochambeau’s army to Newport, where the former died in 1780. Trinity Church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and also registered as a National Historic Landmark in 1968.

**Landscape Type:**  
Institutional Grounds –  
Religious Institution

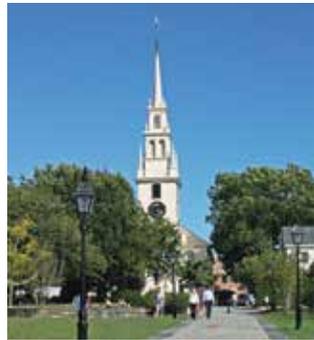


Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum

# Queen Anne Square

Overlooking the wharf and anchored by Trinity Church, this parcel near the historical heart of Newport became a public park in the mid-1970s. In the late 1770s the colonial structures were burned by the British or subsequently demolished; but Trinity Church, being Anglican, was spared. By the 1870s houses had returned, replaced in the mid-twentieth century by a commercial and industrial district. When fire destroyed a store in 1973, the Newport Restoration Foundation, guided by philanthropist Doris Duke, acquired and removed the remaining structures (many of which were abandoned), relocated five historic buildings, and created a park with trees, boulders, and flower beds.

In the mid-1980s, new paths were added, but in 2011 artist Maya Lin and landscape architect Edwina von Gal re-designed the park entirely. A pedestrian path lined with lampposts runs north-south through the one-acre parcel, dividing a lawn crossed by brick-paved walkways, which lead to three outdoor rooms outlined by stone foundations. These echo the footprints of buildings from three different eras, and the thresholds are inscribed with excerpts from historic diaries and ledgers. The foundations (built to seating height) are constructed of native stone, reclaimed from relocated historic houses, and the floors are paved with bluestone from Newport’s old sidewalks. Oaks, elms, maples, and a grove of saucer magnolias are planted throughout, framing the view of Trinity Church’s steeple from Thames Street, along which runs a seating wall made of granite blocks from a demolished bridge.

**Landscape Style:**  
Postmodernist

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park –  
Greens/Commons/Squares

**Designed By:**  
Maya Lin  
Edwina von Gal



Photo by Madeline Berry



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum

# Green Animals

Overlooking Narragansett Bay, this topiary collection is among the oldest and furthest north in the United States. In 1872 Thomas Brayton purchased a white clapboard residence and farm buildings situated on a seven-acre estate and pasture. In 1905 Brayton hired José Carreiro, an immigrant from the Azores, to create and care for flower and vegetable gardens amidst orchards and a network of grape and gourd arbors. Between 1912 and 1945 Carreiro experimented with California privet, propagated in the estate greenhouse, and developed a system of training these—without the support of frames—into life-sized animal shapes. In 1939 Brayton died and left the property to his daughter Alice, who gave the estate its name. That same year, George Mendonça began working with Carreiro on the topiary and gardens, later marrying his daughter. Carrying on the tradition after Carreiro’s death in 1950, Mendonça expanded the gardens to include more than 80 topiaries. In the later years, frame supports began to be used and yew and boxwood were added to the collection of privet.

Today, bordered by mature conifer and magnolia and situated within a pasture, themed garden rooms accessed by a system of axial paths are flanked by densely planted rose, vegetable, and cutting gardens. Near the house and main entrance, the topiary retains a more formal style of figurative and geometric shapes while later plantings tend to be trained into abstractions. Brayton bequeathed the estate to the Preservation Society of Newport County in 1972 and Mendonça continued his work until 1985.

**Landscape Type:**  
Garden and Estate

**Designed By:**  
José Carreiro  
George Mendonça



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum

Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



# Greenvale Vineyards

This 52-acre “gentleman’s farm,” located on a rocky bluff above the Sakonett River, was established as part of a much larger holding as early as 1657 when the region was settled by religious exiles from the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Slowly subdivided, the land was purchased in 1864 by John Barstow. One year previous, Barstow attained a copy of Robert Morris Copeland’s *Country Life*, a book on horticulture and landscape gardening that would influence the development of his “ornamented farm.” Shortly after acquiring the land, Barstow commissioned architect John Hubbard Sturgis to design a Gothic-style house as well as a stable and barn for his prize herd of dairy cattle.

Through the years, the land has remained in the continued possession of the same family. In 1918 Azorean immigrant Frank Silvia began his 61-year employment on the farm, serving as farmer and caretaker of the property. In 1982 the owners transitioned the dairy farm into a commercial vineyard; the stable was repurposed to serve as a tasting room and the house restored. A picturesque drive, descending as it approaches the bluff and passing through a series of gates, traverses agricultural fields and stands of forest before terminating at the historic house, enveloped by sculpted hedges. Dramatic views of the river and the surrounding rural landscape are presented across open lawn and meadow punctuated by mature trees, set amidst rows of grapevines. Greenvale Vineyard was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque or “Romantic”

**Landscape Type:**  
Ornamental Farm

**Designed By:**  
Frank Silvia



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum

# St. Mary's Episcopal Church

Situated amidst farms midway between the town centers of Portsmouth and Middletown, this churchyard and cemetery occupies twelve acres. Settled in the mid-eighteenth century, the site lies on the southern border of the 150-acre Oakland Estate, established by 1850 by the Vanderbilts and including stone entry posts and walls, a polo field, and a ring for exercising show horses. The inaugural service of St. Mary’s was held in 1843 and, four years later, Sarah Gibbs donated 80 acres to the parish. Upon this land, architect Richard Upjohn designed a Gothic church, constructed of fieldstone in 1849. Set a short distance from the road, the church was encircled by a drive and flanked on the north, south, and east by the cemetery. Organized in a symmetrical plan of unenclosed plots with modest headstones, the cemetery is punctuated by specimen trees and bordered by dry-stacked stone walls. It is accessed by a perimeter road and by an extension from the drive that circumscribes the church. Arborvitae, maple, and beeches were planted to create a Picturesque landscape, with an understory of rhododendron and flowering shrubs. In 1927 a rectory and parish house were built; followed by the construction of other buildings in 1970 and 2012.

In 2015 the St. Mary’s parish and the Sarah Gibbs Trust entered an agreement with the Aquidneck Land Trust to establish a 72-acre conservation area surrounding the church and cemetery. Encompassing woodlots, agricultural fields, wetlands, and a pond, the easement protects habitat for a variety of species and safeguards the historic setting.

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque or “Romantic”

**Landscape Type:**  
Institutional Grounds –  
Religious Institution  
Cemetery

**Designed By:**  
Richard Upjohn

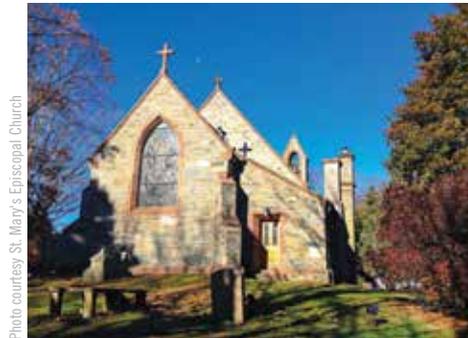


Photo courtesy St. Mary's Episcopal Church

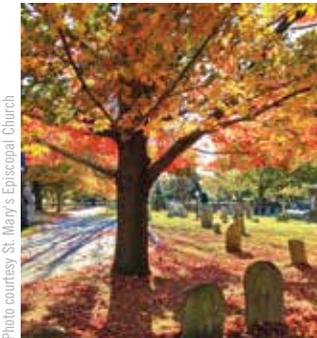


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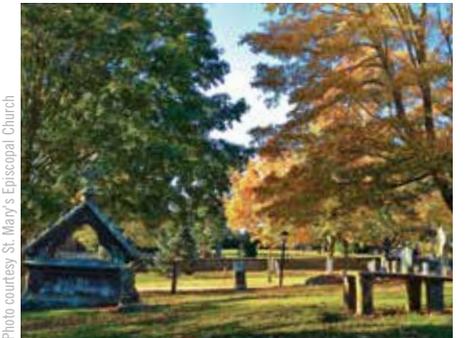


Photo courtesy St. Mary's Episcopal Church

# Blithewold Mansion, Gardens & Arboretum

Photo by Kris Green, courtesy Blithewold



Meaning “cheerful woodland” in Old English, this summer retreat of coal magnate Augustus Van Wickle overlooks Narragansett Bay. In 1895 Van Wickle purchased 70 acres of waterfront property (the former summer home of banker John Rogers Gardner) and constructed a Queen Anne-style manor; the house was destroyed by fire in 1906 and replaced by an Arts & Crafts-style mansion by the architects Kilham and Hopkins.

Blithewold’s grounds, including 33 acres of display gardens and an arboretum, were designed by local landscape architect John DeWolf between 1895 and 1912. A curving gravel drive bordered by stone walls leads past stables and a greenhouse designed by Lord & Burnham in 1901. The house is bordered by broad lawns and gardens punctuated with specimen trees. Gravel paths connect informally arranged gardens in the north, including a bosquet, a rock garden, an Oriental-style water garden, a perennial garden, a rose garden with a moon gate and stone wall, and the enclosed garden, bounded by spruces, larches, and English oaks. The house’s western facade looks out over the ten-acre Great Lawn and sweeping views of the bay. Docks and bathhouses were erected along the waterfront and a beach was created with imported sand.

Despite destructive hurricanes in 1938 and 1954, the major elements of DeWolf’s landscape remain intact. The estate was bequeathed to the Heritage Trust of Rhode Island (now Preserve Rhode Island) in 1976 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

**Landscape Style:**  
Arts & Crafts

**Landscape Type:**  
Garden and Estate –  
Country Place Era Garden  
Arboretum

**Designed By:**  
John DeWolf  
Lord & Burnham  
Kilham and Hopkins



Photo by Kris Green, courtesy Blithewold



Photo by Kris Green, courtesy Blithewold



Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum



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(left) Cliff Walk and Rough Point, Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum  
(cover) The Breakers and Cliff Walk, photo courtesy The Preservation Society of Newport County

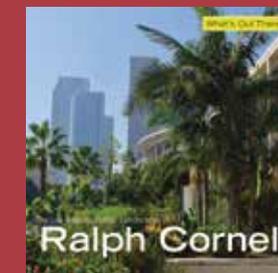
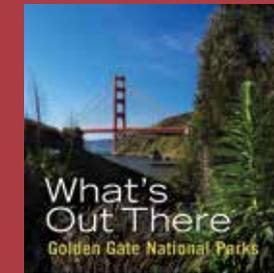
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