III B--GENERAL PLAN

SUMMARY

The general plan for College Hill, presented in this section, is concerned with over-all recommendations including zoning, land use, traffic, schools and recreation. It represents the contribution of the College Hill Study to the City of Providence's Master Plan for the area. The "sketch" master plan shown here summarizes these recommendations and relates them to a comprehensive plan. In it College Hill is divided into two areas; 1) an urban renewal area and 2) the university area. Each has its own planning problems which require different planning proposals and different methods of implementation.

In the urban renewal area sites are indicated for clearance areas for residential and other types of development; areas for rehabilitation of blighted residences; and areas of good housing slated for "conservation" measures. Proposals are made for some clearance for parks and landscaped buffer strips along the main streets; much needed playgrounds in the north and south; a new school in the north and allocation of limited areas for new and rehabilitated business use. Recommendations for major street improvements are concerned chiefly with the principal traffic arteries to the west and south. Where possible, proposals for parking facilities have been co-ordinated with the College Hill urban renewal program.

The historic area extends into both of the above mentioned planning areas. It has been delineated as a historic zone with particular implications within the urban renewal project areas where the historic buildings would be excepted from clearance and project designs would be reviewed by the proposed Historic District Commission. It is hoped that the urban renewal plan can be executed within the next 10 years.

In the university area, zoning proposals are made 1) to encourage orderly growth of the business center in the midst of campus expansion and 2) to discourage new private construction within the confines of an institutional area. Parking needs in the area are projected into the future and a program for parking facilities is presented. A staged master plan for the university area is presented following this section. It is intended as a suggestion to serve as a basis for future joint planning between the institutions and the City Plan Commission.
PREVIOUS PLANNING STUDIES

RECENT OFFICIAL PLANS

Since its reorganization in 1945, the Providence City Plan Commission has published a series of thirteen reports, many of which have been formally adopted by the Commission as elements of the official Master Plan. Although the Master Plan is primarily advisory in character, it does have an official status and warrants consideration as background against which to judge any proposed physical development within the city. It stands as a formally adopted document and any changes in it must follow legal procedures. For this reason, a major factor in making fresh plans for College Hill had to be a review of the existing official plans. The following reports and studies have been drawn upon for background in the current planning effort in College Hill:

- **Master Plan for Land Use:** In a report on a "Master Plan for Land Use and Population Distribution" adopted by the City Plan Commission in 1946, the broad patterns for the city of the future were proposed.

- **Master Plan for Thorofares:** In 1946 the City Plan Commission adopted its "Master Plan for Thorofares" which recommended systems of expressways and major city streets.

- **Thorofare Plan Revision:** Engineering studies by state agencies led to a number of serious modifications in the 1946 proposals. As a result of these and related studies for possible redevelopment projects in the South Main Street area, the City Plan Commission in 1950 formally revised its "Master Plan for Thorofares" to show changes in the central freeway loop. The basic thorofare pattern adopted then has been followed in the proposals made in this report for the College Hill section.

- **Central Area Studies:** Using funds made available by the United States Housing and Home Finance Agency, a group of intensive planning studies of in-town neighborhoods was made in 1950 and 1951. The Plan Commission staff made detailed investigations of potential redevelopment project areas within larger planing districts, including the Fox Point and Camp Street sections. The plans suggested at that time were not concerned with historic aspects.

- **Other Master Plans:** In addition to the Land Use and Thorofare plans described above, the City Plan Commission has from time to time adopted other Master Plan elements. Some of the recommendations in these Master Plans have included proposals in the College Hill Study area. Among these are the "Master Plan for Public School Sites" (1950) and the "Master Plan for Playgrounds and Playfields" (1953).

URBAN RENEWAL PROPOSALS

The concentration of poor housing at the northern and southern edges of College Hill has been the subject of official concern for a quarter century or more. In 1935, the Rhode Island State Planning Board proposed two slum clearance housing projects for consideration by the federal Public Works Administration. One of these dealt with the "South Main and Wickenden Street District", and a second project with the "North End District" north of Randall Square.

Of greater significance to the problems of College Hill today are more recent efforts of the City Plan Commission and the Providence Redevelopment Agency, which have resulted in official actions. Redevelopment was one of the subjects included in the series of Master Plan studies issued by the City Plan Commission in 1946. The "Master Plan for Redevelopment of Residential Areas" defined substantial parts of the city as deteriorated or arrested on the basis of statistics for housing, health and environmental conditions, each of which points to some degree of housing blight. Approximately 140 acres, or 3% of the College Hill study area, is included within two of the 17 Redevelopment Areas designated by City Council action in July, 1948, based on the Master Plan report.

In 1951, several projects were proposed in the report. "Redevelopment Proposals for Central Areas" and others were added to this list of projects in the past few years. In the College Hill area, there have been, among others, three project proposals which have been the subject of serious review: (1) South Main, (2) Cohan Boulevard, and (3) Constitution Hill. None of these are currently active.
TRAFFIC

GENERAL PATTERN

Rhode Island's three major highways skirt the western and southern boundaries of College Hill. U. S. Routes 6 and 44, the principal east-west arteries, strain the capacity of the western boundary streets to handle local traffic. Route 1, the important north-south artery, follows the western boundary for a very short distance, and contributes to a difficult intersection problem at Smith Street. A portion of this traffic problem will be improved in the future when the in-town freeway system is completed. George M. Cohan Boulevard (Routes 6 and 44) will, however, become part of this system; and changes will have to be made to bring it up to freeway standards.

Major traffic arteries which cut through the area are limited to Angell and Waterman Streets, a pair of one-way streets which accommodate the principal east-west flow of local and downtown commuting traffic. There are few through streets in this direction because of the severe limitations imposed by the hillside topography and the barriers of the rivers which separate the study area from downtown. No other heavily traveled local arteries intersect College Hill but two define its boundary: Olney Street on the north and Hope Street on the east. The map to the right shows the relative daily volumes on these streets with \[ \text{cars/day} = 10,000 \]

Topography has caused traffic to follow a natural path around, rather than over the hill and as a result, the major traffic problems occur along its perimeter. There are also minor traffic difficulties within the area along Benefit, Waterman, Angell, Thayer, and Brook Streets. Other problems in the area are the result of the outdated street system laid out long before the days of the automobile, with street widths severely limited because most of the early houses were built close to the sidewalks.

Parking is also a major problem in the area for three reasons: 1) some students and faculty members park their cars each day in the residential areas surrounding the institutions; 2) downtown shoppers and workers park their cars in the residential sections adjoining the city; and 3) many of the homes built before the automobile age are situated close together with few garages and little space for parking facilities.
MAJOR PROBLEMS

Major traffic problems are described below and illustrated on the map on page 104. Streets experiencing traffic congestion are shown ■■■■, areas with poorly arranged and an excess of streets are indicated * * * *, heavily used pedestrian crossings are shown by ○, and difficult street intersections by □.

North and South Main Streets on the west side of College Hill is the northbound mate of a pair of streets constituting a major north-south artery. Traffic jams occur along it in the vicinity of Market Square where traffic from the west and southwest joins it. Canal and South Water Streets form the south-bound side of the pair and these, too, are choked with traffic through Market and Memorial Squares. The flow of traffic along Canal Street is impeded by trucks lining the curb backed up to a string of wholesale outlets. These two arteries are separated by a commercial area; connecting alleys cut through every 100 feet causing further trouble because of their narrowness and wasteful use of land area. The intersection of North Main, Canal, and Smith Streets is a point of congestion.

George M. Cohan Boulevard is a six-lane divided highway bounding the area on the south. It connects Washington Bridge spanning the Seekonk River with the newly constructed Providence River Bridge. When the boulevard was built several years ago, it was constructed at an angle to the grid of the old streets and consequently, several odd shaped blocks and a high percentage of unnecessary street segments have been left. This highway, when incorporated into the freeway system, will not be able to tolerate, as it now does, the turning movements of cars using local streets and the problems of access will have to be solved by a grade separation in the future.

Angell and Waterman Streets, the only important east-west traffic arteries through the study area, intersect the primary north-south movement of cars in the vicinity of Market and Memorial Squares where, during rush hours, traffic may back up the hill for a dis-
tance of two or three blocks. Working in unison as a pair of one-way streets, they function easily under loads of 10,000 cars per day, except that parking along their curbs often forces traffic into two lanes and creates points of congestion. This situation has been alleviated by “all rolling” regulations applied during rush hours; but a few violators can impair the use of full street widths for appreciable distances. Another problem along these two streets is caused by the crossing of large numbers of students at Brown and Thayer Streets and in the vicinity of Benefit Street. These two streets cut Pembroke College off from Brown University and, consequently, solution of the problems of pedestrian crossings and of developing a unified campus will be difficult.

Waterman Street also cuts the Rhode Island School of Design’s dormitory units off from their classroom block and a similar student crossing problem results.

Benefit Street is the second heavily travelled through street within College Hill. It parallels the primary north-south arteries and, with entry available at both the Olney and Wickenden Street ends, offers the motorist a means of avoiding the rush hour congestion at Market-Memorial Square. Benefit Street, a key historic street in the study area, is too narrow to permit more than two lanes of traffic and parking on one side. The heavy traffic has been instrumental in separating the area between Benefit and Main Streets from the rest of the hill and has hastened the deterioration of the houses along its route.

Thayer Street for a few blocks immediately north of Waterman Street is lined with stores and constitutes the major shopping center for residents and students in the central and northern portions of College Hill. The street could easily handle the two-way traffic now flowing along it if it did not also have to provide parking along both curbs. This arrangement under ideal conditions can function, but when cars leave or enter a parking space, or when wider vehicles such as buses or trucks use the street, it usually becomes blocked and traffic is prevented from flowing easily.
CHANGES RECOMMENDED

The major changes recommended for traffic improvements are located on the map to the right showing existing one-way streets →, proposed one-way streets ←, major intersection changes •, streets to be abandoned ♦, and streets to be constructed — during development of renewal and other projects. The proposals are specifically listed below:

- Continue the landscaped dividing strip along North Main Street south to the Smith Street intersection and permit two-way access only at Olney Street, thus reducing the accessibility to Benefit Street.

- Introduce a grade separation interchange at North Main and Smith Streets in such a way that it will least interfere with the proposed Roger Williams Spring Park to the south.

- The proposed park will necessitate relocation of present wholesale establishments along Canal Street and will eliminate the congestion which their loading operations presently cause.

- The traffic pattern where North and South Main Streets join in Market Square should be adjusted.

- Signals and signs should be arranged in such a way as to encourage Wickenden Street traffic to use South Main Street rather than Benefit Street.

- Proposals along George M. Cohan Boulevard include closing the minor streets intersecting it and clearing structures fronting on it for a landscaped buffer between it and the residential neighborhood to the north.

- Hope Street should have a grade-separated connection with Cohan Boulevard.

- It is expected that the completion of the east-west link of the freeway system and the extension of the River Drive along the Seekonk will, in the foreseeable future, keep the traffic on Angell and Waterman Streets within limits of its capacity.

- A foot bridge across Waterman Street connecting the School of Design's new dormitory group with the main classroom block seems
advisable. Brown University also has a crossing problem on Waterman Street in the vicinity of Brown Street which could be reduced either by means of a foot bridge or by signals.

- Thayer and Brook Streets are suggested as one-way south and north respectively.

- Traffic converges from five directions at the corner of Brook and Hope Streets and warrants a traffic signal.

- As a long-range proposal, various streets are shown closed between Hope and Brook Streets above Angell Street to accommodate growth and consolidation of the shopping center over the years.

MARKET AND MEMORIAL SQUARES

This is a most important area for two reasons: 1) it is one of the busiest intersections in the city, fed by sixteen different traffic approaches and serving as the principal link between downtown and points east; 2) it is a fine urban space walled in between the crest of College Hill on the east and a high mass of the city’s buildings on the west, overlooked by the State House to the north and opening out towards Narragansett Bay at the southern end. All major interstate traffic goes through the area or skirts it. Any recommendations for solving traffic problems here should respect the visual quality of the area and they should be designed to prevent the city’s most important gateway from becoming a maze of curving overpasses, concrete islands, and sign posts. In this study, various schemes incorporating a depressed north-south roadway were developed but were rejected. The surface scheme shown here has been recommended both for reasons of economy and because the freeway system now under construction is expected to take part of the traffic load from the area.

The accompanying proposal is intended to accomplish the following: 1) adjust College Hill traffic patterns to new ones being currently proposed in the Downtown Master Plan Demonstration Grant Study; 2) make pedestrian circulation in the area safer and more direct; 3) provide parking which does not interfere with traffic flow; and 4) make the space pleasant to be in or to look out on.
The proposed traffic pattern makes the following changes: South Water Street is eliminated north of Crawford Street, putting all north-bound traffic into South Main Street. West-bound traffic is limited to Steeple Street; it no longer enters the city at Exchange Place but is deflected to the northwest along Promenade. Other design features include enlarging the base of the monument to serve better as a rotary; a large fountain to serve as a rotary in the lower end; extending the Court House park south to Crawford Street; and paving the entire square including the parking area with different types of materials more in character with the hill than the asphalt surface now used.

**SMITH AND NORTH MAIN STREETS**

The accompanying design at the top of the page is based on two considerations: 1) topography, which suggests that it is reasonable to have an elevated connection over Schley Square from the Smith Street bridge to North Main Street with North Main Street at grade as it descends from Olney Street; 2) land use, which is an important consideration in the urban renewal projects planned for either side of this artery. This proposal would keep such construction to the north of Smith Street and thus not interfere with the projected development of the Roger Williams Spring Park to the South.

**COHAN BOULEVARD AND HOPE STREET**

When the Boulevard is incorporated into the freeway system, local streets will probably be sealed off with the exception of Hope Street which will require a grade-separated intersection. The intersection proposed here is planned so that 1) it will not intrude upon the residential area north of Cohan Boulevard and destroy potentially prime development land, and 2) it will avoid cutting off any of the Fox Point neighborhood from the elementary school. It takes advantage of topographic conditions by cutting the crown off the Boulevard and thus eliminates the need for ramps in the north direction.
PARKING

The parking problem in College Hill, particularly on the western slope, is complicated because of steep topography, narrow streets and densely built-up areas containing old structures. The problem is most acute for the following groups: 1) personnel of the educational institutions; 2) shoppers and workers from downtown and clientele from the two local commercial centers along Thayer and Wickenden Streets; 3) local residents whose cars are often parked in makeshift, unsightly lots; and 4) visitors and attendants at churches and other meeting places.

Specific problems occur in the residential areas around the institutions where students monopolize the available curb spaces to the inconvenience of residents. At present the educational institutions need additional off-street parking spaces for about 435 cars, a need which will probably increase to 930 in twenty-five years. A conflict between students and shoppers also exists for parking space along Thayer Street. Parkers from downtown use the streets as far up the hill as Congdon Street which is lined with cars for most of the day. Patients visiting the doctors' offices along Waterman and Angell Streets have difficulty in finding parking spaces. The General Baking Company crowds the Brook Street section with as many as fourteen large trucks as well as with their employees' cars which line the curbs of an otherwise residential area for most of the day. Moreover, trucks negotiating these narrow streets constitute a potential hazard to the children using the playground on Arnold Street. Lack of parking facilities plays a part in the declining economic status of the shops along Wickenden Street.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PARKING PROBLEM

The chart on the left compares the present parking needs with existing facilities for the major categories of parking demand, and projects the demand for 10 years and 25 years into the future. The map to the right shows which facilities should remain; which should be replaced because of their poor location, visual aspects, or interference with proposed projects; and which should be added to satisfy future demand. These predictions are based on the assumption that the growth of enrollment in the institutions will be 10% per decade. In devising a ratio of probable car spaces required it was assumed that 1 out of 20 dormitory students, 1 out of 4 commuting
students, and 4 out of 10 staff members would require a parking space.

Brown University now has off-street parking for 360 cars which takes care of its staff members but does not accommodate the 300 cars estimated as belonging to commuting and resident students. The former Dexter Asylum property now owned by Brown will be used in part for student parking, but its distance from the campus will probably make it little used by commuters and will leave curb parking more attractive. The existing parking lots for staff use are scattered over the area and many are not attractive in appearance. Moreover, some are located in the path of probable new construction in Brown's development program. As such construction occurs, it is suggested that new staff parking facilities be developed in two areas: 1) A central parking zone planned to accommodate 150 cars should be developed along Fones Alley where it would be hidden from view. Such facilities would be convenient to Pembroke College, the main campus, and the administration buildings. 2) The other area suggested is the block bounded by Charlestown, Brook, Power, and Thayer Streets presently occupied by a service station and garage, several houses, and a University parking lot. In the long range picture this would be an ideal spot for Brown to build a parking structure for 300 cars. It is also recommended that the University consider landscaping some of its less attractive lots.

The Rhode Island School of Design has a parking lot in the central block of approximately 50 car spaces which accommodates the staff but is not sufficient for the estimated ninety commuting students in need of parking. Students who commute have an increasingly difficult time finding space since curb parking in the area is restricted and the downtown parker competes for available space in this area. Because of the density of building and the high price of real estate in the locality, it seems unlikely that additional parking facilities can be developed here in the near future. However, the steep hill on which the central block is located would make it possible to deck over the existing parking lot thus adding spaces for approximately 40 more cars. In the more distant future when the school acquires more land for building expansion, provision of facilities for an estimated student demand of 100 cars should be considered. A location in the proposed clearance area at the corner of Benefit and Meeting Streets would be a good place for such a parking lot.

Bryant College is faced with a difficult parking problem since 65
per cent of its nearly 1,400 students commute. It presently has off-

street space for about 55 cars which satisfies only the needs of the faculty and staff. To provide parking facilities for the estimated 200 cars currently in use at peak demand by the students would re-
quire one and one-half acres of land carved out of a residential

neighborhood. Land within College Hill and adjacent to Bryant is densely developed for residential or institutional use, whereas out-
side the study area to the southeast are some areas of blighted housing which possibly could be acquired for parking through the urban renewal program or by independent acquisition.

The Thayer Street shopping and professional center, which is vir-
tually surrounded by educational institutions with heavy parking
requirements and few facilities, strongly feels the need for more
parking space. Parking is allowed on both sides of Thayer Street
but at the cost of creating considerable traffic congestion. The
local merchants’ association has set the need for off-street parking
facilities in the area at approximately 100 cars. It would be pos-
able to meet the parking needs for at least the next 10 years, by
closing one of the cross streets such as Euclid Avenue and devel-
oping a parking lot in the interior of the block. As the shopping
center grows in the future, additional parking can be provided ac-
cording to plan in either of two ways: 1) the shopowners could
buy and develop the land collectively as was done in the nearby
Wayland Square shopping center or 2) the city could condemn
and develop the land for metered parking within the framework of a city-
wide off-street parking program. Prohibition of parking on one side
of Angell and Waterman Streets has resulted in the use by the doc-
tors in the area of the interior of the blocks for parking. It is
hoped that this kind of activity will continue in the professional
area between these two streets.

Wickenden Street, where the second major College Hill shopping
district is located, is a rather busy street with parking permitted
on only one side of the street. Its declining economic position

can be partially relieved by providing it with off-street parking.
It is proposed that two lots be developed at each end of the shop-
ning area to provide space for 50 cars. The land could be ac-
quired through the urban renewal program and developed in a man-
ner similar to that described above for Thayer Street.

Downtown parkers are at present provided with approximately 400
off-street parking spaces located in Market Square and along the
commercial strip lining North and South Main Streets. It is pro-
posed that these facilities be rearranged and coordinated with re-
development projects to provide for a new total of 1,100 spaces to

serve downtown and adjacent parking needs. The proposed 600
car lot along Canal Street will in part be scheduled for use by
visitors to the proposed Benefit Street Historic Trail and Roger
Williams Spring Park. This lot should be operated by the city and
developed by it in conjunction with the urban renewal program.
The 200 car lot proposed for Market Square should be developed by
the city. The three proposed lots for a total of 300 car spaces
along South Water Street would be constructed by private develop-

ers in conjunction with the projected urban renewal activity in
that area.

Residential parking is prohibited on the streets during the night.
As a result of this prohibition, two undesirable situations have
developed: Some of the typically small house lots, already in-
adquate and crowded with building have been almost wholly de-
voted to parking. Larger properties have also been carved up into
ugly parking lots. It is recommended that tighter design restric-
tions be required in the construction of such lots. Also rec-

mended for areas with small lots are cooperative block parking
schemes which have advantages of using less land for parking
and in freeing more land for private and common use. Such a plan could
be successful only if all of the residents of the block are con-
vincing of the advantages and are willing to work hard to implement

it. Ownership and maintenance could be effected on either a co-
operative basis or privately on a rental basis. Lots can be ac-
quired outright or through the urban renewal program where sub-
standard housing can be condemned and land reused for parking.
One example of such a scheme is shown to the right.

Parking Regulations

The parking regulation picture in College Hill is a complex one.
In the residential areas in the extreme north and southeast sec-
tions, no special regulations exist. On at least one side of all
the important streets and on all east-west streets west of Benefit
Street no parking is permitted. In residential areas just to the
east of Benefit Street no parking is allowed before 10:00 a.m. in
an effort to discourage parkers who want to go downtown from
parking on the streets of College Hill. Two-hour parking zones
surround the colleges. Suggested changes in parking regulations
include: 1) eliminating parking on one side of Thayer Street north
of Angell Street, 2) increasing the time limit from 1 to 3 hours on
curbs in front of college property and 3) decreasing the limit in the
residential areas adjoining the institutions. It is recommended
that the parking regulations currently in existence be strictly en-
forced.
LAND USE

Land in the 381 acre study area is predominantly residential and institutional in use. The residential area is separated from the central business district by a strip of warehouses, wholesale outlets and parking lots, and is divided by the institutional area running east and west. The land use map also shows commercial areas, mixed residential and commercial uses, areas of public use, and industrial and warehousing activity. Commercial uses in residential areas are neighborhood oriented with a few important exceptions. Present and proposed land use is summarized in the following table:

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RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

The predominant type of residential structure on College Hill is the detached wood frame building accommodating one, two, or three families. The existing densities of these structures on the land are in many instances too great. Overcrowding of structures is particularly acute in the extreme northern and southern parts of the study area. The proposed 25-year land use plan shows a decrease in residential acreage. Coupled with an increase in population, the residential densities will be greater. This increase in density, however, will not cause worse living conditions as design of the structures on the land will be more efficient.

COMMERCIAL LAND USE

The continuous strip of commercial land running north and south between the river and North and South Main Streets varies considerably in character. At its center, where Market Square connects College Hill and downtown Providence, are located some of the city’s finest commercial and institutional buildings, including
the Providence County Court House, banks, insurance buildings, and the Rhode Island School of Design. To the north and south, however, is an assortment of wholesale outlets, warehouses, and some second-hand shops, many of which are housed in substandard structures. These “fringe-type” uses have had a blighting influence on the residential area of the entire hillside, and their removal or rehabilitation is noted in the proposed land use plan.

Another important commercial area is located on the northern end of Thayer Street. To the south along Wickenden Street is another shopping area serving the residents of Fox Point. The majority of these shops are located in the first floor of older residential structures. This center is strung out, has practically no off-street parking facilities, and is plagued by vacancies.

There are several non-conforming commercial uses of the single store or shop variety scattered throughout the area. Three major instances are particularly important. A large bakery with considerable truck traffic is located in a residential area and across the street from a playground. On another side of the same playground is a four-story laundry, also with considerable traffic in trucking. In the northern section is a casket factory which though relatively quiet in its operation is out of character with the surrounding residential neighborhood. The long-range plan contemplates the ultimate removal of these non-conforming uses.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PUBLIC LAND USE

The proportion of land used by institutions is particularly high in College Hill, due to the location within the area of Brown University, Pembroke College, the Rhode Island School of Design and Bryant College. It is anticipated that these institutions will grow considerably, but more slowly over the next 25 years than in the past ten years, as much expansion has already occurred. It is not expected that other institutions will expand appreciably in the foreseeable future with the possible exception of the central building group of the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island which is considering a program of housing the elderly and increasing other facilities.

Public land includes a few small parks, the Providence County Court House, the Sixth District Court, the Hope Street High School and Benefit Street Elementary School. The elements of this group slated for expansion are the parks and a new elementary school to replace the Benefit Street School.
ZONING FOR USE

The present zoning ordinance of the City of Providence provides for four residential zone classes, three of which occur within the College Hill study area. Some changes in the present zoning district boundaries are recommended, based on observable trends in land use, as well as on proposals made in the master plan for the area.

RESIDENTIAL ZONES

In most of the present One-Family or R-1 zones in College Hill, there has been sufficient conversion of existing structures into apartment type use to warrant some reduction of the area devoted to this zone. Two-Family or R-2 zones do not occur in College Hill. There has been exhibited a definite tendency for types of uses permitted in the General Residence or R-3 zones to expand into the R-1 zone from the north and from the southeast. However, rather than change portions of R-1 zones to R-3 and accelerate the intrusion into the area of new structures which would be out of scale with existing buildings, it is suggested that conversion of buildings in an R-1 zone to multiple dwellings be allowed at the discretion of the Zoning Board of Review. Land now in the Multiple Dwelling or R-4 Zone is proposed to be reduced considerably so as to be limited principally to areas skirting the hill.

COMMERCIAL ZONES

The master plan developed in this report for College Hill implies several changes in regard to the zoning of commercial areas. The present scattered array of stores along Benefit Street would be concentrated in three C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial) areas, two at either end which would be for the convenience of high density dwellings proposed there, and another in the middle which would serve the student population. Other commercial frontage on the east side of Main Street has been drastically curtailed to three areas: 1) one in the north; 2) the area in the center which is ideal for C-3 (Downtown Commercial); and 3) a strip along the east side of South Main Street, C-4 (Heavy Commercial) has
been deleted entirely from the area. The central C-3 zone is shown extended north to the area reserved for the proposed Roger Williams Spring Park and south to the projected rehabilitated commercial area zoned C-2.

It is suggested that the Fox Point neighborhood retain two shopping districts: one within the study area and the other in the vicinity of Ives and Wickenden Streets. While this is different from the 1946 Master Plan, it is based on the concept that rehabilitation type renewal is projected for the area, and improving the existing center would be more in keeping with the program than the construction of one large center.

It is suggested that the Thayer Street shopping zone be increased from the present seven acres to ten acres. The long range plan reflects this rate of growth which was indicated by the studies made of the area. It is also suggested that the center grow to the east so that it will be eventually contained entirely between Brook and Thayer Streets. This will then permit the Pembroke Campus to extend to Thayer Street.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Other miscellaneous recommendations concerning zoning include increasing the height limit and density limit of apartments in R-4 districts for certain sites, particularly in renewal areas, where shape of sites or land costs warrant more intense use of the land. The regulations regarding the use of row houses seem unreasonably restrictive and it is suggested that these be relaxed in view of the considerably improved designs of this type of structure over the past few years.
HISTORIC ZONING

Twenty-one cities in the United States have attempted to preserve historic areas through the use of some form of historic zoning or architectural control. In most cases, the purpose of such action has been to keep intact a body of buildings considered historically and architecturally important to the community and of interest on a broader, often national, scale. It has usually been a further purpose to prevent developments incongruous with the historic aspect of the surroundings.

After study of the ordinances in effect elsewhere, a historic zoning ordinance has been drafted for application to a portion of the College Hill area. This ordinance is presented in the program at the end of this report.

The problem of defining the area recommended for the historic zone has received careful thought. For the purposes of defining historic building and delineating historic areas, it was first necessary to develop an objective system for judging historic and architectural merit. As described in Part II of this report, the factors considered important in judgments of worth have been the following: historic interest, date of building, architectural merit, and character of the neighborhood of which the buildings form a part. Judgment of architectural merit has been based on considerations of style, scale, material and workmanship. On the basis of these criteria, a data sheet was filled in for each building in the area; and a scoring system applied to rate the buildings for historic interest, architectural merit, importance to the neighborhood and physical condition. The buildings have then been mapped according to period and architectural rating.

The accompanying map indicates all buildings according to period, and in effect, results in a description of the growth in time of the College Hill area. As may be seen, the few remaining buildings put up before 1775 and represented as  on the map are to be found near the line of the Old Town Street (now North and South Main Streets) where Providence was first settled. The buildings shown as  on the map were put up between 1775 and 1830. They represent about two hundred and seventy-five structures and form the bulk of the early building left on College Hill; they are to be found in the same area as the earlier structures, as well as along Benefit Street and as far east as Hope Street on the streets south of George Street. Buildings of the Greek Revival period dating from 1830 to about 1845 and shown as  on the map also appear in this same area. In the early Victorian period, new houses went up along southern Benefit, Prospect, Angell, Waterman and Hope Streets. After the Civil War the section north of Angell Street and east of Prospect Street was gradually settled. Buildings of the Victorian period are shown on the map as .  
Structures built after 1900, designated as , include many large public or semi-public buildings, among them the new buildings for Brown University, the Rhode Island School of Design, the Providence County Court House and two insurance buildings. As the larger area of most of these buildings indicates, they represent a major break with the domestic scale and character of the earlier structures.

The delineation of the historic zone (unshaded portion of map) recommended herein has been based on the concept that compact groupings of important and early architecture constitute neighborhoods worthy of protection. A study of the color pattern shown by the map indicates that the area where buildings put up prior to 1830 exist has fairly clearly defined limits and the area recommended for inclusion in the historic area zone has closely followed the limits of concentration of early buildings as shown on the map.

It is intended that the historic zoning ordinance drafted for this report should serve as a model for use for other areas of the city. Since important buildings fall outside the area recommended for historic zoning, and important groups of buildings fall outside the limits of this study, the ordinance has also been designed so that, upon application to the City Council, other historic districts in the city can be attached to the ordinance on the same basis as the originally designated area.
URBAN RENEWAL

An extensive urban renewal project is recommended for the College Hill area. Housing, environmental and other planning considerations were taken into account in the delineation of the boundaries for this project, but significantly, the grouping of valuable historic structures played a most important part in molding the urban renewal program.

Recognition of the historic value of a structure was found to give added value to it and special treatment was called for. Historic structures are often in the poorest sections of a city because of the age of the neighborhood. Standard surveys frequently place valuable historic structures in a slum category marked for demolition. Recognition of the historic worth of a structure, particularly if it is in an area where there are many other historic structures, raises its status in the consideration of a renewal program for the neighborhood. In College Hill, the value of retaining neighborhoods of such unusual character was recognized and areas which might otherwise be marked for demolition were placed in the rehabilitation category wherever possible. The delineation of clearance, rehabilitation and conservation areas in College Hill reflects this effort.

As will be seen in the previous section of this report, the recommended historic zoning overlaps much of the proposed renewal area. This would mean that the Historic District Commission, set up under the terms of the proposed ordinance, would have the power to review plans for new construction in those areas falling within the zone, and can to some degree prevent the removal of valuable structures. The ordinance does not, however, prevent absolutely the destruction of significant structures and some may have to be cleared to make way for worthwhile projects. But, in general, the ordinance will encourage a developer to make an effort to incorporate historic structures within the project plan, and only if it is not feasible to do so, should the Historic District Commission allow the structures to be destroyed.

In the recommended project, there are three types of renewal areas proposed: clearance, rehabilitation, and conservation. Each area is to receive different types of treatment under Urban Renewal procedures. It is hoped that private enterprise can do most of the job and the program has been designed to that end, but public housing may be necessary in certain areas as indicated in a later section of this report. Clearance has been kept to a minimum, and only those structures are recommended for demolition that are felt to be beyond economic repair and which, as a group, serve to depress property values and would cause private enterprise to shun the blighted areas.

Structures in suggested clearance areas are proposed to be demolished to open the land for new building. In the suggested rehabilitation areas most buildings would be saved, although there may be some spot-clearance of poor structures. Special attention would be given to rehabilitation areas in the form of strengthening city ordinances and stepping up city services. Unusual mortgage financing can be made available with federal support in these areas and community group participation in fix-up efforts would be encouraged. The suggested conservation areas are earmarked so that the city and the residents can be alerted to signs of blight. Here, too, community group efforts are to be encouraged, special financing made available, and city services stepped up.

As is described in a later section of this report, two sets of plans for the Constitution Hill neighborhood (northern section) are presented: a minimum renewal scheme and a maximum. The minimum plan recommends the clearance only of those structures beyond hope of repair, the introduction of neighborhood facilities, and the enforcement of the minimum standards housing code. The second plan recommends more extensive clearance, the introduction of neighborhood facilities, the construction of a considerable number new residential structures, and a higher degree of rehabilitation than is required by the minimum housing code. The map showing the entire renewal area includes the maximum plan for the Constitution Hill neighborhood. Cost estimates in the following table also are for the entire area including the maximum scheme for Constitution Hill. If the minimum scheme were used, the estimate of cost of prepared land for the entire project would be $850,000 less than the costs anticipated for the maximum scheme.
PROPOSED COLLEGE HILL URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT

Total Area: 120 acres
Clearance: 57 acres
Total number of Dwelling Structures: 740
Sub-standard or Slum Structures: 290
Percent sub-standard or slum: 39
Total residential land use: 89 acres
Percent of project area in residential land use: 74
Families displaced by clearance: 650

Clearance Areas

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Area No.</th>
<th>Proposed Re-use (2)</th>
<th>Gross area in Acres (1)</th>
<th>Assessed Valuation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Roger Williams Spring Park</td>
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(1) includes streets
(2) details of proposed developments are included in next section of this report

Cost Estimates For Renewal Project

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tr>
<td>Site Improvements</td>
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<td>Planning and Administration</td>
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<td>Gross Project Cost</td>
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<td>Resale of Land</td>
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<td>Net Project Cost</td>
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<tr>
<td>federal share (2/3)</td>
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PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The children of College Hill are served by public, private, and parochial schools within and adjacent to the area. Over the years a school districting pattern has developed which seems unsatisfactory in several respects. Some of the areas in College Hill served by the John Howland elementary school outside the area are more than a mile away from the school. Benefit Street School, the only elementary school in the area, is distanced in such a way that its enrollment is almost all nonwhite. Population over time has shifted, leaving some of the old schools only partly used. The poor condition of some of the schools and the lack of recreation space and facilities create other serious problems in this area. The Benefit Street School was built 118 years ago and is the oldest hill in use as a school in the city. It is in poor condition, has no auditorium or gymnasium, and has an inadequate quarter-acre play area. The Thomas A. Doyle School, just to the north of College Hill and serving children in the northwest corner of the study area is in poor condition, is lacking in facilities, and has no playground. The John Howland School which serves the children in the center of College Hill is in good condition but is located at an inconvenient distance. The new Fox Point elementary school serves the southern half of College Hill. This school is provided with an auditorium and gymnasium and it functions as a community center for the neighborhood.

The City Plan Commission's 1950 "Master Plan for Public School Sites" recommended that both the Benefit Street and Thomas A. Doyle Schools be replaced with a new school to be located in the old Dexter Asylum property along Hope Street and gave such action high priority. It is now recommended that a site be chosen adjacent to the Hope High School grounds for the following reasons: The Dexter property has since been acquired by Brown University; the proposed location is more central to the population being served; and the site would be located within a renewal area. In conjunction with a new school is the proposal to realign district boundaries . North Main Street and the grounds of the Moses
Brown School and Dexter Asylum properties form physical boundaries to the west and east respectively. Brown University and Waterman Street define the southern limits, while the line at the north should run somewhere through the Lippitt Hill redevelopment area depending on population and street layout. With the adoption of this plan, all elementary schools on the east side would include kindergarten through the sixth grade with the exception of Ives Street School which accommodates children in the Fox Point neighborhood through the second grade.

The proposed new school should be designed to function as a community center. It is suggested that the activities now housed in the Benefit Street Recreation Center be accommodated in the new school as is done in the Fox Point School. The size of school needed is estimated at this time at 550 pupils; however, this figure should be re-examined when it can be accurately determined how many elementary school aged children will be living in the proposed Lippitt Hill and College Hill renewal projects. The current estimate is based on an interpolation of the annual school census taken by the school department. Taken into account in the estimate is the fact that an unusually high proportion of children in College Hill attend private schools; however, it is probable that some of these would attend public school with the advent of a new school plant in the area.

The proposed school site located just west of Hope High School playground measures two and three-quarters acres. Of four possible sites in the general area, it was chosen because of its favorable topography, because it would fit in with urban renewal requirements, and because its location is tied in well with the general plan developed for College Hill. Two and three-quarters acres is considerably below suburban standards for elementary school sites; however, it would be larger than all but two of the city's existing elementary schools and would have the advantage of sharing part of Hope High School's grounds.
RECREATION

In 1953, a Master Plan for Playgrounds and Playfields was published by the Providence City Plan Commission. The College Hill study follows that Master Plan except where changes in conditions have occurred or where new planning proposals have changed requirements. The accompanying map shows the location of the existing and proposed recreation facilities which are described below:

A. Hope High School Playfield, adequate in size and facilities, serves children in the northern two-thirds of College Hill.

B. Veterans Memorial Park playfield, situated one-half mile to the east of Hope Street, serves the older children in Fox Point to the south, but is not ideally located.

C. Tockwotton Park to the east of College Hill, is a well-equipped playground adjacent to and serving the Fox Point School, but its area of 1.6 acres is not sufficient for the Fox Point population.

D. The Arnold Street Playground, only four-tenths of an acre in size, bordered by streets carrying heavy truck traffic, has almost no equipment. It should be possible to increase its area to a total of 1.9 acres through urban renewal by acquiring some blighted dwellings and a factory across the street.

E. The one-quarter acre Benefit Street Elementary School playground is the only play area for the children of elementary school age in the Constitution Hill area.

F. Benefit Street Playground would be replaced with a 1.4 acre playground when the proposed new school for the area is built.

G. Roger Williams Spring is located in a small park just west of North Main Street. Its enlargement to a four acre national historic park is proposed.

H. Prospect Terrace, made into a park in the nineteenth century, is used as a place to relax and to view the city spread out below it.

I. The Court House Plaza, a small park of seven tenths of an acre, is not used for active recreation. Its expansion south to Crawford Street is proposed.

Also located on the map are the following centers for community use and recreation: 1. Benefit Street School, 2. Benefit Street Recreation Center, 3. New Elementary School, 4. Hope High School, 5. Providence Boys Club, 6. Fox Point Elementary School.