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West Parish and South Burying Grounds are surviving remnants from Newton's rich history. They contain irreplaceable social, historic and cultural artifacts that must be protected for the education and enjoyment of future generations. The goal of this master plan update is to present important preservation and rehabilitation issues which should be addressed in order to stabilize and protect these two historic resources.

Recent efforts to preserve and maintain Newton's older burial grounds began with a 1990 Master Plan that documented the condition of the burying grounds and identified key preservation issues. In 2002 Newton received funds from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management's Historic Landscape Grant Program to update the master plan and to prepare a National Register nomination. This Master Plan updates the 1990 Master Plan prepared by William Pressley and Associates and includes analysis of West Parish and South Burying Grounds. The East Parish Burying Ground update was included in the "Preservation Guidelines for Municipally Owned Historic Burial Grounds and Cemeteries" prepared by Walker-Kluesing Design Group and published by the Department of Environmental Management in May 2000 and was not included in this report.

The specific goals of this master plan update are as follows:

- To stabilize the burying grounds so that historic resources are protected and that public safety concerns are addressed
- To restore and rehabilitate the burying grounds consistent with contemporary public use
- To reinforce the historic landscape character of the properties based on the 1901 plans
- To provide general recommendations for maintenance practices that are respectful of the historic resources and are consistent with the ecological management of the two sites
- To identify educational opportunities and make recommendations that increase public awareness and appropriate access of the properties

The two burying grounds have varying physical contexts. West Parish Burying Ground is located within a residential neighborhood and provides a pleasant open space character along the edges of River and Cherry Streets in West Newton. South Burying Ground is surrounded on all sides by commercial development and abuts Winchester Street which carries high volumes of traffic. Consequently, the historic character of South Burying Grounds is overshadowed and greatly diminished by surrounding land use and traffic. Access for visitation is also complicated by a lack of public parking along this area of Winchester Street. Determining opportunities to engage the public and encourage respectful visitation is one objective of this master plan. We recommend that both burying grounds be improved to allow appropriate public visitation and that interpretive signage and regulations be developed for each site.

Other treatment recommendations are focused on public safety and preservation of historic fabric of the sites. At South Burying Ground the large hillside tomb is in hazardous condition and is the highest priority for repair. The Master Plan presents several options ranging from repair of the existing structure to complete removal of the structure and the resetting of important stones in the lawn where they once stood. Repairing and resetting gravestones at both burying grounds are also high priorities which require immediate attention.

The plan offers several recommendations to enhance the historic landscape character of these two burying grounds. They include the removal or the replacement of chain and cross link wire fencing with historically appropriate fences. Perimeter stone walls require minor cosmetic repair with the exception of a damaged section of wall near the gate at South Burying Ground which should be entirely replaced.

Improved maintenance practices based on understanding the ecological factors of these two different sites are of great importance. Use of a low nutrient dwarf grass turf can not only reduce maintenance requirements but also can establish an historic landscape character typical of the 19th century. Both sites have large amounts of invasive vegetation which have naturalized at the base of markers, memorials and fences where mowing has been inconsistent. Removal of volunteer vegetation will help protect historical structures and gravestones from further damage. Removal of declining or hazardous trees and on-going safety pruning inspections are required to ensure the stabilization of the landscape over time and minimize costly repairs in the future. A detailed Maintenance Plan should be developed for each site to direct City staff on the careful maintenance practices required within the burying grounds.

The following Master Plan is organized into two parts representing each burying ground. Treatment recommendations for each burying ground are prioritized based on a variety of factors including but not limited to public safety issues, structural stability and protection of significant historic fabric or resources. The recommendations and Master Plan drawings are conceptual and should be used for planning purposes only. Documentation of existing conditions is based on the 1901 plans and field investigation. While general recommendations are provided, specific stone conservation measures are not included in this scope of work, as these were covered in detail in the 1990 Master Plan.

WEST PARISH BURYING GROUND

INTRODUCTION

West Parish Burying Ground is an important cultural resource for West Newton and for the city as a whole. The careful burial records and the 1901 map provide unusually thorough documentation regarding genealogy and the appearance of the burying ground at the end of its period of significance. Despite deterioration of headstones, footstones, monuments and tombs, the burying ground powerfully evokes its past and provides a unique historical record of the early years of West Newton.

The burying ground is generally well maintained, but like most municipal cemeteries, has suffered loss of gravestones over time. There are approximately 200 headstones shown on the 1901 plan, only about 170 or 85% of these remain. The loss of footstones over the past century is even greater. Several fallen stones have been preserved in place. Other stones are leaning or show evidence of poor repair. The 1990 Master Plan identified many problems, most of which have not been addressed.



The following priorities have been established based on the vision of protecting, stabilizing and preserving the character of West Parish Burying Ground.

High Priority [first year]

- Conserve and repair damaged gravestones (ongoing)
- Repair mound tombs
- Prune trees for public safety and the protection of gravestones and monuments
- Add identification signage at the entrance of the burying ground
- Remove volunteer growth

Medium Priority [within 5 years]

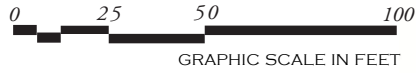
- Replace existing fence and gate with historic replica or historically appropriate fence along River and Cherry Streets
- Restore the row of trees along River Street shown on the 1901 plan

Low Priority [within 10 years]

- Renovate lawns for historic image, ecological management of the site and low maintenance
- Add interpretive signage
- Repoint perimeter stone walls
- Consider planting a new row of trees along Cherry Street
- Provide buffer plantings

WEST PARISH BURYING GROUND

1901 MASTER PLAN



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, LAWNS AND VEGETATION

Landscape Character

Issues

The character of the site is relatively open with a few mature evergreen and deciduous trees. Additional trees not shown on the 1901 plan suggests that most trees were either planted later or naturalized from existing trees in the area. Originally burying grounds of this vintage were open pastures. The planted row of trees along River Street was likely influenced by the garden cemetery movement of the mid 19th century and late nineteenth century civic improvements.

The rectilinear organization of West Parish Burying Ground reflects the transitional style of the early nineteenth century. It consists of a combination of single graves and family lots laid out in rough rows running north/south. The oldest graves, which are predominantly single burials, lie in the eastern section of the burying ground near the entrance, while the later burials located in the western section are primarily in family lots. The majority of headstones face west. The spatial organization is most clearly evident on the 1901 map (see page 7), which shows all recorded burials, including those not marked by headstones or monuments. Today the spatial organization is less clear because there is no visible evidence of many of the graves, although there is slight mounding in some areas where no headstones are present. The cluster of unmarked graves in the northwest corner may have been a paupers section.

The location of the burying grounds is within a dense residential section of West Newton. There are no significant distant views from the grounds.

Recommendations

The open character of the site should be preserved. Replacement of the row of trees shown in the 1901 plan is recommended.

Planting

Issues

Existing trees consist of mature deciduous and evergreen trees. The 1901 plan depicts a single row of 22 trees along River Street. Stumps that remain in this area appear to be from White Pines. The plan also shows 31 small trees or shrubs located within the burying ground. Several of the trees

shown on the plan still remain; while others have been removed. In general, stumps have been left twelve to eighteen inches above finish grade.

The burying ground has 25 trees, 68% of which are deciduous. Tree species inventoried on the site include White Pine, Red Oak, Black Oak, Swamp Oak, Black Locust, Black Cherry, White Ash, Red Maple, Linden, Crabapple, Norway Maple, Eastern Redcedar, European White Birch. Many of these trees are assumed to be volunteers. The largest tree is a Red Oak on the western perimeter with a 36" diameter at breast height (DBH).

Existing White Pines within the interior of the grounds cast dense shade. This along with surface feeder roots and the layer of dropped pine needles allow for very little vegetation growth beneath them. There are several instances of volunteer trees interfering with existing markers. Some trees are suffering from decay and pest infestation.

There is an existing Rhodendron shrub near the small mound tomb which is in good condition. Street trees along Cherry Street outside of the burying ground are in poor condition.

Recommendations

Existing trees should be pruned by certified arborists working under the supervision of the city arborist. Initial pruning efforts should focus on removing dead limbs that are potentially harmful which may be hazardous to gravestones and the public. Consult with an archaeologist to determine if volunteers can be gently grubbed out without disturbing burial markers or burial sites.

Additional tree planting should be limited to restoring the row of trees on the River Street perimeter as shown in the 1901 plan and reinforcing the buffer of adjacent properties to the north and west. Consideration should be given to planting a new row of trees along Cherry Street to replace the struggling street trees planted along the curb. Consideration should be given to extending the row of trees on the berm along the top of the wall on Cherry Street. While no trees are shown in this location on the 1901 plan, trees would enhance the Cherry Street side of the burying ground by providing a vegetative enclosure to the burying ground and a shaded sidewalk below. Deciduous trees are preferable to evergreens as they will allow for more lawn groundcover and allow views into the cemetery. Suggested street trees include disease resistant Elms or Sugar Maples. New low evergreen plantings should be added sparingly along the perimeter of the burying ground to buffer objectionable views. Additional shrub plantings should be avoided.

Existing stumps should be cut level to finish grade and allowed to decay naturally. Remove suckering on annual basis.

Volunteer Growth

Issues

Volunteer growth is prevalent against the west and northern fences and on the mound tombs. Volunteer plants include Black Cherry, Buckthorn, White Birch, Flowering Quince, Honeysuckle, Poison Ivy and Elm. There are several stones being displaced by volunteer trees.

Recommendations

Volunteer growth can be hazardous to historic grave markers within a burying ground. Remove all volunteer growth along the fences and structures within the interior of the burying ground. Maintain an annual program of removals. Consult with a stone conservator prior to using any herbicides which may be hazardous to gravestones. Consult with an archaeologist to determine if volunteers can be gently grubbed out without disturbing burial markers or burial sites. Volunteer trees that are displacing gravestones should be cut flush to the ground in a manner that does not impact the stones. Stones should be left in the remaining stump.



impact of volunteer growth on gravestones - West Parish Burying Ground

Lawns

Issues

In general much of the lawn in West Parish Burying Grounds is in fair condition attributed to the poor soil conditions onsite. Weeds and native grass varieties include Crabgrass and Sheep Fescue. There are many depressions due to the settlement of the earth. There are bare spots and moss patches indicating moisture and soil nutrition and ph problems. The absence of lawn beneath evergreens is due to low light conditions and the accumulation of pine needle mulch. Surface roots from mature trees

discourage lawn growth as they compete for water. The gravelly fill behind the mound tombs along Cherry Street lacks sufficient nutrients and moisture to establish a healthy lawn.



gravestones damaged by mower - West Parish Burying Ground

Recommendations

New lawn plantings should be seeded between August 15 and October 1 to reduce the likelihood of further weed infestation. Remove debris from lawn. Loosen soil in bare spots by hand raking. Rototilling is not recommended as it can be hazardous to gravestones and potential subsurface bone fragments. Existing lawn areas should be top dressed with loam. Fill depressions with topsoil to protect public safety. Seed with low maintenance turf grasses such as hard fescues and sheep fescues; consistent with the historic landscape character of the burying ground.

One of the goals of this master plan is to introduce historically and ecologically appropriate turf varieties to reduce maintenance and recreate the character of an early 20th century burying ground. Lawns should be limited to three mowings per year; two in the spring and one in the fall depending on the rainfall in any given year. Lawns should be mowed to a height of 3 inches. Power mowers should not mow within 12 inches of existing gravestone. Remaining lawn can be trimmed with caution using nylon line trimmers. Metal hand shears should not be used as they may potentially scratch the gravestones. Fallen leaves should be mulched into the grass by mowing.

FENCES AND GATES

Wire and Chain Link Fences

Issues

A cross-link fence is mounted on the street perimeter walls. The fencing consist of a 2" horizontal by 6" vertical grid of 1/8 diameter wires that are held together with square, pinched clips at their intersections. The fence is tensioned with a mechanical apparatus attached to the posts. Many of these apparati are missing. The vertical wires are bent into arches at the top, forming a rather delicate, decorative closure at the top of the fence.



damaged crosslink fence - West Parish Burying Ground

Because the wire can be easily deformed, the fence is extensively damaged. The cross-link fencing is clipped onto four foot high, 1-7/8 inch diameter pipe posts that are embedded into cored holes on top of the stone wall. The spacing between posts varies from 8' to 9'-6". A decorative ball cap covers the top of each pipe but 13 of the 66 ball caps are missing (20 percent). Likewise, approximately 15 percent of the posts and 15 percent of the top rails are missing, loose, bent or corroded through. In addition, many of the posts are tilted. At four locations, the cross-link fencing has been replaced with modern chain link fencing. The interior side of the fence is painted green while the street side has been painted black.

A four foot height chain link fence runs along the west and northern boundaries. The fence is in good condition. One portion of the fence has been painted green. No rust is evident.

Recommendations

The cross-link fence needs extensive repairs. The fencing itself has historic interest but it is too lightweight to provide a secure barrier in a contemporary context. Options include replicating the existing fence fabric with a more durable matching vinyl coated mesh fabric, replacing the existing fence with a historically appropriate steel bar stock fence and gate or removing the fence altogether.

Consider replacing the existing green painted chain link fence along the north and west boundaries of the site with a 4' height black vinyl coated chain link fence. The vinyl coating will reduce maintenance costs over the years.



existing chainlink fence and gate - West Parish Burying Ground

Gate

Issues

The current gate is a modern 10' wide, 6' high galvanized chain link gate with two leaves that swing inward. The gate is sagging. It is locked with a chain and lock at all times except during maintenance periods. The lock is rusting and difficult to open and close.

Two 3'-6" height, 12" square dressed granite posts are set in front of the existing gates. Iron gate supports are embedded within the posts. Rust from the hardware is staining the face of the granite posts. There are two 7' height black painted pipes, 2 ½" outside diameter, behind the gate which were formerly used as gate posts.

Recommendations

Replace existing gate with a new gate to match the new fencing. The gate should be opened and closed at prescribed hours for public access into the burying ground. Provide gate stops to hold the gate in place in an open position during visiting hours.

In the event that the fence is removed, the vehicular entrance at the existing gate will need to be blocked with removable bollards so that unwanted vehicles cannot drive into the burying ground.

ACCESS AND SECURITY

Pedestrian and Universal Access

Issues

The site is generally flat and there are no paved paths within the burying ground to allow for universal access. Pedestrian and vehicular access is shared through a single gate on River Street. Street parking adjacent to the burying ground is readily available. Currently, the burying ground is locked at all times.

Recommendations

Consider instituting open hours when the gates will be opened for pedestrian access. No universally accessible paths are recommended at this time.

Vehicular Access

Issues

Vehicular access for maintenance is currently along River Street through a ten foot wide 6' height double leaf gate.

Recommendations

Maintain current maintenance access point on River Street at the existing width for maintenance vehicles.

Security

Issues

Security does not appear to be a problem at this burying ground. The vehicular gate is chained and padlocked. Surveillance is provided by neighbors and patrolmen.

Recommendations

Chain and padlock are adequate for the existing chain link gate. In the event that the gate is replaced with a steel bar stock gate, provide a locking mechanism. Chains are detrimental to paint finishes.

Vandalism

Issues

There are very few vandalism problems noted within the burying ground. Markings on grave stones appear to be from visitors rubbing stone carvings. Damage to structures is not evident.

Recommendations

Vandalism is not a significant issue. Stone rubbing of individual markers or monuments should be prohibited and listed on regulation signage. Improvements are not recommended at this time.

CIRCULATION SYSTEMS AND MATERIALS

Circulation Systems

Issues

The circulation system is difficult to discern without the aid of the 1901 plan (page 7). A main rectilinear lawn drive traverses the site. The drive is sunken in relationship to the adjacent lawn areas along the south and east segments. There is a separate circulation loop leading to the tombs. Secondary walks are less obvious since they are defined only by cornerstones and posts of family plots.

Recommendations

Maintain the existing circulation system as lawn.

GRAVE MARKERS

Headstones and Footstones

Issues

There are 38 family lots shown on the 1901 map, 23 of which are still marked by low granite corner posts about 30-36" tall. Most show staining caused by chains that no longer exist. There are also 11 mound tombs. Ten of these (A-J) are attached tombs with granite lintels located in the northeast corner of the burying ground. Tombs A-E are larger and are generally in good condition, while tombs F-J are smaller and are partially collapsed. Tomb K located just to the west of the other tombs has mortared fieldstone on three sides to about 30" high, with cut granite on the west side and an earthen top.



damaged gravestones

There are approximately 170 headstones and small monuments dating from 1777 to 1891. Approximately 111 of the headstones are slate. Most of these are dark gray, although there are also a few light gray and greenish slates, and at least one reddish slate. There are footstones associated with about one third of the slate headstones. Most remain in their original location; although some have been relocated or are lying loose on the ground.

There are also 56 marble headstones that vary in size and style. Most are fairly simple and are 3-4' tall, except for those of children, which are typically smaller. Many are surprisingly clean but also eroded with most of the original design softened by years of weathering. There is one small marble pillar about 4' tall. There is also one marble obelisk, which has fallen over and is lying on the ground.

There are also a few miscellaneous stones. One large brownstone slab on grade bears no inscription. There is also a small granite headstone, which is probably a replacement stone. Approximately a

dozen headstones and roughly an equal number of footstones, lie loose within the burying ground. Some are propped against other stones while others are partially buried in the ground. Stones are damaged from mowers scratching the stones. Volunteer plants are growing next to headstones and footstones causing them to tilt.

Recommendations

Remove volunteer growth from markers after review by a stone conservator. Protect stones from mowers and maintenance equipment.

One of the most effective preventive techniques that Newton could undertake would be to reset stones that are leaning more than 15 degrees (typically slates). This is a relatively straightforward task that would greatly benefit stones that are at risk for falling or breaking. A related, but slightly more complex issue is that stones are broken off at the base. The preservation section of the Association for Gravestone Studies website offers specific guidance on this technique. “A Gravestone Preservation Primer” by Lynette Strangstad is also a useful resource.

Treatment by a trained conservator is often needed once a stone is broken or damaged. This can range from reattaching components that have become separated to fitting together multiple fragments like pieces of a puzzle. Previous repairs that have failed are the best reminder to use extreme caution. Newton has many cases where a stone has come loose from its base and is in danger of falling or being stolen. In cases like this where the components are intact, reattachment is a relatively straightforward task that could be undertaken by city staff, using guidelines from the preservation manuals cited above. Reassembly of multiple fragments, especially pieces that have been separated for a long time and have become eroded, should be undertaken by only a stone conservator.

Choices become difficult once a stone is badly damaged. Conservation is expensive and should only be undertaken on stones that have a high likelihood of success, are historically significant or where special funding is available. Where conservation is not an option, stones can be wrapped in filter cloth and buried onsite in clean sand. While moving stones is not generally recommended, this is sometimes done if there is good storage space available good record keeping and no other options.

Edging at Family Plots

Issues

Granite corner posts and chain are evident in the family plot [numbers 100-105] near the mound tomb. Granite posts are found at a number of lots but few have chains.

Recommendations

Preserve chains and granite posts.

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

Perimeter Walls

Issues

The 24 inch high stone wall along Cherry and River Streets consists of random sized, roughly dressed slabs of local pudding stones and bluestones. While the exposed joints at the surface of the wall are heavily mortared, the 18 to 24 inch width of the wall appears to be generally dry-laid. The mortar joints are extensively cracked, loose or missing. Overall, the low wall is plumb and intact but individual stones have shifted or have fallen out of the wall along River Street where the corner curves past a large tree.

While the stone wall forms a vertical boundary along the street sidewalks, an earth berm has been sloped up to the top of the wall on the cemetery side. Along Cherry Street, however, the stone wall rises up to a height of about 36 inches where it then retains an additional height of earth along the back of a row of mound tombs.

About 40 feet of the north boundary adjacent to private property consists of smaller stones laid up with no mortar. The north and west boundaries are fenced with modern chain linking.

There is a railroad tie retaining wall adjacent to the contractor's yard along the western perimeter.

Recommendations

At the low stone boundary walls, displaced stonework should be reset and mortared. Otherwise, there is no urgent structural need to repoint cracked or missing mortar. In general, the mortar

surface does more to create an aesthetic appearance of a solid or finished wall than it actually does to bind the stones together. If anything, the mortar retards the flow of water through the stone which can result in freeze-thaw wedging where water gets trapped behind the mortar in cold weather. This freeze-thaw wedging results in the breaking up of the mortar. Although the mortar work at the low stone boundary walls is not compatible with the historic character of the burial ground, its removal from the stone walls is not a high priority.

Mound Tombs

Issues

There is a row of mound tombs that is parallel to and along Cherry Street near the northeast corner of the burying ground. The front walls of the tombs are extensively deteriorated; in fact, the mound tombs are little more than mounds with the inscribed lintels propped up on the mound. Although brick vaults were noted in the 1990 Master Plan, they are no longer visible. They appear to be covered with a recent addition of earth but it could not be seen whether the vaults are still intact or have been repaired in any way since 1990. Considering the current poor condition of the front wall, they were likely buried without repair. Without further investigation, it would be difficult to determine whether they have even been backfilled or whether they have collapsed prior to the recent placing of fill on the mound.



mound tombs - West Parish Burying Ground

There is a single tomb along the fence which appears to be in sound structural condition. Volunteer growth is obscuring views of the tomb.

Recommendations

Reset one lintel lying on the ground, remove volunteer growth and reestablish turf on the mound at tombs A-J. Remove volunteer growth at base of mound tomb K.

SITE AMENITIES

Signs

Issues

There are no signs related to the burying grounds.

Recommendations

Add an identification sign at the burying ground. Sign should include burying ground name and the dates that it was active. It may also be desirable to include additional regulatory and interpretive signage in the future.

Seating and Trash Receptacles

Issues

There are no benches or trash receptacles within the burying ground.

Recommendations

No seating or trash receptacles should be added.

UTILITIES

Drainage

Issues

The site appears to be well draining. No drainage system was discovered at the site.

Recommendations

Do not add a drainage system.



regulatory sign - Market Street Burying Ground, Brighton, Massachusetts

Water supply

Issues

The burying ground does not have a water system.

Recommendations

With efforts focused on ecological management of the site, no water system should be installed for irrigation.

Lighting

Issues

There are no light fixtures within the burial grounds. Street lighting exists at the corner of River and Cherry Street which casts light on the entrance to the burying ground.

Recommendations

No lighting should be added within the burying ground.









KEY

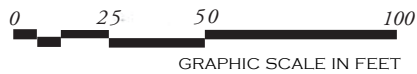
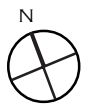
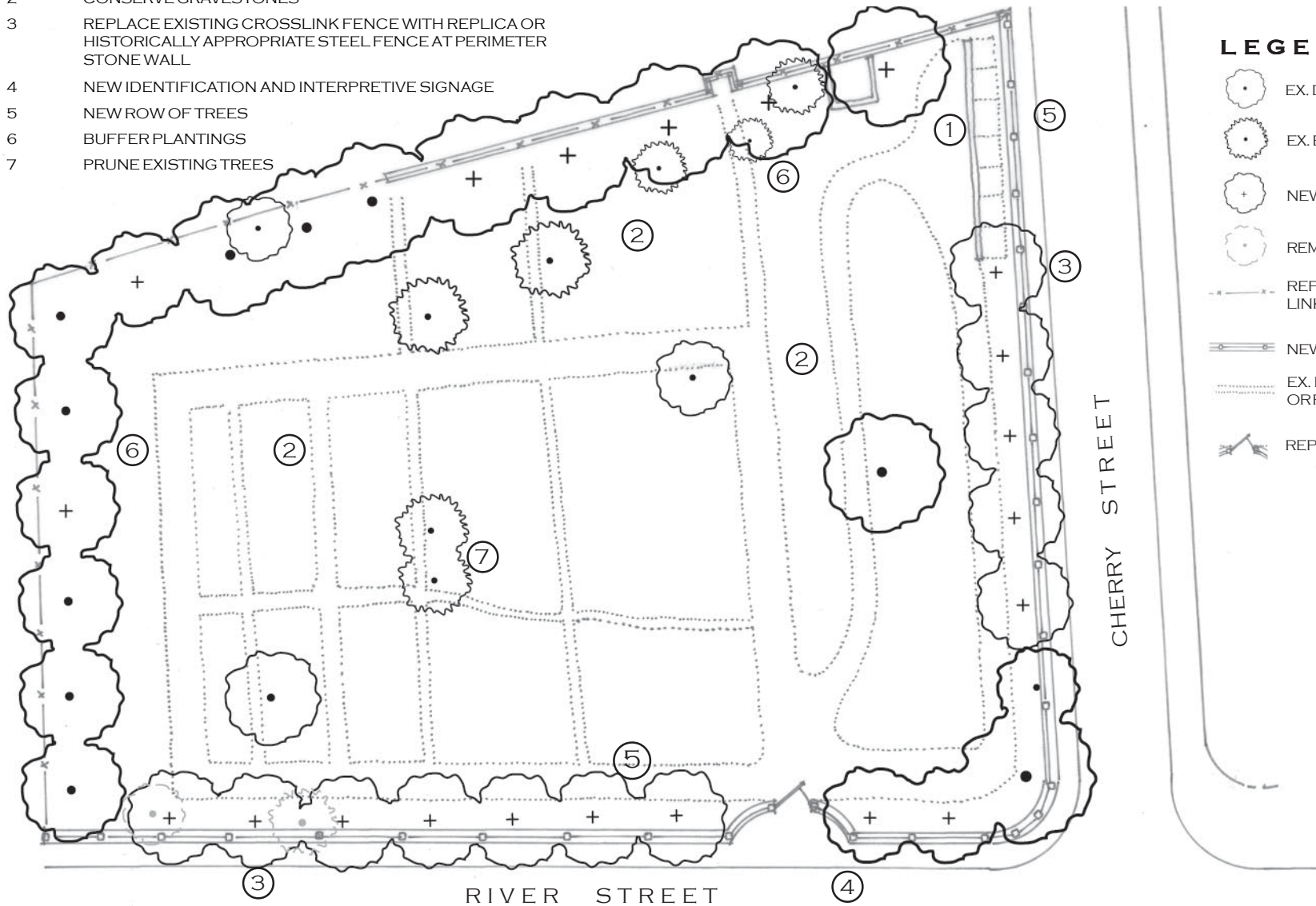
- 1 RESET LINTEL AT MOUND TOMB
- 2 CONSERVE GRAVESTONES
- 3 REPLACE EXISTING CROSSLINK FENCE WITH REPLICA OR HISTORICALLY APPROPRIATE STEEL FENCE AT PERIMETER STONE WALL
- 4 NEW IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE
- 5 NEW ROW OF TREES
- 6 BUFFER PLANTINGS
- 7 PRUNE EXISTING TREES

WEST PARISH BURYING GROUND

ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN

LEGEND

-  EX. DECIDUOUS TREE
-  EX. EVERGREEN TREE
-  NEW DECIDUOUS TREE
-  REMOVE EX. TREE
-  REPLACE EX. CHAIN LINK FENCE
-  NEW FENCE
-  EX. LAWN DRIVE OR PATH
-  REPLACE EX. GATE



WEST PARISH BURYING GROUND

COST ESTIMATE

Previous work on this burial ground includes the 1990 master plan by William Pressley & Associates, Inc., Structural Technology, Inc. and Fannin-Lehner with an estimated restoration cost of \$169,000.

High Priority

	<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Subtotal</i>
1	Gravestone conservation		
	Option A: Salvage broken and fallen stones, move offsite, and repair	\$100,000	
	Option B: Bury broken and fallen stones in burying grounds	\$5,000	
2	Reset mound tomb lintel	\$2,000	
3	Remove volunteer growth	\$5,000	
4	Prune trees deemed a safety issue	\$5,000	
5	Identification sign	\$2,000	\$19,000 to \$114,000

Medium Priority

	<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Subtotal</i>
1	Repair and reset gravestones	\$50,000	
2	Fencing at River and Cherry Streets		
	Option A: Replicate existing cross link fence and gate	\$120,000	
	Option B: Replace existing fence and gate with steel bar stock fence and gate	\$150,000	
3	Renovate Lawn	\$5,000	\$175,000 to \$205,000

WEST PARISH BURYING GROUND

COST ESTIMATE

Low Priority

	<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Subtotal</i>
1	Install interpretive and informational signage	\$4,000	
2	Plant additional trees and shrubs	\$10,000	
3	Repoint perimeter stone walls	\$5,000	
4	Replace Chain Link Fencing at north and west property boundaries	\$5,000	\$24,000
		Total	\$218,000 to \$343,000

SOUTH BURYING GROUND

INTRODUCTION

South Burying Ground, the third burial place established in Newton, is a small municipal cemetery that retains strong historical associations and distinctive burial markers associated with residents of the Upper Falls and Oak Hill neighborhoods. There are 357 recorded burials that occurred here between 1803 and 1938, primarily in the first part of the nineteenth century. These are represented by approximately 165 standing headstones, six small monuments, and nine tombs.

South Burying Ground is a rectangular 1.37-acre site that lies in the southwestern part of Newton near the intersection of Winchester and Needham Streets, between the villages of Upper Falls and Newton Highlands. It is a few hundred yards south of Boylston Street (Route 9), a major east/west regional route. Winchester Street, which abuts the burying ground on the east, is a busy two lane street that is occupied primarily by late twentieth century commercial, industrial and office buildings, including a large lumberyard that abuts the burying ground on the south and west. The MBTA mass transit tracks run a short distance to the west.

Today the burying ground presents a poorly maintained appearance. With its location and proximity to adjacent commercial and industrial land uses, South Burying Ground presents tremendous challenges.



The goals addressed in the executive summary can be accomplished in three phases:

High Priority [first year]

- Conserve and repair damaged gravestones (ongoing)
- Repair mound tomb
- Remove central row of Ash trees
- Prune trees for public safety and the protection of gravestones and monuments
- Add identification signage at the entrance to the burying ground
- Remove volunteer growth

Medium Priority [within 5 years]

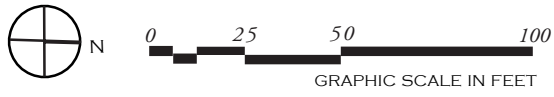
- Replace existing chain link fence and gate with more historically appropriate fencing
- Restore the row of trees along the central axis [former row of Ash trees]
- Renovate Lawn

Low Priority [greater than 5 years]

- Install interpretive and informational signage
- Buffer planting
- Cosmetic repair of perimeter stone walls

SOUTH BURYING GROUND

1901 MASTER PLAN



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER LAWNS AND VEGETATION

Landscape Character

Issues

The landscape character of South Burying Ground is relatively wooded with mature evergreen and deciduous trees and a declining yet prominent row of Ash trees. Over time the site has become naturalized from the spread of volunteer vegetation resulting in an unkempt appearance.

The topography of South Burying Ground features two knolls to either side of the entrance at Winchester Street. The knoll to the southeast of the entrance contains mound tombs and is the highest elevation within the burying ground, rising approximately 10 feet about the entrance. The eastern slope along the Winchester Street wall is approximately 1 vertical foot per every 2 horizontal feet. The northeast knoll is smaller, approximately 5' higher than the entrance, sloping gently in all directions. The remaining areas slope to the southwest corner of the site.

The rectilinear spatial organization of South Burying Ground reflects the transitional style of burial grounds of the early nineteenth century. It consists of a combination of single graves and family lots running north/south. The mounded eastern section of the burial ground contains primarily single graves, arranged in rough rows, as well as tombs. The level middle section contains the largest number of family lots, interspersed with some single graves, especially at the southern end. Narrow strips of land at the western and northern edges of the burying ground, which were added in 1833, contain primarily single graves with a few family lots. The spatial organization is most clearly evident on the 1901 map (see page 27), which shows all recorded burials, including those not marked by headstones, monuments or corner posts. Today the spatial organization is less clear because there is no visible evidence of many of the graves. Most of the headstones face west.

There are no significant views from the burying ground. Views to the commercial areas outside of the burying ground are objectionable. The western boundary of the burying ground appears cluttered with a two-story metal storage building, an 8' height tilting wood fence, a 12' height concrete retaining wall and a steep slope covered with debris. The views to the north include a three-story brick commercial building and parking lot. The views to the south toward the lumber yard include a parking lot and a propane gas filling station.

Recommendations

Selective clearing and removal of decayed and dying trees should occur within the burying ground. Additional plantings should be focused on buffer plantings to screen objectionable views. Consider working with abutters to clean up fine debris from their properties.

Planting

Issues

Vegetation consists of scattered mature trees, mostly ash and maple, some evergreen trees (pine and cedar), and a few shrubs (lilac and arborvitae). Extensive volunteer growth impacts gravestones, particularly along the west wall of the burying ground, with fallen limbs and low branching pines obscuring some headstones. Vegetation contributes significantly to the character of the site but also represents a potential hazard to the burial markers, particularly if it is not pruned regularly.



fallen tree, South Burying Ground

Planting consists of mature deciduous trees and evergreen trees and shrubs [Lilac, Buckthorn], and groundcover [Vinca]. Of the total 36 trees on the site, 69% are deciduous as opposed to the 41 trees shown on the 1901 plan. Tree species inventoried on the site include Ash, Maple, Oak, Mulberry, Red Maple, Linden, White Pine, Arborvitae. Many of these trees are assumed to be volunteers. The largest tree is a White Pine on the southeast knoll with a 36" DBH [diameter at breast height]. Insect damage, cracking and decay are evident in the row of diseased Ash trees along the central lawn drive. White Pines within the interior of the grounds are casting a dense shade and limbs are growing low to the ground creating a visual barrier within the burying ground. A large white pine tree has displaced several headstones.

Recommendations

Remove existing row of diseased Ash trees. Due to the size of the existing Ashes, a crane is necessary for removal. The tree removal operation should not impact historic structures or gravestones. Plant new trees to replace Ashes. Suggested trees include Red Oak or disease resistant varieties of American Elm. Remaining trees should be pruned by certified arborists. Initial pruning efforts should focus on removing dead limbs that are potentially harmful to gravestones and public safety. Prune trees on a yearly basis as required. Evaluate other trees in poor condition for removal. Maintain some of the significant volunteer trees along the northern perimeter to help screen abutting buildings and parking. New evergreen trees should be planted at South and West perimeter to screen objectionable views. Existing evergreen trees should be limbed up to open views and to increase light within the burying ground.

New and existing stumps should be cut level to finish grade and allowed to decay naturally. Suckering should be removed on an annual basis. Trees displacing gravestones should be cut down and stumps cut flush to grade without impact to the gravestones.

Volunteer Growth

Issues

Volunteer shrub growth is evident on mound tombs, markers, walls and along the western, northern and eastern fences. Species include Grey Birch, Black Cherry, Catalpa, Aspen, Buckthorn, Poison Ivy, Bittersweet, Devils Paintbrush, and Loosestrife.

Recommendations

Remove all volunteer growth. Consult with Structural Engineer and Stone Conservator to review structural integrity of markers, tombs or walls prior to removal. Continue to remove naturalized plants on an annual basis.



volunteer growth at South Burying Ground monument

Lawns

Issues

Lawn areas at the perimeter of site under the tree canopy are in fair condition. Where there are pine trees present, no lawn is able to grow due to the dense shade, surface roots and pine needles. There is a large bare spot without ground cover on the northeast knoll. Lawn appears difficult to maintain on the steep easterly slope of the southeast knoll. The lawn is patchy and some erosion is evident.

Recommendations

New lawn plantings should be seeded between August 15 and October 1 to reduce the likelihood of further weed infestation. Loosen soil in bare spots by hand raking. Rototilling is not recommended as it can be hazardous to gravestones and potential subsurface bone fragments. Existing lawn areas should be top dressed with loam. Fill depressions with topsoil to protect public safety. Seed with low maintenance turf grasses such as hard fescues and sheep fescues; consistent with the historic landscape character of the burying ground.

In an effort to recreate the historic character landscape of the burying grounds, lawns should be limited to three mowings per year; two in the spring and one in the fall depending on the rainfall in any given year. Lawns should be mowed to a height of 3 inches. Power mowers should not mow within 12 inches of existing gravestones. Remaining lawn can be removed with caution using line trimmers. Metal hand shears should not be used to protect grave stones. Fallen leaves should be mulched into the grass by mowing.

FENCES AND GATES

Chain Link Fences

Issues

The perimeter of the site is fenced with a variety of chain link fencing. The chain link fence along Winchester Street is approximately 6' high and is mounted on top of the perimeter stone wall. Three 10' panels near the entrance gate were recently damaged along with the wall. These portions of fence were recently replaced with new chain link. The majority of the fence supports are I-shaped steel channels. Many of the posts are missing finial caps. Breaches occur along the south and west border.

There are three newer 4' height galvanized chain link fence panels located at the corner adjacent to the office building along the northern edge of the property. This older chain link fence is in poor condition with broken and corroded horizontal bars. Chain link fabric is retaining earth on the parking lot side of the fence. It is assumed that the abutters filled against the fence to allow for the new bituminous drive to be built. Top rails are cracked from corrosion and previous fallen trees. New chain link at storage building at lumber yard is not secured to the building. Some top rails are missing. Most fence fabric is corroded. There are several breaches in the fence, making it possible for people to enter the site when the gate is locked.

Recommendations

Replace existing chain link fence with 6' height steel bar stock fence on Winchester Street only. Repair existing posts and replace remaining chain link fabric along south, west and northern edge of site with a 6' height black vinyl coated fabric to decrease future maintenance. Consider asking adjacent landowners to remove debris and eroded soil in order to maintain integrity of new fence.

Gate

Issues

Evidence from the remaining dressed granite gate posts and hardware at Winchester Street gate suggest that the original gate was a single leaf gate swinging outward. The replacement gate is a ten foot wide six foot high chain link double gate which swings inward. The gate is sagging and locked with a chain and lock at all times except during maintenance. The lock is rusting and difficult to open and close. There are two 7' ht. cracked and corroded 2 ½" outside diameter pipes supporting the gate.

Recommendations

When the fence is replaced, the gate should be replaced with a solid steel bar stock gate to match new fence. Gate should be opened and closed at prescribed hours. Provide gate stays to hold the gate open during visitation hours.

ACCESS AND SECURITY

Pedestrian and Universal Access

Issues

Pedestrian and universal access is not currently available. Parking is not available along the busy Winchester Street corridor.

Recommendations

Consider negotiating with abutters to provide parking spaces on the weekends. Gate should be opened and closed upon request or for scheduled events such as clean-ups or cemetery tours.

Vehicular Access

Issues

Vehicular access for maintenance is available through the 10' wide Winchester Street gate.

Recommendations

Maintain current access point on Winchester Street.

Security

Issues

There are several breaches within the chain link fence along the lumber yard side of the burying ground. Visibility into the site is difficult due to the topography and location of the burying ground.

Recommendations

Temporary improvements to security can be made by repairing existing chain link fabric fence until further fence improvements can be made.



collapsed chain link fence, South Burying Ground

CIRCULATION SYSTEMS AND MATERIALS

Circulation Systems

Issues

An approximate 10' wide main entry path begins at the midpoint of the site along Winchester Street and extends through the center of site east to west. A secondary path system running south to north shown on 1901 plan (page 27) is no longer discernible other than for a partial row of Ash trees remaining to mark it. Corner stones and posts for plots also help mark the secondary path system. There is no paving within the burying ground.

Recommendations

The existing lawn circulation system is appropriate and sufficient for current use of the burying ground.

Headstones and Footstones

Issues

The 1901 map shows approximately 244 headstones, 150 footstones and 6 monuments. Today there are approximately 165 standing headstones and six monuments. There are also at least a dozen fallen and partially buried headstones and numerous fragments throughout the burying ground. It is difficult to get an accurate count of footstones because many are no longer upright and lie buried on the ground.

The various types of burial markers display a range of styles that were popular during the nineteenth century and clearly illustrate evolving funerary styles during this period. Approximately 55 of the headstones are slate, which is primarily dark gray. Most of these are of relatively modest size and fairly simple with little decorative carving. The willow and urn motif popular during the mid-nineteenth century is fairly well represented at South Burying Ground. The earlier slate headstones, located primarily in the southeastern quadrant of the burying ground, have a rounded tympanum on a shouldered main block. There are also a number of rectangular slate headstones and some with a pointed Gothic-arch tympanum on a shouldered main block. The Gothic arched headstones are an unusual form that is also found at Newton's West Parish Burying Ground.

There are also 110 upright marble headstones that vary in size and style. Most are fairly simple and are 3-4' tall, except for those of children, which are typically smaller. Many are surprisingly

clean but also eroded with most of the original design softened by years of weathering. A few retain some of their original detail.

There is one small marble pillar about 4' tall. There are also five marble obelisks, which vary in size from 4' to 8' tall and typically commemorate multiple family members. The largest is the Boyden monument, prominently located near the northern edge of the burying ground. Most are mounted on a separate base and pedestal, reflecting the popularity of using prefabricated component parts to create a distinctive monument.

There are also a few miscellaneous graves and burial markers. One grave in the northeastern section of the burying ground is slightly raised above the surrounding area and is enclosed by curbing. There is one polished black granite monument which commemorates members of the Esty family and another small granite stone, probably a replacement for an earlier stone.

The earliest burial at South Burying Ground was Enoch Davenport (d. 1803); the most recent was Samuel Bacon (d.1938).

There are approximately 244 headstones shown on the 1901 plan. Only about 165 headstones remain; a loss of one third of the headstones over the past century. The loss of footstones is even greater. The 1990 master plan identified 112 stones as being in need of repair. Many of these have been lying on the ground for more than a decade and have suffered additional damage in the intervening years. Other stones have been damaged since that time.

Recommendations

See recommendations for West Parish Burying Ground.

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

Perimeter Stone Wall

Issues

The site is contained within an 18" high dry laid local puddingstone rubble wall. A 12' section near the existing entrance gate has been recently damaged by an automobile accident. There are missing stones in some places. A portion of the stone wall shown on the 1901 plan has been removed along the office building site.

Recommendations

Repair the stone wall near the entrance gate.



stone wall and fence along Winchester Street, South Burying Ground

Mound Tombs

Issues

There is a row of eight mound tombs that is parallel to and along a barely discernable interior grass path that parallels Winchester Street. The tombs were apparently built in three phases: the first six in 1806; one in 1821 (Iilydes); and one in 1827 (Noah King and Joseph Hall). The first six have the same style of red brick construction; the Iilydes tomb is similar but the brick is more orange and consists of larger brick units; the King-Hall tomb consists of rough pudding stone.



mound tomb - South Burying Ground

The front walls of the first four tombs at the north end of the row are deteriorated beyond repair. There is no evidence of any vaults behind these partially collapsed walls, although they may be hidden behind a load of gravel recently dumped between the back of the wall remnant and the vaults. The front walls of the next three tombs are relatively intact but have horizontal cracks in the bedding joints due to invasive volunteer plants. The front wall of the stone tomb is intact except where the corner has collapsed.

The single tomb above the large group of tombs is in stable condition.

Recommendations

There are three options for preserving the historic conditions of the mound tombs.

The first option would be to demolish the deteriorated brick walls at the first four tombs (A-D) and repair the masonry walls and corners at the second four tombs (E-H). This option would be better if the vaults still exist insofar as there would only be hollow space behind the walls. Because of its many joints and small units, brickwork is vulnerable to water infiltration and freeze-thaw wedging actions if the back of the wall is directly exposed to earth backfill and water. If the vaults

no longer exist, the back of the walls would have to be waterproofed and drains installed to carry water away. Furthermore, the walls must be stout enough to resist the horizontal pressure of the fill against the back of the wall and the foundation should be deep enough to resist frost action in the soil. Assuming that vaults still exist, an allowance of at least \$50,000 should be considered for this work. If no vaults are remaining, it is probably not practical to restore the brick and stonework.

The second option would be to demolish all of the tomb walls and install a concrete retaining wall which would be designed to resist horizontal earth pressure and deep enough to be below frost penetration. Salvaged bricks could be used to face the concrete wall or the concrete could simply be exposed. An allowance of at least \$100,000 should be considered for this work.

SITE AMENITIES

Signs

Issues

There are 3 bronze markers, 6” diameter, in front of mound tombs with the inscription “Revolutionary Soldiers, Lydia, Partridge, Whiting 1775 1783, erected by Chapter B.A.”.

Recommendations

It is desirable to add an identification sign to the burying ground immediately for greater visibility. Adding regulation and interpretive signage is a medium priority and can be added in 1 to 5 years.



interpretive sign- Market Stree Burying Ground

UTILITIES

Drainage

Issues

One catch basin at the southwest corner of the site provides drainage for the Burying Ground. The location of outflow is not known.

Recommendations

The catch basin and storm drain outlet should be cleaned and maintained annually for proper operation.

Water supply

Issues

There are no water supply fixtures within the burying ground.

Recommendations

Adding a water supply is not necessary at this time.

Lighting

Issues

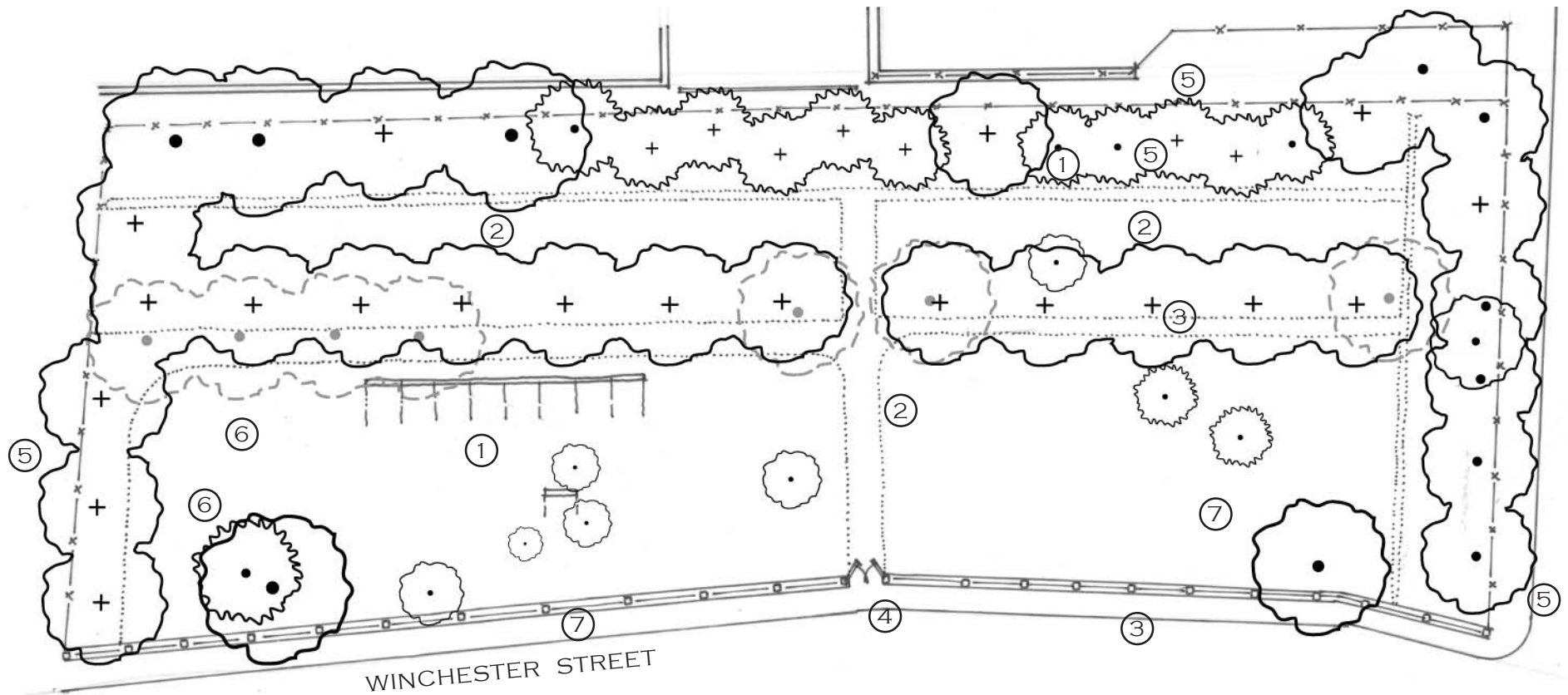
None exists within burial grounds. Winchester Street has street lighting.

Recommendations

No lighting should be added within the burying grounds.

SOUTH BURYING GROUND

ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN

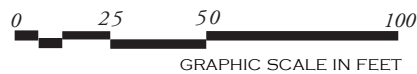


KEY

- 1 REPAIR OR REMOVE DAMAGED SECTION OF MOUND TOMB
- 2 CONSERVE GRAVESTONES
- 3 REPLACE EXISTING CHAIN LINK FENCE WITH HISTORICALLY APPROPRIATE STEEL FENCE AT WINCHESTER STREET WALL.
- 4 NEW IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE
- 5 NEW ROW OF TREES
- 6 BUFFER PLANTINGS
- 7 REMOVE DISEASED ASH TREES
- 8 PRUNE EXISTING TREES

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------|--|------------------------------|
| | EX. DECIDUOUS TREE | | REPLACE EX. CHAIN LINK FENCE |
| | EX. EVERGREEN TREE | | NEW STEEL FENCE |
| | NEW DECIDUOUS TREE | | EXISTING LAWN DRIVE OR PATH |
| | NEW TREE | | REPLACE EX. GATE |
| | REMOVE EX. TREE | | |



SOUTH BURYING GROUND

COST ESTIMATE

Previous work on this burial ground includes the 1990 master plan by William Pressley & Associates, Inc., Structural Technology, Inc. and Fannin-Lehner with an estimated restoration cost of \$137,000.

High Priority

	<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Subtotal</i>
1	Repair mound tombs		
	Option A: Demolish brick walls, regrade and repair stone tomb wall	\$50,000	
	Option B: Rebuild retaining wall and face with salvaged brick and stone	\$100,000	
2	Conserve and repair grave stones (ongoing)	\$100,000	
3	Remove Ash trees	\$15,000	
4	Repair damaged wall at Winchester Street gate	\$10,000	
5	Remove volunteer growth	\$40,000	
6	New identification sign	\$5,000	
			\$220,000 to \$270,000

SOUTH BURYING GROUND

COST ESTIMATE

Medium Priority

	<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Subtotal</i>
1	Replace Winchester Street chain link fence with steel bar stock fence	\$100,000	
2	Repair breaches in remaining chain link fence	\$20,000	
3	Plant row of trees along central drive	\$15,000	
4	Renovate lawn	\$50,000	\$185,000

Low Priority

	<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Subtotal</i>
1	Replace remaining chain link fences with vinyl coated chain link fence	\$12,000	
2	Install Interpretive and informational signage	\$8,000	
3	Buffer planting	\$15,000	
5	Repoint perimeter stone walls	\$30,000	\$65,000
		Total	\$470,000 to \$520,000

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