

WILCOX PARK

*Master Plan for Park-wide Plantings
and Formal Garden Rehabilitation*
Westerly, Rhode Island
Westerly Public Library/Wilcox Park

Project Data

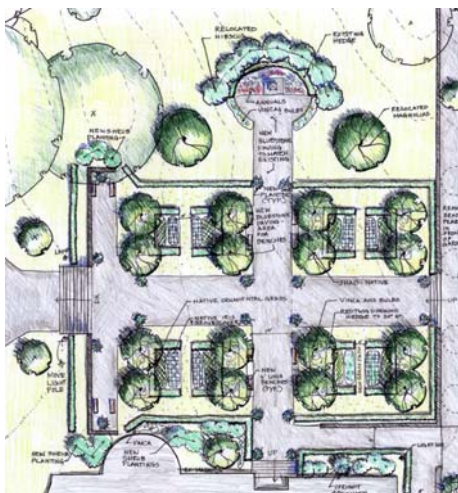
Date: 2005-2006
Size: 14± acres
Context: Centrally located in
downtown Westerly, Rhode
Island



Existing view of the pond from the overlook



Historic image



Project Description:

In 1898, Harriet Wilcox donated a 7-acre estate and money to establish Westerly Public Library and Wilcox Park as a memorial to her late husband. The library is both a library and a Civil War Memorial for the community. In the 1890s, Warren Manning designed a Victorian strolling garden with perimeter walks, open meadow, formal entrances, native trees and understory shrubs, and dense border plantings. In 1905, 7 adjacent acres were acquired. Frank Hamilton designed this property, extended Manning's concept, and incorporated a pond that survives and provides seasonal enjoyment. Arthur A. Shurcliff added to the Manning and Hamilton legacy with a formal terrace (1924) and ballustrade (1929) and a WWI Memorial (1937). Since then, the park has become an arboretum with a unique collection of native and specimen plantings. In 2004, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

EDC was hired as lead consultant to preserve the cultural and historic character of this designed landscape, enhance its important landscape elements, and to improve the plantings. We conducted a detailed site assessment to identify the opportunities and limitations of all the vegetation. Surprisingly, few new plantings are needed. Rather, we established quite early that money can be saved by relocating existing vegetation to more appropriate areas and removing excess vegetation, thus restoring Manning's design ideals and improve the Park's arboretum. Multiple schematic design alternatives were prepared to treat and improve the Formal Garden environs and adjacent Post Office walk and entry. Our scope of work included schematic design, design development, construction documentation, planting specifications and details, and a cost estimate. All of our work followed the guidelines established by *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Treatments of Historic Properties* prepared by the National Park Service, 1996. Park staff and volunteers will implement most of our recommendations. Private contractors will do the heavier work.



*A Schematic Design Alternative and
Perspective View of the Formal Garden*