

WEST NEWBURY HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
 Historic Sites Survey Table of Contents  
Mechanic Street

Street Address	Page ##	Individual or Group Form	WN Historical Commission Comments
<a href="#">5 Mechanic St</a>	2, 4, 7	Group	
<a href="#">7 Mechanic St</a>	2, 3, 4, 7	Group	
<a href="#">13 Mechanic St</a>	2-3, 4, 7	Group	
<a href="#">15 Mechanic St</a>	1, 2-3, 4	Group	Photo on p. TofC 2
<a href="#">17 Mechanic St</a>	3, 4	Group	
<a href="#">19 Mechanic St</a>	4	Group	

*Supplemental Mechanic Street Photo*  
*Source: West Newbury Assessor's Records*



15 MECHANIC ST

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

R10

Newbury-

WNB.H

See Data Sheet

**Town/City:** West Newbury

**Place** (*neighborhood or village*):

**Name of Area:** Mechanic Street Area

**Present Use:** Single-family and Multiple-family Residential

**Construction Dates or Period:** ca. 1790-1857

**Overall Condition:** Good

**Major Intrusions and Alterations:** Synthetic siding, replacement window sash, side and rear additions (late 20<sup>th</sup> – early 21<sup>st</sup> c)

**Acreage:** 3.0 acres

**Recorded by:** Stacy Spies and Wendy Frontiero

**Organization:** West Newbury Historical Commission

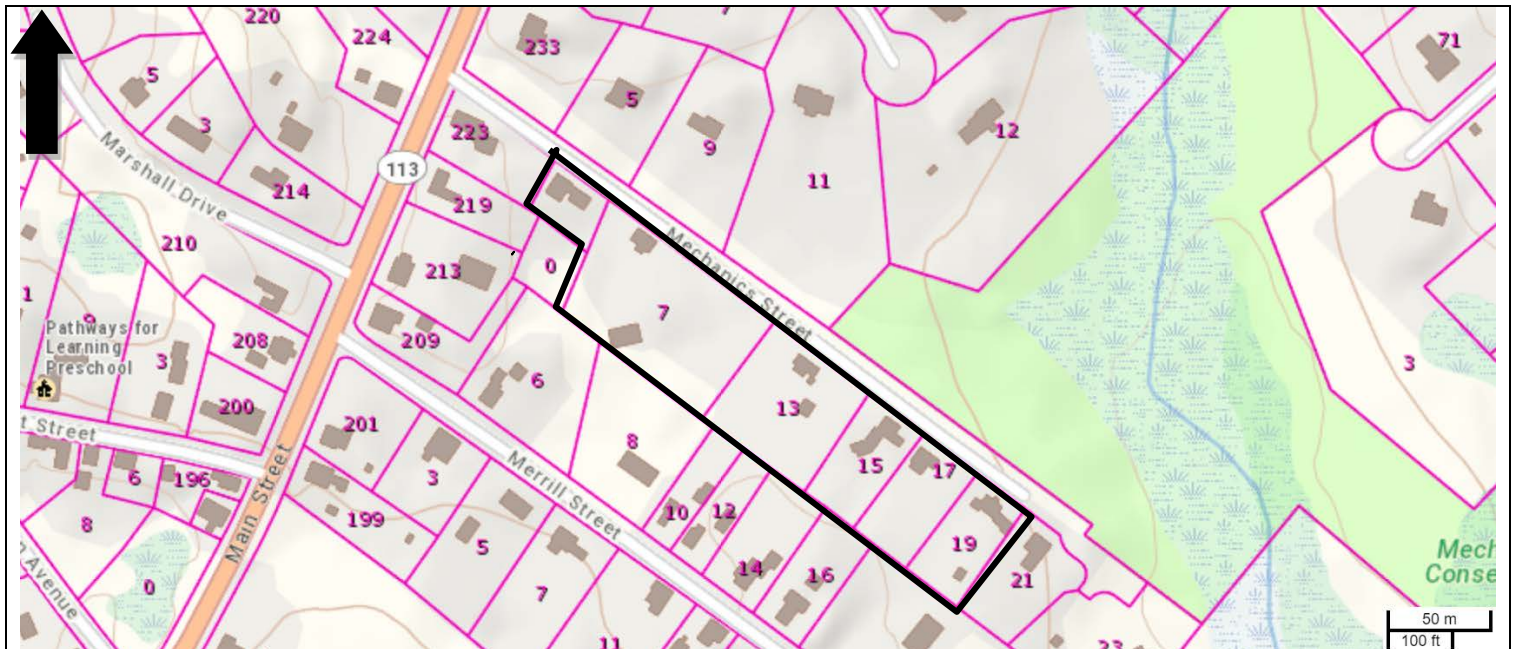
**Date** (*month/year*): June 2020

## Photograph



Photo 1. View looking northwest. At left, 17 and 15 Mechanic Street.

## Locus Map



see continuation sheet

## INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

WEST NEWBURY MECHANIC STREET AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area Letter Form Nos.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WNB.H

See Data  
Sheet

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.  
*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

*Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.*

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

*Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.*

The Mechanic Street Area is a group of six properties on the southwest side of Mechanic Street, a dead-end street that extends southeast from Main Street (Route 113) in the center of town. Mechanic Street descends gradually to the southeast from its intersection with Main Street; the terrain rises slightly up to the northwest across the survey area. Developed mainly in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Mechanic Street Area is characterized by irregularly spaced, single-family houses standing a fairly consistent, moderate setback from the street, with trees set along the property lines, yards maintained in lawn, and gravel and paved driveways at the sides of the houses. The opposite side of Mechanic street is lined by a border of trees and is largely undeveloped. The street has no curbs or sidewalks.

Rows of trees are typical along property lines, and yards are generally landscaped with informal foundation plantings. Five of the properties have outbuildings, including one modern barn and four garages (two of which are attached to the main house); most are small in scale and located behind the main house.

Houses in the survey area are typically very modest examples of late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century forms and styles. (Photo 1) Half of the buildings are 1-½ stories high, two are two stories, and one is 2 ½ stories. Most (five of the six) have side gable forms. Wood clapboards and trim are found on half the residences; two have vinyl siding and trim, and one is clad with asphalt shingles. Single, double-hung windows are typical throughout, with a variety of multi-pane sash -- mostly replacement units-- and flat trim. Flat fieldstone foundations are prevalent. Following is a sample of representative and outstanding individual buildings within the survey area.

The John and Margaret Murphy House, 5 Mechanic Street (ca. 1856, WNB.329) (Photo 2) is a 2-½ story, side-gabled half-house with a side hall plan, interior chimney rising slightly off-center, and clapboard siding. It is distinguished by a flat fieldstone foundation and a three-bay façade having no ornament. A two-story rear ell is in the same plane as the right elevation of the main block. A 1-½ story connector on the left side is set back slightly from the façade of the main block; it features a gambrel roof and offset secondary entrance. The 1-½ story garage attached to the southeast end of the building has an ample, front-gambrel roof and two vehicle bays.

Next door, 7 Mechanic Street (ca. 1853, WNB.330) (Photo 3) is a 1-½ story, side-gable house with a full-length verandah recessed under the front slope of the roof. Its five-bay façade has a center entrance and a long shed-roofed dormer above. The back slope of the roof has been raised at the right end to accommodate rear additions. The left (southwest) elevation has two widely spaced windows at the first floor and two closely spaced windows in the half-story. Much historic detailing has been lost to vinyl siding. (Note: While the house's swooping porch roof and dormer give it the appearance of an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Bungalow, the shape of the house is very similar to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century houses in West Newbury such as the ca. 1860 370 Main Street, and 82, 114, and 118 Maple Street. More research is merited.) A very large, one-story barn/storage building at the rear of the site is late 20<sup>th</sup> century in origin; it features an asymmetrical gable roof and board-and-batten siding.

One of two Georgian-era buildings (13 and 15 Mechanic Street) presumably moved to the survey area in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, 13 Mechanic Street (ca. 1790, moved ca. 1872, WNB.331) (Photo 4) is two stories high and has a side-gable roof

## INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

WEST NEWBURY MECHANIC STREET AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area Letter Form Nos.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WNB.H

See Data  
Sheet

with pronounced gable returns, clapboard siding, and a five-bay façade. The center entrance has a modern Colonial Revival style surround. Small shed-roofed and gabled additions appear along the rear of the main block. A late 20<sup>th</sup> century storage building/workshop at the back of the house has a generous front-gambrel roof and board-and-batten siding. 15 Mechanic Street is similar in size, form, and 5-bay/center entrance façade composition, but is much more utilitarian in design.

The Cornelius and Mary Hallahan House, 17 Mechanic Street (Ca. 1857, WNB.333) (Photo 5) is the most stylish architectural design in the survey area. Its 1-½ story, front-gable volume has asphalt-shingle siding but is ornamented with paneled corner pilasters, bracketed eaves, and paneled window jambs with bracketed flat hoods. A shed-roofed projection along the left (southeast) elevation contains 6/6 sash with paneled jambs and no hoods, and a garage door at the basement level.

Although it has experienced many alterations in building materials, the Mechanic Street Area is a well maintained and cohesive area of late 18<sup>th</sup> through early 20<sup>th</sup> century development. It is notable for its rural setting, consistent front setbacks, relatively small-scale buildings, varied yet harmonious building forms and roof shapes, and unpretentious styling.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this relates to the historical development of the community.*

The Mechanic Street neighborhood was first developed in 1852, when Moses Newell laid out a “way” that was three rods (49.5 feet) wide.<sup>1</sup> The *West Newbury Record* reported in 1852 that “Colonel Newell has laid out a new street, running at a right angle from main road and has disposed of ten house lots. Success to those who reside on ‘Newell Street.’”<sup>2</sup> Mechanic Street was laid out along the western edge of Moses Newell’s property at 243 Main Street (WNB.65). It appears that Moses Newell had houses constructed on Mechanic Street on speculation and sold lots to other investors to do likewise. The street was briefly called “Newell Avenue” in the 1870s,<sup>3</sup> but by 1900, Mechanic Street was consistently in use.<sup>4</sup> Much like Prospect Street and Bridge Street, which were developed contemporaneously with Mechanic Street, the first homeowners on Mechanic Street were all recent Irish immigrants working as laborers, comb makers, or shoemakers.

At the time of the 1865 census, 7 Mechanic Street housed the James Clancy and Michael Clancy families. Shoemaker James Clancy (ca. 1817- ) lived in one half of the house with his three children. Michael Clancy lived in the other half with his wife Bridget and their four children. In 1902, James Clancy sold the property to his son-in-law, William Carroll, his daughter Ann’s husband, and continued to live in the house with them.<sup>5</sup> Carroll worked as a clerk in Daniel Cooney’s grocery store on Main Street. The David family owned the property from 1916 until 1955.<sup>6</sup> Oliver David worked in a shoe factory and lived here with his wife, Delphine. In 1940, Oliver David was employed by the W.P.A.

<sup>1</sup> See Essex South Deed Book 458, p. 199.

<sup>2</sup> “List of Combmakers,” Manuscript notes taken by Elizabeth Thompson, Elizabeth Thompson vertical file, G.A.R. Library, West Newbury.

<sup>3</sup> See Essex South Deed Book 889, p. 207.

<sup>4</sup> See Essex South Deed Book 1690, p. 210.

<sup>5</sup> Essex South Deed Book 1690, p. 210.

<sup>6</sup> Essex South Deed Book 2334, p. 258



## INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

WEST NEWBURY MECHANIC STREET AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area Letter Form Nos.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WNB.H

See Data  
Sheet

19 Mechanic Street (ca. 1856, WNB. ) was sold to Cornelius McAuliffe in 1856.<sup>7</sup> Cornelius McAuliffe (1823-1898) worked as a farm laborer. The McAuliffe family owned the property until 1910.<sup>8</sup> From 1924 to 1944, Mary McCarthy (ca. 1869-ca. 1944) owned the house and lived here.<sup>9</sup>

The John and Margaret Murphy House, 5 Mechanic Street, was likely moved here by investor Charles C. Moseley, who owned adjacent land on Main Street (See 219 Main St., WNB.61). In 1863, laborer John Murphy (ca. 1815- ) and his wife, Margaret (ca. 1822- ) purchased the house and land.<sup>10</sup> Like Moseley, John Murphy saw investment potential on the new Mechanic Street; Murphy also owned 17 Mechanic Street around this time. In 1866, Irish immigrant Cornelius Hallahan purchased 5 Mechanic Street as a rental property.<sup>11</sup> Hallahan resided at 17 Mechanic Street. The Hallahan family owned 5 Mechanic Street until 1949.<sup>12</sup>

From the 1870s into the 1920s, the Hayes family lived at 5 Mechanic Street. At the time of the 1870 census, Timothy Hayes (ca. 1826-1895) and his wife, Alice (1830-1895), both born in Ireland, lived here with their four children. Timothy Hayes worked as a comb maker; his sons worked as shoemakers. In the 1910s and 1920s, Mary E. Hayes, granddaughter of Timothy Hayes, lived here while working as a packer in a shoe factory. At the time of the 1920 census, Mary E. Hayes was living at 17 Mechanic Street and working as a housekeeper for Thomas Hallahan.

The Cornelius and Mary Hallahan House, 17 Mechanic Street, like 5 Mechanic Street, was also originally owned by John Murphy. In 1866, Cornelius Hallahan purchased 17 Mechanic Street from Murphy.<sup>13</sup> Cornelius Hallahan (ca. 1837-after 1884) and his wife, Mary Kelleher Hallahan (1835-after 1900), were both born in Ireland. Cornelius worked as a farm laborer. Mary worked as a "wash woman," according to the 1900 census. Cornelius and Mary's son, Thomas, continued to live with his parents as an adult. Thomas Hallahan worked in a shoe factory and as a road construction laborer.

13 and 15 Mechanic Street appear to be late 18<sup>th</sup> century houses moved to this location in the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thomas Silk purchased 13 Mechanic Street from investor Anson W. Noyes in 1873.<sup>14</sup> The house appears substantially older than that date. (Secondary source materials note that Noyes moved buildings to and from Maple Street and Main Street as an investor; house-moving would not have been unfamiliar to him.) Thomas Silk (1822-1910)<sup>15</sup> and his wife, Margaret (1829-1897)<sup>16</sup> had at least nine children. Thomas Silk worked as a laborer and at a comb factory. At the time of the 1870 census, the three teenage Silk sons were also at work at a comb factory and a shoe factory. Thomas Silk owned the property until 1905.<sup>17</sup>

15 Mechanic Street (ca. 1790, moved ca. 1868, WNB.332) was the home of John Clancy (1836- ) and his wife, Mary (1836- ). John Clancy worked as a shoemaker. At the time of the 1900 census, John and Mary's daughter, Bridget, was living alone here while she worked as a shoemaker. The house remained in the Clancy family until at least 1914. From 1921 to 1963, the house was owned by Clinton and Lucy Ladd.<sup>18</sup> Clinton Ladd worked as a fitter and a wood heeler in a shoe factory, Lucy Ladd worked as a cook in a bakery, their son worked as a truck driver, and their daughter worked as a packer in a shoe shop.

<sup>7</sup> Essex South Deed Book 545, p. 219.

<sup>8</sup> Essex South Deed Book 2028, p. 124.

<sup>9</sup> Essex South Deed Book 2601, p. 255 and Essex South Deed Book 3392, p. 253.

<sup>10</sup> Essex South Deed Book 647, p. 140.

<sup>11</sup> Essex South Deed Book 703, p. 36.

<sup>12</sup> Essex South Deed Book 3705, p. 396.

<sup>13</sup> Essex South Deed Book 703, p. 36.

<sup>14</sup> Essex South Deed Book 889, p. 207.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/110560260>. Accessed Feb. 27, 2020.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/110560662/margaret-silk>. Accessed Feb. 27, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Essex South Deed Book 1801, p. 289.

<sup>18</sup> Essex South Deed Book 2494, p. 565 and Book 5122, p. 386.

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

WEST NEWBURY MECHANIC STREET AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area Letter    Form Nos.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WNB.H

See Data  
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**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

WEST NEWBURY MECHANIC STREET AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area Letter    Form Nos.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WNB.H

See Data  
Sheet**AREA DATA SHEET**

Assessor's #	MHC #		Street Address	Construction Date	Style	Acreage
R10-14	WNB.329	John and Margaret Murphy House	5 Mechanic St.	Ca. 1856	No style	0.20
R10-13	WNB.330	James Clancy House	7 Mechanic St.	Ca. 1853	No style	1.39
R10-12	WNB.331	Thomas and Margaret Silk House	13 Mechanic St.	Ca. 1790; Moved Ca. 1872	Georgian	1.00
R10-11	WNB.332	John and Mary Clancy House	15 Mechanic St.	Ca. 1790; Moved Ca. 1868	Georgian	0.5
R10-10	WNB.333	Cornelius and Mary Hallahan House	17 Mechanic St.	Ca. 1857	Greek Revival/Italianate	0.5
R10-9	WNB.334	Cornelius and Hannah McAuliffe House	19 Mechanic St.	Ca. 1856	No style	0.5



# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

WEST NEWBURY MECHANIC STREET AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area Letter Form Nos.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WNB.H

See Data  
Sheet

## SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Photo 2. 5 Mechanic Street. View looking southeast.



Photo 3. 7 Mechanic Street. View looking southeast.



Photo 4. 13 Mechanic Street. View looking southeast.



Photo 5. 17 Mechanic Street. View looking southwest.