

WEST NEWBURY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Historic Sites Survey Table of Contents
Sullivan's Court

Street Address	Page ##	Individual or Group Form	WN Historical Commission Comments
1 Sullivan's Court	1, 2, 3, 7	Group	

FORM A - AREA

R11, U1	Newbury- port West	WNB.K	See Data Sheet
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town/City: West Newbury

Place (*neighborhood or village*):

Name of Area: Whetstone Street Area

Present Use: Single-family Residential

Construction Dates or Period: ca. 1860-1957

Overall Condition: Good to Fair

Major Intrusions and Alterations: Synthetic siding, replacement window sash, changes to fenestration, side and rear additions (late 20th – early 21st c)

Acreage: 3.0 acres

Recorded by: Stacy Spies and Wendy Frontiero

Organization: West Newbury Historical Commission

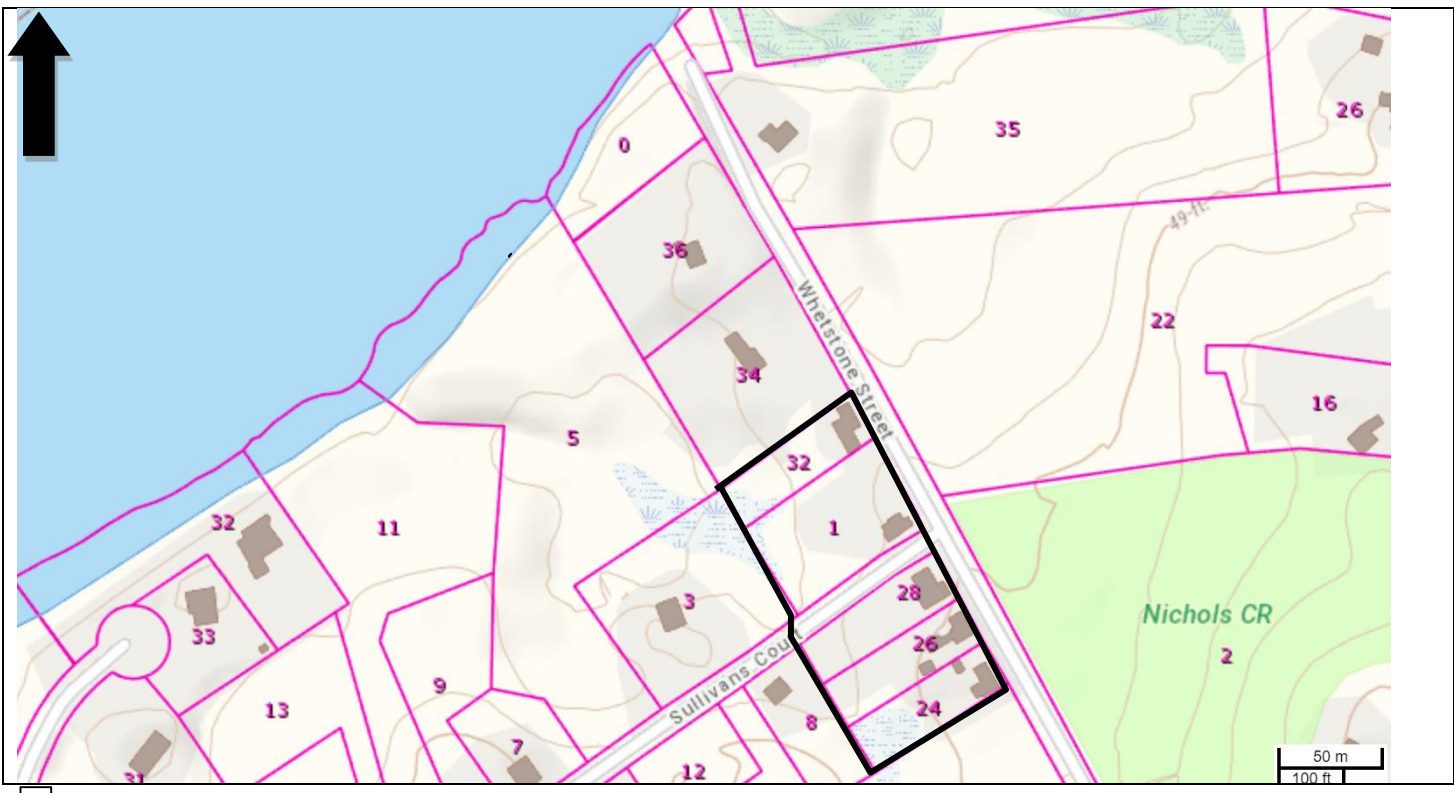
Date (*month/year*): June 2020

Photograph



Photo 1. Intersection of Whetstone Street and Sullivan's Court. View looking northwest. 28 Whetstone Street at left. 1 Sullivan's Lane at right.

Locus Map



☐ see continuation sheet

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- ☐ 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 Whetstone Street Area is a cluster of five properties at the intersection of Whetstone Street and Sullivan's Court, between Main Street and the Merrimack River, which is located approximately one-eighth mile to the northwest. The rural neighborhood is sparsely developed, with large open fields and a heterogeneous mix of residential development. Whetstone Street slopes down to the northwest and the river across the survey area. Developed primarily in the mid to late 19th century, the Whetstone Street Area is characterized by regularly spaced, single-family houses standing close to the street edge, with yards maintained in lawn, paved driveways at the sides, and scattered trees and shrubs throughout. Buildings are consistently positioned with moderate front setbacks along Whetstone Street. The similar Whetstone Street houses occupy long, narrow lots, while the larger and architecturally singular house at 1 Sullivan's Court has a correspondingly larger and square-shaped lot. The main houses are set near the street, with the occasional outbuildings positioned to the side and slightly in back of the dwellings.

Whetstone Street and Sullivan Court have no curbs or sidewalks. The front yards of the three properties to the south of Sullivan's Court slope gently up to the houses, while the yards to the north of the intersection are generally flat. Houses in the survey area are typically very utilitarian examples of mid-19th century housing, with minimal detailing and virtually no ornament, except for 1 Sullivan's Court. (Early detailing may have been lost to modern renovations.) Nos. 24, 26, and 32 Whetstone Street are 1-½ story, side-gabled cottages with high post stud walls, three- to five-bay facades, and center entrances. 28 Whetstone Street is a mid-20th century ranch, and 1 Sullivan's Court is a 2-½ story, tentatively ambitious Italianate style. Of the three houses where the foundations are visible, one (Sullivan's Court) is brick, and the others are concrete block. Three of the residences have wood clapboards and trim; one has vinyl siding and trim; and one (the ranch house) has wood shingle siding. Windows are usually replacement units with 6/6 or 1/1 sash, most with flat casings. Three of the properties have outbuildings, all 20th century garages. New siding, windows, and side and rear additions are common alterations. Following are brief descriptions of representative and outstanding buildings in the survey area.

At the southern end of the survey area, the Michael and Catherine (Kittie) Lafferty House, 24 Whetstone Street (Ca. 1861, WNB.368) (Photos 3, 4) is a five-bay cottage with an asymmetrical façade, no gable returns, and vinyl siding and trim. One bay deep, the original building is augmented with a shed-roofed rear addition and a two by two bay side addition. An intact, early 20th c garage/storage building near the right rear corner of the house has a front-gable form, shiplap siding, exposed purlin ends and a window opening centered in the half-story on each gable end, a large garage door opening on the façade (southeast elevation), and a 2/2 window on the long wall facing the street (northeast elevation). (Photo 4.)

The most intact of the trio of 1-½ story cottages in the district, the Edward Kenney House, 26 Whetstone Street (ca. 1860, WNB.370) (Photos 3, 6) has a three-bay façade with a modern Colonial Revival style door surround in its center entrance. The house also features wood clapboard siding, minimal gable returns, a small center chimney, and flat corner boards, fascia boards, and window casings. The left (southeast) elevation has two windows centered on the first floor and one in the half story. A large gabled ell on the right (northwest) side of the original house is two bays wide; a sequence of gradually smaller rear additions extends from the back of the house.

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Standing at the corner of Whetstone and Sullivan's Court, the Thomas and Mary McGrath House, 1 Sullivan's Court (ca. 1860, WNB.367) (Photo 2) has modest setbacks from both adjacent streets. The 2-½ story house has a side-gable roof and a five-bay façade. The symmetrical right (northeast) elevation displays two window bays on the first two floors, one window centered in the half-story, and pronounced gable returns. Clapboard siding is trimmed with flat corner boards and fascia. The building's 6/6 windows and small center entrance are decoratively trimmed, with a narrow transom and small bracketed hood over the doorway, and projecting cornice shelves over the first and second floor windows on the façade and side elevations. A one-story side addition that is flush with the main façade has a gable roof and is trimmed to match the historic building.

1 Sullivan's Court is a particularly well-preserved example of Italianate architecture dating to the Early Industrial Period (1830-1870). Vernacular Greek Revival and Italianate style were popular in West Newbury during this period. Houses in West Newbury were typically conservative in terms of form, i.e. frame construction, gable roof, two stories, yet builders were cognizant of design trends such as the addition of Greek Revival recessed entrances or Italianate brackets and hoods as at 1 Sullivan's Court. In West Newbury, these design trends took the form of features applied to conservative forms; in other localities, temple forms or mansard roofs, for example, would have been more commonly used.

Although it has experienced significant alterations in building materials and additions, the Whetstone Street Area is remarkably cohesive in building shape, siting, roof form, fenestration, and detailing, and it maintains an unusually strong street edge. The area is notable for its rural setting, repetitive 1-½ story cottages, and 2-½ story focal point that is singular in its size and degree of ornamentation. Alterations—pervasive on the 1 ½ story cottages—include synthetic siding, replacement window sash, side additions, and loss of original trim.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

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

In 1729, Whetstone Street was called "Follinsby's Lane," presumably so named for Thomas Follinsby, who, at that time, owned a house located at the northwest corner of the present-day intersection of Main Street and Whetstone Street. Located alongside Whetstone Brook, the now-quiet Whetstone Street, terminates at a dead end. The lane originally extended from Main Street to a landing at the edge of the Merrimack River. The landing was used for cargo transport of animal horn for comb making and coal. In addition to providing access to shipping, the area supported local industry; Deacon Osgood is reported to have operated a tannery at the foot of the hill.¹

No houses were constructed on Whetstone Street until the mid-19th century, when William Claflin laid out Sullivan's Court circa 1859 and began selling ½-acre building lots along Whetstone Street.² Sullivan's Court was likely named for "J. Sullivan," who owned a house at the west end of present-day Sullivan's Court (see 1872 map). The first residents of Whetstone Street were Irish immigrants working primarily in West Newbury's comb and shoe factories.

Thomas and Mary McGrath purchased 1 Sullivan's Court from William Claflin in 1859. Thomas McGrath (1824-1894)³ and Mary Clancy McGrath (1830-1909)⁴ were both born in Ireland or England (census records are inconsistent) and had at least seven children. Thomas McGrath worked as a laborer; his sons worked as shoemakers and in comb factories. After their parents' deaths, children John, Mary, and Michael McGrath continued to live in the house for the remainder of their lives. The McGrath family owned this house until 1947.⁵

¹ Elizabeth Thompson. "West Newbury Center in Bygone Days." 1981. Elizabeth Thompson vertical file. G.A.R. Library, West Newbury. P. 2.

² See Essex South Deed Book 589, p. 185 and Book 646, p. 173.

³ Findagrave.com Memorial #159669344. Accessed Nov. 7, 2019.

⁴ Findagrave.com Memorial ##15969354. Accessed Nov. 7, 2019.

⁵ Essex South Deed Book 3525, p. 285.

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26 Whetstone Street was likely constructed for Edward Kenney; Kenney purchased the lot from William Claflin in 1856 and sold the lot with a house on it in 1863.⁶ During the 1860s, the house was owned by investor Charles C. Moseley (See 219 Main Street (WNB. 61).) From 1871 until 1909 the house was owned by Irish immigrants Hugh and Mary Riley and their family.⁷ Hugh Riley worked as a laborer; his son, John, worked in a comb factory. From 1909 to 1958, the house was owned by George and Ellen Pomeroy.⁸ George Pomeroy worked as an express automobile driver on the route between Haverhill and Newburyport and as a taxi driver. In the 1920s, Pomeroy owned a tire shop in Haverhill.⁹

24 Whetstone Street was likely constructed for or moved by comb maker and investor Anson W. Noyes (1803-1876).¹⁰ Noyes lived on Main Street and bought and sold property throughout West Newbury during the second and third quarters of the 19th century (see esp. Maple Street). (One source states that the house was moved from Ferry Lane (present-day Bridge Street).)¹¹ During the 1860s-1880s, comb maker Michael Lafferty (ca. 1828-1884), his wife Catherine (ca. 1825-), and their three children lived here. Michael and Catherine Lafferty were both born in Ireland. From 1886-1913, 24 Whetstone Street was owned by Mary E. Sheehan and her husband, Cornelius. Cornelius worked as a "shoe roller." Their son, John, worked as a tack cutter. From 1921 to 1976, 24 Whetstone Street was owned by Eva Warren.¹² Eva Warren lived here with her husband, Samuel, a house painter, and their daughters, June and Phylina. At the time of the 1940 census, Phylina worked as a laundress at a hospital.

The John A. and Susannah Jameson House, 32 Whetstone Street (ca. 1860, WNB.373), appears to also have been constructed by Anson W. Noyes, who sold the lot and buildings to Jameson in 1868.¹³ At the time of the 1865 census, John A. Jameson (1828-1891)¹⁴ and his wife, Susannah (unk.-1872),¹⁵ were living on Whetstone Street with their six young children. John A. Jameson worked as a laborer and in a comb shop. The 1872 map shows the Jameson house and a shop at this location. The Jameson family owned the property until 1894.¹⁶ During the 1900s to the 1920s, Jacob and Nancy Fowler owned the property. Jacob Fowler worked in a shoe factory. The Janes family has owned the house since 1950.

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⁶ Essex South Deed Book 541, p. 248 and Book 651, p. 7.

⁷ Essex South Deed Book 842, p. 269 and Book 1960, p. 98.

⁸ Essex South Deed Book 4464, p. 544.

⁹ Newburyport City Directory, 1916, and Haverhill City Directory, 1921.

¹⁰ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/90246121>. Accessed Feb. 7, 2020.

¹¹ Susan Follansbee, compiler. "West Newbury Houses That Were Moved" from Elizabeth Thompson notes. Undated [1940s?]. Collection of West Newbury Historical Commission.

¹² Essex South Deed Book 2484, p. 65 and Book 6887, p. 433.

¹³ Essex South Deed Book 762, p. 100.

¹⁴ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/99335749>, Accessed Nov. 5, 2019.

¹⁵ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/108737583/susannah-jameson>, Accessed Nov. 5, 2019.

¹⁶ Essex South Deed Book 1404, p. 238.

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Massachusetts Death Records. Ancestry.com
Massachusetts Marriage Records. Ancestry.com.
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Sheet**AREA DATA SHEET**

Assessor's #	MHC #		Street Address	Construction Date	Style	Acreage
R11-16	WNB.367	Thomas and Mary McGrath House	1 Sullivan's Court	Ca. 1860	Italianate	0.98
U1-14	WNB.369	Michael and Catherine Lafferty House	24 Whetstone Street	Ca. 1861	No style	0.5
	WNB.370	Garage		Ca. 1920	No style	
U1-15	WNB.371	Edward Kenney House	26 Whetstone Street	Ca.1860	No style	0.5
U1-16	WNB.372		28 Whetstone Street	1957	Contemporary Ranch	0.5
R11-17	WNB.373	John A. and Susannah Jameson House	32 Whetstone Street	Ca.1860	No style	0.5

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Sheet**SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES**

Photo 2. 1 Sullivan's Court. View looking northwest.



Photo 3. 24 and 26 Whetstone Street. View looking northwest.



Photo 4. 24 Whetstone Street. View looking southwest.



Photo 5. 24 Whetstone Street. Garage. View looking southwest.

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Photo 6. 26 Whetstone Street. View looking west.



Photo 7. 32 Whetstone Street. View looking northwest.