

NEWTON LOCAL LANDMARK REPORT

Floyd House

450 Winchester Street

**Prepared for:
Newton Historical
Commission
April 2008**

Floyd House

450 Winchester Street

1. *Name of Property*

- a. *Historic Name:* Floyd House
- b. *Common Name:* None

2. *Location*

- a. *Street Address:* 450 Winchester Street
- b. *Zip Code:* Newton Highlands, MA 02461
- c. *Assessor's #:* 83036-0011

3. *Classification*

- a. *Ownership of Property:* Private
- b. *Type of Property:* Residence
- c. *National Register Status:* Eligible

4. *Function or Use*

- a. *Historic Functions:* Built in 1872 as a farmstead, this house continues to be inhabited as a single family residence. Outbuildings constructed in the late 19th century housed a hennery, and reportedly a greenhouse, at a minimum. These outbuildings are no longer standing. A small modern shed now stands near the northeast corner of the lot.
- b. *Current Functions:* This house continues to sit on the southern edge of a densely developed residential neighborhood, while land to the south of this house remains sparsely developed due in large part to the golf course owned by the Charles River Country Club, Inc and Nahanton Park, owned by the City of Newton.

5. *Zoning*

The Zoning District is Single Residence 3 which requires a minimum 10,000 square foot lot for single family use, and a minimum frontage of 80 feet. Single family dwellings are allowable by right; occupancy by more than one family is only allowed by special permit.

6. *Description*

Neighborhood Description: The property is located at the southern end of Newton Highlands Village, near the Needham town line, and stands at the south end of a

densely developed neighborhood containing a mix of post World War II and late 19th century houses. With the creation of the Charles River Golf Course and Nahanton Park c.1900, the open space that historically surrounded this property has for the most part been preserved.

This property is located about a quarter mile north of the intersection of Winchester and Nahanton Streets, and the same distance east of the Charles River. This area was one of the last in Newton to receive transportation improvements due to its distance from established village centers. As a result, land located on the south end of Winchester Street in the mid- to late 19th century was much slower to gain value and was not deemed to be attractive for housing development.

Twenty-five acres of land located across the street and slightly south of this property, now known as Nahanton Park, was purchased in the late 19th century by the City of Newton from the Burney Estate for use as an infirmary and farmland (e.g. a poor farm, which was relocated from Waban). A large parcel of land located to the south of this park was owned by the Boston Catholic Archdiocese, which built the Home for Working Boys in the late 1890s. In the 1980s, the city purchased 32 acres of this property in order to enlarge Nahanton Park. Another portion of this parcel became part of the campus of the Jewish Community Center. Across the street, located at the northeast corner of Winchester and Nahanton Streets, Angino Farm still stands as an operational, late 19th century farmstead.

Architectural Description:

(1) Materials:

Foundation: Fieldstone

Walls: Clapboard *Roof:* Mansard, asphalt shingle

Windows: Two over two wooden sash windows throughout house; one over one modern windows in rear enclosed porch.

Ornamentation: Second Empire Style

Vegetation: The vegetation surrounding the house is largely in keeping with the residential character of the neighborhood. Trees and dense vegetation across the rear of the lot, and portions of the side, screen the property from two c.1950 houses on either side. While there are a few plantings along the front and sides of the house, the majority of the property is open lawn. An asphalt driveway and parking area completes the landscaping of the lot.

(2) Verbal Description:

Historical appearance: 450 Winchester Street is a classic example of late nineteenth century, Second Empire Style construction, which exhibits the major architectural features of a popular style adapted to cottage form. The two-story structure has a rear ell and a more recent enclosed porch, which fills the rear ell junction. Both the main house and the ell are capped by separate hipped, mansard roofs trimmed with paired, decorative wooden brackets. Fieldstone foundations with concrete infill support the house and the ell. The roofs are sheathed in asphalt shingle.

In keeping with the period detailing of the structure, the building is sheathed in wood clapboards with flat, undecorated cornerboards. Two plain, narrow brick chimneys extend from the roof on the main house block. The first rises off-center to the right from the hipped mansard. The second is set slightly back from the first and is set to the left of center. Given the high level of decoration found elsewhere on this building, it is likely these chimneys were replaced at some point.

The front façade, not surprisingly, is the most decorative of the four. A full open veranda spans the front of the façade and extends beyond it on either side. This veranda is covered by a hipped roof and stands on a fieldstone foundation matching that of the main house and ell. The porch roof is supported by spiral-cut wooden posts on squared plinths, and decorated with jigsaw-cut wooden brackets. A low wooden baluster with turned balustrades lines the veranda above painted wooden decking. Wooden steps lead down to the yard on either side, and another set leads to the front door.

The front, west façade has three symmetrical bays with a central entrance. The entrance consists of a single wood paneled door with a stained-glass transom and sidelights, a later modification. Single arched, 2/2 wooden sash windows with decorative wooden mullions flank this doorway on either side. On the second floor, three end-gabled dormers with boxed returns front the mansard roofline at regular intervals. Dormer windows are wooden sash 2/2 with decorative wooden pilasters and plain pediments. This style of dormer is repeated on all four sides of the roof on both the main house and the rear ell. All dormers also have red-painted, diamond shingled wooden siding in contrast to the black asphalt roof shingling.

The north and south facades of the main house are two bays in width respectively, with two elongated, 2/2 rectangular, wooden sash windows on each side bearing the same decorative mullion detail as the two front arched windows. The north façade continues east to include the single-bay rear ell. This ell bears exact resemblance to the main house block, with the single consideration being that it rises only one and half stories, with architectural elements reduced in scale accordingly. The rear east façade of the ell is two bays in width, with a dormer and 2/2 wooden sash window forming the right

bay. The left bay is without a dormer, and where there might have been a window is now a single rear door. A small, single pane window is mounted just to the left of this door. It would appear that the dormer was removed prior to roof being reshingled. This rear door opens onto a stone step and a small, modern bluestone patio and koi pond.

The modern, enclosed rear porch stands on a poured concrete foundation. A shed roof slants over this porch from north to south and supports a stepped balustrade for a roof top deck. Windows are modern 1/1, with French doors opening to the rear yard.

Current appearance: With the exception of the rear enclosed porch, no changes appear to have been made to the footprint of the structure since its construction. Minor changes such as the loss of the rear ell dormer and the addition of stained glass around the front entrance appear to be the extent of changes made to this Second Empire period cottage. The house has retained its wood clapboard appearance, detailing, roof form, and original windows, and can be considered to be uniquely, architecturally intact.

The large lot itself appears to be well maintained. A rear patio and another stone wall on the northeast side of the lot stand where there was an outbuilding, which first appears on insurance maps in 1895. A stone wall and grape arbor stand to the rear of the house in the general vicinity of what was purportedly another outbuilding, although insurance maps do not show one in this area. A single modern storage shed is the only outbuilding on the property at this time.

7. *History of Property*

a. *Deed History:*

1871 (Book 1167, Page 416): George Willard and Henry D. Hyde, in bankruptcy, sold lot to Emma Britten, wife of William Britten, and Ann Floyd, all of Newton. This lot is described as being a parcel of land only, with no buildings. It is also described as being a portion of land, Lot #1, on a plan made by Marshall S. Rice, surveyor on May 17, 1871. Parcel was three acres and three rods in size and sold for \$905.67.

1875 (Book 1373, Page 350): William Britten, Emma H. Britten and Ann Floyd formerly of Newton, now New York, sold the land “with buildings thereon” to Dustin Lancey. Parcel was three acres and three rods in size and sold for \$7000.00.

1876 (Book 1384, Page 374): Dustin Lancey sold this parcel with buildings to John W. Warren of Brookline. Parcel was three acres and three rods in size and sold for \$4800.00.

1923 (Book 4643, Page 390): Heirs of John W. Warren sold this parcel with buildings to Stephen B. Jacobs.

b. *Development History:* Since 1872, this property was sold six times. The first three sales, however, took place in the first four years. Between 1876 and 2008, the property has had only three owners. An atlas from 1874 (Beers) shows a parcel of land on Winchester Street owned by 'J. Warren,' but with no house on the lot. The next lot to the south has one house on it with a similar footprint to the current house and owned by a "Mrs. Floyd." By 1895, J. Warren owned both his lot and that of Mrs. Floyd.

Mrs. Floyd was actually Anne F. Floyd, who, with Emma and William Britten, bought this lot from George S. Willard and Henry D. Hyde, both of whom were in bankruptcy, in 1871. Mr. and Mrs. Britten, and Ms. Floyd, are the presumed builders of the house now standing, though only Mrs. Floyd is listed as its owner on the earliest map for this property on file at Jackson Homestead (Beers 1874). The former owners of the lot, Willard and Hyde, purchased this lot a few months earlier from a subdivision platted by Marshall S. Rice, longtime surveyor for the City of Newton who was also responsible for platting Washington Park in Newtonville (listed on the National Register of Historic Places).

In 1875, Britten and Floyd sold the house and lot to Dustin Lancey, a builder and longtime resident of Newtonville. Lancey was owner of the Washington Park property in 1865 when he hired Rice to subdivide his land into house lots. Lancey owned the house at 450 Winchester for only a year, and in 1876 sold the property to John W. Warren of Brookline. Warren already owned the adjacent parcel to the north.

At the turn of the twentieth century, land to the north and east of this property was surveyed and purchased by numerous owners as house lots. By 1895, John W. Warren sold off the northwest corner of his lot as a house lot to Almira L. Chamberlain (his wife). By 1907, another house lot was created just east of the new house lot, and by 1917, there was a third. All were owned by Almira L. Chamberlain. A narrow driveway provided access to these lots from Winchester Street. This driveway later became a dead-end road, eponymously named Stephen Place for a future owner of this property.

The Newton Directories and atlases from the period continue to list only John W. Warren as the owner of record. This gets interesting, because Warren had a son who was also named John W. Warren, and both were farmers. In the 1903 Newton Directory, a 'Mrs. Almira L. Warren, widow of John W. Warren,' is listed as an occupant of the house. This is the first mention of her in the Directories. She appears to be living in the same house as her son, since John W. Warren Jr. does not die until March, 1921.

Almira L. Warren died in February, 1906, at the age of 80. John W. Warren, her son, is the owner of record until his death in 1921, but in 1917, two occupants with the same last name are listed as borders for the first time: Almira Warren and Gertrude Warren. Also listed for the first time is John's presumed wife, Cora Warren. By 1921, Almira Warren (daughter?) married H. Clyde Baldwin, publicity agent, and moved into the house at 450 Winchester.

After John W. Warren's death in 1921 the property was vacant for a year or two, culminating a 45 year period of ownership by the Warren Family. The property was purchased in 1923 by Stephen Barstow Jacobs, a florist who had another business in town, and his wife Lena Rockwell Jacobs, musician, who ushered in a second period of long-term ownership. In 1924, Jacobs applied for and received a building permit to erect a 'henery,' which is no longer extant. By 1929, Jacobs converted the driveway on the property to a cul de sac and named it Stephen Place. Jacobs gradually updated the plumbing and electrical systems over the years until his death in October, 1951. The house stayed in the Jacobs family for a total of 56 years until the property was sold to the current owners in 1979. Fred B. and Marcia Altaffer have owned this property now for nearly thirty years.

Development in the southern end of Newton Highlands progressed mostly on paper until the early 1920s. Lots were surveyed, subdivided and sold, but many of the platted roads through these developments were never actually built. Goddard/Rachel Street now forms the southern boundary of this early 20th century development, providing a clean line of demarcation between the small 20th century lots to the north and the larger 19th century lots to the south.

Other 19th century properties located in the vicinity of 450 Winchester Street include the Thomas Ranney farmstead, built c.1860 and located across the street at 499 Winchester Street (NWT.3594); the J.A. Veazie House at 383 Winchester Street (NWT.3592), built c.1845; and 230 Winchester Street, built in 1873, which was individually listed on the National Register in 1986. By way of comparison, the state MACRIS list of historic buildings shows approximately 275 Second Empire Style buildings identified in Newton, 76 of which are listed on the National Register either individually or as part of an NR district, or have preservation restrictions.

8. *Significance of Property*

- a. *Period of Significance* The period of significance for 450 Winchester Street is 1872-1951. This period encompasses both its construction by Mrs. Floyd, whose name appears alone on the 1874 insurance map, and its long term use as a residence by the Warren and Jacobs families. The outbuildings on the property, which are no longer extant, were constructed during this period as well. This property is also known as the Floyd House on the B Form for this property, as well as on the MACRIS list for historic properties in the state.

- b. *Historical Significance* Historically, the structure is important for its contribution as a farmstead to a neighborhood which has seen steady growth since its construction in 1872. This property has served as an important visual and historical boundary in the community between the well established residential neighborhood to its north and its protected open space to the south. Its change from an agricultural property to a suburban home illustrates the changing demographic of the area as the community moved into the twentieth century.
- c. *Architectural Significance* The building is architecturally significant as an example of the vernacular style of architecture that incorporated significant features of the Second Empire Style. The building has retained its original lot configuration and most of its defining architectural details with few significant additions or alterations.
- d. *Landmark Designation Criteria* The Floyd House meets criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 22-93 of Newton's Ordinance T-288. The property is:
 - Eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places
 - Associated with the development of Newton Highlands as a village and of the southern end of Newton in general
 - Historically and architecturally significant for its intact representation of the Second Empire Style in the late nineteenth century and as an important reminder of how the neighborhood has evolved over time
 - Historic location and setting has been retained and is compatible with future preservation and use
 - Representative of the original design retaining most of its original fabric and features

9. *Recommendations*

- a. *Preservation Recommendations* The property has been well maintained with repairs that were appropriate and which used compatible materials. The building has also retained the style and appearance of its period of historic significance.
- b. *Important Features* The defining features of this Second Empire cottage are the general size and massing of the structure and its bracketed, mansard roof and veranda. The Second Empire detailing seen around the roof, windows, and front

porch are architecturally important elements that define the structure and its period of construction.

10. *Standards for Design Review*

a. *General Standards.* All projects affecting the property should be evaluated by considering the effect that proposed changes would have on the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features involved and the relationship of such features to the surrounding area. In the case of additions, the appropriateness of size, shape and location of the additions is of critical concern. The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation should provide a baseline for review of changes to the landmark property.

b. *Specific Standards* Specific design standards have been addressed in the existing maintenance of the property with regard to height, proportion of windows and doors, scale and architectural detail. The same principles should be applied in developing a design for changes and in reviewing proposed changes, such that the key features retain their prominence and continue to stand out as excellent examples of the nineteenth century vernacular and that the structure itself retains its identity as a nineteenth century vernacular style residence with Colonial Revival and Queen Anne influences. Thus the following specific design standards refer to potential changes to the existing structure:

Exterior Walls

- Wood clapboarding should be replaced in kind and painted.
- Decorative elements should be preserved and only replaced by like materials and design when absolutely necessary.
- No new openings should be allowed on the front façade or those sides visible from Winchester Street.
- No existing openings should be filled in on the front façade or those sides visible from Winchester Street.

Windows

- Surviving historic windows should be retained and repaired if possible. If replacement is absolutely necessary, the replacements should match as closely as possible the original window in materials, style, and design.

Entrances/Doors

- The original front entrance and door design and arrangement should be retained, unless efforts are made to restore the front entrance to its original configuration.
- Replacement doors should be fabricated to match the style and materials of the originals and the construction period of the structure.

Roof

- No changes should be made to the pitch or style of the roof

11. *Notification*

The following properties are considered abutters for the purposes of notification. Owners of these properties should receive notice when this property is considered for landmark designation and for any future under the Landmark Ordinance.

<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>S/B/L</u>
483 Dedham Street	83036-0004
9 Stephen Place	83036-0014
37 Stephen Place	83036-0015C
436 Winchester Street	83036-0013
444 Winchester Street	83036-0012
458 Winchester Street	83036-0010