

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



Locus Map (north is up)



Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

P-09-48

Boston
North

MDF.584
MDF.585

Town/City: Medford

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Brickyards / Mystic Park

Address: 67-71 Mystic Avenue

Historic Name: James and Mary Connors House

Uses: Present: residential

Original: single-family residential

Date of Construction: 1867-1875

Source: deeds, maps

Style/Form: no style/ end house

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: parged

Wall/Trim: cementitious shingles/ metal or synthetic
panning

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: Detached 20th
century autocentric commercial building.

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Siding, trim, sash and
doors, late 20th century.

Condition: fair

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.24 acre

Setting: Dense mix of late 20th century autocentric
commercial uses intermixed with rare surviving 19th century
residential buildings.

Recorded by: John D. Clemson

Organization: Medford Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): August 2026

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

67-71 MYSTIC AVENUE

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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.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

This property, currently identified by the assessor as 67-71 Mystic Avenue, is configured as two parcels filling a lot described on an 1853 subdivision plan as number 4 with 88 feet of frontage on west side of Mystic Avenue. It is occupied by two buildings, a ca 1867-1875 wood-frame dwelling of the end house type known as the Connors House, and a post-1950 commercial building that houses a used vehicle workshop and sales office. The arrangement of the two buildings can be observed on the locus and historic maps reproduced below; the wood dwelling on the south parcel closest to the frontage and the garage/ workshop to the north at a deep setback. The buildings are listed in MACRIS as contributing to MDF.AD, Middlesex Canal Historic and Archaeological District but are not otherwise described or narrated historically. The property is being documented in anticipation of a hearing to determine historical significance and whether to invoke the city's demolition delay ordinance. The Connors House at 71 Mystic is a unique survival of the initial development pattern lining Mystic Avenue in this vicinity, which took place during the second half of the 19th century and was characterized by similar wood-frame end houses. By 1898 nine of these houses filled the block between Columbia Road to the north and Hancock Court to the south.¹

The Connors House, constructed between 1867 and 1875, is a two-and-a-half-story gabled end house of three bays with a side, left-bay entrance and a two-pile depth. The dimensions are 21 feet wide by 26 feet deep. The fenestration pattern of the façade on the second floor is distinctive: the bay over the entry is unlit, making the pattern asymmetrical. A single window lights the gable at the third level. The right elevation has a regular pattern on both floors; on the left a small window is placed high on the first floor, suggesting it lights a stair on that side of the building. Beyond it a modern picture window has been inserted, suggesting the location of a kitchen. The building is expanded by a single-story hipped bump out against the left elevation. The fenestration patterns front and sides suggest a side hall plan with reception spaces filling the right side and a kitchen rear left. A stove chimney centered on the rear pile at the roof ridge reenforces the kitchen location.

Twentieth century residing, window, and door replacements have obscured any decorative building fabric, making a stylistic analysis challenging. Historic Sanborn footprints suggest the house originally had a full-width front porch. Evidence of original building fabric may survive beneath later coverings.

The house is sited at the south edge of its originally generous quarter-acre lot. Open lawn surrounds the house and fills the modest setback. An early 20th century concrete walkway and decorative stoop with curving stringers connects the entrance to the frontage. The remainder of the lot is entirely paved beyond a broad curb cut. At the rear edge of the north parcel is a rectangular block commercial building massed in a near 21- by 26-foot cube. A lower bay projects forward of the main body; both facades are filled by garage openings with articulated doors. The building's signage reads "A-Tech Used Auto Sales, Service."

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Connors House, based on title and map evidence, dates to between 1867 and 1875. The house was constructed within an early subdivision owned by James Kidder filling the west side of Mystic Avenue between the south bound of 87 Mystic to the south and the vicinity of Columbia Road to the north, where property bounds have since been reconfigured. The subdivision plan, recorded in 1853, is reproduced below. The Kidder House was originally part of a neighborhood of similar wood-frame dwellings that filled the west side of Mystic Avenue, mostly within this subdivision but stretching between today's Columbia Road at its north end to Hancock Court to the south. This built environment can be observed on period maps reproduced below and is further documented in the Hancock-Columbia Area MDF.XX, of which this property is part.

¹ Although depicted as a single property on assessor's maps, the most recent deed describes two parcels of approximately the same size (see MCSRD 47952:542, 2006). This subdivision dates to before 1898 until the property was again combined under single ownership in 1979 through the purchase of the south lot from Barry heirs, see narrative.

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Although no deed descriptions mention it, the slightly curved west edge of the subdivision generally follows the east bank of the Middlesex Canal (MDF.AD and Middlesex Canal Historic and Archaeological District, NR), whose closing ca 1852 may have made the land available to its developers. James Kidder (1776-1852), later a resident of Charlestown, "was a cooper and served as toll-gatherer on the Medford Turnpike from 1804 to 1840." The turnpike, constructed in 1803, followed the path of current-day Mystic Avenue and route 38, continuing northward as the Andover Turnpike (Forest Street). Circumstances suggest Kidder was able to parlay his fiduciary responsibilities to the turnpike owners into a real estate investment opportunity.²

In 1867 the subject property, described as lot 4 on the 1853 Kidder plan, was acquired by James Brown of Charlestown from Susan K Sanborn, the wife of Russell F Sanborn of Charlestown, for \$300. The deed identified Susan Sanborn as a devisee of James Kidder, deceased, her father. Two weeks later Brown sold the property for the identical amount to James Connors of Medford. A native of Ireland, Connors (born ca 1823) worked as a laborer. Connors was identified in the 1860 Federal Census, before acquiring the subject property, in a household that included his wife, Mary (born ca 1820) and two children born in Ireland. A third child was born in Massachusetts. Their ages suggest the family immigrated between 1848 and 1857. The property was labeled "J. Cannon" in 1875, evidently a misprint, and Mrs. P. Connors in 1889.³

Between 1887 and 1957 the property was owned and occupied by three generations of the Barry family. In 1887 it was acquired by Michael Barry from James Connors. Barry (ca 1847-1893), laborer, and his wife, Margaret (Ronan, born ca 1843) were both natives of Ireland. In 1880 their household included five children born between 1871 and 1878 in Massachusetts. By 1900 the house was occupied by a son, William Henry Barry (born 1874), his wife Mary Ellen (Kennedy, born 1875), a daughter of Michael and Anna (Woods) Kennedy, and a daughter, Lillian M Barry (born 1900). At the time of his 1899 marriage he worked as a salesman but by 1900 was a bartender. Ten years later he worked as a house painter. Although a deed could not be located, by 1898 that year's city atlas indicated the lot, described as number 4, had been subdivided and a wood-frame dwelling had been constructed, occupied and owned by Mary A Cullen, at what is currently numbered 67 Mystic. By 1920 the subject household, identified as 71 Mystic, headed by widow Mary E Barry, included four children: Lillian, a stenographer for a radio company, William H (born ca 1905), Helen M (born ca 1911) and son Francis M (born ca 1914). By 1930 William H worked as a printer and Helen doing clerical work for an insurance company. The household included a grandson, Richard Morgan (born ca 1928).⁴

In 1957 Francis M Barry, acting as administrator of the estate of Mary E Barry, conveyed the property, with 43.51 feet of frontage on Mystic, to himself. In 1979 Barry sold 71 Mystic to his abutters to the north at number 67, Joseph Colozzo and Claudio Evangelista, for \$60,000. By this time the north portion of the parcel had evidently been improved with the commercial garage building with the signage "A-Tech Used Auto Sales" that currently occupies the site. Claudio and Lucia Evangelista conveyed both properties to a limited liability corporation in 2006.⁵

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Maps and atlases:

1855 H.F. Walling. "Map of Medford...."

1875 F. W. Beers, *County Atlas of Middlesex, Massachusetts*.

1880 O. H. Bailey [Bird's Eye View of] Medford.

² MCSRD Plan 188:47 (1853); Morgan Hewitt Stafford, *A Genealogy of the Kidder Family Comprising the Descendants in the Male Line of Ensign James Kidder, 1626-1676, of Cambridge and Billerica in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay* (The Tuttle Publishing Co, 1941) pp. 136-137. James Kidder (1776-1852) was the scion of an old Medford family established by his grandfather Deacon Samuel Kidder (1720-1777); his eldest son and namesake (1793-1837) was an accomplished artist and print maker, well known for his renderings of the important Federal-era estate of Thompson Kidder on Forest Street now in the collections of Historic New England. Another relative, Francis Henry Kidder (1826-1897) built an ambitious house in the neighboring Hancock Subdivision at 252 Main Street (MDF.BD, see MDF.1538, demolished). Regarding the artist James Kidder (1793-1837) see: Kevin J. Avery, *American Drawings and Watercolors in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Vol. I, A Catalogue of Works by Artists Born Before 1835* (Yale University Press, 2002) p.322.

³ MCSRD 1014:369 (Jul. 30, 1867); 1015:403 (Aug. 15, 1867); 1428:107 (1877, declaration of homestead); Ancestry.com: 1860 Federal Census; 1880, 1886 Medford town directories (which listed a second family by the name Connors headed by Patrick, a teamster).

⁴ MCSRD 1796:28 (1887); Ancestry.com: vital records, birth, marriage, death; 1880, 1900-1930 Federal Census, inclusive.

⁵ MCSRD 8983:442-444 (1957); 10478:157-158 (1964, conveyance); 13208:28 (1977); 13817:60 (1979); 15798:480-482 (1984); 47952:542 (2006).

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1889 Geo. H. Walker & Co., *Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts.*

1898 Geo. W. Stadly & Co., *Atlas of the City of Medford....*

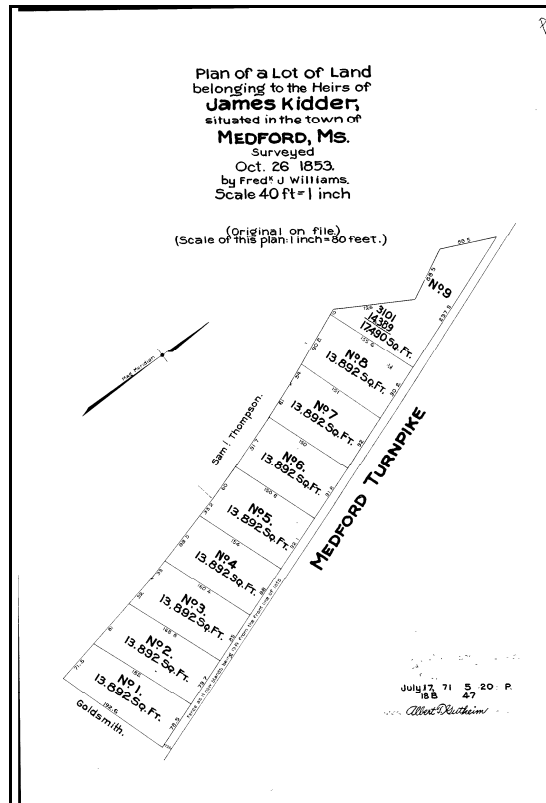
1900 Geo. W. Stadly & Co., *Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Volume 1.*

1892, 1897, 1903, 1910, 1936, 1936-1950 Sanborn Insurance Atlases.

Ancestry.com: see footnotes

Charles Brooks and James M. Usher, *History of the Town of Medford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, From its First Settlement in 1630 to 1855; Revised, Enlarged and Brought Down to 1885* (Rand, Avery & Co., 1886)

Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds, in notes as MCSRD book:page (date).

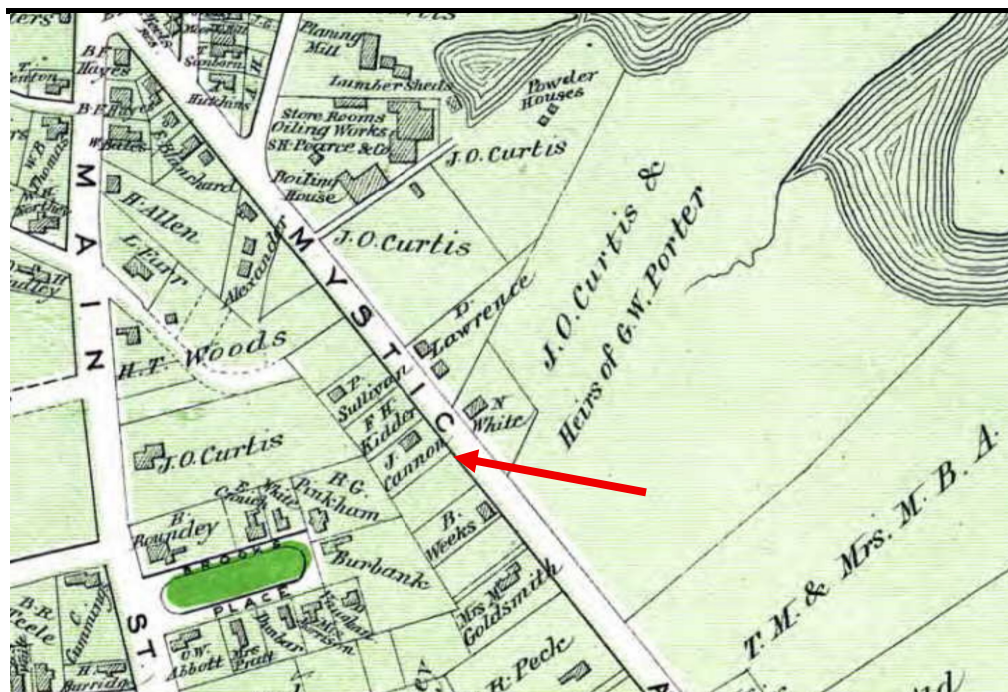


Left: Plan 18B:47 (1853) and right: 1855 Walling map of Medford with the subdivision outline.

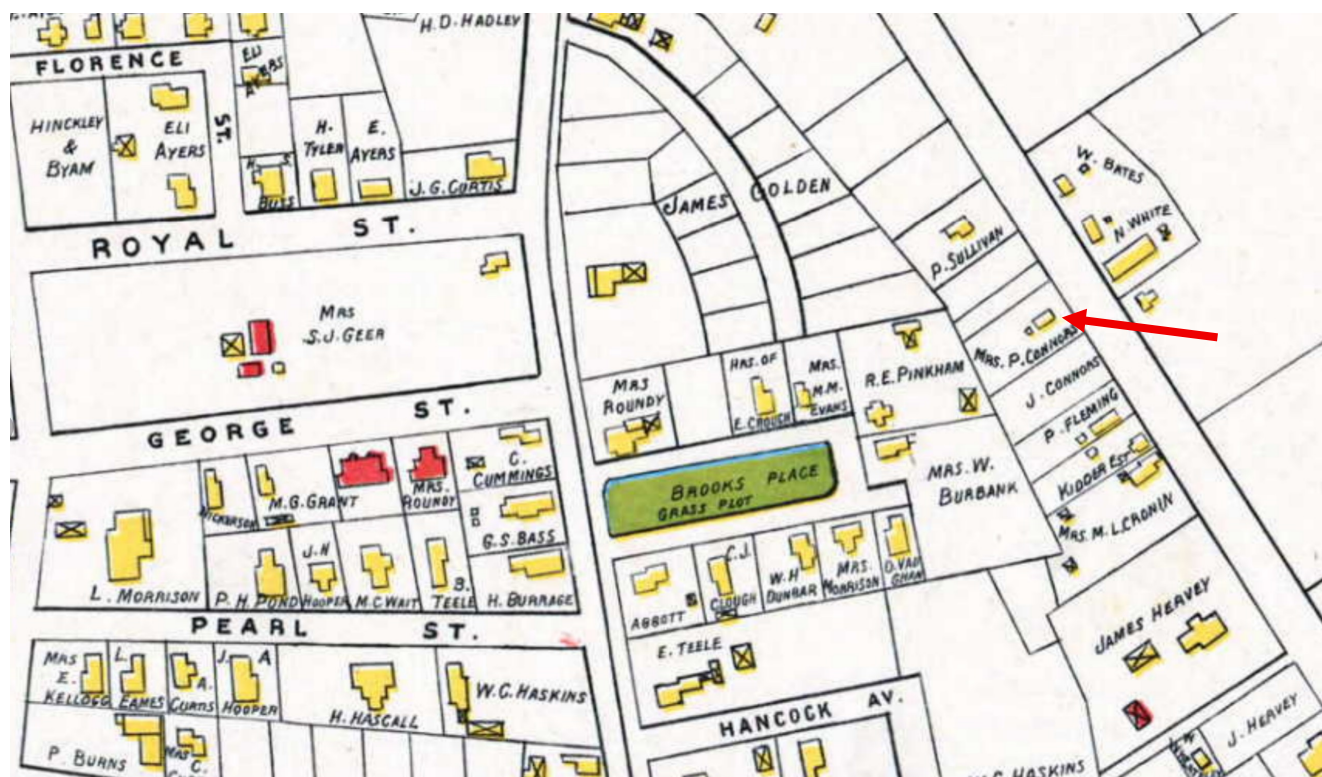
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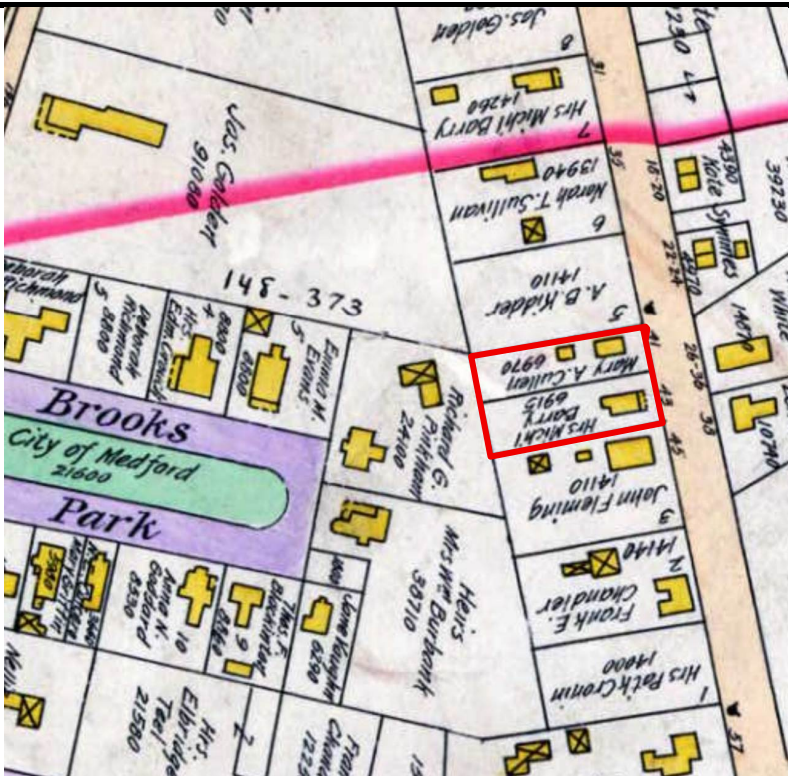
1875 Beers county atlas showing the initial depiction of the house evidently incorrectly labeled "J. Cannon" indicated by a red arrow. North is up.



1889 Walker county atlas labeled "Mrs. P. Connors."

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1898 Stadly city atlas depicting lot 4 subdivided, labeled “Hrs Mich'l Barry” and “Mary A. Cullen.”



Above: 1936 Sanborn, plate 13; below: 1950 Sanborn, plate 13. 71 Mystic indicated by a red arrow. Note the presence of a front porch filling the façade.

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South elevation.



67 Mystic Avenue.

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[If appropriate, cut and paste the text below into an inventory form's last continuation sheet.]

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Individually eligible ☐ Eligible **only** in a historic district
- ☒ Contributing to a potential historic district ☒ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Statement of Significance by John D. Clemson

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The Connors House, 71 Mystic Avenue, 1867-1875, is a unique survival of the initial development of this section of the west side of Mystic Avenue, which was originally improved by nine other similar wood-frame domestic buildings generally occupied by a group of workers of Irish heritage, but was redeveloped with industrial buildings during the middle decades of the 20th century. The industrial buildings may be eligible for NR listing as a district in their own right, reflecting land use and industrial activity that fueled the economy of the city during the immediate post-WWII period. The surrounding Hancock-Columbia Block Area is a well-preserved industrial built landscape dating generally to the middle of the 20th century. Beginning in the early 20th century but peaking in the middle of the century, the area was redeveloped with industrial uses, including an ink manufactory, a book bindery, a cheese manufactory, and a bakery. Other more recent uses include vehicular repair and sales and construction equipment storage. The mid-20th-century industrial development in this and surrounding area on Mystic Avenue was a major local employer contributing to local and regional industrial activity and economic expansion of its period. Although currently in a condition of rapid change and redevelopment, this block and its surrounding streetscape lining Mystic Avenue retains many well-preserved examples of mid-20th-century industrial architecture, retaining integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Areas of significance would include architecture, historic non-aboriginal archeology related to the Middlesex Canal site, commerce, community planning and development, European ethnic heritage, industry, social history and transportation related to both the canal and Middlesex Turnpike (Mystic Avenue). This block would contribute to an NR district listing a Mystic Avenue industrial corridor, the boundaries of which would require additional research and documentation.

This neighborhood borders the Middlesex Canal Historic and Archaeological National Register District (MDF.V and MDF.AD in Medford), and several resources undergoing initial documentation through this area form contribute to this district.