National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms* Type all entries—complete applicable sections

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and/or common (Partia	storic Reso al Inventor	y: Hist	oric an	gton Juncti d <mark>Architec</mark> t	ural 1	Properties)
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7. Description

Condition excellent _X good _X fair	<pre> deteriorated ruins unexposed</pre>	Check one	Check one X original site moved date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Methodology

The documentation of the Newington Junction Multiple Resource Area (MRA) rests on the visual inspection of the area and its buildings, and on the examination and evaluation of a breadth of materials. Chief among these sources were the 1979 historic and architectural resources survey of Newington sponsored by the Newington Historical Society and Trust, Inc. and the Centennial History of Newington (1971), compiled and edited by Elizabeth S. Baxter, the town historian. The townwide survey included within its inventory of significant structures 13 buildings in the Newington Junction area. Both the survey and the Centennial History recounted the story of the Junction in some detail. The historical collections of the Lucy Robbins Welles Public Library in Newington are extensive and were very informative. The library's photographic resources, in particular, offered important visual insights into the Junction's history and buildings. In preparing this documentation, the 1979 survey forms for individual buildings were updated and expanded, based upon these available sources. Wherever possible, furthermore, property owners themselves were consulted and homes visited. All of the existing structures in the Junction were examined for their associations with its period of greatest significance.

Physical and structural changes over time have impaired the integrity of the Junction's historic appearance and determined the appropriate geographic arrangement of MRA components. The Willard Avenue railroad overpass and modern commercial buildings at the intersection of Willard Avenue and West Hill Road, for example, fragment the structures and features that most strongly convey the Junction's significance. Two of these resources, the Junction Railroad Depot and the Willard Homestead, are surrounded by incompatible modern structures. The balance are grouped in three cohesive clusters that comprise the Newington Junction South, West, and North Historic Districts.

Description

The Newington Junction MRA lies in the northwestern part of Newington, Connecticut, and contains approximately 55 acres. The area is T-shaped and consists of the properties on either side of Willard Avenue and West Hill Road extending to the north, west, and south of their intersection (see maps #1 and #2). These two thoroughfares are busy main roads connecting Newington with West Hartford and New Britain. The area is bisected by two important and adjacent features, the Amtrak railroad tracks and Piper Brook, both of which run in a northeasterly direction under the elevated Willard Avenue overpass. The terrain is flat or gently rolling, and the MRA is part of a fertile valley long used for agricultural pursuits.

The historic sites and historic districts in the MRA contain 49 major buildings. 11, 16 and 16 structures are located, respectively, in the Newington Junction South, West, and North Historic Districts. The individual sites are the Railroad Depot (3 buildings) and the Willard Homestead (house and two outbuildings). Of the 49 major buildings, the 40 that contribute to the significance of these sites and districts date from approximately 1700 to 1915. The John Camp House on West Hill Road (c. 1710, Photograph #17) is considered to be the oldest extant structure in Newington. With the exception of the railroad depot buildings and the old firehouse on Chapman Street, all of the MRA historic structures are residential and illustrate the continuum of styles

(see continuation sheets)

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Continuation sheet Location & Ownership Item number

The following is a list, by street number and owner, of all properties located with the Multiple Resource Area that are National Register sites or part of National Register districts. Unless otherwise indicated, the mailing address for each owner is the same as the street address. The Newington zip code is 06111.

2

Newington Junction Railroad Depot

160 Willard Avenue Peggy H. Bond

200 Francis Avenue Cashway, Inc. P.O.Box 370, Plainville, CT

Railroad Right of Way Amtrak, attn: Levonia Reid, 400 N. Capitol St. (between 160 Willard Ave. & NW, Washington, D.C. 20001 200 Francis Avenue) Willard Homestead

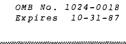
372 Willard Avenue Joan Alice Taylor

Newington Junction South Historic District

268 Willard Avenue	Mark P. & Nancy A. Kraczkowsky
272 Willard Avenue	Joan Riley Sherwood
277 Willard Avenue	Adele M. Darius
282-284 Willard Avenue	Nels O. & Helen W. Nelson
293 Willard Avenue	Kenneth Brown
294 Willard Avenue	Town of Newington, 131 Cedar Street.
303 Willard Avenue	Concetta Tralongo, 12 Wilcox St., Wethersfield, CT 06109
313 Willard Ave nue	Robert E. & Elizabeth Moulton
319 Willard Avenue	Ralph H. Gilbert

Newington Junction West Historic District

269	West Hill	Road	James 3	E.	රු	Lorraine	F.	Giansanti
272	West Hill	Road	Thomas	Α.	V	Vhaples		



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Newington Junction Multiple Resource Area, Newington, CT Continuation sheet Location & Ownership Item number 2

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#### <u>Newington Junction West Historic District</u> (continued)

275 West Hill Road	David G. & Catherine A. Begin
279 West Hill Road	Robert M. & Elizabeth S. Stevenson
285-287 West Hill Road	Floyd D. Cotton, Jr.
295-297 West Hill Road	Benjamin W. & Elizabeth R. Lover
301-303 West Hill Road	Matthew G. Nelson
2 Chapman Street (formerly numbered 175 Willard Avenue)	Town of Newington, 131 Cedar Street
4 Chapman Street (formerly numbered 181-183 Willard Avenue)	The Pillars Limited Partnership, 20 Vanderbilt Road West Hartford, CT 06119

#### Newington Junction North Historic District

55 Willard Avenue	Josephine Cieri, 63 Willard Avenue, Newington
56 Willard Avenue	Lorraine L. Hawley
63 Willard Avenue	Philip J. & Josephine M. Cieri
Willard Avenue, lot N/W 1354 (west side, between #63 and 79)	Connecticut Light & Power Company P. O. Box 2010, Hartford, CT 06101
64-66 Willard Avenue	Samuel A., Alty M. & Darlene M. Frink
74 Willard Avenue	Edward B. & Annette D. Bloom
79 Willard Avenue	Thomas E. & Sandra A. Donagher
82 Willard Avenue	Ralph P. Testa & Charlotte Downard (lot N/W 21 at rear), and Charlotte Downard, individually, (lot N/W 2078 at front)
91 Willard Avenue	Robert E. & Ruth W. Seigler
96-98 Willard Avenue	Salvatore, Nicolino & Candido D'Occhio, 144 South Street, West Hartford, CT 06110
97 Willard Avenue	James E. & Denise M. Beaupre
108 Willard Avenue	Onias & Marie Lamothe

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Newington Junction Multiple Resource Area, Newington,CT Continuation sheet Surveys Item number 6

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Historic Resources Survey of Newington, 1979 (On deposit at the Connecticut Historical Commission and the Lucy Robbins Welles Public Library, 95 Cedar Street, Newington, CT) Continuation sheet

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Newington Junction Multiple Resource Area, Newington, CT

and construction methods in vogue during the Junction's long period of significance. Wood frame construction is universal among the contributing

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7

buildings, and either clapboard or wood shingle sheathing is the rule. Within each historic district, the buildings share a general similarity in scale, proportion, and setback from the street (see map #2).

The MRA is a densely developed mixture of commercial and residential uses. Its center, the intersection of Willard Avenue and West Hill Road, is ringed by moderately sized one- and two-story brick and frame commercial structures ( housing retail, office, and light industrial tenants) on the north and east, and by the one-story Keleher senior citizen housing complex and Volunteer Fire Company #3 firehouse on the west. To the south of the intersection are the railroad tracks. Nearby are the three historic districts, and between and beyond them are more modern residential structures. Approximately 80% of the buildings in the MRA are residential, and they range widely in age, scale, and appearance. The older structures tend to be larger than the newer ones, are situated on larger lots with deeper setbacks, and are architecturally distinguished. Most of the later houses date from the years 1950 to 1965 and are modest, one-story ranch styles. The past few years have witnessed the construction of multi-unit apartment and condominium complexes in the neighborhood, including one that is just north of West Hill Road on the west side of Willard Avenue.

During its long period of significance (c. 1700-1940), Newington Junction was settled and grew into a recognizable and distinct community within Newington. The original 1670 "Mile-in-Breadth" grants, being narrow and deep and fronting on Willard Avenue, encouraged the original settlers to build their homes near the avenue, which was itself laid out as early as 1680. A small group of homes in this area were the basis for the erection here of the North District School (c. 1757), the second in Newington. Located at the modern intersection of Stoddard and Willard Avenues, the school provided the first focus for this nascent community. The fertile land here otherwise encouraged the development of a loosely organized agrarian economy of large farms that experienced little change for almost 150 years.

Newington Junction changed dramatically in the latter half of the 19th century. It acquired the identity and most of the buildings that are the centerpiece of its historical significance. No longer primarily rural in its appearance, the community had strong foci in the railroad tracks that crossed Willard Avenue and the nearby commercial and governmental facilities (satinet mill, general store and post office). In the vicinity were clusters of residences on Willard Avenue and West Hill Road. Some of the parcels on which these residences stood retained, even at that time, substantially their original configurations as "Mile-in-Breadth" grants. The still continuing process of subdivision for residential and commercial purposes, however, had begun.

The face of Newington Junction has changed even more in the 20th century. Explosive housing construction has filled in the open spaces and integrated the Junction into Newington proper. The railroad tracks are now almost

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ignored beneath the auto traffic on the Willard Avenue overpass. A larger concentration of small commercial buildings at Willard Avenue and West Hill Road no longer are devoted to the civic and industrial uses that contributed so much to the Junction's identity.

# 8. Significance

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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Newington Junction MRA is historically significant because it was an area of early settlement in Newington that became a center of commerce and growth in the middle to late 19th century. Toward the end of the 19th century, it eclipsed the town center in importance and played a key role in the separation of Newington from Wethersfield and in its incorporation as a town in 1871. Its residents have included some of the oldest and most prominent Newington families (Criterion A). The MRA is architecturally significant because it contains a concentration of fine, and in some cases distinguished, buildings that span and effectively document the area's period of significance. The oldest extant house in Newington, the c. 1710 John Camp House, is there, as are commercial and residential structures that illustrate the Junction's 19th-century milieu (Criterion C).

#### Criterion A (History)

The development of Newington Junction began with the Town of Wethersfield's distribution in 1670 of land grants covering its then westernmost section, now part of Newington Following these 52-acre "Mile-in-Breadth" grants (known by their east/west dimension), the new owners began to farm the fertile land. Few of the owners, who lived several miles to the east in the center of Wethersfield', at first chose to settle. Samuel Hun, who purchased three of the grants in 1697, is generally credited with being the first permanent resident in the Junction area. (272 West Hill Road, Photograph #18, was built by his descendants) By 1686, a highway (later named Willard Avenue) was laid out along the eastern border of the original grants. Agriculture remained the principal land use and source of employment well into the 20th century.

Residents of this area early began playing an important part in civic affairs, Several, among them Simon Willard (Photographs #6-10) and John Camp (Photograph #17) signed the petition to the Wethersfield town meeting that resulted in 1712 in the creation of the separate Newington Society (parish). The parish's first clerk (1716) was Josiah Willard, son of Simon. The rapidly increasing population, furthermore, warranted the establishment in 1757, near the modern intersection of Willard and Stoddard Avenues, of the second school in the parish.

Newington Junction became a distinct entity and gained its name in the mid-19th century. In 1838, three prominent local men, General Martin Kellogg, Daniel Willard III, and John M. Belden, built a factory on the south side of Wood River (now known as Piper Brook) to manufacture satinet, a strong cloth of cotton and wool used to line clothing. They likely chose this location in anticipation of the arrival of the railroad, for in 1839 the Hartford-New Haven Railroad laid its tracks nearby, just to the north of Wood River. Fearing noise and undue disruption, the residents of Newington center had

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

Quadrangle name UTM References	property <u>appr</u> Hartford So See Continu	uth	· · ·	Quadrangle scale <u>1:24,000</u>
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Newington Junction Multiple Resource Area, Newington,CT Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page

lobbied successfully for the tracks to run through these "back lots" rather than closer to their homes. Then, in 1850, the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill Railroad laid separate tracks through Newington for its line from Bristol to Hartford. These tracks met those of the other railroad a few hundred feet southwest of the modern intersection of West Hill Road and Willard Avenue (see Map #2). The logic of a railroad stop there was apparent, and two depot buildings rose (see Photographs #1-5). Before long, the name "Newington Junction" was in common use.

The increase in commercial activity generated by these developments helped to solidify and expand the Junction community. According to the 1860 census, the satinet mill annually produced 40,000 yards of material valued at \$20,000, had 222 spindles and four carding machines, and employed 14 (7 men and 7 women). By 1868, 13 trains on the two rail lines stopped daily (five northbound, eight southbound). Mail for the entire Newington community arrived by train at the new Junction post office, established that same year. This office soon became the more important of the two in Newington because of its volume and greater array of services. A general store, begun in 1847 by Joseph Camp at his home on Willard Avenue, expanded and occupied separate space close to the railroad (on Francis Avenue; now demolished). With the construction in 1874 of Grace Episcopal Church (also on Francis Avenue; now demolished), the Junction had its own house of worship. The community became the fastest growing and most developed part of Newington. A symbol of its progress and importance was the installation in 1883 at Fish's general store (successor to Camp's) of the first telephone in town.

Newington Junction played a key role in the separation of Newington from Wethersfield and its incorporation in 1871. The refusal by the Wethersfield town meeting in 1863 to appropriate funds to improve the Willard Avenue bridge over the Wood River leading to the depot roused the ire of area residents and precipitated the growth of sentiment for separation. Newington residents gathered at the Junction railroad depot in early 1871 and voted unanimously to seek town status, the first step in their successful effort. Following separation, the first board of selectmen elected in 1871 included Albert Hunn (sic) and Joseph Francis, both Junction men.

At the close of the 19th century, the Junction area began to decline. Several factors contributed to this change. Its commercial fortunes waned when the satinet factory, which had boomed during the Civil War as a sup* plier of linings for military uniforms, burned in 1890 and was not rebuilt. No new industry took its place. Interurban trolleys cut into railroad traffic. To fight their i mcreasing popularity, the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad (successor to the Hartford-New Haven), installed an electrified "third rail" in its roadbed in 1896 for commuter cars to Hartford and New Britain. 750 passengers soon traveled daily through Newington Junction, and trains between Hartford and the Junction ran every half hour. Travel to Hartford and New Britain for shopping, employment, or school became common. Newington Junction was losing its identity as it became a

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#### suburb of Hartford.

The rapid rise of automobile use in the early part of the 20th century hastened these developments. The growing attraction of Newington as a suburban residential address led to much faster population growth and blurred the distinction between the Junction and town center as the land between them was subdivided. Railroad traffic at the Junction, even for commuter use, declined greatly.

Four events symbolize the end of the Junction's separate identity. The eastern of the two depot stations closed in the 1930s and was moved to Churchill Park for use as a Girl Scout cabin. Construction of a railroad overpass on Willard Avenue in 1935-36 changed the physical appearance of the Junction drastically and greatly altered its visual cohesion. In 1940, James Gilbert stepped down as First Selectman, ending an 18-year tenure during which his home, The Willard Homestead (Photographs #6-10), served as <u>de facto</u> town hall. Finally in 1944, the Junction post office closed. Though this area is still a shopping center for the neighborhood and has some light industry, it is no longer known as Newington Junction and is an integral part of Newington.

#### <u>Criterion C (Architecture)</u>

The buildings in the Newington Junction Multiple Resource Area strongly recall the appearance and character of the area during the period of its greatest significance. Together with the individual historic sites, virtually all of the structures in the three historic districts date from that time and are mostly intact. Because they are different in size and proportion from both the newer residences and commercial buildings in the vicinity, are located on larger lots, and are built in much much earlier architectural styles, these structures stand apart. Nowhere is this phenomenon better evident than in the case of the Willard Homestead, which is set far back from Willard Avenue amidst a sweeping lawn and flanked by small, modern ranches to the north and modern apartment buildings to the south (Photograph #6).

Key aspects of Newington Junction life are embodied by these surviving buildings. Though somewhat altered, the depot station and freight house, in both their appearance and location, evoke the heyday of the railroads. The Junction role as an early center of town education is well illustrated by the old North District School. The small, one-story clapboard building on the grounds of 272 West Hill Road, once used for tobacco stripping and packaging, is one of the few structures still standing that attests to the Junction's long agricultural history. And the residences, in the breadth of their ages, materials, and other features, portray the habits, tastes, and affluence of the residents and, more generally, the economic well-being of the entire Junction community. The great age of this area is readily apparent from the c. 1710 John Camp House and the other nearby 18thcentury residences. NPS Form 10-900-a (3-82) OMB No. 1024-0018 Expires 10-31-87

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The Junction includes good examples of a number of architectural styles, together with many more restrained and almost plain buildings that typify those designs commonly found in small American towns. The John Camp House (Photograph #17) is the only surviving Colonial saltbox in Newington, which gives it distinction despite its many changes over time. Of the several 18th-century houses in Newington Junction, the Willard Homestead is the finest (Photograph #6-10), in part because of its well-preserved condition and the high and, in some cases, unusual quality of its detailing (both interior and exterior; e.g., the teardrop door latches with spiral ends).

The 19th-century structures offer a much greater contrast in style and quality than earlier buildings. Most of the major architectural styles of that century are represented, which is noteworthy given the relatively small number of buildings in the Junction. "The Pillars" is a remarkable Greek Revival/Italianate transitional residence (Photograph #20) that exhibits appropriate Greek Revival proportions despite the massive size of its portico columns. Relatively few Gothic Revival designs were erected in Newington or in surrounding communities; 268 Willard Avenue (Photograph # 15) is a large and very representative design. The Italianate residences, not surprisingly, are the largest in number and most sophisticated since they date from the height of the Junction's affluence. The adjoining examples at 82 and 96-98 Willard Avenue and those at 282-284 and 293 Willard Avenue (Photographs #25, 26, 13 & 14, respectively) display the broad vocabulary of this style and are all well-executed. The Queen Anne designs are few and, except for 74 Willard Avenue (Photograph #27), relatively restrained. As one would expect, several houses are plain except for a few stylistic touches, such as turned porch posts at 64-66 Willard Avenue (Photograph #28).

The quality of the 20th-century designs reflects both the change in the Junction's fortunes and the generally plainer appearance of Colonial Revival structures. These buildings generally are not the architectural equals of their predecessors. 108 Willard Avenue (Photograph #29) is the one exception, and is an attractive Shingle Style design with Prairie-Style overtones.

The North District School (Photograph #16), the Railroad Depot buildings (Photographs #1-5) and the Volunteer Fire Company #3 firehouse are pleasant examples of their genre and important primarily because of their historical associations.

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# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Newington Junction Multiple Resource Area, Newington, CT Continuation sheet Geographical Data Item number 10

#### UTM References:

#### Newington Junction Railroad Depot

I 18/688260/4620440

### Willard Homestead

н 18/688390/4619700

### Newington Junction South Historic District

- F 18/688140/4620150
- G 18/687950/4619820
- н 18/688390/4619700
- D 18/688390/4620470

### Newington Junction West Historic District

- C 18/687900/4620630
- E 18/687840/4620350
- F 18/688140/4620150
- D 18/688390/4620470

### Newington Junction North Historic District

- A 18/688480/4620930
- B 18/687940/4620890
- c 18/687900/4620630
- D 18/688390/4620470

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2.	Newington Junction North ) Historic District	Main Converter Street Keepe	0 det 2/87
	:	^{<i>U</i>} Attest	Source 6-
3.	Newington Junction South Historic District	Substantiva in Keepe	D a-b/2/ST.
	· · · · ·	Attest	
4.	Newington Junction West Historic District	To Keepe	0/2/87
	· · ·	Attest	Der altage 6-
5.	Willard Homestead	for Keepe	1 William B. Bute
		Attest	
6.		Keepe	R
		Attest	
7.	• •	Keepe	r
•		Attest	
8.		Keepe	r
		Attest	
9.		Keepe	r
		Attest	
10.	:	Keepe	r
		Attest	

OMB No. 1024-0018 Expires 10-31-87