

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
 80 BOYLSTON STREET  
 BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA

FORM NO.

F

534



Town ACTON

Address 20 River Street

Historic Name J. Everett Reed

Use: Present single family residential

Original single family residential

DESCRIPTION

Date 1873

Source Nylander notes/maps/visual

Style Greco-Italianate / altered

Architect unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric asbestos shingles

Outbuildings none

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s).

Indicate north Assessor's Map # H-3A-30



Major Alterations (with dates) siding of mid 20th c., concrete foundation, porch

Condition fair

Moved no Date n/a

Acreage less than one acre

Setting North side of River St., opposite

r.r. with vernacular Greek Revival and

Italianate modest housing behind on School

St. - house on hill above street level

Recorded by Gretchen G. Schuler

Organization Acton Historical Commission

Date January 1990

UTM REFERENCE \_\_\_\_\_

USGS QUADRANGLE \_\_\_\_\_

SCALE \_\_\_\_\_

## NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The property is eligible for National Register nomination as part of the School-River-Main Mill and Commercial Historic District for Criteria:

A - its association with the development of the railroad community from the 1840s with thriving mills and retail businesses on School, River and Main, as well as the owners and workers housing.

C - its representation of the Greek Revival and Italianate architecture most popular in developing the community of South Acton.

## ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

Situated high above the road, the simple gable front, 3-bay, 1 1/2 story dwelling has a smaller 1 1/2 story side ell to which there is attached a small rear shed roof ell. The main block has a brick foundation and the side ell is built on concrete. Asbestos shingles cover the entire building. The driveway for the house has access to School Street located above the house as well as River St.

The main side hall entry facade has modern 1/1 windows and door. There are two first story and two second story windows. The wide overhang has a truss in the gable peak and no returns. The side overhang is also exaggerated. The 3-bay side ell has a center door with mid 20th century glass and wood door, metal storm door and no visible surround due to the asbestos shingles. Flanking windows have 1/1 sash. The gable end of the side ell has one first story window and one in the gable peak. A concrete based deck projects from the main facade and has a simple square post and stick balustrade.

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

South Acton, once part of the 1000-acre farm granted to Concord's Major Simon Willard, was sold to Ephraim and Samuel Jones and Jonathan Knight in 1701. The first fulling mill was established and throughout the 18th and 19th century mill privileges on Fort Pond east of Main Street were developed. South Acton became the first village center in Acton, preceding Acton Centre, which revolved around the Common, Meeting House, and school from 1806. With the advent of the Fitchburg Railroad in 1844 came the major growth of South Acton Village as an industrial village.

River Street, laid out in 1847 for access to the mills built along Fort Pond Brook, runs from School Street near Mill Corner to Parker Street in the eastern section of South Acton. Paralleling the railroad and the stream (Fort Pond Brook), River Street was the location of several important 19th century mills for woodworking and textile manufacturing. The road is only sparsely developed with dwellings that were for the most part associated with the 19th century mills.

One of many houses built by Francis Conant (1827-1907) - See Maple Street and New England Village subdivision - this house was for J. Everett Reed (1829-1908). According to the 1875 map both Conant and Reed owned the property and Reed was the occupant. He was a lumberman and managed Elnathan Jones' lumberyard on Maple Street.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Atlas/Birdseye/Map: 1875, 1886, 1889, 1892.
- Acton Historical Society. Library Files.
- Nylander and Forbes. "Mill Corner", 1989.
- Nylander, Robert. research notes.
- Phalen, Harold. History of the Town of Acton, 1954.