

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

21/378	Reading		396
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**Town:** Reading

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*)

## Photograph



**Address:** 69 Lowell Street

**Historic Name:** Skillen House

**Uses:** Present: residential

Original: residential

**Date of Construction:** c.1880

**Source:** maps

**Style/Form:** Queen Anne

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

### Exterior Material:

Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard/wood shingle

Roof: asphalt shingle

### Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

garage

### Major Alterations (*with dates*):

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no | x | yes | | **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acreage:** 0.19 acre

**Setting:** mixed residential on busy main road (Rt. 129)

## Topographic or Assessor's Map



**Recorded by:** Lisa Mausolf

**Organization:** Reading Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): December 2009

**RECEIVED**  
**AUG 20 2010**  
**MASS. HIST. COMM.**

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

READING

69 Lowell Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

396

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.  
*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

The house at 69 Lowell Street is an unusual example of the Queen Anne style. The two-story, clapboarded structure displays a steeply pitched roof of irregular shape, consisting of a simple cross-gabled roof with a two-story, hip-roofed tower embraced within the L. At the base of the tower there is a simple, shed-roofed entrance porch with the roof pitch echoed by a smaller, shed-roofed bay window at the base of the front gable. Adding further visual interest are several steeply-pitched wall dormers. The house has minimal decorative detailing compared to many Queen Anne style houses but does exhibit a mixture of wood clapboards with areas of patterned wood shingles. Other character-defining features include the purlins decorating the projecting eaves and the original double-hung windows which display a gridded upper sash over a single light lower sash. Offset to the northeast corner of the house is a single-car garage with double doors, dating to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

This house (originally 15 Lowell Street) was apparently constructed for Francis (d.1-1-1916) and Effie Skillen (d. 4-7-1906) between 1880 and 1889. In 1893 Effie Skillen sold the house to Emma Brown, widow of Frank Brown (Book 2205, Page 340).

Over the years, Mrs. Brown lived here with several of her children, Bertha and Helen, as well as a number of other lodgers and relatives. After Emma's death, the 1930 Census lists Bertha L. Brown as head of house and indicates that she was living here with her sister Helen, as well as an aunt, sister and niece. Bertha Brown served for many years as the librarian of the Reading Public Library. Bertha Brown is last listed here in 1958, Helen in 1961.

Joseph and Enid Schmuck had acquired the property by 1962.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass.

Reading Directories, various years.

Reading 350<sup>th</sup> Book Committee. *At Wood End – Reading, Massachusetts 1644-1994, A Pictorial History*, 1994.

Town of Reading. List of Persons Twenty Years of Age and Over. Compiled by the Board of Registrars, Reading, Massachusetts, 1907-1979. (No women listed until 1924).

Town of Reading. Valuation of Real and Personal Estates, various dates.

Town of Reading, Water Department Records, 1891-present.

U.S. Census, 1900-1930.

1875, 1889 maps of Reading.

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Community      Property Address  
READING        69 LOWELL STREET

Area(s)      Form No.

	396
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## 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 Lisa Mausolf

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

Constructed c.1880, the house at 69 Lowell Street is a good example of the Queen Anne style with an asymmetrical profile highlighted by a two-story, hip-roofed tower. The mix of wood clapboards with areas of patterned wood shingles is also typical of the style. The property is potentially eligible for the National Register as an amendment to the 1984 Reading Multiple Resource Area under Criteria A and C, for its associations with the late 19<sup>th</sup> century development of Reading and as a good example of the Queen Anne style.