

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

21/244	Reading	D	415
--------	---------	---	-----

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

**Town:** Reading

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

## Photograph



**Address:** 97 Middlesex Avenue

**Historic Name:** Foss House

**Uses:** Present: residential

Original: residential

**Date of Construction:** c.1880

**Source:** maps

**Style/Form:** Stick Style

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

### Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard

Roof: slate

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**  
none

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

early 20<sup>th</sup> c. – front porch  
date unknown – new windows

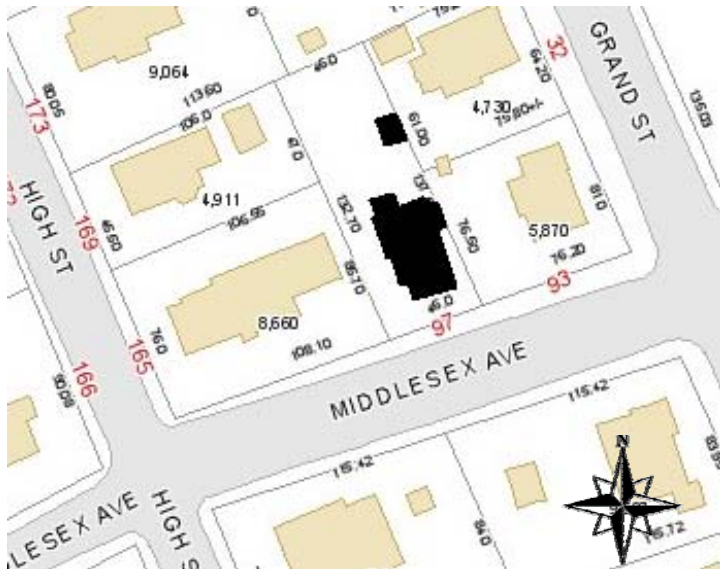
**Condition:** good

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

**Acreage:** 0.14 acre

**Setting:** mixed residential neighborhood

## 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

97 Middlesex Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

D

415

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 97 Middlesex Avenue is a 1½-story cottage constructed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with Stick Style detailing. The building is sheathed in wood clapboards and is notable for its rather unusual clipped gable (jerkinhead) form which is sheathed in slate shingles. The front raking is notched and embellished by raised knobs in several designs. Above the second floor façade windows is some simple stickwork; the triangle on either end under the eaves is filled with clapboards in a diagonal fan. The façade is fronted by a sun-porch which, judging from its rusticated concrete block foundation, was added in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is a gable wall dormer and three-sided bay window on the east elevation and a projecting gable on the west side. The windows now contain modern 6/1 sash. There is a square, fixed Queen Anne-style window on the east wall.

## 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.*

Historic maps suggest that this house (originally 69 Middlesex Avenue) predates the 1889 map. It is included on that map and is shown as being owned by H.W. Foss who also owned the adjacent properties at 165 and 169 High Street. Horace W. Foss was a shoemaker by trade and employed 3-5 workers in his small shop. By 1900 Census records indicate that Foss was living at 38 Hancock Street. The 1906 map shows that the property was owned by E.J. Foss (Ellen was his wife) although the house was apparently rented out.

From about 1909 to the early 1920s the house was owned and occupied by William H. Manning. Manning had a number of occupations during this period including policeman, laborer, and iceman.

By 1936 the house was owned by Louis and Harriet Ellison. He was employed as an engineer. The Ellisons sold the property to Elmer and Elizabeth Rising in the 1950s. Elmer Rising was a pen and ink artist who was employed as a scientific illustrator at the Peabody Museum at Harvard University and later at the Division of Engineering and Applied Physics. The property was sold by Elmer Rising to Quentin and Joan Hoyt in 1961. Joan Hoyt finally sold the house in 2000.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass.

*Reading Chronicle*, Dec. 12, 1979 [information on Elmer Rising].

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 Records, 1891-present.

1889, 1906 maps.

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

Community      Property Address  
READING        97 MIDDLESEX AVENUE

Area(s)      Form No.

	415
--	-----

## 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 Foss House at 97 Middlesex Avenue is a well-preserved example of a late 19<sup>th</sup> century Stick Style/Queen Anne cottage which retains considerable decorative detailing. It is notable for its unusual clipped gable (jerkinhead) form. 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 19th century development of Reading and as a good example of the Stick Style/Queen Anne.