

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

56/105	Reading		416
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Town: Reading

Place: (*neighborhood or village*)

Photograph



Address: 75 Mill Street

Historic Name: Waterworks Engineer's House

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: 1897-8

Source: water department records, Town report

Style/Form: Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder: W.D. Parker (plans)

Exterior Material:

Foundation: fieldstone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

shed

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

date? – replacement windows

Condition: good

Moved: no | x | yes | | **Date** _____

Acreage: 0.30 acre

Setting: close to narrow road, adjacent to location of pumping station for Reading's first waterworks (1890)

Topographic or Assessor's Map



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Reading Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): December 2009

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INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

READING

75 Mill Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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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:

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

Constructed in 1897-8, 75 Mill Street is a two-story structure with a box-like plan, capped by a steeply-pitched hip roof. Set on a mortared fieldstone foundation, the house is sheathed in wood clapboards with simple cornerboards. A two-bay porch fronts the façade, supported by Roman Doric columns resting on a wooden deck. Simple stick balusters span between the columns and terminate at simple newel posts with small knobs. The sidehall entry contains a glass-and-panel door. The predominant window is a simple wooden frame containing 1/1 replacement sash and flanked by shutters. The notable exception is the two-story tall window on the west elevation which is filled with geometric leaded glass. It is topped by a broken or swan's neck pediment with an additional jigsaw panel under the sill. Gable dormers rise from the front and west slopes. A secondary entrance marked by a shed door hood with simple scroll is located at the rear of the west elevation. Single-story, three-sided bay windows project from the east and west sides and there is a modern deck at the northwest corner.

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.

In 1890-1 a Romanesque style pumping station was built by the Town of Reading on the south bank of the Ipswich River, to the west of this house. The brick building was designed by George Abbott. The pumps were powered by steam generated by the burning of coal. Upstream was the filter gallery that collected water for the system.

This house was constructed by the Town in 1897-8 for Frank F. Strout, the first engineer to oversee the pumping station operation. According to the town report, W.D. Parker was paid \$60 to prepare plans for the building. A detailed listing of the other costs of erecting the building (including buying and hanging wallpaper) appeared in the 1897 Town Report (p. 95). The 1898 Town Report provides additional information regarding the construction of the building:

The question of a residence for the engineer, to be located on the pumping station grounds, has been under consideration for some years, but postponed from time to time owing to matters of greater importance. In August last, plans were obtained, and after careful consideration it was decided to build, the work to be done under the superintendent's direction, the labor paid for by the day, and preference given to citizens of Reading. The house is now completed on the outside, and plastering has been commenced. While not extravagant in detail, the house presents a neat and attractive appearance on its exterior, and is well arranged in plan, and provided with modern improvements (pp. 117-118).

The pumping station was used until 1931 when a new facility was built. Frank Strout was still living here with his wife Ella as late as 1941. In 1951 this parcel of land was subdivided by the town from the larger pumping station parcel. In 1961 the old pumping station was demolished although the chimney remained for some time.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (continued)

The person who drew the plans for the engineer's house, W.D. Parker, may well have been Winthrop D. Parker (1871-1955), a Reading native who had graduated from M.I.T. in 1895 and went onto become a partner in the Boston architectural firm of Adden & Parker (later Adden, Parker, Clinch and Crimp). Among the local buildings designed by Adden & Parker were Reading High School at 52 Sanborn Street (1906); First Congregational Church at 25 Woburn Street (1911); Reading Public Library at 6 Lowell Street (1918); and Reading Town Hall at 16 Lowell Street (1918). Parker was a life-long resident of Reading, serving on the town finance committee and as a cemetery trustee. He lived at 1 Charles Street (no longer extant) until his death in 1955.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass.

Murphy Postcard Collection, Reading Public Library, NOBLE Digital Library archive.

Reading Chronicle, July 7, 1955 [obituary of Winthrop D. Parker].

Reading 350th Book Committee. *At Wood End – Reading, Massachusetts 1644-1994, A Pictorial History*, 1994: 82.

Town of Reading, Annual Reports, 1987 and 1898.

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.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

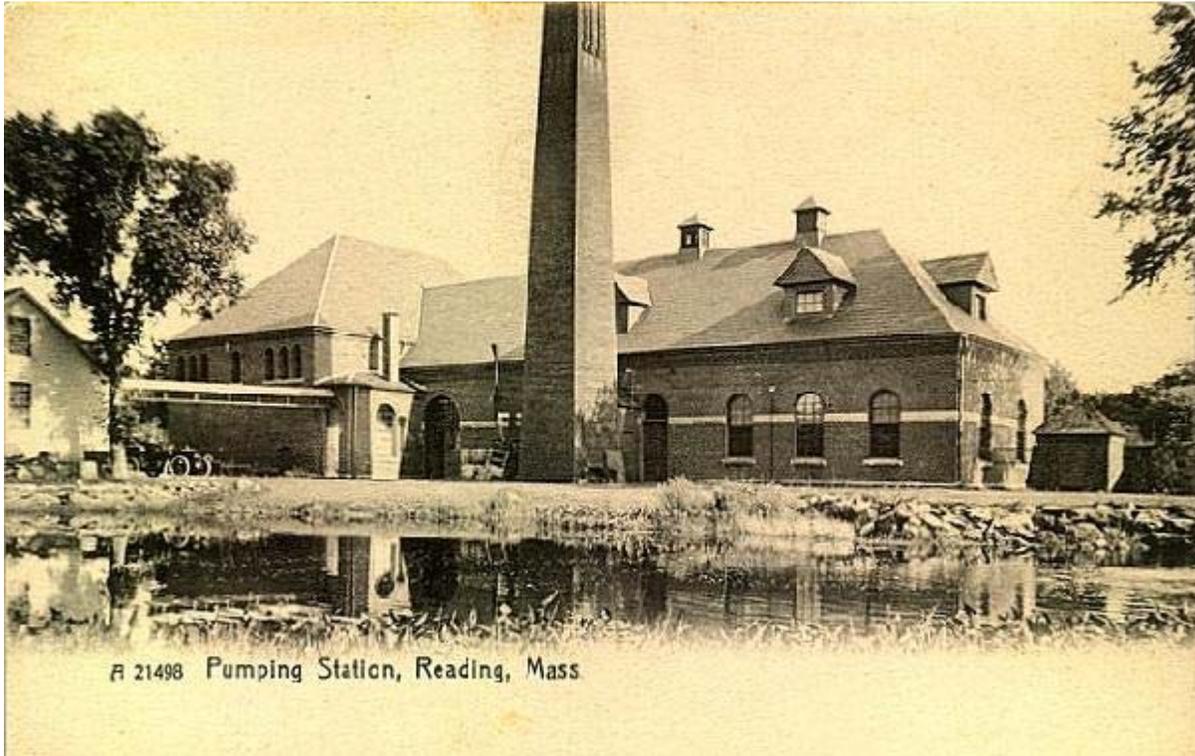
READING

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View of Pumping Station which stood adjacent to 75 Mill Street (no longer extant)

Source: Murphy Postcard Collection, Reading Public Library,
NOBLE Digital Library archive

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MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Community Property Address
READING 75 MILL STREET

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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 in 1897-8, the house at 75 Mill Street is a good example of a modest Colonial Revival structure, erected to house the engineer of the town pumping station. The clapboarded, hip-roofed structure is of note as an early design by Winthrop D. Parker, a Reading native who went on to become a partner in the Boston architectural firm of Adden & Parker. 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 development of Reading and the expansion of town services in the late 19th and early 20th century, and as a good but restrained example of the Colonial Revival style.