

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no.

Form no.

119-A

2. Photo (3x3" or 3x5")
Staple to left side of form
Photo number _____

Expos. 6A

Roll 20

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location
in relation to nearest cross streets and
other buildings. Indicate north.

1. Town WorcesterAddress 312 Plantation StreetName Richard Barker Octagonal HousePresent use residentialPresent owner Carlo and Josephine
Brescia

3. Description:

Date ca. 1855-1865Source directories and exterior
architectureStyle Octagonal ModeArchitect unknownExterior wall fabric stucco over stone
chipsOutbuildings (describe) noneOther features possible gravel-wall
construction, recessed wall panels,
paired bracketsAltered cupola removed
entry porch added Date ca. 1925Moved no Date Assessors' Book 17, p. 75. Lot size: Lot "C" 9,772 sq. ft.One acre or less x Over one acre _____Approximate frontage 50'Approximate distance of building from street
30'6. Recorded by B.R. PfeifferOrganization Worc. Heritage Pres. SocDate January 1978

(over)

7. Original owner (if known) Richard Barker (first known)
Original use residence
Subsequent uses (if any) and dates same

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	☐	Conservation	☐	Recreation	☐
Agricultural	☐	Education	☐	Religion	☐
Architectural	☒	Exploration/ settlement	☐	Science/ invention	☐
The Arts	☐	Industry	☐	Social/ humanitarian	☐
Commerce	☐	Military	☐	Transportation	☐
Communication	☐	Political	☐		
Community development	☐				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

One of two octagonal houses extant in Worcester, the Barker House is a rare example of its type, constructed of stone chips and faced with stucco, incised to resemble masonry. The building's eight outside walls have pilaster-like raised sections at the heads of which are paired brackets. Prior to the 1920s, the house also had an octagonal cupola. The Octagonal Mode of house building existed as a fad, mostly during the 1850s and early 1860s. Its popularity arose from books by Orson Squire Fowler, especially Fowler's A Home for All, or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building, New, Cheap, Convenient, Superior and Adapted to Rich and Poor which went through eight printings between 1848 and 1857. Although Fowler recommended the construction of houses using stone and mortar ("the gravel wall"), most octagonal houses were built of wood; examples of gravel wall construction such as the Barker House are very rare.

The house's first known owner and occupant was Richard Barker, a carpenter, who first lived at 312 Plantation Street in 1866. Although it is possible that the house was built for Barker in 1865 or 1866, the fad had largely passed by this date, making it likely that Barker purchased from a previous owner. The uniqueness of the Barker House and the fanciful associations of its style make it an important building to preserve.

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

City atlases and directories.

Property Worcester Multiple Resource Area (Partial Inventory)

State MA (Worcester) Working Number 8.30.79.2060

TECHNICAL

Photos 383 + 13

Maps 2, 63

CONTROL

Excellent multiple resource nomination for the entire city of Worcester. Both the general description & statement of significance & the individual inventory sheets are well done. Each type of property included is well justified & reasons are listed for not including others at this time (e.g. 3-deckers). Minor problems with some properties are listed on attached sheets.

HISTORIAN

Call/Accept
Lightner
10.30.79

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

ARCHEOLOGIST

Concur with Bruce's comments on 102-L-3, 116-CBD-11, 117-E, and 130-CBD-50 and 44. Integrity and/or boundaries need to be addressed specifically on individual forms. DOUBLE

116-CBD-11 - Destroyed, cannot be listed.
130-CBD-44 - I am not convinced this has lost integrity. See attached.
102-L-3 - Period of significance and categorization of 1 bps need to be discussed with State.

With 3 exceptions all properties appear to me to meet the criteria and the forms are adequate. ~~Both~~ both technically and to determine significance. Although some of the forms did not contain strong statements of significance the resource categories were thoroughly discussed in the body of the nomination; therefore significance was established. VBDS were not necessary because

OTHER

Accept
MacDonald
2/23/80

of the scale maps and clearly delineated boundaries. Acreage was missing
on some properties but is now included after the 2/11 corrections.

HAER

The only properties that I do not recommend listing are

Inventory _____

✓ 116-CBD-13 - destroyed by fire MD - 116 CBD-11

Review _____

130-CBD-44 - does not retain integrity for individual eligibility

✓ 102-L-3 I ~~was~~ am not convinced about boundaries

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

but believe they could be OK. ~~Based~~ Based

on additional documentation submitted - I defer judgement.

Recommend now
Listing all properties except these 3. Return 116-CBD-11 to State
(not eligible); ~~to discuss further~~ w/ NR staff + state. DOUBLE
Return 102-L-3 to State for correction;
Hold 130-CBD-44 for info from State

BRANCH CHIEF 3/3/80

Staff conference 3/5/80 - agreed to action as noted below:

KEEPER

Accept with exception of 116-CBD-11 (official notification of fire & clean from State), 102-L-3 (returning to State for revision - also returning 116-CBD-11) & 130-CBD-44 (listing from State)

Soldner
3/5/80

National Register Write-up _____

Send-back _____

Entered _____

Federal Register Entry 2.3.81

Re-submit _____

MAR 5 1980



by Berkeley

Prestige Prints

876

JAN 1978

by Berkeley

Prestige Prints

JAN 197

119 - A ⁸⁰ AUG 1979

312 Plantation St.

Berkley, Richard, Octagon House
Worcester MA, MA

West elevation

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000304