

## FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108

Area  
B

Form no.  
80



1 Reading

Address 77-83 Ash Street

Historic Name Captain Parker's Red House

Original dwelling

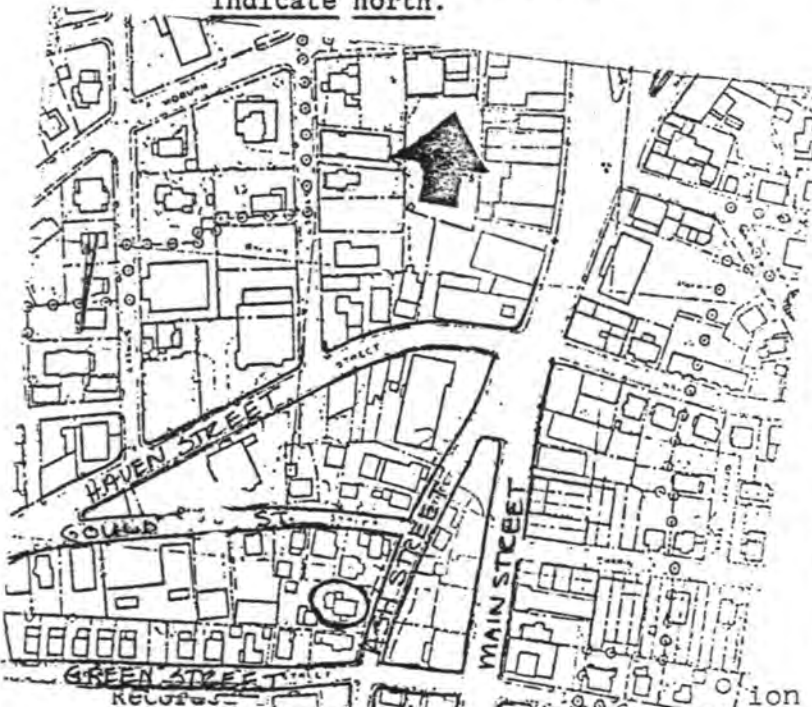
Present dwelling

Ownership: ☒ Private individual  
Private organization

Public

Original owner Nathaniel Parker

location in relation to nearest  
cross streets and other buildings  
or geographical features.  
Indicate north.



## DESCRIPTION:

Date before 1765

Source 1765 map

Style vernacular Georgian

Architect --

Exterior wall fabric clapboards, shingles

Outbuildings

Major alterations (with dates) two-story  
ell, north; two-story porch, south;  
one-story extension, west

Moved no Date

Approx. acreage 11,490 sq. ft.

Setting Faces south on old coach  
road

Organization Reading Historical Com-  
mission

Date November 1980

Date 6/82

UTM: 19/327130/4709680

(Staple additional sheets here)

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE** (describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within community)

This is a common house type, having a five-bay facade, a center entrance, and a center chimney. It features two important doors, both probably from an early date: one on the south and one on the north. Perhaps one led to the tavern room. The corner boards are rather wide for the period. The south-facing door is probably the earlier of the two, in terms of a main entrance. It is somewhat more sophisticated than usual, with pilasters exhibiting entasis on pedestals and a four-light transom window in its enframement.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE** (explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community)

This house was a landmark when the 1765 map was made of the community. The fact that the house was painted -- an uncommon occurrence for the period -- made it noteworthy. It stood on a coaching road, on land that had long been owned by Parkers. Ensign Nathaniel Parker was the first; he left the land to his son, Lieutenant Nathaniel Parker, who left it to his son, Captain Nathan Parker. Captain Parker was the owner of the house when it was identified in 1765; he was active in town affairs. The same was true of his son, Colonel Nathan Parker, who became the town's first postmaster. After Captain Nathan died in 1778, the house passed to Colonel Nathan, who began to keep a tavern there in 1781. This tavern was where area residents gathered for the memorial service to George Washington. After the Andover and Medford turnpike was built in 1806-07, however, the tavern was no longer on the main road, and Colonel Nathan built another tavern on the turnpike. The turnpike became Main Street, the focus of commercial activity.

Colonel Nathan's son, Edmund, was a selectman and a member of the General Court, and he drew the 1830 map of Reading. His daughter Caroline married James Davis, whose name appears on the 1854 map for this house. The Davises lived here from 1831 to 1888; they were Abolitionists, and may have sheltered runaway slaves.

The land on which the "red house" stood was subdivided in 1831, and in 1845, streets were opened near the house.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

|          |                            |                                             |
|----------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1765 map | Captain Parker's Red House | Bishop, <u>Rooftrees</u> , Chapter 29       |
| 1795 map | Col. Parker                | Eaton, <u>Genealogical History</u> , p. 310 |
| 1830 map | yes                        |                                             |
| 1854 map | J. Davis (James)           |                                             |
| 1875 map | " " "                      |                                             |
| 1889 map | L. Hutchins                |                                             |

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Reading

Form No:

B-80

Property Name: 77-83 Ash St.

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Captain Parker's Red House is significant (1) for its role as an 18th-century tavern on a major north-south coaching road; (2) for its special designation on the map of 1765; (3) for its connection with the locally important Parker family, particularly Captain Nathan Parker and his son Colonel Nathan; (4) for its connection with Reading's Abolition movement; and (5) as a largely intact example of vernacular Georgian architecture. It retains integrity of location, general design, materials, workmanship, and feeling, and meets Criteria A, B, and C of the National Register.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received 6/1/84

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 749

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Reading Multiple Resource Area  
State Middlesex County, MASSACHUSETTS

| Nomination/Type of Review                 | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | Date/Signature               |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| 61. Nichols, James, House                 | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 7-19-84</u> |
|                                           | Attest                              |               |                              |
| 62. Nichols, Richard, House               | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 7-19-84</u> |
|                                           | Attest                              |               |                              |
| 63. Octagon House                         | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 7-19-84</u> |
|                                           | Attest                              |               |                              |
| 64. Old Hose House                        | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 7-19-84</u> |
|                                           | Attest                              |               |                              |
| 65. Parker, Capt. Nathaniel,<br>Red House | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 7-19-84</u> |
|                                           | Attest                              |               |                              |
| 66. Parker House<br>(52 Salem St.)        | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 7-19-84</u> |
|                                           | Attest                              |               |                              |
| 67. Parker, Joseph, House                 | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 7-19-84</u> |
|                                           | Attest                              |               |                              |
| 68. Parker, Samuel, House                 | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 7-19-84</u> |
|                                           | Attest                              |               |                              |
| 69. Parker, Stillman, House               | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 7-19-84</u> |
|                                           | Attest                              |               |                              |
| 70. Parker House<br>(316 Haven St.)       | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 7-19-84</u> |
|                                           | Attest                              |               |                              |



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Parker, Capt. Nathaniel, Red House  
(Reading MRA)  
Middlesex County  
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. JUN 4 1984  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/5/85  
Date Due: 7-5-84 / 7-19-84  
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 7-19-84  
☐ RETURN  
☐ REJECT  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ resubmission  
☐ nomination by person or local government  
☐ owner objection  
☐ appeal

Entered in the  
National Register

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: \_\_\_\_\_ technical corrections cited below  
\_\_\_\_\_ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership          | Status     | Present Use |
|----------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
|          | Public Acquisition | Accessible |             |

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition

- |                                    |                                       |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good      | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair      | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed    |

Check one

- ☐ unaltered  
☐ altered

Check one

- ☐ original site  
☐ moved date \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph  
☐ completeness  
☐ clarity  
☐ alterations/integrity  
☐ dates  
☐ boundary selection

## 8. Significance

Period      Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

## 11. Form Prepared By

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_\_ state      \_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date

## 13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



Parker, Capt. Nathaniel, Dec  
Reading M Pt, Ma. Mass

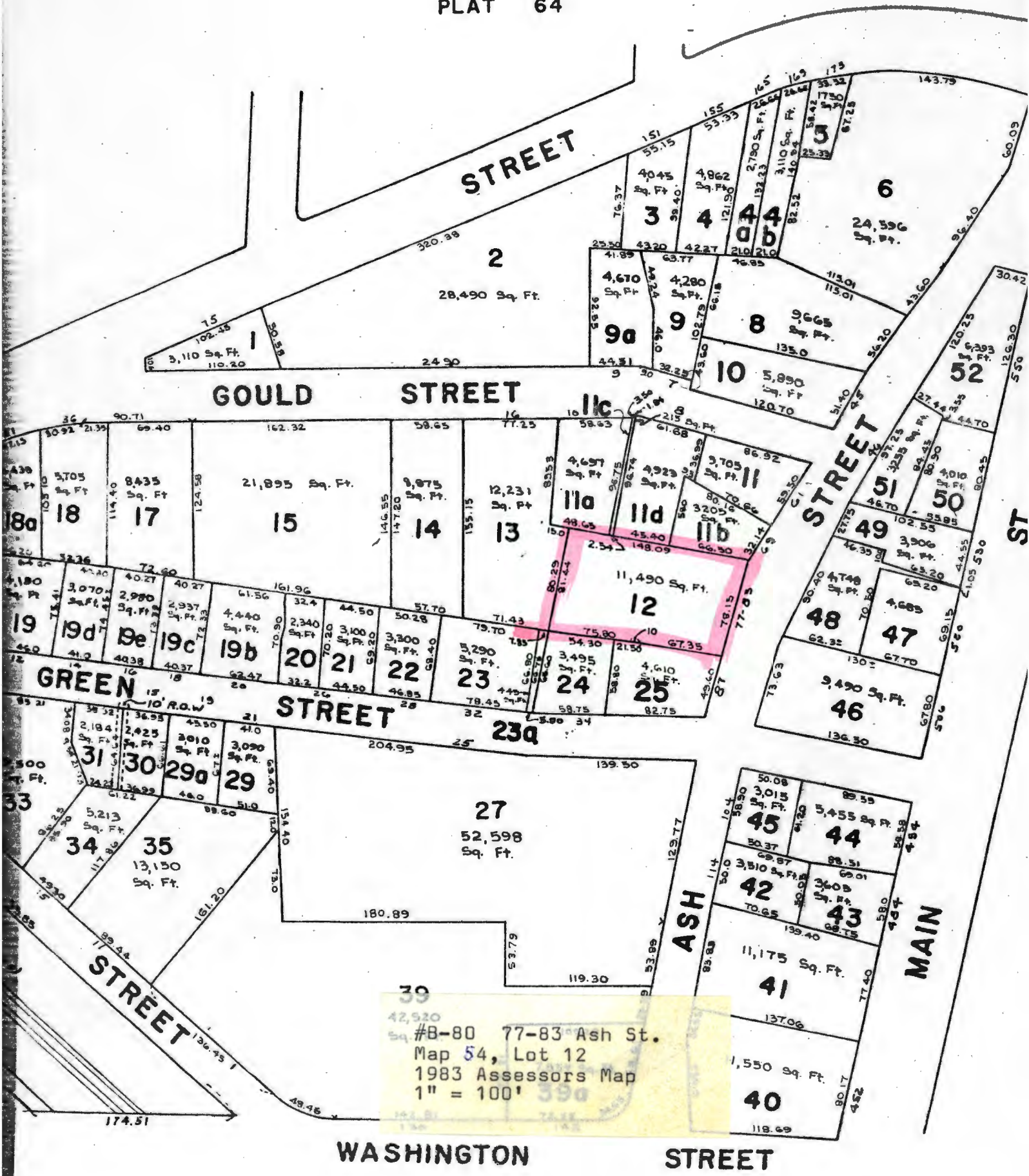
# B-80

81 Ash St.

I-4



PLAT 64



#B-80 77-83 Ash St.  
Map 54, Lot 12  
1983 Assessors Map  
1" = 100'

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

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000290