

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION XXXII-21
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108



Reading

Address 55 Hopkins StreetHistoric Name Walnut Street SchoolOriginal schoolPresent theaterOwnership: ☐ Private individual

Private organization

Quannapowitt Players

Public

Original owner School District #1

DESCRIPTION:

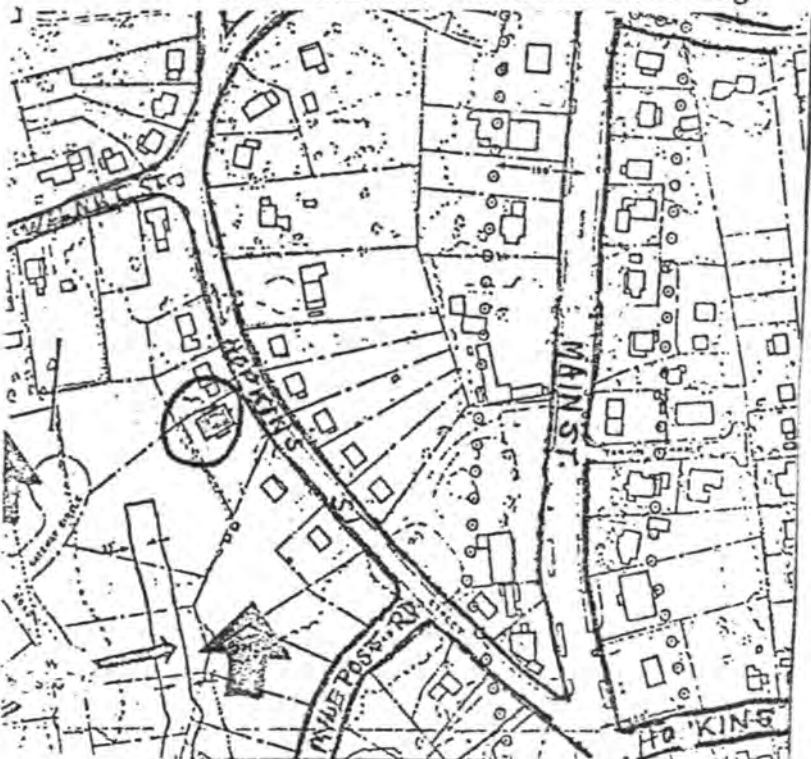
Date 1853Source ChronicleStyle ItalianateArchitect --Exterior wall fabric clapboardsOutbuildings --Major alterations (with dates) altered

by Horace G. Wadlin in 1883: porch
entrances and interior plan changed,
cellar dug

Moved yes Date 1883Approx. acreage 16,110 sq. ft.

Setting faces south toward old
road

cross streets and other buildings

Recorded by Architectural Preservation
AssociatesOrganization Reading Historical
CommissionDate November 30, 1980Date 2/16/84UTM: 19/326900/4708180

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

This mid-19th century building's appearance dates largely to 1884, when it was extensively remodeled: a second floor was removed, and the side porches were added. It illustrates the type of small, wooden schoolhouse so prevalent in Reading's past, but rare now, even those that have been reused. Notable details include the delicate dentil course at cornice level, running below a modillion course on the eaves, and between paired brackets on the raking gables end.

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

This building was not the first school in the area -- a school built in 1834 on the corner of Summer Avenue and Walnut Street served the south school district until 1853. It was moved to the address now known as 167 Washington Street, to make way for the construction of this schoolhouse. Regarded as a model district schoolhouse, it cost \$2,600-2,700 to build, including the bell and grading.

The district school system was abolished in 1864, and the school's name was changed from "Hill End" to "Walnut Street." Reference to an expense for a bell wheel implies that the school had a bell tower.

Thomas Jefferson Mayall built a grand residence on Summer Avenue. He was instrumental in changing the name of the thoroughfare from "street" to "avenue," and he favored the removal of the school from the triangle of land bordered by Walnut Street, Hopkins Street, and Summer Avenue, because the removal of gravel from around the school made the area unsightly. Controversy followed, and it was not until 1883 that the Chronicle reported that the school had been moved to a lot on Hopkins Street. Horace G. Wadlin, the prominent local architect, remodeled the interior after removing the second story, and added the side entry porches. With a new site and a new appearance, a new name seemed in order, so the school was renamed the "Chestnut Hill School." It served the community well until 1944, when the small, rural schoolhouse was being regarded as inadequate for the expanding functions and equipment necessary for a good elementary education.

In 1962, the Quannapowitt Players bought the school for \$3,900. It is used as a community theater, but still retains the exterior appearance of a frame schoolhouse.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Bishop, Schoolhouse for Ninety-Six Years
Chronicle, Aug. 4, 1949

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:	Form No:
Reading	C-94
Property Name: --	

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

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

This building is significant (1) for its long history as a public school; (2) for its updating by notable architect and school committee member Horace G. Wadlin; and (3) for its retention of 19th-century architectural details. It retains integrity of general location, design, setting, 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 6/14/84

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 9 of 9

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Reading Multiple Resource Area
State Middlesex County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

81. Sanborn, Rev. Peter, House
Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper Melvin Byers 7-19-84
Attest

82. Symonds, Thomas, House
Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper Melvin Byers 7-19-84
Attest

83. Temple, Joseph, House
Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper Melvin Byers 7-19-84
Attest

84. Temple, Mark, House
Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper Melvin Byers 7-19-84
Attest

85. Walnut Street School
Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper Melvin Byers 7-19-84
Attest

86. Wells, Charles, House
Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper Melvin Byers 7-19-84
Attest

87. Weston, Ephrain, House
Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper Melvin Byers 7-19-84
Attest

88. Weston, Jabez, House
Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper Melvin Byers 7-19-84
Attest

89. Wisteria Lodge
Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper Melvin Byers 7-19-84
Attest

Keeper

Attest

ref # E41002841

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Walnut Street School (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: _____

Entered in the
National Register

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

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

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ excellent | ☐ deteriorated |
| ☐ good | ☐ ruins |
| ☐ fair | ☐ 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: _____

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet

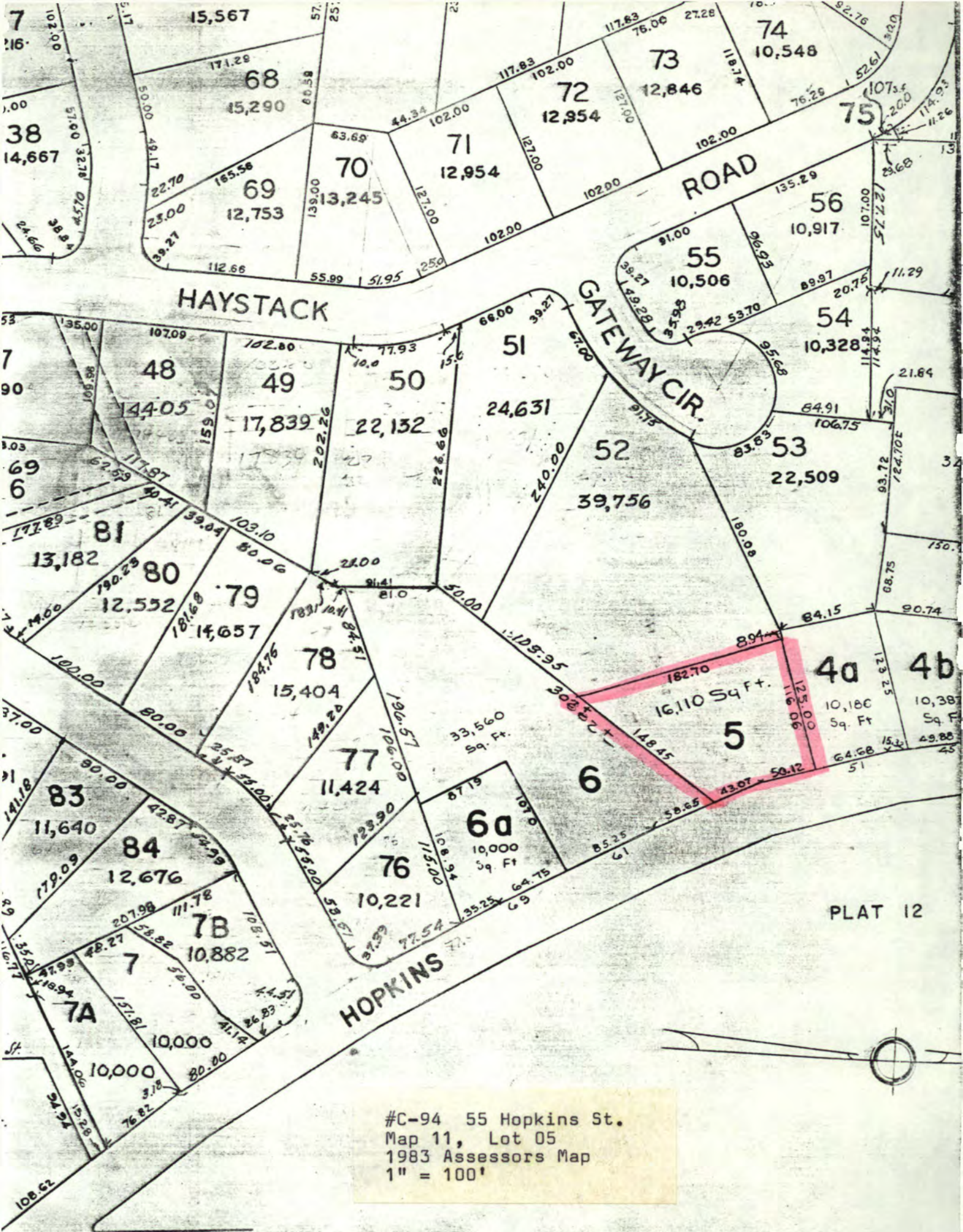


Walgot St. School
Reading NPA, Ma

C-94

53² Hopkins St.

XXXX 21A



#C-94 55 Hopkins St.
Map 11, Lot 05
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