

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



location in relation to nearest



Reading

Address 26 Center Avenue

Historic Name House at

Original dwelling

Present dwelling

Ownership: ☒ Private individual
Private organization

Public

Original owner --

DESCRIPTION:

Date c. 1870

Source town valuation book

Style Gothic Revival-Italianate

Architect --

Exterior wall fabric clapboards

Outbuildings garage

Major alterations (with dates) 1-story

rear extension; shed-roof

dormers

Moved no Date

Approx. acreage 17,856 sq. ft.

Setting on a slight rise, facing
and close to street

Recorded by Architectural Preservation
Associates

Organization Reading Historical

Commission
Date November 30, 1980

Date 2/16/84

UTM: 19/326930/4709240

(Staple additional sheets here)

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

This is an extremely eclectic house. From the Greek Revival tradition comes its setting, on high brick foundations on a rise, and its trabeated doorway enframing. There are, however, no gable returns, as is customary in houses of this style; instead, there are bargeboards all around the eaves, exhibiting a cut-out design. The long first-floor windows on the front facade have flat caps supported on brackets, in the Italianate mode.

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 part of the area known either as Cummingsville, after Amos Cummings, who developed it; or Mudville, for the mud that followed the flooding of its low, unpaved streets. Cummings' scheme was to advance money to workers so that they could build the cottages, or else to build them himself and collect dues or rent until the accrued amount would cover his expenses. However, the Panic of 1857 caused the collapse of the Loan Fund Association of which Cummings was treasurer. Many persons lost their life savings. The real-estate boom Cummings had hoped to start never materialized; the 22 house that stood here in 1875 were the only ones here in 1889. In later years, residents improved the streets, whose soil had been taken to build up house sites, and planted maple trees. They hoped to change the name of the area from Mudville to Mapleville. Today, neither name is used.

The 1875 map reference to R. Knight as owner of this house seems to be in error, since Erastis Knight was assessed for the house in 1870, and he remained its owner for many years. He was a machinist in Boston (probably associated with the railroad), and he was elected to the board of directors of the Boston and Maine Relief Association in 1897. Knight died in 1904, at age 67.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

1875 map - R. Knight (probably an error; should be "E. Knight")
1889 map - E. Knight (Erastis)
1906 map - deleted
Eaton, Memorial Volume
1886/7 business directories
1870 valuation book
Chronicle, Jan. 23, 1897; July 2, 1904

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:	Form No:
Reading	C-116
Property Name: --	

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

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

This house is significant (1) as part of the 19th-century real-estate development called Cummingsville; (2) for its connection with railroad employee Erastis Knight; and (3) for its eclectic mix of 19th-century architectural styles. It retains integrity of 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 6/4/84

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 5-49

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Reading Multiple Resource Area
State Middlesex County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

41. House at 11 Beech Street

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Shelton Byers

7/19/84

Attest

42. House at 16 Mineral Street

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Shelton Byers

7/19/84

Attest

43. House at 26 Center Avenue

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Shelton Byers

7/19/84

Attest

44. House at 42 Salem Street

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Shelton Byers

7/19/84

Attest

45. House at 44 Temple Street

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Shelton Byers

7/19/84

Attest

46. House at 57 Woburn Street

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Shelton Byers

7/19/84

Attest

47. House at 77 Howard Street

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Shelton Byers

7/19/84

Attest

48. House at 79-81 Salem Street

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Shelton Byers

7/19/84

Attest

49. House at 129 High Street

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Shelton Byers

7/19/84

Attest

50. House at 199 Summer Avenue

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Shelton Byers

7/19/84

Attest

Ref. # 64002679

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

House at 26 Center Avenue (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 ☐ 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 Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use
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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



Reading, MA, Ma

C-116

House at

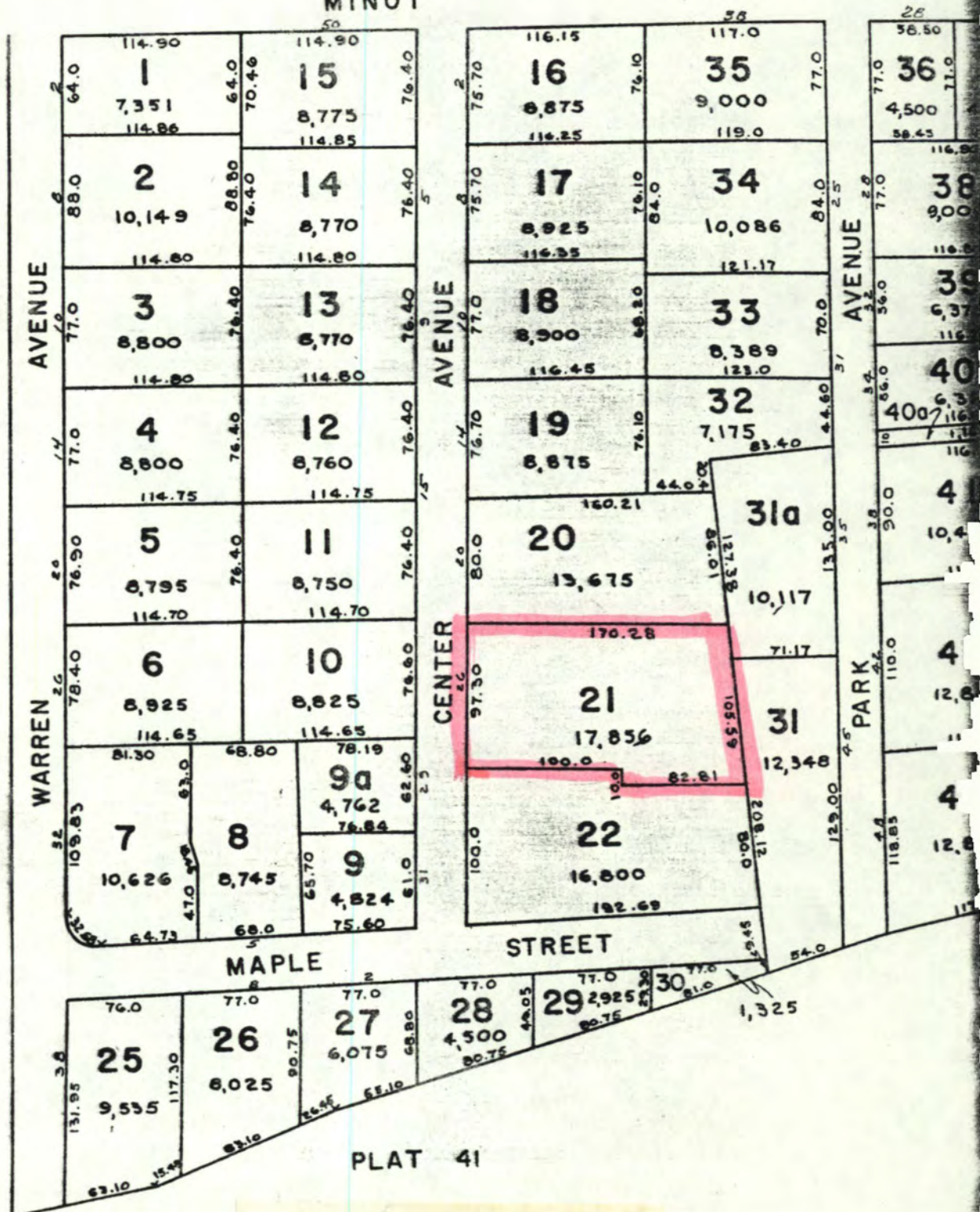
26 Center Ave

I-21

PLAT 53

MINOT

PLAT 52



PLAT 41

#C-116 26 Center St.
Map 42, Lot 21
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