

FORM B -BUILDING

Assessor' number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard

[Empty box]

Reading

[Empty box]

131

Town: North Reading, MA

Place (neighborhood or village) N/A

Address 471 Park Street

Historic Name Joseph Frye Farmstead

Use: Present Private residence

Original Farm house

Date of Construction 1765

Source Samuel L. Le Page

Style/Form Saltbox/L-shaped

Architect/Builder Undetermined

Exterior Material

Foundation Field stone

Wall Clapboards

Roof Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures Modern two-car garage.

Major Alterations (with dates) Post mid 1940s alterations include addition of enclosed, gable-roofed entrance porch and a screened-in porch.

Condition Good

Moved yes no

Acreage 1.43 Acres

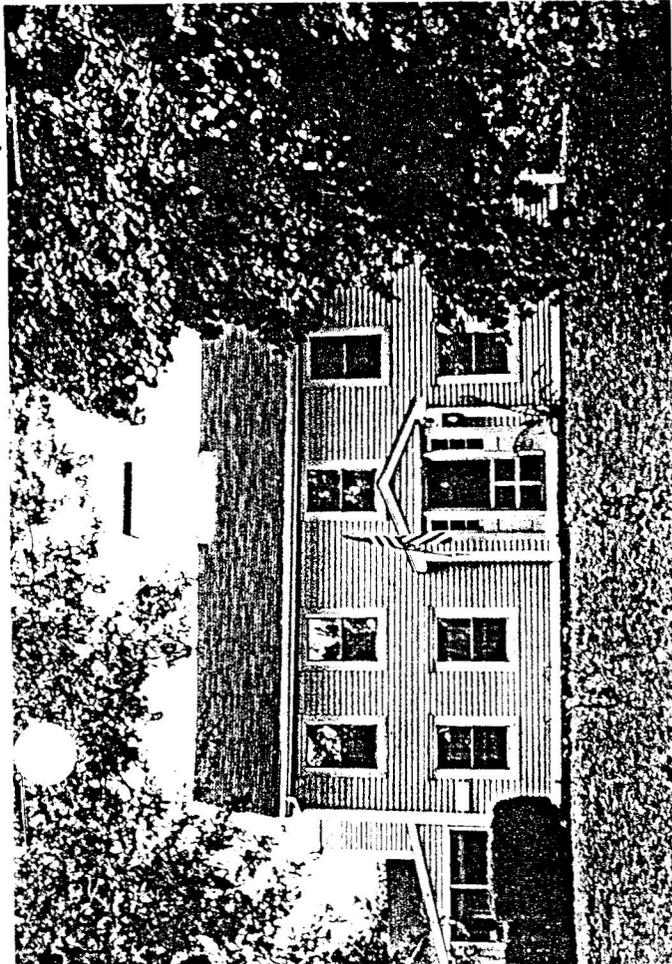
Setting Prominently sited atop a tree-shaded rise facing

a lawn that slopes down to the great bend in Park Street West. Modern suburban residences located to the northwest, southeast and south.

Recorded by Edward W. Gordon

North Reading Historical Commission
Organization

Date(month/day/year) 17/10/2001



INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community:

Form No:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

North Reading

Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth
of Massachusetts, Boston

Name: 471 Park Street

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

Architectural Narrative

The most drastic alteration of this otherwise intact dwelling, aside from the screened-in porch, is the shallow, enclosed, post-mid 1940s gable-roofed entrance porch. A photograph in Le Page's history of North Reading (1944) depicts the front door flanked by narrow side lights and pilasters and surmounted by a cornice-headed entablature.

In general, windows are fully enframed and contain 12/12 wood sash. The louvered shutters shown in the Le Page photograph are no longer in evidence. The edges of the main block are set off by simple narrow base and corner boards. A low, substantial brick chimney painted white with black trim is in evidence at the center of the roof's ridge.

Historical Narrative

According to Le Page, 471 Park Street passed from Mrs. Frye to her daughter Azuba who, in turn, left the house to her niece and caregiver Nancy Travis. In 1870, the Park street property of Nancy Travis embraced nearly eighty acres. In addition to the old house which was worth an estimated \$500, this farm was host to a barn (\$250) and a shed (\$50). The farm was subdivided into a three-acre Home lot (\$90); eight acres of fields (\$240); a one and one-quarter acre orchard; fifteen acres of pasture, including grazing land for horses (\$300); six-and-one-quarter acres of meadow (\$100) as well as forty-three acres of wood lots (\$780).

During the 1870s, Nancy Travis married Samuel W. Holt, who was presumably one of the Holts of 178 North Street (see MHC Form B ____). The Holts raised a daughter Abigail who evidently provided Le Page with an oral history of the property during the early 1940s. Members of the Frye and Travis families are buried beneath the lone obelisk in the small family burial ground on part of the property at 474 Park Street (see MHC Form E, ____).

By 1889, 471 Park Street had passed from the Travis-Holts to Samuel Heron. By that time the old farm had been reduced from half its eighty-acre size in 1870 to just over forty acres. Heron added a hen house to the property but otherwise the house, barn and shed listed in 1870 were still extant.

The 1905 Middlesex County Atlas shows this house and two farm buildings across the street (no longer extant) labeled Leonard. By 1910, the property had begun its long period of ownership by the family of George A. Murphy. The Murphys owned this farm until as late as the mid 1960s. The 1910 North Reading Valuation of Real and Personal Estate indicates that Mrs. George A. Murphy presided over a forty-five acre farm.

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Historical Narrative

By 1920, this property encompassed forty-six acres and along with the house and farm buildings was worth an estimated \$4,850. Ten years later, Mary A. Murphy owned this property which still encompassed forty-six acres and had an assessed value of \$5,500. The old names for the various segments of the farm lived on in names such as Front, East and Orchard Fields as well as the Home, South, North, Back and Wright Pastures.

By the mid 1960s, the property was owned by Maria and Sherman H. Murphy, tax collector. Also in residence at that time were Air Force serviceman David A. Murphy and Mrs. Murphy's mother, Winifred L. Johnson.

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

Community
North Reading

Property Address
471 Park Street

Area(s)

Form No.

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 Edward W. Gordon Preservation Consultant
Consultant

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here

The Joseph Frye House is a key component in North Reading's small but choice collection of pre Revolutionary War Saltbox farm houses. Probably built around 1765 for surveyor Joseph Frye, this residence provides a glimpse of the farm of an educated, skilled professional who delineated properties and community plans during the mid eighteenth century. This property provides a glimpse of a North Parish of Reading farmstead before the town's economy became more diversified after 1820 with the introduction of shoemaking and other cottage industries.