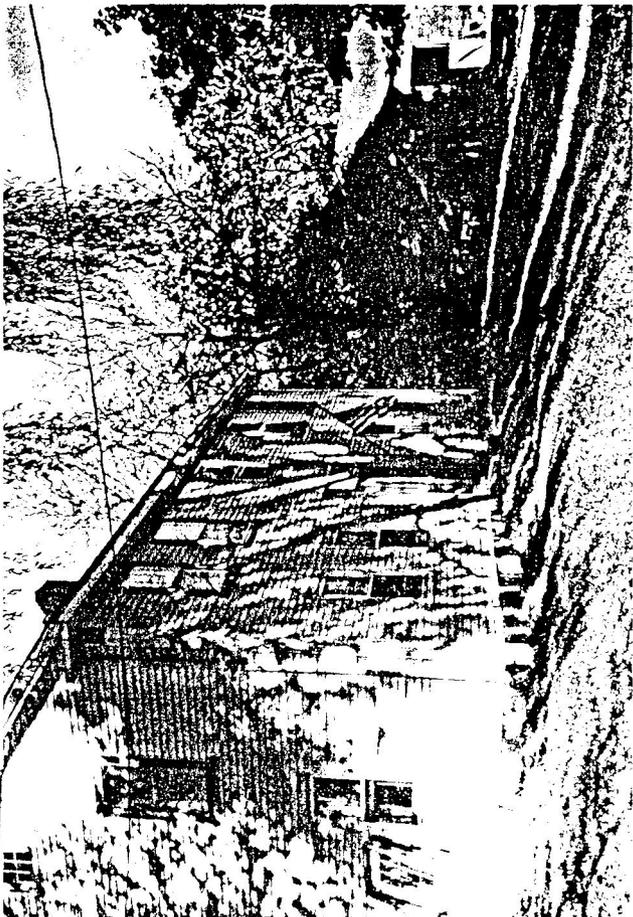


Massachusetts Historical Commission

Map:75 Parcel:10

Reading

82, 83



Town: North Reading, MA

Place (neighborhood or village)

Lower End

Address 189 Elm Street

Historic Name Parker-Rayner-Olmsted Farmstead

Use: Present Private residence

Original Farm House

Date of Construction by 1795? 1801?

Source 1795 Nickerson Map and Le Page History of N.R.

Style/Form Late Georgian/Greek Revival /rectangular

Architect/Builder Undetermined

Exterior Material

Foundation Granite block

Wall Vinyl

Roof Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures Extended English barn

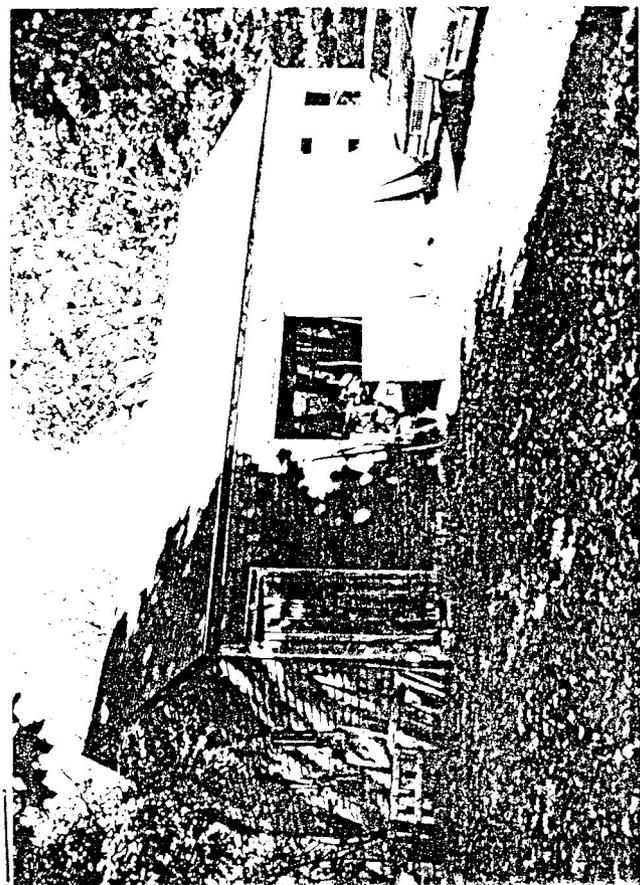
Major Alterations (with dates) Vinyl applied to exterior walls at undetermined date.

Condition Fair

Moved yes no

Acreage 1.63 acres

Setting Situated at the great bend in Elm Street opposite Ipswich River conservation lands.



BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION *see continuation sheet*

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Although the Needham Map indicates that 189 Elm Street was extant by 1795, Samuel M. Le Page claims that his late Georgian farm house was built in 1801. This farm house once presided over one of North Reading's largest farms. To a great degree, this house and its still-ample back yard preserves an unspoiled glimpse of North Reading during the early nineteenth century when farming constituted most of the town's economic base. Behind the house are fields and wood lands while the main facade overlooks Ipswich River conservation lands.

The house rises two stories from a granite block foundation to a broad asphalt shingle-sheathed gable roof. Covered with vinyl siding, this house's five-bay-by-three-bay volume is that of a late Georgian house. A short flight of granite steps leads to the center entrance. Exhibiting c. mid-nineteenth century double doors with solid lower panels surmounted by long rectangular glass panes, the entrance's entablature is missing. Still intact are flanking Doric pilasters. The entrance surrounds appear to have been a later, Greek Revival addition. Secondary entrances are located at the side gables.

In general, windows exhibit raised surrounds and contain 6/6 wood sash. The second-story windows are flush with the plate beneath the simple wooden cornice. Rising from either end of the roof's ridge are low, fairly substantial brick chimneys.

Still extant to the east of the house is a long, four-bay-by-two bay rectangular structure that may be categorized as an extended English barn. At some point during the mid nineteenth century an extant barn was evidently

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE *see continuation sheet*

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

189 Elm Street is a key component in the Elm/Park Street corridor's important collection of eighteenth century farm houses. The Parker-Rayner-Olmsted House provides a physical link with North Reading (then the North Parish of Reading) during the Federal Period (1775-1830). During this period the economy was characterized by subsistence farming with shoe and boot manufacturing coming to the fore after 1820. Three mills were in operation on the Ipswich River--all of these were owned by Flints. Population figures are incomplete for this period. Best evidence indicates slow growth with approximately 500 inhabitants in 1790 and 800 by 1830. The introduction of the Andover Turnpike (Main Street) through the area during the early 1800s shifted the focus of commercial activity to the mill and cottage industries at West Village (Park/Mill Streets) while the Town Common area (Park/Haverhill Streets) remained the focus of civic life.

193 Elm Street is shown on the 1795 Nickerson Map labeled D. Parker. This house's presence is indicated on the 1831 Parker Map. North Reading historian Samuel M. Le Page states "it was built by David Parker Jr. and the date is 1801... The interesting part about the house is that although built after

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES *see continuation sheet*

North Reading Maps/Atlases: 1795,1831,1857,1875,1889,1906; Town of North Reading Street List, 1966
North Reading Directories (Wakefield): 1896-97;1905;1907;1911-12; 1919-20;1931-1932;1941
Valuation of Real and Personal Estates, Town of North Reading: 1870;1890;1910;1920;1930
Eaton, Chester W., & Warren Eaton, eds. Proceedings of the 250th Anniversary of the Ancient Town of N.R.
Le Page, Samuel M. A History of North Reading, Tercentenary Ed., 1944
MHC Reconnaissance Survey Report, North Reading, 1981

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125

Community: North Reading, MA	Form No:
Property Name: 189 Elm Street	

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

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION continued

enlarged to twice its original size. According to Thomas Visser in Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings (1997), "By the mid-1800s many farmers saw their traditional English barn as being too small, inefficient, and old fashioned. As competition from the American West changed the economics of farming in New England, favoring larger herds and new ventures, some New England farmers built new gable-front barns while others expanded the older barns by building lean-to additions off the sides or rear of the Barn. Some added basements, while others simply lengthened the barns by adding extra bays at one end. These extended barns often have several front doors, with one opening to the original threshing floor."

The barn at 189 Elm Street in all probability evolved in a manner described by the following "cautious" observation quoted by Visser from *The Cultivator and Country Gentleman* (1893): "This is not brought to notice because it is an ideal barn or all its features to be commended, but because its arrangement interested me, may interest others and may furnish suggestions. It struck me as having at some time been lengthened from what was originally a much shorter barn."

The barn at 189 Elm Street is a long rectangular structure which measures the equivalent of five-bays-by-two bays. In typical English barn fashion it stands with its eaves facing the street while its narrow end gables face east and west. Clad with clapboards, it rises a single story from a granite block foundation to an asphalt shingle-sheathed gable roof. Probably representing this structure original structural component, the western half of the Elm Street façade exhibits a batten door adjacent to the southwest corner followed by a wide entrance that seems to have been reduced to half its size, judging by a narrow wooden lintel that extends eastward beyond the present entrance. The barn door appears to be missing. At the far end of the Elm Street façade are two standard size windows. The end gable exhibits pairs of standard size windows.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community:

Form No:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

North Reading

Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth
of Massachusetts, Boston

Name: 189 Elm Street

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

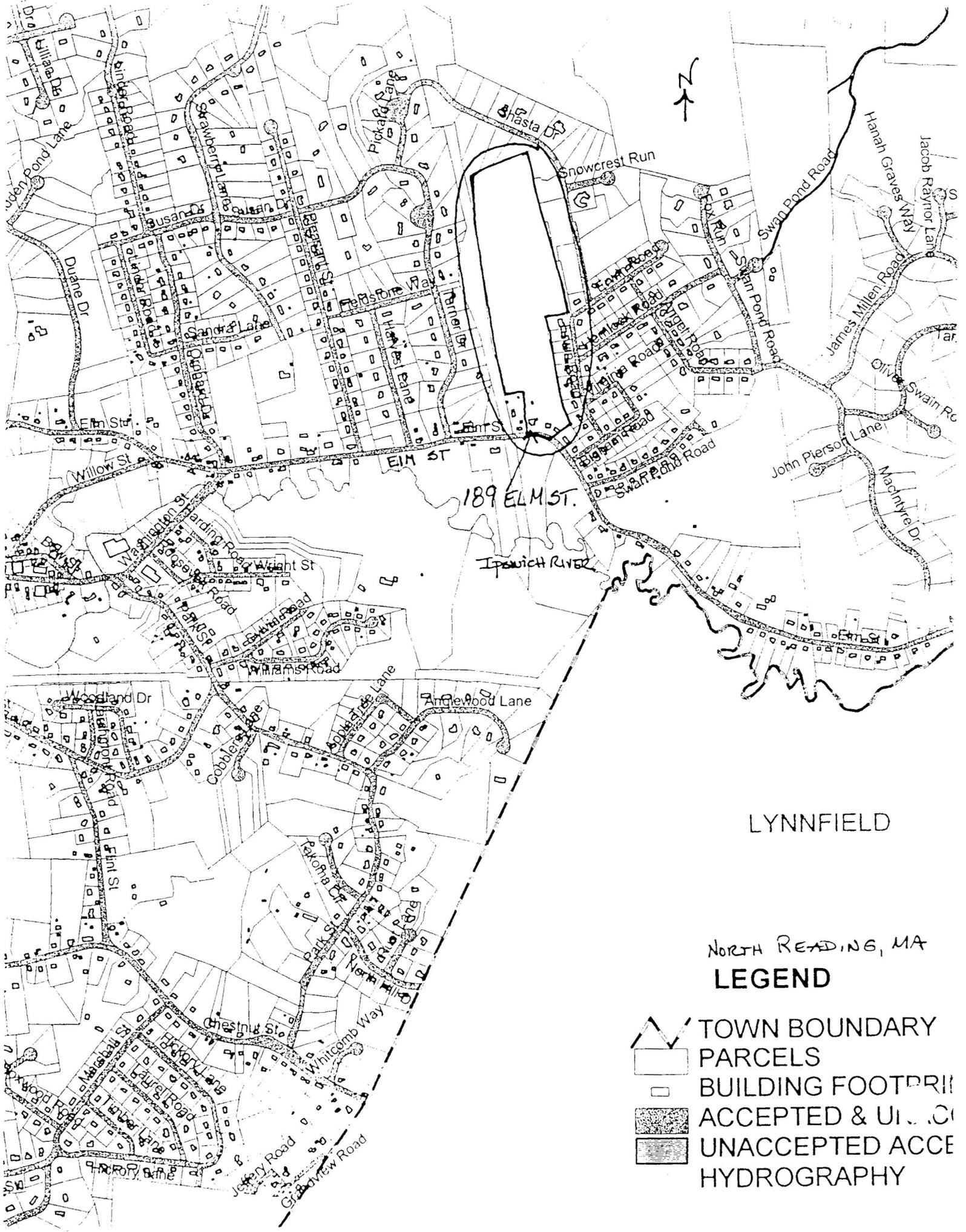
Historical Narrative

the beginning of the new century, it was built in the old style with the entrance facing south, with the winding stairway, two side rooms with fireplaces, and the kitchen [in the] back."

Le Page mentions that 189 Elm Street "was long known as the Rainer (sic) house. Indeed, by the mid-nineteenth century, Thomas Rayner owned this property. By 1870, Edward S. Rayner had inherited a farm which encompassed 167 1/4 acres and was valued at \$6,000, constituting one of the largest agricultural tracts in North Reading. Encompassing four fields, three pastures, two meadows, two wood lots and 15 acres of "Common Swamp," the Rayner holdings included meadows bordering the Ipswich River extending northward across Elm Street to Swan Pond. At that time the house was valued at \$1150 while the barn and two sheds were valued at \$600 and \$80, respectively. By the mid-1890s, Edward S. and Edward C. Rayner, farmer and traveling salesman are listed here. Following the death of Edward S. Rayner, around 1900, Edward C. Rayner and his mother Josephine moved to Chicago, Illinois. The Rayners sold the old farm to Alexander Sanford Olmsted in August 1904 for \$8,000 (along with Pew 38 in the Union Congregational Church). Olmsted subsequently moved from St. Albans, Vermont to North Reading. The Rayner-Olmsted deed notes that the southwest corner of the property was circumscribed by the Ipswich River where there was "a large willow tree at the end of a ditch."

According to the 1910 Valuation Mrs. A.S. Olmsted presided over a 240-acre tract worth \$7,510. Since 1870, several buildings had been added to the property, including a carriage house (\$100), a hen house (\$100); and a horse shed (\$20). At that time the house was valued at \$1600 while the barn was worth an estimated \$750. Two sheds had a combined value of \$200. The farm's acreage broke down as follows: a 1-acre house lot; a 1 1/4 acre barn lot; a 10-acre "Home Field"; a 15-acre "swain field"; a 4-acre East Field; an 11-acre River Meadow; an 11-acre Great Meadow; and 187 3/4 acres of pasture and woodlands. By 1915, A.S. Olmsted's widow, Rebecca, shared this house with civil engineers Bradley N. Olmsted and Russell C. Olmsted, as well as Willard I. Olmsted of the Flint Company in Lawrence, MA. By the 1920s, Olmsteds are no longer in residence on Elm Street.

By 1966, the house was owned by Dana A. Rowe, mechanic; Neva C. Rowe, supervisor; and Dana A. Rowe Jr., laborer.



LYNNFIELD

NORTH READING, MA

LEGEND

-  TOWN BOUNDARY
-  PARCELS
-  BUILDING FOOTPRINT
-  ACCEPTED & UTILIZED
-  UNACCEPTED ACCEPTED
-  HYDROGRAPHY

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

Community
North Reading

Property Address
189 Elm 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

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

Built around 1800, the Parker- Rayner- Olmsted Farm is a key component in the Lower End neighborhood/ Eastern Elm streets remarkably intact collection of Colonial and Federal farmsteads. By the mid nineteenth Century this farm encompassed nearly 170 acres, ranking among the largest agricultural properties in the Town. Still extant on the premises is a structure representing an example of an extended English barn Dating from the first half of the nineteenth century.