

**FORM B – BUILDING**

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

Assessor's Number    USGS Quad    Area(s)    Form Number

0028000104    Boston N.       655, 656

Town    Lexington

Place (*neighborhood or village*)

Address    51 Lowell St.

Historic Name    Josiah H. Reed House

Uses: Present    Multi-Family Residential

Original    Residential

Date of Construction    1872

Source    Lexington Valuation lists

Style/Form    Italianate w. Queen Anne finishes

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation    Brick

Wall/Trim    Wood Clapboard/ Wood Shingle

Roof    Slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures    Attached barn

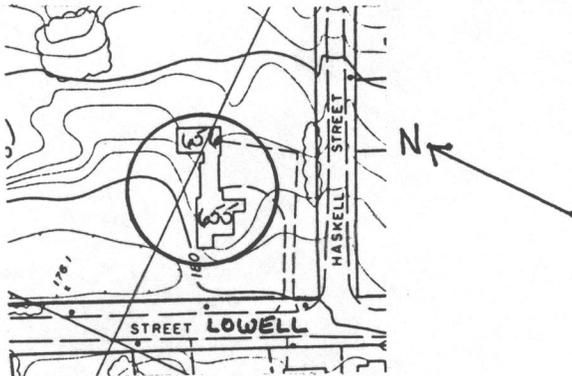
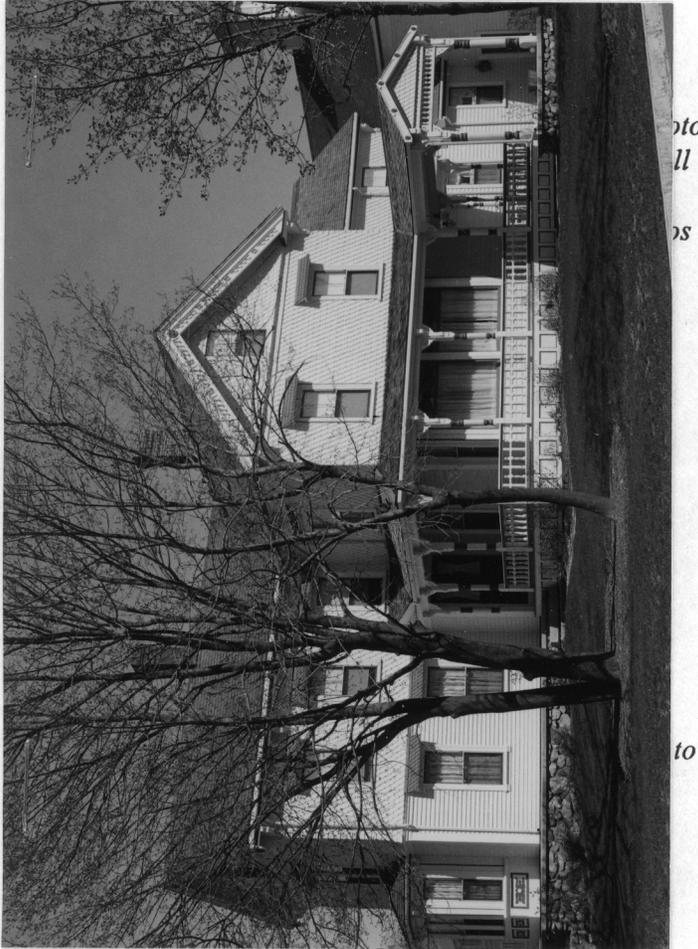
Major Alterations (*with dates*)

Condition    Good

Moved     no     yes    Date    1996

Acreeage    0.4 A.

Setting    At one side of a new development of closely-spaced houses



Recorded by    Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization    Lexington Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*)    February 1998

## BUILDING FORM

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION see continuation sheet

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

51 Lowell St. is one of several L-shaped Italianate farmhouses in Lexington, but the only one with Queen Anne finishes. The cross-gabled house (MHC #655) has a rear ell, is 2½ stories, and has two ridge chimneys. It is set on a brick foundation, clad with wood clapboards and wood shingles, and roofed with slate. The main entry is now under a porte cochere on the south elevation, a secondary entry is located in the reentrant angle, and windows are 2/1 double hung sash. Some Italianate finishes still remain: the paired curved brackets at the cornice and single brackets at the corners, the shed-style window hoods roofed with fishscale slates, and a double former front door in the reentrant angle. More prominent are the Queen Anne finishes: diamond patterned shingles above the first story, second-story walls that flare outward at the base, a distinctive scroll design along with flowers and paterae on the barge boards, another distinctive design on the panels of the projecting bays, turned porch posts with cut-out brackets, a spindle balustrade, and a spindle frieze under the porte cochere. The attached barn (MHC #656) with a cupola vent is now a residence with a two-car garage.

### 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.*

This house was built in 1872 by Josiah H. Reed (1827–1890), who had grown up in the Reed homestead house at 72 Lowell St. (MHC # 658). After his father's death in 1864, Josiah's brother, Reuben W., apparently lived at the homestead farm and Josiah lived in Somerville before building this house. By 1881, however, Reuben W. had moved to Somerville and Josiah had acquired the Reed homestead farm; Josiah then sold this house in 1882 to a William Litchfield. It was undoubtedly Litchfield who made the Queen Anne additions to the house and he made many other changes as well. An August 1882 item in the *Lexington Minute-man* related: "Mr. Litchfield contemplates making quite extensive improvements and is now engaged in sinking a well, which will not be less than forty feet deep, through the ledge, and when this is finished he will erect a wind mill to pump water to the highest point of his land, where he will build a reservoir to contain it for domestic and other purposes. He will also have an artificial duck pond in front of his residence. A new barn has been built for him this last spring. When finished, this will be another beautiful estate." In 1893 Litchfield's estate included the house, barn, windmill (built in 1889), ¾ acre mowing and tillage, 8 acres pasture, 3 horses, 1 cow, 60 fowl, and 3 carriages.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES see continuation sheet

Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington*. Revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913. 2: 568.

*Lexington Minute-man*, 26 August 1882.

Lexington Valuation Lists. 1872–1873.

Middlesex Registry of Deeds. Deeds. Cambridge, MA. 1582: 27; 1595: 55, 56.

Sileo, Thomas P. Research on Monahan House, Lowell St. In possession of Thomas P. Sileo, Chelmsford, MA.

Sullivan, Mark. "Family Feuds over Historic Home." *Boston Globe*, 26, March, 1995.

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  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town  
Lexington

Property Address  
51 Lowell St.

Area(s) Form No.

	655, 656
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## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (continued)

In 1901 the house was acquired by Charles B. Patch, who worked in Boston, and in 1913 by Eugene and Agnes Monahan. Monahan was a produce dealer and by 1915 had added two greenhouses. In 1995 the property became the center of a controversy when two Monahan descendants sold it to developer Mark Moore, who planned to build 12 new houses on the lot, a development that would force the Monahan's daughter to move out of the farmhouse. The dispute was somewhat resolved in 1996 when the farmhouse was moved forward and to the side of the lot to permit the construction of the new houses and, in the process, the barn converted to a residence.



Roll #8, Negative #36A-37