

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

*Log House, John Giestler House, West Reading Market Annex*

AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

*30 South Fourth Street*

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

*Reading*

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

*6*

STATE

*Pennsylvania*

CODE  
*42*

COUNTY  
*Berks*

CODE  
*011*

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

*Reading Restoration, Inc.*

STREET & NUMBER

*3407 Perkiomen Avenue*

CITY, TOWN

*Reading*

VICINITY OF

STATE

*Pennsylvania 19606*

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

*Berks County Courthouse*

STREET & NUMBER

*Sixth and Court Streets*

CITY, TOWN

*Reading*

STATE

*Pennsylvania*

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

*Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places*

DATE

*5-21-79*

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

*Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission*

CITY, TOWN

*Harrisburg*

STATE

*Pennsylvania*

# DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Presented here is a description of three structures built on a single city lot over a period of approximately 150 years. Together they comprise a unique representation of Reading's settlement and growth.

Structure #1 - Log House Circa 1760  
Size: Approximately 25' x 30'; 1½ stories

This log structure is not a settler's cabin but rather a house which uses logs as the major building material. Its size met the construction requirements stated in the patent (1752), "a substantial dwelling house of 20 feet square, at least, with a good brick or stone chimney". One of the original lots located just one block from the main street, it was required that a dwelling be erected within three years.

The house is constructed of exposed logs chinked with cut stone mortared in place. Because of its large size, the house has at least one 6 over 6 window in each wall. The front elevation has a door to the right and two windows to the side.

The pine logs are joined at the corners with notch and saddle construction. A hand-hewn summer beam runs parallel to the front of the house. Vertical sawn floor joists (3" x 8") are tenoned into the summer beam. Tapered, vertical sawn, pegged rafters come together at the peak with a pegged tenon joint. There is no ridgepole. Collar beams are fastened by a tusk-tenon-mortise joint and pegged rafters are set on a plate that is fastened by pegs to the top of the attic floor joist.

The original roof was hand split wood shingle on lath, later covered with standing seam tin. Much of the original roof was still under the tin.

Interior: The flooring in attic is double-tongue, double-groove jack-planed pine, 8" to 14" wide and fastened to floor joists with hand made flooring nails similar to those found by Mercer in a house dated 1776.

Evidence of the original hearth was found over the vault-like chimney foundation.

The pieces of original trim found were fastened with rose head nails. Interior walls consisted of exposed logs and mud and straw chinking plastered and whitewashed or painted. Location of fireplace and original stairs are noted in the sketch below.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

*LOG HOUSE, JOHN GIESTER HOUSE, WEST READING MARKET ANNEX*

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Alterations: *Prior to acquisition the building has been altered in the following ways:*

- 1. East (front) - modern door, cement steps, large windows, flush-to-ground iron basement hatch doors.*
- 2. North - (Cherry Street) - The original roof line was changed following construction of a two bay brick house directly behind Log House. Both buildings were altered to permit passage between them at first and second levels. It is probable that the siding was added at this time as well perhaps as dormers. This addition of siding was fortuitous as it preserved intact the entire north side.*
- 3. South side - Largely original. There are no apparent structural changes. Some repairs to foundations.*
- 4. West - (rear) - Portions of logs were removed to provide access to brick house on first level and to provide doors to cinder block addition housing lavatories.*

Structure #2 - John Hiester House Circa 1820

*Size: Approximately 17' x 34'; two bay; two stories with attic*

*This structure, a self-contained brick house, is immediately to rear of Log House. Set lengthwise on property, it allows for a small court adjacent to the front which can be reached by a passage alongside Log House. The courtyard is brick laid in herringbone pattern.*

*The building is entirely brick with the exception of two roof dormers. These are long and deep because of the shallowness of the roof. Originally they had diagonal siding.*

*There are three fireplaces, two on the first floor and one on the second. These are set on vaulted foundations in the basement. The basement has a dirt floor and walls, the walls plastered and whitewashed. There are three basement windows; two still have the original cast grates.*

*The roof covering was wood shingle on oak lath.*

*The major architectural feature of this house is the shape of the building itself which is similar to the ell portion of many city homes. Other features are a wood cornice moulding which is quite deep and a small scaled lintel over earlier-type window frames. Doors with three pan lites above them are at opposite ends of the long facade, the western one completely original. Mortar pointing is in grapevine pattern.*

*The windows - 3 on second floor, 3 on first, 4 in attic - are 6 over 6 light, at one time shuttered as evidenced by remaining cast iron hinges and keepers.*

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LOG HOUSE, JOHN GIESTER HOUSE, WEST READING MARKET ANNEX

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

*Interior: The flooring on all 3 floors is of t&g pine, random width. Walls and ceilings are plastered on oak hand-split lath. Interior trim appears to be hand-planed with moulding planes rather than machine made. Baseboards and trim are "plastered in".*

*Alterations: Sometime during mid-1800's a window on north wall of 2nd floor was altered to provide a doorway to loft of Log House. In 1960 a cinder block addition was built to rear of Log House to provide restrooms for restaurant patrons covering over one exterior door of Brick House.*

*In 1895 the third structure of this complex was built to the rear of this house, incorporating the west wall in its construction. A window on the 2nd floor was then sealed off.*

Structure #3 - West Reading Market Annex - Built 1395 (date on cornerstone)

Size: 165' long x 30' wide x 30' high

*The last addition to this property, a brick market house, maintained the depth of the original grant. With its construction utilization of the building site was fully maximized.*

*The exterior shape is derived from use of almost circular laminated wood trusses held together at their bases by means of an iron rod. On top of the trusses sits a head house running the length of the building with windows on either side. The windows are activated with ropes set in large wooden pulleys. The west end is brick like the side walls, the east end is frame covered with German drop siding. Both ends have arched windows which match the contour of the roof line. The roof retains the original tin standing seam which was common to that period.*

*Interior: The floor runs with the grade of the land, level at the east end, sloping downward to the west. A portion of the floor is concrete, the balance is brick. The interior is a large open space.*

*Alterations: The original points of access have all been altered. At the west end a large garage door has been installed. On the north all exits and facade windows have been bricked in or covered with plywood. At the east end, sliding doors have given way to a single swinging door.*

# SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES *c.1760; c. 1820; 1895*

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Log House, the Hiester House and the West Reading Market Annex stand as a visible commentary on a century and a half of architectural change in Reading (1760-1895). This property, the entire front and northern elevation of which can be readily seen and approached by foot and street traffic, is an intriguing collection of structures reflecting progressive degrees of sophistication of Reading's designers and builders. The Log House, dating from the 1760's and situated on the southern moiety of Lot #53, the patent for which was granted Nicholas Werner in 1752, is a fine example of the sturdy and pragmatic style of the early city settlers. The rough-hewn logs and odd-sized stone chinking make a primitive statement when viewed beside the orderly masonry composition of the adjoining double-storied house built of Reading-made brick in the first quarter of the 19th century. The final building of the trio is an 1895 market house which covers the latter three fourths of the property. Its circular trussed roof, the work of a skilled engineer of artistic spirit, forms a welcome contrast to the angular simplicity of the two preceeding buildings. It is indeed remarkable that these three contiguous buildings, each a remnant of a distinctly different period of Reading's history, should have survived, little altered, on a busy corner one block from the main street of a city of over 80,000 persons.

In addition to their architectural value, these buildings are also significant as a current illustration of a past century of intensive urban development. Originally the property held a single residential dwelling, but by the first quarter of the 19th century the brick house had been added. It is interesting to conjecture that perhaps this addition may have allowed the Log House to become the first phase of the property's transition from residential to commercial usage. Records indicate that while the brick house remained a residence, the Log House served many purposes. In 1826 the property was acquired by John S. Hiester, son of the Governor, and it is thought by some that his law offices were located here. Other known uses of the Log House include a tailor shop, butcher shop, boarding house, real estate office and most commonly, various types of eateries. A basement chute filled with shells attests to its service as an oyster house at the turn of the 20th century.

The close proximity of Penn Street was an obvious commercial advantage and in 1805 Amos Potteiger built the market house, thus expanding the commercial utilization of the property to the fullest. Intended as an annex to the West Reading Market, it continued to provide a place of interchange for farm and city folk long after the Penn Street market had been torn down. Whereas much urban development has taken place at the expense of earlier structures, these three buildings remain and reflect the gradual progression of Reading from a small rural town to a vital commercial center.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .15

QUADRANGLE NAME Reading, PA

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 420920 4465050  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE  
Susan S Brubaker, Arlene C. Unger

ORGANIZATION  
Reading Restoration, Inc.

DATE

STREET & NUMBER  
3407 Perkiomen Avenue

TELEPHONE  
215-779-2553

CITY OR TOWN  
Reading

STATE  
Pennsylvania

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL    STATE    LOCAL x

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE ED WEINTRAUB, Director  
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE
ATTEST:	DATE
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION	

**TRG** | **THOMAS R. GIBBONS** | registered  
LAND SURVEYING & SUBDIVISION | Surveyor

PHONE 215 - 376-8676

July 12, 1978

DESCRIPTION OF DISPOSITION PARCEL NO. 39 PURPART  
NO. 1 IN THE MODEL CITIES ONE URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT  
PA-R-381, READING, BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of land located on the West side of South Fourth Street, (Sixty (60.00') feet wide) and on the South side of Cherry Street, (Fifty (50.00') feet wide), and being Disposition Parcel No. 39 Purpart No. 1 in the Model Cities One Urban Renewal Project PA-R-381 belonging to the Reading Redevelopment Authority of the City of Reading, as shown on Plan of Survey TRG-D-1230 by Thomas R. Gibbons, Registered Surveyor, Reading, Pennsylvania, and situate in the City of Reading, County of Berks, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, being more fully bounded and described as follows to wit:

BEGINNING at the point of intersection of the West topographical building line of South Fourth Street (Sixty (60.00') feet wide) with the South topographical building line of Cherry Street (Fifty (50.00') feet wide);

THENCE EXTENDING in a Southerly direction along the West topographical building line of South Fourth Street on a line forming an interior angle of Eighty-nine (89°) degrees Twenty-five (25') minutes Fifty-three (53") seconds with the South topographical building line of Cherry Street, a distance of Twenty-nine feet and Forty-three hundredths of one foot (29.43') to a point, a corner of property belonging to the Reading Merchants Oil Company;

THENCE EXTENDING in a Westerly direction along property belonging to the Reading Merchants Oil Company on a line forming an interior angle of Ninety (90°) degrees Thirty-five (35') minutes Two (02") seconds with the West topographical building line of South Fourth Street a distance of Sixty-three feet and Ten hundredths of one foot (63.10') to a point, a corner of Purpart No. 2;

THENCE EXTENDING in a Northerly direction along part No. 2 on a line forming an interior angle of Eighty-nine (89°) degrees Fifteen (15') minutes Twenty-seven (27") seconds with the last described line, a distance of Twenty-nine feet and Forty-five hundredths of one foot (29.45') to a point on the South topographical building line of Cherry Street;

THENCE EXTENDING in an Easterly direction along the South topographical building line of Cherry Street on a line forming an interior angle of Ninety (90°) degrees Forty-three (43') minutes Thirty-eight (38") seconds with the last described line, a distance of Sixty-three feet and Two hundredths of one foot (63.02') to the place of BEGINNING

CONTAINING IN AREA One thousand Eight hundred Fifty-six square feet and Two hundred Sixty-seven thousandths of one square foot (1,856.267 sq. feet) of land.



