This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties or districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 15A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classifications, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>historic name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlie Parker Residence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>street &amp; number</th>
<th>151 Charlie Parker Place (a.k.a. Avenue B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>city, town</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>state</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>code</td>
<td>NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>county</td>
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<tr>
<td>code</td>
<td>061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zip code</td>
<td>10009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [X] nationally [ ] statewide [ ] locally. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of certifying official</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation</td>
<td>1/25/74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of commenting or other official</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

[ ] entered in the National Register.

[ ] See continuation sheet.

[ ] determined eligible for the National Register.[ ] see continuation sheet.

[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.

[ ] removed from the National Register.

[ ] other, (explain:)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of keeper</th>
<th>Date of Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)</td>
<td>Category of Property (check only one box)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[X] private</td>
<td>[X] building(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] public-local</td>
<td>[ ] district</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] public-State</td>
<td>[ ] site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] public-Federal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[ ] object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name of related multiple property listings (enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. Function or Use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic Function</td>
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<tr>
<td>(enter categories from instructions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOMESTIC: childrens day nursery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

<table>
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<tr>
<th>7. Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architectural Classification</td>
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<tr>
<td>(enter categories from instructions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gothic Revival</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Materials
(enter categories from instructions)

foundation: stone
walls: brick
roof: stone (brownstone)
other: metal (tin)

Narrative Description
(describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
Charlie Parker Residence

New York, New York

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark an "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[ ] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
[X] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
[ ] C Property that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
[ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Performing Arts (Music)
Ethnic Heritage (Black)

Period of Significance
1950-1954

Significant Dates
N/A

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

[ ] A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
[ ] B removed from its original location.
[ ] C a birthplace or grave.
[ ] D a cemetery.
[ ] E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
[ ] F a commemorative property.
[X] G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): Primary location of additional data:
[ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
[X] State historic preservation office
[ ] previously listed in the National Register
[ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
[ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
[ ] recorded by Historic American Building Survey #
[ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Name of repository:

Parker, Charles Christopher
Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
N/A

Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property _______ less than one acre

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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<th>Northing</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbal Boundary Description
(Explain the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title ____________________ Contact: Peter D. Shaver and see continuation sheet
organization NYS Office of Parks, Rec. & Historic Preservation date 5/10/96
street & number Peebles Island, PO Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643
city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188-0189

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property’s location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items
(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(name)

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name ____________________

street & number ____________________________

city or town ____________________________ state ________ zip code ________

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.
Description

The Charlie Parker Residence is located at 151 Charlie Parker Place (a.k.a. Avenue B) in the East Village section of Manhattan, New York County. A three-story building with a raised basement, brick walls, painted brownstone facade, and flat roof, it was erected in 1849 as a single-family residence. (1) A rooftop penthouse was added in 1945 when the building was converted into apartments. Charlie Parker and his family resided in the basement apartment between 1950 and 1954. Located across from Tompkins Square Park, the building is adjoined by late nineteenth and early twentieth century townhouses and apartment buildings, including the prominent high-rise Art Deco style Christodora House, built in 1928 (National Register listed, 1986). The development of the Tompkins Square area as a primarily residential neighborhood surrounding the park began in the 1840’s. The townhouses and apartment buildings located across from the park are rendered in a range of styles including Italianate, eclectic Victorian Gothic and Renaissance Revival.

The townhouse at 151 Avenue B was among the earliest buildings constructed in the neighborhood. It was built as one of a group of identical Gothic Revival single-family rowhouses across from Tompkins Square Park. It is a typical mid-nineteenth century middle-class residence in New York City with its three-bay form, side-hall plan, basement kitchen, high stoop, and double parlors and dining room on the first floor. Although it is the most intact of the remaining group of three houses, it was converted to apartments in 1945, with one apartment on each floor and an added penthouse. It remains substantially intact from that period.

The building features a three-bay facade of symmetrical, one-over-one windows with drip moldings, a sheet metal and boxed wood cornice adorned with decorative moldings, and an added metal rooftop railing. There is also an entrance stoop. The building also features such Gothic Revival design elements as a deeply carved, pointed-arch doorway with the archway resting upon pairs of thin colonettes, along with carved trefoil reliefs, all framed by a prominent hood molding above. The entrance door is of wood paneling with carved quatrefoils. There are also hood
moldings above the windows and a decorative relief band with a Gothic Revival design motif located below the cornice. Overall, the building possesses a high level of exterior design integrity, in that its facade and original design elements are largely unaltered. However, it should be noted that the building’s cornice is severely deteriorated, while the rear wall is extensively braced at the ground and first floor levels because of structural weakness.

The interior of the townhouse features a first-floor entrance foyer leading to a prominent curved stairway with a carved wood balustrade and railing. The entrance foyer features ornamental wall and ceiling moldings. Located along the stairway are decorative lower wall paneling and several arched wall niches. The building’s first floor, with its high ceilings, features a side hallway plan with largely unaltered front and rear parlors, and a center dining room. These rooms feature elaborate wall pilasters, ornamental wall and ceiling moldings, and decorative ceiling plasterwork. There is also a fireplace in the original dining room. Originally built as a single-family residence, the townhouse was converted into apartments in 1945.(2)

The basement apartment where Charlie Parker and his family lived consists of a long side hall from which the main front and rear rooms are entered. The present layout and configuration of the four rooms in the apartment, plus bathroom, is somewhat changed from the layout during the Parker occupancy but retains sufficient integrity of design and feeling to be recognizable from the period. The most significant change is the addition of a new wall which divides the former main room into two rooms. Also, two closets have been added to the front room along with molding strips around the closet doors and the alcove which was created by the construction of the new wall: the closets flank and thus form the alcove. A door from the hallway to the newly formed middle room was also added along with strip moldings along the borders of the closet in the rear room. Strip moldings have also been added to frame the alcove located on the south side of the newly-formed middle room.
The rear room, facing the rear courtyard of the house, is original to the period 1950-1954, as are the apartment’s kitchen and bathroom. Also original to the period of significance is the hall closet located under the stairs leading to the upper floors of the building. During the period 1950-1954, the rear room originally served as the bedroom for Parker’s two children and later became the bedroom for Parker and his wife Chan. The main front room became the bedroom for the children. (3) The apartment’s bathroom and kitchen are located at the end of the side hall. The apartment featured such design elements as ornamental wallpaper produced by the Steinberg Co., a custom-made blonde-wood dining table produced by Heywood Wakefield, and a black linoleum floor with a decorative, stylized Chinese emblem. (4) The floor in the front room with this design motif still exists, together with the black and white checkerboard pattern floor in the hallway.

Notes

1. 1849 Assessor’s Book of the City of New York, p. 35. This property tax assessment record indicates, unlike the previous 1848 record, the existence of a house on the property lot at 151 Avenue B.

2. See New York City Department of Buildings application for building alteration No. AL #557-45 dated April 10, 1945.

3. Upon moving their children into the front room, this space was referred to as "the dormitory" by Parker and his wife Chan. From a telephone interview with Chan Parker on June 7, 1993. Chan Parker now lives in Champmatteux, France, outside of Paris.

4. Telephone interview with Chan Parker; June 7, 1993.
Statement of Significance

The townhouse at 151 Charlie Parker Place (a.k.a. Avenue B) in the East Village section of Manhattan, New York County is historically significant under Criterion B for its association with the life of an extremely prominent figure in American jazz, Charlie Parker. Charlie Parker, who was also known as "Bird" or "Yardbird," resided at 151 Avenue B from late 1950 until 1954, just a few months before his untimely death in March, 1955 at the age of 34. (1) Under Criterion Exception G, as a property whose period of significance is less than 50 years, the exceptional significance of 151 Avenue B is clearly demonstrated by the contributions of Charlie Parker to the development of jazz and to African-American history as documented by several books and countless testimonials written about him. Parker was one of the pre-eminent jazz musicians of the 1940's and 1950's, and is widely credited with having been one of the creators of the jazz genre known as Bebop. (2) He also became well known internationally for his strikingly innovative and highly influential way of playing the saxophone.

The period of Parker's residence at 151 Avenue B coincides with the establishment of his career as a jazz master and prominent recording artist. Parker's distinctive manner of playing and highly individual interpretations of jazz compositions evolved from his living and working in New York City beginning in the late 1930's. Born in Kansas City, Kansas in 1920, Parker began playing the saxophone as a teenager in clubs and taverns of the then thriving jazz scene of nearby Kansas City, Missouri.

Parker arrived in New York in 1938, and immediately sought to immerse himself in the unparalleled vibrant uptown jazz scene in Harlem. While performing in 1939 at Monroe's Uptown House, a restaurant and jazz spot located on 138th Street in Harlem, Parker introduced a fresh new approach to playing the saxophone, in which he concentrated on the higher intervals or top notes of chords—raised ninths, elevenths, and thirteenth. (3) The result was a departure from the traditional playing of compositions in only a few select keys with easy chord progressions and
moderate tempos that characterized the saxophone playing of such earlier established saxophonists as Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young. (4)

It was this pioneering new sound, in which the basic four-four beat of traditional jazz was abandoned in favor of free-form playing composed of complex, irregular rhythms and the insertion of different short melodic phrases, that would characterize Bebop. (5) Bebop was a striking new form of jazz that was a major departure from Swing music, the dominant jazz mode of the 1930's. Bebop was created by Charlie Parker along the John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie in the early 1940's in New York, although several accounts credit the invention of the new music solely to Parker. (6)

With its complex rhythms, dynamic harmonies, and fast-paced energy, Bebop was epitomized in the playing of Charlie Parker. Parker's saxophone playing was distinguished by an incredibly fast, though extremely accurate, style that was an explosion of pure musical energy. Chords were altered, and sounds inspired by the pace and environment of the city were incorporated into Parker's new playing. In addition, Parker, with his saxophone, managed to distill the sound of an entire big band reed section, with all its richness and variations of instrumental sounds normally produced by five instruments, into his single saxophone. (7) Bebop transformed jazz from being an energetic background barroom music, an accompaniment for vocalists singing blues-derived or popular tunes, or as a vehicle for dancers, to music with an independent modern jazz sound. (8)

Bebop also transformed the context of the New York jazz scene. The club where Charlie Parker often performed with Dizzy Gillespie, The Three Deuces, was located on West 52nd Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, and was among a number of small clubs and lounges that would form the downtown jazz scene through the end of the 1940's. In fact, the unparalleled dynamic playing of Parker and Gillespie at The Three Deuces transformed the club into the primary destination, in the sense of a Mecca, for young jazz musicians visiting New York from around the country. (9)
The height of Charlie Parker's career as a jazz musician, described as his "ascension" by one scholar, encompasses the period from 1947 to his death in 1955. During much of this period Parker resided at 151 Avenue B. (10) From the late 1940's through the early 1950's, the new sound of Bebop was disseminated throughout the nation and internationally, and Charlie Parker became the primary messenger of the new music. Parker became extremely influential as a musician, acquiring such saxophonists as Sonny Stitt, Jimmy Heath, and Art Pepper as his disciples; these musicians would go on to establish well-known individual careers. In addition, Parker toured extensively throughout the nation and overseas during this period. His first European tour took place from November through December, 1950, in which Parker spent time in Sweden and France. Parker's stay in Sweden was marked by a considerable amount of public and media attention in which he gave press conferences and was interviewed by the Swedish jazz magazine "Estrad," while his two performances at the large Konserthuset in Stockholm were both sold out. (11)

Parker's concert performances in Europe were accompanied by similar engagements in the United States. During the early 1950's, Parker performed in the Jazz at the Philharmonic concert series organized by jazz promoter and record producer Norman Granz in such cities as Los Angeles, Chicago, Minneapolis, Buffalo, Philadelphia and New York. These concerts usually occurred in large venues, exposing thousands of people to Parker's music. In 1953, Parker performed with Dizzy Gillespie and such other major jazz performers as Bud Powell, Charles Mingus, and Max Roach at Massey Hall in Toronto, Canada in a concert that was described as "an electrifying hour of music." (12)

By the time Charlie Parker moved into the basement apartment of the townhouse at 151 Avenue B in 1950, he had begun to establish himself as a jazz recording artist. Indeed, more than half of all the recordings made by Parker as an artist independent of bands and ensembles which he did not lead, were produced from 1950 until 1954, the period of his residency on Avenue B. (13) Parker had a long-term contract with Mercury Records, a major jazz record label during this period, and the acknowledgement of his playing by the listening public placed him consistently
at the top of the "Metronome" magazine readers poll for leading jazz saxophonist from 1948 through 1953. A particularly noteworthy series of broadcasts took place during March and April 1951 in which Parker, together with Bud Powell and Dizzy Gillespie and two others, performed an outstanding half-hour of music which, according to one critic, "put in the shade all the other quintet performances of the period." (14)

The location of the Spring, 1951 broadcast performances was evidence of a major development in jazz performance in which Charlie Parker participated. "Birdland, " a large and spacious jazz club named after Parker (his best known moniker was "Bird"), and established in 1950 on Broadway at West 53rd Street in Manhattan, was opened by jazz promoter Billy Shaw. The opening of "Birdland" signaled the replacement of the rather small and crowded clubs and lounges of West 52nd Street with a spacious, high-profile jazz venue accommodating some 400 patrons that would achieve a long-lasting reputation. This new development in jazz performance gave Bebop a respectability and prominence that further enhanced the qualities of the new jazz genre pioneered by Charlie Parker.

Prior to moving to 151 Avenue B in 1950, Charlie Parker lived at various locations in Manhattan; however, most of these were short-term stays in various hotels or rooming houses and many have been demolished. After arriving in New York City in 1939, Parker briefly shared apartments with such jazz musicians as big band leader Andy Kirk, and Buster Smith. (15) However, Parker's first years in the city were highly transient, thus he stayed in many rooms and apartments. Upon arriving back in New York from California in 1947, Parker, together with his wife Doris (Sydnor) lived in the former Dewey Square Hotel located at West 117th Street between St. Nicholas and Seventh avenues in Harlem. The hotel has been renovated into a low-income apartment and community service building. In 1948, Parker and Doris lived at 411 Manhattan Avenue, located further west, but also in Harlem. (16) That building has also been renovated into low-income housing. From early 1949 until the move to 151 Avenue B, Parker, together with his new common-law wife, Chan
(Richardson), lived first in a townhouse at 7 West 52nd Street and then in a five-room front apartment at 422 East 11th Street in the East Village, where they lived for several months. These two buildings have since been demolished.

In early October, 1954, Charlie Parker and his wife Chan moved to Chan's mother's house located in New Hope, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. During this time Bird was traveling daily to New York City to receive psychiatric treatment at Bellevue Hospital in Manhattan. From the beginning of March, 1955, until his death on March 12, Parker stayed with his friend and jazz aficionado, the Baroness Pannonica de Koenigswarter, at the Hotel St. John at 295 Fifth Avenue in Manhattan.

Despite Charlie Parker's short music career, the last four and one-half years of his life, which were mainly spent living at 151 Avenue B, culminated an intense lifetime experience developing a highly original technical complexity in jazz performance that represented a revolution in music. The striking new sound of Parker's music also accompanied the growing exposure of the general public to jazz and the critical attention paid to jazz music in the Post-World War II era. This transformation of jazz that occurred largely in New York City during the period of Charlie Parker's residency at 151 Avenue B represents an important development in twentieth century American culture.

In commemoration of Parker's importance in the history of jazz, African-American heritage, and the city of New York, Avenue B was renamed Charlie Parker Place in August, 1993.

Notes

1. Evidence of Charlie Parker's residency at 151 Avenue B is revealed in Ross Russell, Bird Lives! (London: Quartet Books, Ltd.), pp. 307-308. Additional references to 151 Avenue B are contained in letters from Chan Parker to Judy Snead, the current owner, dated July 19, 1981 and March 19, 1984; and in correspondence, including telegrams and letters, reprinted in To Bird with Love by Chan Parker and Francis Paudras (Poitiers, France: Editions WIZLOV 1981); see pages 325; 331-333; and 351.


13. For a comprehensive, completely dated discography of Parker’s recordings indicating the large recording output during the period 1950-1954, see Priestley, *Charlie Parker*, pp. 81-95.


15. Telephone interview with Phil Schaap, June 16, 1993. Schaap is a radio broadcaster and jazz scholar who has extensive knowledge of the life and career of Charlie Parker.


Major Bibliographical References


Parker, Chan and Francis Paudras. To Bird with Love (Poitiers, France: Editions WIZLOV, 1981.)


"Why We Must Preserve Our Jazz Heritage" by Wynton Marsalis in Ebony, November, 1990: pp. 159-164.

Williams, Martin T. The Jazz Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.)

WIlson, Peter Niklas. Charlie Parker: Sein Leben, Seine Musik, seine Schallplatten (Schaftlach, Germany: ORES Verlag, 1988.)
Geographical Data

Verbal boundary description:

Block 392, lot 5, at 151 Avenue B, New York, New York. The nominated property is encompassed within the bold line on the attached Sanborn Insurance map.

Verbal boundary justification:

The nominated property includes the building and property historically associated with the residency of Charlie Parker.
Form Prepared By

Draft nomination prepared by:

Jeffrey Baumoei
Preservation Consultant
28-19 23rd Avenue, Apt. 4
Astoria, NY 11105
718-726-5374

Edited by:

Peter D. Shaver
Program Assistant
Field Services Bureau
NYSOPRPH
Peebles Island, P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188
518-237-8643
Charlie Parker
Residence
161 Avenue B
New York, NY 10003
Brooklyn Quad
Zone 18
Easting: 586100
Northing: 45008700