

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

27/136	Reading		354
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

**Town:** Reading

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*)

## Photograph



**Address:** 153 Bancroft Avenue

**Historic Name:** Collins-Richards House

**Uses:** Present: residential

Original: residential

**Date of Construction:** 1922

**Source:** water department records

**Style/Form:** Gambrel Front

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

### Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: wood shingle

Roof: asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**  
none

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):  
date unknown - addition

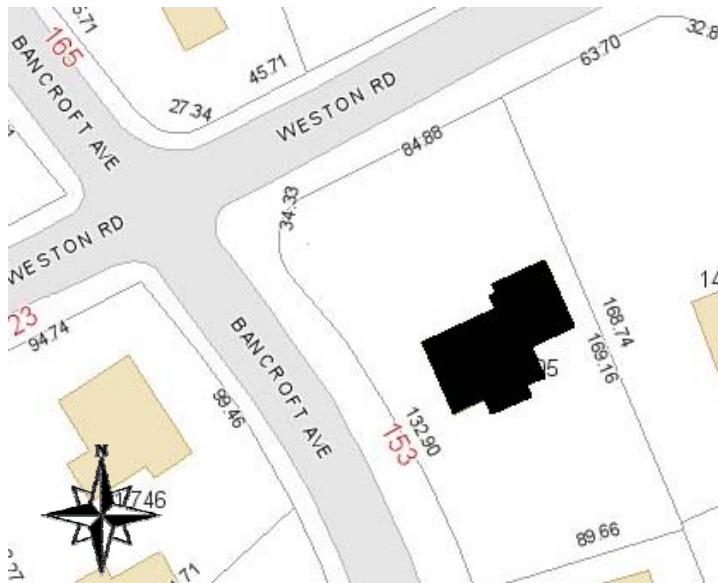
**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no | x | yes | | **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acreage:** 0.35 acre

**Setting:** mixed residential neighborhood

## Topographic or Assessor's Map



**Recorded by:** Lisa Mausolf

**Organization:** Reading Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): December 2009

**RECEIVED**  
**AUG 20 2010**  
 MASS. HIST. COMM.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

READING

153 Bancroft Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

The house at 153 Bancroft Avenue is a well-preserved example of the gambrel front cottages constructed in Reading and other suburban communities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, just one variation on the broader Colonial Revival theme. The gambrel front cottage was especially appropriate for small suburban sites and was an economical design because so much of the second story was usable space. Variations on the gambrel front cottage design were produced by mail order companies such as Sears, Roebuck and Co., Montgomery Ward, etc. but could also be readily built without a kit.

In this case the gambrel front cottage rests on a concrete foundation and is sheathed in wood shingles. The sidehall entry is sheltered by a shallow entrance porch supported by four square posts with lattice panels between the end posts. The six-panel door is flanked by two 6/1 windows. There are three pairs of 6/1 windows on the gambrel front with additional windows of the same configuration on the other elevations including the long shed dormers which span both the north and south roof slopes. A two-story addition with garage is offset to the northeast.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*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.*

According to water department records, this house (originally 121 Bancroft Avenue) was constructed for Harry B. Collins and the water was connected on November 1, 1922. The land constitutes lots of 7, 9, and 11 of a plan that was originally drawn in 1916. According to the 1925 directory, Harry Collins was the Superintendent of Public Works in Reading and lived here with his wife Nellie.

By 1930 the house was owned and occupied by Fred and Ellen Richards, proprietors of Richards Apparel Shop, a ladies apparel shop in Reading Square. They lived here with their son, Stuart, and daughter-in-law, Edna, who also worked in the shop. The house remained in the Richards family until 1977 when it was sold by the estate of Ednamay Richards. Michael and Mildred Garroway owned the property from 1977 until 1983. Michael Garroway served on the town school committee. In 1983 the property was sold to Joan Creamer.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass.

Reading, Directories, various years.

Reading 350<sup>th</sup> Book Committee. *At Wood End – Reading, Massachusetts 1644-1994, A Pictorial History*, 1994.

Town of Reading. List of Persons Twenty Years of Age and Over. Compiled by the Board of Registrars, Reading, Massachusetts, 1907-1979. (No women listed until 1924).

Town of Reading. Valuation of Real and Personal Estates, various dates.

Town of Reading, Water Department Records, 1891-present.

U.S. Census, 1930.

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

Community      Property Address  
READING      153 BANCROFT AVENUE

Area(s)      Form No.

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## 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     Lisa Mausolf    

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

Constructed in 1922, the house at 153 Bancroft Avenue is a good example of the Colonial Revival-inspired gambrel cottages which found widespread popularity in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The property is potentially eligible for the National Register as an amendment to the 1984 Reading Multiple Resource Area under Criteria A and C, for its associations with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century development of Reading and as a good example of a variation on the Colonial Revival style.