

FORM B – BUILDING

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

20/70	Reading		392
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town: Reading

Place: (*neighborhood or village*)

Photograph



Address: 17 Longview Road

Historic Name: Bessie Long McLane House

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: 1926

Source: water records, valuation records

Style/Form: Tudor Revival

Architect/Builder: George Ernest Robinson

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: stone, stucco, wood

Roof: slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*): none

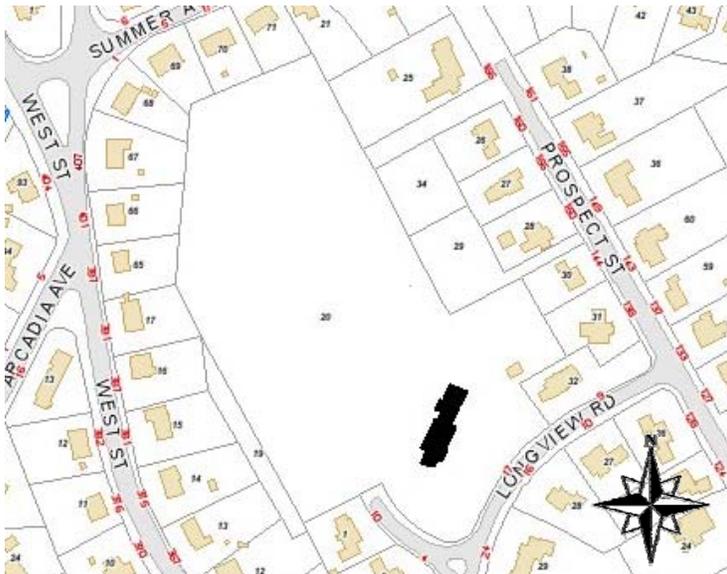
Condition: good

Moved: no | x | yes | | **Date** _____

Acreage: 6.52 acres

Setting: mixed residential

Topographic or Assessor's Map



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Reading Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): December 2009

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INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

READING

17 Longview Road

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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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 Tudor Revival house at 17 Longview Road is one of Reading's most impressive homes. The 2½-story dwelling displays an irregular massing consisting of a side-gabled center structure from which other appendages project, including an offcenter, gable and lower side-gable wings. Ashlar stone is the principal wall material but there are also areas of stucco cladding with wooden trim and some decorative half-timbering. The steeply-pitched gable roof slopes are covered with rough slate shingles and there are decorative shed and hip-roofed dormers as well as a stone chimney crowned by decorative chimney pots, copper gutters and ornate copper downspouts. The principal entry is sheltered by an overhanging front porch supported by simple bowed wooden posts. The windows consist of metal casements which may be in pairs or grouped into strings of three or more with transoms. Attached at the northeast end of the house is a garage.

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.

This stone manor was completed for Miss Bessie Long McLane (1878-?) in 1926 (local water records indicate that the water was connected on July 23, 1926). Bessie was the daughter of Jared and Alice McLane of North Reading and apparently inherited a large amount of money upon her parents' deaths that enabled her to build this house. (Jared and Alice also had another daughter, Lelia, who was married to Foster Batchelder of North Reading.)

Jared Brown McLane (1853-1917) came to this country from Nova Scotia in 1872. In 1888 he started the McLane Wagon Works in North Reading. In time this became the dominant manufacturing establishment in that town and employed about fifty workers. The company's production included a full line of commercial wagons and in later years, automobile bodies. He was a director of the First National Bank of Reading, active in North Reading town affairs, a member of the Good Fellowship Club of Reading, and was elected to the General Court in 1914 to represent a district which included North Reading, Reading, Woburn, Burlington and Wilmington.

Bessie McLane traveled extensively in Europe and this house is said to be a one-third scale replica of a "cottage" in the Cotswald District of England. It took two years to complete construction. The building contractor was Harold Currell or Aurell? The roof slate reportedly was imported from England. The iron hinges on the garage are six feet tall and were said to have been made by Miss McLane's father, a blacksmith in North Reading (*At Wood End: 44*). After building her house, Miss McLane put advertisements in the local newspaper to sell other house lots on Longview Road (see *Chronicle*, April 26, 1929). These included what became 10, 16, and 24 Longview Road.

An October 5, 1945 article in the *Chronicle* provides additional information concerning the house:

The large, English manor type building has a commanding view from the top of Longview Hill. It has for several years been a showplace and during its building Miss McLane paid personal attention to many details that make the house unusual in construction and an authentic reproduction of the old English residences. The grounds were carefully laid out with special attention given to lawns and shrubbery.

On her trip around the world Miss McLane acquired many pieces of furniture and art work typical of countries visited and these were used in furnishing the house, separate rooms being done in different national themes.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

READING

17 Longview Road

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Miss McLane continued to own the house until 1945 when it was sold to Stanley and Barbara Cross of Melrose. Mr. Cross was the district manager of the Newberry stores. At the time, Miss McLane moved to 94 Salem Street and she continued to live there until at least 1953. In 1982 Stanley Cross sold the property at 17 Longview Road to Robert and Ellen Cagnina (Book 14550, Page 544).

The architect for the house was George Ernest Robinson of Boston. Robinson was best known for his fire station designs and among his works were stations in Amesbury, Arlington, Gloucester, Mansfield, and Quincy. Other designs included the Jeremiah Burke High School in Boston and the Martin Millmore Public School in Boston. This is his only known design for a residence (MACRIS database).

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

American Historical Company. *American Biography: A New Cyclopedia, vol. 5*. New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1919: p. 256-7. [Information on Jared McLane].

Barclay, Miriam. Notes on 17 Longview Road. [Reading Historical Commission archives].

Massachusetts Historical Commission, MACRIS database.

Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass.

Reading Chronicle, April 26, 1929; October 5, 1945.

Reading 350th Book Committee. *At Wood End – Reading, Massachusetts 1644-1994, A Pictorial History*, 1994, p. 44.

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 17 LONGVIEW ROAD

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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 1926, the Bessie McLane House at 17 Longview Road is one of Reading's most impressive domestic designs and was based on an English Manor. Constructed of stone with stucco and half-timbered accents, the house is a large and well-preserved example of the Tudor Revival style, designed by Boston architect George Ernest Robinson. The house is set in a neighborhood of impressive homes of the same period representing various styles, erected by some of Reading's most prosperous early 20th century citizens. This house was constructed for Miss Bessie McLane, a single woman with considerable family wealth who traveled the world and found inspiration for the design of her home. The property is potentially eligible for the National Register for its associations with the early 20th century development of Reading and as a good example of a variation on the Tudor/Colonial Revival mode.