

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

21/136	Reading		420
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## Photograph



**Town:** Reading

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

**Address:** 52 Mt. Vernon Street

**Historic Name:** Edwin C. Hanscom Duplex

**Uses:** Present: residential

Original: residential

**Date of Construction:** 1910

**Source:** water department records

**Style/Form:** Queen Anne/Colonial Revival

**Architect/Builder:** Edwin C. Hanscom

## Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete block

Wall/Trim: concrete block

Roof: asphalt shingle

## Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

none

## Major Alterations (*with dates*):

date unknown – new windows, porch balustrade

**Condition:** good

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

**Acreage:** 0.25 acre

**Setting:** mixed residential neighborhood

## 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

52 Mt. Vernon Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

420

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 duplex at 52 Mt. Vernon Street is an early 20<sup>th</sup> century hip roofed flat, notable for its unusual concrete block construction. The façade is divided into two sections – a two-story, three-sided bay to the east and a single-story porch with double entrances to the west. The building utilizes a variety of concrete block forms including rusticated blocks for much of the body, smooth blocks or bricks for the bay window and ribbed cylindrical porch supports, also of concrete. The windows on the bay window projection have raised sills and lintels. The house retains a number of original doors including one with oval glass and a glass-and-panel. The predominant window is a modern 6/1 sash. There are also several Queen Anne style windows on the lesser elevations. The railing on top of the front porch appears to be new. The house is twice as long as it is wide. The long side elevations are broken only by a bay window on the east side. Punctuating the roof above is a hip dormer.

## 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 town water records, this duplex (originally 36 Mt. Vernon Street) was originally owned by Edwin C. Hanscom and was built in 1910. On January 20, 1911, the *Chronicle* reported that “a car of cement came this week for E. C. Hanscom. He will make concrete blocks with it, utilizing the time when his contracting business is dull, and will build another house eventually”. It is not clear if this is a reference to the construction of 54 Mt. Vernon Street or an indication that Hanscom constructed another house after. Hanscom was a teamster and contractor who at the time lived at what was then 40 Mt. Vernon Street (now 58, no longer extant).

On January 12, 1917, Hanscom purchased a small block advertisement in the *Chronicle* which read “Two-flat Cement Block House - Six and seven rooms, for sale. All improvements. Both flats let. E.C. Hanscom, 36 Mt. Vernon St., Reading”. He apparently sold the building to Annie Kelsey. The 1920 Census indicates that Mrs. Kelsey, a 61 year old widow, owned the building and was living in one unit with her daughter Ethel. The other apartment was rented to Harry Cromwell, a clothing manufacturer, and his family. Mrs. Kelsey still owned the building in 1936.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass.

*Reading Chronicle*, January 20, 1911.

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, 1920-1930.

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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Community      Property Address  
READING      52 MT. VERNON STREET

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 1910, the house at 52 Mt. Vernon Street is a unique early 20<sup>th</sup> century duplex, constructed of rusticated concrete blocks and embellished by a combination of Queen Anne and Colonial Revival features. The house is of interest for its associations with local teamster and real estate developer Edwin C. Hanscom. 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 unique example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century construction.