

FORM B – BUILDING

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

16/178	Reading		430
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town: Reading

Place: (*neighborhood or village*)

Photograph



Address: 61-63 Prescott Street

Historic Name: Harry F. Harmon Duplex

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: 1917

Source: water department records

Style/Form: Craftsman duplex

Architect/Builder: Harry F. Harmon, builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete block

Wall/Trim: wood shingle

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

shed

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

date unknown – new windows

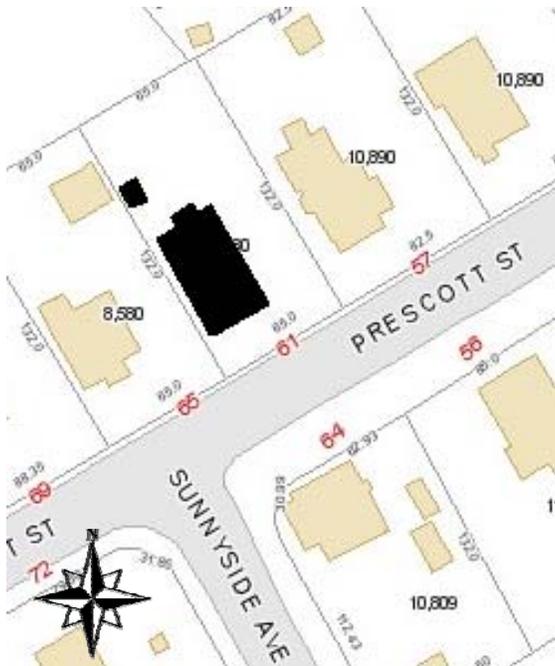
Condition: good

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

Acreage: 0.20 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

61-63 Prescott Street

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 building at 61-63 Prescott Street is a well-preserved, Craftsman-style, two-family house dating to the early 20th century. The house was designed with two flats, each comprising an entire floor, front to back. Set on a rusticated concrete block foundation, the 2½-story dwelling is sheathed in wood shingles and capped by a hip roof which extends to shelter the two-story front porch. The main roof as well as the hip dormers and bay window on the west wall all display exposed rafter tails, characteristic of the Craftsman style. The front porch is two bays wide, with distinctive supports consisting of pairs of wooden posts spanned by lattice work panels topped by triangles. The posts are spanned by stick balusters. There are side-by-side entries on the first floor of the façade. The original double-hung windows appear to have been removed and replaced with double-hung 6/1 sash set into the original molded surrounds. Lighting the stairhall on the west wall is a small window with three bolder vertical lights in the upper half and a single light lower sash. It is likely that the original windows were more reminiscent of this design.

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 31-33 Prescott Street) was constructed for (and probably by) Harry F. Harmon in 1917. The lots were originally laid out in 1845 on the land of Joshua Prescott but this land remained unbuilt upon until the 20th century. The water was turned on March 31, 1917. It is unlikely that Harmon ever lived here. The 1930 Census indicates that he was living elsewhere in Reading and lists his occupation as housebuilder. In 1918 the two units were rented to Carl Smith, a druggist at Willis Drug Store, and his wife Beatrice and Albert Carpenter, a salesman, who lived here with his wife Mabel.

By 1926 Chester Buck owned the building. The 1930 Census indicates that he lived in the unit at 33 Prescott with his wife Malvina, son Chester and daughter Malvina. His occupation is listed as sales manager of an electric supply company. The other apartment, 31 Prescott Street, was occupied in 1930 by William and Greta Bitzer. Two Doyon families occupied the building in the mid 1950s. Maurice Doyon founded Doyon's TV and Appliance Company. In 1962 the two units were occupied by Raymond and Helen Lavoie and Raymond and Anna Hebert.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass.

Reading Directories, various years.

Reading 350th 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.

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

Community Property Address
READING 61-63 PRESCOTT STREET

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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 1917, the house at 61-63 Prescott Street is a unique early 20th century duplex in the Craftsman style, constructed of rusticated concrete blocks and wood shingles with character-defining features including hip dormers, exposed rafter tails and a distinctive two-tier porch. 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 early 20th century residential development in Reading and as a unique example of the Craftsman style and the variety of housing stock being constructed in town during this period.