

FORM B – BUILDING

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

21/100	Reading	D	365
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town: Reading

Place: (*neighborhood or village*)

Photograph



Address: 14 Grand Street

Historic Name: Gray-DeCoster House

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: 1908

Source: water department records

Style/Form: Queen Anne

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: rubble

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard, wood shingle

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

modern garage (2003)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Date unknown? – new windows, enclosure of front porch, sunburst

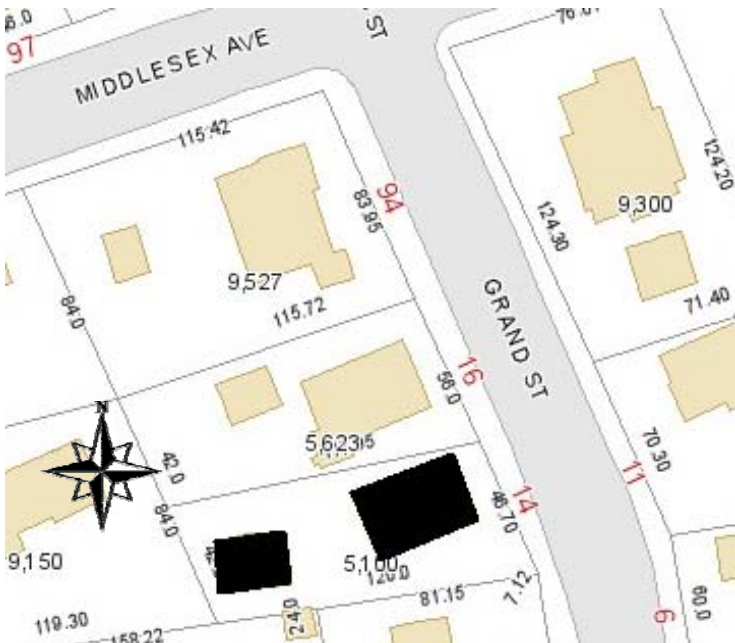
Condition: good

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

Acreage: 0.12 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

14 Grand Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

D

365

___ 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 14 Grand Street is an interesting variation on the gambrel cottage and in this case displays a cross gambrel plan. It is set on a rubble foundation and sheathed in wood shingles. The façade is fronted by a porch set on a stone base with Doric columns and paneled lower walls. At some point it was enclosed by windows. Resting on the porch is a three-sided bay window. Alterations include the replacement of the original windows with modern 1/1 sash.

Behind the house is a gambrel front garage constructed in 2003.

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 local water records, this house (originally 2 Grand Street) was constructed in 1908 for Mrs. Lottie Gray, wife of William. The water was turned on Dec. 9, 1908. The 1910 Census indicates that the house was occupied by William, then 51, Lottie, 39, and their three children. Born in England, William was employed as a conductor and operator on the street railway for nearly 35 years and was active in various fraternal organizations. The Grays moved to Melrose Highlands about 1920.

By 1920 what is now 14 Grand Street had been purchased by Algernon DeCoster who was born in Maine and worked on the Railroad. He lived here with his wife Helen, son Elmer, and two lodgers. The property remained in the family until 1984 when Elmer sold it to Kenneth and Alice Nielsen.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass. (Plan Book 178, Page 46 – 1909)

Reading Chronicle, Oct. 6, 1939 [obituary of William E. Gray].

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, 1910, 1920, 1930.