

FORM B - BUILDING

5093

REA. 2108

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02116

Assessor's Number 54-19A	USGS Quad READING	Area(s)	Form Number 268
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Reading

(neighborhood or village) RD 2

25 Haven Street

Name Reading Municipal Light Department

Present Town offices

Original Municipal Light Dept. Offices

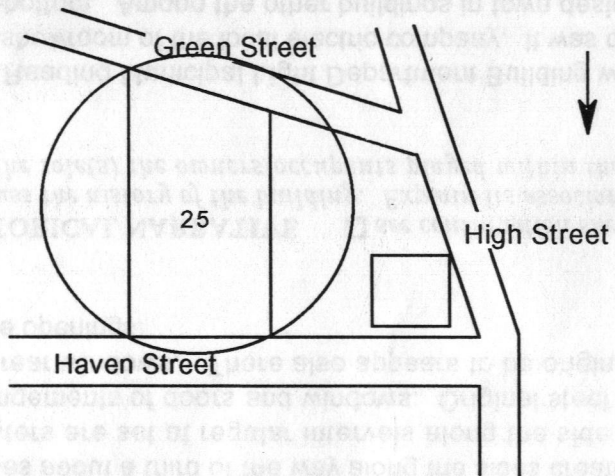
Construction 1939

Reading Town Report, 1939

Form Art Deco

Architect/Builder George H. Sidebottom/Concrete Construction Company

Material:



Foundation Concrete

Wall/Trim Brick/Concrete

Roof Tar & gravel

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures None

Major Alterations (with dates) Storefront windows replaced by brick infill (ca. 1970s or 1980s)

Condition Good

Moved no yes Date _____

Acres approximately 18,000 square feet

Setting Set close to street in downtown commercial area. A parking lot is located to the east and open space to the west.

Recorded by Leslie Donovan/Christine Beard

Organization _____

Date (month/year) October, 1994

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION *see continuation sheet*

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

The Reading Municipal Light Department building is a single-story commercial building designed in the Art Deco style. Rising from a concrete foundation, the building is enclosed by a flat roof framed by a low brick parapet. The building occupies most of its lot and extends from the sidewalk along Haven Street through to the Green Street sidewalk. The facade has been altered significantly with the removal of original display windows and the installation of brick infill. Surviving elements of the original Art Deco design include the entry transom, six light fixtures and ribbed sheet metal in the form of hood molds. In the former location of the neon sign, along the parapet, is a recessed blind brick panel. The rear and side elevations are largely unornamented with the exception of blind recessed brick panels along the parapet. The parapet ceases about a third of the way along the sides creating stepped side elevations. Wide brick pilasters are set at regular intervals along the side elevations where there are irregular arrangements of doors and windows. Original steel multi-pane sash remain in most of the side and rear windows. There also appears to be original or early steel storm windows in a number of the openings.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE *see continuation sheet*

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.

The Reading Municipal Light Department Building was constructed in 1939 to house the offices and showroom of the local electric company. It was designed by Reading architect George H. Sidebottom. Among the other buildings in town designed by Sidebottom are the Pearl Street School, Church of the Good Shepherd, Town Garage (demolished), and Joshua Eaton School. The town's first power plant was constructed in 1894 on Ash Street and provided power for 47 street lights and 1,000 incandescent lamps. In the early twentieth century, Reading began providing electricity to the towns of Lynnfield, North Reading, and Wilmington. The Light Department offices were first located in the Masonic block at the intersection of Main and Haven Streets. They relocated a number of times between 1913 and 1939. With an increase in customers through the early twentieth century, the capacity of the Ash Street plant was expanded but by 1925 generating equipment was insufficient to carry the peak load. The Light Company began purchasing current from the Boston Edison Company. Very recently the Light Department moved to larger quarters at 230 Ash Street.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES *see continuation sheet*

Reading Town Report, 1939.

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

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