

FORM B – BUILDING

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

26/128	Reading		383
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town: Reading

Place: (*neighborhood or village*)

Photograph



Address: 15 Intervale Terrace

Historic Name: Frank A. Bessom House

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: 1899

Source: water department records

Style/Form: Colonial Revival Gambrel Cottage

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood shingle, wood clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Condition: good

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

Acreage: 0.20 acre

Setting: mixed residential street near Rt. 129

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

15 Intervale Terrace

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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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 house at 15 Intervale Terrace is a good example of a Colonial Revival cottage with intersecting gambrel roofs. It is set on a stone foundation and features contrasting clapboards (on the first floor) with wood shingles filling the areas above. The façade is spanned by a projecting porch that is two bays wide, supported by pairs of Doric columns that rest on paneled bases. The areas between the supports are spanned by a turned spindle balustrade; the entry to the porch is from the front of the west (side) elevation. The sidehall entry retains a period panel-and-glass door. Adjacent to the entrance is a three-sided bay window. The second floor of the façade is punctuated by a tripartite set of windows capped by a single entablature. These windows contain 1/1 replacement sash. Most of the other windows retain 2/1 sash. Another three-sided bay window is located on the west side and there is a hip-roofed dormer between the gambrels.

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 house (originally 7 Intervale Terrace) was constructed for prominent local businessman Frank A. Bessom in 1899. In the early 20th century Bessom served as the town's assistant postmaster and was also co-owner of the Edgerley & Bessom funeral home, established in 1899. Later he also was the proprietor of a gentleman's furnishings store on Haven Street. Bessom was active in local real estate and built several houses on Intervale Terrace in the so-called Elmdale or Slab City section of Reading, including what are now 27 and 39 Intervale Terrace. On September 29, 1911, the *Chronicle* reported that Bessom's new house, "the third he has built at Intervale Terrace is taking shape" and was to be rented to Mr. Baker, advertisement man on the Boston Record. The paper noted "Mr. Bessom is doing good work in building up the Elmdale section of town".

Directories and Census records confirm that what is now 15 Intervale Terrace was occupied by Bessom himself. The 1920 Census indicates that Bessom was then 47, living here with his wife Alice and mother-in-law, Mary Rand. Frank Bessom is last listed at this address in 1939. By 1941 he was living at 27 Grove Street and Harold and Ada Zitzow were occupying 15 Intervale. The Zitzows ran the "Naborhood" Store which burned in 1970 (the present site of P & S Variety at 287 Lowell St.).

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass.

Reading Chronicle, Feb. 24, 1911; Sept. 29, 1911; Feb. 5, 1915; May 25, 1951.

Reading Directories, various years.

Reading 350th Book Committee. *At Wood End – Reading, Massachusetts 1644-1994, A Pictorial History*, 1994: 130

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

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Community Property Address
READING 15 INTERVALE TERRACE

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 1899, the house at 15 Intervale Terrace is a good example of a late 19th century Colonial Revival/Shingle Style cottage with intersecting gambrel roofs. It combines rubble, wood shingles and clapboards with a porch which is supported by pairs of Doric columns. 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 20th century development of Reading and as a good example of the Colonial Revival/Shingle Style.