

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



Topographic or Assessor's Map



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf
Organization: Reading Historical Commission
Date (month/year): December 2009

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

15/263	Reading		394
--------	---------	--	-----

Town: Reading
Place: (neighborhood or village)

Address: 54 Longview Road
Historic Name: Norman L. Duncan House
Uses: Present: residential
Original: residential

Date of Construction: 1935
Source: water records, valuation records
Style/Form: Contemporary (alt.)
Architect/Builder: Samuel Glaser

Exterior Material:
Foundation: concrete
Wall/Trim: vertical wood boards (over stucco?)
Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (with dates):
1975 – renovations and additions; vertical board siding

Condition: fair (due to alteration)
Moved: no | x | yes | | **Date** _____
Acreage: 0.30 acre
Setting: mixed residential

RECEIVED
AUG 20 2010
MASS. HIST. COMM.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

READING

54 Longview Road

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	394
--	-----

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.

Although later altered, the house at 54 Longview Road is notable as one of Reading's earliest International Style/Contemporary dwellings, designed by prominent architect Samuel Glaser. As originally constructed, the two-story building featured a stucco finish on cinder concrete block. Concrete was used for the roof and floor slabs and joists and a basement recreation room was executed in colored concrete. Typical of its style, the house was designed with clean straight lines and incorporated a roof deck and a curving projection which sheltered the front entrance.

In 1975 extensive renovations and additions were completed including the installation of a vertical board exterior and numerous shed-roofed projections where previously there had been flat roof lines. Other alterations included a large rear addition.

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.

This house was constructed for Norman L. Duncan in 1935. It was designed by Boston architect Samuel Glaser at a cost of \$9,000. Duncan (1891-May 10, 1957) was a newspaper editor. He had reportedly seen a Frank Lloyd Wright house at the World's Fair and was inspired to build a contemporary home. The house was designed with every modern convenience, including air conditioning. The house, including photograph and floor plans was published in the August 1936 edition of *American Architect and Architecture*. Ellen Duncan, Norman's widow, was still living here in 1959.

Samuel Glaser (1902-1983) was an innovative Boston architect who was credited with being the first architect to use airspace over highways for construction, as in his design for the Star Market over the Massachusetts Turnpike in Newtonville, Massachusetts. Among Glaser's other works were the John F. Kennedy Federal Building in Boston (1966) and the American Airlines hangar at Logan airport. Glaser graduated from MIT and established an architectural firm in 1930 with deCastro and Vitols. In addition to the Duncan House, Glaser's other early residential commissions included 79 Woodchester Drive in Newton (1930), 34 Kingswood Road in Newton (1935), the Gibbs-Katz House in Brookline (1936), the Edward Melnick House in Brookline (1937), the Samuel Shaine House in Springfield (1937), and 189 Englewood Drive in Longmeadow (1941). He was also the architect for the Cabot School in Newton (1929), U.S. Post Office in Dedham (1934), Temple Kehillath Israel in Brookline, the Natick Research and Development Laboratories and several buildings at the BOMARC Missile Facility in Sandwich. Glaser retired in 1975 and died in 1983.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

READING

54 Longview Road

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	394
--	-----

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

An Invitation to Reading, "An Ideal Home Town", c.1940 Pamphlet. [Reading Historical Commission archives].

"House of N.L. Duncan, Reading, Massachusetts. Samuel Glaser, Architect". *American Architect and Architecture*, August 1936, p. 46.

Massachusetts Historical Commission, MACRIS database.

Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass.

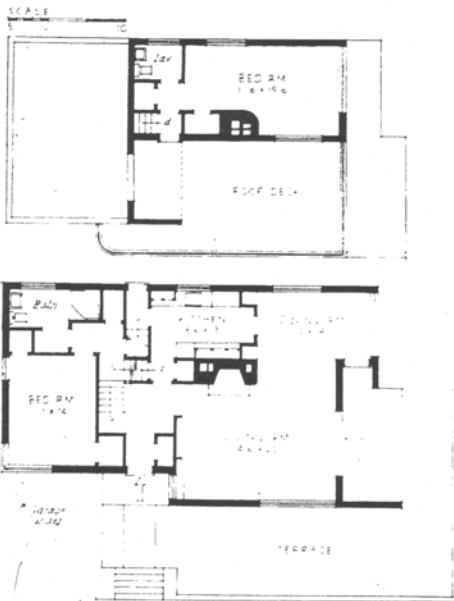
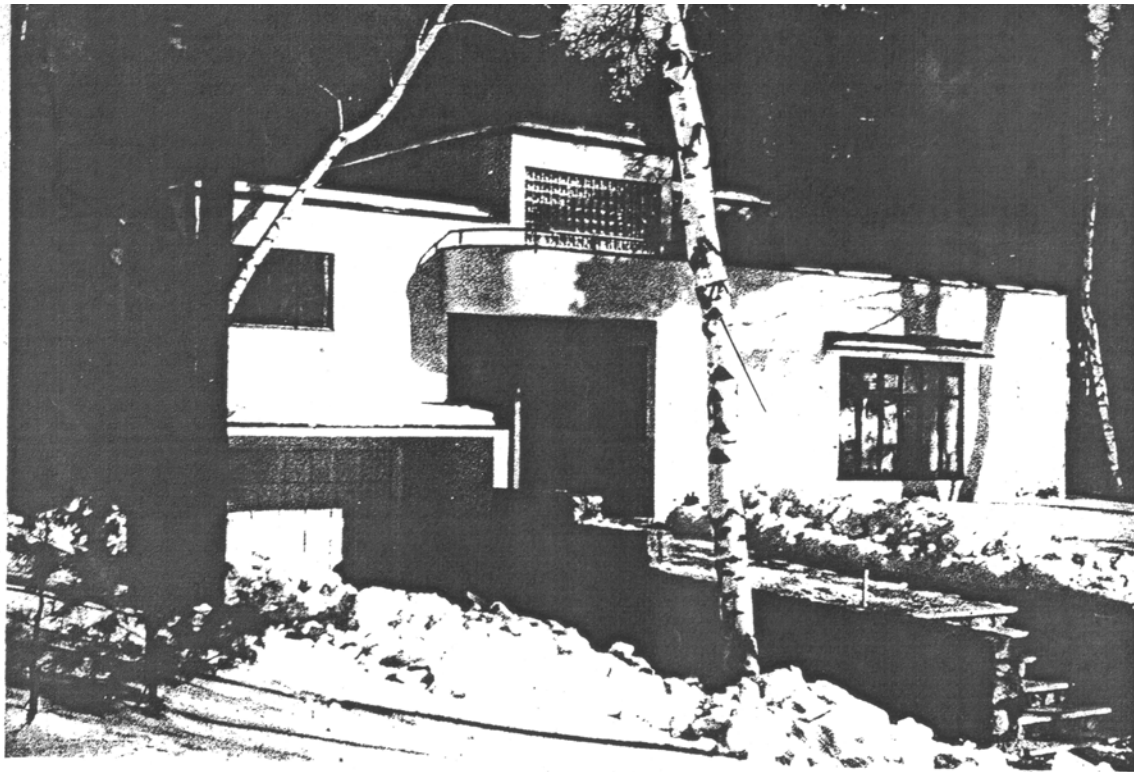
New York Times, August 13, 1983 [obituary of Samuel Glaser].

Reading 350th Book Committee. *At Wood End – Reading, Massachusetts 1644-1994, A Pictorial History*, 1994, p. 81.

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.



Stucco finish on cinder concrete block has the precise surface quality required for modern architecture (above). Concrete is used for roof and floor slabs, and joists. A basement recreation room is executed in colored concrete. Cost \$9,000 in 1935

Stucco and brick, over frame construction, combine to lend textural interest to this California "Colonial" house (opposite page). Roof is hand split red cedar shingles. Bookcases in the deep window reveals of the living room are interesting

HOUSE OF N. L. DUNCAN, READING, MASSACHUSETTS. SAMUEL GLASER, ARCHITECT

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

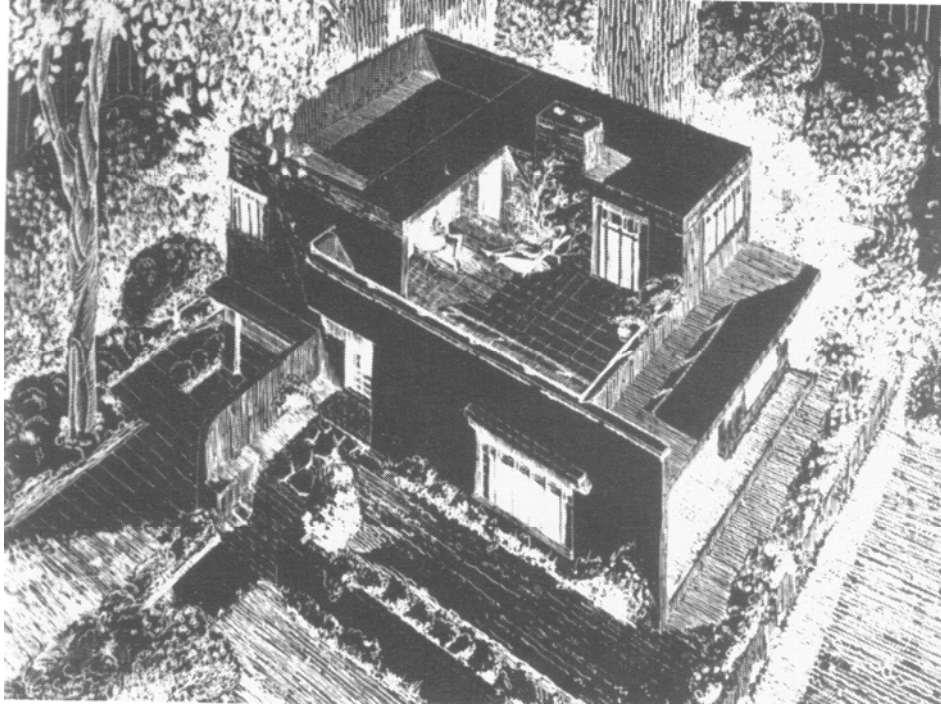
READING

54 Longview Road

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	394
--	-----



Source: *At Wood End*, p. 45.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

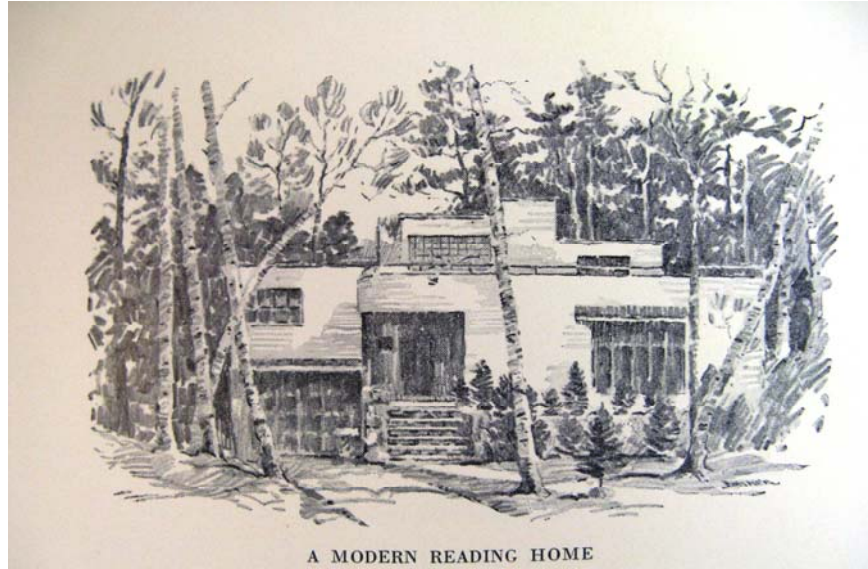
READING

54 Longview Road

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	394
--	-----



Source: *An Invitation to Reading, "An Ideal Home Town"*, c.1940s Pamphlet.