

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

22/10	Reading		408
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

**Town:** Reading

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*) Downtown

## Photograph



**Address:** 666 Main Street

**Historic Name:** Richmond Block

**Uses:** Present: commercial

Original: commercial

**Date of Construction:** 1913

**Source:** *At Wood End*, p. 156

**Style/Form:** Commercial Eclectic

**Architect/Builder:** Henry R. Johnson, builder

### Exterior Material:

Foundation:

Wall/Trim: concrete

Roof: tar & gravel

### Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

none

### Major Alterations (*with dates*):

date unknown – alterations to storefronts, rear addition

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no | x | yes | | **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acreage:** 0.35 acre

**Setting:** mixed downtown area

## Topographic or Assessor's Map



**Recorded by:** Lisa Mausolf

**Organization:** Reading Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): December 2009

**RECEIVED**  
**AUG 20 2010**  
 MASS. HIST. COMM.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

READING

666 Main Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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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.*

Constructed as a three store block in 1913, the Richmond Block is a one-story concrete building with a stuccoed exterior. A small stepped parapet crowns the smaller shop to the south with a longer stepped, shared parapet marking the two storefronts to the north. In both cases the parapet is used to disguise the flat roof from the street. The three storefronts have all seen multiple alterations. That to the south displays plate glass windows in aluminum frames with some kind of metal panels below the windows. The entrance to #672 is recessed to the north of the windows. The storefronts at 676 and 680 share a recess with separate doors. The middle storefront has wooden panels under the display windows while the lesser area under the northernmost display windows is stuccoed. The long Woburn Street elevation has two additional window areas toward Main Street. The western half of the building is a later 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.*

Dr. Ernest Richmond was one of a succession of physicians who occupied the old Davis-Perkins house at the corner of Woburn Street and Main Street. Dr. Richmond came to Reading and bought the house in 1899. He married Bessie Dewey, the daughter of a Boston merchant and the couple lived in the house for several years. In 1913 the Davis-Perkins House was moved around the corner to 18-20 Woburn Street (destroyed by fire c.2005). The present commercial block was built at the corner of Main and Woburn Streets by the Richmonds that same year. On June 6, 1913, the *Reading Chronicle* reported the construction progress. It was noted that the block "will rest on a solid foundation" as ledge had to be blasted out. Henry R. Johnson of Reading was the builder/contractor. At the time of the 1914 Town valuation, the property was assessed at \$10,000.

The south end of the Richmond Block was initially occupied by a candy shop called the Reading Spa under the ownership of Moses & Scott. On July 18, 1914 the business was purchased by Frank and Tillie Torre (renamed Torre's in the 1930s but still known by that name after the Torres sold the business in 1954). The shop continued to sell ice cream and was a popular social center through the 1960s. The middle shop contained Fred F. Smith's grocery store from 1913 until 1935 when he moved across the Square to Harnden Street. The space later became the Economy Grocery Store (also known as Ecco Grocery). The north store was at one time occupied by the Thorndike haberdashery but the space was later absorbed by the Economy store. In 1941 the Economy Store became the Stop & Shop supermarket which remained here until 1955. In the late 1940s and 1950s the property was owned by Aaron Levin.

The space which had been Torre's was later occupied by several dry cleaning establishments and the Golden Dragon restaurant beginning in 1981. It now contains Chinatown Café. After 1955 the former Stop and Shop supermarket was again divided into two shops. The southern portion was home to The Children's Shop which closed in 1992. This space was later occupied by Papa Gino's and is now leased by The Wine Shop. The northern space was occupied by Richards Apparel, the Elkins shoe store and later a dry cleaner. Today, it contains the Venetian Moon Restaurant.

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Adams, Virginia and Roberta Sullivan. *Around The Square*. Reading Historical Commission, 2005.

*Reading Chronicle*, June 6, 1913; June 20, 1930.

Reading 350<sup>th</sup> Book Committee. *At Wood End – Reading, Massachusetts 1644-1994, A Pictorial History*, 1994.



Source: *Around the Square*