

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

17/162	Reading		402
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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:** 531 Main Street (at Chapin Avenue)

**Historic Name:** Davis Service Station/Reading Chronicle

**Uses:** Present: commercial

Original: gas station

**Date of Construction:** 1929

**Source:** *Chronicle*, Sept. 6, 1929; April 15, 1978

**Style/Form:** Commercial (altered)

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

### Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: concrete, vinyl

Roof: asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**  
none

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

1932 – conversion to newspaper office, alt. to fenestration date unknown – rear addition

**Condition:** good

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

**Acreage:** 0.13 acre

**Setting:** mixed downtown area

## Topographic or Assessor's Map



**Recorded by:** Lisa Mausolf

**Organization:** Reading Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): April 2010

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

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

READING

531 Main Street

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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 building at 531 Main Street is a former gasoline service station, converted for use as a newspaper office in 1932. The structure consists of a single-story concrete structure, capped by a hip roof, set back from Main Street with a flat-roofed garage section to the rear. The main entrance contains a modern glass and panel door and is flanked by two sets of multi-light casement windows, replacing the original plate glass windows. What was originally an open bay to the north has been enclosed and has double-hung 6/1 windows. With the exception of a single doorway, the former lower level openings facing Chapin Avenue have all been filled with vinyl siding.

## 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 building was originally constructed in 1929 to house George W. Davis's Super Service Pan-Am Gas and Motor Oils Station. The station featured high pressure greasing and an "auto laundry". The auto service area was located behind the building on Chapin Avenue and was originally just half its present size. A photograph of the new facility was published in the Reading Chronicle on September 6, 1929. It opened to the public the following day.

On April 22, 1932 the Reading Chronicle moved to this building from its old offices on the second floor of the Masonic block on Main and Haven Streets. When the building was remodeled to house the newspaper, the grease rack became a storage area and the grease pit was used for lead casing machines. When the newspaper converted to offset production, the grease pit became a computer room. Later, the grease rack was renovated for use as the editor's office. The building is still used by the Daily Times Chronicle today.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

*Reading Chronicle*, June 7, 1929; Sept. 6, 1929; April 15, 1978

Reading Public Library, NOBLE Digital Archive.

Reading 350<sup>th</sup> Book Committee. *At Wood End – Reading, Massachusetts 1644-1994, A Pictorial History*, 1994, p. 142-3.

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Source: *Reading Chronicle*, Sept. 6, 1929

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Source: Reading Public Library

