

FORM B -BUILDING

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard

Assessor' number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

Map: 24 Parcel:18

Reading

140

town: North Reading, MA

Place (neighborhood or village) N/A

Address 21 Winter Street

Historic Name Roy E. Richardson's Garage and Store

Use: Present Garage/ Gas truck repair

Original Garage / store / gas station

Date of Construction 1924

Source Current owner

Style/Form Utilitarian /irregular

Architect/Builder Undetermined

Exterior Material

Foundation Field stone

Wall Clapboards

Roof Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures A free standing garage storage facility is located on the north side of the property.

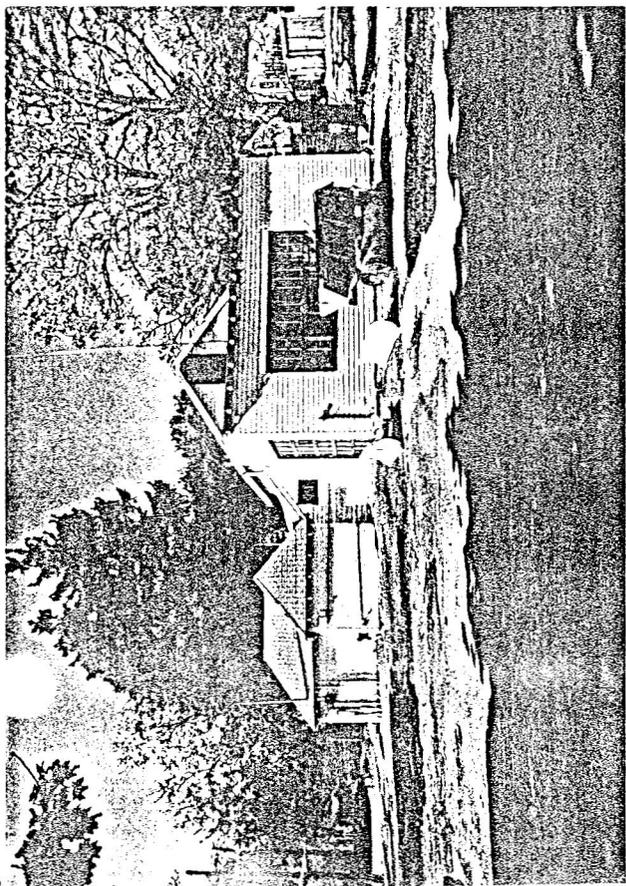
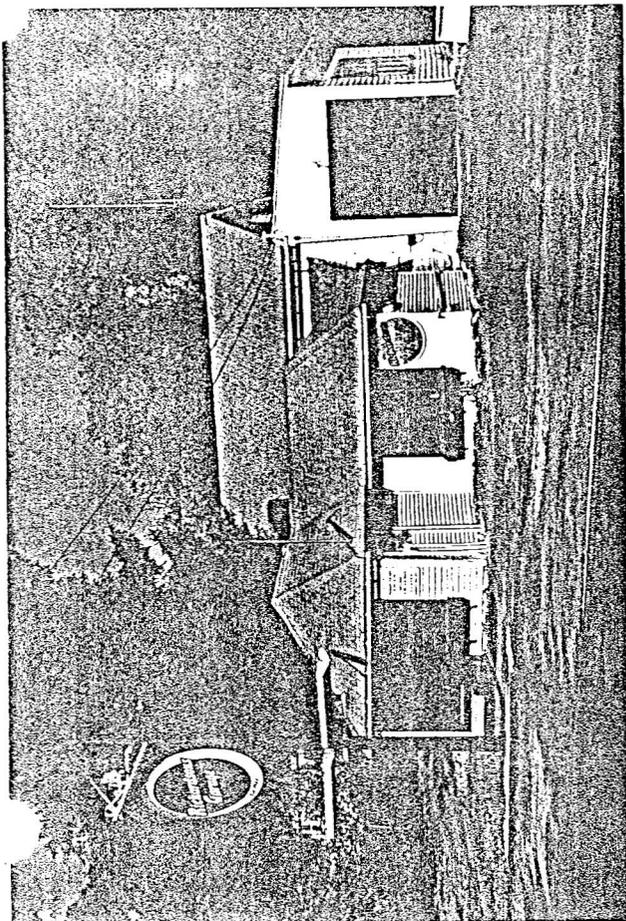
Major Alterations (with dates) Undetermined

Condition Good

Moved yes no

Acreage Part of .33 acres

Setting Situated to southeast of mid nineteenth century farm house and across the street from modern suburban houses.



BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION *see continuation sheet*

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

Architecturally, 21 Winter Street is of interest as a remarkably intact, mid-1920s commercial building associated with the early Automobile Age in North Reading and Middlesex County. Built to house a garage, store, and gas station, this utilitarian building is characterized by an irregular complex configuration of structural components. Stylistically, the exposed roof rafters and hip roofed office/store components allude to the Craftsman style. Despite the absence of vintage gas pumps, this building's roadside location, tree shaded lot and asymmetrical massing presents an image reminiscent of the types of subject matter that appears in the 1930s and 1940s paintings of Edward Hopper and the photographs of Walker Evans. By all accounts commercial archaeologists from around the country have sought out Richardson's Garage to study and photograph.

Sheathed with wood clapboards, 21 Winter Street's four components are one to one-and-one-half stories in height. Overlooking the former drive-in/gas pumps area is an L-shaped component that evidently was built to house the gas station office and small convenience store. This component rises a single story from a stone (?) foundation to an intersecting hip roof which is sheathed with asphalt shingles. Its main facade exhibits a front door and a large double window containing 2/2 wood sash. The eastern segment of this L-shaped component's street facade is pierced by a double window containing 2/2 wood sash. The west wall of this component is pierced by a pair of windows. A one-story shed-roofed structural component links the office/store with a rectangular, gable roofed garage component which is the tallest segment of this building. Tall and wide garage doors are in evidence on the west side of the garage facility. Projecting from the east wall of the garage is a second, one-story rectangular

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.

As a mid-1920s example of a commercial building associated with the early Automobile Age, 21 Winter Street ranks among the most important cultural resources in North Reading. Owned and operated by the fourth generation of the Roy E. Richardson family, this building was built in 1924 to house a garage, store and gas station. 21 Winter Street's lot was carved from the Nichols farm (see MHC Form B on 25 Winter Street). The Nichols farm house is still extant next door to the west. In 1924, Leslie Nichols, the grandson of Richard Nichols, sold an 1/8 of an acre lot to Roy E. Richardson. By 1930, Richardson's Winter Street holdings are listed as a garage and store valued at \$650 and gas tanks with an estimated worth of \$400 while the lot had a value of \$100. In 1931-32, the Richardson's business was listed as "auto supplies." The Richardson family purchased the old Nichols farm house at 25 Winter Street after 1930. By the 1950s, a buried tank with a capacity of 500 gallons of gas was accessed via a hand pump. Reportedly a machine shop operated on these premises at an unspecified date. By the mid 1960s the garage/ store and gas station was owned by bowling alley employee June W. Richardson and railroad clerk Elsdon Richardson. According to local historical commission member Patricia Romeo, gas for automobiles could be pumped here as late as the 1980s. The Richardsons presently operate 21 Winter Street as an auto and "gas truck" repair facility. A sign on the building reads "Heavy truck repair, Welding & Fabrication, Custom Accessories Installed; Lift Kits; Trailer Hitches, Specialty Sandblasting."

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES *see continuation sheet*

North Reading Maps/Atlases: 1795,1831,1857,1875,1889,1906;
Town of North Reading Street List, 1966
North Reading Directories (Wakefield): 1896-97;1905;1907;1911-12; 1919-20;1931-1932;1941
Valuation of Real and Personal Estates, Town of North Reading: 1870;1890;1910;1920;1930
Chester Liebs, Main Street to Miracle Mile
Interviews with Mr. Richardson and North Reading historical Comm. member Patricia Romeo

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

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

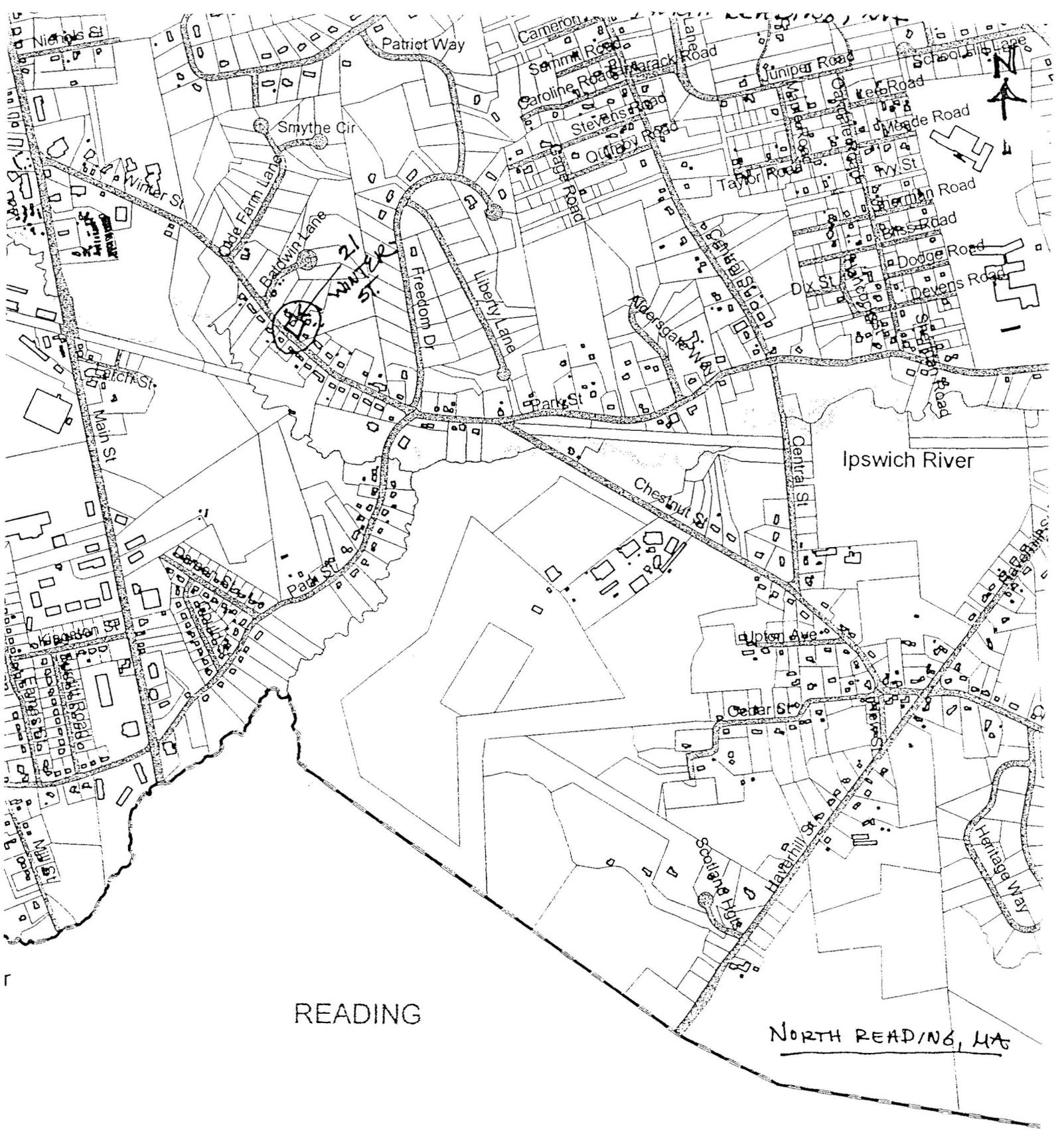
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125

Community: North Reading, MA	Form No:
Property Name: 21 Winter Street	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION continued

garage with multi-panel doors located on the south side of this component. A bank of four windows is located at the center of the second garage component's east wall. These windows contain 6/6 wood sash.



READING

NORTH READING, MA

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

Community
North Reading

Property Address
21 Winter Street

Area(s)

Form No.

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 Edward W. Gordon Preservation Consultant

Consultant

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here

Built in 1924, Richardson's Gas Station and Store is a rare surviving service station providing physical evidence of North Reading during the early automobile age. Further research may categorize the shop component to the west of the garage as an early version of highway convenience stores. This building links the town to the period of 1915 -1940, when the town witnessed the demise of electric trolley as well as railroad links with Salem, Lowell and Boston and other towns. As rail travel declined, roads were improved to accommodate automobiles, reaching the heretofore remote sections of the community. Automobile-accessible colonies of summer cottages sprang up around local ponds and water ways. Local farmers used the new and improved highways to haul their produce into Boston and Lowell by truck rather than horse and wagon. Operated by the same family for nearly eighty years, gas was pumped here as late as the 1980s and today it is operated as an automobile and "gas truck" repair facility. This gas station boasts a "following" among commercial archaeologists from all over the country who seek out this building as a touchstone for learning about the dawn of wide-spread automobile travel and ownership.