

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

10A 28

Georgetown

GEO.89

Town/City: Georgetown

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Elm Street Area

Photograph



View from NE

Address: 59 Elm Street

Historic Name: Horace E. & Mary Harriman House

Uses: Present: residence

Original: residence

Date of Construction: 1878

Source: Southern Essex County Registry of Deeds

Style/Form: Classical Revival

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: vinyl clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
Garage

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Vinyl siding added
Window replacement

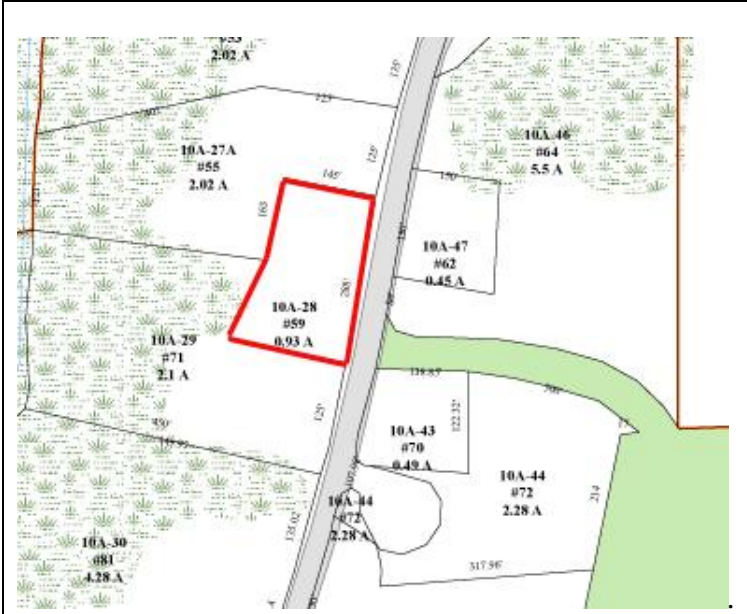
Condition: fair

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.93 acre

Setting: This property is on the west side of Elm Street and borders marshland at its western boundary. Elm Street is primarily a residential street.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Kathryn Grover and Neil Larson

Organization: Georgetown Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): January 2010

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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.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

The Horace E. & Mary Harriman House is a two-story wood frame single dwelling with vinyl clapboard siding and a front gable roof. It is situated at the north end of a shallow, rectangular one-acre lot, which was subdivided from the larger neighboring property (55 Elm St.) in 1878 when the house was built. The southern side of the lot is mowed; the west edge is wooded.

The two-bay gabled front façade of the house contains an entrance on the north side embellished with a flat hood supported by massive scrolled brackets. This feature, as well as the attenuated Classical corner and eave details, is common to late-19th-century domestic architecture in industrial towns in eastern Massachusetts. Each of the long side walls contain two window bays; those on the north side are set back where there are interior stairs. A one-story beveled-corner window is located at the rear of the south side, and a larger one-story box bay window is in a similar location on the north side. A long one-story kitchen ell is appended to the rear. A large wood frame garage with a gable roof and three vehicle bays is sited just behind the ell and is connected to it by a short breezeway.

The Horace E. & Mary Harriman House is a distinctive example of a late-19th-century village dwelling. The house is essentially intact to its 1878 construction date and is distinguished by original materials, although it has been covered with vinyl siding. It is a contributing component of a historic district on Elm Street.

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 local histories, aside from the road (now Massachusetts Route 133) connecting Georgetown to its parent Rowley to the east and Andover on the west, Elm Street is one of the oldest streets in Georgetown, having been opened to "public travel" about 1686.¹ At that time between ten and twenty families lived in what was known as Rowley second (or west) parish or New Rowley. Beginning in the 1650s Rowley proprietors began to make land grants in the town's western reaches; in 1666-67, the town laid out three thousand acres in the area and granted John Spofford the job of penning cattle "the young cattle of the towne" where they had "been herded this last yeare." Pen Brook is named for these pens, which stood west of Elm Street. In 1732 families in the area successfully petitioned to form the Second Church of Rowley (ultimately Georgetown's First Congregational Church) and built a second meetinghouse at the junction of Elm and East Main Streets in 1769. In 1838 the General Court of Massachusetts incorporated Georgetown, which embraced most of the second parish.²

By 1800, according to a map showing the town center at that time, various branches of the Nelson family owned large tracts embracing both sides of Elm and Chestnut Street and both sides of Main Street in this section. All of these branches descended from Thomas Nelson (1615-about 1648), who was among the twenty families who had come to the New World in the winter of 1638 with the Puritan cleric Ezekiel Rogers (1590-166). With Rogers most of these families settled at Rowley, incorporated in 1639.

The extent to which the Nelson lands reached southward is not clear from the 1800 village map, but the land on which the house at 59 Elm is sited probably belonged then to Aaron Nelson, who owned a large tract just to the north on the west side of Elm

¹ See, for example, Benjamin F. Arrington, ed., *Municipal History of Essex County in Massachusetts* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1922), 146.

² Thomas Gage, *The History of Rowley* (Boston: Ferdinand Andrews, 1840), 31-32, 320, 324, 326, 329.

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Street. Aaron Nelson (1740-1804) was descended from the immigrant Thomas's son Philip (1636-1691), while the other Nelson landowners in this area descend from Philip's brother Thomas (1638-1712). Aaron Nelson's land passed to his sons Jonathan (1772-1852) and Joseph (1764-1856), and by the mid-1800s much land in this area was owned by Jonathan's son Sylvanus Nelson (1803-82) and Joseph's son Charles (1803-74).

In 1878 this property was part of the larger holdings of shoemaker Joshua How (1805-1903), who lived at 53 Elm Street probably from the late 1830s until his death in 1903. On 16 July 1878 How sold a part of his land bordering Elm Street to the shoe manufacturer Horace E. Harriman provided that he "use land as a house lot to have a house built on same & to be used as homestead for him and his family" and that he build "a good & substantial fence" around the lot.³

Horace E. Harriman, born in Georgetown in 1852, was the son of shoe manufacturer William B. Harriman (1810-84), who lived on the site of 72 Elm Street; the Harriman shoe factory was just south of the house. Horace is shown as a seventeen-year-old shoemaker in his father's household in 1870. Four years later he married Mary Balcom of Salem. It seems likely that the couple lived with his parents until the house at 59 Elm Street was built.

William Brown Harriman was born in Georgetown and in 1838 married Olive Nelson, descended from the immigrant Thomas Nelson's son Thomas; her father Moses (1773-1863) was the son of Amos Nelson (1736-1806), who in 1800 owned land on the north side of East Main Street near its intersection with Elm that was sandwiched by his father Solomon's large tracts. In 1850 Moses Nelson is shown as a bootmaker owning four thousand dollars of property, a relatively large sum in Georgetown at the time. By 1870 the value of Harriman's estate was nearly ten thousand dollars.⁴

While Elm Street is largely residential today, through the nineteenth century numerous shoemaking shops of varying size also existed along the road; in 1872 five were large enough to be shown on the Georgetown village plate of the county atlas. The 1872 map of Georgetown shows Harriman's operation as a "Boot & Shoe Manufactory," the only one on Elm Street so designated (though the map does not show in detail upper Elm Street, where the J. B. Giles factory at the site of 26 Elm Street; Giles's was probably the only other large-scale shoe operation on the street). The Harriman shop made "men's high grade heavy boots and shoes," the footwear for which Georgetown was best known; the shoes were sent for the most part to southern and western markets. As a boot and shoe manufacturing town, Georgetown was far eclipsed by many Essex County towns—chiefly Lynn, the largest producer of footwear in the commonwealth, as well as Haverhill and Marblehead. But an industrial census mandated by the state found that in the year previous Rowley (of which Georgetown was part until 1838) made more boots---32,600 pair---than any other place in the county. The town also made 300,250 pair of shoes, according to this survey, employed 518 men and 192 women, and produced footwear with an estimated value of \$315,360. It is clear that most of this production took place in what soon became Georgetown: according to an 1888 local history, twenty-seven shoe shops operated in Georgetown in the late 1830s and produced boots and shoes worth \$221,900, or roughly 70 percent of the estimated value of footwear in Rowley as a whole. By the 1830s Georgetown was both larger than Rowley and much more focused on industrial development; Rowley remained by and large agricultural.⁵

It seems likely that the family's shoe operation began as a "ten-footer" (a shoe shop ranging from ten to fourteen feet square), where shoes were made from start to finish. Beginning about 1820 the "central shop" began to emerge, in which a shop sometimes not run by a shoemaker cut leather into pieces for uppers and put them out to men and women to sew in their homes; these workers then sent the uppers back to the central shop, which then sent them out again with rough soles to be finished in the same fashion. The central shop was responsible for marketing the footwear.⁶ According to industry historian

³ Joshua How to Horace E Harriman, 16 July 1878, SED 1010:276.

⁴ See *Biographical Review, Containing Life Sketches of Leading Citizens of Essex County, Massachusetts* (Boston: Boston Biographical Review Publishing Co., 1897), 526-63, for background on William B. and Horace E. Harriman. The sketch states that William Harriman was an "ardent abolitionist." Jane Field, *A Brief History of Georgetown Massachusetts 1838-1963*, rev. ed. (Georgetown: Georgetown Historical Commission, 1988), 20, notes that in antebellum Georgetown "some of the boys wrapping shoes for Southern consignment folded them in copies of the Liberator, Garrison's anti-slavery sheet, but had to stop when the recipients in Charleston began to voice their objections to the factory management."

⁵ See Gage, *History of Rowley*, 402-3; Nelson, "Town of Georgetown History," 835; and Blanche Evans Hazard, *The Organization of the Boot and Shoe Industry in Massachusetts before 1875* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), 210, which notes that these statistics were gathered and published by John Warner Barber in *Historical Collections of Every Town in Massachusetts* (Worcester: Dorr, Howland and Co., 1839), 66, 201.

⁶ Hazard, *Boot and Shoe Industry*, 8-9, 42, 44.

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William H. Mulligan Jr., the move from the central shop to the factory system took place incrementally as various shoemaking processes were mechanized, and as late as 1870 this transition was still underway.⁷

By 1880 William B. Harriman had retired, and his son Horace assumed control of the business. At roughly this time, according to Henry Nelson's local history, the Harriman shop was making boots "for Essex County and home trade generally" and was among four Georgetown shoe factories not using mechanical power. But by 1879, according to a biographical sketch, Horace Harriman, who had theretofore been working "in the shoe business, started in as a manufacturer, with a factory located at South Georgetown, where he carries on his business at the present time. He produces heavy work, and sells to the retail trade of New England."⁸

From 1910 to 1913 Horace Harriman partnered with Charles E. Cartwright to make a heel by a process Cartwright had invented. According to local historian Benjamin Arrington, the heel "met with instant success, being ordered in large quantities, but its very success killed the business locally, because great monied interests, seeing huge possibilities in the marketing of the Cartwright process of making heels, placed the same process made heel on the market at a cheaper price." By the late 1910s Horace's sons Fred and William renamed the firm Harriman Brothers and began "manufacturing a popular priced shoe for children."⁹

Sometime in the early 1910s Horace Harriman moved from the house at 59 Elm Street to Street to 94 Elm, where he is shown in 1933; assessor's records show that he then owned two houses, a barn, a shop, and twenty fowl. In 1914 the shoemaker (and later farmer) James M. Morse was living at 59 Elm Street and in 1921 Harriman sold Morse the property.¹⁰ Morse's father was the shoe and boot maker Colonius Morse, who lived on East Main Street. When James Morse married Ella F. Banks of Groveland in 1879, he, too, was a shoemaker, and by 1910 he worked as a nailer in a shoe factory. James Morse, his wife, and his son Ernest lived at 59 Elm Street through at least 1933. The 1930 census lists Ernest's occupation as a plumber, and 1920 assessor's records note that he owned thirty hens, which suggests that he was selling eggs and perhaps poultry on a modest scale. By 1944 59 Elm Street had passed to Morse's son Chester, who in 1930 lived on East Main Street and worked as a heeler. Chester Morse died in Haverhill in 1971, and title to the house was transferred to Kenneth B. Morse, probably Chester's son, by 1973. Morse and his wife Dorothy in turn deeded the property to William M. Morse in 1992.¹¹

⁷ William H. Mulligan Jr., e-mail to Kathryn Grover, 9 December 2009.

⁸ *Biographical Review*, 563.

⁹ Arrington, *Municipal History*, 259-62.

¹⁰ Horace E. Harriman to Ella F. Morse, 22 January 1921, SED 2474:486.

¹¹ Kenneth B. Morse to self and Dorothy Morse, 15 March 1973, SED 5963:664; Morses to William M. Morse, 3 March 1992, SED 11170:192.

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MAPS

"Map of the Centre of Georgetown in 1800." In Perley, Sidney H., "Centre of Georgetown in the Year 1800." *The Essex Antiquarian: A Quarterly Magazine Devoted to the Biography, Genealogy, History, and Antiquities of Essex County, Massachusetts* 2, 7 (July 1898): 201.

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"Map of New Rowley Surveyed and Drawn by Philander Anderson 1830." Georgetown Historical Society.

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[Delete this page if no Criteria Statement is prepared]

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__Neil Larson and Kathryn Grover_____

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

The Horace E. & Mary Harriman House is a distinctive example of a late-19th-century village dwelling. The house is essentially intact to its 1878 construction date and is distinguished by original materials, although it has been covered with vinyl siding. It is a contributing component of a historic district on Elm Street.

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View from SE



Aerial view from E