

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



View from SW

Locus Map



Recorded by: Kathryn Grover and Neil Larson

Organization: Georgetown Historical Commission

Date (month / year): January 2010

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

10A 41

Georgetown

GEO.93

Town/City: Georgetown

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

Address: 88 Elm Street

Historic Name: Harriman Tenant House

Uses: Present: residence

Original: residence

Date of Construction: ca. 1870

Source: historic maps

Style/Form: Classical Revival

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: wood shingle

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Garage (non-historic)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Bay windows altered

Garage attached by breezeway

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.56 acre

Setting: This house is set on a rise above the east side of Elm Street, which is primarily residential.

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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 Harriman Tenant House is a story-and-a-half-story wood frame single dwelling with wood clapboard siding and a front gable roof. It is situated on a half-acre lot and is elevated above the street on a slight promontory. There is a lawn around the house; the rear of the parcel is wooded. A long driveway on the south side of the house connects the street to a garage at the rear of the lot.

The gabled front façade of the house contains an entrance on the left side embellished with a flat hood supported by 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. A one-story beveled-corner bay window occupies the right side of the first story and three windows are evenly spaced across the second. There are bay windows on each side wall as well. A one-story kitchen ell is appended to the rear. A large wood frame garage with a gable roof and a two-car-wide vehicle bay is sited on a diagonal to the house just behind the ell and is connected to it by a long breezeway.

The Harriman Tenant House is a distinctive example of a late-19th-century village dwelling. The house is essentially intact to its ca. 1870 construction date and is distinguished by original materials. 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 by 1836 the tract on which this property is sited belonged to Charles Nelson (1803-74). The first Nelson to own it, as well as acreage on the west side of

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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Elm Street, was Joseph Nelson (1682-1744), who according to local historian Henry Mighill Nelson was the “first of this name to settle in Georgetown.”³ The property passed to Joseph’s son Aaron (1740-1804) and from Aaron to his sons Joseph (1769-1856) and Jonathan (1772-1852) and then to Joseph’s son Charles (1803-74) and Jonathan’s son Sylvanus (1803-82).

Born in Orange, New Hampshire, Charles Nelson was a lifelong farmer and lived for a time at 62 Elm Street. In 1836 he sold the shoe manufacturer William B. Harriman a large tract of “field land” bordered by Elm Street and the land of his uncle Jonathan and cousin Sylvanus Nelson. Harriman lived at 72 Elm Street in a house no longer extant and owned at least as far south as the lot on which 94 Elm Street stands. Harriman’s son Horace lived briefly at 94 Elm Street and then in the house he built for his family on 91 Elm Street. Thus it appears that Harriman probably rented 88 Elm Street. Because census enumerations on Elm Street do not appear to have been done in numerical order, it is difficult to know who lived in the house.

In 1911 Caroline Harriman Tyler, the daughter of William B. Harriman, sold the land and buildings at 88 Elm Street to Horace E. Harriman, her brother, also a prominent shoe manufacturer in Georgetown. The property remained in the Harriman family until 1949, but there is no evidence that any member of the family lived there. By 1920 the shoe worker Fred J. Boulanger lived at 88 Elm with his wife Dora, born in Minnesota, children, and mother-in-law. By 1925 the Boulangers had moved to Haverhill, and in 1930 Charles H. and Rose N. Mellen owned the property. Mellen was born in New Hampshire, worked then as an edge trimmer at a shoe factory, and was sixty-five years old. Rose Mellen was the same age and a native of Maine. The Mellens owned the house—and twelve chickens—in 1933. In 1949 William A. Harriman sold 88 Elm to William A. and Jarda Cragg, who sold it in 1959 to Salvatore Pirrotta. Ownership of the property then changed hands at least six times before January 2007, when Thomas G. and Laura C. Schall-Leckrone sold it to current owner David R. Blake.⁴

³ Henry M. Nelson, “Town of Georgetown History,” in D. Hamilton Hurd. *History of Essex County, Massachusetts, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men* (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis and Co., 1888), 1: 812.

⁴ Charles Nelson to William B. Harriman, 14 October 1836, SED 295:212; Caroline H. Tyler to Horace E. Harriman, 25 February 1911, SED 2066:526; William B. Harriman Heirs to William A. Harriman, 16 November 1935, SED 3058: 212; William A. Harriman to William A. and Jarda Cragg, 27 December 1949, SED 3717:558; Craggs to Salvatore and Joan A. Pirrotta, 13 May 1959, SED 4659:457; Thomas G. and Laura C. Schall-Leckrone to David R. Blake, 31 January 2007, SED 26523:22. See also “Plan of Land in Georgetown, MA property of William D. & Janice E. Stevens,” 31 August 1983, Southern Essex Plan Book 174 Plan 4, which divided the lot into two parcels.

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- Resident and Business Directory of Groveland and Georgetown, Mass., for 1885-1886*. Needham, MA: Local Directory Publishing Co., 1885.

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.
- Map of Georgetown in 1810 and 1840. In Gage, Thomas. *The History of Rowley, Anciently Including Bradford, Boxford, and Georgetown, from the Year 1639 to the Present Time*. Boston: F. Andrews, 1840. 320.
- "Map of New Rowley Surveyed and Drawn by Philander Anderson 1830." Georgetown Historical Society.
- Map of Georgetown. 1856. In Walling, H. F. *A Topographical Map Essex County Massachusetts*. Boston: Smith and Morley, 1856.
- Atlas of Essex County*. Philadelphia: D. G. Beers and Co., 1872). Plates 59 and 61.
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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 _____

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

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View from SW



View from W

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View from NW



Aerial view from W