

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 39

Georgetown

GEO.97

Town/City: Georgetown

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

Photograph



View from W

Address: 98 Elm Street

Historic Name: Elijah P. & Sarah L. White House

Uses: Present: residence

Original: residence

Date of Construction: ca. 1845

Source: historic maps & family history

Style/Form: Classical Revival

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
Shed or shop

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Front dormer and porch, c. 1900

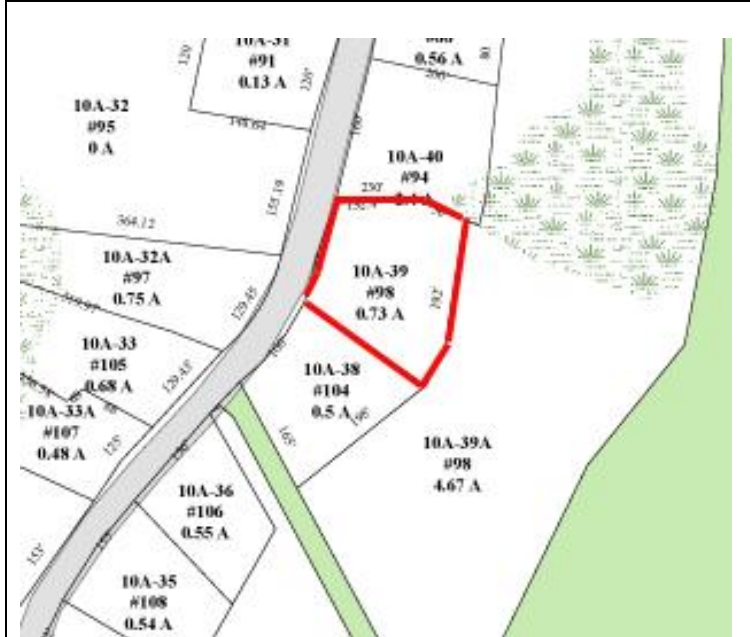
Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.73 acres

Setting: This property sits on a slight rise on the east side of Elm Street on a lot with mature hardwoods and softwoods. Elm Street is primarily residential.

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 Elijah P. & Sarah L. White House is a story-and-a-half wood frame dwelling with a gable roof and wood clapboard siding built c. 1845. It is situated on a three-quarter-acre lot on and is elevated above east side of Elm 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 parking area at the rear of the house.

The house is designed in a traditional mid-19th-century rural manner, which is unusual on Elm Street: a story-and-a-half rectangular form with a deep-eaved gable roof and a five-bay front façade containing a center entrance with sidelights. However, consistent with the older and more substantial two-story houses concentrated at the north end of Elm Street, there are two chimneys on the back wall. The wide shed dormer and deep front piazza were added at the turn-of-the-century when the existing two-over-two and two-over-one sashes were added. A cross-gable kitchen ell is appended to the rear, with a narrow back house connected behind it, which may have contained a carriage shed and stable in the rear.

South of the house is a small wood frame outbuilding with a gable roof, and end door and numerous windows suggesting that it may have functioned as a "ten-footer" shoe shop.

The Elijah P. & Sarah L. White House is a distinctive example of mid-19th-century domestic architecture on Elm Street that reflects the growth and diversity of the decentralized shoemaking industry in Georgetown. The property may include a small shoe shop. The property is a contributing feature of the Elm Street historic district.

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.

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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The extent to which the Nelson lands reached southward is not clear from the 1800 village map, but by the mid-1800s the tract on which this property is sited probably belonged to Charles Nelson (1803-74). The first Nelson to own the land in this section of Elm Street was Joseph Nelson (1682-1744), the grandson of the immigrant Thomas Nelson. According to local historian Henry Mighill Nelson, Joseph 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).

A house labeled "E.P. White" is shown on this site on the 1856 Georgetown map indicating the presence of Elijah P. White, a shoemaker born in Pittsfield, New Hampshire, about 1811. White was living in Essex County by 1836, when he married Hannah Woodman of Newbury, who died less than two months later of consumption. By 1844 White was living in Georgetown and married again, to the widow and Newbury native Sarah C. Lee. Her parents were Samuel and Lydia Coffin. The house was probably built around this time. The 1850 census enumerated Elijah P. White as a head of household in Georgetown; he was listed among others in the Elm Street neighborhood as a shoemaker, 39 years of age, with real estate valued \$1,800. His wife Sarah, age 38, and two children, Sherbern K., age 12, and Satira H., age 10, were listed with him along with 15-year-old shoemaker George H. Lane, a boarder. Sarah Lee died in 1852, and White married her sister Lydia.

The 1872 map shows a shoe shop just south of his dwelling. In 1870 White's personal estate was valued at only \$200, which suggests that his shop was a so-called "ten footer," which may be the small outbuilding currently on the property. According to local historian Benjamin Arrington, about 1830 "there was scarcely a farmhouse (or any other house) but that had in its backyard a 12x12 foot shoe-shop. It was in these small shops that the countrywide known Georgetown boots and shoes were made until recent years, when they were manufactured in factories."⁴ In the so-called "ten footer"—a shoe shop actually ranging from ten to fourteen feet square—as many as eight shoemakers (including journeymen and apprentices) made a shoe from start to finish. Beginning about 1820 the "central shop," where leather was cut and put out to men and women in the community to sew the "uppers" among other tasks; these domestic workers then sent the uppers back, and the central shop sent them out again with soles and thread to finish the shoe, which the central shop then gathered and marketed.⁵ According to industry historian 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.⁶ The 1872 map shows both shoe shops and shoe "manufactories" on Elm Street.

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 1837 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 at the time 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.⁷

Elijah P. White lived at 98 Elm until his death in 1885; his wife Lydia died four years later. The property then passed to his son Sherburne K. White, born in Bradford in 1838 and one of three children of White's first marriage. In 1859 he married Annie Hobson of Rowley, and they apparently lived elsewhere in Georgetown until 1880, when Sherburne is shown as the owner/occupant of 98 Elm and was assessed for a house, barn, and henhouse on the property. After his parents' deaths in the mid-1880s, Sherburne White stayed at 98 Elm until about 1917; by 1918 he and his wife were living on Union Street. He was

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 Arrington, *Municipal History*, 254.

⁵ Hazard, *Boot and Shoe Industry*, 8-9, 42, 44.

⁶ William H. Mulligan Jr., e-mail to Kathryn Grover, 9 December 2009.

⁷ 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.

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always listed as a shoe cutter: the 1880 census shows his occupation as "upper leather cutter," and by 1900 he was working for the George W. Chaplin Company, whose factory was close by on Central Street.

In 1918 the farmer Arthur H. Conant bought 98 Elm Street and lived there with his wife Sarah L. Conant. Born in Topsfield in 1862, he was a milkman at the time of his marriage in 1885. By 1930 the census showed him occupied at market gardening, and assessor's records for 1933 show him as owning four hundred fowl and a brooder house as well as a shop, a shed, and one horse. The Conant family owned the property through 1970. Current owner Paul J. Scoglio bought 98 Elm Street in 1987.⁸

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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.

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.

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⁸ "Plan of Land. . . Sarah L. Conant," 30 April 1970, Southern Essex Registry Plan Book 117 plan 23; J. J. Marks to Paul J. Scoglio, 22 May 1987, SED 8979:63.

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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 Elijah P. & Sarah L. White House is a distinctive example of mid-19th-century domestic architecture on Elm Street that reflects the growth and diversity of the decentralized shoemaking industry in Georgetown. The property may include a small shoe shop. The property is a contributing feature of the Elm Street historic district.

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View from SW

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View from NW



Aerial view from SE