

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

16 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.244
GEO.245

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

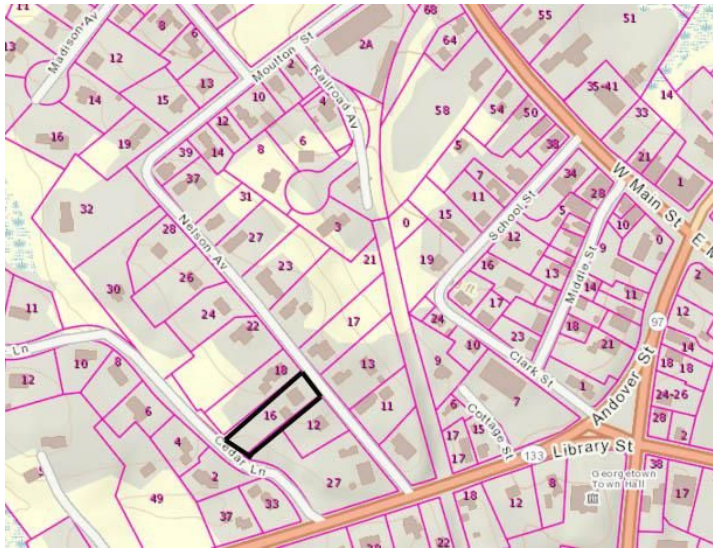
FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



View from NE



Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

Recorded by: Kathryn Grover & Neil Larson
Organization: Town of Georgetown Historical Commission
Date: June 2017

Locus Map (north at top)

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

16 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.244
GEO.245

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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

6C-91

Georgetown

GEO.244
GEO.245

Setting: Residential neighborhood developed in mid-19th century adjacent to commercial area of town center.

Town/City: Georgetown

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Georgetown Center

Address: 16 Nelson Avenue

Historic Name: Christopher & Rhoda Morse House & Barn

Uses: Present: single family residential
Original: single family residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1878

Source: deeds & visual assessment

Style/Form: Italianate

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Domestic barn, c. 2878

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
none

Condition: excellent

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.44 acre

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

16 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.244
GEO.245

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The Christopher and Rhoda Morse House, built about 1878, is a two-story, wood frame single dwelling with a gable roof and a double-pile, center-hall plan. Designed in the Italianate style, the three-bay front facade is distinguished by a central gabled entrance pavilion with a double doorway set under an ornate porch. A bracketed cornice decorates the entire roof edge; windows have pedimented headers; an arched window occupies the gable of the central pavilion. The southeastern end contains two windows on each story and a double window centered in the attic; a bay window occupies the window space at the rear of the first floor. H northwest end is similarly fenestrated with the addition of a slender widow in the center of the first story in what probably is the stair space. A one-story ell and associated deck on the rear appears to be recent additions as are the two skylights in the roof.

A story-and-a-half, wood-frame domestic barn with a gable roof is sited just west of the house. It has corner pilasters and entablatures with tall friezes. Wagon and mow doors are intact on one side of the front façade offset by a window. A stable entrance is located in the exposed stone basement wall on the southerly end. A deck and swimming pool are located behind the barn. The house is situated in the center of the street frontage set back behind a deep lawn with mature trees. A driveway enters the southeast corner of the parcel and runs back to the barn. The rear yard extends back to Cedar Lane.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The houses on Nelson Avenue were built on land once belonging to Nathaniel Nelson (1767-1853), the son of Solomon Nelson Jr. (1742-1821) and his wife Elizabeth Mighill Nelson (1742-77). He was descended from English immigrant Thomas Nelson, whose sons Philip (1636-91) and Thomas (1638-1712) both have descendants in Georgetown. Philip's son Joseph (1682-1744) was the first of this surname to settle in Georgetown. Nathaniel descended from Philip's brother Thomas. He had two children with Sarah Chaplin, his first wife—Sally (1800-1869), who married housewright John Kimball of Georgetown, and Mary (1803-55), who married John's older brother Joseph Kimball, also a housewright. After Sally Chaplin Nelson's death in 1828 Nathaniel Nelson married Mary A. Spofford of Boxford, and they had one child, Elisabeth Spofford Jones (1830-1902), who in 1851 married New Hampshire native and Georgetown attorney Jeremiah Pingree Jones (1819-92). By then Nathaniel Nelson appears to have moved from Elm Street to the house at 27 Andover Street (GEO.23), built in 1815 at the northwestern corner of what is now Nelson Avenue. The 1850 census enumerated Nelson in this latter neighborhood as a farmer with real estate valued at \$17,140 and a household containing his wife Mary (with \$4000 of real estate), his yet-unmarried daughter Elisabeth, and six boarders, three men of Irish descent and one man of African descent. After Nelson's death the widowed Mary Nelson lived here with her then-married daughter Elisabeth, her son-in-law Jeremiah P. Jones, the Joneses' young daughters Mary and Elisabeth, an Irish-born domestic servant, and two boarders.

Nathaniel Nelson himself sold the first house lots, on the east side of what became Nelson Avenue, in the late 1840s, but the west side of the street remained undeveloped until about 1875, when various of his heirs began to sell lots to the north of Nelson's Andover Street home. In July 1878 daughter Elisabeth and her husband Jeremiah P. Jones sold 70 square rods to metal worker Christopher M. Morse, and by 1880 Morse had built 16 Nelson Avenue on the lot.¹

Born in Plymouth, New Hampshire, about 1825, Christopher Morse had been living in Georgetown since at least 1870 with his wife Rhoda, also a New Hampshire native, and their children Lillian and Nathan. The four are shown together on Nelson Avenue

¹ Jeremiah P. and Elizabeth S. Jones to Christopher M. Morse, 15 July 1878, 1002:136.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

16 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.244
GEO.245

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

in the 1880 census; Lillian by then was clerking in a dry goods store. The 1884 map of Georgetown Center attaches the name "C. M. Morse" to the house at this address,

In 1894 Morse moved in with his now-married daughter in Lynn and sold 16 Nelson Avenue to Serena Poore (sometimes Poor).² Serena Phinney Gaskell Poore was from Nova Scotia, and she was a widow living in West Newbury with her daughter Stella when she married West Newbury farm worker Abel M. Poor in Newburyport in 1884. The 1900 census shows them on Nelson Avenue with their sons Lester Dean and Archie Merrill and daughter Stella Gaskell. Abel Poore died in 1903, and the 1910 census shows his widow in the house with her son Lester, a street railway company electrical engineer. Son Archie had died of typhoid fever two years before, when he was 22. In 1910 Lester married Georgetown native Amy Mansfield Butler. Serena Phinney Poor died in Newburyport in 1913. Two years later Lester sold 16 Nelson Avenue to Alfred H. Sayward.³

Born in Alfred, Maine, about 1860, Alfred Sayward was living in Newburyport and working in a shoe factory by 1880. In 1883 he married Eliza E. Keyes of Newburyport, and he was still a shoe worker in that town at the time he bought 16 Nelson Avenue. The 1920 census shows him in the house (incorrectly labeled Andover Street) with his wife, adult daughter Dorothy, and one roomer; by 1930 he and his wife boarded shoe worker James C. Eaton. Alfred Sayward died in 1939, and the 1940 directory shows his widow Eliza at 16 Nelson Avenue. She died in 1942, and the property passed to her married daughter Dorothy E. Brown, wife of Donald C. Brown of Newburyport. After Dorothy Brown's death in 1959 and her husband's by 1967, the 16 Nelson Avenue property was sold to Mary S. D. Smith, who sold it to current owners William C. and Mary Elizabeth Hastings in October 1969.⁴

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

AmericanAncestors.org.

Ancestry.com.

Assessor's Records, Georgetown and Rowley. 1883, 1902, 1920, 1933.

Bureau of the Census. United States Census, 1790-1930.

Lainhart, Ann S. "1855 and 1865 Massachusetts State Censuses for Georgetown." Boston: Ann S. Lainhart, 1987.

Nelson, Henry M. "Town of Georgetown History." In Hurd, D. Hamilton. *History of Essex County, Massachusetts, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men*. Vol. 1. Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis and Co., 1888.

Southern Essex County Registry of Deeds website, salemdeeds.com.

DIRECTORIES

The Essex County Directory. 1866. Boston: Innes & Niles, 1866.*Essex County History and Directory*. Boston: C. A. & J. F. Wood, 1870.*Resident and Business Directory of Groveland and Georgetown, Mass., for 1885-1886*. Needham, MA: Local Directory Publishing Co., 1885.*Georgetown, Boxford, Byfield, Newbury, and West Newbury, Massachusetts, Directory*. Boston: W. E. Shaw, 1901-2, 1905.

North Essex Directory for Boxford, Georgetown, Merrimac, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury, West Newbury. Salem, MA: Henry M. Meek Publishing Co., 1907, 1909-10, 1912, 1914-15, 1916-17, 1918, 1925.

Ipswich, Boxford, Byfield, Georgetown, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury, Salisbury Beach, Topsfield, West Newbury Directory. Vol. 1, 1932-'34. Beverly, MA, and Portland, ME: Crowley & Lunt, 1932.*Haverhill, Mass. Suburban Directory for Georgetown, Groveland, Merrimac and West Newbury 1940*. North Hampton, NH: Crosby Publishing Co., 1940.

² Christopher M. Morse to Serena Poore, 30 April 1894, SECD 1457:33.

³ Lester D. Poore to Alfred H. Sayward, 23 June 1915, SECD 2299:387.

⁴ Lester D. Poore to Alfred H. Sayward, 23 June 1915, SECD 2299:387; Mary S. D. Smith to William C. and Mary Elizabeth Hastings, Groveland, 17 October 1969, SECD 5645:49.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

16 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.244 GEO.245

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Ipswich, Boxford, Georgetown, Middleton, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury, Topsfield, West Newbury Directory 1957. New Haven, CT: Price & Lee Co., 1957.

MAPS

“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, Massachusetts. Philadelphia: D. G. Beers and Co., 1872). Plates 59 and 61.
“Town of Georgetown Mass.” and “Village of Georgetown Mass.” In *Atlas of Essex County, Massachusetts* (Boston: George H. Walker, 1884).
“Georgetown, Mass. 1887.” Drawn and Published by George E. Norris, Brockton, Massachusetts. Troy, NY: Burleigh Lithographic Establishment, 1887.”

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

16 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.244 GEO.245

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)



View from east.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

16 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.244 GEO.245

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



View from north.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

16 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.244 GEO.245

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



Aerial view from south. Source: [bing.com/maps](https://www.bing.com/maps).

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

16 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.244
GEO.245

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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

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

The Christopher & Rhoda Morse House, built ca. 1878, appears to be eligible for the National Register under criteria A and C. It is a distinctive example of domestic architecture designed in the Italianate style in Georgetown and is essentially intact from that period. It is accompanied by a substantial domestic barn erected in ca. 1878. The house and barn were built for metal worker Christopher M. Morse and his family, who were natives of New Hampshire. The property also appears eligible as a contributing component of a historic district in Georgetown Center, the boundaries of which are yet to be determined.