

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

17 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.246

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Recorded by: Kathryn Grover & Neil Larson

Organization: Town of Georgetown Historical Commission

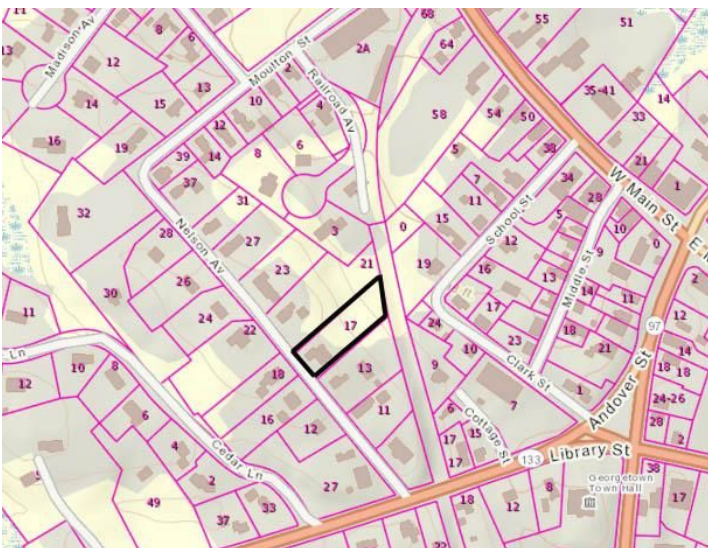
Date: June 2017

Photograph



View from west.

Locus Map (north at top)



Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

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

6C-101

Georgetown

GEO.246

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: 17 Nelson Avenue

Historic Name: Samuel & Mary Perkins House

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

Date of Construction: ca. 1849

Source: deeds & visual assessment

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Annex (attached), late 20th century

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Annex (attached), late 20th century

Dormer added NW side, mid 20th century

Window sash and doors replaced

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.62 acre

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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.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The Samuel and Mary Perkins House, built about 1849, is a story-and-a-half, wood frame single dwelling with a front gable roof and a side-passage plan. Designed in the Greek Revival style, the three-bay front facade is distinguished by Classical entablatures along the roof edges to short returns at the base of the gables, wide corner pilasters and an off-center trabeated doorway with sidelights and a pedimented header. Two windows are evenly spaced in the attic story. Entablatures with tall friezes follow the eaves along the side walls, each with pilasters at the corners. The front section of the northwest side is blank to correspond with the interior stairs running up that wall. A window at the rear of the wall illuminates a room behind the stairs, and a gabled dormer is a later addition. The southeast side originally contained four windows, two each for the principal rooms on that side; however, a hyphen connecting the house to a later annex blocks the rear two. A one-story rear kitchen ell is attached to the rear. Sometime in the mid-twentieth century, a one-story wood frame building with a front-gable roof was constructed off the southeast side of the house and linked to it by a short hyphen with an entrance connected to the rear of the house. It has a bowed oriel centered in the front gable end, which is framed by corner pilasters and Classical roof-edge trim echoing that on the historic portion of the house. The house is situated in the center of the frontage with a driveway entering the southwest side terminating in front of the annex. The rear of the deep parcel is wooded.

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.

In March 1849 Nathaniel Nelson sold "a lot of land north of my dwelling house" to shoemaker Samuel Perkins for \$150, and in 1855, after Nelson's death, the administrators of his estate sold Perkins 58.25 rods abutting this first lot to Perkins.¹ The 1856 map attaches the name "S. Perkins" to the house on this lot, and the 1855 census shows Perkins in the house with his wife Mary and their one-year-old daughter Mary Abby.

Born in Deerfield, New Hampshire, about 1803, Samuel Perkins was living in Boxford by 1831, when he married Mahala Kimball Marden, and they were living in Georgetown by October 1847, when Mahala Perkins died. In Newburyport in 1849 Perkins married Mary F. Pierce, a native Bostonian born in 1816 whose mother, Abigail Hardy, was from Groveland. By 1860 the couple had had a second child, Samuel Jackson, and the Perkinses are consistently shown in censuses in this neighborhood through

¹ Nathaniel Nelson to Samuel Perkins, 16 March 1849, SECD 2965:342; Joseph Kimball and Joseph P. Jones, administrators estate Nathaniel Nelson, to Samuel Perkins, 21 December 1855, SECD 2965:341.

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1880, when Samuel Perkins was listed as an invalid. He died in 1885, and his widow and unmarried children stayed on in the house. In 1887 Mary F. Perkins deeded 17 Nelson Avenue to her daughter "in consideration of support heretofore furnished me by Mary Abby Perkins . . . and of her agreement to support me during my natural life as stated in a bond of even date herewith."² The 1900 census shows Mary Perkins, her daughter Mary, then a suit maker for a tailor, and son Jackson, a day laborer, in the Nelson Avenue home.

In March 1904 Mary F. Pierce Perkins died, and siblings Abby and S. Jackson remained at 17 Nelson Avenue until their deaths, Abby in 1930 and S. Jackson three years later. In 1933 the executors of S. Jackson Perkins's will sold the property to Albert J. Gagnon, who may never have occupied the house.³ Born in Salem about 1898, Gagnon was a teamster who had married Georgetown native Viola Evelyn Spaulding in 1921. He and his wife and daughter Alberta lived on East Main Street in 1930 and on School Street in 1932. In 1940 daughter Alberta married Albert D. Rogers, a pin boy born in Haverhill who was then living in Plaistow, New Hampshire, and in 1947 Albert J. Gagnon deeded the 17 Nelson Avenue property to his daughter and son-in-law, and in 1986, after Albert Rogers's death, his widow added and her son John to the deed.⁴ They and John Rogers's wife Martha sold the property in 2011, and current owners Derek R. and Claire Prime acquired it in 2015.⁵

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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.

² Mary F. Perkins to Mary Abby Perkins, 4 March 1887, SECD 1193:141.

³ Edward M. Hoyt and Leonard M. Dresser, executors will S. Jackson Perkins, to Albert J. Gagnon, 1 November 1933, SECD 2967:586.

⁴ Albert J. Gagnon to Albert D. and Alberta M. Rogers, 22 August 1947, SECD 3532:367.

⁵ Alberta M. Rogers to Alberta M. Rogers and John A. Rogers, 14 July 1986, SECD 8393:172; Alberta M. Rogers and John A. and Martha A. Rogers to Jonah J. Pringle, Adam J. Pringle, and James F. Pringle III, 27 October 2011, SECD 30797:487; Alberta M. Rogers and John A. and Martha A. Rogers to Jonah J. Pringle, Adam J. Pringle, and James F. Pringle III, 27 October 2011, SECD 30797:487.

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PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)



View from SW.



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View from south. Source: bing.com/maps.

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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 Samuel and Mary Perkins House, built about 1849, appears to be eligible for the National Register under criteria A and C as a contributing component of a historic district in Georgetown Center, the boundaries of which are yet to be determined. It is an altered but distinctive example of domestic architecture designed in the Greek Revival style in Georgetown. The house was built for shoemaker Samuel Perkins and his bride, and it remained in the family for nearly 100 years. The location and quality of the house indicates the material success and reputable status enjoyed by independent shoemakers in Georgetown.