

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

9A 17	Georgetown		GEO.52
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Town/City: Georgetown

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

Address: 240 Central Street

Historic Name: Engine House No. 5

Uses: Present: none

Original: fire station

Date of Construction: ca 1875

Source: town annual reports, local histories

Style/Form: Classical Revival

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

none

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:** 1876

Acreage: 0.06 acre

Setting: This property is at the southern side of the intersection of Central and East Streets on a mostly open lot. The area is mostly residential with a few commercial buildings to the south and northwest.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Kathryn Grover and Neil Larson

Organization: Georgetown Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): January 2010

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

242 CENTRAL ST.

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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 building known as Engine House No. 5 is a two-story wood frame barn with wood clapboard siding and a front gable roof. It was built on Middle Street at some point before the 1874 Georgetown fire and was moved to its Central Street location in 1876. It is situated on the north end of the residential lot to which it was moved at the intersection of Central and East streets.

The front façade faces west and contains a wagon door with swing doors centered on the first floor and a mow door on the second. Wide corner boards support a Classical entablature in the late 19th-century fashion. The entablature wraps around the side walls with its tall frieze abutting the second-story window tops. The north side contains window bays at opposite ends of the wall and a doorway in the east corner. The south wall has windows similarly placed with the first-story on the west end blank, probably because of a staircase now or once located in the interior. A single window is centered in the second story on the back (east) gable end, which has an entablature to match the front. There does not appear to be much interior historic fabric left intact.

Engine House No. 5 is a rare and distinctive civic building in Georgetown. Although it has been moved from the town center, the building is an important historic object and a contributing component 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 a 1922 local history, Central Street began as a “fenced lane” and was made a street “in the early part of 1800.” It has historically also been called the Salem Road, and it is today state route 97. From an early point it was both residential and industrial. In 1760 Captain Benjamin Adams opened the town’s first tannery here and through the nineteenth century shoe shops stood on both sides of the street.¹ The Georgetown plate from the 1884 Essex County Atlas shows five such shops on Central Street, and the village directory of the next year lists four factories—G. W. Chaplin and Company, H. P. Chaplin, John H. Lovering (at the corner of Elm Street), and C. G. Baker (at the corner of Nelson Street).

In 1875 the shoe cutter William. H. Ilsley, who lived in the household of his father-in-law Jonathan Spiller at 105 Elm Street, petitioned with others for a town meeting warrant “to see if the town will purchase a lot of land near the residence of John A. Lovering’s, and place thereon one of their Engine houses and fire Engines, and take such action as may be necessary to carry he same into effect.” The petition no doubt responded to a fire in Georgetown center in October 1874, which started in the stable (or barn) owned by shoe manufacturer George Jewett Tenney, who had moved from 38 Elm Street to the town’s current center after 1872. The fire spread rapidly through the central area and destroyed Tenney’s home, his downtown shoe factory, and a number of stores as well as the Masonic Hall. According to Edwin Hill’s 1878 history of the town, “The fire department was entirely inadequate to cope with so extensive a conflagration, and assistance was sought from Newburyport and Haverhill, which was promptly supplied, by which a general sweep of the village was prevented.”² Voters approved not only the construction of a

¹ Benjamin F. Arrington, ed., *Municipal History of Essex County in Massachusetts* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1922), 246; 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), 1:844.

² Edwin J. Hill, “History of Georgetown, Massachusetts,” in Cyrus M. Tracey, William E. Graves, and Henry M. Batchelder, eds., *Standard History of Essex County, Massachusetts*, (Boston: C. F. Jewett, 1878), 127. See also Forest P. Hull, *Georgetown: Story of One Hundred Years, 1838-1938* (reprint, Georgetown: Georgetown Historical Commission, 2006), 40, 43, 63.

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new engine house on Middle Street that housed three fire engines but moving what was apparently the existing single-engine firehouse at that site to "the south part the town" along with the town's Washington #3 pumper. The building was on this wedge-shaped lot between Central and East Streets. A volunteer company was also formed for the new engine house, with George L. Mighill as its foreman as J. Henry Scates as clerk.³ About 1915 the Washington pumper was transferred to the Erie 4 Fire Association on North Street about 1915.

A 1984 subdivision plan identifies the building at 242 Central Street as a barn and makes note of the fact that current Georgetown zoning law deems the structure "undersized for a dwelling." From 1926 to the early to mid-1970s the family of former Georgetown fire chief Basil Kinson owned the property, currently owned by Daniel T. Meagher.⁴

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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- Field, Jane. *A Brief History of Georgetown Massachusetts 1838-1963*. Rev. ed. 1988. Georgetown: Georgetown Historical Commission, 1988.
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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.
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- "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.

³ Thanks to Dan Meagher of Georgetown for supplying digitized copies of "Town Warrant," 1875 Annual Report, 31, and "Report of the Engineers of the Fire Department," 1876 Annual Report, 16-17.

⁴ Alvin F. Marden et al. to George B. James, 24 February 1893, SED 1370:277; George F. Carleton to Hattie F. Kinson, 1 December 1926, SED 2705:473; "Plan of Land in Georgetown, Mass., #1 East Street, Owned by David B. and Deanna R. E. Kinson," July 1984, Southern Essex Registry Plan Book 189 plan 34.

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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.

Engine House No. 5 is a rare and distinctive civic building in Georgetown. Although it has been moved from the town center, the building is an important historic object and a contributing component of the Elm Street historic district.

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View from W



View from E

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Aerial view from W