

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

37 Nelson Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.252
GEO.253

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

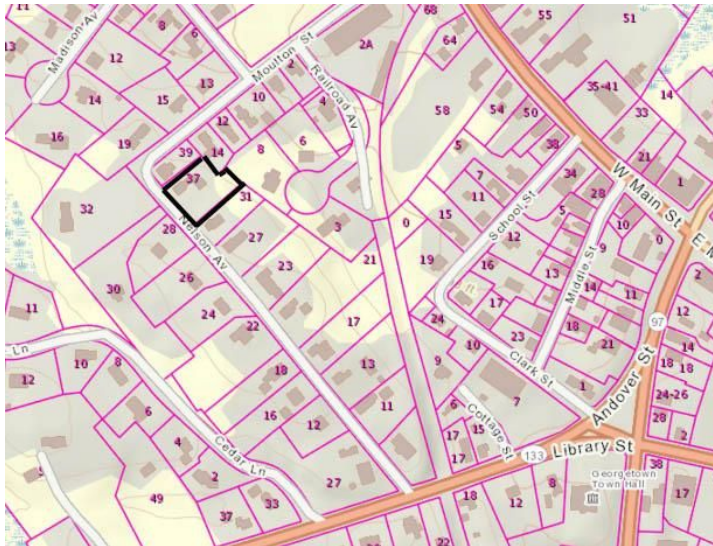
FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



View from SW.



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)

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

6C-106

Georgetown

GEO.252
GEO.253

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

Town/City: Georgetown

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

Address: 37 Nelson Avenue

Historic Name: James & Abigail Carleton House & Barn

Uses: Present: multiple family residential

Original: single family residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1876

Source: deeds & visual assessment

Style/Form: Classical Revival

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Domestic barn

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Converted to three-family dwelling

Entrances and window sash replaced

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.43 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 James and Abigail Carleton House, built about 1876, is a two-story, wood frame single dwelling with a front gable roof and a side-passage plan. Designed with Classical Revival details, the three-bay front facade is distinguished by a gable end embellished with a modest entablature and corner pilasters; an off-center entrance is positioned under a shed-roofed hood mounted on large ornate brackets. 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. Windows are located at the rear of the wall, two on each story. The outside ones are standard size and indicate the locations of rooms behind the stairs. The inside ones are small: the one in the second story contains colored glass and lights the top of the stairs, while the lower one—with clear glass—probably lights the way to the basement. The southeast side contains four windows on both stories, two each for the principal rooms on that side; a one-story bay window was substituted for the lower two at the rear end of the first story. A chimney is aligned with the interior dividing partition where hearths were located. A two-story kitchen ell with a flat roof is appended to the rear of the house, set back on the southeast where an enclosed porch fills the void. The wing likely originated as a single story and was raised to two stories later. A one-story shed-roof enclosed porch is located at the extreme end of the building.

A story-and-a-half, wood-frame domestic barn with a front-gable roof is sited just east of the house. The front façade has been altered by the addition of a domestic door and window; the building has been converted to a dwelling unit. Otherwise the exterior retains its corner pilasters and raking entablatures that terminate in short returns similar to those on the house. The house occupies the northwest corner of the lot with minimal set backs on the front and northwest side. A driveway enters the center of the frontage and runs past the southeast side of the house to the barn. An lawn occupies the open space on the southeast side of the parcel.

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.

Nelson himself began selling lots on the east side of Nelson Avenue in 1849, while shoe manufacturer Daniel Moulton and Jeremiah and Elisabeth Jones had begun developing the other end of Nelson Avenue, at Moulton Street, about 1875. The 1872 map of Georgetown Center show dentist Alvah H. and Apphia Horner Howard with a large lot at what was then the northern extent of Nelson Avenue (21 Nelson Ave., GEO.248). In September 1876 Jeremiah and Elisabeth Jones sold a lot near the

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intersection of Moulton Street to James Carleton for \$300; the deed refers to Nelson Avenue as a "private way."¹ By 1880 Carleton, a shoebox stock manufacturer, was living in the house on this lot, 37 Nelson Avenue, with his wife Abigail.

James Carleton's background is somewhat obscure. He was born about 1817, according to various records in either Boxford or Chelmsford. His wife, Abigail Gage, was born in Pelham, New Hampshire, and the two might have married in that state. In 1870 Carleton was farming and living in Boxford, and the household included the couple's son Lewis A., born in 1853.

The 1880 industrial census shows James Carleton as a maker of shoe box stock employing two males working ten-hour days; he made a \$500 profit in the business the year before. In 1880 son Lewis, a shoe box manufacturer probably in business with his father, married Edna E. Sherburne, the daughter of Edna Hobson and William Sherburne; Edna's sister Hannah had married shoe cutter John Munroe in 1873 and by 1895 had built a house at nearby 31 Nelson Avenue (GEO.251). Lewis and Edna Carleton lived elsewhere in Georgetown with his mother-in-law Edna Sherburne and brothers-in-law Herman H. and Wendell A. Sherburne, both shoe shop workers.

James Carleton died in 1886, and the 1900 census shows the widowed Abigail Carleton in the house with son Lewis and his wife. Abigail Gage Carleton died in 1907, and in the same year Lewis Carleton acquired title to her property from other heirs.² Lewis Carleton, who worked as a carpenter, remained in the house with his wife until his own death in 1940. The house then passed to Herbert J. Hull, who owned it for five years, and the property changed hands often afterward. Richard A. Kalish and Joanne Kelley owned and occupied 37 Nelson Avenue from 1982 to 2016, when they sold it to current owners Charles and Rebecca Allen Ippolito.³

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¹ Jeremiah P. and Elisabeth S. Jones to James Carleton, 26 September 1876, SECD 1070:126-27.

² Celinda H. Anderson, Boxford MA, to Lewis Carleton, 6 February 1886, SECD 1167:175. Anderson identified herself as an heir of James Carleton in this deed. Charles R. Anderson and William H. Anderson, both Boxford MA; Charles L. Anderson, Lawrence MA; Frank H. Anderson, North Andover MA; David A. Anderson, Boxford MA; and John R. Anderson, Uxbridge MA, to Lewis Carleton, August 1907, SECD 1894:375.

³ Robert F. Metcalf, executor will Lewis A. Carleton, to Herbert J. Hull, 20 August 1941, SECD 3267:330; Herbert J. Hull to Albert R. and Catherine L. Greenleaf, 12 November 1945, SECD 3432:92; Geraldine M Zuk, Danvers MA, to Richard A. Kalish and Joanne Kelly, Beverly MA, 15 June 1982, SECD 6944:709; Richard A. Kalish and Joanne Kelly, 37 Nelson Ave, to Charles and Rebecca Allen Ippolito, now 37 Nelson Ave, 27 August 2016, SECD 35248:369.

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MAPS
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PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)



View from south.

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View from north.

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**

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Statement of Significance by Neil Larson
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The James and Abigail Carleton House, built about 1876, 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 a representative example of domestic architecture in the Classically inspired design that had been scaled back from the more ponderous proportions of the Greek Revival style. Neither the craftsman nor the client chose to invest much in the expressions of taste. The house was built for shoebox manufacturer James Carleton and his family, who lived there into the 1940s.