

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

379 Central Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.231

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



View from east.



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

8-4

Georgetown

GEO.231

Setting: Major route into town center with concentration of historic and non-historic residential buildings.

Town/City: Georgetown

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

Address: 379 Central Street

Historic Name: Baker-Jones House

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

Date of Construction: ca. 1830

Source: deeds & visual assessment

Style/Form: Federal

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
Wagon house (attached)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
Entrance added, ca. 1900
Possible addition, ca. 1900

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 1.08 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 Baker-Jones House is a two-story wood frame single dwelling with a gable roof built about 1830. Its asymmetrical five-bay front façade with the northern two bays stretched out of balance suggests that the house was enlarged at a later time, potentially when the Jones family resided there in the early twentieth century. However, the materials—brick basement and wood clapboard siding—as well as a sustained entablature along the eaves and returns on the end walls provide no clues to an expansion. An internal chimney centered in the southerly end of the house is consistent with a side-passage plan a room-and-a-half deep with a basement kitchen exposed at grade on the south end. There is no chimney visible north of the passage. An interior examination of the house is necessary to determine if the house indeed was built in two stages. The central entrance with its arched transom and Federal-style porch are early twentieth-century additions, and the two-over-two sash extant throughout the house also could have been installed during renovations at that time. The south end, in addition to its brick basement with a door and two windows, has two windows on each story and a single attic window centered in the gable. The north end represents either an alteration of the pattern of the original wall, expected to be similar to that on the south end, or the planned fenestration of a 20th-century addition. A string of five sash windows and a doorway occupy the first story. The Joneses were milk dealers, and perhaps the unusual, intensive configuration of windows relates to a commercial use. Two second-story windows are uneven in size and spacing. The rear façade is shingled with a shingled story-and-a-half wagon house connected by a long one-story hyphen, again, appearing to be a twentieth-century addition made by the Jones family. The south end of the outbuilding contains wagon and mow doors, the former replaced with an overhead garage door. A wood stairway has been constructed on the north side of the rear wall leading to a door installed in the second story either for a fire escape or access to a second dwelling unit.

The house is situated in the center of the street frontage of a polygonal lot set back behind a sizeable yard. Driveways enter on both ends of the house, the southerly one leading to the wagon house/garage in the rear. The rest of the lot is wooded.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Like many houses on the southern reaches of Central Street, 379 Central Street is situated on land once owned by Benjamin Adams (1746-1821), sometimes called Captain Benjamin Adams or “tanner Adams” because his 1780 Central Street tannery was the first in what became Georgetown. According to local histories, Adams’s own house was built on the east side of Central Street and north of this house, on the north side of Pen Brook, between 1754 and 1760 (302 Central St., GEO.30). In March 1830 Adams’s son and namesake, Benjamin Adams (1773-1852), sold 3 acres and 18 rods to Gideon Baker of Boxford for \$93.37; the land was bordered by the road on the east and by Adams family land everywhere else.¹ The 1830 Georgetown map shows a house on this site labeled “G. Baker,” though Baker was enumerated in the census that year as a resident of his native Boxford. By the time the 1840 census was taken, he is listed in Georgetown just prior to the 372 Central Street household of John B. Buckminster (GEO.230).

Born in 1783 in Vermont, carpenter Gideon Baker married Sarah Barnard Kelley in Newbury in 1809, and the couple is shown in the 1850 Georgetown census with \$1200 in real estate. Their only son, Cornelius Gould Baker, had died in 1845 when he was just short of 33 years old. He and his wife Clarissa Robbins (1818-1906) had a son named for his father born in the same year that Cornelius died. Sarah Baker died in 1851, and the 1855 census shows Gideon Baker alone in his house next door to his son’s widow Clarissa, her son Cornelius Gould Jr., and her widowed mother Mary Crombie Robbins at 391 Central Street. Mary Robbins was the sister of John B. Buckminster’s wife Charlotte; they were the two daughters of Revolutionary War veteran Aaron Crombie.

¹ Benjamin Adams to Gideon Baker, Boxford, 29 March 1830, SECD 258:278.

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The 1865 census show Gideon Baker as 81 years old and sharing the household with Maine-born housekeeper Emma Roberts, her three young daughters, and another housekeeper. He died in April 1868, and three months later his grandson Cornelius deeded 379 Central Street and ten acres to Cyrus Tidd. The deed notes that "the said Cyrus Tidd hereby intends to claim a homestead in the above described premises."² The son of Samuel Charles and Ruth Mighill Tidd, Cyrus Tidd was born in 1823 in Rowley and grew up at 90 Baldpate Road (GEO.217). In 1829 in Topsfield he married Clara Buckminster, the daughter of John Buckminster's son George. "C. Tidd" is shown as the owner of 379 Central Street on the 1872 and 1884 Georgetown maps; in 1872 the label denoted Cyrus, but he died in 1873; on the 1884 the "C." stood for Clara.

In 1887 the administrator of Cyrus Tidd's estate sold 379 Central Street and twelve acres at auction to Charles E. Thompson, and at some point between 1887 and 1899 Clara Buckminster Tidd moved into her parents' household at 372 Central Street, where she is shown with her children in the 1900 census. Thompson sold the property to Frank A. Jones from Turner, Maine, in 1899.³ The 1900 census shows Jones in this neighborhood as a farmer living with his wife Edna, also born in Maine, and their sons Ralph, Alfred, and Harold, born between 1892 and 1895. Jones was running a dairy operation at 379 Central in 1910, and by then the family had two more children, Elmer, born about 1904, and Dorothy, born about 1909. The 1916 directory shows Jones as a milk dealer on Central Street near the Boxford line. Sons Ralph, Alfred, and Harold were drivers for him and lived in the house, while Dorothy was boarding on Andover Street, presumably to be closer to school, and Elmer, though he was only about 12 years old, was working in the shoe industry and boarding elsewhere.

Frank Jones died in 1919, and the 1920 census shows his widow Edna as a farmer living with sons Elmer and daughter Dorothy. In 1931 Ralph, Alfred, and Harold Jones deeded the 379 Central Street property to their mother Edna Jones and their younger brother Elmer. By 1943 Elmer had married, and his wife Dorothy also became an owner of 379 Central. The 1940 census shows Edna Jones as a 79-year-old widow living in the house with her son Elmer, a shoe factory edge trimmer, his wife Dorothy, and their two children Eleanor and Henry. Edna Jones was still listed in the household in the 1957 directory; her date of death is not yet known. Elmer and Dorothy Jones subdivided the property in 1987 and sold 379 Central and 1.08 acres to current owner Kevin T. McElroy in 1991.⁴

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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., 1885.² Cornelius G. Baker to Cyrus Tidd, 22 July 1868, SECD 751:67.³ Orlando B. Tenney, administrator estate Cyrus Tidd, to Charles E. Thompson, 25 May 1887, SECD 1198:80; Charles E. Thompson to Frank A. Jones, 21 September 1899, SECD 1592:56.⁴ Ralph H. Jones, Boston; Alfred M. Jones, Harold E. Jones, and Dorothy Jones to Edna M. Jones and Elmer S. Jones, 8 July 1931, SECD 2886:442; Dorothy B. and Elmer S. Jones to Kevin T. McElroy, 15 May 1991, SECD 10797:456. See also "Subdivision Plan of Land, Central Street and Smith Way, Georgetown, Mass.," 14 May 1987, SECD 227:37, where 379 Central is Lot 1.

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MAPS

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PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)

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View from SE.

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View from NE.

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Aerial view from west. Source bing.com/maps.