

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

468 North Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.279

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

FORM B – BUILDING

Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

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

Recorded by: Kathryn Grover & Neil Larson

Organization: Town of Georgetown Historical Commission

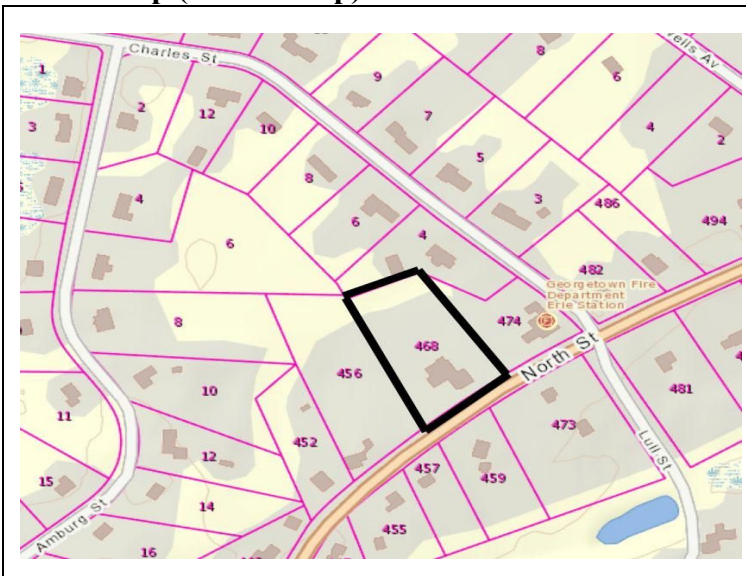
Date: June 2017

Photograph



View from south.

Locus Map (north at top)



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

18-1

Georgetown

GEO.279

Setting: Rural highway leading out from town center with farmhouses interspersed with suburban development on once-associated farmland.

Town/City: Georgetown

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Wallingford's Corner

Address: 468 North Street

Historic Name: William S. & Sarah E. Wheeler House

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

Date of Construction: ca. 1850

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:

Store & barn (attached)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Porch added SW side, lath 19th century

Rear wings added (2), 20th century

Two-car garage & greenhouse added, late 20th c.

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 1.80 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 William S. and Sarah E. Wheeler House is a two-story wood frame single dwelling with a gable roof built about 1850. Its bilaterally symmetrical form and single-pile center-passage plan with chimneys on the rear wall represents a house type common in Georgetown in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The five-bay front façade contains a center entrance in a trabeated architrave reflecting a late expression of the Greek Revival style. Paneled corner pilasters and a modest frieze running below a deep Classical cornice are features designed in a similar fashion. Windows have simple trim with edge moldings. The end walls of the house contain two windows on each floor skewed towards the front to accommodate fireplaces on the rear walls in the principal rooms flanking the center hall. Single attic windows are centered in the gables, which are ornamented with Classical cornices with short returns at their bases. Two brick chimneys on the rear wall are intact although both are contained within rear wings. The two-story cross-gable wing on the westerly side appears original to the house. It has a gabled wall dormer on its façade, a Gothic Revival feature incorporated in the overall Classical design of the building. A porch spanning the westerly side of the house and wing appears to be a later addition with the portion fronting the wing walled-in at a later time.

A two-story cross-gable wing on the easterly end of rear façade with paired windows and a recessed porch on the first story appears to be mid- to late twentieth century in construction. It has three widow bays on the front façade with a doorway located in the westerly corner. A one-story open porch spans the front and probably is an original feature. The store blocks the front of a large aisle barn; their roofs intersect over the store and a ventilator is centered on the barn's ridge. A two-stall garage attached to the westerly end of the store wing further screens the barn from view; a greenhouse has been added to the westerly side of the garage. A shed-roof wing with a brick chimney and adjacent sunroom abut the easterly side of the barn; these are late twentieth-century additions.

The house is centered on its frontage, reduced by subdivisions, and set back a short distance from the street with its multiple wings and connected outbuildings spreading out to the westerly side and the rear. Front and side yards are distinguished with lawns and mature plantings; a driveway enters the west side of the frontage in two places and arcs along the west end of the house and the garage. The rear of the parcel is cultivated with gardens.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The brothers William S. Wheeler (1819-94) and Moses B. Wheeler (1817-67) inherited from their grandfather, Moses Wheeler, 25 acres on the south side of North Street with a dwelling house, barn and other buildings and three acres on the north side opposite the dwelling house. Moses Wheeler lived in the house until he died in 1840. In that same year, Moses B. Wheeler conveyed his undivided half of the properties to his brother.¹ They were sons of William W. Wheeler and Susan Brown; their ancestor Moses Wheeler was, according to Essex County historian, Duane Hamilton Hurd, among those who "are supposed to all have been householders in 1744 in what is now Georgetown."²

Shortly after this transaction, William Searle Wheeler married Sarah Elizabeth Burnham (1821-1903), daughter of Moses Burnham and Elizabeth Merrill of Georgetown, and they may have initially set up housekeeping in the pre-existing dwelling on the south side of the street (not extant). In 1850 William was working as a shoemaker and owned real estate valued at \$5200. He and Sarah had two young daughters, Sarah Elizabeth, six years old, and one-year-old Clara. They also boarded a teenage shoemaker from New Hampshire, Samuel C. Rogers, and 22-year-old Mary Brookings, probably a domestic servant. Five years

¹ Moses B. Wheeler to William S. Wheeler, 31 March 1840, SECD 333:123.

² *History of Essex County, Massachusetts* (1888) 833.

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later William Wheeler was characterized as a farmer but still had a shoemaker boarding in his household along with a farm laborer. The 1856 map Essex County associates him with a house on the north side of the street, which documents the construction of the 468 North Street house to between 1850 and 1855.

By 1860 Wheeler's occupation was termed "trader" and then "merchant" in 1865. From 1870 on he is described as a retail grocer and probably was operating out of one of the wings of the large, rambling North Street house. The family was boarding a store clerk in 1870 and in 1880 both his daughter, Sarah E., and her husband, Danvers native Lewis Wells, were living in the house and working in the grocery. William S. Wheeler died in 1895, and in 1900 his widow, and the Wellses continued their residence in the house. Sarah E. Wheeler died in 1903, and her namesake daughter died four years later. In her 1906 will Sarah E. Wells left her North Street homestead farm, "which I inherited from my father, William S. Wheeler, and consists of and comprises the field and orchard where the house is situated," to Nellie J. Hardy, who had lived with Wells since Hardy was thirteen years old. Born in 1875, Nellie J. Hardy was the daughter of George and Sarah Gammage Tidd, and in 1900 she married Georgetown native Walter Prescott Hardy, then working as a box maker. The 1910 census enumerated the couple at the North Street address where Walter P. Hardy then worked as a farmer. Also in the household were their daughter Zella W., born in 1904, and Nellie's father George Tidd; the four are listed in the household again in 1920. Between 1920 and 1930 daughter Zella married Georgetown native Dwight Ira Minchin, the son of Henry J. and Myra Hatfield Minchin; he worked as an electric lineman.

In 1930 Walter and Nellie J. Hardy lived at 468 North Street with their daughter and son-in-law and a lodger who worked as a farm manager. The Hardy and Minchin couples shared the house in 1940 as well. In October 1941 Nellie J. Hardy sold "our home place" on North Street to her daughter Zella and her husband Dwight Minchin; the deed notes that she acquired the property through the will of Sarah E. Wells. Dwight Minchin died in 1946, and Zella Minchin remained at 468 North Street until she died, probably in 1989. The executor of her will sold the property to Martyn P. and Deborah L. Richards, in whose family 468 North Street remains. In 2016 Deborah L. Richards transferred title to Richards Irrevocable Trust.³

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³ Nellie J. Hardy to Dwight I. and Zella W. Minchin, 11 October 1941, SECD 3275:294; Ethel M. Watson executor will Zella W. Minchin, to Martyn P. and Deborah L. Richards, 15 June 1989, SECD 10038:241; Deborah L. Richards, 268 North St, to Maxwell Richards, trustee Richards Irrevocable Trust, 14 January 2016, SECD 35077:318. The property is shown as owned by Zella Minchin on "Plan of Land as Surveyed for Erie #4 Fire Association, Inc., North Street, Georgetown, Mass.," October 1967, SECP 5491:800.

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MAPS
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PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)



View from SW.



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View from east.

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Detail of entrance from SE.

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View from NE.

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.

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The William S. and Sarah E. Wheeler House, built about 1850, is a distinctive example of a mid nineteenth-century farmhouse with connected outbuildings including a store and a barn. The two-story wood frame house with a single-pile, center-hall plan with chimneys on the rear wall, a defining form in Georgetown's historic architectural context, is essentially intact along with its kitchen wing, two-story store annex and large aisle barn. Its mid nineteenth-century century construction date is reflected in late Greek Revival features—entrance architrave, paneled corner pilasters, and Classical cornices—and current Gothic Revival features, notably a gabled wall dormer on the westerly façade of the kitchen wing. With its essential materials and construction features intact, the significance of the house is not diminished by later additions of wings and garages.

William S. Wheeler (1819-94) inherited the farm from his grandfather, Moses Wheeler, in 1840 and built this large and imposing building group as he prospered as a local grocery merchant. He and his wife, Sarah E. Burnham, had two daughters, one of which, her mother's namesake, took over the farm and grocery business with her husband Lewis Wells. In her 1906 will Sarah E. Wells left her North Street homestead farm to Nellie J. Hardy, who had lived with the Wellses since Hardy was thirteen years old. She and her husband, shoe box maker-turned-farmer Walter Prescott Hardy, conveyed the property to their daughter Zella and her husband Dwight Minchin in 1941. Zella Minchin lived in the house until she died in 1989.

The property appears to meet National Register criteria A & C at a local level of significance as a distinctive example of Georgetown's evolving and surviving domestic and agricultural architecture.