

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

10B-34

Georgetown

GEO.20

Town/City: Georgetown

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

Photograph



View from SE

Address: 5 Elm Street

Historic Name: Adams Hall

Uses: Present: vacant

Original: residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1835 – ca. 1859

Source: Nelson in Hurd, *History of Essex County* (1888)

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone (granite slab)

Wall/Trim: wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

none

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.92 acres

Setting: The property is located at the intersection of Elm and East Main Streets (MA Route 133) on lot with mature hardwoods. Its commercial function relates to its proximity to East Main Street; Elm Street is primarily residential.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Kathryn Grover and Neil Larson

Organization: Georgetown Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): November 2009

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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.

Adams Hall is a two-story wood frame single dwelling with wood clapboard siding and a front gable roof. It is situated on a one-acre lot on the northwest corner of the intersection of Elm and East Main streets. Once part of a larger property, lots have been divided off on both Elm and East Main streets. The house is sited on the east side of the lot with its front facing Elm Street and the space around and behind it maintained as lawn ornamented with mature plantings.

Adams Hall is a distinctive example of Greek Revival-style domestic architecture in Georgetown. Its two-story Doric portico is reputedly the only such residential example in the entire town.¹ The building purportedly originated in a commercial use, but this is not reflected in its exterior design features. The two-story wood frame building has a three-bay front façade and a side hall plan with an entrance on the north side. The façade is framed by paneled pilasters, and the entrance and windows have shouldered architraves, both of which reflect the relaxed and more ornate characteristics expressed when the style was in its later stages in the late 1840s and 1850s. The entrance contains a pair of doors, neither sidelights nor transom, and lacks the trabeated architrave typical of earlier Greek Revival architecture. The front gable roof projects across the top of the porch and is framed as a pediment by a light entablature with a short frieze. The tympanum is sided with flush boards and contains two windows with simple trim with corner blocks at the tops. The sills of the tall windows on the ground floor extend nearly down to the porch floor. All windows on the façade contain six-over-six sash, which appear to be original. This evidence contradicts previous accounts of the building having been built in the 1830s with a store occupying the ground floor. (A more detailed inspection of this building may reveal that these features are the result of a renovation.)

The front half of the north wall is blank indicating the location of the entry hall and stairs; at the rear of the façade there are windows on both stories. The south wall has three windows widely spaced on each floor with chimneys in between. The windows have simple moldings with corner blocks at the tops and six-over-six sashes. A frieze distinguishes the roof line on both sides, and abuts the tops of second-story windows. There is a paneled corner pilaster at the rear of the south side, but on the north side, where the house abuts a 1.5-story rear kitchen ell there is only a slim corner board. The front façade is sided with flush boards, both under and above the porch; the side and rear walls, as well as the ell, are sided with narrow clapboards, all of which appear original. Box eaves above the side friezes were built to contain gutters, although they have been covered with the existing asphalt shingle roof.

Adams Hall is a distinctive example of Greek Revival-style domestic architecture in the town with the notable feature of a two-story Doric portico. The property is individually eligible for the National Register in the local context for its architectural integrity and distinction as well as its historical associations. It is a key component in an 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 local histories, aside from the road (now Massachusetts Route 133) connecting Georgetown to its parent Rowley to the east and Andover on the west, Elm Street is one of the oldest streets in Georgetown, having been opened to "public travel"

¹ Boston MA, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Historic Resource Inventory Records for Georgetown, Inventory Form for 5 Elm St., 1967.

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about 1686.² At that time between ten and twenty families lived in what was known as Rowley second (or west) parish or New Rowley. Beginning in the 1650s Rowley proprietors began to make land grants in the town's western reaches; in 1666-67, the town laid out three thousand acres in the area and granted John Spofford the job of penning cattle "the young cattle of the towne" where they had "been herded this last yeare." Pen Brook is named for these pens, which stood west of Elm Street. In 1732 families in the area successfully petitioned to form the Second Church of Rowley (ultimately Georgetown's First Congregational Church) and built a second meetinghouse at the junction of Elm and East Main Streets in 1769. In 1838 the General Court of Massachusetts incorporated Georgetown, which embraced most of the second parish.³

By 1800, according to a map showing the town center at that time, various branches of the Nelson family owned large tracts embracing both sides of Elm and Chestnut Street and both sides of Main Street in this section. All of these branches descended from Thomas Nelson (1615-about 1648), who was among the twenty families who had come to the New World in the winter of 1638 with the Puritan cleric Ezekiel Rogers (1590-166). With Rogers most of these families settled at Rowley, incorporated in 1639. The site of 5 Elm Street was part of a larger tract owned by Solomon Nelson Jr. (1742-1821), the great-grandson of Thomas Nelson (1638-1712), one of the immigrant Thomas's two sons whose descendants owned land in this area.

According to local histories, this property was owned by Josiah Adams (1757-1852) of the Byfield parish section of Newbury, on the northeast border of Georgetown.⁴ Adams was a farmer, a Revolutionary War veteran, and a fourth-generation descendant of the immigrant Robert Adams, who came from Devonshire to Massachusetts about 1629 and moved to Newbury in 1640.⁵ In 1888 Henry M. Nelson stated that the building's first floor was originally occupied by a store and the second by a hall "used for social purposes."⁶ A building in this location is labeled "Store" on the 1838 map of the town, the first time a building is depicted in this location, although it likely was not the building that now exists there, unless it was substantially altered.

Adams Hall is located across Elm Street from the site of the 1769 building of the First Congregational Church (originally the Second Congregational Church of Rowley). In March 1849, the town's Congregational Society purchased Adams Hall for eight hundred dollars to house the church vestry, which remained in the building for forty-one months until a new building was built for that purpose next door (north). In August 1852 the house became the home of the Reverend John M. Prince Jr., who had been ordained in Georgetown in February 1847, as a colleague and junior pastor to the Reverend Isaac Braman (1770-1858), who served the local congregation from 1797 until his death. Prince, born in Portland, Maine in 1820, graduated Bowdoin College in 1841 and Bangor Seminary in 1845. The 1850 census shows him living with Braman at 13 Elm Street, then the next house south. Prince remained in Georgetown until early February 1857, when he moved to a pastorate in Bridgewater, Massachusetts; he died there in 1858.

The next occupant of Adams Hall was probably Moses Tenney (1808-1903), who was born in Byfield parish. He operated a prosperous saw mill in Georgetown, and served at one time in the state senate. It is very possible that Tenney renovated an older utilitarian building into this grand temple-fronted residence. In 1856 newly elected Governor Henry Joseph Gardner, who ran on the anti-Catholic Know-Nothing ticket, appointed Tenney state treasurer, a position he held until 1861. It is not entirely clear how long Tenney occupied Adams Hall as a residence, but judging by his location in the 1870 federal census enumeration he seems to have moved to another part of Georgetown by that year. By 1880 Adams Hall was the home of horse dealer and stable keeper Jophanus Adams (1830-1913). Born in Maine, where his ancestors had lived since about 1650, Jophanus Adams's family had probably come from Rowley or nearby towns: Jewett, his father's first name, and Mighill, the first name of one of his brothers, are surnames of founding Rowley families. No genealogy, however, connects his branch to the immigrant Robert Adams.⁷

² See, for example, Benjamin F. Arrington, ed., *Municipal History of Essex County in Massachusetts* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1922), 146.

³ Thomas Gage, *The History of Rowley* (Boston: Ferdinand Andrews, 1840), 31-32, 320, 324, 326, 329.

⁴ Henry M. Nelson, "Town of Georgetown History," in *History of Essex County, Massachusetts, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men*, ed. D. Hamilton Hurd (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis and Co., 1888), 1: 836.

⁵ Andrew N. Adams, *A Genealogical History of Robert Adams, of Newbury, Mass., and His Descendants, 1635-1900* (Rutland, VT: Tuttle Co., 1900); *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors in the Revolutionary War* (Boston: Secretary of the Commonwealth, 1902), 62.

⁶ Nelson, "Georgetown History," 1:836.

⁷ See Adams, *Genealogical History*, and, for the Jophanus Adams lineage, the Colby Connection website, <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=SHOW&db=dmcolby&recno=7224>,

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Jophanus Adams moved from his native Wilton, Maine, to Georgetown by 1855, the year he married Laura Ann Brocklebank, a descendant of one of Georgetown's most prominent founding families. His father Jewett and brothers Lyman and Warren followed him to Georgetown by 1870, and Warren settled in Rowley. The migration of the Adamses was part of a far larger nineteenth-century movement from northern New England's rural areas into the burgeoning textile and shoe manufacturing towns and cities of southern New England. By 1835, led by Lynn and Haverhill, the towns of Essex County led Massachusetts in boot and shoe manufacture. In the latter part of that decade Rowley was fifth among all Essex towns in the value of its shoe and boot output, and Georgetown—then still part of Rowley—produced the bulk of Rowley shoes. In 1837 Rowley shops made boots and shoes valued at \$315,360; about the same time the value of these products made in Georgetown alone was \$221,900. By 1880 the town's shops and factories made shoes and boots worth \$500,000.

At his first marriage in 1855 Jophanus Adams was listed as a shoemaker, but he did not remain one, and only one of his four sons worked in the industry. By 1870 Adams had become a livery stable proprietor, and the 1880 census identifies him as a horse dealer. Adams placed an advertisement for his "sale stable" at the corner of Elm and East Main Streets in the 1885-86 Groveland and Georgetown directory" noting that his stock always featured "reliable Horses" for both farm and family use and that horses could be "exchanged to suit customers." He ran one of three liveryies in the town. By 1880 Adams's son Ernest, born about 1858, was working in the business, and by 1885 another son, Fred Dennis Adams, born about 1863, had begun to work for his father. Son Henry Lyman Adams, who worked as an express manager, still lived in his father's Elm Street household. By the turn of the century a fourth son, Lewis (sometimes shown as Louis), had joined the family business and probably by that time had built 9 Elm Street, between his father's house and the former Braman parsonage. Clarence Cushman Adams, born about 1872 and the son of Adams and his second wife Caroline Cushman Crafts, whom he married in 1870, began his working life as a shoe stitcher for Georgetown Boot and Shoe Company; by 1912 he was a foreman there and had moved to 150 Elm Street. Jophanus Adams's 1870 household also included his second wife Caroline's three sons, one of whom, Charles Crafts, was working as an "ostler," probably for his stepfather.

The Adamses were certainly living at 5 Elm Street by 1880, when the federal census enumerates the family next to Isaac Braman's. It seems likely that Adams Hall was the "unoccupied" building listed before the Braman house in the 1860 census, and the shoemaker Edward H Foster may have lived there in 1870 judging by his place between William Nelson (at 8 Elm) and the widowed Sarah Braman in that year's census enumeration.

Town directories through 1912 show Jophanus Adams, then seventy-one years old, as a horse dealer. In that year both Ernest, who had moved to a home on Main Street, and Louis still worked for him, and after Jophanus's death in July 1913 Louis Adams assumed control of the business. In 1893 Jophanus had married a third time, to Alfarata A. Dodge Adams of Rowley, daughter of the stone mason Amos Dodge and widow of Jophanus's brother Warren, Alfarata Adams and Jophanus's youngest daughter Carrie lived at 5 Elm Street at least through 1930.⁸ How long they remained at that address is unknown, but they may have sold the property soon after 1930 to Everett G. Spaulding, a descendant of Georgetown's Brocklebank family who had acquired the 1660 Samuel Brocklebank house at 108 East Main Street in 1931. Spaulding made furniture in the style of the early national period and sometimes modeled pieces after the work of Newburyport cabinetmaker Joseph Short (1771-1819). Spaulding's factory was at 118 East Main Street, and he used Adams Hall as his reproduction furniture showroom for sixty years. In 2006-7 5 Elm Street housed the collections of the town's Peabody Library during its renovation and expansion. The building is currently vacant and the property advertised for sale.

⁸ Censuses and vital statistics consistently show Carrie P. Adams's date of birth as between 1867 and 1869, after the death of Jophanus's first wife Laura in 1867 and before his 1 January 1870 marriage to Caroline Cushman Crafts. That she bears the same name as Crafts strongly suggests that she was Crafts' child and presumably born out of wedlock.

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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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[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

Adams Hall is a distinctive example of Greek Revival-style domestic architecture in the town with the notable feature of a two-story Doric portico. The property is individually eligible for the National Register in the local context for its architectural integrity and distinction as well as its historical associations. It is a key component in an Elm Street historic district.

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View from E

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View from NE



Aerial view from SE