

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

504 North Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.280

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



View from NE.



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

18-25

Georgetown

GEO.280

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: 504 North Street

Historic Name: Francis & Hannah Hills House

Uses: Present: single family residential

Original: two family residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1803

Source: deeds & visual assessment

Style/Form: Federal

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: vinyl clapboards

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Additions on rear, dormers, mid 20th century

Vinyl siding added

Window sash replaced

Condition: fair

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.69 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 Francis and Hannah Hills House is a one-story wood frame single dwelling with a gable roof built about 1803. Its symmetrical form and center-chimney plan represents a late phase of an enduring New England house type. The five-bay front façade contains an unembellished center entrance. A modest cornice with returns distinguishes the roof edge. The easterly gable end contains two windows on two levels; the westerly end has been altered to contain five windows on the first story. Two gable dormers were added to the roof in the front in the 20th century, and a shed dormer was raised on the rear. What may have originated as an early kitchen wing on the westerly end of the rear façade was enlarged into the existing two-story, flat-roofed annex. The house is sited in the northeast corner of the lot close to both North Street and Wells Avenue. The rest of the lot is open with driveways entering from both roads.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

In October 1821 Francis Hills deeded to Reuben Hardy, soon to be his son-in-law, 14.5 acres of this farm with the buildings on it, bounded on the west by the land he and his father owned. The next year Hardy deeded back to Hills 7.5 acres, along with half of the house in which Francis Hills was then living and other buildings on the property.¹ Hardy, from Newbury, married Francis Hills's eldest daughter Sarah Ann in 1823; the 1830 Georgetown map shows "R. Hardy" with a house at this corner. Francis Hills (1778-1852), also formerly of Newbury, had shared a 105-acre farm with his father Obadiah Hills (1751-1825), since 1805; it is likely that the Hardy house had been part of that farm, as the deed to Hardy mentions buildings. The 1830 map depicts a house at the northwestern extremity of Wells Road and associates it with C. Hills, which probably is a misnomer for Obadiah. By 1856, after Obadiah Hills died, the house was occupied by S. Wells, hence the current naming of the road; Mrs. O. Hills, Obadiah's widow, was living in a house midway between there and North Street. Francis Hills married Hannah Tenney of Georgetown in 1803, which is an appropriate estimated construction date for the house.

How long Reuben Hardy and his family remained at 504 North Street is unclear. By 1850 they had moved to Ipswich, where Hardy worked as a shoemaker; the household included his wife, their eight children, and Sarah Hardy's parents, Francis and Hannah Hills. In 1850 their oldest son William Francis Hills (1810-71) and his wife Elizabeth J. Hills sold to his younger brother Albert Smith Hills, born in 1816, a large parcel on both sides of North Street, and in the same year John M. and Mary S. Dobson of Ipswich sold Albert Hills half of a house at the corner of North Street and Wells Avenue and the land under and adjacent to it for \$550.² No recorded deed exists documenting the Dobsons' purchase of the house. In 1853 Albert Hills sold the same parcel back to the Dobsons, and "J. Dobson" is shown as the owner of the 504 North Street house on the 1856 map of Georgetown. By 1855, however, the Dobson family had moved to Taunton; there, as in Ipswich, he worked as a barber and hairdresser. Whether they ever lived at 504 North Street is unknown.

By 1871, "the Dobson place" was among the holdings of the heirs of William F. Hills. The 1872 and 1884 maps label the house "Mrs. Hills," but Elizabeth J. Hills died in 1873, and in May 1871 her children and grandchildren deeded the 1-acre Dobson place to William Searle Wheeler (1818-94), whose family farm was just to the west at 468 North Street (GEO.279). Wheeler sold it and four other lots to William P. Hills, one of the sons of William F. Hills, and it remained in their family into the 1940s.³

¹ Francis Hills to Reuben Hardy, 7 October 1821, SECD 227:274; Reuben Hardy to Francis Hills, 11 November 1822, SECD 233:268.

² William F. and Elizabeth J. Hills to Albert S. Hills, Ipswich MA, 5 April 1850, SECD 426:173; William F. and Elizabeth J. Hills to Albert S. Hills, Ipswich MA, 5 April 1850, SECD 426:173.

³ William S. Wheeler to William P. Hills, 27 April 1872, SECD 890:97.

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Born in 1843, William P. Hills was the son of William Francis and Elizabeth J. Hills. By 1873 he had married Henrietta Pearson of Rowley, and their son Hudson P. Hills was born in that year. The 1880 census show William P. and Henrietta Hills in this North Street neighborhood with their children Hudson P., Merritt Custar, Maude, Nettie Stanley, and William Rodney. William P. Hills worked as a shoe heeler in 1880, but by 1900 the census shows him farming. He then lived at 504 North Street with his wife, son William, and a domestic servant. William (in some records shown as Hudson P. Hills). In 1917 William R. Hills deeded 504 North Street to his son William P. Hills.⁴ By 1920 William P. Hills was seventy-six years old and was sharing the house with his son William, William's wife Grace Short Hills (they married in Newburyport in 1910), and a boarder. William P. Hills died in January 1921, and in 1930 the household included William R., by then a nursery worker, his wife Grace, their daughter Natalie, born in 1923, and Grace's widowed mother Jane D. Short. The 1932 street directory shows William R. and Grace Hills in a at the corner of North Street and Wells Avenue, then unnumbered but clearly 504 North Street. By 1940 the household included William and Grace Hills and their daughter. Hills was working for the Works Progress Administration.

By 1942 William R. Hills was still working for the WPA, but he had moved to Central Street in Georgetown, and the town owned 504 North Street. In April 1940 it sold it to Bertha D. Noyes, who owned it until 1947. The property changed hands quite often after that point. Current owner Mary F. Greenwood acquired 504 North Street in 1982.⁵

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MAPS

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Map of Georgetown. 1856. In Walling. H. F. *A Topographical Map Essex County Massachusetts*. Boston: Smith and Morley, 1856.

⁴ William P. Hills to William R. Hills, 7 April 1917, SECD 2361:575.

⁵ Town of Georgetown to Bertha D. Noyes, 30 April 1940, SECD 3216:285; Samuel V. and Bertha D. Noyes to William W. and Helen C. Thompson, 30 June 1947, SECD 3555:554; Salvatore J. Bordonaro, 504 North St, to Mary F. Greenwood, Malden MA, 1 December 1982, SECD 7020:507.

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PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)



View from SE.

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View from NW.