

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

55 North Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.259

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

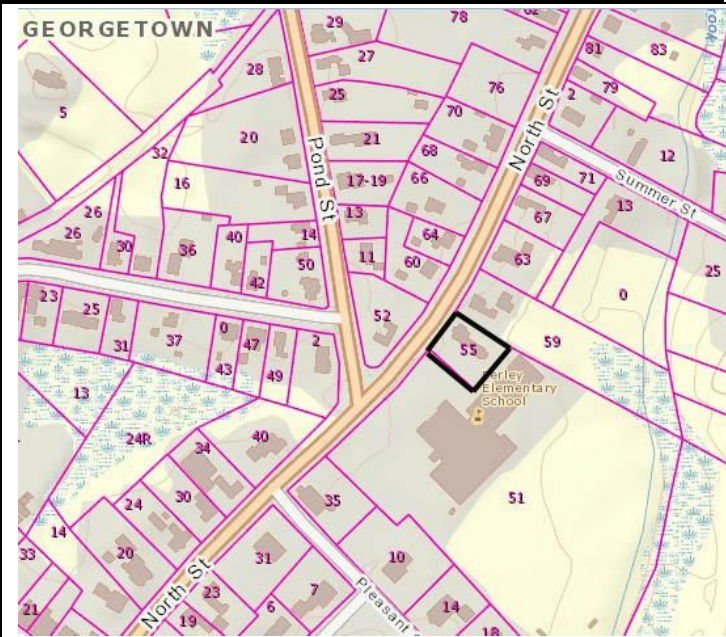
FORM B – BUILDING

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)

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

55 North Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.259

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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

11A-26

Georgetown

GEO.259

Setting: Part of a densely developed streetscape of single-family houses within the village center.

Town/City: Georgetown

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

Address: 55 North Street

Historic Name: Pearson-Butler House

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

Date of Construction: ca. 1840

Source: deeds & visual assessment

Style/Form: Italianate

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
Garage (attached)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
Entrance pavilion added, ca. 1870.
Addition on rear, late 19th century

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.33 acre

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

55 North Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.259

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

☒ 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 Pearson-Butler House is a two-story wood frame single dwelling with a gable roof built about 1840. Its bilaterally symmetrical form and single-pile center-passage plan with chimneys on the back wall represents a house type common in Georgetown in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The five-bay front façade contains a center entrance contained in a two-story gabled pavilion added in ca. 1870; the entrance trim, composed of sidelights divided by molded pilasters and an arched transom appears to be the original doorway moved out to face the addition. Pairs of windows flank the entrance, which is surmounted by an arched window; a modest Classical entablature with deep soffit and short returns distinguishes the roof edge. Two windows are contained on each story of the end walls with a single window centered in the attic. A two-story cross-gable kitchen wing attached to the rear façade is aligned with the southerly end wall where a second entrance and porch are located. The southerly side of the wing contains four windows in each story with no other entrance. A wide blank space in the center of the façade indicates the location of a partition between the kitchen in the front and service rooms in the rear. The cooking hearth appears to have been located against the back wall of the house where it shared a chimney. A two-story flat-roof addition was built within the area where the house and wing form an L on the northerly side. A one-story wood frame outbuilding with a gable roof is attached to the rear of the kitchen wing by a short hyphen. With two garage doors in the north-facing gable end, this may be an older barn and/or shop later adapted to its current use.

The house is situated on the north side of a small lot set back behind a small yard and screened from the street and adjoining school parking lot by mature plantings. The rear of the property is paved for parking.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

In August 1840 Nathaniel Nelson sold Georgetown hotel and tavern keeper John B. Savory a quarter-acre lot of land for \$200. It was bounded by his own and other land he had recently sold, and it was deeded with the proviso that Savory build and maintain fence on the boundaries meeting Nelson's land. Savory, who lived further north on the west side of North Street, built a house on this lot, possibly the first to appear on the east side of North Street north of his hotel on the corner of East Main Street (not extant), which he sold to Georgetown trader Moses Carter. In 1847 Carter sold it to its first longtime occupant, Belinda Pearson.¹ The Pearsons do not appear in the 1850 census in this neighborhood, but in 1855 they are listed here after Daniel Pierce, who lived at 52 North Street (GEO.258).

Born in Rowley in 1807, Charles Noyes Pearson was the son of Noyes and Mary Searle Pearson, and in 1843 he married Belinda Hills Thurlow. He was a shoemaker, and the 1856 map of Georgetown appears to show a house and shop attached to his name. Pearson died in June 1856, and his widow might have moved out of the house and kept it for its rental income; the 1865 census shows her as a shoe stitcher boarding in the home of widow Hazel Hazen. In 1867 she sold 55 North Street to Oliver S. Butler; he and his family owned the property until 1901.

Born in East Harwich on Cape Cod in 1827, Oliver Smith Butler was a Methodist clergyman at the time he bought 55 North Street. In 1847 he married Sarah Maria Ferguson, a native of Sandwich, New Hampshire, then living in Danvers, and the couple lived in Danvers and Newbury before coming to Georgetown. They had four children—John D., born in 1847 in Sandwich; Maria P., born in 1850 in Danvers; Sarah F., born in 1855; and William Arthur, born in 1859 in Newbury. The 1870 directory lists Oliver S. Butler as the town's postmaster with a house on North Street, and the 1872 map attaches his name to this house. In 1880 he was listed in the census as both a clergyman and postmaster, and he lived there with his wife, his mother-in-law Sarah

¹ Nathaniel Nelson to John B. Savory, 21 August 1840, SECD 321:91; Nathaniel Nelson to John B. Savory, 21 August 1840, SECD 321:91; Moses Carter to Belinda G. Pearson, 16 February 1847, SECD 439:262.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

55 North Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.259

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Ferguson, and an 11-year-old granddaughter, Bertha Larkin. The agricultural census for 1880 lists him with six tilled acres, six acres of meadow, and \$175 in livestock.

Sarah Ferguson Butler died in 1892, and the 1900 census shows Oliver Butler as retired and living with one male boarder. He died in 1903. His will, made in 1890, had directed that everything but his homestead be sold to benefit his wife should she have survived him; if his wife predeceased him, the estate was to go in equal quarter-shares to sons John D. and William A., daughter Sarah F., and granddaughter Bertha Larkin. Two years before he died Oliver Butler sold the homestead to the trustees of the Perley Free School, which owned it until 1941.² The school trustees rented the house to staff; from at least 1925 to 1932 Edward Messon Tucker, the principal of Perley Free School, rented it with his wife Helen. He died in late December 1932.

In November 1941, the trustees sold 55 North Street to Kenneth B. and Mary A. Ross. Kenneth Ross was born in 1914 in Haverhill and worked as a civil engineer, in Beverly, for the Massachusetts Department of Public Works; his father, Grantley Ross, was a civil engineer for Essex County. Kenneth and Mary Ross had two daughters, Pauline and Ruth. By October 1960 the Rosses had moved to Hot Springs, Arkansas, and sold 55 North Street to Hazel H. and Joseph F. Kent of Beverly, whose family owned it for the next two decades. Current owners Charles M. and Margot B. Kinston acquired the property in 1980.³

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

AmericanAncestors.org.

Ancestry.com.

Assessor's Records, Georgetown and Rowley. 1883, 1902, 1920, 1933.

Bureau of the Census. United States Census, 1790-1930.

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

Southern Essex County Registry of Deeds website, salemdeeds.com.

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.

Georgetown, Boxford, Byfield, Newbury, and West Newbury, Massachusetts, Directory. Boston: W. E. Shaw, 1901-2, 1905.

North Essex Directory for Boxford, Georgetown, Merrimac, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury, West Newbury. Salem, MA: Henry M. Meek Publishing Co., 1907, 1909-10, 1912, 1914-15, 1916-17, 1918, 1925.

Ipswich, Boxford, Byfield, Georgetown, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury, Salisbury Beach, Topsfield, West Newbury Directory. Vol. 1, 1932-'34. Beverly, MA, and Portland, ME: Crowley & Lunt, 1932.

Haverhill, Mass. Suburban Directory for Georgetown, Groveland, Merrimac and West Newbury 1940. North Hampton, NH: Crosby Publishing Co., 1940.

Ipswich, Boxford, Georgetown, Middleton, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury, Topsfield, West Newbury Directory 1957. New Haven, CT: Price & Lee Co., 1957.

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.

² Oliver S. Butler to trustees of the Perley Free School, 1 November 1901, SECD 1658:119.

³ Trustees of the Perley Free School to Kenneth B. Mary Ross, 1 November 1941, SECD 3278:132; Trustees of the Perley Free School to Kenneth B. Mary Ross, 1 November 1941, SECD 3278:132; Trustees of the Perley Free School to Kenneth B. Mary Ross, 1 November 1941, SECD 3278:132.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

55 North Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.259

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

“Map of New Rowley Surveyed and Drawn by Philander Anderson 1830.” Georgetown Historical Society.
Map of Georgetown. 1856. In Walling. H. F. *A Topographical Map Essex County Massachusetts*. Boston: Smith and Morley, 1856.
Atlas of Essex County, Massachusetts. Philadelphia: D. G. Beers and Co., 1872). Plates 59 and 61.
“Town of Georgetown Mass.” and “Village of Georgetown Mass.” In *Atlas of Essex County, Massachusetts* (Boston: George H. Walker, 1884).
“Georgetown, Mass. 1887.” Drawn and Published by George E. Norris, Brockton, Massachusetts. Troy, NY: Burleigh Lithographic Establishment, 1887.”
Insurance Maps of Haverhill Including Bradford, Groveland & Georgetown, Massachusetts. New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co., 1893; Sanborn Map Co., 1906, 1949.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

55 North Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.259

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)



View from NW.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

55 North Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.259

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



Detail of front entrance.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

55 North Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.259

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



Aerial view from south. Source: [bing.com/maps](https://www.bing.com/maps).

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

55 North Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.259

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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.

The Pearson-Butler House, built about 1840, is a distinctive example of early nineteenth-century domestic architecture in the town center. It has characteristics in common with other houses from this period in Georgetown, notably a single-pile center hall plan with chimneys on the rear wall. About 1870 its entrance, which likely was contained in a shallow vestibule popular in Georgetown, was moved to the front of a two-story pavilion added at that time. The house has a large kitchen wing that connects by a hyphen to an outbuilding that may have incorporated a shoe shop; it has been altered into or replaced by the existing garage. The house was built by innkeeper John B. Savory, apparently on speculation as he immediately sold it to another merchant before it was bought by Belinda Pearson in 1847. Her husband Charles Noyes Pearson was a shoemaker. In 1867 she sold 55 North Street to Oliver S. Butler, a Methodist clergyman, for a time, the town's postmaster, who made the changes to the front façade of the house. The property meets National Register criteria A and C as a contributing feature in a potential historic district in the town center, the boundaries of which have yet to be determined.