

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

## Photograph



View from NW

## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Kathryn Grover and Neil Larson

**Organization:** Georgetown Historical Commission

**Date (month / year):** January 2010

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

10A 42

Georgetown

GEO.92

**Town/City:** Georgetown

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

**Address:** 80 Elm Street

**Historic Name:** William & Lizzie Thomas House

**Uses:** Present: residence

Original: residence

**Date of Construction:** 1900

**Source:** census records; visual analysis

**Style/Form:** Classical Revival

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

### Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**  
Garage

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):

Garage added  
Rear wing added

**Condition:** fair

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 2 acres

**Setting:** This property sits on a slight rise on the east side of Elm Street and borders the property of Georgetown Sand and Gravel Company on the east. Elm Street is a primarily residential street.

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GEORGETOWN

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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.*

The William & Lizzie Thomas House is a two-story wood frame single dwelling built ca. 1900 with wood clapboard siding and a front gable roof. It is situated at the north end of an irregularly-shaped two-acre lot. A large lawn occupies the southern side of the lot; the east side is wooded.

The three-bay front façade contains an entrance on the right side embellished with a flat hood supported by massive scrolled brackets. This feature, as well as the attenuated Classical corner and eave details, is common to late-19<sup>th</sup>-century domestic architecture in industrial towns in eastern Massachusetts. The north wall contains a regular window pattern; two large gable dormers have been added to the roof. The south wall is articulated with staggered shed-roof bays that contain the interior staircase; a third bay window is placed in the rear of the wall, and a gable dormer—matching those on the north side—has been added to the roof. Historic windows contain original two-over-two sash. A two-story ell is attached to the rear (east) end, and a one-story wing has been constructed diagonally linked to the southeast corner.

A two-story wood frame garage with a front gable roof and two vehicle bays is sited just north of the house and is connected to it by a short breezeway.

The William & Lizzie Thomas House is a distinctive example of a late-19<sup>th</sup>-century village dwelling. The house is essentially intact to its ca. 1900 construction date and is distinguished by a novel staircase enclosure on the south wall. It is a contributing component of a historic district on Elm Street.

### 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” about 1686.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Benjamin F. Arrington, ed., *Municipal History of Essex County in Massachusetts* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1922), 146.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Gage, *The History of Rowley* (Boston: Ferdinand Andrews, 1840), 31-32, 320, 324, 326, 329.

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1638 with the Puritan cleric Ezekiel Rogers (1590-166). With Rogers most of these families settled at Rowley, incorporated in 1639.

The extent to which the Nelson lands reached southward is not clear from the 1800 village map, so whether the lot on which 70 Elm is sited was originally Nelson property is not yet known. The house here was built in 1900 for William Thomas, a shoemaker born in Ireland in 1849. He came to the United States in 1865 and in 1874 married Sarah Lizzie Danforth, a native of Ipswich then living in Georgetown; she was eighteen years old. In 1870 Thomas was boarding in the household shared by shoemaker Tobias Gurley and Eunice Morse, probably on Chestnut Street; he appears to have been at the same location in 1880, when he and his wife shared their house with his mother-in-law Abigail Cole Danforth and her daughter, also named Abigail. Born in Hingham, Massachusetts, about 1821, Abigail Cole married Jeremiah Danforth, a shoemaker and native of Groveland who died in October 1863 in Virginia from wounds he received in battle in December 1862.<sup>3</sup> She died in 1884, and her daughter married shoemaker William Hitchcock of nearby Hamilton a year later.

By 1910 Thomas was working at Georgetown Boot and Shoe Company, organized in 1885, as a machine operator. He died in September 1915, at which point his widow Sarah moved to 137 Elm Street. By 1933 the house was occupied by Densley L. and Joseph H. Keach, and a shop as well as a house stood on the property. By 1942 Joseph A. MacDougall, a town employee who had earlier lived at 62 Elm, was living at this address, and by 1952 John Joyall owned the property. By 1976 John R. and Ruth A. Jewett owned 80 Elm, and they sold it that year to current owner Jeremy Barnard.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Massachusetts in the Army and Navy during the War of 1861-65* (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1896), 451, states that Danforth, in the 19<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry, died at Spring House Hospital in December 1862 of wounds received at Antietam. Georgetown vital records show the same date of death (5 October 1863) for Daniel W. Bryant, also in the 19<sup>th</sup> Regiment, who died at Sharpsburg, Maryland, on 5 October 1862.

<sup>4</sup> John R. and Ruth A. Jewett to Jeremy Barnard, 17 October 1976, SED 6286:576.

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- Direct Tax List for 1798 for Massachusetts, New England Historical Genealogical Society website, [www.newenglandancestors.org](http://www.newenglandancestors.org).
- Gage, Thomas. *The History of Rowley, Anciently Including Bradford, Boxford, and Georgetown, from the Year 1639 to the Present Time*. Boston: F. Andrews, 1840.
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- Resident and Business Directory of Groveland and Georgetown, Mass., for 1885-1886*. Needham, MA: Local Directory Publishing Co., 1885.

## 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.
- "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.
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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.*

The William & Lizzie Thomas House is a distinctive example of a late-19<sup>th</sup>-century village dwelling. The house is essentially intact to its ca. 1900 construction date and is distinguished by a novel staircase enclosure on the south wall. It is a contributing component of a historic district on Elm Street.



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View from SW



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View from SW



Aerial view from SW