

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

83 North Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.265

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)

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

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

11B-130

Georgetown

GEO.265

Town/City: Georgetown

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

Address: 83 North Street

Historic Name: Taylor-Murphy House

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

Date of Construction: ca. 1770, ca. 1865

Source: deeds & historic maps

Style/Form: Classical Revival

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Moved ca. 1865

Additions on east side and rear

Condition: good

Moved: no ☐ yes ☒ **Date:** ca. 1865

Acreage: 0.52 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 Taylor-Murphy House appears to be an earlier building than the deed and map history of the parcel on which it is located indicates, which suggests that it was moved here from an undocumented location. Because of the property's association with the Baptist parsonage, the house may have been moved from the site occupied by both the Baptist Church and the parsonage on the west side of North Street above the point where the Penn Brook crosses the road. However, the neighboring house at 85 North Street also appears to be an eighteenth-century building moved to this location in the mid-nineteenth century. In both cases, a more intensive analysis of the construction history of these houses is required before any clear determination of their histories can be made.

The house at 83 North Street is oriented with its five-bay front façade turned away from the street towards the south. The asymmetrical spacing of the bays indicates that the house likely began with a smaller, side-passage plan comprising the entrance and windows on the east side of the house, with the gap between the door and the windows representing the space for a center chimney. The footprint depicted on the 1872 Georgetown map purports to show the plan had been enlarged either before or at the time it was moved. Different characteristics of the wall at the basement level side-to-side hint that the addition was made after the side-passage house was erected on its current brick basement. Likewise, a comparison of the basements of the front and rear saltbox sections of the house shows different methods. The lean-to probably does not have a basement. Small "half-houses" were the norm for modest eighteenth-century non-farm dwellings (see 124 North Street), and they often were enlarged as time went on and living standards changed, particularly in the nineteenth century. So there is much here physically and visually to suggest the house did not originate in this form, place, or documented era.

One chimney remains on what would have been the rear wall of the east room of the house. The earlier west half would have had an internal chimney, perhaps shared with the lean-to. End walls contained one window centered on each floor in the traditional local manner for plans one-room-deep. The house is sited at the street end of a narrow, deep lot and tight against the north property line and neighboring house at 85 North Street. It is set back behind a small yard with a row of trees screening it from the street. A driveway runs along the southerly boundary and terminates at a parking area just behind the house. The rear of the lot, extending back to Pen Brook, is mostly wooded.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The chain of title for 83 North Street can be traced only to 1867, when a committee of the Baptist Society of Georgetown sold 1.5 acres for \$300 and, in 1869, the 38.25-acre "Parsonage pasture" for \$500 to Francis Marden of Boxford. This pasture extended from the land of David Haskell, who owned a tract on the north side of Summer Street, to Pen Brook, which would have included the site of this house; the descriptions suggest these tracts were contiguous. No house is shown on this site on either the 1830 or 1856 maps of Georgetown Center, but by 1872 a house labeled "F. Marden" is shown at what is now 85 North Street and one labeled W.E. Taylor at 83 North Street. If either of these houses dates to 1770, as town records have it, they must have been moved to the site.¹

¹ Edwin P. Perkins and Flint Weston, Georgetown, and Rufus D. Lothrop, Bradford, committee of the Baptist Society, Georgetown, to Francis Marden, Boxford, 15 June 1867, SECD 735:185; John W. Morrill, Stephen S. Hardy, and Jonathan T. Plumer, committee of Baptist Society, Georgetown, to Francis Marden, Boxford, 17 May 1869, SECD 774:140. It is impossible to determine from local histories, but the house might have been the so-called "old meeting house" of Rowley Second Parish (Georgetown), which had been acquired by Rowley Baptists in 1768, taken down and moved to Bradford, and in 1781 taken down again and moved to Georgetown "directly in front of the saw-mill then or soon after owned by John Wood," according to local historian Henry M. Nelson. The church is depicted in this location on the 1830 map of Rowley

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The 1872 map shows, running north from David Haskell's land, an unlabeled dwelling, the shoe shop of Albro Kennedy, another shoe shop (shown on the 1856 map), a house owned by W. E. Taylor, and a house owned by Francis Marden, all ranging between Pen Brook and the east side of North Street. In 1870 Marden had sold shoe manufacturers Daniel Moulton and Samuel Little 87.5 square rods, bounded on the south by Albro Kennedy's property. The deed indicated that the parcel was "a strip of land five rods in wide from said road [North Street, here called the Newburyport road] to the brook with the buildings standing on the same." In January 1875, Little and Moulton sold that tract with its buildings to William E. Taylor, who, the 1872 map indicates, was probably already living at 83 North Street.²

The 1865 census appears to show shoemaker William E. Taylor in this neighborhood with his wife Mary and children Forest (sometimes shown as LaForest), William, and Sarah. Born in Danbury, New Hampshire, in 1827, Taylor was living and working in Georgetown by 1847, when he married Mary Green Jewett, the daughter of Gorham L. M. Jewett and his wife Mary Jane Scilly Jewett.³ He had served in the 50th Massachusetts Infantry in 1862-63, and the 1870 census shows Taylor as a shoemaker with \$900 in real property; son LaForest was an apothecary's clerk, and the family had the income of two boarders. By 1880 he and his wife were residing alone at 83 North Street. Mary Jewett Taylor died in 1899, and the 1900 census shows William E. Taylor in the house with his grandchildren, Forest E. Colburn and Susie M. Colburn.; they were the children of Taylor's daughter Sarah, w ho had married Charles E. Colburn in 1879 and had died in 1895.

William E. Taylor died in 1906, and in May 1907 the executor of his will sold 83 North Street to Sarah E. Murphy.⁴ Sarah Woodbury Murphy, born in Georgetown in 1881, was the daughter of George Woodbury, a native of Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, and Sarah M. Wildes of Rowley. In 1899 she married shoemaker Lawrence L. Murphy, the son of Dennis and Margaret Cummings Murphy of Georgetown. In 1900 the couple and their infant daughter Olive were living with her parents on their Andover Street farm. The 1910 census shows them on North Street with their daughter Olive and son Sylvester, born in 1902; Murphy was a shoe factory stock fitter.

In 1912 Sarah Murphy died after a complicated pregnancy, and son Sylvester died five years later of scarlet fever. In 1916 Lawrence Murphy was living at 83 North Street with his widowed mother Margaret. By July 1921 he had remarried, and he and his wife Mary L. Murphy owned and occupied at 83 North Street into the 1940s. By March 1948 Lawrence Murphy had died, and his widow sold the property to Nathan L. and Helen R. Smallidge, whose family owned it until 1973. Current owners David D. Nastasia and Pamela M. Waggoner acquired the property in 1983.⁵

labeled for some reason "No.4." The parsonage of Rev. E. Wilmarth is located just south of the church. Both are on the west side of North Street and above where the Penn Brook crosses the road. In January 1823 the brothers Samuel and Benjamin Plummer gave the Baptist Society the 60-acre "Shepard farm," which included the so-called Baptist parsonage farm on the east side of North Street. By 1829 the old Baptist church was deemed beyond repair, and at auction in 1830 Orin Weston bought it for \$89. A deed documenting this transfer has not been found. In 1829 a new Baptist meeting house was built "near the old house" on the parsonage grounds. No Georgetown history through 1922 indicates what became of this old meetinghouse, and no deed has been located in which Orin Weston transferred title back to the Baptist Society before 1869.

² Francis Marden, Boxford, to Samuel Little and Daniel E. Moulton, 14 May 1870, SECD 921:161; Samuel Little and Daniel E. Moulton to William E. Taylor, 26 January 1875, SECD 921:162.

³ In March 1830 Gorham Jewett legally changed his name to Gorham Laforace Miranda Jewett; see List of Persons Whose Names Have Been Changed in This Commonwealth, 1780-1892 (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1893), 59. He had a son LaForest Burton Jewett in 1829, and his daughter Mary Jewett Taylor had a son originally called LaForest and later Forest.

⁴ William M. Currier, Danvers MA, executor of will of William S. Taylor, to Sarah E. Murphy, 9 May 1907, SECD 1873:128.

⁵ Lawrence L. Murphy to Mary Murphy, 5 July 1921, SECD 2488:347; Olive M. Petty to Mary Murphy, 2 July 1921, SECD 2488:347; Mary Murphy to Nathan L. and Helen R. Smallidge, 23 March 1948, SECD 3594:132; Robert C. Smallidge, Salisbury MA, to Morgan K. Meehan, 12 March 1973, SECD 5955:515; John W. and Christine L. Guthro to David D. Nastasia and Pamela M. Waggoner, 23 February 1983, SECD 7056:568; David D. Nastasia and Pamela M. Waggoner to David D. Nastasia and Pamela M. Waggoner, trustees North Street Realty Trust, 83 North St, 27 May 2016, SECD 34978:47.

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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.

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"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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PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)



View from SW

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View from NW.

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 Taylor-Murphy House, probably built about 1770 and moved to its current site about 1865, is a distinctive example late eighteenth-century domestic architecture in Georgetown, although its precise origin is undocumented. The two-story side-passage plan house was enlarged in one or more stages to a center-passage plan with rear lean-to wing. The properties containing two apparently eighteenth-century houses at 83 and 85 North Street are located on land sold by the Baptist Society of Georgetown to Francis Marden of Boxford in 1867. Historic maps depict none of these buildings until 1872. The land's association with the Baptist Society suggest the houses may have come from church land farther north. The 1872 map shows the owner of the house at 83 North Street to be shoemaker William E. Taylor; a shoe shop is also depicted. He and his family lived and worked on the property until 1907 when the executor of Taylor's will sold the property to Sarah E. Murphy, wife of shoemaker Lawrence L. Murphy. 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.