

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

85 North Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.266

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

## FORM B – BUILDING

Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

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

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

**Organization:** Town of Georgetown Historical Commission

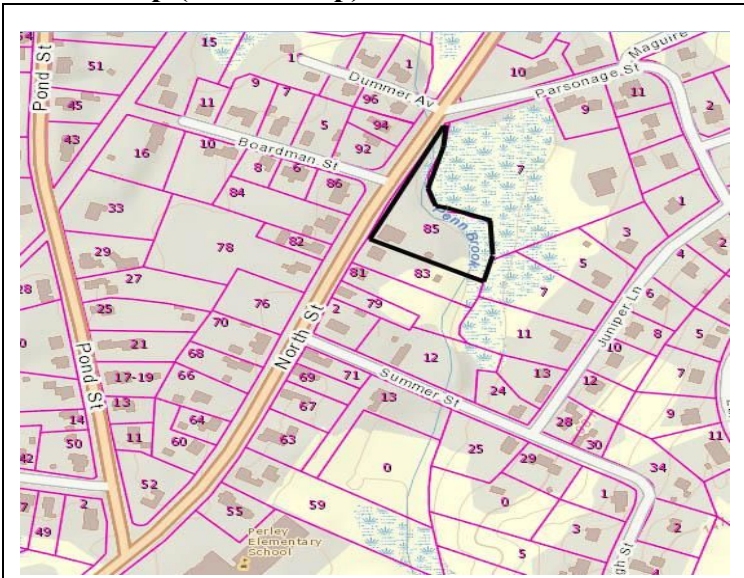
**Date:** June 2017

### Photograph



View from north.

### 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-129

Georgetown

GEO.266

**Town/City:** Georgetown

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

**Address:** 85 North Street

**Historic Name:** Francis Marden House

**Uses:** Present: single family residential

Original: single family residential

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1770, ca. 1870

**Source:** deeds & visual assessment

**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. 1870?

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no ☐ yes ☒ **Date:** ca. 1870

**Acreage:** 1.01 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 Marden 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 Pen Brook crosses the road. However, the neighboring house at 83 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 two-story wood frame single dwelling has a gable roof and a five-bay front façade with asymmetrical spacing that indicates the house likely began with a smaller, side-passage plan comprising the entrance and windows on the north side of the house, with the gap between the door and the windows representing the space for a center chimney. Twelve-over-eight sash windows give the house an 18<sup>th</sup>-century appearance. The entrance is framed by a trabeated architrave in the Greek Revival taste. The extent of alterations is not understood enough to evaluate the authenticity of these features. 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. The plan appears to be a room-and-a-half deep with a chimney in the wall between them extant on the northerly end. A one-story kitchen wing is centered on the rear where three large gabled dormers have been added more recently. So, there is much here physically and visually to suggest the house did not originate in this form, place or documented era.

The house is sited in the extreme southwest corner of an irregular lot bordered by North Street on the west and Penn Brook on the east and north. A parking area is located at the north end of the house where a small shed is also located. A yard with a swimming pool is behind the house. The northerly end of the lot, where the Penn Brook converges with the road is wooded.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The chain of title for 85 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 houses are 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.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 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 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 found in which Orin Weston transferred title back to the Baptist Society before 1869.

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Censuses consistently place Francis Marden in Boxford and identify him as a farmer. His investment in Georgetown farmland is unexplained, but Marden continued to own the North Street property, subdividing off parts, such as 83 North Street. Shortly before his death in 1892, he sold a one-acre lot and its buildings at 85 North Street to shoe manufacturer Henry Prescott Chaplin of Georgetown, who added it to his portfolio of rental properties.<sup>2</sup> In 1895 Henry P. Chaplin died, and seven properties he owned in Georgetown passed to his children Lawrence, Wilfred, Alice C. Noyes, and Mabel C. Chaplin. Mabel Chaplin died in 1906, and in 1908 Lawrence and his wife transferred her quarter-interest in 85 North Street and the six other properties to John G. and Gilman McAllaster of Manchester, New Hampshire. Their sister Helen had married Wilfred Chaplin, who died in 1909. In February 1910 the remaining Chaplin heirs sold their entire interest in 85 North Street to Chester S. Mitchell.<sup>3</sup>

The 1910 census shows Chester Mitchell on North Street with his wife Emily, daughter Madeline, and a boarding widow. The 1916 directory shows him to be employed as a clerk for the New York, New Haven, and Hudson River Railroad. In 1922 and 1924 he was working for the railroad at the "old Fitchburg station" in Boston and still living at 85 North Street, but in the latter year he sold the property to Flora M. Smallidge of Haverhill, who is shown at this address in the 1930 census. Born in Lawrence about 1868, Flora M. Edgerly Smallidge was the wife of Helon Smallidge, a native of Mt. Desert Island in Maine who was working as a shoe factory machinist. They lived at 85 North Street with their 36-year-old son Clifford. Helon Smallidge died in Georgetown in February 1934, and his widow Flora died in Georgetown in June 1954. In July 1954 85 North Street was sold to Burleigh J. and Natalie Hills Woodward, who owned it until 1970. Current owners James P. and Claudia L. Smith acquired it in 1983.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Francis Marden, Boxford, to Henry P. Chaplin, 27 April 1892, SECD 1341:164.

<sup>3</sup> Agreement between Laurence L. and Susan T. Chaplin to John G. McAllaster and Gilman McAllaster, Manchester NH, 16 November 1908, SECD 1951:201; Alice C. Noyes and Laurence L. Chaplin, Georgetown, and John G. McAllaster and Gilman McAllaster, Manchester NH, trustees, to Chester S. Mitchell, 3 February 1910, SECD 2010:437.

<sup>4</sup> Chester S. Mitchell, Malden MA, to Flora M. Smallidge, Haverhill MA, 15 August 1924, SECD 2604:387; Doris A. Marston to Burleigh J. and Natalie Hills Woodward, 26 July 1954, SECD 4087:152; Burleigh J. and Natalie Hills Woodward to Harris H. and Phyllis L. Brooks, 31 August 1970, SECD 5708:362; Harry E. and Karen Mangle to James P. and Claudia L. Smith, 85 North Street, 18 February 1983, SECD 7057:261; James P. and Claudia L. Smith to James P. and Claudia L. Smith, trustees 85 North Street Nominee Realty Trust, 17 December 2015, SECD 34705:106.

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MAPS

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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PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)



View from NW.

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View from SW.

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Aerial view from east. Source: [bing.com/maps](http://bing.com/maps).

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## 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 Francis Marden House, probably built about 1770 and moved to its current site about 1870, 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 one-and-a-half rooms deep. 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 suggests that the houses may have come from church land farther north. The 1872 map shows the owner of the house at 85 North Street to be Francis Marden, a Boxford farmer who developed the property renting the house and selling other portions of his property to shoemakers. In 1892, Marden sold the house on a one-acre lot to shoe manufacturer Henry Prescott Chaplin of Georgetown, who owned other rental properties in the town. 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.