

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GEORGETOWN

92 Nelson Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

GEO.257

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

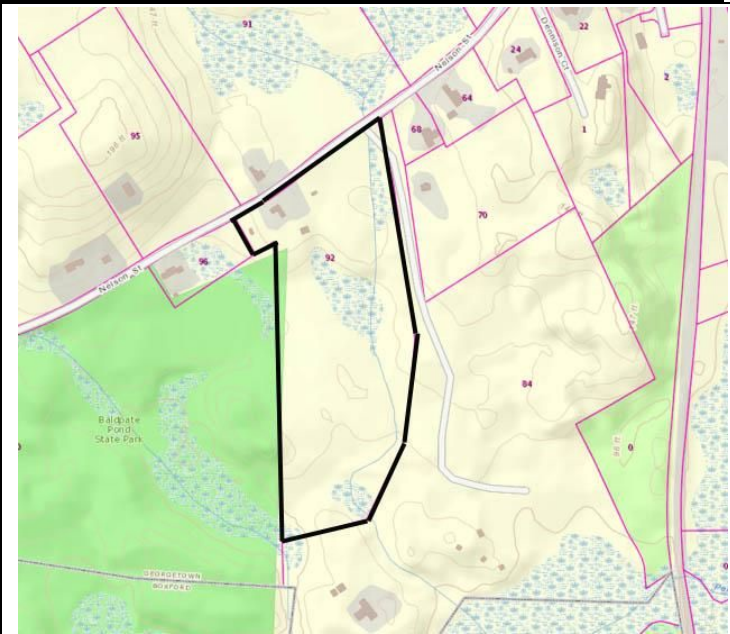
FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



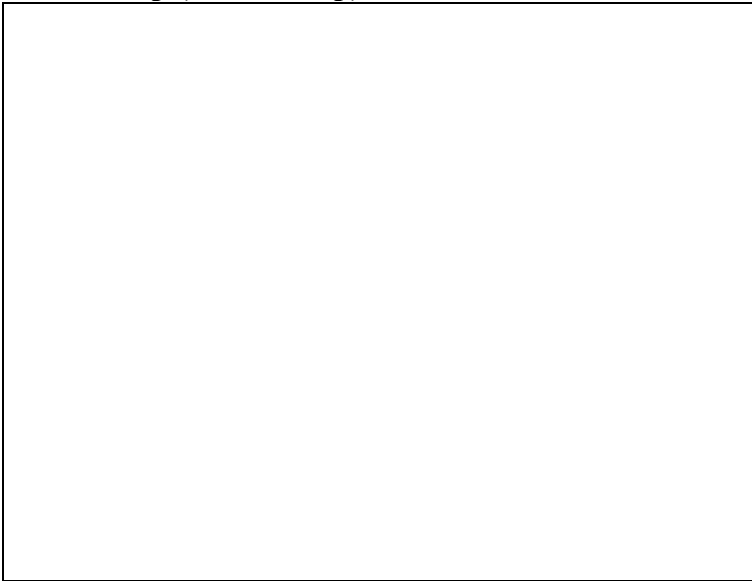
View from north.



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

4-23

Georgetown

GEO.257

Setting: The house is located west of a major crossroads and railroad depot in South Georgetown where the densely developed highway landscape (Central St.) begins to open up into farmland.

Town/City: Georgetown

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

Address: 92 Nelson Street

Historic Name: Mighill & Elizabeth Nelson House

Uses: Present: single family residential

Original: single family residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1833

Source: deeds & visual assessment

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Garage

Farm outbuildings (2)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

none

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 16.6 acres

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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 Mighill and Elizabeth Nelson House is a two-story wood frame single dwelling with a gable roof built about 1833. Its bilaterally symmetrical form and single-pile center-passage plan with end chimneys represents a house type common in Georgetown in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The five-bay front façade contains a center entrance embellished with sidelights and a trabeated architrave. Pairs of windows flank the entrance and a modest Classical entablature with short returns on the gable ends distinguishes the roof edge. The southwest end contains two windows on each floor and in the attic. The northeast end is the same except for a door positioned in the rear of the plan. A two-story cross-gable kitchen wing with a center chimney is attached to the northeast side of the rear wall in line with the gable end. What had been a porch on the southwest side of the ell has been enclosed and expanded on at least two later occasions.

Two small wood frame outbuildings behind the house appear to be in farm use. A large two-story wood frame building with a gambrel roof with two garage stalls on its street façade has been constructed more recently. The house is situated close to the street with yards on all sides; a driveway enters the northeasterly side of the property and runs between the house and garage to the farm buildings and a small pasture in the rear. Nearly all of the large farm parcel has reforested.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The house at 92 Nelson Street was built by Mighill Nelson (1807-56) probably around the time of his marriage to Elizabeth G. Nelson in 1833, and it remained in his family until 1962. When he sold the property shortly before he died, Nelson stated in the deed that the farm was one-sixth of the property bequeathed to him by his father, Thomas Nelson (1776-1855). Mighill was the fourth of nine children of Thomas Nelson and his wife Susannah March, and he probably grew up in a house at the intersection of Nelson Street and Baldpate Road (not extant). At his death in 1855, Thomas Nelson owned well more than 100 acres of land in twelve tracts, at least three of them with structures upon them. His will, made in 1850, directed that his wife receive all the income from his real property after debts and bequests were paid out, that his then-unmarried daughters Hannah and Sarah have all the household furniture his wife did not use, that children George M. Nelson and Louisa Conant received five dollars each, and that son Albert receive an acre of peat meadow. He then left the rest of his estate in equal shares to children Asa, Mighill, Harrison, Thomas Mighill, Hannah, and Sarah, who married Luther P. Tidd in the same year her father made his will.

Mighill Nelson's one-sixth share must have been the 92 Nelson Street property, but at the time of his father's death in March 1855 he owed his father \$1588.76; Moses Dorman, the administrator of Thomas Nelson's will, reported to the probate court that he had been unable to collect this sum from Mighill because he had "no estate from which he could have realized the amount of said claim." Dorman's statement indicates that Mighill did not own his house and land; both probably belonged to his father, though it is difficult to determine which of the lots described in Thomas Nelson's probate documents were the ones assigned to Mighill in deeds. In any event, in early December 1855 Mighill sold to Dorman "for benefit" of his father's estate all his interest in the estate, which was a quarter-acre lot with a house and other buildings on it and a 6-acre tract of woodland that his father had acquired in April 1850. Mighill also took out a mortgage with Dorman on his sixth part of his father's estate, described as a 90-acre farm in Georgetown and Boxford, 7 acres of marsh in Ipswich, 3 acres of marsh in Rowley, and 12 acres of woods in Boxford.¹ Dorman as administrator noted that he sold the "Mighill Nelson homestead and rooty plain lot" for \$1224.93 and collected \$28.85 in rent from Nelson's wife,

The 1850 census places Mighill Nelson in this neighborhood with his wife Elizabeth Gage Nelson (his first cousin once removed) and their children Solomon Augustus, Henry Mighill, Susan E., and Edward Upham (sometimes shown as Edward N. or M.

¹ Mighill Nelson to Moses Dorman, administrator estate Thomas Nelson, 3 December 1855, SECD 523:36 and 37.

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Nelson); there were also two boarders in the household.² In 1855 Mighill and Elizabeth Nelson were in the house with only their two youngest children, Susan and Edward. In April 1856 Mighill Nelson died; the cause of death was listed as "fitts." The accounting of his estate showed him with \$475 in real property, listed as four acres of land in Groveland, one-sixth of "reversion" of the Thomas Nelson estate, and a half a pew at the Georgetown Baptist meetinghouse. Mighill Nelson is shown in censuses as a farmer, but his \$689 in personal property included \$34 in "shoe and leather in shop." He died in debt, but his widow and children remained in the 92 Nelson Street house. In 1860 Elizabeth Gage Nelson was listed as a farmer and her sons Solomon (named for her father, Solomon Nelson Jr.) and Edward M., then sixteen, were both working on the farm. Daughter Susan worked as a shoe binder. By 1870 Solomon had gone to work in the shoe industry, and Edward was an agent for a soap manufacturer.

In 1875 Elizabeth Gage Nelson died, and the 1900 census shows Edward U. and Solomon Augustus Nelson as farmers together owning the 94 Nelson Street property. Solomon had married Salem native Sarah P. Symonds in 1871, and she and their children Edward Symonds, a surveyor, Henry H., a sawmill worker, and Ethel G., a painter, were in the same household with "in-laws" Eliza and Bertha E. Nelson. By 1910 Solomon A. Nelson and his family had moved a different house on Nelson Street, and Edward U. and his unmarried siblings Henry Mighill and Susan E. were at 92 Nelson Street. Henry Mighill Nelson was author of the town history that appeared in the 1888 *History of Essex County, Massachusetts*.

Edward Upham Nelson died in 1912, and Henry Mighill Nelson died in 1915. By 1916 Susan E. Nelson was living with her brother Solomon's family, now on Baldpate Road. Edward's son Edward S. Nelson then owned the house, which he apparently rented until 1947, when he and his wife Gertrude added Leroy MacAloney to the deed.³ In 1962, after both Edward S. and Gertrude Nelson had died, the title passed to MacAloney and his wife Gloria. By 1968 the property was owned by Baldpate Inc. and by a successor firm Abfor Realty Trust, in which Michael J. Batal Jr. was a principal. Abfor Realty Trust sold 92 Nelson Street to current owners David M. and Deborah R. Watson in 1968.⁴

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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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.

MAPS

"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.

² Henry Mighill Nelson was later one of Georgetown's local historians and lived next door to his mother's household in 1870.

³ Edward S. and Gertrude Nelson to James P. Cleary Jr., Haverhill MA, 23 October 1947, SECD 3573:86; Leroy MacAloney to Leory and Gloria MacAloney, 8 November 1962, SECD 5010:439. The first of these deeds transferred about 3 acres and its buildings, being the northern part of a 15-acre tract; the southern 12 acres was then owned by the estate of Edward U. Nelson. The deed explained Edward S Nelson bought the interest of other heirs of Edward U. Nelson before 31 Oct 1945, at which time he conveyed property through Ruth Wicks to Edward S. and Gertrude Nelson; see Edward S. Nelson to Ruth Wicks, Haverhill, 21 October 1945, SECD 3430:207; Ruth Wicks, Haverhill, to Edward S. and Gertrude Nelson, 31 October 1945, SECD 3430:208.

⁴ Leroy MacAloney to Leory and Gloria MacAloney, 8 November 1962, SECD 5010:439; Leroy MacAloney to Leory and Gloria MacAloney, 8 November 1962, SECD 5010:439; Baldpate Inc. to Michael J. Batal Jr. and Patricia M. Lehan, trustees Abfor Realty Trust, 1 November 1968, SECD 5573:370; Michael J. Batal Jr. and Patricia M. Laha, trustees Abfor Realty Trust, to David M. and Deborah R. Watson, 1 November 1968, SECD 5573:372.

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“Town of Georgetown Mass.” and “Village of Georgetown Mass.” In *Atlas of Essex County, Massachusetts* (Boston: George H. Walker, 1884).

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PHOTOGRAPHS (all photos by Neil Larson, 2017)



View from NE.

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View from east.

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View form north.



Aerial view from south. Source: 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 Mighill and Elizabeth Nelson House, built about 1833, appears to meet National Register A and C as a distinctive example of early nineteenth-century farmhouse architecture in the Greek Revival style surviving intact in Georgetown. Its shallow plan and tall gable ends illustrate the persistence of the Neoclassical taste updated with a prominent Greek Revival-style doorway. A large and prominent Georgetown family, the Nelson family settled on and spread out along the road bearing their name. Mighill Nelson (1807-56) was the fourth of nine children of Thomas Nelson and his wife Susannah March, and he probably grew up in a house at the intersection of Nelson Street and Baldpate Road (not extant). At his death in 1855, Thomas Nelson owned well more than 100 acres of land in twelve tracts, at least three of them with structures upon them. His will, made in 1850, directed that his property be conveyed undivided among his six children. His grandson Henry Mighill Nelson, who wrote a history of Georgetown published in the Essex County history of 1888, lived in this house in the early twentieth century.