

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



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

20-9	Marion		MRN.47
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Town/City: Marion
Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Converse Point
Address: 100 Moorings Road
Historic Name: Parker Converse House / The Moorings
Uses: Present: Residential
Original: Residential
Date of Construction: 1924
Source: Contemporary press
Style/Form: Colonial Revival
Architect/Builder: Brown & Poole
Exterior Material:
Foundation: Fieldstone, brick & concrete
Wall/Trim: Wood shingle / Wood
Roof: Asphalt shingle
Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Attached garage
Replacement windows
Renovation (1983)

Condition: Excellent

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 2.60

Setting: Sparsely settled area at Converse Point bordered by shoreline. Interior terrain is characterized by woods and marsh land. Populated primarily by large, waterfront seasonal residences built on large parcels in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Dwellings display the Queen Anne, Shingle, and Colonial Revival styles.

Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month/year*): January 2024

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

100 MOORINGS ROAD

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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.

100 Moorings Road occupies an irregularly shaped parcel at the tip of Converse Point. The house is roughly centered on the property and is surrounded by an expansive lawn that drops gently in grade to the shoreline. The dwelling faces north fronting a grass courtyard with tightly manicured hedges and shrubs, planting beds, and clusters of mature trees. Trees line the gravel driveway which enters the property from Moorings Road at the northern point of the parcel and curves to end at the attached garage at the west elevation. A rectangular area completely enclosed by a hedge at the western property line is labeled "vegetable garden" on a 1984 land plan of the property. A long, L-shaped dock extends into the harbor at the easternmost point of the parcel; it is accessed directly from the end of Moorings Road.

The two-story house comprises a side-gabled main block, a hip-roofed east wing, a gabled west wing extending diagonally from the main block, and a one-story hip-roofed garage set at the northwest corner of the west block. The components form a roughly U-shaped, north-facing conglomerate. Constructed in 1924 in the Colonial Revival style, it appears to retain all of its original character-defining features. The house rises from a foundation that includes portions of fieldstone, brick, and concrete. The dwelling is clad in wood shingles and the roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles. Double-flue brick chimneys rise from the roof ridge of the main block at the east gable end and from the south roof slope of the east block.

Trim includes narrow corner boards, frieze boards, a molded cornice, and eave returns at the gable ends of the main block. The main block is formally organized at the façade with three bays at each story. The enclosed, flat-roofed entry vestibule is fully glazed with full-height, multi-light windows. It has a deep entablature and carries a turned balustrade at the roof. The door fronts a flagstone walkway that crosses the courtyard towards the driveway. The windows at the main block and the east and west wings at the north-facing elevations are single, double-hung, sash with flat surrounds and blinds. Symmetrically arranged at the main block, they are randomly organized at the east and west blocks. The openings at the second story touch the frieze board at the cornice.

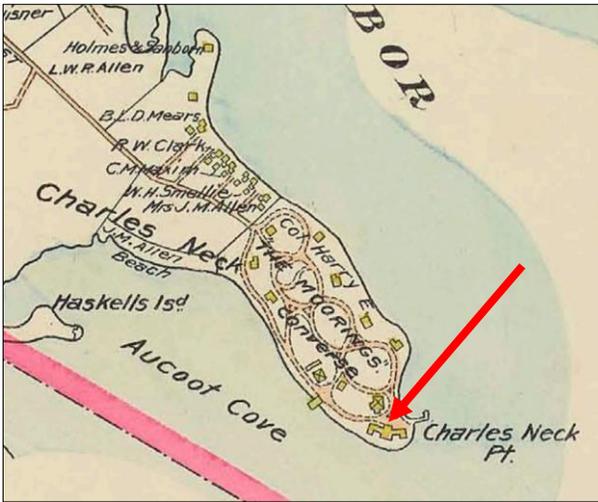
A semi-hexagonal bay window with a roof balustrade ornaments the north wall of the east wing and an open, two-story porch occupies its southeast corner. The porch has rectangular posts and a heavy spindle railing at the second level. The first-story windows at the water-facing south and east elevations of the east wing include large, mulled tripartite picture windows affording views of the bay.

The openings at the rear (south) elevation of the main block include single and paired one-over-one-windows at the second story and a semi-hexagonal bay window, tripartite picture window, and two glass-and-panel doors with molded, pedimented hoods at the first story. A one-story gabled greenhouse projects from the west wall of the main block. A courtyard enclosed by a low rubblestone wall extends from the greenhouse. Only three single windows pierce the west wing at the second story

100 Moorings Road is a restrained example of the Colonial Revival style. The Colonial Revival period in America (1880–1955) saw a resurgence of patriotism and a return to the architectural styles of the early years of the republic. Combining the classical architectural elements of the Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival periods, the Colonial Revival style was the most popular style in America for private and public buildings between the World Wars. The characteristic Colonial Revival features of this house include the formal organization of the façade at the main block, the entry vestibule with balustrade, and two doors at the south elevation with pedimented hoods. It is possible that other Colonial Revival features may have been removed when the house was fully renovated in 1983.

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.

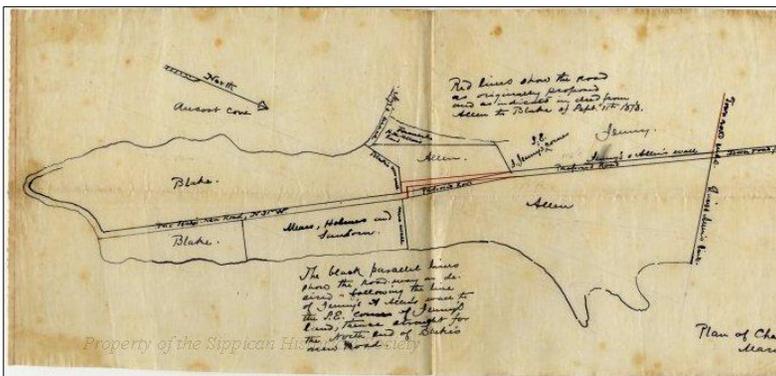


1903 map.

This house is located at the end of Moorings Road, an approximately 0.5-mile-long extension of Converse Road [historically called Pleasant Street, Nye Street, or Charles Neck Road] which runs south from Marion Village to Converse Point [historically called Charles Neck Point], the southernmost end of the peninsula on the western shoreline of Sippican Harbor. Moorings Road, which loops back on itself at the tip of Converse Point, takes its name from "The Moorings," the name given to the Converse estate that occupies the end of the peninsula.

No buildings are seen on Charles Neck on the 1855 and 1879 maps. The 1903 map shows this area occupied by The Moorings estate owned by Harry E. Converse, which included a large main house at the southern tip of the point, about ten smaller dwellings and outbuildings, and a pattern of oval roadways. The footprint of the house seen on the 1903 map mirrors numerous historic photographs of the grand Shingle Style mansion that was later razed and replaced with the current dwelling. The earliest recorded conveyance found for this property was the purchase of a 120-acre parcel of land from the estate of John B. Blankinship in 1864 by Thomas LeBaron and Nahum Morse.

Title research finds that the land comprising Charles Neck was owned during the mid-19th century by John B. Blankinship and then later by James C. and Elizabeth Luce of New Rochelle, New York. It was subsequently acquired by John M. Allen of New Bedford. John M. Allen (1842-1912) and his wife Lizzie Wood Ricketson Allen (1851-1934) were active players in real estate development in Marion in the late 19th century. Allen was the son of Captain Henry M. Allen of Marion, a mariner and a major figure in the salt making business. A graduate of Harvard College, he was a Boston-trained architect who designed the house at 1 Allen Street (1882, John Cotton Brooks House, MRN.124) among other residences in Marion. Lizzie Allen was the principal of record in many real estate transactions in Marion, including the purchase of the former Blankinship farm and its subsequent subdivision into many of the housing lots in the Water Street and Nye areas of the village. John M. Allen was also involved in the development of Allen's Point on the eastern side of Sippican Harbor. In 1879, John and Lizzie Allen sold two parcels of this land to Lyman Reed Blake.



1879 map of Charles Neck likely drawn up by John and Lizzie Allen. The Blake property is seen at left at the southern end of the point. Image courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society.

Lyman Reed Blake (1835-1883) was born in Abington and began his career by learning shoemaking from his older brother, who ran a small shop. He later went to work for Isaac Singer, maker of sewing machines, where he became a partner in 1856 and began to develop new applications for Singer's machines. In 1858, at age 23, Blake was given a patent for a device which sewed together the insole, uppers and outsoles of shoes. Through the elimination of tedious hand-sewing, this innovation dramatically changed the manufacture of shoes, one of New England's most important industries. Lyman Blake began to build a seaside estate in Marion shortly after purchasing a total of 65 acres of land from John W. and Lizzie W.R. Allen in the late 1870s. Blake and his wife Emma I. DeLaski Blake called their estate Holly Lodge

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because of the vast number of holly trees on the property.¹ The *Boston Post* noted in 1881 that the Harbor and Land Commission received a petition from Lyman to build a wharf on his property on Charles Neck; this wharf is seen on the 1903 map.² In 1882, a project was mentioned in *American Architect & Building News* described as “alterations and additions to Holly Lodge, Blake’s Point, for Lyman R. Blake, Esq. \$2,000.”³ An 1885 note appearing in the *Boston Globe* reported that “Emma R. Blake, the widow of the late Lyman R. Blake, has been in her elegant house, Holly Lodge at the end of Charles Neck, nearly two months and has leased it for the remainder of the season to Cyrus H. McCormick of Chicago.”⁴ During the Blakes’ ownership the point of land at the end of Charles Neck was referred to as Blake’s Point.⁵

In 1885 Emma Blake sold the property to Miss Marian Hovey of Gloucester through real estate agent Horace S. Crowell. Marian Hovey (1835-1898) was the daughter of Mary Ann Levley Cotton and George Otis Hovey (1809-1877), a very prosperous Boston merchant and yachtsman who left his daughter with a substantial inheritance. Unmarried and an invalid, Marian Hovey was a long-time resident of Boston and Gloucester, where the family summered. Known for her many acts of charity, Marian Hovey supported the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the Museum of Fine Arts, and Harvard Medical School, where her grant provided that the medical school should begin admitting women.⁶ The subject property was sold by her estate in 1898 to Harry E. Converse. An article appearing in the *Boston Globe* at the time of the purchase described the estate as “charming ...it is very handsomely wooded with a profuse sprinkling of holly, so much so that one of the former owners named the property ‘Holly Lodge.’ A large, comfortable house, a commodious stable, cottage, boathouse and a very heavy substantial granite wharf comprise the buildings and erection.”⁷

Harry Elisha Converse (1863-1920) was the son of Malden shoe manufacturer Elisha Slade Converse (1820-1904), who in 1853 established the Boston Rubber Shoe Company, a firm which eventually employed 3,500 people and became one of the largest rubber manufacturers in the United States. Elisha also served as Malden’s first mayor. His son Harry Converse, an executive at the shoe company, was appointed a colonel in the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia during the Spanish American War and served as a fire commissioner in Malden. Harry, his wife Mary C. Parker Converse (1872-1961), and their five children maintained their primary residence in Malden until Harry became involved in a dispute in that city in 1898 and moved his family to Marion, where he became one of its leading citizens and benefactors. Both Harry Converse and his wife Mary were accomplished sailors and earned their pilot licenses in Marion. After the death of her husband in 1920, Mary moved west to be closer to two of her children. In 1935 she began a navigational training program in Washington, D.C. and in 1940, at the age of 68, became a full captain in the U.S. Merchant Marine, the first woman to hold an Unlimited Tonnage Masters License. Mary Converse spent the rest of her life in Colorado, where she taught navigation and seamanship to naval cadets.⁸

Harry E. Converse purchased the subject property in 1898 and the family spent their first summer there in one of the cottages on the site.⁹ Around 1902 Converse razed the building referred to as “Holly Lodge” and built a grand new residence approaching the size of a hotel. This Shingle Style house was described in an article in the New Bedford *Evening Standard* as “the largest and finest residence of the whole shore of Buzzard’s Bay.”¹⁰ (See historic image below.) Converse’s new summer cottage, which he named “The Moorings,” was designed by architect Tristram Griffin. Tristram H. Griffin (1840-1927), who was born in Gloucester, was a Civil War veteran and later an active member of the Grand Army of the Republic. After his service, he studied architecture in the office of Benjamin Franklin Dwight and in 1870 opened his own practice in Boston. Griffin became a well-known and prolific architect whose body of work included not only residential projects, including a house for Harry E. Converse in Malden, but many civic structures including the Malden Central Fire Station, the Malden YMCA at 83 Pleasant Street (1895,

¹ “Two Valuable Parcels at Buzzards Bay Sold.” *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA. November 24, 1898.

² *The Boston Post*, Boston, MA. March 4, 1881 p.3.

³ *American Architect & Building News*, Volume XII, July-Dec. 1882.

⁴ “Marion,” *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA. July 5, 1885 p.14.

⁵ “Blakes Point,” *The Boston Evening Transcript*, Boston, MA. October 17, 1879.

⁶ “Miss Hovey’s Intent” *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA. November 20, 1985.

⁷ “Two Valuable Parcels at Buzzards Bay Sold.” *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA. November 24, 1898.

⁸ “Mary Converse.” *Lighting the Way: Historic Women of the Southcoast @ <https://historicwomensouthcoast.org/mary-parker-converse/>*. Sourced from Converse, Mary Allen. “Captain Mary: The Biography of Mary Parker Converse,” U.S.M.M. American Merchant Marine Museum, 1987.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *New Bedford Evening Standard*, June 3, 1902

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Malden Y.M.C.A. Building, MAL.178), and a number of schools. Griffin was also active in Malden city government, serving as a selectman and later as a member of the first board of alderman during the administration of mayor Elisha Converse.¹¹

The Moorings was set on a large, gardened property overlooking the entrance to Sippican Harbor and Buzzards Bay. Of note on the 1903 map is the network of oval driveways leading from the estate entrance at Charles Neck Road to the main house. Part of the property's carefully planned landscape, these driveways were designed to provide visitors approaching the house with spectacular water views and glimpses of the extensive gardens. The grounds of the estate featured numerous outbuildings, grass tennis courts, water gardens, green houses, an observatory, and a bell tower. (See image below.) The gate house was occupied by Viggo V. Petersen, the family's chef. Converse employed a huge service staff at The Moorings, many of whom lived in the neighboring area. The landscape architect and superintendent of the estate was David F. Roy, one of the best-known horticulturalists in Massachusetts. He had worked for Harry Converse's father Elisha Converse and served as the superintendent of the E.S. Converse Park in Malden. Roy had previously been employed as a gardener at the Vanderbilt and other estates in Newport, Rhode Island. In 1911, the Moorings was awarded the prestigious H.H. Hunnewell Prize given by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.¹²

After the death of Harry Converse in 1920, the property was conveyed to three of his children, Margaret Converse Butler (b.1896), Parker Converse (1897-1965), and Roger Wolcott Converse (1900-1969). In 1922 the siblings drew up a plan subdividing the Moorings estate into 24 building lots. (See the land plan below.) In a 1995 recorded interview, H. [Harry] Peter Converse, the son of Parker Converse, described how the property was divided:

"They cut the point in half and Aunt Peggy [Margaret Converse Butler] took everything on the Aucoot Cove side and this is after my grandfather [Harry E. Converse] died leaving the land to his children. Dad [Parker Converse] had the land on the Sippican Harbor side and Uncle Govy [Roger Converse] got a strip across the middle which in my youth was called Govy's Alley."¹³

Parker Converse acquired the subject property. The 1922 land plan does not show a house on the parcel, suggesting that it had been demolished by this time. In 1924-25 the Shingle Style house was replaced with the Colonial Revival dwelling now standing on the site. An article in the New Bedford *Evening Standard* in March 1925 reported that the structure was destroyed by fire during its construction and was rebuilt according to the original plan. The architects were Brown & Poole, a New Bedford firm that designed private residences as well as many commercial and public buildings, most in the Colonial Revival style. Frank C. Brown (1883-1969) trained in the offices of the well-known architect Charles Brigham. Erford Poole (1877-1965) was born in Dartmouth to a prominent family of farmers, politicians, merchants, and whaling captains. The firm's commissions include the Smith Neck School in Dartmouth (1924, DAR.191), the Rochester Grange Hall (1924, ROC.54), and Greenmount Avenue School in Dracut (ca. 1928, DRA.44). The contractor was C.O. Brightman of New Bedford.¹⁴

Parker Converse was born in Malden, attended Yale University, and was a veteran of both World Wars, serving in the United States Navy and Coast Guard. A yacht broker associated with John G. Alden of Boston, he was himself a well-known yachtsman, serving as commodore of the Beverly Yacht Club.¹⁵ He was married to June Butler (b.1899), daughter of William Edward Butler and Harriet S. Higbee. The property was conveyed to the couple's son, H. [Harry] Peter Converse (1922-2005), who like his father attended Yale University. After serving as a lieutenant commander in the Navy during World War II he began his career as a journalist, reporting for the *Standard Times* of New Bedford. He later worked for the General Electric Company and for Sperry Rand, where he was the director of corporate communications. Peter Converse was an avid sailor, an active member of the Marion community, and a director of the Sippican Historical Society.¹⁶ The house remains in Converse family ownership and is used as a seasonal rental property.

¹¹ "Tristram Griffin to be Buried Today," *The Boston Globe*, Boston, Ma March 10, 1927 p. 10.

¹² "Moorings Wins Honors," *The Boston Evening Transcript*, Boston, MA June 27, 1911.

¹³ Transcript of audio tape, Sippican Historical Society object 2005.007.003 (1995).

¹⁴ "Fire Destroys Converse Home," *New Bedford Evening Standard*, New Bedford, MA. March 2, 1925.

¹⁵ "Parker Converse Dies; Yachtsman, Tabor Trustee," *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA. July 30, 1965.

¹⁶ "H. Peter Converse, reporter, investor," *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA. September 15, 2005.

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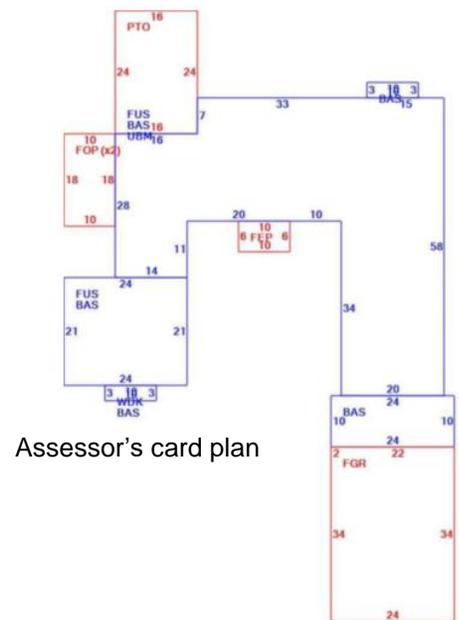
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Title Research

Date	Book-Page (Certificate)	Grantor	Grantee
10-26-2000	19003-121	H. Peter Converse	H. Peter Converse & Allen Peter Converse, Trustees
Probate	#140159	June B. Converse	H. Peter Converse
Probate		Parker Converse	June B. Converse
01-28-1930	1587-561	Harold Davis	Parker Converse (5 parcels)
01-27-1930	1587-559	Parker Converse & Margaret C. Butler	Harold Davis (7 parcels)
01-18-1923	1431-14	Roger Converse	Margaret C. Butler
07-28-1922	1422-395	Harold S. Davis	Margaret C. Butler, Parker Converse, & Roger Converse
07-28-1922	1422-394	Estate of Harry E. Converse	Harold Davis
11-18-1898	777-57	Estate of Marian Hovey	Harry E. Converse
06-19-1885	526-119	Horace S. Crowell	Marian Hovey
06-19-1885	516-360	Emma R. Blake	Horace S. Crowell
		Estate of Lyman Blake	Emma R. Blake
01-23-1880	459-198	Nelson Sanborn	Lyman R. Blake
01-17-1879	457-285	John W. & Lizzie W.R. Allen	Lyman R. Blake
09-11-1878	442-229	John W. & Lizzie W.R. Allen	Lyman R. Blake
04-26-1875	421-11	Elizabeth & James C. Luce	John M. Allen
10-07-1872	395-202	Thomas M. LeBaron & Nahum F. Morse	Elizabeth Luce
03-19-1864	332-244	Estate of John B. Blankinship	Thomas M. LeBaron & Nahum F. Morse

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Assessor's card plan

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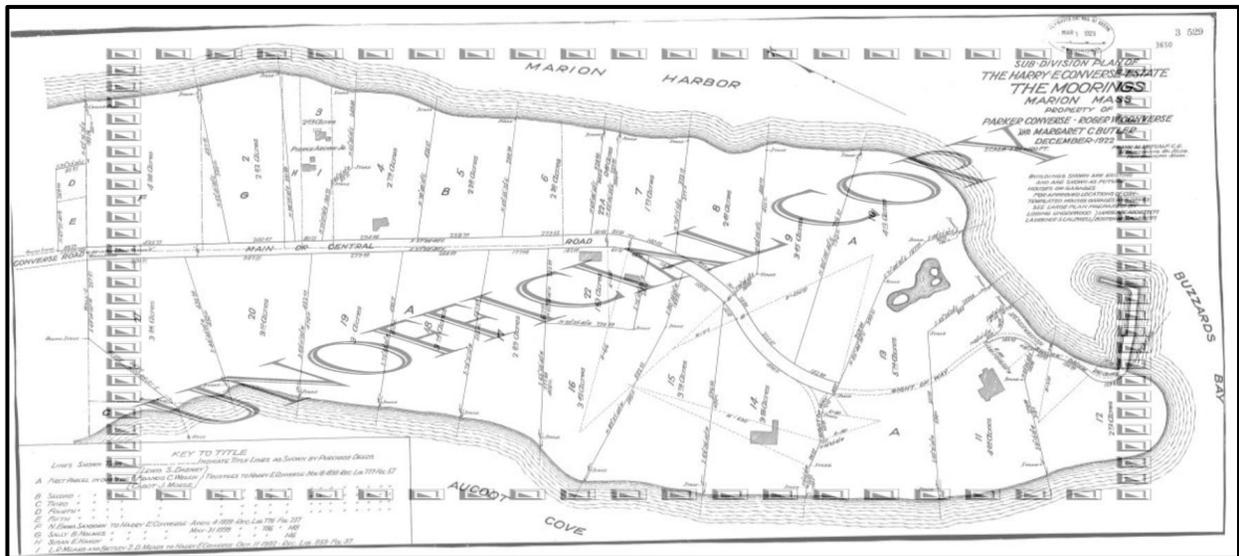
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South and east elevations.

West and south elevations.



Harry E. Converse Estate Subdivision Plan, 1922. Plymouth County Registry of Deeds Plan Book 3, Page 529. The 1924 dwelling has not yet been built to replace the original Moorings dwelling, which was razed and is not shown here.

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The Moorings, ca.1902. Photograph courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society.



The Moorings, undated. Photograph courtesy of the Converse family.

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The Moorings, undated. Photograph courtesy of the Converse family.



The Moorings Water Garden, ca. 1913. Postcard courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society.