

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

20-3	Marion		MRN.619
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**Town/City:** Marion

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

**Address:** 27 Moorings Road

**Historic Name:** Betsey Z.D. Mears House

**Uses:** Present: Residential

Original: Residential

**Date of Construction:** Late 19<sup>th</sup> century

**Source:** Visual analysis

**Style/Form:** No Style

**Architect/Builder:** Unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Rubblestone

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboard / Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Barn / shed (early 20<sup>th</sup> c.)

## Photograph



## Locus Map



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

Replacement windows

Wall dormers (21<sup>st</sup> c.)

Deck

**Condition:** Good

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 2.11

**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 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> 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

27 MOORINGS ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

MRN.619

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.*

**27 Moorings Road** occupies a polygonal parcel on the east side of Moorings Road that stretches to the Sippican Harbor shoreline. The house is sited in the eastern half of the lot and faces east. Foundation plantings line the façade (east elevation). An expanse of lawn surrounds the house and extends to the shoreline. A uniform row of tall hemlocks lines the northern property line and the parcel is otherwise moderately vegetated with matures trees and shrubs. An L-shaped, overgrown stone wall encloses a large grassy area north of the house. A gravel driveway off Moorings Road runs along the southern property line and branches to serve both the subject house and the dwelling at 35 Moorings Road. The driveway turns north, passing a barn/shed sited west of the house and ending in a parking area along the façade.

This one-and-one-half-story dwelling comprises an L-shaped main block with two dependencies, all three of which have rubblestone foundations and likely date to the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The dependencies include a long, side-gabled, one-story south block at the southwest corner of the main block, and a cross-gabled north block at the north elevation of the main block. Constructed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the house is stylistically modest and although it has been significantly altered retains some of its original character-defining features. The dwelling rises from a rubblestone foundation and is clad in wood clapboards. The roof is surfaced with wood shingles. Tall, corbeled brick chimneys rise from the roof ridge at the west gable end of the main block and from the west roof slope of the south block at its junction with the main block.

Trim at the house is limited to corner boards and simple eaves with a shallow overhang. The main entry is located at the northwest corner of the west wing of the main block. The door is sheltered by an open shed-roofed porch with a concrete floor and vertical-slat knee walls under mulled six-light windows. There are rafter tails at the porch roof, a Craftsman-style detail that that may have been present elsewhere on the house at one time. A flagstone pathway leads from the porch to the driveway. A second entry at the west elevation occupies a gabled projection at the junction of the main and south blocks. It contains a glass-and-panel door and has double-hung, six-over-six windows at the side walls. Wall dormers are set at the north roof slope of the west wing of the main block and the west roof slope of the north block. A one-story shed-roofed projection spans the north wall of the north block. The windows at the west and north elevations of the house include single and mulled one-over-one sash with flat surrounds, capped lintels, and blinds. There is a single nine-over-nine window at the west wall of the south block.

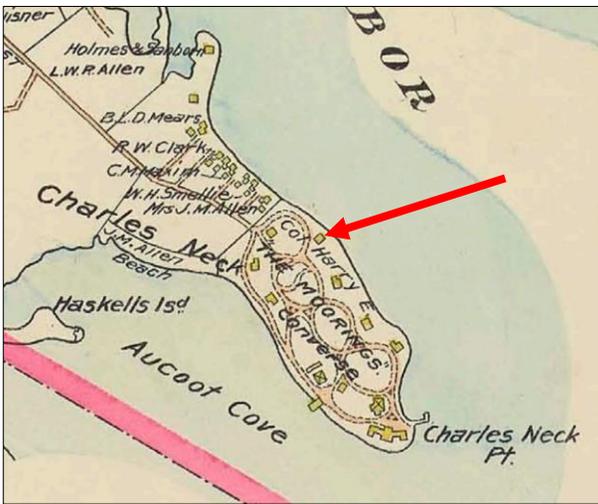
Two-bay wall dormers occupy the main and north blocks at the waterfront (east) elevation of the house. Fenestration at the first story at this elevation includes a sliding glass door at the north block, tripartite pictures windows at the main block, and a series of eight mulled, full-height single sash at the south block. Entries at all three blocks open to a large open deck that spans the east elevation. A continuous three-sided stair descends from the deck to the lawn. Single one-over-one windows pierce the side elevations of the three blocks.

The large barn/shed sited west of the house is seen on the 1922 land plan for the property. The main block is front-gabled with a cross gable at the south end and a steep roof with deep overhanging eaves. A full-length, shed-roofed addition spans the east elevation. The north (façade) elevation is clad in vertical wood siding, the east elevation in wood shingles, and the south elevation in wood clapboards. There are two vertical plank openings at the north elevation and a single vertical plank door at the east elevation. A series of mulled, sliding four-light windows are set at the cornice at the east wall. Paired, mulled two-over-two windows occupy the south elevation.

**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.*

This house is located on 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.



1903 map.

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. An unlabeled building in the general location of the subject house is seen on the 1903 map. The earliest conveyance found for the property was its sale in 1880 to Betsey Mears of Brooklyn, New York from Nelson W. Sanborn of Haverhill. His deed to Mears did not note the presence of a building in the property description.

Nelson Willard Sanborn (1846-1900) was born in Maine. Census records reported that his principal residence was in the Boston area and his occupation was thread salesman. In 1880 and 1893 he sold two parcels of land to Betsey Mears. Born Elizabeth Zebiah Dolbear Blake (1821-1908), she was the wife of boot and shoe manufacturer Lemuel Robinson Mears of Dorchester. Lemuel and Betsey Mears lived most of their lives together in Brooklyn and the subject property was likely a summer residence for them. It was purchased by Harry E. Converse in 1902 and became part of his large estate known as The Moorings.

**Note:** For the history of the estate first owned by Lyman R. Blake in 1878 and later by Harry Converse, see the MHC Building Form B for 100 Moorings Road (1924, Parker Converse House, MRN.47).

After the death of Harry Converse in 1920, the large 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 of the Moorings estate into 24 building lots (see the 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."<sup>1</sup>

The subject property was sold in 1922 to Pierce Archer, Jr. (1882-1954) and his wife Dorothy Hoffman Archer (1886-1965). The 1922 subdivision plan for the property shows both the house and the outbuilding currently on the site. Pierce Archer, Jr. was the son of Mary H. Roach and Archer Pierce, a prominent Philadelphia trial lawyer. The younger Pierce was also a lawyer and shared offices with his father. The Archers lived in suburban Philadelphia and used the property as a summer residence. It remained in the family until shortly before the death of Dorothy Archer in 1965.

The property was next owned by C. Eric Olsen, Jr. (1916-1993) and his wife Joan L. Olsen. Charles Eric Olsen, a 1940 graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was a renowned sailor known for racing a variety of boat types all over the world.

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society, transcript of audio tape, object 2005.007.003 (1995).

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Olsen represented the United States in sailing at the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, Australia. He was a frequent contributor to a number of sailing periodicals and was a founder of *Sail* magazine in 1970. An engineer by profession, C. Eric Olsen was the president of Newport Ropes.<sup>2</sup>

The property was owned by the Olsen family until 2005 when it was purchased by the current owners.

Title Research

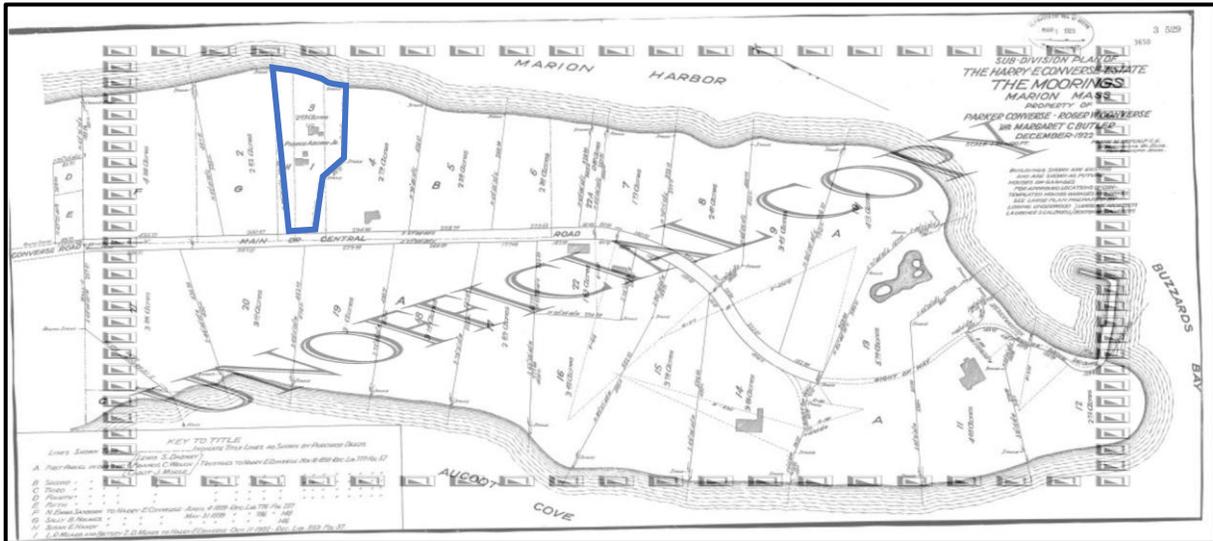
Date	Book-Page (Certificate)	Grantor	Grantee
08-26-2021	(132570)	Marianne M. Reardon	James S. & Marianne M. Reardon, Trustees
12-24-2005	(108491)	John F. Menzel	Marianne M. Reardon & Richard Menzel
08-15-2005	(107790)	Joan L. Olsen	John F. Menzel
11-13-1967	(41304)	C. Eric, Jr. & Joan L. Olsen	Joan L. Olsen
12-06-1964	(36518)	Dorothy Hoffman Archer	C. Eric, Jr. & Joan L. Olsen
09-13-1955	(23766)	Court Order	Dorothy Hoffman Archer
12-22-1922	1428-453	Parker Converse, Roger W. Converse, Margaret C. Butler	Pierce, Jr. & Dorothy Hoffman Archer
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
10-11-1902	859-37	Betsey Z.D. Mears	Harry E. Converse
08-11-1893	655-412	Nelson W. Sanborn	Betsey Z.D. Mears
01-23-1880	457-284	Nelson W. Sanborn	Betsey Z.D. Mears
01-23-1880	459-193	George N. Holmes	Nelson W. Sanborn
11-30-1877	443-35	George N. Holmes	Nelson W. Sanborn
11-15-1877	439-15	John M. Allen	George N. Holmes
11-15-1877	439-15	James C. & Elizabeth Luce	John M. Allen
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

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

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*Map of the Town of Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts 1855* H.F. Walling  
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<sup>2</sup> "Eric Olsen, 78 Olympic sailor, engineer, writer," *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA May 11, 1993.





Subdivision Plan of the Harry E. Converse Estate, 1922. Plymouth County Registry of Deeds Plan Book 3, Page 529.