

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

20-10A

Marion

MRN.622

**Town/City:** Marion

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

**Address:** 99 Moorings Road

**Historic Name:** The Moorings Stable

**Uses:** Present: Residential

Original: Stable / Carriage house

**Date of Construction:** Ca. 1902

**Source:** Visual analysis

**Style/Form:** Queen Anne / Shingle Style

**Architect/Builder:** Tristram H. Griffin

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Granite block

Wall/Trim: Wood shingle / Wood

Roof: Wood shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Pool house (late 1990s)

Swimming pool (late 1990s)

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

Neo-Colonial porches & fenestration at south & east elevations, west sunroom enclosure (late 1990s)

**Condition:** Excellent

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

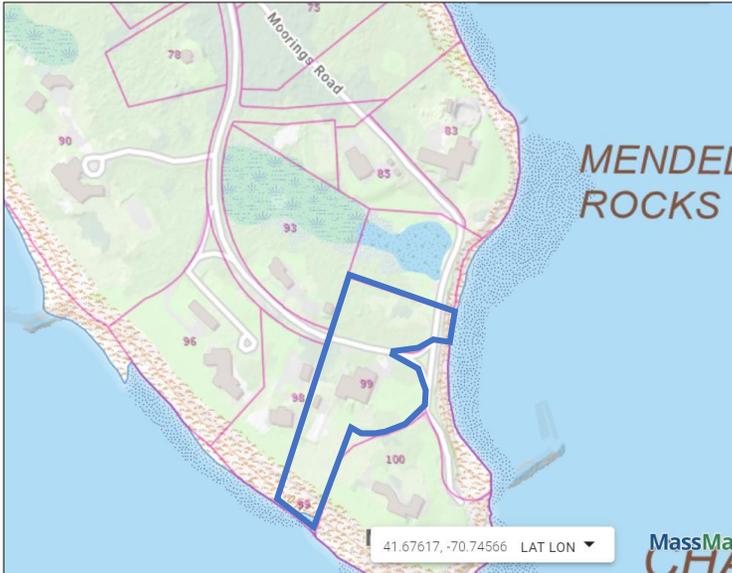
**Acreage:** 2.70

**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.

## Photograph



## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Lynn Smiledge

**Organization:** Marion Historical Commission

**Date** (*month/year*): January 2024

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

99 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.*

**99 Moorings Road** occupies an irregularly-shaped parcel near the tip of Charles Neck Point that stretches across the peninsula to both the east and west shorelines. The former stable, which faces west, is sited off the northwest corner of "The Moorings" at 100 Moorings Road and is separated from it by a broad swath of heavy vegetation. An expansive lawn reaches from the south (rear) elevation of the house to the waterfront. Foundation plantings surround the house at the north, east, and west elevations; the portion of the property north of the house is wooded. A long, narrow, rectangular swimming pool surrounded by a manicured hedge is set at the western property line. A paved driveway off Moorings Road enters the property at the north elevation of the house. A tall hedge off the north elevation of the house borders the road across the width of the parcel.

This large two-story dwelling, a former stable, has the volumetric massing, asymmetry, complex roof plan, numerous gables and dormers, varied wall surfaces, and towers characteristic of the Queen Anne style. Along with less dominant Shingle Style features, it also exhibits neo-Colonial elements added in the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The basic house form comprises two parallel gabled blocks (north block and south block) with cross gables and projections at all four elevations. Constructed ca.1902, it retains many if not all of its original character-defining features. Its most distinctive elements include an octagonal tower with an attached circular tower and several commanding entrance porticos. The house rises from a tall granite block foundation and is clad in wood shingles articulated with contrasting wood trim. The roof is surfaced with wood shingles. A single brick chimney rises from the south roof slope of the north block.

The house is trimmed with molded belt courses, frieze boards, and both straight and flared overhanging eaves. The façade (west elevation), which is seven bays wide, is dominated by a side-gabled projection at the fifth and sixth most southerly bays. The projection has flared eaves and a broad, pedimented wall dormer overhanging the first story. An adjacent, one-story sunroom projection at the southernmost (seventh) bay is side gabled and glazed with continuous 18-light fixed sash; it carries a polygonal dormer at the roof. A pergola spans this projection, which is seen as an open porch on an historic image of the building. (See below.) The northernmost four bays at the façade comprise a wide cross gable surmounting a garage door opening containing a single glass-and-panel door. The door fronts a granite-paved ramp that joins the asphalt-paved driveway. An arched entry at the fourth-most northerly bay is nestled at the junction with the center projection; it fronts a railed porch and stairway leading to a walkway and the driveway. The arched entry is slightly recessed and glazed with full-height multi-light panels and a transom. The window openings at the facade comprise a combination of single, paired, and triple mulled sash with six-over-one muntin configurations. Small semi-circular windows with curved tracery occupy the gable peaks; they are surmounted by curved, Shingle Style hoods.

The distinctive octagonal tower rises from the west roof slope above the recessed entry. It has rounded corners and is capped with a domed roof. An oculus with curved tracery occupies the tower base; lancet and eyebrow windows pierce the top of the tower. A small, engaged circular tower capped with a metal spire and weathervane rises from a railed porch at the east wall of the octagonal tower. A narrow glass-and-panel door opens from the tower to the porch. The circular tower originally served as a windmill, as seen on an historic image of the house. (See below.)

A pedimented, front-gabled projection with clipped corners at the first story anchors the west end of the south elevation. The east end is anchored by a wide cross gable. An integrated open porch in the neo-Colonial style extends eastward across the façade from the pedimented projection and shelters a monumental center entry. The entry is fully glazed with twelve-light French doors, side-lights, and a deep transom. This window pattern is repeated in the full-height windows extending across the porch. Heavy square columns support the porch roof and the curved spandrel marking the entrance bay. Paired gable dormers occupy the roof between the west projection and the east dormer. Fenestration at this elevation matches that at the north elevation,

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including the semi-circular windows with shingled hoods at the gable peaks. (See below for an historic image of the south elevation of the house, which appears to have been the primary elevation [façade] of the stable.)

The east elevation of the house is symmetrically massed and organized. Wide cross gables at the outside bays flank a recessed centered entry sheltered by a dramatic curved pergola with tapered rectangular columns. The arched entry contains French doors with 12-light sidelights and a deep transom. Monumental, full-height, fully-glazed box bay windows are centered at the cross gables. They are surmounted by triple mullied six-over-one windows, which are in turn surmounted by small semi-circular windows with shingled hoods. Small gabled dormers at the inner roof slopes of the cross gables face each other across a railed porch and frame the base of the octagonal tower. The porch deck at the south elevation of the house wraps the east elevation and ends at the north cross gable. A tall side-walled stairway rises from grade to reach the porch. Recessed garage openings are centered at grade at the cross gables.

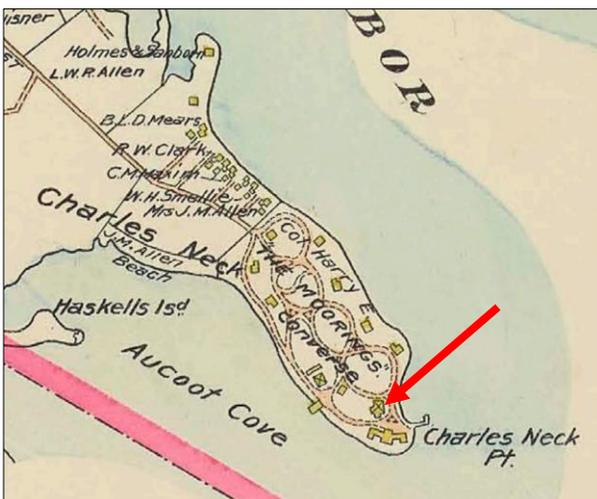
The north elevation of the house, which faces Moorings Road, is four bays wide and features an engaged rectangular tower with a pyramidal roof. A hip-roofed enclosed entry serves as the tower base. Paired and triple mullied, six-over-one sash comprise the fenestration at this elevation.

99 Moorings Road is an exuberant example of the Queen Anne style, the predominant style for domestic architecture in the United States between 1880 and 1900. Devised by a group of English architects and based on the visual vocabulary of late Medieval models, Queen Anne encompasses a wide range of architectural features from several stylistic traditions. The style gained popularity after being seen at the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876. It was disseminated by the country's leading architectural magazine and by pattern books and mail-order house plans. Identifying features of the Queen Anne style seen in this house include its volumetric massing, asymmetry, complex roof plan, numerous gables and dormers, varied wall surfaces, and towers. Shingle Style details include the flared eaves and shingled window hoods. The Neo-Colonial elements comprise the glazed entries and open porches.

## 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 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.



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. The subject building, which began its existence as a stable/carriage house for the Converse estate, is shown at the red arrow on the 1903 map. The earliest recorded conveyance found for the property was the purchase of a 120-acre parcel of land in 1864 from the estate of John B. Blankinship by Thomas LeBaron and Nahum Morse.

**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).

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. Around 1902 Converse razed the existing building, referred to by previous owners 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

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Bedford *Evening Standard* as “the largest and finest residence of the whole shore of Buzzard’s Bay.”<sup>1</sup> 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 opened his own practice in Boston in 1870. 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, 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.<sup>2</sup>

It can be reasonably assumed that the Queen Anne style stable was constructed around the same time as the main house and was designed by the same architect. A photograph of the building in the collection of the Sippican Historical Society is partially captioned as follows: “[The structure] was originally a stable housing ten horses, a pony, various carriages, sleighs, and a four-in-hand coach. The upper story was used as a hayloft and for grain storage. The windmill atop the structure pumped water from a well in the cellar.”<sup>3</sup> It is not known when the stable was converted to a dwelling, but a ca.1910 photograph of the building suggests that it might have included living quarters at that time. (See image below.)

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.”<sup>4</sup>

Parker Converse acquired the subject property as part of that arrangement. He was born in Malden, attended Yale University, and was a veteran of both World Wars, serving in the United States Navy and Coast Guard. Parker Converse was a yacht broker associated with John G. Alden of Boston and was himself a well-known yachtsman, serving as commodore of the Beverly Yacht Club.<sup>5</sup> He was married to June Butler (b.1899) and the property was devised to the couple’s daughter, Patricia Converse McDonald (1923-1987). She was born in Boston and attended Chatham Hall School in Chatham, Virginia. Patricia McDonald was a trustee of the Marion Center for Human Services, which she founded in 1976, and also worked as a full-time counselor for that organization. She was married to W. James McDonald, vice president and general counsel for the New England Life Insurance Company. Patricia Converse was an avid sailor and member of the Beverly Yacht Club.<sup>6</sup> She conveyed the property to her son shortly before her death in 1987.

The property was purchased in 1993 by Thomas G. Stemberg and his wife Dola H. Stemberg. Thomas G. Stemberg (1949-2015) was a philanthropist and the founder of Staples, Inc. office supply store. His obituary in *The Boston Globe* credited him with revolutionizing the way office products were sold and with creating a chain that at one time employed as many as 91,000 people. His friend, former governor Mitt Romney, recalled that Stemberg inspired him to establish the “Romneycare” health insurance program in Massachusetts, which became the prototype for “Obamacare.”<sup>7</sup> The property remains in Stemberg family ownership.

<sup>1</sup> *New Bedford Evening Standard*, June 3, 1902.

<sup>2</sup> “Tristram Griffin to be Buried Today,” *The Boston Globe*, Boston, Ma March 10, 1927 p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society.

<sup>4</sup> Transcript of audio tape, Sippican Historical Society object 2005.007.003 (1995).

<sup>5</sup> “Parker Converse Dies; Yachtsman, Tabor Trustee,” *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA. July 30, 1965.

<sup>6</sup> “Patricia McDonald,” Founded Marion therapy center,” *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA July 28, 1987.

<sup>7</sup> “Staples founder Thomas Stemberg dies at 66,” *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA. October 23, 2015.

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Title Research

Date	Book-Page (Certificate)	Grantor	Grantee
04-03-2006	32456-193	Thomas G. Stemberg	Dola Hamilton Stemberg
08-03-1993	12093-262	Courtland A. & Georgia McDonald	Thomas G. & Dola H. Stemberg
04-08-1987	7675-35	Patricia C. McDonald	Courtland A. & Georgia McDonald
Probate	140159	Estate of June Converse	Patricia C. McDonald
Probate		Estate of Parker Converse	June Converse
01-28-1930	1587-561	Harold Davis	Parker Converse (5 parcels)
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	516360	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

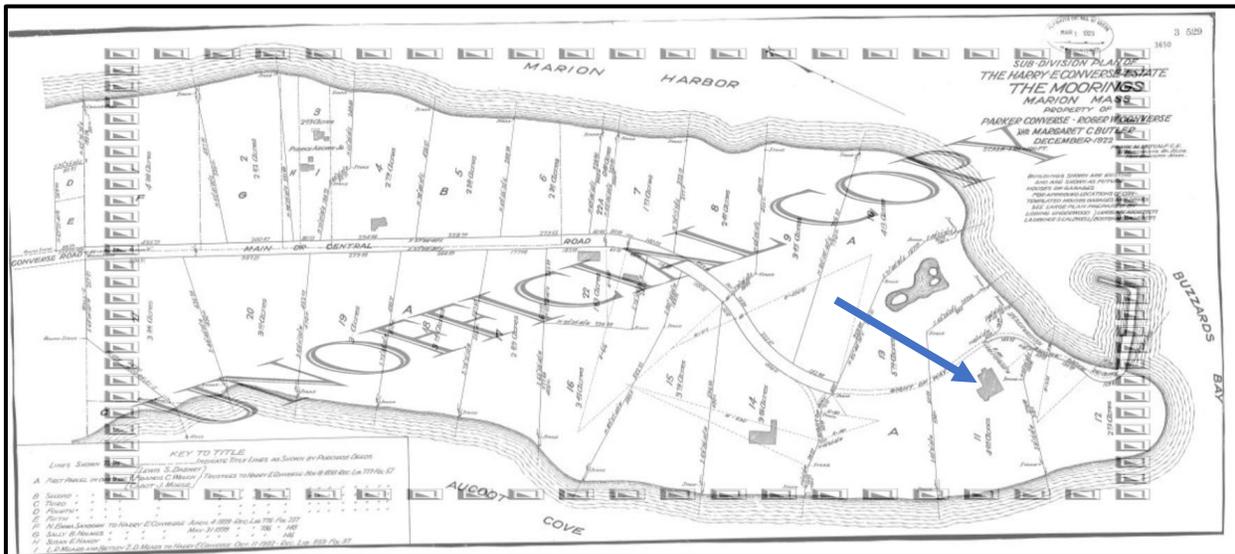
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Ca. 1910. Photograph courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society



Harry E. Converse Estate Subdivision Plan, 1922. Plymouth County Registry of Deeds Plan Book 3, Page 529. Subject house at blue arrow.