

AUG 04 1989

1251

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
80 BOYLSTON STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREAFORM NO.

Prospect Hill	130
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Town Somerville MRAAddress 61 Columbus AvenueHistoric Name James H. Brooks HouseUse: Present residenceOriginal residence

## DESCRIPTION

Date ca. 1880Source map researchStyle Second EmpireArchitect unknownExterior Wall Fabric aluminum sidingOutbuildings garageMajor Alterations (with dates) n/aCondition excellentMoved no Date n/aAcreage less than one acre

Setting The Brook's House is located on a hill in an area near a public park. Prospect Hill was subdivided in the

late 1860s and developed with extant

Second Empire and other late-19th c. dwellings.

Recorded by Betsy Friedberg, PreservationOrganization Mass. Historical CommissionDate May 1986

Photo (3"x3" or 3"x5", black and white) Indicate address of property on back of photo. Staple to left side of form.

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s).  
Indicate north

See Attached Assessor's Map

UTM REFERENCE Z E N 19 - 327/520 - 4694/060

USGS QUADRANGLE Boston NorthSCALE 1:25,000

**NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)**

The James H. Brooks House is among the well-preserved examples of the Second Empire-style in Somerville. With its square tower ornamented with stylish cast-iron cresting, the Brooks House is a small but pretentious example of this style, popular with Somerville's businessmen and merchants in the 1870s and 1880s. The house is historically significant for its associations with Somerville's process of subdivision in the decades following the Civil War, and with the city's commercial development during the same period. Retaining integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, the James H. Brooks House fulfills Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on a local level.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.**

The James Brooks House, together with its neighbor, the S. E. Bracket House (#131) is one of Somerville's most pretentious examples of the Second Empire-style. Its design undoubtedly came from a pattern book. The house built ca. 1880, a 1 1/2-story mansard cottage with a square corner tower offset to the left. The tower, with its gabled dormers, retains its original iron cresting. Other features include a full-height Polygonal bay offset to the right and steep, straight-edged mansard roof of slate. A bracketed, flat-roofed porch wraps around the front and side of the building, and brackets also highlight the buildings cornice line. Despite the application of aluminum siding, the building's detailing remains intact.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.**

61 Columbus Avenue occupies one of the most prominent lots in the residential subdivision of Warren and Columbus Streets, platted in 1870 by Somerville businessman and investor Ira Hill. Hill was largely responsible for the development of nearby Union Square into the city's major commercial center during the same period. The large lots in Hill's residential development, known as Prospect Hill, were intended for spacious houses for businessmen and professionals. While many Prospect Hill residents commuted to Boston on the Boston and Maine Railroad and by street rail (both of which stopped in Union Square), James Brooks, the first owner of 61 Columbus Avenue, was a dry goods dealer with offices in Union Square's Masonic Block.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

G. M. Hopkins, Atlas of the City of Somerville, 1874, 1884.

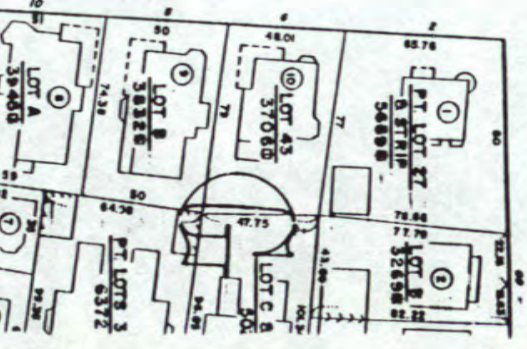
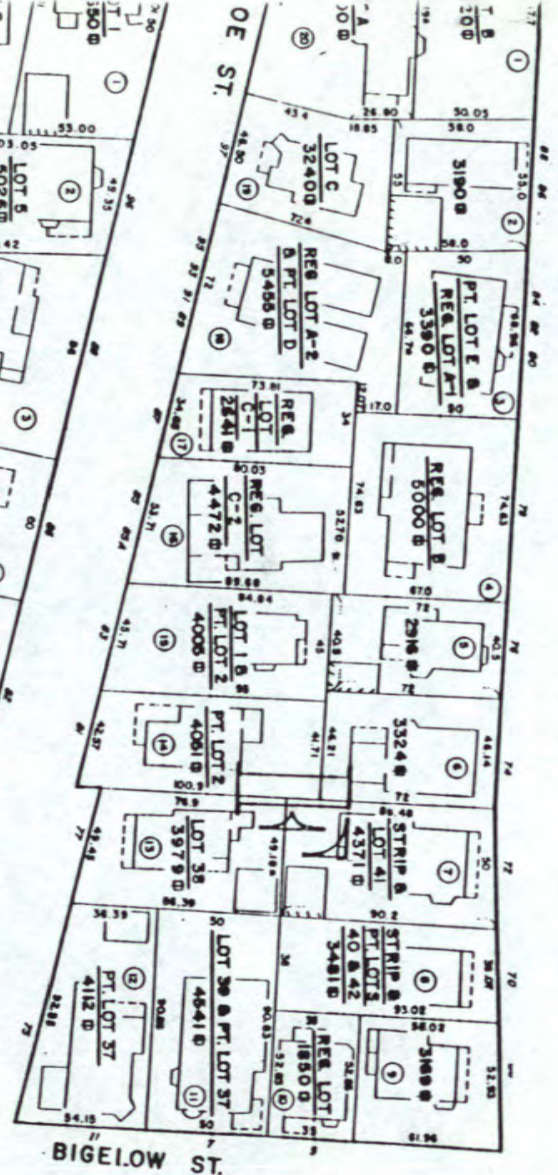
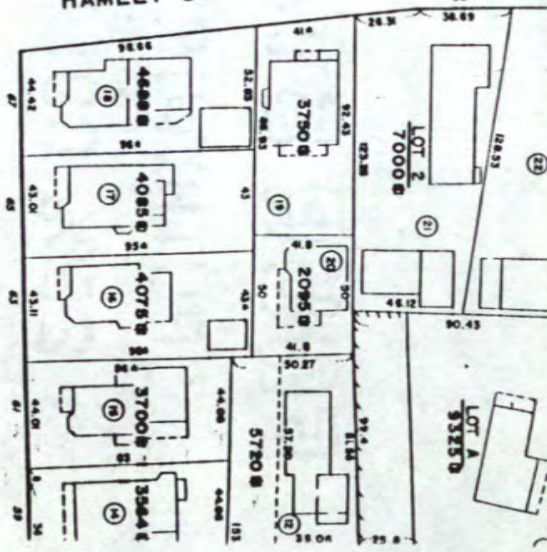
ON ST.

#130  
1" = 100'



James H. Brooks to.  
Garage  
61 Columbus  
Somerville (MRA), Mass

HAMLET ST.



COLUMBUS AVENUE

WARREN AVE.

ON ST.

PROSPECT

PROSPECT HILL PARK  
71,400 B

BIGELOW ST.

MUNROE ST.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Somerville MPS  
State Middlesex County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- 11. Adams--Magoun House Entered in the National Register  Keeper Delores Byers 9/18/89  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. Bacon, Clifton, House Entered in the National Register  Keeper Delores Byers 9/18/89  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 501 13. Barnes, Walter S. and Melissa E., House Substantive Review  Keeper John J. Savage 3/8/90  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. Brackett, S.E., House Entered in the National Register  Keeper Delores Byers 9/18/89  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. Broadway Winter Hill Congregational Church Entered in the National Register  Keeper Delores Byers 9/18/89  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. Brooks, James H., House Entered in the National Register  Keeper Delores Byers 9/18/89  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. Central Library Entered in the National Register  Keeper Delores Byers 9/18/89  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 18. Cliff, Z.E., House Entered in the National Register  Keeper Delores Byers 9/18/89  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. Cook, Thomas, House Entered in the National Register  Keeper Delores Byers 9/18/89  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 20. Cooper--Davenport Tavern Wing Entered in the National Register  Keeper Delores Byers 9/18/89  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Brooks, James H., House

MULTIPLE NAME: Somerville MPS

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 8/04/89      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/15/89  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/31/89      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/18/89  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89001251

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT       RETURN       REJECT      9/18/89 DATE

Entered in the  
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_  
REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

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CLASSIFICATION

count       resource type

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STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

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FUNCTION

historic       current

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DESCRIPTION

architectural classification  
 materials  
 descriptive text

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SIGNIFICANCE

Period      Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates      Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

summary paragraph  
 completeness  
 clarity  
 applicable criteria  
 justification of areas checked  
 relating significance to the resource  
 context  
 relationship of integrity to significance  
 justification of exception  
 other

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage       verbal boundary description  
 UTM's       boundary justification

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ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps     USGS maps     photographs     presentation

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OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



61 Columbus

1. 61 Columbus Ave

2. Somerville, MA

3. Carol Zelle

4. 1983

5. Somerville City Hall

6. Looking north

7. # 130

Brooks James H., House  
Somerville, MA, MA

Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64500253