

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

AUG 21 1989

NATIONAL
REGISTER

AREA

FORM NO.

104

WALTHAM, MA MRA

Town Waltham, MAAddress 30 Common StreetHistoric Name James Swasey HouseUse: Present ResidentialOriginal Residential

DESCRIPTION

Date ca. 1846Source DeedsStyle Greek RevivalArchitect James Swasey--carpenterExterior Wall Fabric ClapboardOutbuildings garage-NCMajor Alterations (with dates) noneCondition GoodMoved no Date n/aAcreage 0.3A 12,640 sq. ft. 60-12-9

Setting In a residential area of mid-
19th c. houses very close to a major
business district

Recorded by Nancy S. SeasholesOrganization Waltham Historical Comm.te August 1986

revised C. Jenkins 2/88

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

UTM REFERENCE 19/315790/4693860USGS QUADRANGLE LexingtonSCALE 1:25,000

The James Swasey House is a very modest but well preserved example of a vernacular sidehall plan Greek Revival style house in the city. Its 2½ story form is detailed with a pedimented gable, cornerboards, entry with full sidelights, and Doric porch. It is a good illustration of the development of the north central Main Street area in the mid-19th century as a home for workers and small businessmen; its history particularly documents real estate practices. The house possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and associations and meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

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

Set on what is still primarily a residential street of mid-nineteenth century houses although impacted by a major commercial district around the corner, this porticoed Greek Revival house is probably typical of many that were built in its era. It has a pedimented attic, simple entablature, corner boards, gable-end side entrance with sidelights, a one-story portico supported by fluted Doric columns, and a granite foundation. It is a clapboard clad structure rising 2½ stories to a gable roof; it is extended by a two story rear ell. Windows retain original 6/6 sash. Its well preserved simplicity presents an interesting counterpoint to similiar area examples like the Josiah Beard House (#94).

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

This house was probably built ca. 1846 by James Swasey, a carpenter. Interestingly, the lot had changed hands several times in the years just preceding this, apparently with the intention of building a house on speculation, but none had been constructed. In 1840, this lot was sold to Lewis Bemis, a successful cordwainer who lived and worked at 380 Lexington Street (see form) and was apparently speculating in real estate. Bemis immediately sold it to Daniel Sawyer, a housewright. Sawyer did not build a house on this lot, but another contract between Sawyer and Bemis is illuminating about the type of houses housewrights like Sawyer did build for speculators like Bemis. This contract, dated August 4, 1840, specified that Sawyer was to build two tenements: 36 feet long, 17 feet wide, each wih an "L" 12 by 15 feet and a shed 10 by 14 feet with an outhouse. The house was to be "finished inside and out in a plain good substantial manner." Stairs were to be "straightrun", there were to be moldings "round all the doors and windows", and the tenement was to be divided "from the height of the roof to the bottom of the ells." The price of this house was to be \$425 provided Bemis had two more tenements, with approximately the same dimensions and finishes, built by Sawyer for \$400 (M.D.396:393). In 1841, Sawyer sold this lot back to Bemis without, as stated previously, having built a house on it and in April 1846 Bemis sold the lot to Swasey who presumably built this house shortly thereafter. Swasey continued to occupy the house for the rest of the nineteenth century and his widow was still living in it in 1923.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Middlesex Deeds - 391:159,160; 404:529; 478:486,487
Maps and atlases - 1854, 1875, 1886, 1900, 1911, 1915, 1923
Directories - 1871, 1886, 1899

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

AUG 21 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName Waltham MRA
State Middlesex County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

81. St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church Complex
Substantive ReviewKeeper Betty L. Sauer 9/28/89
Attest _____82. Stanley, Leonard W., House
Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Helene Byen 9/28/89
Attest _____83. Stark Building
Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Helene Byen 9/28/89
Attest _____84. Stark, Robert M., House
Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Helene Byen 9/28/89
Attest _____85. Stearns, Amos, House
Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Helene Byen 9/28/89
Attest _____86. Stewart, Henry, House
Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Helene Byen 9/28/89
Attest _____87. Swasey, James, House
Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Helene Byen 9/28/89
Attest _____88. Tyler, Frank J., House
Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Helene Byen 9/28/89
Attest _____89. United States Watch Company
Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Helene Byen 9/28/89
Attest _____90. Waltham Gas Light Company
Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Helene Byen 9/28/89
Attest _____

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Swasey, James, House
NAME:

MULTIPLE Waltham MRA
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 8/21/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/05/89
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/21/89 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/05/89
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89001530

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 9/28/89 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

CLASSIFICATION

☐ count ☐ resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

☐ historic ☐ current

DESCRIPTION

☐ architectural classification
☐ materials
☐ descriptive text

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

☐ acreage ☐ verbal boundary description
☐ UTM's ☐ boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

☐ sketch maps ☐ USGS maps ☐ photographs ☐ presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

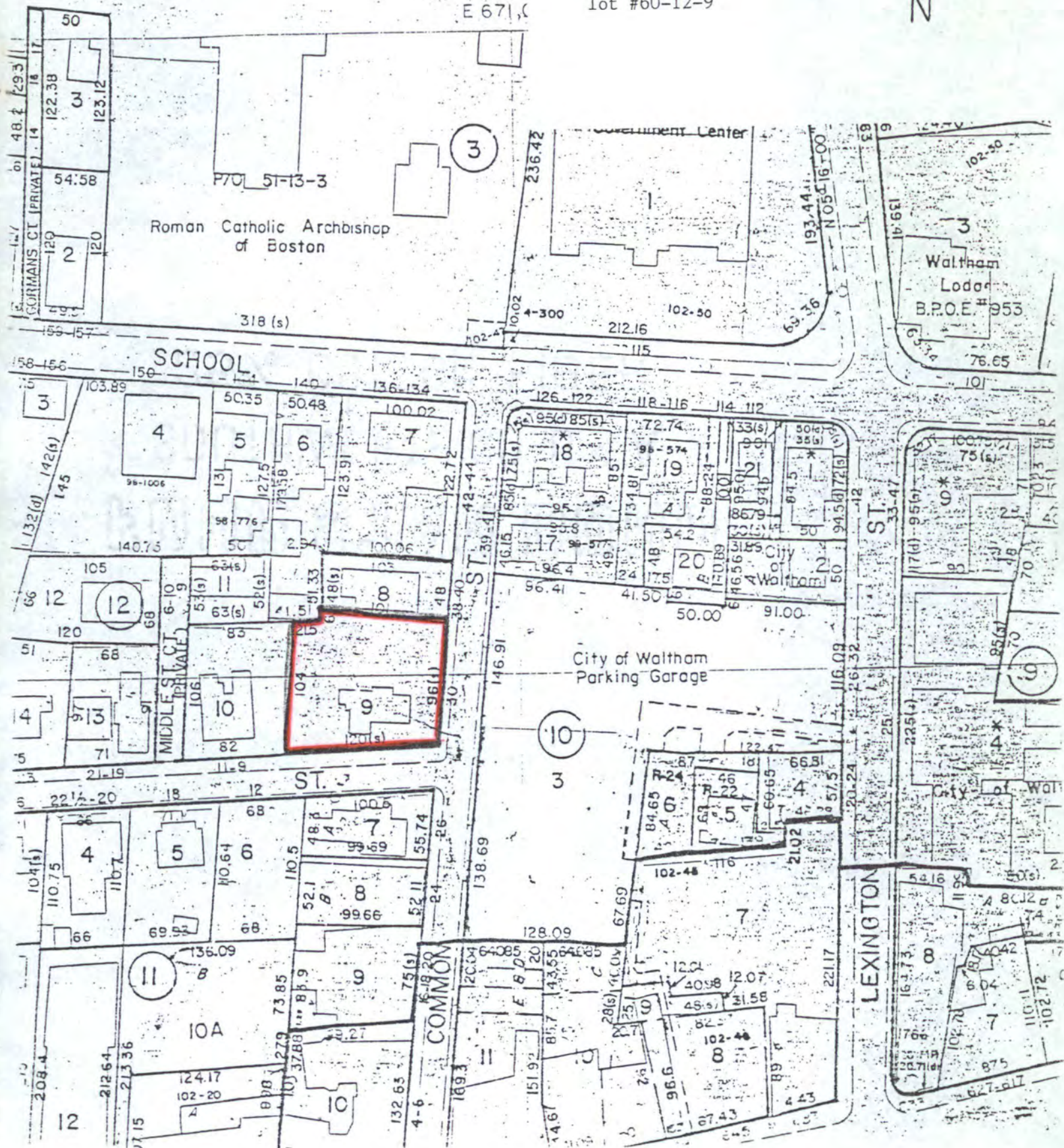
Signed _____ Phone _____

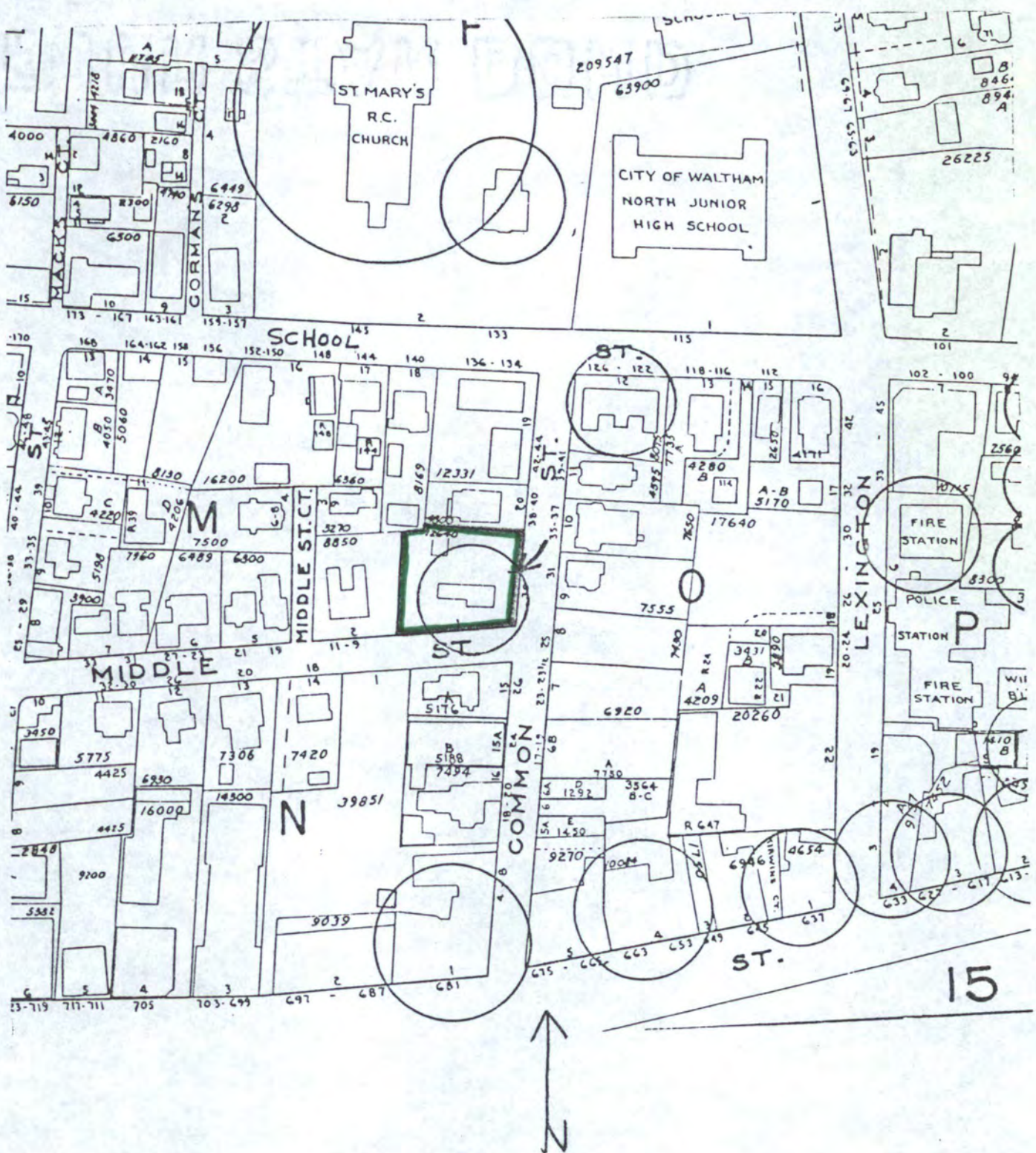
Date _____



30 COMMON ST.
WALTHAM, MA MRA
104 ^{gives}
Swasy¹ House

lot #60-12-9





1970 Atlas, City of Waltham
 Compiled by the Waltham
 Engineering Division
 Scale: 1 inch = 140 feet

Waltham, Massachusetts MRA
 30 Common Street
 James Swasey House
 16-M-1

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

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000301