

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

| | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| STATE: Massachusetts | |
| COUNTY: Suffolk | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
David Sears House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Now the Somerset Club

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
42 Beacon Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Boston

STATE:
Massachusetts

COUNTY:
Suffolk

CODE

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered | Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Pork <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Private men's club. |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
**Mr. John L. Layman,
Somerset Club**

STREET AND NUMBER:
42 Beacon Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Boston

STATE:
Massachusetts

CODE

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Registry of Deeds, Suffolk County

STREET AND NUMBER:
Pemberton Square

CITY OR TOWN:
Boston

STATE:
Massachusetts

CODE

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
| | (Check One) | | | (Check One) | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The David Sears House, now a tall three-story granite structure with gable roof and two great projecting semi-circular front bays in its front facade, reached its present and final form in three steps between 1816 and 1875. The Sears House, as built in 1816, was a two-story-over elevated-basement L-shaped ashlar structure with hipped roof and a single projecting central bay. The walls were of cut granite. The main (south) facade was seven-bays wide and the center of this elevation was occupied by a three-bay-wide two-story-high bow or bay which was crowned by an exterior saucer dome. First-story windows were full-length and those in the second-story were of regular size. The intervening space in each bay between the two tiers of windows was adorned by ~~an oblong-shaped~~ carved granite swag panel, the only exterior decorations to this boldly modeled front. The main structure was covered by a high hip roof and the entrance door, together with a one-story entry portico with four columns, was located in the third-bay of the east side.

Inside the rooms were arranged in two tiers, with the service rooms located in the rear ell at the northeast corner. The east entrance opened into a vestibule in the rear tier with a groin-vaulted bay flanked by niches. To the north of the hall, in the rear ell, were the kitchen and servants' room. To the west of the vestibule, in the second tier of rooms, was a large stair hall with the main stairway. To the west of the stair hall and extending forward into the southwest (front) corner was the large drawing room, and behind this, in the northwest corner, was the small drawing room. The front tier of three rooms was comprised of the large drawing room, the large semi-elliptical sitting room located in the central projecting bow, and the dining room with shallow recess for sideboard, situated in the southeast (front) corner.

Around 1824 the residence was nearly doubled in size by additions that duplicated the original design. In this work one of the two bays originally located west of the central bow was removed; at the east side a second great matching three-bay-wide bow and also a bay-wide east end bay were added. These changes increased the width of the facade from seven to 10 bays. The entrance was relocated from the east side to its present position in east-end-bay of the south (front) elevation. The present door is topped by a rectangular transom and sheltered by a one-story portico with two Corinthian columns and pilasters.

In 1875 the existing third-story and roofs were added. The level of the third-floor is marked by a broad granite belt course and the windows in this story are of regular size. The original hip roof was replaced by a gable one and the saucer domes of the double bows by low-pitched roofs. The interior finish of the first two floors was also renovated in 1875. Around 1900 the house was enlarged to the rear by the addition of new service quarters. The David Sears House is in excellent condition. The structure is utilized as a private men's club and is not open to visitors.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1816, 1824**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designed and built by Alexander Parris in 1816 and enlarged in 1824 and again in 1875, the David Sears House is an early and magnificent example of a monumentally-scale Adamesque-Federal-styled town house constructed of granite. The use of this new building material imposed rigid restrictions on conventional detailing. But in this house Parris demonstrated how to make of these restrictions an opportunity to develop a highly original sort of basic classicism.

History

Plans for the house, one of the first in Boston to be built of granite, were prepared by Alexander Parris, noted Boston architect, and the exterior granite panels were carved by Solmon Willard in 1816. Around 1824 David Sears, the owner, nearly doubled the size of his residence by adding a second great curved bay. The existing third story was added to the structure when the house was acquired by the Somerset Club in 1875. The building has been used since that year as a private men's club.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Architecture, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Baltimore, 1963), 85.
 Fiske Kimball, Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic (New York, 1922), 153, 155, 156, 157, 167, 169, 194, 201, 238, 239, 269.
 Talbot F. Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America (New York, 1944), 92-93, 100, XXIV.
Massachusetts, A Guide to Its Places and People (American Guide Series), (Boston, 1937), 84.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | OR | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|----|---|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | |
| | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | |
| NW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | 42 ° 21 ' 25 " | 71 ° 04' 03" | |
| NE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1 acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION **Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service** DATE **7/27/70**

STREET AND NUMBER:
801 - 19th Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE **D.C.** CODE

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Title _____</p> <p>Date _____</p> | <p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____ <i>Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</i></p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____ <i>Keeper of The National Register</i></p> <p>Date _____</p> |
|--|---|

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

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| STATE Massachusetts | |
| COUNTY Suffolk | |
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| | |

(Number all entries)

9. Major Bibliographical References for the David Sears House
(Somerset Club), Boston:

Walter H. Kilham, Boston After Bulfinch, An Account of Its
Architecture, 1800-1900 (Cambridge, 1948), 23.