

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.55
Historic Name:	Munroe, Edwin and Benjamin House
Common Name:	
Address:	91 Boston St
City/Town:	Somerville
Village/Neighborhood:	Prospect Hill
Local No:	275; 72-B-35
Year Constructed:	C 1850
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Colonial Revival; Greek Revival
Use(s):	Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Architecture
Area(s):	SMV.BA: Somerville Single Building Local Historic District SMV.D: Summit Avenue
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (10/31/1989)



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

10/13/89
(10)

AREA

FORM NO.

Prospect
Hill

275 55

Pt. Prospect
Jus. Bost. N

SOMERVILLE

SECT B

91 Boston Street

Owner Name Edwin & Benjamin S.

Munroe

Present residential

Original residential

DESCRIPTION

ca. 1850

Source deeds / maps

Style Greek Revival with Colonial
Revival addition

Architect

Exterior Wall Fabric clapboard

Outbuildings

Major Alterations (with dates)

Condition good

Moved Date

Acreage 12,109 sq. ft.

Setting Northeast corner of Boston &
Walnut Sts., in Prospect Hill area,
in well established late 19th century
residential neighborhood

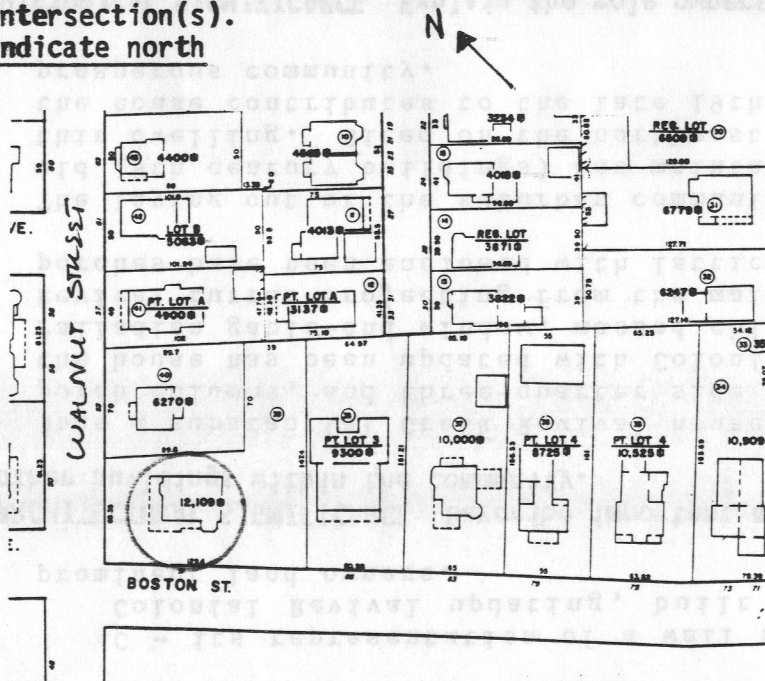
Recorded by Carol Zellie - 1980
Gretchen Schuler - 1988

Organization Somerville Historic
Preservation Commission

Date April, 1988



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

USGS QUADRANGLE

SCALE

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The property is significant for :

A - its representation of one of the earliest surviving houses of the Prospect Hill area, built prior to the suburbanization of the community.

C - its representation of a well conserved Greek Revival house with Colonial Revival updating, built and maintained by locally prominent land owners.

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

Once a substantial Greek Revival house with templar gable ends, Doric porch columns, and three-quarter side lights flanking the entrance door, the house has been updated with Colonial Revival motifs including the Palladian gable-end window, massed chimneys, and the Queen Anne/Colonial Revival turret projecting from the main facade. In more recent years the porches have been enclosed with lattice screening.

The laying out of the suburban community around this (and only a few other mid 19th century buildings) has maintained a point of visual prominence for this dwelling. Sited on the northeast corner of Boston and Walnut Street, the house contributes to the late 19th century streetscapes of the prosperous community.

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

Prospect Hill, one of the most prosperous residential neighborhoods, evolved throughout the late 19th century. Prior to that it was an agricultural community of farms. Only a few houses existed at the top of Prospect Hill prior to the 1870s. This dwelling was one of those that was built by 1852 according to the Draper Map. In 1853 Edwin and Benjamin S. Munroe conveyed this property with "a cottage house thereon standing" to a teacher, Henry F. and wife, Martha Munroe. Edwin Munroe, who lived at #37 Walnut Street, owned large tracts of land on Prospect Hill. Deed research shows that members of the Munroe family owned and exchanged parcels between Boston St. and Highland Avenue and on what was to become Munroe Street. In the 1870s when the residential building boom began in the Prospect Hill area, the property was owned by Ira Hill, who was one of the most influential persons in the real estate development. Like Munroe, Hill owned vast parcels of land throughout Prospect Hill. Most were subdivided and developed according to Ira Hill's Plans.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

1. Atlas of Middlesex County, Somerville: 1874 ("Ira Hill"), 1884 ("Wm. A. Preston"), 1895 ("F. Mac Rae").
2. City Directories, 1870s-1890s
3. Registry of Deeds, Middlesex County: Book 496, Page 274; Book 573, Page 174.

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no.

Form no.

72-B-35

55



own Somerville

address 91 Boston Street

ame

resent use residence

resent owner Frederick J. Lund

escription:

ate c. 1830-1850

Source Style/1852 Atlas

yle Greek Revival with Queen Anne
addition/alterations

Architect unknown

Exterior wall fabric clapboard

Outbuildings (describe)

Other features Greek Revival format

with turret probably added and
corner boards removed in 1870's
to "update" house to a Queen Anne
style.

Altered turret probably
added Date c.1870-80

Moved _____ Date _____

5. Lot size: 12,109 sq. feet

One acre or less _____ Over one acre _____

Approximate frontage 129.5

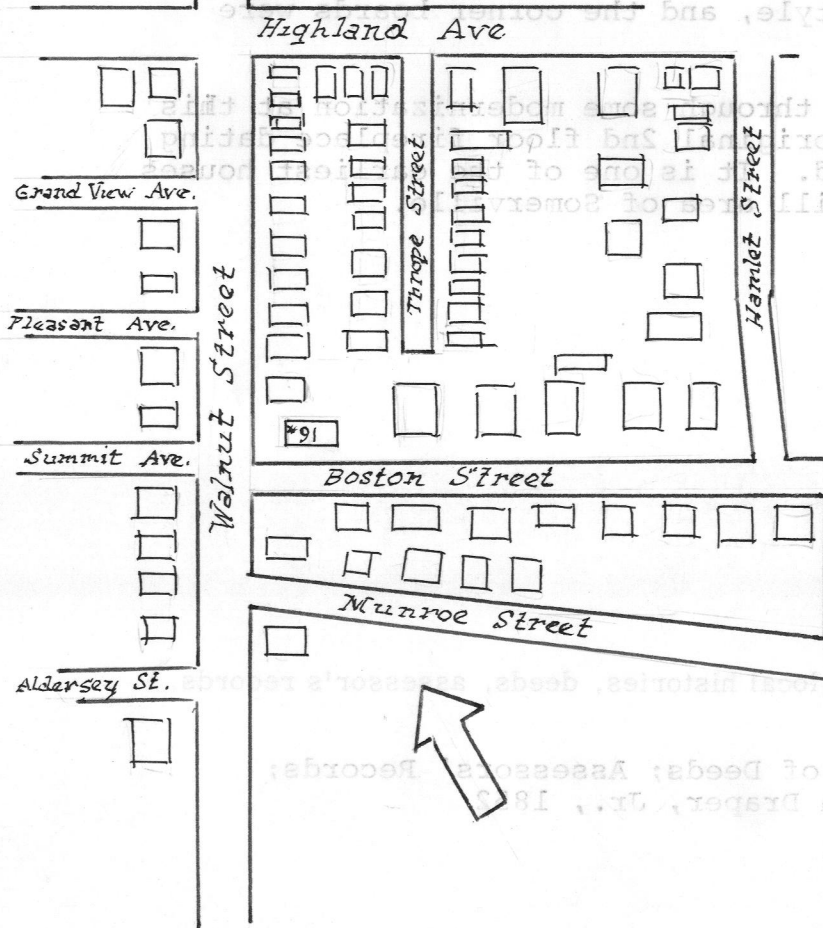
Approximate distance of building from street
35 feet

6. Recorded by M.A.Campbell, K. Tuttmann,
W.Mulligan, J.Fitzmaurice

Organization Office of Planning &
Community Development

Date September 22, 1978

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location
in relation to nearest cross streets and
other buildings. Indicate north.



(over)

SEP 28 1978

MASS. HIST. COMM.

7. Original owner (if known) _____

Original use _____

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates _____

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	_____
Agricultural	_____	Education	_____	Religion	_____
Architectural	<u>X</u>	Exploration/ settlement	_____	Science/ invention	_____
The Arts	_____	Industry	_____	Social/ humanitarian	_____
Commerce	_____	Military	_____	Transportation	_____
Communication	_____	Political	_____		
Community development	_____				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

This house is a very typical example of the Greek Revival type of residence prevalent in the first quarter of the 19th century with its wrap-around porch supported by Doric columns. The turret, however, was probably added about 1870-80 to "modernize" the house in accordance with the newly popular Queen Anne Style, and the corner boards were probably removed.

Although the interior went through some modernization at this time as well, there is an original 2nd floor fireplace dating to the Greek Revival period. It is one of the earliest houses in the historic Prospect Hill area of Somerville.

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

South Middlesex Registry of Deeds; Assessors' Records;
Map of Somerville, Martin Draper, Jr., 1852



Side view



Detail-top window

