

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.245
Historic Name:	McCormic, Thomas J. House
Common Name:	
Address:	55 Columbus Ave
City/Town:	Somerville
Village/Neighborhood:	Prospect Hill
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	R 1880
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Second Empire
Use(s):	Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Architecture
Area(s):	SMV.AW: Columbus Avenue - Warren Avenue Historic District
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

Lot 10/31/89 (10)
P1. Prospect
Hill - Boston
Sector B

AREA

FORM NO.

245

Prospect
Hill



SOMERVILLE

55 Columbus Avenue

Owner Name Thomas J. McCormick

Present residential

Original residential

TION

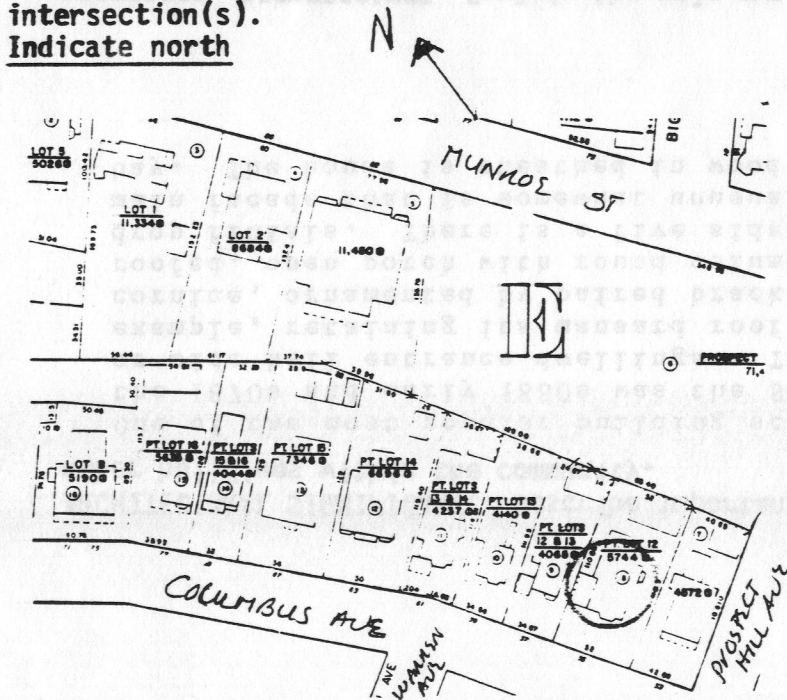
1874-1884

maps / deeds

Second Empire / Mansard

ct

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



Exterior Wall Fabric wood shingles

Outbuildings

Major Alterations (with dates)

Condition good

Moved Date

Acreage 5744 sq. ft.

Setting North side of Columbus Ave.
near corner of Columbus and Prospect
Hill Avenue, late 19th century
residential neighborhood, south slope
of Prospect Hill.

Recorded by Gretchen Schuler

Organization Somerville Historic
Preservation Commission

Date April, 1988

UTM REFERENCE

USGS QUADRANGLE

SCALE

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE** Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

One of the most popular building styles in the Prospect Hill area during the 1870s and early 1880s was the Second Empire style for large center-hall or side-hall entrance dwellings. This dwelling is a well conserved example, retaining its mansard roof form with pedimented dormers, a raking cornice, ornamented by paired brackets, two, two-story bays, and a flat roofed, open porch with round columns, square pilasters, and brackets with drop finials. There is a five sided dormer over the polygonal bay on the main facade that is somewhat unusual and accentuates the prominence of the bay. The house is sheathed in wood shingles.

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 substantial residential neighborhoods of Somerville, evolved throughout the late 19th century. Prior to that it was an agricultural community of farms. Columbus Avenue, once known as Warren Avenue, ran from Walnut to Bonner Street until the 1870s when it was continued through Bonner property to Washington Street. Its proximity to Union Square, a center for commercial and transportation activity made it a desirable place to live. Columbus Avenue was and is half way to the top of Prospect Hill and only a few blocks from Highland Avenue where the civic center of Somerville was by the mid to late 1800s.

In 1873 Ira Hill, local real estate investor and the one responsible for the subdivision plan of part of Columbus and Warren Avenues (Plan Book 17, Plan 90) sold Lot 12 to Thomas J. McCormic who built his house by 1874 and lived here until 1888 when he sold to Frank Ellis also of Somerville. McCormic and his family were the proprietors of an "oyster and eating house" located in the Masonic Block in Union Square. In the mid 1880s Thomas McCormic sold liquors in Boston while Bernard McCormic managed the eating house in Union Square.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

1. Atlas of Middlesex County, Somerville: 1874 ("T.J. McCormic"), 1884 ("T.J. McCormic"), 1895 ("Frank Ellis")
2. City Directories, 1870s-1890s.
3. Registry of Deeds, Middlesex County: Book 1271 Page 163; Book 1299, Page 340.