

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	CON.1795
Historic Name:	James, Edward Holten House and Study
Common Name:	Brook, The
Address:	105 Walden St
City/Town:	Concord
Village/Neighborhood:	Concord Center
Local No:	H9-119
Year Constructed:	1923
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Colonial Revival
Use(s):	Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Architecture; Literature; Social History
Area(s):	CON.A: Concord Monument Sq-Lexington Road Historic Dist. CON.DS: American Mile Historic District
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (03/06/1961); Nat'l Register District (09/13/1977)
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Ceramic Tile Wall: Brick; Concrete Unspecified; Wood; Wood Clapboard Foundation: Brick; Concrete Unspecified



The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has converted this paper record to digital format as part of ongoing projects to scan records of the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and National Register of Historic Places nominations for Massachusetts. Efforts are ongoing and not all inventory or National Register records related to this resource may be available in digital format at this time.

The MACRIS database and scanned files are highly dynamic; new information is added daily and both database records and related scanned files may be updated as new information is incorporated into MHC files. Users should note that there may be a considerable lag time between the receipt of new or updated records by MHC and the appearance of related information in MACRIS. Users should also note that not all source materials for the MACRIS database are made available as scanned images. Users may consult the records, files and maps available in MHC's public research area at its offices at the State Archives Building, 220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, open M-F, 9-5.

Users of this digital material acknowledge that they have read and understood the MACRIS Information and Disclaimer (<http://mhc-macris.net/macrisdisclaimer.htm>)

Data available via the MACRIS web interface, and associated scanned files are for information purposes only. THE ACT OF CHECKING THIS DATABASE AND ASSOCIATED SCANNED FILES DOES NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LOCAL, STATE OR FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS. IF YOU ARE REPRESENTING A DEVELOPER AND/OR A PROPOSED PROJECT THAT WILL REQUIRE A PERMIT, LICENSE OR FUNDING FROM ANY STATE OR FEDERAL AGENCY YOU MUST SUBMIT A PROJECT NOTIFICATION FORM TO MHC FOR MHC'S REVIEW AND COMMENT. You can obtain a copy of a PNF through the MHC web site (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc) under the subject heading "MHC Forms."

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

This file was accessed on: Friday, October 30, 2020 at 1:49: PM

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

H9-119

Concord

A

1795

NR: DIS; LHD - 3/12/62

Town Concord

Place (neighborhood or village) _____

Concord center

Address 105 Walden StreetHistoric Name Edward H. James House and Study; ("The Brook")Uses: Present dwellingOriginal studyDate of Construction 1923-24; part may be 1890'sSource Assessor's records; inscription in houseStyle/Form Federal RevivalArchitect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation concrete and brickWall/Trim wood clapboardRoof ceramic tile

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures _____

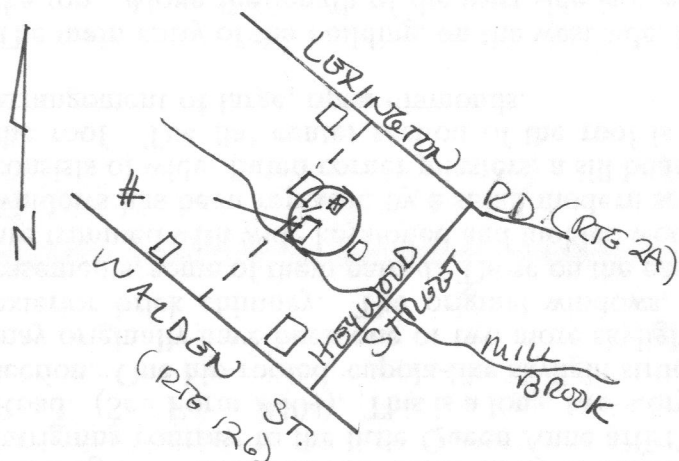
concrete-block garageMajor Alterations (with dates) onewindow replaced with double-hung; sky-lights removed (?)Condition goodMoved ☒ no ☐ yes Date N/AAcreage one acre

Setting Off road, on N. bank of the Mill Brook
on long, narrow lot stretching from Walden St.
to Lexington Road.



Sketch Map

Draw a map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets, including route numbers, if any. Attach a separate sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate north.



Recorded by Anne Forbes, consultant
research by Anne Forbes and Carla Garbarino
Organization Concord Hist. Commission

Date 11/4/94

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [X] *see continuation sheet*

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Stylistically a unique building in Concord, 105 Walden Street shows the 1920's approach to the building of a writer and musician's study or studio. Built in the Federal Revival style, it provides an intriguing contrast to the little Queen Anne artist's studio of Daniel Chester French at 324 Sudbury Road. (See Form #404). This is a long, two-story structure, with a low hipped roof with flat center section. One hip-roofed, cupola-like skylight structure remains at the north end of the roof. (There may originally have been one or two more skylights.) Abutting each end of the building is a large exterior brick chimney. The original windows, most of which survive, are all large, multi-light casements, some of them paired. Those on the east side at the first story, (two pairs and two singles,) are trimmed with wide keystone and molded wooden arches and solid fanlights. (One of the single windows has been replaced by a small modern sash.) The other architectural trim on the building consists of wide, fluted corner pilasters, a sill board, and exposed rafter ends under the overhang of the roof. The flat center section of the roof is surrounded by a wooden balustrade in a simple arrangement of large, open diamonds.

The main entry of the building, on the west side, has a flush wood door with a multi-light section at the top. Along the length of the west side is a veranda, its shed roof supported by brick piers and metal pipes. Its floor is made of broken red roofing tiles, set into the ground. In its center is a marble block, which reads "The Brook," 1923. Another inscription, on an interior wall of the basement, reads "E. James," 1926, coinciding with the time when tax records show the building may have been enlarged. (Cont.)

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [X] *see continuation sheet*

Explain history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

In spite of the popular belief that this building was the studio of artist Robertson James, who died in 1910, town records indicate that it is a 1920's replacement for that much smaller building. It was actually built by Mr. James's son, **Edward Holten James** (1873-1954), who lived in Concord for most of his life. In the early part of this century, he inherited considerable real estate from his parents, including the property at 70 Lexington Road. (See Form #319). That parcel, on which were the home and studio where his father had died, stretched south to the Mill Brook. In 1923, Edward James moved into #70 with his wife, Louisa (Cushing), and proceeded to rebuild or replace his father's small studio with this building on the bank of the brook. It was originally meant to serve as a study, but with the acquiescence of his wife, who said that they got along better apart than together, Edward James soon moved here and made it his home. Because he was afraid of fires, he had much of the house constructed of concrete.

Edward Holten James graduated in 1896 from Harvard, where his discovery of Ralph Waldo Emerson's essays set the stage for some of his later thinking on patriotism, freedom, and legal rights. He went on to study law at the University of Wisconsin, and practiced briefly as an attorney in Seattle. (Cont.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES [X] *see continuation sheet*

Maps and Atlases: 1927 Sanborn.
Concord Directories and Lists of Poll Taxpayers.
Concord Free Library: Special Collections--Obituary File.
Forbes, Anne. Interview with owners, 11/3/94. (Cont.)

[X] Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places*. *If checked, a completed National Register Criteria Statement form is attached.* *NR-listed 1977.

Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Concord Edward H. James House
and Study
Area(s) Form No.
A

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

A unique feature of this building is the roof construction, which is concrete, covered with thick red flat tiles. Identical tiles were used in the main sections of the roof of 70 Lexington Road, as well. The walls of this building are also said to be of early concrete construction.

In describing the house, Mr. James's son-in-law said that the large casement windows were installed because of his father-in-law's asthma. The ground floor included a study and a large living room. Upstairs were three bedrooms. Bands of red, green, and gold decorated the tops of the interior walls, and the doors were natural varnished wood. Heat was provided by a "pipeless furnace", with a large register on each floor. In the basement, Mr. James installed a pool, made by diverting the brook, in which he kept a frog and, at one time, what he believed to be a beaver. When he remarked to a friend that the beaver had not begun to build a dam, the friend replied that it was not surprising, since the animal was actually a muskrat.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

Mr. James was a musician, (who, according to one source, played the violin "atrociously and assiduously"), a compulsive writer, and a crusader for world peace and the rights of minorities. His radical ideas gained him a controversial reputation, both nationally and internationally as a Communist and subversive, and, locally, where he does not appear to have had much of a following, as an eccentric. As early as 1910 he took part in the overthrow of King Manuel of Portugal, was jailed twice in Germany during World War I for publishing criticism of the Kaiser, and in 1927 he was an ardent supporter of Sacco and Vanzetti. Late in his life, he spent several weeks in the Concord jail for criminal libel when he distributed a pamphlet criticizing U.S. government policy during World War II, and calling President Roosevelt "a bloodstained assassin."

Among his many written works were two books about his extensive travels, Crossroads in Europe (1929), and another on India. Another, entitled Jesus for the Jews, was an attempt to prove that the Roman government was solely responsible for the death of Christ. His most comprehensive work, I Am a Yankee, (1943) presented a program for reform in America, in which he proposed that the country be renamed "Yankee", and adopt the maltese cross as a national emblem. Its publication was associated with what he called the "Yankee Freedom Movement", a short-lived cause which gained a few supporters during World War II.

The cover of one of Edward James's books, written in 1934, bears a drawing by artist Alexander Calder. Calder was his son-in-law, and is said to have married Edward and Louisa's daughter, Louisa, here in the house.

BIBLIOGRAPHY, cont.

James, Edward H. I Am a Yankee. 1943.
Kaplan, Fred. Henry James: the Imagination of Genius.
Keyes/Tolman. "Houses in Concord."
Miller, Marian. "A Concord Yankee". 1978.

