

FINAL

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Sommer, August, House

and/or common

## 2. Location

street &amp; number 29 East McCarty Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Indianapolis \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 6th

state Indiana \_\_\_\_\_ code 0018 \_\_\_\_\_ county Marion \_\_\_\_\_ code 097

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

## 4. Owner of Property

name Phillip L. and Cynthia J. Prime

street &amp; number 29 Highland Manor Court, North Drive

city, town Indianapolis \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Indiana

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Center Township Recorder, Marion County

street &amp; number 1321 City-County Building

city, town Indianapolis \_\_\_\_\_ state Indiana

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title 1977 Survey of Marion County \_\_\_\_\_ has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes  nodate 1977 \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state  county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission

city, town 1842 City-County Building, Indianapolis, \_\_\_\_\_ state Indiana 46204

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The August Sommer House is located south of downtown Indianapolis in what was one of Indianapolis' largest German communities. The area is now one of mixed uses. One block to the west is a commercial strip along South Meridian, with several quite old commercial structures. To the east and south is part of the modern expressway system, which is responsible for the loss of most of the area's historic fabric. Just beyond the freeway entrance to the east is the Eli Lilly & Company pharmaceutical company.

The house itself faces north on McCarty Street. It is the only remaining residence facing this block of McCarty, with a parking lot to the east and commercial structures and parking lots to the west and north. Behind the house on the south is a small residential enclave, remnants of what was once a neighborhood. These structures are by and large working class housing, in a run-down condition.

In this setting, the Sommer House, a classic example of the Italianate style, stands out. The main block of the two-story painted brick house has projections on both sides, and a two-bay by two-bay block on the rear, giving it a lopsided Latin-cross floor plan. The house foundation is rock-faced ashlar limestone, which is capped by a dressed stone water table.

The main (north) facade is three bays in width, with the recessed main entry located in the westernmost bay. A second entrance is located in the western projecting bay and also faces McCarty Street. A wooden porch with cut-work detail extends from this entrance to the front of the house. The original porch floor and entrance steps have recently been replaced with concrete.

All openings on the house are segmentally arched, with the exception of an oval window which lights the interior staircase on the west side. Openings on the McCarty Street side also feature arched stone window trim with keystones. All windows are one over one double-hung sash. Both entrance doors, with paneled base and single light, are original. The fenestration of the second floor repeats that of the first on all elevations.

Attic story windows are located above each lower level opening, each of them flanked by brackets. A continuous stone sill joins all of these windows. There are brackets at each corner of the roof and spaced along the north, east, and west sides of the main block. Above the bracketed eaves is a decked hipped roof.

At the rear of the house is a one-story hipped roof portion. The southwest corner is a porch area, formerly enclosed with lattice work. On the east side of this portion is a one-story shed-roof wood addition which is not original to the house. A wrought-iron fence which was once located on the property line has been stored against the west side of the house.

All of the original detailing remains on the interior; however, all of the woodwork has been painted. In the entrance hall, there is a curved staircase with turned balusters, paneled octagonal newel post and carved work along the risers.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1880

Builder/Architect Unknown

**Statement of Significance (~~in one paragraph~~)**

The August Sommer House is locally significant for its architecture and for the builder's social/humanitarian activities.

The Sommer House is a classic Italianate structure, and certainly the most substantial and prominent residence remaining in the area. Little remains of the once large German area, through which a complex of expressways has been cut.

August Sommer(1837-1916), himself one of many German immigrants who settled in Indianapolis, came to the city before the Civil War, worked as a drayman, and eventually rose to prominence in the German community. He was one of the founders of the German Protestant Orphan Asylum, established in 1867, and later served as a member of the board of directors and as a trustee of this institution.

Sommer and his growing family occupied several wood frame houses before moving into a substantial brick home at 85(727) Union Street sometime prior to 1877. In 1880 he had this house built, a statement of his success. Sommer occupied the home until his death in 1916. All but one of his children lived in this house until their father's death. At that time the house passed into the hands of his daughter, Emma. The home did not pass out of family ownership until her death in 1957.

~~Currently, the home is being restored to its original condition. The garden will contain a memorial to John Muir, who lived nearby for a short time in a house that was removed by the expressway project.~~





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Continuation sheet The August Sommer House

Item number 7

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To the left of the entry is a parlor with a black marble fireplace. It has a round arch opening with gold incised Eastlake style decoration in the spandrels and on the center cartouche. The mantel shelf has a serpentine profile. The other five fireplaces in the house are wood and are simplified versions of the parlor fireplace in design and profile. In several of the rooms there is an unusual decorative wood shelf with serpentine profile and curved brackets.

The house is currently being renovated.

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Major Bibliographical

Continuation sheet References, Sommer House

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Sulgrove, (B(arry) R., History of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana  
(Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), P. 383

Indianapolis Architecture (n.p.: Indiana Architectural Foundation, 1975), p. 81