

100 High St. (1810-35)

From: Form B-STRUCTURAL SURVEY, Massachusetts Historical Commission, office of the secretary, Statehouse, Boston.

Recorder: DR Knapton:



100 High Street

2015

Number 100 High St. is a brick Federal house with a five bay main façade and a two bay end wall facing the street. It has a

granite foundation and a half-hip roof-it was originally a double house. It has a deep yard in front of the main façade.

From,

BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION Architectural Survey:

Sawyer (*Old Charlestown*, 1902) sheds light on 100 High Street's beginning (further work is needed to untangle the deed chain at Middlesex). He states that "the double brick house which stands on the corner of High and Salem Streets was also built by James Harrison or his father. His father lived in the half of it that fronted on the fruit garden (this orchard was located on the site of 86-98 High St.) His lot was enclosed by a slat fence, in which a gate opening into the pathway that led through the Son's garden to his house-a convenient and pleasant connection of family estates." James Harrison was a well-to-do merchant and real estate speculator. Interestingly, this double house (100 High Street) was a secondary residence on Harrison's estate. Harrison's mansion house stood at the center of the block bounded by High, School, Main and Salem Streets. Built in 1799-1802, it was "a square wood mansion, two stories high, resembling the Dexter house (still extant on Green Street), but plainer, without a cupola and surrounded by far less elaborate grounds". This house was moved to 16-18 School Street in 1870 and was demolished in June 1964.



Harrison mansion

?date

Hunnewell lists James Harrison's widow as living at 100 High Street in 1812. This house's deeds have been traced back to September 28, 1816. At that time Elisha Wheeler, a Charlestown merchant, sold of this property to Elisha Phinney for \$2000. This lot is described as "parcel of real estate near the Second Congregational Church, bordering the garden of the mansion house of James Harrison, deceased, purchased at auction (lately) by Capt. Thomas Beckford." This deed mentions "the Brick house". Evidently Phinney owned both halves until the house was purchased by Isaac Warren and George Warren in 1833. By 1836 Timothy Fletcher, a lumber merchant, owned both halves of this house. Fletcher sold the "missing" half to George Stimson Junior, a gentleman, on April 15, 1847 (501:261) for \$3200. This deed mentions the circular fence at the northeast corner. Stimson in turn sold of the "missing" half to John Mullay, trader/furniture dealer on June 2, 1856. On July 7, 1856 Mullay sold it to Henry Caryl of

Charlestown, a cabinetmaker, for \$4000 (741:322). This deed mentions the circular fences at the northeast corner and the adjacent brick house of Timothy Fletcher. The 1875 atlas indicates that by that time Caryl owned both halves. The deed chain associated with the extant portion of this house does not indicate when Caryl acquired number 100. (Starting with Franklin G R Lennon from Charles M Hosmer, June 25, 1886, 1729:354). By 1901 F G R Lennon is listed as the owner of 100 and the "missing" half was owned by Francis Rayner.

This house is a survivor from Salem Hill's earliest phase of residential development during the 1790s and early 1800s. It may represent the work of Oliver Holden, carpenter and/or Shadrach Shattuck, brick maker. (See form on 231 Main St.). Holden lived in a Federal mansion on the site of the present Oliver Holden School on Pearl Street (behind the old Hotel Salem). He moved from Pepperell Massachusetts to Charlestown in 1789 and became a major real estate speculator, builder and merchant.

The establishment of a Baptist church across the street from 100 high, on the site of the Hotel Salem in 1801 was indicative of the growth of this once rural fringe area. Building activity was evidently encouraged in part by the completion of the Middlesex Canal in 1803 (southern terminus at Charlestown Neck) and to a lesser extent by the establishment of a state prison at nearby Prison Point in 1804-1805.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1833, 1839, 1848, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown directories-1834-1874

James F Hunnewell, *A Century of Town Life* pp.96 – 97

Timothy T Sawyer, *Old Charlestown*, pp. 117-118

