

108 Main Street (? ca. 1820s-30s, ? ca. 1855 4th floor addition)

From Boston Landmark Commission's Charlestown Historic Resources Study 1981 (E. W. Gordon, Consultant)*:



108 Main

ca 1980

Number 108 Main Street is a free standing, four story brick Italianate house with a side hall plan. It has a stone lintel band course between the first and second floors. There is a deep, bracketed cornice at the roof, which is flat. To the rear is a four-story ell. The house is adjacent Union Court, a Belgian block-paved alley.

There is a replacement front door and sidelights. The door hood is saw-cut bracketed with pendants and supports an oriel window with a bracketed cornice. The windows have simple brownstone sills and lintels



108 Main Street

2015

Builder: unknown

Original owner: ? Captain Eliphath Newell?, Amos Bancroft?

Number 108 Main is something of an architectural enigma. At first glance it appears to be a circa mid-1850s Italianate house. Middlesex deeds and local history, however, indicate that it dates back to at least the early 19th century. No longer extant is the apparently identical house which once stood at 110 Main Street. (A ca. 1900 photograph shows a two story tobacco shop/pool hall at that time.) In its present architectural incarnation number 108 Main Street is a straightforward Italianate townhouse. With a deep bracketed door hood, oriel window, and deep-bracketed cornice. It had a storefront of uncertain vintage, since removed.



108, 110 Main Street

ca. 1900

Hunnewell (page 136) notes that 108's lot was purchased in 1773 by Capt. Eleazar Johnson. His executors sold it to Susannah, wife of Capt. Eliphalet Newell. At the time of Newell's death in 1827, the building on this property was described as "a brick house with a 40-foot front. It stands close to the street and was two stories high, but the southerly half now has three stories" (meaning number 108, which, counting the storefront has four floors). In any event members of the Newell family owned this property until the late 1840s (see Middlesex deeds 501:144 and five at 21:192).

From 1848 until 1855, the property was owned by Jacob Forster, a Charlestown merchant. Forster sold 108 to Amos B Bancroft, Charlestown physician, on March 26, 1855. During the mid-19th century (possibly later?) The Thompson Square area was something of a medical center with several doctors' offices in the Dexter Row block and the Union Block. Number 108 Main Street probably achieved its appearance (with the former storefront) shortly after Bancroft's purchase in 1855. Bancroft's heirs owned this house in the 1910s.

Bibliography:

Atlases-1868, 1875, 1885, 1892, 1901, 1911

Maps-1818, 1852

Hunnewell-*A Century of Town Life*, page 136

Middlesex deeds-337: 391, 392; 501:144; 521:192; 701:480

Charlestown directories-1834-74

Boston directories-late 19th century

*Digitized, and edited without change in content, from the scanned record in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, and with addition of current photographs. In the case of houses that have been altered since the survey, these photographs may not entirely correspond to the

architectural description. If earlier photographs of suitable quality are available, these have been included.

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