

115 Russell Street (circa 1859)

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



115 Russell Street

1981



115 Russell Street

2016

Number 115 Russell Street is a 2½ story Greek Revival/Italianate wood frame house. It has a three bay main façade with a side hall plan, and there are simple narrow corner boards. The house has a gable roof with return eaves and bracketed cornice. A flight of wooden steps leads to a recessed entrance with a simple vertical and horizontal board

enframements. The windows are simply enframed with 2/2 wood sash.

Original owner: George S Monroe

The house's relatively ample front and side yards reflect its appearance in the area prior to 1860. To the rear is the steep slope of Bunker Hill. Built in 1859, 115 Russell Street is of interest as one of the very few detached wood frame single-family houses built in Charlestown after 1850. This solid Greek Revival/Italianate wood frame vernacular house, with its relatively ample front and side yards, represents the last gasp of suburban type housing in Charlestown. As early as the late 1840s, portions of Bunker Hill (e.g. Baldwin Street) began to be built up with masonry row houses. From the mid-1850s onward, Russell Street was built up with wood frame row houses and later brick apartment blocks.

Russell Street was laid out in several stages between 1810 and 1861. The segment of Russell Street between Pearl and Sullivan streets was set out circa 1810. The segment from Sullivan to Eden Street had been laid out by 1834 and the portion between Eden and Oak Street was set circa 1840s, while the section that 115 faces was extended from Oak Street to Auburn Street by 1861.

Number 115's lot had been part of the estate of Isaac Mead, a prominent Charlestown Morocco manufacturer. Mead's widow Alice sold 115's land to Oliver Brown, a "neat's foot oil dealer", and Benjamin Phipps, a carriage trimmer and harness maker, on June 20, 1844. Brown and Phipps owned this parcel for 15 years before selling it to George A Monroe, a provisions dealer, on April 18, 1859. Presumably, this house was built in the spring/summer of 1859. Munro paid \$1000 for this lot. He is

listed as living at 115 Russell Street in 1860. (In 1856, he lived at 14 Eden Street and operated a provisions store at 144 Main Street.) Number 115 Russell St. remained in the Monroe family until 1918. At that time the house was sold to Joan V Cronan (see Suffolk deed 4106:463).

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1833, 1839, 1848, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown directories-1840s-70's

Middlesex deeds-445:158, 811:186

Suffolk deed-4106:463

*Digitized and edited, without change in content, from the scanned record in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, with the 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.

R Dinsmore