

15, 18 City Square, Roughan Hall (1894)

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



Roughan Hall, 15, 18 City Square

2015

Roughan Hall, at City Square, is a four-story Renaissance Revival commercial/office building containing a large meeting

hall, which is no longer in use. The building is constructed of yellow brick with cast-iron framed storefronts on the ground floor and boldly rendered rusticated limestone enframement at the main entrance. A projecting continuous stone sill course divider separates the lower three floors from the fourth floor. Formally finished facades face Main and Park streets. The windows of floors two and three are enframed vertically by raised cast stone (?) moldings. The fourth floor has large double arched windows with oculars at the centers of the arches, framed by well-crafted terra-cotta moldings. The Main and Park Street façades have an unusual corbelled cornice with a regimental row of round arch brickwork corbels echoing the shape of the fourth floor window arches. The roof is flat.

Builder: unknown

Original owner: Michael Roughan

The Roughan building is a remnant of late 19th century pre-elevated railway City Square. Like the Cauley building at City Square, this building has lost much of its original commercial context to highway construction, and urban renewal. Along with the Army and Navy YMCA (demolished), the Charlestown municipal building, and Charlestown Trust company building, the Roughan building provides a physical link with City Square late 19th-early 20th century prosperity as an important Boston area commercial/transportation node.

Architecturally, the Roughan building represents an interesting foray into Renaissance Revival commercial architecture.

Salient features include the well preserved cast-iron storefronts, Rusticated light gray stone entrance enframements, tall arched windows and the distinctive corbelled cornice which consists of a series of brick work arches.

The 1875 and 1885 atlases of Charlestown indicate that this building's lot was occupied by a large rectangular structure at the Main Street/Park street corner owned by Francis E Donner and a contiguous trapezoidal building owned by the Monument National Bank (1875) and P J Stone (1885). To the rear of the large building owned by Donner were two wooden stables and a long rectangular brick building. Evidently Michael Roughan began to put the Roughan buildings lot together in February 1892. On February 1 of that year Melissa E Donner, widow of Francis E Donner sold the lot at the corner of Main and Park Street to Michael Roughan of Boston for one dollar.

Roughan Hall was completed in September, 1894. It contained a magnificent hall, offices, Lodge rooms and club quarters. By 1930 this building contained a cigar store, bowling alleys, Law offices, a branch of the John Hancock Life Insurance Company and Gillis Inc. autos. Roughan Hall at that time was used as a meeting place for the Palaci Aidi club. Further research is needed on this building's original owner, Michael Roughan; Boston buildings department records did not have information on this building's architect, builder, etc.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

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

Suffolk deeds-2040: 588

1930 Boston directory

Middlesex deeds-1161: 254

*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.

R. Dinsmore