

23 Caldwell Street (circa 1891-92,(?) or earlier and moved)

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



23 Caldwell Street

1980s

Number 23 Caldwell Street is a two story, T-plan Greek Revival/Italianate house. It has a brick basement and a broad, four bay street-facing main façade at its gable end. The house has a

gable roof with return eaves. There are narrow corner boards and sideboards at the eaves. An ell at the rear of the house is clad with wooden shingles.

The off center entrance has simple vertical and horizontal board enframements. Above the front door is a small square six-pane window.



23 Caldwell Street

2016

Builder: Horatio Williams?

Original owner: Horatio and Martha A Williams

Number 23 Caldwell Street's form, fenestration, and elements suggest that this is a Greek Revival/Italianate house dating approximately to the 1850s. However, atlases and Middlesex County deeds indicate that the house did not occupy this lot until circa 1891-92. On November 23, 1891, Benjamin F Parker, a widower, of Wellesley sold the house's lot, with no mention of buildings, to Martha A Williams, wife of Horatio Williams (see Suffolk deed 2029:488). Horatio Williams' career as a carpenter stretched back to the 1840s (see form on 57, 59 Sullivan Street), suggesting that it is entirely possible that Williams, working in a retardataire manner for the early 1890s, could have produced a Greek revival/Italianate frame vernacular house at so late a date. On the other hand, the house may have been moved from some other part of Charlestown Neck, perhaps as the result of the expansion of the Davidson rubber Company, across the street.

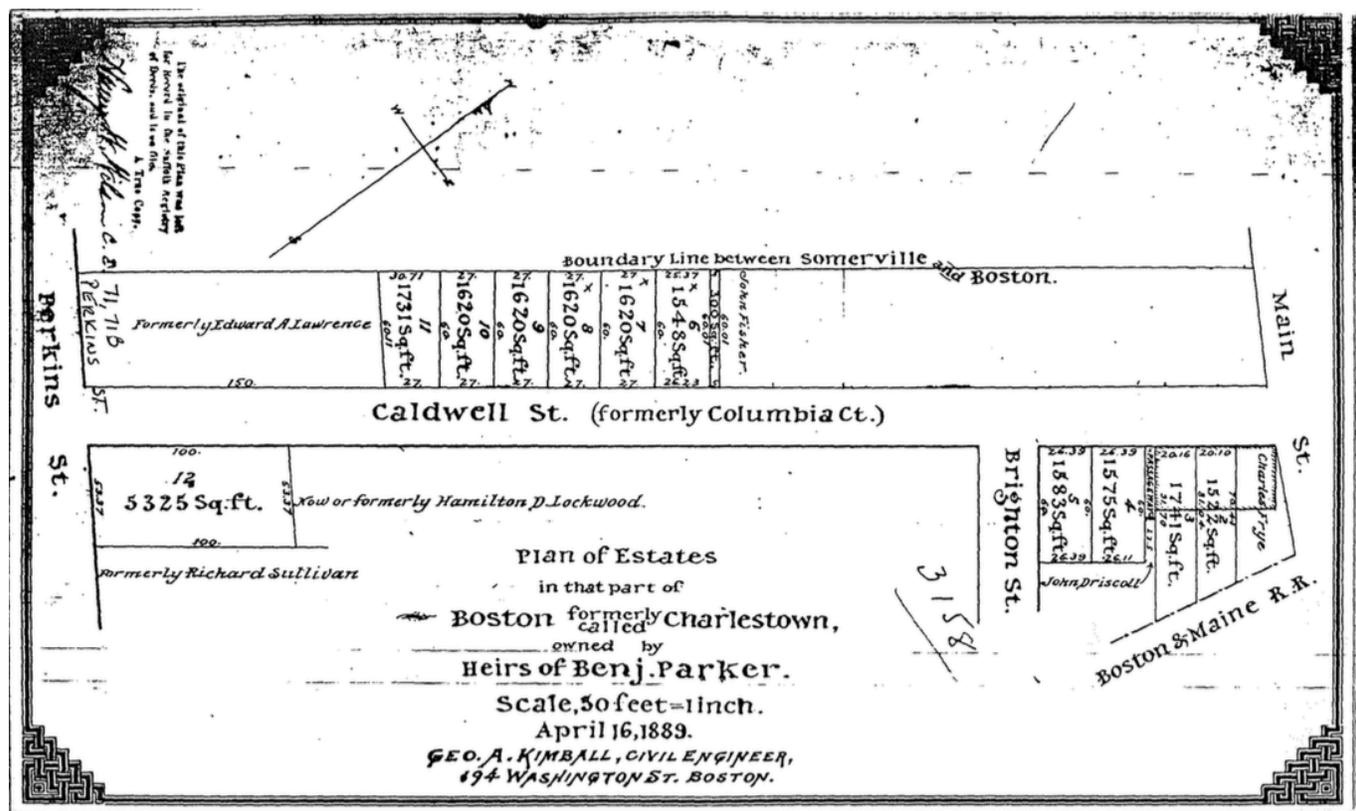
In any event, this house's lot had been part of the extensive landholdings of Benjamin Parker, and probably belonged to Richard Sullivan Sr during the early 19th century. Parker was a brick maker, listed as early as 1834 as "without the peninsula." During the 1840s his residence is described as "Neck Village", referring to present day Sullivan Square and vicinity.

From 1848 until the late 1860s Parker was a brick dealer living at 39 Perkins Street. The house at 72 Perkins Street was apparently built circa early 1870s, after Benjamin Parker's death on December 19, 1970. (Ed. Note- This passage is confusing, but may be clarified by the form for 71- 71B Perkins Street, which states that "Number 39 Perkins may have been an earlier house on this site or may have been located elsewhere on Perkins Street. It is not clear if the street numbering system has been changed over time".)

In any event this house (23 Caldwell) first appears on the 1892 Atlas. Members of the Williams family lived here until circa 1912.

Later owners included Patrick Grimes, a brewery worker, living at 28 Brighton Street, in 1910, and Miles Muldoon, 1820s.

Caldwell Street appears to have been an afterthought in a street pattern that includes Brighton, Perkins, and Parker streets. These streets were set out over Richard Sullivan Sr-owned land in the mid-1840s. Caldwell Street was originally called Columbia Street and came into existence circa 1850s. It was called Columbia court in 1866 and was not cut through to Brighton Street until the late 1880s. The name Caldwell Street appears to date to the late 1880s, judging by a plan entitled "plan of estates" in that part of Boston etc. owned by the heirs of Benjamin Parker, April 16, 1889. Caldwell Street evidentially never developed as a more densely settled residential street owing to its proximity to the Davidson rubber Company.



Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1833, 1839, 1848, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown and Boston directories

A record of the streets, alleys, places, etc. in the city of Boston, 1910

Suffolk deeds-1886:20, 2029:488

*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.

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