

## 238-240 Bunker Hill Street (circa 1800-1810)



238, 240 Bunker Hill Street

SPNEA, circa 1980s

Numbers 238-240 Bunker Hill Street is an early 19th century masonry vernacular gambrel-roofed house. It rises two stories on the Bunker Hill Street side, and three stories on the rear wall. The ground floor was reworked in approximately the late 19th century to accommodate a storefront. The entrance was probably originally at the center of the Bunker Hill Street façade, but is presently located on the two-story side ell. (The 1980s photo shows the ell to have a flat roof, enclosed by extension of the gambrel roof in the 2015 photo). Modern brick covers the area from the ground level to just above the first floor windows and consists of six rows of stretcher bricks to one row of header bricks. The upper floor has seven rows of

stretcher bricks to one row of header bricks. The windows of the unaltered upper floors have 6/6 wood sash and are fully enframed with round moldings\*\*. The rear wall shows reworked windows of various sizes at ground level. The building is enclosed by a gambrel roof with return eaves. The narrowness of the two bay end wall gables suggests a 19<sup>th</sup> rather than an 18<sup>th</sup> century gambrel profile.



238, 240 Bunker Hill Street

2015

Original owner: trustees of Phillips Academy (?)

Numbers 238, 240 Bunker Hill Street is significant as a rare Boston area early 19th century masonry vernacular gambrel roofed house. Although its ground floor on the Bunker Hill Street façade was reworked circa late 19th century to

accommodate a storefront, it retains its distinctive form and Gambrel end wall gable profile. The brickwork of its upper floor and one half has been undisturbed. Still intact are its windows' rounded moldings. The narrowness of the end wall gambrel gables suggests a construction date of approximately the early 1800s. This house is difficult to date by deeds, as many deed index entries exist for Trustees of Phillips Academy, its pre-1821 owner. The Trustees of Phillips Academy do not appear as Charlestown grantees in the indexes before 1800.

On May 25, 1821, Gardner Whiten, a victualler, paid the Trustees of Phillips Academy \$1900 for this property. Whiten is described in the deed as already occupying the property. (See Middlesex deed 237: 371.) On September 11, 1824 Gardner Whiten sold "a certain parcel of land with a brick dwelling house and other buildings" to Mary B Stone (256:313). Mary B Stone, later Shaw, sold this house to Thomas Hooper, Esq. in October 1837 (368:334) for \$1500. Hooper held on to this property for 10 years, selling it to Samuel M Felton for \$3000. Felton was a land surveyor, responsible for several mid-19th century Bunker Hill-area plans. He is referred to as a "civil engineer" in a deed of June 20, 1848. At that time Jacob Forster paid Felton \$1400 for this property "521:419). Forster, a merchant, sold it to James McLaughlin of Boston, a laborer, on September 12, 1853 for \$1400 (611:551). McLaughlin owned it until at least 1875. He is probably the same James McLaughlin listed in the 1884 Charlestown directory as "at gas works, house 53 Baldwin Street".

A ca late 19th century SPNEA photograph of Bunker Hill Street indicates that a grocery store was located on the house's ground floor. Further research is needed to unravel the Trustees of Phillips Academy deeds to determine the original owner and date of construction.

Bunker Hill Street was "opened" in 1783 but probably existed as a colonial north-south highway. Evidently this house stood in isolation until the 1840s. Up until that time it stood on the northwestern-most fringes of the town's residential area. By the late 1840s, construction of substantial row houses was underway.

Bibliography:

Maps-818, 1833, 1839, 1848, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown and Boston directories

Middlesex deeds

SPNEA photo file

\*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

\*\* I am not able to identify round moldings-they appear to be typical moldings with raised outer borders. See notes for 9-13 Union Street. -R.D