

## 29 Elm Street (1837-1838)

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



29 Elm Street

1981

Number 29 Elm Street is an interesting brick and wood Greek Revival house. It has wood shingles (presumably originally clapboards) with brick end wall gables, a low granite basement and a three bay main façade. There are Italianate brackets at the cornice, possibly representing a circa 1850s attempt to update the house.

Two granite steps lead to a slightly recessed entrance flanked by paneled pilasters and surmounted by a heavy cornice-headed Greek Revival entablature. The windows are fully enframed with 1/1 wood sash.



29 Elm Street

2015

Builder: Charles Chesley?, Moses Worthen?

Original owner: Charles O Kimball

Number 29 is part of Elm Street's stylistically comprehensive collection of 19th century houses ranging from the early 1800s Federal to Georgian Revival and early 20th century apartments. The portion of Elm Street between Bunker Hill Street and High Street is part of a very old system of roads, which dates back to at least the mid-18th century, and linked Bunker Hill Street with streets leading to Boston.

Architecturally, 29 Elm Street is of interest as a circa late 1830s Greek Revival house with circa 1850s Italianate "updating," with wood brackets at its cornice. It represents an unusual Charlestown example of a house combining a wood frame main façade with brick end wall gables.

Built circa 1837-1838, this house may represent the work of Charles Chesley, of Charlestown, a housewright, and/or Moses L Worthen. Charles Chesley is not listed in 1830s or 1840s Charlestown directories. Moses L Worthen was active in Charlestown building trades from circa the 1820s to the 1850s. He was the architect of the Greek Revival/Italianate house at 54 Elm Street built at the same time as 29 Elm Street, circa 1837 – 38.

During the mid 1830s, 29 Elm's lot was sold back and forth between Chesley, William Austin, Esq., James Dana, Moses Worthen, and C O Kimball, a clerk. There was no mention of buildings on this lot in a mortgage dated June 19, 1837 (365:505, Kimball, grantee; Austin, grantor). Buildings are mentioned in the deed of June 1838 (375:144). At that time Otis Wing, a clerk, of Hampton New Hampshire paid Kimball \$2000 for this land and "the buildings thereon". During the 1840s the house was owned by the estate of Jane and Richard C Lawrence. On June 12, 1847 the house was sold to Eben

Jackson by Woodbury Marstons, trustee of the Lawrence estate, for \$1500. Jackson is referred to in the deed as a "Boston gentleman". By the time he sold 29 in 1853 he is referred to as a "farmer, Westborough, Worcester County". (See 601:528, April 14, 1843).

During the 1850s Hall Mason owned this house. On March 28, 1857 it was sold to Leonard Conant, a Charlestown a trader, by Samuel L Mason, a housewright, for \$5100 (761:53). Conant lived here from 1857 until circa 1875. During the 1860s and 1870s he worked as a clerk at 84 Faneuil Hall market, Boston. During the late 19th century this house was owned by F B and J W Austin.

#### Bibliography:

Maps-1775, 1818, 1833, 1839, 1848, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown directories-1834-1874

Middlesex deeds-350:473, 375:144, 365:505, 501:498,  
601:528, 761:53

\*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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