

303 Bunker Hill St. (1881)

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

The St. Francis deSales Church Parochial Residence is an L-shaped Second Empire building with a boxy, large, main block, granite basement, and center entrance pavilion. It is constructed of red brick with continuous lintel and sill courses, now painted red/Brown, but originally white stone. The building has a bracketed cornice and a hip-on-Mansard roof with slates which are still intact. It has attractively framed dormer windows and corbelled chimneys.



303 Bunker Hill Street

2015

Original owner: Roman Catholic archdiocese of Boston

Together, the St. Francis deSales Church, the convent, and the St. Francis deSales Parochial Residence constitute a well-preserved Victorian streetscape of substantial, well-designed buildings. Number 303 Bunker Hill Street ranks among the finest examples of brick Second Empire style architecture in Charlestown, and for that matter, the Boston area. It is a rare Charlestown example of a freestanding brick Second Empire building.

The Parochial Residence's lot appears vacant on the 1875 atlas, which showed the "Catholic Burying Ground" to the rear. James S Sullivan wrote that "in 1881, a fine commodious parochial residence of brick was built at a cost of \$18,000."

Its first resident was Rev. Michael J Supple. He was parish priest from July 1865 to 1888. In 1879, it became the home of Father James N supple. He was born in Milford Massachusetts, January 19, 1850. He was a graduate of Holy Cross and later entered Troy seminary, in 1870. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 30, 1874 and was subsequently appointed a curate to St. Augustine's Church, South Boston.

St. Francis deSales Church was built in 1859-1862, to serve Boston's growing Roman Catholic congregation. Much of this population surge was linked to the great immigration of 1845-1855, which brought 100,000 Irish from the famine stricken southern and western counties of Ireland to the port of Boston. Charlestown's docks and the Navy Yard offered employment to these immigrants.

Bibliography:

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

One Hundred Years of Progress -Pictorial Account of the Catholic Church in New England, James S Sullivan, M.D., 1895

The Catholic Church of Boston, William A Leahy
*History of the Archdiocese of Boston in the Various Stages of its
Development 1604-1943*, volume II, 1944
“Historical Background”, from *Revitalizing Older Houses in
Charlestown*, George Stephen, BRA, January 1973

*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