

## Engine house #50, Winthrop Street (ca. 1911-22)

From Boston Landmark Commission's Charlestown Historic Resources Study 1981\*:



Engine House #50

2015



Rear wall hose drying rack, ? age, no longer in use

2017

Engine house #50 is a handsome Georgian revival fire station constructed of red brick with cast ironstone. The first floor cast stone facing is carried to the level of the center entrance entablature. Between floors two and three are a cast stone belt course, and a third floor windows sill course, closely spaced.

The main façade features a center entrance framed by rusticated cast stone pilasters and entablature with a broken pediment and an urn. The entrance is flanked by garage doors, set within wide console keystone arches which spring from rusticated pilasters. The second floor is dominated by a trio of tall windows, boldly framed by Doric pilasters and pedimented entablatures, opening on wrought iron balconies and bracketed by cross-shaped cast stone plaques containing shallow oval niches. Small oval windows flank the center second floor window. The third floor has five windows interspersed with rectangular/vertical cast stone panels. Bracketing the five windows are high relief cast stone swags.

Above the third floor windows is a rusting metal cornice and a tall parapet (later addition?).



Second floor door, hinge, old section (1853)



Old section (1853) 2/3 floor stair

2017

Architect/builder: unknown

Owner: City of Boston

Engine house number 50's main façade is a richly detailed example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Georgian Revival fire station architecture. It is characterized by a high degree of symmetry, and

polychromatic red brick versus white cast stone materials. The façade is dominated by wide garage door openings set within handsome console keystone Arches and the boldly framed second floor windows.

This fire station is integral to the primarily mid-19th century character of Winthrop Street. It is a key component of the “wall” of buildings lining the west side of Winthrop Street. Neither the Boston Buildings Department or Fire Department records yielded information on this building’s exact date of construction, architect, builder etc. Information on this building was not forthcoming from *Charlestown Enterprise* back issues. (Microfilm missing at the B P L for the four years 1913-1915)

A fire station has been located on this site since the early 1850s. The first fire station was constructed of brick and initially contained a school. The 1875 Beers Atlas of Charlestown shows the predecessor fire station on this site labeled "Washington hose number three." Evidently this building was oriented toward Soley Street, rather than Winthrop Street, its doors opening onto a stable yard which led to Soley Street. By 1901 the old fire station on this lot was labeled "Combination Number Seven". The present fire station was built circa 1911-1922. Further research, and another check of the BPL Fine arts Department buildings files might entail finding out who the city architect was in 1910-1920.

Note: the bronze plaque on this building’s first floor reads: “in memory of District Fire Chief Richard E Sullivan, Districts One and Two, Boston fire Department, who collapsed at the scene of a fire on November 23, 1938. Donated by members of Boston Firefighters Local 718 I.A. F.F.”



Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

Atlases-1868, 1875, 1885, 1092, 1901, 1911

\*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.

R. Dinsmore