

## **340 Bunker Hill Street, the St. Francis deSales School (1885-1892)**

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



The St. Francis deSales School is a large Queen Anne/Georgian Revival School. It has a nine bay main facade with deep, arched entrances at the third and seventh bays. The main facade is treated as three segments: a five bay midsection and two bay wings. Vertical emphasis is provided by recessed and arched bays spanning floors two to four in the center and two to three in the wings. There are rock-faced brownstone sills and lintels,

which provide contrast with the red brick. The windows have 6/6 wood sash. The main block and wings have a copper cornice, and hip roofs. Pedimented tripartite dormers are located at the apex of the wings' roofs.

Architect: Charles J Bateman

Owner: Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston.

Along with St. Francis deSales Church, the St. Francis deSales School is one of Bunker Hill's prominent landmarks.

Architecturally, it represents a restrained example of Colonial Revival form and symmetry with Queen Anne "feeling" via arched openings, verging on Romanesque, and high quality brick work.

St. Francis deSales School was built in 1890-91 and is the work of C J Bateman. James S Sullivan notes that "nearly opposite the church, on Bunker Hill Street, crowning the very summit of the hill and overlooking the country for miles around, stands a great schoolhouse. It is the parish school and it towers apparently as high as the monument on Breeds Hill. It is of brick, with granite trimmings, five stories high. It is 125 feet long and 75 feet wide and cost over \$125,000 including the price of the land. It has 16 rooms and one large hall, well adapted for lectures or entertainments, and the seating capacity of the hall is 1000. The building of the school commenced in May 1890 and the school being completed, it was opened in September 1891. About 900 children attend the school and the teachers, who number 15, are members of the Sisters of St. Dominic (A teaching order founded in France in the 13th century)".

\*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.

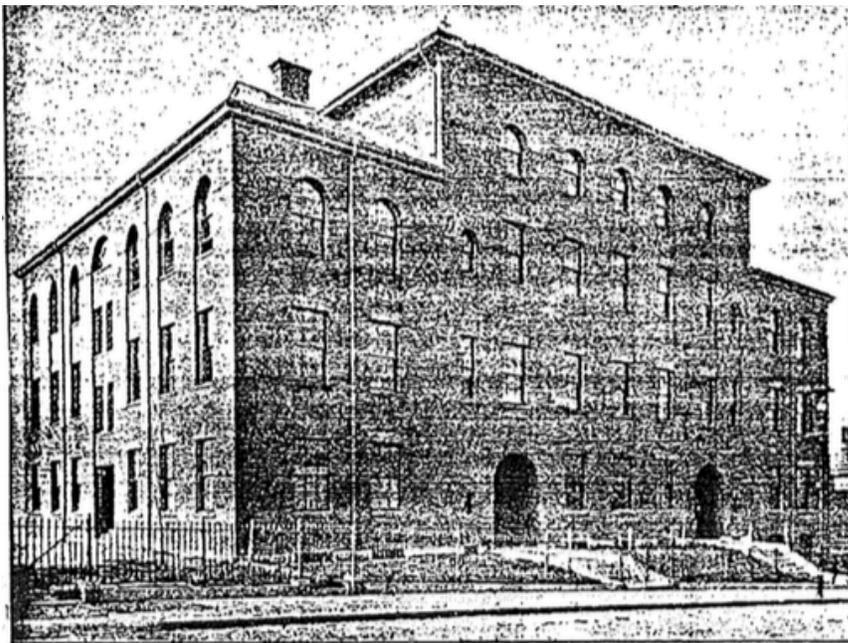
R Dinsmore

Bibliography:

Atlases- 1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

One Hundred Years of Progress—A Graphic, Historical and Pictorial Account of the Catholic Church of New England, Archdiocese of Boston—1895, James J Sullivan, M D

From: Massachusetts Cultural Resource System Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and National Register of Historic Places nominations for Massachusetts



PAROCHIAL SCHOOL, ST. FRANCIS DE SALES' CHURCH, CHARLESTOWN.

The St. Francis the Sales Roman Catholic Church complex is associated with the economic and social ascendancy of the Charlestown Irish Catholic population in the late 19th century. Employment opportunities along the industrial waterfront and in the Navy yard attracted Irish immigrants to Charlestown, first as day laborers and following the Civil War as residents. Prominently sited at the crest of Bunker Hill, this well preserved parish complex includes a church, rectory, convent, and school.

St. Francis's deSales Church is an impressive Gothic revival structure designed by noted ecclesiastic architect Patrick C Keeley (1816-1896). Constructed of argillite, an indigenous Charlestown stone, this 1861 church is distinguished by a 181 foot spire and ornamental cast iron entry arches. Charles J Bateman, Boston city architect during the 1880s, designed the parish's three brick buildings, each executed in a different architectural style. The 1881 rectory is a rare local example of a freestanding brick second Empire residence. The 1894 parochial school is a massive Romanesque revival structure; its signature hip roof form dominates Bunker Hill skyline. The 1901 late-Italianate convent completes this eclectic Victorian campus. A Catholic burial ground dating from circa 1830 occupies the steep rocky slope to the rear of the rectory.