

55 Park Street (ca. 1801-1808)

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



55 Park Street

ca. 1880s

Number 55 Park Street is a Federal wood frame house with a five bay by one bay main block and an L-shaped rear ell. The building is clad with clapboards and has three stories and a low brick basement. Wooden latticework treatments cover the basement windows. The edges of the building are defined by narrow base, corner, and fascia boards. It has a flat roof with a projecting wood cornice.

The front door, with a center entrance, is flanked by attenuated, paneled, Doric pilasters and is surmounted by a panel displaying groups of incised vertical lines. Above this

panel is a five-pane transom, which in turn is surmounted by a cornice-headed entablature with blocked segments on either side of the



55 Park Street

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transom which, in turn, is surmounted by cornice-headed entablature with blocked segments on either side of the transom and at either end of the entablature. The entrance opens onto a low platform flanked by stairs with a Chinese fretwork railing. The third floor has small square windows. The Windows are fully enframed with raised outer moldings. They have 2/1 wood sash.

Original owner: John Chadwick



55 Park entry detail

2015

Number 55 Park Street was built in 1801/1808. It is a well-preserved, well-crafted clapboard clad Federal house. It has three stories and a low brick basement. Its broad five bay main façade is crisply outlined by narrow base, corner, and fascia boards. Particularly noteworthy is its center entrance's simple, straightforward enframements with only a hint of decorative detailing on the panel directly above the front door with incised lines in groups of four.

This house is a key component in the "wall" of wood frame vernacular dwellings lining the southeastern side of Park Street. This house originally stood with the narrow end wall facing Common Street and the training field. Its main façade faced a narrow passageway. The house was originally

numbered 12 Common St. It was repositioned to face Park Street in 1868 as part of the Park Street extension project-at that time Park Street was continued from Warren Street to Common Street.

Apparently number 55 was built circa 1801-1807 for John Chadwick, brick maker. During the early 1800s Chadwick was the mortgagee of Nathan Tufts, merchant. In May 1807, Chadwick's land and buildings on this site were repossessed by Deputy Sheriff Peter Edes in order for Chadwick to honor some debts-at this point these premises became part of Nathan Tufts extensive real estate holdings. On 30 January 1808 Nathan Tufts sold the house to Isaac Wheeler of Charlestown, a shipwright, for \$650. Middlesex deeds indicate that during the 1800s this house was owned jointly by Isaac Wheeler and Marmaduke Hay of Charlestown, a mariner. On August 12, 1823 Isaac Wheeler, by that time living in Amherst New Hampshire, sold in the house to Marmaduke Hay for \$875. The house was "bounded southwesterly on land of D Stetson, there measuring 22'6", southeasterly on land of said Hay, 44'8", northeasterly on land of J. Tapley, 26'6," and two Training Field boundaries, both northwesterly-26'6" and 44'8." The latter measurement also bordered on D. Stetson's land.

Number 55 Park (then 12 Common) remained under Hay family ownership until June 29, 1854-at that time Charles W Green, executor of the estate of Marmaduke Hay, "yeoman, late of Melrose" sold the house at public auction-to whom is not exactly clear-for \$640. Evidently it was sold back and forth between Green and William H Willis of South Reading Massachusetts, a physician, with Green finally selling the property to Samuel A. Adams and George H. Ingalls of Boston for \$2200 on June 5, 1868. Between June 1868 and December of that year, the main façade was turned to face Park Street.

During the early 1870s George H Ingalls is listed as a carpenter living at 55 Park Street. Samuel A. Adams is not listed in Charlestown directories during the early 1870s. S.A. Adams is last listed as an owner of 55 Park in 1885.

The house was owned by George H. Ingalls until at least 1911.

For further information on the changes wrought to this house's immediate area by Park Street extension from Warren to Common Street in 1868 see form on numbers 47, 49 Park Street.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

Atlases-1868, 1875, 1885, 1892, 1901, 1911

Middlesex deeds-141: 324, 176:73, 208:130, 256:235, 681:158, 1031:172, 1051:33

Charlestown directories-1860s-70s

*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.

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