

## 58, 60 Elm Street (circa 1846)

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



58, 60 Elm Street

1980s photo



58- 60 Elm Street

2015



58 Elm Street balcony detail

2-16

Numbers 58, 60 Elm Street is a three story, red brick Greek Revival double townhouse. Each half has a high granite basement, flat front three bay facade, and a side hall plan. The building has a gable roof and a stepped-out brickwork corbel table. Each house's street-facing slope has a single tall dormer.

Their entrances are paired and deeply recessed. Number 60's late 19th century double doors are still intact, with arched glass panels. They have simple granite sills and lintels; 60 has 2/2 and 58 has 6/6 wood sash. Number 60 has a cast iron second-floor balcony, which may represent an authentic replacement.

Builder: Colburn Barrell

Original owner: Colburn Barrell

The stately red brick and granite-trimmed Greek Revival row houses at 58 and 60 Elm Street were built circa 1846. Architecturally, these houses rank among the earliest examples of masonry row houses built west of Elm Street. They are

contemporaries of the 1840's row housing built on the northern portion of Baldwin Street.

Although the identity of this house's mason is not clear, a ship's carpenter named Colburn Barrell may have been responsible for interior stairs and flooring. Colburn Barrel is variously listed in Charlestown directories as "ship carpenter" and "carpenter". He was active circa 1820s-1860s. In 1834, he lived at 10 Elm Street, and by 1848 he resided at "Elm near Medford." During the 1850s and early 1860s he lived at 124 Elm Street. He is not listed in Charlestown directories after 1864. Number 58 and 60's lots were part of a much larger parcel sold to Colburn Barrel during the 1820s (see Middlesex deeds to 48:356, May 1, 1823, and 268:47, May 14, 1825- this parcel ran back to School Street). Barrel evidently waited two decades before erecting buildings on 58 and 60's lots. He obtained a mortgage on these premises from the Scituate Institute for Savings for \$1000 on November 4, 1844. Buildings are mentioned on 58 and 60's lots in a deed dated April 19, 1847 (Middlesex deeds 501:292). At that time Barrel sold the property for \$2700 to George W Ireland, a trader. Ireland is first listed on Elm Street in 1848. His occupation is listed as "soda manufacturer".

Ireland, in turn, sold 58 Elm to George W Yeaton, a Charlestown merchant, for \$3000 April 27, 1853. By that time Ireland was living in Somerville. Yeaton is listed as a merchant at 5 and 6 N. Market, Boston, during the 1850s. Directories list Yeaton at 60 Elm in 1854 and 1856. In 1858 he is listed next door at 58. Yeaton sold 58 to Seth and Helen M Winslow and Company, Furniture Manufacturing, at 425 Medford Street. His house is listed at 98 Elm in 1870 and 58 Elm Street in 1872. During the 1880s and 90s, Gilbert Williams owned 58 Elm Street. Williams was a prolific mid--late 19th century

Charlestown carpenter, later wood and coal dealer. He had extensive landholdings throughout Charlestown (see form on 79 Pearl Street).

By 1860, Otis Little, "mason, navy yard", is listed at 60 Elm. Little lived here until the early 1890s.

The segment of Elm Street between Bunker Hill Street and High Street was part of a colonial road system, which linked Charlestown's Bunker Hill Street with High, Adams, and Turnpike Streets. This multi-segment road ran along the southwestern edge of Breed's Hill. The segment of Elm Street north of Bunker Hill Street was set out circa 1840s and may have started out as the highway to the old Alms House. The portion of Elm Street between High and Bunker Hill streets is of interest because of the variety of its architectural styles and perhaps shows more clearly than any other street the various stages of development of the area between Elm Street and Charlestown Neck during the 19th century.

#### Bibliography:

Maps-1775, 1813, 833, 1839, 1848, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 18, 1901

Charlestown Directories-1834-70s

Middlesex deeds-248:356, 268:47, 248:356, 501:592, 611:87,  
1101:337

\*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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