

59-61 Elm Street (1906)

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



59, 61 Elm Street

2016

Numbers 59-61 Elm Street is a handsome Georgian Revival apartment building constructed of red brick with limestone trim. It has a highly symmetrical six bay main façade with paired entrances. There is a white stone string course between

the second and third floors, and a flat roof with a deep copper cornice with dentils and modillion blocks.

The entrances retain their original doors, with oval glass panels, and sidelights and fanlights. The entrances are set within white stone enframements featuring egg and dart molding and acanthus leaf console keystones. The windows have a 1/1 wood sash, and simple sills with wedge-shaped lintels on floors one and three, and wedge-shaped keystone lintels on the second floor. Copper oriels spanning the second and third floors have paneled apron panels and dentils.



Entry detail

2016

Architect: P O Riordan

Builder: P O Riordan

Elm Street boasts one of the most stylistically comprehensive collections of 19th century domestic architecture in Charlestown. Numbers 59-61 Elm Street is a late addition to its collection of early-mid-19th-century houses. Built circa 1906, this handsome Georgian Revival apartment house replaced the contiguous rectangular and U-shaped wood frame structures that appeared on this lot in late 19th century to early 20th century (1901) atlases. The quality of craftsmanship and design is high for this type of multifamily housing.

This house represents the work of P O Riordan. He is not listed in late 19th century-early 20th century Boston directories. Further research in Cambridge, Malden, Everett, etc. directories may reveal more information on Riordan. The 1892 atlas indicates that this lot was owned by a Joseph B Morse. Mary B Morse is listed as this lot's owner in 1901.

The segment of Elm Street between Bunker Hill and High Streets is part of a very old system of roads skirting the edge of Breeds Hill, which dates to at least the 1770s. Elm Street was evidently more formally laid out circa 1810. At that time it was "conveyed to the town by Oliver Holden." Prior to 1810 it had been called Washington Street. The segment of Elm Street from Bunker Hill Street to Medford Street dates to the late 1830s.

Bibliography:

Atlases -1892, 1901, 1911

Boston Building Department Records

**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