

61 (1881), 65 (circa early 1840s) High Street

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



61 High Street

2015

Number 61 High Street is a well-detailed red brick single-family Mansard house with a side hall plan. It has a flat entrance bay and a two-story bow front. The main façade is enlivened by belt and stringcourses of granite between the basement and first floor, and of angled bricks between floors one and two and at the cornice. The building culminates in a cornice with paired brackets, a straight-sided Mansard roof with asphalt shingles, and single and tripartite dormers with pedimented gables.

A low granite "stoop" leads to a recessed entrance with the original Victorian multipanel doors and a single pane transom. The entrance and window lintels feature incised Eastlavian detail. In general the windows have 2/2 wood sash.

Original owner: William E Litchfield

Number 61 High Street is a relatively late addition to High street's collection of primarily circa 1840-1860s residences. Built in 1881, this house is a relatively rare Charlestown example of bow front housing. It is set apart from the more typical bow front Mansard townhouse formula by virtue of its surface ornamentation-granite and angled brick banding and lintels with incised Eastlavian detail.

Number 61 High Street has regionally significant historical associations with furniture and lumber dealer William E Litchfield. It was built in 1881 for William E and Cordelia A Litchfield. The Litchfields paid the heirs of Charles A Ranlett \$8000 for the land "with the buildings thereon" on April 28, 1881 (see probate records -Middlesex?-For Charles A Ranlett, Billerica Massachusetts, 11 June 1878.) This house's lot

appears vacant on the 1868 Sanborn Insurance Atlas and the 1875 Atlas of Charlestown.

William E Litchfield was born in Cohasset, Massachusetts August 4, 1861. He became a resident of Charlestown in 1881, the year of 61's construction. He was a director of the Reed Furniture Company of South Keane, New Hampshire and was a member of the firm of Litchfield brothers, wholesale lumber dealers, of North Vernon, Indiana and Boston, Massachusetts. He was "a popular society man," holding memberships of numerous local social and civic organizations. He lived at 61 High Street from 1881 to approximately the 1890s. By 1901 a Marsha Towle is listed as this property's owner.



65 High Street

2015

Number 65 High Street is a two story masonry Greek Revival town house. It has a three bay, flat front main façade, a granite basement, and a side hall plan.

The entrance is recessed, with an outer transom and a replacement inner door. It has simple stone sills and lintels; tall second floor windows evidently have original multipane sash.

The house has a dentilated brickwork cornice and a gable roof.

Original owner: Benjamin Seabury (?)

Number 65 High Street is a rather straightforward foray into the single-family masonry side hall plan Greek Revival house type. It ranks among the first brick houses built along High Street between School Street and Monument Square.

On July 28, 1840 Benjamin Bell, a chemist, of Charlestown, sold 65's lot to Benjamin Seabury of Charlestown, a physician, for \$925.10 (directory work may determine more exact date of Seabury occupancy of 65). Number 65 High Street was built circa early 1840s. For many years (circa 1855-1901), this was the home of Freeman H Sewell, variously listed as a Morocco dresser, 1860s (partners in Sewell and Chase, couriers, 9 Middlesex St.) and Morocco manufacturers-1870s ("foot of Dorrance"-evidently on the Mystic River?) By 1911 an A M Grandison owned this house.

Bibliography:

Maps 1818, 1852

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

Charlestown directories-1850s-70s

Boston directories-post 1875

Middlesex Deeds-# 65:395:194, 711:101

Suffolk deeds-#65: 2783:390, 3368:453

Suffolk deeds-# 61: 1823:337, 3368:453, 2327:394

Charlestown enterprise-special edition, 50th anniversary

Bunker Hill Monument-biographical sketches-William E
Litchfield

*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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