

71, 71B Perkins Street (circa 1871-72?)

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



71, 71B Perkins Street

1980s





71, 71B Perkins Street

2016

Numbers 71 and 71B Perkins Street is a substantial wood frame Italianate/ Mansard double house. It has a handsome projecting center entrance porch surmounted by an oriel on the second floor. There are wide fascia and sideboards beneath the eaves. The mansard roof retains pedimented dormers and scalloped shingles. To the rear is a one story mansard ell with dormers.

The entry porch with its paired entrances is flanked by first floor oriels. The windows are fully enframed.

Original Owner: Edward A Lawrence (?); Benjamin Parker (?)

This house is one of the very few substantial mid-century houses in the Charlestown Neck area. Most of the houses in this section are of a more modest scale and date to the 1840s and 50s. Architecturally, it is a relatively rare Charlestown example of a detached wood frame Mansard House.

Middlesex deeds and Charlestown directories do not provide solid clues as to the construction date. As early as April 10, 1824, Benjamin Parker purchased this lot from Richard and Sarah Sullivan. Parker is listed in the 1850s and 60s Charlestown directories as a brick dealer at 39 Perkins Street. Number 39 Perkins may have been an earlier house on this site or may have been located elsewhere on Perkins Street. It is not clear if the street numbering system has been changed over time.

Stylistically, 71, 71B has the appearance of an Italianate/Mansard house of circa late 1860s or early 1870s. It may have been built around the time Parker's heirs sold its corner lot, bordering the Somerville-Boston line, "with the buildings thereon" to an Edward A Lawrence of Boston (see Middlesex 1239:130, October 16, 1872). The sale price of \$17,250 suggests that a substantial structure was already extant on this lot. Parker died on December 19, 1870. Conceivably his heirs erected this house circa 1871-72. In any event, Parker's heirs are listed as this houses owners on the 1875 Atlas (apparently Edward A Lawrence was a Parker Heir).

Lawrence, in turn, sold the house to Edmund Gage on August 28, 1875 (1285:58). Gage sold it to Moses T Dole (1326:205) for \$8100 on May 17, 1876. The house remained in the Dole family from 1876 until the early 1900s. By 1812 the heirs of Sarah F Wiggin owned this house.

The house's lot had been part of the extensive land holdings of Richard Sullivan Sr, the fourth son of Massachusetts governor James Sullivan. Born in Grafton Massachusetts on June 17, 1779. Richard Sullivan Sr was a prominent early 19th century Boston

lawyer, real estate speculator, and partner in the Middlesex Canal-related Boston and Concord Boating Company, founded in 1827. Sullivan operated a tavern at what is now Sullivan Square, catering to the canal trade. During the 1810s and 20s he acquired extensive landholdings on Perkins Street and vicinity. Perkins, Parker, and Brighton Streets were cut out circa mid-1840s. Richard Sullivan Jr seems to have sold off much of his father's Charlestown real estate holdings circa 1840s-1870s.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1833, 1813, 1848, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown/Boston directories-1850s-1870s

Middlesex deeds-256:163, 1239: 130, 1285:58

Wyman Genealogies, T B Wyman, 1879

*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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