

98-114 Elm Street (1856-1858)

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



98- 114 Elm Street

2016

Numbers 98 -114 Elm Street is a group of nine, three story red brick Italianate row houses. They have low granite basements and three bay main façades with side hall plans, and a flat roof with a deep-bracketed cornice. The row's planar surfaces are pierced by standard size windows with simple sill and lintel bars (granite?), painted white. The entrances are recessed.

Builder: Isaac C Cushing, and possibly Weston and Mason
Original owner: Isaac C Cushing

Architecturally, this group's surface treatment underlines the conservatism of mid-19th century Charlestown row house architecture. These extremely plain buildings are characterized by low granite basements, planar surfaces, and simple stone trim. It is interesting to note that at the time of this group's construction, the swell or bow front was enjoying widespread popularity in Boston's South End.

Evidently, these houses are the work of I C Cushing, a builder. Cushing was active in Charlestown building trades from circa 1842 to 1858. He is listed as boarding at 54 Main Street in 1840 and his last listing was as a mason residing 36 Winthrop Street on August 25, 1856. Cushing paid the city of Charlestown \$13,716.88 for a large parcel of land on Elm Street, with no buildings, including lots 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, and 31 (see plan of the Alms House Estate, Bunker Hill, Charlestown, November 24, 1848). These contiguous lots were conveyed to Cushing under the condition that "the said lots shall be improved by the erection of brick buildings not less than three stories in height. Only 'dwelling houses' or 'stores' could be erected on this land" (Middlesex 741:507). Westin and Mason, Charlestown painters and builders, may have played a role in the construction of this group as Cushing sold number 110 to them for \$4000 on February 24, 1859. The Cushing/Westin and Mason deed mentions buildings on this lot.

Westin and Mason, in turn, sold number 110 to Daniel Hill, a Charlestown trader, for \$3500. Number 110 is described in this deed as "the seventh house in a nine building brick block"

(811:178). By 1875 98-114 Elm Street's owners included Samuel Easter, a trunk manufacturer, at 98; Dan W Lowell, 4 Cellar, new F H Market, Boston, at 100; N S Durkee (occupation unknown), at 102; Jos H Maynard, a bookkeeper, 10 Polk Street, at 104; James O Turner at 106; Samuel F Summers, a machinist, 63 Beverly Street, at 108; George W Hobbs, books and fancy goods, 83 Main, at 110; W D at 112, and William E Clayton, a tailor, 163 Washington, Boston, at 114 Elm Street.

Owners in 1901 included Henrietta L Day at 98; Peter Macken heirs at 100; PL Mario at 102; H F Boler at 104; S B Green Junior at 106; Elizabeth Bymer at 108; J J and M J O'Brien at 110; Benjamin F Brown at 112, and Kathryn Brennan at 114.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1833, 1839, 1848, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown directories-1834-1874

Middlesex deeds

*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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