



- Gross Square Feet: 1,302
- Number of Floors Above Ground: 1 1/2
- Building Height: 20 feet
- Status: Abandoned
- Current Use: None – Collapsed

Significance: Building 21, the Carriage House, is significant for its association with the Commandant's House, its probable authorship by Alexander Parris. Until the 2014 roof collapse, it was the Charlestown Navy Yard's the oldest surviving granite structure. Unreconstructed, it is unlikely to convey anything other than its plan extent and historic granite wall material.

Building Description

In April 1825 the Board of Navy Commissioners approved the construction of a stable for the Navy Yard Commandant. Although Alexander Parris, the architect for the Navy Yard Boundary Wall, is generally credited with the design of the Carriage House (Building 21), the plans were drawn by Sailing Master Charles F. Waldo, who was employed as a draftsman in the yard. They called for a 30 x 20 ft. building constructed against the yard's granite wall immediately east of the Commandant's House. Naval Agent Amos Binney immediately obtained quotations from two contractors, one of whom proposed granite and the other brick.

In June, Binney awarded Levi Bates a contract for the erection of a granite structure. Work began at the end of August 1825 and the building was finished by the end of the year. Differing slightly from the original plan, the structure actually measured 28 x 28.7 ft. The walls rose 12 ft. to the eaves and 18.6 ft. to the top of the gable on the south end. Like most masonry buildings in the yard, it had a slate roof, with the north side being hipped to slope down to the granite yard wall. The interior contained stables, and at a lower grade, a carriage room with a hay loft above it. Both areas had doors on the west side of the building.

By the 1870s the structure no longer served its original purpose. Instead, it had been converted into quarters for the watchman for the gate located in the granite wall between the wing wall which connected the Commandant's House with the main wall on Chelsea Street and Building 21. An 1874 plan indicates that a greenhouse had been added to the south side. This extended out 10 ft. and had a sharply angled roof to maximize sun exposure.

Listed as a watch house on Yard site plans as late as 1906, it was being used as quarters for the Commandant's servants in 1912. Thereafter, it appears solely as a greenhouse. In 1915 the Yard prepared plans for a replacement greenhouse, but the project was never funded. A more modest proposal to reconstruct the greenhouse prepared in 1951 also failed to win approval. The greenhouse was finally demolished in 1963. Thereafter, Yard plans label Building 21 as a Carriage House, although there is little evidence that it was used for anything more than storage.

Following the acquisition of the Yard by the National Park Service the structure continued to remain vacant. In 1983 the NPS replaced the slate roof. The interior was used in the early 1990s as a workshop in conjunction with the replacement and repair of the windows for the Commandant's House. Interior renovations were minimal. Not until the spring of 1998 was any major work undertaken. At that time, the interior was rehabilitated as a part of the Junior League of Boston's Decorator Showhouse held in the Commandant's House.

Following the closure of the Showhouse, the space was made available as office and classroom space for the Hull Lifesaving Museum, which operated a small boat building and rowing program on Pier 2. That use continued until 2004, when the structure was again made available for a Designer's Showcase. Since then, the building has remained vacant.

In 2014 heavy snow caused the roof to cave in which damaged the roof and wall facing the Commandant's Mansion.

Building Analysis

Character-defining Elements

Exterior

- Granite block facings on double-sided wall (2' thick x 2'-5' long units x 10" high typical)
- Navy Yard Boundary Wall is north wall of the original Carriage House
- Stable and carriage entry doors in arched opening.
- Wood window opening in gable of south elevation
- Iron pintles remain in carriage gateway locations in the Navy Boundary Wall.

Interior

- Hay loft/balcony, stair, and balustrade

Integrity/Intactness

Building 21 is no longer intact apart from vulnerable portions of its granite walls.

Building Envelope Condition

Building 21 is a ruin without enclosure from weather or security from inquisitive visitors to the Park. The plan is marked by existing walls, some of which are retaining earth.

Building Interior Condition

Unsalvageable ruin with potential danger to intruders.



Building Floor Plans

