Charles Bulfinch’s popularity flourished in the 1790’s after articles and images of the Hollis Street Church, his first major project, were published. The images led to two early church commissions outside of Boston and signaled the beginning of Bulfinch’s growing influence on New England church architecture. The church commissions also led to a wide variety of requests for Bulfinch designed institutional buildings, such as court houses, banks and collegiate architecture, as well as designs for private mansions, evidence of which can be found in Salem, Massachusetts and Maine.

Bulfinch’s church designs had several innovative elements. Traditionally, the entrances to a New England style meeting houses, where religious and public meetings were held, had been placed on the short axis of the building where members entered from the sides. Bulfinch reorganized this design along the lines of a classical Latinate plan, placing the entrance on the long axis at the front of the church and pulpit at the far end. He also brought the free standing tower and steeple back into the body of the building, above the entrance with a pediment porch to support it. The two churches which began this trend were the Congregational Churches in Pittsfield (1793) and Taunton (1792), very similar in design, and widely copied throughout the New England area. Other churches Bulfinch worked on outside of Boston were the Old South Church in Hallowell, Maine, where he designed the Cupola (1806), and the Church of Christ in Lancaster, Massachusetts. The Lancaster Church (1816) bears many of Bulfinch’s most elegant ornaments, with a portico, colonnade and cupola. The design combines the New England puritanical spirit in its simplicity with Bulfinch’s Roman revival style.

Bulfinch’s reputation as an architect of institutional buildings spread as well, leading to his association with the court-houses of Middlesex, Cambridge, Newburyport, Worcester and Dedham. Bulfinch contributed to the cupola of the Dedham court house (1796) and furnished Worcester with a court house in the same year. Although the cupola of the Worcester court house is unlike any of Bulfinch’s designs, the building had a familiar façade with arched recessed windows. While the unusual cupola of the Worcester court house might raise questions about his involvement, there is a signed and dated drawing of the front elevation. In 1804 he worked on the Worcester Bank and furnished Newburyport with a combined court house and town house. Very similar to the Worcester court house, the Newburyport façade featured an open and arched portico and a roofed walkway leading to the entrance supported by columns.

Bulfinch’s reputation as an architect of institutional buildings led to a number of commissions for collegiate architecture. Bulfinch designed the second Stoughton Hall at Harvard, which was meant to be very similar to the nearby Hollis Hall (1763), as well as Harvard’s University Hall. Bulfinch is also credited with three buildings at Phillips Academy in Andover—Pearson Hall (1818), and the Newburyport facade similar to University Hall in Cambridge, although less grand and built with brick. A late piece of Bulfinch architecture, and certainly the farthest from his home city, is the Kenyon Hall spire at Kenyon College, Ohio (1828). Bulfinch collaborated with Reverend Norman Nash, who is credited with the larger portion of the design. It is the first example of ‘collegiate gothic’ architecture in this country.

There are also a number of buildings in Salem which can be attributed to Bulfinch: two private homes, the Essex bank, and the Salem Almshouse. The Elias Hasket Derby house (1799) influenced by Lord Burlington’s Provost House in Dublin, was his earliest Salem building. Along with the neighboring Ezekiel Hersey Derby house (c.1800) it was thought to be the design of Samuel McIntire until 1924, when evidence also linked Bulfinch with the original design of both buildings. In 1811, Bulfinch designed the Essex Bank in Salem with a hall on the second floor, which was the longtime home of the Hanfield and Hayden Society. The Salem Almshouse, his last Salem building built in 1816, is unlike any of Bulfinch’s designs with few architectural features.

Bulfinch’s design of private homes and mansions extended to Thomaston, Maine with Montpelier, Henry Knox’s home (1796). Attribution to Bulfinch relies heavily on brief mentions of Bulfinch in the Henry Knox papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society and overwhelming stylistic evidence. The design bears a striking resemblance to Joseph Barrell’s episcopal Somerville mansion, as well as the Swan and Perez houses, all designed by Bulfinch in his signature style.