

1 Adams, 63 Winthrop Street (ca. 1855)

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



63 Winthrop Street (left), 1 Adams Street (right), 1980s photo

Numbers 1 Adams Street and 63 Winthrop Street is a double Italianate mansion of masonry construction, a form unique within Charlestown. Architecturally, it makes the most of an oddly shaped lot. Both halves have trapezoidal shapes; their planar wall surfaces fan out like an open book. Both rise four stories from granite basements to flat roofs and deep cornices with closely spaced scrolled brackets.

Both have recessed entrances. One Adams has a side hall plan, a rectangular outer transom and Victorian multi-panel double doors. Sixty-three Winthrop has an off-center entrance. Above the entrances are bracketed door hoods supporting wooden oriels. The oriels have narrow arched windows with scroll-bracketed cornice heads

whose still- crisp lines suggest cast iron composition. The windows are fully enframed and have cornice-headed lintels and 6/6 wood sash. One Adams has tall windows at *piano nobile* level. There are iron star- shaped tie rods above one Adams' third floor windows.



63 Winthrop (left), 1 Adams (right)

2015

Architect/builder: Unknown

Original owner(s): Ownership of both houses may be traced back to Nathaniel Brown, a merchant. Subsequently, George Stimpson, 1 Adams, and John Mulla, 63 Winthrop.

Few urban residential buildings, by virtue of their form, scale and elements anchor a corner lot as effectively as this double house. It is a key component in two remarkable mid-19th century streetscapes. One Adams Street is the northeastern most house in a "wall" of Greek Revival, Italianate and Mansard row houses, which serve as an elegant backdrop for Winthrop Square. Number 63 Winthrop Street has an interesting visual relationship with two bow front row houses located just to the north east of this house, at numbers 65 and 67 Winthrop Street.

During the early 19th century, the Charlestown Almshouse stood at the corner of Adams and High (later Winthrop) Streets. At that time the training field area represented the fringes of settlement with the upland pasture/battlefield of Breed's Hill located to the north east of Adams Street. The almshouse was demolished in 1824, relocated to Elm Street, near Bunker Hill Street (Bedford Street side) and moved to Alford Street in 1848.

Architecturally, the building makes the most of an oddly shaped lot. Each half has a trapezoidal shape-their planar wall surfaces "fan out" from the Winthrop/Adams corner in "open book" fashion. Relieving the planarity narrative are bracketed door hoods, oriel windows, and a scroll-bracketed cornice whose still crisp lines suggest cast iron composition, all-in-all an interesting foray into the Italianate style. Middlesex deeds point to a construction date of circa 1855.

The ownership of both may be traced back to Nathaniel Brown, a merchant. These houses appear on the Doane Plan of June 8, 1835- see lot #7. Number 63 Winthrop (and presumably 1 Adams) was built in 1855. A deed related to 63 Winthrop Street dated 23 June 1855 mentions "the brick wall thereon standing"-suggesting house construction in process. Another deed associated with 63 Winthrop dated 26 April 1856 mentions "a certain parcel of land with the brick house thereon, now recently completed but as yet unoccupied". Early owners of 1 Adams and 63 Winthrop included George Stimpson, a gentleman at 1 Adams, and John Mulla, a trader at 63

Winthrop Street. Stimpson purchased 1 Adams from Nathaniel Brown on June 23, 1856; John Mullay paid Brown \$2300 for 63 Winthrop on 23 June 1855.

James B Miles of Charlestown, a clerk, lived and in 1 Adams from 1857 until 1871. On November 21, 1871, Edwin Weymouth of North Berwick, Maine paid Miles \$10,500 for 1 Adams Street. (1187:446) Weymouth owned this property on and off until the early 1890s.

By the early 1900s Edward J Doherty owned 1 Adams Street.

No. 63 Winthrop Street seems to have been owned by Mullay and The Warren Institute for Savings during the 1850s-60s. By 1868 an Eliza A Cutter owned 63 Winthrop Street.

Esrak Goodall owned 63 Winthrop Street from the mid-1870s to the early 1900s.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

Panoramic view of Charlestown, 1848

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

Charlestown directories-mid-19th century

Middlesex deeds-63 Winthrop Street 711: 387, 731:577, 881:604, 1021:489; 1 Adams Street 761:278, 1187:446

The Charlestown Enterprise November 8, 1884 page 4, "local historical notes"

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R. Dinsmore