

2 Adams Street (1848-1852)

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



2 Adams Street 2015

Two Adams Street is architecturally significant as a solid, well-crafted example of Greek Revival luxury housing. It is one of the very few houses in Charlestown that retains an original cupola. It has granite/brownstone trim with a three bay main façade, rising three stories from a low granite faced basement. The house has a gable roof and a shallow, planar corbel table composed of two segments. At the center of the roof's ridge is a distinctive cupola. A pair of dormers display well-crafted flat roofed wood cornices.

The entrance is deeply recessed, with a cornice-headed lintel. Windows of floors one and three have simple brownstone sills and lintels with 1/6 wood sash and tall second floor windows feature pedimented lintels in the Greek Revival manner. They open onto a balcony with an ornate cast Iron railing.

Architect/builder: unknown
Original owner(s): unknown

Number 2 Adams Street is a key component in the masonry "wall" of townhouses overlooking the old training field/Winthrop Square- this "wall" sweeps southeastward from Winthrop Street to Chestnut Street. It is architecturally significant as a solid well-crafted example of Greek Revival luxury housing dating to circa 1848-1852. It is one of the very few houses in Charlestown that retains an original cupola.

This house's land appears on Alexander Wadsworth's plan of George Washington Warren's land (date 1849) as lot number six. George Washington Warren was a leading figure in the mid-19th century Charlestown. He was a well to do lawyer, judge, mayor of Charlestown, and president of the Bunker Hill Memorial Association. The BHMA's 115-lot tract at Breeds Hill was developed with housing beginning in 1839. Warren sold off house lots in his development bordering Adams and Winthrop Streets, and Wallace Court, beginning circa 1849. This development was

contiguous, on the southeast, with the BHMA's much larger development.

Further research is needed to determine 2 Adams' original owner. Further deed work may reveal from whom Harriet Mandel (owner of number two in 1875) purchased this house. By 1885 James a Sawtelle, grocer at 34 S. Market, Boston, owned this property. By 1887, Sawtelle had moved to Newton, Massachusetts. He sold off this property to an Edward J Doherty of Malden on January 20, 1887 for "one dollar and other good considerations".

Bibliography:

Maps- 1818, 1852

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

Charlestown/Boston directories-19th century

Suffix deeds-1757: 132

Middlesex deeds- 1266:129?, 541:119, 1021:359

*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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