

15-45 Monument Avenue (1855)

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



15-45 Monument Avenue

2015



27 Monument Avenue balcony detail

2015

Numbers 15-45 Monument Avenue is a row of 16 Italianate, with Greek Revival features, red brick row houses. They have three bay main façades, granite faced basements, and shallow brickwork cornice tables. Numbers 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, and 27 have cast iron railings at the second floor.

They have side hall plans, with recessed entrances reached via granite steps. While 45 has handsome double Victorian outer doors, most entrances are open and numbers 17, 19, 21, 27, 29, 31, 33 have replacement inner doors. There are heavy granite lintels over the entrances.

Oriel windows project from the center of the second floor on numbers 29, 31, 39, 43 and 45. They have apron panels and dentilated cornices; 29 and 31's are faced with copper. In general the windows have simple granite sills and lintels with various sash figuration's-2/2, 6/6, etc.

Note: the 1868 Atlas shows rear ells of this group: #15-1 story wood ell; #17-two-story wood ell; #19-2 story brick ell; #22-two-story brick ell; #23-1 story wood ell; #29-two-story wood ell; #31-1 story wood ell; #33-1 story wood ell; #35-1 story wood ell; #37-45 all have small one-story wood ells.

Builder: John B Wilson and Charles Wilson

Original owner: John B Wilson/Charles Wilson

Numbers 15-45 Monument Avenue dates to the earliest phase of Monument Avenue's development. Its 16 single-family residences constitute the longest row of identical contiguous townhouses in Charlestown. Much of Monument Avenue's charm is dependent on the existence of these row houses. Architecturally, this group represents a blend of Greek Revival and Italianate stylistic characteristics. Granite basements and

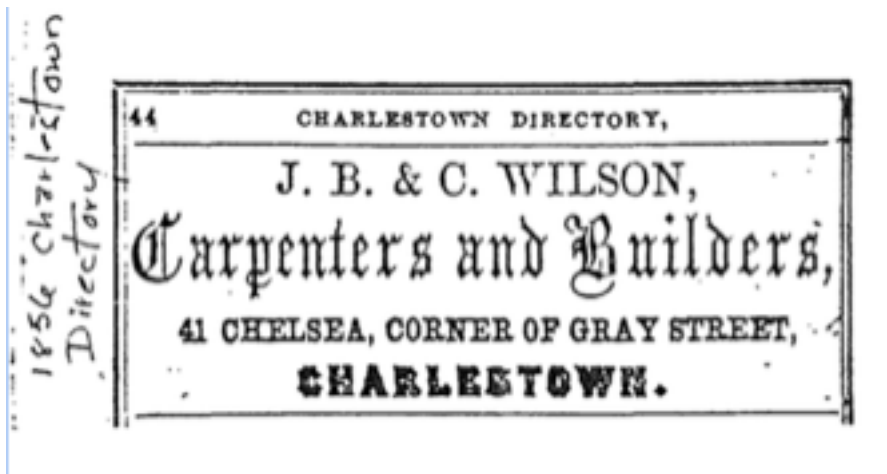
simple stone sills and lintels strike a Greek revival note. This group's shallow brickwork cornice tables are in Italianate sensibility but a full-blown Italianate cornice would have involved brackets of wood or cast iron. It is difficult to determine if the oriel windows and cast-iron second-floor railings of some of the houses are original features. These houses may have all started out with flat fronts.

Numbers 15-45's house lots had been part of the pastureland of Isaac Kendall, the last relatively extensive open land between Warren and High Streets (see form numbers 44, 46, 48, 50 for development history of monument Avenue). On July 5, 1853 Kendall sold 15-45's land to Arnold W Taylor. Taylor had this tract carved into 19 house lots. (e. g. Number 43's land appears as lot 15 on the Doane plan of Taylor's land dated August 18, 1853.) Taylor in turn sold lots 15 and 16, and possibly others in this development, to Sampson Warren on November 16, 1853.

On February 16, 1855 Warren sold lots 15 and 16 (numbers 43, 45) to prolific mid-19th century Charlestown housewrights John B and Charles Wilson. (See form on numbers 47, 49 Monument Ave. for more information on the Wilsons). The Wilsons paid Warren \$1923 for lots 43 and 45. The Warren/Wilson deed carried certain restrictions-"that no building shall be erected thereon except brick dwelling houses not less than 2 1/2 stories, with the fronts of face brick and, common (?) brick covered with mastic."

In any event, 43 Monument Avenue's deed chronology provides information about the early history of this row. Buildings on 43's lot are mentioned for the first time in a deed dated 5 April 1856. At that time John B Wilson and Charles Wilson sold 43 to Edmund Johnson of Ware, New Hampshire

for \$4700. Further research is needed to determine this group's other first post Wilson owners.



By 1875 the owners included: William Bray estate-William W Bray, a mason-15; John H Blodgett, a milkman-17; Joseph Maynard, occupation? -63 Commercial, Boston-19; Charles A Ingraham, a music teacher-23; Edward Brewer, a cigar manufacturer, 14 S. Market, Boston-23; Samuel S Wilson, deputy collector, Internal Revenue Service-25; William H Smith, a letter carrier, 95 1/2 Washington St.-27; Lyman Haskell, an engraver, Boston-29; H G Waldrun, a painter, 6 City Square-31; Nahum P Godard, a musician-33; John Richards, a broker, 7 Brattle Sq.-35; Hiram Averell (H Averell and E N Hilton, brush manufacturers, 12 Waverly block-37; John P Hilton, Hilton Brothers and Company, "butter and cheese"-39; H Hudson, ? occupation-41; Lewis Klous, "clothing and furnishing goods", 9, 10, 11 Waverly block-43 and Benjamin F Teel, a bookkeeper, Market National Bank-45.

By 1911, owners included Edward J Doherty-15; Patrick Cannon-17, Daniel Breslin-19; Mary Kearns-21; Ed Brewer-23; M J Coleman-25; ME Vose-27; Mary McNamara-29; W C Harrington-31; K E and M E Rogan-33; Elizabeth M Clarkson-35; Bridget Fitzgerald--39; numbers 41-45 (?).

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1802

Panoramic view-1848

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

Charlestown directories

Boston directories

Middlesex deeds-#43- 611: 418, 547; 701:185; 741:42

Middlesex plan book 5, plan 30

*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.

R Dinsmore