

City Square*

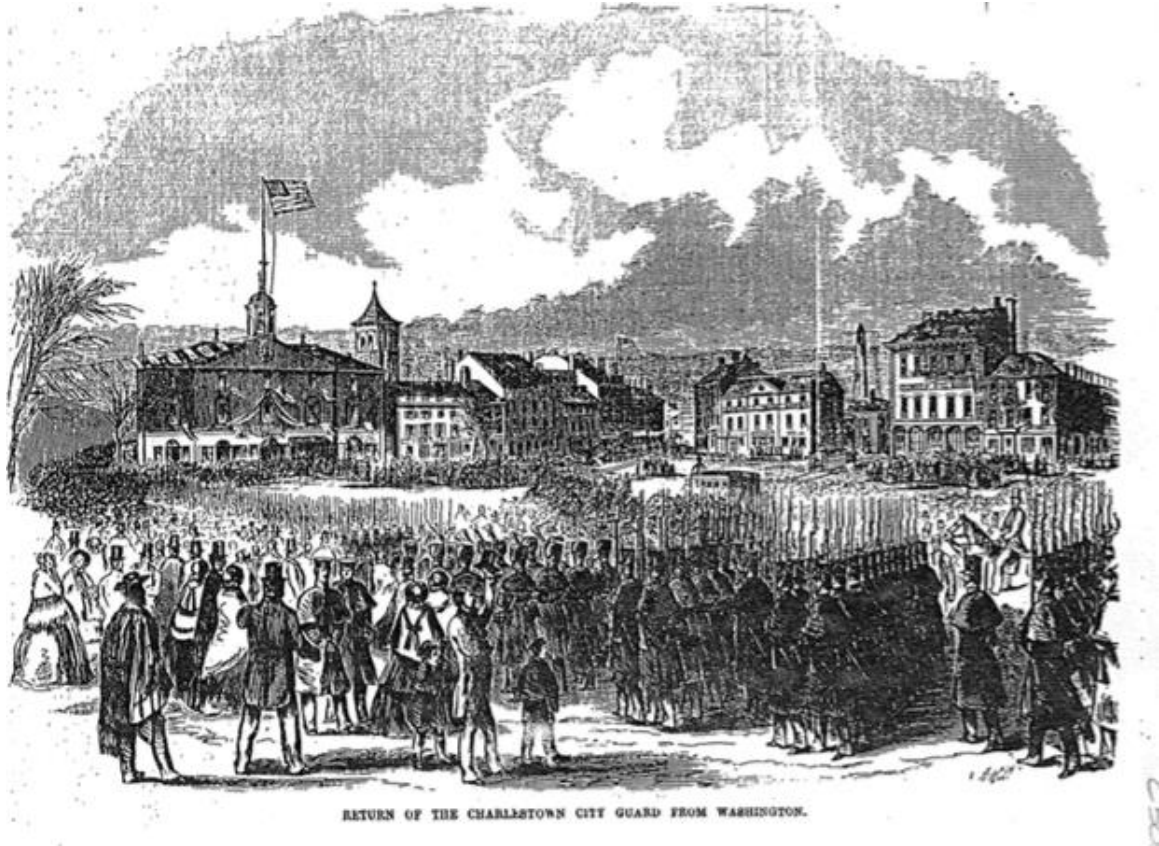
City Square has been the site of Charlestown civic life for over 350 years, beginning with the Great House, which served as the governor's house and General Court chambers until their removal to Boston on October 1630. As early as the late summer of 1629, the Massachusetts Bay Company representative, Thomas Graves, erected the structure known as the Great House in preparation for the arrival of Winthrop and his fleet in June 1630. The Great House served as the governor's house and General Court chambers until their removal to Boston in October 1630. In 1632 the General Court purchased the structure from the company for 10 pounds and it was used for a meetinghouse after Charlestown's inhabitants split off from the Boston congregation. In 1635 the structure became the Tree Cranes Tavern when it was sold for 30 pounds along with the surrounding lot to Robert Long. The tavern remained during the 17th and 18th centuries. The site was owned by Ebenezer Breed II prior to the Revolutionary war and remained in Breed's hands until this property's destruction in 1775.

The square was used for an open-air market for artisans, farmers and local merchants from the town's founding until 1802 -except for a period during the revolution when the area was abandoned. City Square has been, over time, known as Market Square and Charlestown Square, with an unsuccessful attempt to rename it Bogan Square after a General Bogen during the early 20th century,

Important structures at City Square during the early-mid 18th century included a meetinghouse and Court House. From 1818 to 1867 a Federal style Town Hall stood on the Charlestown Municipal Building's site. For many years its cupola was a

landmark in this area. (See accompanying illustration "return of the Charlestown city Guard from Washington.")

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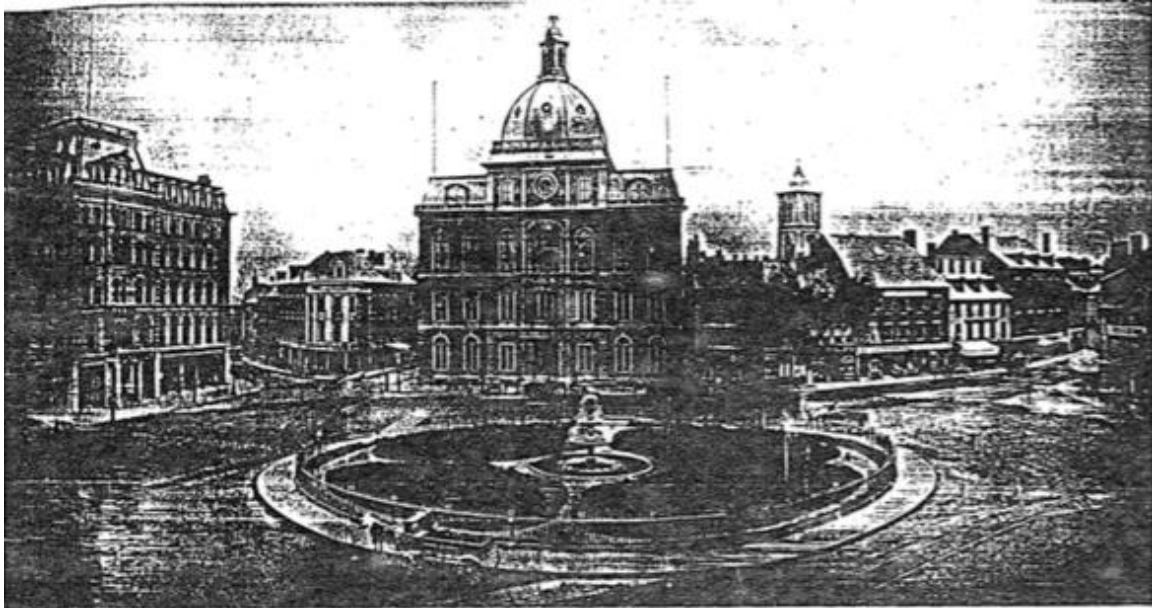


City Square, with 1818 Town Hall in the background

Interestingly, the present municipal building adheres to the Federal style 1818 predecessor building's tripartite main façade format and inclusion of a circular clock on the building.

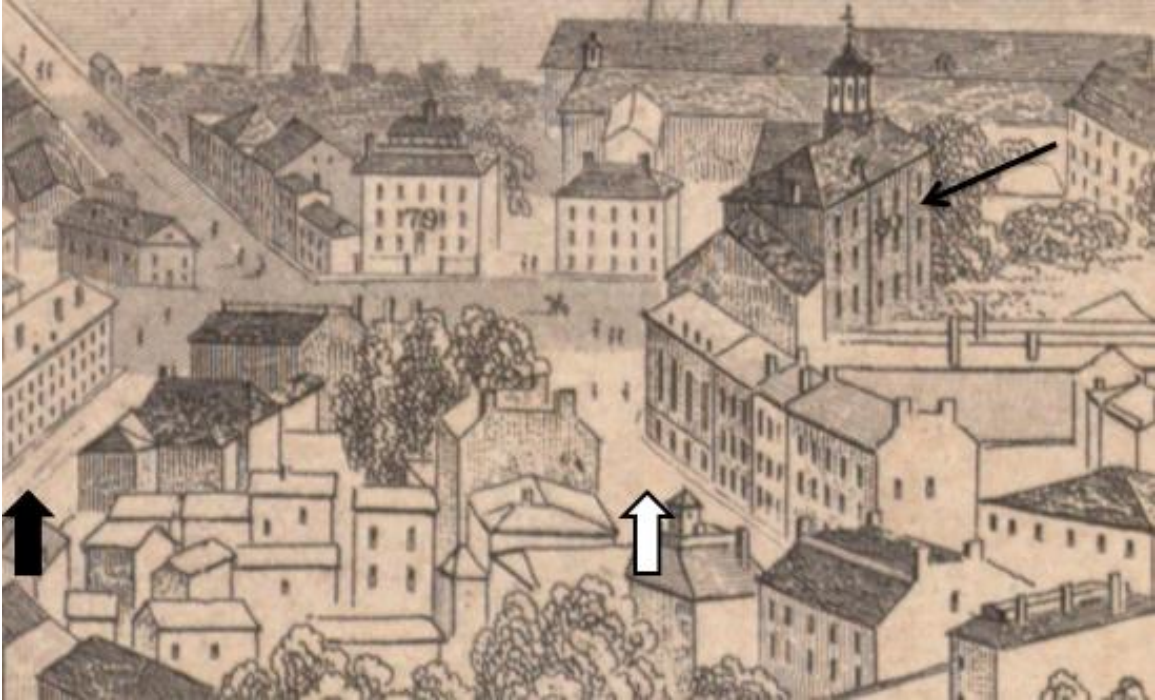
From 1867 to 1913 a stately Renaissance Revival/Second Empire masonry building designed by Boston architect William Washburn, to serve as Charlestown's City Hall was located on this site. This building was characterized by a tripartite main façade with quoins accenting the corners of floors one and two, round arch and triangular pedimented windows and a

distinctive centrally located dome/belvedere with a circular clock at the dome's base.



City Hall, City Square, ca. 1868-1880 (Waverly House Hotel, on the left)

This building's use as a City Hall was short-lived as Charlestown was annexed to Boston in 1874. Henceforth the Washburn-designed building was used as a public library and police station. From 1899 to 1975 an elevated railway cut through City Square, encroaching on an oval park with its three-tier cast iron fountain.



Mallory, Panoramic View of Charlestown, 1848, white block arrow, Main Street, black block arrow, Park Street; long black arrow, Town Hall.

*Information drawn from Boston Landmark Commission's Charlestown Historic Resources Study 1981 (E. W. Gordon, Consultant), with the addition of photographs and images from early maps and/or the Mallory Panoramic View of Charlestown, when appropriate.