

## 1- 4 Harvard Place (circa 1858 - 1860)

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

Harvard Place is a charming cobblestone-paved cul-de-sac located on the southwest side of Harvard Street. Opposite one another on this cul-de-sac's north and south sides are elegant pairs of Italianate/Mansard townhouses numbered one, three and two, four, respectively. The buildings are constructed of



Harvard Place, 2, 4

1980s

red brick with granite and brownstone trim. Each house has a three bay main façade and side hall plan. The houses rise three stories from rusticated granite block basements to straight-sided mansard roofs and deep-bracketed cornices with dentils.

Each entrance is deeply recessed, and set within a brownstone arch with spring blocks, rope moldings, and keystone. There are short flights of granite steps leading to Victorian double doors. The windows have simple brownstone sills and lintels and 2/2 wood sash.



2, 4 Harvard Place

2015



1-4 Harvard Place

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These houses are part of a larger enclave of similar Italianate/mansard townhouses at 18-24 and 34-38 Harvard Street, 28 Harvard Street, and 5 Washington Street built by developer Moses A. Dow. Unlike other Dow-related houses this group does not have second-floor oriel windows.

Builder: unknown

Original owner: Mathew A. Dow, printer, publisher and real estate speculator.

These houses are actually key components of the enclave of Italianate/Mansard townhouses on Harvard Street, including Dow's own house at 28 Harvard, and number 5 Washington. In terms of style and substance these houses fall somewhere between the plainer, more vernacular mid-19th-century houses of Mount Vernon Street and the more elaborate mansion scale houses of Monument Square. They occupy part of the old Matthew Bridge House site. (This house is described in an 1890 *Charlestown Enterprise* article as a "large and handsome wooden house".) The brick Federal house still extant at 16 Harvard Street was built in 1814 by Matthew Bridge over what had been the lower part of his garden. Moses A. Dow, well-to-do printer, publisher and real estate speculator purchased the old Bridge estate lands in 1857/1858, demolishing the wooden Bridge house in 1858.

By the time Dow purchased this land, Harvard Street had fallen on hard times. Not even the construction of the block at 7-23 Harvard Street during the mid 1830s could revive the area's flagging appearance. Dow's development of Harvard Street/Harvard Place and Washington Street with stylish and substantial townhouses was seen as evidence of "his faith and confidence in Charlestown as an abiding place".

For more biographical information on Dow see the form on 28 Harvard Street. Dow owned numbers 1-4 Harvard Place until his death in 1886. Later owners included Joseph H cotton, (1890s, early 1900s) and Emma J. Cutler (numbers 1, 3 Harvard Pl.) and Mary D Scott (numbers 2, 4 Harvard Pl.).

Bibliography:

Maps- 1818, 1852

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

*Charlestown Enterprise*-June 26, 1886, page 1 "the Bridge family"

Hunnewell-*A Century of Town Life*

\*Digitized, and edited without change in content, from the scanned record in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, and with 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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