

1-5 Pleasant Street Court (circa 1840s/early 1850s, by 1852)

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



1-4 Pleasant Street Court

2015

Pleasant Street Court is a cul-de-sac lined with circa late 1840s/early 1850s modestly scaled wood frame dwellings. Bordering the right side is a row of four wood frame Greek Revival houses. Numbers 3 and 4 have each been drastically altered by the addition of a third floor plus a two-story oriel. Numbers 1 and 2 have three bay main facades, with simple baseboards and corner boards. Number 1's end wall gable has two bays facing Pleasant Street. They have side hall plans and entrances topped by small rectangular transoms and framed by extremely modest pedimented entablatures. Transom-surmounted back doors open onto yards in the rear. In general, the windows are fully and simply enframed.



5 Pleasant Street Court

2015

On the left side is number 5, a single-family detached wood frame house. It has a five bay by one bay main block with a

center hall plan and a narrow end wall gable facing the street. It rises two stories from a brick foundation to a gable roof with return eaves, and has a small side ell.

The center entrance features three granite steps, a front door flanked by sidelights and surmounted by a saw-cut scroll-bracketed Italianate door hood with pendants. There is a small transom over the front door. The windows are simply enframed, with 2/2 wood sash and raised moldings.

There are three granite hitching posts at the entrance to the cul-de-sac; the center post is the tallest of the three and is octagonal.

Builder: Unknown. Numbers 3 and 4 enlarged by Edward J Norriss (?) ca. 1880s or 90s

Original owner: Jacob Foss (?)

Pleasant Street Court ranks among Charlestown's more picturesque cul-de-sacs. The broad end-wall gable of 1-4 Pleasant Street Court and the narrow end wall gable of 5 Pleasant Street Court add considerable interest to Pleasant Street's streetscape and serve as a gateway to Pleasant Street Court. Much of this cul-de-sac's charm is dependent on the presence of the three granite hitching posts, which stand at its head. These obelisk-like and octagonal granite posts are relatively substantial and are unique within Charlestown.

Architecturally, these houses are simple wood frame mid-19th century vernacular houses of modest scale and minimal ornamentation. Number 5 Pleasant Street court's saw-cut, scroll bracketed door hood strikes an Italianate note while numbers 1 and 2 may be characterized as Greek revival by virtue of their entrances' rectangular transoms and

pedimented entablatures. Numbers 3 and 4 were transformed into three-story Queen Anne houses with two-story oriels at some point circa 1880s or 1890s.

Numbers 5 and 1-4 Pleasant Street Court appear on the 1852 McIntyre map of Boston vicinity. Middlesex deeds indicate that both number 5 and 1-4 were part of the extensive mid-19th-century landholdings of Jacob Foss. (Foss owned a number of parcels in the vicinity of Chelsea Street and elsewhere along the waterfront). Evidently Zenas C Howland, acting as an administrator for Foss's estate, began to break up his landholdings-at least along Pleasant Street Court, circa 1867. Further research is needed to determine the construction date of numbers 1-4 and 5-involving a study of the many grantee entries for Foss prior to 1867.

By 1874, the owners of 1-4 included Calvin H Sawin, "baggage master", Fitchburg Railroad-number 1; Lawrence L Hamilton, a painter-number 2; Charles H Cormier, a harness maker-number 3; and William Mason (several entries in the 1874 Boston Directory, apparently none living at this address) and Edwin Sibley, a truck man, with a house 32 Adams Street-number 5.

By 1885 the only change in ownership involved number 4, which was then owned and occupied by an Edward J Norriss, a carpenter, at 139 Rutherford Avenue. Norriss may have been responsible for altering numbers 3 and 4 by the addition of a third-floor and oriels.

By 1911 this group's owners included L B Cormier, number 1, Edward C Hamilton, number 2, Elizabeth R Cormier, number 3 and Harry E Cormier numbers 4 and 5.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

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

Charlestown/Boston directories-19th century

Middlesex deeds-1001: 554, 1867 August 29; 1001:392 August 1, 1867

*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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