

1 Prescott Street (circa 1804)

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



1 Prescott

1972

One Prescott Street is a handsome Federal masonry house with a five bay main façade, and two bay sidewall. The brickwork of the main block has five rows of stretcher bricks for every row of header bricks. Certain passages of the brick work appear to be have been reworked (e.g. around the main entrance and at the basement level on the Devens Street wall. The building has a well-crafted wooden cornice.

There is a rear ell, which is composed of brick along Devens Street, and of wood on its side/rear walls. The rear ell apparently is a mid-19th century addition.

The main façade is highly symmetrical, with a slightly recessed center entrance. Three granite steps lead to the front door, which is surmounted by a semi circular fanlight. The windows have delicate, raised outer moldings and have 6/6 wood sash. There are small square windows with 3/3 wood sash at the third floor of the main block.



1 Prescott Street

2015

Builder: James C Edmands, "bricklayer"
Original owner: James C Edmands

One Prescott is a highly visible landmark at the intersection of Harvard, Prescott, Devens, and Main streets, and serves as an impressive introduction or "gateway" building to both Prescott and Devens Streets' interesting collection of 19th century structures. Architecturally it is an excellent example of early 19th century Federal domestic architecture.

Built circa 1804, it represents the craftsmanship of James C Edmands, a "bricklayer". J C Edmands was also the house's first owner occupant. He purchased this house's lot from Jacob Rhodes of Boston, a shipwright, on December 14, 1803 for \$1000. Rhodes had purchased this house lot from John Kidder, circa 1880s or 90s. John Kidder had inherited it from his grandfather Stephen Kidder in 1770. (After the destruction of Charlestown wrought by the British in 1775, John Kidder claimed for a loss "a shop and end of a house".)

Evidently 1 Prescott remained under Edmands family ownership until 1860. On July 30, 1860 the deacons of the First Parish Church, executors of the estate of Martha Edmands sold 1 Prescott to Isaac Foster, a tailor, of Charlestown, for \$4000. Foster in turn sold 1 Prescott to Jesse B. Rideout, a "stable keeper" for \$8500 on May 1, 1871. Jesse B Rideout and John B. Rideout (also living at this address in 1875) were associated with Moore and Rideout Stables, on Henley Street, corner of Warren.

By 1885 Mrs. Mary M Rideout, a physician, was living here as well as Jesse Rideout. Atlases and James F Hunnewell indicate that 1 Prescott acquired its brick and wood rear ell at some point between 1885 and 1888. In 1888 Hunnewell described 1 Prescott as "a three storied brick house (the upper story low), old but painted in good order, standing at the corner and

southward is a three-story recent wooden house (meaning the ell?) painted a dark color". By 1901 Jesse Rideout's heirs are listed at this address. By 1911 a Mary E Donahoe is listed as living here.

Prescott Street was originally called Middlegate Street and has existed since at least the late 17th century, being part of the remarkable organic pattern of streets which developed on and around Town, or Harvard, Hill as early as the 1630s. Prescott Street was named in honor of Col. William Prescott, the distinguished leader of the patriot troops on Bunker Hill.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

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

Charlestown/Boston directories-19th century

Middlesex deeds-154: 253, 831:566, 1159:239

James F Hunnewell-*A Century of Town Life*

*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