

105, 107 High Street, 2 Pearl St. (circa 1881-82)

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



105, 107 High Street, 2 Pearl Street

2015

Numbers 105 and 107 High Street and 2 Pearl Street is a large brick Mansard apartment building, formerly the Hotel Salem. Its High and Pearl Street facades have a high degree of surface plasticity. A pair of octagonal metal oriels project from the center of the four bay High Street façade, spanning floors two through the Mansard roof. The Pearl Street façade has three octagonal bays, also carried through the attic level and treated as dormers. The High Street side has a high basement with wide arched openings. These apparently were entrances to stables.

The windows have gauged brickwork lintels and brownstone sills. The number 2 Pearl Street entrance is reached by a flight of brownstone stairs. It has a handsome replacement multi panel door and is surmounted by a deep-bracketed door hood. Panels containing billet work appear beneath the windows of floors two and three.



Billet work panel, gauged brick lintel

Original owner: Thomas Doane

The former Hotel Salem, situated on the site of a Baptist church that was built in 1801, is the only apartment hotel in the survey area. It is a relatively early Boston area example of this building type. Built circa 1875-85, the Hotel Salem predates many Back Bay apartment hotels, including John Faxon's Hotel Victoria at the corner of Dartmouth and Newbury streets, which dates to 1886. The Hotel Salem has important historical associations with Thomas Doane, civil engineer and prominent mid-late 19th century Charlestown citizen.

A wooden Baptist Church, dedicated in May 1801 occupied this corner lot on land given by Oliver Holden, who lived in a Federal style mansion that was located on the site of the present Holden School. In 1810 the Baptists moved to a new church on Austin Street. The old church was sold to James Harrison, merchant (see form 108 High Street) and by him in 1815 to the Unitarian Society. It became a Methodist Church 1819. Methodists worshiped here until the 1850s. Sawyer notes that "after a time the steeple was weakened by decay and taken down and the church was changed into an armory for the Prescott Light Guard. By the late 1860s the old church was used as a dance hall. In ca. 1881 or 1882, Thomas Doane, of Boston, purchased the old church and erected "the Salem" (Hotel Salem) on April 8, 1881. Thomas Doane purchased this property from the Warren Institute for savings for \$7050. (Traced back from Suffolk the 2768:529)

Thomas Doane had a remarkable career as a civil engineer and inventor. For years he was associated with "all the railroads running out of Boston, but particularly with the Boston and Maine." He was born in Orleans, Massachusetts on September 20, 1821. He apprenticed with Samuel M Felton, a leading citizen of Charlestown.

Thomas Doane's career encompassed work as head engineer of the division of the Vermont Central Railroad and the resident engineer of the Cheshire Railroad at Walpole, New Hampshire in 1847-1849. In 1849 he returned to Charlestown and opened a civil engineering office. He and John Doane (son?) were responsible for the street plan of Waltham's South side in the crescent-shaped area bounded by Moody Street and the Charles River. In 1863 he was appointed chief of the Hoosac Tunnel and located the line of the tunnel, built the dam in the Deerfield River to furnish water power, and in this work

introduced nitroglycerin and electrical blasting for the first time in this country. He also introduced compressed air and introduced the machinery for it and had a large share in inventing the pneumatic drills used then. In 1869 he went to Nebraska where he built 240 miles of railroad on the extension of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy. He played a leading role in establishing Nebraska's first college- Doane College, in Crete, Nebraska, named in his honor. During the 1870s he served as consulting engineer on a number of railroad projects and was a director of numerous Boston area charitable associations. Doane died circa 1900.

The Salem's owner in 1901 was John Doane.

Bibliography:

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Old Charlestown, Timothy Walker, page 332

"Souvenir of Charlestown and Bunker Hill Monument",
published by the *Bunker Hill Times*, Charlestown, 1893

Middlesex deeds

*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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