

18-22 Cedar Street (circa 1855-1856)

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



18- 22 Cedar Street

2015



18- 22 Cedar Street, balcony detail

2015

Numbers 18-22 Cedar Street are a trio of elegant three-story Greek Revival brick, bow front town houses. The main façades have low granite block basements and side hall plans. They have flat entrance bays and two-window bow front bays. There is a deep cornice and a flat roof.

The entrances are recessed. There is a replacement front door on number 22 and original, or at least mid-19th-century, doors on numbers 18 and 20. There are tall windows with 9/9 wood sash opening onto cast iron balconies with Rococo Revival motifs on the second floor (originally just cast iron ornamental banding without floors). The tall windows on number 20 are treated as French doors. In general the sills and lintels are of simple brownstone with the exception of the second-floor windows, which have cornice heads. There are various sash configurations. A brownstone course runs above the third floor windows.

Builder: unknown

Original owner: Nicholas G Childs

Numbers 18-22 Cedar are elegant, relatively rare Charlestown examples of mid-19th century bow front row housing. Much of the trio's charm is dependent on the tall, gently bowed fronts, tall second floor windows, Rococo Revival cast iron ornamental banding and deep cornices. Together with numbers 1 and 2 Laurel St., this trio forms an attractive enclave of bow front houses. In addition, numbers 18-22 Cedar Street serve as an attractive focal point at the head of Laurel Street as seen from Monument Square.

These houses stand just outside the boundary of the 115-lot tract developed by the Bunker Hill Monument Association during the 1830s ("auctioned off" beginning in 1839). Laurel

Street, evidently intended to be a street of considerable breadth, never reached beyond Cedar Street. Numbers 18-20's lots appear on a "plan of Childs, Kimball and Fields lands dated July 13, 1855-plan book 7, page 60 (Middlesex). Judging by the 1855 plan and listings for Nicholas G Childs in mid-1850s Charlestown directories, numbers 18-22 Cedar appeared to have been built circa 1855-1856. Number 18 (and possibly numbers 20 and 22) were originally owned by Nicholas G Childs, a chemist. In 1854 he lived at 17 Bartlett St. By 1850 he is listed at "foot, Laurel". (See Middlesex deeds 731:544).

Further deed research is needed for numbers 20, 22 to determine early ownership. By 1875 18 Cedar was owned by L Elliott Pierce, 20 was owned by D L Palmer (occupation?) And 22 was the property of George a Coolidge, master mechanic, Fitchburg Railroad.

By 1892 this trio's owners included Ezra K Goodall (occupation?) Number 18; Thomas F Neary, a clerk, 9 Bunker Hill St., house 8 Cedar Street, number 20; and George A. Coolidge (?), number 22).

Owners in 1911 included Ezra K Goodall number 18, Margaret A Beck number 20, and Elizabeth L Moffitt number 22.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

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

Middlesex deeds-1071: 371, 991:165, 981:190, 921:103, 731:544 (for number 18).

Charlestown and directories-1840s-70s

Boston directories-late 19th century

*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.

R. Dinsmore