

18-24 and 34-38 Harvard Street (circa 1855 – 1860)

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



18- 24 Harvard Street

2015



34- 38 Harvard Street

2015

Numbers 18-24 and 34-38 Harvard Street are elegant, three-story red brick granite/brownstone trimmed Italianate/Mansard townhouses. They have three bay main façades, rusticated granite block basements, and side hall plans. The houses culminate in bracketed cornices with fascia boards and a dentil course. Each is crowned by a bell-cast Mansard roof, with a single and a double-windowed dormer in each roof slope. The sidewall of 34 Hancock, at the corner of Washington Street, has a stone plaque with incised letters reading "Washington Street".

They have deeply recessed entrances surmounted by brownstone arches with spring blocks, rope moldings, and keystones. Short flights of granite steps lead to Victorian multi-paneled front doors. The entry walls are covered by well-crafted wood paneling and the windows have brownstone sills and cornice headed lintels, with 2/2 wood sash. In some, the brownstone trim has signs of severe weathering. In the center of each façade at the second floor is an oriel window with a dentillated cornice.

Builder: unknown

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

Along with 1-4 Harvard Pl. and 5 Washington St., this row of Italianate/Mansard townhouses is an elegant residential enclave created by printer, publisher, and real estate speculator Moses A Dow. Built circa 1855-1860, they are architecturally significant as well preserved examples of stylish mid-19th-century Italianate/Mansard housing. Their second floor oriel windows continue the rhythmic repetition of projecting forms initiated by the bow fronts at 42-48 Harvard

Street. Thus they are a key component in the "wall" of masonry buildings lining the southwestern side of Harvard Street. Built circa 1855 for the printer/publisher Moses A Dow, they are part of his "courageous project for the improvement of Charlestown property". (See forms on 28 Harvard St., 1-4 Harvard Pl.). For many years Dow lived at 28 Harvard Street. He was publisher of the Waverly Magazine, developer of the Waverly House at City Square (a hotel and office for his



38 Harvard Street entry detail, 2015

Magazine) and a shrewd real estate speculator. For more biographical information on Dow see form on 28 Harvard Street. Dow owned these houses until his death in 1886.

By 1892, numbers 34, 36, and 38 were owned by Joseph H cotton, a trustee of Moses Dow's estate. Born in Tuftonboro New Hampshire on August 27, 1833, he came to Charlestown in 1855. Cotton subsequently became a prominent lawyer- his office was at 15 City Square. Beginning in 1874 he was a



34 Harvard-street sign on Washington Street sidewall, 2015

Special Justice of the Charlestown court. For many years he was active in Republican politics.

By 1911, 34 and 36 were owned by Emma J. Cutter, while 35 was owned by Mary D Scott.

Note: these houses' lot appears to have been acquired by Dow on June 9, 1857 from James H. Conant-see Middlesex deed 761:369.

Bibliography:
Maps-1818, 1852

Atlases-1865, 1875, 1885, eight 1892, 1901, 1911
Charlestown Enterprise-special edition June 1917
"Charlestown Citizen Past and Present"
Charlestown Enterprise June 26, 1886-obit of Moses Ado
Charlestown Enterprise September 20, 1890

*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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