

20 -26 Mount Vernon Street (1846-1871)

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



20 Mount Vernon Street

2016

Number 20 Mount Vernon Street is a stately three-story Greek Revival masonry house with granite and brownstone trimmings, a three bay main façade, a low granite faced basement, and a side hall plan. It has a gable roof with linked chimneys.

A single granite step leads to the entrance, which was originally open and recessed, but is presently covered with a later outer

door and two pane transom. The entrance is surmounted by a pedimented lintel with tabs. The windows have simple brownstone sills and lintels, with 2/2 wood sash on floors one and two and 6/6 wood sash at the third floor. There are tall windows at the second floor, and there is a picture window at the attic level on the southeast wall.



26- 20 Mount Vernon Street

2016

Number's 22 and 24 Mount Vernon Street were originally identical halves of a masonry Mansard double house. Both have three bay main façades and side hall plans, and identical basement treatments with a stone lintel course. Evidently both houses were originally enclosed by a mansard roof with a deep-

bracketed cornice. Number 24 retains the mansard with slate shingles, mostly intact, and a pair of flat roofed dormers. Number 22's mansard was removed circa 1880s or 90s (?) and a full fiat roofed third floor was added, with a brickwork dentilated cornice.

Their entrances are surmounted by deep-bracketed door hoods and each has a second floor oriel window with apron panels and dentilated cornice.

Number 26 is a solid, straightforward example of a late 1840s Greek Revival house, with a side hall plan, a three bay main façade, and a gable roof.

The entrance is surmounted by a pedimented lintel. There are tall windows at the second floor; the windows have 6/6 wood sash.

Builder: #20-Moses G Cobb, #22 Jonathan Oldham, #24 John H TomFohrde, #26 Joseph Young

This group is part of Mount Vernon Street's remarkably unspoiled collection of mid-19th century, mostly masonry, residences. Their lots were carved from the 34-Lot Ebenezer Breed estate development in 1846. Built circa 1846-1848, number 20 ranks among the first houses built on this development.

Architecturally, number 20 is a stately well-crafted example of 1840s Greek Revival luxury housing. Numbers 22 and 24 represent a relatively late addition to Mount Vernon's collection of 1840s and 50s houses, evidently originally a Mansard double house, built circa 1868-71. At some point in the 1880s or 90s number 22's mansard roof was removed and a full flat roof third floor was added. Number 26 Mount Vernon is a solid, straightforward example of late 1840s Greek Revival housing.

Number 20 Mount Vernon Street appears on the 1848 panoramic view of Charlestown/Boston; its southeast wall originally overlooked the Breed house and garden. Number 20's lot was purchased from John Breed by James Dana, a real estate speculator, and Gustavus V Hall, an auctioneer, on January 31st, 1846. Dana and Hall sold 20's lot with "the buildings thereon" to Moses G Cobb, "attorney-at-law" of Charlestown, for \$777.60. Cobb owned the house for nearly 10 years before moving to Dorchester and selling it to James F Hastings on June 22, 1859 for \$9000. Hastings was a teller at the Merchants Bank in Boston.

During the 1860s 20 was owned by Charlestown trader Marshall N Cutter, and during the late 1860s-early 1870s, by Olvin F Raymond. Judging by mid-19th century grantee indexes Raymond was a very successful real estate speculator with extensive real estate holdings. Charles A Stearns (?), an employee of the "Fire Alarm Office" paid Raymond \$9000 for the house on September 25, 1871. During the 1880s and 90s it was owned by Henry Buxton, a grocer, and during the early 1900s, by a Bernard McGraffigan.

Numbers 22 and 24, built as a Mansard double house, does not appear on the 1868 Sanborn Insurance Atlas. The house was developed by "big time" real estate speculator Olvin F Raymond. Evidently it was completed by 1871. Raymond sold 22 to Jonathan Oldham on October 3, 1872 and 24 to J H TomFohrde on November 14, 1873. Jonathan Oldham is listed as deputy sheriff, 5 Chelsea Street, in the early 1870s Charlestown directories. He owned 22 until the 1890s; by 1911 it was owned by a Neil Kelly.

Number 26 Mount Vernon dates to circa 1848-49. Architecturally it represents a competent foray into Greek Revival single-family housing. This house lot was purchased by James Dana, the real estate speculator, and Gustavus V Hall, the auctioneer, from John Breed on January 31, 1846 (at the time of their purchase of

20's lot). Dana and Hall sold 26's lot "with the buildings thereon" to Joseph Young, a merchant, on April 7, 1849. This house remained under Young family ownership until May 23, 1863. At that time Asbury Young of Pittston, Massachusetts, sold 26 to Liveras Hall for \$4900. From 1869 to circa 1880 it was owned by George W White (?), employee of the Tucker Manufacturing Company, "Hard Pine Lumber," and by the early 1900s, by John McLaughlin.

Bibliography:

Map-1818, 1852

Atlases-1865, 1875, 1885, 1892, 1901, 1911

Mallory panoramic view-1848

Charlestown/Boston directories-19th century

Middlesex Deeds-#20, 551:195, 821:6, 1101:108; #22-1230:630; #24-1287:138; #26-1081:58, 881:581, 531:564.

*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 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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