

22, 24 Trenton Street (circa 1860-1867)

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



22, 24 Trenton Street

1980s

Numbers 22, 24 Trenton Street is a three story, wood frame double Italianate house. The halves have side hall plans, brick basements with baseboards between the basements and clapboards, and Doric

pilasters at their corners. (The Doric capital is missing on number 24.) The building has a heavy ornate cornice with modified Greek key/dentil motif, fascia boards, and closely spaced, saw cut scroll brackets. It has a flat roof.

The entrances are paired and were originally recessed; 24 has later outer doors with a multi-pane transom. Wood steps lead to the front doors and the entry walls are paneled. The entrance enframements strike a Greek revival note with paneled Doric pilasters and entablatures, and there are shallow, bracketed cornices. The windows are simply enframed, with 2/1 and 1/1 wood sash.



22, 24 Trenton Street

2016



22 Trenton Street cornice detail

2016

Builder: Uriel Adams

Original owner: Uriel Adams

Architecturally, numbers 22 and 24 Trenton Street are significant as solid, well-executed examples of 1860s Italianate wood frame vernacular row housing. Three story double houses of this type may represent a phase in the evolution of the late 19th century Boston area three-decker. Particularly noteworthy is the duo's entrance enframements, combining Greek Revival and Italianate

elements, and robust, well-detailed, deep cornices, with fascia boards, modified Greek key dentil course and closely spaced saw cut brackets.

During the early 19th century, Trenton Street and adjacent lots were part of Breed's Hill pastureland, falling within the boundaries of the Russell and Bartlett estates (see 1818 Tufts map). Judging by the Panoramic View of Bunker Hill, dated 1848, Trenton Street was slow to develop. At that time Trenton Street had been set out but there were no buildings. Most of the houses on Trenton Street date to the 1860s, while houses in the immediately adjacent area date to late 1840s to the 1850s. Number 22 and 24 Trenton Street were built circa 1860-1867.

Evidently this duo represents the work of Uriel Adams. He was active in Charlestown building trades from approximately the early 1850s until the early 1910s. In 1852 he is listed at 73 Green Street and his trade is described as "carpenter". From circa late 1850s-1866 he lived at 2 Webster Street. He is first listed at 22 Trenton in 1868. From circa 1880 until at least 1910 he lived at 48 Mount Vernon Street.

He purchased 22 and 24 Trenton Street's lots from William Hurd, a Charlestown "gentleman," on 15 June 1860, for \$1617. (These lots had been conveyed to William Hurd by Joseph Hurd on September 20, 1837, 368:77.) It is unclear as to whether Adams built 22, 24 Trenton shortly after his 1860 purchase from Hurd or waited until circa 1867, after his move from Webster Street, to build these houses. They are shown on the 1868 Sanborn Insurance Atlas, with two-story rear ells. At that time they stood in isolation with no buildings lining Tremont Street between 24 and Bunker Hill Street and from 22 to 10 Trenton Street.

In 1875 Adams owned both houses. On March 26, 1880, he sold 24 to Elizabeth H Brown, wife of Frederick L Brown, of Boston. Adams apparently sold 22 at about the same time to Merrill A Green, a

clerk. Green is listed at 22 Trenton in 1885. Elizabeth Brown lived at number 24 from 1880 until at least 1911. Later owners of 22 included Georgiana E Melzar, 1901, and Ellen M McCaffrey.

Note: Trenton Street was named in honor of the revolutionary war battle of the same name. Other examples of Uriel Adams work included 7-17 Tremont Street. In 1868-69 he built the brick Italianate row at 44-52 Mount Vernon Street, and in 1868-74, the pair of brick Italianate row houses at 51 and 53 Monument Avenue. (He was listed as 51's architect and builder, and was presumably 53's architect and builder as well).

Bibliography:

Maps-1818

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

Panoramic View of Bunker Hill, 1848

Charlestown/Boston directories-19th century

Middlesex deeds-368:77, 831:459

Suffolk the-1487:104

*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.

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