

23, 25 Park Street (circa early 19th century, moved 1838?)

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



23, 25 Park Street

1981

Numbers 23 and 25 Park Street is an L shaped, much altered three-story Federal house. The house was originally constructed completely of wood. Its first floor, a tavern, was originally clapboard and is presently covered with modern brickwork and the upper floors are swathed in aluminum siding. The main block has five by two bays and is enclosed by a hip roof. An ell has a flat roof. Window treatments are totally modern.



23, 25 Park Street

2015

Original owner: Abel Stowell-1838

The site of 23 and 25 Park is the easternmost component of an early-mid 19th century streetscape, a remnant of the once densely settled City Square/waterfront area. It is a much-altered survivor from the early 19th century. This house's distinctive boxy five bay by two bay main block and hip roof identify it as a Federal style structure.

It was moved it to this site from an unidentified location after the fire of 1835. For more information on this fire see the form on 11-21 Park Street. This house occupies lots 7 and 8 on "plan of lots in the burnt district in Charlestown to be sold at auction

October 25, 1836." The plan was drawn by an important early-mid-19th century surveyor/city planner, Alexander Wadsworth. He is credited with "layout" of Pemberton Square, Boston and Mount Auburn Cemetery's system of winding paths. The segment of Park Street between City Square and Joiner Street was known as Warren Street in 1835. Evidently 23 and 25 Park assumed its present L-shaped form quite early on. The 1868 Sanborn insurance Atlas indicates that both the main block and ell were extant, both standing three stories tall with a two-story L-shaped side/rear segment wrapped around the southwest corner of the main block.

The so-called "burnt district" was rebuilt under the leadership of Ebenezer Breed, Charlestown merchant and "trustee for special purposes" during the rebuilding. It was Breed's task to oversee the disposal of lots in the burnt district. Numbers 23 and 25 Park seem to have been the exception to the rule of newly constructed post 1835 buildings in the area. The house probably dates to circa 1800 and was moved to the Park/Joiner Street's lots from an undetermined site. No buildings were located on 23, 25 Park Street's land in March 1838.

At that time Ebenezer Breed sold this land to Henry Jacques of Charlestown, a "gentleman" for \$1806.43. Jacques in turn sold this property one day later to Abel Stowell, Charlestown watchmaker, for \$1800. Stowell owned the property from 1838 until 1856, and was presumably responsible for moving the present house to this site. On October 29, 1856 he sold it to John Murphy, a laborer, for \$3000. Numbers 23 and 25 Park remained under John Murphy heirs' ownership until as late as 1901. In 1911 Mary E and James F Fitzgerald owned this house.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

Atlases-1868, 1876, 1885, 1892, 1901, 1911

Charlestown/Boston directories-19th century

Middlesex deeds-371: 290, 291, 751:174

Suffolk deeds-3053: 447

Final report: phase 2 archaeological site examination of the project area for the central archery North area Charlestown Massachusetts pages 39-42, 1983

*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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