

23 Cordis Street (by 1826)

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



23 Cordis

2015

Number 23 Cordis Street is a modestly scaled early Greek Revival dwelling with a three bay by two bay main block and a two bay by one bay side ell. The house stands with its narrow end wall gable to the street. It rises two stories from a granite block basement to a gable roof.

It has a handsome Greek Revival entrance, with Doric pilasters and cornice-headed entablature. The windows are simply enframed and contain 6/1 wood sash. (The house originally had 6/6 wood sash, and the original clapboards have been replaced by wood shingles.)

Builder: John Kidder?

Original owner: John Kidder?

Facing a narrow brick paved passageway and the rear wall of the red brick Federal Gretchell House (21 Cordis Street), 23 Cordis is integral to the early-mid-19th century character of Cordis Street. Architecturally, this house represents a modestly scaled early Greek Revival dwelling with a handsome classical entrance.

Built by 1826, this house's land appears as lot number 1 on "Ground Plan of Cordis' Pasture as laid into house lots, 10 October 1799." Evidently it's land was part of a parcel which Oliver Holden, the locally prominent builder/merchant, purchased from Amariah Childs and Thomas Oliver Larkin on September 23, 1803. Holden, in turn, sold this lot to John Kidder, a cordwainer, on 17 December 1803.

Judging by 23 Cordis' form and style it would seem doubtful that Kidder built this house during the first or second decades of the 19th century. It is more likely that this house was built

circa 1825-prior to Kidder's sale of this property to Alicia L. Phelps and Benjamin Thompson, merchants. The Kidder/Phelps deed of 19 August 1826 mentions "land with the dwelling house and other buildings" and refers to Kidder as a Charlestown "inn holder." Phelps, in turn sold 23 Cordis to Abraham Andrews of Charlestown, a schoolmaster, on 31 July 1828. The Phelps/Andrews deed stipulated that the sale was subject to "a life lease to John Kidder and his wife during their natural life as appears upon the record at the Registry of Deeds office." For many years Andrews owned the brick Federal house next door at 21 Cordis. Number 23 Cordis St. was owned by Andrews family members until the early 1880s. On July 20, 1882, Robert Alcorn, a laborer, purchased this house from the Andrews estate for \$2350. By the early 1900s, a John R Murphy owned this house.

Bibliography:

Maps- 1818, 1852

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

Charlestown directories-1834-1874

Boston directories-late 19th century

Middlesex Deeds-163: 320, 268:347, 283:352; Suffolk deeds-1567: 250, 251

*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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