

23, 25 Oak Street (circa 1865)

From Boston Landmark Commission's Charlestown Historic Resources Study 1981*:



23, 25 Oak Street

1981



23, 25 Oak Street 2015

Numbers 23 and 25 Oak Street is a pair of three story red brick, granite trimmed row houses. They granite block basements, three bay main façades and side hall plans. The building has a flat roof with a dentilated and bracketed cornice.

Granite steps with curved shoulder blocks lead to recessed entrances with multi-paneled entranceways. The windows have simple rectangular granite sills and lintels, and each house has a wooden oriel at its second floor center.

Builder: John F Gilman/Dolphin D Taylor

Original owner: John F Gilman built circa 1865

These row houses underline the conservatism of form and design inherent in 19th-century Charlestown architecture. At a time when the bow front was being widely employed in Boston's South End, 23 and 25 Oak repeat the Greek Revival formula of flat fronts, granite block basements and granite sill and lintel bars, at a time when lintels on south End row houses tended to be projecting and curvilinear.

Numbers 23 and 25 Oak's lots were part of a larger parcel containing the ca. 1840s Greek Revival wood frame house still extant at 31 Oak Street. Middlesex deeds point to a construction date of circa 1865-67 for these houses. Apparently, Dolphin D Taylor and possibly John F Gilman, a stonecutter, were responsible for these houses' construction. On September 26, 1865 Samuel Carr sold the southwesterly portion of number 31 Oak's lot (see form on 31 Oak Street) to John F Gilman for \$7000 (Middlesex deed 931:294). Buildings are mentioned in the Carr/Gilman deed. Gilman, in turn, sold this property to Dolphin D Taylor, a mason, on April 30, 1866.

Dolphin D Taylor was active in Charlestown building trades from circa 1845 to early 1890s. In 1845 he was listed as a mason at 20 Green Street. By 1860 he lived at 10 Summer Street. From ca. late 1860s to early 1890s he lived at 31 Oak. Other examples of Taylor's work in Charlestown include: 46-60

Baldwin (Italianate red brick townhouses circa 1849-50). Taylor sold 23 to Nathan Phipps, agent, on May 27, 1869. He sold 25 to Oliver H P Smith, expressman, (Haymarket Square) on May 27, 1869. Nathan Phipps' heirs owned 23 until at least the mid-1880s.

By the late 1890s, a George R and Jesse M Hill owned number 23. Number 25 was owned by Oliver Smith's heirs until at least the early 1900s.

Bibliography:

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charlestown directories-1834-1874

Middlesex deeds

*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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