

29 Harvard Square (circa 1820s)

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



29 Harvard Square

2015

29 Harvard Square is a charming Federal style dwelling with its main façade, a three bay side hall gable, facing Henley Street and a two bay side wall overlooking Harvard Square. The Harvard Square wall is clad with clapboards.

The Henley Street wall is of brick and has a rubble stone basement. The gable is continued as a center chimney and the

brick wall is continued above the gable roof as a firewall. The Henley Street entrance is recessed and arched and has two granite steps and three wooden steps. A replacement front door is flanked by slender pilasters, characterized by two long vertical raised moldings surmounted by small Doric capitals, and is surmounted by a fanlight. There is a brickwork belt course at the main façade between floors one and two. The windows have 6/6 wood sash. A pair of widely spaced small square windows appears at attic level.

Number 29 Harvard Square is the northeastern most member of a picturesque modestly scaled trio of circa late 1790s-1820s dwellings. It is a charming example of a ca. 1820s Federal "brick Ender". Particularly noteworthy is the house's orientation to the street and square. It stands with a distinctive end wall gable facing Henley Street and this end wall has several curious features, namely a brick belt course between floors one and two (a retardataire feature even for conservative Charlestown). In the early 19th century brick belt courses hark back to Georgian masonry architecture). Also curious are the small square windows of the brick gable, which continues above the roof level to serve as a sort of primitive firewall. This house is one of a handful in Charlestown with an arched entrance. Arched entrances in Charlestown architecture appear mostly on masonry row houses of the late 1820s and early 1830s.

Builder: unknown

Original owner: Austin family?

This house's construction date is difficult to pinpoint; it was part of the extensive real estate holdings of Henry D Austin, the son of prominent Charlestown lawyer and politician William Austin. Henry D. Austin graduated from Harvard College in

1839. According to Timothy Thompson Sawyer (*Old Charlestown*, p.225) "he will be remembered for his active interest and ownership in Charlestown real estate". H.D. Austin was a lawyer by profession. He was a familiar figure in the streets of Charlestown, inspecting, improving and managing his properties. No. 29 Harvard Square remained under Austin family ownership until it was purchased by James H Deland on April 26, 1881. James H Deland and is listed in 1880s Boston directories as an "express man". He owned this house until at least 1911.

Listed in Town Hill National Register District.

Bibliography:

Maps 1818, 1852

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

Charlestown directories 19th century

TT Sawyer-*Old Charlestown*, page 225

*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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