

3, 4, 5 Salem Street Avenue (1869)

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



3- 5 Salem Street Avenue

1981



3- 5 Salem Street Avenue

2015

Three, four and five Salem Street Avenue are three contiguous, rectangular plan Italianate/Mansard houses with an interesting "setback" grouping of their main façades. The houses are covered with clapboards and have two bay main

façades. They have deep cornices with paired brackets, and steep-sided Mansard roofs with one dormer for each house. The entrances are located on the main façades of 3 and 4 while number 5's is on a projecting sidewall. The windows are simply enframed with 6/6 wood sash.

Architect: James H Rand

Original owner: James H Rand

Numbers 3-5 Salem Street Avenue was built in March-August 1869. Particularly noteworthy is the way the maximum number of residential units has been developed on a relatively small lot in an aesthetically pleasing manner, a manner that predicts the best of present day house construction on the limited space in Boston and Cambridge neighborhoods. It is essentially a three family Italianate/ Mansard wood frame house whose façades have been staggered in such a way as to give a more individual identity to each house. It represents the work of Charlestown (later Boston) architect James H Rand. He is one of the very few architects associated with a residential structure in the Charlestown survey area.

James H Rand is listed as an architect in Charlestown/Boston directories from 1862 to the mid-1880s. He lived at 31 Monument Square, Charlestown in 1860, and at 22 Union Street by 1872. He then had an office at 18 Exchange Street, Boston (his house, 18 Cordis Street, Charlestown). He is listed in Boston directories at 77 Warren Street, Charlestown in the early 1880s, but not in the 1890 directory. James H Rand is credited with the design of Charlestown's Bunker Hill and Winthrop (later Frothingham) Schools. In addition he was responsible for two early 1880s apartment buildings on Rutland Street, South End, known as the "Garfield" and "Rand".

Boston Public Library files note that he may have been a partner in a firm called Weston and Rand.

In any event, Rand paid George C Stevens \$900 for number 3 Salem Street Avenue's lot on March 17, 1869. (Middlesex 1051:380). Stevens was a rigger who lived at 10 North Street, (later named Salem Street Avenue), during the 1850s. During the 1860s he lived at 17 Sullivan Street, was listed in 1868 at 19 Sullivan, and moved to East Boston by the 1870s. Presumably Rand acquired numbers 4 and 5's lots from Stevens and by September 1869 buildings were located on this property.

On June 27, 1870, Rand sold number 3 Salem Street Avenue to Philinda A Corkins, wife of Charles R Corkins of Charlestown for \$2700 (Middlesex 1101:391). Rand eventually sold number 4 and 5 Salem Street Avenue's lots to John M Gill, a salesman (Middlesex 1071:610, October 14, 1869) and Ellen Clark (Middlesex 1071:363, September 10, 1869), respectively. The Clarks and Gills lived here until at least the mid-1880s. By 1885 an E Clapp owned number 5. By 1901 these houses were owned by Joseph E Bacon-number 3, Willie Harding-number 4 and Richard and Thomas for Fohrdrl (? Sp., related to H Tomfohrde, see form for 21 Prescott Street, or J H Tomfohrde, see form for 20-26 Mount Vernon Street) -number 5.

Salem Street Avenue is a narrow lane linking Salem Street with High Street. Salem Street was set out circa early 1800s. Salem Street Avenue was originally called North Street, until approximately the mid-1860s, and was set out in the early 1850s. Apparently it started out as a driveway to number 2 Salem Street Avenue.

Bibliography:

Atlases-1875, 1805, 1892, 1901

Boston Public Library Architect's File

Charlestown directories-1860s-70s

Boston directories-1880s

Middlesex D-1101: 391, 1071:610, 1071:363

*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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