

30, 32 Harvard Street, 2 Washington Street (1846)

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



30, 32 Harvard, 2 Washington Street

2015

Numbers 30 and 32 Harvard Street, along with 2 Washington Street, are a trio of three story red brick, granite/brownstone trimmed townhouses of subdued Greek Revival style. The buildings have gable roofs.

They have low granite faced basements, and three bay main façades with flat entrance bays and two-bay bow fronts. The bow front at the Harvard/Washington Street corner is part of the 2 Washington Street house, whose main entrance is located at the Washington Street-facing end wall gable. Numbers 30 and 32 Harvard have side hall plans (not clear as to plan of 2 Washington St.).

Numbers 30 and 32's entrances are recessed and each has five granite steps. There is a single door (replacement) with original multi-pane sidelights at number 30. Number 32's single door, sidelights, and transom have been replaced by double Victorian doors with arched glass panes. Number 2 Washington's entrance is slightly recessed and is reached by two granite steps. It has an Italianate bracketed door hood. The windows have simple brownstone sills and lintels and 6/6 wood sash.

Builder: Job A. Turner, Samuel S. Cudworth, housewrights
Original owners: Job A. Turner, Samuel S. Cudworth

Numbers 30 and 32 Harvard St. and number 2 Washington St. represent relatively rare examples of bow front masonry housing in Charlestown. This trio is a key component in Harvard Street's impressive collection of circa 1835-1860 townhouses. This trio, with its bow fronts, continues the rhythmic repetition of projecting structural forms (oriels and bow fronts) in evidence at numbers 34-50 Harvard Street, briefly interrupted by Washington street's intersection with Harvard Street and continued via the bow fronts 30 and 32

Harvard, and 2 Washington Street. Interestingly, the entrance to the first bow front of this trio (after Washington Street) is located at the end wall gable facing Washington Street rather than on the Harvard Street side (sort of like the masonry equivalent of 14 Concord Street on the other side of Breeds Hill-see form on 14 Concord St.).

Evidently this trio was built by Boston housewrights Samuel S Cudworth and Job A Turner-further research in Boston directories is needed to establish the timeframe of activity in Boston building trades for these housewrights. Samuel S Cudworth is also credited with the circa 1852-1853 bow front row houses located at 42-48 Harvard Street. Number 32 Harvard's deed chronology may be traced back to 22 November 1845-at that time Richard F Harris of Boston sold number 30 and 32 Harvard/2 Washington Street's land (55 feet on Harvard Street) to Job A. Turner and Samuel S. Cudworth for \$4112.00. The Harris/Turner/Cudworth deed mentions that this transaction did not include "all that part of a lot of land which the town of Charlestown has taken for a highway to widen said Arrow Street, measuring about 3 feet in width (the segment of Washington Street between Harvard Street and Devens Street was originally called Arrow Street-the second segment of Arrow Street extended from Devens Street, "dead ending" at Hurd's wharf on the Charles River -see 1818 Peter Tufts map)". This deed also stipulated that "the owners along the southern edge of the Arrow and Harvard Street property (2 Washington Street) may not have the right to have windows opening on the southerly side of the premises." Cudworth evidentially owned 32 Harvard Street from 1846-1856.

From 1856 to 1873 Lucius Dickenson, a trader, owned number 32. From 1873 to ca. 1880 it was owned by Philip Doherty, a merchant, tailor, 24 City Square.

Similarly, 2 Washington's deed chronology may be traced back to Cudworth and Turner with the first mention of "the buildings thereon" in a deed dated 3 July 1846. At that time Turner sold his share of 2 Washington to Samuel Cudworth for \$6000.

During the 1850s, 2 Washington was owned by Warren P. Tyler of Newton, Massachusetts, a merchant, tailor, and Amos Roberts of Charlestown, a grocer. By 1868, 2 Washington was owned by Albert Conant, "looking glasses", 105 Hanover St., Boston. Conant owned this house until circa 1890. Later owners included William F Wills, "liquors", 5 Charlestown Street, Boston (1890s) and Alice Riley (early 1900s).

Further research is needed on 30 Harvard Street's deed chronology. In 1875 this house's owner was T S G Robinson, an "agent", E Gary and Company Furniture, 92 Main Street. By 1885 stable owner J B Rideout (late 19th-century owner of 1 Prescott Street, as well) owned number 30, by 1890 it was owned by L Leonard, Trustee, and during the early 1900s by E O'Donnell.

Harvard Street is a very old thoroughfare, originally called Town Hill Street. Its path is part of Town Hill's remarkably intact Thomas Graves-planned mid-17th century (possibly as early as the 1630s) streetscape. Town Hill was variously known as Burial Ground Hill and Windmill Hill during colonial times. Town Hill Street became known as Harvard Street during the mid 1830s-it was named in honor of John Harvard,

founder of Harvard College and minister of First Parish Church in Charlestown.

In the annals of Harvard Street's 19th century residential development history, 30 and 32 Harvard and 2 Washington stand midway between the First Parish Church's extensive circa mid-1830s row of masonry houses at 7-23 Harvard St. (developed by Shadrach Varney and others) and the extensive townhouse development of Moses A. Dow during the late 1850s, encompassing 18-24, 34-38 Harvard Street, 1-4 Harvard Place, and 5 Washington Street.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

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

Charlestown directories-1870s

Middlesex deeds-number 32 Harvard St.- 474:108, 731:336, 751:362 and 1254:293. Number 2 Washington St.-474:108, 489:451, 801:289, 1031:334

*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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