

30/ 32 Winthrop Street (ca. 1860)

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



30, 32 Winthrop Street

1980s

Numbers 30 and 32 Winthrop Street are flat front, wood frame Italianate houses. Number 30 has been altered by replacement of clapboards with aluminum siding, while 32 retains clapboard sheathing. The edges of the main façades are defined by tall paneled pilasters with Doric capitals spanning the houses' three stories. Both houses have three bay main façades and side hall plans, on brick basements. They have wide bracketed cornices and flat roofs.

The entrances are enframed by paneled pilasters with Doric capitals and cornice-headed entablatures. The outer doors are paneled and have round-headed glass panes; inner doors are treated in similar manner.



30 (1), and 32 Winthrop Street

2015



32 Winthrop Street cornice detail

2016

Builder: Robert R. Wiley/ Isaac C. Cushing.

Owner: Robert R. Wiley/ Isaac C. Cushing

Numbers 30, 32 Winthrop are integral to the mid-19th century character of Winthrop Street. Architecturally, these houses represent solid examples of circa 1860s Italianate wood frame vernacular Charlestown housing.

In a sense, numbers 30 and 32 Winthrop Street evolved out of a property dispute between Eldridge Brown, the pre-1860 owner of numbers 30 and 32's land and the City of Charlestown. During the 1850s Brown fought the city's decision to build a fire station/school on land adjacent to number 30 Winthrop Street. Extant on numbers 30 and 32's lots prior to 1860 was a house

acquired by Brown, a merchant, in 1824. In a property agreement between Brown and the City of Charlestown in 1853 this house was described as "a dwelling house with several ancient windows overlooking the premises (engine/schoolhouse). Brown complained that the fire station/school would infringe on his rights to "light and air". In March 1853, a settlement was reached between the city and Brown. Brown was allowed to use a wall of the engine/school house for building purposes, meaning that Brown could utilize the existing engine/school house wall to eventually build number 32 Winthrop Street. The present fire station adjacent to number 32 dates to circa 1910-1920. In any event, Elbridge Brown sold numbers 30 and 32's land to Robert R Wiley and Isaac C Cushing on July 19, 1860 for \$3600. Presumably the old house was taken down and numbers 30 and 32 erected at some point during the late summer or fall of 1860.

Robert R Wiley (1828-1903 was active in Charlestown building trades from the late 1840s-circa 1890s. In 1850 he organized the firm of Cushing and Wiley with Isaac C Cushing. By the early 1860s he was working alone as a mason/builder. For further information on Wiley see form on 59 Warren Street.

Isaac C Cushing was active in Charlestown building trades from circa 1840-late 1850s. By 1860 he was living in Somerville. Cushing is listed as a mason in mid-19th century Charlestown directories. For further information on Cushing see form on 3 Tremont Street.

On April 10, 1861 Robert R Wiley sold number 30 Winthrop to a Franklin Hopkins of Charlestown. Between 1861-1867, number 30 was owned by a number of people, and from 1867-circa 1880 it was owned by Cyrus Flanders, a provisions dealer, of 32 Park Street, and 1 Warren Street. Later owners of number 30 included AA. Hallet (1885), Alan D Hall (1892) and John Mahan (early 1890s).

During the 1860s and 70s number 32's owner was Richard Power, a marble worker, 83 Haverhill Street, Boston. Later owners included Mary Clemens (1885), Catherine Herlihy (1890s-early 1900s).

Bibliography:

Maps- 1818, 1852

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

Charlestown Directories-1834-1874

Boston Directories post 1875

Middlesex deeds-#30-174:318, 275:274, 731:145 (deed with interesting agreement between Brown and City of Charlestown).
831:548, 851:132, 861:392, 901:157, 991:509

*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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