

34 High Street (by 1848, mansard added circa 1870)

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



34 High Street

2015

Number 34 High Street is a modestly scaled Mansard cottage. It was originally a gable roofed Greek Revival cottage, transformed circa 1860s or 70s. It is constructed of wood, with wooden shingles, and has a three bay main façade. Narrow

corner boards accent its edges. It has a high brick basement at the side and rear, below the grade of High Street. The sidewall has two bays. The mansard's slate shingles are intact; it has a deep cornice with regularly spaced brackets and a pair of dormers with curvilinear side enframement and broken pedimented gables. The house has a side hall plan.

The entrance framing betrays its Greek Revival origins. The front door is framed by pilasters and cornice-headed entablature. The windows are fully enframed and have 1/1 and 2/2 wood sash.

Original owner: Timothy Fletcher?

The house is prominently sited at the southwest corner of High and Cordis Streets and serves as a focal point opposite the head of Cedar Street. Siting and stylistic elements in an otherwise modestly scaled Mansard cottage combine to form a memorable vignette of mid-19th-century Charlestown. Much of Cedar Street's charm is derived from this house's location opposite the head of its narrow oriel window and bowfront-bordered path.

The 1848 panoramic view of Bunker Hill clearly shows this house then had a 1½-story gable roof structure. Its entrance enframements testify to its Greek Revival beginnings. The mansard roof was added circa late 1860s/early 1870s, judging by its dormer treatments, e.g. curvilinear enframements, which are similar to those of the double Mansard House at 174, 176 Bunker Hill Street (circa 1870). This house derives much of its charm from the stylishness of its entrance, dormer treatments and Mansard roof slope, on a modestly scaled wood frame cottage.

Further research is needed to pinpoint its date of construction. Middlesex grantee listings for Timothy Fletcher (1830s, 40s) are too numerous to explore within the timeframe of this survey. This house, in its gable roof form, was extant by 1848. Architecturally, in its gable roofed state it would have been somewhat akin to the circa 1840s Greek revival cottages of Wall Street, Avon Place, and 9, 11, 13 Bartlett St.

Evidently Timothy Fletcher's administrators sold this property in 1855 to Ethan N Coburn, who owned it from 1855 until circa early 1890s. By the early 1900s the house was owned by Coburn's heirs. By 1911 an Edward Gagnon is listed as this house's owner.

Note: Deeds indicate that a Philip A Doherty may have been a tenant of this house during the late 19th century.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901, 1911

Middlesex deeds-701: 332, 3284:156, 2847:173

Suffolk deeds- 2847:173, 3284:156

*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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