

36, 38 High Street (circa 1868-74)

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



36- 38 High Street

2015

Numbers 36 and 38 High Street is a stately three-story Mansard double house, constructed of red brick with brownstone trimmings. Brownstone belt courses visually separate the basement from the first floor. The cornice has brickwork dentils and the straight-sided mansard roof retains its slate shingles. Each house has a double pedimented dormer above the bow front and a single pediment dormer above the entrance bay. Each has a side hall plan, and the main façades are characterized by flat entrance bays and two bay bow fronts. The northwest wall is devoid of windows; the Cordis Street wall has two bays.

Low flights of stone steps lead to handsomely enframed entrances. Number 36's enframements are the less weathered of the two houses- 38's are extremely weathered and have been painted brown. Number 36's front doors are flanked by Doric pilasters with incised lines, and surmounting the entrance is an entablature with incised Eastlake floral design and saw tooth coursing. Above the entablature is a heavy, deep door hood with large brackets with incised lines.

The Windows have simple sills and segmental lintels, and, in general, 2/2 wood sash.

Original owner: Edward Lawrence

Numbers 36 and 38 High Street were built circa 1868-1874. Prominently sited at the northwest corner of High and Cordis Streets, this double mansard bow front house stands adjacent the garden of Edward Lawrence's residence at 44 High Street. In a sense, numbers 36 and 38 with their Eastlake decorative



36 High Street entry detail

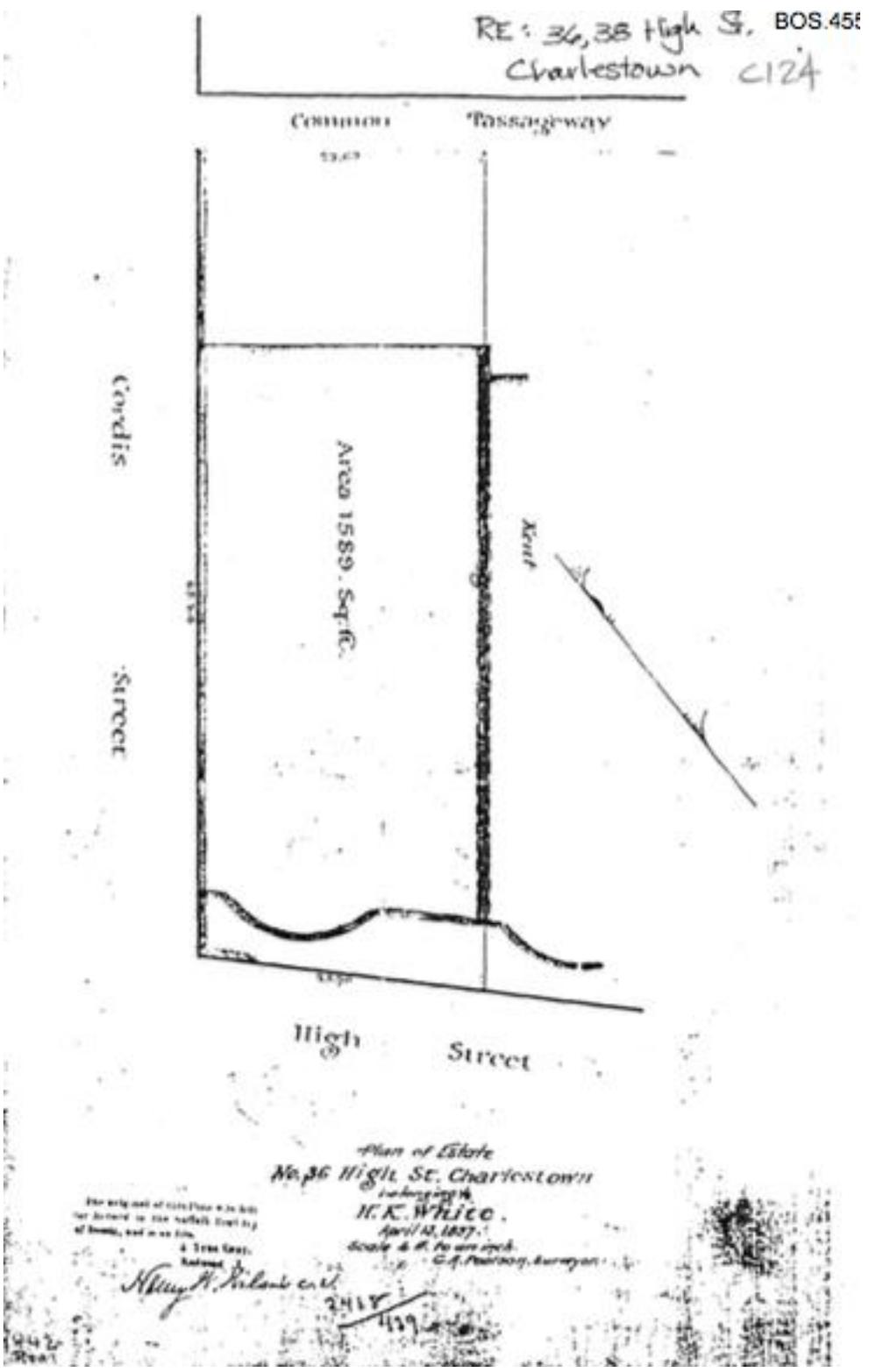
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details and Mansard roofs are a more "up to date" version of numbers 44, 46 High Street (circa 1850) with their Greek Revival stylistic sensibility, broader bow-fronts, linked chimneys and gable roofs. Numbers 36, 38 High Street rank among the statelier, better designed examples of Mansard townhouse architecture in Charlestown and are a relatively rare example of bow-front housing in the survey area.

Both numbers 36 and 38 and 44, 46 High Street have important historical associations with Edward Lawrence. At some point circa 1868-74, Edward Lawrence, a prominent Charlestown furniture manufacturer and political figure, built 36 and 38 High Street on what had been the old Loring estate. The 1868 Sanborn Insurance atlas shows a large square three-story wood frame house with three small ells on its northwest side on the site of what is now 38 and the lawn which is now

part of 44 High Street property. According to an article in the *Charlestown enterprise* dated May 26, 1888, page 1, the old Josiah Loring house stood with its end wall facing High Street, the front looking out upon a garden which extended to Cordis Street. The estate was entered via a gateway on High Street. The Loring garden was said to have possessed "the best tulip bed in Charlestown". Early in his life Col. Josiah Loring was the first commander of the Washington Light Infantry of Boston. Col. Loring was for many years the weigher and guager of the Custom House of Boston and Charlestown. The *Charlestown enterprise* article noted that "to make room for the block of brick houses built by the late Hon. Edward Lawrence, a few years ago, the old house (Loring) was torn down." However, 36 and 38 had evidently already been built when Edward Lawrence purchased the Loring property on January 26, 1876. Numbers 36 and 38 are shown on the 1875 Charlestown atlas, both labeled Edward Lawrence. Lawrence (see numbers 44, 46 High Street for biographical information pertaining to Edward Lawrence) paid George D Edmonds \$15,000 for this property. Middlesex deeds indicate that Lawrence built these houses for two daughters-Mary Louise Chandler (number 36) and Ellen M Kent (for 38). The Lawrence sisters received full ownership of these houses upon Lawrence's death in 1885.

By the early 1900s this duo's owners included a Mary a Breen-36, and a James Towler-38.



Bibliography:
 Maps- 1852

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

Middlesex Deeds- #36- 3171: 239, 2468: 437, 1312: 219; #38-
2436: 75, 1312: 219

Charlestown Enterprise –May 26, 1888, p.

*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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