

37 Winthrop Street (1875-85)

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



37 Winthrop Street

2015

Number 37 Winthrop Street is an attractive example of late 1870s-early 1880s single-family Italianate wood frame vernacular houses.

It is prominently sited at the corner of Common and Winthrop Streets overlooking the Training Field/Winthrop Square. It has a side hall plan with three bays, and rises three stories from a brick basement. Narrow corner boards accent the edges of the house, and a broad baseboard runs between the basement and clapboards. The house has a flat roof with an overhanging cornice. The cornice has curved brackets, which are decorated on their undersides with incised lines, and circular bosses at their small square-top ends. There is a two-story ell at the rear.

The house has a deeply recessed side entrance with five wooden steps leading to transom-topped double multipaneled front doors. The entrance is framed by Doric pilasters, each with three incised grooves. The door hood has curved brackets with a shallow hip roof. The first and second floor windows are fully enframed and pedimented.

Architect: Frederick A. Hatch (?)

Original owner: Abijah Hatch or F. A. Hatch



37 Winthrop cornice detail

2015



37 Winthrop Street Entry

Number 37 Winthrop Street is a key component of two important Charlestown streetscapes. Prominently sited at the corner of Common and Winthrop Streets, number 37's sidewall overlooks the Training Field/Winthrop Square. It is an important component in the "frame" of late 18th century- early 20th century buildings, which picturesquely border Winthrop Square. In addition 37 Winthrop Street is a key component in the "wall" of mid-late 19th century buildings bordering the southeast side of Winthrop Street, a wall that begins at Warren Street with the Queen Anne/Romanesque St. Mary's School and includes the primarily masonry residences along Winthrop Street.

Evidently the first house on this lot was built in 1828-29. At that time Joseph Smith of Charlestown, a trader, acquired the property from his father David Smith (see Middlesex 284:432, October 31, 1828). The panoramic view of Bunker Hill dated 1848 shows a two-story house with a three bay main façade facing Winthrop Street and a narrow one bay end wall gable facing the training field. The main block is gable rather than flat roofed and a one-story ell appears to the rear. It is doubtful that any part of this predecessor house survives within the present structure. The entrance to the predecessor house is shown at the Winthrop/Common Streets corner rather than at its present location. Its main block is shown on the 1868 Sanborn Atlas and the 1875 Atlas of Charlestown.

Mid-19th century maps, atlases, and the Panoramic View indicate that the present house replaced the earlier circa 1828/29 house on this site at some point between 1875 and 1885. The current configuration of 37 Winthrop Street first appears on the 1885 Atlas of Charlestown.

For many years 37 Winthrop (both predecessor and current houses) was the home of the family of Abijah Hatch, a caulker, at the Navy Yard. Abijah Hatch purchased the predecessor house from James

Mellen of Cambridge on 7 April 1853 (611:59)-Hatch paid Mellen \$1800. (For Mellen's title see Middlesex 325:236)

It is unclear as to whether the predecessor on this site was destroyed by fire, moved, or taken down. The possibility remains that Frederick a Hatch, a draftsman, who was a boarder in the first 37 Winthrop Street house during the 1870s, and owner of the present house by 1885, may have been responsible for its design and construction. Also boarding at 37 Winthrop during the 1870s was Charles H Hatch, a clerk, and George a Hatch, a machinist.

Later owners of 37 Winthrop include Isaac Klous "woolen rags" (dry goods dealer and real estate speculator) and Richard Porter (early 1900s).

Bibliography:

Maps- 1818, 1852

Panoramic View of Charlestown-1848

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

Charlestown/Boston directories-19th century

Middlesex deeds-284: 432, 580:180, 325:236, 591:314, 611:59

*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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