

417-421 Main Street (circa 1871-1872)

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



417-421 Main

2015

Numbers 417-421 Main Street is a trio of handsome Italianate red brick row houses. The main façades are characterized by flat entrance bays and three story, plus basements, octagonal bays. There is dentil-like brick work below bracketed (cast iron?) cornices, and a flat roof.

Recessed, paneled entrances and short flights of granite stairs lead to double front doors. There are deep-bracketed door

hoods. The windows have simple sills and lintels with incised Eastlake designs on numbers 419 and 421—the lintels on 417 have been reworked with header bricks.

Builder: John B Lord



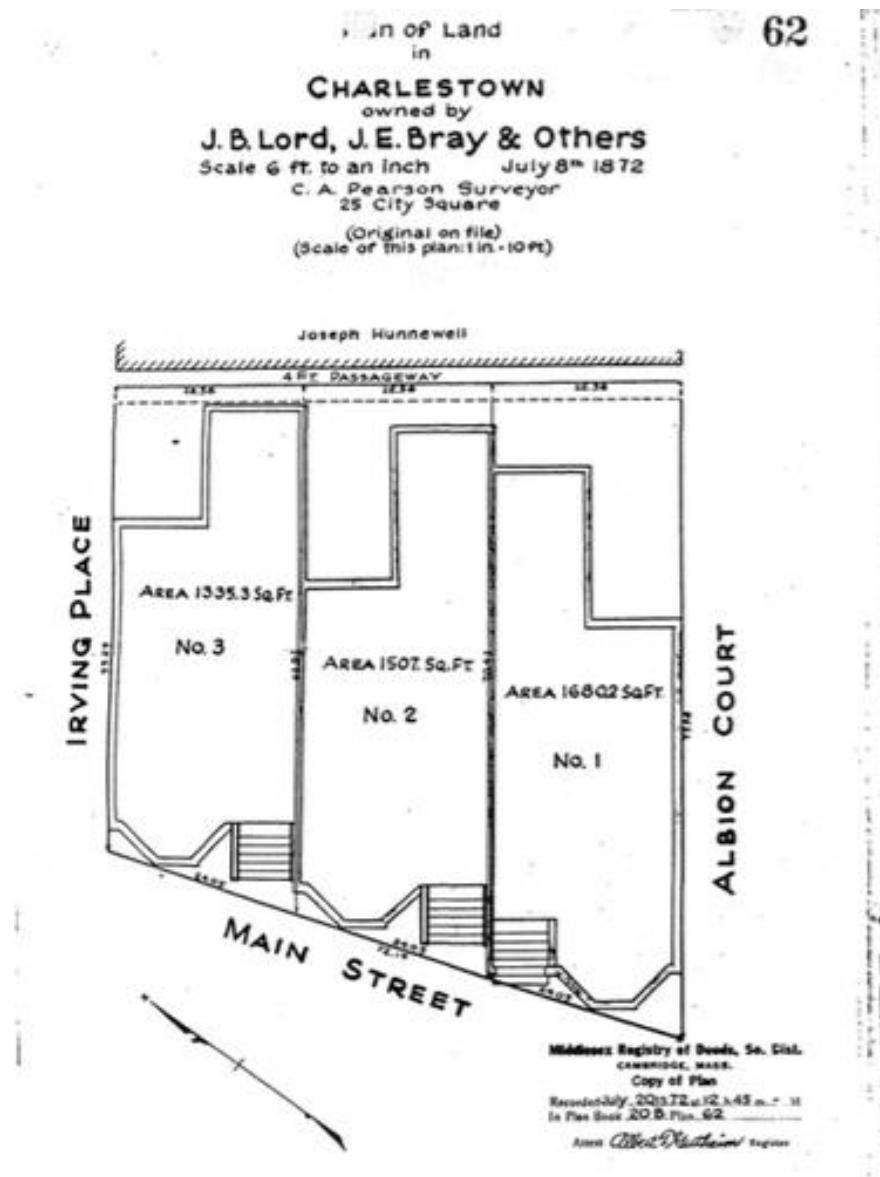
217 Main cornice detail

2015

Architecturally, this trio of red brick Italianate row houses is significant as one of the very few groups of octagonal bay townhouses in Charlestown. The flat front is the most prevalent type of Charlestown row house. This group exemplifies a circa 1870s-early 1880s predilection in Boston area row house design for hard edges and incised Eastlake floral motifs for window lintels. It is one of the few groups of row houses still extant on Main Street. They date to circa 1871-1872, although no buildings are mentioned in 421's Middlesex deed of July 20, 1872 (1221:565).



421 Main lintel detail



However, the purchase price of \$7462.12 suggests that a house was already extant on this lot. At that time Joseph Hunnewell sold this property to John B Lord, Joseph E Bray and James M Andrews. John B Lord operated John B Lord and Company (Benjamin R Wentworth), contractors. He was active in Charlestown building trades from circa 1885-1890s. In 1856 Lord is listed as boarding at Irving Place. By 1870 he was a partner in Simons and Lord, Carpenters, 416 Main Street. (Nathaniel G Simons) and he was also involved in Dix and Simons Real Estate, 310 Main Street. During the early 1870s Lord lived at 32 Auburn Street. By 1875 he was the head of John B Lord and Company, Carpenters. Interestingly, his work is listed as "furniture", 414 Main Street, in 1880. By 1819 he is again listed as a carpenter at 416 Main Street, his house at 62 Berkeley Street. Lord owned 421 Main Street during the 1870s.

In addition to Lord at 421, owners of this group in 1875 included Levi G Dodge, an apothecary, 536 Main, Charlestown and real estate tycoon Francis Hunnewell, Congress Building, 4 post-Office Square, Boston, house at Brookline, who owned 419 as an investment property-as well as two dwellings to the rear of 419.

By 1901 this group's owners included Mary E Boynton-417, Thomas B Morrill-419 and Luther W Morrill- 421. Thomas B and Luther W Morrill were partners in Blinn, Morrill and Company (J F Blinn), Teamsters, 6 Chatham row and 113 Franklin. Apparently Luther W Morrill was also associated with a restaurant at 15 Market Street, Charlestown.

*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.

R. Dinsmore