42-48 Harvard Street (circa 1852-1853)

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

42- 48 Harvard Street   2015

Numbers 42-48 Harvard Street is a four building row of bow front Greek Revival townhouses, constructed of red brick with granite faced basements. The buildings have brickwork cornice tables with raised brick courses. Each building has one flat-roofed dormer and each is crowned by a low-pitched gable roof.

They have side hall plans and deeply recessed entrances with wood paneled walls. The front doors are flanked by narrow multi-pane sidelights with four-pane transoms. The original (?)

doors are intact at numbers 44, 46, and 48. The entrances and windows of the first floors have pedimented lintels with tabs; the sills and lintels are composed of brownstone, now mostly painted over. Number 48's main façade is the most altered, with replacement lintels of up-ended stretcher bricks instead of brownstone. In general the Windows have 2/2 wood sash.

Builder: Samuel A Cudworth

Numbers 42-48 Harvard are key components in the "wall" of masonry and wood frame houses bordering Harvard Street, between Main Street and Washington Street. This wall is characterized by the rhythmic repetition of bow fronts and oriel windows. Harvard Street retains a high percentage of its historic fabric, along with comparable recent condominium additions and possesses one of Charlestown's more memorable streetscapes. Numbers 42-48 Harvard represent a rather conservative foray into Greek Revival bow front townhouse architecture, with the broad bow fronts and Greek Revival pedimented lintels characteristic of circa 1840s-early 1850s Boston area residences of this type.

Judging by number 46's deed chronology, these houses were built circa 1852-53 by Samuel A Cudworth of Boston (further research is needed in 19th century Boston directories to realize a timeframe for Cudworth's career). In any event Cudworth paid Solomon Hovey of Charlestown, a "gentleman", $5000 for 46's lot. Hovey had purchased this lot and the other three (?) from Elijah Hadley in 1843. Cudworth in turn sold the completed 46 along with its lot to Luther Smith of Pepperell Massachusetts, a yeoman, for $5400. Number 46's lot appears as lot number three on "a plan of the Hovey estate in Charlestown drawn by A Wadsworth December 24, 1852. Luther Smith sold 46 to William Hunt of Salem for $7250 on

July 18, 1868. In 1874 William Hunt is not listed at number 46 but rather a Lewis Hunt, "hardware cutlery", 111 Main Street, house 46 Harvard Street.

Other owners of this group in 1874 included Mrs. Albert A Frost- 44, A S Morse- 42, and Uriah W Carr, wines and liquors, 123 April St., Boston, house 48 Harvard Street. By 1892 this group's owner's included Anthony S Morse, "hardware and galvanized ship chandlery" 210 Commercial Street- 42, John Doyle, "watchmen FRR"- 44, Existe Laviree, lumber-46, and Lucretiat Carr, widow-48.

Owners in 1911 included H K and L E Morss- 42, John Doyle- 44, Mary Kiernan-46, and B Kean-48.

Note: Numbers 42-48 occupy the site of Richard Hunnewell's pre- 1775 estate. After the revolution, he claimed losses for "a house, shop, stock and furniture". Hunnewell notes that across the north end of number 48 was "an old two-story wooden house with a hip roof." Could number 50 still incorporate parts of this roof structure or is number 50 an entirely" new" ca. 1890s building?

Bibliography: map
Maps-1818, 1852
Atlases-1868, 1845, 1885, 1892, 1901, 1911
Charlestown/Boston directories
Middlesex deeds-number 46-432:198, 591:227, 601:567, 1031:414
Honeywell-a century of town life, 1888

*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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