

47 Chestnut Street (1878)

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

Number 47 Chestnut Street is a freestanding three-story red brick townhouse with an octagonal bay. It has a granite faced basement and a three bay main façade with a side hall plan. A short flight of granite steps with low granite shoulders leads to a recessed entrance with distinctive enframements- pilasters with square vermiculated panels and recessed rectangular panels, rock-faced "Doric" capitals, and a lintel with incised Eastlavian/Neo-Grec motifs. In general, the windows have simple stone sills and lintels with tabs. The building has a corbelled cornice with dentils and angled bricks, and a flat roof.



47 Chestnut Street 2015



47 Chestnut Street, entry detail 2015

Builder: George W Pope

Original owner: Aaron Hook

Number 47 Chestnut Street is a late addition to Chestnut Street's interesting collection of a primarily mid-19th century masonry houses. The house is difficult to categorize

stylistically. Built in 1877, it is a townhouse with an octagonal bay on a street dominated by flat front housing. Its concessions to style include entrance enframements with Eastlake/neo-Grec incised motifs, window lintels with tabs (vaguely Italianate) and a corbelled cornice reminiscent of those found on Panel Brick and Queen Anne row houses.

The house has historical Association with Aaron Hook, well-to-do Charlestown shoe store owner. Boston Buildings Department information on this building includes an "application for permit to build" dated July 26, 1877. The permit lists Aaron Hook as owner and George W Pope as builder. This permit indicates that four houses were to have been built, (requiring the tearing down of adjacent structures?). A second permit entitled "survey and inspection of buildings" dated May 30, 1878 indicates that only one house was located here.

Information on George W Pope is sketchy. Evidently he was active circa 1860s until at least the 1890s. He was responsible for a three-story, three family dwelling at 123-125 Conant Street, Roxbury, and a six story brick mercantile building at 110-114 Purchase Street, corner of Oliver Street and Cotton Place, Boston. Further research is needed on George W Pope.

Aaron Hook was the son of Levitt and Sarah (Prescott) Horn. He was born on June 3, 1825 in Chichester, New Hampshire. His father served in the war of 1812. His early life was spent in farming. His educational background included schooling at Chichester schools and Blanchard Academy, of Pembroke, New Hampshire. In 1843 he settled in Concord, New Hampshire, intending to learn the masons trade. However, his health failed in 1848 and he abandoned the building trades and moved to Boston, finding employment in a shoe store as salesman.

During the early 1850s he started a shoe trade on Hanover Street, Boston. In 1873 he moved to a larger store at the corner of Hanover and Washington Streets, and in 1886 he started a shoe store in Charlestown- the store of the late M Clarence Hall on Main Street. He remained in the shoe trade until 1887, passing his business along to his sons.

Hook came to Charlestown to live in 1866. He evidently moved into 47 Chestnut Street in 1878. Hook's heirs lived here until at least 1911.

Bibliography:

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

Boston directories-post 1875

Boston buildings department "jacket"

Charlestown enterprise and evening news-special edition, June 17, 1893, Charlestown Citizens, Past and Present (at Massachusetts historical Society)

*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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