

## 65-67 Chestnut Street (#65-1841, #67-circa 1841-42)

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



67, 65 Chestnut Street

2015

Numbers 65 and 67 Chestnut Street are substantial three-story town houses, which were originally identical gable-roofed Greek Revival Houses. Number 65 was altered (Circa?) by the removal of its gable roof and the creation of a flat roof with a bracketed Italianate cornice. Number 67 has an added oriel window, and both added bracketed door hoods.

They have clapboard-clad main facades and brick sidewalls. Number 65's clapboards, on the main façade, have been replaced by aluminum siding. The houses have granite block basements and three bay facades with side hall plans. Their edges are accented by narrow baseboards and corner boards. Number 67 has a simple fascia board at the cornice with a gable roof, and a gable-roofed double dormer. Number 65 has a bracketed Italianate cornice with a flat roof.

Granite steps with curvilinear cast iron railings lead to recessed, paired, entrances with Doric pilasters and deep-bracketed door hoods- which were originally just heavy classical entablatures. Number 67 has a segmental arched entry and its door hood supports a narrow, apron-paneled oriel with a bracketed cornice. Number 65's front door is flanked by multi-pane sidelights and is surmounted by a two-pane transom; 67's double doors are still intact. The windows are fully enframed with 1/1 replacement sash at 67 and 6/6 wood sash on 65.

They have narrow front yards; 67's cast iron fence is particularly noteworthy.

Original owner: #65-Joseph G Hicks #67-William Pedrick

Built circa early 1840s, 65 and 67 Chestnut Street rank among the oldest houses on the southeastern slopes of Breeds Hill. Constructed six years before the first house on nearby Monument Square, these tall stately houses originally stood in splendid isolation-highly visible landmarks near Breed's Hill's apex. Undoubtedly these houses reassured prospective house builders and homeowners that the barren pastureland and battlefield could be transformed into an attractive residential quarter of substantial houses.

Architecturally, these houses represent a type of tall Greek Revival house which may represent an early stage in the development of the three Decker house. At some point, circa 1850s or 60s, this once identical gable roofed duo took on separate identities with the removal of 65's gable roof and subsequent flat roof replacement, with a bracketed cornice. Number 67's oriel window evidently represents an effort to give the house a more "up-to-date" appearance. The bracketed door hoods of both houses are also later additions.

The 1818 Tufts map of Charlestown indicates that 65 and 67's lots were either part of Nathan Adams' estate or a tract labeled "M Frost". Numbers 65 and 67's lots are located just beyond the boundaries of the Bunker Hill Monument Association's 115 lot tract. Originally, the BHMA, organized in 1823, had intended to preserve the area as an open battlefield but by the early 1830s population pressures and transportation improvements were causing the members to turn to residential development. Lots were auctioned off beginning in 1839, with the first houses being built along Concord, Monument, and Lexington Streets during the early 1840s.

During the 1830s George Kettel had acquired 65 and 67's lots, and apparently others in the vicinity. By 1841 he was selling

off his house lots. On August 5, 1841 Kettel sold 65's house lot to Joseph G Hicks, an "engineer, US Navy Yard" and 67's house lot to another US Navy yard employee, William Pedrick, a "machinist." Kettel sold 65's lot to Hicks for \$701.06, and 67's lot to Pedrick for \$557.28. The Kettel/Pedrick deed states that the house lot's southern border was a "new street intended to be called Chestnut Street" and stipulated that the house to be erected thereon shall be one of the value of not less than \$2000 and is to be placed on a line with the house now erected by Mr. Kettel on said street, where it turns westerly to the monument land," thus indicating that 65 was already extant or nearing completion. Charlestown directories indicate that Joseph G Hicks, a "rope maker", listed as engineer in the deeds, was living here by 1842.

Pedrick sold 67 to Hiram Whitman, a "clerk, 60 State Street, Boston" on October (?), 1848 for \$3000. Whitman remained this house's owner until circa 1895. During the early 1900s, 67 was owned by James H Whitman. Number 65's late 19th century owners included R M Swan, 1875, Susan A Swan, 1885-92, and Charles M Hunter, early 1900s.

#### Bibliography:

Maps- 1818, 1852

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

Charlestown Directories- 1840s

Middlesex Deeds- #65-408:82, #67-408:83, 531:203, 831:210

Panoramic View, 1848

\*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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