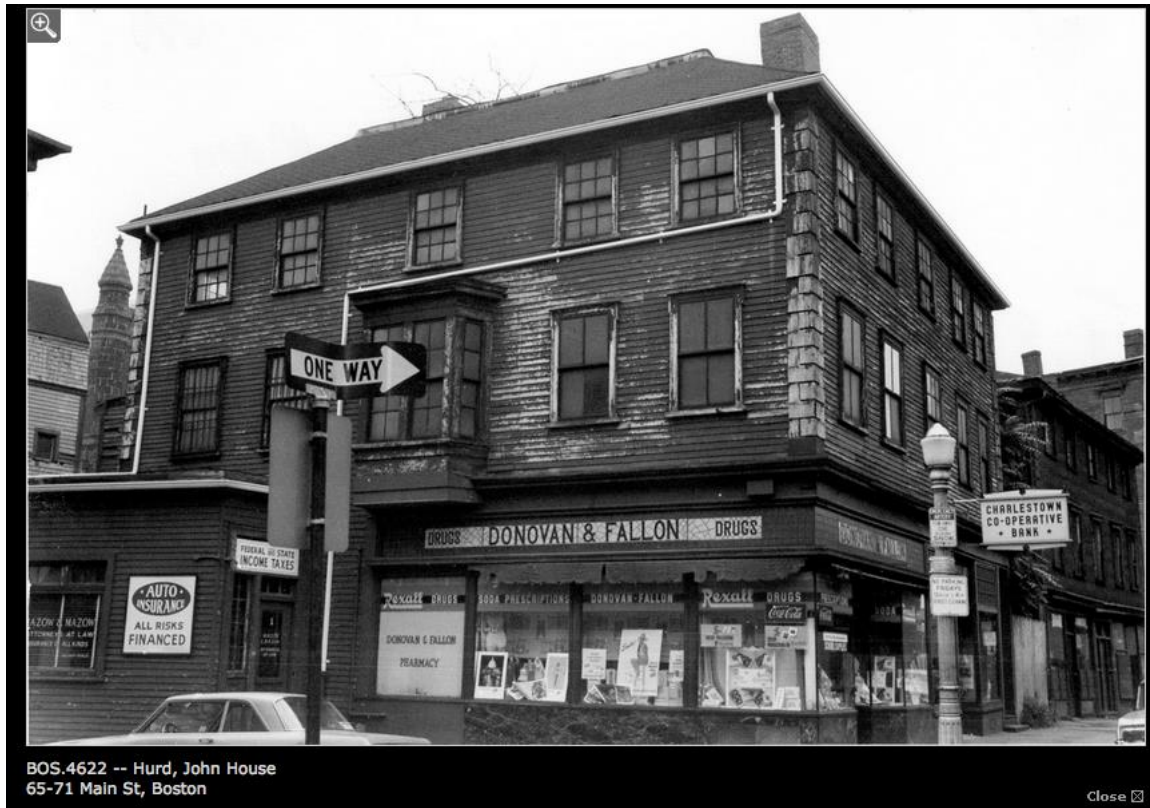


69, 71 Main Street (John Hurd house, circa 1795)

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



ca. 1985

The John Hurd house is a substantial late Georgian wood frame house with late 19th century cast iron storefront treatments. It has a five bay by five bay main block, and a one-story wood frame addition (by 1875) at the Monument Avenue side. There is a wrap-around late 19th century storefront at the ground floor with stained glass transoms which read "Donovan and Fallon drugs". Upper floors are sheathed with clapboards, with quoins at the corners. There is a steeply pitched hip roof.

The windows are fully enframed and hand pegged with raised outer moldings, and 6/6 wood sash. A later Italianate oriel projects from the Monument Avenue wall at its center.



Hurd House, 69, 71 Main Street

2015

Original owner: John Hurd

The John Hurd house has architecturally significant features from two centuries. Originally built as a private residence circa 1795, this building's ground floor was converted for commercial use circa 1875-1885. The upper floors retain their original late Georgian appearance, e.g. clapboard sheathing, corner quoins, well-crafted window frames and steeply pitched

hip roof. The ground floor retains its handsome late 19th century cast iron enframements and stained glass transom.

The building has significant historical associations with prominent businessman John Hurd. T.T. Sawyer described John Hurd as "a gentleman, quiet and dignified in manner, regular and methodical in habits, sincere and thoughtful in action. As a businessman he was efficient, intelligent and honest. His integrity could never be questioned etc." during Hurd's occupancy in the late 18th/early 19th centuries the house had "a large garden in the rear which extended to Warren Street, and was always kept in the best condition". Evidently the house's interior during the Hurd families' occupancy reflected their prosperity and high standing in the community. Hunnewell noted that "internally it is handsomely furnished".

The Hurds' long era of ownership ended with William Murray's purchase of this building in March, 1882. Evidently Murray's dry goods business was located in the Hurd house as early as circa 1872. During the late 19th century the building's commercial ground floor contained the dry goods store of J W Rand and William Murray and Son. William Murray was a Charlestown native, growing up on Cordis Street and later living on Oak Street. His son William Clark Murray (born September 1848) became a partner in this store at age 22. At that time the Murrays' dry goods concern was housed in the old Cordis house at 121 Main Street. W C Murray was also a successful real estate speculator and was "well-versed in local history". He died on November 18, 1890. During the early 1900s W.C. Hurd's widow Harriet Murray owned the house.

Further research is needed to determine the time frame of the Donovan and Fallon occupancy. Further research in Middlesex Deeds may also result in a definitive date for this property.

Even J F Hunnewell's detective work did not result in a firm date for this house. He characterized the house's origins as "somewhat perplexing".

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

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

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*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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