

72, 74 Warren Street (circa 1837)

From Boston Landmark Commission's Charlestown Historic Resources Study 1981*:



72, 74 Warren

2015

Numbers 72, 74 Warren Street is a Greek Revival wood frame double house. The main block has a broad five bay street-facing gable, five bay sidewalls, and a granite block basement. The edges of the house are accented by narrow base and corner boards. It retains its clapboard fabric. The building is crowned by a broad pedimented gable roof with a trio of windows at the attic level.

Number 72 has a tall center entrance with Greek Revival framing, e.g. pilasters and narrow pedimented entablature. The entrance was originally recessed and presently has late 19th century outer doors and transom. Still intact are the original inner door and multi-pane sidelights and transom.

The north sidewall has a low, ground level secondary entrance at the center (74 Warren), possibly not original.

In general the windows are fully and simply enframed with 2/1 wood sash.

Original owner: Daniel J Coburn

Together with 80 Warren, next door, and 77, 79 Warren, across the street, 72 and 74 Warren Street form a node of well-crafted Greek Revival wood frame houses within the Town Hill district. Architecturally, 72, 74 Warren represent a type of Greek Revival wood frame double house unique within Charlestown, and for that matter, within Boston. The usual type of Greek Revival double house stands with its long, six bay main façade facing the street. Numbers 72, 74's main façade also faces the street, but is at the house's six bay gable end, and the main entrance is located at the center of this street-facing gable. The more typical Greek revival double house in Charlestown, e.g. 37, 39 Washington, or 46, 48 Chestnut Street, with the long side as the main façade, has paired entrances. Number 72, 74's a main entrance is treated as a single entrance suggesting a center entrance plan, (although two side hall plan segments are located within this building). In a sense, 72, 74 Warren is the product of 1830s vernacular house plans in transition, involving the rise of the side hall plan and the forsaking of the more traditional pre-Greek Revival center hall plan.

Number 72, 74 Warren Street was built circa 1837. On February 3, 1837, Enoch Hunt of Charlestown, a "gentleman" and Susanna Kettel and Betsy Kettel, "single women" sold 72, 74 Warren's land to Daniel J Coburn of Charlestown, a "gentleman" for \$1000. Presumably this house was built in the spring/summer of 1837. Daniel Coburn is listed in the 1834 Charlestown directory as "Deputy Sheriff, 40 Main Street, house 20 Henley Street." Coburn is not listed in Charlestown directories in the 1840s and 1850s. Middlesex deeds indicate that Coburn moved from Charlestown to Malden.

In any event, Coburn's heirs, William Knowlton of Upton, Massachusetts and Elizabeth Coburn of Malden, sold the house to Everett Torrey, a marble dealer, on October 2, 1860. For many years Torrey lived at 31 High Street (see form on 29-41 High Street). Torrey evidentially owned 72, 74 Warren as an investment property, until at least 1911.

Warren Street, originally known as Back Street, is a very old Charlestown thoroughfare, dating as early as 1638. Back Street was renamed Warren Street in honor of Gen. Joseph Warren who was killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Bibliography

Maps- 1818, 1854

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

Charlestown directories-1834-74

Middlesex deeds-360: 200, 971:618

*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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