

72 High Street (1863-1864)

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



72 High Street

2015

Number 72 High Street is a red brick Italianate/Mansard townhouse with a granite block basement and three bay main façade. A bay window projects from the east wall.



72 High Street entry detail

2016



72 High Street first floor lintel detail

2016

The house has a distinctive, recessed, brownstone entrance arch and multi-panelled pilasters. Still intact are the original double doors, and a transom. The windows have brownstone enframements with cornice-headed lintels with circular and rectangular panels, on the first floor. The second floor windows have simple rectangular brownstone sills and lintels. In the center of the second floor's main façade is an oriel with apron panels and dentils at its cornice.

The lintel detail all of the first floor windows is repeated on a fascia board of the cornice with large paired brackets flanking rows of smaller brackets.



72 High Street Cornice, roof detail

2016

Original owner: Marshall Simonds

Architecturally, 72 High Street is one of the most elegant, architecturally ambitious townhouses in the survey area, reflecting the wealth of its early owners Marshall Simonds, provisions dealer, and Thaddeus Richardson, grocery store proprietor and distiller. This house is noteworthy for the high quality of its design, craftsmanship, and materials. It ranks among the finest examples of an Italianate/Mansard townhouse in Charlestown. The 1875 atlas indicates a stable to the rear of the house, and late 19th-early 20th century atlases show a rectangular back stable on this lot.

The house was built for Marshall Simonds, a provisions dealer, circa 1863-64. On September 1, 1863, Simonds paid Henry D

Austin, Esq. \$8000 for this house's lot (891:160). Five years later it was (probably) sold, by an Otis Simonds (occupation unlisted), to Martha G Richardson for \$17,000 on July 7, 1869. During the 1870s and 80s the house was sold back and forth to Thaddeus Stevens (occupation not listed) and Thaddeus Richardson (Briggs and Richardson, distillers, 63 Chelsea Street, Charlestown) by 1893 a Julia M Burbank, widow, owned this property, and by the early 1900s it was owned by a Mary J Fisk.

Thaddeus Richardson, the house's second owner, was born in Stoneham, Massachusetts March 14, 1809. Educated at the Academy in Sanbornton, New Hampshire, he went to Lynn at the age of 17 as a blacksmith's apprentice. After a year and a half he removed to Malden where he was self-employed as a blacksmith and stable keeper. He lived in Malden for 10 years and during the latter portion of the time operated a stage line from Malden to Boston. Together with Henry Van Voorhis, he next started in the grain business on a site later occupied by the Fitchburg Railroad. (In Charlestown?) By the early 1840s he and Edwin Bradley opened a grocery store in Charlestown. By the 1840s he had formed a partnership with John F Hartshorn in a grocery store on Blackstone Street in Boston. His next business venture was with the firm of Richardson and Chapin, which, like the former business, did a distilling business for five years. During the late 1860s he turned to farming on his two large farms in Stoneham Massachusetts. During this time he and his brother built the Stoneham Branch Railroad. According to "souvenir of Charlestown" (1893) he bought 72 High Street in 1871. He spent his retirement caring for his real estate interests. He was a member of the Charlestown Council in 1873 and served four years on the Charlestown Water Board. For 60 years he was a member of the Winthrop Society.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1833, 1839, 1828, 1851

Atlases-1875, 1885, 1892, 1901

Charles town directories-1834-1874

"Souvenir of Charlestown and the Bunker Hill Monument"
1843-1883

Middlesex deeds-831: 377 (?), 891:160, 1061:597, 1130:65

Suffolk deeds-1783: 83, 2109:34

*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.

R. Dinsmore

Interior photos, ca. 2000



Stair hall, first floor



Double parlor, with mantels, mirrors, plaster cornice, first floor