

73, 83, 83 1/2, 85 Main Street (73: ca. 1868-75; 83-85 ca. late 1820s, by 1830)

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



73 Main, ca. 1889

Numbers 73-85 Main Street is a commercial/office and residential group, including three late Federal masonry buildings and a Mansard office block.



73 Main Street

2016

The corner building, 73 Main, is constructed of brick with a 19th century storefront treatment at the Main Street/Monument Avenue corner. The upper floor is characterized by flat surfaces with a narrow brickwork course above and below the windows providing horizontal accents. There are small corbels at regular intervals at the cornice. The

mansard's slate shingles are intact. A dormer at the corner retains a distinctive pyramidal roof with a finial. A tripartite dormer on the Main Street façade features a stick style gable and there are five dormers along Monument Avenue.

There are three windows on the main street façade, one at the Main/Monument corner, and five along Monument Avenue. No longer extant is a second-floor oriel, which was located on the Monument Avenue side. The Windows originally had 2/2 wood sash but now have 1/1 wood sash.



1981

Original owner(s): Early owners of number 83 were Susanna and Betsy Castel.



85, 83 Main Street

2015

Numbers 83 -85 Main forms an interesting and rare Boston area early-mid-19th century group of mixed-use structures. This trio of masonry flat front Federal brick buildings features replacement storefronts and other later treatments at the ground floor level. The upper floors are extremely plain with planar masonry surfaces and simple stone sills and lintels. The buildings are enclosed by a gable roof with one gable-roofed

dormer per segment. Architecturally, they represent a rare Boston area trio of late Federal commercial/residential buildings.

Number 73 Main Street, with its distinctive form and mansard roof with pyramid-capped corner dormer provides a memorable introduction to Monument Avenue's collection of mid-19th century buildings. With the exception of the missing second floor oriel, 73 Main is a remarkably unspoiled example of a Mansard commercial/office block dating to ca.1868-75.

Middlesex deeds indicated that numbers 83-85 Main were extant by 1830. Further research is needed to pinpoint a circa late 1820s construction date. Early owners of number 83 were Susanna and Betsy Kettle, grantees of Joseph Hurd of Portsmouth New Hampshire. Further research is needed to determine the early ownership and commercial usage of these buildings.

Number 73 was built circa 1868-1875. The 1868 Sanborn Atlas indicates that a large one-story brick structure with a four-story rear building was located on this site. For many years prior to 1875, this lot was owned by members of the Newell and Cofran families. They lost part of this lot in 1866 when Monument Avenue was cut through to Main Street. The *Charlestown enterprise* dated December 14, 1889 includes an illustration of number 73 Main showing a sign on the building's corner above the second-floor windows which read "Dr. Harding, dentist, 1875". The date, 1875, refers to the date Dr. Harding began his practice in a building on Bunker Hill Street. In 1884 his practice had become so large that he rented the upper three floors of 73 Main St. Dr. Harding's offices were described as "splendidly fitted up to carry on his large business, a battery gives power for lighting his place with

electricity and everything that taste or ingenuity could suggest has been added"

This group is numbered 73, 77, 83, and 87 on late 19th century atlases. In 1875, this group's owners included John Newell-number 73, William Hunt-number 77, Betsy Kettle-number 83, and J G Mumter (?) -87. By 1885 Alexander M Tucker was conducting a "dry and fancy goods" business in number 87. By 1892 the heirs of Susan Cofran owned number 73, William Hunt's heirs owned number 77, Elbridge G Davis, confectionery, occupied number 83 and Alex M Tucker was still located in number 87. By 1911 George W Brown owned numbers 73-83 and Florence E. Fash owned number 87.

Bibliography:

Maps-1818, 1852

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

Middlesex deeds-293: 305, 353:576, 427:512, 513.

The *Charlestown Enterprise*, December 14, 1889

Charlestown directories- 1834-74

Boston directories-late 19th century

*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