

77, 79 Warren Street (circa late 1830s/1840s)

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



77, 79 Warren

2015

Numbers 77 and 79 Warren Street is a three story, double Greek Revival wood frame/masonry townhouse. The main

façade is clad with clapboards, and has a rock faced granite basement. The house has brick end walls The main façade culminates in narrow fascia boards and the building is enclosed by a steeply pitched Gable roof. There are two dormer windows at the main façade roof slope. Each house has a side hall plan.

The entrances are recessed and located at either end of the main façade. The front doors are reached via short flights of wooden steps. The outer entrance enframements consist of simple Doric pilasters and a cornice headed entablature. The entry walls have well crafted wood paneling. The front doors are flanked by narrow multi-pane sidelights and are surmounted by rectangular transoms. In general the windows are simply and fully enframed with 6/6 wood sash.

Original owner: William Fernald?

Numbers 77, 79 Warren Street is architecturally significant as Charlestown's only extant example of a three-story double Greek Revival house. Built circa late 1830s/early 1840s, this house represents an interesting variation on the more typical two-story Greek Revival double house formula from that time, e.g. 37, 39 Washington; 107, 109 Warren). In a sense 77, 79 perpetuates Federal style three-story main block proportions, characterized by narrow end walls and wide main façades (but not, as in the Federal style, a center entrance plan, five bay main façade and small square windows at third story). Numbers 77, 79 definitely lack the volume of most two-story double Greek revival houses of the late 1830s-1840s. Generally houses of this type had very broad distinctive end wall gable profiles, and two-story double houses generally had paired entrances at the center of the main façade. Finally, one might be stretching the point to suggest that 77, 79 Warren

anticipates the rows of three-story single-family wood frame Greek revival/Italianate houses built along Russell, Green, Trenton, and Prospect Streets, etc. , built during the 1850s and 1860s.

Numbers 77, 79 Warren is difficult to date via Middlesex deeds. Its form and stylistic elements are the basis for its late 1830s/40s construction date. Middlesex deeds indicate that prior to the late 1860s the house was owned by William Fernald, a Morocco dresser, and later by his son William R Fernald, of Malden, an "insolvent debtor". William Fernald, the Morocco dresser, is listed in the 1830s and 40s in Charlestown directories as working at 24 Main and living at 11 Warren Avenue (not the same as Warren Street). Numbers 77, 79 Warren Street appears on the 1848 Mallory Panoramic View of Charlestown/Boston.

During the 1870s James H Rand owned 77, 79 as an investment property. He was a Charlestown architect responsible for the design of the Bunker Hill School, 1866, on Baldwin Street and several houses in Charlestown. During the early 1870s he lived at 24 Cordis (see form on 18-24 Cordis).

During the 1880s the house was owned by Arthur F Teele, a "real estate agent", 62 Devonshire Street. From circa 1890 until at least 1911, number 77 was owned by John Neville, a laborer, and 79 by John Fitzgerald.

Bibliography:

Maps- 1818, 1852

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

Charlestown/Boston directories-19th century

Middlesex deeds-1159: 596, 1001:475, 1061:193

R Mallory Panoramic View-Charlestown/Boston, 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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