

Massachusetts Historical Commission



Town Newburyport  
Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 9-11 Liberty Street

Historic Name

Uses: Present Commercial

Original Commercial

Date of Construction c.1830

Source visual inspection

Style/Form

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation Stone

Wall/Trim Brick

Roof Asphalt

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

none

Major Alterations (with dates) c.1970 - building re  
and first floor reconstructed

Condition good

Moved  no  yes Date

Acreage 28,276 SF (with other adjacent property)

Setting side street to east of State Street in central  
business district



Recorded by Lisa Mausolf

Organization Newburyport Historical Commission

Date (month/year) June 1999

## BUILDING FORM (9-11 Liberty Street)

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of the building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

The building at 9-11 Liberty Street is a three-story brick block capped by a gable roof and separated from the building to the west by a gabled firewall. Additional brick chimneys rise from the front slope and the northeast corner. As visible from the varying brick, the first floor was totally reconstructed c.1970. The storefront to the west (#9) has been recessed behind the front wall which is punctuated by an arched opening flanked by two rectangular openings. The other storefront (#11) has an arched, fanlit entrance flanked by two 3 x 3 display windows with an entrance upstairs at the right.

The upstairs windows consist of modern 6/6 wooden windows grouped horizontally in two groups of three. The windows have wooden sills and splayed sandstone lintels. The third floor windows are slightly smaller. The east gable end is ivy-covered and without openings. Adjacent to the building is a patio enclosed by wooden walls.

### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*Describe the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

Liberty Street was laid out in 1769 from Federal Street to Centre Street. In 1832 it was extended to Market Square and the present building at 9-11 Liberty Street was probably constructed at about that time.

The first Newburyport directory was printed in 1849 and lists Ebenezer S. Sweetser as operating a carpet and dry goods store at 11 Liberty Street. He was succeeded by Benaiah G. Gerrish in the 1880s. The directory indicates that Gerrish's business was established in 1830 and it is possible that this date actually refers to the origin of Sweetser's business. A paint and wallpaper store initially operated by George Morrill occupied the space from c.1930 until the 1960s. The business was sold by Beaulieu and Linsky to Joe Miller in 1956. In 1967 George F. Morrill, Inc. moved to Salisbury as the building was scheduled to be demolished as part of Urban Renewal.

The storefront at #9 Liberty Street was occupied in 1849 by Chesley and Merrill who sold butter and cheese. A produce store was later located here, run briefly by Nymphas Stacy (c.1860). The space was used by a harnessmaker in the 1880s and was later used as a garage in the early 20th century but was vacant from the 1930s to 1950s and was later used for storage before the building was rehabbed in the 1970s.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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Essex County, Register of Deeds.  
Irving, Ron. Unpublished research on Liberty Street.  
Massachusetts Historical Commission. Historic Resources Inventory: Newburyport.  
Newburyport City Directories, various dates.  
Newburyport Daily News, March 8, 1967.

#### Maps

*Atlas of Essex County, Massachusetts*. Philadelphia: D.B. Beers & Co., 1872.  
*Atlas of Essex County, Massachusetts*. Boston: George H. Walker, 1884.  
Beck & Paul. *City of Newburyport*. Framingham, Mass.: Bigelow and Hazen, 1880.  
*Plan of Newburyport*. Philadelphia: H. McIntyre, 1851.  
Sanborn Insurance Maps. Massachusetts State Library, Boston, Massachusetts.

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attached a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*