

FORM B - BUILDING

NRDIS 8/2/1984

Assessor's number
47-9

USGS Quad
Newburyport

Area(s)
R

Form Number
450

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building

Town Newburyport

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 43-47 Merrimac Street

Historic Name

Uses: Present Offices

Original Commercial/Residential

Date of Construction c1820

Source visual inspection

Style/Form Federal

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation Brick

Wall/Trim Brick

Roof Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

none

Major Alterations (with dates) c.1900 - rear addition;
early 20th c. - new storefronts; 1998 - building gutted,
new rooftop deck

Condition good

Moved no yes Date

Acreage 2590 SF

Setting edge of central business district, north of Police
Station and near waterfront



Recorded by Lisa Mausolf

Organization Newburyport Historical Commission

Date (month/year) May 1999

BUILDING FORM (43-47 Merrimac Street)

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

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

Located at the southwest corner of Merrimac and Green Streets, 43-47 Merrimac Street is a three-story, brick building which appears to date to the early 19th century and displays the influence of the Federal style. The building is oriented with its seven bay facade facing the waterfront. The narrow ends of the building display distinctive stepped parapet ends with two brick chimneys emerging from each end. The center entrance retains its original arched surround and consists of a four-panel door capped by a modern semicircular fanlight. To each side the original windows have been replaced by a large storefront consisting of a modern glass-and-panel door recessed with a modern fluted surround. On either side of the storefront entrance 20th century single-pane windows have been inserted into the brick and are topped by tri-part applied entablatures. The fenestration pattern on the upper floors of the facade remains unchanged although modern 6/6 windows have been inserted. The windows display splayed sandstone lintels and stone sills; the third floor openings are slightly smaller. With the exception of the top window, the windows on the west side lack splayed lintels while those on the east end do have the decorative lintels.

Rising from the gable roof is a c.1990 clapboarded deck platform with simple railing. Extending behind the building on Green Street is a single-story addition with an exterior stair and roof deck.

An historic photograph at the Peabody Essex Museum provides a partial view of the building c.1890 and shows that by that time the windows on the building contained 2/2 sash and that the first floor of the facade was punctuated by individual windows in alignment with the upper two stories.

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.

This building appears to date to the early 19th century, approximately c.1820 based on its Federal-style detailing. According to the present owner, it was constructed about 1829 for Moses Brown who lived on Brown Square in what is now the Garrison Inn. Brown's connection to this property has not been verified.

The earliest known owner of this building is Charles R. Sargent who had a machine shop here at the time of the 1851 map. Sargent lived at 45 Merrimac while his shop was located at 43 Merrimac. Sargent was a machinist, gunsmith, gasfitter and the sealer of weights. Charles R. Sargent died in 1883 and the business was continued under the supervision of Charles H. and Samuel E. Sargent.

Later owners included Samuel Brown who later willed the property to Abby Brown. The 1884 map lists the owner of the property as the Heirs of the S. Brown estate. In 1894 there was a fruit store located at 45 Merrimack Street and a saloon at 47 Merrimac Street. By 1906 the building was occupied by a fruit store and a confectionery with an ice cream factory located in the single-story addition to the rear. The property was acquired by John Canepa in 1910 and it remained in the family until 1965. According to the present owner under the bronze plaque on the front of the building there is a granite block inscribed with "Canepa" and "1910". The fruit store at 43 Merrimac Street was operated by Giovanni (John) Canepa into the 1950s while the other half was occupied by a liquor store, owned by the Canepa Brothers and still in business in the 1960s. The building was gutted and rehabilitated by Facility Concepts Corporation in 1998.

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

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
NewburyportProperty Address
43-47 Merrimac Street
Area(s) Form No.

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

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BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Currier, John J. *History of Newburyport, Massachusetts, 1764-1906*, vols. 1 & 2. Newburyport: 1906 & 1909.
Massachusetts Historical Commission. *Historic Resources Inventory: Newburyport*.
Newburyport City Directories, various dates.
Photographic collection, Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. E.I. Neg #11400.
Stirgwort, Mary Jane. "Historical Buildings Survey and Inventory, Newburyport, Massachusetts: Narrative History",
Prepared for the Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1980.

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.
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