

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

99 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
(203) 566-3005

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM

For Buildings and Structures

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			
TOWN NO.:	SITE NO.:		
UTM: 18/	/	/	/
QUAD:			
DISTRICT:	S	NR:	ACTUAL POTENTIAL

IDENTIFICATION

- 1. BUILDING NAME: Common: Old Middletown High School Historic: Middletown High School
- 2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: _____ COUNTY: Middlesex
- 3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 251 Court Street
- 4. OWNER(S): Caldarelli & Interbartolo PUBLIC PRIVATE
- 5. USE: Present: Proposed Elderly Housing Historic: Educational
- 6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: yes no
Interior accessible: yes, explain with permission no

DESCRIPTION

- 7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Romanesque Revival DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1894-1896
- 8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):

<input type="checkbox"/> clapboard	<input type="checkbox"/> asbestos siding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> brick (Pompeian)
<input type="checkbox"/> wood shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> asphalt siding	<input type="checkbox"/> fieldstone
<input type="checkbox"/> board & batten	<input type="checkbox"/> stucco	<input type="checkbox"/> cobblestone
<input type="checkbox"/> aluminum siding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> concrete: type: <u>poured</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cut stone: type: <u>brownstone</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>copper flashing;</u>	<u>foundation</u>	<u>foundation;</u>
<u>terra cotta ornamentation</u>	<u>west wing</u>	<u>Potsdam red</u>
		<u>sandstone trim</u>
- 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
 wood frame: post and beam balloon
 load bearing masonry structural iron or steel interior framing
 other: _____
- 10. ROOF: type:
 gable flat wings mansard monitor sawtooth
 gambrel shed hip round other conical on tower
material:
 wood shingle roll asphalt tin slate
 asphalt shingle built up wings tile other: copper sheathing
- 11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 3 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 138'x207'
- 12. CONDITION: Structural: excellent good fair deteriorated
Exterior: excellent good fair deteriorated
- 13. INTEGRITY: Location: on original site moved, when: _____
Alterations: no yes, explain: Southeast wing added 1912; west wing added 1931;
- 14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES: original north entrance with stairway removed
 barn shed garage other landscape features or buildings: _____
 carriage house shop garden parking lot on west side
- 15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:
 open land woodland residential scattered buildings visible from site
 commercial industrial rural high building density
- 16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This building occupies the southwest corner of Court and Pearl Streets. It is situated in a modestly scaled 19th century urban residential neighborhood. Although integrated into its surroundings, the old high school stands out because of its greater scale, Romanesque style, and educational function.

17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):

Fireproof construction: asbestos lined floors and stairways
Terra cotta cased beams
Brick fire-stopped interior walls
Remnants of original heating and ventilating system

SIGNIFICANCE

Architect: Curtis & Johnson, Hartford Builder: Jasper Tryon, carpenter
Watson Tryon & Son, masons

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: Built in 1894-96, this building was Middletown's second high school. The Hartford firm of Curtis and Johnson designed the structure in the Romanesque style. The building, for which no expense was spared in materials or design, set an innovative standard for the educational facilities of its day.

The use of different materials (Pompeian brick, brownstone, and terra cotta) produces a rich textural effect on the exterior. A turret on the northeast corner, the use of round compound arches, and an overall asymmetrical plan are typical of the Romanesque style.

In 1912 a large wing designed by Charles Scranton Palmer of Meriden was added to the south side of the building. This wing closely repeated the materials and stylistic elements of the existing structure. A second large wing containing a library, auditorium, and gymnasium was added to the west side in 1931. Although it incorporates some Romanesque details such as round compound arched windows and utilized materials compatible to the original, the overall impression is of a separate and distinct construction.

(see continuation sheet)

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Roger Sherman
date: 12/77 view: north
negative on file: Roll 6, 13A



COMPILED BY:

name: John E. Reynolds date: 5/78
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: "Special Report of The Board of Education: New High School" (1896, 1912, 1931); H.F. Donlan, Middletown Tribune: Souvenir Edition (Middletown: 1896); City of Middletown Study Committee on the Old Middletown High School, "Report to the Common Council" (unpublished, 1975)

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

none known highways vandalism developers other: _____
 renewal private deterioration zoning explanation: _____

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Item number: 18 Date: _____

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Middletown High School
251 Court Street, Middletown, Ct. 06457

The old high school is one of the few monumental civic buildings of the 19th century remaining in Middletown and the only one of the Romanesque style. It ceased operation as a high school in 1972 and has been vacant since then. A proposal to convert the building for use as housing for the elderly has been accepted by the city. Work is scheduled to begin in June, 1978.

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HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
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CONTINUATION SHEET

Item number: _____ Date: 1/90

Middletown High School

251 Court Street, Middletown, CT 06457

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