

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

59 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: Dean's House Historic: First President's House
- 2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: _____ COUNTY: Middlesex
- 3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 255 High Street
- 4. OWNER(S): Wesleyan University PUBLIC PRIVATE
- 5. USE: Present: Offices Historic: Residence
- 6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: yes no
Interior accessible: yes, explain offices no

DESCRIPTION

- 7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Greek Revival DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1838
- 8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
 clapboard asbestos siding brick
 wood shingle asphalt siding fieldstone
 board & batten stucco cobblestone
 aluminum siding concrete: type: _____ cut stone: type: brownstone foundation
 other: flushboarded entablature and pilasters (vertical)
- 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
 wood frame: post and beam balloon
 load bearing masonry structural iron or steel
 other: _____
- 10. ROOF: type:
 gable west wing flat mansard monitor sawtooth
 gambrel shed hip round other _____
material:
 wood shingle roll asphalt tin slate
 asphalt shingle built up tile other: _____
 west wing
- 11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 2½ APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 38'x43' (wing 18'x43')
- 12. CONDITION: Structural: excellent good fair deteriorated
Exterior: excellent good fair deteriorated
- 13. INTEGRITY: Location: on original site moved, when: _____
Alterations: no yes, explain: Veranda added 1842-51, removed 1936; wood shingle roof replaced with tin roof
- 14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
 barn shed garage other landscape features or buildings: campus green to south
 carriage house shop garden
- 15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: college campus
 open land woodland residential scattered buildings visible from site
 commercial industrial rural high building density

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This building is located on the west side of High Street at the north end of the Wesleyan University campus green. Its orientation is south to the campus and College Row (of 19th century brownstone buildings) and not to the view of the Connecticut River as is typical of the neighboring structures.

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

SIGNIFICANCE

Isaac Baldwin - carpenter

Architect: Barzillai D. Sage

Builder: John Bliss - mason

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This house was built in 1837-38 by Wesleyan University as a residence for the University President. The cost of construction was financed by the proceeds of a book written by President Wilbur Fisk describing his European travels. It housed Wesleyan Presidents until 1904, when the Coite-Hubbard House (269 High Street) was acquired for that purpose. An exception was its use in 1884-89 as a women's dormitory. Since 1905, it has housed Alumni offices and the University Dean's office.

The design and contract specifications for the building were provided by prominent Middletown builder, Barzillai Sage. The carpenter was Isaac Baldwin and the masonry work was done by John Bliss, both of Middletown.

As originally built the President's House was a simple structure with typical Greek Revival details: plain frieze; corner pilasters; and doorway with transom and side lights. Between 1842 and 1851 an elaborate ironwork veranda was added to the south and east sides. This veranda was very similar to those on the contemporary Alsop House (301 High Street) and later E.W.N. Starr House (294 High Street) and was probably an attempt to upgrade the house stylistically to a par with its neighborhood. This was replaced with a Victorian (see continuation sheet)

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Elizabeth Loomis
date: 2/78 view: south facade
negative on file: Roll 12, #22

COMPILED BY:

name: John E. Reynolds date: 4/78
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Isaac M. Baldwin, Contract, 1838; John Bliss, Contract, 1838; Reports of the Prudential Committee (Wesleyan Archives); Wesleyan Landmarks Advisory Board



20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

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

