

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

TOWN NO.: \_\_\_\_\_ SITE NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

UTM: 18/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

QUAD: \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT: \_\_\_\_\_ S NR: \_\_\_\_\_ ACTUAL  
POTENTIAL

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
 CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
 100 Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106  
 860-3005  
 CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM  
 Buildings and Structures

**IDENTIFICATION**

BUILDING NAME: Common: Old North Church Historic: Fourth Meeting House of First Church of Christ

TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY: Middlesex

STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 706-712 Main Street

OWNER(S): Edward J. Bransfield et al. PUBLIC  PRIVATE

USE: Present: Apartments and storefronts Historic: Church

ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road:  yes  no  
 Interior accessible:  yes, explain with owner's permission  no

**DESCRIPTION**

STYLE OF BUILDING: Federal DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1799

MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):

<input type="checkbox"/> clapboard under asphalt	<input type="checkbox"/> asbestos siding	<input type="checkbox"/> brick
<input type="checkbox"/> wood shingle siding	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> concrete: type: _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cut stone: type: <u>brownstone</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____		<u>foundation</u> (random ashlar)

**STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:**

wood frame:  post and beam  balloon  structural iron or steel

load bearing masonry

other: \_\_\_\_\_

**ROOF:** type:  gable  flat  mansard  monitor  sawtooth

gambrel  shed  hip  round  other \_\_\_\_\_

material:  wood shingle  roll asphalt  tin  slate

asphalt shingle  built up  tile  other: \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF STORIES: 3 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 45'x70'

CONDITION: Structural:  excellent  good  fair  deteriorated

Exterior:  excellent  good  fair  deteriorated

INTEGRITY: Location:  on original site  moved, when: 1822;1873

Alterations:  no  yes, explain: Steeple removed; interior divided into apartments; asphalt siding

**RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:**

barn  shed  garage  other landscape features or buildings: alley on south side to parking area in rear (east)

carriage house  shop  garden

**SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:**

open land  woodland  residential  scattered buildings visible from site

commercial  industrial  rural  high building density

INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This former meeting house was originally located on the west side of Main Street between College and Court Streets. It was moved in 1873 to its present site on the east side of the north end of Main Street. The rear of the original structure is now the front or street facade. Storefront additions and brick patterned asphalt siding have altered the original appearance so that it blends inconspicuously with the

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

- Bevelled wooden quoins
- Palladian window west facade (visible from interior only)
- Main columns visible in attic
- Original clapboards under asphalt siding

**SIGNIFICANCE**

Architect: probably Lavius Fillmore Builder: probably Lavius Fillmore

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This building was erected in 1799 as the fourth meeting house of the First Ecclesiastical Society in Middletown. This Congregational society was formally established in 1668, and is one of the oldest in the State. Enoch Huntington, a scholar and a leading local patriot during the Revolution, was pastor at the time this structure was built. He served as pastor for 47 years.

The overall design of the church is derived from Asher Benjamin's Country Builder's Assistant, a popular architectural copybook of the period. In its original form it was of the type with its major axis perpendicular to the street, a high pulpit at the narrow end opposite the entrance, and the steeple tower arising from the roof. Architectural historian J. Frederick Kelly attributes the "greater delicacy and refinement of scale" and "an improved feeling for mass and proportion" exhibited by churches of this type in part to the "remarkable ability of men of the builder-architect school." The design of this church bears close similarities to churches in East Haddam and Norwich, Connecticut, and in Middlebury and Bennington, Vermont, which are attributed to the important builder-architect Lavius Fillmore. There is a strong possibility that he was (see continuation sheet)

**PHOTOGRAPH**

photographer: John E. Reynolds  
date: 7/78 view: east  
negative on file: Roll 29, #23A



**COMPILED BY:**

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

19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; Middletown City Directories; A.W. Hazen, A Brief History of the First Church of Christ in Middletown, Connecticut (Middletown: 1920); Jesse Alsop "First Church," Old Houses of Connecticut Series (FERA 1935); Records (see continuation sheet)

**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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INVENTORY SHEET  
Number: 18&19 Date: 5/78

Fourth Meeting House of First Church of Christ  
706-712 Main St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

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neighboring commercial buildings on the block.

#18

responsible for this church also. Design elements common to these five churches include the use of bevelled wooden quoins; round arched windows on the second floor; a fanlight in the pavillion pediment; and groined vaults above the corner columns in the interior.

This church has been moved twice; the first time in 1822 when it was moved back eight feet from its original site as it was thought to be too close to Main Street. The steeple was removed and the building moved to its present site in 1873. It was placed with its original entrance at the rear of the new site. The audience room was used as a meeting hall for St. Mary's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society. It later housed small businesses and part of the interior was converted into apartments. It presently is a tenement with commercial space on Main Street.

Much of the original fabric remains, including the denticulated/modillioned cornices, wooden quoins, and clapboards underneath the present asphalt siding. A Palladian window (now boarded up) behind the original location of the pulpit can be seen from the interior.

This is the last public building from the 18th century remaining in Middletown. It is a building of great architectural distinction and is probably the work of one of New England's most important builder-architects, Lavius Fillmore. Present City plans for its restoration and reuse are a key to the revitalization of the north end of Middletown.

#19

of First Church, Connecticut State Library; First Church Archives (including photos); L. Wodehouse, "Lavius Fillmore," Antiques, CIV, 6; J.F. Kelly, Early Connecticut Meeting Houses (Columbia University Press, New York)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Item number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 1/90

Fourth Meeting House of First Church of Christ  
710-712 Main Street (formerly #706-712)  
Middletown, CT 06457

