

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
5 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: Alsop Farmhouse Historic: Joseph Wright, Jr. House
- 2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY: Middlesex
- 3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 1181 East Street
- 4. OWNER(S): George J. Achenbach PUBLIC  PRIVATE
- 5. USE: Present: Vacant Historic: Residence
- 6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road:  yes  no  
Interior accessible:  yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_  no

DESCRIPTION

- 7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Center-Chimney Colonial DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: c. 1735-1740
- 8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
 

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> clapboard	<input type="checkbox"/> asbestos siding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> brick chimney and fireplaces
<input type="checkbox"/> wood shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> asphalt siding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fieldstone foundation
<input type="checkbox"/> board & batten	<input type="checkbox"/> stucco	<input type="checkbox"/> cobblestone
<input type="checkbox"/> aluminum siding	<input type="checkbox"/> concrete: type: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> cut stone: type: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____		
- 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
 

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> wood frame: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> post and beam	<input type="checkbox"/> balloon
<input type="checkbox"/> load bearing masonry	<input type="checkbox"/> structural iron or steel
<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	
- 10. ROOF: type:
 

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> gable	<input type="checkbox"/> flat	<input type="checkbox"/> mansard	<input type="checkbox"/> monitor	<input type="checkbox"/> sawtooth
<input type="checkbox"/> gambrel	<input type="checkbox"/> shed	<input type="checkbox"/> hip	<input type="checkbox"/> round	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____

 material:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> wood shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> roll asphalt	<input type="checkbox"/> tin	<input type="checkbox"/> slate
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> asphalt shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> built up	<input type="checkbox"/> tile	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____
- 11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 2½ APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 39'x27'; leanto 12'x42'
- 12. CONDITION: Structural:  excellent  good  fair  deteriorated  
Exterior:  excellent  good  fair  deteriorated
- 13. INTEGRITY: Location:  on original site  moved, when: \_\_\_\_\_  
Alterations:  no  yes, explain: Exterior flue added, north side
- 14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> barn	<input type="checkbox"/> shed	<input type="checkbox"/> garage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other landscape features or buildings: <u>condominiums</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> carriage house	<input type="checkbox"/> shop	<input type="checkbox"/> garden	<u>and parking lot</u>
- 15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> open land	<input type="checkbox"/> woodland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> residential	<input type="checkbox"/> scattered buildings visible from site
<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> rural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> high building density

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: The Alsop farmhouse is located in Westfield, a rural area in the western part of Middletown. It is well set back from East Street, in the midst of a large, contemporary apartment condominium development.

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

Fireplace wall panelling and dado panelling in all main rooms  
Triple-run stair with turned balusters and carved handrail  
Many original doors and much old hardware

SIGNIFICANCE

Architect: \_\_\_\_\_ Builder: \_\_\_\_\_

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: Joseph Wright, Jr. built this house possibly as early as 1735. Wright was a well-to-do farmer in the Newfield and Westfield areas of Middletown, with land holdings of over four hundred acres. The marriage of his daughter Mary to Capt. Richard Alsop in 1760 established a family alliance between Middletown's most prominent merchant and an equally prominent supplier of foodstuffs, livestock, and other locally produced goods which found a ready market in the West Indies.

Tradition has it that Joseph Wright was the first to discover the suitability of the local clay for brick making. Around 1751 he built a gambrel-roofed townhouse on Main Street said to be the first building in Middletown constructed of native brick. Wright was an important figure in the organization of Middletown's Episcopal Church, and later served as Captain of militia during the Revolution.

The Wright House in Westfield, although presently vacant and suffering from neglect, retains most of its original fabric and decoration. This includes hardware, raised paneling, fireplaces, and a fine triple-run staircase. Reflecting Wright's elevated standing in Colonial Middletown, his house displays an elaborate and formal decorative treatment which belies its early date and rural origin.

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: John E. Reynolds  
date: 12/78 view: southeast  
negative on file: Roll 51, #35



COMPILED BY:

name: John E. Reynolds date: 9/78  
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust  
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; "Joseph Wright House," Colonial Dames Monograph; 1859 Walling Map; 1874 Beers Atlas

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

none known  highways  vandalism  developers  other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 renewal  private  deterioration  zoning  explanation: building is vacant, without maintenance and is vulnerable to vandalism