

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: deKoven House Historic: Clarence Wadsworth House; Benjamin Williams House

2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: _____ COUNTY: Middlesex

3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 27 Washington Street

4. OWNER(S): The Rockfall Corporation PUBLIC PRIVATE

5. USE: Present: Offices for Community Services Historic: Residence

6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: yes no
Interior accessible: yes, explain Offices no

DESCRIPTION

7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Late Georgian with Adamesque detail DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: Between 1791 and 1797

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

<input type="checkbox"/> clapboard	<input type="checkbox"/> asbestos siding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> brick
<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 type="checkbox"/> concrete: type: _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cut stone: type: <u>brownstone</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____		<u>quoins, window trim, foundation</u>

9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:

wood frame: post and beam balloon

load bearing masonry structural iron or steel

other: _____

10. ROOF: type:

<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> hip	<input type="checkbox"/> round	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____

material:

<input type="checkbox"/> wood shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> roll asphalt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> tin	<input type="checkbox"/> slate
<input type="checkbox"/> asphalt shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> built up	<input type="checkbox"/> tile	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 2½ APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 44'x38'; rear wing 31'x80'

12. CONDITION: Structural: excellent good fair deteriorated

Exterior: excellent good fair deteriorated

13. INTEGRITY: Location: on original site moved, when: _____

Alterations: no yes, explain: Rear two story ell added, 1892; rear assembly room added, 1957

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>wrought iron fence; plaque dedicated to the deKoven and Wadsworth families; granite sidewalk on Washington Street</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> carriage house	<input type="checkbox"/> shop	<input type="checkbox"/> garden	<u>scattered buildings visible from site</u>

15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:

<input type="checkbox"/> open land	<input type="checkbox"/> woodland	<input type="checkbox"/> residential	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> high building density
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> rural	

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: deKoven House, at the foot of Washington Street, is in a section of downtown Middletown that has undergone considerable transformation in recent years. The well-landscaped site is directly north of the new municipal building and county courthouse. A parking lot is west, with the Main Street commercial buildings beyond. Railroad tracks and a four-lane highway separate the house from the Connecticut River to the east.

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

Ornate Victorian chimney pots
Early front door with metal hardware

SIGNIFICANCE

Architect: _____ Builder: _____

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This distinctive residence was built by Benjamin Williams between 1791 and 1797. Williams, the owner of a small merchant ship fleet, participated in the city's lucrative West Indies trade. Henry L. deKoven, a merchant ship captain, bought the house in 1818. deKoven's son Reginald became a well-known musician and composer who created what is generally considered the first American opera, "Robin Hood." In 1897, the structure was obtained by Colonel Clarence Wadsworth. Wadsworth, who served as Major Commandant of the First Company Governor's Foot Guard, organized the Rockfall Corporation which currently owns the building. The Colonel's widow, Katherine Hubbard, under the direction of J. Frederick Kelly, restored the house to its present appearance in the early '40s.

The building was designed in the late Georgian style. The symmetrically arranged facade displays three dormers that project from the truncated, hipped roof. The middle dormer has a semicircular gable which contrasts with the pediments of the other two. The roof is bordered by mutules and dentils. An Adamesque porch, probably added in the early 1800s, is characterized by slender columns and a thin, curved ceiling. It frames the main entrance which has a semicircular fanlight above the door. Brownstone quoins (see continuation sheet)

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Robert Svec
date: 9/78 view: north
negative on file: Roll 31, #21



COMPILED BY:

name: Robert Svec date: 2/79
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; The Rockfall Corporation; Connecticut Historical Commission Survey, 1970; John Duell, "The Henry deKoven House" (unpublished, 1960)

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: 2/79

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#18

accent the building's brick walls; the facade and east elevation are laid in the decorative Flemish bond. The interior displaying a central hall plan, also retains much of its original detail. The stairway exhibits thick balusters; the walls are wood paneled; and wide, crown mouldings decorate the rooms. Antique furnishings contribute to the early appearance of two rooms on the first floor, open to the public.

The deKoven House is an outstanding example of the city's late eighteenth-century architecture. Sited near the river, it is an important area landmark and is one of the most significant remnants of Middletown's early seaport heritage.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Item number: _____ Date: 1/90

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