

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

Wesleyan University
 1. BUILDING NAME: Common: Religious Studies Center Historic: Butler House
 2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: _____ COUNTY: Middlesex
 3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 171 Church 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 with occupant's permission no

DESCRIPTION

Early 20th century,
 7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Prairie style influence DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: Probably c. 1872, remodelled c. 1917
 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: poured cut stone: type: appears to be
 ___ other: steps and porches brownstone foundation under stucco
 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
 ___ wood frame: ___ post and beam ___ balloon
 load bearing masonry ___ structural iron or steel
 ___ other: _____
 10. ROOF: type:
 ___ gable ___ flat ___ mansard ___ monitor ___ sawtooth
 ___ gambrel ___ shed hip ___ round other rounded, at eaves
 material:
 ___ wood shingle ___ roll asphalt ___ tin slate
 ___ asphalt shingle ___ built up ___ tile ___ other: _____
 11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 2 1/2 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 49'x30'; rear ell, 26'x26'
 12. CONDITION: Structural: ___ excellent good ___ fair ___ deteriorated
 Exterior: ___ excellent good ___ fair ___ deteriorated
 13. INTEGRITY: Location: on original site Added styling features: tiles, slate roof, stuccoing.
 Alterations: no yes, explain: poured concrete porches; interior alterations to
 14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES: plan
 ___ barn ___ shed ___ garage ___ other landscape features or buildings: _____
 ___ carriage house ___ shop ___ garden _____
 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 large asymmetrical structure occupies a key corner at the intersection of Church and High Streets immediately southeast of the Wesleyan University campus. Its bold decoration, and large mass give additional prominence on a conspicuous site between the campus and residential buildings to the south and east. As a former residence now used for offices, it links the campus to the neighboring residential area.

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

- Inlaid tile lozenge decoration over windows
- Bold paired brackets at eaves
- Belt courses at each floor level
- Recessed oval port-hole vents in west frieze

SIGNIFICANCE

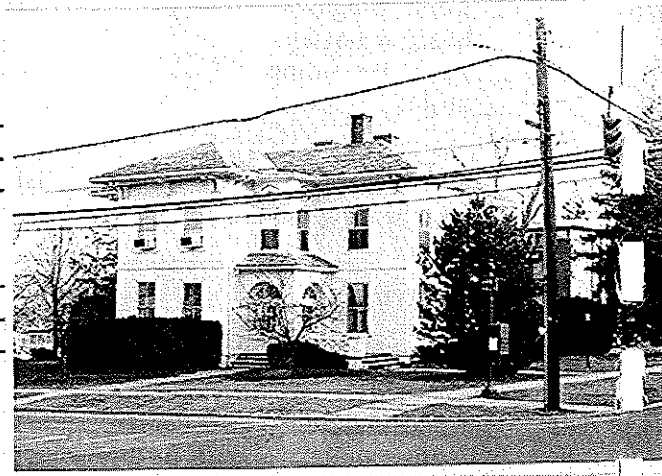
Architect: _____ Builder: _____

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: 171 Church Street was the home of Dale E. Butler, the founder of Butler's Insurance Agency. It is most likely a conversion (c. 1917) of an earlier house of the Second Empire style constructed c. 1872 by his father, Seth H. Butler. Seth H. Butler was an executive of the First National Bank and the People's Fire Insurance Company.

The house retains the asymmetrical massing of a Victorian building; however, with the possible exception of the brackets of the cornice, it presents an early twentieth century appearance. The masonry walls have been stuccoed; a low hipped roof, reminiscent the Prairie Style, extends over the walls, and inlaid tiles decorate the frieze underneath the eaves. Now adaptively used as the Religious Studies Center of Wesleyan University, this substantial building occupies an important site at the intersection of two major roads, Church and High Streets.

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Elizabeth Loomis
date: 12/78 view: northwest
negative on file: Roll 56, #19



COMPILED BY:

name: Roger Sherman date: 9/78
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Middletown Tax Records; Middletown City Directories; 1874 Beers Atlas

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

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