

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: Olin Library Historic: same
- 2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY: Middlesex
- 3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 200 Church Street
- 4. OWNER(S): Wesleyan University PUBLIC  PRIVATE
- 5. USE: Present: Library Historic: same
- 6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road:  yes  no  
Interior accessible:  yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_  no

DESCRIPTION

- 7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Academic Classicism DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1925-1927
- 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>marble foundation and trim; granite foundation base and portico platform</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____		
- 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:  
 wood frame:  post and beam  balloon  
 load bearing masonry  structural iron or steel (interior framing)  
 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:  
 wood shingle  roll asphalt  tin  slate  
 asphalt shingle  built up  tile  other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 3 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 163'x64'; rear wing 64'x65'
- 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 addition to stacks (1938); extension to Har-
- 14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES: riman Hall (1955); third floor remodelled  
 barn  shed  garage  other landscape features or buildings: Denison Terrace in rear facing Andrus Field  
 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: Olin Library is one of the principal structures that comprise Wesleyan University. Its ornate appearance contrasts with Clark Hall, a plain brownstone building to the west, and the modern Science Center across the street. From here, Church Street descends east to the city's business district. The Library overlooks a wide south lawn; behind it, classically styled Dennison Terrace borders Andrus Field to the north.

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

Memorial Hall: vaulted ceiling, marble mosaic floor, Italian walnut panelling, pilasters and monolithic columns of green marble (bronze bases and capitals), large, bronze chandelier, ornate bronze balustrade on second floor  
The main reading room: three chandeliers, carved wood grill and wood balustrade over entrance  
Denison Terrace in rear: white marble balustrades, steps and rostrum

SIGNIFICANCE Henry Bacon; revisions,

Architect: McKim, Mead & White Builder: \_\_\_\_\_

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This impressive building was dedicated in 1928 to the memory of former Wesleyan President Stephen Olin, and his son Stephen H. Olin who had served as the university's Acting President. It replaced the earlier library facility Rich Hall ('92 Theatre). The initial plans for Olin were created by campus architect Henry Bacon. After his death, the drawings were then utilized by McKim, Mead & White. The final composition was a synthesis of Bacon's theme and the firm's individual interpretation.

The structure, erected at an approximate cost of \$800,000, was designed in the Renaissance Revival style. European building materials were incorporated in its construction and the brick walls are coursed in the decorative Flemish bond. The library is highlighted by ornate, white marble details. A large portico dominates the wide, horizontal facade. Enclosing the tall, arched main entrance, it consists of a broad pediment supported by six Ionic columns. The portico is flanked by two round-arched windows whose appearance resembles that of the main entrance. Pilasters and a thick beltcourse are also displayed on the facade. The roof is bordered by modillion blocks and exhibits a

(see continuation sheet)

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Roger Sherman  
date: 6/78 view: south  
negative on file: Roll 22, #35A-36

COMPILED BY:

name: Robert Svec date: 8/78  
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust  
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Wesleyan University Archives, Middletown, Connecticut



20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

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

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106  
HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM  
For Buildings and Structures

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			
TOWN NO.:	SITE NO.:		
UTM: 18	/	/	/
QUAD:			
DISTRICT:	8	NR:	ACTUAL POTENTIAL

CONTINUATION SHEET

Item number: 18 Date: 8/78

Olin Library  
200 Church St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

#18

balustrade above the portico. These smooth, marble decorations project from the darker brick walls. The two contrasting materials provide the building with surfaces of rich textural and chromatic variety.

Olin Library reflects the substantial growth experienced by Wesleyan University during the early twentieth century. It is also a prominent example of the monumental institutional design characteristic of McKim, Mead & White, the foremost American architectural firm of its day.