

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: Downey House Historic: Elihu W.N. Starr House
- 2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: _____ COUNTY: Middlesex
- 3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 298 High Street
- 4. OWNER(S): Wesleyan University PUBLIC PRIVATE
- 5. USE: Present: Student center Historic: Residence
- 6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: yes no
Interior accessible: yes, explain student center no

DESCRIPTION

- 7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Italianate DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1841-1842
- 8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
 clapboard asbestos siding brick
 wood shingle asphalt siding scored to fieldstone
 board & batten stucco resemble ashlar cobblestone
 aluminum siding concrete: type: _____ cut stone: type: brownstone
 other: _____ foundation

- 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 cupola
 material:
 wood shingle roll asphalt tin slate
 asphalt shingle built up tile other: 37'x63' (N.E. wing 33'x14',

- 11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 2 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: S. wing 42'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: Parts of south wing added, 1936; interior altered
for student center, 1936

- 14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
 barn shed garage other landscape features or buildings: _____
 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: This house is sited on a steep slope at the southeast corner of High and Court Streets. It has entrances on two levels, one off High Street and the other off Court Street. High Street in the 19th century was the most prestigious residential area in Middletown, and is now a part of the Wesleyan University Campus.

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

Elaborately foliated ironwork on veranda

SIGNIFICANCE

Builder: _____

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This house was built by Elihu W.N. Starr in 1841/42 on property sold to him from the family estate of his father Nathan Starr, Jr. Elihu Starr was engaged in the manufacture of swords and rifles with his father. He was also active in local civic and military affairs, holding such public offices as postmaster, town clerk, and judge of probate. In 1860 he was named Brigadier General of the Connecticut 2nd Brigade. The house was sold in 1853 to John A. Russell, whose father Samuel W. Russell built Honors College (Russell House, 1828) on High Street. In 1884 Elizabeth and Anna Patten purchased the house and operated the Misses Patten Boarding and Day School here. Wesleyan acquired the property in 1922 for use as a faculty club. Renovation and a large south addition converted it to its present use as a student center in 1936.

The building is well adapted to its hill site; the original northeast wing with its Court Street entrance enables the building's orientation to include both High and Court Streets. The original Tuscan Villa style remains intact despite the alterations of 1936.

(see continuation sheet)

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Roger Sherman
date: 2/78 view: west
negative on file: Roll 10, #34



COMPILED BY:

name: John 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; "Wesleyan University Alumnus" (Middletown: October 1935); Connecticut State Historical Commission Survey 1970; 1851 Clark Map; 1877 Bailey Map

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: 5/78

Elihu W.N. Starr House
298 High Street, Middletown, Ct. 06457

It is similar to the Alsop House (1838) across High Street in such stylistic details as the unbracketed projecting eaves, wide frieze and elaborate veranda ironwork.

This house, with its Tuscan Villa style, bridges the architectural transition on High Street from the Greek Revival/Tuscan Villa Alsop House (1838) to the Italianate Villa Coite-Hubbard House (1856). This early and sophisticated use of Tuscan Villa form demonstrates the concern of the 19th century residents of High Street to remain current with the architectural fashions of the time.