

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106

(860) 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: Davison Infirmary Historic: Duane Barnes House "The Stone Cottage"
2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY: Middlesex
3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 327 High Street
4. OWNER(S): Wesleyan University PUBLIC  PRIVATE
5. USE: Present: College Infirmary Historic: Residence
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road:  yes  no  
Interior accessible:  yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_ with permission \_\_\_\_\_ no

DESCRIPTION

7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Gothic Revival DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: c. 1848
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: \_\_\_\_\_  cut stone: type: brownstone ashlar  
 other: wooden bargeboards; iron balcony railings
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 material:  
 \_\_\_ wood shingle \_\_\_ roll asphalt \_\_\_ tin  slate  
 \_\_\_ asphalt shingle \_\_\_ built up \_\_\_ tile \_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_
11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 2½ APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 43'x31' (wing 40'x30')
12. CONDITION: Structural: \_\_\_ excellent  good \_\_\_ fair \_\_\_ deteriorated  
 Exterior: \_\_\_ excellent  good \_\_\_ fair \_\_\_ deteriorated
13. INTEGRITY: Location:  on original site \_\_\_ Southwest wing added c. 1855; second southwest wing  
 Alterations: \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ yes, explain: added 1934-35; south wing added 1970; interior altered for infirmary use 1943-45
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:  
 \_\_\_ 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 Gothic Revival cottage is set back from the west side of High Street north of the Greek/Italianate Alsop House (1838). High Street during the 19th century was the most prestigious residential neighborhood in Middletown. The Gothic Revival style of this house (with the exception of the Wetmore Weeks house, 202 Washington Street) is unique to the residences in the surrounding area.

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

Stylized acorn and oak leaf motif bargeboards  
Tongue and groove masonry construction (no mortar)  
Glass hood over second floor window east facade

**SIGNIFICANCE** Duane Barnes or possibly  
Architect: A.J. Davis Builder: probably Duane Barnes

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This Gothic cottage was built around 1848 by Edward Duane Barnes, "a pioneer Middletown quarryman, bookseller, poet, civic improver and leader of Middletown's intellectual avant-garde." Barnes sold the property in 1855 to William Sebor, captain of a New York to London packet. It remained in the Sebor family until 1901, when Louis deKoven Hubbard acquired it. His heirs sold the property to Wesleyan University in 1934 and shortly after it was converted for use as an infirmary.

Described in A.J. Downing's Cottage Residences as one of the most "artistic" residences in the country, this house earned that accolade through its elaborate treatment of Gothic Revival form and decoration. The steep gables and asymmetry of the elevations, together with the intricate decorative details make this house a fine example of the Gothic Revival carried to its successful extremes. Although the design is generally attributed to Barnes himself, its high quality as compared to other later houses designed by Barnes, ("Clovernook," 18 Burr Avenue; 194 Court Street) and an existing Middletown connection suggest a possible attribution to A.J. Davis, the premier American architect of the Gothic Revival.

(see continuation sheet)

**PHOTOGRAPH**

photographer: Elizabeth Loomis  
date: 11/77 view: east  
negative on file: Roll 2, #16



**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; Stephen J. Roper, "Duane Barnes House," Greater Middletown Preservation Report (unpublished, 1975); Commemorative Biography of Middlesex County (Chicago: J.H. Beers, 1904); Connecticut State Historical Commission Survey 1970; 1851 Clark Map; 1877 Bailey Map; A.J. Downing, The Architecture of Country Residences (Dover Publishers, 1969)

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS: ture of Country Residences (Dover Publishers, 1969)

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

Duane Barnes House "The Stone Cottage"  
327 High Street, Middletown, Ct. 06457

A south wing was added, probably around 1855, and is very close stylistically to the original structure. When Wesleyan converted the house to infirmary use in 1936, a two story wing was added to the south. This wing was expanded in 1970. The interior was altered drastically in 1936 to accommodate patient care requirements; however, some details such as fireplaces and woodwork remain.

The romantic naturalism and picturesque architecture advocated by A.J. Downing became popular primarily with America's intellectual avant-garde of which Duane Barnes was a characteristic member. The high style architecture of this house maintained the opulent tradition of 19th century High Street as Middletown's most prestigious residential area; however, its unique qualities are distinctly a reflection of Duane Barnes's individual taste.