

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
5 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: Catholic Charities Bldg. Historic: Sisters of Mercy Convent
- 2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: _____ COUNTY: Middlesex
- 3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 33 St. John's Square
- 4. OWNER(S): Diocese of Norwich PUBLIC PRIVATE
- 5. USE: Present: Office; parish hall (rear) Historic: Nunnery
- 6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: yes no
Interior accessible: yes, explain administrative offices no

DESCRIPTION

- 7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Victorian Italianate DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1872
- 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
 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 _____
 material:
 wood shingle roll asphalt tin slate
 asphalt shingle built up tile other: _____

- 11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 3 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 50'x50'; Chapel, rear 70'x30'
- 12. CONDITION: Structural: excellent good fair deteriorated
Exterior: excellent good fair deteriorated

- 13. INTEGRITY: Location: on original site moved, when: _____
Alterations: no yes, explain: Gothic Revival chapel added (rear) c. 1905; belfry

- 14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES: enclosed
 barn shed garage other landscape features or buildings: Religious
 carriage house shop garden statuary in west side yard

- 15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:
 open land woodland residential scattered buildings visible from site
 commercial industrial rural high building density

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: The easternmost of the four St. John's buildings at the north end of Main Street, the Catholic Charities building overlooks the highway, railroad tracks, and distantly, the river. It is related in style and function to the other three church buildings, which, taken together, form an impressive terminus for Main Street.

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

A Pyramidal-based cupola surmounted by a Celtic Cross carries the vertical lines of the pavilion upward through the cornice.
Ornate columned entrance porch

SIGNIFICANCE

Architect: _____

Builder: _____

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: In 1872 a priest was sent to Ireland to solicit the help of the Sisters of Mercy order in re-establishing St. John's parochial school (first begun in 1855). They arrived in the same year, even before this convent building, being prepared for their use, was completed. The sisters also established St. Elizabeth's Academy, a private school that was conducted in the convent with success for nineteen years. A Gothic Revival chapel was added to the rear of the convent around 1905. The building today houses the Sisters of Mercy nuns; is the office for Catholic charities; and is used as a parish hall and community center.

The building is a three-story brick structure, square in plan. A variety of Victorian-era stylistic details are used: the bracketed roof cornice is Italianate; the ornate entrance porch features a balustrade and sets of triple columns; the chapel added in the rear shows Gothic elements. The Catholic Charities building, along with its sister structures, forms a coordinated religious and educational complex that is important to Middletown's historical and architectural heritage.

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Elizabeth Loomis

date: 2/79 view: southwest

negative on file: Roll 59, #22

COMPILED BY:

name: Roger Sherman date: 6/78

organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust

address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: H.F. Donlan, The Middletown Tribune: Souvenir Edition (Middletown: 1896); History of Middlesex County (New York: H.F. Beers, 1884); See also "St. John's Church," GMPT Survey Report, 1978

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:



21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

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

rail traffic cause vibrations harmful to masonry construction. The retaining wall has required frequent rebuilding.