

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
(203) 566-3005

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

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
For Buildings and Structures

IDENTIFICATION

- 1. BUILDING NAME: Common: _____ Historic: Ira K. Penfield House
- 2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: _____ COUNTY: Middlesex
- 3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 51 South Main Street
- 4. OWNER(S): Howard A. and Florence M. Emmons PUBLIC PRIVATE
- 5. USE: Present: Residence Historic: same
- 6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: yes no
Interior accessible: yes, explain with permission no

DESCRIPTION

- 7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Italianate DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1854
- 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: 2 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 33'x38'; rear wing 34'x25'
- 12. CONDITION: Structural: excellent good fair deteriorated
Exterior: excellent good fair deteriorated
- 13. INTEGRITY: Location: on original site moved, when: _____
Alterations: no yes, explain: Addition of asbestos siding
- 14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
 barn shed garage other landscape features or buildings: Trees in
 carriage house shop garden front screen house from street
- 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 house is the northernmost in a row of three similar Italianate houses along the west side of South Main Street at the head of Crescent Street. To the north is the large South Green elderly housing complex. From its site set back from the street atop a steep bank, this house derives a feeling of privacy unusual for its location.

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

Elaborately detailed verandah
Delicate brackets under eaves

SIGNIFICANCE

Architect: _____ Builder: probably Albert Ruff

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This house was built in 1854, probably by Albert Ruff, on a lot subdivided from land of Jonathan Kilbourne. Upon completion it was sold to Ira K. Penfield, a manufacturer of edge tools in Middletown. In 1877 the property was acquired by Edward Payne, a director of the Middletown Plate Co., and Mayor of Middletown in 1882. From 1906 to the present, the house has remained in residential use through a succession of owners.

An elaborate verandah which covers the front of this symmetrical Italianate villa is its most distinctive feature. Slender, square, fluted columns banded with circular design motifs support a panelled entablature. The bracketed cornice echoes on a smaller scale the treatment of the eaves. A fine balustrade of lattice stick-work spans the columns. The pattern is repeated in the porch platform below. The door and window frames display elongated crossets and are similar to those on the Samuel Babcock House at 64 Liberty Street.

The rise of manufacturing in Middletown was concentrated in the south end of town. This house, together with its neighbors, reflects the residential development of that area associated with the newly established industries nearby.

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Elizabeth Loomis
date: 4/78 view: east
negative on file: Roll 18, #2A



COMPILED BY:

name: John E. Reynolds date: 7/78
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; Middletown City Directories; History of Middlesex County (Chicago: J.B. Beers, 1884); 1851 Clark Map; 1874 Beers Atlas; 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: _____ Date: 1/90

Ira K. Penfield House
51 South Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457

