

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
9 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: Skull and Serpent Historic: same
- 2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: _____ COUNTY: Middlesex
- 3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 16 Wyllys Avenue
- 4. OWNER(S): Skull and Serpent Senior Society PUBLIC PRIVATE
- 5. USE: Present: Secret Society 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: 1914
- 8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):

<input type="checkbox"/> clapboard	<input type="checkbox"/> asbestos siding	<input 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>brownstone</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>wood details</u>		<u>rubble walls; ashlar foundation; trim</u>
- 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: 1 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 22'x40'
- 12. CONDITION: Structural: excellent good fair deteriorated
Exterior: excellent good fair deteriorated
- 13. INTEGRITY: Location: on original site moved, when: _____
Alterations: no yes, explain: Interior partially altered
- 14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
 barn shed garage other landscape features or buildings: college campus
 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 classically designed templum is one of two "secret society" buildings on the Wesleyan University campus. These structures are similarly sited on Wyllys Avenue, a quiet side street that joins High Street a short distance away. Both have ivy covered walls and resemble small monuments. One of the modern Center for the Arts buildings, a larger grey rectangular structure, is situated between these two templums.

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

Small wooden portico of the Ionic order: capitals constructed of lignum; full entablature with cresting
Interior contains a fresco portraying "Saint George Slaying the Dragon", Olin Dows (1929)
Plaque beneath the pediment exhibiting the "Skull and Serpent" insignia

SIGNIFICANCE

William B. Mylchreest;

Architect: Henry Bacon Builder: Interior, possibly C. O. Stone
18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This small building, built in 1914, is the headquarters of the Skull and Serpent. Founded in 1865, this "secret society" is Wesleyan University's oldest senior honorary organization.

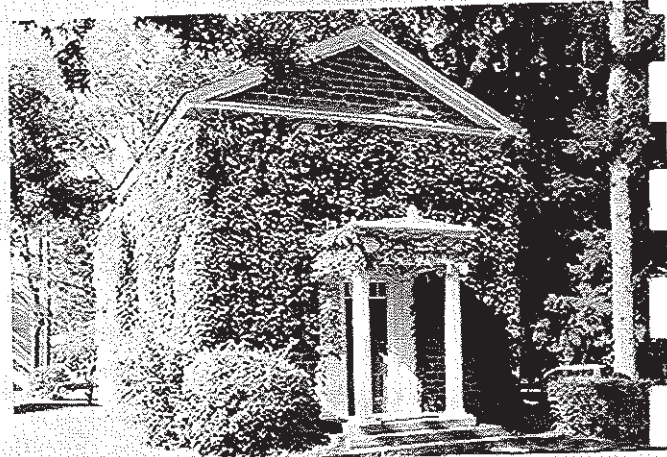
Henry Bacon, whose most prominent work is the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., designed this templum while he was employed as Wesleyan's campus architect. Skull and Serpent, together with other campus buildings (notably Eclectic 1907, Van Vleck Observatory 1916, Clark Hall 1915), form the highest concentration of Bacon's architecture in the country.

This simple Academic Classicism templum displays a small elaborate portico and a pediment (made of cyprus) on the main facade. Two large round-arched windows with Gothic mullions are also featured on opposite sides of the building. These windows, incorporated into the structure's primarily classical design, reflect Bacon's practice of combining various stylistic elements. The interior contains an entrance hall, another device extensively used by Bacon.

Before the recent construction of the Center for the Arts, this building and that of another secret society, the Mystical Seven, stood side by side. These organizations in past years exercised much influence in campus affairs. Their templums, resembling small monuments, evoke a significant aspect of Wesleyan's heritage and traditions.

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Roger Sherman
date: 9/78 view: south
negative on file: Roll 31, #36



COMPILED BY:

name: Robert Svec date: 7/78
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Wesleyan Archives

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

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