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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JUL 25 1988

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name N/A  
other names/site number Broad Street Historic District

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet.  not for publication  
city, town Middletown  vicinity  
state Connecticut code CT county Middlesex code 007 zip code 06457

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>114</u>	<u>5</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
		<u>114</u>	<u>5</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 2

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

[Signature] July 20, 1988  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Director, Connecticut Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. [Signature] 8/25/88  
 See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_  
 determined not eligible for the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_  
 removed from the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_  
 other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling  
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling  
COMMERCE/business  
COMMERCE/professional  
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL/Postmedieval English  
EARLY REPUBLIC/Federal  
MID-19th CENTURY/Greek Revival  
LATE VICTORIAN/ Italianate/Queen Anne  
20th CENTURY REVIVAL/Colonial Revival

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Sandstone  
walls Weatherboard  
Brick  
roof Asphalt  
other

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Broad Street Historic District is a small, nineteenth-century urban residential area in Middletown, Connecticut. It is situated between Main Street, the historic commercial center of the city, and High Street, the residential/institutional border of the Wesleyan campus. In addition to Broad Street, a north-south thoroughfare, three other streets are included in the district: College and Court Streets which run east to west uphill from Main Street and perpendicular to Broad Street, and Pearl Street, a connector between College Street and Washington Street to the north, running parallel to Broad Street. Although somewhat reduced in size by both historic and modern development to the east and north, these streets comprise the largest urban residential area in the city. Four National Register districts border the Broad Street district: the Washington Street Historic District, a residential street to the north, and the Metro South and Main Street Historic Districts, two commercial districts on Main Street to the east. The South Green Historic District, a residential/institutional district, is located at its southern terminus.

Wood-frame houses set on brick or brownstone foundations predominate in the district. Generally two-and-one-half stories in height, they are sited close together with little or no setback from the street. Porches or entrance porticos are a common feature, with most porch steps opening directly onto the sidewalk. The masonry buildings in the district include all the institutional buildings: two schools, one church (now a library), and two non-contributing twentieth-century commercial buildings, along with at least five houses built of brick. Until recently mature trees lined all the streets in the district.

Construction of the residential district which remains today began in the early 1800s and was substantially completed by 1900. Ninety percent of the houses date from this period. According to a map of the city drawn in 1825, only 13 houses were standing in the district, although the street grid of this area had been in existence since the early colonial period<sup>1</sup>. Six of the original thirteen are in existence today, one of which dates from the Revolution (Inventory #35). The other five were built in the late Federal period (Inventory #s 1, 31, 47, 84, 109). There is one other Colonial period house in the district, a large three-story gambrel on College Street (Inventory #59), moved there about 1830.

Three of the Federal-style houses are substantially intact, three-bay, ridge-to-street dwellings, one of wood, the other two of brick, with almost identical side entrances: pedimented porticos with coved ceilings and fanlights over

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Location

Broad Street: #s 9-11, 15, 17, 23, 25-27, 31, 43-45, 51, 55, 59, 83, 85, 89-91, 93-97, 101, 109, 123, 138, 139, 144, 145, 148, 151. Note: #9-11 also has an address of 54 Church Street.

College Street: #s 148, 151, 156-158, 157, 160, 161, 162-164, 165, 166-168, 169-171, 170, 175, 180, 186, 192, 196, 200, 201, 204, 208, 212, 221-223, 229, 234, 235, 238, 240-242, 241, 250, 251, 258, 264, 267, 268, 271, 279, 285.

Pearl Place: no number.

Pearl Street: 11, 12, 15, 16, 20, 24, 28, 59, 60, 63, 64, 66, 70, 73, 74, 77, 78, 80, 86, 90.

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the door (Inventory #s 47, 84, 109; Photograph #1). A later Federal-style house built for Randolph Pease in 1822 at the corner of College and Broad Streets is also brick with a brownstone foundation (Inventory # 31; Photograph # 2). Because of its corner location, the gable end facing Broad Street is highlighted by an exceptional leaded fanlight set within a full pediment. The opposite gable does not face the street and has a simple rectangular window and no pediment. The non-contributing one-story modern store attached to the north side does not impact visually or physically on the integrity of the house (Inventory #14). The last Federal-style house on the map is also on a corner, at Broad and Church Streets (Inventory # 1). Its gable end facing Church Street has a fanlight, but extensive additions over time along Broad Street and the use of aluminum siding have obscured its remaining features. A Federal-style house built in 1826 (not on the 1825 map) was enlarged in the Colonial Revival period (Inventory #65; Photograph #3).

A residential building boom occurred in the district from about 1830 to 1850, tripling the number of houses. Almost 30% of the standing buildings in the district date from this period, all built in the Greek Revival style. Several types were constructed more or less contemporaneously. They include "Greek Row", a group of four almost identically styled cube-form buildings in a middle block of Broad Street (Inventory #s 16, 17, 19, 21; Photograph #s 2,4). More modest vernacular interpretations in the temple form, such as the William Trench House on the corner of Broad and College were also constructed (Inventory #6; Photograph #5). Typically it displays a fully pedimented gable and a side-hall entrance with side-lights and a transom.

The Broad Street houses are an exceptional group. Two were built as duplexes and owned by separate families throughout most of the nineteenth century. The best of these examples has an intact exterior (Inventory #17; Photograph #4). It has a seven-bay facade and a double-width portico with composite capitals. The two entrances have retained their original doors. Anthemion-motif screens cover the typical small attic windows under the eaves. The masonry building to the south has had its double portico extended across the facade. The remaining two buildings have aluminum siding with differing degrees of impact. The last one of the row, the Samuel Stearns House, is the only one of this group with a two-story portico (Inventory #21). The building, as well as its massive square posts, has been sheathed in aluminum. The remaining four-bay Enoch Ferre House, although aluminum sided, has an intact portico of the Doric order offset in the third bay (Inventory #19). A two-story bay on the north and an Italianate cupola make a marked contrast to the severe lines of the building.

The gable-to-street version is more prevalent with a notable group on College Street between Broad and Pearl Streets (Inventory #s 34, 37, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47; Photograph #6). Several had Italianate porches added later in the century but all but one (Inventory #41) have retained their essential temple form. One other of this form at the head of the street has an Italianate cupola on its gabled roof illustrating the

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excessive influence of this later style (Inventory #62). Another collection of this type is located on Pearl Street (Inventory #s 88, 89, 91, 93, 97, 100). With the exception of #93, which has an added mansard roof, all are generally intact. Only one Greek Revival-style house utilized the ridge-to-street form with pedimented gables in either end (Inventory #30; Photograph #7).

One house and a brownstone church were originally built with a fully colonnaded portico supporting a pediment. In keeping with the scale of the neighborhood the house (now a church) is of relatively modest size (Inventory #32; Photograph #8). When the brownstone church was converted rather drastically to a Gothic Revival-style library about 1875 the portico was filled in, a small tower was added on the southwest corner and pointed arched windows were installed. Another alteration was the larger addition on the north side in 1986. Taken together these alterations have hidden but not totally obscured the Greek Revival-style proportions of the original building (Inventory #22; Photograph #9).

The Italianate style was popular in the next residential building boom, after the Civil War, following a lull of about 20 years. Although only eight new houses were built in this style, the stylistic impact on the district was extensive, as previously noted. The new construction included several cube-form houses with bracketed cornices and overhanging shallow-pitched hip roofs (Inventory #s 24, 27, 49; Photograph #s 10, 11). The recently rehabilitated Samuel T. Camp House (Inventory #49) is the best example of this type. Its bracketed eaves, cupola, and portico are set off by the stuccoed walls. One of the two houses on Broad Street (Inventory #27; Photograph #7), has a recent two-story addition which partially obscures its facade.

The last style to be well-represented in the district was the Queen Anne. Seventeen houses (22%) were built in this style in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. They range from some large exceptional samples displaying all the asymmetry and embellished surface associated with this style to modest cottages of the type found in builder's manuals of the period. Three of the larger houses are located on Broad Street (Inventory #s 5, 15, 23). One was originally the sole example of the Shingle style in the district but it now has asbestos siding (Inventory #5). The Joseph Elliott House at the north end of the street is an especially well-preserved example of the Stick style with fine stick-work trusses in the gables and delicate iron cresting on the tent roof of the tower (Photograph #12). Two others were built on the site of the old courthouse which stood on the northwest corner of Pearl and Court Streets (Inventory #s 72, 75; Photograph #s 13, 14). These houses were exceptional for several reasons. Not only do they illustrate the increasing affluence of the district residents, but they also have some unique features, especially in the unusual configuration of the gables. The Eastlake trim of the gables on the John Douglas House is quite elaborate and found nowhere else in Middletown. This house also has a unique side porch on the second floor, wrapped

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around a two-story bay. Open below, it is screened above, with a balustrade, and supported by posts which extend to a low wall almost at grade.

A collection of more modest Queen Anne-style cottages was constructed on the east side of Pearl Street in the northernmost block before Washington Street, the last section of the district to be developed (Inventory #s 110, 113, 114, 116, 118; Photograph #s 15, 16). The land, once part of the Russell estate on High Street, was divided and sold after 1872. These five similarly scaled houses were built here directly across from the Russell Carriage House and the Federal-style house which housed the Russell coachman-chauffeur for many years (Inventory #s 109, 112).

Two early-twentieth-century houses built by two of the Protestant churches in the Georgian Revival style complete the district (Inventory #s 26, 85; Photograph #17), the Congregational Parsonage and the Bishop Acheson House. Both are symmetrical brick buildings highlighted by formal classical detail.

A complete inventory of buildings in the district follows. Construction dates of named houses were taken from survey inventory forms. Other dates were taken from tax assessor's records and verified in the field by visual inspection. Undated outbuildings, classified as "old" by the assessor, are at least 50 years old.

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## INVENTORY OF CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

#	Address	Name/Style/Date	C/NC	Photograph #
1.	9-11 Broad Street	Federal, 1820	C	
2.	15 "	Italianate, ca.1880	C	
3.	17 "	Italianate, ca.1870	C	
4.	23 "	19th-c. domestic, ca. 1850	C	5
5.	25-27 "	Queen Anne, ca.1880	C	5
6.	31 "	WILLIAM TRENCH HOUSE Greek Revival, 1839	C	5
7.	43-45 "	COLOR MART/ATTICUS BOOKSTORE Early 20th-c. industrial, 1910	NC	
8.	51 "	HENRY MANSFIELD HOUSE Mid-19th-c. domestic, ca.1850	C	
9.	51 "	Garage associated with #8	C	
10.	55 "	Colonial Revival, ca.1910	C	
11.	55 "	Garage associated with #10	C	
12.	59 "	Victorian Cross-gable, ca.1880	C	
13.	59 "	Garage associated with #12,1920	C	
14.	83 "	ETHICAL PHARMACY, 1962 attached to 148 College St.(#30)	NC	2
15.	85 "	Queen Anne, ca.1880	C	2
16.	89-91 "	CRANDALL/CORNWELL HOUSE Greek Revival, 1840	C	2
17.	93-97 "	WILLIAM H. ATKINS HOUSE Greek Revival, 1840	C	2,4
18.	93-97 "	Garage assoc. with #17	C	
19.	101 "	ENOCH C. FERRE HOUSE Greek Revival, ca.1840	C	2,4
20.	101 "	Garage associated with #19	C	
21.	109 "	SAMUEL STEARNS HOUSE Greek Revival, ca.1845	C	2
22.	123 "	RUSSELL LIBRARY Greek Revival Church, ca.1833; Gothic Revival Alteration, 1875; Modern additions, 1970, 1986	C	9
23.	138 "	JOSEPH ELLIOT HOUSE Stick, 1883	C	12, 17

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24.	139	"	WILLIAM COOLEY JR. HOUSE Italianate, ca.1860	C	
25.	139	"	Garage associated with #24	C	
26.	144	"	BISHOP ACHESON HOUSE (St.Luke's) Georgian Revival, 1902-1903	C	17
27.	145	"	Italianate, ca.1880	C	7
28.	145	"	Garage associated with #27	C	
29.	148	"	CHARLES C. HUBBARD HOUSE Italianate, 1861	C	17
30.	151	"	JOSEPH TOBEY HOUSE Greek Revival, ca.1845	C	7
31.	148 College Street		RANDOLPH PEASE HOUSE Federal, 1822	C	2
32.	151	"	2nd RANDOLPH PEASE HOUSE now Christian Science Church Greek Revival, 1832-1837	C	8
33.	156-158	"	19th-c. cross gable vern. ca.1880	C	
34.	157	"	Greek Revival, 1840	C	
35.	160	"	HEZEKIAH HULBERT HOUSE Colonial, ca.1775	C	
36.	160	"	Garage associated with #35	C	
37.	161	"	Greek Revival/Italianate, 1840/1870	C	6
38.	161	"	Garage associated with #37	C	
39.	162-164	"	19th-c. vernacular, 1879	C	
40.	162-164	"	Garage associated with #39	C	
41.	165	"	NATHANIEL SMITH HOUSE Greek Revival, 1839 Italianate alterations, ca.1880	C	6
42.	166-168	"	Greek Revival, ca. 1840	C	
43.	169-171	"	DAVIS ARNOLD HOUSE Greek Revival, 1839	C	
44.	169	"	Garage associated with #43	C	
45.	170	"	EZRA CLARK HOUSE Greek Revival, ca.1840	C	
46.	170	"	Garage assoc. with #45	C	
47.	175	"	Federal/Greek Revival, ca.1825	C	
48.	175	"	Garage associated with #47	C	
49.	180	"	SAMUEL T. CAMP HOUSE Italianate, 1865	C	10,11



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50.	186	College Street	Italianate, ca.1870	C	10,11
51.	186	"	Garage associated with #50, 1964	NC	
52.	192	"	Queen Anne, ca.1880	C	10,11
53.	192	"	Garage associated with #52	C	
54.	196	"	THEOPHILUS CHANDLER HOUSE Italianate, ca.1870	C	10,11
55.	196	"	Garage associated with #54	C	
56.	200	"	Queen Anne/Colonial Revival, ca.1890	C	10
57.	201	"	CENTRAL SCHOOL 20th-c.institutional, Art Deco trim, ca.1925; condominiums, 1982	C	
58.	204	"	Garage with apartment upstairs,1938	NC	
59.	208	"	JOSEPH HALL HOUSE Colonial Gambrel, 1765 Moved to site ca.1830 from High St.	C	10
60.	212	"	19th-c.Cross-gable, 1886	C	
61.	212	"	Garage associated with #60	C	
62.	221-223	"	Greek Revival/Italianate, ca. 1850/1870	C	
63.	221-223	"	Garage assoc. with #62	C	
64.	229	Court Street	Queen Anne, ca.1880	C	
65.	234	"	JOHN & SUSAN SMITH HOUSE Federal,1826-28, Colonial Revival remodelling, ca.1910	C	
66.	235	"	Greek Revival/Italianate, ca.1860	C	
67.	238	"	Greek Revival, ca.1850	C	
68.	238	"	Garage associated with #67	C	
69.	240-242	"	SAGE/RUSSELL HOUSE Georgian/Federal, ca.1830	C	
70.	240-242	"	Garage associated with #69	C	
71.	241	"	Mansard, ca.1870	C	
72.	250	"	J.PETERS PELTON HOUSE Queen Anne/stick, 1883-84	C	13
73.	250	"	Garage associated with #72 (located on Pearl Street)	C	
74.	251	"	OLD MIDDLETOWN HIGH SCHOOL Romanesque Revival, 1894-96 converted to elderly housing, 1980	C	
75.	258	"	JOHN M. DOUGLAS HOUSE Queen Anne, Eastlake detail, 1880	C	14

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76.	258 Court Street	Garage associated with #75	C
77.	264 "	HASKELL-VINAL HOUSE Mansard, 1873	C
78.	264 "	Garage associated with #77	C
79.	267 "	Italianate, ca. 1870	C
80.	268 "	Jacobean Revival, ca. 1920	C
81.	268 "	Garage assoc. with #80, 1935	C
82.	271 "	SAMUEL BREESE HOUSE Greek Revival, ca. 1840	C
83.	271 "	Garage associated with #82	C
84.	279 "	OLIVER D. BEEBE HOUSE Federal, 1814	C
85.	285 "	PARSONAGE, 1st CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH Georgian Revival, 1911	C
86.	Pearl Place	19th-c. Cross-gable, ca. 1860	C
87.	11 Pearl Street	CAMP/WILCOX HOUSE Italianate, 1874	C
88.	12 "	Greek Revival cottage, ca. 1850	C
89.	15 "	GEORGE E. BARROWS HOUSE Greek Revival Cottage, 1838	C
90.	15 "	Garage associated with #89	C
91.	16 "	ZEBULON H. BALDWIN HOUSE Greek Revival Cottage, 1839	C
92.	16 "	Garage associated with #91	C
93.	20 "	Greek Revival/Mansard, ca. 1840/1870	C
94.	20 "	Garage associated with #93, 1942	NC
95.	24 "	Mansard, ca. 1870	C
96.	24 "	Garage associated with #95	C
97.	28 "	CHARLES BREWER HOUSE Greek Revival, ca. 1840	C
98.	28 "	Garage assoc. with #97	C
99.	59 "	Queen Anne, 1884	C
100.	60 "	Greek Revival, ca. 1840	C
101.	60 "	Garage associated with #100	C
102.	63 "	Queen Anne/Colonial Revival, ca. 1900	C
103.	63 "	Garage associated with #102	C

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104.	63	Pearl Street	Garage associated with #102	C	
105.	64	"	Queen Anne, ca. 1880	C	
106.	66	"	19th-c. domestic, 1889	C	
107.	66	"	Barn/Garage assoc. with #106	C	
108.	70	"	Greek Revival, ca.1840	C	
109.	73	"	STARR/RUSSELL HOUSE Federal, 1813	C	1
110.	74	"	Queen Anne, 1890	C	15,16
111.	74	"	Garage associated with #110	C	
112.	77	"	RUSSELL CARRIAGE HOUSE Queen Anne/Colonial Rev. 1900/1930	C	1
113.	78	"	JAMES G. HUBBARD HOUSE Queen Anne, 1886	C	15,16
114.	80	"	Queen Anne, 1889	C	15,16
115.	80	"	Garage assoc. with #114	C	
116.	86	"	Queen Anne, 1889	C	15
117.	86	"	Garage associated with #116	C	
118.	90	"	Queen Anne, 1889	C	15
119.	90	"	Garage associated with #118	C	

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1765 - 1930  
1800 - 1900

Significant Dates

N/A  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Various See 8:4

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

An urban residential district which developed primarily in the nineteenth century, the Broad Street Historic District is a tangible record of the broad patterns of social change that accompanied the Industrial Revolution, both in Middletown and in the United States, especially the emergence of an urban middle class (Criterion A). The district has architectural significance as an exceptionally cohesive, well-preserved and integrated body of architecture containing many well-crafted examples of the architectural styles of the nineteenth century, including Federal, Greek Revival, and Queen Anne (Criterion C).

Historical Significance

The Broad Street Historic District was developed in response to a number of socio-economic factors. Chief among them was the decline of the established social order of the colonial period with the concomitant rise of a new urban middle class, and the economic revival produced by the Industrial Revolution. Although the establishment of this residential area marked a crucial turning point in the city's growth, neither of these factors was unique to Middletown, but was part of the broader patterns of modernization taking place in the nineteenth century.

Middletown, a major riverport in the eighteenth century and the largest city in the state in 1790, was rapidly becoming an economic backwater by 1830.<sup>2</sup> A self-directed group of prominent citizens undertook the task of rebuilding the city and establishing a new economic base. Their development efforts, concentrated on Main and High streets bordering the district, paved the way for residential growth in the Broad Street area. One of the first steps was the establishment of Wesleyan College in 1831 on High Street. Merchants grown wealthy in the maritime trade invested their capital in commercial development and new textile and machine industries. New commercial blocks were built on Main Street including a grand hotel known as the Mansion House in the early 1830s.

The success of this nineteenth-century version of a chamber of commerce was demonstrated by the rapid growth in the Broad Street district in succeeding years. A substantial number of houses were built almost immediately, as evidenced by the proliferation of the Greek Revival style. Almost without exception, these houses were

See continuation sheet

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Beers, H. B. Commemorative Biographical Record of Middlesex County. New York: 1903.  
Beers, J. B. History of Middlesex County. New York: 1884.  
Field, David. D. Centennial Address. Middletown, Conn.: William B. Casey. 1815.  
Hall, Peter D. Middletown, Streets, Commerce, and People, 1650-1981. Sesquicentennial Papers Number Eight. Luneberg, Vermont: Stinehour Press, 1981.  
Harrington, Karl Pomeroy. The Background of Middletown and the Wesleyan Connections, 1823-1833. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1942.

Maps: 1825 Map of the City of Middletown. H.L. Barum. Middletown, Conn.  
1851 Map of the City of Middletown. New Haven: Richard Clark.  
1877 Middletown, Connecticut. O.H. Bailey and Company.  
1915 Aero View of Middletown. Connecticut. New York: Hughes and Bailey.

See continuation sheet

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

### Specify repository:

Greater Middletown Preservation Trust

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 27

### UTM References

A            
Zone Easting Northing

C

B            
Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

The Broad Street Historic District encompasses the maximum number of house remaining in this nineteenth-century residential neighborhood and includes the following streets: Broad Street (west side for full length and part of the east side), Court and College streets from Broad Street west to High Street, Pearl Street from Washington Street south to College Street, and Pearl Place. (See sketch map of district for boundaries.)

See continuation sheet

### Boundary Justification

The district boundaries were drawn to include the maximum number of historic resources associated with the period of significance of the district and to exclude modern or historic areas with other associations. These excluded areas are the following: on the north of the district, buildings included in the Washington Street Historic District (NR:1986); on the east, modern commercial development along the east side of Broad Street; on the south,

See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By

Edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant  
organization Cunningham Associates Ltd. date 12/3/87  
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Continuation Sheet**

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for Main Street businessmen, evidence of not only the greater prosperity of the town but a new social phenomenon: the separation of the home and workplace. This was a new concept, a radical departure from an earlier period when houses and shops were clustered on Main Street, while most of the land in the district lay undeveloped, used, if at all, as garden plots for Main Street houses.

As Main Street became almost exclusively devoted to commerce, a process almost complete by the Civil War, and more houses were built in the district, a clearcut residential and geographic hierarchy typical of New England towns was established. On High Street, the most desirable location in the city because of its view of the river and proximity to Wesleyan College, the wealthy built their homes.<sup>3</sup> The poor, often newly arrived immigrants, were relegated to the decaying blocks near the river below Main Street.<sup>4</sup> Halfway down the slope, the middle ground, as it were, was reserved appropriately enough for the new middle class.

Two key factors, nativity and occupation, characterized the social class in the district. It appears to have been restricted exclusively to native-born Americans who, at least in the early years of the district, were basically shopkeepers or tradesmen, many descendants of old families. Although many prospered and achieved greater social stature later in the century as directors or incorporators of banks and insurance companies, or through election to public office, typically the first residents were young men, skilled entrepreneurs who were just establishing their own businesses when they built their homes in the district. These were the men who a few years earlier would have left Middletown to seek their fortunes.

The 28 known occupations of district homeowners covered a full range of producers of goods and services<sup>5</sup>. They included hardware dealers and haberdashers, pharmacists and carriage makers, printers (of two Middletown newspapers), along with at least five grocers and three jewelers. Several blacksmiths also lived there and owned livery stables on Main Street. Several of these businesses were still operating in the twentieth century, notably Woodward Drug and Payne Music. A number were builders: carpenters, joiners, and masons, living and working in the district. Some were developers like Charles Brewer, who was a jeweler in town, as well as a real-estate speculator. He lived at 28 Pearl Street and had the two neighboring houses built for sale to others (Inventory #s 89, 95, 97). Enoch Ferre, a lumber dealer who lived in "Greek Row" on Broad Street, was largely responsible for this group of houses (Inventory #s 16, 17, 19, 21).

**Architectural Significance**

The survival of the Broad Street Historic District, the only major concentration of nineteenth-century domestic architecture in the city of Middletown, is quite as remarkable as its development. Modern development pressures, particularly commercial encroachment, have whittled away at the periphery, but the surviving district is substantially intact, appearing much as it did in 1900. Ninety-six percent of the

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buildings contribute to the district...an extremely rare level of contribution.

Its historic residential appearance, characterized by such features as closely sited houses located near the street line, are uniquely urban and nineteenth century. No demolition has occurred in the district to disrupt this characteristic rhythm. New residential construction, usually present in some degree in a historic district, is totally absent, either as modern infill or as the replacement of older houses. Only one modern commercial building intrudes upon the district. Its location in the otherwise uninterrupted flow of historic residences in the central block of Broad Street is regrettable, but the impact is muted by its relatively small scale (Photograph #2).

The twentieth century has had other impacts, both negative and positive. By about 1920, a number of small garages were built at the rear of the lots as district residents acquired automobiles. Some of these contributing buildings may have been replacements for earlier stables. As early as 1910, however, there were indications that the neighborhood was becoming less desirable as evidenced by the building of a factory on Broad Street at that time. Today this building has been attractively converted to commercial retail use, but its construction may have accelerated a decline at the time. There is no question that the neighborhood deteriorated in the 1930s and 40s, a period when many single family houses were divided for multiple use. Asbestos or asphalt siding was a popular exterior treatment in this period, remnants of which appear today. The more recent use of aluminum or vinyl siding is more problematic. It may not be as reversible a process. In some cases, when it is applied to buildings such as the Samuel Stearns House with such a disregard for the building's architectural character, the quality of the building is substantially affected (Inventory # 21).

More positive has been the recent trend to rehabilitate houses for professional offices. Most of these conversions have been accomplished without disturbing residential appearance or architectural character. One of the most progressive of these conversions has been the virtual restoration of the William Trench House (Inventory # 6; Photograph # 5), reclaiming a building that had been vacant for many years. The sole exception has been the inappropriate modern addition to the facade of an Italianate-style house on Broad Street (Inventory # 27). Its immediate neighbor to the north, one of the most recent conversions, demonstrates a more positive approach to adaptive re-use, one that may stimulate more progressive rehabilitation elsewhere in the district (Inventory # 30; Photograph # 7).

Several stylistic groups of houses add architectural distinction to the district. They include the few but distinguished examples of the Federal-style, the exceptional concentration of Greek Revival-style houses, and finally the late nineteenth-century residences constructed in the Queen Anne style.

The side-hall Federal style houses are quite similar, a relatively rare form in Middletown with most of the surviving examples in the district. With their striking degree of similarity, they may be the work of one builder as yet unidentified. The

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exceptionally well-crafted porticos which highlight these houses may be the work of a master joiner working from the pattern books of the period. Their proportions are classically Adamesque with the appropriate attenuation associated with this style. Several display exceptionally fine leadwork in the fanlights under the cove ceiling of the portico and in the gable peaks, a feature often present in the later Greek Revival as well.

The exceptional group of Greek-Revival style houses, the largest surviving concentration in the city, illustrate the full range of this popular residential style. Their association with a number of Middletown's known builders lends further importance to this group. While this style was universally popular between 1830-1850, its local popularity can be attributed to an exceptional early example, a mansion built on High Street in 1828.<sup>6</sup> In this house Middletown builders had an exemplary model; in its wealthy owner the aspiring middle-class with social pretensions had a leader to emulate. Limiting themselves to modest wood-frame versions of the temple form, several Middletown builders constructed their own houses in the district and other houses on speculation.<sup>7</sup> Those that have been positively identified include Ezra Clark, a coaster captain turned builder. He lived at 170 College Street and was responsible for three other extant houses (Inventory #s 37, 42, 88), and one located at the site of the High School. George Barrows, a joiner with his shop and house at 15 Pearl Street, may have constructed his own home (Inventory # 89). Zebulon Baldwin built two houses on Pearl Street (Inventory #s 91, 93). The survival of such a large body of work by a group of entrepreneurial carpenters is testimony enough to the quality of their construction.

Some of the work of the city's master builders is also represented in the district. Barzillai Sage was a master mason noted for his work on churches and large residences. One of his three brownstone churches was the Christ Church on Broad Street, now the Russell Library, the only church he built in the Greek Revival mode (Inventory # 22; Photograph # 9). One house in the district can be definitely attributed to Sage, the Samuel Breese House on College Street (Inventory # 82). A modest brick house in the temple form, it is a finely proportioned example of the genre. Another master builder was Isaac Baldwin. He worked with Sage on the Italianate house built for the first president of Wesleyan College and the villa built for Richard Alsop IV, both on High Street. The Joseph Tobey House on Broad Street was his contribution to the district (Inventory # 30; Photograph # 7).

The Queen Anne was the last nineteenth-century contribution to the district. The first built examples are exceptionally well-preserved, retaining all their architectural embellishments. Unique to the district and to Middletown is the John Douglas House for its unusual Eastlake detail. Both it and the nearby J. Peters Pelton House make use of appropriate color schemes to highlight the architectural details (Inventory #s 72, 75; Photographs #s 13, 14). Several of the smaller examples of the Queen Anne cottages on Pearl Street, all built about the same time, are also well-preserved with intact porches and a variety of shingled surfaces (Inventory #s 113, 114; Photograph # 16).



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Notes:

1. H.L.Barnum, Map of the City of Middletown 1825.(Middletown, Connecticut, 1825).
2. For a more detailed analysis of Middletown's history in the period between 1780 and 1830 see Peter D. Hall, Middletown, Streets, Commerce, and People, 1650-1981, Sesquicentennial Papers Number Eight, (Luneberg, Vermont; Stinehour Press, 1981).
3. Most of the architect, or master-builder designed, nineteenth-century mansions are located on High Street. It is notable that this street had become so fashionable by 1830 that even a large Colonial house (Inventory # 59) was moved from there to the district, to make way for a larger stone mansion, now used as a fraternity house.
4. Upwardly-mobile Irish left the tenements in the late nineteenth century to build their residential enclave above Main Street to the north of Washington Street, an area undeveloped until after the Civil War. Italian immigrants took their place below Main Street beginning about 1890.
5. Occupations of owners were taken from survey forms prepared by the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust in 1979-80.
6. The Samuel Russell House designed by Ithiel Towne.
7. See "Middletown Builders" file at the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust, a compilation from several sources, including the city directories and land transfer records.

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Geographic Data

UTM References: USGS Middletown Quad Scale: 1=24,000

A	18 695750	4603510
B	18 695770	4603480
C	18 695740	4603420
D	18 695970	4602920
E	18 695940	4602900
F	18 695840	4603160
G	18 695620	4602980
H	18 695540	4603260
I	18 695620	4603300
J	18 695560	4603460
K	18 695600	4603480
L	18 695620	4603470

Boundary Justification (continued):

the South Green Historic District (NR: 1980) and modern development to the west on Church Street, including a police station, apartment buildings, and a medical center; to the west, the historic residential and institutional buildings associated with Wesleyan University. This latter group developed in the same general time frame as the district, but consists of larger, high-style mansions, and classroom buildings constructed by Wesleyan University, all part of the present campus of this institution.

CHURCH STREET



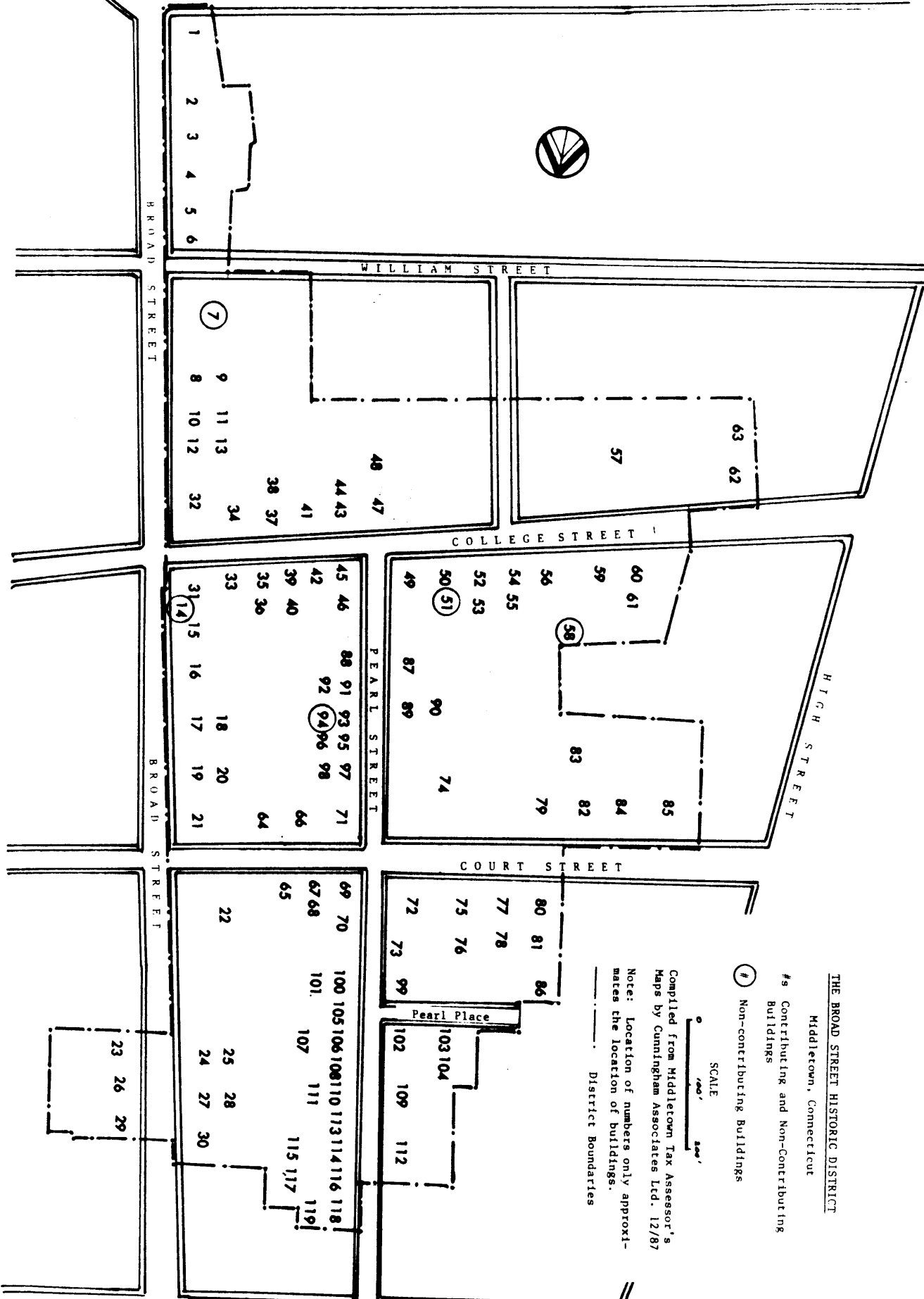
BROAD STREET

WILLIAM STREET

COLLEGE STREET

COURT STREET

WASHINGTON STREET



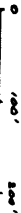
THE BROAD STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

Middletown, Connecticut

#s Contributing and Non-Contributing Buildings

⊕ Non-contributing Buildings

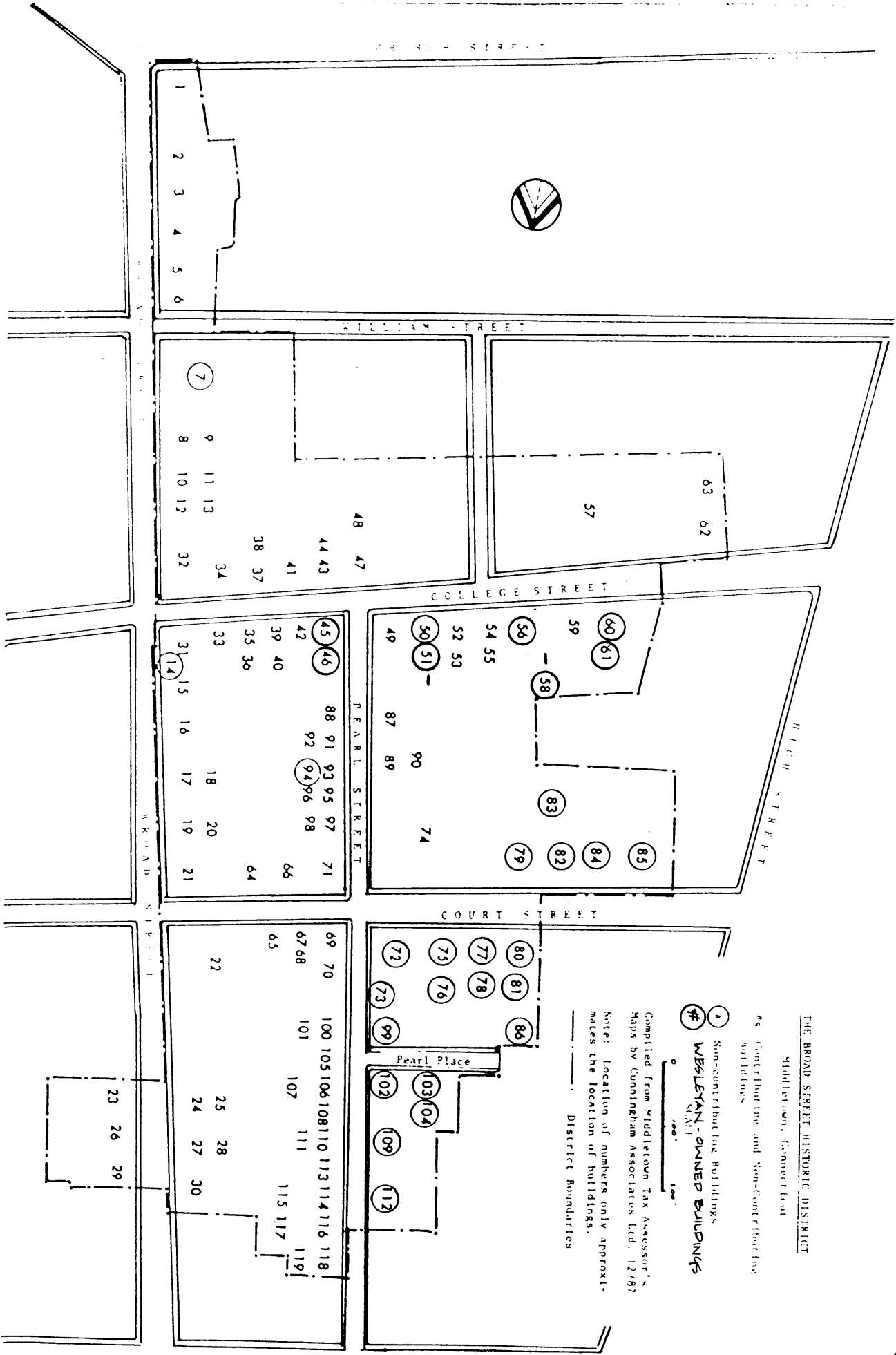
SCALE



Compiled from Middletown Tax Assessor's Maps by Cunningham Associates Ltd. 12/87

Note: Location of numbers only approximates the location of buildings.

--- District Boundaries



**THE BROAD STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Middletown, Connecticut

Contributing and Non-Contributing buildings

\* Non-contributing buildings  
 # WESLEYAN-OWNED BUILDINGS  
 SCALF

Compiled from Middletown Tax Assessor's Maps by Cunningham Associates Ltd. 12/87

Note: Location of numbers only approximates the location of buildings.

District Boundaries

