STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
For Buildings and Structures

IDENTIFICATION
1. BUILDING NAME: Common: First Church of Christ Congregational
   Historic: same
2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: 
   COUNTY: Middlesex
3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 190 Court Street
4. OWNER(S): The First Ecclesiastical Society
   PUBLIC X PRIVATE
5. USE: Present: Church
   Historic: same
   Interior accessible: x yes, explain religious use
   no
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: x yes, no
   (course ashlar)

DESCRIPTION
7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Gothic Revival
   DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1871-1872
8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
   __clapboard __asbestos siding
   __wood shingle __asphalt siding
   __board & batten __stucco
   __aluminum siding __concrete: type: __
   __other:
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
   __load bearing masonry __structural iron or steel
   __other:
10. ROOF: type:
    __gable __flat ___mansard __monitor
    __gambrel __shed __hip north ___round
    __material: __wood shingle __roll asphalt __tin
    __asphalt shingle __built up __tile
    __x slate __other:
11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 2
    APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 135'x80'
12. CONDITION: Structural:
    __ excellent __good
    Exterior: __ excellent __good
13. INTEGRITY: Location: x on original site
    moved, when: Rear wing added (1926); spire, pinnacles, dormers
    Altered: no x yes, explain:
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 __x high building density
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This large building, located a short distance from Main Street, is in an area consisting principally of commercial buildings from various periods. Although some are similar in materials, the surrounding rectangular buildings contrast with the church's distinct vertical Gothic style. This church is flanked by a mid-nineteenth century building once used as its parish house and a two story commercial building.
17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):

SIGNIFICANCE
Architect: C.C. Nicholas of Albany, New York
Builder:

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This church, built in 1871-72, is the fifth meeting house of The First Ecclesiastical Society, the oldest religious organization in Middletown. Traditionally, this church's congregation has been composed of many prominent city residents. Since this building's erection, its membership has included Woodrow Wilson and state governors Frank B. Weeks and Owen V. Coffin. Notable church pastors were Azel W. Hazen (pastor 1868-1919), author of a history of the church and Douglas Horton, the succeeding pastor who later became Dean of the Harvard Divinity School.

This Gothic Revival edifice was designed by C.C. Nicholas of Albany, New York. A six-bay buttressed brick main section encloses a modest interior with a plaster vaulted ceiling. The facade is of brownstone and derives a distinctly textural effect from the contrast of its rock faced ashlar walls with the smooth finished stone of its window and entrance moldings. The elements of the central facade are symmetrically arranged; over the large pointed arch portal are three pointed arch tracery windows. A square buttressed brownstone tower is incorporated into the southwest corner of the facade. The spire damaged in the (see continuation sheet)

PHOTOGRAPH
photographer: Robert Svec
date: 9/78 view: south
negative on file: Roll 31, #13

COMPILED BY:
name: Robert Svec date: 3/78
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; Middletown Probate Records; A.W. Hazen, A Brief History of the First Church of Christ (1920); The Middletown Tribune: Souvenir Edition (E.F. Bigelow, 1896); 1874 Beers Atlas; 1877 Bailey Map; Robert Clark, historian, First Church of Christ Congregational

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:
X none known __ highways __ vandalism __ developers
__ renewal __ private __ deterioration __ zoning
other: ____________________________

explanation: ____________________________
hurricane of 1938 and accompanying pinnacles have been removed, thus somewhat reducing the original vertical emphasis of the building.

This church is one of a number of Gothic Revival churches built of brownstone and/or brick in Middletown during the 1860's and 1870's. These churches exemplify the vigorous religious involvement and relative prosperity of the city in that era.
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CONTINUATION SHEET
Item number: Date: 1/90

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