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: Olin Library
   Historic: same
2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown
   VILLAGE: ___________
3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 200 Church Street
4. OWNER(S): Wesleyan University
   PUBLIC X PRIVATE
5. USE: Present: Library
   Historic: same
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: X yes ___ no
   Interior accessible: X yes, explain ___ no

DESCRIPTION
7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Academic Classicism
   DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1925-1927
8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
   X clapboard
   X wood shingle
   X board & batten
   X aluminum siding
   __ other:
   X asbestos siding
   X asphalt siding
   X stucco
   X concrete: type: ___________
   X brick
   X fieldstone
   X cobblestone
   X cut stone: type: marble foundation and trim; granite foundation base and portico platform
   X structural iron or steel (interior framing)
   __ other:
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
   X load bearing masonry
   X balloon
   __ gable
   __ flat
   X gambrel
   __ shed
   X hip
   __ mansard
   __ monitor
   X round
   __ sawtooth
   __ other:
10. ROOF: type:
    X gable
    __ flat
    __ gambrel
    __ shed
    __ hip
    __ mansard
    X monitor
    __ round
    __ sawtooth
    __ other:
11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 3
    APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 163'x64'; rear wing 64'x65'
12. CONDITION: Structural:
    X excellent
    __ good
    __ fair
    __ deteriorated
    Exterior:
    X excellent
    __ good
    __ fair
    __ deteriorated
13. INTEGRITY: Location: X on original site
    moved, when:
    Alterations: ___ no ___ X yes, explain:
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
    X rear addition to stacks (1938); extension to Har- riman Hall (1955); third floor remodelled
    __ barn
    __ shed
    __ garage
    __ carriage house
    __ shop
    __ garden
    X other landscape features or buildings: Denison Terrace
    in rear facing Andrus Field
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:
    College campus
    __ open land
    __ woodland
    __ residential
    scattered buildings visible from site
    __ commercial
    __ industrial
    __ rural
    X high building density
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:
    Olin Library is one of the principal structures that comprise Wesleyan University. Its ornate appearance contrasts with Clark Hall, a plain brownstone building to the west, and the modern Science Center across the street. From here, Church Street descends east to the city's business district. The Library overlooks a wide south lawn; behind it, classically styled Dennison Terrace borders Andrus Field to the north.
17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):

Memorial Hall: vaulted ceiling, marble mosaic floor, Italian walnut panelling, pilasters and monolithic columns of green marble (bronze bases and capitals), large, bronze chandelier, ornate bronze balustrade on second floor
The main reading room: three chandeliers, carved wood grill and wood balustrade over entrance
Denison Terrace in rear: white marble balustrades, steps and rostrum

SIGNIFICANCE
Henry Bacon; revisions,
Architect: McKim, Mead & White
Builder:

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This impressive building was dedicated in 1928 to the memory of former Wesleyan President Stephen Olin, and his son Stephen H. Olin who had served as the university's Acting President. It replaced the earlier library facility Rich Hall (92 Theatre). The initial plans for Olin were created by campus architect Henry Bacon. After his death, the drawings were then utilized by McKim, Mead & White. The final composition was a synthesis of Bacon's theme and the firm's individual interpretation.

The structure, erected at an approximate cost of $800,000, was designed in the Renaissance Revival style. European building materials were incorporated in its construction and the brick walls are coursed in the decorative Flemish bond. The library is highlighted by ornate, white marble details. A large portico dominates the wide, horizontal facade. Enclosing the tall, arched main entrance, it consists of a broad pediment supported by six Ionic columns. The portico is flanked by two round-arched windows whose appearance resembles that of the main entrance. Pilasters and a thick beltcourse are also displayed on the facade. The roof is bordered by modillion blocks and exhibits a

PHOTOGRAPH
photographer: Roger Sherman
date: 6/78 view: south
negative on file: Roll 22, #35A-35

COMPILED BY:
name: Robert Svec
date: 8/78
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Wesleyan University Archives, Middletown, Connecticut

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

[ ] none known [ ] highways [ ] vandalism [ ] developers [ ] other:
[ ] renewal [ ] private [ ] deterioration [ ] zoning [ ] explanation: 
balustrade above the portico. These smooth, marble decorations project from the darker brick walls. The two contrasting materials provide the building with surfaces of rich textural and chromatic variety.

Olin Library reflects the substantial growth experienced by Wesleyan University during the early twentieth century. It is also a prominent example of the monumental institutional design characteristic of McKim, Mead & White, the foremost American architectural firm of its day.