STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
for Buildings and Structures

IDENTIFICATION
1. BUILDING NAME: Common: Old Middletown High School Historic: Middletown High School
2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: COUNTY: Middlesex
3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 251 Court Street
4. OWNER(S): Caldarelli & Interbartolo PUBLIC X PRIVATE
5. USE: Present: Proposed Elderly Housing Historic: Educational
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: X yes no
   Interior accessible: X yes, explain with permission no

DESCRIPTION
7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Romanesque Revival DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1894-1896
8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
   _clapboard _asbestos siding X brick (Pompeian)
   _wood shingle _asphalt siding _fieldstone
   _board & batten _stucco _cobblestone
   _aluminum siding _concrete: type: poured X cut stone: type: brownstone
   X other: copper flashing X terra cotta ornamentation foundation
   X west wing
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
   _wood frame: X post and beam balloon
   _load bearing masonry _X structural iron or steel: interior framing
   _other:
10. ROOF: type:
    _gable X flat wings _mansard _monitor _sawtooth
    _gambrel _shed _hip _round _X other: conical on tower
    _material:
    _wood shingle _roll asphalt _tin X slate
    _asphalt shingle _X built up wings _tile _X other: copper sheathing
11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 3 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 138' x 207'
12. CONDITION: Structural: _excellent _good X fair _deteriorated
    Exterior: _excellent _good _fair _X deteriorated
13. INTEGRITY: Location: X on original site moved, when:
    Alterations: _no X yes, explain: Southeast wing added 1912; west wing added 1931.
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
    _barn _shed _garage X other landscape features or buildings: original north entrance with stairway
    _carriage house _shop _garden
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:
    _open land _woodland X residential _scattered buildings visible from site
    _commercial _industrial _rural _X high building density
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This building occupies the southwest corner of Court and Pearl Streets. It is situated in a modestly scaled 19th century urban residential neighborhood. Although integrated into its surroundings, the old high school stands out because of its greater scale, Romanesque style, and educational function.
17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):

Fireproof construction: asbestos lined floors and stairways
Terra cotta cased beams
Brick fire-stopped interior walls
Remnants of original heating and ventilating system

SIGNIFICANCE

Architect: Curtis & Johnson, Hartford
Builder: Watson Tryon & Son, masons

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: Built in 1894-96, this building was Middletown's second high school. The Hartford firm of Curtis and Johnson designed the structure in the Romanesque style. The building, for which no expense was spared in materials or design, set an innovative standard for the educational facilities of its day.

The use of different materials (Pompeian brick, brownstone, and terra cotta) produces a rich textural effect on the exterior. A turret on the northeast corner, the use of round compound arches, and an overall asymmetrical plan are typical of the Romanesque style.

In 1912 a large wing designed by Charles Scranstone Palmer of Meriden was added to the south side of the building. This wing closely repeated the materials and stylistic elements of the existing structure. A second large wing containing a library, auditorium, and gymnasium was added to the west side in 1931. Although it incorporates some Romanesque details such as round compound arched windows and utilized materials compatible to the original, the overall impression is of a separate and distinct construction.

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Roger Sherman
date: 12/77 view: north
negative on file: Roll 6, 13A

COMPILED BY:

name: John E. Reynolds date: 5/78
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457


20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

x none known  ____highways  ____vandalism  ____developers  ____other: __________________

___renewal  ____private  ____deterioration  ____zoning  ____explanation: __________________
The old high school is one of the few monumental civic buildings of the 19th century remaining in Middletown and the only one of the Romanesque style. It ceased operation as a high school in 1972 and has been vacant since then. A proposal to convert the building for use as housing for the elderly has been accepted by the city. Work is scheduled to begin in June, 1978.
Middletown High School
251 Court Street, Middletown, CT 06457