STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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

STORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
For Buildings and Structures

1. BUILDING NAME: Common: KNK Fraternity  Historic: Edward Augustus Russell House
2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE:  COUNTY: Middlesex
3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 318 High Street
4. OWNER(S): Kappa Nu Kappa  PUBLIC X PRIVATE
5. USE: Present: Fraternity  Historic: Residence
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: X yes _ no
   Interior accessible: _ yes, explain ________________________________ X no

7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Greek Revival  DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1841-42
8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
   _ clapboard  _ asbestos siding  X brick bearing walls
   _ wood shingle  _ asphalt siding  _ fieldstone
   _ board & batten  _ stucco  _ cobblestone
   _ aluminum siding  _ concrete: type:  _ brownstone
   X other: flushboarding  foundation & entrance steps
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
   _ wood frame: _ post and beam _ balloon
   _ load bearing masonry: _ structural iron or steel
   _ other: ________________________________
10. ROOF: type:
     _ gable  _ shed  _ mansard  _ monitor  _ sawtooth
      _ gambrel  _ hip  _ round  _ other:
          _ material:
     _ wood shingle  _ roll asphalt  _ tin  _ slate
     _ asphalt shingle  _ built up  _ tile  _ other:
11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 3  APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 47' x 47'
12. CONDITION: Structural: _ excellent _ good _ fair _ deteriorated
    Exterior: _ excellent _ good _ fair _ deteriorated
13. INTEGRITY: Location: X on original site _ moved, when:
     Alterations: _ no X yes, explain: Third floor added after 1934; interior remodelled
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
     to accommodate fraternity
     _ barn  _ shed  _ garage  _ other landscape features or buildings:
     _ carriage house  _ shop  _ garden
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: College campus
     _ open land  _ woodland  X residential  _ scattered buildings visible from site
     _ commercial  _ industrial  _ rural  _ high building density (nearby)
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This Greek Revival style house faces
     west from the east side of High Street north of the corner at High and Court Streets. A
     large wooded lawn extends to the Honors College (Russell House 1828) property to the north.
     High Street between Church and Washington Streets was the most prestigious residential area
     in Middletown during the 19th century. It is now a part of the Wesleyan University Campus.
17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):

Elliptical stained glass window south facade (not original)

SIGNIFICANCE
Architect: possibly J. Town or A.J. Davis  
Builder:  

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This house was built in 1841-42 for Edward A. Russell (1797-1874) on a portion of the Russell family estate. Edward Russell worked in the foreign mercantile trade until he returned to Middletown in 1838. He later served as mayor, state representative and national convention delegate.

Edward A. Russell had personal contact with the firm of Town and Davis while supervising the building of the well-known Greek Revival Russell House (1828) for his younger brother, Samuel W. Russell. Thus it is possible that Edward retained the services of this firm when his house was built. Such a possibility is reinforced by early photographs showing the original proportions and decoration. These indicate that the house was a sophisticated and high style example of the Greek Revival, and stylistically close to the DeKham Brevoort House (attributed to Davis) in New York City and "Highwood", Henry Whitney's estate in New Haven (1835-36) by Town and Davis.

Edward Russell's grand-nephew, Richard L. deZeng (1847-1932), occupied the house until his death in 1932. Wesleyan purchased the property from the administrators of the estate of E.A. Russell and then sold it to Alpha Sigma Delta Alumni Assoc., Inc. in 1934. At this time (see continuation sheet).

PHOTOGRAPH
photographer: Elizabeth Loomis  
date: 8/78  
view: west  
negative on file: Roll 33, #10

COMPILED BY:
name: John E. Reynolds  
date: 4/78  
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust  
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; Middletown City Directories; Notes by Alain Munkittrick in Greater Middletown Preservation Trust files; Alice B. Richter,"History of Church of Holy Trinity"(Middletown: 1963); 1851 Clark Map; 1877 Bailey Map; Photos in Wesleyan Archives

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:
- none known  
- highways  
- vandalism  
- renewal  
- private  
- deterioration  
- zoning  
- other:  
- explanation:
time the structure was altered for use as a fraternity house.

The heavy cornice at the top of the building was lowered to the second floor and windows were placed above the cornice to form a full third floor. Window cornices were removed and new window openings cut in the south facade. The second and third floors were divided into three room suites; however, the first floor remains largely unaltered.

This house was the last example of Greek Revival architecture to be built in the prestigious area of High Street.