STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
(03) 566-3005
HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
For Buildings and Structures

IDENTIFICATION
1. BUILDING NAME: Common: Davison Infirmary    Historic: Duane Barnes House
2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown    VILLAGE:    COUNTY: Middlesex
3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 327 High Street
4. OWNER(S): Wesleyan University
5. USE: Present: College Infirmary    Historic: Residence
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: Gothic Revival
8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
   _ x clapboard _ x asbestos siding _ x brick
   _ x wood shingle _ x asphalt siding _ x fieldstone
   _ x board & batten _ x stucco _ x cobblestone
   _ x aluminum siding _ x concrete: type: _ x cut stone: type: _ x brownstone
   _ x other: wooden bargeboards; iron balcony railings _ x ashlar
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
   wood frame: _ x post and beam _ x structural iron or steel
   _ x load bearing masonry
   _ x other:
10. ROOF: type:
    _ x gable  _ x gambrel  _ x shed  _ x hip  _ x built up  _ x monitor
    _ x mansard  _ x roll asphalt  _ x tile  _ x sawtooth  _ x slate
    _ x other:
11. NUMEROF STORIES: _ x 2½ APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 43' x 31' (wing 40' x 30')
12. CONDITION: Structural: _ x excellent  _ x good  _ x fair  _ x deteriorated
   Exterior:  _ x excellent  _ x good  _ x fair  _ x deteriorated
13. INTEGRITY: Location: _ x on original site  Southwest wing added c. 1855; second southwest wing
    Alterations: _ x no  _ x yes, explain: added 1934-35; south wing added 1970; interior al-
        tered for infirmary use 1943-45
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
    _ x barn  _ x shed  _ x garage  _ x shop  _ x garden
    _ x other landscape features or buildings:
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:
    _ x open land  _ x woodland  _ x residential  _ x scattered buildings visible from site
    _ x commercial  _ x industrial  _ x rural  _ x high building density
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This Gothic Revival cottage is set
    back from the west side of High Street north of the Greek/Italianate Alsop House (1838).
    High Street during the 19th century was the most prestigious residential neighborhood in
    Middletown. The Gothic Revival style of this house (with the exception of the Wetmore
    Weeks house, 202 Washington Street) is unique to the residences in the surrounding area.
17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):

Stylized acorn and oak leaf motif bargeboards
Tongue and groove masonry construction (no mortar)
Glass hood over second floor window east facade

SIGNIFICANCE

Architect: Duane Barnes or possibly A.J. Davis
Builder: probably Duane Barnes

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This Gothic cottage was built around 1848 by Edward Duane Barnes, "a pioneer Middletown quarryman, bookseller, poet, civic improver and leader of Middletown's intellectual avant-garde." Barnes sold the property in 1855 to William Sebor, captain of a New York to London packet. It remained in the Sebor family until 1901, when Louis deKoven Hubbard acquired it. His heirs sold the property to Wesleyan University in 1934 and shortly after it was converted for use as an infirmary.

Described in A.J. Downing's Cottage Residences as one of the most "artistic" residences in the country, this house earned that accolade through its elaborate treatment of Gothic Revival form and decoration. The steep gables and asymmetry of the elevations, together with the intricate decorative details make this house a fine example of the Gothic Revival carried to its successful extremes. Although the design is generally attributed to Barnes himself, its high quality as compared to other later houses designed by Barnes, ("Clovernook," 18 Burr Avenue; 194 Court Street) and an existing Middletown connection suggest a possible attribution to A.J. Davis, the premier American architect of the Gothic Revival.

(see continuation sheet)

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Elizabeth Loomis
date: 11/77 view: east
negative on file: Roll 2, #16

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:
A south wing was added, probably around 1855, and is very close stylistically to the original structure. When Wesleyan converted the house to infirmary use in 1936, a two story wing was added to the south. This wing was expanded in 1970. The interior was altered drastically in 1936 to accommodate patient care requirements; however, some details such as fireplaces and woodwork remain.

The romantic naturalism and picturesque architecture advocated by A.J. Downing became popular primarily with America's intellectual avant-garde of which Duane Barnes was a characteristic member. The high style architecture of this house maintained the opulent tradition of 19th century High Street as Middletown's most prestigious residential area; however, its unique qualities are distinctly a reflection of Duane Barnes's individual taste.