STATE OF CONNECTICUT

ONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
9 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
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HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
for Buildings and Structures

IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME: Common: "92 Theatre" Historic: Rich Hall

2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: ___________ COUNTY: Middlesex

3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): High St. (College Row, between Church and Washington)

4. OWNER(S): Wesleyan University PUBLIC __ PRIVATE X

5. USE: Present: Theatre Historic: Library

6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: X yes no
Interior accessible: X yes, explain theatre usage no

DESCRIPTION

7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Gothic Revival DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1866-68

8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
   __ wood shingle __ asbestos siding __ brick
   __ aluminum siding __ wood frame __ fieldstone
   __ board & batten __ stucco __ cut stone __ concrete: type:
   __ other: brownstone

   X load bearing masonry structural iron or steel
   __ other:

9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
   __ gable __ shed __ mansard __ monitor __ sawtooth
   __ sickle __ roll asphalt __ round __ other
   material:
   __ wood shingle __ roll asphalt __ tin __ slate
   __ asphalt shingle __ built up __ tile __ other:

10. ROOF: type:
    X gable __ flat __ mansard __ monitor __ sawtooth
        __ gambrel __ shed __ hip __ round __ other
        material:
        __ wood shingle __ roll asphalt __ tin __ slate
        __ asphalt shingle __ built up __ tile __ other:

11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 1 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 101'x56'

12. CONDITION: Structural: X excellent _ good __ fair __ deteriorated
    Exterior: X excellent _ good __ fair __ deteriorated

13. INTEGRITY: Location: X on original site moved, when:
    Alterations: X no _ X yes, explain: Interior converted from library to theatre

14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
    __ barn __ shed __ garage _ other landscape features or buildings: University
    __ carriage house __ shop __ garden

15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: University campus
    __ open land __ woodland __ residential _ scattered buildings visible from site
    __ commercial __ industrial __ rural __ high building density

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This brownstone building is a member of a row of five older Wesleyan buildings arranged in line along the west side of the University campus green. As a group these buildings are the traditional focus of the campus, and constitute one of Middletown's best known sights.
17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):

Elaborate Buttress Pinnacles
Interior remodelled for theatre usage

SIGNIFICANCE

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This building was dedicated in 1866 as the new home of the College library. It was named Rich Hall after Isaac Rich, whose pledge of $25,000, to be matched in kind, was the impetus for its erection. Rich Hall served as the college library until 1930 when it was converted into a theatre through the gift of the class of 1892, hence its present name, "92 Theatre."

Like its neighbor to the north, Memorial Chapel, this building is in the Gothic Revival style which dominated institutional construction in Middletown after the Civil War. Common features of these brick and brownstone buildings are steeply pitched roofs, pointed-arch windows, tracery, and other Gothic decorative elements. Except for the Russell Library (1874), Rich Hall is the only non-ecclesiastical building in this style in Middletown. This distinction is further illustrated by the lack of any steeple or tower, which leaves the building with a symmetrical form uncommon to this style.

By virtue of the rare application of the post-civil war Gothic Revival to a non-religious building in Middletown, Rich Hall has great architectural interest. Its membership in College Row and its original function give it an added significance to the history of Wesleyan and Middletown.

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Roger Sherman
date: 6/78 view: east
negative on file: Roll 24, #2

COMPiled BY:

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19. SOURCES: History of Middlesex County (Chicago: J.B. Beers 1884); Rich Hall/92 Theatre file, Wesleyan Archives; 1874 Beers Atlas; 1877 Bailey Map

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

X none known highways vandalism developers other:
renewal private deterioration zoning explanation: