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: Willbur Fisk Hall
   Historic: same

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

3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 262 High Street

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

5. USE: Present: Educational
   Historic: same

6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: x yes no
   Interior accessible: x yes, explain classroom use no

DESCRIPTION
7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Academic Classicism

8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
   _clapboard _asbestos siding
   _wood shingle _asphalt siding
   _board & batten _stucco
   _aluminum siding _concrete: type: x cut stone: type: brownstone ashlar
   _x other: metal cornice walls smooth finished; foundation rock-faced

9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
   _wood frame: post and beam _balloon
   _load bearing masonry _x structural iron or steel

10. ROOF: type:
    _gable _flat _mansard _monitor _sawtooth
    _gambrel _shed _hip _round _other
    _material:
    _wood shingle _roll asphalt _tint _x slate
    _asphalt shingle _built up _tile _x other:

11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 3
    APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 114' x 65'

12. CONDITION: Structural: excellent _x good _fair _deteriorated
    Exterior: excellent _x good

13. INTEGRITY: Location: x on original site _moved, when:
    Alterations: no x yes, explain: Rear fire escape added (1969-70); interior, ex-

14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES: tensively renovated; room size altered
    _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 _x high building density

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This classically detailed building,
    part of the Wesleyan University campus, is sited on High Street among elegant former resi-
    dences and fraternity houses. Its utilitarian appearance, large size and dark brownstone
    walls distinguish Fisk Hall from the neighboring buildings. This contrast is emphasized by
    its corner site. Like the other structures on the east side of High Street, Fisk Hall is on
    a well landscaped lot that slopes to the rear.
SIGNIFICANCE

Architect: Cady, Berg & See (N.Y.C.)  Builder: William Mylchreest (Middletown)

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This large building was named in honor of Wilbur Fisk, Wesleyan University's first president. It was erected during an era of university expansion that began in the 1890's. The reputable firm of Cady, Berg and See designed this building. The firm also designed Wesleyan's Fayerweather Gymnasium (1894) and many notable buildings in the New York area. Excavation was begun in 1902; the cornerstone and time capsule were laid in 1903 and the structure was dedicated in 1904. Upon completion, Middletown contractor William Mylchreest had erected Fisk Hall for less than its projected cost.

Plans for this classically designed and detailed structure were well received, and described by a contemporary as follows: "Exterior decorations are not numerous, but enough to break the monotony of a perfectly plain building, without detracting from its imposing simplicity. On either side of the main entrance are double columns of brownstone. The windows of the first floor are arched..." (Wesleyan Argus 12/17/02). It originally contained fourteen lecture rooms, ten private studies for professors, seven seminary rooms, and a "psychological lab." Fisk Hall is still primarily used for lecture room space. In 1974, the

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Elizabeth Loomis  date: 2/78  view: west

negative on file: Roll 12, #25

COMPILED BY:

name: Robert Svec  date: 5/78

organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust

address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; "Fisk Hall File," Wesleyan University Archives

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

x none known  __highways  __vandalism  __developers  _other:

_____renewal  _____private  _____deterioration  _____zoning  _explanation:
university post office opened in the basement; shortly thereafter the Wesleyan College Store also moved to this location.
This structure with its ivy covered walls continues to contribute to the diverse collection of distinguished architecture on High Street.