STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
For Buildings and Structures

IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME: Common: Dean's House
Historic: First President's House

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

3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 255 High Street

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

5. USE: Present: Offices
Historic: Residence

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

DESCRIPTION

7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Greek Revival

8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
_x_clapboard _asbestos siding
__wood shingle __asphalt siding
__board & batten __stucco
__aluminum siding __concrete: type: 
_x_other: flushboarded entablature
and pilasters (vertical)

9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
_x_wood frame; x_post and beam__balloon
__load bearing masonry _structural iron or steel
__other:

10. ROOF: type:
_x_gable west wing flat
__gambrel __shed __hip __round __other

_material:
_x_wood shingle _roll asphalt _x_tin _slate
__asphalt shingle __built up __tile __other:

11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 2 1/2
 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 38'x43' (wing 18'x43')

12. CONDITION: Structural: x excellent __good __fair __deteriorated
Exterior: x excellent __good __fair __deteriorated

13. INTEGRITY: Location: x_on original site moved, when:
Alterations: no x_yes, explain: Veranda added 1842-51, removed 1936; wood shingled roof replaced with tin roof

14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
_x_barn __shed __garage __x_other landscape features or buildings: campus green
carriage house __shop__garage__x_other land
open land __woodland __x_residential __scattered buildings visible from site
cornfield _commercial _industrial _rural __high building density

15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: college campus
_x_open land __woodland __residential scattered buildings visible from site
__commercial __industrial _rural _high building density

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This building is located on the west side of High Street at the north end of the Wesleyan University campus green. Its orientation is south to the campus and College Row (of 19th century brownstone buildings) and not to the view of the Connecticut River as is typical of the neighboring structures.
17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):

SIGNIFICANCE

Name: Barzillai D. Sage  Builder: John Bliss - mason
Isaac Baldwin - carpenter

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This house was built in 1837-38 by Wesleyan University as a residence for the University President. The cost of construction was financed by the proceeds of a book written by President Wilbur Fisk describing his European travels. It housed Wesleyan Presidents until 1904, when the Coite-Hubbard House (269 High Street) was acquired for that purpose. An exception was its use in 1884-89 as a women's dormitory. Since 1905, it has housed Alumni offices and the University Dean's office.

The design and contract specifications for the building were provided by prominent Middletown builder, Barzillai Sage. The carpenter was Isaac Baldwin and the masonry work was done by John Bliss, both of Middletown.

As originally built the President's House was a simple structure with typical Greek Revival details: plain frieze; corner pilasters; and doorway with transom and side lights. Between 1842 and 1851 an elaborate ironwork veranda was added to the south and east sides. This veranda was very similar to those on the contemporary Alsop House (301 High Street) and later E.W.N. Starr House (294 High Street) and was probably an attempt to upgrade the house stylistically to a par with its neighborhood. This was replaced with a Victorian (see continuation sheet)

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Elizabeth Loomis  view: south facade
date: 2/78
negative on file: Roll 12, #22

COMPILRED BY:

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

19. SOURCES: Isaac M. Baldwin, Contract, 1838; John Bliss, Contract, 1838; Reports of the Prudential Committee (Wesleyan Archives); Wesleyan Landmarks Advisory Board

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

X  none known  ____highways  ____vandalism  ____developers  ____other:
____  renewal  ____private  ____deterioration  ____zoning  ____explanation:
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INUATION SHEET
Form number: 18 Date: 4/78

First President's House
255 High Street, Middletown, Ct. 06457

veranda in the 1880's which was removed when Wesleyan remodelled the structure in 1936.

The vernacular interpretation of the Greek Revival style as displayed in this house is emphasized by its proximity to the high style buildings which dominate High Street. It is distinctive as well for its historical use which is reflected in its atypical siting.