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: Jim's Flower Shop; Victor Shoe Repair
   Historic: Peter Butler Homestead
2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: ____________________________ COUNTY: Middlesex
3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 590-594 Main Street
4. OWNER(S): Douglas R. Sr., Douglas R. Jr., & William B. Magee
   PUBLIC x PRIVATE
5. USE: Present: Commercial Historic: Residential
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: x yes _no
   Interior accessible: x yes, explain: _______ WITH owner's permission _no

DESCRIPTION
7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Center-Chimney Colonial
8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
   x clapboard _asbestos siding
   _wood shingle x asphalt siding _rear
   _board & batten _stucco
   _aluminum siding _concrete: type: __________
   _other: ____________________________
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
   x wood frame x post and beam _balloon
   _load bearing masonry _structural iron or steel
   _other: ______________________________
10. ROOF: type:
    gable __flat _mansard _monitor _sawtooth
    x gambrel _shed _hip _round _other: ________________________
    material:
    _wood shingle _roll asphalt _tin _slate
    _asphalt shingle _built up _tile _other: _______________________
11. NUMBER OF STORIES: __2½__ APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 37' x 66' with additions
12. CONDITION: Structural: _excellent _good _fair _x deteriorated
    Exterior: __________ excellent __________ good __________ fair _x deteriorated
13. INTEGRITY: Location: x on original site _moved, when:
    Alterations: _no _yes, explain: ____________________________________________
    Facade raised to two stories, front; sheds, rear
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
    _barn _x shed _x garage _x other landscape features or buildings: Blacktopped
    _carriage house _shop _garden
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:
    _open land _x woodland _x residential _scattered buildings visible from site
    _commercial _x industrial _x rural _x high building density
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: Sited in a row of taller, substantial commercial buildings along the east side of Main Street in the North End, the Peter Butler Homestead is hidden behind deteriorating shop fronts and second-story wooden signboards that obscure its eighteenth century origin.
17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):
   Gambrel roof (rear)
   Oldest remaining dwelling house on Main Street

SIGNIFICANCE
   Architect:  
   Builder:  
   18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: The early history of the Peter Butler Homestead is clouded. It is mentioned in Butler’s 1732 inventory. His daughters sold their interests to Stephen Warner and Samuel Starr in separate transactions in 1750 and 1753. Title was consolidated by Mary Van Overwyk in 1795. The house passed through a series of relatives and other owners until the early 1870s when real estate developer Henry Fountain bought it. Legal agreements exist that indicate Fountain remodeled the building, raising the second-floor front to two full stories and installing a bracketed cornice. In the current century the building has housed a variety of businesses, including an antique shop, a real estate firm, and the current cobbler shop and florist. The structure has not been used as a residence for some time; the second floor provides storage space for the businesses below.
   Viewed from the rear, the building's basic form and age are apparent. It is a two and one-half story gambrel-roofed cottage with the chimney slightly off center. Narrow clapboards are visible on the north gable end. There have been severe alterations: the center chimney has been reduced to one stack; the first floor has been converted into (see continuation sheet)

PHOTOGRAPH
   photographer:  Elizabeth Loomis  
   date:  A: 5/78; B: 8/78  view:  A: east; B: west  
   negative on file:  A: Roll 25A, #28; B: Roll 33, #27

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19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; Middletown Probate Records; Early Connecticut Probate Records (State Library); Middletown Press, 7/14/75

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:
   _none known  _highways  _vandalism  _developers  X other:  
   _renewal  _private  _deterioration  _zoning  X explanation:  
   Building has been purchased by a developer whose future plans for it are uncertain.
shop usage; clapboarding on the rear is covered with roll asphalt; and two added rear sheds are in disrepair.

A number of eighteenth century details remain intact on the second and third floors: the steep stairs, molded handrail, and protective balustrade at the top of the stairway; an original closet under the eaves at the southeast corner, complete with batten door and lighted by the original dormer; bolection molding around the fireplace openings; some original pegged rafters and purlins.

Given the fine detail of these remaining early features, and with the distinction of being the earliest existing dwelling house on Main Street, the building assumes a historical importance that transcends its current time-worn appearance.