STATE OF 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: ____________________________ Historic: "Watch House"
   TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: Long Hill
   STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 30 Maple Shade Road
   OWNER(S): John and Mary Risley
   USE: Present: Residence Historic: School; watchhouse
   ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: yes x no
                              Interior accessible: yes, explain with owner's permission

DESCRIPTION

7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Stone Blockhouse, 20' Square DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1675-1676

8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
   __ clapboard __ asbestos siding __ brick
   __ wood shingle __ asphalt siding __ fieldstone
   __ board & batten __ stucco __ cobblestone
   __ aluminum siding __ concrete; type: __ cut stone; type: brownstone
   __ other: rubble, north section

9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
   __ wood frame: ___ post and beam ___ balloon
   ___ load bearing masonry ___ structural iron or steel
   __ other: ____________________________

10. ROOF: type:
    ___ gambrel ___ shed ___ mansard __ monitor __ sawtooth
        ___ flat ___ hip ___ round ___ other: ____________________________
    material:
    __ wood shingle __ roll asphalt __ tin __ slate
    X asphalt shingle built up __ tile __ other: Originally 20'x20';

11. NUMBER OF STORIES: ___ APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: Presently 20'x40'

12. CONDITION: Structural: ___ excellent ___ good ___ fair ___ deteriorated
    Exterior: ___ excellent ___ good ___ fair ___ deteriorated

13. INTEGRITY: Location: ___ on original site
    Alterations: ___ no ___ yes, explain: Expanded to accommodate school needs; interior
    renovated; connected to another structure at

14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
    ___ barn ___ shed ___ garage ___ other landscape features or buildings:____________________
    ___ carriage house ___ shop ___ garden ____________________________

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

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This house is located in the Long Hill
district, one of Middletown's traditional farming districts. It is sited on the brow of a hill
on the south side of Randolph Road near Maple Shade Road. It is screened from view by a thick
row of trees. An enclosed hall at the north end leads from this structure onto the second floor
of a modern addition (1963) whose first floor is set into the side of the hill.
17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):

Plaster barrel vaulted ceiling
Brownstone rubble construction

SIGNIFICANCE

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This is the oldest known structure in Middletown. It was built in 1675 during King Philip's War pursuant to an order of the General Court for each town "to make such suitable places of defense as they are capable of." A Middletown tradition says that three stone blockhouses were constructed near Long Hill as a defense against hostile Indians; however, this is the only documented example (see form for 1340 Randolph Road). After King Philip's defeat in 1676 the town voted "that the watch house shall be forth with fitted up for a scoll house." In 1713 the town resigned its rights in the "Old Scool house" to the inhabitants of the Long Hill area, and it continued in use as a district school until 1919. A north section of stone, added ca. 1885, doubled the size of the original structure. In 1963 the present owners built a modern residence and connected it to the brownstone house by an enclosed passway.

A plaster barrel vaulted ceiling is the most distinctive architectural feature of this historic structure. It is of early construction, but its exact age is unknown.

The early date of this building and the causes behind its construction are historical associations of great significance. It is a unique survival from the earliest days of the settlement at Middletown.

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: John E. Reynolds
date: 7/78 view: west
negative on file: Roll 34, #23

COMPiled By:

name: John E. Reynolds date: 8/78
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20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

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