STATE OF CONNECTICUT

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
For Buildings and Structures

IDENTIFICATION
1. BUILDING NAME: Common: Odd Fellows Hall Historic: Universalist Church
2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: COUNTY: Middlesex
3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 203-207 Main Street
4. OWNER(S): City of Middletown X PUBLIC PRIVATE
5. USE: Present: Theatre, meeting hall; stores Historic: Church; stores
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: X yes no
Interior accessible: X yes, explain permission of owner no

DESCRIPTION
7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Greek Revival DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1839
8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
   - gable: X asbestos siding
   - shed: roll asphalt
   - Historic foundation wall: X brick
   - roof: X wood shingle
   - wall: concrete, type:
   - other: Probably flush boarded wooden siding under stucco
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
   - wood frame: X post and beam
   - balloon
   - load bearing masonry
   - structural iron or steel
   - other:

0. ROOF: type:
   - gable: X flat
   - gambrel:
   - shed: hip
   - round: monitor
   - other: sawtooth
   - material:
     - wood shingle
     - roll asphalt
     - X asphalt shingle
     - built up
     - tile
     - slate
     - other:
10. NUMBER OF STORIES: 3½ APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 57' x 70'
12. CONDITION: Structural: X excellent
    Exterior: X excellent
    X fair, deteriorated
    X fair, deteriorated
    X fair, deteriorated
13. INTEGRITY: Location: X on original site moved, when:
    Alterations: no X yes, explain: Northeast storefront extended; pressed metal sign panel added
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 X scattered buildings visible from site
    - commercial
    - industrial
    - rural
    - X high building density
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: The stuccoed Greek Revival style Universalist Church Building stands out at the southwest corner of College and Main Streets among commercial buildings of varied age and size. It echoes the high front entrance of the Old Middletown Mutual Building, two doors south, and opens on the sidewalk like its northwest counterpart, the Farmers and Mechanics Bank. It faces the Metro Square project and Riverview Center across Main Street, looking toward the river.
17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):

Prominent brownstone entrance steps one-half story up from street level
Paneled wood entrance doors

SIGNIFICANCE

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: Constructed in 1839, at a cost of $12,000, this is the first and only church building erected by the First Universalist Society (organized 1829). Membership in the Universalist Society varied under different pastors; during the last quarter of the nineteenth century membership averaged around 150 people. The church went into a decline after 1900. In 1916 the building was sold to the Middletown Odd Fellows for use as a meeting hall. Current plans by the Middletown Redevelopment Agency are to use the structure as part of a "Theatre Block Restoration Project" comprising most of the buildings on the west side of Main Street across from the agency's Metropolitan Square Project.

The Greek Revival style of the 1839 Universalist Church is strongly echoed by the 1842 brick Baptist Church, similarly sited one block to the south. Both buildings display a high front entrance, "temple front" to the street, pilasters and pedimented gable. Originally topped by a square two-tiered belfry and lantern, the Universalist Church has undergone considerable alteration. The bell tower is gone, the whole exterior surface has been stuccoed, and the northeast street-level storefront has been extended to provide display windows. The building retains its imposing mass with classical lines, and functions

PHOTOGRAPH well as an urban meeting hall.

photographer: Elizabeth Loomis
date: 2/78 view: northeast
negative on file: Roll 13, #26

COMPiled BY:

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19. SOURCES: Middletown Tax Assessor's Records; Middletown Land Records; Middletown City Directories; Larry Marino Postal Card Collection (GMPT); Middletown Tribune: Souvenir Edition (Middletown: 1896); David Dudley Field, Centennial Address and Historical Sketches (Middletown: 1853); Records of the First Universalist Church at Middletown, "1846-1911 (Ct. State Library)

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

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

Universalist Church
203-207 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457