STANDARD INVENTORY FORM

For Buildings and Structures

1. BUILDING NAME: Common:_________ Historic:_________ Jehovah A. Spencer

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

3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 253 Ridge Road

4. OWNER(S): Elizabeth B. Augustine PUBLIC/PRIVATE: PUBLIC

5. USE: Present: Residence (double) Historic: Residence

6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: yes _ no Interior accessible: yes, explain with permission _ no

7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Victorian Gothic DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: possibly 1861

8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
   - clapboard
   - asbestos siding
   - wood shingle
   - asphalt siding
   - board & batten
   - stucco
   - aluminum siding
   - concrete: type: 
   - other: ________
   - brick
   - fieldstone
   - cobblestone
   - cut stone: type: probably brownstone
   - foundation (not discernible)

9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
   - wood frame: _ post and beam _ balloon
   - load bearing masonry _ structural iron or steel
   - other: ________

10. ROOF: type:
    - gable _ flat _ mansard _ monitor _ sawtooth
    - gambrel _ shed _ hip _ round _ other
    - material:
    - wood shingle _ roll asphalt _ tin _ slate _ other:
    - asphalt shingle _ built up _ tile _ other:

11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 2 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 37' x 25'

12. CONDITION:
    - Structural: excellent _ good _ fair _ deteriorated
    - Exterior: excellent _ good _ fair _ deteriorated

13. INTEGRITY:
    - Location: X on original site _ moved, when:
    - Alterations: no _ X yes, explain: Siding added; south verandah enclosed; interior divided

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

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

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:
    This house occupies the southwest corner of Ridge Road and Russell Street. Its long axis runs north-south, but because of projecting central block with cross gable on the east side, the building is oriented to both streets.
17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):

Steep alternating gables on east and north bay windows
Divided oculus windows in west and south gable peaks
"Rounded" dentils under bay window cornices

SIGNIFICANCE

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This house was built probably in 1861 by Jehosaphat L. Spencer. As Spencer is listed in an early directory as a carpenter, it is possible he constructed this house himself. Other sources identify Spencer as a farmer, and it is likely he worked at both occupations. Jehosaphat Spencer’s heirs sold the property in 1895 to Sherman E. Bailey, a painter who later opened a meat market on the property. The property remained in the Bailey family until 1964 and has since been converted to a double residence.

The two-story bay windows on the east and south sides of the house serve to dress up its street facades. These bays feature three steeply pitched alternating gables in each roof; a treatment which is unknown elsewhere in Middletown. Two verandas, one of which is now enclosed, fill in the angles created by the projecting central block and the main section of the house. The vernacular Victorian Gothic style of this house was one of the styles popular in Middletown during and after the Civil War. This house is an important illustration of the style as it retains its original appearance except for the application of new siding. As a former farmhouse it serves as a reminder of the area’s traditional rural character prior to post World War II residential development.

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Elizabeth Loomis
date: 9/78 view: northwest
negative on file: Roll 45, #2A-3

COMPiled BY:

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19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; Middletown City Probate Records; Middletown City Directories; 1874 Beers Atlas

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

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