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: ___________________________ Historic: Ira K. Penfield House
2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: ___________________________ COUNTY: Middlesex
3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): 51 South Main Street
4. OWNER(S): Howard A. and Florence M. Emmons ___________________________ PUBLIC X PRIVATE
5. USE: Present: Residence ___________________________ Historic: same
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: x yes no
   Interior accessible: x yes, explain with permission no

DESCRIPTION
7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Italianate DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1854
8. MATERIAL(S) (indicate use or location when appropriate):
   x clapboard x asbestos siding
   x wood shingle asphalt siding
   x board & batten stucco
   x aluminum siding concrete: type:
   x other:
   X wood frame: post and beam x balloon
   x load bearing masonry structural iron or steel
   x other:
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
   x wood frame: post and beam x balloon
   x load bearing masonry structural iron or steel
   x other:
10. ROOF: type:
   x gable x flat mansard x monitor sawtooth
   x gambrel x shed x hip x round x other
   material:
   x wood shingle x roll asphalt x tin x slate x other:
   x asphalt shingle built up tile x other:
11. NUMBER OF STORIES: 2 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS: 33'x38'; rear wing 34'x25'
12. CONDITION: Structural: x excellent good fair deteriorated
   Exterior: x excellent good x fair deteriorated
13. INTEGRITY: Location: x on original site moved, when:
   Alterations: no x yes, explain: Addition of asbestos siding
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES:
   x barn x shed garage x other landscape features or buildings: Trees in
   x carriage house shop garden front screen house from street
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:
   x open land woodland residential scattered buildings visible from site
   x commercial x industrial rural x high building density
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:
This house is the northernmost in a row of three similar Italianate houses along the west side of South Main Street at the head of Crescent Street. To the north is the large South Green elderly housing complex. From its site set back from the street atop a steep bank, this house derives a feeling of privacy unusual for its location.
17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior):

Elaborately detailed verandah
Delticate brackets under eaves

SIGNIFICANCE

Architect: [Blank]  
Builder: probably Albert Ruff

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: This house was built in 1854, probably by Albert Ruff, on a lot subdivided from land of Jonathan Kilbourne. Upon completion it was sold to Ira K. Penfield, a manufacturer of edge tools in Middletown. In 1877 the property was acquired by Edward Payne, a director of the Middletown Plate Co., and Mayor of Middletown in 1882. From 1906 to the present, the house has remained in residential use through a succession of owners.

An elaborate verandah which covers the front of this symmetrical Italianate villa is its most distinctive feature. Slender, square, fluted columns banded with circular design motifs support a panelled entablature. The bracketed cornice echoes on a smaller scale the treatment of the eaves. A fine balustrade of lattice stick-work spans the columns. The pattern is repeated in the porch platform below. The door and window frames display elongated crossets and are similar to those on the Samuel Babcock House at 64 Liberty Street.

The rise of manufacturing in Middletown was concentrated in the south end of town. This house, together with its neighbors, reflects the residential development of that area associated with the newly established industries nearby.

PHOTOGRAPH

photographer: Elizabeth Loomis  
date: 4/78  
view: east

negative on file: Roll 18, #2A

COMPILED BY:

name: John E. Reynolds  
date: 7/78
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; Middletown City Directories; History of Middlesex County (Chicago: J.B. Beers, 1884); 1851 Clark Map; 1874 Beers Atlas; 1877 Bailey Map

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:

X none known  __highways  ___vandalism  ___developers  ___other:
__renewal  __private  __deterioration  __zoning  ___explanation:
Ira K. Penfield House
51 South Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457