

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
 CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 59 SOUTH PROSPECT STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106
 (203) 566-3005

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Town No. _____ Site No. 101

UTM : | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

QUAD: _____

DISTRICT IF NR SPECIFY
 S NR Actual Potential

IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME (Common) (Historic)
 Durham Public Library Durham Public Library

2 TOWN CITY VILLAGE COUNTY
 Durham Middlesex

3 STREET AND NUMBER (and or location)
 Main Street, west side, at intersection of Town House Road

4 OWNER(S)
 Town of Durham Public Private

5 USE (Present) (Historic)
 Library Library

6 ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: EXTERIOR VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROAD INTERIOR ACCESSIBLE IF YES EXPLAIN
 Yes No Yes No public library

DESCRIPTION

7 STYLE OF BUILDING DATE OF CONSTRUCTION
 Neo-Classical 1901

8 MATERIAL(S) (Indicate use or location when appropriate)
 Clapboard Asbestos Siding Brick Other (Specify) _____
 Wood Shingle Asphalt Siding Fieldstone
 Board & Batten Stucco Cobblestone
 Aluminum Siding Concrete Type: _____ Cut stone Type: granite foundation

9 STRUCTURAL SYSTEM
 Wood frame Post and beam balloon Other (Specify) _____
 Load bearing masonry Structural iron or steel

10 ROOF (Type) (Material)
 Gable Flat Mansard Monitor sawtooth
 Gambrel Shed Hip Round Other (Specify) _____
 Wood Shingle Roll Asphalt Tin Slate
 Asphalt shingle Built up Tile Other (Specify) _____

11 NUMBER OF STORIES APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS
 1 35' x 25'

12 CONDITION (Structural) (Exterior)
 Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

13 INTEGRITY (Location) (When) (Alterations) (If YES EXPLAIN)
 On original site Moved Yes No

14 RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES
 Barn Shed Garage Other landscape features or buildings (Specify) _____
 Carriage house Shop Garden

15 SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT
 Open land Wood-land Residential Scattered buildings visible from site
 Commercial Indus-trial Rural High building density

16 INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS

The Durham Library stands upon a wooded lot on the west side of Main Street north of the Town Green. Access to this elevated site is gained from a southern driveway leading to the rear of the building.

17 OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior)

DESCRIP (Continued)

The central pavillion on the east facade projects from the base of the doorway to the eave of the roof with a double doorway recessed in a double-archivolts rounded arch. flanked by original lamps. Each door has two rectangular panels, the upper (vertically) longer than the lower. The door frame has wooden archivolt trim on the frontal edges, and is surmounted with a fanlight bordered by five polygonal panes. The round arch of the brick inner archivolt springs from square, moulded, brownstone capitals. The arch of the outer archivolt (flush with the projecting portal wall surface) springs from brownstone impost blocks, which, in turn, extend to the outer edges of the portal surface. Inlaid vertical bricks form the keystone of the arch. Concrete steps, with wrought iron railings, rise from the north and south sides to a brownstone platform in front of the doorway. A southeast cornerstone (brownstone) denotes the year of (Continued)

18 ARCHITECT BUILDER

19 HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE

SIGNIFICANCE

The Durham Public Library is a Neo-Classical style building with Italianate style influence. The cubical, light brown brick building, constructed in 1901, has a slate-shingled hip roof and a granite foundation and watertable. The developments leading to the construction of the present building began in 1733, when the Durham Book Company was founded as the "First Book Company in the United States and ...the forerunner of our present library" (Century, p.105). The Company became a respected and venerable organization in Durham. In the nineteenth century, however, it suffered a decline in prestige as "newspapers, light reading and party politics...took the place of solid books, so that the Library was neglected, and Durham lost in some degree its high standing among the other towns." (Fowler, p. 106). The Book Company was dissolved in 1856. In 1894, the Town voted to re-establish a library. Books were kept in the Town Hall until 1902, when the present structure, designed by L.W. Robinson, was dedicated. It is one of only four libraries in the state which were built through the labors of the townspeople. The Library presently holds almost 20,000 volumes. Enlargement of the structure is presently being planned to accomodate the ever-increasing number of books.

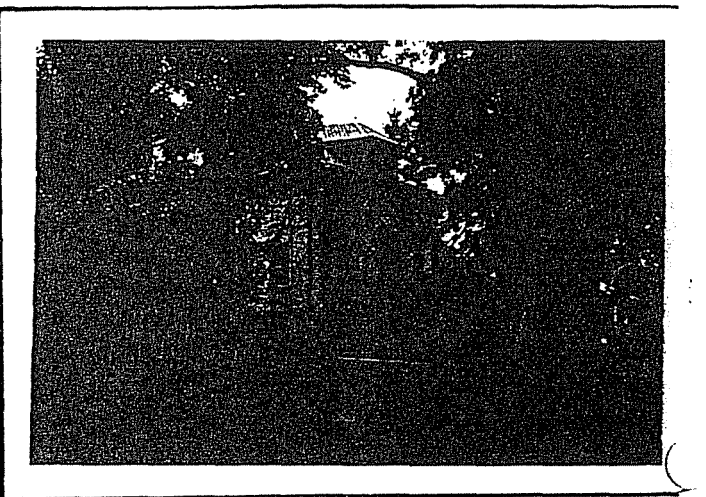
SOURCES

Durham Land Records; Durham Vital Records; Middletown Probate Records; Federal Census of 1820, 1850, 1880; Beers, J.B. History of Middlesex County, Connecticut (New York: J.B. Beers & Co., 1884); Durham History Committee Durham, CT 1866-1980: Century of Change (Durham: 1980); Fowler, William C. History of Durham (Durham: 1886); Whited, Milton Durham's Heritage (Durham: 1976); 1859 Walling Map; 1874 Beers Atlas.

PHOTO

COMPILED BY

PHOTOGRAPHER Peter Hall	DATE 6/83
VIEW west	NEGATIVE ON FILE 6:6
NAME J. McCord	DATE 8/83
ORGANIZATION Greater Middletown Preservation Trust	
ADDRESS 27 Washington Street, Middletown, CT	



20 SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS

21 THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE

None known; Highways Vandalism Developers Other _____

Renewal Private Deterioration Zoning Explanation _____

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
For Buildings and Structures

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			
TOWN NO.:		SITE NO.:	
UTM: 18	/	/	/ 1 / 0 / 1
QUAD:			
DISTRICT:	S	NR:	ACTUAL POTENTIAL

CONTINUATION SHEET

Item number: 17 Date: 8/83

The Durham Public Library
Main Street, Durham

of construction, 1901. A single large brownstone panel under the facade eave bears the word "LIBRARY". The "Bertha C. Ryan Children's Room", built in 1963, is a square, brick, gable-roofed addition attached to the facade platform. A continuous moulded cornice runs under its eaves. Two one-over-one sash, flat-arched windows with brownstone sills, flank the doorway. Above each window is an ornamental, square, brickworked blind panel. The north and south side elements are identically disposed. In the dado of each side (corresponding to the facade steps) there are three central flat-arched basement windows flanked by two lateral basement windows; all of these are six-over-six windows. At the main level, each of three central windows (corresponding to the three central basement windows) has a rectangular pane surmounted by a square pane. Three contiguous horizontal brownstone spandrels separate these panes from one another. Above the side central windows are three contiguous heavy brownstone lintels. Two windows flank the side central windows. On each side, the east lateral window, including the ornamental square panel above, is formally identical to the facade lateral windows. The side lateral windows to the west (towards the rear) are similar to the side central windows, but have a flat arch instead of a heavy brownstone lintel. An outside end chimney with Queen Anne style corbelling capped by brownstone is placed in the center of the rear (west) wall. The chimney brick is the same in composition as the main block. A copper ridge with two finials extends to a facade dormer, with a hip roof and triple Queen Anne style windows with triangular panes, decorative wooden tracery, and a moulded frame. A continuous architrave, a plain frieze and a moulded wooden cornice run under the bracketed eaves, demonstrating the Italianate style influence.