

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Benedict-Miller House

and/or common University of Connecticut, Student Government/Faculty Offices

**2. Location**

street & number 32 Hillside Avenue  not for publication

city, town Waterbury  vicinity of congressional district Fifth

state Connecticut code 09 county New Haven code 009

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name University of Connecticut (State of Connecticut)

street & number 32 Hillside Avenue

city, town Waterbury  vicinity of state Connecticut 06702

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Waterbury City Hall

street & number 235 Grand Street

city, town Waterbury  vicinity of state Connecticut

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Historic Resources Inventory, State of Connecticut has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date January, 1979  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town Hartford  vicinity of state Connecticut 06106

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Overlooking the city of Waterbury and the Naugatuck Valley, the Charles Benedict House sits on the crest of a hill three blocks north of the Waterbury Green. Its prominent location establishes the house as the main visual focus of the surrounding neighborhood. Large mature maple trees and landscaping enhance the hilltop setting.

Built in 1879, the Benedict House is an outstanding example of the Queen Anne style characterized by the use of contrasting materials and an asymmetrical free-form design. The house also displays a variety of details from the Stick Style, exemplifying the transitional period between the two styles.

Built on a monumental scale, the house is based on a three story, gable-roofed main block with numerous wings, bay windows and dormers. The largest appendage is a two and a half story servants' wing extending from the northeast corner. Overall, there are 18 projecting gables and four chimneys which create a strong vertical emphasis. The placement of the projecting elements in relationship to a central mass, however, balances the whole into a unified, well-conceived design.

The house rests on a foundation of randomly-coursed rock-faced Plymouth granite, slightly outset from the wall plane. Bridging this distance is a tooled brownstone water-table set at a 45 degree angle.

The first story is of pressed red brick which contrasts in color, material and texture with the wood-sheathing of the upper stories, a common trait of the Queen Anne Style. The brick surface is highlighted by four string courses which encircle the entire house. The lower string course consists of single courses of white-glazed brick above and below the tooled brownstone window sills. At the midpoint up the window frames, there is a course of square terra cotta tiles with rosettes. The third string course is a row of soldier bricks laid in a sawtooth pattern. The fourth is a single course of decorative brickwork which alternates between sawtooth bricks and molded bricks with a spherical knoblike motif. These upper three courses are all laid between courses of white glazed brick. The top of the brick wall is marked by a final course of white glazed brick which runs below a wooden water table.

The second story is sheathed with clapboards symbolically articulated with horizontal and vertical boards at structural members of the house frame, a feature commonly used on Stick Style houses. The third story is covered in scalloped wooden shingles with applied patterned timbering in the gables.

The facade, which faces south is dominated by a projecting central gabled pavilion extending from the main wall. Paired Queen Anne doors are centered on the pavilion. A 5 x 1 bay, shed-roofed veranda follows the contour of the facade. The three center bays extend outward and are topped by a gable with a spindle screen. The veranda roof rests on turned posts which rise from a Stick Style balustrade with turned balusters interrupted by an "X" in the center of each section. Brownstone stairs on each end of the central projection provide access to the entry level. Below the veranda is a fence-like Stick Style foundation screen.

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Continuation sheet

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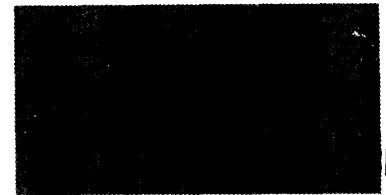
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State Register of Historic Places  
1981 State

Connecticut Historical Commission  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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Each main bay division on the facade contains paired windows with multipaned double-hung sash topped by stained glass transoms. The window openings have segmental arched tops extending into brick splayed lintels. The first story windows have identical treatment on all elevations.

On the second story of the facade, paired windows contain double-hung sash. One bay to the east of the projecting gable is sheltered by a 2 x 1 bay porch.

On the third story, there are two gabled-wall dormers, flanking the main gable of the central pavilion, which has a Stick Style balcony with a balustrade at this level. All the gables rest on large curved brackets and have half-timbering in the gable end.

An exterior brick chimney rises on the eastern section of the facade, visible until it pierces through the easternmost dormer. Rectangular at the base, it reappears with a clustered shaft, which rises to a corbelled cap. All of the chimneys on the house have ornamental bands of glazed white brick. These decorative chimneys are also typical of the Queen Anne style.

The main elements of the east elevation are a three-story wing extending diagonally from the southeast corner, and the two-and-a-half-story servants' wing. Above the brick first story, the walls are clapboarded with decorative stick work, like on the facade. The projecting gables of the third story are sheathed with fish scale shingles. Another chimney is exposed on the south wall of the servants' wing.

Dominating the north elevation is a gable-roofed porte-cochere, a feature common to Victorian era houses of this magnitude. The roof rests on four rectangular brick piers which rise from a granite base and have ornamental bands identical to those on the first story. The open gable ends display a kingpost truss motif above a spindle screen. The recessed rear entry is beneath the porte-cochere. Slightly east of the porte-cochere is a three-story ell topped by a shingled gable. Projecting diagonally from the northeast corner is a three-story, one bay wing.

The west elevation, marked by the corner wing and a three-sided, three-story bay window, has the same progression of brick, clapboard, and shingles on the first, second, and third stories respectively.

All of the roof surfaces are sheathed with polygonal slate shingles, adding a fourth textural, shape and color contrast. The ridgelines all have a buff-colored, pierced tile crest.

The interior of the Benedict house displays the panelled walls and carved woodwork associated with houses of this period. The open floorplan consisting of suites of rooms organized around a large, open hall, is also characteristic of the Queen Anne Style.

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The center hall has oak paneling and a coffered paneled ceiling. On the wall opposite the entry, an inglenook features a massive fireplace in the style of Eastlake (presently hidden behind a modern partition). The staircase rises from the right side, retaining its Eastlake newel post, banister and balusters.

The main parlor, library and dining room open off the center hall, and can be closed by sliding oak doors. Each of the major rooms has oak wainscoting and corner fireplaces of varying Eastlake design. The fireplace openings are flanked by colonettes with floral capitals, supporting mirrored overmantels. Stained glass transom windows reflect the function of each room (i.e. Shakespearean portraits in the library, etc.)

Original hardware and woodwork remain intact. The historical integrity of the interior has been reduced by the removal of some fireplace tiles and newel post tops. Linoleum has been installed on the floors, fluorescent lights hang from the ceilings, and an unattractive storm enclosure has been installed at the front entrance.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1879–1880      **Builder/Architect** Palliser, Palliser & Co., Bridgeport

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Charles Benedict House embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Queen Anne style that shaped the appearance of the Hillside Avenue neighborhood. Described in the New Haven Register in 1880 as "one of the most elegant and attractive of the homesteads in Connecticut,"<sup>1</sup> it was the most fully realized example of the Queen Anne style to be built in Waterbury and remains today as one of the most prominent and least altered of the grand homes of the industrialists who were the leaders in the nineteenth century American brass industry. It is one of only two homes of the major industrialists still standing in the city today. It is one of the most elaborate houses in the state designed by Palliser, Palliser & Co. of Bridgeport in the Queen Anne Style that they helped to popularize in the American market through their numerous pattern books published in the final decades of the 19th century. (Criteria C)

George Palliser, an English builder who came to Bridgeport in 1873 after a brief time in Trenton, published his first pattern book in 1876 as an attempt to make a well designed and well built house affordable to people who could not afford to hire an architect. Palliser was willing to sell plans for houses with prices varying depending on the size and finish. He would also advise on paint, plumbing, and hardware. The plans published in this first book were for houses with rectangular forms which depended on the Italianate and Stick Styles for embellishment. But Palliser must have been familiar with the Queen Anne Style that was characterized by an open floorplan and varied surface treatments, that was gaining popularity in England. Two years later, Charles Palliser joined his brother in Bridgeport and the following year they published a new pattern book with houses that incorporated many of the Queen Anne features found in the Benedict House; the open plan with eccentric projections, the large center hall with a fireplace, the varied textured surfaces. Benedict's house was considerably more elaborate than the examples published by the firm, but a number of houses based on Palliser's more modest examples were subsequently built in the Hillside Avenue neighborhood.

Although the Benedict House was designed just as the firm began working with the Queen Anne style, it is a fully realized example in design and ornamentation of the architectural philosophy of the period. The decorative stick-work of the upper stories, a feature originally amplified by contrasting paint colors, represents a conscious effort to emphasize the structural framework, the basic premise of the Stick Style. The imaginative design, projecting gables, and asymmetry embody the Queen Anne architect's ability to express the exuberance of the Gilded Age through uninhibited use of shape and material. In addition, the Benedict House illustrates the flexibility of balloon frame construction which made possible the creation of irregular shapes and projecting features.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Anderson, Joseph, ed., The Town and City of Waterbury, Conn. 3 vols., 1896, New Haven: The Price and Lee Company  
 Bologna, Sando, "Benedict House..." in the Waterbury American, May 23, 1953.  
 Palliser, Palliser & Co., Palliser's Model Homes, New York: Charles Coffin, 1879. (American Life Foundation Reprint, 1978)

# 10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property 2.5 acres

Quadrangle name Waterbury, Conn.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	8	6	6	3	3	0	0	4	6	0	2	7	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing			

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing			

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing			

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing			

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing			

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing			

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing			

### Verbal boundary description and justification

From the northwest intersection of Prospect Street and Hillside Avenue, proceed west along the north side of Hillside Avenue for 4000 feet; then north for 270 feet; then east for 250 feet, south for 95 feet, east for 150 feet and south along the west side of Prospect Street for 175 feet to the point of origin.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ann Y. Smith

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date September 30, 1980

street & number 93 Bethmour Road telephone 393-3403

city or town Bethany state Connecticut

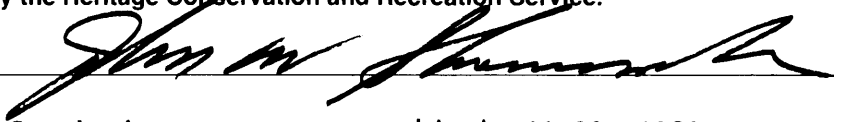
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local



As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date April 22, 1981

For HCRA use only  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

	date <u>6/2/81</u>
	date <u>6/4/81</u>

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Charles Benedict, described as "the leader of the largest industrial firm in the state"<sup>2</sup> at the time of his death, was nearing retirement when he built his impressive new house. He had been President of a number of the companies that his father had built in Waterbury, including Benedict and Burnham, the earliest of the city's giant brass companies, as well as the American Pin Co., the Waterbury Button Co., and the Waterbury Watch Co. Benedict and Burnham initiated many of the methods that laid the foundation of the brass industry in Connecticut: they were the first to import skilled English brass workers, the first to roll brass in Waterbury, and the first to create a joint stock company in Waterbury generating the large amounts of working capital needed for large scale production. In addition to his industrial contributions, Charles Benedict served the city as councilman, alderman and mayor.

In 1869, Benedict bought twenty-five acres on the hilltop overlooking the city, paved Hillside Avenue, and built a spacious Italianate home on the crest of the hill. After his father's death, he replaced the earlier home with a larger one of advanced style designed by Palliser, Palliser and Co. He built a house next door, also designed by the Bridgeport firm, for his recently widowed sister. In 1879, the estate also included elaborate greenhouses, a carriage house and a stable housing seven carriages, a farm house, and a working farm.

The house attracted state-wide attention during construction, for although it was one of Palliser, Palliser and Co.'s most elaborate houses, it was said to maintain the "sensible" new aesthetic promoted by the Bridgeport architects. Those who were interested in architecture were urged to visit the new style house in which "beauty is obtained by sound construction, harmonious combinations, and honest building which sets to naught all geegaws and gingerbread."<sup>3</sup> Equipped with advanced modern conveniences including a bathroom for every bedroom, an elevator, an ice room, and a clothes chute, the house was an elegant version of the basic Queen Anne house promoted by Palliser, Palliser and Co.

When Benedict died of pleurisy in October, 1881, returning from a voyage to England, his inventory suggests that the family had not yet finished moving into the house. His married daughter, Mrs. Gilman Hall, and her family moved into the house with Benedict's widow. The property was subdivided and the house was sold in 1889 to Charles Miller, a prosperous member of the rising merchant community and the President of Miller and Peck, a retail store specializing in dry goods and carpets. One of Miller's daughters, Sally Miller Smith, bought the house from her father's estate in 1917, retaining a staff of eleven to maintain the house and grounds (including four gardeners to tend to oranges, Hapsburg grapes, and poppies).

In 1952, the city bought the house in order to provide a permanent university campus in Waterbury and to induce the University of Connecticut to remain in the city. There have been additional classroom buildings constructed on the grounds nearby and the house itself continues to serve as student and faculty offices.



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Continuation sheet

Significance

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- Notes: <sup>1</sup>The New Haven Register, c. 1881, quoted in Sando Bologna, "The Benedict House...", Waterbury American, May 23, 1953
- <sup>2</sup>The New Haven Palladium, c. 1881, quoted in Sando Bologna, "The Benedict House...", Waterbury American, May 23, 1953
- <sup>3</sup>The American, c. 1880, quoted in Sando Bologna, "The Benedict House...", Waterbury American, May 23, 1953

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Major Bibliographical

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References

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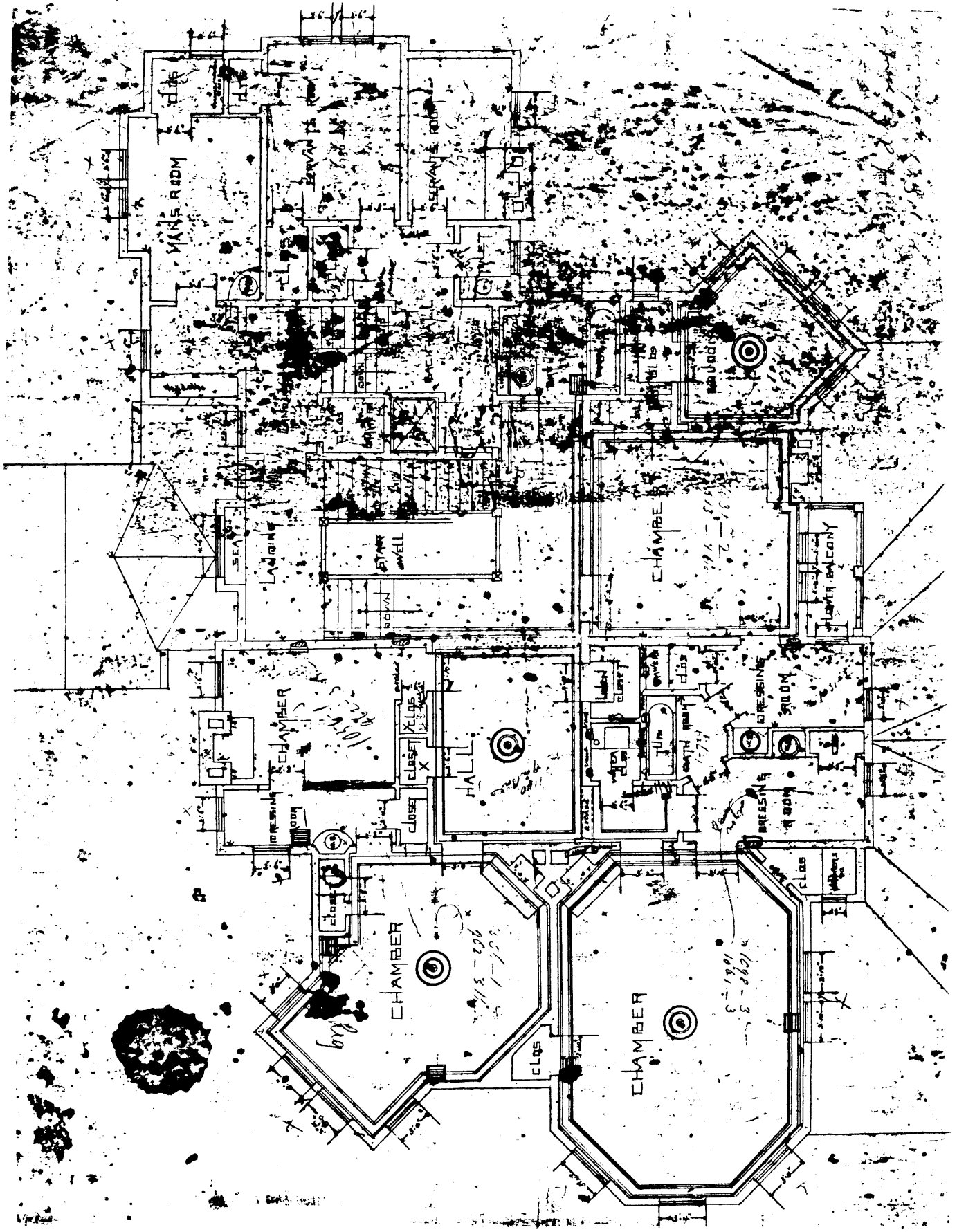


Palliser, George, Model Homes for the People, Bridgeport: 1876  
(American Life Foundation Reprint, 1978)  
Architect's drawings, 32 Hillside Avenue, second floor plan (in  
collection of Mattatuck Historical Society)  
Welton and Bennett, survey of Benedict land and house, March, 1871  
(in the records of the A.J. Patton Co., Waterbury)  
Waterbury Public Records: Land records, probate records, city engineering  
records, tax records, City Atlases  
Waterbury City Directory, 1869-1880  
Waterbury American, October 3, 1878, p. 3.

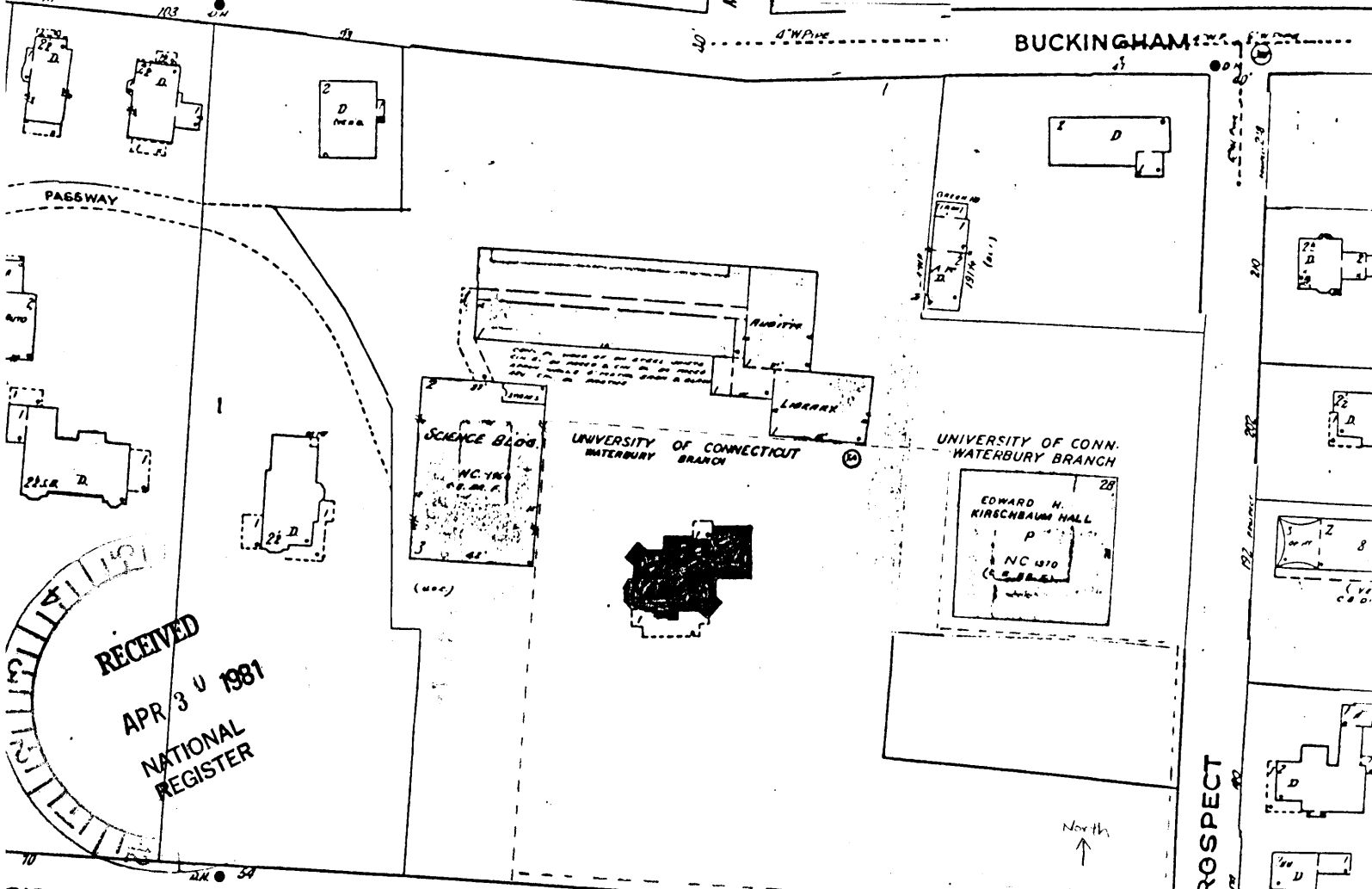
Second Story

Benedict-Miller House  
2nd story floor plan  
32 Hillside Avenue  
Waterbury, Connecticut

APR 30 1981  
JUN 12 1981

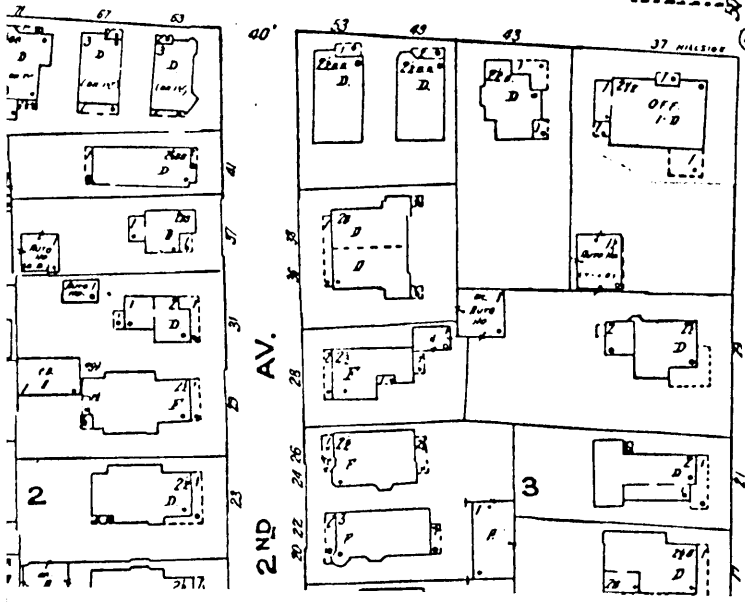


BUCKINGHAM

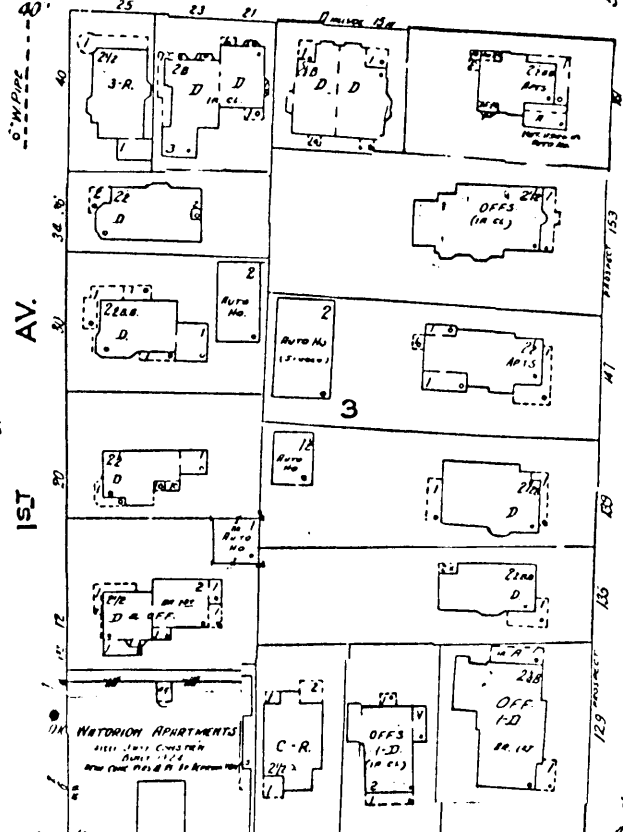


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 APR 3 0 1981  
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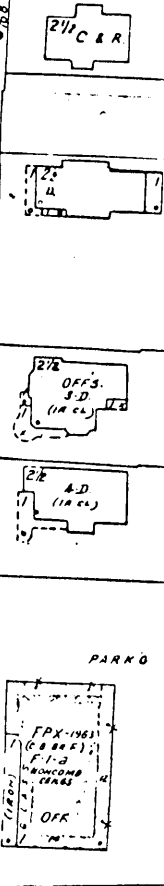
SIDE AV.



HILLSIDE AV.



PROSPECT

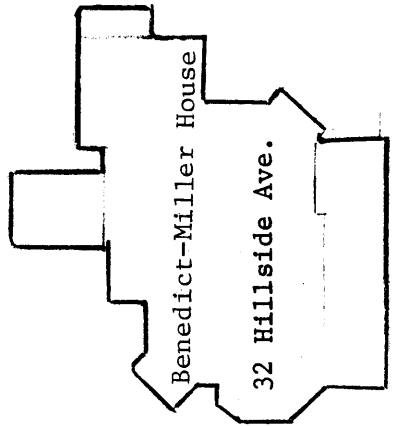
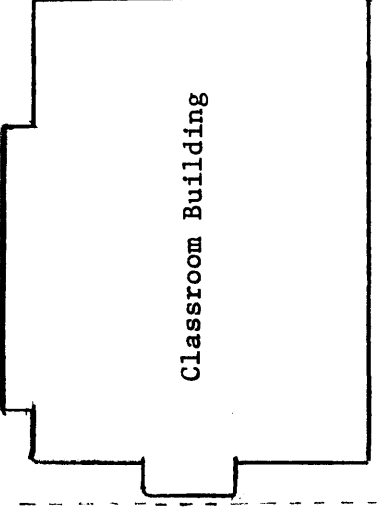


PARK

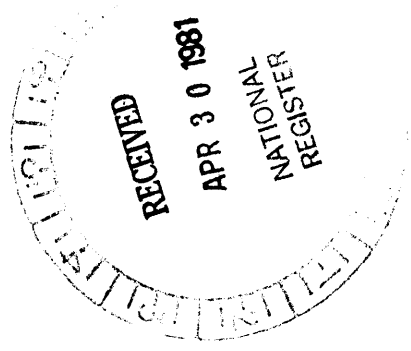
Benedict-Miller House  
 32 Hillside Ave., Waterbury, Conn.

18.663.300      46.02.750

JUN 12 1981



PROSPECT ST.



KEY

- Building Lines — North
- Paving Lines
- Site Boundry
- Scale: 1 inch=40 feet

JUN 12 1981