

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAR 8 1982

DATE ENTERED

APR 12 1982

**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

Webster Memorial Building

AND/OR COMMON

Webster Memorial Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

36 Trumbull Street

N/A NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

N/A VICINITY OF 1st.

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

09

COUNTY

Hartford

CODE

003

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY** DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT**OWNERSHIP** PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION** IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED

N/A

STATUS OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE** YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO**PRESENT USE** AGRICULTURE MUSEUM COMMERCIAL PARK EDUCATIONAL PRIVATE RESIDENCE ENTERTAINMENT RELIGIOUS GOVERNMENT SCIENTIFIC INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORTATION MILITARY OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Webster Associates

STREET & NUMBER

36 Trumbull Street

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

N/A VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Hartford City & Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

525 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

State Register of Historic Places

DATE

1981

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Webster Memorial is a three-story, flat-roofed brick building, five bays wide, with a central porticoed entrance. Located opposite one of the principal entrances to Hartford's Bushnell Park, the building is small in comparison to its neighbors. The surrounding buildings are nearly all large, 20th-century office and commercial structures, though the Lewis Street National Register District is around the corner just out of sight. For over 50 years, the Webster Memorial has been the headquarters of the Family Services Society of Hartford. The building's brick walls, laid in common bond with Flemish variation, rest on fieldstone underpinnings which are concealed above grade with brownstone facing. Brownstone also forms the simple lintels and sills of the rectangular window openings, now fitted with six-over-six double-hung sash.

Built as a three-family residence around 1870, the building originally was Italianate in style, with a bracketed cornice, overhanging eaves, and a different entrance portico.¹ It was extensively remodeled in 1924 for the Charity Organization Society, and contained offices, Memorial Hall (a meeting room) and on the upper floors, rooms for counseling and teaching. As it stands today, the facade or south-west side is chiefly distinguished for its limestone entrance treatment. Paired smooth columns with Corinthian capitals support a flat-roofed portico, which in turn is surmounted by a solid railing with urns at the corners. The window above the portico is enframed by limestone pilasters and capped by a round broken pediment. The bracketed eaves have been replaced by a Classical cornice with dentils and mutules, above which is a plain brick parapet. The cornice extends around the southeast side of the building, but the northwest wall is blank: demolition of an abutting structure and the resulting parking lot have left the wall exposed. To the rear is a one-story ell with high, round-arched windows, trimmed with limestone keyblocks and fitted with small-pane sash.

The interior was renovated for office space and has dropped ceilings, carpeted floors, and more than one generation of re-partitioning. Remaining historic material, however, includes two marble mantels with curved shelves, round-arched openings and carved keyblocks near the southeast corner on the first two floors; a similar mantel believed concealed beneath the wall material near the southwest corner of the first floor; and two wooden mantels with Gothic arch openings on the second floor. In an ell to the rear added in 1924, is Memorial Hall, now partitioned into several offices but originally a large open room in a finely detailed Georgian Revival style. It has a frieze of alternating triglyphs and patera, large round-arched windows with corresponding mirrors on the northwest wall, and a backdrop on the northeast wall consisting of a dentillated broken pediment supported on Ionic pilasters, repeating the motif of the window above the entrance.

¹The building does not appear in the Assessor's streetbook of 1865, but it is listed in 1871. Lewis Rowell's will of 1872 refers to the "new brick building on Trumbull Street," one of about a dozen houses owned by Rowell. In 1880, a tobacconist, a confectioner, and a toolmaker lived there with their families. In 1888, a picture showing the building before the 1924 renovation suggests that the top floor was boarded up and not rented (State Library, Picture Collection, Blizzard of 1888).

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Surveys (continued):

Hartford Architecture Conservancy Survey of Hartford
Local - 1975-78
Hartford Architecture Conservancy
Records deposited with:
Stowe-Day Foundation
Hartford, Connecticut

The building is included in one of the survey's published volumes:

Hartford Architecture, Volume One Downtown
Hartford Architecture Conservancy, 1979.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 c.1870 - built
1924 - remodeled

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Lewis & Rowell, orig. builder
Allen & Collens, arch. for remodelling

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Webster Memorial Building is important because it served as the first permanent home of Hartford's Charity Organization Society, the major private relief organization of the early 20th century (Criteria A). The building has its roots in the 19th-century development of the Lewis Street area, but it was remodeled in 1924 for the Society by Allen and Collens, one of the leading Boston firms. In its location, material and scale, the building preserves some of its character from its first use as a residence; at the same time, its Georgian Revival renovation is itself significant, for as the work of nationally-known architects, it provides a fine example of early 20th-century taste (Criteria C). Finally, the importance of the building is heightened by its highly visible location opposite an entrance to Bushnell Park.

The formation of Charity Organization Societies was one of the key developments of the Progressive Period. Reformers in the last years of the 19th century were distressed by social unrest arising from new waves of immigration, periodic depression and unemployment, urban congestion, and increasingly militant labor protest. At the same time, demands on public and private welfare agencies were rising. Charity Organization Societies were seen as a solution to both problems, and nearly every city in the country had one. The idea was to streamline private giving by combining charities into one organization, thereby eliminating duplication. Secondly, applicants for aid were rigorously investigated to discover the character flaws which were thought to have led to destitution. The Charity Organization Societies were a transition between the 19th-century view of poverty as moral failure and professional social work. At least in its early stages, the movement combined the idea of individual failure with modern case work methods. The Societies epitomized Progressive values of efficiency and reliance on social science solutions to problems, while at the same time retaining the moralistic outlook which pervaded the period.

Hartford's Charity Organization Society was one of the earliest, founded in 1890. On its 20th anniversary, the Society took pride in the fact that it had steadily reduced private charity outlays from \$33,000 in 1890 to a little over \$3,000 in 1910. By thoroughly investigating and counseling its clients, it is felt it had largely eliminated the "imposition, indolence and debauchery connected with the pauperism of that time (the 1890s)." In these years the Society rented office space and moved its headquarters frequently, but a bequest from insurance executive John C. Webster allowed the Society to move into a permanent home in 1925. Eventually, the judgmental tone was softened, and following the Depression, when like other private charities they were overwhelmed with requests for aid, they changed their name to Family Service Society. Early programs operating in the building included casework for public assistance recipients and the Friendly Visiting program, where volunteers visited elderly shut-ins. By the 1940s, a Homemakers Service was in place for clients unable to care for their homes, and family counseling had begun.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Charity Organization Society of Hartford. Annual Report, 1910-1920.
 Hartford Probate Records Estate of Lewis Rowell, 1874, State Library, Hartford
 Kusmer, Kenneth L. "The Foundations of Organized Charity in the Progressive Era,"
 Journal of American History, LX (1973), 657-78.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME Hartford North

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1"=24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 693160 4626100

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is recorded in the Hartford Land Records, Vol. 550, Page 248.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Merle Kummer and Bruce Clouette

ORGANIZATION

Hartford Architecture Conservancy

DATE

May 20, 1980

STREET & NUMBER

130 Washington Street

TELEPHONE

(203) 525-0279

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE

Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

February 19, 1982

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Entered in the
National Register

DATE

4/12/82

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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Meals on Wheels was the most recent program addition. The organization's significance during its period in the Webster Memorial lies in its expression of the national trend in private social work away from individual charity and toward counseling and self-help efforts.

The house the Society purchased had been built about 1870 by Lewis Rowell, a wealthy contractor who lived on an adjacent lot fronting on Lewis Street. It was one of several houses Rowell built in the area and was rented out to three middle class families. Although extensively remodelled, the Webster Memorial has not entirely lost its character as a residential structure. In addition to its historical association with Rowell and the Lewis Street area, the house retains its small proportions, brick material, and interior mantels which distinguish it from its office-building neighbors and recall the earlier nature of the area as a residential neighborhood. Indeed, in the flood of commercial and governmental buildings of the 20th century, the Webster Memorial is the last 19th-century residence left on the downtown edge of Bushnell Park.

The architects of the 1924 remodeling were Allen and Collens, a firm best known in Hartford for their buildings at the Hartford Theological Seminary. The senior partner, Francis R. Allen, was trained in the years 1877-79 at l'Ecole des Beaux-arts, and in 1904 joined in partnership with Charles Collens. Working in Gothic and Classical styles, the firm had an outstanding reputation for their church and college buildings, notably Union Theological Seminary in New York, the Church of Christ Scientist in Concord, N.H., and several buildings at Columbia, Williams, and Vassar colleges. In the Webster Memorial Building, they gave to a rather ordinary brick house a sense of importance and seriousness fitting for the headquarters of Hartford's major charity. The academic, almost heavy, Classical detailing of the new entrance had connotations of elegance and stateliness. The repetition of the broken pediment motif gives a unity to the renovation work, since it connects the reworking of the facade to the finely-detailed Memorial Hall in the interior.

The restrained neo-Georgian design stands solidly in the mainstream of Hartford's commercial architecture of the 1920s, represented most monumentally by the Hartford Connecticut Trust of 1921 (Morris and O'Connor), a Travelers office of 1927-28 (Voorhees Gmelin and Walker) and the Aetna office of 1929-31 (James Gamble Rogers), all of which refer to Bullfinch's 1796 Old State House. The Webster Memorial, in its small scale, achieves a surprisingly similar monumentality and represents one of Hartford's most successful designs in the style. In addition, the Memorial Hall ranks with the interiors of Davis and Brooks' 1914 Municipal Building as neo-Classical ensembles.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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The broken pediment, the red brick exterior, and the round-arched, small-paned windows in the ell are the key features which make the Memorial Georgian Revival. Like the Second Renaissance Revival and the Neo-Classical, other 20th-century styles with which it shares strong Classical detailing, the neo-Georgian style was appropriate for public and private buildings where discipline, historical precedence and a feeling of monumentality were the goals of architecture.