

SHPO DOE: ☐ SR ☐ NR

☐ Eligible ☐ Not Eligible ☐ Insufficient

Date _____

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation Determination of Eligibility (DOE) Form

A "Determination of Eligibility" is a decision regarding whether a district, site, building, structure, or object meets the State or National Register Criteria for Evaluation, although the property is not formally listed in the State or National Register.

Please complete this form by clicking in the checkboxes and entering text in the grey fields.

SECTION I

Property Address: 63 Chateau Rd, Middlebury College, Middlebury VT

Property Name: Battell Hall – Middlebury College

This DOE is for the:

- ☒ State Register of Historic Places
 - ☐ State project – 22 VSA 14 review
 - ☒ Act 250 project – Criterion 8 review
 - ☐ State Tax Credits
 - ☐ Barn Grant Application
 - ☐ Historic Preservation Grant Application
 - ☐ VDHP staff request
 - ☐ Other _____
- ☐ National Register of Historic Places
 - ☐ Federal project – Section 106 review
 - ☐ Federal Tax Credits (RITC)
 - ☐ VDHP staff request
 - ☐ Other _____

Who is making this request?

- ☐ Division for Historic Preservation Staff: Name, Title
-or-

Middlebury College Office of Facilities Services
Attn: Mr. Norm Cushman, AVP for Operations
84 South Service Rd, Middlebury College, Middlebury
cushman@middlebury.edu
802-989-0029

SECTION II

*for completion by State/Federal agencies and consultants only

Eligibility Recommendation

Evaluated under:

☒ Criterion A: Event

☐ Criterion B: Person

☒ Criterion C: Design/Construction

☐ Criterion D: Information Potential

Integrity: ☒ Setting ☒ Location ☒ Design ☒ Materials ☒ Workmanship ☒ Feeling ☒ Association

Period of Significance: 1950 - 1974

Level of Significance: ☒ Local

☐ State

☐ National

Justification for Eligibility Recommendation:

The Battell Dormitory is eligible for listing in the State Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Events, as a contributing building in a potential Middlebury College Historic District which is significant for its association with the broad patterns of education in Vermont. As noted in the Multiple Property Documentation Form for Educational Resources of Vermont:

"Education has played a significant and often progressive role in the history of Vermont. The 1777 constitution of the Republic of Vermont was the first constitution in what was to become the United States to include a provision for education. It stated: "A school or schools shall be established in each town, by the legislature, for the convenient instruction of youth, with such salaries to the masters, paid by each town, making proper use of school lands in each town ...

It also recommended the establishment of institutions of higher learning:

"One grammar school in each county, and one university in this State ought to be established by direction of the General Assembly."

Schools at all three levels of instruction were established in the following 14 years, including the University of Vermont founded in 1791, the year Vermont became a state. Instruction at UVM did not start until the turn of the century. Middlebury College was chartered and began operations in 1800, becoming the first operating institute of higher learning in the state. Between 1850 – 1860, 300 new schools were built adding 10,000 new students. By 1860, 11 towns had their own high schools and graduating classes swelled the ranks of college applicants by 100%. By 1900, state law required towns with populations over 2,500 to maintain a public high schools causing the establishment of several new colleges to educate graduates: St. Michael's College (1904), Lyndon State College (1911), Trinity College (1925), Bennington College (1925), and Goddard College (1938).

Schools are reflective of the State's long history of education. As stated in the Education MPDF:

"They were and still are important public buildings in their districts, neighborhoods, or towns. They also played significant roles in their communities because they were used for other public functions, such as singing schools, dances, suppers, temperance meetings, lectures, town meetings, religious services, club meetings, and lyceums."

The same is true for colleges and universities, but the scope and impact is far greater. Universities have transformed their host communities, as a major employer, economic driver, and center of arts, diversity, and politics. With its 350-acre campus and 2,800 student body adjoining Middlebury Village, the impact on the development of Middlebury (population 7,200) over the 224 years of the college's operation has been consequential and continual. The construction of the Battell in 1950 and 1955 as part of a 1950's expansion was aligned with the surge in demand for a Middlebury College education after WWII, buttressed by the 1944 G.I. bill that rewarded returning veterans with funds to cover tuition and living expenses.

The Battell Dormitory is also significant for the role of dormitories on college campuses. The idea of having students reside on campus is as old as the universities themselves and served practical and social objectives. As Carla Yanni writes in her book Living on Campus, An Architectural History of the American Dormitory:

"living on campus is a manifestation of three hundred years of American educational ideology that placed a high priority on social interaction among students Dorm living is one of the most widely shared experiences in modern American life. Hundreds of thousands of students pass through residence halls, and their lives are changed by encounters with these buildings ... Residence halls are not mute containers for the temporary storage of youthful bodies and emergent minds. Dormitories constitute historical evidence of the educational ideas of the people who built them."

With the above in mind, the contributing Battell dormitory together with the group of core buildings that comprise the potential Middlebury College Historic District are associated with broad patterns of education in Vermont.

The Battell Dormitory is also eligible for listing in the State Register of Historic Places under Criterion C: Design/Construction, as a good representative example of a double-loaded corridor college dormitory. Early dormitories served to house – and separate – students, often by race or socioeconomic backgrounds. They were often included within self-sufficient school buildings, such as Middlebury College's Le Chateau which housed dorms, offices, classrooms, dining hall, and offices in a single structure. The advent and construction of purpose-built dormitory buildings was more a reflection of the college's organization and environment than to a particular timeframe. Carla Yanni writes in her book that while the range of architectural styles for dormitories was vast, and no style carried a particular difference over another in terms of how they functioned, there have historically been two general plans for college dormitories. The first, as used at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, is the staircase plan which had regularly placed doors into stairwells that accessed several rooms radiating around the stair hall on each floor, the stair hall serving as the common area. This plan lacked a central desk or observation point and offered the freedom for students to move in and out of the building at

will, built typically for male students. In contrast, the double-loaded corridor plan as used in the Battell has rows of rooms adjoining a common corridor with limited access points and making it easier to track students and visitors. Common bathrooms, lounges, and study rooms were placed as needed in this plan. At the time of Battell's construction, monitoring female students was considered more important than men as noted in a 1949 pamphlet produced by the American Institute of Architects ...

"It is noted that women's colleges generally provide more supervision and therefore prefer the corridor-type plan to the entry-type plan."

Application of the double-loaded corridor plan offered flexibility in how the building was laid out, straight lines, U-shapes, quadrangles, or as deployed at the Battell, L-shapes, and an E-shape. Common to each configuration was the double loaded corridor and a limited number of entrances.

Of course, colleges located outside cities, particularly those in rural areas, *had* to provide student housing for lack of alternatives. But how they provided housing followed the same patterns – assuring social cohesion and interaction, but with a measure of gender segregation and control early on. By contrast, contemporary on-campus housing celebrates diversity and freedom, and the 2004 Middlebury College Atwater residences are an example. Gone are the Battell low ceilings and long corridors in favor of an all-suite design – the evolution of the staircase plan.

In terms of architectural style, the degree to which the Battell dormitory is a good representative example of the Colonial Revival style is not as clear. As noted in the VARI form text and illustrated in the attachments, the Battell was designed and constructed as two L-shaped buildings in 1950, ostensibly Colonial, or Classical Revival in design. Other than the stonework and mortar required to match that of Forest Hall, there is little written about the design objectives. Retired Middlebury College professor Glenn Andres recalls the design-build firm Austin & Austin providing a basic building design and menu of possible embellishments for the Battell, and that the college selected all-of-the-above. This included the rather incongruous smooth marble quoins, but rightfully the marble stairs, iron railings, entrance pavilions, and classical entrance with fluted columns, architrave, and sidelights. Low ceiling heights and radiators below windows on the inside meant the windows appear a little short in proportion, however.

In 1955, the center, three-story section was added without that intent in 1950. As a result, the Battell is highly unusual in that the central, architecturally dominant section of the building is a later addition. The central section, albeit a product of expediency to meet the post-war need for capacity, produced a central hipped block with pedimented, classical entrance and symmetry across the Battell's long façade elevation. Whether by clever design, some fortunate happenstance, or a mixture of both, the 1955 building appears consistent with the generally accepted tenets of Colonial Revival design, with classical entrances, hipped roof planes, strict symmetry, and projecting pedimented pavilions. The center block pavilion also serves to (imperfectly) break the long façade elevation into components consistent with the design of the lower campus. Other than replacement vinyl windows and vinyl siding on the entrance pavilions, the building appears as it did after the center addition was built in 1955. The interior has also seen very few changes, other than resurfacing and painting the corridor concrete block walls. As a result, whatever the observer might conclude about the design success of the 1955

addition and overall architectural values of the building, it retains the integrity required for State Register eligibility.

Just as the build-out of the Battell was not part of a standing formal plan, neither was its siting on the campus. Its location and massing do not appear on any of the three masterplans before it was built, and it is conspicuously absent from the 2008 Dennis Associates plan, which recommended its removal. The problematic issues around its present location are twofold. First, it interrupts axes the college continues to consider important in binding the components of the north campus and connecting the north campus to the south campus. Pearsons Hall was constructed in 1911 to anchor the west flank of the common, with a proposed axis eastward to what is now the Johnson building. The 1950 version of the Battell allowed the axis to pass between the opposing blocks. The center addition interrupted that axis and awkwardly divided the north campus into east and west components, at least relative to the concepts expressed in the earlier master plans. It also encroached on a second axis connecting the north and south campuses from the Chateau building to the McCullough Student Center. Both axes are shown on the attached Dennis Associates plan for reference.

The second issue with the siting is encroachment on the Chateau quadrangle which once extended south from the Chateau to College Street, and the Battell blocking what were previously significant views of and from the Chateau. The Dennis Associates volume plan removes the Battell, reimagines the two north campus quadrangles, and overlays an orderly arrangement of possible buildings adherent to City Beautiful concepts. With the above in mind, the Battell dormitory does not appear to be significant for its contribution to a formal campus plan.

- ☒ Meets the Criteria for Evaluation and is eligible for the State/National Register of Historic Places
- ☐ Does NOT meet the Criteria for Evaluation and is NOT eligible for the State/National Register of Historic Places

SECTION III

Required Attachments:

- ☒ Vermont Architectural Resource Inventory Form (VARI)
- ☒ Recent photographs of the property showing exterior views of each elevation; overall views of the property and the surrounding context. If available, include copies of historic views as well. For a historic district, include streetscape views showing how the properties relate to each other.
- ☒ Map showing the location of the property in relation to streets, intersections, or widely recognized features. For a historic district, include an approximate boundary showing the extent of the district.

Please email this form as a Word document (not PDF) and all required attachments to:

ACCD.projectreview@vermont.gov

Questions? Call Devin Colman at 802-585-8246

Section IV

*for completion by VDHP staff only

Division for Historic Preservation Determination or Concurrence:

☐ Eligible

☐ Not Eligible

☐ Insufficient Information for Determination

Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Integrity: ☐ Setting ☐ Location ☐ Design ☐ Materials ☐ Workmanship ☐ Feeling ☐ Association

Staff Comments: _____

Requires Vermont Advisory Council Review? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

Advisory Council Finding: _____

Recorded by: Name, Title

Date: mm/dd/yyyy