

OHIO HISTORIC INVENTORY

Ohio Historic Preservation Office
567 E. Hudson St. Columbus, Ohio 43211
614/297-2470



1. No.	2. County LOR	4. Present Name(s) Severance Hall		<input type="checkbox"/> Coded
3. Location of Negatives O.H.I.O. Resource		5. Historic or Other Name(s) Severance Laboratory		
	Roll # Exp. # Facing			
Rear	1 25A SE			
Front	1 24A NW			
6. Specific Address or Location 120 West Lorain		17. Date(s) or Period 1901	17b. Alteration Date(s)	30. Foundation Material Stone
6a. Lot, Section or VMD Number 09-00-075-106-061		18. Style or Design Romanesque	High Style <input type="checkbox"/>	31. Wall Construction Stone Bearing
7. City or Village Oberlin		18a. Style of Addition or Element(s) Elements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		32. Roof: Type Hip Pitch Low Material Clay Tile, Roman Tile
8. Site Plan with North Arrow		19. Architect or Engineer Howard Van Doren Shaw, Chicago		33. No. Bays Front 5 Side 7
		19a. Design Sources		34. Exterior Wall Material(s) Stone, Rock-Faced Ashlar
		20. Contractor or Builder George Feick, Sandusky		35. Plan Shape Other
9. U.T.M. Reference Quadrangle Name		21. Building Type or Plan Other Building		36. Changes (Explain in #42) Altered, Minimal
Zone	Easting	Northing		37. Window Type(s) 12 over 1, 6 over 6 Double-hung
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		38. Bldg. Dims. approx. 74 ft. X 72 ft.
10. <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure		23. Present Use College Psychology Department		39. Endangered? No Explain:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Object		24. Ownership <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private		40. Chimney Placement Off Center Within Roof Surface
11. On National Register ? Yes		25. Owner's Name & Address, if known Oberlin College 135 West Lorain Street Oberlin OH 44074		41a. Distance from road
12. N.R. Potential ?		26. Property Acreage 1.127		41b. Frontage on road 188 ft. (corner)
13. Part of Estb Hist Dist? No		27. Other Surveys in Which Included McQuillin (75)		
14. Dist. Potential ?		28. No. of Stories 3		
15. Name of Established District (N.R. or Local) NR: Oberlin College thematic nomination		29. Basement? Yes		
16. Thematic Association(s) Education: Parochial/Private: Higher		42. Further Description of Important Interior and Exterior Features This two-and-one-half-story rock-faced ashlar building has a clay tile hipped roof, Romanesque details, and a V-shaped footprint oriented within a street corner. The central portion of the building faces southeast, while the outer walls of the side wings face east and south respectively. An inverted trapezoid façade is created where the side wings join the central portion; a large patio rests in front of this façade. The main entrance has a three-quarter-circle transom window above wood double doors flanked by medium-sized stone piers. Three windows are directly above the main entrance and carved just below their sill is "Severance Chemical Laboratory." Almost all of the windows on the first and second stories are twelve-over-one, double-hung (cont.)		
43. History and Significance Severance Chemical Laboratory was the gift of Mr. Louis Severance, of New York City. The construction began in 1899, and the corner stone was laid May 31, 1900; it was dedicated on September 26, 1901. The total cost, including the site, was \$75,000. Mr. Severance also provided an endowment of \$40,000 for the Chair of Chemistry, and a laboratory fund of \$10,000 for the Department of Chemistry. The architect was Howard Van Doren Shaw, of Chicago (OC General Catalogue). When it was built, Severance Hall provided for a great advance in science pedagogy. Prior to its completion, (cont.)		46. Prepared by M. Fedelchak-Harley; L. Previll		
44. Description of Environment and Outbuildings (see #52) This building sits at the intersection of Lorain St. (Rt. 511) and South Professor diagonally opposite Tappan Square. Route 511 is a busy traffic thoroughfare and Professor Street is a central pedestrian route for college students.		47. Organization O.H.I.O. and H.P.C.		
45. Sources of Information Lorain County Courthouse: Lorain County tax records. O.H.I.O. Resource Center: Oberlin Historic Preservation Commission Files; General Catalogue of Oberlin College, 1908. Blodgett, Geoffrey. Oberlin Architecture College and Town: A Guide to its Social History. Oberlin College, 1985.		48. Date Recorded 9-30-2000		
		49. Revised by		
		50a. Date Revised		
		50b. Reviewed by		

51. Condition of Property

<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruin
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good/Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Destroyed/Burned
<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	Date _____

54. Farmstead Plan



52. Historic Outbuildings and Dependencies

Barn Type(s)

<input type="checkbox"/> Corn Crib or Shed	<input type="checkbox"/> Summer Kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/> Silo
<input type="checkbox"/> Smoke House	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring House	<input type="checkbox"/> Ice House
<input type="checkbox"/> Designed Landscape Features	<input type="checkbox"/> Privy	<input type="checkbox"/> Garage

53. Affiliated OAI Site Number(s) _____

OAI Completed? _____

Archaeological Feature:	Observed	Expected on Basis of Archival Research
Well	<u>No</u>	<u>No</u>
Privy	<u>No</u>	<u>No</u>
Cistern	<u>No</u>	<u>No</u>
Foundation	<u>No</u>	<u>No</u>
Structural Rubble	<u>No</u>	<u>No</u>
Formal Trash Dump	<u>No</u>	<u>No</u>
Other _____	<u>No</u>	<u>No</u>

42. Further Description of Important Interior and Exterior Features (Continued from page 1)

and appear to be original to the building. The windows of the top half-story are six-over-six, double-hung. Plain stone lintels rest above all first-story windows while shaped lintels crown the second-story windows. Each corner of the building has smooth stone quoins. The building's high foundation has allowed the basement to be renovated into classroom space. The back of the building has a cast-iron fire escape added after construction.

43. History and Significance (Continued from page 1.)

chemistry had been taught in decaying Cabinet Hall. When Severance was completed, Chemistry Professor Jewett and his students carried their equipment in triumph from Cabinet Hall to Severance (Blodgett).

This building is significant for the history of philanthropy and science pedagogy that it embodies. It is also significant for its history of the college's late 19th century expansion. Severance Laboratory was listed on the National Register as part of the Oberlin College thematic nomination in 1978. It was listed by the City of Oberlin as an Oberlin City Landmark in September of 1975.