

# OHIO HISTORIC INVENTORY

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



1. No.	2. County <b>LOR</b>	4. Present Name(s) Wilder Hall Student Union		<input type="checkbox"/> Coded
3. Location of Negatives O.H.I.O. Resource		5. Historic or Other Name(s) Wilder Hall (Men's Building)		
	Roll # Exp. # Facing			
Front	1 21A N			
Rear	2 25A S			
6. Specific Address or Location 135 West Lorain		17. Date(s) or Period 1911	17b. Alteration Date(s)	30. Foundation Material Stone
6a. Lot, Section or VMD Number 09-00-085-106-071		18. Style or Design Richardsonian Romanesque	High Style <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	31. Wall Construction Stone Bearing
7. City or Village Oberlin		18a. Style of Addition or Element(s) Elements <input type="checkbox"/>		32. Roof: Type Hip Pitch Moderate Material Clay Tile, Roman Tile
8. Site Plan with North Arrow		19. Architect or Engineer Joseph Lyman Silsbee, Chicago		33. No. Bays Front 20 Side 5
		19a. Design Sources		34. Exterior Wall Material(s) Stone, Rock-Faced Ashlar
		20. Contractor or Builder		35. Plan Shape Rectangular
9. U.T.M. Reference		21. Building Type or Plan Other Building		36. Changes (Explain in #42) Rehabilitation
Zone Easting Northing		22. Original Use, if apparent Men's Dormitory		37. Window Type(s) 1 over 1 Double-hung
<input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Object		23. Present Use Student Union of Oberlin College		38. Bldg. Dims. 196 ft. X 106 ft.
11. On National Register ? Yes		24. Ownership <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private		39. Endangered? No Explain:
12. N.R. Potential ?		25. Owner's Name & Address, if known Oberlin College 135 W. Lorain Street Oberlin OH 44074		40. Chimney Placement 6 Gable End, Exterior Both Ends
13. Part of Estb Hist Dist? No		26. Property Acreage 3.036		41a. Distance from road
14. Dist. Potential ? No		27. Other Surveys in Which Included McQuillin (75)		41b. Frontage on road 196 ft.
15. Name of Established District (N.R. or Local) NR: Oberlin College thematic nomination		28. No. of Stories 4		
16. Thematic Association(s) Education: Parochial/Private: Higher		29. Basement? yes		
42. Further Description of Important Interior and Exterior Features <p>This symmetrical stone building is a three-and-one-half-story Richardsonian Romanesque Style. It has a red tile hipped roof, and a parapet-gable center, on both the front and rear façades. The front entrance has a squared hood, with two pairs of decorative columns framing the entryway. Similar columns can be found along the rear exposure, framing the basement-level entryways. Other features include a large, formal, raised porch around the front entrance, and semicircular, leaded-glass, patterned panels above all front-facing, first-story windows. All windows are one-over-one, double-hung, and appear to be original. The building has undergone regular interior renovations as the student union of Oberlin College, but retains much of its original woodwork.</p>				
43. History and Significance <p>From the school's founding men had lived in boarding houses scattered throughout the town. The college had built dormitories for women, including Talcott and Baldwin, but not for men. This building, constructed from a design by architect Joseph Lyman Silsbee, was intended to correct a perceived imbalance by providing men with campus housing, and thereby to build male loyalty and a sense of brotherhood at the college. Men's Building was completed in 1911 with funding from an anonymous donor, who was later identified as Herbert Wilder a Boston paper manufacturer. As is true with so many donors to the college, Mr. Wilder admired President King's aim to combine</p>				
44. Description of Environment and Outbuildings (see #52) <p>Wilder Hall sits on the north side of an Oberlin College campus thoroughway known as Wilder Bowl. Its central location, near many college classroom buildings, reinforces its function as a student union.</p>				
45. Sources of Information <p>Lorain County Courthouse: Lorain County tax records. O.H.I.O. Resource Center: Oberlin Historic Preservation Commission Files. Blodgett, Geoffrey. Oberlin Architecture College and Town: A Guide to its Social History. Oberlin College, 1985.</p>				
				46. Prepared by M. Fedelchak-Harley; L. Previll
				47. Organization O.H.I.O. and H.P.C.
				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)

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

excellence with religious principles; it was named for Wilder in 1956. Men' s Hall provided housing for 65 undergraduate leaders (class officers, athletic captains, publication editors, etc.) a dining room, a barbershop and other spaces for meetings and assembly (Blodgett). Today it serves as the student union and provides space for student organization offices, dining options, mailroom, and meeting and performance space along with places for social gatherings, relaxation and conviviality.

Wilder Hall 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 November of 1997.