Laundry | Phoenix Manufacturing Company

Town City: Farmington
Street and Number (and or, location): 120 Garden Street
Owner(s): Miss Porter's School, Inc.
Use: Early Learning Center/Apartments

Style of Building: Mid-nineteenth-century industrial

Material: (Specify)
- X Clapboard
- X Brick
- X Other (Specify) brownstone foundation
- X Asbestos Siding
- Partial foundation
- X Wood Shingle
- X Asphalt Siding
- X Fieldstone
- X Board & Batten
- X Stucco
- X Cobblestone
- X Aluminum Siding
- X Concrete
- X Cut stone

Structural System:
- X Wood frame
- X Post and beam
- X balloon
- X Other (Specify)
- X Load bearing masonry
- X Structural iron or steel

Roof Type:
- X Gable
- X Flat
- X Mansard
- X Monitor
- X Sawtooth
- X Gambrel
- X Shed
- X Hip
- X Round
- X Other (Specify)

Material:
- X Wood Shingle
- X Roll Asphalt
- X Tin
- X Slate
- X Asbestos shingle
- X Built up
- X Tile
- X Other (Specify)

Number of Stories: 3
Approximate Dimensions: original block 30 x 60. Rear 65 x 30, Elles 10 x 16, 19 x 12, 10 x 21

Condition: Structural:
- X Excellent
- X Good
- X Fair
- X Deteriorated

Integrity: On original site
- X Yes
- X No

Related Outbuildings or Landscape Features:
- X Barn
- X Shed
- X Garage
- X Other landscape features or buildings (Specify)
- X Carriage house
- X Shop
- X Garden

Surrounding Environment:
- X Open land
- X Woodland
- X Residential
- X Scattered buildings visible from site
- X Commercial
- X Industrial
- X Rural
- X High building density

This building sits on the west side of Garden Street south of Mill Lane. The Riverside Cemetery is visible to the south. Other buildings associated with Miss Porter's School lie to the north and east. To the west is the Farmington River.
Built between 1848-1851, this building originally featured a rectangular block. Its wings were added by Nelson O. Keyes and later by R.F. Jones (dates unknown) probably after 1906. Today it exhibits exposed, high brownstone and brick foundations. A balcony porch extends off the east elevation. The rear additions feature identical materials and similar design elements. Note the nine-over-nine sash, brick chimney, and two story open porches on the north and south sides of the main block.

In 1848 Timothy and Catherine Cowles quit-claimed a "certain piece of land on the new street recently opened, west of Main Street" to the Phoenix Manufacturing Company (FLR 50:170). Measuring 84 1/2 rods, the land was sold to the company headed by president Samuel Deming (1798-1884), the son of John and Susannah (Cowles) Deming. The company manufactured hoes, forks, and other garden tools in this building which was standing by 1851. In September of 1851 John Deming (b. 1825?) quit-claimed his interests in the "foundry, blacksmith shop, small building near shop used as a pattern room" to Samuel (LFR 51:270), who in turn quit-claimed the property for $1400 to Edwin W. Carrington (FLR 51:273). By December of the same year, Samuel Deming received back 1/3 part of the property (FLR 50:374) and sold it, next, to Austin F. Williams in 1854 (FLR 51:566), along with Augustus Ward's interest in 1859 (FLR 54:336). In 1872 Catherine D. Vorce, the heir of Williams, inherited the "Phoenix property" (FLR 64:44). In 1886 she and her husband sold it to Sarah Porter, founder of Farmington's female boarding school (FLR 66:523). It was used for many years as the laundry for the school. Next, Robert Porter Keep inherited his aunt's estate and it passed to Robert Porter Keep, Jr. and Dorthea Prentise, Dudley. History of Farmington Houses. 9 vols., N.p., 1974; Farmington House File Collection. N.p., 1950-52. Brandegee, Arthur L. Farmington, Connecticut, The Village of Beautiful Homes. Farmington, Conn: Author, 1906.
OWNER'S NAME: MISS PORTER'S SCHOOL, INC.

ADDRESS: 120 Garden Street

DATE BUILT: ca. 1848

FOR: The Phoenix Manufacturing Company

ARCHITECT: 1st. addition by Nelson O. Keyes for a laundry;

MASTER-BUILDER: 2nd " R.F. Jones


REFERENCES: "Farmington, Conn., 1906", p. 196 'Laundry for Miss Porter's School, formerly the Phoenix'
"Baker & Tilden Atlas, 1869", p. 33 - 'A.F. Williams, Tr.'

(OVER)
Former Owners, cont.: 
road at a point 159 ft. s. of the intersection of the s. line of Mill Lane & e. line of New Rd., with the Phoenix bldg. & 2 tenements, 8/2/1886, Vol. 66, p. 523; A.F. Williams from Allen D. & Catherine D. Vorce, the Phoenix property so-called on New St., n. on my own land & Mill La., s. on C. Sparmer, 1 acre. The n. line is to the center of land between the 2 bldgs. now occupied by Hiley Chidsey & Henry Davis. The n. line runs to the Canal Bank & then n. to Mill La. A Quit Claim deed, 6/16/1885, Vol. 69, p. 2; A.F. Williams from Raymond Seeley, Trustee Est. Timothy Cowles (A.F. Williams was then Trustee for his wife & children) land known as the Phoenix property near the mill - n. on Geo. Gallagher, e. on New St., s. & w. on Chauncey D. Cowles, with the bldgs., & 1 1/2 acre of land 2/22/1873, Vol. 64, p. 78; O.D. Vorce from A.F. Williams, the Phoenix property, n. on Geo. Gallagher & Mill La., e. on highway, s. on C.D. Cowles, w. on river 8/17/1872, Vol. 64, p. 44; A.F. Williams as individual & as Trustee Est. Timothy Cowles, from Samuel Deming & Augustus Ward, same, 3/31/1859, Vol. 54, p. 336; T. Cowles, S. Deming & A. Ward from A.F. Williams, same, excepting a blacksmith shop & small stove room built by John Deming, a q.c. deed, 1/3/1857, Vol. 54, p. 226; A.F. Williams from Samuel Deming, Pres. Phoenix Mfg. Co., land & all bldgs., except blkstshop & small stove house built by John Deming, being 84 1/2 rods with all bldgs. & appurtenances, 11/11/1856, Vol. 51, p. 566; Samuel Deming, Pres. Phoenix Mfg. Co., from Timothy Cowles, Samuel Deming, Augustus Ward, Sarah Carrington & A. Ward as Adm. Est. Edwin W. Carrington dead, an undivided tract of land with all bldgs. thereon known as the Phoenix Mfg. Co., 84 rods, n. on Mill La., w. on Canal, s. on T. Cowles, e. on highway with all personal property to said bldgs., conveying all real & personal est. that was sold by the Phoenix Mfg. Co. to Edwin W. Carrington deceased & by him conveyed to us, 2/24/1854, Vol. 50, p. 523; Samuel Deming from Edwin W. Carrington 1/3 land & bldgs. known as the Phoenix Mfg. Co. 12/20/1851, Vol. 50, p. 374 - Samuel Deming was President; Edwin W. Carrington from Phoenix Mfg. Co., by
including the factory or main bldg., including the forges in it, the chimney, brick work about the boilers & the pipes for water & wind, the grinding shop with all the grindstones, shafting, etc. The coal house, storehouse, office & outhouse, the new Forging shop with all the forges thereon, 2 blowers & 1 pair bellows, the steam engine & boilers & all fixtures & all shafting attached thereto to the bldg., all pulleys & shafting for blowers & the polishing works & all material for polishing, including wheels, the tempering works & all material for tempering, the benches in the factory & all belting, 2 trip hammers & 1 Power press, reserving the form for former, anvils, vices, lathes & all loose tools which have been used in the manufacturing of forks & hoes, 10/17/1851, Vol. 51, p. 273; Samuel Deming by q.c. deed from his brother, John Deming, bldg., on land owned by Samuel Deming & E.W. Carrington near Mill La., 1 of said bldgs. being a foundry & standing on land.
owned by Timothy Cowles, another bldg. being the blacksmith shop, & the 3rd a small bldg. nearby, said last mentioned shop used as a pattern room, both of said last mentioned bldgs. standing on land recently owned by the Phoenix Mfg. Co. & conveyed to E.W. Carrington. I do hereby assign to said Samuel Deming all my personal estate of every kind, all debts, choses in action of every kind, all other property belonging to me excepting only property exempt from execution, also my interest if any to the land on which said bldgs. stand, for said S. Deming to hold & dispose of for the benefit of my creditors, 9/23/1851, Vol. 51, p. 270; also my int. in the Partnership of Deming & Parks; Phoenix Mfg. Co., from Timothy & Catherine (Deming) Cowles, 84 rods, on New St., bounded s.e. on New Rd., n.e. on Mill La., s.w. on land of Catherine Cowles, w. on C. Cowles, Reserving at northeast corner a passway to land in the rear, dated 7/8/1848, recorded 10/28/1848, Vol. 50, p. 170.
120 Garden Street

This building was pictured on page 196 of the Farmington Book as "Laundry for Miss Porter's School - formerly the Phoenix".

This was originally a factory, the Phoenix Manufacturing Company, Samuel Deming, President. Principal products were rakes and hoses and other small farm or garden tools. It was alongside the old Farmington Canal, and its construction was perhaps planned while the canal was in its short-time prime, but by 1848 it was no longer operating.

The Samuel Deming mentioned above as being the president of the company was undoubtedly the Samuel Deming of 66 Main Street, 1798-1871. He was primarily a farmer, but also had been in merchandizing for a time with H. L. Bidwell, was a magistrate, and one of the directors of the Farmington Canal Company. The land at the site of the factory probably was included in the purchase of either 1770 or 1773, from Thomas Hart Hooker.

On Baker and Tilden's 1869 Atlas, four buildings show on the west side of Garden Street at approximately this site, bracketed and showing ownership by "A. F. Williams, Trustee". The bracket is not entirely clear, and the north building of the four may possibly be the house now known as 118 Garden Street. Mr. Williams was the Austin F. Williams of 127 Main Street, an astute business man. It might be guessed the Phoenix Manufacturing Company had failed and that he had been appointed its trustee. The trusteeship appears to have lasted for several years. Mr. Williams died in 1885, but when Miss Sarah Porter purchased this property in 1897, it was sold to her by "The executor of the estate of A. F. Williams".

This building was used by Miss Porter's School as its laundry, and an addition was built to it by Nelson O. Keyes. No date is given for this, but it could have been at the time of purchase. A later alteration, providing separate rooms for occupancy by single employees of the school, was made by the R. F. Jones Company.

This building has passed through several hands, ownership by members of the Porter family, and it was then deeded to the school at the time of incorporation in 1943.

The laundry, at the height of its use, was said to employ all the available women in Farmington.

At one time it was said that all the front part of the main floor was boiler room, and that the laundry took up the entire second floor. To the rear of the first floor was a four-room apartment, while the third floor had two apartments in the front plus single rooms in the rear for workmen.

William Gallagher is said to have been in charge of the boiler room at one time.

November 16, 1973
At the time of the Farmington Book's publication Henry Isserman was in charge of the laundry. He and his family lived at 118 Garden Street, the next house north of the laundry, and it has been customary ever since that time for the laundry manager to live in that house. Charles L. McLaughlin was the manager for many years, and was perhaps the last one.

Operation of the laundry has now been phased out as more and more of the work was done by individual machines in the various dormitories and other buildings of the school.

As of early 1973 Vincent Antigiovanni, an employee of the school, has been living here with his family. Six single employees are housed here, and part of the building is being used as the "Early Learning Center".

November 16, 1973