Located along the west side of Garden Street, the Gay Tenement sits approximately fifty feet back off the street. Large old trees shade the lawn. The bordering neighborhood contains primarily residential buildings dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day.
This building lacks any stylistic detail identifying it with a particular architectural mode. Although the building is oriented gable-to-street, the main entry is found on the south elevation, facing away from the road. The entry door exhibits a small modest, gable-roofed porch with square posts. The gable-to-street elevation has remained relatively unaltered except for the modern fanlight-shaped vent in the gable end. The fenestration on the south elevation has been altered, although one original twelve-over-twelve sash remains. Six-over-six sash dominate throughout the rest of the building. One of the original interior twin chimneys is intact. The large, gable-roofed addition and garage on the west elevation are modern. The house originally featured a simple, facade wrap-around porch and it was sided in clapboards.

The construction date of this building is somewhat uncertain. It was probably erected by William Gay around 1845. In 1834 Gay of Albany, New York, purchased a large nine-acre parcel of land along the west side of Main Street with a dwelling house and other buildings (FLR 46:231). The dwelling mentioned in this deed faced east onto Main Street and was formerly the residence of Roger Hooker (see 24 Main Street). This large tract of land was bordered to the west by the Farmington River and had the Farmington Canal passing through north to south. It seems most likely that this house was not standing in 1834. Mabel Hurlburt claims that this dwelling was built by Gay as a tenement for a farmer who worked for him. Gay, who operated a successful general store along Farmington Avenue, resided in the large house along Main Street. He was active in local civic affairs, serving as a selectman and town treasurer for a number of years. From 1866 to 1889 Gay was president of the Farmington Savings Bank. He also served as a deacon of the Congregational Church for 25 years. The 1855 Map of Farmington Center attributes this house to L.A. Dodge, although Gay continued to own the house. The Farmington Vital Statistics lists a Leonard Dodge, a housepainter, and his wife Alice as having a son in 1853. In 1856 Gay sold the house to Robert Lawrence (1821-1912), an "agricultural laborer" (FLR 53:588). A native of Dublin, Ireland, Lawrence was the son of George and Jane Lawrence. His wife was the former Mary Gallagher (1820-1905), also a native of Dublin. In 1865 Rose (Rosa) Durning acquired the property for $700 (FLR 60:253). A native of Ireland, Rose (1838-1902) was the wife of soldier Stephen Durning (1818-1868)
Mr. Durning died as a result of the Civil War and his wife was left with four young children to raise alone. In 1903 the house was sold by Durning's estate to her son, Robert Durning (FLR 74:107). Danford N. Barney, a wealthy Farmington lawyer who lived on Mountain Spring Road, bought the house in 1905 and leased it to employees of his estate (FLR 76:15). Occupants in the early twentieth century included Casper Wilde, who was a gardener for Mr. Barney, and the Umberto family. The Kettenbeck family resided here in 1922. William J. Kettenbeck (1877-1948) was also an employee of Danford N. Barney. In 1948 the Kettenbeck's daughter Mary and her husband Frank J. Gademann purchased the house from D.N. Barney's son Austin D. Barney (FLR 102:507). The present owners acquired the house in 1963.

Although relatively simple in design, the Gay Tenement is historically significant as one of the earliest examples of employee housing in Farmington and is one of the oldest buildings located along Garden Street.
OWNER’S NAME: GADEMAN, FRANK J. & MARY K.

ADDRESS: 28 Garden Street

DATE BUILT: ca. 1835 FOR: Timothy Cowles?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
The house was probably a tenement house built for the farmer who worked for William Gay.
The dwellinghouse was the house now owned and occupied by E.H. Cady.

ARCHITECT
MASTER-BUILDER

FORMER OWNERS:
E.H. Deming from Farm, Sav. Bank Vol. 73, p. 542; Farm.
Sav. Bank from Robert Durning north on Tew 10/20/1905;
Rose Durning from Robert Lawrence & wife 10/10/1865 Vol. 60, p. 253; Robert Lawrence from William Gay 2/16/1856 Vol. 53, p. 588; William Gay from Timothy Cowles 9 acres Main St. to river with all bldgs. & the dwellinghouse 10/6/1833, Vol. 16, p. 231, e. on Main St., w. on river with canal passing through.

REFERENCES: "Farmington, Conn., 1906", p. 111 (entitled "property of D.N. Barney").
This house is pictured on page 111 of the Farmington Book as the property of D. N. Barney. Baker and Tilden's 1869 Atlas shows it as "Wm. Gay".

The land on which it stands was purchased by William Gay from Timothy Cowles on October 16, 1834, included in his purchase of the house at 24 Main Street. The description on the deed read partially as follows: "nine acres Main Street to river, with dwelling house and all buildings". The dwelling house which was mentioned was the house at 24 Main Street, now the property and home of the Francis Cadys.

Notes on this house, written up by Mrs. Hurlburt in 1950 indicate the likelihood that this house was "probably a tenement house built for a farmer who worked for William Gay", since only one dwelling house was mentioned in the deed at Mr. Gay's purchase.

The notes also show that Robert Lawrence purchased from William Gay on February 16, 1856. The Lawrences later lived at 5 Waterville Road, purchasing in 1865, in which year, on October 10, they sold this house to Rose Durning.

This leaves Baker and Tilden in error, since they still show William Gay as the owner in 1869.

The Farmington Savings Bank took over from Robert Durning on October 20, 1905, and Edward H. Deming took title that same day from the bank.

Nineteen days later, on November 8, 1905, the property was sold to D. N. Barney, thus bringing the ownership up to where it stood when the Farmington Book was published in 1906.

It is not known who was living here in 1906, but sometime prior to 1902 it was occupied by Casper Wilde and his family, Mr. Wilde being gardener for the Barneys, and Mrs. Wilde working for them also. Mr. Wilde later worked for the Waldo K. Chase family of 87 Main Street.

The Umberto Lauretti family, formerly of the Nordstrom house on Town Farm Road, lived here from 1914 until 1918, while they were readying for occupancy the house which they had bought at 8 Garden Street.

The Kettenbeck family moved into this house in 1922, having lived one year in the Hial Chidsey house just south of this. William J. Kettenbeck, 1877-1948, had come from Germany at the age of six, accompanied by an aunt. He lived with the Pease family in Colchester, where he grew up. He learned farming and gardening, and worked for many different people.

Mr. Kettenbeck was married to Julia Curran, daughter of Thomas Curran and Nora Latchford. He had worked for the Goodwins in Hartford, for the Cheneys in Manchester, for Edward Bill of Amston, and it was from there that they came to Farmington. Here he worked for D. Newton Barney, perhaps as dairyman, as Mr. Slocombe was Mr. Barney's superintendent.

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The Kettenbecks had one child, Mary Teresa, who was a quite young school girl when they came to Farmington. She was anxious to become a teacher, and after her high school graduation worked two years at Miss Porter's school to help pay for further schooling. She was later graduated from Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where she received a B. S. in Physical Education. She taught school in Farmington prior to World War II, during which she was with the personnel department at Royal Typewriter, returning to the Farmington schools afterward.

Mrs. Kettenbeck died in 1939 and Mary kept house for her father in addition to working.

Mary was married in December of 1942 to Frank John Gademan, son of Frank H. Gademan and Pauline Marolla. At that time he was on leave from the Combat Engineers Corps, training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. He spent the next two years in England, waiting for D Day, and then on through France and Belgium to Germany, fighting all the way. Upon his return he and Mary lived with Mr. Kettenbeck, who continued his residence here until his death in 1948. The Gademans then purchased this house from Austin D. Barney, who had inherited from his father at the latter's death in 1940.

The Gademans had a daughter by this time, Paulanne Marie Gademan.

They continued their residence here until 1962 when they purchased what was in 1906 called the Sarah Barry house on Old Mountain Road. They then sold 28 Garden Street to George F. Beyer, who still lives there. George Beyer has added a whole modern house to the rear of the original No. 28.

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