Standing at the northeast corner of High Street and Mountain Road, the Franklin Woodford House is partially obscured from view by large pines. The surrounding neighborhood contains other historically significant eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century dwellings.
This house underwent a dramatic and extensive remodeling in the early twentieth century. Originally built in the Italianate style, the Franklin Woodford House once displayed an "L-shaped" floor plan. Architectural embellishments included ornate Italianate-style porches, bay window and wide overhanging eaves supported by decorative paired brackets. In 1923 architect Eric Rossiter was hired to alter the house to its present Neo-Classical appearance. Today the house displays a symmetrical five-bay facade capped with a ridge-to-street gable roof and interior brick chimney. The facade is dominated by a full-height colonnaded portico. The door surround is fully classical in character and two projecting bay windows are found on the second story. Note the three pedimented gable-roof dormers. A large Palladian window is found in the southern gable end and the rear two-and-one-half-story ell displays an open classical porch with decorative balustrade.

In March of 1858 Franklin Woodford purchased "2½ acres with old dwelling house" from John Hooker of Hartford (FLR 55:446). Shortly afterward, Woodford tore down the old house and built a "new" dwelling, which he mortgaged to the Farmington Savings Bank in October of 1858 (FLR 55:419). Franklin Woodford, a native of Avon, was the son of Asaph Woodford. His wife was the former Cornelia Hawley. Little is known about Woodford, although he was elected poundkeeper in 1859 and was a member of the Farmington Cornet Band in 1876. In 1895 Amasa A. Redfield acquired the property (FLR 71:177). A wealthy lawyer from New York City, Redfield resided in the large Italianate-style house located next door at #45 High Street. His heirs sold the property to Mary (Graham) Whitney and her husband, John R. (1828-1909) in 1905. They had lived in Pennsylvania before settling in Farmington. In 1923 the heirs of Mary Whitney sold the house to Howard Gibb of Hartford (FLR 79:671). It appears that Mr. Gibb and his mother, Elizabeth Gibb, both of whom lived here, were responsible for the dramatic remodeling of the house. They hired Eric Rossiter as the architect; he altered the house from its original Italianate-style appearance to its present Neo-Classical form. The Gibbs also did extensive landscaping of the property. In 1927 Howard Gibb married and sold the property to Heywood Whaples, an investment broker (FLR 84:220). The Whaples family retained ownership until 1947.

Although the Franklin Woodford House has undergone a complete stylistic transformation, it remains a good example of the Neo-Classical style, which was a dominant building style throughout the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. (see below)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner's Name</td>
<td>SHEPHERD, ELISE &amp; HENRY L. to DAY, GEORGE H.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>49 High Street &amp; Mountain Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Built</td>
<td>1858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>Franklin Woodford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Information</td>
<td>According to a letter from George H. Day, owner 3/20/56, dated 4/16/60. Howard Gibb had Eric Rossiter draw the plans which converted the house to its present Georgian type, Plans dated 8/1923.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>&quot;Farmington, Conn. 1906&quot; p.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hartford County Atlas, Baker &amp; Tilden, 1869, p.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farmington Town Clerks, Hurlburt, 1943, p.275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The old house on the site of the Shepherd house was bought by Woodford from John Hooker, 11/27/1858 Vol. 55 p446:
- Hooker, John from Edward Hooker (brother)
- Hooker, Edward from Edward Hooker (father) by will
- Hooker, Edward Sr. from Cyrus Porter
- Porter, Cyrus from Susan Porter
- Porter, S. from Captain Joseph Porter
- Porter, Captain Joseph from William Porter

Franklin Woodford purchased from John Hooker, Mar. 28, 1858 for $1000
"corner of Mountain Street and High Street two and one half acres with an old dwelling house theron known as Porter corner." Vol. 55, p. 446
Franklin Woodford moved the old house, built 1711 by William Porter and later a tavern operated by Captain Joseph Porter, east of its original site and built the present house on the site of the old one. (The porches and other changes were made by H. H. Whaples)
The old house, similar in construction to the Farmington Museum and the old Clark house, burned 15 Jan. 1886.
The original owner of the land was Robert Porter.
The house at this address is pictured in the Farmington Book on page 170 as the residence of John R. Whitney. It is shown on the Baker and Tilden Atlas of 1869 as "F. Woodford". The atlas also shows as building to the east, as also owned by F. Woodford.

The latter building, which originally stood on the site of the house first mentioned, is described by Julius Gay on page 26 of the Farmington Book as follows: "On the northeast corner of the intersection of High Street with the road to New Britain (now called Mountain Road) long stood the house of Capt. Joseph Porter, one of the three houses on the east side of High Street with much projecting upper stories and conspicuous pendants, built about 1700. This was moved some rods up the hill when Mr. Franklin Woodford built his new house, and was burned on the evening of January 15, 1886". Note -- The Myron Clark house now stands probably on about the site of the old house after it had been moved.

On page 155 of the Farmington Book is a reproduction of the old weatherbeaten sign which was suspended for many years over the door of the Captain Porter Tavern.

Library records show that this old house was built by William Porter on land originally of Robert Porter, and stated to have been his wood lot. Joseph Porter inherited from his father William, and it was Joseph's son Joseph, born in 1766, who began its use as a tavern. Members of the Farmington Society for the Detection of Horse Thieves and Burglars were said to have chased a horse thief all the way to Durham early in the 1800's to recover a horse belonging to Captain Porter.

In 1827 Captain Joseph's son Cyrus Porter inherited a half interest from his father, who had died the previous year. Cyrus Porter's mother Susan died in 1832, and he then owned the property in full. He sold it in 1842 to Deacon Edward Hooker (of 50 High Street) and perhaps at this time moved to Vermont to take over a drug store which he had purchased from William G. Hooker, brother of Deacon Edward.

Deacon Edward Hooker, at his death in 1845, left this property to his son Edward, born in 1822, who was a naval officer at this time.

John Hooker, born in 1816, purchased this property in 1848 from his brother Edward, and held it for ten years. It is thought that he himself lived at that time in the house at 44 Mountain Road, which records show that he built in 1847. In 1858, after he had moved to Hartford, he sold this property to Franklin Woodford.

It was Franklin Woodford who then moved the old house to the east and built what Judge Day, the present (1971) owner, calls "the core of the present house". Judge Day believes that it had already been greatly enlarged by the time the photo had been taken in 1906 for the Farmington Book. He considers that the original house probably consisted only of what is presently the rear of the house, the dining room with bedroom over it, the kitchen, and some rooms to the rear. An ell attached at the present time, of only one story, was perhaps the stable.

September 17, 1971
Franklin Woodford was probably from Avon, as were most of the Woodfords of the area. All that we presently know of Franklin Woodford is what Mrs. Hurlburt has told us, on pages 202, 251, 264 and 275 of "Town Clerks". He was the brother of Emeline Woodford whose husband Franklin Deming was the builder of what was "known to later generations as the Monteith place", as stated by Mrs. Hurlburt on page 275 of her book "Town Clerks". Mrs. Deming later married Thomas L. Porter of 25 Main Street. Mr. Woodford was appointed on of four pound-keepers on October 3, 1859. He was a member of the Cornet Band organized in 1876, which met for practice in the old Hart schoolhouse next door to him, and he was signer of a petition in 1888 to divide Farmington into two separate towns.

After the above had been written, the writer contacted Watson Woodford, great-grandson of Harvey Woodford, Franklin's brother. He stated that Franklin was the son of Asaph Woodford, 1784-1859, and that his wife had been Cornelia Hawley.

Amasa Redfield bought the property from Mr. Woodford in 1895, probably as an investment, since Mr. Redfield himself already owned and occupied the house next door at 45 High Street, purchased in 1892.

It is possible that Franklin Woodford had already vacated the property long before he sold it. Russell Lee Jones mentioned in his "Memories" that his (Russell's) father rented that house for the summer of 1875. The Jones family had started in 1873 the practice of spending each summer here in Farmington.

Mr. Redfield died in 1902 and left the property to his son and daughter, Robert Redfield and Mrs. Edith Cooper. They in turn sold it in 1905 to Mary G. Whitney, wife of John R. Whitney who is indicated as the occupant in 1906, according to the Farmington Book.

It is quite probable that it was the Jones family who induced Mr. and Mrs. Whitney to come here and live and to buy this house. Russell Lee Jones mentions them as "our aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. John R. Whitney of Bryn Mawr", when he mentioned that his family stayed with them in 1876 while attending the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Mrs. Whitney was probably the former Mary Graham, the sister of Frederick Jones' wife, who was Russell's mother. For more information on the Jones family, see the account of the house at 11 Mt. Spring Road, and Mr. Jones' reminiscences appended to that account.

John R. Whitney, son of Asa Whitney and Clarinda Williams, died here on January 13, 1909. His wife already owned the property so no title transfer was necessary at this point.

Mary G. Whitney died early in 1918 and her will, probated on November 21, 1918, left her property to her daughters Frances G. Whitney and Anna T. Whitney.

Frances Whitney (called Patty) was said to have been a teacher in a girls' school. Anna Whitney was for much of her life an invalid, lived in Pomfret, Connecticut after selling this house.

September 17, 1971
Later information regarding Miss Anne Temple Whitney, mentioned briefly on the previous page, indicates the following facts.

Miss Whitney was not wealthy, but she did have enough to live modestly and comfortably. All through the 1930's she lived her winters at the Elm Tree Inn, staying there from early November through mid-April. From then until late autumn she lived at a boarding house in Rockport, Massachusetts, where she was very fond of watching the waves and the shore birds, sitting on the rocks and meditating.

She was a very sweet and kind person. Her whole left side was partially paralyzed, and she always walked with a cane.

Her cousin, Russell Lee Jones, was very kind to her, and managed her affairs. She was always sending packages, and letters with small checks, to residents of a Home in her native state of Pennsylvania, whom she felt were worse off than she, and more in need.

The Whitney girls sold the property on July 24, 1923, to Howard Gibb, and it may be noted that one John D. Whitney of Nevada City, California, gave Mr. Gibb a quit-claim deed at that time. It appears that he probably was the brother of the two Whitney girls who had inherited.

Howard Gibb, son of Howard and Elizabeth Gibb, who purchased the place in 1923, although young and as yet unmarried, was comfortably wealthy. His mother had first been married to a Mr. Rossiter, by whom she had a daughter, Miss Bessie. Mrs. Gibb and her daughter and son lived here.

They hired an architect, Eric Rossiter, and Mrs. Gibb was the leading spirit in the extensive remodeling of the house. Mrs. Gibb also supervised the landscaping and planting of new trees and shrubs, and was responsible for the wonderful dwarf Canadian weeping hemlocks on the High Street side of the yard, near the house. It has been said that she almost had them dug up again when she saw the bill, but she later felt recompensed by their beauty. "They were the handsomest ever seen". She probably also had the two Kousas planted, sometimes called Oriental, of Korean, dogwood. When in bloom they are beautiful. The last elm was removed from the yard in 1968, but there are beech trees still standing which Judge Day believes may be over 200 years old.

April 30, 1973
When all alterations were completed, according to Judge Day, they changed the character of the house from Mid-Victorian to Georgian. He states it this way: "When Gibb bought the property, the house was a flat-roofed Mid-Victorian affair with small porches on the northwest and southwest corners, very similar to Lady Welsh's house on the north. The front stairs ran down to the front door which faced High Street, and the one-story structure on the east was a barn or stable. Gibb's mother employed an architect named Rossiter who put on the front porch, raised the roof, added the library, turned the stairs to face the south door, and added several feet to the living room and front hall".

The house should actually now be considered as on Mountain Road instead of High Street, as there is no longer an entrance from High Street, although a door and a porch are still there.

Howard Gibb in April 1927 married Elsie Graham McIlwaine, who had been born on Main Street in "Humphrey". She was the daughter of an insurance company president Archibald G. McIlwaine who had lived for a time in "Meadowview". See sketch No. 365.

The very next month after his marriage Howard Gibb sold this house to Haywood H. Whaples and his wife the former Constance Roberts, the daughter of George Roberts and Ida Hamilton.

The recently married Howard and Elsie Gibb moved to West Hartford and lived at 31 Walbridge Road. Two children were born of this marriage, two daughters.

Joan Gibb married Martin Widdifield in 1950, and they had a son and three daughters. Joan died in October 1970 and her surviving husband and children live in Los Angeles.

Anne Graham Gibb, MPS 1946-49, married William J. McKenzie, Jr., and she and her husband and their four sons and one daughter live in New Canaan, Connecticut. She is presently on the Board of Directors of Miss Porter's School, and is Bulletin Chairman also.

Howard Gibb died in 1933 and his widow continued her residence in West Hartford until 1948, when she moved to New York.

After an unsuccessful marriage to David Klee she resumed her proper name of Mrs. Howard Gibb and returned to Connecticut, once again living on Prospect Avenue in Hartford. She was very familiar with the former Woolley house and misses it upon her return to Hartford. Mrs. gibb has kept in very good touch with Farmington, both with MPS and with her many friends.

Mr. Whaples, who had purchased this house in 1927, was an investment broker whose father had been president of the old Hartford Connecticut Trust Company, but the younger Whaples was also a very substantial and well known man.

September 10, 1974
Mr. and Mrs. Whaples had lived in Farmington at 15 Waterville Road, which they had purchased in 1913, and their two daughters were born during that residence, but some time during the early 1920s they moved to Hartford and lived there prior to purchasing this house and returning to Farmington. Their daughter Anne was married in 1937 to John Sheldon McCook, son of Philip J. McCook and Jean R. A. Brown. Constance was married in 1939 to George Crawford, son of Lynn Crawford and Tillie Mullin. Both daughters are now deceased. Mrs. Whaples, niece of former Connecticut Governor George Roberts, died in March 1945, and Mr. Whaples died within a year or so.

The house was sold by Mr. Whaples' estate in November 1947, to Henry Shepherd and his wife Elise Holderness Shepherd. Mr. Shepherd was the son of Henry Leven Shepherd and Marna Laura Magnussen, and Mrs. Shepherd was the former Elise Munroe Holderness, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Holderness of 36 High Street. Mr. and Mrs. Shepherd had been married in 1937, and their son Henry Langdon Shepherd, Jr., was six years of age when they bought this house.

Mr. and Mrs. Shepherd were separated and divorced during their residence here, and the house was sold by Mrs. Shepherd on March 20, 1956, to George H. Day.

Mr. Shepherd moved to West Hartford and then to Litchfield, where he and his son now practice law. Mrs. Shepherd married William Damerel and they lived on Reservoir Road until Mr. Damerel's death. Mrs. Damerel later sold that house to Alex Kist, Jr., but she still resides in Farmington.

Judge George H. Day, born in 1891, purchaser in 1956, is the son of George H. Day and Katherine Beach. He is a graduate of Pomfret School, of Yale University in 1913, and has a law degree from Harvard Law School 1916. Mrs. Day is the former Grace Phelps Allen, daughter of John Hall Allen and Lillian Denniston, and a descendant of the Phelps family of Windsor. Judge Day started his legal career as a law clerk with Bennett and Goodwin in 1916 and has been since 1919 an attorney with Shipman and Goodwin. He was Police Court Judge in Hartford from 1923 until 1927. He has been a director of both Travelers Aid Society and Connecticut Childrens Aid Society, and prosecuting agent for Connecticut Humane Society.

Judge Day is of the Beach family and also the John Steele family of Farmington, the John Steele whose son in the 17th or early 18th century operated a still about on the site of the present telephone company building at 18 Main Street. He is a cousin of three of the Beach family who are or have been of Farmington -- first cousin of Joseph Beach recently of Mountain Road -- second cousin of Charles Beach of Talcott Notch Road -- and double second cousin of Frederick Beach of Old Mountain Road. Mr. Day's parents had a between-seasons place on Ely Road on Talcott Mountain when their son was young, but gave it up some years ago.

September 17, 1971
Mr. and Mrs. Day had lived comfortably for 31 years on North Beacon Street in Hartford, but the construction of a funeral parlor next door to them was an incentive to find a new home. Mrs. Day was in Europe when this High Street property was shown to Judge Day. He air-mailed her a description and sketch of the house and she cabled her "yes" to the question of its purchase. They have never regretted it.

The Day's first child, George H. Day, Jr., was a World War II casualty in Italy in February 1945. Their other two children are: Jean Day Lowry of Avon, and Mary Phelps (Miffie) Williams of Colorado Springs. She and her husband John lived for a time at 1169 Farmington Avenue after their marriage in 1959.

The Hartford Art School Auxiliary, in May 1970, sponsored the 37th Annual House and Garden Tour as a benefit for the Scholarship Fund of the Hartford Art School of the University of Hartford. Mrs. Frederick D. Houghton of Sunset Farm Road, West Hartford, and a Miss Porter's School graduate, was tour chairman. Judge and Mrs. Day opened their home for this tour, and the following was told of the house: "Built in 1858 by Franklin Woodford, the house was originally a flat-roofed mid-Victorian design with small porches on the northeast and southwest corners... the front stairs running down to the front door which was on High Street. The one story structure on the east was a stable.

"Bought by Mr. Howard Gibb, structural changes were made in 1923 by his mother. She put on a front terrace, raised the roof, added the library, and turned the stairs to face the south door and added several feet to the living room and front hall. The stable was converted to a laundry.

"All these changes transformed this house into a primarily Georgian design. Details architecturally can be noted in the molding around the ceilings, in the doors with narrower top panels, the fan lights of leaded glass above the old and new entry doors, and in the design of the balusters.

"The house is filled with treasures, reflecting the heritage of the families of both Judge and Mrs. Day.... Mrs. Day's father's Victorian high chair, a painting of Mr. Day's father in 1877, done by his friend, Charles Noel Flagg, given to him as a wedding present.... all combined with their own treasures and decorative taste.

"The spacious kitchen and eating area were redesigned by Judge Day... the porch off the kitchen providing a delightful spot for dinner on hot summer evenings".

September 17, 1971