The Cowles-Thompson House sits on the west side of Main Street on a landscaped lot with mature trees and shrubs. It lies in the heart of the historic district and is surrounded by other historic residences.
This house exhibits the characteristics of the Italianate style. Its cube-shape form, rather plainly adorned, features a one-bay facade with its main entrance located to the side of the projecting east elevation. The small entry porch contains decorative posts, a feature also found on the larger open porch on the south elevation. A hip roof caps the building's wide entablature with paired brackets, interspersed with small attic windows on the west, north, and south elevations. Note the brick chimney and six-over-six sash. Later additions include the enclosed entry porch on the north elevation and small square window on the east elevation.

In 1867 Chauncey Deming Cowles (1812-1880), son of Timothy and Catherine (Deming) Cowles, sold a two acre plot of land to Misses Maria and Jane Thompson for $1500 (FLR 60:615). The Thompson sisters were the daughters of Dr. Asahel Thompson and his wife Ruth (Whitman). It is possible that Cowles built this house during or after the sale for Maria (1811-1894) and Jane (1819-1891) Thompson due to the fact that the house was standing in 1869 according to the Baker and Tilden Map. Cowles owned several other properties and resided in his ancestral home. In 1891 Henry W. Barbour received title to the property as power of attorney (FLR 70:271) and by 1901 he sold the house with 3/4 acre to Charles W. Ruic (FLR 71:512). Ruic attended the Suffield School and married Sarah Lasher of New York. He served as a borough judge, representative to the legislature, chairman of the commission on claims, and selectman of Farmington. Next Otto Nelson purchased the property in 1908 (FLR 77:169) and built the barn which once stood at the rear of the property. Little is known about Nelson except that he sold the property to Henry and Sarah Barbour's daughter, Anna Y. Barbour, in 1915 (FLR 77:572). She retained title until her death in 1953. It has changed owners several times since then.

The Cowles-Thompson House has both architectural and historical significance. It remains one of a few unaltered Italianate-style residences in Farmington and has associations with the Thompson and Ruic families.

OWNER'S NAME (BARBOUR, ANNA YOUNGS) PUTNAM, Gerald R. from John B. Harvey 8/3/59 Vol. 144, p 207, from

ADDRESS: 90 Main Street Est. Barbour 5/27/53,

DATE BUILT: ca. 1867 FOR: Chauncey Deming Cowles V.133p347

ARCHITECT
MASTER-BUILDER

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION The old Pitkin house, a long, yellow house which formerly stood on this site, was the home of the Rev. Timothy Pitkin and was burned in the fire of July, 1864. The present house was evidently built soon afterward. Note the fundamental similarity with the next house south.


REFERENCES: "Farmington, Conn., 1906", p. 24
"Baker & Tilden Atlas, 1869", p. 33 - 'Misses Thompson'
The house at this address is pictured on page 94 of the Farmington Book as the residence of Charles W. Ruic. Baker and Tilden's 1869 Atlas shows it as "Misses Thompson".

The original owner of this land was John Hart, the son of Deacon Stephen Hart, the Settler. John Hart lived about where this house stands and his brother-in-law and sister, Thomas and Sarah Porter, were a little farther south, on the site of the Creamer house at 100 Main Street. John Hart's house was destroyed in the fire of December 1666. Only one son survived the tragedy, John, born 1655, who was at the Hart farm in Nod that awful night, and was thus spared.

Regarding the house or buildings which may have stood on this site between 1666 and 1864, the writer knows only the following, which is taken from Adrian Wadsworth's description of the houses and buildings destroyed by the great fire of that year. Mr. Wadsworth was a young man at that time and he says that it destroyed everything from Mill Lane south to the south line of the property on which presently stands the house at 100 Main Street. He begins the description of the buildings lost in the fire as follows: "The first to claim our attention would be the first from Mill Lane, known as the Wallace Whaples house. It faced south on a farm passway running westerly through the yard". This could have been on the site of the doctors' building presently known as 1 Mill Lane. Mr. Wadsworth goes on to say: "directly across the passway was the carriage and horse barn next to the great hay and cattle barn". These belonged to Chauncey D. Cowles great farm, and it appears that they would have been on the site of the present house at 90 Main Street.

Next south of this stood the former home of the Rev. Timothy Pitkin, described by Julius Gay as "the long yellow house" and by Mr. Wadsworth as "a large tenement house of two stories", just north of Maiden Lane. That would have been on the site of 92 Main Street.

The present house at 90 Main Street was built by Chauncey D. Cowles on his own land, in 1867, and perhaps was built especially for the Misses Jane and Maria Thomson, who became the first owners that same year.

The Thompson sisters were daughters of Dr. Asahel Thomson who died in 1866, and his wife the former Ruth Whitman, born 1784. They were of the house which stood on the site of 15 Main Street. Dr. and Mrs. Thomson were married on November 13, 1809. Maria L. Thomson was born in 1811 and Jane in 1814. Jane died in 1891 and Maria in 1894.

It is not known where Maria lived her last three years, as Henry W. Barbour purchased the property in 1891. She was living in Farmington however, at her death in 1894.

Henry Barbour may well have purchased the property solely as an investment, as he lived in his own house on his own farm at 144 Main Street at this time, as far as is known. He sold the house to Charles W. Ruic in 1901.

January 17, 1972.
Charles Wesley Ruic, whose middle name honored the great Methodist, was of Granby, and attended the Suffield School formerly called the Connecticut Literary Institution. His wife was Sarah Lasher of Philmont, New York, of the Reformed Dutch Church. She had been born in Evansville, Indiana, daughter of Philip Henry Lasher and Helen Mink. Sarah Lasher taught school in West Stockbridge, Massachusetts. A Mr. Lasher who may have been a nephew, was production manager for Wallace Barnes in Bristol, and died in 1969.

Charles W. Ruic was a graduate of Williams College. He had also taught school in West Stockbridge, then came to Farmington as school principal. He took up the study of law however, and gave up the school work. When they first came to Farmington they lived upstairs over the A. J. Parker Store, see photos on page 179. Their son, Kenneth Lasher Ruic, was born during that residence.

The Ruics later moved to the Harry Loomis house, see photo on page 112, which had been moved from Waterville Road. They moved to 90 Main Street as tenants sometime prior to 1900, renting from Mr. Barbour. Mr. Ruic took most of the 1900 census of Farmington, riding a bicycle. He bought this house in 1901.

Having studied law and passed the bar examination, Mr. Ruic took up law as a profession, and opened an office in Hartford. He served as Borough Judge in Farmington, was a representative to the legislature, chairman of the Commission on Claims, and served as borough clerk and selectman, prior to moving to Hartford in 1908. There he concentrated on his law practice. See photo of Judge Ruic on page 207. He did not live many years after moving to Hartford.

Mrs. Ruic moved back to Farmington in 1913, worked at the postoffice for a time and then served as postmistress. In 1925 her son Kenneth purchased the house at 126 Main Street and they both moved into it. See more regarding the Ruics in the account of that house.

Otto Nelson purchased the house at 90 Main Street from Mr. Ruic in 1908, and lived here with his family until 1915.

The barn to the rear of this house was built by Otto Nelson while he lived here, to house his horse, buggy, sleigh, etc. It still stands, used by Miss Porter's School for storage.

January 17, 1972
In 1915 this house was purchased by Anna Youngs Barbour, the daughter of previous owner Henry Barbour, as a home for herself and her recently widowed mother. Miss Barbour had apparently led a rather repressed life, her father, Deacon Barbour, having been very straight-laced and severe. She opened up to some extent after their move from their old home to this house. She was a wonderful person and served for many years as Sunday School teacher. She was also benefactor of many ill or impoverished residents of Farmington. When anyone was in need of help the advice usually given was "See Miss Barbour". She walked on most of her errands, even as far as Oakland Gardens when the need took her there. Anna Barbour did a lot toward compiling the records showing all who are buried in the old Main Street Cemetery. She worked with Stephen Lawrence on this project.

Mrs. Barbour died in 1924, and Miss Barbour in January of 1953.

John B. Harney purchased the property in May of 1953, from the estate of Anna Barbour.

Gerald R. Putnam purchased the property in August of 1959, moving however to 16 Mountain Road in 1961.

Miss Porter's School purchased it in May 1961, for use as a faculty residence. The school calls it the Asche House.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Knowles and family lived here from 1961 to 1965, moving then to 116 Main Street.

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Linn and family followed them, living here from 1965 to 1967 when they moved to 80 Main Street.

Mr. and Mrs. Hance, Warren S. and Alice S. are the present occupants, with their family, moving however to 36 Main Street in 1971.

Director of studies and assistant to the headmaster, Gerald W. Husted, Jr., and his family moved into the Asche house later in 1971. Mr. Husted and his wife Susan are natives of Haddon Heights, New Jersey. Mr received a BS in Math from Franklin and Marshall College, where he was an All-American soccer player, and an MS from Michigan State University. A veteran of over three years in the US Navy, he has taught at Hotchkiss School, Westledge School, and the Exeter Summer Session.

The Husteds, parents of David 3, and Jody 8, are glad to be back at a boarding school after two years at a day school because "We wanted the sense of community found at a boarding school. It's good to have girls coming in and out of our house during their free time".

March 15, 1973

This house, known by Miss Porter's School as the Vale-Asche House, has been endowed through the "70's Fund" gifts, by Mrs. Marion S. Ackerman III (Vale Asche '51) and Mrs. A. Dossett McCullough (Bettyann Asche '57). The endowment income will be used for its maintenance and preservation.