1. **Building Name (Common)**

Music Cottage

2. **Town City**

Farmington

3. **Street and Number (Deal or Location)**

108 Garden Street

4. **Owner(s)**

Miss Porter's School, Inc.

5. **Use (Present)**

Residence

Music Cottage

6. **Accessibility to Public**

Exterior visible from public road: Yes

Interior accessible: Yes

If Yes explain:

7. **Style of Building**

Nineteenth-century vernacular

c. 1865

8. **Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate)**

- Wood Shingle
- Cobblestone
- Clapboard
- Asbestos Siding
- Brick
- Fieldstone
- Aluminum Siding
- Concrete
- Stucco
- Cut stone
- Brownstone foundation

9. **Structural System**

- Wood frame
- Post and beam
- Balloon

10. **Roof (Type)**

- Gable
- Shed
- Hip
- Round

11. **Number of Stories**

2

12. **Condition**

Excellent: Good

External:

13. **Integrity**

On original: Moved

1906-13

14. **Related Outbuildings or Landscape Features**

- Barn
- Shed
- Garage
- Other landscape features or buildings (Specify)

15. **Surrounding Environment**

- Open land
- Woodland
- Residential
- Scattered buildings visible from site

16. **Interrelationship of Building and Surroundings**

Facing east onto Garden Street, the old Music Cottage sits in a densely populated, residential neighborhood, comprising architecture of similar vintage. Most of the surrounding dwellings are owned by Miss Porter's School and house school employees.
The Old Music Cottage remains relatively intact, although some alterations were made in 1912 when the building was moved and converted to a residence. Oriented gable-to-street, the building features its original, single-story, open porch enhanced by paneled posts and lattice balustrade. Capped with large, but modest arched window hoods, the facade's first-story, six-over-six sash replace the original multi-paned entry doors. The gable end exhibits wide overhanging eaves with raking cornice and original six-over-six windows. The ridge-to-street ell with entry door and pedimented dormer were added when the building was moved.

Although a definite date cannot be assigned to this building, it was probably constructed around 1865 by Miss Sarah Porter as a music cottage for her private school. The building originally stood along the west side of Main Street between the school's main building (#60 Main Street) and the headmaster's house (#66 Main Street). A building does appear on this site on the 1869 Baker and Tilden Atlas. Miss Sarah Porter (1813-1900), who opened her boarding school for young women in 1843, was the daughter of the Rev. Noah Porter, pastor of the Farmington Congregational Church from 1806 to 1866. The school which today occupies many of the fine old homes along Main Street, is one of the country's finest all girls preparatory institutions.

Music had always been an important part of Miss Porter's curriculum and for many years girls were required to enroll in either chorus or music appreciation. In 1912 a new music cottage was built and this small building was moved to the southwest corner of Garden Street and Mill Lane to a quarter-acre parcel of land Miss Porter had purchased in 1897 from George Gallagher for $130 (FLR 71:288). The Old Music Cottage at this time was converted to a residence and since then has housed employees of the school.

Sources:
The house presently standing here is pictured on page 193 of the Farmington Book, in the photo at the lower right, as "The Music Cottage". Its former site can easily be identified as facing Main Street south of the main building of Miss Porter's School, by its relationship to the Headmaster's house, which is seen in the background in the photo.

Baker and Tilden's 1869 Atlas shows a house on that site, with no special caption, but bracketed as part of the property owned by Miss Porter. This would indicate its construction before 1869, but perhaps it was then a residence of sorts, if built that early.

The land on the site to which it was moved was purchased by Miss Sarah Porter from George Gallagher on April 7, 1897, but the house must not have been moved until after 1906, as most of the photos in the Farmington Book were taken in that year.

This building, which stands on the southwest corner at the intersection of Garden Street and Mill Road, was the first home of the kindergarten started around 1910 or 1911 by Mrs. Elizabeth V. Hale Keep, while she was Headmistress of Miss Porter's School. Her original intent was to provide pre-school training for children of the school's employees. Over the years it was greatly expanded, and the house at 117 Garden Street was built in 1913 and 1914 for the special purpose of housing the kindergarten. See the account of 117 Garden Street for more on this subject.

The music cottage was radically altered in its remodeling, so that it takes more than a casual look before one can realize that it is the same building. It still sits facing the same direction that it did, facing east as it had before its move, but its former front entrances on the east have been closed off, and the front entrance is now at the north. An upper floor has been added, and two porches, plus an extension to the north, from the middle of the house. This makes it Tee shaped, with the top of the T to the south, the bottom extending toward Mill Road, which adjoins the house lot.

It has housed employees of Miss Porter's School since its removal to this site.

Present occupants are Mr. and Mrs. Leo E. Mara, Mr. Mara being employed by Miss Porter's School. He is in the maintenance department, although he also drives the small MPS bus at times, taking students to outside activities, and to work as volunteers at hospitals and other schools.

Mr. Mara was born in New York City, and Mrs. Mara, the former Mary Elizabeth Tompkins, was born in Sharon, Connecticut. Leo Mara served in the Tank Corps in World War II, from 1942 until 1945. Before coming to Farmington Mr. Mara had his own restaurant. Mrs. Mara is waitress in the Porter School dining room. Their children are: Janice Lee Mara, now Mrs. Louis Roland Chase of Millerton, New York, Leo Martin Mara of Pottsville, Pennsylvania, whose wife is Azzia, and Daniel Robert Mara, single, of Durham, Connecticut.

November 15, 1973