Brown Jr., Ervin, House

1. **TOWN CITY**
   - Farmington

2. **VILLAGE**
   - Unionville

3. **COUNTY**
   - Hartford

4. **OWNER(S)**
   - Kane, Caroline B.

5. **USE**
   - Residence

6. **STYLE OF BUILDING**
   - Greek Revival

7. **DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**
   - ca. 1853

8. **MATERIAL(S)**
   - Wood Shingle

9. **STRUCTURAL SYSTEM**
   - Wood frame

10. **ROOF**
    - Gable

11. **NUMBER OF STORIES**
    - 2

12. **CONDITION**
    - Excellent

13. **INTEGRITY**
    - Excellent

14. **RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES**
    - Garage

15. **SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT**
    - Residential

16. **INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS**
    - Sited on the south side of Main Street in Unionville, the Ervin Brown, Jr. House is bordered to the north, east, and west by houses built during the nineteenth century. Hedges run along the front of the property and a sidewalk leads to the front door.
This Greek Revival-style house is oriented gable-to-street. Its three-bay facade exhibits a heavy pediment and a door surround typical of the style. Six-over-six sash exist throughout the house and a brick chimney rises from the center of the roof. Modern additions extend off the east and south elevations and asphalt siding hides the building's original clapboard exterior.

The early history of this house is unknown. In 1853 Ervin Brown, Jr. quit-claimed to Seneca L. Gorham a ½ acre with buildings (FLR 50:490). Perhaps the firm of Norton, Cowles, and Bidwell owned part interest in the property for on the same day they quit-claimed the same piece Brown had transferred to Gorham for $50 (FLR 50:491). The deed mentioned "reserving the right to occupy by Mr. Steel until November 23, 1853, said Gorham to receive the rent from this time". No historical information exists about Brown and it is not known from whom he received this house and land. Gorham (1820-1865) was a builder in partnership with Charles Butler. He is said to have built the Cowles Paper Company for James Cowles. In 1859 he served as a "measurer of wood" and "visitor of house of industry", appointed town positions. His wife was Philomelia (?) (1823-1867) and their son Daniel Searle (b. 1853) died at the early age of 7. During the Civil War, in which Gorham served as a lieutenant in Company K, 25th Infantry Connecticut Volunteers, he mortgaged the "place where I now live" to the Farmington Savings Bank for $500 (FLR 58:576). In 1865 Gorham was killed in battle and his wife also died in the same year; both were age 45. With no heirs living, the estate passed to James L. Cowles, Unionville's industrial entrepreneur and one of the founders of the Unionville racetrack and dam. In 1868 he quit-claimed it to Lucas (1825-1895) and Solomon (1829-1906) Richards, sons of George Richards (1799-1880), who operated the mill on the river further north (see River Road) (FLR 59:464). According to the 1869 Baker and Tilden Atlas the building was used as the store and office of George Richards and Company, listed as millers and dealers in (see cont. pg.)

flour and feed. In June of 1869 the Richards sold the property, "known as the Gorham Place", to Norman Mills for $2500 (FLR 61:203). Mills, of which little is known, sold it in 1874 for $3500 to John A. Merriman a farmer, who lived off of Lovely Street (FLR 61:656). The following year Merriman sold the 3/4 acre parcel to Homer J. Norton and his siblings for $3500 (FLR 65:103). They, in turn, mortgaged the property for $1600 to the Farmington Savings Bank (FLR 62:338); it was foreclosed in 1899 (FLR 73:269). The bank next sold it to John J. Burnett (d. 1928), son of Robert and Wilhelmina (Lawson) Burnett (FLR 71:510) in 1901. Upon his death, his widow Anna received the property; she in turn willed it to her son, George Burnett (FLR 74:413). In 1958 Helen and George Burnett sold the property to their sister, Caroline Burnette Kane (FLR 143:434).

The Ervin Brown, Jr. House derives both architectural and historical significance due to the retention of its Greek Revival-style details and association with the Gorham, Richards, and Burnett families.