Facing south onto Main Street the Virgil C. Goodwin House is set on a landscaped lot near the center of Unionville. The surrounding neighborhood is dominated by other historic dwellings erected in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries.
Oriented gable-to-street, this three-bay side-hall entrance, Greek Revival-style dwelling was erected between 1842 and 1846. The entry exhibits heavy pilasters supporting a massive entablature with projecting cornice. Alterations to the doorway include the replacement door and probable removal of sidelights and transom. The original six-over-six sash are found throughout the house. A wide, flushboarded entablature extends around the building beneath the eaves. The fully pedimented gable displays a raking cornice and a large, rectangular window with geometrically designed mullions. A two and half story integral wing extends from the east side. The rear elevation features a long, narrow ½-story ell.

In 1842 Virgil Collins Goodwin (1813-1877) purchased a one acre lot of land from Luther S. Parsons for $300 (FLR 48:301). This dwelling was erected for Goodwin sometime between 1842 and June of 1846 when he mortgaged the property "with buildings" to Parsons for $950 (FLR 49:155). Mabel Hurlburt's book Farmington Town Clerks and Their Times states that the house was built for Goodwin by Joseph H. Lewis (p. 337). Born in Plymouth, Connecticut, Virgil Goodwin was the son of Ozias and Asenath (Pond) Goodwin. In 1832 he married Fanny Olive Potter (1813-1887) of Plymouth and they raised eleven children. While residing in Unionville, Goodwin and Abner Whittlesey operated a livery stable and grocery store under the name of Whittlesey and Goodwin (FLR 49:437). In 1848 Whittlesey purchased the house (FLR 49:448) and the Goodwins eventually moved to Rochester, New York and later Fox Lake, Wisconsin. Abner Whittlesey, a native of Farmington, only owned the property for two years before selling "the house, store, and barn" to William Platner and Samuel Q. Porter of the firm Platner and Porter in March of 1850 (FLR 52:103). The company quit-claimed the house in 1851 to William Platner (FLR 50:309) who resided here until 1864. Platner was president of Platner & Porter, which was founded in 1848. He and Samuel Q. Porter bought the Stone & Carrington paper mill along the upper canal. The firm, which continued in the paper manufacturing business, became one of Unionville's most prosperous enterprises. By the mid 1850s they had erected additional mill buildings along the canal and constructed nearby tenement

homes for their employees. In 1864 Platner sold the "homestead" to the Unionville Parsonage Association (FLR 60:89) and moved to New Jersey after selling his interest in the paper mill. The house served as the Congregational Church parsonage until 1976. In 1976 it became a private home once again.

The Virgil C. Goodwin House is significant as a well-preserved example of Greek Revival-style architecture in Unionville and for its association with William Platner and the Unionville Congregational Church.
In 1831, when Luther Parsons acquired this property, the deeds described it as one acre with a small house where Sylvii Kelsey had lived (45-45,46). Even though this property adjoined his father's homestead, it is doubtful that Luther Parsons ever lived here in such a small house - his family was just too large. When Parsons sold the property to Virgil Goodwin in 1842, no buildings are even mentioned in the deed (48-301). The interesting unknown is whether the small Kelsey house was torn down, or was it kept as the rear kitchen section of the present house?

The present house was built sometime between 1842 and 1846, most probably 1846, for Virgil Goodwin. In 1846 he obtained a release for his original mortgage and took out a new, larger mortgage with Luther Parsons; both records (50-56, 49-155) mention buildings. This house was certainly built by May 1847, when Goodwin took out another mortgage on "the homestead occupied by me" (49-259), a document which mentions his prior mortgage of the same property to Parsons. Samuel
Pepper's history of Unionville in Mabel Hurlburt's "Town Clerks and their Times" says that this house was built by Joseph H. Lewis for Virgil Goodwin.

An interesting document, dated June 1848, sheds a little light on Virgil Goodwin. It is a mortgage (49-437) by Goodwin to Abner S. Whittlesey for this property, also for Goodwin's interest in "the livery stable and grocery business in Unionville under the name and firm of Whittlesey and Goodwin". There are no other documents in Town Hall to show that the business was operated elsewhere, so perhaps it was located right here on his homestead. The birth record of one of his children gives his occupation as "livery stable keeper".

In any event, Virgil Goodwin didn't stay long in this house; in October 1848 he sold it to Abner Whittlesey (49-448). It is not known where Goodwin went; but he owned property both on Lovely Street and in Avon, so perhaps he moved to one or the other of those places. He, his wife, and several children are buried in Hillside Cemetery; on the family monument, it says that he died in 1877 in Fox Lake, Wisconsin. Abner Whittlesey only owned this house for two years, selling it in 1850 to Platner & Porter (52-103). This deed has an intriguing mention of "water pipes running through said land". Abner Whittlesey eventually moved to Galesburg, Knox County, Illinois, according to other documents on file at Town Hall.

So in 1850 this house became the home of William Platner, who had come from Massachusetts and formed the partnership with Samuel O. Porter to make paper products in Unionville. Their business prospered, was incorporated in 1860 with Platner as President and the two of them holding a majority of the stock, and went on to become one of the largest industrial concerns in Unionville in the late 1800s. In the 1851 deed which clarified Platner's ownership of this house, a mention is made of a "house, store, and barn" on the property (50-309). Platner lived here for 14 years, then moving to New Jersey; he sold his holdings in Platner & Porter to H.C. Hurlburt and Milan Hurlburt, but the firm retained his name for many years after that.

In August 1864 the Unionville Parsonage Association was formed, probably for the sole purpose of buying a parsonage for the Congregational Church. The stockholders were George Richards & Co., S.O. Porter, James A. Smith, Truman Sanford, John P. Chamberlin, Edward Mills, and Edmund Sanford (57-372). The Association then bought this house from William Platner, and it became the parsonage until 1976. During that time the following were ministers of the Congregational Church and so presumably lived here:

- Burritt A. Smith, 1863-64
- Charles Brooks, 1864-66
- Henry Hubbell, 1866-68
- T.E. Davies, 1869-83
- Charles S. Lane, 1884-88
- David D. Marsh, 1888-99
- R.G.S. MacNeille, 1899-1902
- Charles E. Ewing, 1902-04
- Edward C. Fellows, 1904-12
- David S. Wheeler, 1912-15
- Franklin W. Barker, 1916-35
- Kenneth Slop, 1936-39
- Howard Worth, 1939-44
- Lawrence M. Stone, 1944-48
- Herbert H. Deck, 1948-53
- Elvert F. Miller, 1953-59
- James B. Vee, 1959-67
- Stoddard Williams, 1968-present (1979)
In 1869 the Parsonage Association sold part of the property to Samuel Q. Porter (61-193); that piece, ½ acre plus a barn, became what is now 76 Main Street. See that write-up for subsequent history of that. Also in 1869, the Parsonage Association transferred ownership of the parsonage to the Unionville Ecclesiastical Society; then in 1915, when the two Congregational churches in town merged administratively, ownership was transferred again, this time to the First Church of Christ of Farmington, Inc.

In 1976 the church decided to buy 63 Main Street for use as a parsonage, so this house was sold and once again became a private residence.

Genealogy

Virgil C. Goodwin: b. 8-2-1813 in Plymouth, Conn.; d. 10-5-1877 at Fox Lake, Wisconsin, buried in Hillside Cemetery

Fanny O. Potter Goodwin: b. 5-11-1813 in Plymouth; d. 10-27-1887

children: Mary J., b. 1833/4, m. Timothy Root, d. 5-18-1860
George C., b. 6-1833, d. 10-19-1859
Virgil W., b. 1841/2, d. 3-8-1862
Theodore W., b. 1844/5, d. 12-21-1862; Co. C, 16th Inf. Conn. Vols.
Arthur S., b. 10-21-1847, d. 9-28-1859
James A., b. 1849/50, d. 11-3-1870
Annie E., b. 3-1852, d. 9-21-1852

Abner S. Whittlesey: b. ?, d. ?
Harriet A. Newell Whittlesey: b. ?, m. 5-25-1847, d. ?
child: Sherman N., b. 5-24-1849

William Platner: b. ?, d. ?
Abigail Platner: b. 5-16-1820 in Lee, Mass.; d. 10-6-1859
Emily Platner: b. ?, d. ? (second wife)

children: Catherine N., b. 2-18-1850
female, b. 3-12-1862
male, b. 12-4-1863