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New Canaan saltbox a well-seasoned piece of the past

Makayla Silva

Published 12:50 am, Wednesday, April 8, 2015

▶ This lovingly preserved saltbox on New Canaan's North Wilton Road has a storied past.

It served as a shoe factory in the 18th century, was home to the radio personality and actor Sheriff [Bob Dixon](#) in the early 20th century and, in recent years, has hosted a number of horses and donkeys rescued from around the country.

The home's history dates to the early 1780s. It has been renovated and expanded through the centuries and most recently was reimagined by architect [James Schettino](#) in 2004, who was careful to preserve the bones of the 18th century home.

A stunning kitchen was part of the 2004 redesign, with three skylights, Carrara marble counters and all new appliances, including a Subzero fridge, double Dacor wall oven and timeless front apron fireclay farm sink.

An oversized center island framed by original hand-hewn beams was built of wood reclaimed from the property's barn hayloft.

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For further depth, a hand-painted mural -- by the same artist who completed work at Litchfield County's landmark [Mayflower Inn](#) and Spa -- was added on the far wall of the kitchen alongside the breakfast area.


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Additional renovations include a sunken family room just off the kitchen with locally sourced millwork and floors, a floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace using reclaimed stones from the property and a wall of built-in shelving.

Opposite the family room, the original formal living room remains preserved with antique wide plank floors and one of three wood-burning fireplaces off the home's original center chimney.

The sunken sunroom, steps from the living room, was originally a wood shed that was renovated by former homeowner Dixon, a popular television cowboy from the early days of TV. It features radiant heated stone floors, two walls of windows and a wall of built-in bookshelves.

About a century ago, the now first-floor office, generously sized with its own exterior access and a deep walk-in custom closet, was an addition made for a shoe cobbler's operations in a time when New Canaan was a prominent center for shoe production.

Seemingly untouched is the formal dining room, with timeworn antique wood floors, original brick beehive fireplace and built-in pantry storage.

A small potting room just off the dining room would make a great spot for an avid gardener to grow herbs, as it includes a built-in dry sink with a copper inlay and plenty of natural light.

Also nearly untouched is the butler's pantry, with plenty of cabinetry and an oak butcher-block counter.

The second floor of the house, once with separate standalone wings, has been connected, with five bedrooms and four full baths.

A private guest wing features a full bath with a Carrara marble sunken soaking tub, frameless glass step-in shower and large walk-in closet with custom storage.

Two additional guest bedrooms share an updated Jack and Jill bath with a step-in shower, while a smaller sized bedroom, perfect for a nursery, includes its own full bath with equestrian-inspired wallpaper.

A private master suite wing features cathedral ceilings with exposed wooden beams, two double closets plus a large walk-in closet and a large master bath.

The master en suite features his and hers vanities, a sunken tub and frameless glass step-in shower with a classic marble hex tile floor.

The meadow-like grounds also feature a carriage barn with a two-bedroom apartment, pool and spa, and numerous syrup-producing maple trees.

"This quintessential Connecticut country estate is both an extraordinary home and an extraordinary property, combining history, style and sophisticated luxuries," said Realtor [Rita Kirby](#). "It's the perfect marriage of charm, character and 21st-century amenities, affording a lifestyle of relaxation and rest."

For more information or to set up an appointment to see the house, contact Rita Kirby of [William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty](#) at 203-984-7665 or email her at rkirby@wpsir.com.

ABOUT THIS HOUSE

TYPE: Colonial

ADDRESS: 854 North Wilton Road

PRICE: \$ 3,295,000

ACREAGE: 4.28

YEAR BUILT: 1780

[SQUARE FOOTAGE](#): 7,004

NUMBER OF ROOMS: 15

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BEDROOMS: 5

FULL BATH: 4

HALF BATH: 2

NOTABLE FEATURES: carriage house with second floor apartment, three-car detached garage, terrace, shed, workshop, heated pool and spa,

SCHOOLS: East Elementary, Sax Middle School, and [New Canaan High School](#)

ASSESSMENT: \$1,997,730

TAXES: \$31,045

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