

REAL ESTATE

HOT PROPERTY

Coveted, historic Wilton estate comes to market

By Gretchen A. Peck

Known as the "Isaiah Keeler Homestead," 652 Ridgefield Road in Wilton is listed for \$2.95 million by Ryan Cornell of William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty.

The current homeowners purchased the property in 2013. They'd lived in the neighborhood already and admired it daily.

"We were excited when it came onto the market," said one of the sellers, who requested that their names be withheld. "We loved the unique nature of the antique homestead [and] history of the property, along with the wonderful upgrades to modern amenities that the previous several owners had completed."

The history here is rich and noteworthy. The Keeler family property dates back to the mid-1700s. For a time, the 70 acres of land was worked as a farm. It remained in the family through the early 1900s.

Some of the original architectural details remain — the framing, millwork, timbers and beams, the chimney and the fireplace hearth, as well as the second level of the residence are original and beautifully preserved. Outside, rock walls and mature coniferous trees tell the tale of time, as do some of the longtime residents of the area.

"Many locals we meet that grew up in or near Wilton talk of spending their childhood snow sledding from the main house, down and around the neighborhood, when it was still pasture [and] farm fields; horseback riding from the stables, or stopping by the farm with their families to buy local produce," the seller said.

However, in the centuries since, the original residence has been amended, expanded and renovated. There have been "major expansions" in each century — one during the 1800s, another during the 1900s, and the most recent one completed in the 2000s, according to the seller.

"That final addition ... added on the dining room, with his-and-her master baths above," he said. A carriage house on the property



William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty

Above: The country estate at 652 Ridgefield Road in Wilton includes a center-hall colonial that spans 6,500 square feet of living space, a pool house, a guesthouse, a carriage house with five-bay garage, barn and a potting shed. **Below:** The kitchen has hardwood floors, exposed beams, white cabinetry, high-end appliances and opens seamlessly into the breakfast room.

was rebuilt, and an older outbuilding — a legacy from the former farm — was reimaged as a pool house.

Country compound living

The homeowners describe the property as "a country estate or compound." It includes the main center-hall colonial that spans 6,500 square feet of living space, pool house, guesthouse, a carriage house with five-bay garage, barn and a potting shed.

From the moment a new guest walks into the home, the historic architectural features shine. The kitchen's wide-planked hardwood floors and exposed beams ensure the space is full of character. It's also a fabulous place to cook, with lots of white cabinetry, counter space and high-end appliances. In addition to bar seating for four, the space opens seamlessly to the breakfast room.

The formal dining room is sunken; two steps down take guests to the beautiful sun-



drenched and expansive space that's wrapped in windows and French doors. There's also a convenient butler's pantry with additional cabinetry, sink, wine refrigerator and lots of task space.

Fireplaces are prevalent. There are a total of seven throughout the home, including in the breakfast room, living room, family room

and a library that's worked well as an in-home office. There's also a fireplace in one of the second-level en-suite bedrooms.

The residence has six bedrooms, including the master suite, five full baths and two partial baths. Plus, there are two additional bedrooms in the guesthouse.

Details

Address: 652 Ridgefield Road, Wilton

Price: \$2.95 million

Number of Rooms: 15

Features: The appended 1738 residence offers approximately 6,500 square feet of living space with six bedrooms, five full baths and two partial bathrooms. Common rooms include formal living and dining rooms, a chef's kitchen with a breakfast room, family room and library/home office. In addition to a carriage house with a five-bay garage, the estate also includes a pool, pool house, potting shed, and two-bedroom guesthouse.

Schools: Miller-Driscoll Elementary, Middlebrook Middle, Wilton High School

The current homeowners have added a wine cellar to the property, a luxury for wine enthusiasts and frequent entertainers.

Stretched out before the pool house is the in-ground pool, surrounded by a stone terrace and further beautified with thoughtful landscaping. The land parcel is measured at 2.83 acres.

"The lot is highly developed from a landscaping perspective, mainly due to previous owners spending years planting and sculpting the feel of the property," the seller said. "At the same time, it is not ostentatious, as it keeps a feeling that is more intimate and inviting versus a showcase to be seen from afar but not really used. We love Wilton and the community at large. It is a spectacular place to raise a family or several generations since Wilton is so open and inviting to young and old alike."

Sotheby's Ryan Cornell noted, "While there are other properties available in this price range — and they are wonderful homes — the Isaiah Keeler Homestead is truly unique. You cannot build an estate like this, no matter how much money you have."

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AGENT PROFILE Leigh Ann Lengyel

Following in family's footsteps

After a 23-year-career as director of sales for a Stamford brewery, Leigh Ann Lengyel began a new career seven weeks ago in real estate.

While Lengyel truly enjoyed her sales job with Half Full Brewery, in which she ran the sales department from Maine to Virginia, it was time to enter the field she learned so much about from her parents. Lengyel began her new job in early March with William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty.

Lengyel's mother was a Realtor and her father was a builder and both worked hand-in-hand.

"I learned the customer service side from my mother. She taught me to make sure every client feels as if you are their only client," she said.

From her father, Lengyel said, "I learned to really know what you are doing, to know your product and push forward every single day."

Lengyel has done just that: pushed forward from the first day she began at William Pitt.

"I had six listings in my first seven weeks and 20 clients for buying and selling," said Lengyel, one of about 65 agents in the Wilton office.

Lengyel said she is focused on promptly responding to her clients and she has a love



Business: William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty

Lives: Norwalk

Works: Wilton

Experience: New home buyers, marketing properties, quick response time

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"The company is international, so the listings I have in Connecticut are being shown internationally," Lengyel said. "The support from the company is amazing, from the administrators to upper level management."

Lengyel has been so successful in her short

AGENT PROFILE Peter Raider

Fascination with architecture

From buttons to buildings, Peter Raider made the smooth transition from the family business to what he has always loved: architecture and real estate.

For 15 years, Raider worked in the family's button business in New York City's garment center. But, as the father of young children the commute was getting a little too much so Raider started his second career. And it has taken off.

"I had young children who I wanted to see grow up," said Raider, who has four children with his wife Lisa. "I also was always fascinated with architecture."

Raider got his license in 1990 and started working as a Realtor in 1995. He joined Coldwell Banker in 2008.

A consummate pro who has a detailed background in new construction having sold more than 100 new construction homes in his career, Raider learns from the best.

"For the past five years, I have worked with (the California-based) Tom Ferry and his organization and one of his top coaches," Raider said. "He is the No. 1 real estate coach in the country. I want to make sure my skills are always cutting edge and that my marketing is ahead of



Business: Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

Lives: North Stamford

Works: Stamford and White Plains, N.Y.

Experience: Residential homes, home sales and buyers

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change and condition on a moment's notice," he said.

Raider is licensed in New York and Connecticut and started working out of Coldwell's Stamford office in November