ADVERTISEMENT

Litchfield, New Haven and Fairfield Counties

The three Connecticut counties closest to New York City offer a diverse mix of fine homes in some of the most sought-after communities in the country.

As the only contemporary-styled home in the heart of the Calhoun/Ives historic district of Washington, considered by many the cultural hub of Connecticut's Litchfield County, 157a Calhoun Street is a six-bedroom home designed by the well-known architectural firm Demetriades + Walker. Completed in 2012, the home was designed to embrace the best of innovative modernism and the estate farmhouse vernacular of the area with clean and simple lines, employing double-height ceilings, white maple flooring, neutral colors, abundant windows and sliding glass doors. The 7,700-square-foot home comes with a spacious lounge and dining area opening to a stone viewing patio; a modern kitchen with screened porch; and two master suites, one with a spa and private porch on the main floor, and the other with a sundeck overlooking the 9.24-acre property. All this, within 90 minutes from New York City.

On the market for $4,250,000, the home's location is considered one of the most prestigious addresses in an area known for its elegant estate farmhouses. "The historic district designation means that most of what comes onto the market here are older homes that might need to be redone," said Jeffrey Phillips, associate broker with William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty. "Here you can live on an ideal pastoral road and, because of the architecture, feel like you are in Los

Hollins & Lawrence

OPPOSITE: 157a Calhoun Street

ABOVE: 201 Millerton Road

RIGHT: 250 Upper Whittemore Road

Angeles or the Hamptons. This is a true indoor/outdoor party house, with beautiful western sunsets — a super contemporary art house ideal to showcase a Jeff Koons or a Richard Serra."

Also designed by Demetriades + Walker and being shown by Phillips, 250 Upper Whittemore Road in New Haven County's Middlebury is a stylish cedar shingle six-bedroom gambrel-roofed home built by the current owners with walnut floors, custom millwork and cabinetry, high ceilings and views of Lake Quassapaug. The 20.92-acre site was once part of the turn-of-the-century industrialist J.H. Whittemore's 300-acre estate, then called Tranquillity Farm, where McKim, Mead & White designed the main home, and an associate of the Olmsted brothers designed the gardens. The current property, built in 2011, is quintessential New England, featuring a grassy hillside, with stonewalls and big lawns rolling down toward the lake; and the new home takes its cues from White's cedar shingle, gambrel-roofed exterior, evoking that same period in a more contemporary style.

The 7,858-square-foot home is listing for $3,890,000. "From the outside, it blends in with the other homes of the area; but the interior, with soaring ceilings, contemporary lighting, walls that beg for an extensive art collection and huge windows that let in tons of light, is chic," said Phillips. "It has all the latest brands — Savant, Lutron, Toto, Sub-Zero, Miele — and multizone HVAC, a woodburning fireplace, a pool with a motorized solar/safety cover, an ipe wood deck, and an outdoor kitchen with a gas fireplace and a concealable outdoor television. It is the ultimate in sophistication."

In the northwest corner of the state, 201 Millerton Road in Sharon is a five-bedroom white English Manor estate, built in 1809 on 95.72 acres, with its detailed pediments, carved fireplaces and millwork intact. The approximately 8,500-square-foot home represents the best of historic Litchfield County, with a huge three-exposure drawing room with walls of windows. The main event, however, may be the expansive grounds, created by English garden designer Penelope Hobhouse and British architect Sir Anthony Denny, with carefully

Douglas Elliman

calibrated Edwardian symmetry in a hillside setting centered around an obelisk-topped folly framed by a double allée of zelkova trees. The allée is flanked by two formal rectangular gardens: one a walled English garden designed with brick paths, and the other a hornbeam-hedged garden surrounding a 75-foot lap pool and a double pavilion with a cabana and a guest studio. An antique Russian dacha helps set the mood, located in the light woodlands along a meandering stream. There is also a tennis court, a large party barn and a three-bedroom guesthouse.

The entire property is on the market for $7,750,000. "Hobhouse designed the grounds to fit perfectly with the house, and the property is the complete package," said John Friend, sales agent with Houlihan Lawrence Real Estate. "Her gardens are spectacular — both the walled garden and the hornbeam-hedged garden that surrounds the pool. And a sizable stream runs through the back of the property, with several waterfalls, with bridges across the stream. The result is breathtaking: Every time you are at the property you see something different, from specimen trees to the gardens, and it is all beautifully maintained. Every tree was planted very deliberately."

Alligator Farm, the Ridgefield estate of the Edelman family, founders of Edelman Leather, sits on 31 acres with a river running through the property at 129 Spring Valley Road. Listing for $4,695,000, the family, which once hired a then-unknown commercial illustrator named Andy Warhol as its graphic designer, created a truly artistic residence on the border of neighboring Westchester County in North Salem, with all its many horse trails. The Edelmans collected art since they built the property in 1969, when they dismantled two barns from the 1840s, and used the vintage siding on the interior of their new home as a showcase for large-scale art. The property now includes an indoor and an outdoor pool with a pool house, a cottage and a barn/workshop that was formerly a stable. A more recent addition is a year-round greenhouse/party area attached to the 8,424-square-foot, eight-bedroom, six-bathroom home. There is also a two-bedroom cottage.

"The indoor lap pool is parallel with the running stream, which makes swimming laps a real experience — but my favorite part is the living room, with the barn beams and the open flow overlooking a waterfall," said Sally Slater, associate broker with Douglas Elliman Real Estate, who grew up in the house with her brother, John Edelman, president and C.E.O. of Design Within Reach. "The home still has a real loftlike feeling that you get with a converted barn. There is a warmth to the wood, with a huge fireplace, and an air of creativity throughout. The advantage here is that your taxes are a fraction of what they would be in North Salem — and Ridgefield is a great town in its own right, with the playhouse and a contemporary art museum."

Also in Fairfield County, at 36 Narrow Rocks Road in Westport and on the market for $4,999,000, is a six-bedroom, eight-bathroom, 8,008-square-foot home on 1.15 acres located directly across from Longshore Golf Club near Compo Beach, the marina and the train. The home's core, built in 1795, was expanded upon by the current owner in 2016, who works for a company that buys old hotels, then guts and reinvents them. The original structure is now a home office, and there are three woodburning fireplaces, an outdoor kitchen with a gunite pool, organic vegetable gardens, year-round sunroom,

Hollman Lawrence

OPPOSITE: 129 Spring Valley Road

ABOVE: 36 Narrow Rocks Road

RIGHT: 241 Black Rock Turnpike

Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

a stainless-steel staircase, and lots of exposed beams and sliding barn doors.

"The new sections are extremely modern, big and open," says Kim Harizman, partner with KMS Partners, a team of realtors affiliated with Coldwell Banker. "It all comes out of the owner's keen sense of style from being in the design business. He didn't want a conventional center hall colonial — and instead built something that is completely out of the ordinary, taking advantage of the lack of zoning for the original structure, which sat close to the road. The way the original house is sited allows for the maximum use of the current property in a way that could not be done if it were built today because of zoning restrictions; it affords abundant privacy. The master bedroom is striking, with decks off two sides, one overlooking the courtyard and another overlooking the backyard, with a fireplace and a vaulted ceiling. It speaks to a buyer who maybe didn't know what they were looking for, but knew they didn't want plain vanilla."

A casual stucco and stone country manor with a French-style turret set on a 19.38 acres at 241 Black Rock Turnpike in Redding, on the market for $6 million, is located on a 1.25-acre pond with a pier, suitable for kayaking, a koi pond, and a new pool with a waterfall. The 14,866-square-foot slate-roof home, built in 2004 with a heated driveway and porte cochere between the two garages, comprises five fireplaces, an antique slate roof, large dining room, two recreation rooms, two saunas (one indoor, the other by the pool), a media room and an outdoor fireplace with seating.

"It is like living in Vermont, in Fairfield County — but instead of driving three hours to Vermont, this is an hour and 20 minutes to New York City," said Gail Lilley Zawacki, sales agent with Coldwell Banker in Westport. "The area has always had a lot of writers, artists, movie people and creative types, as well as horse lovers; there are plenty of horse properties nearby. It is like a European castle, with a huge amount of space on just under 20 acres, but we call it a casual European country manor."