

On the Market / Vintage farmhouse rooted in local history

By Meg Barone Published 12:00 am EDT, Tuesday, May 14, 2019



Photo: Austin Eterno



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The wrap around veranda can be accessed from several rooms and provides views of the beautifully landscaped 2.49-acre property.



WESTON – Paul Harris and his wife, Sitta, were expecting their first child when they were looking for the perfect home to raise their family.

They chose a vintage farmhouse that was firmly rooted in local history, which they renovated and updated constructing what Paul Harris calls "a quintessential Connecticut home."

The David Osborn House at 61 Georgetown Road (Route 57) was part of the Osborn Farm in the Georgetown section of Weston, and dates back at least to 1808 and most likely even earlier still. A stone in the chimney has that

date carved into it, but that could be from a renovation. Harris said he has a copy of the original deed to the farm property, which is dated 1769, when King George deeded the house to the Osborn family.

"The first long lot in what is now the village of Georgetown was known as the Osborn long lot granted to Richard Osborn for military service in the Pequot Indian War. This section is in the Weston part of Georgetown," according to information on the History of Redding website. " ... It has been said that Richard Osborn built on the Osborn long lot at an early date but this has not been proven. The first settler we have record of who built on this section was William Osborn, who built a log house in 1734."

Harris said the antique structure appeal to him, an appreciation he developed in childhood visiting an aunt who lived in the oldest house in the town of Simsbury.

"I gravitate toward older homes with historic connections," he said.

With the heart of a preservationist, a creative mind, and a visionary eye toward modern lifestyle, Harris designed, renovated and expanded the original farmhouse, and masterfully so because of his line of work. Harris is managing partner and principal of Cole Harris Associates, an award-winning Westport-based residential and commercial design-build firm.

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Years after purchasing the house, Harris thought about designing and building a new house, "but my kids were so attached to the home, and we had and continue to have an amazing relationship with our neighbors so we didn't want to leave."

Instead, they spent two years renovating and expanding the existing farmhouse to create "a sprawling home kind of like the one that I remember from my childhood with a little bit of something from a Bing Crosby movie – big rooms where you can fit 25 people. We've had over 40 for a sit-down dinner in our dining room," Harris said. They are only moving now because their children are grown.

No doubt the National Trust for Historic Preservation wishes there were more people like Paul and Sitta Harris who appreciate and make efforts to preserve antique houses. May is Preservation Month, celebrated by the NTHP, which encourages people to purchase and preserve vintage houses.

During the renovation, Harris expanded the footprint to 5,273 square feet, retaining the early charm including hand-hewn beams, wide-planked flooring, and four fireplaces – some of them original to the house, while giving it all the amenities for 21st-century living and entertaining.



ABOUT THIS HOUSE

STYLE: Colonial

ADDRESS: 61 Georgetown Road,
Weston

PRICE: \$1,199,000

ROOMS: 11

FEATURES: 2.49-acre level property, large wrap-around veranda, multi-leveled flagstone patio, fire pit, balcony, exterior lighting, awnings, professionally landscaped, audio system, cable – available, four fireplaces, Thermopane windows, disability access and features, proximity to Devil's Den Nature Conservancy, only about five minutes to Georgetown shopping district, only about 12 minutes from the Merritt Parkway, attached two-car garage, porte cochere, circular driveway, private well, natural gas heat, wood shingle roof, stone wall, five bedrooms, five full and two half baths

SCHOOLS: Hurlbutt Elementary,
Weston Middle, Weston High

ASSESSMENT: \$928,900

MILL RATE: 28.91 mills

TAXES: \$27,300

The house was designed to be spacious yet intimate, and to blur the lines between indoor and outdoor living with a wide wrap-around veranda that can be accessed from several rooms and a flagstone patio with a fire pit.

Harris converted the existing garage into a large media room and created a porte cochere with living space above that serves as an interior "pathway" connecting the media room to the main house. This interior space can be used as an art studio, office or homework/study area. It contains 20 linear feet of cabinetry and countertop.

The chef's eat-in kitchen easily facilitates daily meals and catered parties on a grand scale. It features a long wood center island/breakfast bar, marble counters, breakfast nook, built-in desk area, and high-end appliances including Sub-Zero refrigerator and separate freezer.

On the second floor there are four en suite bedrooms. The three-room master suite was built into the cupola and features a dressing room with a door to a private balcony, and private bath.

Harris said commuting is easy because of the location of the house, only minutes from the Georgetown shopping district, the center of Weston, and Westport.

"Being on a state road we rarely ever lose power and we're always the first to be plowed," he said.

The recreational value of the house is enhanced by its proximity to the 1,756-acre Devil's Den Nature Preserve with miles of trails for hiking and cross-country skiing.

For more information or to make an appointment to see the house contact Susan C. Leone and Gabrielle DiBianco of Higgins Group; Leone at 203-209-2075 or susan@susanleone.com, and DiBianco at 203-895-6724 or

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