

Avery Homestead a Relocated Restoration

By JOHN TORSIELLO
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There's a big piece of eastern Connecticut Colonial-era history right in Washington. And it's for sale.

What is known as the Avery Homestead was moved piece by piece from Preston during the middle of the last decade and became the home of the Lovelace family, the 250-plus-year-old dwelling merged impeccably with a modern addition on Upper Church Hill Road. The home, which has 10 rooms, four bedrooms, two-and-a-half baths and sits on almost 13 acres of pristine countryside, is listed for \$2.195 million. Peter Klemm of Klemm Real Estate is the listing agent.

"This quintessential 'gentleman's farm' entails all the factors that represent the romance of Litchfield County living," said Mr. Klemm. "The house offers the best of both the old and new world. It provides the authenticity, charm and character of an antique house with the amenities and reliability of modern construction."

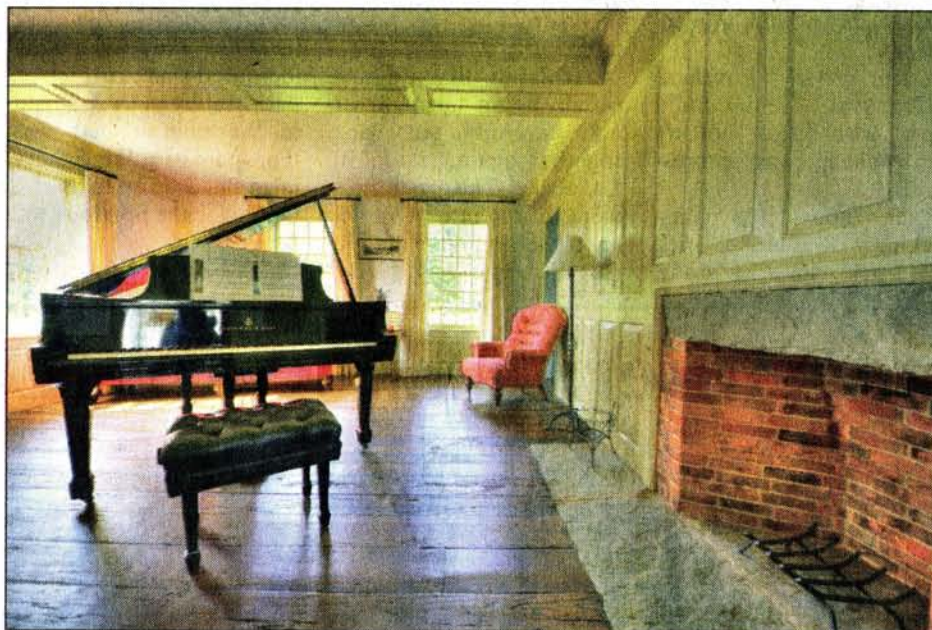
Originally built in 1755 by Capt. John Avery for his son, John Avery Jr., and his new bride in Preston, the home was carefully dismantled, relocated and rebuilt in Washington. The interior of the main house has been restored to its original state in 1755, while the new addition includes a modern kitchen with high-end appliances and a large family living area that provides stunning views of the property.

Vermont soapstone was tastefully used for the kitchen's countertops and center island. The kitchen



The Avery Homestead was originally built in Preston in 1755 by Capt. John Avery for his son. The house now sits on nearly 13 acres of land in Washington.

Contributed photos



The front room that is currently used as a music room features paneled walls, wide floorboards and a fireplace built with the original brick.

also has an array of Wolf gas range, conventional well as both a Subzero appliances, including the and microwave ovens, as commercial-size refrigera-

secret that had been hidden for nearly 300 years. When the staircase was being removed during the dismantling of the house, the original builder's (John Avery's) signature, written in chalk, was discovered on the inside of the staircase.

The house has tall ceilings for its pre-Revolutionary War period and intricately carved paneled walls that reflect the wealth of its original builder, a well-to-do and respected farmer, goldsmith and clockmaker.

Exiting the home and looking west over a field, one can easily imagine sitting on the large porch, whiling away a late afternoon and early evening, watching the sun set into the hills. The property has nearly one-quarter mile of rebuilt stone-walls and a gated driveway.

The home's current owner, Eric Lovelace, explained the genesis of the dwelling's triumphant move to Washington.

"My wife (Amy) and I first spent a weekend in Litchfield at the Toll Gate Inn sometime in the mid-1990s. It was during this time and on weekends later that I came to love the Litchfield County area, with its rural bucolic setting and its grand 18th-century homes. At the time I was living in New Jersey and working as a hedge fund portfolio manager in New York City. While New Jersey was convenient, I felt claustrophobic living there. Having grown up in a farming community in Missouri, I yearned for something more rural with character."

So, the Lovelaces began searching for a suitable home for their family (they have two children), first in Fairfield County and then Litchfield County.

tor/freezer and separate wine-cooler. A living area off of the kitchen and dining room incorporated original wood beams from the Avery Homestead.

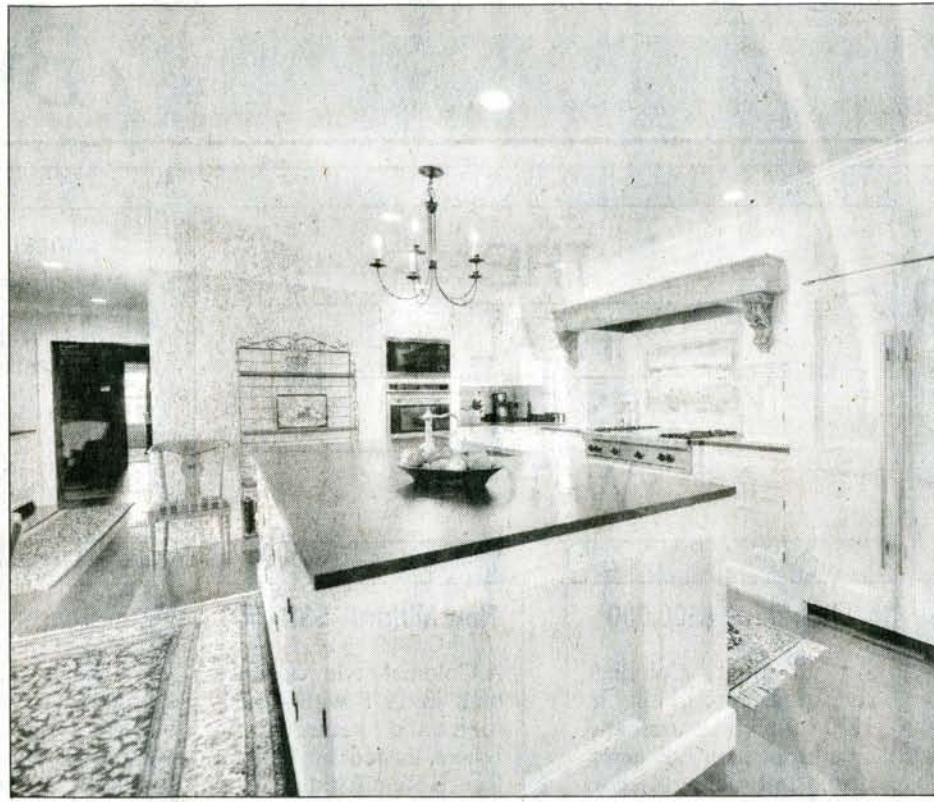
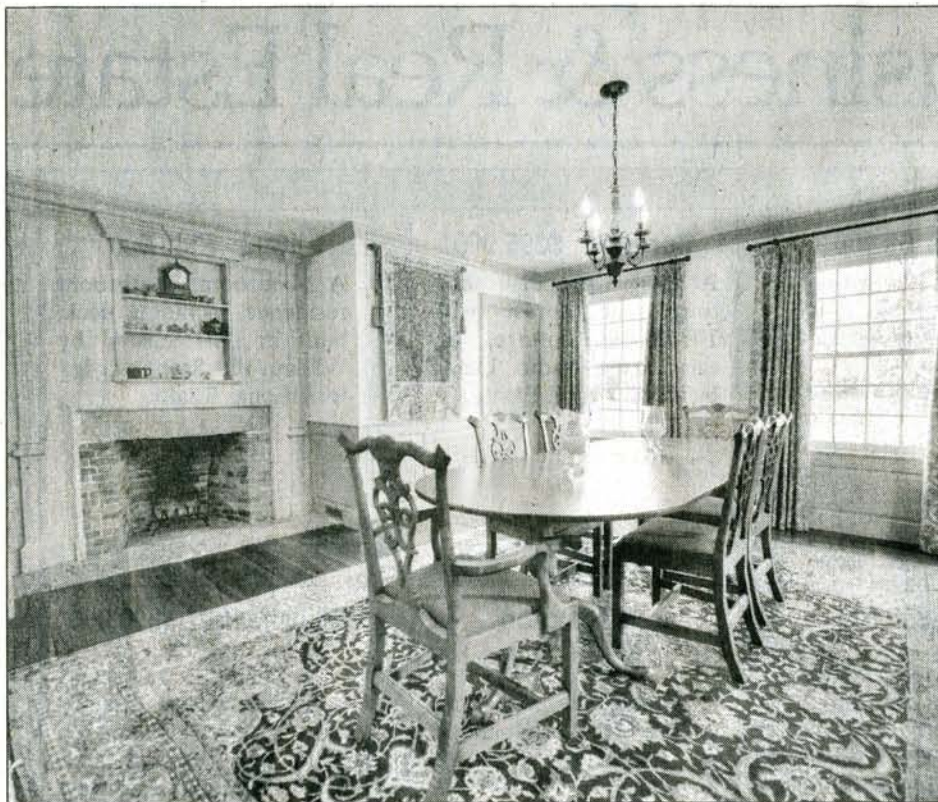
A main "keeping room" features original exposed post and beams and oak wide board paneling and floorboards.

The room has a massive stone fireplace, with a center beehive oven, that is the focal point of the room. The two front rooms of the house, one currently used as a music room and the other as a formal dining area, showcase impressive (especially for the era in which the house was originally built) paneled walls and floorboards.

Each of the front rooms has its own fireplace built with the original brick.

The front staircase of the home conceals a small

Please see **Avery** on **A15**



Contributed photos

Above left, the dining room; above right, the kitchen, which opens up into the main "keeping room," shown below.

Avery

From A13

"I was never able to find a home that satisfied all the conditions required by my wife and myself. I liked old homes, but she liked newer amenities. We needed to find something that we both could live with. Any properties we found were either too expensive for our budget or were located too close to a road or in too suburban an area. We were looking for the storybook New England dream home, a historic house on a farm-like setting, with stone walls, barns, and such."

One requirement for the Lovelaces was that the house had to be of Georgian architecture and be pre-Revolutionary War. But finding all of these elements within commuting distance of New York City proved futile.

"I had to think outside the box, so to speak. At one point in my journey I discovered there were craftsmen who were in the business of dismantling old homes and relocating them to new locations. One such person was Bill Gould of Woodstock. He knew that the historical society of Preston was at-



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tempting to dismantle an important and impressive 1755 Colonial set to be razed to clear the way for a hotel. The Foxwoods Casino was visible from the house's original location, and they were looking for someone to finish dismantling the house and store it or rebuild it."

Remarkably, the owner of the Avery Homestead

was willing to give the house away for free if the Lovelaces paid to have it taken down and moved. Bingo.

Said Mr. Lovelace, "That was a deal I could live with. The house's provenance was impressive."

The house was painstakingly dismantled, brick by brick, stone by stone,

stick by stick. The pieces were carefully numbered and cataloged to aid in reconstructing the house later.

"This was like a jigsaw puzzle being taken apart and carefully put back together again," said Mr. Lovelace. The materials were loaded into two tractor trailers and one flatbed (for the stone work, bricks

and foundation).

The trailers were stored until the Lovelaces found a "perfect" building location. They eventually identified an attractive, flat, usable piece of land in Washington that was then part of a large dairy farm that had been in one family for the previous 150 years.

"It had beautiful stone

walls and a mixture of flat pasture land and trees," said Mr. Lovelace. "It provided the perfect building spot. Great road frontage, curb appeal, flat usable land, and in an upscale Litchfield County town."

Through word of mouth and reputation, the Lovelaces found and engaged Frank Fisher of Litchfield to be the general contractor for the project. Construction began in 2005 and was completed in the summer of 2006.

Mr. Lovelace said, "Most people comment to me that the house looks like it has sat on this spot for the past 250 years. That is how I knew I had completed the project correctly. We have raised Old English Southdown sheep, as well as chickens on the property. It has been a wonderful place to live and raise a family."

In addition to the main house, there is an original barn from the dairy farm located on the property (mid-1800s), and a large three-bay garage/barn that was built by Old Town Barns of Pawling, N.Y. The structure incorporates a large walk-up loft that could be converted to an apartment or office.

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