

ON THE MARKET

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2016

Changes went full circle to keep soul of the house

In 2016, some 220 years after Phineas Smith



The 1796 Colonial and barn were built by Phineas Smith, the impactful engineer who laid out plans for nearby state highways and was Roxbury's first representative in state legislature.

built it, this centerpiece Colonial house and barn reflects more of the detail and accuracy Smith put into his 1796 homestead than architects Charles M. Haver and Stewart R. Skolnick found when they took ownership two decades ago. The antique structures that were

featured in Architectural Digest in 2004 and again in 2005, have over the centuries seen five successive owners remodel and augment them — going away from the original state and then back again. Skolnick described the full



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Within the living quarters, one of the home's four original fireplaces maintains its historic detail.

circle changes thus: "Over the years the house had additions put on, and it grew to be quite big," he said. "In the '60s an antiques dealer bought it, ripped off a third of the house, and brought it back almost to what Phineas Smith had built, but left a kitchen porch addition." The previous owner removed a rear wing, porches, doorways, and mantels, but then introduced late-Georgian and early-Federal doors and hardware that are reminiscent of the original intent. So, although the house is a little larger today than

it was in the country's earliest days, it is otherwise the home imagined by engineer and politician Smith. "It's very common with houses over centuries, that people add on successfully and sometimes not," said Skolnick, "and it's not uncommon to remove (additions) and bring it back." That doesn't dismiss investments the current owners put into the 10-room home, which is something Haver said "was worth it." But perhaps most profound was the work they did on the barn structure. According to Skolnick, it was in worse shape than the house, so he and Haver tore off looming additions, but rebuilt them with care and thoughtfulness. Now the barn serves as the headquarters for both their own architecture firm and Haver's antiques shop. Residence and work in one place, as listing agent Wendy Westcott puts it, "in a prime location for anyone who wants to simplify their life." As outlined in a survey of Roxbury, written last decade by Rachel Carley, it was in this homestead that Smith laid plans for Oxford Turnpike, which is the heavily traversed Route 67 state highway — also known as Southbury Road — upon which the home has frontage. And it was here that Smith mounted his successful campaign to become Roxbury's first representative in the state legislature. Balanced work and life are nothing new to this location. "We're talking about buildings, but we feel they have a soul," said Skolnick. "And if you take care of them, they'll take care of you."

IN THE DETAILS

Listing: Klemm Real Estate
 Price: \$1.25 million
 Bedrooms: 4 Baths: 3
 Acreage: 2
 Year built: 1796

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By Jack Coraggio