



HOMES FOR SALE REAL ESTATE

3 brick mansions by Mott Schmidt for sale right now

New York's favorite post-Gilded Age architect

BY ROBERT KHEDERIAN | OCT 19, 2017, 1:00PM EDT



Photo courtesy of Houlihan Lawrence.

Welcome back to [Period Dramas](#), a weekly column that alternates between rounding up historic homes on the market and answering questions we've always had about older structures.

It didn't take long for the opulence of the Gilded Age to [fall out of fashion](#). As global tastes shifted after World War I, over-the-top, sprawling mansions became obsolete.

Many homes were sold or demolished, and trends turned toward houses in the Colonial Revival and [Georgian styles](#), which were known for their restrained senses of decoration.

Eighteenth century architecture of both America and England influenced the Colonial Revival style, which leapt onto the scene around the turn of the 20th century, thanks to firms like [McKim, Mead, & White](#) and [Delano & Alrich](#).

But it was Mott Schmidt, a [New York City-based architect](#) working mainly from the 1920s through his death in the the 1970s, who made the refined classicism of Georgian and Colonial Revival architecture his signature style.

A 1906 graduate of the Pratt Institute of Technology, Schmidt got his big break when literary agent Elizabeth Marbury hired him in 1920 to [renovate a townhouse](#) on Sutton Place in midtown Manhattan, then a rather unknown and undesirable location.

Marbury had a knack for fostering creative talent: She kickstarted her partner Elsie de Wolfe's interior design career—and subsequently the American interior design industry as a whole—in 1907 when [she helped De Wolfe clinch her first big](#)

[commission](#): The Colony Club of New York City.

Many of Marbury's friends—members of the Vanderbilt and Morgan families—[saw Schmidt's work](#) and hired him, too, to develop their own Sutton Place townhouses, which quickly went from no-man's land to one of the most desirable addresses on the east side of Manhattan.

Working in the Georgian style—typified by a rigorous symmetry—Schmidt became a go-to architect for wealthy New Yorkers. His designs were famous for spacious and elegantly appointed interiors free from the overuse of marble and gold that plagued many Gilded Age designs. Here are a few examples, each of which is on the market right now, should you have an exorbitant amount of money to drop on your next home.



Photo by Cary Horowitz.



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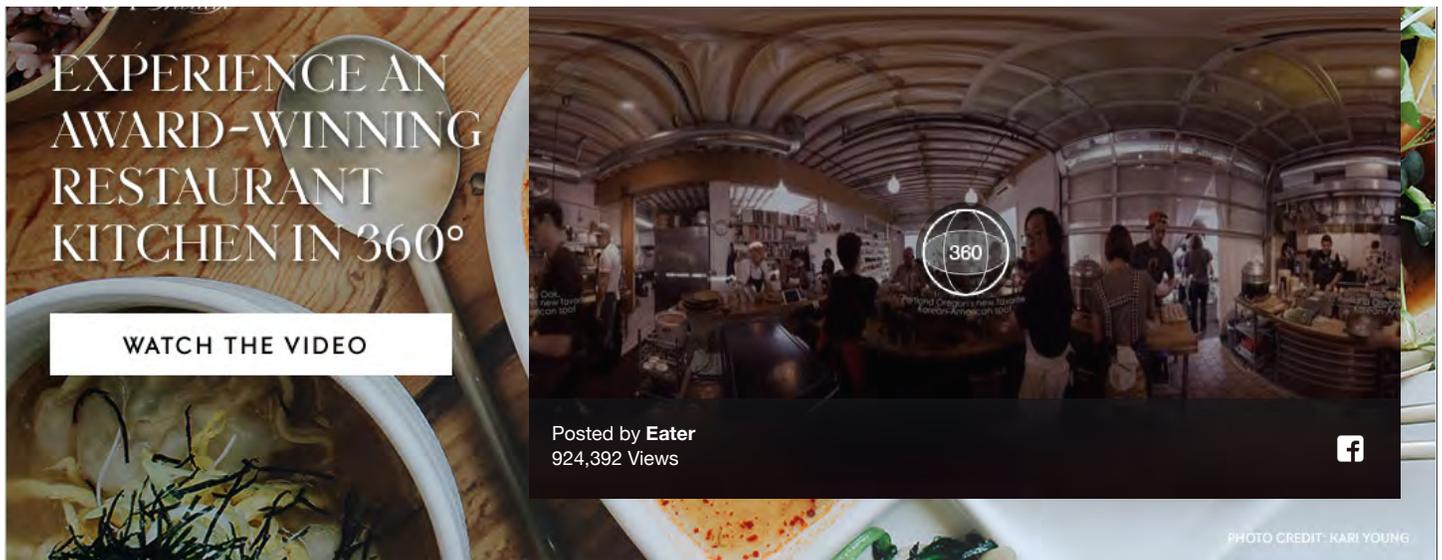


Photo by Cary Horowitz.

New York, New York (8 bedrooms, 8.5 bathrooms, \$27 million)

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Spanning almost 10,000 square feet on the Upper East Side of New York, this double-wide townhouse—completed in 1924—was purchased in 1948 by the Rockefeller family. The house remained in the Rockefeller estate until the death of David Rockefeller earlier this year.

What's interesting to think about is how the style of this house, its size and architectural appointments, would have been considered a step *back* from the extravagance of the Gilded Age. Make no mistake: The upper floor of this house is still dedicated to a network of rooms for live-in staff. But the rooms are all rendered in simpler wood paneling.

While early 20th-century houses may have had layers of deeply carved molding, this red-brick house has just enough to make the rooms feel formal. That woodwork is complemented by matching hand-painted [chinoiserie wallpaper](#).



Photo courtesy of Houlihan Lawrence.



Photo courtesy of Houlihan Lawrence.



Photo courtesy of Houlihan Lawrence.

Sleepy Hollow, New York (11 bedrooms, 12 bathrooms, \$22 million)

Schmidt designed this Georgian estate in 1938 for Abby Rockefeller, who later sold it to her brother, David Rockefeller. The house is located about an hour north of New York City, just down the road from the [Gilded Age Rockefeller retreat Kykuit](#).

While Kykuit, which was completed in 1913, is resplendent with monumentally sized rooms, bands of plater moldings, and acres of strictly formal gardens, this house is on a much more human scale—or, at least as human as you can get in 11,000 square feet.

Just as in the Manhattan townhouse, the interiors are formal without being over-the-top. Even the scale of the rooms and ceiling heights are more modest. The dining room—which, like the Manhattan house, is also in a cheery yellow—looks like it was designed for intimate gatherings rather than sprawling dinner parties. The bedrooms barely have any ornamentation, save for a marble fireplace and small band of crown molding.



Photo courtesy of Houlihan Lawrence.



Photo courtesy of Houlihan Lawrence.



Photo courtesy of Houlihan Lawrence.

North Salem, New York (7 bedrooms, 7 bathrooms, \$9.85 million)

Also about an hour north of Manhattan, this red-brick Georgian on 26 acres was built for Richard W. Woolworth.

In keeping with Schmidt's style, the exterior of the house is entirely symmetrical, from the chimney placement to the landscaping to the dormers popping up from the roofline. The interior tells a slightly different story.

While the first few houses we saw were pretty much in untouched condition, the same can not be said of this 9,000-square-foot pile. But that's not necessarily a bad thing: The house received a kitchen renovation fit for a Nancy Meyers film. And, perhaps most importantly, none of the woodwork was sacrificed in the maintenance of the house.

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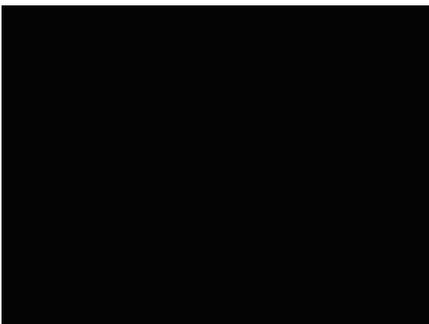
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