

Rabbit Hill is the Scarborough estate of famed art dealer Warren Adelson

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(Photo: Steve Turner)

A legendary modern-day architect with an eye toward old-world charm and elegance, [Mott B. Schmidt](http://www.mottschmidt.com/) (<http://www.mottschmidt.com/>) has never been so talked about in the Hudson Valley as he is these days.

Several of the houses he created are for sale — and the owners, who think of themselves more like caretakers of his creations rather than property owners, are coming together to share how they preserve and enhance these multimillion-dollar estates without changing them. These are not homes that are subject to gut renovations or torn down for larger abodes.

Schmidt's Georgian-style country homes for the Astors, Rockefellers, the Vanderbilts, Woolworth heir Richard Woolworth, have a big presence in the Hudson Valley. And Mark Alan Hewitt, an architect and architectural historian who has studied and written about Schmidt, says these were favorite homes, the place where owners entertained and relaxed in style and comfort.

Rabbit Hill a Mott Schmidt estate in Scarborough

Jan and Warren Adelson own the 15-acre Rabbit Hill in Scarborough and are the latest to connect with Schmidt devotees. Their house was built in 1929 for banker William Lambie.

Red brick with black shutters, double doors welcomes guests. There are matching wings on either side of the entrance. Even the landscaping is symmetrical with a circular bed of flowers in the driveway and two flower urns to the left and the right of the door. Matching ivy vines climb the outside walls.

And as a nod to Warren Adelson, founder of Adelson Galleries, which features American impressionism, realism and modernism, contemporary sculptures from modern masters are situated throughout the gardens. Presumably these do not come with the house, but anything is negotiable especially when the owner is an art dealer.

"This is a large home and now that our children are grown it is silly to have the two of us rattling around here. It should have a family," Jan Adelson said of the 13,000-square-foot house on three stories with eight bedrooms, eight bathrooms and two powder rooms. There is also a tennis court, heated swimming pool and pool house, carriage house and studio apartment.

A board member at Lyndhurst, the Hudson River Museum and Historic Hudson Valley, she is quite enamored of the entrance hall that has a marble-checked floor as well as the gracious size of the home's rooms.

"You keep the architect's decor because it fits," Adelson added. The library has walnut paneling and French doors that lead to a terrace with extraordinary Hudson River views to the west.

Her home is considered one of Schmidt's grandest projects.

"At Rabbit Hill, (Schmidt) re-imagined the quintessential English country house complete with the stately proportions and restrained classical elegance for which he is known," Hewitt said.

At a recent cocktail party talk at the Hudson River estate, Hewitt described Schmidt as "the last of the masters of this kind of architecture," noting that the architect lived in Westchester during his later years and was a Katonah resident at the time of his death in 1977. He lived for a time at Pook's House on Guard Hill Road in Bedford, named for a Rudyard Kipling story, but sold the house and built a smaller home in Katonah.

As well, Schmidt built townhouses in New York City, a major renovation to Gracie Mansion and other projects in 16 other states and Washington, D.C.

Hewitt admitted he became a "stalker" of these houses and traipsed through the country checking each one out with his own eyes.

The architect also did some municipal projects. In 1932 he designed the Village Hall and post office in Mount Kisco, a picturesque complex on Main Street. He did many major renovations to grand estates in Westchester including Edgewood in Purchase and Crowfields in Bedford.

"These houses are timeless," Hewitt said explaining that they combine function, comfort, good sighting and good taste.

Rabbit Hill is listed at \$8.9 million and there are two approved adjoining lots of 2- and 4-acres available for an additional \$1.4 million. David Turner of Houlihan Lawrence (<http://davidturner.houlihanlawrence.com/property/25295997/842-sleepy-hollow-road-scarborough-ny-10510>) is the listing agent.

Also for sale is Northshire in North Salem, which is known as the former Woolworth estate. The current owners restored it to its original grandeur adding a Lord & Burnham greenhouse, chef's kitchen and a loft-like guest suite. It is being offered at \$15.85 million through listing agent Linda Gracie and Anthony Cutugno of Houlihan Lawrence (<http://www.houlihanlawrence.com/property/26248852/58-cat-ridge-road-north-salem-ny-10560>).

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