Defying a teardown trend
Homeowners are turning to remodeling

By Susan Nova
Special Correspondent

Resisting the trend of teardowns in recent years, two homeowners chose different paths. Homesellers in New Canaan opted for a six-month renovation to ensure the survival of their 1920s homestead, and a Rowayton couple, knowing they were going to move to Pennsylvania, completed a large addition before selling.

Patty and Bob Franklin have listed their shingle — style Colonial with Carolyn Clark, whose New Canaan agency bears her name, for $2,399 million. Anxious to preserve its vintage charm, but knowing it required remodeling, the Franklins went to work under the direction of Clark and her associate, Cathy Wooters.

The Franklins wanted to enhance the value of their 3,500-square-foot home on .56 acres and build upon a 1999 expansion that had been designed by award-winning New Canaan architect, Laurent DuPont. "That project was done with such great care — especially with the attention given to maximizing the sunlight entering through the windows, skylights and French doors — that I did not want all that to be lost," Bob Franklin said. "My father was a pediatrician, and he once told me that he could always tell if a child was being raised in a place filled with sunlight."

The front facade features simple columns supporting a triangular peaked entryway that is echoed in the gabled dormers above, along with some fish-scale siding, typical of the earlier Victorian era. At the rear elevation is a tall brick chimney stack, and arches of latticework support a private deck, with lattice screening, whose wide stairs angle down to a ground-level terrace and the back yard. Also visible are gabled dormers, with full windows, and skylights.

The formal living room with fireplace has a bay window and French doors. There's a separate dining room, a library that could serve as a fifth bedroom, an office and a full bath on this level. A new kitchen, with white cabinets, granite countertops, high-end appliances, pantry, island and wet bar, is open to the family room, with brick fireplace and French doors that open to the wrap-around deck.

Upstairs, the master bedroom has a cathedral ceiling and a walk-in closet, along with a marble bath with whirlpool tub. Three additional bedrooms share another marble bath.

Classic split remodeled with flair In Rowayton, what had been a 1,900-square-foot split-level house with the look of a ranch is now a 3,500-square-foot Nantucket Colonial, designed to fit into its neighborhood.

Dr. Clive Hammant, a remarried widower, had sold a house in Victorian style. His bride, Dr. Lucille Russell, was fond of the modern and had lived in a loft in Chicago.

From the front, the house is somewhat traditional, but with a contemporary flair. There are steeply sloping roof lines, multipaned windows and a front porch that expands to a deck around one side of the house. Inside, the main level has an open floor plan, filled with natural light. "The ceilings are high and accented with sleek stainless steel structural rods," said architect, Ann Sellars Lathrop of Westport. The stainless steel is followed through in the stair rails of the main center stair hall and in the luxury appliances of the open kitchen.

In total, there are 11 rooms, with five bedrooms, five baths and four fireplaces. The master suite has a vaulted ceiling, fireplace and skylights, his-and-hers closets and water views. The master bath has heated floors, custom double vanities, whirlpool tub and steam shower. "Vaulted ceilings and other features combine modern edginess with graceful Colonial character," said Hammant, who recently retired from Pfizer Pharmaceutical Co. The house has elements of passive solar energy design, a tall wall of low-E glass windows, facing south and the north side of the house built into the ground, according to Sellars Lathrop.

The house, had been listed at $1.85 million by Sara Littlefield of Prudential Connecticut Realty in Darien and was sold for a bit under the asking price by Barbara Gagliardi in Prudential's Rowayton office.

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