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## Dream architecture defines these North Fork homes

by Cyndi Murray

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A Greek-revival style home on Shelter Island. (Credit: Ian McDonald)

### Historic home reimaged on Shelter Island

There are four uniquely historic homes on Shelter Island unlike any other. These Greek-revival houses were constructed in the 1840s by local carpenter Gabriel Crook before he fled the island in 1849 in search of fortune during the California's Gold Rush.

His original four homes remain an iconic pillar to the architectural fabric on Shelter Island and were the inspiration behind this newly constructed home on a 2.6-acre estate that abuts the Sylvester Manor homestead.

The property owners tasked local architect Ian McDonald with recreating the Crook Greek-revival style home from the ground up. Perhaps, there was no better person for the job. McDonald took advantage of an opportunity to study one of Crook's homes in detail and even planned to build one for his family.



"I always loved the Greek revival," McDonald said. "It is simple – not overly fussy, but it still has a lot of detail."

Instead of rehashing a historical reproduction, the owners wanted to design a house inspired by the Crook homes, but with a contemporary factor that would be easy to maintain and large enough to accommodate visiting family and friends.

While studying the original Crook home, McDonald carefully measured each element down to the dentils. The new home shares many attributes with the Greek-revival style it was modeled after, including fluted columns, an entry door wrapped in fluted trim and corner boards made to look like fluted pilasters.

The replicas were all made from modern, weather-resistant materials. To modernize the centuries-old design while keeping the character, he made slight adjustments to meet the homeowners' modern-day needs.

The site constraints called for a long, narrow house and garage perpendicular to the harbor. Basing the house on the 22-foot wide Crook model, McDonald developed a plan that used two "bookends" connected by a "bridge" section in the middle.

"I took the main core of the Crook house and mirrored it and created a bridge in the center," he said. "It was almost like two houses with a hallway [joining them]."

The powder room, guest bedrooms, bathrooms, staircases and laundry were located on the rear bookend, which created a desirable open floor plan in the front of the home. The design also allowed sweeping harbor views from the living and dining room, the kitchen and the three-season porch.

"Every year the homeowners drop off a bottle of wine at my office," McDonald said. "They're really happy with the house."



A view of the garage. (Credit: Ian McDonald)



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