

REAL ESTATE

LUXURY LIVING

Conyers Farm blends country charm, luxury

By Gretchen A. Peck

Ask any local to describe Greenwich's Conyers Farm, and you'll likely be treated to descriptive terms like bucolic, serene, wide open, God's country, horse country and luxurious. The private, gated community that spans more than 1,460 acres through backcountry Greenwich has also earned nicknames like "Billionaires' Way," and it is true that its residents — many of whom have been celebrities in the world of business or the fine arts — are fortunate and appreciate the private, get-away-from-it-all vibe. The land here is tranquil, and the estates are iconic.

The story of Conyers Farm began at the turn of the century when steel mogul Edmund C. Converse acquired a sequence of farms, combined the land, and founded a farm and orchard of his own. It became an important source of sustenance for Greenwich of that era.

It was in the 1980s when a developer purchased the Connecticut parcel — which had largely been undeveloped following the Great Depression and Converse's death in the late '30s — and it became the exclusive gated community it's known as today.

The New York Times covered its sale and development in June 1983, noting that it would be governed by strict zoning restrictions in order to preserve its rural, natural beauty. It was a smart and forward-thinking strategy for that aesthetic has been preserved. Back then, subdivided parcels could be purchased for as little as \$200,000, with larger 10-acre lakefront sites ranging from \$500,000 to \$750,000.

Life on "the Farm"

Though the price tags have changed, as Conyers Farm became increasingly coveted, the grandeur of the land and homes there remains exceptional. There are at least nine properties for sale in the community today, ranging in list price from \$4.75 million to \$65 million.

"When backcountry sales picked up in 2012, Conyers Farm



Photos by David Ogilvy & Associates

Above: Architect Robert Lamb Hart designed Hurlingham, the iconic Georgian colonial estate that resides on nearly 14 private acres in Conyers Farm. It is listed for \$8.495 million. Below: The 80-acre estate at 25 Lower Cross Road was originally built in 1904, but was recreated in 1983 by famed architects Alan Wanzenberg and Alex Antonelli. One of the many reminders of its rich history, the remains of an open-air barn still stands. It is listed for \$65 million.



had the predominant number of sales," according to Francine Ehrlich of Sotheby's International Realty in Greenwich. Ehrlich is the listing agent for the 30.97-acre estate located at 200 Guards Road. The main residence was designed by architect Alan Wanzenberg and built in 2004. Today, it's listed for \$18.795 million.

"The zoning in Conyers Farm is a minimum of 10 acres," Ehrlich said. "Thus, one immediately feels the graciousness upon entering the gates. It is a community that affords privacy, but also has wonderful holiday events for the family. Horses are grazing; people are walking the extensive drives, enjoying the variety of landscaped

is unique."

The Stevens Kencel Group has two Conyers Farm properties listed, both stunning and special. The first is the more than 14,000-square-foot manor at 88 Conyers Farm Drive. The stone manor with an iconic slate roof resides on more than 12 acres. It was one of the first Conyers Farms estates to be built in the late '80s. Its timeless grandeur still resonates, each of its 17 rooms a work of art, with custom millwork, moldings and ceiling finishes that wow. There's even an underground garage that's more of a collector's showroom for prized automobiles than mere storage space for them. The property is listed for \$12.9 million.

The Stevens Kencel Group also has the listing of the brick manor known as Hurlingham, which sits on 13 lush acres. Its classic Georgian colonial style is perfectly at home here, the chimneys for its six fireplaces symmetrically placed and pointed skyward. The land around the residence has been beautifully landscaped and appended with some special features of its own: four terraces, a pool with a cabana, manicured gardens, a greenhouse and even an ice rink. The property is listed for \$8.495 million.

David Ogilvy & Associates is managing the listings of two Conyers Farm properties, as well. Described as a "handsome, south-facing Georgian," the residence at 74 Upper Cross Road is found at the end of a long, winding drive that spills out into a lovely courtyard laid out before its elegant entryway. The seven-bedroom home is nestled on more than 16 private acres, also the setting for a heated pool and spa with a waterfall, a garage apartment and a log cabin style guesthouse. It's listed for \$8.95 million.

David Ogilvy is also the listing broker for what some have called "the grand jewel" of Conyers Farm — the original 80-acre Conyers Farm estate at 25 Lower Cross Road, listed for \$65 million. Built in 1904, the seven-bedroom main residence was recreated in 1982 by the architectural team of Alan Wanzenberg and Alex Antonelli.

properties.

On Converse Lake, residents also enjoy kayaking, canoeing and even fishing.

"For people who want the very best in elegant, expansive, and private country living, less than one hour from New York City, Conyers Farm will continue to draw those lucky enough to be able to access all that it affords," she said.

Robin Kencel, partner in The Stevens Kencel Group at Douglas Elliman Real Estate's Greenwich office, was recently showing properties in Conyers Farm to a prospective buyer from New York City. Kencel recalled how the buyer perfectly described the community: "I have always loved Conyers Farm. To me, it is the quintessential country setting."

"I believe her response is shared by many, and how could it not," Kencel said. "The fields with horses grazing, the privacy and expanse of having homes on 10-plus acres — a requirement in Conyers Farm — evokes a peacefulness that