



Architectural History of the Samuel Wilson House

BUILT IN 1760, the oldest house in the center of Petersham and the second oldest house in town, the Samuel Wilson house sits on a lawned lot within the Petersham Historic District.

Norman M. Isham*, distinguished historian of American Colonial architecture, pronounced this house the finest in Petersham because of the early untouched Georgian paneling of the front rooms, pristine paneled staircase and pedimented, heavily cornice Georgian-Classical entrance with fluted pilasters and dentillated cornice. The interior of the entrance contains unique, double, elliptical (crescent) paneled entablatures and two paneled box-seats below two of the four windows, and Georgian panels which take in all sides of the entrance. The dentillated cornice is carried inside the entrance as well and crowns the two built-in corner cupboards in both front rooms.

The 1760 House contains four bedrooms and five fireplaces – three of which retain their original brick, which were fired in Petersham. Another fireplace has 18th century Delft polychrome tiles. The original plaster remains in the front rooms and bedchambers. All the floors are original and most of the strap, H and H-L hinges and latch hardware are original.

The old kitchen, buttery, and borning room were turned into one, very large, cheerful, sunny room with one very large fireplace and nine windows and large door giving way onto the terrace and gardens.

The 19th century, two-story ell -- sensitively in keeping with the lines of the older house – contains a kitchen, with built-in cabinets which carry out the raised paneled motif of the front rooms with floorboards taken from the attic of the 1760 House, scraped, sanded, and refinished. The ell also includes a large adjoining clapboarded shed (laundry room) and two rooms and bath upstairs. A 20th century addition served as the 1760 House Antique Shop.

Original clapboards and nailing can still be observed on the house together with delicately graduated boarding on the north side. Seven outside doors on the first floor give out on all sides to lawns, trees, and herb garden.

* **Author of:**
Providence and Its Colonial Houses: Early American Houses
Early Connecticut Houses
Early Rhode Island Houses