

Home and Gardens at 2501 Kenmore Drive, Raleigh, NC

The home was built in 1928 by Isaac Bailey for his personal residence, and was the first house built in Kenmoor Subdivision, which would become known as Anderson Heights. The house was built with Wake County granite, most likely from the quarry that used to be at Glenwood Village. After Mr. Bailey built his own home, he then built others in the neighborhood using the same granite.

The house is approximately 3,264 square feet, including a finished basement of approximately 720 square feet and roughly 240 square feet of finished attic storage space. It has three bedrooms, two of which have walk-in closets; living room; study/office; sunroom; two bathrooms and a powder room; kitchen; dining room; wet bar; butler's pantry; and upstairs and downstairs halls.

Since the current homeowners bought it in 1978, they have improved it considerably both inside, and outside in the yard and garden.

The front yard garden is unique. It is a "sunken garden" with stone steps that go down about ten feet from the sidewalk into a lush and shaded area, including a natural stream (occupied by fish that have chosen to live there). It is surrounded by walls, boxwoods, or bamboo fences on all sides, evoking The Secret Garden of children's literature. There are several very tall trees including two tulip poplars, a magnolia, an ironwood and a bald cypress. It is wonderful space for a range of uses from dining, to quite reflection, to large parties, fundraisers, and/or other events.

Over the years, they have transformed the yard into an award-winning garden. It has maxed out the homeowners' three Yard-of-the-Month awards from the Fallon Park Garden Club long ago, and then two years ago, it received the accolade of Garden of the Year from Wake County Gardeners. The garden has blooms every month of the year. Highlights include an expansive Japanese Cherry Tree, around 30 rose bushes, 25 azaleas, and 20 peonies scattered throughout the garden. It also has 75 boxwoods that probably are about seventy years old. The scents in the garden start as early as January with both Edgeworthia and Daphne bushes leading a profusion of blooms and perfumes that change from week to week through the spring and summer.

The back yard is also very pleasant, with a lawn area and a couple of levels featuring a variety of plants and stonework. One side of the house has a deck, and the other side has a cutting garden.

The garden has also had the benefit of such notable gardener/designers, such as the present one, Eric Eibelhouser, and in the past, Tracy Traer and Jeff Evans, with long time maintenance by Charles Dobbin. Joe Valles, a stonemason with ancestral roots to stonemasons in Italy has added features to the yard with projects from the mid-1990s until his recent retirement. This includes patios, walkways, an arched keystone bridge and even a "grotto" by the stream. The "Asian" garden on the east side the yard

was built by Stefan Bloodworth, who at the time was the director of the native wildlife section of the Duke Gardens.

The house has also enjoyed consistent improvements throughout the last 46 years of our residency.

For example, one major improvement, five years ago in 2019, occurred when Baker Roofing replaced the asphalt roof with a Ludowici tile roof, which is guaranteed for 100 years. The homeowners searched for the perfect chimney covers to enhance their new curved-tile green roof. They found them in Banner Elk, which had been shipped over from England, so now two Victorian chimney pots grace the chimney.

All bathrooms have been modernized. The guest/hall bath has Carrera marble floors, French plumbing fixtures, a whirlpool tub, and a Toto bidet/toilet. The primary bath has a heated floor, two sinks, custom granite counter, a walk-in shower with body sprayers, and a Toto bidet/toilet. The first-floor powder room has black marble floors and a black sink and toilet.

The primary bedroom is 15x15 with recently installed hardwood floors and an adjacent walk-in closet, which is 13x7. There are two other bedrooms. One of the other bedrooms has a walk-in cedar closet.

The sunroom is a special place to sit. It was totally renovated in 2012. The cabinets were custom made by Eidolon Designs. The surround sound TV and audio system was designed by Steve Barry of Dr. Video. It features a 42 inch Sony TV, front speaker over the TV, two side speakers in the front and back and a bass speaker in an adjacent cabinet. In addition to being an ideal place for a couple to watch TV or a movie, it is the perfect room for reading. The morning and afternoon light bathes the room.

Other custom cabinetry is throughout the house by Eidolon Designs or by Sinigur Construction.

The basement is finished with one large room, three adjoining spaces, and five closets, including a cedar closet. After Hurricane Fran, the homeowners installed two sump pumps and had Shamrock Waterproofing install a French drain behind the walls designed to catch water and drain into the sump pumps. The home now has a natural gas generator, eliminating the need for a backup battery. The basement TV has a surround sound system with five Bose speakers.

The attic is also finished, with ample storage (including yet another cedar closet). They added a dormer for natural light and the attic has an HVAC supply. When the tile roof was added, new insulation was installed both in the ceiling between the rafters and under the floor between the attic joists.

As previously mentioned, the house has a whole house generator powered by natural gas. The homeowners have recently, in 2024, installed two architecturally correct Pella exterior doors. They have also recently installed new appliances: a Bosch dishwasher, a Sub-Zero ice machine and a Sub-Zero Bar refrigerator/freezer. The second floor HVAC unit was replaced with a heat pump in 2021; the unit also has an air cleaner and humidifier which services the upstairs and attic. It makes for nice sleeping!

The home has an ADT monitored security system and three cameras. In addition, there are monitoring cameras on all four sides of the house. The front door has a Ring camera and doorbell.

Until recently, there was a detached garage that was in rough shape; in fact, part of it was falling down. The homeowners decided that it should be demolished, and this has just been completed. They plan to take the stone with them to their new house. The original garage floor slab remains and can accommodate several cars, or a car port or new garage.

2501 Kenmore Drive is the signature home for this part of Anderson Heights, with all the hallmarks of a custom home of that era: high ceilings, spacious rooms, wide eave overhangs for hot weather, a rear service door off the kitchen to receive delivered groceries, and an oversized corner lot with sidewalks taking you down to Fallon Park. Homes of this style and character, which have been appropriately modernized without losing any of the original charm, are rare in our market – as validated by an on-site visit to see in person the current residents' 46 years of diligent attention to the upkeep and improvement of the house and property. It may sound like a cliché, but this property is truly one-of-a-kind.