

Sell This House

Sleepy Hollow classic needs some minor tweaks

By Karen Finnegan

For The Journal News

Westchester is one of the loveliest counties in New York. Within Westchester, I'd have to say that Sleepy Hollow is truly my favorite town. It has that feel of "old Westchester" — shaded, tree-lined streets, beautiful estates, cozy homes, excellent schools; not to mention the history. Who hasn't been spooked by Washington Irving's classic story "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" at one point or another? In addition to this classic tale of ghosts and goblins, Sleepy Hollow is home to many terrific experiences celebrating the fall season. Every autumn, local residents are treated to some of the most fabulous Halloween events on the East Coast including cemetery tours, hayrides, and a creepy tribute to "Sleepy Hollow" at the historic Philipsburg Manor (one of the major landmarks in the story). I pull into the drive at 15 Webb Road, Sleepy Hollow, and the home is everything I expect. The house is large but not ostentatious, elegant without being pretentious, and unique in layout and design without being over the top. "What I love about this center hall Colonial is its character," says home stager Susan Atwell. The house, which was built in 1931, "is an older home, and I believe some of the rooms were additions but they were done so nicely that you can hardly tell that they weren't part of the original structure."



THE EXPERT

Home stager : Susan Atwell
Website:
www.atwellstagedhome.com
Phone: 914-525-0454

LIKE THIS HOUSE?

Address: 15 Webb Road,
Sleepy Hollow
Price: \$869,000
Year Built: 1931
Size: 2904 sf
Annual Taxes: \$29,143
MLS No: 3231467
Contact: Judith Kitt Associate Broker, Douglas Elliman (Armonk Office) 914-263-2406

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The home boasts four bedrooms, two gorgeous sun rooms, and unusual touches include barn doors that are used in place of the traditional garage doors. In the living room, beamed ceilings add to the warmth, while custom built-in shelving in the home office give the space a classic feel. Interestingly, one of the two sun rooms in the house has one wall that is stone. Atwell explains, "This was most likely an exterior wall at one time; however, when the sun room was built on, this wall was left exposed on the inside, which adds a very special architectural feature to the space."

QUICK FIX

"The first thing that I told the owner to do, which wouldn't cost her a dime, was to move out all of the things that didn't need to be in the space," says Atwell. De-cluttering is home-staging 101, an essential step that any homeowner needs to take when putting a house up for sale. A home like this, which is owned by a single mother of young children, is naturally going to have excess items like toys, books, extra furniture.

Once the non-essential items are removed, a buyer's attention can be drawn to other features of the house. "I asked the homeowner to think about which of the children's things we could put away, and which things should be left out," says Atwell. "My concern was that if too many of their personal things were put away, the house would become quickly un-staged in the search for a precious toy or book."



The home has hardwood floors throughout, and buyers today traditionally like to see them gleaming.

STEP IT UP

"One of the most interesting features of this house was the floor plan," Atwell comments, "There is a back staircase that runs from one of the children's bedrooms to the kitchen. I couldn't get it out of my head how ideal this would be for a family that had an au pair or live-in nanny."

Atwell suggests that it would allow other

people to embrace this concept if the child's room was moved to one of the other bedrooms, and this room was set up to indicate that an au pair could inhabit that space, which also includes a private bath.

Atwell adds, "In an older house wood floors can also become scuffed with time. Personally I like a worn-in looking floor, especially on an older home; however, buyers today traditionally like to see them gleaming. It might bene-



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fit the owner to consider refinishing the floor in the kitchen as well."

Regardless of the adjustments that might be made to the home, it is truly a gorgeous house and will be perfect for a family looking for a great home in a terrific school district, set on a corner lot on a street that is quiet and country-like while still being just minutes from major highways.