

This three-bedroom house in Red Hook is on a secluded lane and has a glass-fronted four-season porch with southern exposure.

Red Hook attracts with its natural, architectural beauty

Single-level home is on the market

By Janet Ruhe-Schoen
For the Poughkeepsie Journal

RED HOOK — This town gets its name from a sighting by Dutch sailors on the Hudson River of Cruger's "Hoek" (peninsula) in autumn, when sumac and Virginia creeper were crimson.

The area's scenic status hasn't lapsed since, although its name has.

At one point it was called Hardscrabble, a moniker immortalized yearly on Hardscrabble Day. But no one wants to go back to that name.

Brenda Cagle, a master gardener for Cornell Cooperative Extension and a member of Red Hook's Village Green Committee board, has lived in the village for nearly 30 years and works with the committee to keep it scenic by planting and preserving trees.

The committee started in 2002 after the village cut down scores of century-old maple trees.

"The trees were declining," Cagle said. "But they weren't being replaced. We started by planting trees."

Trees planted

Because of the committee, in 2002, the village board passed a measure ordaining a community forestry program with an annual budget. In 2004, the Village Green Committee created its Forestry Management Plan.

"We went to workshops and got educated about tree care in general. Now we have a holistic approach," she said.

The committee takes seriously the village's commitment to being a Tree City, USA.

"We have a good team," Cagle said, adding two times a year, some 20-30 volunteers

Neighborhoods

Red Hook

118 Read Road

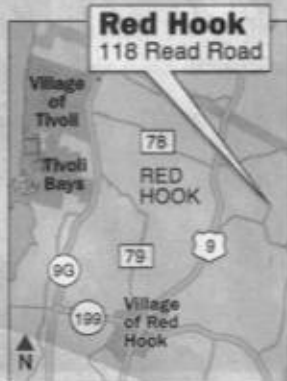
Asking Price: \$379,500.

Features: Single-level, three bedrooms, two bathrooms, built in 1973 on two acres, air conditioning, ceiling fans, 2,084-square-foot living area, glass-fronted four-season porch with southern exposure.

Amenities: Wood stove and skylights on porch, some hand-built kitchen fittings. Near Route 9, Taconic Parkway, Rhinecliff Train Station, village stores and restaurants.

Taxes: \$5,377.

Contact: Win Morrison Vondell Realtors, 845-876-7653.



On the Web

■ Red Hook Library: redhook.lib.ny.us

■ Village Green Committee: redhooknyvillage.org/villagegreen

come out to help with tree planting.

Red Hook's architecture includes 18th-century jewels such as Elmendorph's Inn, Thomas' Tavern and the brick mansion Maizeland.

One of the outstanding architectural treasures is Victorian. It's the octagonal mansion that now houses the Red Hook Public Library.

Mary Anna Egan, the library's director for the past seven years, said it was originally built for Allen Barringer Hendricks, proprietor of the Red Hook Tobacco Factory. The architecture is based on Orson Squire Fowler's design for an eight-sided home.

Fowler, a phrenologist, read people's characters by examining the bumps on their skulls and shapes of their heads. He was multitasking. One of his publications was a 1,052-page sex manual, quite scandalous for the Victorian era.

While living in his own 60-room, four-story octagonal house in Fishkill in 1849, he

published his book, "A Home for All," recommending octagonal houses as the way to usher in a new age.

His idea wasn't new. Others had built octagonally, including Thomas Jefferson, but Fowler popularized it and it was a trend until a financial depression brought a halt to it.

The Red Hook library occupies one of the few octagonal houses still standing in the United States. Fowler's Folly, as his Fishkill mansion was called, was leveled in 1897.

Egan, citing her own contentment with Red Hook as "a really nice community in a very beautiful part of the Hudson Valley," said the library offers lots of information for newcomers to the area.

There's a three-bedroom, two-bathroom house on two acres for sale at the end of a secluded Red Hook road with an asking price of \$379,500.

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