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Rehab Addict

Architect spends retirement
restoring homes

2016 Bridal Special Section Inside!

Local architect continues to leave his mark on Hudson

by Laura Straub

It's almost impossible to walk through the center of Hudson without seeing a building refurbished by local architect and Hudson resident Allan Sveda. The 85-year-old currently owns more than 10 refurbished rental properties in Hudson, has restored countless other buildings and shows no signs of slowing down any time soon.

"I retired for five minutes a while back, and then I started restoring houses in Hudson," said Sveda. "I've lived in Hudson since 1967, and I love it here."

Sveda found that there was a demand for small homes located in the center of Hudson that featured updated interiors combined with traditional architectural style.

"I like traditional architecture," he said. "I like specifically Greek Revival, and that's prevalent in Hudson."

Sveda's most recent completed project stayed true to that style. The Hudson Guest House is one of three homes that Sveda has restored or is in the process of restoring on E. Streetsboro Street.

The guesthouse was originally built in the 1830s as a wing of a funeral home on the Green. It was moved to its current location in 1870 and enlarged with various additions. When the house came up for auction years later, Sveda decided it would be a good project.

"He actually didn't win the auction, but the people walked away, and they called him at that point," said Sveda's daughter Tracey Crawford, who manages reservations for the property.

Once he obtained ownership of the house, Sveda got to work updating the hand-dug basement, removing vinyl siding and additions and building pathways with brick from the original basement.



Left: Hudson resident and architect Allan Sveda stands in front of a cabinet full of his renderings from over the years. Some of his proudest projects are right here in Hudson. Photo by L. Staub

Top: The Hudson Guest House, an 1830s home on E. Streetsboro Road that Allen Sveda painstakingly restored, is available for short-term rental.

According to Sveda, the home still features all original flooring, as well as period correct hardware on the doors. Everything else was painstakingly recreated to match the original.

"This house is really a new, old house," Sveda said of the home, which also boasts a smart TV and wi-fi throughout.

The house is also unique because Sveda furnished it with his own pieces and rents it out for week and weekend increments, instead of a yearlong lease like all of his other properties.

"I decided I wanted to keep the house, so I could maintain the look of it, instead of sell it and let somebody else change it," he said.

According to Sveda, the two-bedroom, two-bathroom, 1,178-square-foot house is an affordable alternative to a hotel, plus it provides all the modern-day amenities of home including a parlor, sitting room, patio space, a full kitchen and laundry.

The guesthouse, which held its open house on Sept. 13, has already hosted an array of visitors traveling from states as far away as Georgia and Texas.

But while his daughter manages rentals at the guesthouse, Sveda has already moved on to his next project, a housing development on Ravenna Street next to the post office.

He said that the 1.8 acres are zoned for 10 condominium-style houses that will feature five unique floor plans – all including a downstairs master bedroom and bathroom, two bedrooms upstairs, a small basement and a two-car garage set back from the street.

"The garages are way back," said Sveda. "With most condos, the first thing you see is a garage, but these are reversed. The emphasis will be on front porches, picket fences, arbors and a small gravel road."

The only problem was that the Giles Doolittle house sat directly in the path of the road for the development, dubbed Founders Lane.

"That house was built in 1834, and it's one of the oldest houses in Hudson," said Sveda.

It was built for Doolittle when town founder David Hudson recruited the priest to come to the township with his family. In order to preserve it, Sveda moved it 75 feet from its original location onto a new basement and foundation.

He plans for the Giles Doolittle house to sit on Ravenna Street apart from the 10 condominiums, giving him the ability to start renovating immediately. The proposal was given the green light by the city's planning commission on Dec. 14.

The historic home, which is outfitted with new electric and plumbing, will become another one of Sveda's long-term rental properties.

The condos, however, will be up for sale. Bob Mastriana, who worked for Sveda for several years after earning his architecture degree from Kent State, will collaborate with him on the condo project and oversee construction.

As for any more upcoming project from Sveda, only time will tell. He said he has no particular style when looking for a new project, but the price has to be right. ∞

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