



STAFF PHOTOS/CARRIE ANN GRIPPO

The mud house in Penfield, owned by Andrea Napier, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Below, the upstairs hallway of the Whalen Road house recalls 19th-century living.

Here's the dirt on the mud house

The historic home on Whalen Road is up for sale.

By Mike Murphy
Messenger Post Staff

A computer sits in the den area. A Harry Potter book lies on an upstairs table. A box of Fruit Loops on the kitchen counter tempts the health-conscious.

Just like any other residence in 21st-century suburban Penfield, Andrea Napier's house is a home. Napier, her husband, Matthew Kohl, and their two children, Alexandria and B.J., have many special memories of life at 922 Whalen Road, a home built more than 160 years ago.

The Napier home – now up for sale – is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the National Survey of Historic Buildings, and the Western New York Landmark Society's List of Historic Buildings.

So what if the exterior is made of mud? After all, the house has an asking price of \$129,900, and once you get



used to the mud, you kind of forget it's there.

"On the outside it looks like brown stucco," Kohl said. "Until you run your finger through it."

There's work to be done on the house, for sure, but not as much as one might expect for a mud house. Plumbing, heating and electrical work were updated in 1981, and central air and a gas water heater were added

in 1996.

For a young family, the location can't be beat. Penfield schools are nearby, and a soon-to-be-expanded public library is within walking distance.

If Napier, head of the lower school at Allendale Columbia School, in Pittsburgh, wasn't leaving to take a new position in Pittsburgh, Pa., she'd stay.

"I just fell in love with it,"

she said. "The way the window sills are like book shelves, the fireplaces, picket fence out front – this is so cool, I can't stand it."

Renee Champion, a broker with the Re/Max Realty Group, admitted this piece of early Penfield history may not be an easy sell, but it won't be impossible.

"It's not a house that works for everyone," she said. "It's not your conventional house, but it's a great house for someone enamored with history."

The interior can be designed to suit the taste of any owner, but it's a good bet the new owner won't want to modernize the historic features that give the home its character.

A portion of the basement still has the original dirt floor. Tree trunks support beams that have prominent ax marks, perhaps dating back to 1835, when the

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