

MANSION

SPREAD SHEET | SANETTE TANAKA

WHEN THE SPIRIT MOVES YOU

The challenge of selling a 'haunted' house; while most people don't believe in ghosts, many reject spooky properties, survey finds



Nightmare on Elm Street

In an online survey, visitors to Realtor.com were asked about the possibility of buying a 'haunted' house.



Would you consider buying a home that was perceived to be 'haunted'?
38% **36%** **26%**

No Maybe Yes

Of those willing to buy a 'haunted' house, what rumored spooky happenings might kill the home sale?

75%	63%	63%	60%
Levitating objects	Objects being moved from where they were placed	Ghost sightings	Strange noises (footsteps, doors slamming)

Of those willing to buy a 'haunted' property, price reductions that would be expected:
12% **34%** **22%** **19%**

Pay full market value or more

Discounted 1% to 30%

Discounted 31% to 50%

Discounted 51% or more

Source: Realtor.com; Note: Survey conducted from Sept. 25 to Oct. 1 with 1,410 responses

LET THE BUYER BEWARE:

This house might be haunted.

Simone Murray thought she found her ideal home in Zionsville, Ind. "Everything was perfect. It was secluded, nestled in beautiful trees," says Ms. Murray, vice president of member services at an Indianapolis-based nonprofit.

But the cemetery in the backyard stopped her: "There were headstones on the property," she says. "We decided not to consider it."

Although research shows that most people don't believe in ghosts, many still balk at the thought of buying a 'haunted house.'

In an online survey conducted by Realtor.com, 38% of the 1,410 respondents said they would reject buying a house that was perceived to be haunted. Of those who would consider buying a haunted house, three-fourths would expect a price reduction because of the stigma, the survey found.

Ms. Murray's real-estate agent, Diane Brooks of the FC Tucker Co., says half of her clients don't care if a property is near headstones. "They know a cemetery is beautiful and will be well maintained," she says.

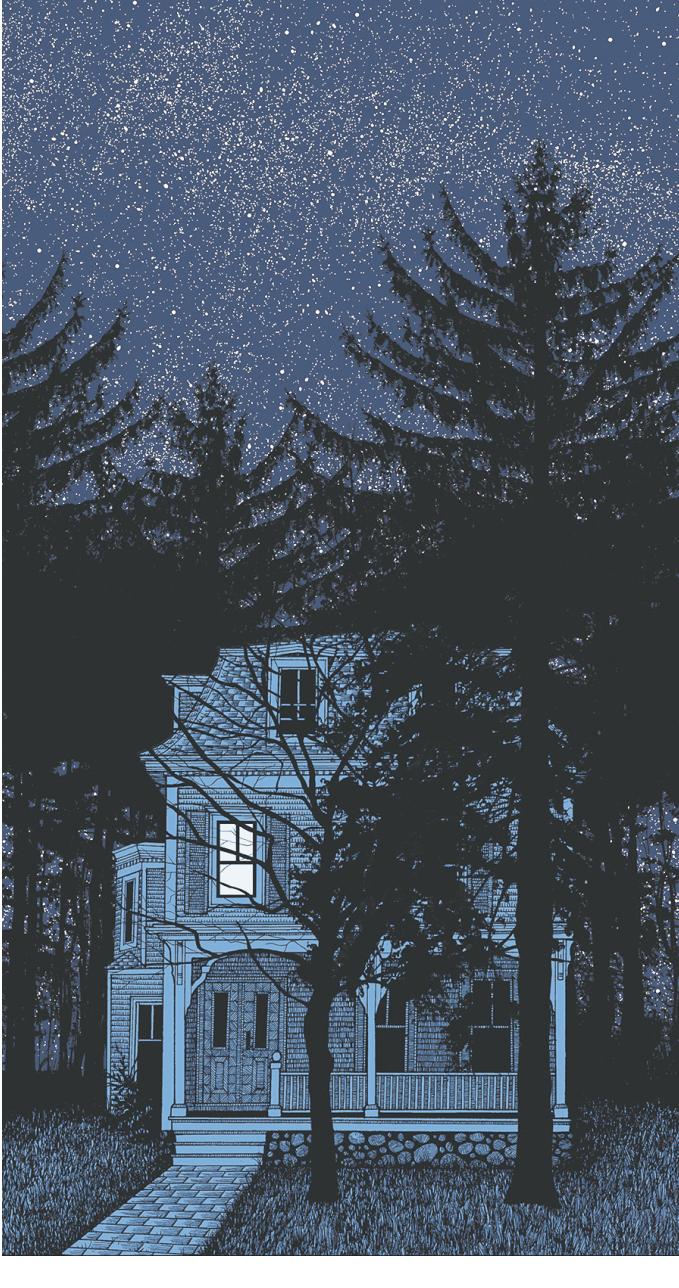
While most states require sellers to disclose physical issues, only some require sellers to disclose psychological issues, like if a house is stigmatized. A house perceived to have ghosts could fall under that category, says Ilona Bray, real-estate editor of Nolo, a publisher of consumer legal guides based in

Berkeley, Calif. "Let's say you think your house is haunted. If you find out there was a horrible murder, or someone's body was left in the attic, that could matter. That property could be stigmatized. And that could materially affect the value of the house," she says.

Mike Hunter, a real-estate agent with William Raveis Real Estate in Sudbury, Mass., says once clients hear that a house is believed to be haunted, 90% of the time, they pass. But there are the rare few who seek out haunted homes, he adds. In the Realtor.com survey, 12% of the respondents said they would pay a home's full market value or more if they believed a house was haunted.

People are more likely to believe a house is haunted if experts express their support, says Paul Brewer, professor in the department of communication at the University of Delaware, who studies beliefs about the paranormal. "If a house has a reputation, with media coverage presented as credible or even scientific, that can shape people's beliefs and shape people's perception," he says.

Some agents cast these properties in a positive light, focusing on their historical significance or interesting architecture, says Leslie Piper, Realtor.com's consumer-housing specialist and an agent with Pacific Union in Lafayette, Calif. "It's a fine line," she says. "What's spooky to one person might be intriguing to another."



Art prints by Dan McCarthy

Trick or Treat? 'Haunted' Homes for Sale

**\$975,000****The Perkins House, Charles Town, W. Va.**
Five-bedroom, six-bathroom home built in 1891

This 7,037-square-foot Victorian mansion was built on the same site where famed abolitionist John Brown was hanged for murder and treason in 1859. The three-story brick residence has a turret, swimming pool and two-story barn. A wrought-iron gate surrounds the 1-acre lot. Hardwood floors throughout.

Agent: Carolyn Snyder of Snyder Bailey & Associates in Martinsburg, W. Va.

**\$30,000****Wilkes-Barre, Pa.**
Four-bedroom, one-bathroom home built circa 1860

This two-story, Victorian-style house features 10-foot ceilings on the first floor and 9-foot ceilings on the second. The home retains some original woodwork. According to the listing agent, the 2,000-square-foot house has a reputation among the locals as being haunted, but he declined to give specifics.

Agent: David Sudimak of Weichert, Realtors TradeMark in Shavertown, Pa.

**\$12 million****Kreischer Mansion, Charleston, N.Y.**
Seven-bedroom, five-bathroom home built in 1885

This three-story mansion in Staten Island sits on a nearly 5-acre lot that overlooks the Arthur Kill, the strait that separates Staten Island from New Jersey. The mysterious deaths of the house's original owners and several killings that took place on the property in the past few decades led to rumors of the property being haunted.

Agent: Melsa Skrapalliu of Sun Properties of New York in Staten Island

WSJ Live WorldStream

Technology, Turkey or Tokyo: see news as it happens.

Streamed from the smartphones of our award-winning journalists anywhere in the world, WorldStream by WSJ Live puts you in the picture. Be there virtually in fast, impactful videos of one minute or less.

Stream it. Share it.

TECHNOLOGY



TURKEY



TOKYO

Go to: wsj.com/worldstream