

Remodeling: Building out, rather than moving out

BY DAVID HAYES

Seattle native Ken Jones always wanted to live near a lake. He and his wife Mary Crane jumped at the opportunity nine years ago when a cozy, colonial became available in the South Cove neighborhood, putting them right on the shores of Lake Sammamish.

The only problem was their family, including two children, needed a little more elbow room than the 1928 farmhouse, originally owned by the Lindley pioneer family, offered.

"Ken felt he found exactly what he wanted," Mary said. "But he knew it needed work. He saw the big picture."

That picture was expanding the home to fit their family, rather than try to find a bigger house elsewhere. Thus, began a five-year odyssey of a two-phase remodel project to make the home around Ken and Mary one they could retire in.

One of the obstacles unique to their home was planning around and on top of what the previous owners had already remodeled. Mary said they had owned the home for 25 years prior and had tried to maintain an old feel, using custom materials, from windows to door knobs. She pointed out the obvious areas where they'd expanded, too.

"But technically, it was still just a two-bedroom, 1 1/2-bath house," she said.

Plus, it had sat unused for seven years. So, Ken and Mary had a lot of work to do.

One of the first remodeling decisions they made was whether to do the work themselves or go with professionals. They chose the latter.

"Oh, we had an architect in on the planning," she said. "Plus, I had a designer help, primarily with the colors and hard surfaces."

The next step was finding a contractor to implement their vision. For both phases, they went through a bidding process, selecting from their top three choices.

For the second round, they went with Thornburg Construction, a part of the Issaquah community for 70 years. Co-owner Ted Jennekens said while some homeowners go with just one bid, it's an important part of the remodeling process to choose from as many as two or three.

"Most clients have already learned about contractors from visiting home shows and researching on the Internet," Jennekens said. "By the time they're ready to accept bids, they've already narrowed it down. We find the bid is almost like an interview process."

He added that while getting to know whether a contractor is capable of sharing a homeowner's vision, it's just as important they're compatible personality wise.

"We like to say we're going to be in their home for six months," Jennekens said. "You gotta be sure we'll all be able to get along."

Another unique aspect to Ken and Mary's home remodel was the permitting process. When they first began, all their permits went through unincorporated King County. Then, in the intervening five years between phases, Ken, who owns Pacific Lighting Systems, kept the permits open by paying a yearly fee, rather than letting them expire and having to start over. By the time they were ready for phase two, their neighborhood had been annexed by the city of Issaquah, but the permits were easily transferred, thanks to Ken's legwork.

For phase one, they concentrated on the downstairs, remodeling the kitchen and hardwood floors.

By the time they were ready for phase two, Ken and Mary were empty nesters, their children having moved out. They first converted the property's carriage house,



South Cove resident Mary Crane (above) describes the improvements made to her 80-year-old home, located on the waterfront of Lake Sammamish, including extending the upstairs out above the front porch, creating a bigger spare media room.

BY GREG FARRAR



BY THORNBURG CONSTRUCTION

A before look at the rear of the Jones's home before the first phase of its remodel.



BY GREG FARRAR

The rear of the house now has a covered porch, and an extended upstairs master bedroom.

used by the previous owners as an office/laundry/storage pit. They installed a bathroom, a bedroom loft, small kitchen and living room.



BY THORNBURG CONSTRUCTION

See REMODEL, Page C3 A before look at the Jones' home before the upstairs was extended.



BY GREG FARRAR

Mary Crane, homeowner with husband Ken Jones of the 1928 pioneer Lindley House on Lake Sammamish, describes changing the ceiling in the master bedroom from flat to a barrel shape and adding lighting.

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"Ken calls it the doghouse," Mary said.

Now, they had a space to live in while the major renovations went on in the main house's upstairs. They're in the process of installing a new master bathroom, expanding the extra room into a media/craft room and expanding the master bedroom. They even created a new hallway to the extra room, so access to the spare room is no longer through the master bedroom.

"This was really a quirky house, with a lot of nooks and crannies we had to figure out what to do with," Mary said.

Jenneskens said one of the biggest challenges they had to overcome was the home's history.

"With a home that is that old and has already been remodeled, you just don't know what's there," he said. "It had some good work done to it, but there were so many unknowns figuring

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— Mary Crane

South Cove neighborhood homeowner

out if what had been done will conform to what we're trying to do."

Mary said luckily they built in some flexibility to make work change orders as needed to the plan and budget. Plus, Ken's expertise in lighting helped cut costs and manpower in some areas. Mary said the key to coming really close to the proposed completion date was the preparation.

"We did a lot of front-end work on our own," she said. "We did a lot of research, so we knew what we wanted plus stay one step ahead of the contractors and anticipate what they needed."

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