



INTERIOR RENOVATIONS REMODELER

ARCHITECTURAL CRAFTSMEN

JOE AND MARY THOMPSON



Mary and Joe Thompson understand that every home has a story to tell, and it has become their mission to reveal those stories and make them page-turning works of art through their unique architectural design and craftsmanship. As owners of the award-winning Architectural Craftsmen, they are not only seasoned professionals within the industry, but also perfectionists, honest and proficient at their craft. Attention to detail is not just a philosophy, it is a business lifestyle for them and the end results of each and every project are nothing short of spectacular.

A leader in the home remodeling industry, Architectural Craftsmen began 15 years ago, but Mary and Joe have been in the business for much longer. Mary has an academic background in education but has also studied design extensively. Joe attended architectural school and has a background in commercial construction. It was during his time in that arena that he and Mary spent their weekends doing various home remodeling projects.

"I was more interested in the residential side, as it allowed for more creativity than the commercial side," Joe noted.

Over the years, the Thompsons have steadily gravitated towards working on older homes. When Joe was studying at the University of Kansas, the couple at the time resided in the nearby town of Baldwin City where they lived in a house built in 1910.

"We lived on the main floor while we restored the house," recalled Mary. "That place was sort of like our baby and we fell in love with the process of remodeling."

From there, they met former business partner Matt Kirby, an artist and a musician, and together they transitioned to working on older homes in Lawrence. Mary and Joe eventually relocated to Kansas City and started a family and while there were some initial growing pains to starting a business while raising a family, Mary and Joe have created a workable formula and are breathing new life into local older homes. While Mary tends to a majority of the design work and is experienced with CAD drawings, Joe spends most of his time out in the field, managing, bidding, and estimating, assuming more of a sales role.

The Thompsons appreciate the exceptional craftsmanship of days gone by and admire the attention to detail that has been expressed in older homes.

"It is what we enjoy and like working on," said Joe. "The trim work executed back then was extraordinary, yet extremely common."

Joe also noted that typically the materials used were of a much better quality than you might see today. For example, the growth rings on trees were tighter because they grew at a slower and steadier rate. Today, some trees are genetically bred to grow faster. Even the masonry work was often

of a superior quality, giving a strong nod that building homes was not just a business, but an art.

"Older homes were built for a different way of living," expressed Joe. "These days, most of the entertaining is in the kitchen. Our primary challenge — but also what we love to do — is make the houses work for today while still allowing for the original character and integrity of the way these homes were originally built."

Joe explained that if an older home is still standing today, it is a nod to the mantra of "survival of the fittest." And while many of these homes can suffer from sinking foundations, cracked walls and chipped stucco, the experts at Architectural Craftsmen can readily incorporate modern methods and tools to keep the home alive and well, and when it comes to ensuring these older homes have the voices



"Sometimes, these old houses speak to us," commented Mary.

In addition to working with historic homes in neighborhoods such as Roanoke, Hyde Park, and Janssen Place, Architectural Craftsmen also offers remodeling work in Overland Park, Leawood, Lenexa, Prairie Village, Fairway, Westwood and Kansas City, Missouri. Additionally, they are members of Historic Kansas City and the Kansas City Bungalow Club. ■



they need to express their stories and rich histories, Joe relies not only on his architectural background but also his degree in history.

"We like working with the homeowners and getting excited about the project," smiled Joe, who, along with Mary, frequently does background research at the Missouri Valley Room at the Kansas City Public Library, which has a cornucopia of information about many of the earlier homes in and around the Kansas City area.

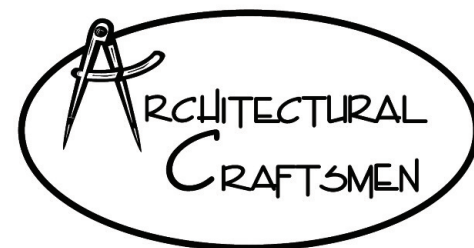
"When we can, we give the homeowners a written history, original drawings and background information of their home," stated Joe. "It's fun for us to return the home back to what it was and to see the joy and satisfaction in our customers."

Through their attention to efficiency, organization, design and detail, the Thompsons are, in a sense, residential curators, yet often in the end, learn more with each completed project.



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