

We've all heard the expression "If these walls could talk." Well, what if they could? Apparently, Mary and Joe Thompson, owners of Architectural Craftsmen, are akin to historic home whisperers. This award-winning home remodeling business excels in architectural detailing and superior craftsmanship. Working all over the metro area, the



Thompsons and their skilled craftsmen work on all types and styles of homes but have a decidedly strong passion for those homes with a rich, vibrant history to them.

"We believe that every home has a story to tell," noted Mary. "It is our mission to discover that story and to express it in the work we do through architectural design and craftsmanship."

This husband and wife team brings a wealth of skills, talent and expertise to the table. Mary's strong background as a Universal Design Certified Specialist greatly



complements Joe's equally impressive resume in architecture and history. Together with their clients, they work to create an end result that truly reflects the



homeowner's lifestyle while simultaneously giving the home the opportunity to revel in its own story and personality. In addition to understanding the soul of each home, the Architectural Craftsmen team also understands the heartbeat of the home — the families who will reside there.

"We figure out what the family wants and then design around those ideas, planning around their personal activities, lifestyle and preferences," indicated Mary.

No matter the home, and especially the

older ones, the experts at Architectural Craftsmen listen to the home and let it speak to them.

"Our job is to honor the architecture it is reflecting," expressed Mary, notably referencing the older homes in which they work. "We have worked on many homes in the Roanoke neighborhood, many of which were built before 1910."

In an effort to accurately convey the spirit of the historic homes on which they work, the Thompsons comb through old



photos, looking for those that depict the house in its original form and style. Additionally, many of the homeowners, also enthusiasts of historic residences, maintain a wealth of information on the properties. And for neighborhoods such as Roanoke, there exists an express commitment to the preservation of the time period in which these homes were built, with exacting standards to which each

PRO TIP...

Want to take down that wall to open up your living space? Before you pick up your sawzall or sledge hammer, make sure it's not load-bearing. Take a look in the attic or basement to see which direction the joists run.

If they are perpendicular to the wall you want to remove, put down your tools and step away. That's a load-bearing wall! You might consider opening up a pass-through instead. But make sure there's no plumbing, electrical or HVAC in your way, or you'll be in for a shock!



homeowner proudly adheres.

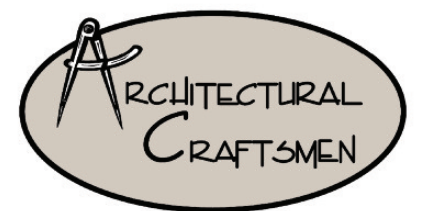
"The people who live in these older homes feel as if they are curators of the past," explained Mary. "And we want to honor and maintain that integrity and are privileged to be the caretakers of them. This dedication to such preservation holds us to a very high standard and we are happy to embrace the same mentality."

For example, when working on an historic home, the experts at Architectural Craftsmen incorporate elements to reflect the time period in which the home was built. This includes re-trimming windows with quarter sawn white oak, a far more stable, harder and denser wood than modern red oak. The end result is a more

historically accurate wood that not only caters to the former era functionally, but aesthetically as well.

This dedication to maintaining strong ties to each home's past can be found through each and every detail, for the true beauty exists in those details.

"As carpenters, we feel a sense of responsibility when we work on a house," said Joe. "We only partner with skilled craftsmen who care and desire to maintain the integrity of the older homes. Because we are extremely passionate about what we do, that makes us uniquely different. We will always do the amazing and we want to walk away from each project happy with the work." ■



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