

City Manager Set
To Retire

See Page 46

AboutTown

Official Magazine of the City of Edina



S U M M E R • 2 0 1 0

Country Club Home Named Heritage Award Winner

By Kaylin Martin

It all began when Pete and Sandy Cochrane set out to replace the windows of their 1938 traditional Edina Colonial Revival last summer.

"Before we knew it, we weren't only replacing the windows, but ripping off the siding and building a new garage," said Sandy. "We thought 'If we're going to spend all this money, we might as well do it the right way.'"

The Cochranes were recently named the winner of the 2010 Edina Heritage Award for "doing it the right way" with their efforts to bring their home's historic essence back to life.

"It's great to see how good homes look after they've gone through the restoration process," said Joel Stegner, Chairman of Edina's Heritage Preservation Board, which has presented the award annually for seven years. "When people make an effort, like the Cochranes did, we appreciate it. They did a wonderful job exemplifying what the Heritage Award is all about."

Once the Cochranes decided to make more improvements to their home than replacing the windows, they knew they had to find help. After hearing rave reviews about the work Steve Kuhl and his team were doing, the Cochranes decided to give the designer a call. Kuhl completed a remodeling project for Pete's brother, who also lives in the historic Country Club District.



Submitted Photo

During the remodeling project at 4611 Arden Ave., new siding, windows, cornices and a new portico were constructed to honor the home's historic integrity.

"We picked the right people to work with," said Sandy. "It's rare to find people to work with on home improvement projects who are as passionate about the project as you are, but we found that."

Kuhl, meticulous about the details of the project, assured the Cochranes that their home on Arden Avenue would not only meet the guidelines for remodeling in a designated Heritage Landmark neighborhood, but that the project would give their home the functionality they were looking for.

Before they could get started, all exterior work had to be approved by the Heritage Preservation Board. "I think if a lot of people weren't subjected to those pressures or

reviews, builders would just paste stuff onto houses, even when the client is fine with it," said Kuhl, "but part of our job is to educate the client about what's correct when it comes to maintaining historic integrity."

"I'm glad that the Historic Preservation Board exists. I appreciate their efforts and wish they had existed sooner."

From the 1950s through the 1990s, the Cochranes' home "suffered some indignities" that took away from its historic significance. It was important to both Kuhl and the Cochranes that they recapture the previous glory of the historic home. However, in order to do so, much attention had to be paid to the specifics of the project in order to showcase the architecture that creates a Colonial Revival.

"Details are important to the project, but they are not the project itself. A Colonial Revival, and other historic homes, is all about its overall composition. It's about all the details coming together in such a way that there is form, balance and hierarchy," said Kuhl. "From the beginning, the Cochranes had the foresight and discipline – emotionally and financially – to make the right decisions about everything."

The old vinyl and rotted wood windows were replaced with new windows featuring integrated muntins, or window grids. The exterior window trim was cut down in size to better comply with historic standards, and each window was then capped with a crown casing on top.

It was important to the Cochranes to salvage what they could, so they donated whatever materials possible to the Reuse Center, a non-profit organization dedicated to keeping reusable building materials out of landfills.

Kuhl says the most important identifying feature of a Colonial Revival is the cornice treatments, where the corners of the home meet the roofline. Kuhl's team did a complete cornice overhaul and gave the cornices life by incorporating more detailed woodwork and a hand-soldered copper capping.

The distressed cedar shake siding was replaced with a product new to Minnesota, Hardi-Artisan, a version of Hardi-board concrete siding that is over 2.5 times thicker than common Hardi siding. This creates the depth, texture and shadow of lap siding true to the home's historic form.

Also appropriate to the home's original form is the front portico. Kuhl said designing the home's front portico was the most challenging part of the project. After much research, Kuhl was able to create a portico that reflects the proportions and scaling of other Colonial Revivals. However, Kuhl said doing so takes time and a lot of work.

"You can tell when something doesn't look totally correct, and it's because they haven't followed the historic form or really respected that there is a precedence to these things," he said. "We didn't invent these rules, so we

(continued on next page)



Before the remodel, thick shutters and vinyl windows covered Pete and Sandy Cochrane's old home, tarnishing its historic

have to be humble enough to look them up, learn them and follow them."

The flattop garage, which was added to the home long after its original construction, was demolished and a new garage was constructed to softly mimic the home's presence. The home's inauthentic four-season porch was also reconstructed to better compliment the home's originality. However, it was not made to completely match the rest of the house.

"A good house tells a story over time," said Kuhl. "It's appropriate and feels right that the porch is differentiated from the rest of the house. It's okay for a house to say 'I've grown and evolved to suit the changing lifestyles that lives in my walls,' but it has to be done respecting a certain amount of rules."

"A lot of what we find attractive when we drive around Lake Harriet or Edina is the quirky A-symmetric charm that these homes have."

After the construction was complete, Pete and Sandy said they couldn't have been more pleased with the results or more surprised about the award.

"It isn't that much more of an effort to take that extra step and do it right," said Sandy. "It's nice that this award is the confirmation that we did do the right thing and to be recognized for it is neat."

During May's Heritage Preservation Month, the Heritage Preservation Board takes time to recognize and applaud those who add value to the community by demonstrating excellence in preservation, said Edina's Associate Planner Joyce Repya.

Even though the Cochranes' home improvement project was award-winning and everyone was happy with the final product, in the end what brought the most joy were the friendships that were formed.

"The Cochranes are lovely, kind, warm people and that's by far been my favorite part of the project," said Kuhl. "When you get clients like Pete and Sandy, it's professional sunshine."

The Heritage Award-winning home is located at 4611 Arden Ave. For more information on the Edina Heritage Award, contact Associate Planner Joyce Repya at 952-826-0462 or visit www.CityofEdina.com/Planning.