

CRAFTSMAN IN DISGUISE

A massive restoration returns a weary “Colonial Revival” to its origins



Photos by Marv Bondarowicz THE OREGONIAN

| AFTER |

A 1912 Craftsman masquerading as a Colonial Revival, below, finally sheds its 1930s-era facade. Owners Terry and Mark Lewis were inspired by a photo of their Colonial Heights home in a 1912 issue of the Oregon Journal.



Before photos by Wade Freitag

| BEFORE |

DESIGNER |
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of Craftsman De-
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THE OWNERS |

Terry and Mark Lewis

THE GOAL |

The Lewises bought their 1912 home in the Colonial Heights neighborhood 23 years ago as a “fixer with potential.” The Parry Center for Children had operated it as a group home for troubled adolescents, and the wear and tear showed.

Back in the 1930s, the house had also endured an extensive remodel led by Portland architect Glenn Stanton, who transformed it from Craftsman to Colonial Revival, an architectural style popular at the time. Needless to say, it was a “remuddle” of astonishing proportions.

“You had to have vision to buy this house,” admits Terry. “It was a scary, scary house.”

Inside, the Lewises tackled one room at a time, making mostly cosmetic fixes over the years.

The outside presented even bigger challenges. Stanton had cut off the original 3-foot eaves and removed the barge rafters and roof brackets. The original front porch was replaced by a flimsy wooden pergola, topped by an equally incongruous wrought-iron railing. What’s more, two 108-inch-wide “picture windows” had supplanted the original Craftsman window groupings at the front of the house.

The Lewises wanted to restore the home’s exterior, but how?

THE PROFESSIONAL |

Early last fall, the couple hired Wade Freitag of Craftsman Design and Renovation, who specializes in period-sensitive remodels and restorations. Freitag, who studied interior architecture at the University of Oregon, is a master at reading and interpreting the faint “shadow lines” that give hints of what once was — or should have been.

HISTORICAL CHALLENGE |

Freitag encouraged the Lewises to walk their neighborhood for inspiration and hunt for historical photos of their home at the Oregon Historical Society. The five-bedroom, 3,800-square-foot house was big enough and grand enough to have been designed by an architect, he advised, and

DESIGN SOLUTIONS

would most likely be on record somewhere.

"Houses like this rarely exist in a bubble," he says.

Terry struck out in the photo archives at the Oregon Historical Society but stumbled upon a photo in a 1912 issue of the Oregon Journal when scrolling through microfilm at the Multnomah County Library.

The newspaper's business section trumpeted the completion of a "handsome new home" in her neighborhood. There was her street address on a house that looked nothing like her own.

"I passed right by it the first time I saw it," Terry says of the photo that revealed her magnificent Craftsman in all its original glory.

Though grainy and lacking in detail, the photo gave the Lewises a virtual blueprint for an exterior restoration. What's more, the couple discovered their "sister house," just four blocks away, which offered clues as to what rafter tails, roof brackets, windows and eaves would be appropriate.

SOLUTIONS |

Freitag's crew began by bringing back the lovely extended eaves and ornamental rafter tails. They also restored the barge rafters and roof brackets. They repaired existing trim and moldings throughout and replaced the shingle siding on the home's second and third stories. They also replaced at least a dozen windows, including the two oversized "picture windows" in front.

Best of all, they rebuilt the front porch with massive brick piers and columns, and put back the second-story balcony and balustrade. They even re-created the custom 4-by-12-inch top rail on the new "old" porch.

Then came the fun stuff: a whopping seven-color paint job, including two body colors and a light blue porch ceiling.

The Lewises chose Benjamin Moore historical colors and applied many of Freitag's tried-and-true tricks to highlight the trim and bring out the exquisite architectural detail.



RESTORED ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS |

1. 3-foot eaves
2. Rafter tails
3. Barge rafters
4. Roof brackets
5. Brick piers
6. Balustrade



AFTER



An Arts and Crafts porch topped by a second-story balcony replaces an ill-fitting wooden pergola thought to have been added in a 1930s remodel.

BEFORE



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The ground floor was painted a slightly darker shade of the body color to help anchor the house to its site and balance its grand proportions.

"When you look at the house now, it looks like it should," says Freitag.

Granted, such an extensive restoration, including the painting, cost them about \$200,000 and put off a planned kitchen remodel. (But nobody's complaining.)

THE BOTTOM LINE |

After decades in disguise as a Colonial Revival, their lovely Craftsman has finally shed its ill-fitting facade. The Lewises — and all their neighbors — still marvel at the transformation. "The house," says Terry, "really let out a huge sigh of relief." ●

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