



Workmen Patrick Roland, left, and Kevin McKibben press timbers together while adding a family room to Jay and Marianne Graham's home. Crews raised the wooden walls — which will make room for a new and improved kitchen, a new bedroom and a new bathroom — earlier this month and are busy connecting the pieces with a series of wooden pegs.

By J. Henson — The Capital

Building on a solid tradition

New addition to couple's 1935 home makes use of old-style timber and pegs

By WENDI WINTERS
For The Capital

When Jay and Marianne Graham wanted to add a family room on to their home, they consulted with area architects to find the best contractor to do the job.

Jay is the owner of the Annapolis-based Graham Landscape Architecture, and wife Marianne is an architect with Architrave in Washington.

Their house on Baltimore-Annapolis Boulevard in the St. Margarets section of Annapolis is no ordinary residence.

The addition being built on is also far from ordinary. When it's completed, the new family room will feature an Arts and Crafts-style timber wood framing. The framing is being painstakingly constructed using pegs and joinery — no nails or screws allowed.

The roof over this room is unusual in that it utilizes structural insulated panels. Styrofoam is sandwiched between heavy, 4-foot sheets of wood. This provides higher energy efficiency and fewer leaks and drafts than conventional roofing materials.

Mr. Graham said the house was built in 1935 for David Jenkins, at the time the superintendent of the Anne Arundel County public schools system.

Mr. Jenkins commissioned an architectural firm that went on to build a number of notable public, private and commercial structures throughout the county, including the public library on West Street in Annapolis.

In the mid-'30s, the region was in the middle of an architectural infatuation with homes built in the Colonial Revival style. Homes built in that mode often feature center hall staircases and

resemble the Williamsburg colonial-era homes that were being restored by the Rockefeller family during that decade.

Bungalows built in the Arts and Crafts style fell out of favor and were regarded by that generation with the distaste this generation reserves for the '70s split levels.

Mr. Jenkins wanted a combination of both styles in his house — and got it.

"This house is built like a rock," said Mr. Graham, who has lived in it for 15 years. "It's a combination of masonry and shingle. The two-by-fours are full two-by-fours. And instead of today's cheaper plywood, the sheathing is composed of diagonal boards."

Andy Apter is the contractor and master carpenter the Grahams hired for their novel project that also involves the extensive renovation and expansion of the existing kitchen, plus adding a new bedroom and bathroom atop the kitchen expansion.

It took days for Mr. Apter to remove that stu

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in areas being worked on.

He got the nod for the job based on his reputation as a master carpenter.

"In timber framing, carpentry is pretty important," Mr. Graham said. "My wife is detail-oriented and the finishing details will be important to her."

Mr. Graham added that selecting timber framing over the more conventional — and far less expensive — methods was done to "keep in the spirit of the house," using elements from both the Arts and Crafts and Colonial Revival periods. He estimates the framing alone adds \$30,000 to the costs of the low six-figure project.

Originally from the southwestern part of Germany, Mr. Apter's family immigrated to this area when he was four.

Now 43, the handsome, 6-foot-tall, blue-eyed resident of Annapolis' Homewood section has been in the remodeling business for 24 years.

The timber framing was custom-produced for the job by Dreaming Creek Timber Frame Homes of Powhatan, Va. Every piece of the mixed oak timbers and decking was individually cut to spec, milled, numbered and assembled as a unit in Virginia. Then the structure was disassembled, like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, and trucked to Annapolis.

Dreaming Creek sent several of its framers to assist in "raising the framework earlier in December. It looked a bit like an old time barn raising," Mr. Apter said.

"Marianne wanted a timber frame home," Mr. Apter said. "It's not a conventional construction method. . . . The walls are 11 feet high, peaking to a height of 18 feet. I joked that the room needs a hoop to play

basketball."

"The assembly process was impressive," he noted. "Everything was numbered and pre-fit. It went up so fast. It had to. The Dream Creek framers had to complete two other framing projects elsewhere in the country before the holidays."

The remainder of the work will be finished by Mr. Apter's team, which also includes Kevin McKibben and Patrick Rowland.

"It is a carpenter's dream to do a project like this," Mr. Apter said.

"It is a top-tier project to be involved with. The finished product will be very spacious. If someone wanted to do an addition, they might not want to spend an additional 10 percent or so to do it (with this kind of framing), but the results are more than worth the expense."

Wendi Winters is a freelancer writer who lives in Arnold.