

Builders' Showcase

Contractor stays solvent with remodeling projects



REVIEWS

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CRYSTAL LAKE — Peter Scholl prefers to build custom \$2 million homes, such as a recently completed private residence in the rural Woodstock area of Bull Valley, but these projects are rarities today.

The economic climate does not provide him with a steady clientele of million-dollar, new-home owners.

As the president of the Woodstock-based Scholl Construction Co., he has to keep his company solvent. An office staff and an in-house crew of tradesmen rely on his ability to keep them with a job and busy working.

To do that, Scholl relies on commercial ventures, but even more on house remodeling projects. Some of those projects resemble more the building of a new house than a remodeling. "In Arlington Heights we took a house right down to the studs and left only the main framing intact. The roof, siding, plaster all had to go. It really was in bad shape. I call it a little extra on the remodeling end," Scholl said.

"One of our more interesting projects is in Green Oaks by Libertyville. The owner is a retired engineer and has a nice house in a wooded area but it is next to Interstate 94. Being next to the interstate means there's a lot of noise. He is having us soundproof the house, top to bottom, windows, walls, roof, everything. The window won't even vibrate when we are done.

"We also are doing a house in rural Libertyville, which will be totally gutted and where



Photo provided

The finished remodeling project at 1031 North Shore Drive in Crystal Lake shows a pagoda, trellis, new siding and windows. This is the side facing the lake.

we will be installing a thermal heating system. We really emphasize our "green house" abilities," Scholl said.

Scholl's work is concentrated in McHenry, Lake, Kane, Cook and Dupage counties, plus the southeastern Wisconsin communities of Lake Geneva, Williams Bay, Fontana, Delavan, Sharon and Burlington.

He does not shirk the new housing contracts that come his way, but they are few. "We have a new custom house underway in Glenn Ellyn, but most of our projects are extensive remodelings with a really nice project on North Shore Drive in Crystal Lake."

The \$160,000 facelift on the house at 1031 North Shore Drive was completed a month ago.

"I would say we took it from a \$500,000 or \$600,000 house on the shoreline of Crystal Lake to one that now is worth a million dollars," Scholl said. "The owners (Catherine Forester and Kevin Sullivan) may not have realized it, but the facelift added a lot of value and curb appeal to their house.

"We transformed an old, dilapidated, rundown, junky old house into one that today looks and is fresh and brand-new."

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Photo provided

After the pagoda was built, but before exterior and interior remodeling by the Peter Scholl Construction company began, the side of the house facing the lake at 1031 North Shore Drive, Crystal Lake, looked like this. The balcony was removed. The deck was stained but otherwise left untouched.

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The original two-story, four-bedroom, bath-and-a-half house, which was built in the late 19th Century, has 4,100 square feet of living space, and sits on a lot with 156 feet of shoreline.

Scholl built a 510-square-foot addition, added two full bathrooms to the partial and full bath already there, remodeled the exterior and most of the interior of the house.

“We ripped off the old roof shingles on the house and a four-car garage, which is more of a detached coach house, and put on architectural shingles. We took off the old aluminum siding and replaced it with fiber cement, a maintenance-free product that lasts a long time and looks just like wood.

“Most of the windows are new. If they were double-hung or casements before, they were the same after we were done with them.

“A mud and powder room at the front of the house facing the street came down and that is where I put the addition.

“Also, at the side of the house we built a 300-square-foot rectangular pagoda.

“At the rear, where the house faces the lake, a second-floor virtually unusable balcony was removed and replaced with a trellis. We simply dressed up that part of the house facing the lake.

“There were little things, too, like fixing mortar joints on the brick chimney, putting up new soffits and fascia, replacing the trim around the doors and staining a huge existing two-tier deck a maple color.

“On the interior, we left the maple floors, but installed ceramic tile in all the bathrooms, added laundry rooms on the first and second floors, and did a partial remodel of the kitchen. The first-floor laundry has a combination washer and dryer and will get a lot of use in the summer as the owners like to entertain and there



Photo provided

The original house at 1031 North Shore Drive in Crystal Lake also served as a 19th Century hotel.

are lots of beach towels to deal with.

The upstairs laundry has built-in appliances with a folding table above. The old laundry was in the basement and that area now can be used for more storage.

“We did some really nice period tile work in the bath-

rooms and in the foyer.”

The addition includes built-in cabinets, a bench and is, effect, a new and porcelain-tiled mud room.

“Outside and inside, the looks of the house have been greatly enhanced,” Scholl said.

Although the remodeling, which began in late spring and

was completed in early November, is completed, Scholl has close to a dozen other projects to keep him and his employees busy through the winter.

“I feel lucky to have kept so busy. I have not felt the downturn in the housing market at all. I guess I am in a nice niche market but what helps is

referrals from architects and past customers. It looks like we will be busy for a long time to come.”

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