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EASTON, MARYLAND 75¢

Remodeling from the ground up in Oxford

By DAVID EVERMAN
Special Sections Editor

Officially, it's a remodeling job, and Rob and Peggy Begor are keeping part of the original house in the same basic size it had.

Just one room, on the second floor.

The Begor house is more than a simple remodel, according to the contractor on the project. "We added 1,300 square feet of new house and 300 square feet of new deck," Scott Cronshaw of Cronshaw Carpentry said. "Not one bit is retaining the same use as before. Everything is changed

here."

Begor is a yacht broker, and his wife, Peggy, works for Critchlow Adkins Children's Centers in Easton, he said.

However, this remodeling project does have one advantage — it's being done on an unoccupied house. Remodeling a house while the owners are still living in it is another matter entirely.

Originally the Begors had hoped to move into the house in the spring time, but that hasn't happened. "We had roughed it out as a six-to-seven-month project," Rob said, "but it should be around the end of July or the

REMODELING

first of August to get it together."

Work at the site began in October, but design work started before that. "We started talking about it a year and a half ago," Cronshaw noted. "There were some sketches, and then he hired East Bay."

As sketches of the remodel were revised, Cronshaw said, he would put a budget figure on the schedule.

"The budget drives the project," he added. "It's a process. It takes two or three times until you reach a point the homeowner is satisfied, getting what they want and what they can afford."

After getting the property, "it was three years to get from that point to what you see today," Begor said.

"It took a couple of years to figure out what we wanted to do," he added. "Then we had to get the right assistance. After that, it's costing and hiring contractors and getting it off the ground."

Assisting in getting the remodeling project underway were Cronshaw and Lars Erikson of East Bay Construction Services, both in Easton.

"I had met with Scott about two years ago and he had recommended Lars to me," Begor said. "At that point, we got together with Lars, who did all the drafting work and a lot of the design work to put it together."

"We met with Lars and showed him what we liked, and he heard us and responded accurately with what his vision was of what we were after."

However, the design is still an ongoing process. "We're still going through it," Begor said. "It's not over. We're just getting there, as a matter of fact."

The room that will become the master bedroom is almost ready to paint, but the decision of the color has not been made, although the choices have apparently been whittled to only six, because there are six patches of the wall painted in different colors, from a sea foam that's barely visible to varying shades of blue/gray.

Family experience is a key part of the design of the remodel.

"In terms of the thinking that went into this renovation, experience with the family needs is all part of the equation," Begor said. "We tried to incorporate that and work it into the footprint of what we could do."

The kitchen area, with two sides covered with cabinets, is open to the living room, which makes food preparation less isolating for the cook.

Over the garage — a large one with room for cars and an area for Rob to build a

boat — are rooms for the younger part of the family. A long hallway leads to these rooms.

"A little distance is always good," Begor noted.

The shoreline faces west over the Tred Avon River, which makes for great sunsets over Fox Hole Creek and the Bellevue area. That, plus its location on the water, can help encourage the children who have grown up and moved to come back to visit, Peggy said.

However, that view has its drawbacks during the winter — the expanse of water can contribute to bone-chilling winds during the winter months.

Since the remodeling job started last year, the work crew found out how cold it could get in the winter by putting a thermometer in the yard.

"We had some cold days," Cronshaw said. "There was nothing between us and the wind except the Tred Avon."

The weather side of the home has been heavily insulated with sprayed foam inside the walls.

The shoreline has gotten a remodel too, Begor said. "There has been quite a bit of erosion over the last five years," he explained. "And the only way to control the erosion is to rip-rap it. It's not what I'd really like to do, but it's the only viable choice."

"Erosion is a funny thing. It seems to come and go."

In some years, the beach seems to erode easily — "I'm talking in terms of feet," Begor said — and some years it seems to replace sand.

"In some years it goes away and in other years it goes the other way," he said. "But I haven't seen it put back any of the lawn and plants."

Although the kitchen cabinets are factory-made, purchased from Kitchen Creations in Easton, Cronshaw said, his company will do the installation. "Plus we'll take care of the door and window casings, the



PHOTOS BY DAVID EVERMAN

A wheelbarrow and the dirt needed to build up the ground height wait on the job site during the complete remodeling of Rob and Peggy Begors' soon-to-be home in Oxford.

molding and the wood paneling," he added.

He avoids using contractors whenever possible. "We have more control on the job site," he said. "When you're doing a remodeling job, something has to happen every day. You can't have time wasted waiting for subcontractors to get stuff done."

The drooping economy has taken its toll on business, Cronshaw said. "I would say it is about half of what it was," he explained.

"Last year I had a part-time estimator. He was working maybe 20 hours a week. Now he's lucky to be getting in five or six hours."

"We still have plenty of work to do, and we have enough to keep us busy through September, October, and we're in conversation with people who want us to start about then."

Cronshaw said he had not had to lay anyone off this year. "We have three full-time carpenters and a lady in the office," he said.



Scott Cronshaw of Cronshaw Carpentry marks the cuts for a piece of window casing to be used in the remodel of a house in Oxford.



Danny Strunk of Cronshaw Carpentry sizes window casings to go into the first floor of the home in Oxford the company is remodeling.



Rob and Peggy Begor show the finalists for the color of the master bedroom walls in their new home in Oxford.