



March 28, 2022

Project Information
493 N. Marion
Oak Park, IL 60302

Mary Murphy's residence at 943 N. Marion Street was originally built in 1929, typical of many homes in the northwest corner of Oak Park. The house is a fairly traditional Tudor home built in that period with masonry on the first floor and dormers on the second floor with stucco and half-timbering. The front gable is a steep pitch also common with the style and features beautiful detailing both with the half-timbering and the many-mulled and stained glass windows.

The Tudor style became popular in the middle to late 19th century and continued consistently up to about World War II. Since this style comes from the cold, wet climates of Great Britain, it is certainly not inappropriate for our area and climate. Because this style features expensive materials and elaborate detail work, Tudor revival homes primarily appeared in wealthier suburbs and sometimes noted as "Stockbroker Tudors" referring to owners who gained their wealth on the roaring stock market of the 1920s. The builders 943 Marion spared little expense, (must have been before October) as evidenced by the stone detailing at windows and doors, the solid wood front door with heavy-duty iron hardware, and the copper gutters and downspouts. The interior of the home contains more Tudor features with beautiful plaster walls and detailing, iron railings, a stone fireplace, and arched openings.

Not much had changed over the years which left some obvious problems for Mary and her family. The kitchen was very small and tucked in the corner of the house, there was very little storage, the second floor had only one bathroom, and there was no "drop zone" or mudroom to handle all of the daily gear of a busy family. With a growing daughter and son and lots of friends she loves to entertain, Mary felt she needed a little more space to make the home work better for her today.

For the first floor, we were able to leave much of the front of the house alone. The more formal living and dining rooms were large and beautiful, so the only change was to open the existing dining room a little bit more to the kitchen which we expanded, extending it enough to include more cabinetry, a big central island, an informal family room space for a television and sectional sofa, and a mudroom down at grade to handle the "stuff" and keep it somewhat hidden from guests. On the south side, off of the extended kitchen, we built a screened porch and an open wood deck for a hot tub.

On the second floor, by eliminating the small closets between the two smaller existing bedrooms, we were able to create a hallway leading to a new primary bedroom suite over the new kitchen and family room. Now we have a four bedroom, two bath second floor. Again, at the front of the house, we were able to retain the existing large bedroom and the hall bath. Since there were only three bedrooms on this level, the secondary bedrooms 2 and 3 did not suffer greatly to have new closets added to the space. The primary bathroom features a soaking tub and a large shower, a separate water closet, double lavatories, and an all-important linen closet. The primary bedroom has two walk-in closets, a built-in coffee bar, and a French door leading out to a deck on top of the new screened porch.

The key to the success for this project was to create all of these wonderful new amenities, but keep the exterior looking as if this addition has always existed. We detailed the new rear of the home to mimic the rich, handsome front façade using masonry on the first floor, the half-timbering and stucco look for the second floor, continuing the use of dormers to keep the proportions and scale appropriate not only to the house, but to the neighborhood as well. All the modern conveniences in a beautiful, traditional package.



Kimberlee Smith founded Smith Architecture, Ltd. in February of 2006, initially focusing on large, custom single family homes in and around Chicago. The practice has grown beyond that project type to include additions, renovations, historic preservation, and new construction of many building types and uses. We have worked on school projects, business offices, restaurants, retail stores, and doctors' offices, as well as small and large scale residential projects, including work on senior housing buildings. Although work is mainly focused in Oak Park and River Forest, we have also had projects from coast to coast, and in Canada. We have been so fortunate to surround ourselves with great contractors, consultants, and clients, and we look forward to continued service to the community, providing assistance with projects of all shapes and sizes, from start to finish.



Terry Tackbary, General Contractor, thrives in the tension of historic preservation and modern family lifestyle. Growing up in a historically significant home in Hinsdale, Harold Zook's Home and Studio, gave Terry Tackbary an eye for details that helps him merge the historic character of a home with new design and function. In 1985, Terry bought his first mid-century modern home in Riverwoods, Illinois and under the guidance of Master Builder, Bob Roberts, he reassigned the space for more functional living without losing the historical character of the house. He did such a great job, neighbors began asking for him to work on their homes, and by 1989 he had become a sought-after General Contractor and Builder on the North Shore. He brought his talents to the Oak Park/River Forest area, where he has been working since 2015.



Mary Widner Murphy is the homeowner of 943 N. Marion. Mary was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio and a graduate of Indiana University's Kelly School of Business. She purchased this property for her family in August of 2015. She is an extremely successful business person with an expertise in third party logistics, is a great mom, loves to travel and cook, and is a heck of a singer as she (and coincidentally Kim) perform in their kids' school's parent rock and roll band, playing at fundraisers and block parties.