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Jeff Ruppenthal/SUNDAY NEWS

This kitchen in Lancaster's Old Town community received upgrades while maintaining its historic appearance.

Making old new again

Lancaster company Historic Restorations remodels kitchen in 19th-century home.

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When Richard and Dasa Redmond wanted to upgrade the kitchen in their 19th-century home, they chose a contractor who specializes in old properties.



Owners of the 121 S. Duke St. property believe it was built circa 1847.

Historic Restorations is known for its work on such landmarks as the Peterson House in Washington, D.C. — where President Abraham Lincoln died after being shot by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theatre — but the Lancaster company also does smaller projects, too.

Before tackling the Redmonds' kitchen, Historic Restorations redid the front windows in their home, located in Lancaster city's Old Town neighborhood. The job required city approval because of the residence's historic character.

As for the kitchen, which looks out South Duke Street, "we wanted it kind of upgraded" to reflect a style that better suited their tastes, Richard Redmond said. The couple cut out samples from magazines to show what they wanted, he said.

A landscape painter, Richard Redmond said he believes their three-story row house, reflecting post-Federal-style architecture, was erected in 1847. It includes three bedrooms, 2½ baths and an art studio on the top floor; there's also a garden in the rear.

Historic Restorations refaced the existing kitchen cabinets — which had been painted dark red — and "reconstituted" all the drawers, said Danielle Keperling, the company's chief operating officer.

She said true mortise-and-tenon joints were used, and "the drawers were dovetailed by hand."

On the wall separating the kitchen from the dining room, Historic Restorations modified the floor-to-ceiling cabinet to create a lighted shelf at the top. Bullnose trim also was added in the middle, making the cabinet resemble a piece of furniture, Dasa Redmond said.

Work was done in the company's East



The existing kitchen cabinets were refaced and drawers were dovetailed by hand.

Liberty Street workshop before the pieces were installed in the Redmonds' kitchen. The kitchen had to be shut down for two weeks during installation.

"We ate out a lot," Richard Redmond laughed.

Work was completed in May, in time for the house to be featured in the Old Town garden tour.

"It's craftsmanship you just don't see anymore," Richard Redmond said.

"I really like this kitchen," his wife added. "It's very functional."

Keperling said Historic Restorations has the capacity to do projects that vary greatly in size. Currently, the firm is working extensively on Schmucker Hall, a mid-18th-century building on the campus of Lutheran Theological Seminary that was an observation post during the Battle of Gettysburg.

The Redmonds, transplants from New York, purchased their house on South Duke Street almost two years ago. In addition, they own a property in Cooperstown, N.Y.

One of the reasons they decided to buy a home in Lancaster was because their son lives in Manheim Township. When Richard Redmond worked in advertising, one of the clients he dealt with was Armstrong World Industries, so that's another way they were familiar with the area, he said.

Old Town reminds him of the brownstones of Brooklyn Heights, where the couple used to live. "It's a neighborhood," he said.

"Everybody's friendly," Dasa Redmond remarked.

She said she also likes the area because it's reminiscent of the town where she grew up in the former Czechoslovakia.

"You can walk to everything." ■

Historic Restorations modified the floor-to-ceiling cabinet in the kitchen.

