

## **Prominent Webster Groves Home is Completely Renovated**

This Webster Groves rehab is 101 years old. And while that would naturally result in its original interior looking very similar to large, beautiful homes from this same period in the City, I was still surprised that the photos of badly water-damaged ceilings, plaster walls torn open to get at plumbing and wiring, could easily be mistaken for rehabs in Lafayette Square, Benton Park or the Central West End. Somehow I just didn't expect to see photos of interior damage like this, from a home on Lockwood in Webster. The house was in such poor condition that many who saw it thought it should be torn down. Fortunately the owners didn't see it that way at all.

The Rush's lived about a mile away in Rock Hill. Jim Rush was driving down Lockwood one day and saw the house. While they were not really in the market for a house at the time, he thought it had such great potential he immediately brought his wife over to see it. They both knew it would be a very costly project, but both felt that once it was completed they'd have an incredible home; the type that stays in a family for generations. This home was originally built by a *Riverboat Captain* who took the train into the City for work. The home eventually ended up in the *Carlson* family who held on to it throughout most of its history. I suspect the Rush family will be holding on to it for a very long time as well. They finally purchased the home in March of 2011 but the rehabbing didn't actually begin till October of 2011 and move-in wasn't until June of 2012. Very early in the initial planning process *R3 St. Louis* friend, and Architect, *Jeff Day* was brought in to help develop the remodeling plans which Mike Mahn of *Mike Mahn Custom Homes* would execute. Mike was no stranger to this type of complete renovation, which the final results clearly indicate.

### **The Basement:**

Unlike any other home from this period that I'm familiar with, it has a poured concrete foundation. Regular use of poured foundations didn't really come about till the 40's and 50's. Also unlike other homes from this period, it has a steel I-beam and cast iron posts supporting the house. Talk about being a head of your time. This home was innovative for its day and built to last. Thank you Captain! Since we're already in the basement lets take a look around. There's a new concrete floor necessitated when they had to run all new waste lines across much of the floor. While they were digging up the old floor they also dug out enough to add to the ceiling height and give it a more modern basement feel. Naturally, the Electrical Service panel is all new, as is the wiring throughout the house. The plumbing is completely new as well and was all done with the familiar red and blue PEX tubing you can see tucked up in the basement rafters. At some time there was a coal-fired boiler and water heat throughout the house but *West County Heating & Cooling* installed a *Geo-Thermal* system that will keep the Rush's HVAC monthly bills to a minimum for many years to come. The day I was there I was struck by how new the basement felt. I imagine all the mechanicals contributed to this, but I believe it was the poured concrete walls and new concrete floor that gave it a nice new feel and it was not damp at all. This basement will definitely serve as extra, quality, everyday living space which it appears to have already done in the past. There is a large, fading, but beautiful, mural painted on one of the basement walls that they are going to likely try and preserve. Oral history on the house seems to suggest that it was likely painted many, many years ago by Panamanian women, another intriguing reason to preserve it.

### **Kitchen:**

Back up the basement stairs to the kitchen, you're in the only all-new portion of this house. The original, small 10' x 10" kitchen was in this same location but it was on a smaller slab that turned out to be badly cracked and needed to be replaced. So the new kitchen and a master bedroom suite above it were built on the site of old kitchen, but this time with a new foundation capable of supporting two floors. The kitchen is virtually anyone's dream. It's large, expansive and built to make it easy to cook and entertain a good sized group. Virtually everywhere there isn't already an appliance or doorway you'll see 42" high wall cabinets above marble countertops. The commercial looking, stainless, refrigerator is wrapped in cabinets too. There is a large, gas, stainless oven and range with a nice size, attractive, hood above it and also a water faucet centered over the

range for filling pts. I didn't measure the marble covered island in the center of the floor, but it has to be 8 to 10' long and probably at least 4' wide. There's a small sink built into it and an eating counter on one side with an elegant rounded curve to its edge. The marble countertops throughout the kitchen all feature a 2" decorative edge, giving the marble a very rich look.

At the back of the kitchen is a mudroom where the kids have a defined area to hang coats and store personal items right at the back door. How convenient for everyone. There is some shelving built into the side of the cabinets and hidden a bit from general view when you're in the kitchen. It's a neat little area that everyone needs to store those items you like to have handy, but would rather not have sitting out on the counter or buried in a drawer. Back across the kitchen there is a very cute little powder room that looks like it was built into a closet. It may have been added well after the original construction, but it was done many, many years ago; and the cute sink I commented on when I was there, turned out to be original! Heading down the hall you'll find yourself in the front entry area with the option of going left through a set of French Doors into the Dining Room, right into the Living Room or up the stairs to the second and third floors. The Living Room is spacious, with a fireplace on the opposite wall centered between two sets of French Doors. These decorative doors lead out to a porch whose brick archways, columns, foundations and concrete base were all rebuilt so that someday this area will likely become a 3 season room.

### **Dining Room:**

Back in the front hallway you're standing under a really interesting lighting fixture just inside the entry. I immediately commented about it being original, but it turns out it's from Essex England. Walking into the Dining Room you see another beautiful chandelier that surely was original but it was brought up from New Orleans. Obviously great replacement choices, since they both appeared to be original. There is a striking, curio cabinet built into the corner of the Dining Room. It features beautiful leaded glass doors. Neighbors have been a great source of information for the Rush's about their home. This curio cabinet has come up in their conversations more than once. It's thought that this particular type of curio cabinet was attributed to a particular designer. Homes back then which featured this designer's curio cabinet were often known by that designer's name. To date, no one seems to have discovered the designer's name but that's likely only a matter of time. Another doorway opposite the entry to the Dining Room leads into a short hall to the kitchen that features a Butler's pantry which has been completely restored.

Another interesting fact about the house is that *Elizabeth Carlson* introduced *Bridge* to the area and taught *Bridge* classes here. Her classes became so popular that Lockwood was widened in front of the home to provide a wider shoulder for parking! If you're driving Lockwood you'll notice how it only widens in this stretch centered just in front of this home. The flooring on the first floor was evidently depression-era stock that was not only thinner, but also had already been sanded to the point that it could no longer be refinished again, and needed to be replaced. Throughout the first floor there is beautiful, dark hardwood flooring which came from *Boardwalk Hardwood Floors* over in Crestwood. The front stairs are beautiful and they should be. They are all original except for a single baluster that had to be replaced. The balusters were all removed, repaired and refinished while the stair treads were all refinished in place.

### **Second Floor:**

Heading up the front stairs there's a landing with a window and another small run of stairs to the second floor. The second floor includes several restored rooms including; a very inviting guest room, a sleeping porch and also a guest bath that features its original pedestal sink plus a claw foot tub that was brought down from a third floor bath. And then there's the second floor Master Bedroom Suite addition. Living in a 100+ year old home, is just that much more wonderful, when you can also have all the creature comforts of a modern: kitchen, master bedroom and bath. The bedroom includes more than enough room for a nice large, comfortable bed. A door on the opposite side of the room leads to a hallway that accesses two, walk-in closets and then leads into a spacious bathroom featuring a glassed-in shower and large, deep, oval tub. There's a period-looking pedestal sink, consistent with the home's history, and the actual commode is tucked into a small corner room with a

door. Finally, there's a set of French Doors which lead out to a small patio area built on the roof of the kitchen. These doors also contribute heavily to the natural day-lighting that bathes the room. (no pun intended)

**Third Floor:**

The kid's rooms are tucked nicely up on the third floor. The claw foot tub that was moved from the third floor bath was replaced with a walk-in shower. The rooms are cute and reminiscent of bedrooms fondly written about after growing up in a large house like this. I guess this will still be true of a room with lots of *Mizzou* related paraphernalia!!!

What a home. It's incredibly warm; it has all the creature comforts and its over a hundred years old. Thankfully this home was not torn down, and instead was completely restored and expanded. The neighbors certainly all benefited and so did Webster Groves, as an historically significant home on Lockwood was brought back to its original prominence.

