



While not mentioned in the article Creative Architects designed the home and found the dimensioned James Hardie product used on the home.

Couple discovers new way to build Craftsman-style home

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Julia and Tim Herchen were frustrated. They had been looking for a spacious home with a large lot in the Stonewall Jackson Elementary School area for more than a year. They knew they wanted a Craftsman-style home. But nothing had worked for them, so they decided to build their own. They bought a large lot near Stonewall Jackson and started working on the home's design. The problem was that the Herchens and their very interested neighbors wanted the house to look like a Craftsman-style home.

"They really wanted the house to be authentic," says Carolee Kamesch with Prestige Designer Homes.

That meant using wood siding, which swells and cracks the paint and requires repainting about every five years.

But regular siding is only about five-sixteenths of an inch thick and does not cast the deep shadows that characterize the Craftsman-style look.

Ms. Kamesch, their builder, and Dan Levin, the sales representative for James Hardie products, came to the rescue. Ms. Kamesch, one of the founding members of the Green Built North Texas program, thrives on innovation and new products. A homebuilder since 2000, she is constantly doing research on new products and techniques.

"In my research, I talked to my James Hardie rep," she says. But she was not very hopeful. She didn't think it would work because it was too thin.

To her surprise, Mr. Levin told her that James Hardie was introducing a new concrete-fiber siding it had been testing in Australia for five years. The siding, called Artisan Lap Siding, is twice as thick – five-eighths of an inch – and is perfect for creating the shadows of the Craftsman-style look.

In fact, their home is the first to have the new product in North Texas. It has a 30-year warranty and will not have to be painted for at least 10 years. And it costs about the same price as brick – but is cheaper to install.

The Herchens are moving into their new home in July. The 4,400-square-foot home with five bedrooms and about three times as many built-ins as most homes has gone up under the watchful eye of the neighbors.

For their home, priced in the \$700s, the Herchens had to get a variance from the city of Dallas because they wanted to build their front-entry garage three feet closer to the street to save a large American elm tree.

After a search that she describes as an odyssey, Ms. Herchen found her builder, Ms. Kamesch, one day when Ms. Herchen was walking her newborn son in his stroller. Ms. Kamesch had built a new home on nearby Llano Street and was holding it open for potential buyers when Ms. Herchen, still looking for the perfect home, strolled in.

"We really liked her. She seemed like someone we could work with," Ms. Herchen says.

They interviewed five other builders, but they chose Ms. Kamesch because she was patient and answered their many questions, Ms. Herchen says.

She even explained to Mr. Herchen, who works for a mortgage company, how roof flashing keeps water out. "Anyone who could put up with that we knew, we wanted to work with," Ms. Herchen says.

Their choice also may have something to do with Ms. Kamesch being a woman. According to a Harvard University study,

women make 91 percent of the homebuying decisions.

"They had heard all the horror stories about working with builders," Ms. Kamesch says. "Because I am a woman, I think I was able to gain their confidence."

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