

# Waveland Park News



## Fall 2021 – *The Historic Homes Edition*

### OLD HOUSE LOVE: WHAT THE EXPERTS KNOW ABOUT YOUR HOUSE (AND YOU SHOULD TOO)

We asked four local pros to share their expertise and ideas for easy improvements you could make this weekend.

By Karman Hotchkiss

Windows constructed of dense, 100-year-old oak. Stucco applied by skilled craftspeople. Rich topsoil that extends more than a few inches deep. These are the features we find in our Waveland Park houses, and they're among the reasons we love—and sometimes lament—our unique homes.

One of the earliest groups to encourage the construction of neighborhood homes with these high-quality standards was the Kingman Boulevard Association, says architectural historian Jennifer Irsfeld James. Her business, Jennifer James Preservation, has been based in Waveland Park since she moved to the neighborhood in 2011.

In the early 1900s, she explains, the Kingman Boulevard group acted like a cross between a modern day homeowner's association and a city planning board.

They set standards for the area houses on things like home and lot size and construction materials—and created excitement for developments like Hubbell school. That organization helped create homes that are celebrating their 100-year anniversaries and still standing proud with many of their original features.

"I like my real hardwood floors," affirms Carol Lunde, a Realtor with Keller Williams who's lived in this neighborhood for 30+ years. "I like the solidness with which our house was built. It's not noisy."

Of course, if you live in an old home (or a new one for that matter), you know that things do wear out and require rehabbing or replacing. And houses need to adapt to updated amenities, too. ("Air-conditioning is a wonderful thing!" James says.) Todd Hotchkiss, an architect with WP-based remodeling business Monarch Renovations, consults with a lot of local homeowners who want to update their homes to meet their current needs. And he has to figure out how to update while working with all these wonderful old-home materials and features.

#### Modern Updates

"One of the things we get asked about a lot is how to get a bigger kitchen," Hotchkiss says. Kitchens and baths are among the spaces owners most often want to update. When an addition for a bigger kitchen isn't realistic, Hotchkiss often suggests swapping locations of the kitchen and dining room. "These old dining rooms are generally bigger than what people need today, so we can use that real estate for an expanded kitchen, maybe with eat-in seating," he says. And the former kitchen? It can allow space for a mudroom or a first-floor bath.

"Try to keep a tie to the original architecture," James recommends. "So the changes are things people will appreciate in the future rather than reverse."

While keeping resale in mind seems like an important aspect of investing in your home, "You don't know what someone else wants," Lunde says. "Do your renovations for yourself first. Do it so that you can live in it. ... Don't do it for somebody else."

*Continued...*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### Waveland Park Monthly Meeting

**Monday, September 13**  
6:30 p.m.  
Franklin Library

### Neighborhood Walking Tour

**Saturday, September 18**  
10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

**Roosevelt High School, northwest parking lot**  
Back by popular demand, it's our second annual Waveland Park walking tour led by architect Tom Wollan. Roosevelt High School's 100-year mark is coming up, making the school and its characteristic 1920s-style a fitting place to start. From there, we'll proceed north on Polk Boulevard,

past the land where a beautiful synagogue with Moorish architecture once stood, then continue north passing the four twin houses on Polk and a *Better Homes & Gardens* house of the future on Lakeview before turning down Kingman Boulevard to 45th street.



Photo by Jennifer Irsfeld James

### Waveland Park Monthly Meeting

**Monday, October 11**  
6:30 p.m.  
Location: TBA (Check our Facebook for details)

### WPNA Annual Meeting and Neighborhood Celebration

**Saturday, October 24**  
12:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Waveland Golf Course  
Join us for an afternoon celebrating our great neighborhood and talking about ideas for the future. We'll have music by Abbie and the Sawyers, pizza, a putt putt competition, and more!

### Waveland Park Monthly Meeting

**Monday, November 8**  
6:30 p.m.  
Location: TBA (Check our Facebook for details)

## Outdoor Connections

Another thing Hotchkiss often helps homeowners do is get a better connection between their indoors and outdoors. “This summer we’ve worked on a lot of outdoor projects,” Hotchkiss says. Decks, gazebos, and other covered outdoor dining spaces have been at the top of homeowners’ wish lists.

“Our home [Hotchkiss has lived in WP for 20+ years] used to have a deck that was just stuck on the back of the house, but there was no easy way to get to it from inside or from the yard,” he says, *see below*. That’s a common problem in this area, and fixing it improves a home’s livability, he says.

Once the structures and connection are there, garden designer Kevin Venhaus is the guy who gets called. Venhaus has lived in this part of the city for 23 years, and through his business Sun or Shade Garden Design, he helps homeowners reimagine their gardens. Sometimes that means starting with some good, aggressive pruning to trim back trees and shrubs that may have been planted as long as 50 or even 100 years ago. “It’s like your hair,” Venhaus says. “Sometimes your shrubs need a hair cut” to look fresh again. He also commonly finds plants like irises or hostas that have gotten too dense to bloom and need to be thinned out.

With all the mature trees in this neighborhood, Venhaus frequently gets calls to work on shade gardens. “A lot of people think hostas and ferns are about the only thing you can grow in the shade,” he says. “I like to turn people on to other shade plants.” He’s a fan of ‘Sea Heart’ and ‘Silver Heart’ brunnera. Pulmonaria, aka lungwort, puts out delightful pink or purple spring blooms. And the leaves of coral bells come in many shades, from bright chartreuse to deep burgundy. Even shrubs like fothergilla and weigela do well in shade, he says.

## What Should I Avoid?

Lunde suggests thinking twice about going open concept. It’s a trend we’re starting to see go away, she says.

Hotchkiss wishes people who are looking for more square footage would find solutions that don’t turn their front porch into a finished living space. “You rarely get a room that’s truly comfortable year-round,” he says—from his home office

which is a former front porch that a previous owner enclosed. “And it takes something away from the neighborhood. You lose that protected, half-in-half-out perch where you can relax, wave at the dog walkers, and enjoy the neighborhood.”

James would remind people that old materials aren’t necessarily bad. “Our neighborhood has high-quality materials and construction. Old can be worth rehabilitating instead of replacing,” she says. She points to windows as one example. A 100-year-old window made of dense, old-growth wood and then reglazed, repainted, and paired with a modern storm will probably last longer than a vinyl replacement window.

Venhaus’s “avoid this” list includes over-watering in the garden. “Other than for containers, you don’t have to water every day once a plant is established,” he says. Also, don’t feel like you can (or should) rehab your entire landscape all at once. “Do one section at a time,” he recommends. Take time to watch how a plant fares in your yard before you repeat it. Watch what’s blooming in your neighbors’ yards too.

## Show Your House Some Love

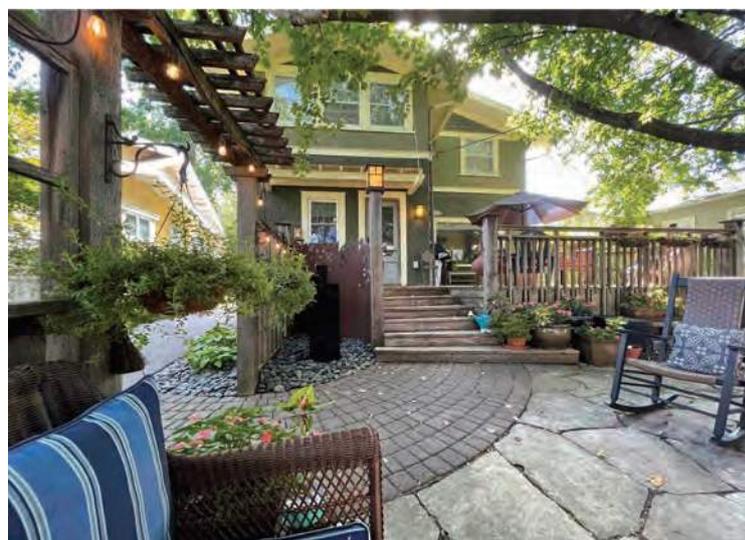
Each of our pros assured us that there are things you can do this weekend for your home.

“Wash the windows!” Lunde says. It makes your house look brighter and fresher, and improves your view from inside too.

And while you’re doing a little cleaning, poke around in the corners or your attic, basement, or garage, James says. You may find some original artifacts that “help you understand why your home is the way it is.” An old door, a box of tiles ... these are clues about your home’s story.

Cleanup in the garden is a common weekend To Do item, of course. Venhaus also recommends putting fresh annuals in containers as a way to get color in your yard no matter the season.

Hotchkiss’s recommendation for making a big difference this weekend: Plant a tree in your front yard or in the parking strip. Our neighborhood has lost a lot of trees in the last few years to storms and age and pests. “Adding new trees is critical to keeping the character of our neighborhood—and creating shade for me when I’m walking my dog,” he says.



*Before and After of Todd Hotchkiss's back deck renovation*

## PROJECT NOTES

Waveland Parker Cate Holec's family has spent the last decade lightening, brightening, and altogether transforming their 1923 Craftsman-style fixer upper. Cate shares a look at two of their biggest projects: The kitchen and their upstairs primary suite.

### Who did the work for you?

The designs are mine and I was basically my own contractor, but I was fortunate to be able to utilize my family to do a lot of the install and finishing work in the kitchen. I do my own painting, and my husband, Trent, did all of the demo for our primary suite. It was a big job, made even bigger with plaster and lath.

### What were the biggest problems or issues that prompted you to tackle the kitchen?

We have a relatively small house for a large family of six, and the kitchen felt closed off and cramped. Removing the wall between our kitchen and living area made room for an island. People always sit there first. I love being able to cook while still being a part of conversations with family and guests. It also allowed for another 10 windows worth of light to pour into the most used space in the house. It's awesome. And it's bright.



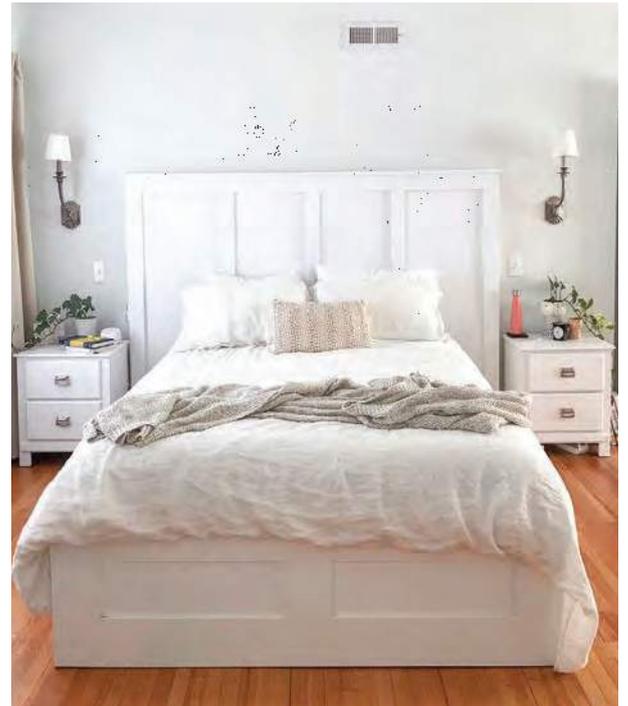
*Before*



*After*



*Before*



*After*

### What's the back story on the primary suite?

The motivation was essentially to provide a space that worked for our family. We started by building our two oldest kiddos a teen suite in the basement. We've got two littles on the main floor, so we were able to create an oasis for ourselves upstairs. With this many kids you need a space for yourself! We knocked down a wall upstairs to create one large open room and turned our crawl space into a bathroom. I'm especially attached to the skylights in that space. I'm so glad we have them. It's so bright and cheerful.

### What did you learn about renovating an older home? Any tips for someone wanting to make similar changes?

I learned so much. There's an unexpected surprise at every turn, so prepare yourself for things not to go exactly the way you planned and to have a built-in financial cushion. I found it helpful to be home as renovations went on. Last minute decisions happen that may seem small, but impact the overall outcome of your project. For example, at first I was told that we needed a bulkhead over the sink in our kitchen ceiling for pipes. I brought in the plumber and my uncle (who's in construction) and we found a way to work around that. I would have hated a bulkhead there and I probably would have had one if I hadn't been home to say "Nope, not happening!"

Want to see more spaces and details? Follow [@Cathryn.marlowe](#) on Instagram or at [oldhousenewfamily.wordpress.com](#)



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## ABOUT THE WPNA

The WPNA is a non-partisan nonprofit organization in which all meetings, programs, and events are free and open to the public. It is the purpose of the WPNA to enhance and maintain the quality of life in Waveland Park. For questions, comments, or to become a member contact: Waveland Park Neighborhood Association, P.O. Box 30112, Des Moines, IA 50310  
 Email: [info@wavelandpark.org](mailto:info@wavelandpark.org)  
 Web: [wavelandpark.org](http://wavelandpark.org)  
 Facebook: [/WPNAfb](https://www.facebook.com/WPNAfb)

## WPNA NEWSLETTER

The WPNA newsletter is the official publication of the Waveland Park Neighborhood Association. This newsletter is published quarterly (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter) by Waveland Park Neighborhood Association and delivered to more than 1,200 homes and businesses in Waveland Park.

Materials for the Winter issue are due November 1. Contact Katy Kiick Condon ([katykiick@gmail.com](mailto:katykiick@gmail.com)) with story ideas or to advertise. Rates start at \$50.

## INSIDER'S TOUR

Meet Jordan Josephsen, an art teacher and the artist behind the architectural watercolor paintings at Josephsen Customs, *left*.



### The best last-minute gift in the neighborhood?

*Records from Rogue Planet Music*

### Tennis or pickleball at the McCollum courts?

*Tennis*

### Circle one, Louie's for:

**Sunday Jazz on the patio**

or

**Friday night at a corner table?**

### Friederichs Coffee order?

*Apple Cider*

### What's the better run, down Kingman or Polk?

*I like to walk on both streets to admire the houses, but if I had to choose one I'd pick Kingman.*

### When was the last time you were in Roosevelt High School and why?

*To vote!*

### What's the last thing you saw at the Des Moines Playhouse?

*Ella Enchanted*

### When you find out Taste to Go! is catering, what do you most look forward to?

*Eating at least one of everything!*

## JOIN WPNA NOW!

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
 COMPANY NAME \_\_\_\_\_

(For Business Membership)

### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

**Note:** Waveland Park Neighborhood Association is a nonprofit organization. Your membership may be tax deductible and could be eligible for a matching gift from your employer.

- Renewal
- New Membership

- \$20.00 Individual/Family Membership
- \$75.00 Business Membership

You may also purchase a sign with our Waveland Park logo (see page 1) for only \$35. The eight-inch round sign is weather-resistant and perfect to hang outdoors—or indoors, too.

Logo Window Clings: \$6 each or 3 for \$15

### PAYMENT INFORMATION

Please make checks payable to WPNA and mail to:

WPNA P.O. Box 30112  
 Des Moines, IA 50310

Payment via PayPal also is available online at [www.wavelandpark.org](http://www.wavelandpark.org) under the MEMBERSHIP tab. Please include your name, address, and email as a NOTE attached to your PayPal payment.

## MEETINGS

Join us the second Monday of every month, at 6:30 p.m.

Follow us on Facebook for updated meeting locations.

[facebook.com/WPNAfb](https://www.facebook.com/WPNAfb)

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