

Creative Living

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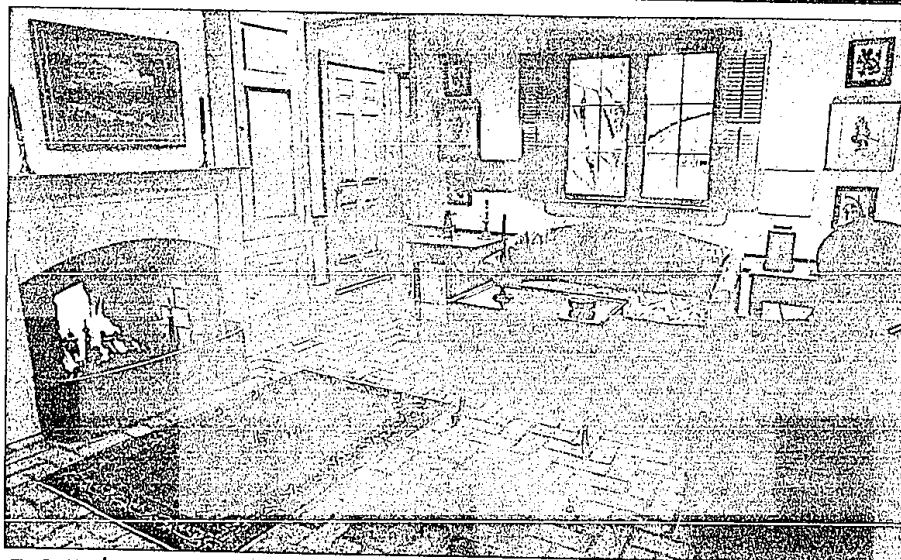


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Jane and David Barton wanted more than a "keeping room" in name only. Not only is theirs attractive, but Mrs. Barton paints and displays her theorem paintings there. The four behind her are examples of her art and his framing skills.



The David Barton's keeping room replaces a former breezeway. Builder Mark Oles created extra room and storage space without making any apparent change in the exterior of the home.

New room earns its keep every day

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

In colonial times, the room which was recently created for Jane and David Barton of Farmington was called "a keeping room."

"The room was designed as a studio for me . . . and we really keep things in it," said Mrs. Barton.

The couple went to Mark R. Oles, designer/builder whose firm, Markertis Associates Inc. of Farmington Hills, specializes in remodeling and restoration, with a carefully drafted plan which Barton, an engineer, drew.

They wanted it to parallel the originals as closely as possible. Consequently, Oles was called upon to do some fancy improvising as he swung between maintaining the old look and meeting the demands of contemporary building codes.

"We ended up dancing and think tanking with building inspectors," he said with a smile of satisfaction.

For instance, the curved trim just above the fireplace opening, is traditionally wood. But, building codes won't allow wood that close to the open fireplace, so this one is plaster, shaped and painted the same creamy beige as the rest of the wood in the room.

THE BARTONS' keeping room is between the kitchen and the garage, where a not-too-useable breezeway was once located. Oles enlarged it without changing the basic lines of the house. He extended the width by moving the wall that joins the garage four feet into the oversized two-car garage. This allowed for the construction of the fireplace and storage space on both sides of the fireplace. Counting fireplace and storage areas, the room is 18 by 13 feet.

The load-bearing wall of the breezeway which faced the back yard, was taken out, replaced by a solid, load bearing 10-by-14-inch fur beam and pushed out several feet. In all, Oles said the room is more than double the size of the breezeway.

Barton said he thinks the new, small porch and the extended exterior roof line improved the look of the back of the house, although the change is hardly noticeable.

Mrs. Barton, who learned theorem painting as a hobby from Donna Hall of Rochester, gradually became so skilled at it that her hobby changed to a full-blown career.

Theorem painting, popular in the first half of the 19th century, particularly with young ladies, is a stenciling process that allows an amateur to produce pleasing, professional looking

paintings with oils or watercolors on paper of white velvet. Mrs. Barton, a fine arts graduate of the University of Michigan, was selected by Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum to reproduce exact copies of theorems from their collection.

Mrs. Barton does eight theorem paintings for Greenfield Village, six in the original size and two adaptations. Each is signed Jane Barton and sold at the museum gift shop.

She also does a number of her own designs. These maintain the traditional feeling of 19th century theorem painting. And Mrs. Barton also sells her work to the Deerfield Museum in Massachusetts.

THE KEEPING room was designed as her work area and her desk is behind the wood paneled doors beside the fire-

place. In fact, all the paneling in the room conceals storage areas, for books, TV, files and papers.

Since such paneled doors aren't available, Oles had them all custom made of five quarter inch stock by cabinetmaker David Van Derwerp.

The room was designed as a studio for me," Mrs. Barton said. "It's not a family room. We sit in our living room. We haven't changed our lifestyle one bit, we've just organized our life better."

Barton, a talented craftsman who makes all of the frames for his wife's paintings (sometimes 8-10 at a time), also made and wired the six-light, painted black metal chandelier in the keeping room.

The floor of the room is soft-material, red, paving brick laid in a herringbone pattern. Now, as Jane Barton does her paint-

Staff photos by Mindy
Saunders

ings, sometimes blending as many as five colors for one stencil opening, careful to be as accurate as possible, she is in the kind of atmosphere that fostered the art.

And at the end of a working period, she can put her things out of sight in a well-designed storage area, relax and enjoy her home — something both she and her husband relish.

The Bartons feel close collaboration and communication between themselves and Mark Oles is directly responsible for success of their keeping room.

They showed and told him what they wanted and he took it from there and did the problem solving.

From painting to sculpture: Artist switches mediums easily

By Mattie Greene
staff writer

After two major shows and her third one coming up, artist Lyn Parker is in full stride and taking off in another direction — sculpture.

Following the birth of her third child, a son, Parker went back to painting and eased into sculpture.

Pleased with the transition from painting to sculpture, the fruits of Parker's labor are entitled "Sculptural Canvases" will be on display through Tuesday, May 1, at the Carol Hoebnerman Gallery, 155 Bates, Birmingham.

Parker is excited and content with her third showing.

Sculptural leanings were indicated in Parker's second show and here she gives full expression to that urge. Free hanging canvasses with ragged edges are another departure in her style. Parker sees it as freer and looser than her framed and stretched art.

"I wanted to break away from the stiffness and work with the edges."

Her first approach to ragged edges was timid but grew bolder and more detailed with each succeeding piece. The first work after her child was born is paler and less bold than any in the collection. Most of the series is characterized by soft, feminine pastels — blues, lavenders and grays.

In a couple of pieces, she makes a radical change and switches to deep, dark, rich colors. "I did those right after I had the baby," said Parker.

Her son is 18 months old.

PARKER uses rough fabric, beads, glitter, and placemats to give her art dimension. "I like to do a lot of different things. I cut up old paintings and I use cheesecloth," she said.

Her first sculptural piece, which she uses on her showing invitation, hangs on the wall. She took an old painting, rolled it, filled it lightly with pillow stuffing until she achieved the effect she was after. "I like the idea of sculpture coming off the wall," said Parker.

Encouraged by the hanging sculpture, she went on to create a freestanding sculpture. In this piece she started with linoleum, rolled and bound it together and began draping fabric over it. The end result is a soft flowing form, suggestive of a woman in a wedding gown.

Another painting she balled up in anger, ended up being two companion pieces of art. She had been working on a piece and it

wasn't working to her satisfaction, so she crumpled it up, but not totally. The next day, she returned to her Farmington studio and decided there was something there. She hung the canvas on the wall and began working with it until she shaped it into two works of art.

Parker isn't sure if she will continue with sculpture, even though hanging her first sculpture was fun. The West Bloomfield artist is still young and has lots of time to experiment and study new art forms.

She uses a great deal of fabric in her work, a natural extension from her days as a successful textile designer in New York. Originally from New York, she came here with her husband Dr. Jeff Parker, an internist.

ALTHOUGH she majored in psychology in college, she has always been interested in art and has been taking art classes since she was 5 years old.



Wall sculptures, at right, illustrate the artist's fascination with the beauty of edges which seem able to find their own place in space.



Parker's free-standing sculpture, which began as rolls of linoleum, has an unusual figurative presence that seems ready to move beyond the confines of studio or gallery.



Lyn Parker, West Bloomfield artist, is versatile and adaptable and even though still young, on about her third or fourth career. One of these was in fabric design, an endeavor that dovetailed nicely with her lifelong interest in the fine arts.

Staff photos by
Randy Borsl