

Sakiyama Construction Ltd.

A Longstanding Winnipeg Tradition

BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK



Projects now cover the gamut, from turn-of-the-century historic homes to traditional residences and ultra-contemporary projects.

Builders and renovators come from many different cultural and educational backgrounds, but I'd venture a guess that not too many come into the business with a degree in microbiology and chemistry. That, however, is exactly the case with **GRANT SAKIYAMA**, president of the Winnipeg, Manitoba-based award-winning **Sakiyama Construction Ltd.**

"I did end up in the family business after university," said Sakiyama. "My father would have been happy if I'd decided to go right into the family business after high school, but he also wanted me to pursue my other interests, and so he encouraged and paid for my post-secondary education at the University of Manitoba."

Grant's father would be **SHIG SAKIYAMA**, a man who was known for his quality of work, innovative design and detail. Many of his homes were featured in the Winnipeg Home Builders Association's Parade of Homes during the 1960s under the banner of **S. Sakiyama Construction**. In 1989, the company became Sakiyama Construction Limited with Shig as president and Grant as vice president. In 1992, Grant became and still remains president of Sakiyama Construction Ltd.

Changes through the Years

In the 1990s, Sakiyama Construction Ltd. specialized in residential and commercial remodelling; by 2000, the company's focus changed, with an emphasis on residential additions and remodelling, large complex projects, and select custom-designed homes. Projects now cover the gamut, from turn-of-the-century historic homes to traditional residences and ultra-contemporary projects. Today, Sakiyama Construction Ltd. is a designated Certified Master Renovator, a certified R2000 builder, and Grant is a Certified Renovations Professional.

Sakiyama believes designations of professionalism and related memberships are key to garnering trust with today's homeowners. "The dollar values of homes have increased significantly from 10-12 years ago and so have the cost of renovations; at that time, a huge renovation was \$300,000. Certainly that's still considered a large reno—today our renovations average \$100,000 and up—but my largest reno to date is \$2.2 million."

Regardless of the size or cost of the renovation, Sakiyama says his focus is always on problem solving, noting that, "Every reno has its own set of challenges; it's the ability to come up with viable solutions and implement them effectively that matters."

One thing that hasn't changed is the reason people renovate. "Historically, people love their home and their neighbourhood and they don't want to leave either," said Sakiyama.

"That was true when I started, and it's still true today. What's interesting, though, is a real shift to environmental stewardship. I routinely install energy saving windows and lighting, low water consumption plumbing fixtures, and various high efficiency heating systems, including some complex costly geothermal ones. Willingness to invest in these technologies certainly shows how energy efficiency has become a really important consideration."

Making a Difference

As a longstanding member of the Manitoba Home Builders Association (MHBA), Grant was formerly on the Education and Training Committee of the MHBA. In 2012, he was the Chair of the MHBA Board of Directors.

Sakiyama has also been on the Executive of the Renovators Council of the MHBA, and currently is the Manitoba representative to the Canadian Renovators Council and the Board of Directors of the CHBA. Naturally, Sakiyama Construction is a RenoMark member.

"I've been on MHBA Renovation Council for about 14 years," said Sakiyama. "We were



one of the first adopters of RenoMark, certainly the first, if only, province-wide adopter. We decided right at the outset, as a group, to make membership in RenoMark mandatory for every renovator member of MHBA."

The focus, both at the provincial level, and the national level, is to bring public awareness to the RenoMark program. "We want to make the word RenoMark and what it stands for recognizable across Canada," said Sakiyama, "to educate the public about the advantages of our Code of Conduct vs. the risks of the underground economy."

So how is the MHBA getting the word out in Manitoba? "We have two home shows in Mani-



Before and after shots of a living room addition project.

toba," said Sakiyama. "The Home Expressions Show has a general focus, whereas the Kitchen and Bath Show caters to renovation. Every year we try to push RenoMark a little bit harder. We want to convey the message that we are a group of professional contractors; that we focus on things like education, current technologies and business ethics. There are things that a small business person by themselves can't do, but working together as a group, we have a strong common voice." 🏠