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Saratoga, CA, 95070

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In our experience, Mark Macdonald of Tracery Professional Builders is just the best contractor ever. We don't say this lightly, and we are not prone to grandiose statements that are not supported by facts.

The short version is that Mark is even better at fixing broken homes than "Mike Holmes" of HGTV fame. Mark is also a registered engineer which is a significant bonus for the architect/builder/homeowner team.

We had a severely broken home project that everyone wanted a piece of but no one until Mark would own as a whole.

**Attitude:**

Tracery Builders is the Contractor who made the salvage of our large living room possible. We are do-it-yourself types but our discovery of termite infested walls, and floor, unstable fireplace and deteriorating patio cement slab under a wood subfloor, which also included rodent infestations, made for an unmanageable homeowner project.

Mark was referred by our architect friend and was the only contractor who looked at our problems with interest and a positive attitude. Even before we hired him, he gave of his time freely and worked through several design changes before our team developed a reasonable, cost effective, and superb solution.

**Communication:**

Great communicator. Mark kept us updated on all aspects of the project, and as a result we had no surprises – other than what we actually found once we started demolition. Marks' calm and positive manner helped us during the times we were running amok being "overwhelmed homeowners."

**Expertise:**

Marks' structural engineering background came into play at several points in the design as we blended a seismic upgrade of our foundation with the original design in a cost effective way.

Mark provided clear diagrams and explained the complexities in everyday terms. He made it easy to understand the technical details. I believe this ability also extended to presenting the project to the building department for approval and the ease with which the building inspections passed.

**Working within the budget:**

There were no surprises. Mark talked about and provided a detailed write-up of each change and phase of the project, and even sent us a DVD of the "as built" project plans and notes.

It became evident that Mark gave us the best value for our budget. Our budget required some compromises (not everything can be torn down and rebuilt) but Mark really worked to put the value where it would make a difference for years to come.

**Flexibility:**

Initially we wanted to do this renovation in a more modest way. Yet as we uncovered one horror show after another (termite damage, water damage, rodent infestations, deteriorating duct work), we ended up with several projects that we did not even have the space to think about. Flooring and the fireplace facing were two of these items. Mark had to work around this indecision and still do the structural work in a way that allows for some flexibility of choice down the line. He did this with grace and understanding even though it made his job a lot more difficult. Mark accepted our indecision and changes in the work order with positive interest and comments as we added some things and deleted (postponed) others. The changes were well documented.

**Ethics:**

To us, ethics is about doing what you say you will do, not cheating anyone and holding yourself to a standard of excellence in service. Tracery Builders met and in our estimation, exceeded these standards during the work on our project. Mark's ethical behavior also was evident in how he treats people. Mark was not only focused and pleasant during the planning and building phase, he treated his employees well and frequently worked along side them teaching and supervising.

He personally supervised the work of sub-contractors and it was evident that he has a good working relationship with them. It is also clear that he has a small group of contractors he himself trusts and works with regularly – so he brings only the A-team to the job.

**Knowledgeable about Qualified Sub-contractors and Materials:**

Mark was generous with sharing the names and phone numbers of skilled people to do other projects he was not involved in. Our pool equipment went on the fritz and Mark gave us the name of someone who helped us. This is after we had called three pool companies and got nothing but promises to come out and look at the problem.

A friend needed some referrals for a drive way resurfacing and Mark was able to provide that.

What to use to get old stains off concrete or windows? Mark provided the names of products. We could always count on Mark to come up with something that helped with blending the projects he was working on with the projects we were doing ourselves.

Need the name of a rain gutter company? Ask Mark. In the busy professional world it is rare to come across an individual such as Mark.

**Genuine desire to please homeowners:**

A lot of Mark's communication focused on understanding what we wanted and what was important to us with this project. He was very patient with us when we had no idea of what we wanted. He makes great suggestions and gets on board quickly with supporting our requests.

All of that said, the results are outstanding, and really bring this place together. We are very satisfied to have used Tracery Builders: quality work at a fair price and recommend his work to others.