

“Work with what ya got”

That’s a quote from my daughter. She works at ROM and maybe that’s a reflection of Museum work.

She and her husband bought a Gambrel roof house in East York, not their choice of style but the price and location were right in this crazy market. We’re looking at modernizing with a pleasing design to the facade. First thought was ditching the gambrel and making an open gable or even flat roof. It’s in a group of 3 identical and 3 similar roofs so a radical change was ruled out. We’ve been looking around other streets in the area, Cedarvale, Monroe etc. that have many similar and other streets that have singles to see what they have done. Some are quite pleasing adding a pagoda style at the eave, or a front upper deck. Some are mediocre adding siding to the lower roof section, moving the eavestrough up to the roof break. Some are simply horrid, adding an odd front sunroom, reworking the gable area or even removing the verandah and adding a box with flat roof. trying, I suppose, to get the loft look that seems to be popular in T.O. these days. Mostly they pay no attention to the neighbourhood.

I presented a bunch of options for major renovation, some radical, some very simple that they mostly rejected or even laughed at. (I’m a long time AutoCad user but now in retirement I’m using SketchUp software It was really great when it was Google. Now its split off to Trimble and they have wrecked it.) This would be combined with adding a bedroom in a second storey rear addition. They have narrowed it now to 2 concepts we are working with. One revises the whole roof profile, integrates an upper front deck over the verandah. The other retains everything but revises the front overhang of house and verandah to give a floating span effect. We have, kind of, decided to add a box section below the eave to bring the eavestrough lower and extend that straight forward and match the verandah roof so it will be one continuous eavestrough back to front. That because the neighbouring eavestroughs are so close you can’t get between for maintenance. If you’ve been along any of these streets you know what I mean.

In the discussion and viewing the many Gambrel examples in all East York my daughter’s observation was this “There are a lot of purchasers that don’t like the house they could afford or find, then try to make it into something they wish they had but don’t have the resources to create. And that’s always an awkward fail. **Work with what ya got**”. For young Designers and even some seasoned Architects that should be a mantra.