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Top Builder: Craig Sharp Homes continually looks to be different



Craig Sharp.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

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Craig Sharp's answer to a slight decline in business is to take more chances.

Craig Sharp Homes, for which Sharp is the CEO, enjoyed record-breaking years in 2016 and 2017. When three of the company's go-to subdivisions filled up, Sharp started thinking differently.

"We do a few other things," Sharp said. "We may do a little more remodeling than we normally do, and I'll do a little bit of commercial work here and there. We might look at doing more of that to fill gaps. We'll look at doing anything to fill a gap."

The most daring gap-filler is bringing new design concepts to Wichita, those that are most prominent on the coasts. During the recent spring Parade of Homes, Craig Sharp Homes unveiled what Sharp called “prairie-style, modern, Frank Lloyd Wright-type of architecture and design,” with help from similarly bold architect Brandon Salisbury.

“Wichita and Kansas are a little bit behind the breaking trends,” Salisbury said. “But I see that as a benefit so we can kind of see what has worked and what hasn’t worked. It takes time to get to our region, so you can see if things are just a flash-in-the-pan fad or if they’re really going to work, both in design and new equipment.”

Sharp enjoys watching how trends develop and determining whether they might work in areas where design concepts lean more conservative.

“We are one of the few builders that really strive to be out on the cutting edge and helping get some of those new trends established,” Sharp said. “It doesn’t always work – Wichita doesn’t always accept new trends. But they do a lot, and we like to get out there and try that stuff.”

In 2017 and 2018, Craig Sharp Homes sold dozens of homes in the GardenWalk, Stonebridge and Parkway at the Waterfront Communities. When those filled up, Sharp had to plan elsewhere, like in northwest Wichita, and rely upon his 27 years of experience running a company more than 50 years old.

“There’s no new area that’s on the ground,” Sharp said. “Eventually there will be at some point. Something will break and something will come up.”

BY JEFFREY LUTZ