

**Job Title:** Historic Restoration Woodworker

**Type:** Full-Time (35-40 hrs.)

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### **Position Overview**

We are looking for a skilled woodworker with a genuine appreciation for historic architectural restoration to join our company. The right person will have woodworking competency (as described below) and be eager to develop your potential in a restoration context. You have skills and experience with both hand and machine tools and take satisfaction in doing precise and beautiful, detail-oriented work. You have an artisanal orientation, meaning your approach integrates structural soundness and functional ease with aesthetic richness. Experience in restoration work is a plus, but we will train you. Strong communication skills and work ethic (defined as honesty and industriousness), as well as a commitment to respectful collegial relations, are essential.

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### **About Us**

We are a small, but growing Chicago-area shop specializing in the restoration and period-appropriate enhancement of transitional (windows and doors) and interior elements in historic residential architecture. As our 5-star Google reviews attest (please read), we have built a strong reputation for doing high quality work with integrity and care in a relational approach with our clients. While wood window and door restoration have been our "bread-and-butter" services, the launch of our new website is expressive of our initiative to expand our scope to take on a broader range of projects, especially ones with a strong orientation towards aesthetic enhancement. While profit is important, we are also a mission-driven company, recognizing that beauty in one's everyday life is important for the soul's well-being. Respectful and creative commitment to three fundamental principles guides our work:

- Preservation and enhancement of architectural integrity.
- Integration of structural soundness and functional ease with beauty.
- Celebration of the desirable effects of aging.

We prefer work in the residential sector (though not exclusively) because homeowners care deeply about their dwelling places.

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### **Key Responsibilities**

- Assess, repair, and restore historic wood windows including sash, frames, sills, muntins, and glazing components.
- Repair and restore historic wood doors, thresholds, casing, and associated hardware.
- Fabricate replacement components to match existing profiles using both machine and hand tools.
- Repair and restore other interior architectural elements, including built-in cabinets, fireplace surrounds, staircases, wood trim, pillars, wall paneling, and other interior elements.

- Understand and have the capacity to make scarf repairs, replacement pieces, re-build wood joints (including mortise-and-tenon joints) and both repair and replace wood veneer.
- Apply appropriate wood consolidates, fillers, adhesives, bleaches, and finishes in a workmanlike manner.
- Maintain consistency, quality, and economy while doing repetitive procedures over an extended period.
- Prep. and apply painted, stained, and clear finishes.
- Transport tools and materials to and from job sites; maintain a clean and organized work environment
- Communicate clearly and respectfully with the owner, co-workers, and with clients on site.
- Handle and store tools and equipment with care.
- Develop an understanding of and have a willingness to follow personal protection procedures and wear protective equipment when working with toxic chemicals and other hazardous materials (such as lead paint).
- Maintain a commitment to building your own skills in and understanding of preservation and restoration, recognizing that increased capacity not only enhances self-worth but also results in increased compensation.

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### **Required Skills & Qualifications**

- 2–5 years of experience in carpentry, woodworking, furniture restoration, or a closely related trade in which the following skills and abilities have been acquired.
- Safe, and efficient facility with hand tools: chisels, hand planes, mallets, hand saws, cabinet scrapers, marking tools, and the like. Ability to sharpen and maintain hand tools.
- Safe, and efficient facility with shop machinery: table saw, miter saw, router (freehand and table), planer and jointer, belt sander, scroll saw, and band saw.
- Ability to combine router bits and use table saw to reproduce short runs of vintage profiles.
- Ability to take accurate measurements and work to reasonable tolerances.
- Basic understanding of wood species, grain behavior, and joinery.
- Reliability, punctuality, and ability to work both independently and in coordination with other crafts persons.
- Rather than mindless engagement in tasks, the ability to maintain engaged thoughtfulness to think creatively about ways to restore elements in period context.
- An attitude and ability to integrate structural soundness and functional ease with aesthetic richness. For instance, you understand that a well-restored window is not just operational but beautiful, and that these qualities are inseparable.
- Independent means of transportation and the ability to sustain reliable daily commute to both the shop in the South Shore neighborhood and to job sites across the metro area is essential and non-negotiable — please assess this honestly before applying.
- Provide and maintain own hand tools. (Some specialty tools will be provided.)

- Ability to work discreetly onsite, understanding you are privileged to be invited into client's homes.

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### **Strongly Preferred Qualifications**

- Experience with historic window or door restoration.
- Experience working in preservation and restoration contexts.
- Any formal trade training, apprenticeship, or vocational education in woodworking.
- Enthusiasm and initiative to help grow the business by embracing new challenges.
- Facility in the use of spray equipment for application of clear and painted finishes.

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### **What We Offer**

- Competitive hourly wage commensurate with experience.
- A small, focused community of crafts persons where your work is visible and valued.
- Five paid holidays.
- Sick leave in keeping with Chicago ordinance.
- Opportunity to develop skills in historic restoration (with partial financial support for some training courses).
- Room for increased responsibility and compensation as your skills and our project scope expand.
- Involvement in projects from beginning to end, resulting in satisfaction at a job well done, oftentimes on one-of-a-kind elements.
- Direct work with appreciative clientele.

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### **Compensation**

**\$24-\$32 per hour. Depending on experience and skill level.** This reflects the current scope and scale of our work, and we are transparent about that. As the company grows into more complex and refined restoration projects, compensation will grow with it.

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### **To Apply**

Submit a resume, portfolio, and cover letter.

**Applications which include only a resume will not be considered. You must also submit a cover letter and portfolio. Send cover letter and portfolio to [jediger@oakbrothers.net](mailto:jediger@oakbrothers.net)**

**Regarding the resume.** Include a chronological history of both work and education.

**Regarding the cover letter.** Relax! We care more about how you think and work than how you write. Here are some suggestions to help you compose your letter. Describe your interest in restoration. What inspires you about this work? Why is it important? What skills and qualities do you possess that make you well-qualified for this specialized field of work? Avoid generalities like "I am detail-oriented." Instead, describe a project you've done that demonstrates this orientation. In other words, ***show don't tell.***

Also, then, respond to either or both of the following prompts.

I. Choose a project from our website which interests you. Respond to these questions:

- What attracted your attention to this project? What inspired you? What surprised you?

- Given your skill set, what could you have contributed to the project had you been involved in the restoration process? Providing details about where else you have used these skills is helpful.
  - Our motto is that "we restore things better than they used to be." Beyond restoring structural soundness and functional ease, we are interested in rendering period appropriate enhancement of architectural elements. Imagine and describe a single or several enhancements your skill set might have enabled you to contribute to this project that could have enhanced the outcome beyond what we accomplished. This is a chance to demonstrate your creativity and thoughtfulness.
2. Choose a project from another context that you are proud of having completed.
- Describe the scope of the project.
  - What makes you proud of your accomplishment? What skills did you use? What challenges did you face and how did you overcome them?
  - Based on your understanding of our work, describe tasks you completed that are directly related to procedures you would be performing in working for Oak Brothers.

**Regarding the portfolio.** We're not looking for anything polished. We just want to see your work. Pictures taken with your phone are fine.

Send the cover letter and portfolio to Jeff at [jediger@oakbrothers.net](mailto:jediger@oakbrothers.net)