

Wes Carver Electric

by Michelle Boyles

Wes Carver Electric has been your friendly neighborhood electrician since 1999, specializing in residential work throughout Bucks and Montgomery counties. Wes Carver has been in the electrical trade for over 25 years, honing both his technical and design skills. *House & Home* spoke with him about the impact carefully planned landscape lighting can have on your home.

What are the most common landscape lighting requests today?

Our customers usually reach out to us for one of three reasons: the house lacks curb appeal, there is a security related concern or it is simply just too dark. Light in general is a great deterrent from the bad guys. Giving your house a well-lit look from the curb will not only make it look great, but also gives the added benefit of peace of mind knowing that your home is also safer. Some other issues we help our customers solve are problem areas like paths, steps and the areas around pools. Those things—and being able to entertain and enjoy their outside space—are the main reasons people start thinking about their outdoor lighting.

What's the typical process when a homeowner calls?

During the initial phone call we get some basic information, and ask a few questions so we are prepared for the in-home consultation. During that consultation, I will meet with the customer, listen to their concerns and ideas, then provide recommendations based on our years of experience. It's important for me to understand their motivation



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Wes Carver, Owner

for the lighting project so I can custom tailor a design to meet their individual needs.

What is your design process like?

The first thing I look at is the house itself. We want to make sure we light the front entry so guests can locate the front door and often the entry makes a nice focal point. Other aspects of the house would include lighting features such as brick, stone or other interesting details. When we uplight onto textured surfaces such as stone or brick, it gives off a nice contrast of light and shadows which provides a dramatic look. Next we look at what parts of the landscaping would work best in the design. Lastly, we will add path lights to cover any dark spots if needed.

Our goal is to light the property and make it look natural. We want our light fixtures to blend into the background, not call attention. That is how we can achieve a natural, cohesive lighting design. If I can place a fixture to cast light up 25-feet on the house versus a path light, I'm going to use the uplight every time and it will be a completely different look than the neighbors'.

What is your favorite thing to light?

Birch trees have thin canopies and a wonderful texture to the bark. They filter light better than any other tree.

What are some trends in lighting design right now?

Bluetooth and app-based control is where it's at these days for landscape lighting. We now have Bluetooth capability when installing a new system so that the customer can control their new lights from their smartphone. Normally, we set up the lights to turn on at dusk and off at a specified time. The app knows when dusk is every day in your area so no need to constantly change the timer programming; now it happens automatically.

All lighting fixtures are LED these days. However it's very important to match up the color temperature of the LED lights, so they are not a different color than the house's existing exterior lights.

What should homeowners consider when selecting a contractor to install landscape lighting?

A great design is key to a successful project. If the contractor is not familiar with how to create a dynamic, yet natural lighting design it might not meet expectations. Quality light fixtures are also critical. You want your investment to function well and look good for many years. Inexpensive light fixtures simply do not hold up over time as well as their well-constructed counterparts. Another important aspect is wiring. Electricians know how to make proper electrical connections. **H&H**