

NARI MINNESOTA - 2025 RotY AWARDS

PROJECT: SANCTUARY CATEGORY: RESIDENTIAL KITCHEN \$125,000-150,000



Client Objectives

building a forever home

When our clients first reached out, they envisioned a partial remodel — replacing the kitchen peninsula, extending the cabinetry to the ceiling, and painting the existing cabinets to lighten the space. However, during our conversations, it quickly became clear that replacing the cabinetry altogether, paired with a few key layout changes, could create a far greater impact without a significantly larger investment.

Freed from the constraints of the existing cabinetry, we designed a new plan that would maximize the transformation while working within the current floor plan and flooring.

Their objectives included:

- Brightening the space considerably
- Incorporating the largest island possible
- Improving kitchen flow without disrupting existing walkway patterns
- Creating a space that could feed and entertain their large blended family
- Enhancing functionality and layout for everyday use

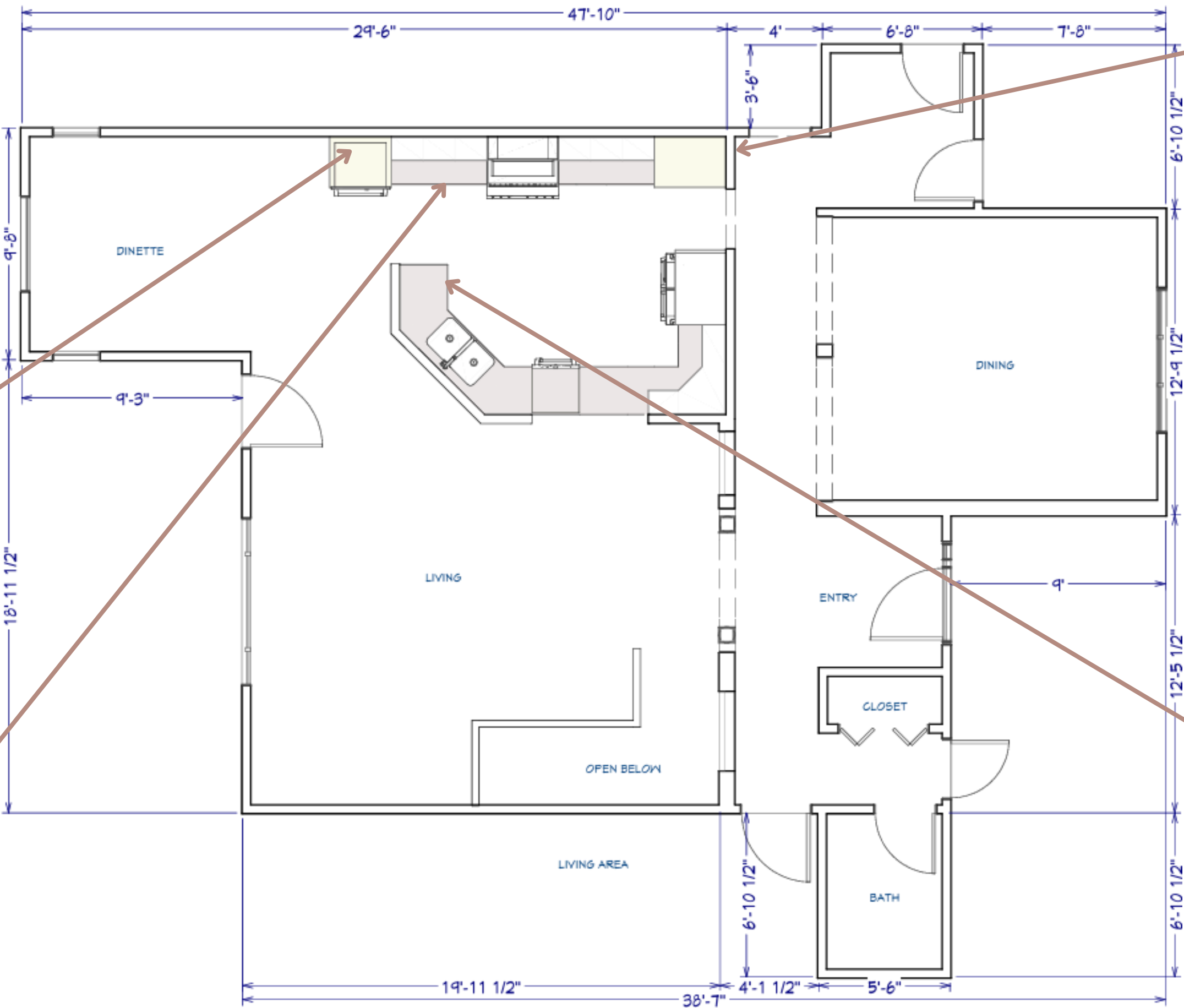


Client Frustrations

before plan

A long peninsula was more of a hindrance than a help, cutting off the kitchen from the rest of the home and limiting traffic flow, especially when entertaining. Paired with a dark cabinet and color scheme, the space felt much less spacious than the square footage reflected.

EXISTING FLOOR PLAN
3/16" = 1'



Double ovens cut-off the space and blocked light.

Pantry in the corner was inconveniently located.

Overall, the kitchen felt cramped, despite the open concept. Wanted a space to better entertain their blended family of 8 kids plus spouses.

With cabinets on just one side of the peninsula, they lacked sufficient storage

Long peninsula island drastically limited access to the kitchen, creating a bottleneck, especially when entertaining.

Cherry cabinetry and dark-stained flooring throughout made the space feel dark and dated.

Client Wishes

an updated space tailored for entertaining and daily life



Frustrated with the large peninsula that cut off the kitchen and bottlenecked traffic flow, they wanted a standalone island, as large as possible, to better suit their love for cooking and entertaining.



They wanted to brighten the entire room, yet didn't want an all white kitchen design.



8' tall cabinetry left 2' of space unused. They wished not only to update the cabinetry, but extend the cabinets higher, taking advantage of the 10' ceilings.



They wanted to eradicate the dated design and features, replacing them with design that blended contemporary and traditional elements



Entertaining was top of mind. With a large blended family, they wanted a design that would allow them to easily hold and feed a crowd.

Challenges Addressed

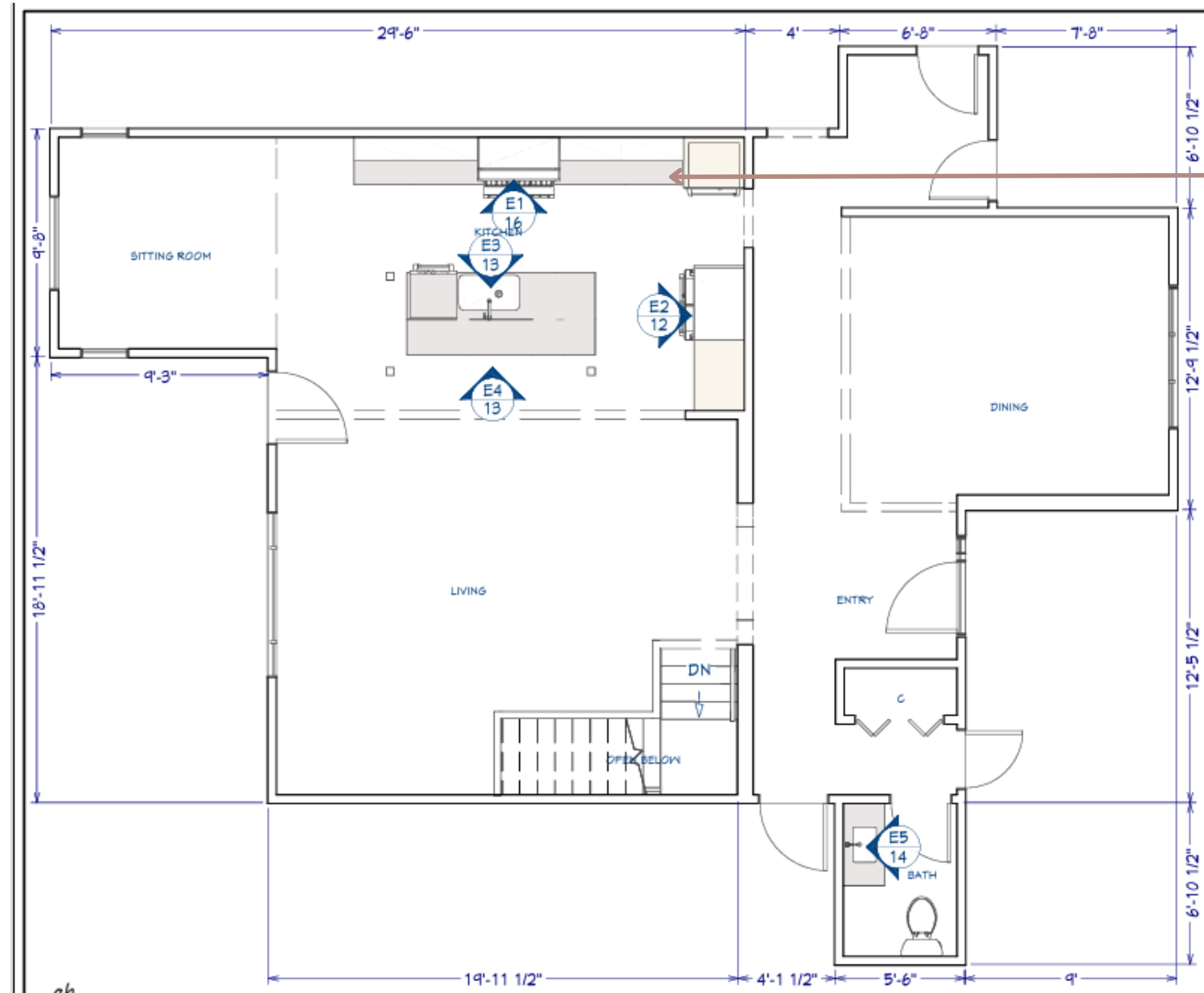
after plan

To keep the budget in check, the homeowner requested that we not move any walls or plumbing. The new design delivers on all of their wishes while staying within the parameters of this request.

The homeowner wished to keep the existing stained maple floor. Sanding of the floor proved to be very challenging as the stain had really permeated the wood. Additionally, there were no wood floors under the existing cabinetry, requiring a lot of feathering in where the peninsula once stood.

PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN

3/16" = 1'



The homeowner wanted the cabinetry to extend to the ceiling without using stacked cabinets. Our solution was to add an open shelf beneath the upper cabinets, creating balanced lines while still achieving the full-height look

Throughout the process, our homeowners made several changes to the original design. Thanks to diligent communication and creative problem-solving, we delivered a space that checked all the boxes—and delighted our clients.

Functionality

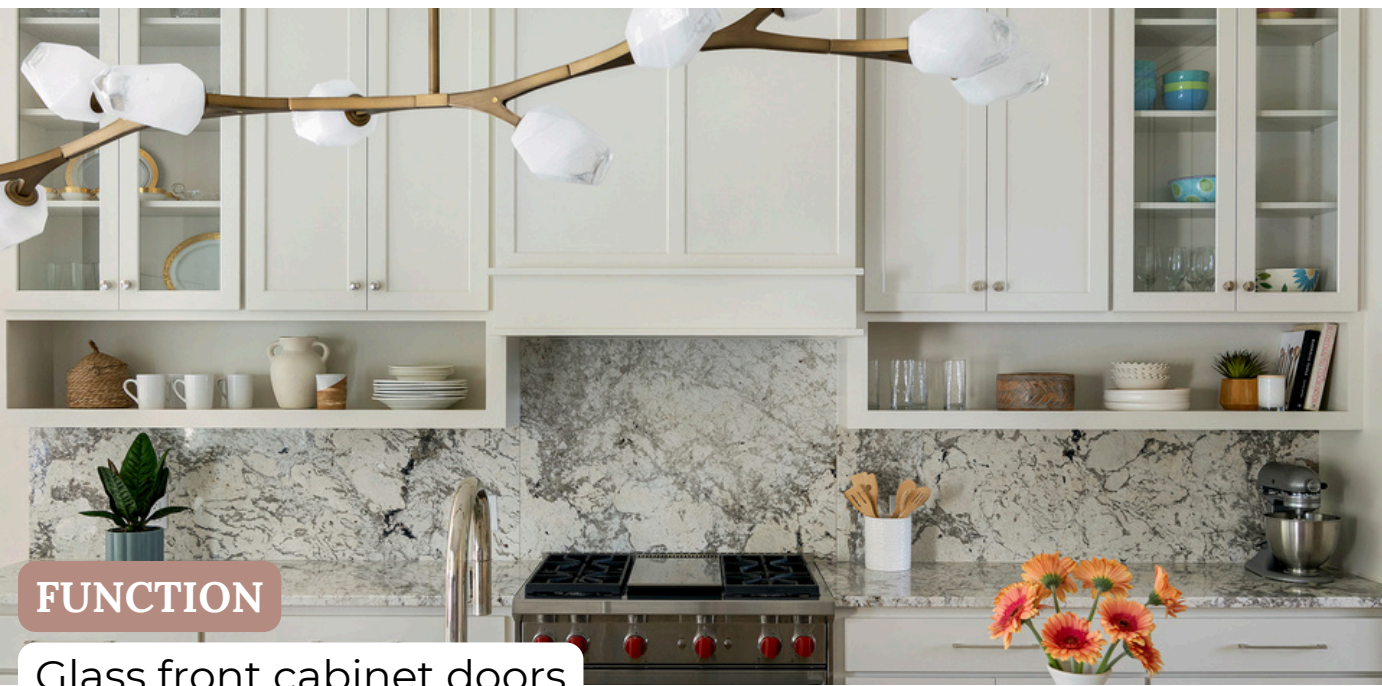
opening up to possibility

While the previous peninsula cut the room in half, hindering both traffic flow and usable space when entertaining, within the new design, an oversized island provides our homeowners with everything they desired. Offering plenty of storage, a cookbook shelf for an avid home chef, seating for entertaining, and countertop workspace for all to enjoy, the new island gracefully opens up the flow of traffic while not compromising on space or function.



Functionality

storage and workspace aplenty



FUNCTION

Glass front cabinet doors provide opportunity to store and display special items.



Before

FUNCTION

It was our homeowner's wish to eliminate the wasted space above the cabinets. To address this, we brought the cabinets to the ceiling, adding crown molding above and open shelves below to balance the cabinetry visually and provide easy access to everyday items.



After

FUNCTION

A functionality powerhouse, the island houses cabinet storage on both sides, seating, the sink and dishwasher.

FUNCTION

Previously tucked into a corner, the relocated pantry now resides in a more convenient location. In the pantry's former locations, the double ovens now reside, no longer obstructing light and site lines.

FUNCTION

Heat-resistant granite countertops.



FUNCTION

There are no tight, awkward-to-reach corners like those found in the previous layout..

Craftsmanship

extra attention to detail

Nothing was left as an oversight on this design. From panels on the end of the cabinets to the island legs, to the glass front doors and visually engaging granite countertops with a full height backsplash, deliberate care was put into the design and creation of details that elevate the design and achieve a contemporary yet traditional appeal.



CRAFTSMANSHIP

Texture is incorporated everywhere, from the movable/adjustable light above the island to the knurling on the hardware.



CRAFTSMANSHIP

Granite countertops are carried up the backsplash to create a more contemporary/seamless design



CRAFTSMANSHIP

The mixing of metals between the hardware, faucet, and lighting create interest and keep your eye moving.

Innovation

reaching full height

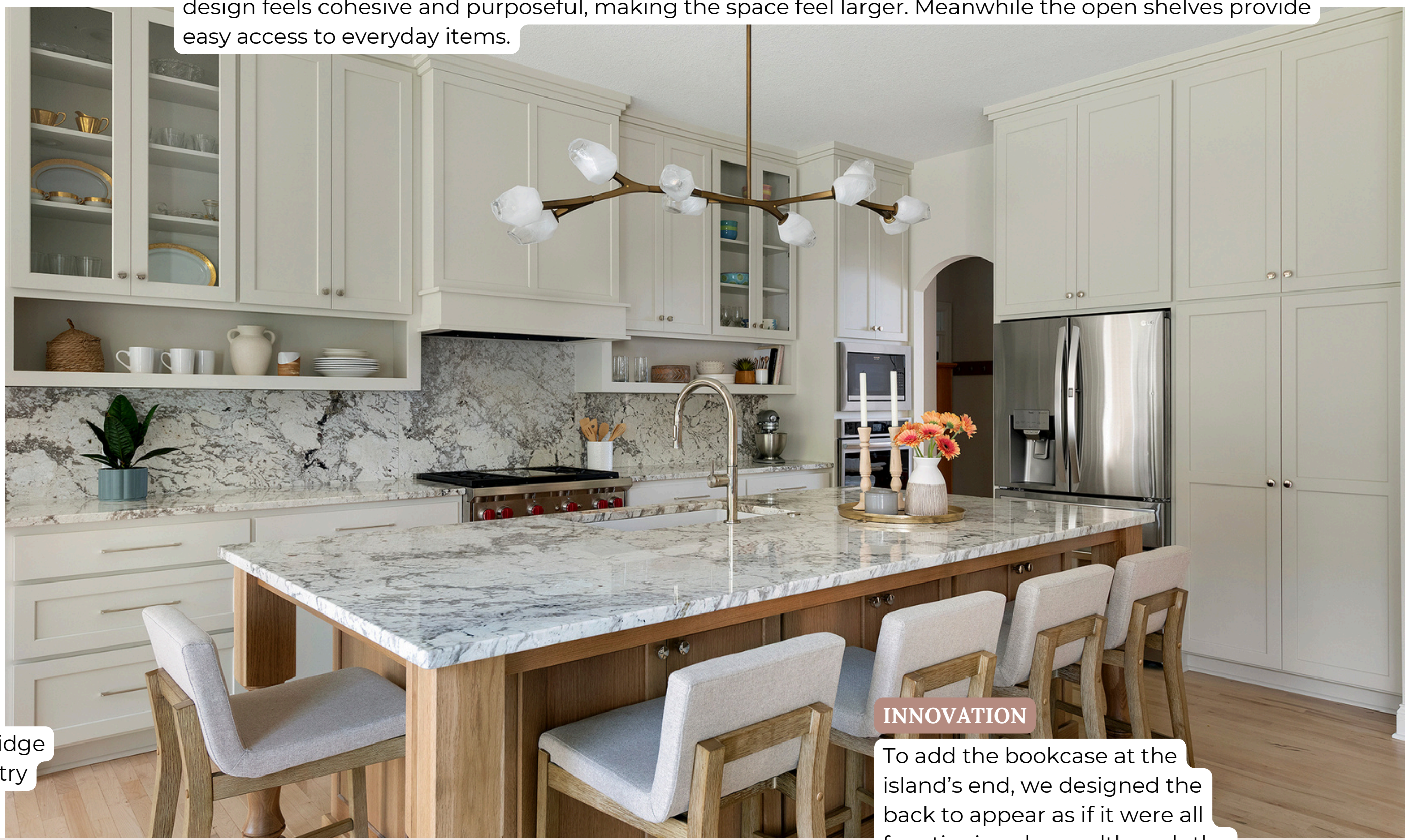


INNOVATION

The tall cabinets above the fridge and pantry mirror the cabinetry along the far wall.

INNOVATION

After playing with the height of the cabinetry extensively, we landed on this design for the stove hood and the decision to include floating shelves underneath the upper cabinets to balance the design. The resulting design feels cohesive and purposeful, making the space feel larger. Meanwhile the open shelves provide easy access to everyday items.



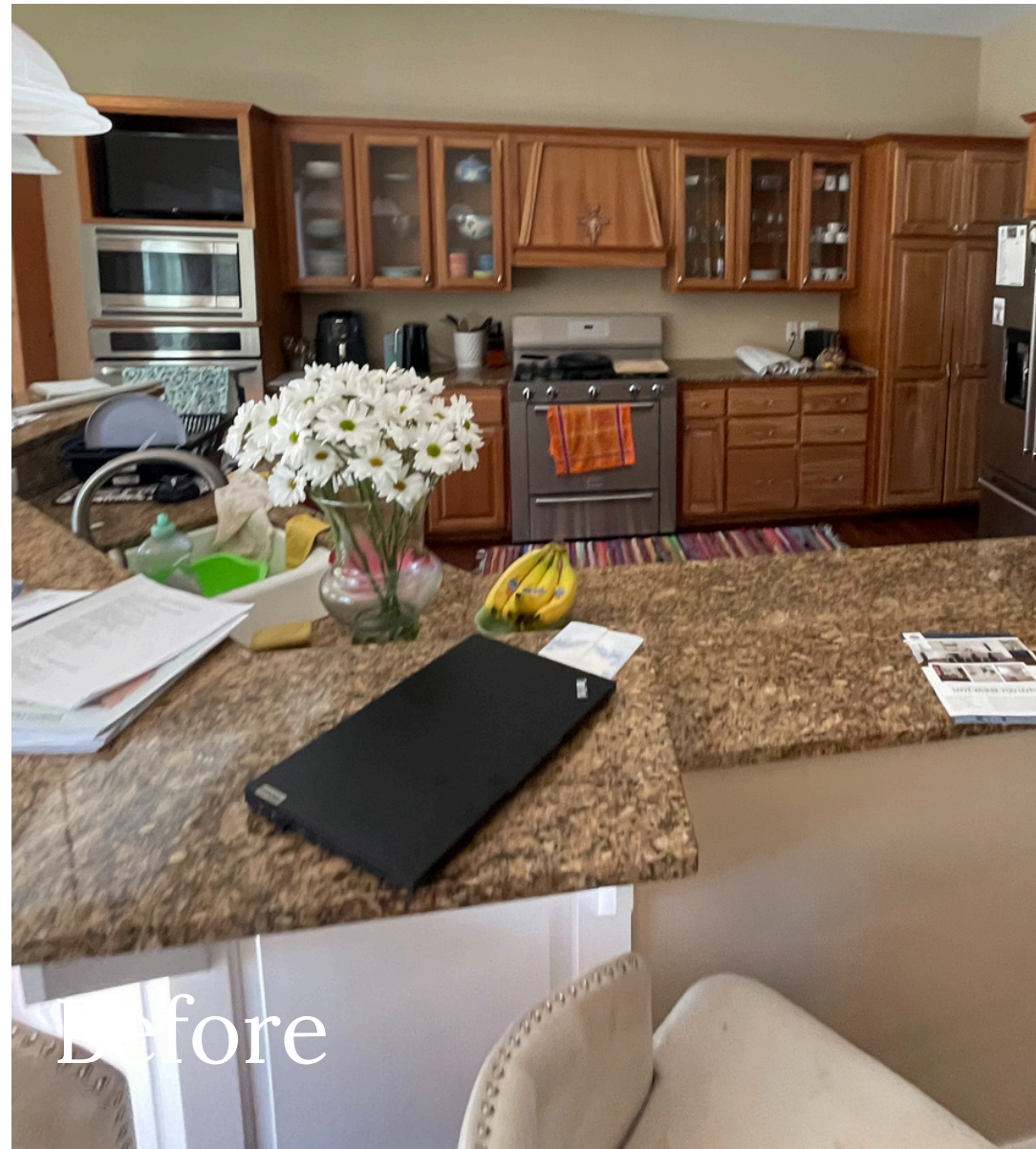
INNOVATION

To add the bookcase at the island's end, we designed the back to appear as if it were all functioning doors, although the far-right door is decorative.

Aesthetics

a traditional contemporary

Where brown undertones once overwhelmed the eye, rich visual interest and light now reign. The clean lines of the cabinetry and contemporary lighting mix with curved traditional elements and rift white oak on the island for a space that is the perfect marriage of light, depth and interest.



Before

AESTHETICS

For our client, seeing this light was love at first sight. However, she was adamant that she didn't want an abundance of gold or too much warmth in her design. Letting the light "shine" without letting it take over the design became one of our primary focuses. The light is also adjustable, so they can change it over time to give the kitchen a subtle, fresh look.



After

Aesthetics

a delicate dance of depth

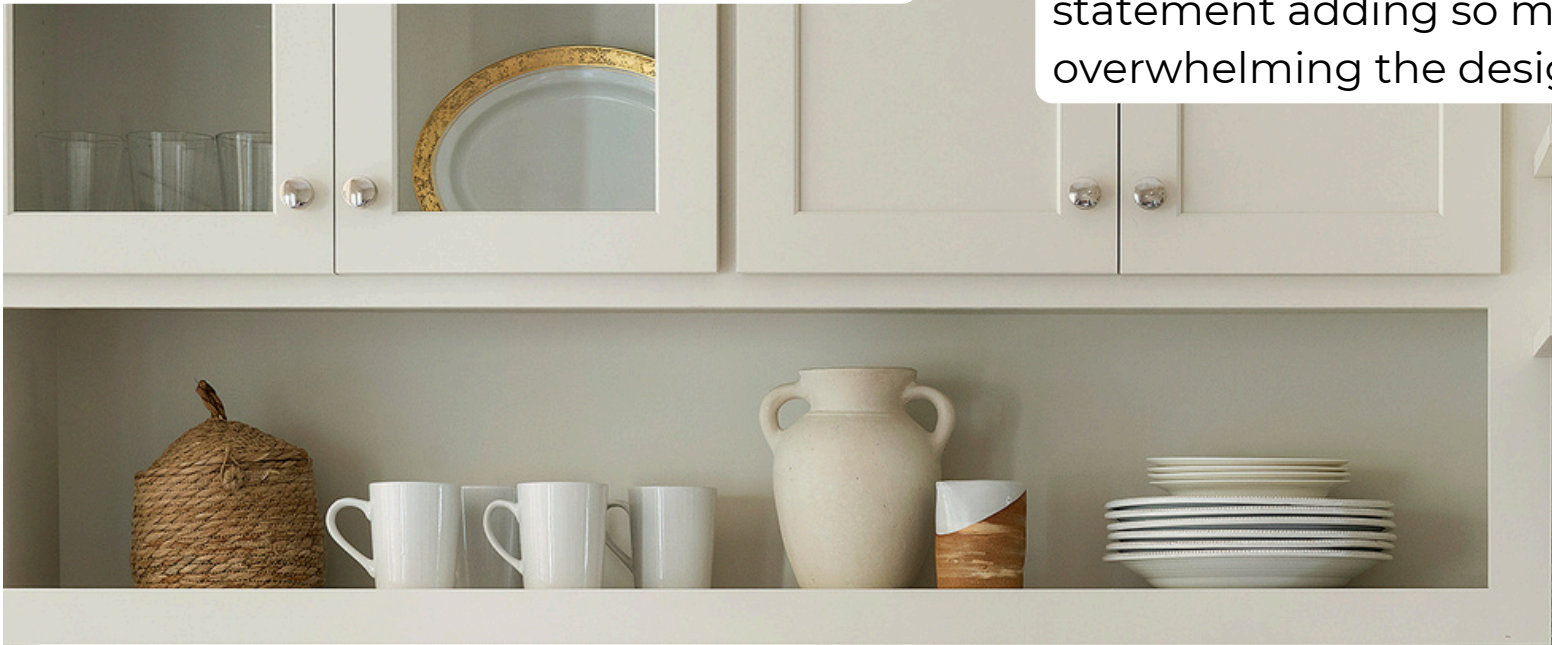
AESTHETICS

Wanting to lighten the space without the starkness of an white kitchen, we settled on Benjamin Moore Natural Cream for the upper and lower cabinetry and rift white oak on the island to add warmth.



AESTHETICS

The glass front doors also give the illusion of light, balancing the heaviness of solid doors.



AESTHETICS

Beautiful Mona Lisa granite graces both the countertops and the full height backsplash make a statement adding so much depth without overwhelming the design.



AESTHETICS

Polished nickel faucet and hardware keep the design from becoming too warm. Subtle knurling on both adds another layer of texture.

After

Aesthetics

Layers and layers

AESTHETICS

Layers of lighting, texture, and lines play together in a way that feels decadent yet uncomplicated.



AESTHETICS

Beyond the balance they bring, these open shelves are an unexpected element that layers in visual interest.



AESTHETICS

The refinished wood floors, no longer weighed down with a dark stain, tie the entire main floor together, adding another layer of cool warmth.

