

NARI Minnesota 2025 RotY

Edgy and Bold Kitchen Reimagined

Category: Residential Kitchen \$150k-200k

The clients were looking for a kitchen that matched their bold, modern aesthetic while solving long-standing functional issues. The original space was inefficient, prone to freezing pipes, and lacked visual appeal. As a commercial designer himself, the homeowner had plenty of creative ideas but needed help turning them into a practical, well-integrated kitchen layout.

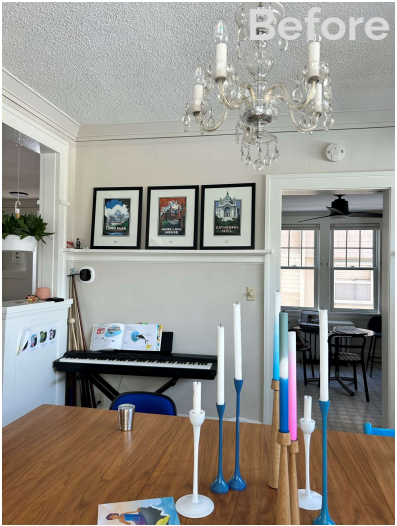
One of the most surprising outcomes of the renovation was the addition of a main-floor bathroom—something the clients hadn't even considered possible. This unexpected feature became a highlight of a transformation that successfully blended style, innovation, and everyday functionality.

The client's needs

- Better view into backyard
- Eliminate freezing pipe issues
- Natural Light
- Lots of countertop space, stools
- Gain ceiling height if possible
- Juxtapose modern design with Foursquare home



Before Photos



As Built Main Level Plan

179 sq. ft.
Existing Kitchen &
Informal Dining Rm

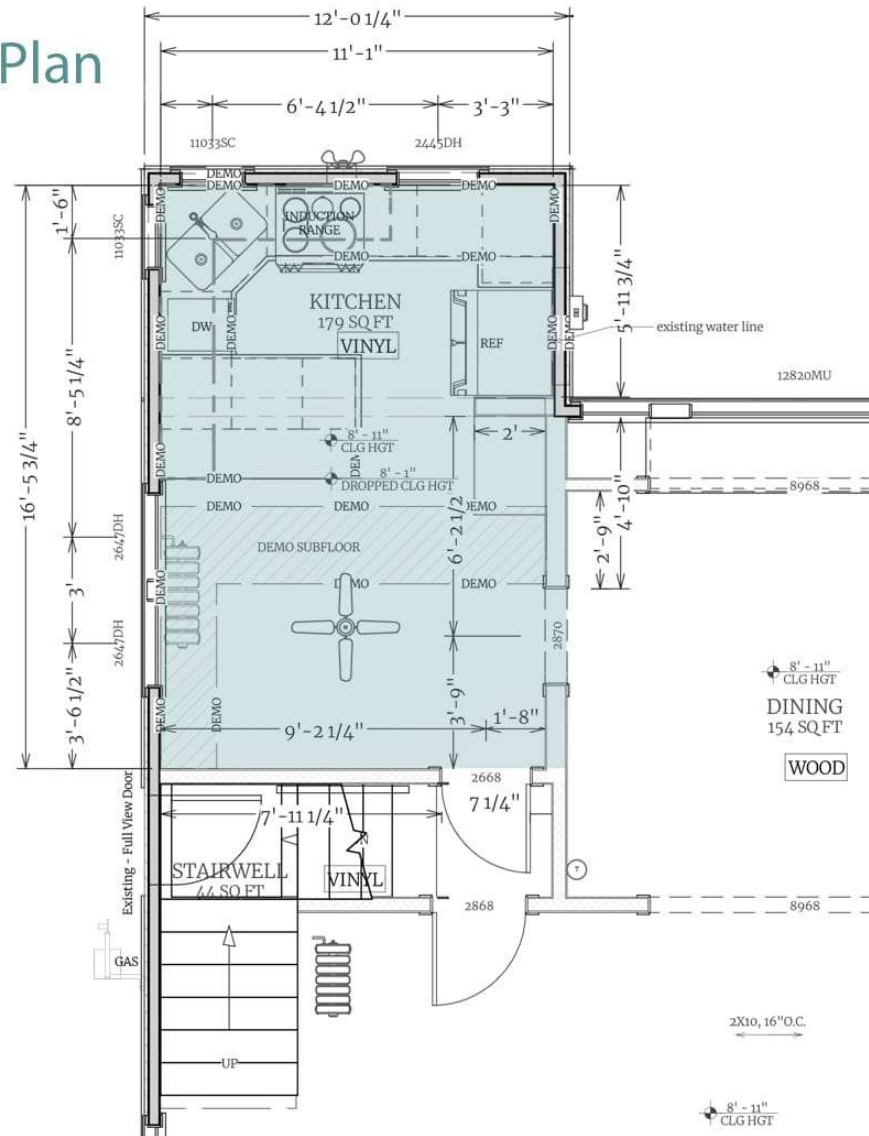
5 Windows to be Demolished

1 Ceiling Fan to be Demolished

Key:
Boundary
of Remodel

Kitchen

Informal Dining



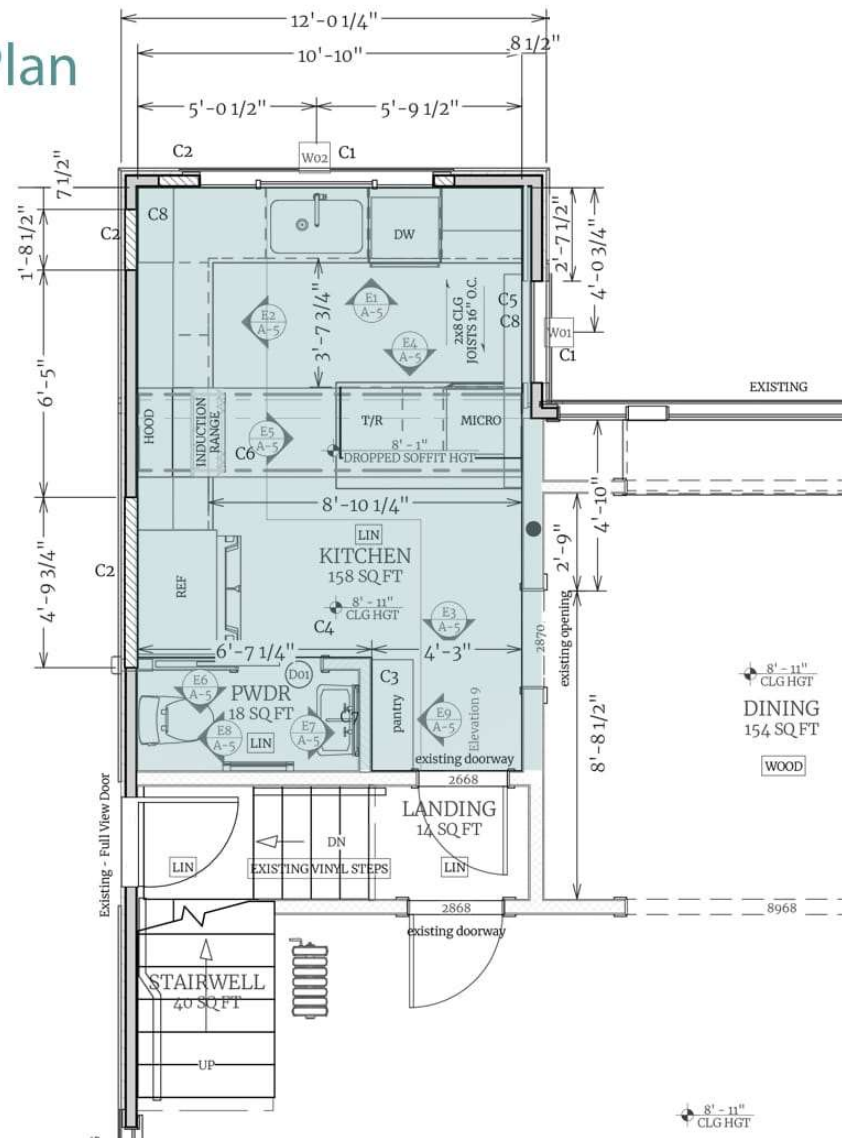
Proposed Main Level Plan

179 sq. ft.
Proposed Kitchen
Bath & Pantry

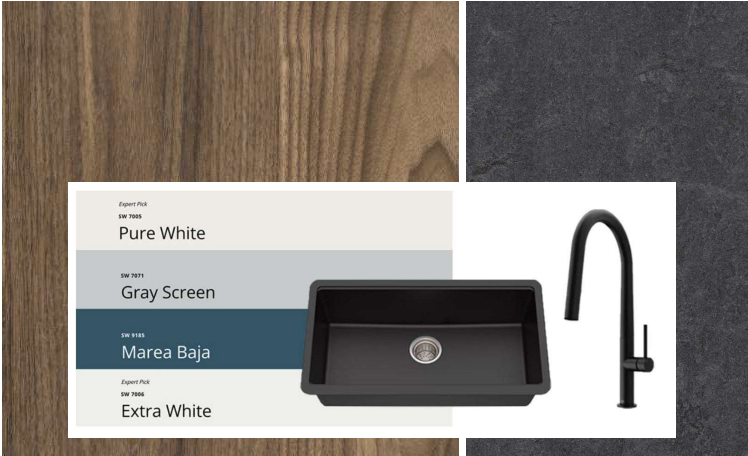
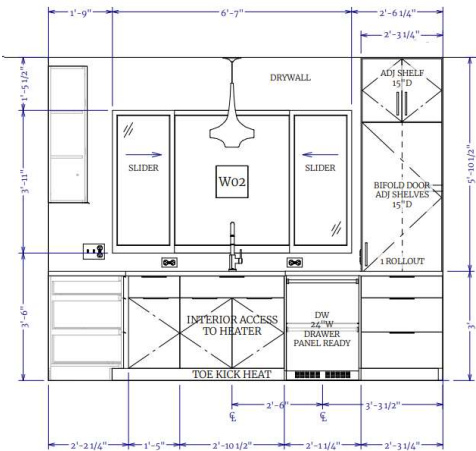
2 Replacement Windows

18 sq. ft.
Proposed Powder
Bathroom

Key:
Boundary
of Remodel



3D Renderings and Design Development



Before vs After



Project Challenges

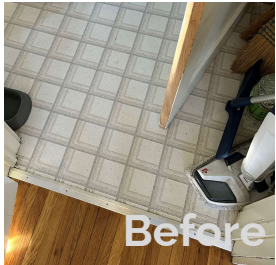
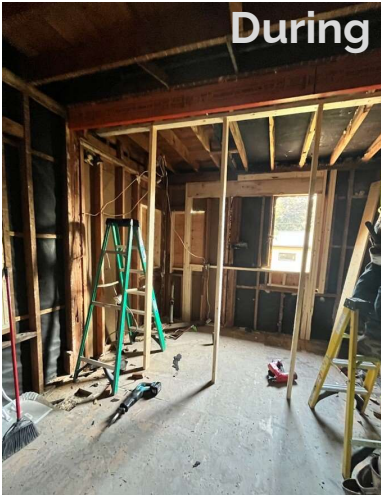


Before diving into design choices, we focused on how the space needed to function. The first step was addressing the obvious challenges: frozen pipes under the sink, drafts from the windows, cabinet doors that collided, and a kitchen so cramped it couldn't accommodate two people comfortably.

Prior to beginning demolition, our team conducted asbestos testing on the flooring. Although the linoleum didn't match the typical 8x8 asbestos-containing tiles, we prioritized the family's safety and proceeded with caution. The results confirmed that residual adhesive from a previous flooring tested positive for asbestos, prompting us to schedule abatement immediately.

The lower ceiling in the kitchen was our first clue that part of this area had once been a porch, with the original exterior wall beam still in place across the middle of the room. What we didn't realize until we got into the renovation was that during a remodel in the 1960s, the beam's structural support had been removed. Addressing this issue was non-negotiable. Fortunately, the solution came with a design win: a backlit walnut ceiling detail that not only concealed the beam but added warmth and character to the space.

To resolve the cold air infiltration, we installed Marvin windows and applied spray foam insulation to all existing exterior 2x4 walls and the floor rim, which had been a source of drafts. Since the ceiling of the old porch sits directly beneath a small balcony with no attic space above, we ensured it was properly insulated as well.



By reconfiguring the window layout, we created room for a longer stretch of cabinetry—adding both storage and space for appliances. Since the clients have young children, a built-in eat-in counter was a must. And while a main floor bathroom felt like a far-fetched dream, we found a way to make it a reality.



Aesthetics and Style



An all-white kitchen was never on the table for this bold couple. They steered clear of trendy shapes like hexagons and pickets, and passed on popular finishes like white oak and gold hardware. What they were really drawn to—though unknowingly—was a modern Bauhaus aesthetic. As we explored design options, the pairing of natural walnut with Sherwin Williams’ Marea Baja emerged as the clear frontrunner. From that moment, the vision came together seamlessly, featuring a blue concrete sink, striking midcentury wallpaper, and a pendant light inspired by Verner Panton.



Though this family leans more 'type-B,' they dreamed of the orderliness of a 'type-A' kitchen. To make that vision practical, we incorporated smart, easy-to-maintain solutions. Ample drawers give the kids independent access to their snacks and dishes, while concealed pocket doors keep the coffee and toast station accessible yet effortlessly hidden—just one quick slide to keep the counters clutter-free.

Marmoleum flooring was selected as an environmentally friendly solution, while also being warmer on the toes and easier to maintain than a real slate floor.

