

Belle Creek Beauty
Farmhouse

ENTIRE HOUSE — \$750,000 – 1,000,000

NARI MINNESOTA- 2026 ROTY AWARDS

PROJECT: Belle Creek Beauty Farmhouse **CATEGORY:** Entire House 750,000 – 1,000,000

The Belle Creek Beauty Farmhouse is a thoughtfully restored farmhouse that celebrates nearly 150 years of history while embracing modern living. Throughout the renovation, original architectural details emerged and were carefully preserved. Each decision was influenced by the farmhouse's rich past and historic charm all while blending in new white oak and painted cabinets, quartz countertops and bronze finishes. This home is not only a beautiful curated design, the structure of the home was pulled off its foundation to rebuild this farmhouse into a passive home.

From the beginning, we collaborated with a best-in-class project team to blend building science with timeless design. Every decision, from insulation strategy to window placement was informed by energy modeling and verified through rigorous performance testing. The result.....A home that's air tight, ultra-efficient, and tuned to deliver unmatched year-round comfort.

This house made history as the first single-family retrofit in Minnesota to achieve Passive House Certifications – a gold standard in building performance, energy efficiency, and comfort. But for us, this wasn't just about breaking records. It was about creating a healthier, smarter, and more sustainable home.

The result is a transformation that goes beyond cosmetic changes-it's a thoughtful reimagining of a beloved design era, as well as a sustainable home. Every detail speaks to the homeowners' dedication to preserving the home's original character while making it a warm and welcoming space, perfectly tailored to their lifestyle.





Kitchen

By expanding the original cramped kitchen into the original mudroom and laundry spaces, we created a spacious heart in this incredible home that perfectly captures a clean, sophisticated aesthetic. The custom-stained white oak island anchors the space, alongside white painted cabinetry, sleek quartz countertops, and seamlessly integrated appliances to maintain the home's clean aesthetic. Ample natural light, enhanced storage, and thoughtful features like a beverage station create a bright, inviting space that's perfect for family gatherings and entertaining.





Sunroom Addition – Family Room View

The new “sunroom” addition is a nod to homage of the original porch that was a part of the home many years ago. Instead of just a porch, this space was made into a dining room and sitting area. The light that flows into this space lends itself to a reading nook enjoying the sun shining in on you. And it also is an amazing space to entertain!





Living Room

The living room has been thoughtfully redesigned. The space now flows seamlessly with the surrounding areas, creating an open and airy atmosphere perfect for both relaxation and socializing. Built-in faux fireplace provides practical storage and adds sophistication, while the overall layout promotes a welcoming environment. The updates have turned the living room into an inviting centerpiece of the home.





Laundry Room

The addition added onto the Farmhouse carved out a space for a dedicated laundry room. The original home had the laundry located in the kitchen. Having a dedicated space for laundry is such a delight for the homeowner! Painted cabinetry, limestone look tiled floors, and a white crisp countertops create a tranquil space for tackling chores. The stunning hues foster a fun relaxed atmosphere, making laundry day more pleasant. Ample storage ensures that the room remains organized and efficient.



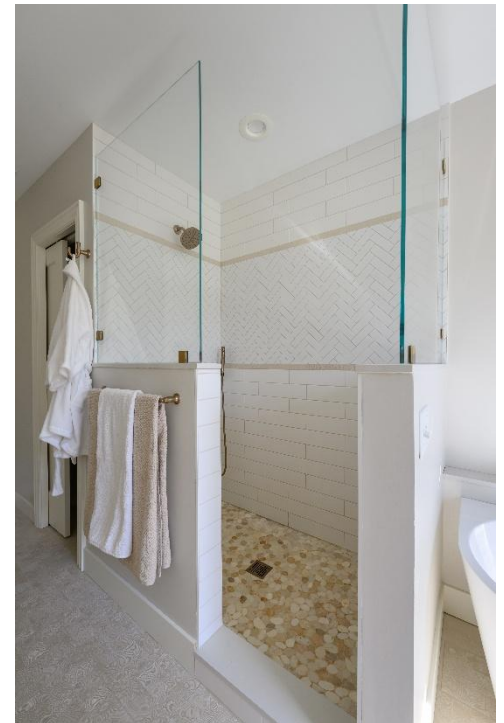
Main Floor Bathroom

A main floor bathroom is a must! The convenience of having guests have a bathroom close instead of invading your upstairs bathroom is such a dream! The other benefit to having a main floor bath, is this home can age with the homeowners. The shower in this bathroom is 0 entry which will also provide future convenience for aging in place. While the adjacent office space could be converted into a primary bedroom and with a bathroom on the main floor, your set for main floor living! The calming color palette creates a soothing atmosphere, perfect for unwinding as you return home or gearing up for a new day,



Primary Bath

The primary bath suite has been fully redesigned to offer a sanctuary of relaxation and luxury. With its refined aesthetic and smart layout, it transforms daily routines into a calming experience. The primary bath is located in the 2nd floor addition next to the original farmhouse. This revitalized space enriches the homeowners' lives by providing a serene retreat where they can escape and rejuvenate, enhancing their overall sense of well-being and home comfort.





Guest Bath

The original upstairs bathroom was remodeled and re-imagined to allow for a spacious guest bath. This thoughtful addition introduces convenience and privacy to their college aged children, while ensuring that visitors have their own space without disrupting the private areas of the home. Its presence adds a refined touch to the 2nd floor, making entertaining and hosting guests more enjoyable and stress-free.

BEFORE PHOTOS – FARMHOUSE EXTERIOR



BEFORE PHOTOS- KITCHEN, LAUNDRY & DINETTE AREAS

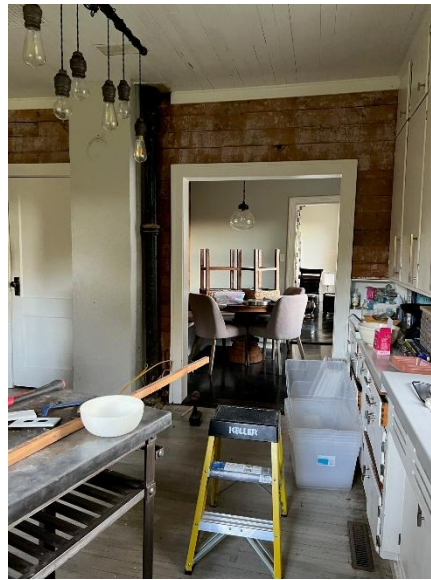
EXISTING KITCHEN



VIEW TO KITCHEN FROM LAUNDRY/MUDROOM



WASHER & DRYER IN BASE CABINETS JUST OFF THE KITCHEN



VIEW TO DINETTE FROM KITCHEN

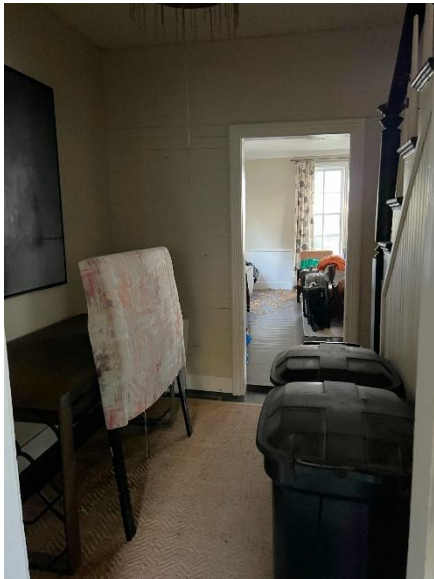


BEFORE PHOTOS – LIVING ROOM & DINETTE

EXISTING LIVING ROOM



STAIRWELL – VIEW INTO LIVING ROOM



STANDING IN KITCHEN
LOOKING INTO DINETTE



EXISTING KITCHEN (ORIGINAL WOOD WALL)



DINETTE

BEFORE PHOTOS- UPSTAIRS BEDROOMS & BATHROOMS

2nd FLOOR GUEST BATH



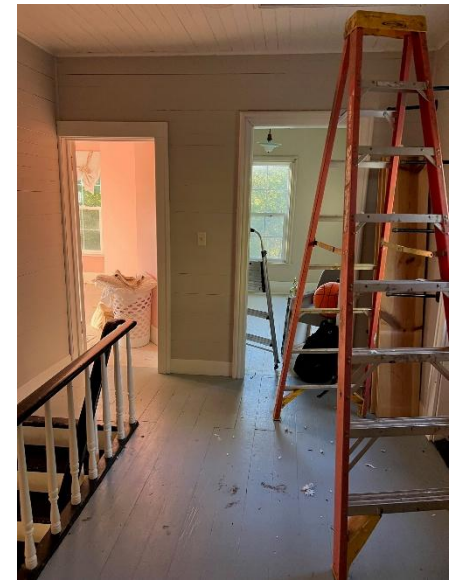
GUEST BEDROOM - LOCATED ACROSS FROM BATHROOM



BEFORE - SMALL GUEST BEDROOM
NOTE: EXISTING WOOD PANELING BEHIND SHEETROCK



GUEST BEDROOM ACROSS
FROM BATHROOM



2 BEDROOMS THAT WILL BE
CONVERTED TO 1 BEDROOM

IN PROGRESS PHOTOS - EXTERIOR

FARMHOUSE WAS PULLED OFF IT'S FOUNDATION AND MOVED 12' EAST & 6' NORTH



AFTER PHOTOS - DINING / DINETTE & LIVING ROOM



AFTER PHOTOS – ORIGINAL STAIRWELL/LAUNDRY/MUDROOM/NEW STAIRWELL & HALL

MUDROOM OFF GARAGE

1ST FLOOR HALLWAY



1ST FLOOR STAIRWELL



AFTER PHOTOS- BATHROOMS



PASSIVE HOME REPORT FOR THE FARMHOUSE

General Information

- Pursuing Phius CORE REVIVE 2021: Design Certified in Feb 2024, Pursuing Final Certification
- 2 Levels + Basement, 4 Bed/3 Bath
- iCFA: 5,159 SF, Envelope Area: 11,448 SF

Key Design and Performance Strategies:

- Established overall massing of the addition to complement the proportion and appearance of the original farmhouse
- Developed similar strategies for control layers at both existing and new exterior walls to simplify the construction
- Included attic in thermal envelope to allow for both top-down and bottom-up mechanical distribution to avoid the need for large chases through the existing house
- Existing house was raised up to allow for complete replacement of foundation with ICF walls and fully-insulated slab

Exterior Assemblies Thermal Performance

- Foundation (R-39)
- New ICF with additional 4” foam insert under existing house and addition
- Exterior wall (R-42 new and existing)
- 2x4 framing with dense-pack cellulose
- Additional insulation cavity with 9-1/2” i-joist on exterior of sheathing layer, filled with dense-pack cellulose
- Roof (R-65/70)
- Existing: 20” i-joist added to exterior of existing roof sheathing, cavity filled with dense-pack cellulose
- New: 22” parallel chord roof trusses, cavity filled with dense-pack cellulose

Air Barrier

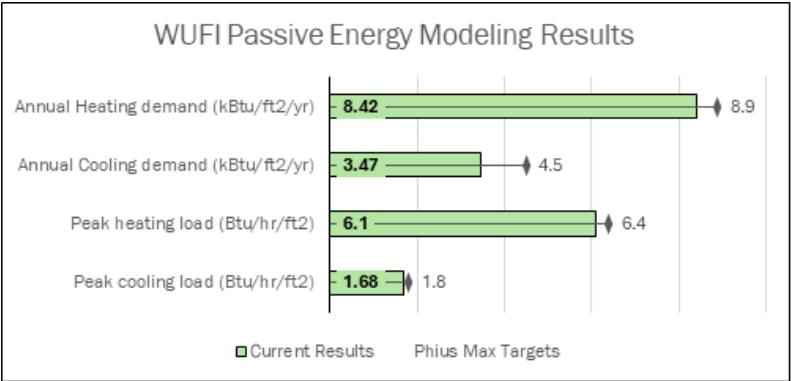
- Airtightness: Preliminary blower door test = 0.027 cfm50/ft2 enclosure area
- Air Barrier materials
- Slab: Under-slab polyethylene sheet (Stego)
- Exterior walls (existing and new): Pro Clima Intello X
- Ceiling/Roof (existing): Pro Clima Intello X on outside of sheathing
- Ceiling/Roof (new): Pro Clima Intello X on inside of roof trusses
- Air barrier transition from existing roof to new, using transition zone of fluid-applied air barrier (design assist by 475 Building Supply)

Windows/Doors

- Alpen Zenith ZR-6, Thin Glass Triple
- U-0.15 (Fixed) | 0.16 (Casement)
- High Gain SGHC = 0.46 (Fixed) | 0.39 (Casement)
- Exterior Doors: Provia Fiberglass, U-0.25
- Thermal bridging impact of the window placement within the depth of the wall was iteratively analyzed to find the right balance of performance goals and Owners’ aesthetic preferences for interior sill depth and limited exterior reveal

Mechanical Systems & Equipment (design by Energy Vanguard)

- Air-source heat pumps for ducted heating and cooling
- Dedicated ERV ducting (Zehnder A350)
- Future electric connection when existing gas range needs to be replaced
- Make-up air for range hood
- Heat pump washer/dryer combo
- Heat Pump Water Heater



Details on the Farmhouse construction and Passive Home Strategies

Highly insulated exterior assemblies:

Roof (existing house) – R-65

20" over-framing filled with dense pack cellulose insulation and continuous airtight vapor control layer on top of existing roof sheathing, exterior roof sheathing with integral weather-resistive barrier ventilated cavity, and metal roof

Roof (addition) – R-72

22" parallel chord truss filled with dense pack cellulose insulation, interior airtight vapor control membrane roof sheathing with integral weather-resistive barrier, ventilated cavity, and metal roof

Exterior Walls – R-42

2x4 framing cavity filled with dense pack cellulose insulation, wall sheathing with continuous airtight vapor control membrane, 9 1/2" joist over-framing filled with continuous dense pack cellulose insulation, exterior sheathing with integral weather-resistive barrier, ventilated rainscreen cladding

Foundation Walls – R-39

Insulated concrete form (ICF) foundation with 4" additional continuous foam placed in the forms for a total of 9-1/4" insulation

Floor Type – R-24

Concrete slab over continuous vapor control membrane, 6" EPS foam insulation and compacted granular base

High-performance glazing and windows

Triple pane, fiberglass, high solar gain windows from Alpen
Whole-window U-value: 0.15/0.16 for fixed/casement

Airtightness

Minimizes infiltration of outside air, increasing both energy efficiency and durability of the home.

A continuous air barrier enclosure has been tested to achieve the passive house standard requirement of 0.06 cfm/ft² at 50 Pa via a blower door test.

Ventilation

An Energy Recovery Ventilation (ERV) system passively recovers 77% of heat to provide a continuous supply of healthy, fresh air to the home. Interior air is exhausted from the bathrooms, kitchen and laundry areas to remove contaminants, and fresh filtered air is continuously supplied to the living spaces and bedrooms.

Heating and Cooling:

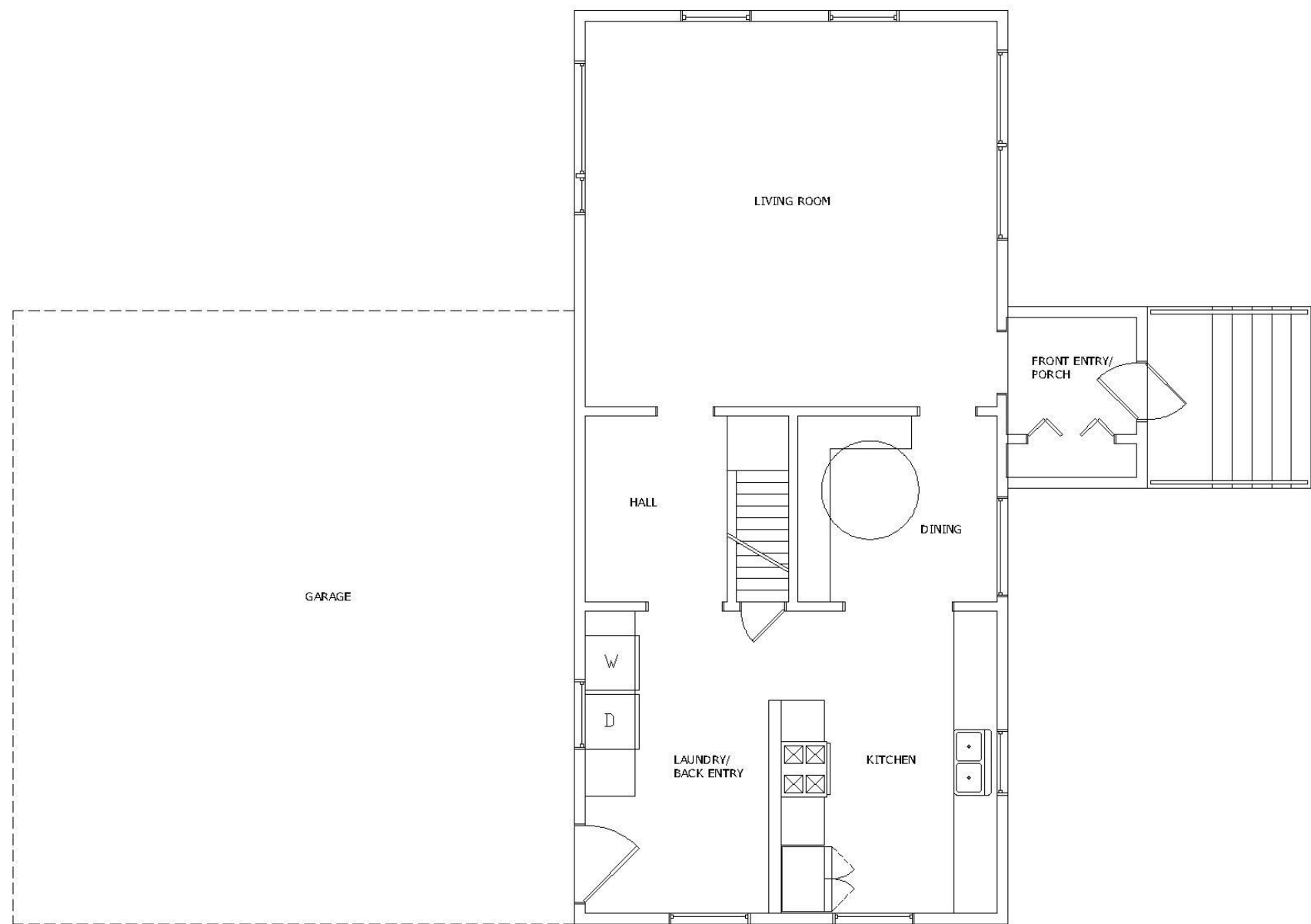
Energy-efficient heating and cooling is provided by a heat pump system which is specifically designed to work at high efficiency in cold climates.

Renewable Energy – PV

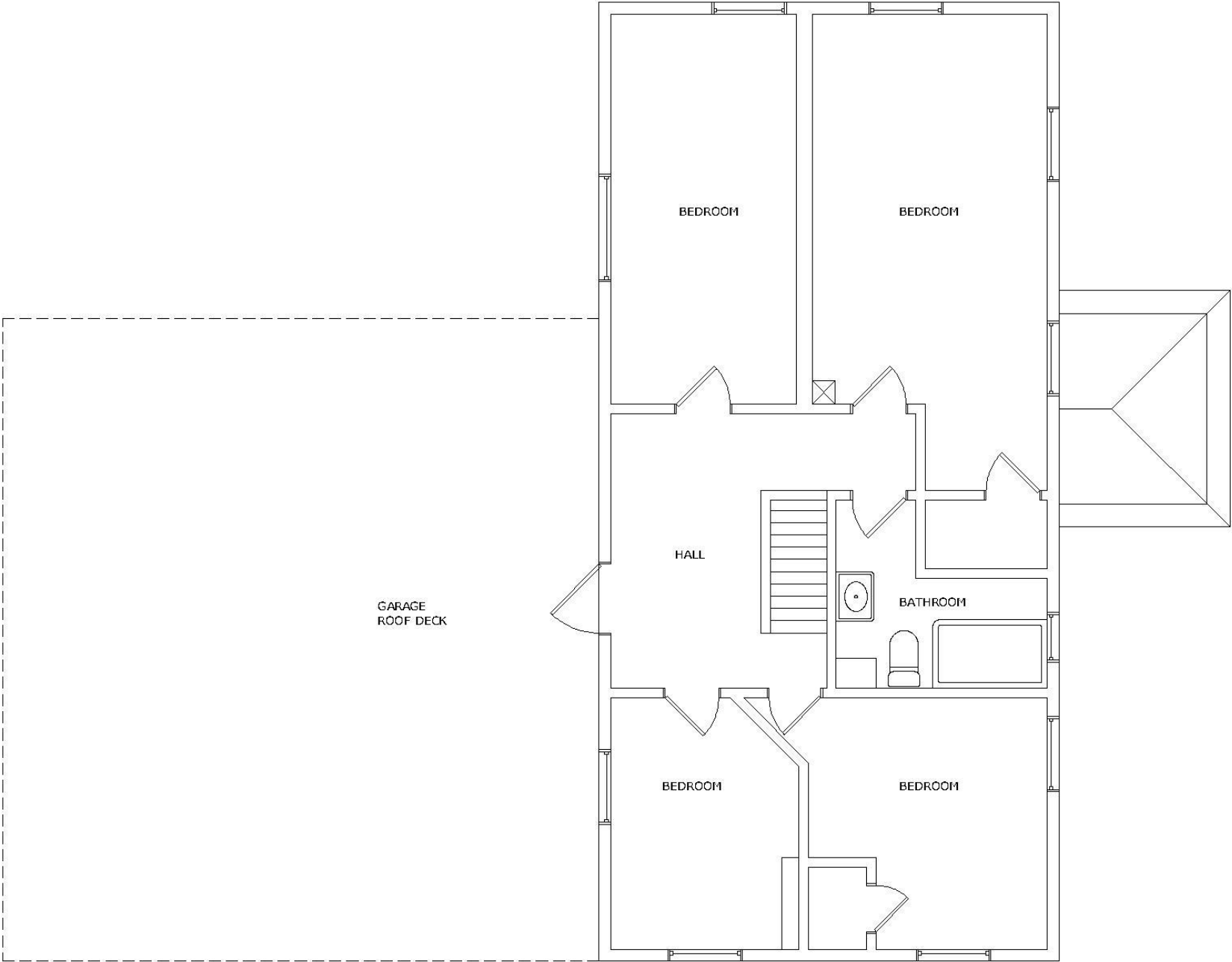
CLIENT REQUESTS

- To become the first single-family retrofit project in the state of MN to achieve Passive House Certification.
- To create a highly functional space that honors the home's rich history while supporting the way the family lives today.
- They wanted a large kitchen with an open and airy feel, perfect for entertaining.
- Reduction in energy use, increase interior comfort.
- High level building durability.
- They wanted a seamless, clutter-free space with lots of built-in storage solutions that exuded modern luxury and was flooded with natural light.
- Dining Room space to allow for more room than the existing banquette seating and allows for entertaining.
- The client wanted a serene color palette to instill calmness.
- Addition to be added to include a laundry room, main floor bathroom, and additional stairwell that met current codes.
- Main floor office space that could become a bedroom for future aging in place.
- The upstairs guest bathroom was envisioned as a sophisticated retreat highlighted by a large walk-in- shower. This space was meant to exude elegance while providing a comfortable and stylish experience for guests.
- The primary bath suite was to be a sanctuary of relaxation and luxury, with a spa-like ambiance. The client requested high-end finishes and a serene design that would elevate their daily routine into a moment of indulgence.
- They needed a main floor bath to offer guests privacy and convenience, eliminating the need for them to access the second-floor guest bath. This bath will also allow for easy access to a shower after a hard day farming.
- They requested to remove walls and to replace windows and doors to maximize natural light throughout the home, seamlessly blending indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Maintain historic elements including the original wood plank wall, while a painted tongue and groove ceiling was added to replicate the existing ceiling.

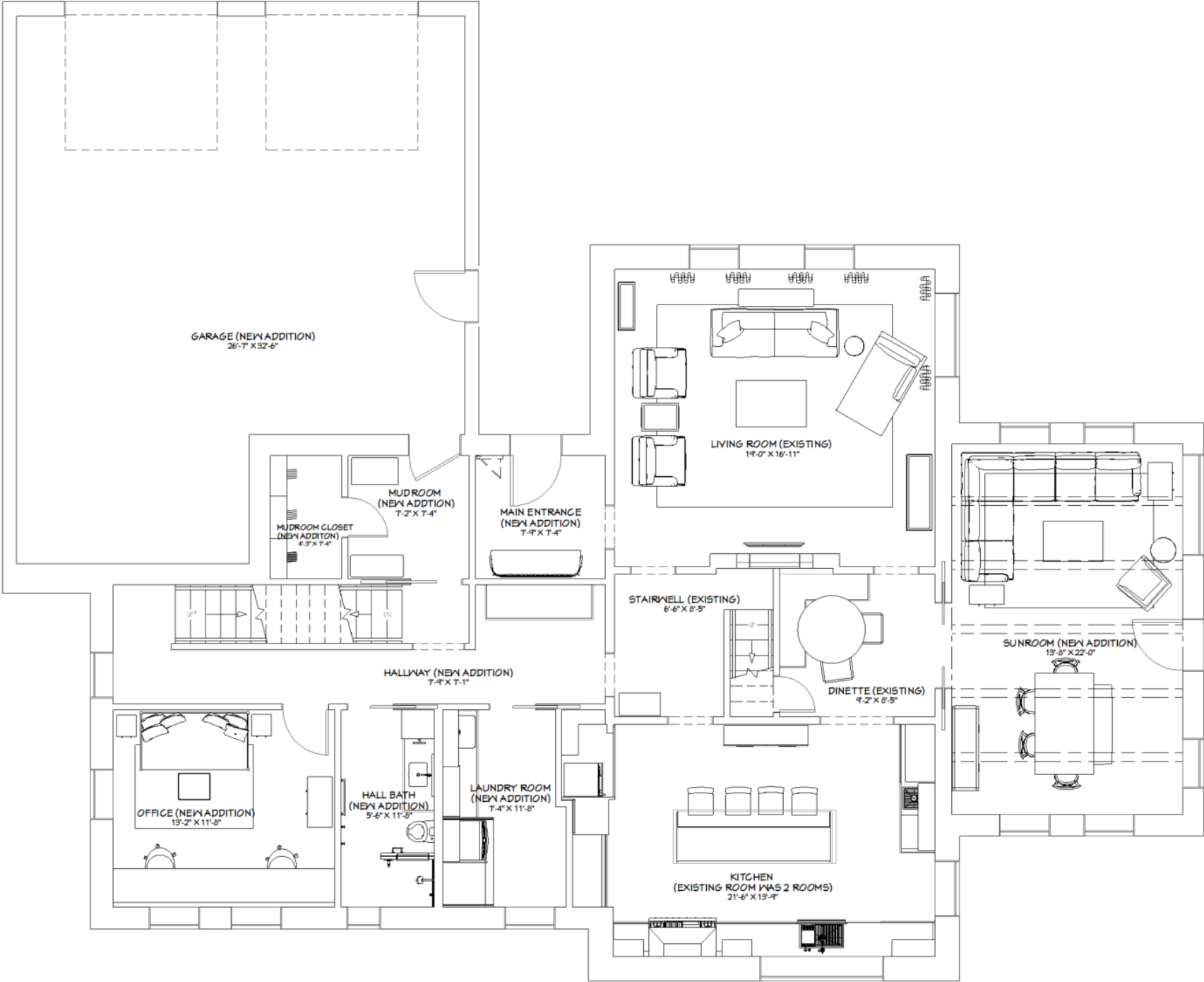
FLOOR PLAN BEFORE – 1ST FLOOR MAIN FLOOR



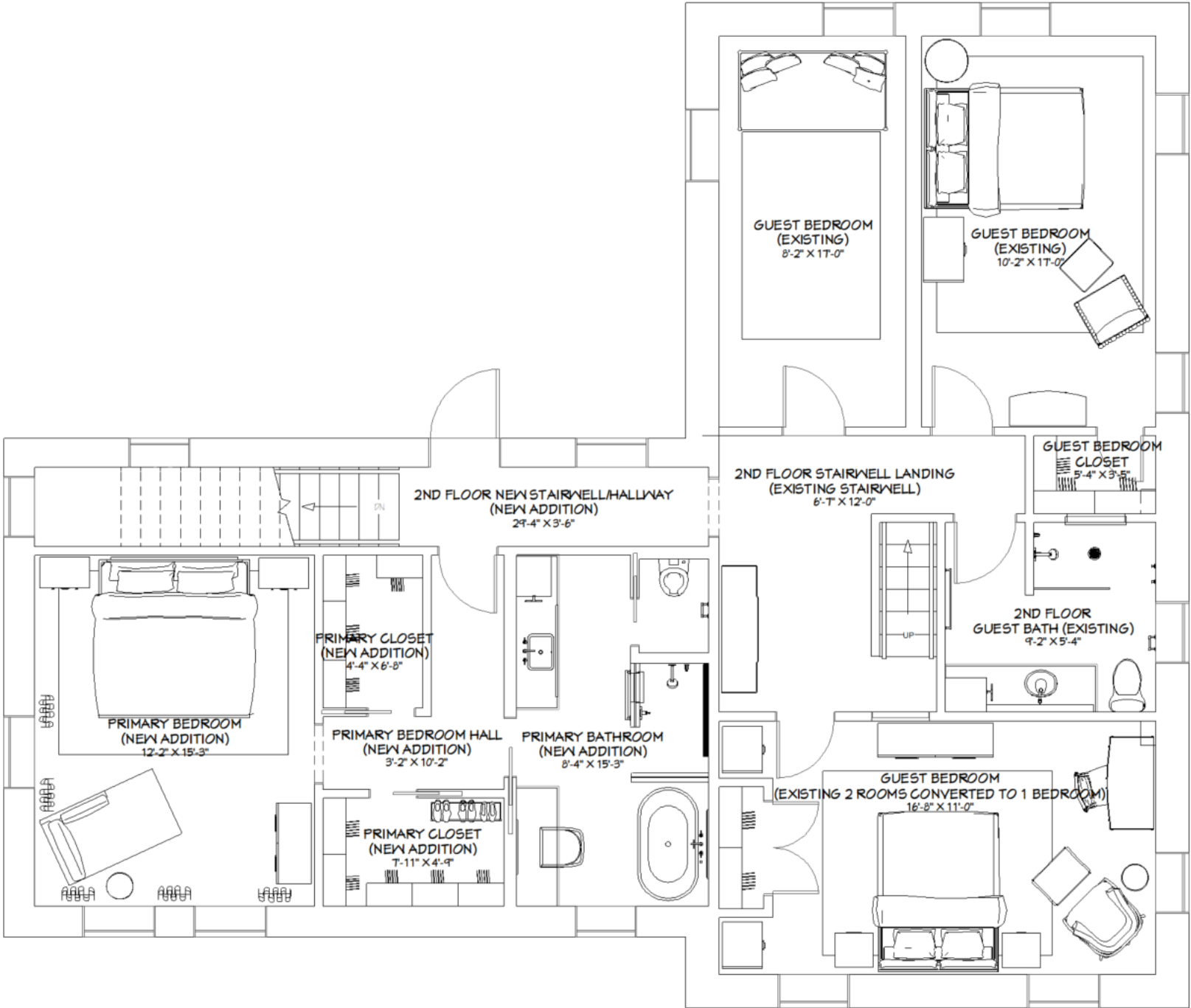
FLOOR PLAN BEFORE – UPSTAIRS (2ND FLOOR)



FLOOR PLAN AFTER – 1ST FLOOR MAIN FLOOR



FLOOR PLAN AFTER – UPSTAIRS (2ND FLOOR)



Project Challenges

Overall

- The home’s farmhouse design required careful consideration to preserve its architectural integrity, presenting a challenge in balancing historical accuracy with contemporary needs.
- The existing layout had to be extensively reworked, including relocating walls & reconfiguring room placements, which complicated the planning & execution process.
- The rigorous verification and testing that was performed to that thermal performance, air tightness and mechanical equipment performed as intended, giving the project team the ability to resolve any issues before construction completion.
- The extensive updates and structural changes required careful coordination with various trades to ensure that each phase of the project was executed smoothly and on schedule.

Kitchen

- The redesign of the kitchen that consumed the laundry and mudroom spaces involved significant structural changes.
- Integrating new, hidden appliances with the existing cabinetry required precise measurements and custom fittings.
- Maintaining the existing wood paneling and patching in with new provided challenges.



Project Challenges

Electrical

- The home was completely re-wired to be brought up to code and for safety. Extra care to run electrical wires. All wiring needed to be ran and not fished later. All holes needed to be sealed to maintain the properties of a passive home.

Larson Walls

- Extra thick 14" deep walls with deep window sills

Existing Home to be Re-built

- Marrying old walls to new. Walls were out of level, 20 floor joists were rotted and a 27" thick limestone foundation that needed to be removed. Starting over with a new home would have been easier.

Weather Conditions

- 2 months of continuous rainfall in the summer, along with winter snow hindered productive working conditions and emotional stress.

Maintaining wood paneled walls that were hidden by sheetrock

- Existing wood walls

Existing Bedroom Doors, Hardware and Casing to be re-used

- Time consuming installation of existing doors
- Existing Casing would need to be stripped and far more time consuming then just adding new.

Mid Point Blower Test

- There was no case study for type of passive home re-build, so the mid point blower test would tell all. If it was not up to Phius standards, all the hard work would need to be torn apart and re-done.

Moving the home off its foundation

- Moving the location of the home



Kitchen Features

- The kitchen was thoughtfully relocated by consuming the laundry room and mudroom to create a larger space for hosting and entertaining.
- A custom-stained, white oak island comfortably seats a family of four, offering casual dining and serving as a design focal point.
- Integrated, panel-ready appliances, including a concealed fridge, are seamlessly built into the cabinetry, while a built-in microwave adds convenience.
- A chic beverage station, complete with metal mesh in the upper cabinets and lower base pull-out cabinets, that offers convenient access to grab snacks and drinks.
- The removal of walls transformed the former galley-style kitchen into a large, open area, flooded with light.
- An arched painted hood is a bold focal point.
- Herringbone backsplash tile & solid quartz splash on the kitchen backsplash walls add texture and character, creating visual interest.
- Existing wood on one wall adds warmth & texture.
- Luxurious quartz countertops offer a combination of timeless elegance and durability.



Guest Bedrooms & Primary Bedroom Features

- The original tongue and groove woodwork that existed behind the sheetrock was thoughtfully maintained to pay homage to the farmhouse.
- New beadboard ceilings were added to the bedroom ceilings to maintain the character of the original beadboard ceiling.
- Original painted wood flooring was stripped and repainted to maintain the original charm that brings warmth and richness to the space, grounding the design and adding a cozy natural element.
- Existing casing and baseboard were preserved to keep the original charm of a trim used in yesteryears. New casing & baseboard were custom made to blend in with the old.
- Door knobs were re-used and sourced vintage knobs to coordinate with the existing door knobs.



Guest Bedrooms



Primary Bedroom



Bathroom Features

Primary Bathroom

- Warm pebble tile, blends natural warmth with sleek, modern style.
- Champagne bronze hardware add striking contrast to the clean white quartz countertop.
- A free-standing tub offer soothing vibes for a spa-like atmosphere..
- The combo of subway and herringbone tile pair well with champagne bronze metal fixtures to turn the shower into a modern showstopper.



Upstairs Guest Bathroom

- Warm white walls paired with beadboard, create a dramatic contrast, elevated by stainless accents.
- Undulated subway tile paired with square zellige & warm pebble tile.



Main Floor Bathroom

- Vertical spa blue accent tile paired with a warm undulated subway shower tile & large hex floor tile.
- O entry Shower
- Built In Linen storage next to the vanity.
- It offers privacy and easy access on the main floor so guests don't have to enter other areas of the home.

Dining Area and Living Room Features

Dining Area

- The dining room was relocated to create a seamless flow between spaces, offering a more formal area for hosting guests.
- A large dining table sits at the center, framed by elegant lighting that adds warmth and sophistication to the space.
- Open sightlines between the dining, kitchen, and living room make entertaining effortless and cohesive.



Living Room & Sunroom Family Room

- Traditional compartmentalized spaces provide multiple areas to entertain & with the addition of pocket doors between the dining & living room, builds in privacy.
- The living room features an inviting seating area, perfect for both casual relaxation and entertaining.
- Large windows flood the sunroom with natural light, highlighting the open, airy atmosphere.
- Clean lines and minimalist design choices create a modern yet timeless aesthetic in both the dining and living rooms, paying homage to the architecture.



Overall



Overall

- The design of the Belle Creek Beauty Farmhouse required careful consideration to preserve its architectural integrity, presenting a challenge in balancing historical accuracy with contemporary needs.
- The Farmhouse needed to be pulled off its foundation to rebuild this home to the standards that a passive home needed.
- The existing layout with the additions had to be extensively reworked, including relocating walls and reconfiguring room placements, which complicated the planning and execution process.
- The Farmhouse project is the first single family retrofit project in the state of MN to achieve Passive House Certification.
- The extensive updates and structural changes required careful coordination with various trades to ensure that each phase of the project was executed smoothly and on schedule.