



NARI MN 2026 ROTY AWARDS

Project: Recrafted Heritage

Category: Residential Historical Renovation/Restoration Under \$250K

HONOR THE HISTORY

After standing for more than a century, this 1915 St. Paul home was ready for its next chapter. The homeowners wanted to preserve the character that had drawn them to the home while thoughtfully updating the main level to better support the way they live today. Their goal was not to reinvent the house, but to restore its sense of continuity by improving flow, increasing natural light, and creating spaces that felt authentic to its history.

It was important that the kitchen, adjoining dining room, powder room and back entry function together.

Throughout the project, historically appropriate decisions guided each design choice, from preserving original millwork and the dining room swinging door to returning the two-wide double-hung kitchen window to its original location.

Equally important was creating a home that could adapt to daily life. Flexible gathering spaces, improved circulation, integrated storage, and thoughtful updates to the powder room and back entry were designed to make the home more comfortable and functional without compromising its historic integrity.

Every decision reflects the homeowners' vision of preserving the past while preparing the home for its next century.

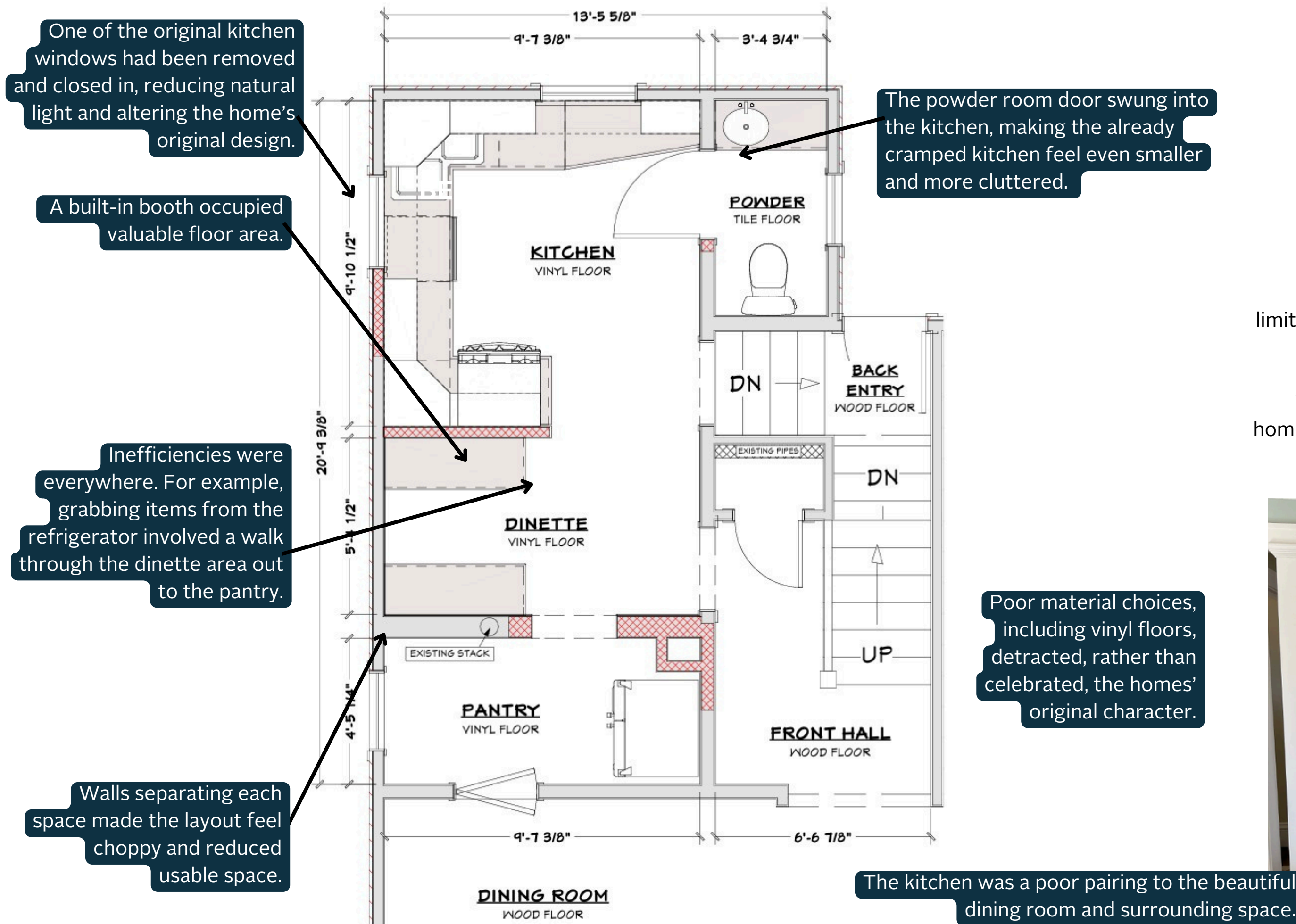


WHAT WASN'T WORKING IN THEIR EXISTING HOME

BEFORE FLOOR PLAN

The original main level reflected years of previous alterations that had gradually changed both the home's historic character and the way the spaces were lived in. The kitchen no longer served as the heart of the home, with an unconventional layout, limited natural light, and disconnected work areas that made everyday living less than ideal.

Together, these conditions concealed much of the home's original character and limited how comfortably the main level could support modern living.



EXISTING ADJACENT DINING ROOM

CLIENT WISHES

CELEBRATING HISTORY & MODERN CONVENIENCES

Their goal was not to reinvent the house, but to restore its sense of continuity by improving flow, increasing natural light, and creating spaces that felt authentic to its history.

Remodeled in stages, the overall design was lackluster. They wished for a design that celebrated, rather than erased, the home's historic character.



Before

Built before mudrooms were common, the homeowners wanted an integrated area for jackets, shoes, and more.



Before

Typical to homes of this age, storage was limited as was space for their desired modern day appliances.



Before

The homeowners prioritized a brighter kitchen and home maximizing natural light.

To open up the space for entertaining, cooking and everyday life, they wanted the underused dinette removed.



Before

CHALLENGES ADDRESSED

AFTER FLOOR PLAN

The renovation presented a series of challenges typical of a century-old home, where previous changes had compromised both the home's historic character and the way the main level functioned.

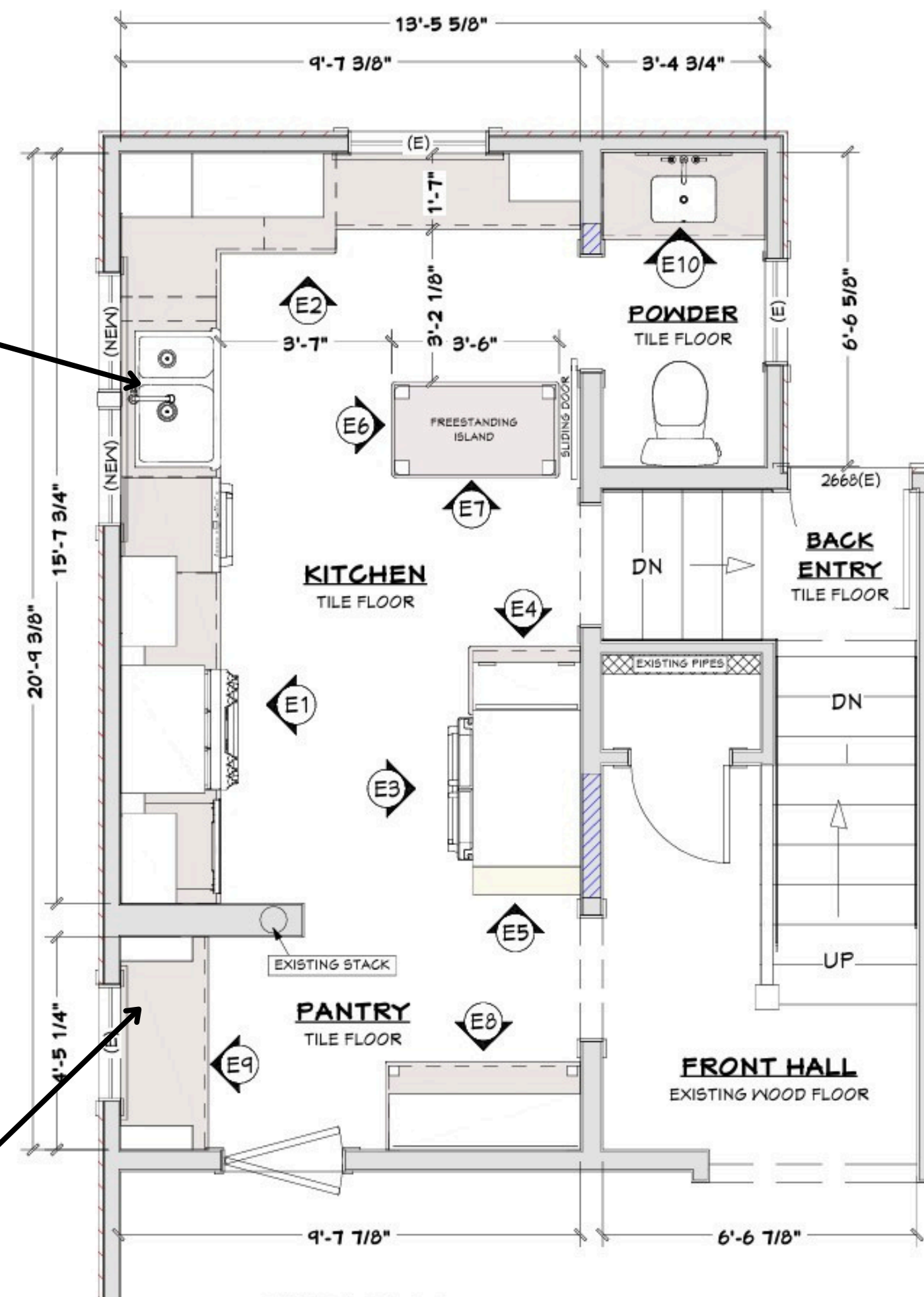
The redesigned plan brings greater purpose and connection to the kitchen, dining area, powder room, and back entry, improving circulation and everyday function while working thoughtfully within the home's existing structure.



The original kitchen window had been relocated during an earlier renovation, diminishing natural light and altering the room's original composition. Returning a two-wide double-hung window to its original opening above the farmhouse sink required careful coordination, restoring natural light and the kitchen's architectural balance.

Asbestos, uneven floors, and aging construction required careful remediation, floor leveling, and structural coordination to create a solid foundation for the renovation.

The upper-level plumbing stack could not be relocated, so the existing wall was incorporated into the design as the anchor for a narrow serving counter connecting the kitchen and dining room.



Finding materials that felt authentic to the home's era while meeting modern needs for function and durability presented a challenge. Carefully selected, historically inspired materials and details preserve the home's character while delivering modern performance.

FUNCTIONALITY UPGRADES

MADE FOR LIVING

The renovation reshapes the experience of the main level by making each space work more intuitively while respecting the home's historic character.

The kitchen once again serves as the center of daily life, with improved organization, greater flexibility, and stronger connections to the adjoining dining area.

Thoughtful planning extends those improvements beyond the kitchen, where a reconfigured powder room and more functional back entry support everyday routines without expanding the home's footprint.

Together, these carefully considered updates create a main level that feels more comfortable, adaptable, and naturally suited to the way the homeowners live.

Continuous cabinetry maximizes storage while maintaining clear circulation throughout the kitchen.

Replacing the bulky radiator beneath the existing kitchen window with a toe-kick heater frees valuable space for shallow pantry storage.

The mobile floating table adapts throughout the day as a prep station, buffet, bar, or table for two.

A sliding barn door to the powder room eliminates the interference of a traditional swing door, while inside, a deeper vanity maximizes the existing footprint without expanding the room.

Improvements to the back entry create a more organized transition between the outdoors and the heart of the home.



FUNCTIONALITY
UPGRADES (CONT.)

Shifting the wall and doorway allowed the refrigerator to return to the kitchen as part of a continuous wall of much needed integrated storage.



Before



Removing the bulky built-in booth opened the center of the kitchen, creating greater flexibility for cooking, gathering, and entertaining.

Thoughtful space planning improves circulation while strengthening the connection between the kitchen and adjoining spaces.

CRAFTSMANSHIP & INNOVATION

MASTERFUL DETAILS

The success of the renovation lies in the balance between craftsmanship and innovation. Rather than replacing historic character, each decision builds upon the home’s character through careful planning, precise execution, and thoughtful detailing. Innovative design solutions resolve long-standing issues within the existing structure, while skilled craftsmanship preserves the architectural integrity of the 1915 home.

CRAFTSMANSHIP:

Wainscoting added to one side of the back entry was crafted to match the home's existing detailing, creating a seamless transition between original and new.

Before



INNOVATION:

A strategic shift in the wall and doorway brings the refrigerator back into the kitchen while creating a continuous, multifunctional wall of integrated storage.

CRAFTSMANSHIP:

Historically inspired details—including the backsplash, wood cabinet with corbels, and built-in serving buffet—feel authentic to the home’s 1915 character.



INNOVATION:

An immovable plumbing stack became the foundation for a narrow serving counter that sits just outside the dining room, transforming a structural constraint into a functional design feature.

AESTHETICS &
DESIGN DETAILS

TIMELESS CHARACTER

The renovation honors the character of the home with a balance of historic inspiration and timeless design. Rather than introducing unnecessary contrast, each new element builds upon the home's existing architecture with carefully selected materials, and traditional craftsmanship.

Across the main level, period-appropriate finishes create a blended approach that allows the renovated spaces to feel at home within the original structure. A restrained palette of smoky blue cabinetry in the kitchen, rich wood, dimensional neutral floor tile, and historical detailing creates a warmth and visual depth. and carry through the home.



Before



Returning to a two-wide double-hung window unit, after one of the windows had been closed off over time, returns natural light to the kitchen and allows the sink to move out of the corner, centering naturally beneath the windows.

A spice rack provides easy access for everyday cooking necessities.

Rich wood at the hood, a historically inspired backsplash, and period-appropriate detailing create a work zone that feels authentic to the home's era.

Ample storage and updated cooking appliances add much-needed modern function.

AESTHETICS & DESIGN
DETAILS (CONT.)



Dimensional neutral floor tile balances smoky blue cabinetry, creating a timeless palette inspired by the home's original character.



Whimsical, nature-inspired wallpaper pairs with a period-appropriate vanity, creating a powder room that feels playful while remaining true to the home's historic character.



Updates to the back entry carry the kitchen's patterned floor tile and traditional wainscoting into a welcoming transition that completes the main level.



Fragments of original wallpaper discovered during demolition confirmed the direction of the design palette and period-appropriate detailing.