

NARI MINNESOTA - 2026 RotY AWARDS

PROJECT: FOUNDRY CATEGORY: RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR \$250,000 TO \$500,000



Client Objectives

a home in step with life

After nearly 17 years, the home they built for a growing family had become dated and out of step with who they were. Inspired by the Artisan Home Tour and the look of new high-end builds, including white oak, stone, statement fireplaces, and interiors current in every detail, they were ready to transform all 1,361 square feet of their main floor. With children still at home, the project unfolded in two phases, completed in 2025 and 2026.

Their objectives included:

- Modernize the main floor aesthetic while keeping the home functional throughout
- Replace a traditional fireplace and surround with a grand, contemporary statement
- Update built-ins and cabinetry to stained Rift white oak
- Open up the dining room by removing soffits and columns
- Redesign the powder bath as a bold, moody statement space
- Replace the staircase railing with custom ironwork to match the new aesthetic
- Design the kitchen during Phase 1 so every selection would integrate seamlessly when Phase 2 began
- Create a custom office with white oak desk and built-ins



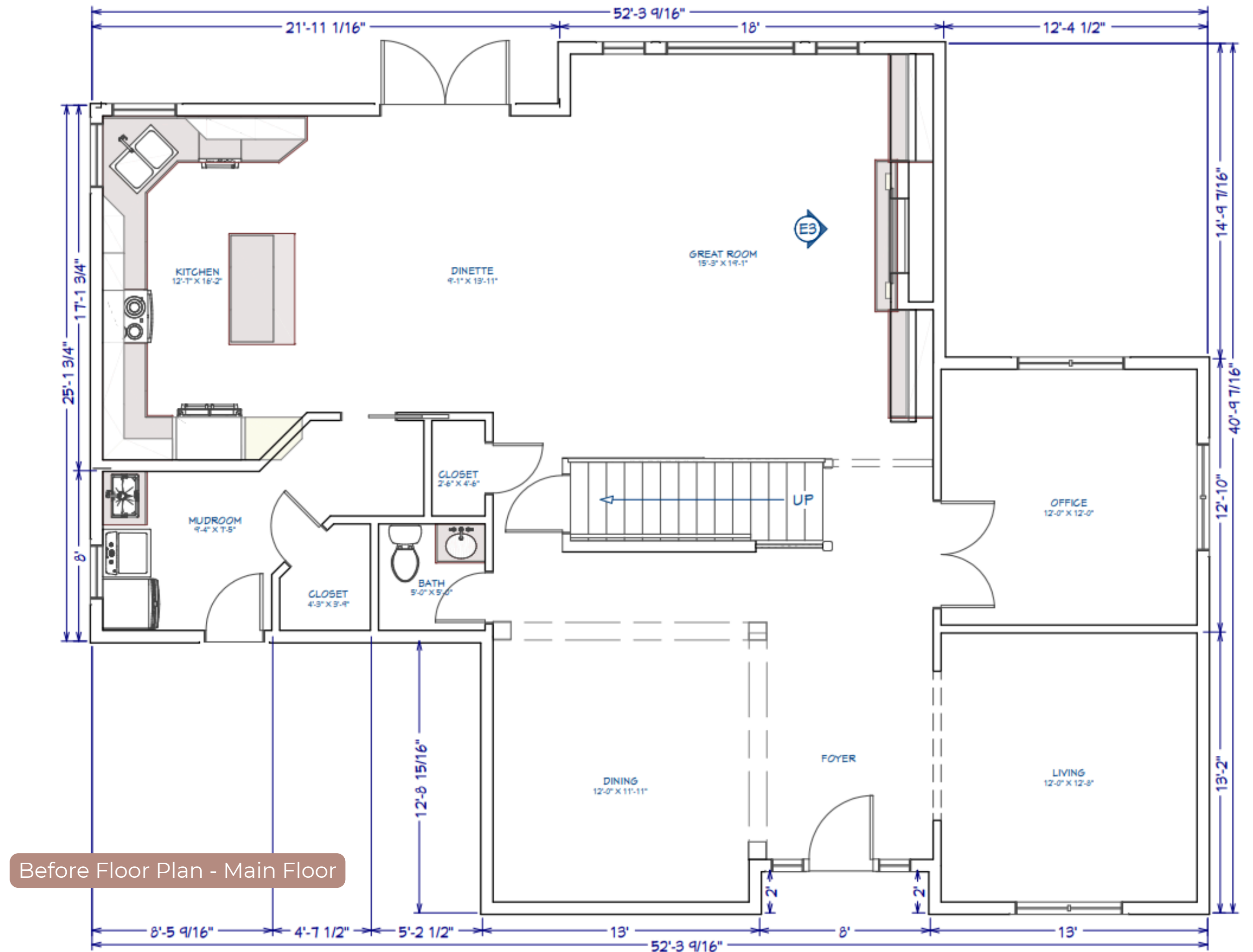
Client Frustrations

before floor plan

The home served its purpose well for years — spacious enough for a family of seven, but its traditional finishes and compartmentalized layout had become mismatched with the homeowners' evolving taste. Every room felt dated, and nothing connected visually from one space to the next.

What wasn't working:

- Overall dated aesthetic
- Traditional fireplace surround and mantle felt out of scale in an 18-foot great room
- Dining room soffits and columns created unnecessary division in an otherwise open plan
- Fireplace built-ins were functional but visually outdated
- Staircase railing no longer matched the aesthetic direction of the home
- Powder bath had no personality or presence
- Kitchen and office were overdue for a complete overhaul
- The fridge/corner cabinets were a pinch point
- No cohesive design thread connecting spaces across the main floor



Client Requests

after floor plan

PHASE ONE

The homeowners had a clear direction and a specific constraint: Update the main floor in such a manner that the family would not be left without a functioning home. Phase 1 which included the great room, powder bath, dining, entry and piano room, had to stand on its own and set up everything that would come in Phase 2 which included the kitchen and office.

A cohesive, contemporary design inspired by their research. It was imperative that the elements flowed from room to room, including the kitchen which would be completed later in a second phase.

Removal of soffits and columns to create a more open room with flexible, unobstructed dining space.

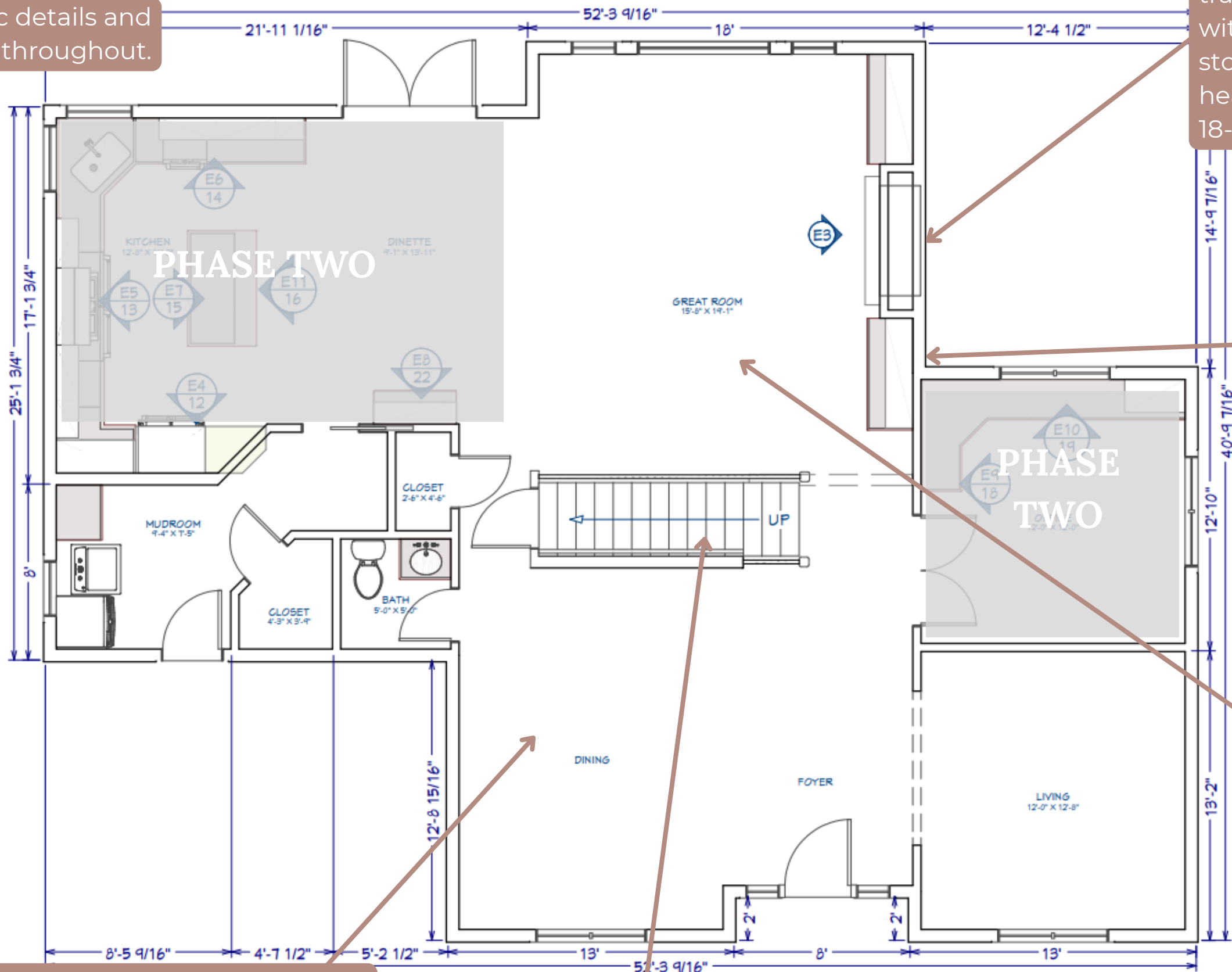
Update staircase railing according to a specific, more modern look they had in mind.

Dramatic details and lighting throughout.

Replace the traditional fireplace with a dramatic stone surround and hearth scaled to the 18-foot great room.

Update built-ins to match desired aesthetic

With kids at home who liked to sit on the floor, carpet in the great room was a must. They also wanted the carpet to run up the stairs.



Client Requests

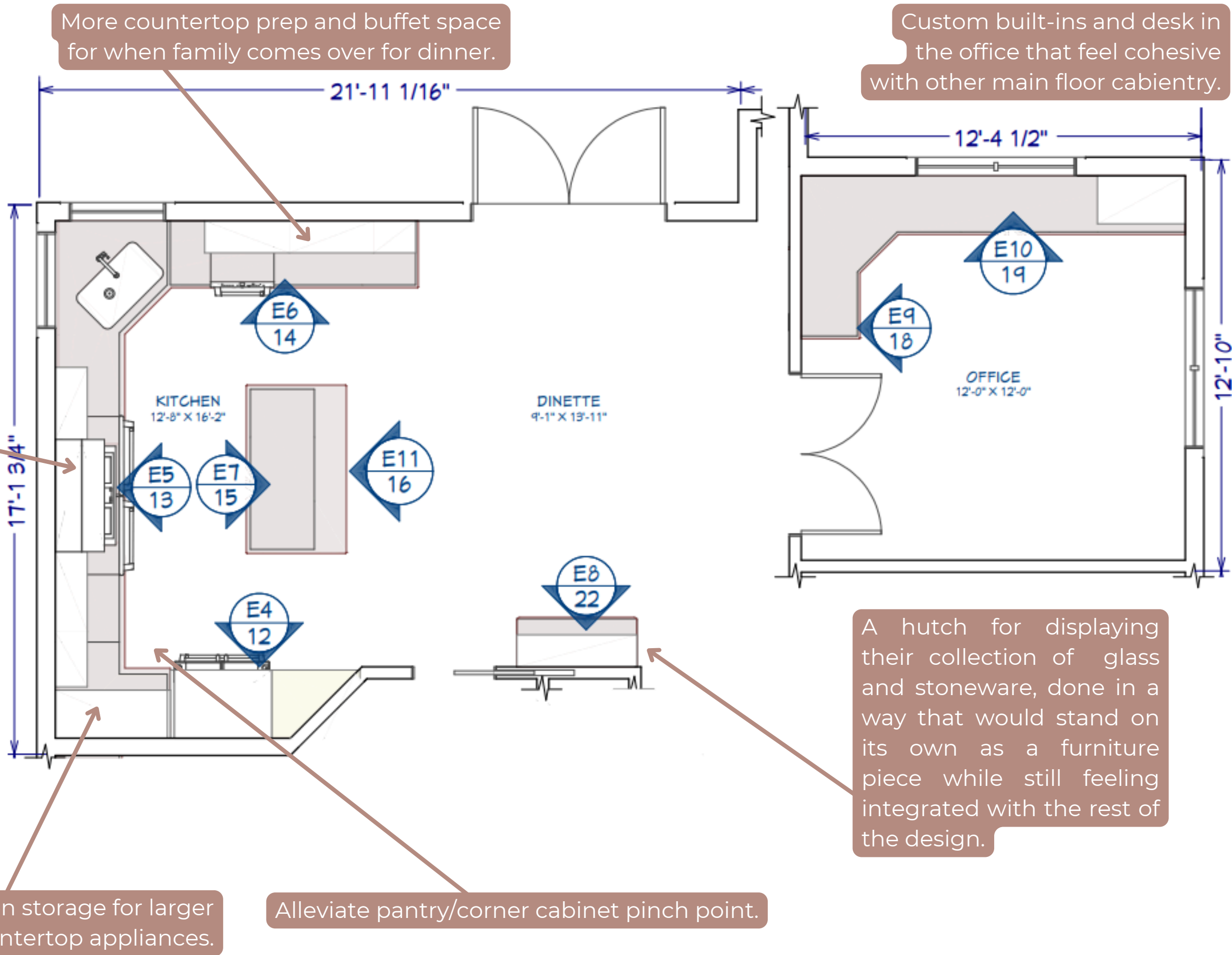
after floor plan

PHASE TWO - KITCHEN & OFFICE

Phase two, which included renovating the kitchen and the office, was completed about a year later. This phased approach was key to ensuring livability in the home for this busy family throughout the entire renovation. With a majority of the design decisions already settled, this phase was all about putting the final puzzle piece of this cohesive main level transformation into place.



Before



Challenges Addressed

Two phases, one cohesive vision

The greatest challenge wasn't a single technical problem, it was designing a two-phase remodel as one whole while keeping the family's home functional throughout.



Phased Design Without Compromise

All kitchen selections were finalized during Phase 1, before a wall was touched in the kitchen, requiring two projects to be designed simultaneously with a gap of a year or more between them.



Recapturing Space To Alleviate Pinch Point

By recessing the fridge and utilizing updated cabinetry construction, we gained valuable inches, helping alleviate the pinch point created by the existing fridge and corner cabinets.



Second Oven, No Wall Space

Homeowners requested a second oven but did not want to give up wall or countertop space. To solve the issue we placed two ovens under a centered cooktop, requiring careful coordination with appliance placement, electrical and cabinet construction.

Challenges Addressed

Two phases, one cohesive vision



The Fireplace Wall

An 18-foot ceiling and a soffit that had to remain created a narrow margin for error; the stone had to land inside the soffit exactly. The entire fireplace bump-out was reframed to make it work.



Custom Iron Railing

No vendor carried a railing system that matched the project's direction. A local ironwork vendor was commissioned to custom-fabricate panels to fit each section of the staircase precisely.



Great Room Chandelier

Dramatic lighting was a must. Multiple glass globes had to be hung at individually calibrated heights to read as effortlessly random from every angle, a complex install requiring close coordination across design, electrical, and construction.

Functionality

equal parts brain & beauty

With children still at home and a full family schedule, every space had to work harder. These weren't cosmetic updates — each room was rethought around how the family actually lives in it.

GREAT ROOM

Carpet was kept intentionally, with a large family that gathers on the floor, hardwood wasn't the right choice. The room functions better now while still meeting the family's everyday needs.



DINING ROOM

Soffits and columns removed to create an open, flexible space that works for a family dinner and a gathering of twenty.



Before



Functionality

equal parts brain & beauty



KITCHEN

Two ovens placed under the requested cooktop give the family the cooking capacity they needed without sacrificing counter or wall space.



KITCHEN

Cabinets extended toward the patio door to create more buffet and prep surface for large family meals.

Functionality

equal parts brain & beauty

KITCHEN

A requested custom designed hutch displays unique glass and stoneware.



Before

KITCHEN

Cabinets extend to the ceiling adding additional storage



KITCHEN

The microwave and coffee maker stay tucked behind a garage-door cabinet in the kitchen corner, accessible daily, invisible when company arrives.



Craftsmanship & Innovation

where detail becomes design

This project demanded precision at every scale, from a fireplace wall planned to the inch, to a chandelier hung globe by globe. The craftsmanship shows in the details; the innovation shows in the decisions that made two phases feel like one.



CRAFTSMANSHIP

Custom Iron Railing

A local ironwork vendor fabricated the panels to fit each staircase section precisely, paired with white oak top rail and newel posts.



CRAFTSMANSHIP

Plaster Hood

A local artisan developed a custom color and texture specifically for this kitchen, applied by hand and one-of-a-kind

CRAFTSMANSHIP

Fireplace Bump-Out Reframe

The entire fireplace wall was reframed to exact tolerances so the stonework would land cleanly inside the soffit — no overlap, no gap.

CRAFTSMANSHIP

Great Room Chandelier

Each glass globe was positioned at an individually calibrated height to create a composition that reads as effortlessly random from every angle.



Craftsmanship & Innovation

where detail becomes design

INNOVATION

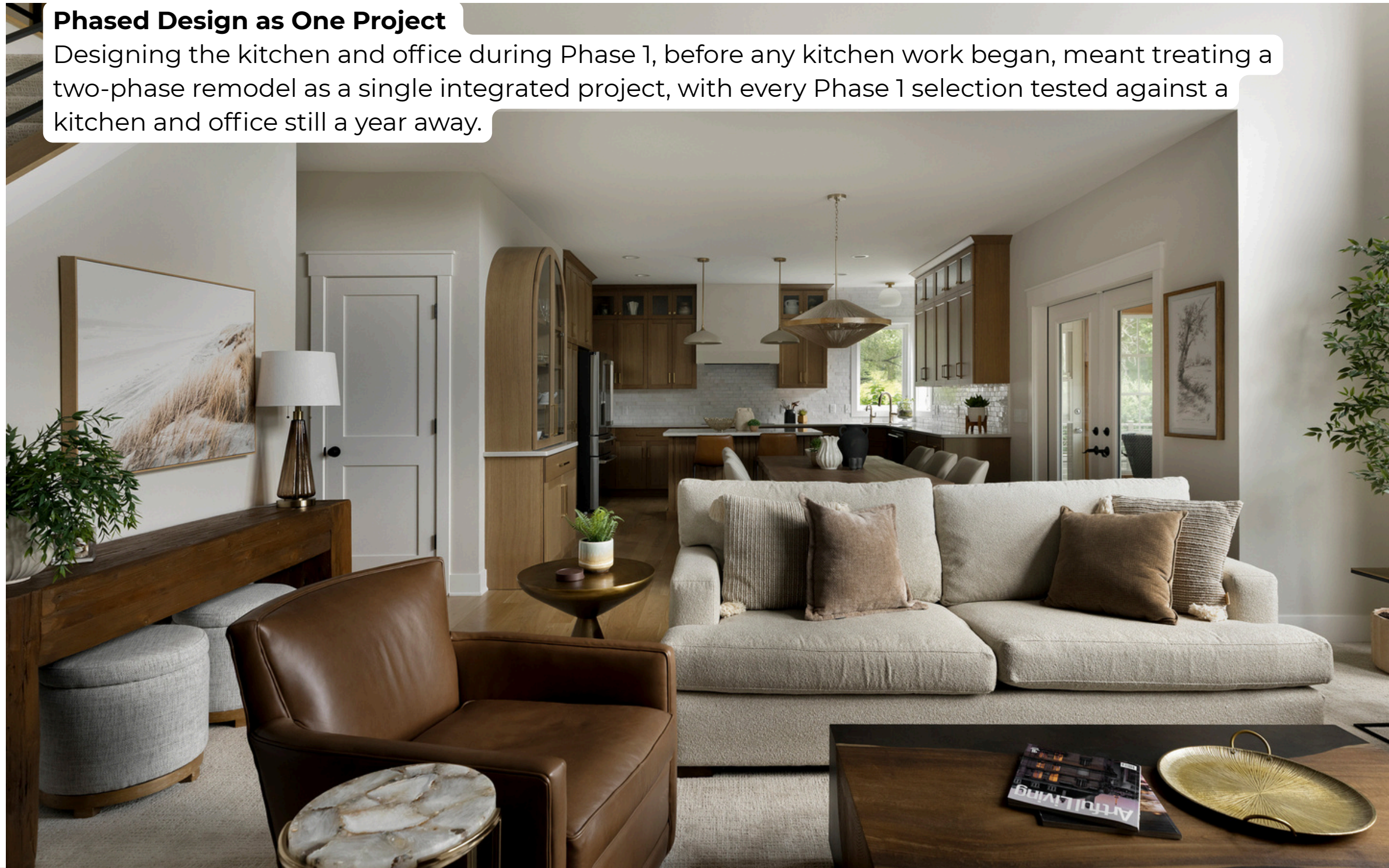
Phased Design as One Project

Designing the kitchen and office during Phase 1, before any kitchen work began, meant treating a two-phase remodel as a single integrated project, with every Phase 1 selection tested against a kitchen and office still a year away.

INNOVATION

Tambour Wall as Connective Detail

Introduced in the dining room, the Tambour wall detail recurs in the piano room and kitchen island, the visual thread that ties unrelated rooms into a cohesive whole.



Aesthetics

modern twist to an established home

The homeowners wanted what they'd seen on the Artisan Home Tour: white oak, clean lines, warm neutrals, and spaces that felt curated without feeling cold. Every update speaks the same visual language, a consistency that only deepened when the kitchen arrived in Phase 2

AESTHETICS

Rift white oak in a Sandalwood stain runs through the built-ins, cabinetry, staircase, kitchen, and office — the material through-line of the entire project.

Before

AESTHETICS

Stone in three blended tones, Fondulac Buff, Oakfield MC, and Harbor Blue Ledge, rises to the soffit, flanked by white oak built-ins and anchored by a smooth Indiana Limestone hearth.

AESTHETICS

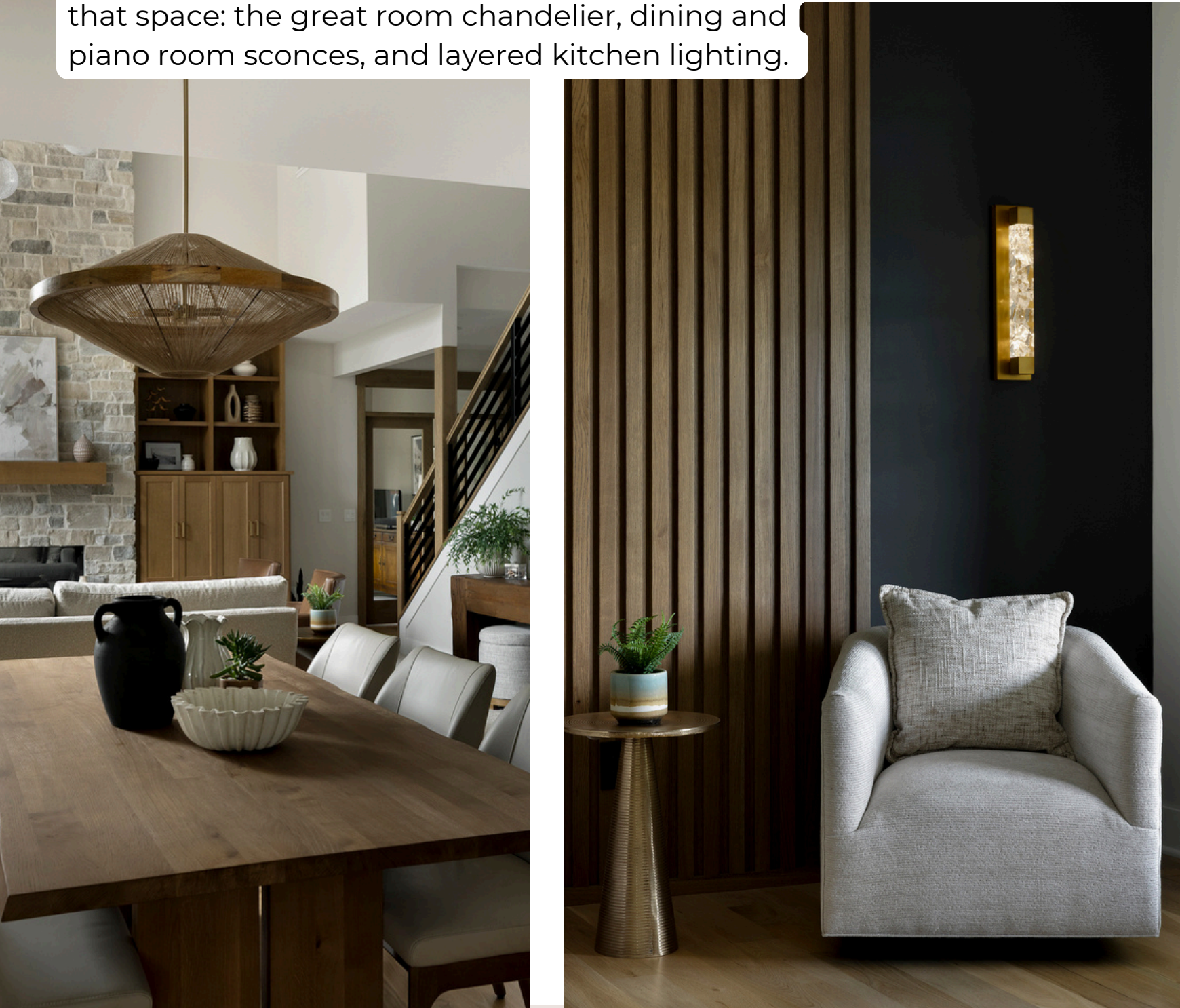
Sherwin-Williams City Loft, not too gray, not too warm, gives every space a backdrop that lets the materials and millwork read clearly.

Aesthetics

modern twist to an established home

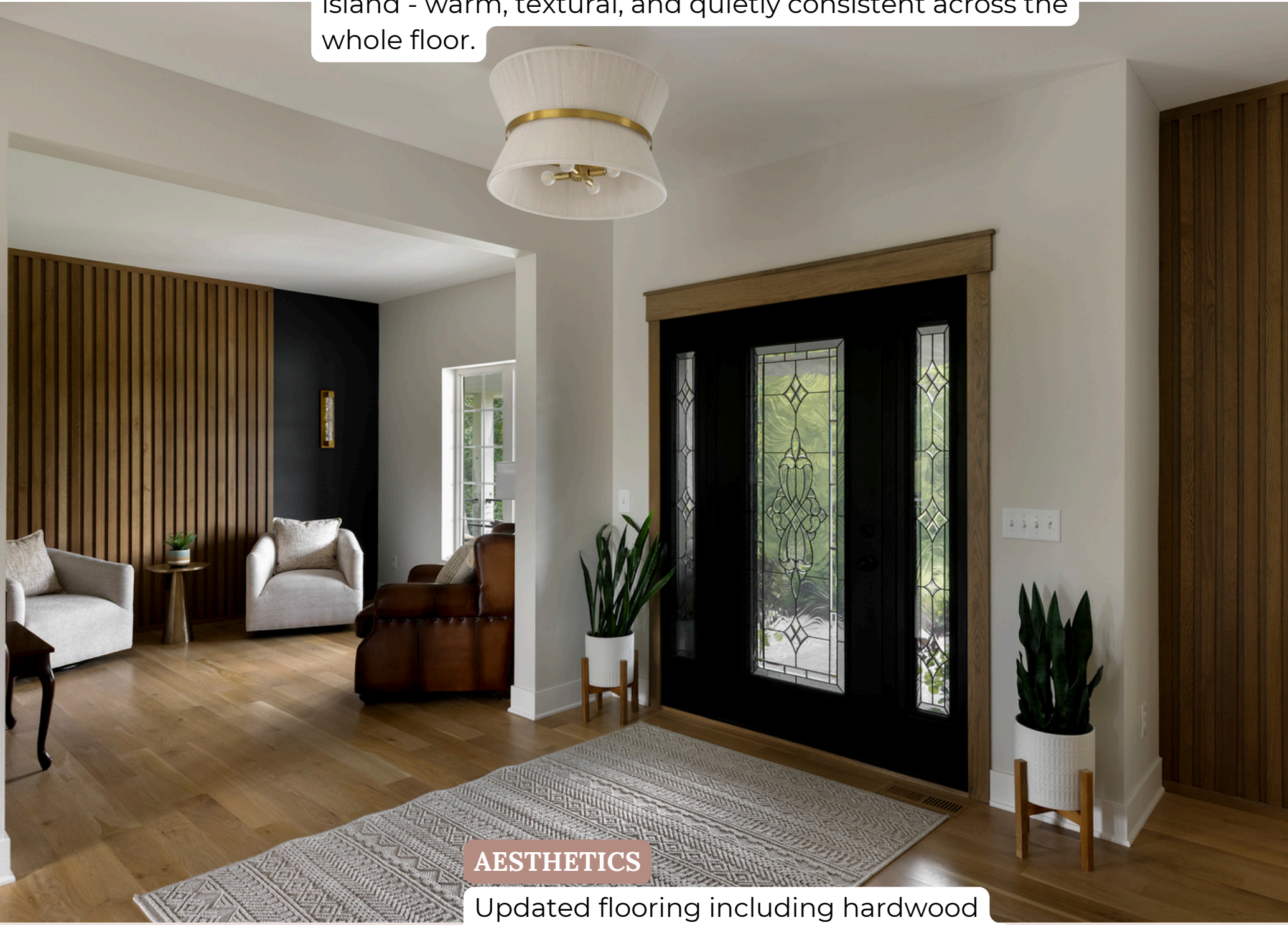
AESTHETICS

Each room received a fixture chosen specifically for that space: the great room chandelier, dining and piano room sconces, and layered kitchen lighting.



AESTHETICS

Stained to match the cabinetry, oak Tambour detail makes its appearance in the dining room, piano room and kitchen island - warm, textural, and quietly consistent across the whole floor.



AESTHETICS

Updated flooring including hardwood white oak floors in the main living areas and carpet in the guest suite.

Aesthetics

modern twist to an established home



AESTHETICS

Custom matte black iron panels, white oak top rail and newel posts, and new carpet — visible from multiple floors and designed to hold up at every angle.



AESTHETICS

Full-height Travola porcelain tiles, Benjamin Moore Gravel Gray paint, a reeded vanity in BM Pashmina, and Taj Mahal quartzite. This is a small room that makes a big impression.



AESTHETICS

White oak to the ceiling with glass upper doors, a hand-textured plaster hood, Beethoven quartz, Cle Tile Zellige Sea Salt backsplash, Brizo Kintsu in Luxe Gold, and a custom arched hutch. Every selection made during Phase 1, executed exactly as designed.