

RESIDENTIAL
basement ^{under}100K



Introducing, the living gallery



This lower-level renovation transformed a visually compressed, underutilized basement into a polished extension of the home. The design established a cohesive environment through custom millwork, layered lighting, sculptural forms.

Art became a defining influence, shaping the gallery rails, directional lighting, built-ins, and display niches. Warm materials, subtle texture, and curved details gave the space a more collected character.

The result is *The Living Gallery*—a lower level where architecture, craftsmanship, and personal collections come together in a space that feels both functional and expressive.

The homeowners have a strong appreciation for art, collected objects, and creative pursuits, and wanted this space to reflect those interests as a place where treasured pieces, hobbies, and everyday life could naturally coexist.

Their openness to unconventional ideas and highly customized solutions gave the design team freedom to explore distinctive forms, hidden features, and thoughtful architectural details. That collaboration helped create a finished space that feels personal, intentional, and uniquely suited to them.

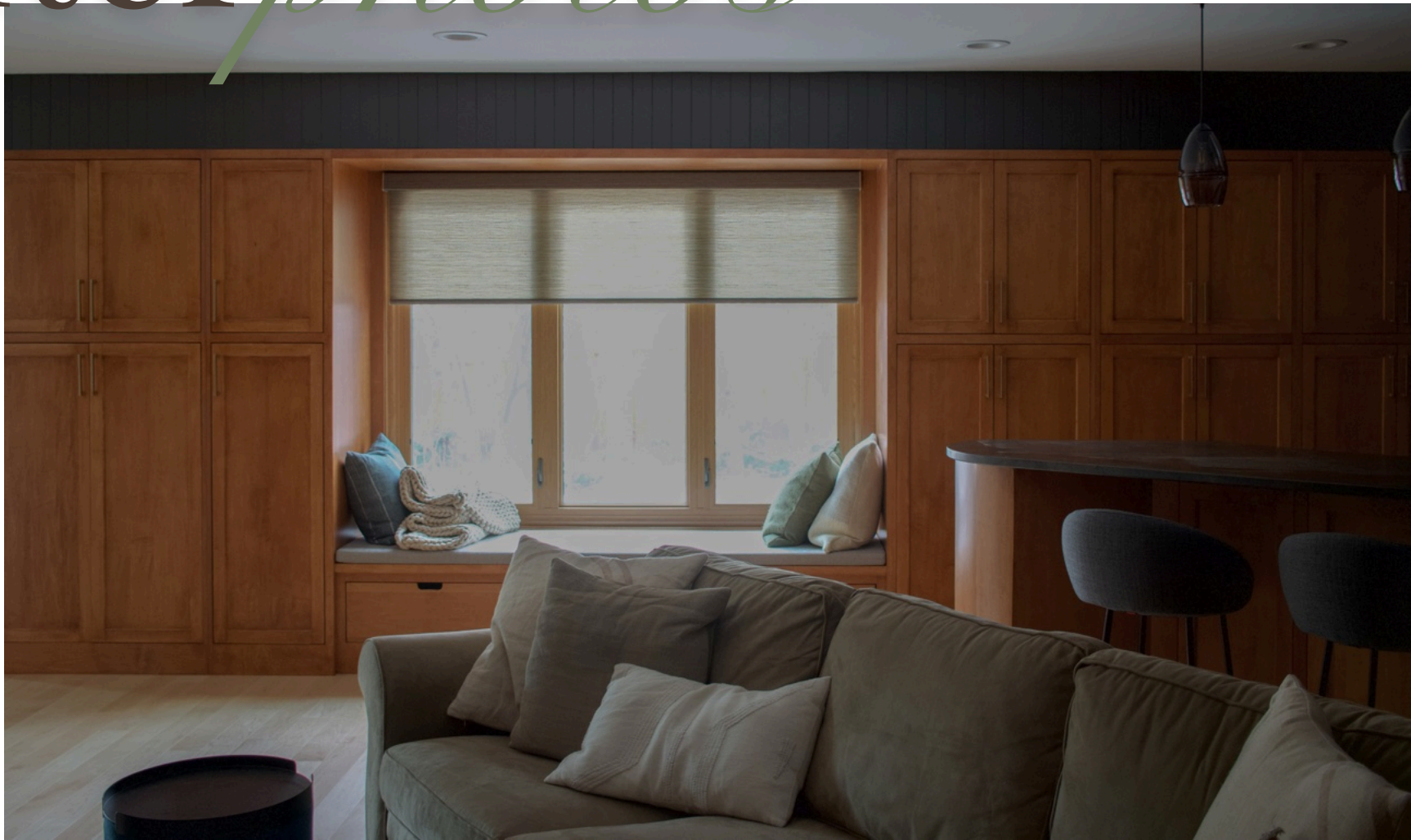
before photos

3



after *photos*

4





bringing a concept to creation is at our core

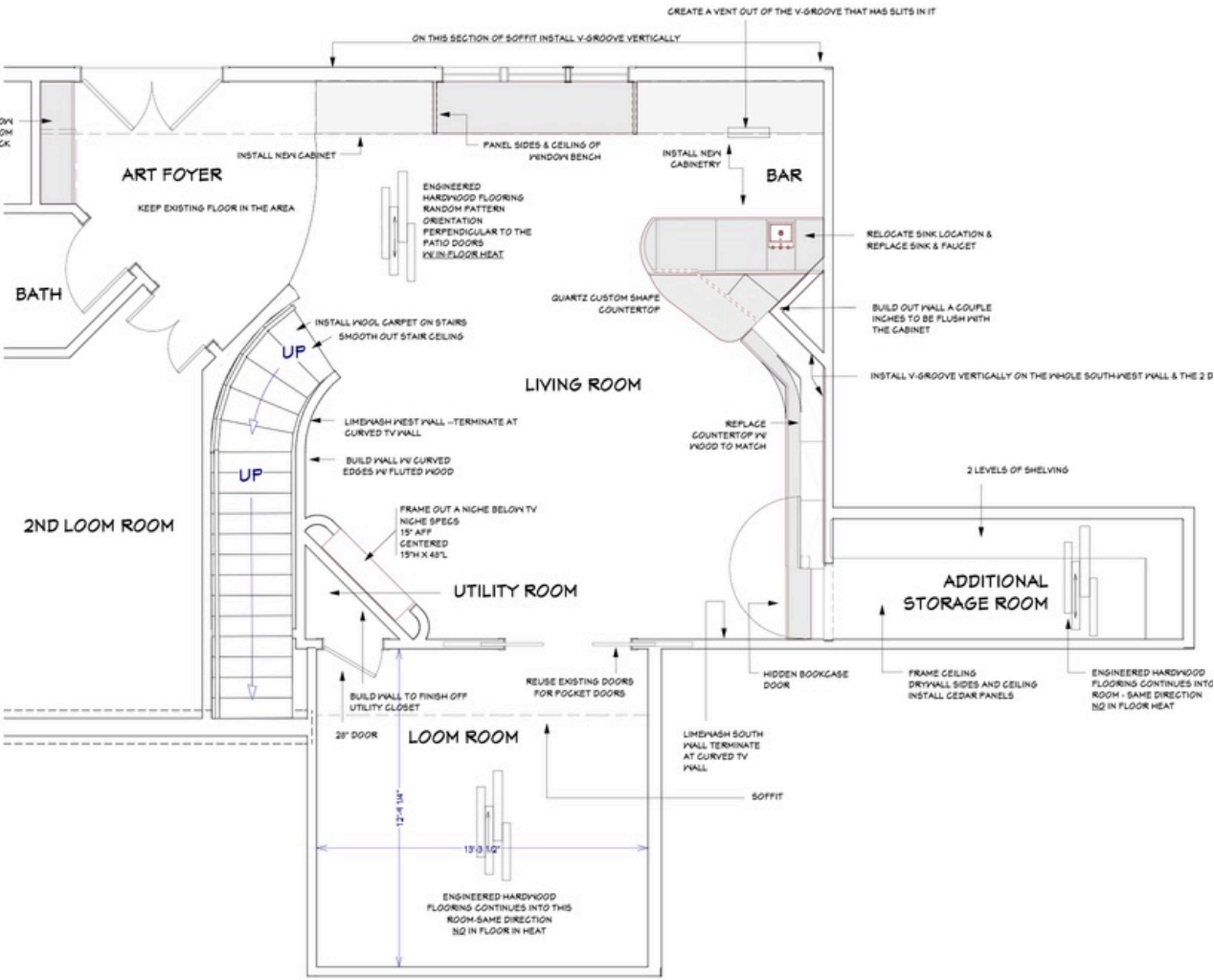


Client Asks:

- basement refresh
- dedicated loom room
- dedicated gallery areas
- ample lighting
- storage
- open bar

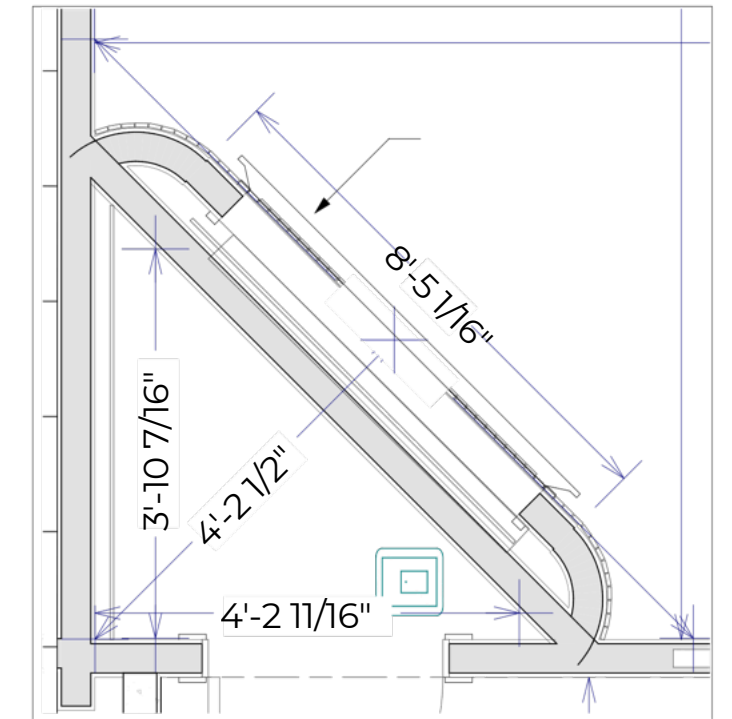
- **Complete Basement Transformation:** Reimagined a dated, basement-like lower level into a polished extension of the home by removing the bulkhead and refining the overall space.
- **Dedicated Loom Room:** Created a flexible creative space with a pocket door, new flooring, recessed lighting, paint, and expanded storage.
- **Curated Gallery Space:** Added gallery rails and focused display areas to showcase artwork throughout the basement.
- **Layered Lighting Plan:** Combined gallery, recessed, pendant, decorative, and niche lighting to support both task and ambient needs.
- **Custom Built-In Storage:** Added full-length cabinetry with specialty hardware to maximize storage while maintaining a clean architectural appearance.
- **Open Bar Integration:** Opened the bar to the surrounding space to improve entertaining, circulation, and visual connection.
- **Secret Room:** Integrated a concealed mechanical bookcase door leading to cedar-lined storage, combining function with an unexpected design feature. **(a bonus deliverable!)**

PROPOSED PLAN

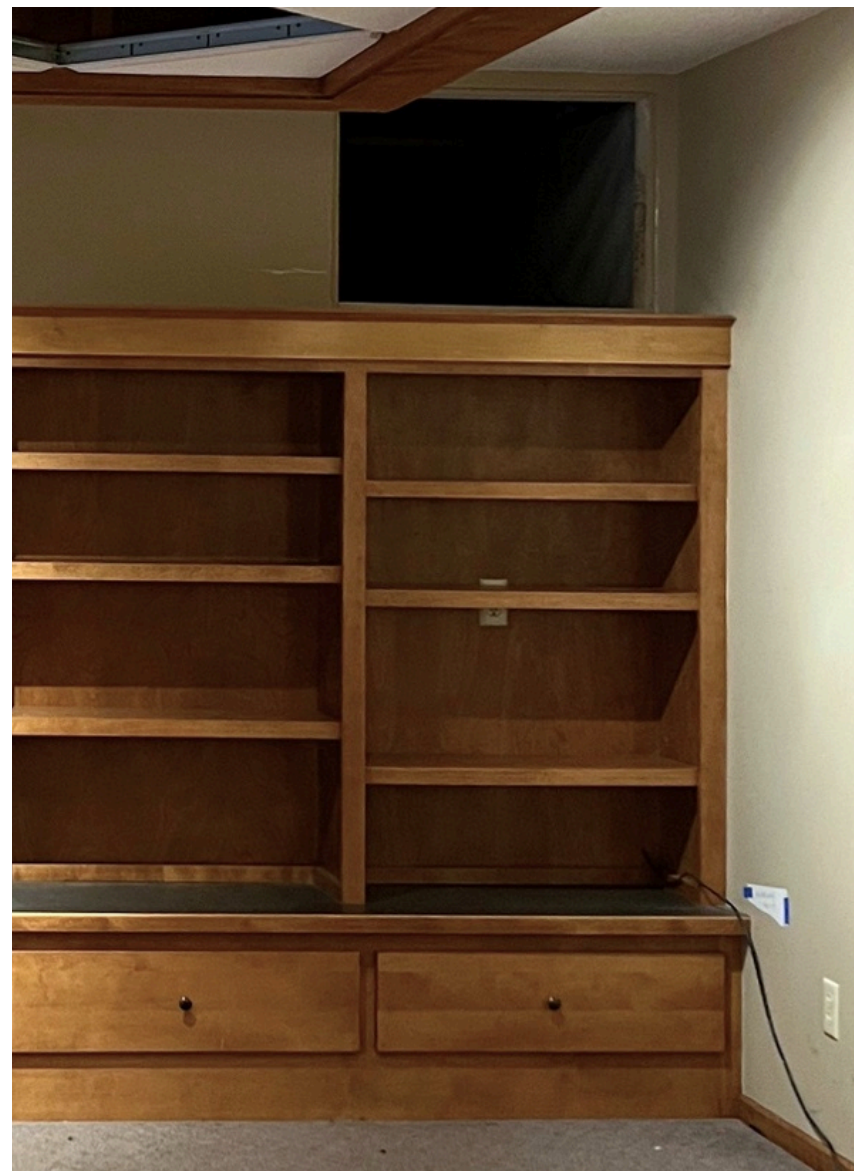
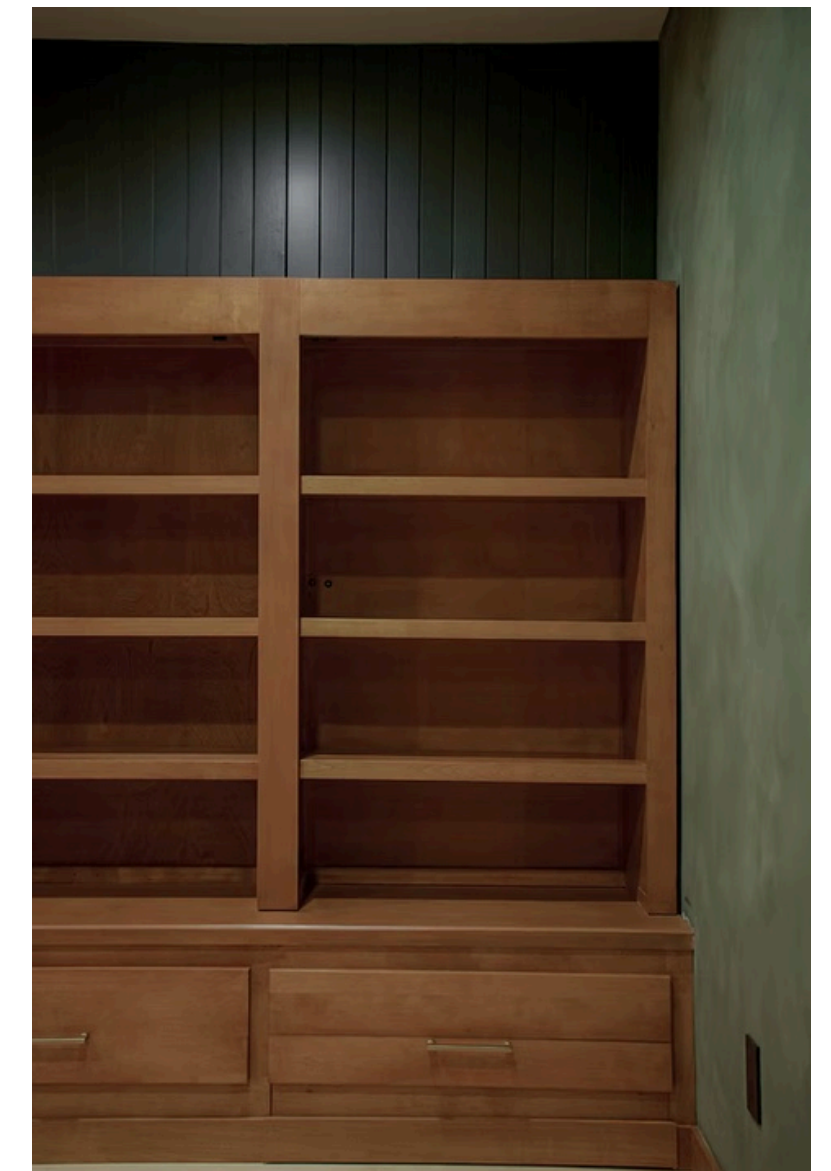


The entertainment center was designed as a focal point that brings together texture, warmth, natural elements, and softness. Thoughtful *craftsmanship* is reflected in the curved detailing and carefully finished forms, which soften the built-in and give it a more custom, sculptural quality.

The illuminated niche below showcases the family's treasured artifacts with an opportunity to be replaced by a fireplace. *Innovative thinking* was used to maximize the depth of the feature, transforming the otherwise unused space behind it into a concealed storage closet accessible from the loom room.

*existing**rendering**finished*

The team identified an opportunity to reclaim underutilized square footage and transform it into a purposeful hidden room that unexpectedly addressed the clients' desire for functional storage. Rather than remove the existing built-in bookcase, it was *reimagined* as the concealed entrance, *preserving* the visual continuity of the cabinetry while introducing a highly customized architectural feature.

*existing**in progress**rendering**finished*

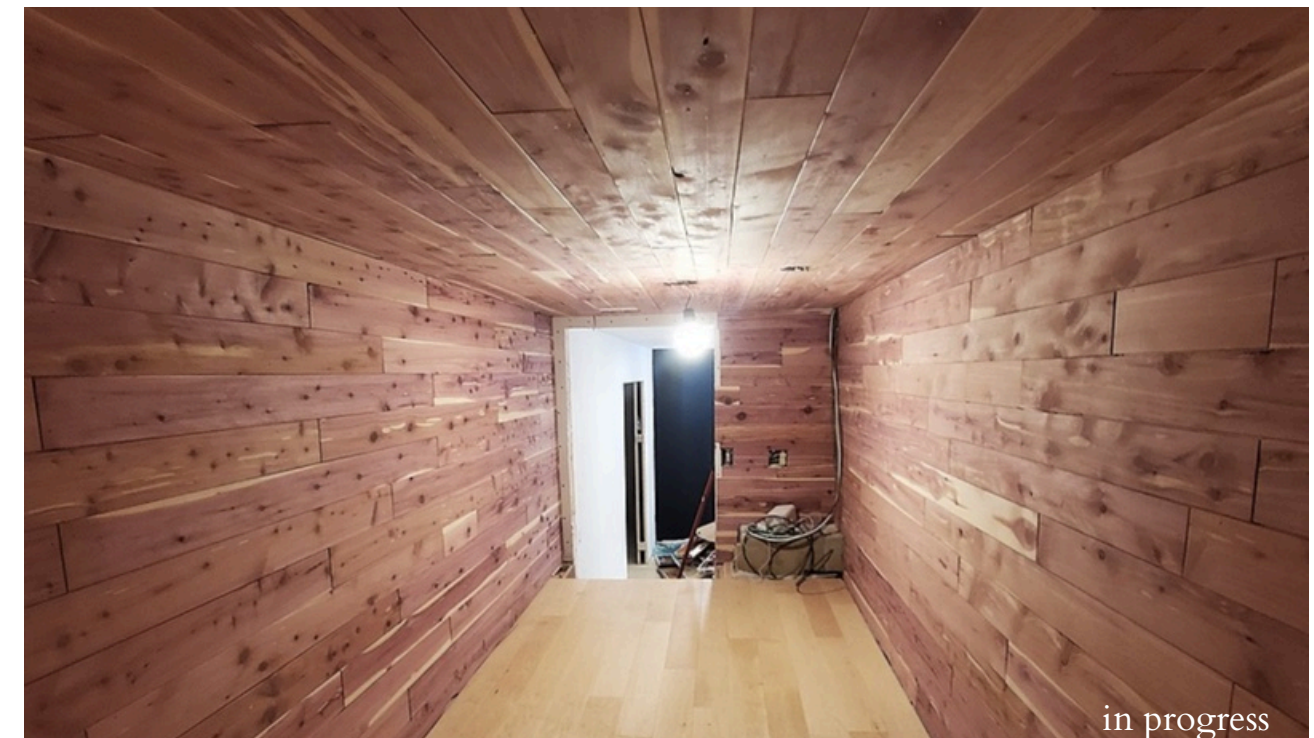
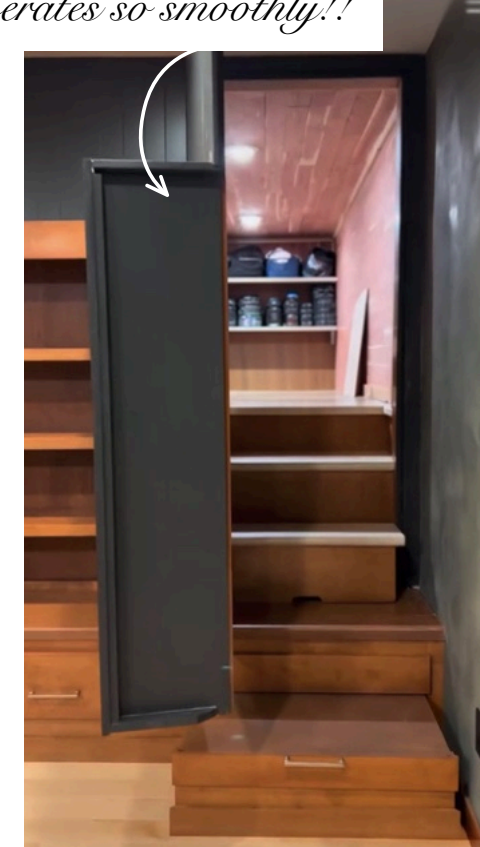
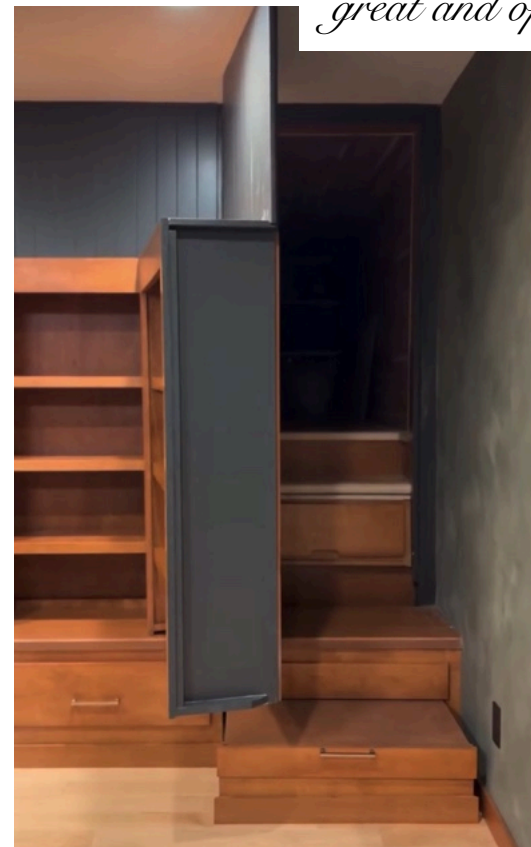
CREATING THE ENTRANCE REQUIRED THE TEAM TO **SOLVE** THREE PRIMARY CHALLENGES:

- **How could the bookcase open?** A traditional pivoting system was not feasible. One pivot location caused the cabinet to bind against the adjacent wall, while another would obstruct the opening and lacked adequate structural support.
- **How could the elevated room be safely accessed?** The hidden room sits at a higher elevation.
- **How could the entrance remain completely concealed?**

To address these constraints, the team developed a custom two-stage movement system. A concealed switch activates linear actuators that first move the bookcase outward on tracks, creating the clearance necessary for rear pivot points to swing the assembly fully open. A compact stair was integrated within the opening to resolve the elevation change while preserving usable space. The last step being integrated in the built-in drawer.

Precise coordination of millwork, structural modifications, mechanical components, stair construction, and finish carpentry allowed each element to function as one integrated system. When closed, the moving bookcase aligns with the surrounding cabinetry and face-frame trim, completely disguising the entrance. The completed feature demonstrates *innovative problem-solving* and refined *craftsmanship* by resolving multiple structural and spatial constraints without compromising the original design intent.

Clients' words: Nice work! Looks great and operates so smoothly!!



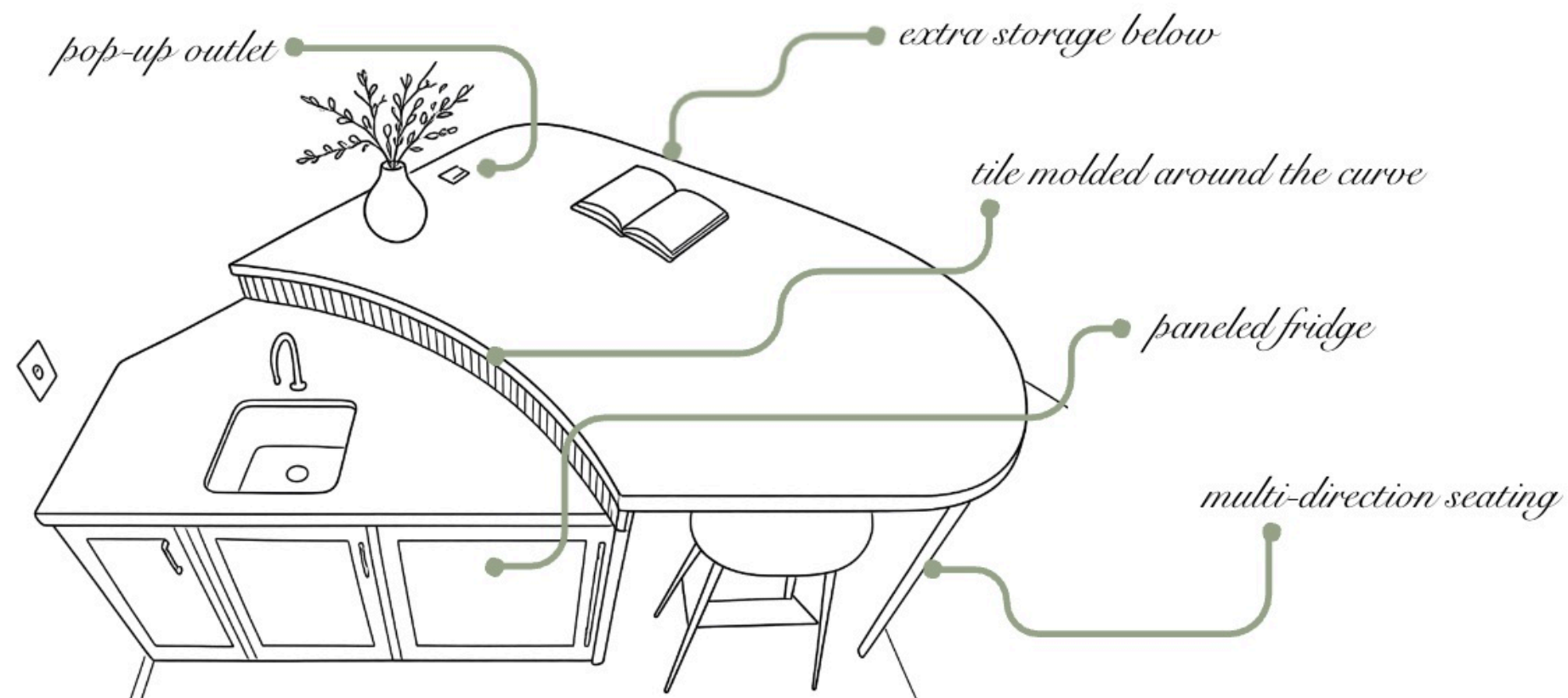
*existing**in progress**rendering**finished*

The existing bar felt enclosed and disconnected from the rest of the basement, with a low soffit visually compressing the space and a tall cabinet limiting sight-lines to the surrounding gathering area. The redesign opened the bar to the larger room and introduced a sculptural curved form that reflects the *clients' preference* for something more distinctive and unexpected. The new layout also creates seating from multiple directions, allowing the bar to function as a more social, connected focal point within the basement. A V-groove paneled back wall adds visual texture and contrast, creating a bold backdrop that anchors the custom bar design.

The bar was further refined through a series of custom details, balancing *aesthetics* with every-day *function*. Plumbing was relocated to accommodate the new open bar, while a custom-paneled beverage refrigerator was integrated into the cabinetry for a seamless appearance. A curved backsplash connects the lower work surface to the raised bar, and a custom curved end panel carries the geometry through the cabinetry. Together, these elements reinforce the rounded design language while demonstrating the *craftsmanship* and *coordination* required to turn the clients' *request* into a highly customized finished feature.

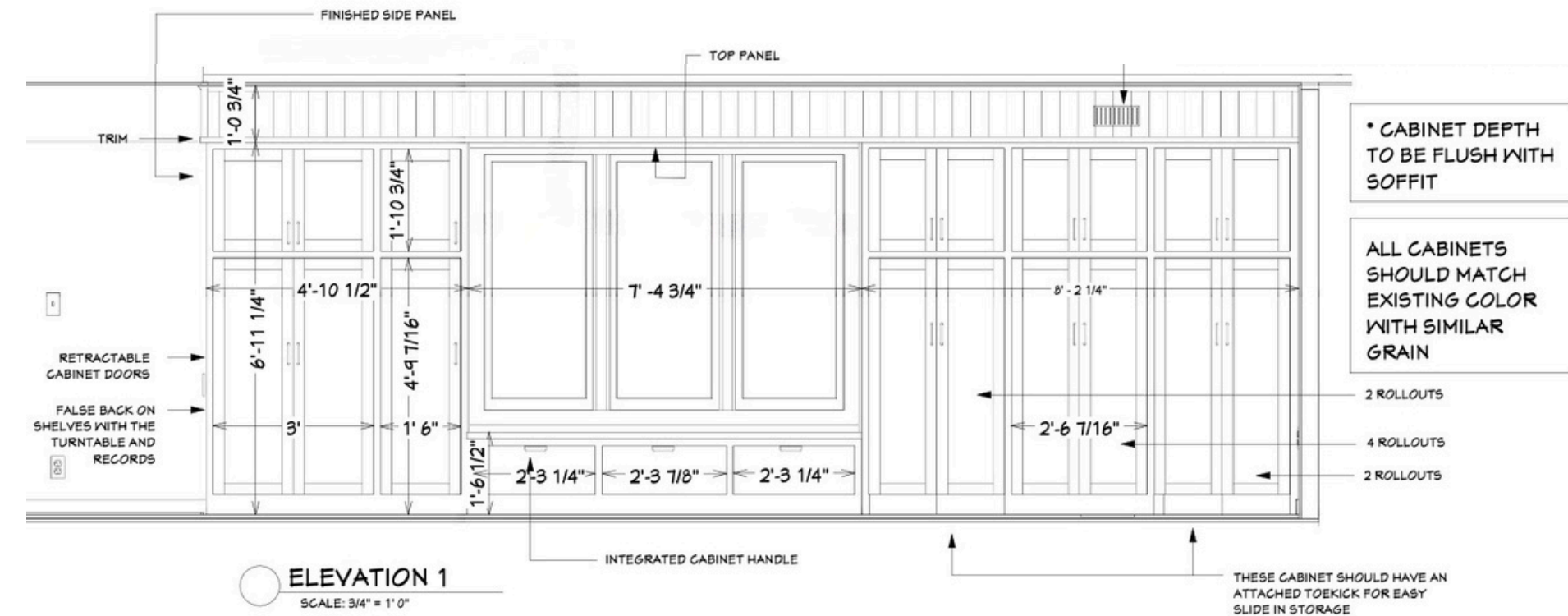


With this unique shape, creating renderings was a crucial step in the design process not only for the client to visualize but to also ensure all the parts came together cohesively.



From the beginning of the design process, additional storage was a high priority. A full-height built-in cabinet wall significantly *increased capacity* while also giving the existing utility soffit an intentional place to terminate. Wrapping the soffit in V-groove paneling visually integrated it with the cabinetry rather than allowing it to read as a separate mechanical element.

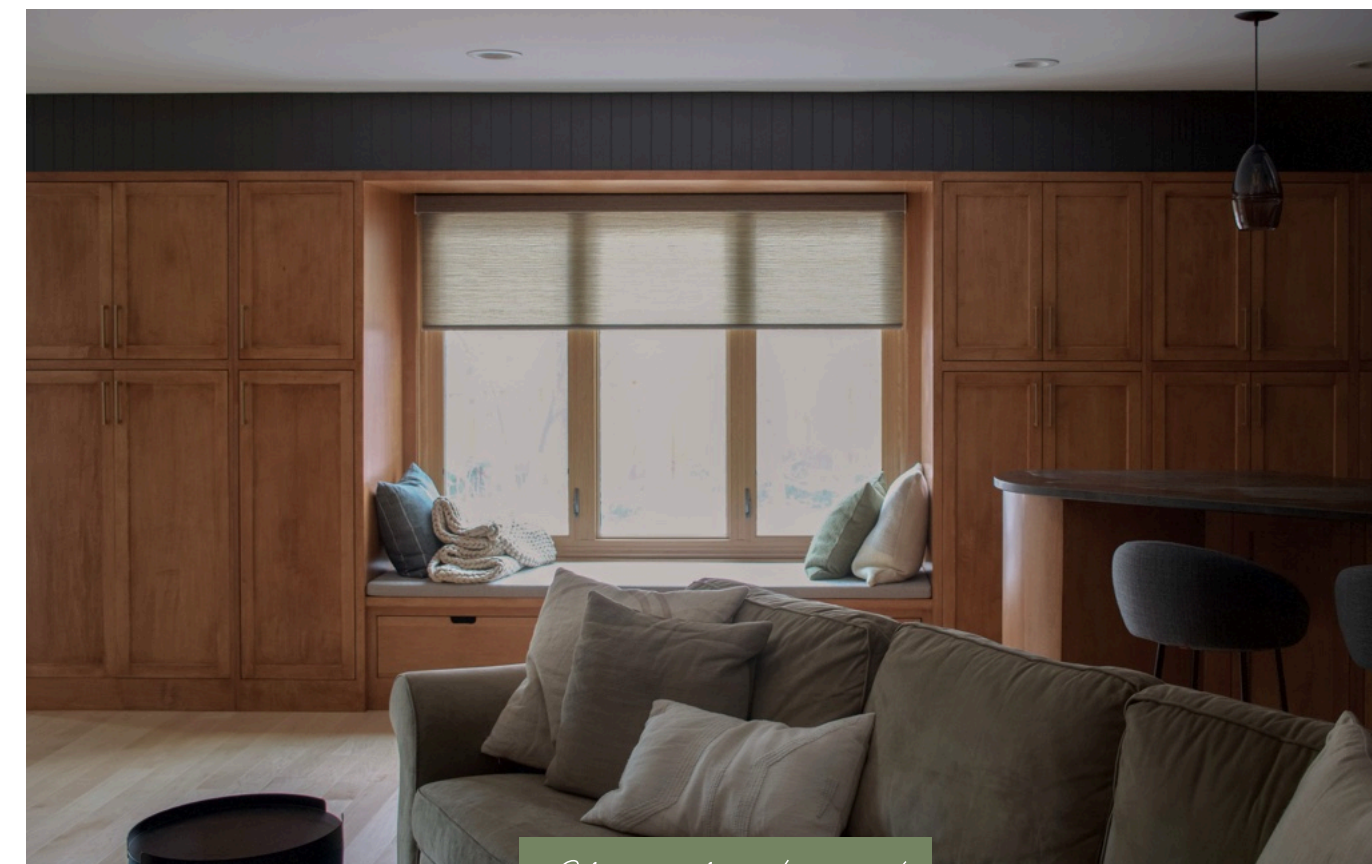
The built-ins were custom finished to match the surrounding cabinetry and tailored to the *clients' specific needs*. One section incorporates pocket doors so their Victrola can be played with the doors fully concealed, while the adjacent cabinets use rollouts to keep a variety of stored items easily accessible. Together, the built-ins provide substantial storage, improved *usability*, and a *cohesive finish*.



existing



rendering



finished



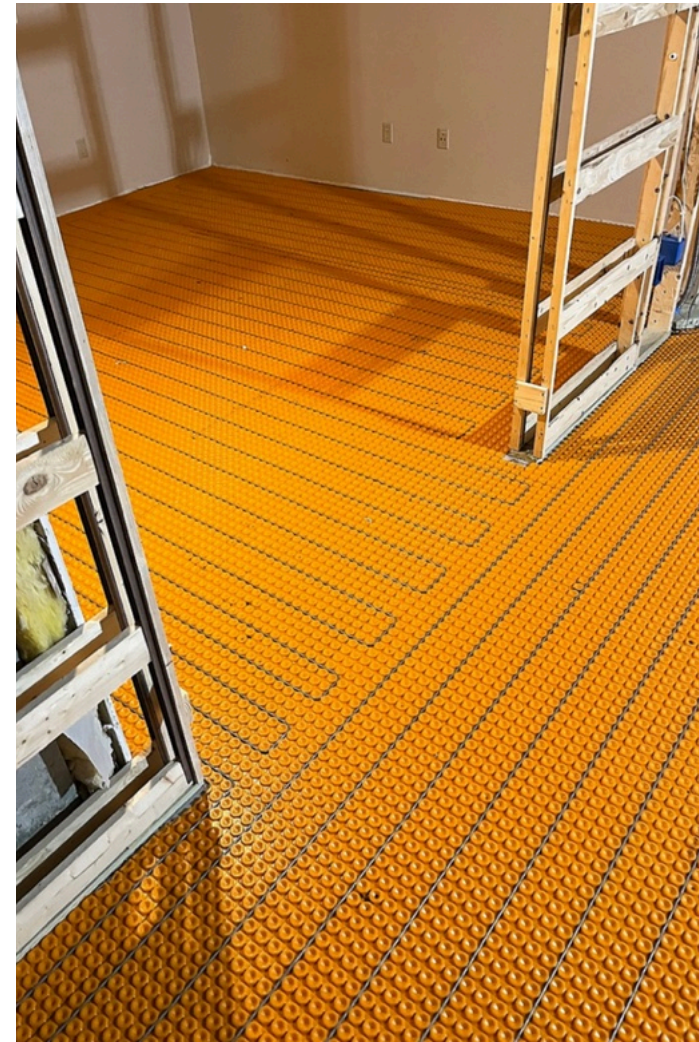
V-groove paneling introduces subtle texture & dimension, enriching the space without competing with the artwork.

Pebble tile installed with thoughtful placement along a curved edge.



Integrated gallery rail maintains a minimal look allowing the art to take focus rather than the system itself.

In floor heat sets the warmth of the atmosphere



Limewash elevates the basement through its nuanced depth, subtle movement, and mineral-rich texture.

Took an opportunity to add a custom detail instead of using a generic plate.

Integrated hand pulls to create a smooth minimal design

Inset custom match maple cabinetry with aged brass hardware





The loom room was refreshed as a flexible creative space designed to support the client's craft while remaining visually calm. One significant upgrade was converting the entry to a pocket door, allowing the room to function as either an open extension of the basement or a closed, dedicated workspace when separation is needed. Secondly, the room also became the access point to additional storage concealed behind the entertainment center, capturing unused depth. New flooring, recessed lighting, and simplified finishes further improved function and organization.



existing



refreshed and repurposed



bonus space!



Judges
THANK YOU FOR
YOUR TIME