



RESIDENTIAL kitchen *100-150k*

NARI - REMODELER OF THE YEAR AWARDS - 2026

Introducing, at the heart



This St. Paul kitchen renovation began with a layout that disrupted everyday life. Multiple entrances converged within the kitchen, making it a natural crossroads, yet circulation disrupted the work triangle and limited efficiency. An adjacent former laundry room had also become overflow storage, offering additional potential within the existing footprint.

The design approach focused on strengthening the kitchen's role at the heart of the home—improving how the surrounding rooms connected while creating a more functional and intentional work zone. Rather than just simply updating finishes, the renovation reworked circulation and transformed the former laundry room into a walk-through pantry that better supports the kitchen and adjacent living spaces.

Period-appropriate inset white quarter-sawn oak cabinetry grounds the kitchen in the home's character, while natural green accents, warm brass fixtures, reeded glass, and a heated tile floor introduce texture, warmth, and balance.

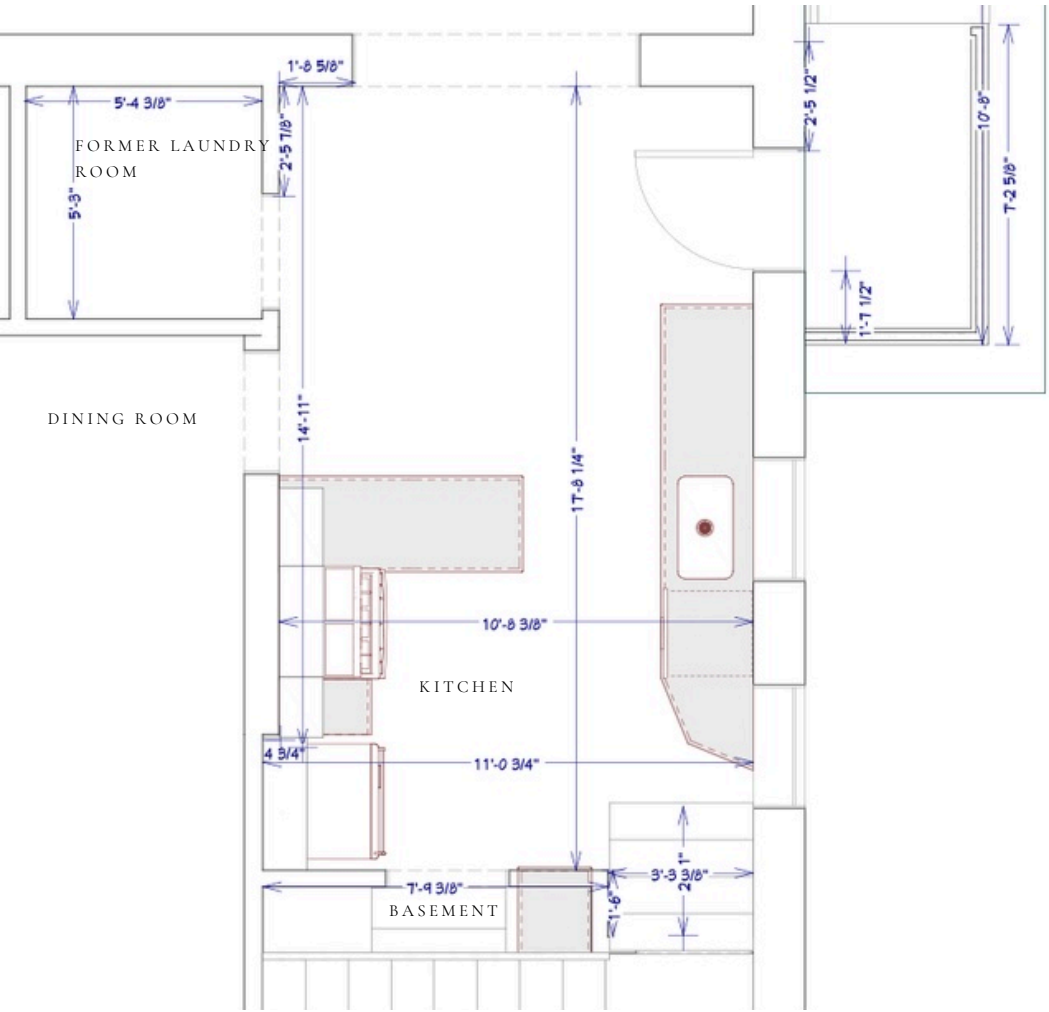
The result is At the Heart—a kitchen that thoughtfully connects the surrounding spaces while remaining rooted in the historic character of the home.

Client Asks:

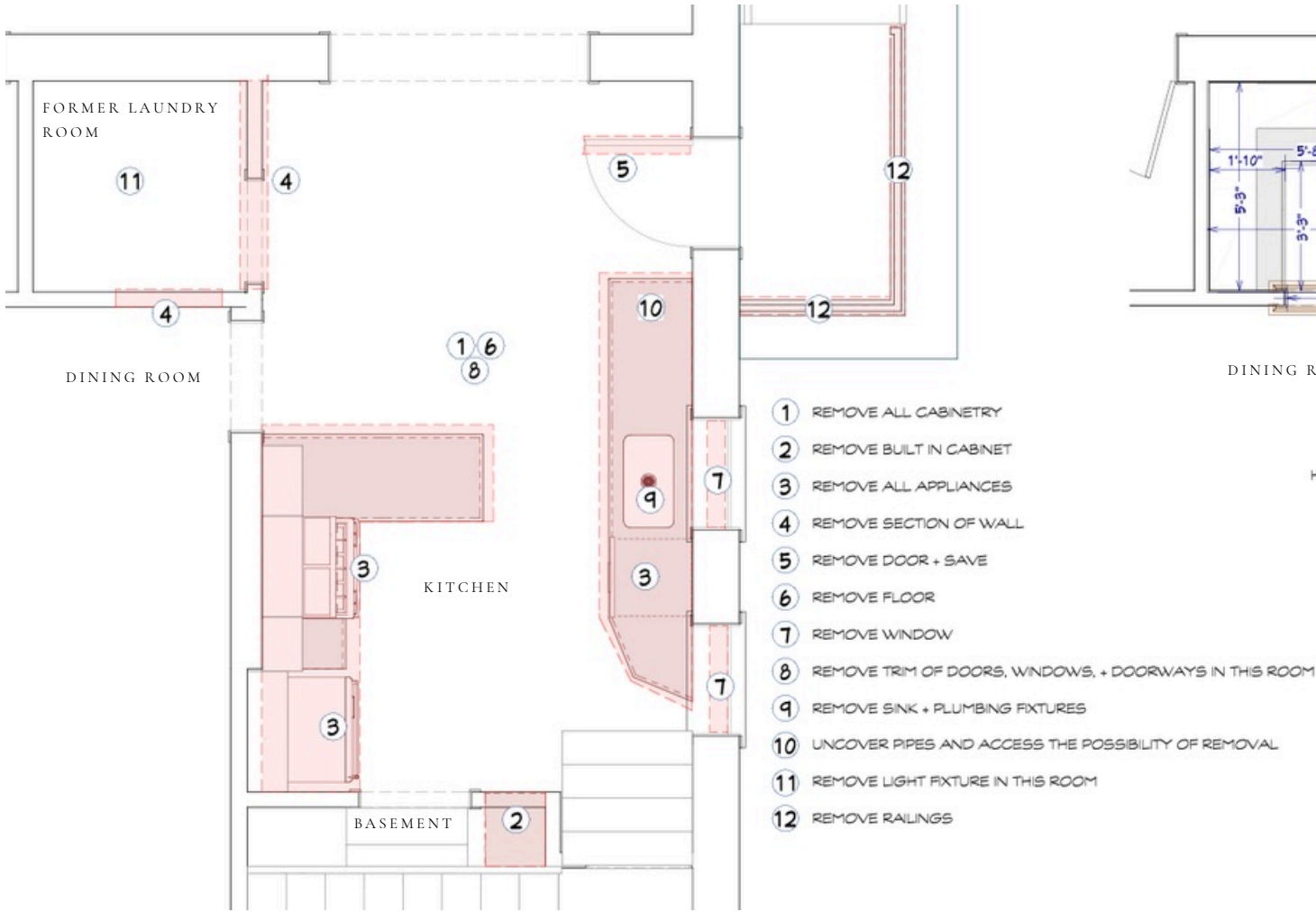
- improved layout
- period correct details
- reimagined laundry space
- kitchen aesthetic

- **Improved Layout:** Reworked circulation to improve the kitchen work zone and create stronger connections to the surrounding rooms.
- **Period-Correct Details:** Restored period-sensitive millwork and incorporated inset quarter sawn cabinetry, textured glass, and traditional detailing that better reflected the character of the home.
- **Reimagine the Laundry Space:** Converted the former laundry room into a walk-through pantry, adding storage and function while creating a more intentional circulation path that allowed a kitchen doorway to be eliminated.
- **Kitchen Aesthetic:** Introduced a refined palette of natural green, quarter-sawn oak, warm brass, and light quartz to create a kitchen that feels fresh while remaining appropriate to the home’s historic setting.

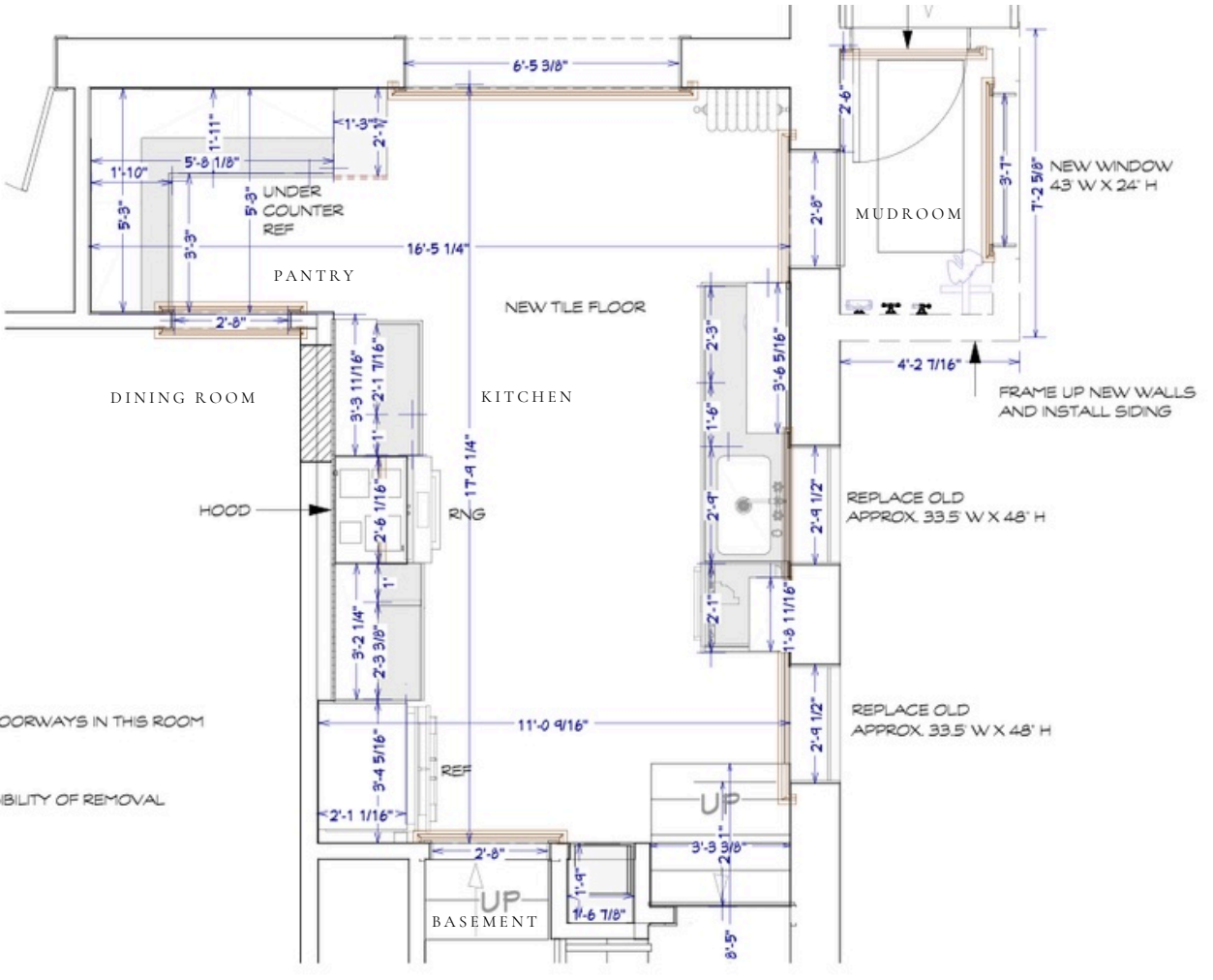
At the Heart



EXISTING PLAN



DEMOLITION PLAN



PROPOSED PLAN



before *photos*





after *photos*



bigger windows bring in natural light

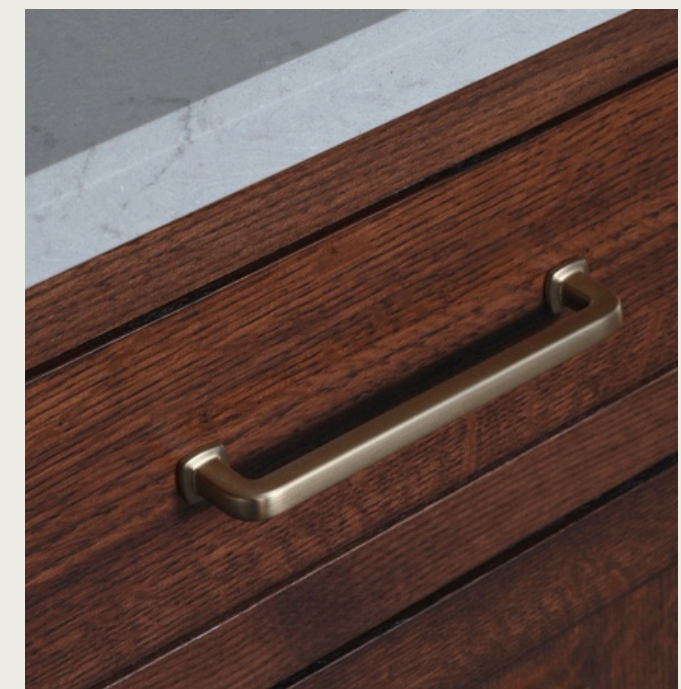


Beautiful reeded glass providing privacy while reducing the visual weight of the cabinetry.

Quartz chosen for long-term performance.



Delta faucet paired perfectly with the cabinet hardware



The original kitchen was constrained by multiple openings and work zones within a narrow footprint. Because the space also serves as a major circulation point with movement in several directions, a generous galley layout became the most effective solution. The redesign organized the work zones more clearly while allowing traffic to move through the kitchen without interrupting cooking and prep.

Dark base cabinetry anchor the room, while soft green uppers keep the composition feeling lighter. Tall reeded-glass cabinets frame the bigger windows, allowing natural light to remain a strong part of the design, while light quartz surfaces brighten the room.

We tied the palette together with warm wood accents and brass hardware which complemented the carefully proportioned cabinetry and reeded glass, adding texture without visual clutter. The in-floor heat provides a quiet foundation, introducing a subtle layer of physical warmth that makes the room feel more inviting and comfortable year-round.



The quartz countertop with the Treeline edge adds a simple but sculpted elegance to the countertop feature.

The continuous quartz backsplash adds a high level of refinement while minimizing grout lines for easier maintenance.



Custom Cabinetry: Inset cabinetry brings a seamless, built-in refinement to the kitchen. The reeded glass adds texture and lightness to the upper cabinets.

The dark oak base cabinets constructed with dovetail drawers add a grounded richness.



The integrated dovetail cutting board adds valuable prep space while remaining neatly built into the cabinetry.



The custom curved hood introduces softness and interest



Undercounter outlets preserve a uninterrupted backsplash while keeping power accessible.

Quartersawn white oak inset cabinetry nodding back to the period correct designs of when the home was built.

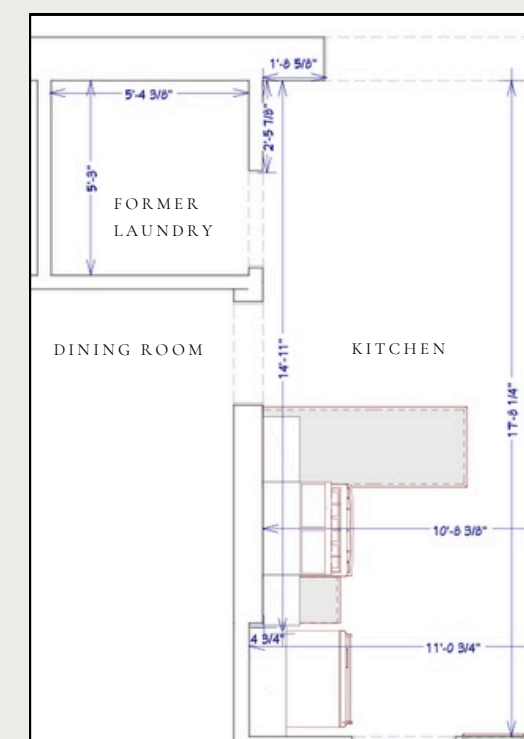
Specialty rollouts that increase the functionality of the kitchen



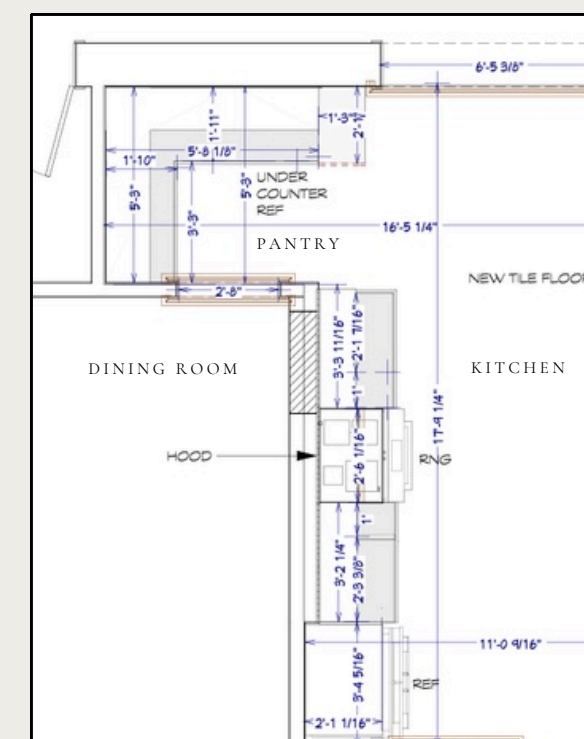
EVIDENCE OF FUNCTIONALITY

There was direct access from the kitchen into the dining room, but the opening consumed valuable wall space and limited cabinetry, storage, and an efficient work zone. Meanwhile, the adjacent former laundry room had become underused overflow space.

The design team *rerouted* circulation through the former laundry room, allowing the kitchen to *reclaim* a continuous wall while giving the overlooked space a *new purpose*. Though less typical, the solution aligned with the family's routines and improved both the kitchen's *functionality* and its *connection* to the surrounding rooms.



EXISTING PLAN



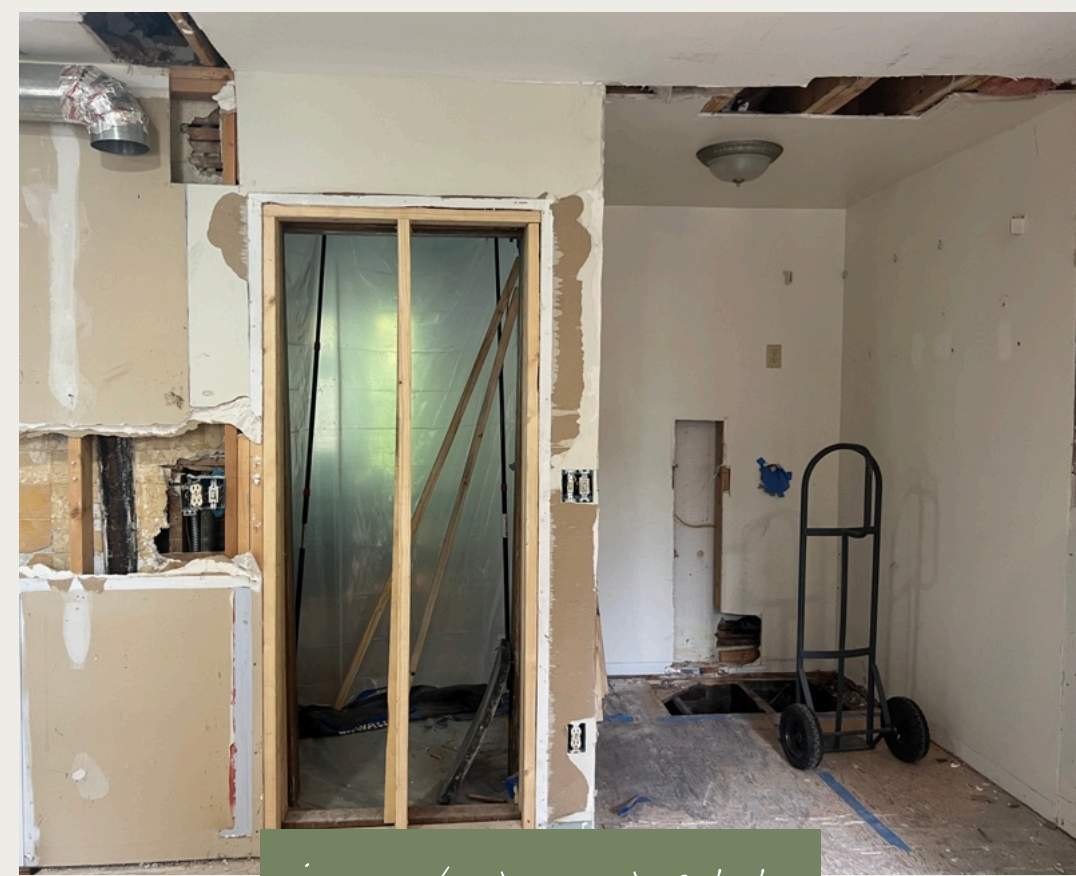
PROPOSED PLAN

doorway into the
dining room



existing

Enclosed former laundry room functioning primarily as overflow storage.



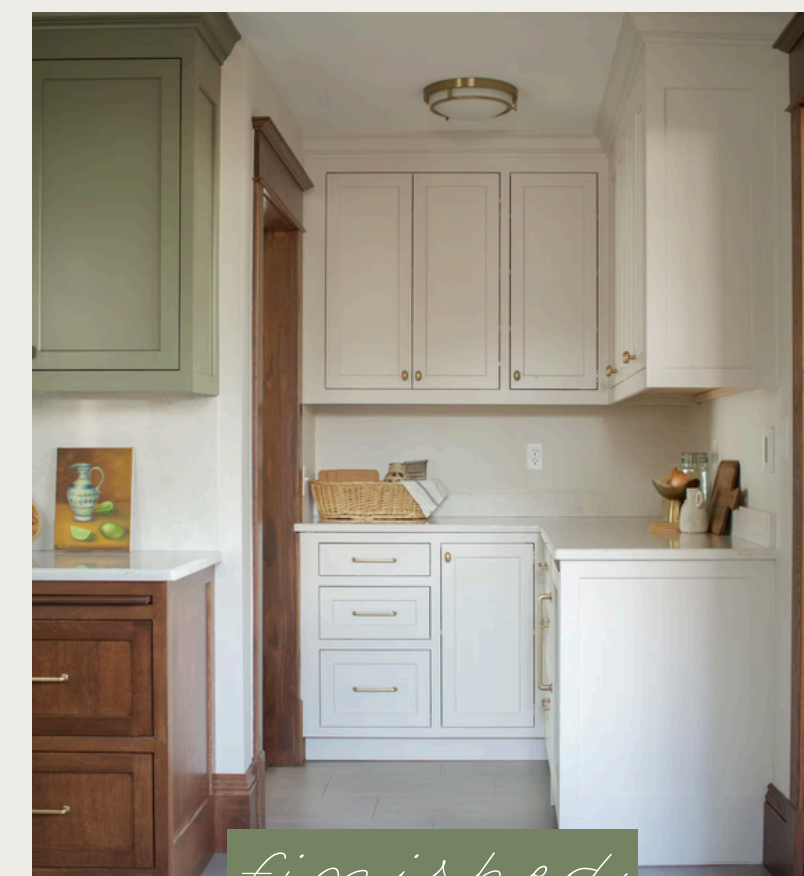
in progress

Walls selectively opened and circulation reworked to establish the new pantry connection.



rendering

Cabinetry, clearances, and circulation studied prior to construction.

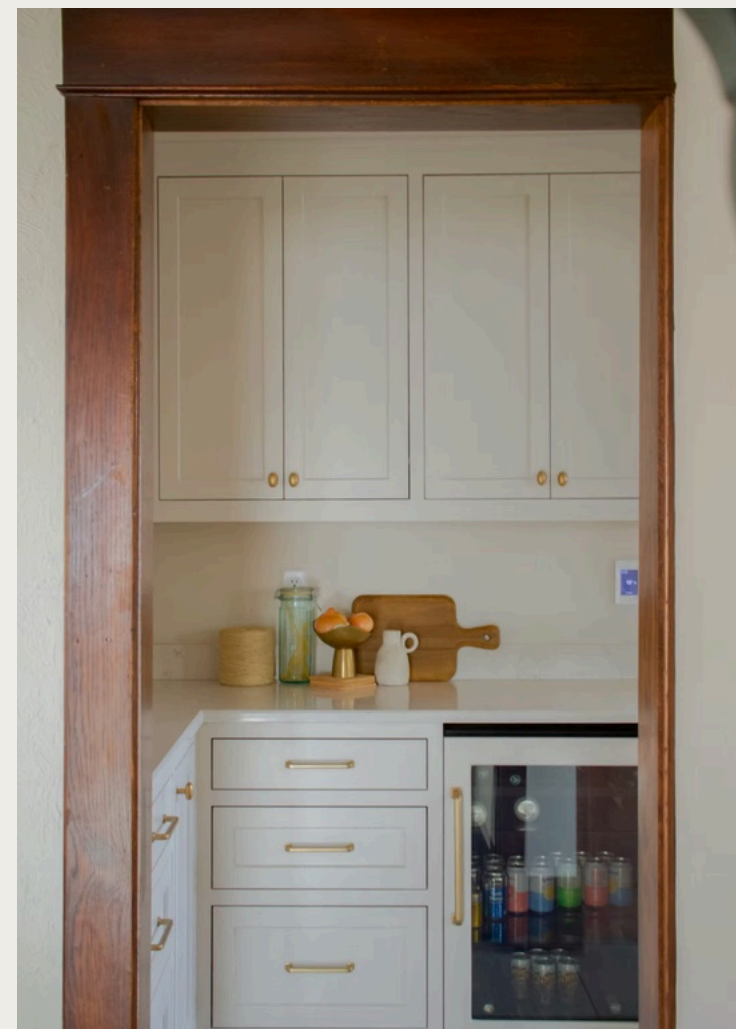


finished

Pantry adds storage while creating an intentional connection between rooms.

Walk-through PANTRY

The walk-through pantry was designed as a natural extension of the kitchen while maintaining its own identity. Ample cabinetry, small-appliance storage, and a beverage cooler created an accessible destination outside the primary kitchen work zone. To *recapture* the home's original character, where the kitchen traditionally felt more separate from adjoining rooms, the new connection was carefully positioned to maintain convenient access without creating a direct line of sight through the kitchen. This preserves a sense of intimacy while *improving* circulation between surrounding spaces. The pantry's location also allows family members to easily access drinks and snacks while moving between the family room and dining room without interrupting kitchen activity. Matching the cabinetry to the wall color allows the pantry to visually recede, helping it read as a simple transitional hallway while discreetly concealing substantial storage and everyday function.



The radiator pipe from the upper level ran directly through the kitchen cabinetry, forcing a bulky enclosure that reduced storage and disrupted the backsplash and countertop. To resolve the condition, the pipe was carefully relocated to another wall. Removing the pipe allowed the cabinetry to remain uninterrupted, improving both *functionality* and *visual continuity* while turning a necessary building system into a virtually invisible part of the finished design.



Part of the wall extended upward in front of the windows, partially obstructing natural light and creating an awkward ledge where debris could collect. As part of the renovation, the windows were replaced and the interior wall was

lowered to countertop height, creating a deep, functional window stool. The quartz countertop was extended into the opening, transforming a previously problematic condition into a clean cottage-like detail and an additional surface for display, plants, or everyday use.



Custom BUILT-IN

The existing cabinet underutilized the available footprint. The design team worked with the clients to define how the area could better support their daily needs. The resulting custom built-in combines open and closed storage with integrated wine storage above, improving function while creating a more intentional and interesting feature.



Wood DETAILS

Darkly stained wood is carried through select accents to *reinforce* continuity within the home. The kitchen doorways were missing the architrave trim found throughout the rest of the home. *Restoring* each opening with period-appropriate millwork became the final layer of detail that visually tied the kitchen together, making the space feel complete. Precise *craftsmanship* was required at challenging connections such as the stair transition and custom built-in, ensuring seams and profiles align cleanly from one element to the next.

The deteriorated painted stairs were replaced with golden stained oak rather than dark stain, a deliberate material decision that creates a visual bridge from the existing landing beyond. Together, these details demonstrate *intentional materials* and *craftsmanship* while preserving the character of the home.







“I am standing in the middle of the new kitchen, smiling.”



“Everyone was a pleasure to work with!”



Thank you for your time, Judges!