

NARI MINNESOTA – 2026 ROTY AWARDS

PROJECT: A LEVEL ABOVE
CATEGORY: ADDITION OVER \$500,000

Our clients, a young family, loved their home, lake views, and deeded lake access but needed significantly more space to support their growing family. Rather than leave the property they loved, they chose to transform the home's underutilized upper level into a complete family level while maintaining the approachable character and scale of the original residence.

The existing upper level contained one bedroom surrounded by largely unusable storage space. Approximately 250 square feet of new living space was added to the home, allowing the upper level to be substantially expanded and reconfigured into a complete family level with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, dedicated laundry, and customized storage. A new primary suite was positioned toward the lake and includes a private bathroom, walk-in shower, custom vanity, and storage designed around the home's rooflines.

One of the project's primary challenges was accomplishing this transformation around the existing staircase, which remained in its original location. The new floor plan was carefully organized around this fixed element, maximizing every available square foot while controlling construction costs and preserving usable portions of the existing structure.

The exterior architecture was substantially transformed to accommodate the completed upper level. New rooflines, siding, windows, trim, and exterior detailing were carefully proportioned to integrate the expanded second story with the original home rather than make it appear added on.

Inside, the new upper level was designed to feel like a natural continuation of the existing residence. Consistent millwork, finishes, proportions, and detailing connect old and new, while enlarged windows capture natural light and the lake views that originally drew the homeowners to the property.

The completed project gave the family the bedroom, bathroom, laundry, and storage space of a significantly larger home without sacrificing the property, lake lifestyle, and character they valued.

CLIENT NEEDS

- **Remain on the Property:** Gain the space of a larger family home without giving up the lake views, deeded lake access, and location the homeowners loved.
- **Maximize the Upper Level:** Transform largely unusable second-story space into comfortable, functional everyday living areas.
- **Add Three Bedrooms:** Create an upper level capable of accommodating the growing family's bedroom needs.
- **Create a Primary Suite:** Position a private primary bedroom and bathroom to take advantage of the property's lake views.
- **Add a Family Bathroom:** Provide a larger secondary bathroom capable of comfortably serving the children's bedrooms.



- **Add Upstairs Laundry:** Locate laundry near the bedrooms to simplify everyday family routines.
- **Maximize Storage:** Utilize challenging rooflines and transitional areas for closets and customized storage.
- **Retain the Existing Staircase:** Design the new upper-level layout around the original stair location to preserve existing structure and control costs.
- **Preserve Finished Space Below:** Protect the fully finished basement and retained portions of the home throughout extensive structural construction.
- **Integrate Old + New:** Make the completed upper level feel architecturally consistent with the original home.
- **Capture Lake Views:** Use window placement and room orientation to bring the property's valued lake views into the new upper-level spaces.
- **Maintain Residential Scale:** Expand the home's functionality without allowing the new upper level to overwhelm the original architecture.

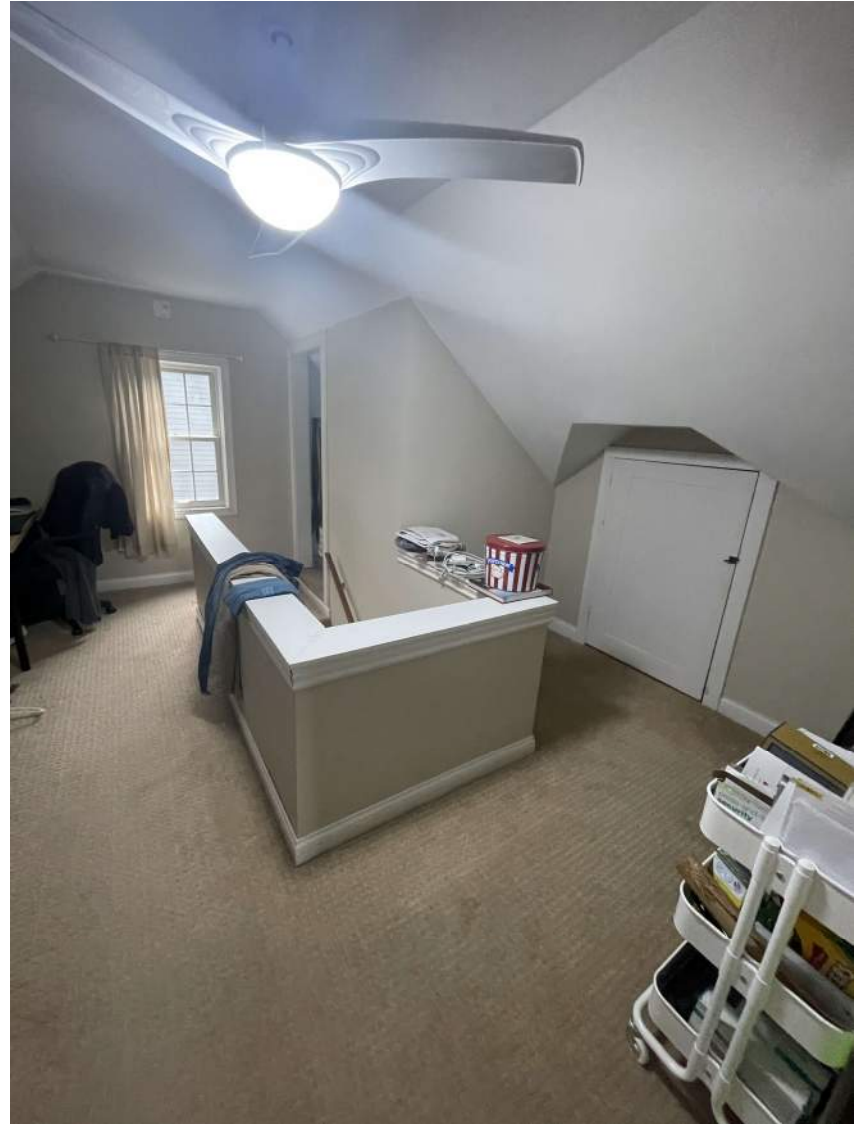
BEFORE PHOTOS



BEFORE PHOTOS



STAIRCASE



UPSTAIRS

BEFORE PHOTOS



UPSTAIRS



HALL BATH

BEFORE PHOTOS



BEDROOM 1



UPSTAIRS

BEFORE PHOTOS



KITCHEN

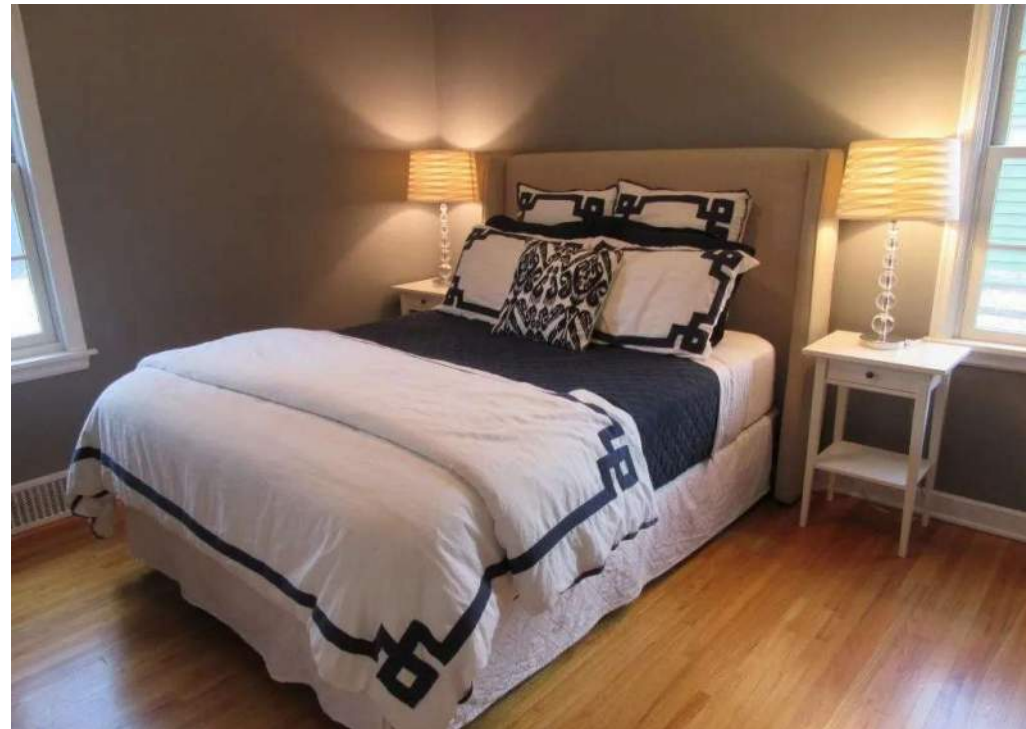


SEATING NOOK

BEFORE PHOTOS

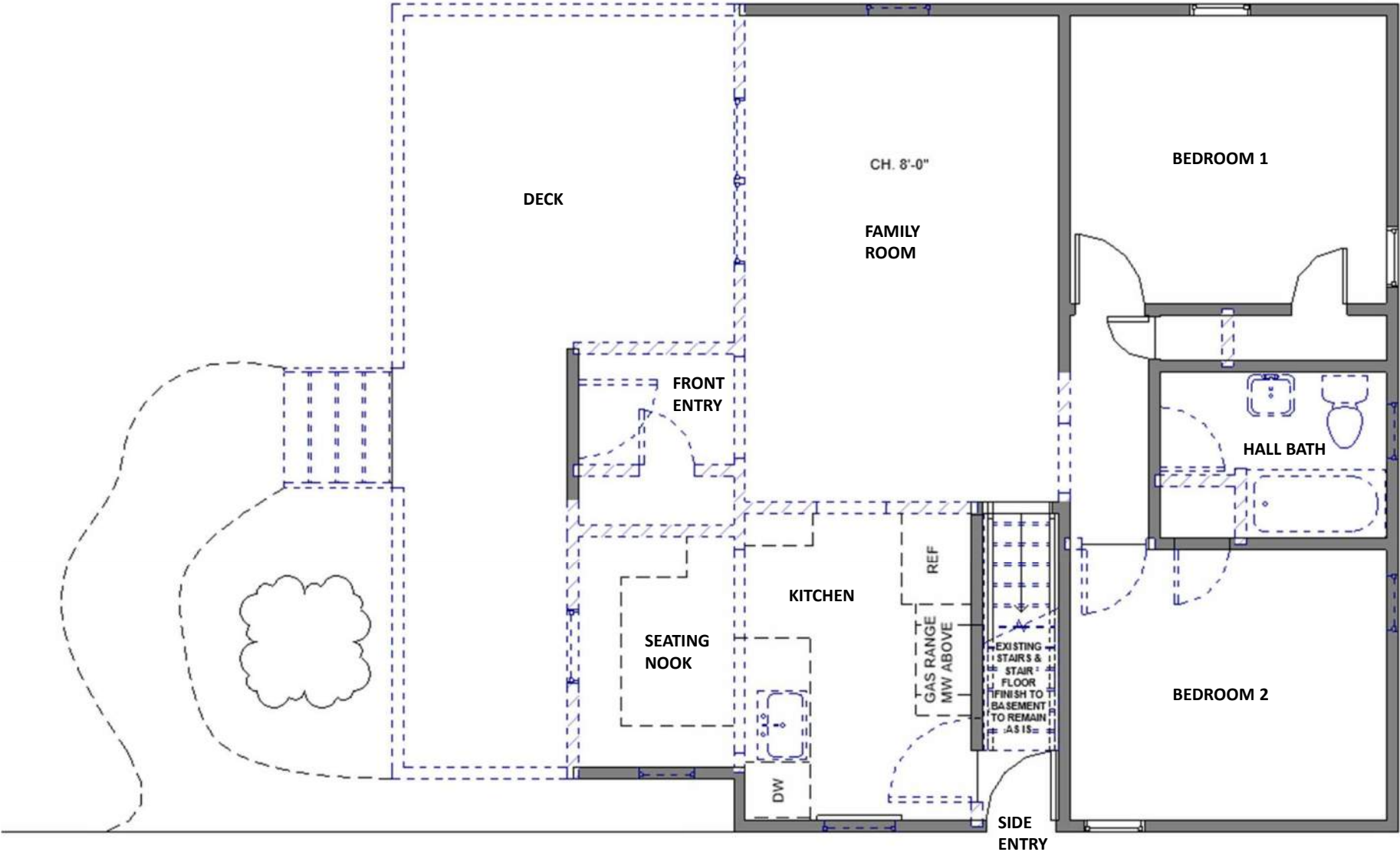


FAMILY ROOM

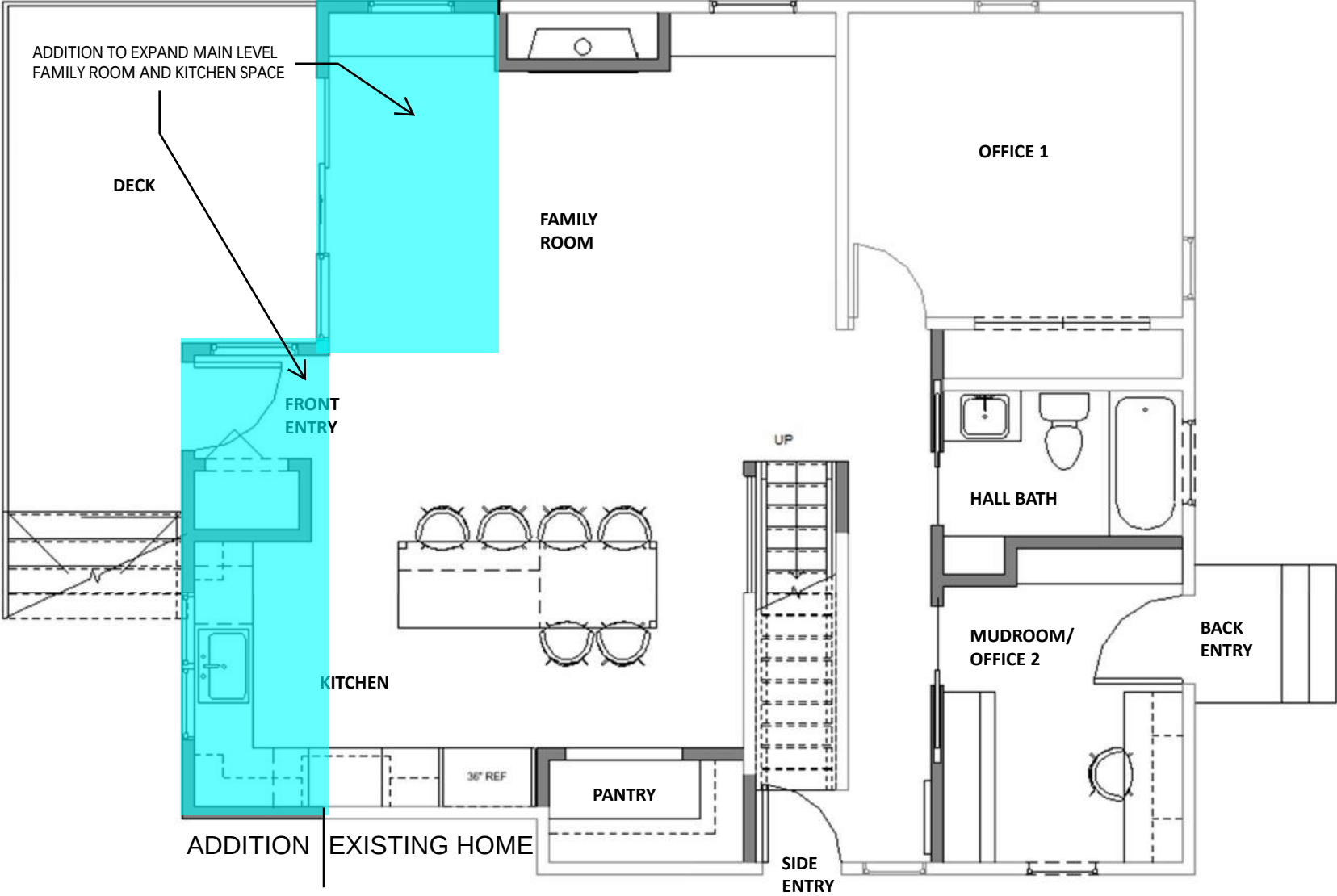


BEDROOM 2

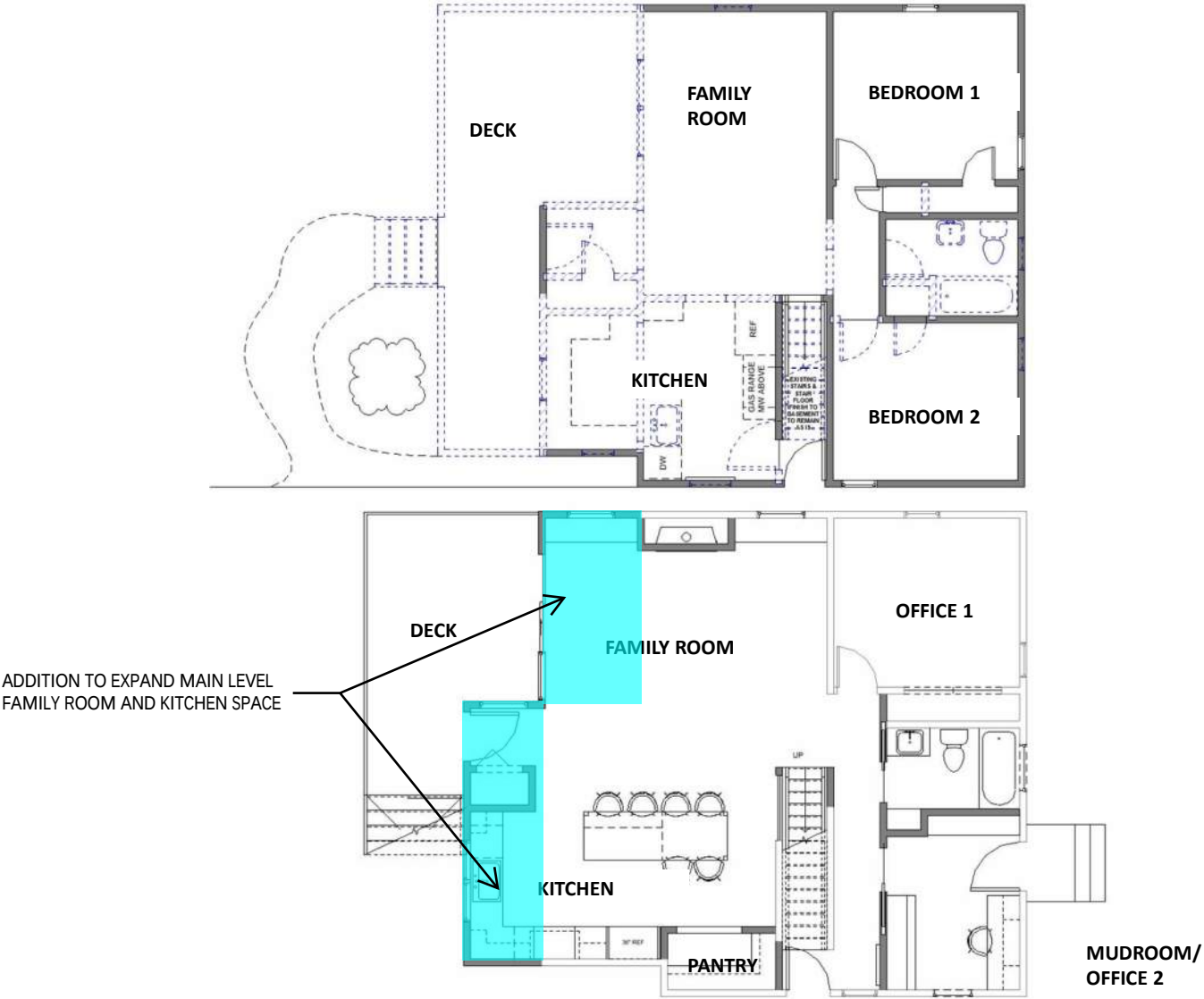
BEFORE FLOOR PLAN – MAIN LEVEL



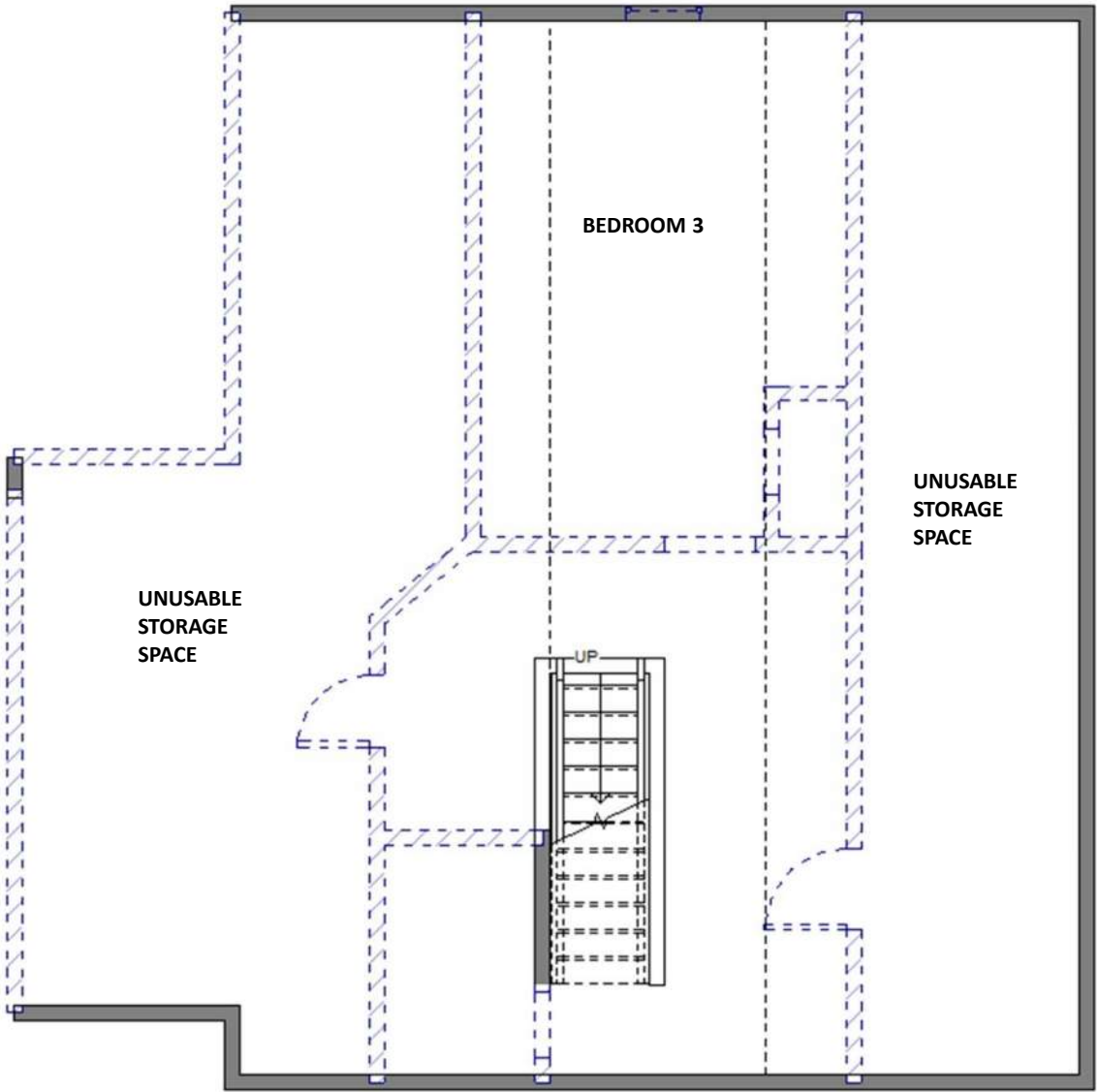
AFTER FLOOR PLAN – MAIN LEVEL



BEFORE AND AFTER FLOOR PLAN – MAIN LEVEL SIDE BY SIDE

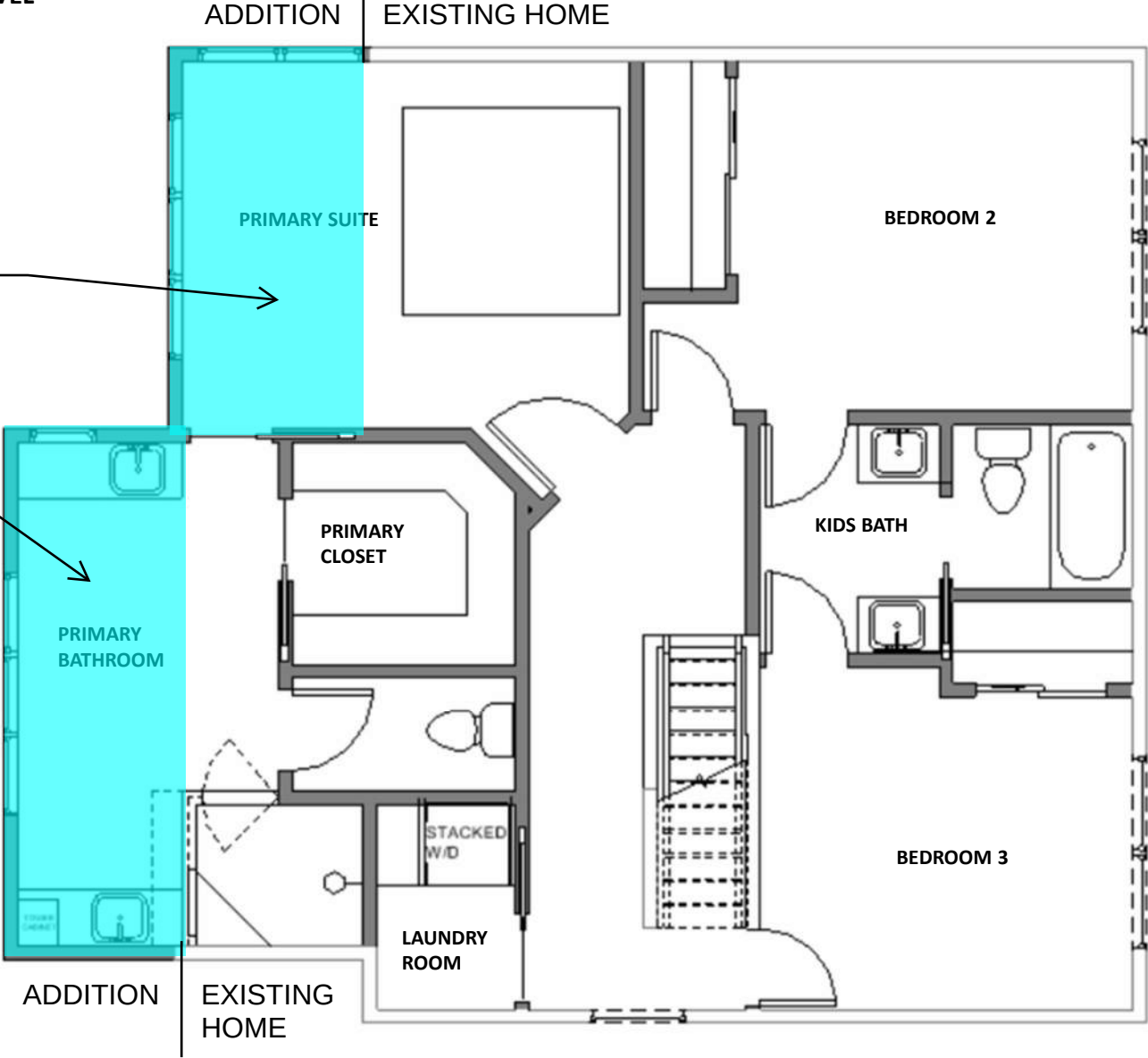


BEFORE FLOOR PLAN – UPPER LEVEL

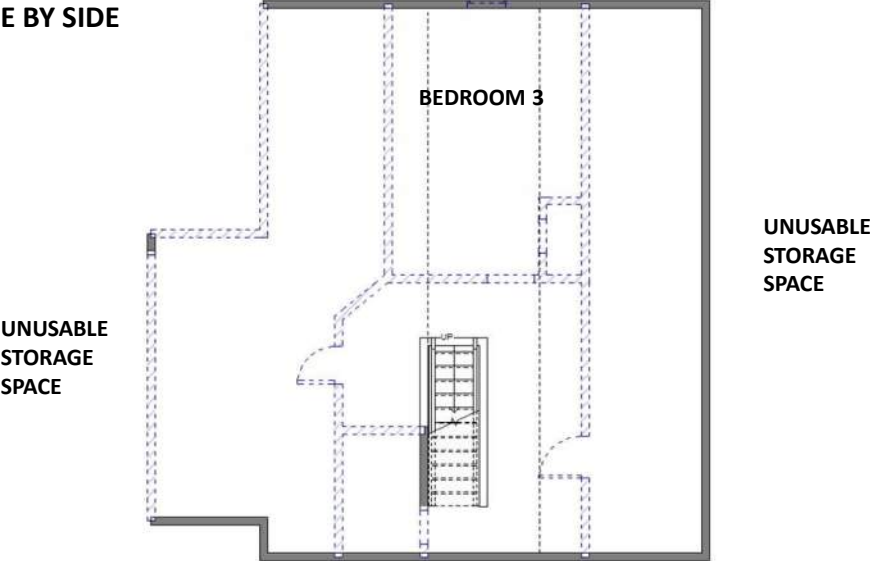


AFTER FLOOR PLAN – UPPER LEVEL

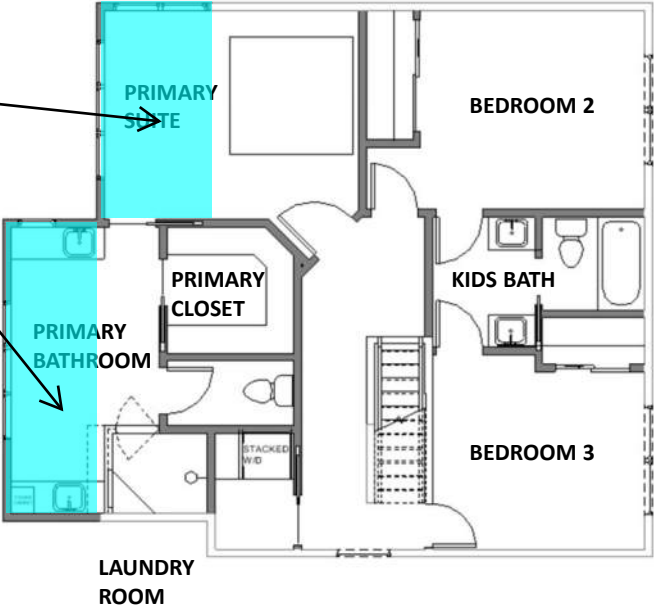
ADDITION TO CREATE A FULL
HEIGHT SECOND LEVEL INCLUDING
EXPANDING THE PRIMARY SUITE
AND ALLOWING FOR 3 BEDROOMS
TOTAL UPSTAIRS, 2 BATHROOMS
AND A LAUNDRY ROOM



BEFORE AND AFTER FLOOR PLAN – UPPER LEVEL SIDE BY SIDE



ADDITION TO CREATE A FULL HEIGHT SECOND LEVEL INCLUDING EXPANDING THE PRIMARY SUITE AND ALLOWING FOR 3 BEDROOMS TOTAL UPSTAIRS, 2 BATHROOMS AND A LAUNDRY ROOM



3D RENDERINGS



3D RENDERINGS



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO – LIVING ROOM



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO



FUNCTIONALITY

- **Complete Family Level:** The transformed upper level provides three bedrooms, two bathrooms, laundry, and integrated storage, giving the growing family the functionality previously missing from the compact home.
- **Efficient Upper-Level Planning:** Bedrooms, bathrooms, laundry, storage, and circulation were carefully organized around the retained staircase to maximize usable square footage.
- **Private Primary Suite:** The new primary suite provides a dedicated bedroom and bathroom oriented toward the property's valued lake views.
- **Family Bathroom:** A larger secondary bathroom was designed to comfortably serve both children's bedrooms, rough-in's only to preserve the budget.
- **Convenient Laundry:** Locating laundry on the same floor as all three bedrooms simplifies everyday family routines.
- **Integrated Storage:** Areas constrained by roof geometry were converted into closets and customized storage rather than becoming wasted space.
- **Preserved Circulation:** Retaining the original staircase maintained a familiar connection between levels while avoiding unnecessary structural modifications.
- **Lake-Oriented Planning:** Room placement and new windows allow the upper level to take advantage of natural light and views toward the lake.



AESTHETICS

- **Original Character Preserved:** The new upper level was designed to feel like a natural evolution of the original home rather than an oversized addition.
- **Refined Upper Level:** Light finishes, warm wood tones, coordinated millwork, and restrained detailing create comfortable bedrooms and bathrooms appropriate for the young family.
- **Lake Views as a Design Feature:** Window placement and room orientation frame views from the primary suite and other upper-level spaces.
- **Cohesive Millwork:** Doors, trim, cabinetry, vanities, and storage details maintain visual continuity between retained and newly constructed areas.
- **Exterior Integration:** New rooflines, siding, windows, and trim were proportioned to visually integrate the completed upper level with the original home's architecture.
- **Timeless Design:** Materials and architectural details were selected for longevity rather than short-term trends, supporting the family's goal of remaining in the home long-term



CRAFTSMANSHIP

- **Protection & Construction Sequencing:** Extensive demolition, structural work, and reconstruction occurred above a fully finished basement. Detailed protection, temporary support, and carefully planned sequencing protected the completed spaces below throughout construction.
- **Structural Integration:** New framing and structural modifications were precisely integrated with retained portions of the original home, requiring careful field verification and coordination as existing conditions were exposed.
- **Old-to-New Transitions:** Flooring, drywall, millwork, trim, cabinetry, and other finishes were carefully transitioned between retained and reconstructed areas so the extensive renovation reads as one continuous home.
- **Complex Upper-Level Framing:** Precise framing was required to work within the existing staircase location, changing roof geometry, bedroom and bathroom layouts, and storage areas while maintaining clean finished proportions.
- **Roof & Exterior Execution:** New rooflines, siding, windows, trim, and exterior details were carefully tied into the retained structure so the completed upper level appears integrated with the original architecture.
- **Custom Cabinetry & Millwork:** Kitchen cabinetry, family-room built-ins, bathroom vanities, closets, and storage solutions were carefully fitted and detailed to maintain consistent proportions, reveals, and finish quality throughout the home.
- **Detailed Finish Work:** Tile, flooring, cabinetry, millwork, drywall, paint, and trim were coordinated across numerous remodeled areas, with particular attention given to clean intersections and transitions between materials.
- **Window Integration:** New and enlarged window openings required precise framing, weatherproofing, exterior detailing, and interior finish work while maintaining consistent architectural proportions and maximizing views toward the lake.



INNOVATIVE METHODS AND USES

- **Unlocking Existing Square Footage:** Rather than relying on a large footprint expansion, underutilized upper-level volume was transformed into valuable family living space.
- **Planning Around a Fixed Staircase:** The entire upper-level plan was developed around the existing staircase, avoiding costly relocation while still accommodating three bedrooms, two bathrooms, laundry, storage, and circulation.
- **Turning Constraints Into Storage:** Areas affected by roof geometry were intentionally converted into closets and custom storage rather than becoming inaccessible or wasted space.
- **Preserving Finished Space Below:** Structural and construction strategies allowed extensive work to occur above while protecting the fully finished existing basement.
- **Lake-Oriented Space Planning:** The primary suite and windows were strategically positioned to make the property's lake views part of the family's everyday experience.
- **Budget as a Design Tool:** Retaining valuable existing elements allowed the family's investment to be concentrated on improvements that provided the greatest functional return.
- **Strategic Use of Helical Piers:** A portion of the addition was supported on helical piers, providing an efficient structural solution that reduced the need for more extensive conventional foundation work. This approach helped control construction costs while maintaining the structural performance required for the expanded upper level.



PROJECT CHALLENGES

- **Existing Structural Conditions:** Transforming an existing upper level required working with structural conditions that could only be fully verified as demolition progressed.
- **Fixed Stair Location:** The original staircase had to remain, creating a non-negotiable organizing point for the entire new upper-level plan.
- **Complex Roof Geometry:** Creating comfortable bedrooms, bathrooms, laundry, circulation, and storage within the existing upper-level configuration required careful resolution of rooflines and ceiling heights.
- **Plumbing & Mechanical Coordination:** Adding two bathrooms and laundry upstairs required new plumbing, HVAC, ventilation, and electrical systems to be routed through retained portions of the home.
- **Protecting Finished Areas:** Extensive demolition and structural work occurred above a fully finished basement that needed to remain intact.
- **Exterior Proportion:** Substantially altering the upper level risked overwhelming the small original home, requiring careful attention to rooflines, windows, siding, trim, and overall scale.
- **Maximizing Every Square Foot:** The family's extensive program left little room for inefficient circulation or unusable areas, making careful space planning essential.

