

PIECEMEAL TO PERFECTION

Residential Kitchen: \$100,000 to \$150,000

2026 NARI ROTY MINNESOTA AWARDS

FIXING THE FRAGMENTED: A BLUEPRINT FOR FLOW

BACKGROUND

A fragmented 1950s kitchen with red laminate countertops, green-and-gray checkerboard flooring, dated white cabinetry, zero built-in overhead lighting, and full partition walls that completely blocked natural light. The refrigerator stood boxed in against two doorways with zero adjacent counter space, making side-by-side cooking virtually impossible. The 120-sq-foot space was completely isolated from the rest of the main level, severely constraining spatial flow.

VISION & STRATEGY

Unify the Footprint: Open the kitchen to create a unified flow without expanding beyond the original footprint, eliminate physical barriers to natural light, and create an inviting setup for entertaining.

Multi-Cook Efficiency: Reconfigure the layout with dedicated work zones and ample landing space that can easily accommodate two cooks.

Structural Re-Engineering: Remove load-bearing walls using overhead framing to establish continuous ceiling lines.

Strategic Circulation: Anchor the footprint with a custom dogleg peninsula that provides island seating, prep space, and smooth traffic flow.



PLANS

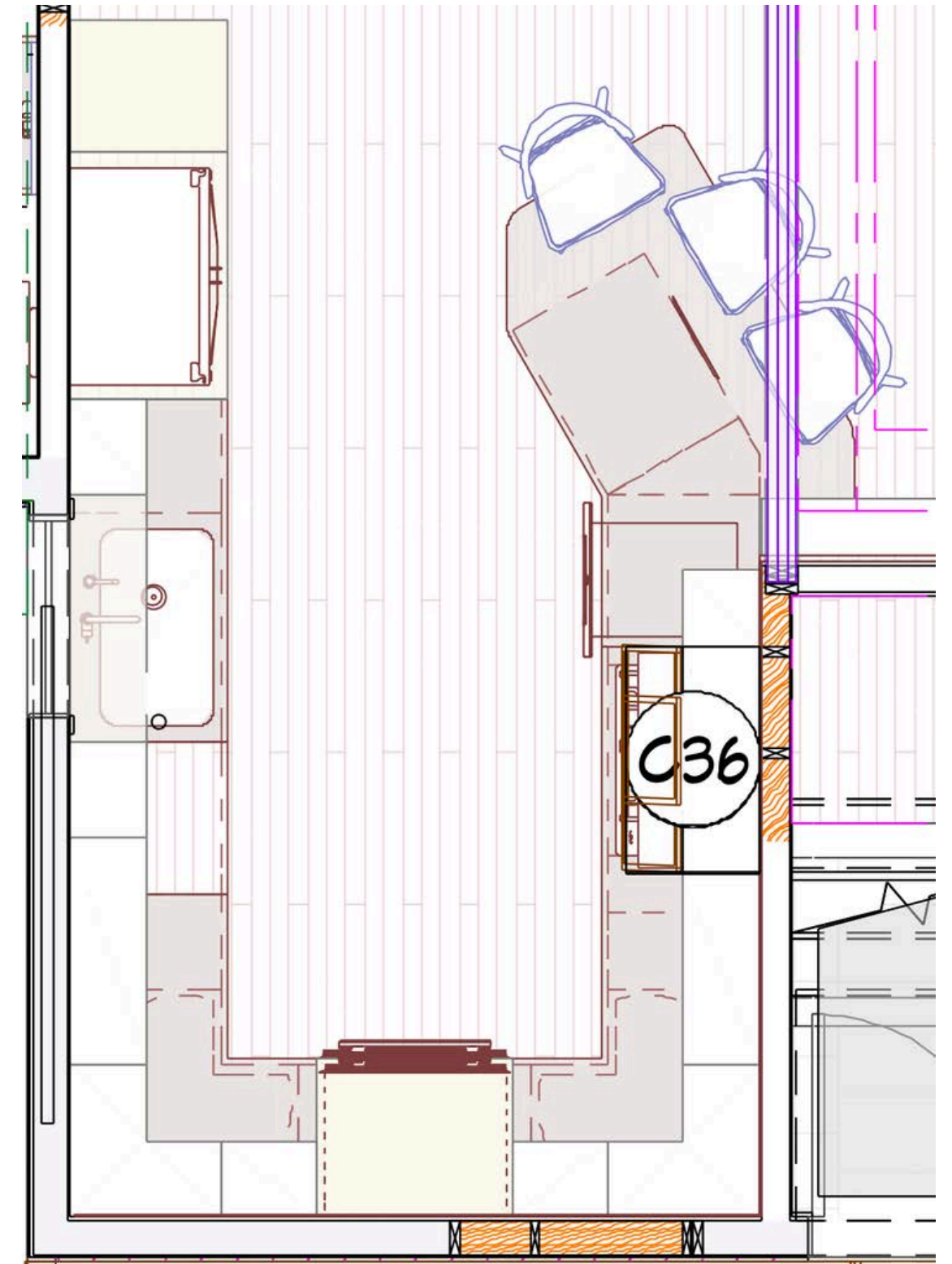
The **demolition plan** shows just how enclosed the original kitchen was — walled off from the rest of the main level by full partitions.

The **new plan** removes those walls entirely, opening up the layout so the same volume of space reads as one continuous, expansive kitchen organized around a dogleg peninsula.

DEMO PLAN



NEW PLAN



FROM PATCHWORK 1950'S...

A dim, closed-off 120-sq-ft room with red laminate, checkerboard tile, dated cabinets, a boxed-in fridge, and no built-in lighting.



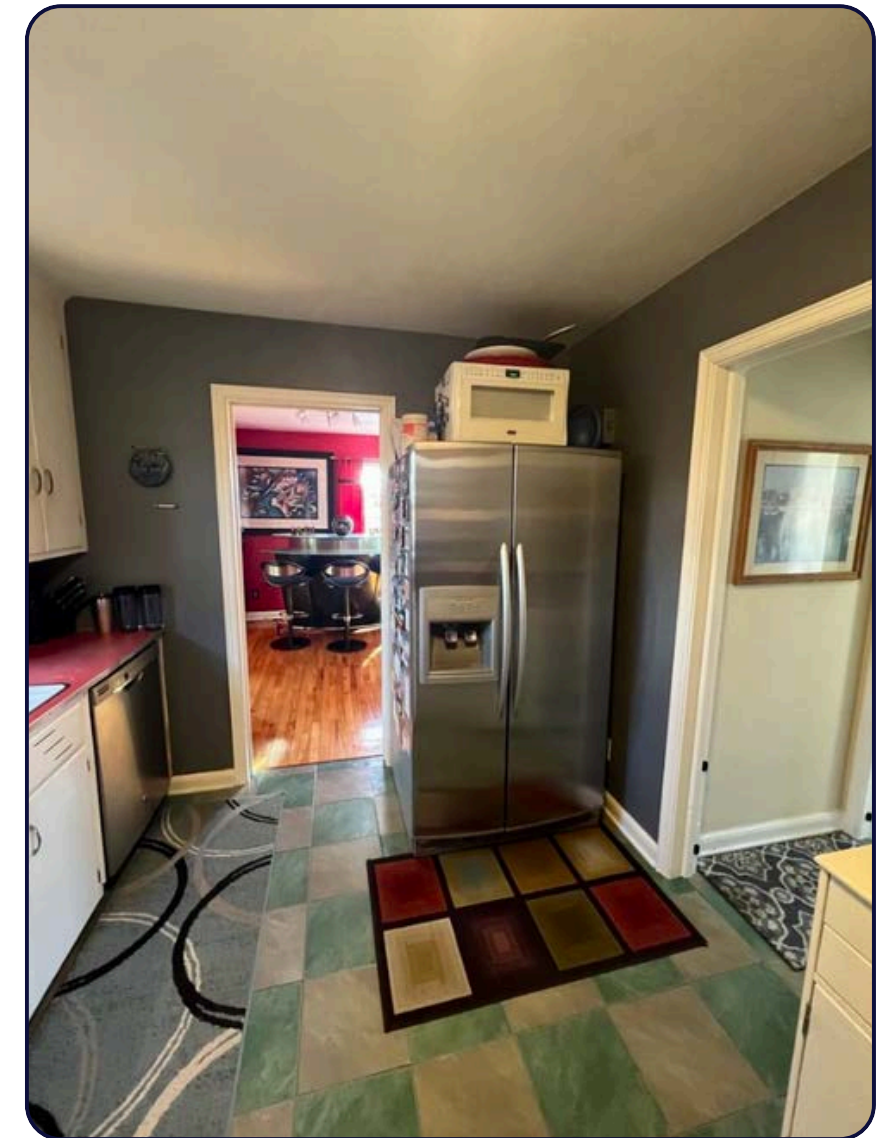
The original kitchen, isolated from the rest of the main level.



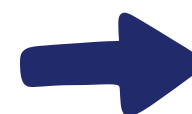
Red laminate counters and white cabinetry, original to the house.



The sink run — the kitchen's only source of natural light.



The refrigerator wall, boxed in tight against two doorways.



...TO SEAMLESS CUSTOM KITCHEN

A light-filled open kitchen featuring continuous hardwood flooring, two-tone custom cabinetry, a dogleg peninsula, and a dedicated entertaining bar.





SPATIAL & DESIGN INNOVATIONS

Dogleg Peninsula Hub

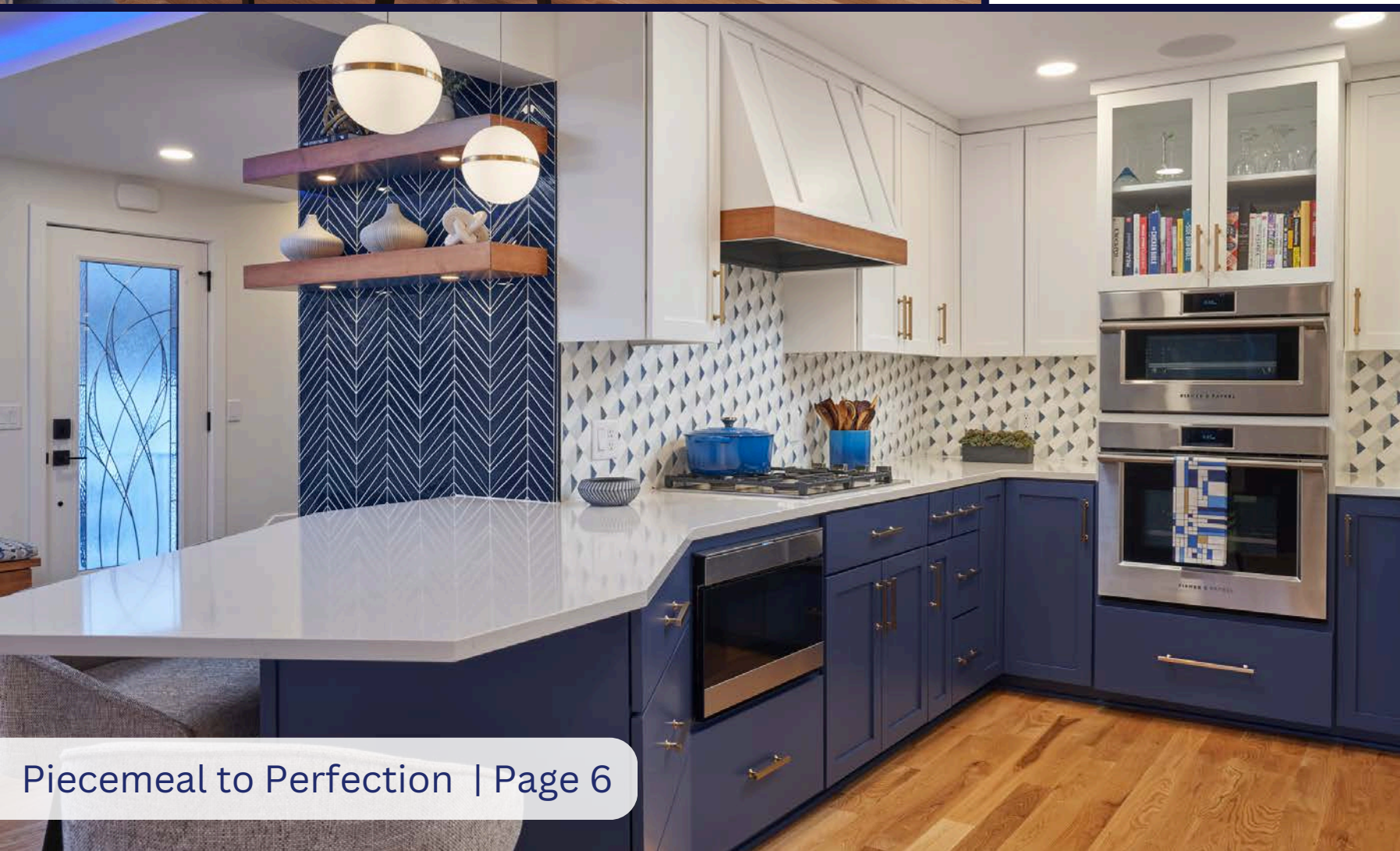
A custom-angled peninsula anchors the kitchen footprint, providing island functionality, bar seating clear of the primary prep area, and smooth traffic flow through the main living area.

Multi-Cook Appliances & Storage

Upgraded to separate double wall ovens, a built-in microwave drawer in the peninsula, and a counter-depth refrigerator framed by full pantry storage and ample prep zones.

Light Amplification

Combined multi-layered ceiling lighting, globe pendants, light quartz tops, and geometric backsplash tile to pull natural daylight from three sides of the home deep into the kitchen.



CHALLENGES & ENGINEERING

Structural Load Transfer

A critical load-bearing wall landed a point load right where the new peninsula needed to sit. To carry the load 5 feet further down the framing, the team engineered an exposed, dropped triple LVL beam—turning a structural necessity into an architectural feature of the space.

Mechanical Duct Rerouting

Demolition exposed main-level and upper-story HVAC supply runs inside the partition walls. Mechanicals were rerouted into exterior walls and the new island structure to maintain unbroken sightlines and a seamless ceiling plane.

Precision Architectural Detailing

Executed clean vertical tile wrapping around the accent column, complete with flush-mounted floating shelves and under-shelf task lighting.



ELEVATED FINISHES: CONTRAST & CONTINUITY



Two-Tone Palette & Visual Anchor

Crisp white upper cabinets pair with deep navy base cabinetry, anchored by a rich navy herringbone accent column with floating wood shelves.

Cohesive Architectural Details

Warm hardwood floors, custom natural wood hood trim, brushed brass hardware, and a subtle geometric tile backsplash bring warmth and visual balance to the entire space.

END RESULTS

Transformed a dated, cramped 1950s layout into a light-filled, highly functional multi-cook and entertaining space without needing to expand the home's exterior footprint.



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