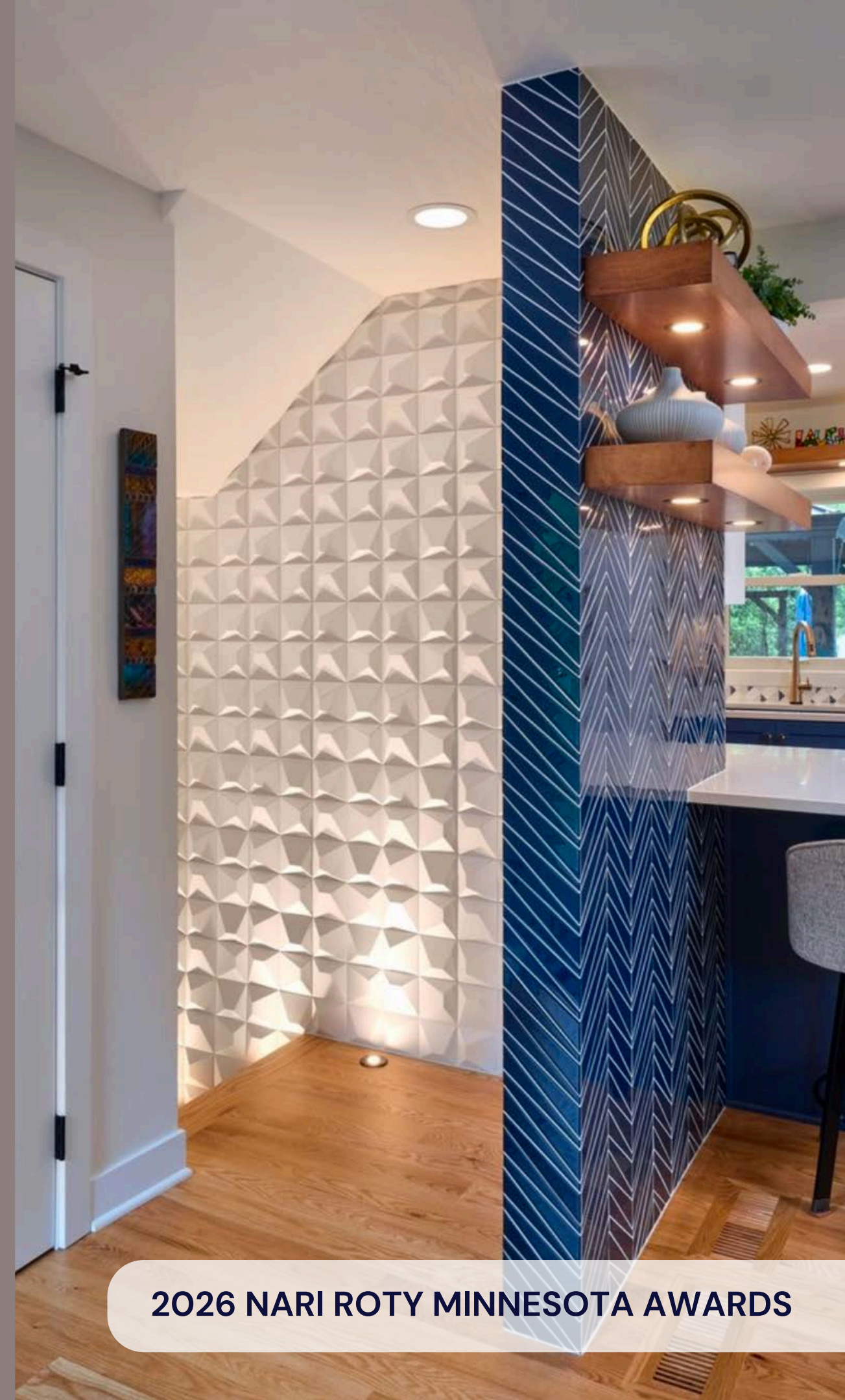


MAKING AN ENTRANCE

Interior Feature: \$50,000 & Under



2026 NARI ROTY MINNESOTA AWARDS

FROM CONGESTED TO INVITING

BACKGROUND

A cramped, boxed-in 42-sq-ft entry and 14-sq-ft hall created a chaotic traffic bottleneck, which was far from inviting. Five separate pathways converged on one small landing with no clear floor space to stand, drop a bag, or hang a coat.

The area was closed off from the rest of the main level, dark, and shaped by a single coat closet that doubled as the awkwardly shared path down to the lower level. The front door even swung backward toward the stoop, forcing guests to fight the door for entry space.

GOALS

Eliminate spatial congestion without expanding the footprint, create continuous single-level flow, and elevate required structural elements into a signature focal point.

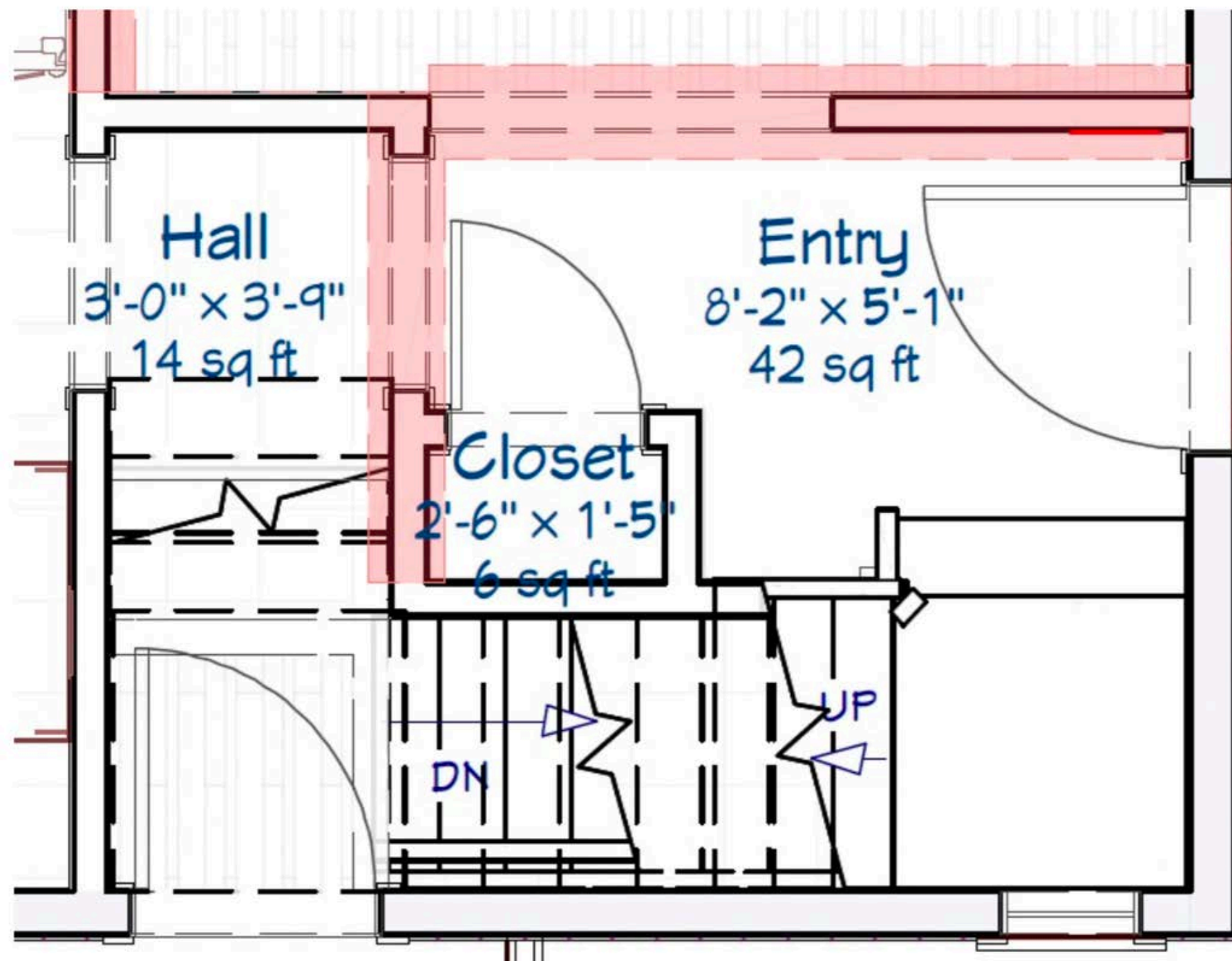
STRATEGY

Remove enclosing partition walls, re-engineer the mandatory structural wall into a feature wing wall, and utilize vertical and ceiling planes to maximize perceived volume and light.



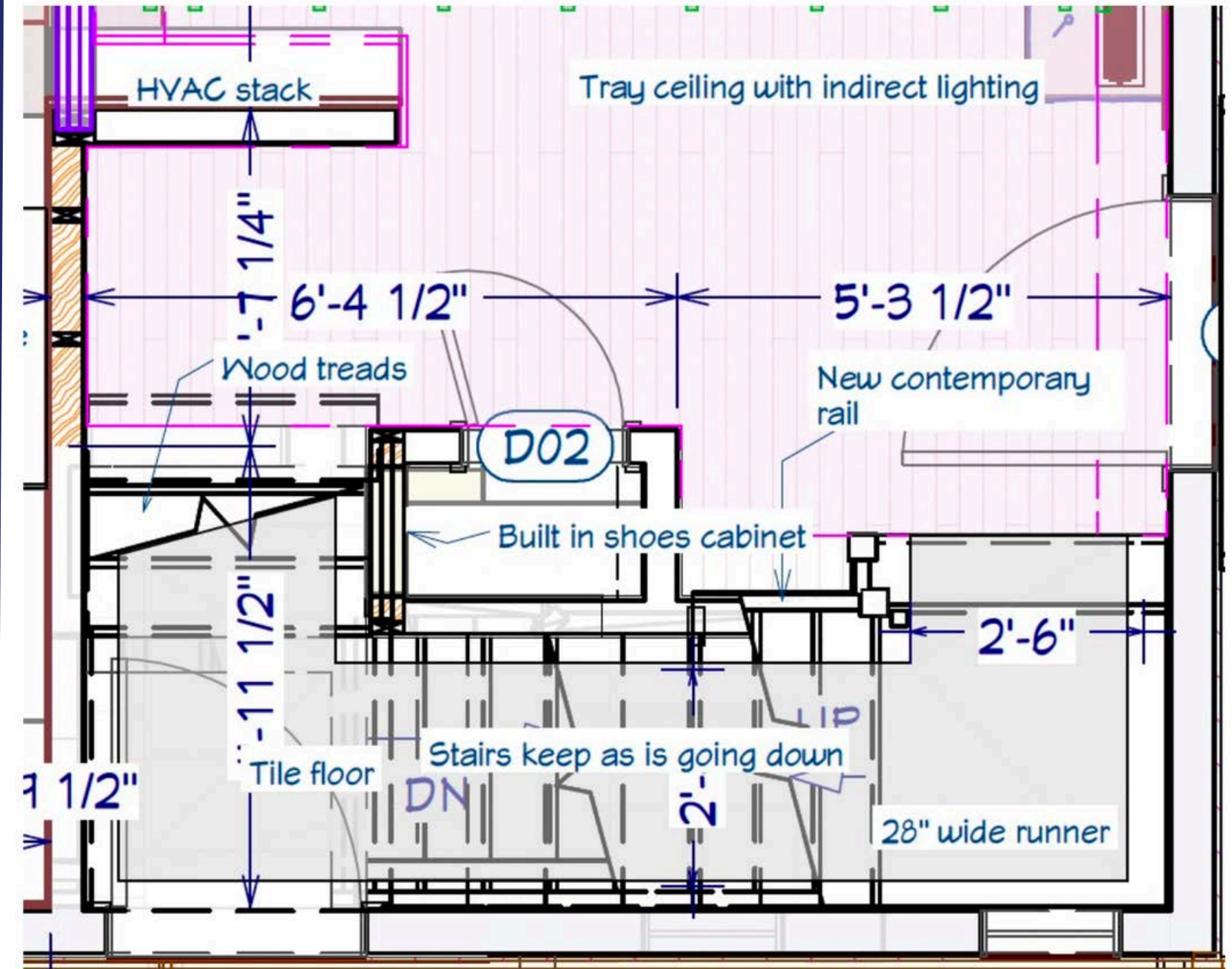
PLANS

EXISTING



Existing plan — the 42-sq-ft entry and 14-sq-ft hall, boxed in tight against the stairwell.

NEW



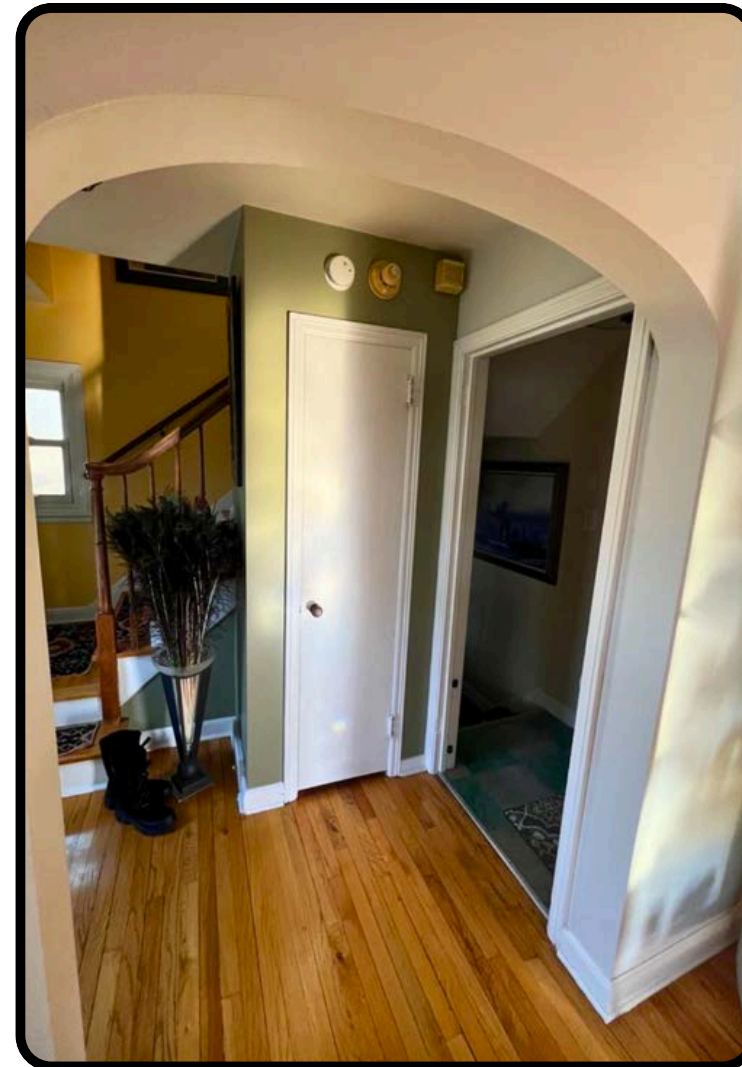
New plan details — tray ceiling with indirect lighting, wood treads, built-in shoe cabinet, and new contemporary rail along the existing stair run.

FROM BOXED-IN FOYER...

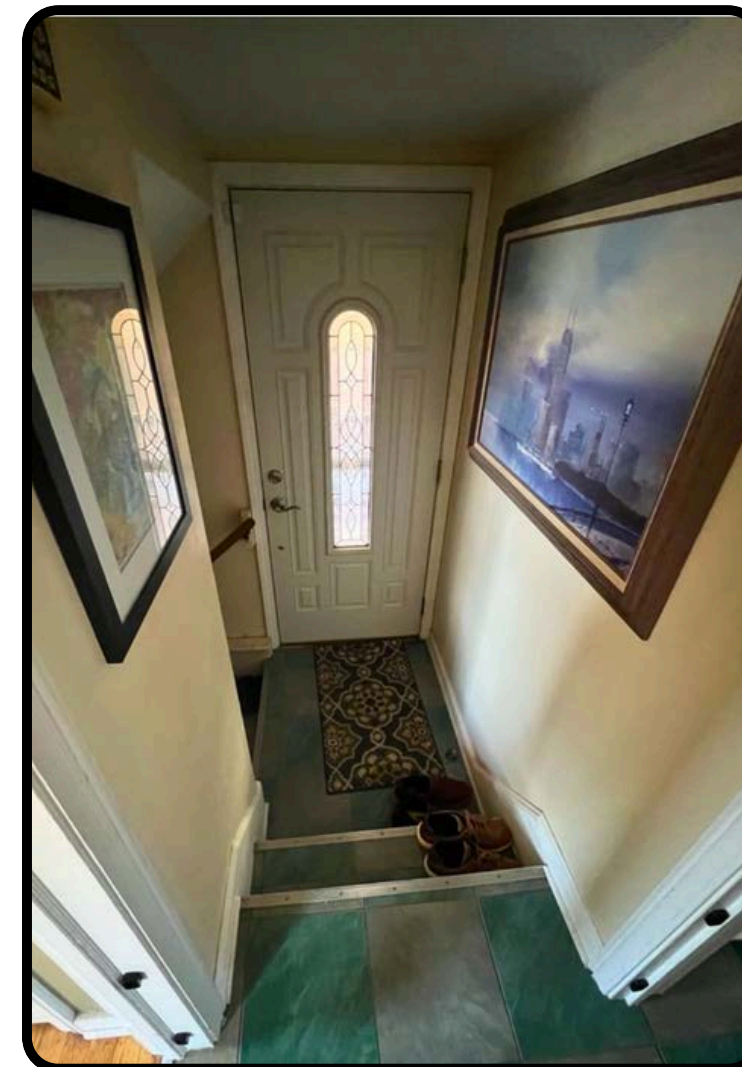
Dark, unwelcoming, enclosed 42-sq-ft traffic bottleneck with poor ergonomics.



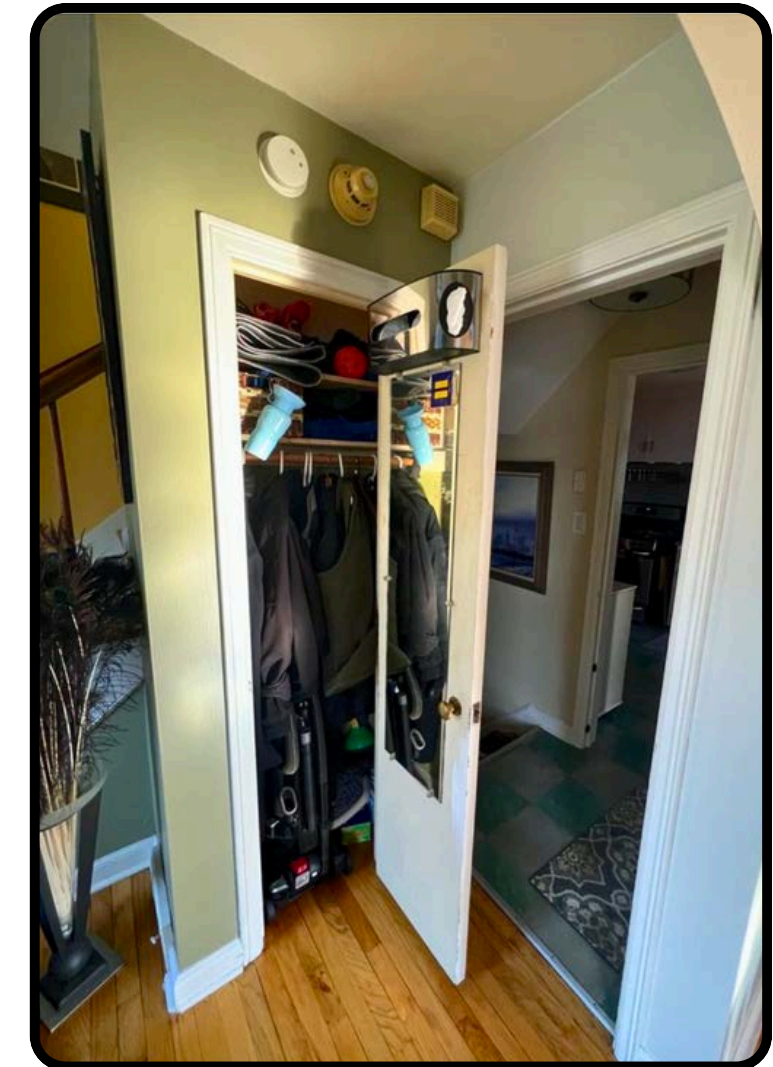
The original entry landing, where multiple spaces converged.



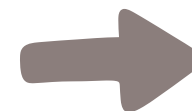
Looking back through the archway: stairs up on the left, closet and door down to the lower level on the right.



The front door, hinged so that walking in swung guests back toward the front stoop instead of into the house.

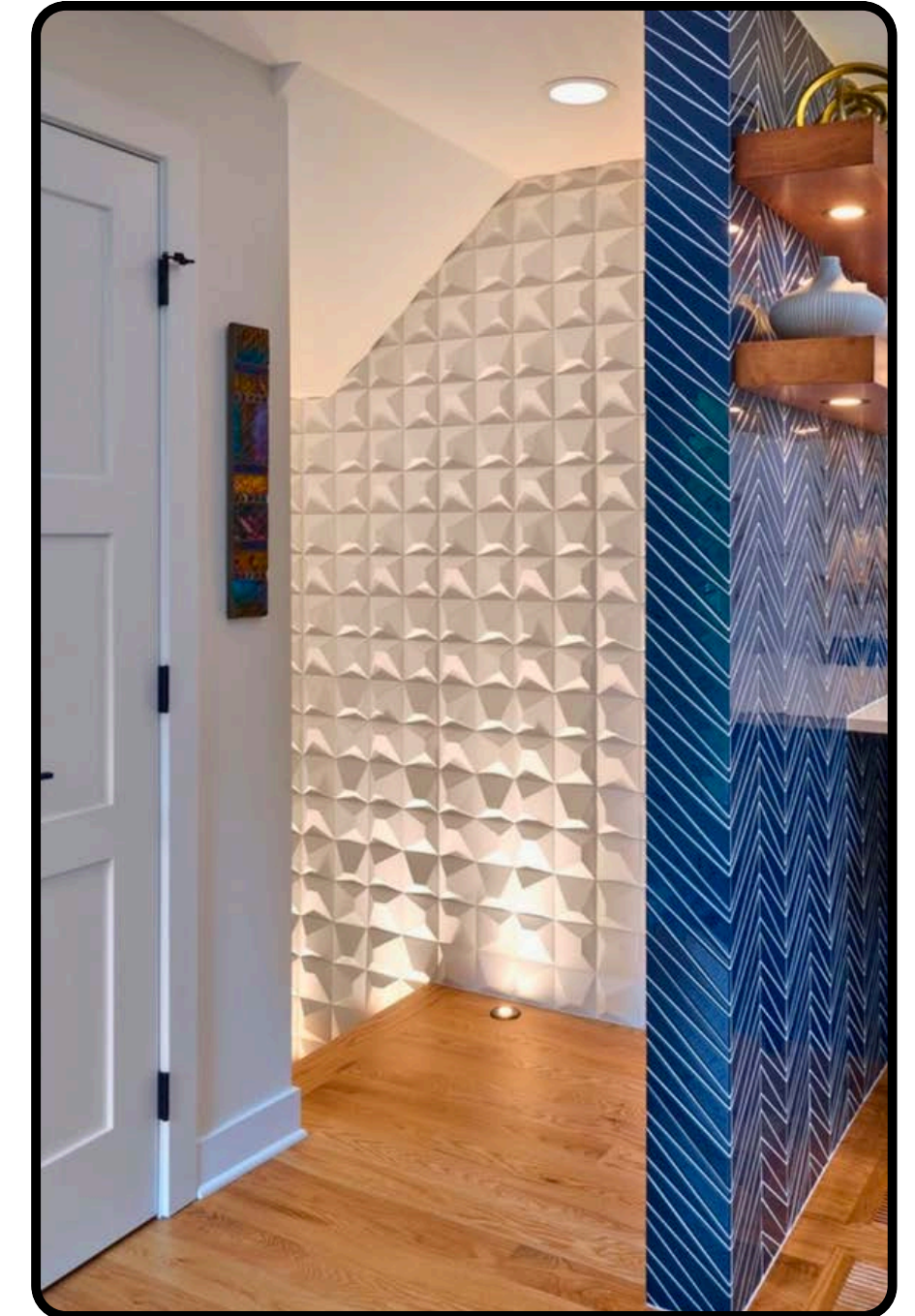
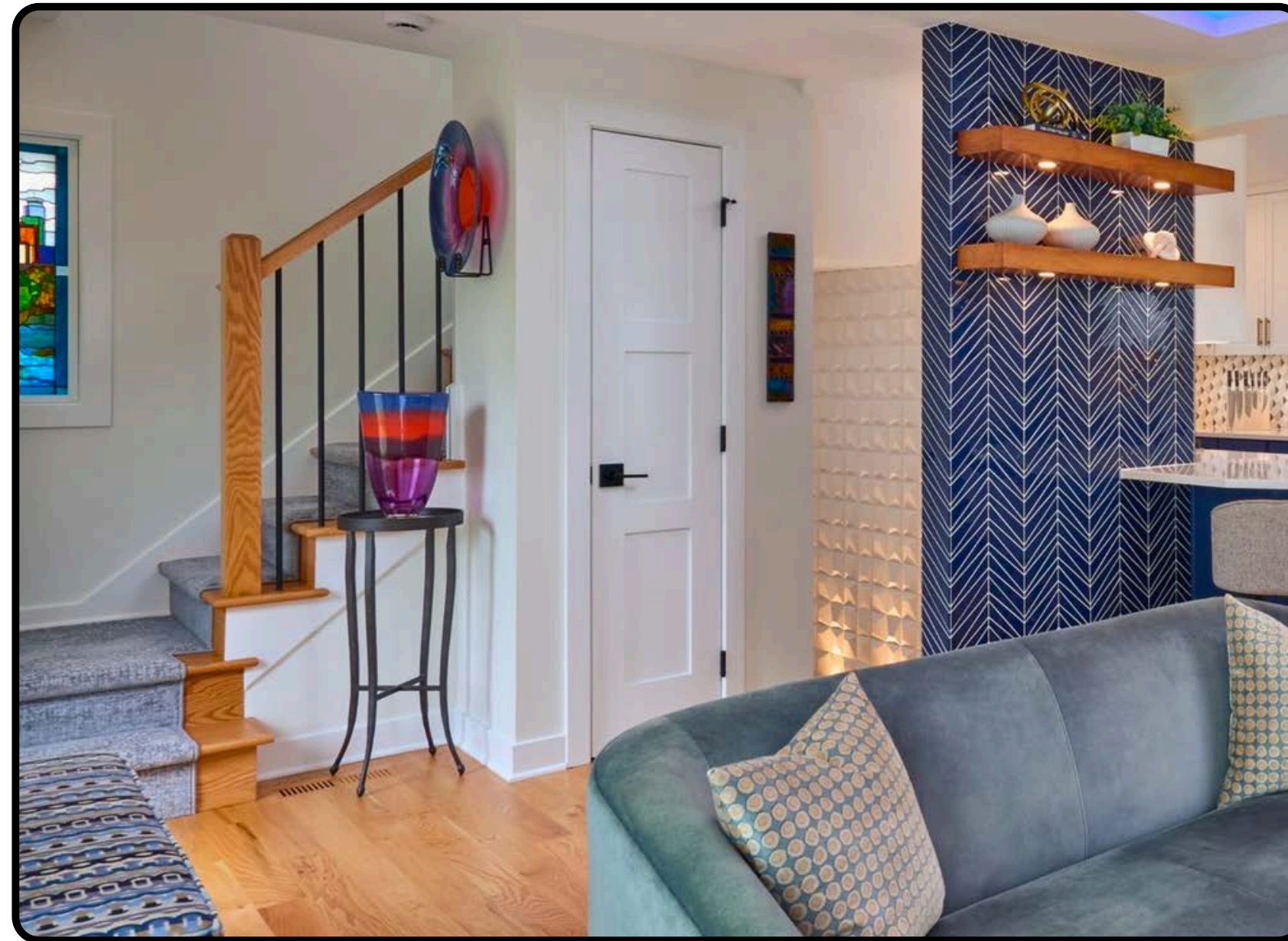


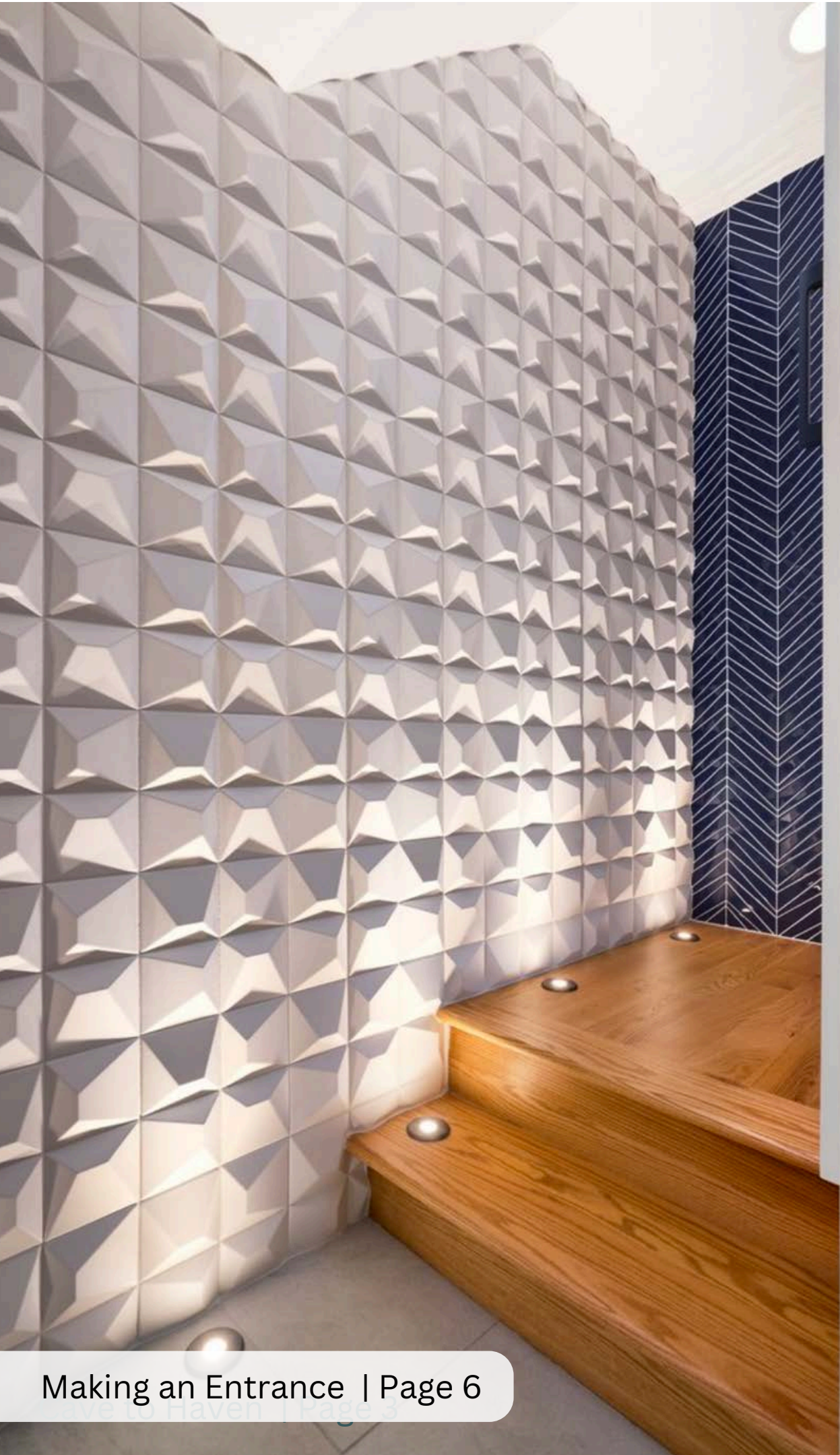
The single coat closet, packed with outerwear and doing double duty as the route down to the lower level.



...TO ARTFUL ARCHITECTURE

Light-filled, open-concept greeting space with custom tile focal wall.





SOLVING THE STRUCTURAL & SPATIAL PUZZLE

Fixed Structural Footprint Constraints

Because the basement stairwell location could not be moved, all storage, circulation, and architectural upgrades had to occur within the existing 42-sq-ft landing space.

Counter-Intuitive Traffic Ergonomics

The existing front door swung backward toward the stoop, forcing arriving guests to step backward into the doorway. The swing direction was reversed to naturally channel incoming foot traffic directly into the open living space. A small change, but it's the difference between an entry that resists you and one that welcomes you in.

Concealed Mechanical Chase

Removing the entry walls eliminated the primary vertical chase carrying critical HVAC supply lines from the basement to the second floor. The team engineered the new L-shaped wing wall to double as a concealed mechanical chase while maintaining perfectly flat substrates for heavy tile installation.

FUNCTIONALITY & INNOVATION

Unobstructed Flow & Spatial Utility

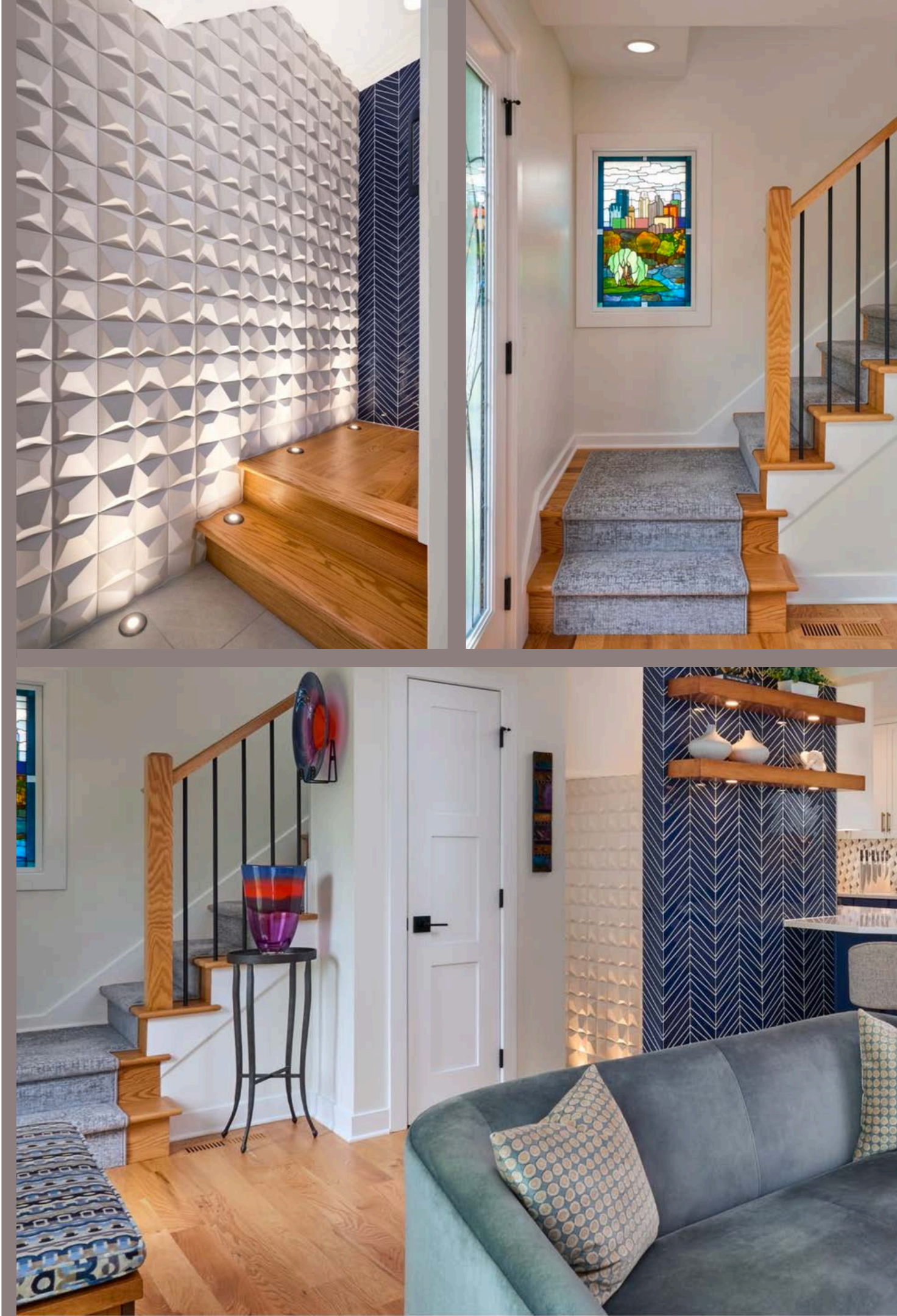
Eliminated wall barriers to connect the front door seamlessly to the rest of the home while integrating a built-in shoe cabinet directly into the landing to solve daily entry clutter.

Multi-Layered Lighting Architecture

Engineered a raised tray ceiling featuring color-changing indirect LED cove lighting, drawing the eye upward to visually expand the tight footprint while adding low-voltage step lights into refinished wood stair risers.

Ergonomic Safety Upgrades

Paired high-visibility stair tread lighting with a modern black-and-oak handrail system to enhance safety along the lower-level stair path.

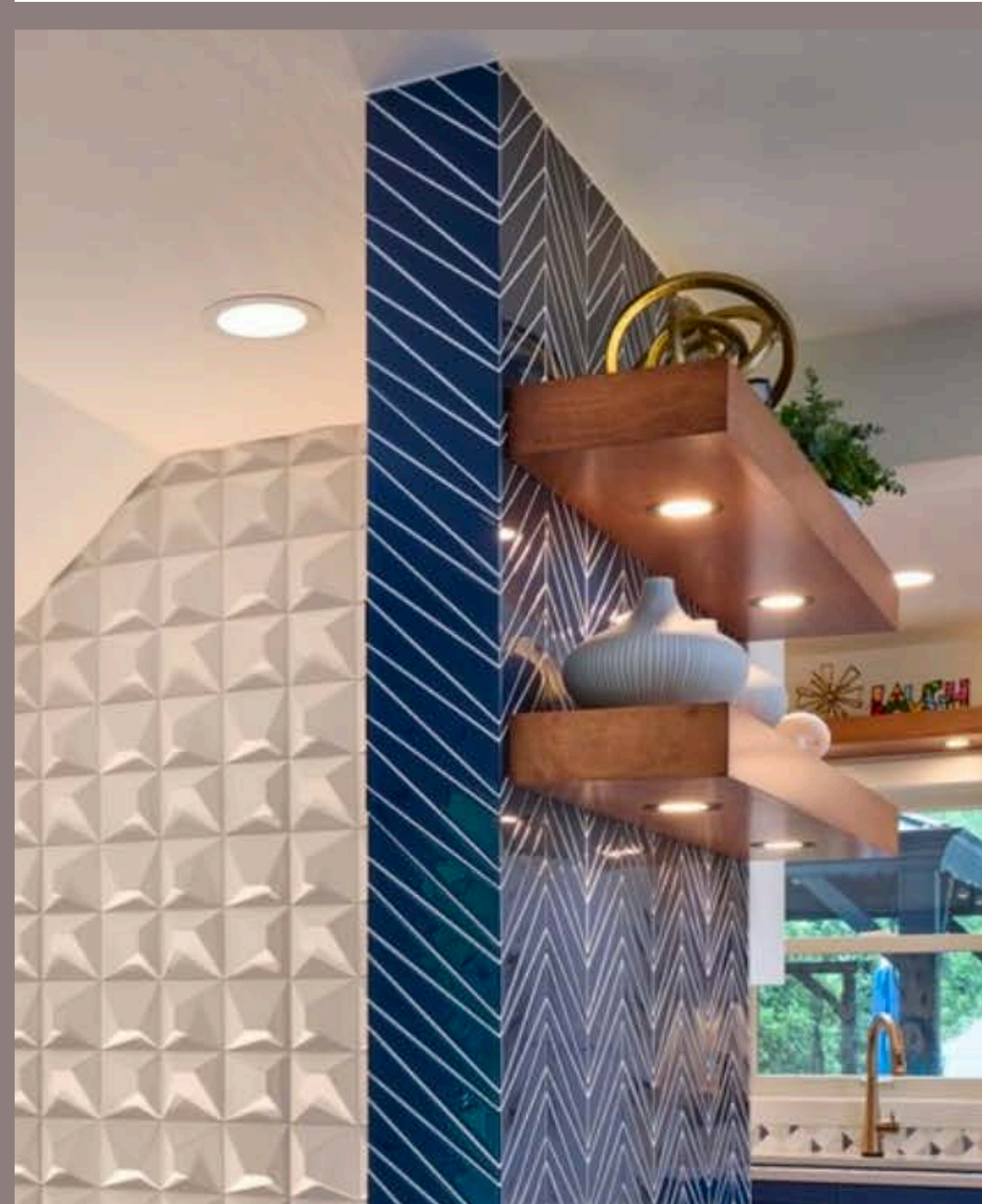




LAYERED LIGHT, PRECISION TILE & FINE DETAIL

Dual-Tile Feature Wall

Wrapped the L-shaped structural wing wall in 3D geometric white tile that transitions cleanly into a deep navy herringbone tile for striking light play and depth.



Concealed Millwork Integration

Custom-crafted floating oak shelves on the feature wall with hidden wiring channels for under-shelf task lighting.

Signature Local Art Niche

Designed a dedicated illuminated wall niche adjacent to the doorway to house a custom stained-glass depiction of the Minneapolis skyline.

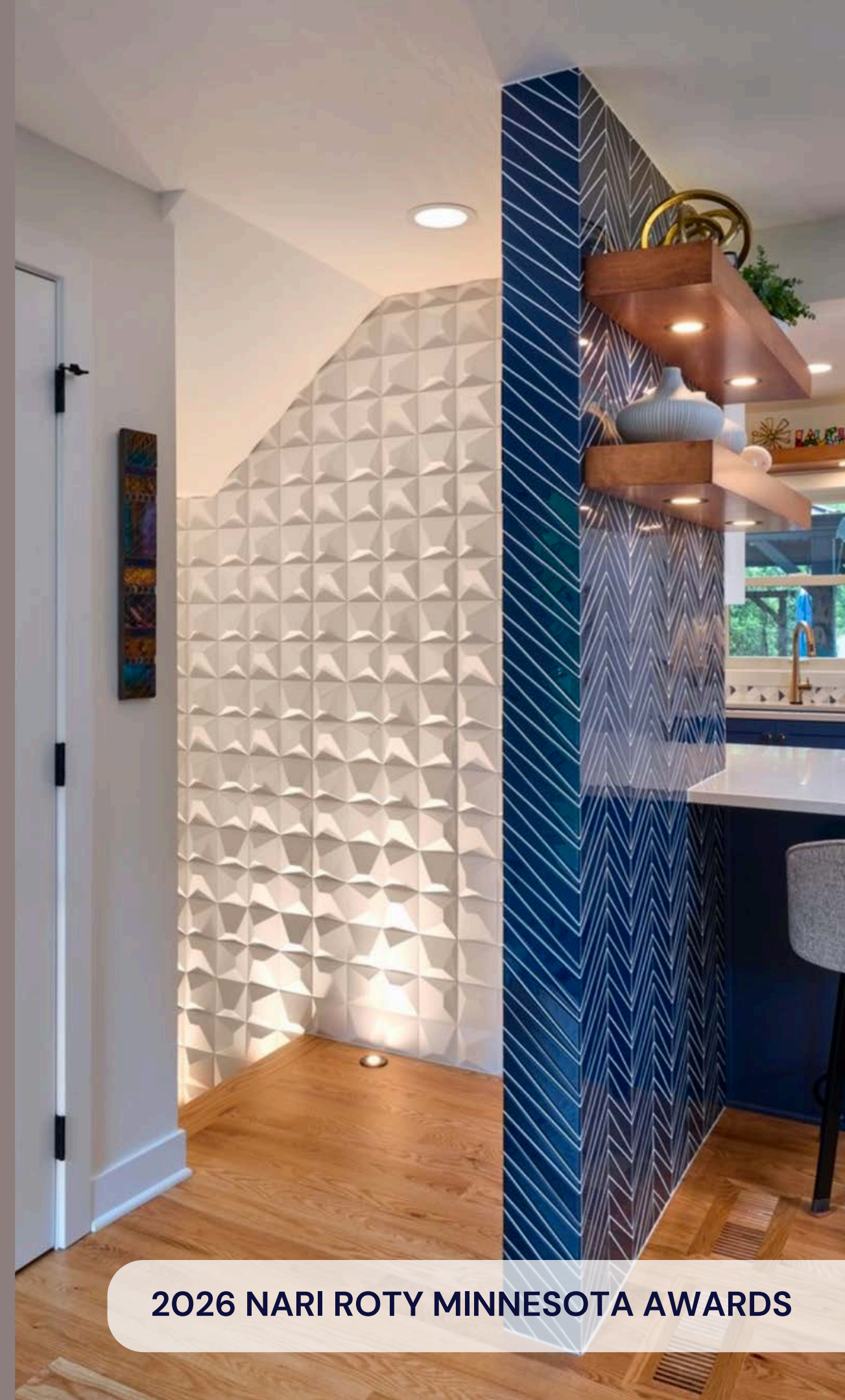
END RESULTS

Transformed a cramped 42-sq-ft entry into a dynamic, open-concept first impression. By turning structural and mechanical constraints into focal points, the project delivered high-impact architectural artistry and unhindered spatial flow.



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