

A Forever Home, Reimagined.



NARI RotY Awards 2026

Category: Entire House > \$1,000,000

Project: A Forever Home, Reimagined.

Introduction

This 1939 Colonial was envisioned to become our client's forever home, one that could support the homeowners through retirement while welcoming children, grandchildren, overnight guests, and large family gatherings. Its traditional architecture offered the character they valued, but the existing layout did not yet provide the accessibility, connection, or variety of spaces needed for that vision.

Meeting those goals required a comprehensive reorganization of the entire house with an addition. The renovation and 1,036-square-foot addition reshaped the relationship among private retreats, gathering areas, service spaces, and everyday support functions, with accessibility, circulation, storage, and long-term flexibility guiding the plan.

Throughout the project, every new space and architectural detail was designed to bridge the home's Colonial character with modern-day style and function. The result is a warm, highly personal home that feels established rather than newly expanded, comfortable for two, welcoming for many, and prepared to serve the family for years to come.





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Client Wants and Needs

- The homeowners wanted the ability to age in place gracefully, with their primary bedroom and bathroom on the main level, accessible laundry, and generous circulation throughout the home to accommodate potential mobility changes over time.
- As avid year-round cyclists, the homeowners needed their home to accommodate bike storage, maintenance, and year-round riding. They needed convenient access between the main and lower levels, including a direct route and adequate stair width to move bikes downstairs.
- The homeowners wanted flexibility in how spaces were used over time. They did not want rooms to be defined by a single purpose or maintain a formal hierarchy, but rather spaces that could adapt as their needs and lifestyle changed.
- The kitchen needed to support both everyday life for two and larger-scale entertaining. The homeowners wanted a generous gathering space while also accommodating cooking, preparation, serving, and cleanup for larger gatherings.
- The homeowners wanted to honor the colonial character and existing bones of the home while updating it for modern living. They desired a home that felt personal, joyful, handcrafted, and connected to the character and nostalgia of an older home without feeling dated.
- Natural light and a connection to the outdoors was high on the homeowners list along with high ceilings and volumes of space.

Project Constraints

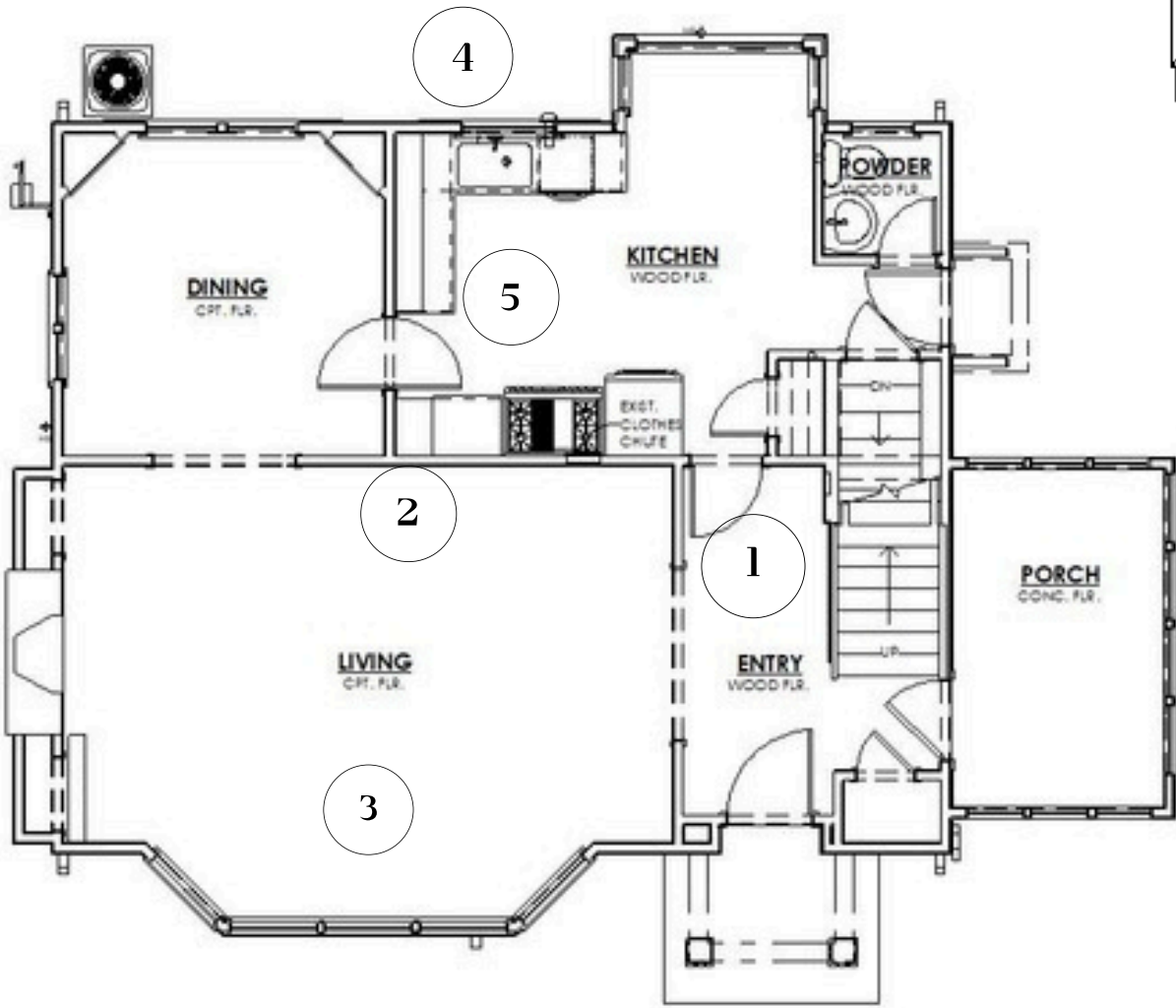
- The existing floor plan needed to accommodate a wide range of functions and changing needs while maintaining a sense of connection and flow throughout the home.
- An addition was needed to provide additional living space without overpowering the existing home or exceeding the property's allowable impervious surface area.
- Load-bearing walls needed to be removed to achieve the desired changes to the existing floor plan.
- The project needed to remain within the homeowners' established budget while addressing their extensive list of functional and lifestyle priorities.
- The renovation needed to balance modern functionality with the architectural character of the existing colonial home, creating a cohesive result rather than making the addition or renovated spaces feel disconnected from the original house.
- Existing low ceilings and shorter doorways needed to co-exist with vaulted ceilings and taller doorways. Allow flow and connection from old to new



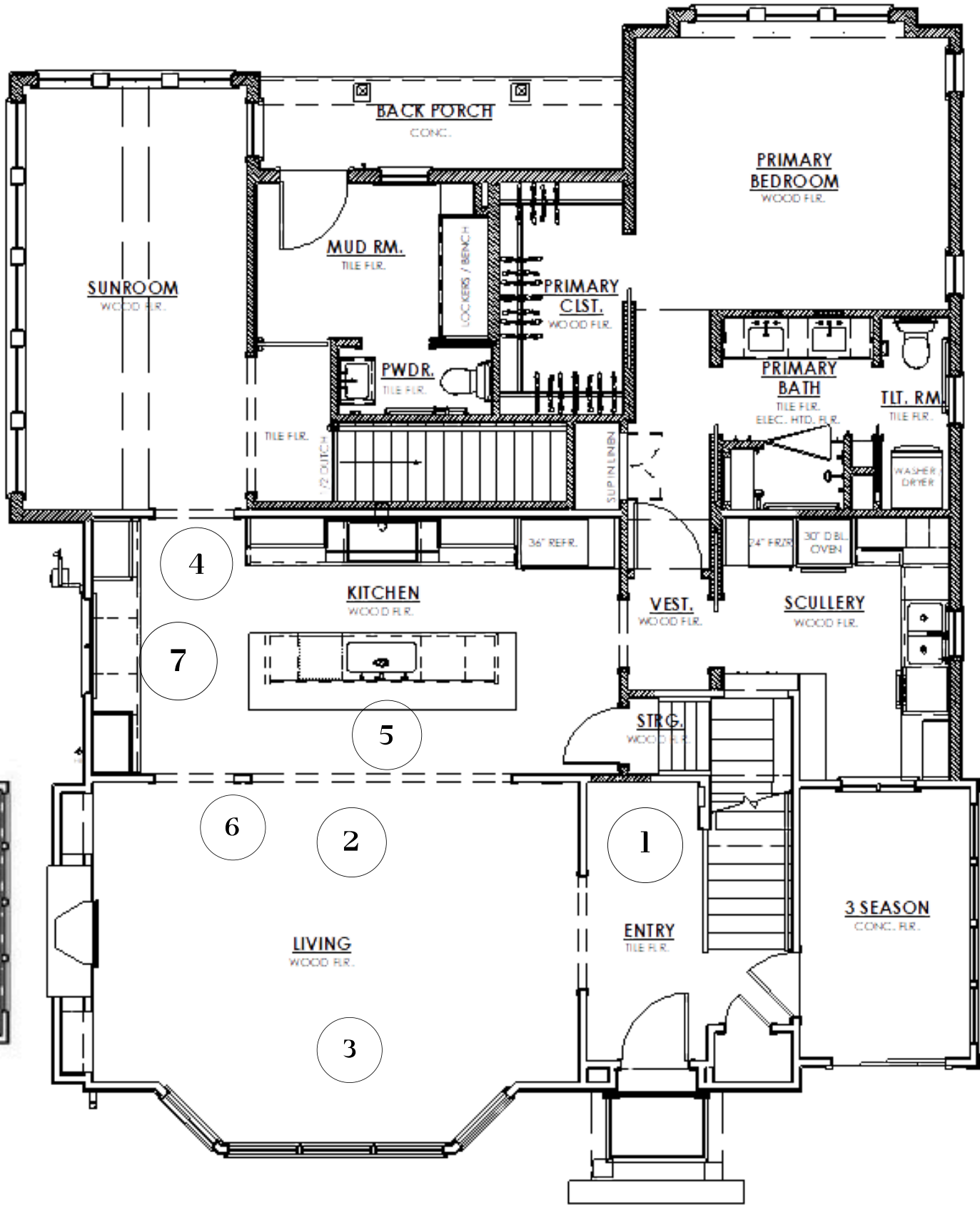
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Floor Plan Transformation:

Entry, Living Room and Kitchen



Before Floor Plan



After Floor Plan

1. Defined Entry & Improved Circulation

The existing kitchen opening was closed off from the main entry, allowing the entry to function as a true arrival space rather than a passage directly into the kitchen. This improved circulation and created a more defined transition between the main-level living spaces, sunroom, and second floor.

2. Opened Connection Between Kitchen & Living Room

The load-bearing wall between the kitchen and living room was removed and replaced with a steel beam to improve sightlines, daylight, and connection. Relocating the kitchen to the center of the home creates an easy flow from one space to the next.

3. Preserved & Reimagined the Living Room

The existing living room and bay window were preserved, honoring the character of the 1939 Colonial. The generous scale of the room allows it to function as both a formal and informal extension of the kitchen—providing space for overflow dining, lounging, or a quiet retreat.

4. Connected Addition to the Original Home

The rear exterior wall was removed to seamlessly connect the new addition to the existing home creating a cohesive relationship between old and new.

5. Reimagined Kitchen for Everyday Living & Entertaining

The existing kitchen and dining room were opened and reconfigured into a larger, more functional kitchen. Multiple work and serving areas support large gatherings while allowing the space to function comfortably for the homeowners' everyday life as a couple.

6. Defined Kitchen Circulation

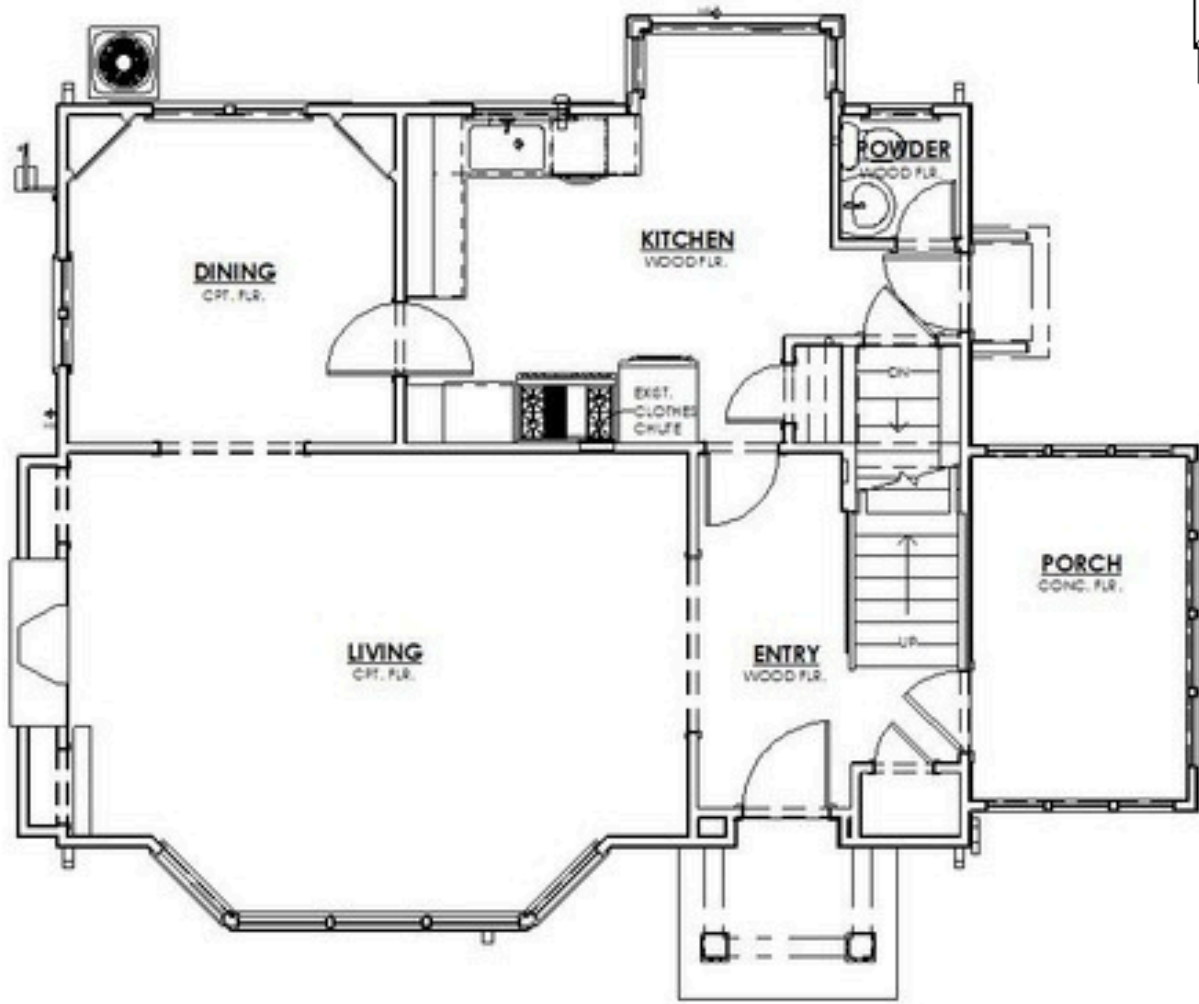
A structural postpost creates the visual definition of a walkway, directing guests around the primary kitchen work zone and keeping the main traffic pattern clear. It also creates a cased opening that adds architectural character and rhythm as you move through the home.

7. Flexible Serving & Storage

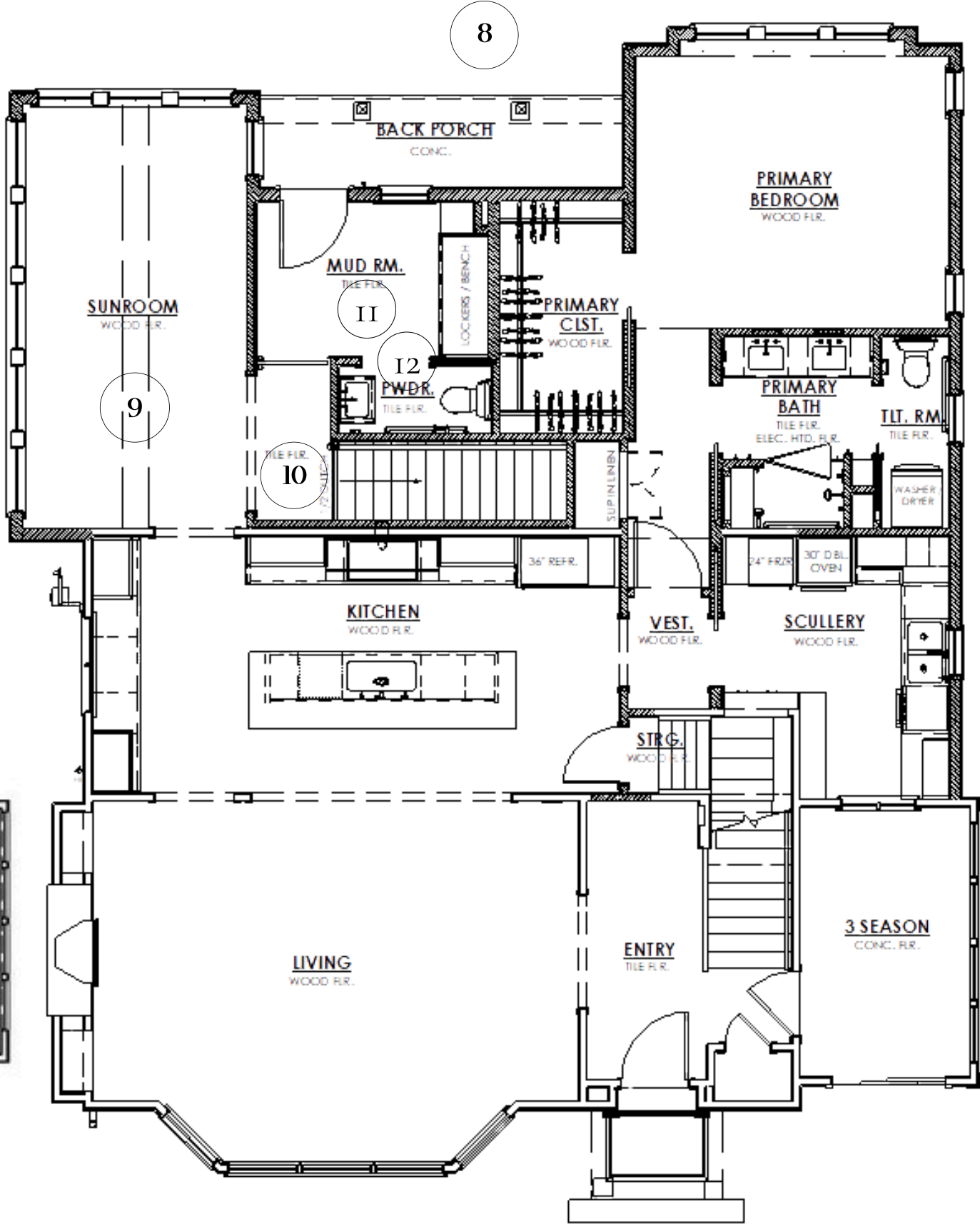
A dedicated wall of cabinetry just outside the primary kitchen workspace provides flexible counter space for serving, entertaining, and everyday use, while adding valuable additional storage.

Floor Plan Transformation:

U Shaped Addition: Public Spaces



Before Floor Plan



After Floor Plan

8. U-Shaped Addition & Thoughtful Planning

The addition was designed in a U-shape to accommodate multiple functions while preserving valuable yard space. This configuration allowed public and private spaces to develop naturally around the existing home, creating a thoughtful connection between the original structure and the new addition.

9. Flexible Sunroom

The sunroom was designed with a vaulted ceiling and large-scale windows to allow natural light to pour into the room. The added ceiling height offers a comfortable new scale for the tall homeowners, while the long shape allows the space to function as a dining room, breakfast nook, lounge, or anything in between.

10. Improved Lower-Level Access

A new 42"-wide staircase was designed to improve access to the lower level, replacing an existing stair that was tight, dark, and difficult to navigate. Clear headroom makes it easier to move bikes and everyday items between levels. At the clients' request, the stair enters directly from the yard with a single turn.

11. Functional Mudroom & Storage

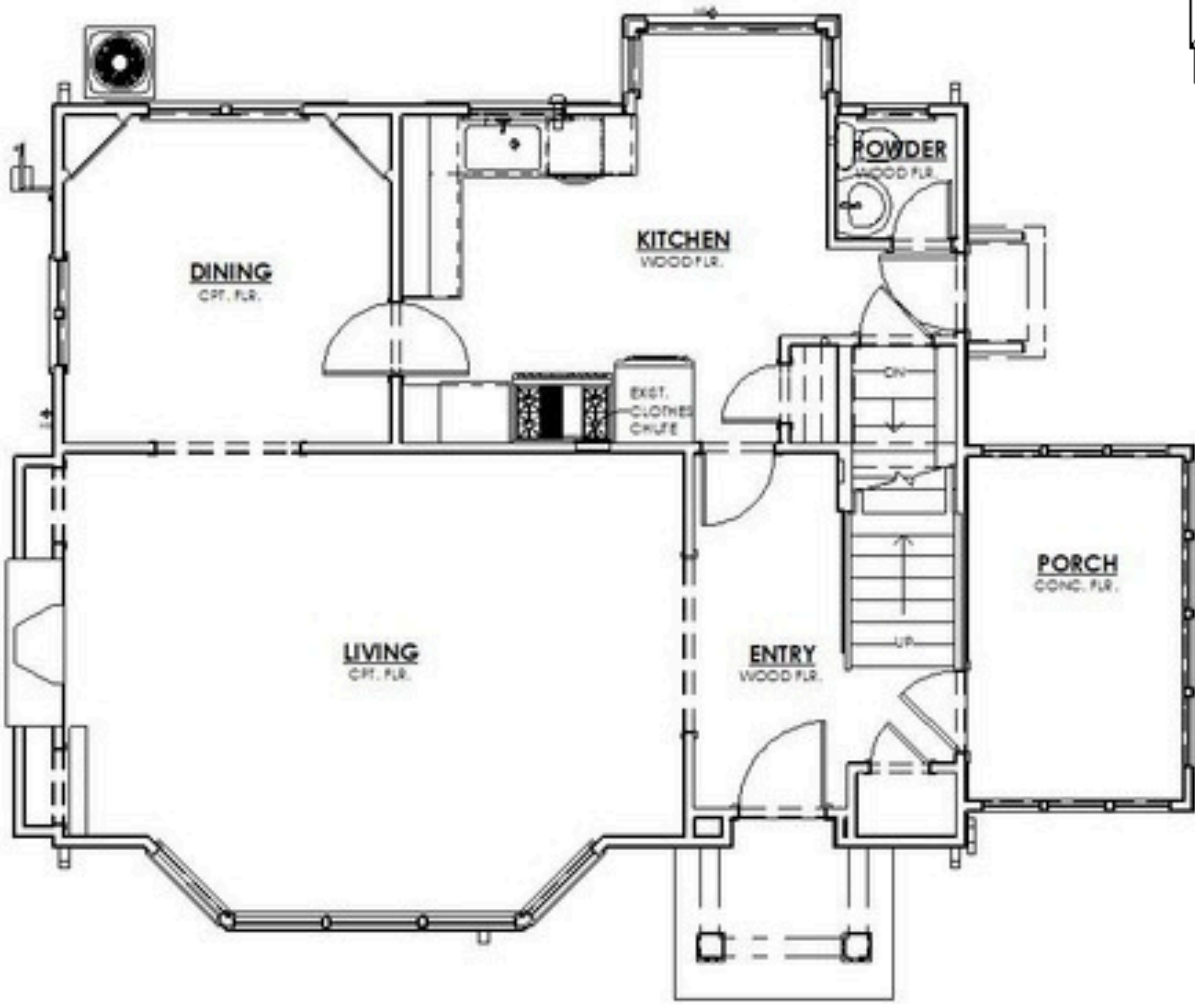
Located directly off the backyard and garage, the mudroom provides an easy transition in and out of the home. Its generous footprint and floor-to-ceiling cabinetry provide ample all-season storage while keeping everyday items organized and out of sight.

12. Convenient & Private Powder Room

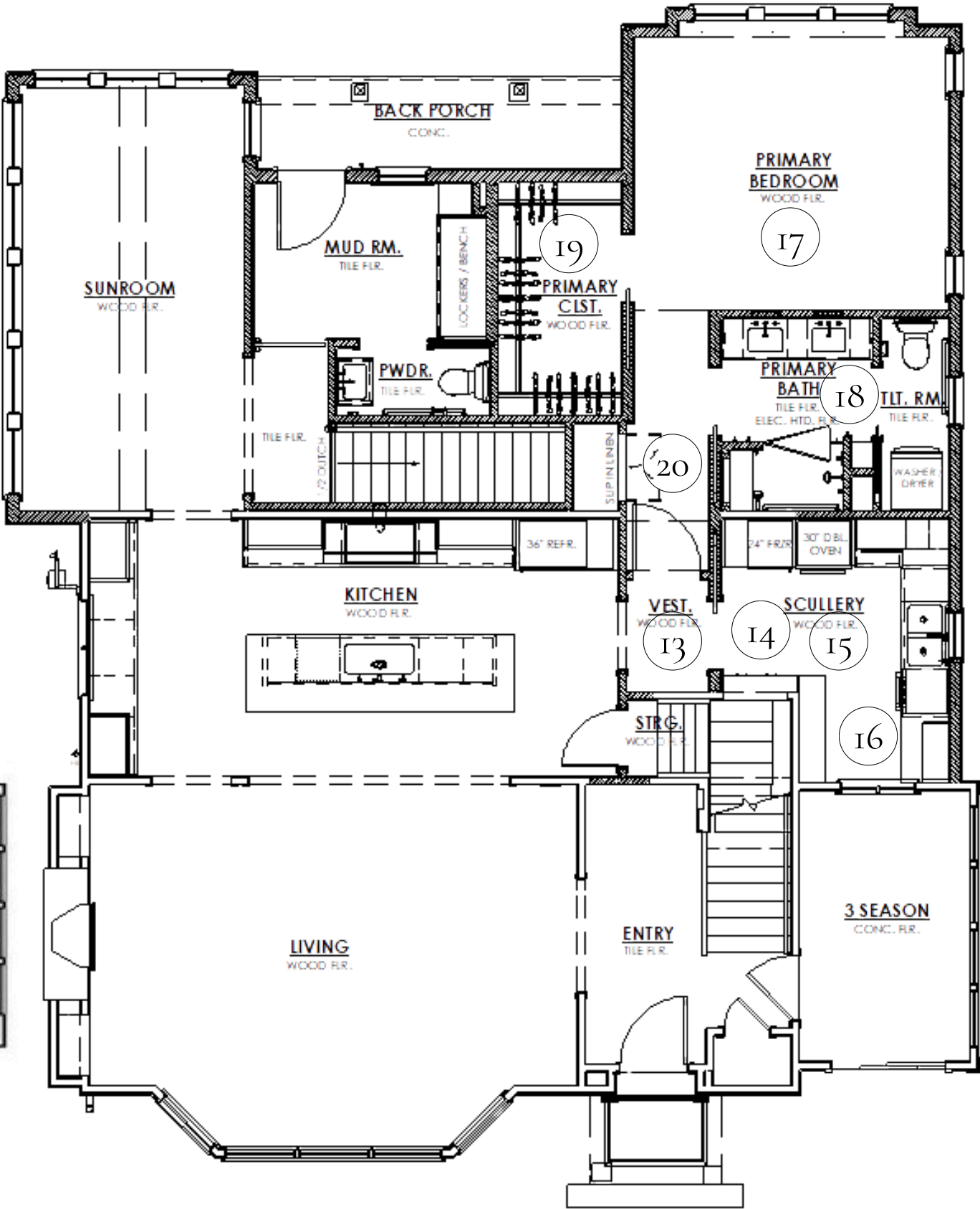
The powder room was strategically located for easy access from the main level while maintaining privacy. Its placement allows guests to use the space comfortably without making it visually prominent within the main living areas.

Floor Plan Transformation:

U Shaped Addition: Private Spaces



Before Floor Plan



After Floor Plan

13. Defined Transition & Privacy

A congested area was reimagined as a vestibule that creates a thoughtful transition to the more private spaces of the home. Acting as a buffer between the main living areas, scullery, and primary suite, the vestibule improves circulation while providing a sense of separation and privacy.

14. Multi-Functional Scullery

An underutilized space connecting the addition to the existing three-season porch was transformed into a highly functional scullery. The space provides a secondary work zone for large gatherings, keeping mess and activity out of the main kitchen, while adding pantry storage, a secondary sink, and dishwasher.

15. Catering Kitchen Functionality

Double ovens and the freezer were relocated to the scullery, keeping the main kitchen visually clean and improving circulation. When needed, the space can function as a catering kitchen, providing additional capacity for entertaining and large family gatherings.

16. Reused Window Creates Connection

A salvaged window was strategically placed to reconnect the scullery with the existing three-season porch, a space that had previously felt disconnected from the home. The window brings natural light into the scullery and doubles as a convenient serving window when entertaining.

17. Primary Suite Oriented to the Outdoors

The primary suite was positioned to take advantage of the home's exterior views, with the bedroom oriented toward the backyard.

18. Primary Bathroom & Laundry

The bathroom is located immediately upon entering the suite and provides the essential amenities along with a conveniently integrated stacking washer and dryer and separate toilet room

19. Personalized Primary Closet

The primary closet was designed specifically around the homeowners' needs and is directly connected to the bedroom and positioned across from the bathroom, creating an efficient and intuitive flow for everyday living.

20. Maximizing Unused Space

A large linen cabinet was strategically tucked into otherwise unused space above the new addition, transforming dead space into valuable storage for the bathroom and primary bedroom.

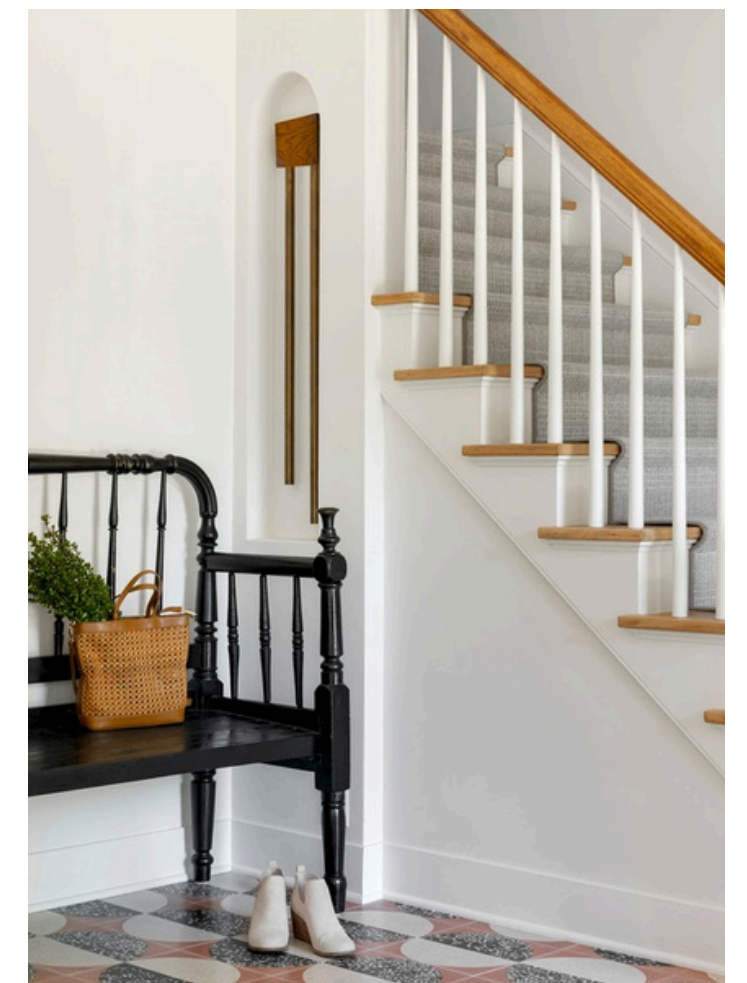
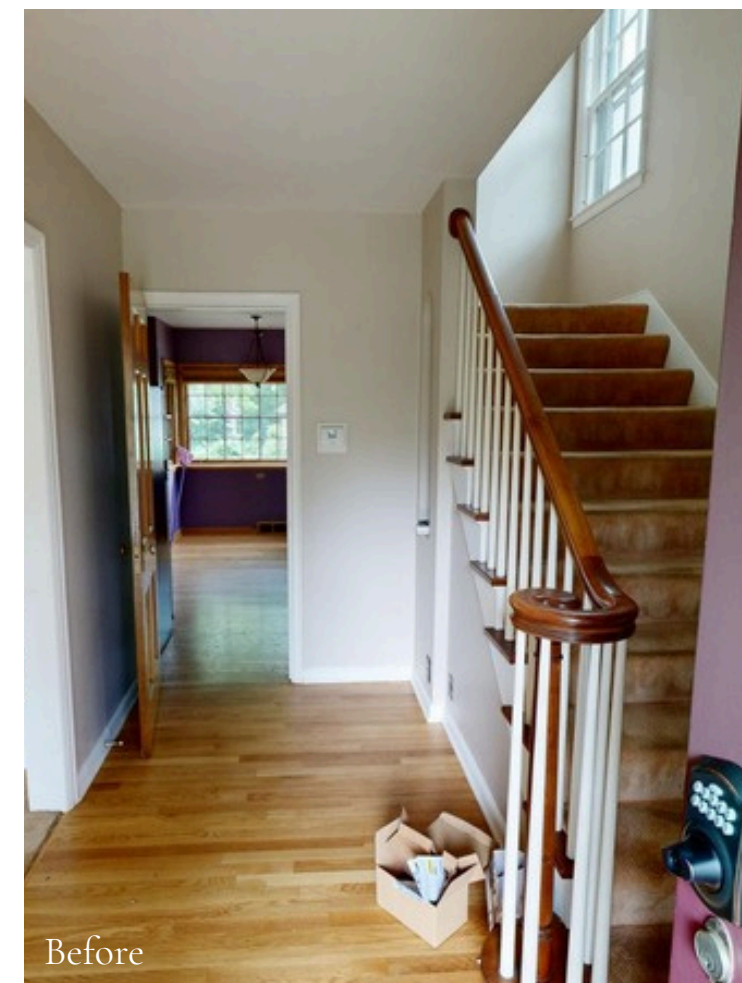
A Clear Welcoming Arrival

The entry was designed around the clients' desire to create an immediate sense of welcome, to draw you into the home while establishing a clear and intentional transition into the living spaces. Closing off the entrance to the kitchen allows guests a direct pathway to the living room drawing them into the home.

In honoring the character of the home, we refinished the existing railing and banister and paired the original stair with a traditional runner that complements the warmth of the wood stain. We reused existing doors and hardware where applicable restoring them to pristine condition.

At the entry, a cement-based terrazzo tile was introduced as a nod to the era of the home, reinterpreted in a playful repeating pattern. The circular motif speaks directly to the clients' love of curved forms and movement while bringing a sense of joy and personality to the arrival experience.

The result is an entry that feels distinctly connected to the home's history while reflecting the clients' personality—warm, welcoming, playful, and full of life.

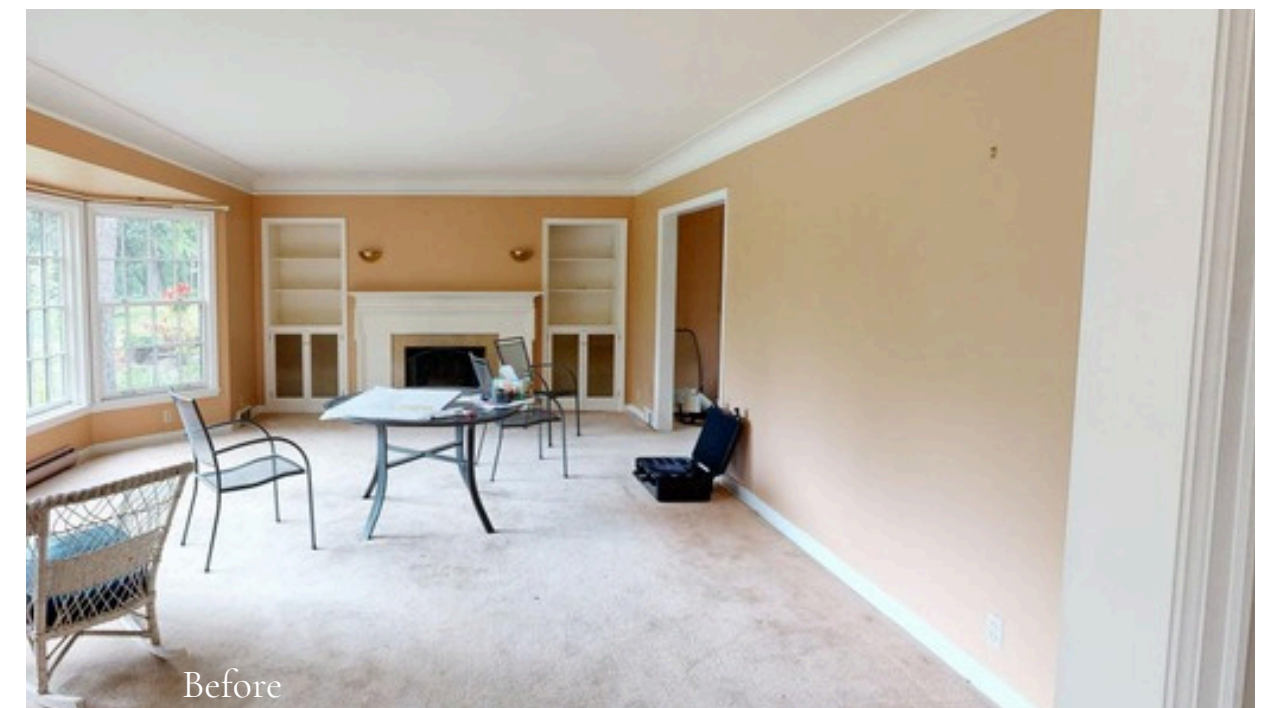


Connecting the Heart of the Home

A primary goal for the home was to create stronger connections between spaces and improve the overall flow. Upon entering, a large load-bearing wall separated the formal living room from the rest of the home. Removing the wall and introducing a steel beam opened the space and allowed the kitchen to become the central gathering point, creating both a visual and physical connection to the living room.

The new layout comfortably accommodates large gatherings while remaining intimate for everyday life. Existing built-ins flanking the fireplace were preserved and refreshed with paint and an unexpected pop of blue, adding a whimsical touch that reflects the clients' personality.

New sconces elevate the fireplace, while organically shaped overhead fixtures introduce a contemporary contrast.



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Layering Old & New

The living room's existing cove ceiling molding and trim details became the inspiration for architectural detailing throughout the home, creating a consistent visual language from the original spaces into the new kitchen.

The structural post required to support the long steel beam was intentionally incorporated into the design, helping frame the kitchen and define the transition between spaces. A secondary cased opening creates a visual walkway, directing guests through the kitchen while keeping them out of the primary work zone.

This view from the living room into the new kitchen highlights the importance of understanding the layers of the original home and thoughtfully carrying those details into the new design. Lighting was intentionally selected to complement—not compete with—the kitchen, allowing it to remain the focal point while balancing the traditional architecture with contemporary elements.

The result is a home that feels connected, welcoming, and layered, honoring its original character while reflecting how the homeowners live today.



The Heart of the Home

Designed to balance timeless architectural character with the homeowners' playful personality, the kitchen layers warm wood cabinetry, reeded fire-molded glass, sculptural lighting, nostalgic crystal knobs, and richly textured materials to create a space that feels both enduring and fresh.

A generous island anchors the kitchen, comfortably seating five to seven guests with additional room for standing and gathering. The back and sides are wrapped in reeded tambour, adding durability, subtle movement, and texture while reinforcing the layered material palette.

The custom-designed range hood serves as the architectural focal point, thoughtfully scaled to the homeowners' height for improved function. Its graceful arch introduces softness, while carefully detailed molding pays homage to the Colonial roots of the home. Finished in a soft off-white gray, the hood blends with the surrounding sculptural tile, balancing the warmth of the wood cabinetry without competing with the room's other focal points.

An almost sculptural tile was selected as the backdrop, providing texture and movement without overwhelming the space. Its repeating curves and rhythm reflect the homeowners' love of circles and movement, adding an unexpected moment that ties the room together and creates balance among the many layers of the design.



Before

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Thoughtful Function

This view highlights the kitchen's thoughtful approach to everyday function. The induction cooktop provides an efficient, streamlined cooking surface, while the workstation sink was selected to accommodate the realities of daily life. Its generous scale allows dirty dishes to be contained within the sink rather than left in clear view on the island, keeping the kitchen visually calm and ready for entertaining.

The buffet wall extends the kitchen's functionality beyond the main work zone. Designed to serve as additional counter space, a dedicated beverage station, and substantial storage, it accommodates everything from linens and oversized platters to extra dishes and small appliances. This flexibility allows the kitchen to easily transition between everyday use and large gatherings.

Materials and finishes were carefully curated to introduce a sense of nostalgia while blending old and new. Schoolhouse-inspired sconces above the windows provide both task and ambient lighting, while a small pop of orange adds personality without overwhelming the space. Inside the cabinetry, blue tile creates an unexpected surprise and provides a durable, easy-to-clean surface for serving beverages or storing appliances.

Cup pulls reference the era of the home, while the butcher block countertop adds warmth and a traditional sensibility in contrast to the quartz used throughout the main kitchen. Cafe-style window treatments provide privacy while preserving natural light, with a pattern reminiscent of vintage tea towels.

The result is a space where every detail serves a purpose while contributing to a thoughtful balance of nostalgia, personality, and modern function.



Before

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Concealed Function

A built-in buffet and coffee bar provide storage and serving space for daily routines and entertaining. When closed, the cabinet doors maintain the kitchen's composed appearance. When open, they reveal accessible storage and display space.

The concealed feature brings modern function into the kitchen while remaining consistent with the surrounding cabinetry.



Connecting Old & New Spaces

The connection from the living room into the addition was an important part of creating flow throughout the home. Because the sunroom can function as a dining room, breakfast nook, or living space, its relationship to the adjacent rooms was carefully considered. A large cased opening creates a generous transition, allowing homeowners and guests to move easily between spaces.

Continuing the wood flooring into the sunroom provides visual continuity and a simple, seamless transition between the original home and addition.

The abundance of natural light from the sunroom extends into the home, transforming what was once a smaller, darker house and giving the entire main level a renewed sense of light, openness, and life.



A Room Designed for Every Occasion

The sunroom was designed as a room for every function—from dining and lounging to everything in between. It serves as a natural transition from the outdoors into the home and connects the lower level to the main living spaces.

The vaulted ceiling adds height and scale while allowing for tall windows that maximize natural light and strengthen the connection to the outdoors. The entire room is wrapped in a soft yellow, chosen to enhance the natural light and bring warmth and optimism to the space.

Designed to feel comfortable and functional for the homeowners' everyday life, the room can easily transform into a vibrant gathering space when entertaining. Divided-light windows reference the character of the original home, while a simplified grid preserves more of the surrounding views.

The result is a fun, whimsical, and joyful space designed to be enjoyed for years to come.



Designed for What They Love

The new staircase was designed around one of the homeowners' favorite shared activities: cycling. A direct route from the exterior leads to a straight, generous stair, making it easy to carry their bicycles between the yard and lower level. The design supports something they love to do together every day, with the goal of making it effortless to enjoy for years to come.

The lower level includes a dedicated workshop where the homeowners can continue riding indoors during the winter months and maintain their bikes as needed.

A playful functional detail was also incorporated into the space with child- and dog-gates that sit flush against the wall when not in use and hinge open when needed. Textural vinyl wallcovering adds subtle visual interest while providing durability for everyday life.

The result is a space designed not just for access, but around the homeowners' lifestyle and the activities that bring them joy.

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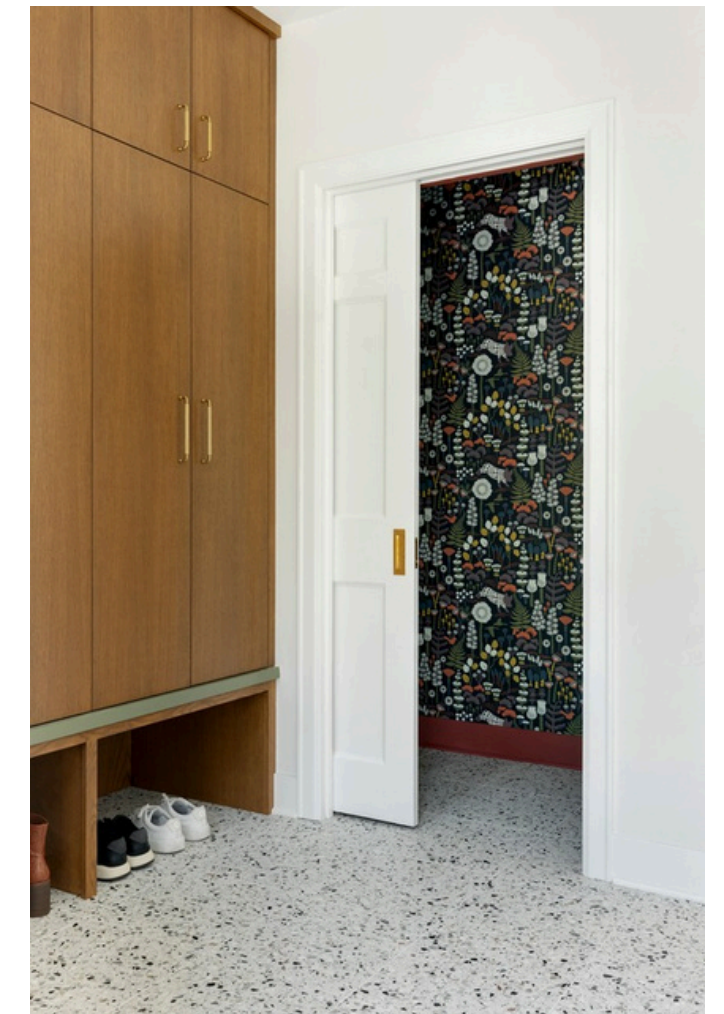
Designed for Everyday Life

The mudroom was designed to provide a direct and welcoming transition from the outdoors, with an open footprint that comfortably accommodates two adults and multiple dogs.

Terrazzo tile was selected for its durability and its connection to the era of the home, introducing playful colors and unexpected tones that carry throughout the space. Floor-to-ceiling custom cabinetry provides dedicated storage for every season, while a durable landing area allows shoes and boots to dry without concern for damaging the flooring.

Mid-tone white oak cabinetry is paired with soft green accents to add warmth and contrast. Floating shelves provide flexibility to display decorative pieces or store everyday essentials such as leashes and other pet gear.

The powder room is located directly off the mudroom, creating a convenient and intuitive path from the main living spaces and outdoors.





A Moment for Whimsy

Who doesn't love the opportunity to go a little wild? That is exactly what we did in this powder room. From the beginning of the project, the homeowners fell in love with the wallcovering, which became the one true constant and the inspiration for the room's color palette and design direction.

The goal was to make the powder room a destination for guests while thoughtfully integrating Universal Design. A custom floating vanity maintains the required 36" doorway clearance while providing space for a walker or step stool to be easily accessed or tucked away for users of all ages.

Traditional details, including an ogee countertop edge and decorative backsplash, bring contrast to the playful modern wallcovering, while a beaded cabinet door adds another layer of character. An arched recessed mirror conceals additional storage for overnight guests, creating function that is nearly invisible at first glance.

Sculptural sconces balance traditional and contemporary finishes, completing a space filled with personality, pep, and whimsy—proving that Universal Design can be both highly functional and beautifully unexpected.

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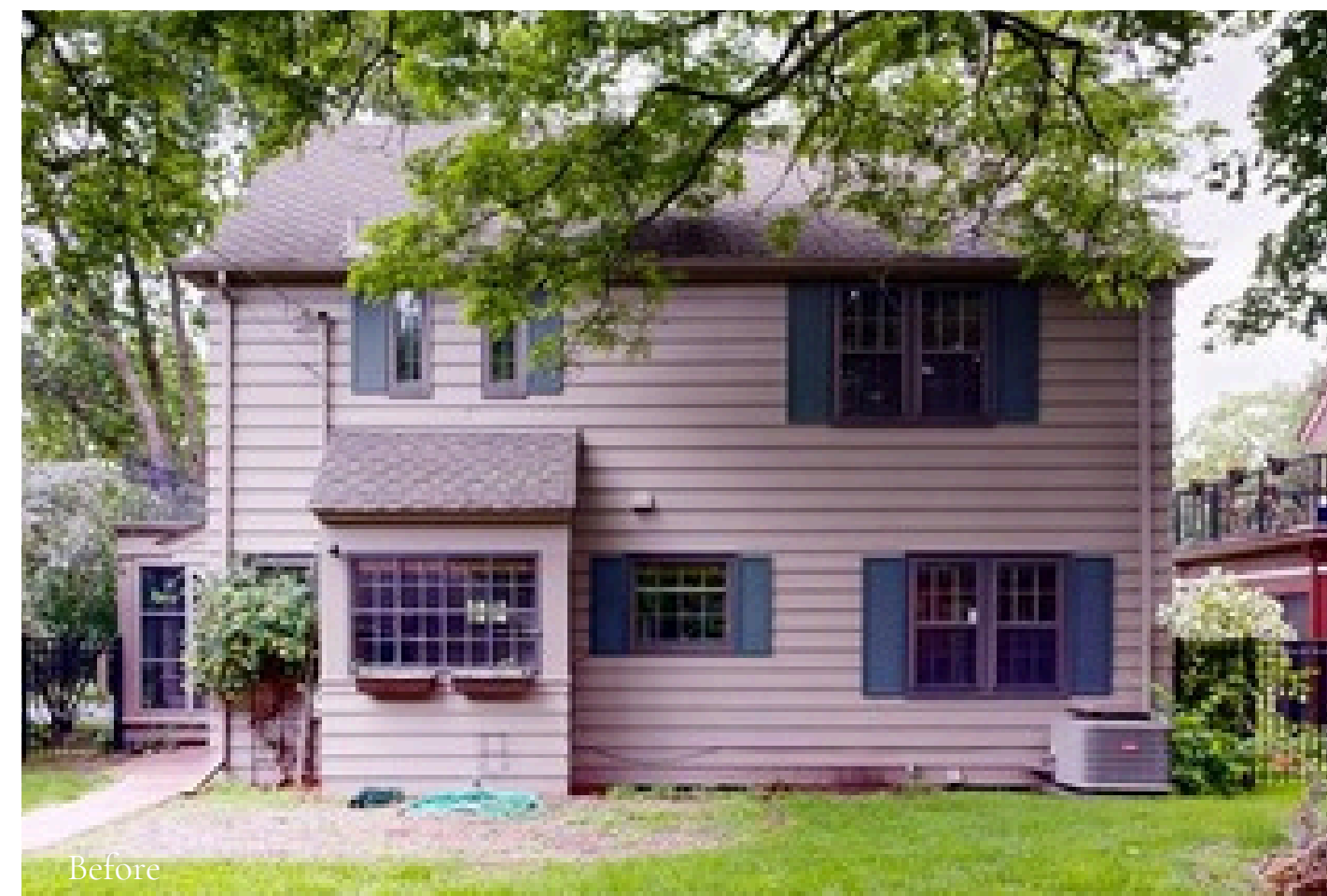
Bringing New Life to the Home

The transformation of the home is truly remarkable. The rundown exterior, lack of continuity, and collection of unnecessary additions were reimagined with a cohesive U-shaped addition anchored by a pair of new gable roofs.

The once-neglected yard was thoughtfully redesigned to restore life and connection to the home. The exterior was painted a welcoming shade of blue, chosen to honor the Colonial character of the original home while bringing a sense of joy and optimism to the arrival.

Large new windows are balanced with divided-light grids that reference the original architecture, thoughtfully bridging old and new.

The result is a home that feels renewed, cohesive, and full of life—restoring both beauty and function to a home designed to be enjoyed for years to come.



From Dead Space to Purposeful Connection

The before-and-after transformation highlights how an underutilized hallway was reimagined into a purposeful transition space. Previously, the cramped corridor led nowhere, squeezed between the existing staircase, an exterior door, and the powder room.

The new design creates a defined vestibule that leads naturally into the scullery, giving the space a clear purpose while improving circulation throughout the home. Positioned just off the kitchen, the scullery serves as the workhorse of the kitchen—providing additional workspace, storage, and support for everyday living and entertaining.





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A New Space with an Old Soul

The scullery became a bonus to the project in more ways than one. It allowed the main kitchen to remain the showpiece and primary gathering space while introducing the warmth and nostalgia of an old-fashioned kitchen—blending so naturally with the home that it is easy to wonder whether it was original or new.

Beadboard walls and a salvaged window from the original dining room, repurposed as a French casement, connect the scullery to the existing three-season porch and strengthen the relationship between old and new. Yellow walls and blue cabinetry bring an unexpected sense of fun and joy to the space.

Every detail was designed with purpose. The scullery provides additional pantry and everyday storage, dedicated dog-food storage and water stations, along with a second sink and dishwasher. It can easily transition from a catering kitchen to a baking station for time spent with the grandchildren.

Lighting was selected to reference the home's traditional character, while a stainless steel backsplash adds durability and a playful layer of function—it is magnetic, creating the perfect place to display the homeowner's collection of magnets gathered from travels.

The result is a hardworking space that delivers flexibility and function without sacrificing personality, with every design decision made for a reason.

A Secret Passage

What would a forever home be without a hidden staircase? Designed with the grandchildren in mind, this playful feature brings a little unexpected magic to the home.

Rather than removing the existing staircase, we transformed it into a secret passage concealed within the built-in bookcase. When closed, the door reads as part of the cabinetry, complete with a fabric skirt that helps disguise the opening. With the push of a remote, the hidden door opens to reveal a secret staircase where the grandchildren can disappear, explore, and make their way around the home to the new staircase as many times as their hearts desire.

Just beyond the scullery, a nostalgic wallcovering adds another layer of whimsy, reminiscent of something found in a grandmother's home. Its colors tie into the adjacent spaces, creating a playful bridge between old and new and helping the entire home feel connected.

The result is a small architectural surprise that adds a big dose of personality—and creates a space the grandchildren will remember for years to come.



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A Private Retreat, Elevated by Design

The primary bathroom became a true retreat within the home—a space designed specifically for the homeowners to enjoy as they move into this next chapter of life.

The custom vanity was designed around how the homeowners use the space, with abundant drawers providing ergonomic, easy-access storage and a place for everything to have its own home. Walnut cabinetry introduces a subtle shift from the white oak used throughout the rest of the home, adding warmth and a more contemporary note. Two traditionally shaped oval medicine cabinets provide additional storage while maintaining the classic character established throughout the home.

Details were layered in to make the room feel special rather than simply functional. Ribbon sconces echo the curves and circular forms found in the floor tile and wallcovering, creating a quiet visual connection throughout the space. Within the zero-clearance shower, a built-in bench and recessed niche provide comfort and convenience, while full quartz shower walls offer a durable, easy-to-clean surface that will support the homeowners as they age in place.

Tucked discreetly into the separate toilet room, a stackable washer and dryer bring another layer of everyday function to the main floor without compromising the serenity of the space. The result is a bathroom that does a lot within a little footprint—beautifully balancing storage, accessibility, comfort, and style to create a serene retreat the homeowners can enjoy at the end of each day.



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