

NARI · REMODELER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

2026

RESIDENTIAL KITCHEN

\$100,000 - \$150,000

JOB COST: \$139,237.04

LOCATION: South Minneapolis, MN

Anonymous submission - no company name or logo appears in this document.





THE CHALLENGE

This 1920s South Minneapolis kitchen was compact, closed off from the dining room, and constrained by an inefficient galley layout. A tall cast-iron radiator occupied valuable floor space, appliance placement was crowded, and the kitchen felt disconnected from the way the family wanted to cook, gather, and move through the main floor.

THE RESPONSE

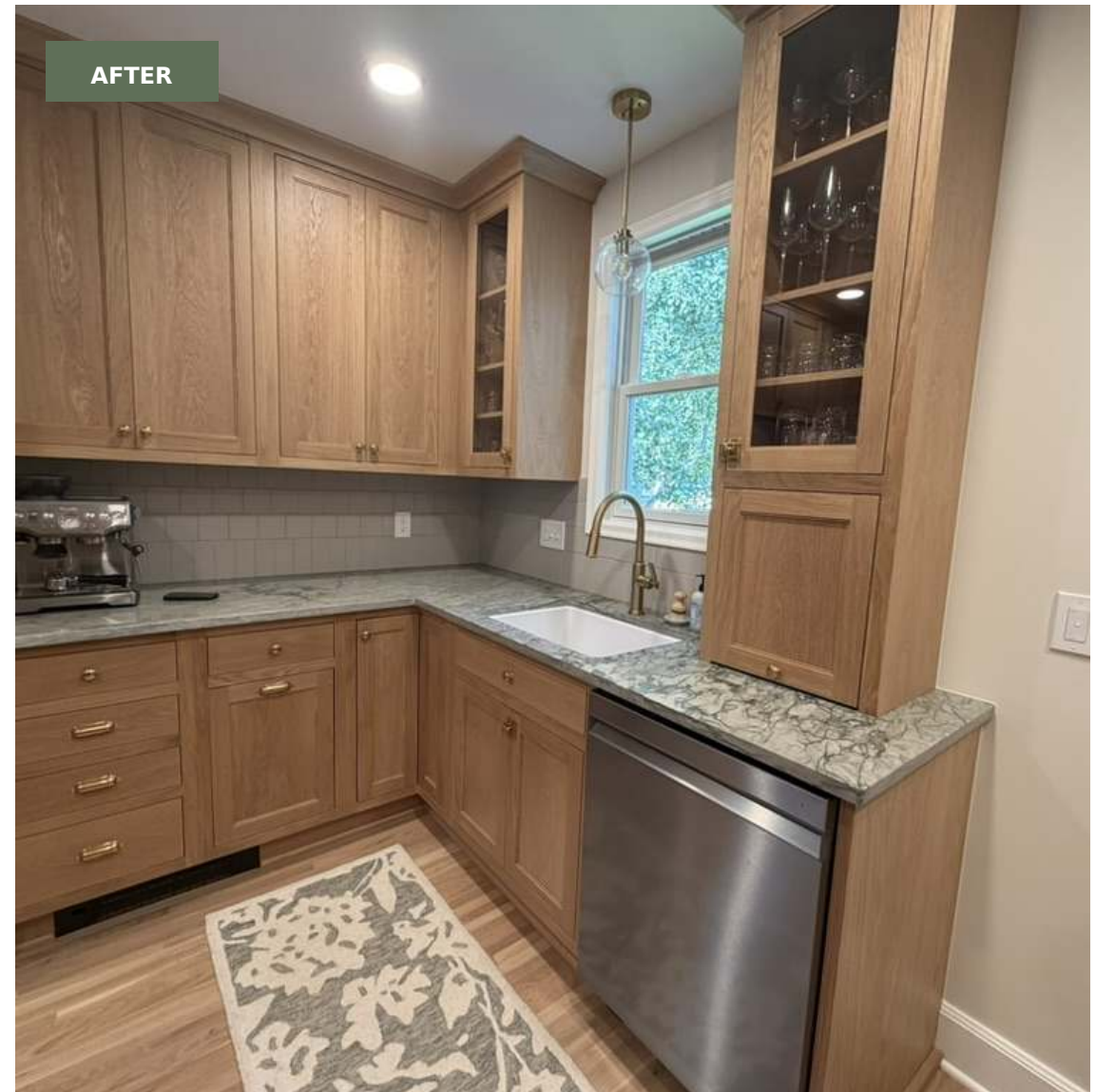
The renovation opened the kitchen to the dining room, reorganized the cabinetry and appliances, reclaimed the radiator wall, and created a generous peninsula for prep, serving, and casual seating. Warm white oak cabinetry, natural quartzite, brass accents, neutral tile, and restored white oak floors tie the new space back to the character of the home.

OPENING THE KITCHEN TO THE DINING ROOM

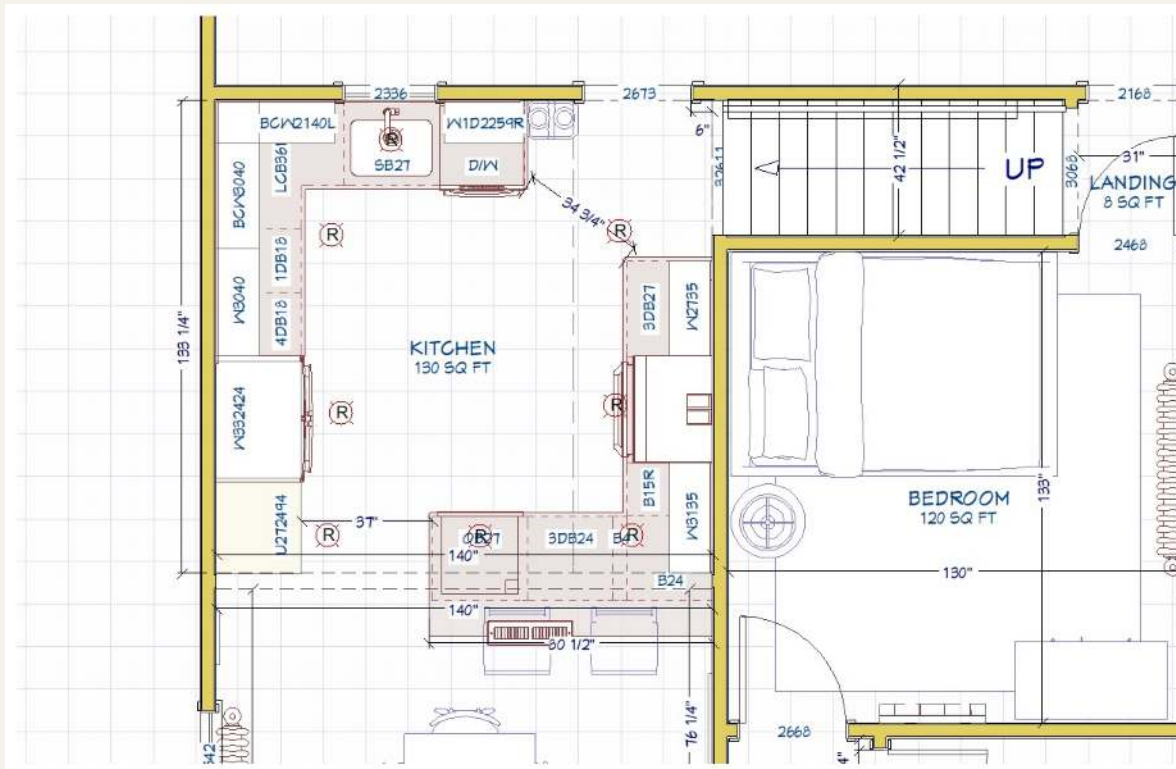
MEETING CLIENTS' OBJECTIVES · FUNCTIONALITY



A narrow doorway once made the kitchen feel like a separate room at the end of the dining space. Removing the dividing wall transformed two small, disconnected zones into one continuous main-floor gathering space. The new peninsula establishes the kitchen edge without rebuilding the visual barrier, while the preserved dining room and original arched opening remain part of the home's familiar rhythm.



The original cast-iron radiator consumed a large section of wall beside the sink, leaving valuable floor area unusable. The redesign replaced it with a compact toe-kick heating solution concealed beneath the new cabinetry, allowing the refrigerator, storage, and continuous work surfaces to occupy the wall instead. Heat was retained; wasted space was not.



PROPOSED PLAN

The new 130-square-foot kitchen reorganizes the room around three coordinated zones: a full refrigerator and storage wall, a sink and cleanup wall, and a cooking/peninsula zone that opens directly to the dining room.

WHY IT WORKS

- The refrigerator is pulled out of the former range corner.
- The peninsula adds prep area and casual seating without closing the room.
- Storage is distributed across full-height and base cabinetry.
- The sink remains connected to natural light.
- Circulation now flows through the kitchen instead of stopping at a narrow doorway.



CUSTOM WHITE OAK CABINETRY

Warm natural-toned white oak gives the kitchen a furniture-like quality while providing substantially more storage than the original painted cabinetry. Full-height cabinets, glass-front display storage, integrated appliance locations, and carefully resolved corners allow the cabinetry to read as one continuous composition.

DETAILS THAT MATTER

The inside cabinet corner is mitered and paneled rather than resolved with a stock filler. Glass-front cabinetry is finished with traditional brass cabinet hardware, and the same warm metal language continues at the faucet and pulls. These small decisions keep the room tailored and consistent with the age and character of the house.

A MORE FUNCTIONAL COOKING ZONE

FUNCTIONALITY · CRAFTSMANSHIP



The cooking wall and peninsula consolidate everyday tasks into a compact working zone while keeping the dining room immediately connected. Appliances are integrated below the work surface, deep drawers put cookware within reach, and the peninsula adds both uninterrupted prep space and concealed storage on the dining side.

A MATERIAL PALETTE THAT BRIDGES OLD AND NEW

AESTHETICS · CRAFTSMANSHIP



WHITE OAK

Natural white oak cabinetry introduces warmth without recreating the heavy amber tone of the original floor finish.



QUARTZITE + TILE

Cooler green-gray quartzite and neutral fireclay tile balance the cabinetry with natural movement and a quiet, durable backdrop.



BRASS DETAILS

Brass hardware and plumbing fittings add a traditional note that feels at home in a 1920s interior.

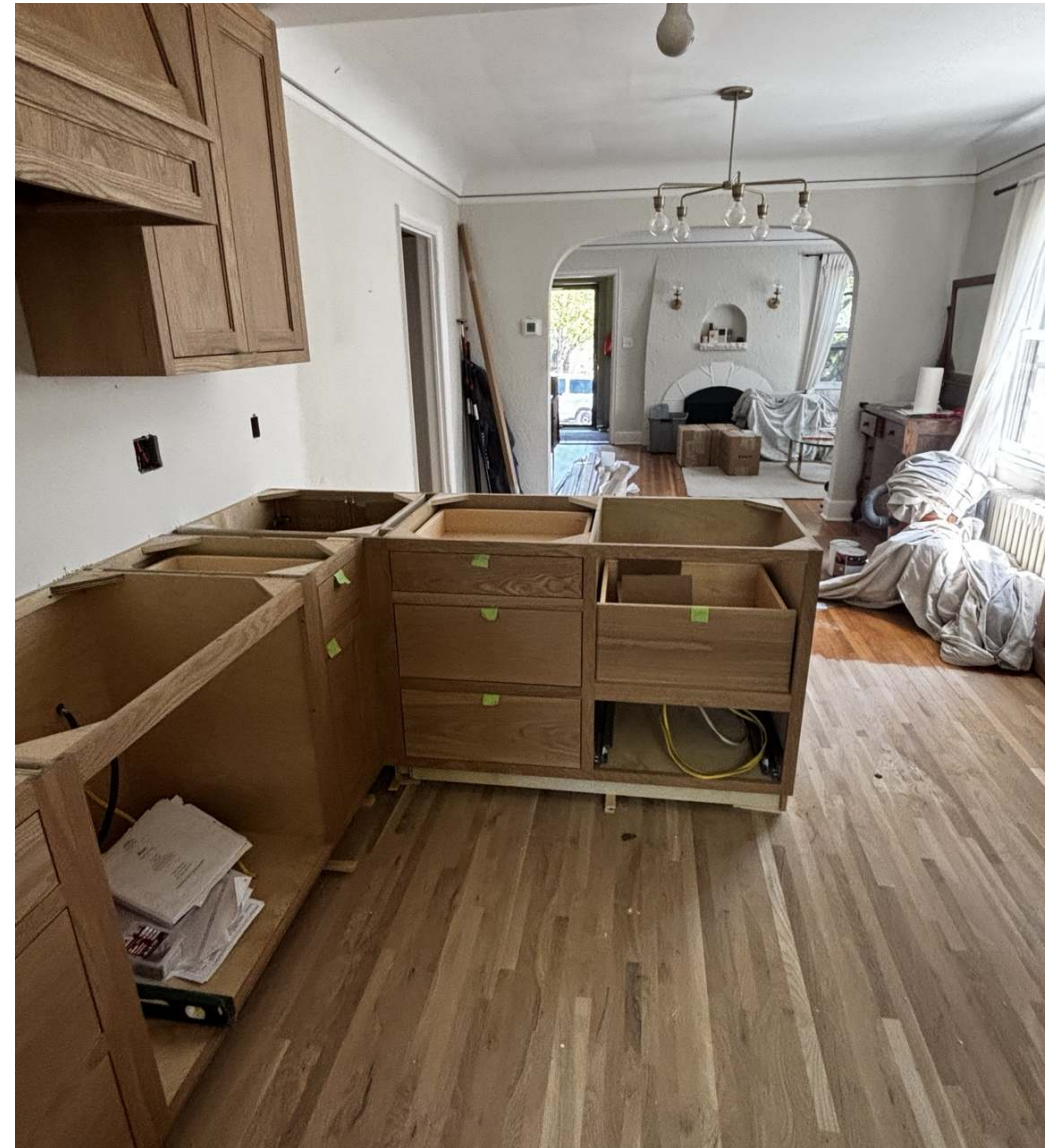
The palette was selected to make the renovation feel intentional within the existing house rather than visually detached from it: warm wood, cool natural stone, quiet tile, and restrained metal details.

RESTORING THE WHITE OAK FLOORS

CRAFTSMANSHIP · AESTHETICS



The home's existing white oak floors had aged to a pronounced amber tone. Where walls and cabinetry were removed, matching white oak was hand-laced into the field. The construction image captures the transition while adjacent rooms still retained the older amber finish. The main level was then sanded and refinished to a lighter, more neutral tone, creating a continuous floor that bridges the warm cabinetry and cooler quartzite.



Construction views show the extent of the rework: new cabinet runs, the relocated refrigerator wall, the peninsula footprint, altered lighting, and floor integration were coordinated before the finish materials were installed. The open dining-room connection is already visible at this stage, demonstrating that the completed room is the result of a fundamentally new plan - not a cosmetic cabinet swap.

SINK WALL: STORAGE, LIGHT + DETAIL

FUNCTIONALITY · AESTHETICS



The sink remains centered on natural light while tall glass-front cabinets frame the window and add usable storage. The adjacent refrigerator wall turns what had been fragmented, awkward space into a purposeful composition. Brass hardware, a warm metal faucet, and the white oak cabinet fronts reinforce the restrained historic character carried throughout the project.



A KITCHEN RECONNECTED TO ITS HOME

MEETING CLIENTS' OBJECTIVES

FUNCTIONALITY

AESTHETICS

CRAFTSMANSHIP

INNOVATION

The finished kitchen is larger in feeling without expanding the footprint of the house. It is brighter, more useful, more connected to the dining room, and materially grounded in the character of the original 1920s interior.

Thank you, Judges.