

# 1940s Forever Home

CATEGORY // ENTIRE HOUSE \$1,000,000+

**PROJECT  
OVERVIEW**

The owners of this 1940s home in the Minneapolis, Bryn Mawr neighborhood loved their location, but their 1½-story house no longer fit the needs of their growing family. The challenge became twofold: how to create more space and how to introduce a European-Victorian-inspired aesthetic.

Using our team's structural expertise, we converted the existing 1½-story home into 2½ stories. With the additional space, we moved all bedrooms upstairs (increasing the total number to four) and turned the attic into a bonus space. We then completely redesigned the main level, creating an eat-in kitchen, walk-in pantry, and a new mudroom.

**CLIENT  
GOALS**

- ◇ Create more functional space.  
— See *Functionality*, page 8
- ◇ Blend European cottage and Victorian design into the home.  
— See *Aesthetic*, page 9
- ◇ Maintain the traditional separate floor plan.  
— See *Functionality*, page 8
- ◇ Create backyard views from the main living space.  
— See *Aesthetic*, page 9
- ◇ Keep the remodel within the existing footprint of the home.  
— See *Craftsmanship*, page 10

**WHAT WE  
CHANGED**

**Kitchen**

- ◇ Expanded into a larger eat-in kitchen with a dining nook
- ◇ Added a walk-through butler's pantry connecting the kitchen and dining room

**Dining Room**

- ◇ Created a dedicated formal dining room

**Mudroom**

- ◇ Added a new, efficient mudroom
- ◇ Added a powder room connected to the mudroom

**Four-Season Porch**

- ◇ Added a new four-season porch connecting the home to its natural surroundings

**Second Level**

- ◇ Built an entirely new full second level
- ◇ Added two bedrooms sharing a Jack and Jill bath
- ◇ Added a dedicated office
- ◇ Added a primary suite with his and her closets

**Attic**

- ◇ Created a finished attic space above the second level

**Exterior**

- ◇ Transformed a 1½-story bungalow into a 2½-story Modern Victorian cottage
- ◇ New sloped roofline across the front of the home
- ◇ Stone front façade
- ◇ Stone arched entry with a custom arched wood door



A FRESH LOOK

# Before & After Photos

EXTERIOR // **AFTER**



EXTERIOR // **BEFORE**



KITCHEN // **AFTER**



KITCHEN // **BEFORE**

A FRESH LOOK

# Before & After Photos

DINING NOOK // **AFTER**



DINING NOOK // **BEFORE**



FOUR-SEASON PORCH // **AFTER**



FOUR-SEASON PORCH // **BEFORE**

A FRESH LOOK

# After Photos



POWDER ROOM // **AFTER**

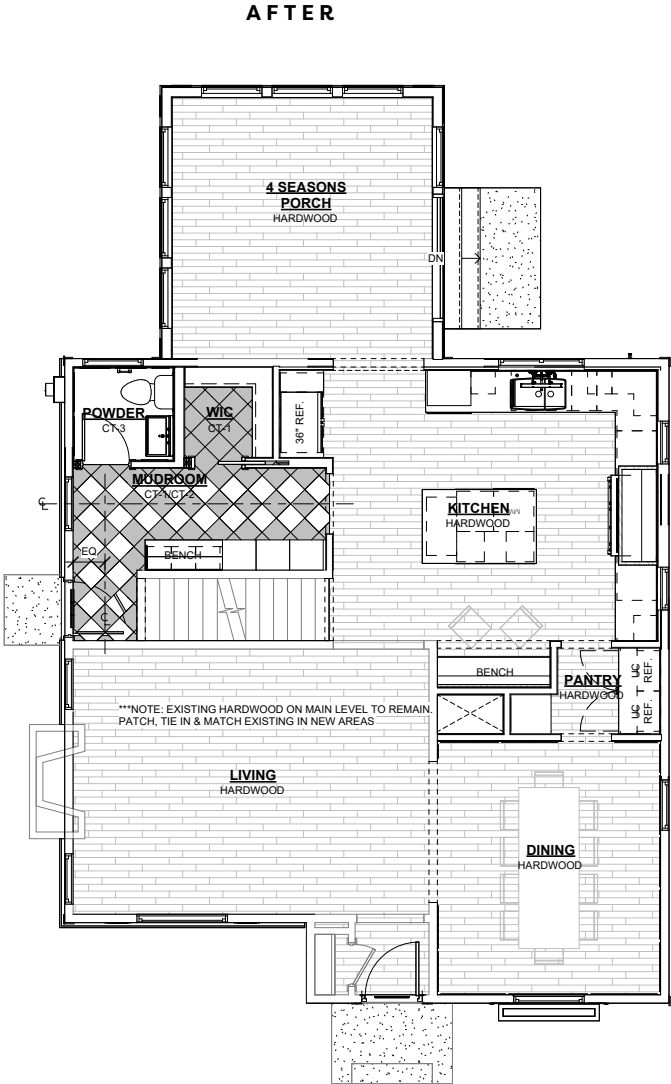
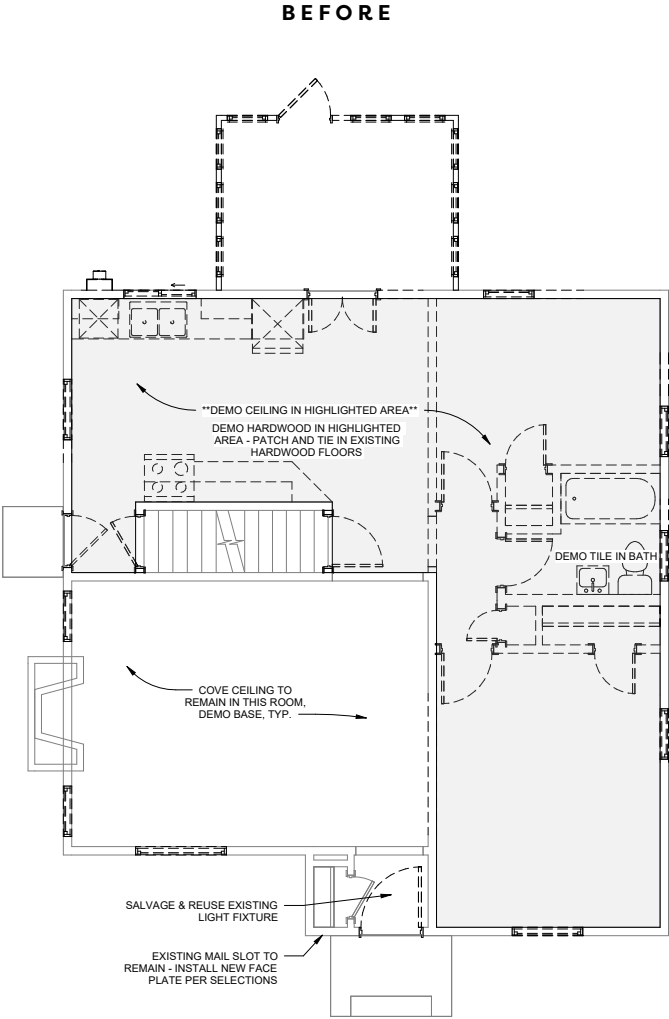


EXTERIOR // **AFTER**



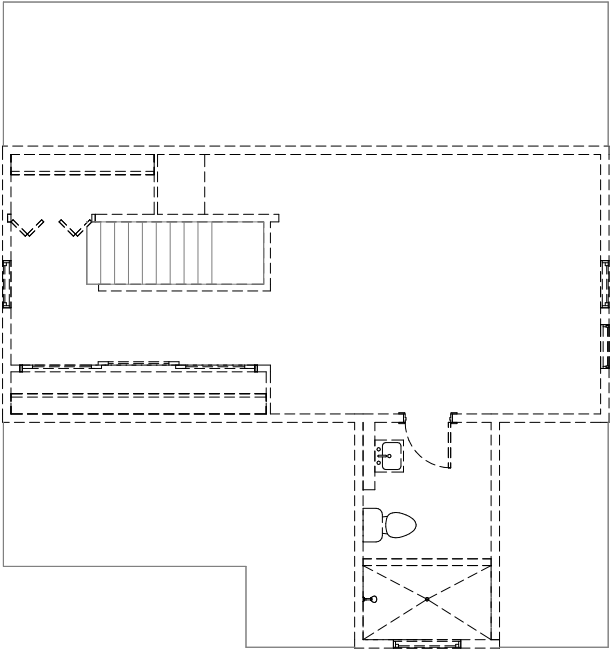
KITCHEN // **AFTER**

# Floor Plans – Main Level

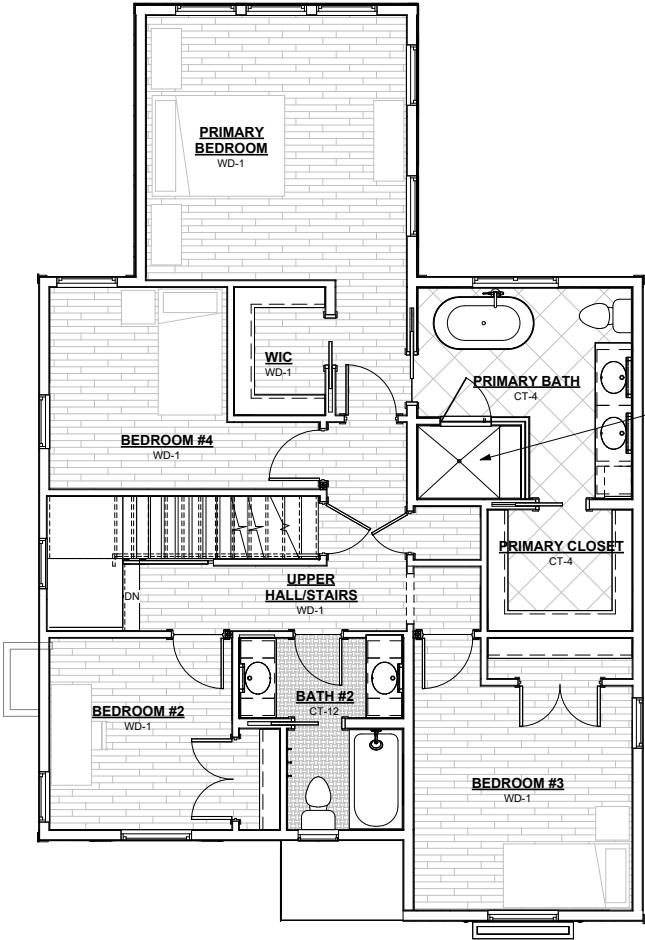


# Floor Plans – Second Level

BEFORE



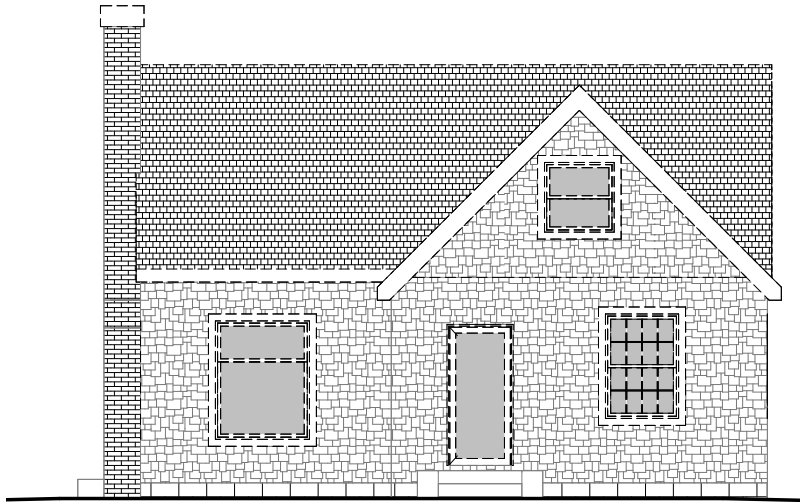
AFTER



LAYING OUT THE LEVELS

# Floor Plans – Exterior

**BEFORE**



**AFTER**



## FUNCTIONALITY

# Rooms with a Purpose

Our team had two primary functional goals for this home. One, separating the private and public spaces while creating more functional space. Two, make the main level more effective without turning it into one large open room.

### SEPARATE PRIVATE & PUBLIC SPACES + CREATE MORE FUNCTIONAL SPACE

- ◇ All bedrooms were relocated to the new full second level, moving the family's private space entirely off the main floor.
- ◇ The new second level holds two bedrooms with a shared Jack and Jill bath, a dedicated office, and a primary suite with his and her closets.
- ◇ The main level was completely reworked into a welcoming series of public spaces for hosting.
- ◇ The kitchen was expanded into an eat-in chef's kitchen with a dining nook, giving the family a place for everyday meals and the cooking space they were missing.
- ◇ A walk-through butler's pantry connects the kitchen to the formal dining room, keeping prep and serving out of the main sightlines.
- ◇ A new mudroom and adjoining powder room creates a dedicated space for daily routines and storage.
- ◇ A new four-season porch extends the hosting space outdoors and ties the home to its surroundings.

### MAINTAIN A TRADITIONAL SEPARATED FLOOR PLAN

- ◇ Rather than removing walls for one large open room, the main level was designed as a connected sequence of defined rooms.
- ◇ The butler's pantry doubles as a transition between the formal dining room and the working kitchen.
- ◇ The dining room was kept as its own dedicated room instead of a nook off the kitchen.
- ◇ All of this was accomplished within the existing footprint of the home, as the clients requested.



## AESTHETIC

# Old World Color, New World Living

The design of this home was drawn from the clients' travels. They love Europe and wanted their home to feel like the cottages and Victorian architecture they had visited again and again. The goal was a modern interpretation of that aesthetic, saturated with color, and paired with practical amenities for a young family.

### BLEND EUROPEAN COTTAGE + VICTORIAN DESIGN

- ◇ A custom chinoiserie mural was designed for the formal dining room.
- ◇ A saturated blue butler's pantry connects the dining room and kitchen.
- ◇ In the kitchen, an Ilve range and a porcelain slab backsplash create the focal point for the entire room.
- ◇ The primary bathroom utilizes marble tile and floral wallpaper.
- ◇ The exterior carries the same story with a Modern Victorian cottage form, a stone arched entry with an arched wood door, a sloped front roofline, and a stone façade with decorative window elements.
- ◇ The clients did not want recessed can lighting, so the home uses very few cans and relies instead on unique decorative fixtures throughout.

### INCREASE NATURAL LIGHT + BACKYARD VIEWS

- ◇ Windows on the main level were placed and sized to create views of the backyard from the primary living spaces.
- ◇ Traditional window shapes were used throughout, avoiding transoms and contemporary window configurations that would have worked against the Victorian aesthetic.
- ◇ The new four-season porch pulls the natural surroundings directly into the home's daily use.
- ◇ Layered decorative fixtures provide light when daylight drops off.



KITCHEN // AFTER

## CRAFTSMANSHIP

# It's All in the Details

Adding a full second level and attic to an original 1940s home gave our team the chance to flex a wide range of skills. Much of the best work on this project is the work you cannot see.

### CRAFTED DETAILS

- ◇ A custom mural was created for the dining room showcasing the home's story.
- ◇ The custom front door was built overseas and arrived by ship on a long lead time. Its dimensions had to be coordinated with our masonry work for the custom stone arch header above it.
- ◇ The front of the home features a new sloped roofline paired with the stone arch and arched wood door.
- ◇ The living room was original plaster. We kept as much of it as possible and matched the plaster texture with mud and drywall in that space. The rest of the home is drywall.
- ◇ We kept as much of the original red oak 1¾" hardwood on the main level as possible and laced in new hardwood. All of it was sanded and given a custom stain, so the original and new floors are indistinguishable.
- ◇ The home was dramatically out of square. Rather than move the exterior walls, we stacked the new second level over the existing walls and squared only the primary bathroom, furring out one side from 1.5" down to 0" so the tile details would read true.
- ◇ Elegant marble tile and wallpaper were installed in the primary suite.



DINING ROOM & ENTRY // AFTER



BONUS SPACE // AFTER

## INNOVATION

# Truing Up an Old Home

The innovation on this project came from finding smarter paths to the client's wish list, protecting the budget so the details that mattered most could stay in the plan.

## INCORPORATING INNOVATION

- ◇ The home was dramatically out of square. Instead of squaring up the entire home, which would have required moving exterior walls, we squared only the rooms that needed it aesthetically. For example, the second level primary bathroom was squared due to the intricate details of the room including the tile.
- ◇ For the exterior addition, the homeowners went with helical piers and a header system instead of a full foundation and basement underneath. Everything was built off the ground, and the approach likely saved them \$20,000 or more.
- ◇ We created a unique egress window built from tiered block rather than the usual deep hole or metal well, turning a code requirement into a design feature.
- ◇ We matched the original plaster texture on the main level. This allowed us to blend old and new with no visible difference between the rooms.
- ◇ We kept as much of the original red oak 1 ¾" flooring on the main floor as possible. The new flooring was blended in and the entire level refinished to mesh everything seamlessly.
- ◇ The lighting design was rethought around the clients' dislike of recessed cans, using decorative fixtures as the primary light source throughout the home.



PRIMARY BATH // AFTER

## PROJECT CHALLENGES

# Thinking Outside the Box

## RESOLVING THE UNEXPECTED

- ◇ This was a growing family deeply rooted in the neighborhood they loved. They had started the remodel process a year earlier but chose to pause, regroup, and build the financial cushion needed to create the home they truly envisioned. That time served them well. It gave them space to clarify their priorities and refine what mattered most for the way they wanted to live. Ultimately they were able to add back in all the details they wanted, growing a remodel that started at roughly \$700,000 into a project of over \$1M.
- ◇ During construction, rain and water issues flooded the basement, an area that was not part of our original scope of work. Our team stepped in to make the necessary repairs and keep the rest of the project moving.
- ◇ The original home was dramatically out of square, which had to be solved without moving exterior walls. We stacked the second level over the existing walls and squared only the primary bathroom.
- ◇ The custom front door had a very long overseas lead time, which required coordinating the masonry stone arch header to the door's exact dimensions well before it arrived on site.

