

Chic Contemporary



This busy and social family came to us desiring open concept living for the first floor of their colonial home. Updates to the kitchen, dining, and family room areas were top priorities. The new design for these rooms also presented opportunity to update and organize essential support areas, such as the laundry room, mudroom, and powder room. The homeowner's affinity for clean lines and organic colors guided design, material, and color selections.



Before



The small eat-in kitchen lacked countertop workspace and was not large enough for several people to gather in at once (photo A). Traffic patterns through the kitchen were hazardous with a cooking station on a wall by itself and passages to either side of it (photo B). A corner sink set in front of a window overlooked the neighbors' driveway.



Photo A

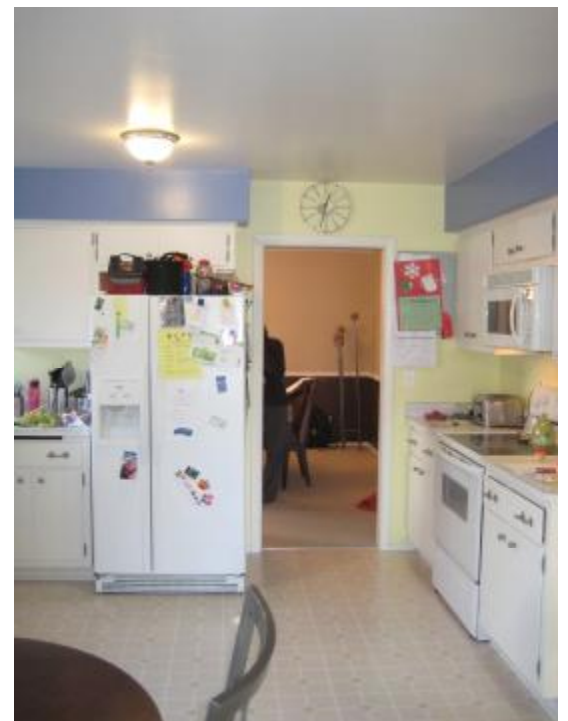


Photo B



Photo C



Photo D

Filled with doors, a low ceiling, and dated recessed lights, an existing hallway isolated the powder room, basement, and laundry room (photo C). Unfortunately it constricted flow in the home and the laundry room blocked views to the back yard as well (photo D). The precious square feet occupied by the hallway could be much better utilized for enlarging the living spaces.

Unity



Photo E (plan - page 3)



Photo F (plan - page 3)

Our goal for this project was to remove the “utility” of the first floor space and promote “unity”. The obvious solution to the lack of unity and openness was to remove as many walls as possible from the existing kitchen, family room, and hall areas. This was not without its challenges, however. Two of the main walls to be removed were load bearing walls. Ideally, flush headers would be the choice to maintain second floor loads as well as an uninterrupted first floor ceiling. The size of the steel headers and existing second floor layouts required that dropped headers be installed to maintain the loads. It was visually important that these dropped headers not detract from the look and feel of the new design. Therefore, the new kitchen was laid out to utilize the dropped headers as subtle demarcations of space.

The refrigerator and double ovens are tucked into a niche easily accessible to the island prep area and cooking areas. By using the space formerly occupied by the powder room for these tall appliances, the remaining kitchen feels more open and maximizes countertop workspace.

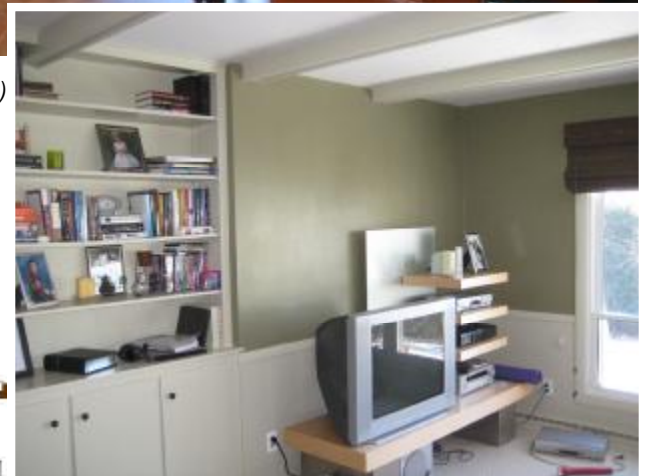


A new steel header supports second floor loads.



Photo G (plan - page 3)

A window once in the laundry room and a door formerly in the back hall now offer additional natural light to the space as well as views to the patio.



Before

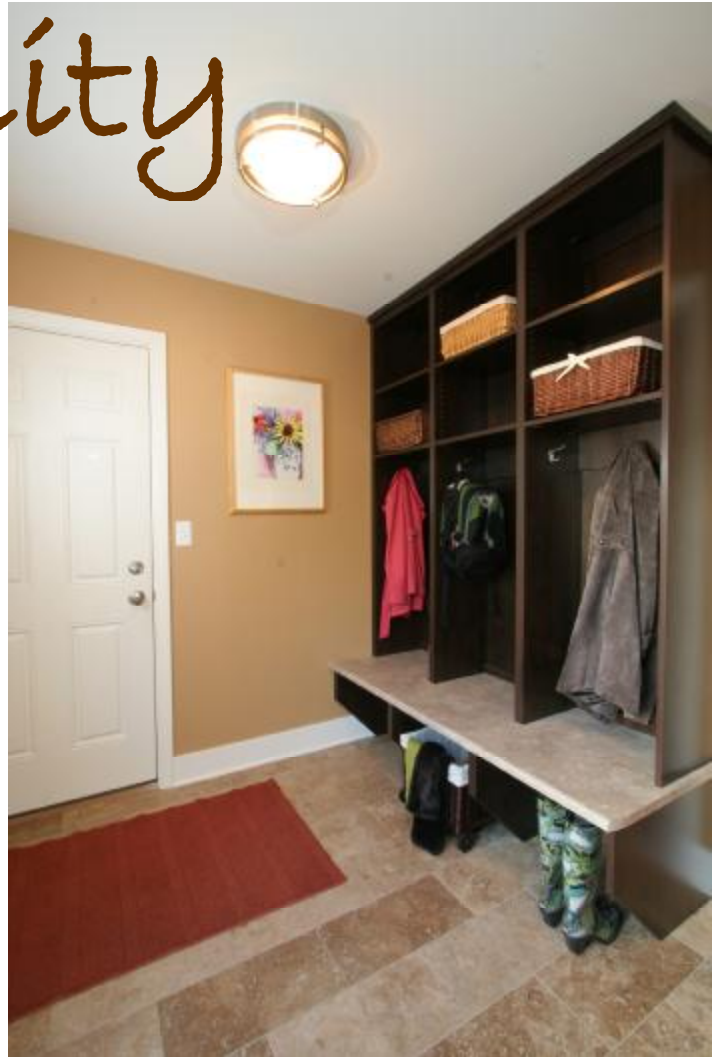
Demolition Plan



Removal of the walls surrounding the kitchen and halls, and relocating the laundry room has created a large gathering room where dining and socializing becomes an integral part of the new living space.

Functionality

Adjacent to the attached garage, the under-utilized formal dining room was transformed into a control center for the family's comings and goings. The door to the garage, originally in the front foyer, was relocated into the new mudroom. This gives the family a much needed "drop zone", complete with cubby type lockers and limestone flooring. The laundry facilities occupy the same room with a convenient utility sink and workspace above the washing machine and dryer. Two ceiling pendants serve as general lighting and undercabinet lighting offers task lighting at the countertop. The choice of high pressure laminate cabinetry and laminate countertops over custom wood cabinetry helped reign in costs for their tight \$150,000.00 budget.





The remaining areas of the former dining room neatly conceal a discreet powder room accessible from the short hall to the mudroom, and a walk-in pantry directly adjacent to the kitchen.



Before – Dining Room (photo H)



Details



Another item on the homeowners' wish list was to create a cathedral ceiling in the new gathering room space. While traditional support methods of wood ties were considered, the homeowner was receptive to our suggestion for something more contemporary. We introduced new steel ties that became structural art and blended well with the clean lines the homeowner desired for the new gathering room and kitchen.



(Opposite Page)

Custom wood cabinetry was painted and glazed for a warm yet bright touch in the kitchen. An alder island is the centerpiece of the kitchen providing abundant workspace and a sink that is now oriented toward the gathering room. Expansive Verde Tahiti granite gives the kitchen an exciting and organic feel and was the basis for paint choices throughout the space. Vertically oriented glass tile highlights the backsplash at the new gas range, which is now separated from "through" traffic. Navigational, task, and ambient lighting are featured in all areas of the kitchen.



Straight lines and ninety degree angles repeat throughout the project, from the steel ties and cabinet details to a new coffered ceiling in the living room.

Careful attention was given to the layout of all ceiling lights so that equal spacing between the ties aligned properly with the furniture below.



Elegantly Social

While the living room retained its traditional fireplace, cosmetic changes helped blend the new and old spaces. Large flat base moldings and a coffered ceiling were added to accentuate the crisp lines used throughout. American walnut floors with a rich chocolate hue flow throughout the first floor.



A cabinet niche was created for audio/visual equipment in the remaining space formerly occupied by the powder room.



By removing walls and unifying materials through the first floor, we've achieved the warm and inviting space the homeowners aspired to. Ample space for entertaining and the close proximity of everyday activities enriches the family's living experience daily.

