



Built on History

AN INTERIOR DESIGNER AND AN ARCHITECT MASTER THE ART OF COMPROMISE TO COOK UP A KITCHEN ROOTED IN THE PAST THAT LIVES LARGE IN THE PRESENT.

Project Goals

- Design a light-filled, modern cook space.
- Gain a breakfast nook.
- Maintain the home's existing scale and proportion to respect its history.

Project Steps

- Built a kitchen addition with three large windows overlooking the homeowners' lush garden.
- Converted the original kitchen into a cozy breakfast nook.
- Integrated the new cook space into the rest of the house by closely echoing doorway dimensions.

Left: The modest 13x11-foot kitchen provides ample function without overwhelming the other rooms in the house.



There's a lot to be learned from listening to an older home. Architect David Heide and his partner, interior designer Michael Crull, know this. So when they bought a 1922 Prairie-style home in Minneapolis, they chose to play the waiting game rather than rush into renovations.

"We had time to figure out what we wanted to do and to understand the house," David says. "That's what I tell clients who buy older homes and immediately want to renovate."

The couple patiently waited five years before deciding to expand and redesign their kitchen. They converted the original cook space into a breakfast room, which flows into a light-filled 13x11-foot kitchen addition overlooking the garden. A granite-topped peninsula visually divides the kitchen and breakfast room without blocking light or views.

The new kitchen's red birch cabinets, soft green tile backsplash, and hardwood floors respect the home's Prairie style. Such details are a far cry from the original kitchen's stark white upper cabinets, countertop, and backsplash, and its black lower cabinets and checkerboard-pattern floor.

Natural light bathes the room through a large bank of

windows above a vintage English porcelain sink. Additional light flows from a variety of light fixtures designed by David's architecture firm. "The light level is uniform throughout the room," he says. Undercabinet task lighting spotlights food prep and cleanup, and long, thin pendants add a soft glow in the evening. In the breakfast room, traditional lamps wear art glass shades.

Though it offers modern function, the new space looks like an extension of the home because of attention to detail. "It's important to me to maintain the existing scale and proportions," David says. "The kitchen is not just one big room. The original house has smaller rooms opening onto one another, so we made our openings in a similar way."

Proportion aside, collaboration and compromise were also key to the remodel's success. David and Michael bounced numerous ideas off each other before reaching final decisions. "I have the architecture background, and Michael has an acutely defined sense of color and lightness," David says. "We advocate for one another, but we also are one another's editors." The picture-perfect addition is testament to that collaboration.

Opposite left: Bold vertical and horizontal lines pay homage to the home's Prairie style. The kitchen's opening is scaled to match other doorways throughout the house.

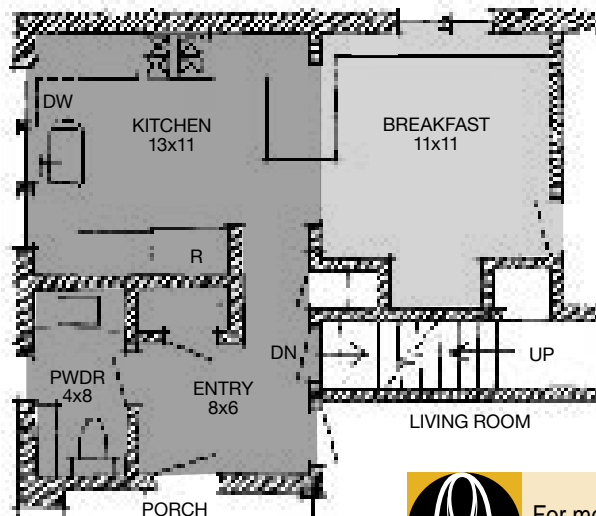
Opposite right: Handsome birch paneling keeps major appliances almost out of sight and lends an old-fashioned look. A ceiling fan and pendant lights provide slightly more modern elements.

Above: Natural light accentuates the birch cabinets' luminosity, which is enhanced by generous layers of garnet and amber shellac.

Right: A vintage English porcelain sink is the kitchen centerpiece. Its position under the windows allows the homeowners to enjoy garden views while working at the sink.

Resources begin on page 108.

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REMODELING
ADDITION

Above: Thanks to the storage-packed peninsula, the kitchen and breakfast room function individually and as one generous space.

Opposite: The granite-topped peninsula wraps around from the kitchen into the breakfast nook to grace built-in bookshelves; it also doubles as a makeshift dining spot.



For more on adding on to older homes:
RemodelingCenter.com/remstyle

Do It

So You Want to Be Your Own General Contractor?

Saving as much as 25 percent of overall project costs by acting as your own general contractor sounds attractive, but the experience is often more time- and money-consuming than many homeowners think. Steve Smith, a construction consultant in Raleigh, North Carolina, shares considerations for going this route.

- **Do your homework.** Research your specific project to understand every detail. Become familiar with “the requirements and procedures expected from a general contractor—planning, workflow, local and state code requirements, and the safety of the workers you contract with,” Smith says. Check out library books on the subject. Look into community college classes that train you to be your own general contractor. Also consider construction-project-management computer software to help you stay organized.

- **Be realistic.** Being a general contractor can be a full-time job. “You have to be available to drop what you are doing to handle the emergencies that almost always come up, and if you are a worker bee, this can sometimes be impossible,” Smith says. “If you lose more money from the time out of work than gained from conducting the work, consider having a professional conduct the work for you.”

- **Team up with a project manager.** If you want help coordinating your addition—but still want to oversee the project in its entirety—enlist the help of a project manager, who can get labor and materials at a discounted price. Plus, he or she already has an established base of qualified subcontractors, which eliminates the time you spend calling around to find workers. You’ll pay more up front to hire a project manager—about 8 to 10 percent of the job’s overall cost. This is approximately half of what you would pay a general contractor, and “it will cost you little after all things are considered,” Smith says.

SECRET TO SUCCESS

Built-in bookshelves line one wall of the breakfast room. The clever cubbies are various sizes to hold the owners’ cookbooks and decorative items, and to create visual interest.

