



Before & After: Kitchen

Period style, updated ease

Annexing a pantry gives a cook space needed breathing room, while an original hutch inspires a vintage-look makeover that improves function and flow

BY NINA MALKIN

Few folks buy a turn-of-the-century house without some appreciation for its original details. No surprise, then, that Indianapolis homeowners Kaela and Cason Cusack hoped to honor the built-in oak hutch in their circa 1895 American Foursquare's kitchen. Last renovated in the 1990s, the room also held an awkward angled island that hemmed in the cook, a fridge that blocked traffic, and scant storage and prep space. "We wanted to preserve the beautiful woodwork but make the room flow better so that cooking would be fun," Kaela says.

Using the hutch as the cornerstone of her vision, designer Tiffany Skilling had the piece disassembled, then scrapped the butler's pantry behind it to extend the run of base cabinets by about 6 feet. Two-thirds of the three-door hutch was rebuilt and installed along the new wall, with the fridge nestled neatly beside it. The range, formerly in the island, swapped places with the sink and a vent hood was added, while a new white oak island was crafted to echo the original doors and trim. The ideal counterpoint to all that wood? Clean, bright-white cabinets and touches of pale green. "Salvaging the built-in was 100 percent the right decision, and the openness of the new layout is great," Kaela says. "We have friends over, host family holidays, and eat breakfast at the island every morning. The kitchen is now a true gathering place."



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Sacrificing a walk-in pantry allowed for additional base cabinets and helped open up the kitchen. New oak flooring and an ample island, which holds the sink and dishwasher, match existing woodwork. The perimeter countertop is honed granite with the look of soapstone; the island is topped with white quartz, for contrast.

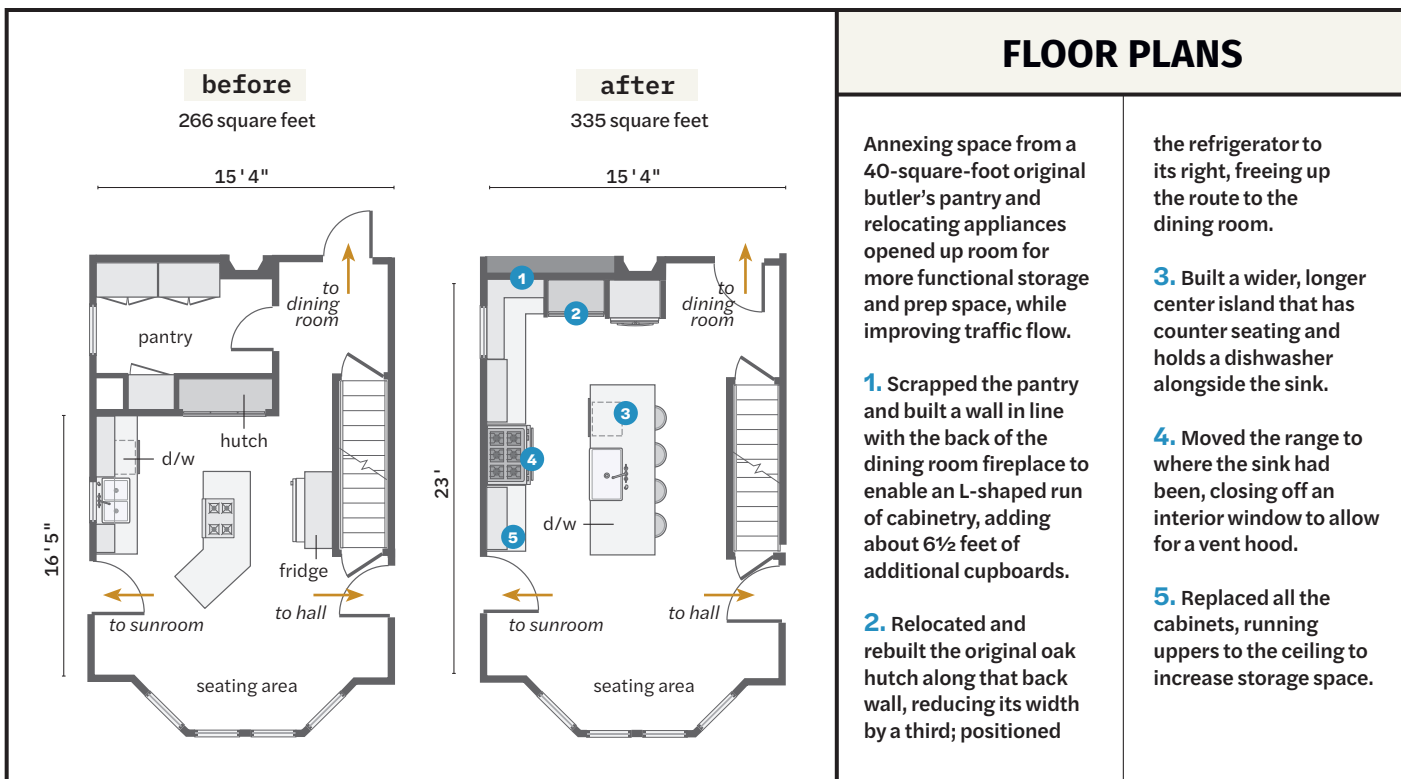
BEFORE The existing kitchen was an obstacle course: The fridge impeded passage to the dining room, a walk-in pantry hid behind the hutch, and the island took a hip-busting turn. Cabinets were worn; vinyl flooring and laminate countertops were outdated.



Two-thirds of the rebuilt hutch was devoted to the kitchen; the remaining third was repurposed upstairs as a linen closet in the main bath. The interior was updated with storage bins and rollout shelves; it also houses the microwave.



Rather than lose the character of an original wood-cased window for more cabinetry, floating shelves now traverse it. The interior window channels light from the sunroom, “and I can peek in on my kids playing while I cook,” Kaela says.



FLOOR PLANS: IAN WORPOLE



EXPERT ADVICE

“An island with just an overhang feels unfinished to me. Here the island’s chunky legs ground the piece and create impact.”

TIFFANY SKILLING,
principal designer,
Tiffany Skilling Interiors



The new white oak island blends beautifully with the existing woodwork. “Our cabinetmakers brought a piece of original trim that came down during demolition to their workshop to match the grain and stain,” Kaela says. The range wall gained a vent hood, a pot filler, and a backsplash of subway tile that’s textured for handcrafted appeal.

SKILLING: SARAH SHIELDS



↑ “From what we can tell, all the quartersawn tiger-oak woodwork in the house has never been painted,” Kaela says. “We are extremely lucky!” To complement the existing casings, wainscoting, doors, and windows, the new white oak flooring was given a warm-walnut stain.



← Talk about sitting pretty: A bay of tall double-hung windows frames a seating nook refreshed with painted rattan chairs and a tulip-style table. The seats’ cool-blue paint color coordinates with the kitchen’s pale-green accent shade—and both set off the warm oak millwork. While the nook gets plenty of morning sun, a pulley-style pendant light keeps it bright at all hours.

GET THE LOOK

These updated classics nail the vintage feel and offer practical advantages, too

1. Faux bridge faucet / DELTA

This chrome faucet offers the look of a bridge style but installs like a conventional three-hole model for an easier retrofit. Broderick Two-Handle Pull-Down Bridge Kitchen Faucet, \$843; deltafaucet.com

2. Pulley-style pendant / KOHLER

A modern take on a vintage-style adjustable work light, this streamlined design brings the light right where you want it. Artifacts Adjustable Pendant, \$299; us.kohler.com

3. Leather-top stool / BALLARD DESIGNS

This sturdy seat has an industrial look that’s in sync with the island’s schoolhouse lights. Cornelia Leather Counter Stool, \$449; ballarddesigns.com

4. Accent shade / BENJAMIN MOORE

“This green is soft without being pastel and feels very vintage,” says Skilling. Regal Select in Antique Jade, from \$70 per gallon; benjaminmoore.com 🏠

