

How big ideas transform small spaces

■ A food prep island, strategic storage and artful finishes turn a 50-year-old kitchen into a functional family gathering space

BY JOHN BYRD
SPECIAL TO THE FAIRFAX
COUNTY TIMES

An island of sanity

The value of a mid-kitchen food preparation surface cannot be overstated – even in tight spaces. True, you’ve got to allow a circumference wide enough for two people to pass without collision. But a kitchen island has so many functions: useful surface, cooking station, at-hand storage, customized “essentials” drawer, protective barrier, and traffic regulator – all perfectly situated between refrigerator and sink, pantry and breakfast table. Command and control is the operative idea, certainly more than ever before.

“Our old kitchen was pretty dysfunctional,” admits BT, a Mount Vernon homeowner who had moved into his 50-year-old center hall Colonial with his wife and two small children three years ago, but hadn’t seriously appraised its kitchen until the family had occupied it for almost a year.

“It was dated and not well-designed, but it’s hard to know how much aggravation a bad kitchen can cause... until you start using it,” he said.

Soon, however, the drawbacks were obvious – not enough storage, poorly constructed cabinets, cramped dining area, scarcely usable

appliances and mainly, no logic to the traffic in a room with three doors.

Obstructions in tight places

The core problem was that the 240 square feet of usable floor space was subdivided by a narrow countertop that ran perpendicular to the back wall while thrusting a full 8 feet into the kitchen’s 12-foot width.

The floor plan didn’t actually provide space for bar stools (one way to make sense of a counter). Worse yet, the counter top was so close to the opposite wall that doors to the built-in cabinets barely had room to swing open.

At the far end, the kitchen narrowed to a 6-by-8 niche with a window that had to accommodate a sink and refrigerator. The cook top – at almost mid-room – was contiguous with the perpendicular island. Complicating matters, doors to the outside rear kitchen and basement opened into the cook’s work zone.

“All the kitchen’s necessary activity zones were in the middle of the main artery through the back of the house,” BT recalls. “If you wanted to go to the basement or the backdoor, you had to walk through the cook’s working area. Ditto a trip to the refrigerator from any part of the house.”

Adding to the mayhem: clutter; there simply wasn’t enough assigned storage, and appliances were almost randomly backed against walls in a vain attempt to free up the

mid-room. The effect, of course, was the opposite: as the cook dashed from wall to wall, someone was invariably entering their workspace – bobbing and sidestepping like bumper cars.



PHOTOS COURTESY HOME FRONTS NEWS

While there has been no increase in available square footage, a kitchen space plan by Michael Nash Design Build and Homes introduced a food prep island with a cook top range to reinforce efficient work triangles. The island frees the cook from disruptive walk-through traffic.

“Our first step was to gut the area entirely and rethink traffic, storage, aesthetics,” says Sonny Nazemian, who founded Michael Nash Design Build and Homes precisely to offer these kinds of integrated solutions. “It’s all of a piece – you want a kitchen that feels spacious, that’s light

and open, that has thoughtfully integrated work zones – and conveniently puts everything that’s needed in a place of its own.”

After almost three decades as an award-winning remodeler, Nazemian can deconstruct problems like this quickly. He and his staff operate a virtual “think

tank” on kitchen design out of their Lee Highway showroom in Fairfax. They also execute all the creative and construction phases of all projects in-house, without using subcontractors. While Michael Nash projects run the gambit from sprawling multi-level luxury kitchen to modest galley, creating

a thoughtfully structured floor plan is usually where it starts.

“Often a homeowner hasn’t thought much about how they want to use the space, or where things should go,” Nazemian observes. “Perhaps they simply

See HOMES PAGE B-5

— MONUMENTAL —

★ SALE ★

Presidents Day

HURRY! ENDS FEBRUARY 20TH!

PICK 3 BIG OPTIONS FOR FREE*!

- Finished Rec Room • Basement Bathroom
- Tray Ceiling in Owner’s Suite • Upgraded Appliances



Burke Junction • Fairfax, VA

SINGLE FAMILY HOMES
FROM THE LOW \$900s
NOW SELLING!

- Up to 5 BR & 5.5 BA • Starting at 3,036 sq. ft.
- 1 mile to Burke Centre Station VRE!
- Easy access to Fairfax County Parkway and I-66
- Fairfax’s Mosaic District - short drive to upscale shopping & dining
- Old Town Fairfax’s quaint restaurants & shops await just 5 miles away
- Burke Farmer’s Market less than a mile away
- George Mason University 6 minutes away
- Burke Lake Park and Golf Course are 10 minutes away
- Fairfax County Public Schools

5636 Guinea Road, Fairfax, VA 22032
866-407-3926
khov.com/BurkeJunction

BURKE JUNCTION

*“Pick 3” options and upgrades are based on availability, subject to change without notice, valid only for new contracts on to-be-built homes purchased by February 20, 2017 (Presidents Day). Value of options and upgrades may affect maximum available financing and may not exceed \$30,000. See Community Sales Consultant for current list of community-specific “Pick 3” options. All prices are base prices, subject to availability, and subject to change without notice. K. Hovnanian® Homes is a registered trademark of Hovnanian Enterprises®, Inc. See Sales Consultant for details. We are pledged to the letter and spirit of U.S. policy for the achievement of equal housing opportunity throughout the Nation. We encourage and support an affirmative advertising and marketing program in which there are no barriers to obtaining housing because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin. K. Hovnanian® American Mortgage, LLC, 3601 Quantum Boulevard, Boynton Beach, FL 33426. NMLS #3259 (www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org). Licensed by the Virginia State Corporation Commission #MC2661.

KHovnanian®
Homes

KHovnanian
American Mortgage, L.L.C.



f /khov.VA
t /khov_VA

THE TOP TEN SALES IN FAIRFAX COUNTY



MCLEAN

1819 BALDWIN DR,
MCLEAN, VA 22101
\$750,000
4 bed, 3 bath



MCLEAN

1450 WAGGAMAN CIR,
MCLEAN, VA 22101
\$2,595,000
6 bed, 6 bath



VIENNA

1102 HILLCREST DR SW,
VIENNA, VA 22180
\$530,000
5 bed, 3 bath



VIENNA

1740 LOCKERBIE LN,
VIENNA, VA 22182
\$830,000
5 bed, 2 bath



RESTON

1579 POPLAR GROVE DR,
RESTON, VA 20194
\$365,000
3 bed, 2 bath



RESTON

11401 HOLLOW TIMBER CT,
RESTON, VA 20194
\$664,900
4 bed, 3 bath



FAIRFAX

4111 SHERWOOD ST,
FAIRFAX, VA 22030
\$369,900
2 bed, 2 bath



FAIRFAX

5193 DUNGANNON RD,
FAIRFAX, VA 22030
\$652,000
5 bed, 3 bath



CENTREVILLE

6245 HIDDEN CANYON RD,
CENTREVILLE, VA 20120
\$422,000
5 bed, 3 bath



CENTREVILLE

5826 STONE CREEK DR,
CENTREVILLE, VA 20120
\$650,000
5 bed, 4 bath



Glass-facing cabinets make it easy to identify plates, bowls and cups, facilitating food service. Wireless access is at hand in the new plan; the clean-up station in the far corner is self-contained.



BEFORE: The old kitchen's 240 square feet of floor space was subdivided by a narrow countertop that ran perpendicular to the back wall while thrusting a full 8 feet into the kitchen's 12-foot width. Owing to a lack of assigned storage options, there was a significant clutter problem around the stove.

HOMES

Continued from Page B-4

bought a house and moved in. Nothing has been custom-created to meet real needs. As a first step, we get the owners to prioritize everything that requires dedicated storage, and then we work on a plan that will make food preparation and clean-up efficient... even fun."

Solutions

In the Mount Vernon Colonial, the call to action was apparent: eliminate the obstructive countertop, create a working kitchen with a clearly delineated dining area, and keep traffic flowing around a mid-room island - And do it all within a budget worked out with BT and family, line-by-line.

To begin formulating an appropriate ambiance, the Michael Nash team removed decades-old vinyl flooring and resurfaced the area in cream-colored ceramic tile. Embossed backsplashes in the same tone would be intermittently applied to walls. Walls would be painted a highlighting shade of lime; ceilings, baseboards and replacement window trimmed in a complementary egg-white.

Locating appliances was the next critical matter, starting with the 72-by-25-inch food preparation island surfaced in black "ubata" granite. The solution features a 30-inch, GE Profile gas cook top with a hood and generous spaces for cutting and slicing,

or just staging a meal. Better yet, with the refrigerator, space cabinets and pantry immediately at one's back - and a microwave and oven to the left - the cook's work triangle is now neatly defined.

Someone proceeding helpfully to the new glass-facing china cabinet, or dishwasher (or even the backdoor) now travels on the opposite side the island. The kitchen clean-up crew stays out of the chef's sanctum. Moreover, the cook has several at-hand surfaces to prepare service to the formal dining room.

In response to storage requirements, Nazemian and team specified a series of floor-to-ceiling cabinets that preserve critical floor space. Pantries on either side of the refrigerator keep food products close at hand; cabinets within easy reach of the island have been designed for pots, pans, cooking utensils; plates, glasses and tableware have their place in the china cabinet. Best yet, the spacious cat-in kitchen area is just a few steps away from the now-happy cook.

"It's really the family kitchen we always wanted," BT observes, "So we plan on living here for quite a while."

For information call (703) 641-9800 or go to www.MichaelNashKitchens.com

John Byrd has been writing about home improvement for 30 years. He can be reached at (703) 715-8006, www.HomeFrontsNews.com or byrdmatx@gmail.com

Post-election housing sentiment: Too soon to tell

CONTENT COURTESY
FANNIE MAE

More Americans expect home prices to rise, according to Fannie Mae's recently released Home Purchase Sentiment Index® (HPSI) - but that expectation is likely muddled by the charged election atmosphere, which has resulted in opposing attitudes toward housing. The amount of Americans who said home prices will rise increased four points to 35 percent in November - a reversal of trend. The HPSI overall decreased 0.5 points to 81.2 percent last month, a half-point higher than its reading the same time last year.

"The November Home Purchase Sentiment Index outcome is difficult to interpret, as the data collection period occurred across the Presidential election timeline," says Doug Duncan, senior vice president and chief economist at Fannie Mae. "The results are fairly evenly split between responses collected before and after the election, and there is evidence of an increase in consumer optimism in the immediate aftermath of the election. However, we caution readers against drawing conclusions about sustainable changes in consumer sentiment so soon after the election."

The amount of Americans who said it is "a good time to buy a house" decreased one point to 30 percent; the amount who said it is a good time to sell, however, decreased six points to 13 percent, and the amount who said it is a bad time to sell increased two points to 38 percent - indicators of an upcoming swing to a buyer's market.

The amount of Americans who said mortgage rates will go down in the next year decreased as well, six points to -51 percent. Mortgage rates shot up over 4 percent in the wake of the election - the first time rates were above 4 percent since 2015 - and have continued to rise every week since.

"Low mortgage rates have been the primary driver of positive attitudes toward the home-buying and -selling climate throughout the recovery," says Duncan. "However, if mortgage rates continue their recent rise, we may see a dampening in home purchase attitudes. There are clear predecessors for rapid market changes that ultimately dissipated, which urges caution in the interpretation of stability in short-term rate changes. Most recently was the very temporary market reaction to the Brexit and, earlier, the 'Taper Tantrum,' and in both instances the rate regime returned to roughly its prior position. The drivers are somewhat different in this instance but nonetheless suggest modesty in drawing near-term conclusions."

Housing on the whole is expected to slow next year, with realtor.com® estimating home prices decelerating to a rate of 3.9 percent from an expectation of 4.9 percent.

"We do not see in the November HPSI results a fundamental departure from a flattening of housing activity relative to prior periods," confirms Duncan. "This is consistent with our corporate forecast of a modest growth in the 12 months ahead."

Content is provided by:



Contact Javen House or Kim House for more information:

Javen House
javen.house@gmail.com
703-201-3388

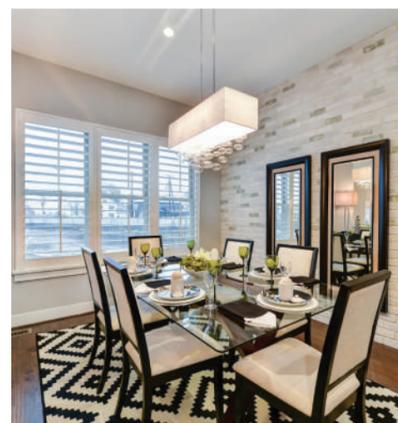
Kim House
kim.house@LNE.com
703-201-8860

homesbyhouses.com



JUNCTION SQUARE

MODEL GRAND OPENING
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH NOON-4PM



Tour our brand new model on Saturday, February 18TH and experience these modern townhomes redefining spacious living. Each home offers designer features throughout, open floorplans, and unbeatable location in historic downtown Herndon and are ready for immediate delivery.

HOMES FOR IMMEDIATE MOVE-IN FROM THE MID \$600s
(703) 831-6323 | JUNCTIONSQUARETOWNS.COM



711 MONROE STREET | HERNDON, VA 20170

