Expanding space without adding on

The step-saving space plan generated the square footage needed for a substanially larger refrigerator, a cooktop with vent and a 30 percent increase in storage capacity.

PHOTOS COURTESY MICHAEL NASH DESIGN BUILD AND HOMES

By removing two interior walls, widening a window, adding a second sink and introducing a food prep/dining counter that seats three, the new kitchen boasts generous sight lines and natural light.

■ Innovative solution named Best of Category in 11 southern states

By John Byrd
SPECIAL TO THE FAIRFAX COUNTY TIMES

Having recently purchased their first home -- a 30-year-old townhouse in Herndon -- the new owners began exploring ideas for enlarging and upgrading the space-restricted production house with an eye toward making it more reflective of their own tastes and emergent family requirements.

Since the property had never been modified, the appropriate steps to realizing envisioned improvements within a budget remained unclear -- until a meeting with Sonny Nazemian, founder and president of Michael Nash Kitchens and Homes, revealed a cohesive strategy for expanding usable space without adding on.

"The first level was quite cramped and very much a product of the late 1990s," Nazemian recalls. "There are always significant structural challenges when retrofitting a townhouse. But this is housing specialty where we've acquired lots of experience. Our goal was to introduce an open plan with standout aesthetic improvements while staying in-budget."

At first glance, the existing floor plan offered few options for inspiration. Entering from the foyer, a living room to the immediate right segued into a dining room which, in turn, extended further to the left rear of the house.

Two floor-to-ceiling partition walls separated the small kitchen from the rest of the main level. Packed with plumbing and ductwork linked to the second floor bathroom, the partitions also served as bearing walls. Meanwhile, essential support beams were embedded in the wall between the kitchen and dining room.

"We had to find ways to shift loads so we could remove two critical support walls within tightly conceived building regulations," Nazemian says. "Experience is everything in this kind of undertaking."

The owners primarily sought an upgrade to both the look and function of the new space and began exploring emergent lifestyle requirements. Among other factors, the changes would require re-routing and/or deleting bulkheads, a pantry closet and the partition walls.

The new open plan incorporates a formal dining area and even allows for TV viewing-- yet activity zones are well-defined and integrated.

The carefully matched the Brazilian cherry flooring previously used in dining room has been applied throughout the newly re-furbished kitchen. Cabinet facings, wine rack and a finely polished granite surface confer elegance and warmth.

The plan was simple -- yet challenging. To gain needed square footage, the HVAC system's primary "trunk" was re-located to lower-level garage and laundry; a new chase was introduced to accommodate the second-floor bedroom requirements.

Soil stack plumbing was then re-routed into a wall behind the cabinetry. To support the requirements of an open plan, a pair of structural beams was installed in the expanded main level living room/ dining room.

Next, the sink and dishwasher were relocated to the east wall. This permitted designers to shift the kitchen window to the left, forming a cavity for a substantially larger refrigerator.

A stand-alone food-prep island is now positioned mid-kitchen. The built-in is not only an essential serving station, but also a place for the family to convene as the cook explores favorite recipes.

Carefully-matched Brazilian cherry flooring previously confined to the dining room has been applied throughout the re-furbished kitchen.

The project recently received a regional (11 state) "Contractor of the Year" award (COTY) from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry.

For more information, call 703-641-9800 or visit MichaelNashKitchens.com

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

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