





# The kitchen sink and everything

## else

Updating the kitchen of this 1909 Craftsman to meet the demands of a modern family wound up becoming a much larger project, without sacrificing the original integrity of the home.





BY NANCY CROTTI  
PHOTOS BY  
HABITAT ARCHITECTURE

**Y**ou know what they say about remodeling jobs? Sometimes they can take over a whole house, and that's not necessarily a bad thing.

The Severt family – parents Katie and Tony; sons Zane, 11; Connor, 8; Grant, 4; and daughter Mena, 21/2 – got more livable space on three floors of their Kenwood home from what started as a kitchen remodel.

Aided by architect Hamid Kashani of Habitat Architecture in Bloomington and Otogawa-Anschel Design+Build of Minneapolis, the Severts replaced an outdated-single-story porch that a previous owner had added to the back of their 1909 Craftsman home. That gave them the opportunity to expand the eating area of their kitchen, add a covered rear entry and a new mudroom. And that was only the first floor.

The Severts bought the house when they married in 2000.

"It's really the only one we found that had the unfinished, unpainted woodwork," Katie Severt says. "We really liked the look of the quarter-sawn oak and the coffered ceilings and the dining room and the location."

The home has original, built-in oak storage cupboards and stained glass windows in the formal dining room, with bar-rister bookcases forming a gateway that separates the family room from the formal living room. The original kitchen was fine for a couple, but became increasingly cramped as the family expanded.



**Above,** what the kitchen looked like before the remodel.

“Our eating area was too small,” Katie Severt explains. “We just had a little counter that sat roughly three people, so when we got to four or five we just shoved high chairs on the end.”

The Severts didn’t want to trundle food and family to the dining room for every meal, so they opted to expand and remodel the entire kitchen. That included extending oak flooring from the main hallway, replacing a cramped pantry with floor-to-ceiling oak cabinets, covering the new Thermador refrigerator and dishwasher with the same oak cabinetry, and adding an expansive island with a prep sink and seating for four.

Removing the narrow pantry between the kitchen and dining room made space for an extra, in-drawer refrigerator and shelves. On the other side of the same wall, it made room for a guest bath that opens onto the front hallway.

The kitchen’s main eating area now consists of a roomy wooden table from Nadeau in Minneapolis, complete with bench seating for the children.

“With kids it’s easier just to put them all on a bench,” Katie Severt says. “It’s crowd control at our house.”

The architect and general contractor worked to make the kitchen addition look like it was always there, according to Otagawa-Anschel principal Michael Anschel. The contractor replaced the soffits, drop beams in Kashani’s drawing, and replaced them with a flush ceiling, courtesy of a steel beam tucked above it.



**A new guest bath** was the result of removing the pantry from the old kitchen.



BEFORE



"It's a hidden detail, but it's part of how we make it all look seamless," Anschel says. "On a project that big, there are so many details."

Some changes were more obvious. Kashani suggested moving an original three-panel stained-glass window from a stairway landing to the kitchen expansion, adding natural light and privacy to the new dinette area.

"While we are improving and modernizing these homes, we try to be sensitive to the original features that this home had to provide," Kashani says.

Artisan Kim Saima of Gaytee-Palmer Stained Glass of Minneapolis restored the window, replacing part of the glass and repairing a crack. She believes that Minneapolis' Witty Brothers Studio, known for its landscapes with windmills and sailboats, made the window in the early 20th Century.

"It's that really translucent, heavy, granite glass for a lot of it, and that's what makes it look so rich," Saima says. "It's kind of a definite Minneapolis-St. Paul area look, because I don't know of too many other studios that worked in the same style."



Moving the stained-glass window to the kitchen not only preserved it, but also allowed the family to stretch their addition outward and upward. It freed up space to expand Zane's second-story bedroom, create a walk-in closet and toy storage area for him and Connor, a shared bath for the boys and a connection from the closet and adjacent playroom to Connor's bedroom.

Kashani designed a sheltered entryway for the rear of the house, now covered in red brick. (The house was originally all red brick but had been painted over the years. Katie Severt wants to return the rest of the house to red brick again.)

Kashani also designed a mudroom just inside the back door with a floor of white, aqua and terra cotta colored tiles that match those in the front entry.

Otogawa-Anschel had to raise the level of the floor by three feet from where the former enclosed porch stood to meet the kitchen addition and connect to an existing sunroom.

Kashani also designed a built-in oak cabinet opposite the back door to collect mail, cell phones and other paraphernalia that family members bring home, so as not to clutter the kitchen.



**Above,** the addition and new exterior at the back of the home, now clad in brick. Originally the whole house was red brick but had been painted over the years.  
**Right,** the add-on back porch was removed to make way for a more comprehensive solution.







He suggested combining the sunroom with the adjacent den, creating a warm, spacious family room. The family replaced crank-out windows installed in the sunroom in the 1970s with ones that matched the rest of the windows in the house, Katie Severt says.

Getting to and from the third floor master suite used to mean making a hard right at the top of the second-story landing and passing through a doorway up a steep, narrow flight of carpeted stairs.

No more. The scary stairs are gone and the main wooden stairwell extends to the third floor, its exact details replicated along the way.

Otogawa-Anschel does a fair amount of matching existing millwork, according to Anschel.

"The staircase was one of those examples of, 'Where does the new one start and the old one stop?' — making the connection between the new space and the old space," he said.



The family had a pair of skylights added to the stairwell's roofline ceiling to let natural light in all year and let warm air out in summer. The addition also made space for a third-floor, walk-in closet for Katie Severt, "which is the best thing in the world," she said. "When Hamid told me I'd get a closet, I said, 'OK, he's hired.'"

Tony Severt got his own walk-in closet by reducing the size of the master bedroom. The couple also had the original laundry chute extended one story up to their suite.

The family is happy with the changes, even though they weren't in the original plans.

"The way that it's laid out now is just perfect for four kids," Katie Severt said. "Now everything just works really well." ■

*Nancy Crotti writes for the numerous Twin Cities publications and is a frequent contributor to Spaces.*