

A Kitchen Bumps

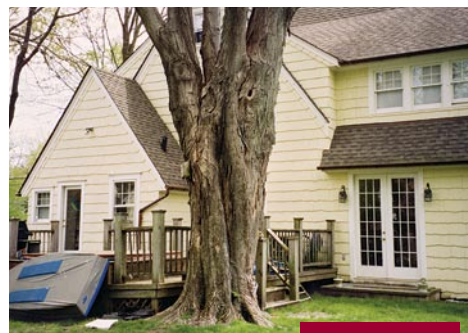
A small addition displaces the old kitchen to yield a mudroom, a laundry, a pantry, and a better-flowing first floor

BY PAULO VICENTE

A new kitchen with period charm. Keeping the footprint small and the design simple preserves the existing home's 1920s Tudor feel. Small, low windows on each side of the stove provide daylight but limit views of a neighboring house. Photo taken at A on floor plan.



Into the Backyard



Before



After

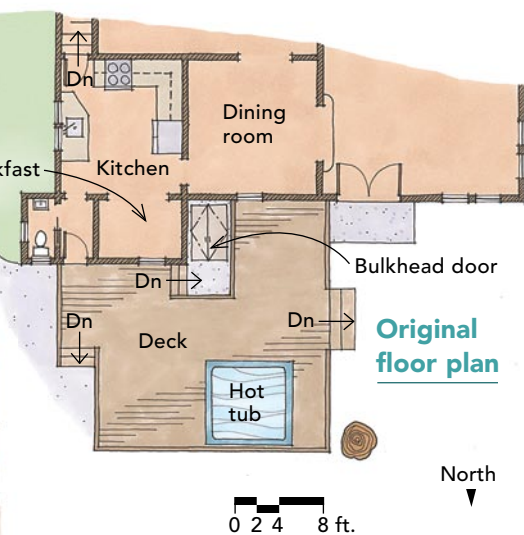
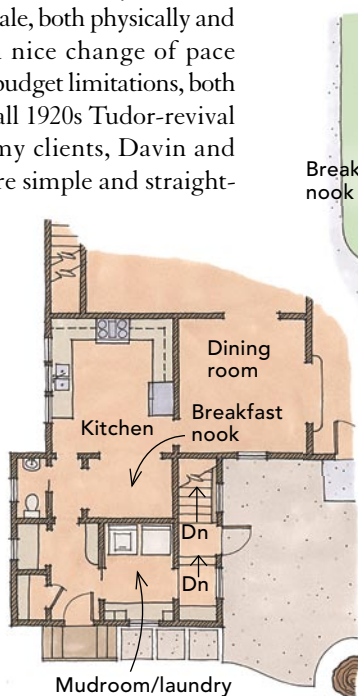
As a residential architect on the coast of southwestern Connecticut, I usually work on projects on a large scale, both physically and financially. It's a nice change of pace to be challenged by space and budget limitations, both of which existed with this small 1920s Tudor-revival remodel. When I first met my clients, Davin and Julie Gebauer, their goals were simple and straightforward. They wanted to update their small and tired kitchen, gain additional storage space, and have easier access to the often-used basement. In addition to these interior improvements, the couple wanted an outdoor-dining/entertainment area.

They initially focused on renovating the existing kitchen and building an addition off the back of the house to hold a mudroom and a laundry room ("First idea" plan, right). But to me, keeping the new kitchen in its existing location seemed a missed opportunity. By adding the new mudroom and laundry room to the rear of the house, much-needed daylight and views to the backyard would be cut off from the kitchen. For these reasons, I proposed that we place the kitchen in the new addition and reclaim the old kitchen space for a new mudroom/laundry room, and also see what else the space could do for them.

Moving a kitchen doesn't mean making it grow

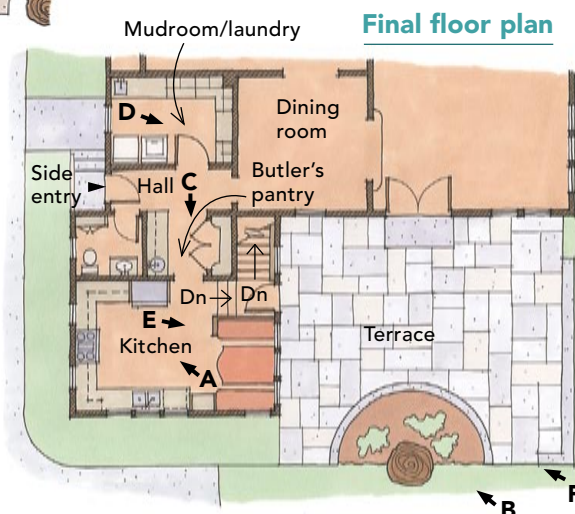
Aside from the fact that the Gebauers' old kitchen had 30-plus years of wear and tear, it also had lay-

RAISE THE RIDGE, MOVE THE KITCHEN, MAINTAIN THE STYLE



First idea

Photos taken at lettered positions.



Gaining a small amount of space often presents big challenges. In this case, we added up to add out, extending an original roofline and maintaining the original pitch on the new roof section to stay faithful to the home's Tudor-style proportions.

The best thing about the original kitchen was its view of the backyard and its convenient connection to the dining room. The owners' first idea for an expanded plan kept the kitchen and dining areas connected, but backyard access and views were lost. I persuaded my clients to move the kitchen but maintain the dining-room connection with a butler's pantry. The final plan provides the kitchen with the best views and easy access to a new terrace. We turned an exterior bulkhead basement door into a more-convenient interior stairway, enlarged the bath, and added a mudroom/laundry. Photos above taken at B on the floor plan.

A butler's pantry makes the connection.

Converting the old breakfast nook into a butler's pantry keeps the kitchen and dining room closely connected. Double doors provide access to additional food-storage space just a few steps away from the kitchen. Glazed upper cabinets, a wine cooler, a sink, and well-lit counter space add to the area's versatility. Photo taken at C on floor plan.

out issues. For starters, heavily trafficked areas cut through the main part of the workspace. Access to the basement, to the backyard, and to the first-floor powder room all flowed through the kitchen. This traffic problem adversely affected the functionality of the kitchen.

The old kitchen had limited countertop space and was furnished with white-laminate cabinets that had little stylistic connection with the original Tudor-style architecture. The only two good things about the kitchen were that it was directly off the main dining room and that it had a cozy breakfast nook facing the backyard.

When planning a kitchen addition, clients typically take the opportunity to make it large and to add a lot of expensive cabinets for extra storage. The limited budget on this project challenged us to extract the maximum benefit from a minimal addition. Within a 450-sq.-ft. footprint, we needed to fit a new kitchen, an eating area, a powder room, a mudroom, a laundry room, and basement access. The actual working kitchen area of the addition, 144 sq. ft., was not much bigger than the original 120-sq.-ft. kitchen.

From a style standpoint, our goal was to make the addition seem as if it had always been there, so the new architecture needed to blend seamlessly with the old.

A small pantry makes a big difference

My original proposal to move the kitchen into the rear addition had one small potential drawback that concerned the owners. Because the kitchen would no longer be directly off the dining room, the Gebauers worried that it would be difficult to serve guests in the dining room.

To me, the problem was easily solved by adding a small bar/butler's pantry between the kitchen and the dining room. This more-traditional plan is usually found in larger homes, but it worked perfectly in this small space. The area becomes a great place to store dishes and glasses that are used to serve food or drinks in the dining room. But the butler's pan-



Locker-style storage. Separated by a mirror, a convenient combination of open shelves and divided cubbies keeps an active family organized. Seats on the built-in benches are hinged and conceal more storage. Beadboard paneling provides durability. Photo taken at D on floor plan.

try also has the added benefit of hiding any kitchen mess from the guests' view.

The butler's pantry provided additional kitchen storage, thus reducing the need for more kitchen area. The new space feels larger because it opens the kitchen to other areas in the house, such as the breakfast nook and the new basement stairway. Also, we took advantage of the tall roof pitch of the Tudor revival and raised the ceiling to give the kitchen a more-spacious feel.

Make a lot happen in a little space

Because we had used all the new space for the kitchen and the breakfast area, we had to make the best use of the original kitchen's space, which was all we had left. To improve flow, we added a side entrance off the driveway. This entrance leads to a small 4-ft.-wide hallway, which serves as the distribution space for the entire house; it leads either to the dining room and the rest of the house or to the kitchen, the mudroom, or the powder room.

To take full advantage of the small spaces, some areas have dual functions. The 88-sq.-ft. mudroom doubles as a laundry room and is lined with cabinets to store the children's sports equipment. Sealed off from the hallway by a door to keep the area out of sight when guests are around, the mudroom is convenient to the new side entrance. The powder room, also just off the hallway, contains a small cabinet for linens and toiletries. The kitchen also contains a small eating area tucked in the corner with built-in seating and a table that overlooks the yard.

Relocating the basement access was necessary to improve circulation throughout the floor plan, but finding adequate space for new stairs could have been nearly impossible. We found an ideal solution, however. By covering the existing exterior bulkhead door with the new addition, we created a new interior entrance to the basement (floor plans, p. 67). An L-shaped stair plan improved the approach because the existing bulkhead stair came only up to grade. This strategy also resolved the need to have another set of stairs to access the terrace.

An addition improved the yard

Another project goal was to create an exterior dining and entertainment area. Our clients wanted to preserve and maintain an old maple tree that was the focal point of the backyard (this also limited the size of the addition). The existing house had a raised wooden deck in front of the breakfast nook and along the driveway. The deck was carved up by stairs, bulkhead-door access, and a hot tub.

Removing the deck and creating a terrace that filled the space between the new kitchen and the main house made the house flow into the yard. The terrace is centered on the maple tree, which has since been destroyed by a storm. Accessible from the kitchen and the living room, the new outdoor space is the ultimate area to unwind on a hot summer day, or to spread out and mingle with guests. □

Paulo Vicente is a partner in Vicente-Burin Architects, LLC, a residential-architecture firm in Fairfield, Conn. Photos by Charles Miller, except where noted.



Should we eat inside or outside? A cozy built-in breakfast nook has an open feel thanks to low windows. A high-backed built-in bench separates the area from the stairs and the door to the terrace. Once the location of the bulkhead door, basement access is now inside, convenient, and out of the way via a small landing by the door. Outside, a blue-slate terrace connects the house and the yard. Photo left taken at E on floor plan; photo above taken at F.