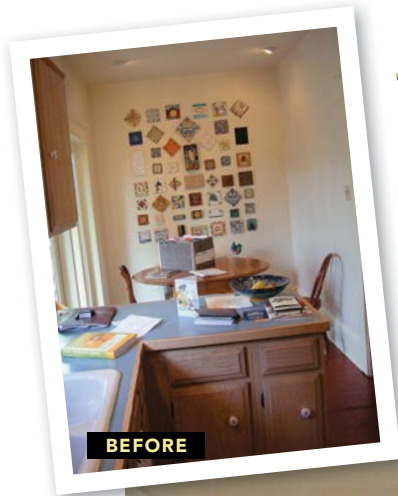
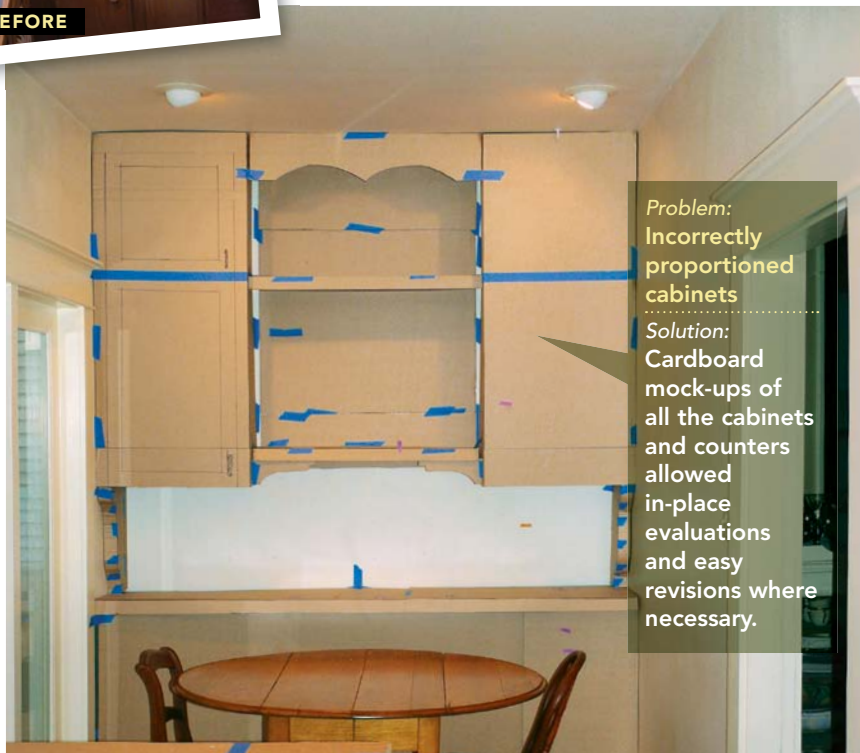


# From Cardboard to Cabinets



Fine-tuning a kitchen makeover with cardboard mock-ups dialed in a delightful design



*Problem:* Incorrectly proportioned cabinets  
*Solution:* Cardboard mock-ups of all the cabinets and counters allowed in-place evaluations and easy revisions where necessary.



Seattle's Wallingford neighborhood is filled with charming bungalows from the early 20th century, but when Craig Zehnder and his wife, Amanda, were house-hunting, it was a 1901 farmhouse that caught their eye. It immediately reminded them both of the rural farmhouses of their Michigan childhoods. Overall, the house was in great shape for its age, but as an architect and craftsman, Craig saw it as a blank canvas waiting for some creative updates.

Nothing was left of the original kitchen. Gutted and remodeled in the early 1980s, the kitchen had been outfitted with inexpensive appliances and cabinets, laminate countertops, and can lights. Along the south wall, an awkward soffit topped the upper cabinets. The north wall was a blank.

At a basic level, the kitchen functioned, but it didn't have much appeal. Plus, the Zehnders found that the lack of an effective range hood was a nuisance, especially





## Cool detail

Glass shelves in the built-in hutch allow light from fixtures at the top of the cabinet to pass through to the counter, illuminating goblets and glassware.



*Problem:* Douglas-fir flooring too soft for the kitchen

*Solution:* A two-tone cork floor extends the warmth of the fir floors into the kitchen, but the cork is more durable and easy to clean. Even the occasional tennis-ball soccer match with the homeowners' golden retriever hasn't scratched the cork.





**Problem:** No place for the microwave oven

**Solution:** Put it on its own shelf above the pantry, with an outlet at the back of the cabinet.

## Cool detail

Open shelves on both sides of the sink provide display space and keep the upper cabinets from feeling top heavy. The shelves' and cabinets' profiled edges add a stylish, understated note.



### Notable elements

**Counters:** honed Vermont Verde Antique marble

**Flush-mount light fixtures:** Rejuvenation

**Two-tone cork floor:** Expanko

**Apron sink:** Shaw

**Cabinet pulls:** Alno satin nickel

**Range:** BlueStar



**Problem:** Lackluster details unsuited to the farmhouse style

**Solution:** A restrained palette of Douglas-fir ceiling boards, cork floors, white subway tiles, and enameled cabinetry carries the original detailing found throughout the house into the kitchen. In the hutch, wavy antique glass from old single-pane windows nails the early 20th-century look.



**Problem: Useless recirculating range hood**

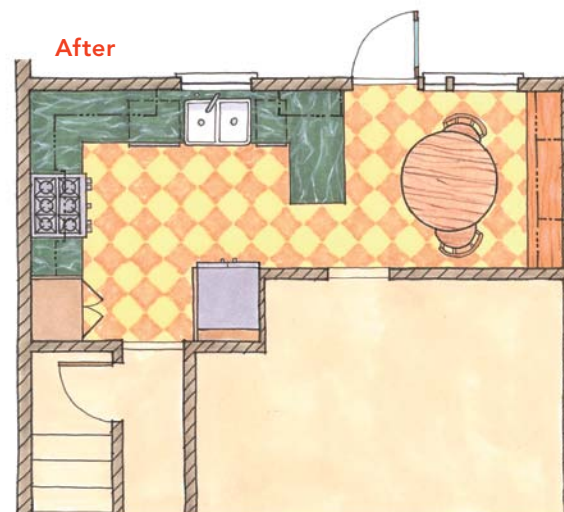
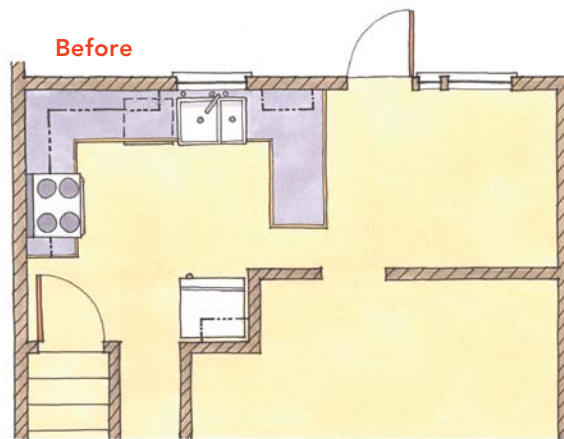
**Solution: A 1200-cfm hood that vents to the exterior successfully clears cooktop air.**



## "aha!" moment

Moving a staircase is a pretty big deal in a small remodel, but sometimes the benefits so clearly outweigh the drawbacks that it's undeniably the right decision. Relocating the stair to the nearby hallway made the entire corner to the left of the range available for drawers, a pantry, and more counter space.

0 2 4 8 ft.



during intense cooking while entertaining family and friends.

### Moving the basement door unclogs the floor plan

Typical of houses from this era, the door to the basement was in the kitchen, wasting valuable floor space. Also, the refrigerator was jammed so close to the hall that it hid the door casings.

After drawing several plans that tried to make the layout work with the basement door, Craig finally had the inspiration to move the stair a few feet to the east, with access off the hall. That freed space in the corner for a full-height pantry, with plenty of room to hide the microwave and a large pullout drawer for oversize items.

Moving the adjacent wall a few inches to the north gave the refrigerator a built-in look

and allowed for doorway trim that matched the style of the rest of the house.

To make sure the proportions of the new kitchen both looked and felt right, Craig mocked it up in cardboard and used a black marker to sketch out the cabinet faces and forms. This was an especially useful exercise for the north wall, where the design called for a built-in hutch (photo right, p. 51). Because of the windows on the west wall, the hutch needed to be shallower in depth than typical kitchen cabinets.

The new kitchen looks right at home in its 100-year-old surroundings. The Zehnders are particularly proud when they have visitors who say that it looks like it could be the original kitchen. □

Finished kitchen photos by Charles Miller. Others courtesy of Craig Zehnder.

**Architect and builder:** Craig Zehnder

**Cabinets:** Matt Feeney, Three-Tree Custom Carpentry Services