

JULY | AUGUST 2023

# MIDWEST HOME

ON THE WATER



\$4.50 VOL. 32 NO. 4



0 86771 56371 5 07



written by ANNA BJORLIN  
photos by SPACECRAFTING

# Next-Era Evolution

A historic St. Paul residence receives a refined remodel for a modern family of four



THE OWNERS OF THIS STately SUMMIT AVENUE RESIDENCE RECENTLY COMPLETED THE HOME'S FOURTH RENOVATION, WHICH INCLUDES THIS FORMAL DINING ROOM WITH GEORGIAN MOTIFS AND BUTLER'S PANTRY ACCESS (BELOW). THE PANTRY FLOWS THROUGH TO THE NEW KITCHEN—A CRISP, CLEAN GATHERING SPACE FOR A CURRENT-DAY FAMILY (RIGHT).



**W**hen choosing to purchase a property rich in history, homeowners know their decision will typically involve an impending remodel or two. For a local couple who fell in love with St. Paul's historic Summit Avenue and its Gilded Age homes, the renovations on their stately Georgian Revival-style residence (built back in 1960 for one of James J. Hill's granddaughters) is currently up to four—and counting.

"We always knew we would need to update it for modern convenience, but we wanted to honor the home's original architecture and intent, especially when it came to making sure the new parts blended with the existing craftsmanship," says the homeowner.

Over the past eight years, work on the property has been carried out in phases, starting with the conversion of a three-season porch into a home office and encompassing a two-level pool house and exterior work on the main residence's facade, driveway, and entryway. Most recently, the design team (made up of architectural design studio Charlie & Co. Design, custom home builder Anderson Reda, and Twist Interior Design) worked on transforming the kitchen, butler's pantry, and dining room.

Built at a time when serving staff lived alongside the family, the house was designed to create separation between the two. "It was really set up as two homes in one—there's this big concrete wall that runs right through the middle," explains Charlie Simmons, founding principal of Charlie & Co. Design. "The front side, facing the street, was built for the staff with the kitchen and workspaces below and their living quarters above, while the back—with the entertaining spaces and great bluff views of the Mississippi River valley—was designed for the family."

The first order of business was opening up the kitchen, closed off from the rest of the house with far too many walls and doors. "We looked at the original blueprints and found we could pretty much do whatever we wanted as long as we stayed within that big concrete bearing wall," says Simmons. "So, we basically threw a grenade in there and let the dust settle," he adds, jokingly.

The team organized the space in a traditional Georgian-style galley kitchen layout, with a large marble-topped island (one of the wife's must-haves for the kids to hang out and do homework while she's cooking) at the forefront. Behind, a custom metal range hood, originally designed for the pool house kitchen, anchors the space. "Formal symmetry is key to the Georgian style; however, it was missing from the old kitchen," explains Doug Tang, project manager at Charlie & Co. Design. "We restored it by repositioning the new metal hood on center (in between the existing double-hung windows) and echoing the new symmetry in the cabinetry, beam work, and lighting





fixture placement.” Reclaimed oak flooring was installed to match the home’s original wood floors, and two smaller closets were combined into a pantry perfect for storing smaller appliances, snacks, and cereal dispenser containers—a specific request from the couple’s son.

At one end of the kitchen, past a wide arched doorframe, an office (once a walk-in cooler) was converted into a built-in booth to provide the casual dining space the family wanted. Across, space was stolen from a hall closet to create a lovely hidden office nook nestled inside a faux armoire. The custom workstation, designed by Tang, simply looks like a regal piece of Georgian furniture when its doors are closed, but they open up and slide back to reveal a sophisticated secretary desk complete with a cane back chair. “The team really valued design and came up with all these little touches that surprise and delight,” says the homeowner. “My wife’s desk is probably her favorite part of the entire remodel.”

The other end of the kitchen flows into the butler’s pantry, a decadent, darker space that connects to the dining room. Stained walnut cabinetry was chosen to contrast with the bright-white enameled cabinetry in the kitchen, while its similar



FROM LEFT: A CUSTOM WORKSTATION WITH A SECRETARY-STYLE DESK AND CANE BACK CHAIR IS NESTLED INSIDE A FAUX ARMOIRE. A GOLD LEAF LIGHT FIXTURE AND MOODY COLOR PALETTE PLAY INTO THE BUTLER’S PANTRY’S OLD WORLD ELEGANCE.

stained-glass motifs help bridge the two spaces. The tray ceiling detail and distinctive gold leaf light fixture add an air of Old World elegance, while the window ushers in light to illuminate the floating glass shelving and highlight the gold flecks in the deep blue wallpaper. “We knew it would be more than just a flow-through space, so we wanted it to be functional but beautiful, like a statement-making powder room,” says Sandy LaMendola, design principal at Minneapolis-based Twist Interior Design.

The dining room, previously dark and red, had felt too suburban for the homeowners. “They wanted a lavishly beautiful dining room,” explains LaMendola, who employed a luxurious fabric featuring a soft, deconstructed floral pattern for the walls and window treatments. “It was like creating an outfit—dressing up the room in this beautiful fabric that made such a big

statement by virtue of the scale itself and then adding in some gorgeous hardware for the ‘jewelry.’” The subtle painted ceiling and Georgian motifs in the millwork create the perfect finishing touches and help reflect the home’s history as well.

“All the details, from the crown molding and trim to the paneling and dormer window casing, were all replicated from existing elements in the rest of the home,” explains Simmons. “We were very careful about making sure every single detail we added in felt like it had always been there.”

However, this project was just one of the team’s first forays into the main residence. As for the next phase of the remodel? “We’re actually working on adding a trellis and bench area opposite the pool house right now,” says Simmons, “and just starting conversations about potentially tackling the primary bedroom next!” ✂