



Past Made Perfect

This antique Cape boasted charm and an in-town location. Now its kitchen is a keeper.



Built in 1772 and moved in the 1800s to its present site in Cambridge, Zachary and Helena Sweet's tiny Massachusetts Cape had seen better days. By the time they bought it, the kitchen was cut off from the yard by an unheated porch and had become a pasteboard of bargain building materials, from its vinyl flooring to its sagging Masonite ceiling. The Sweets called on Wesley Quigley III, a Torrington, Conn., building designer and longtime friend, to reintroduce their home to its yard and to redefine its character. The couple hoped to infuse the space with more light and warmth, as well as add design elements and materials to balance the centuries-old house with their 21st-century lifestyle. Of course, there were other benefits, too. "We hung out in the ugliest room in the house for years," Helena said. "Now we hang out in the prettiest."



Designer: Wesley Quigley III, Torrington, Conn. **Construction:** LBC Construction, Peabody, Mass. **Cabinetry:** Dutch Made, Grabill, Ind.

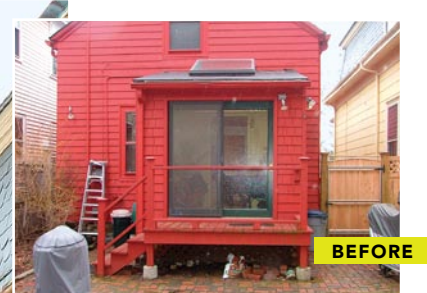
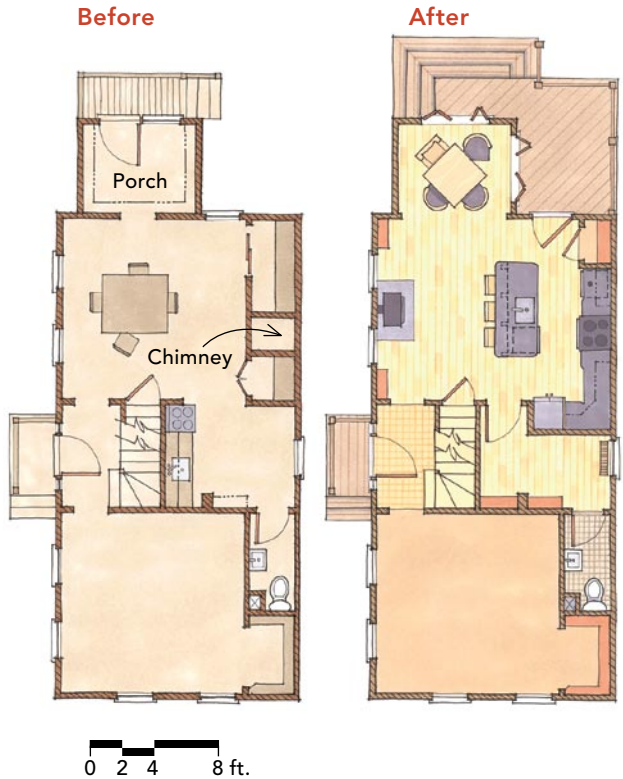


Problem: Access to the backyard through a separate room that left the kitchen dark and cut off from the outside

Solution: Removing the interior wall united the unheated back porch with the kitchen. Adding extra framing, insulation, and baseboard heating to the walls, along with custom-made folding-glass windows, created a comfortable, all-season dining area. A single window alongside was replaced with a door for deck access, and a skylight was installed for additional light.

"aha!" moment

Sometimes you have to remove old thorns to get a rose to bloom. Rather than dismantle a decrepit chimney, previous owners had encased it in the kitchen wall, with a built-in on one side and a closet on the other. By removing the chimney (and the built-ins alongside), the Sweets gained nearly 50 sq. ft.—enough space to accommodate the kitchen's work zone. "It was like we found another room," Quigley says.



BEFORE

Cool detail

The key to the indoor-outdoor connection in the Sweets' kitchen is these 6-ft.-tall bifold windows on two sides of the dining nook. Rather than confine the search to existing products, Quigley mapped out his specifications, then searched for the right manufacturer. He found it in Wisconsin-based Parrett Manufacturing (www.parrettwindows.com), which constructed the windows with the dependable-track system, heavy-duty weatherstripping, and argon-filled low-e glass lites Quigley required. The last frame on each unit not only folds but also acts as a swinging casement, enabling it to open as a single window.