



Cool, Calm & Collected

A kitchen remodel that lives comfortably in this 100-year-old house



BY JACE LEVINSON

Originally constructed in 1905, this 1800-sq.-ft. Craftsman home located in the Sea Cliff neighborhood of San Francisco evokes simple yet elegant living. During my first visit, I was taken by the character of the modestly proportioned rooms and by the sunny, carefully tended garden in the yard just beyond the kitchen. The kitchen itself, however, didn't leave me with such positive impressions. It had been remodeled in 1982, and it lacked the charm of the Craftsman aesthetic found elsewhere in the home. The narrow space had a large, awkward island at its center that contained the sink, the dishwasher, and the range. Due to the island's width, the previous remodelers could only provide a 1-ft.-wide series of base cabinets along the longest wall in the kitchen. Too narrow to store anything of much size, the base cabinets also failed to offer a reasonable food-preparation area. A good deal of space was wasted in the entire arrangement.

My firm's challenge was straightforward: The owners, Norman and Rosemary, wanted an improved plan in a style more appropriate for the home, but they did not want to build an addition.

Establishing calm

I like to think of our work as understated but vibrant. We look to nature for our inspiration, and in this case, we were influenced by the simplicity and color palette of the nearby garden. An interior with soft tones and delicate bursts of color seemed appropriate.

In the remodeled kitchen, open spaces predominate, with solid objects placed carefully within the layout. For example, upper cabinets do not extend fully to the ceiling,



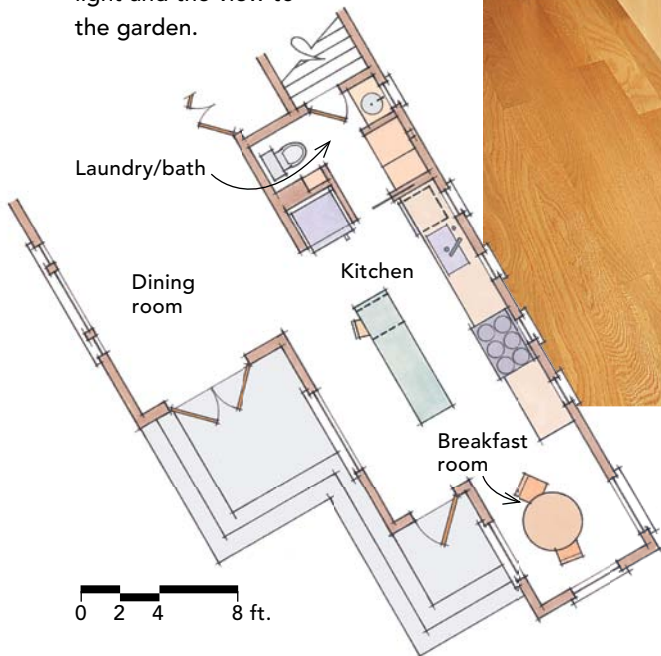
For the view. The kitchen's light wood tones and bursts of green mimic those in the backyard garden. The kitchen was laid out to preserve and maximize this view.

ROLE REVERSAL



Before The previous kitchen remodel grouped most of the kitchen's task areas to an oversize island. Shallow base cabinets elsewhere provided little storage space and even less prep space.

After Redesigning the kitchen island to be furniturelike lightened its presence in the small space. Its narrowness can easily accommodate entertaining and light meal prep, and it allowed full-depth cabinets to be introduced to the rear wall. Tasks that once took place at the island are now clustered on the periphery of the space, which enables the entire kitchen to open up toward the light and the view to the garden.



Wall of work. The property-line wall handles the bulk of the kitchen's workload. A new 30-in. Bertazzoni range and 42-in. Zephyr hood sit opposite the new island. Just off the kitchen, next to the refrigerator, sits a laundry, bath, and pantry.

Location San Francisco **Architects** Jace Levinson, Gordon Popaduik (associate), jacearchitecture.com **Builder** Tom Paratore, Paratore & Associates, Piedmont, Calif.

MODERN MOVES



Before The kitchen hadn't been touched since a remodel in the early 1980s, and the changes that were made—melamine-faced cabinetry, linoleum flooring, and stainless counters—stood in stark contrast to the rest of the Craftsman-style home.

Seamless transition.

The corner opening between the dining room and the kitchen is cased in trim that continues elegantly into a coffered ceiling. The opening frames a view of the kitchen's quiet material palette of maple, oak, fir, concrete, stainless steel, and marble.



After The most appropriate elements of the kitchen, such as the clerestory windows and coffered ceiling, were retained. The rest of the kitchen was updated with new oak flooring and vertical-grain maple cabinetry that was topped with Calcutta Michelangelo Marble. The new island has an end panel accented with Douglas fir and a concrete top tinted with Buddy Rhodes Universe pigment. Green Leucos Solaris pendants offer a burst of color and help bridge the gap between Craftsman and modern styles.

which makes them far less imposing. Portions of cabinets are left open and have the same effect. We chose not to maximize the amount of cabinetry in the kitchen, but rather to show a bit of restraint in order to create a more-open floor plan. Similarly, we could have selected a larger sink, but a modest-size unit helps emphasize the expansiveness of the new marble countertop. These design decisions, though subtle, keep the kitchen appropriately proportioned.

Modern yet warm

Given our desire to reflect the home's natural surroundings, wood was an obvious choice for the kitchen's primary surfaces. I have always liked the way the soft yellow tones of maple balance the deep amber hues of Douglas fir. For the primary cabinetry, we chose vertical-grain maple veneer; for accents—the end panel at the island and 4-in.-deep art shelves on the walls—we selected fir.

The light fixtures provide the bright, colorful accent we were looking for, while at the same time reinforcing the sense of craft. Man-

ufactured by Leucos from Italian Murano glass, they have delicate stainless-steel attachments that help establish a modern tone.

A casual arrangement

We chose to view the kitchen as an intermediary space between the living and dining areas at the front the house, and the breakfast nook and the garden at the rear. By placing all the larger, solid elements—cabinets, sink, refrigerator, and range—away from the perimeter wall nearest the garden, we could introduce windows to maintain direct visual contact with the outdoors.

This is a modest kitchen, but with some pop. The quality of the new space emerges from the balance of the colors and materials used, and the crafted relationship of each object and space to another. □

Jace Levinson is the principal of Jace Architecture in San Francisco. "Before" photos courtesy of the author. Other photos by Muffy Kibbey.