

Kitchen of the Week: White, Wood and Wide Open

A Pennsylvania couple and their designer take down walls to create an open, light-filled great room

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Former Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Mayor John Callahan and his wife, Mafalda, decided to remodel their first floor after their three children had grown up and moved away from home. The first floor's existing layout divided the house with many walls and small doorways, and the couple's vision was to tear away as many barriers as possible to create an open plan that connected the kitchen, dining area and family room, allowing the close family and their friends to be together while relaxing, cooking, eating and entertaining.



Photos by Jesse Jarrett

Kitchen at a Glance

Who lives here: John and Mafalda Callahan
Location: Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Size: 210 square feet (20 square meters)
Designer: Dana Bacher of Jarrett Design

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The Callahans had long dreamed of updating their 1970s kitchen while raising their family. “From the day we bought the house, we didn’t like the kitchen,” John says. Mafalda echoes that sentiment. “It was dated and we thought, ‘Someday we will get to this kitchen,’ ” she says. “Next thing you know, the kids are in college.”

Becoming empty nesters provided the perfect opportunity for an overhaul of the first floor once “the kids had finished destroying it,” John jokes.

The homeowners hired designer Dana Bacher to create a bright, expanded kitchen. They credit her with honing their ideas into a cohesive vision with creativity and attention to detail.

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Before: The original kitchen had very little natural light and a small footprint. The couple knew they wanted more of an open floor plan and that walls had to come down between the kitchen, den (through the door past the fridge in this photo) and dining room. “We didn’t want to do a minor rehab,” John says. “We wanted to open up the whole first floor.”



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After: This photo is taken from approximately the same angle as the previous one. The sink stayed in the same place under the window at left. A load-bearing wall was removed, requiring a support beam and post to be installed in its place. A local artisan wrapped both in reclaimed white oak and finished them to match the existing fireplace mantel in the den.

The warmth of the beam and floors adds richness and texture, balancing all the white of the space, which was a design request of Mafalda's.

Opening the wall between the den and kitchen brought the welcome surprise of a vaulted ceiling long hidden above the existing low ceiling. "The house was built in the midst of the 1970s energy crisis," John says. "People were looking to cut energy costs. We were never happy with the low ceilings on the first floor. Raising the ceiling in the den creates the illusion of all the ceilings feeling higher. It goes a long way toward creating that great-room feel."

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The couple chose a slide-in range with downdraft ventilation for the peninsula to create an open feel while cooking.

Wall Color: Decorator's White, Benjamin Moore



"The original kitchen didn't have a specific focal point," Bacher says, "so we chose to





Vendome sconces: Visual Comfort

Duiker says, “so we chose to make the sink the new focal point and make it as pretty as possible with the sconces above, the beautiful Kohler farm-style sink and the turned legs of the cabinet below.”

Subtle whispers of gray marbling in the alabaster quartz countertops and the light gray subway tile add a luxuriousness and help to quietly break up all the white, as do the rubbed-bronze accents.



The custom cabinetry includes a corner countertop cabinet with an appliance garage that hides the toaster and other kitchen tools. Corbels soften the look and add more visual interest.

Cabinets: Slate White, Plain & Fancy Custom Cabinetry



Only the flooring of the family room could be salvaged and refinished. The remaining areas got new flooring, also stained to match the mantel.

Counter seating was added to create connection with the family room. Additional seating was essential to Mafalda. “We were always the gathering house for our kids and their friends” she says. “We’d

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friends," she says. "We'd always cram into the small dining room and had five or 10 extra kids. Every year we host 60 or more people for Christmas Eve."

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Jarrett Design, LLC

A microwave drawer in the new island frees up counter space, something the original kitchen was sorely lacking.



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Jarrett Design, LLC

Drawers for pots and pans, along with spice drawers, were also specific requests for the design plan.



Jarrett Design, LLC

A tall pantry cabinet now



stands next to new French doors that lead to a porch.



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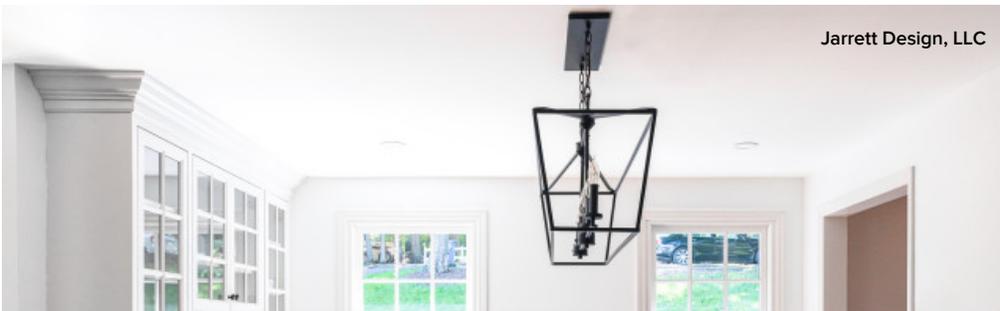
Before Photo



Before: The Callahans' original dining space didn't allow for expansion of their table.

"Mafalda grew up in a large Italian family and was used to having everyone around the table," John says. "I wasn't, so I gravitated toward the idea quickly of having that time around the table."

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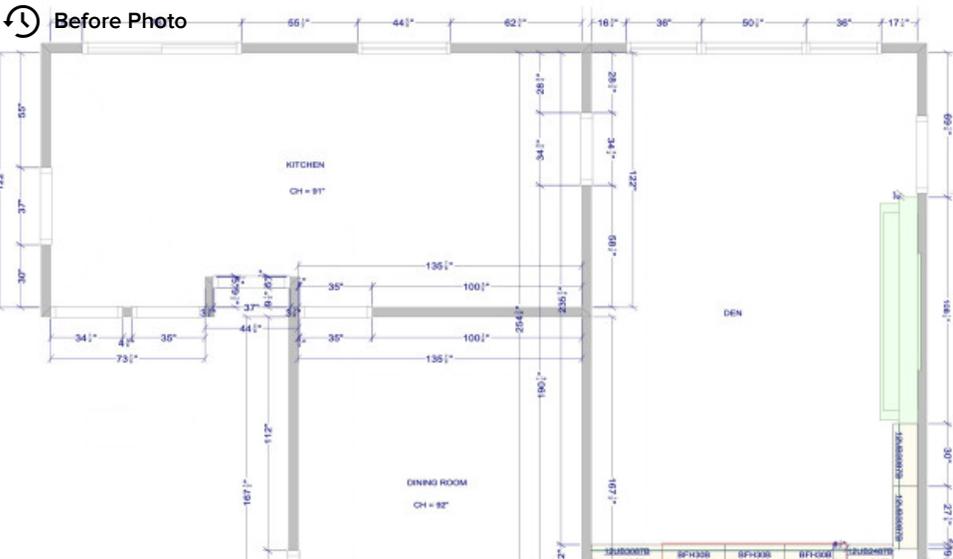
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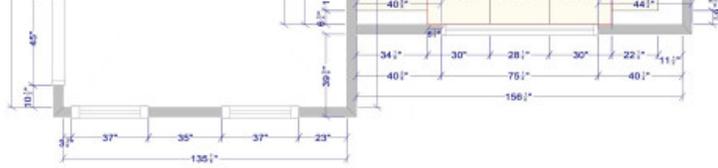
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After: A dining space that would accommodate family and friends was key. “The table was ordered from Italy and took six months to arrive,” John says. “It’s about our kids and their friends sitting down for dinner. It’s about the ups and downs of life, having them return and hopefully having grandkids around the table someday. It was important to have that space to be together.” The table expands to accommodate 12.

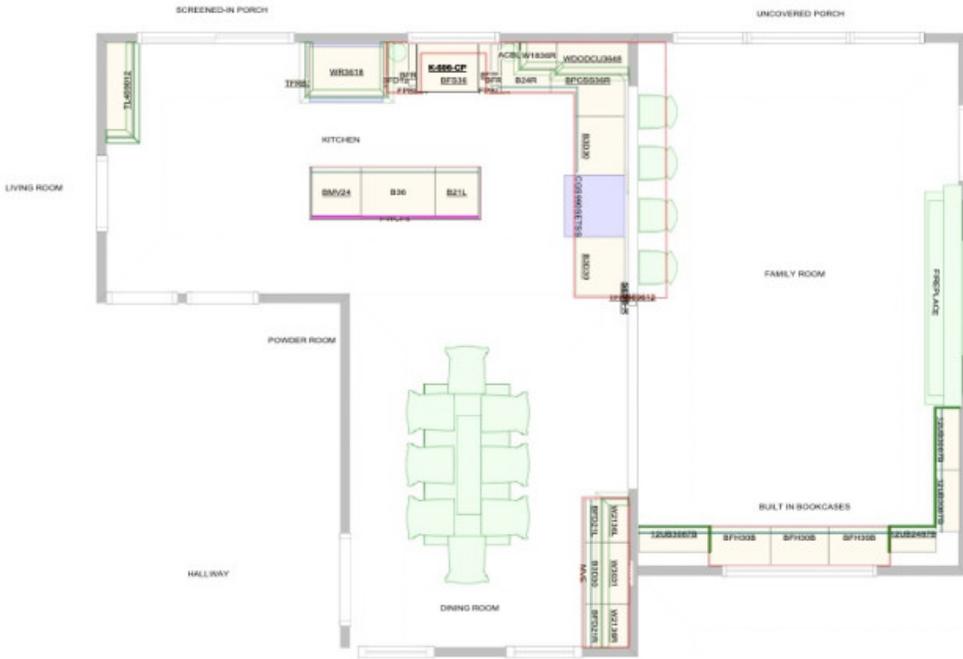


Bacher designed this built-in buffet as the focal point of the dining room. “When people enter the home, this is the first thing you see as you turn toward the dining room,” she says. “We wanted it to be a beautiful piece of furniture.” The walnut top echoes the warm tones of the floor and kitchen beam, though it’s stained slightly darker to display the beauty and richness of the wood. The cabinetry was built to match that of the kitchen.





Before: This floor plan of the original layout shows the many walls that separated the kitchen, top, and the den and dining areas.



After: The floor plan of the remodeled space shows the three rooms open to one another, creating the perfect environment for entertaining and family dinners.

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“After years and years, really since we moved into the house, of Mafalda showing me pictures of kitchens she loved, it’s amazing to think we have a kitchen worthy of being on Houzz,” John says. “We had three kids. We never had the time or money to redo the kitchen. It makes me feel pretty good, as a husband, to have finally been able to give my wife the kitchen of her dreams.”

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