



Kitchen Confidential

Three common challenges of a kitchen remodel—and how one local family solved theirs.

THREE YEARS HAVE PASSED since Doug and Sue Williams's Plymouth kitchen was remodeled, but the parents of two still enjoy cooking and baking in the space as if the upgrades happened yesterday.

"We really, really like it," Doug Williams says. "There is really nothing that we wish we would have done differently."

This split-entry house on 50th Avenue has been the Williamses' home for 18 years, and with two teenage kids, the dining room's carpet was wearing, the kitchen's vinyl floor was cracking and the cabinets were no longer efficient. The home was built in 1983, and the Williams wanted to bring their kitchen into the 21st century.



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Challenge: Aesthetic

Enter designer Amy Hinck and co-owner Ron Orfield of Orfield Design & Construction. They listened as the Williamses said they wanted to remove the neutral brown look of the checkerboard floor, the faux-wood countertops, the old cabinetry and the striped wallpaper. The couple also wanted to improve the kitchen's functionality.

"It looked very old and tired, aesthetically," Williams says.

The Williamses went through their list of desires—granite countertops, hardwood floors, painted walls—as well as their practical points—a good place for the gar-

bage can, a location for cookie sheets, a spot to stow pots and pans. They wanted everything without disrupting the current layout.

The kitchen and dining room remodel began in May 2008. Details that were missed with the original construction were fixed; for example, the sink was realigned to be centered with the window. "It might not seem like a big deal, but moving that over and aligning everything correctly makes it look a lot better," Hinck says.

Challenge: Timeline

But by late June, after trying to live in this remodeling zone, the Williamses were growing slightly perturbed.

"As soon as I vented a little bit of frustration, Orfield came back with a timeline on how they would finish everything up," Williams says, noting timeframes are a good thing to establish as early in the process as is possible. "They said, 'We are going to be done in two or three weeks.' And they were." By July, the Williamses had their new kitchen.

Challenge: Budget

The Williamses had lots of items to check off of their wish list. For the contractors, that meant walking the fine line between aesthetic and budget, managing wants versus needs, Hinck says. Client education was key: "Homeowners understand better if we show them all the reasons why [they might like a certain product or method] and all the pieces that go into a particular design," she says.

To meet budget, the Williamses delayed the addition of new appliances and skipped additional lighting over the peninsula; to compromise, Orfield added lights under the cabinets. Another cost-saving came by way of granite-patterned laminate instead of the real thing. "Products are coming a long way, and you can save \$4,000 by going with a laminate versus a granite countertop," Hinck says.

While Orfield Design & Construction reined in some costs and expectations, the new space had ditched the "very muted color palette" and replaced it with a "very warm room," Hinck says. "It's inviting. Everything seems very put-together, and everything stands out. It seems like it's now in the current era, not outdated." //