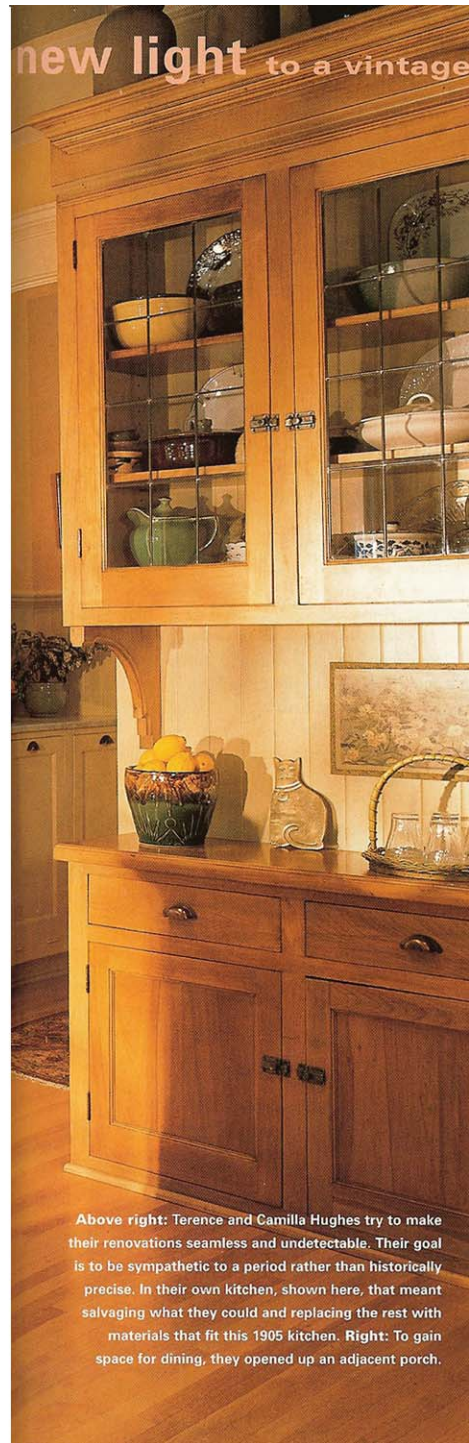


A Minneapolis couple adds new life and new light to a vintage kitchen.



vintage VIEWS

Professional renovators Terence and Camilla Hughes spent three long years finding the home of their dreams, but the wait was worth it. They found exactly what they were looking for in the form of a 90-year-old south-facing duplex on Lake of the Isles in Minneapolis.

"We actually came to the duplex for an estate sale, and while we were there we inquired about the house," recalls Terence. "We found that it had just been listed that day, so we made an offer. As it turned out, the owner's daughter was familiar with work we had done on other houses in the neighborhood and liked what



Above right: Terence and Camilla Hughes try to make their renovations seamless and undetectable. Their goal is to be sympathetic to a period rather than historically precise. In their own kitchen, shown here, that meant salvaging what they could and replacing the rest with materials that fit this 1905 kitchen. Right: To gain space for dining, they opened up an adjacent porch.

BY ELIOT NUSBAUM
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENIFER JORDAN

we had done. So, she accepted our offer, even though there was areal estate agent there with a higher offer. She wanted to see the right thing done with the house she grew up in."

It may well have been a dream home, but the 7,500-square-foot house had some real-life problems. However, after 13 years in the renovation business as The House-dressing Company, and with something like 30 projects under their tool belts (including 19 houses or apartments that they actually lived in themselves), the Hugheses have reached a point where they operate by gut reaction. They can walk into a place, get an instant feel for what it is and what it needs, roll up their sleeves, and make a plan.

So, when they purchased this turn-of-the-century classic in Minneapolis' Kenwood area, up went the sleeves. The Hugheses first renovated the downstairs apartment. Then they went to work on the second and third floors of the house, which is where they would live.

As with many of their previous projects, the couple went to St. Paul architect Lee Meyer with a list of ideas.

"We conceive the ideas, then sit down with Lee, who gives us the structural ramifications of these changes. Then he helps us zero in on practical solutions," says Terence.

In fact, they had quite a few structural changes to make.

First on the list was the kitchen. "It was horrible," recalls Camilla with a laugh. It was too small, too dark, too 1905. Expanding the kitchen gave shape to the rest of the second-floor project list. To give the room more space, the Hugheses enclosed a small screened-in porch, opened it to the kitchen, and created a breakfast area. To bring in more light from the back, they replaced porch screens with six casement windows.

To help bring more light into the rest of the kitchen area, they pulled together a couple of windows above the sink, win-



dows that previously flanked the sink area. They gave the relocated windows more focus and architectural interest by constructing an alcove topped with a contrasting keystone detail around them.

To further open up the kitchen visually, the Hugheses cut a wide archway into an existing hall. That opened up the space between the kitchen and a new family room that they'd fashioned from what had previously been a back bedroom.

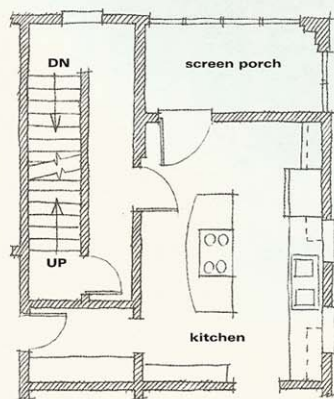
But here they ran into a roadblock. To make the cramped pass-through work, the Hugheses had to

remove a stairway to the third floor. From a practical standpoint, it wasn't a problem. This was a back service stair, and there was a much grander staircase in the front of the house. However, by eliminating the stairway, they were required by code to add a rescue balcony for the third floor on the back of the house.

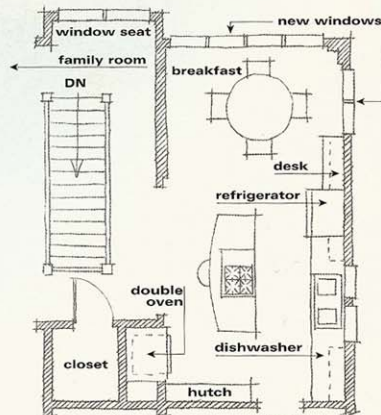
What appeared to be a bump on the road of true renovation happiness turned into a second-story bump-out with two more windows, an arched alcove with a cozy new window seat, and a sunny view of the back garden. "I love the window seat," says Camilla. "It's a quaint, comfortable place to be."

"We needed a little more room at the top of the stairs to pass through to the family room anyway," explains Terence. "So, by bumping out the back end of the house and creating the window bench, we were able to comply with the code requirements and at the same time get a little more room at the top of the stairs to make the pass-through to the new family room more comfortable."

To create architectural interest, they added a column between the alcove and adjacent family room. "We had a beam," says Terence, "and felt that it needed to look as if it was being held up by something."

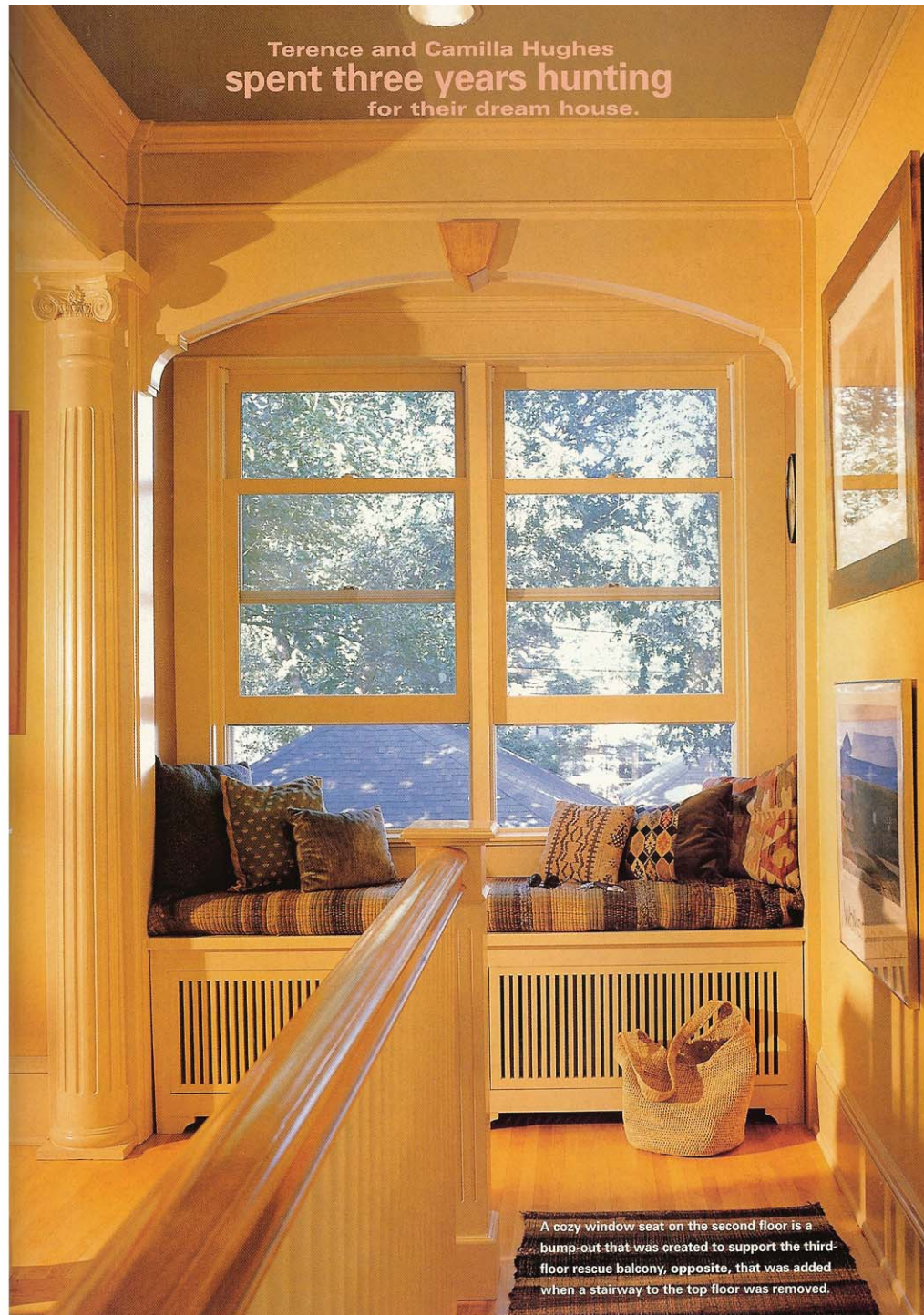


BEFORE



AFTER

Terence and Camilla Hughes spent three years hunting for their dream house.



A cozy window seat on the second floor is a bump-out that was created to support the third-floor rescue balcony, opposite, that was added when a stairway to the top floor was removed.



All that could be salvaged from the 1905 kitchen was the sink and one remaining set of maple cupboards.

Once walls were moved, the couple went to work on the kitchen. With the exception of the appliances, the space was pretty much unchanged from the time it was built—it still had the original cabinets and the original sink.

Terence and Camilla try to make their renovations seamless and undetectable, but their goal is to do something that is sympathetic to a period rather than historically precise. In their own kitchen that meant making use of and enhancing what was salvageable—which wasn't much—and ripping out the rest. In fact, all they were able to save was the vintage sink and one set of floor-to-ceiling maple cabinets at the far end of the kitchen.

That was enough, though. It was that one remaining set of cabinets that set the tone for the kitchen renovation.

By making several major modifications to the cabinets—such as removing the topmost portion and finishing the new, lowered top with crown molding, replacing the wooden panels in the upper cupboard doors with leaded-glass inserts, trimming away side panels that connected the upper cupboards with the lowers, and adding a new countertop—they created what appeared to be an old-fashioned, built-in display hutch that looked original to the house.

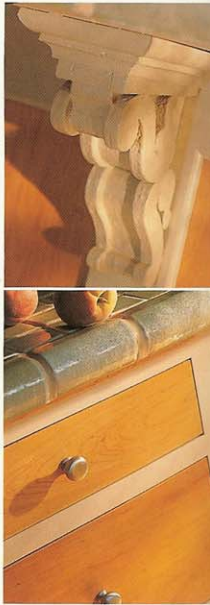
The new-old hutch was the takeoff point for the rest of the kitchen, Camilla explains. She and Terence knew they needed to base their work on the remaining maple cabinets, but they also knew they didn't want all maple cabinets. Likewise, they knew they didn't want all painted cabinets either, so they split the difference. They painted the frames a warm yellow-white and used lightly stained maple panel inserts for the fronts. The result, they agree, is a fresh, uplifting new look that connotes the feel of an earlier era.

For countertops throughout the kitchen, the Hugheses chose a slightly irregular green tile that was very similar to something they had seen at Glensheen Mansion, a historically preserved 19th-century home in Duluth.

"When we found these tiles, we thought they really made the statement that we were looking for: old-fashioned, almost worn looking—like they had been there, perhaps, since 1905," says Terence.

Under the new countertop on the island, the Hugheses added a fanciful touch by incorporating a vintage corbel from a salvaged porch to "support" the lip of the counter. This blending of old architectural elements with the new construction is an earmark of their company's renovation work.

Though they operate by gut reaction, the Hugheses' feelings about this house are from the heart. "We're a couple that continues to have different fantasies," says Terence, "but we're happy here, and this is going to be home for a while." □



Left: A new "hutch" made from an old cupboard sets the tone for the kitchen renovation. "We removed the center wooden panels of the upper doors and replaced them with leaded-glass panels," says Terence. Top: Adding vintage elements like this corbel from a porch is a Hughes trademark. Above: Stainless steel pulls complement the kitchen's new appliances.

Designers: Terence and Camilla Hughes. **Architect:** Lee Meyer
Regional Editor: Lisa Cicotte
For more information, see Buying Guide on page 114.