

In the late summer of 2009, after spending our anniversary leisurely wandering the streets of Linden Hills and Fulton admiring the quaint vintage homes and all that is within walking distance, we made our decision. We were living in the 'burbs and were just done with the always-in-your-car lifestyle, and the fact that the only choices we had in restaurants or stores were between one chain retailer or another. We wanted the old-fashioned, support-your-locals neighborhood and a home with character and a history of its own. We were moving to Minneapolis!

Once we began looking, it quickly became apparent that what we really wanted was a home we could make our own. My dream of a large, sunny kitchen was being overshadowed by all of the small, dark kitchens we were seeing. So we shifted gears and started looking for the perfect home that we could modify (tearing down was not an option for us). My husband, being a contractor with good vision, brought us to purchase a home that, in my opinion, was far from cute. But I trusted him when he said that he could change that!

We knew the look we wanted, and the floor plan. My husband's idea was to add on to the back, giving me my large sunny kitchen and a small office, while turning the existing (small, north-facing) kitchen into a back hall with powder and mudroom on either side. The upstairs had been converted at some point from 2 bedrooms into 3. We returned it to the original larger 2 bedrooms, and stole some room out of the existing bath to make a hallway leading back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> story addition: a master bedroom, closet and bathroom. We then hired a designer to help us tweak the plans and put them on paper.

We were determined to not remove any character while updating and enlarging our home. And it had to fit into the neighborhood. For the exterior, we did not raise the roof, and the addition to the back is narrower and shorter than the existing home. We also focused on 4-sided architecture; jogging in and bumping out to add interest, using different sidings for texture, and adding a wide-open and welcoming front porch. Inside we were able to replicate the wide baseboard and had the cove molding custom made to match the existing. We used all reclaimed doors and wood flooring (including on the front porch), and reproduction lighting, door knobs and hardware. The home had one existing arch between the living room and dining room, so we added more of those wherever we could throughout the home. Because of the attention to detail and the use of as many reclaimed materials as possible, people can't tell what was added and what wasn't—which thrills us!

On warm summer evenings my husband and I are often found sitting on our front porch (our kids finally in bed!), and we have had many thanks from neighbors walking by. Not only for improving the look of our home, but for making it one that fits in. Our number one goal was to respect the feel of the neighborhood, and in turn respect our neighbors, and we feel like we have succeeded.