

2024 AIA|DC Washingtonian Residential Design Awards

Project Title: *Kitchen Refuge*

Location: Washington, DC

Date of Completion: June 2023

Project Statement:

Though the whole house was renovated, the project is mostly about a kitchen. A room for cooking and eating but also for reading, entertaining, and engaging with nature to the rear of the house.

The kitchen is positioned in an addition one level below the entry, allowing for 18-foot ceilings and a space that spills through a retractable wall onto a rear terrace.

The palate includes natural materials that are at once cozy and tough. Elegant and casual. The built-in millwork is solid elm and the floor, which continues out onto the terrace through pocket doors, is Jerusalem limestone. The metal highlights in the hardware and light fixtures are warm-tones of copper and bronze.

A pyramidal chimney climbs the east wall and is paired with a 60-inch “void” skylight, which accentuates the loftiness of the space.

Design Narrative: How does this project address *Design for Integration, Wellbeing, and Discovery?*

The space is not conceived as a kitchen that contains elements of a living space. It is a living space where food is an equal part of the full-body experience of living.

To that end the area for the preparation and consumption of food is celebrated in a soaring room that boasts rich materials and a prime view of the site. The fact that the space is dropped to the basement level, makes it feel insulated from the hubbub of the front door and more closely associated with the chirping and buzzing of the silvan canopy behind.

The space provides an intersection of communing with loved ones, engaging with nature and the life of the mind. One end of the space nestles into the embrace of the several thousand books. The dining and gathering areas are removed physically and psychologically from the traffic in the front of the house and offices on the upper levels. The tall windows and disappearing sliding doors allow the kitchen to be immersed in the outdoors.

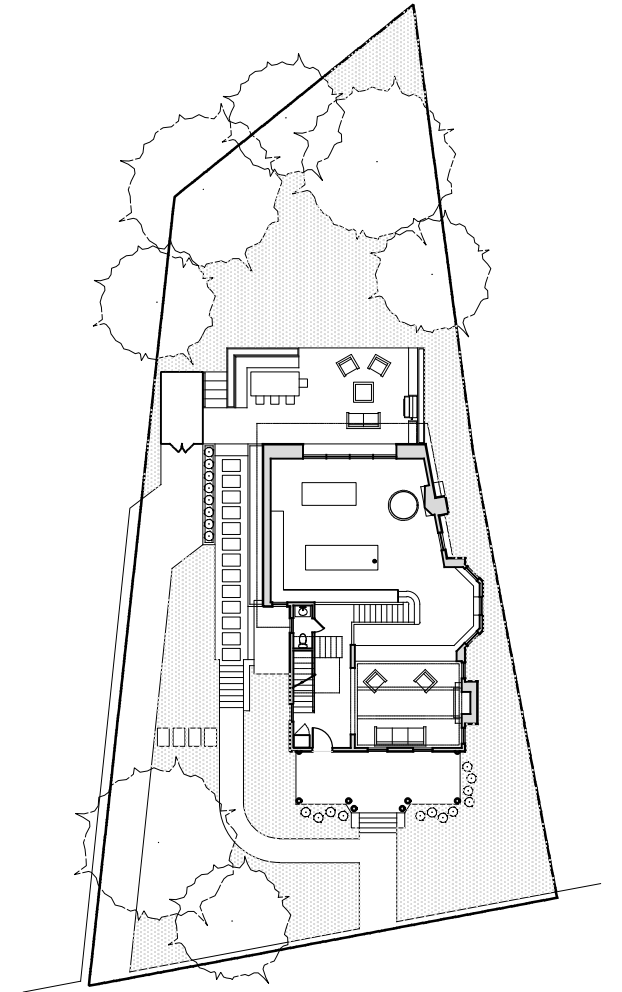
Views through the colossal windows open up from the front hall and the front parlor. The choreographed circulation allows the space to reveal itself gradually, enhancing the room’s sense of refuge.

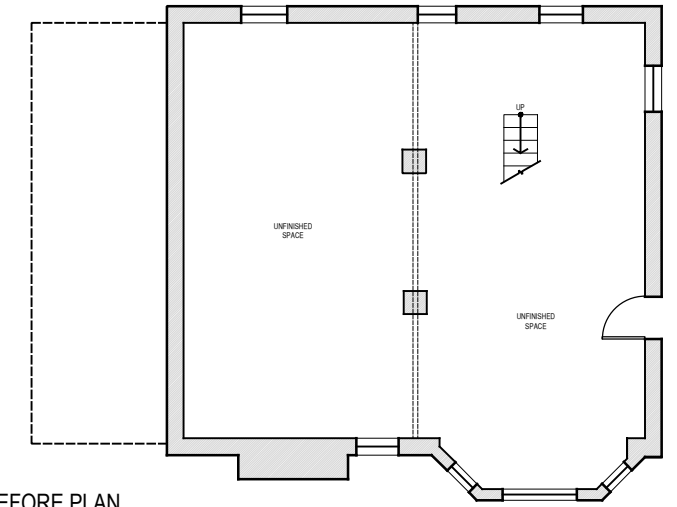
Community Engagement: How does this project address *Design for Equitable Communities and Economy?*

The kitchen space offers a safe and healthy place for loved ones to gather and feel connected to nature within a walkable, urban fabric. The space has its own associated bedroom suite and access to the outside which will allow the owners to age in the house even as their ability to navigate the stairs becomes compromised. Natural materials were chosen that will age with grace, and that have special value to the occupants as they were sourced from the birthplaces of the owners. Finally, natural ventilation and illumination eases the energy loads of the building.

Sustainability and Resilience: How does this project address *Design for Ecosystems, Water, Energy, Resources, and Change?*

The project uses heavily insulated walls, high efficiency appliances, heat pumps and induction cooking. There is a planted roof on the addition for water retention and the garden, which has no sod, boasts a selection of edibles to serve the kitchen. The operable glass wall allows for natural ventilation and daylighting.





BEFORE PLAN

The project is a complete renovation but most of all, it is about a new room. A refuge for a couple to live, read, eat, cook and entertain.

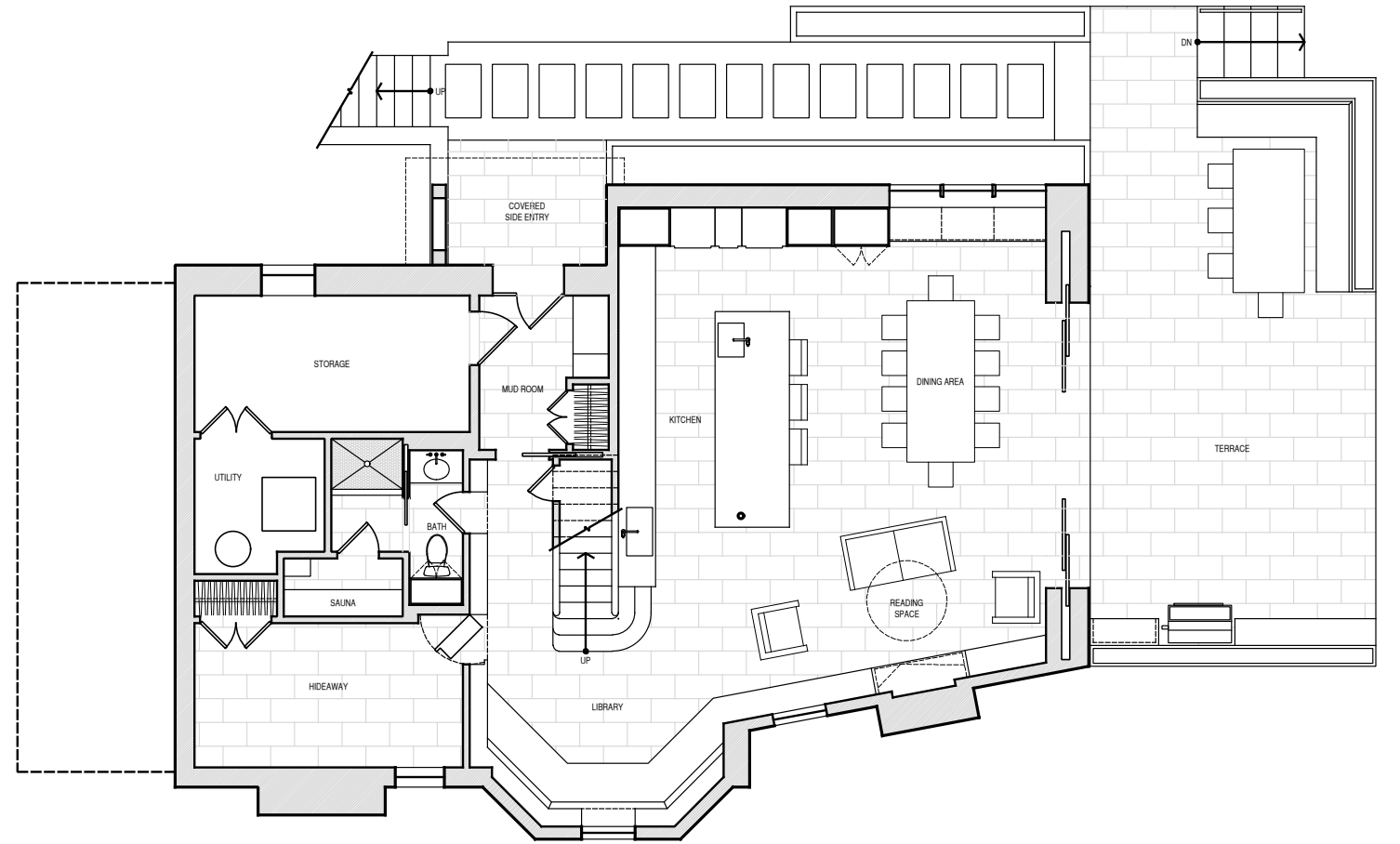
This took the form of a grade-level addition at the rear of the house where the landscape slopes into a tree-laden gulch. Placement of the kitchen at the lower level meant that it could enjoy higher ceilings with minimal visibility from the street.



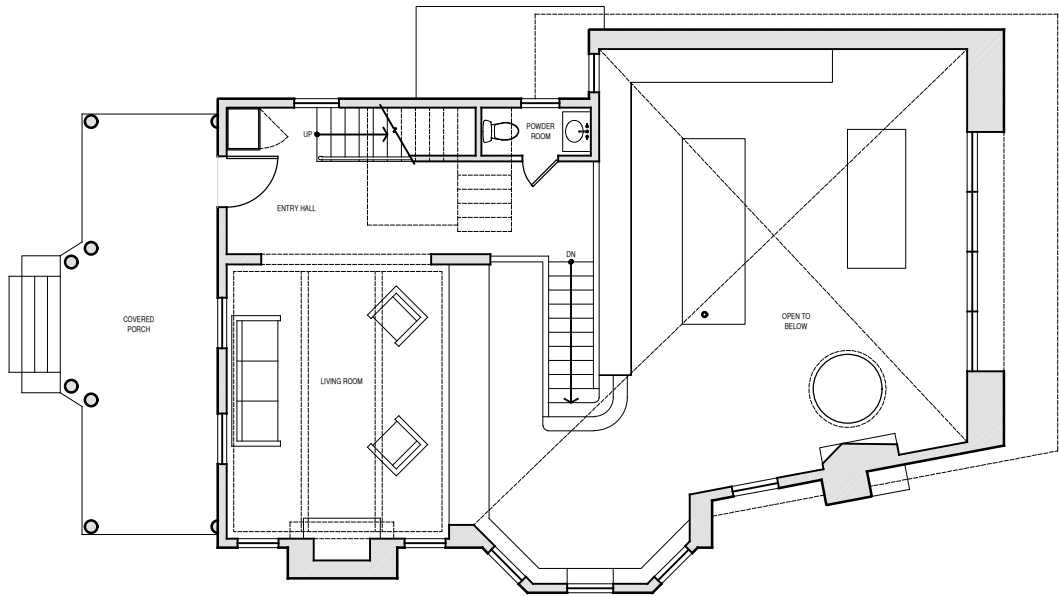
(above) basement before construction



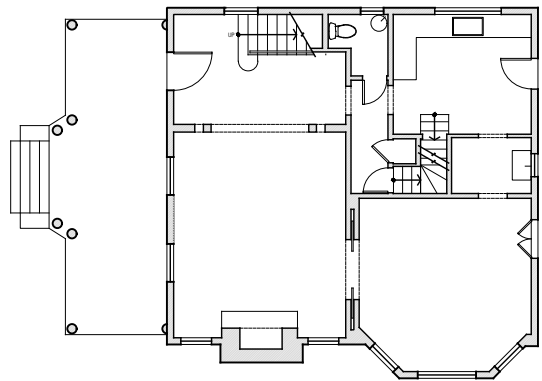
(above) view of side entry access from a shared driveway directly into the lower level (left) before view



PROPOSED BASEMENT PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



BEFORE PLAN



(above) Because much of the first floor was peeled back to accommodate the kitchen, the entry level serves as an arrival space, a parlor and a gallery looking down onto the kitchen and out into the landscape.

(bottom left) before view from same location

