

With an urban edge

This remodeled kitchen in a city house is a modern composition that teams oak veneer and white lacquer with pops of yellow in overhead cabinets





Moving from the suburbs to the city involves a certain change of lifestyle, but it's even more dramatic when you swap a 1920s Arts and Crafts-style home for a contemporary city house.

But that's exactly what the owners of this house did. Architect William Massey says his clients wanted to embrace their new city lifestyle, and had been looking for a modern, loft-style home.

"The house they found was built in 2000, but although they loved the location and the outlook, the interior didn't

provide a loft space. The living and dining rooms and kitchen were all separate spaces closed off from each other. However, there were pleasant views out large windows at the front and back, which we could maximize by completely opening up the space on the main living level."

Removing the walls between the rooms, and moving the mechanical services created the generous, uncluttered living environment the owners required. But Massey says it was still important to

define the various areas within this space.

"We chose to position the kitchen in the middle, where it helps to separate the various seating and dining areas. But working out what form the kitchen would take was a challenge. We played with 3-D computer models, looking at the different massing possibilities for the kitchen, which needed to be highly functional as well as eye catching.

"Initially, the design focused on three 9ft-square cabinet components – one each for storage, cooking and entertainment. We then decided we didn't need all that

mass, so we carved pieces away, gradually carving off more and more, reducing the mass to the essentials."

Massey says the island was designed on a similar basis – hollowing out a large cube eroded the mass so that it was not too bulky. This created niches for cookbooks and storage. It also gave the island a sculptural look that's in keeping with the overall aesthetic.

To maintain the contemporary feel, a light oak veneer is teamed with crisp white lacquer. This combination avoids

the monotony of using a single material in such a pivotal space. For added visual drama, overhead cabinets and a high shelving unit are painted yellow.

"The yellow adds a pop of color, but is not a distraction," says the architect. "Using a 70% gloss avoids reflections but ensures it has a lively sheen."

Functionality is also assured, with extra storage provided in cabinetry on the opposite wall. This incorporates a coat closet, slide-out pantries and a home office area for laptops and phone charging.

Preceding pages: Cabinets in this new kitchen appear as 3-D insertions within a large, loft-style living space. The geometry of these volumes creates a modern composition that relates to both formal and informal seating areas.

Above left: The peninsula serves as a buffet for the dining area. The waterfall countertop on this unit wraps around a wine refrigerator that visually anchors the cabinetry on the other side.

Top and above: Both the cabinetry and island appear to have pieces carved out from the original volumes, which gives them a highly sculptural look.



Above: White lacquered doors were specified for the perimeter cabinets on the opposite wall of the kitchen. These are framed with light oak veneer, which also forms the display shelving. The doors conceal a coat closet and slide-out Häfele pantry units. A home office is provided at the far end of the unit. Architect William Massey says although the kitchen area is 27ft long, the work triangles are relatively tight, making it easy for the owners to prepare meals and clean up. Entertaining is also a breeze, thanks to the open-plan design.

Architect: William Massey AIA, Massey Associates Architects (Chicago)

Interior designer: David MacKenzie, David MacKenzie, Inc

Cabinet company: New Style Cabinets; All Seasons Woodworks, Inc

Builder: WZ Home Improvement, Inc

Cabinetry: Painted; reconstituted oak veneer

Countertops and backsplash: Quartz

Sink: Julien

Faucets: Dornbracht Elio

Lighting: Halo recessed incandescent; M26 Studio pendant in dining room

Oven and dishwasher: Miele

Cooktop: Viking

Ventilation: Best

Refrigeration: Sub-Zero

Water dispenser: Mountain Plumbing

Waste disposal: KitchenAid

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