

# A Kitchen for an ISLAND COTTAGE



**T**HE ONLY INHABITED ISLAND on the Mississippi River, and rich in Minnesota history, Nicollet Island is just off downtown Minneapolis. Its north end boasts 22 historic 19th-century homes. This house built ca. 1900 was a holdover of the earlier 19th-century gable-front house with a side wing. Corner pilasters, a wide frieze, and the six-over-six windows, all so characteristic of American Greek Revival style, are original. The homeowner, in fact, calls this his “Nantucket cottage” for its similarity to the prevailing house type on that other island off Massachusetts.

The cottage was saved from demolition during the 1980s, when it was moved from its original location near the University of Minnesota. Before that it had been a rental property for many years. The kitchen, poorly remodeled in the 1950s, connected to the den via a walk-through bathroom. With the kitchen and bath both in dire need of updating, the Minneapolis firm TreHus was brought in to design and build the improvements.

The owner asked that new work be in keeping with the style and details of the old house. He also asked for an addition to make the kitchen more usable and open, which would need approval by the Minneapolis Historic Preservation Commission and the Minneapolis Park Board. And he wanted state-of-the-art mechanical and electrical systems as part of the

A new kitchen in the American vernacular suits this restored Greek Revival cottage.

by Patricia Poore | photographs by Susan Gilmore

Board walls, inset cabinets, beadboard accents, and free-standing kitchen furniture are historical details in the old house. Carrara marble countertops and subway-tile backsplash are practical and timeless.

ANDREA RUGG (EXT.)





whole-house renovation.

The TreHus design team added ten feet at the rear of the house and relocated the powder room, which created an effortless connection among all of the main-floor living spaces. The locations of the original living room, dining room, and den have been maintained and those rooms restored to

**LEFT:** Detailed and painted to look like vintage furniture, the hutch has a cypress countertop. Tongue-and-groove boards laid horizontally evoke an old convention, adding warmth and texture to a contemporary space. **BELOW:** A floor of dark-stained, wide-plank pine boards anchors the room.

original condition.

Original windows were re-furbished; the siding was stripped of paint, repaired, and painted to match the original color. The kitchen addition has new double-hung windows; single-glazed, they match the size, muntin width, and light (multi-pane) patterns of the originals. New casing was milled to the exact measurements of the original trim in the rest of the house.

Archival photos dating to the early 1900s helped in the design of elements congruent with the original house. For instance, the designers used a photo of the rear of



**RIGHT:** Vintage wall brackets illuminate the cottage-style double vanity cabinet. Built-ins are simple, but subtly embellished with a painted detail (inset).

## About TreHus

The name of the firm means “house of wood” in Norwegian—fitting, as president and owner David Amundson comes from a line of wooden boat builders and a culture of craftsmanship.

Founded in 1982, TreHus is now a full-service design and build company. It follows what they call the Master Carpenter System, which allows carpenters to concentrate on craftsmanship and dedication to the project, while Project Managers handle job organization and other details. TreHus also encourages a kind of guild system by participating in a community of artisans who serve the Twin Cities.

**TREHUS BUILDERS, INC.**  
**ARCHITECTS + INTERIOR DESIGNERS**  
**+ BUILDERS**  
 Minneapolis, MN: (612) 729-2992,  
 trehus.biz



In the master bathroom upstairs, the water closet is separated from the bathroom proper. The plain wainscot of horizontal boards is walnut.

the house to reconstruct what used to be a summer kitchen and is, in today’s incarnation, the mudroom. A handsome picket fence visible in an old image of the house and the road became the model for the new one.

UPSTAIRS, REMODELING created a master suite with a walk-in closet. The original floors are in place, painted in a deep color. Here the master bath is fitted with a freestanding tub and a marble-topped freestanding vanity cabinet fitted with two sink basins. Vintage lighting tops the mirror in a wood frame. The wainscot is made of walnut.

The house restoration project won a Chrysalis award, a Master Design Bronze award, a COTY award, and the 2009 Janus award. It fits in beautifully on the island. \*



## Sources

- **WATERWORKS** waterworks.com 3x6-in. subway tiles in ‘Dove’ • **BENJAMIN MOORE** benjaminmoore.com Hutch paint #HC-145 ‘Van Courtland Blue’ • **VIKING** vikingrange.com 24-in. open burner #VGIC245-4B without backsplash, ordered as “island unit” • **FRANKE** franke.com ‘Manor House’ faucet #MH-470 in polished nickel • **COLONIAL BRONZE** colonialbronze.com Various hardware knobs and pulls in kitchen and bath, all in satin black finish • **SUNRISE SPECIALTY CO.** sunrisespecialty.com ‘Piedmont’ skirted bathtub

MORE PAINT COLORS: SEE P. 67