



Something had to give

In remodeling this 1950s lakefront home, the design team from Airoom Architects & Builders were inspired by Nantucket beach houses – with one in particular hitting the right note

Design inspiration can come from many sources, but it's often location that provides the strongest influence.

When the design team from Airoom Architects & Builders – project development manager Greg Sutton and kitchen and bath architect Jane Kelly – were approached to remodel this 1950s home in Evanston, on the shores of Lake Michigan, the beachfront setting was key.

“The house has a magical setting with its own private beach,” says Kelly. “We immediately said to the owners, Leon and Donna Floerchinger, that the house had to look like the one in the movie *Something’s Gotta Give* – it needed that Nantucket beach house aesthetic. The couple watched the movie that same night and right away were in complete agreement.”

Transforming the house was not straightforward, however. Sutton says the original house lacked character and was a mass of small rooms.

“The existing house had a dated ‘60s country feel, and the interior was not well suited to the owners’ lifestyle. They love entertaining and needed a spacious, open-plan interior and well-equipped kitchen.

To provide the required

Above left and top: Traditional Nantucket beach houses provided the design inspiration for this remodeling project, which was designed and built by Airoom Architects & Builders, a company based in Lincolnwood, IL.

Above: Rooms were opened up to create a flowing, open interior with plenty of windows to maximize a spectacular lake view. The formal dining room originally featured dark wood paneling.



space, Airoom removed walls, widened openings and added on a television-games room. "Effectively, the interior on the first floor was completely gutted," says Kelly. "By replacing the flooring with hand-scraped, dark walnut, we were able to seamlessly join the old with the new." Kelly says the alterations were made more difficult by the existing concrete slab floor,

which incorporated an old water-heating system. "Remodeling projects often bring hidden challenges. Airoom has the experience to ensure such work flows smoothly, however." The kitchen also underwent a major transformation, which was in keeping with the beach house aesthetic. The design team specified two islands – one for the main seating area

and the second island forming an entertaining base. This island is opposite a drinks area and near a door where guests enter from the beach. "Guests and family come in from the beach and wash sand off their feet in the utility room and come into the kitchen for snacks and drinks without getting in the way of the cook," says Kelly. The attention to detail that

characterizes the remodeling is seen in the kitchen; original mouldings were duplicated where required, and embossed tin ceilings were added. "Visually, the ceilings help to anchor the islands," says Kelly. "Vintage light pendants sourced by the owner were accommodated within the embossed design on the tin." Although the kitchen is not overly large, it is highly

functional. The owners wanted a full complement of high-performance appliances. This was achieved using Sub-Zero and Wolf. "Using Sub-Zero and Wolf also allowed us to seamlessly integrate appliances into the cabinetry," says Kelly. To provide a traditional symmetry, the design team balanced the display cabinets on either side of the kitchen, so

the cooking center cabinetry is complemented by the cabinets in the drinks area. "The homeowners are professionals in the design industry – Leon is an engineer and Donna a partner in a commercial design firm," says Kelly. "Being familiar with the design-and-build industry, the couple took a suitably professional approach to their project, commissioning



Above left: A new kitchen was a major part of the remodeling. White-painted crystal cabinets with inset panel doors are teamed with Calacatta Gold marble and Maroon Cohiba antiqued granite countertops. Airoom Architects & Builders recommended two islands, one for dining and one for entertaining.

Above and left: Wherever possible, appliances, including a microwave drawer, wine storage and steamers, are integrated into the cabinetry.



Top: Embossed tin ceilings define the two islands within the kitchen. The Airoom team that worked on this project included Greg Sutton, Jane Kelly, John Bryson, Gina Bon, Jorge Escobar, Matt Jans, Drew Klee and Kevin Bigos.

Above: A Wolf warming drawer is integrated into the cabinetry.

Above right: Airoom also provided an addition, with a bay window, built-in shelving and beadboard ceiling.

a professional company to undertake the work.

Airoom CEO Michael Klein says Airoom's design-build philosophy takes in every aspect of a renovation project. "We combine the disciplines of architecture, engineering, construction, interior design, purchasing and financing into a coherent whole. Because we design what we build and build what we design, we can

deliver good value and control the entire operation."

Klein says this approach minimizes hassles, especially in terms of dealing with trades and zoning issues.

"In more than 50 years, we have faced just about every possible home renovation challenge," he says. "This experience means we can provide clients with a seamless integration in terms of both

planning and execution."

All projects come with a 10-year installation and 15-year construction warranty.

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