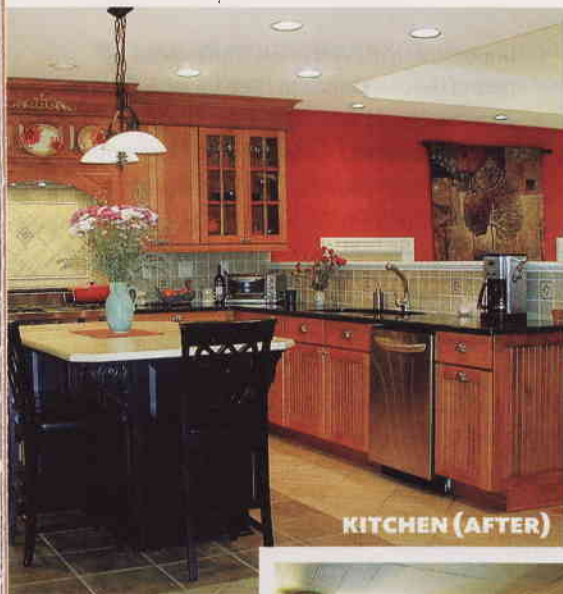


Home | BEFORE/AFTER



KITCHEN (AFTER)



KITCHEN (BEFORE)



FAMILY ROOM (AFTER)

DO place tiles over radiant heat to maximize its impact. **DON'T** forget radiant heat costs 40% more to install.

All in the Family Room

A ground-floor expansion makes this 1890s home more livable—and more marketable **BY KATE ASHFORD**

When Art and Eileen Martines bought their 1894 Cranford, N.J. home, they fell for the historic house's heavy woodwork and sturdy structure. What they didn't love: that 19th-century home builders had omitted a 21st-century family room. "It just wasn't functional for the way we live now," says Eileen. The previous owners had converted the dining room into a family room, but the Martines like to entertain. At first they used a second-floor sleeping porch, but they found the setup inconvenient. So they brought in architect Arthur Henn to help them add first-floor space. Inspired by a similar renovation she'd seen on a historic home tour, Eileen wanted a family room that adjoined the kitchen, creating a single, open area. And because Eileen is an avid gardener, the couple hoped to link the room to the flower-filled backyard. "We wanted it to almost seem like the backyard was an extension of the family room," Art explains. The sloping property, however, posed a challenge. The solution: The Martines settled for stairs—three steps down from the kitchen to the family room and four more to the patio. The family room ceiling is the same height as the kitchen's, though, making the room feel spacious. Tall windows and transoms enhance the effect. "Everybody wants a family room now on the main level," says Eugene Wisniewski, a local realtor with Century 21. "It's gorgeous, and they kept the personality of the house intact. The market's soft right now, but they added significant value to the property." **\$**

THE NUMBERS

BOUGHT IN 1991 FOR

\$295K

RENOVATION COSTS

\$240K

MARKET VALUE TODAY

\$850K

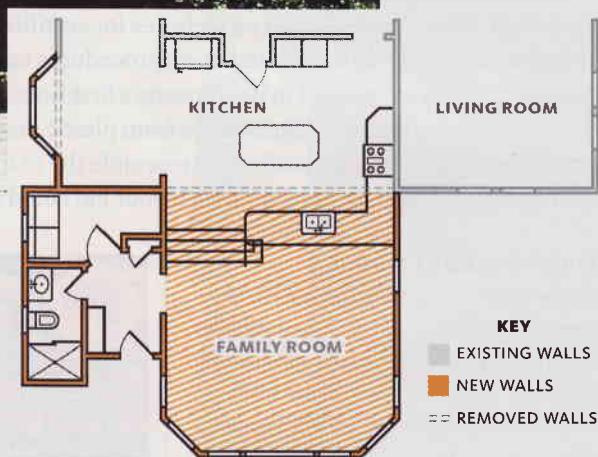
WHERE DID IT GO? About 40% of the total budget went toward the new family room. The rest paid for updating the kitchen and installing a laundry room, mudroom and full bath on the first floor. All told, the Martines gained nearly 500 square feet of living space.



EXTERIOR (AFTER)

A perfect match
The new family room extends about 20 feet into the backyard, with stone steps leading down to a small patio and garden. Double-hung Andersen windows, transoms and wood-hinged french doors (\$10,400) give the family an expansive view of their yard. The addition's trim work, roofing and siding were custom-matched to the rest of the 1894 house. "You don't want your addition to look like an addition," says Bob VanBenschoten, the contractor on the project.

Under and over Because the new room had to be heated separately—the rest of the house depends on old steam radiators—an Onix radiant heating system (\$7,900) was installed under the polished porcelain tiles (\$7,300). Recessed halo lights (\$3,300) were used to draw attention to the high tray ceiling. The millwork and new interior doors were custom-made from poplar (\$12,000) to match the existing moldings and doors, in keeping with the home's late-1800s style.



DOS & DON'TS Family Room Addition

BY DUO DICKINSON

DO step the floor down to create more ceiling height and easier access to the outdoors from the new room.

DON'T step down more than three steps at a time. You want to be able to get from one room to another easily.

DO draw natural light into a tall, deep space with transom windows. Angle walls and windows to get more of the outside in.

DON'T select huge plate-glass windows when you add on to an old home, and don't skimp on wall space for art and privacy.

DO use a single distinctive paint color to unify your old and new walls.

DON'T use a bold paint color without a contrasting trim. If you do, the color looks too dense and intense, which can be tiring.

DO build low walls behind kitchen cabinets that overlook a living space. They'll hide the mess and the view of appliances.

DON'T block the light with that wall; use glass blocks to let as much light through as possible and add a cap for stability.

DO create an informal dining space close to the kitchen to allow for efficient noshing and overflow prep and serving space.

DON'T hesitate to make the kitchen island look different from the surrounding cabinetry. It's as much furniture as a built-in.

Contributing writer Duo Dickinson is an architect in Madison, Conn.