

Project Name: Library Addition
Residential Interior Element under \$30,000
Completion Date: March 15, 2021
Location: DeForest, WI



Our repeat clients made the decision to sell their single family home when the opportunity arose to purchase the condo right next door to their mother. Having to leave their home where they raised their family and had done a variety of home improvement projects throughout the years was a big decision - the new condo had to be stunning. Because of our prior working relationship, trust, and design expertise, they knew that we were the right ones for the job.



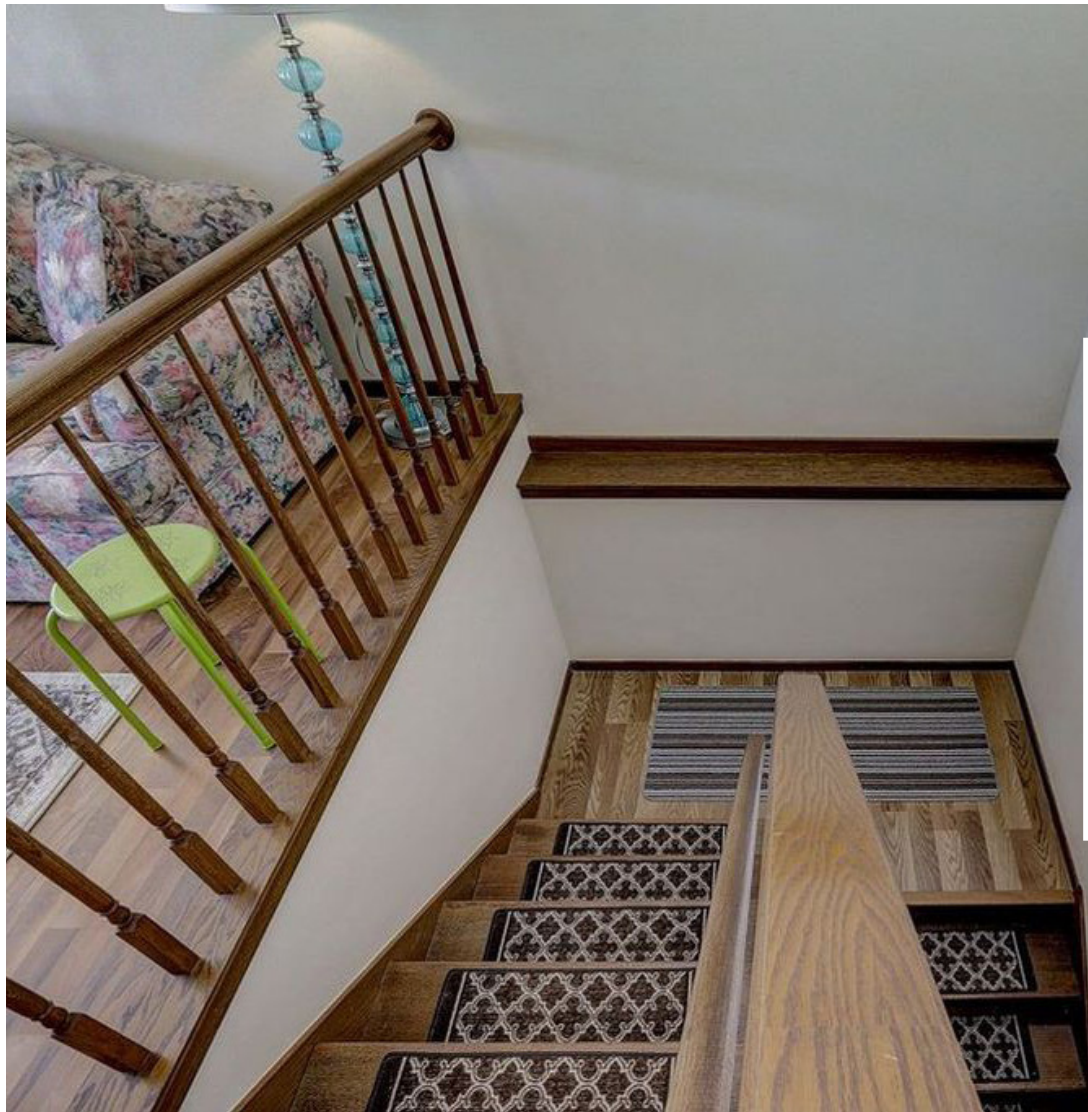
BEFORE: VIEW OF EXISTING LIVING ROOM

Unfortunately, due to the beginning of the Coronavirus shutdown, the seller of the condo was unwilling to let us visit prior to closing in order to take measurements. Therefore, our experienced design and construction team speculated and estimated the measurements of the stairway area from photos in order to come up with a design concept that would transform the empty wall of the landing into an eye-catching library.

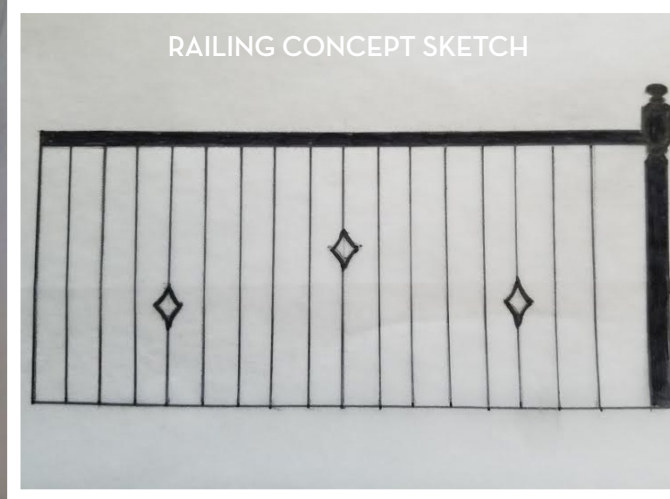


AFTER: VIEW OF LIBRARY WALL

It turns out we did a pretty good job, and we were accurate enough to come up with a design that was able to be produced exactly as intended, without the need for any modifications or product changes.



BEFORE: EXISTING RAILINGS



RAILING CONCEPT SKETCH



BEFORE: EXISTING RAILINGS

In order to achieve this result, photographs were used as a guide to count the exact number of balusters needed to come up with an appropriate design, so that we could get the products ordered ahead of time in anticipation of the shutdown.

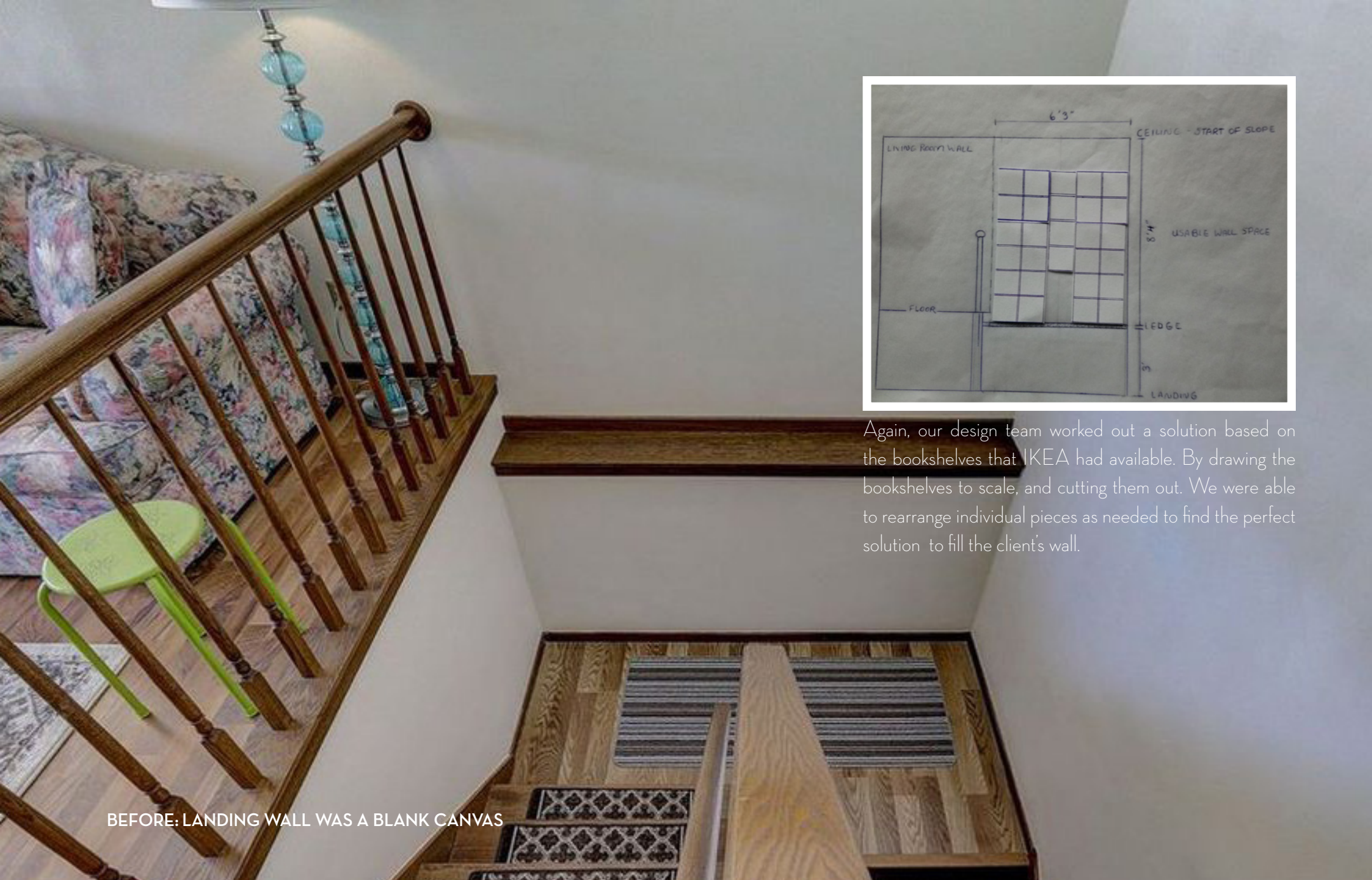


AFTER: NEW RAILING BALUSTERS



AFTER: NEW RAILING BALUSTERS

By drawing out a concept sketch, our design team was able to figure out exactly the location, and amount of railings that would be necessary to achieve a visual balance.



BEFORE: LANDING WALL WAS A BLANK CANVAS

Again, our design team worked out a solution based on the bookshelves that IKEA had available. By drawing the bookshelves to scale, and cutting them out. We were able to rearrange individual pieces as needed to find the perfect solution to fill the client's wall.

In order to remain within a modest budget, an inexpensive shelving option needed to be selected to transform this blank canvas into the eye-catching library the clients envisioned. We decided to go with IKEA bookshelves, understanding that the depth would need to be cut down in order to use the landing ledge as support.



AFTER: NEW LIBRARY SHELVING

IN PROGRESS: REINFORCING THE SHELVES



This job would rely on our skilled carpenters to flawlessly execute the transition from deep shelving to narrow shelving. Extra support was required to give the shelving unit enough strength and stability to be anchored to the wall after being stripped down.



THERE
IS GOLD
IN EVERY
PIECE
OF
YOUR
STORY

AFTER: NEW LIBRARY AREA

A photograph of a modern library area. On the left is a dark wood bookshelf with several shelves of books. A snake plant sits on a wooden tray on top of the shelf. A metal pipe runs horizontally across the top of the shelf. In the center is a ladder-style metal structure made of rusted metal pipes, mounted against a burnt orange wall. To the right is a starburst light fixture with multiple blades in shades of orange and black. A white text box is in the bottom right corner.

AFTER: NEW LIBRARY AREA

The result is a stunning library with shelves that are the perfect depth for storing books and memorabilia.



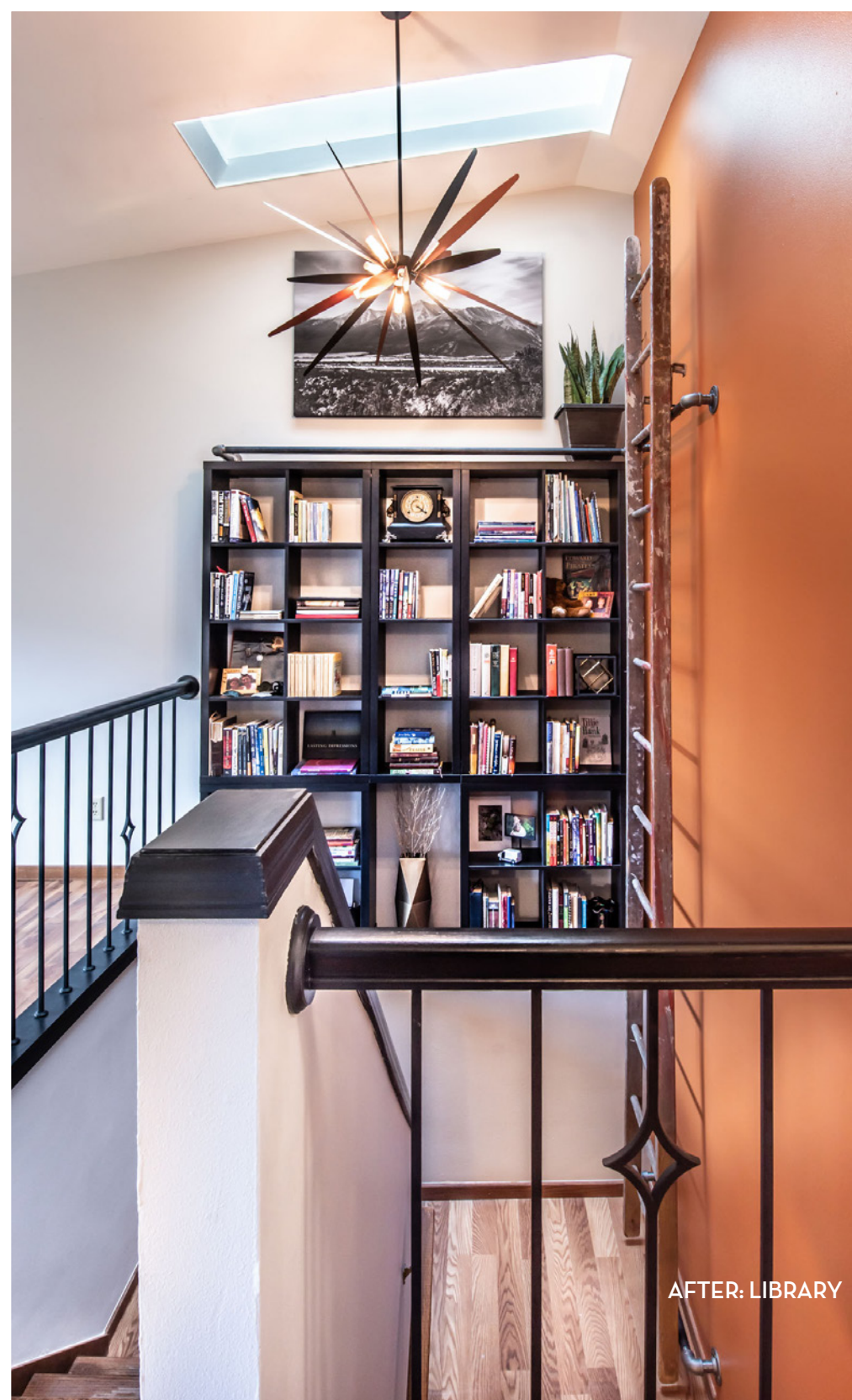
AFTER: CONTEMPORARY LIBRARY LIGHT

Another significant design element within this project was the lighting. The clients found a contemporary “Sputnik” style fixture that ties together with the library design and brings in a splash of copper color, which coordinates perfectly with the copper accent wall.

The copper colored stairway wall is a key feature for the entire main level of the condo.



AFTER: COPPER COLORED ACCENT WALL



AFTER: LIBRARY



AFTER: BLACK PAINTED DOORS TO DEN

The matte black book-shelving, stairway parts, and door to the den directly across from the stairs, complement the copper colored wall perfectly!

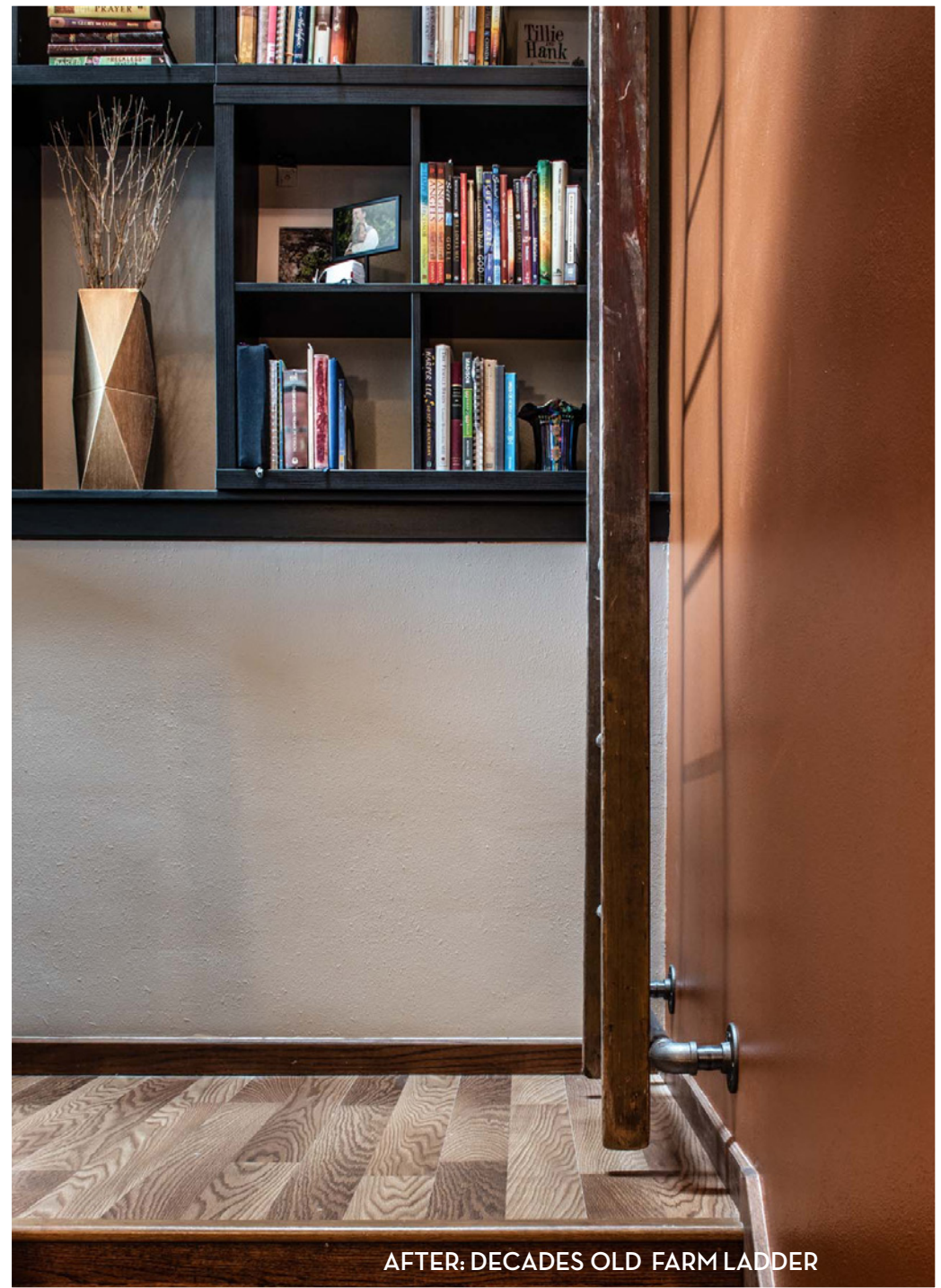


AFTER: ANTIQUE LADDER

One of our favorite design features in this project was the incorporation of a decades old farm ladder. The clients originally had a dream of a ladder that would roll along the front of the bookshelf on wheels, however, this encroached on the code requirements for a staircase landing.



Our design team came up with the solution to hang the ladder on the wall as a focal point, and if it were intriguing enough, it could serve as an art piece as well. The clients loved the solution, and we set out in search of the perfect ladder.



AFTER: DECADES OLD FARM LADDER

A decades worn farm ladder was found. With years of paint, natural distressing, and history, it was the perfect juxtaposition for this now contemporary space.



AFTER: BLACK PLUMBING PIPE

In order to affix the ladder to the wall in a well-designed way, as well as make it usable for the library shelving, we selected black plumbing pipe. This made a huge design statement by adding an industrial element to the overall design.



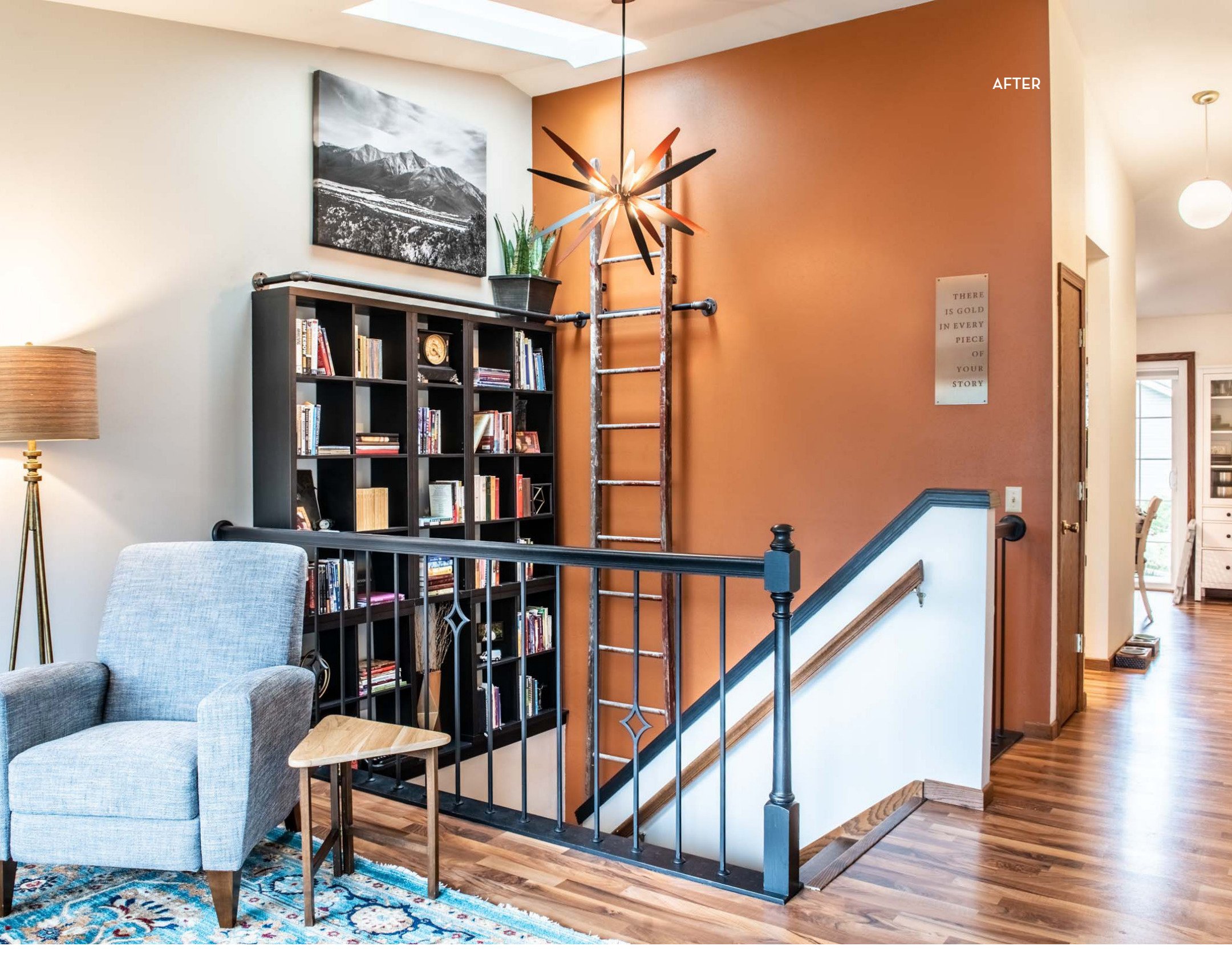
AFTER: NEW HARDWARE HOOKS



AFTER: ORIGINAL HARDWARE WAS PRESERVED

The original ladder hooks were preserved, so as not to compromise the authenticity of the ladder, and new hardware store hooks were purchased, heated, bent, and painted black to hold the library ladder as needed.

AFTER





AFTER



CRITERIA RESPONSES

To what degree were the expressed needs of the client met?

In moving from a single family home to a condo, the clients needed a home that felt stunning, with reassurance that they hadn't settled. At the same time, this had to be done on a modest budget with the following goals in mind.

- create a cohesive, contemporary feel in our work and by doing interior design, to help the clients with their work. This included accent walls, light fixtures, painting of the stairs and doors, and the main focus of creating a stunning library within the stairwell.
- transform the stairway into a non-oak, contemporary feel.
- integrate a library ladder of some sort.
- replace the double doors to the den in a way that is cohesive to the rest of the design, creating a feel between sleek & contemporary, or even shabby chic.

We achieved all of these goals by helping the client select all of the items for both our work and the DIY work in other areas to achieve the look they wanted. The perfect color copper paint was chosen to become the feature wall that they dreamed of. The existing railings were painted, but the oak balusters were replaced with iron balusters to give them an updated look but stay within a modest budget. IKEA products were used to create the library wall. A genuine barn ladder was repurposed to create a library ladder, with black gas pipe used to create the rail. For the den, frosted single-pane doors were painted matte black to match the library area and stairway railing, while leaving the jambs and casing in place to tie into the existing home.

To what degree does the project enhance the existing structures functionally?

- New lighting improved the function through better visibility.
- The den doors provide better natural lighting for the use of the room.
- The stairway library provides a place to store the books and decoration that are so important when downsizing.

To what degree does the project enhance the structure aesthetically?

As the clients requested, it is stunning! It's a contemporary transformation. It provides color, geometry, and a contemporary feel. The DIY work by the clients in other areas meets their goal of creating a cohesive and unified look, the aesthetic improvements they wished for.



CRITERIA RESPONSES (continued)

Is there evidence of superior craftsmanship?

Superior craftsmanship was necessary to execute this project in the following areas.

- The IKEA shelving was cut down to fit the depth of the stairway ledge appropriately. The hollow-core system had to be filled back in to retain its structural integrity.
- The black pipe ladder rail was precisely configured to attach to the stud with no drywall work for installation of blocking.
- The new doors were hung in an existing jambed opening.
- The stairway library provides a place to store the books and decoration that are so important when downsizing.

Were innovative uses of material and/or methods of construction used in the project?

We have several favorite innovations in this job. The IKEA shelving was perfect for price and design, but had to be cut down to fit. We used standard black pipe and reinvented it to create a library ladder rail. A salvaged barn ladder was used and re-purposed using new hooks that were heated, bent, and painted black to hang the library ladder. The light fixture was modified to work properly. The stairway light arrived damaged, and so did a second one. The undamaged parts from both were “frankensteined” together to create one complete fixture, and the downrod was doubled with the spare part to make it perfect for the stairway.

Did the contractor overcome difficult obstacles?

The biggest difficulty was finding a way to meet the budget and provide the DIY advice, meeting the needs, price-point, and skill level the clients expected. Additionally, because of COVID, we actually completed all of the design using photos, and did not have actual measurements until after closing. We had to speculate the measurements of the stairway width and height as well as the depth of the ledge, and our experience lead us to hit the mark close enough to proceed without modification. We even counted balusters from photos in order to get the design pattern, quantity, and pricing just right!



MADISON