Budget Bay for the Kitchen Sink

by Roger Whitaker

One of the most common client requests is to center the kitchen sink under a window. It makes sense: The window offers plenty of daylight and a view to the outside world while you're doing the dishes.

We've discovered a relatively inexpensive way to customize this popular kitchen work area by creating a "mini" box-bay window. During the framing stage, we use 2x12s to box out the window's rough opening (see Figure 1). We position the bottom of the bumpout so that the kitchen counter can extend into the window opening.

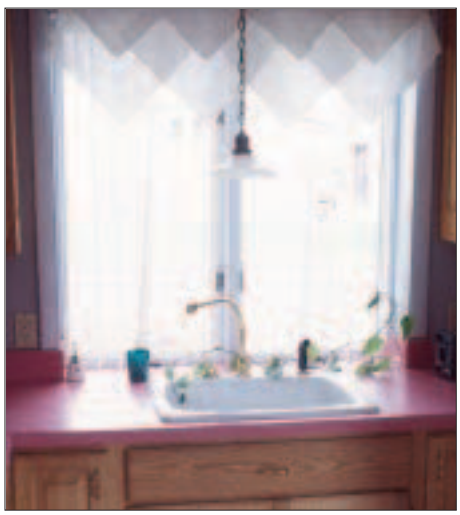

Figure 1. *A projecting 2x12 "box" provides the structure for this small bay window. The counter extends flush right to the window unit.*

It Starts With the Framing

Layout and sizing of the rough opening is critical. In order for the counter to extend into the bumpout bay, the top of the rough sill *must* be level with the top of the base cabinets. Since most stock cabinets are 34 1/2 inches tall, and installed on *top* of the finished floor, the rough sill height can be calculated by adding the finished floor thickness to the height of the base cabinets (Figure 2). You'll need to add 3 inches to the height and width of the rough opening to accommodate the 2x12 box.

Outside finish. We install the window unit by fastening through the nailing flanges into the edge of the 2x12 box, then wrap the box with rigid foam (Figure 3, page 57). When

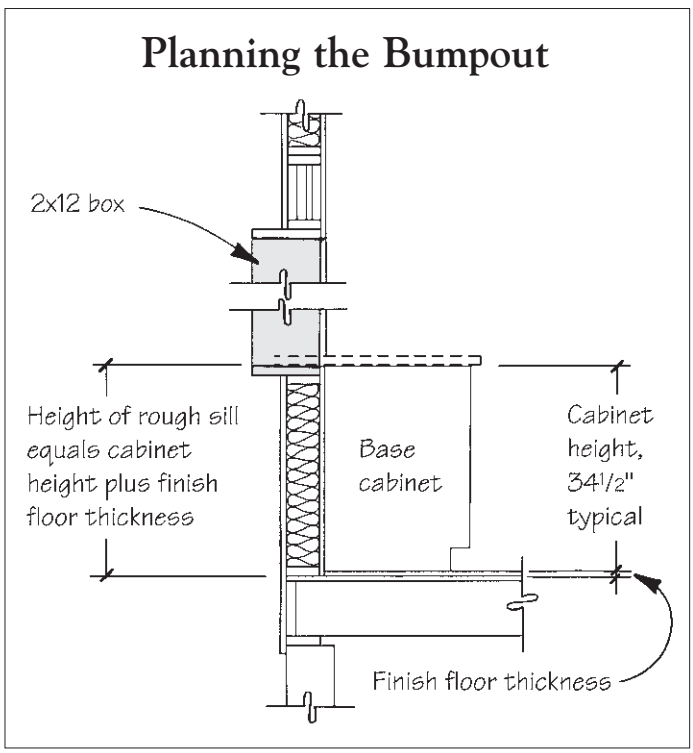

Figure 2. *To extend the counter into the bumped-out bay, the top of the rough sill must be level with the top of the base cabinets. This height is usually found by adding the finished floor thickness to the height of the base cabinet.*

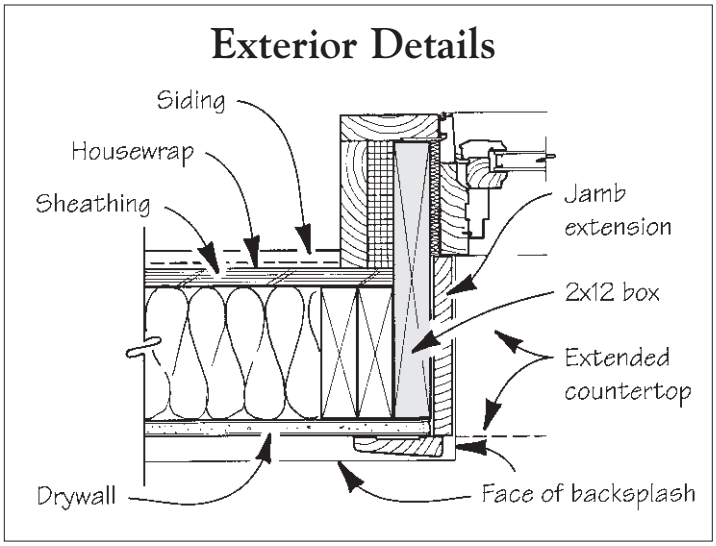

Figure 3. *The author fastens the window unit to the edge of the 2x12 box and wraps the outside with rigid foam. Trim and siding details vary according to house style and materials.*

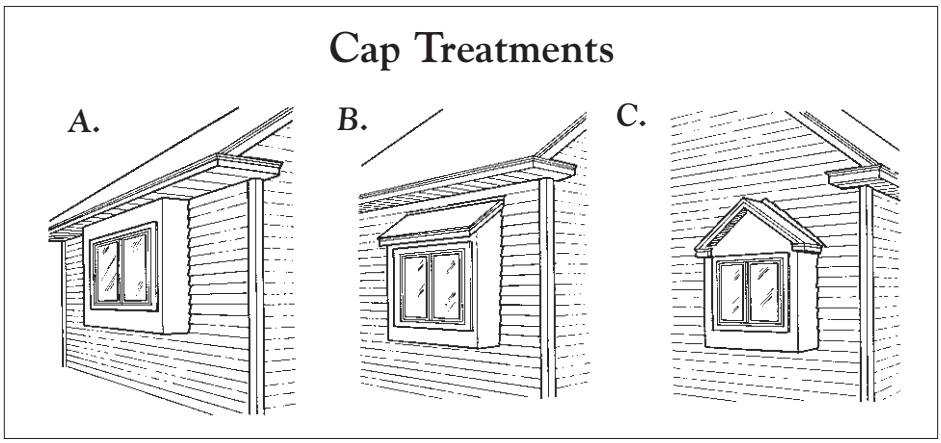

Figure 4. *If the bumpout is directly below the eaves, a roof may not be necessary (A). When it's located lower (B), or on a two-story wall or gable end (C), use a roof style that matches the house.*

leveling the window, it's important to keep in mind how any shimming will affect the final height of the unit in relationship to the counter height. Siding and trim details will vary depending on materials and preferences, but this bumpout bay is adaptable to most siding arrangements.

There are a number of ways to cap the bumpout. The style of the house, along with the location of the window, will influence the choices. If the roof eaves are directly above the window, the sides of the bumpout can extend up to the soffit. When the window is on the gable end of the house, or on the first floor of a two-story wall, a small roof will be required (Figure 4).

Extended counter. To finish off the inside, we install the counter and the backsplash before trimming the window. We let the backsplash turn the corner and extend to the window unit, then fit the jamb extensions to the top of the backsplash. After the head extensions are installed, we case the window, letting the vertical casings rest on the backsplash.

Casements work best. Double-hung units are difficult to open when reaching over the extended counter (or any kitchen counter, for that matter), so we use Andersen casement windows whenever possible. The Andersen units are designed with a sill stop that covers the joint where the counter meets the window.

Bumped-Up Costs

We budget an additional ten man-hours of labor for a bumpout bay, and add about $100 to the materials list. Much of the material required for the exterior finish can be salvaged from what would otherwise be waste, and since we make our own countertops, the counter material costs are only slightly higher. ■

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