

On the Job

An Unlikely Window

Most kitchens contain so many cabinets and appliances there's hardly any space for windows. Jef Forward, of Forward Designers & Builders in Ann Arbor, Mich., has come up with a unique solution to this problem: He shoehorns a fixed-sash window into the space above the range hood (1). He has done this on a couple of occasions; for one kitchen, he used a stock-size Pella unit and for another, an easily customizable Andersen Flexiframe unit.

On this particular project, the window (2) is located at what had formerly been the corner of



the building — the area to the right is a small addition. When Forward built the addition, he had to remove the rear wall of the house and pick up the roof loads with an LVL beam. The beam is centered above the new window and hangs from an LVL header that sits on the top plates. The exhaust duct from the range hood exits the wall just below the window (3).

According to Forward, installing a window in the space above a range hood is easier than it looks — and well worth the trouble, because it brings in valuable natural light. Clients love this detail, and it's earned Forward a number of referrals. — *David Frane*



Bench Bump-Outs Expand a Narrow Porch

by Geoffrey Zimmerman



The original screened porch was like hundreds of others in Richmond, Va., where I work — an 8-foot-by-20-foot slab set on a masonry foundation across the back of the house with a roof overhead. The client said the space always felt too narrow when he had guests over, so he asked me to look into ideas for expansion. The local zoning official told me that the existing porch was already 1½ feet closer to the property line than allowed, but after

some discussion said he would support a variance for a small addition out the back — a maximum of 2 feet — as long as I didn't expand the porch's actual footprint. Other builders suggested a cantilever approach, but I kept coming back to the idea of a projecting triangular support — like the scaffold braces I make out of 2x4s whenever I need them (1). I contacted an engineer, and he came back with a plan for the connection details (2). Since we couldn't easily expand the floor, the obvious thing was to add seating (3). With the windows above (4), the extra 2 feet in the two bays makes a big difference in the feel of the space. The owner plans to put cushions on the benches (5). Simple finishes on the exterior wrapped up the job (6).

Geoffrey Zimmerman is a remodeling contractor in Richmond, Va.

