Tin Veneer on a New Tray Ceiling

BY NATE PLASHA

Last fall, a previous client asked me to repair a water-damaged ceiling in a old Victorian home. The damage was the result of ice damming and was confined to the kitchen under the roof-to-wall juncture at an 8-foot-wide one-story bump-out addition. Rather than reinstalling a flat ceiling, similar to the existing one, the homeowner wondered if it was possible to do something more interesting. After a few discussions, we decided to investigate upgrading to a tray ceiling with a tin panel finish—a finish more in keeping with the home's Victorian style.

Working with a friend, Karl Lukhaup, we began by isolating the affected 8-foot-wide area of the kitchen with plastic. We demoed the ceiling down to the framing and began to envision the layout of the tray. The kitchen had a collision of other elements besides the ceiling framing to contend with, such as multiple ceiling planes, wall cabinets, crown-molding detailing, and a large island countertop located in close proximity to our planned tray.

Sizing the hole. Ultimately, we related the length of the new tray's framed opening to the island unit, extending it 16 inches beyond either end to roughly 11 feet long. We framed its depth to the underside of the roof's collar ties, which conveniently worked out to be 12 inches and matched a ceiling plane in the kitchen area beyond. We were somewhat limited on the tray's width. We made the opening 3 feet wide and centered it over the kitchen "galley" below; a tangential goal was to supply generous task lighting to this work area.

With the tray framed in, we repaired the roof area above, flashing the questionable roof-to-wall juncture to prevent leaking from recurring. The wiring was roughed-in and the insulation subcontractor blew in cellulose. Then we installed a 1/2-inch plywood nailable substrate on the top and sides of the tray and drywalled everything. We painted with latex paint for our vapor barrier and then installed the tin panel finish.

Tin ceiling. The homeowner opted for tin ceiling panels with crown and picture-frame molding by American Tin (americantinceilings.com). Ornamental tin panels typically are 2x2-foot squares and can have heavy, pronounced patterns. Since we did not have room for a 4-foot-wide tray, we decided to go with a more subdued repeating pattern, which allowed us "tin off" the non-modular opening and locate task lighting easier and in a more visually pleasing manner. We cut holes for the dimmable 2-inch-diameter LED lights in place, avoiding lapped tin seams.

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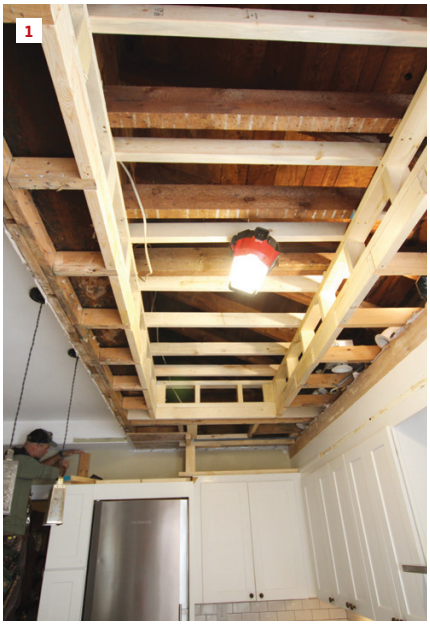
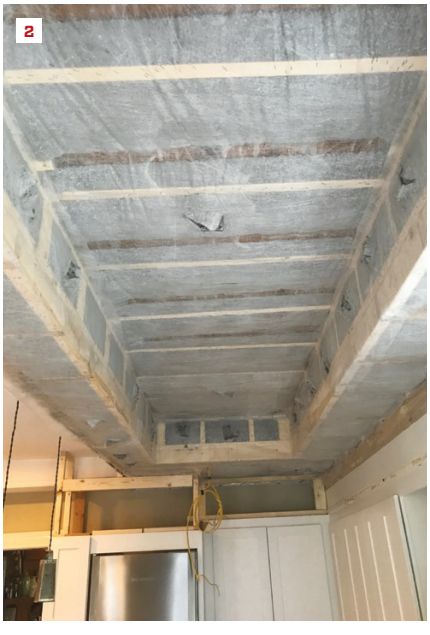
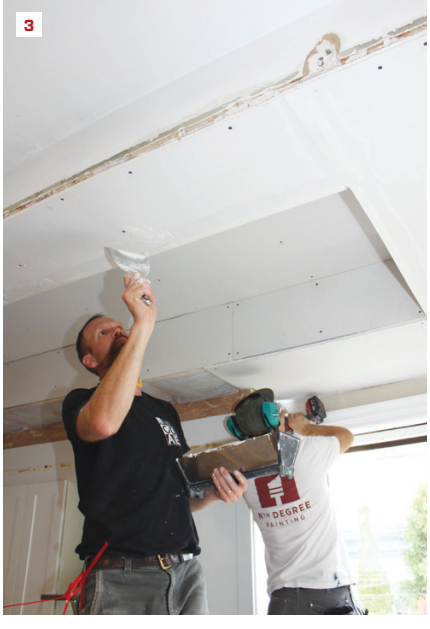
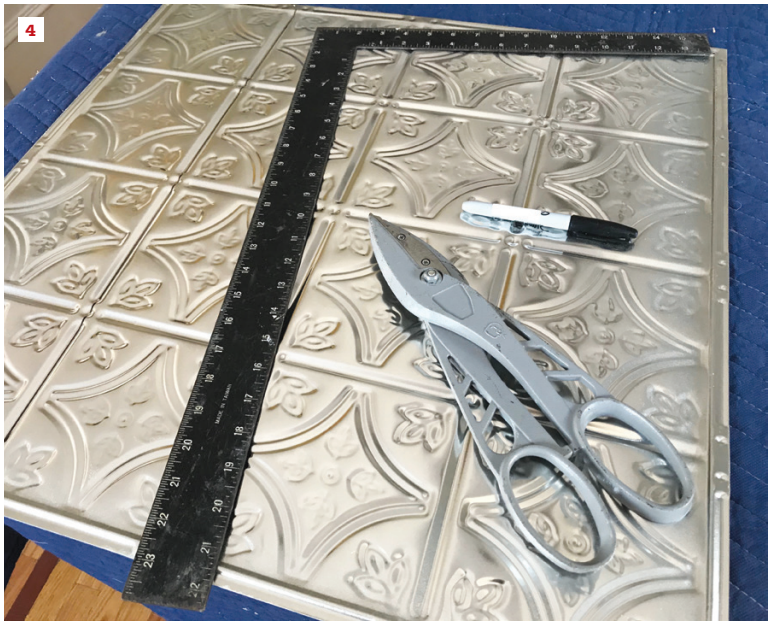


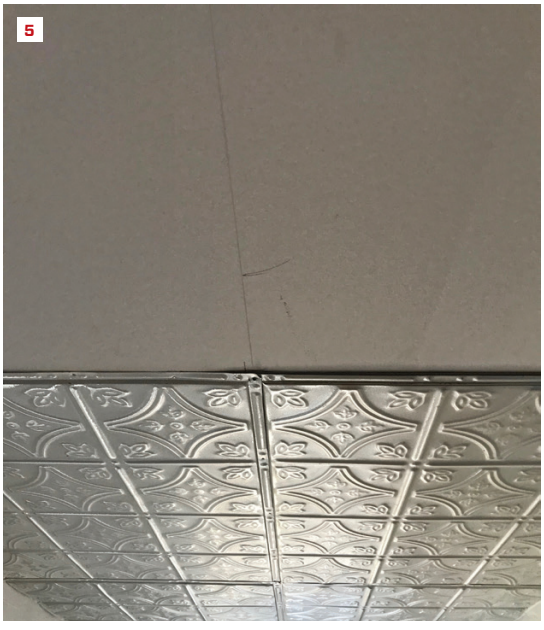




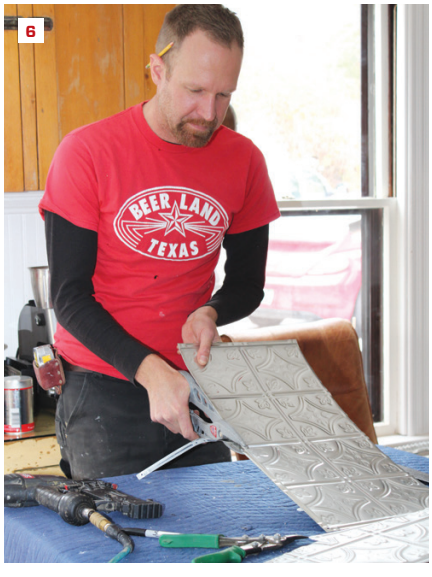
After removing the water-damaged kitchen ceiling, the author framed the structure for the tray ceiling **(1)**. To hold the blown-in insulation in the cramped "attic" above the tray, the insulation sub attached netting to the underside of the frame **(2)**. After installing plywood to the top and sides of the tray for attaching the tin veneer, the crew drywalled and taped off the ceiling **(3)**.

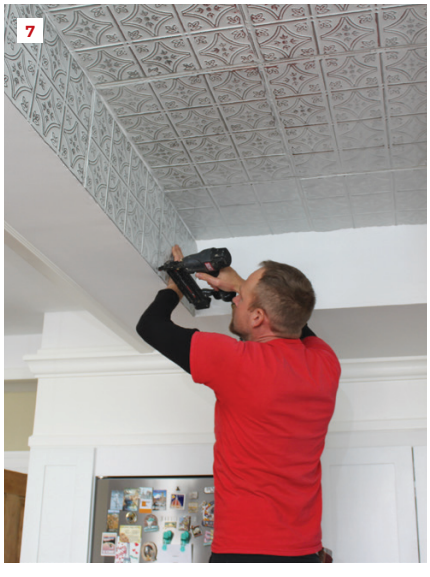
Photos by Tim Healey, Nate Plasha, and Daria Bishop

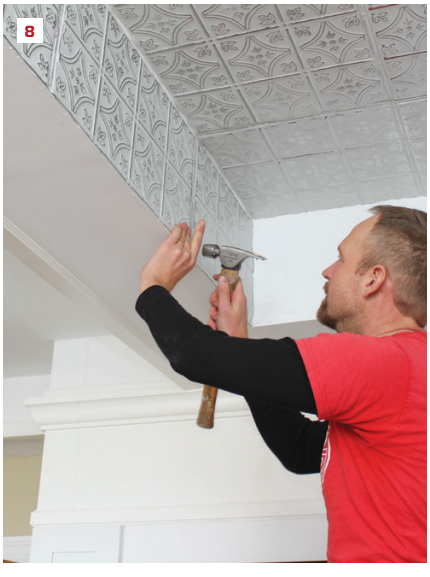




The tin veneer for this ceiling came in 2-foot-square sheets with a narrow flange around the perimeter for attachment. Tin ceiling veneer is typically embossed with a pattern—in this case, within 6-inch squares, so the author based the framing and underlayment of the tray ceiling to accommodate that 6-inch layout. This particular tin had one face with a finish called Artisans Silver Wash White. Tin is usually cut from the back of the veneer; basic tools for cutting tin include a framing square, tin snips, and a felt pen **(4)**. The panels were centered in the ceiling, trimmed to accommodate a non-modular tray size **(5)**.







The author had laid out and built the vertical perimeter of the tray ceiling to fit a half-sheet of veneer. He cut the sheets in half and then trimmed the flange off to fit the space exactly **(6)**. Again, the length of the tray worked out perfectly for the embossed 6-inch pattern of the veneer. To attach the veneer, the author started with an 18-gauge brad nailer, driving 1-inch brads at regular spacing along the nailing flange **(7)**. Where needed, he supplemented the attachment with hand-driven brads, taking extra care not to damage the embossing or finish with the hammer **(8)**.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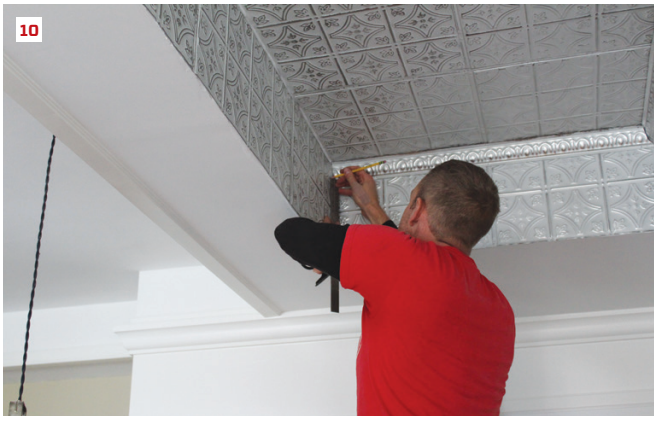
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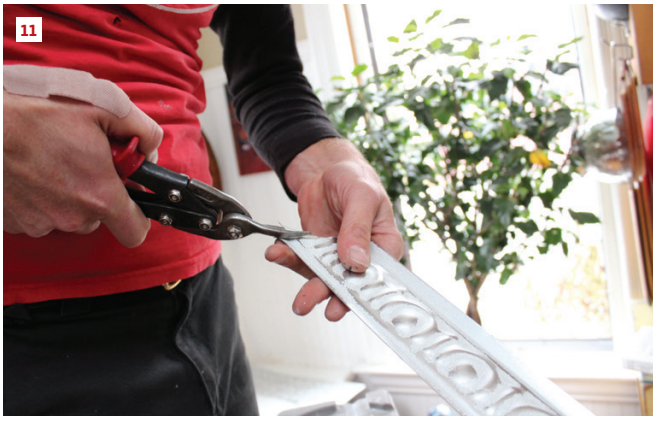
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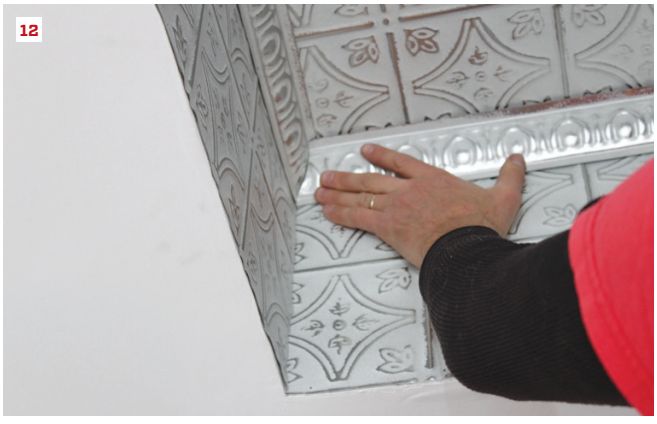
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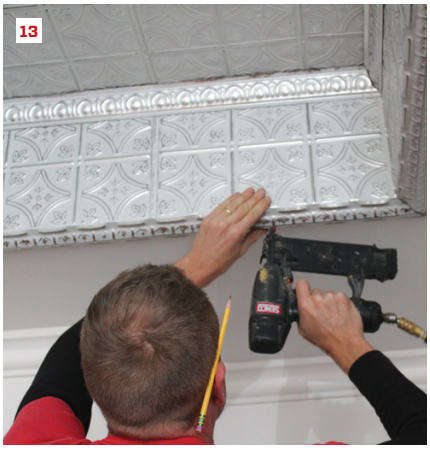
The author used tin crown embossed with an egg-and-dart pattern as an accent between the tray field and the perimeter **(9)**. Because the molding was flexible, he used a combination square to set the height **(10)**. Corners were coped much like wood molding, with snips cutting the curve of the cope **(11)**, to create seamless inside corners **(12)**.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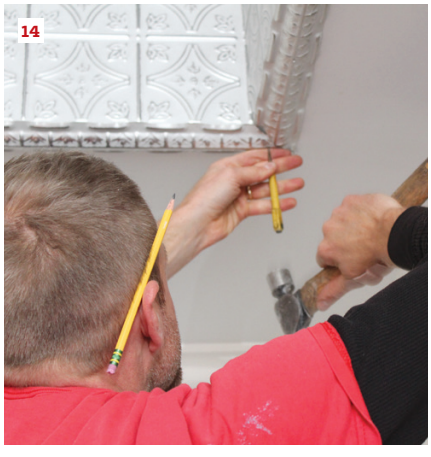
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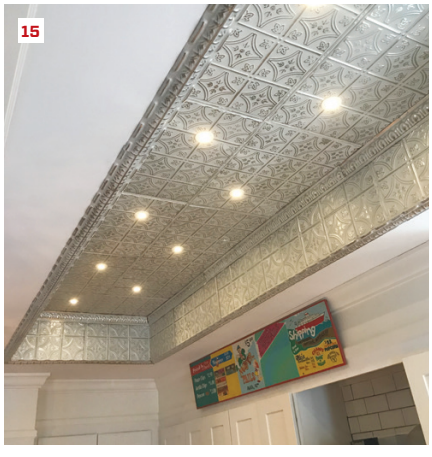
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To finish the bottom edge of the tray ceiling where it returned onto the main ceiling, the author installed embossed picture-frame molding, making sure that the fasteners hit solid nailing **(13)**. He used a nail set to drive all the fasteners to a proper depth without denting the tin **(14)**. After finishing the tin installation, lighting was installed to complete the tray ceiling **(15)**.