

the Architects-column

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Creating FLEXI-PLAN living

The idea of open plan living is not new. The world-renowned modern architect Le Corbusier pioneered it back in the 1920's and 30's and it became widely used in the 1960's.

Over the last 10-15 years breaking through between kitchens and dining rooms has become very popular resulting in the loss of the traditional dining room. The creation of an open plan space where meals can be prepared while socialising with friends and family can be attractive and may suit current lifestyles, however there can be disadvantages when entertaining: -

- Noise can be transmitted by appliances such as dishwashers, washing machines and food processors
- Cooking smells are not confined to the preparation areas.
- Dirty dishes look untidy as they start to accumulate.

I am not suggesting that open plan kitchen dining areas should be avoided. We have created a number of these spaces recently because they were right for that client and the property. With careful design many of the disadvantages can be minimised and overcome:

- Design the space to **avoid visual sight lines** between the dining area and main preparation / washing up areas. An L shaped room works well.
- The simple inclusion of low-level walls to the front of worktops avoids direct sight of dishes from the entertaining area.



It is also worth considering the creation flexible spaces 'flexi-plan'. This allows living areas to be opened up by using:

- folding partitions
- sliding doors
- moveable walls
- fold back doors.

With a little imagination these can be cost effective solutions to give the user the best of all worlds. The property can be open plan for everyday living or a party while rooms can also be closed off in different combinations to create private spaces.



folding screen by Vufold: www.vufold.co.uk



bookcase wall with sliding doors



movable wall by Anaunia: www.anaunia-movable-walls.com



internal screen by Crittall: www.crittall-windows.co.uk

for more advice contact us on 0151 342 7748 or call in and see us at our new office 47 Telegraph Road, Heswall