

Ask the designer

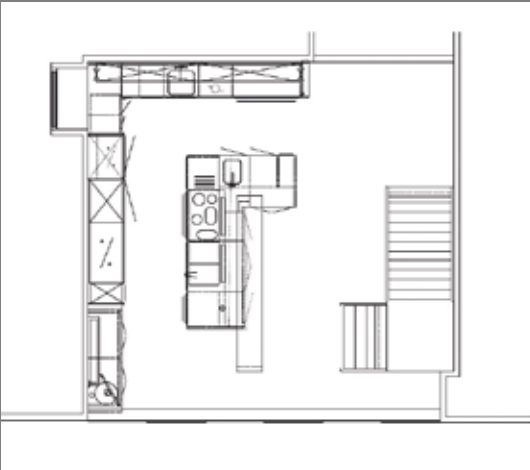
If you plan to update your kitchen, why not consult kitchen expert **Louisa Forsyth** first for some design advice?



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Send your room layout and question to dearutopia@propub.co.uk

We recently purchased a very dilapidated property in south London and are renovating it. With three teenage children we need more space to grow into and want to add an open-plan, conservatory-style, family area with a large kitchen for day-to-day use. However, due to our professional lives, we would also like to create a formal kitchen/dining room where we like to entertain. Ideally the kitchens would sit directly above each other and be connected via a contemporary stairway. Both kitchens would need to be independently equipped and fully functional. I would like them to be aesthetically complimentary, but distinctive in their own right. Can you help? *Richard and Sue Matthews, Dulwich, London*



This request, although not conventional, is actually a requirement that is becoming ever more popular, where clients want a ‘front of house’ kitchen for formal dinner parties and entertaining and then a more relaxed, everyday family kitchen for all other times. The formal kitchen should be suited also for outside professional caterers, who might be hired to use this facility with the emphasis being on a luxury entertaining and dining experience.

The unusual situation here is that both kitchens are to be positioned in an ‘open-plan setting’, above one another but still be used as independent kitchens. The key thing for us to consider is how each of the kitchens are to perform in their own right,

and how they complement each other. The large open-plan, family kitchen is to be positioned to the rear of the property at lower ground level, leading through to a fantastic open-plan contemporary conservatory and out to a secluded garden. This multi functional space provides the main living/socialising area for the family and their three teenage boys.

To create a contemporary, clean look Poggenpohl Blossom white kitchen furniture is chosen with Glacier white Corian worktops. A white kitchen acts as a neutral pallet with the other soft furnishings and colours from the garden adding the accented colour. The minimalist, stylish look is also easy to clean and will look

good for many years. We are including a Sub-Zero American fridge, as well as two fully integrated dishwashers to cope with large family gatherings .

The large island, with accompanying breakfast bar in hi-gloss lacquered walnut which complements the wall panelling on the staircase, contains a Wolf induction hob and combination microwave. When designing the formal kitchen above it is important to design a kitchen that when not in functional use looks like ‘furniture’. We are including an area that doubles as a ‘cocktail bar’ and provides not only a stunning focal point but a gathering point for guests to socialise and is far more chic and stylish than a mere breakfast bar.



The two kitchens sit one on top of each other with the open-plan one below and the formal entertaining one above



The formal kitchen has a curved walnut veneer island with dramatic black Silestone Stellar Negro worktop

To ensure discerning detail is achieved throughout this kitchen we are choosing a bespoke range of furniture. Walnut, horizontal book-matched veneer furniture is designed as handle-less to extenuate the desire to look like furniture. Unlike the large linear family kitchen, soft curves are preferred here and a raised bar area is designed to add interest to the island and also to conceal any clutter on the worktop.

A unique slide away door mechanism is used to conceal the ovens, while a panoramic induction hob and a pop-up tap is used to create a design that is not identifiable as a conventional kitchen. As in the family kitchen a downdraft

extraction is specified with a bespoke external motor to allow the Matthews family to control the extraction from both kitchens as required.

On the working side of the island a wine storage unit is fitted along with a 14-place fully integrated dishwasher. To provide a stunning reflection in the evenings the worktops are Silestone Stellar Negro. To connect the two kitchens a beautiful contemporary staircase leads from the lower ground floor kitchen to the formal kitchen with a 1.9cm float glass balustrade running along the perimeter of the mezzanine floor plus travertine stone flooring is used in both kitchens to give continuity.



The large open-plan family kitchen in Poggenpohl Blossom white is accommodating and contemporary to suit a large family



The lower kitchen flows into a conservatory style living room, which is ideal for the children and provides a terrace outside the formal kitchen above

The final result is two individual kitchens, sitting one above the other, but viewed together they complement each other well and provide such different functions that the Matthews wonder how they ever survived with one kitchen. ●

DESIGN TIPS

- If the Kitchen gets heavy use from a large family it is vital to choose quality appliances to meet the demands on them.
- For a kitchen that is the centre of formal entertaining choose ‘hidden’ features such as handle-less units and sliding doors to cover the fronts of appliances. This gives a much sleeker and stylish look.

