

Cost

Determine whether quite basic cabinets and appliances are required, or whether no expense should be spared. If funds are limited, advise clients not to economise on the initial provision of plumbing and electrical installations so that some appliances may be added later when more money is available.

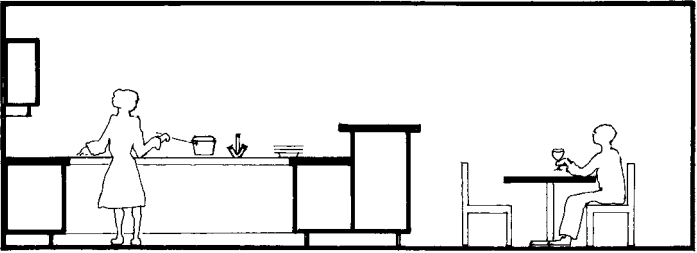
The family kitchen

The family kitchen is the key room in the house. It not only has to deal with cooking and eating, but may entail the supervision of children, whether toddlers playing on the floor, school-age children doing homework on the table or playing in the adjacent garden.

It should have links with the outside for access to dustbins and to any outhouses which may have a second fridge-freezer. Where there is a garden, a sheltered paved area could be provided for cooking and eating outdoors, and vegetable and herbs grown for the kitchen. Ideally, the kitchen should not be too far from an outside door to reduce the distance needed to carry shopping.

In the case of the dining-kitchen, the dining area should be accessed first so as to avoid guests walking through the not-necessarily pristine cooking area.

Many clients underestimate how much time is spent in the kitchen by all the members of the family, and wish to tuck the kitchen away in a dreary, north-facing room whilst giving pride of place to the formal dining room which, often, is only used a few times a year. Except for the super-rich who can afford staff or employ outside caterers, a separate dining room has largely become an anachronism for most families. The separate dining room also involves considerably more work in laying and clearing the table. In this respect, where kitchens are being installed in existing buildings, two adjacent rooms opened up into one makes the serving of meals and the supervision of children far simpler.



Kitchen screened by taller cabinets. Cabinets serving dining area set 300 mm higher than kitchen worktop conceal inevitable mess arising from dishing up

One essential device for the kitchen-dining room, which cannot be overestimated, is to have a barrier between the cooking and dining area which is a minimum of 1.2 m high. This can take the form of a back to counter unit with a shelf on top or storage cupboards of this height facing the dining area (see above). This device screens the kitchen counters when seated at table, and hides the inevitable mess created when serving up a meal.

The luxury kitchen

At the top of the market, the kitchen becomes a status symbol which can cost anything from £70–500,000 equipped perhaps with a range cooker, larger and more expensive than a Mercedes-Benz SLK car.

This type of kitchen may have vast refrigerators and ice machines from the USA, fan refrigerators which are better at circulating air, wine coolers, and even a separate cold room reminiscent of the north-facing larders of old country houses.

This phenomenon has largely been inspired by celebrity TV chefs who have renewed an interest in cooking from good raw materials. The rich, who like to cook, want a great room