



Open-concept *living*

A fresh design connects the kitchen to the dining room and opens up both to the new great room.

Two large windows allow lots of natural light into the cooking space.

A large island includes a space for stools where guests can watch the action.

The former dining room, now open to the kitchen, can be used daily.



BEFORE: WALLS CUT OFF THE KITCHEN.



This typical side split needed a new outlook. The homeowner has dreamed of an open concept home that would connect the heavily used kitchen to a great room but felt it was impossible with her house layout.

Chances are you've been in a home just like this one – come in the front door, up a few steps and the living room, dining room, kitchen and nook occupy the middle level. Off the kitchen/nook there are a few steps down to the family room.

The challenge that is faced by many homeowners with this layout is that it seems impossible to get the desired open-concept great room with the three or four stairs acting as such a barrier between the kitchen and family room.

In many homes the living room and dining room are large spaces that are rarely used – perhaps a few times a year for holiday dinners. The rest of the year, families squish around the kitchen table for daily meals. Why not create a floor plan that allows these underutilized spaces to be used year round?

Taking down the two walls that separate the kitchen and nook from the living and dining room allows a great room to be created on the middle level of this home. The family room on the lower floor could be used as a kids' play area or a games room, while the main family living and entertaining could be connected on the main level.

With the dining room open to the kitchen there is adequate space for this table to be used on a daily basis, which allows for the kitchen to extend into the previous nook space, creating a large, open kitchen.

The range and hood are relocated to the exterior wall, flanked by two large windows allowing lots of natural light into the cooking

space. Locating the hood fan on the exterior wall makes the new venting easy.

The sink is located on the adjacent wall to allow the dishwasher to be beside it, with ample storage for dishes right above. The fridge has cabinet panels on the doors and drawers to fully integrate it with the perimeter cabinets. This allows for seamless flow and allows the fridge to disappear into the cabinetry, which is more important now that the kitchen is open to the rest of the floor.

Locating the appliances on the perimeter of the kitchen leaves the large island surface clear of any appliances or fixture – perfect for preparation of food and entertaining.

Including a space for stools at the island allows guests to be part of the action but out of the cook's way.

The island is anchored by a decorative column hiding a structural post. The column is integrated with the overall room design by the decorative trim covering the beams, and a second column beside the stairs to the upper floor.

A large patio door connects the kitchen to a barbecue deck off

the dining room and a buffet can be built into the hutch recess for table linens and serving dishes.

The new great room accommodates a large seating group around the fireplace and TV hidden in millwork flanking the fireplace.

Removing the two walls and reorienting the kitchen to create a great room allows this family to stay in their home longer, as it now functions for the way a modern-day family uses it.

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A new floor plan allows underutilized spaces to be used year-round.

DO YOU HAVE DESIGN DILEMMA?

Tired of a dark, dingy bathroom? Frustrated with a kitchen that doesn't function efficiently? House call columnist Sarah Gallop would like to offer some assistance. Email your design dilemma, along with photos of the space in question, to housecall@sarahgallop.com. Watch for Sarah's design suggestions in future issues of Westcoast Homes & Design.