

Find me a property with... A Beautiful Kitchen



Jo Eccles, runs a property search company Sourcing Property, which specialises in central London, acts for time-poor buyers and tenants, offering a comprehensive search service designed to eliminate the time and stress associated with finding a dream property. **Further information t: 020 7834 1343 w: www.sourcingproperty.co.uk**

According to recent research by the Halifax, the dining room is dead, with more than half a million dining rooms in British homes likely to be demolished over the next 12 months as homeowners knock down walls to create bigger living space.

But where the dining room fades, the kitchen materialises; it's long been said that the kitchen is the heart of the house and I would say that it is perhaps the most important room in the home today. It certainly plays a significant part in the search criteria of many of my clients. One recent client insisted on an open plan kitchen, with all the latest gadgets and gizmos, despite the couple being very open about the fact that they never cook.

Traditionally, the kitchen was hidden away and staff would be the only ones to use it; this is often highlighted in period properties, such as mansion blocks, where the kitchen is often tucked away at the back of the property. Times have changed however, and nowadays the kitchen is not just used as a room in which to cook, but as a place to work, entertain, dine and relax. As a result, the current trend is for open plan kitchens with breakfast bars and comfy seating areas.

I have a client who bought a property in a mansion block in Victoria and has completely gutted and redesigned the layout of the entire

flat so that the bedrooms are now at the back and his kitchen is at the front (when he bought the flat it was the other way around). Whilst the new overall style of the flat is in keeping with the traditional feel of the building, he has chosen a very bold, modern kitchen which makes an impression and expresses his personal taste. This is an increasing trend; people tend to feel that they can make a statement in kitchens by using cutting edge or unusual materials or bold colours that they perhaps wouldn't feel comfortable using in other rooms of the property.

I've also had a Canadian client buying a property for his daughter in London and whilst I showed them some spectacular properties, they just weren't quite 'right'. In the end, we established that the problem was that they are used to the kitchen being the heart of the home, and anything which didn't have an open plan kitchen was considered too formal for their liking. Subsequently, we found them a lateral flat which had a vast open plan kitchen, reception and dining area centred around a big fireplace in the middle. This was a major selling feature of the property and the most important factor to them, demonstrating the huge influence the kitchen has on people's buying decisions today.

I think the kitchen will remain one of the most important areas of the home and will continue to be developed as the social hub of the household, going well beyond just a functional space.



In a traditional period house, good quality classic kitchens with hard wearing work tops like this one by Poggenpohl are the safest option from a re-sale perspective.

Kitchen Design Tips

Kitchens are very much a focus of the modern home, so they should look good, as well as provide functional convenience. A good quality kitchen is extremely important when showing your home.

The most popular layout is an open plan, informal space; kitchens are being designed to dissolve the boundaries between food preparation and everyday life so that they provide multi-functional space which can be used to cook, dine, entertain and relax. As a result, manufacturers are incorporating a wider range of materials, with soft options such as natural pine and leather sofas designed for the kitchen to create a comfortable feel.

With the rise in working from home and advances in wireless technology, the kitchen is also often used as a place to work and study, so not only does it need to incorporate comfort for relaxing, but surfaces which can be used for a multitude of functions.

Whilst kitchens are the most popular room to renovate, it's important to remember that people have very personal taste when it comes to the kitchen and often change it when they move in. Therefore, think carefully before ripping it out and doing it up purely for the sake of selling your home; a few simple upgrades might be sufficient to simply present it better without having to spend a lot of money. Designs to opt for depend on the type of property you are selling and your target market. In a traditional period house, for example, classic kitchens which are good quality with work tops which will stand the test of time are the safest option from a re-sale perspective. It needs to be a design that serves the needs of individuals who are likely to buy or rent your home.

Agents Comment

Giles Cook, Chesterton Area Director

“Over the past ten years, kitchens have taken on more prominence in terms of the overall value of a home. Kitchens are now big business and an expensive commodity with some costing over £100,000.

“Developers often tell me that the value of your kitchen should roughly represent ten per cent of the overall value of your home.

“Kitchens can make or break a sale. If recently upgraded, a good quality kitchen can definitely increase a home's overall saleability. The sheer hassle, upheaval and time factor required is often a turn off for potential buyers.”

On The Market

Ifield Road | Chelsea | £2,500,000

A four-bed, three-bath, two-reception room Moroccan influenced home. The handmade 'Chalon' kitchen is worth £100,000 - a traditional design using quality materials and skilled craftsmanship. **Chesterton Chelsea t: 0207 589 5211 | www.chesterton.co.uk**

