



Open up
YOUR SPACE

Lauren Sutton, head of Design Hub at Virtual Worlds, on how virtual reality can show you what your new kitchen will look like if you're thinking of knocking through

One of the most popular renovation projects is creating an open-plan kitchen-diner. We all need space so creating a larger area for the whole household to enjoy and use for multiple tasks is now more important than ever, what with the changes we've experienced to the way we live lately. From home working and spending more time indoors, open-plan living could bring huge benefits to your new lifestyle.

Knocking through

By opening up a room you can create extra space, bring in more light, and introduce better flow. Not all projects are the same, so first seek advice from a professional – building regulations need to be considered as well as the structural feasibility. Then think about the many uses of the modern day kitchen and work out zones for each: cooking, dining, entertaining, working, and relaxing. Define the space with colours, materials, lighting, and floor levels for each use.



Step into your new kitchen

If you're thinking of knocking through to create an open-plan kitchen, you'll want to be 100% sure you're making the right decision for the space as mistakes can be costly. Imagine stepping into your new kitchen and experiencing it in real time, to see if it suits. Virtual reality can help you get a feel for the new space and avoid any dreaded regret. That way you'll be certain a knock through is the right project for you.



Want to give it a go? To find your nearest independent retailer with Virtual Worlds technology, visit find4d.com

IN THE detail

STEEL-FRAMED GLAZING

Every decision matters in your perfect home, so we look at how this design feature can make a big difference

Words Yvette Filer

What is steel-framed glazing?

It has been a staple throughout interiors over the years, providing a distinct, timeless black steel multi-framed design. It can be used as both external glazing or interior screens and doors to section off areas, and suits most properties. This glazing type is highly durable, strong, and secure, which is particularly reassuring when you're planning to use it for garden doors. Steel-framed styles can also be made bespoke, opening up more design possibilities. You can also get the frames powder coated in any colour of your choice.

Have I seen it before?

You may have heard it referred to as Crittall glazing. Crittall is one of the leading English manufacturers – founded more than 130 years ago, it is still popular today. There are a variety of other companies that also design and make steel-framed glazing – reputable ones can be found on the Steel Window Association website. Simply search via steel-window-association.co.uk/find-a-member.

Why should I choose this glazing?

"Lightweight and strong, aluminium windows tend to have slimmer frames and more glass area, to let in more natural light and a low for bigger openings – but they don't retain heat as well," says Ryan Thomas, managing director at Thames Valley Window Company.

If your heart is set on the authentic look of steel-framed glazing, you may be pleased to know it is a sustainable choice. "Steel is one of the most widely recycled materials in the world and many windows are manufactured using recycled material," says James Lee, communications director at myglazing.com, the consumer advice site of the Glass & Glazing Federation. "It is also incredibly low maintenance and easy-to-clean." In fact, most new windows won't need to be repainted or repaired for at least 20 years.

Is it expensive?

Steel-framed glazing does tend to come with a hefty price tag – so it's important to weigh up your options and make sure you bring professionals on board to design and install it correctly. "Do your research for both an architecture firm and installer company," suggests Darren Brennan, architectural project manager of Jansen Steel Systems at Schüco UK. "The architects will be in contact with suppliers like ourselves, so we can ensure the design needs such as security, acoustics, and thermal performance are met."

Anything else I need to know?

From an aesthetics perspective, the nature of the design means sightlines to the outdoors or through a space will be disrupted by the frames, so consider this when deciding on your windows and doors. Registered installers will be approved to carry out the work to comply with building regulations without involving building control. Steel-framed glazing can have long lead times, so keep this in mind when setting your time frame. **REB**



Photography: French + Eye

In Bradley Van Der Straeten Architects' Vault House project, a beautiful south-facing garden can be accessed through Crittall doors in the kitchen.

After three years – 12 months of planning followed by two years of building works – Lauren and Ben Gearing were able to move into a home designed with them in mind. "Since moving to the city we've lived in places such as Brick Lane and an old shoe factory, so this look very much influenced the industrial design of the space – from the steel glazing and brick walls to the wooden floors," says Lauren. Architects, Seán & Stephen.



Photography: Seán & Stephen