



John and Carol Selby lived in their family home in Richmond, south west London, for almost eight years before deciding it was time for change. "We love it, but as our sons were starting to turn into teenagers our household dynamics were beginning to change," says Carol. "We're a close-knit family, but needed more space." The couple transformed their five-bedroom semi-detached house by knocking down a wall between the living room and kitchen, lowering the floor, and extending into the garden. "We wanted a larger, lighter, more social space, so turning the house's back into one multifunctional room made sense." ▶

# Tall order

As their two teenage sons were rapidly growing into young adults, John and Carol Selby wanted to create an open-plan space the whole family can enjoy without feeling on top of each other

Words: Yvette Murrell Photography: Lind & Cumings Design Photography



"From the outset, Carol was keen on having a dark blue kitchen – but it wasn't until much later in the design process that we decided on the exact shade," explains Rhiannon Phenis, senior designer at Sola Kitchens, who the couple hired to create their dream scheme. "We played around with a few different tones, including Farrow & Ball's Railings, until making a bespoke hue in our workshop." The colour was spray-painted onto plywood boards, to see how it would work against the natural light flooding the extended space thanks to the large skylights and new sliding doors. As for the cupboards, Carol says it was all about compromise. "This was the only design both my husband and I could agree on," she laughs. "Our house is Arts and Crafts, but the extension is very modern, so we had to find something to help marry the two together. Not too traditional, but also not too contemporary."



All aspects of the storage were carefully considered. Both Carol and John love to cook, so chopping boards and utensils can be found near the ovens and crockery is located in the drawers facing the dining table – meaning the boys can set the table without getting in the way of whoever is cooking. Additionally, with John standing tall at 6'2" and the boys rapidly catching up with him, the family wanted to make the most of their high ceilings so chose tall cupboards.



A key requirement in Carol and John's kitchen brief was for it to be discreet when not in use, so blending in with the wider open-plan living and dining areas. "After getting to know the family and how they wanted the space to work, we decided to opt for integrated appliances, a ceiling-mounted extractor, and a built-in induction hob for a smart, clean finish," Rhiannon explains. "Carol and John liked the idea of having an induction hob, but were unsure whether others would, should they sell the house in years to come. So we actually installed a gas connection into one of the legs of the island, in case anyone wants to change it to a gas hob in the future. They really spent a lot of time thinking about all eventualities for this space." ▶

## Factfile

### Who lives here?

Carol and John Selby with their two teenage sons Josh, 13, and Toby, 15.

### What type of house is it?

A five-bedroom semi-detached Arts and Crafts house built in the 1920s near Richmond, south west London. The kitchen alone cost £45,000, including appliances.

### What was the aim of the project?

To create a practical yet sociable open-plan kitchen-dining-living area the whole family could enjoy.

### Who designed the kitchen?

Rhiannon Phenis, senior designer at Sola Kitchens.

### How much did it cost?

A similar project would cost around £150,000 for the design and construction, including the kitchen. The kitchen alone cost £45,000, including appliances.

### How long did it take?

Six months.

**Design tip**

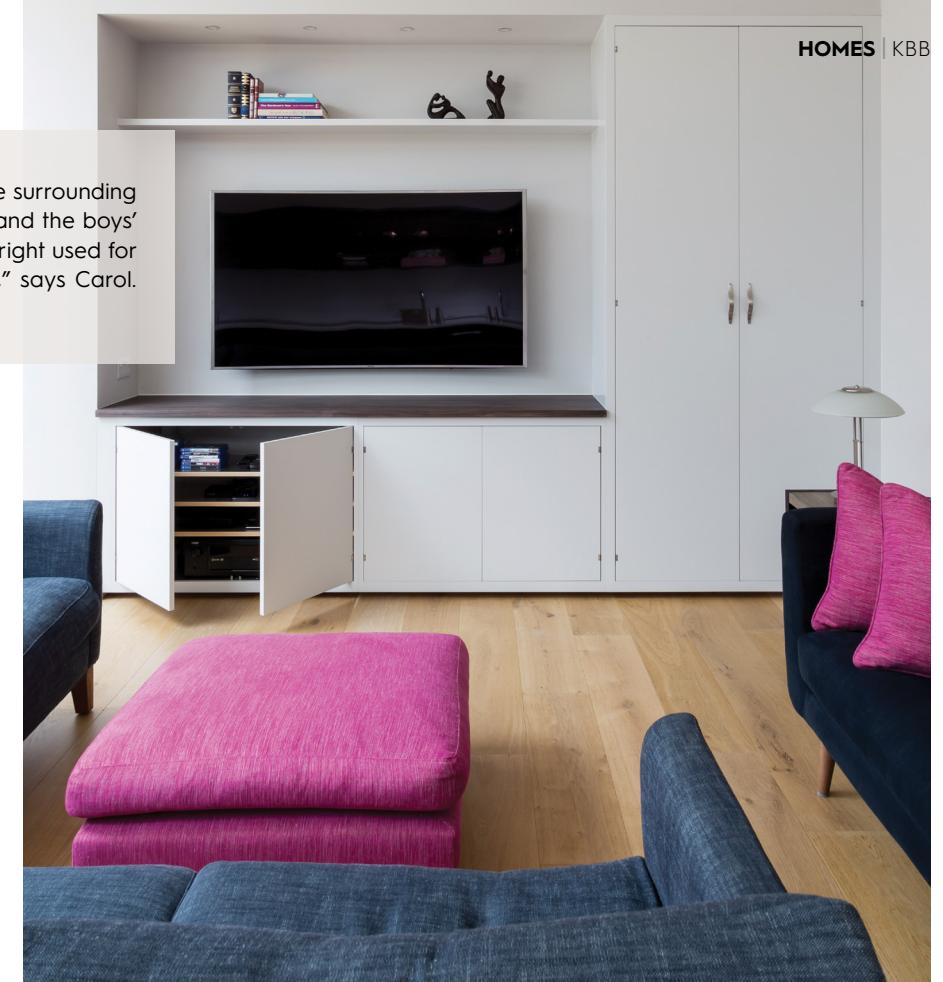
"Write down your list of priorities before you start looking for a new kitchen, including aspects you are not willing to compromise on. You can then refer back to this list when it comes to making tough decisions, so you don't lose sight of what is really important to you."

**Rhiannon Phenis, senior designer at Sola Kitchens**



When kitchen designer Rhiannon first came on board, she started off by clearly zoning each area of the room and working out where best to place everything before introducing the family to interior designer Georgie Rudge of Townhouse Interiors. She helped pick out the finishing touches - including pendant lights, tables and chairs - which work with the cabinetry, worktops, and flooring.

Rhiannon also designed the entertainment centre surrounding the television. It holds DVDs, the television box, and the boys' game consoles - with the taller cupboard to the right used for coats and jackets. "No space went overlooked," says Carol. "We really made the most of every last inch."

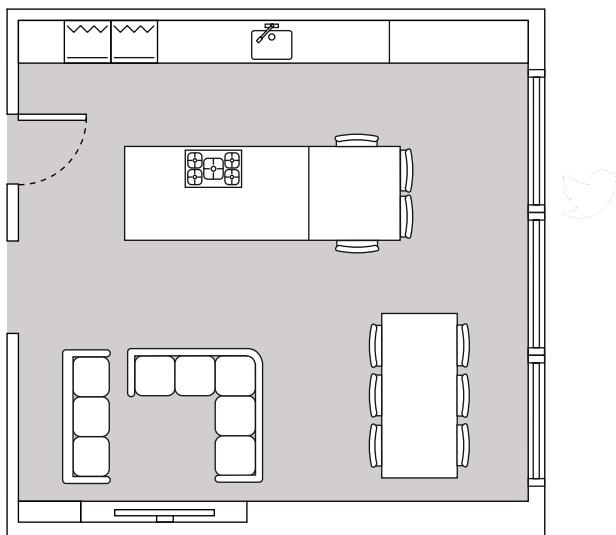


The family's main desire was to have somewhere open and sociable, to invite friends over for dinner parties. But with four family members' needs and opinions to consider, Rhiannon wanted to make sure she was creating a room working well for everyone. "There was lots of back-and-forth, but one particular idea they all loved was my suggestion of having two different surfaces on the island - a quartz finish for the cooking area and a softer, wood finish for the breakfast bar," she says. ➤



## THE PLANS

Reconfiguring the layout and extending to the rear created a larger kitchen-dining-living space



## SOURCE Book

### DESIGN

**Kitchen design** Rhiannon Phenis, senior designer, Sola Kitchens (020 3004 0898 or [solakitchens.com](http://solakitchens.com))  
**Interior design** Georgie Rudge, Town House Interiors (01635 777724 or [townhouse-interiordesign.co.uk](http://townhouse-interiordesign.co.uk))  
**Architectural design** Urbane Design (020 8996 0601 or [urbanedesignarchitects.com](http://urbanedesignarchitects.com))  
**Glazing** Urban & Grey (020 8979 6367 or [urbanandgrey.co.uk](http://urbanandgrey.co.uk))

### KITCHEN/DINING/LIVING AREA

**Kitchen cabinetry** Sletten range by Sola Kitchens, as before  
**Worktops** Bianco from Sola Kitchens, as before  
**Appliances** Oven, microwave, fridge-freezer, and induction hob, Siemens (0344 892 8999 or [siemens-home.bsh-group.com](http://siemens-home.bsh-group.com))  
**Coffee machine** Nespresso (0800 442 442 or [nespresso.com](http://nespresso.com))  
**Extractor** Westin (01484 421585 or [westin.co.uk](http://westin.co.uk))  
**Sink and tap** Franke (0161 436 6280 or [franke.com](http://franke.com))  
**Flooring** Wood Unlimited (020 8560 7831 or [woodunlimited.co.uk](http://woodunlimited.co.uk))  
**Barstools** For similar try The Conran Shop (0844 848 4000 or [conranshop.co.uk](http://conranshop.co.uk))  
**Dining table and chairs** Calligaris (020 7580 528 or [calligaris.co.uk](http://calligaris.co.uk))  
**Pendant lights** Above island, Heal's (0333 212 1915 or [heals.com](http://heals.com)); Above dining table, Christopher Wray (020 7013 0180 or [christopherwray.com](http://christopherwray.com))  
**Entertainment cabinetry** Sola Kitchens, as before  
**Sofas** Sofa.com (0345 400 2222 or [sofa.com](http://sofa.com))

### COST

A similar project would cost around £150,000 for the design and construction, including the kitchen. The kitchen alone cost £45,000, including appliances.



1 Cohen dual-tone pendant light, £159, Heal's. [heals.com](http://heals.com) 2 Retro wall clock in French Blue, £30, Cuckooland. [cuckooland.com](http://cuckooland.com) 3 Surrey cushion in Plum, £29, Sheridan. [sheridanaustralia.co.uk](http://sheridanaustralia.co.uk) 4 C2362 electric single oven, £531, Caple. [caple.co.uk](http://caple.co.uk) 5 Normann Copenhagen Form bar stool, £230, Nest. [nest.co.uk](http://nest.co.uk)  
6 Lux Oak Coast flooring, £91.20 per sq m, Kahrs. [kahrs.com](http://kahrs.com)