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Renovation Walk-Through Summary – Open-Plan Kitchen & Living

Client: Mark & Olivia Brennan
Property: Inglewood, WA
Focus Area: Opening the kitchen, dining and living into one connected space

Summary of Renovation Objectives

Mark and Olivia want to open up the back of the house. Right now the kitchen, dining and living are three separate boxed-off rooms, and whoever is cooking is shut away from everyone else. The goal is to pull them together into one connected, open-plan space.

The current kitchen sits behind a brick wall, closed off from the living area. It is dated, tight on bench space, and the layout works against the way the family actually lives. They are staying here long-term — this is not a renovation to sell — so the brief is to do it once and do it properly.

On the money side, they have set a renovation budget and want to know where it is best spent before committing to anything. The priority is the layout and the structural work first, with mid-range, timeless finishes rather than chasing the dearest options.

Constraints

The key constraint is the wall between the kitchen and the living area. It is load-bearing, so it cannot simply be knocked out — that single fact sets the scope, the cost and the order of works for this whole job.

The physical constraints to plan around are: double-brick construction, the roof load currently carried by that dividing wall, the ceiling height and existing cornice, the plumbing that runs to the kitchen sink on the external wall, the meter box and electrical, the window positions, and the rear door out to the yard.

There is also a cost constraint worth stating up front: the structural work, the kitchen and the flooring should be kept as separate, clearly-quoted scopes. That way you can see exactly what each part costs and make decisions without one big number hiding the detail.

Structural and Architectural Considerations

The dividing wall is load-bearing, so removing it means putting in a beam to carry the load — most likely a steel beam or an engineered timber beam — sized and specified by a structural engineer. The brickwork above needs temporary propping while the beam goes in, and the ceiling and cornice made good where the old wall met them.

We looked at leaving part of the wall in as a half-wall or breakfast-bar stub. I would not go that way here — it kills the open feel you are after, and you still need an engineer for the opening, so you carry most of the cost without the payoff.

Any wall, brickwork or opening changes should be checked by a structural engineer before any work begins. The beam size and the way it is supported are not something to guess at.

Recommendations

The first thing to do is get a structural engineer in to assess the dividing wall and specify the beam. Everything else on this job — the layout, the kitchen, even the budget — hangs off that one answer, so it comes first.

The main layout ideas discussed were:

- Remove the load-bearing wall and carry the load on a beam, kept as flush to the ceiling as the engineer allows
- Place an island bench roughly where the wall sits now, to anchor the kitchen and zone it off the living area
- Keep the sink near its current position to limit plumbing changes, or move it into the island if you want the cooking zone facing the room
- Move the fridge and pantry to the end return so the working kitchen sits out of the main sightline
- Run one floor through the kitchen, dining and living so the whole space reads as a single room
- Hold onto the rear door and window so the new space stays connected to the yard

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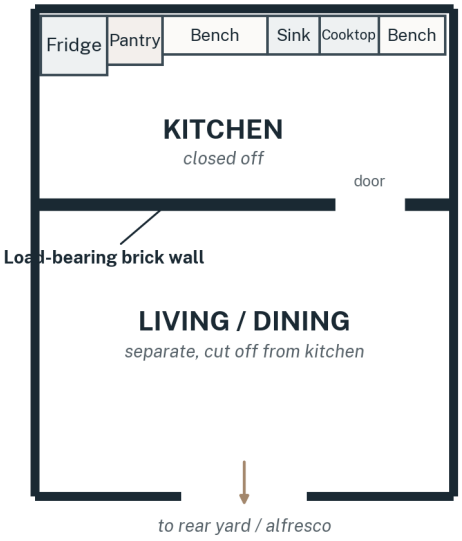
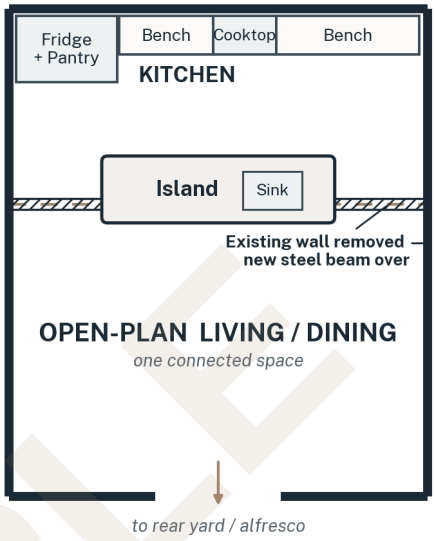
Existing Layout



Existing layout — kitchen closed off behind the load-bearing wall.

Proposed Open-Plan Layout



Proposed open-plan — wall removed, island anchoring the kitchen.

Design Direction

The direction here is warm and modern, built to last rather than to chase a trend. With the structure taking the lead role on this job, the finishes should stay simple, honest and timeless.

Cabinetry in a warm off-white, with a timber or warm-grey island to break it up and give the space a centre. An engineered stone-look benchtop gives you the look without the price of a premium slab. Timber-look hybrid or engineered flooring runs through the whole zone to tie it together. Keep the metals to one story — matte black or brushed brass on the tapware and handles — as the single accent.

The thinking is simple: spend on the structure and the layout, and let the finishes sit warm and quiet around them.

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Design Direction — Materials & Palette

Warm white cabinetry | Warm timber island | Stone-look benchtop | Hybrid timber flooring | Matte black tapware | Brushed brass accents

Cost Control

This job should be quoted in separate sections, not as one lump sum. That way you can see where the money is going and make calls section by section:

1. **Structural** — the engineer's fees, the beam, the temporary propping, and making good
2. **Kitchen** — cabinetry, benchtop, splashback and appliances
3. **Flooring** — supply and lay through the open-plan zone
4. **Services** — any plumbing relocation, plus electrical and lighting changes
5. **Making good and painting** — ceilings, cornice and walls once the wall is out
6. **Consequential** — temporary kitchen, rubbish removal, and the bits that always come with opening a space up

The main cost drivers on this one are the structural beam and the making-good around it — that is the single biggest variable — followed by the cabinetry run and the area of flooring. Keeping the sink close to where it is now is the easiest way to hold the plumbing cost down.

As an early ballpark, here is where the money tends to sit on a job like this – indicative ranges only, not quotes:

Work section	Indicative range
Structural – engineer, beam, propping, make-good	$6,000 – $14,000
Kitchen – cabinetry, benchtop, splashback, appliances	$24,000 – $45,000
Flooring – supply and lay, open-plan zone	$3,000 – $8,000
Services – plumbing, electrical and lighting	$3,000 – $8,000
Making good and painting	$3,000 – $6,000
Consequential – temp kitchen, rubbish, sundries	$1,500 – $4,000
Indicative project total	**$40,000 – $85,000**

Indicative early-stage ranges to guide budgeting only. Actual figures are confirmed through the separated quotes above.

Next Steps

1. Obtain a structural engineer's assessment of the dividing wall and a specified beam.
2. Confirm how you want to split the budget across the separated sections above.
3. Prepare a measured layout of the new kitchen before going out for cabinetry quotes.
4. Seek separate quotes for the structural, kitchen and flooring work so each can be judged on its own.
5. Confirm whether the sink stays put or moves, before the plumbing is priced.
6. Plan for a temporary kitchen so you are not left without one during the build.

Functionality

Taking that wall out turns three cut-off rooms into one connected space. Whoever is cooking becomes part of the room — you can see the kids, talk to people in the living area, and keep an eye on the yard. The back of the house will feel close to twice the size without adding a single square metre.

The new layout should focus on improving:

- Clear sightlines from the kitchen across the living and dining
- An island to gather around, with proper bench space either side of the cooktop
- Better storage, with the fridge and pantry grouped together on one wall
- More natural light pulled right through the space
- A direct, open connection out to the rear yard and alfresco
- Room to actually host people, instead of being stuck away in a side kitchen

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Contacts Discussed

Structural Engineer
You will need a structural engineer to assess the wall and specify the beam before anything is booked in. I have a couple I trust and will give you a name once you are ready to move — this is the first call to make.

Cabinet Maker
I will match you to a maker that suits both the budget and the layout, rather than the biggest showroom. Worth getting the measured plan sorted first so they are all quoting the same kitchen.

Flooring
A supplier for the hybrid or engineered timber-look flooring — I will point you to one that has been reliable on price and stock for jobs like this.

One builder I spoke to about this type of work is flat out and not taking on smaller structural renos right now. Worth knowing, so you are not sitting waiting on a quote that is not coming.

Kitchen Pod
The temporary kitchen you can hire while the build is on, so the household keeps running through it: https://www.kitchenpod.com.au/

Brief Summary

This home has a lot to gain from one move: opening up that wall. It changes how the whole house lives, and it is the kind of job where the result is far bigger than the size of the change on paper.

The single main priority is to get the dividing wall assessed by a structural engineer and the beam specified. That one step unlocks the layout and firms up the biggest cost on the job, so everything else can be planned around a solid answer.

Thanks for having me through and talking it all over. It is a great space with a lot of potential, and once the structure is sorted it will come together into a warm, practical, open-plan heart of the home.

Thank You