

## Open It Up!



**By Brian Madigan**

For most of the twentieth century, house designs divided houses up into a number of rooms for specific purposes. In the early 1900's, in addition to the regular rooms, parlours were commonplace and kitchens were small. The entire house would be divided up and most rooms were separated by doorways.

In the late 1950's, the American Architect Frank Lloyd Wright became quite creative with the **open concept** design. He removed the walls and he designated special purpose areas throughout the house. This produced a feeling of spaciousness. Parlours were gone, so were the walls between living rooms and dining rooms and even hallways.

By the 1960's, family rooms were added to the main floorplate, and eventually the wall between kitchen and family rooms were eliminated creating the great room which became popular in the 1980's.

Today many older homes are in need of upgrading and modernization.. If there are walls separating the house into various rooms, you might consider taking them down. If they happen to be a supporting wall, then don't bother it's probably too costly. However, don't despair you might be able to remove almost all of the wall and replace it with a supporting steel post. These posts can be enclosed nicely with wooden posts and you might even consider an extra one (without the steel post) if you require some balance in the room.

New appliances, fans and windows can easily deal with cooking odours, so your kitchen can become an integral focus on the main floor.

You might remember that 1930's vintage houses, even the largest ones often had small galley kitchens. The trend today is to open up the space. Let the sunshine in! Add windows and skylights. Use continuous floors throughout the main level. Hardwood is also "in" and works as well in the kitchen as it does in the living room.

However, when it comes to the outside, purchasers still want the traditional look. Georgian, Colonial, Tudor, Victorian or Cape Cod will all outsell the "I can't find the front-door type" of design.

So, consider an old house and let your imagination remove some of the walls. You might be pleasantly surprised. Old traditional exteriors are in, but old interiors are out. Look for an older house in a good area, and you might find a real gem.

*Brian Madigan LL.B., Realtor is an author and commentator on real estate matters, Coldwell Banker Innovators Realty  
905-796-8888  
[www.OntarioRealEstateSource.com](http://www.OntarioRealEstateSource.com)*