Welcome to the Digital version of HOUSE - the magazine for architect-designed houses and interiors in Ireland.

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See the fabulous new LEICHT kitchen now on display at Bushell Interiors

LEICHT kitchen with gloss laminate doors and laminate worktop, with plenty of storage. The kitchen comprises of a SIEMENS Induction hob, a double oven, a steam oven and a dishwasher, a LIEBHERR larder fridge, and a FALMEC extractor hood. The stainless steel sink is from SUTER. Prices for this kitchen and similar options start from €15,950 plus VAT, fitting included.

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People can sometimes be daunted by the idea of working with an architect, feeling that perhaps the designer will speak a language they don’t understand or that the service will cost a lot of money. In this issue we speak to architects about how the relationship between client and architect works, what the design process involves and how you can employ an architect in a way that suits you and your budget.

Our homes section then shows just what can be achieved by using an architect, from transforming standard, somewhat dark traditional homes with bright, new extensions or by building a new house that takes note of the surrounding landscape, the local weather and the people who will live in it. Designs range from a house on stilts, one with a swimming pool on the ground floor, an extension coated in red tiles and a home with a roof inspired by a hovering bird of prey.

The homes in this issue also include the latest in eco-technology and we consult architect Owen Lewis about how we can make our homes greener.

Enjoy.

Emma Cullinan,
Editor
It may seem incredible but until recent legislation was passed it was possible for anyone to call themselves architects even if they had never taken a course in the subject. Those who do train as an architect typically spend five years at college as well as time working in architects’ offices, training on the job.

While in reality it was unlikely that your local butcher or baker would double up as an architect in their spare time, hypothetically they could have done (although they may have found it difficult to get insurance for their building projects). In reality it was people associated with areas of building and design who set up as ‘architects’ – and some were very competent but the situation did leave clients open to the possibility of employing someone who was not properly trained to carry out the work.

In this regard, Ireland lagged behind much of the rest of the world where the title architect was recognised by law, just as dentists, vets, doctors and lawyers are.

Now, for the first time, architects in Ireland must also be registered and conform to standards set out in Irish legislation (which also meet with European and international standards).

This means that clients can now be certain that people using the title ‘architect’ have met this standard and must adhere to the Professional Code of Conduct, carry professional indemnity insurance, and update their knowledge by taking a prescribed amount of education courses each year.

The building process is becoming more complicated with (thankfully) higher standards being required by law. With clients requiring more sustainable buildings and with increased technologies and more diverse design solutions available, it is important that the professional overseeing a building project is competent. Also, if something goes wrong clients can turn to the RIAI for help through its established processes.

An architect can project manage your building from start to finish in a complex task involving many parties and the coordination of a diverse range of services. Architects design the structure, apply for planning permission, go out to tender, administer the building contract and provide the client with all necessary documentation for compliance with building regulations and planning. That’s why it is important that they have the relevant training. The primary function of registration is to provide you, the client, with certainty and protection. For more information contact the Registration Body, the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) on T: (01) 676 1703 or www.riai.ie
About us
homearchitect.ie is a network of RIAI architects who share a progressive outlook towards design and how we use our homes.

It was established by Boris de Swart and Greg Tisdall (above) for homeowners to easily and cost effectively engage the services of an architect.

Our service
With homearchitect.ie you only use us where you feel we add value. We provide a local RIAI registered architect at an affordable price.

It is ideal for all home improvement projects. As part of our service, we offer a unique initial home visit consultation service for €500.

Case studies
Our website shows case studies as examples of what can be achieved. They show before and after photographs, and an indication of cost.

- Bungalow
- City – period
- Suburban extension
- Suburban semi-d
- Suburban detached
- Livingroom extension

Tips and advice
Check out our useful tips and advice on embarking on a home improvement project.

- Whether you are looking to create an extension, convert your loft or re-configurable internal space, homearchitect.ie can help guide you step-by-step through the process.

Cost calculator
This tool helps homeowners to estimate the approximate budget for building work.

It is important to know the proposed floor area of the new extension and also the floor area of associated renovation works together with other works in the remainder of the house.

Cost calculator

A new website helps people access architects on a pay-per-visit basis

A new pay-as-you-go architectural service has been set up by the architectural arm of Duff & Tisdall, who also run furniture shops and are interior design specialists. Architects across Ireland are finding, in these economically nervous times, that homeowners sometimes opt to just use an architect for certain phases of a build rather than the whole project (see previous feature) and the new service addresses this.

“Now that the market has changed, we are trying to pitch the profession in a more user-friendly way and take a pay-as-you-go approach to home architecture,” says Greg Tisdall, of Studio D Architects, run by himself with Arthur Duff and Boris de Swart. Information on the service can be found on www.homearchitect.ie, which will have a network of architects cross Ireland providing design advice.

“We are tailoring the architectural service to homeowners, including people who don’t know much about architecture, don’t know what an architect does or who find it difficult to engage with architects,” says Tisdall.

A key part of the pay-as-you-go service involves a home visit, which costs €500 for four hours and €800 for seven hours (times depends on the size of the project), during which the architect will discuss the client’s wishes, take measurements of the property and sketch out a plan of the home. The architect will then draw up initial design sketches.

Clients can use these or keep them for a later date – and perhaps opt for further architectural services, supplied on a pay-by-the-hour basis or along more traditional fee lines (typically a percentage of the job cost, see previous article). “When we spoke to people they said, ‘aren’t architects expensive?’ We are showing people that they can use an architect in a cost-effective manner,” says Tisdall.

“People are looking at reinventing their homes and space,” says Arthur Duff. “While in the past they may have decided to move, now they are evaluating what they have in terms of space and how their home functions. They are asking ‘how can we revisit our home as a working and living environment?’

Other services provided by Home Architect can include progressing the sketch drawings into design drawings, doing a measured survey of a home and perhaps a land survey. If the building work needs planning permission, the architect can also do planning application drawings and, later, detailed construction drawings, describing the building work, materials and finishes in detail, for a builder to follow. The architect can also see the building through on site, making sure that it is built properly.

“The priority is that the client is happy and gets the best value, maximum enjoyment and functional capacity out of their available space,” says Duff.

Some of the services provided by www.homearchitect.ie

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Architect Sterrin O’Shea talks to Lucy Taylor about the stages that architects work through with their clients, and describes a typical job

Architects will typically work through four stages with a client: initial design, developed design, detail design and construction. At the initial design stage I have my first meeting with the client, usually in their home and am always happy if they are familiar with my work.

This meeting is important so that I can see how they live, their existing home, their style, whether they have children and so on.

Architects always remember that a client is trusting them with their money and because it will be a relationship that can last up to two years, it’s critical to get a good sense of whether you can work together during this meeting.

We establish their brief, or wish list, what kind of accommodation they want and so on. We also discuss what rough budget they might have and whether this is realistic for the kind of work involved.

I come up with ideas, we discuss the scope of service and associated fees – and whether they want me to be involved in all four stages of the process. Currently some clients only want an architect for a limited service, for instance, up to stage two or three.

The client will be given an RIAI (Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland) Client Architect Agreement and also the RIAI cost guidelines which set out approximate build costs per square metre. These documents also help formulate the architect’s fee which ranges from 12-18% of the build cost for the full RIAI service.

As construction costs are down at the moment fees are down too.

Recently some people have preferred to agree a fixed fee.

We also discuss planning issues and the feasibility of what the client is trying to achieve. I then take some key dimensions to get some idea of scale. Later on a full measurement survey is carried out.

If I am appointed I go and prepare a sketch design. Two or three design proposals will be presented in the form of plans or layouts. Then, depending on the scale of the job, I might use models or 3D drawings.

Stage two (the developed design) involves agreeing a final design, adjusting the budget and fees if required, and drawing up a project programme.

I incorporate all of this information into the tender drawings and prepare a detailed specification which will include everything from the type of tap in the kitchen to the paint on the walls. This document is then issued with the tender drawings to the selected builders for pricing. During this stage there are a number of meetings with the client to decide the finer details such as finishes.

The final stage of the process is the construction. An architect will evaluate tenders from the builders with the quantity surveyor to ensure there are no errors/omissions and then advise the client on the choice of builder, taking into account issues such as price, relevant experience and availability.

The client enters into a contract with the main contractor. It is the architect’s job to act as an independent agent or advisor and to check that the builder is fulfilling the terms of the contract. During the construction process the architect problem-solves and keeps the client informed.

I always advise the client that they should not instruct the contractor directly as this may lead to extra costs and delays later on.

We usually have a site meeting every fortnight with the main contractor but would also be on the phone regularly. Towards the end, I might be on site twice a week as this is usually when all trades are on site working under pressure in an effort to complete the project on time. The recession has made people much more cost-conscious. They want to maximise the existing space in their home and remodel rather than extend. They can now take advantage of the fact that this is a cheaper time to build and there are more builders available. I am focusing on cost-effective solutions and sustainable designs.

It is certainly more challenging but it also forces you to be more creative, for instance, with the choice of materials.

I think architects should be selling quality of life. People who want work done on their homes are doing it because they want to improve their life or are undergoing life changes such as having children, rather than wanting to profit from it.

An architect can bring enormous value to even a small remodelling project. It is important to realise that if an architect is not involved during the construction stage, the client is not going to get the same product at the end. There is a risk that it can take longer and be more expensive in the long run. Most people are only going to do it once so it’s critical to get it right.

www.sosa.ie

Left and above: An extension by Sterrin O’Shea Architects
Living in Style

Colours from Dulux, about €25 for 2.5 litres. www.dulux.ie

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Cappuccino all-weather range in durable steel, set of table and chairs €149 from Marks and Spencer

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Ciaran Sweeney hand-printed silk velvet cushion
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Sveje cotton rug
90cm x 150cm in orange, blue, red, green or black with white stripes, €10 from Ikea, Belfast (and opening in Dublin this July); www.ikea.ie

Victoria rug by Nanimarquina available in two sizes: 170 x 240cm for €2,518 and 200 x 300cm for €3,671 from Duff Tisdall Furniture and Interiors; www.duff-tisdall.ie

Crown beige white solo mid-sheen emulsion, about €23 for 2.5 litres

Par 4 Pop, prices start at €1,350, www.lostweekend.ie

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€3,300 from Roche Bobois, Sandyford, Dublin, www.roche-bobois.com

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A shore sanctuary
It is among the most stunningly picturesque, and peaceful places anywhere,” says architect Damien Murtagh who was obviously inspired by the site of this house in Portrane, North Co Dublin, on a sand and gravel ridge of salt marshes and dune grasslands filled with year-round flora and fauna. Right next door is a bird sanctuary and the house is also near a marina and an island.

The clients asked Damien Murtagh Architects for a house whose form, scale and overall appearance would evolve from this rural and coastal setting. The couple also wanted to create an inspirational home for their children to grow up in: where daylight, nature, the elements, materials and textures, and energy awareness played a large role.

And that is what they now have. The house’s dry-stone walls, brilliant-white rendering, patinated copper and cedar cladding are designed both to blend together and into their surroundings.

The house consists of a two-storey elongated spine with two arms at either end. This gives the home a shape that forms a private courtyard facing the sun. The main aim behind the form was to ensure that most of the rooms in the house got coastal views as well as sun throughout the day. All of the social spaces are duel aspect “so that the coastal panorama and the sunlight are present”, says the architect, “which makes for spaces of great stimulus”.

The house’s open-plan interior is enhanced and punctuated with voids, frameless glass railings and sliding walls. It is entered through a recessed alcove that leads to a light-filled hall floored with warm giant slabs of Oniciato Travertine Stone designed to contrast with the brilliant-white internal walls.

There are not only bedrooms on the ground floor but also a swimming pool which is surrounded by walls with a stucco marmorino plaster finish to complement the blue Bisazza mosaic pool tiles. The floor is in a dark travertine stone. The open-plan kitchen, with walnut and Corian Cesar kitchen, links into the dining area with its double-height frameless-corner glazing that gives views to Lambay Island in the distance.

The dining area and raised living space are separated by a cantilevered staircase with frameless glass rail and which is contrasted with white Corian (more associated with kitchens and bathrooms). This ascends into a study space that overlooks the dining area.

The dramatic sitting room, with its exposed ceiling and white oak flooring, cantilevers on the coastal side towards the views through a wall of floor-to-ceiling frameless glass. On the opposite
side of the room you can reach the roof terraces through large sliding doors; external steps connect these terraces to the courtyard below.

The master bedroom (with its sheltered morning terrace), the second guest bedroom (also with its own roof terrace) and a children’s bedroom are reached across a bridge – over the circulation core – from the sitting room.

The electrical elements in the house are controlled through a Smarthome control system which can operate elements such as audio, lighting, security, heating, and TV, on site or remotely. For example, when the owners are away they can use their laptop to check security cameras, turn on the radio, open the curtains, turn off the lighting and lower the heating.

This airtight home has achieved a Grade A Building Energy Rating (BER) through its thermal insulation and renewable energy elements. The house incorporates a range of Kingspan products including The Century Tek Building System with the addition of an insulated drylining board to all external walls and ceilings, Thermomax Photovoltaic solar panelling, a heat recovery ventilation system and an integrated water harvesting tank. Eurotech Ltd who installed the geothermal heating system and an air to water heating system also installed the Eurosmart control system. This separately controls and records the temperature of every room in the house. It also gives preference to the highest energy efficient performer of all systems installed at any given time of day. This, combined with an advanced Alu/Timber triple glazing System from German Joinery Ltd, make the whole house, including the indoor pool, economical to heat.

This airtight home filled with natural light means that those who live here “are in constant touch with the outside while internally still feeling protected and secure from the elements”, says the architect. “We are delighted with the outcome of this structure which responds sensitively yet boldly to both its surroundings and requirements.

We view its design, form and harmonious synthesis of materials as a modern interpretation of coastal architecture.”

ARCHITECT
Damien Murtagh
Architects

Damien Murtagh Architects believe that the quality of the environment directly influences the quality of our lives. It is a design-led practice, creating uplifting buildings that are specifically connected to context, function and client brief. The practice’s experience covers an extensive range of building types and product design.

Bespoke house design and renovation is the practice’s forte and it approaches every individual project with an intrinsic knowledge of both sustainable materials and renewable energy sources;

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E: info@dmurtagh.com
www.dmurtagh.com

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Title: Kingspan Century; Kingspan Renewables, Kingspan Environmental, Louise Oliver T: (047) 81 370 and Alan Hogan T: 087 678 2409
In house control system: Smart Homes. T: 085 2700332
Heating: Eurotech, Gerry Duffy. T: (041) 974 9479
Glass railings: Rock Forging, Andrew Clarke. T: 087 246 8561
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Proud to be associated with the 'By the Sea' project
by Damien Murtagh

Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co. Cavan
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Noel Kelly 087 245 5722
Email: conatynoel@yahoo.co.uk
When their children had grown up and moved out of the family’s Victorian house in Dublin 6, the couple who owned it decided to build a mews house, in the garden, for themselves. They approached KMD Architecture who considered the good and poor aspects of mews house design before starting to design the house. The good thing about building a house in your own garden is that you can stay in a neighbourhood you know well and, for this couple, it meant they could stay close to the city centre.

On looking at the downsides of mews houses, the architects say that poorly designed examples have limited natural light, lack of storage and a lack of facilities beyond basic living requirements. They were aware that there could be a living area on the opposite side of the floor there is an office, bathroom and a guest bedroom. The office and living area up here can be easily converted into two more bedrooms.

KMD Architecture have designed the house in a way that allows spaces to flow from one area to the next to increase the sense of space. To facilitate this flow, there are many sliding doors that slip into walls, to disappear when not in use. The living/dining room, for instance, is separated from the rest of the house with a double sliding wall.

This room has lots of natural light coming in from both ends and the views out and across the area give a good feeling of space. The interior and exterior are also linked by the timber floor in the living/dining room that runs into the timber terraces on both sides of the house. The deck to the rear of the house is seen as an extension to the living/dining room, and has a barbecue, seating and dining area.

A large stepped terrace, finished in porcelain tiles, brings light and natural ventilation right down into the spa room and play room. The well-insulated concrete house is clad in grey ceramic tiles that are carefully detailed to create a clean flow between walls and roof. Internally the palette comprises white painted ceilings and walls, timber and ceramic floors on the ground floor, rubber and ceramic in the basement and carpet on the first floor.

This neutral environment was created in consultation with the clients who wanted the perfect space in which to display their collection of art.

“The project had to deal with the challenge of clients moving from a large scale elegant Victorian house to more compact accommodation and the elegance and scale of the Victorian house has been interpreted in an unashamedly modern architecture style, which still deals with elegance, scale, proportion and light,” say the architects.

KMD carried out the job with two contractors doing very different tasks. The ‘shell and core’ contract (which is basically the building of the house) was by Owenbee Construction while the fit-out was done by James Quinn Construction. “By splitting this contract, the heavy in situ work could be carried out by contractors best suited to that activity and the highly specialised precise quality of finish required for such a house could be delivered by a contractor interested in and capable of such standard,” say the architects. “The commitment and skill of James Quinn of Quinn Construction was outstanding. His attention to detail and desire to deliver quality was exceptional and much credit is due to him for the project’s success.”

The architects also praise Dunnes Joinery “for very high quality timberwork throughout the house, Tilestyle for beautiful mosaics and porcelain tiles and Ican Engineering for metalwork and glass balustrades. Philips for the integrated audio/visual system (connecting radio / iPod / CD / DVD / digital TV, including home cinema) and Buchtal for the external ceramic tile cladding.”

The clients have been in the house for a year now and are happy in their new home. They played a large role in the successful outcome, say the architects.

“In all successful projects there are many contributors, not least in this instance our clients, whose energy and enthusiasm over the duration of the process was remarkable.”
ARCHITECT
KMD Architecture

KMD Architecture is a design-lead architectural practice based in Dublin city centre. The practice is committed to professional excellence in architecture in terms of design and service with the advantage of considerable experience in delivering projects of all sizes within the Irish construction industry over its 55-year history.

Every project has unique requirements and KMD Architecture analyses these requirements, establishes sustainability and low energy criteria, researches similar projects and develops a unique solution for the client’s site and performance requirements.

All projects have a director responsible to the client to ensure their needs are fully identified and that the resources and experience within the practice are best used to achieve a successful project for the client.

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E: super@kmd.ie www.kmd.ie

PROJECT FACTS

T: (01) 248 0533

Paving and Landscaping: James Quinn Construction, Co Westmeath.
T: 086 889 4078

T: (01) 451 9077

Architectural metalwork: Ican Engineering Ltd, Co Armagh.
T: (048) 3088 8181

Carpet: SE Quirke Ltd, Dublin 18.

Timber flooring: Select Hardwood Flooring Ltd, Co Dublin.
T: (01) 840 2373

SECTION

GROUND FLOOR PLAN
1 LAUNDRY
2 OFFICE
3 BEDROOM
4 MASTER BEDROOM
5 LIVING AREA
6 BEDROOM
7 BALCONY

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1 LANDING
2 OFFICE
3 BEDROOM
4 MASTER BEDROOM
5 LIVING AREA
6 BEDROOM
7 BALCONY

BASEMENT PLAN
1 CHANGING AREA
2 STORE
3 PLANT ROOM
4 SPA AREA
5 STEAM ROOM
6 PLAY ROOM
7 UTILITY
8 STORE

architect
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Lightbox
We lived in a house in the Quay area of Westport for 10 years, which was great but the terraced nature of the house had its drawbacks,” says Michael Horan, of Axo Architects, who lives here with his wife Tia and children Lucy (9) and Ted (6). All waste, shopping and fuel had to come in through the front door and hall, he says, because there was no rear access, and the fact that the family lived right beside a supermarket meant that it was impossible for the children to play out front.

The family bought a small, sloping plot of land just outside the town to build their new home on. Discussions about just what sort of house they wanted came up with a desire for a close relationship with both land and sky (especially the sun).

Horan worked with the site, pushing the lower part of the house into the hill “to ground it in the landscape”. Materials (sourced locally where possible) were also chosen to fix the house in the landscape (concrete and timber), dramatically reach out to the sun and landscape (white rendered box) and to reflect the surrounding colours (glass).

The white upper part of the building sits on this and overhangs it. The ‘folded box’ form of that top section was inspired by a white sheet of paper, folded and wrapped into a shape that would create various degrees of opacity and privacy, both externally and internally. (see illustration)

The bedrooms and utility/storage are in the lower part of the house and the fact that this part of the building’s back wall is underground allows it to use the natural warmth of the earth to help to heat the house. All of the bedrooms face the morning sun “to allow us to waken to the sunrise rather than the sound of a beeping alarm clock”, says Horan, who built the house using direct labour, mainly from the locality.

“The sun moves around to the west in the evening and allows the downstairs bedrooms to cool down to avoid stuffiness at bed time.”

The open sun terrace above the main bedroom is orientated to receive sunlight from morning until late evening. This terrace is also the main entry point to the house.

“The merest rays of sunshine in winter have an impact on the internal temperature,” says Horan. The roof extends out on the south side to give some shade from the summer sun, and stop the house from overheating (internal walls also extend to the exterior). A large cut in the roof brings dramatic injections of light deep into the house and allows occupants to be aware of where the sun is, all day long. The overhanging box makes the house look as if it is floating on the landscape when seen from the west. Inside this box the space is designed to flow freely. The living, kitchen and dining zones are open plan but large sliding walls allow the spaces to be closed up to create more intimate spaces.

The house has the following energy-efficient elements:

- Air-to-water heat pump and under-floor heating for space heating.
- Solar collector tubes for hot water.
- Grey water from flat roof for WC cisterns.
- Heat recovery ventilation.
- Super-insulated and air-tight.
- Low-e and argon-filled double-glazed units in all windows.
- Thermal massing and thermal wall against sub-soil.
- Passive solar heating.

This sun-filled sea side home with a view of Croagh Patrick, which sits just outside Westport, was created for a growing family.

On this page The living rooms and kitchen on the main level are arranged in accordance with the path of the sun to ensure lots of natural light and solar gain.
ARCHITECT

**Axo Architects**

Axo Architects was established with a philosophy to bring a fresh and innovative approach to projects and to deliver sustainable, quality buildings and environments.

Being based in a town in the west of Ireland, Axo Architects has designed both urban and rural houses, each being a direct product of the client’s requirements and site context. Certain design principles remain constant such as appropriate building forms, natural sunlight, fresh air and a connection to the outside.

The practice is multi-disciplinary with in-house expertise in design, urban planning, conservation, project supervisor design process (PSDP), fire safety engineering, 3D visualisations and project management.

With sustainability being the most challenging aspect of our profession, Axo Architects leads by example through a virtual paperless office and an evolving knowledge in sustainable building and design techniques.

Castlebar, Co Mayo
T: (094) 9026094
info@axoarchitects.ie
www.axoarchitects.ie

**PROJECT FACTS**

Roof finishes Top Level Roofing and Cladding, Co Mayo. T: (094) 9254302
Aluminium windows and doors Season Master Double Glazing, Co Mayo. T: (094) 9031415
Electrical Services Moran Electrical Services, Co Mayo. T: (098) 28877
Mechanical services and solar heating Joe Gavin, Plumbing and Heating Contractor, Co Mayo. T: (098) 26003
Light fittings ECI Lighting, Dublin 11.
T: (01) 8611800
Ironmongery Doorware, Galway.
T: (091) 743100
Fitted kitchen Flynn Furniture, Co Mayo. T: (098) 28197

**FOLDED WHITE BOX**

**UPPER GROUND FLOOR**
1. DECK
2. LOBBY
3. LIVING ROOM
4. DINING
5. KITCHEN
6. FAMILY AREA
7. PLAY AREA
8. GUEST BEDROOM
9. GUEST EN SUITE
10. VISITABLE WC
11. PANTRY / STORE
12. STUDY

**LOWER GROUND FLOOR**
1. MAIN BEDROOM
2. MAIN EN SUITE
3. MAIN DRESS AREA
4. BEDROOM
5. EN SUITE
6. PLAY HALL
7. HOT PRESS
8. PLANT ROOM
9. UTILITY

**MIDDAY SUN**

**EVENING SUN**

**MORNING SUN**

Left top: The open sun terrace by the main bedroom is orientated to receive sun all day.

Left bottom: Materials were chosen to fix the house in the landscape (concrete and timber), reach out to the sun (white render) and reflect the surrounding colours (glass).
The first thing that struck Ailtireacht Architects when they were asked to add an extension to this double-fronted house in south Co. Dublin was that the existing home didn’t link well to the garden. “When you came in the front door you stepped down into the kitchen, in the return, and were confronted with a big windowless wall so you didn’t know that the garden was there. It was obvious we had to change that,” says Allister Coyne of Ailtireacht Architects.

The Victorian house, which has a large living room and study to the front, and a new kitchen and dining room in the extension to the rear, now has views right through from front to back, through the use of well-placed expanses of glass. While the architects retained the side walls of the original 205 sq.m return, they “cut it to bits” and added onto it to create a new extension of 755 sq.m.

“Now all of the geometries guide your eyes out into the garden,” says Coyne, and geometry is a key word here: the architects took inspiration from the fact that the edge of the garden was at an angle, because of the way it met the adjoining property, and that set up diagonals in the new structure.

Upstairs a partial first floor return built on top of the extension is also at an angle. Upstairs there used to be four bedrooms and a bathroom but now the bathroom is in the return and the top floor was reconfigured to still have four bedrooms but one now has an en suite.

The house has become known as Windhover – the name of a Gerard Manley Hopkins poem about a bird’s ability to hover while hunting for prey – to describe its birdlike form and instill the idea of wings moving up and down: reflected in the zig-zag form of the roof. The rising and falling of the roof is reflected in the spaces below, creating different zones, such as the kitchen and dining area, in the new extension.
The clients did initially think it looked complicated, says Coyne, but in such a large, extension, having one space with a single flat ceiling would be too much.

A zinc cuff encloses the edge of the roof and that metal comes down and touches the ground at certain points, to connect the roof with the ground.

There is also a close connection between the interior and exterior, helped by huge expanses of glass. "When the large doors – practically walls – are opened "you can hardly tell the difference between inside and outside", says Coyne. Granite flooring used inside and out also helps to connect the two.

The interior meets the exterior in a number of places, including a terrace, back garden and two courtyards. The garden also extends to part of the roof which has grass on it that also runs up a wall.

The downpipe is in the form of a gathering of chains which set up a water feature using the rain. "We didn't go for the easy route," admits Coyne when talking of the design solution, "but the clients love it."
ARCHITECT
Ailtireacht Architects

Founded in 2002, by Allister Coyne, Ailtireacht is a design-orientated practice pursuing exemplary contemporary architecture that enhances lives. The practice is engaged in the constant pursuit of excellence in the design process, in synthesising the client, site, brief and budget, to challenge limits of expectation and find the project’s narrative.

The practice’s buildings are commercially astute and built to exacting construction standards, using a key set of experienced craftsmen. Using the act of drawing and representation – to ensure a shared clarity of intent throughout – the practice tests, pushes, and explores each element in greater detail.

In constantly analysing everyday life, the practice seeks to improve the rituals of existence, to lift expectation, to inspire, challenge and explore life in all its facets. The practice inventively combines traditional and new materials, and techniques, to create better places to live and work in.

11 Parliament Street, Dublin 2.
www.ailtireacht.ie

PROJECT FACTS
Contractor: Alan Kelly, Oaklawn Construction, Dublin 18.
T: (01) 281 4749
Lighting: Rocky Wall, Wink Lighting.
T: (01) 288 0380
Interior Design: Deirdre Danaher, Blackrock, Co Dublin.
T: (01) 288 0380

1 master bedroom
2 master en suite
3 master bathroom
4 bedroom

1 entrance room
2 reception
3 master bathroom
4 study
5 kitchen
6 dining room
7 living room
8 utility

First Floor

1 master bedroom
2 master en suite
3 master bathroom
4 bedroom

Ground Floor

1 entrance room
2 reception
3 master bathroom
4 study
5 kitchen
6 dining room
7 living room
8 utility

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Sea change

Every room in the house was lit according to what we do as a family. We wanted minimalist edgy design but with comfort and consideration of every aspect of our daily life, from our home office to our dinner parties. Our requirements and our budget constraints didn’t hold back the quality or the service we received. We had no idea how important lighting could be and it really has changed the quality of our life at home.”

Barbara O’Connor, Castleknock.

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It was the arrival of twins that prompted the couple who had lived in this small 1930s two-bedroom cottage in Wicklow for five years to both expand the space and put what they had to better use.

While the house had plenty of character and was well placed, near the sea, “it didn’t really work as family home,” says Joe Lawrence of Lawrence and Long Architects who were taken on to carry out the work. “The house comprised a series of small rooms and there was an inappropriate flat roofed extension and a conservatory on one side. Most of the house had no relation with the garden.” Yet the south-west-facing garden was a potential sun-trap and the architects demolished a shed and built a thin long extension along the north edge of the garden – with plenty of glazing, including a clerestory window – so that it could capture sun from the south.

They configured it so that a 30-year-old birch tree could remain in place. While the new extension is essentially one room, housing a kitchen and ‘den’, it has three different ceiling heights to demark ‘rooms’, while a long verandah accessed by large sliding doors links all of the areas.

As is often the case when people are given bright new spaces, the family now spends most of its time in this kitchen and the informal living room beside it. In the previous set-up the kitchen cut the living space off from the garden, whereas now the internal layout has been changed (with walls removed) so that you can see the floating timber and glass extension from the front door, which helps to link the house from front to rear and on into the garden. “What is now the hall used to be a landlocked living room with no windows and a hall that was so small two people couldn’t stand together in it,” says Lawrence. They kept a fireplace from that room which now backs onto a living room beside it.

At Christmas the hall fire was lit to welcome guests and children ran around the entrance area to let off steam, giving the space a whole new life. On the other side of the front hall there used to be a tiny galley kitchen stuck onto one side of the house and a small bathroom to the rear that cut off the house from its garden. Views of the sea to the front were also restricted by an awkward staircase that ran up inside the front wall just to the left of the front door.

Upstairs were two bedrooms one of which just had a window on the gable, which meant that it had no sea views. The conservatory was demolished and a larger two-storey extension was built. This has added a third bedroom to the house as well as a bathroom that juts out beyond the bedroom, giving sea views from the bath. A ‘periscope’ shoots into the sky from this room to catch morning sunlight from the east. Such nautical design speaks both of the nearby sea and the creation of new views of the outside world.

A house near the sea in Wicklow was extended and reorientated to make the most of the views and the sunlight, writes Emma Cullinan. Photography by Marie-Louise Halpenny

All above While the new extension is essentially one room, housing a kitchen and ‘den’, it has three different ceiling heights to demark ‘rooms’, while a long verandah accessed by large sliding doors links all of the areas.
**ARCHITECT**

Lawrence and Long Architects

Lawrence and Long Architects was established by Joe Lawrence and Pierre Long in 2005. The practice aspires to produce work of high quality and significant architectural merit. In approaching all projects, particular attention is in providing elegant design solutions, combining sustainable technologies and quality building materials.

The practice has a range of projects including residential, educational and commercial projects. The practice was recently shortlisted in an international architectural competition for Bord Gais Networks.

13 Lad Lane Upper, Dublin 2.

www.lawrenceandlong.com

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**PROJECT FACTS**

**Project Architect** David Flynn

**Structural Engineer** Molony Millar, Dublin 14, T: (01) 493 0211

**Building Contractor** Gary Ringland, Co Dublin
T: 087 258 4824

**Subcontractors** Dangan Joinery, Co Offaly, T: (057) 935 3097

Zinc Roofing Boyle Copper and Zinc Craft, Co Wicklow, T: (01) 281 0355

Stone to floor and stairs Artefacton Dockrell Complex, Dublin 24, T: (01) 408 5702

**Kitchen Units** Spendlove Furniture Co Wicklow, T: (01) 287 0500

Iroko floor Scotts, Dublin 2, T: (01) 662 5580
It’s a wrap
This extension clad in red clay tiles – that speaks of both traditional Dublin redbrick and of warm Mediterranean climes – shows what can be achieved with a flexible wrapping material writes Emma Cullinan

Photography by Paul Tierney and Maire-Louise Halpenny

This warm red extension to a house in Glenageary, Dublin, by Cast Architecture speaks both of the traditional redbrick houses of Dublin but the structure’s clay klinker tiles (hard-wearing tiles often used on commercial buildings) also conjure up a Mediterranean feel, a sort of Costa del Glenageary. This image is helped by the fact that you can see the sea from here, over the Monkstown rooftops.

The way the material can wrap the structure, across walls, floors and soffits, is what Emmet Scanlon and Sarah Cremin of Cast liked about it. It even runs across the stairs making them look a very warm and inviting place to sit. The architects also wanted a structure that contrasted with the pitched-roof brick and plaster house, which is in a street of similarly profiled properties.

The couple who live in this 1970s house have been here for 20 years and wanted to adapt it to their current needs. This included an independent but connected space for their grown-up son, now at college. His room is now in what was formerly the garage and is in part of the extension that wraps around the side of the house. The teenager’s room has its own front door – so that he can sneak in quietly late at night – but it connects into a new shower room and on into the main kitchen/living space where the back of the house meets the extension.

There used to be an office in this part of the house but this has moved to the west side of the house to enable the kitchen to have a meaningful relationship with the garden. The architects wanted an extension with a profile that was as strong as the A-frame house and to clearly differentiate between old and new, with both materials and shape. “We wanted the new extension to feel like one piece,” says Scanlon.

Architecture is greatly helped by the use of good quality materials and that has worked here with those klinker tiles all beautifully applied by hand and in vertical courses to underline the fact that they are non-structural. “From the moment we began looking for a contractor we told them that this would be a really important part of the job,” says Scanlon. Pat Comerford was the builder and the tiler was Tadas, from Poland, who took great care over the project. “He would sponge down the tiles with a smile on his face,” says Cremin.

The site is surrounded by houses and trees and the clients were keen to have a roof terrace to lift them up closer to the sun. Planners asked that the terrace not overlook neighbours so the glass wall at its edge is opaque, making the terrace feel like an outdoor room. This space’s other walls are the bookends at each edge which are part of the klinker-clad extension structure.

These box-like ‘periscopes’ extend up from the main form and have windows that bring light into the rooms below. One splits to allow natural light into both a hallway and bathroom and the other one brings light into one side of the open-plan living space. On the ground floor, where things are more private, huge glass doors embrace the garden. The concrete patio paving is in a similar colour to the klinker tiles and was a compromise when the tile budget ran out.

Much of the success of the project was down to the relationship between the architects and clients. “They were very good to work with,” says Scanlon. “Although they had little experience of drawings and models, they are a professional couple who knew about professional working relationships. A sense of trust between architect and clients is very important and that quickly developed as we began to show them the drawings and they could see the potential. It’s a collaborative thing and clients who can’t find trust can’t work as equals.”

“At key moments they went with the design because they loved what they saw, and that built up more trust,” says Cremin.

They are happy in their new home, says Scanlon, “and excited about it, they were great clients”. [1]

[1] HOMES 48

48 HOUSE

HOUSE 49
CAST architecture was established in 2006 by Emmett Scanlon and Sarah Cremin. The directors have considerable experience in design and construction having completed art galleries, theatres, schools, housing, offices and master plans for public and private clients. Recent work has been in the domestic realm, where the team has enjoyed numerous private commissions for one-off houses and the refurbishment and extension of existing homes throughout Ireland.

19a Upper Baggot Street
Dublin 4. T: +353 1 668 6085
www.castarchitecture.ie

**PROJECT FACTS**

**Design Team:** Roughan O’Donovan Structural Engineers

**Contractor:** Comerford Developments, Co Kildare

**Quantity Surveyor:** Leonard and Williams

**Materials:** Tiling – red klinker by Laria Klinker supplied by Gilroys Tiles, Co Kildare

**Sanitaryware:** Stark 3 range by Duravit, supplied by Elegant John

**Kitchen:** Kube Interiors, Dublin 18

**Worktop:** by De Bros Marble Works, Co Meath

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**MODEL**

**GROUND FLOOR**

1. Back Garden
2. Dining Room
3. Shower
4. Kitchen
5. Bedroom
6. Living Room
7. Front Garden

**FIRST FLOOR**

1. Terrace
2. Stairs to Garden
3. Bedroom
This modern home in the chocolate box village of Ennserny in Wicklow sits on the site of a former cottage at the base of a steep escarpment. The cottage and incline both restricted the size of the new home but they also enabled a dramatic design. The couple who owned the site sought permission to get rid of the cottage on the site, “which was a wreck”, says architect Dave O’Shea of ODOS Architects, which he runs with Darrell O’Donoghue. Permission was granted for the demolition and the building of a new house that was about a third larger in size than the existing property.

The living space in this house, which is at the base of a steep escarpment, is on the upper floor to make the most of views across the countryside by Emma Cullinan. Photography by Ros Kavannagh

- about 270sq m – having taken into account the outbuildings as well. “The client wanted a contemporary home that was full of light and would enable them to appreciate the setting,” says O’Shea. “The old cottage had been rooted firmly in the ground and the windows were so small that you couldn’t really appreciate the site.”

The top floor of this three-bedroom house – with one storey at the back and two at the front – contains the sleeping and open-plan living area, while utility rooms, services and the garage are tucked in the beneath.

Having the living accommodation on the upper floor not only allows those views, it also lifts it out of the sodden ground and lets light in beneath the house too.

“From the off the project was tricky: it ran through a very wet summer and the trees on the escarpment held all the rain and then when it stopped the water would all start moving down towards the house,” says O’Shea. “The water tables varied greatly and we had to try to keep the water out of the site. We were building in very odd conditions.”

Adding to the aquatic scene was an ancient river which didn’t show up on recent maps of the area but certainly revealed itself once the original cottage was demolished. The fact that this ran through three different soil types: a rock base, sandy soil and silt meant that the architects – who eventually found documentation of the river on an 1810 map – had to go back to the drawing board. “Our building now had to be on those three soil
types and our original foundation design didn’t work with two of those soil types so we had to redesign the sub-soil strategy,” says O’Shea.

But there was also much excitement as the building began to take shape. Watching it go up led to a design decision that the architects are still happy with.

“At first we didn’t appreciate the level that you could go to with painting timber,” says O’Shea. The glass walls were originally going to be divided with panels in varying shades of grey but then they decided on colour. “One night when me and Darrell were on site he said, why don’t we do stripes instead of all these blocks?”

“We were very anxious to make a difference between the solids and the surrounds and this was an aid to describing the concept of building,” says O’Donoghue. Internally many of the floors are in polished concrete (with carpets in the bedrooms) and the bathroom uses wet-room technology. The architects used strip lighting that is more usually found in shops to create filtered and coloured light. “The days of having four downlighters in a room are over. Light levels are an important part of a building,” says O’Shea.

Now the clients can enjoy their new home but they also have to occasionally share it because they often get requests, sometimes in the form of letters posted through their door, from people who want to come inside and see it.
The woman who lives in this house – who became a friend of architect Amanda Bone during the build – loves her new home despite the fact that the architect felt the design was compromised by tenacious planners.

The front of the house is in a rustic stone that recalls the stables that would have traditionally been on this site, at the back of a long garden in Dublin city centre. Amanda Bone would not have chosen such a material except that it was a planning requirement.

When Bone, of Bone O’Donnell Architects, was approached to design a small house on this tight mews site, she knew just what was needed to make the most of it. There would be large windows to bring in as much natural light as possible and, because the ground floor was small and dark, she would have the bedrooms at this level and the living space on the brighter top floor which has good views of the canal.

But all did not go to plan; when Bone went for planning permission she was asked to imitate the houses that had recently been built beside her site. Like them, she too was to have bedrooms on the upper floor; she was to copy the small windows divided into four panes, she was to match the stone front, have hardwood windows, follow the footprints of the houses beside this, and ape the roof pitch to the front.

“There were so many conditions but the client was really into trying to achieve something here so we went back to a sketch design,” says Bone.

The resulting house stands testament to the client and architect’s tenacity: this project is the work of someone who cares about what they do and has spent the extra time achieving it.
Starting at the front, where she was to copy the stone of the house next door, she did just that but made some key changes.

The stones follow horizontal courses rather than being random like those nearby; the upper windows run in a band to the edge of the wall and the lower windows come back the other way; the windows are recessed and have sharp aluminium edges “rather than just being planted on and having a rough and ready granite look. I wanted to do something with the stone and not just have it as an infill between windows,” she says.

Entry to the 90sq m (971.7sq ft) house is through a ‘car port’ and then a floor-to-ceiling front door. Such generous openings, that encourage the flow of natural light, are used throughout the house. A resin floor, poured by Renobuild, takes the daylight and makes it appear infinite as well as bouncing it back up into the rooms.

The floor was originally meant to be in polished concrete but the machine that pours it wouldn’t fit into the small space. The resin, which is normally used on factory floors, comes in many colours but here it mimics a concrete tone to match the patio, with which it lies flush.

The main, south-facing bedroom spills onto the outdoor space through a large wall made from solar-reducing glass that turns opaque when viewed sideways on (although the sun is also encouraged into the building through evacuated tube solar panels on the roof that are used to heat water). Behind this bedroom is a small bathroom fitted with sanitaryware designed by architect David Chipperfield for Ideal Standard and brick-shaped glazed white tiles that recall those in the French house designed by Eileen Grey (catchily titled E-1027), whose work this client admires.

To the front is a small bedroom whose windows are too high to see out of from the bed, another planning requirement. Upstairs is open-plan to enable a large space on a small footprint and to bring in natural light from two sides.

The space is subliminally divided: the low-level storage that runs beneath the fireplace in the sitting area finishes, across the other side of the room, at the point where the kitchen begins (also the mid-way point of the room). The island unit is designed to break up the room but links in with it too by being in the same iroko timber as the floor and windows.

To the rear of this room, where the client can wave to her parents who live in the original at the other end of the garden, there is a long, wide window – with strong vertical divides – that folds back completely to give a clear horizontal opening that dramatically addresses the world at large.

The result is a small, simple, nicely detailed, light-filled house that is well-oriented and capitalises on canal views. And the resulting friendship between client and architect is testament to a happy build.

ARCHITECT
Bone O’Donnell Architects

Bone O’Donnell Architects is an award winning design orientated practice established in 2000. The emphasis is on a high standard of design and detail in architecture, interior design and landscaping. As a small practice Bone O’Donnell is able to provide a highly committed and individual service to each client and this enables the practice to achieve high standards throughout each stage of every project. The practice was created with the intention of developing a profile with a reputation for excellence in the design of work at all scales, from additions to individual dwellings to large-scale public buildings. With each project Bone O’Donnell is continuously exploring the architectural language and interests of the practice.

1 Upper Kilmacud Road, Dundrum, Dublin 14
T: (01) 298 9197

PROJECT FACTS

Structural engineers: Casey O’Rourke Associates, Merrion Square, Dublin 2.
T: (01) 661 1100
Quantity surveyor: Desmond J Bone and Associates, Bray, Co Wicklow.
T: (01) 276 4496
Flooring: Epoxy floor by Renobuild, Fenns, Enniscorthy, Wexford.
T: (053) 936 6444
Sanitaryware: Euro Heating and Plumbing Supplies, Dublin 12.
T: (01) 450 3953
Lighting: General Lighting, Dublin 22.
T: (01) 843 4497
T: (01) 843 5012
Ironmongery: Elemenier, Dublin 11.
T: (01) 296 5488
Light show
When Camilleri-Preziosi Ryan Architects were asked to design an extension and improve this existing redbrick period house in Rathmines, Dublin they took the opportunity to bring in lots more natural light, and to make it dance.  

Photography by Paul Tierney

When the couple who own this house were expecting their first child they took the opportunity to get an architect to convert the property, which was then divided into apartments, into a comfortable and bright family home. The existing layout of the 100-year-old redbrick was typical of such houses: there were poor connections from the ground floor living areas to the garden and kitchen and other spaces that had been designed in the past to be used by servants. This also meant that natural light levels in the living rooms were low.

The brief to Camilleri-Preziosi Ryan Architects included a desire for an open-plan kitchen/living space, a utility room and an additional bathroom and bedroom in the attic space. Inside the existing house the architects improved the layout and made the house more energy efficient. “A fine balance must be found in order to achieve the benefits of upgrading without compromising the period character of the property or damaging the original fabric,” say the architects who put high levels of insulation in the roof spaces and floors (by lifting the original floorboards), dry lined some rooms, refurbished and draught-proofed original sash windows; added smart controls to zone the heating; installed a high efficiency condensing boiler; put in water-heating solar panels and used high-performance materials in the construction of the new extension.

The new kitchen and living space was to be in this light-filled rear extension, which contrasts with the original kitchen area which was small, dim and didn’t embrace the direction of the sun. The materials in the extension “are intended to provide a natural and sympathetic background for the design of the spaces and to complement the brick in the original house”, say the architects. A dark grey zinc was chosen for the roof because of its durability. The grey of the zinc and aluminium windows is softened by red cedar in the brise-soleil and a timber bench.

The flooring is timber inside and stone outside. These are laid flush with each other to ease the link between interior and exterior. This complements the connection between the two spaces established by the extensive glazing and large folding doors.

The extension roof overhangs to the rear creating a blurring of this boundary between indoors and out. This portion of the roof contains the cut out with timber brise-soleil which filters and animates the quality of light in the space. The roof’s shape and design, including clerestory windows, modulates natural light in both new and old spaces. The clients have enjoyed the unexpected patterns of light coming into their new living space, not least those caused by reflections from water lying on the small flat roof outside the clerestory window.
ARCHITECT
Camilleri-Preziosi Ryan Architects

John Ryan and Francesca Camilleri-Preziosi set up Camilleri-Preziosi Ryan Architects in 2004 after gaining wide experience working in London and Dublin. The practice specialises in one-off commissions and develops unique designs to each client’s situation. In dealing with alterations to existing buildings the practice, which has specialist conservation skills, places an emphasis on bringing daylight into the heart of every structure. The practice fully explores a wide range of factors during the design phase and uses 3D modelling both as a design tool and to help clients visualise the end result.

Camilleri-Preziosi Ryan Architects places particular emphasis on detail design and sustainability and low-energy design. The practice employs BER Assessors.

4 Belgrave Road, Monkstown, Co Dublin. T: (01) 284 5774

PROJECT FACTS
Main Contractor: John Harley Shopfitting Ltd, SCR, Dublin 8
Windows: Produkt, Sandyford, Dublin 18. T: (01) 293 9015 www.produkt.ie
Specialist Joinery: Bective Woodcraft (John Hegarty), Belturbet, Co Cavan T: (049) 952 9897
Cable Lighting: Mizar System by National Lighting, Dublin. T: (01) 516 3030
Light Fittings: Wever and Ducre – ECI Lighting, Dublin, Cork and Belfast
Radiators: Runtal RX and Conector by Versatile, Navan, Co Meath. T: (046) 902 3000

GROUND FLOOR PLAN
1. KITCHEN
2. DINING
3. LIVING
4. STUDY
5. SITTING ROOM
6. HALL/LANDING
7. WC/BATHROOM
8. UTILITY
9. STORAGE
10. GARDEN
11. BEDROOM
This bright Belfast home was designed to accommodate a growing family as well as regular visitors, writes Emma Cullinan.

Architect Kieran McGonigle, a partner in Belfast architects Twenty two over seven, never planned to design and build his own home but when he was house hunting for his growing family he couldn’t find anything that suited in the area to the south-east of Belfast city that he lived in and liked.

Then he and his wife Rachel found a site for sale in a back garden and, despite its limitations, knew that here they could build a house that would suit them and those in their extended family, including a wheelchair user.

The new house is behind the existing Victorian house (which faces a main road) and, to maintain privacy, McGonigle designed his home to be sideways onto the house in front of it. This means that you first arrive at one end of the house, with its pitched roof and white wall punctuated with offset, upscaled, low and high windows which indicate that thought has gone into the design, personal needs have been addressed and convention has been tampered with.

A passageway to the left of this gable end leads to the mighty front door. The ground floor of this house has been split into a family side and formal end, all reached along a wide, tall corridor that runs perpendicular to the front door.

The house is one room deep and has its sparsely windowed back to the north, against weather and a neighbouring terrace of Victorian houses, while the rooms open out to the south to embrace any sun and a strip of wasteland (which McGonigle plans to turn into a woodland with the agreement of the school that owns it).

The pivot between family and formal is, quite appropriately, a flexi-space which is usually a study but turns into a bedroom when their guest in a wheelchair visits (with wide doors and generous halls allowing for the delivery of a hospital bed).

The formal sitting room, with wide oak floors, inbuilt, low-lying shelving/seating made from local Mourne granite, is at the opposite end of the long house to the diningroom/kitchen and playroom which sits out in the garden.

All of the ground floor rooms spill onto the long, thin garden which is a series of separate courtyard spaces, defined by planting, overhanging structures and semi-walls, with the formal area sitting beside the formal room and the dining area outside the kitchen.

The house is filled with such augmentations of standard design: where there could have been one long outdoor space, there is a series; and where the dark-stained hardwood framing the glass walls could have been plain fat planes, they are stepped with the uprights expressed, to look like supporting columns and offering a nod to the work of Dutch architect Gerrit Rietveld.

Other creative details include having the playroom offset at the end of the long house where it partly sits in the lawned garden to the far end of the house, a concrete pergola extends beyond this.

There is a neat – but chic – kitchen; and deep window reveals of 40cm in the 56cm thick gables are designed to recall traditional Irish cottages. These cleverly restrict diagonal views into the main bedroom at the back of the house – only revealing a reveal rather than a bedroom wall.

Neighbours are in a row of beautiful period redbricks sitting to one side, with regimented chimneys marching into the distance (and a hole in the hedge allows neighbouring children to visit each other).

Below the bedroom window is a flat roof in standing-seam lead, whose seams are wider and more rounded than standard: “When you have a craftsman on the building team – as we did – you should use them,” says McGonigle, who visited the site about three times a week, and completed the 235m² (2,500sq ft) house on a strict budget – of £185,000 (€235,000).

The main roof is in slate, and those two roof materials express this house’s combination of vernacular and new. Having slotted in between period houses, this home represents a polite new neighbour whose form fits in with local customs and yet which hides a creative and open soul.
ARCHITECT
Twenty two over seven

Twenty two over seven is a Belfast-based practice that was founded in 1990 by Aidan McGrath and Doug Elliott. Kieran McConigle joined the practice in 1993 and became a director in 2000. Twenty two over seven are enthusiastic proponents of modernism, much of it informed by vernacular architectural forms. The contemporary work of the practice is also influenced by considerable experience of the restoration and re-use of historic buildings, bringing to the design process a sensitivity to context and materiality, and an understanding of the central role of proportion. The practice takes a rigorous and analytical approach to function and planning, and applies a process of refinement to every detail.

The directors have extensive experience of a wide range of building projects and types, for both public and private clients. The work of the practice has been recognised with numerous awards, including four RIBA awards and the Liam McCormick Prize in 2008.

The Ormeau Baths, Belfast. www.twentytwooverseven.co.uk

PROJECT FACTS
Contractor: Sandark Construction, Bangor. T: (0044) 2892 203364
Plumbing and heating: Joe Hunter. T: (0044) 7711 145656
Electrical subcontractor: Meadows Electrical Randalstown. T: (048) 9447 3092
Structural engineer: Ivor Armstrong Associates, Belfast. T: (048) 7907 1972
General building materials: JP Corry, Belfast. T: (048) 9024 1661
Slate roof: Penrose Roofing, Carrickfergus. T: (048) 9335 1650

Right: The southern edge of the house faces on to the long garden divided into a series of distinct spaces.
Back to nature

Now that times are tight people are turning to their gardens as an escape from stress and also to produce food. Lucy Taylor asks three garden experts about current trends

THE RECYCLED GARDEN

C o l o u r i s i n v o g u e this summer as people want their spirits lifted from the doom and gloom that is about, says Calm Doyle of Doylescapes. “Growing fruit and veg organically is a buzz item at the moment,” he says, “and this goes hand-in-hand with sustainable gardening practice such as organic composting and cutting out the use of chemicals. People are turning to gardening for relaxation and stress relief.”

Due to budget constraints many people are recycling materials such as timber and old stone to build benches, border edging, low walls, random pathways and so on, says Doyle.

“We recently worked on two private gardens where we reused all of the planting in the gardens, all of the timber fencing and all of the paving. This cut down the costs to the client by about 40 per cent and made the completed gardens look as if they had been there for a long time.

“The tough times are likely to last some time. You have to diversify and change the direction of business in order to sustain revenue and grow. We recently opened a Polish office and relocated a member of staff there who is from Poland. He is now bringing in business from eastern and central Europe.”

What ideas can Doyle suggest that are affordable for people on a budget? “Try to be realistic with your budget, give your designer an idea of the items you want and the price range or budget you have. I often get clients who won’t disclose their budget and get a shock when they see the quotations for the work. The aim of the landscape designer is to work with them to suit their budgets. It is also important, when a client wants to do some of the work themselves, that they should say so at the beginning of the garden design process.”

Doylescapes had a medium-sized show garden at Bloom this year called Urban Native. Its design created an outdoor space in which you could relax and enjoy an oasis of simple materials and planting within the confines of a city or urban garden or a small office or commercial garden.

GARDEN ADVENTURES

“People are getting more adventurous in achieving greater use of garden space, hence the increased interest in summer houses, lighting and grow-your-own fruit and vegetables,” says garden designer Owen Chubb whose core client base is premium private residential. He noticed distinctive garden trends coming through for summer 2009. “Increasingly clients are selecting quality products with design attributes: natural stone paving and mature specimen planting are featuring strongly,” says Chubb who runs Owen Chubb Garden Landscapes. “There is a growing interest in garden layouts that are more open and less fussy. Plant heights and planting spaces continue to decline, reflecting the continued demand for low-maintenance solutions.

“Demand for distinctive forms in garden furniture, sculpture and stainless steel water features continues to grow. Popular specimen plants and trees are olive, Chamerops and Trachycarpus as well as smaller traditional trees for subtle screening. In townhouse gardens and apartments, we have seen interest in planters with built-in irrigation,” says Chubb, who was at Bloom for the third year running, selling his Titan stainless steel water features, figurative bronze garden sculptures from Belgium, garden swing seats and classic benches as well as Victorian summer houses.

He says that certain sectors of the market are experiencing lower sales. “We continue to enjoy good demand for our design and installation services, but remain alert and responsive to any market changes.”

Does Chubb perceive a new trend in garden improvements as an alternative to moving house? “There is anecdotal evidence that people are deciding not to move but to make improvements to their current house and garden. A more unusual trend is an increased interest from younger people in investing in their gardens.”

THE OBAMA EFFECT

Garden enthusiasts flocked to Bloom 2009 over the June bank holiday weekend in the Phoenix Park. The central theme for this year’s event was Grow Your Own.

“This year, some show gardens were constructed on limited budgets as many visitors want a beautiful garden but are likely to have less disposable income to achieve it,” says Gary Graham, Bloom Project Manager.

“In times of economic uncertainty the garden’s role increases in importance. We need a safe haven, a place to unwind and de-stress, to gather with friends and family, to grow food to eat and plants and flowers to remind us of the beauty of nature. Some of our gardens were designed to show what can be achieved when a professional designer is engaged, often with the garden owner getting ‘dug in’ and carrying out the planting and unskilled labour themselves.”

Bord Bia, sponsors of Bloom, built a replica of First Lady Michelle Obama’s Whitehouse Garden to promote the importance of healthy eating and to educate visitors on planting, harvesting and cooking your own food.

Bloom 2009 included 25 show gardens from Ireland’s top horticultural talent complemented by a floral pavilion. “There is growing recognition that plants and gardens need time to mature. Gardens can be designed and built in phases, which is easier on the pocket and allows more time to ‘finesse’ and improve on one’s initial ideas,” says Graham.

...
By getting the design right, you can lower your new home’s energy bill for free, says Owen Lewis, chief executive of SEI (Sustainable Energy Ireland).

“Things like siting, shelter, orientation and planning will give you, for no cost and a bit of thought, infinite rates of return and that underlines the importance of skilled design,” says Lewis.

By siting he means placing your home well – for example not on the top of a windy hill or in a shadowy hollow. Orientation is also about facing various rooms in your home, to ensure that they make the most of the weather, be that facing the sun or having their back to the wind.

“For instance, it is lovely to have a kitchen or breakfast room that gets the morning sun while the living room may face the west for evening use. Your service spaces, bathroom and circulation areas, such as stairs, can be put towards the north to insulate the building. That way you get a layout which naturally cuts heating costs by getting the sun to heat the building.

“Each individual site will have its own challenges, in terms of views and neighbouring buildings, which will add further layers to the design challenge,” says Lewis.

Trees can be used to cut down the prevailing winds but you need to be careful not to block out the sun: designers have learned how to use deciduous trees whose leaves will give shade in summer while bare branches in the winter will let the sun through. “Simple and well-tried things like that come through the understanding of daily and seasonal changes and how buildings respond to those changes,” says Lewis.

Other seasonal responses include having shading, such as shutters and awnings, that are positioned to take account of the sun’s high angle in summer and low angle in winter.

Another extremely effective way of cutting energy costs – although this will need paying for – is insulation. “You need to have the envelope of the building as well-made as possible,” says Lewis. “You need serious amounts of insulation.”

It is crucial, he says, that there are no gaps that will bring cold air gushing in or which will send warm air out: heat can either escape through holes or across thermal bridges (this is where a material that conducts heat, such as a metal tie, runs through insulation). “Problems arise in the openings [such as doors and windows],” says Lewis.
windows] or where you connect, say, the floor at the first floor level or at the eaves,” says Lewis. “You have to be careful that you don’t make a ‘bridge’ which acts as a conduit for heat to leak out.

“The quality of construction is very important when putting in insulation as you are trying to make sure that the envelope is well sealed and there are no bad joints between, say, the window and wall,” says Lewis.

Insulation can run in walls, roofs and even floors. In walls it can be put into cavity walls (although many homes in Ireland are built with hollow blocks making them difficult to retrofit in this way) or they can be insulated internally or externally.

As well as requiring good insulation, new standards will also stipulate that buildings be better sealed and so suffer from less heat loss, “which will mean that mechanical ventilation with heat recovery will be required”, says Lewis, describing systems where ventilation is controlled mechanically and any heat engendered in the house (such as from cookers or washing machines) is harnessed and reused.

For those concerned about using a mechanical system at a time when we are trying to cut down our use of energy, Lewis says, “They are wonderfully efficient and do not use too much electricity.” There are also other ways of ventilating homes without mechanical systems.

Extracting heat will also prevent condensation problems, which can be achieved by “taking out water vapour at source, for instance with an extractor in the kitchen or even just by opening a bathroom window after a shower. If you don’t tackle the issue at source condensation will spread through the house to the coldest room.

“People may wonder why they have mould growth on their spare room ceiling, but the problem could be that it is coming from the bathroom, which is why it is best to extract vapour at source,” says Lewis.

Additions such as solar panels need to be considered carefully, says Lewis, who explains that while it would take a considerable number of solar panels to heat both your home and hot water, a small area of solar collectors could be used to heat your water, with an energy-efficient boiler heating the home.

“Water heating demand stays constant,” he says, pointing out that such systems can be bought with the help of a grant under one of the SEI’s schemes (see panel).

He also sees PV (photovoltaic cells), which use the sun’s energy to make electricity, becoming a more feasible option as they become cheaper (although they are still very expensive).

And, while he says that wind turbines are feasible in the countryside in certain cases, he doesn’t really advise them in cities.

You need to apply for SEI grants before you carry out the work and use one of the professionals registered on the SEI’s website: “We are using registered people to see that this is done properly. A lot of stuff was done in boom conditions that was not always to the best of standards; that has to stop,” says Lewis.

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**Home Energy Saving scheme grants**

Grant approval must be in place before any purchase of materials or commencement of measures undertaken. Grants are paid after the measures are completed and the contractor has been paid by the homeowner.

**Greener Homes scheme**

- Solar Thermal Space and or Hot water heating (Evacuated Tube): €100 per m² (to max.6 m²)
- Solar Thermal Space and or Hot water heating (Flat Plate): €250 per m² (to max.6 m²)
- Heat Pump - Horizontal ground collector: €2,500
- Heat Pump - Vertical ground collector: €2,500
- Heat Pump - Water (well) to water: €2,500
- Heat Pump - Air source: €2,000
- Wood Chip/Pellet Stove: €800
- Biomass / Wood pellet Stove with integral boiler: €1,400
- Wood Chip/Pellet Boiler: €2,300
- Wood Gasification Boiler: €2,000

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Top left This house by ABK Architects has a green roof and plenty of glass for natural light and solar gain Top Centre The terrace of a house built by Hanse Haus Above The interior of a well-insulated Griffner house – allowing in lots of sun and natural light – designed by Irish architects Wan Morehead Right Griffner Haus interior
Dave Egan of Node Architects looks at the positives involved in extending your home

Time to extend

Dave Egan of Node Architects looks at the positives involved in extending your home

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do the bubble has burst. The tiger is dead, or at least has gone into hibernation for a couple of years and, it seems, we are all heading for cover with him. Shares have taken a hammering and property is no longer the banker that it once was so we have buried our heads in the sands of Ireland’s economy hoping to see a sleeping beast below and not a rotting corpse.

But not everyone sees things this way. More and more people are seeing this as the perfect time to invest in something a little closer to home; in fact, they are investing in the home itself.

As I write, architects seeking prices for building work are reporting tender returns of up to 25 percent below budget cost and, for the first time in years, they are experiencing no difficulties in finding building contractors willing to tender. These are the perfect conditions in which we can add to that long-term investment called the family home. Most people who consider extending their home see the negatives first. Will they get planning permission? Is there really potential to extend? What about the disruption? What about the cost? Often those who go ahead do so only because their need outweighs their fears, however many of them are surprised that the process turns out to be a lot less painful than they had anticipated.

If you use an architect, or an architect-led design team if required, many of these questions can be answered in a more positive tone than you might expect. The planning process, for instance, can be protracted with decisions on appeal often extending the 12-week planning period by a further 18 to 36 weeks with the appeals board however in domestic situations appellants are almost universally neighbours who can be involved in discussions before even going for planning permission and that will minimise the likelihood of an appeal.

It is worth keeping in mind too that the planning authority will by default have a positive disposition towards domestic extensions because it is in the interests of good planning that people stay put and build communities rather than move on when they need more space. That is of course if you need planning permission in the first place.

In 2000 the planning regulations were relaxed to reduce the burden on planning authorities by expanding the criteria for exemption to include large proportion of small domestic extensions. Now, an extension to the rear of a domestic house that hasn’t already been extended is exempt if it is 40 sq.m. or less (it used to be 23 sq.m. or less) and with certain constraints this can be arranged over two floors. When you consider that before the introduction of the DOE standards last year the minimum size for a one-bedroom apartment in some county councils was 38 sq.m. you begin to realise how significant an area this is to construct with no statutory process, no delay and no capital contributions. The conversion of a garage or shed to the side or rear of a house is also exempt.

The question of potential to extend can be answered almost universally with a positive. In 14 years of professional practice I have never come across a property that could not be extended. We recently secured permission for a client to extend a tiny, one-bed city centre cottage that fronted straight onto the street and had no more than 8 sq.m. of open space to the rear and more recently we had an entirely positive meeting with Dublin City Council planning authority concerning an extension to the side of a small end of terrace dwelling in spite of the fact that the extension breaks the building line of the street perpendicular to it. As noted above, in general the planning authority wants you to stay put.

But what about the disruption? Any development causes disruption and if you are going to extend the best you can do is plan to minimise the effect of that disruption on you and your family. In truth, a building site is no place for a person to live and we always advise our clients to move out for the duration of the works. That duration can be anything from three to 12 months and, if you don’t have understanding relatives with lots of spare bedrooms, you should budget for renting for the duration of the construction period. These days the rent for a three bedroom apartment in Dublin is between €1,100 and €2,500 per month with the rate for houses somewhat higher and, given that it facilitates a quicker, less expensive build and the protection of your sanity, in the overall context of the job this is money well spent.

Under the RIAI contract you can also protect yourself against additional rent, and indeed any other costs caused by the builder not meeting his programme. The “liquidated ascertained damages” clause in the contract forces the builder to cover any expense caused by delays so long as it is a genuine cost to you (evaluated before construction and written into the contract) and it is genuinely his delay.

All of which brings us neatly to the issue of cost. In our experience the cost of a domestic extension can vary widely depending on the specification, complexity, location and size of the project so there’s no point in applying a guide price per square meter; however, after a quick walk around and a discussion regarding your requirements an architect should be able to give you a ballpark construction figure and advise on planning fees, capital contributions and professional fees.

The money spent on a well designed refurbishment and extension to a home should increase the value of that home by an equivalent amount but you should consider a domestic extension as an investment in your quality of life as much as a financial investment in your home. When you plan your extension it is the perfect time to reconsider the everyday things that affect your quality of life. Little things like laundry shoots, flatscreen TVs, hardwood floors, sound, under-sink waste disposal units and central vacuuming systems can make our lives that little bit easier and more significant choices like using solar panels for heating your water, choosing airtight construction with high levels of insulation, insulating your existing walls and roof and replacing existing windows and doors can significantly reduce your running costs while improving everyone’s lives in the long run by minimising your impact on the environment.

In many ways extending can be much more environmentally friendly than moving to a larger house. Usually trading up means moving further out thus increasing carbon emissions caused by travelling and the cost of trading up also means that there is no money left to adequately insulate the larger property or invest in sustainable technologies for reducing running costs and emissions.

It is true that sustainable living starts in the home and next time you find that you need more space, before deciding to relocate, consider reusing and recycling your home itself and you should be able to reduce your energy consumption in the process.
The A-Z of Going Green

Air Tightness
Air tightness helps prevent warm air escaping and cold air entering your home. Draught proofing improves air tightness by filling in gaps. Further information from the Air Tightness Testing and Measurement Association www.atma.org

A-Rated Appliances
All new home appliances are A-G rated the higher the rating the more energy efficient the appliance.

BREEAM Ireland
BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) is a well-established, widely used environmental assessment method for buildings which will assess and describe a building’s environmental performance. More information from www.breireland.ie

Boilers
Modern boilers are required by law to be very efficient. If you have an older boiler you may find it is not efficiently heating your home and water. A boiler will typically last for 15 years so find out when yours might need replacing and how much a more efficient one would cost (grants are available from SEI).

Climate Change
The reason why we need to reduce our CO₂ emissions.

Curtains
When drawn closed at night they help contain heat the thicker the fabric the more effective they are.

Drying Your Washing
Is there a space in your home to dry washing? Tumble dryers use huge amounts of electricity.

Durability
Durable materials used in your home save you money on replacements and maintenance. When buying your home ask what the expected lifespan is of the roofing, windows, flooring, external surfaces and whether any materials are under warranty.

Energy Ratings
A Building Energy Rating (BER) is similar to the energy label for a household electrical appliances. The label has a scale of A-G, with A-rated homes being the most energy efficient and G being the least efficient. A BER certificate is compulsory for all homes being sold or rented. If you are buying or renting a new house or apartment now, you are entitled to a BER so do ask the seller/landlord or the agent for it. All new homes (even when not for sale) must have a BER certificate before they are occupied. More information from www.sei.ie

Renewable Energy
Renewable energy comes from sources which can be replenished such as the sun and wood/trees. Renewable energy can be generated at home, reducing the amount of energy required from fossil fuels. These might include solar panels, biomass boilers or wind turbines. Grants for these are available from the SEI. More information from Solar Energy Ireland at www.solarireland.wordpress.com, the Irish Wind Energy Association at www.iwea.com and the Irish Bioenergy Association www.ibrea.org

Future
The climate is changing. Will your property be comfortable inside during periods of extreme warmth and/or cold? Can rooms be easily ventilated and are they well insulated? Is the property in a low flood risk area?

Green Roofs and Walls
Green roofs are covered with soil and vegetation and provide a habitat for wildlife. They also reduce flood risk by absorbing rain. More information from the International Green Roof Association at www.igra-world.com

Healthy Living
Part of living a sustainable lifestyle is about feeling good. Your home and the area around it can make a big difference to your health, comfort and well-being. Does the property get lots of natural daylight? How is fresh air brought into the home and can ventilation be controlled? Does the property have a recreational outdoor space nearby? Are there allotments or community gardens nearby? Is there a farmer’s market or box delivery service selling locally produced organic food?

Insulation
One of the easiest and most cost effective ways to improve your home’s energy efficiency is to ensure it is adequately insulated to keep out the cold and reduce the need for heating.

Journeys
By walking, riding a bike or using public transport you can improve your health, the environment and save money. Choosing a home that gives you good access to public transport and reduces your need to travel is one of the most significant steps you can take towards a more sustainable lifestyle.

Kitchen
Only boil as much water as you need. Make sure you de-scale your kettle so it boils more quickly. Defrost your freezer regularly to make it run more efficiently. Defrost your food in the fridge overnight instead of cooking from frozen which takes longer. Keep the glass of your oven door clean so you can easily see whether food is ready without having to open the oven door, which loses heat. Use the right size pan on the right size hob and put a lid on your pans when you’re cooking to retain the heat. Chop vegetables into smaller pieces, so they will cook more quickly.

Local Community
Buy locally produced items, materials and services, whenever possible. This way you will help your local community become more sustainable and reduce the need for transport.

Managing your Energy
Use Smart meters installed in the home show you exactly what you are spending on energy and helps you make informed decisions about how to save money. Thermostatic controls allow you to control the heating in each room – turning the heating down or off in rooms you are not using.

Natural Non Toxic
Natural materials such as lime plaster and organic paints are better for our health as they are not made from toxic materials.

One Planet
Living One Planet Living is a global initiative based on 10 principles of sustainability developed by BioRegional and WWF. If everyone in the world lived like an average European, we’d need three planets to live on – or five if we all lived like an average North American! www.oneplanetliving.org

Passivhaus
The term ‘passivhaus’ refers to highly insulated, airtight houses which have excellent comfort conditions in both winter and summer. These principles can be applied not only to the residential sector, as the name suggests, but also to the commercial, industrial and public buildings. BRE, in partnership with the passivhaus Institut in Darmstadt, can provide a complete passivhaus design advice service and can tap into a wealth of A-Z expertise.
of design experience from Europe.

Sustainable building materials have a low environmental impact and can be recycled or reused at the end of their life, reducing waste.

Q: Can you cite an example of a sustainable building project?
A: The Watermint apartment scheme in Dublin by DMOD Architects, which was made from sustainably sourced teak at the Watermint scheme in Dublin.

RECYCLING

Over 80 per cent of our waste can be recycled or reused and much of it didn’t need to be created in the first place. By recycling, less new materials need to be extracted or harvested. It will also cut down on the waste buried in the ground in landfill sites where it produces greenhouse gases.

SWITCH IT OFF

If you’re not using it, switch it off and don’t leave it on standby. This is the quickest, easiest and cheapest way to save money and energy.

TIMBER

Certified timber is a highly sustainable building material, as it is renewable and almost carbon neutral. More information from the Forest Stewardship Council at www.fsc.org

THERMOSTAT

Make sure your water isn’t too hot; no need for it to be higher than 60oC.

UTILITIES

Find a green energy supplier so you know your energy is from sustainable sources.

VEGETABLES

Have a least one meat-free meal a week. The UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation estimates that meat production accounts for nearly a fifth of global greenhouse gas emissions. These are generated during the production of animal feeds, for example, while ruminants, particularly cows, emit methane, which is 23 times more damaging as a global warming agent than carbon dioxide. Compassion in World Farming has calculated that if an average household halved its meat consumption that would cut emissions more than if their car use was cut in half.

WATER AND WASTE

Taps with aerators or spray nozzles and showers designed for low flow can use around 30 per cent less water to achieve the same effect as conventional showers and taps. Flow restrictions and cheap devices fitted onto pipe work stop more water than necessary flowing.

USING HALF A FLUSH when you don’t need a full one saves water. Ask what size the cistern is and whether a water-saving device such as a Save a Flush or Hippo has been fitted. Think about having a water butt or rainwater recycling system and a grey water recycling system (this treats water from baths, showers and basins and reuses it for toilet flushing). More information from the Environment Protection Agency Ireland at www.epa.ie

ZERO TOLERANCE ON WASTE!

Information is available from many organisations including, on the built environment, BRE. Contact Dr Eanna Nolan, BRE Ireland, Enterprise Acceleration Centre, Limerick Institute of Technology, Molylish Park, Limerick. T: (061) 448 509, www.breireland.ie

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McEvoy at Elm Park. Page 79 Kitchen made from both sustainably sourced and recycled wood at the Watermint scheme in Dublin by DMOD Architects, Bath made from sustainably sourced wood at the Watermint apartment scheme in Dublin by DMOD Architects

Above

Low energy Viking fridge from Drumms in Dublin 12

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Building, Extending or Renovating?
Bad Ground?
Difficult Access?
Big Problem?

NO PROBLEM!!
The perfect recipe

As the kitchen is the hub of any modern home you need to get it right first time. Ailbhe Moloney asks Rossa Tormey of Tormey Hogan Architects how to design a kitchen that is economical, eco-friendly and easy to use.

The kitchen should be considered as a piece of fine joinery, says Tormey: “It should look good from all sides including the back and gable end, allowing the kitchen to be incorporated into an open-plan living/dining room in the heart of the home, rather than banished into a separate room.”

The best kitchens work with a large utility room “where all rarely used appliances, deft, freezers and louder appliances, such as washing machines, can be closed away, freeing up the need for filling all the over-counter space with presses, and de-clutters your counter tops giving you more room to work”.

For smaller kitchens, where a utility room is not available, he advises keeping the design simple with straight lines, pared handles and flush doors and using pale colours for units and a mirror as a splash back.

Tormey believes the working triangle between the fridge, sink and cooker is still essential to good kitchen design and usability. “The total length of the three sides of the triangle should be between 3.6m and 6.6m and circulation through the triangle should be avoided. The sink and cooker should be no more than 1.8m apart.”

He advocates the use of island units for casual dining but cautions that they “should be at least 900mm deep to allow you to get your feet under the counter to eat and to tidy stools away when you are not using them”.

Good lighting is essential, especially over countertops, as is a good extractor fan. Tormey advises checking that materials used are from managed sources, for example; timber that carries the FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) mark comes from managed woodlands. For the kitchen floor “there are some great recycled rubbers available such as Dainaturel from Dalsouple rubber (www.dalsouple.com)”.

Tormey suggests having three waste bins in a pull-out unit under your sink to allow easy separation of waste for recycling. Controversial for some, but small wormeries are catching on for converting waste to compost: “Good ones are in sealed units, don’t smell and can be incorporated into the size of a kitchen unit,” says Tormey (see www.wormry.ie).

You should be ruthless with dated appliances and avoid wasting money on expensive kitchen gimmicks as they take up valuable storage space, says Tormey, who sensibly asks, “When was the last time you used that Soda Stream?”

www.tormeyhoganarchitects.ie

Above: Flush painted kitchen with oak island, €17,000; Wabi-Sabi Ltd, 7 Donore Road, Dublin 6, www.wabisabi.ie

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www.tormeyhoganarchitects.ie

From top to bottom: • Flush painted kitchen with 70mm thick stone worktops, €26,000; Wabi-Sabi Ltd, 7 Donore Road, Dublin 6, www.wabisabi.ie • SieMatic Concept 10, €19,000; Houseworks in Belfast, Dublin and Cork, www.houseworks.ie • Leicht from Bob Bushell Interiors, Dublin, from €16,000; www.bushellinteriors.com • The Statura is part of the Blanco range from Drumms, from €650; Drumms, Naas Road, Dublin, www.drumms.ie

www.tormeyhoganarchitects.ie
There are two main aspects to a stairs in a home: functionality and appearance. Yet people often just focus on functionality: getting up to bed, the bathroom and using the space underneath to store the vacuum cleaner. Stairs are sometimes thrown in on plans without much thought to the pitch, positioning, style or budget.

New trends see stairs becoming focal points in a home and are one of only a few features of your house that is used several times a day.

When designing a home or renovating, the stairs should get their fair share of attention and budget. This is not something that will change easily when you move in so a little forward thinking will go a long way. On www.signaturestairs.ie the ‘Planning a stairs’ section details the things you should weigh up before starting and some of the pitfalls that can be avoided at the early stages. In the ‘stairs anatomy’ section of the same site you can familiarise yourself with the terminology of stairs so you know what stair manufacturers are speaking about when you go to their showrooms.

The predominant use of glass in the balustrades gives stairs a distinctive look as well as bringing much more light into a room. It can open out a hall rather than close it off or darken it. While many feel it is a very contemporary feature, Signature Stairs says glass and stainless steel fit equally well in more traditional style homes too. Being able to see through your stairs or gallery area means that the other features of the home, such as picture windows, wall colours, book cases and so on, are not hidden or obstructed. Signature Stairs customises each stair to the home it is going into.

With the correct lighting a Signature Stairs can become an impressive feature at night by using coloured wall lights over the steps and floor lighting directed upwards under open-rise stairs.

Stairs can vary wildly in price depending on quality and what you are trying to achieve so it’s best to take a practical approach. If your stairs are hidden away and serve largely a functional purpose then you don’t have to spend a huge amount of money. If they are in the middle of your hall and are going to be viewed and used constantly then put some thought into them and allocate a bigger budget. Starting from about €10,500 Signature Stairs are aimed predominately at homeowners who want to make a statement.
Creative Metals

Creative Metals provides custom metal fabrication and design for interiors and exteriors. Providing services such as custom staircases, custom furniture and custom railings, it delivers timeless designs in any metal including stainless steel, steel, cast-iron, copper and brass. Creative Metals began trading in 2000 and was started by Niall Beach who began his design career in carpentry in 1988. Creative Metals’ first major project came when Niall was contracted to design and build a custom staircase and copper building façade for a major Dublin company.

Creative Metals has since expanded its service and provides many other services including custom metal furniture design and even shop-front design. They work in virtually any material including any type of metal, glass, stone, wood and even plastics to deliver the perfect design for any requirement. Niall has always enjoyed challenging projects, which recently drove him to design a “heli-coil” staircase. The staircase actually holds itself up without any additional support. Creative Metals designs and fabricates stairways, balustrades and balcony railings for all sorts of commercial or domestic projects. Any shape, size and design using any materials can be accommodated and the company can even integrate wood, stone and glass elements.

Stairs and Co

Stairs and Co (pictured below), which is run by Niall Moriarty who has been in the construction sector for three decades and remembers exhibiting at the first Plan Expo 25 years ago, sells a number of stair ranges including the impressive Marretti range, from Italy. The company designs and makes stairs in its Tuscany base which it set up 40 years ago.

The stairs are made in materials such as timber, glass and steel and the detailing is impressive. The company is family run and that family includes someone on the production side and someone in design so design solutions can be brought to any issues in production.

“Marretti has learned how to turn rock into crystal, to make steel lightweight, and all supports superfluous,” says the company which has registered its designs and patented its exclusive anchoring systems.

 Some of the glass stairs are so transparent that you almost wouldn’t know they were there, says Moriarty, who has just put in stairs for a client in Dublin who says they almost can’t see the steps, which is just thing they were looking for in their new glassy extension.

“The trend is that staircases are becoming more and more of a standalone feature just like up-market kitchens,” says Moriarty.

www.stairsandco.ie

Sustainable design

My first introduction to Damien Murtagh Architects was with a view to designing a heating solution for what is now an architectural masterpiece with a very small carbon footprint”, says Gerard Duffy of Eurotech Group. “Damien made it very clear from the outset that he wanted a house which allowed nature in, both in light and heat with absolutely no reliance on burning fossil fuels.”

The design focused on creating a heating system using geothermal and solar air heating for the entire house including hot water and the swimming pool.

By integrating the latest technology OVI (Ochsner Vapour Injection) and EET (Electronic Expansion Technology) it was possible to generate 65°C flow with only geothermal energy. Kingspan Solar Panels of 1254 m was also included from an A frame system on the flat roof and full heat recovery ventilation from the Kingspan system. The intelligent Eurosmart Control System co-ordinates all energy sources and provides room by room control including ensuites from a single keypad with simple operation and features.

Developments at Shane Holland Design Workshops

Shane Holland Design created and installed the largest diameter chandelier in Ireland measuring 3.3 metres at Portlaoise Church in November 2008. Shane Holland Design sees constant possibilities in the energy efficient lighting products and has actively promoted this via www.shanehollanddesign.com
Sunparadise are Switzerland's leading bespoke Aluminium glazing company. Sunparadise's unique portfolio has been designed and engineered to rigorous Swiss quality standards whilst maintaining a contemporary look and feel.

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Large fixed panels above this folding door create a contemporary look.
Glenvale Kitchens win national industry awards

Glenvale Kitchens, who are based in the small border town of Keedy, have won the National KBB Industry Awards. It was a design created by Darren Morgan, one of the Glenvale team, that secured Glenvale Kitchens national recognition and won Darren the prestigious title of “Designer of the Year 2003.”

The KBB awards are open to interior designers, architects and independent kitchen and bathroom retailers from all across the UK and Ireland and attracts the leading names in the kitchen and bathroom industry.

For the first time in the 15 year history of the awards all of the design category finalists travelled to the Royal Institute of British Architects in London so that they could present their design in person to a judging panel of industry experts. The judges said of Darren’s winning design: “This kitchen represents such great value for money. It’s very functional and Darren has come up with some really good solutions to a challenging space. It’s a technically excellent job and is very client specific. Given the space and the budget he’s maximized everything fantastically!”

All the finalists attended the black tie award ceremony on 11th May at ExCeL in London. Marcus Briggstocke, comedian and host for the evening, presented the award to Darren, who said, “Every once in a while something special happens and winning the KBB Review awards is one of those times. Winning this award is the highlight of my career to date and it is also a real embolishment for the entire Glenvale team. I may have created the initial concept and design but it was the entire team that made the design a reality for the client.”

Established 15 years ago as Glenvale Design, the company refocused itself three years ago and was re-launched as Glenvale Kitchens. They are now one of the leading kitchen design companies in Ireland.

Aidan McCooey, proprietor of Glenvale Kitchens, said: “We are all so proud of what we have achieved. I have believed in a while something special happens and it’s great to come out on top.”

Glenvale Kitchens have 18 kitchens on display in their showrooms, many of which are fully functional, and they include several examples of their own “Dynamically Different Range”. This is a range of individually designed and commissioned kitchen furniture by Glenvale.

Glenvale have also recently launched g-robes.com which coverts smart, contemporary bedroom and living room storage solutions. The range is designed at their studio in Keedy but is heavily influenced by Italian designers and many of the distinctive finishes have been commissioned for g-robes.com by a specialist facility in Italy.

Visit the Glenvale website www.glenvalegroup.com which also has a link though to the new g-robes.com website.
Good design often has a sense of fun behind it and that is what distinguishes kitchenware company Alessi which has just opened an outlet on the third floor of Brown Thomas, Dublin. The Italian company has employed illustrious designers to create pieces over the years — many combining sleek metal with bright plastic human and animal features — including Jasper Morrison, Philippe Starck, Marc Newson, Michael Graves, Aldo Rossi, Achille Castiglioni and Ettore Sottsass, the list goes on to become a who’s who of contemporary design.

An exhibition of European and English Baroque Architecture — covering buildings such as St Paul’s and Blenheim Palace — is running at the V&A in London until November 9th. The exhibition will cover the work of Sir Christopher Wren, Nicholas Hawksmoor, Sir John Vanbrugh, William Talman and James Gibbs, among others, and will look at how these 18th century architects took inspiration from Baroque buildings across Europe, largely from books and engravings because travel was difficult.

This year’s RIAI award winners and runners-up are now being exhibited at The Cow Shed in Farmleigh, Phoenix Park. The designs run from commercial projects to houses and give you the chance to see the latest in good home design.

www.ria.ie

www.vam.ac.uk
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KBB Industry Awards 2009
- Showroom Award Winner