

IRELAND'S HOMES INTERIORS & LIVING

IRELAND'S LARGEST SELLING MONTHLY INTERIORS AND LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE September 2010

46

pages of readers'
homes & kitchens

Dublin, Dundalk,
Wicklow,
Co. Armagh

Bathroom Focus

Expert advice & the
very latest products

Come Dine With Us

Create a glamorous
dining space

Sofa Selector

Take your pick from the best

Also:
**Cookery
Gardening
Travel**



€ 5.40



A Tall Order

When their rural idyll became a commuter belt, Con and Suzanne decided to embrace town life, lose a car and move to Ranelagh. After some searching and failed bids, both welcomed the challenge of a well located, but sadly neglected Victorian house. It was in six flats with no family kitchen, no family bathroom, no central water heating system and a very tired extension – it needed the works.





Con who grew up on a farm set a few grounds rules; he had to have a large shed for his tools, space and be within three miles of the city centre. Suzanne wanted to be near family, schools, and shops and to have a spacious living area for social gatherings and preferably somewhere to accommodate a collection of sentimental furniture. The house is three storeys but each level is split, stacked split level, so there is not the same flexibility of space as with the traditional configuration of interconnecting reception rooms - almost every room is on a different level. The somewhat quirky house was also interesting from a historical engineering view point as although faced with brick, it was constructed with mass concrete, a subject of Con's thesis in building conservation.

While letting the house in flats after some basic repair work, they engaged the services of building historian, Rob Goodbody and RIAI Architect, Katya Voronova who both had experience with old houses and together worked patiently as they took their time planning their future home. The big decision was whether or not to put the kitchen into the original space or in the new extension. At lower ground level there was the original kitchen, separate scullery and pokey, poorly constructed extension and the original dining room would have been directly above the kitchen. This area needed serious thought. The extension had to be replaced and a decent room at one level was needed. 'I wanted the kitchen to have independent access from the living/dining area, so



everyone wouldn't be colliding at one door in the busiest part of the house,' explains Suzanne.

So after much painstaking analysis and weighing up structural and conservation issues against flow and movement and cooking smells, they decided to put the kitchen in the bright new extension where servicing with gas, water, under floor heating, etc would be far less intrusive than digging up the original floor of the original unplumbed kitchen. The cooker could also be easily vented and away from the living areas. The utility fits snugly in a bank of cupboards in the original scullery and allows a passage directly to the kitchen from the hall. The kitchen continues from the 'scullery' in the form of a type of galley kitchen with a peninsula 'island'. The



original kitchen has been converted into a living area and a traditional style Herman wood pellet stove now sits comfortably where the range would have been all those decades ago. This is a cosy spot to sit and also doubles as a dining room for big events. From here, the clutter of the kitchen is not visible. In an effort to open up the house and interconnect the living spaces, Katya recommended making the original dining room above a mezzanine. This was partly implemented as only a smaller section of floor was removed and this provides a blast of daylight from the fully restored dramatic bay window above. A previous owner had raised the sill and wedged a 60s style asymmetrical picture window in place of a beautifully proportioned tri-partite sash window.





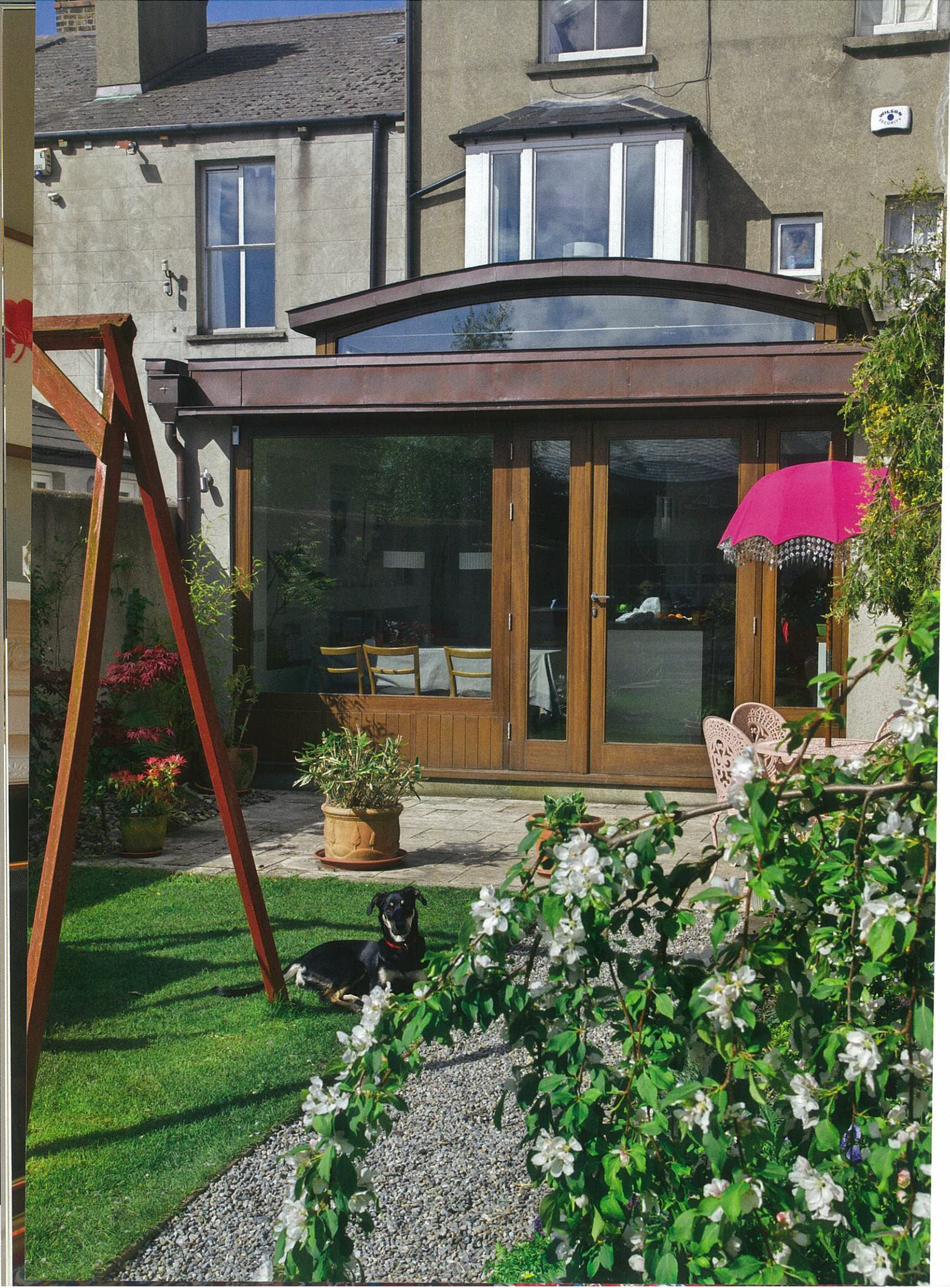
The extension is roughly square in plan and slightly narrower than the house and features a dramatic copper clad curved roof. The curve gives an elegant softness to otherwise simple lines. It also breaks up the vast dull rear elevation and elegantly bridges the house and garden. Internally, it is a dramatic light filled space with a particularly beautiful roof. The kitchen layout is extremely low key with below counter matt white drawers and just one shallow, glazed wall press. On the opposite wall, the clever use of void spaces provide lots of subtle storage and display areas without jarring with the simple lines of the interior. They both appreciate the evidence of crafted work such as can be seen in the exposed ribs and structural elements of the roof and the subtle joinery detailing. This is the perfect backdrop to old or new furniture or utensils- 'if it's well made and beautiful it just works'. The intricate Edwardian display cabinet (or inlaid mahogany half moon table) is just as at home as the industrial steel cooker. Although Suzanne would've liked to have used more of Katya's elegant joinery which extended into the garden as

well as the house. The use of mellow stained (Suzanne mixed a number of shades of the limited palette to achieve the right tone) teak in the windows and shelves together with walnut counters also softens the style.

The mezzanine/original dining room has been retained as a reception room above and is used as a study/TV area where the children hang out. Much of this room's character is derived from the old and somewhat battered but much loved roll-top desk. Suzanne managed to get a complementary art deco bookcase from Greene's antique shop and with her granny's old shell-backed suite a cosy relaxed study is complete. The deep red Persian rug and bright oak is mellowed by the use of Farrow and Ball's Hardwick white and hints of violet in the lampshades and painting. The void allows the stove below to heat this area and also allows semi-supervision of children and ease of communication. 'In our old house we always had the interconnecting doors open - so it's much the same - except it's a vertical interconnection and works very well for us!' explains Suzanne.









Suzanne firmly believes in supporting independent and local shops where possible. For example Lamps and Lighting and Sharon Creagh (both in Rathgar), Duff Tisdall, Stock, and occasionally Dunnes. For soft furnishings, she is big fan of Helen McAlinden's range (Con's cousin) available in No.6 Castlemarket in town and the house is scattered with Helens's Foxford designs. The new mohair range introduces bright bold colours into a not so bright bedroom and teamed with the vibrant Lisa Corti textile range has solved the dilemma of how to finish the bedroom.

Ornate plasterwork and fireplaces fairly much dictate the style and traditional furniture is much in evidence, but, with the use of blocks of colours, roman blinds, lighting and modern bathrooms the interior is firmly of today. A lot of big furniture is mainly second hand – from family clear-outs and auctions. 'Some we

painted, some we stripped and some were just right. We picked up a massive mahogany wardrobe for €200 to go with an old brass bed. We had to knock a wall through in our old house to get it to fit. But it's very at home here. Our daughter's girly, creamy pink wardrobe was my grandfather's smoky oak closet. And our son's press was formerly a granny's hat store!' In contrast to the old furniture, lighting is modern and simple. Lightshades throughout the house are mostly drum shaped, giving continuity, but are in various materials, textures and colours. 'Allowing for flair and avoiding a hotel look,' explains Suzanne. The height of the ceiling in the kitchen has been exploited to good effect with shades, again all straight edged, of varying heights and textures uses to break up the space at night and highlight different zones to dramatic effect. 🏠