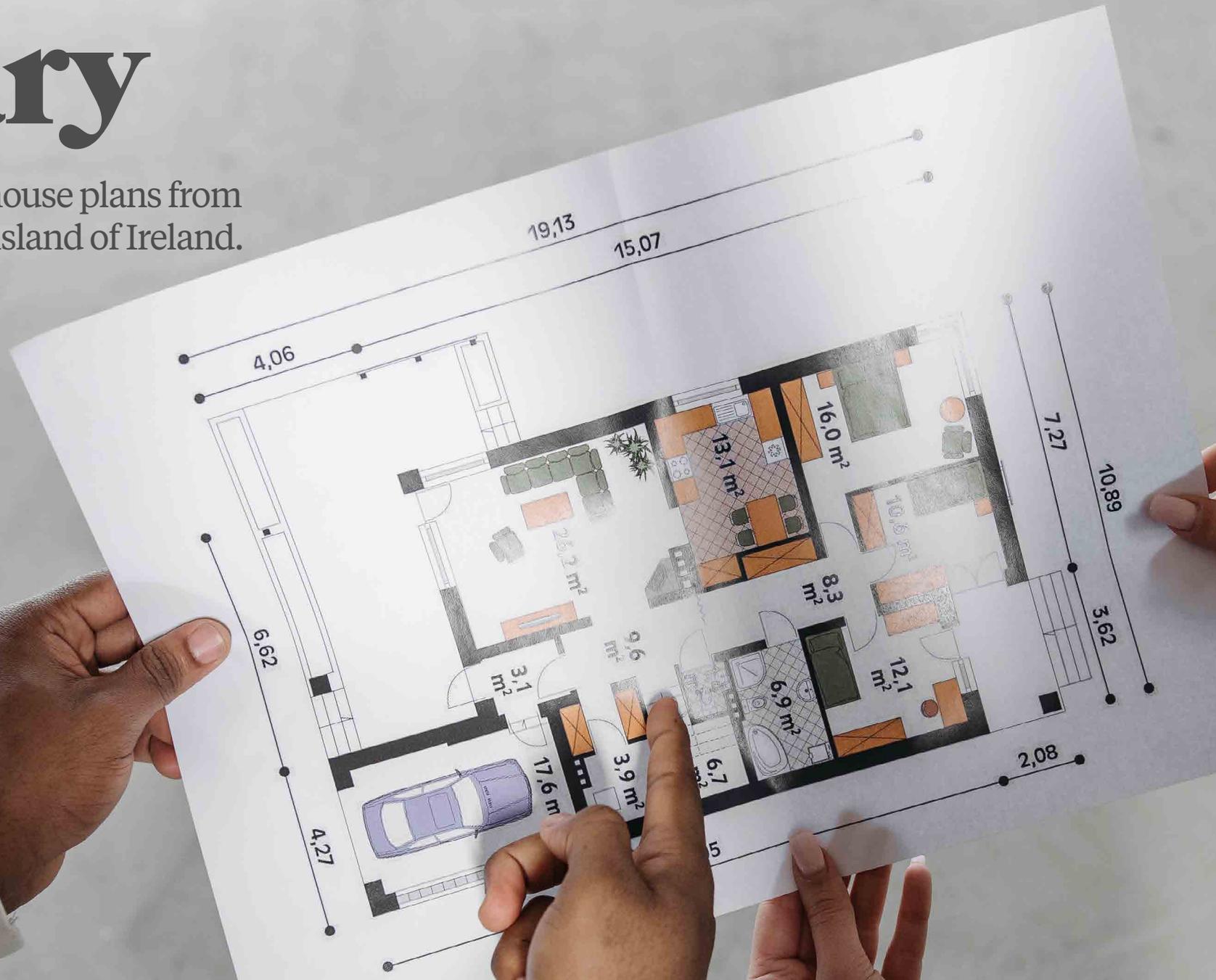


House Plans Library

Selfbuild.ie

We have compiled 128 house plans from houses built across the island of Ireland.



Contents



Astrid Madsen
Editor

Welcome to the House Plans Library, exclusively available on selfbuild.ie. We've brought together projects from across the island of Ireland to help you create your dream home. We have new builds, renovations and extension projects from the 32 counties, as featured in Selfbuild magazine.

Each project gets a page with floor plan and brief, along with a link to click through to read the full article. Enjoy!

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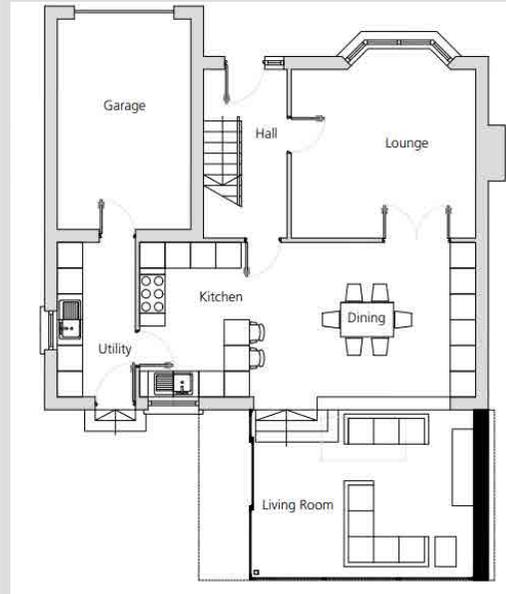
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Split level house in Co Fermanagh

How Alanna and James Connolly made the most of the sloping site they bought with planning approved.

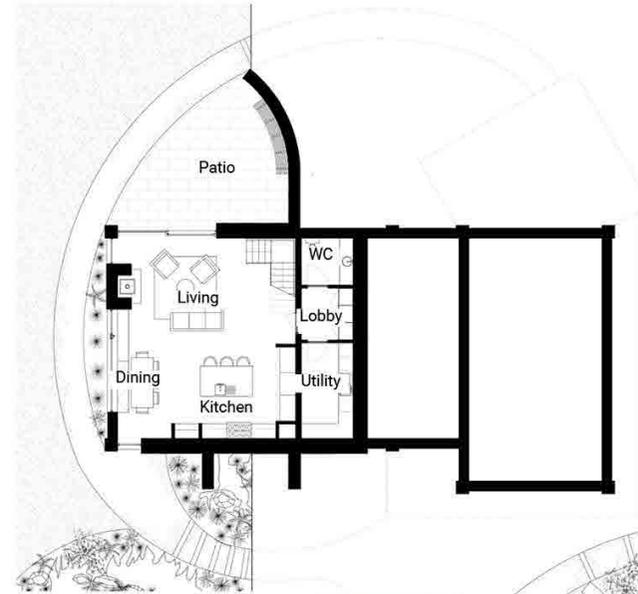
In this project we cover:

- Taking the original plans and transforming them to a three level house
- Changing the design with architectural input
- Planning process and what conditions were imposed
- How the living areas are organised across levels
- Kitchen and lighting design with tips
- Bathroom design and choice of sanitaryware including shower trays
- How they saved on floor finishes
- Thrifty interior design tips
- Budgeting tips and how they stayed on top of their budget
- Landscaping on a sloping site

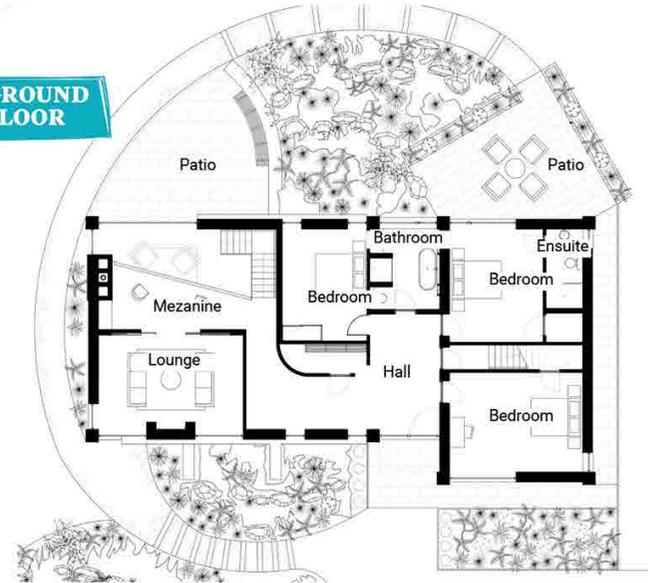
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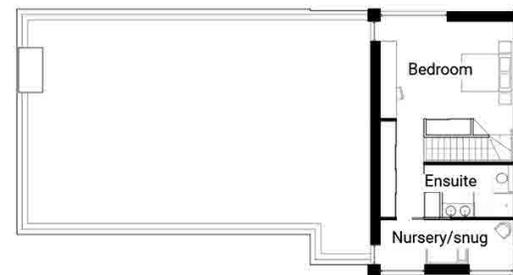
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GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



Architect
Donal McPhillips Architecture,
mcphillipsarchitecture.com

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Dublin laneway house

How Ronan and Laura Campbell built their house in Ronan's parents' laneway in Dublin.

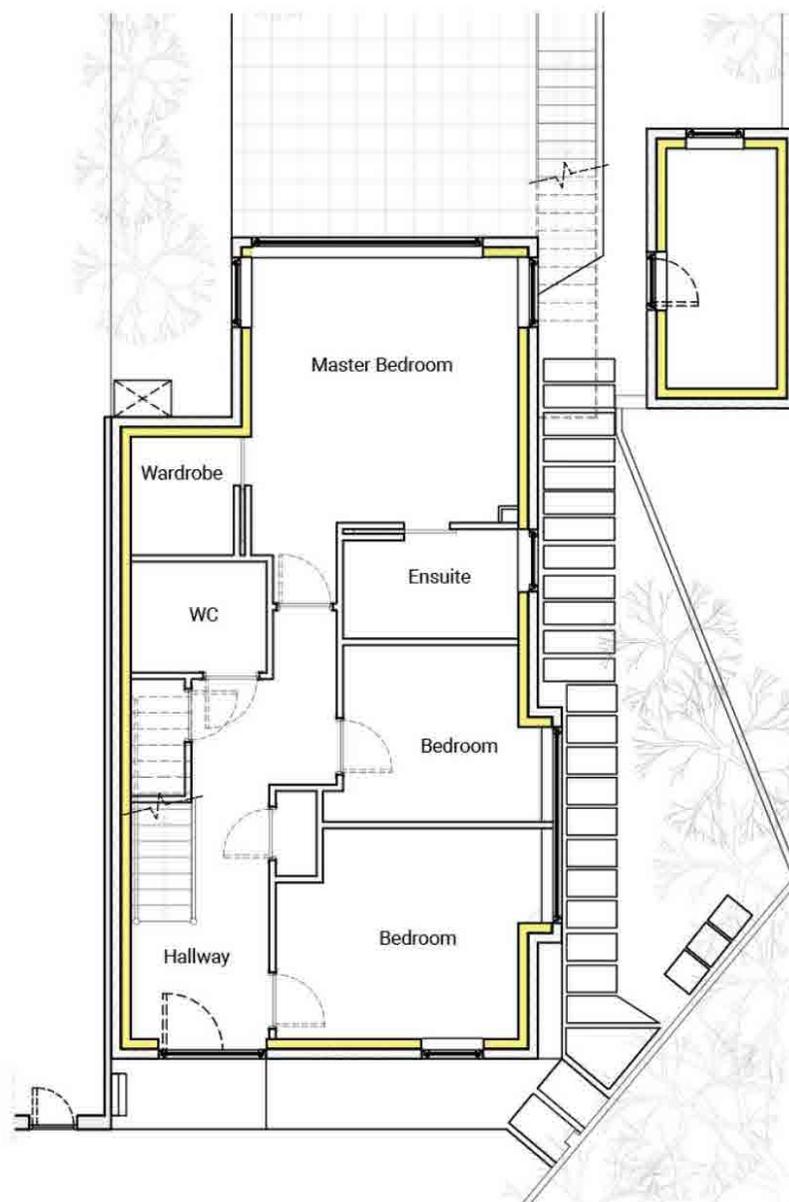
In this project we cover:

- How Ronan and Laura got planning permission
- Design to fit the laneway
- Planning constraints (not what you'd think)
- Build method chosen for speed and quality
- Build process from start to finish with Covid thrown in
- Budget friendly finishes
- Landscaping and what would do differently about it
- Full floors plans, spec and supplier list
- Timeline and top tips to save on your build
- Hour-long podcast with Ronan and Laura

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)

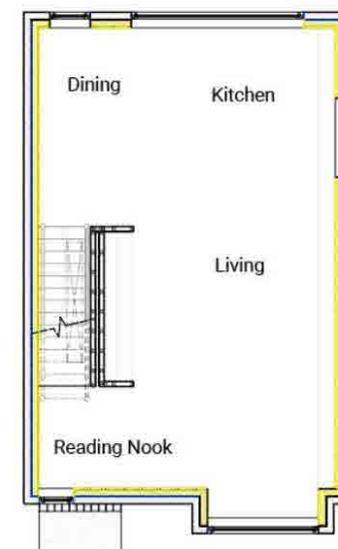


GROUND FLOOR



Architect
Mark O'Donoghue, Moda Architects,
mobile 086 826 1328

FIRST FLOOR



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A functional and modern home in Co Down

For the Russells, creating a functional, modern home was all about delivering space, style and tech on a budget.

In this project we cover:

- Finding an architectural designer
- How to join a Georgian design with modern back
- Efficient floor plan to reduce build costs
- Forward thinking with electrics and plumbing
- Planning application process
- Choosing a builder and setting up a contract
- How the day to day went: who the builder hired and who the self-builders hired directly
- How much DIY they did and lessons learned
- Playroom design with swinging elements
- Heating system choice
- Kitchen design
- DIY smart home design
- Landscaping details and how they saved on those costs
- Other budget saving tips throughout the build
- Window design and installation
- Internal design choices from lighting to flooring

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)

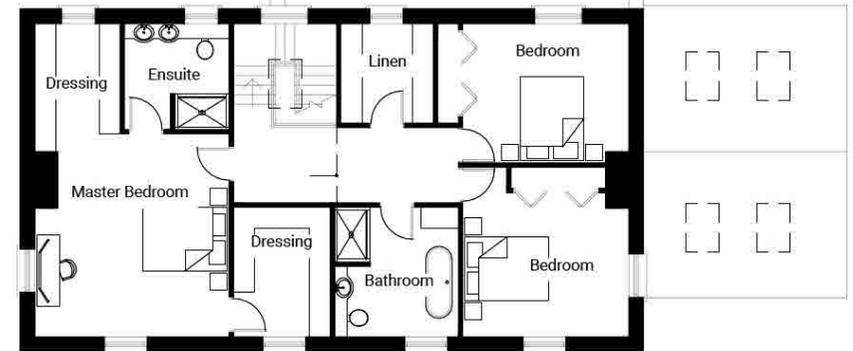


GROUND FLOOR



Architect
Colin McAuley Planning

FIRST FLOOR



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Strikingly modern new build on Donegal coast

Denise and Mick O'Donnell took a gamble that paid off: they project managed their modern new build even though they'd never built before.

In this project we cover:

- Site conditions and how the design started
- Main influences and design process
- Main design elements: simple and cost effective yet architectural
- Strikingly modern internal architectural features
- Planning permission process
- How they managed the project themselves and how they kept on track
- Details of heating system
- How they tackled salt spray and other issues with coastal location
- Lighting design
- Lessons learned
- Full timeline, floor plans and supplier list

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Studio Gallagher, studiogallagher.ie

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Period holiday home in Co Donegal

This historical lookout for seafaring smugglers was renovated to meet the demands of a holiday home and retain period features.

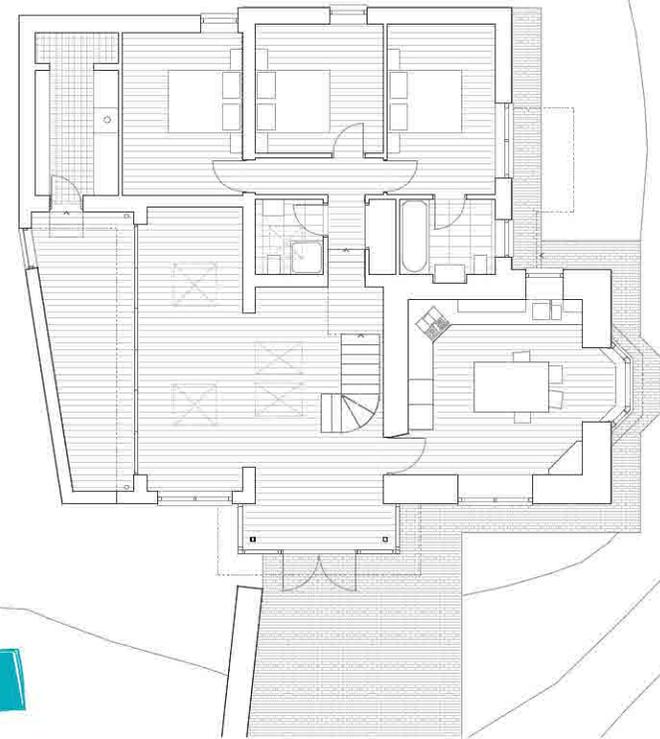
In this project we cover:

- History of the property and working with an architect
- Inspiration and what they wanted from the renovation
- Extension design and alterations to the existing building
- Making sure the watchtower would look as it had before
- Going through the planning process: from rejection to approval
- Going to tender and how they found their builder
- How the build was managed and what the day to day was like on site
- How the changes are working out for them
- Choosing local suppliers
- Floor plans and timeline
- Full specification and supplier list
- Professional photographs

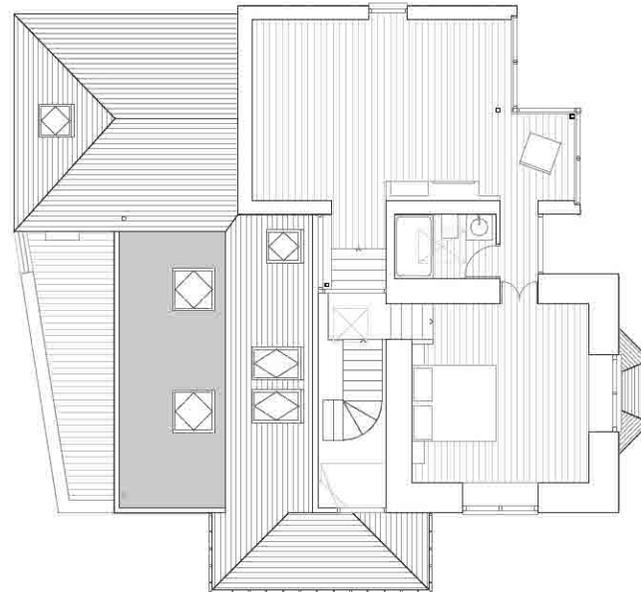
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Architect
Bond Architects, Portnablagh

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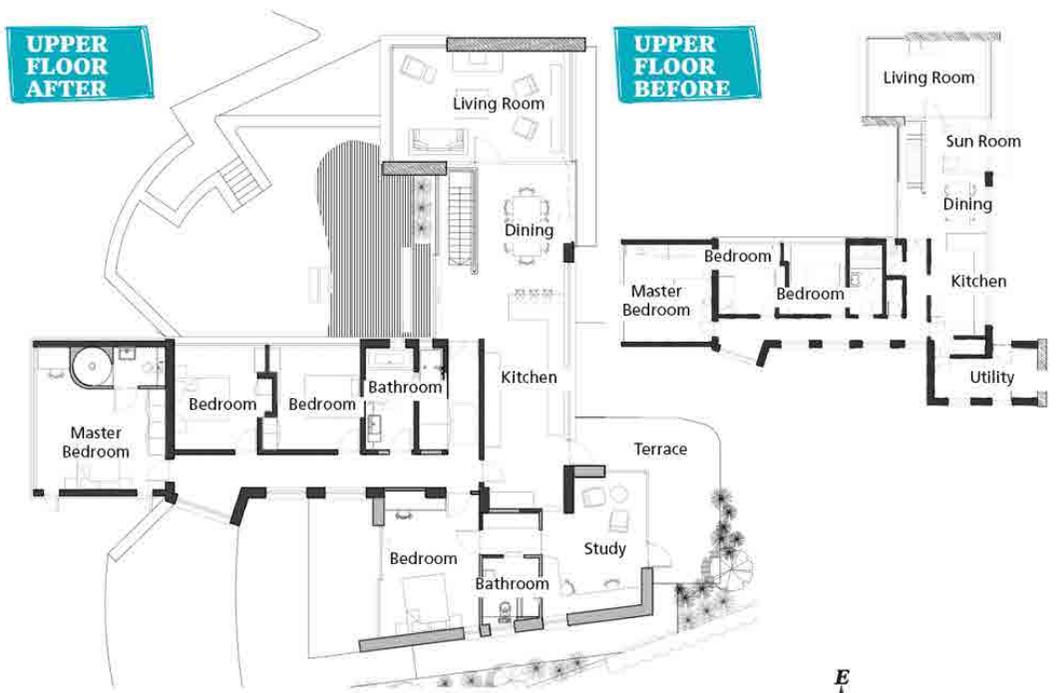
Cantilever house in Co Antrim

Renovating this 1950s seaside house meant rebuilding the structural supports for the cantilever bedroom that takes in the view.

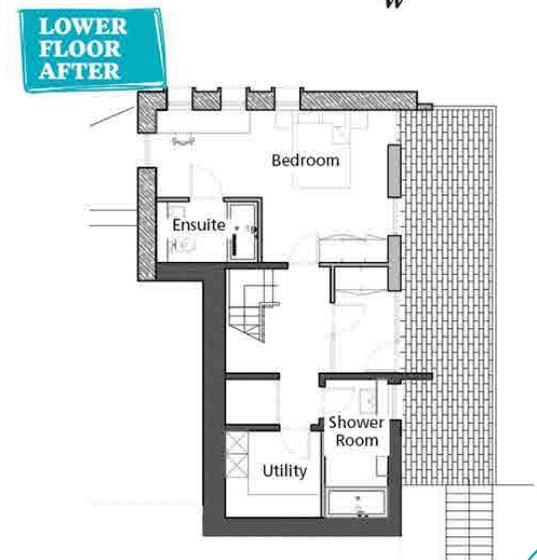
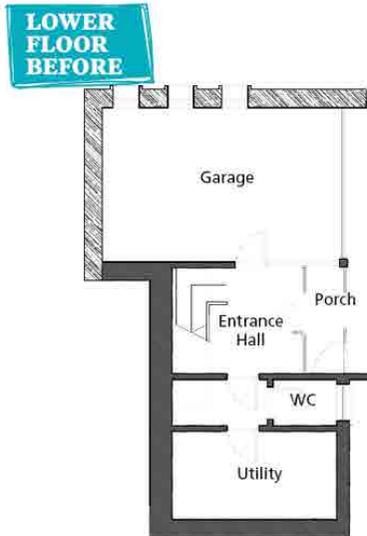
In this project we cover:

- Story behind the historical, architecturally designed cantilever house
- How the homeowners used existing furniture from the 1960s as their starting point
- How the homeowners chose their architect – how they made their shortlist and why they chose theirs
- Choice of hiring architect as project manager and on what terms, how it went on site
- Choosing the builder and organising stage payments
- Changes made to the inside with full before and after floor plans
- Biggest splurge and budget saving tips
- LPG boiler sizing and underfloor vs radiators
- Electrics tips: whether to choose LEDs, pendant built from scratch
- Tiling tips: finding the right type, working with supplier and tiler to get the look
- Structural issues with the roof and choice of reroofing
- Cantilever supports: details of how it was redesigned and rebuilt
- Choice of hiring interior designer and why it saved them money
- Kitchen, utility room, and wardrobe designs with space saving tips

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Ben Wilson of Wilson McMullen Architects,
wilsonmcmullen.com



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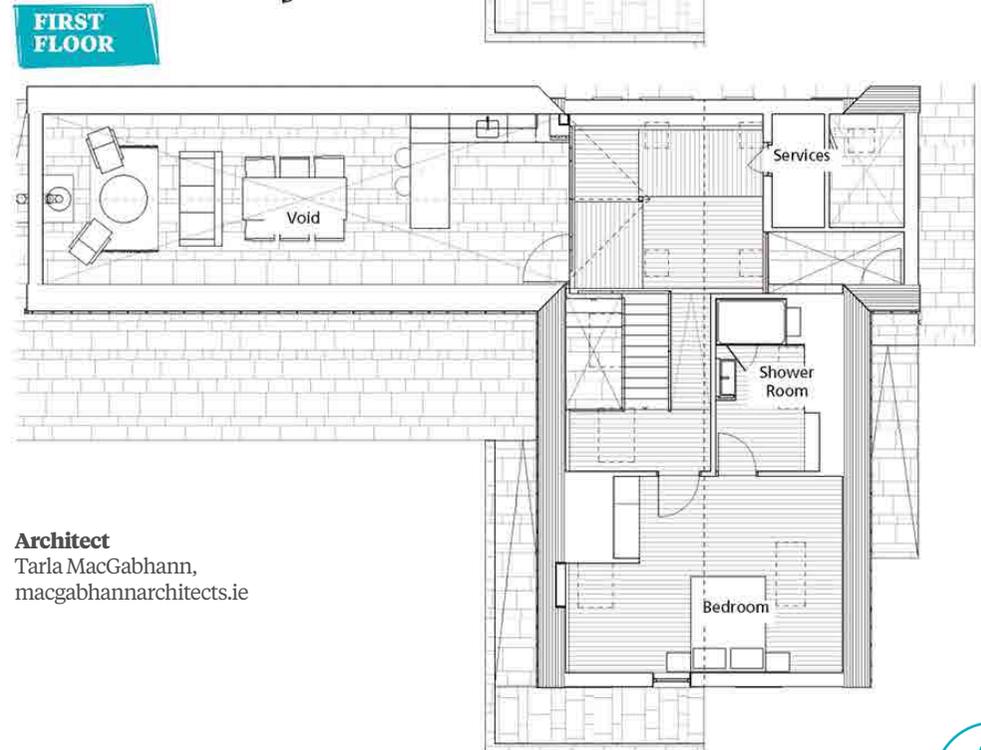
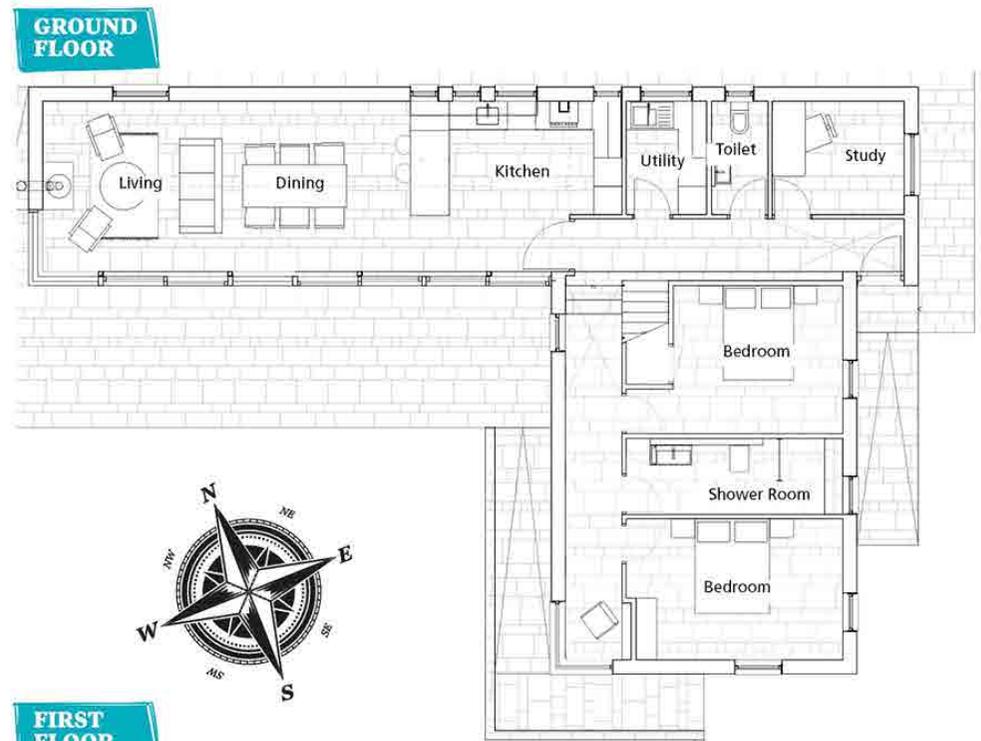
Contemporary new build bungalow

This new build bungalow in Co Donegal features bespoke finishes on a budget and a stunning garden.

In this project we cover:

- Buying a site with planning permission for a bungalow
- Redesign process keeping the modern bungalow frontage, adding more glazing
- How the new build was managed with foreman and direct labour
- Material choices for building fabric and finishes
- Complex roof design details
- Cost savings on roof covering and other elements
- Importance of garden design and how it came together
- Biophilic design for the interiors
- Scandi interiors: how to get the look on a budget
- Floor finishes and detailing, including shadow gap details
- Changes during construction
- Heating system choice and payback
- Secret to bespoke finishes on a budget
- Biggest splurge and favourite feature

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Tarla MacGabhann,
macgabhannarchitects.ie

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Building the dream

Much as we thought we had found out everything we needed to know about the site we bought in Co Down, there were still plenty of surprises along the way, writes self-builder Brian Corry who's building the dream eco house.

In this project we cover:

- How to save money by going DIY
- How to manage the project yourself
- How to work with an architectural designer for the design
- How to design around the site
- Why he chose to go with a passive house specification and how
- Full details on heating, hot water and ventilation system (in his case, all in one) plus full insulation and airtightness spec
- Kitchen design and choice of windows and doors, plus external finishes
- How to get the look on a budget with clever sourcing
- Full floor plans and specifications

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Visibility splays
The planners and the roads service will not allow you to build on a site that does not give you the sight lines necessary to enter and exit the property safely. In our case we had to buy a portion of the adjoining field, which was owned by the person selling us the site, to accommodate this. We were able to incorporate it into the sale to prevent it becoming a 'ransom strip'.

Volume
We wanted our house to be compact, to fit in with the surroundings and to reduce the build cost. An oversized home which costs a fortune to heat and maintain tends to be hard to sell when circumstances change.

Shape
A rectangle was the most efficient shape to reduce the amount of conifers and maximise useful space and the number of rooms. It is also a good shape to retain heat, we had the house go through an energy assessment, as part of the compliance process but also because we wanted a near zero energy house.

Curved roof
A curved or wing shaped roof blends in with the rolling drumlins of Co Down and allows us to have a full second story.

Height
Planning constraints included a 6m maximum ridge height and a relatively small area on the site that we had to build the house within.

Room sizes
We concentrated on having a large kitchen/family room and good-sized bedrooms where we felt we would be spending the majority of our time.

Functionality
Simple design decisions will make your life easier, such as making sure the drawer for the cutlery and cupboard for the crockery are all within reach of the dishwasher, similarly think of where you are most likely to do the ironing. Also consider where the TV, and charging stations for your phones, will be.

Compact design
We started by asking ourselves how many rooms we really needed as opposed to wanted. We were strict in not building in dining rooms, reception rooms etc. Our experience, growing up and with other people's homes was that these rooms rarely got used so why bother with them?

Bugbears
We asked ourselves what things we found awkward in our current home and asked our friends too. We always felt that the laundry basket is never where you need it so we have made space for a chute directly to the washing machine from upstairs.

Christmas tree
Make sure there is sufficient space for at least one large Christmas tree in your new home, with a double socket close by. Also where you will store it, along with suitcases and other seasonal items.

Furniture
John Corless, of Selfbuild Live fame, is forever mentioning the need to ensure that the furniture you want will actually fit in the room. We researched and got actual measurements for L-shaped sofas, our kitchen table, American style fridge, etc. to ensure that there was sufficient space for what we intended to buy.

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Budget friendly new build in Co Tyrone

How David and Christine Adams' contemporary new build house came in £20k under budget.

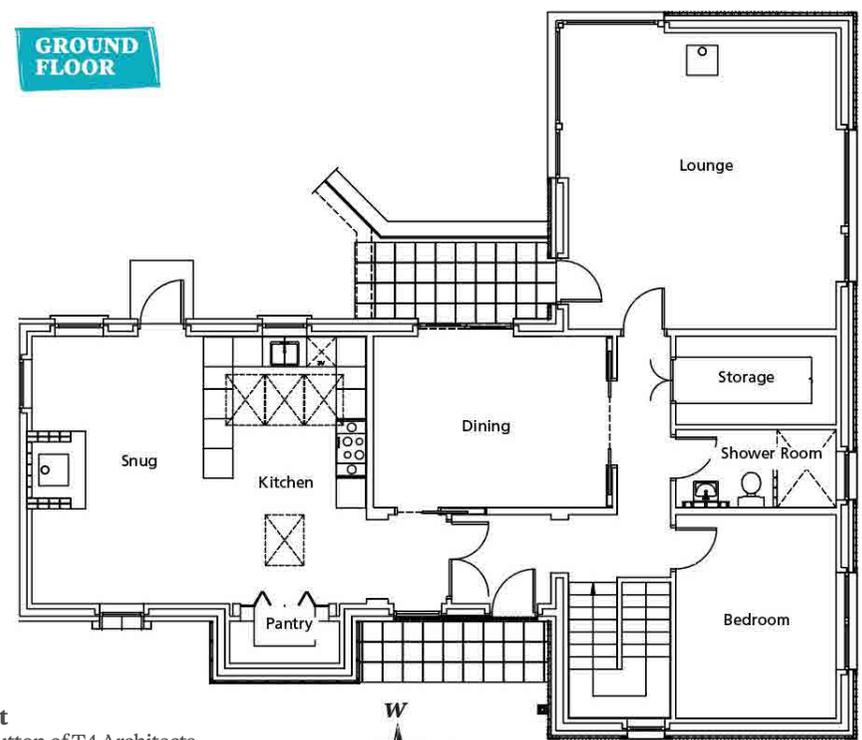
In this project we cover:

- Details of planning application under PPS21 – CTY10
- Change in house location based on planning requirements
- Working with their architectural designer and the barrel roof design
- Details of the build up of the three roof types
- Corner window details, sealing and insulating
- Practical design hacks including where to put the utility room
- Cost saving finishes, from corrugated metal cladding to finding alternatives for zinc
- Cost savings from direct labour, buying equipment and DIY
- Details of upside down design and how it works with the sloping site
- Full floor plans and specification
- Choice of low maintenance finishes including tiles

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)

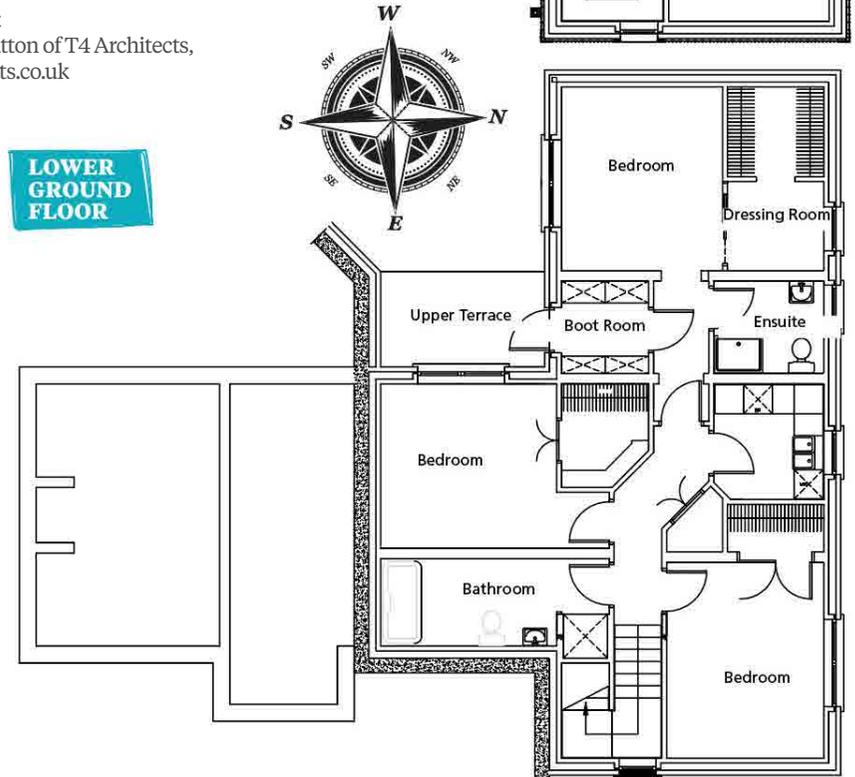


GROUND FLOOR



Architect
Trevor Hutton of T4 Architects,
t4architects.co.uk

LOWER GROUND FLOOR



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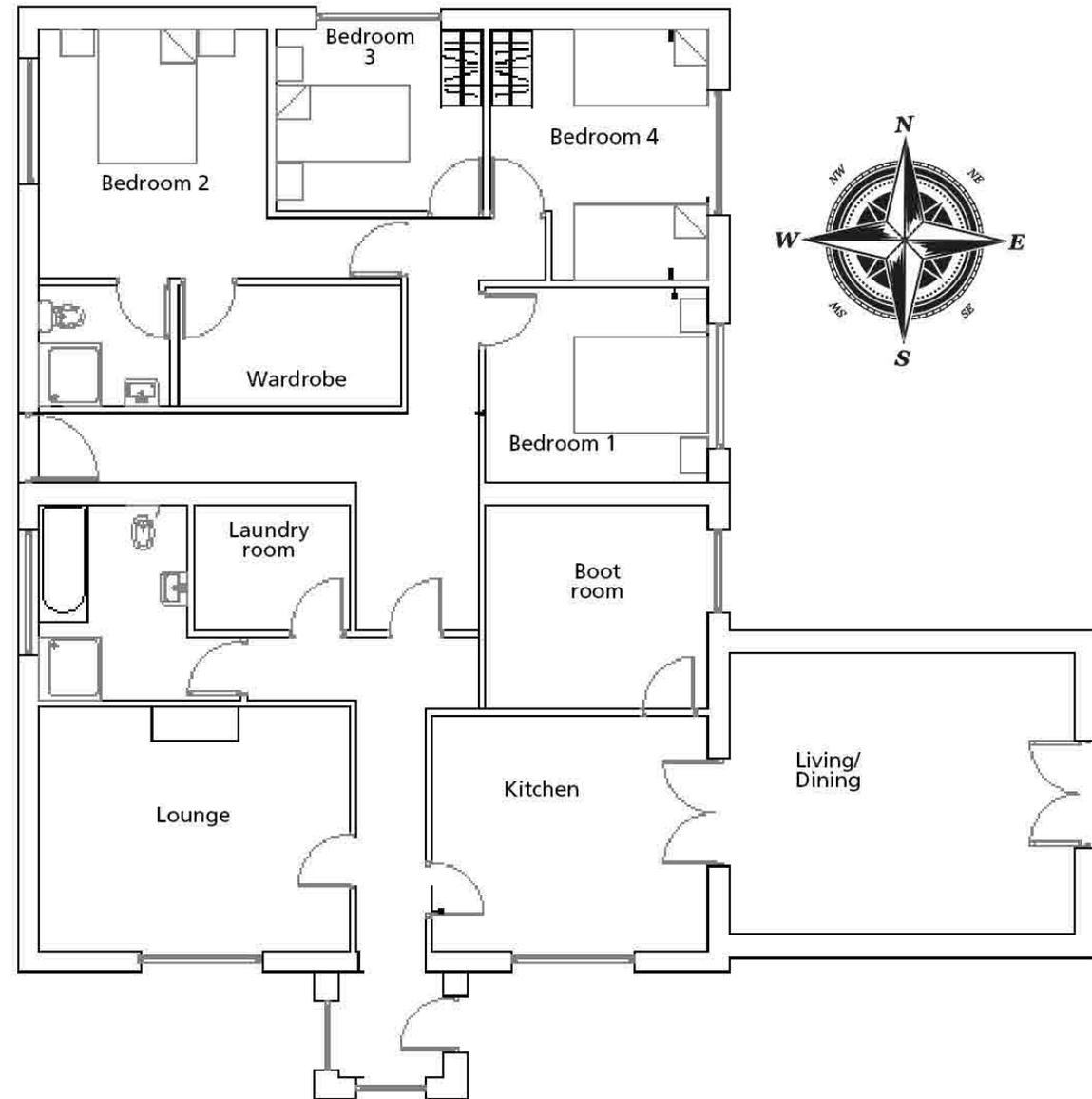
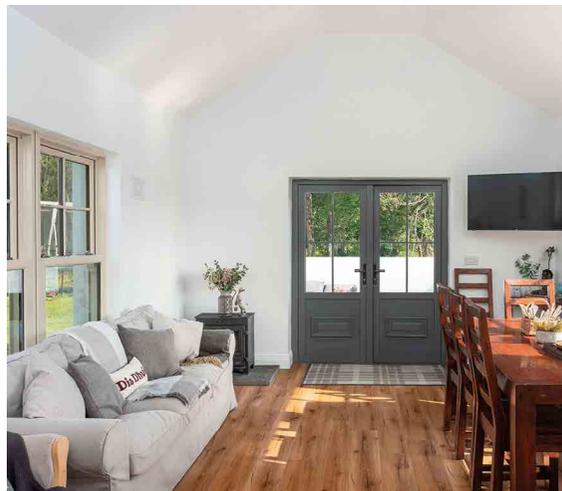
Compact renovation and extension in Co Galway

Compact renovation and extension in Co Galway.

In this project we cover:

- Condition original house was in and how they planned the renovation
- Family friendly redesign
- Why they didn't qualify for a grant
- How much DIY they did to save money
- Demolition work and site clearing
- Details of window and insulation upgrade
- Electrics and direct labour tips
- Kitchen and bathrooms
- Budgeting tips and how they saved during the build
- Build costs, floor plans and supplier list
- Timeline and professional photos

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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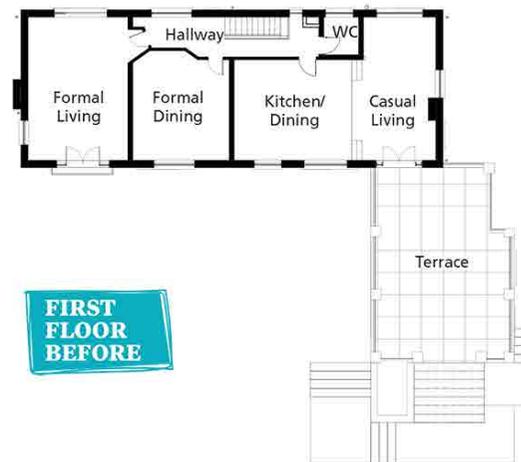
Upside down renovation in Co Down

After a false start, Allison Cordner took charge of her renovation project and never looked back.

When we moved back to Northern Ireland, we bought a 1970s house in a sought after neighbourhood as a renovation project," says Allison. "The house, as many others in this area, had the living space on the first floor and sleeping quarters on the ground floor."

"Our estate agent recommended an architect, and we invited him to view the house with us to get his thoughts. He suggested taking advantage of the south facing location, moving the living space to the ground floor in an open plan configuration with bifold doors. He included an extension over the existing concrete carport to the left of the property."

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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Family home built on a budget in Co Laois

Alan and Ber Glass not only built their family home on a budget, they did it in such a way that regular bouts of respiratory attacks are now a distant memory.

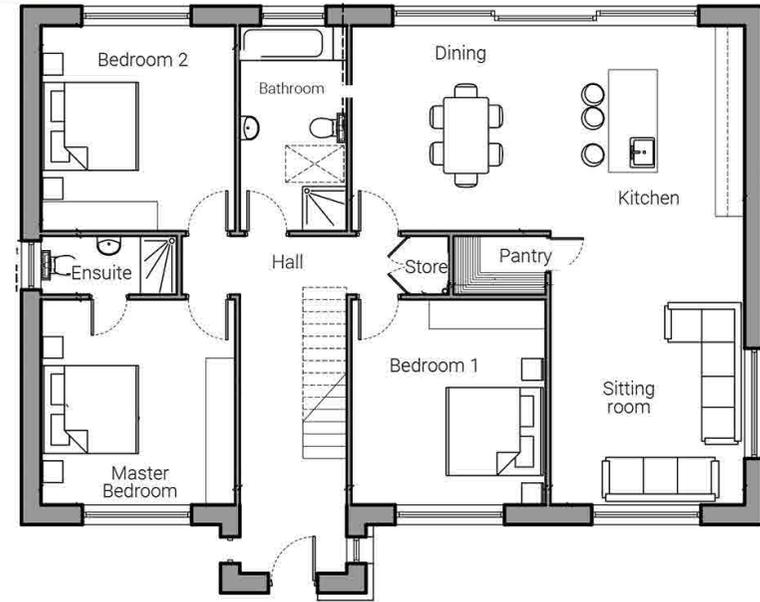
In this project we cover:

- House design for a cost optimal build
- Planning permission process and site assessment
- How they kept the build on budget
- Choices on site to rein in the budget
- Where they could have saved more and where they splurged
- Insulation, airtightness and systems choices
- Top tips for a budget build
- Floor plans
- Full timeline, supplier list and specification

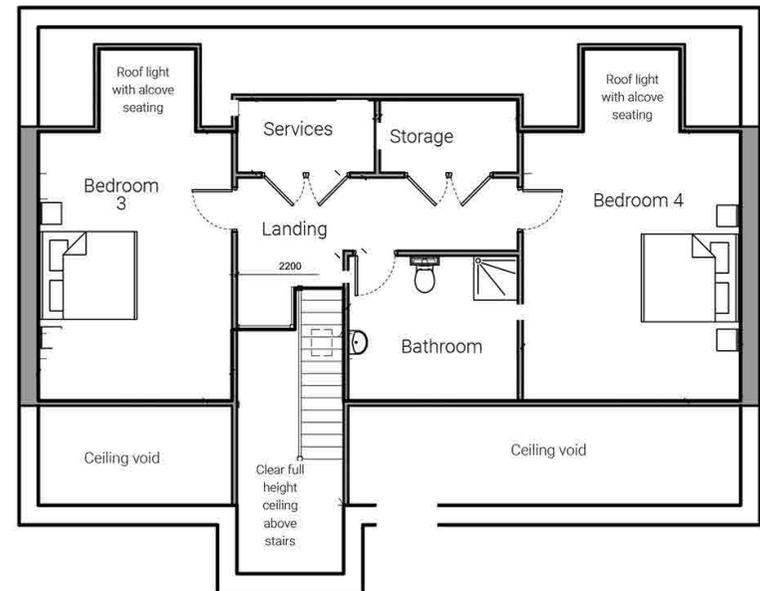
To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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Low cost energy efficient home in Co Antrim

This low cost energy efficient new build is the result of years of research, and of a clear idea of what to spend money on.

In this project we cover:

- Design process and what the homeowner's must have were
- How to build on a budget and which decisions saved the most
- Build costs and timeline
- Choices for systems, insulation and ventilation
- Planning restrictions
- Demolition work and site clearance
- Full supplier list and specification
- Floor plans
- Photographs of the exterior and interiors

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Ronan McKee of FMK Architecture Ltd,
fmkni.com



Charred timber and stone new build in Co Down

Before they start a family, couples are often drawn to Aidan and Julie-Ann Rainey built their family home in the countryside, driven by the need for more space.

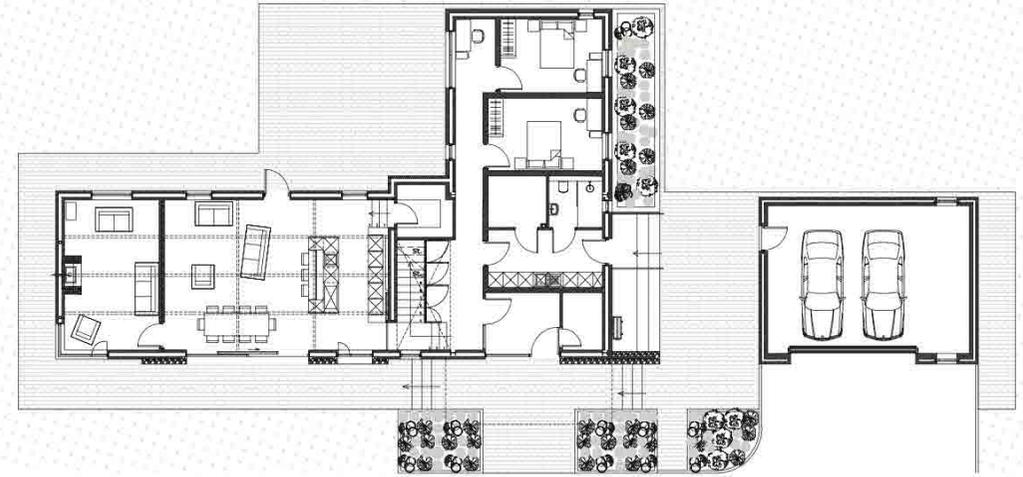
When we decided to self-build, we were in a terraced house that my great aunt used to live in," says Aidan. "It had been left disused for 20 years when we got it, so we refurbished it. It was a great space and perfect for a couple."
"But when our eldest was born, we started to realise it wasn't practical. Then when the twins came along, it was clear we had to get a bigger house as we'd grown out of the one we were in. We were lucky to be given land to build on, off the family farm at home, and we looked at different sites."

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)

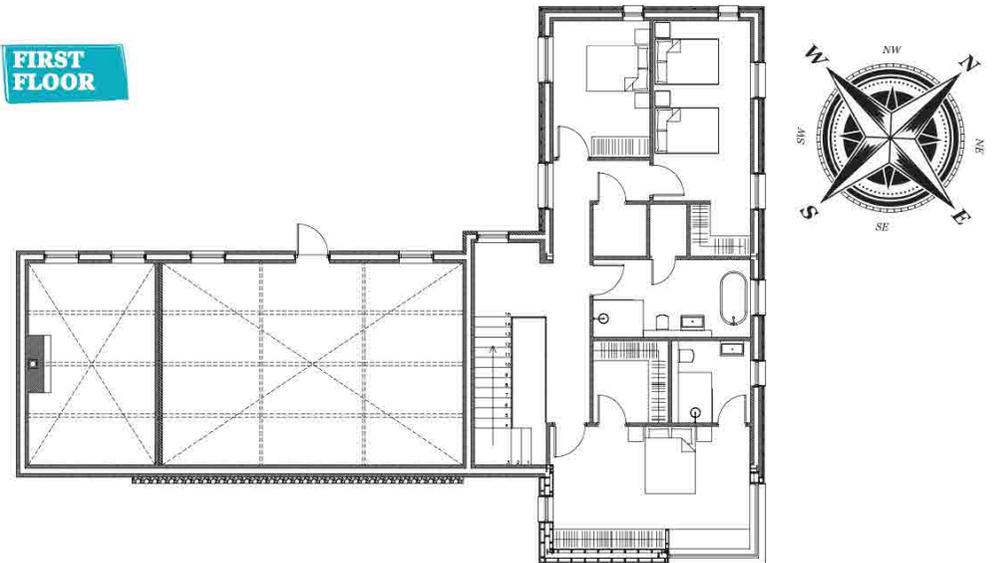


Architect
Fergal Rainey of McGurk Architects,
mcgurk-architects.com

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**FIRST
FLOOR**



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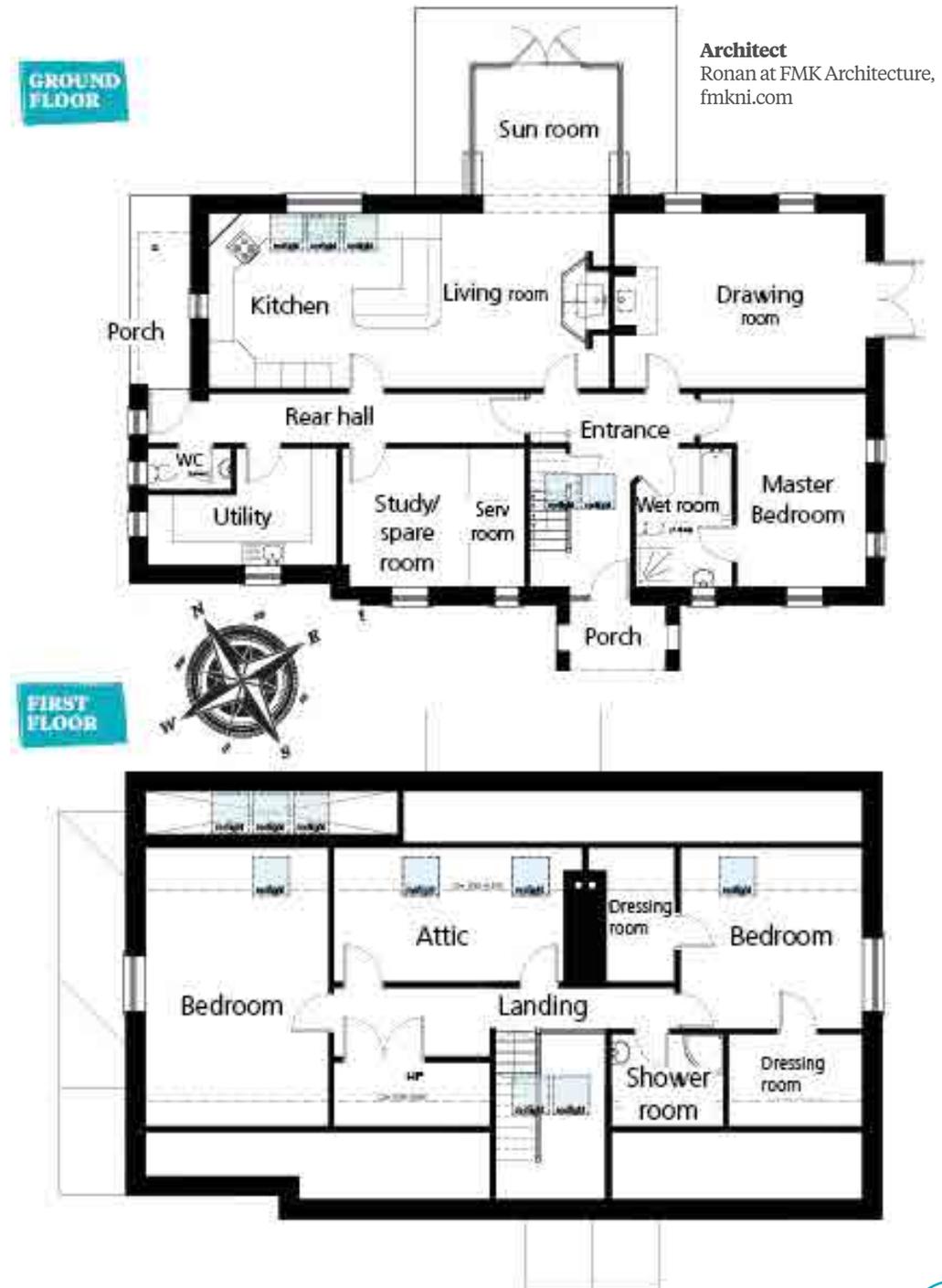
Eco new build on a budget in Co Down

For Fiona and David McKee, an eco new build was the obvious way to go...

In this project we cover:

- How their new build design evolved and how they decided on which eco features to include
- South facing design without overheating
- Details of photovoltaic (PV) installation including costs
- PV self sufficiency and payback times: electricity generated vs used, electricity exported, electricity stored in battery
- Full specification, floor plans, timeline and suppliers' list

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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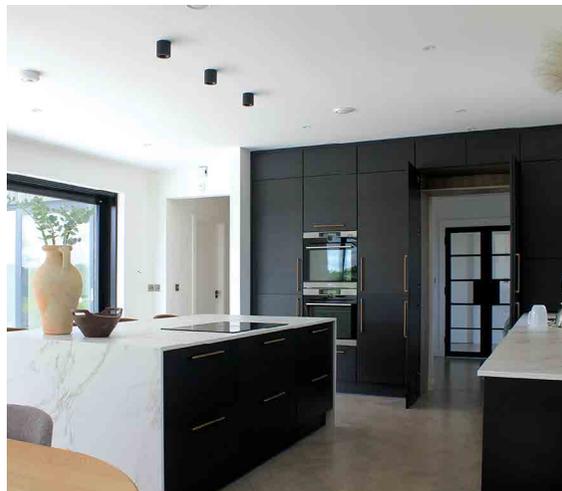
Modern new build in Co Roscommon

This modern new build shows that a contemporary design in the open countryside can get planning permission, as long as it's well thought out.

In this project we cover:

- Design process with architect with 3D renders
- How they got planning permission for their striking new build
- Choice of steel frame construction with photos of progress on site
- Kitchen design and specification
- Direct labour self-build: how it went, top tips
- Choice of systems including heat pump with cooling function
- Timeline, specification and supplier list

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Patrick Broderick, broderickarchitects.ie

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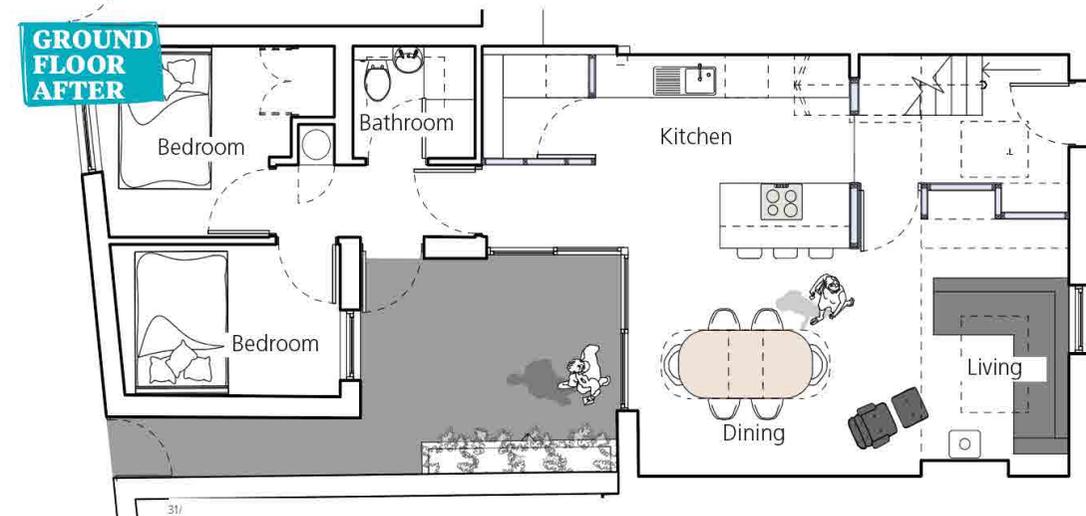
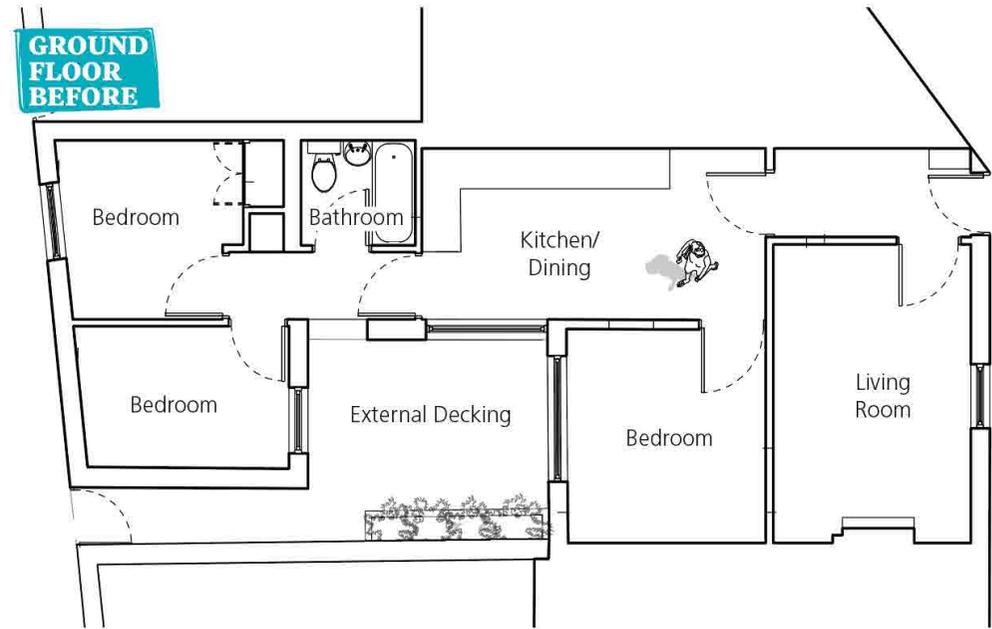
Dublin renovation on a budget

Architect
Marc Kilkenny, marckilkenny.com

Alex Cullen and John Kilkenny bought a 100 year old house in Dublin city centre to do it up as cost effectively as they could. The result is to die for.

“We bought the house when we were young professionals, pre children,” says Alex. “We were renting at the time, in a house share, and wanted to buy something of our own. But the area we lived in at the time was beyond our budget. By chance, we came across a small house that had the potential to tick all of the boxes.”

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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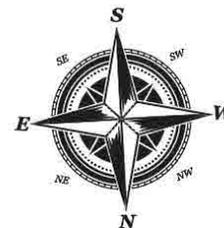
Neo Georgian new build in Co Tyrone

Bronwen and Gary McCausland turned their attention to the family farm after struggling to find a house to buy.

In this project we cover:

- Planning under PPS21
- Wishlist and how the design process evolved from there
- Georgian features
- House size limited by building control fees
- Who built what and how they took on DIY tasks to save money
- Choice of construction method and heating system
- Why current heating bills are so low
- Switching from a timber staircase construction to precast concrete: headaches on site
- Visiting kitchen showrooms and travelling to find the right one
- Kitchen design details
- Bathroom design details and how they got the cast iron bath in
- Floor plans and specification
- Supplier list with contact details

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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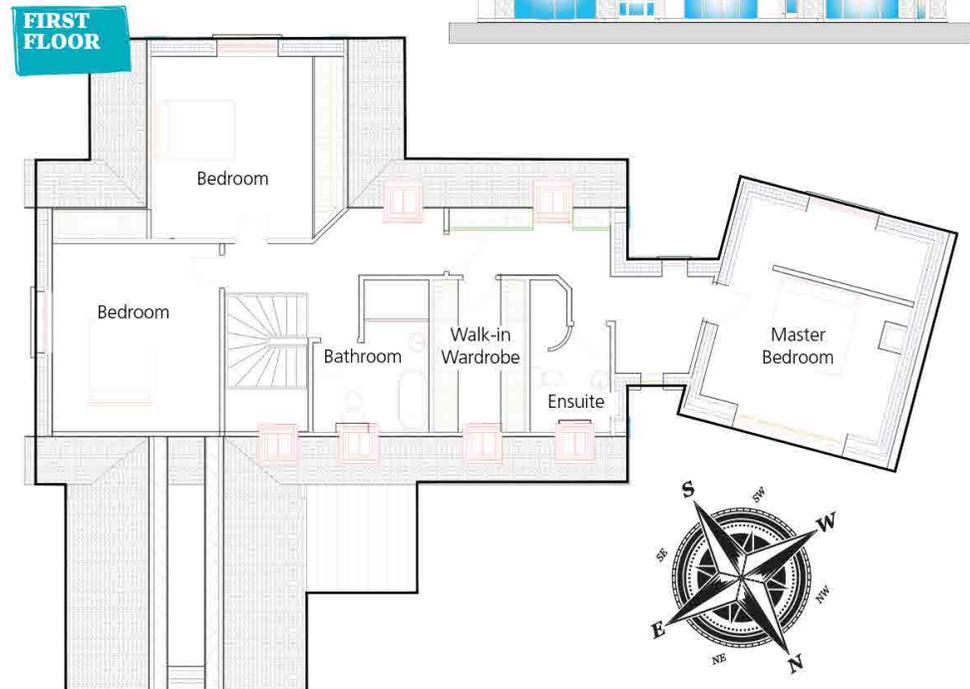
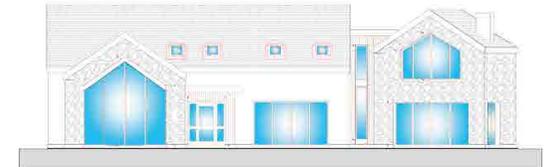
Building the nest in Co Mayo

Before they start a family, couples are often drawn to building their own home, which happened to be the case of Jason and Nicola O'Donnell.

Nicola and I are both from the local area, have jobs here, and knew we wanted to stay put to start a family," says Jason. "We were lucky to have a fabulous site with amazing views. My parents had the foresight to buy the land next to their house when it came up for sale."

"We started our journey buying magazines, watching various house programmes, and using social media to create mood boards and follow house accounts. Visiting the Selfbuild shows was a great help too," says Nicola.

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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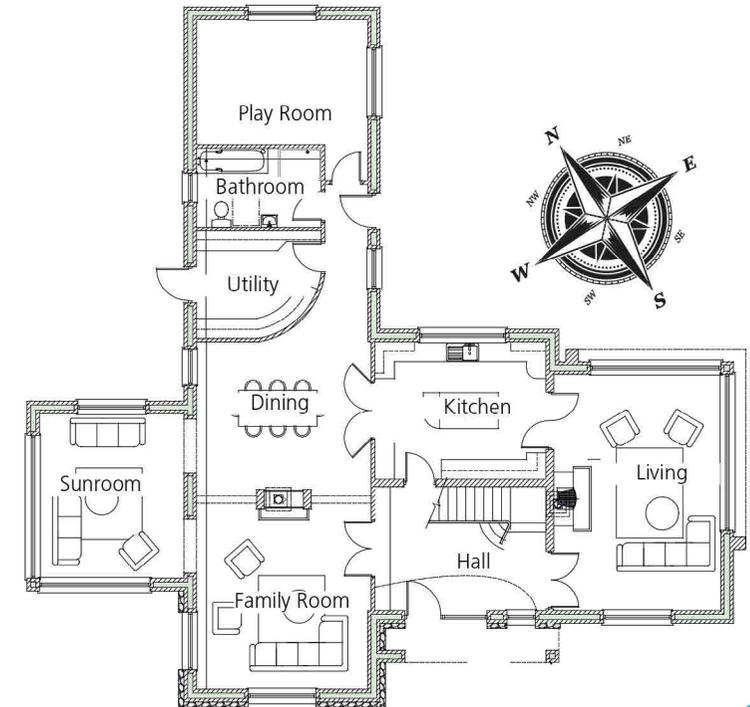
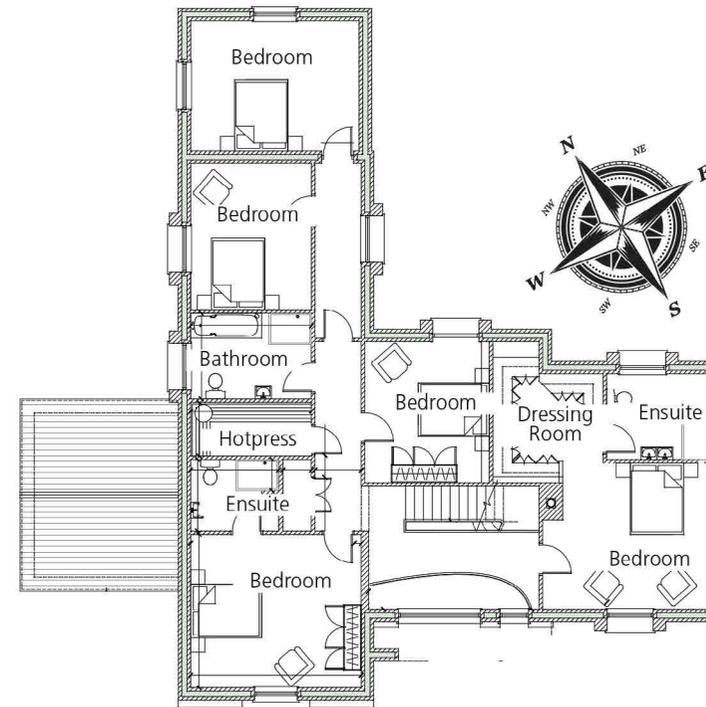
The NZEB new build

How the Lamberts self-built this NZEB new build in Co Meath, to deliver a home that costs very little to run.

In this project we cover:

- What they wanted to achieve
- Choice of building method: reasons and how they did it
- Foundations and ground floor specification
- Roof specification and choices
- Full floor plans and elevations
- Construction drawings for key construction details
- How they minimised thermal bridging
- How and why they beat the minimum building regulations requirements
- Suppliers list

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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Renovating a 100-year-old semi-d in Co Antrim

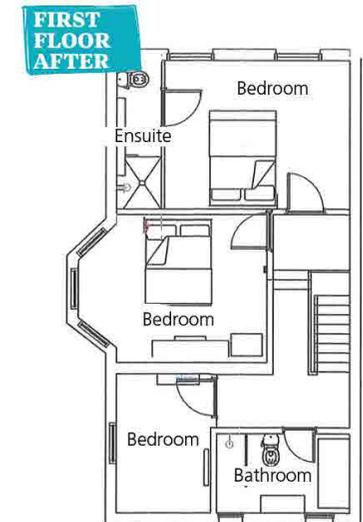
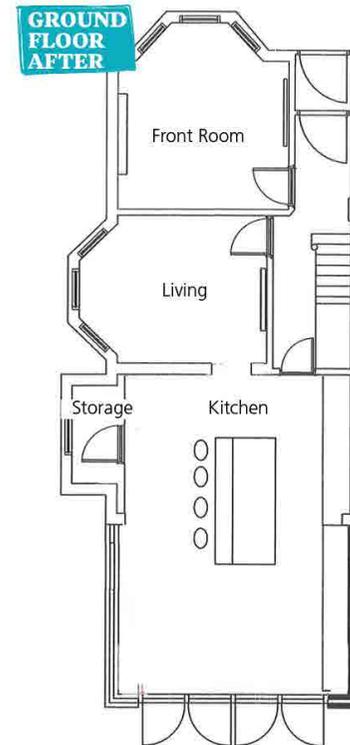
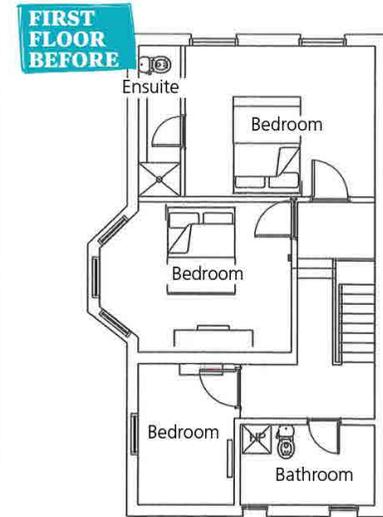
When John and Sinead Cullen decided to buy a 100 year old house, they embarked on an Art Deco renovation journey that took over their lives.

John and I had been living in London for a few years when John's mum got ill," says Sinead. "We made the quick decision to come back home so we looked for properties whilst still in London. Belfast was our preferred choice, as it still had the hustle and bustle of city life and our new jobs would be based there."

"We found our charming home on a property website; there was only one photo of the exterior but I knew it was the one we wanted."

"Even though it needed a lot of work, the house was structurally sound, and we decided to bid on it after seeing the site survey. We did get to buy it for quite a bit less than the average asking price for the street, because it hadn't been lived in for quite some time and was neglected. It's a gamble that paid off as we doubled the house value in two years."

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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Buying a site with full planning permission in Co Antrim

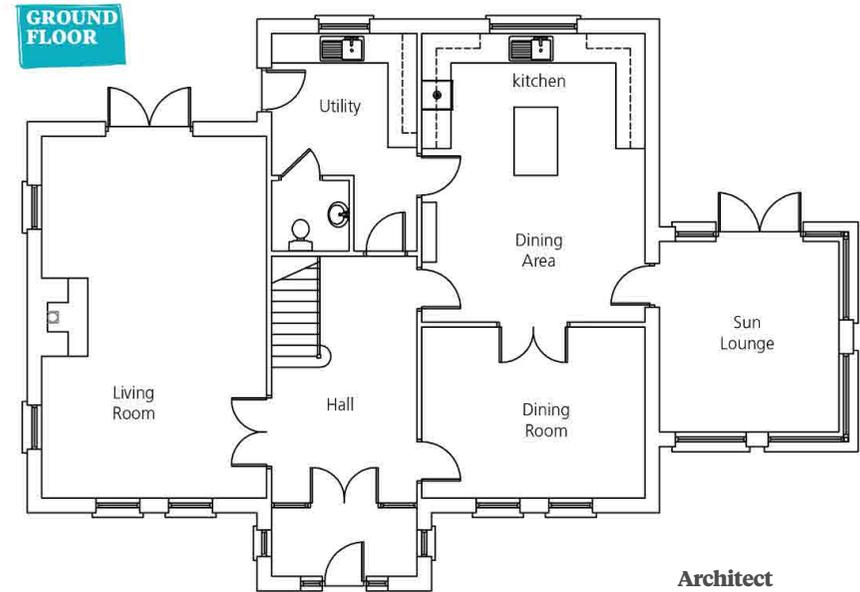
Emma and Mark McMullan bought a sloping site that ticked every one of their boxes, with the bonus of having full planning permission.

My parents had self-built the house they live in now, and I always had at the back of my mind the intention to do the same,” says Emma. “Mark is a quantity surveyor so there was nothing that daunting about deciding to build our own home.”

“It just made sense to us to build instead of buying an existing house; that way we would save some money and get exactly what we wanted.”

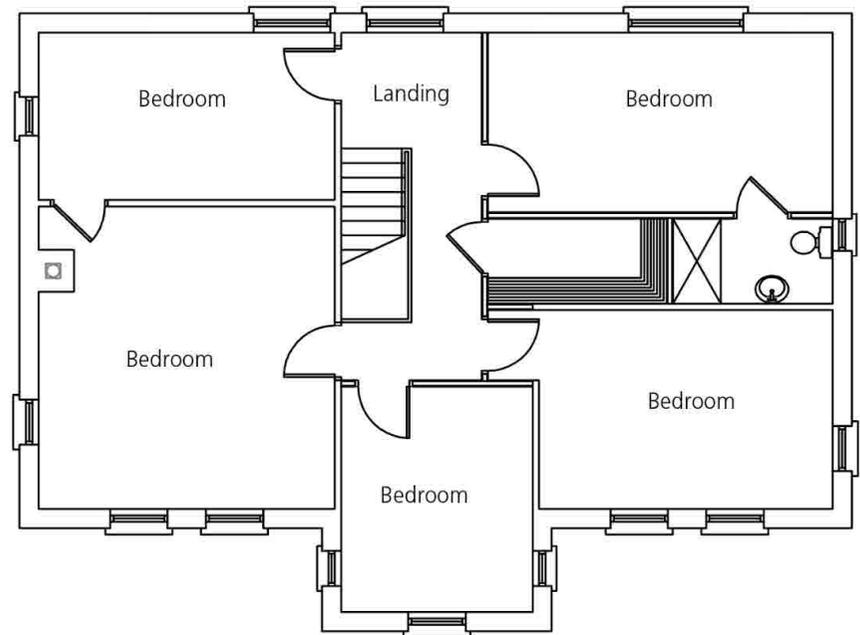
“When we were site hunting, we both agreed the most important thing was to find a remote location in the country with plenty of scope to establish a landscaped garden to work at over the years. As well as enough space to eventually rear a few horses. We also have a dog, Axel, and we wanted space for him too.”

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Simpson Design NI Ltd,
mobile 07845588073

FIRST FLOOR



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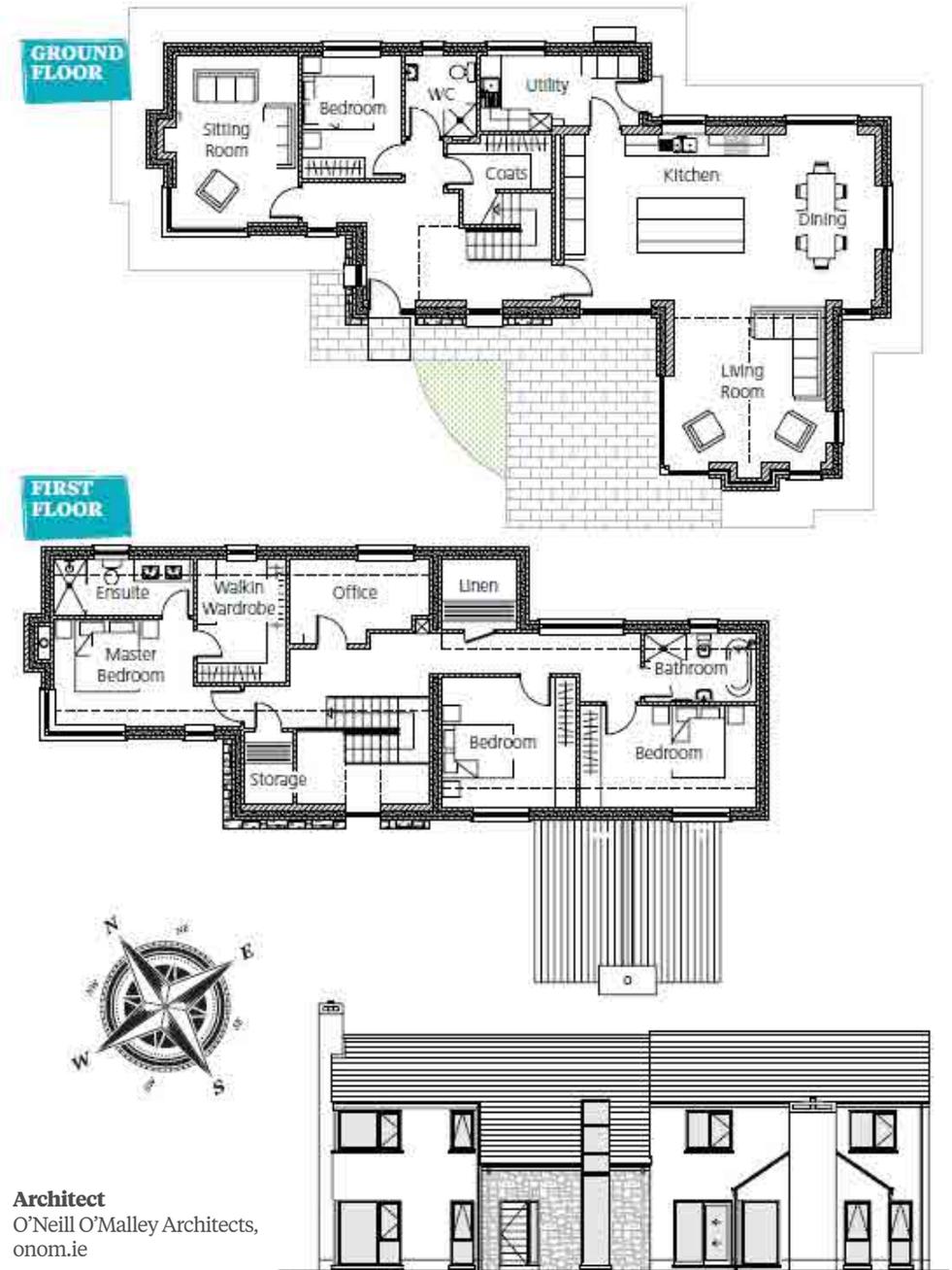
Co Galway new build on family land

Fionnuala Mannion was lucky to be able to self-build on her grandfather's land, near other members of her immediate family.

In this project we cover:

- How the new build design was influenced by moving from city to country
- Design details from bulkhead in kitchen to U-shaped staircase
- Adaptable storage solutions: for young children and beyond
- Adapting the design to suit the budget and how they could have saved even more
- Windows and doors: choices and installation
- Contract with builder and process of building
- Full floor plans and specification

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
O'Neill O'Malley Architects,
onom.ie

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The automated home

Mark and Helen McCall built themselves a contemporary house in Co Down. Here Mark shares how he went about building their automated home.

In this project we cover:

- Details of the infill plot and how they got planning
- Architectural design process with tips on how to get it right
- Cutting costs at the design stage
- How building two decades ago informed the design and specification
- How the home automation system and how it was installed
- Costs for automating the
- Heating and ventilation system choices
- Floor plans and specification

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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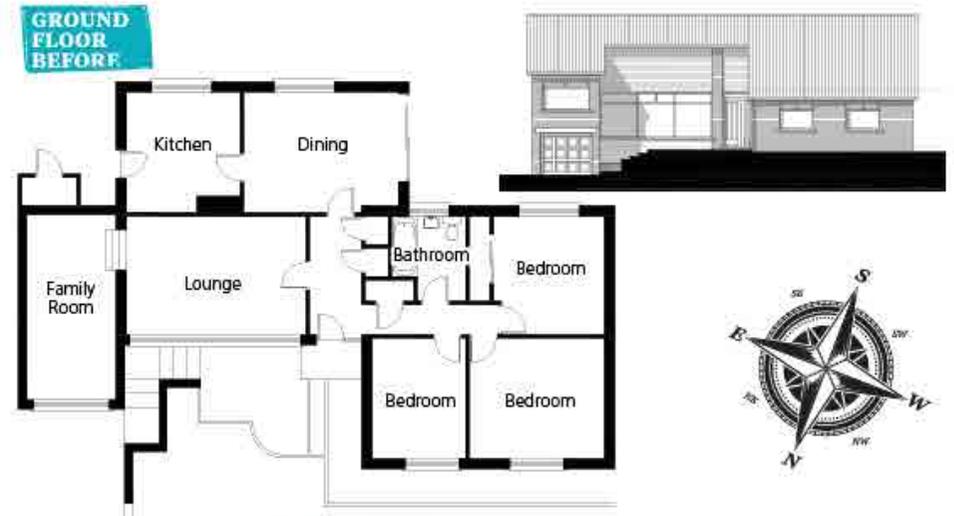
Within walking distance

For many couples, finding the right home in the right location means being near the right school. Caroline and Robin Harris had the same requirement, and they eventually found a property that ended up ticking all of the right boxes.

“I met my husband in London,” says Caroline. “We looked at buying there but all we could afford was a studio above a chip shop. We eventually decided to move back to my home town in 2012 to settle down, and we self-built our own home.”

“It was a four bedroom cottage style house, with a stone facing. We stayed in the house for four years, had our little girl there. It had a beautiful view of the lake but we realised after having children that we needed more storage – and a playroom – which hadn’t been factored in when we had designed the house.”

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Colin McAuley MRTPI of Colin McAuley
Planning & Design,
colin@colinmcauleyplanning.com

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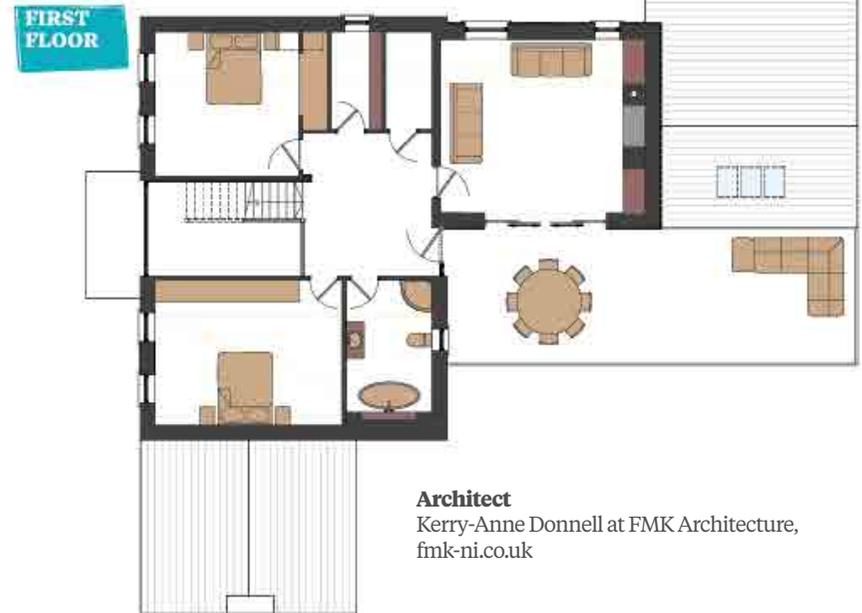
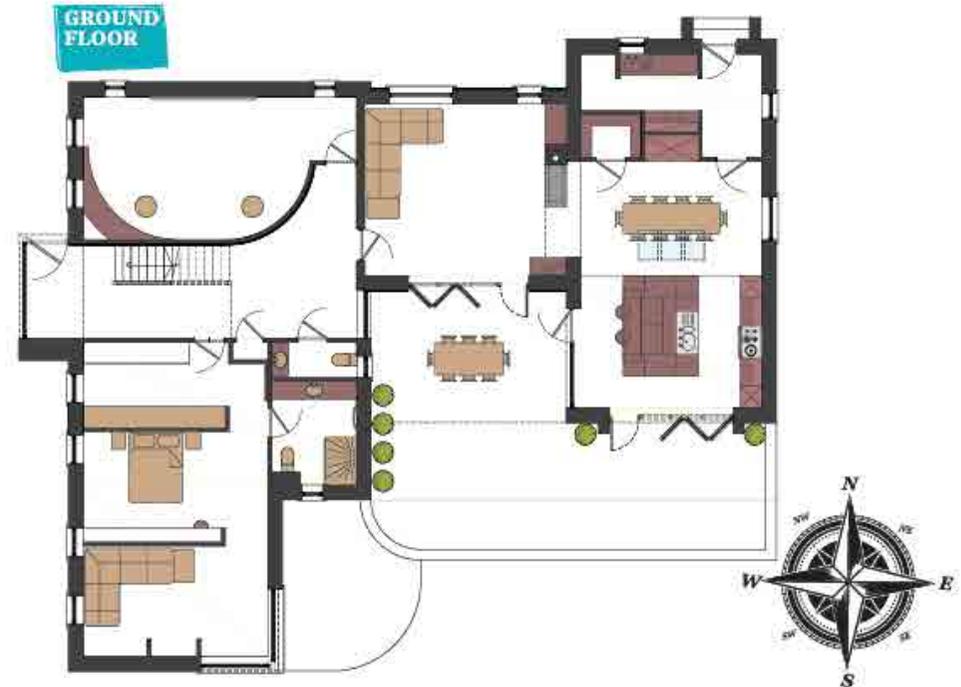
Retirement plan

When Sandra and David Fulton decided it was time to downsize, they built their new home near the farmhouse they raised their children in and turned their self-build project into their retirement plan.

In this project we cover:

- How novice self-builders tackled a low energy build
- Lengthy planning permission process
- Going to tender and choosing a builder
- Focus on airtightness and insulation with results in energy bills
- Kitchen design and fit: top tips
- Internal finishes and how to keep on top of the budget
- Suppliers, floor plans and specification
- Professional photography

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Kerry-Anne Donnell at FMK Architecture,
fmk-ni.co.uk

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ICF build with DIY home automation

Architect

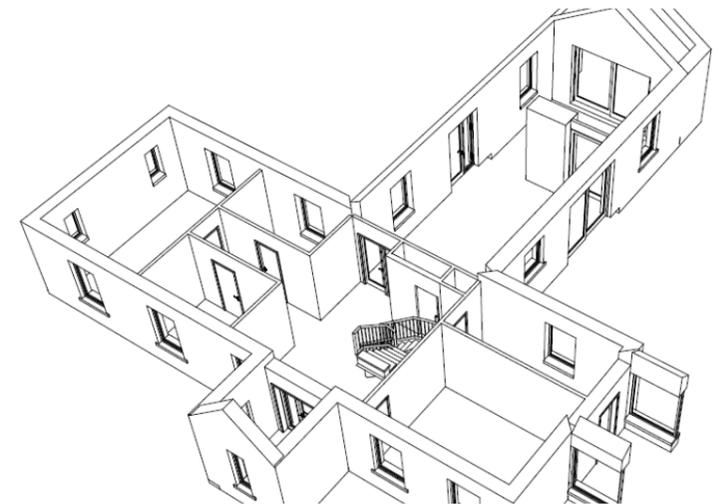
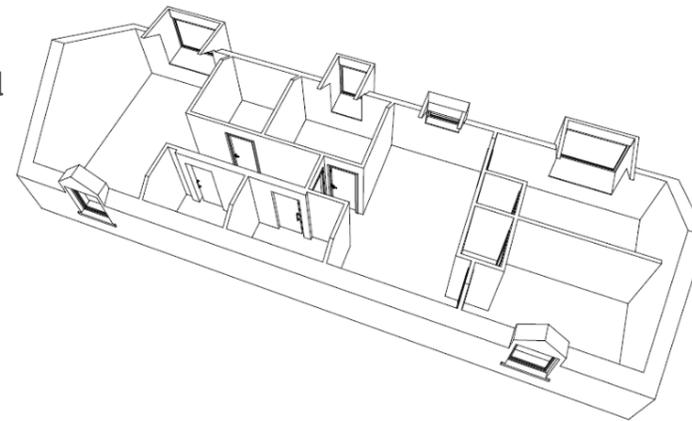
Ultan Blake, ultanblake@gmail.com, 01 8019512

Building an airtight home with ICF didn't cost Eimear and Donal Kane much more than a traditional block build. This in turn allowed them to spend more of their budget on a smart home system and a floating curved concrete staircase.

In this project we cover:

- Choosing Insulating Concrete Formwork (ICF): comparison with other build methods
- Designing the new house for a busy family with both parents working
- Applying for planning permission four times
- Process of uploading commencement notice to notify building control
- Choosing how much insulation to go with for the ICF walls
- Going to tender: how ICF compared to traditional block build
- Builder woes and taking on the project themselves
- How much DIY they did to save on costs
- Floating concrete staircase design
- Choice of systems and how low their energy bills are now
- Details of the DIY home automation system
- Professional photographs, supplier list and full specification

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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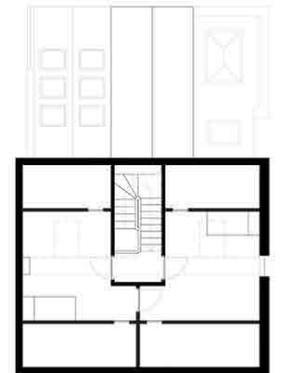
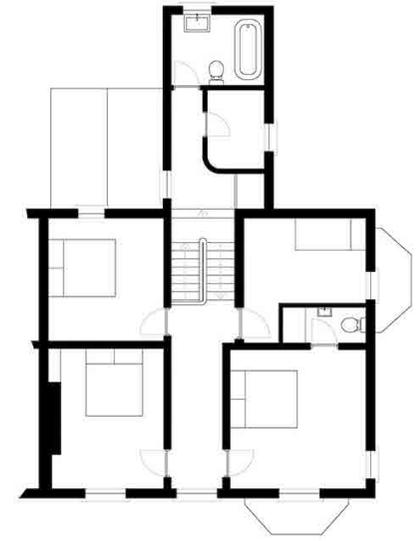
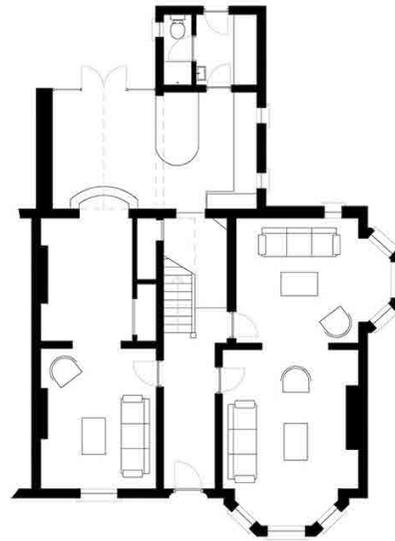
Victorian renovation in Belfast

Gavin and Catherine Gracey took on a Victorian restoration in Belfast that kept to the style of their 120 year old property.

In this project we cover:

- How they renovated the kitchen and living areas
- How it went with the planners and having to revisit the application
- Build choice and tendering to three builders
- Strict fire regulations and how they were dealt with
- Wanting to build in the roof space and how it was tackled
- Dealing with existing chimneys and chimney breasts
- Biggest splurge, tips to stay on budget and on schedule
- Full specification with before and after floor plans

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Aisling Shannon Rusk of Studio idir, Belfast, studioidir.com

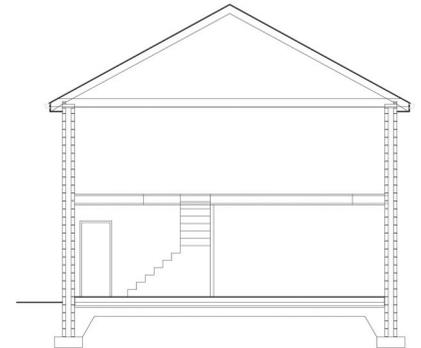
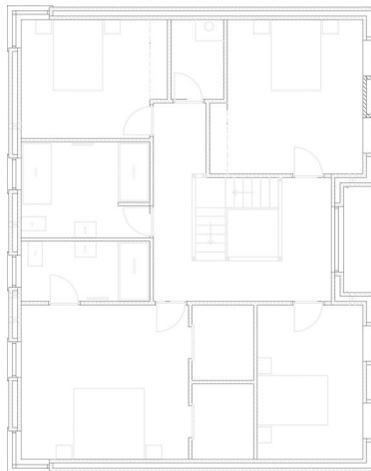
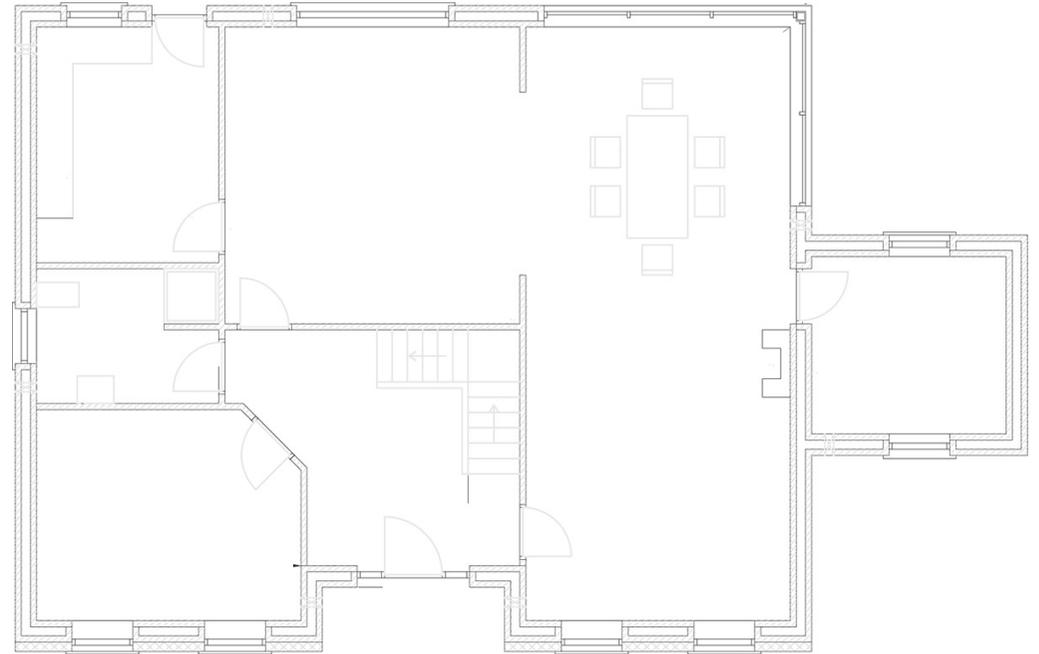
Timber frame energy efficient home in Kilkenny

Kieran and Anita McGrath are a typical example of how forward-thinking self-builders are, especially when it comes to making an energy efficient home. Not only did the couple achieve impressive eco credentials back in 2011, they drew up their house plans and project managed the build themselves.

In this project we cover:

- Details of energy efficient design
- Process of designing the house and having plans signed off on
- Issues with securing planning permission in a rural area
- Process of installing the timber frame kit that had been built off site
- Open plan design and changes during the build
- Choice of heating system and resulting energy bills
- Airtightness testing
- Drilling a well: process and tips
- Self-builder experiences
- Full supplier list & contact details
- Full build specifications, including wall, floor, roof and glazing
- Floor plans
- 24 project photos
- Self-builder tips and Q&A
- Build cost calculator (Ireland only)

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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Cast concrete home extension in Donegal

Even though Emma and Mark Smith were reluctant renovators, they knew a home extension project was the only way to create the family home of their dreams in such a desirable location.

In this project we cover:

- Renovation of a 1970s home to make it energy efficient and contemporary
- Extension design to add living space and capture the views
- Details of concrete shuttering: what it is and how it's done
- Reason for choosing renovation versus new build with cost comparison
- Choice of geothermal heating system including system sizing and temperature flows
- Full details of insulation and airtightness upgrade in existing house
- Cost comparison oil versus heat pump
- Kitchen design including details of cooled walk-in larder
- Outdoor chimney design with patio
- Practical tips to stay on budget at design and build stages
- Full floor plans, specification, supplier list and timeline

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Michael Howe, 2020 Architects, 2020architects.co.uk

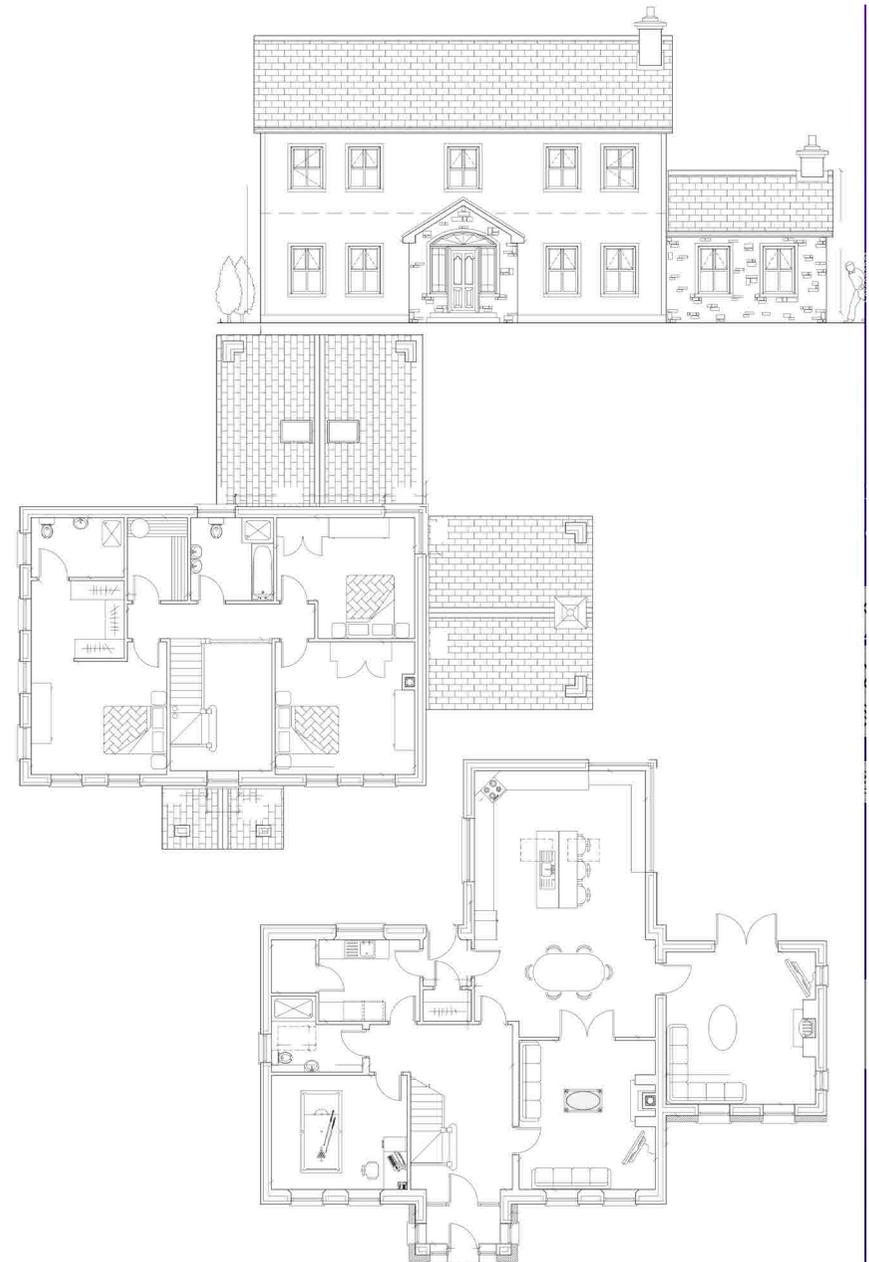
The two storey home in Co Mayo

A carpenter by trade, Ambrose Lynott had the skills and ambition to build a dream two storey home for himself, his wife Donna and four children. With the help of family, and 24/7 dedication to the project, they managed to get it all built in a year.

The site, gifted by my parents, is next to a river and has views all around. It was the dream location for us as we were living in a confined three-bed townhouse that had no views and was always dark inside,” says Ambrose. “Before the townhouse, we had rented a very small house and one large one. These experiences gave us good insight into what we disliked.”

“We realised the need for good sized living areas and a place for kids to play, both inside and outside,” adds Donna. “We took every opportunity to capture light or views when designing our new house so in the kitchen-dining area, a corner window was high on the wish list.”

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



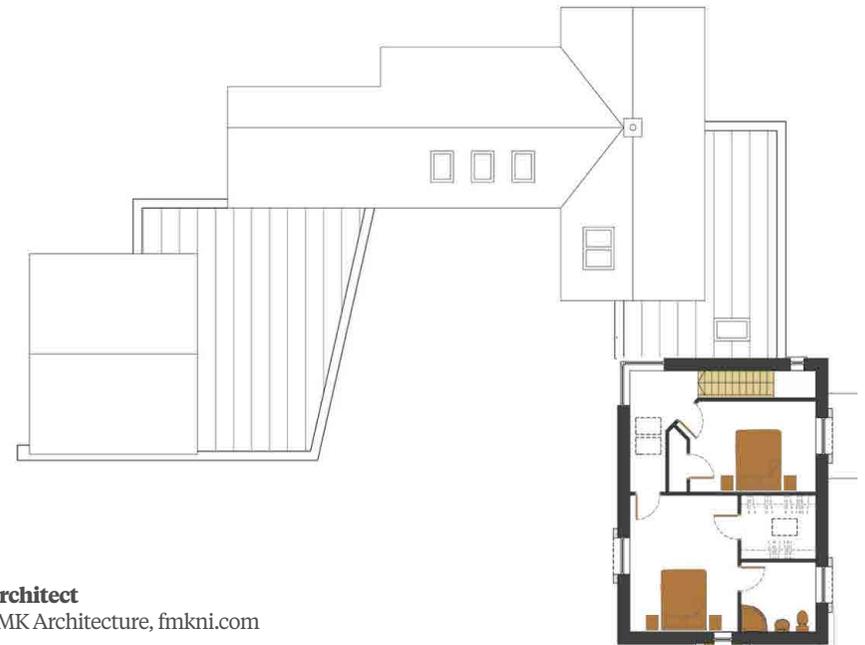
First time self-builders create dream home in County Down

From design vision to final finish, first-time self-builders Colin and Nicole McKee rolled up their sleeves and got stuck in.

In this project we cover:

- How to achieve a contemporary design within a rural setting
- Planning permission process for replacement dwelling
- How they project managed the build themselves
- How they tackled issues on site for ducting and cabling
- Choice of heating and ventilation systems
- Photovoltaic (PV) system choice and installation
- Details of vaulted ceiling
- Kitchen design and installation
- Interior design details: industrial look
- Tips to stay on schedule and on budget
- Full floor plans, specification and supplier list

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
FMK Architecture, fmkni.com

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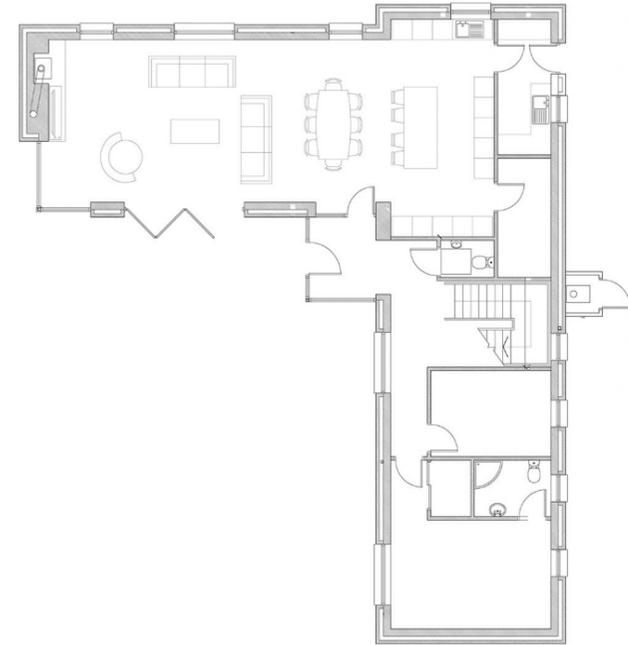
L-shaped new build in Antrim

Paul and Diane Gates stumbled across an old hilltop farmhouse for sale with jaw dropping views across Belfast's cityscape. This unexpected discovery was a stroke of luck that followed them throughout their self-build journey.

Paul and Diane Gates hadn't set out to become self-builders. Neither of them had built a house before and their eventual building plot was found by accident while en route to view an existing house for sale. Knowing immediately it was their dream new build location they put in an offer which was accepted.

But, instead of buying a move-in-able home they bought a decrepit farmhouse, which sat on a three quarter acre rural site with commanding views over Belfast and the surrounding countryside.

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
C3 Architects,
c3architects.com

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Concrete interiors for new Co Cork home

The challenge for architects is to get the houses they design in the countryside to blend into the landscape. When it came to his own home, Andrew O'Brien came up with an ingenious solution by incorporating concrete interiors.

The process was the same as for any project I take on; we had a list of things we wanted out of the house and a specific location in which to put it.

The choice between traditional and modern is a question of taste but also rooted in the features of the land, such as orientation, views, overlooking, overshadowing, rural vs urban, exposed sensitive landscape, etc.

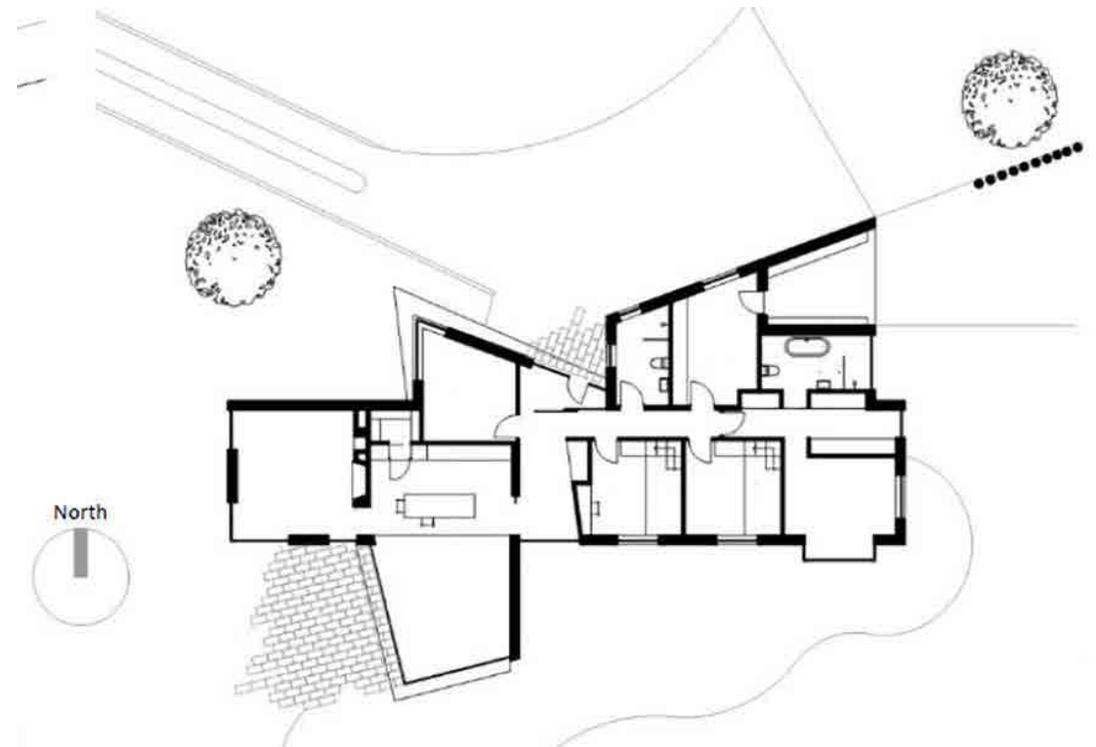
This site is located within an agricultural setting, backing onto the edge of a mature forest. For this reason the house is clad in deep green corrugated metal sheeting to reflect the farm sheds scattered about the landscape, but with crisp modern and highly detailed finishes and junctions.

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect

Andrew O'Brien Architects Ltd, mobile 086 0730113



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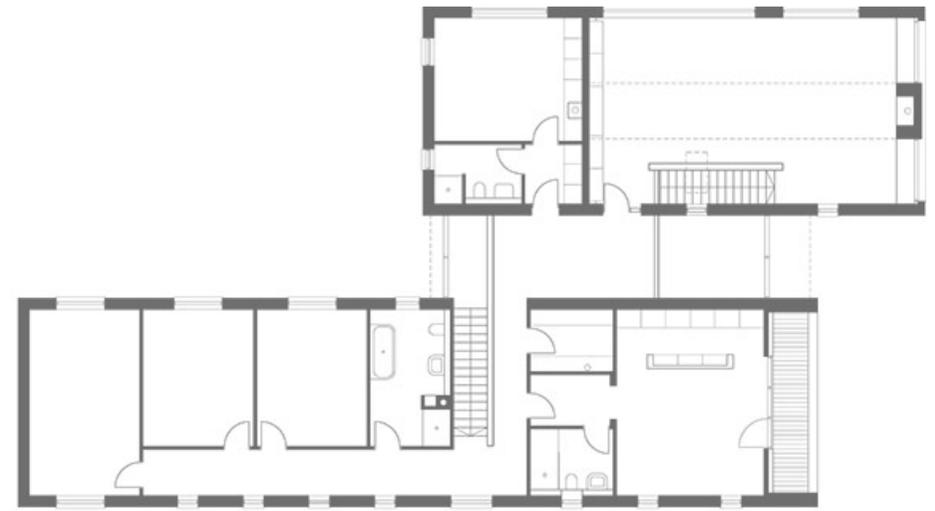
The multi-generational house

Building a home is always an emotional process. And for Cary Thompson, building a multi-generational house was the best way to honour the memory of his late mum.

In this project we cover:

- Working with an architect on an emotive project and how to choose the right architect for the job
- House plans
- Site problems due to planned roadworks
- Why a self-build made more sense than buying an existing house
- Dealing with tree preservation orders
- Multi-generational design details including shared utility room but separate postal addresses
- Red brick design to replace the Victorian house originally on the site
- Heating, ventilation specifications
- Kitchen and staircase designs and ethos

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect

John Kennedy,
tel. 93344944,
johnkennedyarchitect.com



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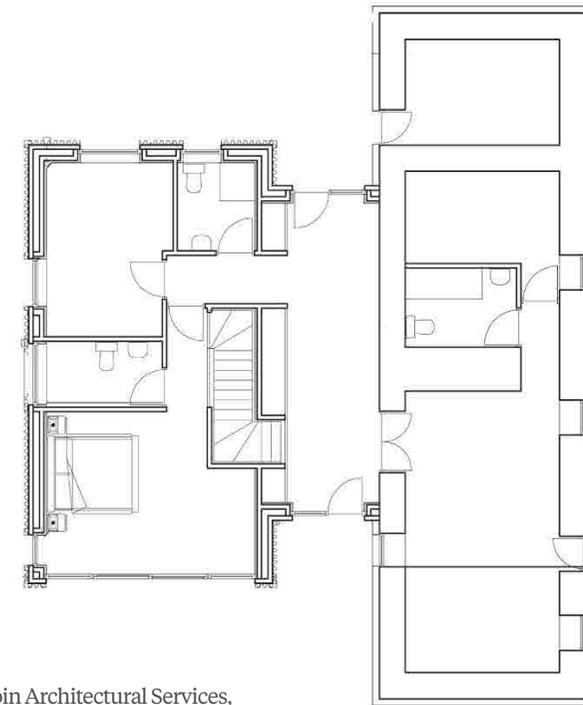
Barrel Roofed Extension: Sligo / Donegal coast line

While house hunting we fell in love with the panoramic views from this tiny derelict, coastal cottage,” explains Martin. “The vista reaches across sand dunes and spans County Sligo’s Grange estuary and Donegal Bay.”

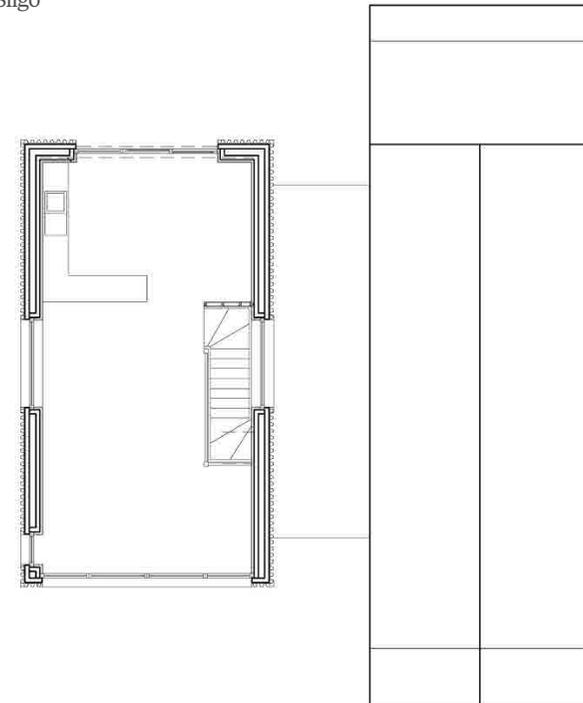
Not even the trees growing out of the ruin put them off. “We basically bought a pile of stones with ocean views,” he jokes. “I have estimated the date of construction to circa 1890, where it first appears on the historical online maps. Despite its age, it was not listed which meant we could go ahead and renovate the cottage in the first instance without planning permission.”

“The cottage floors were mud and cobble with some flags which sloped downhill towards the doors below. I was informed that the design here was to facilitate the livestock sleeping in the lower section and the slope aided washing out the waste through the doors in the morning. The occupants slept in the ‘uphill’ bedroom.”

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Martin McGloin Architectural Services,
Cliffoney, Co Sligo



Vernacular new build in Co Kildare

For John and Elaine Lawler, building themselves a new home in Co Kildare was all about moving back to their roots to build a vernacular house. They also made it a condition that it be completely finished when they moved in.

In this project we cover:

- Choosing where to build on gifted land
- Inspiration for the vernacular build
- Why they discarded their first design, for which they had received planning permission
- The redesign process
- Hiring an engineer to oversee the house construction
- Hiring a builder
- Appointing the architect as Project Supervisor Design Stage (PSDS) and the builder as Project Supervisor Construction Stage (PSCS)
- Choice of air to water heat pump and ventilation with heat recovery
- Triple glazed windows and brise soleil to combat overheating
- Choice of laminate and tiles over polished concrete
- Garden design

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect

Patrick Lynch MRIAI of House7 Architects,
Dublin 4, tel. 01 668 1110,
house7architects.ie

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1800s cottage renovation

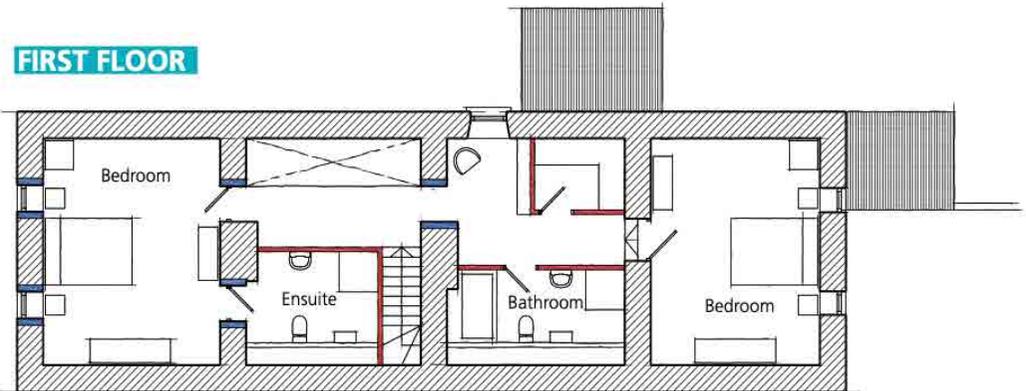
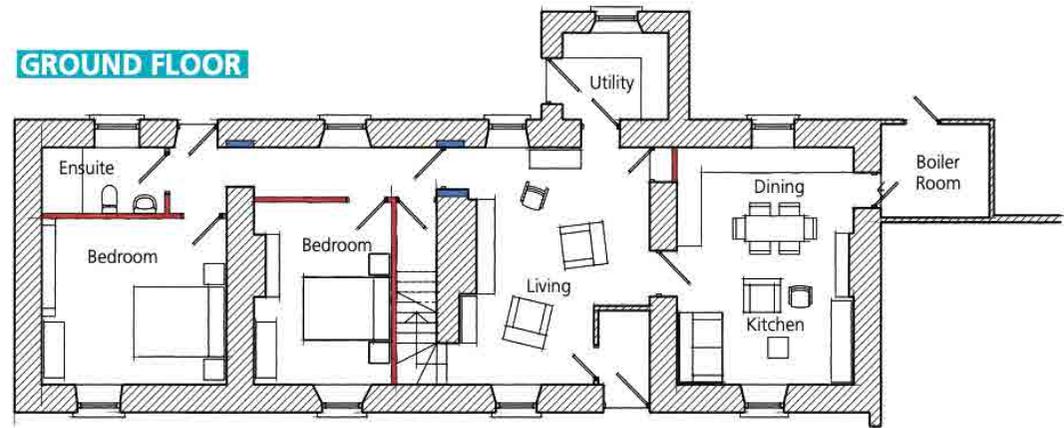
For Mary McGeough renovating this early 1800s cottage was not just about preserving history, it was about paying tribute to her aunt and cherishing childhood memories.

As a vernacular cottage listed on the Heritage at Risk Northern Ireland register, with a listing grade of B+, this project was bound to be special.

“The house was bequeathed to me by my aunt, who was 93 when she passed away,” recounts Mary. “It is also where my father was reared with his brother and two sisters; my mum and dad even lived here for a short while after they were married.”

“I have such lovely memories staying here, regularly visiting. I would come most Sundays and when I was old enough, I’d cycle down to visit. When I stayed over my aunt would always give me the upstairs bedroom. Unless her sister was visiting, in that case I’d use the small bunk bed on the landing. I loved spending time in the house.”

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Patrick Bradley Architects,
Maghera, Co Derry,
tel. 7940 1814, pb-architects.com

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Narrow site for Wicklow new build

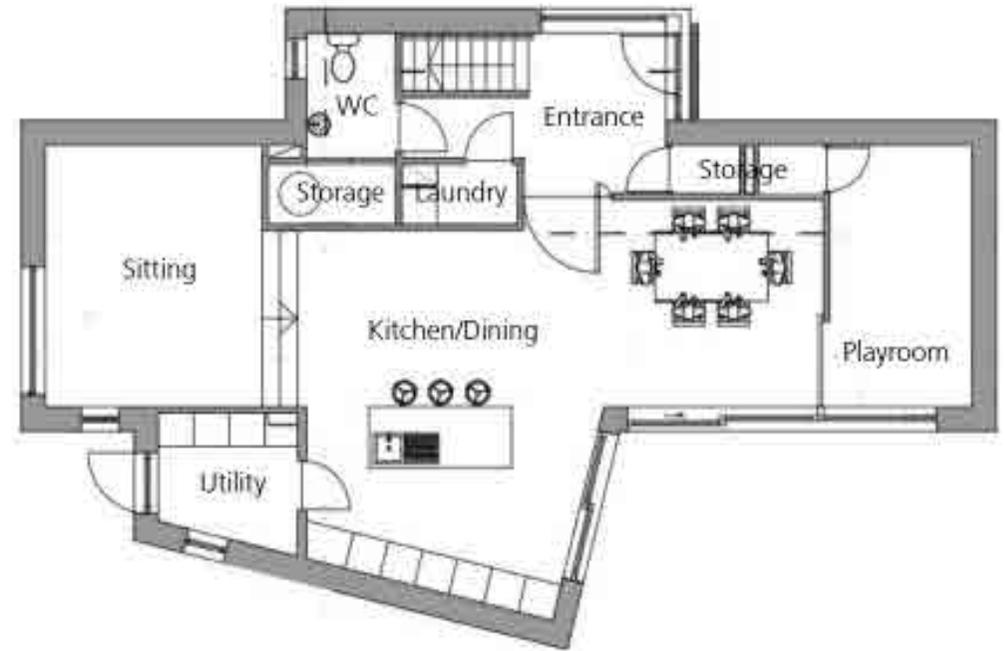
Architect
Luis Reis MRIAI, BBA architecture,
Delgany, Co Wicklow,
tel. 01 2876949, bba.ie

Securing planning permission in Co Wicklow took longer than building Luis Reis' family home – in large part because it sits on a narrow infill site, sandwiched between two overlooking properties.

In this project we cover:

- How an architect designs his own family home
- How they got their infill site
- Design challenges and planning obstacles
- Choice of building method
- Opting out of appointing an assigned certifier
- Day to day on site
- Budget and project management tips
- Build costs including SIPS supplier
- Full specification and floor plans

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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Modern bungalow in County Donegal

When Dawn and Declan Lambe of Co Donegal found a site with jaw dropping sea and country views, the modern bungalow self-build of a lifetime beckoned...

In this project we cover:

- How the site guided the design with details of stone for exterior, blending into the landscape
- Proving local needs for planning permission with details of pre-planning meeting
- Bungalow layout with details of contemporary finishes
- How the build came in under budget
- How they did the panelling throughout
- Solid in frame kitchen design details and tips
- Practical bathroom designs with a touch of tech
- Soft furnishing details for living room and installing a two sided stove
- Boot room design: how to make it functional and beautiful
- Staircase design and build with money saving tips
- Cost effective tile choice for downstairs
- Build process and heating system decision, stove specification and how often it's used



To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Northwest Modern Designs,
Buncrana, Co Donegal,
tel. 074 932 0860

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Extension connecting a beautiful garden

Gareth and Lesley McAuley's extension project created a connection with the garden and increased the value of their home in Co Antrim.

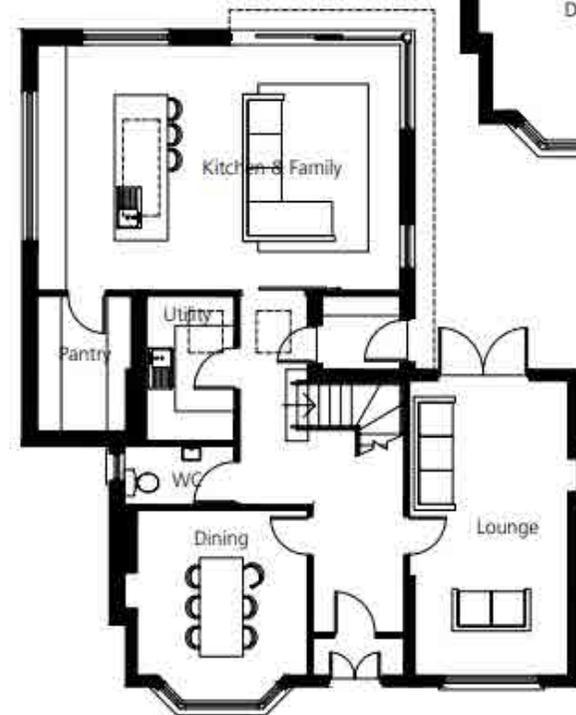
In this project we cover:

- Details of 1950s house and demolish plans of previous extensions
- Internal redesign and extension design to maximise the garden views
- Tips to stay on budget and how to tackle an extension project as a novice
- Plumbing upgrades and new heating system details
- Choosing a builder and putting a contract in place with details including prime cost (PC) sums
- Cost effective and stylish choice of windows, plus other means to reduce draughts
- Staircase design and interior design details
- House value before and after
- Full before and after floor plans
- Insulation strategy and how it went on site
- Supplier list and specification

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



GROUND FLOOR BEFORE



GROUND FLOOR AFTER

Architect

Colin McAuley, Colin McAuley Planning,
Belfast, tel. 90 489441,
colin@colinmcauleyplanning.com

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

Architect designed modern new build in Co Down

Architect

John Lavery of BGA Architects, Newtownards, Co Down, bga-ni.com

Giving free reign to an architect to design your new build pays off. And as Kerri Farrell found out, it's not nearly as expensive as your might think.

In this project we cover:

- Buying a serviced site
- Design process with architect
- Hiring a quantity surveyor after the construction drawings were done
- Decision to go direct labour and how they managed the day to day on site
- How they kept on top of the budget and what they would change
- Full details of window design and spec
- Choice of heating and ventilation systems and energy use since moved in
- Interior design process and lighting plan
- Full supplier list and floor plans

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

Steel frame new build in Co Wicklow

This Co Wicklow steel frame new build came about from a gift of land nestled in the forest.

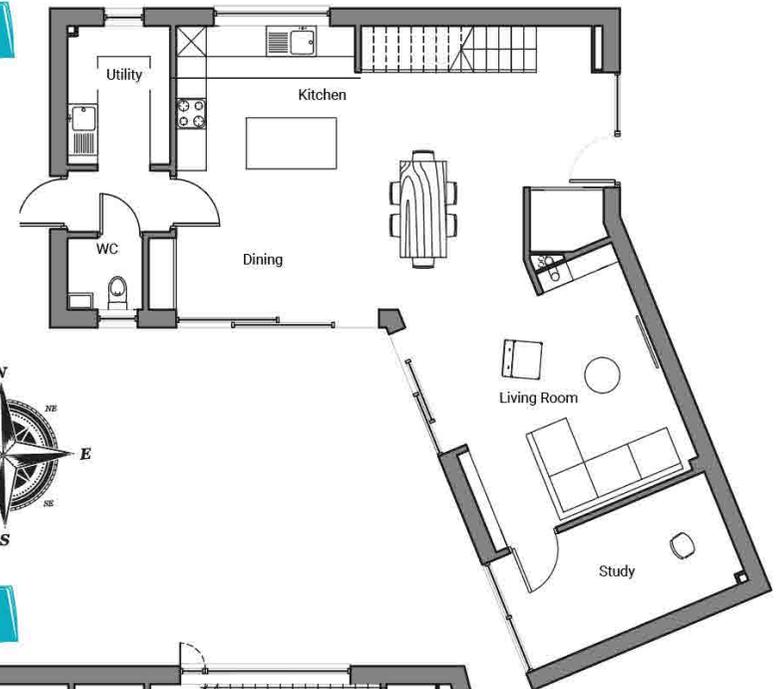
In this project we cover:

- Coming up with a design that blended in
- Why it took nine months to get planning permission
- Building to the passive house standard without certification
- Choice of steel frame as the building method
- Interior design choices
- Renewable technology: pros and cons
- Working to a tight schedule
- Challenges finding the products they wanted and how they got around it
- Top tips and advice to stay on track and on budget
- Floor plans, specification and supplier list
- Professional photographs

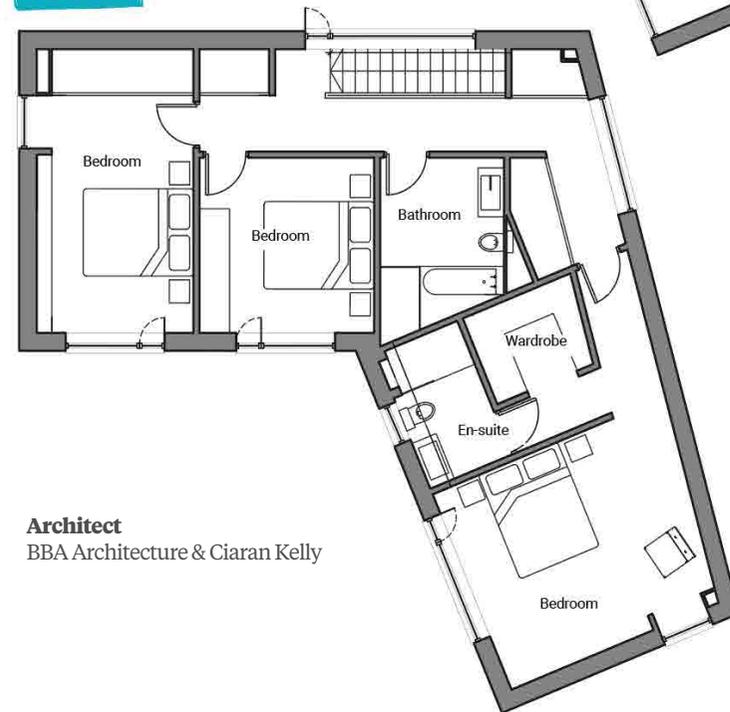
To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



Architect
BBA Architecture & Ciaran Kelly

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

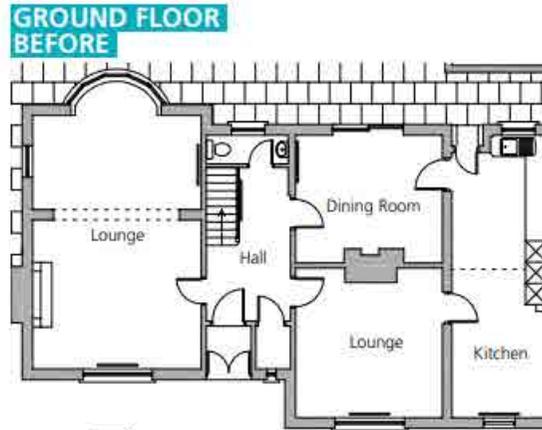
Rejuvenation of Dublin home

How Claire and Robert Watts turned this well-located but cold Dublin home into a functional and cosy nest for their family.

Built in the 1940s after WWII the materials used were minimal, mostly thin concrete blocks, bricks and wood. There was hardly any insulation left as well as dated electric systems,” says Claire.

“My husband grew up in this house and from the beginning his parents were happy with us making big changes and start with a clean slate because they knew it needed an upgrade.”
“We knew about its faults and qualities. I is a place that we loved and we wanted the best for it.”

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Mark Davies from ARC Design,
arcdesign.ie

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

Downsizing in Belfast

Pauline Millar's downsizing project in Belfast shows what can be done with a small property and a limited budget.

In this project we cover:

- House hunting tips for a renovation project
- Maximise small footprint by designing the extension and garden at the same time
- Budget friendly decisions
- How to use ever inch of space: storage tips
- Split level design both inside and out to maximise light and views
- Hidden drainage details and concealed washing line
- Full kitchen design with island storage
- Stripping back the bathroom to add a bath
- How to configure the floor to ceiling windows for least cost, ventilation and maximum visual impact
- How to increase water pressure
- Choice of gas boiler and wood burning stove

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)

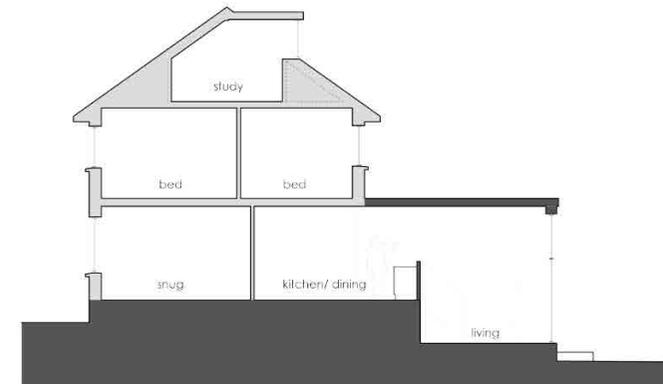


GROUND FLOOR BEFORE



GROUND FLOOR AFTER

SECTION THROUGH KITCHEN/LIVING/DINING



Architect
Robert Gilmour Architects,
Belfast, tel. 9064 9098,
rgtect.co.uk

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

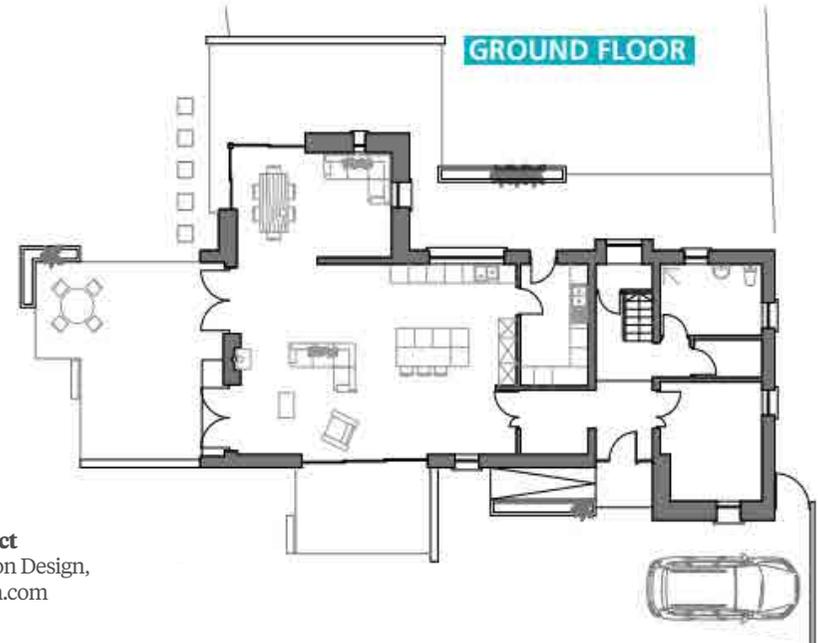
County Meath Two Storey

When Denis McNamara of Co Meath inherited his grandparents' farmhouse, he was living in London and had a stark choice to make.

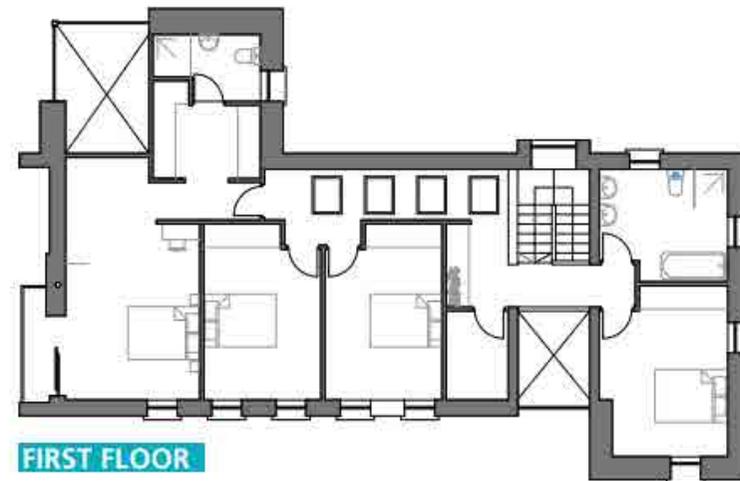
In this project we cover:

- Cost savings through design changes
- Why and how he chose to demolish the existing house and build new
- Finding an architectural designer and planning application process for the new build
- Reusing limestone from the demolition and other external finishes
- Details of the window design, vaulted ceiling and open plan layout
- Acoustic challenges with double height ceilings and how they were overcome
- Choice of heating and ventilation systems
- Project management route and making changes on site
- Structural challenges during the build
- Details of DIY landscaping

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Joe Fallon Design,
joefallon.com



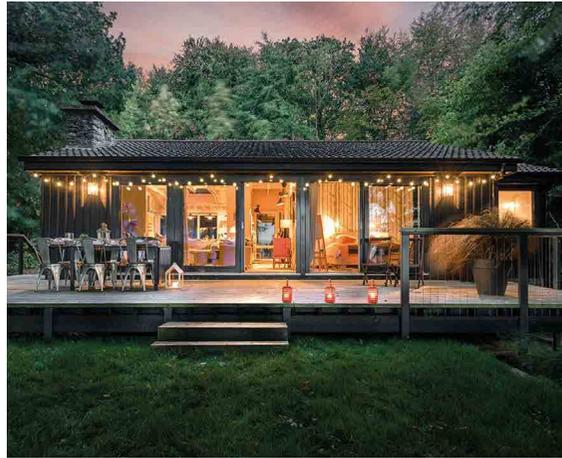
County Westmeath Lakeside Renovation

For Egon Walesch, this lakeside renovation was a balancing act between modernising the place and conserving childhood memories.

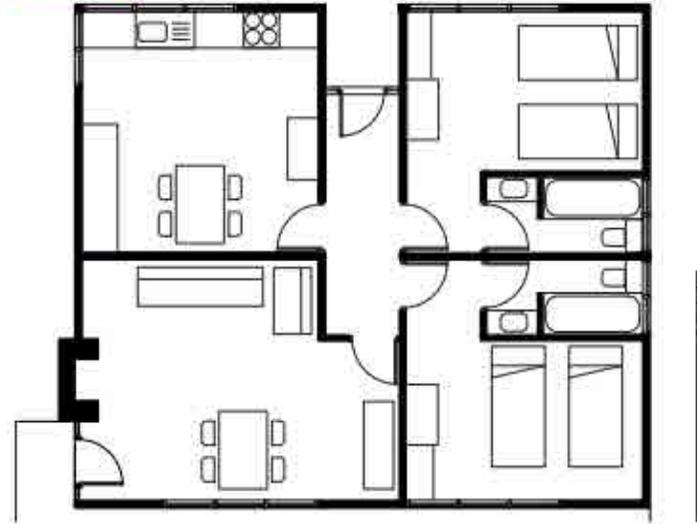
In this project we cover:

- Renovating a lakeside timber frame, chalet style house
- Interior choices with cost saving tips
- Why he was told to knock down the house
- How he persisted and managed to find the right builder for the job
- Details of internal design to make the house more space efficient
- Details of planning-exempt extension
- Details of reroofing work
- Details of log stove with back boiler for radiators
- Tadelakt waterproof plaster details
- Managing the projects from abroad
- Full before & after floor plans

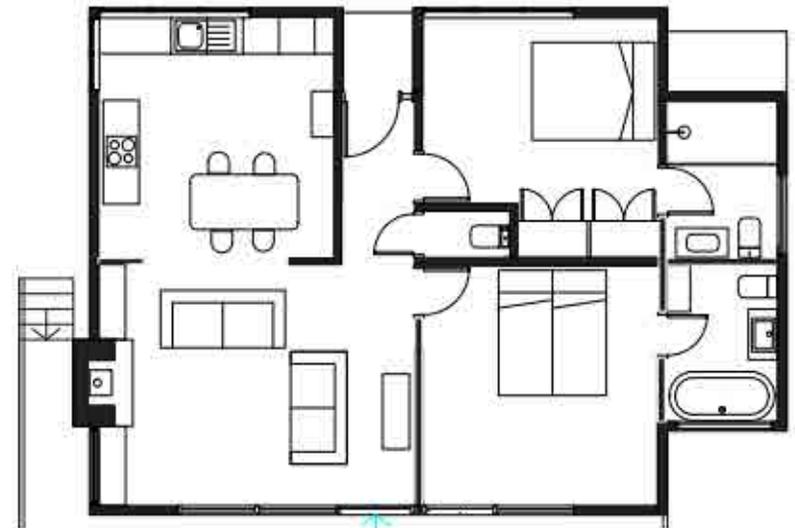
To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



BEFORE



AFTER



[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

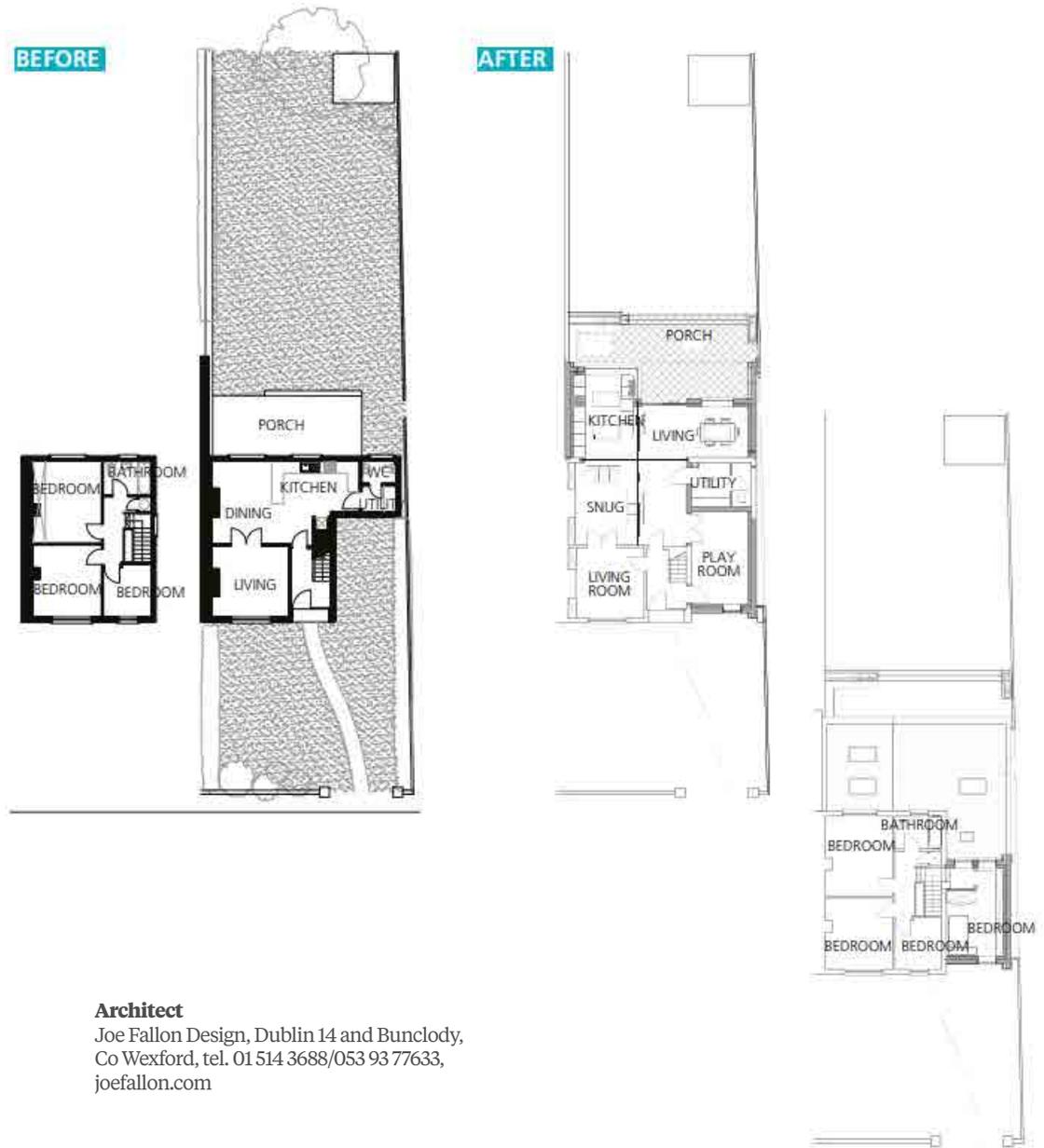
County Dublin Renovation

A cost-effective extension pulled this typical 1950s semi detached Dublin suburban house back into shape.

We bought the house 10 years ago; the same person had lived in it since it was built in the early 1950s. It was a three-bed semi detached end of terrace house,” explains Emma Blain who lived in it for a year with husband Andy Macken before adding a new kitchen and renovating.

“A couple of years later we realised it was still a difficult living space, we needed a new bathroom and utility, so we did a small renovation on the existing wetroom and did up the bathroom upstairs.”

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect

Joe Fallon Design, Dublin 14 and Bunclody,
Co Wexford, tel. 01 514 3688/053 93 77633,
joefallon.com

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

Amazing County Down Renovation

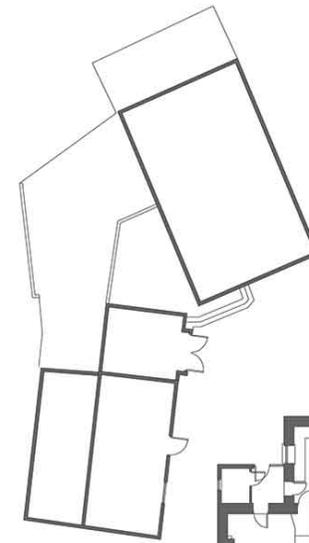
This County Down renovation and extension project consisted of upgrading a semi derelict house sitting on a site with amazing views.

In this project we cover:

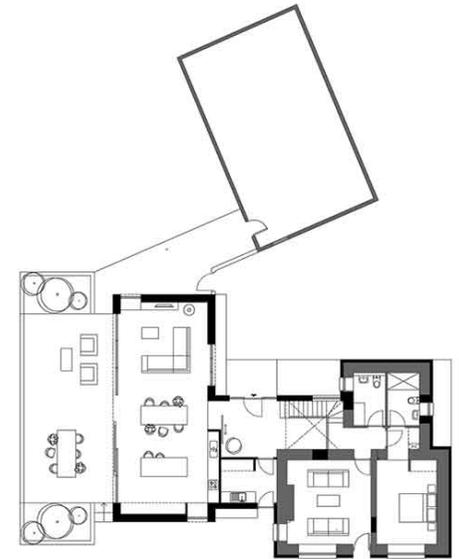
- Site hunting and planning permission
- Changes to the design
- Rebuilding parts of the house
- How to get started on the landscaping early without breaking the bank
- Choosing a builder and day to day self-builder experiences on site
- Budget cuts: How to make savings on finishes and simpler ways of building
- Details of unexpected cost overruns
- Details of lighting and interior design scheme
- Alternative to polished concrete floor
- Full supplier list & contact details
- Full build specifications, including wall, floor, roof and glazing
- Floor plans and dozens of project photos



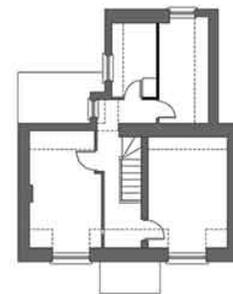
To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



EXISTING
GROUND
FLOOR



PROPOSED
GROUND
FLOOR



EXISTING
FIRST
FLOOR



PROPOSED
FIRST
FLOOR

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

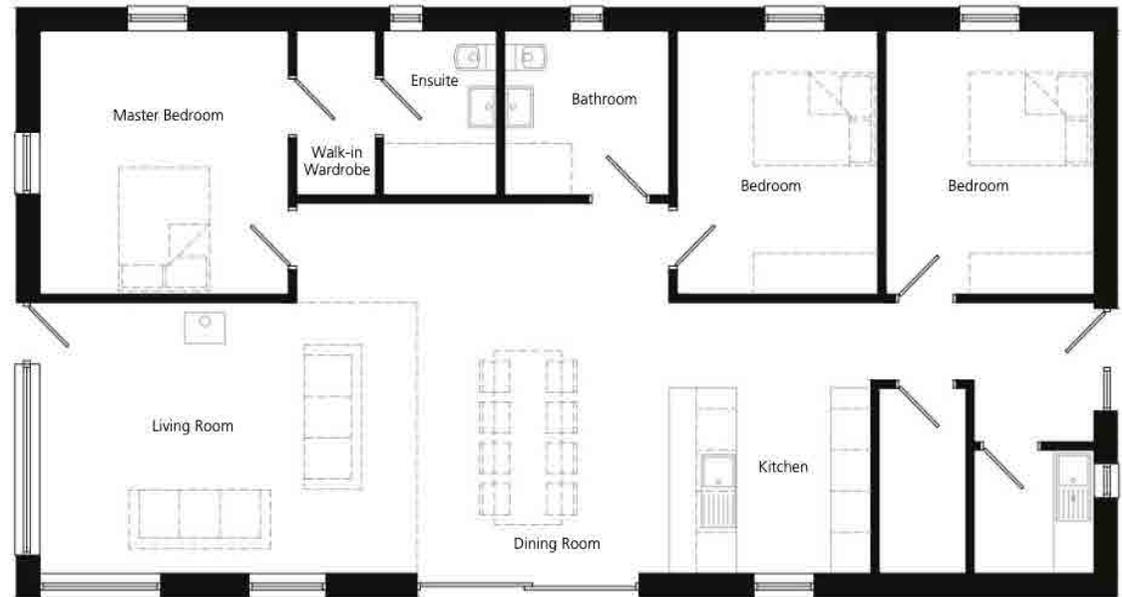
Low cost energy efficient rectangular design

Ken Gill's rectangular self-built home in Co Down is low cost and energy efficient.

In this project we cover:

- How he came up with the shape and size of his house to maximise energy efficiency
- Choice of timber frame and working with a kit supplier for design and installation
- Reasons for choosing fibre cement cladding
- Finding windows suitable for seaside location
- Direct labour tasks, from pouring foundations himself to hiring trades
- Floor covering options and flat pack kitchen
- Top tips to keep on top of the budget
- Floor plans and specification

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect

Gareth Boyd of 2020 Architects, 2020architects.co.uk

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

County Wexford holiday home

Self-build mortgages can be hard to get if you plan to build a holiday home but for Helen and Daniel Smyth the lure of the sea proved too strong to resist.

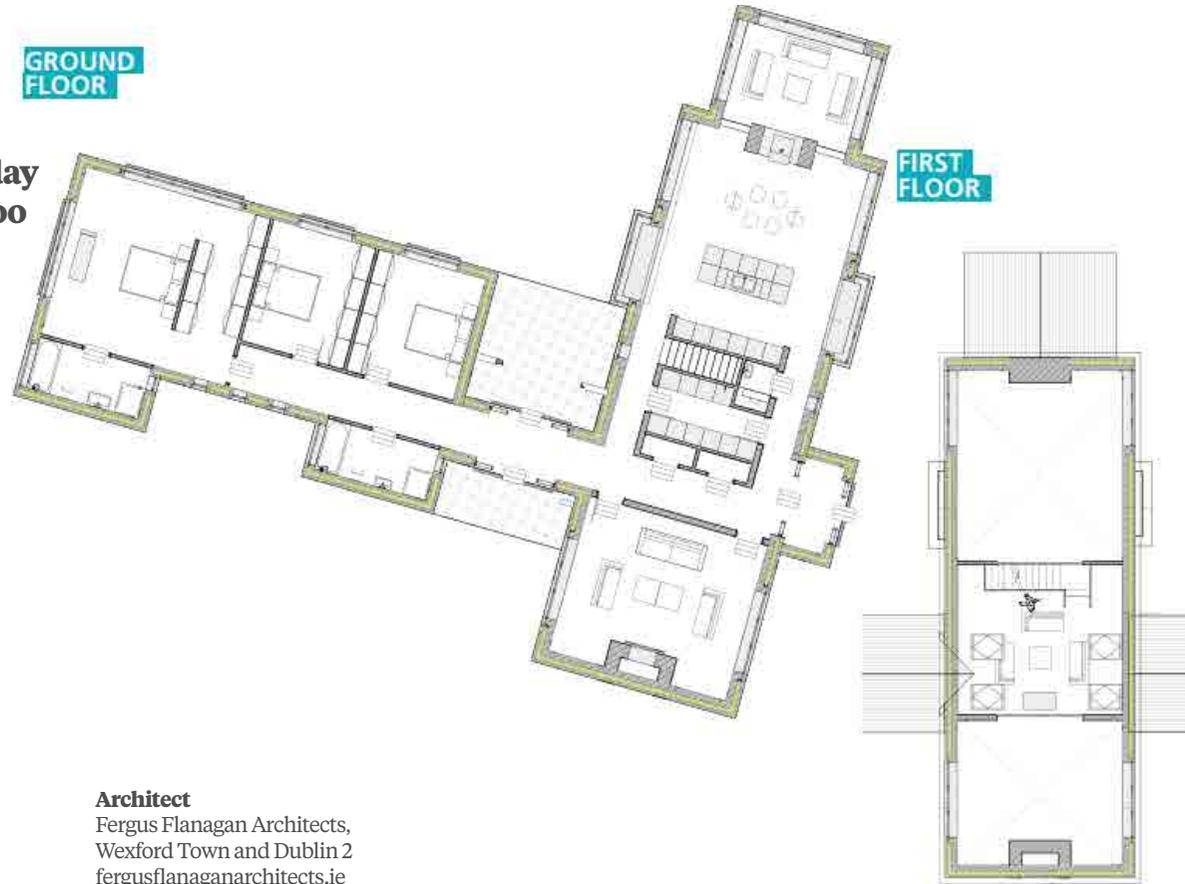
In this project we cover:

- How to go about building the dream holiday home, starting with finding a site
- Decision to renovate or knock down to build new
- Finding an architect and design process
- Tender process, how they chose their builder and troubleshooting on site
- Planning permission issues including hitch with percolation test
- Different versions of the minimalist design layout
- Types of tiles and paint to cater to mud loving dogs and children
- Learning from mistakes in previous homes
- Futureproofing and accessibility for older age
- Unforeseen cost overruns and why hiring an architect saved them money
- Details of key design features: sunroom and double height ceilings

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



GROUND FLOOR



Architect

Fergus Flanagan Architects,
Wexford Town and Dublin 2
fergusflanaganarchitects.ie

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

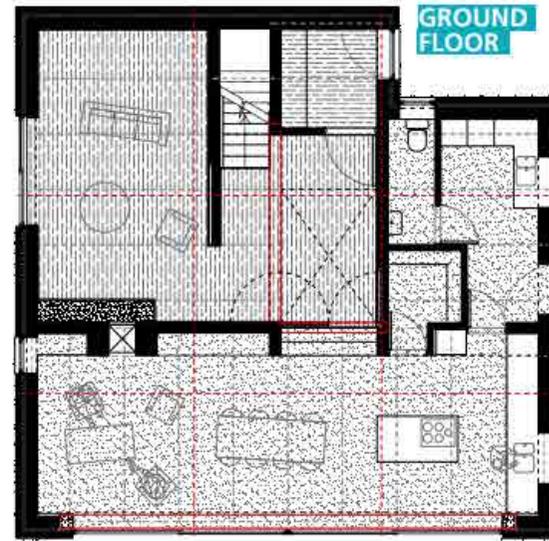
County Cavan build with a difference

Taking the time to plan your self-build pays incredible dividends as Sean and Eloise Duffy learned after spending four years designing their Co Cavan home that embraces architectural forms – it really is a new build with a difference.

In this project we cover:

- How the project came about, main contributors to the design process
- Issues with planning permission
- Build timeline and how they managed the project
- How they managed costs
- Concrete floors and timber finishes
- Architect's account of the build
- Top tips for a successful build
- Floor plans, supplier list and Professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)

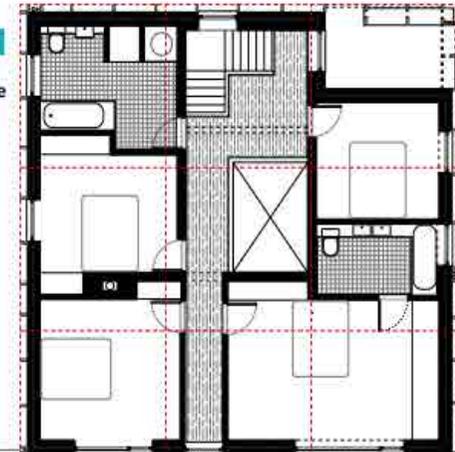


GROUND FLOOR

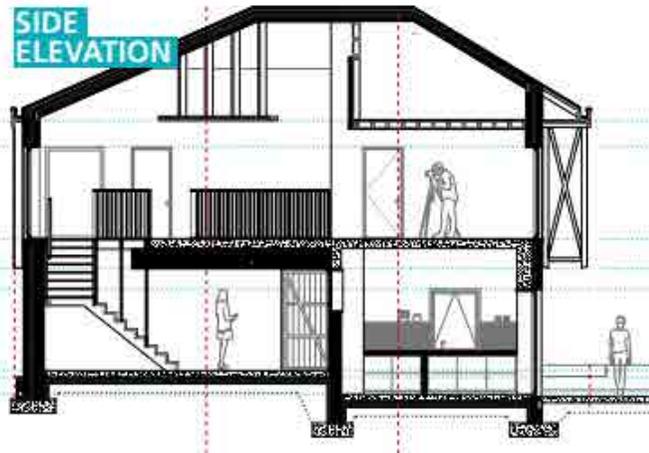
Architect
Thomas O'Brien

FIRST FLOOR

House size
2,200 sqft
Plot size
0.4 acre



SIDE ELEVATION



[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

The impressive extension with sliding glass doors

To get the most out of a renovation or extension project you need to have lived in the house for at least a couple of years to see what changes will work best for you, working from the inside out, as Gayle and Graeme Doyle of Co Down found out.

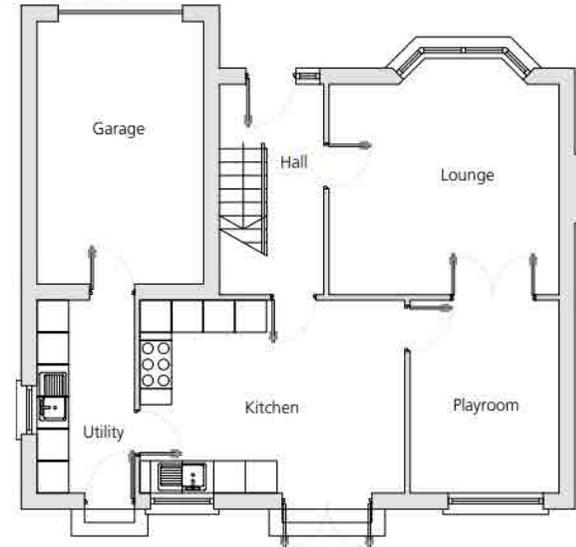
In this project we cover:

- Design details of the extension with all glass doors
- Insulation strategy including existing floors
- How the house stays fresh during hot summers with natural ventilation
- Design and installation details of the polished concrete floor
- Reason why they didn't need planning permission for the extension
- Working with Building Control
- Initial time frame and reasons for delays
- Budgeting and scheduling tips
- How it went on site: managing the day to day
- Why their diet suffered because of the build
- Lighting design and extending the existing heating system
- Interior design and colour schemes, including DIY elements
- Choice of rooflights and sourcing it on the other side of the border

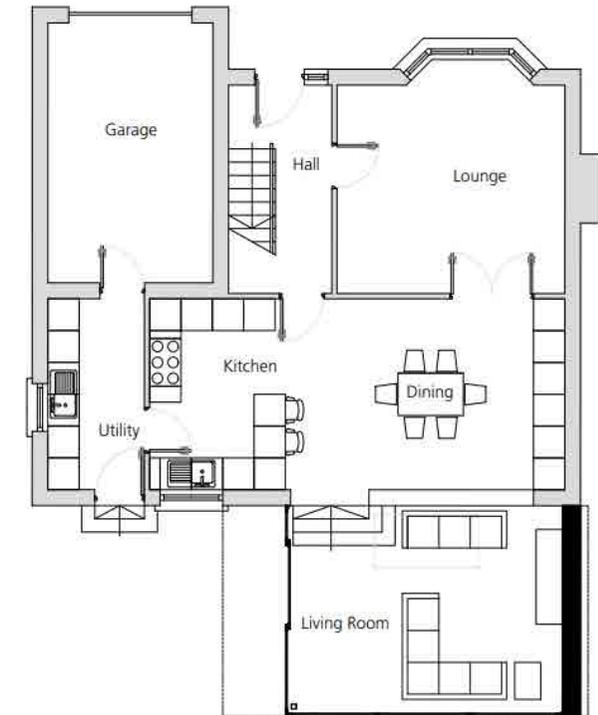
To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



BEFORE



AFTER



Architect

Glenn Massey, Lisburn, Co Antrim,
mobile 07779 572289,
gmarchitect.co.uk

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

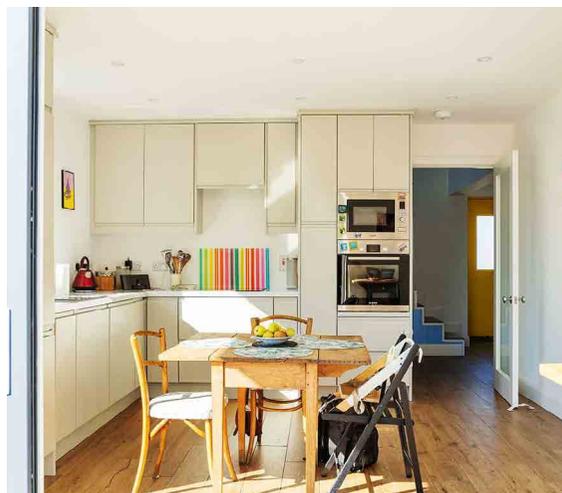
Mid-century extension in Dublin

How Cora Marshall and Philip Clarke converted their compact 1950s two-up-two-down house into a bright and spacious family home.

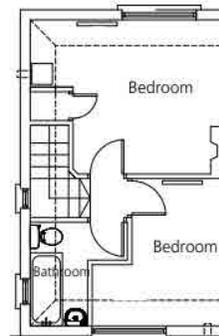
In this project we cover:

- Working with an architect and extending at the side of the end-of-terrace concrete house
- How to extend and maximise garden space with before and after floor plans
- Moving the internal staircase
- Details of the external wall insulation work
- Window replacement
- Securing a self-build mortgage
- Redesigning the plans to the budget
- Construction drawings for the extension project and for future alterations
- Builder contract details
- Demolition work, moving out and the need to replumb
- Snagging

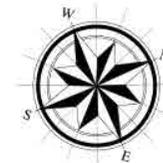
To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



BEFORE



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



Architect

Fergal McGirl MRIAI,
Dublin 1,
tel. 01 873 5441,
fmgarchitects.ie

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Contemporary Co Down Build

It was always Dom Thorpe's dream to build a contemporary home, but his wife Nicola wasn't convinced it was such a good idea... at least at first.

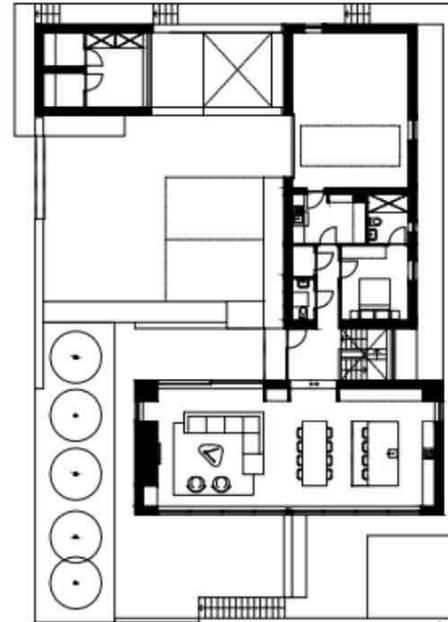
In this project we cover:

- Benefits of self-building over buying an existing house
- Contemporary build design details and finishes, how to choose the right architect
- Getting planning permission in an Area of Outstanding Beauty and how it worked with PPS21
- Low energy home specification including glazing
- Issues with floor to ceiling triple glazed windows
- Choice of wood burning stove and why it's not used
- How the project was managed and details of site meetings
- Top tips for surviving a self-build
- Floor plans and podcast

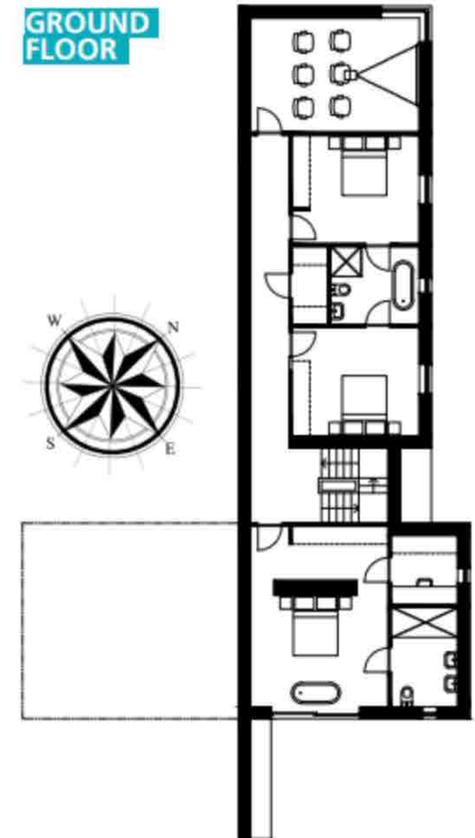
To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



FIRST
FLOOR



GROUND
FLOOR



Architect
BGA Architects,
Newtownards, Co Down,
tel. 9181 5736,
bga-ni.com

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

Georgian house built from scratch

Mark Johnson precision engineered most of the tools required to build his circular mock-Georgian new build.

We started with the site and in terms of orientation we wanted the house to be facing dead south, with the kitchen eastward, the front door getting full sun at 12 noon and the orangery benefiting from it in the evening. We also wanted to introduce a lot of curves, simply because they're more interesting than straight lines. We went the full hog with a circular hallway which in turn dictated we have a circular staircase.

At the design stage we spent a lot of time on the kitchen and snug because these two rooms are where we knew we'd be spending pretty much all of our time. We wanted it to be big and workable and didn't want anything modern on show, so everything is concealed apart from appliances that match the range cooker. The larder room hides the unsightly items.

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Paul McAlister Architects,
pmarchitects.com

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

1800's renovation with amazing beauty

If, like many others in the area, you think this house is owned by a famous boxer – think again.

It's funny because we still have people asking us if we bought the house from a celebrity; he just happened to be looking at the same time we were," chides Mairead. "All it takes is a 'no comment' at the builder's merchant to get the rumour mill going. To this day people think he's the rightful owner." "It's the kind of property we passed on our way to work every day but never dreamt of owning. It's quite prominent on the landscape and well known in the area, it was more of a landmark than anything else. It looked too big and expensive for us."

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
John Lavery of BGA NI,
bga-ni.com

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

New build in County Armagh

There are some things you can plan for, like choosing finishes in advance, but others are unpredictable. Such as having to fork out £15,000 to get an electricity connection in a built-up area for a new build in Co Armagh.

In this project we cover:

- Design process and planning application with an architectural designer
- Working with a quantity surveyor and the tender process
- Delays due to stonework
- Challenges due to stonework including concrete lintels
- Internal insulation strategy
- Decision against wood burner
- Oil boiler set up with underfloor heating
- Details of the three sided gas fire in the open plan area
- Reason for the need to pay for a new electricity pole
- Electrics including LEDs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



Architect

Glyn Owen of The Designworks Studio,
Portadown, Co Armagh,
tel. 38852724,
thedesignworksstudio.com

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

Major renovation in County Antrim

Converting your home into a space that's tailor-made for you can have life changing consequences, as Siobhan Hawkins and Gerry Gormley learned.

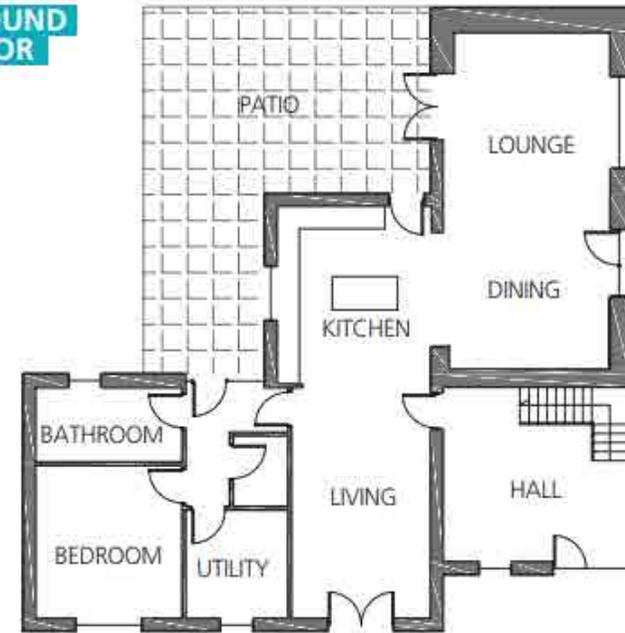
In this project we cover:

- Issues working with first architect and lessons learned
- Redesigning the house themselves and then approaching a new architect
- Planning permission and having to resubmit their application
- Finding a builder and costing the project
- Build timeline with details of day to day on site and how they kept an eye on the build
- Choice of systems and designing for solar gain
- Choice of windows and how they framed the views
- Choice of low maintenance finishes
- Kitchen design details with tips including costing the worktop
- DIY elements to save on costs
- Top tips to stay on track and on budget
- Professional photographs, supplier list and specification

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



Architect
Slemish Design Studio Architects,
Ballymena, Co Antrim,
slemishdesignstudio.co.uk

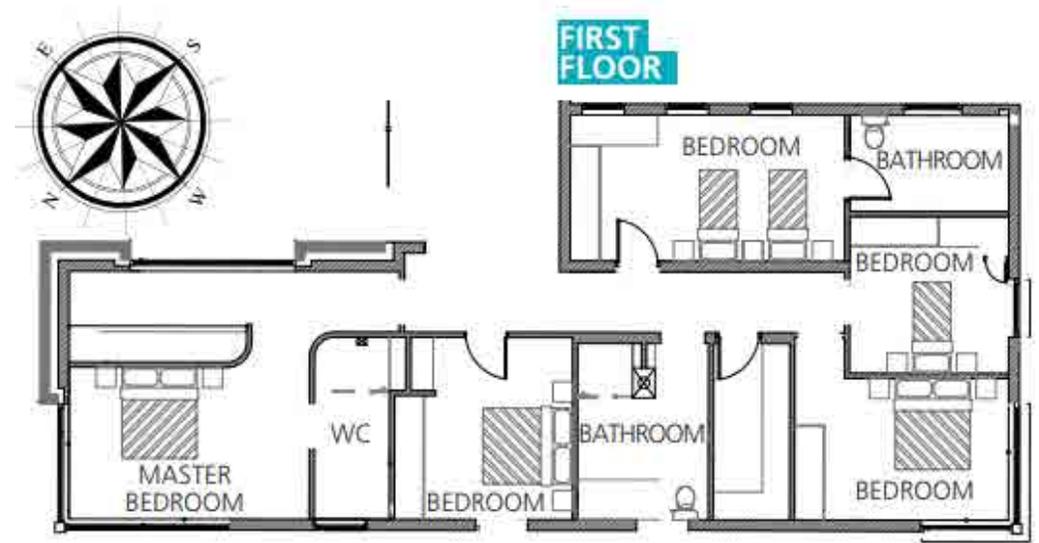
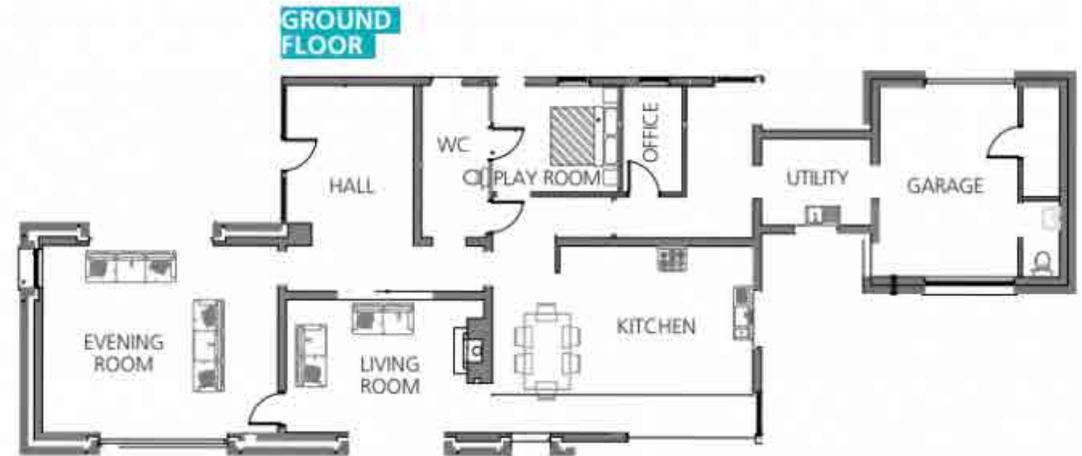
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‘It takes 40 cows to heat the house in winter’

How Denise and Matt Donoghue’s research led them to devise an innovative heating and hot water system.

When Denise and Matt got married over a decade ago they set up their base on Matt’s family agricultural holdings, and lived in the farmhouse that had been on the land for over 100 years. The couple carried out an energy upgrade by adding insulation and solar thermal panels. But to make it really work as a functioning family home, they knew they needed to do some substantial work. “The house was cosy and warm for us but it was pretty dark because the windows were quite low,” explains Denise.

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect

Mark Salter MIEI, Kinsale, Co Cork,
mobile 087 795 1730,
marksalterengineering@gmail.com

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

County Tyrone Barrel Roof House

Serial self-builders Eric and Gladys Black built their cost-effective barrel roof house to make the most of the rolling countryside views.

In this project we cover:

- How they designed their dream house to retire to and to make the most of the views
- Details of budget-friendly design: shape, size and choice of finishes
- Why he chose timber frame as the building method
- Warm roof construction details for the barrel roof house
- Discussion around overheating and cross ventilation
- Kitchen design
- Heating system details including boiler and wood burning stove
- Full floor plans and images

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Trevor Hutton of T4 Architects,
Stewartstown, Co Tyrone,
t4architects.co.uk

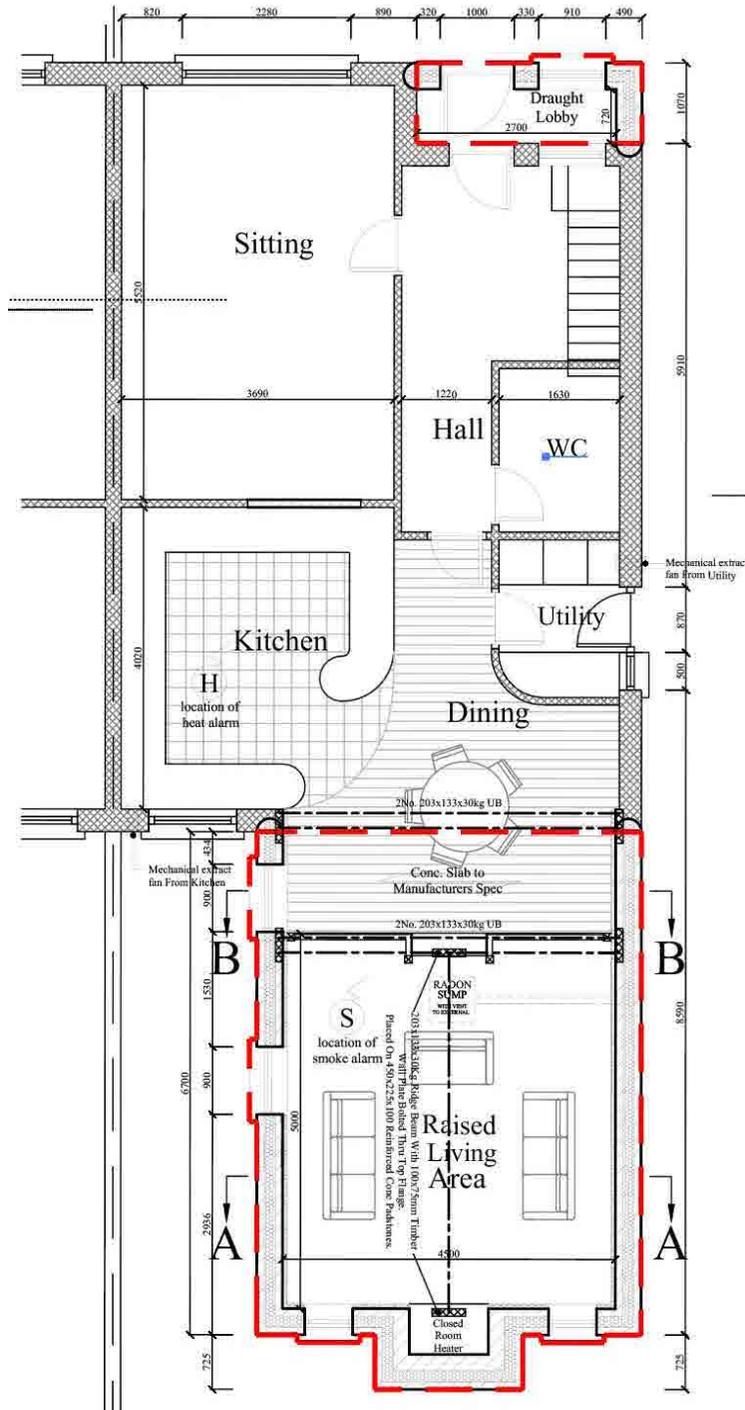
Semi detached makeover

Clíodhna and Enda Rooney had a choice between moving or extending; they decided to stay put and inject the wow factor into their semi detached home.

In this project we cover:

- How to renovate and extend a semi-detached house
- Extension that provides privacy and brings light in
- Dividing up the kitchen and open plan areas with different levels and partitions
- Heating upgrades and insulation grant
- Lighting design
- Kitchen design
- Floor plans
- Specification and supplier list
- Professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
J. Martin McLaughlin B.Eng
(Hons) CEng MIEI of October
House Design Ltd, Ballyshannon,
Co Donegal, octoberhouse.org

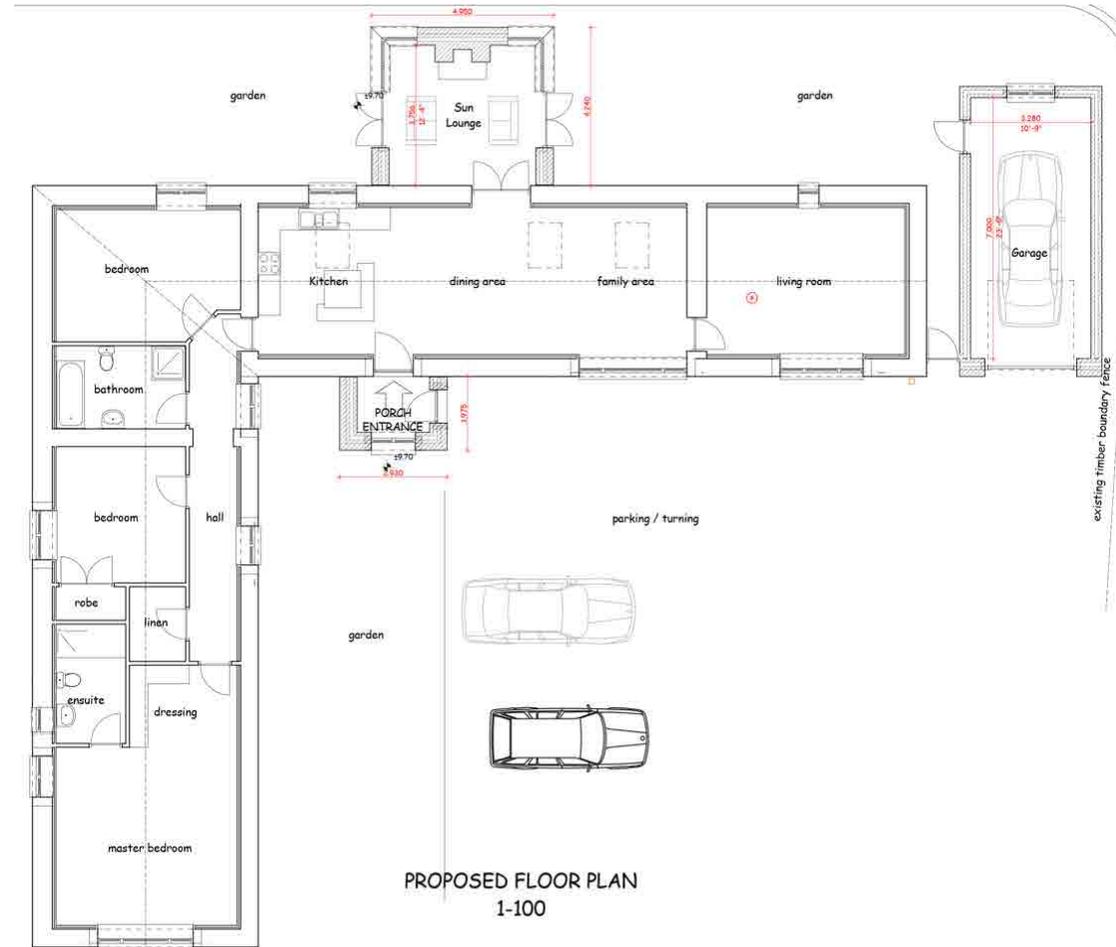
Barn conversion at its finest

Even though Andrew and Julie Rogers' barn conversion, completed over a decade ago, gave them the home they always dreamt of, once they were living in the house they realised they could do with some additions.

In this project we cover:

- Renovating for maximum resale value in an area of outstanding beauty
- Draughtproofing the barn with details of porch design
- Garage design
- Planning approvals and floor plans
- Working with Building Control, including changes to beam sizes and insulation
- Living room extension with new wood burning stove

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



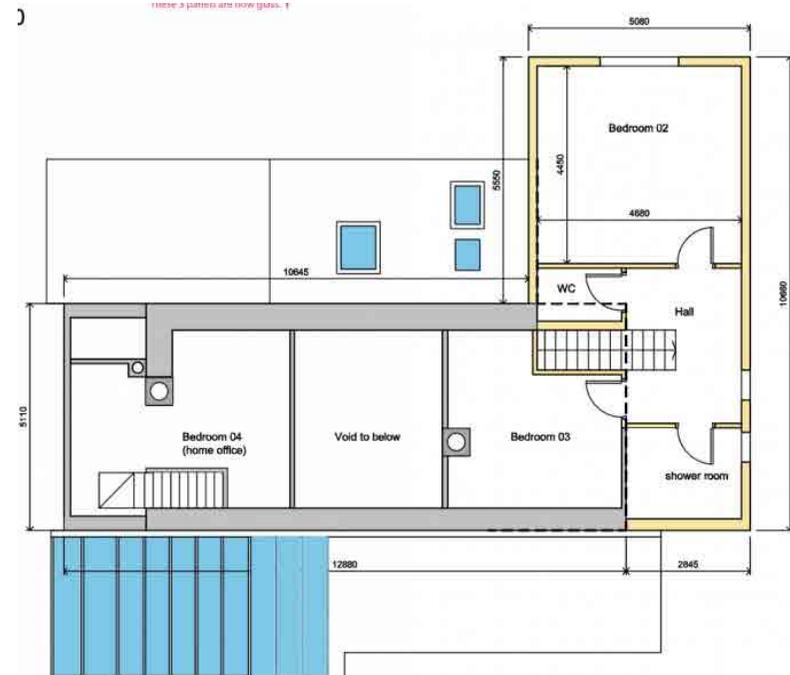
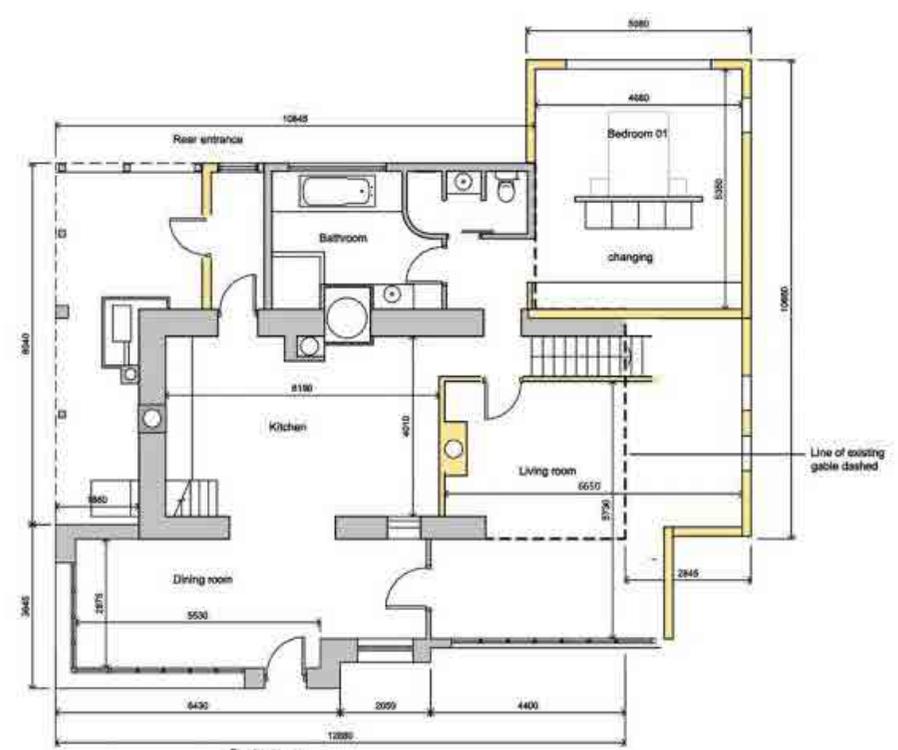
DIY self-build on a budget

It wasn't by design that Paul and Rebecca O'Connor became largely self-sufficient, it was a by-product of their self-build.

I was looking for a place to renovate – which I was convinced would have to be by the sea – and came across this house in a woodland in the year 2000. Not building in an exposed location presented its benefits and I quite liked the Hansel and Gretel feel to the place,” recounts Paul.

“It's not what I expected to buy but my budget was very limited; I was 27 at the time and working in Dublin. For me the most important thing was not getting into debt.”

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



VIEW PROJECT HERE

Westmeath build with minimalist finishes

This timber frame new build in Co Westmeath with minimalist finishes is the antidote to city living, featuring plenty storage and a large kitchen.

In this project we cover:

- Details of pre planning meeting with local council
- Choosing a timber frame build
- How the house was built to be a Passive House
- Design choices for a family with young children
- Heating and ventilation systems and how they've worked out
- Interior design choices: minimalist finishes
- Tips for a smooth build
- Specification, floor plans and supplier list
- Professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Blair Adamson MRIAI and Mel McGerr MRIAI MCIAT of Murphy + McGerr Architecture, Athlone, Co Westmeath, mmarchitecture.ie



[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

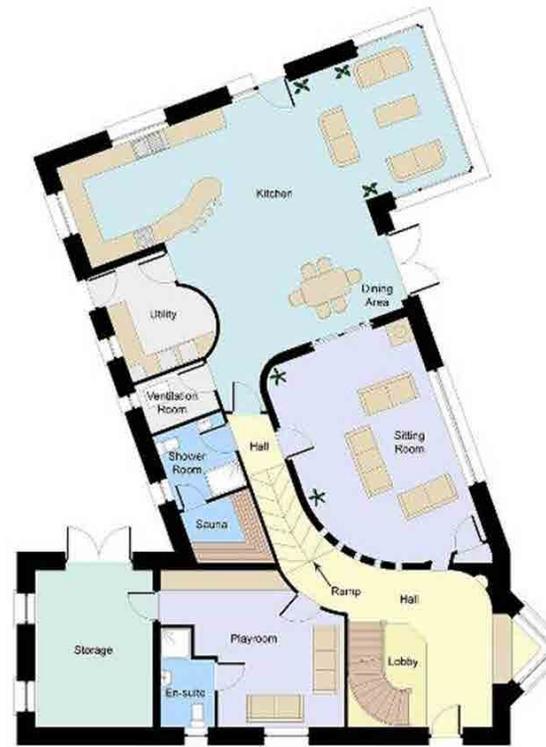
Passive house pioneer

Find out what changes Tomás O’Leary made to his home, which was the first Passive House certified self-build not only in Ireland but in the English-speaking world.

When Tomás built his passive house in 2004 he was aiming for a home which needed just 15 per cent of the heating demand of a convention build, a concept that wife Mairead and almost everyone else in Ireland thought at the time was outlandish.

But the Passive House method had been tried and tested in Germany so, undeterred Tomás set about replicating it here. This despite the fact that Tomás had to import all the materials for his selfbuild, including the triple glazed windows, as none of them could be sourced in Ireland.

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Ground Floor



First Floor

Cottage Extension & Renovation

Architect
FMK Architecture, Ballymena,
Co Antrim, fmkni.com

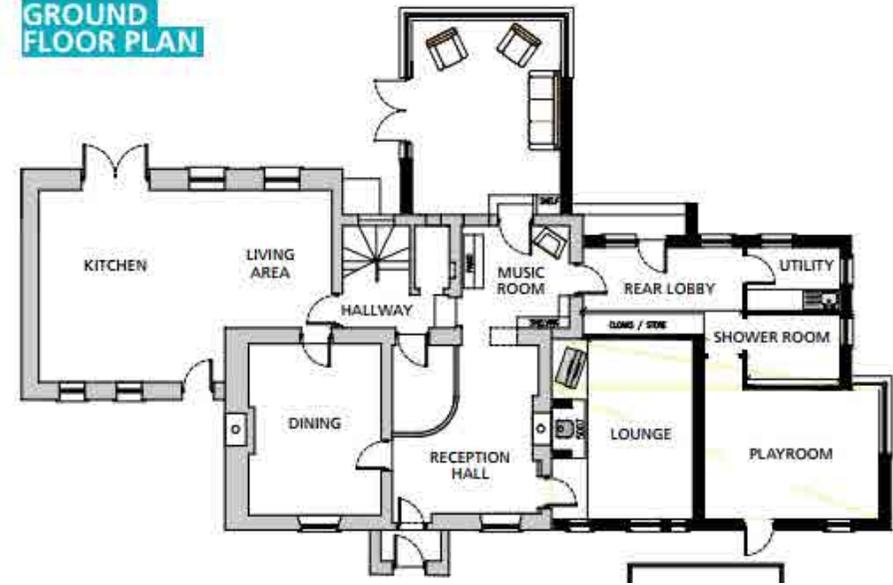
This cottage renovation and extension project in Co Antrim shows what can be done on a budget.

In this project we cover:

- House hunting for the perfect cottage to renovate
- How to double the usable space without doubling the footprint
- Finding an architectural designer and hiring a builder
- Getting planning permission for the extension
- Matching the roof slates
- Kitchen redesign
- How to keep on top of the budget and schedule
- Choice of heating system
- Details of PV panels with tips on how to maximise their use
- Extension specification, floor plans and supplier list
- Professional photographs



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)

1860s Concrete Shed Renovation

An 1860s concrete shed is an unusual choice for a renovation project but Imelda and Matt Jones of Co Sligo were the perfect couple to take on the challenge.

Self-builders are in many ways key drivers to innovation, often seeking the most environmentally friendly and cutting-edge solutions to their home building projects, almost always going above and beyond the building regulations requirements. Matt and Imelda are a perfect example of this phenomenon; when the couple moved from Wales to Ireland back in 2005, they embraced technologies that were hard to come by, yet nowadays are run-of-the-mill.

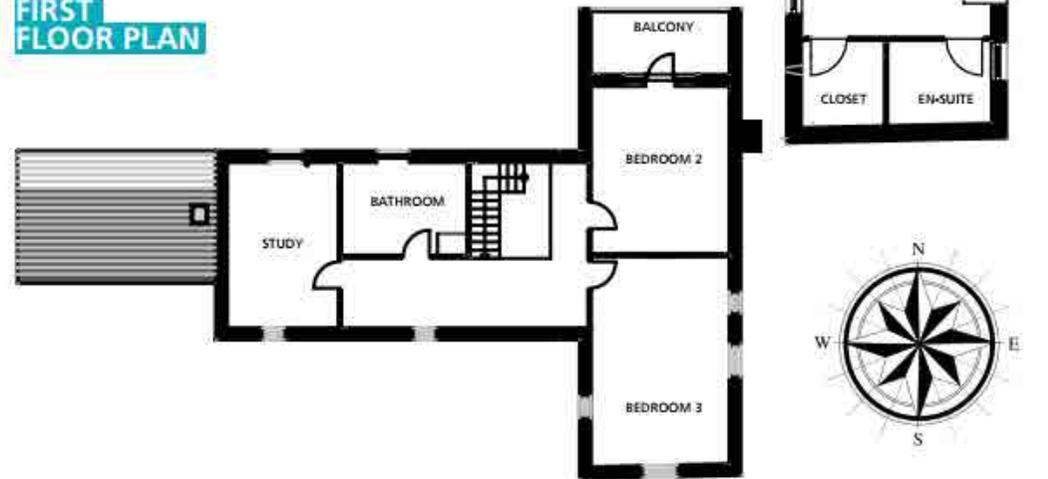
To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



Architect
Colin Bell Architect, Sligo,
tel. 071 9169982,
colinbell-architect.com

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

The four-month self-build

It's perhaps little surprise Brian and Niamh McCann of Co Wicklow chose a rapid build kit house for their project. It took them two years to sell their house and another two to find a new place to call home...

In this project we cover:

- Choice of timber frame kit house: pros and cons
- Mix and match design process with the kit manufacturer
- Issues with planning permission
- Steps by step details of how this kit house was built, from foundation stage
- Sequencing of works and who did what
- Cantilever details
- How to avoid delays
- Surprise costs due to utility connection
- Contract with the builder and how the build went on a day to day basis
- Key changes they would make with hindsight, including upper storey construction
- Full floor and site plans

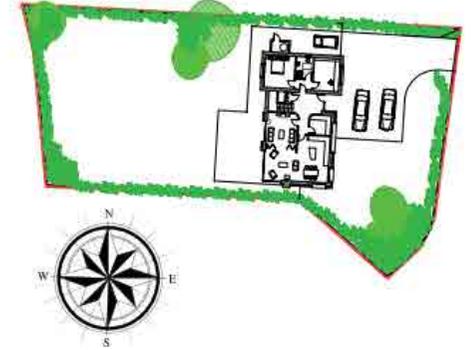
To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



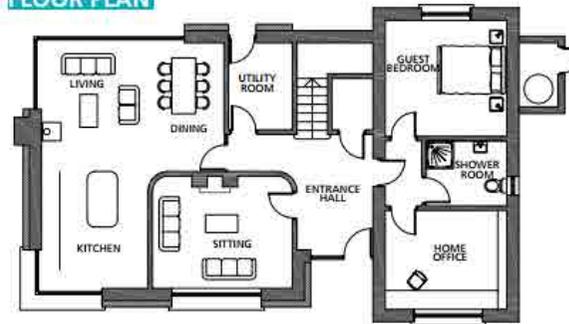
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SITE LAYOUT PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



Architect

Kenneth Byrne of Project Design Architects,
Kilcoole, Co Wicklow, tel. 01 657 2973,
projectdesignarchitects.com

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

Small modern family home in Co Down

Because John and Leanne O'Connor couldn't build their house to face the sun, for planning reasons, they used fin shaped walls to coax sunlight back inside.

In this project we cover:

- Dealing with a narrow site – planning issues and how they were overcome
- Shape of house, roof lights, window design to deal with north facing aspect
- Vernacular choice of materials and soft furnishings, plus details of storage design
- Timber frame build with fixed price contract
- Choice of systems and why, including issues with the heat pump and how they were resolved
- Getting used to heating their home with a heat pump
- Details of extra cost for electricity poles
- Tips to stay on budget
- Garden design details
- Full floor plans, on site progress photos, specification and supplier list

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



Architect

Jono Johnston at W M Given, Coleraine,
tel. 7035 1111, wmgivenarchitects.co.uk

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

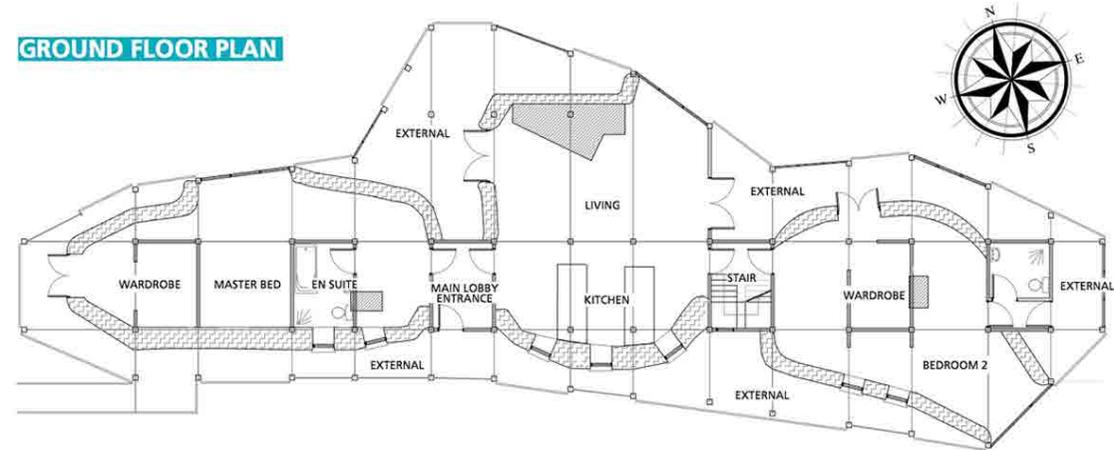
Veranda living in Co Leitrim

If you plan to build a house using an innovative design and materials, the chances are some things may not go as planned. Phil Byrne and Marie O’Kelly share what they learned from their Co Leitrim build.

Pain was certainly part of this house building equation yet the result remains a positive one, with two concepts that make this home not only a beautiful space to live in, but an outstanding piece of architecture.

The first is its location, on a nine-acre site, nestled within centuries old hedgerows that mark the boundary between four fields. As a result, you can only see the house as a whole from the sky.

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

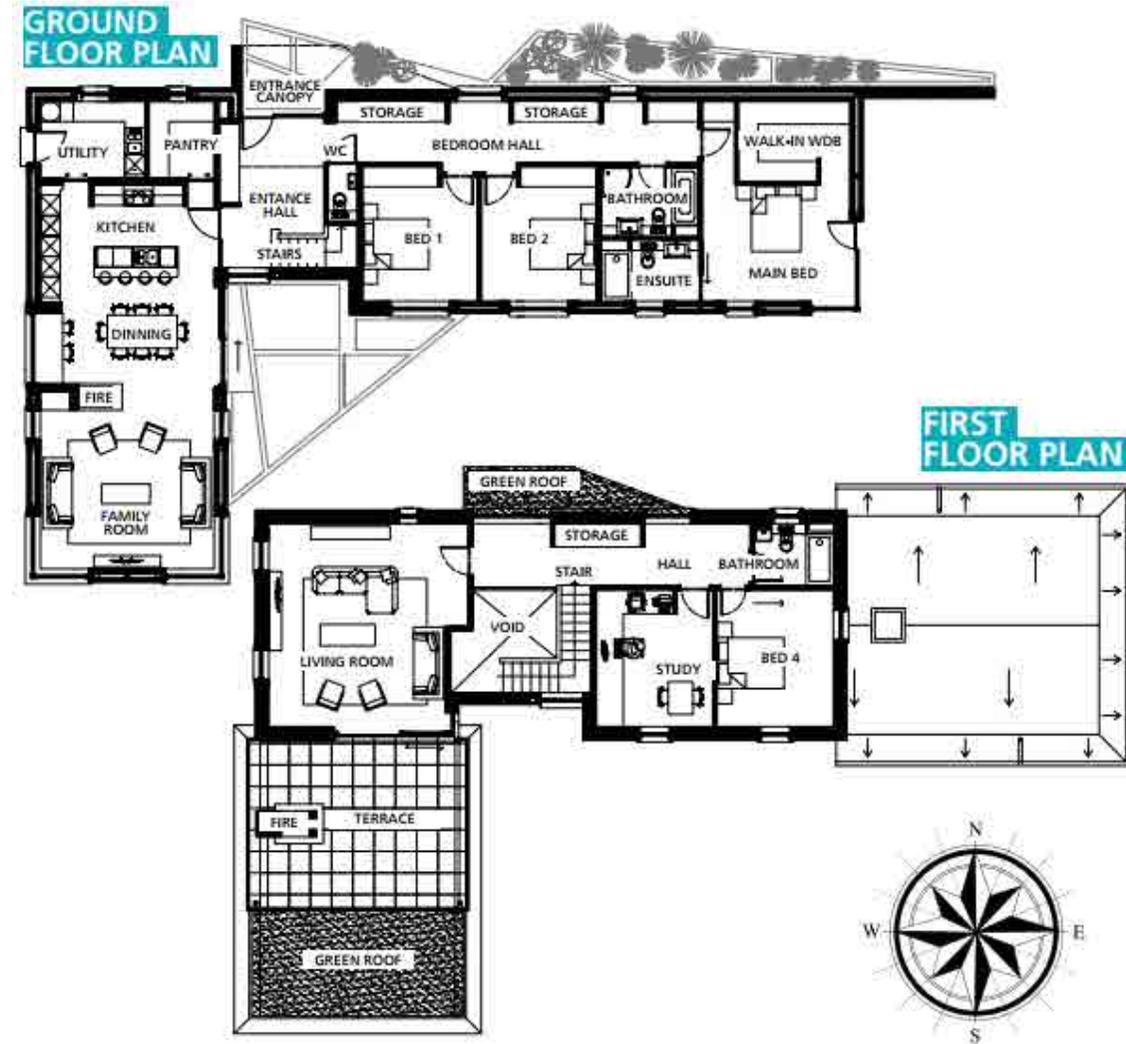
The Minimalist Co Antrim Home

Even though Catherine and John Reilly's design is a minimalist one, they managed to cram just about everything they ever wanted in a home.

In this project we cover:

- Finding the plot in a sought-after location
- The design details including office and playroom details, plus full floor plans
- A keen cook's kitchen design with pantry
- Getting plans costed by a quantity surveyor
- Difference in cost between estimate and tenders from builders
- Cost engineering to reduce to tender prices and keep the build within budget
- Project management and delays on site
- Issues with the chimney and external plaster and how they were dealt with
- Choice of biomass boiler and what they needed to store the pellets
- Why they went £15k over budget
- Planting trees early on and garden design

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect

Ben Wilson of Wilson McMullan Architects,
wilsonmcmullen.com

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

Open plan extension and renovation in 1900s home

Deirdre and Frank Spillane's renovation project in Co Antrim saw many of the things they liked in their previous home replicated.

"It all started four years ago. Even though we were living in a fabulous home at the time, it was too small – we had a third baby on the way and simply needed more room. A renovation would have been too difficult so we started looking at houses."

"To help us on this quest, we got an architect to advise us – someone we found through a personal recommendation. We looked at three properties we really liked, in the right location and at the right price. Some of the houses were older but had new kitchens, which ironically made a renovation project more difficult as we had a set type of kitchen in mind."

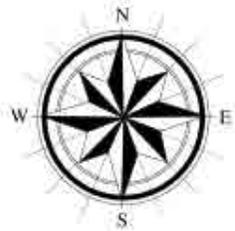
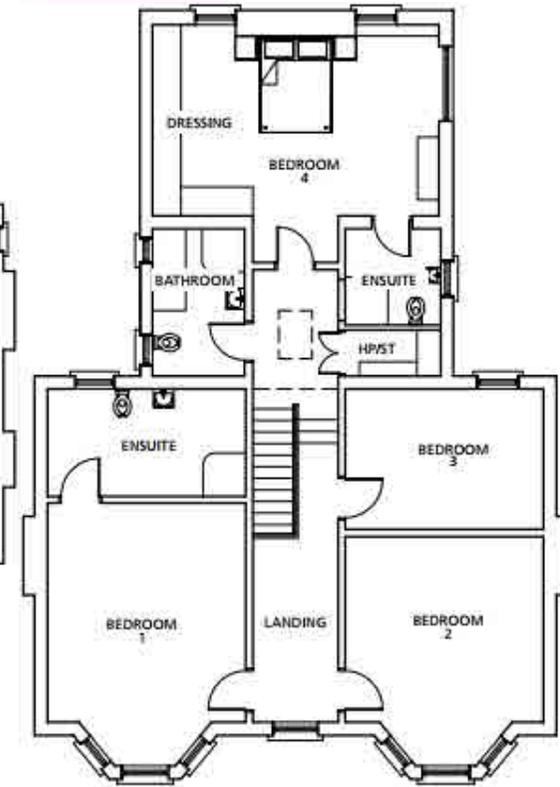
To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



Architect

Dominic Morris MRIAI RIBA of McNally Morris Architects, Hillsborough, Co Down, tel. 92682316, mcnallymorris.com

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

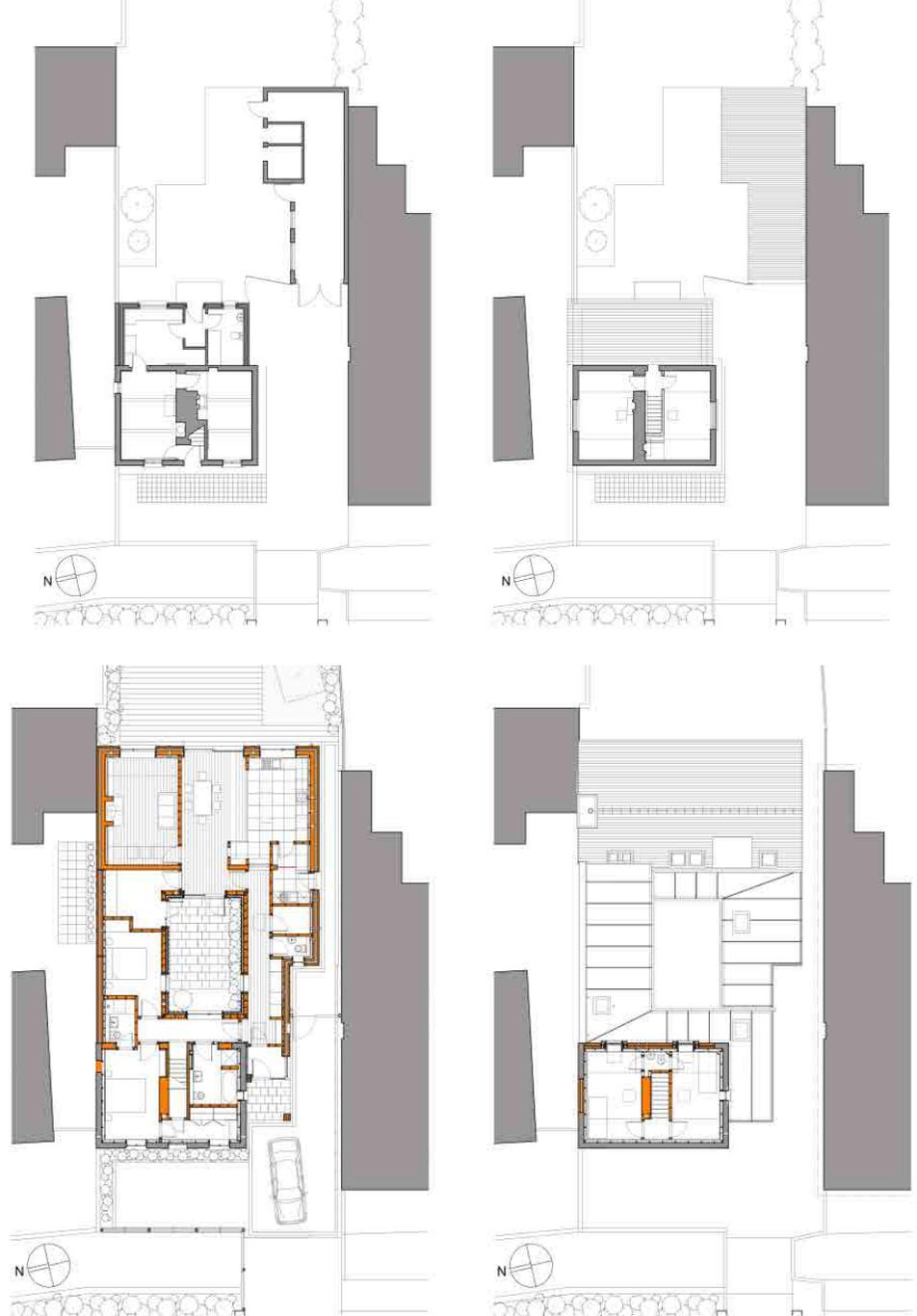
Renovation of a long and narrow house

Building a family home in a sought-after area, such as the Dublin commuter belt, may leave you with a renovation project on your hands; for Brendan and Sheila McCann of Co Kildare the makeover consisted of a house just 10m wide.

In this project we cover:

- Buying a house at auction
- How to spot a good buy
- Design process to renovate the house and planning permission
- Windows choice
- Going to tender for the build and how to keep costs down
- Budget-friendly heating system
- Natural ventilation strategy
- Details of the Sustainable Urban Drainage System
- Budget-friendly choice of roof covering and other external finishes
- Garden design
- Finding furniture for a bespoke shape
- Before and after floor plans and photographs
- Full supplier list and specification

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Aelyn Chambers MRIAI, Dalkey, Co Dublin, aleynchambers.com

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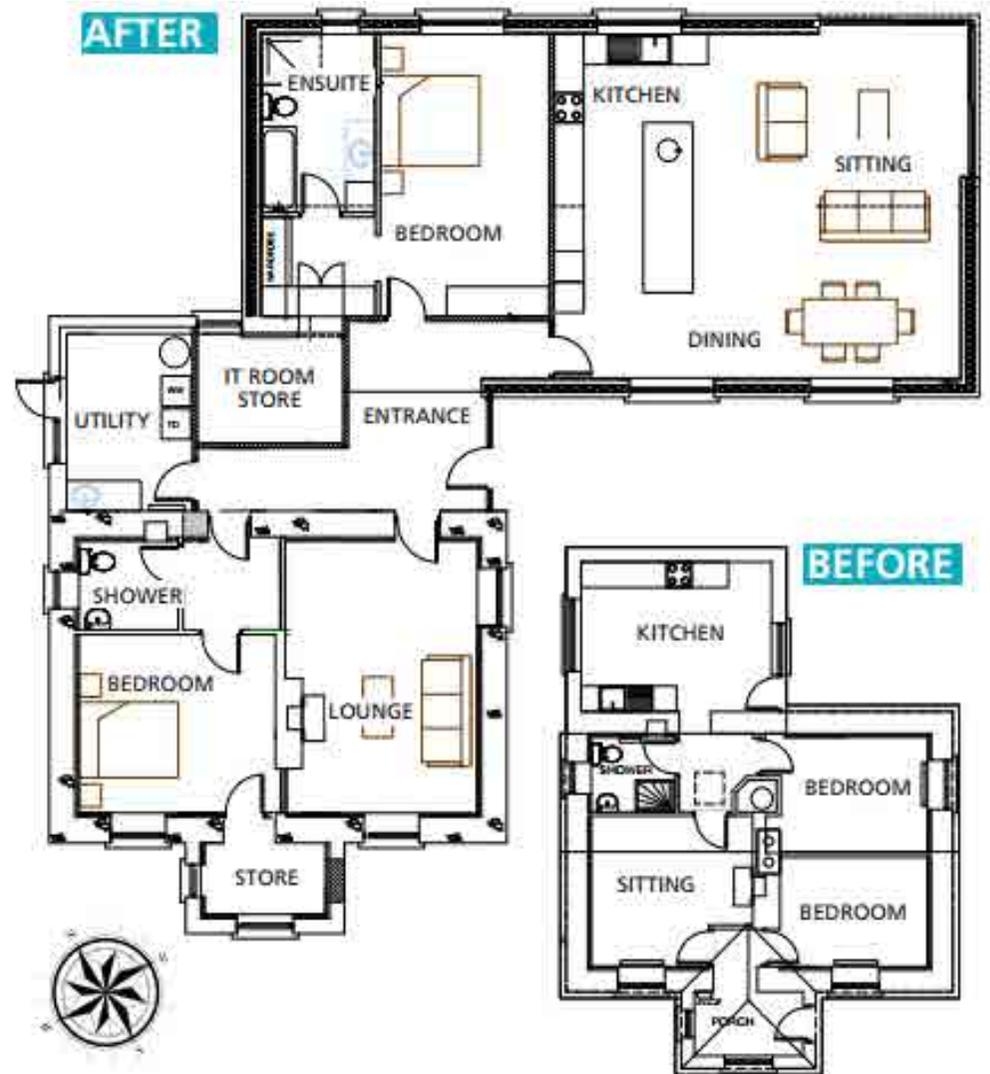
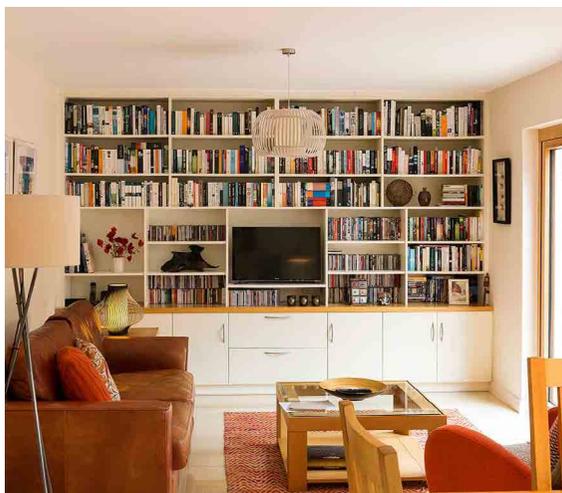
Open plan renovation

By knocking down an internal wall and reconfiguring her living space, Mary Johnston of Co L'Derry transformed her day-to-day life for the better.

We renovated three years ago and I still enjoy walking into our new open plan kitchen, dining and den area. I'm so happy we took that leap of faith, and can't believe the result for such a simple project," says Mary. The reconfiguration consisted of converting her dining room into a den, removing the wall separating it from the kitchen and adding two bifold doors onto a patio area and garden she upgraded.

"We'd had a bad experience when we moved into the house 20 years ago, which we'd bought on plans. There were many problems and as we'd just moved to the area that made things more difficult." "Even though this experience was truly behind us, we were still apprehensive and didn't want to go at it alone."

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect

Ben Wilson of Wilson McMullen Architects,
Portrush, Co Antrim,
tel. 7082 5865, wilsonmcmullen.com

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

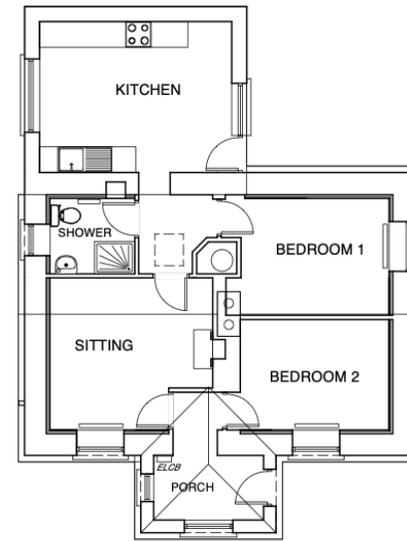
North facing extension

How do you get your house to change direction, get it to move so that it's angled towards the sun and views? Insert roller blades underneath? Glenna Woods and Gerry Warnock of Co Dublin found a way to design their way out of this structural problem.

Whilst building your house to face the road has some appeal, the need for privacy, the desire to avail of views and the sun's ability to warm up the house, coupled with an aversion to noise, have conspired to make this a less desirable alternative than it may have been in the past.

But when you're renovating there's little you can do about where your house is positioned. The only option is to change how that box is configured and make it feel like it's been relocated. And as Glenna bought their two-bedroom Land Commission cottage with a view to extend, the change in orientation had to take place alongside an extension and renovation.

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Fergal McGirl MRIA, Dublin,
tel. 01 873 5441, fmgarchitects.ie



FRONT (SOUTH ELEVATION)

SIDE (WEST ELEVATION)



REAR (NORTH ELEVATION)

SIDE (EAST ELEVATION)



[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

Well insulated self-build in County Cork

How Ellis and Liam Looney managed to hold down their full time jobs, raise their young children and undertake a well insulated self-build.

In this project we cover:

- How they managed to do their research and make choices before they started on the design
- Details of the open plan design with children in mind
- Process of changing planning permission to build a different house
- Details of how to go to tender to get the best price from builders
- Details of fixed price contract and how the build was managed day to day
- Insulation details and resulting low heating costs
- Windows mix including roof lights
- Dealing with overheating in summer months
- Choice of heating system and heat emitters
- Managing the budget when their contingency was swallowed up by the foundations
- Reasons for not installing a stove
- Working with an interior designer and how it saved them money



To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)

GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



Architect

Paul Ahern,
aspectarchitecture.ie, mobile 0876661234

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

No previous experience required

First-time self-builders Amanda and Kevin Fullerton of Co Derry tackled their new build project like any novices would: by asking plenty of questions.

In this project we cover:

- How they approached buying a site
- The design and planning process
- Kitchen design
- Flooring choices
- How the build was managed
- Day to day on site and changes made
- Staircase reconfiguration
- Thrifty glazing specification
- Details of heating and ventilation systems
- Full floor plans, supplier list and specification

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect

Slemish Design Studio Studio,
LLP, Raceview Mill, 29 Raceview Road, Broughshane, Ballymena,
Co Antrim, BT424JJ,
slemishdesignstudio.co.uk

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

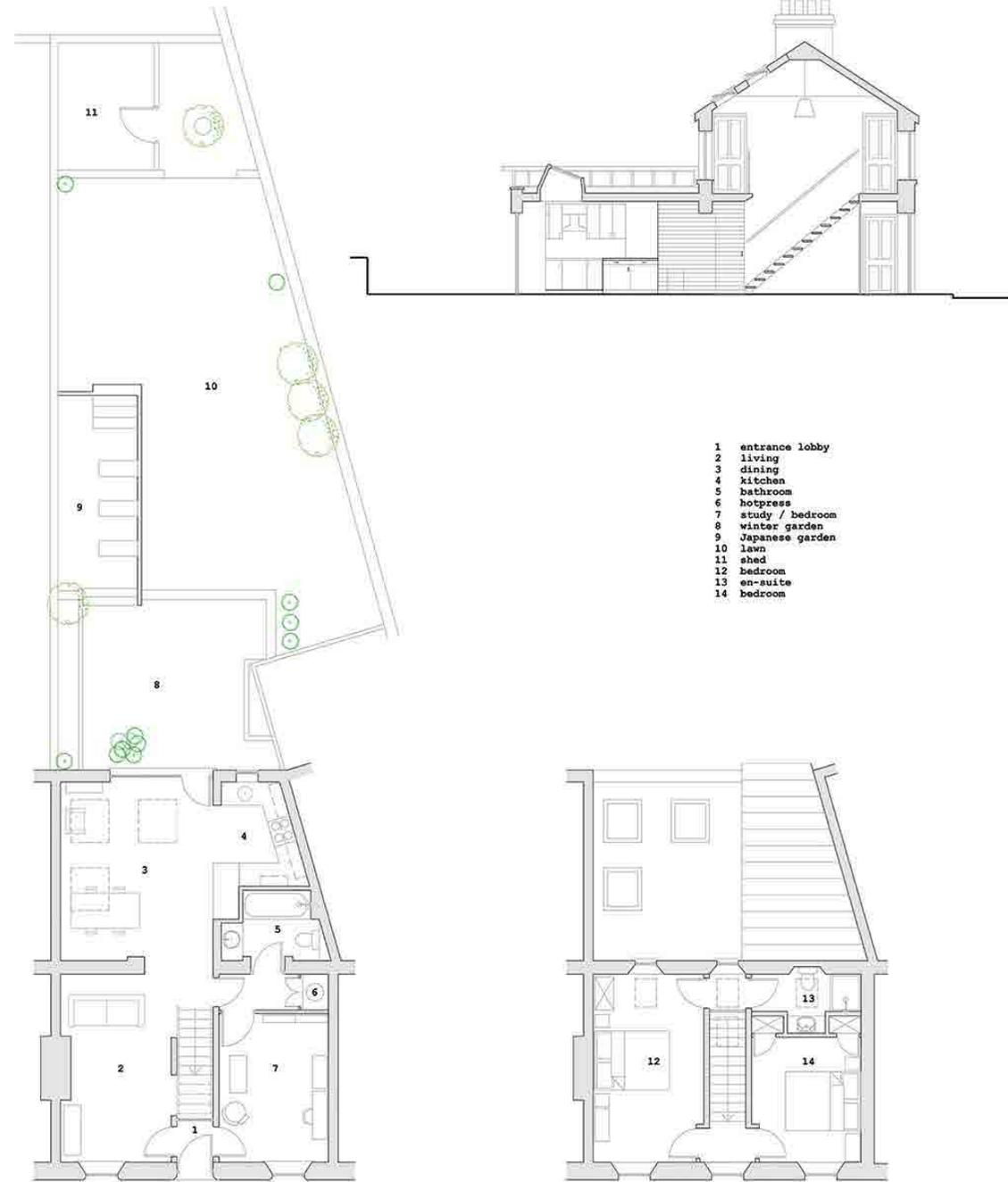
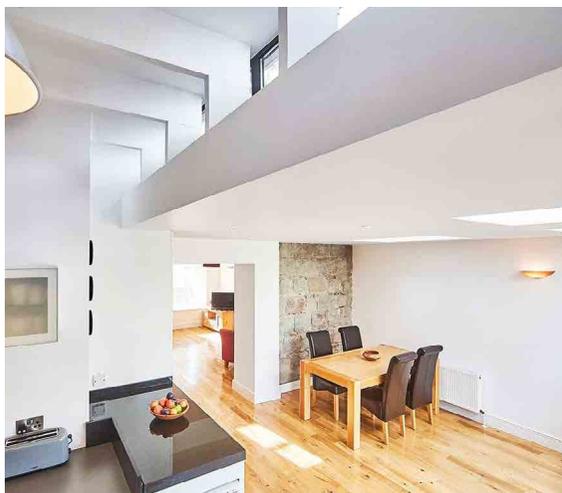
DIY renovation in Carlow

Ian Walsh's DIY renovation project in Co Carlow shows why it's important to spend time on determining what you want, how you plan to achieve it, and above all, sticking to the plan.

In this project we cover:

- Renovation process from start to finish, over a period of three years
- How the project was managed and budget kept in check
- Planning process because it is a listed building
- Design process and furniture choice to maximise feeling of space within small footprint
- Insulation strategy
- Dealing with differences in floor levels
- Demolition work
- Plumbing and rewiring
- Angled kitchen design with flatpack DIY installation
- Thrifty staircase design
- Dealing with asbestos
- Choice of heating, ventilation systems
- Full specification, floor plans and supplier list
- Before photos and Professional photographs of the transformation

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

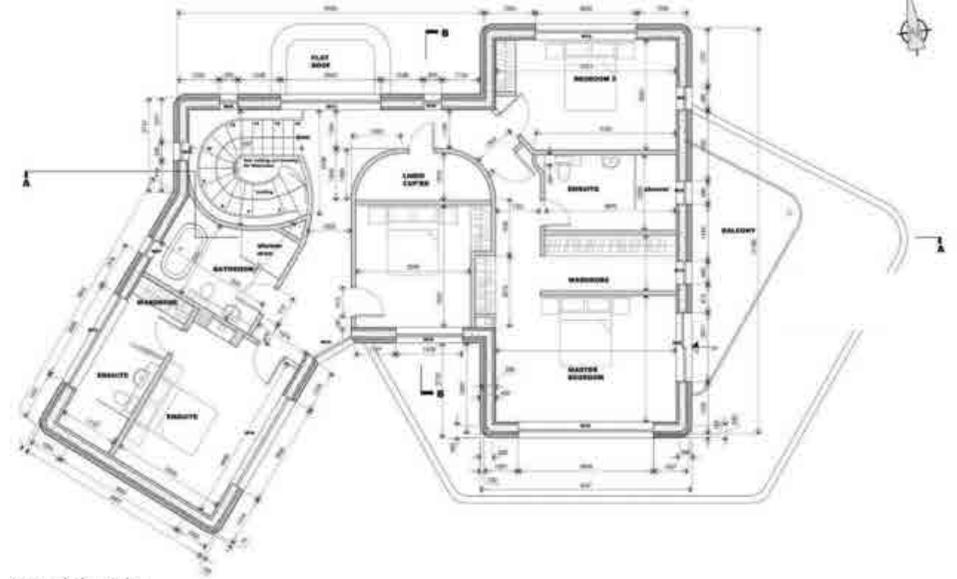
A Low Maintenance House

Tony Casey always loved going down to the waterway at the end of his garden, so when retirement loomed he decided to build his dream art deco house beside it.

In this project we cover:

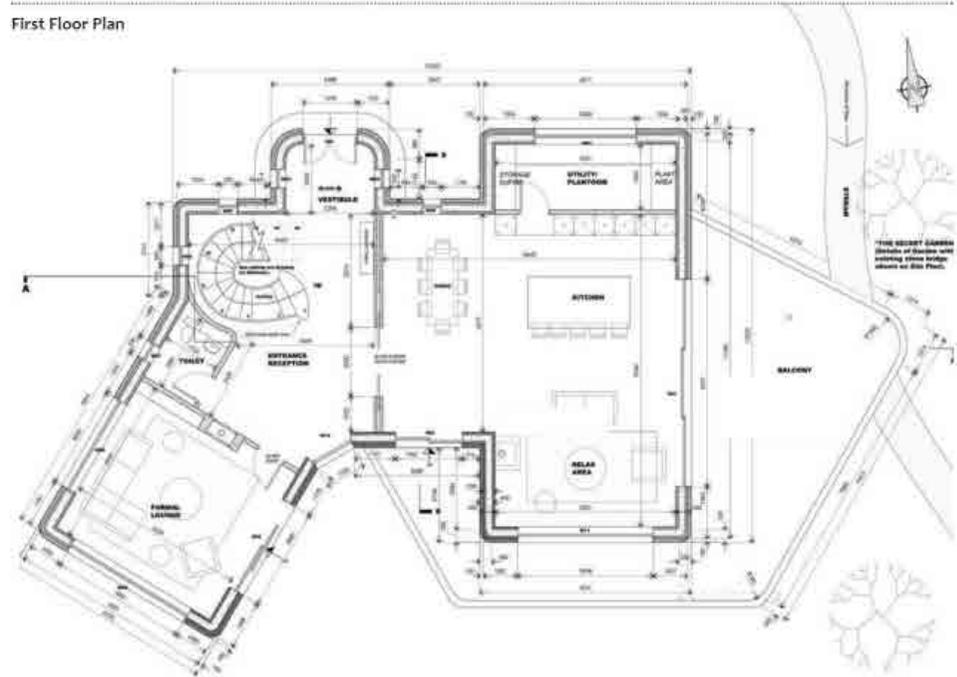
- How the Art Deco design came about
- Optimal room sizes and ceiling heights
- Minimising noise in open plan living space
- How he found a reasonably priced builder and why he didn't go with a fixed price contract
- How the project was managed to keep on top of the budget and schedule
- Mortgage free design on limited budget with budget saving tips
- Full details of the heat pump that uses the stream as its heat source including depth of wells and flow temperature
- Insulating Concrete Formwork construction method and reasons for choosing it
- Lighting design specification including LEDs and pendant lights

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Ground Floor Plan

First Floor Plan



Architect
Mark Davies MCIAT, Arc Design,
Delgany, Co Wicklow,
tel. 01201 0377, www.arcdesign.ie

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

The house with near-zero energy bills

Jim MacLane of Co Tyrone didn't set out to build himself a low energy house but thanks to clever design that follows the sun he's heating his retirement home for next to nothing.

Jim wanted to build a house that would be warm, comfortable and easy to upkeep; environmentally friendly, energy efficient as well as cost effective. If this wish list seems demanding, his attitude was anything but. His very relaxed approach to this project may in fact have been the reason why the design, securing planning permission and construction phases, went so well.

The context may have had something to do with it too. "We built behind the original home where I was born and reared. I've moved back to my roots to retire," he says. "Living next door to our daughter, son-in-law and young grandchildren we wanted to do our part for the environment, we are setting an example for them and for future generations which is great as we are still exercising parental guidance," he adds.

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)

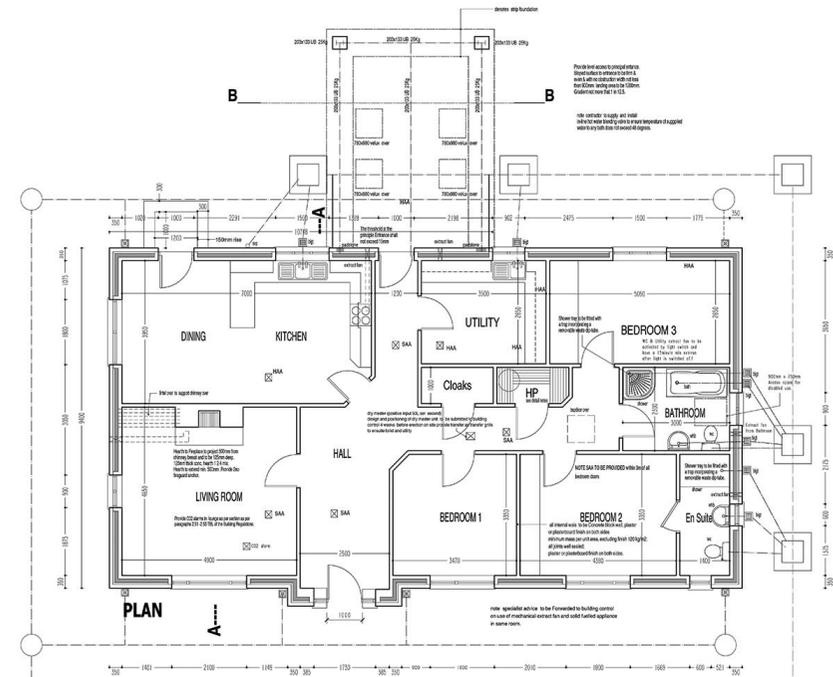


FRONT ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION

Architect
Moffitt & Robinson Construction,
Omagh, Co Tyrone,
tel. 8224 3656,
www.moffittandrobinson.co.uk



[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

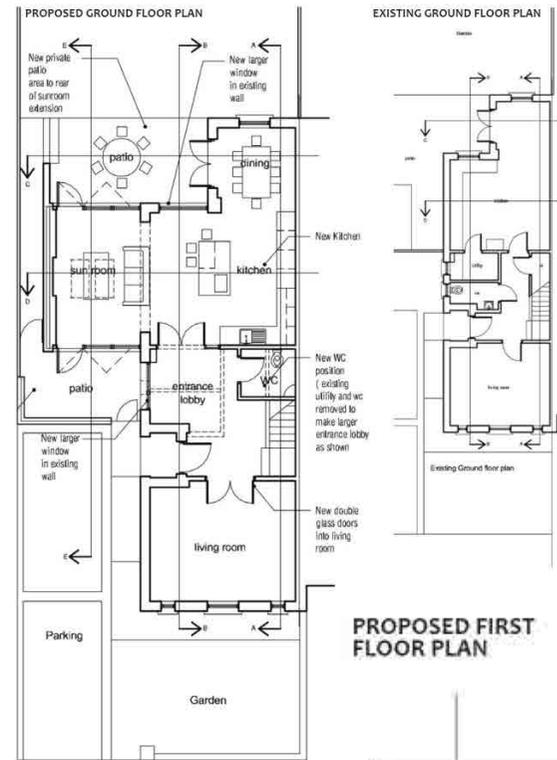
From Australia to Antrim

How James and Rhea Kipling of Co Antrim undertook a light filled renovation project upon returning home from Australia.

In this project we cover:

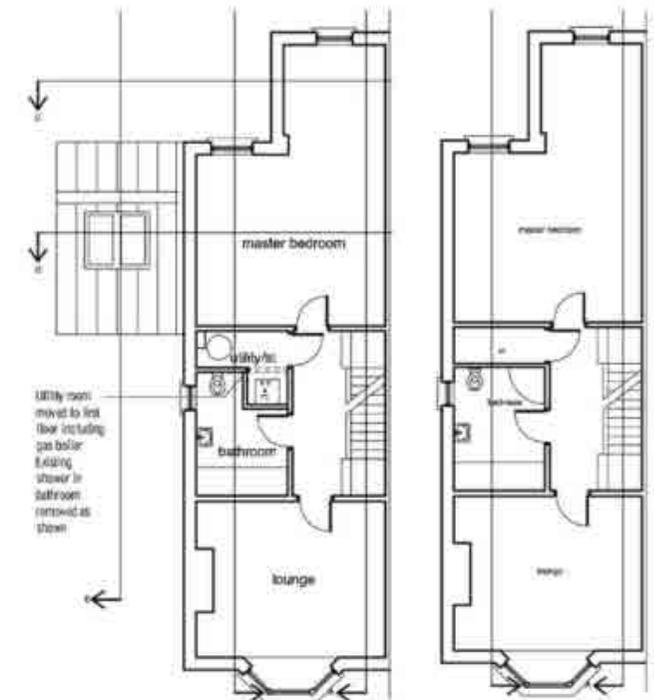
- How they managed to bring in additional light to their existing house
- Details of their extension and reconfiguration project turning the house on its head
- Trade off between adding windows and losing energy efficiency
- Details of redesign including how to make best use of rooflights
- Which elements were moved where and best design choices to add light
- Minimising impact on neighbours and working with local area's management company
- Garden transformation and redesign to make it more usable and enticing
- Artificial lighting and making it work
- Kitchen design
- How the project was managed and built
- Tips to keep on top of the budget
- Heating choices and how they've worked out

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN

EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN



Architect
 Dominic Morris MRIA RIBA,
 Hillsborough, Co Down,
 tel. 9268 2316,
www.mcnellymorris.com

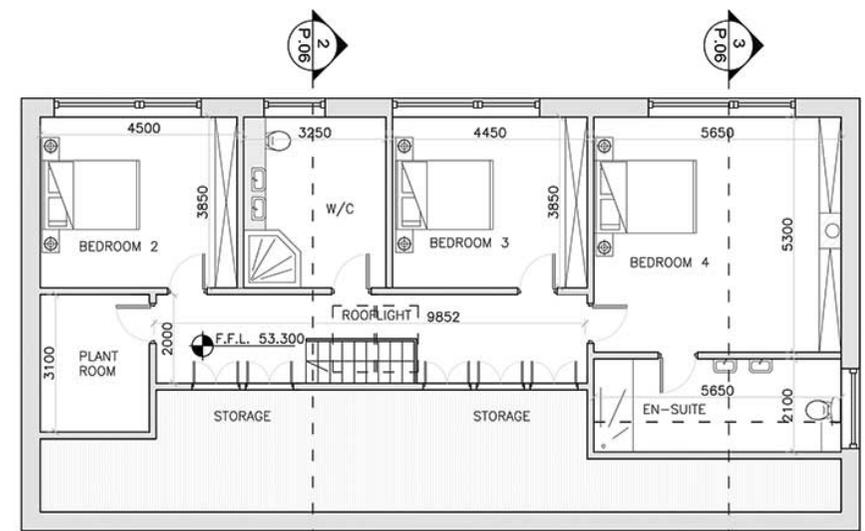
Passive House shading device

Emmanuelle Quinlivan of Co Cork had to juggle tricky soil conditions with her desire to build a passive house.

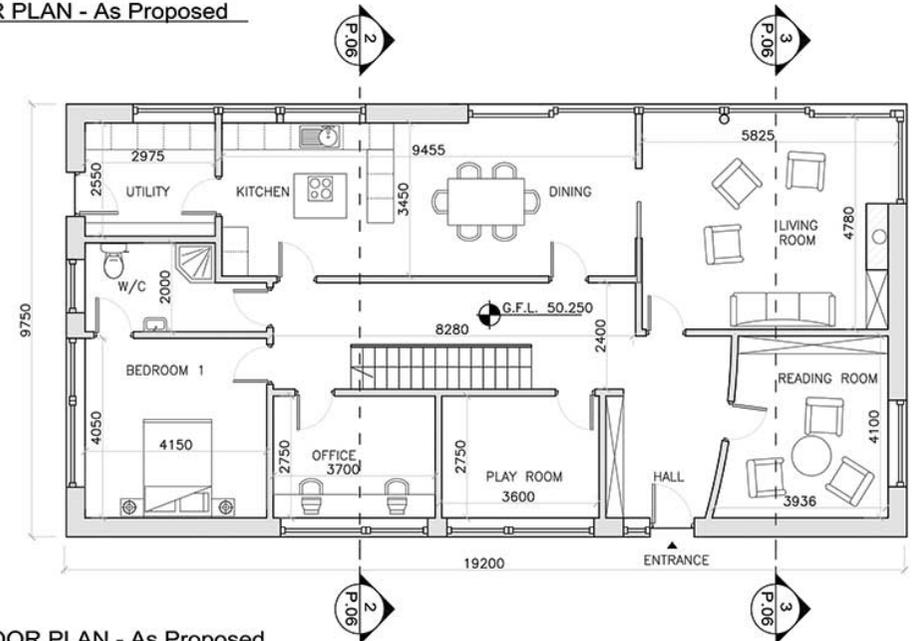
Four years ago Emmanuelle was looking for an antidote to the damp, draughty and hard to heat home she was living in.

It was only when she found a greenfield site in the right location that she got her chance to go 'passive' – introduce large amounts of insulation, triple glazing, build the house to be airtight with a heat recovery ventilation system and have a minimal heat input requirement. "This was my pet project," she explains. "From the very beginning I knew I wanted to invest in the building fabric. I had no interest in the finishes, my aim was to get the technology that would make this a comfortable, healthy home."

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



1 FIRST FLOOR PLAN - As Proposed



2 GROUND FLOOR PLAN - As Proposed

Architect
Mosart Ltd., Wicklow town,
tel. 0404 25777, www.mosart.ie

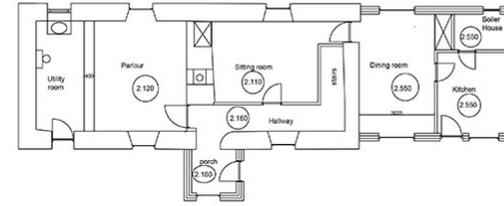
Farmhouse Renovation

Stunning views, a family connection and the prospect of an original design prompted Lory Higgins, his partner Sandra and their young family to leave Dublin and set up home in Co Wexford.

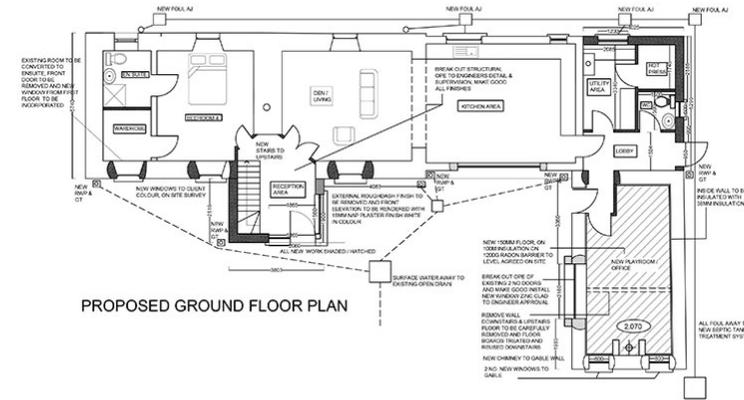
The farmhouse Lory grew up in was typical in many ways, in its rectilinear courtyard layout and small windows. It was a happy childhood, and as they often are, one in which sweaters were worn to counteract the draughts! This home is also one that his partner Sandra got attached to very quickly.

“The house is really well located, in the Co Wexford countryside, and it has so much history,” says Sandra. “It dates back to the 1800s and I felt strongly about preserving it, and the stories that unfolded there.” Lory on the other hand had different ideas. “To be honest I had my sights set on a greenfield site, building a low energy house, no headaches or problems attached. But as often happens Sandra won the debate!” As an engineer Lory was acutely aware of the challenges that lay ahead of him, but once the commitment was made he got really excited.

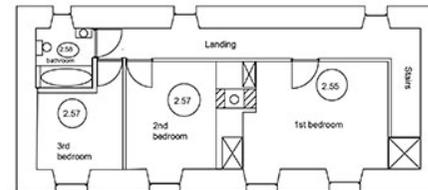
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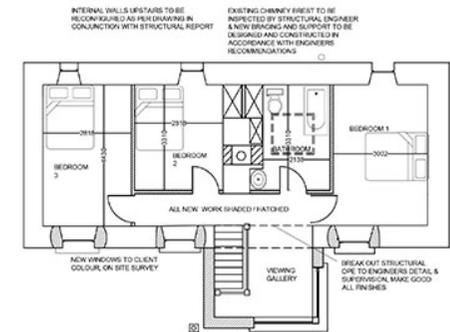
EXISTING GROUND FLOOR PLAN



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN



EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Architect
 Joe Fallon Design Architecture
 Bunclody
 tel. 087 2566808
 joe@joe Fallon.com

Sloping house with a view

A successful renovation and extension transformed this sloping house into one that makes the most of its Co Antrim views.

In this project we cover:

- Working with an architectural practice for the redesign and extension
- How the build was project managed and why
- Deciding between knocking the house down and extending
- Window choices
- Replumbing choices
- How the house was redesigned
- Tender process and choosing a builder
- Finding the right products and finishes
- How much they could repurpose from the original house
- Details of hidden costs, including electrics and plastering
- Cutting costs during the build to keep it within budget
- Landscaping on a sloping site
- Floor plans and suppliers list
- Maintenance requirements for stainless steel and outdoor glazing
- Tips on room sizes and sanitaryware positioning
- Garden design for a sloping site

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect

FmK Architecture & ECOHomes,
Ballymena, Co Antrim,
www.fmknki.com, www.ecohomesni.com

[VIEW PROJECT HERE](#)

Designer hypermodern home

We bring you the homes Irish architects, engineers and other house building designers live in.

This hypermodern home still retains its cachet almost two decades after it was built.

In total and since the beginning we may have spent around €250,000 to €270,000 to bring the house to its current state. Despite large expanses of glazing the cost of heating is relatively low, at about €2,000 yearly, even though it runs 24/7.”

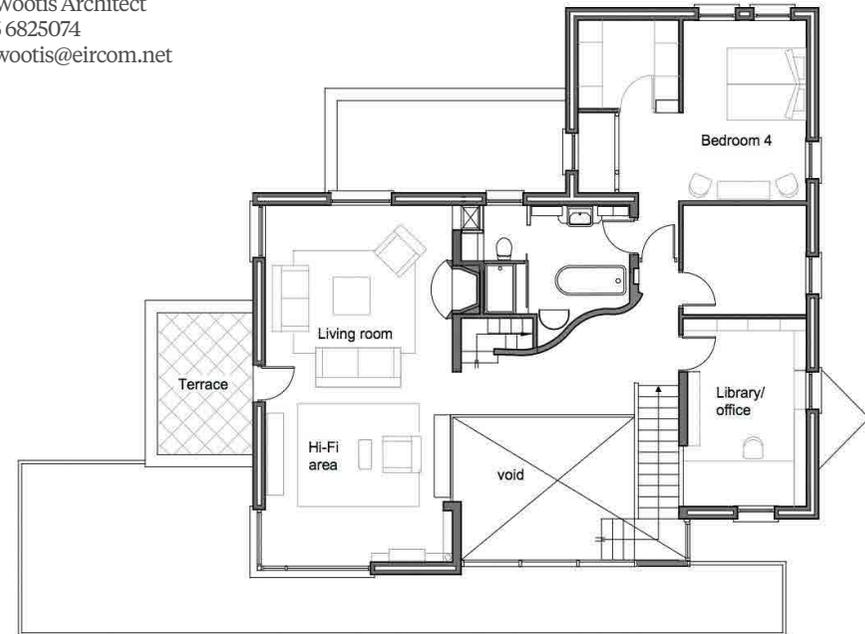
To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



GROUND FLOOR

Architect

Kostas Wootis Architect
Tel: 065 6825074
Email: wootis@eircom.net



FIRST FLOOR

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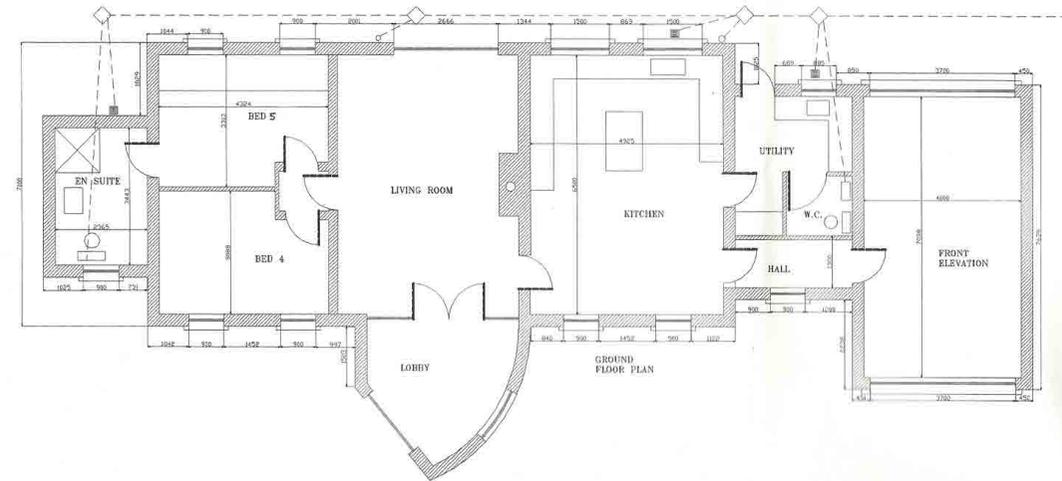
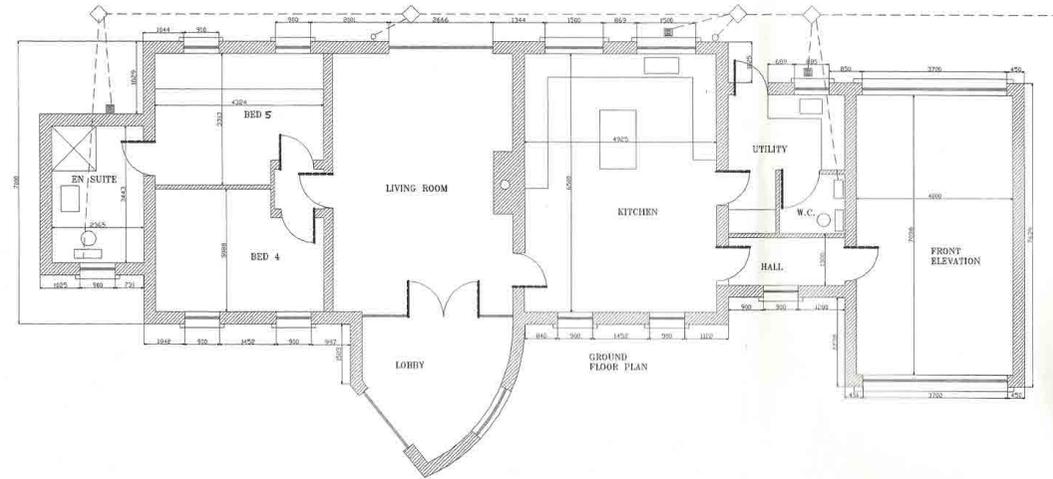
Two storey dream home in Co Wexford

This two storey dream home in Co Wexford ticked all of the boxes on Michael and Paula O'Neill's wish list, including granite porch.

In this project we cover:

- How they got the site and how they made the most of mountain views with the design
- Planning permission process
- Details of granite porch entrance
- Window choices and artificial lighting including chandelier
- Details of geothermal system with costings and how much they spend on heating a year
- Heat recovery ventilation system details
- Double height ceiling design and practicalities on site
- How much DIY they did to save on costs
- Hiring tradesmen and managing their schedule
- What they would change
- Supplier list, specification, and floor plans
- Total build cost and professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect

Joe Fallon Design,
Dublin and Wexford,
tel. 014505471 / 051424766, mobile: 0872566808,
www.joefallon.com

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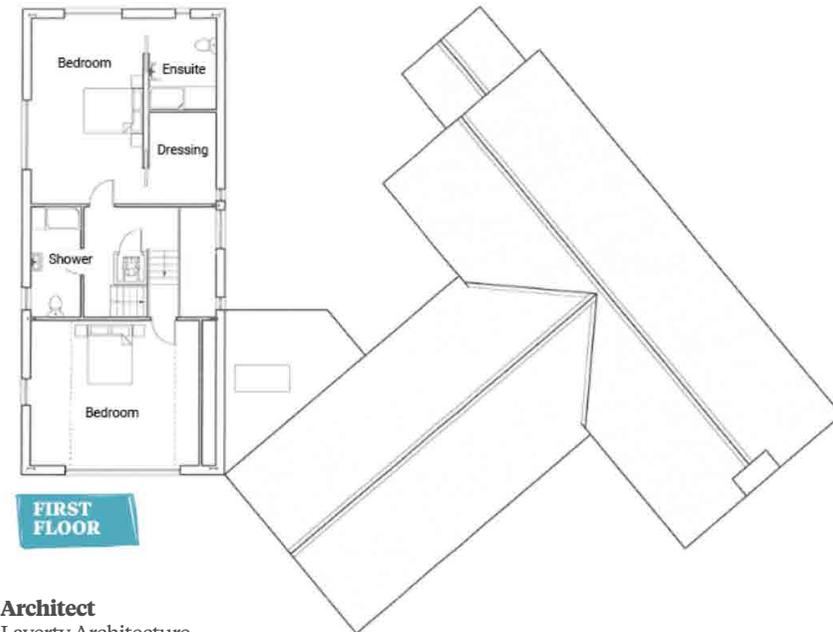
Planning battle for Co Antrim new build

Planning consultant Sean McHenry spent years in a protracted battle to secure planning permission for his parents Colm and Nora's new build.

In this project we cover:

- Design process including accommodating for mobility issues
- Applying for planning permission in an Area of Outstanding Beauty
- Appeals process and going in front of the Planning Committee
- How the proceedings went and what the planning conditions were
- Tips to secure planning permission for your build
- Challenges reducing the ridge height
- How the build was managed and what the day to day was like on site
- Choice of systems and how they're working out
- How to make the house energy efficient
- Landscaping
- Specification, floor plans and suppliers' list
- Professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Lavery Architecture,
laveryarchitecture.co.uk

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The three week renovation

How Denise and Fiachra Sinnott of Co Cork transformed their tired old 1980s chalet bungalow into a 21st century family home, carrying out the reno in just three weeks.

In this project we cover:

- House hunting for a straightforward renovation project
- How they funded the renovation
- Window choices
- Living on site during the three weeks of building work
- Details of scope of works
- Build costs and what they were quoted
- Deciding on how to insulate
- Kitchen design
- Interior design ethos and DIY elements
- Flooring choices
- Project management and budgeting tips
- Suppliers, specification and floor plans
- Professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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Covid delays for Co Louth build

Stephen and Vicki Murray share what it was like to build their vernacular house during Covid, and getting the home of their dreams at the end of it.

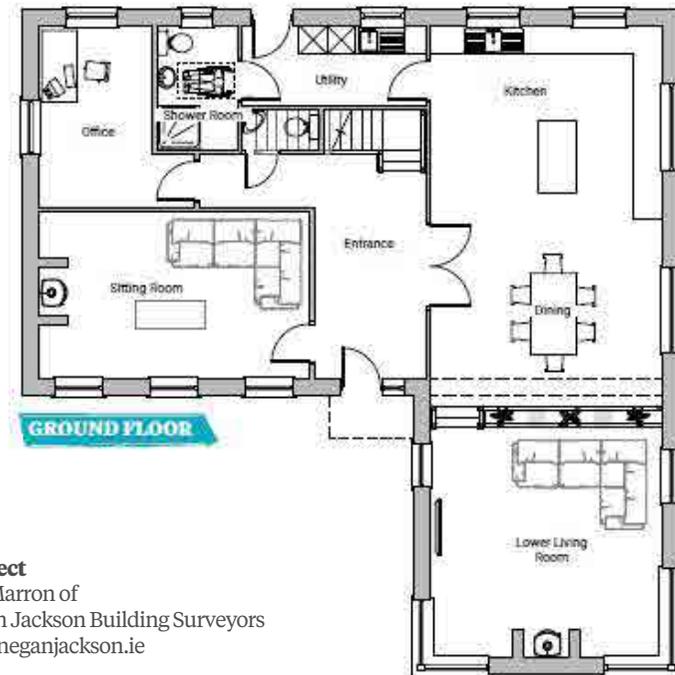
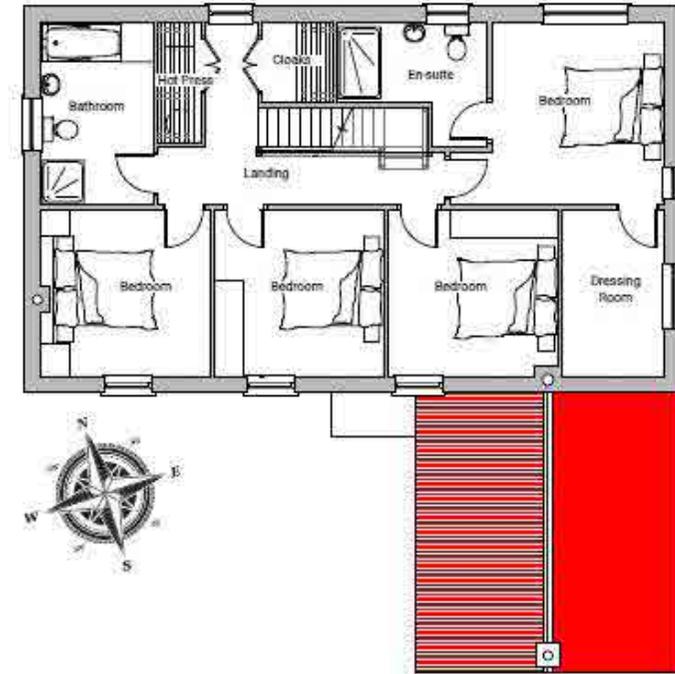
In this project we cover:

- Choosing where to build on the farm
- Choice of materials to blend into surroundings
- Finding an architect
- Tips for the design stage
- Planning application process
- Working with a builder for the shell
- Direct labour for fit out: tips and advice
- Sourcing windows
- Choice of geothermal heating over air to water
- Geothermal heat pump installation details
- Budgeting tips and advice
- Dealing with delays during Covid
- Kitchen and bathroom design tips
- Floor plans and timeline
- Supplier list and specification

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



FIRST FLOOR



Architect
Colm Marron of
Finegan Jackson Building Surveyors
www.fineganjackson.ie

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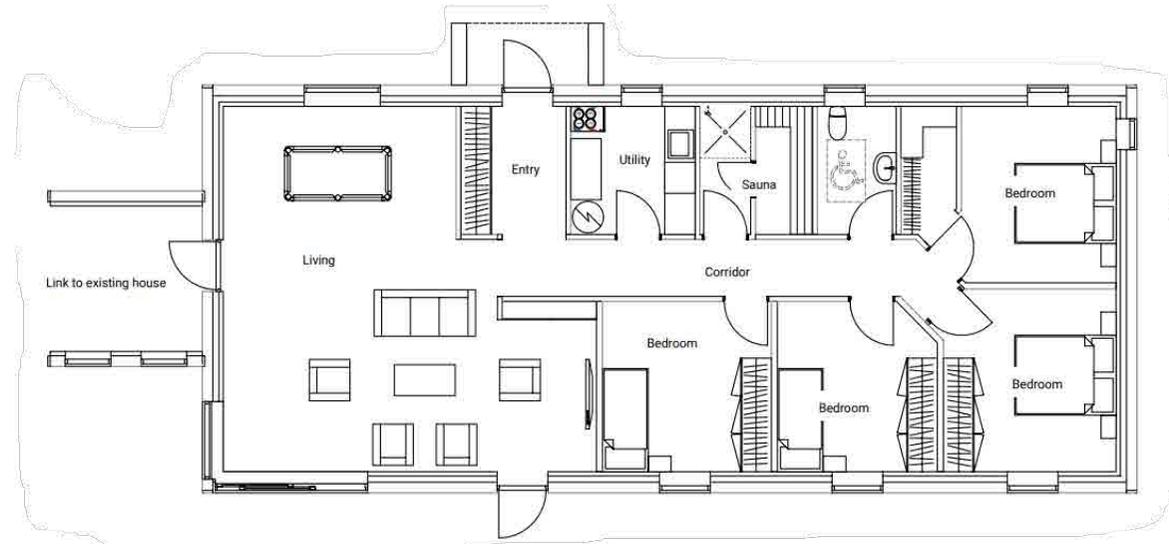
Timber frame extension in Co Laois

Fiona and Liam Canavan had their timber frame extension built off site; this is how they got on installing it.

In this project we cover:

- Designing the extension
- Choosing a supplier and what other options they considered
- Working with a timber frame supplier
- Groundwork
- What the kit looked like and how it was put up
- Heating and ventilation system choices
- Cost comparison for timber frame vs blockwork
- Timeline and floor plans

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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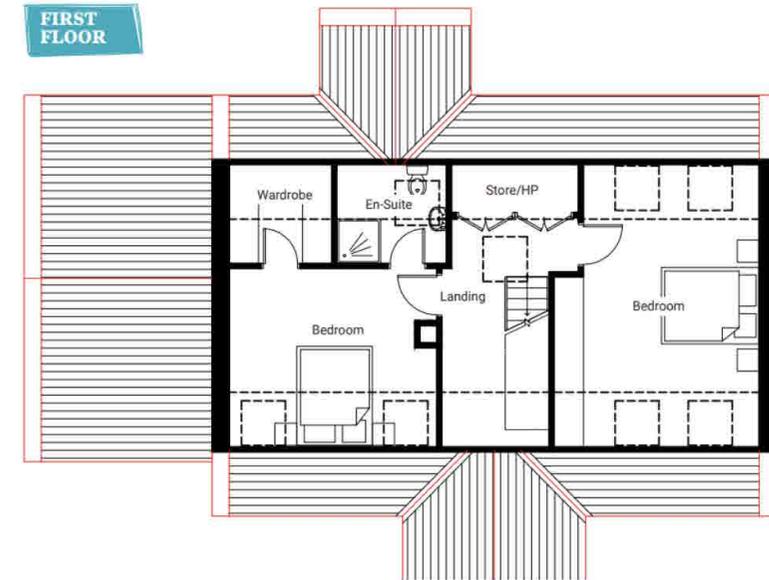
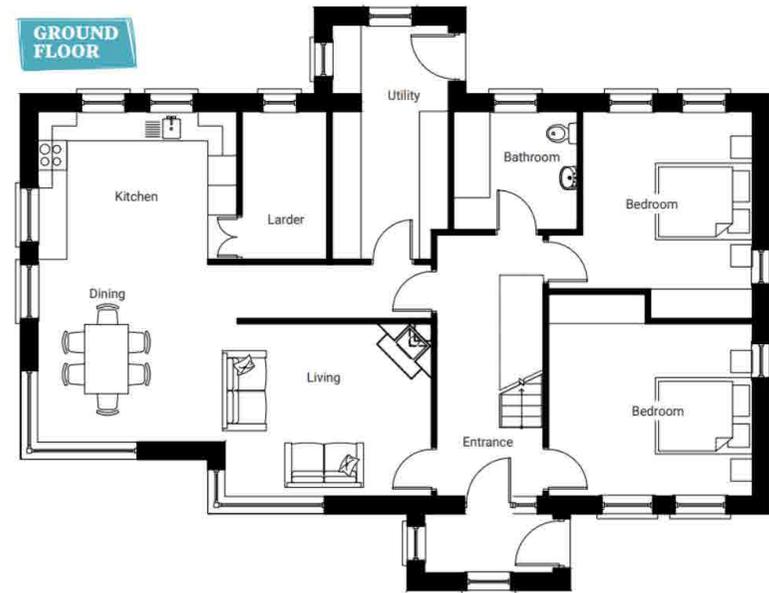
Island new build in Co Mayo

How Linda and Edward Mulkern built their 220sqm home on Achill Island to retire to, replacing a concrete bunker house that had been their holiday digs for years.

In this project we cover:

- How the couple came to buy a property on Achill
- Plans to demolish and rebuild and coming up with a cost effective new build design
- Hiring their architectural designer as project manager
- Tips to save money while building
- Working with local trades
- Heating choices for power cuts
- Solar panel setup (PV)
- Windows and artificial lighting design
- Staircase design including continuous ash handrail
- Top tips to other self-builders for a successful build
- Floor plans, timeline and specification
- Suppliers list and build costs
- Professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Aiden Masterson Design Ltd, Castlebar, Co Mayo
www.masterdesign.ie

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The Avrame house

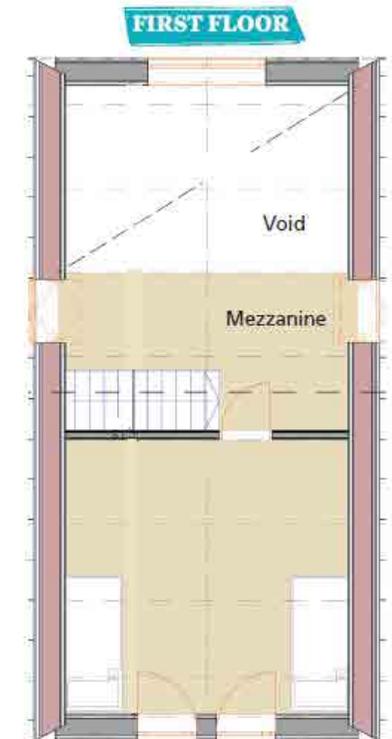
Jonathan Byrne of Co Longford chose an Avrame timber frame kit because it gave him cost certainty and a turnkey finish.

In this project we cover:

Alan Rowan of TuffHouse Eco Build got a call one day from a prospective client, who'd gotten his contact details from a happy customer. "Jonathan came to me recommended from word of mouth," says Alan. "He was looking to build an eco house and asked me what his options were."

"Considering what he was after I suggested he look into the Avrame kits. I was familiar with the company for the quality of its product, service and delivery times." Alan says timber in Ireland is grown too quickly to use in house building, which is why kits are usually imported from the Baltic region, where the cold growing conditions make the wood stronger.

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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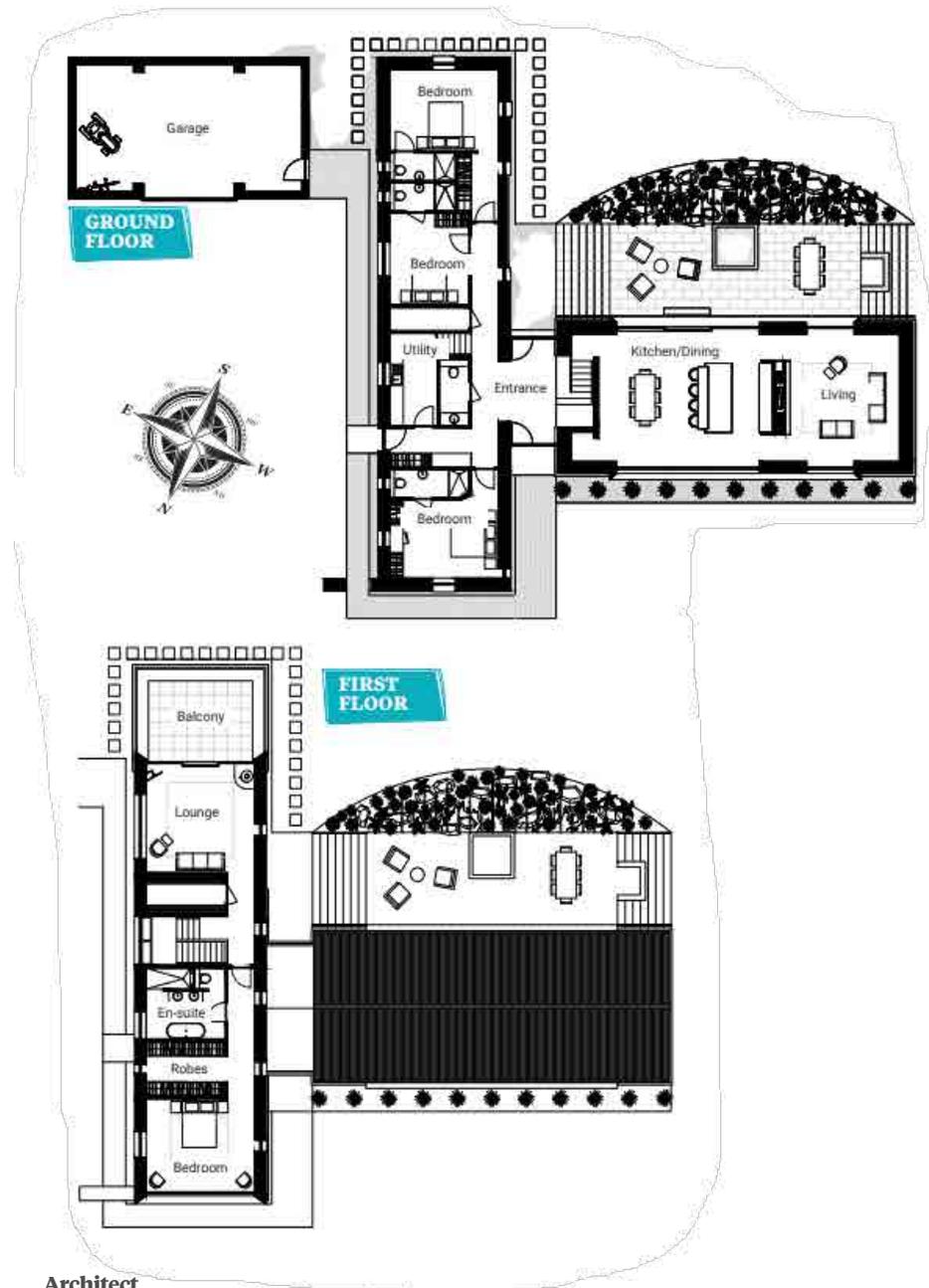
Co Down modern new build

For Elaine and David Douglas, building this Co Down modern new build was a way to strike a healthy work life balance.

In this project we cover:

- Why they chose to self-build
- What drove the design and how it evolved
- Difficulties with planning permission process
- Hiring a quantity surveyor: what he did and how he helped budget the build
- Investigating different building methods, including SIPs
- External roof and wall finishes
- Heating system choice
- Kitchen design: process and tips
- Thrifty interior design tips
- Description of layout with images of floor plans
- Timeline and supplier list
- Full specification
- Professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Donal McPhillips Architecture,
mcphillipsarchitecture.com

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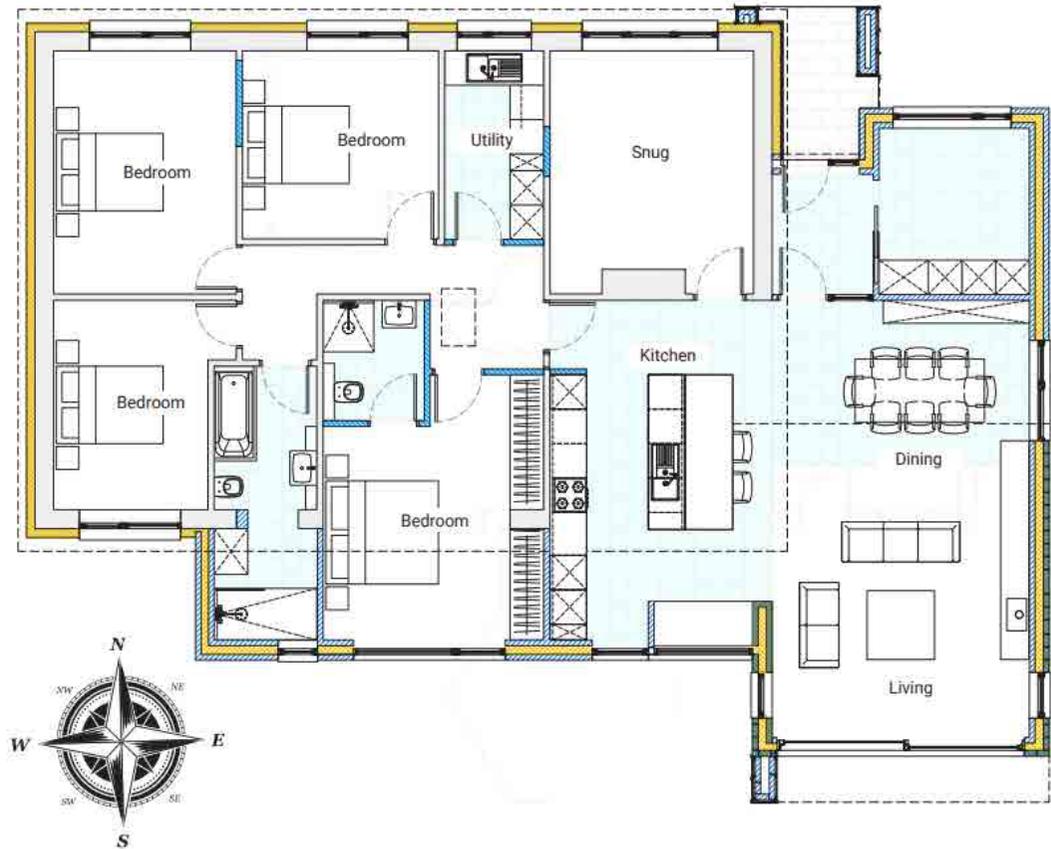
Kilkenny renovation and extension

Having lived in Australia, single level, open plan living was what Anne and Niall Jordan wanted from their Kilkenny renovation and extension project.

In this project we cover:

- From renting to buying a doer upper
- Working with an architect for a redesign
- What they kept and how they extended
- SEAI grant to insulate externally
- Top tip to reduce costs when insulating
- Airtightness tips
- Changing the windows with specification
- Thrifty tips: when to buy second hand
- Lighting design and cost effective flooring options
- What they would do differently
- Tree protection during the works
- Timeline and floor plans
- Specification and supplier list
- Professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
ROJO Studio Architects,
rojo-studio.com

Passive house retrofit in Co Monaghan

Barry McCarron explains how he went about renovating his home in Co Monaghan to the passive house retrofit methodology, EnerPHit.

In this project we cover:

- How much to budget for a passive house renovation project in Ireland
- How much his house cost to retrofit
- Fully detailed build schedule
- How Barry went about upgrading his own bungalow
- What problems he had to tackle and what solutions he had for them
- The passive house requirements and how to achieve them
- Top tips for a passive house retrofit
- Full details of the insulation upgrade
- How they dealt with thermal bridging and airtightness
- Windows installation tips
- Ventilation system details
- Heat Loss Indicator: what the term means and why it's important
- Specification, before and after metrics
- Floor plans and photographs of build progress

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



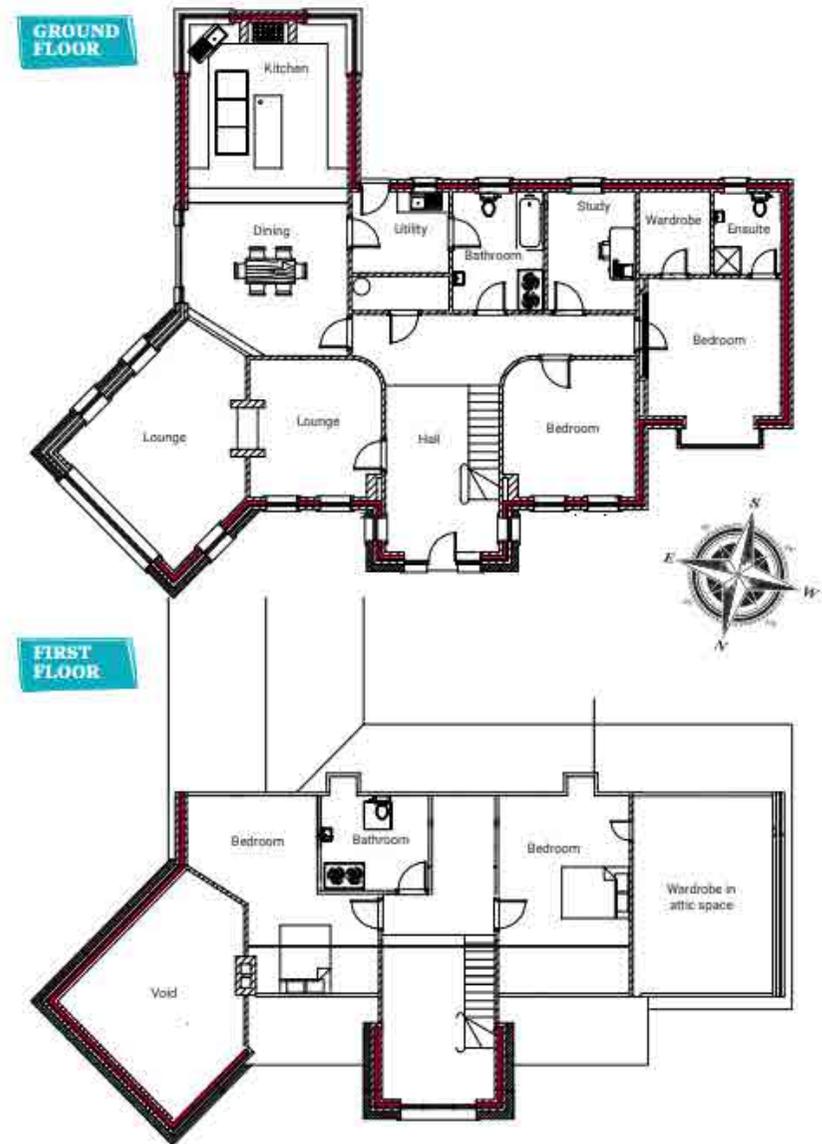
Co Laois home built on a budget

How quantity surveyor James Corrigan built his Co Laois home on a budget.

In this project we cover:

- Site and build costs
- How they kept the build costs down
- Biggest splurge
- Finding a site through word of mouth
- Designing the house around key features
- Direct labour self-build: project management tips
- Heating and ventilation choices
- What they would do differently
- Design tips on a budget
- Full specification and supplier list
- Floor plans and professional images

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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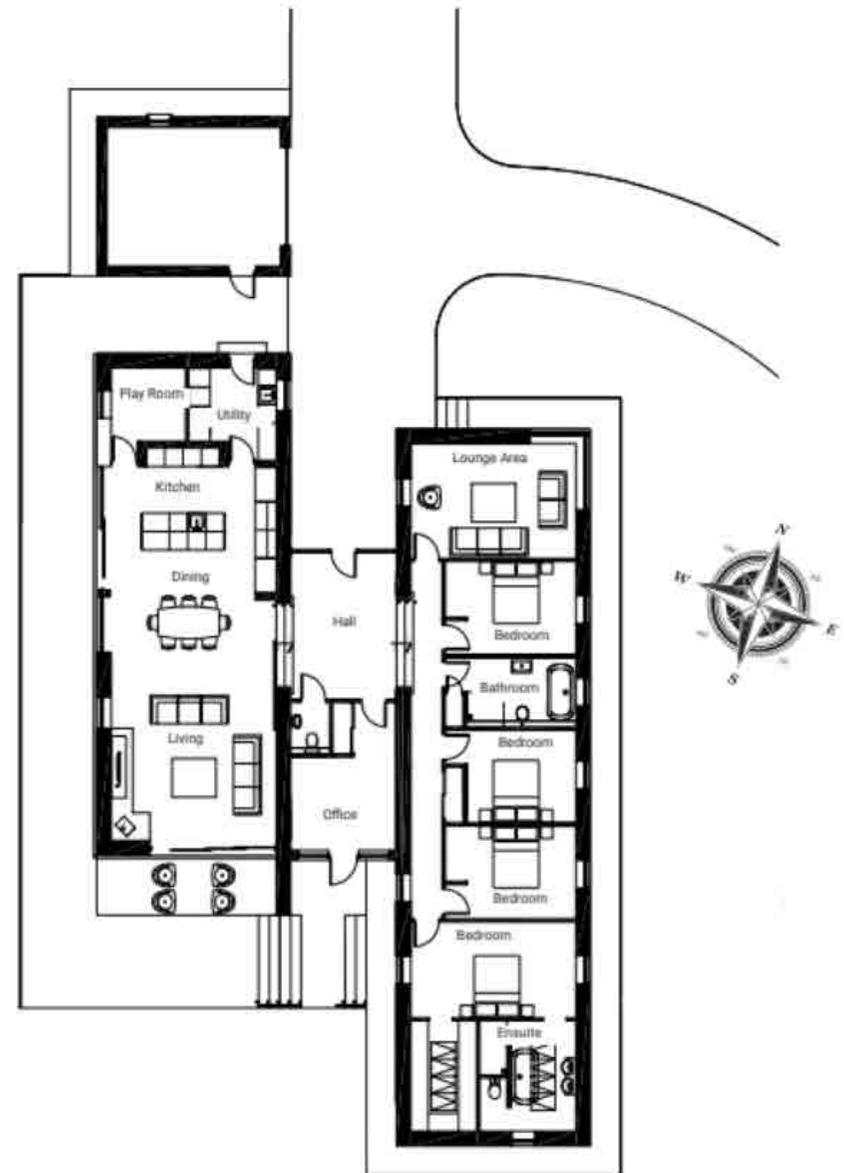
£50k profit for self-build home

A self-build is often first and foremost about creating a family home, but in many cases it can also yield a profit. As did this project in Co Armagh.

In this project we cover:

- House value vs cost to buy the site and build the house
- Cost details of big ticket items
- Why they chose to self-build
- How they went about finding a site
- How they went about designing the house
- Difficulties with planning permission
- Wastewater and electricity setbacks
- Top tips for a successful build that stays on budget
- Interior design: how to nail the minimalist style
- Savings on the kitchen design choices
- Weighing benefits of heat pump and solar technologies
- Timeline and supplier list
- Full specification and floor plans

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Architect
Mark and Jack Cassidy at C3 Architects,
Co Antrim, tel. 9266 2555, mobile 075 4365 4495

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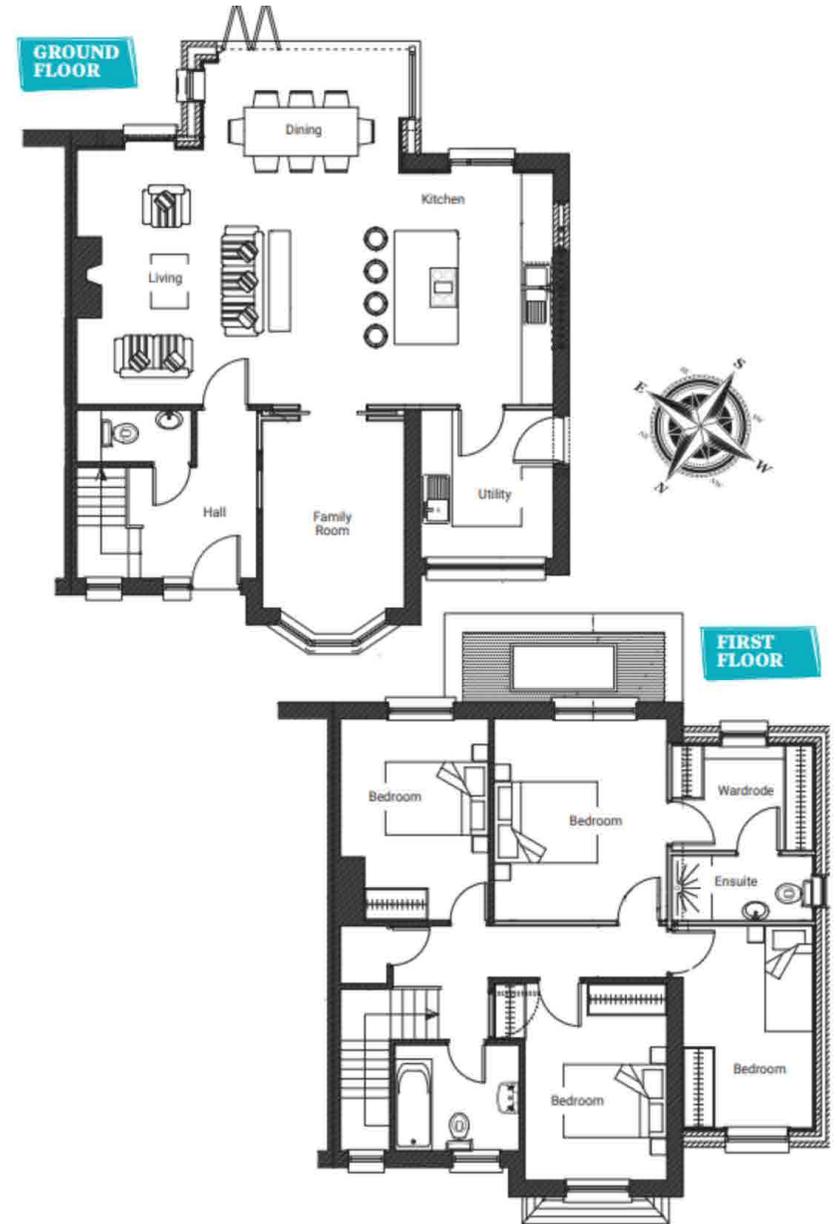
Budget friendly renovation for semi-d

Mark and Aoife Ryan share how they went about their budget friendly renovation of their semi-detached home in Co Limerick.

In this project we cover:

- How they went about the renovation
- What their budget was and where they overspent
- Thrifty design tips
- Delaying the build and finding the right builder
- How the project was managed and who signed off on it
- Day to day to on site and changes made
- Going from a D1 energy rating to an A2
- PV panel set up
- Lessons learned from the process with top tips
- Professional photographs
- Timeline and supplier list
- Specification and floor plans

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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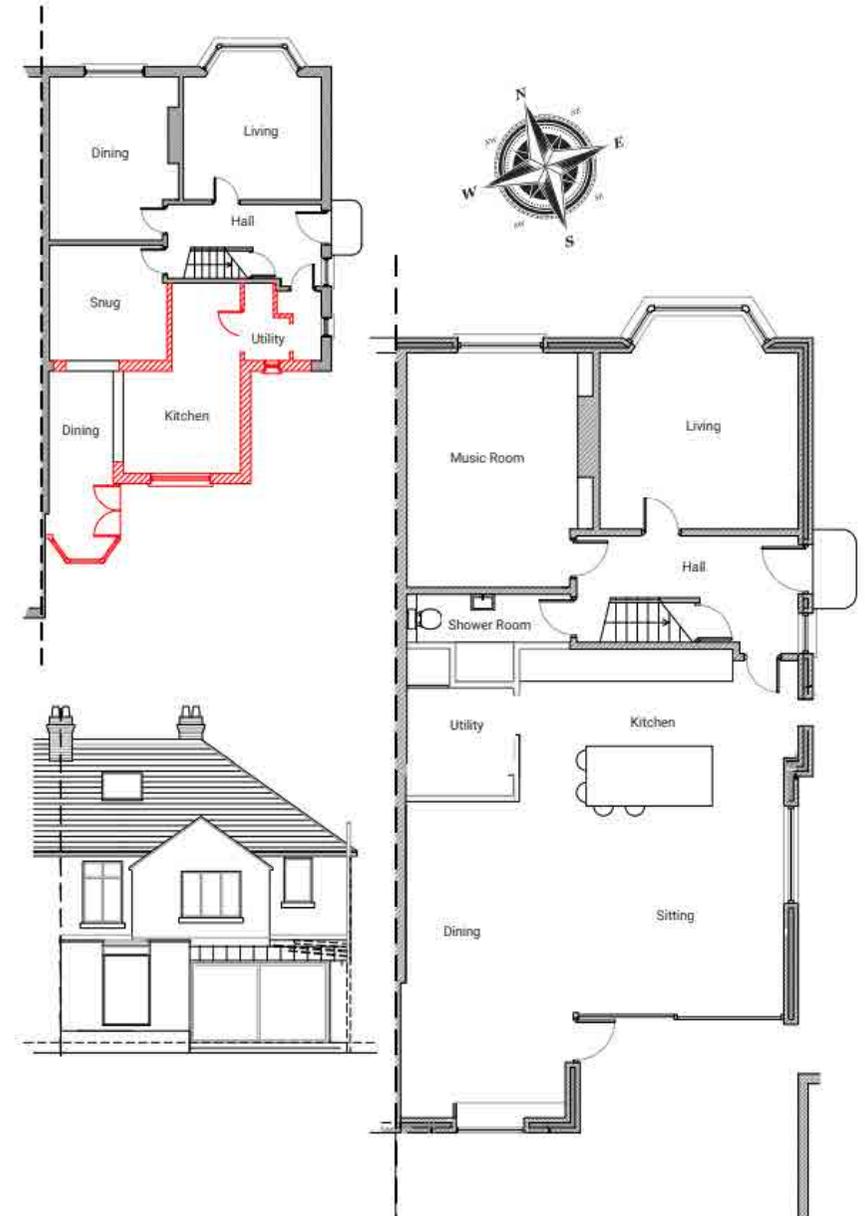
Modern extension in Co Down

How Emma and Jonathan Rhodes knocked down their conservatory in Co Down to replace it with a modern open plan extension.

In this project we cover:

- Renovation cost
- Benefits of hiring an architect
- Process of changing the layout
- How they managed the project
- Kitchen and bathroom choices
- Clever island design
- Insulation and heating upgrades
- Biggest splurge
- Top tips and what they would do differently
- Landscaping
- Professional photographs
- Floor plans and full specification
- Timeline

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



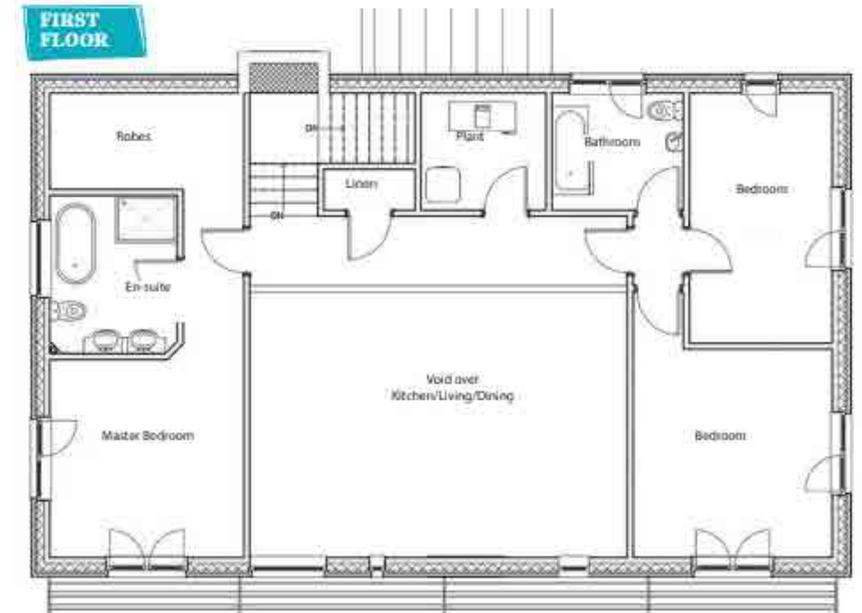
Low energy home on a budget

After a fruitless search to buy a house, Brian and Karen Corry decided to build themselves their dream low energy home on a budget in Co Down.

In this project we cover:

- How to maximise savings on a day to day basis
- Biggest investments and where it paid to spend
- Design process and securing planning permission
- Roof design and build details
- Glulam timber construction choice
- Innovative heating and ventilation system
- What the day to day on site was like
- Top tips to save on build costs
- Specification and suppliers list
- Floor plans and build costs
- Timeline and professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Why I chose timber frame

Ryan Daly chats about why he chose timber frame as the build method for his home in Co Down and shares what the experience was like.

In this project we cover:

- Why he chose timber frame
- How much it cost
- What the timber frame company provided
- What it was like from delivery to putting up the kit
- Troubleshooting on site
- Heating and cooling systems
- EPC/SAP with house/plot sizes
- Floor plans and supplier list

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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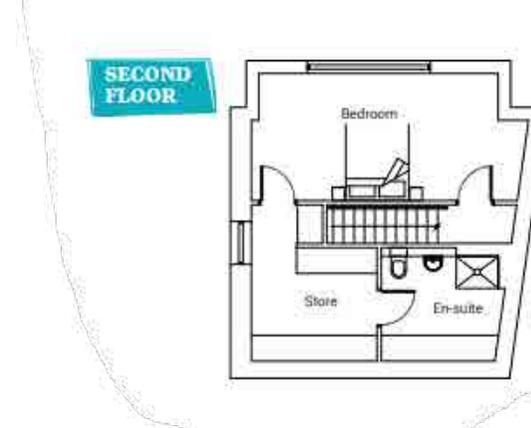
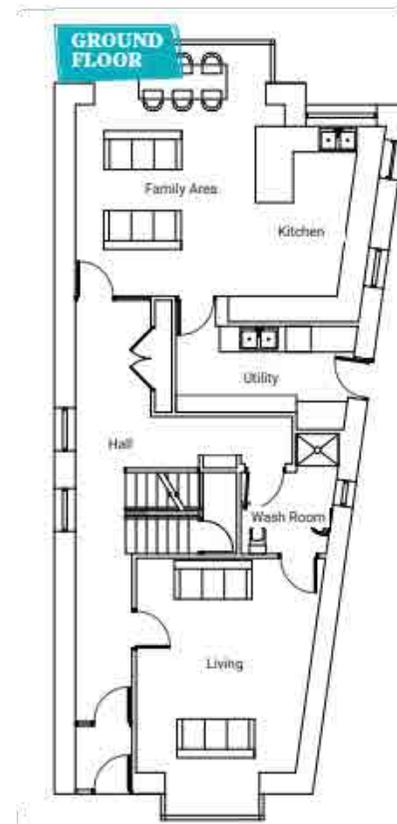
Dublin infill house

How a retired couple in Dublin downsized in their own garden by creating an infill house.

In this project we cover:

- Planning permission process to build in the side garden
- Energy efficiency and layout choices
- Open plan design and futureproofing
- Adapting to the new house
- Top tips and what they would do differently
- Lockdown and financing the project
- Timeline
- Build cost, house value
- House and plot sizes, floor plans
- Supplier list and specification
- Professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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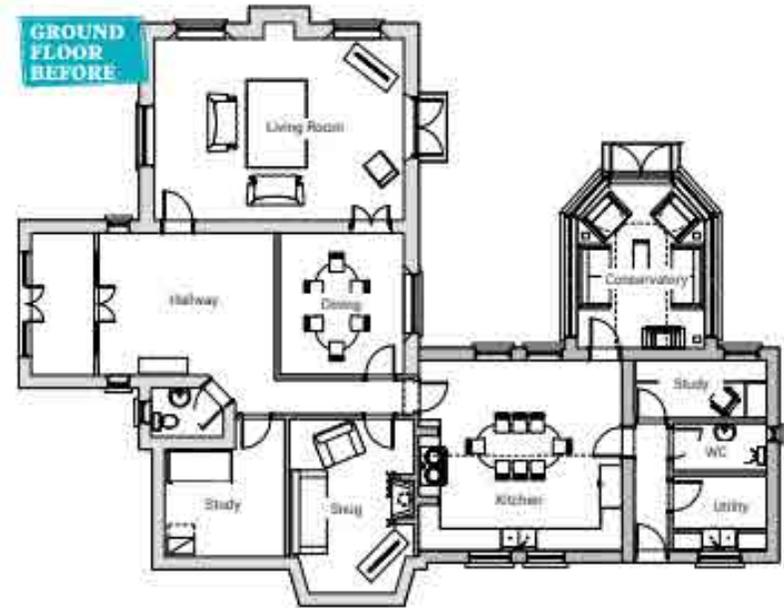
Major renovation in Co Fermanagh

To breathe new life into her home she built 20 years ago, Gail Forster undertook a major renovation project in Fermanagh.

In this project we cover:

- Details of the house they originally built in 2005 and why it wasn't working for them
- How they went about the renovation
- What they would do differently
- Biggest splurge
- Renovation tips
- Floor plans before and after
- Supplier list and professional photographs
- Specification, sizes, costings

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Co Laois dream family home

Find out how this new build in Co Laois delivers on creating the dream family home.

In this project we cover:

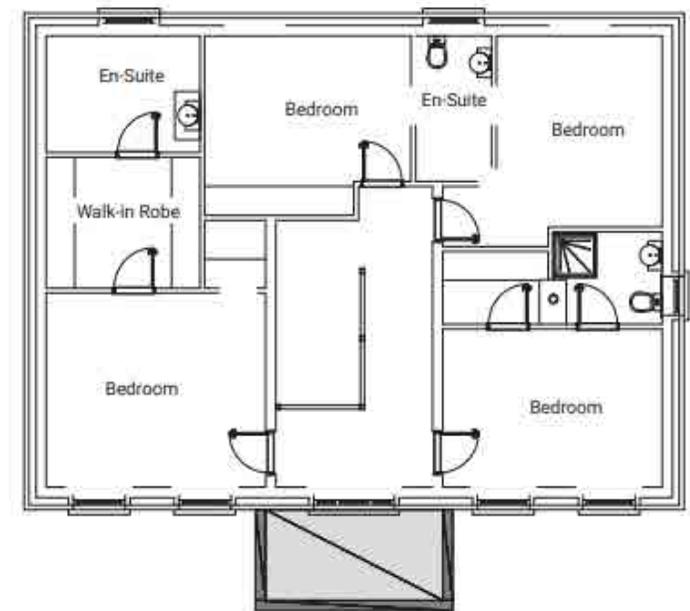
- Finding a site and the process of buying it
- How the design came about
- Changes to the design
- How they got the house built
- What they sourced themselves
- How much DIY they did
- The day to day on site
- Kitchen design tips
- Budgeting tips
- Outside patio area
- Suppliers list and specification
- Professional photographs and floor plans

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



GROUND FLOOR

FIRST FLOOR



Budget-friendly family home in Co Tyrone

Matthew and Hannah Sterrett share what they learned from building their budget-friendly family home in Co Tyrone.

In this project we cover:

- Cost breakdown of the main build elements
- Unforeseen costs, build cost and house value
- How they kept costs under control, budget management tips
- Project management tips and how they managed their day jobs
- Details of how they went about their project with tips to others
- What they would do differently
- Floor plans, specification
- Full timeline
- Supplier list and professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



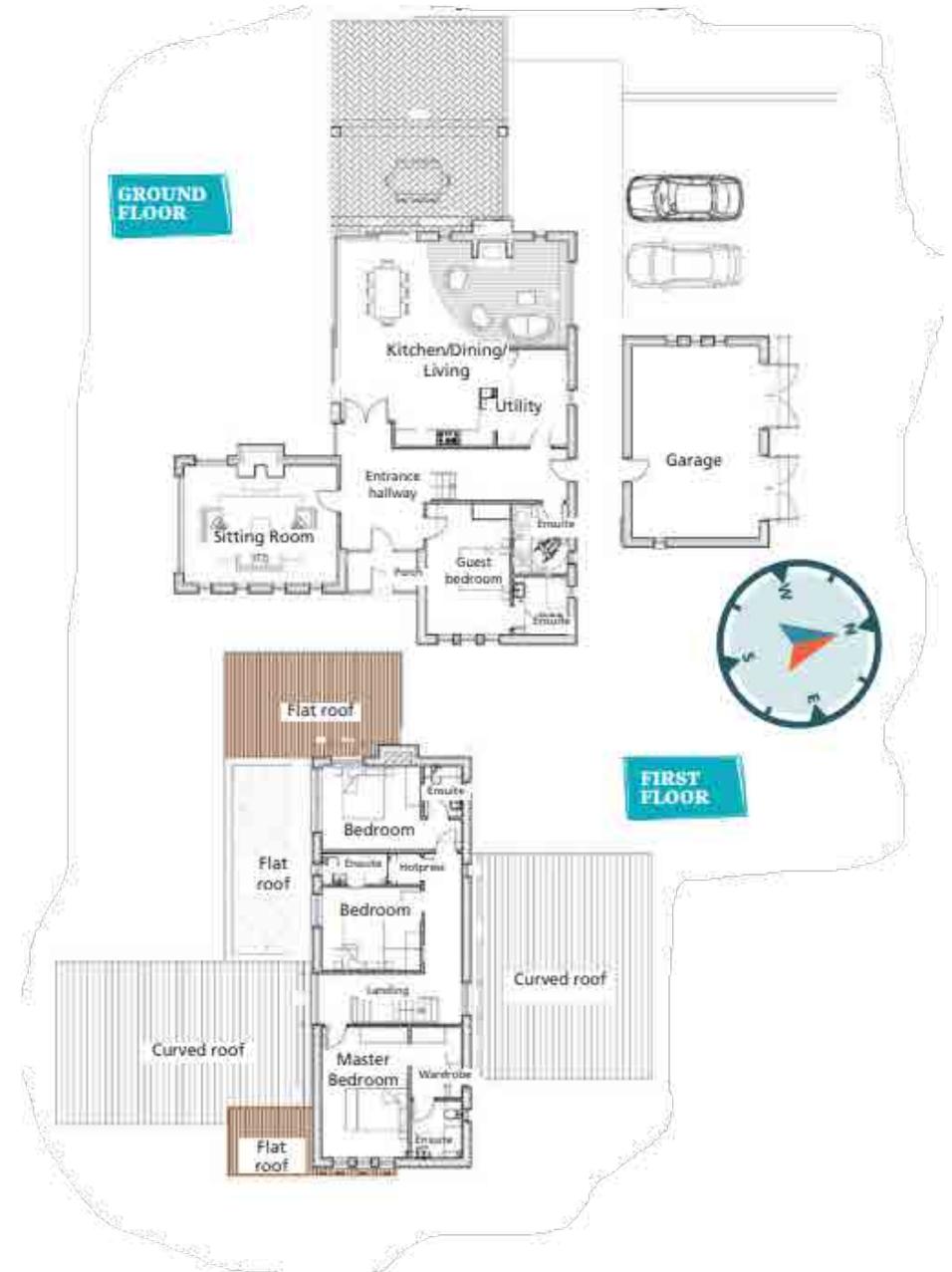
ICF build in Co Longford

Discover how Micheal McKeon chose to build his home in Co Longford out of Insulating Concrete Formwork, or ICF.

In this project we cover:

- What is ICF
- Difficulties being an early adopter of ICF
- How he secured planning permission
- Roof details
- Floor construction and window choices
- Heating system choice
- Costing the project and choosing to go direct labour
- Top tips for the direct labour route and how he went about it
- Top tips to keep the project on track
- How he kept on top of costs, budgeting tips
- Interior design and kitchen tips
- Floor plans and full specification
- Timeline and professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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From kitchen extension to major renovation

This project in Co Dublin initially started as a small kitchen extension and quickly turned into a major renovation; this is how Marie Behan went about it.

In this project we cover:

- Changes made before the major renovation
- Redesign and how it came about
- Planning process
- Changes to the facade
- Changes to windows
- How the build was managed, top tips
- Garden design
- Top tips to stay on track and on budget
- Timeline and professional photographs
- Suppliers list
- Before and after floor plans
- Full specification, including BER before and after

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



GROUND FLOOR AFTER



FIRST FLOOR AFTER

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Change in layout for Co Down home

This Co Down home's change in layout made all the difference to everyday living, thanks to an attic conversion and complete transformation of the ground floor plans.

In this project we cover:

- How the project started, first steps
- Details of changes to ground floor plans and attic conversion
- How much it cost
- Securing planning permission for roof lights
- Hiring a quantity surveyor
- Tender process
- Top tips for a renovation
- Pandemic delays
- Day to day on site
- Legal issues: right of access
- Kitchen, bathroom and bedroom designs
- Window choices
- Heating and ventilation choices
- What they would do differently
- Before and after floor plans
- Professional photographs
- Timeline and supplier list

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



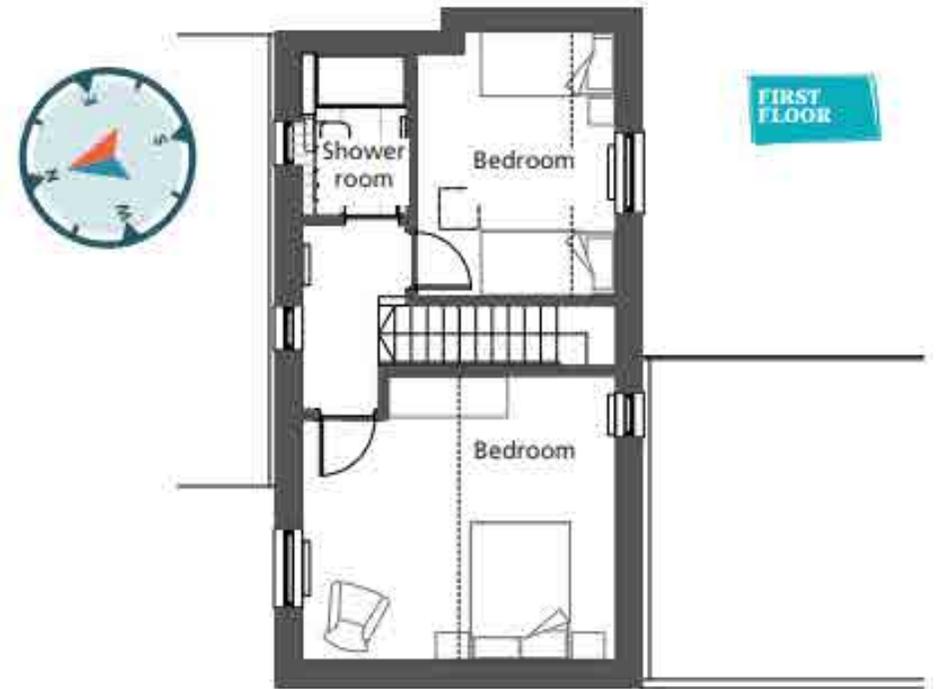
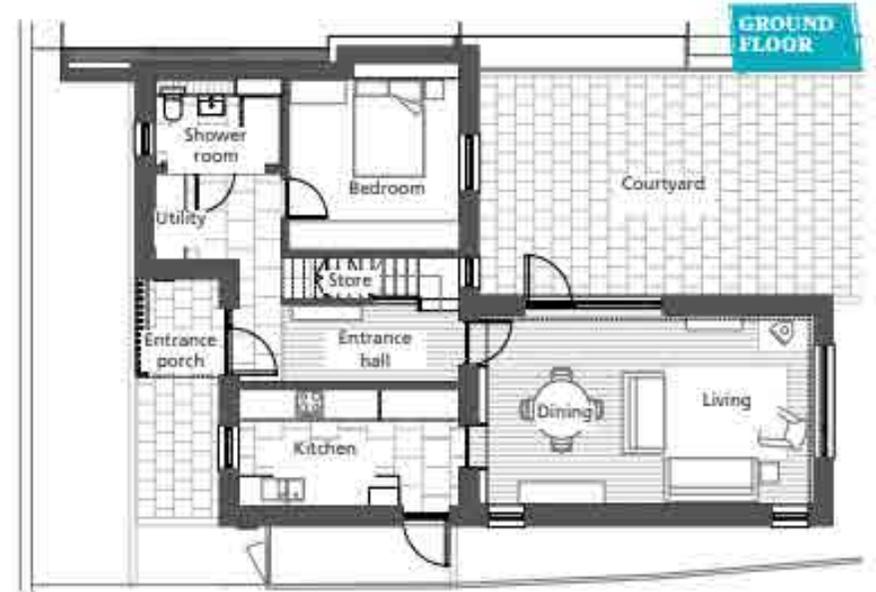
A home made for retirement

Sonya Russell bought a dilapidated cottage and replaced it with a tailor-made home made for retirement, costing just £185k, all thanks to the help of her daughter Susan who's an architect.

In this project we cover:

- House hunting and how the design evolved
- Dealing with an existing planning application
- Demolition work
- Hiring a builder
- Choosing cost effective finishes
- Examples of swaps to save costs
- Heating and ventilation, window choices
- Kitchen and bathrooms
- Garden design
- Timeline and top tips
- Specifications and floor plans
- Supplier list and professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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Hands-on self-build in Co Laois

This hands-on self-build in Co Laois came to fruition thanks to lots of hard work and help from family and friends.

In this project we cover:

- How the house was designed
- Securing planning permission
- Financing the project
- Hiring tradesmen: top tips
- How they saved money
- Help from friends and family
- Details of how the house was built
- Which DIY element they took on
- Window choices
- Parquet flooring details
- Heating, ventilation and electrics
- Adapting a secondhand kitchen to their needs
- Landscaping details
- Professional photographs and supplier list
- Floor plans and specification

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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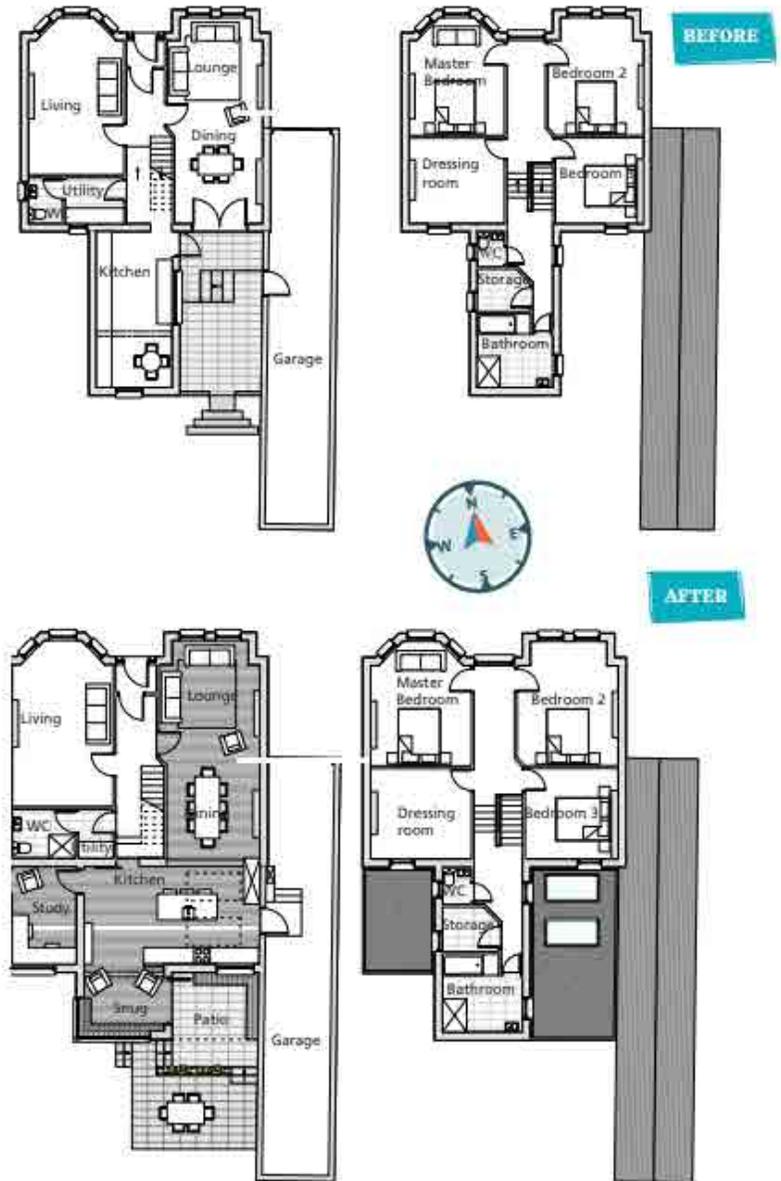
Small extension transforms family home

This internal redesign with small extension transformed this family home into a space that's both functional and beautiful.

In this project we cover:

- Cost breakdown
- Why the house wasn't working for them
- Design process for new layout
- Changes made along the way
- Linking old with new
- Window choices
- How the project was managed
- Day to day on site
- Interior design
- Top tips for those thinking of a reno
- Garden design
- Biggest splurge
- Timeline, supplier list
- Floors plans before and after
- Specification and professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



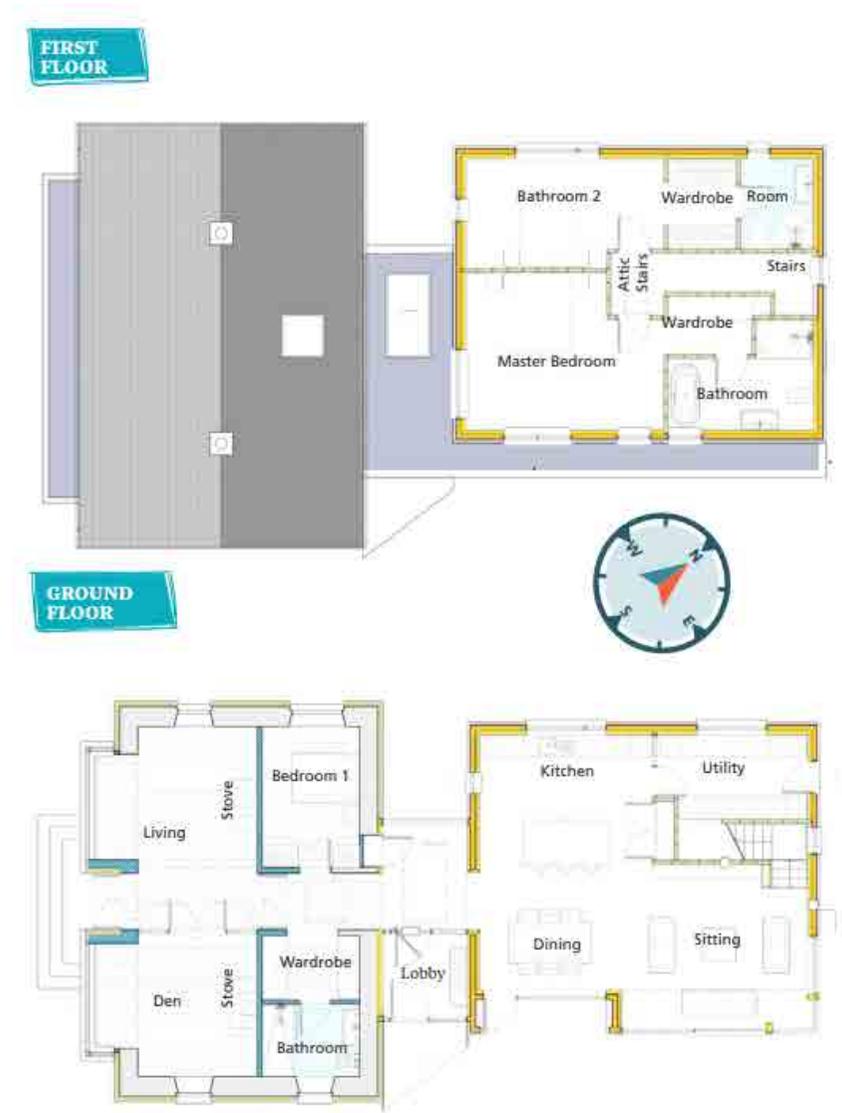
Modern redesign for Co Waterford cottage

Finalist for RTÉ Home of the Year 2024, this clever redesign breathed new life into a mud built cottage in Co Waterford.

In this project we cover:

- Build costs, timeline and spec
- Material price increases and how much it added to the build
- State of the cottage and first steps
- Planning permission process including conditions
- Repairs to existing cottage
- Mid century monochrome design details
- Pros and cons of uPVC roofing
- Floor finishes – what they did and what would do differently
- Kitchen design
- Lighting design
- Colour choices, window choices
- Top tips for those undertaking a renovation and extension project
- Project evolution from start to finish
- Floorplans and supplier list
- Professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



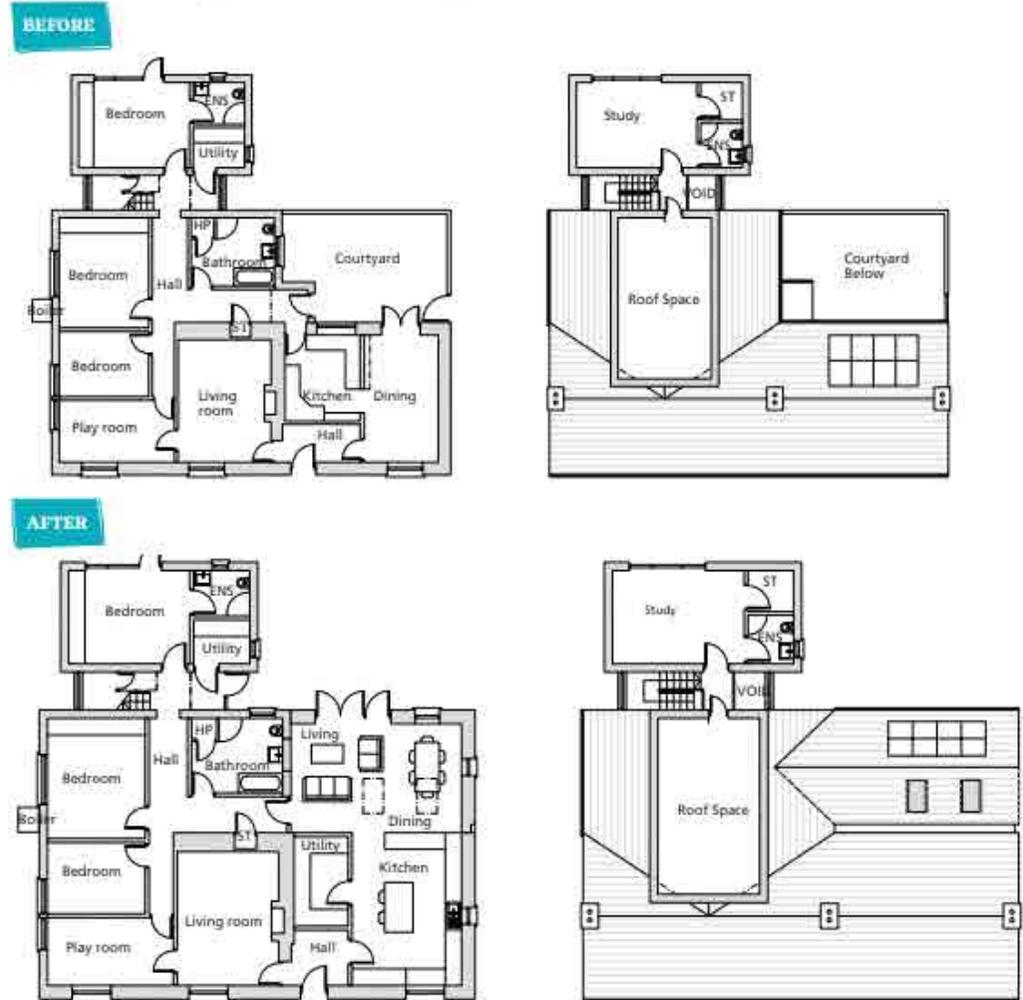
Cottage with brick extension

This traditional cottage renovation with brick extension in Co Armagh seamlessly blends old with new.

In this project we cover:

- House sizes and costs
- Upgrades to the existing damp cottage
- Finding an architect, design process
- Getting the flow right with tips
- Choice of new windows and doors
- Extension: build elements from bricks to insulation
- Ventilation system challenges
- Details of solar system
- Top tips for anyone taking on a renovation
- Living in the house during construction
- Before and after floor plans
- Full specification and professional photographs
- Suppliers and timeline

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



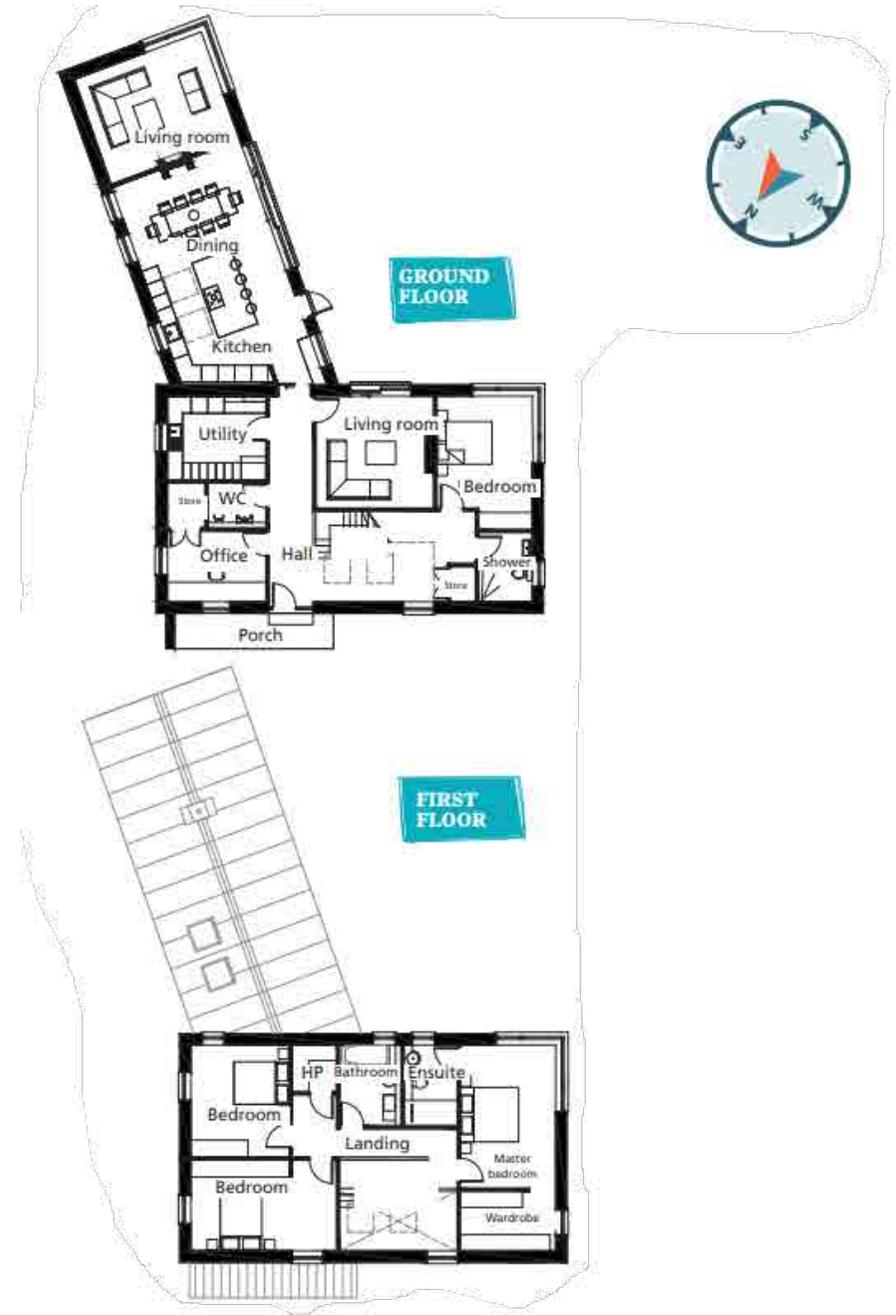
Scandi design for Co Meath new build

How this Scandi design new build in Co Meath was built by an architect and quantity surveyor couple.

In this project we cover:

- How this architect and quantity surveyor couple tackled the design process of their home
- How much they overspent by
- Modern farmhouse design tips
- Scandi (Scandinavian) design and finishes
- Achieving an A1 energy rating
- Choice of traditional build method
- Reasons for systems choices
- Planning process and going to tender
- Choosing a main contractor
- Troubleshooting on site
- Getting help from family and friends
- Timeline and specification
- Floor plans
- Professional photographs

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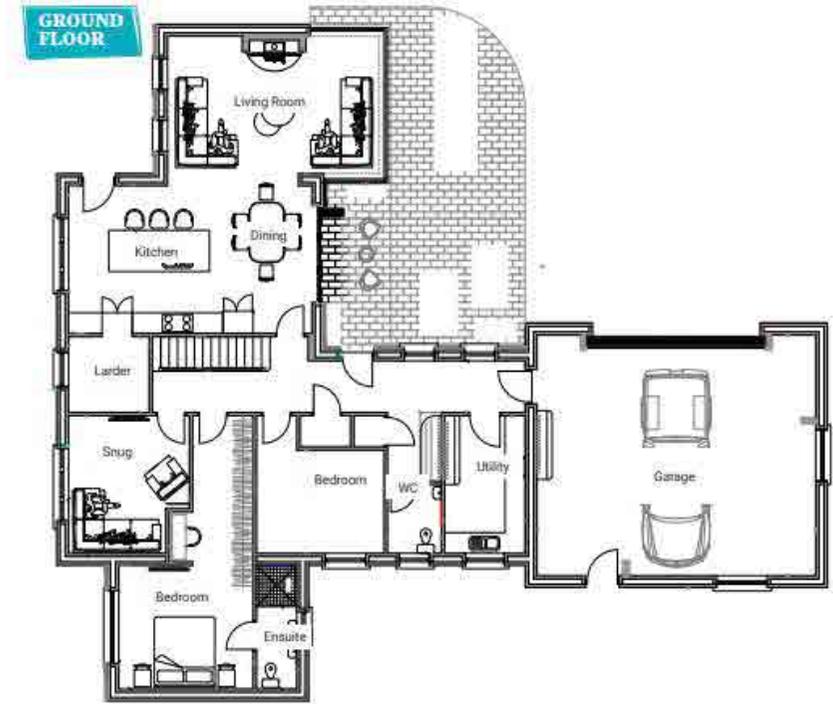
Costed new build in Co Tyrone

This costed new build project in Co Tyrone shows how to build a family home in the countryside from scratch.

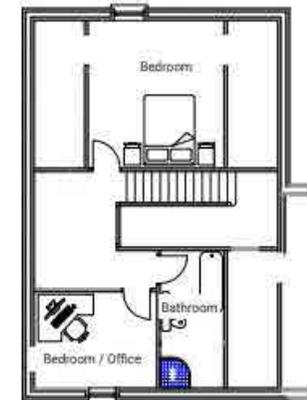
In this project we cover:

- Finding the perfect site on the farm
- How they secured planning permission
- Inspiration and resulting design
- Doing work themselves and getting help from friends and family
- Costed new build elements: fees, connection costs, design and fit, landscaping, total build cost
- Interior design scheme with tips on how to get the look
- Bathroom and kitchen design tips
- Floor covering tips
- Landscaping tips
- Top tips including changes they would make
- Favourite features, splurges
- Floor plans
- Timeline and specification
- Suppliers and professional photographs

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



FIRST FLOOR



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Edwardian renovation in Dublin

This Edwardian renovation project saw a red brick terraced house being transformed from a dark space into a warm a bright home.

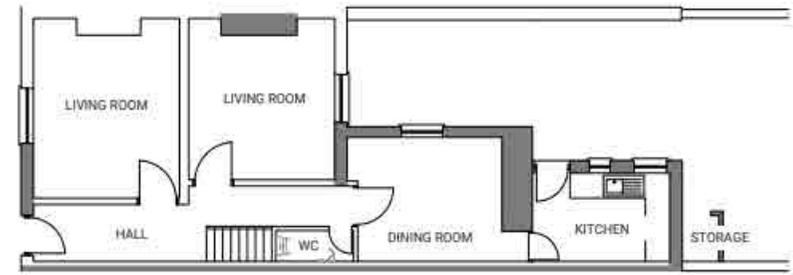
In this project we cover:

- State the house was in when the couple bought it
- How the renovation project got started
- Working with an architectural designer and hiring a builder
- Full costs including kitchen
- Colour schemes
- Changes on the upper storey
- Dealing with old windows and walls
- Kitchen upgrade details
- Changes they would make
- Top tips for renovators
- Floor plans before and after
- Suppliers and timeline
- Full specification

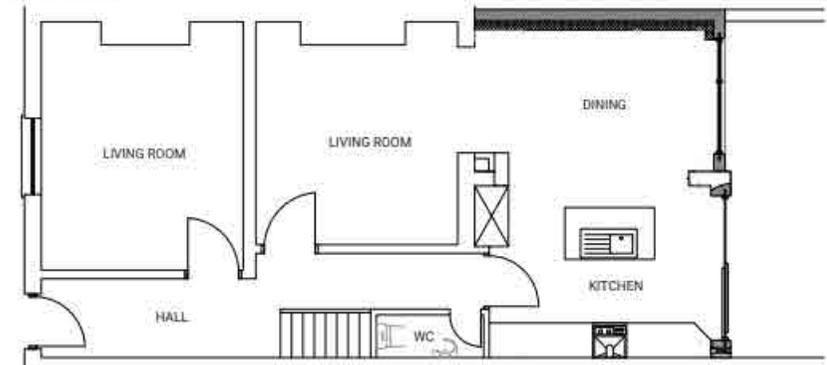
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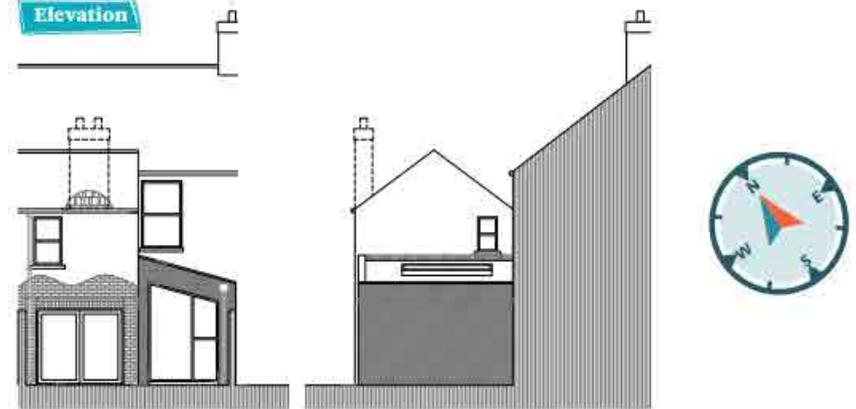
Before



After



Elevation



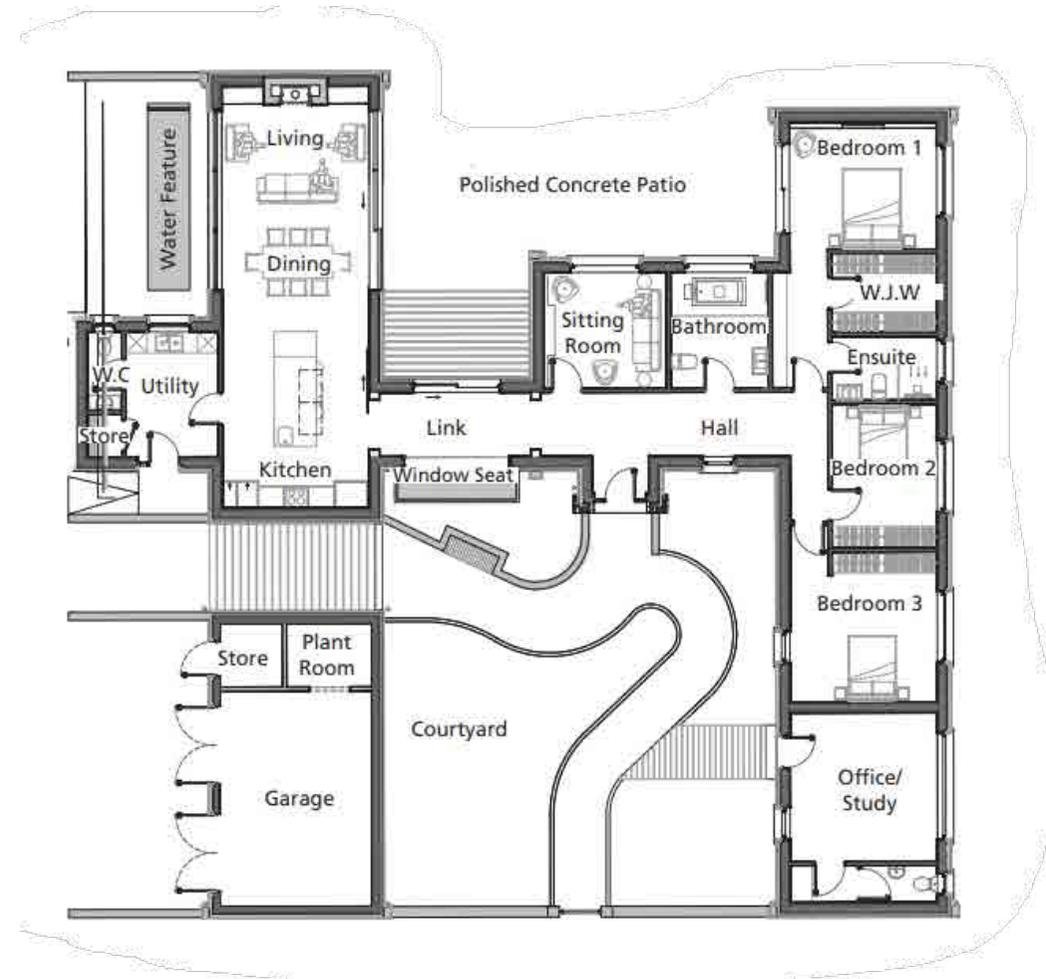
H-shaped bungalow

How architect Declan Brennan designed and built his H-shaped bungalow in Co Laois.

In this project we cover:

- Design inspiration, must-haves
- Energy efficient design tips
- Garden design tips
- Kitchen design tips
- Choice of heating and hot water systems
- Wastewater and electricity choices
- Issues with polished concrete
- Hard landscaping design and build
- Direct labour tips
- Biggest splurges and what they would change
- Favourite features
- Full timeline and specification
- Supplies and professional photographs
- Floor plans

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Building the dream home to retire to

Construction industry veteran Louis Gunnigan chronicles how he went about building the dream home to retire to: a low maintenance bungalow near the sea.

In this project we cover:

- How he found the site
- Choosing an architectural designer
- Creating a Values Statement for his architect
- Guiding principles for the house and how that affected design decisions
- House size and budgeting for the build
- Cost details on key elements
- Rainwater harvesting system details
- Top design tips and ideas for a compact home, including storage
- Building methods: exploring the options from volumetric to ICF
- Choice between direct labour and main contractor
- Getting the space right
- External finishes
- Kitchen and bathroom design
- Mechanical and electrical design
- Connecting to services
- Timeline and supplier list
- Floor plans

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



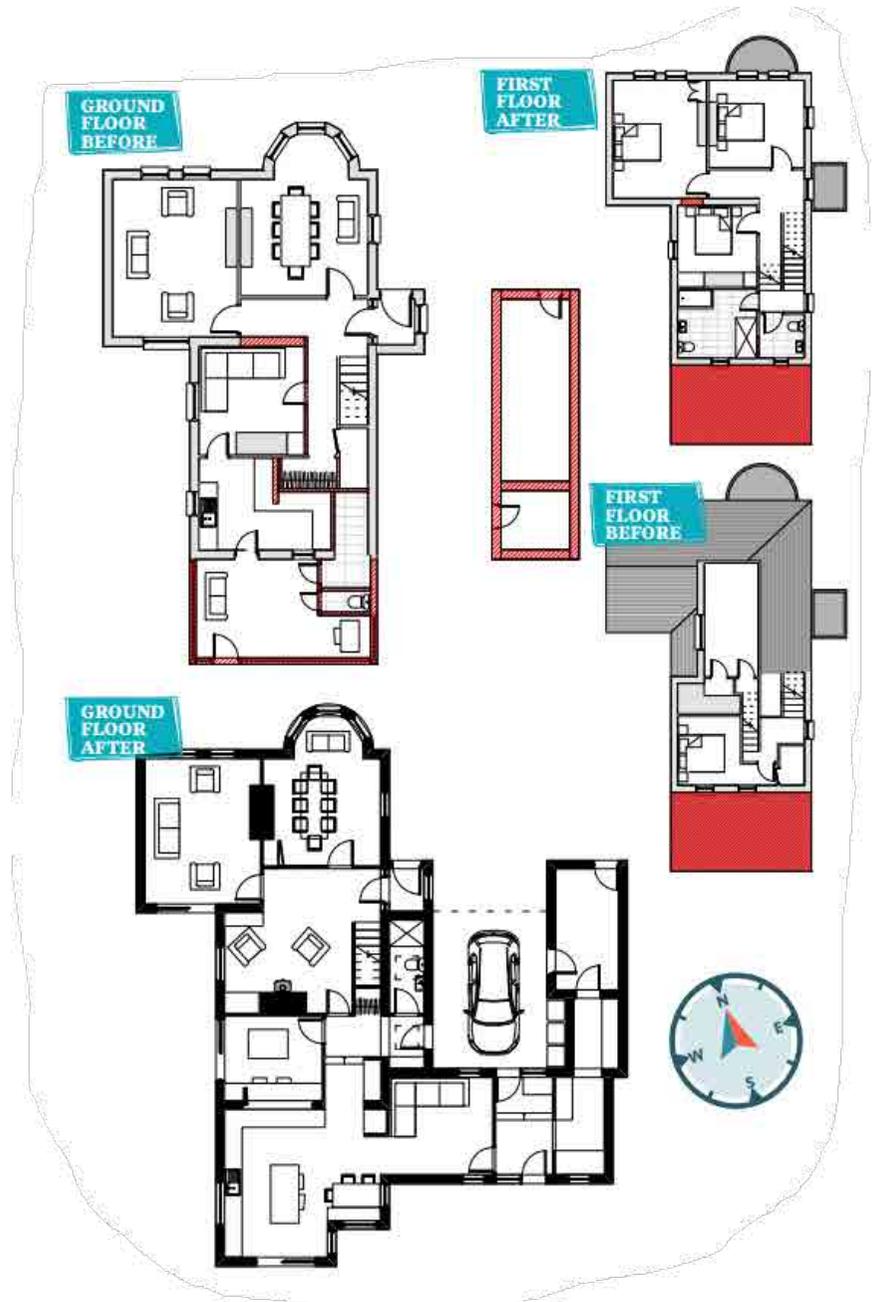
Major renovation for Belfast home

The story of a major renovation project on a Belfast home that went from dark and cramped to bright and airy.

In this project we cover:

- Finding the house and first steps to renovate it
- Specification including cost of house and works
- Breakdown of professional fees
- Design features on the extension
- Renovating in a conservation area
- Undertaking work during Covid
- Fire regs issues with open plan
- Kitchen design
- Interior design tips
- Subsidence issues
- Favourite features and top tips to others
- Professional photographs
- Timeline and supplier list
- Before and after floor plans

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



Passive house in Co Tyrone

Certified passive house consultant Patrick McMullan of Co Tyrone shares how he went about designing and building his family home.

In this project we cover:

- Full costings, spec and floorplans
- Initial design and getting the space right
- Passive house effect on the design
- Cost savers
- Kitchen and bathroom designs
- Designing the outside space
- Passive house explainers
- Choosing external finishes
- Choosing windows and doors
- Securing planning permission
- Heating system choice
- Ventilation system choice
- Provisions for on site electricity, water
- Construction drawings
- Timeline and progress photos

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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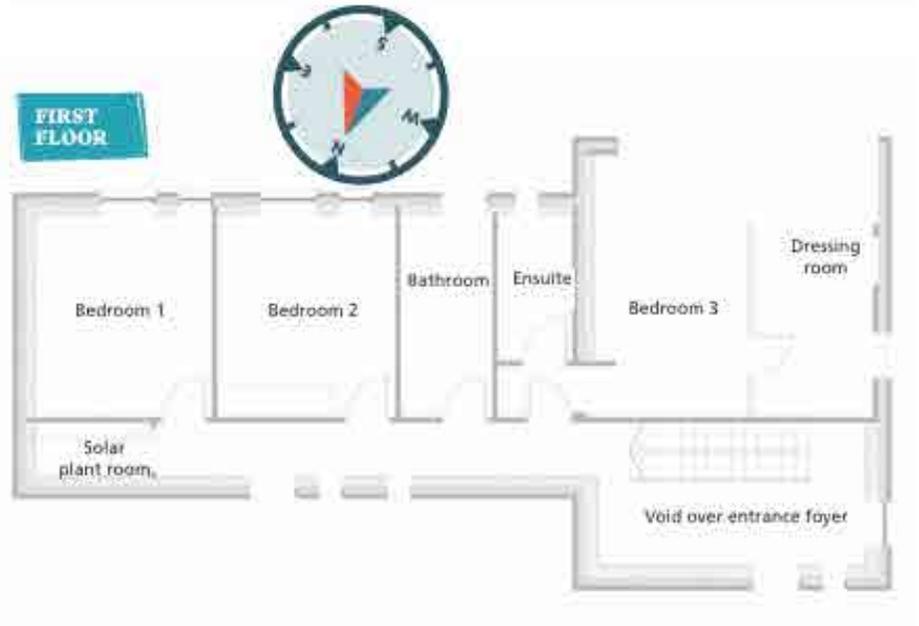
Low energy home in Co Cork

This low energy home in Co Cork was the product of research and plenty of blood, sweat and tears.

In this project we cover:

- Specs and full cost breakdown
- Defining what it means to build a sustainable house
- Choosing where to build on the site and building method
- Design choices to maximise space and savings
- Window choices
- Pre-planning meeting: tips
- Visibility spays
- Favourites, surprises and top tips
- Building roles: who did what and how they managed the build
- Budget management tips
- Design change mid-build
- Interior design tips
- Professional photographs
- Floorplans, timeline and supplier list

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



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Costed Victorian house renovation

This Victorian house renovation turned a damp and dated building into a stylishly smart home.

In this project we cover:

- Cost breakdown of the renovation
- Process of buying the house
- How the house didn't meet their needs
- Reconfiguration and demo work
- Kitchen design details and tips
- How the project was managed
- Troubleshooting
- Interior design details and tips
- Professional photographs
- Timeline, suppliers and specifications
- Before and after floor plans

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Co Derry new build made for retirement

How novice self-builder John Wright oversaw the building of his parents' home in Co Derry.

In this project we cover:

- Low maintenance house design
- Future proofing for old age
- Top tips for novices
- Choice of upper floors
- Building method choice
- Window choices
- Thoughts on battery storage
- Smart home features
- Kitchen tips
- Challenges faced during the build
- Eco choices
- Floor plans and spec
- Suppliers and timeline
- Professional photographs

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Costed extension in Co Dublin

Find out how a 1950s semi-detached house was transformed into a family home in this costed extension project in Co Dublin.

In this project we cover:

- Finding the property and how they spotted its potential
- Cost breakdown of both professional fees and build components
- Design process and how it was affected by the budget
- Securing planning permission
- How the project was managed
- Tips to others thinking of a similar project
- Kitchen design process
- Choice of external finishes
- Choice of internal floor finishes
- Converting the garage into office space
- Futureproofing measures
- Interior design process
- Choice of windows to avoid overheating
- Troubleshooting: issues with liquid screed, steel beam placement and steps to the garden
- Impact of insulation on room sizes
- Timeline, specification and suppliers
- Before and after floor plans

To read the full article on this project and see additional images from throughout the property, [click here](#)



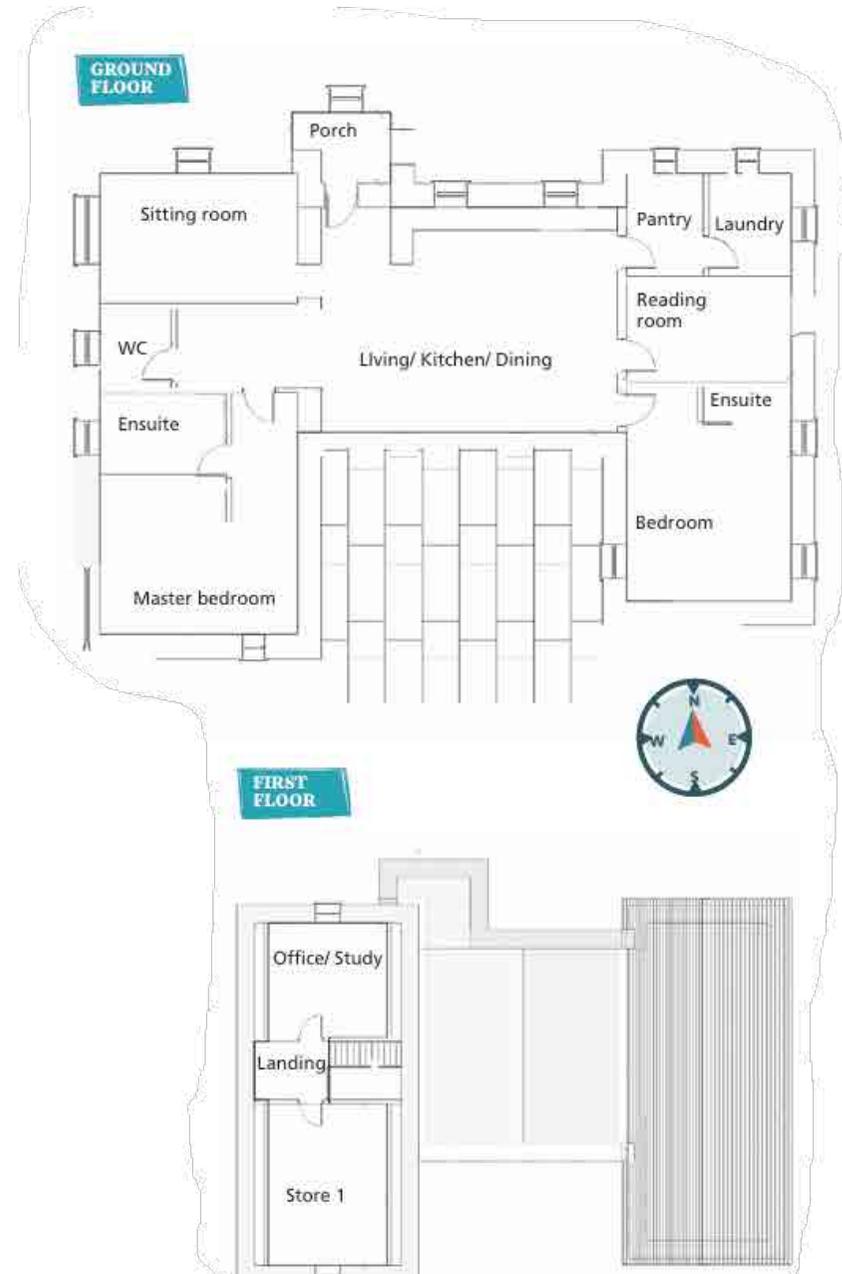
Cost savings on traditional build in Co Down

There's a reason many self-builders choose to go with a traditional build – it saves money, as Gavin Connolly of Co Down explains.

In this project we cover:

- Headline build costs including plumbing, kitchen, windows
- Ways to keep costs under control
- How the build was financed
- QS cost and how much they went overbudget
- Finding the site and tips to others
- Planning restrictions
- Decision to go direct labour
- Tips to others considering managing the build themselves
- Insulation strategy
- Timeline and progress photos
- Floor plans, supplier list and specifications

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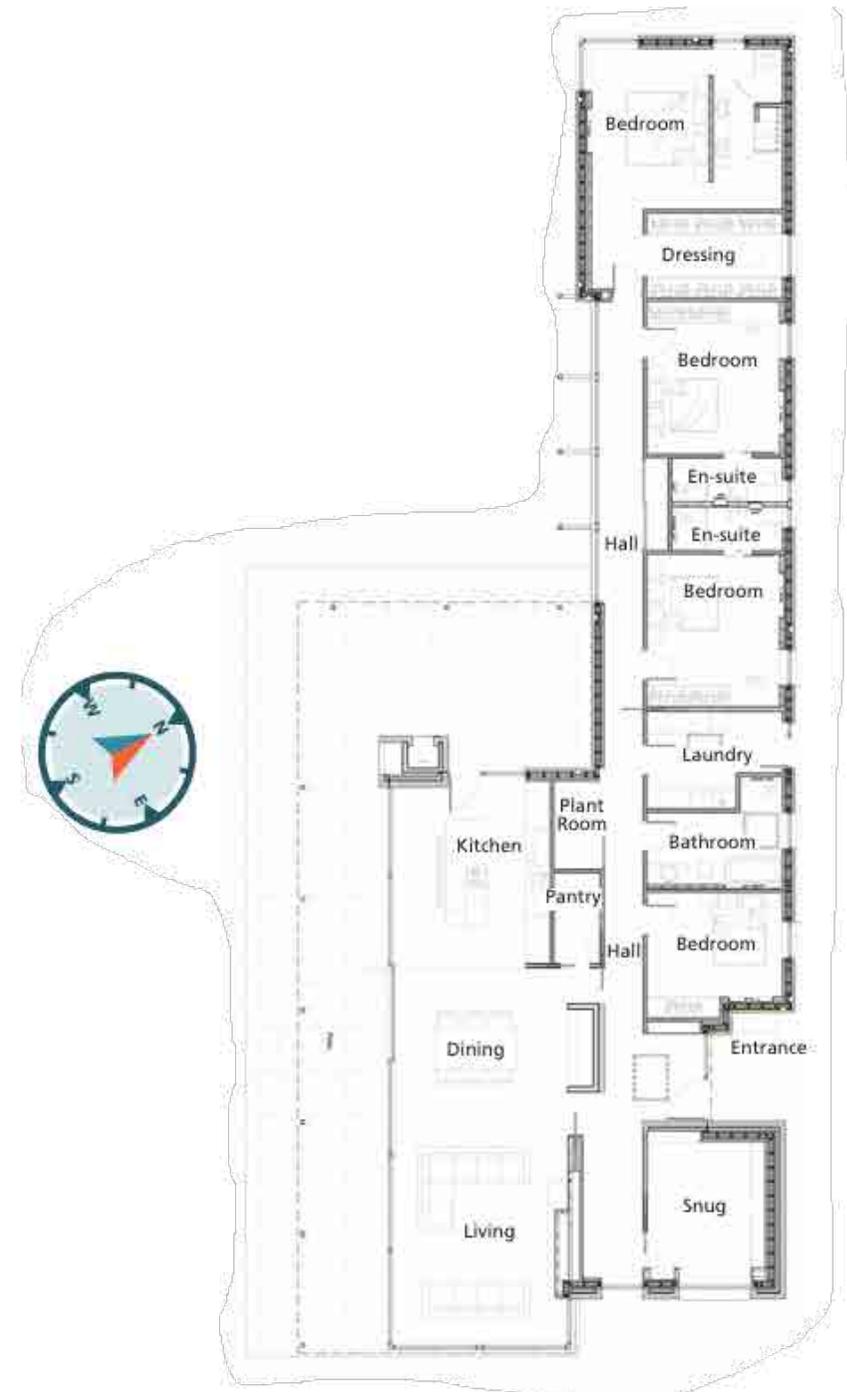
Modern new build in Co Antrim

Home of the Year winner Rob McConnell shares the frustrations that come with building a modern new build in Ireland, and the satisfaction of seeing it through.

In this project we cover:

- How luck and perseverance got them their dream site
- House style influences
- How the build was managed
- Top tips for going direct labour
- Troubleshooting on site: issues with windows and doors and roofing materials
- Why he chose timber frame
- Choice of heat pump and why
- Interior design tips
- Landscaping tips
- Tips for those looking to build a similar looking house
- Biggest splurge
- Floor plans and specification
- Suppliers and professional photographs

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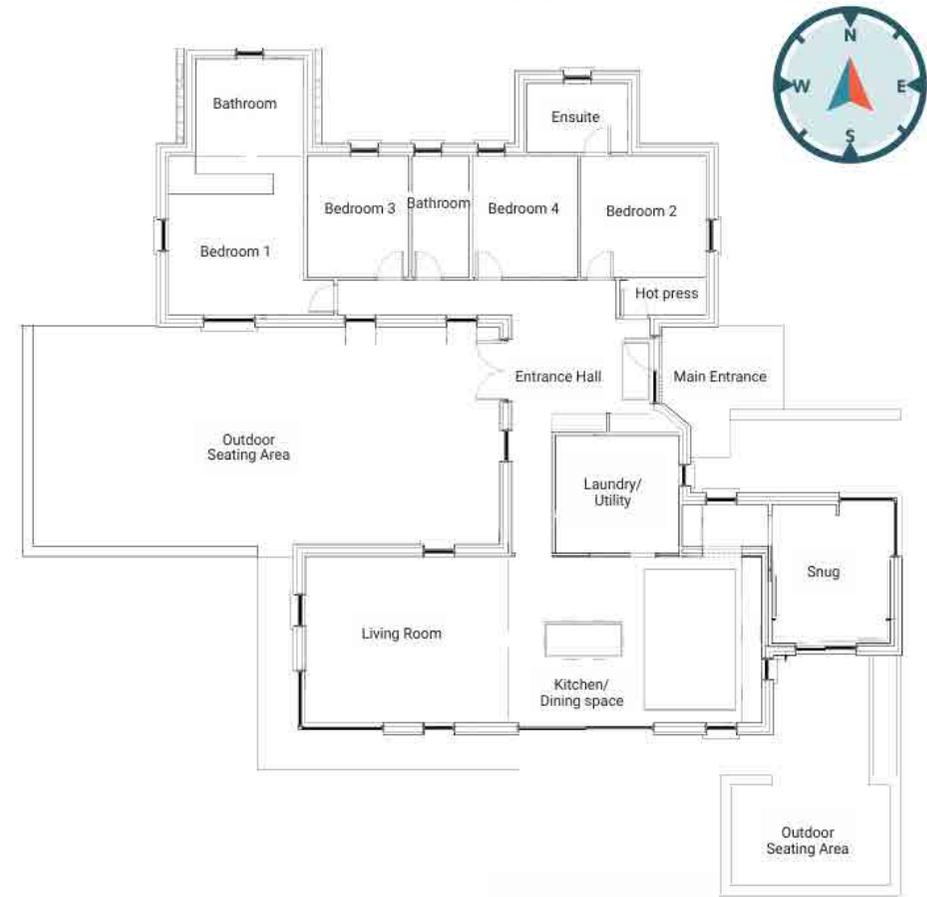
Co Westmeath bungalow on a budget

This new build family-friendly project was designed for modern living and built on a budget.

In this project we cover:

- Westmeath bungalow costs on a budget
- Cost effective design choices
- Incorporating oak into the design
- Project management route and direct labour tips
- Changes midway through the build
- Dealing with a €10k curveball from Irish water
- Planning conditions
- Savings on kitchen and finishes
- Favourite features and changes they'd make
- Top tips for others building their own house
- Specifications
- Professional photographs
- Floor plans and timeline
- Suppliers

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