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ARCHITECTURE

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Architects
Sterrin O'Shea Architects
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Quantity Surveyors
Andrew Nugent and Associates /
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Photography
Marie-Louise Halpenny

Client
Private

Engineers
Casey O'Rourke Engineers
John Casey

Main Contractor
Brian Leach Construction

PROJECT SIZE
55m²
DURATION
8 months
LOCATION
Rathgar, Dublin

RATHGAR HOUSE



Sterrin O'Shea Architects' Account

This project called for the remodelling and refurbishing of an existing Edwardian house together with an extension to the rear and an attic mezzanine to allow for additional habitable space for the owners, who have three teenage daughters. The house forms part of a row of semi-detached red brick Edwardian houses dating back to c.1905. Though not protected, the two-storey over garden level house retains many original features including fireplaces, decorative cornicing, centrepieces and elaborate panelling around windows.

Design

The challenge was to explore the relationship between old and new and to successfully create a garden room, which not only links the rear to the main house but also connects directly with the garden. It was critical that this addition would work with the main house in a sympathetic way without blocking natural daylight. For this reason, we introduced an elevated courtyard, which allows light into the original dining room and provides direct access from the new kitchen. This external room now connects these two spaces with the garden room, which has been recessed to reduce impact when viewed from the hall and dining room in the original house. Care was taken to ensure that it is still possible to see the rear garden when standing at the dining room patio doors, as the roof to the rear extension is stepped, giving the impression of infinite glass over the main structural beam. The screens to the rear extension and courtyard are composed of clear and opaque glazing together with anodised aluminium panels which are kept flush intentionally to give the appearance of a taut skin. The intention is that it reflects both the brickwork of the main house and the rear garden including its new timber clad walls.

On entering the main house, one is drawn through the somewhat dark hall, via a new pivot door, by the immense light and the view of the recessed lush garden beyond. The storage wall also acts as a necessary link between old and new. It begins under the main stairwell accommodating a WC and cloakroom and extends into the kitchen concealing the mechanical appliances (gas boiler, water cylinder, manifolds) together with laundry facilities and larder presses. It continues into the rear extension, providing additional storage and terminating in the form of a study desk.

Attic Stairs

We initially had concerns about developing the attic as the head height was considerably restricted due to the low pitch of the main roof, especially when compared to the generous proportions of the main house. Rather than make a separate room, we created a mezzanine room overlooking the main stairwell. Access hatches to storage in the eaves are hidden along the birch veneered panelled walls. Lighting is concealed beneath this, illuminating the marmoleum grey floor.

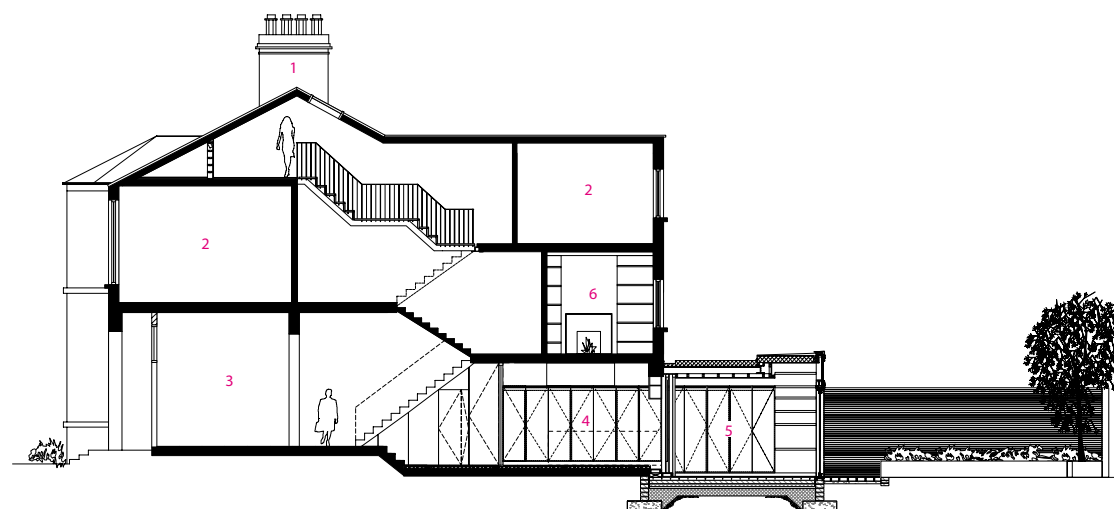
The access to the new attic room provided a challenge due to potential impact on the generous height of the existing landing, though this was surprisingly dark to begin. To compensate, we introduced roof lights to the main roof and the roof over the return; these roof lights were positioned to channel maximum natural daylight either side of the new stairs deep into the main stairwell and hall. Rather than extend the original stairwell 'up' to the attic in a pastiche fashion, we designed a new stainless steel and American White Oak stairs which folded 'down'. This became 'bridge-like', as we had to allow for 2m clear head height below. The stainless steel hand rail extends around to form a balustrade to the corner of the attic which overlooks the main stairwell.

Remodelling

As heat loss and dampness were the main concerns for our clients, floors were tanked and insulated, wet and dry rot was treated and external walls were dri-lined. The decorative cornicing was reinstated. Double-glazed windows were installed and the architraves and panelling were restored. Internal doors were stripped and re-hung. A new pressurised plumbing system was installed. The main family bathroom was enlarged and ensembles were added to allow for modern day family life.

Materials

The palette of materials was kept to a minimum; the same hardwoods and natural stone were used in both the new additions and also the old house. American White Oak with oil finish was the timber used for flooring and joinery. More hardwearing limestone flags were selected for the entrance hall, kitchen, wet areas and also externally in the courtyard to ensure continuity between inside and out. Sprayed and lacquered MDF with routed edges in lieu of handles was used for doors to wardrobes and storage walls. Light fittings are concealed to avoid clutter.



Section

- 1 Mezzanine
- 2 Bedroom
- 3 Hall
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Living/Dining
- 6 Study



- 1 The new garden room links with the existing house, while also providing direct access to the garden
- 2 The continuous storage wall with panels of lacquered MDF connects old with new
- 3 A new elevated courtyard brings light into the depth of the plan
- 4,5,7,8 A new stainless steel stairs rises up to the attic bridge-like
- 6 The new attic room features storage in the eaves
- 9 The garden room connects with the outside through tall glazing
- 10 Flush glazing together with the anodised aluminium panels give the appearance of a taut skin

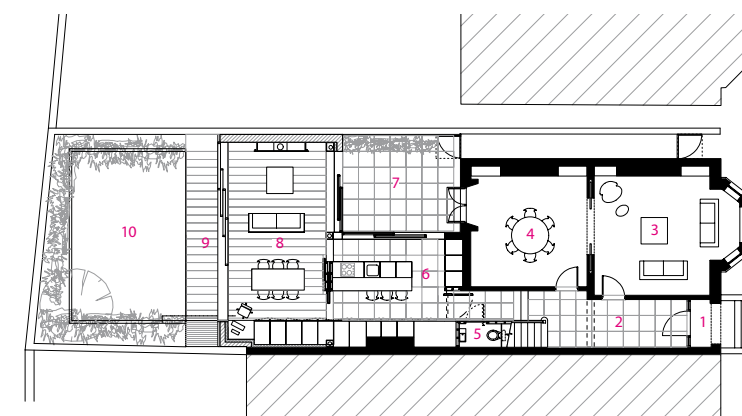
First floor plan

- 1 Bedroom
- 2 Bathroom
- 3 Ensuite
- 4 Bedroom / study
- 5 Roof over extension
- 6 Rear garden
- v Void



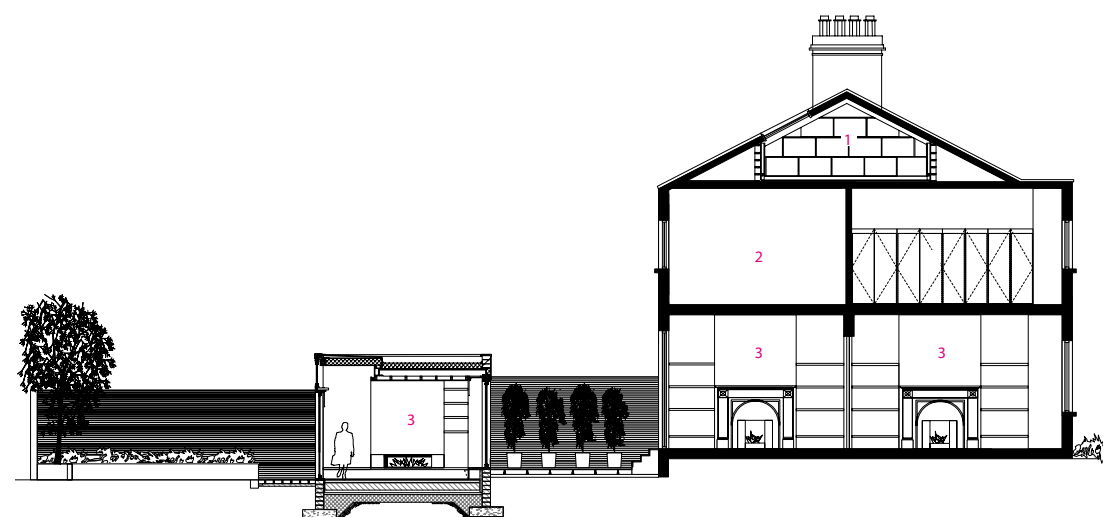
Ground floor plan

- 1 Porch
- 2 Hall
- 3 Living room
- 4 Dining room
- 5 W/C
- 6 Kitchen
- 7 New Courtyard
- 8 Living/dining room
- 9 Deck
- 10 Rear Garden



Section

- 1 Attic
- 2 Bedroom
- 3 Living/Dining



Bucholz McEvoy Architects

(Elmpark, Dublin)

Bucholz McEvoy Architects are one of the most successful architects practices in Ireland. We have developed an integrated approach to architectural design, seamlessly incorporating structure, technology, environmental controls, ecology, landscape and infrastructure into the design process. This approach is applied to all areas of research, from full architectural services and master planning to urban design and product design.

Sterrin O'Shea Architects

(FAI Headquarters, Abbotstown, Dublin)

Sterrin O'Shea established her own practice in 2005. After graduating from DIT Bolton Street she worked with Grafton Architects, FKL and Murray O'Laoire in Dublin and with Engelen Moore in Sydney, Australia. The aim of the practice is to provide high quality bespoke design solutions for each project. The key focus is to maximise the use of light and create a flexible living environment. There is a strong emphasis on detailing throughout the design stage to ensure a high quality finish on completion. Currently the practice is involved in the design of mixed use schemes and one-off houses together with refurbishments and extensions.

Boyd Cody Architects

(Palmerston, Dublin)

Boyd Cody Architects are Sinead Bourke, Dermot Boyd, Brendan Carroll, Peter Cody, Fumi Kashimura, John Maguire, Oran O'Siochain and Kevin Walsh. The directors, Dermot Boyd and Peter Cody graduated from Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) in 1990. Peter Cody received a masters degree from Columbia University in 1996. Both served as Presidents of the Architectural Association of Ireland (AAI) on their return to Ireland. Boyd Cody Architects was established in 2000. The practice won the Monaghan Civic Offices Competition in 2002. Boyd Cody Architects has received numerous awards since its foundation, including the AAI Downes Medal in 2005 for excellence in architectural design. Their work has also been widely published here and abroad and featured in the Venice Architectural Biennale in 2006 and the Lisbon Architectural Triennale in 2007. Dermot Boyd teaches at DIT and Peter Cody at UCD. The practice is currently working on a series of houses in Ireland and larger scale developments in Dublin and Athens.