



THE SPACE MAKERS

More homeowners are deciding to improve rather than move, resulting in some creative and inspiring extension projects, discovers **Nathalie Marquez Courtney**.



DOUBLE TAKE

A listed Victorian semi that once housed a series of flats was restored to its former glory – with a fresh and modern addition out back.

Sometimes you have to work hard to preserve what's there. Other times you have to knock everything over and start again. When working on this listed Victorian redbrick in Rathmines, architect Sterrin O'Shea of SOSA Architects had to do a bit of both.

The main body of the house had been divided into rental flats and was painstakingly restored to its original layout. The garden mews, circa the 1960s, was not so lucky. "The badly constructed mews in the rear garden had housed one of the flats, a self-contained unit," Sterrin explains. "This was demolished to allow for a larger garden."

The owners, a couple with two sons, also wanted to make sure that their shiny new extension wouldn't stop them from enjoying their new period property. To this end, they decided against having a living room. "They felt that if they had one, they wouldn't use the beautifully proportioned reception rooms in the main house," she says. "These reception rooms are now interconnecting, but can be separated to create two separate living rooms – one for the parents and one for their sons."

The extension houses a large family kitchen and dining room. Set back from the main house, this allows natural daylight into both and created an attractive courtyard as well as an alternative entrance. "The clients are keen cyclists and like to park their bikes in the newly-covered side passage and use the courtyard as the day-to-day entrance, rather than the main one at the front," Sterrin continues.

The new extension also houses a utility room, clad in iroko hardwood panelling, and a lacquered MDF storage wall concealing a cloakroom and pantry. The palette of materials was kept to a minimum to create a sleek and contemporary finish. Polished concrete floors blend seamlessly with the stainless steel worktops and white subway tiles, while a striking block of iroko serves as the breakfast bar. Sterrin and her team chose not to use any overhead storage, which keeps the kitchen looking clean, unfussy and uncluttered.

Bespoke joinery is really given a place to shine here and very little new furniture was needed. "The clients retained only one piece of



furniture for the extension – an oak kitchen table that we both loved,” Sterrin recalls. “The only new furniture required were the Eames DSW chairs.” A 1950s PH50 light by Poul Henningsen for Louis Poulsen completes the look.

As well as designing the island breakfast bar, the architects worked with Langrell Kitchens to create a custom-built desk that looks out onto the courtyard. The other end of the extension features an attractive day bed, positioned to overlook the garden and maximise relaxation. “The owners reported that all four of them had a snooze on the day bed one Sunday afternoon!” she laughs.

Sterrin O’Shea Architects; 01 405 2315; sosa.ie.

OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT To keep the extension from looking too cluttered, Sterrin O’Shea of SOSA Architects decided against overhead storage in the kitchen. **ABOVE RIGHT** Custom joinery creates an elegant, cohesive feel. **BELOW RIGHT** Poured concrete floors keep the space looking bright and clean. **ABOVE** Discreet storage is an integral part of this extension. **ABOVE RIGHT** Floor to ceiling windows on both sides maximise the amount of light the extension receives.