



WHO LIVES HERE

Karl and Geraldine McCabe and their two children, aged four and two.

THE HOUSE A mid-terraced Victorian red-brick in Rathmines, Dublin, with a spacious new extension.

WHY WE LOVE IT

This extension has transformed the way the McCabes live, bringing the kitchen, living area and garden together.

LIVING ROOM

Dublin couple Geraldine and Karl McCabe discover a well-designed extension can change your life for the better.

PHOTOGRAPHY MARIE-LOUISE HALPENNY WORDS BEN WEBB

The timber decking was carried up to conceal the old garden wall, create a space for bikes and old garden equipment and to allow space to accommodate the flush lighting. **OPPOSITE PAGE, ABOVE LEFT** The full-width glass doors help to merge inside and out. The zinc is carried across the facade over the side court. **LEFT** The sofa is by Roche Bobois and has a back rest which flips up for added comfort. Geraldine loves the blinds, which are remote controlled.



“It’s completely transformed our lives,” says a smiling Geraldine McCabe, staring through the huge glass doors of the new extension into the garden. “I can cook and keep an eye on our two young children while they are playing with their toys or running about in the garden. We now live in a much more relaxed way.”

All extensions, by definition, add space, but it is only the best ones that improve the way people live in their home. And that means the project to extend this mid-terraced Victorian red-brick in Rathmines, Dublin, has been a huge success.

“Karl, my husband, and I were open-minded, but wanted something modern that did not clash with the house,” Geraldine says. “We also wanted storage, more light and to open up the garden. The old kitchen was really dark and we always had the lights on ... it was depressing.”

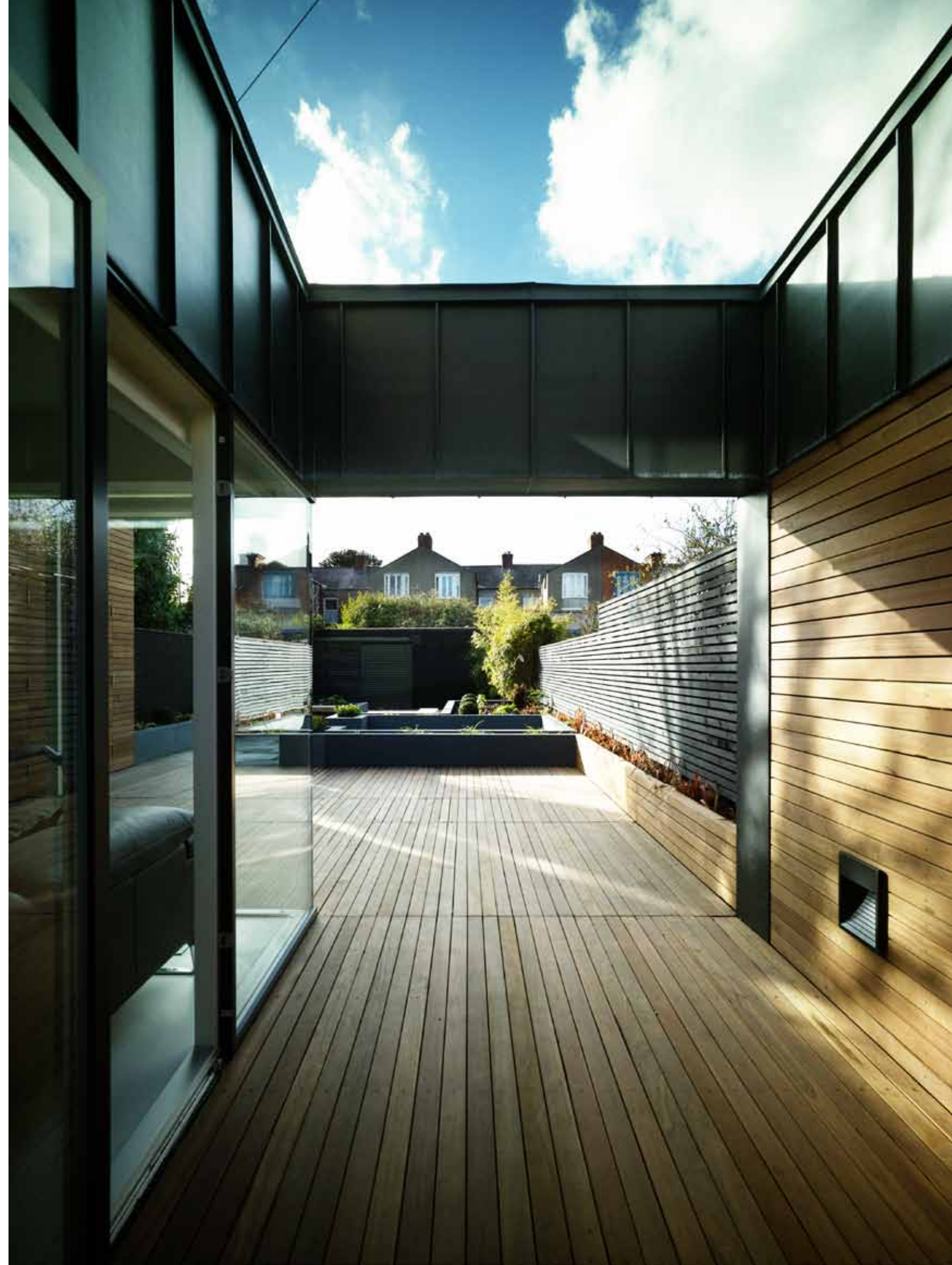
The McCabes called Sterrin O’Shea Architects after seeing examples of her work on similar properties. After the first meeting, they “just clicked”. Determined to get on with the job, they decided there was no need for a beauty parade. O’Shea warned them to be patient, however, as a major extension takes time. Lots of it.

As it was a listed building, planning permission was complicated. In May 2010 – more than a year after starting the project – the family finally moved into a small rented house for six months while the work was carried out. “We couldn’t wait to move back in,” Geraldine says. “There were no serious problems, however, and we kept popping back to check on progress. Living off-site made everything much easier.”

They moved back in November 2011, just before the first major fall of snow brought Dublin to a standstill. Once they were happily installed in their new-look home, there was one unlikely test of strength for the new glass ceiling. “A huge drift of snow slid off the top roof and landed very heavily,” Geraldine recalls. “But the roof survived.”

Today, the result is a wonderfully light, airy kitchen and dining area that connects to a seating space and the garden. Light bounces off the white poured concrete floor – they wanted one surface for the entire area – and the sleek kitchen cupboards conceal all the appliances. “We didn’t want to see them, but we didn’t want a utility room that would take up space,” Geraldine, who is expecting the couple’s third child in September, explains. “We’re really pleased with Sterrin’s design and the Langrell kitchen units.”

ABOVE LEFT The ornate plaster and panelled doors have all been beautifully restored. A new oak and glass door connects the hall and the new extension. The floor is white oiled oak. **LEFT** The new sash windows are by Kells Windows. The low-maintenance garden, which was designed by Eoin Ryan Landscapes, has a play area with rubber mats for young children. **OPPOSITE PAGE** This view from the kitchen shows how Geraldine can cook in the kitchen and still keep an eye on her young children playing in the garden. The decking has been carried up to create a raised planter.



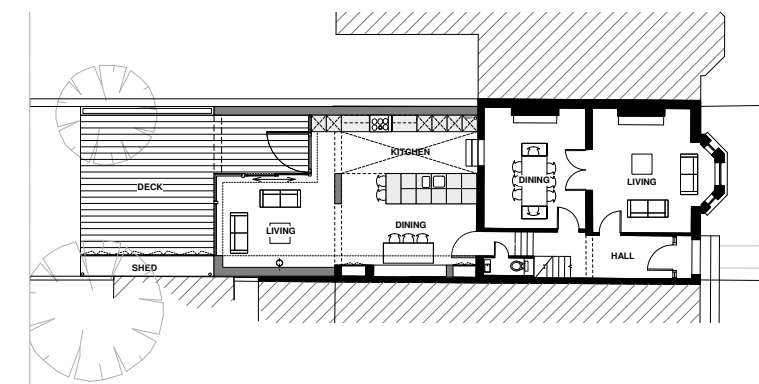


A breakfast bar and Silestone worktop separates the kitchen area from the dining room, where there is a large table that was also made by Langrell Kitchens. To contrast with the white of the concrete floor, the old party wall has been painted black, which also helps to conceal the storage cupboards in the old chimney breast. But the eye is always drawn out through the floor-to-ceiling windows and the garden.

The low-maintenance garden, designed by Eoin Ryan Landscapes, has an area with rubber matting for the children to play safely, and lots of low walls and benches where adults can sit and chat. The McCabes wanted a storage area but no shed. O'Shea's solution was to create a decking wall with doors – a perfect place to hide bikes and big things like the car roof box.

By bringing the kitchen, living room and gardens into one space, the new extension has made family life so much more relaxed and enjoyable. "But I also love the remote control blinds," says Geraldine. "With the push of a button, you can just shut out the outside world altogether." And with a soft hum, the white roller blinds start to unwind.

Sterrin O'Shea Architects, 01 214 3315; www.sosa.ie



ABOVE The table and chairs are by O'Driscoll Design. The bench along the side was designed by SOSA and crafted by Langrell Kitchens. The black Farrow & Ball paint offsets the white poured concrete floor. The elevated breakfast bar is made of oak. **OPPOSITE PAGE** The window to the original dining room was removed and doors added to create a link between the two rooms. The double oven is by Smeg, the grey cabinet is from Langrell Kitchens and the grey strip light is from Willie Duggan Lighting.