



# LIGHT SHOW

THE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT POSED THE REAL CHALLENGE WHEN THE CLIENT SOUGHT A SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION OF JUST 23 SQUARE METRES

PHOTOGRAPHY: HUGO BORGES, HBORGES.COM



## Fact file

**THE HOUSE** A two storey, three bed mid terraced house in Churchtown, Dublin 14

**THE BRIEF** To add a contemporary extension to the living space at minimal cost and minimal impact on the existing rooms and finishes

**TIME IT TOOK** 11 weeks

Luckily, the existing house was in good condition and generally didn't require any work. The rear garden space was used only on an infrequent basis. Yet, even though the house was in good nick, it had a very small and cramped kitchen space that was becoming increasingly less usable. There was very little interaction between the internal living spaces and the garden outside and both were suffering as a result.

"The biggest issue came from a planning perspective. The Camberley Oaks development is unusual in that it has a condition with the original planning permission as it requires that permission sought for any new extension that people wish to add to any of the existing houses.

This, essentially, means that exempted development doesn't apply here. The client had already been refused planning permission for a modest size extension as a result of the impact that it had on neighbouring properties, particularly the neighbours to the north, in terms of overshadowing and overbearing," says Alan O'Connell of OC Architects & Design.

Seeing as the budget could not cover any major works to the kitchen and had to be retained, the solution was addressed with care, so it wouldn't affect the space just for the sake of adding extra room. The solution wasn't as simple as extending out from the back wall across the width of the house, however.

Thus, to address the planning issues, an

The rooflight, contracted by Mike Bonner of Vindr Ltd. (Vindrvs.com), throws light into build, making the floor space appear much larger without affecting the neighbouring properties



unusual geometry was agreed upon, in both plan and elevation. A sculptural form was adopted to help facilitate this and provide a clear architectural language. "We maximised the floor area that could be achieved, considering the planning issues, while satisfying the planners so that the impact on the neighbours, to the north, was kept to an absolute minimum," says O'Connell. The perception of a light and airy form was essential to the architects' concept, and height was added along the boundary with the neighbour to the south. It was also a positive that the neighbour wouldn't be affected to facilitate this.

A courtyard was formed between the existing house and the new extension, again to break up the bulk with the





neighbours to the north, but also to ensure that the window to the kitchen is retained and the quality of light to the kitchen space was not compromised. The courtyard is glazed, as is the rear wall of the extension, to maintain a view from the kitchen space to the garden outside and ensure that there would still be a connection here. The construction of the extension was devised as a steel and timber frame to keep the cost down.

The external envelope of the extension is fibreglass, which avoided awkward junctions between different materials and ensured that the sculptural form would be maintained.

In terms of finishes, the built-in wall units tie in, visually, with the existing kitchen units. The teak countertop forms a breakfast bar in the kitchen and extends along, stepping down to form a built-in seat to the dining area. It then steps back up to form some extra storage to the sitting area. The built-in units extend from the kitchen space right-out to the rear glazed wall and this helps tie the new and old space together.

Generally, the finishes were kept simple to reduce cost and allow the light and space itself be the difference. The furniture that the client has since added has been the perfect addition to allow the space to become part of a modern home.

*For sources related to this house, turn to page 32.*

