

Revived, restored and ready to go in Rathgar

An extensive and sympathetic renovation returned this elegant Victorian familyhome – which had been deemed unfit for habitation – to its former glory

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Elizabeth Birdthistle



Today, 85 Rathgar Road bears no trace of its former existence as a pre-1963 unit of seven bedsits. “The ceilings were collapsing, and the house was so bad it had been deemed unfit for habitation” says current owner Karen Nicholl.

Nicholl, who with her husband, Alan, purchased the property in 2011 for €250,000, engaged Wojciech Kordyl of A1 Architects, and Once Civil & Structural Engineers to reinstate the property to its former glory, while project managing the renovations herself.

“It was all over the place, doors were where they shouldn’t have been, areas were completely partitioned off, and downstairs was accessed by a dangerously narrow spiral staircase,” says Nicholl.

Thankfully most of the period details were intact, and where they are new – some of the doors and architraves – they have been so sympathetically replaced the only way to distinguish their age is by their condition.

Not all was plain sailing, as the house is a listed building, and getting permission to enlarge the kitchen by six feet took more than six months. The result, after a mammoth restoration, is an elegant family home with a footprint of 217sq m (2,336sq ft) set over three levels.

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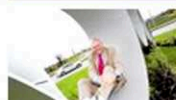
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Spacious hallway

Inside the spacious hallway, complete with ornate ceiling rose and intricate coving, are interconnecting drawing and diningrooms. The fireplaces “are of the period, but not of the house” says Nicholl, who spent a year trawling through salvage yards and auctions, in search of pieces suitable for the property. All cornices and plasterwork have been seamlessly repaired by Dublin Mouldings.

Nicholl’s eye to detail is evident from the fittings throughout. In the pretty bathroom on the return old sanitary ware sourced from the Victorian Salvage Company, including a freestanding roll-top bath and Staffordshire loo, sits on stripped-back pine flooring .

At garden level, and now accessed by a fine staircase, with an exposed brick wall adding detail, is the family kitchen. “It was worth the wait,” says Nicholl of the six months of uncertainty regarding permission to create the hub of the house – a 44sq m (474sq ft) kitchen, designed by FitzGerald Kitchens in Tinahealy, which opens out onto a patio through concertina doors. The property has four bedrooms, three of which are en suite, the fourth, currently used as a playroom, is plumbed for a bathroom.

The garden, while not expansive, is overlooked by new feature in the property – a roof terrace. Accessed from French windows over the return, it is a perfect spot for parents to enjoy some peace – and still keep an eye on children at play.

Nicholl and her family are downsizing and have put their home on the market through Felicity Fox at €1.35 million.



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