

Colour, Courtyards and a Zest for Life.

Carefully considered courtyards and a cluster of connected living compartments characterise this extension in Dublin 8.

Architects
Rae Moore,
Atelier Rae

Location
Dublin 8

Text
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Photography
Ste Murray

Client Must-Haves

- + Functionality of kitchen and black plywood
- + Adding life to the house
- + New upstairs bathroom and good connection from return on stairs

This typical two-up, two-down Victorian mid-terrace house in Dublin 8 has been completely transformed into a series of fluid spaces punctuated by external courtyards which respond to the nuances and rituals of contemporary daily life.

Unlocking the back

The client, an individual who had been living in this compact 19th century dwelling for two years, approached Atelier Rae to give life back to the house. The project was full of potential, but the existing configuration at ground floor was stifling it. The original layout consisted of two large rooms off the entrance hall, and a lean-to extension at the back that housed a kitchen and bathroom. The garden was sandwiched between this extension, which robbed the interior room of all its light, and a work shed, whose large footprint in turn stole precious square meterage from the back garden.

Bye bye big box

The brief called for a new kitchen, living, dining and utility space on the ground floor, and a new bathroom upstairs. Originally, the client wanted an open plan arrangement that would maximise the connection to

the garden. Given that the middle room was already suffering from poor light and ventilation, Architect Rae Moore proposed a series of separate but connected spaces instead. Previous and personal experience had shown the architect that the promise of open plan living didn’t always deliver, and that adults have an inherent need for privacy and separation that the typical ‘big box out the back’ extension cannot offer. “Living is more pleasant with dedicated zones that can be closed off,” she says.

Courtyards and connections

The resulting plan was one of collection and connection. A collection of rooms are executed in a series of pitched roof volumes which are arranged around a courtyard. These three new enfilade rooms are organised along two axes, allowing for circulation and layered views across the internal and external spaces. The centre volume is tall and narrow, while the end volume is lower and wider, both falling away from the main house in tiers towards the rear of the property. The rooms are connected with thresholds that delineate them, and the courtyard layout gives a lot of value back to the life of the house by enhancing the quality of light that pervades the spaces.





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Light is central to this project, and the architect’s sensibilities towards the potential of light and shadow come from her photographer parents. Three oculus windows – one in the living room ceiling, one at high level in the dining area and one over the shower in the bathroom – each deliver a soft shaft of celestial light to their respective spaces, the ethereal nature of which departs from the sharper-edged shadows cast by the rectangular windows throughout the new volumes.

Artistic Inspiration
Atelier Rae often draws on contemporary art as a reference for their projects. In this case, works by Pieter de Hooch informed the sequencing of spaces and the relationships between the public and private realms, while Giorgio Moradni’s still life compositions were instructive on how disparate objects come together to form a whole, and Edwin Lutyens’ designs offered clues as to the hierarchy of openings. Olafur Eliasson’s exploration of light and Donald Judd’s play with depth of space and volume provided Zesty Courtyard with a contemporary language to describe the project. “What results is a warm milky interior that contrasts with the abstracted exterior expression,” Moore explains.

Local flavour
Flashes of colour from the orange-framed, alu-clad windows appear at

momentary intervals throughout the property, picking up the warm orangey-red brick that characterises the local urban fabric, and contrasting against the grey render which echoes the blue-grey slate roofs of the surrounding terraces. The limited budget meant that more economic materials were used, but they were employed in such a way as to harmonise with the context, but appear distinctive because of their contemporary detailing.

Ritual living
The clever design of the two new volumes provides a generous ceiling height internally, and their steep and offset pitches respectively also mean that there is minimum overshadowing of neighbouring properties. The exposed beams on the ceiling of the lower volume imbue the space with a sense of grandeur, whether it is being used to entertain or unwind, and add an element of acoustic surprise, as the sounds within the space are muffled. The bespoke black plywood kitchen was carefully designed by the architect and built by a master cabinet maker, and the central island has the feeling of a pub counter, rendering the space inherently social in nature. Atelier Rae is keenly aware of the nuance of modern living, that it is “vast and changes over time. You can never fully predict the life of a building and its occupants.”



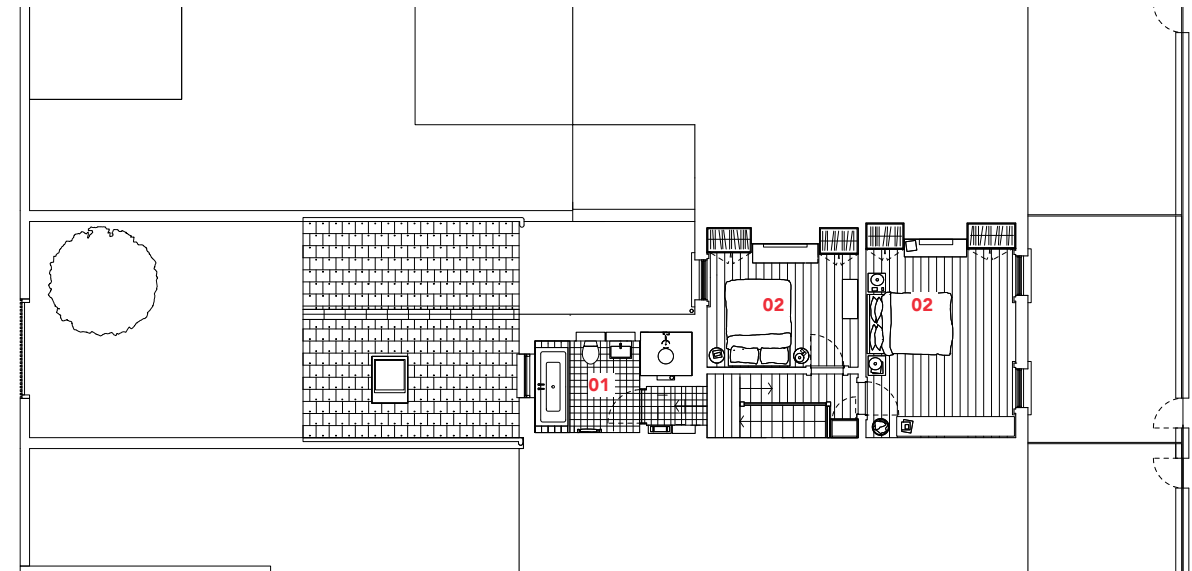
+Architects Top Tip

When working with tight terraced sites, be very aware of light and how it moves around the space during the day. This can dramatically affect how you plan the house. This courtyard was southeast facing, but if it had been north facing the solution would have been totally different.



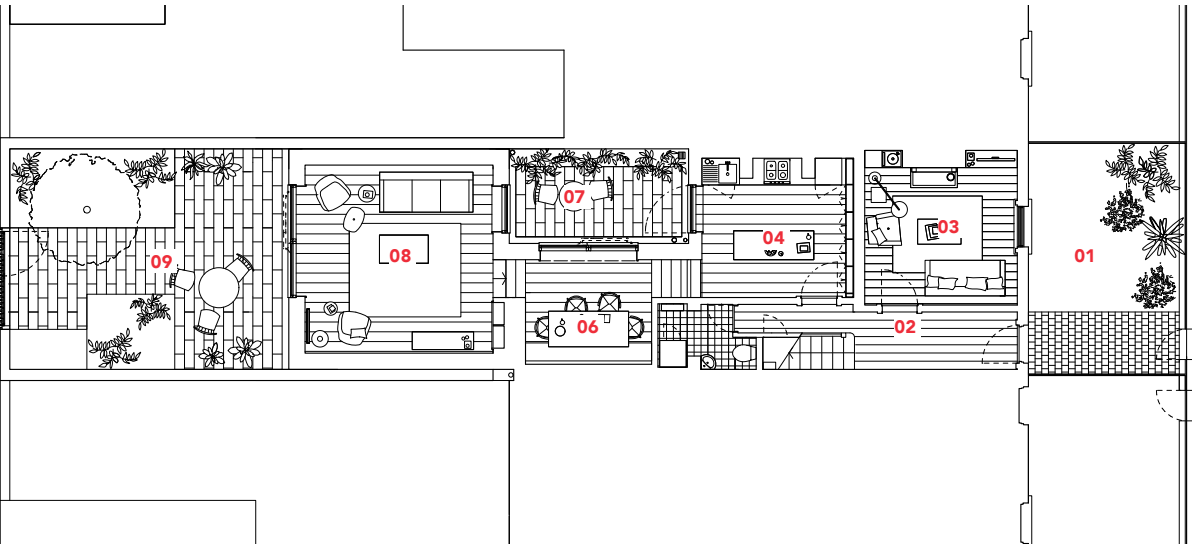
Section

- Tiles
MOSA tiles
- Appliances
Ikea
- Bathroom Fittings
Sonas via Davies
- Windows
Velfac
- Roof Slates
Tegral, Thrutone Fibre Cement Slates
- External Paving
Kilsaran
- External Colour Render
Kilsaran
- Flooring
Engineered Oak by Keen-M
- Insulation
Quintherm
- Skylights
Velux



First Floor Plan

- 01. Bathroom
- 02. Bedrooms



Ground Floor Plan

- 01. Front Garden
- 02. Hall
- 03. Sitting Room
- 04. Kitchen
- 05. WC/Utility
- 06. Dining
- 07. Courtyard
- 08. Living
- 09. Rear Garden



About the Architect

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Twitter - @_RaeMoore
atelierrae.ie

Rae Moore MRIAI is an architect, artist and Design Fellow in Architecture at UCD. She is the recipient of the Irish Design Institutes overall Emerging Talent Award, and was named “one of Ireland’s most exciting young design talents” by The Irish Times. Rae graduated from the Accademia di Architettura di Mendrisio, Switzerland and worked for Clancy Moore Architects (Dublin) and Carmody Groarke (London) before establishing her own creative studio in Dublin, Atelier Rae.

Engineer Terry Sweeny, GNCE Consulting Engineers
Contractor Gintaras Sabas, BSG Homes Ltd