



HOME RENOVATION

Room to Grow

A Rathgar family transforms their home with a bold extension, and ends up with a space every member of the family can truly call their own

BY **SIVE O'BRIEN** PHOTOGRAPHS **LORRAINE MAGUIRE**

Custom sofa in Olive Green fabric, designed by Love to Home Design, made by the Chair Doctor. Grey Satin Ukam floor tiles by Italian Tile and Stone. Terra Mater oak flooring from the Hardwood Floor Company. Plants from Hopeless Botanics in bespoke sunken planter by Mark Whelan Building, with joinery by Oakheart & Co. June the Bear bookcase is from Ibride. Bespoke hidden storage, designed by Love to Home Design, crafted by Oakheart & Co. Walls and woodwork are painted in Slaked Lime Mid by Little Greene.



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LEFT Post Icon rug in Redwood Haze, from Nordic Elements. Imola swivel armchair and footstool are from BoConcept. Ceiling lights are from Hicken Lighting. Bowler side table is Hay from the Finnish Design Shop.

THE PROJECT

The clients had seen interior designer Suzanne Lynam’s own home and loved it “We essentially did an expanded version of that with their house,” Suzanne says. The brief was clear: design the interiors of the extended rooms so that they flowed cohesively with the existing home, and make them feel like they belonged.

The family of six - four children ranging from 8 to 16 years old - needed spaces that could serve everyone at once: somewhere to play, exercise, and gather. The extension delivered all of it. An open-plan playroom, a sunken living room, a hidden home gym, a boys’ bedroom and a new bathroom. Bespoke joinery runs throughout, threading the spaces together and giving the whole project a considered, finished quality.



LEFT Green fluted tiles, green subway tiles, white hexagon floor tiles, all from Fossil Stone. Vanity, mirror and sanitaryware, from The Bathroom Boutique. **RIGHT** Bespoke bathroom joinery with open timber shelving and fluted closed cabinetry, designed by Love to Home Design, crafted by Oakheart & Co, painted in Slaked Lime Mid, by Little Greene. Matcha check towels by HAY from Nordic Nest. **BOTTOM LEFT** Bespoke stone shelf by M. Roe and Sons.



THE DESIGN ETHOS

Colour was the starting point. “The clients said they liked green, which was music to my ears,” says Suzanne. They came in knowing what they didn’t want (calm neutrals, a safe interior) and left her considerable room to move. “They wanted colour on the walls and a light-filled space. There are huge windows throughout, and a skylight over the living room’s media wall, so it feels bright, but warmth builds through the scheme in layers: a mustard-toned chair in the playroom echoes through to the coffee table in the living room; ochre tones and timber sit against a tiled floor; red details in the playroom add energy without tipping into noise. The existing house had orange in the hallway, stained glass and a few decorative details, so Suzanne picked that up in the fabric on the new window seat, threading old and new together without forcing the connection.

TOP LEFT Interior designer Suzanne Lynam perches on the Custom U-shaped sofa, designed by Love to Home Design, made by Chair Doctor. Black wall light, by Ferm Living. Marble plinth, by Audo Copenhagen. **TOP RIGHT** Window seat reupholstered in Yarn Collective fabrics. Reed, the wall light, by Tom Kirk Lighting. **BOTTOM LEFT** Custom media wall, designed by Love to Home Design, crafted by Oakheart & Co, painted in Slaked Lime Mid by Little Greene. The striped jar is by Bloomingville from Nordic Nest. White ceramic sculpture is from Curated by MRD. The antique bottles were recovered from the clients’ garden.

THE JOINERY

Bespoke joinery by Oakheart & Co was central to the project from the outset, but the piece that required the most attention was the sofa by Chair Doctor. Made entirely from scratch, it fills the sunken living room in a deep U-shape, large enough for four kids and two adults to pile onto at once. “The bespoke sofa involved a lot of back-and-forth to get the function, proportion, and aesthetics right all at once,” says Suzanne. The clients came into the showroom to pick the foam type and density themselves. “It made it a real journey from concept to finished piece.”

The joinery and the sofa together do the work of linking two rooms that share no connecting wall, only a change in level. The steps and materials carry that visual merge quietly, so the spaces feel designed rather than just decorated.





LEFT & OPPOSITE Walls painted in Wattle III and ceiling in Wattle I, all by Paint & Paper Library. Bespoke headboard, designed by Love to Home Design, upholstered in Meander Embroidery fabric by Schumacher. Bedside table repainted in Brick Red by Benjamin Moore. On the bed is an Ardagh lambswool throw by Foxford, and soccer motif cushion by Elisabeth Dunker, from Fine Little Day. The HAY Nelson Ball Bubble pendant and Mr Watson table lamp, are both from Lampmasters.



THE CHALLENGES

The sheer volume of bespoke elements meant constant problem-solving. The biggest design challenge was creating a coherent scheme across two distinct rooms with no connecting wall between them. The transition zone between the existing kitchen and the new extension was equally complex, requiring the new palette to work with colours already embedded in the existing house.

On the build side, the sunken element meant digging into the ground. At one point, torrential rain caused flooding and significant delays, the whole area had to be resealed and waterproofed before work could continue. For a period, the extension was just a boarded-up wall from their kitchen. They lived with that board for many months. “They were incredibly patient,” says Suzanne. “And I think that made the reveal even more meaningful.”

TOP LEFT Ribbed wardrobe door fronts painted in Apple Smiles II by Paint & Paper Library. Muuto brown leather handles; Dots wall hooks, all from Finnish Design Shop.
RIGHT Custom study desk, designed by Love to Home Design, made by Croftwood Joinery. Brown leather chair, from April and the Bear. Peg board from Woodesign.





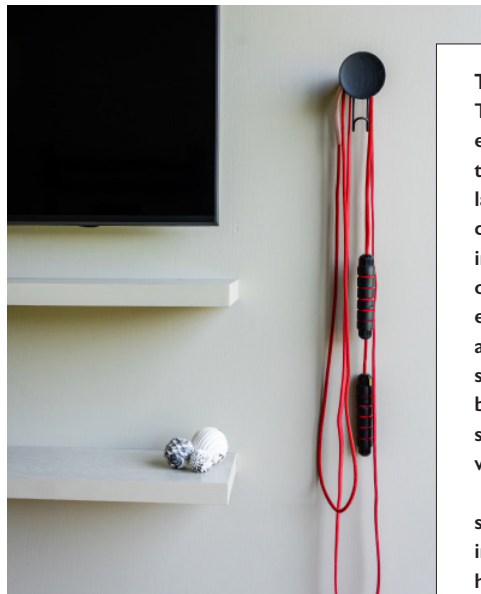
THE MURAL

The family has a deep connection to Sligo, they visit regularly and can see Benbulbin from a spot they love. While the project was in full swing, Suzanne came across illustrator and artist Emily McKeagney on Instagram. “When the family mentioned they’d just been back from Sligo, I showed them her work and suggested commissioning something personal to them,” she says. “They were immediately on board.”

A custom mural of Benbulbin now anchors the gym. It was Emily’s first commission of this kind. “It’s so meaningful when the art in a home is specific to the people who live there,” says Suzanne. “To see it unfold and then land in the space was a lovely experience for everyone.”

Suzanne Lynam
Love to Home Design
Lovetohomedesign.ie

RIGHT Bespoke wall mural by Emily McKeagney. Walls painted in Dense Fog by Curator Paints. High performance flooring, from Floor Design. Gym equipment, from BLK BOX. Botanical print yoga mat, Flow State Fit.
OPPOSITE Window seat reupholstered in Yarn Collective fabrics.



THE LAYOUT

The extension sits to the side of the existing house, connecting directly to the kitchen and opening up a much larger family zone. Each space is distinct in character, but continuous in flow. “The main challenge was the open-plan area running from the existing kitchen through the playroom and down into the sunken living room,” says Suzanne. “It reads as one layout but needed to function as two distinct spaces - one for play, one for living, while feeling cohesive throughout.”

Off the living room, a home gym sits behind a hidden door set flush into the panelled wall. There is no handle on the living room side, by design. Upstairs, the boys’ bedroom was extended and a compact bathroom introduced between two of the bedrooms, a practical gain that makes the layout work considerably harder for a family of six.



THE TAKEAWAY

Two years on from breaking ground, the extension has become the undisputed heart of the home. The two older kids head straight for the gym; the younger two claim the playroom; and then everyone lands on the vast U-shaped sofa in the living room. “There’s a space for each of them to do their own thing, and then a space that brings them all back together, which has brought a new energy to the house; joyful, well-used, and unmistakably theirs,” says Suzanne. “I always say trust the process, and this was a project that really tested that, for all of us. But when you see every piece, detail, material choice come together at the end, it’s just so satisfying.”

SOURCEBOOK

ARCHITECT Dmvf.ie

CONTRACTOR Builderdublin.ie

FURNITURE Aprilandthebear.ie, Boconcept.com, Finnishdesignshop.com, Nordicnest.com

BATHROOM Thebathroomboutique.ie

UPHOLSTERY Chairdoctor.ie

JOINERY Oakheartandco.com, Croftwoodjoinery.com,

PAINTS Benjaminmoore.com, Curatorpaints.com, Littlegreene.com, Paintandpaperlibrary.com

DÉCOR Audocopenhagen.com, Curated.ie, Curatedbymdr.com, Eichholtz.com, Fermliving.com, Finelittleday.com, Finnishdesignshop.com, Flowstatefit.com, Foxford.com, Hay.dk, Ibride-design.com, Nordicnest.com, Woodesign.ie

RUG Nordicelements.com

TILES Fossilstone.ie, Italiantileandstone.ie

FLOORING Floordesign.ie, Hardwoodfloorcompany.ie

LIGHTING Hickenlighting.ie, Lampmasters.ie, Tomkirklighting.co.uk

PLANTS Hopelessbotanics.ie

FABRICS Fschumacher.eu, Yarncollective.com

MURAL Emilymckeagney.com



PHOTOGRAPHY LORRAINE MAGUIRE

