



BREATHING ROOM

A thoughtful extension can transform the flow of your home.
We've found five that add substance, as well as size.

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PHOTOGRAPHY STE MURRAY

“The biggest challenge was pinning down the actual layout of the space,” architect Robert Bourke explains. “It appears very simple and effortless, but it actually took a lot of work to get it to that, especially details like how big the living area should be in relation to the kitchen and dining areas. We reorganised the space several times.”

The clients had been living in this house for two years before they approached Robert about creating a new kitchen and living space, which he says gave them a good sense of what they wanted. “They knew that the sun was at the back of the house in the morning, so they really wanted us to maximise that.”

It was decided that to give them the most for their limited budget that it would



be a simple rectangular single-storey extension. “Nothing fancy, just a basic shape, because this is the most economical way to provide those spaces,” says Robert. The timber-frame structure was inspired by Walter Segal’s self-build houses, and the visible beams create a kind of structure to the space. “It’s divided into six bays, which define its three main functions. The living area occupies two of those bays, the dining area is one bay in the middle, and the kitchen occupies another two. One of the end bays is a utility room and a shower room.”

The space is then given further definition through the use of brickwork. It starts in the living area, forming a plinth for a stove to sit on. Then it turns the corner and

forms a window seat. It continues around another corner and forms a wall around the dining area bench. “It’s a meandering, serpentine, quite sculptural object,” Robert says. “It helped to subdivide what would otherwise be a big open volume, and break it down into smaller, more intimate spaces.” A polished concrete floor contrasts with the warm colours and different textures of the timber and brick.

As the extension is wider than the house and over 40 square metres, it needed planning permission, however this didn’t present any extra challenges. They maintained the neighbours’ privacy by placing the windows high on the sides of the extension, while still allowing afternoon sunlight to filter into the space. rba.ie

ARCHITECT Robert Bourke Architects

PROJECT A single-storey rear extension of a 1940s bungalow

MATERIALS Brickwork wall with timber lattice roof

SIZE 75 square metres