



# COUNTRY RETREAT

*Jennifer and Paul have relocated from Dublin to the Cavan countryside, building a modern classic home on family land next to Jennifer's childhood home*

*Photography INFINITY MEDIA*



*Sitting room:* Bathed in Farrow & Ball Railings from ceiling to skirting boards, the sitting room is a fabulously atmospheric space. Interior design throughout, Little Design House; sofas, The 1933 Furniture Company; blinds and curtains made by McAllister Interiors.





‘We’d been working and living in Dublin for 15 years when we decided to move to Ballyconnell, where I grew up. That was in 2016 when our little boy, Harry was just two. We were in a contemporary two-bed apartment in the city and loved our time there but I have such fond memories of my childhood in the country and wanted the same for our kids. We moved in with my parents while the house was being built, so we were effectively living on site throughout the entire project, which was a huge benefit. Our second child, Zoe was born in 2018 and we moved into the new house in June this year, so we finally have our dream family home and country retreat,’ says Jennifer.

Wanting something a little bit different, Jennifer and Paul liked the idea of a modern take on a Georgian style with emphasis placed on large windows, lots of natural light, a harmonious flow between rooms and lots of storage, to maintain a clean, pared back look yet with a cosy feel, perfect for their young family. Our architect, Paul McGuigan (McGuigan Architects) was superb. We wanted to use a local architect and I really liked what I’d seen of Paul’s work. I couldn’t recommend him highly enough. I saw an image on Pinterest of what I wanted the house to look like, so Paul had a really good understanding of what we wanted and took everything on board. His drawings were bang on; we only had one review of the first draft. Our interior designer, Tonya Douglas (Little Design House) was on board with the project from this very early stage, so she looked at the plans before we broke ground. They were very few changes, just a door change from a single to a double into the kitchen and, where the en suite had a bath, we changed to a shower to make room for the his and hers wash hand basins I wanted.’

The couple’s architect, project manager and interior designer worked closely with the couple to ensure everyone was on the same page, using gifted tradespeople from the local area. ‘We were incredibly lucky with the quality of trade in this build. The level of craftsmanship and calibre of tradespeople in Co Monaghan alone is amazing.’

After living in a bright apartment with open plan layout and walls of glass, Jennifer really wanted the house to have as much light as possible without compromising the style and proportions of the architecture, and it was hugely important that the house be as practical as it is beautiful. ‘I didn’t want the house to feel precious; our kids are 7 and 3, so I wanted storage to be built in everywhere so they could play around us instead of having a separate playroom. Playroom can become dumping grounds, so we favoured having good storage in each room instead.’

With a sense of space and fluidity from the hall to the open plan kitchen and throughout the ground floor, the key to the success of this is a practically considered layout and a harmonious colour scheme throughout. ‘It was Tonya’s idea to go with the dark ceiling in the sitting room. This is a great evening room, whereas the kitchen is a real daytime space, where we cook, eat dinner and do homework. It’s a very sociable space; everyone gravitates to this room. I love how the Railings colour has been carried through the house, it’s such a naturally bright house that it can take the dramatic pops of colour!’



**Hallway:** Chevron flooring and classic panelling adds to the drama of the sweeping effect on the staircase. Console table, Woo Design; wood flooring, Matt Britton; handmade curved stairs and panelling, made and fitted by Peadar Greenan Staircases.





**Open plan space:** The original single door into this room was upgraded to double doors to add impact to the flow between spaces. Farrow & Ball Railings has been carried through from the sitting room, albeit as a subtle accent colour. Dining table, Bo Concept; dining chairs and bar stools, McGuigan Furniture; island pendant lights, Mullan Lighting; green chair, Pieces.ie.







**Kitchen:** The couple's interior designer advised on the kitchen design and layout, steering away from wall presses for a more pared back look, with separate walk-in pantry. Kitchen handpainted in Farrow & Ball Railings, custom made by McAdam Kitchens; kitchen floor tiles, Fired Earth; wood flooring, Matt Britton. Bar stools, McGuigan Furniture; island pendant lights, Mullan Lighting







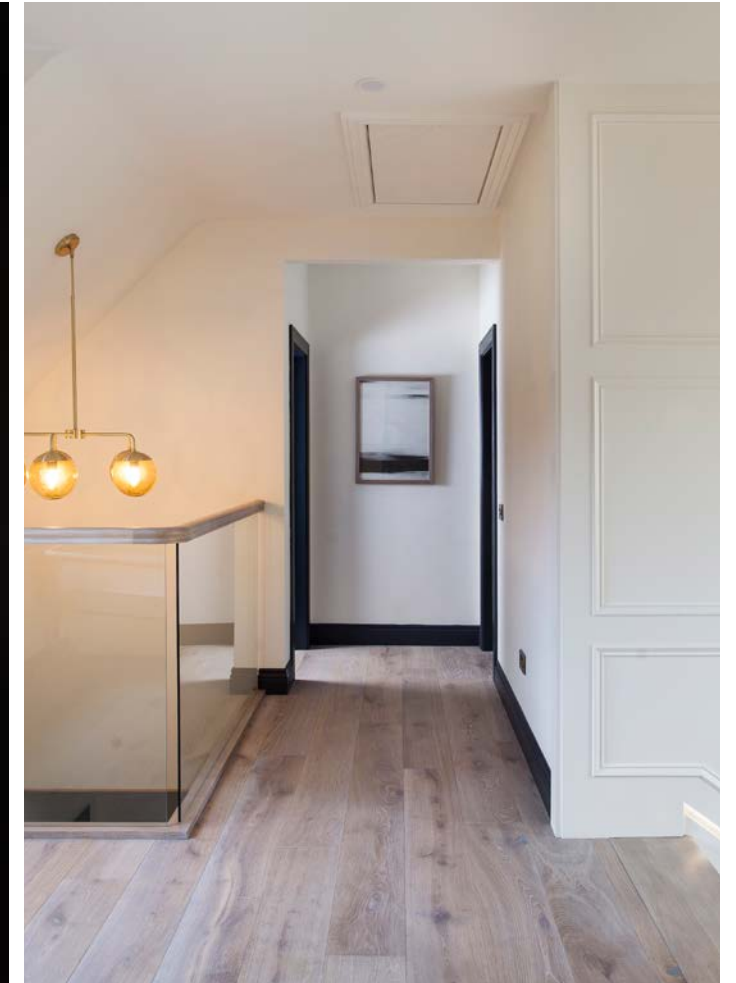
*Dining area:* Built-in storage in the window seat is the perfect place for stowing away toys, yet easily accessible to the couple's young children. Bespoke window seat, McAdam Kitchens.







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## INSIGHT

### *The owners*

*‘If I could offer one piece of advice to anyone taking on a similar project, it would be, don’t attempt this without a project manager. We couldn’t have done this without our project manager, who happens to be my cousin, Gerry. He oversaw the whole thing and we totally relied on him.’*

*‘The best thing about living here is being so close to family, having that interaction, a slower pace and giving the kids a better experience. We both love Dublin but living here feels like such a retreat.’*

*‘The key element in the design was natural light and a good sense of flow between spaces. We wanted big windows yet in proportion to the house style; we didn’t want a glass box.’*

*‘My favourite room is the sitting room; it has a cinema room feel with the dark walls and ceiling. It’s a great chill-out room where we relax in the evenings. The kids love it too!’*

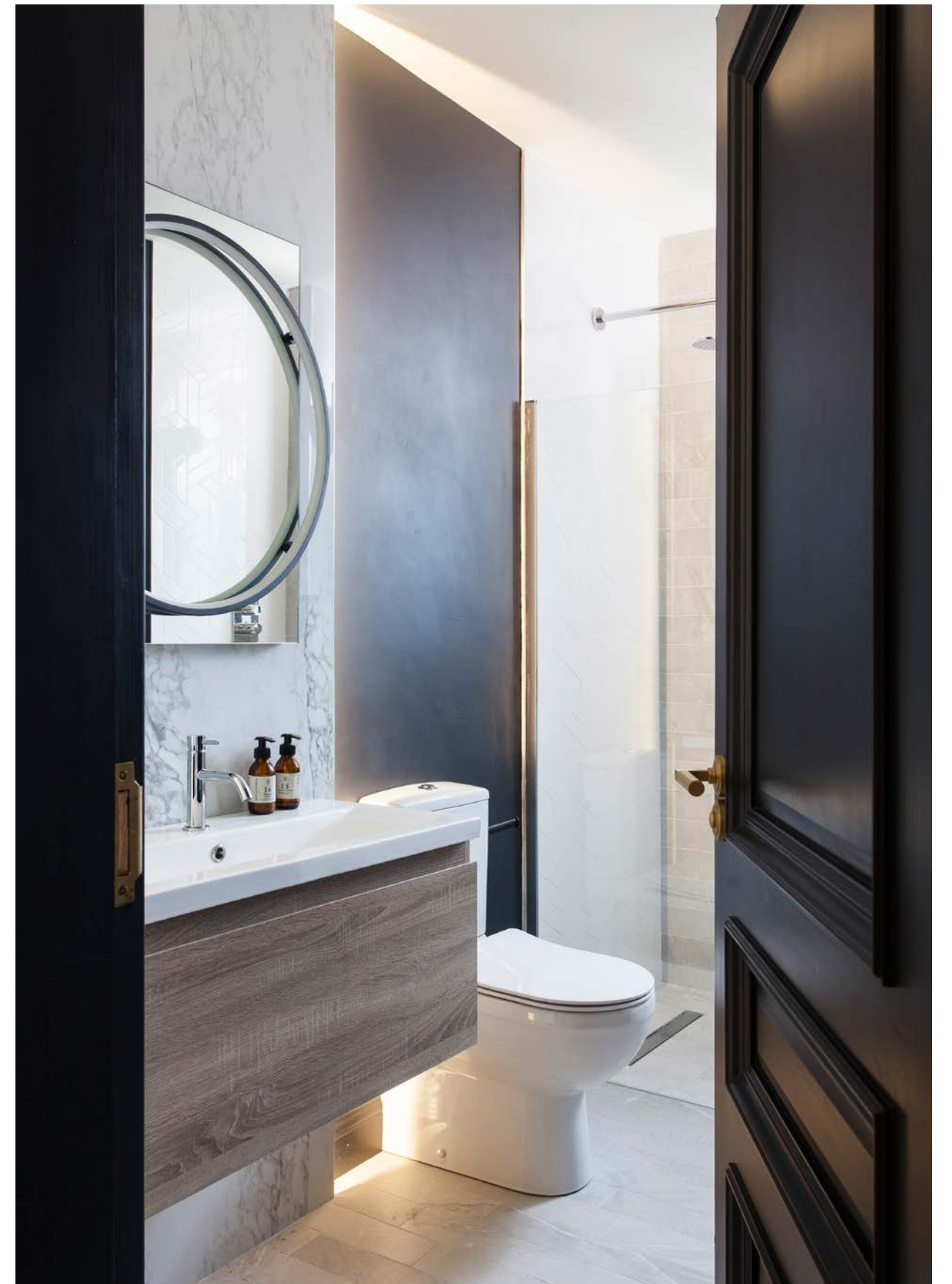
*Master bedroom: Farrow & Ball Railings gives the master bedroom a rich and relaxing ambience, with fabulous feature bed and brass accents adding a decadent feel. Bespoke bed by Little Design House; carpet, Matt Britton; dressing room, McAdam Kitchens.*





*Master ensuite.* A double vanity with stunning tiled splashback gives the ensuite shower room an opulent finish. Vanity, Porter; tiles, Irwin Tiles; wall lights, Mullan Lighting.





***Bootroom:*** With bespoke handpainted furniture, the bootroom has been designed with great additional storage, a great set-down area for shopping bags and schoolbags. Bootroom, McAdam Kitchens. ***Downstairs wc:*** A striking scheme has been achieved in the downstairs wc, with stone being combined with distressed timber and dark paint tones.