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ONCE AN OLD FARMHOUSE, NOW IT'S A FAMILY HOME!

Joe Fallon's Wexford Home

As a registered Chartered Architectural Technologist Dublin man Joe Fallon is well used to designing houses of all shapes, sizes and most importantly catering for each family's needs but when it came to designing and building his own family home in Wexford, it was a different story.

Running his own Chartered Architectural Technologist company who design energy efficient buildings with strong emphasis on natural light. With more than 25 years' experience within the construction industry, the bulk of their work involves designing extensions, one off houses, renovations and a small

amount of commercial work. Earlier this year, the company won the award for the Best Public Park at the Community and Council Awards as well as the Wexford Chamber of Commerce Social Contribution Award. In 2011, the company were also shortlisted for the CMG Architectural Practice of the Year.

Mr Fallon who is originally from Templeogue and his wife Deirdre is a native of Mullingar in Westmeath reside in their home near Ballywilliam in County Wexford which they share with their two young children Grace and John.

Having lived in Dublin for a number of years, the house is the perfect 'peaceful hideaway.'



"My mother is originally from this part of Wexford so I would be quite familiar with the area and I would have known a lot of the locals," said Joe Fallon.

"Accidentally we saw that this house was up for sale and it was also my mother's first cousin that was selling it so she told us that if we were interested in buying the house we could. The house dated back to the 1700's. Whilst the main building was derelict the out buildings were fine and they even had a roof. The main house wasn't built as well as the out buildings though so we understood that a restoration would be out of our price range and the house was of a cottier style meaning that it was a cottage with a low ceiling and no windows.

"I kept redrawing the home and eventually my wife Deirdre put her foot down and told me to decide upon the final design. When you're designing your own home as a designer, you never think that you will get it 100% right. When we converted the barn, we turned it into my office as well as a type of granny flat for my mother.

"We applied for planning permission and within 18 months it came through. We didn't encounter any problems, we were able to demolish the cottage and start from scratch. We built the house on the same site. We salvaged what we could from the old house such as salvaged stone that we put over the new doors and we saved whatever else we could including the flagstones which we put around the fireplace and in the hallway," added Mr Fallon.

As he was working in Dublin three days a week at the time, Joe had to rely

on local people for pointing him in the right direction when it came to finding tradesmen to work alongside him on the project whilst Joe happily worked as project manager with a local Engineer overseeing the structural elements of the build whilst Mr Fallon covered the rest as well as calling in favours from suppliers of building materials and specialist traders that he had a rapport with.

With the house being built on a mountain, there was a slight interference.

"We had to redirect [the springs] so we were able to put in the concrete footings which was tricky especially as we were building the house in the winter time which is when the springs appear. For the house, we chose a hollow block single leaf construction cavity wall as it was quicker to build and we wanted to move into the house as soon as we possibly could. The materials may have cost that bit more as the blocks are more thermally efficient and the house is insulated on the inside therefore creating a thermal envelope," enthused Joe.

Having double height ceilings throughout the house, Mr Fallon also quite cleverly put in a hidden sliding glass door between the kitchen and living room to make up for any heat lost in the space throughout the cold winter months.

The living area features a salvaged wooden floor from a church in Belfast with a plain stone floor being one of the eye catching features in the kitchen as it is said to marry well with the wooden floor in the living room.

An impossible feature to miss is that of a piece of dark bog oak which is in



situ over the stove in the sitting room salvaged from a yard in Kildare with a lot of the furniture throughout the home having been bought in Conran Interiors.

"Throughout the build, I was determined not to take anything away from the 'farmhouse feel.' In the main house, we built the upstairs windows closer to the ground and smaller as we wanted the new house to be sympathetic to the environment whilst not overshadowing the barn.

"We refurbished the barn in recent years and we were able to salvage a lot of it. We kept the wall and roof structure whilst figuring out how to link up the old with the new as they were in or around one metre apart. We got a stonemason from the area to reuse the salvaged stone from the cottage which

built the bridging wall. The stonework is perfect and it is impossible to tell where his work begins and ends," explained Mr Fallon.

"At night, we can see Hook Head which is a good 30 or 40 miles away. We always wanted a house in a rural location. We're delighted with the house and how it turned out, we're delighted to be away from the hustle and bustle of Dublin! The only problem is we have a south facing conservatory and it can be hard to read the newspaper in there on a Sunday morning with the direct sunshine beaming in on top of you and we could have also made the hotpress a bit bigger than it is but other than that we're happy."

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CONTACT LIST

ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGIST:

Joe Fallon Design
www.joefallon.com, joe@joefallon.com
087-2566808

BUILDING MATERIALS:

Heiton Buckley
Gorey, County Wexford
053-9421317

ELECTRICIAN:

Michael Fallon Electrical
Holywell, County Dublin
087-8348180

GROUND WORKS AND DEMOLITION CONTRACTOR:

Michael Ryan & Son Plant Hire,
Enniscorthy, County Wexford
087-6533846

INSULATION:

Kingspan Insulation
Castleblaney,
County Monaghan
042-9795000 www.insulation.kingspan.com

INTERNAL DOORS:

Doras Distributors,
Dublin 22
www.dorasdist.com 01-6235444

NATURAL ROOF SLATES:

Tegral Roof Slates,
Athy,
County Kildare
www.tegral.com 05986-31316

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Dean Duncan
Naas, County Kildare
www.oldsalvagewood.com 045-901801 086-2336792

SOLAR PANELS:

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Registered SEAL Installer:
Mick Martin 087-6900911

BATHROOMS:

Ideal Bathrooms
Ardmore House, Lower Ballymount Road,
Walkinstown, Dublin 12
01-4609911

FLOORS:

Bearfoot Flooring
Western Industrial Estate,
Knockmitten Lane,
Dublin 12
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