

Loic deHaye, originally from Lille, got to act as his own client in his home in Ballinlough, Cork City. Pictures: Larry Cummins

PASSIVE ATTACK

Loic DeHaye's home is a primer for anyone looking to try their hand at a deep renovation, while keeping costs down, writes **Kya deLongchamps**

Architect Loic DeHaye hails from Lille in France, and now lives on the Ballinlough Road in Cork City in a boldly renovated, semi-detached house. Airtight, with high levels of insulation and using photovoltaic panels, the house is renovated to Passive standard and would rate as a near zero energy build (nZEB).

Aesthetically, this is an understated, graceful house, its thoughtfully-edited lines drawing pedestrian attention — even the odd knock on the door in the home deHaye shares with his two lively daughters Emilie (7) and Juliette (9). Coming to Ireland has refocused his personal and professional life and he says his work as an architect is finely balanced on relationships.

“House builds in France under 170sq m (1,830sqft) don't require certification by an architect and most French architects therefore, spend their time working in the public and commercial sector.” What appealed to Loic as his domestic portfolio evolved, was not just what appeared on paper and out of the ground.

“A house build or renovation can be a two to three year-relationship,” he explains. “That's what being an architect means to me. This is a journey.

Keeping open communication going is what smooths a build.” So, acting as his own client — what was the brief?

“I was guided by my lifestyle expectations above all,” he says. “It had to be practical. I love the scale of Cork city, and wanted to be close to my practice and the girls' school. One thing I could not compromise on at any time was a south-facing garden.”

In 2016, this was a three bedroom, sadly declining semi-detached from about 1937, in a state of semi-dereliction. It had been lived in and cherished for many years by an elderly lady, but when she passed away the house was rented out and then left empty for six months. When Loic found Ballysimon, the ground floor had started to collapse and required underpinning. It was a typical surveyor's nightmare and lingered on the market, was sold, failed financing twice and reappeared for sale, a year after the first time he had viewed.

“There was no bidding war with this one — I was probably more informed and unafraid as an architect, and could see its potential. The house had firm advantages other than location — there was a nice long garden behind and a wide perimeter to one side, ideal for a fast, clean, extension in timber frame in renewable materials.”

Now, here's the trick, if you want to save money on an older house. Loic identified the building's authentic

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