



Loic, who shares the home with his children Emilie and Juliette, was informed by how renovations can have a positive impact on the wider community and made sure his home was not too "in the face" of his neighbours.



The original front door re-used as an internal door, and the original 1930s staircase has been retained. The house is replete with seven photovoltaic cells and is as close to passive as it can be.



architecture. There are two overhead window lights with attractive, deep reveals — one set of three over the kitchen/dining area, a fixed rectangular light over a couch in the seating area.

Without including the seven photovoltaic panels framed up to the sun on the flat roof on the rear of the house, the house is still close to Passive — an A3. Include the PV and we have an nZEB home, the efficiency standard for new housing from December 2019. Loic urges commonsense balance when it comes to retrofit for energy saving.

"Part L as it stands delivers a good, warm home. Any tweaking up after this will not deliver perceptibly different comfort levels. Passive and nZEB are based on a calculation, and this can be arrived at using different paths." Ballysimon has standard 'wet' radiators, not UFH. Loic prefers their reactivity and the ability to balance solar gain against CH as needed. He also has natural gas heating rather than the expected heat pump favoured for many nZEB/Passive builds. "What matters is what you sink into the structure — insulation, airtightness matched to ventilation, the quality of materials.

"A heat pump is still just an appliance. In around 15 years even HP technology will change, improve, wear out and will be replaced. This is not about just ticking off boxes to future-proof and achieve passive standards. Installation and proper commission is crucial. The installer must understand, maintain, balance the system, and certify it. I would argue that gas boilers remain a good buy because installers completely understand them."

The place of a wider social connectedness informed Loic's approach during this project.

"I think the renovation has had a positive impact on the wider community and that nothing we did in terms of the façade was too 'in your face' for families long established here.

"We presented and explained what we were doing to our immediate neighbours. They were supportive, and clearly happy that the house was no longer derelict — something that brings the whole area down.

"There's always going to be a certain amount of noise and disruption especially in the case of a semi-detached building. You're leaving a mark for maybe 20 years, that's a big responsibility in close quarters.

"I would always advise my clients to present what they are planning to the neighbours. Take account of their feelings and the impact of what you're doing."

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