

DYNAMIC DUO

*A pairing of cantilevered extension and stone barn brings
a vibrant feel to Paul and Elaine Haffey's new home*

Words **Jane Crittenden** Photography **Chris Hill**



Sharp Projection

The angular shape of the property reflects the footprints of the original barns; the new part of the house replaces the barn that couldn't be saved. A glazed entrance hall links the two buildings.

PROJECT NOTES

Homeowners

Paul and Elaine Haffey

Location

Lisburn, Co. Antrim

Project Self-build

Build time

Apr 2015 - Jun 2016

Size 317m²

Plot cost £75,000

Build cost £350,000

Value £500,000 -

£600,000

Suppliers

Architect

McGarry-Moon Architects:

mcgarry-moon.com

Interior design

Paul Haffey Design:

paulhaffeydesign.co.uk

Main contractor

Meegan Builders: meeganbuilders.ie

Glazing

Timoney Windows:

timoneywindows.com

Cladding

Abbeywoods:

abbeywoods.ie

Woodburner

Portadown Fireplaces:

portadownfireplaces.co.uk

Flooring

Wilson Salvage:

wilsonsalvage.com

Lighting

PM Lighting:

pm-lighting.co.uk

Bathrooms

Bathrooms for Ireland:

bfbathroomsforireland.com

Tiles

Armatile: armatile.com

Internal joinery

(staircase, kitchen, internal doors) ID

Interiors: id-interiors.co.uk

Build Costs

Groundworks £12,000

Foundations £10,000

External walls £44,000

Walls and windows £45,000

Roof structure and covering £35,000

Internal walls £32,000

Floor, wall and ceiling finishes £21,000

Joinery and fittings £37,000

Plumbing and heating £15,000

Kitchen and bathrooms £32,000

Electrics £21,000

Decorating £5,000

Landscaping £26,000

Other £15,000

Total £350,000

Architect's View

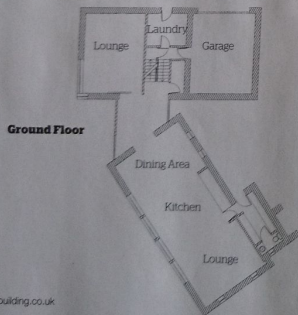
Steven Moon of McGarry-Moon Architects says: "Our brief was to create a modern family home while making use of the traditional stone barn and countryside views. Thus, the residence combines the rustic barn to the south, the modern new build to the north, and a glazed east-west entrance link where old meets new. The restored barn accommodates three free-flowing spaces for food preparation, dining and relaxing on one level. Within the new build structure, we've accommodated a garage, laundry room, formal lounge and bedrooms over three floors.

"The layout of the new build is topographically driven to maximise the existing landscape's natural views and a sense of connection between the buildings and surroundings. This is the site of the second barn and the stepped floor levels

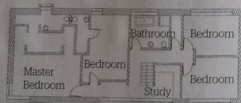
coincide with the natural fall of the land. We exploited the gradient to accommodate Paul and Elaine's request for a laundry room and two-car garage and concealed this at ground level.

"The entrance arrives between the two buildings and steps up 1.5m with the open plan barn room to the right and the formal living room to the left. Stairs rise up a half level to the girls' bedrooms and bathroom. Paul and Elaine's bedroom is up again in the cantilevered part of the house with amazing countryside views.

"The external architecture is where old and new complement each other. The texture and colour of the untreated western red cedar timber cladding and the zinc roof contrast and interact with the original stone walls — as does the striking freshness of the white render and glass," concludes Steven Moon.



Ground Floor



First Floor



Space to Hang Out

The dramatic cantilevered first floor is for the bedrooms and bathrooms — it's constructed in a steel frame and clad in untreated Western red cedar. Below, in the rendered blockwork ground floor, is the garage, laundry room and second living room with outdoor amenity space. "The view down the river is my favourite part of the building," says Stephen. "It's a really fantastic house."





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An Expanse of Glass

The large central barn (1,271) was restored to form the main living area of the house; the vaulted ceiling accentuates the feeling of space. The two existing openings on the barn were extended to four for the sliding doors. The glazing faces south west, benefiting from the afternoon sun and sunsets. The high level glazed gables (102.0m) exploit the natural light and solar gain.

Lettover stone from the barn conversion was used to build the garden wall (100.0m). The natural stone softens the drama of the cantilevered plane and helps embed the building back into the landscape.



Paul and Elaine Haffey's home in Northern Ireland is original on many levels. A dynamic new build connects with the original stone barn, forming an angular and quirky stepped layout inside, mirroring the topography of the site.

Despite a plot cost of just £75,000, the Haffeys nearly passed on this opportunity back in 2011, spending six months making up their minds about the site and its three derelict barns.

"We were looking for a rural plot with good links to the motorway and the plot ticked the boxes," Paul explains. "But the outline design was pretty standard and we didn't think we stood a chance getting planning in the countryside with a different one-off design."

The couple's indecision wasn't helped by the plot being completely overgrown, which made it difficult to see the barns. However, the owner was keen to sell, so the Haffeys struck a deal, buying the plot on the proviso they got planning permission first. "There was no real risk to us – if we didn't get planning the deal was off," says Paul. "It was an amazing offer."

The three barns stood at angles to one another and the couple knew they would be integral to their planning application. Although Paul is a commercial designer and designs projects for the hospitality industry, he didn't hesitate to hand over the reins to McGarry-Moon Architects.

"I'm not a house designer – my expertise is in interior spaces – and I believe in hiring a specialist person for a specialist job," Paul explains. "What attracted us to the practice is how they design contemporary buildings that sit well in the countryside. We were confident they would come up with an adventurous design that would work for us and the planners."

Design and Planning

The design focused on retaining the largest stone barn and demolishing the second, which couldn't be saved, then rebuilding directly on its footprint. This contemporary cantilevered new build would be described in the planning application as an 'extension' to the main barn.

The planning application was submitted

in January 2012, including the conversion of the third barn into Paul's business premises. However, the planners felt the design didn't comply with the local countryside planning regulations.

"Conversations went back and forth for the next year," says Paul. "In the end, we removed the office and got approval based on McGarry-Moon Architects' evidence to substantiate a 'Statement of Environmental Significance.'"

"There was no real risk to us – if we didn't get planning the deal was off"



Material Choices

A strategic palette of textured materials brings structure to the spacious barn. Parquet flooring (usw2) meets grey porcelain kitchen floor tiles and oak shelves, and cupboards sit beneath a leather-finish granite worktop (usf7). The surface has a brushed finish so when you run your hand across it feels soft and not cold," says Paul. "It's a lovely material and won't mark or scratch."

Staircase Design

The oak stairwell and landing (usf7) receives the morning light through the double-height windows.



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Zoned Spaces

"We spend all our time in the barn, but it's a big area and we wanted some kind of separation between the kitchen and living space (see below)," says Paul. "The woodburning stove (above), which is built into a low wall that provides a shelf for our TV, creates that separation." To the other side of this wall lies a recessed kitchen cupboard. "Bespoke joinery for built-in storage was really important. We have toy storage and seating areas in the living room with storage hidden away, too."



The architects specified the low carbon footprint construction and thermal efficiency with low-energy requirements, stating this would minimise the environmental impact of the building on the rural landscape.

By now the couple had sold their house and were renting. They were ready to complete the sale of the plot, but the owner's sister – a joint-owner of the site – had passed away, and the estate had to go through probate.

While they waited to complete, Paul and Elaine put their finances into place and appointed a builder. They took on Meegan Builders, a team they knew from Elaine's home town of Castleblayney.

Getting Started

Work got underway on Easter Monday in 2015 with Meegan Builders undertaking all the main building work and Paul taking care of packages like the windows, internal joinery and roof to keep costs down. He swapped the roof on the new building from zinc to single-ply membrane, saving around £15,000. "Visually it makes zero difference," Paul says. "You'd only notice if you were flying into Belfast airport!"

The team approached repairs to the main barn cautiously, but with trees and tree roots so entangled into the stone, inevitably more of the barn had to be rebuilt than initially thought. New openings were created for sliding doors and windows, and the roof built from the inside out to allow the character of the tongue and groove structure to remain on show.

When the project moved inside, Paul invested his time in the interior finishes, calling on companies he knew through his business. His key focus was the barn – an open plan living space zoned for the kitchen, dining and living areas. He played around with the dimensions, working out the best layout for the floorplan to bring spaces together, but also divide them.

The Haffey's initial £280,000 project budget crept up another £70,000 by the time the house was finished, after accounting for a bigger spend on the kitchen, high specification interior finishes and landscaping (all items that the couple hadn't budgeted for).



Utility

A useful utility and WC is positioned to the side of the open plan kitchen, dining and living space, and provides access to the garden and driveway.

Designed to Take in the Views

The master bedroom is built into the cantilevered part of the building and offers rural views on two sides, thanks to the corner glazing (see below).



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First Floor Spaces

The master suite, positioned in the new build element of this self-build, features an en suite partitioned off behind a wall (above). A glazed walkway (left) links the bedrooms in the modern build and the restored and remodelled living space of the barn – it also offers stunning rural views through expansive glazing.



Paul says that creating shadow gaps was a costly and time-consuming process that he wouldn't do again. "They look great but the walls have to be double-boarded to create the recess along the bottom, which is really labour intensive," he explains.

"We wanted an interesting house and we love the contemporary design, but it's fantastic the house works really well for us as a family too without being overly extravagant," he adds.

The moment to move in finally arrived in June 2016. "When the builders had gone, Elaine and I sat down in the living room one evening and watched the lights over the city," he concludes. "We didn't expect views like this and that's added to the sense of making our house feel unique." 



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