

TRIBUTE ACT

The restoration and extension of this house in Glasgow paid careful homage to the original architect's intentions

Photography Paul Tyagi Words Catherine Coyle



DETAILS

What A restoration and extension of an Arts and Crafts villa
Where The outskirts of Glasgow
Architect Donald Bentley Architect

Carved into the wall of this house on the outskirts of Glasgow is a coat of arms with the motto *Propria domus omnium optima* – a rough translation of which might be ‘hame’s always best’. And when your ‘hame’ is a late 19th-century detached villa that melds Arts and Crafts and modernist elements with turn-of-the-century European details, calling it the ‘best’ seems entirely appropriate.

Architect Donald Bentley has known the house since he was a boy growing up nearby, and its curious mix of styles had always intrigued him. So when the owners asked him to restore and extend the property, he knew that any new space he created would have to be very special indeed to complement the house. The original architect is unknown but Donald is convinced that only a ‘master of styles’ could have designed it. The front, he explains, has an asymmetrical composition typical of this period. “The juxtaposition of low-eaves gables, tall chimneys and grand bay windows is reminiscent of master stylists such as the Scottish architects James Salmon or JJ Burnet,” he says.

“So when it came to the brief to restore and extend the house, I really wanted to respect the character of it. It has a lovely domestic quality to it – it had always felt really homely – but it was tired and in need of some TLC.”

The building, which had been in the same family for half a century before the current owners bought it in 2013, was largely intact. There had been some alterations made in the 1950s which were neither sympathetic to the style of the house nor particularly well executed. Donald was determined to stay true to the original ▶



[Above] Looking down into the living area of the new extension from the kitchen. A contemporary Stovax Riva wood-burner from Firestorm features and three glazed doors open the room out to the garden. The exposed beams show off the craftsmanship that has gone into this build. Note the stainless-steel surface of the kitchen island and the smoked oak flooring from Havwoods. [Previous page] Great care was taken to match the exterior of the old and new parts of the house. Pre-blackened zinc was used on the roof since it looks like the original lead. The doors and windows in the extension are by Rationel

architect's intentions while bringing light into the interior to make it feel airy and modern.

The house is in a conservation area but is not listed (though Donald believes it probably should be). The reception hallway has retained all of its original wooden panelling, with a neat umbrella stand, coat pegs and a church pew-style seat in a sunken inglenook at the foot of the staircase. A previous owner had installed a 1930s fireplace but Donald has replaced this with an earlier one

more befitting of the period. "We picked up on details that we found elsewhere in the house," he explains. "Wherever we've done something new, it has been based on details that were already here."

In a hidden cupboard above the inglenook, he discovered a complete set of the original copper finger-plates that had been removed from the doors and stored away. He dusted them off, cleaned them up and had them returned to the internal door facings. "They're

wonderful," he says. He advised that the colours for the walls and any exposed timber should be subtle and in varying degrees of white and grey. "I wanted graded colour, moving from light to dark."

A bigger question for the architect was how to successfully extend a house of this calibre to give the owners what they wanted without compromising the quality and heritage of the building. With the commanding exterior and the area's conservation requirements in mind, he restricted the extension to the side and rear of the building, creating a discreet 'family entrance' at the side of the house that serves as a boot room, before visitors are welcomed through to the new, extended part of the house. Once inside, there is an open area that links the original house to the new extension – the 'barn', as it's called by the owners. ▶

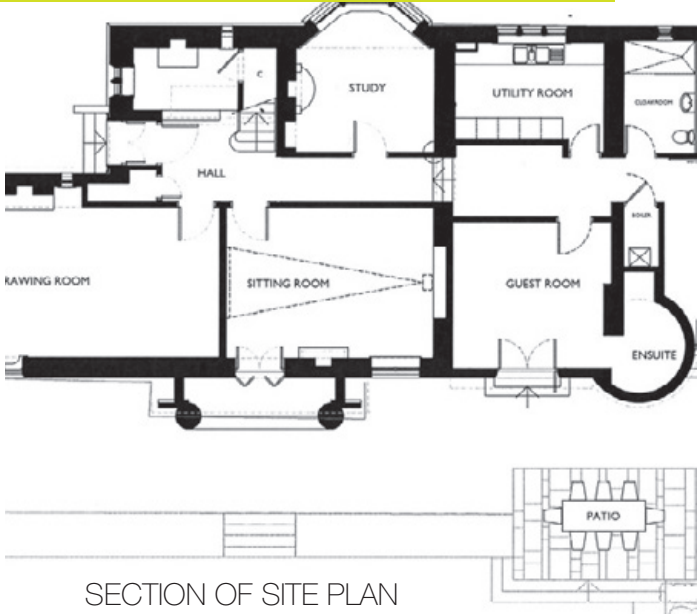


[Left and right] The kitchen has been designed using Bulthaup's b3 DFK2 range in Clay, from Cameron Interiors. It sits on a platform at one end of the new extension and is lit from above by a large skylight. Wall-hung units and an island supported by metal legs stop the dark-toned finishes from looking too heavy. A Quooker Fusion tap supplies hot, cold and boiling water





[Clockwise from above] Painted grey bespoke cabinetry made by Armands Balams; the landing has a panelled ceiling, lit by small windows; the inglenook at the foot of the stairs with its original built-in bench and umbrella stand; the ground-floor plan shows how the extension joins on to the main body of the original house. Note the 'secret' door leading from the kitchen into the pantry, which allows some large appliances to be kept out of sight. Note too the corner of the new living area that forms a large 'bay window'. Much care was taken during the planning and construction not to damage the garden's many beautiful mature trees; the fireplace in the study was supplied by John Kane Fireplaces



SECTION OF SITE PLAN

“This part of the house has a different look,” says the architect. “I wanted to create a sense of flow as you move from one space to the other.” His design was influenced by the grand games rooms of old British country houses but he wanted to present that concept in a modern style. Picking up on the gable heights at the front of the property, he pitched the extension roof at the same height but exposed the beams for maximum light and impact. The bolted timber beams demonstrate the craftsmanship of the build and serve as a juxtaposition between the old and the new.

At the far end of the barn are large glazed doors that form a bay window – a clever design trick that Donald says forces you to look back up to the main house, to appreciate its form.

The extension is home to an understated kitchen and living area that encapsulates Donald’s harmonious marrying of contemporary and period elements. The layout was designed with Kirsten Robeson of Cameron Interiors, using Bulthaup’s b3 DFK2 range. “The brief was for a simple, pared-back Scandinavian look,” says Kirsten. “The living area has a vaulted ceiling with exposed oak trusses, which gives the room a very light feel. This meant we could use a darker finish for the kitchen.” Bulthaup’s Clay colour was chosen as a result.

The high ceiling made the space feel enormous, so Donald proposed raising the floor in the kitchen area. This means that when you stand at the bottom of the barn and look up, the kitchen area is raised, like an altar, where cooking can be theatrical and the form of the wall-hung system can really be appreciated. The skylight above the island ‘altar’ provides both additional ventilation and light, and gives another view of the upper gable of the barn. But it also casts a ‘divine’ shaft of light on to this space that’s certainly worthy of worship. “Perhaps I’m a frustrated church architect,” smiles Donald.

While an extremely contemporary design, the kitchen suits the room, as Kirsten acknowledges. “Bulthaup’s simplicity works well in this space as it is not fighting for attention with its surroundings. ▶



The use of neutral materials and steel worktops allows it to integrate well into its surroundings.” And, she adds, “The installation of wall-hung units and a leg-standing island give the kitchen a light, floating appearance that allows us to see the full proportions of the room.”

There are no handles on any of the drawers or doors, and all the usual cooking paraphernalia can be neatly and easily hidden away. Further concealment comes from the existence of a secret door in the side wall that leads through to a pantry where appliances, a wine cooler and a second dishwasher are stashed. “We disguised this door behind the Bulthaup panel system,” says Kirsten. “It gives the owners a separate functional room that’s used for storage and as a working space, allowing the main kitchen to be minimal and aesthetically pleasing.”

The engineered smoked-oak flooring by Havwoods complements the tones found in the kitchen. With a Stovax Riva wood-burning stove by Firestorm, Permo underfloor heating and triple-glazed windows and doors by Rational, this space is decidedly warm despite its airy volume.

The first-floor portion of the extension rests above the old butler’s quarters. Here, Donald has created a master suite with an en-suite bathroom and dressing room. Careful to avoid meddling with the proportions of the house, he has increased the ceiling height in this room by one metre by having a drop-down step into the room. Continuity is achieved with clever touches such as windows that mirror the proportions ▶

[Above and below] The bathroom is minimalist yet luxurious thanks to high quality fittings from Porcelanosa. [Right] Any damage to the elaborate cornicing and plasterwork around the windows was fixed during the restoration work



“IT IS ALL ABOUT FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE. IT’S SO EASY TO DAMAGE A PROPERTY IF YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT YOU’RE DOING”



[Clockwise from above] Steps lead down into the new master bedroom, to keep the extension roof line consistent with the rest of the building while providing adequate ceiling height; the new entrance, which leads into a boot room. Note the stonework – CBC Stone matched the sandstone of the original exterior; details such as the door finger-plates and the carved balustrades add to the character of the house



found in the main family bathroom. And elements that were sacrificed in the joining of the extension to the house have been reused here – the bathroom and dressing rooms have doors that were salvaged from the now-vanished butler’s area downstairs.

By setting this portion of the house back, the original curved doocot roof could be retained as a feature, and the open space could be utilised as a balcony for the master suite. All four bathrooms in the house have Porcelanosa sanitaryware and tiles, with the master en-suite’s Krion Almond bath taking centre stage. “It was quite an operation getting the bath in here!” laughs Donald. “Sockets, radiator and waste points had to be positioned exactly, due the weight of the bath.”

This level of precision was matched by the contractor, Garry Mann, in the construction of the extension. From the demolition of a Second World War concrete bomb shelter originally on the site, to the careful protection of an adjacent silver birch tree and the ▶





[Above] Elements of the Arts and Crafts style can be seen in the façade of the house, with its low eaves, tall chimneys and multi-paned bay windows. [Below] Carved detailing of the reproduction oak gates by Craft Gates

crafting of the bolted oak trusses, this is a project that rewards close inspection. Finding decay behind the walls in one bedroom, for example, took more time than expected to fix but was a necessary undertaking and has resulted in a structurally sound, beautifully preserved period home.

The same attention to detail has been lavished on the façade. Glasgow's CBC Stone reproduced the original stonework pattern on the extension's sandstone walls, while pre-blackened zinc was selected for the roof because it looks like the lead that would have originally been used. Earlier cement repairs were removed and replaced with lime pointing and, in places, new stone indentation. The entire property has been repointed and cleaned, with the heraldic badge refaced and recut, allowing the lettering to be read again.

The rear garden – a half-acre that looks onto a neighbouring tennis court – was laid and maintained by the head greenkeeper of Loch Lomond Golf Club. By bestowing this level of attention on the entire property, inside and out, the craftsmanship that has slowly and painstakingly been uncovered will survive for a long time to come. "It's all about finding the right people," says Donald. "It is so easy to damage a property if you don't know what you're doing." ■

