

SOMETHING OLD *something new*

A mix of modern, a touch of bespoke and a pop of vintage have given Tanya and Morgan's new-build home a unique style

WORDS AND STYLING PENNY CRAWFORD-COLLINS
PHOTOGRAPHY PHILIP LAUTERBACH



LIVING AREA The light bright and airy living space is furnished with a generous sized modern sofa (from BoConcept.com) that provides the couple with plenty of comfortable seating. This is teamed with a mid century vintage coffee table. The gallery wall, hung with pieces they love, adds visual interest. "Morgan is a great fan of James Bond and fast cars so these just had to be hung on our gallery wall," laughs Tanya





Sometimes you have to step back and re-evaluate what you really want for your home, especially if your heart is set on a particular location. Do you want to take on a costly renovation or would you be better considering something new? This is exactly the dilemma Tanya Neufeld Flanagan, an interior designer at Ellish Rickard Interiors and her husband Morgan Flanagan Creagh, a marketing manager at Willam Fry faced back in 2020 when they decided to buy.

"We had lived in Sandymount for a number of years and loved it, so we were looking to buy in the area," says Tanya. "We were in a bidding war on a former corporation house which looked to be in fine condition, but it only had one bathroom downstairs, an outdated extension and a very low BER rating," explains Tanya. Before the couple went sale agreed on the property they decided to call in the professionals to assess what needed to be done and the costs involved. "When we realised how much renovating would cost, the fact we were in a pandemic was affecting the supply chains, and the construction industry was really under pressure, we decided it made practical and financial sense to amend our search," explains Tanya. The couple realised if they wanted a property in better condition which didn't involve a huge renovation project or go over their budget, they would need to consider a new-build.

Tanya spotted this house, one of a pair of contemporary new builds, built between 2018-2020 by a small scale developer. The project named 'Two Seabirds' was designed by architect Sally Starbuck of Gaia Ecotecture. The houses are built on an urban infill at the back of a Victorian property and were elected for exhibition in the Sustainability category of the annual Architectural Awards in 2021. "It's rare to find one-off new builds and we fell in love with our 'seabird' immediately. It is funky, contemporary, individual and near the beach. Flooded with natural light it has high-spec finishes like solid oak flooring, and underfloor heating, so we were overjoyed when we finally went sale agreed on it," says Tanya.

It takes skill and vision to turn an empty box into a home with personality and this is what Tanya has ultimately achieved with her

choice of colours, furnishings, textures and artwork. "It was a bit cold and empty when we moved in as no one had ever lived in it, and really it lacked basic storage. We needed to re-zone the open plan area and incorporate an area for my home office. The second bedroom we made into Morgan's office," says Tanya.

To give the kitchen a revamp, one of Tanya's tips is to get it spray painted instead of replacing it. "There's a lot you can do to a kitchen you don't like without replacing entire carcasses and ripping things out. It's easy enough to replace appliances, change doors and hardware and by just spraying it a different colour you can give it an instant uplift," she says. They added open shelving to the kitchen and the open plan area which is stained black to contrast with the white oak floors, skirting and architraves. They also built a floating shelf television unit with a cable management system concealed behind it. In addition they installed built-in wardrobes on the landing and their bedroom. "We wanted the wardrobes to just disappear and take up as little space as possible so we used Sliderobes," says Tanya. The couple also retiled the front porch and repainted every room in select shades from Farrow & Ball.

By re-paving the front of the house and gravelled the driveway, the outside has also been given a facelift. "We also tackled the garden and clad it in minimalist horizontal timber and turned the flower beds into bench seating which works a treat. It is particularly good when we are entertaining," smiles Tanya.

"Our house doesn't look like anyone else's and it doesn't take itself too seriously," she says. "It's fresh, modest, playful and has an attitude which represents us very well."

Their personalities shine throughout the house, from the toy cars that race down the wall to the 1960s photograph of Verbier where Tanya grew up skiing. "The whole house has a lovely harmonious balance between old and new," says Tanya. Is there anything left to do? "The more I learn about design the more I want to undo and redo things," says Tanya. "Our bathroom has a huge freestanding bathtub, for instance. Now I wish it was a really sleek utility press instead. So I think there might just be a few changes yet to come." **H** Check out Tanya's interiors podcast: <https://tanyaneufeld.com/home/podcast>

KITCHEN A large two metre mirror from Cornelscourt Glass (Cornelscourtglass.ie) sits comfortably behind the bespoke dining table, giving the illusion of extra space. The pendant lighting is from Bombinate.com. "We wanted something that wouldn't be too heavy and obtrusive for our dining table and thought that glass would feel a bit cold. We worked with Shorewood Design (Shorewooddesign.ie) to choose a beautiful piece of yew that we

had a custom-made smokey grey resin poured around. We added the mid-century legs too," says Tanya. The table is teamed with dining chairs from Kavehome.com. Solid oak flooring runs throughout the ground floor of the open plan space to add warmth and texture, and a pop of colour. Tanya sourced a rug from RugVista.com. "Morgan was amazed I had selected something that had colour in it - he always thinks I gravitate to black and white, which is probably true!"



KITCHEN The original 'builders' spec' cabinets were a blue-grey which weren't to Tanya's taste. She wanted something lighter so had the units re-sprayed (in Wevet by Farrow-ball.com) by a company called Mywonderkitchen.com.

Clever storage here hides bulky appliances. Also, bespoke open shelving allows for extra storage and ensures the all important coffee capsules are easily accessible just above the Nespresso coffee machine



GOOD IDEA

Don't like the colour of your kitchen? Find a specialist company to respray the doors



"We know how lucky we are to find this house. It is so rare to find a one-off new-build like this"



KITCHEN The large black and white print from [Photos.com](#) makes a striking statement, and is perfectly teamed with a modern style console from [Woodesign.ie](#). "I originally had some chunky marble wall hooks fitted in this space. They never screwed in properly and always spun when you hung anything on them, so I replaced these recently with a bespoke coat rack made by Paddy, who is a self-taught woodworker who runs [CK53design.ie](#). You can pull the hooks out as and when you need them"

ENTRANCE HALL (ABOVE) Tanya searched for a while to find a slim half glazed cabinet to fit into the narrow space in the entrance hall which she sourced with the help of Belfast furniture warehouse, Betty's Lounge (@Bettyslounge). The walls are painted in Mizzle by Farrow-ball.com. The mirror is from Ikea and the print and the artwork on the back of the front door are by Carolyn Walsh (Carolynwalshart.com)

MORGAN'S OFFICE (LEFT) Morgan's office is the one dark and moody room in the house. Tanya painted it in London Clay by Farrow-ball.com. It is furnished with a futon from [Made.com](#) and a vintage chrome and leather desk which was sourced from online vintage furniture site, [Pamono.com](#)





SHOWER ROOM This simple walk-in space is dressed in black accessories from Finnishdesignshop.com. The addition of plants keeps the look fresh. The linen towels are from Etsy and the striped towels are from Missoni Home at Brownthomas.com

MASTER BEDROOM (THIS PAGE & OPPOSITE) Painted in Dutch Pink, by Farrow-ball.com, the bedroom is inspired by hues of the South of France where the couple love to visit. The built-in wardrobes are from Sliderobes.ie

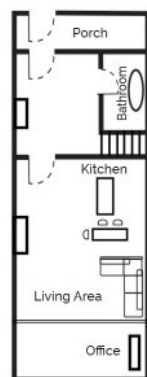
“We wanted the wardrobes to disappear into the walls, taking up as little space as possible”

TANYA'S INTERIORS TIPS FOR A NEW-BUILD HOME

1 A well-styled home should have a mix of investment pieces and some harder wearing items that can take the beating of daily use. Even if you can afford all designer, it adds character to pull vintage pieces or have something custom-made. Be realistic about where you should splurge or save.

2 Create a narrative or theme for your home that inspires you. Pull together things you love that have nothing to do with interiors – favourite vacations, hobbies, places, films and music – to create a really uniquely themed home that won't fall prey to trends.

3 New builds are built with smaller proportions than period homes, so you really need to plan in your storage before you fill your house with furniture and junk. My first design mentor, Steph O'Sullivan gave me a great piece of advice that the Japanese follow - 40% of each space should be dedicated to storage. Built-in saves a lot of space and increases the resale value of your home. You'll never regret it. Choose muted finishes that you can change or upgrade over the years.



Ground Floor



First Floor





BATHROOM The bathroom scheme includes a freestanding bath and basin from Villeroy and Boch. Tanya found the vintage Japanese silk screen print and had it framed, via eBay. The plant stand is from Ikea with towels from Missoni Home at Brownthomas.com

See more great houses at Houseandhome.ie



DON'T MISS THE DETAILS

Clockwise from top left: Monogrammed table linen from Nahen (bought on Etsy) adds the finishing touches to the table; The second bedroom is now Morgan's home office; For extra storage, bespoke open shelving was designed to fit snugly into the alcove, an Eames-style chair sits neatly below it; The Sapiens book tower, in one corner of the space, introduces some colour. Next to it is a mid-century Danish bar from Betty's Lounge (@Bettyslounge)

