

Dublin 4 €3.2m

Substantial home in sought-after Ballsbridge development

Home formerly owned by interior designer who imbued it with elements of South African home design

Claremont, Shrewsbury, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Description: Impressive architect-designed home enjoys private and highly secure setting behind two sets of gates
Agent: Owen Reilly

MIRIAM MULCAHY

Built in 2010, Claremont in Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, is set behind two sets of gates: one at the entrance to the Shrewsbury development off the Merion Road and a second set of electronic gates providing further security outside its grounds.

A gravelled driveway and attractive hedging make for a stylish entrance to this three-bedroom home, designed by architect Rory Murphy for its previous owner, interior designer Breda Clifford. The home was bought from Clifford by its current owners three years ago, and they are now placing it back on the market with Owen Reilly, seeking €3.2 million.

The front of the house is dominated by two deep bay windows, topped by zinc-wrapped Juliet balconies. Having spent time in South Africa, Clifford imported the style from homes she saw there to the new-build, focusing on large, airy rooms and incorporating dark wood throughout: a stained oak that contrasts beautifully with the pale walls.

Italian marble tiles were laid on top of underfloor heating, so the interiors are welcoming and warm. A large sitting room painted a warm, dusky pink lies to the left of the entrance hall. It has a feature marble fireplace and doors leading out to the garden. With a bay window deep enough for a baby grand piano, this room sets the tone for the flow and space in this 295sq m (3,175sq ft) property. This and the other living areas benefit from sliding pocket doors.

On the other side of the entrance hall, dominated by a handsome stained-oak staircase, lies a study or second sitting room, with the same deep bay window, built-in shelving and a gas inset fire. Beside it is a



wet room and guest WC.

The star of this home is the expansive kitchen/dining/living area at the back of the house. It is glossy, high-end and filled with light, with sliding doors in the dining area opened to create the ultimate indoor/outdoor area. Substantial stained-oak units and an oak door leading to a utility room frame a large fireplace, adding warmth to the space. The kitchen is vast, with a tall



wine fridge surrounded by display units, and an extensive bank of units topped with Corian. It has a Smeg oven and coffee machine, a Viking professional hob with extractor unit, a full-length Gorenje fridge, and an undercounter Siemens freezer. A large island with a perpendicular section has enough room to seat six.

With a southwest orientation, the garden is low maintenance, with bamboo, its own irrigation system, a sound system, a dining area and a raised deck to catch the evening sun and its own putting green to the rear. Murphy, the architect, was intent on making this as green a home as possible; high levels of insulation, solar panels and a heat-recovery system have resulted in a B3 Ber.

Upstairs the understated luxury continues, with three big double rooms, all with their own en suites. Extra windows and roof lights flood the upstairs with light. One of the bedrooms has access to a roof terrace while the other two have Juliet balconies. The main bedroom is impressive, where a partition wall behind the bed conceals a dressing area and a glossy bank of wardrobes.

Claremont is within walking distance of Sandymount Strand, Herbert Park and the boutiques and cafes of Ballsbridge village, while also being within a 10-minute drive from schools including St Michael's, Teresians, Blackrock College, St Andrew's and Muckross Park.

Dublin 2 €595,000

Apartment in heart of the city

Apartment 4, 66/67 South Great George's Street, Dublin 2

Description: Duplex-style home around the corner from Trinity and Grafton Street
Agent: Mullery O'Gara

ALISON GILL

Architect and Home of the Year judge Hugh Wallace spoke in an interview with the RTE Guide a few years ago about his time living in an apartment on South Great George's Street.

"We bought an apartment on George's Street, which was

amazing. It overlooked Dublin Castle, and it was amazing to live right in the centre of town," said Wallace.

Wallace sold up long ago but that same apartment, number 4 at 66/67 South Great George's Street, is now on the market with Mullery O'Gara with a guide price of €595,000.

The one thing that hasn't changed over the years is the location. At 102sq m (1,098sq ft), the living space is set out over two levels in the duplex-style property.

The entrance hall opens up into the dining room that has double-height ceilings with a balcony looking down from the landing above. This leads into the bright living room that has a cast-iron fireplace with a gas fire and shuttered windows

and doors out to a west-facing balcony.

The gallery kitchen is on the other side of the apartment and looks out over George's Street. This is fully fitted with units and integrated appliances. Beside this is a double bedroom and a bathroom.

A wooden staircase from the living room takes you up to the next floor where there is another double bedroom and bathroom.

The balcony from the living room has the views out over Dublin Castle that Wallace spoke about, but perhaps the most surprising thing about the property is how quiet it feels when you're inside.

Located on one of the busiest streets in Dublin, the apartment is over what was Dylan

McGrath's Brasserie Sixty6 restaurant. According to selling agents Mullery O'Gara, a new restaurant is due to open in the venue soon.

With a C3 energy rating, the city apartment has been well maintained and is ready to move into. New owners may want to modernise the kitchen and bathrooms but there is plenty of character in the duplex to work with like shutters and large windows, as well as the high ceilings that provide a gallery-like setting for artwork.

The management fee for the units in the building is €2,775 plus €200 towards a sinking fund.

All that the city has to offer is on your doorstep including Grafton Street, St Stephen's Green and Trinity College.



On view



St Ann's Cottage, 31 Lower Road, Shankill, Dublin 18

€625,000, DNG

A three-bed mid-terrace cottage extending to 81sq m (872sq ft). This home features a spacious and private back garden of about 37m in length, beautifully laid out with a large patio, a central walkway and a lawn to the rear surrounded by mature shrubs and trees. It is a 10-minute walk from Shankill train station. Ber C3



49 Glengarriff Parade, Phibsborough, Dublin 7

€435,000, Lappin Estates

A two-bed mid-terrace redbrick home extending to 67sq m (720sq ft). It is located on a mature street off North Circular Road. It consists of an open-plan living and dining space with a gallery kitchen and the bathroom to the rear of the ground floor. There are two upstairs bedrooms and a small courtyard to the rear. Ber C3



122 Sarto Park, Naas, Co Kildare

€330,000, Sherry FitzGerald O'Reilly

A three-bed end-terrace extending to 79sq m (850sq ft). This house comes to the market in move-in ready condition. The modern interior features a sitting room to the front with mahogany-coloured flooring and a spacious kitchen-diner to the rear with green cabinets. It also offers a good-sized lawned back garden and three bedrooms and a shower room upstairs. Ber C2



39 Cherry Avenue, Rivervally, Swords, Co Dublin

€420,000, Sherry FitzGerald

A three-bed end-terrace house extending to 87sq m (936sq ft). It is a 20-minute walk from Swords main street and has a good-sized back garden featuring a decked gazebo. The home is turnkey, with a familiar layout: a sitting room and a kitchen-diner on the ground floor and bedrooms and a modern shower room upstairs. Ber C3



5 Forest Park, Carrigaline, Co Cork

€385,000, Michael Pigott

A detached three-bed single-storey home extending to 94sq m (1,012sq ft). It has three bedrooms, and the main has an en suite. It features a driveway and lawn to the front as well as a garden with a decked patio and lawn to the rear. It is about a 25-minute walk from Carrigaline main street and a 25-minute drive from Cork city. Ber C1

Sort it

Denise O'Connor



Simple ways to use light to boost wellbeing

We all know fresh air and good food are essential for our health, but what about light? It turns out the lighting in our homes may be doing more than just setting a mood. It sends biological signals affecting everything from sleep and stress levels to metabolism. I chatted to lighting designer Willie Duggan jnr about how the lighting in our homes can impact our wellbeing – often in ways we don't realise. The good news is, there are simple changes every homeowner can make that can have a big impact.

Circadian rhythm

At the core of the issue is something known as the circadian rhythm – our body's internal clock. It runs on a roughly 24-hour cycle and is heavily influenced by light. When we receive the right light at the right time, everything in our body functions better, from cardiovascular and immune systems to mood, appetite and sleep.

Light acts as the master signal that sets this clock, particularly in the morning. But most of us aren't getting enough natural light during the day and we're getting too much of the wrong kind of light at night.

This mismatch can have serious consequences. One of the biggest culprits? Artificial light at night suppresses melatonin, the hormone responsible for sleep, cell repair and immune function.

"Artificial light affects us far more deeply than we realise," explains Duggan. "Our bodies are incredibly sensitive to light cues. The problem is, we've created homes that ignore that completely."

Artificial light

Before electricity, our days were lit by the sun and our nights by firelight. That rhythm gave our bodies clear cues for when to wake up, wind down and rest. But today, we live in a world of perpetual light. We wake up in the dark, go straight into blue-lit bathrooms and kitchens, spend our days with LED lights and screens and then wind down in front of the TV or phone, often well past sunset.

Blue light, the kind emitted by screens and most modern LED bulbs, isn't all bad. During the day, it actually helps with alertness and focus. But at night, it suppresses melatonin and keeps the stress hormone cortisol elevated. That's why so many people find it hard to fall asleep, even when they feel exhausted.

There's another kind of light we're missing entirely: infrared. Natural daylight is made up of more than 50 per cent infrared light, which supports energy production and cellular repair. We used to get infrared exposure from old incandescent bulbs and open fires, but we've now engineered most of it out of our homes. "Infrared is essential," Duggan says. "It affects everything down to our mitochondria, the energy engines of our cells. Yet most homes have virtually none of it."

The problem isn't just what's missing. Many low-quality LED and fluorescent bulbs flicker at high speed, often invisible to the naked eye, but not to your brain. This kind of flick-

er has been linked to eye strain, headaches, fatigue and even migraines, especially when lights are dimmed or used for extended periods. Duggan recommends checking for flicker by putting your phone on slow-motion video and pointing it at your lights. If you see a strobe effect, it might be time for an upgrade.

Recreate natural light

The goal, says Duggan, is to "recreate the natural rhythm of light. Bright and cool during the day, warm and dim in the evening". It's not about throwing out every LED or sitting in the dark with a candle. It's about making small, thoughtful changes that align your lighting with your body's natural rhythms.

One of the best things you can do is step outside early in the day. Just 10 to 15 minutes of exposure to natural light in the morning, even on a cloudy day, can reset your circadian rhythm and improve your sleep that night. Your brain relies on that morning signal to time everything else for the day, from hormone production to digestion.

If you work from home, try to set up your workspace near a window for optimal natural light. Natural light improves mood, energy and focus. Also, consider the types of light you use in other rooms throughout your home. Mixing task, ambient and accent lighting can help avoid overexposure to glare.



“Natural light improves mood, energy and focus”

Consider switching to warmer light bulbs in the evening. Look for bulbs marked 2700K or lower. Avoid screens for at least an hour before bed, or use blue-light-blocking glasses if you must be on a device.

For those looking to go a step further, flicker-free LED bulbs (look for those compliant with IEC 1789 standards) and infrared panels are becoming more widely available. While infrared solutions are still relatively expensive, they're a step toward reintroducing this vital wavelength into our homes. "We're now designing homes that block infrared completely – even our windows are filtering it," Duggan says. He recommends opening windows as much as possible throughout the day to let in infrared light.

Most people think about lighting in terms of function or aesthetics. However, it's time we started thinking of light in terms of wellbeing. The right light at the right time can improve sleep, boost energy, support mood and even help regulate weight and immunity. The wrong light, at the wrong time, can do the opposite. The key is to start with small steps – get natural light early in the day, dim things down in the evening, and aim for warmth over brightness after dark.