

# HOME

**Time for tea** Furlong and her children — and their friends Lucy and Oscar — gather round the vintage McIntosh dining table

Philip Lauterbach



## LITTLE GEM

These glass wall jewels will jazz up any room

P12



Skylights and windows were key to this airy kitchen/living room extension that makes a modern backdrop for its owners' mid-century decor

**P**lenty of us wait years for that dream kitchen. Frieda Furlong waited a full decade. “I reckon I deserve a medal,” she says. Now, she’s the proud owner of a snazzy new extended kitchen/living room space, with a distinctly mid-century modern feel, in the Phibsboro home she shares with husband Frazer, an IT specialist, and their children Charlie, 9, Ava Rose, 7, and Jack, 3. “The house already had an extension at the back, but it was pitch dark and there was no space. If anyone ever came into the kitchen, I’d tell them to get out. There was really only space for one person at a time in there. I can’t believe we endured it for 10 years.”

The new room is an unexpectedly bright space, given its north-facing aspect. “The light at the front used to come through to the second living room but it didn’t reach the kitchen. Now it’s so bright, thanks to the four roof lights and lots of glazing. It also left behind more garden space than I expected.”

The extension itself measures just 26 sq m, making it planning exempt, with external insulation. It was overseen by Seamus Driver Construction and the architect Mícheál de Siún of De Siún Scullion Architects.

“At first I didn’t even want an architect, I just thought we needed a simple square box at the back of the house. But being both culchies, we didn’t know any builders in Dublin, and a friend recommended Mícheál de Siún. His attention to detail was incredible. He was super-engaged in the project and there were tiny little things he cared about that he wouldn’t give up on,” she says. “The builder went above and beyond, too. The brief was ‘Let there be light’ and they achieved →

# DAYLIGHT SAVINGS



→ that in bucketloads,” says Furlong. “We lived here for the entire build, camped up in the attic, and Seamus even made me a temporary kitchen, which was brilliant.”

Initially, the couple wanted their new addition to have a traditional pitched roof, rather than a flat one, “but Micheál convinced me that a flat shape would better suit the 1960s style I was hoping to achieve. I wasn’t sure it would work, but it did, with the help of the huge roof lights. He also wanted everything triple-glazed, which was important,” she says. The glazing is by Munster Joinery, while the kitchen is from Eco Interiors, based in Santry, Dublin 9, and is a variation of the Line N model by German company Nobilia.

**The Kobenstyle jug started my obsession with Dansk. Some people have a shoe and handbag obsession – mine is ceramics and enamelware**

“I’m a terrible magpie so I wanted a plain, straight-lined kitchen with no handles, as a background for my things. It has a wooden laminate trim on it, which is an element from another maker. The kitchen company was great – they let Michael ‘pimp’ the kitchen, by mixing and matching elements,” says Furlong. “I wanted reflective surfaces given the room is north facing. I added the pale green glass splashback, from Topglass, for the same reason.”

The light above the kitchen island came from a shop fittings company, as Furlong wanted nothing too intrusive at eye level. For this reason, de Siún also provided built-in discreet artificial lighting between the roof lights above the table, to avoid the need for a hanging pendant. The kitchen work surfaces are of Silestone, while the floor is made from polished concrete by Martin Cremin of Cutsue.ie, and resembles terrazzo. “I was away in Barcelona when the floor was being laid, and walking across all these spectacular real terrazzo floors, thinking ‘I hope my floor looks like this when I get home.’ It actually turned out great. It contains beautiful scraps of browns, blacks and whites.”

The kitchen’s concrete floor meets seamlessly with the original pine flooring in the living room end of this open-plan space. “That was a deliberate decision from the architect – he insisted there be no join or saddle. It meant adding additional lengths of floorboard and ensuring the concrete rose to 3mm above the wood’s level when it was poured, since that’s the amount you lose off the top during the polishing process. That’s the sort of attention to detail he had,” says Furlong. “I was cursing him, but he never gave up, and he was right.”

The heating system was upgraded by Arc Heating Services, and to avoid



**Back to the 60s**  
The streamlined white kitchen and pale green glass helps create a sense of space, and provide a neutral background to Furlong’s collection of retro and Scandi-style furniture and objets



blighting the look of the crisp, clean new kitchen, de Siún fashioned a built-in “hovering” radiator concealed within the kitchen island. “It’s one of the best things about the project and gives off a gorgeous heat. It’s connected to the stove system. I can light the stove in the morning and get the room nice and cosy for the day. The kids love sitting there in the mornings,” says Furlong. “We get the wood from the family farm in Wicklow.”

While the new addition functions beautifully in terms of space, light and heat, finishing touches make it a study in good design and judicious use of colour. Furlong has furnished the entire area with her favourite mid-century modern design and classic Scandinavian patterns, and she researches pieces she’s seeking online and at flea markets, auction houses and through Irish-based vintage dealers.

The dining table is a McIntosh from vintage dealer Geoff Kirk of Kirkmodern and took five months to source. It double-extends to fit a dozen people and on the inside, is teamed with a bench from Ikea which Furlong stained to match the table and window woodwork.

The rest of the chairs are McIntosh designs that match the table, but were sourced separately from Table Lighting Chair, another Dublin-based vintage business. They were reupholstered in a Kirkby Design fabric from Dublin’s The Cloth Shop, by the Swedish upholsterer Mia Van Evelingen of Mia’s Upholstery, also based in Dublin. “I was going to go for a plain fabric, but I fell for the geometric one when I saw it. I’m hoping it won’t date quickly.”

In the corner is the classic reading chair/lamp combination: the Swedish





leather chair was purchased by Furlong 10 years ago as she was about to have her first child, and it came from the now-closed Wild Child Originals. The lamp is the Samtid floor lamp from Ikea; Furlong swapped its shade for one in a turquoise colour she prefers.

The mid-century influences continue into the adjoining living space, where there's a large armchair by Parker Knoll. The sofa was a gift from a former colleague. Behind it is a McIntosh teak sideboard.

"I didn't want the sideboard initially, I

wanted one of those Avalon room dividers, but I lost patience looking for it, and Geoff Kirk found me that one." There is a smaller Avalon unit to the left of the fireplace, while the coffee table is that retro classic, the G-Plan Astro.

Furlong has become an avid collector of vintage Scandinavian ceramics and enamelware. The turquoise jug on open display, and the yellow paella-style fruit bowl, are part of the Kobenstyle range by Dansk, one of her favourite makers. She's also a collector of the classic 1960s enamelware by Cathrineholm of Norway,

#### Old and new

The modern polished concrete floor of the flat-roofed extension segues smoothly into the original wood floorboards in the living area

with its signature Lotus pattern. "The jug was given to me by my mother-in-law, which started my obsession with Dansk," she says. "Some people have a shoe and handbag obsession — mine is ceramics and enamelware."

There are non-Danish items, in similar style, adding pops of bright primary colour to the neutral space. The little orange sugar bowl and milk jug are by Alfred Meakin, picked up in the Tinahely Farm Shop, one of Furlong's favourite outlets for retro accessories. The Orla Kiely and Rob Ryan kitchenware items

were bought in a small shop called Treat, around the corner from the family home in Dublin 7.

The only true departure from the 1950s and 1960s style in this room is the 1920s Globe Wernicke storage unit, known as a stacking barrister's bookcase, which is designed with glass panel doors that flip up and slide into the unit. Furlong found it, after much research, on eBay for the bargain price of £300. "I love the thrill of a good find," she says.

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# LOFT EXPANDER

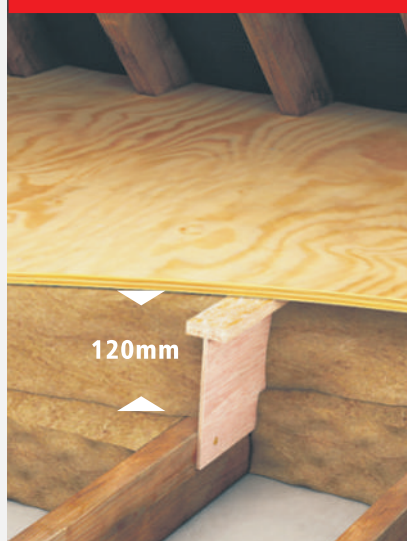
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