

smoothly from the sleek surface. "I asked a few friends, who are stylists and work with interiors, what they thought and they said it's a great idea to put the kitchen in the best room in the house."

Two Siemens ovens ensure there is plenty of cooking power for their regular dinner parties. Luckily, the island is slap-bang below a beautiful chandelier that came with the house, providing a striking contrast between the old and the new. A TV on the wall opposite is for watching major breaking news or crises. "I can cook without missing Federer play at Wimbledon," she jokes.

The essence of the development was to join up the three main rooms of the ground floor. The owner had spent much of her time in her old house in Raglan Road, Dublin, cut off in a small kitchen. She wanted all the main living parts of the house to be connected. "After living in Australia, I wanted the kind of continuous living space they have there," she recalls. "I hate formal rooms now."

The architect, Pierre Long, of Lawrence and Long Architects in Dublin, enjoyed the challenge. "It's an amazing house," he says. "We put the island right in the middle of the main reception room, which meant none of the architectural features were disturbed. The room is south-facing and we wanted to create access to the garden and so we put in doors either side of the bay window which are not visible from the outside." The final major change – and arguably the most impressive – was to create a clearer link between the new kitchen and its neighbouring reception room.



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LET THERE BE LIGHT

PAINTED IN GLEAMING WHITE AND COOL CREAMS, A LOOMING GOTHIC HOUSE IN WICKLOW HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A COOL AND MINIMALIST BUT, MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, COMFORTABLE FAMILY HOME

WORDS BEN WEBB PHOTOGRAPHY RENÉ KRAMERS; BARBARA CORSICO STYLING HAZEL PREIFER



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The stained glass window that dominates the huge entrance hall is one of the largest in a private house in Ireland. The story of the house is written in the four heraldic panels. The George III mirror (left) of Handgrove built the house in 1807. OPPOSITE PAGE A glass door leads to the spacious hallway.



The wood panelling of the old library has been repainted in rich creams from the Dulux Heritage range. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP LEFT The beautiful mirror was already in place. Painted in a subtle shade of stone, it feels contemporary and new. TOP RIGHT The large wooden door opens onto a magnificent entrance hall with huge stained glass windows. LEFT A rear view of the Gothic house and the bay window of the ground floor kitchen and living room areas.