

Award-Winning Design

This stunning Co. Armagh home recently won a Design Project of the Year category at the IHIL Awards in Dublin. The designer behind the project, Kris Turnbull of Kris Turnbull Studios, attributes its success to a balance of design elements. We take a look inside.

EDITORIAL BY EMMA DEIGHAN.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER BRUCE.





Reigning supreme at the IHIL Awards in the Design Project of the Year category (£50/€60k - £500/€600k), this Co. Armagh property is a true style story that embraces the outdoors. 'We are incredibly proud of how the project turned out,' Kris Turnbull begins. 'The home reflects the family's needs and personalities, blending timeless architectural details with luxurious yet practical design.'

His use of soft, textured finishes, natural materials, and an organic design approach has produced a home that is both visually stunning and practical.

Built on the original footprint of an old rectory, the building spans 3,800 sq ft and was designed by architect Des Ewing to embrace a 'picture-book perfect' architectural style. Kris balanced charming original features with contemporary touches.

'We were brought on board when the bones of the building were already underway,' Kris continues. 'As the contractor began requesting details for key elements such as the staircase and fireplace design, the clients realised they needed professional guidance. We worked under pressure



to stay ahead of the builder, ensuring decisions were made swiftly to keep the project moving forward.'

Set on four acres of beautifully landscaped gardens, including an enclosed courtyard, a mini meadow with wildflowers, and a treehouse built by the father using reclaimed wood, the outdoor elements of this home became a vital influence on the design choices.

'Soft pastel accents were introduced to create a harmonious balance between traditional and contemporary elements, while the children's bedrooms embraced more playful colour schemes,' Kris explains. 'The large timber sash windows fill each room with natural light, and we drew inspiration from Georgian architecture, merging it with modern elements to maintain a timeless feel.'

The hallway sets the tone for the rest of the home. 'In

large entrance halls, you need thoughtful architectural detailing, impactful lighting, and intricate flooring to avoid a cold or empty feel,' Kris says. 'For this space, a bespoke chandelier cascades down the centre, and we added a large-format porcelain tile with a brass inlay detail to define the formality of the space. The bespoke hand-tufted carpet runner brings softness to the staircase.'

The dark console table, paired with sleek mirrors and crisscross stools, introduces a dramatic but balanced aesthetic. The cabinet is by Christopher Guy, made from java wood with Daliesque hand-carved legs, creating a striking focal point.

In the drawing room, Kris continued his use of rich blue tones and introduced classical elements like a hand-carved marble fireplace and a herringbone timber floor with brass framing. 'The plasterwork, inspired by Georgian design,



was executed in a contemporary way with recessed ceiling details,' he explains. 'We used a combination of materials such as botanical silk and wool for the bespoke rugs, while the sofas were upholstered in an over-knitted boucle fabric by Nobilis Paris. The 17th-century archive materials for the cushions from Rubelli in Venice brought a traditional touch to the room.'

The artwork throughout consists of hand-painted textured canvases that 'add a sense of serenity to each room'.

The family room at the rear of the house required a different approach to balance the elegant proportions of

the front with a more relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere. 'The large-format porcelain tiles from the hallway were continued into the open-plan kitchen and family room, creating a seamless transition,' Kris says. 'For the lounge, we wanted comfort and a sense of luxury. The bespoke corner group, combined with Minotti swivel chairs, creates an inviting space. The dress curtains from Nobilis reflect the light with subtle metallic threads and geometric patterns.'

Kris worked closely with the clients to design a kitchen that would deliver both practically and visually. 'We created a large island where the children could eat while



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the parents cooked. The challenge was integrating elegant design with practicality—keeping kitchen appliances out of sight and organising the space efficiently. We introduced a neighbouring pantry to store everything together.’

The hand-painted kitchen features a centrepiece Aga range, a Calacatta Oro backsplash, while brass inlays were used to elevate the Quartzite worktops. Kris explains, ‘The

key is to create balance and symmetry without sacrificing functionality.’

For the master suite, the goal was to create calm and luxury. ‘The clients wanted the space to reflect the peaceful environment outside. We used feature wall panels behind the bespoke headboard, which represent the shadows of oak trees, and dressed the bed with luxurious linen and velvets from Evitavonni.’



The room also features an end-of-bed TV cabinet with a telescopic lift system. 'The combination of textures and natural materials brings the outdoors in while keeping the space serene and inviting,' Kris adds.

Throughout the home, wood accents were thoughtfully incorporated to balance the soft, neutral tones. 'Wood elements tell a story and add warmth and sophistication. By embracing the natural imperfections of materials like wood and stone, we create a warm, timeless feel that's enhanced by natural light,' Kris explains.

A unique light sculpture in the dressing room adds the wow factor. It was designed to bring an organic touch to the clean-lined space. 'The steel leaves, brushed in gold, create a dramatic effect while remaining delicate,' Kris says. 'It's a work of art that doubles as functional lighting, providing a warm, homogenous spread of light.'

Kris and his team took a playful, personal approach to designing the children's bedrooms. 'Each room was styled to reflect the individual personalities of the children. The girls chose a pink colour palette with princess-inspired elements, while the boys' room features a bespoke wooden bunk bed, complemented by a charming vintage tractor wallpaper.'





The paint colour in the boys' room is Dove Blue by Sanderson, in a washable, stain-resistant eggshell finish.

Asked to pick his favourite element of the home, Kris says, 'The orangery extension created an amazing new open space with an abundance of light, opening the door to a myriad of design possibilities. Its interior embraces the property's charming architectural details with sumptuous fabrics and natural materials with a tactile application to family living, yet still retaining its elegant Georgian character. The clients love more subdued, neutral tones with gentle accents of warm golds, creams, soft greens, and pinks. The serene, organic colour palette helps to create a calming mood, filled with light, and showcases beautiful garden views, while adding luxurious furnishings and materials.'

And reflecting on that award win, he concludes, 'Ultimately, judging how successful a project is starts with how the client or family in this case feels. Does their new home exceed their expectations? On this occasion, they were totally surpassed.' 🏠

*If you have any questions or queries relating to this reader's home please contact Heather Withers.
Phone +44 (0) 28 9147 3979 or email enquiries@ihil.net*