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Browne/Design Warehouse.

In fact, all of the workmanship here is very much top drawer. The owner admits to being a bit obsessive about finishes and fittings. As recently as this week even the 'lesser' rooms (like the master bedroom's dressing room) were getting final touches and some new units so that the vendors can truly say that every square inch and foot is finely finished, the real 'walk-in job.' (Even the unused attic, reached via a Stira in the main bedroom, is floored, plastered, insulated, painted, and heated.)

No 7 The Hermitage's first floor proper has that great, double aspect main bedroom, with large bathroom with both bath and shower, as well as a room-sized dressing room, just refitted and with a sit-up-to feature window: this room used to be the upstairs sitting room, it transpires.

At the far end of the landing are two bedrooms, each with walk-through wardrobes/dressing rooms which link, in turn, to a Jack & Jill en suite shared bathroom. Only, in this case, it's a Jill & Jill en suite, as it's used by twin, teenage girls, and each are scrupulously, identically sized (the rooms, that is, not the girls.)

It's at ground floor level that this home really shines, though (did we mention/did you lamp the gleam off the parquet floor?) Rightly so, the main, scene setter is the kitchen/dining/family room, now about 40' from front to the back of the zinc-roofed added glazed extension, with double/triple aspect, and has underfloor heating.

Units and island/breakfast unit tops on the low-gloss Leicht kitchen are marble, and the plentiful appliances are AEG, with boiling water on tap delivery. There's also a very large double/triple fridge freezer, nearly walk-in size, or stagger-out size, complete as it is with a central wine chiller and prone bottles nestled on display. However, it's about the only fixture not included in the property sale. The family are very attached to it, it's from Gaggenau, and it's likely to have been as indulgent an investment as many homes' entire fitted kitchens.....

Auctioneer Jackie Cohan doesn't have to reach too far for superlatives and notes simply that "after being substantially upgraded in 2012 to the highest of standards and specifications, this home is as good as it gets," adding "the finest of materials have been used and meticulous attention to detail is unmistakably evident in this beautiful family home."

Off the main kitchen section is a pantry/cloakroom, built-on minus the underfloor heating (gas fired and zoned) support to deliberately be able to store provisions and foodstuffs at cooler temperature, and just in

case heating is ever required, there's a swish electrical radiator on standby.

Main, visible heat source is the wide Faber gas fire in a wide plain surround in the family seating section, with a flue passing through the external wall so as not to spoil the clear lines of the clerestory windows and recessed coffered ceiling ringing this room's end. Expensive, understated drapes and blinds in a combination of types feature heavily here, and in many other rooms, and the house's owners reckon they spend tens of thousands of euros (even in a lull market) on fabrics, curtains and lights, all of which are being left behind.

Elsewhere, visible through glazed double doors from the kitchen is a bay windowed TV room (it used to be No 7's main ground floor reception,) and a now, much larger living room, south facing, with high-gloss parquet floor. It's got a large insert gas fire, in a black surround, framed by a simple white marble fireplace: this room has double doors to the brick-paved sun-trap rear patio, as equally reached from the family room/sun-room and again from a far end play room/office/den/optional extra bedroom. It was created as part of the two-storey extension at the property's eastern end, past an en suite bedroom and a just-reworked, well-sized utility room/laundry.

Externally, the amount of extra work and updating is best seen and appreciated from the rear, where both extra wings are in evidence, especially the western kitchen/sun room add-on, giving the original brick dormer home a very contemporary visual edge and extra oomph.

No 7's set on a sloping, wedge-shaped landscaped site (done day one by designer Dominick Cullinane) and there's very considerable privacy, especially to the back, along with good parking, all behind electric access gates.

The Hermitage has 15 detached homes in all, dating to the late 1990s, and while initially they may have started out with features in common, many have evolved considerably since, in fits and starts.

Right next door, for example, No 6 The Hermitage went to market in May of this year, pushed up to 4,700 sq ft by its departing owners, and it has a hotel-like fitness suite, complete with gym and indoors swimming pool with counter current, sauna and body-drying 6' high blow dryer. No 6 was launched by Cobh-based agent Johanna Murphy at €950,000, about €200 per square foot, on a similar sized site, and while under offer is, as yet, unsold.

**VERDICT:** Seven's generally a lucky number.

## GET THE LOOK

Some great ideas for you to use in your home and where to get them

1 Zinc or swim. No 7's zinc roofed extensions, either side, add a real burnish of contemporary swish to the 1990s-built, red-brick dormer, lifting it to a whole new look and level



2 A recessed or coffered ceiling section allows for lots of subtle lighting moods and alterations. But, you can be sure, a builder/plasterer will rather you stuck to plain old straight planes



3 Did someone mention planes? A son's bedroom gets to really take off thanks to these oversize models, real flights of fancy and guaranteed to stimulate stirring dreams



4 Finishes and fittings more usually seen in high-end bars, restaurants or hotels can be made to work at home too, if carefully selected. Part of the design team at 7 The Hermitage were architect Derek O'Leary, and interiors specialist Róisín O'Brien.

5 Windows wrap both sides, and even over the top, of this wide hearth, hosting a wide, gas-fired Faber fire, with wide screen telly overhead. The fire's flue is vented out the back of the wall

6 A sheltered overhang allows for an open door policy by the family area, in any weather, while the extensive brick-paved rear patio is an absolute sun-trap

