

HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Designs on a high-class, high standard house? **Tommy Barker** says Bramley Lodge could be the apple of your eye

There's sheer elegance to Bramley Lodge, a large one-off family home built 20 years ago on a height, hovering over Cork City's outer regions, above the old landmark railway feature the Viaduct.

Built large, in a splayed shape and to a high standard, to a design by architects Roderick Hogan Associates, this is a new-to-market offering that comes straight in at the upper end. It's guided at €750,000 by Brian Olden of Cohalan Downing, who says it's immaculately finished, and sumptuously specified. Not only that, but its three acres of ground sets it in a different league also, for those who like space, and lots of it.

That ground, by the crown of Spur Hill by the RTÉ station (the ground was bought from RTÉ by the house's owners when they saw the views to be had from here while on a back-road route to Kinsale) is sloping westwards, in tiers, with the house more or less in the middle of the deep plot, with woodland planted a couple of decades ago now mellowed into a leafy private bower.

Views from the grounds range down the Chetwynd valley to the Viaduct and now include the new St Patrick's Marymount hospital off in the distance, and apart from those location markers and RTÉ up the way, there's no other locational clues. Inside, in Bramley Lodge's grounds, all is utterly private.

All brick finished on the outside, the entire low-slung house has also mellowed and settled into its private landscape, and is far larger inside than its approach might suggest. In fact, what's visible to the front is indeed a far smaller sweep of facade than the outer side, thanks to the broad, angular curves; internally, there's about 3,250 sq ft of living and sleeping accommodation, unequally divided, with at least two thirds of the space at ground level.

Bramley Lodge was briefly on the market back in 2007 with different agents, and now on its return is an even better bet, with more work done — to the same high standard.

Its feel is a mix of fresh, updated country home and five-star hotel, with large living room with two bay windows, more intimate family room/study, kitchen with dining room off, by a raised fireplace set in a brick chimney breast — even when not lighting, it looks warm. This casual dining area opens next to a recent addition, a deep sun room with long wall of glass, glazed apex over the door, and several Velux

windows in the high ceilings for good measure.

Interior designer Fiona O'Keeffe has been involved for quite a while at Bramely Lodge, and can give a roll call of top brands used as well as tradesmen whose work is exemplary, giving credit generously to people like Ken Jackson for sofas and armchairs, Paddy Dunne for French polishing, plus Cogans of Middleton for curtains and fabrics.

Fiona O'Keeffe has also used brands like Zoffany and Colefax and Fowler for fabrics, paints by Farrow and Ball, Boulevard Interiors for occasional pieces, and Hollands for rugs. Fireplaces in the two main rooms came from Belle Chiminee, and are stand-out pieces, sheer quality, with polished brasses showing on-going appreciation.

Built by Jerry Keohane to a rock-solid level, and topped with a ring-beam right the way around before the complicated roof work got into gear, this house has a number of signature motifs of its designer Roddy Hogan, such as a few internal split-levels every now and then, almost as much to define and mark out

Location:	Viaduct, Cork
Price:	€750,000
Size:	305 (3,250 sq ft)
Bedrooms:	4
Bathrooms:	4
BER rating:	C2
Best asset:	Immaculate on all fronts

spaces as to work with the site's contours. Whatever the rationale here (and it seems to be a bit of both) the end result is pretty harmonious.

In terms of layout, Bramley Lodge is very different, as it has two of its four bedrooms upstairs, each en suite under a dormer roof, but neither can hold a candle to either of the ground floor suites which are almost at opposite ends of

the house from one another. Each of these ground floors rooms are large, with high-end bathrooms and loads of privacy, ideal especially for guests, au pairs or just separation from noisy offspring. Parents of younger children may find the remove between the bedrooms to be a bit unsettling, or at least needing getting used to. Intercom or text messaging, perhaps?

One of the bedrooms (built into what was initially a linked double garage) has potential to be almost self-contained, and already has separate external as well as internal access.

Most of the internal joinery is in oak, polished by hand, and the kitchen at the house's core has a highly-polished terracotta tiled floor, with hand-painted units made by Peter O'Halloran in Ballinhassig.

There's a great flow of rooms off the double-height hall, ideal for parties — and Bramley Lodge is ready to party once more.

VERDICT: Comfort personified — a cracking good house. **IB**



Pictures: **Denis Scannell**



CONTENTS

4 TRADING UP

Tipperary glebe has charm and country life quality in a manageable size



6 STARTERS

Lillyvale Cottage is an extended rural home on the fringes of Cork City



8 MAIVILLE

Maiville Terrace home is a pristine city pad



10 RENOVATION

Kinsale's old mill rescue sees a bright future after a painful bank sale



12 KITCHEN RULES

14 COLOUR SPOOLS
16 HOPEFUL DROOLS
18 GARDEN TOOLS
20 OLD JEWELS



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