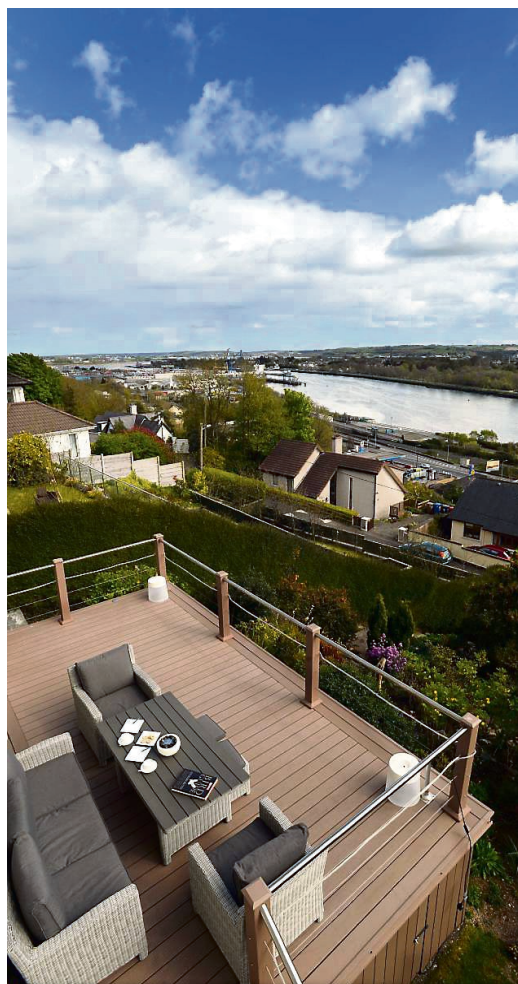


Home which offers

Fernleigh House was brought back to its bare elements in 2103 then its



THE SETTING might be rock-solid and static, up on high at Cork's Tivoli Estate, but you never quite know what's going to be in full view next. It could be a cruise ship, a naval vessel, a trawler, a regatta or a currach — or, it could be Bruce Springsteen.

Back in July 2013, when The Boss played Cork's Páirc Uí Chaoimh, neighbours on this wooded Tivoli hillside lined up their deckchairs and pews for a free view of Springsteen's Wrecking Ball tour, unfolding on a giant screen across the River Lee.... just as Prince did in July 1990; U2 and Oasis also gigged at the Cork stadium.

Right now, an actual wrecking ball has been taken to GAA's 40-year old stadium, but the new skeletal outline is starting to take shape... what concert goodies will follow in coming years? And, what of the Marquee? Tivoli residents mightn't get to see those tented

gigs, but they get the audio treatment just the same, gratis.

The owners of Fernleigh House, on a quarter acre Tivoli Estate site, missed the Springsteen concert in 2013 as they had just bought this detached 1950s home, and had hard-hat builders on site here while the neighbours had party

hats on: they were in the throes of major renovations, rushing to be in situ in their new home for Christmas, a deadline they achieved.

Now, they hope to be gone by December 2016, as they are feeling the lure of the sea and Cork harbour once more.



Fernleigh House is owned by architect Patrick O'Hanlon, who's a principal with the acclaimed Cork firm Hogan Associates, and his wife Liz, and they moved here from a calm, contemporary waterfront home in Frenches Walk, Cobh, which featured extensively in these pages in 2011 when they put it up for sale.

Called Bayview House, it was bought by an Apple exec, and post-sale, the O'Hanlon family decamped from Cobh and Cork harbour vistas, moving upstream to the city for a change of scene, and fell for Fernleigh House immediately when they saw its views over the Marina, and its prospects.

They delivered on all of its promise, but —like a tide turning — the call of the water is bidding again, and they hope to move back east to the harbour and another purchase, within a stone's throw of the tides, and near where they have extended family connections.

Their move back east will be

some other house-hunter's absolute gain, as this reimagining is as fastidious as their last build at Bayview when we noted in editorial that Patrick O'Hanlon (and, clearly Liz also) had perfectionist tendencies.

All that survived inside this 2,225 sq ft five-bed south-facing house once the O'Hanlons started in were the four walls, the roof (re-insulated) one original, sandstone fireplace, the front door with leaded coloured glass panel, and the floorboards upstairs.

Other than that, everything is new, and tweaked and made luxurious and energy efficient. And bright, and calm... despite being a family home to a dog, several teenagers including a Leaving Cert student, and an older daughter who's flown the nest, leaving obvious home comforts behind.

This week, Fernleigh House off Lovers Walk a mile or two east of Cork city centre, goes to market with agents James Colbert of

the heights of luxury

architect owner redesigned it with lofty ideals writes **Tommy Barker**



Tivoli, Cork
€645,000
Size: 207 sq m (2,225 sq ft)
Bedrooms: 4
Bathrooms: 3
BER: Pending
Best Feature: Architect owner maxxed the views



Pictures: Denis Scannell



Midleton, jointly with Malcolm Tyrrell of Cohalan Downing, and it carries an asking price of €645,000. It follows the arrival of another 1960s detached here in Tivoli Estate, The Coppins, which came to market in October last year, getting offers around its €490,000 guide price before the vendor decided to take it off the market.

Fernleigh's immaculate, pristine in every way, and its very mature gardens have been taken in hand too. While the house needed an overhaul and added space, it had bonus of a previous woman owner who clearly loved her plants, so it's packed with dense and lush growth and seasonal blossoms, top and bottom of its sloping site, including rhododendron, camellias, azalias, hollies, and fruit trees that include apple, pear, and quince.

There's two entrances to this site, thanks to a pedestrian gate at the lower section, with wending path up to the house through the

gardens, though Liz recalls they were living here a year or more before they even found the path, as their second phase of works after doing the house was taming the verdant banks of growth, shrubs and trees.

Now, it's all good bones, and order restored, and easily admired from the elevated deck off the home's main living spaces. Car access comes having rounded the first chicane in Tivoli Estate; Fernleigh has off-street parking facing the house's first floor with access from this parking spot to what's currently used as a bedroom.

And, very handily, because there's full and proper secure access to this main bedrooms' level, the converted attic bedroom overhead is fully planning compliant, with permanent stairs access, Velux with 'crow's nest' harbour views towards Tivoli and Blackrock, as well as to the city and across the suburbs and Marina, and has a luxurious en suite at its

far end.

More regularly, main access to this two/three storey home is down a run of steps from road level to the ground floor, amid flora, scents, and the sound of a water feature: you could almost expect to hear bullfrogs, such is the 'Fern Gully' feel to this landscaped (and,

by night, lit) approach.

There's been much reordering of rooms and spaces to suit day-to-day family life, and with views obviously maximised. A surprise: they didn't knock through walls to create the huge, open family area that are such a current feature: instead, recognising the reality that

different, older generations need their own spaces at times, they put in walls, to fashion side-by-side living room and a family room facing the river, and super-bright, all day long. The larger, living room is 16' by 13' with stove in the original stone fireplace, and the 13' by 12' family home (with repro cast iron and tiled fireplace) has French doors in its bay window. This gives access to a raised and railed deck with outstanding, standing-out views over sylvan gardens, and the leafy Marina and Atlantic Pond and public-park-to-be.

(That deck by the way, is done in low-maintenance, rot-free composite lengths and rails, and even has a pull-out wind screen on one house wall, a feature Patrick had seen used in hotels, but a rare (and highly effective) find in a private domestic setting.

Did we say there wasn't a big, open gathering space inside? Oops, sorry, there is, actually. At the house's eastern end, the couple ex-







tended what had been a garage and store section into a 27' by 11' kitchen/dining room with pale, large tiles on the floor and which runs back on a north-south axis deep into the site's rear, giving support rooms which didn't need access to the river views.

The kitchen itself has a large white display painted dresser, contrasting with pale blue units with oak tops, a separate/mobile granite topped serving unit in lieu of an island or peninsula, and centrepiece is an Esse range, gas-fired and electrically controlled. The dining table is at right angles up by the reconfigured, south facing window: guests joke when seated here they feel they are in a railway carriage on some European jaunt, watching the world go by the windows (an unusual arrival last year in the river Lee vista was the Le Boréal a 142m private cruise ship/yacht which docked in Cork city before heading north to the Arctic, Iceland and Greenland).

Back on board at Fernleigh, the long diner/kitchen steps back into a pantry/utility, and beyond that again is a plant room/store, with access to a leafy courtyard and sheltered BBQ spot by the entrance steps.

Again, in keeping with good design ethos of having best daily-use rooms to the south/sun (and, in this case also, views) the rest/back of the house has its hall, a study, and a guest WC with the dinkiest corner basin and pedestal imaginable.

Most ground floor rooms and the hall have smoked oak floor boards, whilst carpeted stairs and teak rails and spindles lead from the hall. As you rise you begin to notice things (apart from the art and family images hanging on walls) like the thick drylining on the back wall. Not only was the whole house slabbed inside for warmth, but its windows are high efficiency Argon gas filled (by Munster Glass) and every radiator, door, hinge, light switch, fitting, and socket is sparkling new.

Kept was the bedrooms' level original wood floors, painted in layers in a pale

cream throughout all four bedrooms and landing, acting nicely for continuity and flow, and maintaining a calm, sort of French country home decor theme. The front has three bedrooms across its southerly span, two of them relatively compact, and there's a long, fourth stepped bedroom to the back (that's the one with external access to the approach drive.) The master bedroom is luxe yet low-key, with a bay window, and a painted white feature cast iron fireplace. It then flows, neatly, into a dressing room with two walls of robes, and next turns to a glistening en suite bathroom, all tiled in white with sandblasted window, and it has both a shower and a stand-alone, roll-top bath, on ornate chromed feet.

A WC/shower room serves the mid-level's three other bedroom and then a further stair flight takes a turn up to the attic level's fifth en suite bedroom, with sloping ceiling but good heights in the centre, and Velux on the landing, in the bedroom and in the veined marble-tiled en suite shower room.

Inside and out, work on this 'gut job' was done to a high standard by builder Alan Bardsley, and floors at ground level were dug out and insulated with high-grade materials before being reinstated, while there's also new fascias, soffits, downpipes, paths, sewers, and drains, plus a new fibreglass roof to a flat roof section. New connections were made for gas and ESB supplies, plus cable TV, and the raised, external south-facing composite decking with stainless steel handrails only went in to complete the picture a year ago.

Selling agents for this finely finished home James Colbert and Malcolm Tyrrell say Fernleigh House is done to the highest standard by a highly-regarded architect and domestic designer: "in this residential enclave where properties only rarely come to market, as they are usually highly coveted by family members and passed on through generations."

VERDICT: Top of its game

GETTHELOOK

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

- 1 Windows might be the eyes of a house, but fireplaces (with or without stoves) are the heart and hearth and give clues as to a house's age. This retained Cork sandstone piece is one of the few items that survived this house's major, 2013 updating
- 2 Need a small hand? This guest suite is home to a tiny feature sink, but every guest who uses it remarks on it
- 3 Shady bowers are a delight, and garden corners can be commandeered for different seating out spots, at different times of the day
- 4 Decking has taken Ireland by storm, but the Irish weather does play havoc with wooden ones. Here, the owners opted for a low-maintenance composite deck material, set off by stainless steel rails
- 5 Take shelter: owner architect Patrick O'Hanlon of Hogan Associates drafted in retractable/sliding wind-screens for all fresco deck-dining shelter and screening. They're of a type more commonly seen in hotels and commercial settings, he notes
- 6 Nothing says home like a range cooker: this modern version, an Esse, is gas-fired and electrically controlled

