



# Making plans

As discussed in the last two articles on deciding whether to extend or not and finding the right builder it is very important when making any changes to your home that you have a clear plan or vision of what you are trying to achieve. You need to be thinking about the interior design at the planning stage. The "finishing touches" need to be considered before anything is started. "Finishing Touches" is actually a confusing term, because although they only become physically visible at the end, the electrics, mechanics, plumbing, space, functionality and flow of a room need to be planned from the beginning in order to achieve said "finishing touches".

One of the most important issues to consider is lighting as it helps to set the atmosphere of a room and define its purpose. It also provides an opportunity to highlight features you want to enjoy and camouflage any flaws. Some questions to consider when incorporating your lighting into your construction drawings are as follows. What is the job of the room, does it change during the day? For example an open plan kitchen / dining / living area or office / living room need to have a flexible lighting plan that can alternate between an efficient working light to a cosy mood enhancing relaxed lighting scheme. Are there different ceiling heights, surfaces, architectural features such as exposed beams or a wallpapered wall? What style are you trying to emulate classic, modern / contemporary, rustic or otherwise?

Other "finishing touches" that can be considered at planning stage include furniture placement, it is important that there is a flow to a room particularly in modern open plan living where multiple activities may be taking place at the same time. Furniture can also be used to divide the space within a room and it is critical to consider and plan for clever storage space especially in an open plan

room. Home entertainment has become very popular particularly in the current economic climate so setting up for speakers, broadband etc. can mean

that at the flick of a switch your living room can be transformed into a surround sound, balanced stereo cinema.

There are also many modern conveniences that can be incorporated into your new home or extension with a little planning like a central vacuum system, intelligent heating controls mean that you can optimise your heating bills, remote switching allows you to turn on your oven / lights before you arrive home. As always, if you require any further information on any architectural or planning issues, please do not hesitate to contact me on [info@sweeneyarchitects.ie](mailto:info@sweeneyarchitects.ie) or 086 8355266.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the **RIA** & the Simon Communities of Ireland have again joined forces for the annual fundraising initiative "Simon Open Door" - whereby participating **RIA** Members around Ireland will open their offices on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th May, to give members of the public an hour's consultation with an Architect in return for a donation to Simon of €50. For further information simply log on to <http://www.simonopendoor.ie/>

