

Stockbridge Road
Donaghadee

very much at ease in the landscape of North Down

Architect
Twentytwo Over Seven

Contractor
Geddis Developments

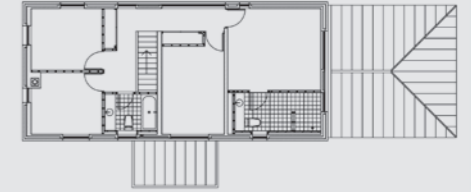
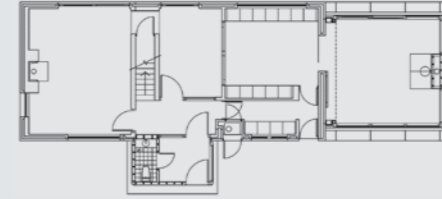
Developer
Geddis Developments

Planning Authority
North Down
Borough Council



1 2 5 6 7
3 4

- 1-2 Glazed 'extension'
- 3 Site plan
- 4 Sliding doors to living area
- 5 Landscaping
- 6 Typical house: Gnd flr plan
- 7 Typical house: 1st flr plan



The story behind this little development is a fascinating one. The architects for the scheme were originally engaged by the builder to design an extension to his own house. They produced a flat roofed glass box, quite unlike the traditional appearance of the houses he would normally construct. So delighted was he by the result that he developed an interest in design theory, and invited the architects to take on a site for which he already had planning permission for four houses, with but one stipulation – that they should incorporate living areas just like his own extension.

Estate agents shook their heads. There was, they said an absolute ceiling on the price one could obtain for a houses of this size in this area of Northern Ireland, let alone ones of such unconventional appearance. In the event, they were proved completely wrong; and for the developer this proved a highly profitable conversion on the road to Damascus, for the price the houses actually achieved exceeded their estimates by a more than comfortable margin.

And one can well see why. The straightforward plan which, with variations, forms the basis for all four houses, gives complete flexibility to the living areas, and has proved capable of assimilating the very different ages and lifestyles of the various owners with remarkable ease. The developer's skill at sourcing the highest quality joinery, metalwork and stonework would shame most mainland housebuilders, as would the generous and beautifully designed storage, utility and kitchen areas.

The grouping of the houses round a gravelled central courtyard is completely successful, combining privacy for the residents with a rather special sense of place. Simple gabled profiles, warm red brick and natural slate roofs combine to produce a settlement very much at ease in the landscape of North Down, while the fully glazed 'extensions' offer a superb link to the gardens in all seasons. The same team now plan two further projects, one of them for townhouses in Belfast. The Assessors await the outcome with considerable interest.