

HOME IMPROVEMENT

ANTHEA SAVAGE

LABOUR OF LOVE IS BUILT ON SOLID FOUNDATIONS

Taking a listed rundown cottage in the country and restoring it sounds like a lot of hard work but now the Mortons have a beautiful home, steeped in history

Dave and Lorraine Morton restored a 250 year old cottage in Co Armagh. The property was 'Listed' as a Grade B1 Building and needed extensive restoration. Before they commenced the project, they contacted the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, NI Environment Agency, local historians and farmers to gather as much information about the property and site as they could.

Dave and Lorraine wanted to retain and restore all the period features of the property and remove any inappropriate additions that had been made during previous renovations, such as the 1940s kitchen extension and plasterboard ceilings.

They had to rescue the roof and lintels, and restore the bog oak purlin that had snapped over the kitchen. The biggest item they spent money on was the windows because they were all different sizes. Carrying out much of the work themselves using traditional methods meant they made considerable savings. They learned that modern materials are not always the best solution.

When you embark on a labour of love like this, it's important to understand the true character and fabric of the building – both inside and out. Dave, who works for the National Trust, believes, if you want to live in the countryside you should, insofar as possible, live with the countryside. This ethos has given them a truly beautiful home steeped in history – made even more special by the fact they restored it themselves.

You can read more information on this unique project, titled 'One Moment in Time', if you visit www.selfbuild.ie.

Anthea Savage is editor of *Decorate, Extend and Renovate*, on sale in newsagents now

**In last week's column it was incorrectly stated that a terraced or semi-detached property can only add 12sqm under Exempt Development guidelines. A terraced or semi-detached property can add up to 40sqm in total without applying for planning permission but only 12sqm of this additional floor area can be at first floor level.*



1: Dave and Lorraine Morton

2: This is a frequent sight across Ireland but Dave and Lorraine wanted to breathe new life into this Listed Grade B1 Building so sought advice from many historical and environment agencies before starting their project.

3: The renovated house is 1,300sq ft and includes kitchen, sitting room, bathroom, master bedroom with en suite, two further bedrooms and a sleeping loft. Site & building costs were £142,000/€179,000. Current value is £300,000/€377,000.

4: The lounge has true period appeal combining soft colour tones, traditional pine floors and doors, and a traditional wood burning stove.

