

Having a garden room installed has allowed one Skye couple to enjoy a different aspect of their home

Pauline Murray and Jim Lawson have lived together in Skye since 2008 and own a wonderful home in the heart of Portree overlooking the harbour.

The house is also close by the TippeCanoe Gift Shop and Gallery which Pauline owns and runs on Portree's Wentworth Street.

Two years ago, their home became even more special to them after they chose to get married in their garden. A very small and intimate blessing, looking out over the harbour and with views of the famous Cuillin hills, it firmly cemented the love of this house in their hearts.

The garden has spectacular views as it is set high above the house, but as with most gardens in Scotland is very beholden to the weather.

Home to a small shed and a bench, the couple enjoyed the garden in nice weather but it still felt quite exposed, but when the weather was bad, it would only really lend itself to a cup of coffee at speed with a big coat on!

So, early last year, when they saw a neighbour with a similar outdoor space had built a garden chalet which



Falling in love again – with your home

they much admired, a seed was planted for the couple.

Having looked at build-

ing an extension a few years previously, Pauline and Jim had received a number of quotes but eventually dismissed the idea.

Due to the steepness of the garden and angle of the house, building an extension would require a lot of scaffolding. This hugely increased the cost of the quotes, not to mention the likely disruption of the build.

So when they saw the possibilities with a garden room, they began their research and discovered JML Garden Rooms (www.jmlgardenrooms.co.uk).

Deciding that the quality and look of the JML Garden Rooms was what they

were looking for, they visited family business owners John and Katie Langley in Perthshire.

"It was a horrible, blustery day," said Pauline, "but when we got there and went inside the show garden room, we couldn't believe how warm and inviting it was. We immediately decided this was what we wanted."

As well as the warmth of the structure and high quality of the fittings, the proposed ease and speed of the installation was very appealing. No scaffolding is required as the whole garden room is manufactured offsite and arrives ready to construct.

With rear access to the garden, the JML team brought it in easily and

more or less put it together onsite.

"It was 10 days from start to finish – we could not believe it. We were delighted with the team; the professionalism, the friendly approach and speed were excellent," said Pauline.

Planning permission for your standard-sized garden room is usually not required. However, as Pauline and Jim's house is in a conservation area, they did need to submit a planning application, but it was met with no objections.

Choosing one of the larger, pitched roof, Highlander designs that would work in the garden space, they chose larch cladding for the exterior walls and a slate roof. Completed in June 2016, the cladding has

already weathered really nicely and, along with the roof, it blends well with their own garden and surrounding properties.

Opting for underfloor heating and benefiting from an energy-efficient, thermal-efficient, Structural Insulated Panel system, their garden room provides a wonderful, even temperature all year round.

Pauline said: "We did consider putting a wood stove in, but we really don't

need it due to the amazing insulation. We chose engineered wood flooring in grey slate colour to match the roof. It is fantastic, and with a dog and muddy paws and boots we were very pleased that we did!

"It heats up so quickly and in the summer we can throw open the doors and enjoy the warmth with no winds."

"We very quickly installed a mat for dirty boots and hooks for coats so that we could use it all year

round, and run back to the house from our dry haven in the garden.

"The garden room already has so many different uses. Before we got the furniture we had ordered I used it with my friends for yoga. We could get four mats in there and open the doors when we needed to. Now we have a desk on one side where I often go to get peace and quiet to do my stock ordering and finances."

"It has a wonderful sense of tranquillity and being able to escape many of the everyday chores that you are faced with when working in the house is ideal."

Jim is a former presenter and director of Cuillin FM, as well as a former presenter on Finnish and London-based radio stations before joining Progzilla Radio (an internet-based station) two years ago. He finds the peace and quiet of the garden room perfect for working, and hopes that once the Wi-Fi has improved he



will be able to record in there.

Pauline said: "It has a lot more spontaneous uses too – we very often sit together up there to have lunch or morning coffee. It means we can take more time to enjoy each other's company and chat, or even just admire the view. We love to watch the birds and have installed feeders which have been very popular."

Pauline and Jim have four grown-up children and a grandson between

them, and they are certain that they will all love it when they come to visit.

"I suspect one or two of them will be sleeping up there!" said Pauline.

"Summer will be just lovely and we can't wait to have friends over for coffee, barbecues and lunches. It really won't be weather dependent anymore."

"It is a very calming and happy space. It has all the components of a perfect view – the sea, the hills, distance, wildlife, people at

the harbour. It really is wonderful. We do not fail to come up here and think – wow.

"Building a JML Garden Room is one of the best decisions we have ever made with our house – it has created a whole different space and aspect to our home. This place was already very special to us, but it has made us love it even more."

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