



Dwelling

AN ANTHOLOGY OF LIVING SPACES

Focal Node: 65BTP-House
Recycled Textures at Jalan Siap
Balancing Duo: JKC1&2
Interiors: One Tree Hill & Grange Infinite
360° Projects: Michaels' Residences & Boulevard Vue



ONG&ONG 360°
group solution



Dwelling

AN ANTHOLOGY OF LIVING SPACES



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65BTP-HOUSE

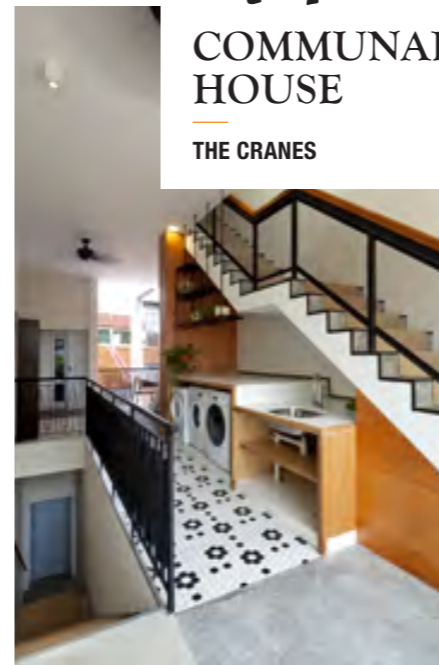


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HOLISTIC SOLUTION



The complexities of building projects have prompted specialisation in the roles of specialists and consultants in the industry. More architectural practices are offering a diversification of these services to harness a bigger slice of the industry.

Apart from diversification of services offered, the practice of architecture even takes on a more holistic role of coordinating and managing the work of a team of specialists and consultants from inception to completion. ONG&ONG Group offers a 360° approach for its range of diversified services. The 360° approach is a holistic integration of services that encompasses the full range of design, management and engineering solutions.

Design solutions include architecture, urban planning, interior, landscape, environmental branding, lighting, as well as experience design. Management solutions often include the administration of project, development, construction, cost as well as place. Engineering solutions include the whole range of mechanical, electrical, civil, structural, fire safety and environmental services. The outcome

is an integrated process where clients enjoy a holistic solution.

In its approach towards a holistic solution for dwelling projects that incorporate comprehensive services, the firm has produced a strong collection of works, which includes houses, high-density residences, as well as conservation houses.

Apart from holistic solutions, the firm goes an extra mile to embrace opportunities that celebrate adaptability, sustainability, and even recycling, to create noteworthy projects that actively engage these responsible concepts. This is captured in a series of houses at Jalan Siap, where the client had access to reusable building materials salvaged from demolished buildings. The design team took the opportunity and created an elegant building that resonated with the times. Sustainability was the key theme, as much of the construction materials either came from recycled sources or were procured locally. By reusing materials that were already available, the designers also captured unique functional and aesthetic characteristics that only time can reveal.

Having completed in excess of 20% of all private high-density residential projects in Singapore, it is quite accurate to claim that residential developments is a forte of ONG&ONG. The firm has gained a reputation of being highly competent in providing consultancy to developers on the most efficient layouts, as well as maximising the gross floor area. This results in refined spaces in optimised designs, ensuring liveability for end-users, which in turn translates into high 'returns on investments' for the client. 🌟





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House



There are certain qualities of a home that are universally celebrated.

It is a place for bonding with family. It is a place for entertaining visitors.

It is also a place for enjoying personal space.

As we walk into the personal spaces created in these homes, we encounter architecture that is often tailor-made to homeowners' daily rituals. Others are configured with flexibility of space in mind so that the house can be adapted to suit a broad spectrum of homeowners. Whichever the stand, the house is about striking that delicate balance between being a showpiece and being a sanctuary.

These houses craft that balance through the artful control of space, nature, light, elements and materials. A few of these projects create enclosures and boundaries for gardens that seamlessly blend indoor and outdoor spaces, so that a more flexible and effective use of the common areas can be achieved. These boundaries in turn create

opportunities for unobstructed desirable views out. Pushing the inside-outside envelope, one of the projects makes constant visual reference to an existing tree, revered as an element of natural heritage. Many of these projects introduced daylight, as well as natural and cross ventilation, that are essential in our tropical climate.

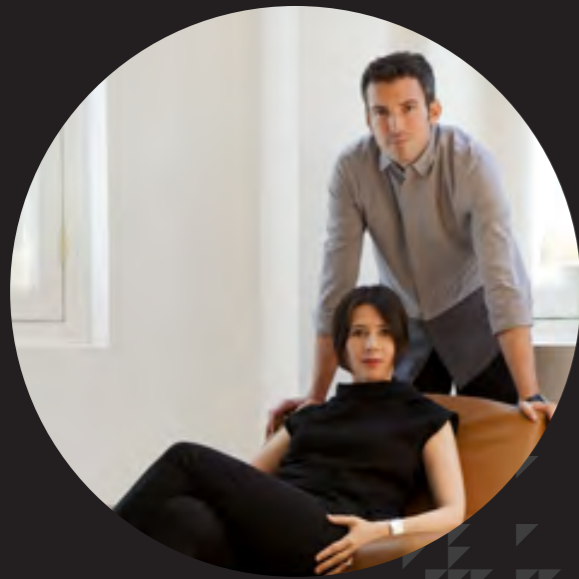
In a more inclusive approach, a few of these houses are coordinated in-house to include interior design and mechanical engineering. This inclusive way of designing ensures a consistency in concept, material palette, as well as quality. The designers work together to carefully consider finishes and contemporary furnishings that go in line with

the architectural intent of the space. The interior design of these projects is intended to complement their architectural features, to create a house that embraces the intrinsic value and work around the constraints of the site. Most importantly, the collaboration creates a comfortable space that one can call home. 🌿

AT EASE AT HOME



*In conversation with
Diego Molina & Maria Arango,
Directors of Architecture*



— AS SOMEONE WHOSE WORK IS TIED DIRECTLY TO MAKING HOMES, HOW DO YOU SEE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOME AND LEISURE? IS THERE A BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE TWO FOR YOU?

MARIA No. And there shouldn't be. Because home is where you are really at ease and that is what we try to do for our clients, to create a haven for them. I do not think there is a distinction.

DIEGO I would say that is the goal, to create a place where you can relax and be yourself.

MARIA Because that is your retreat, your nest.

— WHO ARE THE KEY PLAYERS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A DWELLING?

DIEGO The clients, because we need to get all the information about things like how they live, programmatic requirements, etc. There needs to be a very good relationship between the client and the architect.

MARIA There is a team of key players, and there are different layers to that team. I think the first layer at the nucleus involves the architect and the owner. And then from there, you start getting the other consultants and specialists in to help you get there. But in principle, the major players are the architect and the client. After that, the interior designer comes in, then the landscape designer, and the lighting designer.

— HOW DOES ENGAGING INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS ACROSS DISCIPLINES KEEP THE DWELLING TYPOLOGY ON TRACK?

MARIA I guess when you are designing a home, you are going to always need the three main consultants, who are the M&E (mechanical & electrical) engineers, the C&S (civil & structural) engineers and the architects. Those three are always needed so if you have them working as an integrated entity, it is a great thing to have.

— IS THERE A PROJECT WHICH EPITOMISES THE SUCCESS OF INTEGRATION?

DIEGO I guess, Michaels' Residences.

— IN YOUR OPINION, IS A DWELLING A SPATIAL EXPLORATION OR AN EXPRESSION OF A WAY OF LIFE? OR BOTH?

MARIA It is both. In my opinion, it is both.

DIEGO Yeah. The thing about homes is that you always can explore the space in the short time given but at the end of the day, you're creating a house for the client.

MARIA But for us, as designers and architects, it is an opportunity to have a spatial exploration.

— WHAT EXPERIENCE DO YOU INTEND AND HOPE FOR OCCUPANTS OF THE HOMES YOU HAVE CREATED?

DIEGO Not too many complaints! (*laughs)

MARIA I guess when we approach the project, we are not designing our home, we are designing the client's dream home. So we try to fulfill their expectations, we want to be happy with the home. Even though there will always be hiccups along the way, eventually we want them to feel that the home was crafted for them and for example, the reason why the wardrobe is a certain way is because the clients themselves wanted it that way. We want them to feel that the house is theirs and belongs to them. It is a feeling you do not normally get when you move into a place that is randomly designed.



I guess when we approach the project, we are not designing our home, we are designing the client's dream home. So we try to fulfill their expectations, we want to be happy with the home.

MARIA ARANGO



— HAS THE WAY TECHNOLOGY SEEPED INTO EVERYDAY LIFE MADE IT DIFFICULT TO DRAW THE LINE BETWEEN WORK AND HOME? IS IT EVEN IMPORTANT TO DRAW THAT LINE?

MARIA I think there is always that line. That line will always be drawn. We design spaces to accommodate the lifestyles of our clients or whoever is going to inhabit the house. Sometimes they do require that there be a working area in the home. And yes, technology will allow you to look at your email and stuff at home. But it is a very different thing designing a home as compared to an office building. So yes, there is a difference, I do not think that boundary has been removed yet.

— WHAT IS YOUR OWN INTERPRETATION OF A DWELLING? WHAT IS A MUST-HAVE IN YOUR OWN HOME?

DIEGO There is a long list. (*laughs)

MARIA It is difficult. Because prioritising so many things that are must-haves... it is hard. I would say for me, proper management addressing the light, natural light. I need to have light. For example, when we did JKC1, I felt that the light complements that house quite nicely because wherever you are, there is natural light. And the areas are not too bright either. So to me, that would be a must-have. Diego?

DIEGO Hmm.

MARIA A Playstation corner? (*laughs)

DIEGO Since we have a family, I would say we need a space where the kids can grow, where you feel comfortable.

I guess light, big windows, big kitchens. Those are requirements. As architects we have explored a lot of options. Innovations that we have tried to put in, but at the end of the day, it is better to feel comfortable as a family. Because you will look at it from a different perspective when you are doing a house for someone else and they give you a programme of what they want. But when you are doing it for yourself, you are not just looking at it as an architect. It is very different.

— WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MEMORY OF A DWELLING SPACE? DOES THAT MEMORY INFORM THE WAY YOU APPROACH YOUR WORK?

MARIA In our family, dinnertime was always very important. And by hook or by crook you always had to be seated for dinner. We always had dinner and Saturday lunch altogether. We would sit there together. So that space where you congregate as a family was always important to me. Can I say that that has affected how I design dining rooms? I don't think so. But I do think that the experiences that you get from life will give you the experience and the ideas to work on the spaces that you are designing.

— DO YOU HAVE A MANIFESTO THAT YOU OPERATE BY AND TRANSMIT THROUGH YOUR DAILY ACTIONS?

MARIA No. My manifesto is to wake up, take the kids to school, come home for lunch... It is actually a schedule. (*laughs) I guess, to live as happily as you can.

DIEGO Just enjoy what you are doing. ☀

A photograph of a modern, two-story house with a prominent wooden facade. The house features a large, cantilevered upper level with a white concrete finish. The main level has a dark, textured facade. A large, mature tree with dense green foliage is in the foreground on the left, partially obscuring the house. The background shows a city skyline with tall buildings under a blue sky with light clouds. The overall scene is a blend of nature and modern architecture.

FOCAL NODE



A pre-war rain tree thrives in the vast garden of this site. This home is designed around visual encounters of this colossal heritage from within.



This house is surrounded by a vast garden that converges at a colossal pre-war rain tree of such magnificence that its presence is ingrained within the very architecture of the house itself. Throughout this home are numerous encounters with nature while still being very much indoors.

The architectural placement of the building allows for the viewing of the feature tree from all of the main spaces, from either of its two storeys and even right down to the basement.

FIRST FLOOR

A granite wall at the entrance made from interspersed panels creates a series of holes that subtly shields the garden from full view while maintaining a welcoming atmosphere. In the driveway, a cleverly placed water feature discreetly hides the sunken air-conditioning ledge just beneath it.

The main living and dining areas are housed on the ground level, allowing the spaces to transit seamlessly out into the garden and the accompanying lap pool. By evening, dots of light at the base of the pool dance playfully in the water, mimicking a starry night scene. An elegant spiral staircase leading to the upper floor gives the living area a visual centre while also





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promoting vertical circulation.

SECOND FLOOR

On the second floor sits a cosy family area flanked by bedrooms on either side. The master bedroom's spacious interiors allow it to accommodate a study office as well as a walk-in wardrobe that can be expanded by drawing back the partition separating it from the bathroom, thus creating a generously-sized boudoir. The children's rooms sit on the opposite side of the floor, each a mirror image of the other.

In addition, a glass-covered balcony that spans the entire length of the floor reveals a breathtakingly

panoramic view of the aforementioned rain tree.

BASEMENT

Capitalising on the site's sloping topography, the basement was designed such that it opens up into a lower section of the garden, thus making it feel almost like being on ground level. This floor is dedicated to entertainment and relaxation, with a spa room, a movie room, a large multi-purpose hall, as well as an outdoor barbecue area. The

self-contained service quarters are also kept here, with a kitchenette and sleeping quarters to boot.

Again, outdoor elements permeate this section of the house by way of a water feature that flows continuously under the powder room and spa room, thus deriving continuity across the various spaces. Sensibly placed skylights also help to bring ample sunlight into the spaces and brighten up the basement naturally. Interestingly, these skylights





also provide a spectacularly clear view of the rain tree even from here.

MATERIALS

Natural rock surfaces feature prominently throughout the house, from the raw granite in the outdoor facade right up to the granite flooring inside. Additionally, carefully selected Italian marble with unique, horizontal lines was used for the flooring in the master bathroom.

ECO-FRIENDLY ASPECTS

In order to reduce reliance on mechanical ventilation, the house is orientated in a direction that allows the most wind in. Skylights also help to reduce electricity consumption by promoting natural illumination throughout the day.

Lovingly designed with a modern, nature-inspired theme, this house is a thing of beauty and a timeless

65BTP-HOUSE, SINGAPORE

DIRECTORS Diego Molina & Maria Arango, *Architecture* | MAIN CONTRACTOR Deenn Engineering Pte Ltd | MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL Rankine&Hill (S) Pte Ltd | CIVIL & STRUCTURAL JS Tan & Associates | QUANTITY SURVEYOR Rodney Chng & Associates Pte Ltd | PHOTOGRAPHY Derek Swalwell



RECYCLED *textures*



This house is built using recycled and locally sourced construction materials that give it a unique characteristic, rich with textures and colours.



✿

In this reconstruction project, we aim to explore the deviation from the typology of a semi-detached dwelling, taking into account the potential of the site, spatial experience and possible economic values.



Apart from the authoritarian definitions, the party wall, which separates the pair of units, is the most distinctive feature of the semi-detached dwelling. In this reconstruction project, we aimed to explore the deviation from the typology of a semi-detached dwelling, taking into account the potential of the site, spatial experience and possible economic values.

TPOLOGY

The project started as a journey to enhance the value of a potentially three-storey semi-detached dwelling. By detaching the massing, we saw the potential of a void that will provide quality spaces in terms of day lighting and natural ventilation. Located on higher ground than the adjacent neighbour, there were opportunities to provide facings to three sides of the plot, with well-orientated massing. The detachment also creates the imagery of the dwelling as a bungalow, an enhanced status in the economic sense.

ARCHITECTURAL STRATEGIES

Site and Space Planning – Context Sensitivity

Originally a dwelling with an east-west orientation, we reorganised the spatial arrangement to have its programme spaces located on the south. It overlooks the generous green of Bukit Timah Nature Reserve. The house embraces the natural environment and brings this view towards its terraces and interior.

The Climatic Filter

The dwelling was designed to embrace the tropical climate. Spaces were designed with natural ventilation organised by a linear courtyard which also acts as the circulation spine.

While the floor-to-ceiling windows and skylight optimise usage of natural daylight, large overhangs protect the habitants from tropical heat and rain. These reduce energy consumption. A pitched roof was adopted for effective rainwater runoff. The landscape pond and water feature at the forecourt of the house also aims to cool the air that enters the internal spaces by means of evaporative cooling.

Sustainability – Materials and Materiality

Used materials and an ingenious method of construction form the fundamental philosophy in the dwelling's design. These materials were selected for their timeless quality and their ability to age gracefully with time. The project aimed to contribute to energy conservation and a sustainable environment without compromising the aesthetic and functional aspects of a house. The materials were used in a manner that showcased their textures and tactility, expressing their true character while advocating the notion of giving elements a new way of expressing themselves after the end of their previous, useful 'life'.





Selective Reuse – Celebrating New Lives
The design placed great emphasis on locally available materials and construction methods, as well as minimising the use of new resources. The materials from the original building not only formed the resources for the new architecture, they ultimately influenced the character of the reconstructed dwelling.

Formworks constructed from timber strips of discarded crates were used for cost effectiveness and to create tactile and textured surfaces. Upon the completion of casting, these were processed and transformed into smaller, interlocking modules for the main feature wall at the living room area.



Plywood Formworks were dismantled and sawn into strips, then arranged randomly to the ceilings to create interesting patterns, which were naturally decolourised due to the concrete mix.

Recycled Timber in the form of logs, planks and strips collected from the demolished house were cut into various lengths and sizes for different usage such as balustrades, fencings, trellises and timber deckings. Large quantities of trimmings stripped from wood were assembled and ‘laminated’ to create claddings for the walls, ceilings and counter top.

Transforming Plastic Finishing into Art was something that was explored through imprinting patterns on the wet plaster with various objects such as a discarded car mat and pebbles of varying sizes. The artistic exploration attempted to express the morphosis of plaster work from its initial viscous fluidity to its eventual solid, dry form.

Old Roof Tiles from the demolished house were reused and transformed into the walls of the water feature at the entrance of the house.

In Remembrance of The Fallen Leaves, their imprints were left permanently on walls at selected areas. ☀

— 16 JALAN SIAP, SINGAPORE

DIRECTOR Kurjanto Slamet, *Architecture* | MAIN CONTRACTOR Littlewoods Design Pte Ltd

360° Snapshot

A showcase of our recent projects



SILVERSEA, SINGAPORE
Mechanical & Electrical Engineering

— Silversea is situated on the eastern shoreline with unblocked views of the sea. Residents will be mesmerised by the rising sun coupled with the alluring calm of the sea breeze every morning. A short walk away is East Coast beach, Singapore's most loved beach.



SILVERKRIS LOUNGE, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
Interior Design/Experience Design

— This inaugural lounge is tailored to the basic and emotional needs of travellers in transit, conceptualised through dialogue and prototyping sessions with passengers and staff.



SALAD STOP, SINGAPORE
Experience Design/Branding

— The revamped restaurant chain introduces an educative experience of the benefits of greens, an outcome of interviews and observational studies of customers, staff and suppliers.



MOJO CAFE, BINTAN, INDONESIA
Interior Design/Branding

— This one-stop travel agency café fulfils the globe-trotter's coffee and travel fix. Playful and vibrant colours reflect a beach theme that drive the travel message through.



TUAS VIEW FIRE STATION, SINGAPORE
*Architecture/Mechanical & Electrical Engineering/
Civil & Structural Engineering/Fire Safety Engineering*

— Tuas View Fire Station serves the biomedical hub, which will house high-end pharmaceutical and chemical production. Complementing the neighbouring Tuas Fire Station, the new station will boost the Singapore Civil Defence Force's overall capacity and readiness in responding to incidents.



MOCOWAY COFFEE HOUSE @ POLY CENTRE, CHENGDU, CHINA
Architecture

— Inspired by the colour of coffee, the use of a neutral material and colour palette, with a post-industrialist twist, creates a relaxing environment within this café.



EMPIRE DAMANSARA, KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA
Architecture

— Empire Damansara's five towers comprise a hotel, SOHO units and corporate offices – of which five are signature offices – as well as a heritage-themed village of F&B and retail units that draws inspiration from the old New World warehouses.



NATIONAL HEART CENTRE, SINGAPORE
Architecture/Landscape Design

— The new National Heart Centre challenges architectural boundaries by presenting its facade with literally two "front" entryways.

Its inspirational design cue came from the design philosophy of "Placing People First". Therefore, two facades were created for this healthcare facility. This facility will set a global precedent for sustainable heart-related healthcare developments through a rigorous environmental, social and economic design.



BALANCING DUO



Balancing feng shui elements of 'mountain' and 'water', the first house sits on a slight incline and overlooks a pool. The second is a play of three volumes around a central courtyard, clad in a warm and natural palette of raw materials.



JKC1



‘Architectural simplicity. Contextual complexity.’

This good-class bungalow is located in Singapore’s Bukit Timah district. A natural curtain of lush tropical trees surrounds the site, while its slightly sloping terrain offers an ideal location for the house itself.

The axis of the entrance is adjacent to one of the plot’s longer sides, allowing for a bigger garden and pool space in front of the house. A driveway leads to the rear of the house where the garage is located, discreetly screening it from the outside.

Architecturally, the concept was to keep the general design subtle, giving precedence to the surrounding pockets of nature. As such, the building provides an ideal vantage point from which to enjoy unobstructed views of the encompassing greenery. At the same time, the building blends into the setting, absorbing sections of green space to create a garden within.

The building’s lines are predominantly horizontal, balancing out the verticality of the trees lining the site’s periphery. Retractable glass panels on the pool-facing side dramatically open up the house to the outside, while also being mindful of the need for privacy.



Architecturally, the concept was to keep the general design subtle, giving precedence to the surrounding pockets of nature. As such, the building provides an ideal vantage point from which to enjoy unobstructed views of the encompassing greenery.



GROUND LEVEL

From the social areas of the bungalow, one can relish uninterrupted views of the surrounding greenery. The integration of the living and dining areas, along with the library, creates a large, unified space within which there are infinite choices for a diversity of interactions. The circulation pathway and service areas are tucked deep inside at the back of the building, where there is also a guest bedroom with an ensuite bathroom. Also at the back is a grand kitchen that extends across the entire length of the house, making it an ideal setting for big gatherings where cooking and eating are involved. Additional service areas are housed directly below the kitchen in a naturally ventilated basement.

SECOND LEVEL

A staircase leads from the ground floor to the second storey, splitting into two wings just before the stone garden through which light filters into the core of the building. The bedrooms are positioned around this internal garden, thus making it a central feature as well as the symbolic heart of the building.

Each bedroom is spacious enough to accommodate walk-in wardrobes as well as ensuite bathrooms, while a family room and study area form another communal space. The respective balconies are merged together to form a long and continuous border around the perimeter of that floor. To maintain privacy without downplaying the open atmosphere of the balcony, reflective ponds are interspersed along the way while also providing cooling relief.

Access to the timber-decked roof terrace is via a steel sheet spiral staircase. On the roof, textures and colours blend seamlessly into the natural panorama, creating a comfortable space for social gatherings.





SUSTAINABILITY

One main characteristic of the house is the use of cantilevering slabs to shield the interior spaces from direct sunlight whilst providing a substantial degree of natural illumination. Sliding timber panels on the second floor's balcony also allow the regulation of sunlight and shade.

A cross ventilation strategy was applied throughout the building to ensure that the house has adequate wind circulation to cool the various spaces naturally. The small ponds on the second floor are also additional sources of natural cooling. As a result, electrical energy consumption is reduced without compromising the optimal conditions for thermal comfort.

The façade is composed of a selection of basic materials, such as fair-faced concrete, rough stone, timber and glass. Seemingly porous and organic, the building's skin has a raw texture that contrasts nicely with the smoother finishes used in the interior. This harmonious combination of rough and smooth materials is a refreshingly interesting concept for the modern family home.

Although the original brief focused mainly on having the structure accentuate its natural surroundings, through the course of the design process, a unique balance was achieved where the house and greenery were one with each other. 🌿

JKC1, SINGAPORE

DIRECTORS Diego Molina & Maria Arango,
Architecture | MAIN CONTRACTOR Holden Tiling
 & Construction Pte Ltd | MECHANICAL &
 ELECTRICAL Rankine&Hill (S) Pte Ltd | CIVIL
 & STRUCTURAL JS Tan & Associates | QUANTITY
 SURVEYOR Rodney Chng & Associates Pte Ltd
 | PHOTOGRAPHY Derek Swalwell





JKC2



Three neighboring houses in an elevated, sloping area of Jalan Kampong Chantek have been designed with a common design language, yet each has very different spatial distribution and internal configurations. The most important aspect of these three houses is that they respect and highlight the existing natural landscape while forming a bond with the surrounding environment and minimising any imposition of new elements within the site.

This particular house is composed of three volumes that are positioned in such a way that they interact with each other, yet also maintain a fair amount of distance so that each block may be viewed as an independent entity. The three sections are gathered around a central courtyard, and are linked to each other by covered passages. Akin to the image of three boulders in a Zen garden, their positioning is meaningful yet equally strategic both in terms of functionality and performance. A frangipani tree floats in the middle of the central swimming pool, forming a dramatic silhouette against the light refracting in the water as well as the shadows cast by the tree branches and the timber trellises on the second floor.

The language of the basic volumes mostly makes use of simple geometric shapes that follow a clean and modern aesthetic. Equilibrium is struck between the man-made

spaces and the natural areas through the choice of materials. Simple shapes form a contrast against the complexity of the organic ones, and these new basic shapes are characterised by the use of key materials such as fair-faced concrete, stone, mild steel, tropical wood and clear glass. The dialogue between the components of this palette reflects a sense of warmth and immediacy with nature. Seemingly porous and organic, the building's skin has a raw texture that contrasts nicely with the smoother finishes used in the interior.

Fair-faced concrete was introduced in the house to achieve a variety of textures, while connecting canopies made of steel frames create playful shadows on the ground as light streams into the house. French limestone remains the predominant material for flooring in common areas, while wooden trellises that adorn windows control the intensity of light coming into the house, and help shield off tropical heat in the afternoon.

In terms of the programmatic configuration of the building, flexibility of space was the strategy used to allow the house to be adapted to suit a broader spectrum of users. A series of multi-purpose indoor and outdoor areas has been planned as well.



The language of the basic volumes mostly makes use of simple geometric shapes that follow a clean and modern aesthetic.







WATER COURTYARD

The water courtyard is the meeting point for the three volumes. Moving water, a feature tree, shaded timber decks and a lush garden compose this gorgeous and relaxing scene. This space is an open core, the very heart of the house, which binds together the three distinct blocks. A cross ventilation strategy was applied throughout the building to ensure that the house has adequate wind circulation to cool the various spaces naturally. The water courtyard is also an additional source of natural cooling. As a result, electrical energy consumption is reduced while maintaining the optimal conditions for thermal comfort.

SOCIAL AREA BLOCK

Comparatively shorter than the other two blocks, this unit is for social activities within the house, such as cooking, eating and entertaining. At the same time, this block floats over the car park and connects directly to the service area, which sits underneath the building. On the roof level is an open-air barbecue terrace that serves as an additional recreational area for lounging or for entertaining guests.





A cross ventilation strategy was applied throughout the building to ensure that the house has adequate wind circulation to cool the various spaces naturally.





CHILDREN'S BLOCK

In between the social area block and the master block, this volume hosts three bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms and multi-purpose areas that are directly accessible from the central courtyard.

MASTER BLOCK

The master block sits on the rear section of the site, which is also its highest point from where it overlooks the whole house. This volume is intersected by a reflective pond with a floating island that serves as a second lounge area with direct view of the house's main features. On the second level is a private living area, master bedroom with a walk-in wardrobe and an integrated luxury bathroom from where you can enjoy the best views of the surrounding. Since this is the highest point of the house, it is also the most well illuminated and well ventilated. ☀️



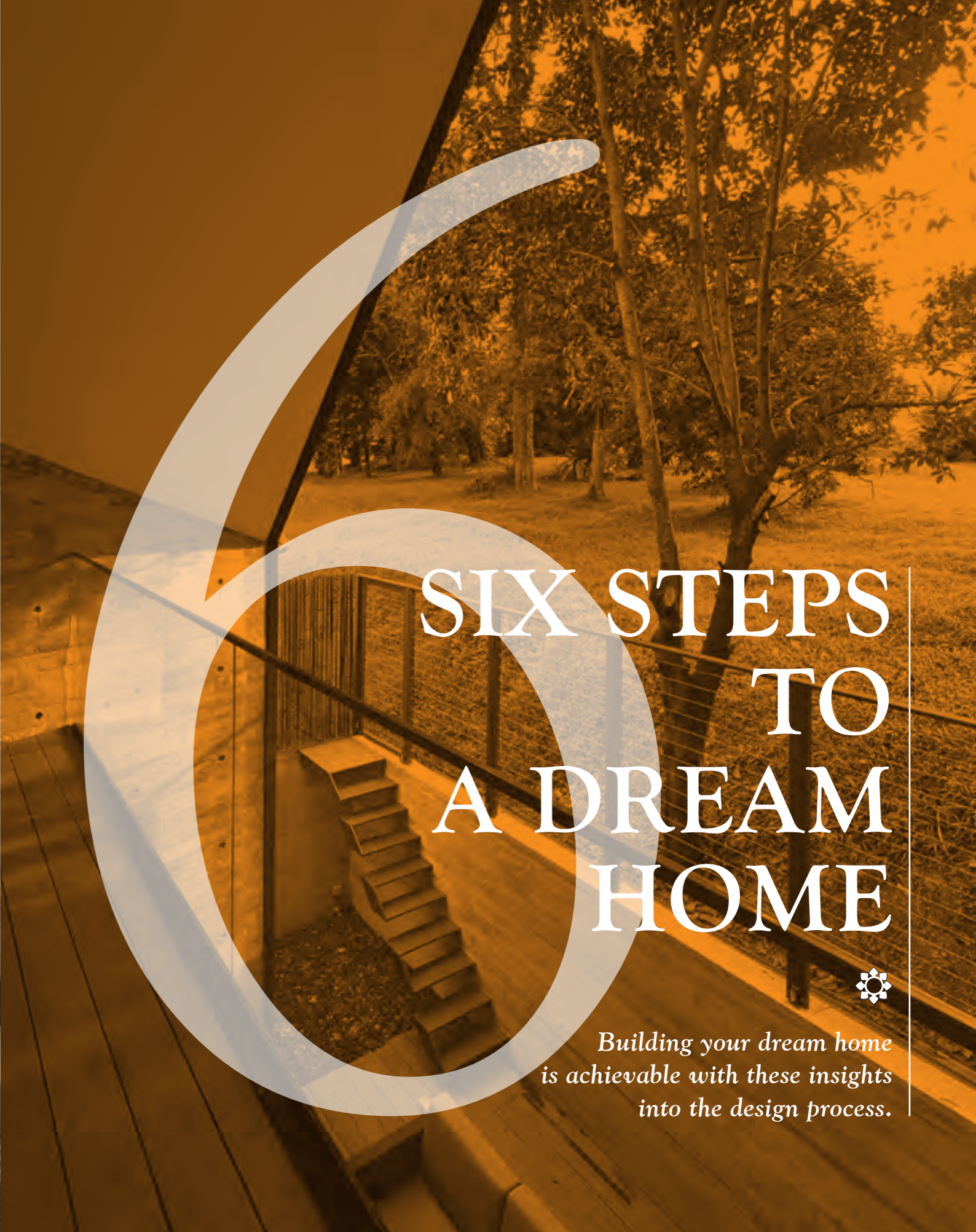
JKC2, SINGAPORE

DIRECTORS Diego Molina & Maria Arango,
Architecture | MAIN CONTRACTOR Holden Tiling
 & Construction Pte Ltd | MECHANICAL &
 ELECTRICAL Rankine&Hill (S) Pte Ltd | CIVIL
 & STRUCTURAL JS Tan & Associates | QUANTITY
 SURVEYOR Rodney Chng & Associates Pte Ltd
 | PHOTOGRAPHY Aaron Pocock





Y-HOUSE



SIX STEPS TO A DREAM HOME



*Building your dream home
is achievable with these insights
into the design process.*

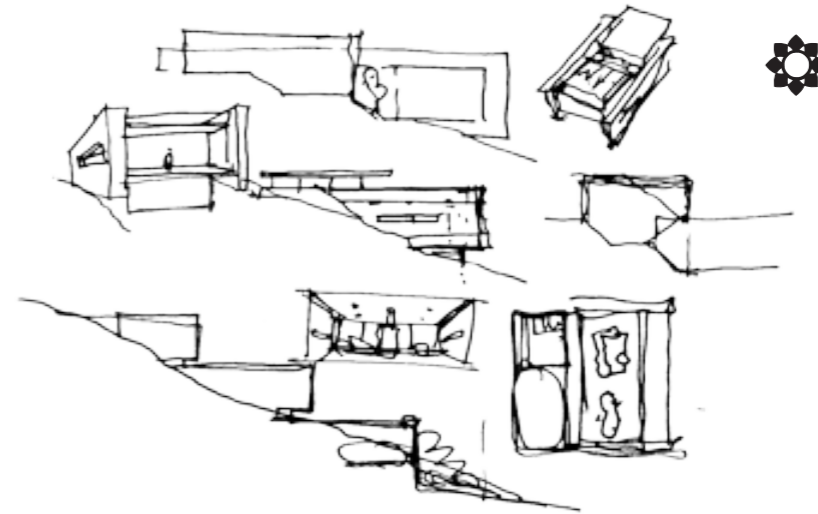


COLONIAL TALE

DW-HOUSE

Ample ambient light and natural ventilation filter through this contemporary reinterpretation of the black and white colonial bungalow with an enclosed private garden.

RESEARCH & UNDERSTANDING

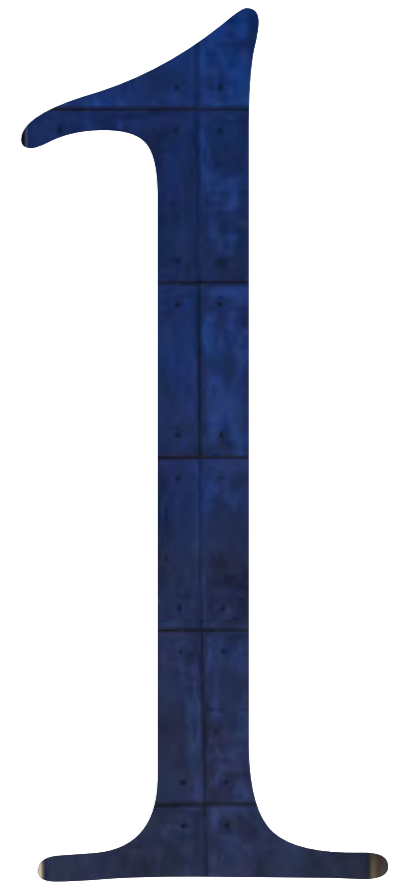


The first phase is dedicated to design and research, where the architect works closely with the client to gain an informed understanding of the opportunities of the land as well as the aspirations and needs of the client for the project. Research is the core of the design process, aimed at understanding how to better address the needs of the client. Through communicating and building a relationship with the client, the architect ascertains in detail the type of house the client is looking to build.

The client can clarify expectations at this stage. Who will be living in the house? What is the desired lifestyle? What are the expectations regarding the layout of the house? Are there any cultural or conservation considerations involved in the project? Are there any environmental concerns or requirements? Are there aesthetic preferences or inspirations? Through this process, the project

aspirations can be clearly defined. The input of the client is integral to the design process. The involvement of the client at this stage can vary, depending on the client's ability and preferences. Input at this stage is crucial in forming the vision of the project.

During this initial phase, the architect also conducts investigations into the technical viability of the project. A definition of the planning perimeters and specifications of the building is established, including any physical limitations, encumbrances, setbacks, maximum size and height of the building, etc. All these considerations are assessed in accordance and with reference to government regulations and masterplans. The architect's understanding of the local codes, practices, environmental and cultural context, combined with design thinking, are essential in realising the dream home of the client.





SCHEMATIC & CONCEPT DESIGN

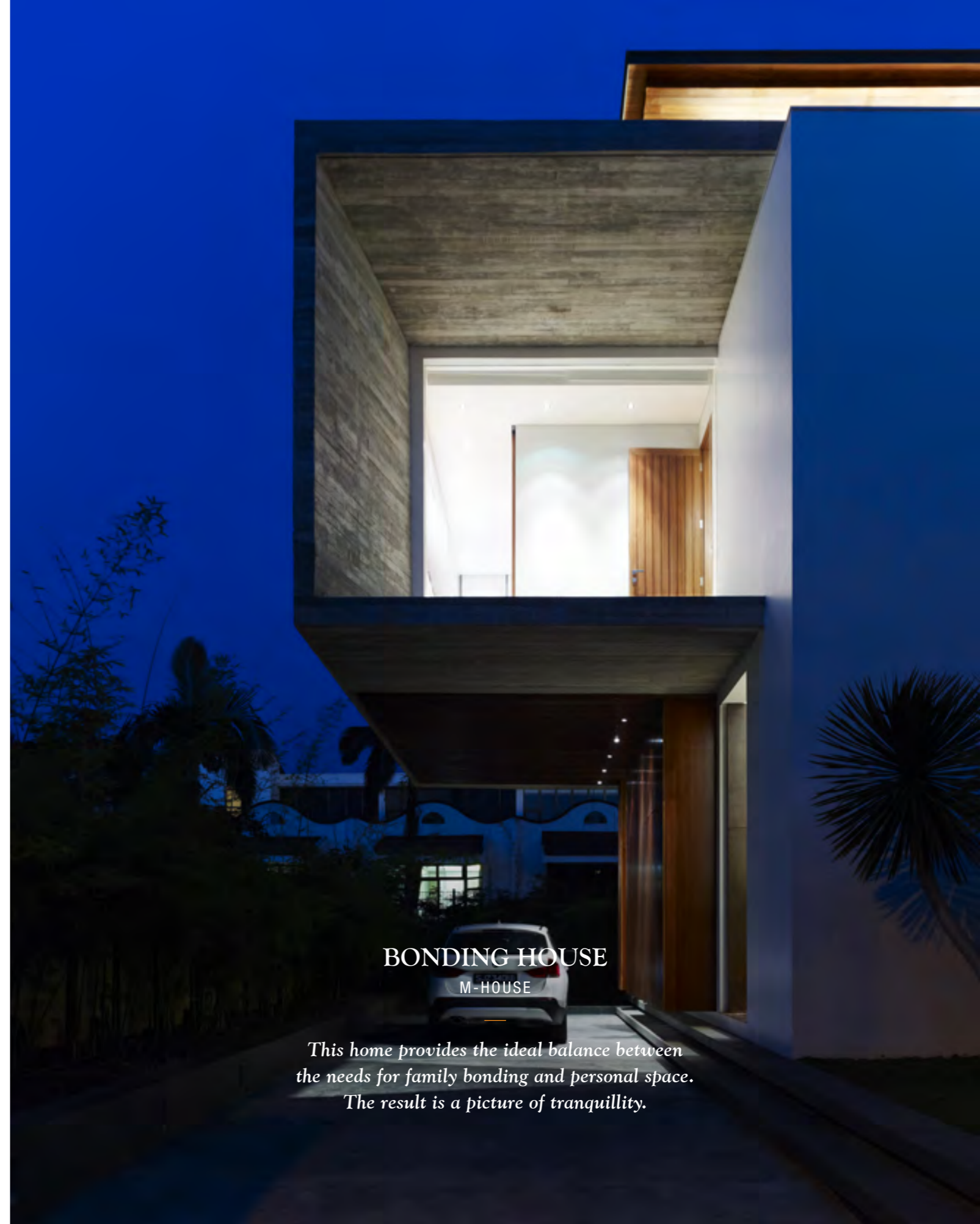


Now that the building programme is developed, a first round of schematic design is presented. Beyond this stage, the architectural team starts to pay meticulous attention to further develop and refine the design solution that best answers the prescribed brief. It is essential to explore the ways in which a space and its surrounding can be configured to suit the needs of the client. Through this creative exploration and enquiry, a bespoke visual and physical design is conceptualised. Main steps in this phase of the project include:

- Preparing schematic sketch designs to interpret the design brief;
- Developing the sketch designs to a sufficient stage to enable applications or submissions to the relevant local authorities. This

is to seek the required planning approvals that are mandatory under the jurisdiction of the law and regulations;

- Preparing preliminary estimates of the construction costs. With the assistance of a qualified quantity surveyor, this estimate is based on the current area, volume and other unit costs;
- Coordinating drawings with the relevant authorities to obtain written planning permission;
- Visualising the project from an aesthetic viewpoint, using artist's impressions, materials and finishes. Mood images and material boards are also presented to the client, to give a sense of direction that the project is going.



BONDING HOUSE

M-HOUSE

This home provides the ideal balance between the needs for family bonding and personal space. The result is a picture of tranquillity.



INSIDE OUT

45 FABER PARK

This house optimises outdoor greens while emphasising a relationship with the internal. The dark grey metal cladding on the façade is complemented with the use of teak internally.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



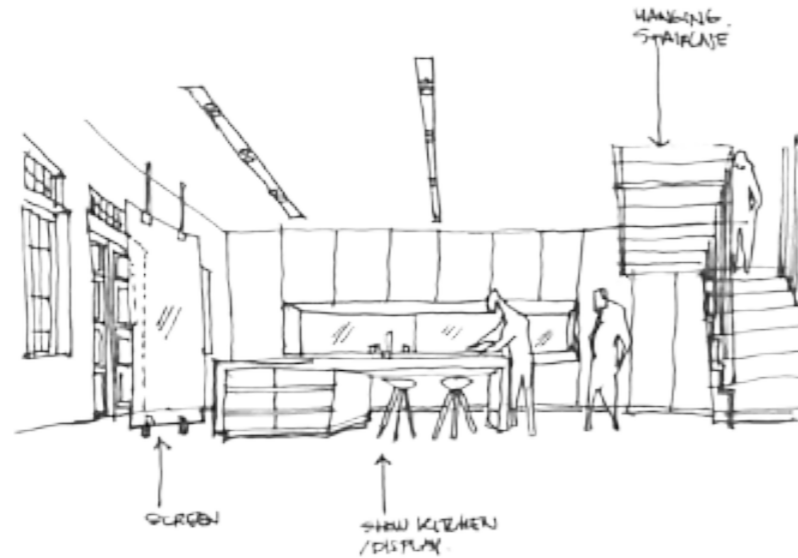
By this stage the home should be fully realised in terms of design, and the construction of the building is underway. Some architects offer a full 'turn-key solution' which means they can act as the one point of contact for the project's design and build. The architectural firm is able to handle all the necessary design, submission, coordination and construction works based on the proposal as agreed with the client and approved by the relevant authorities.

The design development phase consists of:

- Developing the schematic design drawings to a stage that enables the consultants to commence detailed design work;
- Preparing detailed design drawings to comply with the various requirements of the relevant authorities;
- Submitting the detailed design drawings together with other documentation to the governing bodies, such as the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) in the Singaporean context, as well as other relevant authorities to obtain statutory building approval;
- Updating the preliminary cost estimate that is affected by the impending construction costs, with assistance from a qualified quantity surveyor;
- Preparing and updating the project schedule to be presented to the client for approval.

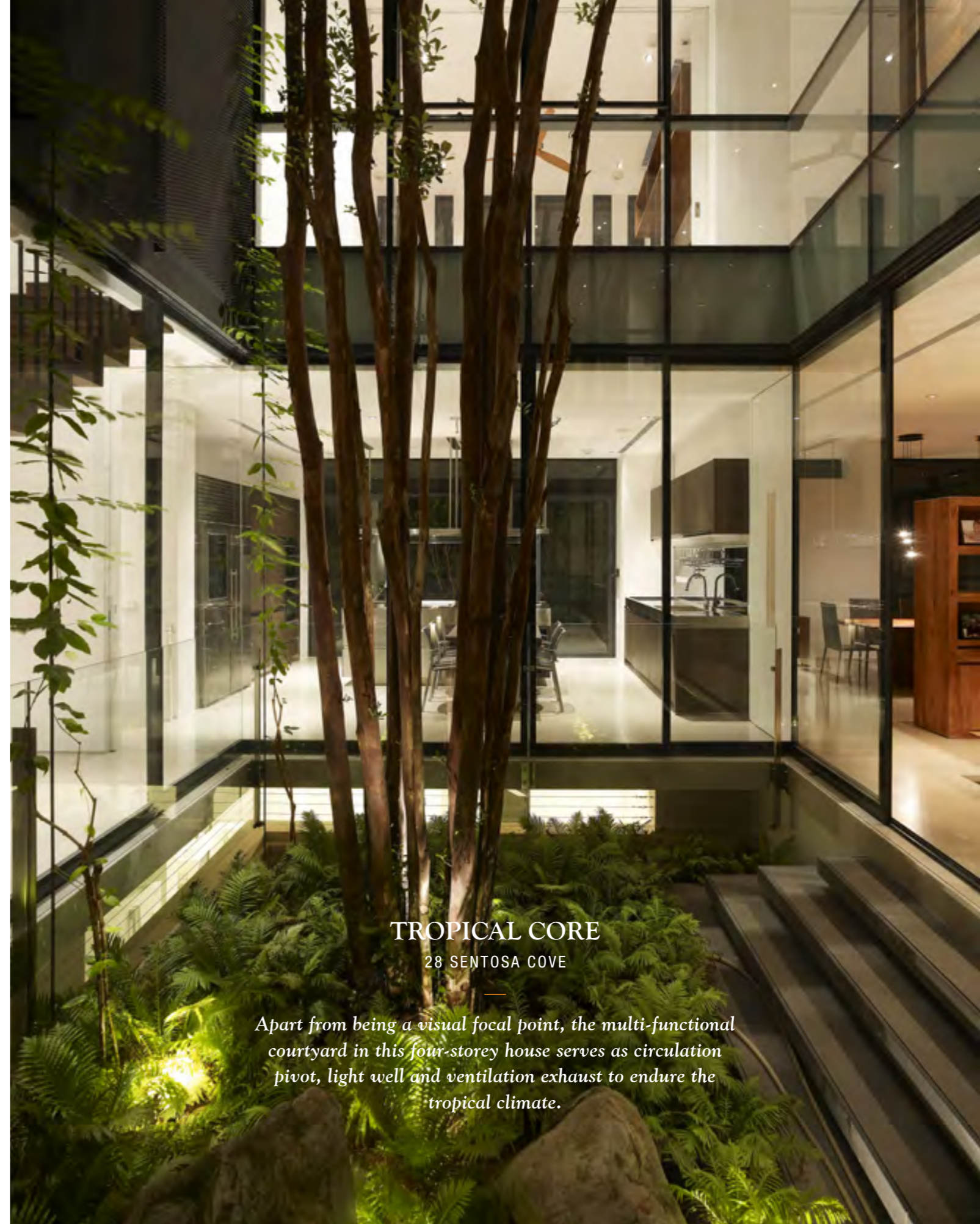


4 TENDER DOCUMENTATION



Based on the updated cost estimate by the quantity surveyor and the project schedule, as approved by the client, this stage consists of:

- Preparing and finalising the working drawings, specifications and other relevant documents necessary for the preparation of the bills of quantities by a quantity surveyor appointed for the project. The 'bills of quantities' is a document used in tendering in the construction industry, in which materials, parts, and labour, as well as their costs, are itemised. It also details the terms and conditions of the construction or repair contract and itemises all work to enable contractors to price the work they are bidding for.
- Preparing all necessary documents, in collaboration with other consultants where necessary, for inviting tenders for the project;
- Inviting tenders, in collaboration with the appointed quantity surveyor, for the project on behalf of the client;
- Evaluating the tenders and submitting a report and recommendation;
- Awarding the contract on behalf of the client to the winning tender;
- Collaborating with the appointed quantity surveyor and other consultants as necessary, to prepare the contract documents for signature between the client and the building contractor.



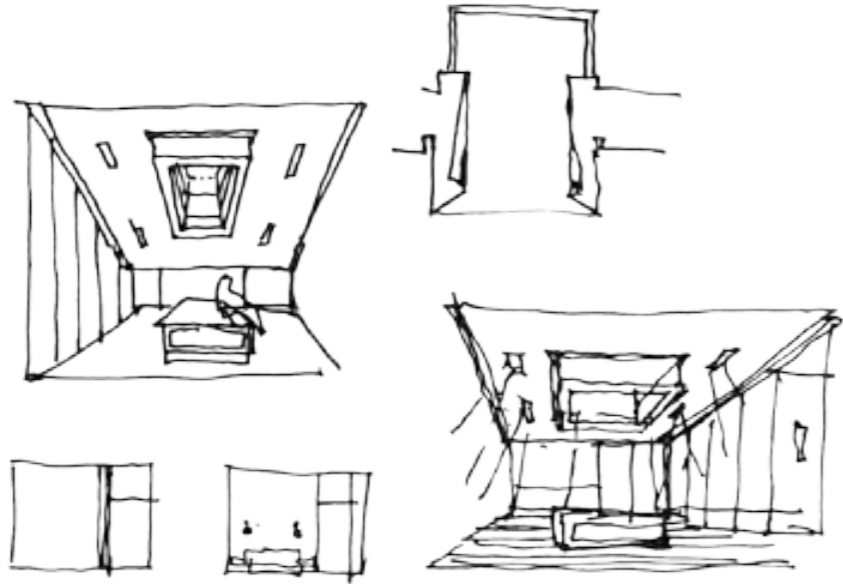
TROPICAL CORE

28 SENTOSA COVE

Apart from being a visual focal point, the multi-functional courtyard in this four-storey house serves as circulation pivot, light well and ventilation exhaust to endure the tropical climate.

5

CONSTRUCTION



This phase falls predominantly under the domain of the architect in relation to the contractor. For example, in Singapore, the function of the architect is defined in the Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA) building contracts as follows:

- Providing all necessary information and issuing instructions to the building contractor to proceed with the works;
- Examining the works programme prepared by the building contractor to satisfy that the works can reasonably be completed within the contract period, barring unforeseen circumstances. The architect, however, does not assume responsibility for the work performance of the building contractor;
- Making periodic inspections of the works as planned and issuing certificates as required under the building contract;
- Accepting the building contract on behalf of the client. The architect provides a set of architectural drawings showing the building as constructed, obtains the drawings of the services of the building as installed, and compiles recommendations on their maintenance from the consultants and specialist contractors.



TAILOR MADE
Y-HOUSE

Featuring a distinct gable roof over a contemporary form, this house demonstrates how a tailored layout and refreshing material palette can create a cosy home for the modern family.

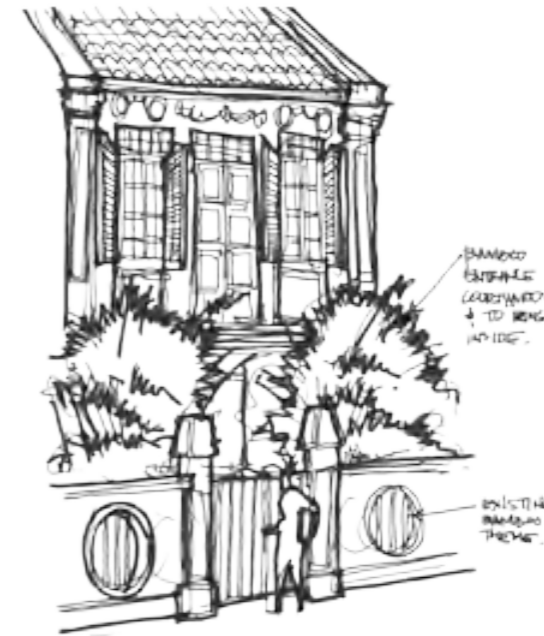


CONTEMPORARY CONSERVATION

31 BLAIR ROAD

This house innovates responses to constraints that guide conservation buildings. To facilitate contemporary entertainment needs, kitchen and dining spaces are located at the entrance – a modernised programmatic twist.

COMPLETION



To finalise the building works, the main steps in this phase of the project include:

- Instructing the building contractor on behalf of the client to carry out any work necessary to comply with all requirements of the relevant authorities;
- Seeking endorsement from the relevant authorities after the preparation and completion of as-built drawings. For example, in the Singaporean context, the architect needs to apply for and obtain a Temporary Occupation Permit (TOP) and Certificate of Statutory Completion (CSC), as well as endorsement of the plans from the relevant authorities, upon completion.

As illustrated, creating a home is very much about the designer having a thorough understanding of the client's needs and aspirations. That understanding sustains and makes a connection between who the client is and what is needed. The process is a professional endeavour that demands technical capability and understanding of statutory procedures from the architect. Each project is an opportunity for the architectural team to demonstrate creativity and function, as well as to establish a long-lasting professional relationship with the client to deliver a dwelling that not only answers but transcends expectations.



HOMING IN ON interiors



In conversation with
Teo Boon Kiat & Niven Greenaway,
Directors of Interior Design

— WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR INSPIRATION FOR DESIGN CONCEPTS FROM?

NIVEN Inspiration from my design concepts come from all areas of life. From cultural understanding and travel, to nature, natural textures and shapes, to colours and shapes of objects. Sometimes, they are client-specific.

BOON KIAT Sometimes it could actually come from the client, because the clientele plays a part. A lot of it depends on the brief as well. Some projects stipulate specific lifestyles, such as a luxurious lifestyle. I also try to find inspiration from the site. Inspiration could come from daily life. A lot of times I am inspired by movies. I think magazines work for me sometimes too. Hotels are actually very good. They can be quite inspiring.

— WHAT EXPERIENCE DO YOU INTEND AND HOPE FOR OCCUPANTS OF THE HOMES YOU HAVE CREATED?

NIVEN The ultimate experience I hope for my clients is for them to feel at home, even though it is often a new space. Coming home and feeling comfortable, relaxed and at one with the space means my job has been successful.

— HAS THE WAY TECHNOLOGY SEEPED INTO EVERYDAY LIFE MADE IT DIFFICULT TO DRAW THE LINE BETWEEN WORK AND HOME? IS IT EVEN IMPORTANT TO DRAW THAT ONE?

NIVEN Technology has seeped into everyday life and it is up to the individual to react and respond to this. Home offices and studies are no longer the norm. TV, phone and tablet devices can all interface and Wi-Fi enables free movement around the home and property. Spaces become work areas as and when required. I believe that a line

needs to be drawn between work overload and a balanced home life, even though at times the lines become blurred.

— HOW DO YOU SEE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOME AND LEISURE? IS THERE A BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE TWO FOR YOU?

NIVEN I believe there must be an integration of the two. The relationship between home and leisure exists as a retreat away from the busy lives we lead and relates to a space, an environment that each individual should feel totally relaxed in.

— ARE THERE ANY PRINCIPLES YOU ABIDE BY WHEN DESIGNING FOR RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS?

NIVEN My basic design principles are balance, proportion and function.

BOON KIAT It has to be designed for the person who lives in the space. Even if we do a show flat, we always have to imagine the owners. It should not feel like the house does not belong to anybody.

— WHAT IS THE MOST COMMON REQUIREMENT YOU RECEIVE FROM CLIENTS?

NIVEN The most common requirement would be a low budget. If it is related to design, usually it is about attempting to squeeze as much as you can into the space, which is generally small with the new condominium and home designs.

BOON KIAT To look spacious... But then most of the time, clients require us to work around the budget. But a lot of times we test the boundary. We always want to push a little bit further than what they think they can afford. Because working backwards is always easier than working forwards.

⚙️
Small homes require designers to think and plan carefully. Look at effective spatial planning and how the areas of the home relate to the client's lifestyle and expectations. With Singaporean homes becoming smaller, more functional storage solutions are a necessity.

NIVEN GREENAWAY



— ANY REQUIREMENTS YOU HAVE COME ACROSS THAT ARE MORE INTERESTING?

BOON KIAT I cannot remember anything really interesting but sometimes we do get some unusual requests. For hygiene purposes, urinals are introduced in public spaces. We do not usually install urinals in homes. For private homes, we do not recommend urinals, but this client wanted one, which he insisted on installing in his master bathroom.

— WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING RESIDENTIAL PROJECT YOU HAVE EVER UNDERTAKEN AND WHY?

BOON KIAT For me, it could be the Cuscaden Residences. I think we met a client who was really willing to explore and proceed with our ideas. They engaged us to conceptualise the design for an old resale unit. This was a double-storey penthouse, complete with a pool deck and everything. The challenge was to segregate the private and public areas clearly. The layout was actually a major aspect of this project, and the part that we took the longest time to do. We essentially changed the entire layout of the existing condominium. We focused on making the circulation and spaces work, while satisfying the functional requirements. I think that was a good challenge. We took about two years. Right after the design stage, there was an extended period when the clients were travelling a lot, so the project was at a standstill for about half a year. The construction work took another half a year. We also engaged an M&E consultant to work out the services. Fortunately, there were some areas that we could raise up, like the walk-in wardrobe, so we managed to hide some of the services beneath the walk-in wardrobe.

— THE SIZE OF SINGAPOREAN HOMES IS SHRINKING BY THE DAY. WHAT TIPS OR ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR DESIGNERS DESIGNING SMALL HOMES?

NIVEN Small homes require designers to think and plan carefully. Look at effective spatial planning and how the areas of the home relate to the client's lifestyle and expectations. With Singaporean homes becoming smaller, more functional storage solutions are a necessity.

BOON KIAT There are two main things. First is to be very sure what you need and what you do in the house. Second is to be very sure that you plan for your storage. That is the make-or-break of a nice home because we can finish a house very nicely but by the time you move in, the storage is not planned, you realise that it is no longer the way it is supposed to be. Storage is probably one of the most important things. Especially when you look at those very creative small houses – amazingly it is how they planned the storage, such as stackable sliding walls and inner walls. Those are things that I think make small living spaces still functional and yet look good. Of course, another way is the multi-purpose use of the same area. Traditionally you may have a dining and a living space, but in a small home, you may have to live with a dining that is also a living space. You should really consider how studio dining or small family dining spaces can be planned instead of always falling back on the conventional dining table.

— WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MEMORY OF A DWELLING SPACE? DOES THAT MEMORY INFORM THE WAY YOU APPROACH YOUR WORK?

NIVEN My favourite memory is of a family property in New York. As a teenager I would travel and stay there often. The feeling of home, comforting, elegant and reassuring, still stays with me to this day. I guess if I can impart this sense to my clients, then I have fulfilled my role as a designer.

— IS A DWELLING A SPATIAL EXPLORATION OR AN EXPRESSION OF A WAY OF LIFE? OR BOTH?

NIVEN I believe it can be both. Spatial exploration examines how a person lives, how the placement of objects in one's life and the space expresses one's personality and style. They both interconnect and evolve over time.

— DO YOU HAVE A MANIFESTO THAT YOU OPERATE BY AND TRANSMIT THROUGH YOUR DAILY ACTIONS?

NIVEN My manifesto when relating to my clients and spaces relates to me personally. I try to initiate a design expression of style and ambiance that I would expect myself, always improving and implementing ideas and styles that reflect the personality and individualism of each client, hence creating a space that has a uniqueness and originality. My daily aims are: 'To be the best I can and to fulfil and exceed expectations of my clients.'




*Inspiration could come from daily life.
A lot of times I am inspired by movies.
I think magazines work for me
sometimes too. Hotels are actually very
good. They can be quite inspiring.*

TEO BOON KIAT



— WHAT SORT OF RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS DO YOU HOPE TO TAKE ON IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

BOON KIAT I think a very nice bachelor pad, maybe? Because that would be the prototype for my own house. (*laughs) 

seamless
BORDERS



This house features a stunning double-volume living area, which opens out to the garden. It offers spaces that seamlessly blend from indoor to outdoor.





This house at One Tree Hill is designed to cater to the homeowner's unique needs. ONG&ONG was involved in both the architecture as well as the interior design of the house. Originally a semi-detached home, it was decided that the house had to be stripped right down to its bare structure and rebuilt to suit its new owner's lifestyle. The revamped architectural layout includes a double-volume space in the living area that opens out into a beautiful garden and water feature. This seamless blending of indoor and outdoor spaces is evident in other sections of the house as well, with the kitchen similarly looking out into a quaint outdoor lounge area. The frangipani tree-lined courtyard and front garden are also visible from within the house.



Entertainment areas are concentrated on the ground floor, which also houses a spacious en suite guest room as well as a private courtyard. The finishes are restful, with contemporary furnishings adding a modern look to the space. On the upper floor are the master bedroom with a customised walk-in wardrobe and an additional guest room, both en suite. A honey oak piece forms the headboard wall of the bed and lends a simple, timeless beauty to the master bedroom. Each room is covered in neutral tones for an added sense of serenity in this peaceful sanctuary, where the homeowner can escape to, away from the stress of a hectic work schedule. This retreat-like atmosphere extends into the master bathroom, with its ample bathtub, rain shower, vanity and make-up dresser, areas that all receive an abundance of fresh air and sunlight.








In essence, this house's interior design beautifully complements its dynamic architectural features to create a warm and tasteful home that fully embraces the wonders of nature.



Teak and black metal form the home's main architectural frame, exuding a bold and modern look that extends even into the house's interior. In essence, this house's interior design beautifully complements its dynamic architectural features to create a warm and tasteful home that fully embraces the wonders of nature. 





— ONE TREE HILL, SINGAPORE

DIRECTORS Teo Boon Kiat, *Architecture* |
 Natalie Louey, *Interior Design* | MAIN
 CONTRACTOR Royce Chai Construction Co Pte
 Ltd | CIVIL & STRUCTURAL SCE Consultants
 (Pte) Ltd | QUANTITY SURVEYOR CCL
 Chartered Surveyors Pte Ltd | PHOTOGRAPHER
 See Chee Keong



BUILDING BLOCKS



Conceptualised as a series of stacked boxes, the main spaces of this house revolve around a feature staircase of corten steel and wooden steps with a special finish.



Bishopsgate is a high-end residential project in one of Singapore's most exclusive residential estates.

As the architect and interior designer of the home, ONG&ONG is able to provide an integrated solution with fully coordinated design concepts that set this residence apart from the others. Designed as a series of stacked boxes, the entertainment zones and the family zones are differentiated by levels.

Guests, upon their arrival, are greeted by a water feature and stepping stones that draw them into the lower gallery areas in the basement, where the entertainment zone is. The basement level consists of a gallery, an informal dining area, a living room and a formal dining room with a display kitchen. The main spaces pivot around a central feature staircase of corten steel and wooden steps with a special finish.

The level above the entertainment zone is designated as a family area, and can be accessed via the staircase or the lift. This level consists of a dry kitchen and a secondary living room. The main feature of the kitchen is a large island bench, with bar dining at one end and teak cupboards behind, serving as a backdrop. Adjacent to the kitchen is a lawn area where a singular frangipani tree stands. The living room overlooks the pool and gym; large glass sliding panels retract and create a direct path from the living room to the pool. In addition, the tall ceiling and glass panels allow one a view of the arrival area and the guest house.



The upper level of the house is divided into two wings, one containing a master bedroom and the other containing two guestrooms as well as a family room. The master wing has a large study area and attached TV entertainment zone as well as a central bathroom with walk-in wardrobes. In the bathroom, a freestanding bathtub is sat next to large pivoting screens, which open up to let natural light into the bathroom,

while skylights provide further illumination. A back-lit onyx stone panel connects the shower and toilet cubicles for an added touch of luxury. The master bedroom has a headboard feature of glass and leather and looks out to a full-width balcony, with a sculpture as a focus for the outdoor space. The guestrooms are large and spacious, with sliding glass panels that blur the boundary between indoor and outdoor space when

retracted. Large bookshelves line one wall and, together with comfy sofas and desks, add a cosy library-like ambience ensuring that guests always feels at home. ☀

— BISHOPSGATE, SINGAPORE

DIRECTORS Andy Goh, *Architecture* |
Natalie Louey, *Interior Design* | MECHANICAL &
ELECTRICAL Chee Choon & Associates | CIVIL
& STRUCTURAL Web Structures (Singapore) |
QUANTITY SURVEYOR Barton Bruce Shaw Pte Ltd



CITY DWELLERS



This residential development, located at the heart of Singapore's main shopping district, features luxurious interior elements that reflect its stylish surrounding.





Situated at the very heart of Singapore's shopping district and soaking up the antiquity of Grange Road, this new residential development promises a luxurious lifestyle with its stylish design and bold colour palette.

For one showflat, the combined dining and living space is swathed in fancy rugs and plush furniture that give the interior a lavish appeal. Tinted pieces of mirror placed at angles to create an origami-inspired feature wall makes a unique addition to the living area. Shiny surfaces and mirrors appear throughout the flat, giving the home a spacious feel. Light is also cleverly employed to highlight the various opulent elements within this beautiful and elegant home in the city. ✨

— GRANGE INFINITE, SINGAPORE
 DIRECTORS Teo Boon Kiat, Interior Design |
 MAIN CONTRACTOR Design Source Interiors |
 PHOTOGRAPHY Nattapon K



✿
For one showflat, the combined dining and living space is swathed in fancy rugs and plush furniture that give the interior a lavish appeal.



THE COST of designed living



Exploring a brave new way
in design dwelling with
ONG&ONG Experience Design



The world of design consultancy has evolved into a very strange place indeed. A new generation of clientele has emerged from a highly educated, empowered and social culture of wants: they want more, only when they want it, exactly how they want it, and at the price they want. When designing their own home or apartment all these wants are must-haves. The Experience Design team recently experimented using new processes and tools to design an apartment on Meyer Road. This could be the future way of approaching residential design.

1

WALK IN THEIR SHOES

Go deep with clients, don't just know what they like but WHY they like it.

The Experience Design team conducted in-depth interview sessions with the clients to dwell deeper than functional needs for the project. Clients were encouraged to dive into the WHY of their life through asking questions like “What is your happiest memory growing up at home? Why is that a happy memory?” The interviews aimed to understand more than just what the clients liked, but also to understand the motivations behind their dreams and aspirations for family, as well as visualise the actualisation of their dreams.



2 USE THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

Make the client and the ones he trusts part of the design project community.

The team engaged Facebook as a design tool to create private groups such as the ‘Meyer Road Apartment Group’. It became a familiar platform for the clients to feel like part of the team. This enabled the clients to record parts of their day that were important to them. It also captured their comments on ideas and allowed the design team to stay connected with clients even when they were traveling. One of the clients invited his brother, whom he trusted the most in his life, to join the group and take part in the design process of his apartment. Despite the fact that his brother was based in the US, the Facebook medium transcended space and time, and the arrangement worked seamlessly.





ALLOW THE CLIENT TO OWN DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Facilitate collaborative design workshops that empower the client to come up with ideas and own the process.

Presentations are consultants presenting to the client. Workshops turn this into a two-way street. Trust the client's intimacy with his own life. In this particular project, it was a cathartic experience for the client to understand the nuances of his life and improve it through design.



4 ESTABLISH THE LANGUAGE

Make sure that the client's definition of 'rustic' is also your definition, or even better — educate the client on what beautiful 'rustic' looks like.

When describing aesthetics he liked, the client used words like 'sanctuary', 'freedom', 'family', 'asian' and 'contemporary'. Using pin-ups to categorise key words used by the client to describe his dream home, the team curated mood images, materials and furniture which the client then whittled down.

FAIL FAST

Find quick ways in which to live test some big design decisions.

5

Using life-sized cardboard printouts to set up the space, followed by roleplaying in said space, the team simulated tryouts with the clients. This kinesthetic process is hands-on and moves with the client. Eliminating the need to anticipate and imagine problem blind spots, some of the bigger ideas were immediately ironed out and redesigned on the spot.

The practice of explorative design consultation by the team involved the clients in the design process. Close and guided interaction with the clients encouraged them to dwell deeper into their thoughts. This in turn yielded in-depth understanding by the design team and eliminated discrepancies. The whole process helped the clients seek design solutions that were true to their desires and were not limited by their own design vocabulary.





High-Density Residential



Residential developments have the interesting catch of having to fulfil the obligatory economic interest of developer clients, while upholding the interest of end-users – the residents.

Homeowners of residential developments are no longer merely looking at real estate, but are also enticed by the exclusive and luxurious lifestyle they are buying into with their property. As we immerse in the modern comforts created in these high-density developments, we encounter architecture that becomes an expression of a desired way of life. The spatial limitation of high-density

apartments is often compensated by the provision of novelty facilities and manicured landscaping.

This compensation is pushed an extra mile in many of the residential developments in these pages, to consider the interest of residents. Most of them utilise common areas as an extension of the living space. These common areas are given

back to residents, through careful consideration and provision for functional usage. There are garden pavilions with integrated pantries to facilitate residents dining in. Apart from the confines of the apartment, these projects offer an additional space to entertain, relax and enjoy a bit of outdoor respite. Even in the strata development projects, gateless compounds extend individual gardens

into pockets of continuous green spaces to be shared.

In a more inclusive approach, a few of these developments are co-ordinated inhouse to include interior design, landscape design and even environmental branding. This inclusive way of designing ensures consistency in concept, finishes and quality. The high-density developments that engage

a comprehensive exercise of branding the project often attract a positive association to the exclusive lifestyle offered by luxury hospitality projects. The branding exercise can include design of the logo, brochure, collaterals, construction hoarding, look and feel of the official website and even production of television commercials. The efforts cumulate into luxurious properties which clients can appreciate and residents can call home. ✨

ELEVATED EXPRESSIONS of *high-density living*



In conversation with Ashvinkumar Kantilal, Steven Low, Andrew Lee & Raymond Tan, Directors of Architecture

— IN YOUR OPINION, IS A DWELLING A SPATIAL EXPLORATION OR AN EXPRESSION OF A WAY OF LIFE? OR BOTH?

ASHVINKUMAR For residences, I would think it is more a way of life. Depends on whether it is a private residential project, meaning that you design specifically for a client or whether it is for speculative purposes. More often than not, when you design condominiums, it is more of designing a lifestyle or what you think a lifestyle is. Whereas when you design for a family, it is to cater to their way of living, their likes and dislikes. It becomes very personal, becomes very warm.

I think we have to mix everything together, as architects. Some of us are what we call 'black box thinkers', some of us are very clear thinkers. I think I fall into the first category of 'black box', which means that you do not know what happens within the box. Everything is assimilated, and it turns out quite well. When asked how we did it, a majority of the 'black box thinkers' would answer with the standard expression, 'by gut feel'. Other architects would say,

'it is a very process-driven approach'. In my case, I think it is more of a gut feel than anything else.

A dwelling is a way of life, of course. Depending on whether you are doing a 'green-fill' project, which is brand new, or a 'brown-fill' project. With a 'green-fill' project, you want to play with volumes, spaces. Whereas in a 'brown-fill' project, the volume of spaces is given, so it is about how you express it to be as simple as possible.

RAYMOND Practicality, functionality, efficiency, value for money, are the words that come first. Between spatial exploration and expression of life, I lean towards spatial exploration in the sense that we continue to explore how to create comfort with the reducing sizes of land, apartment units and bedrooms. I have done an apartment where the bathroom is so tiny that we have to explore the use of 'PD Door' (sliding and folding door) to comply with BCA's required one-metre diameter manoeuvring space within the toilet.



I hardly lean towards dwelling being an expression of a way of life as it is too costly to do so. Imagine a person who can afford a six-star lifestyle and wants to reflect this in his home. Even if he could afford to create an environment that is six-star, it would be most wasteful to do so and I am hardly the person to come in for such projects as I do not support 'low utilisation' of any facility. I am a very practical person and it shows in my work. A 'trophy' building requires 'trophy' maintenance costs and efforts.

ANDREW When I think of dwelling, images recalling memories and experiences of places I have lived come to mind. Many of these images are about homes and communities or environments that I have lived in. Some of these images have to do with my childhood. Looking back, I recall staying in a single-storey dwelling; a dwelling with labyrinthine roads, with a tiled pitch roof and brass framed casement windows. There were two bedrooms, a large living room which my father would fill with a simple television and a radio cum turntable set.

Black and white images and music would fill many family hours in the living room. The living room led to an attached kitchen with a chimney. The kitchen had a Kelvinator refrigerator and a National rice cooker. There were very little else.

The dwelling was simple and understated. All the rooms were stripped of any lavish floor finish; these were screed floors. I recall that the only rooms that were not part of the main house were the bathrooms and a semi-enclosed dining area next to a large rambutan tree. The family would spend most our time eating, working, studying, talking and playing together in these two areas.

Everything about this house was archetypal of the way a child will draw the elevation of a traditional house. There was something simple and comforting about the house. It retained my fondest memories of a house.

Memories invoke the deepest architectural experience that I know. They are repositories that I draw from in my work. When I am designing, I find myself frequently drifting into past memories of a place; I can remember the feel of materials, the scent of the trees, the objects that fill the place and what that place meant to me. Past environmental memories and experiences do not just disappear; it often reappears as fundamental patterns and ideas that will shape my sense of dwelling and place.



More often than not, when you design condominiums, it is more of designing a lifestyle or what you think a lifestyle is. Whereas when you design for a family, it is to cater to their way of living, their likes and dislikes. It becomes very personal, becomes very warm.

ASHVINKUMAR KANTILAL



— AS SOMEONE WHOSE WORK IS TIED DIRECTLY TO MAKING HOMES, HOW DO YOU SEE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOME AND LEISURE? IS THERE A BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE TWO FOR YOU?

ASHVINKUMAR Yes, there is a boundary because I believe in not bringing home work. Very occasionally I try to bring work home and never did anything. So I think a home



ANDREW LEE

is a home, basically a place where you rest, and you recuperate and recover from your work environment. So more often than not, in a home, I try to convince clients, if they want a study, all is well and good, but do not make it into a 'work' study – make it into a family space, where the family can just hang around and have the opportunity to interact, rather than have everyone go back into their study, back into their own rooms to do their own things. But then again, these days with the iPhone at your fingertips, it is quite difficult. It becomes very difficult to draw a fine line between 'home space' and 'work space'.

ANDREW As an author of ideas, I like to realise places that not only match their functional use but more importantly have purpose. A dining room is not only a place to have a meal alone but also a place for family dinners and conversations. Beside the more precise function of eating, the sense of quiet reflection or conversational gatherings can lead to great leisurely moments. Home is not only where great food is served but where great moments are enacted.

RAYMOND There can be no boundary between the two but definition of 'public' and 'private' spaces have to be there.

— HAS THE WAY TECHNOLOGY SEEPED INTO EVERYDAY LIFE MADE IT DIFFICULT TO DRAW THE LINE BETWEEN WORK AND HOME? IS IT EVEN IMPORTANT TO DRAW THAT LINE?

ASHVINKUMAR No, I do not think the line is material anymore. It has become so seamless. But what I think technology has done is, it has made us appreciative of passive design. Everything is air-conditioned, everything is lit up artificially, that sometimes when you stay in this climate, in the tropics, we forget about natural ventilation, we forget about using natural daylight during the daytime to enhance the living space. You do not have deep verandas or overhangings where you can relax and chill.

RAYMOND Work is not home and home is not work. This definition should be done by the individual. We have been involved in many private homes as well as many mass housing private apartment projects. Customising

for individuals is very different from customisation for a targeted mass market.

ANDREW I love music. I grew up listening to Simon and Garfunkel albums played from our family's turntable. I love soccer. I grew up watching black and white footages of soccer matches from our television. I love ice cream. It was a treat to have a slice of cold 'Ripple' ice cream (with wafer biscuits) from our refrigerator. More recently, I have taken a love to coffee. I love the sound of the beans being grinded and I love the aroma as the black liquid oozes out of the coffee machine into my favorite cup.

And I love to write and work on the computer. I love the convenience of 'cutting' and 'pasting', of editing paragraphs, of testing different ideas and possibilities in my writing. The turntable, the television, the refrigerator, the coffee machine and the computer are less about intrusions into our lives. Rather they are extensions of us. The human ability to invent machines of delight, convenience and possibilities amazes me.



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ANDREW LEE



— WHO ARE THE KEY PLAYERS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A DWELLING?

ASHVINKUMAR Of course, your client. It all starts off with your client's brief. But I think the one who binds the whole thing together is actually the architect. Of course, you have the support of the M&E (mechanical & electrical engineering) consultants, structural consultants, the interior design consultants, and the landscape. But I think the architect's vision is the main driving force, and that vision has to align with the client's brief or requirements. More often than not, in speculative housing, it is a number game. It is all about maximum efficiencies. Whereas in landed property, you do not have that parameter. It is not about efficiencies, it is about setbacks and how best you make use of setbacks to have this indoor-outdoor relationship.

RAYMOND An experienced contractor is key to a successful good quality home. Participation of the owner or occupier is also instrumental when it is prompted by the designer.

— HOW DOES ENGAGING INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS ACROSS DISCIPLINES KEEP THE DWELLING TYPOLOGY ON TRACK?

ASHVINKUMAR I think in a dwelling typology, an integrated solution is not as critical as say, when you are designing the commercial building, or for that matter, an industrial building or an institution. I think in a typical residential project, you are purely looking at creating spaces first and then using engineering solutions to make those spaces work.

— WHAT IS YOUR OWN INTERPRETATION OF A DWELLING? WHAT IS A MUST-HAVE IN YOUR OWN HOME?

ASHVINKUMAR Tranquillity. Peace. No, I do not think there is a physical thing that is a must-have. For instance, in one of our residential projects, what we wanted was actually open space, clean lines, and hassle-free, minimal maintenance. We just wanted a very simple space. In the end, everybody thinks it is very Japanese or very 'Muji' as they called it. But it was never intended that way – we did not start off consciously with a Japanese or 'Muji'-ish look. It just came about like that.



STEVEN To me, a dwelling is a place I would call 'home', which is different from a house. It is a place that one will find themselves most at ease, so the design must reflect and take care of every aspect of the layout. Good design for kitchen and 'storage space' is a must-have. So it is important that we incorporate a store when designing house.

RAYMOND There are a few ingredients to what we define as a 'home'. A 'dwelling' is not necessarily a home. We have to be clear what we are addressing now. A dwelling as I understand it, can jolly well be a hotel room, a rented bedroom, a serviced apartment, etc.

I must always feel comfortable at home; both physically as well as emotionally. There must be warmth. Family is also a very important ingredient in what makes a home. There has to be ample space for everybody so that there is no 'encroachment' into each other's spaces. There has to be clear definition of 'public' vs 'private' spaces. All the above that I have mentioned are luxuries that do not come easily in a land scarce nation.

ANDREW There are houses and there are homes. Many homes have become houses with little differentiation between these houses. I like designing dwellings or homes as response to a place. The intention is to respond to purpose, locale and materials and to reveal what is particular and unique to the place.



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STEVEN LOW



— WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MEMORY OF A DWELLING SPACE? DOES THAT MEMORY INFORM THE WAY YOU APPROACH YOUR WORK?

ASHVINKUMAR I think of all the houses I have stayed in, my favourite memory has always been the manipulation of light within the space. A house is quite unique in that you can really use light to craft spaces, unlike, say, an office building or shopping centre because of its very deep plan.

It is different for a house, where within eight metres, any place in the house will have a window. So I think this is something which I remember – using light as a main generator. One of our residential projects was a typical residential deep plan building with the staircase in the middle. That space was always dark, so what we realised was they never had a sky light. So we created a skylight

across the whole width of the house. And then upstairs we had the skylight in the landing. Then in the master bathroom we have a skylight. It was very nice to have light coming through the building.

I think work approach-wise, it is essential to first get the client to be very clear what he or she wants. Because at the end of the day, I do not believe in designing for glossy magazines. I think I am designing for the client's comfort. And so, if the client is clear, I think the design process is easy. If the client is unclear, that is when the challenges creep in. Then you have a lot of ideas that when mashed together become rather eclectic – and it is difficult to get 'good' eclectic. It often becomes 'bad' eclectic, if you know what I mean.

STEVEN Almost everyone has a special place or corner of their home that they make into their favourite spot, be it the lounge, bar counter, kitchen, bedroom bay window, etc. My favourite is sitting on a sofa in the living and master bedroom with an expansive view to the unobstructed greenery. So my design approach is always to arrange the living and dining areas side by side – in 'landscape' manner wherever possible to offer a wide vista upon entering the unit.

RAYMOND I did a house, a Good Class Bungalow, for a very old couple back in 2000. Husband and wife were around 65 then. They are my best clients to date. The couple let me have a free hand. It turned out well at the end and



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RAYMOND TAN



what the lady did after I was done was even better. She was the person who understood best what she wanted from her home and she transformed her home every time she felt like she had "outgrown" the need for a space or an item. I always remind all my clients to allow themselves to grow with their home and vice versa.

ANDREW I mentioned the rambutan tree next to the dining room. The tree had always belonged as a part of our home; an extension of the home and never apart. It is my favorite memory of a dwelling place where I spent hours every day as a child.

It has been forty years and I can still recall with vivid clarity the details of the place: the shade that the tree provided, the shadow patterns on the ground as sunlight streaked through the canopy, the sway and scent of the leaves and the spread of its low-lying branches where my siblings and I would perch in convivial gathering and play. Perhaps this is why I tend to be attentive to the dialogue between the exterior environment and the dwelling.

— WHAT EXPERIENCE DO YOU INTEND AND HOPE FOR OCCUPANTS OF THE HOMES YOU HAVE CREATED?

ASHVINKUMAR To make a space that people feel comfortable with, that they enjoy. Whether you grow old or grow in it and have your second and third generation inherit the space, my thinking's that 'if it's gonna happen, it's gonna happen'. The main thing is that when people come in, they feel comfortable. You feel comfortable in a place where you can sit down and not feel as if the contents are 'once broken, considered sold' – you know what I mean. Rather than 'cannot touch this, cannot touch that', just come, relax and chill. I think that is very important.

STEVEN For them to feel the ownership of the space and embrace it all at the same time.

RAYMOND For their homes to 'grow' along with them. Once they find that they have 'outgrown' their homes, it is time to call me again.



As the author of ideas, I do not want to recall places that do not give me any room for interpretation. Neither do I wish that occupants be limited in the way they can influence the homes that I have created. Great places should give room for interpretation, adaptation and extension of inspiring moments.

ANDREW LEE



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— DO YOU HAVE A MANIFESTO THAT YOU OPERATE BY AND TRANSMIT THROUGH YOUR DAILY ACTIONS?


ANDREW It is less of a manifesto and more of an appointment to keep with my cup of coffee and books. I love books and I love to tarry and spend time reading them. Books allow me to travel in different worlds where I can experience how ideas can travel from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another period.

Many ideas are too easily compromised by factors like budget, time, climate and culture. Travelling into different

worlds allow me to create some sort of psychological construct, some sort of safe distance where I can experiment with different ideas. Travelling into different worlds allow apparently impossible ideas to become new possibilities.

Possible futures are made visible that can push expectations of how I can live. These pictures are like dreams or films I never had before – it is like seeing pictures in my head – and they enlarge my conception of the range of possible experiences. They enlarge my world.

STEVEN Keep things simple but coordinated. A lot of times when things are not properly coordinated and communicated, it messes things up even though things were done with good intentions.

RAYMOND 'Change is the only thing constant!' Life is full of changes and we have to accept and deal with it. 

blurred BOUNDARIES



This unique residential development blurs boundaries to create a loft atmosphere within the house and a gateless community that shares continuous green spaces.





This unique residential development, comprising of a mixture of 30 semi-detached and 10 bungalow homes, will be located in the Chestnut area of Upper Bukit Timah.

Although the target group naturally differs between the two types of landed housing, a common architectural language was adopted for both to maintain consistency in the development's contemporary architectonic look. This is evident in the choice of material, such as fair-faced, or exposed concrete.

Another special feature of Michaels' is its boundary-less concept. The additions of terraces, balconies or planter boxes to each bedroom help to create an open and lofty atmosphere within the house. Furthermore, the absence of gates between neighbouring houses unifies the individual gardens into a continuous green space to be shared.

Due to the size of this development, much effort will be made to ensure that both house types comply with Green Mark specifications and that all products and finishings are of the highest quality. 🌿





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— MICHAELS' RESIDENCES,
SINGAPORE

DIRECTORS Diego Molina, *Architecture* |
Teo Boon Kiat, *Interior Design* | Joanne Tan,
Environmental Branding | PROJECT MANAGEMENT
Project Innovations Ptd Ltd | MAIN CONTRACTOR
Wee Poh Construction Co. (Pte.) Ltd | MECHANICAL
& ELECTRICAL Rankine&Hill (S) Pte Ltd | CIVIL
& STRUCTURAL Rankine&Hill (S) Pte Ltd |
QUANTITY SURVEYOR E S Tang Consultants



International Spotlight

A showcase of noteworthy high-density residential establishments in the international scene



LINCOLN SUITES, SINGAPORE

— Lincoln Suites is a 150-unit high-rise condominium situated in the heart of Newton district, possessing one of the most attractive views of the city. The most breathtaking aspect of this development is when at the break of dawn, the sun's rays bathe the towers in a soft glow, emanating warmth in the midst of this visual splendour.



SEASTRAND, SINGAPORE

— Seastrand Condominium is a trans-urban development that will redefine trendy and modern living within the scenic setting of Pasir Ris. Inspired by beachfront living, most units at Seastrand are designed with a pool view. The 10-block development is located at the junction of Pasir Ris Drive 3 and 4.

One to three-bedroom, and four-bedroom compact units are available, ranging from 570 to 1,485 square feet. The distinguishing feature of the design are the 'frames' – concrete and aluminum trellises. These frames give the elevation a unique appearance of totemic tower blocks that will enhance the skyline of the Pasir Ris precinct. This condominium development, with its wide choice of apartment types, aims to appeal to those who may want to upgrade to private housing. The other attraction is its full range of facilities, from swimming pools to BBQ pavilions, tennis courts and a fully-equipped gymnasium.



OPHIRIA RESIDENCES, EAST LEDANG, MALAYSIA

— Ophiria at East Ledang is part of a series of phases of developments in Nusajaya, located just 10 minutes from Singapore. The residential development consists of an exclusive enclave of six low-rise condominium blocks spread over a total development area of 6.6 acres.

The freehold development boasts exclusive facilities for residents, including two swimming pools, a gym, saunas and an environment deck. Ophiria Residences is a collection of 117 units of low-density townhouses that promote a resort lifestyle in Nusajaya. Tucked away in an exclusive zone of East Ledang, the development is gated and guarded with 24-hour patrols and state-of-the-art security systems.



GRANDVIEW 360, JOHOR, MALAYSIA

— Grandview360 is a maiden foray into Johor, city of Malaysia. The project is an integrated design solution encompassing architectural and interior design. The residential complex consists of three tower blocks, each 25-storey high. The site offers a stunning river view to the North and view of the Singapore city to the South. Spanning a total

of 443 apartment units, the condominium's key design features include double-volume ceilings as well as ample measures for effective cross ventilation and natural illumination.

A wave-like pattern adds vibrancy to the building façade. The playful aesthetics alludes to the flowing water of the river, which runs alongside the entire development site. The interior design concept of the showflat adopts a cosmopolitan outlook in a nature-inspired space. The soothing use of an earthy colour palette and liberal use of wood throughout creates a calming effect that resonates with the landscaping of the development.



ADRIA, SINGAPORE

— Situated in the Novena planning area, Adria is a stone's throw away from the entertainment precinct in Orchard Road, and in close proximity to the cultural bay front at Marina, the upcoming satellite mixed-use developments in Kallang, Beach Road, as well as the nature reserve in MacRitchie.

The project aims to offer an urban resort lifestyle through the creation of a luxuriant, cozy and sensual development, where one may enjoy the feeling of languishing in a cool oasis set within a verdant tropical garden. The experience commences at the drop-off, where one is greeted by a calm, reflective pool holding court at the porte-cochère. This, together with the lush garden under the building, sets the tone for an urban resort lifestyle.



ALBA, SINGAPORE

— Alba is a collection of bespoke residences in the heart of prestigious Orchard Road. Strategically located at Cairnhill Rise, the luxurious 50-unit freehold condominium is set to become the new icon of the city. A unique configuration of three units per floor gives the building its distinctive Y-shape. The layout offers each unit unique views, better living spaces and exclusivity.

Special attention is given to the crafting of the details of the development. The luxurious lifestyle is further enhanced with a series of extensive facilities and landscaping. Residents enjoy the use of dining pods and pavilions in the midst of a multitude of water features, pools, decks, play areas and gym. To complete the exclusive lifestyle, there is even a concierge team that offers personalised services.



ELEVATED LIFESTYLE



This residential development accommodates an exclusive lifestyle of leisure and entertainment that is facilitated by well-equipped poolside pavilions and water landscaping.



Reflections of light and movement are captured as one approaches Boulevard Vue. Still pools of water instill the sense of peace of mind at the water court and tropical grove as one waits to ascend into the residences. The sound of cascading waters leads one towards the recreation pools and Jacuzzi, where other recreational activity areas are located.



Two pavilions face the 25m-lap pool. The fine dining pavilion comes with a complete kitchen with screens that slide out to separate the area from the rest of the pool to give users more privacy and intimacy. When not in use, the seats are turned toward the pool area and this provides a casual lounge for residents to rest and relax.

At the other end of the lap pool, the family pavilion is equipped with basic cooking facilities to prepare a simple meal. The children's play area is located nearby so that parents can keep a close watch on their children while they entertain friends and family. 🌀

— BOULEVARD VUE, SINGAPORE
 DIRECTOR Ong Tze Boon, *Architecture* | MAIN CONTRACTOR China Construction (South Pacific) Development Co Pte Ltd | MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL Rankine&Hill (S) Pte Ltd | CIVIL & STRUCTURAL Beca Carter Hollings & Ferner (SEA) Pte Ltd | QUANTITY SURVEYOR Rider Levett Bucknall | PHOTOGRAPHY Jaime Albert Marti





ROOMS *with a view*



This high-rise residential development sited in the heart of nature maximises inter-block spacing for facilities and landscaping while offering magnificent views of Peirce Reservoir.



Boasting a total of 475 units within three 5-storey blocks and one 14-storey block, the development can be found along Upper Thomson Road, putting it right in the heart of nature.

By retaining the single 14-storey block, the inter-block spacing was maximised, creating spacious grounds for the common facilities and landscaping, which include a 50-metre lap pool, a lily pond, meandering brooks as well as a bird watching tower. The single 14-storey block also provides magnificent views of the nearby Peirce Reservoir.

Conveniently within reach of two major highways, Meadows@Peirce offers residences a luxurious, natural setting without ever falling short of the conveniences of urban living. 🌿



*Conveniently within reach
of two major highways,
Meadows@Peirce offers
residences a luxurious, natural
setting without ever falling
short of the conveniences
of urban living.*





— MEADOWS@PEIRCE, SINGAPORE
DIRECTOR Ong Tze Boon, *Architecture* | MAIN
CONTRACTOR Poh Lian Construction Pte Ltd |
MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL Alpha Consultant
Engineers Pte Ltd | CIVIL & STRUCTURAL TEP
Consultants Pte Ltd | QUANTITY SURVEYOR
Rider Levett Bucknall | PHOTOGRAPHY
See Chee Keong





modern TROPICS



This residential development is an enclosed tropical enclave that fosters a sense of community living within a sustainable natural environment.

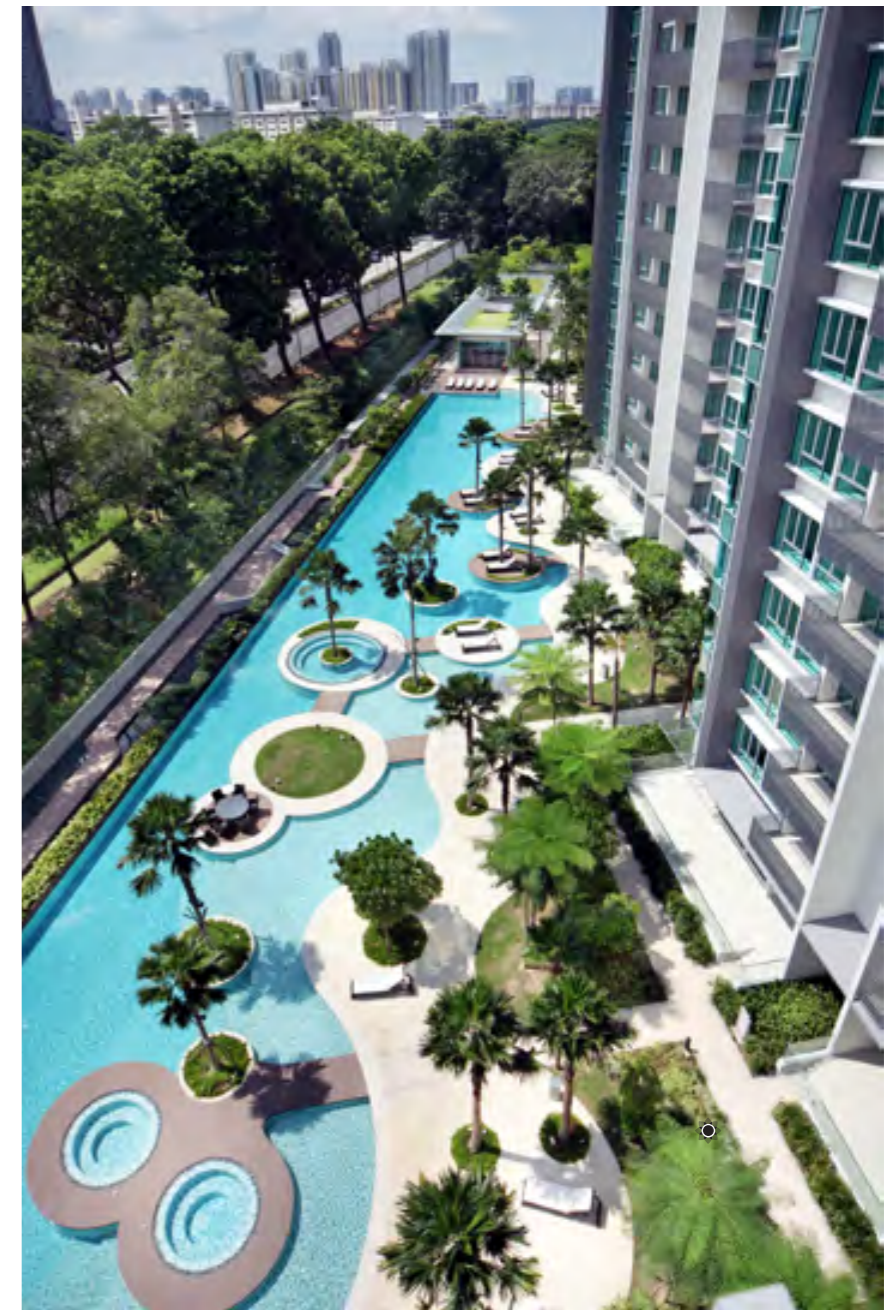




Hailed as an enclave of environmentally sensitive modern living, this 396-unit project has two main objectives. One is to create a sustainable environment that is conducive to tropical living, while the other is to foster a sense of community among residents.

Hundred Trees is built on an elevated landscape deck that envelops the homes within a private and exclusive space yet also maintaining a sense of nature. This added height also ensures that even the lowest unit has a good view, while minimising the need for environmentally harmful excavations.

Most units are oriented to avoid a direct east-west orientation in order to mitigate heat gain. All windows are tinted and laminated to also reduce overall temperature and traffic noise. To promote community spirit, there is generous provision for communal space as well as nodes for neighbours to meet and interact. The 'spine' is where major facilities are located, such as the lap pool, function room, gym and clubhouse. Furthermore, each block has an 'eco shaft' which serves as a more intimate space for residents to mingle.



— HUNDRED TREES, SINGAPORE
 DIRECTOR Steven Low, *Architecture* | MAIN
 CONTRACTOR Tiong Seng Contractors (Pte) Ltd
 | MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL Squire Mech Pte
 Ltd | CIVIL & STRUCTURAL KTP Consultants
 Pte Ltd | QUANTITY SURVEYOR KPK Quantity
 Surveyors (Singapore) Pte Ltd | PHOTOGRAPHY
 See Chee Keong



GREEN DECK



This residential estate is a series of low-rise residential units, connected by an exclusive landscape deck where common recreational facilities are located.

Set within the rustic charm of the Jervois estate and surrounded by lush greenery, Mon Jervois enjoys close proximity to Orchard Road's famous shopping street as well as the exclusive Dempsey Hill. It is also conveniently near prestigious schools and a number of train stations.

The development is organised into five distinct blocks, which are connected by a recreational landscape deck. Working within the constraints of the site's trapezoidal shape, the architects planned the site such that these low-rise residential blocks would be seen to emerge out of its green pedestal-like landscape deck. The landscape deck is conceived as an elevated green plateau, which houses a swimming pool and common recreational facilities while also covering a basement car park.





Each residential tower block holds a variety of luxurious unit types, which are all well lit and well ventilated to channel nature's flowing energy and light into each modern abode. Their minimalist architectural layouts offer perfect canvases for each home dweller to create unique settings that reflect their own individual lifestyle and tastes. Each unit type is spaciouly arranged while designed with cantilevered balconies and textured window screens to create functional yet highly expressive elevations.

In essence, Mon Jervois is a trendy and contemporary lifestyle pad with ample opportunities for quality outdoor living – a concept that will no doubt appeal to today's urban families.



— MON JERVOIS, SINGAPORE

DIRECTORS Ashvinkumar Kantilal & Andrew Lee, *Architecture* | Ong Swee Hong, *Lighting Design* | MAIN CONTRACTOR China Construction (South Pacific) Development Co Pte Ltd | MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL Meinhardt (Singapore) Pte Ltd | CIVIL & STRUCTURAL Engineers Partnership | QUANTITY SURVEYOR Langdon & Seah Singapore Pte Ltd

Indonesian Spotlight

A showcase of noteworthy residential establishments in Indonesia



PT Ong and Ong, ONG&ONG Group's Jakarta branch, commenced operations in October 2012.

Our Indonesian projects are designed collaboratively between PT Ong and Ong and ONG&ONG Singapore under Kurjanto Slamet's leadership. He graduated in 1997 from National University of Singapore School of Architecture with Honours. Kurjanto is a registered Architect with the Board of Architects in Singapore and a Corporate Member of Singapore Institute of Architects since 2002.

MENTENG PARK, JAKARTA

— Menteng Park is a mixed-use development located within close proximity of Jakarta's main business district, Jalan Sudirman. The site is also within view of one of Indonesia's most famous landmarks, The National Monument.

The plot's long and narrow shape, not to mention the existing mosque structure in the centre of the site, posed a number of challenges to the design process. With its position in the midst of old colonial buildings, Menteng Park will see the construction of the very first high-rise buildings in the Menteng area.

Slated as being a place where one can live, work and play, each of the three towers will offer a unique experience whilst maintaining visual consistency with the rest of the development. A green axis will run through the development, thus intertwining the indoor space with outdoor areas.

The various elements are linked by a lifestyle and shopping corridor that will join the towers together. Menteng Park promises to be an exciting lifestyle hub as well as a dramatic, modern landmark.



GOLD COAST, PANTAI INDAH KAPUK, JAKARTA

— Set amidst the thick mangroves of Pantai Indah Kapuk's nature reserve, the design concept for this mixed-use development was to make it look compatible with its natural surroundings.

Six 32-storey residential towers have a combined floor area of 190,000 square metres, while the development's two 24-storey office towers will provide 75,000 square metres of space. Inspired by the environmentally-friendly Eco Isle concept, this development was conceived as a series of 'isles' connected by ecological elements, such as water, landscape and communal spaces.

The residential towers have a Y-shaped layout to maximise the number of sea-facing units, while their C-shaped arrangement gathers the towers around communal facilities on the ground floor. Residents are immersed in nature, with tree houses, ponds and an array of aromatic flora to provide a relaxing atmosphere.



20 | 20 MENTENG RESIDENCES, JAKARTA

— Located in the prime residential district of Jakarta's Menteng area, 20 | 20 Menteng Residence offers a haven of modern living to urban dwellers.

Each unit's layout is flexible, thus allowing for expansion from a single-dweller house to one where three generations can co-exist comfortably. There are also special 'dual key' units where two families can live in a single apartment yet enjoy the luxury of their own space. As the façade is fully covered in glass, residents can enjoy panoramic views of the city while the interiors are protected by sun shades or screens.

For recreational and sports activities, such as swimming and jogging, there is a generous lap pool, a water gym and an indoor gym. Residents may also choose to indulge in gourmet dining at the clubhouse or gardens where a Michelin-star chef on duty will whip up a delicious feast.



WALKING through THE LANDSCAPE



*In conversation with Lena Quek,
Director of Landscape Design*

WALKING through THE LANDSCAPE



*In conversation with Lena Quek,
Director of Landscape Design*

— ARE THERE ANY PRINCIPLES THAT YOU ABIDE BY WHEN DESIGNING FOR RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS?

Firstly, I take into consideration the type of development the building is catering for. Whether it is high-end, mid-range or public housing. Next, I establish the percentage of the residential typologies, whether they are for large families or for couples. I design the facilities to suit the development in that sense. It helps me decide if we should introduce more couple activities, such as hydrotherapy pools, or more family-oriented facilities such as playgrounds for children.

— WHY WOULD THERE BE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN HIGH-END, MID-RANGE AND PUBLIC HOUSING?

That is because the projects are usually dependent on how much the developers want to spend as well as considerations for other design principles that come into play.

— LANDSCAPE DESIGN OFTEN NEEDS TO BALANCE AESTHETIC APPEARANCE, EASE OF MAINTENANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY. HOW DO YOU MANAGE THIS? DO YOU HAVE ANY GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH THIS?

We have to balance aesthetics and maintenance and sustainability because in reality, the landscape does not grow on its own. Neither does it clean up on its own.

In terms of maintenance, we really need to consider the function of a space. If it is a dining pavilion or barbecue area, we avoid the use of timber or granite as it will stain from any food spillage.

If it is a footpath, we need to make sure that the materials we use are non-slip. If mosaic is used at the pool, special care needs to be taken to ensure that the nosing of the steps are non-slip as well. Of course, there is no way to guarantee a totally non-slip surface in the water. So a precautionary differentiation in colour can help users visibly notice the difference in levels.

As for plants, we try to use low-maintenance plants that do not require constant trimming. In fact, we go for the ones that still look fine even if they were to grow a little bit wilder. Some of the plants we select are probably one-third their final size when we first plant them, but still look good as they grow older.

— WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON REQUIREMENTS YOU RECEIVE FROM CLIENTS?

'Oh, you must give me better ideas than the last launch!' So I always have to come up with other original ideas. But really, there is a limit to how much more original I can be! (*laughs) So that is the usual requirement I get. And of course, we get 'keep within budget!' a lot too.



— WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING RESIDENTIAL PROJECT YOU'VE EVER UNDERTAKEN AND WHY?

There were more than one 'most challenging' projects, actually. There were quite a few. But if I have to choose, I believe La Casa takes the cake. La Casa is a public housing project for upgraders.

It was most challenging because of its theme. The development was supposed to follow a Greek concept. It baffled me why La Casa would be Greek because it sounded more Spanish to me. The architect proposed a façade with blue pop-outs in cobalt blue, much like the Adrian Sea.

So I had to work on a theme for it. It was a very delicate project to theme because it could become very tacky. I was left with the problem of coming up with a scheme that fit into the theme without looking too tacky. So my challenge was to come up with a modern scheme that is Greek.

I approached it by adapting some of the finishes of the architecture on the Greek islands. I introduced this crazy paving in grey which gave the original Greek element a modern twist. I also included pebble wash that was whiter and applied it on some of the feature walls.

For the pool, I introduced mosaic tiles that were in a shade of blue, as close as possible to blue of the Adrian Sea. So that from afar, it reminded one of the Greek islands floating in the Adrian Sea. Some of the walls feature vintage lanterns that were used in place of light fittings.

These were the delicate elements I used to balance the scheme. I can deal with a complicated working site. But what I found more challenging was to stay true to a theme, without being tacky. That was my biggest challenge.

— WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR INSPIRATION FROM FOR YOUR LANDSCAPE DESIGN CONCEPTS?

I find inspiration everywhere. From beautiful women and beautiful men to lifestyle objects and even fashion. I am especially inspired by what I find when I am travelling.

— WHAT SORT OF RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS DO YOU HOPE TO TAKE ON IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

I would like to work on one that floats in the water. That would be very interesting. It would float from place to place. Very much like those floating villages. Of course, that is a sci-fi dream. (*laughs)



We have to balance aesthetics and maintenance and sustainability because in reality, the landscape does not grow on its own. Neither does it clean up on its own.

LENA QUEK



— WHAT DO YOU ENVISION FOR THE FUTURE OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN?

It is a promising future but I feel that people are not according it the kind of respect that it deserves. In terms of the consultancy work, as well as the budget. The industry simply does not accord the fees for landscape fairly.

I have clients who still expect the same landscape costings for bigger project sizes. We have tried sharing tender cost that came back for comparable project sizes that were inevitably higher than their expectations. The clients refused to budge. In the end, when they realised the planting was a bit bare, they conceded and the whole costings worked back to our recommended price. Sometimes, I do not know whether to laugh or feel frustrated. ☼

EXTENDED lifestyle



This high-rise residential development is a resort haven. Residents can enjoy dining in garden pavilions at sky terraces, extensions to their living space.



Miro is a high-rise residential development located within close proximity to Singapore's bustling areas of Orchard Road and Little India. It maximises the site's limited land area through an effective use of space and uses lush landscaping to give its urban buildings a touch of nature.

By placing the approach to the site via the relatively quiet Keng Lee Road, the drive up to Miro feels akin to being on a private driveway with a tree-lined boulevard. The road is further accentuated by linear latticed trellises teeming with luxuriant green creepers and giving the boundary wall a more porous and natural feel. These trellises run all the way up to the entrance podium and culminate in a grand reception structure, while an inclined water feature on the ground level welcomes visitors.

Plants on the trellis' green wall are supported by an in-built irrigation system, which also helps to clear dissolved pollutants in the water. In addition, the trellis' green wall not only enhances the façade's aesthetic appeal but also brings down the building's temperature and keeps its surroundings cool.



The first and second storeys are set aside for group interaction and activities, with the latter serving as a spa haven and an extension of one's living space. This idea of an extended living space can also be seen in the landscaped terraces on the 3rd, 9th, 13th, 17th, 21st, 25th and 29th storeys. Each sky terrace has an integrated pantry for residents to dine in the garden pavilions, which are filled with a variety of plants that support a community of butterflies and birds.

The melding of city life with natural, green elements makes Miro a resort-like haven in the heart of Singapore. 🌿

MIRO, SINGAPORE

DIRECTOR Lena Quek, *Landscape Design* |
PHOTOGRAPHY See Chee Keong



Crinum Asiaticum



Xiphidium Caeruleum



Thaumatooccus Daniellii



Syzygium Campanulatum



Axonopus Compressus 'Pearl'



Livistona Chinensis



Cratoxylum Cochinchinensis



Dracaena Draco



Plumeria Rubra



Suregada Multiflora



LET THERE be light



*In conversation with
Ong Swee Hong,
Director of Lighting Design*

— HOW DO YOU THINK LIGHTING MAKES A DIFFERENCE TO A RESIDENCE?

For residential lighting, there is the consideration for the overall lighting concept intended for the space as well as its ambience. It is often not just about the lighting, but the overall vision the design team has for the house, for the different uses of the spaces as well as different times of the day. For instance, indirect lighting is the best in the creation of a restful environment that is glare-free. This is in contrast to instances when we maximise visual drama through the use of pinspot downlights. The intention of lighting design must be considered for all spaces prior to structuring the use of light in space.

Besides the integration of light to surfaces, the form of decorative elements in light should be understood and considered as well. Lighting sometimes does not just complement the functionality of space. Through the use of the right decorative lamps, the visual quality of selected choice locations of the house can also be enhanced.

Although light in its intangible form is often related to its functional values, there should not be a singular way of approach in the perception of light. Designers should take on a holistic approach when it comes to the inclusion of light in the environment.

— WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR INSPIRATION FROM FOR YOUR LIGHTING DESIGN CONCEPTS?

My design inspiration comes in many forms. From questioning how different cultures use or look at the simple idea of habitation, to the attitude of different people towards lighting.

I usually do not impose my ideas on the owners who have commissioned my studio to design their houses. We always believe that the personality of the individual should come through in design.

We believe in spending time talking to the owners. This allows us understand their needs, lighting preference, even their preference in colour of light, before we commence on the design. Most of our design inspirations come from interaction with people and understanding their different personalities. Each house is illuminated differently and is shaped by the understanding that we establish.

— ARE THERE ANY PRINCIPLES YOU ABIDE BY WHEN DESIGNING FOR RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS? WHAT ARE THEY?

In our studio, we handle projects ranging from large scale mixed-use commercial, to high-end hospitalities involving international hotel operators. For each project type, the approach towards lighting should be treated differently. This is because lighting also needs to adhere to the desired characteristics and environment that the project intends to present to users of the space.

Lighting design for residences is different from all other project types. For residential lighting design, there is also the additional consideration to express the personality and individual preferences of the owner or client through the choice and selection of lighting.

Apart from catering for the functional level of light for different spaces, there is also a need for individual expression. A sense of flexibility needs to be retained to give owners room to take over the space.



UNIT 871 HOLLAND



Besides the integration of light to surfaces, the form of decorative elements in light should be understood and considered as well. Lighting sometimes does not just complement the functionality of space.

ONG SWEE HONG



Each project should not be entirely completed. There should be areas where we allow the owners to ‘grow’ and populate the house with decorative lamps. I feel that for residential lighting design, lighting should anticipate the usage of some spaces, and create sufficient opportunities for elements to be added in other spaces.

— WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING RESIDENTIAL PROJECT YOU HAVE EVER UNDERTAKEN, AND WHY?

To date, most of our projects present different challenges. V on Shenton would be an interesting project as a residential typology. It is designed by UN Studio, as a commercial and residential mixed-use development right in the heart of Singapore’s CBD (central business district), in Shenton Way.

Contrary to the local residential development typology, where most of the spaces are presented along a horizontal plane, the spaces of V on Shenton are located along its vertical circulatory core. In order for the lighting to relate to the different rhythm of movement across the environment, the journey across spaces needs to be addressed. This is established through understanding the movement across the verticality of the mixed-use development.

The challenge lies in the need to create a consistent visual journey from private interior units to public exterior spaces and back into the interior. As this residential development is located in the heart of

the dense city, there is a general need to create an environment that is a restful extension of the interior apartment units. A consistent visual image is hence created from the residential lobby to the outdoor public spaces and back into the units.

Mixed-use development is a common trend in many of our projects, located across different South East Asian cities. Marriott in Kota Kinabalu is a mix of hospitality and commercial. Marriott in Malacca is a mix of hospitality with high-end serviced residences. We are convinced that V on Shenton informs a new attitude in residential lighting that can take on a new form in the approach towards lighting design.

— WHAT SORT OF RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS DO YOU HOPE TO TAKE ON IN THE FUTURE?

We have a good mix of projects at the moment. Residential typologies are evolving with the change in lifestyle and attitude towards our living environment. It is hard to anticipate what we can hope to embark on.

However, we do look forward to projects that encourage an innovative inclusion of lighting technology in the design of the house. For instance, a project that requires innovation in lighting or the inclusion of light fittings to space.

— WHAT DO YOU ENVISION FOR THE FUTURE OF LIGHTING DESIGN?

Lighting design has evolved as a discipline through the years of practice. We have seen many changes in the development of lighting technologies, from higher LED (light-emitting diode) efficacy to the emerging new innovations of OLED (organic light-emitting diode).

In summary, I think there is a better way to look at the inclusion of light to surface. The most interesting challenge that all lighting designers will face is how to capitalise on the small physical dimension of the LED source. This gives rise to opportunities to better synergise the LED lamp into architectural finishes and structures. ✨



THE ENGINEERED SMART HOME



This residential development is an enclosed tropical enclave that fosters a sense of community living with a sustainable natural environment.

Engineering systems in buildings have evolved over the past few decades. We have reached the digital age, when it is now the norm to engage electronic means in varying extent to control the electronic devices available for modern comforts. These electronic devices are usually designed to monitor and control the mechanical, security, safety, lighting, HVAC (heating, ventilation and air-conditioning), humidity, as well as ventilation systems in a building.

To fully integrate the devices with the workings of a building, automation is introduced. This is often a centralised control system, which involves computerised networking of the relevant electronic devices. Such buildings are referred to as intelligent buildings and in the residential context, the Smart Home.

Setting up an automated building may incur costs, which is

eventually recouped in energy and insurance savings, as well as other savings associated with pre-emptive maintenance and quick detection of issues. In the long run, energy and maintenance costs of such buildings are reduced in comparison with a non-controlled building.

An automated system also pushes the limits of energy and maintenance savings to the next level in passive house designs. These houses or buildings are designed with the intention to consume little or no net energy. These green buildings often incorporate devices that offer energy, air and water conservation characteristics. Automation is required to manage heating, shading, and scheduling the usage of these devices. Some green buildings are so efficient they even contribute energy back to the environment.

THE SMART HOME

The Smart Home generally offers electronic control of home, housework or household activities. Traditionally, the home relies on electronic means to control lighting, HVAC, appliances, security and other comfort systems. Through the integration of information technology with the home environment, systems and appliances are able to communicate in an integrated manner, which results in convenience, comfort, security, energy efficiency, and safety benefits.

The Smart Home offers an engineered control over the entire integrated system. Connectivity can be established through the home network to allow control by a personal computer and even remote access from the internet. The remote interface provides control and monitoring of home appliances or the automation system itself via a smartphone or web browser. The popularity of home automation has certainly been on the rise in recent years due to the widespread availability of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. Hence remote connectivity is no longer a hassle. An improvement in the affordability of integrated systems also helps promote its popularity.

The customisation of the Smart Home can also be put to specialised use, such as automation for the elderly and disabled to provide increased quality of life for homeowners who might otherwise require caregivers or institutional care.



68 CAIRNHILL ROAD

INNOVATIONS

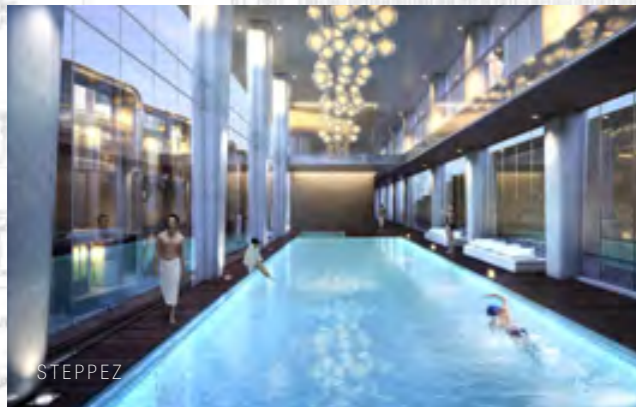
In recent years, innovations to key areas in home automation have seen developments that are more integrated and user friendly. They generally include lighting and shading, audio-visual, HVAC, as well as security and safety systems.

LIGHTING & SHADING

There is artificial as well as natural lighting to consider in a home. Lighting systems control household electric lights. Lights can be controlled on a time cycle, or arranged to automatically go out when a room is unoccupied. Electronically controlled lamps can be controlled for brightness or colour to provide different light levels for different tasks. Lighting can be controlled remotely via wireless control or over the internet.

Lighting can be turned on, off, or dimmed with a building automation or lighting control system based on time of day, occupancy sensor, photo sensors and timers. In simple installations, automation may be as straightforward as turning on the lights when a person enters the room. Some systems can maintain lights on for a specified duration after the last motion was sensed. A photocell placed strategically can sense darkness as well as the time of day, and hence can easily modulate lights outside the house.

Shading control is critical in our tropical climate, where the glare of the sun is ample. Remote control of blinds and curtains can be used for brightness and glare control depending on its desirability. The control of daylight inevitably also constitutes temperature control indoors. In an automated system, the presence or lack of natural light (daylight) can mechanically trigger the control of window shades and draperies to make the best use of natural light.



AUDIO-VISUAL

Most entertainment systems in a home often involve the switching and distribution of audio and video devices. It is not uncommon to have multiple audio or video sources in the modern home. Automatic control systems can be set in place to select and distribute audio-visuals to one or more rooms and can be linked with lighting and blinds to provide mood settings. In advanced installations, rooms can sense not only the presence of a person inside but know who that person is and perhaps set appropriate lighting, temperature, music levels or television channels, taking into account the day of the week, the time of day, and other factors.

HVAC

Heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems often contribute to the biggest energy consumption of the home. A big part of the system handles temperature and humidity control, including natural cooling of fresh air indoors. Simple systems may automatically open and close windows to cool the house. Thermostats allow the homeowner to control the building's heating and air-conditioning systems.

Air-conditioning is a luxury that has become a norm in the modern lifestyle. Systems that are in-built with energy saving features are increasingly popular. The variable refrigerant flow (VRF) system typically supports variable motor speed rather than an on/off operation. By operating at varying speeds, VRF units work only at the needed rate, allowing for substantial energy savings at partial-load conditions.

Integrating the condenser and water heater systems allows collection of waste heat from the refrigeration unit's air-cooled condenser and convert incoming cold water into stored hot water. These energy saving devices can then be integrated as automated or remote-controlled systems, which can be connected to reduce settings of the heating or air conditioning when the house is unoccupied, and restoring the normal setting when an occupant is about to return.

SECURITY AND SAFETY

A household security system predominantly involves locking up, intercoms, security cameras and detectors. Simple installations involve automatic control of access points, including doors, windows and gates. An automated or remote system can trigger central locking.

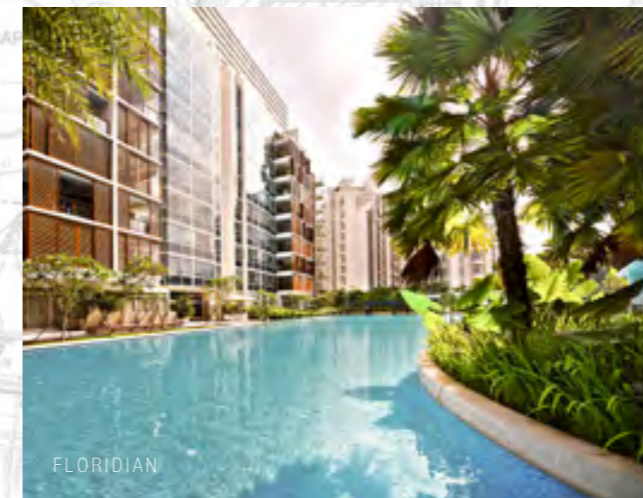
An intercom system predominantly monitors the door entry system via security cameras and can be integrated with the telephone or television set, giving owners audio and visual access to the door or surveillance areas. Some systems allow communication via a microphone and speakers between multiple rooms. More advanced automation systems provide additional services such as remote surveillance of security cameras over the internet.

With such an integration, owners can opt to watch live feeds of their homes from cameras via an internet source. Security systems can include motion sensors that will detect any kind of unauthorised movement and notify the user through the security system or via mobile devices.

The automation system can also simulate the appearance of an occupied home by automatically adjusting lighting or window coverings. This kind of presence simulation acts as a deterrent for prowlers.

Detection systems for fire, gas leak, carbon monoxide, or water leak can also be integrated. An integrated system triggered by a smoke detector which detects a fire or smoke condition can cause all lights in the house to blink to alert any occupants of the house to the possible emergency. If the house is equipped with a home theatre, the automation system can be connected to shut down all audio and video components to avoid distractions, or make an audible announcement. Personal medical alarm systems can allow an injured home occupant to summon help.

The system could also call the home owner on their mobile phone to alert them, or call the fire department or alarm monitoring company. If no one is supposed to be home and the alarm system is set off, the home automation system can call the owner, the neighbours, or an emergency number if an intruder is detected. The possibilities are endless.



SPECIALISED SYSTEMS

As the number of controllable devices in the home rises, interconnection and communication becomes a useful and desirable feature. Almost any household appliance can be monitored and controlled automatically or remotely, from domestic applications such as electronics and appliances, to specialised technological gizmos such as swimming pool systems, rain harvesting tanks, solar panels and even home assistive technologies. More sophisticated systems can maintain an inventory of products, recording their usage through bar codes, or an RFID (radio-frequency identification) tag, and prepare a shopping list or even automatically order replacements and servicing.

The aim of the integrated Smart Home is to create a home which caters optimal comfort and provides a healthy environment. This is achieved through integrating relevant services such as lighting, security, communication, HVAC and assistance systems that respond to the occupants and environment through sensors and detectors, as well as automated or remote controls.



As Managing Director of Rankine&Hill, Peck Khoo has been responsible for the growing strength and focus of the team over the past years, with Rankine&Hill having expanded steadily to its current suite of

engineering capabilities – ranging from mechanical and electrical, civil and structural, to fire safety and environmental engineering. Its comprehensive engineering services paved the way for greater opportunities, allowing Rankine&Hill to delve into newer grounds and secure projects in various categories such as residential, industrial, commercial and retail, mixed-use, hospitality, civic institution and infrastructure.



Conservation Houses



It takes an admirable effort to attempt to conserve a building, which is often entrenched in a historically-rich setting...

...Even more so to make it into a place to call home. It is a sensitive exercise to balance the marriage between old and new. It becomes clear in conservation projects that adaptation and improvements are essential to cater for new lifestyles and habits. For example, when entertaining, a trendy contemporary party often revolves around good food and fine dining. This shift in

lifestyle often requires relocation of kitchen and dining spaces to the front of the house. The new arrangement allows guests to casually mingle with hosts as they cook. Key architectural elements of the conservation shophouse can be updated for effectiveness and relevance. Courtyards are a distinct feature of conservation shophouses.

A courtyard can be introduced to mark the transition between old structure and new extension. Adding wooden decking, landscape and water feature creates a courtyard space for tropical alfresco dining. Coupled with high windows, an open balcony and a jack roof in the attic, a courtyard can also introduce daylight and cross ventilation that is much needed in the long and narrow

shophouse plots. Repositioning a central staircase to the periphery improves internal circulation and creates more usable spaces. In a more inclusive approach, a few of these houses are coordinated inhouse to include interior design, mechanical engineering and project management. This inclusive way of designing ensures a consistency in

concept, material palette, as well as quality. Finishes and contemporary furnishings that go in line with the architectural intent of the space are considered. The interior design of these projects are intended to complement their unique architectural exteriors, to indulge modern comforts as a refreshing contrast to its traditional shell. It is sensitive implementations of

adaptations and improvements that progresses a piece of conservation architecture from relic to home. ✿

A modern kitchen and dining area. In the foreground, a dark glass dining table is surrounded by four wooden chairs with black leather seats. On the table sits a silver wire fruit basket filled with lemons and limes. The floor is covered in black and white hexagonal tiles. In the background, a kitchen island with a wooden countertop and a stainless steel sink is visible. The kitchen cabinets are a mix of dark wood and light green. A white door with glass panes is on the left. A large black and white abstract painting hangs on the wall. Track lighting is installed on the ceiling. To the right, a glass-paned door leads to another room, and a framed picture of a beer bottle is on the wall.

COMMUNAL HOUSE



The Cranes is a conversion of multiple-shophouses into a series of apartments with communal spaces, much reminiscent of old kampong communities.



✿

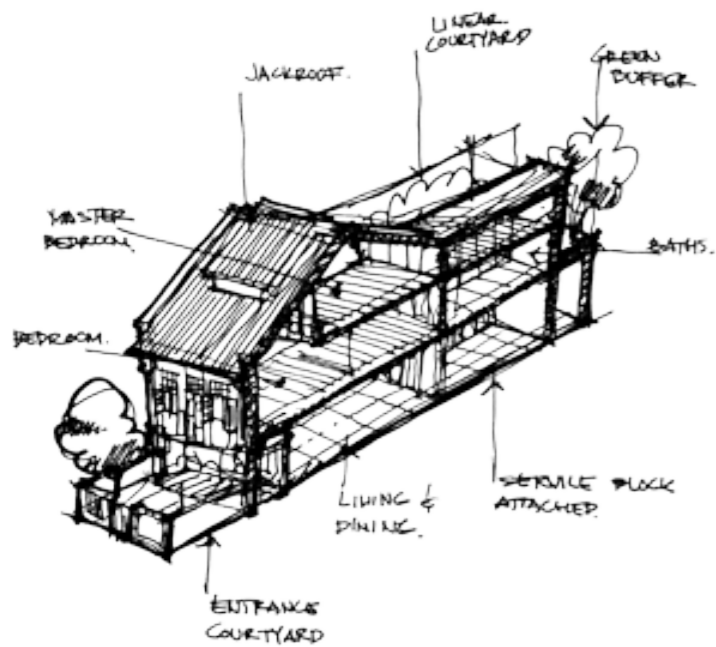
The idea was to create something that was akin to a neighbourhood within a house. We did not just want to build rooms and pretty spaces for people; we also wanted to create chances for people to interact.

THE CLIENT



The Cranes is a multi-shophouse project that expanded from the restoration and redevelopment of one shophouse to include two other adjacent shophouses. Currently, two out of three of the Crane shophouses have been completed while the third remains a work in progress. The two completed shophouses comprise six apartments in total.

The unifying design concept revolves around the idea of community and is very much grounded in the cultural and geographical context of the Joo Chiat neighbourhood, where the shophouses are located and where the client spent much of his life. The nostalgic, fond memories he held of the neighbourhood become the impetus to redevelop the shophouses into a microcosm of its surrounding, reflecting the diverse social-cultural complexities of the neighbourhood.



Concisely put, Joo Chiat is the culmination of a varied and eclectic mix of people and cultures, while the modern critical need for privacy and the traditional kampong style of openness co-exist in strange and yet comfortable harmony. The Cranes is transformed into an authentic representation of this space, bringing the kampong into the house without losing the essential privacy a home should afford. The client's request to reinterpret The Cranes as a multi-generational family house adds a different, more familial nuance to the play of distance and intimacy within the space.





While each apartment is ultimately a self-contained, private space, a multitude of communal spaces is placed strategically throughout The Cranes and is designed to cultivate interaction and bonding in a spontaneous, organic manner, and foster a local shophouse community.

The shophouses share a common courtyard with a stairway that connects the units across the floors. Attached to the stairway is a steel diaphragm wall painted in vivid blue; residents may place plants and other items such as shoes or umbrellas, adding a touch of domestic and personal to the open space. Peranakan tiles also decorate the blue wall, serving as a reminder of the rich cultural heritage of which the shophouse is part and parcel.

A common laundry area on the third floor allows occupants opportunities to mingle and engage in casual conversation during a shared activity - washing and folding their laundry. The public dining room, on the first floor of one of the shophouses, becomes the choice spot for gatherings and events. In the next shophouse, a reading corner and a private second dining room are available for occupants seeking a moment of quiet.

These spaces allow varying levels of openness and engagement, and are deliberately interspersed with interim spaces of respite to foster a greater degree of comfort and ease. This in turn allows occupants to open up and share with the rest of The Cranes community.



SHOPHOUSE #24

The project commenced with the initial restoration of #24. In line with the general design concept of creating a neighbourhood within a shophouse, the private residential spaces were delineated to accommodate different types of residents. The Street House – meant for the social party animal, occupies the front, street-facing section of the shophouse while the Garden House and Sky House (with access to an outdoor deck) are located in the back and provide greater privacy for more reserved residents. The common courtyard, and dining area on the second floor become metaphorical streets and alleys that not only connect the three units but also serve as a spatial buffer, promising each unit's residents their personal space and privacy within the overall shared premise.

SHOPHOUSE #22

#22 built upon and improved the ideas explored in the restoration of #24, reconfiguring the communal spaces to further maximise organic social opportunities and interaction. Both the common laundry area and public dining area can be found in this shophouse.

In an assertion of the shophouse's Peranakan cultural heritage, the floor tiles in the public dining area's attached kitchenette were specially designed and arranged to replicate the random scattering of flower blossoms by a breeze blowing in from the common courtyard.

The Cranes is a thoughtful re-imagination of Joo Chiat that portrays the many facets of the neighbourhood with equal parts nostalgia and re-invention while staying true to the pursuit for human connection. 🌸



— THE CRANES, SINGAPORE

DIRECTORS Mark Wee & Ken Yuktasevi,
Experience Design | PHOTOGRAPHY Jaume Albert
Marti



FROM LEFT: KEN YUKTASEVI AND MARK WEE

BUILDING *a living experience*



*In conversation with
Mark Wee & Ken Yuktasevi,
Directors of Experience Design*

— IN YOUR OPINION, IS A DWELLING
A SPATIAL EXPLORATION OR AN EXPRESSION
OF A WAY OF LIFE? OR BOTH?

KEN The easier thing for me to look at would be as 'an expression of life', because the way we live as humans is a direct reflection of the culture of society, a direct reflection of where we are as people. But at the same time while we can have all these overriding story arcs, now where space is scarce and now we like to live in apartments... we don't realise how important that is.

So you have little details about what makes a person. So I guess it has to be a reflection of their life. But at the same time when you buy a house and you start building your own home, it is actually a big step for a person to actually do that. When you do that, you're literally making a statement about yourself because you are finally solidifying things about the way you live, what's important to you. That all comes out when you build a home.

So when you take that massive step, it is a spatial exploration because you are trying to make a statement about life. It is like saying, 'This is how I choose to live,' and what you do can actually influence the way that other people build their houses. So it's both an exploration and an expression of a way of life.

MARK That is true. Most people have to adapt to the place that they have been given. But for those who have the opportunity to create one, it is actually a big step, like they actually have to visualise how they want to live and they have to make decisions, because they have the power to. When maybe in the past, they were so used to not having to make that decision.

So that is really a privilege, right? Whereas for an architect or an interior designer, sometimes we just look at it as one out of many residential projects. I do not think we ever want us to come to a place where we just look at it as something we have to kick up. Rather, we want to understand how important the place is to a client and be able to journey with him through the creative process.

— FOR A PROJECT WHERE THERE ISN'T A PARTICULAR PERSON THAT YOU ARE DESIGNING FOR, HOW DOES THAT CHANGE YOUR SCOPE?

MARK For example, for The Cranes, it was interesting. The client came to us almost six to seven years ago and we created number 24 (Crane Road), and then a few months before TOP (temporary occupation permit) was granted, he bought number 22 (Crane Road). And then he asked us to work on it. We have only just completed it now. So the journey with this client was very interesting. It has been a six to seven year journey with the client to create a pair of shophouses and actually now we are doing the next one. (*laughs)

It started off with an ambition to create a place for people to live in the spirit of neighbourliness and community. The client was very interesting. We were not designing it for him to live per se. Although he wanted a practical design, so that eventually his family could move in here. But it came from him being familiar with the neighbourhood because he lived in the Katong area for a long time. He was able to crystallise the spirit of the neighbourhood and how it is an eclectic mix of Joo Chiat's night life, food, middle-class residences, nearby HDB (Housing Board Development) flats and a Peranakan history and heritage. He appreciated the eclectic nature of the neighbourhood and the fact that Joo Chiat and Katong had a sense of neighbourliness. Where people would stay for a long time.

Today if they want to rent a house, most people would either rent a condominium flat and basically lock themselves up, or they would rent a shophouse but never open up their doors. So we were creating a space where people could live in a different way. And I think that was really amazing for the client because he felt that that was a very important value that he wanted to provide as a residential experience for his clients and potential tenants. They would never be able to experience that in Singapore.

He knew that most of his tenants would be foreigners and he knew that most foreigners, when they came, they would live in a condominium flat in certain areas or if they live in a shophouse, they would live in one by themselves. But they would never really be able to experience the real Singapore. Our client wanted to create a place where you could engage the neighbourhood in a certain way and you could engage your tenants or your neighbours in a certain way.



Today if they want to rent a house, most people would either rent a condominium flat and basically lock themselves up, or they would rent a shophouse but never open up their doors. So we were creating a space where people could live in a different way.

MARK WEE



So that was an interesting premise for how he created the house. I think the other way the house also evolved was because it was done in two phases. We had the design for one and then as we matured, we looked at the other one years later and we learnt lessons from the first one.

KEN I guess the first house was dictated by research that we did on a certain kind of person who would want to stay in a place like this. And it was really dictated by the kind of street, actually. So we did a study of the elevation of the entire street. The interesting thing was that we started that at the beginning of our design thinking career, so the 'awesomeness' has evolved since then.

We realised that we kind of messed up a lot of things along the way. Not really 'messed up' but we conveniently made assumptions about how people want to live. So before we started on the next one, we did a recap and actually sat down with the tenants again and asked them what worked and what did not work, based on their experiences.

We eventually understood how to ask the right questions as well. One of the things we realised was that the kind of person who would stay here would not be the kind of person who would stay in River Valley, like in a really swanky apartment. They would not stay in a place where their company just put them up at, or even in a normal black and white shophouse.

They have usually done a bit of travelling already, so they are really into authentic experiences, and they would tell us stories like, 'Oh man, the best place I stayed in was in Shanghai. When I walked into my house I had to go through a Chinese kitchen, then go up a staircase to actually get into my house at the top.' And he said that was just authentic, it was raw.

Because you are travelling and working, you either stay in your bubble and not experience the city for what it is, or you experience it for real. So we questioned if we could continue on this theme of 'collision'? Collide with people on the street, collide with people staying here, having the doors open to encourage you to go for a walk at night. So that was one thing that we learnt.

MARK There was this Irish lady. She said there was some room where there were classes and stuff just going on.

KEN One of the things was on communal living. Those are big words now because we are running out of space, so we have to live communally. And the idea of community, you always think, 'Okay, just create more communal spaces!' and create spaces where people can get together, right? But then we realised that privacy is such a big part of community. Facebook for example, you cannot really have Facebook without privacy settings.

So we realised that having your private space was really important, like nooks and corners to be private. And this did not work as well because back then we did not understand the essence of the kitchen. There was no stove, there was no oven. And when you think about having a beautiful dinner party, you are making noise.

It is not a quiet affair. You are laughing, you are celebrating, you are crying, all that kind of stuff. And we put it right in the middle of the house, but that was just programmatic. It was easy to get to. But then we realised no one is using it as a kitchen because they are afraid of bothering their neighbours. So we moved it downstairs and outside where you can actually have more fun. We stuck an oven in there. Maybe you want to bake or entertain. And the original kitchen became more of a reading space.

We were actually inspired by a few things in Spain. You cannot force community to happen. In Barcelona, they



THE CRANES

realised that when people are waiting for their laundry at the laundromats, it is a great time for them to start talking. Hence, they integrated a cafe with a laundromat, so people could have a coffee and chat while doing their laundry. So we took that idea and thought, let's put it up there in the house. We tried to create spaces where collisions could happen unintentionally because as humans we do not really do that intentionally. It is not easy, especially in Singapore.

MARK You see the place actually evolve because now there is a dining room that can really be programmed for events. The client could programme it or people could also book it. But it is all sort of contained. I think the kitchen space on the second floor is interesting because it has become an extension of the apartment. I told the client that when he considers renting the place he could say 'Hey, this space comes with a kitchen!' because it makes sense.

We created a very high ceiling for the laundry area upstairs, because people wanted a very breezy place for their laundry to dry. Those were things we learnt when we interviewed the tenants here. In the previous shophouse iteration, we had laundry at the second floor kitchen and everyone was just washing it there but drying the clothes in their rooms because there was nowhere else to take it to. So we learnt from that.

I think what Ken mentioned was right. Community is like that. People want to feel that they are very near these spaces where you can come up and chat. At the same time, they want to be able to have that privacy and be able to shut their doors and then retreat. That is really important, so if you do not provide that, people get very frustrated.

Actually this new layout also worked for the client's family. He said, 'Even now with my brothers and sisters and my mom and dad, in the past everyone would share a big living room and watch TV together, but now we do not. We watch TV on our own devices. And at meal times, we come out and share the space.'

That is really the truth about how people live today. We want to have independent access yet have these amazing

areas where we can enjoy meals together. This is really reflective of the multi-generational shophouse living that we wanted to create for him as well.

— AS SOMEONE WHOSE WORK IS TIED DIRECTLY TO MAKING HOMES, HOW DO YOU SEE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOME AND LEISURE? IS THERE A BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE TWO FOR YOU?

KEN Home should allow you to enjoy things that you cannot enjoy outside. You do not want to try and imitate walking in a park at home. Some people try to do that with a green wall at home but it is not the same as walking in a park, with people running and all that.

So the things that you have at home should not be the kind of things that you can get outside. It should be a space for your quiet time, for things like enjoying a meal. I am a big nonbeliever of home cinemas because I just want to go to a cinema where there are people around you as well.

MARK I guess in Singapore where it is so crowded, home is an important place to escape to and be yourself. When I start considering how you make a home comfortable, I think how important it is that a person can spend a long time there and feel happy. Hence basics like comfort, interiors, good light, natural wind become very important. At least for me, leisure is being able to just spend time at home with your loved ones or be able to entertain guests. But it could mean different things to different people. Is that the same for you?



We tried to create spaces where collisions could happen unintentionally because as humans we do not really do that intentionally. It is not easy, especially in Singapore.

KEN YUKTASEVI



— WHAT EXPERIENCE DO YOU INTEND AND HOPE FOR OCCUPANTS OF THE HOMES YOU HAVE CREATED?

MARK I would love that the homes we create be homes they can live in for a long time. Even if they did not or they ever had to move, they would cherish it so much that they would either pass it on, or try to sell it to someone who can understand it and who would enjoy the same sense of life they had in it. So I really hope we create a place for happy memories.

KEN I would love to be able to create a place where the owners can have vulnerable experiences. To be vulnerable to their imperfections of themselves and of their families. So a safe place for that to happen. But at the same time, be a place to inspire you and push you forward to improve your life and to grow a family.

— HAS THE WAY TECHNOLOGY SEEPED INTO EVERYDAY LIFE MADE IT DIFFICULT TO DRAW THE LINE BETWEEN WORK AND HOME? IS IT EVEN IMPORTANT TO DRAW THAT LINE?

KEN Of course.

MARK I am attending this parenting class and what they told us was that at night when you go to bed, you should charge your phones outside. So that when you are in your bedroom, you have time to talk and not just be on your devices. That was quite interesting because that was quite a powerful reminder that if technology is like work, then as long as you are on your device, you are still working.

KEN Play and work has integrated because of technology. I will be doing a bit of playing, I will be on Facebook and then I will be answering emails. It all happens at once. Last night, we were doing it again, I was watching Youtube videos and chatting and we thought, "You know what, from now on, 9 p.m., phones are outside."

MARK It actually does something that is dramatically different because all of a sudden there is this whole idea of being present with each other that technology tends to chip away.

KEN The thing I have not tried yet is having a home office though. I did not think that being able to build an office in your home and being able to go there to work is necessarily a good thing.

MARK You must really be disciplined. Because it is so easy...



KEN Yeah. For me, home should be the most luxurious place for you. I am not talking about the finishing and all that kind of stuff. It should be the place where you feel that time is given back to you. For example, looking at this spiral staircase here in The Cranes, we were wondering if we should cover it up, so that it is sheltered.

But as society gets more and more advanced, everything is covered up, like your walkways. Unsheltered is one of those things we do not get to experience with such advancement. When was the last time you got to run home through the rain?

So we thought, would it not be great if you could choose to do that for The Cranes? And that is why we have that umbrella thing because it is porous. So when you come back in the rain, you will have some drops...

MARK You actually get to feel the environment a little bit.

KEN And you never know, that could set off a memory from when you were younger and running around. ... Home should create more moments like that for you.

— HOW DOES ENGAGING INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS ACROSS DISCIPLINES KEEP THE DWELLING TYPOLOGY ON TRACK?

MARK It involves discovery, so we actually do a lot of interviews to try and understand who the client is and what his aspirations are, as well as the context of the area, so that we could come up with a strategy for that.

In the shophouse project, we understood what the market was and we found out that the client wanted to create a unique residential offering that was not a condominium, nor was it a stand-alone shophouse. More like a condominium in a shophouse. Well, almost. (*laughs)

In terms of 360° design, if you think about it, there is architecture, interior design, lighting and even branding – because it is going to be called ‘The Cranes’ and there is even a website. It is interesting that there were multiple disciplines that were brought into this residential offering.



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KEN YUKTASEVI



— IS THERE A PROJECT WHICH EPITOMISES THE SUCCESS OF INTEGRATION?

MARK For residential projects, The Cranes is the most experience design-centric project. It is the most unique.

KEN I will talk about integration with actual clients. There is actually another project that is under construction now. It is an apartment and we decided to see how integrated we could be with our client. So we really got the client to participate in the design.

Throughout the project, we did a few things. We engaged in prototyping with the client. We interviewed the client, we put up cards on the wall, things like ‘escape’ and ‘sanctuary’, things that mean something to him. Basically we got him to create his own mood board out of the pictures.

We also had a Facebook page where he was a member and he could select a few of the people whom he thought knew him the best, so everyone was participating in the design. We even prototyped and built stuff out of cardboard, for things like the kitchen placement. For me, I felt that was the first time when the design team really just integrated with the client and that really yielded some interesting results.

MARK That way of engagement was very effective for that client. Because he was shy.

KEN He is shy and he travels a lot. We just managed to catch him during our workshops and we made him a part of the Facebook group. Throughout his whole day we got him to take pictures, like ‘this is how I brush my teeth’ and he would post it up. Anything that was important to him he would just take a photo and post it up.

MARK In the few residential projects that we have done, if we think about experience design being a real user-centric, user-inspired design, then I would say that because our residential projects are ultimately meant to reflect the owner, I feel all the projects individually reflect their owner’s personalities. I think we were able to achieve that. Unlike some designers who have a certain design language and brand that they will definitely impose on you.

KEN We are more hard-line about the approach rather than the aesthetics. We have to engage you in this way, you have to do things like workshops with us. I think it is because we are trying to make a different statement with each project.

MARK And we ask a lot of questions and we really try to select clients based on whether we can understand them well and, of course, whether they appreciate our aesthetic. Beauty is given. Everything we make has to be beautiful. We are really adamant about that. But we also try to create places where you come in and people say ‘You know, I can

sense a spirit, a life in here.’ Maybe even though it may not be so sleek, it has that wealth and richness of spirit. That is more important.

I want to be able to see a client happy where they look like they just fit in a place and when you take a photo with them in the place, it just makes sense. And I think that is really important. Like when we finished the House at Neil Road, I just knew that that house was the client’s. It could not be for anyone else. And with the client here, you look at the house and think, it is a bit eclectic, there is a bit of oddness, yet there is a boldness, but it is not in your face. The client is like that. So we want our houses to really show the owners’ face.



HOUSE AT NEIL ROAD



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MARK WEE



— WHAT IS YOUR OWN INTERPRETATION OF A DWELLING AND WHAT IS A MUST-HAVE IN YOUR OWN HOME?

MARK I do not own a house, I live in an apartment. There are certain things that are really important to me. Palette-wise, the living room is all very calming to me. Just with nice pieces of art. What is important is that after a long day, I could actually open the windows. Because we live quite high up, I could actually have a breeze.

I could lie on the floor in total silence. I would just have some quiet music and just be myself. I like the coolness of the floor when I lie down, the carpet that is not too thick but enough for you to sit on and still get warm without you sweating. It is best to be without air-conditioning. I like a breeze from a fan and music to just help me zone out. And a place to read. That is all I look for. Actually I’m quite simple.

KEN The house that we have in Australia is an old worker’s cottage and we just built an extension. Our family is all about engagement and openness. If I do not get some engagement with my wife or son, for just one day, I feel it already. So we do not have a lot of walls in the house. I can talk to them from anywhere in the house. Even when I am in the bathroom. (*laughs)

I can have a conversation with her. We also need to have a connection with the context around us. So it does not

matter if it is just a small, tiny porthole. As long as we can connect to what is outside, like our garden. It is really important to us, so we have a few portholes in random places in the house. And because our family is quite touchy-feely, when it comes to flooring, we have a full raw brick floor in the kitchen. You will step from wood to brick. The floor materials are really important to us.

— WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MEMORY OF A DWELLING SPACE? DOES THAT MEMORY INFORM THE WAY YOU APPROACH YOUR WORK?

KEN I guess because being Asian, the best memories that we have with our families are probably when we are eating. So you have the kitchen. We just know that eating time is kind of sacred. But a more recent memory that I have was before we built that extension to my cottage. It was just a cottage with one massive room and one small room, with no kitchen. We had to cook out of this gas burner.

When our son was born, we lived there in that one room and everything was just there. His cot was there, the study table was there, we cooked over there as well. So it was like a studio and we were totally engaging and connected the whole time.

When we needed privacy, we just stepped out into the garden. And those were probably the most intense but also the best memories that I've had in my entire life. Just two months being there with my wife and newborn baby. So it does inform the way I approach my work in having the need to be engaged within your home.

MARK There used to be a house where I lived in with my folks, in Selerar. It used to have this garden. My dad is actually an avid gardener, so every house that we have been to, the garden has always been very beautiful and had enough foliage for privacy.

My parents always made sure that the garden was very lush and they always made sure that the gate is a big black gate so that no one could look in. What was interesting about the garden was that I would have parties where I would lay out a lot of mats and a whole bunch of Christmas lights, put on some music and invite some people over and we would just sit in the garden and talk.

And I realised that these spaces were ultimately quite simple and I think that the simple spaces can be the most powerful ones. That is why I was led to believe that spatial planning is really important in houses and ultimately the cladding and the finishes are also important but it is almost like the guts of it. It is about how you make it feel like life could happen.

— DO YOU HAVE A MANIFESTO THAT YOU OPERATE BY AND TRANSMIT THROUGH YOUR DAILY ACTIONS?

KEN Curiosity, vulnerability, fun, humility, engagement and acknowledging that there is a God. I always live life knowing that you do not own anything. Things have been given for you to steward, whether it is my wife, my family, my talents. It is not because I have earned all that stuff. They are gifts.

MARK I think we have a lot of shared values so that is why we have worked together all these years. So I think making life better is important and we take it seriously. I say that because I think a lot of people do not necessarily want to make life better with their work. A lot of designers just want to get their name out there. So I think who you are designing for is something that gets sidelined in the end.

I think values of authenticity and just being real are important too. I think for the work we create, I always try and look for this thing called 'patina' or 'soul'. There are places that you go to that have no soul. You go in and there is no life. And then there are places that you go to that are simpler in approach but somehow you feel like you want to linger. I feel that if we can create places with soul, that would be great.

The idea of patina is that over time, things will get better. I want something that ages well. I think as a designer, I feel that what we want to try to do is remind people of what the role of design can be. It is really about making life better and honouring others, as opposed to just trying to figure out what is the coolest thing for yourself.

So much that is out there is already about form and making it look cool, yet people can do that without thinking first about the person and caring about them. We feel that we want to do this and we can kick your ass in form anyway. 🌞



CHARMING *heritage*



This conservation home celebrates the traditional charm of Peranakan shophouses with the addition of new spaces that are sensitive to the building's rich heritage.



Located within the conservation district, House at Neil Road celebrates the charm of the transitional-style Peranakan shophouse while creating sensitive additions and alterations that serve as organic developments within the shophouse's perimeters.

Akin to traditional shophouses, spaces are structured in series with courtyards between each space. The courtyards become focal positive spaces that negotiate the boundaries between the public and private as well as the old and new. The original courtyard – with its preserved centerpiece of an ornate fish moulding – serves as the heart of the main public space while the new courtyard acts as a pivotal point between the old shophouse and its new extension.



The shophouse walls tell a similar story of progression from old to new, with paintwork along the forecourt's boundary walls stripped and left unfinished, revealing layers of paintwork and the shophouse's history. Exposed brick walls reveal old bricks manufactured with local clay that are no longer in production. This creates a stark contrast when juxtaposed with the original courtyard wall – its original blue paintwork and folklore-inspired fresco restored to celebrate the shophouse's Peranakan heritage.



With its blending of old and new elements, this house not only preserves a unique cultural heritage, but also acts as a storytelling device that narrates the histories of its past and present occupants.



Other preservation efforts include the restoration of the façade; the original red cement flooring of the five-foot way, living and dining spaces; the original timber flooring and exposed floor joists of the upper levels; and the terrazzo finish for the bathrooms, which highlights an age-old craft that is becoming a dying trade in Singapore. Details such as bathroom vanities accented with glazed Peranakan tiles, the old iron main gate and the “pintu pagar” (Malay for “door gate”) demarcating the master bedroom’s entrance further enrich the authentic tonalities of the shophouse.

With its blending of old and new elements, House at Neil Road not only preserves a unique cultural heritage, it also acts as a storytelling device that narrates the histories of its past and present occupants. 🌟

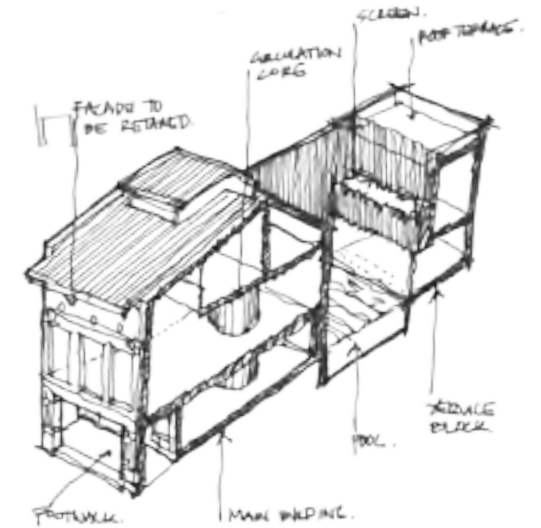
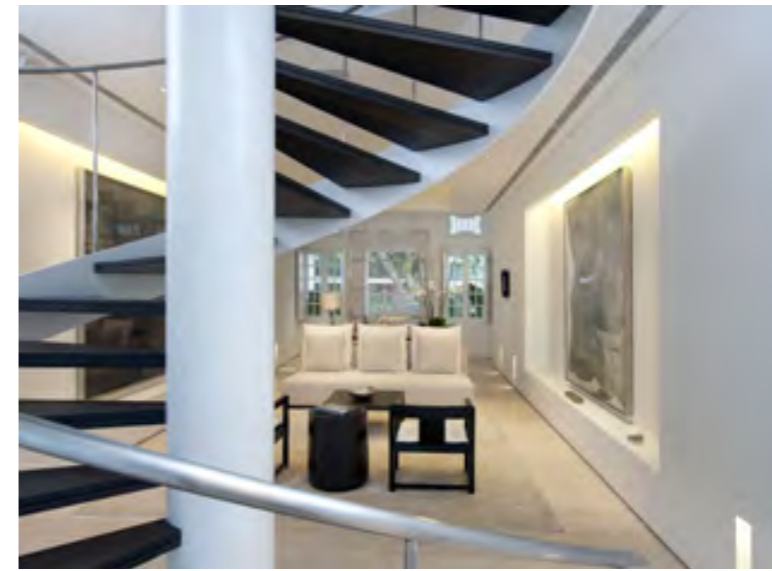




FLEXIBLE LIFESTYLE



Restoration work on this art deco shophouse introduces flexible spaces for open-plan living, as well as a courtyard that brightens and cross ventilates.



This was the renovation and restoration of a traditional art deco style shophouse in Singapore. What makes it special is how the historically intact façade blended well with its contrastingly modern interior.

Four key ideas influenced the design: introduction of light, space continuity, symmetry and adherence to conservation guidelines. By having a well-planned layout and by making competent material choices, the designers also created energy saving alternatives for the home's lighting and ventilation needs.

NATURAL LIGHTING

In the attic, a jack roof was added to allow light to enter directly from above and penetrate all other areas of the house. At ground level, the living room leads directly to a dramatic courtyard, which serves as a natural light well. Sleek aluminium cladding lines its walls and acts as reflective surfaces, which help enhance the sun's natural illumination.

FLUIDITY OF SPACE

This metallic skin continues on into the kitchen's walls and unifies the central courtyard with the back portion of the house. Absence of walls between the living room, courtyard and kitchen on the first floor creates a fluid space spanning these three distinct areas. Retractable glass panels also provide an option to seal off the kitchen, if necessary, but its transparent surface allows for visual continuity across the entire floor.

The courtyard is also a means for ventilation and provides natural cooling that reaches all corners of the house. Space is maximised in the lounge area where its walls double as both exhibition canvas and storage space with large art pieces cleverly concealing the recesses within the concrete.

The master bedroom's design plays to this idea of spatial continuity as well. A unique well in the room provides a window through which the first floor can be viewed, while its ensuite bathroom protrudes slightly over the pool area, melding the two levels into one.

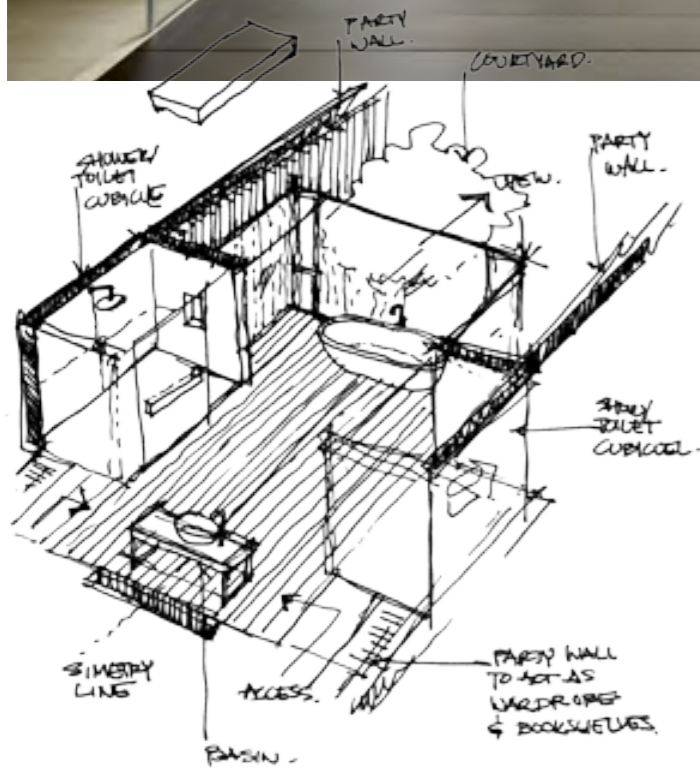


By having a well-planned layout and by making competent material choices, the designers also created energy saving alternatives for the home's lighting and ventilation needs.





ADHERING TO SYMMETRY
Spatial symmetry is achieved with a gorgeous spiral staircase forming a central pin through the main building and up into the attic. The staircase is lit naturally by a cylindrical skylight, which creates a vertical beam of light that strikes the base of these stairs beautifully. The master bedroom stays true to the axial layout of the house, with symmetrically placed bookshelves flanking the path leading to the adjacent study area.



HARMONY BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW

Being first and foremost a conservation project, it was essential to strike a fair balance between the house's colonial past and the necessities of urban living. In keeping with government guidelines, the external façade was restored to pristine condition, creating a refreshing contrast to its ultra-modern interior.

Natural elements were also added within the house for that much needed touch of nature. Slabs of stone laid across the pool linking the lounge to the kitchen, and in the middle of the path stands an impressive century old frangipani. The twisted old trunk adds character to the modern look of the house, reflecting a quaint marriage of past with future. 🌿



55 BLAIR ROAD, SINGAPORE

DIRECTORS Diego Molina & Maria Arango,
Architecture | MAIN CONTRACTOR Jia
 Construction Co. Pte Ltd | MECHANICAL &
 ELECTRICAL Rankine&Hill (S) Pte Ltd | CIVIL
 & STRUCTURAL KKC Consultancy Services |
 QUANTITY SURVEYOR Rodney Chng & Associates
 Pte Ltd | PHOTOGRAPHY Derek Swalwell



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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: ONG TZE BOON | EDITOR: ASHVINKUMAR KANTILAL | CREATIVE DIRECTOR: JOANNE TAN | DESIGNER: DAVINA TJANDRA
WRITER: ELAINE LEE, RAEMARIE LEE, TAN YING XUAN | PROOF READER: ELAINE LEE, STEVEN LEE, TAN YING XUAN | PORTRAIT
PHOTOGRAPHY: JAUME ALBERT MARTI

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