

# No. 62 NIVEN ROAD

A 'Space' Odyssey



2007 AWARD

CATEGORY B

**Owner:**  
*Mdm Wong Chian*

**Architect:**  
*Linghao Architects*

**Engineer:**  
*KH Consultants*

**Contractor:**  
*T & T Technology Contract Services*

**W**ith its extremely narrow width, this two-storey Early shophouse in the Mount Sophia Conservation Area appears small and nondescript on the outside. However, through many novel ways, its interior space has been cleverly used to create a cosy abode.

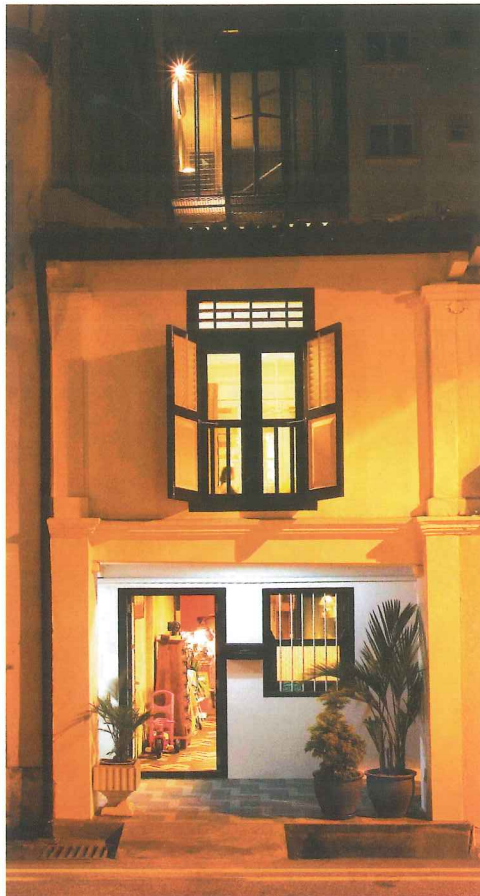
### Neighbourhood Charm

Neighbourhood talk has it that this low and squat shophouse was built by a wealthy Arab merchant before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is one of a set of three identical units in a row, one for each of his three wives. Today, an enchanting air lingers in the area, with this house nestled between a quaint sari shop and a quiet Indian grocery store.

The architect was mindful not to disrupt this charm and has reinstated the unit's façade, which had changed much over time, back to its original architecture. On the inside, as the party walls were generally in good condition, the crack lines were repaired before a new layer of plaster was applied.

### Clever Spaces

The two-storey front portion was carefully restored and a new, four-storey rear extension was added to create more rooms. Eight micropiles were



*Narrow building ingeniously turned into delightful and charming home*

driven with great care into the ground during the construction, with contractors mindful of the existing party walls. The resulting new structure has an expanded metal staircase that joins the bedrooms and leads to a roof terrace. Maximising the limited space, the new addition is modern and arty, yet in tune with the old-world gravity of the original unit.

The site has a width of just 3.7 metres. Despite the narrow width, the architect has ingeniously 'created' new spaces within. For instance, a lightweight steel mesh sunscreen was erected over the full-length glass windows of the fourth-storey study. While it serves to keep the sun out, this sunscreen also extends the width of the room by 700mm, making it instantly larger and more airy.

### Small Wonder

Despite its narrow width and small area, the house never feels cramped, thanks to creative thinking. The result is a home

worthy of inspiring new modern memories for the occupants and their neighbours.



First storey interior with herringbone floor tiling pattern



Roof terrace



Original timber louvred windows



Lightweight steel mesh sunscreen over full-length glass windows



First storey window of traditional design



Patterned tile flooring



Raw and arty feel of study room at fourth level



Expanded metal staircase spanning through narrow interior



Handrails etched into existing wall



Spacious modern interior at second storey



Modern fittings for today's living

## History of the Building

- . Categorised by URA as Early Shophouse Type
- . Property has changed hands at least 8 times, with the 1st transaction dating to 1922
- . Mr Din, owner of adjacent unit at no 60, tells a story that the 3 shophouses, no 58, 60 & 62 were originally built by an arab merchant to house his 3 wives.
- . When the client purchased the unit in 2004, the shophouse had minor additions of a tin roofed rear and the front window were glass louvre panels.
- . There was a long meeting room table and 18 chairs made out of rosewood belonging to the Chinese clan association that was the previous owner.