

68 CAIRNHILL ROAD

Sanctuary Reinvented



Owner:
Ms Elaine Teo

Architect:
Ong & Ong Pte Ltd

Engineer:
KKC Consultancy Services

Contractor:
Royce Chai Construction Co Pte Ltd

This once tiny and dilapidated wedge-shaped two-storey terrace house, circa 1930s, has been articulately restored and transformed into a spacious family home that is arguably even better than the original.

Gaining Lost Ground

Faced with the challenge of an inherently oddly-shaped forecourt and a baffling dead-end five-footway cramped within the tight property envelope, the project team's first triumph was in 'normalising' the layout and façade of the house. This included the reconfiguration of the ground level to incorporate the precious space reclaimed from the redundant five-footway. An inaccessible piece of triangular land at rear of the house was also cleverly integrated into the old house, making way for much-needed new living spaces. This helped to create more room on the upper storey for a new en suite and master bedroom at the rear.

The creation of a jackroof, in character with houses of the era, made way for a new cosy mezzanine suite for guests. Ample in proportions, well-ventilated and complete with generous high ceilings, all the newly created spaces on the second floor radiate with unmistakable old charm.



Art Deco terrace house restored into spacious family home

The newly added roof terrace creates another haven for the family to spend quality time and enjoy the outdoors amidst a neighbourhood that is among the city's most treasured built heritage.

Aligned With The Past

Taking into consideration that the house was in an advanced state of disrepair, the restoration effort has been exemplary. The project team is commended for salvaging as much as was possible and for repairing and expertly replacing what they could not. Existing timber windows, doors and mouldings were fixed and reinstated. The balcony, which had been modified beyond recognition, was also thoughtfully brought back to its former glory with original cast iron railings adding to its authenticity.

Light From Above

Within the house, the retention of the open-to-sky courtyard celebrates this distinctive feature of pre-war architecture. The funnel

of natural light from the courtyard illuminates the living spaces, enhancing the visual connection between the front of the house and its rear block. Incorporating a water garden setting within the area adds a fresh outdoor feel, well suited to a modern family home.

The restored façade and the forecourt wall now align with the rest of the neighbours' and gave this previously neglected conserved house a new lease of life.



Open-to-sky courtyard with water garden setting



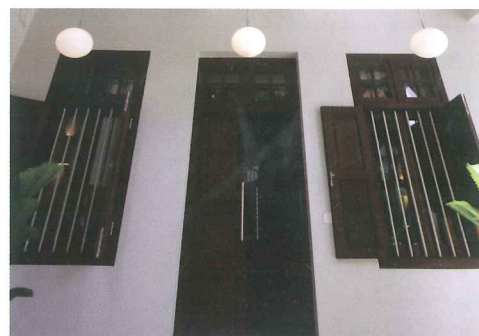
New staircase leading to roof terrace



Cantilevered balcony with original railing design



Spatial quality of first storey kept



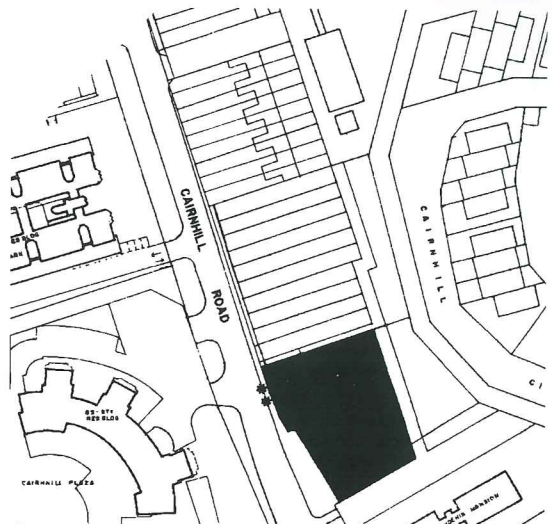
Restored front façade showing symmetrical emphasis



Bedroom at upper storey

68 Cairnhill Road is the last house of a row of 28 shophouses built between the turn of the century and 1940. Most of the houses are two-storey terrace houses of the Late Shophouse and Art Deco Styles and were awarded conservation status in 1989.

This particular house is categorised as an “art deco style shophouse” and is likely to have been built in the 1930s.



Site area: 202.60 m²

GFA: 291.31 m²

Construction period: January 2008 to May 2009

Being the last house on a tapering site meant that number 68 Cairnhill Road has the shortest length (from front to back) and its site is an oddly shaped trapezium, almost ending in a point. Also, on its length-side, there was originally a five-foot way that lead to nowhere – see image. Another irregularity was in that the back yard too had a kink, making it extremely narrow. At its narrowest point, one's shoulders could touch both sides of the house.

The original house had one bedroom on the first level and another on the second storey. The first storey also consisted of a kitchen, a toilet and a small yard. In addition to the bedroom in front, the second storey had another living room and a toilet at the rear.

The house was uninhabited for many years prior to the restoration and was in a state of disrepair.



front façade showing forecourt and five-foot way



front façade showing forecourt and five-foot way



rear view



forecourt wall