

THE LORONG 24A SHOPHOUSE SERIES

Eight Treasures



Owners:

Regality Holdings Pte Ltd, Mr Ang Kong Hua,
Mr Tan Hup Foi

Architects:

Atria Architects, Farm with KD Architects, HYLE Architects,
Lekker Design with Ong Ker-Shing Architecture,
Linghao Architects, Liu & Wo Architects, Zarch Collaboratives

Engineers:

EDP Consultants Pte Ltd, GNG Consultants Pte Ltd,
Kee Fong Engineering Consultants

Contractors:

Komex Building Construction Pte Ltd,
M & R Building Maintenance, The Mandy's Pte Ltd

The façades of the eight units of conserved Chinese Baroque Style shophouses, built circa early 1900s, have been respectably restored. Entrusted to the hands of different architects, each unit has been given a new lease of life with a distinctive interior expression that accentuates the eclectic character of its Geylang neighbourhood and spurs the creative engagement that spills onto the streets.

Reviving The Old

All eight shophouses share the same façade typology characterised by rich detailing like the glazed porcelain tiles, motifs, intricate bas-relief mouldings and stained glass windows. Practising the 3R principles and observing the Specific Façade Restoration Guidelines, all elements on the facades were repaired and reinstated where possible - from the five-foot way to old peepholes, fanlights, decorative tiles, windows, doors and vents.

Within the interiors of the shophouses, elements such as the profile, pitch and height of the existing roof are retained. The original floorboards were repaired and re-varnished, with badly damaged ones replaced.

To Each His Own

To introduce diversity and contrast behind the relatively uniform facades in the row, the owner engaged different local architects for each shophouse on the same fixed and modest budget. This compelled the architects to come up with creative solutions to make the most of the budget and yet, effectively demonstrate how the resulting interior spaces could be treated in different and exciting ways to showcase a refreshing angle to shophouse restoration. Notable design features and solutions in the units include the reintroduction of airwells, which although typical in



Collection of eight restored Late-Style shophouses

shophouses of the era, were not part of the original designs of any of the eight. While every unit now offers a different interior spatial experience, the flow of natural light seems to be the guiding factor for all designs.

There is also an array of interpretations for the central stairway structure connecting the top and ground levels of the shophouses. From the suspended steps over an internal courtyard pond in Unit 9, to the meandering fence-like stairway leading to the lofty roof garden in Unit 11, the steel spiral 'red dragon' in Unit 13, and the origami-

esque sculptured centerpiece in Unit 15, the treatment of the stair core seemed to lead the interior metamorphosis of every unit, bringing drama and illumination into the otherwise light-deprived central core of each house. The result is an intriguing display of what can happen when space and imagination meet within the narrow confines of a vintage shophouse.

Ingenious Engagements

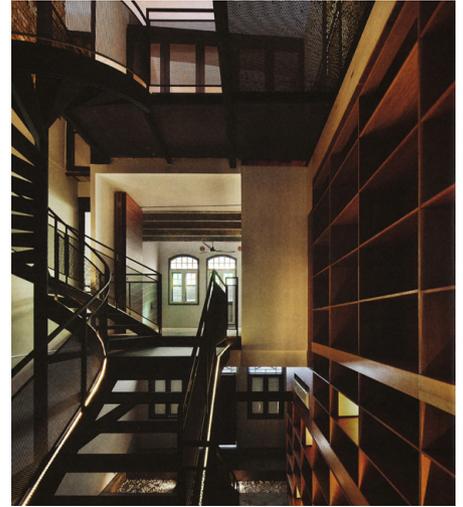
The intent from the very beginning was to create a series of distinctive shophouses that could be enjoyed by tenants, and yet shared with the community to spur creativity and enhance the appreciation of Singapore's built heritage. With the ongoing idea to open up these units between leases for complementary use for community building activities, the owner seems to have made some headway in his goal to activate a new kind of excitement in the street and area. In no small measure, this project is a glowing example of how architects and owners can creatively work together to combine the old with the new in a refreshingly unexpected way to transform life in the area - strengthening the community spirit, reviving the social sense among the inhabitants and contributing positively to the street.



Unit 13 - Steel spiral 'red dragon' staircase



Unit 11 - Meandering fence-like stairway



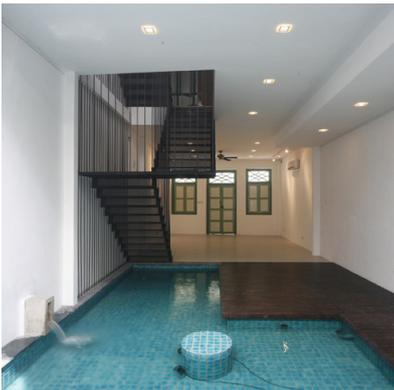
Unit 17 - Stacked boxes with variations in scale



Unit 15 - Interplay of living and display spaces



Unit 21 - Monolithic pool and exposed brickwalls



Unit 9 - Suspended steps over an internal courtyard pond



Unit 19 - Rich details of glazed porcelain tiles, motifs and intricate bas relief mouldings



Unit 5 - Minimal and practical intersections

The Lorong 24A Shophouse Series

Conservation with a Difference

Design commencement: 2010, Year of completion: 2012.



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What Is This Project - The Lorong 24a Shophouse series represents a novel art- and design-led approach to conservation and place-making in Singapore.

The project revolves around 8 conservation shophouses along Lorong 24A Geylang, owned by a single client consortium. The idea was to invite 8 local architects and designers to produce 8 unique concepts with a common brief. The shophouses would be rented out and regular events would be held in the various shophouses to help activate the street, and bring another point of view to Geylang, a renowned red-light district in Singapore.

Pocket Projects was appointed as the creative development consultant for the project. The involvement started from the initial conceptualisation, search and selection of the 8 architects and designers, working closely with the appointed architects on the various projects, subsequent tenant selection to curating events, programming and events planning. This strategic long term involvement in the place-making process was necessary to ensure consistency in terms of the outcome, which often becomes experiential and accumulates from finding the right designers, the selection of the right tenant profiles and down to event management.

In contrast to conventional “top-down” urban planning projects, this scheme is built around a collection of architectural approaches to conservation--in effect, eight complementary proposals for the shophouse. 8 architects and designers took on the challenge and translated this idea into reality. Each shaping their own shophouse according to their interpretation of the common brief. This resulted in an exciting showcase of possibilities where atypical spaces and imagination meets the narrow typology of a shophouse. These homes have been designed to accommodate a shared interest in visual arts, design and media, as a basis for community-building among neighbours. Each unique design attracts its own occupant but as a cluster with common interests in design and the edginess, they form a small but dynamic core, revitalizing the street through open houses, art exhibitions, and social activities to engage longtime residents of the Geylang district as well as others from further afield.

What Has Happened So Far.

To date 14 events have been held at the project, including student shows, local artist exhibitions, talks, architecture tours, pop-up dinners. The project has reached out to a variety of groups including students, design professionals, tourists, local residents and interested public. Some of which have discovered their influence on the urban fabric, and others who have voiced their support for good architecture. Apart from the restoration work to the shophouses, the new designs have added value and interest to them, by catering to contemporary living needs and offering a strong design attraction.

The Future is Promising and Always Evolving.

The project continues to evolve. A different energy has been brought to the street. We hope that the ideas will be contagious and spread to other parts of Singapore. A kind of micro-neighborhood has been started as a result of a design-driven initiative. Recognition of this approach will acknowledge the achievements through design practice and hopefully inspire other collectives or groups to seek out their own neighbourhoods to make a difference.



APPENDIX - LIST OF EVENTS HELD AT THE LORONG 24A SHOPHOUSE SERIES

	Venue	Event & Description	Dates
01	Unit 9	The Lady and the Dragon - solo art show by local French artist	April 2012
02	Unit 11	The Art of Rebellion - group art show by local young artists and pop-up store	April 2012
03	Unit 17	Urbanature - National University of Singapore Architecture Year 1 exhibition	April 2012
04	Unit 17	Aligning - single artwork by local artist Tang Ling Nah	April 2012
05	Unit 9	Bombay Sapphire - 'World's Most Imaginative bartender 2012' private event	May 2012
06	Unit 21	Occupations - National University of Singapore Architecture Year 2 exhibition	June 2012
07	Unit 15	Rock Dreams - solo show by local rock music photographer	July 2012
08	Unit 15	CuratingLab: Curatorial Roundtable 02 - public talk series by NUS Museum	August 2012
09	Unit 13	Acoustic Anarchy - solo art show by local urban artist	September 2012
10	Various	World Architecture Festival 2012 - Architectural Tours	October 2012
11	Various	Singapore ArchiFest '12 - Architectural Tours	October 2012
12	Unit 19	Alexandre Mischan - solo private show by US artist, hosted by unit 19 tenants	September 2012
13	Unit 5	Hat of Cain launch - launch party of panamam hat boutique	February 2013
14	Unit 17	Rightclicka - Private party	April 2013
15	Unit 17	Alice in Asylum - Pop-up secret dinner and bar experience	April 2013

The Lorong 24A Shophouse Series Conservation with a Difference

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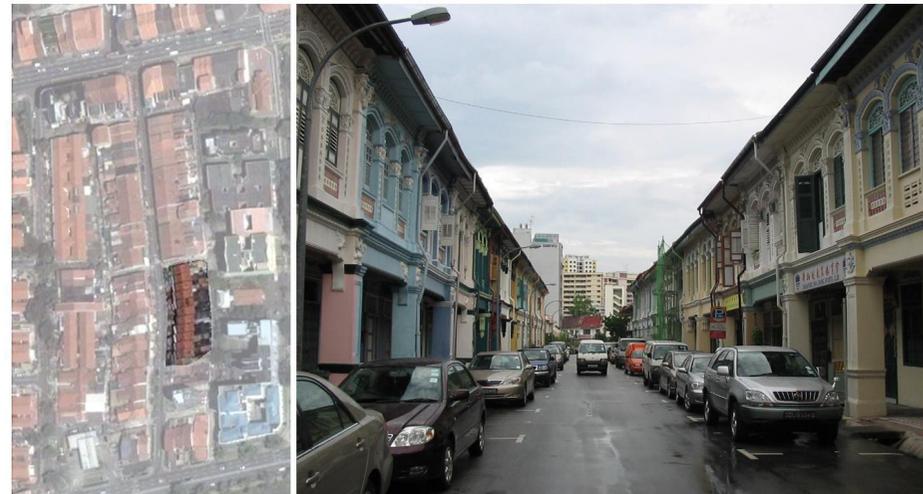
The Project is located in Geylang, a secondary settlement conservation zone. By the early 1900s, Geylang, originally covered by plantations and fields, was transformed into an urbanized area with rows of mainly 2-to 3-storey shophouses.

Built in the 1920s, the shophouses along Lorong 24A are characterized by rich detailing such as glazed porcelain tiles, motifs, intricate base relief mouldings and stained glass windows. Many of them are also brightly coloured, with each unit having a distinctive colour combination. All these are characteristic of the Chinese Baroque shophouse typology, in which the extensive ornamentation, is pre-dominant in the early 1900s.

In contrast to the adjacent streets, Lorong 24A has not had a history of red-light activity. It is instead home to an eclectic myriad of old and new small business, ranging from a traditional Chinese medicine shop (a family home spanning three generations, replete with shop cat and antique medicine cabinetry) to a flamenco dance studio. The street also houses a number of old Chinese clan associations, as well as a Buddhist library. The Project attempts to highlight Lorong 24A as an oft-overlooked pocket of quirky charm and old-world calm amidst the rest of Geylang, an area typically associated with red-light activity and immigrant workers dormitories. It hopes to draw attention to the charming eccentricities and historical richness of the street.



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satellite view of lorong 24a geylang

street view of conservation shophouses along lorong 24a geylang



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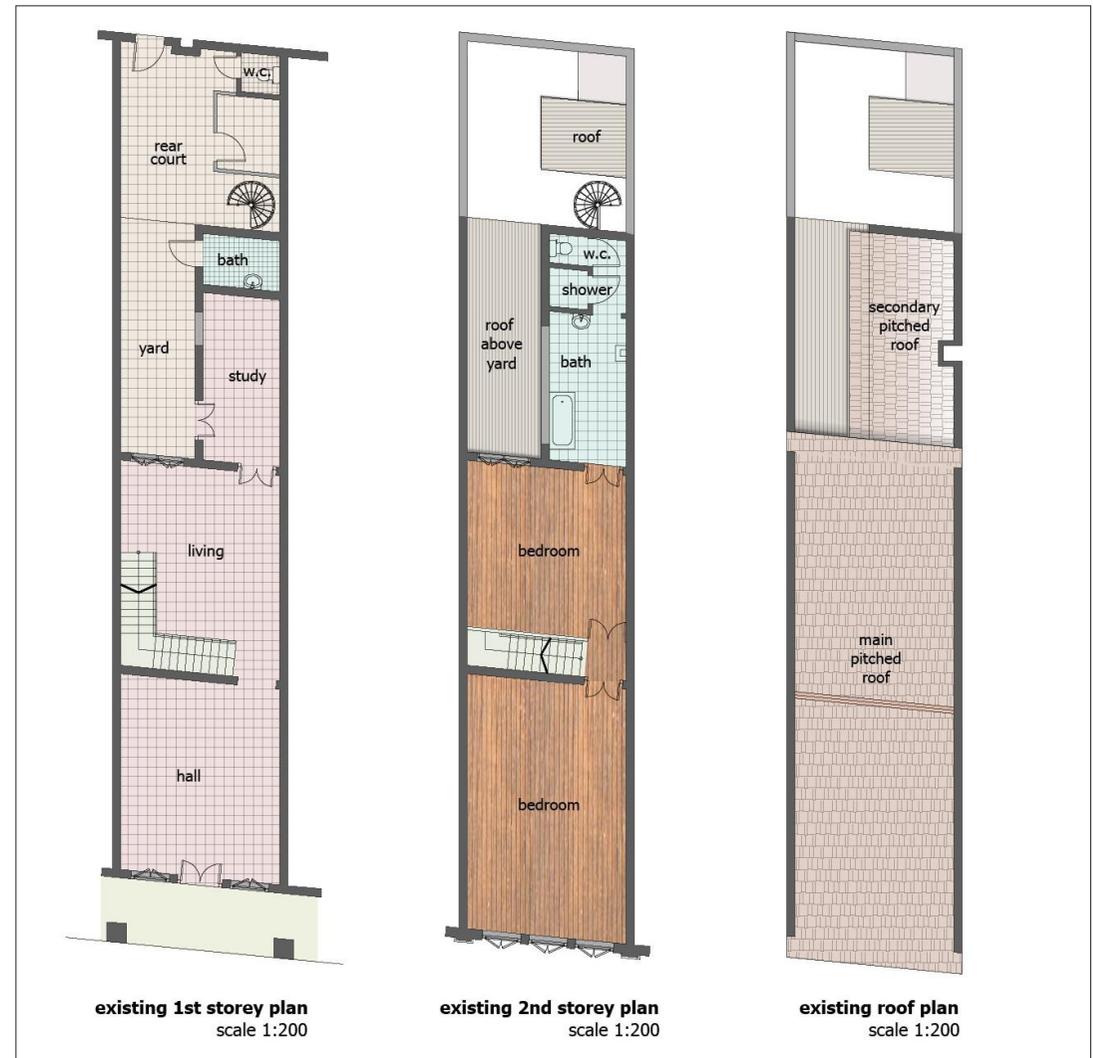
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The existing shophouses were 2-storied and shared similar configurations. Common features would include the five-foot way, open rear court, a quarter-turn staircase located in the centre of the house. The ground floor of each shophouse comprised an entrance hall and private living space behind the central staircase on the ground floor, with the kitchen and bathrooms located in the rear, while the second floor was divided into 2 bedrooms. The central wall spanning the breadth of each unit, separating the external kitchen area from the internal living area, greatly reduced the amount of light entering the central interiors. The traditional central airwells were also absent.

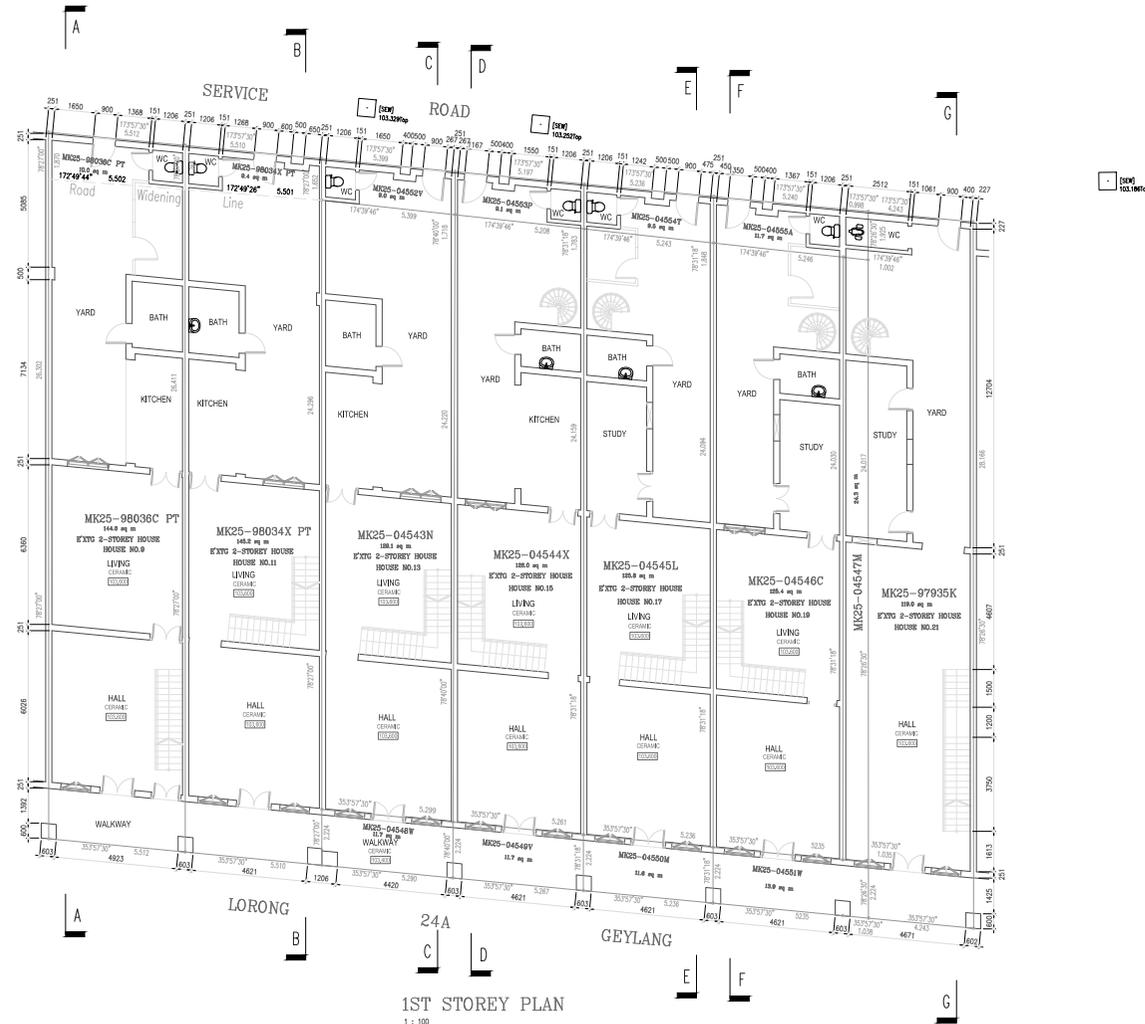
The following represents the typical plan of the original shophouses.





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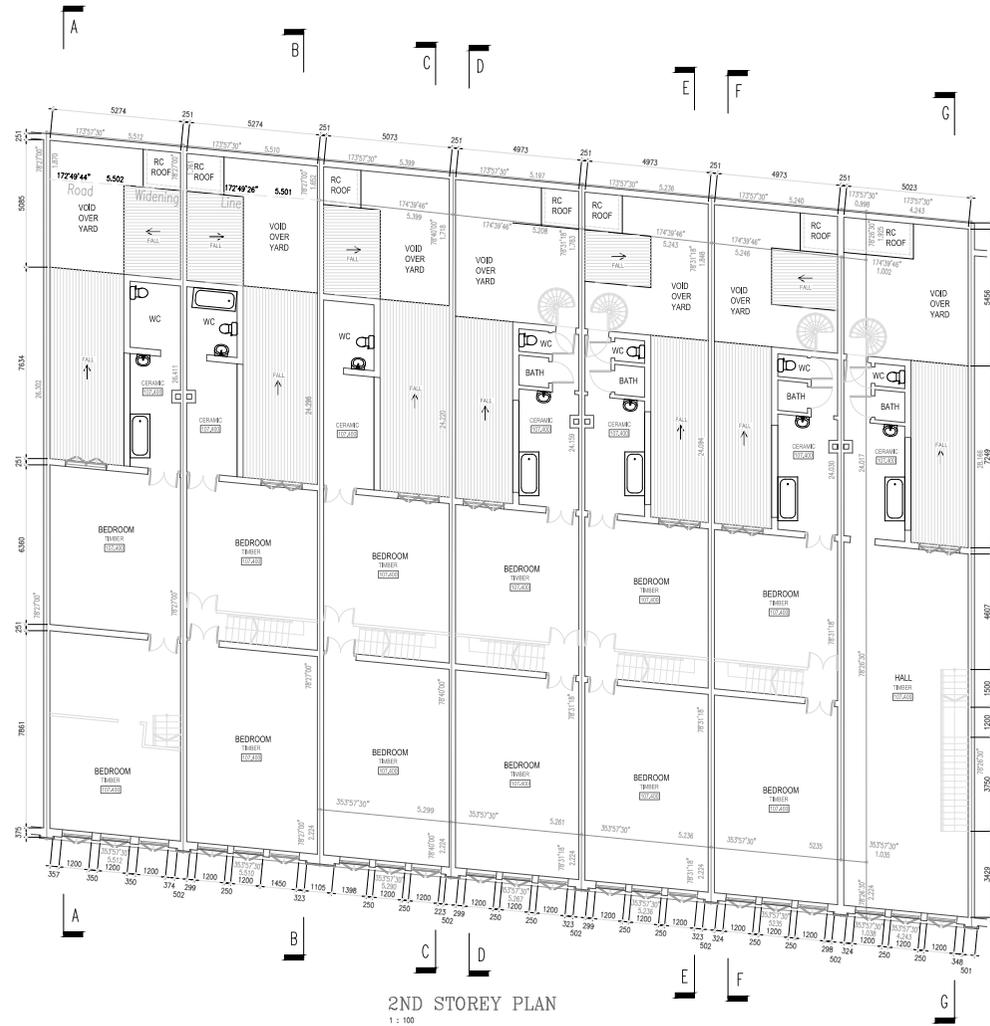
> measured drawings
1st storey





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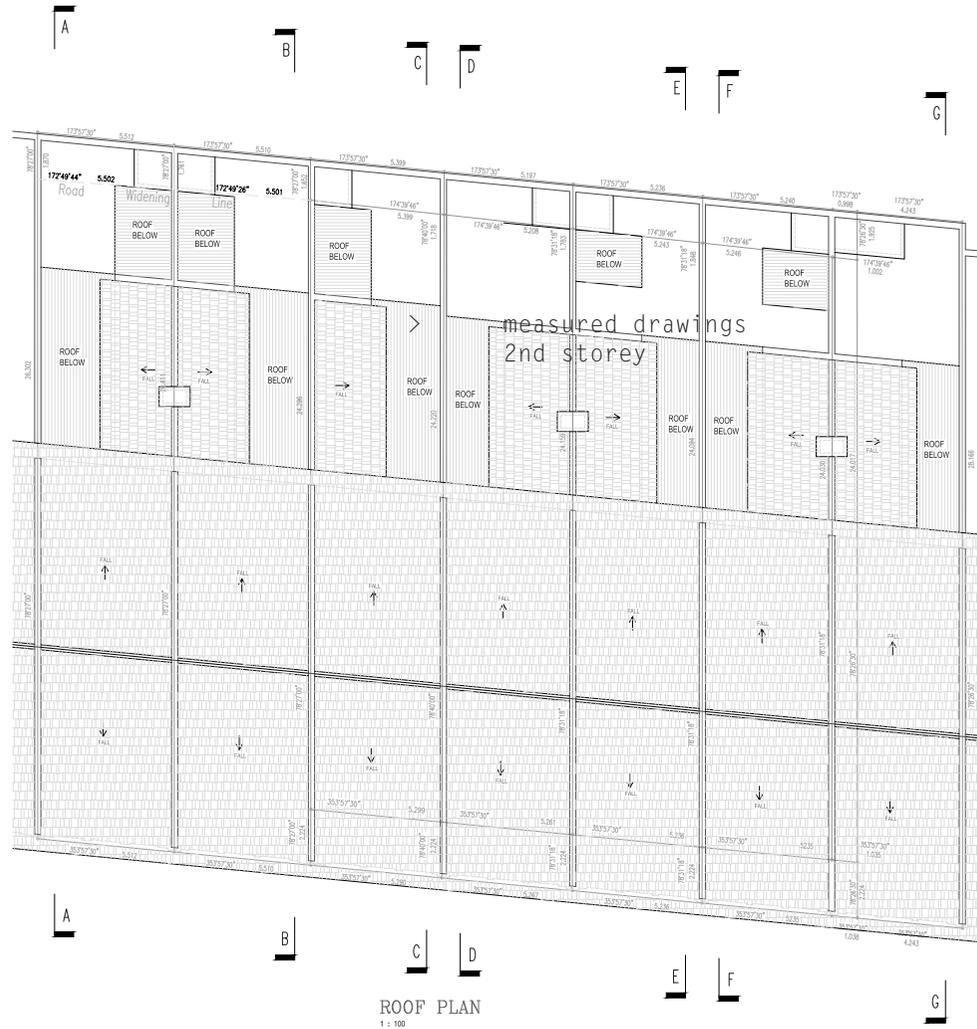
> measured drawings
2nd storey





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> measured drawings
roof





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> typical features



> front facade



> rear court & kitchen area



> five-foot way



> second floor bedroom



> entrance hall



> Existing roof tiles over rear yard and ventilation blocks