

No. 90 CAIRNHILL ROAD

Breathing New Life



2004 AWARD

CATEGORY B

Owner:
Double Two Investment Holding Pte Ltd

Architect:
Guz Architects

Engineer:
Worley Pte Ltd

Contractor:
Overview Construction Pte Ltd

*B*uilt around the 1930s, this two-storey Second Transitional Style terrace house, with Art Deco elements like cross balustrades at the open verandah and glass panel fanlights in front, is located in the Cairnhill Conservation Area. It was a victim to haphazard renovations until this bold restoration effort, with the old and new spaces well integrated for modern tropical terrace living.

Let There be Light

Although this delightful terrace house was in good structural condition prior to restoration, its interior was a mess of small dark rooms. Gone were the abundance of light and natural ventilation so central to such a traditional tropical terrace house. Also gone was the original timber floor which had been replaced with reinforced concrete by the previous owner.

The new owner's brief was to create a four- to five-bedroom house with lots of light and to recover the original spirit of the house. A detailed photographic record of the building particularly its façade, which was largely intact, was carried out to ensure accuracy during the restoration process.

Spatial Quality Restored

The main building, including the façade, roof form and the jack roof, was retained and restored, and the original timber floor was carefully reinstated.



Restored terrace house with entrance forecourt

The new timber floor was carefully designed to mimic the original construction while complying with fire safety requirements. Electrical conduits were also cleverly concealed in a groove that is notched into the top of the beam.

A new three-storey rear block, compatible both in scale and proportion to the main building, was added. There is also a rooftop swimming pool to capitalize on the view of the beautiful trees.

New Breath of Life

Between the old and new blocks, a new central courtyard was created to function as the "lung" where light and air are introduced into the long thin terrace plan.

The courtyard is also landscaped with bamboo plants and a koi pond to bring nature into the house.

The reinstated timber floor of the main building was set back from the courtyard to create a high-ceiling dining area and allow for greater penetration of light to the first level. The stairwell was repositioned to the centre of the main building such that it serves as a ventilation chimney for fresh air to flow through the house.

The result is a bright and airy terrace house that maintains its inherent spatial qualities for modern tropical living.



Swimming pool at rear roof deck



Double-volume space lit by skylight lining the party walls



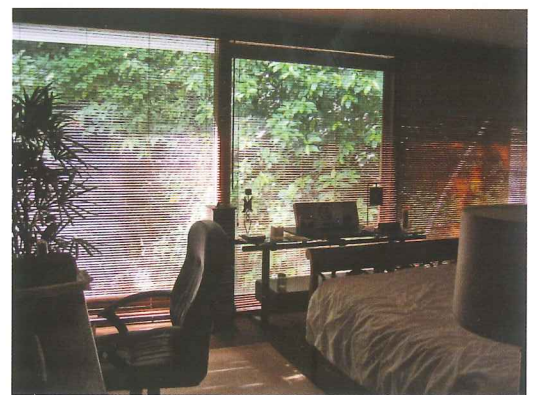
View towards airwell and new rear extension



Modern interior featuring borrowed elements from the "old"



Open-air breakfast area linked to main building via stepping stones over koi pond



Bedroom in new extension



Cross balustrades at open verandah



No 90 Cairnhill Road (Centre)

History

90 Cairnhill is of the Second Transitional Shophouse Style, probably built around 1920s to 1930s. The simplification in style may have been a reaction to the exuberant spirit in the later phases of the shophouse style as it moves towards the Art Deco period. This is evident in the Art Deco elements like cross balustrades at the open balcony and glass panel fanlights, etc.. In plan it is an intermediate terrace shop house with forecourt and rearcourt