

*recent
malaysian
architecture*

essays by Philip Goad and Ngiam
photography by Patrick Bingham-Hall

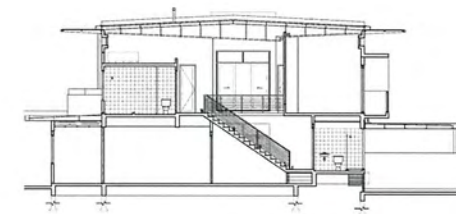
7th avenue

Design Network Architects



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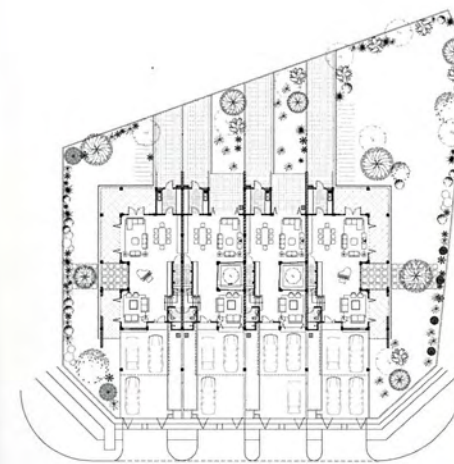
Kuching, Sarawak



Terrace unit section



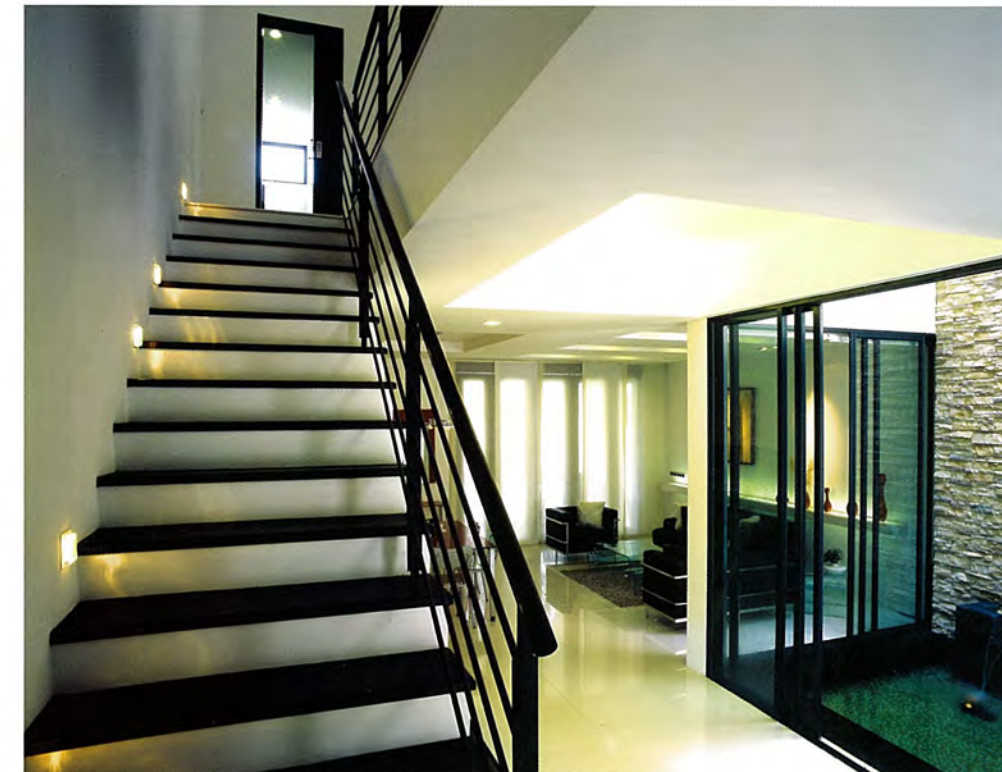
Terrace unit elevation



Terrace units ground floor plan

Left: Semi-detached houses
Right above and below: Terrace units

An elegant medium density scheme in the southern suburbs of Kuching, the 7th Avenue project is a refreshing contrast to the surrounding sprawl of recent mass-produced generic housing. The scheme is comprised of 24 terrace units in four separate blocks, with 6 semi-detached houses standing at the western edge of the site. The external architecture is modern, restrained and crisp, enhanced by the clean thin lines of the projecting roofs. The street frontage of the semi-detached houses, in particular, demonstrates a brisk and lively compositional sense, and the internal planning throughout the development is a fresh interpretation of tropical design principles. The ground floor of each terrace unit is continuously ventilated through sliding and folding doors, as the services and stairs are aligned to one side, and this deceptively spacious living area is naturally lit by an interior light well rising above a central reflection pool.



Completed 2006

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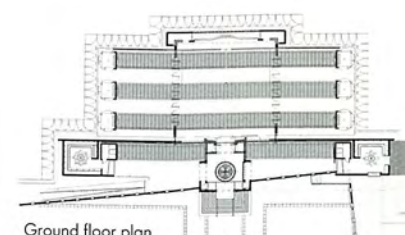


masjid wan alwi

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Section



Ground floor plan

The primary intention behind the design and construction of this mosque in suburban Kuching was to reassert a feeling of neighborhood and traditional Malay lifestyle. As a drift to the cities throughout Malaysia has occurred, there has been a subsequent loss of the communal feeling of the *kampung*. Masjid Wan Alwi was built with the financial support of the family who developed the surrounding suburb, as a gift to the local Muslim population. The mosque has a strong connection with the community, a relationship typically seen in the *Mahgribi* of northern African countries. The forecourts, with fountains and plantings, serve as open space for community gatherings and as a transition zone before entering the prayer hall. The architecture borrows from local built forms, with pitched roofs, shady overhangs and permeable walls, whilst the square plan of the main Prayer Hall lies beneath a pyramidal *belian* roof.

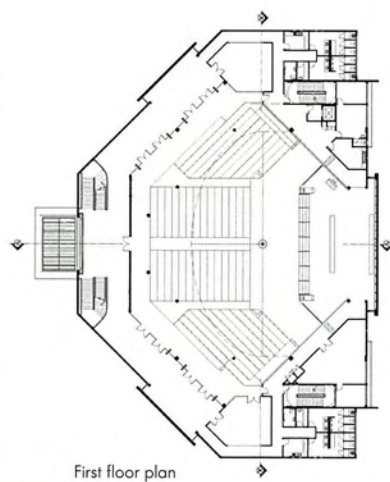
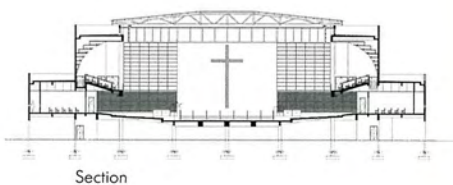
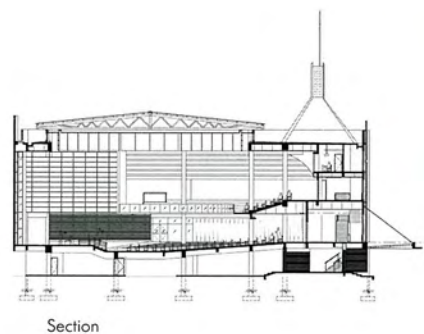
Left: Entry from east

Right: Prayer room



ching kwong methodist church

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Left above: West elevation
Left below: Mezzanine gallery
Below: View to stage and cross

The church committee's original brief had been for a traditional steepled structure, as if located in an ideal landscape of rolling fields, but the completed exterior of this church is crisp and austere, a modernist composition designed to be seen as unremarkable in an industrial area of Kuching. However, the prosaic external shell conceals a sensitive and crafted 14.3 metre high auditorium for a congregation of 1500, with timber seating and a mezzanine gallery fanning out from the central stage. The warm and comfortable ambience of the auditorium is established by indirect natural lighting and by the use of timber and plywood, with a touch of craft hinted at in the 'woven' appearance of the walls and wooden strips abutting the stage. The focal point, at the rear of the stage, is a massively scaled backlit Cross of Christ incised through the wall.

