

ARCHITECTURE MALAYSIA

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Works Abroad

NAN DIAN MASTERPLAN, TEDA SKYBRIDGE AND SUNKEN SQUARE,
MOTHER TERESA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ICON CONDOMINIUM, BELAVISTA CLUBHOUSE,
THE WAVE, PROPOSED PHASE VI DHA LAHORE GOLF COURSE

Houses

PAVILION HOUSE, HOUSE X2, LUA RESIDENCE, TECK•TONIC

FEATURE: FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S ORGANIC ARCHITECTURE INTERIORS: ACCENTURE CORPORATE OFFICES, CAFÉ KOOL



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Teck•Tonic

(ARCHITECTS'S STATEMENT)

► This house continues the architects' exploration in the infusion of modernity into tropical residential architecture. The house is named Teck-tonic partly because there is evidence of the shaping and assembling of different materials in its construction; but largely because the owner 'Ah Teck' thought this to be a catchy name for his house.

Brief. The client requested for a "tropical house, something rustic", along the lines of a Balinese resort. Nevertheless, this provided the opportunity to revisit the basic principles and elements that constitute tropical architecture.

Some of the key 'textbook' criteria of tropical architecture are:

1. The need to have shading
– by having deep overhangs;
2. The need to keep rain out and off – by having pitched roofs;
3. The need to cross ventilate
– to keep building mass small and open to breezes;

4. The need to merge the house with its natural surroundings; and
5. The importance of in-between spaces such as courtyards, terraces and verandas.

Design. The site is 27.5 metres wide and 61 metres long – with the long side facing north. This provided a good opportunity to explore a linear floor plan, with clear distinctions of spaces strung along a spine.

A series of spaces to eat, sleep and play translates into the front family block housing the rooms for the children; the middle block contains the kitchen and the parent's rooms while the last block is for entertaining guests.

The three blocks are linked with breezeways, creating landscaped courtyards and water bodies in-between them. This is an important aspect of the house; using links that provide an intermingling of the natural surroundings with its architecture. This breaks down the scale of the house, thereby exposing

more elevations for better ventilation and light, and more importantly to provide pleasure for its occupants.

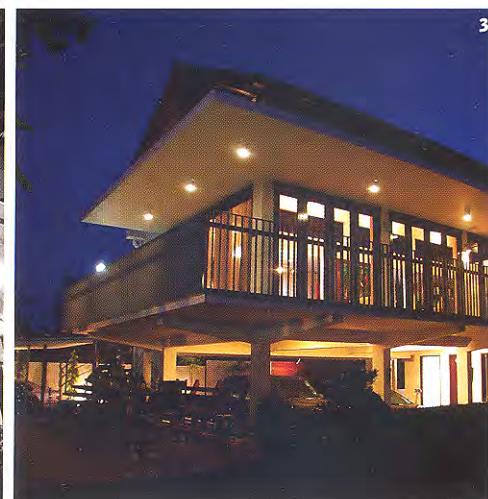
By moulding the sloping site, the architects were able to attain the degree of privacy for the various zones – for example; although the family block is in front next to the road, it is on the highest part of the site, thereby providing the necessary privacy.

In Teck-tonic, there are attempts to merge principles of tropical architecture with modern elements. To lighten the feel of the building, thin slabs were used to shade the veranda and transitional spaces rather than to extend the tropical pitched roof. This serves to breakdown the roofline and to reduce the scale of the pitched roof. Cantilevered veranda slabs reduce the number of columns touching the ground.

The dark "Belian" columns, window frames and stone walls are a good counterpoint to the paleness of the external walls; which also add to the architectural palette of materials.



- 1 Stairs to entertainment block. Clear glazing is used for stone wall to show through
- 2 Breeze way connecting family and kitchen block - spans "koi" pond and water feature
- 3 Entertainment block - most successful in its quest to be "tropical"





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- 4 Despite size and sprawl of the house, a high level of intimacy is achieved as seen in this photograph
- 5 Landscaping levels are sculpted to relate to the single storey block
- 6 Breezeway connecting kitchen block to entertainment area



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7 Infusion of modernity into tropical architecture

8 View down ground floor spine - a series of different experiences



LOCATION

Sarawak

ARCHITECT

Design Network
Architects

C&S ENGINEER

Minsar

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Design Network
Architect

CONTRACTOR

San Chin

TEXT BY

Wee Hii Min of
Design Network
Architects

Wherever possible, the rooms are 'tall' with high or vaulted ceilings to aid in air-circulation. The ceilings are kept simple with minimal light fixtures, relying on reflected light to create a more atmospheric effect. A tropical timber panelled ceiling is used, but lightened by the introduction of a white ceiling foil which suspends below it to catch and reflect light.

The landscaping for this house is also kept simple, with no secondary layer of shrubs, and solitaire trees in the lawn. The master bathroom opens into a roof top garden; which is screened-in to provide privacy enabling the master bathroom to be opened up over looking its personal outdoor space.

The family block is bulky in comparison to the other two blocks, with the entertainment block proving to be the most successful. Being an elevated single storey structure certainly helps in its quest to be "tropical" and close to nature. The pitched gable roof of the drop-off porch looks a little clichéd – reminiscent of a 1980s resort hotel; perhaps a flat roof would have fitted in better and harmoniously with the adjacent blocks.

While the use of varied materials provided an interesting and varied palette, it would have been more honest to use them as part of the building fabric or structure.

Conclusion. In designing and building homes, it is the architect's role to devise a design solution that is not commonplace; and to reflect the lifestyle and aspirations of the home owner. To use the project to explore and test theories; and the lesson is – that some theories work better than others. am

Critique. Although this project was an enjoyable process of collaboration and learning with the client, in hindsight there are areas that could have benefited from different solutions. In other words, elements built differently or perhaps not built at all.

