

robust extents

the simple geometry of the robust form was devised to merge with the developing sub-urban context of koswatte, battaramulla. the design attempts efficient and optimum use of land, space and its construction materials.

by architects gihan muthugala and nilooshi eleperuma
photographs architect gihan muthugala





The double-height living room as seen from the dining room above with the elegant steel and timber lightweight staircase emphasizing the double volume

Built on a 12-perch block of land bordering a bustling road on two sides, the footprint of the house is contained in under 6 perches, excluding allowances for road and rear space reservations by regulation.

The living space and its adjacent garden are raised 4 feet from the existing ground level, allowing the eye-level to be above the boundary walls of the road; thus borrowing visual space from the road and neighboring gardens at a higher elevation, permitting privacy. The living room opens up to the garden through frameless glass doors, and the entire width of the site is visible from any given spot in the living area. White is the predominant interior colour, creating a larger perception of space. The design of spacious volumes inside are formed by one large hall space on the first floor at the center of the mass shared by common activities of the home; the dining, pantry and TV lounge are all open to one another, visually and physically borrowing and sharing space with each other and the garden, resulting with free-flowing space with the illusion of larger area despite the restricted footprint.

The steel and timber staircase, with its lucid lines, rises from ground level to the second floor beside large glass openings to a marsh pond outside. The visual lightness of the stairs amplifies the openness of space in the central volume, while the connection with the outdoors turns an otherwise mundane task of climbing up and down the stairs a pleasant walk. This spatial connectivity offers its occupants the opportunity to engage with each other, while involved in separate and different activities across the entire length and breadth of the house. The spaces are primarily simple, spacious and functional, with ample daylight and breeze.

The road-facing façade to the west responds to solar orientation to cut down heat gain during the day; the façade is composed of blank brick walls, timber louvers and porous exposed brick, avoiding the use of glass, incorporating cross ventilation and reducing thermal gain from direct sun. The ground and first floors are buffered from the west with thick foliage, and all bedrooms avoid walls to the west and are offered north- and south-facing windows. All service pipes, except the storm water down pipes of the mo-

Minimal finishes of white-painted, exposed brick wall complement the smooth cement-rendered soffit and floor, creating the perfect setting for timber windows and furniture.



PROJECT DETAILS

Architect's own house

ARCHITECTS:
Gihan Muthugala and
Niloshil Eteperuma

LAND EXTENT:
12 perches

AREA:
3,200 sq.ft

COMPLETION:
December 2014



The earthy tones used for the exterior of the building promotes its harmonious setting with the natural greenery of the landscape, blending the built and unbuilt in perfect harmony.



The living room set in its double height space. The large French windows inviting the natural landscape to be a part of the living room experience.



Delicate steel and timber staircase, designed to enhance the concept of permeability, reaffirming double volume it spans uninterrupted



Light reflecting through onto the ground bringing life to the earthy floor finishes



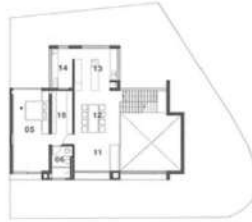
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Robust extents set in its robust neighborhood



The open pantry and kitchen bleed seamlessly with the dining room



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no-pitched roof, are concealed within the structure, with minimum spatial interruptions, allowing for an optimum lucid aesthetic, integration and comfort. The roof's down pipes, however, are unapologetic for their appearance on the front façade and double as a features framing the main entrance.

The house owners are also able to enjoy the blue sky during the daytime or the moonlight and distant lights at night time from the living room sofa, the dining table, kitchen counter or the staircase through a narrow glass strip that runs the periphery beneath the second floor slab. The second floor is an open tranquil area with an increased sky view and cross ventila-

tion as it is unobstructed by neighboring structures that reach only up to the first floor. It is in this release of space where the two family bedrooms are perched, with views across the distant vicinity.

The design of a timber screen between the roof and the wall on the top floor bedrooms and the tall inter-floor space on lower levels allows cross breeze and light to infiltrate all spaces. Retaining existing vegetation on site and the additional thick vegetation contributes to the internal space by evaporative cooling from the west, privacy screening from neighboring premises and buffering noise from the congested road. **Q**