

Present Perfect

K2LD Architects dreams up a beautiful Good Class Bungalow with a stunning culinary zone that combines form and function and is tastefully fitted with Fisher & Paykel appliances

Left to right: The extension was designed as a “pixelated” backdrop that also references the terracotta roof of the original neoclassical-style building; the living room marries elements of the past and present with its classic wall mouldings and modern furnishings



The enclave of Bishopsgate in Singapore is home to many of the country’s Good Class Bungalows, which are considered the most prestigious properties in the island-state’s real estate market. Originally built by the British, these dwellings are a hybrid of Western colonial style and regional architecture, to adapt to the local climate.

This particular house is situated on a flat terrain where the residences were originally constructed on an elevated platform to mitigate the effects of flooding, resulting in a basement area beneath. While most had been demolished over time, it is one of only two still standing on the street that has retained its 1.8m elevation.

These factors combined to create a project in which opportunity was born out of restrictions, says Ko Shiou Hee, founding principal of K2LD Architects, one of the country’s leading practices. Ko and his team were tasked with modernising this home for a repeat client, in order to create a stage for contemporary multigenerational living within the strict conservation guidelines.

A NEW BEGINNING

Along with renovating the interior of the old house, the architects developed an innovative new extension that wraps around its back and side of the existing bungalow. Based on conservation

requirements, the two structures could not physically touch, giving rise to a glass connecting structure that enables a flow between them, while merging into the environment.

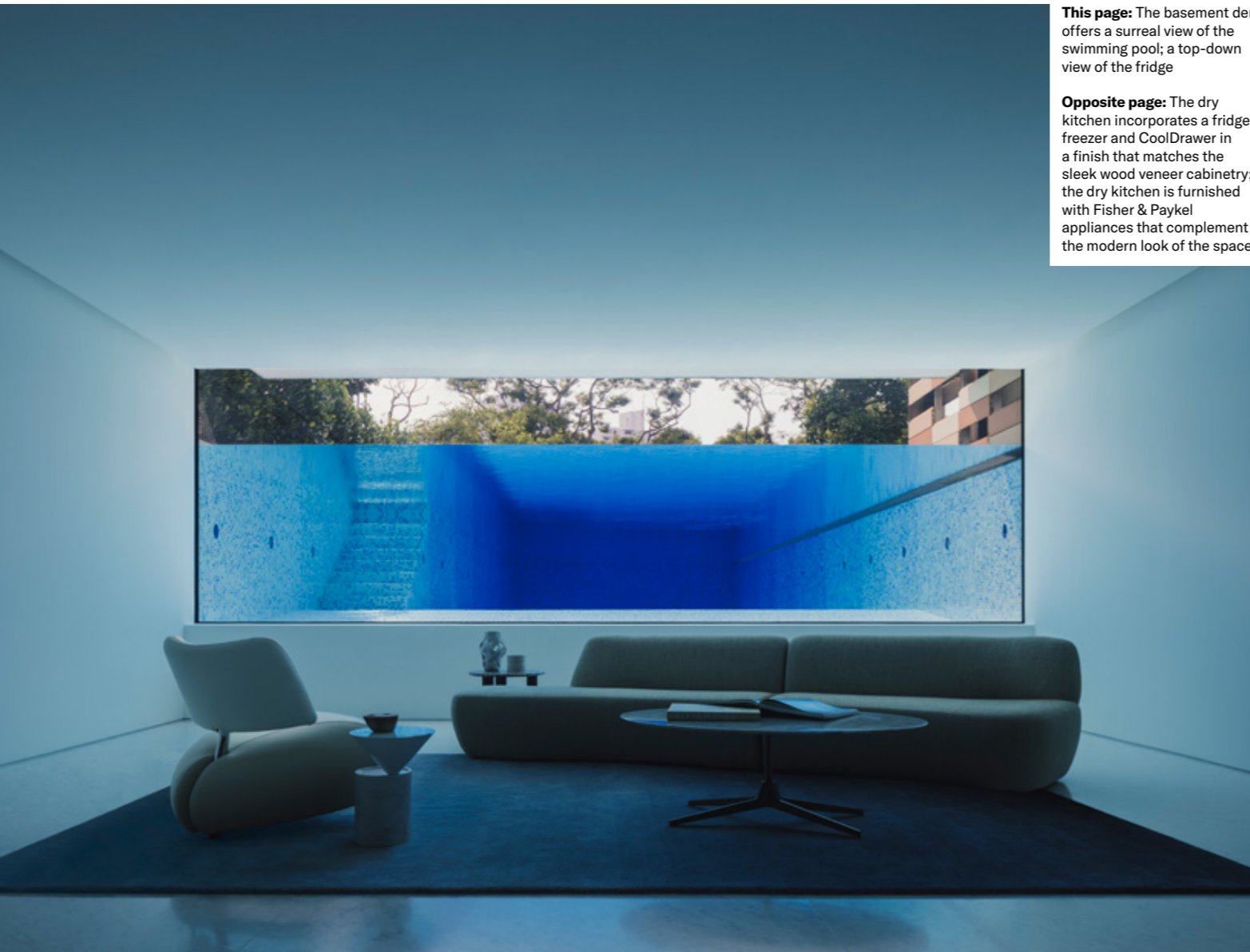
“The addition was a way of creating a backdrop for the older house,” says Ko. “We also wanted to design it as a conversation between the two. Looking at the old building, its most prominent feature is the terracotta roof. Rather than mimicking its neoclassical language, we took inspiration from that and created this screen of tiles that we ‘pixelated’ in response to the internal functions. It’s a very abstract approach, but our client loved it.”

He adds: “While we created the new addition as a way of differentiating the new from the old, the end result speaks of a harmony between two strong forms.” Likewise, the project is a testament to the unique character of Singapore itself, housing a diversity of cultures while blending traditional and contemporary daily practices.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

The compound is spread across five levels, including half-floors. Orienting the parents’ wing on one side and the childrens’ wing on the other, K2LD Architects developed a range of different living spaces and “activity pockets” that would

The architects took inspiration from the original terracotta roof and ‘pixelated’ the facade of the new extension



This page: The basement den offers a surreal view of the swimming pool; a top-down view of the fridge

Opposite page: The dry kitchen incorporates a fridge-freezer and CoolDrawer in a finish that matches the sleek wood veneer cabinetry; the dry kitchen is furnished with Fisher & Paykel appliances that complement the modern look of the space



allow the occupants to entertain, come together, or retreat as desired.

The reception area of the old home was converted to a stunning dining room, where a lowered ceiling was demolished and the beams of the original structure now soar high above the table. The kitchens and informal dining spaces are located close by, but in the new wing, where the family can also gather more privately.

One of the home's special features is the swimming pool. While this is at ground level, the elevated height of the new addition allows a view from its basement den directly into the water, creating a slightly surreal half-pool, half-sky vista. "It's like being in an underground spaceship," laughs Mr. Ko, commenting on the unusual design of the basement den. "Even though it's an old building, we wanted to create these magical moments within it."



CULINARY EDGE

In this food-loving nation-state, it is not unusual for houses to have two kitchens. The first is a Chinese-style wet kitchen, where stir-fries are tossed, steam swirls, and the pungent scent of spices fills the air. The second is a Western-style dry kitchen in which stewing, baking, and reheating takes place. The two zones are connected by an almost-invisible door with a motion sensor that lets people pass through easily while carrying hot dishes.

This stylish culinary zone is fully fitted with sleek appliances from Fisher & Paykel, each selected to match the home's timeless design. In the dry kitchen, the integrated fridge-freezer and CoolDrawer are dedicated to drinks, whereas the wet kitchen's freestanding refrigerator is more of a workhorse for everyday cooking.

The Induction Cooktop in the dry kitchen allows the family to prepare simple fare like ramen noodles, for example, while the Gas-Steel cooktop in the wet kitchen allows for wok-style cooking over an open flame. K2LD Architects also installed the ovens at waist level for better ergonomics and ease of use.

"The dry kitchen is designed for the purpose of casual breakfasts and the interaction of chatting with friends while you're preparing something simple, or heating up food," says Ko. "The wet kitchen has an open-fire cooktop, which clients always ask for no matter how much they love induction cooking."

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