



AMPLE GLASS WALLS
LINK INDOORS AND
OUT SEAMLESSLY.

SPACE

UNBRIDLING THE SITE

In this house designed by K2LD Architects, both the family and passers-by enjoy the garden, thanks to the lack of a main gate and front fence.

BY LUO JINGMEI

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KHOO GUO JIE

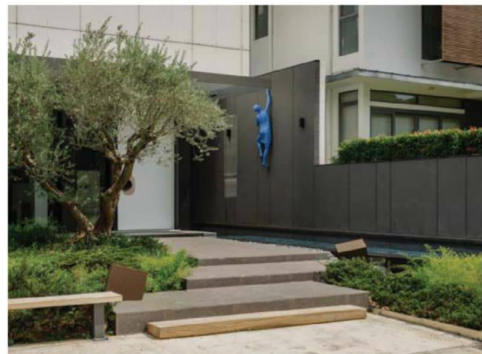


A GENEROUS GARDEN AND SEATING FOR PASSERS-BY ARE CREATED BY EXCLUDING A CAR PORCH.

“No gate, and no wall?” are the expected questions that run through the minds of passers-by – and guests – that approach this semi-detached home designed by K2LD Architects. A house open to the street is ubiquitous in many countries, but in Singapore, it is an anomaly – perhaps even non-existent except in Sentosa where the management has made it mandatory for homeowners to relinquish these physical barriers.

“We discussed with Charlotte and Shiu Hee whether it would be mad to not have a fence,” shares homeowner Richard Goh, who lives here with his wife Sharon Pang, teenage son, and pet dog. “A home should be welcoming and Singapore is so safe. [Not having a fence] creates a different dimension, an openness. We were fine to park our cars outside on the road since we were at a cul-de-sac, so we can keep our garden ‘pure’ with no driveway.”

Singaporean firm K2LD Architects, founded by Ko Shiu Hee, is known for its inventive approach to house design. In this project, senior associate Charlotte Wong aided in creating the bespoke house that contains many artful moments within a streamlined, Modernist box. “We lived in a modern Balinese house before and loved it. But this time, we wanted something more contemporary... we like simple, modern designs and clean lines,” explains Goh. The couple like to experiment and in the firm, they have found like-minded collaborators.



THE POOL IS A KEY FEATURE OF THE GARDEN.



THE MASTER BATHROOM IS WRAPPED IN WHITE MARBLE, WHICH BOUNCES THE LIGHT FROM THE WINDOW.

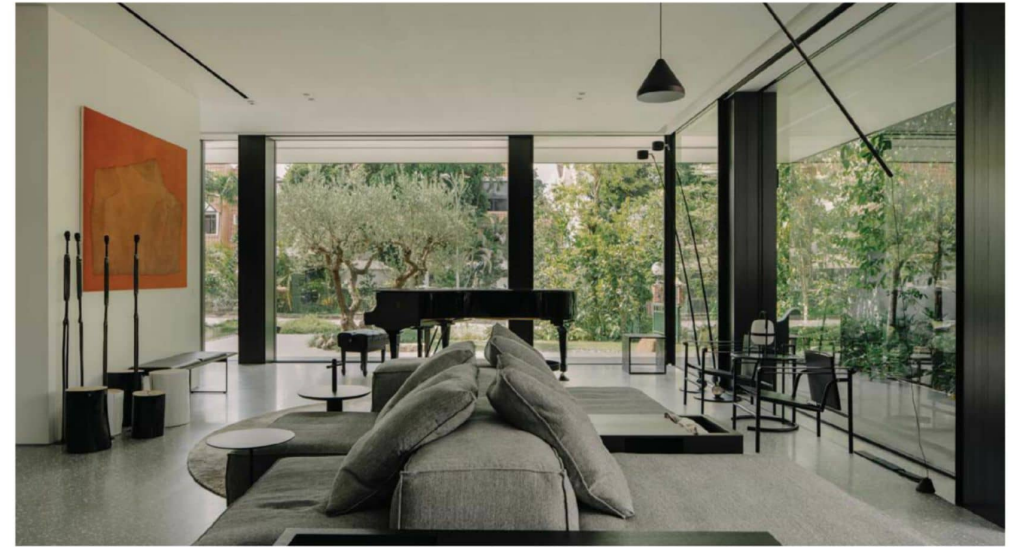
“The desire was to have a semi-detached house look with the expansive feel of a bungalow. We used the swimming pool to create a separation between the house and the party wall,” says Wong. Openings on the first storey frame the pool and surrounding gardens designed by Salad Dressing, continuing the theme of an “open house”. Peeling this edge of the house away from the party wall also enhances natural light in the home.

On the first storey, ample glass walls draw the eye outward. At the dining, three panes of full-height sliding height doors slide into a pocket, bringing in a sense of the outdoors. Standing at the living room, I am constantly lured towards the vista of the front garden, anchored by a sumptuous olive tree. In a nod to neighborly hospitality, benches were erected along the pedestrian walkway for passers-by and curious onlookers to rest their feet.

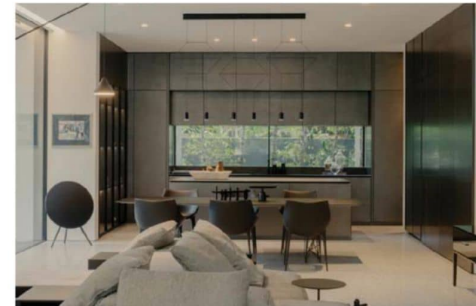
Architecturally, the massing reads as a series of stacked volumes that shift slightly “to create a dynamic composition.” The second storey appears as a floating white volume atop the first level base of glass. Set back from the edge, the reading of the third storey as a neat black box is clear. Wong describes the use of Equitone concrete panels on the façade as adding “texture, lines and shadow”.

This interplay between light and shadow, and pale and dark tones is mirrored in the interior palette. The first storey common areas are dressed in black and grey shades while the communal spaces in the upper levels are lighter, with blond wood and white walls. The more masculine palette on the first storey was intended to contrast with the brightness of the exterior that is flushed with abundant tropical sunlight.

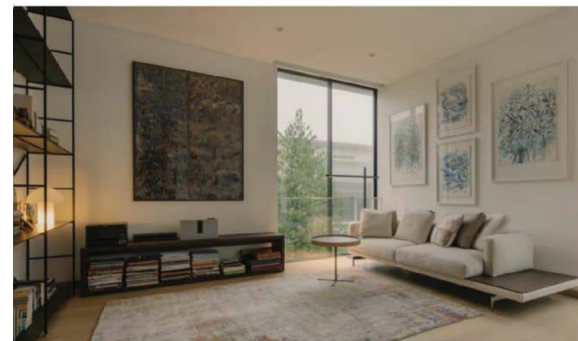
“As you walk through the house, this contrast in colors and light creates different experiences and appreciation of the spaces,” says Wong. Even the basement, with the back-of-house and a family



IN THE LIVING AREA, A MULTI-DIRECTIONAL EXTRA SOFT SOFA FROM LIVING DIVANI (AVAILABLE FROM SPACE FURNITURE) ENHANCES CONVERSATIONS AND VIEWS ALL AROUND.



THE OPEN FIRST STOREY FACILITATES GATHERINGS, WHICH SOMETIMES INCLUDE THE HIRE OF A PRIVATE CHEF.



THE FAMILY'S VAST ARTWORK COLLECTION ADDS COLOUR AND NARRATIVE TO WHITE WALLS.

room, enjoys natural light from openings in the garden. The neutral palette also forms a backdrop for the homeowner's tasteful collection of furniture and art.

The architecture team's dexterous handling of materials is well showcased in the house. The keen-eyed would note the subtle patterns of the Italian-formed terrazzo on the first storey that gives an old-school touch to the predominantly contemporary framework and furniture selection. There is also the master bathroom's dramatic marble-like large-format tiles cladding the master bathroom, book matched to mimic stone and a worthy setting for the sleek, monochromatic Boffi bathtub. Within this master suite on the third storey, picture windows strategically frame the crown of trees.

The staircase, with box-like threads continues the house's abstract language. “The staircase, as the connecting element through the public and private spaces, serves as the main viewing platform where a Queensland Umbrella Tree can be seen. The tree was specifically chosen as the focus in the pool area to visually connect water, architecture, and sky, as well as add color and personality. One can go directly from the powder room and wade past the tree in the 15-meter-long lap pool so that the pool and landscaping [are encountered] as an integral part of living in this home,” Wong comments.

The homeowners wanted the pool to be long enough for swimming laps. It is well used, but also serves as a pleasant visual feature, appreciated from windows and balconies like the one extending from the study room. Such details reflect the work of a seasoned architect, and his conscientious team, attuned to the poetics of site and domestic life. The house is one that the family loves coming home to. States Goh, “The family is happy, our dog is happy.”