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GREEN ISSUE

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Guide to building a green home

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ACGMEDIA

GREEN MANOEUVRE

Conceived by architect Dr Tan Loke Mun, this Malaysian house is built to be sustainable inside out for years to come.

TEXT CLARA LING IMAGES COURTESY OF ARCHICENTRE SDN BHD



PURELY MINIMAL AND RAW, ITS SUBTLETY DERIVES FROM THE ARTICULATION OF SPACES, TEXTURE AND MATERIALITY.

When sustainable buildings are brought to dialogue, one of the country's most notable projects is the Diamond Building in Putrajaya. For leisure, it's perhaps the Sleeping Saverdiah retreat. While the green approach has been imposed in mostly public buildings, the same can't be said for residential properties.

Amongst the few is House No. 18. Conceived as a sustainable private residence by Malaysian architect, Dr Tan Loke Mun of ArchiCentre, the three storey house accommodating a large family settles in the suburb of Sunway Damansara, Selangor.



Sitting on the sloped site that gradually increased from the street, House No. 18 greets residents' at their tracks with its large porte cochère supported by seven red steel columns. Aside from the bright welcome, the large columns bear the hanging roof garden above which runs along the exposed-concrete slab. Meanwhile, the concrete, brickwork and timber form an intentional wall feature by the main entrance.

With generous open living spaces to entertain guests, Dr Tan envisioned the plan into a series of large halls of six metres by six metres modules which are interconnected horizontally and vertically to create interlocking spaces. The idea was to create the three-

storey box comprising cut-in and cut-out spaces, resulting in high volume spaces, courtyards, nooks and hanging gardens.

Known for his sustainable designs, the award-winning Malaysian architect purposefully designed the entry foyer and formal living space to promote natural ventilation and lighting, and open out into the private front lawn. The design approach follows suit at the nearby dining room, where one end opens to a poetic garden with a sculptural frangipani tree and a koi pond; and the other end opens to a forest of saplings in a bed of pebble stones. That leaves the kitchen and service yard to the rear of the house.



ENHANCED BY A KOI POND
AND A FRANGIPANI TREE,
THE POETIC GARDEN
YIELDS SERENITY TO
THE CONCRETE EDIFICE.





The old-style Chinese wooden dining room opens up to a forest rooted at the back of public square, leaving the kitchen and the service area at the rear of the house.



Contained in a double glazed enclosure, the stairway that takes one through to all the upper levels is envisioned as a lantern - illuminated by moon-like wall lights.

Upstairs, the double volume family hall overlooks the poetic garden. From the second floor onwards, the spaces begin to disclose palpable Japanese elements with shoji screens and tatami mats used in place of window blinds and floor tiles respectively. Here, the master bedroom, Zen exercise and tea room are housed.



A BLEND OF JAPANESE ELEMENTS - SHOJI SCREENS AND TATAMI MATS - GRACED THE INTERIOR AS IT CONNECTS TO THE JAPANESE GARDEN TERRACE.



Besides its passive design strategies, House No. 18 too functions ecologically. For instance, the wraparound metal box lattice sun screen shelters the western facade. The house's cross-ventilated approach also minimises the use of air conditioning. The roof boasts thick rock wool and two layers of heat reflective foil, in addition to housing rainwater harvesting tanks.

Fitted with photovoltaic panels, solar hot panels and wind turbines for interior ventilation, the house uses low VOC paints, raw material finishes, water saving taps and sanitary wares, low energy light fittings and local native landscaping. Purely minimal and raw, House No. 18 not only stands as Dr Tan's fulfilled sustainable feat but an ecological habitat as well as an archetypal for the oblivious society. ♦

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