

DUAL ACCESS

BY KENNETH CHEONG | PHOTOGRAPHY BY H LIN HO

Conventional renovations to single-storey terrace houses from the 70s typically necessitates the insertion of a courtyard to allow more light into the living space. In 23 Terrace, Dr Tan Loke Mun of DrTan LM Architect departs from this convention, employing simple strategies to fulfil the needs of its owners to great effect.



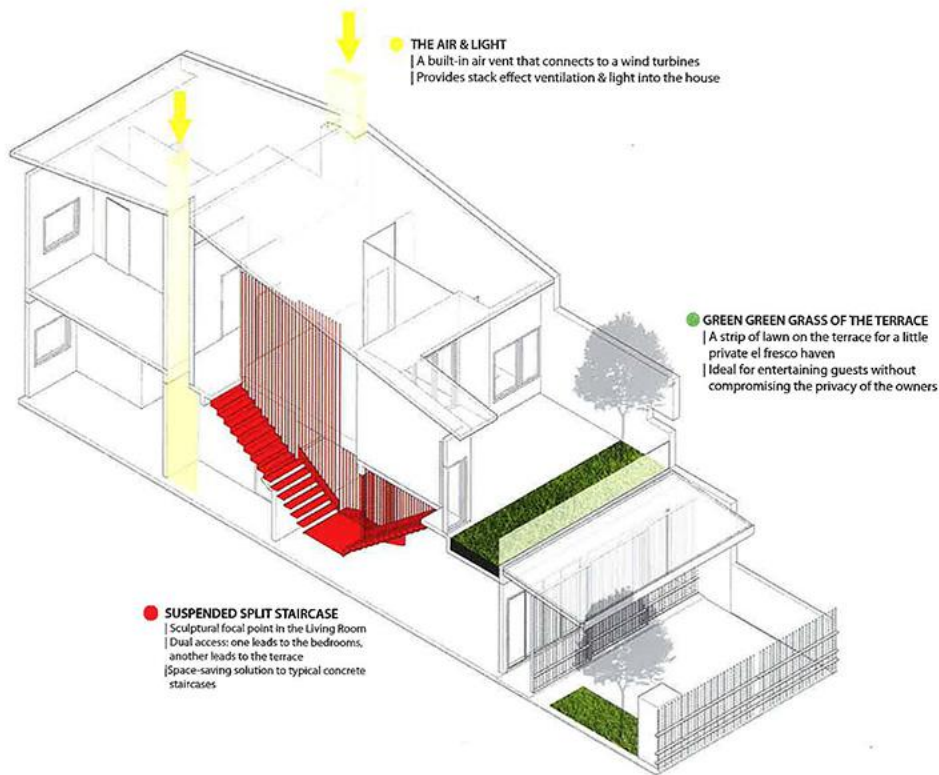
Located in Taman Tun Dr Ismail, the double-storey volume of 23 Terrace stands out from the low roof line of the row of single storey terrace houses developed in the early 80s. From the front façade, the overhang of the car porch is lifted above the line of its neighbours to dramatic effect. An elegant scaled-up screen of steel rods is set away from the front wall of the house as a buffer from the car porch, imparting lightness to the security grille steel structure. The front gate also in vertical steel rods modulates as the eye moves against the backdrop of vertical lines behind. At dusk, the house transforms into a light box, with the geometric lines of the security grille attenuated on the cement rendered porch.

The archetypal layout of a single-storey terrace house from that era accommodates living spaces, three bedrooms with a master bedroom with ensuite bathroom, and if the developer is in a particularly generous mood, all on one level. The bathroom and one bedroom will be lit from an air well. A layout that proves dysfunctional and inadequate to satiate a modern space-hungry lifestyle-driven family of today.

In 23 Terrace, all the private quarters which were previously located on the ground floor of the house are relocated to the upper floor. What was once a cramped living and dining area on the ground floor is now a generous open plan living/dining/cooking space. The pivot-hinged entrance door is scaled up dramatically in proportion to the new open plan space.

The living space terminates at a wall of timber panels, the folding-sliding doors to the guest/music room. With the doors open and fully drawn, the living space is further extended to take up almost the entire plinth of the lot.

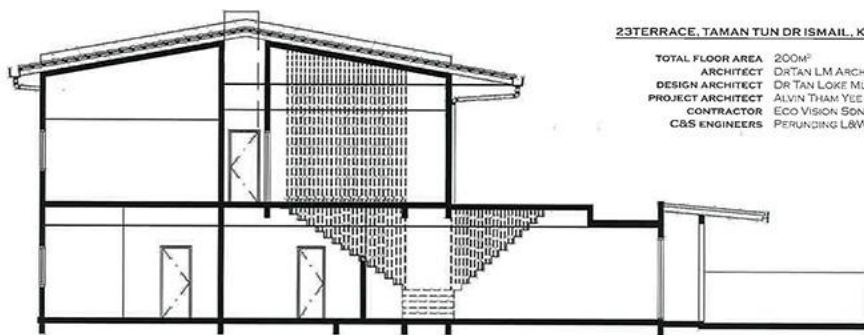
The open plan kitchen is defined by a linear stretch of white Volakas marble with cabinets in stainless steel panels leading to the rear of the house and back-of-house.



Wet and dry zones are left ambiguous to accommodate flexibility in space requirements. Central to the dining space is a bespoke dining table carved out of a single slab of Suar timber anchoring the dining space in the open plan. The honey hue of the timber adds a touch of warmth to the space. According to Dr Tan, the textured off-form concrete ceiling is intentionally left un-plastered to reduce Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) emissions.

dual access

From the living room, a suspended steel staircase held up by steel rods lightly touches the floor. The staircase becomes a central sculptural piece set against a backdrop of salmon hued exposed brick – a remnant of the original house. The hovering V-shaped staircase is a high-impact graphic piece with two sets of staircases diverging to the outdoor living space on the upper floor on one end and the private quarters on the other.



SECTION A-A

23TERRACE, TAMAN TUN DR ISMAIL, KUALA LUMPUR

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| TOTAL FLOOR AREA | 2000 ² |
| ARCHITECT | DR TAN LM ARCHITECT |
| DESIGN ARCHITECT | DR TAN LOKE MUN |
| PROJECT ARCHITECT | ALVIN THAM YEE WENG, MOHD FAIDIN |
| CONTRACTOR | ECCO VISION SDN BHD |
| C&S ENGINEERS | PERUNDING L&W SDN BHD |

The dedicated staircase to the roof deck is an ingenious manoeuvre to extrapolate the public entertaining/living space to extend to the upper floor of the house seamlessly. The generous landscaped outdoor living space is lifted towards the front, setting back the façade of the upper floor to give the upper exterior massing much needed breathing space. A space of much delight, outdoor living spaces are a rarity in the neighbourhood. Said Dr Tan: 'The el fresco space on the balcony is designed to celebrate the tropical weather, with two-thirds cement rendered floor and a strip of grass just before the frameless glass balustrade.'

Planes of exposed brick walls are folded 10 feet high on both ends of the roof terrace to offer visual and acoustic privacy from its neighbours. In the opposite direction, the dramatic linear space of the stairwell leads to a master bedroom and two bedrooms with a shared bathroom. A window opening to the roof deck floods the stairwell, illuminating the living spaces below.



- 1 Living Room
- 2 Dining Room
- 3 Dry Kitchen
- 4 Wet Kitchen
- 5 Laundry
- 6 Guest Room
- 7 Powder Room
- 8 Toilet
- 9 Maid's Room
- 10 Porch



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

- 11 Master Bedroom
- 12 Walk-in Wardrobe
- 13 Master Bathroom
- 14 Roof Garden
- 15 Bedroom 2
- 16 Bedroom 3
- 17 Bathroom



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



ROOF PLAN





The open roof deck on the front facade provides the master bedroom located at the front of the house with much needed privacy. The master bathroom encased in glass extends the sleeping space to take up the entire width of the lot. Full height glazing to the bathroom and sleeping area flood the master bedroom with light.

Puncturing through the floor above from the ground floor, are built-in air vents that connect to a wind turbine attached to a steel framed glazed pyramid on the roof, providing a naturally mechanized stack-effect ventilation system to air the powder room and kitchen. 'A 3-degree differential is enough to spin the turbines by convection,' said Dr Tan.

'The new form and height of 23 Terrace are rejuvenating revisions of the 80s single-storey terrace. It is a baby step towards the greening of the neighbourhood – an attempt to educate the community about the importance of green retrofitting.' Dr Tan's transformation of 23 Terrace is testament that modest simple architectural manoeuvres can dramatically alter what may have been a conventional renovation. +