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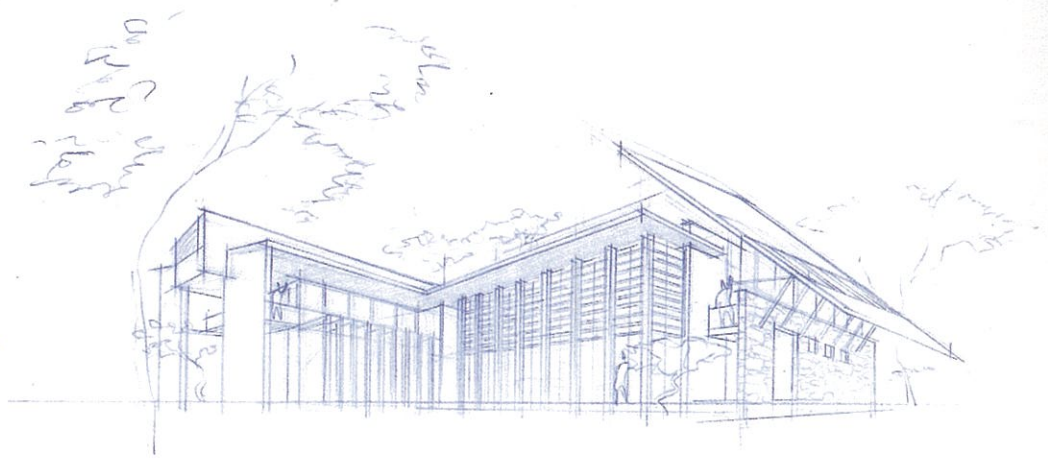
CROWNE PLAZA CHANGI AIRPORT BY WOHA
MOSHE SAFDIE ON ARCHITECTURE: IN OUR IMAGE
SIR TERENCE CONRAN DOES KL
HILL TOP HOUSE OF ART BY K2LD
JLN MERLIMAU HOUSE BY AAMER TAHER
NALLUR RD RESIDENCE BY ARC STUDIO
S'PORE BIENNALE 08 : A REVIEW

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through the roof

PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMIR SULTAN





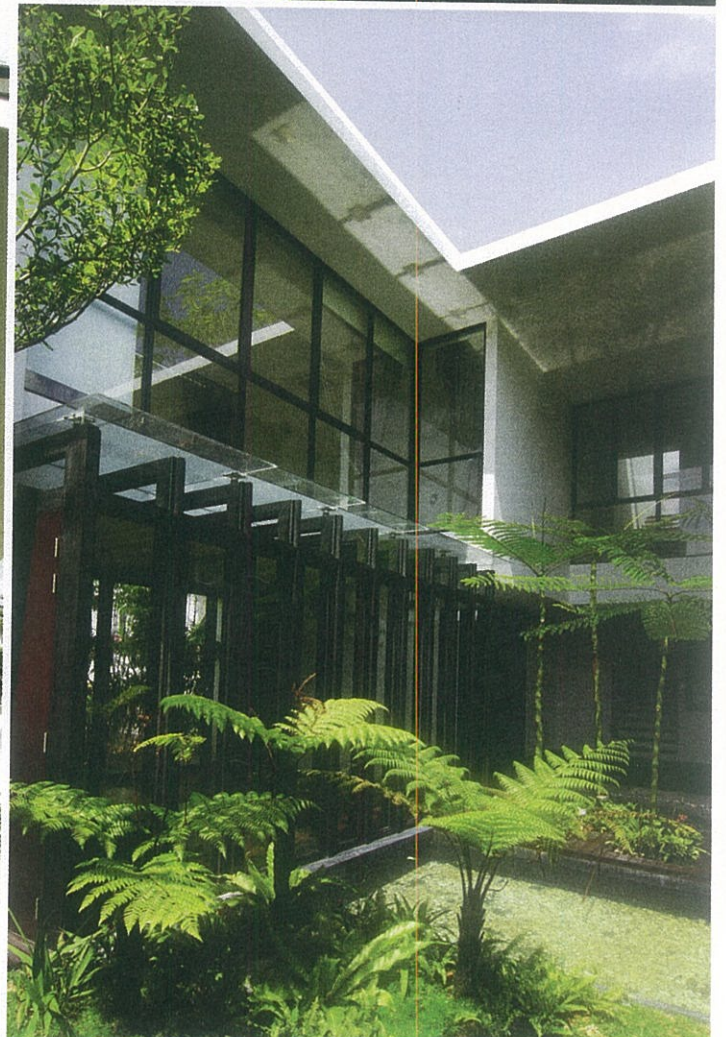
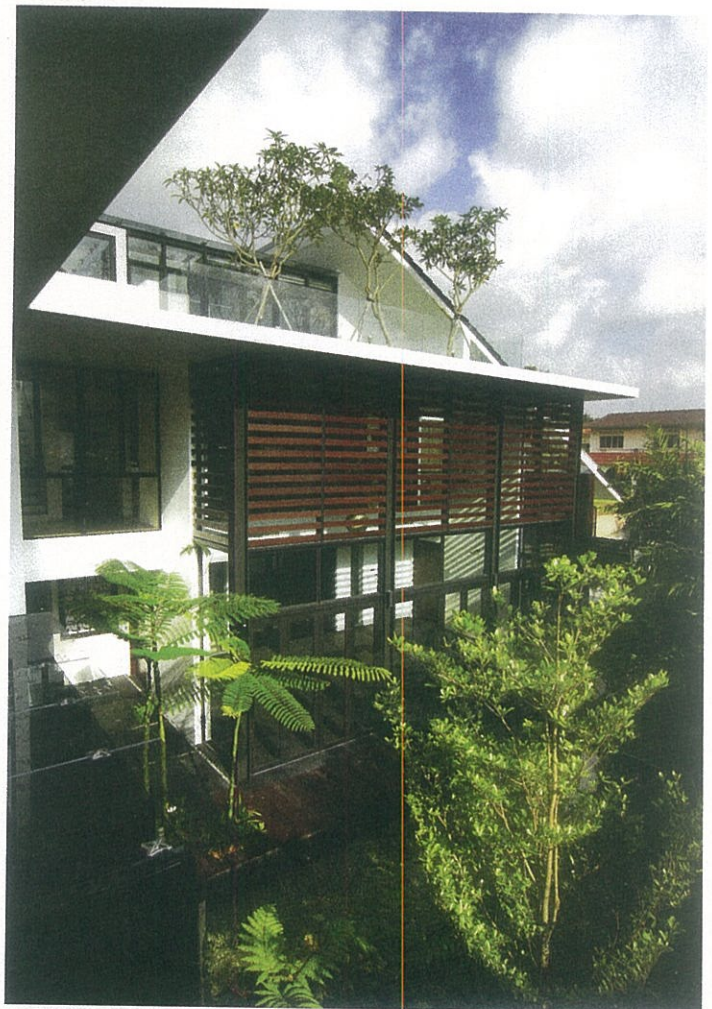
Do not expect to find anything too 'typical' in a house designed by Aamer Taher. The architect stands resolute not to do typical designs, as he explains the design scheme for this house on Jalan Merlimau. 'I'm always not in favour of URA guidelines being so restrictive. They have fixed ideas on setback, car porch, rear setback, attic height, pitch roof...all those guidelines are based on a typical house in their minds. It's all very restrictive if you want to be more creative...' Nevertheless, he will always try to work those restrictions into something creative.

And creative Aamer Taher certainly is here. At front view, the most significant feature of the three-storey house is the mono pitch roof, which is a single floating plane that leans over the attic and continues in a gentle gradient all the way down to become the carporch roof. Where the flat grey-tiled roof slopes over the second storey balcony is a skylight section to allow views through to the family room on that floor.

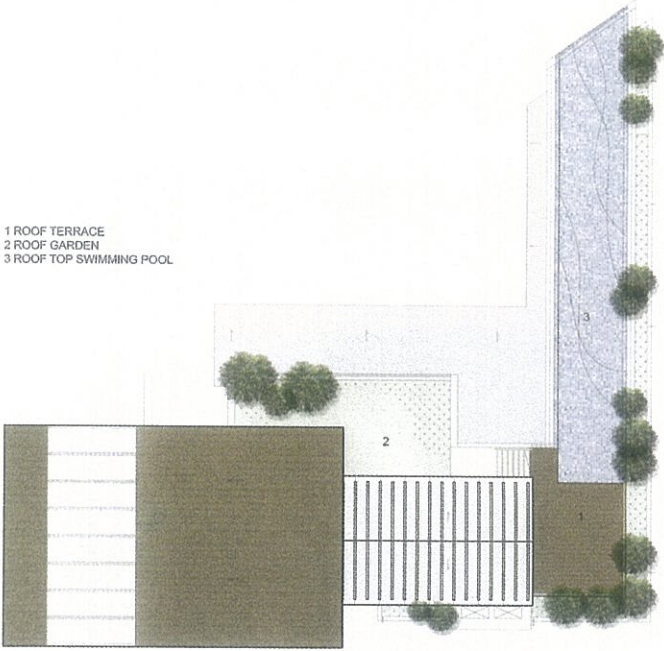
A front wall plane, warmly finished in timber, props the bottom end of the roof with a series of trusses.

Another significant feature, although not immediately in view at the front, is the rooftop infinity pool. It is placed on the horizontal length of the L-shaped plan of the house that fits the triangular shape of the site. At the same time, the pool's site positioning and orientation get the breezes. The slender lap pool, complete with sun deck, fulfils the client's requirement as they are avid swimmers. Having the pool raised above ground makes way for some delightful, resort-like, landscaping of courtyard, pond, garden and terraces on a limited plot.

For all his bold ideas, Taher is a fond believer of Balinese-style tropical architecture, elements of which are pleasingly applied to the contemporary design of this house. It makes sense, in an era of critical concerns about sustainability and eco-friendly buildings. The Balinese tradition is inherently respectful of nature, and applying its principles to contemporary living is on many levels a 'green' response.



- 1 ROOF TERRACE
- 2 ROOF GARDEN
- 3 ROOF TOP SWIMMING POOL



Roof Top Plan

- 1 FAMILY ROOM 1
- 2 FAMILY ROOM 2
- 3 BEDROOM 1
- 4 BATH 1
- 5 BALCONY 1
- 6 MASTER BEDROOM
- 7 WALK - IN WARDROBE
- 8 MASTER BATH
- 9 BALCONY 2



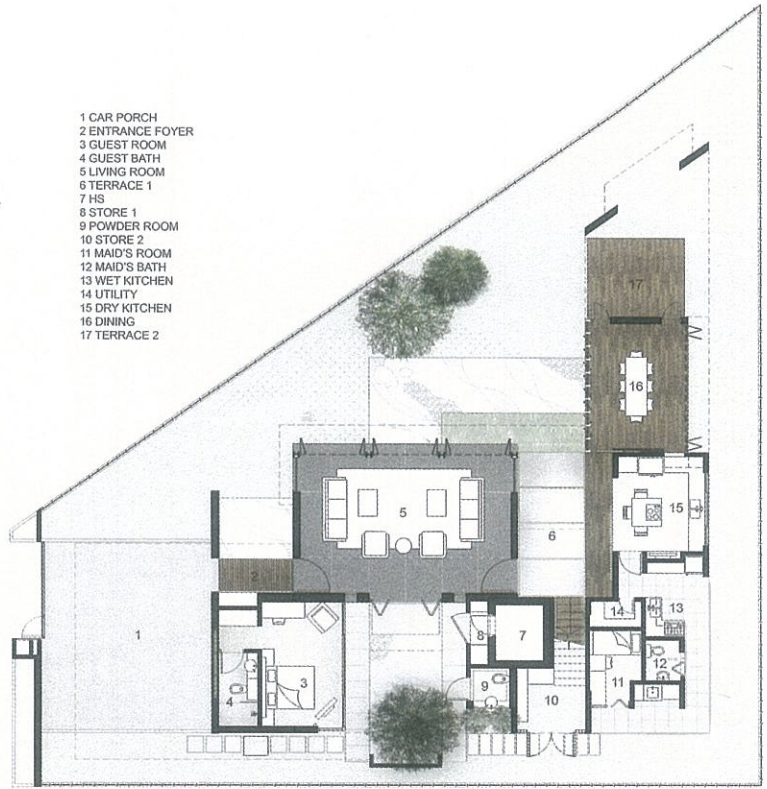
Second Floor Plan

- 1 FAMILY ROOM 3
- 2 EXERCISE ROOM
- 3 BATH 2
- 4 ROOF TERRACE
- 5 ROOF TOP SWIMMING POOL
- 6 ROOF GARDEN

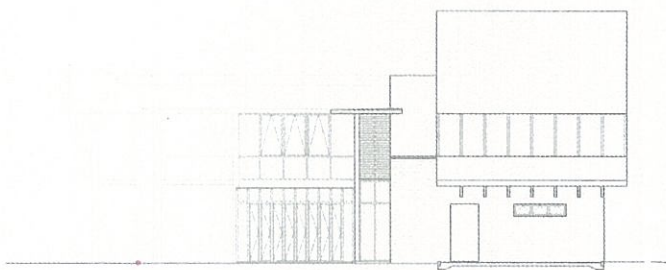


Third Floor Attic Plan

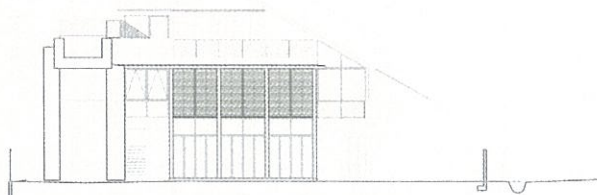
- 1 CAR PORCH
- 2 ENTRANCE FOYER
- 3 GUEST ROOM
- 4 GUEST BATH
- 5 LIVING ROOM
- 6 TERRACE 1
- 7 HS
- 8 STORE 1
- 9 POWDER ROOM
- 10 STORE 2
- 11 MAID'S ROOM
- 12 MAID'S BATH
- 13 WET KITCHEN
- 14 UTILITY
- 15 DRY KITCHEN
- 16 DINING
- 17 TERRACE 2



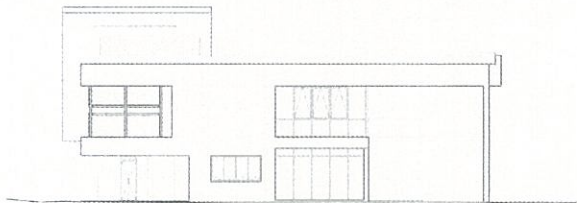
First Floor Plan



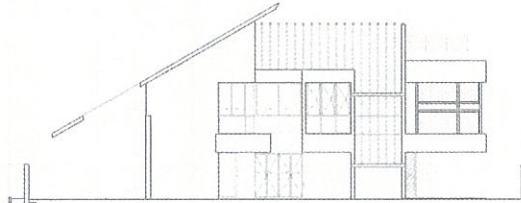
ELEVATION 1



ELEVATION 2



ELEVATION 3



ELEVATION 4





HOUSE ON JALAN MERLIMAU

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In this instance, the client had asked for a 'resort-like atmosphere' for the house. Taher answers the brief by expressing the areas of living and dining as pavilions. The plan is such that you enter the house through an intimately scaled entrance foyer, cross a bridge and pond, and then to a double-volume space that opens out to water and greenery.

The dining 'pavilion', which holds the master bedroom area and rooftop pool above, has a chamfered end that follows the angle of the site. On ground level, it is again another double volume space, as the second-floor balcony stops away from the edge, allowing a height gain for an outdoor dining terrace. The pool that goes out all the way, sheltering – and cooling – all underneath, is supported on two

grand columns that flank the dining terrace.

The roof above the double-volume dining is greened, so that the family room in that large attic space also enjoys a garden. Says Taher, 'In Singapore, landed plots tend to be cramped in by all the other houses. So it's always nice to raise yourself up to get a view from the rooftop. Why not bring your garden to the top, and it also increases your land space.'

Another notable area of the house that gets some bit of natural space is the master bath, which is shaped by a circular wall of glass blocks with a horizontal opening, and further screened on the outside with a thick layer of plantings.

Remarkably, the entire scheme of the house was presented to the client, at the start, with just one hand

sketch. 'And they were like, wow, great. Go for it!' The rest that followed 'had stayed the same since day one. (the design) hardly changed...rarely do we go from first sketch to completion without changes. In this case, we did,' says a very jubilant Taher.

This is Aamer Taher's second residential project with a pool on the roof. His modernist attitude is for flat roofs 'but these tend to heat up the house, and we try to solve that by having water or green. I'd like to do more green roofs...I guess it comes back to what I've said, if the house could be a work of art, like a sculpture, rather than just being a typical house. That's what we'd like our work to be. It's the artist in me again. I can't bear doing a conventional house. If I could turn just one part of the house into something unique, I'll be happier.' +