

Architect's Own House

*a house for two busy professionals
at Thalawathugoda*

Archt .Rohan Jayasinghe





The Architect had to respond to two contrastingly different sets of requirements in his approach to the design of this personalized house.

The house was for two busy professionals both architects trying to juggle their careers and parenting duties. The task isn't made easy when faced with the demands of two hyperactive young children, in a domestic setting devoid of maids or any external help. Thus the house had to be compact with modern easily maintainable finishes. At the same time it had to provide space for children to run around and have fun and be a warm cozy abode for all. In short the house had to be compact and spacious at the same time.

The site was a small block of land 10 perches in extent, in a sub-urban setting bounded by two streets on its southern and western boundaries. The land falls gently to the north revealing a beautiful vista of a lush green thicket and paddy fields beyond.

The basic decision taken to achieve the required compactness and spaciousness at the same time was to set the house well in front of the plot bordering the two streets. Thus the entrance was directly from the southern street (the smaller and more private of the two) through a small forecourt carved out by setting the house diagonally across the plot. This setting helped to leave ample garden space at the rear, overlooking the greenery towards the north.

The Internal spaces are tight and compact; located around a central pantry, from where the mother could keep and eye on the children's activities as she sets about her chores. The



diagonal setting and series of level changes (following the lay of the land) help to carve out spaces, which are allowed to flow due to the absence of any internal walls.

As one enters from the forecourt to the double height space of the formal Living Area, sunlight streams in from a side courtyard, creating wonderful patterns of shadow. A few steps down leads you to the Family Room, which opens out towards the garden and the views of the greenery beyond. This pathway also allows the cool breezes from the paddy fields to flow through the house, which help cool the interior.

Another flight of steps leads you down to the central space of Dining Room cum Pantry, which opens out to

another secluded courtyard. This visual and spatial experience help to create a sense of spaciousness out of a very tightly knit compact arrangement of activities. The spatial experience is further heightened by splashes of color. The dark grey raking columns of the double height living room are like great exclamation marks inviting you to stop and look beyond.

The bright yellow wall of the mezzanine balustrade articulates the meeting of the stairs with the upper floor spaces. The bedrooms are arranged off this mezzanine street and the Master Bedroom opens out to a roof terrace from which you could almost touch the leaves of the thicket it overlooks.





The furniture too has been carefully designed / selected to blend with the general scheme of things. The blue leather sofas with the bright yellow cushions and the yellow upholstered easy chairs complement and contrast each other at the same time. The bedroom furniture too is designed to fit in snugly to the compact spaces. The cupboards, desks and even the beds are built in to maximize space.

The glass topped dining table and the pantry cupboards with stainless steel accessories add emphasis to the ultra modern low maintenance interior. Overall the house has a warm and cozy atmosphere while at the same time displaying vibrant dynamism in the arrangement of its spaces. An ideal setting for the parents to relax and re-vitalize their spirit and the children to run around and enjoy its playhouse like qualities ●