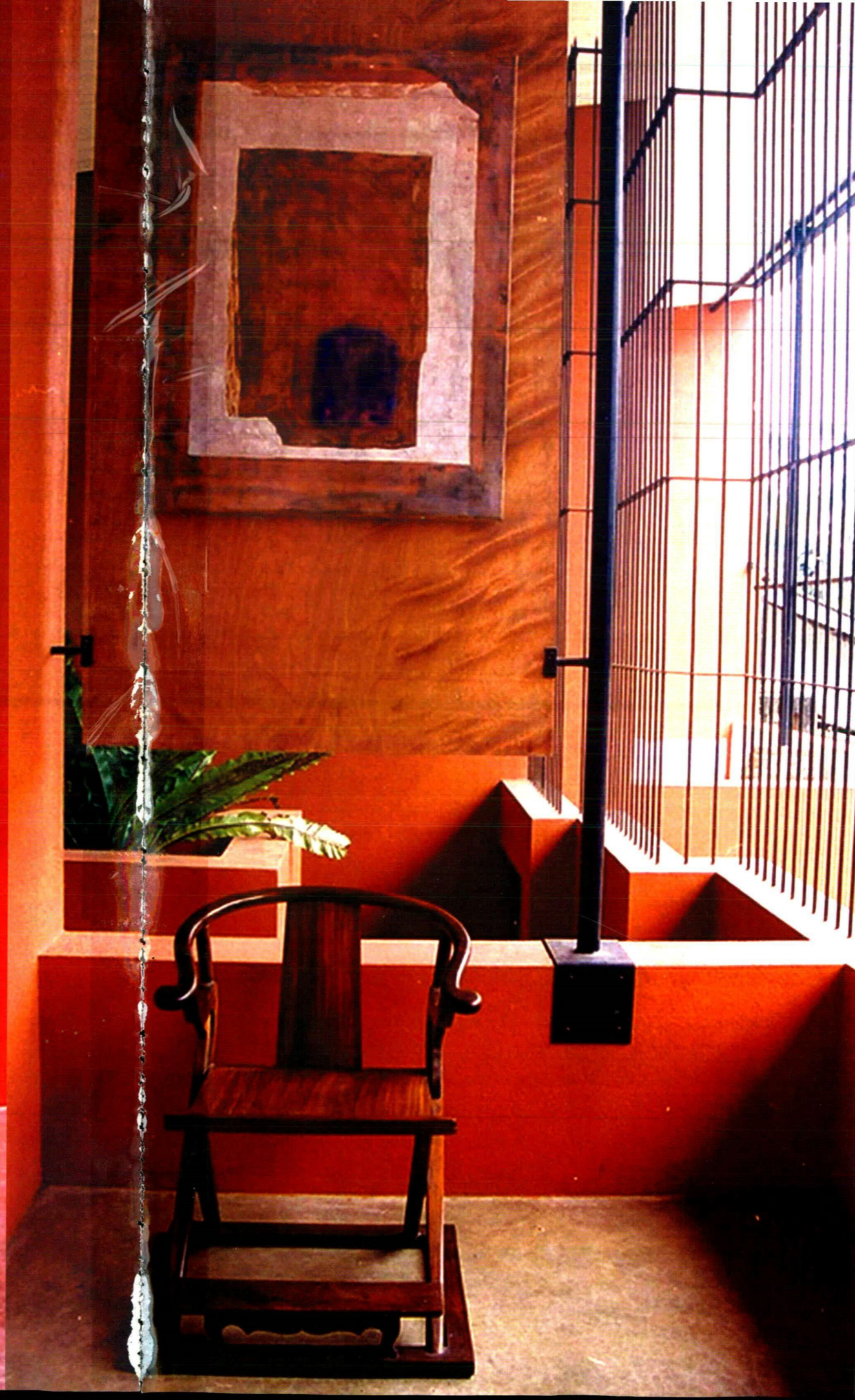


S.L.A - 108 CD-59

# A SUBURBAN RETREAT



In the process of designing a matter-of-fact home, Architect **Prasanna Jayalath** redefines inside-outside in the suburban context....

From the urban hub of Colombo, and from the daily buzz of activities as one moves towards the suburban interior "Piliyandala", a gradual change in context occurs, which is welcome for anyone as its impact on anyone in search of a suburban retreat.

The 22 perch plot of land belonging to the Rajapaksha's carried with it their hope of a simple home, a retreat which provides them with the warmth, protection and shelter they would need for a life time, and the best possible practical set of spaces their limited budget would allow.

The client, one who's generally exposed to an urban life style, frequently working in Colombo possessed a great affinity to the out door life. Thus natural ventilation and clear relationship to the outside was anticipated from the design.

The linear narrow land is one which continues to a steep drop towards the rear from the road level. This allowed the built form to be constructed towards the front and the wider portion of



the site to allow maximum open garden space to the rear. The internal choreography of the space at different levels frame different views of clearly crafted garden space.

The spatial organization is such that there is an intricate balance of solids and voids linking the pleasing nature of outside to the interior of the abode. The Architects palette of rough textures and colours has been effective in enhancing the experience. In a facade of vibrant

orange colour, the striking blue door provides a warm and attractive entrance. Directly below the entrance landing one enters the living room with its carefully selected elegant furniture, and painted walls in pure white. This opens up completely to the rear garden, the lung of the scheme. This provides for a secure outdoor space to relax, enjoy, play and contemplate; A pitch for cricket, a path for strolling, a place to meditate, amongst chirping birds and dashing squirrels.

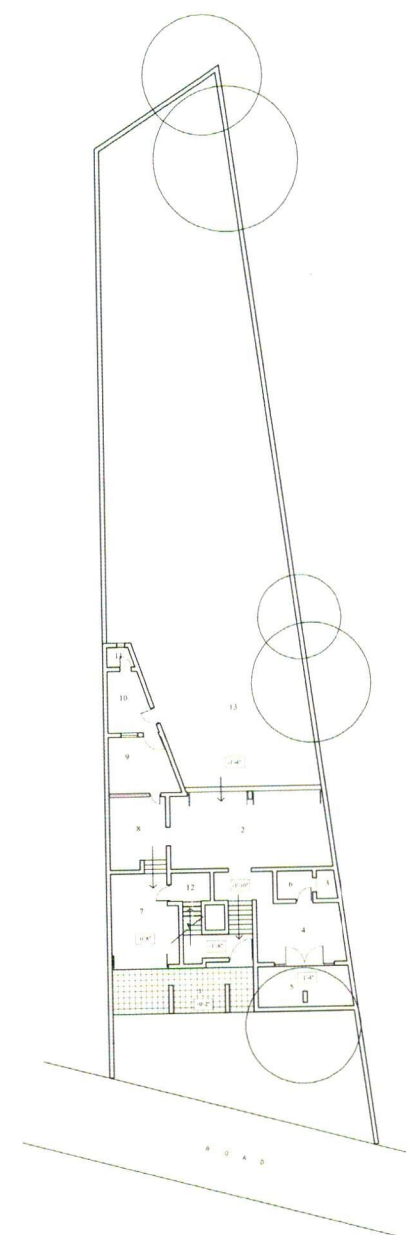
The major living space is carefully linked with the kitchen and maids' spaces in the rear, with garage and the guest bed room tucked on the other side. The planning of the house has led to two levels in which all the private spaces are within the upper level; A cozy and private domain, undisturbed by other happenings. The cement finished staircase leads to a common family lobby with its elegant carved furniture units. This space comes to life with sunlight filtering through the steel grills,

accompanying cheerful family gatherings. On either side of the family lobby lie the bed rooms hidden from direct sight.

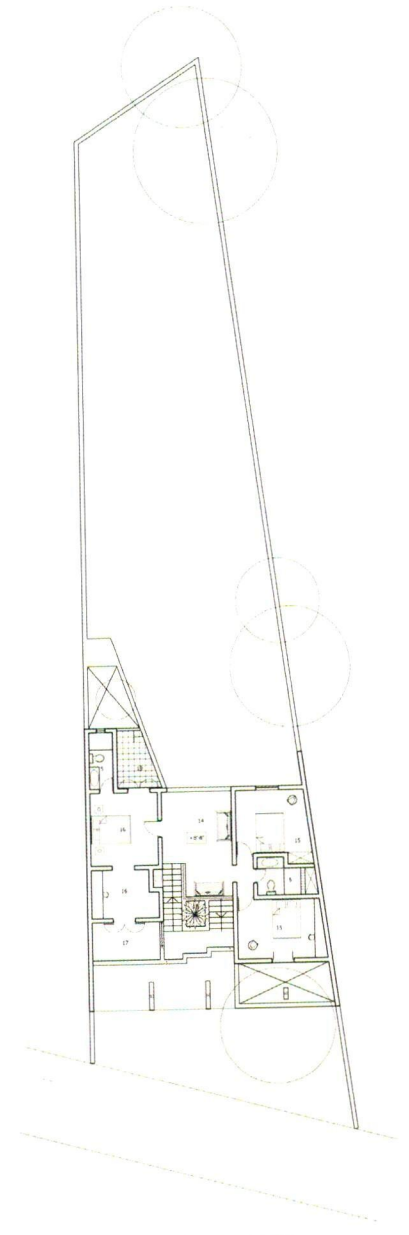
Pictures with similar colour schemes, carefully chosen to be an integral part of the design, and flower troughs are effective in visually linking the spaces vertically. These also breaks the monotony of the linear arrangement. The illuminated corners and niches, the delicate flowing hand rails punctuate the energetic flow of spaces, adding much excitement.

Apart from bringing in natural light, the steel grill creates a balance in the composition of the facades, and promotes cross ventilation. The GI pipe grid pattern, while connecting the structure, softens the solidity of the front façade. The roof of GI pipes and asbestoses, being light weight, tactfully enhances the image.

The simplicity in plan, spaces and detailing reflects the architects' minimalist approach.



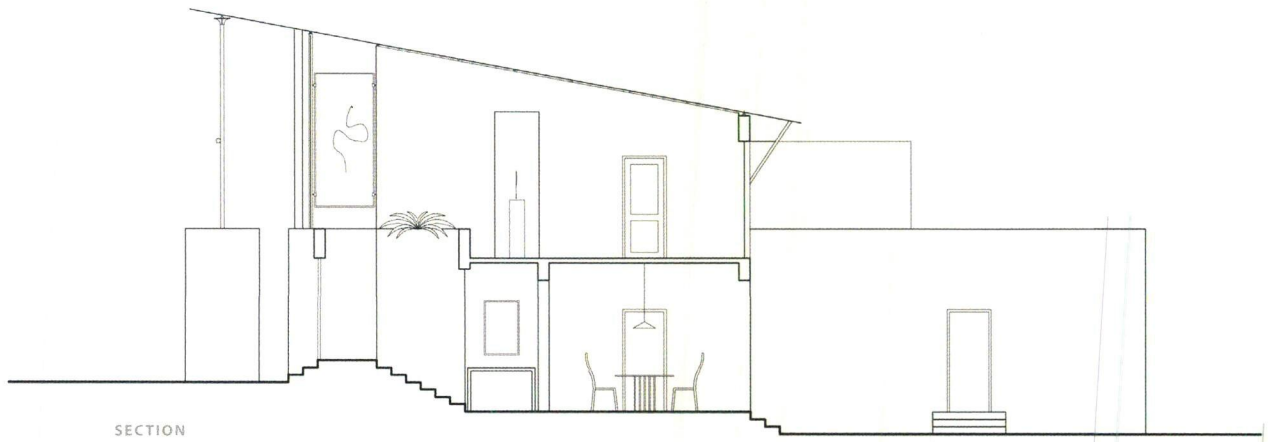
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



UPPER FLOOR PLAN







Incorporation of passive techniques within the house provides for visual and thermal comfort in varying climatic conditions.

Creating a home entails discovering elements that create a sense of place, and reflect the personalities of the inhabitants! Judging from the Rajapaksha family's 'lived in' response, this piece of Architecture has succeeded in giving them a place where they truly belong.

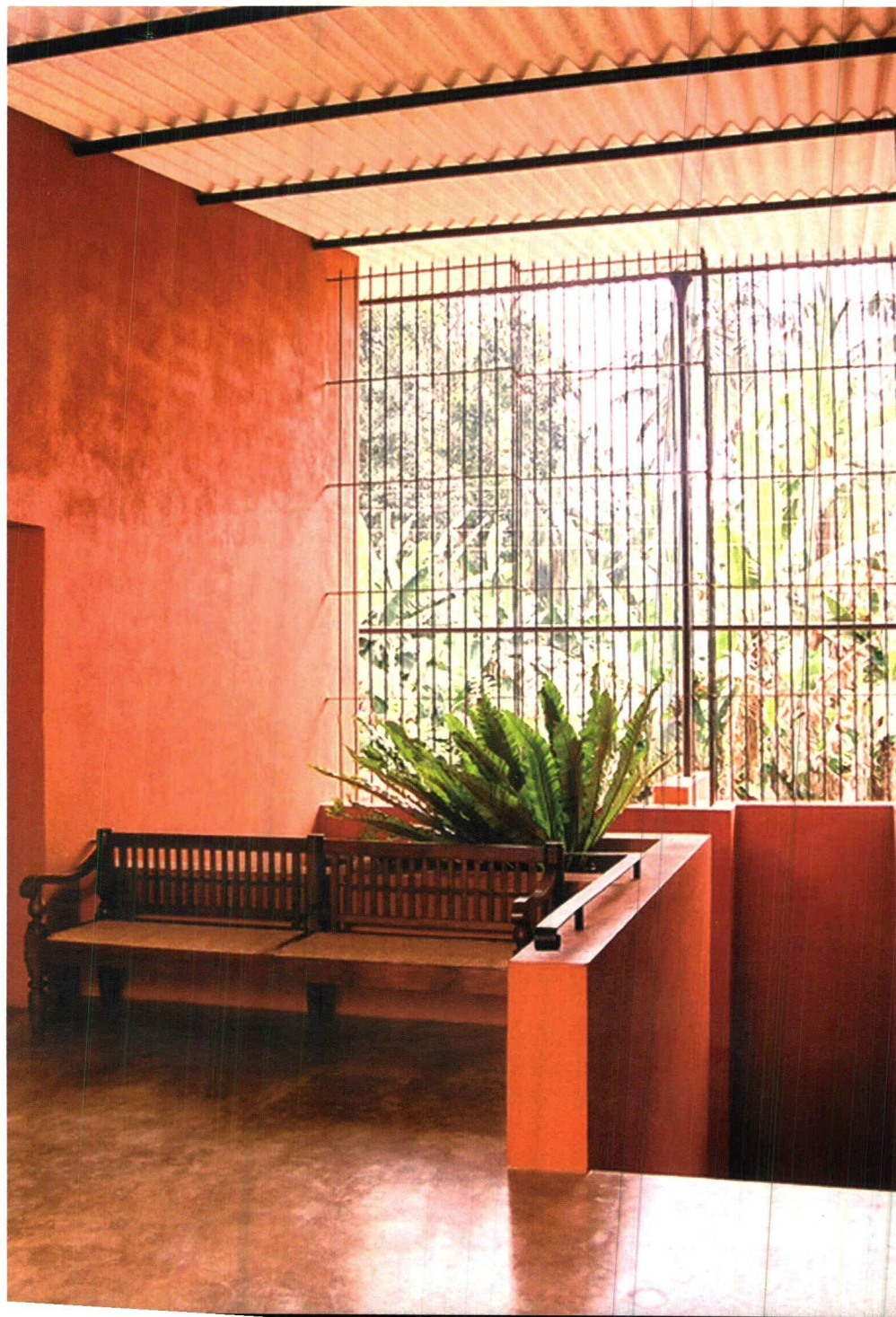
**This residential project was awarded "Design Award of Excellence" at SLIA Annual Sessions 2005.**

by **Dulmini Perera**

The writer is an undergraduate at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Moratuwa.

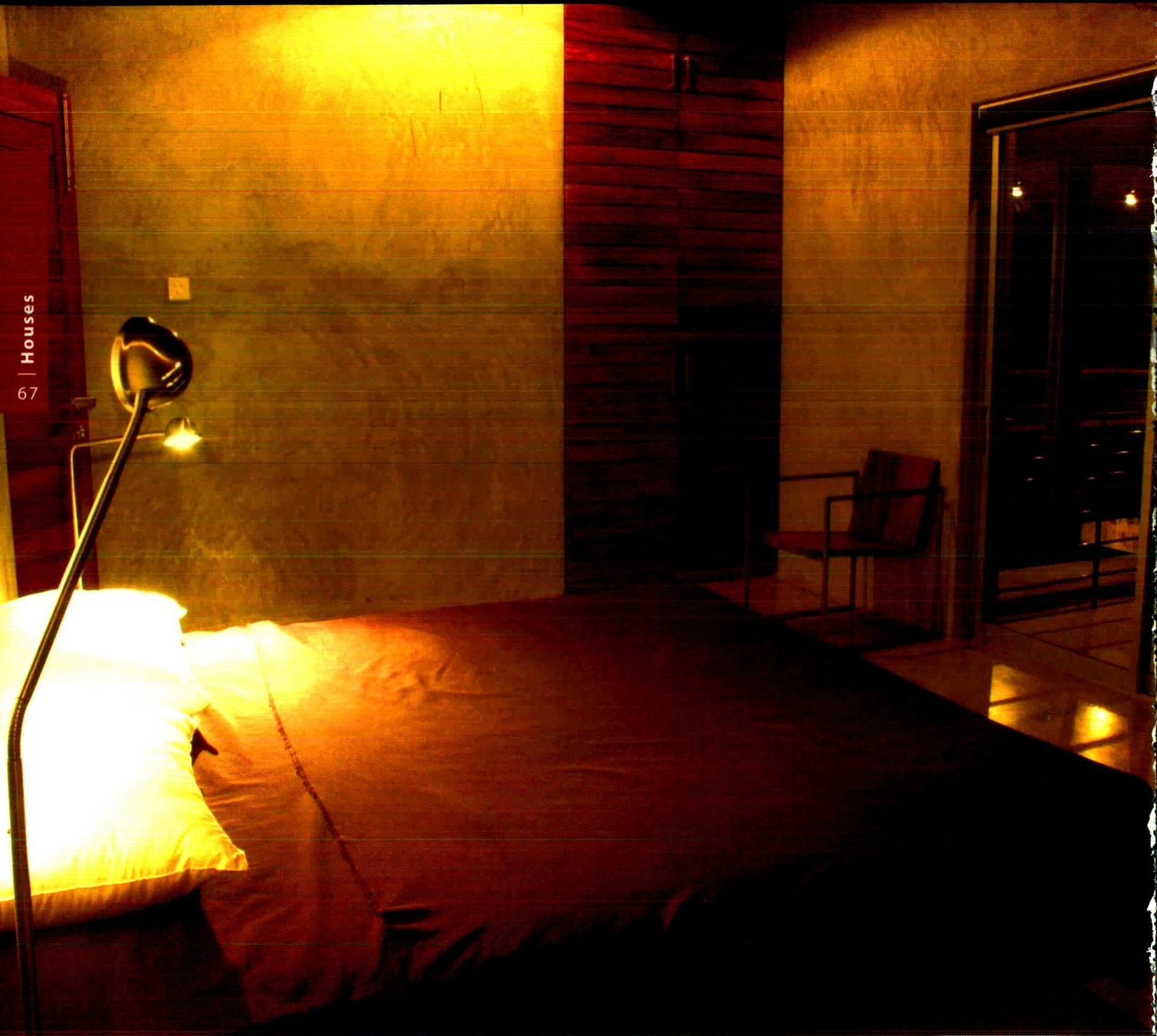
Photography © :  
Sanjaya Withana

Architect :  
Prasanna Jayalath AIA (SL)  
Consultants :  
Wasantha Chandratillake  
Client :  
N. Rajapaksha  
Civil Contractor :  
G. Kumara  
Project Period :  
One Year - 2004-2005  
Area :  
2268 sqft





A HIDEOUT IN THE WOODS



Presented with the task of designing a holiday bungalow, off and below the Hatton Road in a place called Kadawala, **Architect Palinda Kannangara** held back no efforts to capture in his design the essence of the place where one can unwind and enjoy nature to the fullest.

The artificial edifice rises on the side of a valley overlooking mountains and a river which runs below. The design is intended for

the building, painted dark grey on the exterior so that it will be camouflaged by wild grass growing over the slab with time. Along the access path from the road above, one comes upon the blank rubble wall and timber slatted door, and is only given a glimpse of the nature's wonders beyond through a void in a link connecting two solid linear blocks..

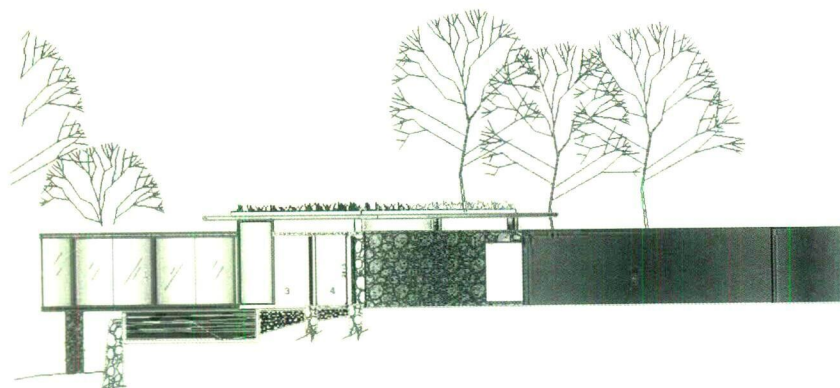
The main structure consists of three rectangular and essentially simplistic and linear forms

coming together in a subtle complexity of angles, which as we shall find has its own reasoning. The entire layout is beautifully connected with a curving pool, which while not contrasting with the linear solid forms, does its part with its fluid dynamism on the flat plain, to complete the composite form.

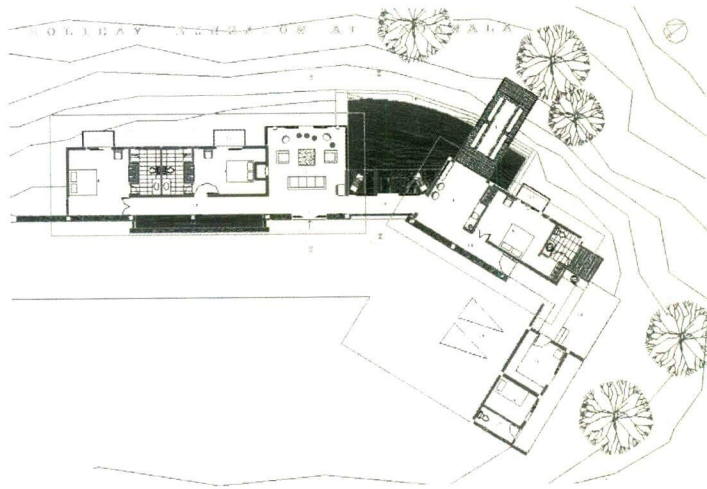
The main activity areas comprising of Living, Dining and the three Bedrooms, Bathrooms, are organized in two linear blocks connected to the link

with a slight angle. These two main blocks feature four foot wide cantilevered weather guards for shade and shelter to both the solids and voids right around the structure. The angle itself has been carefully incorporated to optimize on the magnificent view of the river below from bedrooms, and the forest across from the living and dining. The third section, the one that is twisted to a more severe right angle, is the service block which in turn has its own private view of a different part of the



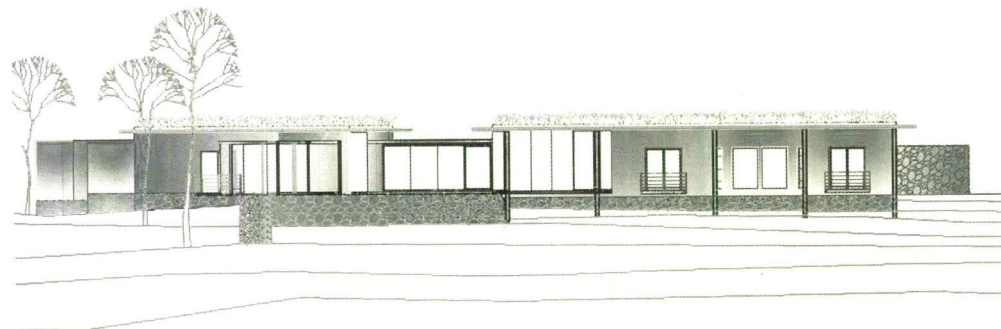
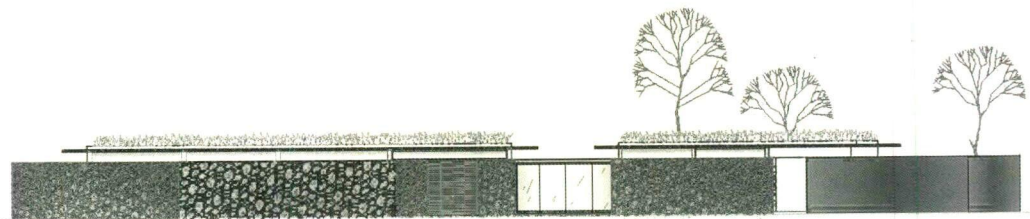


SECTION XX

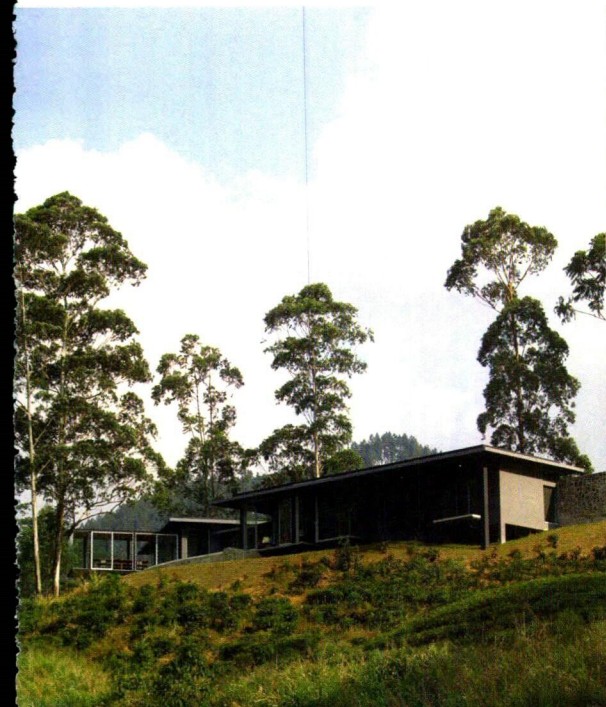


PLAN

FRONT ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION





forest.

The Dining is the focus of the building as a "glass box", an absolute dynamic contrast, on a steel structure protruding towards the forest and floating above the infinity edge swimming pool. The feel of its space is made further different with having a timber floor and timber paneling for the soffit, accentuating its lightness to a level where it appears to float, half in the water and half in the air. Being the climax of the experience, it contrasts with the rest of the scheme which has cement cut floors and soffit painted in black in a more solid and anchored setting.

The finishes of the Master Bedroom with its walls applied with cement float in a rustic finish, has been conceptualized by the architect, to breathe in the view of the forest from a "cave-like" feeling, with the lights adding a 'shaft lighting' effect.

The finishes of the building are carefully thought of, to carry the minimalism of linear forms in conjunction with the furniture. One enjoys a simple sense of lightness lounging in the living area or resting in the bedrooms. The dining activity, however, heightens ones senses with the sheer fluid dynamism of the space, but carries in essence the same minimal linearity in the furniture and form.

Overall, Palinda's effort seems to have been focused on creating a standing point for experiencing the sheer beauty of nature surrounding that area, with a complete sense of relaxation or surrender. It allows one, in essence, let go of petty burdens and let one's self be immersed in the glory of nature, to float with the river or 'live' in the trees listening to bird song.

By **Nandike Samaranyake**

The writer is an Architect by profession working for a reputed private Architectural firm

Photographs :  
© Malaka Weligodapola

Architect :  
**Palinda Kannangara AIA (SL)**  
Consultants :  
**Saro Weerasooriya FIE (SL)**  
Client :  
**Messrs Unit Energy (Pvt) Ltd**  
Contractor :  
**VS Hydro (Pvt) Ltd**  
Project Period :  
**Completed 2006**  
Area :  
**3175 Sqft**