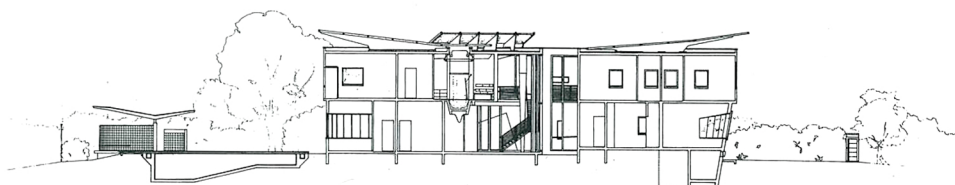


ROBERT POWELL

SINGAPORE ARCHITECTURE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
PATRICK BINGHAM-HALL



SINGAPORE STATEMENT

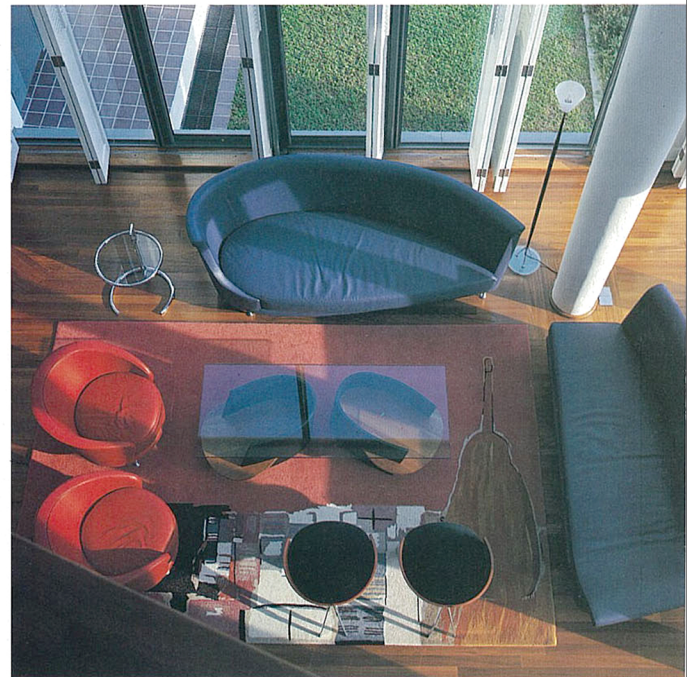
This provocatively modern yet meticulously detailed new private house in a Singapore suburb draws on a rich mixture of Eastern and Western influences. Although, unlike most of the other projects in these pages, climate is not a prime consideration, the outcome is a confident architectural statement.



- 1 The square, ship-like prow of the new house.
- 2 East elevation – an enigmatic interplay of solids and voids.
- 3 West elevation, with glazed volumes piercing and rupturing the concrete shell.
- 4 The carport canopy is supported by a pair of tensile wires.
- 5 Inside the living room, studded with pieces of brightly coloured furniture.

The organisation of Check's house in Singapore places a square, predominantly glazed block in the centre of a narrow, rectangular site. Two wings extend northwards from the north-west corner of the central block and southwards from the south-east corner of this block, defining both the public and private realms.

The south-east wing is slightly rotated around a point which marks the centre of the entrance hall. Entering the house, one turns through 90° to enter the



living area – essential *fung shui* – and a curved wall shields the living room.

The living area is high and dramatic, opening to views of the private pool and eastwards to the splendid trees of the Botanic Gardens. The height is exaggerated by the slim tapered columns which are detached from the external skin. This space contrasts with the compression that is experienced when moving to the dining room along a gently inclined timber ramp. Other spatial experiences are precisely

choreographed by the architect: the sinuous curve of the corridor from the entrance hall leading to the studio; the sensual feeling of exposure along the bedroom corridor; the panoramic view from the dining room; the lightness of the main staircase and the unexpected pleasure of a small courtyard with a pool fed by rainwater on the west side.

Detailing is meticulous. The main staircase, cantilevered from one of the principal structural columns, appears to hang without support, but is as steady as a

House, Singapore
Architects
KNTA Architects



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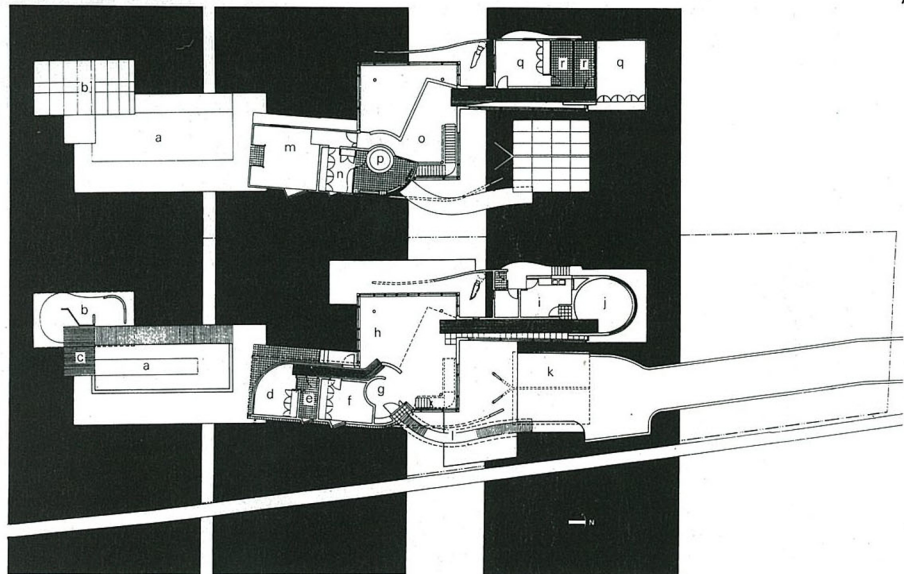
Dining room with louvred shutters.



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Living room at dusk, with the brilliant tropical sky intruding over the protective shutters.

- a swimming pool
- b pool pavilion
- c timber decking
- d study
- e study bedroom
- f guest bedroom
- g entrance hall
- h living room
- i kitchen
- j dining room
- k carport
- l walkway
- m master bedroom
- n dressing room
- o family room
- p master bathroom
- q bedroom
- r bathroom



ground and first floor (scale approx. 1:500)

rock. The handrail terminates with a Gaudi-like flourish at the base. There is a beautifully crafted sliding door to the master bedroom on Scarpa-esque steel rollers and deep reveals to the guest bedroom window.

In the tropics, a house that employs so much glass is bound to come in for searching questions. The architectural language speaks of the globalisation of architecture. The house could be located almost anywhere in the world – its form suggests that climate is not the

main architectural consideration. The primacy of the object, the preoccupation with details, challenges a view that architecture should express its geographical location. If Singapore aims to achieve the configuration of a global city, can it simultaneously resist the globalisation of architecture?

Yet secondary elements are provided as sunscreening devices and make gestures to the climate. There are tall louvred shutters in the living room, a deep concrete beam on the west elevation and

double-skin roof structure which creates an air-circulation space. Even so, the house relies upon air-conditioning.

The architect, Tan Kay Ngee, stands with one foot in European culture and the other in Southeast Asia, and appears not to be beset by the agonies that are evident in a self-conscious search for a Regionalist language. Nor does he borrow uncritically from contemporary Western ideas. The design is a provocative statement by a young Asian architect. **ROBERT POWELL**

Project team
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