



PROJECTS



Russell Dandeniya **ECO HOUSE, MADINNAGODA**

Although in the heart of an urban setting, this house takes advantage of its natural surroundings to provide serene living spaces while at the same time paying homage to the environment through its sustainable design approach.

Photos Indika De Silva, Mahesh Bandara and Kolitha Perera



FROM THE ARCHITECT'S PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Designed to make the most of its surroundings this small house is a spatial refuge, a place to unwind for a client with a busy lifestyle. It is set among the lush greeneries abutting the Diyawannawa Lake on one side and a picturesque marshland on the other. The subsequent placing and planning of the house reflect an eagerness to capture the natural rhythms and flows of its urban enclave, as well as to appreciate experience and protect the variety of birds and other species that dwell in the surrounding environment.

Positioned along the east-west axis of the site, the thin rectangular form of the house is both an environmental and aesthetic response to the idea of intervening sensitively to the natural habitat. Yet, the apparently simple design has been carefully resolved to accommodate a diverse range of indoor and outdoor spaces to suit the client's basic – and at times complex – spatial requirements.

A key strategy pursued in spatial planning was to increase the garden areas substantially, thus leaving the most of the natural setting unharmed and allowing interiors to capture

unrestricted views of the greenery. The internal ground level spaces merge seemingly with the outside by extending into an open dining verandah first, and then to a timber pathway that runs towards the water body. This projected feeling of living 'outside' – as opposed

to 'inside' – is further exaggerated by using natural materials and rough textures to soften the built-form edges, as well as by allowing natural light and ventilation to penetrate each of the interior spaces. Even the master suite at the upper level with



Opening page: wrapping threshold brings outside to inside; pages 2-3: camouflaged cottage inside the green; this page, above: the exterior

of the house where recycle material have been extensively used; opposite page: patterns of dawn created by the timber roof

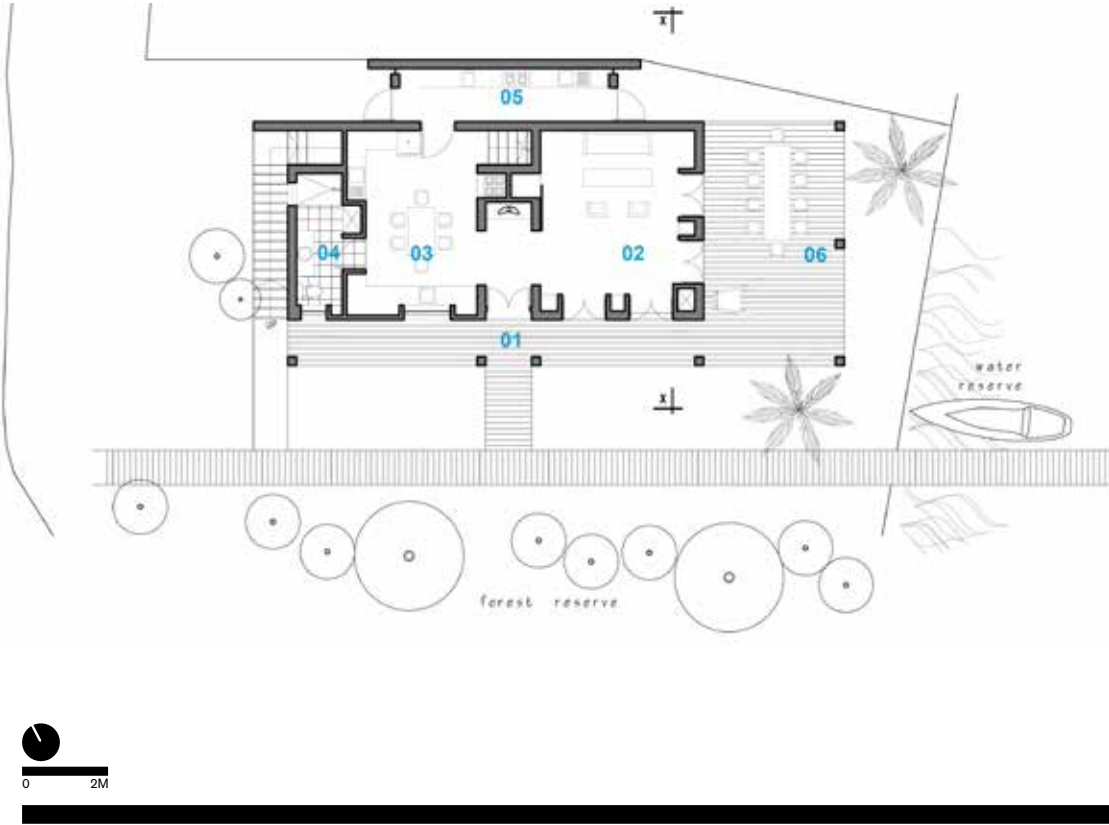




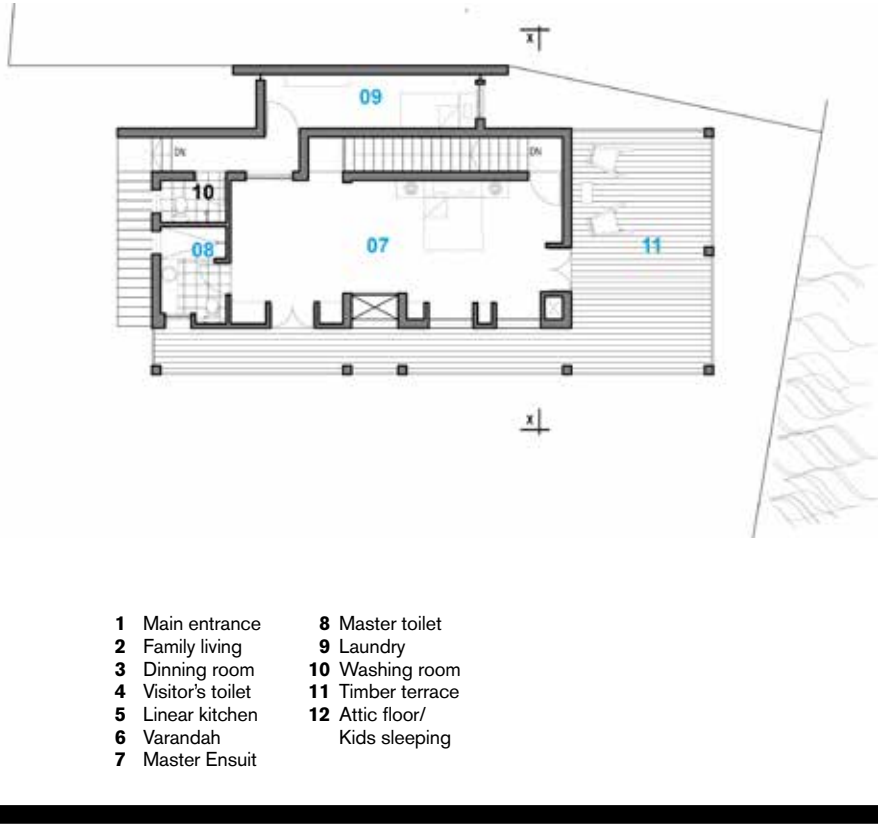
the associated timber attic to entertain kids and the marshland, thereby creating a unique experience unparalleled to what one gets in a similar urban setting.

While the natural setting has been the obvious inspiration for spatial design, the building also benefits from a continuous commitment to follow sustainable building practices. For example, this project can also be considered as a 'zero energy building' where materials for the floor structure, timber floor paneling, doors and windows, railings, staircases, roof timber, etc. have all been recycled, having collected from junk buildir yards in the vicinity of the site; even most of the new materials selected for the building such as the low-energy sun baked mud brick used for walls – fit within the ESD agenda of the project.

Through its simple gestures, material choice and spacious envelopes, the structure also creates a user-friendly and robust architectural environment, which is receptive to different arrangements of furniture or any other spatial or functional chaos without diminishing the intended unique experience or architectural character. It attempts to exemplify wear and tear-free, usable robust, architecture. @



Above: the sitting room with a clear flow of air and light. Sun baked mud bricks interior to induce any usage chaos



Above: the living area opens out to the dining podium; right: hidden alternate access to the house from client's office



Architect:
Archt. Russell Dandeniya
Project Architects
Archt. Gihan Muthugala
Archt. Gayani Hewage
Client :
Mrs. Eshani De Silva
Consultants:
JayanthaGamage
(Structural Engineer)
RDC Architects
(Service/Electrical)
Site extent:
40.9 p.
Total built area:
1900 ft2
Cost:
4.5 M
Completed:
2010
Civil contractor:
Kottegoda Associates
Photographs:
Kolitha Perera



Top, left: the play of light and shadow is maximised to enhance the space; top, right: camouflaged cottage inside the green

Inset: timber detailing of the ceiling; bottom, left: floating space over the canopies; bottom, right: master bedroom, cheerful inside penetration



Top: capturing the nature through openings; bottom, left and right: the wooden walkway from

the jetty of the lake to the house and the aquatic environment around the house



Tadao Ando

Born in 1941 in Osaka, Tadao Ando is one of the most renowned contemporary Japanese architects. He has designed many notable buildings, including Row House in Sumiyoshi, Osaka (1976), the Church of the Light, Osaka (1989), the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, St. Louis (2001), the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (2002), the 21_21 Design Sight in Tokyo (2007) and Punta della Dogana, Venice (2009). The many awards he has received include the Gold Medal of Architecture (1989), the Pritzker Architecture Prize (1995), Gold Medal of the American Institute of Architects (2002), and Gold Medal of Union Internationale des Architectes (2005). He has been a visiting professor at Yale, Columbia, Berkeley, and Harvard. He received the Japanese Order of Culture in 2010.

www.tadao-ando.com

**Paola Besana**

Paola Besana began weaving in 1958 at age 23, after a journey to Sweden and Finland. Inspired by that memorable journey, she later began to study weaving ever more seriously, while trying to learn its techniques and history. Of fundamental importance were her studies in New York with Lily Blumenau in 1961 and at other arts and crafts schools in the US. In the 1970s, she met and studied with Anne Sutton in the UK, a very important figure in the weaving world, and the author of one of the foremost books in this field, *The Structure of Weaving*, published in the early 80s. On her return to Italy, Besana opened a studio in Milan, which immediately became a workshop, research, production and teaching centre.

www.paolabesana.it



Photo: Andrea Martindonna

Russell Dandeniya

Born in 1972 in Matara, Sri Lanka, Russell Dandeniya studied at the Department of Architecture in the University of Moratuwa, where he completed a BSc in Built Environment in 1997 and a MSc in Architecture in 2001. He underwent his professional training at two of the leading architectural practices in Sri Lanka – namely RW and Architrave – before becoming a Chartered Architect in 2004 and subsequently setting up his own architectural practice: a small, experimental and studio-based office, mostly consisting of university graduates, undergraduates and a unique core of competent chartered architects. Believing in a mode of practice that cleverly fuses the client's requirements with the architect's inner belief, Russell searches for an architecture that is minimal in resource use, sustainable in environmental response, and conscientious in dealing with the local climate, people and place. Among the awards he has won for his work are 'the best personalized house' and 'the young architect of the year', both of which were awarded by the Sri Lanka Institute of the Architects (SLIA) in 2008 and 2009 respectively. In 2014, Russell became a fellow member of the SLIA.

www.rdcarchitects.net

**Valerio Olgiati**

Born in Coira, Switzerland, in 1958, Valerio Olgiati studied architecture at the ETH Zurich. In 1996 he opened his own practice in Zurich, and then in 2008 together with his wife Tamara in Flims. His most important buildings include the schoolhouse in Paspels, the museum The Yellow House in Flims, the residential complex Schleife in Zug and the PermMuseumXXI in Perm, Russia. Major projects in planning are the winery for Carnasciale in Italy, the high-rise building San Felipe in Lima, a house for a priest in Bavaria and a building for the headquarters of the Baloise insurance company in Basel. He led the Kenzo Tange Chair at Harvard University, Cambridge in 2009. Since 2002 he has been a full professor at the Accademia di Architettura Mendrisio at the Università della Svizzera italiana.

www.olgiati.net



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