



# A Home Evolved

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► We moved into this house in 1985, two months after our second child, Omar, was born, and when our eldest child, Mahani, was 3 years old. This house was to undergo numerous changes to accommodate a growing family from only the two of us, to include four children right up to adulthood.

This home has evolved to cater to our needs as much as to our finances at that point in time. We changed and expanded our home when the need arose, and there is no space left unused in this home. Use of space has also changed over time according to the needs of our growing family. Even rooms have changed places.

We believe that one's home is constantly evolving, and thus, there is no hurry to build the "perfect" home. A home can be just perfect for the moment, and it can also evolve and be perfect for a different period in time - it just serves to show that a house will grow along with the family.

The original house consisted of a large double volume living and dining space, a guest room en-suite, kitchen, utility and study on the ground floor. There were 3 bedrooms upstairs and no family room. The carpark that allowed for 2 cars had a temporary metal deck roof. The house was tucked to the back of the

- 1 A view from the garden at night
- 2 Our patio overlooking the koi pond; all timber columns and floor joints are recycled cengal wood
- 3 The original house





property, allowing us a large enough garden to play badminton in.

During the early years, we mainly focused on the maintenance and upkeep of the house. We painted the inside of the house one year, and the following year, painted the outside walls. The year after that, we did the bathrooms. We never did have to move out of the house.

Our biggest extension was built after our fourth child was born, as we waited to see if it was a girl or a boy. The decision was either to build two rooms for 2 girls and 2 boys, or one large room for 3 girls and one room for one boy. So it was that we were bestowed with a third daughter, Faridah. We do not believe that children should live in isolation in separate rooms. Having watched so many seasons of *Full House* (a popular TV show in the 90s), we decided that our daughters would turn out to be better people if they learned to cope with each other in one space. So we built them a dormitory with a loft which has become expressively their own. Our son, Omar, occupied this room until the age of 12, and we had to build him a loft in another room to tempt him out. We transformed his room again when he was 19, so that it was more of a multi-purpose space than a bedroom.

Our children's rooms are large with generous study table space; each of them were given 11 ft length of space for computers, printers, scanners, homework, art and craftwork. Individual pin boards allow them to put up photographs, medals, rosettes, etc.

We love collecting original paintings of local artists and both of our daughters and son's rooms are a testament to this – even their own paintings are framed and hung alongside the professionals! Our eldest daughter Mahani then decided to live in the loft; being the tidy person that she is, she felt she needed her own space. At the same time, we rearranged our kitchen, maid's room and store to give us a large working kitchen and a maid and utility area.

Two years ago my husband, Baharum and I decided to give ourselves a treat and enlarged our bedroom to include a study and TV area. As we were collecting old cengal wood for our retreat we decided to use some of it in our house. As we both love the kampong house, we decided to build our extension completely in timber using 8" x 10" cengal columns, and our floor joists became the ceiling of our patio below. We gave ourselves another treat by adding a small koi pond. We actually waited for the children to grow up before adding this feature, as I was quite paranoid about children drowning in pools! As we had an average of 10 cats at any one time, it was also my fear that they might go fishing! But our fears were unfounded – there was only one case where the cat somersaulted into the water having bent too far down trying to have a drink.

We have been collecting furniture from Malacca, and over the years have now a bit of everything for another room. So we added our treasures to our

- 4 The double-volume living and dining space
- 5 Our collection of items from Malacca are placed in the guest room
- 6 Our library is the most flexible space in the house
- 7 The girls' dormitory; the loft upstairs is our eldest daughter's private space
- 8 View from the left
- 9 Our son's sleeping alcove within his bedroom



new guest room, which now has a bit of the old world charm, complete with my parent's trunk and my collection of childhood photos, along with my husband's as well. To personalise the room further, we added paintings of flowers done by our third daughter, Soraya.

Finally, our product designer daughter, Mahani, redesigned our driveway, while we repainted the exterior and added a sandstone relief on the bare wall of the girls' room.

Throughout the expansion and renovation of our home, we never had to intrude into our front garden. The space is still there except that the lawn has shrunk, due to the spaces eaten up by ever-growing plants and trees. We could still play badminton, except that the shuttlecock would get stuck in the foliage of our fruit trees, which have grown over the years. Our *jambu bol* and *jambu madu* have fruited profusely and it is fun to turn them into *rojak*, and send platefuls of it to the neighbours!

Our home is very lived in and the children's rooms are activity spaces. So much so that at times, our house feels like a community centre as their friends feel very at ease coming here. We like that, and we are glad that our children enjoy coming home. Our house is perfect for us now, and like I said, a house is never permanent, we just let it evolve and enjoy it... for the moment. 



Our personal study and TV area attached to the master bedroom