

GAMINI DISSANAYAKE

An Introductory Note

From the telescopic scenic view of a paddy field adjacent a hillside tea estate beyond, and the Asupini Falls from afar, his countryside parental home amidst the ever-changing weather of Aranayaka drew the mind of a young boy of four siblings since his childhood to love the gifts of Mother Nature, which in turn nurtured his talent for drawing, just like his parents, since early on. This young boy, as was schooled at Dharmaraja College in Kandy, was gradually exposed to geography, culture, and living of the Hill Country as he grew. He was insatiably intrigued by the then persisting housing landscape in Kandy, where readily buildable lands are meager.

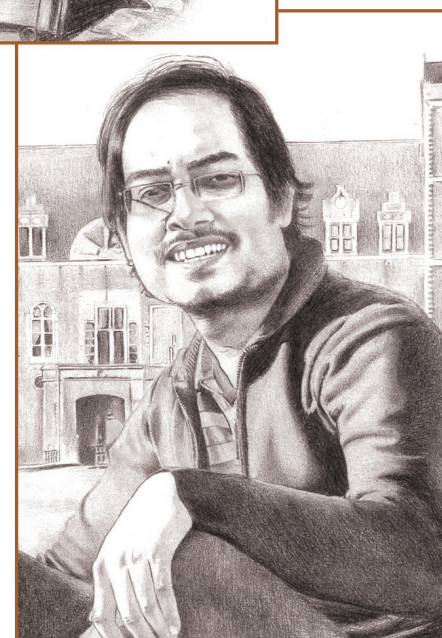
As a young man, in pastime, he tended to wrestle with imaginary house design solutions to meet the challenges posed by Kandyan topography, much like how the architecture of Sigiriya arose from the uncanniest of terrains. His in-born talents as an artist further refined his visualization of future housing landscapes of Kandyan terrains. In 1975, he entered the University of Moratuwa to follow Architecture as a part-time student and after few years he started his career in design. His career begins with his first residential project as he introduces his revolutionary split-level house designs for the lands that had been labeled as 'unbuildable'. He struggled with and smartly overcame the topographical challenges and pioneered the split-level house designs in Kandy.

The present housing landscape of Kandy is derived much upon introduction of this new design concept which was greatly influential to manifest a guiding principle of house design. It is Gamini Dissanayake who pioneered this revolution. In Kandy, now, every land is buildable thanks to Gamini's revolution. He has so far designed more than 3,000 buildings that include several villas, hotels, hospital, library, pavilion, and an auditorium as well. His design hallmark is characterized by the blend of harmony with nature, lasting modernity, construction practicality, spatial utility, and enhanced natural beauty. Gamini Dissanayake – Architectural Perspective is the epitome of his design virtuoso.

Asked Gamini how he designs unique buildings to complement its land, he would humbly say, "When I make a visit to the location, its topography communicates to me of a unique design that flows with the land within minutes. And I blend this initial design with the needs of the client, making it meaningful. And that is it." Two of his clients have the following to express about Gamini's works: First, "Architecture is always more than building, representing as it does a folding together of buildings and culture, so that the buildings come to have meanings as they are caught up in a way of life - architecture is best appreciated as a part of an art of living." Second, "Artists don't always paint masterpieces, no artist does. But there are times when the spirit moves and the painting makes its own demand. And it almost happens by itself, it's a magical moment that every artists prays for." Likewise, no wonder, every client of Gamini has a pleasant tale to recount. And Gamini also has something to tell about his works: "All my clients are living happy lives in the buildings I designed. That is my eventual happiness too."

Gamini says that, as a designer, he ought to have peace of mind and a peaceful home environment. His beloved wife, Chandrakanthi, who sacrificed her lecturer post at the Technical College to help him and to take care of their children relieved Gamini from family commitments and released him for his works. She enthusiastically brought up the children, provided them with excellent education, and maintained peace and pleasure of the family while Gamini was inundated by work. He iterates it is his wife who elevated him to his present state! Their daughter, Apeksha, serves as an acting Consultant Dermatologist. She is married to Bimantha, recently completed his MD (UK) now an ENT Surgeon, and is a mother of two children. Their son, Asiri, is a Chartered Architect, done his master's degree in Belgium and is a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Moratuwa. He is married to Himali, a Doctor of Sri Jayawardenepura Hospital, and is a father of two children.

In addition to his career in architecture, serving as the Managing Director of Gamini Dissanayake Associates (pvt) Ltd., he has obtained a graduateship from City & Guilds Institute in the United Kingdom, and is also a member of the Engineers Guild of Sri Lanka and the Organization of Professional Associations of Sri Lanka in addition to being a member of the governing Council of the University of Peradeniya and Member of the advisory committee of export Development board.



Preface

As an architect-turned-anthropologist, I have long wondered how architects and other creative minds can envision their work before it is even realized. Is it simply a matter of following a ritual canon or applying mathematical principles, building regulations and technical know-how? Do they draw inspiration from the Muses, from a place-and-time-bound 'genius loci' or do they rather project what they had shaped in their mind's eye? In discussions I had on the subject with my mentor, the late Prof. Renaat Devisch, he drew my attention to the ideas on 'transitional object' and 'potential space' which the paediatrician Donald Winnicott (1896 – 1971) developed after studying the close bond that exists between mother and infant. He argued that this invisible oneness of mother-infant, over time, develops a subtly increased distance between them. In this 'intermediate area' the infant intuitively selects a transitional object (a blanket, a piece of wool, a teddy-bear) which it experiences both as part of its own imaginary world and the external reality. As the child grows, it preserves this intermediate way of experiencing by filling that potential space with creative playing, with the use of symbols and with all that eventually adds up to a cultural life. Winnicott repeatedly asserted that the early experiences of transitional phenomena and potential space are the source of what, subsequently, makes up the creativity of each individual. While this gives each individual the potential to discover the world in a personal, creative way, not everyone is endowed with the capacity and the opportunity to fully realize that potential.

This book gives the reader an unprecedented opportunity to look into the ways in which Kandyan architect Gamini Dissanayake realized this potential. Taking in the landscape of his childhood in sketches and watercolors, he cultivated this internalized topography of paddy fields and hills throughout his studies in architecture and re-created it in the split-level design that highlights his architectural oeuvre. Flipping through the pages of this volume, the reader will discover the products of his creative mind in the elevations, interiors, colour schemes and the descriptions of it all. It offers a rare glimpse into that potential space where natural context, cultural observances and functionality all fall neatly in place and, once realized, offer an environment where the end-users are happy to dwell and discover the world in their own personal, creative way.

This architectural oeuvre displays an extraordinary adeptness at combining modern-day functionality and comfort, elements of 20th century architectural styles and references to vernacular Sri Lankan architecture. Another of its outstanding qualities is its subtle way of integrating the natural setting into the design. The split-level design is an outstanding example of how the architecture not only adapts to the topography but turns it into an added value. An abundance of examples demonstrates the architect's preparedness to make the most of the natural setting rather than destroying it. This goes from the respectful integration of trees or rocks into a dwelling such as the Jayawardena Residence, to the clever usage of the hilly terrain to enhance the efficacy of a functional building such as the Kidney Transplant and Renal Care Unit of the National Hospital – Kandy. This empathetic attitude towards both culture and nature undoubtedly constitutes the greatest value of this architectural oeuvre. In view of the growing frequency of natural disasters and the scientific evidence that these incidences are related to climate change, this attitude presents the most commendable (if not only) direction for preserving a habitat that is humanely and naturally sustainable.

Koen De Wandeler, Ph.D.
Assoc. Prof. KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture, Belgium
Chair, KU Leuven Regional Committee for Southeast Asia
ASEAN Bualuang Fellow, Thammasat University, Thailand

Epilogue

“The way people live can be directed a little by Architecture” once said the world-renowned self-taught architect, Tadao Ando. Today we place and treat ourselves graciously on and around the elements of nature thanks to great architectural concepts came to light ever since humans stopped living in caves. It takes a great deal of innovative thinking and patience to convert an imagination into reality and one maestro who has been doing this for more than 4 decades is none other than the humble personality Gamini Dissanayake. He never failed to create marvels propelling Sri Lankan Architecture to the next level. As someone who has been residing and based in Kandy for decades, I still remember how he initiated ‘split-level building designs’ which solved burning problems in the property industry. I can bear witness to the revolutionary yet calm approach he followed to set a trend in building construction in Kandy where unique and classic designs were brought about while embracing the undesirable features of nature as they are. In that era, the city and ultimately the country greatly benefitted from this novel concept and he always stayed focused on his project and devoted to see it to completion. Not to mention, he has always been a dearest colleague and a generous human being and also a master collaborator to the upliftment of University of Peradeniya as well. His unique pavilion design for the University of Peradeniya indeed brings out the class and the supreme artistic values Sri Lanka holds.

The hotel Mount blue designed biophilically with his unique flavors always touched the hearts of visitors both local and international and reminds me of Tadao Ando’s Rokko Housing in Japan. Blending the nature to the designs with optimum utilization of earth’s topographical features as they are, after several decades of his practicing is still astonishing and recognized by public. His every piece of work carries great authenticity yet with simple geometries which attracted many esteemed personalities in the country to get his expertise on the designs of their dream houses and bungalows. My observations as a mere resident in Kandy, a colleague practicing a parallel discipline and a companion confirms nothing but he is just the cleverest at his work.

The instincts of an Architect often lead the transformation of an era. The greatest born Architect of Sri Lanka Gamini Dissanayake is a living example for that and it’s of no secret that his mind-blowing designs never conflicted with but greatly assisted structural engineers’ and green professionals’ duties in the design of a structure. As a person who practice and overlook these disciplines, I can always vouch for that. It’s his work in Kandy that myself and the contemporaries have to show and boast to the younger generations as masterpieces of the modern era. I firmly believe that he is a personality deserves serious consideration as a role model in the Sri Lankan architecture as a person who mastered the art of observing, picturing and converting the land to splendors which allured the nation.

I wish every luck and good health to serve the nation and the world through what he innovated and what continuously generates out of his extreme prudence on the subject, to the trailblazer who made undiscovered patterns discovered, undoable practices doable and the unbuildable lands buildable and of course to the Sri Lankan Ando in my eyes.

Ranjith Dissanayake
Secretary, State Ministry of Rural Roads and other Infrastructures
Senior Professor, Dept. of Civil Engineering, University of Peradeniya
Chairman, Green Building Council of Sri Lanka

A close reading of the architecture

An entity becomes a creation if it can transform us, communicates with us or grabs our attention.

“House” is not only an object which is tangible. It is undoubtedly a magnificent creation which is connected to a person’s soul and at the same time, it is the happiness, love, freedom and the breath of life.

It is believed that from the early human civilization to the contemporary society, variety of houses are built, centrally including the universal human concepts. It has been done consciously at times and unconsciously at other times. In the Egyptian civilization, in creations such as Mastaba, step pyramid, pyramids and rock cut tombs, in the Gothic architecture of the Western Medieval era and in the Eifel tower in France and in the Sidney Opera House in the modern era, the human- culture connectivity, the aesthetic attitude and the intellect of humans which was identical to the so-called different eras, can be seen as central.

Being an artist who treats architecture as an aesthetic entity and who merges it with the principles of humanity, I see Gamini Dissanayake as an architect who is an impressive creator. As an artist, art critic and an academic researcher, I observe his architecture as splendid. I see his work, more than 3500 in number, over a period of nearly 36 years, as an aesthetic weaving,

What I mean by identifying his work as an aesthetic weaving refers to his ability to incorporate time, space, needs of individual preferences, universal themes, culture, the landscapes and the environment with his creations finely.

There are many novelties I have noted in the designs which are included in this book and in the other work done by him, and I would like to give then an embrace of aesthetics as follows.

He is in the process of forming an architectural identity based on the ancient traditional Sri Lankan architecture of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, and Kandy eras. The knowledge and insights he obtains from western and the eastern architecture are finely blended into his work, locating them exactly at place.

The basic elements and the principles of architecture are finely touched in his work, in connection to his critical thinking and analytic skills. The natural light and the light built by the architect are utilized finely in the spaces created by him, nourishing the shadows and depths which finally produce a magnificent impression. By the direction of light and the intensity that light creates on the walls build a splendid space in his buildings.

I see his sensitivity towards the environment as his architecture never builds an impact towards it, always treating it as a part of his work. His sensitivity towards the environment is similar to the architecture at Sigiriya, Ranmasu Uyana and in the work of the Edo era in Japan.

Another significant element in his work is the formation of spaces which have suitable air circulations in them. Although he uses tall and wide doors and windows to do so, what is prominent is his use of colours in doing so. Colours are a fine tool which is capable of interacting with the human personalities and moods. Colours are used by him, not only to light a house but also to provide a meaning to the living, supporting the preferences and the moods of the residents. He uses family colours and opposite colours to do so.

The evolutionary developments in the architectural science is crafty used by Gamini Dissanayake. The cube technique which can be found in the contemporary ultra-modern architecture is used by him suitably to the local culture and the consciousness. He blends that with the different thinking patterns of people, finely.

There is a saying in the field of cinema as "the rule should be broken only if the rule is known" and Mr. Gamini Dissanayake seems to know this very well. He is able to change the conventional architectural techniques to do wonders in the modern architecture. He used the concept of "Madol Kurupaw" – a roof which can be seen in Ambakke Devalaya, in his work of architecture, going against the basic technique of it. The cultural meanings of the colours given by the society on a conventional basis are used to provide different meanings in his works of architecture. The colours the others use very carefully are used by him in a radical manner, and by doing so, he builds up other meanings and an aesthetic appeal. Another prominent aspect I see in his architecture is his creation of the floor. He pays his attention to the colours and shapes and specifically sees to the reflection given by the tiles.

The most interesting aspect in the architecture of Mr. Gamini Dissanayake as I see is his formation of uniqueness among the variety. This is an idea of the western philosopher, Thomas Aquinas. A good craftsman is capable of producing magnificent works by adding a variety of things together and this can be clearly seen in Gamini Dissanayake's work. Shapes, colours, light, building line, large doors and windows, floor, the surrounding environment and the other architectural aspects are finely considered and used by him in his architectural work.

Architecture is not only a craftsmanship. There are aesthetic elements and some technical aspects which are inherent to it. Mr. Gamini Dissanayake is superior in this regard as he is such an artist who is aware of the beauty and the technique both, not light-minded as the fellow architects. He can be declared an artist, undoubtedly, as his ability to engage in architecture with a complete awareness to the technique, aesthetics and the personal preferences.

Prof. W.M.P. Sudarshana Bandara
Professor in Fine Arts
Department of Fine Arts
Faculty of Arts
University of Peradeniya
Sri Lanka





Mr. Volker Bethke

Anniewatta, Kandy

Along the winding routes of Asgiriya, Villa Rosa rests in a Zen-like quietude among a shag of foliage, juxtaposing the effervescent streets of Kandy.



Library nook





Balcony facing a stunning view of Adam's peak



Mount Blue Kandy has a total of 22 rooms with breathtaking views. The lower ground level unfolds into family rooms with ample space and comfort, with access to a pool immersed in a panorama of overlapping silhouettes of the surrounding hills and Mahaweli river. Outdoor pool beds fringe the pool, unraveling up towards the road level with lush landscaping and secluded seating nooks beneath the shade of towering trees.



Mount Blue front façade

Outdoor infinity pool





Front façade of the Nimalasiri Residence

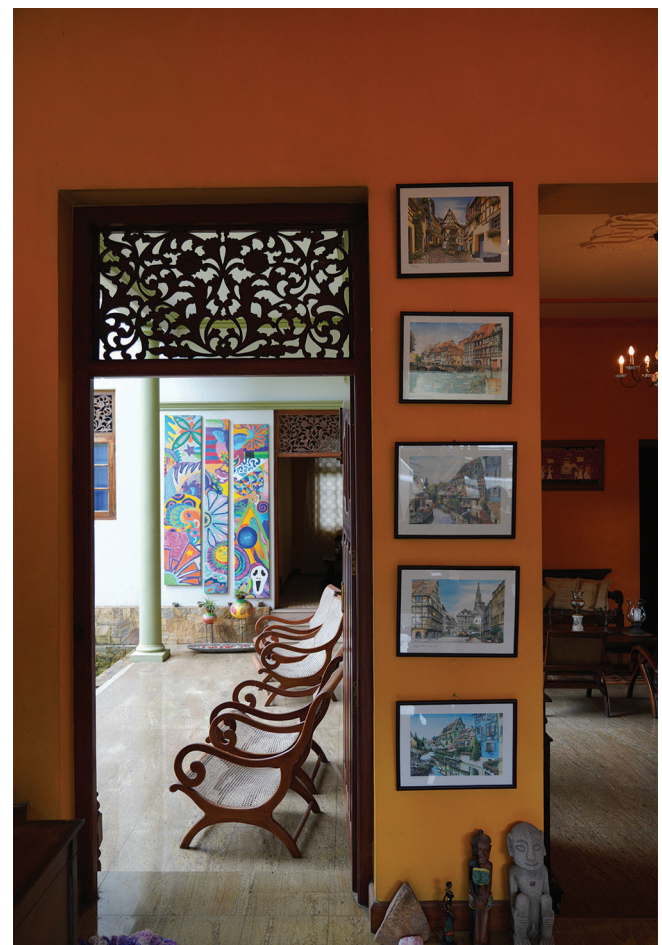




Front porch showcasing traditional woodwork



Staircase landing with large scale painting and window



A serene back verandah

Details of the exterior and landscaping











Vice Chancellor

University of Peradeniya

The task of designing a pavilion for the grounds of the University of Peradeniya bears special significance. With a rich architectural history prevalent in the university premises, creating a design that seamlessly blends with and matches up to the surrounding architecture is crucial.

The pavilion effortlessly recreates the iconic architectural style synonymous with the University of Peradeniya. The structure is symmetrically set with rectangular columns in a dusty rosewood shade, finished off with cornices. A frieze runs across the length of the pavilion, adorned with a series of traditional lotus flower motif moldings in pure white. White cornice detailing outlines the entire span of the frieze, giving an added decorative touch to the exterior.

Front view of University of Peradeniya pavilion
(Under Construction)





Back entrance of the pavilion

Mr. Anuruddha Ratwatte

Anniewatta, Kandy

It is hard to miss the unmistakable scale of the magnificent Doric pillars topped off with a terrace projecting out towards the vast grounds of this property. The exterior of the house gives a subtle introduction of the refined interior architecture yet to be explored. Clean horizontal lines combined with vertical pillars culminate in a simple yet elegant creation of architecture. A pediment sits atop the upper ceiling, paying homage to the neoclassical style of the house. Astonishingly, a typical layout style of a traditional Sri Lankan walauiwa has been discreetly slipped into the façade of the house; a quiet nod to the ancestral history of the client.

Front exterior of the Ratwatte Residence









Front façade of the Tikirathne Residence

Mr. Dudley Sumathipala

Kegalle

Vernacular architecture is of the essence for this residential project in the humid lands of Kegalle. Emerging amongst the tall canopy of a coconut grove, the architecture reminisces traditional Sri Lankan architecture. A sea of brown gravel peppered with dense shrubbery brings a traditional touch to the front yard through its natural and unintentional landscaping.



Side view with garden





Verandah with intricate ceiling
and railing details

Principal

Dharmaraja Collage, Kandy

The Dharmaraja College, Kandy, auditorium is quite possibly a project the architect, being an old boy of the school, considers as the pinnacle of his career. For over a hundred years, this prestigious school spanning over a bountiful 54 acres of land surprisingly didn't have its own auditorium, and, for good reason. As typical with the terrain of Kandy, the property was riddled with inclines and dips of land set upon large immovable rocks.

Approached by the Principal of the college in the early 1990s, he was asked of the possibilities of constructing an auditorium within the school premises. A geologist's expertise later revealed the dangers of disturbing the rock faces for construction, but, the rocks were daringly incorporated into the auditorium design, an unusual feature of the Dharmaraja College auditorium.



Auditorium interior



Mr. Rajiv Bandaranaike

Hanthana, Kandy



Exterior

The owners, once being planters themselves, requested for an architectural work imbued with Tudor-style qualities to resonate with the architectural style of lodges in Nuwara Eliya heavily influenced by English architecture.

The Bandaranaike residence perfectly displays the skills to adapt and audaciously explore different architectural styles; a clever understanding of space and materials that allows for an easeful flexibility in creating architecture that seamlessly slips into a Sri Lankan context. The result; a charming residence that enjoys the best of both worlds.

Quaint exterior of the
Bandaranaike Residence



Façade of the jayarathna Residence





Living room with curved
mezzanine floor

Principal

Dharmaraja College, Kandy



As an alumnus of Dharmaraja College, Kandy, Gamini Dissanayake was always fascinated with the medieval Principal's Bungalow in the vicinity of the school premises. Time and time again, the sight of the bungalow's dilapidating grace foretold the building's impending need for a refurbishment.

Through deft pencil work, new ideas and concepts spilled out into paper. The resulting handful of sketches convinced the Principal to warrant the refurbishments to restore the bungalow back to its former glory.

With a respectful approach that preserves the bungalow's historical significance, the refurbishment maintains the aesthetical essence of the original bungalow whilst minor changes like slipping in a verandah facing the school grounds were imposed to create a more comprehensive layout.

Starting with a delicate idea that stemmed through creative sketches culminating in the restoration of the Principal's bungalow demonstrates the influential power of design conceptualization.



Watercolor painting





Garden with seating area and swimming pool





Entryway and courtyard





Mr. Jeewamal Jayawardena

Malpana, Kengalla

This residence spans across an expanse of almost an acre of steep sloped land in Digana. The summit of the property serves as a vantage point of the factory the owners cherish, which remained an essential element for the design process of the house.

Working compassionately with the land's natural impediments led to the incorporation of four natural rocks dispersed across the property at different levels to the house design, resulting in a delicate and empathetic design that fills the entire property. The house, thus, seamlessly flows through the varying levels of the terrain in split levels, interconnecting its spaces through strategically placed staircases.





Driveway along a lush garden leading up to the Jayawardena Residence



Staircase against a natural rock face

Staircase soffit details



The space planning had been carefully thought out to create a seamless flow and unison between spaces whilst preserving its individuality and maintaining a sense of cohesiveness. This functional and organic design creates a union of man and nature as the design embraces the land in all its flawed splendor to mold a space of calm and serenity. The split levels of the property have been given purpose by creating a journey of discovery throughout the space. The intricate architecture of this house transpired in a haven blessed with a stunning view and complemented by the lingering breezes reminiscent of the fragrances of the surrounding verdure.

The staircase diverting along the natural rocks



Details of natural rock element

Dr. Anuruddha Kiridena

Kuda Rathwaththa Mawatha, Kandy





View of spiral staircase and rock face from above

The natural rock bathed in sunlight

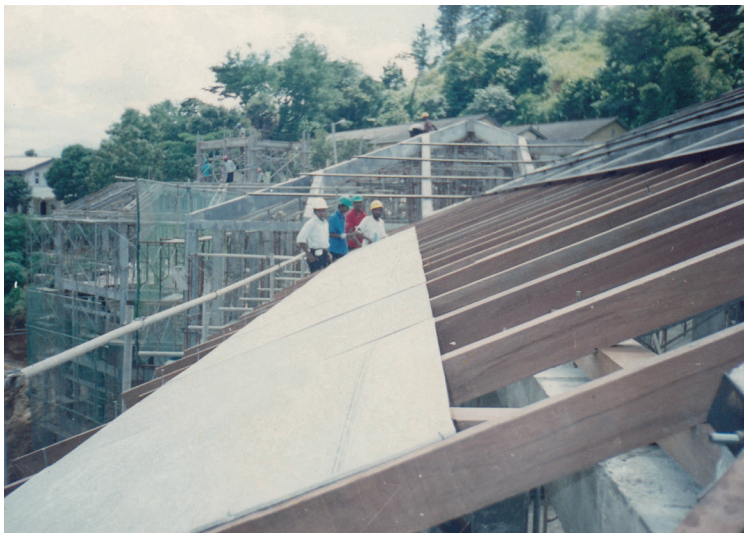


Director

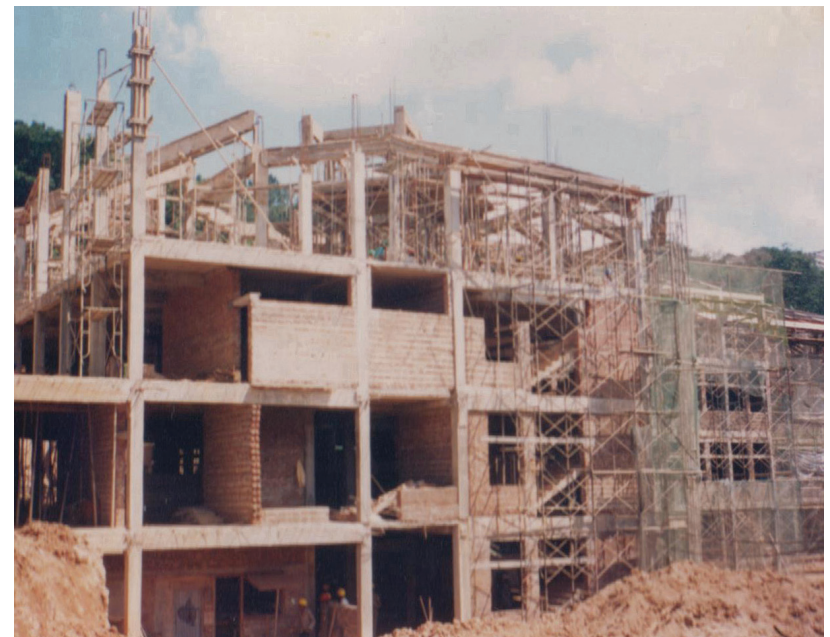
Kidney Transplant & Pediatric Surgery Hospital, Kandy

The Kidney Transplant and Renal Care unit extension, opened in the year 2000, makes the National Hospital – Kandy the second largest hospital in Sri Lanka. The building speaks volumes about the adaptive approach and well-thought-out nature of its architecture.

With the existing buildings of the hospital nestled in flat lands, the property only offered a sloped expanse of 60 degrees reaching the peripheries of the Hanthana Road.



Gamini Dissanayake lightning the oil lamp



Construction stage



Construction stage



Corridor and exterior



The garden space complementing the building structure



Mr. Alawattegama

Tennekumbura, Kandy

The Alawattegama residence in Kandy is a modest, seemingly compact house on a sloped plot of land. A driveway surrounded by landscapes gradually inclines from the side, leading up to a car porch. The façade features double height columns enclosed in natural stone cladding and cornice finishing. Fenestrations of timber framing and glazing are accompanied by louvered panels for passive ventilation, paired with a curved balcony which offsets the linear forms of the exterior.

The Alawattegama Residence beautifully lit in the evening time

Mr. Sujeewa Palliyaguruge

Upper Lake Road, Kandy



Exterior along boundary wall

Having mastered at dueling with the uneven and steep terrains of Kandy, a unique architectural design is conjured up with aesthetic intent and unmatched comfort through thorough understanding of biophilic design; creating a stunning architectural design for the Palliyaguruge residence along the steep terrain of the Rajapihilla Mawatha, whilst maintaining a sense of relaxation and much-needed comfort.



Outdoor pool





First floor interior



Dr. Apeksha Dissanayake

Anniawatta, Kandy

Driveway along the house dipping down into a garden



This residential project is close to the architect's heart; being one meant for his daughter, Dr. Apeksha Dissanayake. The physical characteristics of the property posed a huge challenge on the overall design of the house, its compact, triangular shape constraining possible design solutions.

From a narrow road among bouquets of bourgenvilla blossoms, a gate in whispering green opens and slopes down to the angled property, hovering over a precipice. A cobblestone driveway veers left, opening up to a classy garage blending into the house's aesthetic with its timber and glazed sliding doors. Ahead, the path proceeds to a staircase that dips down in a perfect "S" shape.

The exterior of the house features multiple shells in a tender green, set with fenestrations paired with clerestory windows in wooden tones. Roofs in squared forms display carved wooden rafters that bring in a refined element to subtly balance the simplicity of the exterior.

A garden unravels among the blooming shells of the building's contours, its curvatures offsetting the angular forms of the property. The garden plays an important role in creating a moody and secluded ambience in the property, whilst concealing a home gym underneath. A canopy of tall trees curtaining the periphery of the property dials down the abruptness of the abyss, creating a cozy and enclosed natural landscape. The garden is outlined by cement planters, benches, and a miniature lotus pond, creating a stimulating garden design.



Exterior of the Dissanayake Residence

Mr. Chaminda Sirisena

Polonnaruwa

He Sirisena residence, bearing subtle resemblances to a villa through its placement and scale, reflects the composition of the boundary wall with white façades accompanied by a series of hefty columns bearing earthy tones of stone with a main entrance to the side of the house featuring an ornately carved timber door with a wide frame.



Exterior



Driveway leading to car porch

Front façade



Mr. Dammika Dayananda

Golf Club Road, Digana

Aptly named, the Tunnel House displays yet another antic in dealing with the troublesome terrains of Kandy. Molding the land at a higher elevation, a tunnel has been slipped in beneath the garden, cutting through the land for an easier access route unraveling in a gentle gradient covering the 6-meter height. Through the tunnel, the driveway eases into a car porch and a diagonal staircase to the left; leading to an entrance featuring timber doors and glazed panels on either side with sandblast stickers outlining the shape of decadent roses. A glance at the tunnel shows a pristine garden on top, lined with a white picket fence and lamp posts.



Tunnel house from outside



Front façade

Tunnel



Garden atop the tunnel

Mr. Bandula Gunawardana

Nugegoda



Driveway leading to garage



View of roof terrace from private bar area

Beyond the French windows of this room is a beautiful and spacious roof terrace that slowly transitions from a tiled floor into a swooping curve of grass beneath seating made in a cut and polish cement finish. An outdoor porch swing creates a fun and relaxing seating area, whilst further away, a deck emerges as an outdoor patio beneath awnings, creating a more communal space in the roof terrace; shaping a common space to serve different purposes. Plant beds along the periphery hold bougainvillea and plumeria trees to create a soothing environment.

From a sleek modern exterior to warm libraries and relaxing roof terraces, the complex requirements of the client's lifestyle are addressed through a skilled eye for architectural potential.

Oak Ray Regency Hotel

Peradeniya, Kandy



Exterior of Oak Ray Regency Hotel



The Oak Ray Regency Hotel is a 4-star hotel located at Deveni Rajasinghe Mawatha. Its façade consists of purely geometrical forms to elaborate on the building's scale and emulate a sense of modernity. It's rectangular shape also emphasizes its length spanning along the road, flanked by two mature trees that add a natural element to the front. An ochre hue is used in the façade's stucco walls which are paired with stonework that reinstates the warmth of the color. Yellow lights illuminate the exterior at night with a golden glow.

View from Getambe, Mahaweli Bridge







Mr. Neranjan Wijeratne

Primrose Hill, Kandy

Set amongst a lush canopy of greenery, Mr. Wijeratne's residence stands in seclusion; observing its surrounding in a quiet demeanor. A garage framed by a giant pothos plant straddling a column makes the overrun look of greenery a part of the architectural aesthetic. Araliya trees, ferns, and firs dot around the property; their maturity adding to the aged feel of the house. The incorporation of natural rocks in the landscape adds to the natural, untouched atmosphere of the property.





Prof. Shanthi & Ranjith Mendis

Upper Lake Road, Kandy



Front façade with boundary wall



Seating area decorated with antique pieces

Prof. Ananda & Prof. Chandrika Jayasinghe

Anniewatta, Kandy



Exterior from the garden



Molding and ceiling details



Bedroom interior



Staircase details



Living room

Mr. Jagath Weerabahu

Anniewatta, Kandy

The Weerabahu residence lies on a plateau paved in interlock stone with selective incorporations of vegetation featuring mostly palm trees. The house features a unique form of intersecting angles that makes for an interesting interior layout. Clad partially in stone; the exterior façade ties in the greenery of the vegetation and the paving stones harmoniously. A car porch sits to the left side of the house featuring a traditional timber lattice panel. Alcoves placed into the angled wall of the verandah is lit with soft spotlights to showcase ornaments and plants above a modest timber seat. A simple plank double door in the entrance then opens up into a small foyer and a landing.



Exterior of the Weerabahu Residence



View from foyer



The immediate landing from the entrance diverts to a lower lobby and the first floor with open riser staircases that meets at a mezzanine. The short descent to the lobby displays a water feature adorned with curated plants and a graceful bamboo tree growing up the height of a double-height atrium. The feature helps induce a sense of calm and freshness in the interior whilst occasional rippling caustics bring a dynamic feel to the space.

View from mezzanine



Front façade of the Thalgahagoda Residence

The Thalgahagoda residence in Kandy is a delightful interpretation of Palladian architecture featuring a raised floor level clad in granite, Doric pillars, and a symmetrical, rectangular form. The rustication of the building is unique to itself as it extends up to the first floor, which would usually only be featured in the ground floor level façade. The form of the pediment, synonymous with Palladian architecture, is also achieved through a less ornate façade topped with a gable roof. Beneath the roof terrace in the center is the car porch that directly leads to the front entrance along with a garage to the right.



Driveway leading to car porch

The house opens up to a simple layout that bears resemblance to the floor layouts of Palladian architecture consisting of a center foyer that directly faces a staircase with two rooms flanking. The house's rectangular form means that the space unfolds lengthwise, allowing for the narrow space to be lit up naturally through large French windows on either side. The center timber staircase is a prominent feature in the minimal interior as it leads to a landing with a large picture window that helps connect the house with the greenery in the backyard. Classical square newel posts and balustrades paired with the overlapping folds of the stringer add character to the staircase design. The staircase then bifurcates up to a mezzanine floor; another element from Palladian architecture.



Backyard