



In the original layout, this spacious foyer would have been the cramped living area. Below 3M window film lines the glass doors to protect the interiors from UV exposure.

Architects usually face two challenges that limit their creativity for a project: site restrictions and budget constraints. This house in Upper Bukit Timah was given an honorary mention by the Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA) at this year's Architectural Design Awards for handling "a very difficult site ingeniously". "The challenge was a long, narrow strip behind the original house with an incline of six metres."

For its architect, Warren Liu of D Lab, the budget issue however, played an equal role in the innovative design he drew up for this alteration and addition (A&A) project. The owner Mr Chiu, wanted to expand the three-bedroom semi-detached house for his growing family of four children and their occasionally visiting grandparents – within a conservative budget.

To keep the project cost down, Mr Chiu says that Warren proposed to construct an annexe in the rear of the lot and connect the old and new spaces with an outdoor lounge, instead of building up from the existing semi-detached. To eliminate the expenses for digging and building a new foundation on the boomerang-shaped and sloped lot, the architect designed low-lying, lightweight additions (steel and timber >

right A hedge bordering the pool emphasises the odd shape of the lot and protects it from curious eyes.



DESIGN DETAILS

TIMBER PANELS THAT CAN SWING SHUT TO GIVE THE PROPERTY A SENSE OF PRIVACY FROM ITS NEIGHBOURS, ARE ALSO MADE WITH LOUVRES FOR BETTER VENTILATION.

frames, less concrete and more glass) that could be supported by the existing foundation. Incorporating elements of the original structure – like its foundation – into the A&A also helped with the budget. Although the main structure appears simple, the house's roof planes built at varying pitches add dynamism and echo the odd angles of the site.

OLD MEETS NEW

The original semi-detached house was kept intact – its three bedrooms now serve as guest rooms and storage spaces, and its kitchen is newly fitted with Miele appliances. A dry kitchen with an island counter was added to transit between the old space and the new. To help the existing building blend with the A&A, Warren had it painted entirely white and replaced its old windows with sleeker grey aluminium-framed ones.

A single-storey pavilion was built into the side of the house to connect directly to the original kitchen, and is linked by a koi pond feature to the entrance hall. Enclosed on three sides by sliding glass doors, it is now the new living and dining room. When the glass doors are opened (they can be pushed all the way to the corners), this space looks and feels like a verandah or a roofed open porch overlooking the lap pool. >

