

Project name

Double Haven

Location

Kau To Shan, Shatin, New Territories, Hong Kong

Publication

Building Journal August 2002

Double Haven, Kau To Shan

Haven homes

by Tim Youngs

Located in the upper reaches of Kau To Shan near Sha Tin, the Double Haven development has injected new levels of luxury to the upmarket residential community.

Developer Liu Chong Hing Investment purchased the land in the early-1980s, retaining the existing residential rental development on the site. Amid rising pressure of availability of land in the late-1990s, the owner decided to maximise the land to its full potential. Project architects Ronald Lu & Partners were called on to draw up plans for redevelopment.



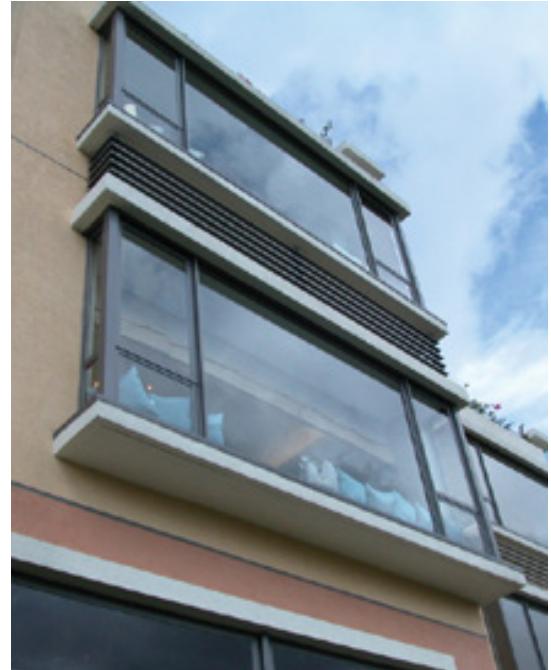


Having maintained his own architectural practice in Australia, Dr Lu's familiarity with the country's style of living influenced the design approach to Double Haven. Row and terrace housing is very popular in Australia, where projects are built mainly two storeys high, Dr Lu noted. "I'm very much familiar with the outdoor space. The interaction between the inside and the outside is important for this type of living."

After overcoming hurdles early in the planning stages — a successful 30 per cent increase in the plot ratio, addressing environmental and traffic concerns — the project team came up with a design in keeping with the needs of today's market.

With young families identified as the target market for the development, planning produced 13 larger detached units along one seaward-facing edge of the site and a row of 19 slightly smaller semi-detached homes on the rear and





elevated side. Featuring a north-northeast and south-southwest orientation, each home includes a living and dining room, family room, a master bedroom with ensuite, two bedrooms and a study room. In addition to fully equipped kitchens, other features include laundry rooms and walk-in closets in the detached houses. The GFA for the detached houses is 3,880 sq ft while the semi-detached houses feature 2,980 sq ft of living space.

Living areas are spread over three floors with interesting variations in headroom. Living and dining rooms feature a lofty one-and-a-half floor high space, admitting more light and air to the homes. Adjacent kitchens, meanwhile, feature more conventional headspace, which in turn results in variances in floor levels above. Heading up central staircases in the homes, bedrooms, studies and second living rooms are entered from landings.

Each house features front or rear yards measuring between 1,000 sq ft to 2,000 sq ft in addition to generous rooftop patios and terrace areas on split levels. Living rooms are placed to open out into backyards or terraces, ensuring that exterior space can become an extension of the indoor environment. Vegetation was an important theme from the outset, so mature trees were maintained where possible, planters were introduced and greenery maximised both in front of and behind each house.

The houses are placed either side of recreation areas and generous open space. Suitably for a development planned with young families in mind, the central portion of the site is traffic-free for children to play safely — cars are diverted into either of two semi-undercover carparks immediately after entering the site and passing a turning circle, heading towards double carports and basement entrances at each house.

Residents' facilities include a 25-metre swimming pool in clear view of each home and designed for both exercise and relaxation, a wading pool, a Jacuzzi, a sauna, an indoor/outdoor childrens' play area and a snooker room.

When choosing colours, materials and textures for the houses and their surrounds, the designers choose to relate the project to Southern Californian images, connoting a youthful environment with sunshine and greenery.



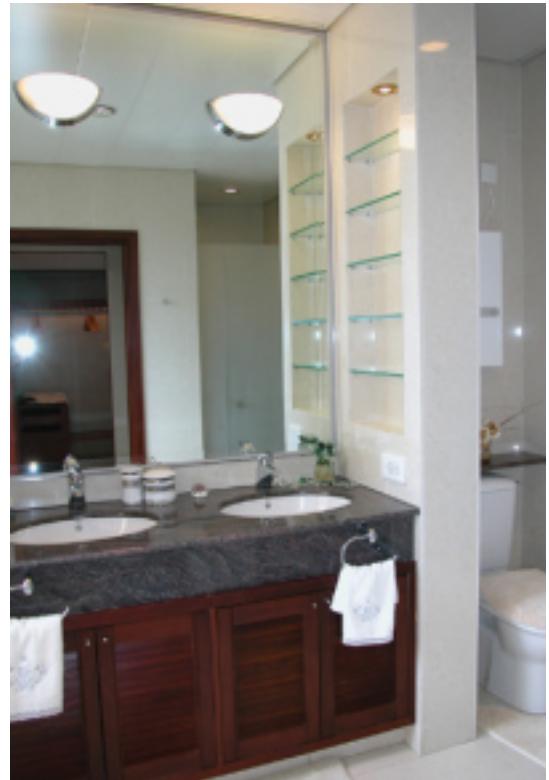




"The development is not a very typical Hong Kong tiled or granite type of development," Dr Lu said. "It's more of a softer feel of tones and colours."

Warm tones are applied to the walls using plaster and spray paint. Glazing throughout the development uses low-E glass with a bit of tint to look as natural as possible, while bay windows extend interior space. At the main entrance to







each home, glazed canopies provide shelter from rain and sun.

The architect's choice of palette was one that was well received by Liu Chong Hing, Dr Lu notes, which in turn helped the team stay focused. "The owner did market research and thought that would be the right direction. I think we were very lucky on this project, in that it went very smoothly because the client, us and the consultant all worked together as a team."

Site challenges

Specific challenges met during the project planning related to fung shui and environmental issues. Fung shui was of particular importance, not least due to the site's location. Perched high on a hillside and overlooking Tolo Harbour, the site's best orientation was determined as being north-northeast. With planning based around

that axis the designer ensured that, by raising homes to the rear of the site, all homes could see the waterway.

Environmental initiatives included retaining several mature trees on the site, planning the swimming pool's location correspondingly at the centre of the site. Design and planning also took into account the topography of the sloping site — the project team didn't want to see soil brought to the site nor taken away during construction. Instead the design balances the cut and fill with excess dirt moved to the back of the site where homes are elevated. The initiative not



house type A typical floor plan



section plan



lower ground floor



ground floor



first floor



second floor



roof floor



Fast facts

Total GFA 143,000 sq ft
 Number of houses 32
 Completion date June 2002

only saved expenditure on ferrying soil but also reduced traffic disturbance and wastage.

Double Haven's refuse collection area is centralised in a separate area accessed from the street. The arrangement ensures that garbage trucks never need to enter the compound. ■

Liu Chong Hing Investment Ltd
 developer

Ronald Lu & Partners (Hong Kong) Ltd
 architect

Chinney Construction Co Ltd
 main contractor



house type B typical floor plan



section plan



lower ground floor



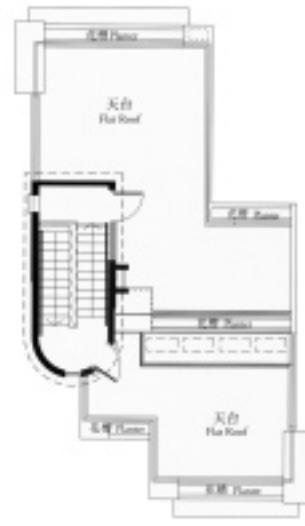
ground floor



first floor



second floor



roof floor