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Sent: Mon Jan 02 14:13:24 2012
Subject: Oxley renewal concept

Hi Ling,

Just to update you on one of the ideas for Oxley renewal/development.

As Loong mentioned, the first preference is to demolish the Oxley house and build afresh.

The next best alternative is to renovate and redevelop parts of the house/annex, so that it is livable/rentable for many more years but with a new internal layout.

The renovation/renewal idea is to keep/renew the main Oxley house structure, retaining its old world ambience but completely changing the internal layout except for the basement dining room, and redeveloping the back annex into a 2 storey annex connected to the main house.

Thus, the current private/family living spaces in the main house upstairs will be gone and family privacy protected.

For instance, we can have one large living area in the front half of the house, which will open up to the original full width verandah. The ceiling of the front living space could be opened up to expose the roof rafters, and we have the option of designing this for mostly natural ventilation or enclosed for airconditioning.

This leaves space for one large bdrm in the back half of the main house, plus stairs leading down to the basement level.

The single storey back annex can be rebuilt into a new 2 storey annex, so that the 2nd storey of the annex is connected directly via a passageway to the upper level of the main house to form one integrated level of living/bdrms space.

The upper level of the new annex block will have 2 bdrms, one large and one smaller, making a total of 3 bdrms at the upper level, 2 at the annex and one at the main house. A variant would be 3 smaller bedrooms at the annex with one large bdrm in the main house upper levels.

The lower floor of annex block could be raised so that it connects directly and at the same level via a passageway to the basement dining area without having to navigate any steps.

A lift will be provided at the passageway between the main house and the annex, for easy access between the upper bedroom/living level and the basement dining/kitchen areas.

The lower floor of the annex can accommodate the maids' room, laundry area, plus the option of a carporch/garden pavilion/spare bed/guestroom.

The basement level of the main house could have accommodate a larger kitchen, plus a large multifunction area, which can be convertible into a large guestroom/bdrm/gym, etc.

It is optional whether to have a 20 metre lap pool on the roof of the annex, a roof garden, or just a plain roof. If we are renting out, the lap pool could be an option.

We may need to strengthen the foundations/columns/walls or other structural elements as the house is over 100 years old (built around 1898). Other additional work could include possibly the treatment of basement walls to prevent damp from rising, replacing/refreshing the timber flooring with new timber flooring, etc.

If there is objection to renting out to say expats, then the family could consider moving in at least for the initial years, so Ling can use one of the big bdrms, and Loong/I can use the other big bdrm, while Yipeng could use the smaller bdrm, assuming that Xiuqi, Hongyi and Haoyi may set up their homes elsewhere and come back to visit from time to time. Or we can create more bdrms at lower levels.

If you are interested, I could bring the preliminary concept plan proposed by Singaporean architect Mok Wei Wei who was introduced by Yang some months ago.

Wei Wei has done various projects including the renewal of victoria theatre as well as "conservation" of private dwellings.

As he explained, the conservation requirements typically do not mean preserving the house in its entirety - the interior layouts are often changed to reflect new family usage needs.

So we have the option for Oxley of redoing the entire interior layout to remove any linkages back to the private family space.

Thanks

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