

The Homes of Yesteryear

By Siobhán Cool

In a quiet street of Bukit Timah, a last remaining pre-war terrace house in the old single-storey style remains. It has a beautiful character despite or because of its concrete cancer, mildewed walls and flaking paint, juxtaposed as it is with its ostentatious three-storey neighbour. Although its windows and doors are dark and anonymous, I can see a bright red twinkle of light where the inner altar is no doubt well-tended and central.



As modern, affluent Singapore creeps into old streets, replacing old dwellings with concrete and glass monoliths, some old world charm remains. In Serangoon Gardens, two semi-detached bungalows are small and quaint but well-loved. Mango trees and old bougainwillaea vines preside in the garden corners, evidence of the original owners – the 1950s Indian community.

Running parallel to Dunearn and Bukit Timah Roads are short lanes serving as private driveways to small house blocks that have survived the growth of traffic flow, multiple road widenings and suburban spread. The feature of this old house must surely be the 'orchid tree' hanging with many pots by its front fence.



Siobhán Cool has lived in Singapore for nine years, creating her sketchbooks as mementos of her two sons' first home.
