

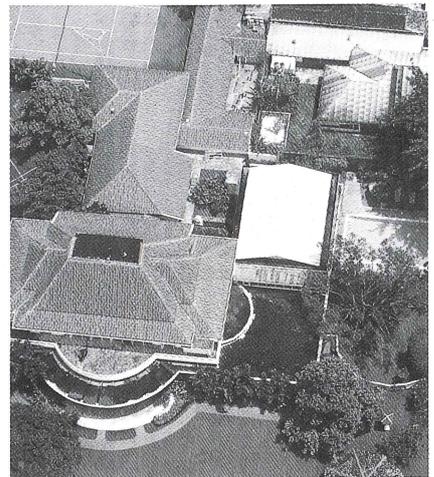
U.S. Ambassador's Residence, Jakarta

Project Data

Location: Taman Suropati, Jakarta.
Client: Embassy of the United States of America, official residence of the Ambassador.
Designer: Interior by Mrs. David Newsom, wife of Ambassador (1974-77); verandah by Mrs. Edward Masters, wife of Ambassador (1977-81).
Interior design: Interior redecorated in 1975, verandah in 1980.
Construction: An art deco-styled Dutch colonial house built in 1928 of reinforced concrete block plastered and painted white, with terra cotta tiled roof and large garden.

The Dutch colonial house at Taman Suropati 3, Jakarta, was built in 1928. Because no early documents for the house exist what is known of its history is sketchy, but it has clearly always been considered an important house. Tenants include the managing director of Stanvac Oil Company and the second in command of the Japanese occupation forces during World War II. In 1950 it was purchased by the US Government and has been the official residence of every American Ambassador since Indonesia's independence.

The residence compound has changed over the years. The curved front entrance verandah was glassed in and a new entrance created at the side, giving the house much-needed space to receive guests and hold large official functions. A side verandah was added in 1966 and a swimming pool was built in 1970. During large parties or recep-



Above: An aerial view of the residence compound. The swimming pool was built in 1970.

Below: The residence seen from the wide front garden. The curved entrance verandah was glassed in to provide space to receive guests, who now enter from a portico to the left.

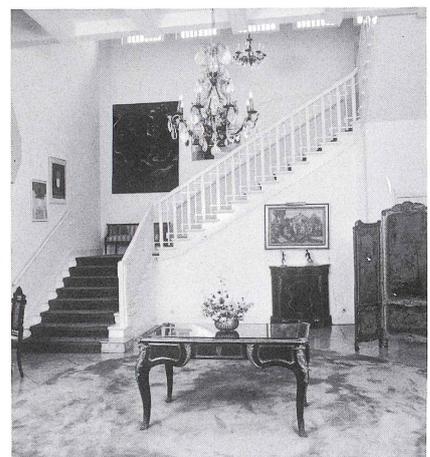


tions guests can now flow from the entrance right through the house to the far verandah.

The interior design has also changed with time as different ambassador's wives have made the house their own. These photographs show the residence as it looked when Ambassador and Mrs. Edward Masters lived there, from 1977 to November 1981.

The dominant colour in the formal reception and dining rooms is blue; all interior walls are white. Furnishings are sparse and understated, giving the rooms a feeling of spaciousness. With the exception of the French furniture in the central hallway and the Hong Kong-made dining room furniture, all the pieces are locally made. The side verandah is furnished in a relaxed and informal style entirely of local materials.

Artwork abounds. Some paintings are on loan from American artists, others are on loan from Indonesian artists or have been purchased for the house. Paintings and artifacts from Thailand, China, Korea and Burma also reflect the Masters' abiding interest in Asian art and culture.



Above: The central hallway, with staircase leading to family bedrooms on the second floor. The furniture is French and consists of 19th-Century reproductions of Louis XV pieces. They were left to the house by the first ambassador, Merle Cochrane.

Right: The formal living room with art deco detail on the ventilator over the door. This room is used for small parties and receptions. The abstract painting over the sofa was painted by an American artist, Jane Mahoney and purchased for the house by Mrs. Newsom.

Text by Judith Shaw who works as an editor and lives in Jakarta.

Photographs by Christopher Little, a well-known New York photographer who frequently contributes to MIMAR.







Far left: The dining room is used for formal dinner parties, the largest of which was a sit-down luncheon for thirty-six guests in honour of Vice President Walter Mondale, in May 1978. The room is also used for buffet suppers and cocktail receptions. The batik tablecloth is in the brown parang rusak or "broken knife" motif typical of central Java. The flatware is standard American ambassadorial silver, and the floral arrangements consist of gardenias, frangipani and sprigs of green leaves, all from the residence garden.

Left and left, below: The verandah is the informal heart of the house, and it was here that the Masters spent most of their unofficial time. The space is divided between a sitting area and the family dining area. All the furnishings are local, from the rattan furniture covered with batik, down to the pandanus matting on the floor. Even the lampshades are made with silk from central Java. Indonesian art and handicrafts add accents and personal touches: the carved wooden ducks are from Bali and Lombok, and the large batik painting was commissioned specially for the house from Iwan Tirta, one of Indonesia's best known batik and fashion designers.

The large open area can accommodate many guests when the occasion demands, as in 1981 when seventy-two persons were seated at round tables for a dinner in honour of former President and Mrs. Gerald Ford, in March 1981.



Mr. and Mrs. Masters, former US Ambassador to Indonesia, resident in the house from 1977 to 1981.

