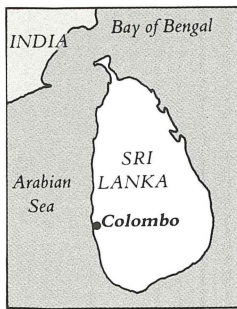


Club Villa Hotel, Bentota



Project Data

Club Villa Hotel, Bentota village.
Architect: Edwards, Reid and Begg
Geoffrey Bawa, principal in charge.
Date: 1981
Number of rooms: 14
Cost: 3.5 million rupees

Photographs by
Christophe Bon unless
otherwise indicated.

A century-old country house on the shoreline south of Colombo, Sri Lanka was in a severely dilapidated state when architect Geoffrey Bawa bought it in 1979. Acting as both client and designer, Bawa decided to develop the enchanting qualities of the site by preserving what could be saved of the old buildings and adding new low-rise extensions totally in keeping with the spirit and character of the original complex. Local materials such as wood, brick and roof tiles were utilised by craftsmen of the region to create these harmonious additions.

The intimate low-key atmosphere which pervades this modest compound now recalls something of the old private clubs of the Indian subcontinent. Enclosure and small scale, as well as the simple, almost 'spartan' yet comfortable quality of the facilities lend themselves to the quiet, relaxed feeling of the place. Landscape and foliage are brought into focus by architectural detailing such as the square window in the wall that encloses the courtyard on the beach side, thereby framing and emphasising a portion of the scenery for contemplation.

On the other hand, a local train that occasionally chugs by carrying local inhabitants has not been resolutely hidden from sight with artificial barriers, as the large commercial hotels nearby might be tempted to do, but brings with it a touch of reality from the outside world.

At the Club Villa, architecture and the pace and style of life coalesce to provide a unique sense of what Sri Lanka is all about. Magnificent views of the surrounding environment (from the upper floor rooms), a sense of intimate retreat (where desired) or the potential for reposeful encounters (due to the small number of accommodations) are the result of the architect's own sensitive response to the elements he found on the site at the very outset. One could say that he simply *accentuated* those that seemed most natural and appropriate to an Old World form of leisure.

Below: View of the main entrance to the Club Villa Hotel. Older portion is to the right. Photograph: Hasan-Uddin Khan.

Right: General view of the complex from the beach front. New extensions to the existing tower are the buildings to the left.

Right, below: Verandah facing the sea which forms part of Geoffrey Bawa's first phase extension to the old house.





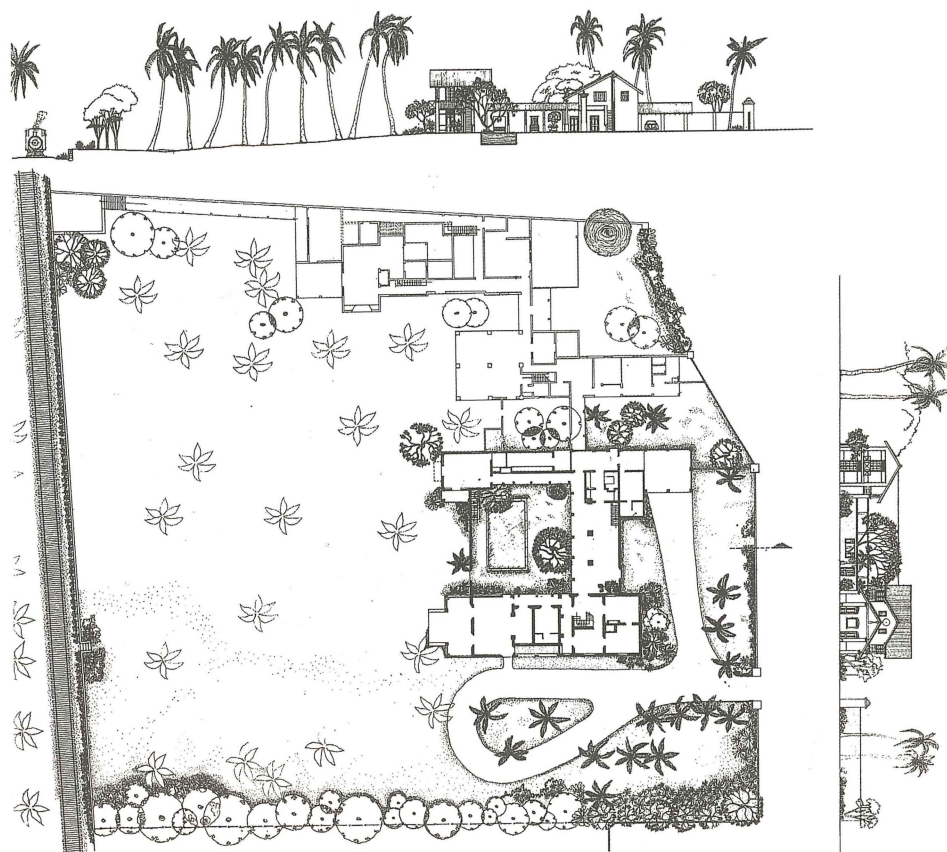


Left: Interior with sitting nook of the wing and verandah facing the sea. Detailing and furniture are in keeping with the colonial style of the original house.

Left, below: The inner courtyard and pool with a view towards the sea and beach. Photograph: Hasan-Uddin Khan.

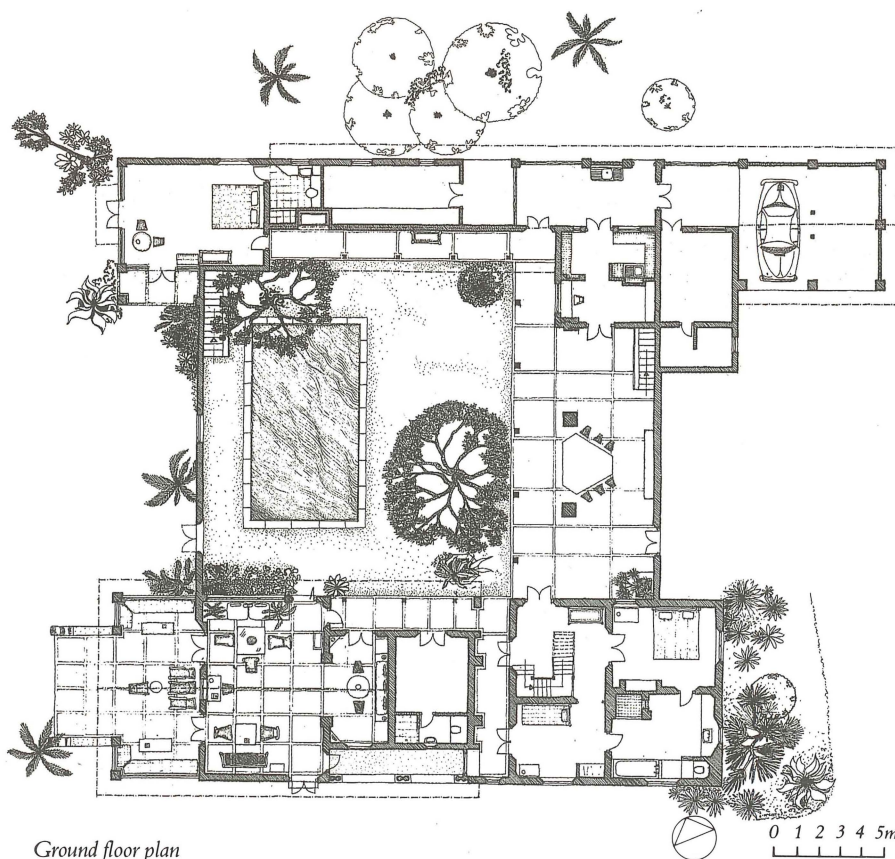
Right: Site plan and sections of the Club Villa Hotel. Tower of the original house is in the lower right-hand corner of the plan; it now contains bedrooms. Subsequent extensions formed the inner courtyard and then additional units to the north.

Right, below: Ground floor plan of the building extensions in phase one of construction.



Site plan

0 5 10 15m



Ground floor plan

0 1 2 3 4 5m



Above: View of the inner courtyard with pool. Existing tower is at the centre, with sitting room extension to the right and verandah for dining at the left.



Left: Detail of inner courtyard. Original structure is at left.

Below: Beach facade of one of the recent additions to Club Villa, with verandah and sleeping rooms above.

