



# A WORLD OF ITS OWN

The air is better, you can hear birds chirping, and your dreams of a garden party at home can be realised. The Kadoorie Estate prides itself in delivering properties that are luxurious, full of personality and wonderfully, uniquely Hong Kong.



In 1931, the Hongkong Engineering & Construction Co. – owned then by the Kadoorie family – purchased “the lot of Crown Land at the junction of Argyle Street and Waterloo Road, known as KIL 2657, with an area of 1,300,000 square feet” at a public auction for just HK\$326,000.

By 1937, three houses, a bungalow and six semi-detached houses had been completed and occupied. Boasting amenities such as air conditioners and en-suite bathrooms, they were, at the time, the ultimate in luxury real estate.

Interest continued to increase rapidly, and by December 1941, 34 houses and 13 apartments in St. George’s Mansions had been built, and immediately after the war, the British Army and Royal Air Force moved in.

It wasn’t until 1946, leading up to the 1950s, that civilian tenants began to return to Kadoorie Avenue with names including the heads of companies like the Hongkong & Whampoa Dock Co., Jardine Matheson, General Electric Co., and the Chinese Maritime Customs on the rent roll.

“We now own 86 homes in Kadoorie Avenue, detached or semi-detached,” Raymond Ho, General Manager of Kadoorie Estates Ltd., explains to me as we are standing on the rooftop of St George’s Court. Ho is – with great pride – showing me an aerial view of the literal oasis that is Kadoorie Avenue and The Kadoorie Estate’s properties, a collective of townhouses, mansions and apartments that are arguably some of the city’s most coveted real estate.

The Kadoorie Estate’s homes vary in size from 3,000 to 6,000 square feet. Each house has its own lush, manicured garden, allowing residents the increasingly rare luxury of indoor-outdoor living in Hong Kong. Some properties even come with swimming pools.

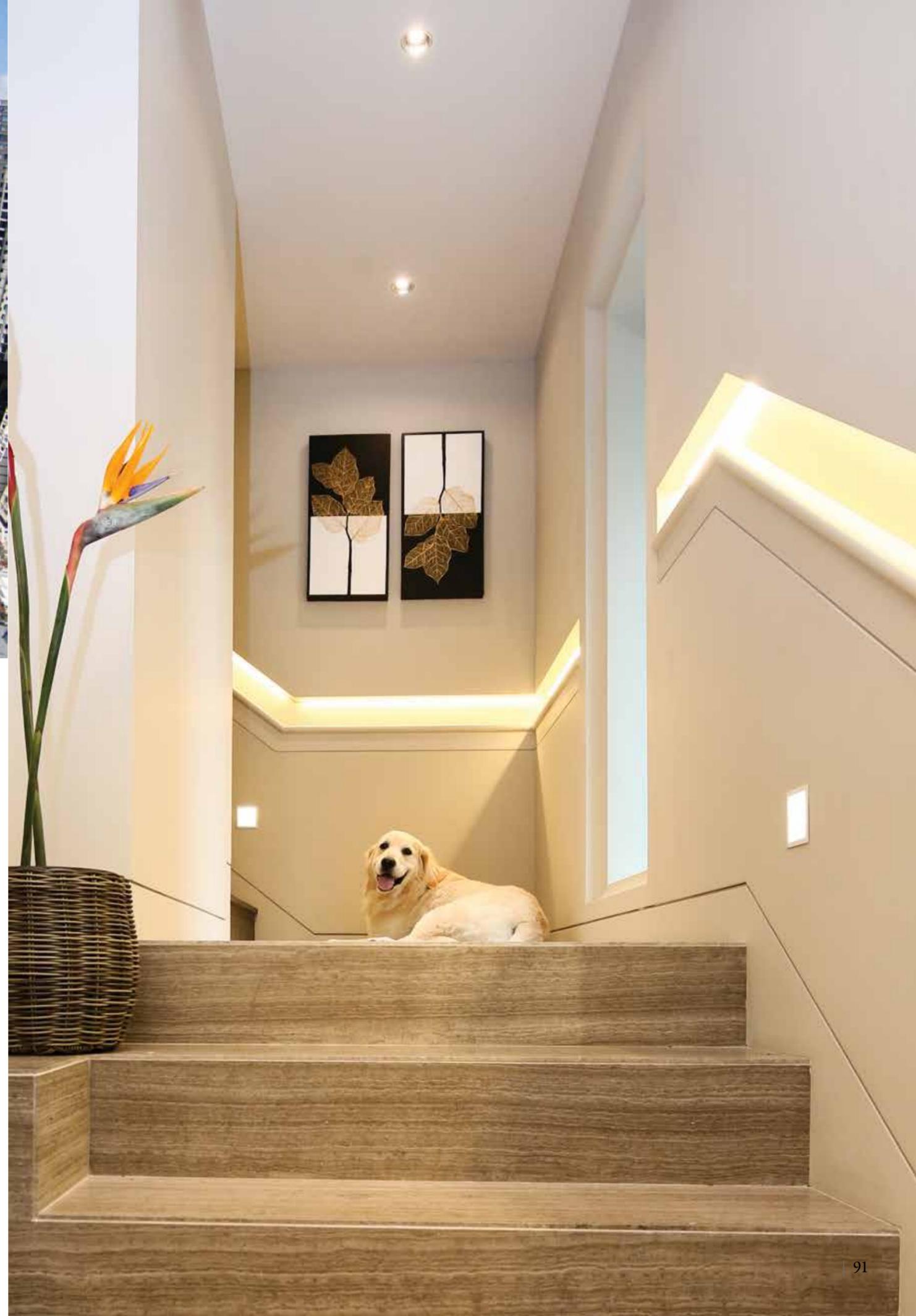
At the top of the hill, St. George’s Court houses 39 colonial-style apartments, each of which is typically 3,000 square feet in size.

“Each home offers maximum privacy, as they are surrounded by trees,” Ho explains, adding that this was a major draw for Hong Kong’s entertainment stars.

During the 2000s, the Estate earned its reputation as the Beverly Hills of Hong Kong as local celebrities – like the who’s who of the Canto-pop world including Andy Hui and the late Leslie Cheung – began to move in, drawn by the Estate’s combination of prestige and privacy, yet close proximity to major business hubs in Kowloon and on Hong Kong Island.

The trees do more than just shield the Avenue’s esteemed residents, however. Kadoorie Avenue is one of the greenest pockets in Hong Kong. With over 2,000 trees in the estate, the area has developed its very own microclimate.

En route to visit Kadoorie Avenue, I had walked out of the Prince Edward MTR station straight into the hustle and bustle – cars, buses, crowds, markets and neon signs bound together to create that quintessentially Hong Kong chaos. It was hard to imagine that this serene green haven is just a short stroll from the bustling streets of Prince Edward and Mong Kok.







“You can feel the area’s microclimate immediately when you take a walk around the area,” says Ho. “We had the Hong Kong Productivity Council conduct outdoor air quality tests for us, and we found that the air pollution index is a whole two grades better than in the neighbouring Air Quality Monitoring Station.”

Every year, dedicated tree doctors also come to clinically examine the health conditions of every tree. “Our tree doctors come and do an inspection of each tree to see if they need felling or pruning,” says Ho, adding that diseased trees are uprooted, and mature trees are planted in their place to maintain a pristine environment that is truly unlike any other found in Hong Kong.

Also a priority is The Kadoorie Estate’s commitment to creating spaces that echo the past without feeling outdated, restoring many of their properties’ colonial charm, including the recycling of original timber flooring and restoring original architectural elements such as arches, marble stair banisters, gorgeous tiles, large French windows, and working fireplaces in the Estate’s houses.

This unyielding respect for the properties’ original character is met with the understated elegance of top-of-the-line modern amenities and fixtures, such as Miele appliances and large, stylish bathrooms worthy of five-star hotels.

“In the same way that people view The Peninsula as the highest standard in five-star service and comfort, we believe that The Kadoorie Estate is the epitomé of luxury living in Hong Kong,” says Ho. “When

we renovate one of our properties, the first question is ‘how can we modernise it without losing the character of the home?’”

A perfect example is the recent renovation of 24 Kadoorie Avenue, where Sir Michael Kadoorie’s mother lived for 50 years. “We wanted to keep certain aspects of the layout and features so that the look and feel was more or less the same, but new and improved,” Ho explains. “It was important to us that when Sir Michael came back he would still recognise the home, and he did. We brought him back to the house about a year and a half ago and it brought back a flood of childhood memories.”

What I was most impressed by with The Kadoorie Estates’ properties is the strong human element involved in their designs. The Estate stands as a literal breath of fresh air amongst the city’s profit-driven real estate developers in that every detail – as it should be – has been considered with the comfort and daily life of its residents in mind.

It’s no surprise then that many of The Kadoorie Estate’s tenants are long-term residents, in some cases residing in their homes for over 30 years. “The Kadoorie Estate remains as an oasis of tranquility amidst Hong Kong’s dramatic development of the last 80 years and maintains to this day a unique environment in the heart of Kowloon,” says The Honourable Sir Michael Kadoorie. “My family is truly proud to have been one of the Founders.”