

# 209 SOUTH BRIDGE ROAD



**Owner:**

*Hindu Endowments Board*

**Architect:**

*AMC Architects International*

**Engineer:**

*SJS Consultants*

**Contractor:**

*Tan Poh Eng Construction*

## 1998 AWARD

This three-storey corner shophouse of the Late style is located within the Historic District of Chinatown. Prior to restoration, the building was in a fair condition. However, most of its roof structure was in need of repair and its wall surfaces covered with



*Restored shophouse in original grandeur*

lichens and plants. Some of its masonry ornamentations were missing. Its five-footway was enclosed for use as additional space. This eroded the original architecture of the building.

Research and a careful survey of the existing structure were carried out prior to commencement of restoration works. Restoration works were carried out under the protection of a temporary roof cover. Replacement of floor joists and roof purlins for the decayed parts were done while the brickwalls were supported laterally at each level throughout the restoration period. Roof purlins were replaced first, followed by the third

and second storey floor joists. The removal and replacement of the purlins and floor joists were done in stages, with a maximum of two members at a time, to ensure that sufficient lateral support was provided for the brickwalls. The structural system of the shophouse was

strengthened. Timber windows and doors were retained and restored. All decorative pilasters and external ornamentations were also retained and carefully restored. The five-footway, which was previously enclosed, was reinstated to its original function. A lift and an attic with a jackroof were introduced with all precautions taken to ensure that the essence of the shophouse is not lost.

The final product is a beautiful shophouse restored to its original grandeur, adding to the overall character and ambience of Chinatown.



*Restored windows and decorative pilasters and mouldings*



*Retention of spatial quality at 1st Storey*



*Restored secondary pilasters at upper storey*



*Five-footway reinstated to original condition and function*



*2nd Storey interior of shophouse*



*Decorative pilasters and external ornamentations retained and sensitively restored*



*Timber staircase leading to upper floors*

The shophouse at no:209, South Bridge road is considered as one of Chinatown's most refined shophouses<sup>2</sup>. It falls within the category of the "Late Shophouse Style". The windows of this building is described as of 'Venetian' design. It has been designed in 1900 for Mr. Lee Yin Fan Esq who has been a photographer & its owner.

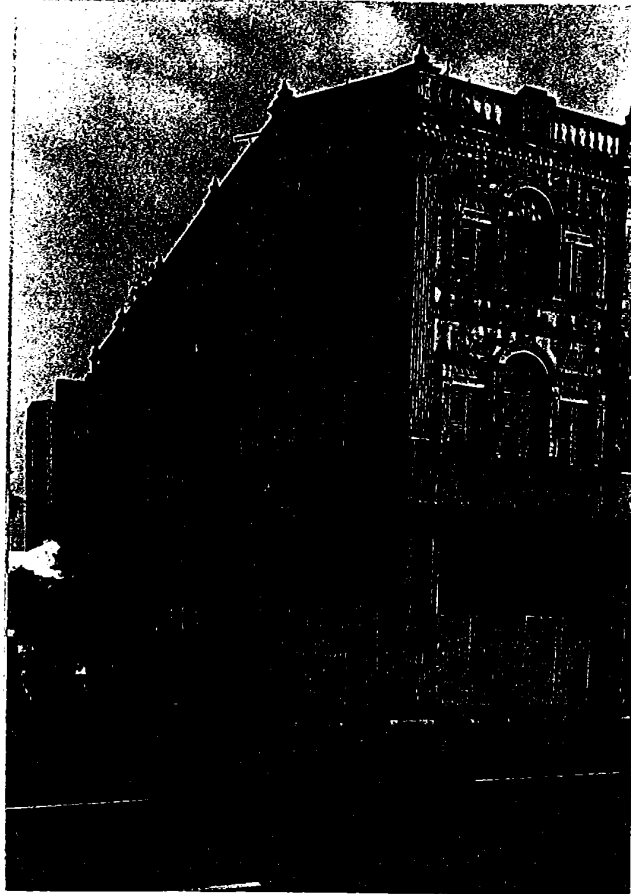


fig.1 - The building as found.

---

<sup>2</sup> Pastel Portraits, p.46, 1984.

The building was found in a state of considerable decay with most of the roof structure in an unstable condition (fig.1 ). Lichen and plants have taken root on the wall surfaces of the building and some of the masonry ornamentation have been defaced due to this phenomenon The previous owners have enclosed the five foot way and made use of it as additional space for the first storey. This addition has badly disfigured the original appearance of the building (fig.2). Some windows of the upper storeys have also being replaced by windows of a different aesthetic worsening this disfigurement.

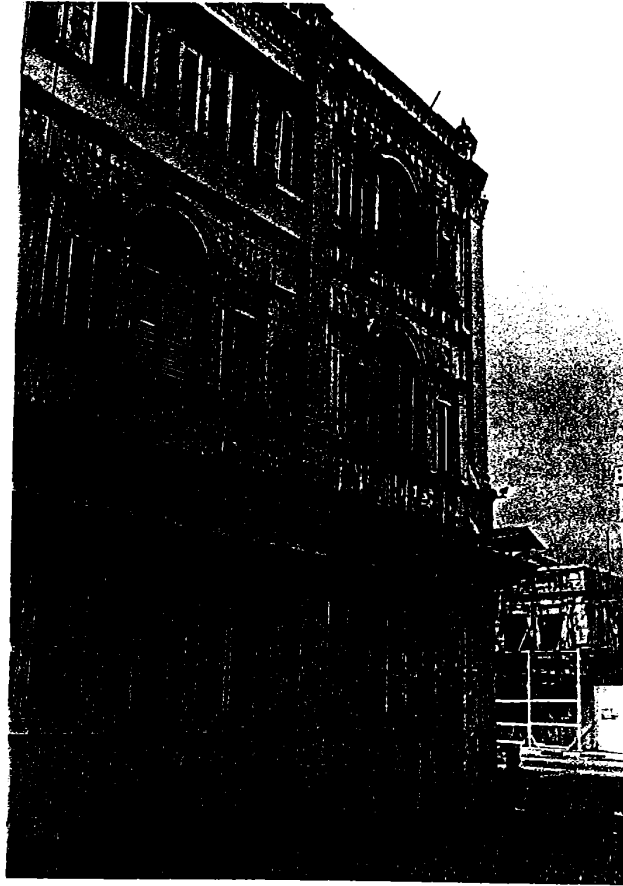


fig.2 - The five footway being enclosed has disfigured the appearance of the building.

This particular shophouse stands amongst many historic buildings in Chinatown (fig.3) . Chinatown itself has a very long history. It was the earliest location of the immigrant Chinese population. Records indicate that Chinatown stretched from the Singapore river West to Cross street and Telok Ayer bay north to South Bridge road<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> Pastel Portraits, p.39, 1984.