

No. 89 to 123 JOO CHIAT PLACE

A Lifestyle Revived



2002 AWARD

Owner:
Casuarina Properties Pte Ltd

Architect:
Liu & Wo Architects Pte Ltd

Engineer:
T P Seow Consultants

Contractor:
Projection Pte Ltd

This project involved the restoration of a row of 18 2-storey shophouses fronting Joo Chiat Place, and the construction of a new 4-storey block with 32 apartments, a basement car park and private communal facilities such as a swimming pool, landscaped garden, gymnasium, playground and a mini “kopitiam” clubhouse.

The shophouses, built in the 1930s, are of the Late Shophouse style. They are located within the Joo Chiat Conservation Area where the main buildings are conserved and the rear is allowed to be rebuilt to the height allowable in the area. In this instance, the owner chose to keep the entire shophouse and build a new apartment block on the plot of land behind the shophouses.

Prior to restoration, the shophouses were in a bad state of disrepair with plasters and bricks crumbling. Their timber structural elements were termite infested or badly affected by wet rot. Many of their internal walls were cracked. Comprehensive archival and oral history research was carried out to ensure authenticity in the shophouse restoration.

During restoration, timber and steel bracings were used to support the brick columns and walls to prevent further damage to the shophouses.



Late shophouses restored to original

Deteriorated bricks and mortar were removed and replaced with new ones, and the walls were replastered. Intricate capitals and motifs were carefully cleaned to remove moss growth, algae, old paintwork and environmental grime. Damaged and missing details were repaired. Cracked tile panels were replaced with new ones of the same design and material. Skylights were introduced to allow light into the shophouses.

The rear of the shophouses was creatively turned into a beautiful second frontage that complemented the front. This was treated with windows of the same proportion as the front. Green-glazed tile canopies sheltered the kitchen entrance doors.

The new apartment block had mouldings and panels similar in design to those of the shophouses so as to create synergy between the old and new. The open space between them was landscaped into a beautiful garden complete with playground, swimming pool and a pavilion. A pair of stately gateposts with curved metal gates was added at the main entrance to protect the extended private enclosed space.

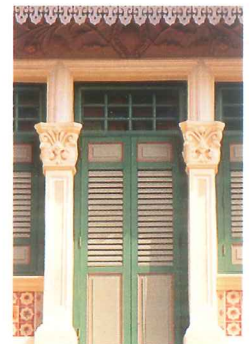
The project has successfully revived a Peranakan lifestyle with a modern twist within a residential enclave called the Lotus at Joo Chiat.



Roof terrace atop restored shophouses



Delicate fretwork and ornate frieze works



Timber framed French window between two fluted secondary pilasters



New apartment blocks complement the restored shophouses



Pavilion added at far end of landscaped garden



Decorative column capitals



Entrance to private enclosed space



Five-footway leads into shophouses through a welcoming pintu pagar



Mini "kopitiam" clubhouse



Floral moulding details



Colourful ceramic wall tiles



Introduction

Joo Chiat begets its name from Chew Joo Chiat. Born around the 1870s, Chew left his family behind in China to seek his fortune in Singapore. He started work in the trading line and soon began acquiring land in the east coast to cultivate gambier and coconut trees for its copra produce. By the 1930s, he was known as the “King of Katong”

Due to its proximity to the sea and the economic activities Joo Chiat became a favourite place with the rich who sets up holiday villas to enjoy the idyllic and rustic atmosphere. Entrepreneurs of the period set up trading shophouses and the area began to bustle with life. In his book *Singapore Through Sunshine and Shadow*, John Bertram van Cuylenburg describes the “spreading of the city towards Katong and the east coast” as “the greatest change in Singapore.”



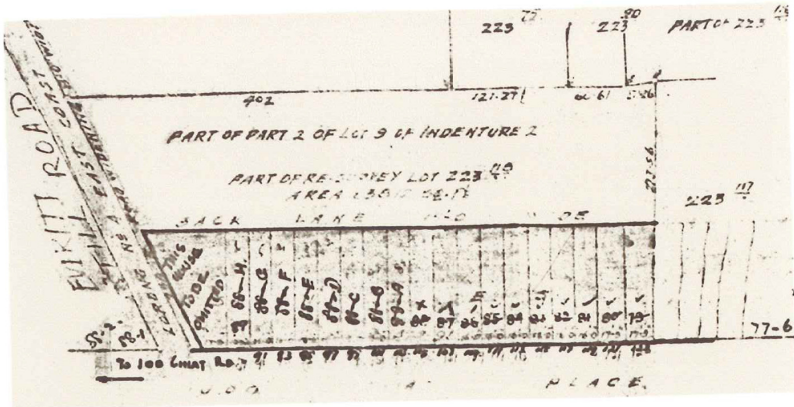
With outbreak of the Second World War, many of the locales were evacuated out of the area as it was thought that the Japanese would attack from the sea. A former occupant at 89 Joo Chiat Place recalls the time when a bomb fell just 40 meter across the road and caused considerable damage.

After the war, unit 89 Joo Chiat Place was registered to a tenant, CHOP BAN HUAT, who operates a provision store at the first storey while the upper floor is used as a residence. The other units were variously used as a beauty salon, bookstores, places of worship, Chinese medicinal hall, wan ton preparation shop and other retail activities.

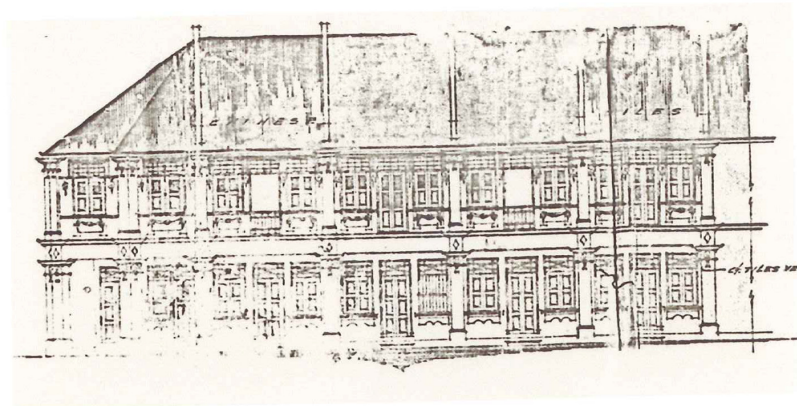


Closing ones eyes and allow ourselves to drift back in time to see the ladies of the moment in their beauty salon priming themselves, the children runs free and the old man downs his *wan ton* noodles. Among these activities, the gangsters roam and terrorise the locales and demand protection money.

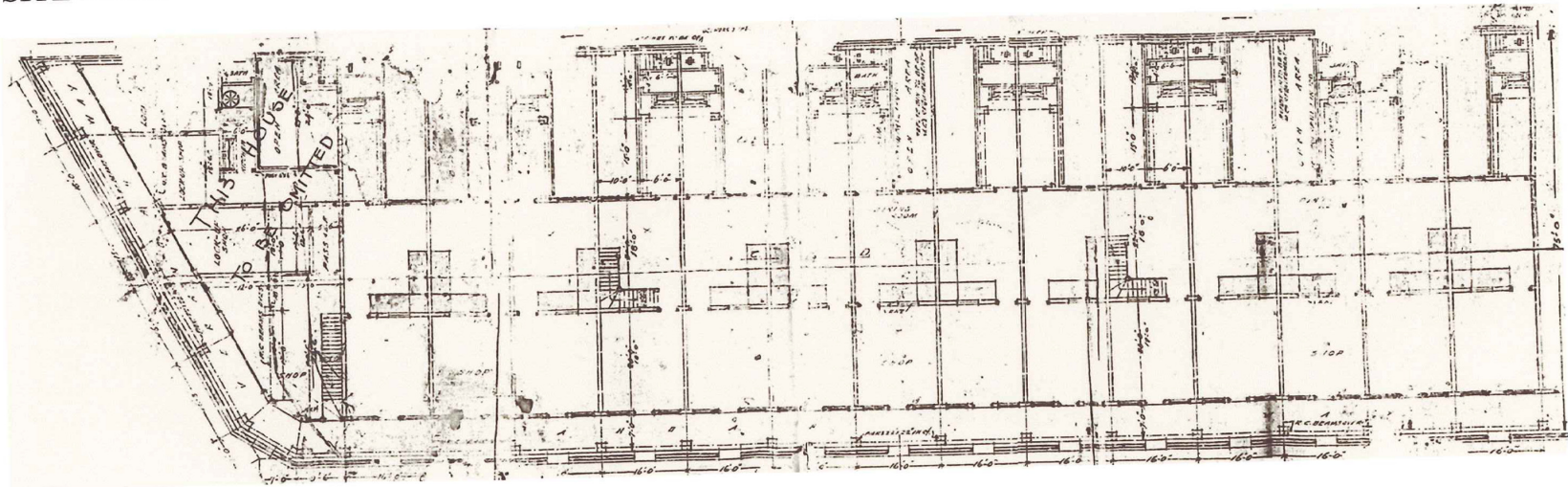
As the area blossoms the wealthy *Peranakans* or Straits born Chinese began to build their homes here. Today, their architectural influence is still very much apparent and well preserved in the rich ornate facades fronting the many shophouses and homes off the area.



SITE PLAN



ELEVATION



1ST STOREY PLAN

ARCHIVE DRAWINGS FOR NO. 89 TO NO. 123