

# No. 66 EMERALD HILL ROAD

Modern Twist To A Treasured Gem



**Owner:**  
*Garden Estates Pte Ltd*

**Architect:**  
*Axis Architects Planners*

**Engineer:**  
*B K Tan Consultants*

**Contractor:**  
*Sunho Construction Pte Ltd*

*At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, No.66 Emerald Hill Road and the houses in its vicinity were addresses to the wealthy Chinese and Peranakan elites. Thanks to careful and innovative conservation works, No.66 now enjoys a new lease of life worthy of its prestigious past.*

## **Taking Over Unfinished Business**

Half renovated when the current owner took over, No. 66 was a three-storey house squeezed into a two-storey building envelope. The ceilings, especially on the first storey, were noticeably low and efficient use of space in the interior was also marred by the haphazard placement of staircases. The living space seemed to be demarcated for numerous dormitory-like rooms.

In contrast, the façade required only minor plastering and paintworks as most of the original elements such as the antique front door and roof trusses had not been altered. Layers of paintwork on the timber balustrades, louvered French windows and antique main doors were removed with detailed care, unveiling the beauty of the original wood patina.

Structurally, the building was mostly intact and the roof was in good condition.



*Peranakan terrace house with a renewed splendour*

## **Space For Lofty Living**

To optimise interior space, the main staircases of the house were centralised to the front third of the building. On the first level flanking the foyer, the start of the staircase acted as a screen that shielded the inner sanctums of the house from visitors at the foyer.

A secondary stairway at the rear of the house was kept and extended to the top level. In addition to a neater overall layout, aligning the staircases also allowed more space for lofty aspirations in the rest of the house.

Restoring a sense of spaciousness to this Peranakan house while retrofitting it with

modern functionality required much ingenuity.

By removing a large portion of the second storey floor, a spacious double-volume living room was created. On the second level, overlooking the living room, a 'bridge' added a modern twist and linked the front of the house to the rear.

## **Order In The Courtyard**

Adjacent to the living room and separated by large windows, a splendidly restored courtyard punched through all three levels of the house, bringing light in. Enlarged but structurally unchanged, the courtyard showcased a reflecting pool, a water feature and a retractable skylight with timber louvres, that look set to bring serenity and comfort to the occupants in any weather.

At the rear of the house, new rooms and bathrooms were added with enlarged windows oriented to the courtyard.

The success of restoring No. 66 Emerald Hill Road gives this Peranakan terrace house a renewed splendour redolent of its distinguished past, making it truly an architectural gem of our time.



*Ornate carved fanlight*



*Second storey façade with original louvred French windows*



*Restored capital*



*Restored dentils*



*First storey front façade*



*Second storey wooden bridge linking the front to the rear*



*Triple-volume space at the airwell*



*Feature staircase marks the transitional zone in the house*



*Lofty living room*



*View from the third storey towards the reflecting pool*



In the early 19 century, when Sir Stamford Raffles first landed in Singapore, Emerald Hill area was still a primeval jungle. It was in 1820's when some parts of the jungles were cleared to provide fuel for the boiling of Gambir leaves. In the 1837 and 1845, William Cuppage, (a Postmaster General in the 1840's) first lease this land for his Nutmeg Plantation. The plantation failed in the 1860's, and later when he died in 1872, William Cuppage, who himself live in the area from 1850's, leave the property with its 2 houses. Erin Lodge and fern Cottage, to his daughter.

After his death, this property has change ownership for few times. It was sold by his daughter to one of Cuppage's son in law William Koek, which turned the area into an orchard and built another house in the estate, called Claregrove. In 1891, the property sold to Thomas E. Rowell and later to Seah Boon Kang and Seah Eng Kiat who father the Emerald Hill. They sub divided the 13.2 ha land into 38 plots. Three existing houses had to give way to new road that was laid out in 1901, following by the building of row of terraces house between 1901-1925. The first few houses were built by Theocews and Peranakans, follow by Hokkiens that later move in to this area from Amoy Street and Telok Ayer Street in Chinatown. Then, a few numbers of houses in this area were known to be built by wealthy Chinese man, to keep their mistresses away from their wives in Chinatown.....



*Emerald Hill Area. Plot marked in red is the development site*