

Nos. 3 & 7 CARLTON WALK

Sanctuary Rediscovered



Owner:

Amara Sentosa Investments Pte Ltd

Architect:

*ADDP Architects in collaboration with
Miyake Masaki Associates / Urbanists-Architects*

Engineer:

KTP Consultants Pte Ltd

Contractor:

JDC Corporation

2007 AWARD

CATEGORY A

*B*uilt on top of a small hill to enjoy the natural sea breeze surrounding Sentosa, these two typical military barrack blocks were originally the living quarters of British soldiers before and after World War II. Now, they have been tastefully transformed into luxurious hotel suites of Amara Sanctuary Resort Sentosa for world-weary travellers to rest and relax in.

Going Green

These two double-storey blocks were built in the 1920s. Each block featured six interconnected units with external and internal concrete staircases, and spacious verandahs and courtyards that allowed occupants to come into close contact with the lush greenery that surrounded the blocks.

When restoration began, the architects sought to maintain this harmonious relationship between buildings and nature, cautiously working around many mature trees during the refurbishment process. The 3R principle was adhered to. Detailed structural investigation and photographic survey were carried out.

Something Old, Something New

In converting the original 12 units into 20 new hotel suites, namely the Courtyard Suites at the first storey and the Verandah Suites at the second storey, the interiors were configured for hotel guests to enjoy the existing greenery, natural ventilation and peaceful surroundings. The original timber louvered windows and doors and balustrades were reinstated. Internal



Transformation of army barracks to upmarket hotel

staircases were removed and new flights of stairs were added at the end of the block. The terracotta roofs of both blocks were cleaned and damaged tiles were replaced with those salvaged from the demolition of similar-aged buildings nearby.

Ornate columns and intricate cornices were kept while damaged ones were replaced with replicas. Likewise, with careful research, existing railings were reinstated with new ones that matched the original design. Other reminders of the building's

past were thoughtfully retained – sole cleaners at the front of each unit for soldiers to remove mud from their boots were kept while existing air raid shelters outside the blocks were also retained.

For modern comforts, dilapidated outhouses in the rear yards made way for new courtyards complete with baths and jacuzzis. No effort was spared in landscaping. A newly designed ginger garden was even created to blend completely with the original vegetation.

A Tropical Oasis

Turning two unused army barracks into a modern luxurious hotel may be an impossible mission for many, but the results show that an eco-sanctuary with a tropical touch and resort feel has been successfully created through careful planning and thoughtful restoration.



Regular rhythm of columns at first storey and original design of railing at second storey



Timber windows retained and restored



Sole cleaner at front of each unit kept



Existing telephone post kept



Alcove at first storey seating area



Existing air raid shelters retained



Open verandah offers sweeping views of surrounding



Interior reconfigured into hotel suite



Modern amenities



New courtyard with bath and jacuzzi



Landscaped garden at rear of restored army barracks

BRIEF HISTORY

BLOCKS 41 & 42 WERE BUILT IN THE EARLY 1900S (OR EARLIER) AND COMPRISES 2 BLOCKS OF 2- STOREY TERRACE HOUSES IN SOLID BRICK AND R.C. SLABS WITH A PITCHED TERRA COTTA ROOFING TILES OVER THE WHOLE STRUCTURE.

EACH BLOCK COMPRISES 6 UNITS AND ARE INTERCONNECTED AND BUILT WITH EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CONCRETE STAIRCASES CONNECTING THE UPPER FLOORS.

THE INDIVIDUAL UNITS WERE USED FOR ACCOMMODATING BRITISH ARMY PERSONNEL BASED IN THE ISLAND OF SENTOSA DURING THE 1900S.

BOTH BLOCKS OF THE TWO-STOREY ARMY BARRACKS, WHICH WERE LAST USED AS HOLIDAY CHALETS, ARE NOW TURNED INTO 20 SUITES THAT HAVE EITHER A VERANDAH OR A COURTYARD.



SERGEANT QUARTERS – SENTOSA HOLIDAY CHALETs

THE SENTOSA HOLIDAY CHALETs WERE PREVIOUSLY LIVING QUARTERS FOR THE BRITISH SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES BEFORE AND AFTER THE WAR. MANY OF THE SOLDIERS WHO SERVED IN THE 1950s REFERRED TO THE BLOCKS AS THE SERGEANT QUARTERS. THE OFFICERS STAYED IN THE BIGGER BLOCKS SUCH AS BLK 50 & 51 AND OUR CURRENT "ARCHES" BUILDING.

ATTACHED IS A NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT BY A BRITISH LADY – MRS HELEN HALL – WHO VISITED SENTOSA IN 1987 AND RECALLED HER CHILDHOOD DAYS STAYING IN ONE OF THOSE BLOCKS FROM 1937-42s.

THE BLOCK HAS A WIDE VERANDAH WHERE SHE WOULD SOMETIMES SLEEP IN, BUT UNDER A MOSQUITO NET. THEY HAD A FEW CHINESE AMAHS WHO HELPED OUT WITH THE HOUSEWORK, COOKED MEALS AND BABY-SAT FOR HER FAMILY. THEY USED BLOCKS OF ICE TO KEEP THEIR FOOD FRESH AND FOR COLD DRINKS.

WHEN THE WAR CAME, THE SOLDIERS DUG AIR RAID SHELTERS OUTSIDE THE BLOCKS. TWO SHELTERS REMAIN THERE TILL TODAY. BOTH ARE NOW OPENED WHERE VISITORS CAN WALK BELOW AND OUT THROUGH THE OTHER END. EACH WAS BUILT WITH AN IRON FRAMEWORK AND CONCRETE, WITH STEPS LEADING INTO A TUNNEL WITH SEATS INSIDE.

HELEN REMEMBERED HAVING TO HIDE IN THE SHELTER AT NIGHTS IN DARKNESS WHEN THE AIR RAID WAS ON AT THE SINGAPORE HARBOUR.

SHE REMEMBERED THE HOUSE HAS A LOT OF ANTS, COCKROACHES, LIZARDS AND EVEN SNAKES, BESIDES THE MOSQUITOES, WHICH IS TYPICAL OF THE ENVIRONMENT HERE.

