

# No. 13 MARTABAN ROAD

Heartfelt Charm



2007 AWARD

CATEGORY B

**Owner:**  
*Steven & Stacey Bealing*

**Architect:**  
*Ong & Ong Architects Pte Ltd*

**Engineer:**  
*MNA & Partners*

**Contractor:**  
*Blueprint Construction Pte Ltd*

Once used as a dormitory for orderlies from the nearby Tan Tock Seng Hospital, this two-storey Second Transitional style terrace house in the Balestier Conservation Area has now been charmingly turned into a chic, contemporary home without sacrificing its humble heritage.

### From Roof to Floor

Built in the 1940s, this terrace house originally had a total of six rooms on two levels with an attic. For the conservation effort, the architects observed the top-down approach where the structural work on the roof was carried out first and the new roof tiles installed before works on the rest of the house began.

While a new jackroof was built in the attic to allow more sunlight in, its original roof profile was kept. Much of the house's original materials were retained. Only one-fifth of the roof rafters and a third of the timber doors and windows which were damaged had to be replaced. Special care was exercised to ensure new additions were faithful to the originals.

Although most of the initial timber floorboards could still be used, shrinkage over time had resulted in wide gaps between the boards. New



Maximum retention of terrace house as residence

boards fabricated from wood similar to the original, were slotted into these spaces, resulting in a seamless integration between old and new.

### New Order in Courtyard

With thoughtful planning, the zinc roof which partially covered the rear courtyard and had become derelict over the years, was removed. This allowed the small but charming corner of the house to be filled with natural light and ventilation. A 'floating' deck, surrounded by water teeming with fishes, was added and the courtyard was landscaped to become the 'heart' of this home.

Care was also taken in restoring the entire rear boundary wall. Mould was removed and layers of paint accumulated over the years were stripped off. Bamboo trees were planted above the wall, adding an elegant and oriental touch to the courtyard.

### Refreshed and Revitalized

A tasteful balance of past and present, the house retains much of its innate charm yet it has been delightfully transformed into a modern home suitable for 21<sup>st</sup> century living.



*Timber louvred screens for privacy and natural lighting at second storey*



*Timber windows retained and restored*



*Restored fanlight*



*Concrete balusters*



*Bedroom at mezzanine floor*



*Open-to-sky 'floating' deck at courtyard*



*Timber screen at first storey living area*



*Landscaped second storey*



*First storey modern interior*



*Stairs leading to upper storey*

13 Martaban Road is a Second Transitional Shophouse style house, part of a row of 13 houses on Martaban Road, in the Balestier Conservation area. Siting on a site of 146.00 m<sup>2</sup>, number 13 is an intermediate terrace originally built in the 1940s.



## BACKGROUND

Prior to sale, the house was used as a dormitory where orderlies from the nearby Tan Tock Seng hospital resided. It originally had a total of six bedrooms with a toilet on the first and second floors only. There were two staircases – the primary one was centralized within the house whilst the secondary one was a spiral staircase at the rear of the house. On level one, the living and dining areas were distinct and separated by a dividing wall. The



*Image showing courtyard prior to restoration*

courtyard was partially covered by a zinc roof and used as a laundry and food preparation area. Next to the courtyard were two small rooms and a kitchen. The second storey consisted of two rooms – each housed several boarders. The third floor, the attic, originally occupied only half the floor and was much the same as the preceding floor albeit sans bathroom.