

# No. 42 CAIRNHILL ROAD

Honourable Mansion



**Owner:**  
Cairnhill Rock Pte Ltd

**Architect:**  
Architects 61 Pte Ltd

**Engineer:**  
HCE Engineers Partnership

**Contractor:**  
Greatearth Construction Pte Ltd

**B**uilt in the early 1930s, the two-storey Tan Chin Tuan Mansion stands tall as an outstanding conservation effort and a modern day engineering marvel. Sitting in the middle of a small triangular piece of prime real estate, it now faces the future as a beautifully restored mansion with a startling new 20-storey residential tower cantilevered over it.

## A Tall Order

How do you turn a treasured near 80-year old bungalow on a sliver of highly-priced land into a commercially viable entity? You build a 20-storey residential tower over it, of course. And that's what the engineers and architects did, while gingerly restoring Tan Chin Tuan Mansion to its former glory.

Bought over in 1939 by prominent banker and philanthropist, the late Tan Chin Tuan, the white house in Cairnhill is an eclectic blend of *peranakan* and colonial architectural styles. Used as a private residence by the Tan family for decades, massive renovation works was undertaken in 1969.

## Good As Old

Before this project began, detailed research was done to uncover the true design of the mansion. It was discovered that a mansard roof that was in the archive plans of the building had not actually been built. Major renovation works done in 1969 brought about some changes. New rooms were added on the top floor and a wall had been knocked down to extend the first storey living area. Through old photographs and archive plans, additions and alterations made to the original mansion were reversed. The true flat roof



1930s bungalow with new 20-storey residential tower

of the building was retained and the wall that had been removed was reconstructed to detail. Badly damaged *peranakan* tiles of the interior flooring were replaced by similar ones sourced from Vietnam and Malaysia. Original solid timber strips on the second floor were also reused.

Externally, most of the original detailing and ornaments were repaired and sensitively reconstructed.

## Breathing New Life

Great care was also taken to ensure that the foundation and the structure of the mansion remained uncompromised during the construction of the new tower and the reconfiguration of the mansion's interior for its new use. The timber staircase originally located at the centre of the mansion was removed. In its place, a new double-volume space now channels natural light from an added skylight. A new light, spiral staircase in the turret now serves access to the second storey.

The centre of the original mansion was reconfigured to fit in the lift core of the 20-storey tower. Two links were also created to provide direct access from the mansion to the new tower.

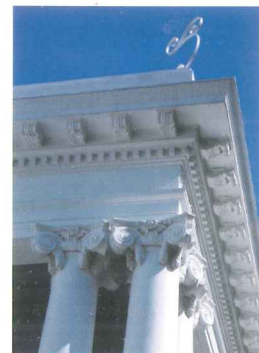
This project is outstanding in two key aspects. Firstly, the Tan Chin Tuan Mansion has been resplendently restored and adapted to its new use as a memorial to its late owner. Secondly, its success has set a new benchmark in site planning for integration of the old and the new.



*Contrast of old and new*



*New residential tower cantilevered over restored bungalow*



*Entablature with decorative brackets and dentils*



*Original window with plaster triangular pediment above*



*Pre-cast concrete balustrade*



*Peranakan cement tiles kept with damaged ones replaced*



*Function hall at first storey*



*Concrete arch-opening with keystone*



*Timber panel door and transom*



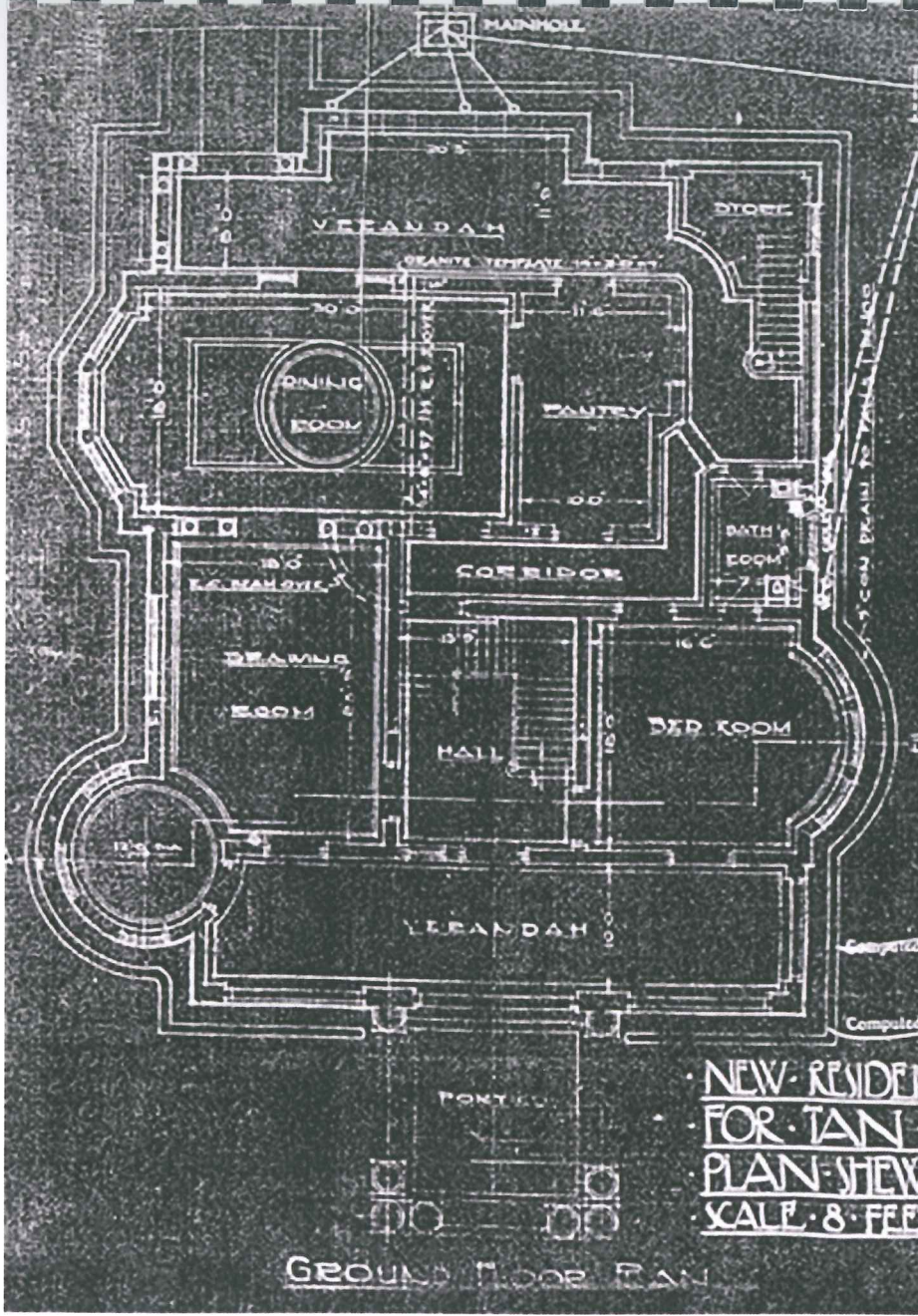
Built in the early 1930-s for a Chinese towkay, the 2-storey mansion has an eclectic style that was quite popular among the local businessman. Adopting a Peranakan and Colonial style of architecture, the mansion reflected the life style of the upper class society decades ago in Singapore. The reminiscence of the glorious time in the building was carried through when it was bought in 1939 by a banker and a philanthropist, the late Tan Chin Tuan, where he and his family resided for a few decades.

The 2-storey mansion received an additional level on the roof top as there was a need to add in extra bedrooms for the extended family of the philanthropist. The major renovation works in 1969 have added an extended living room area on the first storey and a new lift was also attached later on.

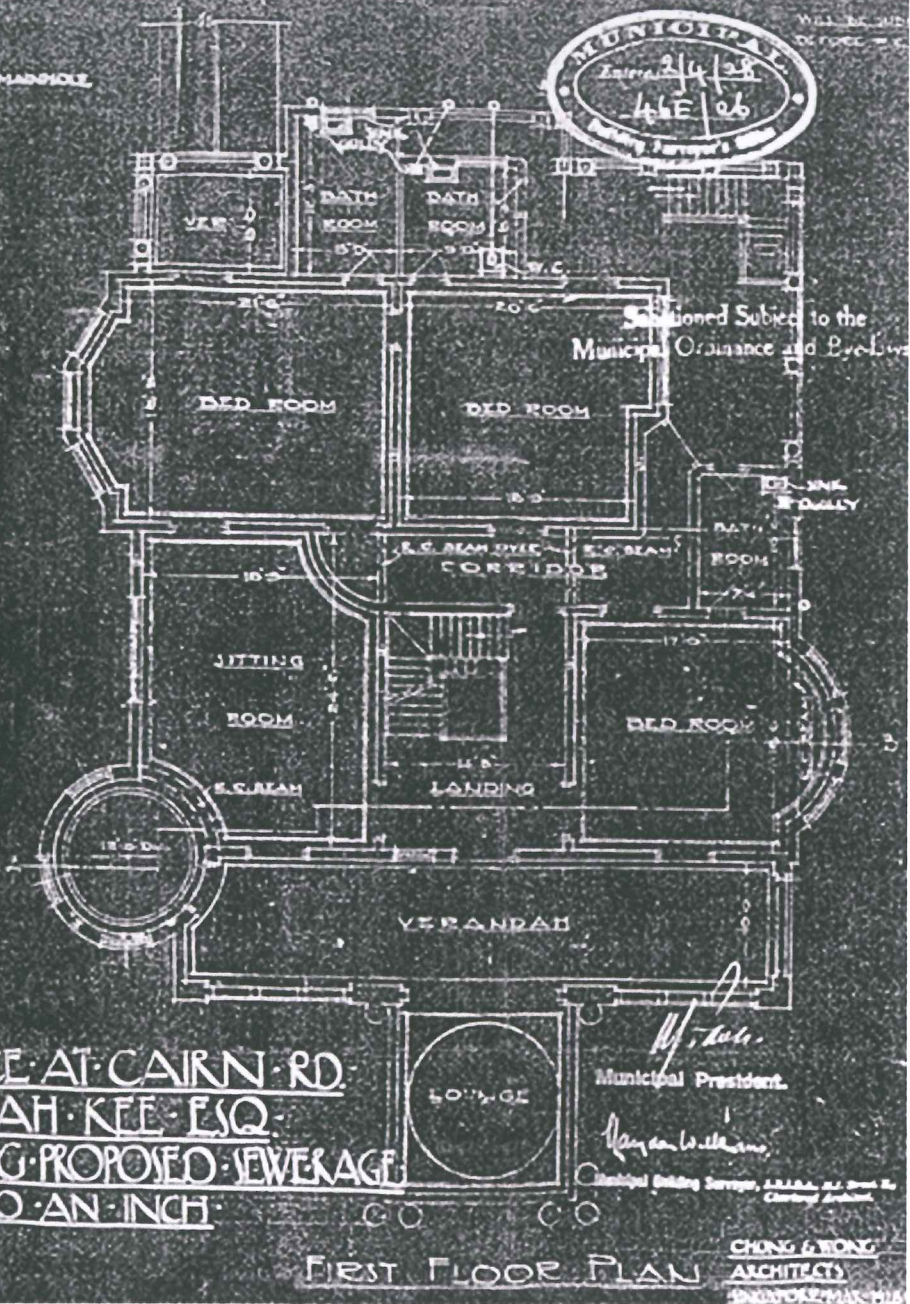
Being vacant for a few years after the Tan Chin Tuan family moved to a bigger apartment, the mansion was undergone a proposal for a redevelopment in year 2003 as it was considered not viable economically; judging from its location in the prime district at Cairnhill area behind Orchard Road.

A requirement from URA to conserve the mansion within the redevelopment of the site plays an important role for the uniqueness of the whole new development of the 20-storey residential tower behind the 2-storey mansion.





GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

NEW RESIDENCE AT CAIRN RD.  
 FOR TAN KAH KEE ESQ.  
 PLAN SHOWING PROPOSED SEWERAGE  
 SCALE 8 FEET TO AN INCH

MUNICIPAL  
 Entered 2/4/38  
 44E/26  
 Public Engineer's Office

Submitted Subject to the  
 Municipal Ordinance and By-Laws

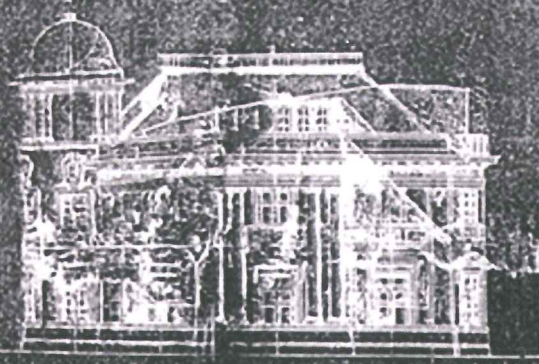
*W. H. Lee*  
 Municipal President.

*Raymond Williams*  
 Municipal Building Surveyor, A.I.A.A., R.A. (H.K.)  
 Consulting Architect.

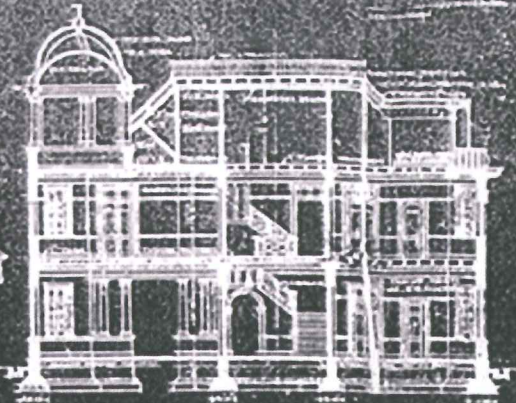
CHONG & TONG  
 ARCHITECTS



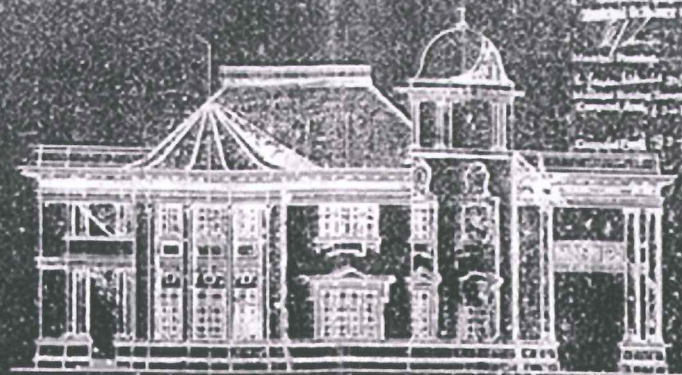
PROPOSED RESIDENCE TO BE ERECTED AT CAHN HILL ROAD  
for TAN KAH KEE ESQ.



FRONT ELEVATION



SECTION A-A

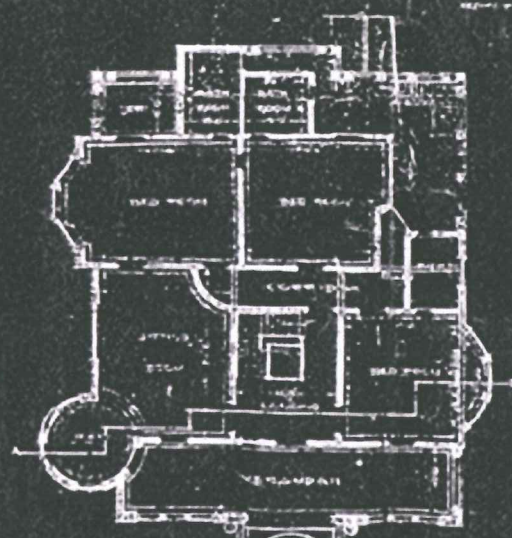


SIDE ELEVATION

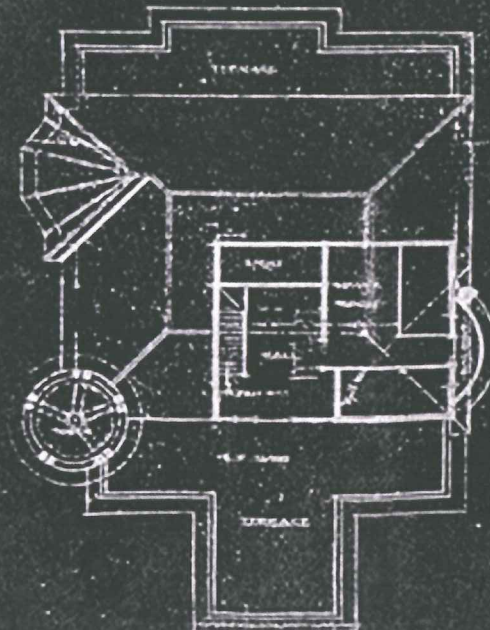
NOTES  
1. All work to be done in accordance with the specifications of the Institution, with all necessary modifications.  
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3. The work to be done in accordance with the specifications of the Institution, with all necessary modifications.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



ATTIC FLOOR PLAN

*Chong*  
CHONG'S ARCHITECTS  
SINGAPORE