

No. 43 AMBER ROAD

Shanghai Glamour



Owner:

Mer Vue Developments Pte Ltd

Architect:

RSP Architects Planners & Engineers (Pte) Ltd

Engineer:

RSP Architects Planners & Engineers (Pte) Ltd

Contractor:

Tiong Aik Construction Pte Ltd

At its present position anchoring a towering collection of six modern condominium blocks, it is hard to imagine that this two-storey clubhouse was once an all-but-forgotten bungalow.

Diamond In The Rough

Built in the early 1900s, this Neo Classical building, now the Sea View Clubhouse, was once a seaside bungalow annexed to a mansion owned by the well-known Elias family. In the 1990s, the bungalow was relegated for use as a storeroom by the Seaview Hotel. Thankfully in 2002, it was acquired by its new owners who have had the foresight to voluntarily conserve the building with the Urban Redevelopment Authority's support and guidance.

Adding A New Shine

In danger of being tucked away in a corner, good site planning lifted the bungalow out of obscurity and into the very heart of its modern day condominium setting. The architects followed through with careful identification and removal of insensitive additions made to the house in its later years. The 3R principles and the top-down approach were observed. Great care was taken to ensure that the structure of the bungalow was not compromised as surrounding constructions began. Sheet piles were provided between the clubhouse and basement car park to stabilise the soil around the clubhouse while the basement car park was being built. Found to be inadequate in bearing the additional load of a clubhouse, the existing foundation of the bungalow had to be underpinned and the first storey reinforced concrete floor strengthened.



Night view of the bungalow restored to its former glory

Internally, the grand timber staircase and the timber-clad walls throughout the inner top storey lounge were retained. On the second storey, the original timber flooring was also kept. Where possible, existing timber doors were retained and damaged ones replaced in matching design and detail.

On the exterior walls, special care was clearly taken to repair and reinstate the unique Shanghai finish that gives the building its rare distinction. New Shanghai plastered walls were closely matched to the original weather-worn plaster of old.

A Glass Act

One of the most outstanding reminders of the bungalow's previous life as a seaside home are the colourful nautical-themed stained glass panels wrapping its first storey verandahs. An experienced stained glass expert was called in for its restoration. Each panel was painstaking removed, repaired and reinstated and missing pieces were matched and replaced. Ornate cast-iron balustrades at the first and second storey verandahs were also given a new shine with new frameless, clear tempered glass balustrades added to comply with building safety requirements.

In all, an outstanding effort in resurrecting a time-worn house and putting it into centrestage within its swanky new development grounds and amidst the built heritage landscape of Singapore.



Aerial view of Clubhouse as the heart of the new condominium development



The restored bungalow



Restored nautical-themed stained glass panel



Restored cast-iron balustrade at first storey verandah



Original terrazzo floor finishes at second storey verandahs retained



Restored timber staircase and balustrade



Close-up of the main entrance façade



Timber wall panels and architraves, doors with decorative grilles above and flooring retained

The stately two-storey Neo-classical bungalow was built in the early 1900s. It is an example of a seaside bungalow that was part of a large estate owned by the Elias family, an established Jewish family in the 1900s. This bungalow was an annex to the Elias family's main mansion. It is the key to the charming character of the Katong area and was then known as The Pavilion.

The bungalow was later used as a storeroom by the Seaview Hotel in the 1990s.

The bungalow has a total gross floor area of 580.12m². In 2002, Mer Vue Development Pte Ltd purchased the bungalow together with land area of 35,470.40m² for development of 546 units of freehold condominium development. The developer has conserved the bungalow by converting it into the clubhouse of the new condominium development known as The Sea View.

The bungalow was gazetted for conservation on 29 November 2004.