

# 11 CANNING WALK

Commanding Presence



**Owner:**  
*Hotel Fort Canning*

**Architect:**  
*DP Architects Pte Ltd*

**Engineer:**  
*Chan Han Chong Consulting Engineers*

**Contractor:**  
*Incorporated Builders Pte Ltd*

*Acquired in a state of disrepair, this three-storey Neo-Classical style building, circa 1926, had been smothered by excessive layers of old cladding. Through a massive yet respectful restoration effort, this former military command centre has been resurrected for its venerable new role as a heritage hotel within an existing recreational club atop the historic Fort Canning Hill.*



*Former military command centre restored into a heritage hotel*

## **Unearthing History**

Among the most impressive successes of this restoration effort is the patient and careful removal of the building's previous decorative trespasses. The project team was able to recover and reinstate much of the property's original elements while adhering to the 3R principles and Top-Down approach. Among the most notable of discoveries was the previously sealed *porte cochere*. This archetypal element was rescued and restored as the hotel's grand entrance. The predominant and repetitive wooden ties motif on the verandah railings that surround the building have also been beautifully reinstated, further preserving the building's colonial identity. Repairs were carried out without altering or affecting the original structural and wall systems.

## **Resurrecting Old Treasures**

One of the property's glories is its distinctive grand stair core. Made of concrete and wood, it is supported by slender columns that terminate in a crown of trusses. Adequately restored, the stair core maintains its original

position of significance at the centre of the building. Today, the commanding structure establishes the hierarchy of the lobby as the centre of the hotel and engages guests from the moment of entry right up to their rooms.

Another point of historic interest is the collection of four glass-encased archaeological pits embedded in the lobby area. A showcase of ancient artefacts in their natural state, it is a creative

idea that gives an instant visual reminder of the area and the building's glorious past.

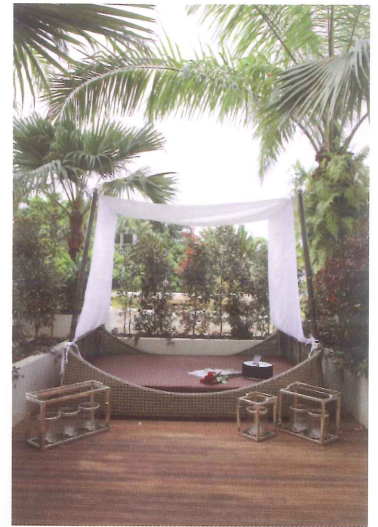
## **Suite Revival**

The planning of the guest rooms was masterfully done considering the original building was designed as utilitarian army barracks. The project team not only carved out generously spacious rooms but also living spaces of various types to cater to the different lifestyle preferences of discerning guests. The painstaking recreation of the original timber conservation doors separating the bedroom and the verandah in the premium suites is lauded. All the rooms come with views out to the surrounding lush greenery of Fort Canning or the bright lights of the city.

Overall, this has been a good effort and challenge in reassigning the building from its original role as a military administrative office to a vibrant and commercially viable hotel.



*Original façade beautifully preserved*



*Garden at first storey guest room*



*Grand staircase at main lobby*



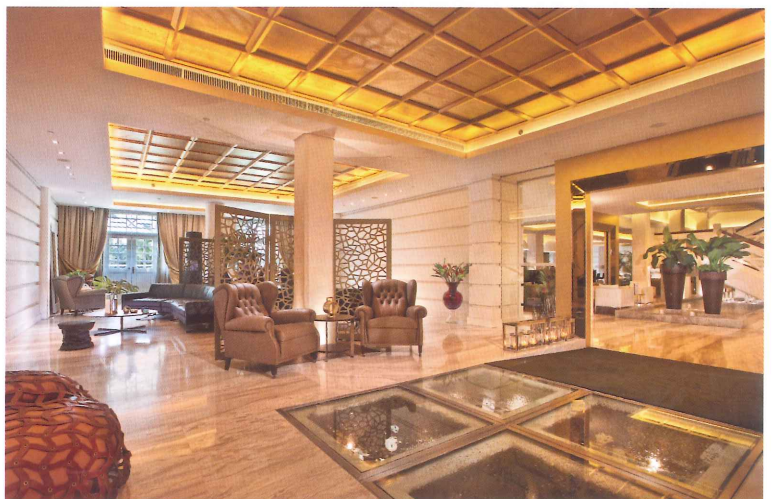
*Verandah of guest room with a view*



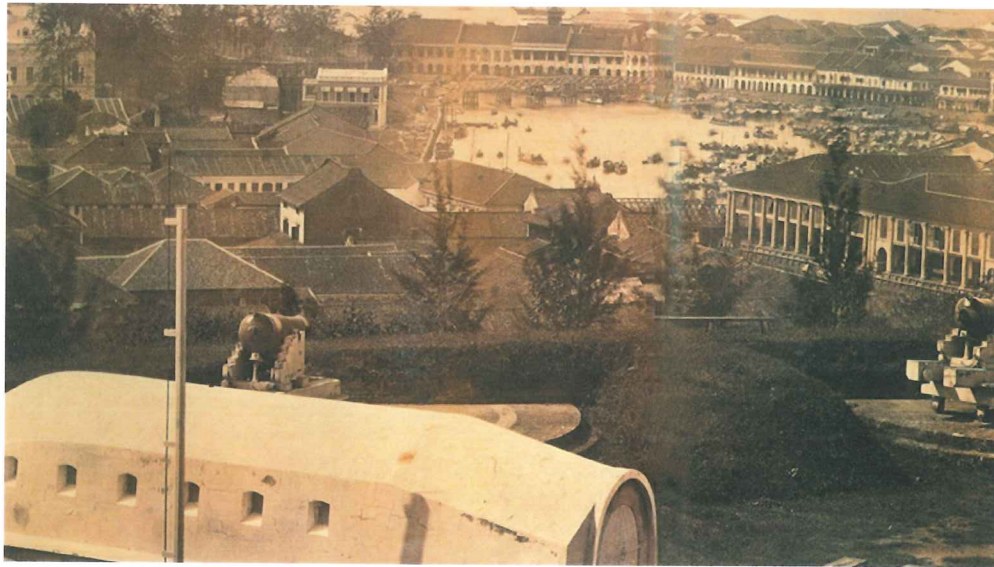
*Previously sealed porte cochere now the hotel grand entrance*



*Guest room masterfully carved out from barrack layout*



*Four glass-encased archaeological pits embedded in hotel lobby area*



Hotel Fort Canning is an exciting yet challenging conservation project that complements the serenity and history imbued in Fort Canning Hill while distinguishing itself as the unprecedented **Archeological Hotel**.

Hotel Fort Canning is situated on Fort Canning Hill, along Canning walk and is a site intrinsically linked to the history of Singapore.

Being the **highest point** located in the vicinity of the old British Colonial town, Fort Canning Hill was chosen as old Singapore's **military command** centre by the British.

Besides the underground command centre, the residences of British officials as well as the **administrative building** of the British Far East Command HQ was located on Fort Canning Hill. This administrative building served numerous functions before settling as a **sleepy clubhouse** in 1994.



Inspired by the rich history of its setting, this former administrative building was converted into a unique archaeological hotel where the vibrant past is unearthed in its new found splendor.

Hotel Fort Canning was constructed initially as a **British Colonial style** building that served military administrative purposes before being used by the Singapore Command & Staff College. This 3-storey building offers a discreet sanctuary of calm in the vibrant city and an epitome of style and modern comfort in each of its 86 guestrooms and suites.

The CEO of The Legends Fort Canning Park, Mr. Oh Chee Eng, commissioned the project in 2007 as the hotel wing of the existing clubhouse, introducing '**modern heritage**' to an architectural gem steeped in colonial history.

Housing **archaeological treasures** excavated locally by Dr. John Miksic in glass encased pits at the lobby, Hotel Fort Canning evokes tranquility with its gentle use of sublimity, melding tradition and modernity in a simple yet dignified manner. The result is a distinctively unique building that is subtle and soothing.

