

# Bringing life back into heritage buildings

**The annual URA Architectural Heritage Awards (AHA) gives recognition to quality restoration of Singapore's built heritage. Skyline features this year's six award-winning projects.**



*"Heritage buildings are gradually finding their niche in the property market and are being adapted to accommodate new uses in the 21st century. Such buildings need to be carefully restored if they are to be fitted out for modern living and still serve as physical markers of our personal memories and national heritage."*

— Dr John Chen, Minister of State for National Development and Communications and IT at the 2000 AHA ceremony held at The Pavilion, Far East Square, 27 July 2000.

## Living in history

### 15 Whitehouse Park

This Early Style bungalow with Victorian influences was designed in the 1890s by Regent Bidwell. The main challenge of this project was to recover the original layout of the bungalow. To do this, ad hoc additions at the rear were removed. During restoration, external and internal shoring were used to prop up the walls.

All external architectural elements were retained. These include the verandah around the house, the large balconies on both storeys, the overhanging roof and the monumental concrete columns and pilasters. The original design of the basement arches was also restored and changes to incorporate modern day living were made, e.g. the addition of a new service annex, a garage and an additional floor. New mechanical and electrical services were also installed.



60, 62, 64 and 66 Kim Yam Road

### 60, 62, 64 and 66 Kim Yam Road

Built in the early 19th century, these residential terrace houses in the River Valley Secondary Settlement were once home to gambier plantation owners. The main buildings of the terrace houses have been retained while the rear portion of the site was redeveloped into a 10-storey apartment block.

The conserved buildings were in fairly good condition but had to be carefully shored for the construction of a basement car park and the new apartment block. Due to site constraints, the laying of services was a challenge.

All the architectural features of the conserved buildings were retained and painstakingly restored. Some motifs found in the conserved buildings were repeated. The great care taken to integrate the old with the new is noteworthy.



15 Whitehouse Park

## New twist to old classics

### 9 Bras Basah Road (Hotel Rendezvous)

The goal of this project was to integrate a new 11-storey hotel behind an existing row of old pre-war three-storey shophouses in an effort to preserve part of Singapore's colourful past. The design for the new hotel was inspired by the lively decorative features of the shophouses that were retained.

The shophouses had been in fairly good condition but advanced building techniques were used to increase the load-bearing capacity of existing structural elements. Temporary propping was also used to hold up existing brickwalls and structures during construction.

At Hotel Rendezvous, the past and the present are linked by an open courtyard. This courtyard not only integrated the new hotel with the



Hotel Rendezvous

restored shophouses but also served as the focal point of the development. Crowning the hotel is a billboard which resembled the one displayed on the roofs of the shophouses back in the 1960s to 1980s.

### 50 Eu Tong Sen Street

Built in 1892, the Old Thong Chai Medical Institution is a prime example of Southern Chinese

Architecture. Here, the restoration project involved restoring the national monument and also constructing a new two-storey building next to it.

The original arrangement of the interior spaces and courtyards was faithfully restored. As the building was in a run-down state, skilled craftsmen from China had to be brought in to work on the detailed features. To complement the monument, the new addition was designed to be compatible to the architecture of the monument. A beautifully landscaped Chinese garden at the junction of Eu Tong Sen Street and Merchant Road was also created as a finishing touch to the development.



50 Eu Tong Sen Street

## Innovative restoration

### 36 Club Street and 23 Mohammed Ali Lane

Located in Chinatown Historic District, this project involved the restoration of a four-storey Art Deco building and two double-storey shophouses of the Early Style. The first storey of this development is now used for commercial uses while the upper floors are used for residences.

Before restoration, the taller building was in poor structural condition. The internal concrete frames had to be

replaced while the partywalls of both buildings had to be propped up before work begun.

With careful yet innovative restoration, all the original features of the buildings were retained and restored and the original central corridor layout on the upper storeys of the Art Deco building was also kept. The shophouses are now connected to the Art Deco building through a new opening created in the ground floor partywall. The air-conditioning condensers of the Art Deco building are well-hidden to blend in with the building. Innovative use of the unusual



36 Club Street and 23 Mohammed Ali Lane

slope of the site also created an underground wine cellar in this development.

Our heartiest congratulations to the winners of this year's awards. 🏆