

Last issue, we looked at the importance of quality restoration. Here, Skyline takes a closer look at the six award-winning projects of this year's Architectural Heritage Awards.



"The conservation programme continues to be relevant today. There are two main reasons. Firstly, it is important for nation-building. It strengthens our roots, and our sense of belonging to this place Conservation buildings are not mere architectural symbols of the past; they are our links to our heritage. They bind us emotionally to a place Secondly, these old buildings add charm and variety to our modern city. Preservation and conservation of our national monuments and historic areas add colour to our streetscapes and enhance the quality of our urban fabric."

— Minister Mah Bow Tan, Guest-of-Honour at the 1999 Architectural Heritage Awards ceremony held at the Singapore Art Museum auditorium, 7 July 1999.

New lease of life for

Heritage homes — No. 19 Koon Seng Road and Nos. 59 and 61 Kim Yam Road



The main building of this 1920s terrace house at Koon Seng Road was conserved and a new three-storey rear extension was added. The elaborate facade, featuring segmental arches with timber-framed coloured glazed panelled fanlight, casement windows with polychromatic tiles below and fluted brickwork pilasters, was restored.

A jack-roof was also introduced to provide light and ventilation to the interior. A glass skylight with timber trellises below covers the space between the conserved part and the new rear extension to form an internal atrium space.

Three Peranakan-style carved timber screens form the entrance to this atrium. A 1.4 m deep open-to-the-sky plunge pool measuring 5 m by 4 m with a wooden deck was built at the third storey of the rear extension, serving as a focal point for relaxation and entertainment.

Owner Dr Caroline Lai, a dental surgeon, feels that the money spent on the restoration was well worth it. She said of her terrace house: "It's very charming. Without compromising on comfort, you have all the modern conveniences."



The terrace house at Koon Seng Road has been ingeniously adapted to suit modern living needs while retaining its original Peranakan flavour.

In the Kim Yam Road project, the main building of two single-storey Early style warehouses, built in the late 1800s, together with a side lane and a new two-storey rear extension were transformed into a traditional Chinese courtyard house.

The facades of the buildings, which featured decorative fluted brickwork columns with moulded capitals and bases, casement windows, panelled doors and a five-footway, were kept.



The traditional Chinese courtyard house at Kim Yam Road is a cosy, yet spacious dwelling suited for a modern-day lifestyle.

A main entrance was introduced through a landscaped, cobblestone court on the side lane. The conserved main buildings were reconfigured into bedroom, dining and kitchen areas. A reflecting pool with skylight above is introduced as the central feature that joins the conserved part with the new rear extension.

Heritage buildings

A vibrant mix of history, culture and commerce at Far East Square and Capital Square



Modern glass and steel structures are juxtaposed against the backdrop of traditional shophouses at Far East Square to create a unique and vibrant commercial centre that showcases the historic nature of the area, within the setting of a modern city complex.

The Far East Square project by Far East Organisation comprises 61 units of conservation buildings. They are mainly two- and three-storey shophouses, a new seven-storey car park station and a two-storey cultural pavilion within the China Square Conservation Area. Among the conservation buildings are the former Fu Tak Chi temple, now a museum, and the Chor Eng Institute, formerly one of

Singapore's oldest schools. Both buildings were restored by skilled craftsmen from China.

The conserved shophouses, which are now occupied by shops and food outlets on the first storey with offices above, were linked together internally to create a larger floor area. The facades, airwells, floors and party walls were left intact to retain the character and spirit of the shophouses.

The Capital Square project, also located within the China Square Conservation area, integrates two streetblocks of two- and three-storey conservation shophouses and a new 16-storey office building to create a unique architectural identity.

A joint-venture between Keppel Land and Rodamco Pacific, the development is primarily for office use except for the first storey along Pekin Street where shops and restaurants are situated next to the Pekin Street pedestrian mall.



The shophouses at Capital Square have been well-integrated with the new buildings to create a rich and interesting urban area.

The external facades of the conservation buildings were restored and the interiors modified to adapt to new uses, with modern building services sensitively incorporated to satisfy contemporary needs without compromising the charm of the traditional shophouse.

All original elements and materials were retained and restored where possible. The end product integrates the old with the new, providing an urban transition between the historic China Square and the Raffles Place financial area.

Shophouse chic — Nos. 15 to 23 Club Street

This project, located within the Historic District of Chinatown, comprises five units of two-storey shophouses built in the 1840s and an old two-storey building at the rear surrounding an internal courtyard.

Owned by Haruta Investment, the first storey is for commercial use and will house a restaurant, a pub and a cafe. The second storey is approved for residential use. The courtyard

acts as the focal point for the first storey commercial areas. A timber balcony ringing the courtyard on the second storey provides circulation for the residential units. Though the buildings have been adapted for new uses, the original humble character of the Early shophouse style has been retained.

See the back page story on the sixth award winner, Shuang Lin Monastery.



The existing buildings were adapted for new uses without sacrificing their historic character.

— Compiled by Patricia Bay