

# FLASH

38

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*News+FLASH is the digital offspring of INTERSECTION. It is published digitally each fortnight for the foreseeable future, until we run out of ideas, articles or money.*



**1** PROJECTS FEATURE :  
**SAN SENG TONG CENTRE OF BUDDHISM CULTURE & EDUCATION**  
by PDC Design Group Sdn. Bhd.  
- PG 1



**2** PROJECTS FEATURE :  
**M RESORT & HOTEL KUALA LUMPUR**  
Landscape by WM Koncepto Company Limited  
- PG 6



**3** PROJECTS FEATURE :  
**ROXY IMPIANA HOTEL**  
by MWA Architects Sdn. Bhd.  
- PG 10



# SAN SENG TONG CENTRE OF BUDDHISM CULTURE & EDUCATION

*by PDC Design Group Sdn. Bhd.*

## ARCHITECT'S STATEMENT

### Introduction

Nestled on high ground overlooking the surrounding housing communities, the San Seng Tong Centre of Buddhism Culture & Education (三圣堂文教中心) stands as a beacon of serenity and enlightenment. Designed with a deep understanding of its community, the four-storey structure serves as a hub for cultural and educational events, fostering a sense of unity and mindfulness. Despite challenges faced during construction, the commitment to the community prevailed, resulting in a unique architectural masterpiece.

### Community-Centric Design

The architectural design of the San Seng Tong Centre of Buddhism Culture & Education revolves around its role as a community hub. The ground floor is strategically dedicated to the main entrance, offices, meeting rooms, and ample parking, ensuring accessibility and convenience for visitors. The layout fosters a welcoming environment, encouraging engagement between the centre and the surrounding neighborhoods.

### Flexible Spaces for Cultural and Educational Events

Recognizing the diverse needs of the community, the centre provides flexible spaces across its four floors. The first floor features educational event spaces, dormitories, offices, and plans for a future kindergarten, while the second floor is dedicated to cultural events and additional dormitories. The third floor boasts a multi-functional hall, serving as a versatile space for a myriad of events, fostering cultural and educational exchange.



### Open Corridor Approach

The architectural emphasises on an open corridor approach ensures that natural lighting and ventilation permeate the building, creating a harmonious atmosphere for multiple events. This design not only enhances the overall aesthetics but also contributes to the well-being of the occupants, promoting a sense of tranquility and connection with nature.

### Striking Facade and Thermal Efficiency

The main facade facing the main road captivates passers-by with a huge opening on the third floor, adorned with fin walls painted in the colors of the Buddhist flag (佛教五色旗). This not only adds a distinctive visual identity to the centre but also symbolizes the principles of Buddhism. The wide corridors on the eastern and western facades provide deep shading to internal event spaces, ensuring comfort during various weather conditions.

### Overcoming Construction Challenges

The construction of the centre faced challenges, particularly in site access due to the maximum footprint of the building. The contractor, committed to the project and the community, creatively addressed these challenges by splitting the casting of the superstructure into two stages. This allowed for efficient use of heavy machinery and reduced the impact on the surrounding areas.

### Community Commitment

Despite an increase in construction costs post-tender and challenges posed by the COVID-19 period, the commitment to the community prevailed. The contractor's initiative to complete the project in a shorter time frame not only reduced unnecessary costs but also kept the local workforce active, overcoming the issue of a shortage of foreign workers.

The San Seng Tong Centre of Buddhism Culture & Education stands as a testament to the harmony between architectural design, community needs, and cultural significance. Its flexible spaces, open corridors, and striking facade create an inviting atmosphere for cultural and educational events. The challenges faced during construction were overcome through commitment, creativity, and a shared dedication to the well-being of the surrounding communities. This centre is not merely a building; it is a living symbol of unity, enlightenment, and the enduring spirit of the community it serves.



*Construction of the building structure was divided into 2 stages due to limited site access.*



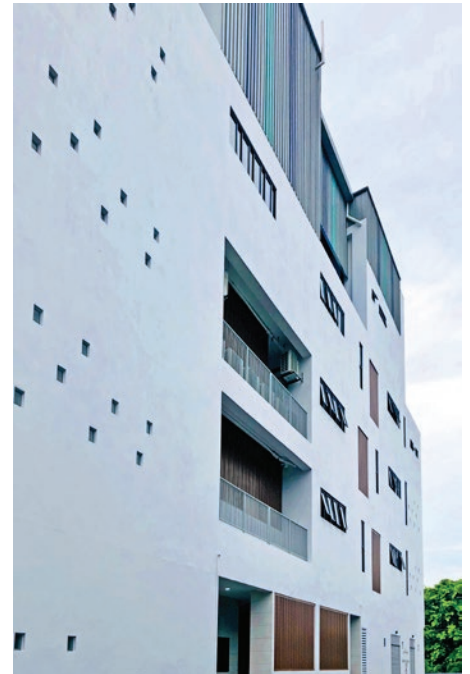
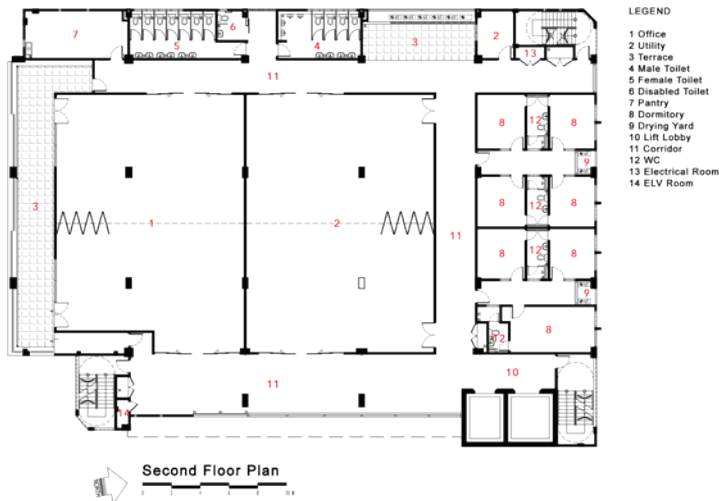
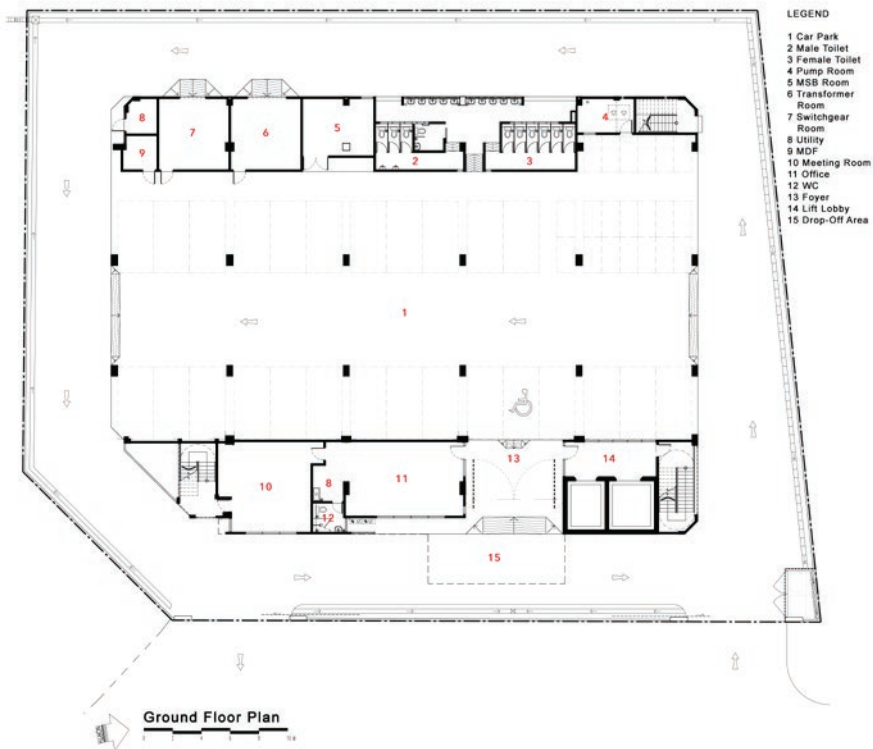
*The stage 2 of structural works can only commence after the mobile crane removed from the middle of the building.*



*Top floor before main roof covering.*



*Installation of roof trusses in progress.*



Architect	: PDC Design Group Sdn. Bhd. Team: Chai Si Yong, Tan Tze Khi, David Wee, Chai Hou Qin, Choong Jun Jie	Mechanical & Electrical	: Perunding Elecmech Sdn. Bhd.
Civil & Structural	: TW EngCoSa Sdn. Bhd.	Quantity Surveyor	: FCH Quantity Surveyors Sdn. Bhd.
		Main Contractor	: Lee Onn Construction Sdn. Bhd.

**Conclusion**

Our involvement in community projects extends beyond the completion of the physical structure. The realisation that working on such projects transcends design and cost considerations has been a valuable lesson. This endeavor has showcased the pivotal role of a passionate and dedicated team of consultants, who play a crucial part in navigating the intricacies of community engagement.

Engaging in community projects often involves working at minimal fees, merely covering essential costs. The commitment extends beyond the drawing board, requiring an investment of time in educating the community. It becomes evident that communities, while often having a clear vision of what they want, may require assistance in understanding the intricacies of implementation, including by-laws, building codes, safety, public health, and navigating authority processes.

Furthermore, our role extends to assisting communities in applying for government grants and funding, ensuring that the resources are allocated efficiently. Practicing good procurement methods and maintaining transparency in the tendering process ensures that funds, often sourced from the general public, are well-spent on essential items.

One of the most satisfying aspects of community projects is gaining the trust of the community, particularly when dealing with lay-persons in the construction industry. Establishing strong relationships and friendships while fostering trust in our professionalism is an integral part of the process.

The tangible rewards go beyond professional satisfaction. For instance, on the San Seng Tong Centre of Buddhism Culture & Education, the team enjoyed the heartwarming gesture of free meals from the community kitchen during meetings, building inspections or festival seasons. These gestures serve as a reminder that community projects are not just about creating physical structures but are profound journeys of collaboration, understanding, and shared commitment to the well-being of the community.

END

**CAPTIONS:**

- 1 - 3. Community kitchen (Photo: SST FB)
- 4. Meetings with client were usually conducted after working hours as their building committee members are volunteers.
- 5. Buddhist blessing ceremony for the commencement of the foundation works.
- 6. Top floor terrace can serve semi-open function area when the sliding doors at the corridor are fully opened.





## M RESORT & HOTEL KUALA LUMPUR

*Landscape by WM Koncepto Company Limited*

### LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT'S STATEMENT

Originally, the site was home to an upscale golf course and sports club. In light of the recent expansion of the mass transit system in the area, M Resort&Hotel Group, initiated the development of a luxurious five-star hotel project, recognizing its immense potential to attract both local and international travelers. WM Koncepto Company Limited has been entrusted with the responsibility of crafting the project's massive landscape architecture.

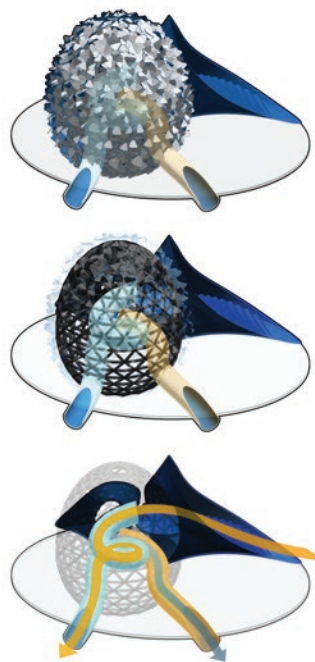
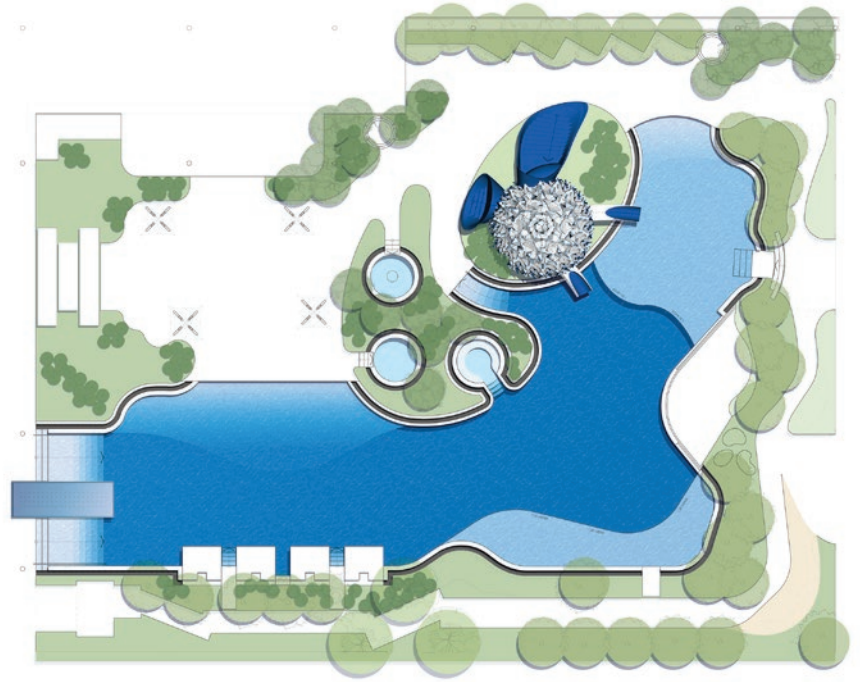
As the project's landscape design team, our primary task is to transform the hotel located on the outskirts of the country's capital into a thriving tourist destination. The goal is to create an unforgettable experience for guests, encouraging them to return and attracting new travelers seeking weekend retreats, which will ensure the hotel's long-term commercial success. Creating stunning and unique hard and soft landscapes is the primary objective for every landscape designer. However, what we believe would generate favorable impressions for the guests, leaving them with fond memories, is a thoughtfully curated selection of activities and a well-designed spatial program. These activities should embrace the diverse Malaysian clientele, taking into account their racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds, genders, ages, and physical disabilities. Such an approach has helped create positive impressions and memorable experiences for the hotel guests. The landscape design team intends for the courtyard to be the central hub for all activities. The L-shaped lagoon-style family swimming



pool takes center stage in the landscape. The swimming amenities comprise an adult pool, a children's pool, and a wellness station. Adjacent to these facilities is a 20-meter-long lap swimming pool, catering to guests seeking more rigorous exercise. Located along the route is a serene leisure pool, inviting guests to unwind and bask in the soothing embrace of the water. Various pools meander through the verdant surroundings, showcasing a diverse array of Malaysia's native flora. The plants and trees have been thoughtfully selected and arranged for optimal sustainability and seamless integration with the neighboring golf course's natural landscape. A section of the swimming pool has been designed to connect with the F&B Zone, creating a vibrant space for hosting pool parties on special occasions. Situated deeper within the swimming area lies a section that links to another party zone, featuring a design reminiscent of a gently sloping beach edge merging with the water. The layout has been designed to avoid a fixed axis, as the aim is to cultivate a serene atmosphere and a sense of discovery, enabling guests to navigate the spaces.



The slider presents itself as a distinctive feature of the pool and serves as the project's iconic highlight. Nestled within the verdant surroundings, the slider reveals itself as soon as visitors emerge from the lobby, serving as an element of surprise intended to impress guests of all ages, from adults to children. It's hidden inside the Butterfly Hive, whose design's striking visual draws inspiration from an image of an enclave of vibrant blue butterflies, tucked away deep within the lush jungle, captured by a National Geographic photographer and explorer. The hive's exterior is adorned with numerous stainless-steel pieces, carefully crafted to mimic the form of butterfly wings. The installations are meticulously arranged, resulting in a multitude of perspectives that shift depending on the viewer's vantage point. The upper pieces feature a sleek silver finish, while the lower ones are indigo blue. The silver finish of the hive beautifully mirrors the lush greenery of its surroundings, creating mesmerizing reflective effects.



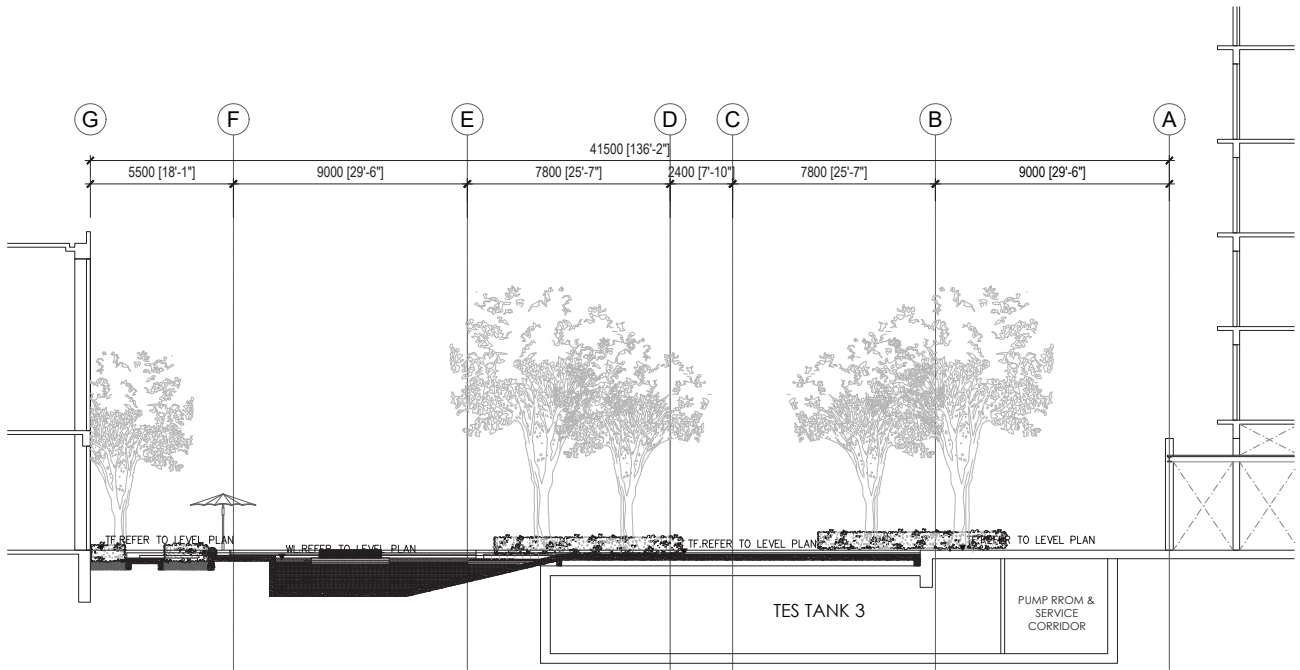


Another crucial element contributing to a hotel's commercial success is the design of users' perceptions and experiences, something that both the owner and design teams agreed was equally significant to a well-planned layout. Every space within the hotel is curated to ensure that every corner and area can be an ideal backdrop for a photograph. The lobby offers a breathtaking perspective of the garden courtyard, exuding a sense of natural beauty. The swimming pool's surrounding zones and areas are designed to provide visual comfort where guests can enjoy unobstructed views without any distractions from the functional spaces and components, including the ones above eye level.

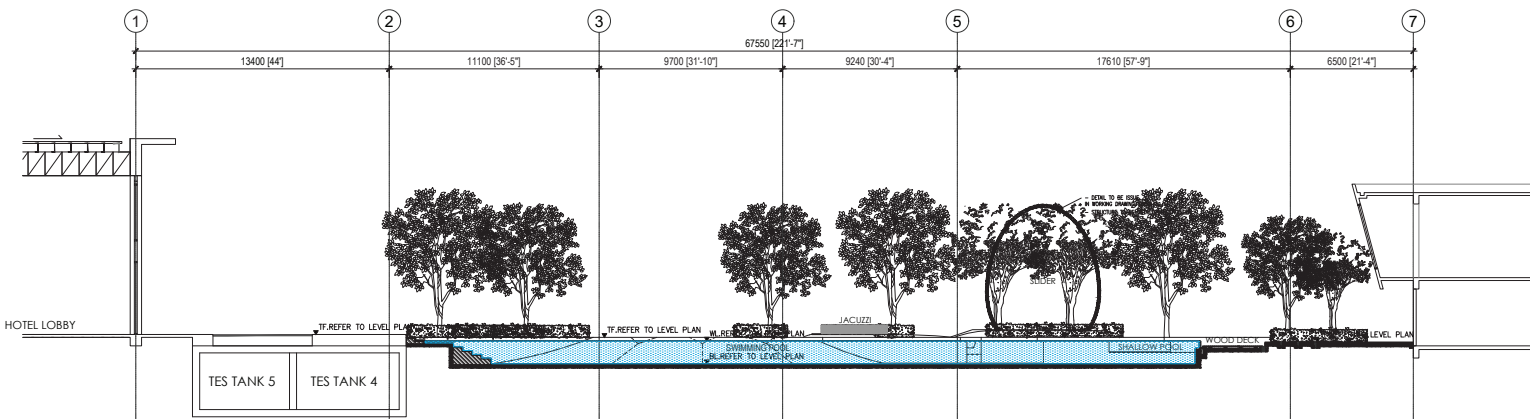
Ultimately, the design aims to optimize the user experience for all types of guests, whether they are solo travelers, couples, families, friends, or colleagues. As the landscape designer, we always imagine users' expectations when they experience and interact with the garden and swimming pools. There are people who choose this particular space to celebrate special occasions or even as a place for their marriage proposals. To many, this is where they go for a relaxing weekend getaway after a busy work week. There are also those who spend their hard-earned savings to create lasting memories with their loved ones at this location. The garden we design must become a part of these individuals' lasting memories. The charm and reward that a project of this nature offers is truly unparalleled, which is why our studio has always held a special love and passion for hospitality projects such as this one.



Client	: High Diligent Sdn. Bhd.	Civil Engineer	: Primetech Engineers Sdn. Bhd.
Landscape Architect	: WM Koncepto Co., Ltd.	Structural Engineer	: Dereka Structure Consultant Sdn. Bhd.
Architect	: Arkitek Dataran	M&E	: ACMV
Interior Designer	: ADC Sdn. Bhd.	Contractor	: Foliage Landscape Services Sdn. Bhd.
Lighting Designer	: Lightbox	Photo Credit	: Lin Ho



*Swimming Pool Area Section B-B*



*Swimming Pool Area Section D-D*





The conceptual design process for this project occurred several months prior to the onset of COVID-19. The pitching competition for the project's contractor took place amidst the peak of the pandemic. During the period of lockdown, both Malaysia and Thailand implemented strict measures, forcing the construction to advance in accordance with the daily circumstances. We collaborated tirelessly via video conferences. Countless photographs were captured and shared to ensure everyone remained informed. The materials needed to be sourced and manufactured in Malaysia, Thailand, and China, with each country facing its own logistical challenges. As one of the design teams, we faced numerous challenges while striving to adapt to the new modes of communication and remote work in a limited timeframe. When the pandemic was finally resolved, the project was approaching its final stages and undergoing inspections. This project owes its success to the collective efforts and support of all parties involved, including the owner, design teams, and contractors. The collaborative spirit was instrumental in overcoming unforeseen challenges and ensuring a positive final outcome.

END

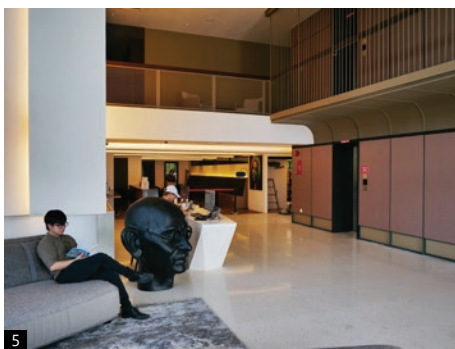




**ROXY IMPIANA HOTEL**

*by MWA Architects Sdn. Bhd.*

**ROXY**



## ARCHITECT'S STATEMENT

This formerly derelict building has cast away its reputation of being haunted, and will soon become the haunt of local hipsters and trendsetters.

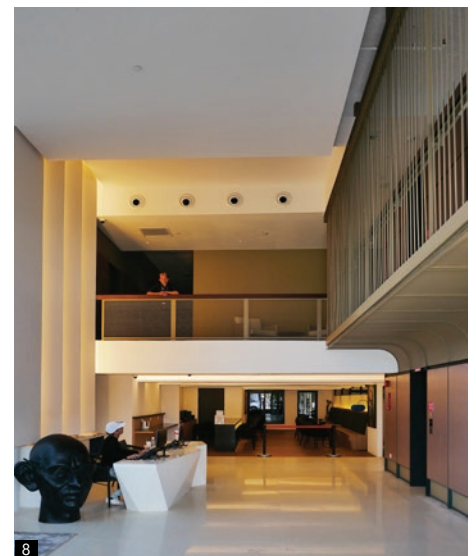
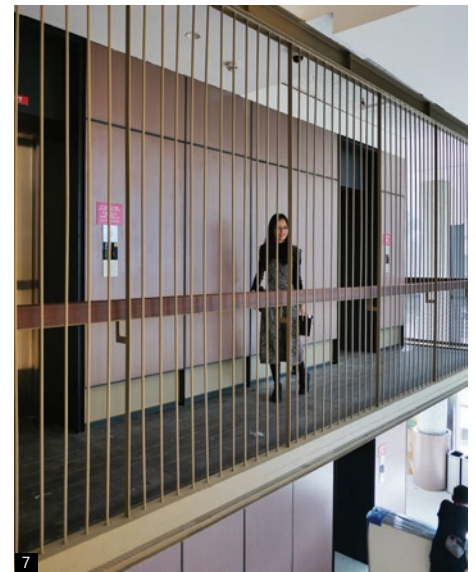
### Background

The Country View Hotel was believed to have been built in 1973; already part of Kuching's skyline some ten years before Wisma Saberkas. In the 80s, it was sold and renamed as Impiana Hotel and operated for several years before closing down. There were sporadic attempts to revive it without much success. It was left vacant and derelict for more than 20 years until the 2nd of April 2022, when Tecktonic and Sons Holdings Sdn Bhd arrived with plans for its refurbishment and revival as a hotel.

### Existing condition

Initial inspections showed that the building is structurally sound, perhaps a little too sound - there were columns in the middle of the guest rooms. Concrete floor beams are oversized and cast with boards instead of plywood; traces of the timber formwork are visible. Inside the building, the services have been stripped, the doors are in a bad state, the windows have been removed and there were plants growing in the rooms.

This building has remained in this state of decay for so long that it has etched itself into local history and the memory of local inhabitants. We felt that the refurbishments need to manifest themselves externally, to change its outlook so that a new chapter of its personal history can start.



### CAPTIONS:

- 1 - 3. The additional elements such as the new lifes, garden terraces, guest room pods are expressed boldly to demonstrate the building's new role and express its new identity.
- 4 & 5. The former drop off is now the hotel lobby and a new drop off canopy extends from the steel facade to welcome guests.
6. In 1973, the Country View Hotel was already part of the Kuching skyline.
- 7 & 8. A suspension steel bridge is an art installation that serves as the life lobby for the mezzanine.



## Design Response

Although the building was originally designed as a hotel; much of its planning was updated. There were several major problems to overcome:

### 1. The hotel lobby was located on the first floor, which it shared with firefighting water tanks.

We relocated the hotel lobby to the drop off porch on the ground floor, the first floor is converted into suite rooms. The giant flight of stairs is removed to allow access towards the rear of the building which now houses a lounge and convenience store. Lush landscaping and outdoor elements provide a backdrop to the new hotel lobby and reception. The drop off is framed by a new steel canopy and shaded by an existing palm tree.

### 2. There was only one passenger lift which stopped on the first floor, so guests have to ascend a long flight of stairs to get to the lobby and check-in. Access and a sense of arrival was missing.

We added a new steel lift shaft, and extended the existing lift to the ground floor, now the hotel is served by two lifts. The addition of new steel lift shaft gave us the idea of 're-framing' the existing building to serve two main purposes:

- to give the building a new facade in line with its new lease of life
- and to provide a garden on every floor, accessible from every hotel corridor.

### 3. The hotel café-and-dining was on the second floor, it overlooked the top of the drop off canopy, which was on a different level from the dining floor. There was evidence of attempts to create an outdoor component to the cafe; a timber stair and decking to bring the two levels together.

This floor retains its original function as the hotel restaurant, we introduced landscaping elements and converted the concrete roof of the front porch into a garden. The kitchen is re-designed to suit the latest F&B requirements including a dumbwaiter that links the loading bay on the ground floor to the restaurant as well as the sky bar on the 9th floor. In keeping with current consumer trends, a seminar and private dining room is carved out from the main dining floor.

### 4. There were 50 guest rooms; 10 per floor of reasonable size unless there is a column in the room. This happens in 4 of the 10 rooms on every floor. The floor-to-floor height was a fraction over 3 m and there was only a small window for each guest room.

We kept the original guest room layouts to optimise time and cost, making only a few small changes:

- removed part of the bathroom wall to let in more natural light
- extended the small windows into pod balconies that articulate the facade, while giving each room an outdoor component.

The interior design of the guest rooms is minimal, using steel framing to define spaces and functions and wall panelling to conceal wiring without hacking into the existing brick walls.

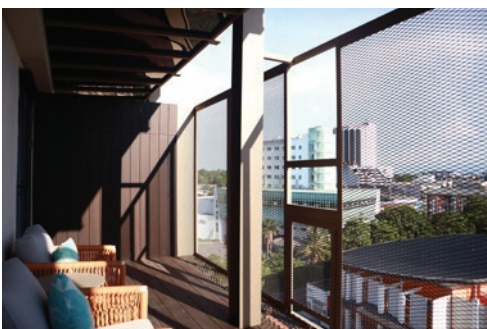
### 5. On the roof level, there was evidence of a roof structure added over the slab to create a lounge or lookout. It was hard to tell, as the structure had rotted away and fallen onto the roof slab. The views from this level are superb; Kuching to the north and Gunung Serapi to the west.

The roof is reinstated for the 'CLOUD9' sky bar, with its state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment and priceless views of Kuching and the surroundings.

## Feedback

During the partial demolition phase of this project, there were many in the local community who wondered if we were demolishing the entire building - because it was old, because it was ugly, because it had a reputation of being haunted.

It was built in the 70s, and was the tallest structure in this part of Kuching for the next 10 years until Wisma Saberkas was completed. We were able to extend the building's personal history by adding new elements and functions within its existing structure. In its new life, the new is able to have a dialogue with the old.

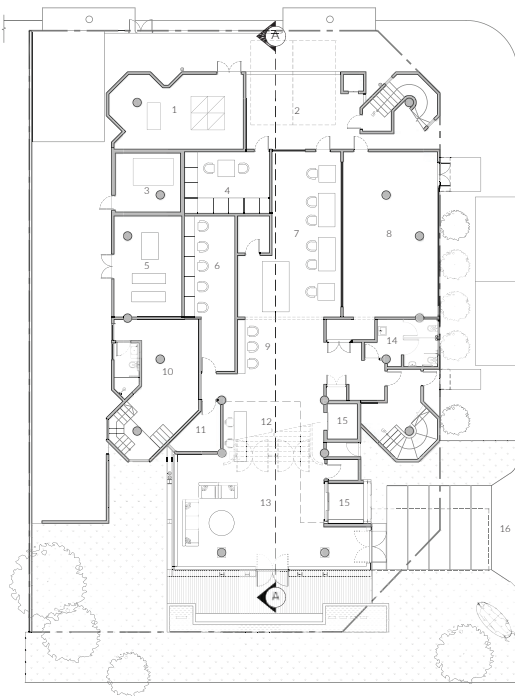


## CAPTIONS:

13 & 14. The former cafeteria has been refurbished with modern materials and greenery.

15 & 16. The guest rooms are simply finished using the existing structure as the ceiling, walls and toilets are retained in their original position.

END

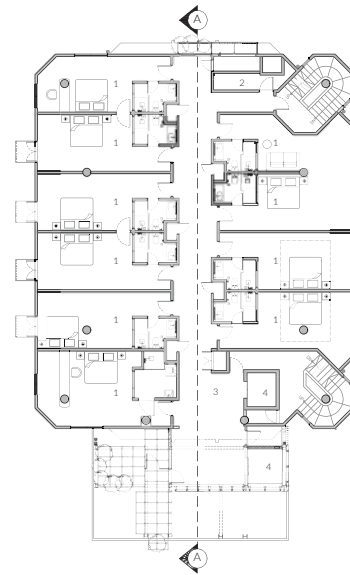


**LEGEND**

1. PUMP ROOM
2. LOADING AND UNLOADING
3. GEN-SET ROOM
4. RESTING ROOM
5. MSB ROOM
6. STAFF OFFICE
7. WAITING LOUNGE
8. CONVENIENCE STORE
9. CHARGING STATION
10. STAFF REST AREA
11. BAGGAGE STORAGE
12. HOTEL RECEPTION
13. LOBBY LOUNGE
14. TOILET
15. LIFT
16. DROP OFF

**GROUND FLOOR PLAN**

SCALE 1:200



**LEGEND**

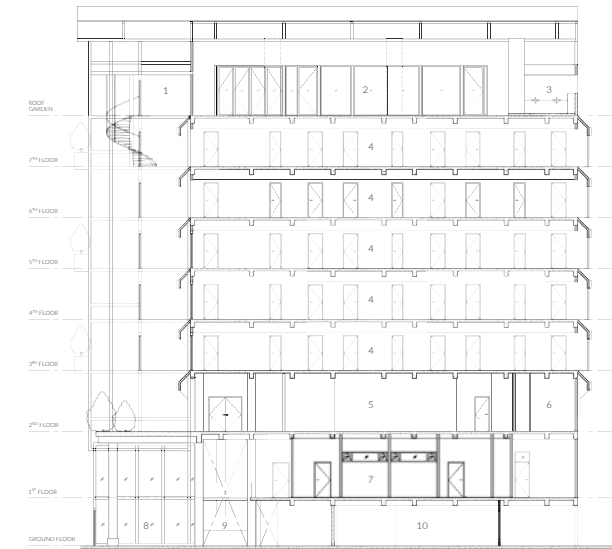
1. ROOM
2. LINEN ROOM
3. LIFT LOBBY
4. LIFT

**3RD - 7TH FLOOR PLAN**

SCALE 1:200



Condition of the hotel building before the refurbishment project which started on the 2nd of april 2023.



**LEGEND**

1. LIFT LOBBY
2. ROOF TERRACE
3. TOILET
4. ROOM
5. RESTAURANT
6. KITCHEN
7. DUPLEX APARTMENT
8. LOBBY LOUNGE
9. HOTEL RECEPTION
10. WAITING LOUNGE

**SECTION A-A**

SCALE 1:200



- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Architect                | : MWA Architects Sdn. Bhd.  |
| C&S Engineer             | : Jurutera Minsar Sdn. Bhd.   |
| M&E Engineer             | : Jurutera JSW Sdn. Bhd.  |
| Landscape Architect      | : WM Koncepto Company Limited   |
| CLOUD9 Interior Designer | : MNSC Architects   |
| Client and Builder       | : Rimba Hartawan Sdn. Bhd.  |
| Design Team              | : Wee Hii Min, Freddie Lo, Louis Ting, Melvin Chan                                      |
| Photography              | : Freddy Chong, Melvin Chan, Sean Wee, Wong Qin Kae, Jenny Chow, Peggy Chai, Grace Teoh |



### THE PEOPLE

A question often asked of me during the construction of this hotel - 'do you see any ghosts?'

My colleague and I did not see any spirits, although our site meetings were very spirited - everyone speaking at once, talking over each other like friends deciding which pub to go after a football match.

The client was decisive often requiring new ideas to be documented for construction quickly; sketches and models were an efficient and effective way to communicate with the sub-contractors who in turn revert with mock-ups on site.



A bonus to work with my classmate from St. Thomas, Ir. Lawrence Chiam on steel construction details for the new lift shaft and front facade.

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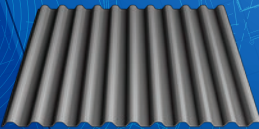
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