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HONOURING OUTSTANDING DESIGNS

By Nur Farhana

PRESIDENT’S DESIGN AWARD 2011 WINNERS

DESIGNS OF THE YEAR

26 CABLE ROAD
ip:li architects
Yip Yuen Hong

1000 SINGAPORES - A MODEL OF THE COMPACT CITY
Khoo Peng Beng
Belinda Huang Wan Jing Agnes
Assistant Professor Erik G. L’Heureux
Assistant Professor Florian Schaetz (and Team)

DYSON DIGITAL MOTOR
Dyson, Singapore
Low Yee Cheok (and Team)

KHOO TECK PUAT HOSPITAL
CPG Consultants Pte Ltd
Lee Sod Khoong (and Team)

MARINA BAY SANDS INTEGRATED RESORT, SINGAPORE
Moshe Safdie International LLC, Boston, Massachusetts
Moshe Safdie (and Team)
In collaboration with Aedas Pte Ltd
Tony Ang (and Team)

PRYDE GROUP BICYCLE DESIGN DEVELOPMENT
BMW Group DesignworksUSA
Magnus Aspegren (and Team)

SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
WOHA Architects Pte Ltd
Wong Mun Summ and Richard Hassell (and Team)

STATE THEATRE CENTRE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Kerry Hill Architects Pte Ltd
Kerry Hill (and Team)

STREETWAVE SWAVEBOARD
Streetwave Pte Ltd
Imran Othman

UNDERSCORE MAGAZINE
Higher
Justin Long (and Team)

DESIGNERS OF THE YEAR

CHAN SAU YAN SONNY
Principal
Chan Sau Yan Associates

TANG GUAN BEE
Principal
Tangguanbee Architects

NOV / DEC 2011
From the iconic Marina Bay Sands, to a radically-designed hospital and even a soulful magazine, the President’s Design Award went to 10 inspiring designs in 2011. Two veteran architects were also conferred ‘Designer of the Year’.

President and new patron of the Award, Dr Tony Tan presented the nation’s most prestigious design accolade to two designers and 10 design projects at the awards ceremony held at the Istana on 10 November 2011. The number of recipients is the biggest since the Award started in 2006. For the first time, the ‘Designer of the Year’ Award went to two architects, unlike in previous years where designers from other fields were also honoured. They were Sonny Chan, Principal at Chan Sau Yan Associates and Tang Guan Bee, Principal at Tangguanbee Architects.

Commenting on the 10 ‘Design of the Year’ projects, Robert Tomlin, Chairman of DesignSingapore Council said the diversity and breadth of design projects that won in 2011 were “testament to how much design can improve our lives.”

HIGHEST DESIGN ACCOLADE
The President’s Design Award is the highest accolade conferred on an individual or organisation in the field of design in Singapore. In its sixth year, the Award honours the achievements and contributions of Singapore-based designers and celebrates impactful designs that have pushed the envelope to stretch traditional limits of design to improve the quality of life, enhance human potential and drive national competitiveness.

Administered by the DesignSingapore Council of the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts, and the Urban Redevelopment Authority, the Award has two categories – Designer of the Year and Design of the Year. The Designer of the Year Award recognises the creative achievements of individual designers or teams with a sustained portfolio of works, while the Design of the Year title is accorded to projects or products in any design discipline of national significance and creative value to Singapore. All submissions are evaluated by an expert panel of Singapore and international jurors from a range of design disciplines. A total of 18 Designer of the Year and 37 Design of the Year Awards have been conferred up to 2010.

POTENTIAL OF GOOD DESIGN
In today’s increasingly competitive markets, design-driven innovation can set products and businesses apart. Jeffrey Ho, Executive Director of DesignSingapore Council said it is about “adopting a user-centric approach throughout the entire creation process…making detailed observations of the users in context, gathering and incorporating user insights into every part of the value chain...” This will help create new value for customers and enable businesses to access previously untapped markets.

Good architectural and urban designs can also excite and inspire communities, enhancing the quality of our living environments. “This year’s recipients are a testament to the high level of design we want to encourage. Their works inspire us as individuals and bond us together with their creations of delightful public spaces. I am excited about the future of Singapore’s architecture and urban design,” said Mr Ng Lang, URA’s Chief Executive Officer.

The winning designs are on display at The URA Centre until 10 February 2012. Skyline shines the spotlight on some of the recipients.
DESIGNS OF THE YEAR

26 CABLE ROAD
ip:li architects
Yip Yuen Hong

A modern re-intepretation of the attap kampong house, the two-storey residential property at Cable Road is designed to preserve the memory of the past, serve as a home for the present and be a place of residence for a future generation. The deliberate low ceiling height of the house allows the surrounding trees, landscape and house to become one. It is a good example of “modesty, economy and refined craftsmanship” according to the jury, reinterpreting “the best practices of tropical vernacular architecture in Southeast Asia, blending the traditional with more modern elements”.

26 Cable Road is an antithesis to the prevalent trends of landed residential architecture in Singapore – either a glass-and-metal modernist statement or the clay-pitched-roof and plastered walls variety. It shows what can be achieved with careful thinking and a patient search for what is intrinsic to climate and culture; and what can be boldly new.

KHOO TECK PUAT HOSPITAL
CPG Consultants Pte Ltd
Lee Soo Khong (and Team)

Designed as both ‘a hospital in a garden’ and ‘a garden in a hospital’, the Khoo Teck Puat Hospital offers a radically different setting which challenges the stereotypical view of healthcare environments. Located in Yishun, the 550-bed public hospital serves the needs of 700,000 residents in the north, offering a “memorable spatial experience that harnesses nature as the restorative wellspring of healing and health”.

The extensive landscaping in and around the hospital, including a view to the adjacent Yishun Pond, creates a calming atmosphere which is conducive for healing. Much care and compassion have gone into designing the layout, with the subsidised wards deliberately placed at the breeziest sections of the site for optimal natural ventilation. Patients’ needs are taken into careful consideration, with provisions for specialised visitation rooms and even specially designed cutlery.
MARINA BAY SANDS INTEGRATED RESORT, SINGAPORE
Moshe Safdie International LLC, Boston, Massachusetts
Moshe Safdie (and Team)
In collaboration with Aedas Pte Ltd
Tony Ang (and Team)

Hailed as one of Singapore’s distinctive architectural icons, the Marina Bay Sands (MBS) skilfully weaves together the complex range of uses into a stunning new building for the new downtown, from a 2,560-room hotel, convention centre, shopping centres, to theatres, a museum and casino.

“Marina Bay Sands is really more than a building project, it is a microcosm of a city rooted in Singapore’s culture, climate, and contemporary life,” says the Boston-based Moshe Safdie. “Our challenge was to create a vital public place at the district-urban scale...to address the issue of mega scale and invent an urban landscape that would work at the human scale.”

The design approach is organised around two principal axes, and places a strong emphasis on connectivity and the flow of people throughout its premises. To accommodate the intensive needs of the hotel, three towers were built instead of a typical singular structure. Sited prominently along the Marina Bay, these majestic towers provide a unique frame to breathtaking views from the city and the sea. The SkyPark has also become a new urban space, with stunning views of Singapore’s skyline.

SCHOOL OF THE ARTS (SOTA)
WOHA Architects Pte Ltd
Wong Mun Summ and Richard Hassell (and Team)

Located at one of Singapore’s major intersections within the city centre, the School of the Arts has become a distinctive icon and gateway to the Bras Basah.Bugis arts and cultural district. In spite of the building’s considerable depth, dynamic volumes and generous spaces have been used to channel natural light and ventilation throughout.

The design of the building addressed two objectives well – providing a safe, secure and inspiring learning environment in the upper floors and enabling active public interaction on the lower levels. Empty walls on the upper floors of the school area serve as ‘blank canvases’, where space interplays with curriculum, allowing students to reflect, and encouraging the free play of new ideas.

With a view to the many surrounding city views, a central public podium serves as a delightful open space for performances and informal interaction. A series of steps descending towards Bras Basah Road extends the building into the public realm, making it a popular and vibrant rest place for students and passer-bys.
STATE THEATRE CENTRE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Kerry Hill Architects Pte Ltd
Kerry Hill (and Team)

The design of the State Theatre Centre of Western Australia has raised the bar for civic design, going beyond simply meeting the demands of a challenging project brief. Its design and purpose are clearly articulated in the organisation of the theatre’s spaces and functions.

What is laudable is the creation of multi-layered foyers, where activities and performances can take place, connecting the building to the streets outside. Windows are cleverly used in the expansive rehearsal room to let in daylight. The use of materials is remarkably rich, bringing out the beauty and elegance of the theatre. Key architectural elements are appropriately scaled, respecting the adjacent heritage buildings while relating well to the Cultural Centre context.

The Jury commends the significant role of the building’s architecture in enhancing the theatre’s contributions to invigorating the arts and local communities, and regenerating the cultural centre of Perth in the process.
A deep concern for the climate, culture and the use of appropriate technology has been a defining trait of the 70-year-old pioneering architect’s extensive body of works in Southeast Asia, India, China and even Morocco. After a stint in Tropical Studies in London’s Architectural Association School of Architecture, Sonny put his knowledge to good use in his first project, Hyatt Kuantan, a beach resort in Malaysia. It introduced a building typology that has become a populist imagery for subsequent buildings by others.

Other significant projects include houses at Bishopsgate, Nassim Hill and Cable Road and the recent award-winning Tokio Marine Centre, well known for its distinctive ‘exo-skeleton’ façade.

The jury was impressed with Sonny’s passionate pursuit for authenticity and his exemplary technical knowledge. “His passion for tropical architecture translates into designs that demonstrate strong contextual and cultural relevance. His acute sensibilities towards local vernacular architecture, such as natural ventilation and minimal mechanical intervention, were adopted early in his career, and through his diligent application and skills, tropical architecture has been brought into a modern idiom.”
TANG GUAN BEE
Principal, Tangguanbee Architects

Tang Guan Bee’s sustained belief in experimentation and risk-taking won him recognition and respect from architects in Singapore and the world as one of the most avant-garde of his times. It also led to career breakthroughs such as the Gallery Hotel, the first boutique hotel of its kind in Singapore, the eco-friendly Abelia Condominium, the Eastpoint Mall and the Market Place.

He received numerous accolades throughout his illustrious career. Both the Gallery Hotel and Eastpoint Mall were nominated for The Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2001. He was nominated for Innovative Architecture by the International Union of Architects in 2004 and won several awards from the Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA). He became the fourth recipient of the SIA Gold Medal, the highest honour given out only to architects who have made a lifetime contribution to society in Singapore.

The jury noted that he is “often admired for his ability to follow through his visions – at times, breaking conventions and setting new standards”. He serves as an inspiration to the younger generation of architects whom he enjoys working with. On receiving the Award, Tang Guan Bee said it made him feel like he is returning to his younger days, where he is given another new beginning.
Keeping up with a steady supply of land, a total of 41 sites were made available in the first half of 2012 (1H2012) of the Government Land Sales (GLS) Programme, yielding about 14,100 private residential units, 218,000 sqm Gross Floor Area (GFA) of commercial space and 4,800 hotel rooms.

To ensure sufficient supply of land for private housing, 14 private residential sites have been placed on the GLS Confirmed List, which can potentially yield 7,000 residential units. This is slightly less than the 8,100 units in the second half of 2011 (2H2011) Confirmed List.

Most of the private residential sites in the 1H2012 GLS Programme are located in the Outside Central Region or in locations in the Rest of Central Region where more affordable private housing is expected to be built.

There will also be more units for Executive Condominium (EC) developments. Sites for 3,500 EC units will be made available in 1H2012, including 3,000 EC units on the Confirmed List. The Confirmed List quantum is comparable to the 3,000 EC units from 5 sites sold for the whole of 2011. The Minister for National Development, Khaw Boon Wan said, “We are ramping up the supply of new EC units through the Government Land Sales Programme. This will help higher-income Singaporeans own private condominium units in an affordable way.”

SUFFICIENT OFFICE SPACE SUPPLY
Two sites will be made available for office development on the 1H2012 Reserve List. They include a White site at Marina View and a commercial site at Sims Avenue / Tanjong Katong Road. There will not be any site for office development in the Confirmed List in 1H2012 as a large supply of office space is already available in the pipeline, amounting to 933,000 sqm GFA. About 410,000 sqm GFA of this will be located outside the Central Area at Buona Vista, Jurong Gateway and Paya Lebar, to sustain the Government’s plans to decentralise work places to the regional centres and add to the supply of more affordable office space for businesses which do not need to be in the Central Business District.

Additional office space supply will also come from projects pending approval such as at Choon Guan Street and the six plots of land at Marina Bay and Ophir Road / Rochor Road by M+S Pte Ltd. Altogether, these will yield another 400,000 to 500,000 sqm GFA of office space.

SUSTAINABLE AND STABLE PROPERTY MARKET
The GLS Programme is regularly reviewed to ensure that there is sufficient supply of land to meet demand for economic growth and to maintain a stable and sustainable property market. Sites in the GLS Programme are released through two main systems – the Confirmed List and the Reserved List. Confirmed List sites are released on a fixed, pre-determined date; while a site on the Reserve List will only be released for sale if the criteria for triggering the sale of the site are met.

In all, the 1H2012 GLS Programme comprises 29 residential sites, 2 commercial sites, 2 white sites and 8 hotel sites to meet market demand. The Government will continue to monitor the property market closely and make adjustments where necessary.

(1) Outside Central Region refers to areas located outside of the Central Region. The Central Region comprises the following 22 Planning Areas: Downtown Core, Orchard, Marina East, Marina South, Museum, Newton, Outram, River Valley, Rochor, Singapore River, Straits View, Bishan, Bukit Merah, Bukit Timah, Geylang, Kallang, Marine Parade, Novena, Queenstown, Southern Islands, Tanglin and Toa Payoh.
The Rest of Central Region refers to the areas within the Central Region but is outside the Core Central Region. The Core Central Region refers to the postal district areas 9, 10 and 11, Downtown Core Planning Area and Sentosa.
A map showing these areas is available at spring.ura.gov.sg/lad/ore/login/map_ccr.pdf

(2) The additional supply from these new projects was not added to the pipeline supply of office space as at 3rd Quarter 2011 because planning approvals (i.e. Provisional Permission or Written Permission) have not been granted for them yet.

(3) The Government will put up a Reserve List site for public tender if it receives an application from a developer who commits, by signing an agreement and paying a deposit of 3% of the bid price, to bid for the site at or above the minimum price which is acceptable to the Government. The Government will also consider launching a Reserve List site for sale if it receives sufficient market interest for the site. A site is deemed to have received sufficient market interest if more than one unrelated party submit minimum prices that are close to the Government’s Reserve Price for the site within a reasonable period.
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<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>SITE AREA (HA)</th>
<th>PROPOSED GPR</th>
<th>ESTIMATED NO. OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS(i)(ii)</th>
<th>ESTIMATED NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS(i)(ii)</th>
<th>ESTIMATED COMMERCIAL SPACE (SQM)(ii)</th>
<th>ESTIMATED LAUNCH DATE</th>
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(i) The estimated number of hotel rooms and dwelling units for some sites carried forward from 2H2011 Reserve List have been updated to take into account the average unit sizes of recent developments in comparable areas and the revisions to site areas.

(ii) The actual number of housing units, hotel rooms and commercial space could be different from the estimated quantum depending on the actual plans of the developers in terms of mix of uses and the size of the housing units and hotel rooms.

(iii) Refers to the estimated date the detailed conditions of sale will be available and applications can be submitted.
NEW PUNGGOL POINT PARK

AT FORMER SEAFOOD HAUNT

By Nur Farhana
Punggol Point now has a new park at what used to be a popular seafood haunt in the past. It was officially opened on 20 November 2011, together with the 1.2 km Punggol Point Walk. Both are part of the Punggol Promenade.

Located next to Punggol jetty, the 0.6 ha Punggol Point Park has two giant lily ponds, a sand-filled playground and an events plaza. There is also a 300 sqm viewing deck offering great views of Pulau Ubin and the Straits of Johor. Lee Howe Ming, URA Executive Architect, said many people remember Punggol Point as the place to enjoy seafood, hence, the design focused on preserving the rustic identity of Punggol. A 1.16 ha site next to Punggol Point Park has also been set aside for food outlets in future, to “bring back the former Punggol atmosphere” said Ler Seng Ann, URA’s Conservation & Development Services Group Director.

Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean, the Member of Parliament for the Pasir Ris-Punggol Group Representative Constituency who opened the park and promenade, said that the facilities will contribute to a wonderful living environment for residents. “These parks around Punggol illustrate that we can still find the space for good quality housing for Singaporeans, provided we design and plan them well, and also that Singaporeans pitch in to help look after all the facilities that we have,” he added. The new amenities built by URA are the latest after the opening of the 1.3 km Riverside Walk in March 2011. The final 2.5 km Nature Walk will open in the first half of 2012. When fully completed, the 4.9 km Punggol Promenade will be linked to the park connectors at Punggol Reservoir and Serangoon Reservoir and form part of a continuous 17 km loop around the north-eastern part of Singapore.
RUSTRIC WATERFRONT DESTINATION
“We hope that Punggol Point Walk will offer respite from the hustle and bustle of city life to the residents in Punggol and allow visitors of all ages to relax and soak in the idyllic atmosphere,” said URA CEO Ng Lang. “This latest recreational destination is a collective effort from the project team, leaders and residents from the grassroots and constituency, the agencies from the public sector and supporters from the private sector.”

In the past, much of the Punggol Point coastline was inaccessible to the public. Today, the area is being transformed into a rustic waterfront. Visitors can take in the panoramic sea views of Pulau Ubin and the Straits of Johor on the ship-inspired elevated viewing deck at Punggol Point Park. City-weary residents can soak in the laidback atmosphere of the coastline or admire the tranquil calm of the giant lily ponds. Children can play in the sand-filled playground while fitness enthusiasts can utilise the dedicated cycling tracks and footpaths along the waterfront promenade at Punggol Point Walk.

It is not just greenery that has flourished along the coastline. The biodiversity of the area has been given a boost with the addition of various leisure destinations in the area. The Lorong Halus Wetland, the two new reservoirs and the Punggol Promenade will provide new sites for biodiversity to thrive. Some of the species of plants and wildlife that have appeared over the past year include eagles, kingfishers, waterhens and a family of otters.

FROM PLANS TO REALITY
The $16.7 million Punggol Promenade project is part of the URA’s Parks and Waterbodies and Identity Plan to open up the coastal areas and introduce new recreational activities and amenities for the residents to enjoy. Drawn up and exhibited in 2002, the plan aimed to introduce new attractions that will not only enhance visitors’ experiences but also preserve the unique laid-back and village-like appeal that the areas are well-known for.

The Punggol Promenade is the latest in a series of improvement projects that the URA has undertaken around the island to enhance the living environment of residents. These include the Southern Ridges, the Woodlands Waterfront and the soon-to-be completed Labrador Nature and Coastal Walk.
Chinatown Clan Houses:
A RICH HERITAGE REVEALED

By Khalil Adis and Clarissa Quek

Clans remain crucial guardians of Chinese culture. The recent URA walking tour of Singapore’s Chinatown celebrates their colourful legacy.

A display of lethal martial arts moves, a hundred year-old school bell and a stately all-boys club were just some of the fascinating highlights that awaited the participants of URA’s recent walking tour for the public. Called Journey through Clans in Chinatown, the tour was offered on 26 November and 3 December 2011 as part of the National Heritage Board (NHB)’s annual Explore Singapore! series. Response to the tours was so positive that some had to be turned away.

The tour was designed to shine a spotlight on some of the more distinctive clan houses in Chinatown. These cultural and architectural gems once served as important welfare organisations for Chinese immigrants who came to Singapore in the 18th century. In 1900, Singapore’s clan houses numbered at more than 50, and by the 1940s, this figure exceeded 200. Today, there are still around 200 associations that are registered as members of the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations.

In the face of rapid social change, clan houses remain crucial guardians of Chinese history and culture. URA Conservation Architect Lee Yan Chang, who led the tour, explained: “Clan houses are an inherent part of the heritage and roots of the Chinese in Singapore. With their charming and well-preserved old-world interiors, each of these buildings has a unique story to tell.”

The tour was part of URA’s efforts to encourage a greater appreciation of Chinatown’s rich cultural heritage and architectural styles. It was supported by the Chinatown Business Association and the Singapore Tourism Board.

Here are some of the noteworthy stops along this tour.
KONG CHOW WUI KOON
Cantonese Locality Clan Association
321 New Bridge Road

At Kong Chow Wui Koon, traditional martial arts like Hung Gar (洪家拳), Chow Gar (周家拳) and Shaolin Kung Fu (少林功夫) still have a stronghold. And with its roots in the same place where Wushu master Wong Fei Hong was born in Kong Chow (or Xinhui, as it is now known), its strength is not to be underestimated.

Several of its Kung Fu masters are third and fourth-generation disciples of Master Wong himself, including Siew Puay Lee and Leong Kwok Khuen. Many aspiring martial arts students attend the free lessons conducted on Friday evenings. With some 500 members, Kong Chow Wui Koon, which was founded in 1839, is one of Singapore’s largest clan associations. It moved into its current neo-classical building in 1924.

During the Japanese Occupation, it doubled up as a clinic of the World Red Swastika Society, and this helped save its historical relics and antique furniture from the bombing suffered by other buildings. Remnants of its glorious past can be found on the second floor, and these include ancestral tablets as well as a wide and fascinating range of lion heads, some of which were brought here from Hong Kong and China.

SIEW PUAY LEE:
62 AND FIGHTING FIT

Even at 62, Siew Puay Lee, a third-generation disciple of Wong Fei Hong, is happy to show you exactly what he’s made of. Siew started learning martial arts (Hung Kar Kung Fu) at the age of five, and is recognised as a legitimate martial arts ‘descendent’ of Wong Fei Hong – Wong’s own disciple handed his skills down to him, he explains.

In the 1980s, he was regularly approached by lion dance troupes and martial artists keen to train under him. Very selectively, he would oblige. More recently, though, he has turned down all requests. And it is not just age that stops him – he feels that many modern practitioners have not stayed true to the roots of the art form.

Still, his credentials – newspaper cuttings and old photographs showing him in action – cover the wall behind his desk. While his main focus now is making the clan’s signature lion heads, which is a skill he picked up as a child, he still supervises the clan’s martial arts classes occasionally.
EE HOE HEAN CLUB 怡和轩俱乐部
43 Bukit Pasoh Road

Long before the era of country clubs and marinas, millionaires would congregate at this exclusive men-only club, founded in 1895 by Lim Nee Soon, Gan Eng Seng and Dr Lim Boon Keng. The Ee Hoe Hean Club has made its mark in history in several ways. Its members were actively involved in Dr Sun Yat Sen’s revolution to overthrow the Qing dynasty. The 1927 Art Deco building which later served as its premises was a meeting place for significant political movements. During the Japanese Occupation, it was headquarters to the Federation of China Relief Fund of the South Seas in Southeast Asia. Its other members included prominent businessman and philanthropist Tan Kah Kee, who spent so much time there that he eventually moved in and lived there for a period of time. His life and contributions are well-chronicled in a public gallery at the first storey known as Pioneers’ Memorial Hall (先贤馆). Tours, which are in Mandarin, are conducted by appointment.

The club, which was marked by NHB as a historic site in 1995, is also famous for its triangular mahjong tables, specially made to facilitate a game of mahjong for three members.

Stops Along the Chinatown Walking Tour
- Ying Fo Fui Kun
- Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan
- Eng Choon Hway Kuan
- Ning Yeung Wui Kuan
- Kwong Wai Siew Li Si Shu Shut
- Singapore City Gallery
- Kong Chow Wui Koon
- Ee Hoe Hean Club
A good starting point for the tour was the Ying Fo Fui Kun, the first Hakka clan association in Singapore, which was established in 1822. One of Singapore’s oldest clan associations, its 1844 building was also one of the first in the Telok Ayer area, where Singapore’s earliest Chinese immigrants settled.

The design of the clan house’s front façade – with one entrance and no windows – was most likely influenced by the traditional Hakka walled villages which were built that way for defensive purposes, explained Lee. Other architectural gems included ornamental mouldings of auspicious symbols such as a flower vase at the main entrance that symbolises peace, intricate paintings and calligraphy etched into the multi-layered wooden beams supporting the roof.

Another highlight was an old school bell – the sole reminder that the building once housed the Ying Sin School, one of Singapore’s earliest modern Chinese schools. It was founded in 1905 and closed in 1969 due to dwindling enrollment.

The clan house, which was declared a national monument in 1998, once extended all the way to Cross Street, but part of it was demolished in the 1980s to make way for road widening. Today, it continues to stay relevant with its celebration of Hakka festivals. It also holds traditional music practices and karaoke sessions. It is open to the public. Admission is free.
In an effort to improve the image of Boat Quay, 23 restaurant shopowners along the stretch have banded together to flush out touting and overcharging at Boat Quay through a campaign, “A Better Singapore River – Good Businesses Don’t Tout or Overcharge”.

“For a long time, the image of Boat Quay has been plagued by touting and overcharging problems caused by some restaurants,” said Jason Pope, owner of the Dallas Restaurant Bar. The group hopes that the campaign can turn this around by encouraging good business practices through peer influence and raising consumers’ awareness of their rights. As part of the campaign which will run till 31 January 2012, participating restaurants are also offering promotions at their outlets. This initiative came from the Singapore River ONE Task Group, formed to explore new ways to enrich people’s experiences along the Singapore River, including Boat Quay, Clarke Quay and Robertson Quay, over the next five years.

“Boat Quay is a special place for many. The charming river setting is unique and not replicable. It has many good things going for it. If you have not been to Boat Quay recently, you may want to re-visit the area as some new exciting and hip establishments have moved into the area,” said Fun Siew Leng, URA’s Urban Planning & Design Group Director. Some entrants like L’Operetta, Absinthe Artisan, Loco Spanish Tapas Bar and Smiths Authentic British Fish & Chips have given the area a fresh lease of life. She added: “We are fully supportive of this initiative and will continue to work closely with stakeholders to improve the image of Boat Quay.”

Visit www.singapore-river.com/singaporerivercampaign for more information.
LIGHT MEETS ASIA

By Serene Tng
Get ready to be dazzled by stunning light art installations at Marina Bay. i Light Marina Bay is returning for the second time from 9 March to 1 April 2012.

“Light Meets Asia” is the only sustainable light art festival in Asia. It brings together works by 30 multi-disciplinary artists which will be on display along the Marina Bay waterfront promenade. Organised by URA in collaboration with Smart Light Singapore, the 2012 festival will build on the success of 2010’s festival which attracted more than 100,000 visitors.

Not only does it give locals and tourists a chance to explore the signature waterfront, the festival also “promotes the use of energy-efficient technology,” said Mark Goh, URA’s Place Management Deputy Director. The festival will be curated by Mary-Anne Kyriakou, a renowned lighting designer and music composer, who is the founder and festival director of i Light Marina Bay 2010 and Smart Light Sydney 2009. She is supported by two others – Charmaine Toh, a Singapore visual arts curator and a team from the award-winning design studio FARM. The 30 light art installations selected from almost 100 submissions reflect new, emerging and well-known artists from across Asia, including Singapore.

Apart from the visually arresting and interactive sustainable light art installations, there will also be a wide array of activities organised, including a night picnic and carnival, outdoor performances, guided light walk tours, educational talks and workshops.

i Light Marina Bay will open nightly from 7.30pm to 11.00pm from 9 March to 1 April 2012. Visit www.i-lightmarinabay.sg for more information.
To make Singapore a great city to live, work and play in.

We are seeking bold and creative ideas for URA’s latest competition on the Rail Corridor. Since the return of the former railway land to Singapore on 1 July 2011, the Rail Corridor project has attracted widespread public interest. Now you can play your part in envisioning the future of the Rail Corridor. Send us your ideas by 9 March 2012.

For more information on the competition, visit www.ura.gov.sg/railcorridor/ideas_comp/