

THE PLAIN.



HERITAGE IN TRANSIT

THE FULLERTON BAY HOTEL

Text by Elaine Lee

Photography courtesy of The Fullerton Bay Hotel Singapore and DP Architects Pte Ltd

Once the landing point for immigrants arriving in Singapore, Clifford Pier is now given a new lease of life by DP Architects who have transformed it into the lobby of The Fullerton Bay Hotel. Integrating the old Customs House as part of its design, the hotel is an innovative exercise in conservation and renewal. **Elaine Lee** investigates.

PROJECT CREDITS

ARCHITECTURE DESIGN FIRM DP Architects Pte Ltd

ARCHITECTURE PROJECT TEAM Chan Sui Him, Lee

Shee Koeng, Heng Chin Hong, Tay Yanling

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER Beca Carter Hollings &

Ferner

INTERIOR DESIGN CONSULTANT LCL Architects

(Guestrooms, corridor and Meeting rooms), AFSO

(Public spaces, The Landing point, Clifford, Lantern)

GENERAL CONTRACTOR KSH Engineering

Construction Pte Ltd

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE DLQ Design Pte Ltd

INTERIOR FIT-OUT CONTRACTOR Cheng Meng

Furniture Company (Pte) Ltd (Clifford Pier), Yang Ah

Kang and Sons Pte Ltd (Guestrooms, corridor and

Meeting rooms), Park International Interior Pte Ltd

(Public spaces, The Landing point, Clifford, Lantern)

LIGHTING CONSULTANT Light Cables Pte Ltd

MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT Beca Carter

Hollings & Ferner

KITCHEN CONSULTANT IPS (Innovative Project

Solutions)

SIGNAGE CONSULTANT Design Objectives

ACOUSTICAL CONSULTANT Acviron Acoustic

Consultants Pte Ltd

LAND AND WATER AREA 26,700 m²

GFA 10,000 m²

DATE OF COMPLETION 8 July 2010



1. The most tangible link to history is its location of the hotel entrance and lobby in the former Clifford Pier building. (Photo: DP Architects Pte Ltd)

2. The demanding task of inserting glass into the arched bays, which line all four sides of the building, was made more arduous by the determination to make it appear as if it rested lightly on the existing. (Photo: DP Architects Pte Ltd)

In 2006, Sino Land and Far East Corporation won the bid for the site of the Fullerton Bay Hotel as well as two conserved buildings, Clifford Pier and the Customs House. With the recent development of the Fullerton Heritage precinct, it is hard to imagine Marina Bay as the bustling commercial port that it was at the turn of the twentieth century. Clifford Pier and Customs House then were the crucial buildings that facilitated the embarkation and arrival of early settlers to Singapore.

Today, the port which once dominated the area, as well as the ships and heavy industry, is replaced by the skyscrapers of the Central Business District (CBD). Only the physical trace of Clifford Pier and Customs House on the urban landscape remains as evidence and symbols of the port's heritage.

DP Architects (DPA), who partnered the developer, saw the opportunity to create a distinct development right at the heart



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Having assimilated the historic Customs House and Clifford Pier into its architectural fabric, the newly completed The Fullerton Bay Hotel proudly displays its heritage.

3. The hotel lounge at the former Clifford Pier building. (Photo: DP Architects Pte Ltd)

4. The voluminous atrium of the main hotel building. (Photo: The Fullerton Bay Hotel)

5. At the intersection, a large internal atrium opens up to face Clifford Pier. The void draws the historic building, Marina Bay, as well as the sky into the internal space. (Photo: The Fullerton Bay Hotel)

6. The expansive use of glass for external cladding and the water body at the bay prompted the use of reflective and polished surfaces. (Photo: The Fullerton Bay Hotel)



of Marina Bay. The project comprises of a commercial and a hotel development, which includes a new six-storey structure as well as the conservation of two heritage buildings. The brief was to create a world-class hotel which responded sensitively to the existing heritage buildings. Having assimilated the historic Customs House and Clifford Pier into its architectural fabric, the newly completed The Fullerton Bay Hotel proudly displays its heritage. The most tangible link to history is its location of the hotel entrance and lobby in the former Clifford Pier building.

The designers have successfully choreographed a narrative journey through the hotel that transports guests from the past to the present. Starting from the former Clifford Pier through a modern link-way, which incorporates the hotel lounge, guests finally reach a climactic termination in the voluminous atrium of the main hotel building.

With the main hotel building anchored above the waters on concrete stilts, the hotel was envisioned as an object that is light and transient, contrasting with the existing buildings. Playing on the lightness of the water, the bluish tones of the glass facade gives a shimmering effect, as if emerging from the water. The volume is gently tapered, in response to the towering adjacent buildings.

Part of the Fullerton Heritage precinct, The Fullerton Bay Hotel opened in July 2010, with 100 rooms and suites. Seated on prime waterfront location in the CDB and arts and cultural precinct, the hotel offers spacious 50-square-metre rooms that feature floor-to-ceiling windows and exclusive balconies. Guests are treated to natural light and a spectacular 360-degree view of the Marina Bay and Singapore skyline.

Considerable effort was made to retain and restore the original Clifford Pier building.

Where restoration was not possible, the elements were fabricated to resemble the original elements, including red lamps adorning the building facade and the rainwater pipes within the interior. One of the biggest challenges was facilitating air-conditioning within a structure that was intended to be naturally ventilated. Like many buildings of its time, the arches of Clifford Pier were originally open and unglazed, allowing the free flow of air and heat to simply rise up into the vaulted ceiling. The demanding task of inserting glass into the arched bays, which line all four sides of the building, was made more arduous by the determination to make it appear as if it rested lightly on the existing.

Another evidence of a thorough design and implementation process is the modular framing system of the windows, which was employed to secure the glass between the existing columns and arch fenestration. The system ensures minimal intrusion to the historic external facade. Glass fins were used to ensure the highest level of transparency, to maintain the visual integrity of the original architecture. To accommodate the varying irregularities of the old structure, horizontal slots in the frame allowed for minute adjustments to the bolts that secure the glass, resulting in a tight glass seal and a clean, seamless look. The design team concentrated on intersections of the buildings and detailed connections that allowed the project to be read as a unified whole.

Even with a modern main building, the expansive glass facade gives the building a light and transparent appearance. Sitting between its historic neighbours and the city, the building disappears as it reflects its surroundings. At the intersection, a large internal atrium opens up to face Clifford Pier. The void draws the historic building, Marina Bay, as well as the sky into the internal space. From the water edge, a smooth visual transition is addressed by the historic low-rise buildings, the contemporary mid-rise

hotel, up to the high-rises of the city beyond. The balance of scale creates a successful hierarchical relationship between the main building, Clifford Pier and Customs House.

Hong Kong interior design and architecture practice LCL Architects (LCL) designed the hotel rooms, including five themed suites, the Presidential Suite, guest room corridors and lift lobbies, as well as the three function rooms. The external architectural elements have a direct impact on the interior design. The expansive use of glass for external cladding and the water body at the bay, prompted the use of reflective and polished surfaces. In areas where transparency to the rooms was desired, glazed walls allow natural light to permeate during the day.

Hong Kong design firm AFISO, designed the public spaces including food and beverage venues with inspiration from Islamic, British colonial, French and Moroccan genres. The whole hotel is conceived as a series of journeys and there are moments highlighted by design features and artwork. The design is also aimed to create a personalised experience reflecting on the colonial era of Singapore but also including modern features that would appeal to the new generation of business travellers. The rooftop bar boasts a five-metre-long glowing bar and an outdoor terrace that overlooks the waterfront.

The Fullerton Bay Hotel Singapore is the latest addition to the sparkling Marina Bay waterfront, with breathtaking architecture and stunning interiors that combine modernity and heritage. ■

For more information, visit www.dpa.com.sg and www.fullertonbayhotel.com.