

# A NEW LEASE OF LIFE



## PROJECT DETAILS

**TITLE** Clarke Quay

**LOCATION** Singapore, Singapore

**CLIENT** Capitaland Commercial Ltd (Poon Hin Kong, Freddie Tan, Michelle Lee, Lim Wie Shan, Toh Kim Sai)

**ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN** SMC Alsop

**DESIGN TEAM** Stephen Pimbley, Peter Sim, Jan Felix

Clostermann, Gyn Kong, Tan Ming Yin, Torrance Goh, Yap Wong

Lin, Sophia David, Chin Kean Kok, Sven Steiner

**LOCAL ARCHITECTS** RSP Architects

**CONCEPT ENGINEER** Atelier One

**ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER** ARUP

**CONTRACTOR** Kajima

**SPECIALIST CONTRACTOR** Ba-O HighTex

## PROJECT FACTS

**BUDGET** S\$ 88 million (US\$ 522 million)

**STATUS** Complete, June 2006

The Singapore River has an important presence in the history of Singapore, as it was on its very banks that the foundations of this modern city were laid over 150 years ago. Beginning life as a humble but bustling fishing village, it soon developed into a busy seaport as trade increased between the East and the West.

It wasn't long before industrious stevedores and hardworking Samsui women filled the streets, and enterprising hawkers packed the alleyways with their fares. Fishermen, traders and workers from across Asia and Europe soon flooded in - adding diversity, colour, and life into the thriving and vibrant community.

Lying near the mouth of the Singapore River, the site of Clarke Quay - named after Sir Andrew Clarke, Singapore's second governor - was the centre of commerce during the late 19th century. Following its steady decline since its heydays and an unsuccessful conventional gentrification of its heritage in the 1980s, SMC Alsop architects were appointed in 2002 with a brief to rejuvenate the prominent three hectare diamond shaped site.

Developed by Capitaland, the dramatic redevelopment of Clarke Quay in Singapore is succeeding in drawing tourists and locals back to the historic waterfront. The S\$ 88 million (US\$ 522 million) mixed-use scheme, designed to increase commercial and leisure activities, gives the riverfront area a new identity and re-positions Clarke Quay as a vibrant and attractive destination once again.

## Micro climate

Crucial to the success of the project has been the architect/engineers' ingenious manipulation of the site's micro-climate through the design of a distinctive and sophisticated shading/cooling system that provides the Quayside with tremendous visual interest and environmental benefits. For the architects, the challenge was to provide a new lease of life not just by developing an attractive re-design of the streetscape and waterfront, but also, to address the perennial climate problem. >>







A dramatic installation of a series of elevated 'Lilypad' dining platforms covered by distinctive bespoke sun and rain umbrellas, known 'Bluebells' animate the water's edge. Illuminated at night in a variety of colours, the Bluebell umbrellas and their reflection in the Singapore River are delightfully reminiscent of an array of traditional Chinese lanterns arranged to celebrate the Chinese mid-autumn festival.



Another challenge was to find ways to mitigate against Singapore's ambient temperature and heavy rainfall without resorting to the traditional scenario of creating an internal air-conditioned mall.

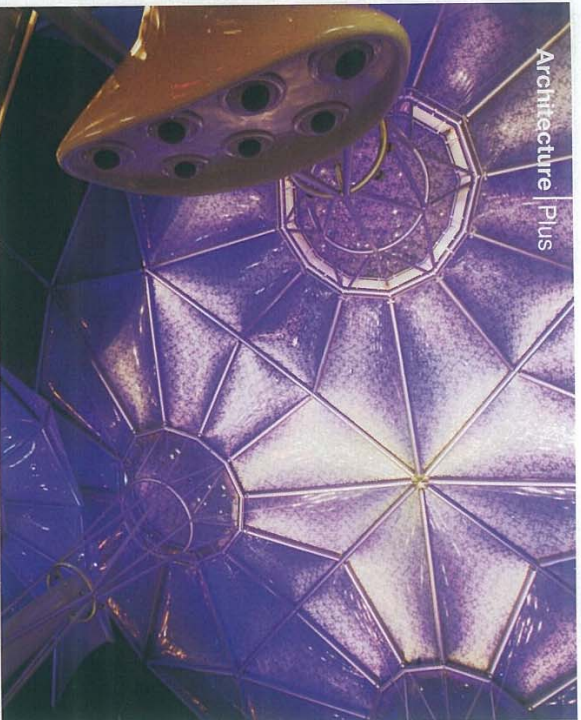
The first phase of the waterfront revival, which was completed in March 2006, has contributed to a total transformation of the area's ambience, activity and appearance through the redevelopment of three main areas: the riverfront, the streets and River Valley Road.

#### The Riverfront

Characterised by a series of colonnaded shop houses used as poor quality restaurants and trinket shops fronting onto crowded ed with persistent hawkers, the potentially attractive riverfront site had lost its appeal to tourist and locals. The new scheme exploits the riverfront's traditional formal linear arrangement of terraced shop houses facing the Singapore River, but removes the poor

quality restaurants, street stalls and cluttered walkways. Instead, it turns the space between the shop houses and the waterfront into a clear zone dedicated to pleasant strolling and observation.

A revival of the riverfront itself has been achieved through the creation of an elevated dining area that projects out over the river wall to maximise the waterfront experience, and create a level of separation and privacy for diners. This is dramatically effected by the installation of a series of elevated 'Lilypad' dining platforms covered by distinctive bespoke sun and rain umbrellas, known 'Bluebells' that animate the water's edge. Illuminated at night in a variety of colours, the Bluebell umbrellas and their reflection in the Singapore River are delightfully reminiscent of an array of traditional Chinese lanterns arranged to celebrate the Chinese mid-autumn >>



### The Streets

Formerly the hot, humid or wet domain of tacky shopping outlets and hawkers stalls, the streetscape has been ingeniously transformed by the design team into a pleasant climate-moderated environment of landscaped arcades. Elegant canopies, providing environmentally friendly shading and cooling - which protect visitors against the extremes of the Singaporean climate and maintain the temperature at 28 degrees Celsius - cover the four internal streets and central courtyard. Known as the Angels, the willowy umbrella-like structures comprise ETFE (Ethyl Tetra Fluoro Ethylene) cushioned canopies, supported on steel frames.

Cantilevering over the roofs of adjacent shop houses, the Angels provide solar shading and rain protection. The frames of the Angels support large whale-tail slow speed fans that provide a low level artificial breeze in the streets. Tree planting in the streets provides further shading and solar absorbance, and the installation of a feature fountain in the centre of the restaurant-lined courtyard affords visual and cooled environmental benefits. In addition, animation is added at street level by increasing window display area through the introduction of new all-glass window vitrines to the facades of the street shop houses.

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### Valley Road

Away from the river, the development of a new urban entertainment block containing Ministry of Sound and Crazy Horse along River Valley Road, creates a new, dynamic and stronger presence for Clarke Quay from Fort Canning and beyond.

A dramatic four-fold increase in foot traffic and a major hike in rental values for the revitalised Clarke Quay have provided the strongest endorsement of the success of the development.

Speaking of the project Will Alsop said: "What is interesting is that the addition of single roof acting as a visual icon has succeeded in attracting people back to Clarke Quay as an essential leisure and pleasure area of Singapore. In addition to the visual impact, the canopy makes an enormous difference to the ambience at Clarke Quay - it cools the streets, and it keeps the rain off." **Text: SMC Alsop, images: Jeremy San of Stzerstudio. Edited: Architecture+**

