

The Tower Of Green: Oasia Hotel Downtown

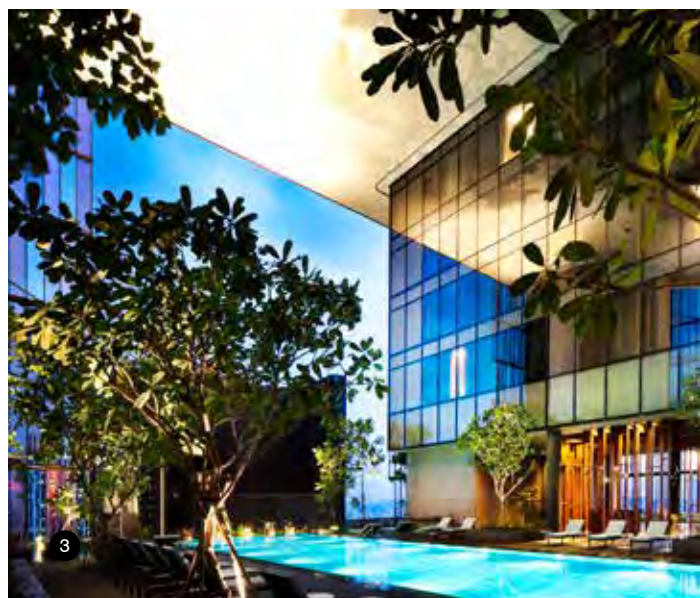
Text by Tanya Singh
Images by Patrick Bingham-Hall

Project Credits
Project Location 100 Peck Seah
Street, Singapore 079333
Developer Far East SOHO Pte Ltd
Completion Date April 2016
Architect WOHA Architects Pte Ltd
Landscape Consultant Sitetectonix
Pte Ltd Mechanical & Electrical
Engineer Rankine & Hill (S) Pte Ltd
Quantity Surveyors Rider Levett
Bucknall Main Contractor Woh Hup
(Private) Ltd Site Area 2,311.4 sqm



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Presenting a radically different façade within the dense urban setting, this creation by WOHA Architects is a tropical “living tower” that offers an alternative image to the sleek technology of the genre.



A Living Tower

A part of that remarkable oeuvre of skysrise greenery projects is the Oasia Hotel Downtown – a verdant “tower of green” in the heart of Singapore’s Central Business District. Presenting a radically different façade within the dense urban setting, this creation by WOHA Architects, conceived in 2011 and completed in April last year, is a tropical “living tower” that offers an alternative image to the sleek technology of the genre. With a warm-coloured exterior made up of permeable aluminium mesh to allow the integration of biodiversity within the building façade and create a “green skin”, the Oasia Hotel Downtown was designed in response to the brief for distinct Offices, Hotel & Club rooms. Conceptually, the cylindrical form topped up with an open deck and crown represents a living form gradually being enveloped in greenery. The design rationale behind the warm tones of the aluminium mesh was to create a contrast with the lush greenery and the cool blue sky to allow the building to stand out amongst the dull coloured downtown skyscrapers. Past sunset, the building emerges through the skyline to resemble a glowing crimson lantern.

The building houses a total of 100 offices and 314 hotel rooms, complete with four sky terraces offering generous public areas for recreation and social interaction throughout the high-rise structure. Standing amidst the overarching corporate skyscrapers, the tower manages to carve out its own internal spaces and dynamic views instead of relying on external vistas for visual interest. The sky terraces, strategically placed throughout the structure at four different levels act as “urban scale verandahs” providing plenty of visual transparency and outlets for cross-ventilation.

“Singapore can become a green shady city filled with fruits and flowers, a city worthy of an industrious people whose quest, progress is matched by their appreciation of beauty, of nature.”

-Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, 1980

Today, decades after that first seed was sowed towards this great vision, Singapore stands proud and tall amidst a lush garden envisioned by the “Chief Gardener” himself – the late Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. With urban greenery evolving, Singapore has, for the last fifty years, and still continues to build itself up to fulfil the “City in a Garden” vision.

Recognising the limitations in land area, the incorporation of greenery in the urban atmosphere of Singapore has taken a multilevel or multi-dimensional role in the form of skysrise greenery. The island currently flaunts 182 skysrise greenery projects covering a total of 80 hectares in area. An ideal alternative to managing land constraints, this innovative greenery effort has enabled Singapore to attain sustainable green coverage and an impressive portfolio of living architecture.

1.The building glows at night like a red lantern in the urban landscape.

2.The tower has 4 Sky Terraces as elevated grounds with gardens and amenities, each within a shaded cross-ventilated breezeway atriums.





The Oasia Hotel Downtown, from footprint to the skyline, produced over 1000% of the greenery found on the site prior to its construction.

Going Beyond Sustainability

In this close collaboration between architecture and landscape architecture, vegetation and foliage are a primary part of the development's material palette both within the space as well as on the exterior.

The façade covering over 25,000 square metres of area incorporates a total number of 21 species of creepers planted in over 1,500 planter boxes located on the inside of the mesh with proper access walkways for easy maintenance. In order to ensure that the exterior remains lush and resilient, the creepers are strategically arranged keeping in mind their preference for sunlight as well as the weather fluctuations along the altitude.

The integration of landscape design within the premises of architecture is not limited to the exterior of the building. From a distinctly green entrance to the naturally ventilated sky terraces, the development is adorned with as much greenery inside as is on the exterior. A total of 33 plant species including a wide range of locally grown trees and shrubs are planted within. The extensive greenery on the sky terraces as well as the top deck peeking through the vibrant aluminium creates a dialogue between the life outside and the energy inside.

With a Green Plot Ratio of over 1000%, the Oasia Hotel Downtown generously compensates for the lack of green in the surrounding structures and adds a splash of vibrancy to the urban setting of the city centre. However, the outlining philosophy behind this green design proposed by WOHA Architects was not just creating a development that amplified the presence of greenery within the urban setting but also establishing a centre that actively contributed to the ecosystem of the city. The design, according to the architectural team, “moves beyond vague notions of sustainability by fundamentally embracing living systems into a mixed-use program—one that grows, rather than exhausts a city's resources”.

The Oasia Hotel Downtown, from footprint to the skyline, produced over 1000% of the greenery found on the site prior to its construction. With a total number of 54 plant species incorporated into the architecture to create a haven for birds and animals, the development has evidently transformed into a hub for reintroducing biodiversity into the city centre.

Towards Breathing Architecture

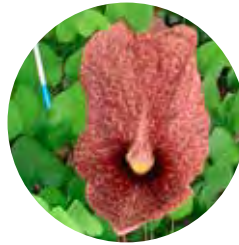
Awarded the Green Good Design Award by The Chicago Athenaeum and The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies this year, the Oasia Hotel Downtown has been at the forefront of the innovative journey in urban greenery. The development, an iconic landmark that lives, breathes and grows with the life around it, encourages the integration of landscape not just for sustainability but also for the creation of living architecture amidst growing urbanisation. As Mr. Lee Kuan Yew once said, “The harshness of tarmac, concrete can be softened by natural trees, flowers, and birds”.^{cc}

3. The Sky Terrace at 21st storey is an urban resort with pool decks, water gardens, camping pods, like an oasis above the urban jungle.
4. 25,000 sqm of aluminium expanded mesh creates a continuous surface for 21 species of creepers.

OASIA HOTEL DOWNTOWN – PLANT SPECIES ON THE FACADE



Antigonon leptopus



Aristolochia gigantea



Argyreia nervosa



Bauhinia kockiana



Clerodendrum thomsoniae



Epipremnum aureum



Ficus pumila



Hoya carnosa



Ipomea tricolor



Jasminum multiflorum



Lonicera macrantha



Mansoa hymenaea



Passiflora coccinea



Passiflora foetida



Petrea volubilis



Quisqualis indica



Thunbergia grandiflora



Tristellateia australasiae



Vallaris glabra

Antigonon leptopus. Image by Jennie Tang Yurue
Aristolochia gigantea, *Argyreia nervosa*, *Ipomea tricolor*, *Hoya carnosae*, *Passiflora coccinea*, *Pacciflora foetida*, *Thunbergia grandiflora*, *Tristellateia australasiae*. Images by Boo Chih Min
Cleodendrum thomsonia, *Epipremnum aureum*, *Petrea volubilis*. Images by Pauline Tay
Jasminum multiflorum. Image by Arthur Ng
Quisqualis indica. Image by Vicky Lim Yen Ngoh
Vallaris glabra. Image by Charis Chiang
Lonicera macrantha, *Bauhinia kockiana*, *Ficus pumila*, *Mansoa hymenaea*. Images by Kwan (www.natureloveyou.sg)