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# Nur Khalisya Sulaiman

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## Remembering the Past and Connecting the Future of Singapore through Architecture

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Skyscrapers in Singapore

In this post, we will talk about how Singapore has been able to maintain an essence of the past in their buildings despite being greatly modernized throughout the years. Why are the buildings built and conserved? How does it benefit the people?

Architecture is the art of designing and building. Its complex and carefully designed structure of a building helps fulfill the practical and expressive requirements of the people. Buildings are built for people to use or for a form of communication of experiences and ideas or both.

Singapore is one of the modern cities in the world and yet, it has managed to integrate small elements of culture in their buildings.



Shop houses in Bugis, Singapore

The **past buildings** in Singapore are unique and more to the traditional aesthetic compared to the city's skyscrapers. These buildings fuse the ethnic Chinese, Malay and Indian elements — indigenous to Singapore and Southeast Asia; they signify the past and have become symbolic to Singapore. These buildings are preserved to remind the future generations on the multi-cultural aspects of Singapore.

## Why are these buildings being preserved?

These buildings unravel a constituent history of Singapore and the events that had taken place in the past. They may or may not have value, however they could attract people because its design could be unique and cannot be duplicated.



Condominium Towers — Reflections at Keppel Bay, Singapore

The **modern buildings** in Singapore break away from the conventional designs; it goes beyond imagination. These buildings were created with enhanced features, which maintains the building for a longer period of time. Creating new buildings in line with creativity and transforming aspects of current architectural designs.

## Why are new buildings being created?

Old buildings are great for attractions, however, they might not be able to serve certain needs and is outdated. In the 21st century, with the world rapidly evolving, design has advanced and people feel like they have seen everything.

Buildings are designed to *amaze the human eye*. These buildings keep up with modern trend, which tend to change over the years. Minimalism and an open concept, these

characteristic gives people space to breathe. Flamboyant and outrageous designs unlike the old buildings, it gives off a refreshing and modern outlook.

Reflections, the curved condominium towers (photo above) is distinctive for its shifting building orientations, where each level feels different as it is not aligned to the floors above and below it. The group of tall and short structures are connected to one another by elevated bridges.



Louis Vuitton Building at Marina Bay Sands, Singapore

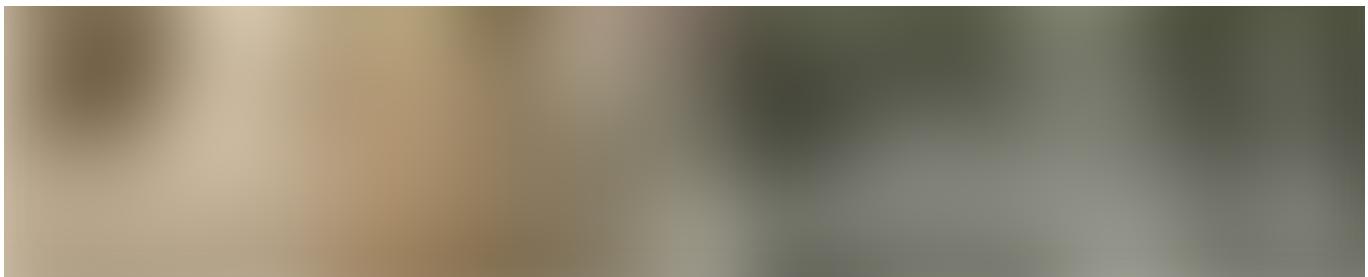
Some designs make use of the natural light and wind to provide for indoor light and ventilation. The Louis Vuitton building (photo above) is structured in a way that it will receive sunlight from all sides from its glass walls. The Jewel Mall in Changi Airport, Singapore, has its distinct dome-shaped façade made from glass and steel to provide light to the indoor garden. The rain vortex acts as an indoor waterfall that help provide cooling and airflow in the environment. The Louvre Museum in Abu Dhabi uses small areas of holes in the ceiling to provide a “rain of light” effect, this could also allow wind to enter.

*Persons with disabilities should experience sites, landscapes, buildings, and spaces in the same manner as other users whenever possible.*

Buildings are designed to cater for the disabled or the elderly. In the past, buildings were primarily used as a shelter from weather, a living space and/or a place to store belongings. They were not originally designed to accommodate everyone. Today's buildings come with ramps, handrails and more spaces for easy access. These well-thought-out designs are user-friendly for everyone — people who use wheelchairs, canes, scooters and those with hearing and vision impairments.

Buildings are designed to withstand natural disasters or unforeseeable events. As technology and design advances, research and materials have enhanced. Buildings are made with better materials, like steel which offers good ductility and concrete which is resistant to strong winds. This assures the safety of the people as well as reduces the damages that could occur.





Vintage Corridor in Singapore Art Museum (left) and Glass Ceiling in Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands (right)

Majority of the past buildings are of a warmer tone and has a Peranakan style. They looked quite bulky, full of pillars and have small-sized windows, which seemed to make the place look cluttered. These buildings were mainly built to serve for a primary reason and nothing else.

The modern buildings are of a cooler tone and has a modern minimalist style. They looked spacious, brand-new and the windows are as big as the walls. These buildings were built to be better than the old buildings and to ensure that everyone and anyone can use and be safe in.

To sum it up, the past buildings are kept, designed and maintained to be seen as a monument that represents the past, a reminder of the past. The modern buildings are created to meet the requirements and safety of the people. The preservation of the past and its adaptation into modern Singapore, symbolizes the uniqueness of Singapore and its history.

*Photos by Nur Khalisya Sulaiman, unless stated otherwise.*

## References:

### **architecture | Definition, Techniques, Types, Schools, Theory, & Facts**

Architecture, the art and technique of designing and building, as distinguished from the skills associated with...

[www.britannica.com](https://www.britannica.com)

### **19 Characteristics of Modern Architecture**

posted by John Spacey, June 07, 2016 updated on August 13, 2019

Modern architecture was an architectural movement that...

[simplicable.com](http://simplicable.com)

### **Reflections at Keppel Bay by Daniel Libeskind | Dezeen**

Architect Daniel Libeskind has completed a family of curved towers beside a bay in Singapore. Alternating between 24...

[www.dezeen.com](http://www.dezeen.com)

### **Provide Accessibility for Historic Buildings**

Most historic buildings were not originally designed to accommodate people with disabilities and special needs...

[www.wbdg.org](http://www.wbdg.org)