



The Golden Mile — Singapore's first conservation and intensification project

Turn to our Cover Story on **Pages 6 and 7.**

The former Golden Mile Complex will be conserved and repositioned as The Golden Mile, with 156 strata-titled office units and 19 medical suites for sale, a two-storey, 120,388 sq ft retail podium and an architectural centre



Golden Mile Singapore consists of the conserved commercial building, The Golden Mile, and Aurea, a new 45-storey residential tower

Artist's Impression

PICTURE: PERENNIAL HOLDINGS AND FAR EAST ORGANIZATION

The Golden Mile — Singapore's first conservation and intensification project

BY TIMOTHY TAY

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The restoration of the former Golden Mile Complex is the most ambitious urban renewal project involving a large-scale, strata-titled conserved building in Singapore. For joint developers Perennial Holdings and Far East Organization, it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to restore a treasured architectural icon to its former glory.

This month, the developers unveiled their vision for the refreshed conservation building, the Golden Mile Complex. It has been renamed The Golden Mile, repositioned into a commercial building with 156 office units, 19 medical suites, a two-storey retail atrium spanning 123,388 sq ft, and an architecture centre.

The entire development will be collectively named Golden Mile Singapore. The conserved building (The Golden Mile) will be linked to

a new 45-storey residential tower named Aurea (Latin for "golden"). The 188-unit residential project will preview sometime in 1Q2025.

Homegrown architecture firm DP Architects and architecture conservation specialist Studio Lapis have been engaged for the design and conservation of Golden Mile Singapore.

DP Architect's involvement is significant as it was the original design architect for Golden Mile Complex. Formerly known as Design Partnership, the firm was established in 1967. It was rebranded as DP Architects in 1975. The firm was initially helmed by pioneering Singaporean architects William Lim, Tay Kheng Soon, and Koh Seow Chuan. Design Partnership's office used to be located within the Golden Mile Complex. Lim was said to have owned a penthouse at the building too, where he frequently threw New Year's Eve parties and guests could enjoy the fireworks display from his balcony.

Seah Chee Huang, CEO of DP Architects,

says working on Golden Mile was an opportunity to rediscover a milestone project in the company's history.

He describes the overall process as one of conservation coupled with intensification of use. Seah sees the project as an opportunity to demonstrate how URA and developers can work together to rejuvenate cherished landmarks with significant heritage value through adaptive reuse.

According to Seah, many stakeholders — including city planners, developers, and strata owners — hope the successful launch of Golden Mile Singapore will inspire similar conservation and redevelopment efforts for other iconic strata-titled mixed-use developments, such as the landmark People's Park Complex, also designed by DP Architects.

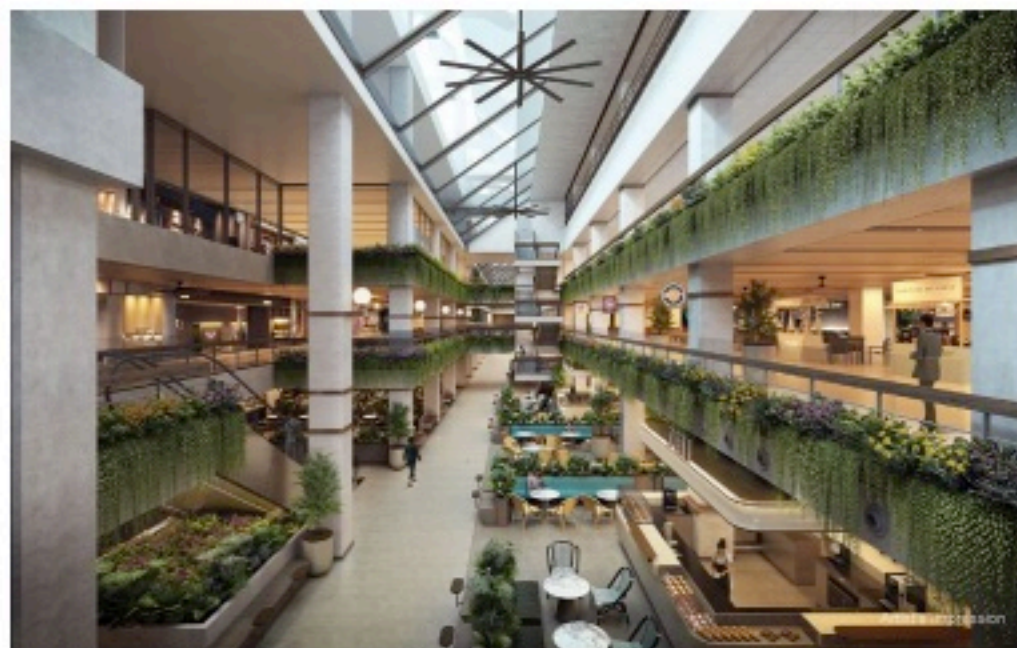
Collective sale; conservation of an icon
Perennial Holdings and Far East Organization,

which are joint-venture partners with equal stakes, purchased the former Golden Mile Complex in an en bloc deal for \$700 million in May 2022. It marked the first collective sale of a large-scale strata-titled mixed-use building that is also gazetted for conservation.

The former Golden Mile Complex, built in 1973, stood out as a tropical linear urban complex with brutalist architecture. Previously, about 40% of the total strata area was set aside for retail, with office units making up 41% and the remaining 19% for residential units.

However, the new Golden Mile Singapore, including Aurea, will see retail taking up 15% of the total strata area, offices occupying another 48% and 30% for residential use. The new medical suites and architecture centre comprise 4% and 3%, respectively.

The new medical suites range from 506 to 2,454 sq ft and are on the third floor. The wide range of sizes is designed to accommodate bou-



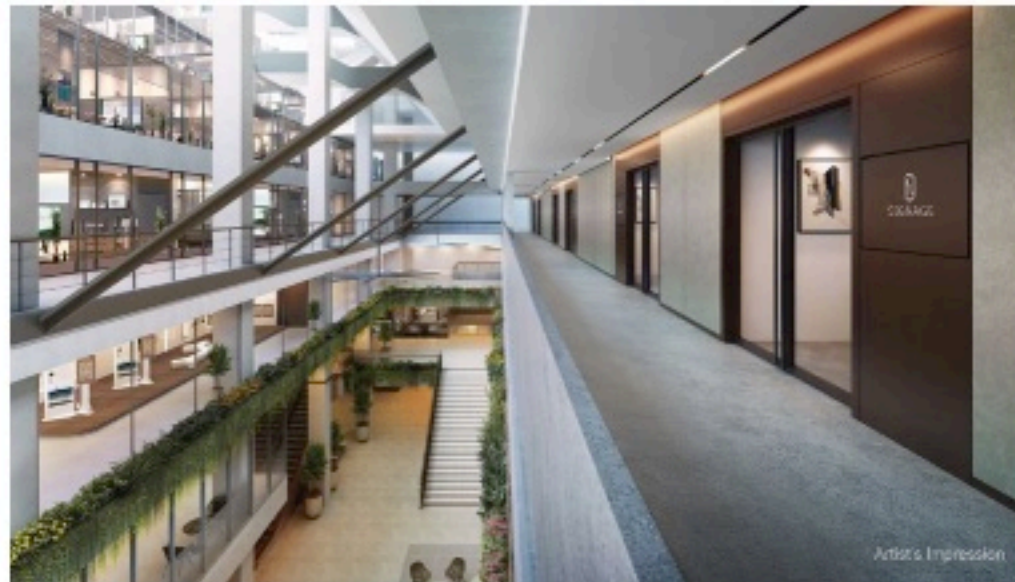
Artist's impression of the refreshed two-storey retail atrium will be naturally ventilated and illuminated with natural light



The former Golden Mile Complex rooftop will be turned into a Sky Garden with public access



There will be 19 medical suites, ranging from 506 to 2,454 sq ft



An artist's impression of the fourth-floor Loft Suites looking down to the retail atrium

tique and large-scale medical practices. Each suite has an en suite toilet and is easily accessible by passenger lifts and a stretcher lift.

The joint-venture partners have added a new four-storey extension above the existing rooftop of the former Golden Mile Complex, raising the block to 22 storeys. This new four-storey extension, The Crown, will house the most premium offices known as the Crown Office units.

In order to build the new four-storey extension, the joint developers put aside 24,994 sq ft from the gross floor area on the third and fourth floors for the establishment of the architectural centre under URA's Community/Sports Facilities Scheme (CSFS). The space will exhibit Singapore's architectural and urban design history.

The developers will also add two new sky gardens on the ninth and 18th floors of The Golden Mile. These gardens will be accessible to the public.

The conserved building will also undergo future proofing and upgrading to bring its systems on a par with modern standards and push its overall sustainability rating to the highest level: a BCA Green Mark Platinum.

Vibrant legacy

In its heyday during the 1970s, Golden Mile Complex attracted some of Singapore's most prestigious firms. Besides Design Partnership, the building's distinctive architecture also drew other leading real estate firms to set up offices there. They included the original developer of Golden Mile Complex, Singapura Developments and its parent company, construction firm Woh Hup; OD Architects, which designed the masterplan for the National University of Singapore's Kent Ridge campus; and British consulting engineers Preece, Cardew and Rider.

Pua Seck Guan, executive chairman and CEO of Perennial Holdings, recalls the vibrancy and prestige that the former Golden Mile Complex commanded back then. "The development pioneered the 'Live, Work, Play' concept in Singapore and attracted many top firms," he says. "Its residential units were also lauded for their unique sea-facing views."

For the new strata-titled office suites at Golden Mile Singapore, Pua intends to target professional firms of varying sizes, including family offices, that want to purchase their own office space. The design and fit-out of these new suites are intended to attract corporate occupiers of the same high calibre as those who originally moved into the Golden Mile Complex, he says.

Unlike in the past, The Golden Mile will now feature an office lobby with a 6-metre-high ceiling, a concierge service, and centralised access control.

A variety of office suites

Six different office layouts have been crafted to meet the needs of different business occupiers. The Flagship office units range from 1,378 to 4,682 sq ft. They are on the fourth to seventh floors and will be the only office units to benefit from a dedicated lift lobby with direct access to the basement carpark, main lobby,

and retail floors.

Loft Suites on the fourth floor and Loft Executive units on the fifth floor will have full-height windows to enjoy landscape views overlooking Beach Road. Loft Suites range from 958 to 2,034 sq ft, while the Loft Executive units range from 710 to 926 sq ft.

The Loft Mezzanine units, located on the sixth to 15th floors, are situated in the terraced section of the building facing Nicoll Highway, with views of Kallang Basin and Marina Bay.

Each split-level unit combines two former residential units, with a portion of the ceiling removed to create a single office space featuring a 5.4-metre double-volume ceiling.

These Mezzanine units are designed with a dual-key layout, allowing access to the mezzanine level via a staircase with a separate entrance or from the lower floor. Unit sizes range from 1,528 to 2,799 sq ft.

The 16th and 17th floors are the Enterprise Office units converted from the duplex residential penthouses. These units enjoy panoramic views of the city and Kallang Basin and will come with two toilets each. Enterprise offices range from 1,851 to 3,122 sq ft.

The most premium units are the 14 Crown Office units in the new four-storey extension above the former rooftop. Crown Offices span 3,315 to 5,393 sq ft. The first three floors will have four office units per floor, with the penthouse level featuring just two office suites.

'Newest strata office offering in the CBD in over 20 years'

"The local office market has not seen the launch of a new, high-quality strata-titled office development of this calibre in the Central Region

since the completion of Suntec City more than 20 years ago," says Pua.

The lack of significant new strata office projects in the CBD over the past 20 years will be a boon for The Golden Mile, as most of the existing strata office stock in the area is ageing and relatively outdated, says Navin Bafna, senior associate division director at PropNex Realty, and a veteran commercial real estate agent.

Pua adds that the development team also overcame the challenges of conserving and repositioning the iconic development and has created a unique lineup of strata offices. He points to the Mezzanine office suites, which he says are a good alternative to shophouses. "They have great views of the Kallang Basin, comprehensive security features and abundant parking," he says.

According to PropNex's Bafna, most buyers of the office units and future tenants are likely to appreciate the development's rich heritage, diverse range of unit types and layouts, and its premium views.

"In the CBD, existing strata office developments such as Suntec City have achieved prices of about \$3,300 to \$3,500 psf," says Bafna. "We can expect a new development like The Golden Mile to command a higher psf price."

Bafna reckons the higher-floor office units at The Golden Mile, such as the Crown and Enterprise floors, will be the most sought-after new strata office units on the market. "No office development in the CBD offers similar views," he says.

Golden Mile Singapore could be a catalyst for the local office market in the central region. "A successful launch would spark a positive

shift in strata office sales and help to restore leasing momentum," says Bafna.

Office decentralisation plans by the government and its long-term goal of repositioning the CBD into a mixed-use district will likely encourage more corporate tenants to explore up-and-coming commercial nodes like Beach Road, says Perennial's Pua.

In March 2022, URA disallowed the strata subdivision of commercial components in new stand-alone or mixed-use developments within the CBD or Orchard Road corridor.

The guideline on strata-subdivision of new commercial buildings does not apply to The Golden Mile. "It makes our office units at The Golden Mile even more desirable and unique," adds Pua.

Curating the retail mix

While the strata office units and medical suites are available for sale, Perennial and Far East intend to keep the retail units in order to curate the shopping experience at The Golden Mile.

Pua recalls the vibrancy and eclectic retail mix that characterised the shopping street at Golden Mile Complex in the 1970s. However, as the retail units at the former Golden Mile Complex were strata-titled, ownership changed hands, and tenants likewise changed. "Over the years, its positioning as a prime mixed-use development eroded," he says.

The developers are determined to recapture and elevate the building's status as a next-generation urban complex in Singapore.

The refreshed two-storey retail atrium will bring natural light and cross ventilation to the space, evoking its original design of a "street shop-style" retail experience. "I believe the retail units will augment and complement the offices and residential units," says Pua.

Momentum of rejuvenation

Marc Boey, executive director of property services at Far East Organization, shares that the launch of the strata office units and medical suites at The Golden Mile presents a rare opportunity to capitalise on the rejuvenation momentum across the Beach Road precinct.

"When the Golden Mile Complex was first conceived, it was part of a broader redevelopment plan to revitalise this stretch of Beach Road," says Boey. "Over the past 50 years, that vibrancy has waxed and waned. In recent years, the energy has returned."

For instance, the mixed-use development Guoco Midtown, which opened in phases since last year, is transforming the other end of Beach Road and the Bugis area. The new condominium nearby, The M, was completed in 2023. Next door to Guoco Midtown is the redevelopment of Shaw Tower into a new Grade-A office building targeted for completion next year.

The restoration of Golden Mile Singapore is a step closer to realising the 50-year dream of uplifting this stretch of Beach Road, says Boey. "It is not just the placemaking effect of this landmark development, but its contribution to the overall revitalisation of the precinct." ■



The Loft Mezzanine office units will feature a split-level design and a dual-key layout