



NEWS RELEASE

Transforming St. John's Home for Elderly Persons

Serrated Façade & Efficient-Compact Building Mass the Winning Factors for Architectural Design Competition

Singapore –4 August 2016. Aamer Architects, reputed for their contemporary equatorial architectural designs, has emerged as winner of the Architectural Design Competition jointly organised by the Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA) and the St. John's Home for Elderly Persons between April and July 2016. The winning design is set apart by its distinctive facade character and efficient-compact building mass.

The well-thought-out design by Aamer Architects expresses the residential units of the Home as angled components, offset and carefully juxtaposed to produce a serrated plan profile, which helps address issues of privacy of the elderly residents' accommodation, planting, views and climate. Interior spaces of the bedroom units are well resolved, with thoughtful consideration for the lifestyle of the residents.

In essence, the winning design strikes a fine balance between realistic constructability and a well-crafted architectural vision for the new St. John's Home for Elderly Persons.

The organisers were heartened by the keen interest generated for this Design Competition, where 52 firms submitted entries; seven were shortlisted. Moreover, the judges were impressed with the excellent quality of the submissions, especially given the critical constrain of a much smaller development site area than what they were used to.

Mdm Jessie Ee, who is 89 years old and has been staying at the Home for more than 14 years, likes the old 'kampong-style' St. John's Home because she can take her leisurely walk in the spacious compound. But looking at the artist's impression of the new building, she said, "The new Home looks beautiful and neat. It is good to have four persons to a room, so that we can have more privacy."

Lead Judge, Ar Theodore Chan said, "The Design Competition embraced all the five key principals of fair governance, namely, Fixed-Fee; Anonymity of Entry; A Well-prepared Design Brief; An Enlightened Jury; Honorarium for Shortlisted Non-Winners. Because of this, the best in the industry were attracted to participate and the good results speak for themselves. We are very proud that the architects of Singapore once again rose to the challenge of designing competent buildings, in this case, for the needs of our pioneer generation. This is by far the best method of procuring great architectural designs."

Interestingly, the current St. John's Home for Elderly Persons, with its distinctive single-storey, chalet-style dormitories, was designed by Architect Prof Eugene Seow, who was the first President of the Singapore Institute of Architects. So it is indeed befitting that 50 years on, SIA rises to the occasion, in its first full-fledged Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) effort and lead this initiative of a Design Competition for the new St. John's Home, ensuring that the best design is selected from the competent fraternity of architects.

Mr Woon Wee Yim, Chairman of St. John's Home explains, "When the Home was established back in 1958, things were simpler. At that time, the vision was to build a cosy, cottage-style Home for needy or homeless elderly. These buildings have served us well for the past 58 years. But times have changed. The needs of the elderly have also changed. We now have to build upwards on a smaller piece of land while increasing the capacity for care – from the current 102 to 150 elderly persons - to meet the present needs of the elderly, and also cater to the geriatrics care, beyond the next 30 years."

Mr Aamer Taher of Aamer Architects elaborates, “We began this project by appreciating the elderly residents’ as well as the operational needs. It is our sincere desire to improve their quality of life by providing the feeling of ‘home away from home’ – a Home which is comfortable, user friendly, interactive and well able to connect with the community. It is our aspiration to make people happier actually.....”

Award Presentation Ceremony and Exhibition

An exhibition featuring the winning design will be held from 5 to 14 August 2016 at the National Design Centre, Design Gallery 1. An Award Presentation Ceremony for the winning and shortlisted architectural firms will also be held at the exhibition venue, on Friday, 5 August 2016, at 2pm.

Needs Of The Home And Fundraising Target

The estimated construction cost of the new building on the fresh 30-year lease is \$12 million. Currently, the Home has a reserve of \$3.5 million. Thus, the Home will have to raise another \$8.5 million.

The Home invites public support through naming rights of key areas such as the dining hall, function rooms, residents' room accommodation and lobby area.

Panel of Judges

The judging panel comprises:

Appointment	Name	Designation
Chairperson	Ar Theodore Chan	Immediate Past President, Singapore Institute of Architects
Panel Member	Mr Woon Wee Yim	Chairman, St. John's Home
Panel Member	Mr Andrew Lioe	Vice Chairman, St. John's Home
Panel Member	Ar Rita Soh	Director, RDC Architects Pte Ltd
Panel Member	Dr Wong Sweet Fun	Deputy Chairperson, Medical Board, Yishun Community Hospital

Project Background

After close to 58 years of operations at its present location at 69 Wan Tho Avenue, St. John's Home for Elderly Persons is embarking on its greatest challenge yet - to build a new Home for its elderly residents on a smaller plot of its current land area.

The Home's land lease expired in December 2015. It now operates on its existing site, on a new Tenancy Agreement, for another three plus three years. Concurrently, the Home has been awarded a fresh 30-year land lease on a smaller plot of 3,300 sqm of its existing land area of 12,224 sqm, for the construction of a new building, which is estimated to cost \$12 million.

Construction of the new five-storey building is expected to commence in January 2019, and completed in 2021. The licensed capacity for the new building is 150 elderly residents, an increase from the current number of 102 residents.

Together with the Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA), the St. John's Home organised a two-stage Design Competition between April and July 2016 for a winning design for the new Home.

Collaboration with the Singapore Institute of Architects

In November 2013, the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) introduced St. John's Home to its corporate partner, the Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA) that was looking for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) opportunities. Since then, SIA has been advising the Home on matters pertaining to the land lease renewal and Building Redevelopment Project. In January 2015, SIA proposed a Design Competition to solicit the best design for an elderly-friendly, future-proof Home for the Elderly.

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About St John's Home for Elderly Persons

Established in December 1958, St. John's Home for Elderly Persons provides long-term residential care for needy/homeless elderly persons aged 60 and above, regardless of race or creed. The Home strives to be a place where ageing is celebrated, and where the elderly can live their golden years in comfort and dignity.

In 2014, the Home was accorded the President's Award for Philanthropy (Non-profit), in recognition of the concerted efforts by its Management Committee members, staff and volunteers in raising funds.

<http://www.stjohneldershome.org.sg/home-page>

About the Singapore Institute of Architects

The Singapore Institute of Architects is a professional organization established in 1961 with the objective to promote the architectural profession and the built environment in Singapore. The Institute is the sole representative for the architectural profession in Singapore. Over the years, the Institute has helped organize several design competitions, which include such projects like the Maybank Headquarter Redevelopment, Marina Line Stadium and Museums Stations, The NUS Alumni Complex, Scape* Youth Complex, Tampines Town Council Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, Al Ansar Mosque in Bedok, Indian Heritage Centre (IHC), Al-Islah Mosque in Punggol, Bukit Panjang Hawker Centre (BPHC) and the most recent is the Wisma Geylang Serai.(WGS).

<http://www.sia.org.sg/>