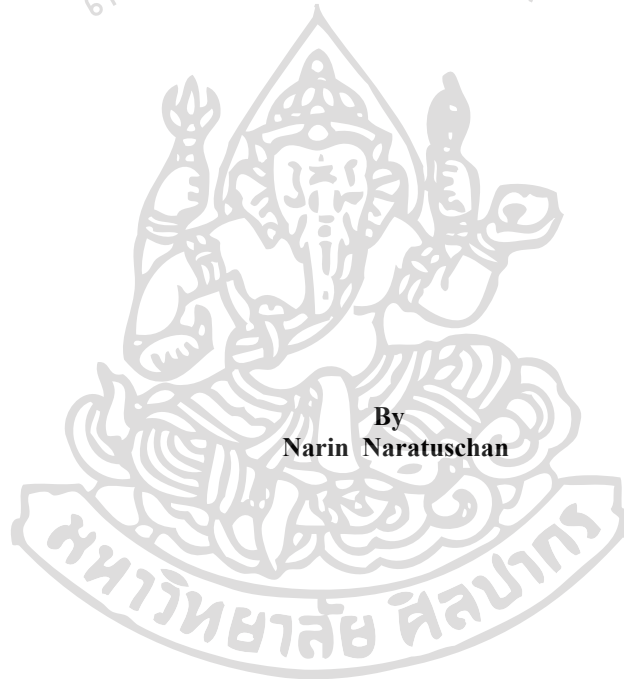




HERITAGE HOTELS IN THAILAND : CHALLENGES, CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

สำนักหอสมุดกลาง



By
Narin Naratuschan

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy Program in Architectural Heritage Management and Tourism
(International Program)**

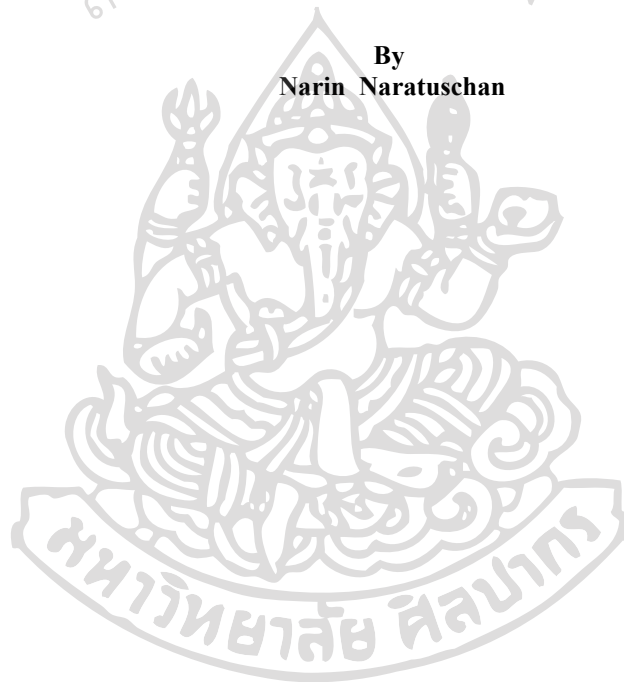
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The Graduate School, Silpakorn University has approved and accredited the Thesis title of “Heritage Hotels in Thailand : Challenges, Constraints and Opportunities” submitted by Mr.Narin Naratuschan as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Architectural Heritage Management and Tourism

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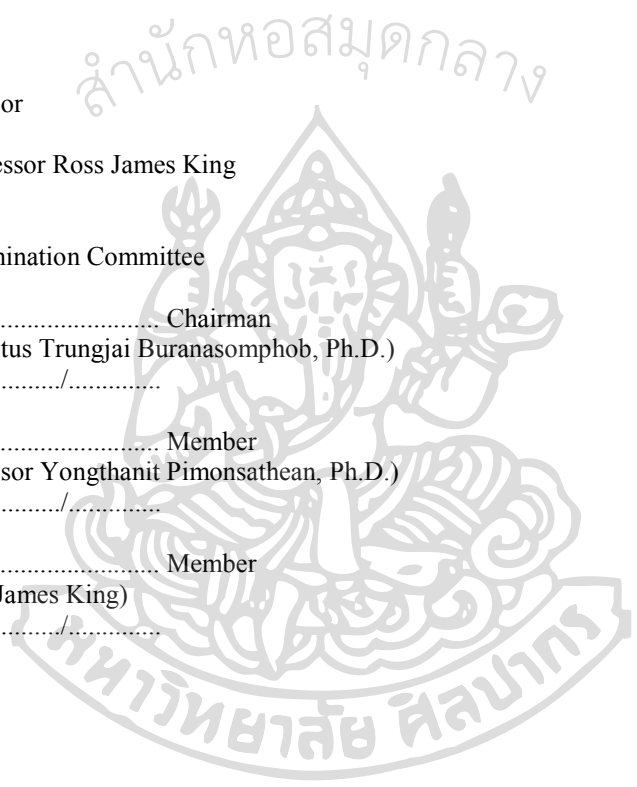
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NARIN NARATUSCHAN: HERITAGE HOTELS IN THAILAND: CHALLENGES,
CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES. THESIS ADVISOR : PROF. ROSS JAMES KING. pp.204

Culturally savvy tourists are one of the traveller groups who prefer to stay in the hotels that are able to distinctively provide individual experiences that they cannot find anywhere else. Using heritage buildings as fabric then applying adaptive and re-use concepts as a boutique hotel is one of the alternatives to both serve the demand of this traveller group and preserve the heritage in Thailand simultaneously.

The aim of this dissertation has been to survey and find potential heritage buildings for applying adaptive and re-use concepts, to identify the constraints relating to the legal, financial and cultural factors that militate against such practices of re-cycling, and to find a feasible way and key success factors to run a boutique hotel in heritage buildings under the constraints of cultural, legal, and economic realities in Thailand. The study was based on interviews and survey of selected buildings categorized into three types of heritage hotels : Original Heritage Hotels, Heritage Hotels that apply an adaptive and re-use approach and Nostalgic Heritage Hotels. There are also two additional hybrid categories situated between these categories. The study also provided a discussion on the question of authenticity of the heritage hotel through a case study of Nan Fa hotel vs. Rachamankha hotel – the interrelated categories of ‘Originally built as a hotel’ and ‘Re-use of Historic Building as Fabric’ vs. ‘Nostalgic Heritage Hotel’. The surveys were conducted during September 2009 to May 2012. It was found that to apply adaptive and re-use programs to heritage buildings is not a straightforward approach that can be applied in every case. Rather, an analysis of the economic, social and cultural conditions is an inescapable pre-requisite. There are also financial, legal and time constraints. If we are to find solutions to overcome these, then we may find a way to run a successful boutique hotel business to serve the current trend of tourists who demand to find a place that provides what they see as ‘authentic’ experiences to them. Those types of tourists will not tend to negotiate but are willing to pay a ‘premium’ if the boutique hotel can provide services that are beyond their expectations. Furthermore, a study of the question of ‘authentic’ design to underlie the creation of ‘architectural excellence’ in the adaptive re-use of heritage buildings requires much further commitment in Thailand in the future.

Program of Architectural Heritage Management and Tourism
Student's signature
Thesis Advisor's signature

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Academic Year 2012

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background, statement and significance of the problem

Among tourists around the world, people who have a passion for cultural heritage will frequently prefer to stay in a heritage hotel such as the Raffles hotel in Singapore, the E&O hotel in Penang, the Savoy hotel in London, and the countless heritage hotels in Paris, etc. rather than the modern hotel. Unfortunately, in the face of this international demand, Thailand has very few heritage hotels left nowadays; some still run their businesses very well such as the Oriental hotel (the Author's Lounge is the only one pavilion of the original building still extant, however) and the former Hua-Hin Railways hotel (the Sofitel Centara Grand Resort and Villas at the moment). The rest of them were unable to survive in the competitive business environment of the globalization era. Elaine Denby, author of the "Grand Hotels", has described the history of the Grand Hotels in the South-East Asia region section by using the Oriental hotel as a representative of Thailand. Denby (1998, p.203) has stated

...Until 1855 when King Mongkut (Rama IV) opened the Kingdom of Siam to the rest of the world, Siam had, like much of the Far East, secluded itself from distrusted and therefore potentially disruptive influences. The British were the first to arrive in the Chao Phraya River at Bangkok and to make trade and cultural contacts. An American missionary, a Dr Bradley, recorded the burning down of 'The Oriental' in 1865. Whether this was an old royal palace that the King had designated for housing foreigners is not at all certain but the recognized date for the founding of the hotel of that name is 1876, when two Danish sea-captains, Jarck and Salje, built modest accommodation near the French embassy. It was bought by H.N. Anderson, another seafarer, who commissioned a new building in the Colonial and Italianate style and open it in 1887 for tourists as well as traders...This piquant atmosphere, especially when blended with the smiling and efficient service which so frequently met the traveller, encouraged return visits and helped to build a reputation as one of the handful of outstanding luxury hotels of South-East Asia. Its nineteenth century building survives in the form of the 'Authors' Residences' at the core of the grand building complex, which won for The Oriental in no less than ten successive recent years the title 'Finest Hotel in the World', awarded by the Institutional Investor magazine...



Figure 1: The Oriental Hotel with a description on the lower-right of a postcard. **Source:** Photocopy from the Grand Hotels book



Figure 2: The Oriental Hotel (Author's Lounge), **Source:** Photocopy from 20 years of the Architectural Conservation Award (1982-2002)

Applying an appropriate adaptive and re-use policy on to heritage buildings, in order to become a boutique hotel, has proved to be another successful strategy recognised as a global trend today. Within the Southeast Asia region, many heritage hotels have achieved

success in the international market by their distinctive characters. The Cheong Fatt Tze or so-called Blue Mansion, in Penang (Figure 3), Malaysia, is an example.



Figure 3: The Cheong Fatt Tze in Penang, **Source:** Photocopy from the Andaman Style book

In addition to applying a re-use strategy to historic buildings and the refurbishment of those buildings, the services provided and the type of customers also proved to be necessary factors to run successful boutique hotels as evidenced by several studies from abroad. Most city boutique hotels in Asia were once referred to as ‘Grand Hotels’, as they are located in historic buildings. These included hotels, often built more than a century ago, which were refurbished during the 1990s, such as Carcosa Seri Negara in Kuala Lumpur, the Eastern & Oriental in Penang and the Raffles in Singapore (Keulen E., Viriot H. and Koh B. 2002). Meanwhile a 2006 study in the United States of America, by hotel research firm Smith Travel Research based in Hendersonville, Tennessee, analysed occupancy data, examining operating trends among 120 member hotels of Historic Hotels of America (HHA) between January 2000 and October 2005. All HHA properties must be at least 50 years old and eligible for National Register of Historic Places status to be a member. Based on the findings, occupancy rates at historic hotels were 8% higher on average compared to the newer hotel properties. To be sure, most of the historic hotels are full-service or resort properties while the nationwide data set includes limited-service

properties. Moreover, the analyst also found that “Travellers seek to make their hotel stay a memorable part of an overall vacation experience.” The stronger operating performance of historic hotels does indeed suggest that a history-craving clientele is willing to pay extra to stay at an older property (Chapman 2006).

Thailand, inheriting an abundant cultural mix of history and legend, like other Southeast Asia countries, is able to classify itself as another important tourist attraction in the worldwide tourist business perspective. Creating heritage hotels as an alternative accommodation form to serve the niche market of culturally savvy travellers would be a strategy to revive and preserve the old heritage buildings throughout Thailand in a sustainable way. From the history of hotel development in Thailand, in addition to the hotels owned by foreigners such as the Oriental Hotel, in those early days a Phyathai Palace was believed to be the pioneer to apply a new approach to the re-use of a heritage building, to become a first class hotel in Thailand named “Phyathai Palace Hotel” with the permission of the King Phrajadhipok (King Rama VII), following an idea of his elder brother, King Vajiravudh (King Rama VI), to turn the family’s gateway cottage into the country’s second five-star hotel¹. The palace had been built in 1909 with the original intention to accommodate King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V) as a place for relaxation. The Phyathai Palace Hotel could accommodate foreign dignitaries and businessmen and became a full-functioning hotel in the reign of the King Prajadhipok and the most luxurious hotel of its time, managed by the Royal State Railways, in 1925. Although praised as one of the most luxurious and up-scale hotels in the Far East and hosting many regional gatherings, including Thailand’s first Rotary Meeting in 1930 (Klangboonkrong 2009, p.42), Phyathai Palace Hotel was affected by the world recession after operating for around five years. It was able to survive for a little over a further year before the military seized the palace in the 1932 coup, consequently altering it into a military building.

In the present day, Nan Fa hotel (Figure 9), originally built as a hotel for travelers at the centre of Nan province in 1934, has been taken over since the end of year 2009 by Mr.

Bantoon Lamsam, Kasikorn Bank's Chief Executive Officer and who has planned to renovate the hotel to become a boutique hotel to serve tourists from the end of 2011.



Figure 4: Phya Thai Palace Hotel's advertisement with the caption "A real palace for your home", **Source:** National Archive



Figure 5: Phya Thai Palace Hotel in the past, **Source:** Phya Thai Palace's website

¹ After the Oriental hotel which was recognised as the first five-star hotel during that period.



Figure 6: Visitors in the Phyathai Palace Hotel , **Source:** Phyathai Palace’s website



Figure 7: Phyathai Palace is currently looked after by the Phyathai Palace Foundation and is open for the public to visit the exhibition and surroundings of the palace, it is located in the Phra Mongkut Hospital near the Victory monument on the Ratcha Vithee Road, Bangkok, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 8: The Grand Opening of the Nan Fa hotel in 1934: important persons such as government officers, policemen and businessmen were photographed altogether at the inauguration of the hotel, **Source:** Photoontour.com's website



Figure 9: Nan Fa hotel is located at the centre of Nan province. The hotel has recently been taken over by Mr. Bantoon Lamsam, Kasikorn Bank's Chief Executive Officer at the end of year 2009. There is a plan to renovate this heritage hotel to become a boutique hotel for tourists in January 2011, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

In addition to historic buildings originally built as hotels and the re-use of other historic buildings as fabric for a heritage hotel, the new trend in hotel development in Thailand was to apply a heritage style as a design scheme to build a new hotel, in a so-called “Nostalgic Heritage”. The most controversial example of its kind was the Mandarin Oriental Dhara Dhevi in Chiang Mai, Thailand, incorporating Buddhist themes and consequently drawing fire from groups concerned with local culture and religion. The opponents argued against the extravagant application of an ancient city concept by rebuilding to scale various temples from Chiang Mai, Lampang, and Nan. The widespread criticism related to the appropriateness and ethics of the project, while the hotel operator proposed the idea of an ancient city project as an opportunity to collect Lanna artworks and as a job creation program by employing local artisans to work on the project.



Figure 10: The Mandarin Oriental Dhara Dhevi in Chiang Mai, **Source:** The Mandarin Oriental’s website

In addition to the Buddhist themes and the idea of strengthening “Thainess” through the architecture as evidenced in the Chiang Mai case, there were other nostalgic themes such as in the Eugenia hotel, embodying a late 19th century colonial-style house form (Figure 11) and located in the heart of downtown Bangkok – Sukhumvit road area. The Ariyasom Villa boutique hotel re-interpreted an old heritage building influenced by a style of western architecture which was very popular in Siam during the reign of King Chulalongkorn. The original house of Ariyasom Villa had been built as the home of the

present owner's grandfather (Figure 12). The owner has applied the same design style to build new added accommodation for a full-service hotel to serve their customers.

From this brief review, we are able to classify the heritage hotels in Thailand into three categories as follows.

- I. Original Heritage Hotels – built as a hotel and where the owner has decided to keep it as it is through changing times. In the United States of America, such a hotel must be at least 50 years old and eligible for National Register of Historic Places status
- II. Heritage Hotels by applying an adaptive and re-use approach to the historic buildings as a fabric
- III. Nostalgic Heritage Hotels – built as new hotels but in a heritage style

Some hotels cannot be precisely classified into these types but fall into an area between categories I and II or categories II and III as displayed in Table 1.



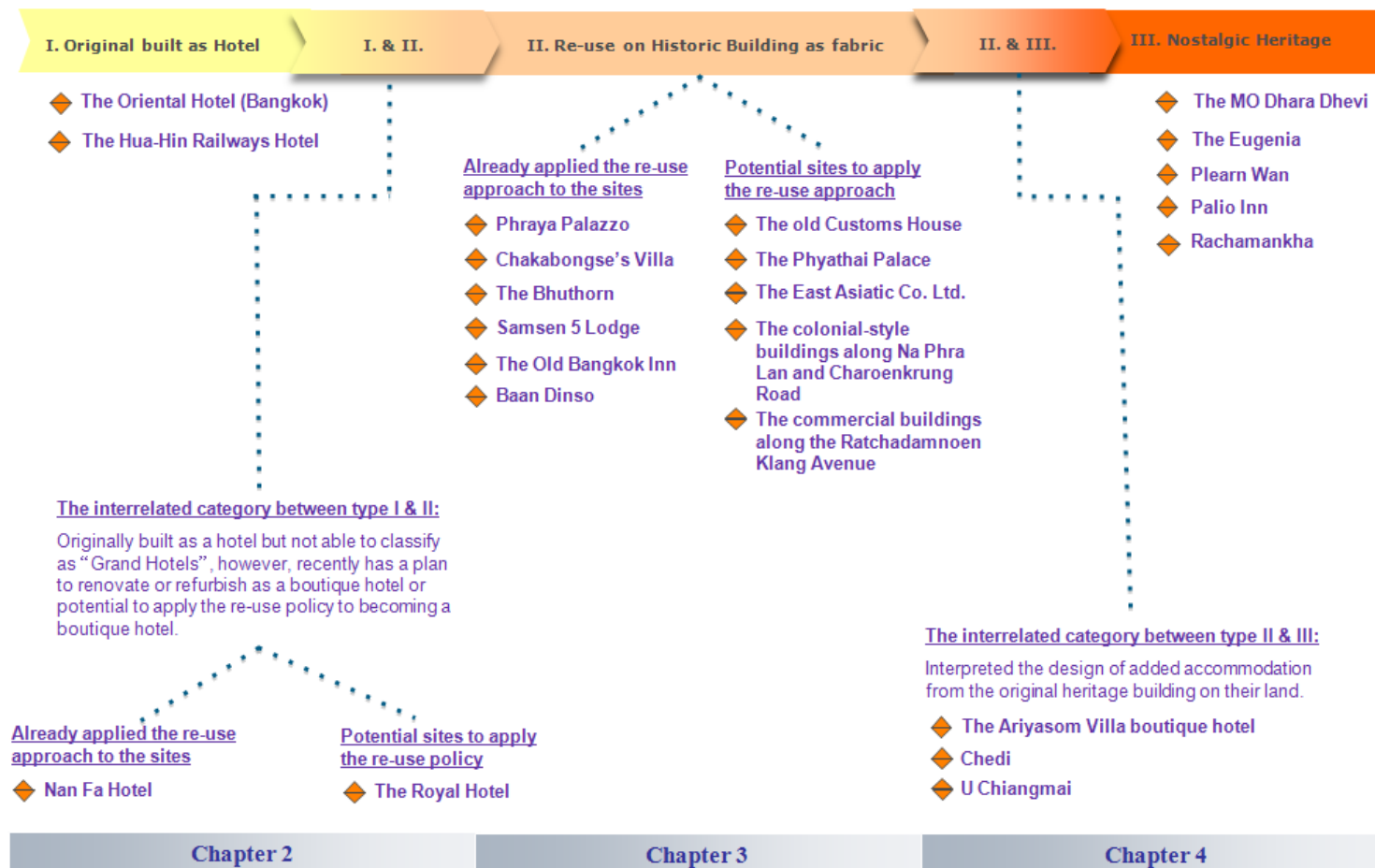
Figure 11: The Eugenia Hotel is located in Soi Sukhumvit 31. The hotel had been built in the Colonial style with a superb interior in a masterpiece of decoration that is able to bring back the past immediately upon opening the door, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 12: The Ariyasom Villa boutique hotel is located in Soi Sukhumvit 1. The hotel uses the old heritage building, shown in this photograph, as a benchmark for the design of new constructed buildings as hotel accommodation, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

Table 1: A list of Heritage Hotels and potential buildings in Thailand, categorised into three main types, that have been investigated in this study

Heritage Hotel Category with a list of hotels in this study



As indicated in Table 1, this study has further separated the investigated sites into those that have already applied a re-use approach to the sites and those that are still potential sites. The existing old hotels such as Nan Fa and Royal Hotel (Rattanakosin Hotel) were included to be investigated regarding their potential to apply the adaptive and re-use policy, in Chapter 2. Moreover, other historic buildings that might equally serve as heritage hotels subject to economic viability and to criteria such as closeness to tourism centres, transportation, other attractions nearby, the location and the size of the building, etc. were discussed under category II, in Chapter 3. Lastly, the hybrid type between categories II & III was mostly ignored in the present study although, some interesting sites were investigated thoroughly with the well-known sites under category III, in Chapter 4. Then we provide a discussion chapter related to the authenticity of heritage hotels in Chapter 5.

People are the most important factor to give place significance. Thus to bring people into a heritage place during the day will lead to “a livelier daytime” for that place. The adaptive and re-use policy of changing the place to provide new accommodation to serve the cultural interests of tourists, provides an alternative method to revive heritage places around the world. However, with the absence of a culture of building re-use in Thailand, in sharp contrast with practices in Europe, America, Australia, etc., the challenges, constraints, and opportunities need to be identified. How can we turn the local opportunities presented from many structures of heritage value to become a key element of a tourist precinct? This research aims to study these related questions: what are the opportunities for re-cycling/re-use of buildings in Thailand and what are the constraints related to the legal, financial and cultural factors that militate against such practices of re-cycling in Thailand?

Goals and objectives

1. To survey and find potential heritage buildings for applying adaptive and re-use concepts in Thailand.

2. To identify the constraints relating to the legal, financial and cultural factors that militate against such practices of re-cycling in Thailand.
3. To find a feasible way and key success factors to run a boutique hotel in heritage buildings under the constraints of cultural, legal, and economic realities in Thailand.

To answer these research questions, though we have three types of heritage hotels defined by this research, Original Heritage Hotels, Heritage Hotels by applying an adaptive and re-use approach and Nostalgic Heritage Hotels. Acknowledging that the boundaries across these three domains were clearly separated, two additional hybrid categories were also situated among them. This study was mainly focused on the Category II : Heritage Hotels by applying an adaptive and re-use approach and the first hybrid types : Interrelated categories I & II, with an aim to find out an appropriate method to apply the adaptive and re-use approach to those potential heritage sites. Unfortunately, there are limited numbers and types of heritage buildings left in Thailand nowadays. A key factor investigated by the study was a lack of opportunities: in the 19th and early 20th centuries, only royal/government and religious buildings were well constructed. The only significant exceptions to the poor quality of construction were (a) some Chinese premises and (b) Western ‘colonial’ buildings including big mansions or so-called “Sino-Colonial” and the “Sino-Portuguese” shop houses. As a result, surveys in the Bangkok area were largely made of specific opportunities as illustrated from Table 1 (1) the Royal Hotel; (2) The old Customs House; (3) the Phrayathai Palace; (4) the East Asiatic Company Ltd. buildings; (5) the colonial-style buildings on thanon Na Phra Lan; (6) The colonial-style buildings along the Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue. Several references to other heritage hotels in several countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, India, Australia, America, Europe etc. were observed to suggest criteria for potential sites appropriate for a re-use program.

Methodology

This research is going to do two things: It brings together references and ideas about the adaptive and re-use program from both domestic sources and abroad to investigate the

most appropriate method to conserve the heritage buildings by running a hotel business in a feasible and sustainable way. It also assembles related issues on legal, financial and cultural factors which somehow are considered as constraints to apply a re-use program to those heritage buildings. Finally, I will bring these two areas together to identify the best solution to apply on each site individually. Combined methods of archival research, field research, interviews and observations and content analysis were used. Other secondary resources used include books, journal articles, maps, photographs.

Scope of the study

As this research aims to identify the best practice to conserve the heritage buildings in Thailand, the scope of research is largely limited to the old towns in Thailand such as Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Nan, Phuket, where there are inherited old buildings with evidence of significant values on those heritage buildings. References are made to domestic examples and to Thailand's neighbouring countries as well as some from Europe and North America.

Within the Thailand examples, I focus on (1) the technical feasibility of re-use by examining the plans of the buildings; (2) suggested programs for re-use; (3) an attempt to discover what the constraints really are.

The time frame of this research has included the historical period during the reigns of King Rama IV to King Rama VII then intentionally skipped the certain period, 1947-1997, then turned to the years following the economic crash in 1997 until May 2012. Historical data are built through reference to secondary sources published in both Thai and English.

Structure

This study comprises 6 chapters,

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: History of hotel business in Thailand by including Hotel in Category I and Interrelated category I & II

Chapter 3: Category II (Re-Use in Historic Building as fabric)

Chapter 4: Category III (Built as Heritage Hotel or the so-called Nostalgic Heritage in this study)

(Chapter 2, 3 and 4 are based on interviews and survey of selected buildings)

Chapter 5: The authenticity of heritage hotels

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion



Chapter 2

History of the hotel business in Thailand

Until 1855 when King Mongkut (Rama IV) opened the Kingdom of Siam to the rest of the world, Siam had secluded itself from distrusted and therefore potentially disruptive influences from Westerners. Siamese diplomats had experienced and seen the lifestyles of westerners when exchanging international diplomacy with several countries in Europe as evidenced by “Mom Racho Thai” (M.R. Kratai Issarangkul), a royal Interpreter of King Mongkut.



Figure 13: Mom Racho Thai (M.R. Kratai Issarangkul), a relatives of King Mongkut who had an opportunity to study English together with him. **Source:** National Archives.

In those days, the adaptations and changes in the society always came from the monarchy (top-down). Hence, I would like to present the history of hotel businesses based on the reigns of Kings, from King Rama IV to King Rama IX. In addition, the study will focus on the most influential hotels, especially those flourishing in Siam and later Thailand.

The reign of King Rama IV (1851 – 1868)

When M.R. Kratai Issarangkul, a royal Interpreter of King Rama IV, came back from Europe, he also brought back the idea of hotel business with him. As documented in the yearly newspaper “Dr. Bradley’s Bangkok Calendar”, since the year 1863 the name list of hotels officially published in that newspaper were

- 1863: the Union Hotel and the Boarding Hotel
- 1864: the Union Hotel, the Oriental Hotel and the Fisher's Hotel
- 1865: the Union Hotel and the Oriental Hotel
- 1866: the Union Hotel
- 1867: the Union Hotel and the Falck's Hotel
- 1868: the Union Hotel

In 1868 only the Union Hotel remained in Siam because the others were destroyed by fire, the burning down of the 'Oriental hotel' recorded by the "Bangkok Recorder" in 1865 (it had been built again in 1876 by two Danish sea-captains).

Apart from the record that could be found in the Bangkok Calendar, there was also a two-storey bungalow at Tam-bon Ang-hin³, Chonburi province. It comprised two Western style buildings which were built by Somdet Chao Phraya Si Suriyawongse and Chao Phraya Thipakorn Wongse, painted in white and red respectively. Those two buildings provided 44 beds to be a rehabilitation place for the missionaries who lived in Siam on those days. The place had been called "Ar-srai-sa-tan" when built. Later on, both buildings had been restored by Queen Saovabha Phongsri and changed in name into "Maharaja & Maharajini"(Bangsaensook 2011) in the reign of the King Rama V.



Figures 14-15: White and Red buildings **Source:** Department of Cultural Promotion

² Nowadays the name had been changed to Tam-bon And-si-la (hin and si-la both have the same meaning = stone)



Figure 16: Three figures who were related to the rehabilitation bungalow at Tam-bon Ang-Hin. From left to right: Somdet Chao Phraya Si Suriyawongse, Chao Phraya Thipakorn Wongse and Queen Saovabha Phongsri. **Source:** National Archives

We have mentioned several hotels and one rehabilitation bungalow that were built during the reign of King Rama IV. Unfortunately, no historical photographs were able to be found to illustrate.

The reign of King Rama V (1868 – 1910)

The Oriental Hotel

With the emergence of electric power during this period, the hotel business in Thailand was revolutionized by the ability to provide fully services at the Oriental Hotel – the first hotel that installed the electricity system in the hotel and served food for their customers, in 1876 when two Danish sea-captains, Jarck and Salje, built a modest accommodation near the French embassy. It was bought by H.N. Anderson, another seafarer, who commissioned a new building in the Colonial and Italianate style then began to serve tourists and traders in 1887 (Figure 17).



Figure 17: Oriental Hotel in 1890, this building had been built in 1887 and elements of it still remain, known as *the 'Authors Residences'*. **Source:** ThaiDVD.net (2010)

The implementation of electricity and infrastructure throughout Bangkok enabled hotels to provide full services. As a result, a number of hotels grew up quickly as documented, in 1870: Falck's German Hotel, Hamburg Hotel, Marien Hotel and Siam Hotel, in 1871: Carter's Hotel and Norfolk Hotel. However, the only one remaining is the Oriental Hotel where it was unavoidable to build new buildings alongside the old one to serve more travellers (Figure 32 below). Though the hotel business had increased abruptly during the reign of King Rama V, all of them were owned and managed by foreigners.

In 1909, an exploration team led by a British engineer who worked for the Royal State Railways of Siam⁴, Henry Gittins, led an expedition to build the Southern Railway connecting Bangkok and the Malay peninsular (Time Machine Journey 2012). The team serendipitously discovered the beautiful beach that later became the earliest retreat place for the royal family. The first member who came to build a villa was His Royal Highness Prince Krom Phra Na-red Worarid, the ancestor of the "Krisdakorn" family. The villa had been named "San-Sam-Ran-Suk Vej" (a very joyful place) and so the beach around the villa has been called "Hua Hin" beach since then. Furthermore, the name of that beach

⁴ In 1951, the Royal State Railways of Siam became a state enterprise by virtue of the State Railway of Thailand Act B.E. 2494 (1951), Source : <http://www.railway.co.th/home/srt/about/history.asp?language=Eng>

later became Tam-bon (sub-district) Hua Hin and finally Am-phoe (district) Hua Hin of Prachuab Khirikhan province (Hua Hin Pocket Guide 2009).

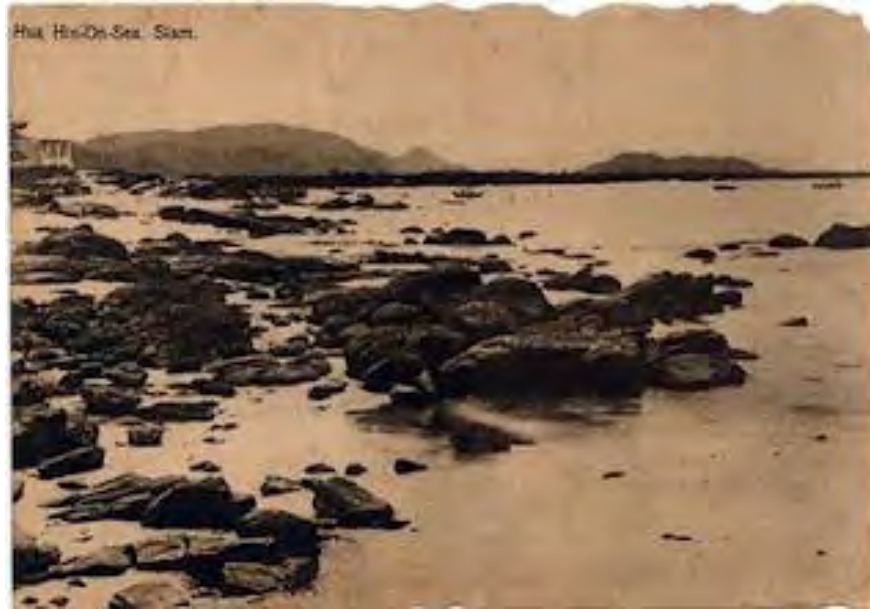


Figure 18: The old postcard shows Hua Hin beach in the past. **Source:** www.chillpainai.com

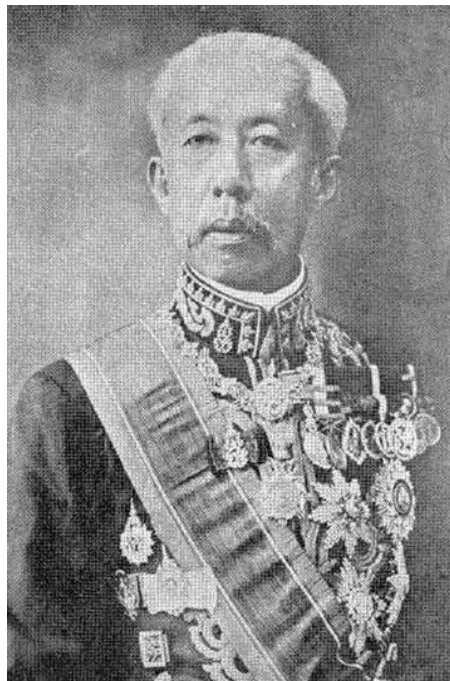


Figure 19: His Royal Highness Prince Krom Phra Na-red Worarid, Phra Ong Jao Krisda Phra-ni-han, **Source:** National Archives

The reign of King Rama VI (1910 – 1925)

The Royal Hotel (Thailand Hotel)

The original mansion had been called “Ruan Luang Jitra-jam-nong-wa-nich” as stated in the website of the Crown Property Bureau – Conservation Project Administrative Department, following the name of the owner, Luang Jitra-jamnong-wanich who was a son-in-law of Luang Sathorn Rachayuth⁵. The villa was originally built in 1888 in the reign of King Rama V in the area between Silom road and Baan Ta-wai. The owner was one of the millionaires in Siam during that period, however, he faced trouble in running his international business and finally his company filed for bankruptcy. Hence, he had to sell all assets including this luxurious villa (Reurn Thai 2002) to the Office of the Privy Purse⁶. In the reign of King Rama VI, His Majesty once gave this mansion to Chao Phraya Ramrakob for a short while before converting it into a hotel.

In 1911, the hotel had been given a name “Royal Hotel” by the King Vajiravudh. It was believed to be the first hotel being converted from a mansion to become a luxurious hotel to serve western travellers in Thailand’s history. Unfortunately, after an unknown period of service as a hotel, this nice heritage building was rented by the Russian Embassy in 1948 until 1999. Then remained empty around ten years before the Golden Land group proposed the project name “Sathorn Square” by took this heritage building as a centre of the project.

(Both photographs are intended to reveal the name of the hotel more clearly.)

⁵ his name “Sathorn” was taken to name for both Klong and road in this area later on

⁶ The Crown Property Bureau was set up with the status equivalent to a division under the Treasury Department of the Finance Ministry. Some of the functions, responsibilities and officials were transferred from the Office of the Privy Purse to the Crown Property Bureau which sought permission to locate its office on the premises of the Office of the Privy Purse in the grounds of the Grand Palace, Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crown_Property_Bureau



Figure 20: The name “Royal Hotel” on the top, King Rama VI had given the name to this hotel. **Source:** National Archives



Figure 21: The only image that could find that contains a cutout with a Thai label stated as “Thailand Hotel”. Another interesting emblem of the “Garuda” stands in the middle of the main façade as a symbol of the Office of the Privy Purse. **Source:** ThaiDVD.net (2010)

In addition, by gathering several pieces of information, the author found the interesting issue that related to the hotel’s name. The hotel had two different names “Royal Hotel”

and “Thailand Hotel” (as shown in the Figures 20 and 21 above). The name “Royal Hotel” had been given by King Rama VI and clearly shown on the top in front of the hotel (Figure 20). However, the name “Thailand Hotel” in Figure 21 is believed to have been in the renovating phrase to becoming a hotel and the negotiations of the lease document between the Crown Property Bureau (CPB) and Russian Embassy (Skyscraper City 2011). Hence, the author suspected that the hotel’s name in Thai was “Thailand Hotel” (in all written documents in Thai language) and using “Royal Hotel” as a name of the hotel to serve European’s travellers. As a result, two names mean the same hotel at the same period of time, not two different hotels at the same place.

The Railways Hotel (Hotel Hua Hin, in Thai)

In 1921 when the Southern Railway had been completed, both royal family members and British who lived in Siam had changed their destination of retreat resorts from Koh Sri Chang, Chonburi province, to Hua Hin, Prachuab Khirikhan province instead. At the same time, King Vajiravudh appointed His Royal Highness Prince Purachatra Jayakara, the Prince of Kamphaengphet, to be responsible for a project to build a high-class hotel with European standards at Hua Hin. The Prince of Kamphaengphet had selected the land next to “San-Sam-Ran-Suk Vej” villa of Phra Ong Jao Krisda Phra-ni-han to become the Railways Hotel at Hua Hin or so-called “Hotel Hua Hin” in Thai.



Figure 22: His Royal Highness Prince Purachatra Jayakara, the Prince of Kamphaengphet or so-called 'Father of Thai Railways' , **Source:** National Archives

The Railways hotel was designed in a Colonial style by A. Rigazzi, an Italian architect who worked for the Royal State Railways of Siam. The hotel had a two-storey form where the ground floor was a concrete-steel construction where lobby and hallway were decorated with timber and precious Italian marble, and the second floor were built as a high standard of craftsmanship in timber. It provided 14 rooms of accommodation. Each room was decorated with the most luxurious materials they could possibly find during those days. In addition, it was also the first time to hire a professional hotelier from Europe to conduct staff training for the hotel to serve the hi-class customers. The Railways hotel was officially opened on January 1, 1922 and considered to be the pioneer for the land development in the Hua Hin area from that time.



Figures 23-24: Railways Hotel at the beginning stage, **Source:** Time Machine Journey. (2012)

Between 1923-1925, the expenses for care and maintenance of Phya Thai Royal Palace were increasing every year and hence a solution to make the palace itself generate income to let it survive was needed. With the success of running the Railways Hotel during that period, King Rama VI had an idea to convert his parent's palace to become a first class hotel. The hotel aimed to provide every necessity and every luxury that are met in the finest hotels in Europe and America (Buranasomphob 2003). As a result, some alterations were made to serve that purpose. To do so, King Rama VI had ordained the Prince of Kamphaengphet and the Royal State Railways of Siam to study the possibility to convert the Phayathai palace to be another hi-class hotel in Bangkok. Unfortunately, His Majesty passed away on 26 November 1925 before the project began.

The reign of King Rama VII (1925 – 1932)

The Phya Thai Palace Hotel

When King Prajadipok ascended the throne, one of the earliest projects was to follow his brother's determination by turning the "Phya Thai Royal Palace" to become the most luxurious hotel to serve first class customers named "Phya Thai Palace", in 1926. The hotel was managed by Royal State Railways of Siam, who also had experience in managing the Railways hotel in Hua Hin. Although praised as one of the most luxurious and up-scale hotels in the Far East and hosting many regional gatherings, including Thailand's first Rotary Meeting in 1930 (Klangboonkrong 2009, p.42), Phayathai Palace Hotel was affected by the world recession after operating for around five years. It was

able to survive for a little over a further year before the military seized the palace in the 1932 coup, consequently altering it into a military building.

The Trocadero Hotel



Figures 25-26 : Hotel Trocadero (was taken in 1920s on the left and 1950s on the right) , **Source:** ThaiDVD.net (2010)



Figure 27: Phraya Prapakornwong (Vong Bunnag), the first Thai investor in the luxurious hotel business in Siam, **Source:** The Bunnag Lineage club's website

In 1927, Phraya Pra-pa-korn-wong (Vong Bunnag) was the first Thai private investor who built and ran a luxurious hotel business on his own land. The hotel was named

“Hotel Trocadero” to cope with the four-storey French style building. It provided 45 rooms of accommodation with complete air-conditioning in every room and also considered to be the first hotel that using elevators in Siam during that period. The hotel was located at the corner of New Road (Cha-roen-krung Road) and Surawong road, in the area of southern Bangkok near the Oriental hotel.

The project received a loan from National Provincial Bank⁷ to support its construction cost. Moreover, Phraya Prapakornwong’s daughter, Cha-vee Bunnag, a British scholarship student, became a foreman and also the first manager of the hotel.

The Rajadhani Hotel (Hotel Rat-cha-tha-ni, in Thai)

Rajadhani hotel was built with an intention to serve as a rest house at the Hua-lum-pong Central Train station in Bangkok, by the Royal State railways of Siam. It was officially opened to serve customers on 24 February 1928 at 4.30 p.m. by King Prajadhipok as documented in His Majesty’s daily Royal duty archives⁸. The hotel provided only 14 rooms of accommodation. However, this small hotel was once in a while the talk of the town in the old days. It was a place that always served a community of Siamese high society and celebrities during that period. Full-services provided at the hotel were a dance floor, bar & restaurant and also a high tea to serve customers with the high standard as in Europe. The hotel ran their business for 20 years before being closed forever in 1968. The building was converted to use as storage at the Central Train station.

The photographs of this establishment are difficult to find the present; here is the only photograph with the name of the hotel that could be found.

⁷ A British retail bank which operated in England and Wales from 1833 until its merger into the National Westminster Bank in 1970; it remains a registered company but is dormant. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Provincial_Bank

⁸ Though the date had been recorded as 24 February 2470 (B.E.), it was a time when Siamese used the old calendar which will change the year after Songkran’s day at April 13th of every year.

Source :

<http://portal.rotfaithai.com/modules.php?name=Forums&file=viewtopic&t=92&postdays=0&postorder=asc&start=10>



Figure 28: Rajadhani Hotel, Source: Kamhom (2009)

The reign of King Rama VIII (1935 – 1946)

During the Revolutionary period, there were two hotels built alongside Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue, namely the Rattanakosin and Suriyanonda Hotels. Both of them were opened on 24 June 1943⁹ by Field Marshal P. Phibulsongkhram. Originally, the name of Rattanakosin hotel was planned to be “Su-ri-ya-sat” as an honour to Major General Sun Suriyasat, the director of the Crown Property Bureau¹⁰, but Maj Gen. Sun refused this idea of Field Marshal Pibul, and thus it was replaced with the name “Rattankosin” as well as the name of Suriyanonda that was originally planned to be “Sri-ya-nonda” hotel as an honour to Lieutenant Colonel Pao Sriyanonda who also refused the idea of Field Marshal Pibul. Finally, the hotel was named “Suri-yanonda” as a combination of surname of both Maj Gen. Sun and Lt.Col. Pao.

A major difference between the two hotels was their statuses: Rattanakosin hotel was a five-star hotel but Suriyanonda hotel was a three-star hotel but still provided a full service to the travellers.

⁹ The National’s day during the Revolutionary period

¹⁰ The Crown Property Bureau was responsible for looking after the land and buildings on both sides of Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue, it operated as a government agency under the strict control of the state through the Ministry of Finance during the Revolutionary Period this implied that the “monarchical institution” had only symbols and no power. However, the passing of the Crown Property Law in 1948 to give the Crown Property Bureau the status of an organization independent of the government caused oversight and management be rested with a committee directly appointed by the King. This law had the effect of placing a large part of both sides of Ratchadamnoen Avenue under the direct control of the palace. (Prakitnonthakan 2007)

Later on both, of them were leased to the private sector and both names changed: “Rattanakosin” to “Royal” hotel and “Suriyanonda” to “Majestic” hotel.



Figure 29: The aerial photograph shows the Rattanakosin Hotel at the foreground, we are able to notice the commercial buildings on both sides of Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue as a background.

Source: National Archives by Muang Boran Journal’s website



Figure 30: The Suriyanonda Hotel. **Source:** National Archives

The reign of King Rama IX (1946 – present)

It was an era when the hotel business in Thailand adopted the chain hotels system into its management regime. Considering the length of the King Bhumibol era and its economic growth accounting for a vast variety of hotels. We aim to study only the buildings with heritage significance. As a result, the chosen hotels in the reign of King Bhumipol will be only those most significant to the present study.

The major change came about from the opportunity to serve group tours and air crew from several airlines, so the hotels built during at the beginning of this period were required to have more than 100 rooms to supply the demand of travellers that was growing every year. With a cooperation from many parties, airlines and the government of General P.Pibulsongkram, finally the first large scale hotel was built at the Raj-pra-song intersection and named the “Erawan Hotel”. Though the project began in 1951, it faced many accidents that caused trouble to the construction process to be performed in the appropriate timeframe. In 1955, the management team decided to build the “Phra Phom Statue” with the belief that Phra Phom will help protect and take care their hotel business in the future. On 9 November 1956 (Travel – Manager Online 2006), Phra Phom statue was inducted and became famous since then.

We can see the architecture of the Erawan hotel in the advertisement shown below in Figure 31. If the buildings still survived, they would be considered another heritage building with historic significance value. However, all the buildings have been supplanted with new modern style buildings. Currently, the Erawan is managing under the “Hyatt” chain and generally known as “Hyatt Erawan” hotel.

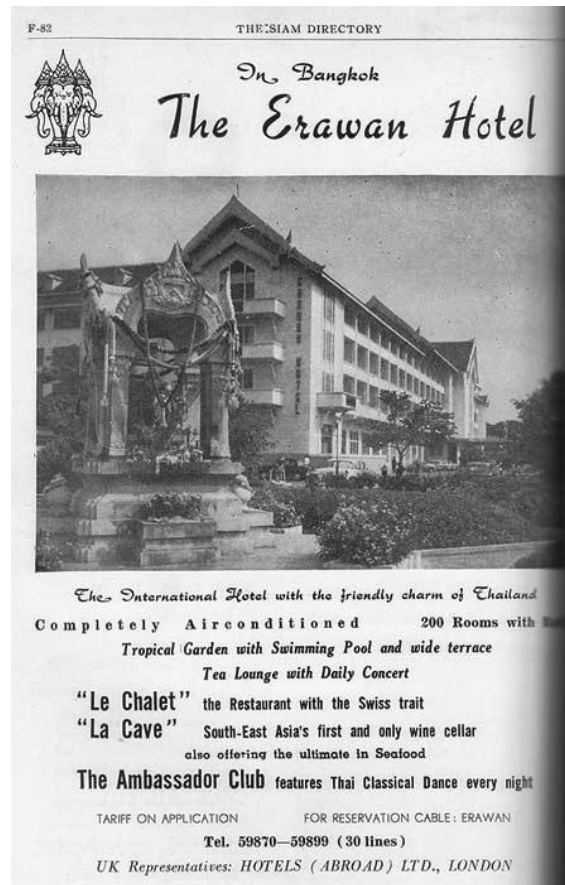


Figure 31: Advertisement of the Erawan Hotel, The Phra Prom Statue became a significant symbol of the hotel. **Source:** ThaiDVD.net (2010)

From a brief history of the hotel business in Thailand we have just mentioned, we could perceive that the most important factor to let the hotel itself survived and grown up with the evolving economics factors through times was the adaptation ability to constantly adjust itself to serve various types of tourists' demands locally and internationally. Some has survived but some ran out of business. Some had to change their status from the five-star hotel to three-star hotel, and some had to compromise with the additional add-up structure to be parking lodge and the rooms of accommodation to serve the increasing demand and considering the fact that commuting by car was a major transportation during past 50 years, nevertheless, still kept their heritage as a core which is now becoming a treasure to generate the extra revenues for the hotel itself. We will explore these original built hotels with a significant historic value as the Original Heritage Hotels,

Category I
(Original Heritage Hotels)

The selected hotel was originally built as a hotel and where the owner has decided to keep it as it is through changing times. In the United States of America, such a hotel must be at least 50 years old and eligible for National Register of Historic Places status and so does our study that will be also applied the same rule as well.

As we mentioned above in the history of hotel business above, there will be only some hotels able to keep all of the structures remainings untouched. There are total four hotels : The Oriental Hotel, The Railways Hotel, The Trocardero Hotel and The Rattanakosin Hotel. We will start from the oldest one which was built at the begining of hotel business in Siam, The Oriental Hotel.

Place: The Oriental Hotel, currently known as “The Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok”

Current Owner / Chain: The Mandarin Oriental Hotel group

Ages: Built 1876 / 136 years old (as of 2012)

Address: 48 Oriental Avenue (Soi Charoenkrung 40) Charoenkrung Road Bangrak Bangkok 10500

There is no doubt why the Oriental hotel became a legendary hotel of Thailand, as it was hosting important events held in Thailand, a place to serve both local and global VIP guests, stars and celebrities from around the world. In addition, its nineteenth century building survives in the form of the ‘Authors’ Residences’ at the core of the grand building complex, which won for The Oriental in no less than ten successive years (during 80-90s) the title ‘Finest Hotel in the World’, awarded by the Institutional Investor magazine since 1981. (Denby (1998, p.203))

Suffice to say here is that two buildings behind and beside the Authors’ Residences (in Figure 32 below) had been built to serve more demand from travellers around the world to experience the distinct, finest services provided by this hotel. The first added element, named “Tower Wing”, was finished and opened to use in 1 April 1958; it is a ten-storey

building that is able to provide 48 rooms of accommodation with the high-class restaurant called “Normandie Grill” on the top floor. The second added, named “River Wing”, was finished in 1977, built over land of the CPB that once belonged to the Chartered Bank. The River Wing was a big change to cope with the greater demand of customers; it is a 16-storey building for accommodation which is placed over a 5-storey parking lodge that is able to serve 350 cars, under a budget of 300 million baht.

This raises a controversial issue because some think the Oriental is not original (not a heritage hotel) anymore by combining the different designs of two buildings with the old one. However, this study does not focus only on the structure but the strategy of adaptive re-use being applied to the heritage buildings and have led it to survive during the globalization arises of the present.

What we should focus on is how we manage that heritage building, the Authors’ Residences, which is still providing a full functional hotel; there are luxury jewellery shops, rooms for accommodation, and the well known “The Authors Lounge” which serves a High-Tea regularly and also is a renowned place to hold a wedding ceremony in a dream of many brides-to-be in Thailand. Consequently, I think the Oriental hotel does a great job to generate income which benefits all parties, both the owner for care and maintenance costs and customers who enjoy experiencing the classic atmosphere embedded in this heritage building.



Figure 32: The Oriental Hotel in 1970s. Two buildings had been built to serve more customers, the tallest behind is “River Wing”, the one on the left is “Tower Wing”, and in the middle is the ‘*Authors Residences*’ (“Authors Wing”). **Source:** ThaiDVD.net (2010)

Place: The Railways Hotel (Hotel Hua Hin) or currently known as “Centara Grand Beach Resort and Villa Hua Hin”

Current Owner / Chain: Centara Hotels and Resorts

Ages: Built 1921 / 91 years old (as of 2012)

Address: 1 Damnernkasem Road, Hua Hin, Prachuab Khirikhan 77110

Hotel Hua Hin (in Thai) was another hotel that had to adapt to cope with changes, starting in 1958 by building a connected three-storey building in modern architectural style to serve increased demand, this section being called “The Colonial Wing”. The original hotel had been called “The Railways Wing”.

However, as time passed, Hotel Hua Hin became out of fashion comparing to various choices of hotel in Cha-am and Hua Hin nearby. In addition, the care and maintenance costs were also increasing which forced the State Railways of Thailand (formerly the Royal State Railways of Siam) to seeking a partner to take care of this heritage hotel. Fortunately, in 1985 the cooperation between the State Railways of Thailand, The Accor group and the Central group made the project to conserve the hotel possible. It took four years for this major change before completion and being ready to serve customers again in 1989. The changes covered building more buildings and rearranging the landscape under the constraint of the original condition, as much as possible, including the Topiary

Garden where there was located a big elephant shape that become a symbol of this heritage place.



Figure 33: The combination of three wings (from left to right): Garden Wing, Railway Wing (in the middle), and Colonial Wing (near the sea). The big elephant tree is also noticeable. **Source:** Yimwhan.com (2005)

Another major change was implemented in 1999 by constructing one more building that still kept the same design, called “The Garden Wing” which provides 207 rooms of accommodation. There were also several minor changes such as the superior room in the Railway Wing and Colonial Wing that had been changed to modern styles in both interior and bathroom to serve clients’ needs in the 21st century.

In summary, this is a good example how to manage a heritage building that contains high value and the historic significance related with Thailand’s history. A cooperation between the international hotel chain and Thai partners, who have the same vision to conserve rather than destroy with the highest respect for the original architecture is the key to success to manage this heritage hotel for the next generations.

Place: Trocadero Hotel, currently known as “New Trocadero Hotel”

Current Owner / Chain: Unknown

Ages: Built 1927 / 85 years old (as of 2012)

Address: 343 Surawong Road Suriyawong Bangkok 10500

The ownership of the Trocadero hotel was transferred from the Bunnag family to others, who are not able to be find. The new owner changed the name to “New Trocadero Hotel”. Though the original building remains, nothing is left to tell the story of the most fashionable hotel during the start up period (1920s).



Figure 34 : Hotel New Trocadero in the present , **Source:** ThaiDVD.net (2010)

There is also a solid evidence about the bad service the hotel provides in the Trip Advisor Website : *Had booked for 5 nights as it was fairly cheap.. Left after the first night. Its not a hotel, its a breeding ground for cockroaches and bugs. Staff are rude and unhelpful. Internet not open till 11am. Have to pay a 1000baht deposit for the room key and mini bar which had bugs in it.. Nowhere near anything. Dirty place. Stay at lub-d backpackers if u want cheap in the area. Its more like a hotel than this place is and at least its cheap with friendly staff. Otherwise pay a little more as there are heaps of hotels closer to patpong markets and in the area at reasonable prices.*¹¹

The comment mentioned above will give a picture of the hotel management problem. Hence, it would be very difficult to improve the services provided by the current owner.

To the author personally, it is a tragedy that we cannot help to protect this heritage hotel’s survival with the constraint of the competitive market for tourism business in the real life situation. The hotel does not have a parking lodge, which is a crucial factor to run a big

¹¹ A comment from customer was taken from the TripAdvisor website:
http://th.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g293916-d1719727-Reviews-New_Trocadero_Hotel_Bangkok-Bangkok.html

scale hotel for the hotel business in Thailand. And last but not least, the care and maintenance costs to take good care of the heritage buildings are considerable but which the generated income might not be able to cover by providing a one-star service standard of the hotel.

Place: Rattanakosin Hotel or currently known as “Royal Hotel” in English

Current Owner / Chain: The Crown Property Bureau and let as private sector leases

Ages: Built 1943 / 69 years old (as of 2012)

Address: 2 Ratchadamnoen Avenue Bangkok 10200



Figure 35: Royal Hotel in the present , **Source:** TripAdvisor’s Website

The status of the hotel has changed from the top five-star and luxury to be a three-star hotel as is reflected in several comments of visitors. The ownership still belongs to CPB but is let out to private sector leases with the building then changing its name in English to be “Royal Hotel” (though still keeping the original name in Thai).

With the effect of chain hotels, the hotel had to adopt itself with a lesser number of travelers who always prefer to have the equivalent standard that they get in their own countries. In addition, a good location for a hotel also shifted from the Rattanakosin Island to the Silom Road and Rajprasong areas or any areas that are more convenient to

the tourists. However, the location of the Royal hotel is still remarkable and suits the visitors who want to experience Rattanakosin Island. A walking distance to the Grand Palace, Khao San road, Giant Swing, etc. is still a strength of the hotel.

There is also a related issue Thailand's political history affecting the Rattanakosin hotel, as protesters in the October 1973 and May 1992 uprisings needed to ask help from the Rattanakosin hotel to be a shelter from the soldiers or even to serve as a small hospital to take care of the people who got hurt from the protests.



Figure 36: The protest on October 1973. **Source:** National Archives

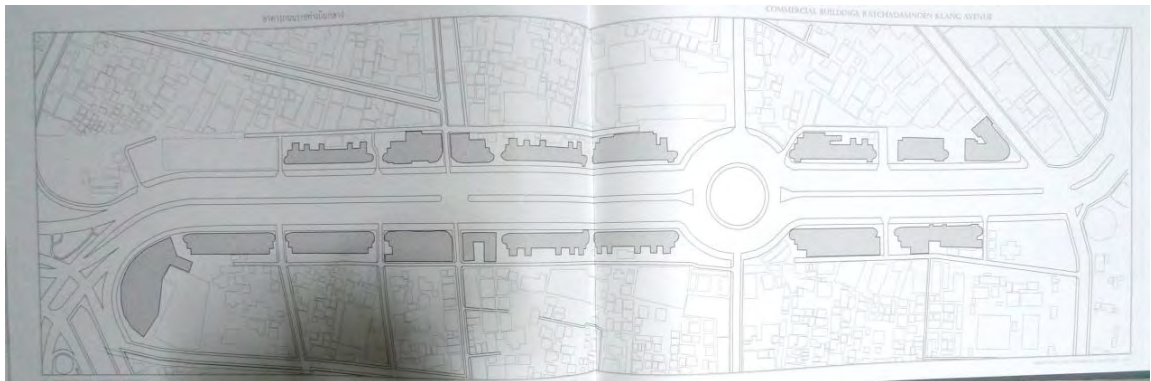


Figure 37: Ratchadamnoen Klang group of buildings under CPB, the Royal hotel is on the far-left (at the corner) **Source:** Architectural Drawings of Historic Building & Places in Thailand Book (Li-Zenn 2008)

Luckily, this heritage building belongs to the CPB who also takes care it as part of a group of buildings on Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue (Figure 37). Hence the outer

structure can be kept in a very good condition. The challenge to overcome is how to maintain it and run it in a competitive world as a hotel business in the future.

Summary

In this chapter we have observed the history of the hotel business in Thailand which began in the reign on King Mongkut, nearly 150 years ago. The major change in the local hotel industry started in the current reign of King Bhumibol when the chain hotels became big players in the market. The local hotels were affected by the capacity of the hotel services including an international standard of cleanliness of rooms, facilities provided, and other services based on a western standard to serve groups of tourists and travelers from around the world. Hence, it is unavoidable to adapt and apply the new strategies to let the hotel catching up the new business direction.

In our study, there are only four hotels that fit well with the condition of being aged beyond 50 years. Two of them are surviving well and still providing services of five-star hotel standard whilst the other two are inevitably degraded from five-star to a lower standard.

The hotels left in the competitive market are the ones that adopt a partnership in terms of a chain system such as the Mandarin group, Accor group, and Centara. The partnerships not only provide an investment to serve the higher-end customers, but also services to cope with international standards and networks to lead tourists from around the world to stay in the hotel. However, the partners who come and understand the value of the heritage buildings (as hotels) are also a crucial factor. Both Oriental and Railways Hotel were lucky to have management teams with a vision to keep and protect their heritage in good condition. That heritage became a source of cultural capital that continues to generate income for the hotel. They were both required to build more buildings to serve the increasing number of customers. At this point, the current “Centara Grand Beach Resort and Villa Hua Hin” is doing a better job by keeping the added structures in some harmony with the original building of the Railways Hotel.

On the other hand, other two hotels that are managed by local management, New Trocadero and Royal Hotel, had to degrade themselves to serve another group of tourists. Analyzing from what we have observed in the hotels and comments from travellers' websites, both of them do not evolve a good perception and should be worrying whether their hotel business will be able to survive in the future. The facade of the Royal hotel is well protected, but only because it belongs to the CPB.

Last but not least, another hotel that is worth to mentioning here is the first hotel that applied the re-use strategy to turn a luxurious villa into the hi-class hotel, namely the first Royal Hotel at Sathorn road (Thailand Hotel). This villa was operated as a hotel for a short while before the CPB decided to lease it to the Russian Embassy. When the lease contract ended in 1999, this heritage building was left empty for a while, then a land developer in the name of "Golden Land" came to propose a project to build a new office tower and a luxury hotel by having this heritage building in the middle. The CPB, owner of this property, approved that proposal. The new heritage building will constitute one part of the hotel. The chain hotel who took part in this is "W Hotel" group. It was planned to finish at the end of 2012, so we cannot at this time evaluate what will happen but hopefully this will be another option that can help protect heritage buildings, as is also proof from the success of the Oriental Hotel and the Railways hotel.



Figure 38: The old Royal Hotel on Sathorn road will be functioning as a hotel in the end of 2012. **Source:** Narin N.

Chapter 3

Category II (Re-Use in Historic Building as fabric)

Boutique is a french word meaning “A small shop, especially one that sells fashionable clothes, jewelry and the like”

Boutique hotel has been classified as one category of hotels since the beginning of the first small, designed hotels were introduced in the United States. In 1984, two businessmen, Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell, developed a “Morgans” hotel by hiring a famous designer, Andree Putman, to design a small hotel on Madison Avenue in New York City. With an instant hit, the hotel revolutionized the hospitality industry with the introduction of the “Boutique Hotel” concept, characterized by personalized service and home-away-from-home ambiance in a setting of timeless elegance (Morgans Hotel Group 2004). Boutique hotels differentiate themselves from larger chain/branded hotels and motels by providing personalized accommodation and services / facilities. Some of them might have some overlap between the concept of a small boutique hotel and a bed-and-breakfast. In Thailand, the concept of boutique hotel has been widespread and used throughout the tourism business after a “Tom-Yum Kung” crisis in 1997. During the economic crash, some of the unemployed began to start up their own small businesses including a small resort/hotel; however, they all had to compete with larger chain hotels that provide a full range of professional services and without any support from government, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and any related agencies; hence some of them had to leave the hotel business subsequently.

In June 2010, Krung Thai Credit Cards (KTC) launched the first Thailand Boutique Awards 2010 in collaboration with Krungthep Turakij, sponsored by TAT and MasterCard, to promote the tourism industry and help revive the Thai economy. It was the first official attempt to help a small hotel businesses in Thailand as it was realised government support is not enough to cover SMEs businesses.

Apart from the prize, one of the most important key success factors for the boutique hotels is a distinctive style and the services provided by them. To prove this fact a real customer's feedback is required. In the past, some twenty years ago, it would be very hard to find several customers' feedback on each hotel thus most customers were willing to pay a premium for a chain hotel to guarantee a professional service with international standard from the Western world during their stay.

Luckily, with the emerging Web 2.0 technology allowing users to upload their content to the server, the world has changed once again. Not only does it help people all around the world to get connected and stay in touch with "just one-click" (you can try "facebook"¹² for instance) but also there is an impact from consumer behaviour, especially on a changing decision making process. In the virtual world of Web 2.0, people change their behaviour and love to share everything on their own personal webpage including their thoughts, ideas and experiences via comments on their own Walls on the facebook. As a result, an online seller is also required to adapt a new method to do a marketing campaign by putting promotions on newspaper ads, billboard ads and TV ads into their potential customers' mailboxes or via their personal facebook fan page. Additionally, multi choices of low cost airlines to many destinations lead more and more foreigners to come across the continents and to spend more time to enjoy and exchange experiences throughout their stay in the neighbour countries with an acceptable budget per trip.

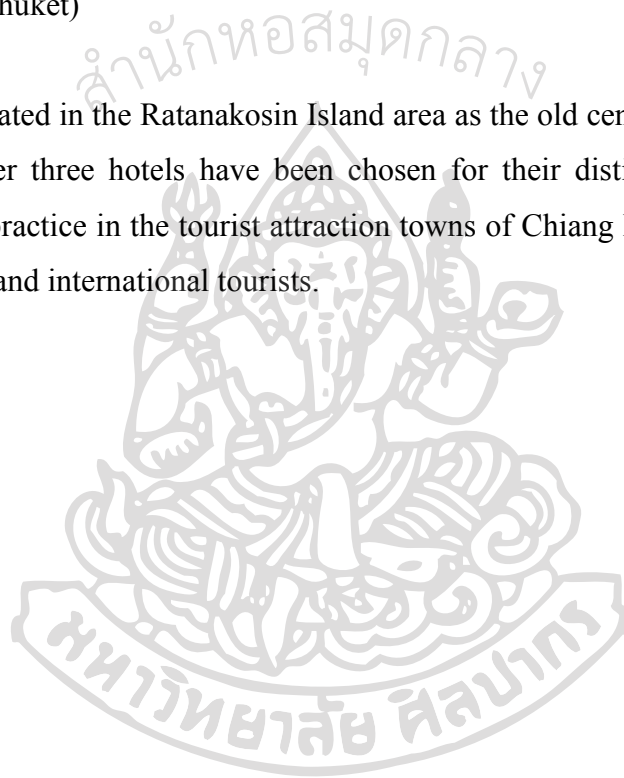
The small boutique hotel business is still in a growth phase and is becoming a first choice for a new generation who share a lifestyle such as travelling to gain and exchange experiences with local people as well as an intention to be an entrepreneur who loves to take care of friends from abroad. In Thailand, we will be able to find boutique and design hotels in several cities especially tourist spots. In this chapter we will focus on Bangkok, Hua Hin, Chiang Mai and Phuket areas.

¹² Facebook users = 1 million in 2004 and reached 500 million in 2010 (from Time Magazine : Person of the Year 2010, December 27, 2010 / January 3, 2011)

The chapter will cover hotels in the list below:

1. Samsen 5 Lodge Bangkok
2. Sam Sen Sam Place
3. Old Bangkok Inn
4. The Bhutorn
5. Baan Dinso
6. Bunthomstan (Chiang Mai)
7. The Hen (Hua Hin)
8. Sino House (Phuket)

No.1-5 are located in the Ratanakosin Island area as the old center of Bangkok in the past while the other three hotels have been chosen for their distinct character with a best conservation practice in the tourist attraction towns of Chiang Mai, Hua Hin and Phuket, for both local and international tourists.



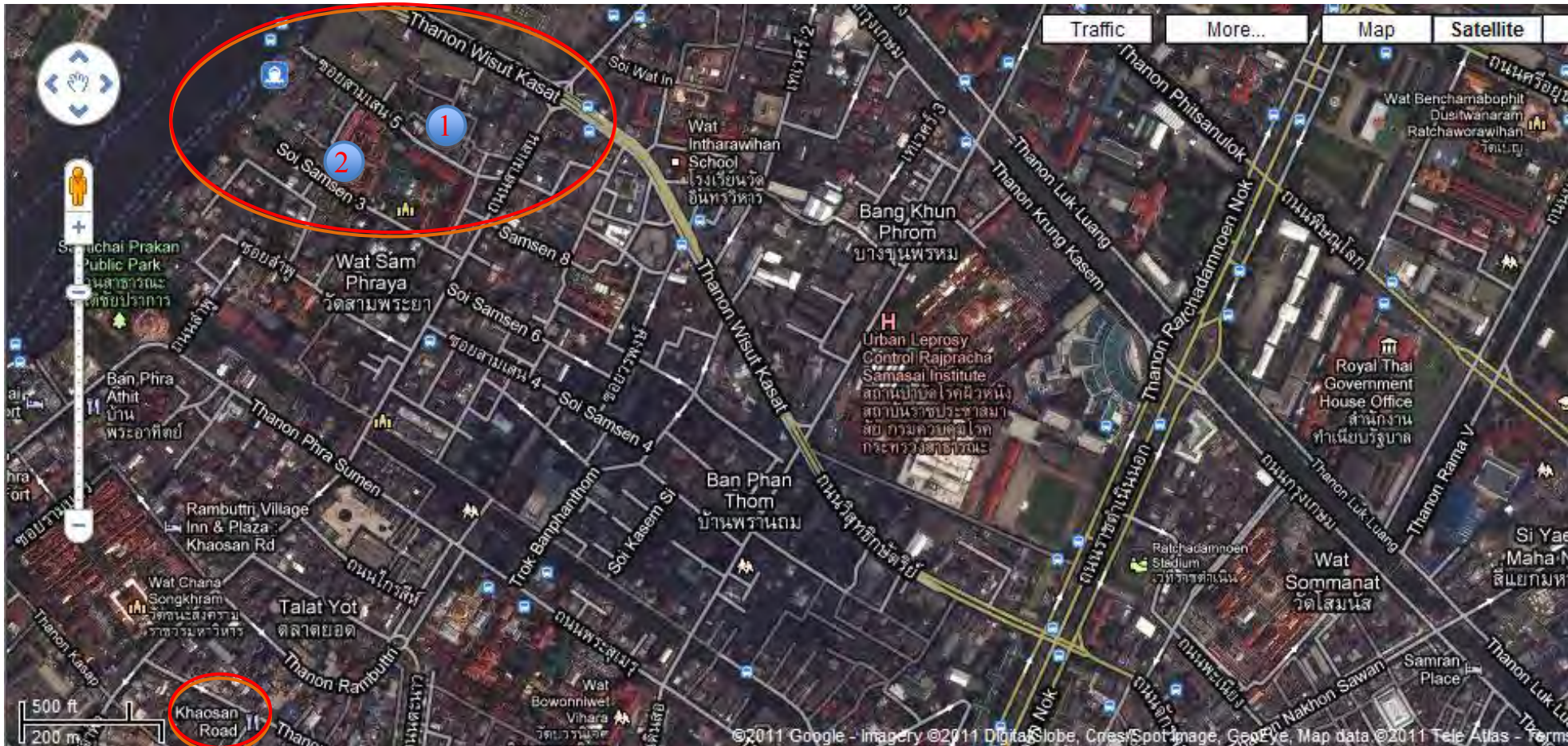


Figure 39: Bangkok Map 1 captured around the area of Samsen Road near Khaosan Road (on the lower-left), illustrates locations of (1) Samsen 5 Lodge and (2) Sam Sen Sam Place, **Source:** Google Map

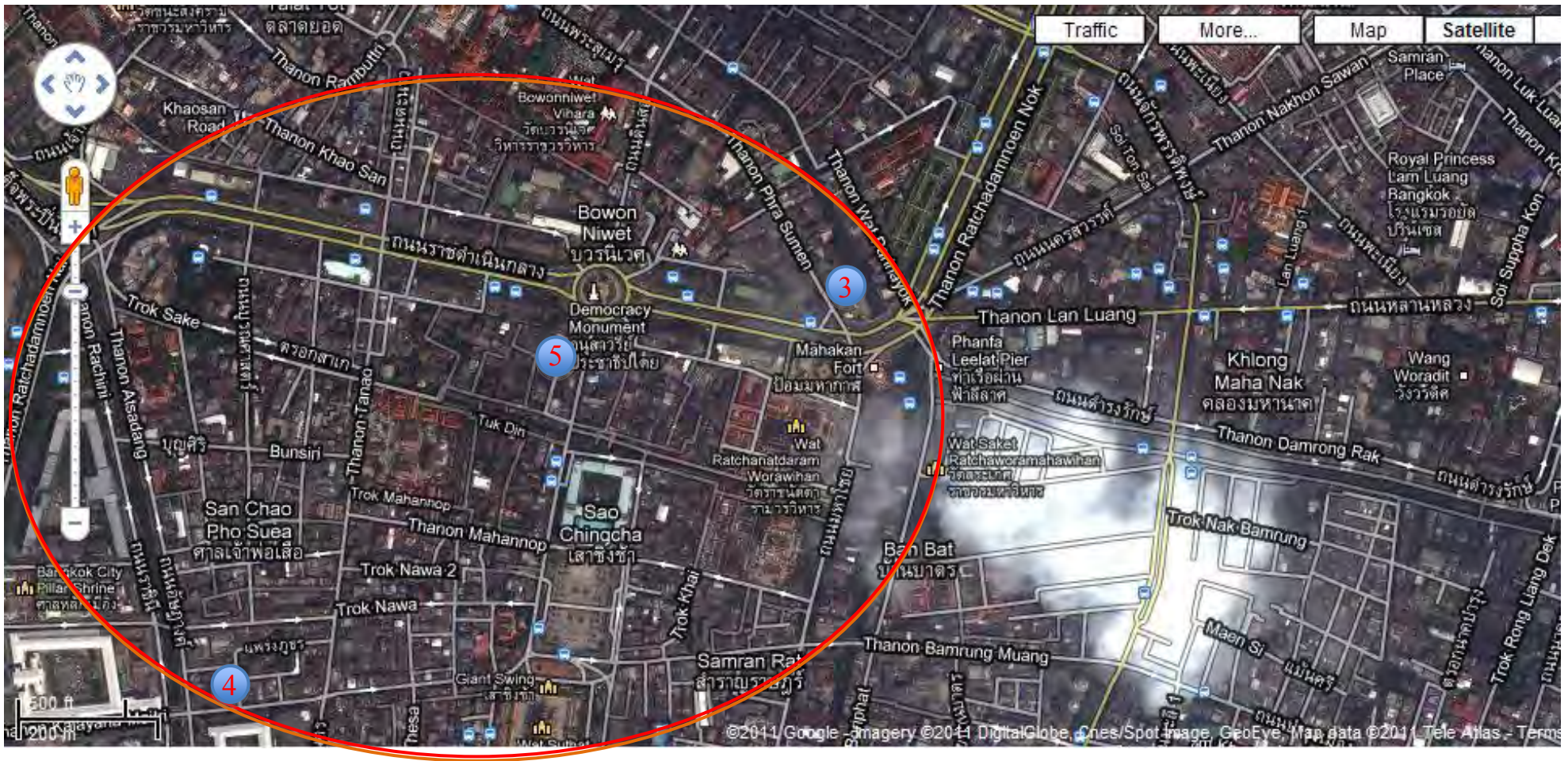


Figure 40: Bangkok Map 2 captured around the area of Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue, the Democracy Monument at the centre of Map, illustrates locations of (3) Old Bangkok Inn, (4) The Bhutorn and (5) Baan Dinso, Source: Google Map

Place: Samsen 5 Lodge Bangkok
Owner: Warapan Klampaiboon
Started Project in Year: Built 1977 / Renovated 2008
Budget: 700,000 baht
Address: 58/1 Soi Samsen 5 Samsen Road Phar Na Korn Bangkok 10200
Number of Rooms: 3 rooms
Price: 1,200-2,000 baht



Figure 41: Samsen 5 Lodge (in the red border) where the owner converted a 90 Square Metre house to become three rooms of accommodation, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

An opportunity to work with legendary Sri Lanka architect Geoffrey Bawa¹³ and a concept of Green Architecture that serves the tropical Asian context and Colonial style had influenced Waraphan Klampaiboon to adapt a 90 Square Metres space to become three rooms of accommodation, also including his private office. Initially he planned to find a place for his private architecture office but the space was bigger than he expected. With a nice location at Soi Samsen 5, the nearby Khao San Road and able to be accessed both on foot from Samsen Road and by boat from the Chao Phraya River, an idea of a budget accommodation arose to serve budget tourists who want a better accommodation compared to the Khaosan Road area. The project started in 2008 and took six months to

¹³ The Sri Lankan Architect Geoffrey Bawa is now regarded as having been one of the most important and influential Asian architects of the twentieth century. (www.geoffreybawa.com)

finish and to be ready to serve as pleasant accommodation where the customer can enjoy privacy with a Green Architecture design during their stay.



Figure 42: With a concept of green building, an interior design was focused on the ability to bring in natural light for energy saving. **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 43: The Colonial style for the interior in the “Chinese Room”, biggest among the three rooms of Samsen 5 Lodge, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

Place: Samsen Sam Place

Owner: Wimonrat Isarankroon na Ayutthaya

Started Project in Year: built 1897 / renovated 2006 / started business 2007

Budget: 5 million baht

Address: 48 Soi Samsen 3 Phra Nakorn Bangkok 10200

Number of Room: 12 rooms

Price: 590, 790, 1400 to 2400 baht



Figure 44: A colourful old house in Soi Samsen 3 which later became a name of this guesthouse “Sam Sen Sam Place”, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

This is a heritage building owned by ‘Ammard Tre Luang Wai-tha-yhet sarang kroon’ (Chuer Isarankroon Na Ayutthaya), a father-in-law of Wimonrat Isarankroon Na Ayutthaya, who graduated from a medical school in England then went back to work in Siriraj Hospital before he quit to be an obstetrician and operated from this house as a medical center to take care of his patients. After his death, the place had been changed to be a 40-room nursery ran by Wimonrat. With a tedious job of nursery, Wimonrat decided to cease her nursery business and change this heritage building to become a budget accommodation to serve budget visitors who want to stay near the Khaosan Road area. She began her project by asking a professional architect to estimate a cost to renovate her place; however, the total cost of the project far exceeded her budget hence she needed to find another solution. Luckily, her best friend next door, Sarunyu Singha or so-called ‘Bobby’, brought an idea to renovate and redesign the old heritage house with a Do It Yourself (DIY) concept. Bobby lived in the United States for some years, hence gaining experience and knowing the Western lifestyle in depth. His DIY project started from managing a space on the 2nd floor to be seven rooms of accommodation. Each room used a combination concept of pastel colour and was assigned a unique name of fruit to differentiate it. The well-treated timber floor was a distinctive characteristic of Sam Sen Sam Place, even in a bathroom (as shown in Figure 47 below). Other five rooms of accommodation were designed in different style situated in the ground floor.



Figure 45: Decorated props to represent “Thainess” are noticeable at the front door, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 46: A simple, neat and clean decoration in each room that makes visitors feel like home is a special character of this charming guesthouse, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 47: The timber floor in a bathroom shows how the owner tried best to keep the original structure of the old house as much as possible, which seems to impress visitors, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 48: The extended structure has been built into the space between two buildings, a house of the owner and a remaining renovated guesthouse, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

Place: Old Bangkok Inn
Owner: Nantiya Tulyanond
Started Project in Year: Built 1937 / started 2004
Budget: 10 million baht
Address: 607 Phra Sumain Road Phra Nakorn Bangkok 10200
Number of Room: 10 rooms
Price: 3,500 – 5,000 baht

In 2004, Mrs. Nantiya Tulayanont prepared herself for retirement as a Bank Manager at the age of 57 years. She had worked with Thai Airways which given her an opportunity to travel around the world. Among those trips abroad, the exceptional service provided by ‘Count of Normandy’ who changed his castle to be a Boutique Hotel inspired her with the idea of a Boutique hotel business on her land whose tenure had been given by King Rama V to her husband’s ancestor.

The 400 square metre land is located in the center of Rattanakosin Island on the Phra Sumen Road near the Golden Mountain and Ratchadamneon Klang Avenue. This led to the name of the place to be ‘Old Bangkok Inn’ to refer to a location in the center of Bangkok’s old town in the past (Rattanakosin Island).



Figure 49: The Old Bangkok Inn is located on a prime location near the Golden Mountain, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 50: The old shop houses had been converted to be a boutique hotel with a well-executed design, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 51: The first floor has been used as a registration counter and is also able to be converted as a tea room to provide high tea in the afternoon, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

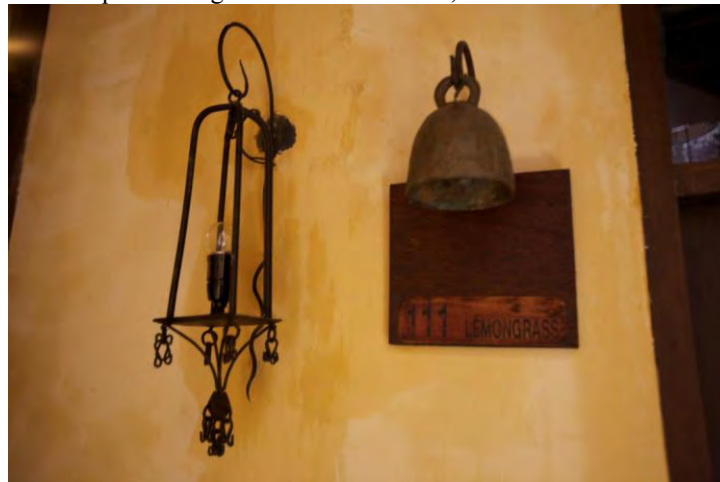


Figure 52: Colour and painted style to replicate an old-fashioned heritage building had been chosen for both interior and exterior of the Old Bangkok Inn. The picture shows room plate, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 53: Bathroom is decorated the same as the bedroom both in tone and manner, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 54: A room on the ground floor has a personal small garden outside the room, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

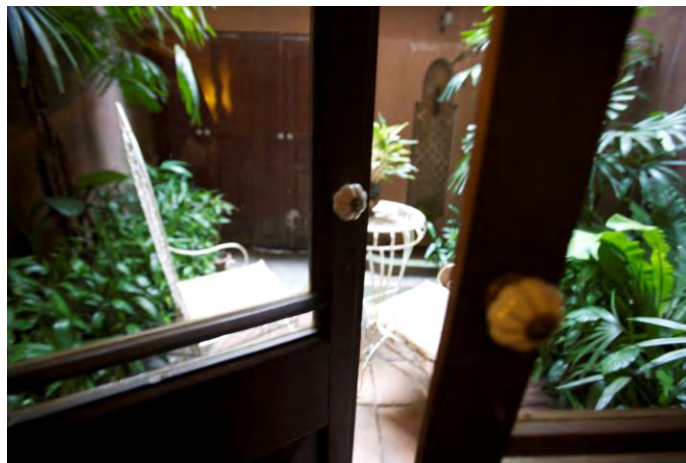


Figure 55: A small garden helps to make a place fresh and lets a visitor relax to read a book during the daytime, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 56: The bathroom's door design is remarkable to enhance the atmosphere of the old-fashioned,
Source: Naratuschan N.



Figure 57: The smallest room on the 2nd floor also designed in an appropriate manner by utilising space and colour, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

Place: The Bhumon

Owner: Direk Sengluang & Chitlada Sengluang

Started Project in Year: Built 1897 / renovated 2009

Budget: unable to define

Address: 96-98 Phrang Bhumon Phra Nakorn Bangkok 10200

Number of Room: 3 rooms

Price: 3,200 / 4,000 / 4,500 baht

'Sam Phrang' is a renowned community in Bangkok who have stood and resisted a globalization influence to remove old houses and replace with new modern buildings. 'Sam' means three and 'Phrang' means intersection, which represents three zone of the community, Phrang Nara, Phrang Bhumon and Phrang Sapphasart of Khet Phra Nakorn.

Mr. & Mrs. Sengluang, architects & interior designers who love to travel in countries with a full background of history and rich cultural aspects, were urged to be antique furniture collectors and later inspired to have their own boutique hotel in the old town of Bangkok. They accidentally found this old vacant building in Phrang Bhutorn; however, it was in a very severe condition and carelessly maintained by misuse as a place to grill pork instead of being lived in as a house. These early Rattanakosin's shophouses were built in 1897; the Bhutorn is a two-block shophouse located at one corner where is very easy to access a communal garden. In addition, the most distinctive character that enriches this place is a continuation of a local community where ancestors rented their particular place from the Crown Property Bureau. And last but not least, the best services provided by the owner impressed all customers leading to the first rank among 162¹⁴ small hotes from Trip Advisor in a category of B&Bs and Inns in Bangkok since early 2010.



Figure 58: Genuine antique furniture of the owner's collection had been selected to decorate the Bhutorn. The picture shows a lobby of the hotel, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

¹⁴ as of January 2010 from http://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g293916-d1490521-Reviews-The_Bhuthorn-Bangkok.html



Figure 59: Original tiles had been revived back to the original by a professional manner of cleaning and retreating, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 60: The owner is a collector hence all of these China pieces are using to serve the High Tea for every visitor, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 61: A Gimmick of decorated flowers looked modern but also combining “Thainess” perfectly, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 62: The surface of furniture is the best evidence to reveal genuine antique furniture, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 63: Carefully decorated details on Duvet Cover Set harmonize with the tiles on the floor, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

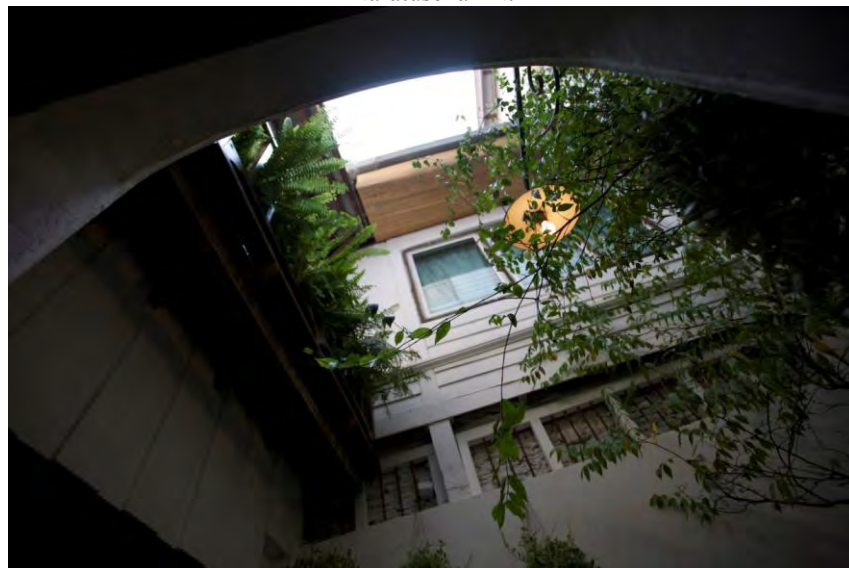


Figure 64: The building next door (of the Bhutorn) had been offered to renovate a shared part by the owner of the Bhutorn. The photo was taken on the open space backdoor of the Bhutorn, **Source:** Naratuschan N.
Place: Baan Dinso

Owner: Wanchai Akrawiwat & Bhutima Akrawiwat

Started Project in Year: Built 1922 / renovated 2006 / started 2007

Budget: 19-20 million baht

Address: 113 Trok Silph Dinso Road Bhavornnived Phra Nakorn Bangkok 10200

Number of Room: 9 rooms

Price: 900 – 2,000 baht

Mr. Wanchai & Mrs. Bhuthima Akrawiwat, owners of a construction company specialised in building hotels, found an advertisement to sell this old house in a newspaper. The house was built in the reign of King Rama V or nearly 85 years old by the only evidence on the Household Registration. The couple tried best to conserve all of the original structure of the house by removing unnecessary parts then restoring the house to the original construction combined with new technology to use a concrete basement floor, iron structure and covered by the original timber. The house was undergoing renovations by a concept of ‘change as little as you can and keep as much as you are able to do’.

After renovation, the second floor had been divided into four rooms of accommodation with the first floor left to be a reception and lobby for a hostel with a converted basement floor as an Internet and living room of the hostel. In addition, there are also five more rooms outside the main building with shared bathrooms to serve customers.

An abundance of awards, such as the Best Hostel in the World 2009 by Hostelling International, 10 Best Hostel 2009 in Bangkok by Hostel World, and last but not least the best Conservation Award 2009 by the Associations of Siam Architects (ASA), are enough to prove a high standard services provided by the owners and staff of Baan Dinso Hostel which we should follow as a new standard of boutique hotel with historic buildings as fabric in Thailand.



Figure 65: The neighbourhood around Bann Dinso is considered a crucial factor that helps to enhance the experience of culturally savvy visitors, who always love to gain more knowledge about local people,
Source: Naratuschan N.

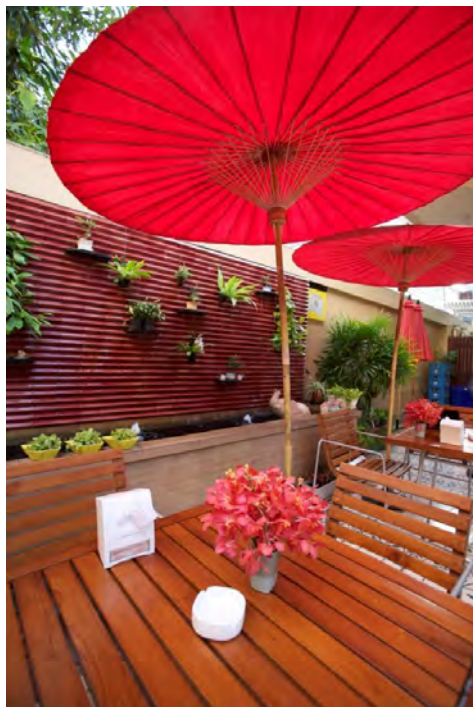


Figure 66: To make a place more relaxing from the environment surrounding, a waterfall was created on the left-hand side of the entrance to welcome a customer and also to use this space to serve breakfast as well, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

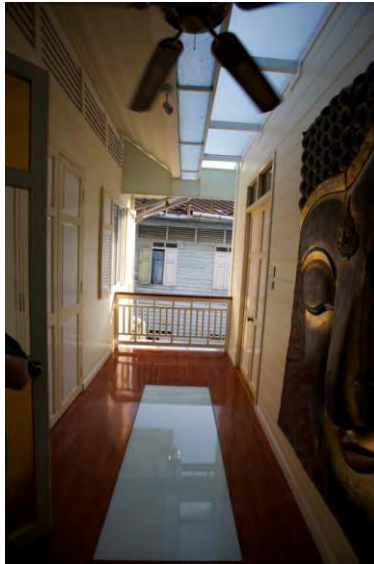


Figure 67: With an energy saving concept, a timber floor had been adapted to add a special glass to reflect the sunlight during the daytime on the 2nd floor, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 68: A simple, neat and clean room to make visitors feel like home is a main concept of Baan Dinso Hostel, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 69: With a limitation of space on the 2nd floor, a special size bed had been customised in the smallest room to serve as a twin room, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

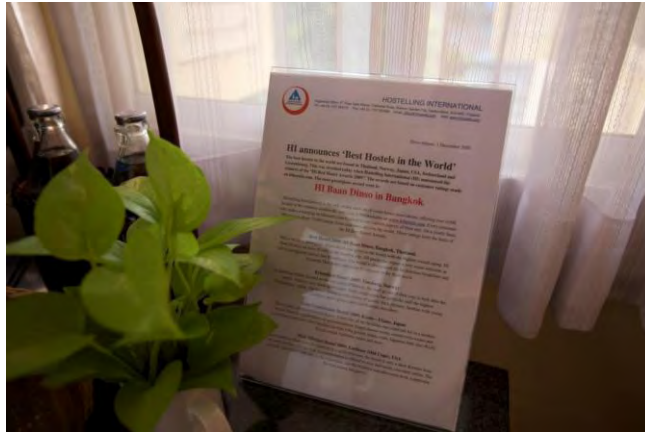


Figure 70: The 'Best Hostels in the World' in 2009 from Hostelling International would be the best way to describe how charming this hostel in a heritage building is, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

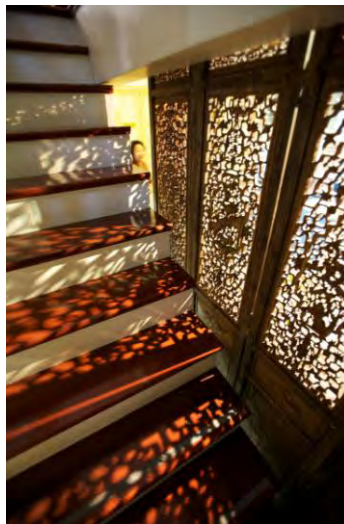


Figure 71: The light directed through antique shading creates a nice atmosphere to impress the visitor walking to the basement floor, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

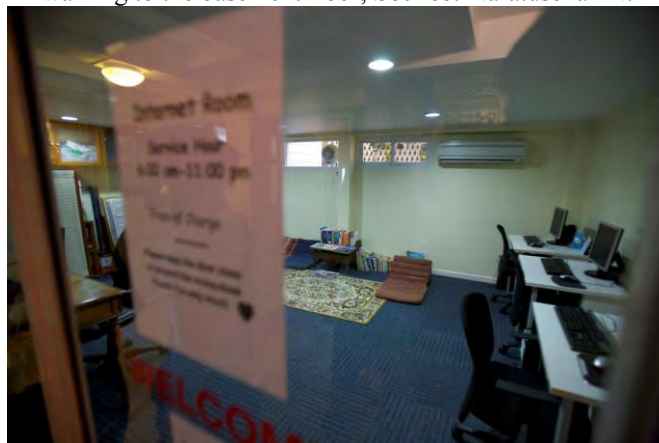


Figure 72: The underground of the house (original level of this old building) had been adapted and re-used to become an Internet Room and a common room for visitors, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

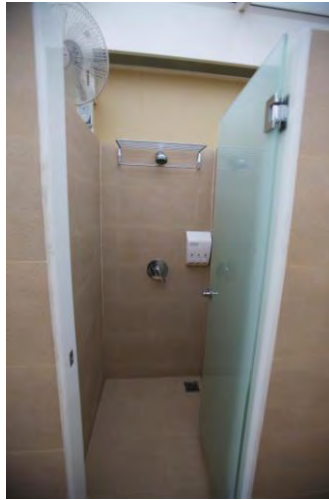


Figure 73: A shared bathroom outside of the building not only helped to solve a problem of the old buildings that normally put the bathroom outside but also comforted visitors as well, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

Place: Bunthomstan

Owner: -

Started Project in Year: Built / renovated 2008 / started 2009

Budget: -

Address: No.7 Nimmanhaemin Soi 5 T.Suthep A.Muang Chiang Mai 50200

Number of Room: 7 rooms

Price: 900 – 2,000 baht

Around 1999, Nimmanhaemin Road began to change from a residential area near University of Chiang Mai to become a ‘HIP’ (Highly Independent Place) of local tourists especially from Bangkok. Many Thai artists relocated to live in Chiang Mai and created art works to sell to foreigners. Nimmanhaemin Soi 1 is the best evidence of this, holding an annual ‘nap’ (Nimmanhaemin Art&Design Promenade) event (Figure 74) to promote their art works and raise awareness of an artists’ community in Chiang Mai among the public.



Figure 74: The 11th nap in December 2010 was the best evidence to display the artist community in Chiang Mai at Nimmanhaemin Road, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 75: A renovated old house to become a boutique hotel, **Source:** Bunthomstan website



Figure 76: An old house before renovation, **Source:** Bunthomstan website

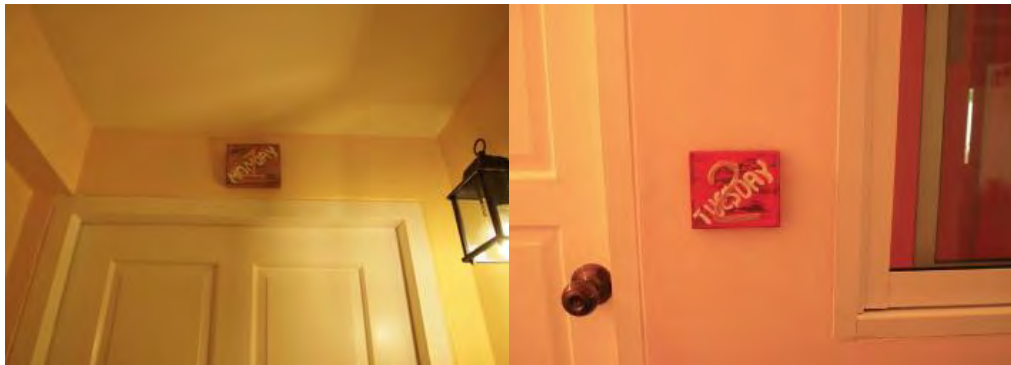
Combined with a changing life style of the local tourists, coffee shops, restuarants, pubs, bars and small hotels increased abruptly to serve the demand of tourists and a new generation of Chiang Mai’s teenagers. Among small hotels in the Nimmanhaemin area, Bunthomstan (“Bunthom” means sleep and “Stan” means place = a place to sleep) is one that used an old house to apply a re-use policy by changing the house to become an accommodation within the original fabric to serve local tourists who want to stay in the Nimmanhaemin area during their stay in Chiang Mai. By separating space into seven rooms of accommodation, a theme of ‘colour of the day’ has been applied by an assigned name of each room as Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday and then painting the wall in each room in Red, Yellow, Pink, Green, Orange, Blue and Violet respectively. With a size of room and atmosphere inside, there is created a mood of ‘feel like home’ to the customers.



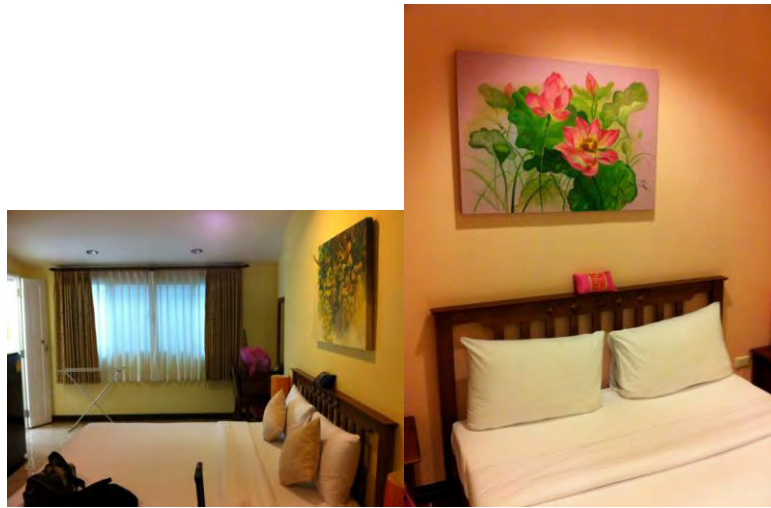
Figure 77: A 200 years old antique door imported from Pakistan had replaced the old fence in front of the hotel to enhance an old character of the hotel, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 78: A well decoration lobby of antique furniture enhanced the atmosphere of the old days, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figures 79-80: A room plate contains both name of the room and number with colour of the day for background (1=Monday=Yellow and 2=Tuesday=Pink), **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figures 81-84: Comparison between Monday and Tuesday rooms: a wall behind the bed and the bathroom are painted in the colour of the day theme, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 85: A theme of ‘a colour of the day’¹⁵ has been chosen by Bunthomstan not only for seven rooms but also interpreted to be decorated glass at the entrance as well, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

Place: The Hen Hua Hin Resort

Owner: Diskul family and rented by Suranard Lertkunaporn

Started Project in Year: built - / renovated -

Budget: -

Address: 31(Samnak Diskul) Naebkhehars Rd., Hua Hin, Prachuab Khirikan, 77110.Thailand.

Number of Room: 6 rooms

Price: 9,900 – 15,900 baht (Rack Rate)

"The Hen" was once the summer vacation home for the "Diskul" royal family. It was known to the public as the "Office of the Diskul family". The Hen is located in a very private and cozy seaside area of Hua Hin that maintains its classic luxury to this day.

The statement above has been put on the welcome page of the Hen Hua Hin Resort website to describe how this resort is special and unique among the abundance of resorts in the Hau-Hin area. ‘Diskul’ is one of the royal family branches of which ‘H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanupab’, a father of Thai history who devoted his life to serve Kings and country, is a progenitor.



Figure 86: H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanupab, **Source:** National Archives

Originally a contemporary bungalow during the late reign of King Rama VII, “The Hen” has been fully renovated to reprise the traditional Hua Hin style of relaxation by Suranard Lertkunaporn, an interior designer who fell in love at the first moment he visited here. The decor is a combination of vintage white with colonial furnishings for a truly relaxing experience. Suranard, nickname “Tong” from “Kai Tong” which means a cock, intended to name this resort as “hen” to honour his mother, her nickname “Kai” meaning ‘hen’ in English. He believes that customers will feel warm and relax like spending time with “mother” in the weekend during their stay in his resort. And last but not least, English words related to “hen” have been assigned to be a name of each room:

1. The Hen (Honeymoon suite)
2. The Rooster (Pool Villa)
3. The Chicken (Pool Villa)
4. The Pleiades (Sea View)
5. The Chick (Sea View)
6. The Pullet (Pool View)

¹⁵ The colour of the day had been used for uniform in the Mrigadayawan Palace during the reign of King Rama VI ; Sunday = Red, Monday = Yellow, Tuesday = Pink, Wednesday = Green, Thursday = Orange, Friday = Blue and Saturday = Violet.

The original summer room for the owner (main building) has been divided into two rooms, the Rooster and the Chicken, while the servant house has been divided into another four rooms.



Figure 87: The original Diskul Office plate still in the original place (Thai words on the left hand side of the picture) and The Hen Hotel Sign on the right hand side, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 88: A brass plate with a special finish and engraving in front of each room contains both name and room number, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 89: White Colonial furnishing to make customer feels relaxing, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 90: A decorated towel with a floating duck to represent “hen & chicken” as a welcome amenity in the room, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figures 91-92: The original tiles in Black & White colour led an interior designer to add Black on White furnishing furniture, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 93: A garden besides the main building has been converted to be an outdoor Jacuzzi Pool beside The Chicken & The Rooster rooms. The Black & White colour is also applied as decorated tiles in the pool,
Source: Naratuschan N.



Figure 94: The original timber structure of the Main Building has been conserved and painted in White,
Source: Naratuschan N.



Figure 95: The pathway in front of the main building replicates a chess board, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 96: The shared pool in front of the old servant house, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 97: The Sea View from “The Chick”, the favourite room of Suranard, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 98: The dining room is prepared to serve a high tea, in the first quarter of 2011, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 99: The historic photographs are installed on the wall of the dining room, among them the one in the middle was taken when King Bhumibol visited here to play music years ago, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 100: The bench that King Bhumibol once used here to play music is considered a most important place and people are requested to keep everything in the original condition by the Diskul family, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

Place: Sino House Phuket Hotel and Apartment

Owner: Akara Architect Co., Ltd.

Started Project in Year: built - / renovated -

Budget: -

Address: 1 Montree Road, Talad-Yai, Muang Phuket 83000

Number of Room: 30 rooms

Price: 1,600 – 3,000 baht

Phuket or so-called “Pearl of the Andaman Sea” used to be an important Southern Seaport of Southeast Asia after Penang in Malaysia, where numerous Western and Chinese immigrants lived during those days. It made Phuket become a mixture of cultures from both West and East, expressed by much evidence. Among that evidence is, a style of building called “Sino-Portuguese” which is easily observed and become a tourist attraction in addition to the beaches around Phuket.



๑๑. ถนนเยาวราช จ.ภูเก็ต ถ่ายจากมุมถนนกระบี่ สตรีภาพเห็นวงเวียนหอกระเจาตลิ่ง ถ่ายราวปี พ.ศ. ๒๔๙๕

Figure 101: Historical Photograph of Yaowaraj Road in Phuket in 1952, **Source:** website

In addition to “Sino-Portuguese” style, there are also a few buildings built by Treasury Department of Thailand that are still standing nowadays as shown in Figure 64 below,



Figure 102: The Puck-Sa-Va-yu-puck sign stands on top of the building to represent the property ownership of Treasury Department under Ministry of Finances, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 103: The Puck-sa-Va-yu-puck sign, **Source:** Ministry of Finance 2010

This building has been rented by Akara-Architect Co., Ltd. to be renovated as a hotel and named “Sino House Phuket Hotel” since 2005. The first floor and lobby have been added the decorative items as shown in Figure 66.



Figure 104: Hotel lobby has been decorated with Chinese style furnishings, **Source:** Sino House Hotel 2010



Figure 105: The Chinese style painted Wallpaper placed above the bed and a small lamp of Chinese appearance help to enhance the atmosphere of a Chinese house, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 106: The facilities in the room are well prepared for a long stay as a full services apartment, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 107: The big old tree helps to enhance a spirit of the place without any effort except good care & maintenance survive into the future, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

The lobby and style of decorations have obvious Chinese influences as also shown by the name of “Sino House” = House of Chinese, also the names of rooms such as “Shanghai Deluxe room”, “Beijing Deluxe room” and “Sino Suite”. The interior design of the rooms is modern with proper facilities as an apartment to serve a long stay visitor, with a

promotional discount rate charged. Though there is only a Chinese painting wallpaper above the bed and a small Chinese lamp in each room to represent “Chinese”, it is still considered to be a fine interpretation in a suitable and appropriate manner that works well with a modern living space. An aluminum framed glass wall is another good design element to bring in direct light that help broaden the room space. During my stay, I was luckily got a room with a great view of this big old tree that helped me enjoy my stay (Figure 107).

Summary

Though there are several types of accommodation that serve both local and international tourists who travel in Thailand, some boutique hotels become one of the choices in their mind. There have achieved under a high standard as evidenced by numerous rewards including No.1 rank in several respected travel websites for The Bhutorn and Baan Dinso. Not only good renovations and management plans have made them deserve such prizes but also good service that far exceeds customer expectation is a key success factor driving both of them to the highest recognition internationally. The location at the heart of the old town in the vicinity of tourist spots and also easy access to transportation are important criteria when seeking a heritage building to apply a re-use policy as a boutique hotel.

From a design aspect, “theme” is the first priority and necessary condition before starting both interior and exterior design. Without a strong foundation of the original building and furnishings as in The Bhutorn, Baan Dinso, and The Hen Hua Hin, a theme such as Green Design, Pastel & Fruit, Colour of the Day, and Chinese room were applied to Samsen 5 Lodge, Sam Sen Sam Place, Bunthomstan, and Sino House Phuket Hotel respectively to enhance and differentiate themselves from others. The yellow or mustard colour is the most popular colour that was chosen to paint both interior and exterior among hotels in the list, specifically Sam Sen Sam Place, The Old Bangkok Inn, Baan Dinso, and Bunthomstan.

Last but not least, social networking and the Internet become crucial, in that every hotel inevitably has its own webpage or at least a fanpage in Facebook to contact their ex-customers and prospected customers. The frequent questions asked before a decision to stay in a small boutique hotel are about what would be provided during their stay. What the owners suggest to do is to provide as much information as possible, especially photos to manage the expectations of prospected visitors. It also helps to reduce their complaints that might not come out directly during their stay but could be posted to some of Travel Agency websites which will discredit the hotel.

Applying an appropriate re-use policy to change an old building to a boutique hotel seems to be a tempting choice that is feasible and viable to retain a heritage building in the long run; however, without a source of funding and appropriate understanding, both design and services face a barrier to achieve a viable boutique hotel business in a competitive market. As discussed in this chapter, we can see several examples with different styles, themes and design. In the next chapter we will discuss two more types of heritage hotels: the interrelated category between types II & III and type III, Nostalgic Heritage.

Chapter 4

Category III

Built as Heritage Hotel (or the so-called Nostalgic Heritage in this study)

“...A boutique hotel, a characterful, low profile, though not necessarily low-budget, place to stay for the discerning traveller, who wants to soak up something of the local atmosphere at street level rather than opt for the bland international style of the major hotel chains.”¹⁶

Quoted from “Singapore Shophouse” by Julian Davison

Pretend, made up, faked heritage, well-done interpretation, preserved craftsmanship, distinguished architecture; mingling those terms can be expressed in what is called, in this study, “Nostalgic Heritage”.

Besides boutique hotels with a heritage building as fabric, entrepreneurs who are obsessed with the beauty of heritage buildings have an idea to design and build a hotel by applying a nostalgic theme. The concepts such as colonial style, the traditional Thai, local temple design and so on have been used as a reference to build a hotel.

There are several hotels that have applied the “Nostalgic Heritage” approach to build hotels in Thailand. Some are well interpreted but some are not. The famous one is the Mandarin Oriental Dhara Dhevi in Chiang Mai that also caused a controversial issue from the beginning of the project. Replicating the architecture of a Lanna temple and converting this to be a hotel for overnight stays by men and women, is considered severely inappropriate in Thai culture¹⁷, which becomes problematic. However, the entrepreneur defended the project with an argument that this is a way to pass on the craftsmanship through generations and to conserve the local knowledge by “Sa-Lha

¹⁶ Davison, Julian, *Singapore Shophouse*, National Archives of Singapore 2010, p. 204

¹⁷ There are two things that Thai are strictly forbidden to “touch” or “mention” in an inferior way, in every aspect – “Religion” and “Royal family”

Lanna” – local artisans in the Northern part of Thailand (Sunsuebsaeng 2011). In this chapter we will exclude this controversial project and focus on the interpretation of other boutique hotels instead.



Figure 108 : Mandarin Oriental Dhara Dhevi hotel, **Source:** Downloadable gallery from Mandarin Oriental Dhara Dhevi website

The first Thailand Boutique Awards 2010 have already been mentioned in chapter 3. The awards have been classified into 7 categories

1. Best Accommodation in region
2. Award for Architecture in region
3. Award for Renovation & Modification in region
4. Award for Community Travel
5. Award for Total Experience
6. Award for Culture
7. Award for Nature & Environment

There are numbers of hotels applying Nostalgic Heritage as a theme that were awarded from the first Thailand Boutique Awards 2010. For instance, in Chiang Mai, “Rachamankha” received the awards as follows: the Best Boutique Accommodation Award

Northern region, the Winner Award for Architecture, and the Outstanding Award of Culture in Northern region. “Ping Nakara” received two awards: the Outstanding Award for Architecture and the Winner of Culture in Northern Region. The three awards winner “Rachamankha” was designed and owned by Ongard Satrabhandhu, 2010 National Artist¹⁹. Ongard intended to adapt the local (Northern) architecture based on several temples as a design framework. In contrast is “Ping Nakara”, where the colonial style was applied as a design theme to build up a three-storey, five-star boutique resort and spa in the middle of Chiang Mai old town. In the Southern region, two hotels that won the Award of Culture are Devasom Hua Hin resort and Plearnwan, both located in the Hua-Hin area, Prachuab Kirikhan. The first won the Excellent award and the latter won the Outstanding Award of Culture. Devasom has applied the colonial style while Plearnwan adapted and applied the local market shophouse as a theme for their boutique hotel.

Although, none of the hotels in the Bangkok area was awarded in the Thailand Boutique Award 2010, it should be noted that the remarkable hotel named “The Eugenia” (Figure 120) is one of the best hotels of its kind. The hotel, designed by a Taiwanese interior designer, is located in the middle of Bangkok, in Soi Sukhumvit 31. In addition, there will be one more type of hotel mentioned in this chapter, an interrelated type between reuse of an historic building as fabric (Type II) and built as a heritage hotel (Type III), based on conserving the original historic building and also constructing more buildings by referencing the structure of the historic building as a design guideline to the new buildings. It will be identified as “Hybrid Heritage” in this study. “Ariyasomvilla Hotel”, “U Chiang Mai hotel” and “Chedi” are selected to be discussed here, as shown in Figures 109 to 111 below:

¹⁹ the appointment was made for his contribution to the field of visual arts (contemporary architecture)
source : <http://www.bangkokpost.com/print/185980/>



Figure 109: The Ariyasomvilla boutique hotel is located in Soi Sukhumvit 1. The hotel uses the old heritage building, shown in this photograph, as a benchmark for the design of new constructed buildings as hotel accommodation, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 110: The U Chiang Mai boutique hotel is located at the center of Chiang Mai old town. The hotel converted the heritage building, shown at the back in this photograph, to become a library and spa. In contrast with the Ariyasomvilla (Figure 109), U Chiang Mai applied the local architecture for the design of new constructed buildings as hotel accommodation, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 111: The main building of the old British Consulate in Chiang Mai was taken over then converted to become a five-star hotel. It is located along the bank of the Ping River at the centre of Chiang Mai near the Chiang Mai Night Bazaar area. The photograph has been taken from the lobby area with the heritage building conserved as a restaurant of the hotel at the background, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

This chapter will cover hotels in the list below:

9. Rachamankha (Chiang Mai)
10. Ping Nakara (Chiang Mai)
11. Devasom Hua Hin resort (Hua Hin)
12. Plearnwan (Hua Hin)
13. Palio Inn (Khao Yai, Nakorn Ratchasima)
14. The Eugenia (Bangkok)
15. Ariyasomvilla hotel (Bangkok)
16. U Chiang Mai (Chiang Mai)
17. Chedi (Chiang Mai)

These will be grouped and compared in four categories as shown below:

Inspired by local temple and architecture

- Rachamankha (Chiang Mai)

Colonial style influence

- The Eugenia (Bangkok), Devasom (Hua Hin) and Ping Nakara (Chiang Mai)

Replicating Towns²⁰

- Plearnwan (Hua Hin) and Palio Inn (Khao Yai)

Hybrid heritage

- Chedi (Chiang Mai), U Chiang Mai (Chiang Mai) and Ariyasomvilla Hotel (Bangkok)

All of them have been chosen for their distinct character and with the best interpretation and conservation practice among others in the tourist attractions of Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Hua Hin and Khao Yai, for both local and international tourists.

Inspired by local temple and architecture

Place: Rachamankha

Owner: Ongard Satrabhandhu

Budget: - (Never disclosed to public)

Address: 6 Rachamankha 9, Phra Singh, Chiang Mai, 50200, Thailand

Number of Room: 25 rooms

Price: 5,000-16,000 baht per night

Ongard Satrabhandhu, a graduate of Cornell and Yale universities and recently named 2010 National Artist in visual arts (contemporary architecture), is also well known in Thailand as a leader of the Corbusian concept – the architectural term derived from the legendary architect Le Corbusier. As a result, his earlier works had been presented through the purity of materials - naked, uncoloured concrete, with the use of geometric forms. When he started to design a boutique hotel in Chiang Mai old town, named “Tamarind Village”, the Eastern and traditional architecture became his influence instead of the Western. Ongard also noted that he had no idea about Lanna or Chiang Mai when he agreed to do the project of Tamarind Village hotel. After research and adventures into northern art and architecture, he was eventually captivated by this distinguished style. He visited a number of temples and resorts but had no strong idea until he found Wat Ton Gwen (Figure 112), some 5km from the city. The beauty of the colonnade proportions was striking to him, as revealed in the outdoor area of Tamarind Village hotel.

²⁰ Named after the CNN news report “*China replicating Western towns*” from the website:



Figure 112: Wat Ton Gwen the ancient temple, which is well known for its anaesthetic value and superbly planned outdoor space, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 113: All the existing trees were kept in the Tamarind Village hotel. Among them is a 200-year-old gigantic tamarind tree which gives its name to the hotel. Fully grown trees make Tamarind Village look like a long-established place, **Source:** Downloadable gallery from Tamarind Village website

When he completed Tamarind Village, Ongard decided to set a firmer foot in Chiang Mai, building a boutique hotel for his family – “Rachamangka”. It was inspired by the

golden section of Viharn Nam Tam of Wat Phra-That Lampang Luang, Lampang province.

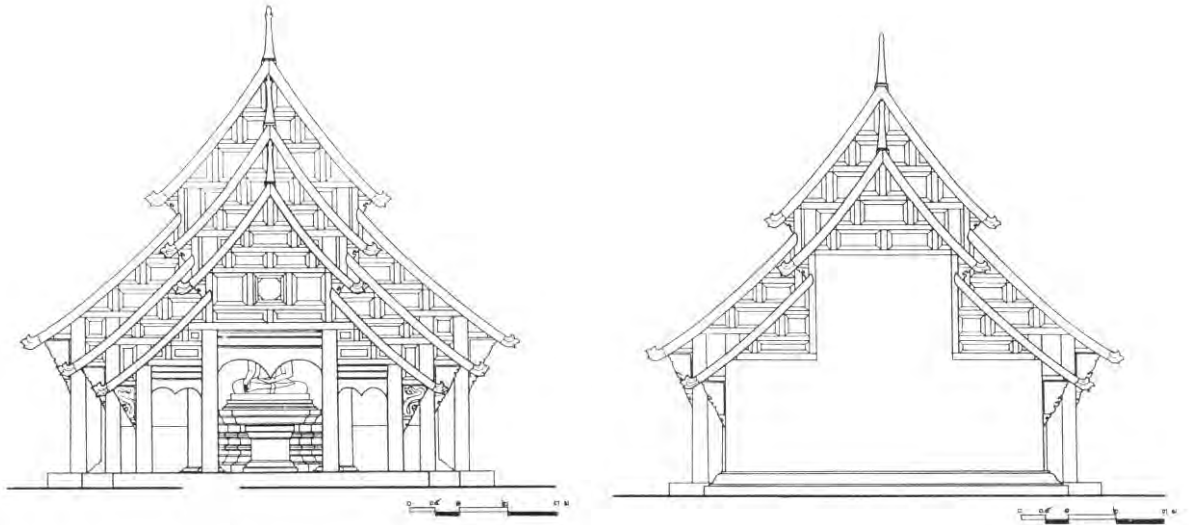


Figure 114: Sketch of Viharn Nam Tam, Wat Phra-That Lampang Luang, **Source:** Scanned from Thesis of Ms. Phannipa Pinthawanich, “*A study of Wat Phra That Lampang Luang architecture*”, Faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University 2003.



Figure 115: Viharn Nam Tam, Wat Phra That Lampang Luang taken in year 2008, **Source:** Ratana B.



Figure 116: Rachamankha hotel, inspired by the local northern temple architecture and blended with various aspects of the culture, creating a world class architecture, **Source:** Rachamangka website



Figure 117: Chinese courtyard of Rachamangka, **Source:** Rachamangka website

The Chinese courtyard has been adapted to blend with the local architecture of the Viharn Nam Tam at the centre as shown in Figures 116 and 117. Although adapting the golden

section of the temple as well as blending Chinese culture into the courtyard thus bringing an interesting result, the key success of Rachamangka is in the construction materials applied entirely throughout the building (Figure 118). Ongard intended to eventually adopt the local artisans working style and also use local construction materials such as lime, which is compatible with the local climate. In “Conservations with architects series: Vol. 07” by Li-Zenn publishing, a pocket book based on interviewed various famous Thai architects, Ongard’s success was acclaimed when his customer asked him a question : “You did renovate a group of heritage buildings, didn’t you?”. No wonder it was a question that made him smile and be happy to hear.



Figure 118: Lanna inspired architecture adopted for use in both Tamarin Village and Rachamanka. Ongard has an intention to maintain the style used by local artisans - that the works are not excessively neat but practical (noticeable at the column on the right-hand side of the image), **Source:** Downloadable gallery from Tamarind Village website

Colonial style influence

- The Eugenia (Bangkok), Devasom (Hua Hin) and Ping Nakara (Chiang Mai)

Among the Southeast Asia nations, Thailand is the only country that has never been politically colonized by Europe. However, with the rise of colonization in those day,

King Rama IV who had an open-minded vision, accepted the European way of thinking as a tool to change Siam to become “civilised” – to protect against the claims of “non-civilised” during the colonisation era. As a result, King Mongkut needed abrupt changes of atmosphere and environment in Siam; thus he adopted European influence such as studying Western languages, encouraged his children to study with an English teacher, and allowed the building of Western architecture in his palace to improve the image of Siam through the Westerner’s eyes. The reign of King Chulalongkorn, King Mongkut’s son, is considered as the era of the opening of Siam to the West, hence Western buildings thrived at their peak. After his European visits, European engineers and architects were hired by the Siamese Court and later by wealthy landlords who also preferred to follow the style of houses as the Royal model rather than the traditional style.

The area of southern Charoen Krung along the Chaopraya River in Bangkok, for instance, had been chosen to build the Custom House (Figure 119) to collect the taxes from foreigners. With a distinct location which foreigners had to pass along the way to the Grand Palace, a gigantic construction was built to set the first impression of visitors once they reached Siam. It was one of the Western buildings built during the reign of King Rama V that is still remaining nowadays.



Figure 119 : The Customs House designed by Mr. Joachim Grassi who served under the command of King Rama V : The welcoming of King Rama V returning from his first visit to Europe in 1897AD, **Source:** National Archive

The surviving European influence of those buildings became the so-called “colonial style” of buildings as time passed. People who were impressed with the beauty of the colonial buildings materialized their dream by replicating the style of the colonial buildings into their boutique hotels. As mentioned earlier, the genuine colonial style buildings were limited to old town areas of Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Hua Hin, etc. where, however, there might be a constraint on hotel development because the city center in the present time might have shifted to other locations. A prime location of tourist attractions is always the first priority when real estate developers decide to build a new hotel to meet customer demand. Hence, to build a new hotel in such a location, a colonial style influence is undoubtedly tempting to those entrepreneurs who want to meet both their own needs and customers’ demands. The Eugenia and Devasom are good examples, being in locations where it would be nearly impossible to find genuine heritage buildings, in Soi Sukhumvit 31 and on land located in the middle between Cha-am and Hua Hin beaches, respectively. However, Ping Nakara is different, as its site is located opposite the Chiang Mai city center near the Wat Khet area that was once a center of timber trading and where colonial style buildings were built in those days. In these days, none of heritage buildings have been left in that area anymore so the owner decided to build the Ping Nakara to revive the spirit of Lanna craftsmanship in Chiang Mai as a center of timber trading once again.

Place: The Eugenia²¹

Owner: Mr. Eugene Yeh

Started Business in Year: Opened in 2006

Budget: 100 million baht

Address: 267, Soi Sukhumvit 31, North Klongtan, Wattana, Bangkok 10110

Number of Room: 12 rooms

Price: 9,000 and 22,000 baht per night

²¹ The hotel *Eugenia* was inspired by the owner's muse - his 83-year-old Vietnamese lady friend, a woman with an exquisite sense of chic and style. The hotel is named in her honor, Source: http://www.anothertravelguide.com/eng/asia/thailand/bangkok/gems_/ainars_erglis/the_eugenia/

The Eugenia, a pioneer as a nostalgic heritage boutique hotel in Bangkok, is located in Soi Sukhumvit 31. It always gives a memorable experience for visitors with every detail attended to in this hidden gem of a hotel and also well considered masterpieces of interior design which make customers strongly believe it is a genuine old buildings rather than a replicated one. However, when we come out of the hotel and observe the neighbourhood, we are unable to find any resembling structures as a linkage between the surroundings and the Eugenia.



Figure 120: The Eugenia Hotel is located in Soi Sukhumvit 31. The hotel had been built in the colonial style with a superb interior furnished as a masterpiece of decoration. It is somehow able to bring back the past immediately upon opening the door, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 121: Genuine old furniture is used in every place in the Eugenia Hotel, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

Place: Devasom Hua Hin resort

Owner: Mrs. Rasri Atirak

Started Business in Year: Opened June 2011

Budget: 100 million baht

Address: 1446 / 23 Petchkasem Road (km 221), Huaisaitai, Chaam-Hua Hin, Petchburi 76120, Thailand

Number of Room: 24 rooms

Price: 4,700 and 6,450 baht per night

The Devasom Hua Hin resort and Ping Nakara boutique hotel & spa are both on top of the list of new colonial influenced hotels in Thailand as evidenced by the awards received from Thailand Boutique Awards 2010. Not only the masterpieces of decoration and furnishing but also the provided services are exceptional. Devasom Hua Hin resort got a TripAdvisor ranking #1 of 109 hotels in Hua Hin²² (as of August 2011) from the website www.tripadvisor.co.uk; similarly Ping Nakara was voted as “Travellers’ Choice 2011 Winner”²³ in category “Romance” with 96% recommendation.

²² http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g297922-d1775291-Reviews-Devasom_Hua_Hin_Resort-Hua_Hin_Prachuap_Khiri_Khan_Province.html as of August 2011

²³ Refers to the website : http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g293917-d1557579-Reviews-Ping_Nakara_Boutique_Hotel_Spa-Chiang_Mai.html as of August 2011



Figure 122: The colonial details were applied with excellent craftsmanship, with a smooth tone and manner of colour applied throughout the Devasom Hua Hin resort, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 123: The lobby area is furnished with vintage furniture in front of the hotel's library, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 124: The colonial style villas were designed with a layout under the concept to enabling each of them to have an individual sea view, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 125: The atmosphere of the Devasom resort Hua Hin in the morning; the picture was taken in the restaurant prepared to serve breakfast, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 126: The atmosphere in the Devasom resort Hua Hin; the picture was taken at the pool area with the main building as a background, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

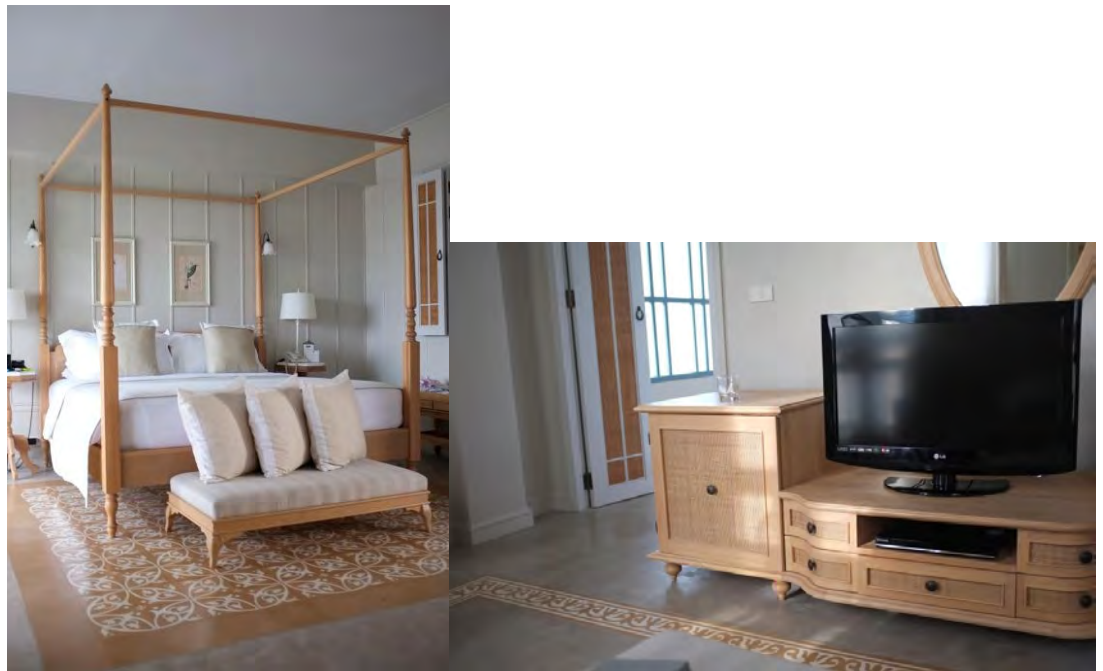


Figure 127: The accommodation room is furnished with a colonial style, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

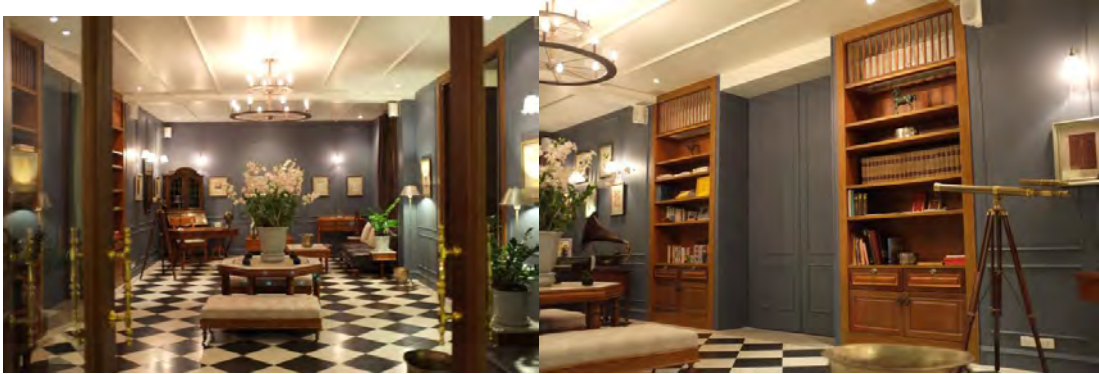


Figure 128: The library with an impressive interior is located at the first floor behind the lobby, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 129: Thailand Boutique Awards 2010: The Winner Award for Culture Southern region, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

Place: Ping Nakara

Owner: Mr. Chairat Asawangkura

Started Business in Year: Built 2009 / Opened 2011

Budget: 50 million baht

Address: 135/9 Charoen Prathet road, Chang Klan, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Number of Room: 19 rooms

Price: 4,700 and 6,450 baht per night

Unlike the two hotels mentioned above, Ping Nakara was built in an area with a history as a flourishing center of timber trading in the past. However, as time passed, all of the history seemed to be vanishing from the area around Chareon Prathet Road at the center of Chiang Mai. The owner, Mr. Chairat Asawangkura, had an intention to revive awareness of this significant place again, so he decided to build a boutique hotel with colonial influence by hiring the architect company, “IDEALIST STUDIO Co., Ltd.”. The seven colonial style buildings were chosen to blending together into the three-storey hotel with 19 rooms of accomodation and spa.



Figure 130: A combination of seven colonial style buildings, Ping Nakara won Thailand Boutique Awards 2010: The Outstanding Award for Architecture and The Winner of Culture in Northern Region, **Source:** Ping Nakara’s website



Figure 131: The stucco façade at the entrance of the main building was made with Lanna craftsmanship in Chiang Mai, **Source:** Ping Nakara's website

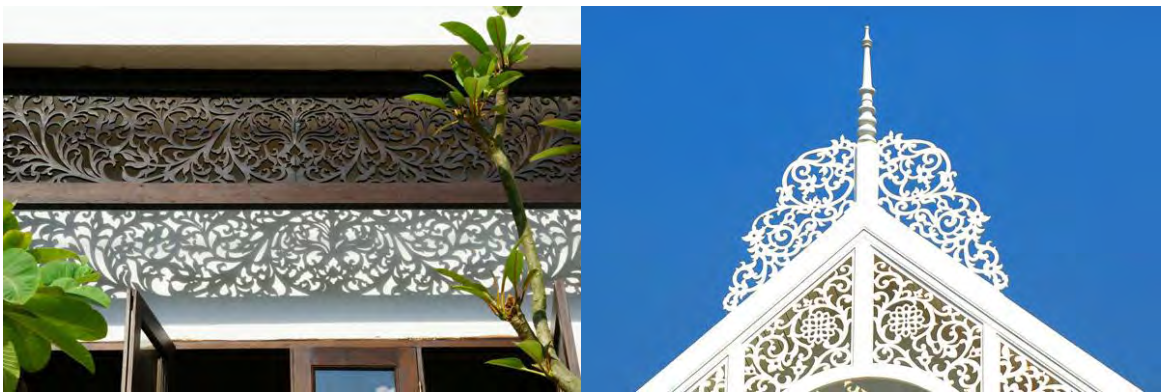


Figure 132: The wood carvings were custom made to decorate throughout the Ping Nakara hotel, **Source:** Ping Nakara's website



Figures 133-135: The atmosphere and interior of the an accommodation room, **Source:** Ping Nakara's website

From Figures 130-135, we can see that the significant application of master craftsmanship with appropriate design in the new boutique hotel, which received several design awards such as “Architectural Excellence Award” from The Association of Lanna Architects and “Recommended Design Hotel Award” from *idesign* magazine. Also the services had been guaranteed by a “Certificate of Excellence for the year 2010” from TripAdvisor website in the first year of starting their business.

Nevertheless, to succeed in the boutique hotel business, not only is the best exterior and interior design needing to be applied in every detail of the building, but also the website,

uniform of staff, and all promotional media should be consistent with a selected theme of the hotel as shown in Figures 136-137.



Figure 136: A promotional on-line leaflet for special lunch at the Ping Nakara hotel, **Source:** Dining Guide Chiang Mai (2010)



Figure 137: A uniform of Devasom Hua Hin is a good example by both style and colour that match with the hotel design, **source:** Narin N.

Replicating The Town

- Plearnwan (Hua Hin) and Palio Inn (Khao Yai)

If you want to experience the atmosphere of the 50's-60's local market or even a small Italian town under a condition of a limited timeframe, given that you are in Bangkok, how could you make this possible? The easiest answer might be to go to the production house or some filming studio when they are doing a theater or musical scene. However, the answer has been changed since replicated towns called "Plearnwan" Hua Hin and "Palio" Khao Yai began their business in 2009.

Place: Plearnwan

Owner: Phatra Sahawat

Started Business in Year: 2009

Budget: 46 million baht

Address: 4/90-95 Soi Moo Ban Bor Fai, Hua Hin, Thailand 77110

Number of Rooms: 20 rooms

Price: 3,200 and 3,700 baht per night

"Plearnwan" have defined themselves as the Hua Hin's first live museum, a replication of the old Hua Hin market and community during the 50's-60's – the golden period of Hua Hin. This was a time when the baby boomer generation chose to visit Hua Hin for their honeymoon, coincidentally the parents of both Gen-X and Gen-Y at the moment, so they also put the quote "The Memories of Classic Romance" under their name to communicate their message of welcoming people with the same age as their parents when they had visited there.

They interpreted the form of the old shophouses as shown in Figure 138 as the idea for the structure and then applied the concept of "old form + new material" throughout the place.



Figure 138: The old market in Petchaburi province, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 139: The concept of “old form + new materials” was chosen to develop the replicating Hua Hin old market community at Plearnwan, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

When the overall structures were all finalised, the next challenge was “how can we make the place lively?”; then the keyword “Temple Fair” (Ngan-Wat in Thai) emerged among the team. The Ngan-Wat theme is added to the replicating Hua Hin old market town to let visitors have more activities at night.

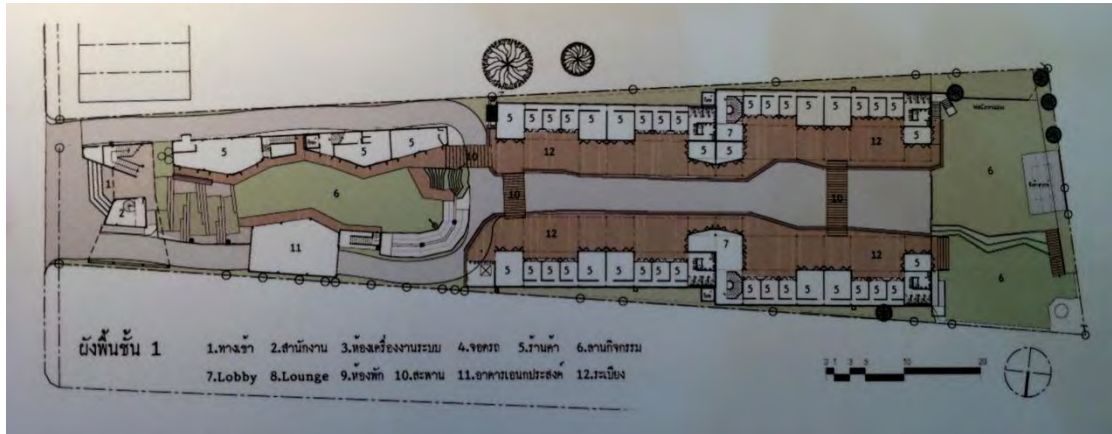


Figure 140: Plan of Plearnwan reveals the limited open space access to the main road on the left hand side, **Source:** Naratuschan N. taken in the Thailand Boutique Award 2010 exhibition



Figure 141: To solve the problem of a narrow and long rectangular site (as show in Figure 140 above), the huge structure with perspective form made by timber was interpreted as a tunnel of time – a time machine, at the entrance to welcome the visitor, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figures 142-144: The atmosphere of Plearnwan at night combining with Ngan-Wat to make a lively place for entertaining their visitors with various activities, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

Not only shops and activities to entertain the visitor, but Plearnwan also provided accommodation rooms with the name “Piman Plearnwan” to let customers who like the “retro” concept enjoy the experience during their stay.



Figure 145: A poster to promote Pimarn Plearnwan – the accommodation of Plearnwan, Source: Plearnwan website



Figure 146: Interior of an accommodation room of Pimarn Plearnwan, Source: Plearnwan website

The final thing worth mentioning here relates to the key success of Plearnwan in the wide range and variety of their visitors. Plearwan is able to attract several groups of people,

who visit Hua Hin, to stop by on the way back to Bangkok for numerous reasons. The replicated 50's - 60's market town has not only created a magnet to draw the new generations (Gen-X and Gen-Y) who enjoy the "retro fashion" but also their parents (baby boomers) who will also be reminded of their good old days when they see many replicated shops in Plearnwan. This helps to create a conversation within their family to exchange and share stories about their life from generation to generation – considered as an intangible aspect of heritage. Consequently, it is not surprising that Plearnwan received the Outstanding Award of Culture in Southern region from the Thailand Boutique Awards 2010.

In contrast to the old traditional Thai market in the Southern region, a replicated Italian town named "Palio"²⁴ was built to be a community mall to attract the local visitors in Khao Yai after the success of a 'chic' coffee shop "Primo ~ Prosto" at Khao Yai. "Palio" was opened in October 2009 and became a tourist spot immediately. Palio defined itself as the most famous street shopping center in Khao Yai. It comprises several types of shops such as coffee shop, restaurant, cloth and fashion accessories, etc that serve their local customers' needs. Moreover, there is a hotel named "Palio Inn" to serve the visitors who want to stay overnight at the Little Italy town.

Place: Palio Inn

Owner: Palio Community mall (holding by five partners)

Started Business in Year: October 2009

Budget: 150 million baht excluding marketing and other activities and expenses²⁵

Address: 54 Moo 4, Thanarat Road, (Km.17) T.Moosri, Pakchong, Nakorn Ratchasima 30130

Number of Room: 18 rooms

Price: 4,500 and 10,000 baht per night

²⁴ Literally "palio" is the drape given to the winner in a horse race. Refers to the website: <http://www.myitalianclass.net/2011/07/what-does-palio-means.html>

²⁵ <http://witternews.com/palio-khao-yai-where-what/>



Figures 147-150: The atmosphere of Palio created by replicating an Italian town for the purpose of a shopping street, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 151: Pailo Inn is situated inside the Palio with the same architectural style of building, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

Though Palio is considered a business success in many aspects, especially in its numbers of visitors during a long weekend in Thailand, it was not able to win any categories of the Thailand Boutique Awards 2010 as Plearnwan did in the culture category. This does not mean that only Thai culture is accepted for the nominations, as apparently colonial style is rewarded. However, to incorporate an unrelated background into a hotel's theme seems to be a factor that works against the Palio, also Chateau de Khao Yai. It might be explained by the term “*architectural absurdities*”²⁶ defined in the “Reading Bangkok” book by Ross King whereby

The absence of a culture of architectural reflection is in some contrast with an exuberance that sometimes breaks through the banality (King 2011, p.188).



Figures 152-153: One of the buildings of Chateau de Khao Yai – a place with a selling point as a place that allows you to experience a French castle in Thailand, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

²⁶ King, Ross., *Reading Bangkok*, Singapore : NUS Press, 2011, p.188.

As a result, the Little Italy town and French Cheateau at Khao Yai are both required to prove themselves in the long run, whether the replicated town or villa will be able to be sustained in the tourism business.

Hybrid heritage

- Chedi (Chiang Mai), U Chiang Mai (Chiang Mai) and Ariyasomvilla Hotel (Bangkok)

The last type of Notalgic Heritage to be discussed in this chapter is termed “Hybrid Heritage”, coming from the fact that it is a combination of the conserved, valued heritage building with added-on buildings as accomodation to serve the customers. Those added-on structures were either replicated or interpreted from the heritage building or surroundings to help a blending between the old and new structures that can stand together appropriately at the same place.

The pioneer to implement the Hybrid Heritage is “The Chedi”, the five stars hotel of the GHM (General Hotel Management) group which is situated on the banks of the Ping River, in the heart of central Chiang Mai. Chedi is described in its website as “...The site of the hotel is a compound of the former British Consulate in Chiang Mai, within which the main Consulate building, dating from the 1920’s, has been retained and integrated within the hotel design...” – integration of the existing colonial house with a contemporary interpretation of traditional Thai materials as a design scheme. All of the design and services are no doubt excellent in every aspect.



Figure 154: The main building of the old British Consulate has been conserved by applying a Re-Use approach to change the function to become a restaurant, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 155: A contemporary interpretation in traditional Thai materials as a design scheme; view from the conserved building to the main building, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 156-157: A contemporary interpretation in traditional Thai materials as a design scheme; picture from around the pool area, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

With the success of the Chedi, U Chiang Mai followed in the steps of that pioneer by conserving the heritage building and adding on more buildings to provide accommodation. A mixing up of a contemporary Thai with local architecture by the architectural firm SPA+A was applied to the U Chiang Mai boutique hotel.

Place: U Chiangmai

Owner: BTS Group Holdings PLC

Started Business : 1 June 2008

Budget: 120 million baht

Address: 70 Ratchadamnoen Road, Sri-Poom Muang District, Chiang Mai 50200 Thailand

Number of Rooms: 41 rooms

Architect and Interior design: SPA+A

Price: 4,500 and 5,500 baht per night

Awards:

- Historical Architectural Conservation Hotel in 2009 by The Association of Siamese Architects under the Royal Patronage
- Thailand Boutique Award 2010 – Outstanding Award in Total Experience Category for Northern Region

U Chiangmai boutique hotel based their business on extensive research to find out the unique services needed – what their customers really want when staying overnight. Then creative ideas such as “whenever wherever breakfast”, 24 hour use of room, various choices of aroma soup, etc that aim to meet the highest satisfaction during their stay have been implemented and became the talk of the town since the opening of the business. In addition, the heritage building had applied the Re-Use approach by changing the function of the house to become the library and spa of the hotel. It was later awarded “Historical Architectural Conservation Hotel in 2009” by the Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage, and more recently the “Outstanding Award in Total Experience Category for Northern Region” by Thailand Boutique Award 2010.



Figure 158: The entrance of U Chiang Mai used concrete painted white as a partition to contrast with the heritage building in the dark colour at the back, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 159: The interior of the Deluxe room, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

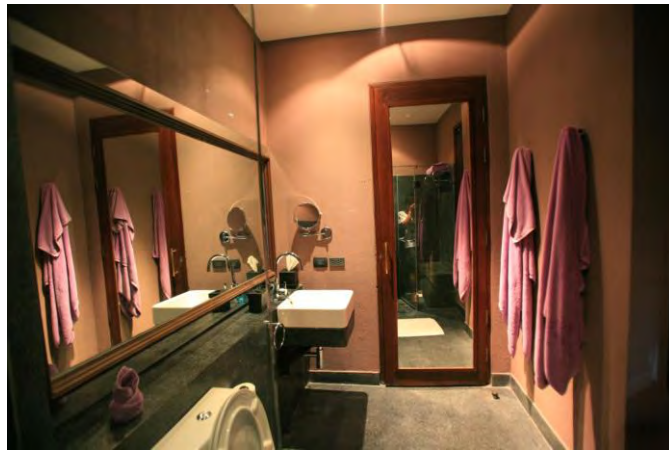


Figure 160: The bathroom of the Deluxe room. The colour theme of U hotel is purple, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 161: There is a small pond in front of every room on the ground floor, **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 162: An interesting void, replicated from the local temple, is well applied on the corridor of the accommodation area, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

With the abrupt success of U Chiang Mai, it has come to be considered a new model for the boutique hotel business with many investors expressing interest to follow it. U Hotels & Resorts group has expanded to other countries in Asia: India, Vietnam, Indonesia and Qatar by 2010.

Ariyasomvilla Hotel (Bangkok)

Place: Ariyasomvilla

Owner: Pariya Chenakul

Started Business in Year: August 2008

Budget: (Never disclosed to public)

Address: 67 Soi Sukhumvit 1 (Ruenrudi), Sukhumvit Road, Klong Toei Nuea, Vadhana, Bangkok

Number of Room: 25 rooms

Price: 4,588++ and 11,324++ baht per night

The last hotel that will be discussed in this chapter is situated at the beginning of Sukhumvit road, Ariyasomvilla Hotel (Bangkok) in Soi Sukhumvit 1.



Figure 163: A signature of “Phra Charoen Wisawakrum” was used on the cover of his funeral book – a burgundy colour is the colour of the faculty of engineering, Chulalongkorn University, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

It is a hotel which replicated the structure of the earlier house with a blending of Thai-European style in Bangkok. The ex-owner was an important person in the engineering field of Thailand, “Phra Charoen Wisawa krum”, the first dean of the faculty of engineering, Chulalongkorn University and also the a founder of the engineering field in Thailand. As a result, his house was built with the best technology for infrastructure and construction during that period and by adapting a European style with Thai style its in architecture which was rarely done in Thailand during the World War II period. The building was designed by M.C. Wothayakon Worawan²⁷ and built in 1942 as a villa for his family and was used until he passed away. No one then lived there for some years until his granddaughter, Pariya Chenakul, came back from the United States with an intention to take care of the legacy of her grandfather. She started to think about a mixture between changing it to be a place to let others come, and for a meditation couse, as well as a business able to generate income. Pariya graduated with a master degree in

landscape architecture from Harvard University and her husband, Peter Lee, had a background in the hotel business. With their joint backgrounds, they decided to change her grandfather's Thai heritage house to become a boutique hotel in 1997, rather than demolish the old building and build condominiums to take a large profit. In the design aspect, they chose to replicate every detail of the villa in the new added-on buildings to blend the old and new structures standing together. To conserve and preserve her grandfather's villa, the project took 10 years to complete because all the trees had to remain untouched but also to dig a 10 metres basement floor to make a parking garage for the hotel. All of the construction process took much time and money for both of them. However, it was completed and ready to serve their customers in August 2008.



Figure 164: The replicated structure from the original villa (see Figure 109) throughout the hotel, **Source:** Painaidee (2010)

²⁷ The first dean of the faculty of Architecture Chulalongkorn University; he was earlier a student who



Figure 165: The old heritage house has been converted to become a restaurant “Na Arun” (named for a memorial of Phra Charoen Wisawakrum’s wife – Arun), **Source:** Naratuschan N.



Figure 166: The added-on buildings at the back repeated the pattern of the old heritage house in every detail and proportion. The trees in the area remain untouched from the past, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

graduated from England.



Figure 167: The decoration flower on the marquee, adapted from a garland, is an example of Thai interpretation, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

With the intention of building a place for frequent meditation courses, the hotel has a selling point as a house for vegetarians who can come to relax and meditate at their place. They provide 25 rooms of accommodation to serve their customers who need a peaceful atmosphere in the center of Bangkok. It is ranked #2 of 635 hotels²⁸ in Bangkok as of September 2011.

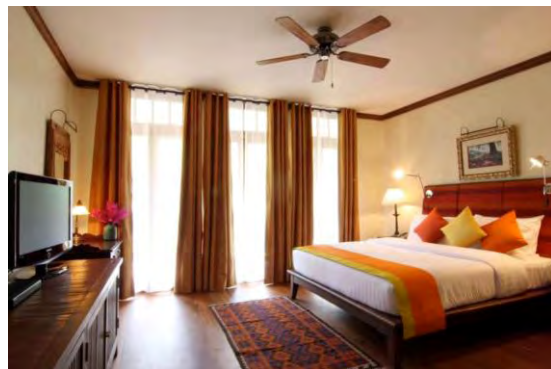


Figure 168: The atmosphere of the Studio room, **Source:** the Ariyasomvilla website

²⁸ Refers to the website : http://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g293916-d1210398-Reviews-Ariyasomvilla-Bangkok.html



Figure 169: The atmosphere of the Deluxe room, **Source:** the Ariyasomvilla website



Figure 170: The bathroom for a studio room, **Source:** the Ariyasomvilla website

Summary

From the fact that there are constraints such as a scarcity of heritage buildings in a good condition, limited locations in the old towns, and of course to renovate an old building with appropriated attention can cost dearly, hence there is the idea to replicate the heritage into new buildings as an alternative for a hotel development.

What makes a “Nostalgic Heritage” theme attractive to the investor who wants to become a hotelier comes from several factors. Firstly, it helps to differentiate their hotels compared to the modern or mainstream and chain hotels in terms of the outer appearance. Secondly, it serves the demand of the traveller who enjoys the local trend of “Nostalgia” at the moment. Thirdly, it is more flexible in terms of choosing the location of the hotel compared to the hotel that applied the Re-Use approach with an existing heritage building as fabric. And lastly, it somehow provides an opportunity to pass on the traditional

craftsmanship and knowledge in those regions through the generations, when replicating the local architecture.

With the selected hotels in this study, most required investing around 46 to 120 million baht: 46 million baht in the case of Plearnwan and the 120 million baht for U Chiang Mai. This is excluding the Rachamanka and Ariyasomvilla hotel who budgets still remain undisclosed by the owners. As a result, there is little to choose between Re-Use heritage buildings and building a new hotel with a nostalgic heritage theme in terms of the budget constraint. The maintenance cost is also another factor that should be considered when choosing between the two mentioned choices. To conserve and preserve the heritage buildings in the appropriate manner such as the Ariyasomvilla hotel was costly, although the owner did not disclose how much they had spent to finish their project, it took ten years to complete. Thus, a time constraint is another factor that the entrepreneur should be concerned about, because to renew is always easier and more economical than to renovate.

A manageable design with a fine interpretation of historical background in every detail as with Devasom and Ping Nakara in a colonial influenced style, seems to be necessary for a Nostalgic Heritage hotel. When applying a replicated theme in order to attract the visitors to 'experience' it, there is no doubt that they will have high expectations when they pay a premium for the boutique hotel instead of the chain hotel which always guarantees the minimum services as accepted by the global standard. What is able to help is to put all information, or as much as possible, on the hotel's website or with any travel agencies that the hotel has contact with. The website "TripAdvisor" is being accepted in many countries because it is a source of information and offers a poll of comments from travellers from all over the world. The website collects all the data and puts the ranking with a certificate given to the acclaimed hotel every year. It is a source of trust that is able to guarantee the services provided by the hotel, where the awarded hotel should be proud to receive it in an international perspective. Hence, all staff have to realize and focus on every action when serving their customers at all the times. One dissatisfied customer is

able to vote “dissatisfaction” which will lower the overall satisfaction score for that hotel by just one click.

Though the outer appearance is important to make your place distinct and outstanding at the first glance, what customers are looking for is the exceptional service provided during their stay. To apply the best practice in provided services, U Chiang Mai is the best example, as is already proved by their ability to expand their business to other countries in Asia. All of their staff are required to provide the same exceptional services in every detail. Creating a guideline manual for staff to follow, step by step, has been linked with staff training. To expect repeated customers, the staff should be able to provide the exceptional service that makes their customers very impressed, so that they will visit the place again and again.

Consequently, even though the entrepreneur may be able to create the best replicated hotel in terms of the outer appearance, the most crucial factor to gain success in the hotel business is always the services being provided. The services are not only the actions between persons but every detail that can make customers enjoy their stay would also need attention. To manage the original built heritage hotel, also Re-Use of a heritage building as a boutique hotel, and a Built-as-Nostalgic hotel, there are the same requirement – the customer who enjoys the charm of heritage and is willing to pay a premium to enjoy the experience with the comfortable stay. So, the beyond-expectation service is always a key to success in the hotel business in the long run.

In the next chapter, we will explore one of the important factors to by which judge the heritage hotels – “authenticity”.

Chapter 5

The authenticity of heritage hotels

We have already mentioned several categories of heritage hotels in Thailand in chapters, namely Type I: originally built more than fifty to one hundred years ago (in Chapter 2), Type II: applied the adaptive and re-use approach on heritage buildings (in Chapter 3) and Type III: newly built with the heritage theme or so-called “Nostalgic Heritage” (in Chapter 4). Here we come to the most intriguing questions for this study: “How do we judge and what are the criteria to be used to find the best practical method for the heritage hotel?”

In this chapter we will discuss a case study of interrelated category Type I and II by considering “Nanfa” hotel and comparing it with a hotel in Type III by a case study of “Rachamankha” which we have just mentioned in Chapter 4.

A case study of “Nanfa” hotel in Nan province

Located at the heart of Nan, the small and peaceful province in the Northern part of Thailand, the building was constructed by teak wood during the World War II period and is still standing with the original function as a hotel named “Nanfa hotel”, now for 76 years, before being taken over by the CEO of Kasikorn Bank, Mr. Banthoon Lamsam, in 2009 for 24 million baht with an aim to renovate it as a boutique hotel to serve wealthy customers – classified as the interrelated category I & II in our study.



Figure 171: Nanfa hotel kept this look after the second renovation for more than 50 years (this photo had been taken at January 2010 two days before renovation). It is located beside Kasikorn Bank (Nan Province branch) on Sumon Dheveraj Road. **Source:** Narin N.

Mr. Banthoon explained that he was not fascinated by the hotel business but a feeling of love and bond with Nan province which made him decide to buy this heritage hotel (Sukchu 2011), as it is also located next to the Kasikorn bank branch Nan province. The ex-owners decided to sell this heritage hotel to others because they did not have any successors who could take care of it. The deal began in 2009, then the renovation started on January 2010 and took around one year to complete and was ready to open on 18 January 2011, the renovation costing around 25 million baht. The renovated hotel has changed its name from “*Nanfa*” to “*Pukha Nanfa*”. Mr. Banthoon expressed his bond with this hotel by writing its history himself, then posting it on the hotel’s website²⁹:

History:

Pukha Nanfa Hotel came into being in the midstream of the immigration flow of oversea Chinese into the Kingdom of Thailand, moving out into every corner of the country in hope of building a new life. The destination includes the Province of Nan, a peaceful patch of land descending from the ancient kingdom of Eastern Lanna, located 668 kilometers to the north of Bangkok, cradled in the embrace of green mountains and forests, and caressed by light fog in the cool morning time.

²⁹ <http://www.pukhananfahotel.co.th/EN/historical.html>

Sometime prior to the onset of World War II, a group of overseas Chinese from Hainan built a small two-story wooden hotel on a 76 square-wah plot of land, on Sumon Devaraj Road, in the central district of the town of Nan, giving its name as Nam Seng Heng (南盛兴). Thereafter, the hotel came briefly into the possession of Mr. Tawee Boonsue (the former mayor of the town of Nan and also a member of the parliament) before being sold on to Mr. Han Bing-yuan (韩炳元), father of Mr. Viroj Harikul, who was already operating a woodworking business.

Not long thereafter, the new owner - himself in the woodworking business - deemed Nam Seng Heng hotel to be too dilapidated, and decided to rebuild it in 1955 into a three-story still wooden structure with 14 guest rooms. An architect from Bangkok named Samruay (surname unknown) was engaged to design and manage the construction. The contractor was a Chinese named Qiu Yuan, with carpenters and workers coming locally from Phrae and Nan. Building tools were obtained from Phrae and various sorts of hard wood were used, with windows or doors being made from teak, all from Mr. Viroj Harikul's own woodworking factory on Khao Noi. Interior design was done inhouse by family members. Furniture, namely beds, dressers, tables were all done by Nan cabinetmakers, mostly of Chinese ancestry. Construction took one year to complete. Investment was 300,000 baht.

After completion, Mr. Han Bing-yuan asked his brother Mr. Han Jiong-yuan (韩炯元), who at that time was doing trading business in Ta Wang Pa District, to come over to run the hotel, which had 5 employees, plus renamed the hotel as "Nanfa", meaning "expansive (like the sky)". After Mr. Han Jiong-yuan managed the hotel well for over 10 years, his nephew Mr. Viroj Harikul transferred the ownership of the hotel and the land to him and all of his uncle's children, who in turn helped run the hotel for 40 more years.

In 2009, the descendants of Mr. Han Jiong-yuan, who by then were in their old age, decided to sell the hotel business to a new investor, Pukha Holdings Company Limited, whom Heaven had guided over to this opportunity. And in the following year, the major renovation of Nanfa Hotel was started, which upon completion was given an extended new name of Pukha Nanfa Hotel.

Apart from the history written by Mr. Banthoon, there is also a missing history of a leasehold hotel period. Nanfa hotel was leased and managed for nearly ten years during 2000-2009 by Mr. Som-nuk Rajasigh. He was an engineer from Nakornsawan province, who came to build a bridge at Nan and stayed at Nanfa hotel for two weeks, consequently falling in love with this wooden structure hotel. As a result, one day during his stay, he expressed interest in leasing the Nanfa hotel from the owner, Mr. Han Jiong-yuan at that time. The leasing was agreed for a 5-year term from 2000, being extended another 4 years to end in 2009 at an unknown yearly rent to Mr. Han Jiong-yuan.

Fortunately, the author also went to visit Nan for the first time during that leasehold

period in 2005 and had a chance to meet and have a short interview with Mr. Som-nuk Rajasigh (but did not have a chance to take a picture of Mr.Som-nuk by himself). At that time the room rate was charged at 350-450 baht per night throughout the year, with no extra charges during the high season. The 14 guest rooms were all cleaned and tidy to the standard of a 3-star hotel in upcountry Thailand. Both building structure and furnishings were believed to be the same as the original and able to be described as ‘authentic’.



Figure 172: Mr. Somnuk Rajasigh who rented and managed Nanfa hotel during 2000-2009, before the owner decided to sell the hotel business to Mr. Banthoon at the end of 2009, **Source:** Photoontour (2004)

As above, I would like to organize the discussion of the Nanfa hotel into three stages according to the history described above. There are historic photographs that show the outer construction in front of the hotel as in figures 175-177 here,

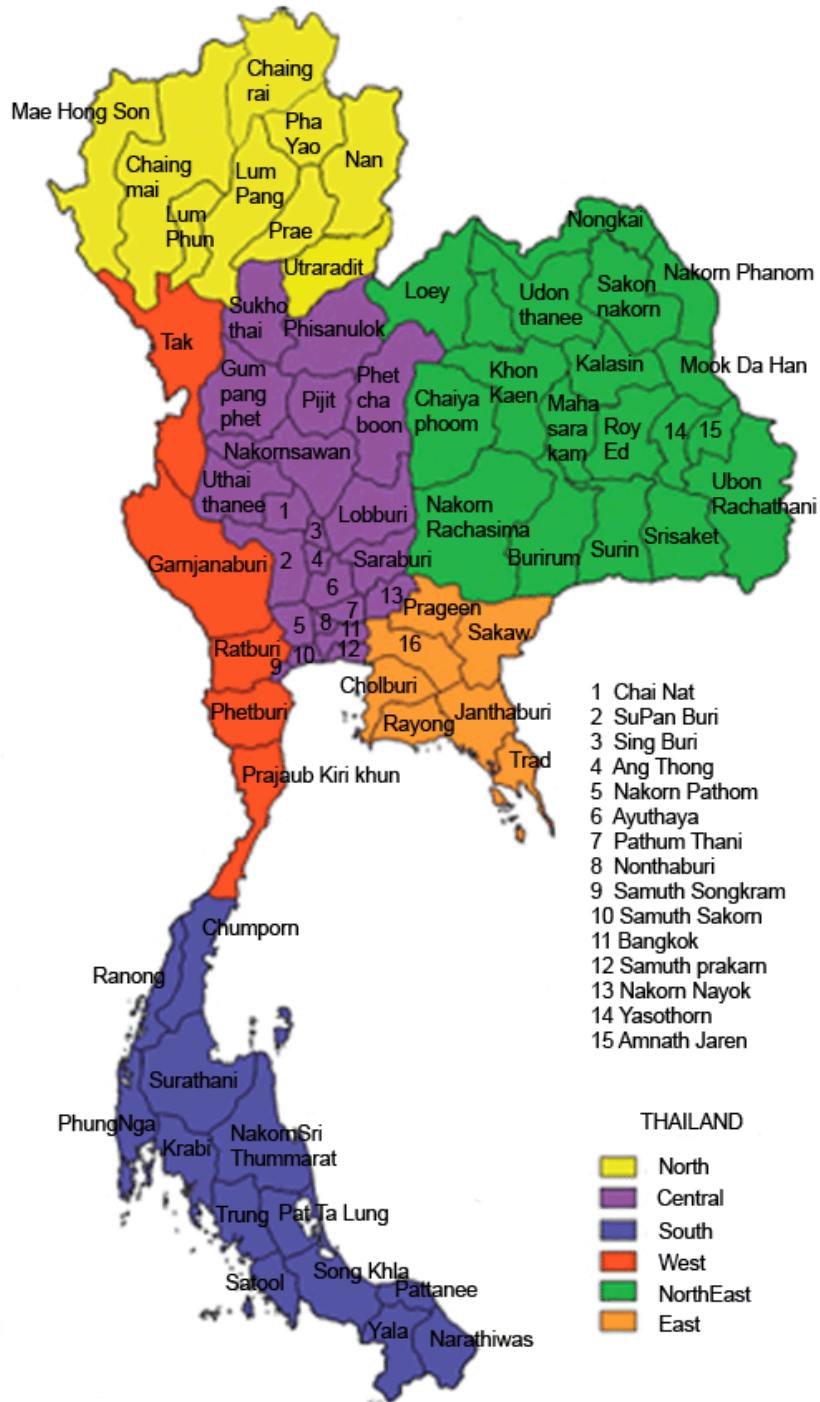


Figure 173: Thailand map, Nan province is located on the Northern part of Thailand which is represented in the yellow area (the right-hand side), **Source:** Thailandin.com (2009)



Figure 174: Map to (Pukha) Nanfa hotel, Source: Pukkananfahotel (2011).



Figure 175: Nanfa hotel on the first opening day in 1955 Source: Photoontour (ibid).



Figure 176: Nanfa hotel in 2010³⁰ in the era of the first renovation, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 177: Phuka Nanfa hotel (the new Nanfa hotel) on January 2011, **Source:** Attariya A.

³⁰ Nan Fa hotel kept both the outer structure (on second and third floors) as well as 14 guest rooms in the same condition since the time it was rebuilt in year 1955 (photograph was taken in year 2005 when the author visited for the first time), hence it relates to the second stage of the Nanfa hotel. In 2009, there was news that this heritage hotel had been sold to the billionaires in Bangkok. The author rushed to visit the original Nanfa hotel on January 2010 for the last time to document every detail by shooting photos, one day before a renovation got started by the new owner.

From Figures 175-177, we can see the same functions of the building persisting, the 1st floor designed to be used as lobby/ restaurant/ reception services and leaving the upper floors (2nd and 3rd floor) to be guest rooms.

Stage / Year	Outer appearance	Hotel signage	Ownership
I / 1934 – 1955	No documentation can be found in the photographs but there is information that it was a two-storey hotel	Cannot be found	a group of overseas Chinese from Hainan and came briefly into the possession of Mr. Tawee Boonsue (the former mayor of the town of Nan province during that time)
II / 1955 – 2009	No open space on 2 nd and 3 rd floor (Figure 5) / Open space for veranda on 2 nd and 3 rd floor (Figure 6)	Thailanguage sign positioned between Chinese labels both left and right – two words on each side (Figure 5) / Only Thai language and separated two Chinese labels (Figure 6)	Mr. Han Bing-yuan with one known lease agreement for 9-years rented by Mr. Somruk Rajasigh
III / 2011 – present	The first floor has been renovated and decorated with many ornaments. The rooms on the 2 nd floor have been expanded on the veranda space in front of the two rooms	The original signage has been replaced with new name – new colour, font, font size and decorated ornaments are applied in the façade. The original signage was moved in the hotel gallery on the 1 st floor	Mr. Banthoon Lamsam

Table 2: The components in each period of Nanfa hotel from 1934 to present

From the Figures 176-177 and Table 2, we can conclude that stage II is the longest period with few changes – the hotel kept the same structure for 54 years which made it ‘invaluable’ in terms of heritage and can be classified as an ‘authentic’ heritage hotel for the visitors and customers who came to stay overnight and for those who living nearby the hotel.

However, in stage III the billionaire owner is fascinated with Feng Shui and Geomancy and hence intended to adapt this heritage hotel with a new look (as seen in Figure 177) with new furnishings and both interior and exterior decoration to serve the hi-end customers who can afford to pay 3,500 – 4,000 baht per night (10 times of a price of the previous period). Unfortunately, this change had swept the authenticity away from the heritage building forever.

Banthoon and Feng Shui at Pukha Nanfa hotel



Figure 178: New logo of Pukah Nanfa Hotel on the 1st floor,

Source: Pukkananfahotel (2011).

One of the renovation objectives was to apply Feng Shui principles into the original structure. According to an interview in the Manager magazine of February 2011 issue (*ibid*), the new owner explained the meaning of the new logo as :



Figure 179: A logo of Pukha Nanfa hotel, **Source:** *ibid*

1. The tree surrounded by the red rectangular form represents the “Chompoo Pukha” tree (*Bretschneidera sinensis*) that is believed to be the last one left at Doi Pukha in Nan. (Chompoo means Pink colour in Thai)



Figure 180: A Pukha Nanfa blossom, **Source:** *ibid*

2. There are eight blossoms of Chompoo Pukha (pink blossoms) on the tree because the number “8” is a lucky number for him. In addition, Chinese believe the number 8 physically looks like the Infinity sign, so 8 brings the good fortune of abundance, wealth and luck continuously (Too 2010).
3. At the ground of the tree, in the ancient Lanna alphabet, it is written as “Pukha” which represents “Pukha Dynasty” – the first dynasty in Nan Province and named as the ancient kingdom of Eastern Lanna. Mr. Banthoon partly believed that he may be related to the dynasty in his past life.
4. The red colour of the rectangular shape is to protect from all bad things

Consequently, the word “Pukha” has been added to the name of the hotel to become the “Pukha Nanfa hotel”, with an intention to manipulate the relationship with “Pukha” as

mentioned above, and so does the ‘red’ colour in many decorated components as shown in Figure 177.

The new look seems to be the ‘controversial’ issue especially to the ex-customers who were impressed with the authentic look of the original heritage hotel – “Nanfa hotel”. Nanfa was very original and created an experience of a “time machine” that brought the customer back to the 50 years ago upon seeing the hotel at the first sight. In contrast, the new hotel has been renovated and managed to have more components that are trying to combine the Chinese influences and Feng Shui to be mixed up altogether, as the main concern of the owner.

The differences between “before and after” of “Nanfa and Pukha Nanfa” can be revealed by the set of photographs shown here:

1st Floor: Changes applied to the space of the restaurant and building up a history gallery as well as a Phufa shop into available space while keeping the lobby at the same place

Before:



Figure 181: 1st floor, the photo was taken on the last day before the renovation got started, **Source:** Narin

N.



Figure 182: 1st floor from the lobby area. We can see that the windows that were applied in this area made the hotel lack a heritage look. The restaurant area was located on the right-hand side at the back, **Source:**

Narin N.



Figure 183: 1st floor, the reception area with the name of hotel at the back, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 184: 1st, the shoes keeper placed at the stairs as a way to protect the timber floor, **Source:** Narin N.

After:



Figure 185: The front of the hotel at 1st floor has been changed from all glasses to timber. In the picture the new logo in accompanied by three languages: Thai, Chinese and English with the new logo on the left-hand side, **Source:** Suparee B.



Figure 186: In front of the restaurant area, **Source:** Suparee B.



Figure 187: Inside of the new restaurant. It is still located at the same place but moved inside a little to provide more space around the hotel. New furnishing is also applied, **Source:** Suparee B.



Figure 188: The reception area is still located at the same place with new decoration such as painting in the Lanna style with more lighting and timber on the ceiling, **Source:** Suparee B.



Figure 189: Hotel lobby, **Source:** Suparee B.

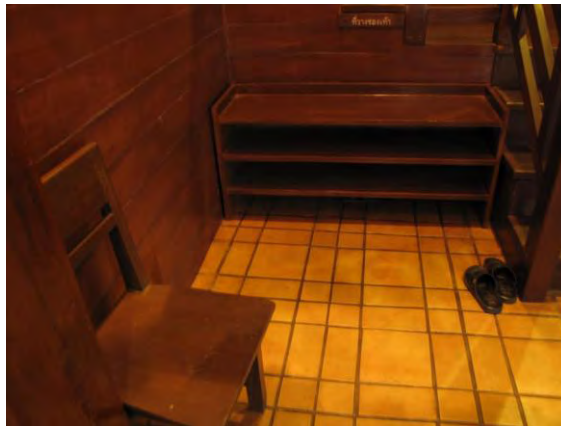


Figure 190: The shoes keeper has been changed (to make it look the same as its surroundings) and also switched in location to make it easier for the visitor to use, **Source:** Suparee B.

After: The added function



Figure 191: A small museum or historical gallery on the left-hand side, **Source:** Suparee B.



Figure 192: A library or reading room is well decorated with wooden structures, **Source:** Suparee B.



Figure 193: This photo was taken back to the entrance, where we will see the Phufa shop located near the entrance of the hotel, **Source:** Suparee B.

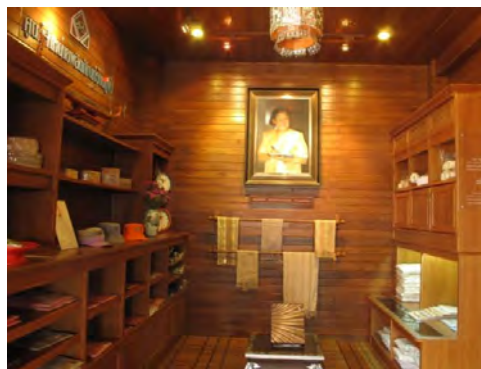


Figure 194: A Phufa shop³¹ was originally set up by HRH Maha Chakri Sirindhorn in Bangkok on 2001; here is a new branch in Nan Province, **Source:** Suparee B.

³¹ In 2001, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn graciously set up the **Phufa Shop**, under the Fund for Development of Children and Youths in Remote Areas, to support marketing the products of the Occupational Development Project. It is expected that this will complete the cycle of the development process, i.e. from training, producing to marketing the products to the people in the town. Source: http://www.phufa.org/about_history_en.php

2nd Floor: Changes applied to all rooms by expanding the size of the rooms

Before:

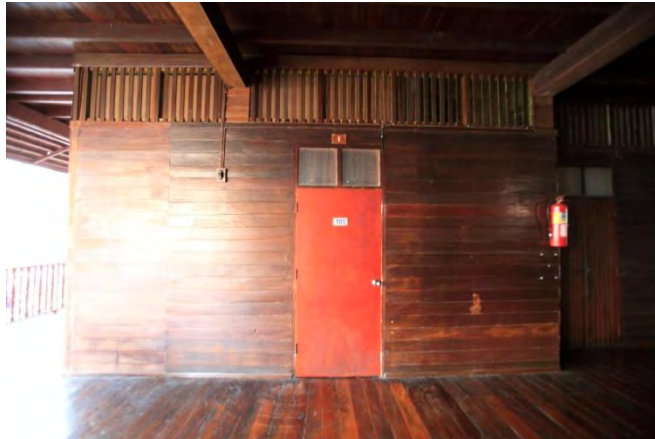


Figure 195: Room no.1 (101) is one of the biggest rooms (the other is Room no.2 (102) in the opposite side) located on the 2nd floor, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 196: On the 2nd floor, the veranda that customers could come to enjoy, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 197: 2nd floor, Room no.2 (102). We can notice the free space on the right-hand side, **Source:** Narin N.

After:

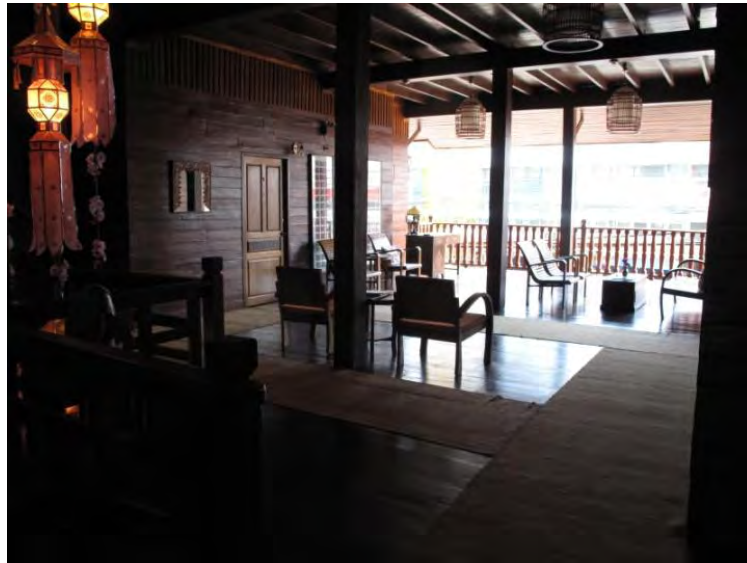


Figure 198: The room no.2 (102) after renovation, the door has been changed to look more luxurious, the added decoration and importantly the extended structure (with the lighter colour of timber), **Source:** Suparee B.



Figure 199: The decoration frame in front of the previous room no.2 with a little sofa, **Source:** Suparee B.

Before:



Figure 200-201: The space on the 2nd floor: we can see the Kasikorn bank in the background, **Source:** Narin N.

After:



Figure 202: Compared with the figures 200-201 above, it is obvious that very little space is left and may be unable to be utilized, **Source:** Suparee B.

Before:



Figure 203: The corridor width to the Fire exit on the 2nd floor is considerable to let the visitor feel comfortable if there is an emergency and a need to use it, **Source:** Narin N.

After:



Figure 204: Compared with the Figure 203 above, we can notice that the corridor width is much narrower than earlier (to expand the size of the rooms), **Source:** Suparee B.

Before:



Figure 205: The Fire exit was located at the back of the hotel, **Source:** Narin N.

After:



Figure 206: Compared with the figure 205 above, the Fire exit made of timber is located at the same place and seems to be a structure that remains unchanged, **Source:** Suparee B.

3rd Floor: Changes applied to the space and decoration

Before:



Figure 207: The stairways from 2nd floor to 3rd floor, **Source:** Narin N.

After:



Figure 208: Compared with the figure 207 above, the picture of HRH Maha Chakri Sirindhorn is hung at the stairways from 2nd floor to 3rd floor, **Source:** Suparee B.

Before:



Figure 209: On the 3rd floor, there was only one bench on the left-hand side, **Source:** Narin N.

After:



Figure 210: Compared with the figure 209 above, the sofa and photo frames have been added, **Source:** Suparee B.

Before:

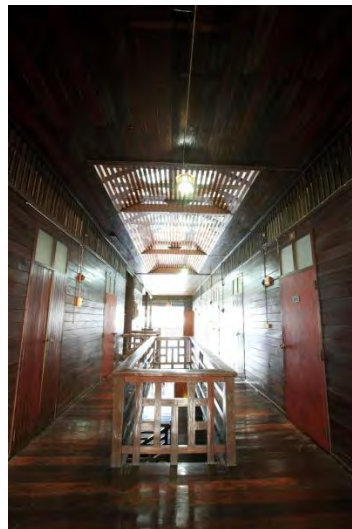


Figure 211: All of the rooms (except both rooms located near the road) had the exact same size as we can notice from the corridor width along the way on 3rd floor, **Source:** Narin N.

After:



Figure 212: Compared with the figure 211 above, the rooms near the Fire exit at the back have been expanded thus making the corridor width narrower to be the exact size as the stairway in the middle of the floor. It was also decorated with “Tung” to enhance the Lanna style, **Source:** Suparee B.

Before:

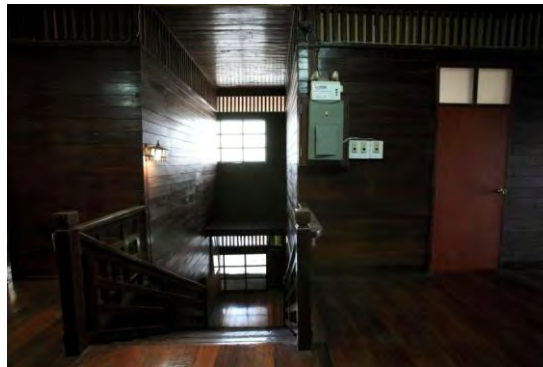


Figure 213: The storage room on 3 rd floor was located next to the ladder, **Source:** Narin N.

After:

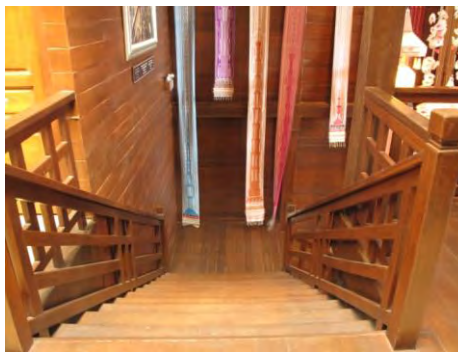


Figure 214: Compared with the figure 213 above, the storage room was removed to create more space and high ceiling from 2nd floor to the roof top, **Source:** Suparee B.

Before:



Figure 215: The storage room was located in the middle of picture, **Source:** Narin N.

After:



Figure 216: Compared with the figure 215 above, the storage room has been removed which enables free space and natural light to come throughout the 2nd and 3rd floor of the hotel, **Source:** Suparee B.

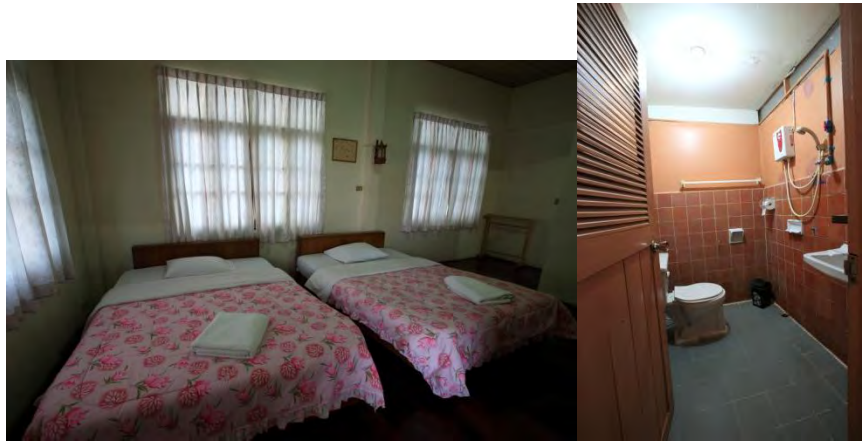


Figure 217: The high ceiling on the stairs creates a relaxing atmosphere, **Source:** Suparee B.

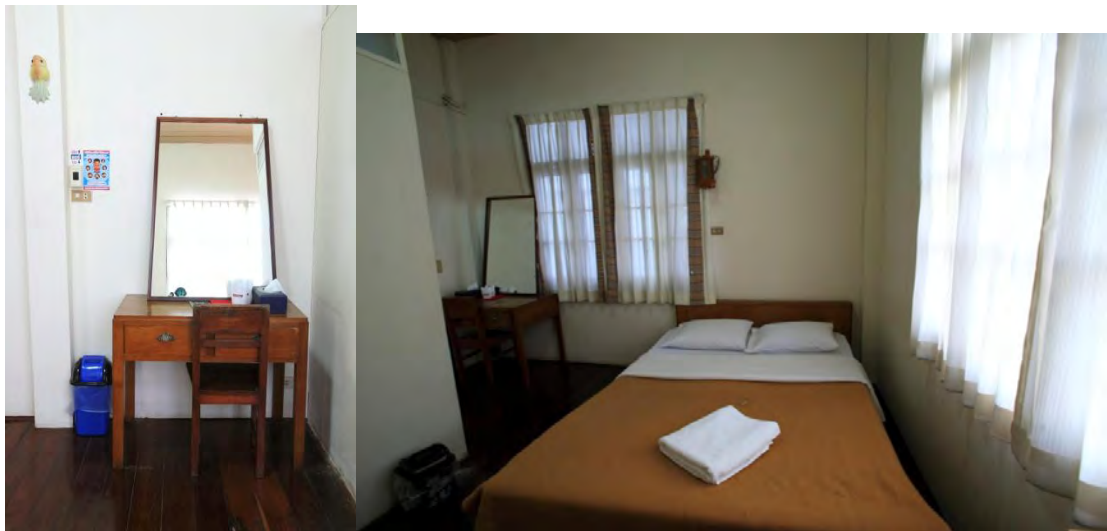
Rooms and Interior

The room rates were 350-450 baht per night before renovation. It was a price that was appropriate to pay for a 3-star hotel in Thailand. However, when the renovation had been done in January 2011, the rate was charged at 3,500 – 4,000 baht per night as the standard for a boutique hotel. The old furnishings were revived throughout the hotel and total number of room remains the same at 14 rooms with a choice of four different types.

The old:



Figures 218-219: Twin room and the toilet inside, **Source:** Narin N.



Figures 220-221: Furniture in double room, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 222: The old chair and bench on the 3rd floor to let customers relax, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 223: The signage of the room number over the old style windows, **Source:** Narin N.

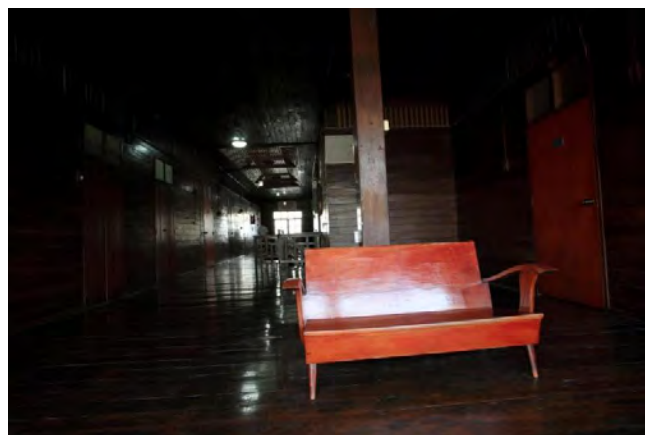


Figure 224: The old bench on the 3rd floor to let customers relax, **Source:** Narin N.



Figures 225-226: The classic style of bed and furniture, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 227: The details of the old furniture, **Source:** Narin N.

****Note*** all of photographs of "The old" had been taken by Narin N. during January 2010*

The renovation:



Figure 228: The 3rd floor of the Nanfa was the first to be renovated, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 229: The 3rd floor of the Nanfa hotel reveals the different colours in each room, **Source:** Nukaville.blogspot (2010).

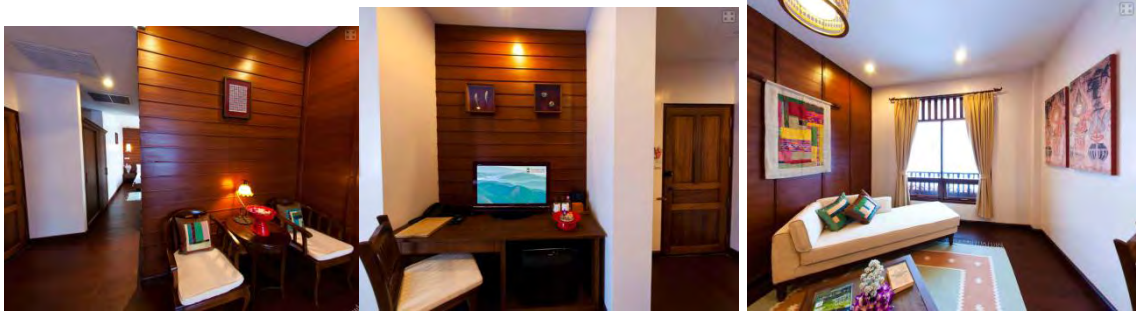


Figure 230: The floor was not covered or protected by any materials, **Source:** *ibid*

Both pictures above were taken in March 2010. We can notice that the room had been painted in different colours on their inside walls.

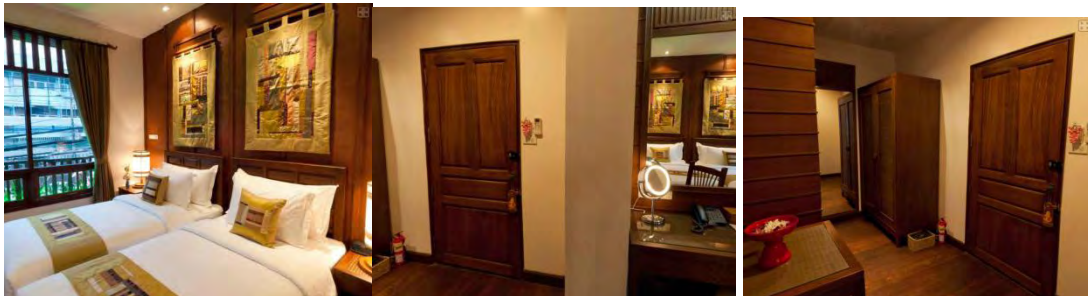
The new:

Room Type: Suite



Figures 231-233: Pukha Nanfa Suite. **Source:** Pukha Nanfa hotel's website

Room Type : Deluxe



Figures 234-236: Deluxe room. **Source:** Pukha Nanfa hotel's website

Room Type : Superior



Figures 237-238: Superior room. **Source:** Pukha Nanfa hotel's website

Room Type : Superior Studio



Figures 239-241: Superior studio room. **Source:** Pukha Nanfa hotel’s website

****Note*** All pictures in “The New” uses new technology to capture the room in 360 degrees view and helps the customer to see, throughout the room, details before making decision on the room type they need*

As above, we can see the difference between “before and after” in many components, both interior and exterior, that have been changed. Some are good and some are bad – in terms of Eurocentric conservation that has an aim to keep the outer appearance as much as possible. What is admirable and should be noted is the adaptive and re-use approach applied in the interior of the 1st floor, where the space is being used in a beneficial way and makes the hotel looks much better than before. However, the exterior is questionable. However, it also depends on the direction of the owner and what he/she intends to give priority to in conserving the heritage buildings, i.e. keeping the original structure, changing some part of the structure and making it profitable as much as possible, etc. It can be argued that the façade is the element that should be kept and remain unchanged to let the spirit of the place stay alive in the place when working with the building conservation.



Figure 242: The façade of the Nanfa hotel, **Source:** Narin N.

From this case study, what we can observe when the renovation process was completed is the new hotel named “Pukha Nanfa” hotel by which, however, we lost the legendary “Nanfa” hotel forever. The new façade has superseded the original one by many new components, for instance:

1. The emblem “Nanfa” hotel has been supplanted with new one, with the original one kept in the gallery at the 1st floor.



Figure 243: The hotel signage referring to the emblem of the hotel had been put here since the beginning of the Nanfa hotel in 1955, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 244: The emblem of the hotel was put into the gallery, **Source:** Suparee B.

2. The Chinese labels hung on the 3rd floor were also removed and put it into the reception.



Figures 245-246: The Chinese labels over the 3rd floor of Nanfa hotel, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 247: Both Chinese labels were put as decorative elements in the reception area, **Source:** Suparee B.

3. The colour and the added decorations – the white colour has been removed and the red colour applied into the façade.



Figure 248: All of the white colour has been removed and the red colour added in the decorations. They have distorted the authenticity of the original hotel by an attempt to embed the Lanna culture and Chinese influence into the hotel. **Source:** Narin N.

The changes to the exterior, especially on the original façade of the heritage building, will impact the most on the perception of the viewer – it is what people have been seeing in their daily life for more than 50 years? Should we follow the best practice to conserve the heritage building – “the original facades of the buildings should be preserved as they are and will only renovate the interior of the buildings where necessary, installing-pillar supports and repairing cracks. The original architecture will be repaired, but only where it is imperative (Lin Let 2011)” ?

We have many case studies from abroad when adaptive re-use is applied to heritage buildings, no matter whether it was originally built as a hotel or not, but the façade is the one element that remains unchanged and the old building is being respected. The best example I have experienced is the Eastern and Oriental hotel in Georgetown, Penang (E&O Hotel), where the old building is profoundly respected – no added decoration or pseudo-traditional additions.

As above, it is noticed that those added elements made by the new owner not only devalued the hotel in terms of cultural significance but also lost the authenticity without any means to take it back into the hotel. We can conclude that the “Pukha Nanfa” has lost the significance of the place – authenticity.

Suffice it to say that the most important factor to judge the heritage hotel, in the terms of the present study, is the “authenticity” or “looks original” of the hotel. Why the “authenticity” plays a major role in the conservation can be found in the following discussion.

The contested realm of authenticity

The various hotels in several types mentioned in the earlier chapters will raise several arguments, for instance:

The heritage hotels express an ironic imagination – their designers seem to attempt no critical or analytical commentary on the styles or traditions that they are attempting to represent, nor do they appear to have any intention of educating the customers of those hotels regarding those styles and traditions. Their designs are in no sense ‘instructional’. Indeed, the intention seems to be either amusement or to provoke a sense of nostalgia in the customer as well as the over-riding intention to make money, of course. (Ross King 2011).

Authenticity is an ambiguous term, where the most popular meaning refers to *real, true to one’s intention, projecting oneself or image with truthfulness, or as good copy*. Hence sometimes it may be taken to represent the “looks original” on the good copy instead of the claim of originality or of the traditional meaning (*ibid*).

From our study, it is important to incorporate “authenticity” as a main concern when we judge heritage hotels as mentioned in earlier chapters.

In the “*Asia Conserved*”: *Best Practices from the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation (2000-2004)* book, the authors provide the

First Principles for Conserving Historic Built Heritage as a guideline to judge the award-winning projects in the Asia-Pacific region over past two decades. They are:

- Principle 1: Collective mapping of cultural space, its hierarchies, symbolic language and associations is a prerequisite for appropriate and successful conservation.
- Principle 2: Tangible cultural expressions derive their origin, value and continuing significance from intangible cultural practices.
- Principle 3: Authenticity, the defining characteristic of heritage, is a culturally-relative attribute to be found in continuity, but not necessarily in the continuity of material only.
- Principle 4: The conservation process succeeds when histories are revealed, traditions revived and meanings recovered in a palimpsest of knowledge.
- Principle 5: Appropriate use of heritage is arrived at through a negotiation process, resulting in a life-enhancing space.

Together, the first principles affirm a set of professional norms which have arisen out of a distinctive Asia-Pacific physical and socio-cultural space, but which have universality in application (Asia Conserved, p.10)

The Award-winning projects reflect a consensus around the set of the powerful ‘first principles’. The Principles 1, 2, 4 and 5 are able to be judged by the physical (tangible asset) or scientific process; Principle 1 by comparing with conservation standards, Principle 2 by comparing with other similar sites (given that ages and locations of both sites were in the same culture), Principle 4 by analysing the traditional conservation process, and Principle 5 by analysing new uses. Nevertheless, Principle 3: Authenticity, is the most questionable term which is unable to be applied within a pure scientific process as with other principles to judge whether it is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, given we need only ‘one global solution’ to judge the authenticity across the different cultures of the world.

The *ICCROM CONSERVATION STUDIES no. 10 – Conserving the authentic: Essay in honour of Jukka Jokilehto*, has mentioned various definitions of authenticity. In Chapter

21: Judging the authenticity of the city by Silvio Mendes Zancheti, Flaviana Lira and Rosane Piccolo, the authors proposed a widening of the concept of authenticity and described authenticity in terms of tourism business.

Authenticity is the measure of the degree with which the attributes of cultural heritage, form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, spirit and feeling, and other factors (UNESCO 2005), credibly bear witness to its significance. In philosophy, authenticity is a question of establishing whether propositions, things and human attitudes are true or false from a specific point of view or in a specific context. It is similar to a value judgment that determines whether something is good or bad for society or for individuals. However, in the approach of tourism to cultural heritage, one understands that “there is less concern about what is ‘authentic’ ” in a firmly grounded historical sense and great emphasis is given to what is ‘attractively authentic’ (Burnett 2001, 39). In this field, authenticity is provided for the tourist by specialized professionals. In other words, the tourist is not engaged in the judgment of authenticity; rather this is presented by means of prior planning involving recreation and interpretation (Zancheti, Lira and Piccolo 2009)³².

Kwanda³³ has also mentioned the failure of the conservation process and the tourism industry in Asia during the 1990s when it was popularized by the state agencies through publications of aesthetic and romanticized heritage from popular magazines, commercial advertisements, to tourists’ guidebooks, maps, brochures, and websites developed for the tourism industry, in his study “*Tradition of conservation: redefining authenticity in*

³² Judging the authenticity of the city p.163 (Conserving THE authentic ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF JUKKA JOKILEHTO)

³³ Kwanda, Timoticin. ‘*Tradition of conservation : redefining authenticity in Javanese architectural conservation*’, Petra Christian University, Surabaya, Indonesia. Pp. 7-8.

Javanese architectural conservation". The past was wrapped up for commercial consumption to embrace economic globalization, especially the lure of the tourism industry. However, a strategy for conservation during the 1990s both in China and Singapore has threatened the quality of historic districts. This is ignored local community services, excluded suitable modern uses, and even resorted in the construction of fake historic scenes, such as the Jinli Old Street in Fujian, the Wuji Mountain Old Street in Hubei in Zhejiang Province, and the Chinatown in Singapore. In summary, Kwanda comments on the root cause of the failed conservation practices as coming from the conservation process that was mainly given to ideas of physical intactness as taught by the "Eurocentric" classical conservation dogmas. As a result, we need a contemporary conservation theory, named as "Inclusive approach and challenging the state" in his study, that puts the main interest on the people. Therefore conservation may be perceived as a complex and continuous process that involves the process of determining what constitutes heritage and how it is used, cared for, interpreted, by and for whom. To answer these questions and to reach equilibrium in the decision-making process, an inclusive approach to involve all parties is expressed in a value-led conservation principle. One source that adopted this inclusive approach is the Burra Charter.

As above, the judgment between philosophy and tourism in the term 'authenticity' seems to be clear from the argument: "*the tourist is not engaged in the judgment of authenticity; rather this is presented by means of prior planning involving recreation and interpretation*". It is no matter what types of tourists are involved: backpacker, tour group, or the culturally savvy visitors, they are only visitors who do not live on that place forever. To have a sustainable conservation management, the hotel owner and designers should be the one who are always concerned and understand the significance of the authenticity of the place before doing the heritage project.

To market the project when a 'retro fashion' influences the market and somehow benefits the old buildings that no one has expressed interest in for years, it is necessary to inspire the owner or new owner to change their building as a hotel, restaurant or museum to

serve the needs of their customers. The important thing to be aware of is not to “over-do” the place; for instance, the Mujapahit Hotel in Surabaya has kept the original building and leaves the external structure untouched. And beware not to create the ‘authentic’ but manipulated with an aim to attract the customers with the objective to gain money as in the case of the Raffles in Singapore (Figure 250).



Figure 249: Majapahit hotel, Surabaya, is a restoration of the old Dutch colonial Oranje Hotel. It is 1920s Art Deco, fairly heavily restored but with a finely preserved ‘colonial’ ambiance in a city with a now faded heritage of Dutch early-modern/Art Deco architecture. It is the city’s preferred venue for up-market weddings, **Source:** Ross K.



Figure 250: The Raffles, Singapore. It is the classic heritage hotel but also certainly ‘over-done’. It is interesting to observe that, when the same group assumed control of the Eastern and Oriental in Penang, they studiously avoided the excesses of the Raffles, **Source:** Ross K.

In the case of the Pukha Nanfa, where the owner wanted to embrace a Chinese influence concept, this was not the major reason for the loss of significance of the Nanfa hotel because actually the hotel has a related background with the Chinese. The former owner

put the four Chinese words on the hotel signage, for example. However, what Mr. Bantoon did to his hotel was a change that affected the original structure that led one to see the hotel as a new one rather than the older heritage one.

Is “authenticity” the final judgement we make on different categories of heritage hotels? I would like to present a remarkable piece of architecture, Rachamankha hotel, where there is combined the sophisticated Lanna and Chinese influence together, to become a masterpiece of a new hotel built as a heritage hotel.

Respected Design: A Case study of Rachamankha

“...Scale makes architecture intelligible on a basic human level, and buildings with carefully calibrated scale are found around the world, from all different periods. Related to scale is ornament – another element that has universal appeal. Inside and out, ornament is a delight to the eye. Ornament is often inspired by the region, based on local flora, colors, and patterns. It aids in our appraisal of how big the building is and how and where we might penetrate it. It can regulate architecture’s composition, lending its pieces a sense of hierarchy. Frequently bearing evidence of handcraft, ornament can provide a humanistic connection to architecture. Ornament can relay history – the earliest methods of building construction, for example, or how the architecture was shaped by environmental factors. Ornament is part of architecture’s narrative: it helps buildings tell their stories.” (Baker 2008)

Quoted from the Introduction of “Architectural Excellence” by Michael J. Crosbie

Located at the heart of Chiang Mai and designed by the renowned architect Mr. Ong-Ard Sadhapandhu, this is a place where integrated Lanna architecture with Chinese influenced decoration and layout made this boutique hotel outstanding among others as reflected in the triple awards of Boutique Awards 2010 for the Northern region.

A methodology that might prove the best to follow for heritage hotels in Thailand is not necessarily to be appropriate to hotels in each category. However, we can observe that this hotel, where the owner and designer understand and respect the authenticity of surrounding cultures and have adapted those beliefs and successfully embedded them into the hotel design will enhance the significance of place no matter whether it was originally built as a hotel or not.

Rachamankha, a new built hotel in an integrated Lanna architectural style and form then enhanced with Chinese influences in decoration, layout and landscape made this boutique hotel outstanding among others in terms of design. It was also proved by some guests strongly believing this hotel is renovated and re-uses a group of olders buildings – this is no doubt ‘instructional’ design by the architect to create the mood of the hotel with an abundance of cultural heritage references to meet the customer’s expectations³⁴.



Figure 251: The Rachamankha is considered a hidden gems with a remarkable architecture. Mr. Ong-ard studied many temples in the Northern area until he found the Golden Mean as was introduced in the design of Wat Ton-Kwen. He is not reluctant to take that opportunity and adapt it in his hotel as he did before at Tamarin Village hotel, **Source:** Narin N.

³⁴ TAT always promotes Chiang Mai as “Chiang Mai is one of the few places in Thailand where it is possible to experience both historical and modern Thai culture coexisting side by side: the city features centuries-old chedis and temples next to modern convenience stores and boutique hotels.” Source: <http://www.tourismthailand.org/where-to-go/cities-guide/destination/chiang-mai/>



Figure 252: The Lanna architecture influence, decorated with Chinese elements, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 253-254: The landscape is an important component that enhances a marvelous hotel, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 255: The wall is not just a plain surface but intended to create the texture of ancient craftsmanship,
Source: Narin N.



Figure 256: The trees are located to lead the eye to the pool, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 257: The Lanna architecture influence and decoration with Chinese elements on door and lamp,

Source: Narin N.



Figure 258: The hotel's library has a unique environment, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 259: The lobby area on the left-hand side. We can see a little Chinese garden nearby, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 260: The ‘right scale’ made the hotel a living space without any feeling that might make the customer feel like living in a temple, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 261: All of the decoration will be based on the Chinese elements with the red colour applied in some necessary places, **Source:** Narin N.

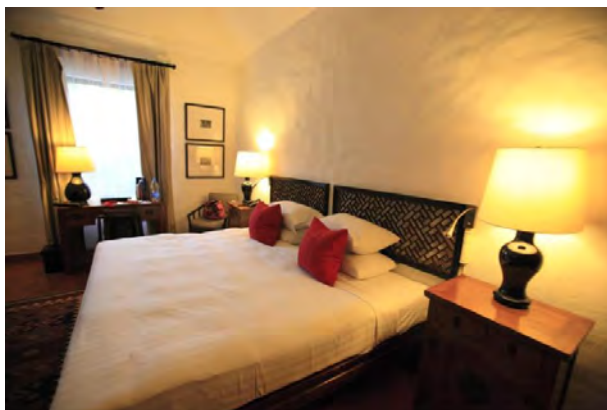


Figure 262: The twin room that is converted to be double room, **Source:** Narin N.

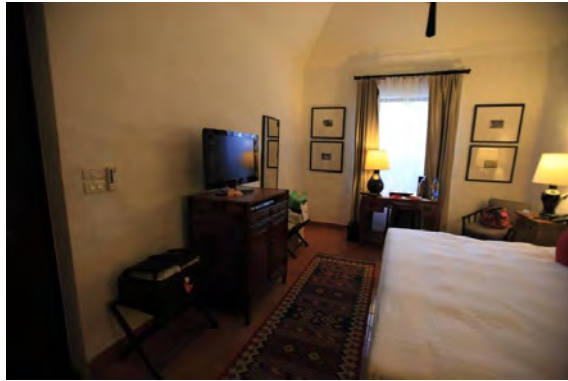


Figure 263: All of facilities are provided well in the high ceiling room, **Source:** Narin N.

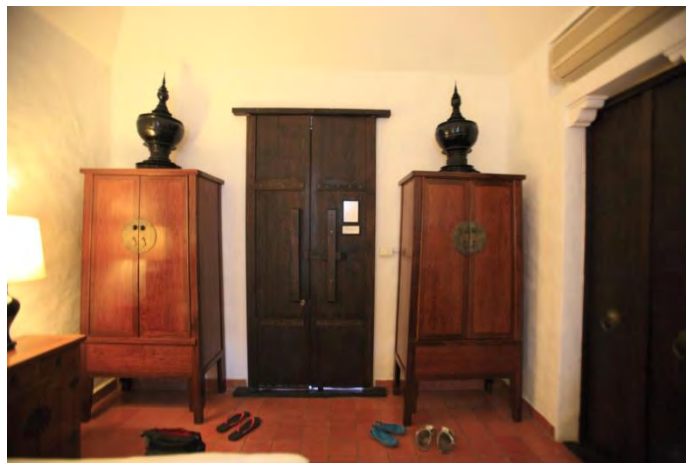


Figure 264: The combination of Lanna and Chinese elements, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 265: The intention to void some parts of the wall to place the air-conditioner helps to blend it, **Source:** Narin N.



Figure 266: The signage of the hotel made of brass and engraved with the emblem, Lanna language, English. All design and font sizes are appropriate., **Source:** Narin N.

“...Vitruvius’ concepts of strength, utility, and beauty are foundation elements for architecture of excellence. These have proven themselves to have a tripartite dependency upon one another for the total success of a building. One cannot be ignored simply because of the fulfillment of the other two. An example of such a fallacy would be the proposition that the perfection of a building’s utility, or function, will necessarily fulfill its aesthetic requirements. Or similarly, that a building of great aesthetic value will necessarily meet its functional requirements. Each of the three must be considered as a complementary whole.”³⁵

From above pictures, it is not exaggeration to say that the “Rachamancha” has all three foundational elements for architecture of excellence as mentioned in the quote. I would classify this place as a valid representation of the perfect conjoining of Lanna architecture with Chinese influence that creates an optimum for the customers.

In summary,

Can we classify every detail in Rachamancha as “pseudo-traditional additions”? The straight forward answer can be is “yes” but it is also able to be seen as a place where you

³⁵ Baker, William T., *Architectural Excellence*, Image Publishing 2008, p. 53

can gain a new experience of the relationship with Lanna more than by staying at the newly restored Pukha Nanfa hotel which is actually a place originally built as a hotel.

As a result, we can see that the idea of historical authenticity is somehow the major concept that we can use as a key factor to judge a heritage hotel but it is not necessarily to be applied in all cases. Authenticity is an ambiguous term that is “open” to use in various ways depending upon the interpretation of the designers and owners and on how they let the visitors or customers experience it for themselves. The successful hotel design should be the one that has no added decoration or pseudo-traditional additions – in case of the building originally built as a hotel. In such cases one might indeed speak of ‘an authentic approach’ – the nostalgia is left to the customer but it is not in the intentions of proprietor or designer. Furthermore, in other cases – newly built or somehow called Nostalgic heritage – the design that is respectful to the surroundings and is successfully interpreted in the right way will lead to “architectural excellence” whereby the owner can let the architecture speak out loud without any advertisement being needed.

Chapter 6

Discussion and Conclusion

Thailand's vital tourism industry might just be indestructible. Despite devastating floods that reached the capital, Bangkok, 19 million tourists visited Thailand in 2011, a nearly 20 per cent jump from the previous year, bringing in record revenues of 735 billion Baht (\$24.5 billion). The same number of tourists is expected this year (The Monocle Thailand Survey 2012 in the Tourism & Hospitality section). The international tourism revenue has no doubt been the essential factor to maintain the steady-state economic growth in terms of GDP per capita in Thailand year after year.

The secret to Thailand's enduring appeal arguably lies in its ability to accommodate all tastes and budgets. Backpackers can stretch out their dollars on Koh Tao or Koh Lipe, while the wealthy from Hong Kong or Jeddah can holiday at exclusive resorts or private villas in Phuket or Samui. Adventurous types can choose between trekking in northern Thailand's forest-covered mountains, diving off the protected Tarutao Islands, or rock-climbing along the limestone cliffs of Krabi. Meanwhile, Bangkok continues to lure travellers with its mix of high and low, old and new, chaotic street life and luxury hotels, vibrant old markets and gleaming shopping malls (*ibid*).

Culturally savvy tourists are one of the traveller groups who prefer to stay in the hotels that are able to provide the individual experiences that one cannot find anywhere else. Using heritage buildings as fabric then applying adaptive and re-use concepts as a boutique hotel is one of the alternatives to both serve the demand of this traveller group and preserve the heritage in Thailand simultaneously. This trend has also been identified internationally when renovated hotels around the world have been considered in surveys conducted by TRAVEL+LEISURE magazine (T+L). The Features Director of T+L, Nilou Motamed (Figure 267), interviewed by NBCNEWS.com³⁶ (Travel section) on May 7th 2012, noted that the surveys took 7 years to complete in 29 countries around the

world. Interestingly, the surveys found 3,000 hotels opening just in 2011 alone. The biggest new trend currently is “exotic” and people are looking for ‘authenticity’. They want a place that is going to stand out and not feel like a generic hotel but a place that seems like a place to which they belong. The survey also presented a “T+L It List of the 50 best new hotels, resorts, and renovations” in the T+L magazine June 2012, The Hotels Issue. It classified those best hotels into six types: 1.) City, 2.) Rustic, 3.) Design, 4.) Resort, 5.) Beach, and 6.) Renovation. In the Renovation category, there were eight qualified hotels and one of the best is the Le Bristol in Paris, France, that invested in a \$130 million renovation to retain the 19th-century paintings and gilded ceiling dating back to 1925, but infused the space with a lighter, welcoming sensibility. In addition to those 50 best hotels in the list, the Best New Hotels of 2012 were mentioned in the interview as well. Among them, the 137 Pillars House, Chiang Mai, Thailand, had coped well with the exotic trend when converting the 19th century historical timber bungalow of Anna’s son, Louis Leonowens³⁷, into the boutique hotel which got a recommendation from the Features Director as “you will get a little bit of authentic feel, everything feels like ‘you’ve gone back in time’, the service is slower, the pace is slower. If you want to relax and unveil, then this is a place to go. It’s a great value, I’d recommend a cooking class there.”

³⁶ <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/vp/47278629#47278629>

³⁷ <http://137pillarshouse.com/heritage/>



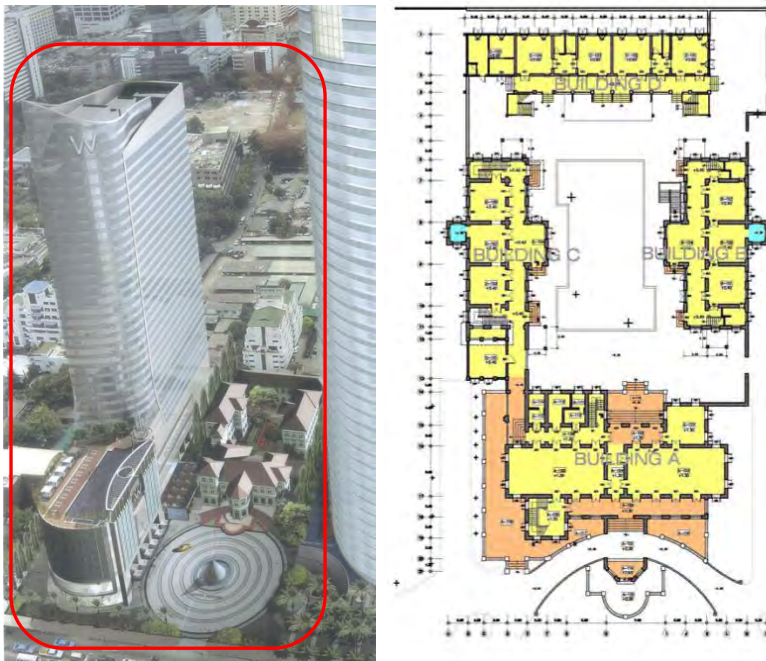
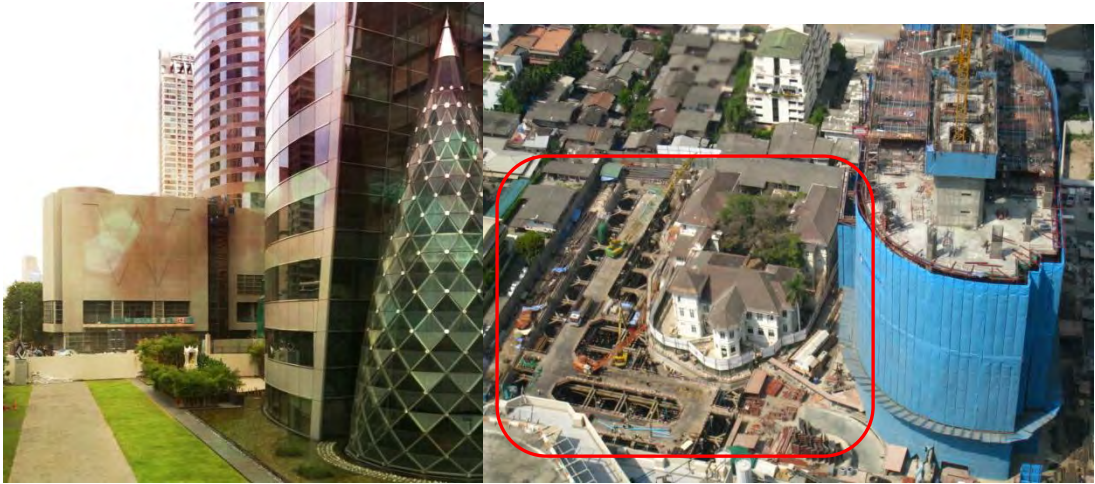
Figure 267: Captured screen of NBCNEWS.com, Nilou Motamed interview on 7th May 2012.



Figure 268: Captured screen of NBCNEWS.com, 137 Pillars House was one of the Best New Hotels 2012 from T+L survey.

The aim of this dissertation has been to survey and find potential heritage buildings for applying adaptive and re-use concepts, to identify the constraints relating to the legal, financial and cultural factors that militate against such practices of re-cycling, and to find a feasible way and key success factors to run a boutique hotel in heritage buildings under the constraints of cultural, legal, and economic realities in Thailand. The study was based on interviews and survey of selected buildings categorized into three types of heritage hotels: Original Heritage Hotels (in Chapter 2), Heritage Hotels by applying an adaptive and re-use approach (in Chapter 3) and Nostalgic Heritage Hotels (in Chapter 4) with also two additional hybrid categories situated between these categories. Chapter 5 provided a discussion on the question of authenticity of the heritage hotel through a case study of Nan Fa hotel vs. Rachamankha hotel – the interrelated categories of ‘Original built as hotel’ and ‘Re-use of Historic Building as Fabric’ vs. ‘Nostalgic Heritage Hotel’. The surveys were conducted during September 2009 to May 2012.

In Chapter 2, we reviewed a brief history of the hotel business in Thailand and learned that only three old hotels remain healthy in terms of business by adopting a chain system such as the Mandarin group, Accor group and Centara in cases of the Mandarin Oriental hotel, the Centara Grand Beach Resort and Villa Hua Hin respectively. All three chains expanded the size of the hotels to serve the increasing number of travellers whilst keeping the original building as cultural capital that continues to generate income for the hotel nowadays. What is worth keeping an eye on is the new “W Hotel” group that has planned to finish a project at the end of 2012, namely “W BANGKOK”. It was designed to keep the historically significant building as an attractive selling point to be situated between two modern design buildings named “Sathorn Square” as shown in the Figures 269-273 below. It took the same strategy as the pioneering Oriental Hotel did, hence success is expected.



Figures 269-273 : The W Bangkok hotel : plan and layout.

Source : <http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=385458&page=12>

In Chapter 3, we learned from various successful entrepreneurs who applied the adaptive and re-use approaches into their heritage buildings in several locations within the historic Rattanakosin Island area. A clear theme with appropriate style and manners is a prerequisite to differentiate from the ordinary guesthouses or small hotels located nearby. The range of investment varied from 700,000 to 20 million baht as found in our survey, so it is presumed to be a challenge for any project to take the break-even period as a major consideration when presenting their feasibility study or business plan to discuss financing the projection with a bank. Another constraint is the fact that there are no supporting laws available at the moment to run a small hotel that provides more than four rooms of accommodation in Thailand. Some owners have had to manipulate their guest receipts by breaking down items as a 'rent' on their furniture rather than as a payment for a room. However, we found two outstanding examples of boutique hotel and hostel, the Bhutorn and Baan Dinso, both recognized as No. 1 rank in several respected travel websites and which had received very positive feedback for their excellent services.

Chapter 4 explored several types of Nostalgic heritage hotels and found that the key success factor is a balancing between the old and the new in their hotels, which were defined as the hybrid heritage type in this study, namely the Chedi, U Chiang Mai and Ariyasom Villa. All of them kept their valued heritage building as a core of the hotel then applying a respectful design style into their add-on buildings as accommodation to serve the customers. To apply this strategy, not only were the locations of the hotels limited but also a maintenance cost to take care of the heritage building was also required as a component of the necessary expenses in the long run. Consequently, another two nostalgic types were considered: 1.) Inspired by a local temple and its architecture 2.) Colonial style influence as represented by Rachamankha and The Eugenia. They overcame the limitations of the location by building replicated heritage buildings in a location where no such old building had previously existed. However, both of these hotels became successful newly built hotels with a nostalgic theme as their customers perceived both places as genuine heritage buildings. Essentially, though the differentiated design can be the selling point, the crucial factor in the hotel business is always the excellent services provided by the staff.

Also in Chapter 4, we found that “the heritage hotel does not need to convert from heritage buildings only”, as further illustrated in Chapter 5 when the ‘authenticity’ of a building originally built as a hotel had been diluted and suppressed by applying a new design and colour scheme, yet by applying a nostalgic heritage theme one can create the new experiences to lure most of the travellers into believing that the hotel had been converted from the genuine heritage building rather than the replicated one.

In addition to key factors mentioned above, one more lesson shared by Laurence Loh, the owner of the Cheong Fatt Tze, well known as the Blue Mansion in Penang, Malaysia, is “when you [have] finished conservation or renovation projects for the heritage buildings, you have to be sure that the building itself should still be immersed with myths and spirit of the places that are able to create a distinct atmosphere as you ‘feel’ at the first time you met them”. There are various examples where, when the renovation is finished, then all the myths have gone. This kind of project will not be a good project and its significance will deteriorate.

The question of authenticity

In the case of the art object, a most sensitive nucleus – namely, its authenticity – is interfered with whereas no natural object is vulnerable on that score. The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object. (Walter Benjamin, 1936: ‘The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction’³⁸)

As intimated observed by Walter Benjamin, the nostalgic mourns the *loss* of authenticity and sees the world as endless repetition without meaning - certainly without authenticity. Hence, this is the dilemma that the entrepreneur or designer of the 'heritage' hotel has to negotiate: how to pursue some notion of authenticity

(assuming that such is an objective) yet also to pander to the 'tragic' state of the nostalgic. "Do they go back to some idea of originality (authenticity) or do they create the *illusion* of the old?"

The question raises both a philosophical and a commercial question.

First, the philosophical: what, when all is said and done, is authenticity? The popular understanding is that it relates to origins, therefore to something in the past. The philosophical understanding, however, turns it back to the individual (to the 'subject', in philosophy); to be authentic is to be true to one's own principles. So, a fake like the Eugenia is certainly not authentic in the popular sense, yet it could be absolutely authentic in the way that its entrepreneur/designer uses it to express the way they see themselves and the world - or, less assertively, the way they see Bangkok. In this sense of a replicated building that comprises original material applied in their structure and decorated with genuine antique furniture, does this absolutely contravene the philosophical understanding of 'authenticity'?

The second question is the commercial. How is the pursuit for authenticity, however defined (or merely to satisfy the cravings of nostalgics, for that matter), to be reconciled with the imposed rigours of banks and financial managers? We are surely justified in questioning the motives of all such entrepreneurs and their designers - surely, they are out to "make a buck". If the project finance costs more than hundred millions of baht, shall we compromise with those bankers by ignoring some original materials then demolish and replace with other new materials that cost less? In addition, do we need to always focus on the customers' demand as a top priority by changing the styles of our developed projects (buildings) according to the upcoming trend every year? As illustrated in a case of "Replicating the Town" mentioned in Chapter 4, different types of towns were built in several tourist attraction spots. When time has passed and the trend has changed, one day

³⁸ <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm>

this will be out of date and no one will any longer be interested to visit. Hence, customizing a fantasy place to serve the demand of fashion would not be a sustainable development. Moreover, we can also usefully repeat the argument about the relationship between the tourist and the judgement of authenticity in Chapter 5 :

“...The judgement between philosophy and tourism in the term ‘authenticity’ seems to be clear from the argument: *“the tourist is not engaged in the judgment of authenticity; rather this is presented by means of prior planning involving recreation and interpretation”*. It is no matter what types of tourists are involved: backpacker, tour group, or the culturally savvy visitors, they are only visitors who do not live in that place forever. To have a sustainable conservation management, the hotel owner and designers should be the ones who are always concerned with and understand the significance of the authenticity of the place before doing the heritage project.”

Tourists should not be engaged in the judgement of authenticity, as they are persons who come, maybe once in their lifetime, then are gone forever. So, to serve the demands of tourists with their spending power but ignore the significance of the place should be avoided. We should convince the banks and financial managers to understand why the budget should be higher if we elect to keep and retain the authenticity of the place as much as we can, rather than presenting the easier way by merely replicating the past.

This, in turn, leads to a question of public policy. Unfortunately, there is no promised public policy to lead the ‘national agenda’ to safeguard the heritage and memory of the nation (at all cost, as it were) in Thailand. Furthermore, there has been no discussion about the extent to ensure the future economic wellbeing of its people, an ideal that has never been recognized by any governments. Anyway, there is the hope from the related agencies such as CPB, ICOMOS Thailand, ASA, and other non-government organisations which are now awakened in an attempt to protect our heritage by raising people’s awareness by many activities such as seminars, public relations exercises, or even turning empty heritage space into commercial space in order to safeguard those significant buildings such as in the cases of Nitas Rattanakosin and the ‘ASIATIQUE

The Riverfront’ – the old warehouse of the East Asiatic Company restored into the first and biggest lifestyle project in Asia as a night market to serve local and foreign tourists. When we are considering the commercial factor in our project, what is really a challenge is the objective of the project : ‘Is the objective to safeguard the heritage or is it to exploit it in the name of the tourist dollar?’

The answer can be suggested by this diagram :

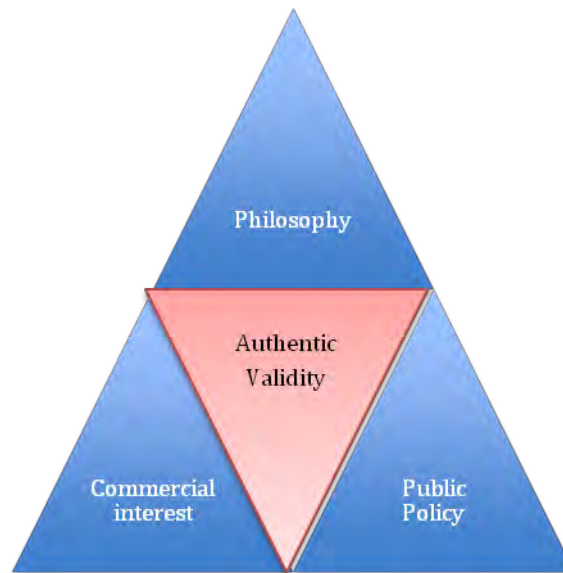


Diagram 1: A ‘trialectic’ for authentic validity when managing a commercial heritage project

Diagram 1 portrays the relationship between three factors, philosophy (of conservation), commercial interest, and public policy, in order to manage the commercial heritage project. This ‘trialectical’ relationship will be unable to survive without any one of its components. Too much ‘philosophy’ means we are trying to keep everything in the genuine conditions of the past and that everything remains untouched. Too much emphasis on the commercial may imply removing all of the old, to be superseded by the new as much as possible to achieve the lowest cost to the project. As we asked earlier: what, when all is said and done, is authenticity? The philosophical understanding, however, turns it back to the individual (to the ‘subject’, in philosophy); to be authentic is to be true to one’s own principles. The commercial interest: how is the pursuit for authenticity, however defined (or merely to satisfy the cravings of nostalgics, for that

matter), to be reconciled with the imposed rigours of banks and financial managers? And last, if there is no input from public policy, this means no budget to support or no rules to control. Though the last is the fact at this moment, only some of the projects can be defined as successful and these required a large budget to invest. Without a support from public policy, no small private sector investor can take part in a big project, if we want to achieve both some sense of historical authenticity and commercial success at the same time.

Consequently, the task is "to achieve the right balance" in this balanced, trialectical relationship, where 'the right balance' is never 'a given' but always to be contested. Indeed, there will be constant contestation over what is the right course, in relation to every single project. To conclude this exercise we can take these issues to a small number of *potential* cases for heritage hotels where issues of authentic 'purity', commercial feasibility and public policy support will inevitably arise.

Lessons

We will take the criteria derived from the present study to be a checklist to be applied to a re-use approach into selected heritage buildings: (1) the Royal Hotel; (2) the old Customs House; (3) the Phayathai Palace; (4) the East Asiatic Company Ltd. buildings; (5) the colonial-style buildings on thanon Na Phra Lan; and (6) the group of buildings along the Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue. I will group these according to their location. The best practices selected from both local and international perspectives will be used as a guideline.

a.) The Royal Hotel (Rattanakosin Hotel) and the buildings along the Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue

Place: A group of buildings along the Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue
Location: Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue, Bangkok, Thailand
Architect / Designer: Mr. Mew (Chit-sen) Aphaiwong

Proprietor: The Crown Property Bureau
Date of Construction: 1943
Conservation Awarded: -

They were both constructed in the same period of time, the Revolution period, and located at Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue. The Rattanakosin hotel was opened on 24 June 1943³⁹ by Field Marshal P. Phibulsongkhram as mentioned in Chapter 2. The current Rattanakosin Hotel cannot claim status as a top five-star hotel though it has the unbeatable location in the Rattanakosin Island adjoining the Sanam-Luang and the Grand Palace. Other commercial buildings have been rented by various tenants for different businesses such as the Sky High restaurant, the Lottery Bureau, Deves Insurance Public Co. Ltd, while some of them have been left empty for a long time.

To apply an adaptive and re-use program into both buildings, one could treat them as a group of buildings by also taking the next adjacent building to the Rattanakosin Hotel if one wanted to expand the size of the hotel to serve the bigger groups of travellers or else manage each of them as two boutique hotels individually. Most of the buildings, except those around the Democracy Monument, in the Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue, belong to CPB (Figure 276), hence the outer structures are still kept in a fine condition that will help to reduce the renovation cost. During the surveys, there was a pioneer project sponsored and owned by CPB. CPB developed one of the buildings in this area to be an interactive museum in 2010, “Nitas Rattanakosin” (Figures 274-275), that indicated a good sign to change the empty buildings to let them come alive again. Another factor we should consider is how easy it can become to access the hotel, as there is a rumour about the new MRT station at the Golden Mountain which would provide better accessibility by public transportation in the near future.

³⁹ The National day during the Revolutionary period



Figure 274: The site of “Nitas Rattanakosin” when it was under construction. This photograph was taken on 25 February 2010. **Source:** Naratuschan N.

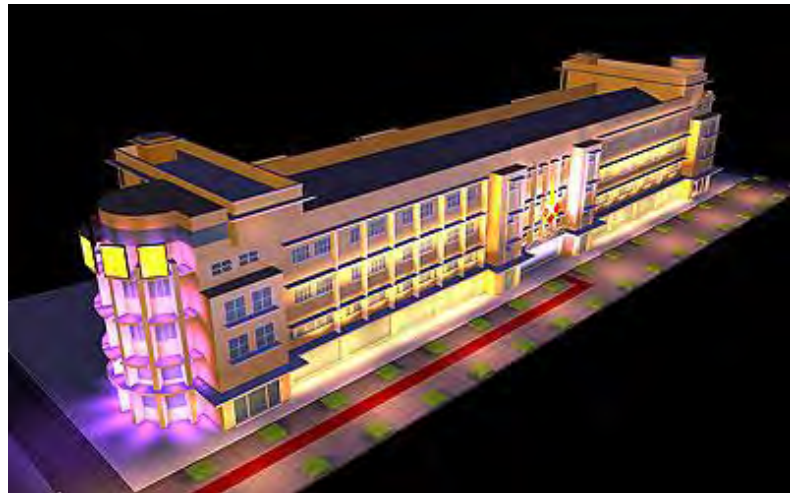


Figure 275: The 3D model illustration shows the new renovated building with the adaptive and re-use program from the Crown Property Bureau to be the “Nitas Rattanakosin” museum. **Source:** Nitas Rattanakosin’s website

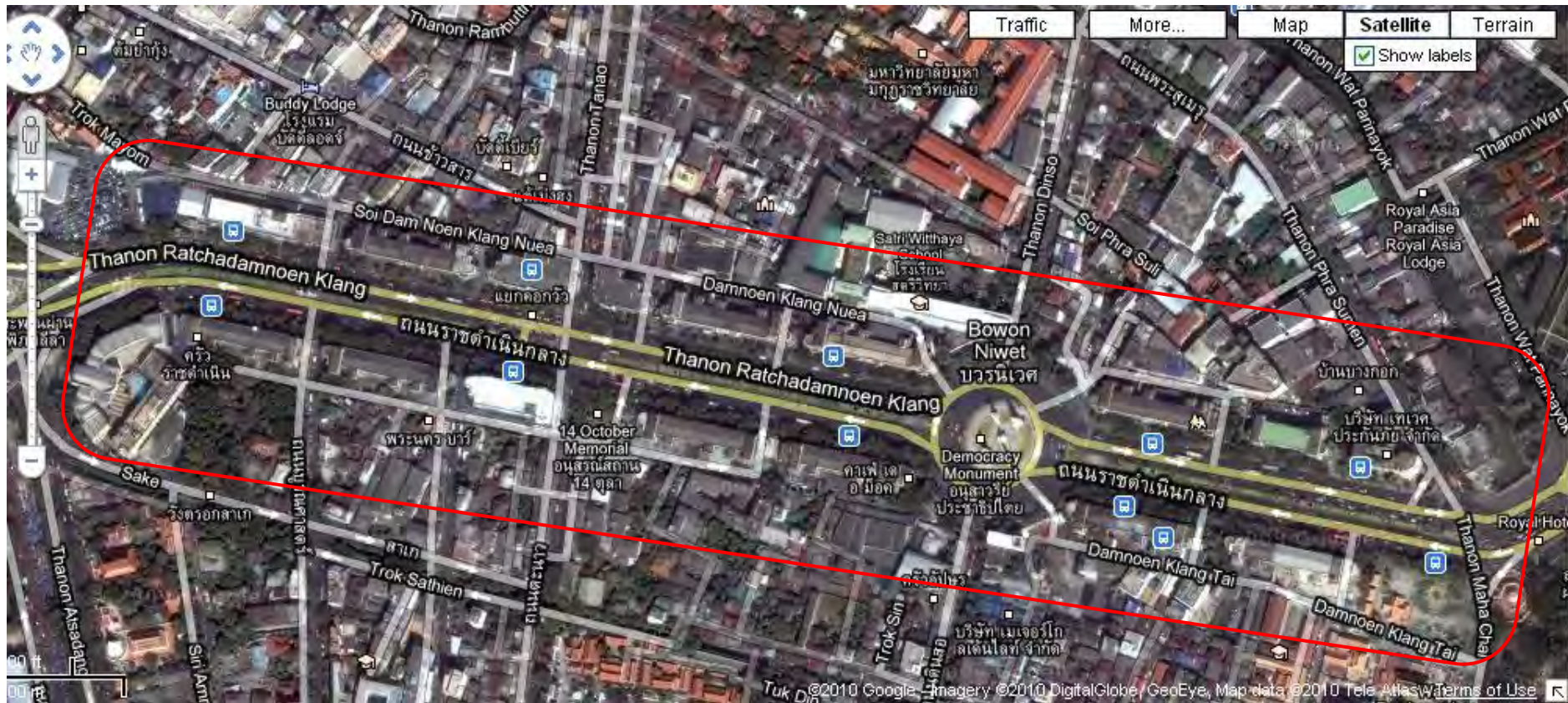


Figure 276: Map of Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue (Thanon Ratchadamnoen Klang) indicated by the yellow route along the map; the red rectangle indicates the area of commercial buildings, Source: Google maps (<http://maps.google.com>)

Therefore, I would propose to implement the same model as the GPO (General Post Office) No.1 Martin Place, Sydney, Australia, which was applied several years ago – it was classified as one of the most high profile redevelopments to show how adaptive re-use can bring new life to heritage places in Sydney. The cutting-edge project involved retaining and restoring the old GPO building while erecting a completely new development on rear land immediately behind the historic building (Heritage Council of NSW Autumn 2002). In other words, the new development would only be allowed at the rear and in the interior with the strict policy to retain the existing external facades to protect the heritage in the historic precincts of Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue. The budget of this project depends upon the size of the project, how many buildings to include, what kind of re-use program should be adapted, for example purely boutique hotel or including a shopping mall as well. Hence, a budget more than several hundred million baht would be expected to be invested on this project.



Figure 277: An historical photograph of GPO Sydney, **Source:** Power House museum's website



Figure 278: A current photograph of GPO Sydney, **Source:** Laf Group

b.) The East Asiatic Company Ltd. and the old Customs House Buildings

Both of these are located in the same area between Soi Charoenkrung 36 and 40 or the Southern Charoenkrung area at the Chao Phraya riverside as shown in Figure 279.

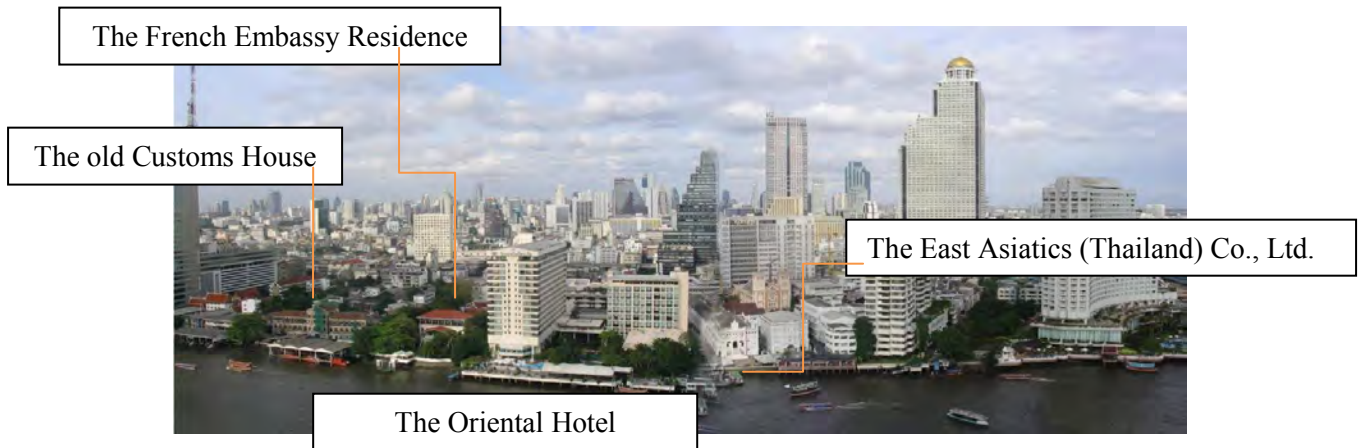


Figure 279: The area between Soi Charoenkrung 36 and 40, the river view from the Peninsula Bangkok Hotel, **Source:** www.bridgeandtunnelclub.com



Figure 280: The Office of East Asiatic (Thailand), **Source:** Naratuschan N.

Place: Office of East Asiatic (Thailand) Company Limited

Location: Oriental Alley (Charoen Krung 40), Bang Rak, Bangkok

Architect / Designer: Mr. Annibale Rigotti

Proprietor: Surathip Co., Ltd

Date of Construction: circa 1900

ASA Conservation Awarded: 1984

The Office of the East Asiatic (Thailand) Company Limited is a 3-storey brick masonry building with hipped roof and wall bearing structure. The architecture is Renaissance Revival style, with round arches and a porch accentuated by a front panel of brick masonry built higher than the roof. The building is set back from the river, however, the entrance with broad and high staircase makes the building distinguishable and stately in appearance.

The East Asiatic (Thailand) Company Limited (the E.A.C. Group) was founded in 1884 by Captain H.N. Andersen, a Danish mariner who came to Thailand via the Chao Phraya River and anchored at Oriental pier. His Company was opened at the site from that time and the office building had been used until 1995, when the company moved to Lumpini Tower. The old office building is conserved as a historic building and has been registered as a National Monument⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ Some content described in cases b.) and c.) below were partly taken from two books “Architectural Heritage in Thailand I: 20 years of the Architectural Award (1982-2002), and “Architectural Heritage in



Figure 281: The Old Customs House, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

Place: The Old Customs House

Location: Soi Charoen Krung 36, Charoen Krung Road, Bangkok

Architect / Designer: Mr. Joachim Grassi

Proprietors: The Treasury Department under the administration of the Ministry of Finance, The Bangrak Fire Brigade Station, The Bangrak Marine Police Station, The Natural Park Public Company Limited (N-Park PCL)

Date of Construction: 1884-1887

ASA Conservation Awarded: Not renovated yet though the N-Park PCL had won an auction to change this place to become a luxury hotel eight years ago.

The distinctive characteristics of Palladian architecture are symmetrically in the form of three buildings, each in an “I” shape or rectangular layout; the front façade of the main building faces to the Chao Phraya river. The other two buildings are located on the left and right of the main building; they contain two stories while the main building has three stories with the addition of two small floors to reach the room under the roof where there is located a clock behind the top of the façade. The main building has a major central room that connects to the grand stairs and the corridors which lead to the left and right wing with reference to the waterfront. At the main central room, the floor and the

ceiling were made of teak wood while the front of the hall has a window for good ventilation.

There is also a corridor, made of timber, which connects both the two subsidiary buildings to the main building. The architect used the Neo-Classical Style especially on the main building consisting of the triangular pediment and rectangular layout while each story has the same floor plan. It is a wall bearing building type. The façade consists of bay windows and arch windows. The symmetrical layout of the building also emphasizes the symmetrical balance and the façade. At the top, there is a triangular pediment with a clock which gives emphasis to the façade which is embellished with the Thai flag and the emblem of King Rama V. All of the components are in clear forms and fine proportional relationships which reflect the revival of Palladian architecture in the Kingdom of Siam⁴¹.

As above, we can have no doubt about the significance values embedded in both historic buildings, especially the aesthetic values – the architecture itself has already spoken out loudly. To apply the re-use program as a boutique hotel is tempting for each project, especially the old customs house that the Treasury Department, under the administration of the Ministry of Finance, had a plan in 2004 to convert to be the most luxurious boutique hotel, providing a proposed 80 rooms of accommodation. In August 2004, they announced the auction winner, the joint venture business group of N-Park PCL, Aman Resort Services Ltd., and Silver Link Holdings Ltd., with a project name of “AMAN Resort, Bangkok” (Figure 282). However, in the October 2004, the management team of the N-Park PCL had been identified as a fraud by the SEC (Thailand)⁴², hence the project has been suspended since then.

⁴¹ *ibid*

⁴² <http://www.muangboranjourn.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=109>



Figure 282: The new project announcement placed in front of the Old Customs House since 2004, **Source:** <http://jackiejan.multiply.com/>

We do not know what will happen in the future but if a new hotel developer is interested to develop both the heritage buildings mentioned above, he would be required to overcome a significant constraint – no parking lodge would be available on their own sites. As a result, I would like to present the example of a boutique hotel that overcame the constraint of no available parking lodge on their site and additionally has very limited access, only by barges, yet nevertheless won triple awards in 2011, namely the 2011 Gold Award for Architecture & Design (River, Water and Lake), 2011 Gold Award for Thematic Idea & Culture (River, Water and Lake) from Thailand Boutique Awards, and 2011 Best Conservation Award by the ASA. This is “Phraya Palazzo”⁴³.

⁴³ <http://www.prayapalazzo.com/awards.php>



Figure 283: Phraya Palazzo (named by the owner as “Praya Palazzo”), **Source:**
<http://www.prayapalazzo.com/>

Place: Phraya Palazzo

Location: 757/1 Soi Somdet Phra Pin Klao 2, Somdet Phra Pin Klao Road, Bang Yi Khan, Bang Phlat, Bangkok

Architect / Designer: not known

Conservation Designer: Asst. Prof. Wichai Pitukworarat

Proprietor: Krung Thep Wittaya Tan Islamic Foundation, rented by Praya Palazzo Co., Ltd.

Date of Construction: 1923

ASA Conservation Awarded: 2011

Phraya Palazzo Building, formerly named Ban Bang Yi Khan, is located on the bank of the Chao Phraya River. Its function has changed from house, to school, and then was deserted from 1996. Until 2008, it was rented by Praya Palazzo Co. Ltd.. The company executives, led by Asst. Prof. Wichai Pitukworarat, restored the building and it has become a boutique hotel with 17 rooms of accommodation and a restaurant named “Praya Palazzo”.

It consists of three brick masonry buildings. Each has two-storeys connected by a terrace. The plan of the buildings in the South and North is in the form of an L-shaped design, and of the same size. The floor is made of wood. The hipped roof is in woodwork covered with Chinese tiles. Above the doors are beautiful wood carvings. The arches above the windows are decorated with stained glass and clear glass. The architectural style is Neo Palladian. Presently, the area inside the buildings has been modified for guestrooms, bathrooms and a dining room. The kitchen was added as well as a swimming

pool and a pavilion etc. Though the Phraya Palazzo had been abandoned for years before renovation work took place, with a passion and dedication in the person of Asst. Prof. Wichai Pitukworarat this heritage building was finally alive again in the October 2010. One month later he passed away from cancer.

What we could learn from this case is a way to overcome the constraints of limited access, in this example by barges and providing the parking lodge for the hotel at Wat Rajathiwas which is located on the opposite side of the river. The hotel offers free parking and provides full of information on how to contact the hotel when their customers reach the Rajaworawihara Pier.



Figure 284: An illustrated map provided by the Praya Palazzo website under their location section, **Source:** <http://www.prayapalazzo.com/location.php>

Consequently, considering their locations, significance values, and applying a solution to handle their constraints, both heritage buildings, namely the East Asiatic Company Ltd. and the old Customs House Buildings, seem to have good prospects if someone planned to apply the adaptive and re-use concept to convert them to be boutique hotels.

c.) The Phayathai Palace

Place: The Phayathai Palace

Location: Ratchawithi Road, Phaya Thai, Bangkok

Architect / Designer: Mr. Mario Tamagno (designed Thewarat Sapharom Hall)

Proprietor: Pramongkutklao Medicine Centre, Royal Thai Army Medical Department

Date of Construction: 1910-1922

ASA Conservation Awarded: 1984

Phayathai Palace was initially built by King Rama V as his countryside resort for his visit to the royal paddy fields in Phayathai area. After His Majesty passed away, his son, King Rama VI, had permanent halls built during 1910-1922 and named them Waikunthephayasathan, Phimanchakri, Sisutthaniwat, Thewaratsapharom, and Udomwanaphon then renamed the former Udomwanaphon Pavillion as Mekhalaruchie. The architecture of the halls is in a Romantic style designed by European architects, one of them being Mr. Mario Tamagno who designed Thewaratsapharom Hall, while the architects of the other halls are unknown. The halls are decorated with stuccos and woodcarvings. Some halls are with high domed roofs. The interiors are decorated with frescos and stuccos. Overall, the palace is picturesque, exciting, extraordinary and elaborated with fine craftsmanship. There is also a historic landscape in the compound, namely the Roman Garden, which is also in a Romantic style.

After King Rama VI's reign, the palace had been rehabilitated as a hotel for a short period called "Hotel Phrayathai", as mentioned in Chapter 1. However, the palace also had been converted to be part of the national radio broadcasting system and a hospital as well. In these days, the palace is left empty and open to the public to visit every day. Essentially, during the weekend it will be cared for by volunteers of "Khon Rak Wang club" (a group of people who are dedicated to the palaces) who will provide a free touring guide two times a day. They will provide education about the background and the significance of the place to the visitor. In addition, it is also opened for public events such as charity concerts and marketing events as well.

To convert this palace into the boutique hotel is somehow questionable, though the location of the palace is near the BTS at the Victory Monument, most of its architectural structures are in a good condition, and it was once functioning as a hotel.

Besides, the surroundings area is the Pramongkutkiao hospital which might not be desirable for the visitor who wants to relax and occasionally find some entertainment. However, in the future when the surroundings may have changed, the model of W Bangkok hotel, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, could offer a strategy to be followed through. The idea is to keep all the palaces as heritage capital while providing a full service of hotel in newly built buildings to surround the palaces.

d.) The colonial-style buildings on thanon Na Phra Lan, or the so-called Na Phra Lan Historic Shophouses



Figures 285-287: The colonial-style buildings on Na Phra Lan, **Source:** Naratuschan N.

Place: Na Phra Lan Historic Shophouses
Location: Na Phra Lan Road, Phra Nakorn, Bangkok
Architect / Designer: not known
Proprietor: The Crown Property Bureau
Date of Construction: circa 1900 (early 20th century)
UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awarded: 2011

Besides the Rattanakosin Hotel, this group of buildings seems to have the formidable advantage of prime location over others, as it fronts the Grand Palace with only Na Phra Lan road in between. It meets all of the pre-requisite key factors to apply the re-use program as a boutique heritage hotel. However, to doing so, one would need to change their functions as shophouses which will destroy the extraordinary spirit and atmosphere of the area. All of the tourists who once visited the Grand Palace would have

seen these scenes of “..shophouses that are offering souvenirs, food and drinks, etc...to all tourists” for more than a century. Thus we should not apply the re-use program if it will destroy the genuine social and heritage value of the place.

There has been a renovation project here to assist long-term tenants, to help them survive and live in these shophouses. It won the Honourable Mention award from the 2011 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards announced on 1st September 2011 as described in the press release here:

“The Na Phra Lan Historic Shophouses, Bangkok, Thailand were also recognized with an Honourable Mention. The refurbishment of the Na Phra Lan Historic Shophouses has uplifted a historically significant urban complex in the heart of the historic core of Bangkok. Prominently located across from the Grand Palace, the project has restored not only this architectural landmark from the early 20th century, but also the surrounding historic streetscape as well. The project establishes a commendable model for participation by the long-term tenants, who contributed to the project costs and have committed to maintaining the buildings in the years to come.”⁴⁴

As a result, to apply adaptive and re-use programs to heritage buildings is not a straightforward approach that can be applied in every case. Rather, an analysis of the economic, social and cultural conditions is an inescapable pre-requisite. There are also financial, legal and time constraints. If we are to find solutions to overcome them, then we may find a way to run a successful boutique hotel business to serve the current trend of tourists who demand to find a place that provides what they see as ‘authentic’ experiences to them. Those types of tourists will not negotiate but are willing to pay a ‘premium’ if the boutique hotel can provide services that are beyond their expectations.

⁴⁴http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/culture/heritage_awards/press_releases/PRHA2011winners.pdf

Challenges: With an abundant collection of heritage significance buildings in several locations in Thailand, unfortunately some of them have been left empty, some of them currently malfunction, and some of them have been demolished without any concerns from the government. Reviving such heritage by applying the appropriate program, then assigning the suitable functions to their utilisation presents challenges that we have to overcome.

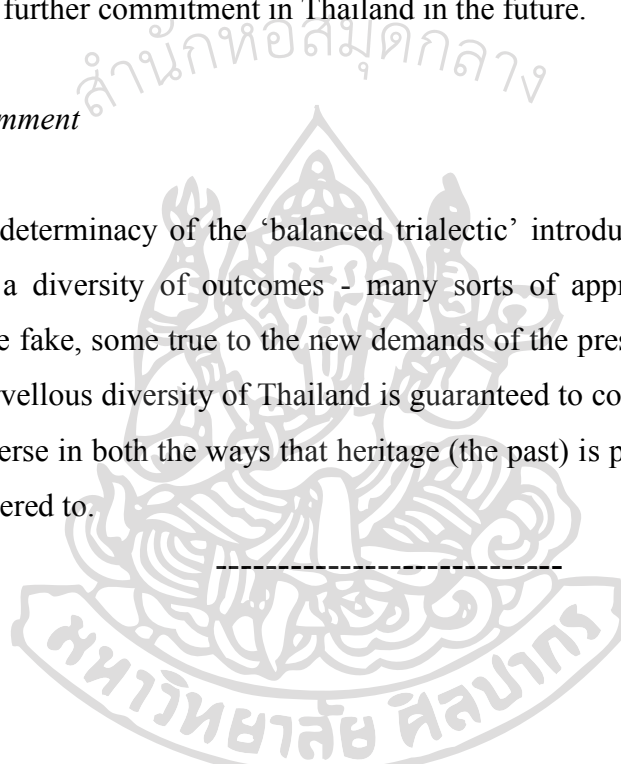
Constraints: To apply an adaptive and re-use program to the heritage buildings in Thailand, both budgeting and time constraints are required to be dealt with for every project. Essentially, an outdated Town Planning Act 1975 is not reflecting the reality and cannot cover the area of the hotel applying the re-use program as was revealed in comments from several entrepreneurs in several interviews. In Bangkok, the Department of City Planning is the one who undertakes surveys and research on population, transport, infrastructure, etc. which are necessary for preparing the comprehensive plan, the specific plans, conservation plans, land readjustment projects, etc. Currently, none of the Acts or Planning Laws is supporting the case of a renovation project by an adaptive and re-use program as a hotel. To make the re-use program viable in every aspect, we need a new Town Planning Act that has to cover and support the area of new businesses, especially to re-use buildings as a hotel which have to include the social responsibilities whereby those hotels should serve both communities and the state in terms of taxpaying or, in brief, a solution for changing the *de facto* hotels into *de jure* hotels.

Opportunities: To create value-added into what we actually have will need a roadmap to lead us to the “creative economy” – a policy driven by several governments in Thailand. Boutique hotels may need small start-ups, as we can observe from several examples in our study. To convert older buildings to accommodation, either as boutique hotels or as bed and breakfast establishments, is interesting because it will let the building itself generate income to taking care of the maintenance costs that become obligatory expenses throughout the lifetime of buildings.

In Thailand, there is a scarcity of specialists or subject matter experts (SME) who have gained the requisite knowledge and can understand the appropriate methods to conserve and preserve heritage buildings by maintaining their ‘souls’ – that is, without losing their authenticity. We have unintentionally lost some of our heritage from this fact. I hope this study will highlight this urgency as indicated in the phrase ‘...if we lose it, we will have lost it forever...’. Furthermore, a study of the question of ‘authentic’ design to underlie the creation of ‘architectural excellence’ in the adaptive re-use of heritage buildings requires much further commitment in Thailand in the future.

A final comment

Finally, the indeterminacy of the ‘balanced trialectic’ introduced above guarantees that there will be a diversity of outcomes - many sorts of approaches to heritage, some ‘genuine’, some fake, some true to the new demands of the present and new expectations. Hence the marvellous diversity of Thailand is guaranteed to continue - indeed, to become even more diverse in both the ways that heritage (the past) is presented and the ways that visitors are catered to.



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