



The restored front facade of the Arlene Terrace in Ipoh. — Made In Ipoh

## Preserving a solid past

An over 120-year-old Straits Eclectic heritage shophouse in Ipoh has been rejuvenated into a trick art gallery, at the same time conserving a part of our built heritage.

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TIMING determines a lot of the things that happen in our life, and that could not be truer for chartered accountant and corporate advisor Michael Chan.

One day in March 2012, Chan and his wife Arlene were walking along the verandahs of Jalan Pasar (formerly known as Market Street) in Ipoh, Perak, when an intriguing colonial shophouse situated opposite the street caught their eyes.

With a passion for salvaging and preserving old heritage buildings, the couple promptly proceeded to find out about the building's owner.

"Out of curiosity to know what's inside, we asked around and got to know that it was available for sale. We managed to arrange for a viewing the following week," recalled Chan, 56.

Upon entering the building, and subsequently revisiting it a few times, they fell in love with the place – its courtyards, louvred windows, timber staircase and ornate baluster – although the building was in bad shape at that time.

"Having explored its interior, we were fascinated by its old-world charm and mesmerised by the architectural design and layout, fixtures, fittings and elements.







"On the exterior were ornate columns and pilasters, timber and iron doors with custom-built iron tower bolts, tall louvred shutter windows with fanlights, baluster and iron bar-grilled windows, and vintage air vents.

"These are some of the design elements found in the early Straits Eclectic architecture-styled shophouse," Chan further explained.

Inside, the designs and craftwork of the two sets of cengal timber staircases, posts and balusters, teak floor boards, joists, vintage door-windows, courtyard and balcony further won them over.

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