

# A culture of trust

Developing great working relationships with the consultants and contractors of a project is key to the creation of a good building, according to RSP Architects Planners and Engineers

AMANDA JAYNE LEE

RSP Architects Planners and Engineers celebrated its 60th anniversary by bagging the Construction Excellence Award for two of their projects — The Tenny and Altez.

The award from the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) celebrates the achievements of companies that have shown excellent project management, as well as excellence in technical aspects and workmanship of a project.

The award spurs on Mr Seah Chee Kien, executive director of RSP Architects Planners and Engineers, to aim for greater achievements.

"It is a great reminder of the responsibility we have to society," he muses, "and a reminder not to be

complacent, but to continue excelling to make a difference to the occupants of our residential buildings."

This passion and drive for creating an impactful environment for residents have led to a slew of other awards.

Since 2002, the firm has bagged BCA Green Mark Awards, Built Environment Leadership Awards, Universal Design Mark Awards, and Design and Engineering Safety Excellence Awards, among others.

The architectural, planning and engineering practice has made a name for itself in the built environment industry, with projects such as Dover MRT Station, Henderson Wave, CapitaGreen and ITE College Central under its belt.

Mr Seah attributes their success to a great working relationship with

their construction counterparts and his team's ability to engage closely with clients.

## Working together is key

Bringing a building from concept to material form is no individual feat, which is why Mr Seah places great emphasis on building good relationships with the various parties involved in the construction of a building.

He explains: "You need to build a culture of trust among the collaborators of the project. We take pride in working hand-in-hand with the contractors to deliver a quality product."

"We build on each other's strength, translating idea to form and from this, enabling the construction industry to continuously

improve, mature and innovate."

But with most industries, working with partner companies can sometimes create friction, which is why "a cool, calm demeanour is important for someone in the construction industry," says Mr Seah.

He shares that difficult sites are plenty, and with time and cost pressure constantly pushing in from different angles, it takes an open mind and willingness to listen to all the different collaborators to work through any problems.

For example, the site for the 63-storey Altez was in a tight city block, right in the heart of the Central Business District and surrounded by existing buildings such as Anson House, Icon and Lian Huat Building.

Special measures and precautions



Mr Seah takes pride in working hand-in-hand with the contractors and building on each other's strength to deliver a quality product. PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG



RSP Architects Planners and Engineers' award-winning projects (from left): The Tenny and Altez. PHOTOS: RSP ARCHITECTS PLANNERS AND ENGINEERS



had to be taken to prevent any construction materials from falling on them.

The Tenny faced space constraint problems too. As it is right above an LRT station and in close proximity to a railway, they had to ensure that cranes and other equipment did not cause any accidents.

They settled on installing anti-collision systems and swing limit devices to ensure the equipment stayed within the construction zone.

Both required the addition of more steps to their checklist, including working closely together with the Land Transport Authority and various agencies to ensure the safety of the public.

The satisfaction of a job well done is also what has kept Mr Seah on the job for more than 26 years.

He relishes the challenges the job brings as well as the ability to shape the environment through new technology and innovations.

## Changing with the times

"In the construction industry, it

is important to continuously arm yourself with new technology and innovative strategies. Staff are encouraged to stay relevant," says Mr Seah.

At RSP Architects Planners and Engineers, an in-house education taskforce manages staff learning.

Specialists are invited regularly to conduct talks and trainings, courses are arranged for younger employees, and a yearly plan is created to ensure holistic development across the board.

With new developments and innovations introduced often, the company tries to keep projects on a manageable scale and has also developed a mentorship style of working.

Emphasis is placed on teamwork, with younger recruits attached to senior employees to give them a taste of their roles and keep them from being overwhelmed by the ever-changing industry.

Not only does it help to train younger recruits, it also helps to nurture the culture of trust from within the company.