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## South Beach: A green landmark



South Beach is a shining star in the civic district, says Mr Kwek Leng Beng (above), executive chairman of City Developments Limited. PHOTO: HONG LEONG GROUP

🕒 PUBLISHED: DEC 20, 2015, 5:00 AM SGT

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## **6) SOUTH BEACH, Singapore's largest mixed-used development**

In the eight years it took to complete South Beach, the developers faced a financial crisis, a change of venture partners and a tough design brief that involved work with heritage buildings.

But their efforts have paid off. South Beach finally opened in stages this year to generally positive reviews.

French designer Philippe Starck, who was brought in to design the five-star hotel The South Beach, has drawn kudos for his bold, contemporary touch.

He also designed other spaces such as the shimmering light installation in the ballroom.





South Beach (above) is a shining star in the civic district, says Mr Kwek Leng Beng, executive chairman of City Developments Limited. PHOTO: ALICIA CHAN

Four conserved buildings have been incorporated seamlessly on site: Three are military buildings from the former Beach Road Camp, while the other is the former Non-Commissioned Officers' Club. These buildings now house eateries, bars and meeting rooms, as well as the ballroom.

The project's eco-friendly features have impressed. Snaking between the buildings is an iconic wave-like, 280m-long canopy that has photovoltaic cells, which convert solar energy to electricity to light up the canopy and towers at night.

For its commitment to sustainability, the development has picked up two Green Mark Platinum Awards, from the Building Construction Authority.

South Beach makes it to this year's Power List for its integration of new and old architecture and its iconic, environmentally conscious concept.

The \$3-billion project is a joint venture between City Developments Limited (CDL) and IOI Properties Group Berhad, which forms the South Beach Consortium.

Housed on a tight 3.5ha plot parcelled by Beach Road, Bras Basah Road, Middle Road and Nicoll Highway, South Beach was designed by award-winning British architecture firm Foster + Partners.

Mr Kwek Leng Beng, 75, executive chairman of Hong Leong Group and CDL, says: "We have faced several bumps along the way and, as I observed before, when the market is really bad, you just have to accept it.

"But we had no doubt the South Beach project would work. These bumps saw us improving and thinking of new designs, so that when the market turned, we were up to date."

Troubles started a year after the consortium secured the site in 2007. The financial crisis in November 2008 led CDL to defer building plans, after which the other two partners for the joint venture dropped out. The project was also supposed to be completed in 2012.

The architects redesigned the canopy after complaints that the structure obstructed the public's view of the conserved buildings.

The opening of South Beach was accompanied by sad news last month, when CDL deputy chairman Kwek Leng Joo - younger brother of Leng Beng - died of a heart attack at the age of 62.

Tragedy aside, Mr Kwek Leng Beng calls South Beach a "new shining star" in the civic district.



"Simply put, it's a marriage of heritage and modernity that preserves the rich history of this site and enhances the whole precinct."

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