The Met

Bangkok, Thailand

Architect	WOHA Architects Singapore
Client	Pebble Bay Thailand Company
Commission	2004
Design	2004 - 2009
Construction	2005 - 2009
Occupancy	2009
Site	11'360 m^2
Ground Floor	n.a.
Total Floor	124'885 m^2
Costs	n.a.
Programme	In designing a training facility for a co-operative cinnamon company promoting environmental and social sustainability, the architects devised a light, wooden roof structure supported by Y-beams anchored in concrete footings. Brick-and-concrete walls partition the floor area into a classroom, showroom, laboratory, kitchen and offices. Built of recycled cinnamon trees and locally crafted brick, existing durian trees are featured in a central courtyard. Ventilation was a major issue, addressed by thermal mass, sunray reduction and extensive eaves and overhangs: 600 square metres of roof over a built area of 484 square metres.

Building Type	Housing
2013 Award Cycle	4026.THA

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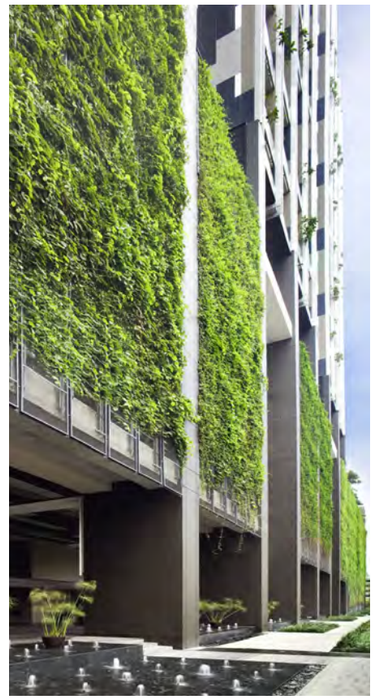
Most tropical high-rise housing in developing countries replicate cold-climate models with sealed facades, reliant on air-conditioning. However, in the tropics, light winds, year-round balmy weather, constant temperatures and high humidity make outdoor living desirable. This high density (Plot Ratio 10.1) provides a model of a naturally ventilated, perforated, indoor-outdoor, green tower, which is a necessary alternative to the sealed, glazed curtain wall buildings being erected across the tropical regions.

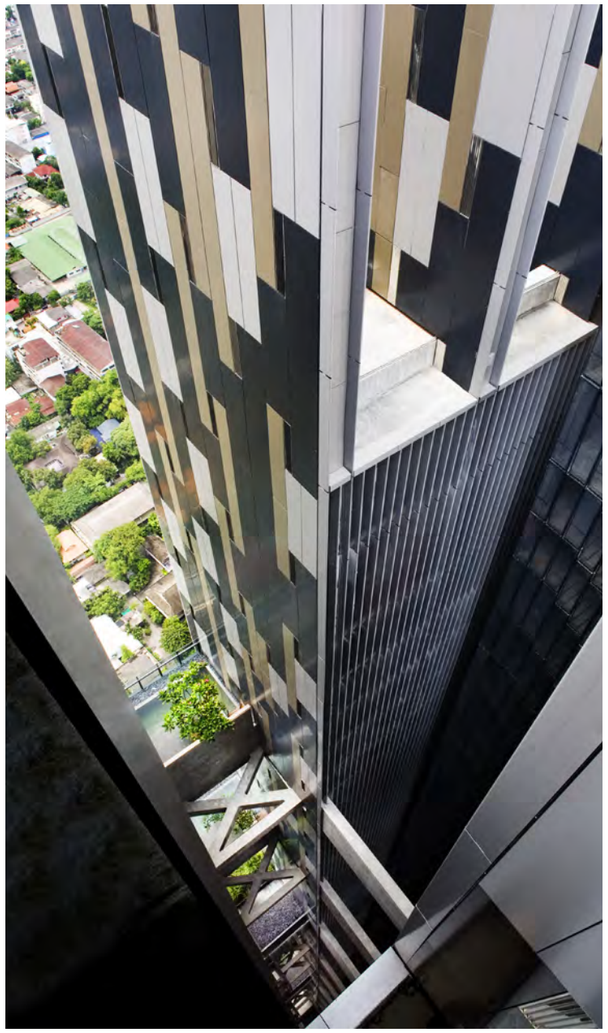
The apartments are houses in the sky with breezeways, full exposure to light and views, outdoor living areas, planters and high-rise gardens, and open-air communal terraces with barbeques, libraries, spas and other facilities. Sky terraces, both private and public, link the blocks every 5 storeys, creating dramatic yet human-scaled external spaces. The building is planted on every horizontal surface, including private balconies. Vertical faces are shaded by creeper screens. All apartments are cross ventilated, and all face north and south. The staggered block arrangement gives apartments light and air on all four sides. The design makes possible living without airconditioning.

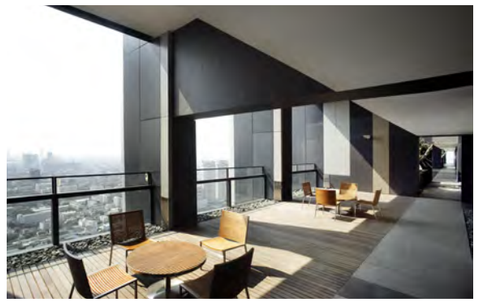
Thai elements– ceramic tiles, textiles and timber paneling – are abstracted to organize forms. The cladding reinterprets Thai temple tiles, the staggered balconies recalls traditional timber paneling. The walls incorporate random mirrored stainless steel panels, a contemporary interpretation of the sparkling mirrors of Thai temples.

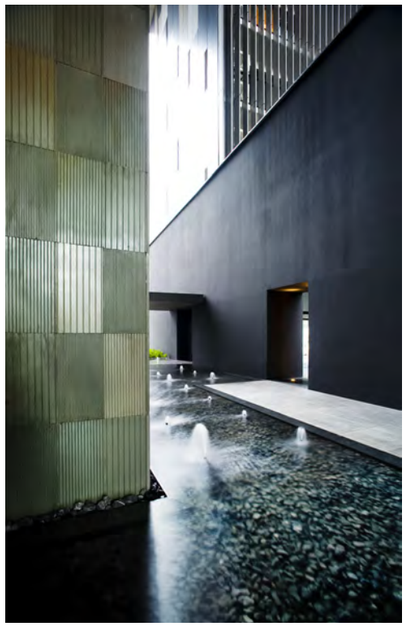
High-rise requires large structures. Rather than intruding into the interior, the columns enlarge on the exterior of the building, creating protected indoor-outdoor spaces for balconies and terraces, and allowing apartment layouts to be standardized, even at lower levels. These exposed buttress columns are lit at night, transforming the building into an elegant, vertical screen.

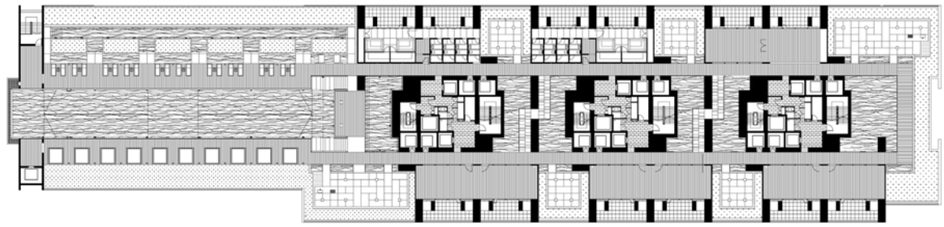
The orderly, elegant building makes an attractive addition to the chaotic skyline of Bangkok. With its openings to the sky behind, planted facades, balconies and sky gardens, the Met weaves nature into the concrete jungle of central Bangkok.





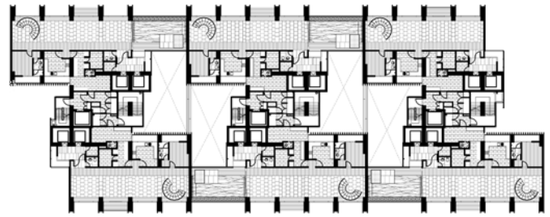






9TH FLOOR PLAN

20TH / TYPICAL LOWER TIER FLOOR PLAN



41ST / TYPICAL HIGH TIER FLOOR PLAN