



## SunTec Center

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Marina Centre, Singapore

Project Type:  
Mixed-Use/Multi-Use

Case No:  
C027020

Year:  
1997

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### SUMMARY

A multiuse project on an 11.7-hectare (28.9-acre) site located within the new, master-planned Marina Centre central business district of Singapore. The megadevelopment comprises five blocks of office space, including one 18-story and four 45-story office towers; the largest international exhibition and convention center in southeast Asia; Singapore's largest shopping and entertainment center; and two basement levels of parking for 3,200 cars, a landmark fountain, and other amenities. The office towers have a total capacity of up to 30,000 workers.

### FEATURES

- An international joint venture
  - The largest integrated privately owned commercial development in Singapore
  - Inspired by traditional Eastern symbolism, incorporating elements of Feng Shui to promote prosperity
  - Postal, banking, telecommunications, travel, and medical and dental services; shopping; dining; and entertainment
  - Direct access to subway
  - Built on reclaimed land
  - Fountain Terrace converts to concert podium
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### OWNER/DEVELOPER/MANAGER

Suntec City Development Pte. Ltd.  
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### ARCHITECT

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Singapore, 039594

Tsao & McKown Architects PC  
20 Vandam Street, 10th Floor  
New York, New York 10013

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## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Suntec City is an 11.7-hectare (28.9-acre) multiuse project located within the new, master-planned Marina Centre central business district (CBD) of Singapore. The name Suntec is derived from the Chinese words *xin da* meaning "new achievement." The single largest integrated privately owned commercial development in Singapore, the project comprises the world-class Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre (SICEC), the largest in southeast Asia; five blocks of office space, including one 18-story and four 45-story office towers totaling 2.3 million square feet; Suntec City Mall, a shopping and entertainment center offering 880,000 square feet of prime retail space; and amenities including the Fountain Terrace, a swimming pool, two tennis courts, a garden pavilion, and two basement levels of parking for 3,200 cars. Three office towers are for sale, in blocks to corporate buyers or in smaller spaces as office condominiums.

Suntec City's office towers are estimated to house a total working population of 30,000 when fully occupied. As a one-stop center in a prime business location, the complex will provide postal, banking, telecommunications, travel, and medical and dental services; shopping; dining; and entertainment. Suntec City Mall was designed as an amenity for the office workers, who constitute a built-in customer base.

Suntec City Development was established specifically to develop and manage Suntec City. The guiding philosophy behind the development was to create a comprehensive mixed-use commercial development that meets or exceeds the highest standard in Singapore and to develop a world-class convention and exhibition center. Ground breaking for Suntec City took place in 1989; the project was launched in three phases. Suntec City Tower opened in 1994 and SICEC and Galleria Retail Podium opened in 1995, completing Phase I. Phase II—including Suntec Tower One and Two, Tropics Retail Podium, and Fountain Terrace—was completed in 1995. Phase III, which consists of Suntec Towers Three and Four and the Entertainment Centre, was completed in 1997.

## THE SITE

Suntec City is built on reclaimed land adjacent to two large existing mixed-use developments that include eight office towers (2.3 million square feet), three shopping malls (2 million square feet), and five hotels (3,000-plus rooms). The hotels are linked to Suntec City by covered pedestrian bridges.

The site is L-shaped, with the nearly equal legs connected at a central point. This shape encourages the creation of a continuous district and also creates an extensive boundary with its neighbors. The highly structured urban space caters to both vehicles and pedestrians and is covered with extensive landscaping that shades the stone-paved pedestrian plazas.

Located at the convergence of Singapore's business, financial, entertainment, and tourist districts, Suntec City's office towers are just a 20-minute drive from Changi International Airport and one kilometer from Raffles Place, Singapore's "Wall Street." The rapid transit interchange and major subway stations are just a short walk away. A \$5 billion expansion being undertaken by the Singapore government will link Suntec City directly to the national subway system.

## PLANNING AND DESIGN

Designed to be a "city within a city," Suntec City's overall objective was to integrate various development components into a coherent urban center that also connects and relates to adjacent developments and to the larger Singapore CBD. The development is connected to Singapore by both internal roads and perimeter highways. Pedestrians can reach the site from the nearby subway station, link bridges, and underpasses to adjoining developments.

Inspired by traditional Eastern symbolism, the design blends powerful elements of Feng Shui, the ancient Chinese art of placement. Buildings and features are arranged to create harmony and ensure good fortune. In its entirety, Suntec City resembles a left "hand." The convention center represents the "wrist," the 18-story office block is the "thumb," and the four 45-story office towers depict the "fingers." The "palm" is cradling a "ring," the fountain, and its cascading water flows inward, representing the retention of wealth and bringing prosperity to tenants and visitors alike. Another unique water feature incorporates an Oriental landscaped water garden and contains live koi, brightly colored ornamental fish that also symbolize wealth.

The landmark Fountain Terrace—the focus of the development—hails a majestic bronze-ringed, elevated fountain on the external plaza, which is linked to the retail podium. The fountain is the heart and civic core of Suntec City, and it symbolizes the wealth of the project. Measuring 21 meters (69 feet) in diameter and supported by four bronze legs 13.8 meters (45.2 feet) high that weigh 85 tons, the fountain is the largest in Southeast Asia. A central vertical jet shoots water up 30 meters (98.3 feet) from the center of the pool, while four perimeter water jets reach 9 meters (29.5 feet). The base of the fountain converts into a stage for a variety of uses, such as dances, concerts, light and sound shows, and promotional activities.

The clad office towers are designed with no internal columns to permit efficient office space planning. The space is arranged around a central service core to allow for maximum views and natural light. Typical floor areas for the high-rise office towers range from 10,000 square feet to 14,000 square feet; Suntec City Tower has the largest floor

plates within Singapore's CBD, at 28,000 net square feet. Separate high-speed elevators serve the low-, mid-, and high-rise zones, while special car and fire elevators provide added features. An energy-efficient, centralized air conditioning system with variable air volume handling units and 24-hour auxiliary water-cooling systems caters to the comfort of tenants.

The 100,000-square-meter SICEC is the largest convention and exhibition center in the Southeast Asia Pacific region, with a total gross area of 1 million square feet. The eight-story center has a 12,000-square-meter (39,344-square-foot), column-free convention hall on Level 6 that can seat up to 12,000 delegates and has an \$8.2 million custom-engineered telescopic seating system (7,560 seats). Its 12,000-square-meter exhibition hall has an acoustic floating floor system to dampen sound and vibration; it can be subdivided into three smaller halls by moving the walls. The exhibition hall also houses a 600-seat auditorium; 26 meeting rooms catering to groups of from 20 to 400 people; a 3,300-square-meter (35,484-square-foot) art gallery; a ballroom accommodating up to 2,000 people; a 1,700-square-meter (18,280-square-foot) central kitchen designed for on-site catering; direct two-way access to the convention floor for 20- and 40-foot container trucks for easy exhibition build-up and take-down; state-of-the-art audio, visual, and lighting equipment, including the world's most advanced digital congress network for teleconferencing and videoconferencing via satellite; and a simultaneous interpretation system for up to 12 languages.

Suntec City Mall is the largest shopping and entertainment destination in Singapore; it links all of Suntec City's components. Anchored by the SICEC and five office towers, it combines thematic zones—Galleria, Tropics, Fountain Terrace, and the Entertainment Centre—to provide an unconventional shopping and entertainment experience. The mall features more than 200 specialty shops, international brand-name boutiques, a French hypermarket, and a five-theater multiplex cinema. Three skylighted atriums provide spacious areas for public activities such as fairs, festivals, and live performances year-round. The basement level has been designed to house 19 theme restaurants, a food court, fast-food outlets, a supermarket, and two pubs that overlook the base of the landmark fountain. Below street level, glass slides open to create open space between the fountain and the mall.

## FINANCING

Suntec City was funded entirely by a consortium whose 11 shareholders are among Asia's most successful entrepreneurs, including Tan Sri Frank Tsao, chairman; Dr. Cheng Yu-Tung; Dr. Lee Shau Kee; Dr. Li Ka-Shing; and Sir Run Run Shaw, among others. The development began with a vision to create a futuristic city to meet the challenges of an international metropolis and to serve as a premier Singapore landmark in the 21st century.

The mixed-use complex occupies a 99-year leasehold acquired by bid from the Singapore government's urban redevelopment authority for S\$208 million. Three of the office towers are being sold under strata title ownership. The project was submitted under eight separate building plan numbers to accelerate construction.

Suntec's development cost totaled S\$2.3 billion (about US\$1.45 billion); its recently appraised value is more than S\$5 billion. It was funded with an undisclosed shareholder equity contribution and approximately S\$1.5 billion in debt, with the balance being funded from sale of office space. Suntec Tower One was launched in March 1996 and was 93 percent sold by November. Both Towers One and Two were sold out prior to construction completion. The debt will be fully paid off from sales by 1998, with Tower Three still open for sale and both Tower Four and retail space available for lease.

## MARKETING

Special promotions are continually scheduled at Suntec City Mall. It also is used as a hub for inbound bus tours, encouraging tourists to stay and shop. Numerous well-known international franchisees have been secured as tenants in the mall, including a French hypermarket and international brand boutiques. Tony Roma's Restaurant, which is strategically located on the B-1 level, is surrounded by a magnificent water feature with a landscaped water garden stocked with live, ornamental koi fish symbolizing wealth for both tenants and visitors. This prime space was booked years in advance of the mall construction.

## EXPERIENCE GAINED

- The key to the success of Suntec City is team work. Many different entities from several countries were involved with the project, including shareholders, architects, general contractors, owners, tenants, managers, design and project consultants, and government agencies. Extensive legal agreements were required.
- It is best to take the role of leader, setting new standards for the future. Do not build just to catch up with the competition—stay one or two steps ahead. Distinguish your project from the competition to increase its value.
- A unique, high-quality project increases value, and value supports price. Suntec City is one of the most valuable office buildings in Singapore.
- Mixed-use adds synergy and value, with each component enhancing the others. For example, Suntec City Mall is designed so that visitors go through the mall to get to the convention center, and it also serves as an amenity for office workers, contributing to mall tenants' decision to locate there.

**PROJECT DATA****LAND USE INFORMATION**

Site area: 11.7 hectares (28.9 acres)

**Gross Building Area**

Use	Floors	Square Feet (Meters)	Percent of Total
Convention and exhibition center	8	1,752,688 (163,000)	25.06
Suntec City Tower	18	537,634 (50,000)	7.69
Office towers (3)	45 each	2,430,107 (226,000)	34.75
Retail/entertainment		1,053,763 (98,000)	15.08
Parking/common areas		1,218,451 (113,316)	17.42
Total		6,992,645 (650,316)	100.00

**Office Information**

Percent for sale: 75 percent

Percent for lease: 25 percent

Average tenant space: 5,000 to 6,000 square feet

Average length of lease: Three to six years

Annual rents: S\$80 to S\$100 per square foot

**RETAIL INFORMATION**

Tenant Classification	Number of Stores
General merchandise	1
Food service	33
Clothing and accessories	54
Shoes	20
Home furnishings	9
Home appliances/music	12
Hobby/special interest	5
Gift/specialty	8
Jewelry	11
Drugs	2
Personal services	12
Recreation/community	1
Financial	4
Other	2
Total	174

Percent leased: Approximately 70 percent

Average length of lease: two to 3 years

Annual rents: S\$60 to S\$300 per square foot

**DEVELOPMENT COST AND FINANCING INFORMATION**

Site acquisition bid: S\$208 million

Total development cost: S\$2.3 billion

Shareholder contribution: Undisclosed

Financing: S\$1.5 billion

Sale of office space (continuing): S\$2.1 billion

Appraised value: S\$5 billion

**DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE**

Site purchased: December 1988

Construction started: December 1989

Leasing started: November 1995

Project completed

Phase I: Mostly in 1994

Phase II: December 1995

Phase III: 1997

**DIRECTIONS**

*From Changi International Airport:* Directly accessible from the airport via the East Coast Expressway.

*Driving time:* Approximately 15 minutes.

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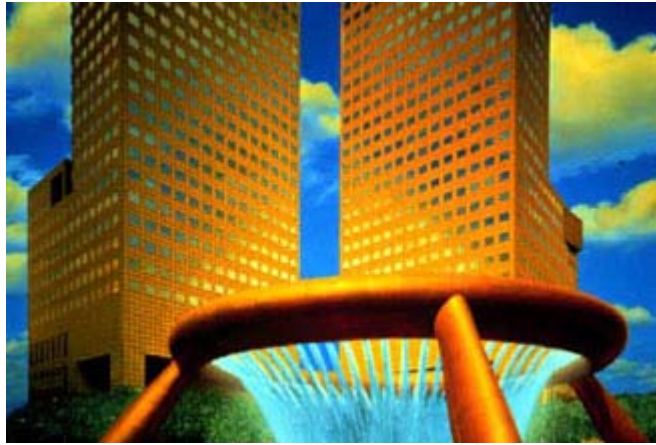
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This Development Case Study is intended as a resource for subscribers in improving the quality of future projects. Data contained herein were made available by the project's development team and constitute a report on, not an endorsement of, the project by ULI-the Urban Land Institute.

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An elevated view of the Suntec City mixed-use complex. The Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre is in the foreground; Suntec City Tower is directly behind. The four high rise office towers are (left to right): Suntec One, Two, Three, and Four. Suntec City Mall, which is 600 meters (1,967 feet) long, is located to the left and wraps around the five office towers. The complex is centrally anchored by the Fountain of Wealth.

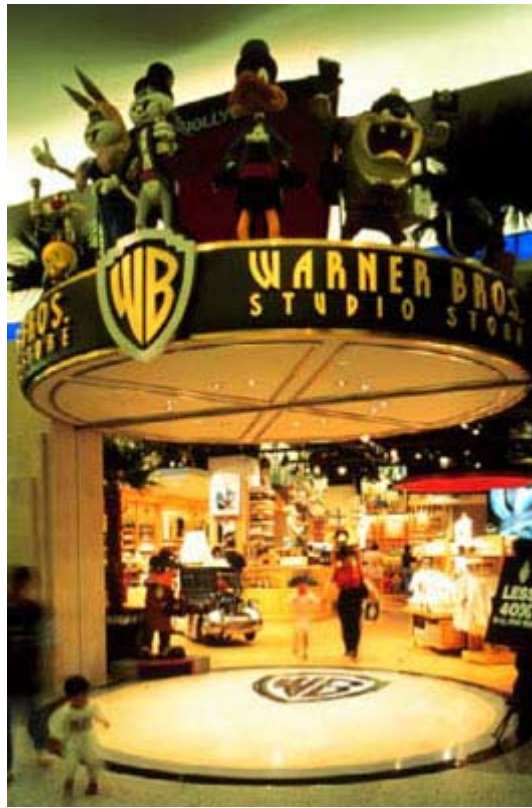


The dramatic Fountain of Wealth is the central focus of the complex, envisioned as bringing prosperity to tenants and visitors.

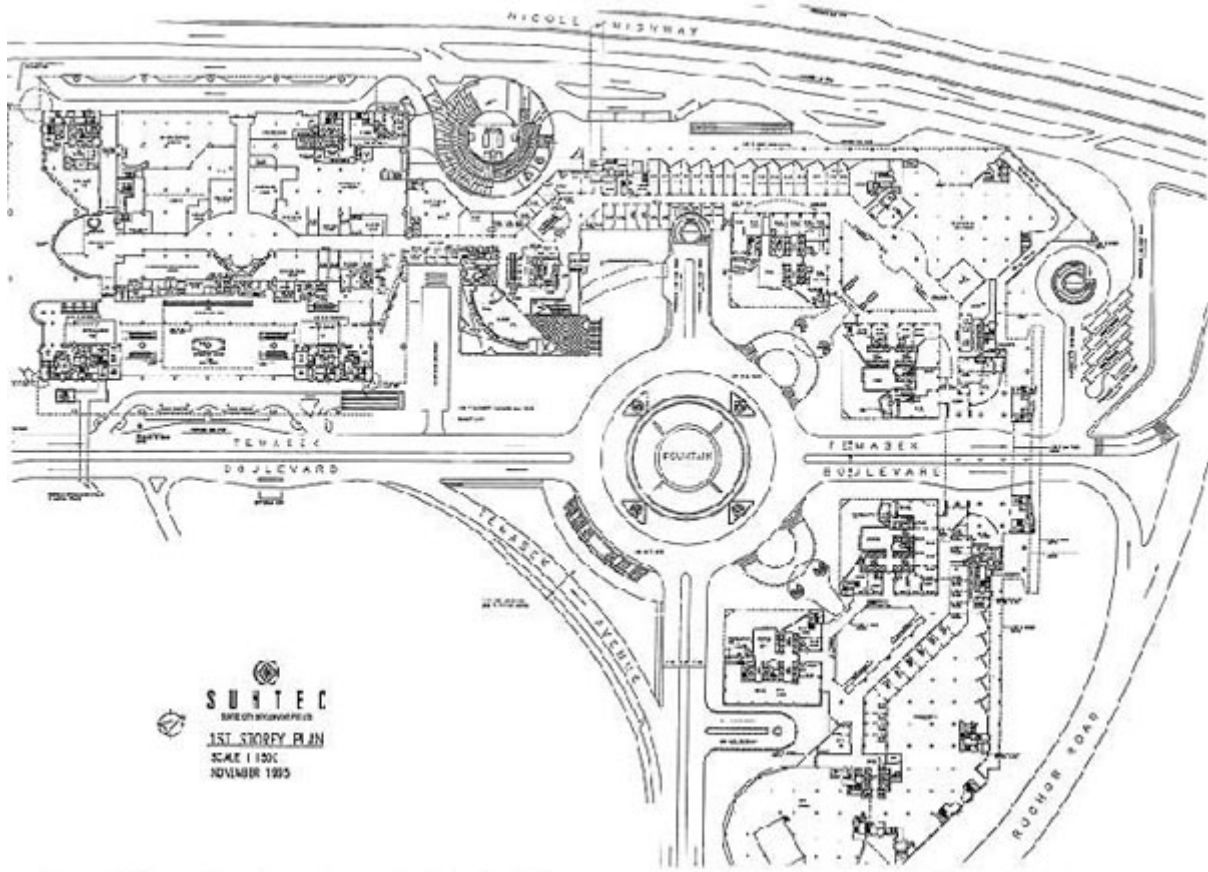




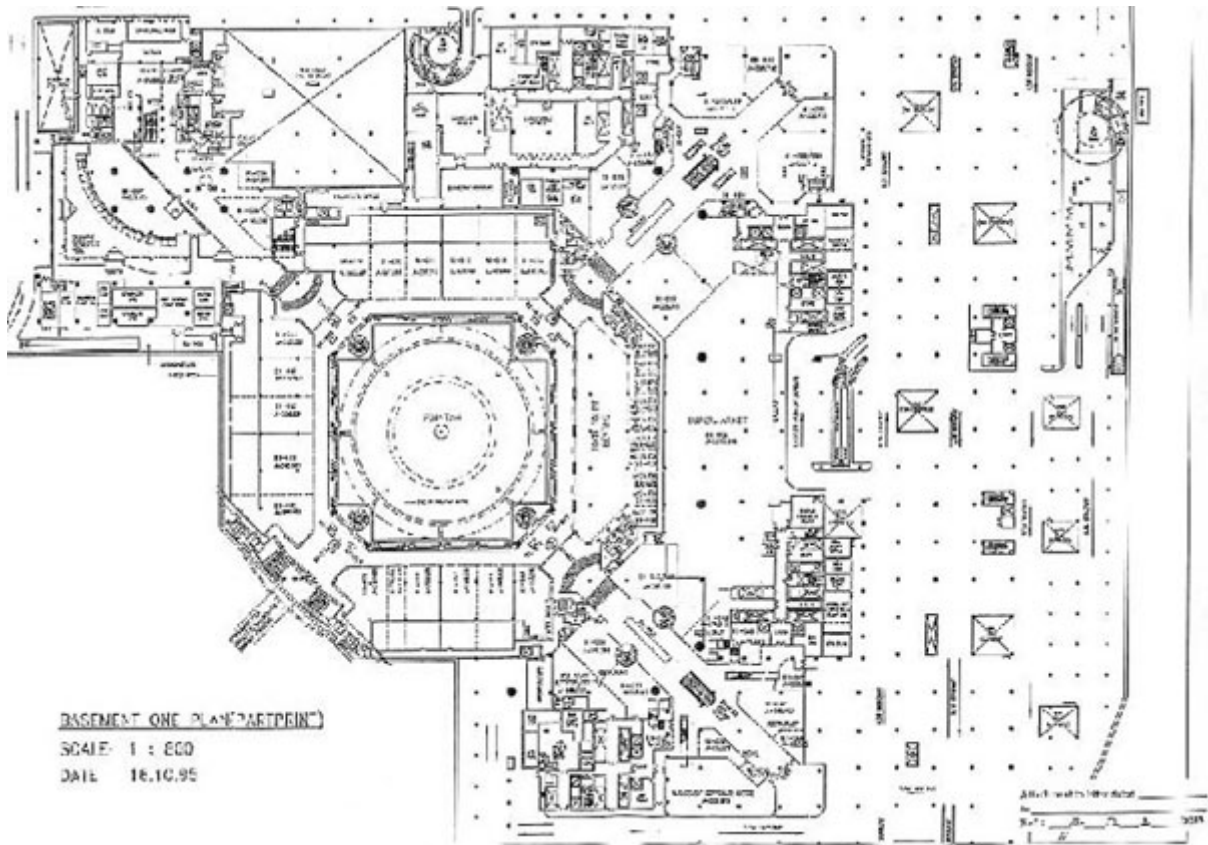
One of the main public areas/dining spaces in the Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre.



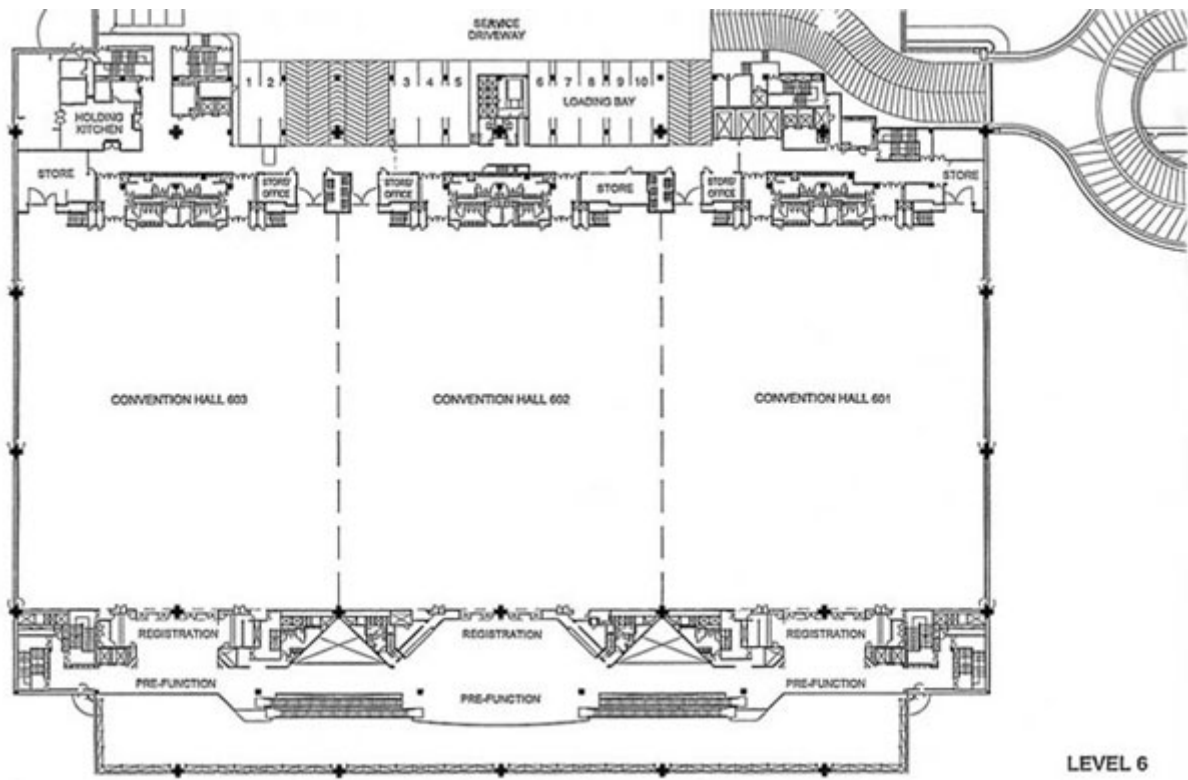
Suntec City Mall features specialty shops, restaurants, international boutiques, a hypermarket, and a five-theater multiplex cinema.



Site plan. - With careful consideration of Feng Shui, the buildings are arranged around the central fountain. The one-million-square foot Singapore International Convention and Exhibit Centre anchors the development, which includes an 880,000-square-foot shopping mall and five office towers totaling 2.3 million square feet of office space.



Floor plan-Basement. At the basement, below street level, the food court and restaurants surround the fountain. When the water is shut off, the fountain base converts into a stage used for dances, concerts, light and sound shows, and promotional activities.



**LEVEL 6**

Floor plan-Main Convention Hall. The column-free main convention hall on the sixth floor of the SICEC holds up to 12,000 people and is directly accessible by truck for service and exhibits.