



Orchard mall Paragon will unveil its facade lighting, comprising LED lights within layers of aluminium panels and fritted glass, at the end of the month. ST PHOTOS: MUGILAN RAJASEGERAN

A light touch in Orchard and Bugis

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The rise of these sparkly facades in architecture design is in line with the Urban Redevelopment Authority's (URA) Lighting Masterplan, which was announced in 2006. It was the Government's call to light up the city.

The plan targets the Civic District – the area around Fullerton Hotel and the Padang, the Central Business District (CBD) and the Marina Bay area. According to URA, within the Civic District and CBD, lights mostly shone onto building facades to brighten the architecture.

However, in areas such as Orchard Road, Bras Basah and Bugis, lights can be incorporated into the building design.

At the other end of Orchard Road, The Cathay also displays a light touch.

After undergoing extensive renovations, the 70-year-old landmark reopened its doors in March 2006 and showed off a glittery face. The new look was the result of a \$100-million collaboration between Tange Associates Japan and RDC Architects in Singapore.

According to a Tange spokesman, colour panels visible from the exterior are located inside the building, while throbbing LED lights line the external curtain wall.

The facade lighting of The Cathay is subtle, complementing the design's "urban skin" concept – a glass layer wrapping the



Even the 70-year-old Cathay has updated its facade with lights. The mall-cum-cineplex now features, among other things, throbbing LED lights lining its external wall.

top half of the structure, which makes the building seem transparent.

Look out also for boutique mall Paragon, which underwent a \$45-million makeover at the start of last year. Its new look can already be seen but it is not completed yet.

The facade lighting will be seen in its full glory only at the end of this month. It comprises LED lights housed within layers of aluminium panels and fritted glass, which is chemically toughened glass with a ceramic base.

In the "arts and heritage" district at Bugis, the bright new spark is Iluma, which is billed as an "urban entertainment centre".

Also designed by Woha, it has a custom-made innovative media facade comprising a scale-like layer of diamond-shaped lights. It is touted as a world's first. A Woha spokesman says its dramatic effect will be showcased at the project's public opening in the second quarter of this year.

Despite these developments, do not expect Singapore to turn into a Shinjuku.

According to URA, glittering screens and flashing images of advertisements on building facades are

still limited to areas with "high levels of pedestrians and street activities, such as Orchard Road, Chinatown and Bras Basah-Bugis".

A URA spokesman says: "While advertisement signs can contribute to the colour and vibrancy of the streetscape, their proliferation can also have a negative impact on the character of the area."

"URA's guidelines ensure that the signs are mounted on the building facades and are at a level where they can relate to and contribute to the street activities and not negatively impact on the city skyline." tanyihui@sph.com.sg