

**COLOMBO HILTON INTERNATIONAL HOTEL  
AT ECHELON SQUARE**

**REPORT ON THE INVESTIGATIONS CARRIED OUT BY  
THE PANEL OF ARCHITECTS APPOINTED BY THE  
SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON  
THE COLOMBO HILTON INTERNATIONAL HOTEL.**

**COLOMBO.**

**14TH NOVEMBER 1995.**

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After studying the documents, plans and the model submitted to the Commission and also carrying out physical measurements and investigations on the hotel building, the following observations were made.

1.0 NUMBER OF ROOM MODULES :

- (a) In July 1980 the architects Kanko Kikaku Sekkeisha of Tokyo, Japan has prepared a design proposal for the Colombo Hilton International of Echelon Square, Colombo [P4 and P4(A)] explaining the intentions of the design with written descriptions and schematic drawings indicating building plans at different levels, sections, elevations, external and internal perspectives, detail bedroom layout and a floor area analysis. This report has clearly indicated the following regarding the number of room modules;
- \* It is a first class hotel with 684 room modules.
  - \* Room modules to be accommodated in a 19 story single tower with three blocks.
  - \* One block consists of twelve room modules per floor, i.e. each block will have 228 room modules.
  - \* Phase one to have only two blocks with 456 room modules.
  - \* Phase two to have 228 room modules and to be constructed at a later period.
  - \* A detail drawing of a typical room module shows the size of a guest room layout as 4m X 8.25 m
  - \* As given in this proposal, it was intended to build 456 bedroom modules in a 19 storey hotel tower identified as the guest room tower in the phase one of the development.
- (b) Proposal submitted to the Ceylon Tourist Board in 1985 for approval was the same design proposal of the Architects KKS dated July 1980 indicating the total scope of 648 modules.
- (c) Preliminary 10 year forecast of income and expenses for 456 rooms (P5) dated 28-8-1981 has taken into consideration 456 rooms. This was based on the design proposal P4.

Contd. .... (2).

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- (d) Quarterly progress reports submitted to the Ceylon Tourist Board by Mr. Naka for the periods upto 31.12.84 and 31.03.85 (P.258, P259), the title of the report was given as 750 roomed new hotel and the number of rooms indicated as approved by the Board was 452. Number of rooms under construction 452.

P260, P262 (A), P261 were the quarterly reports on 452 roomed new hotel project for period ending 31.12.85, 30.06.86, 30.09.86 and has indicated, that the number of rooms approved by the board as 452 and the number of rooms under construction also as 452.

First two reports were signed by Mr. Naka and the third report signed by Mr. Ogami.

However, in P 263 and P 265 under the title, Quarterly Progress Reports on 452 roomed new Hotel Project, for period ending 31.12.86 and 30.06.87 signed by Mr. Ogami, it is indicated that the number of rooms approved by the Board as 386 and the number of rooms under construction also as 386.

In the quarterly progress reports from 31.12.84, upto 30.09.86 number of approved rooms by the Tourist Board have been indicated as 452 and the number of rooms under construction as also 452. But in the two reports submitted in 1987 both numbers have been changed to 386 rooms.

- (e) In the Hotel Developers (Lanka) Ltd. Prospectus for Hilton International Colombo dated 11th March 1983 (P2) reference is made in page 8 under the sub heading 'Features of the Hilton International Colombo', to a 452 roomed tower concept. Reference is also made to another 300 rooms in the form of an additional tower in the second phase.
- (f) In the agreements between Hotel Developers (Lanka) Ltd. and (i) The Consortium comprising of Mitsui & Co. and Taisei Corporation P31, (ii) Mitsui Co. for the supply of furnishing, fixtures and equipment P 32, and (iii) Kanko Kikaku Sekkeisha for design and supervision P 33 made on 31.01.1984 it was indicated as a five star class hotel with approximately 452 bays.
- (g) Regarding the number of room modules, different terminology has been used in different documents. P4 & P4A - This being the original design proposal submitted by the Architects explaining the architectural concepts of the projects. It was identified and given as room modules in the guest room tower. A detail drawing of this room module was given as a guest room layout with a toilet and the furniture layout having an internal dimension of 4000 X 8750.

- \* - P2 - Prospectus of HDL dated 11th March 1983, it was indicated as comprising of a 452 roomed tower, because the hotels are generally identified with the number of guest rooms available.

In P5 - Preliminary 10 year forecast of income and expenses dated 28-08-1981 the number of guest rooms was given as 456. Since the income of a hotel is based on the number of rentable rooms.

- P31 - Construction contract dated 31-01-1984 indicates the number of bays as 452.

- P32 - Contract for the supply of furniture, fixtures and equipment dated 31.01.1984 indicates the number of bays as 452.

- P33 - Contract with the Architects dated 31.01.1984 also gives the number of bays as 452.

The current Colombo Hilton Employee Handbook, gives the number of floors as "Colombo Hilton Complex of 19 floors with 387 guest rooms and suites".

This term 'room bay' in a hotel can be architecturally defined as a functional grid space that can accommodate an acceptable sized bed room with an attached toilet that can be rented out to a guest. The original concept of this was given in drawing form in P4, P4A as a guest room layout where the same concept has been continued upto the realization of the hotel.

- (h) When the layout of room bays in a floor, in stage one was considered, the original schematic plan or the conceptual plan (P4 & P4A) had given a clear explanation in written form and in drawings. Accordingly the phase one was to have 24 room bays in one floor and also to have 19 floors in the guest room tower bringing a total of 456 room bays.

The schematic plans as shown in P4 & P4A show a typical guest room floor as having 24 room bays. However, the plans as constructed depict 25 room bays. This has been done by introducing an additional guest room in each floor in the lift lobby grid. In this revised arrangement changes have also been made taking service requirements into consideration.

The maximum number of room bays that can accommodate single guest rooms in each floor as in the constructed hotel was found as 25, that is a typical guest room floor in the hotel (4th - 17th) has provided accommodation for a maximum number of 25 guest rooms.

Considering these changes the maximum number of room bays that can be accommodated in the guest room tower is 425 (25 X 17).

The present 3rd floor of the hotel tower originally identified by the architect as a guest room floor has been converted to accommodate a different function than to provide guest rooms i.e. to have Meeting rooms and the Managers quarters.

The above changes in the final plans have resulted in the reduction of one floor available for use as guest rooms.

These changes have resulted in having 400 room bays (25x16) that can be used to accommodate guest rooms.

Because some of the room bays in the 18th & 19th floors have been joined together to form suites the number of saleable rooms and suits has been reduced to 387.

- (i) As found in the documents submitted to us, namely the original conceptual plans, prospectus of the Hotel Developers (Lanka) Ltd. and the reports submitted to the Tourist Board upto end of 1986 it can be concluded that the intention was to construct a hotel with about 450 guest room bays.

## 2.0 NUMBER OF STORIES :

- (a) The schematic design proposals of July 1980 submitted by the architects KKS (P4 & P4A) had given a section through the hotel tower indicating the intended number of floors in the hotel. The lobby level was taken as the floor one, there was a second floor and 19 guest room floors above the 2nd floor. The upper most floor was identified as the 21st floor. Machine room floor above the 21st floor was shown in the section but not denoted as the 22nd floor. Below the lobby level there were three floors named as mezzanine, ground floor and the basement.
- (b) Architectural drawings produced by the same architect dated August 1983 had a different section, on the same format as given in 1980 drawings but followed a different method of numbering floors. Entrance lobby floor was taken as the first floor of the hotel tower, the service floor above was the 2nd floor. The 3rd floor accommodated meeting rooms and managers quarters. And 4th to 19th floors accommodated guest rooms and the machine room above part of the 19th floor as Pent House floor 1 and the roof plan with the concrete slabs in the lift shafts housing the lift motor rooms as pent house 2. There was only one floor below the lobby level and named as ground floor.

- (c) In page 8 of the prospectus of the Hotel Developers (Lanka) Ltd. dated 06.03.1984 (P2) it was given under features of the hotel as "going upto 22nd floors".
- (d) Construction agreement between HDL and Mitsui Co. and Taisei Corporation, counter signed by architects KKS dated 31.01.1984 (P31) indicates the number of storeys; "hotel of 22 stories".
- (e) The Colombo Hilton Familiarization Manual has indicated the number of floors as 19.
- (f) Folio number 94 - 96 in the UDA file was an undated application form submitted to the UDA by Cornel & Co., in which the name of the applicant was given as HDL. The application that was signed by the architects KKS, does not indicate whether it was for erection, re-erection or alteration of Hilton International Colombo. This describes the project as a 20 storied first class hotel and specifies the number of floors as 20 floors plus 2 pent house floors. It was found that UDA has not given approval to this document.
- (g) In the original design of KKS (P4 & P4A) the intention was to have 19 guest room floors with 24 room bays per floor totaling to 456 room bays. This proposal had not taken the 22nd floor as a pent house floor. But in the hotel as constructed, there are only 16 guest room floors, because the 3rd floor is used for meeting rooms and the managers quarters. With the introduction of an additional guest room in every guest room floor in the lift lobby grid the number of room bays per floor has increased upto 25.

But the original concept of constructing a 452 room hotel had not changed upto the end 30th June 1987 (P265). The number of rooms under construction was mentioned for the first time as 386 in the quarterly progress report (P263) upto 31.12.1986 submitted to the Tourist Board by Mr. Ogami.

This change and the reduction in the number of final guest room bays from 452 to 387 in the constructed hotel can be due to two technical reasons;


- (1) A reduction in the number of floors
- (2) Conversion of the 3rd floor into some other function.

- (h) In general architectural practice and in accordance with the terminology used in architecture, the lift machine room slab is not in any way counted in the total number of floors of a building. Therefore counting the level named pent house 2 as a floor of a 22 story building is not acceptable.

3.0 PARKING BAYS :

- (a) In the introduction to the original design proposal (p4 & P4A) the number of car parks was given as 450, but not specifically mentioned whether it was indoor or out door parking. However, in the area analysis sheet of these two documents indoor car parking had been provided in the basement, ground floor and in the mezzanine to a total floor area of 12.730 m<sup>2</sup>.
- (b) In plans dated August 1983 indoor car parking was designed to have 67 + 69 in the ground floor, 25 + 31 in the mezzanine floor forming a total of 192 indoor parking bays.
- (c) Number of parking bays as constructed inside the building as available at present was observed as, ground floor rear 18, ground floor front 48, mezzanine floor 38, making a total of 104.
- (d) In the recreation area across the road, there are 92, parking bays marked, forming a total of 196 designated parking bays.
- (e) Large number of parking bays originally constructed had been converted at a later date to occupy functions other than car parking such as dormitories, stores, air line offices etc.
- (f) In the original design proposal (P4 & P4A) the building area for car parking was separated from the hotel area and given as 12700 m<sup>2</sup>. The area of 12700 m<sup>2</sup> was not mentioned in that total floor area calculation.

4.0 TOTAL FLOOR AREA :

- (a) Architects original design proposal dated July 1980 (p4 & p4A) having three guest room towers with 684 room modules anticipated having 51.160 m<sup>2</sup> of floor area in the hotel and a separate floor area of 12.730 m<sup>2</sup> for covered car parks.
  - (b) P41 the preliminary agreement between Cornel & Co and the Japanese Partner Tokyo indicated as having a total floor area of about 40.000 m<sup>2</sup>.
  - (c) The construction agreement p31 dated 31.01.1984 had given the construction area as 39.042.3 m<sup>2</sup>.
  - (d) The total floor area of the hotel constructed inclusive of the covered parking is about 39.245 This does not include newly added floor area of the Chinese Restaurant and Curry Leaf Restaurant.
  - (e) The total area of the hotel building constructed is more or less the same as indicated in construction agreement P31. i.e. 39.042.3 m<sup>2</sup>.
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*D. G. Weeramantry*

AFFIDAVIT

I, Prof. Nimal De Silva of 105, Hunupitiya Lake Road, Colombo 2, being a Buddhist do solemnly, sincerely and truly hereby declare and affirm as follows;

I, Upali Iddawala, Chief Architect and Additional Director, Department of Buildings, Sri Jayawardenapura, Kotte, being a Buddhist do solemnly, sincerely and truly hereby declare and affirm as follows;

I, Dudley Waas of 31, Gregorys Road, Colombo 7, being a Christian (RC) do hereby make oath and state as follows :

We are the above named declarants;

- (1) We have been appointed as a Panel of Architects to execute a local investigation, inspection and survey of the Colombo Hilton Hotel, by the Special Presidential Commission of inquiry 1995.
- (2) Accordingly, we have carried out the above commission issued to us by the SPC aforesaid.
- (3) We hereby submit our report on the findings of the investigations carried out and observations made on the activities pertaining to the construction of Colombo Hilton Hotel.

Signed on the 14th day of November 1995 in Colombo.

*Nimal De Silva*

Prof. Nimal De Silva

*Upali Iddawala*

Upali Iddawala

*Dudley Waas*

Dudley Waas

Before me

*D. G. Weeramantry*  
Justice of the peace

**D. G. WEERAMANTRY B.A. (Lond)**  
**(JUSTICE OF THE PEACE)**  
**COLOMBO.**