Friday, 15 October 2010 was a historical day for Hotel Fort Canning. At 4.00pm, Dr John N Miksic, Resident Archaeologist at Fort Canning Park and Associate Professor of the NUS Southeast Asian Studies Programme interred the first artifact in the Hotel’s Lobby Archaeological Pits.

The brainchild of DP Architect’s Interior Designer, Mr Loh Hai Yew, the Lobby Archaeological Pits are filled with actual 14th and 19th Century artifacts unearthed by Dr Miksic and his team at Fort Canning Park.

Divided into 4 pits, they trace the history of the inhabitants of the Park, and more importantly, of Singapore itself.

The artifacts are a reminder of the close relationship Hotel Fort Canning has with its surroundings. A “live” dig can be found in Fort Canning Park. For more information on the Dig, please approach our Concierge.

Pit A contains locally-made objects from the 14th Century consisting of pottery used in everyday life: cooking pots, storage jars, and other utilitarian items that would have been used to prepare the meals for the royal households of the Majapahit kings who ruled Temasek (old name for Singapore) in the 14th Century.
Pit B displays 14th Century Chinese porcelain. The Chinese brought large quantities of porcelain bowls and cups to exchange for local products. Many ancient Chinese ceramics have been found on Fort Canning, an indication of Singapore’s prosperity and Fort Canning Hill’s importance as a royal palace.

The red baked brick hints at more solid building structures, probably a Chinese temple, on Forbidden Hill (the old name for Fort Canning Hill) than the wooden buildings more common in this part of the world.

Pit C contains a mish-mash of locally-made objects and British items from the 19th Century: English porcelain, hand-made bricks, floor tiles, beer bottles, large platters for cooking food for soldiers, even glass marbles for children to play with.

The arrival of Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819 heralded the rebirth of the ancient port of Singapore. Fort Canning Hill was first the residence of the British governors, and in 1860 became the headquarters of the military forces stationed here.

Pit D consists of Chinese porcelain, which was commonly used by both soldiers and civilians working and living on this hill. These belong to the late Qing Dynasty, which fell in 1911.