

TELOK AYER

THEN VS. NOW

A HERITAGE
LEARNING JOURNEY

HWA CHONG
INSTITUTION
URA



A STREET OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY
AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT



The revamped Singapore City Gallery takes visitors through the nation's land use journey over the past 50 years. With change as the only constant and in view of Singapore's land constraints, there is a need to balance between competing land uses. The Gallery tells Singapore's development story, through interactive and immersive exhibits that detail our planning challenges and the innovative solutions to overcome them.

IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO JUST RETAIN A HISTORIC BUILDING.

TELOK AYER

One of the conserved districts in Chinatown, Telok Ayer in Malay means "bay" and "water". Before land reclamation of the Telok Ayer basin began in the 1900s, Telok Ayer Street originally faced the sea and was a landing site for early immigrants. The built heritage of the area is testimony of how Chinatown was a multi-ethnic area with various dialect groups and ethnicities co-living and working. Telok Ayer Street also tells a story of philanthropy and community spirit.

INSIDE THE GALLERY

01 Urban Planning in Singapore over time

Over the past two centuries, Singapore has managed to expand its land area by 25 percent via land reclamation. Urban planning in Singapore has undergone several phases over time. Interestingly, urban renewal in Singapore does not necessarily mean the demolishing of old buildings. Instead, the process should incorporate the aspects of conservation, rehabilitation and rebuilding.

AS YOU WALK THROUGH THE GALLERY, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

1. How did Singapore tackle its land constraints?
2. What are some of the choices that Singapore had to make?
3. What does long-term sustainable planning entail in Singapore's context?
4. What is the difference between a Concept Plan and a Master Plan?



INSIDE THE GALLERY

Response & Reflections



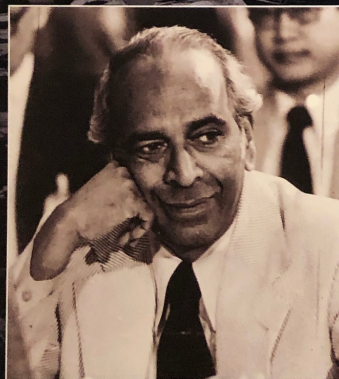
SCAN THE QR CODE TO FIND OUT
MORE ABOUT SINGAPORE'S LAND
RECLAMATION STORY

INSIDE THE GALLERY

02 Conserving Singapore's Built Heritage

1980s CREATING THE FOUNDATIONS

While more emphasis was placed on social and economic development vis-a-vis conservation in the 1960s, there was growing traction for conservation in the 1970s where government officials and planners tried to balance conservation alongside urban renewal. In the 1980s, there was a movement towards conserving entire districts beyond historical monuments.



"A nation must have a memory to give it a sense of cohesion, continuity and identity. The longer the past, the greater the awareness of a nation's identity... A sense of common history is what provides the links to hold together a people who came from the four corners of the earth."

S. Rajaratnam
Senior Minister
Prime Minister's Office
1986

INSIDE THE GALLERY

02 Conserving Singapore's Built Heritage

**AS YOU WALK THROUGH THE GALLERY,
CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.**

1. How do we choose what to conserve?
2. What are the principles of heritage conservation in Singapore?
3. How do we ensure that the areas conserved remain relevant?
4. At the interactive touchscreen panel, identify what are the other conserved areas in besides the historic districts in central Singapore.



INSIDE THE GALLERY

02 Conserving Singapore's Built Heritage



With the growing traction for conservation in the 1980s and how conservation could also boost tourism, the government launched the Tourism Product Development in 1985 to upgrade and redevelop historical areas. Yet, there was a need to strike a balance between conserving for the sake of tourism and staying true to the original spirit and ambience of an area.



To balance sensitive conservation and successful rejuvenation, each building and site has to be considered in relation to its history and past.

Prof Lily Kong
President
Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Social Sciences

INSIDE THE GALLERY

Response & Reflections



AS YOU WALK THROUGH THE GALLERY, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

1. Who should conservation be for?
2. Beyond the hardware, how can conservation take into account the history and social fabric of an area?
3. To what extent can balance be achieved when conserving Singapore's built heritage?



SCAN THE QR CODE TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE CHALLENGES WHEN TRYING TO ACHIEVE A BALANCE BETWEEN OLD AND NEW

TELOK AYER TRAIL

A STREET OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY & COMMUNITY SPIRIT



14 Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church

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12 Thian Hock Keng Temple

11 Nagore Dargah Indian Muslim Heritage Centre

10 Amoy Street Clan and Trade Associations



TELOK AYER TRAIL

A STREET OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Site: Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church



Designed by Swan & Maclaren and built by a French firm, Bross & Mogin in 1924, the church became a National Monument in 1989. It was founded by Benjamin Franklin West, an American doctor and missionary to spread the gospel to the underprivileged Chinese in Chinatown. Aside from the main building, the site originally had a playground, tennis court and badminton court. These were donated by medical doctor and philanthropist Chen Su Lan to enhance the communal and recreational functions of the church.

**AS YOU WALK AROUND THE SITE,
CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.**

1. What are some unique architectural features of the church's building?

TELOK AYER TRAIL

A STREET OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Response & Reflections



Site: Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church



SCAN THE QR CODE TO FIND OUT
MORE ABOUT THE CHURCH'S HISTORY

SCAN THE QR CODE TO FIND OUT MORE
ABOUT DR. CHEN SU LAN, PHYSICIAN,
PHILANTHROPIST AND SOCIAL REFORMER



TELOK AYER TRAIL

A STREET OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Site: Al-Albra Mosque



Al-Albrar Mosque was established in 1827 for the Chulias - Tamil Muslims from who arrived from south India. The Chulias were among the earliest immigrants in Singapore and they worked as traders and money changers in Chinatown. Besides serving a spiritual purpose, it was also a social venue in which the community could meet and interact. The exterior of the mosque is built in a Indo-islamic style. Inside is an eclectic mix of East and West architecture. Today, while the mosque is mostly used as a place of worship for Indian Muslims, it sees more Malay Muslims and also Muslims from other ethnic groups. For office workers, the mosque has become spiritual refuge amidst the hustle and bustle of city life.

TELOK AYER TRAIL

A STREET OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Response & Reflections



Site: Al-Abrar Mosque

AS YOU WALK AROUND THE SITE,
CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

1. What are the similarities and differences between the architectural features of the mosque and its adjacent shophouses?

TELOK AYER TRAIL

A STREET OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Site: Thian Hock Keng Temple

As Telok Ayer was designated as a Chinese district by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1822, various Chinese dialect groups built respective temples to offer prayers for safe voyages. In 1839, under the leadership of Mr Tan Tock Seng and Mr Si Hoo Keh, the Hokkien clan built the Thian Hock Keng temple to worship Mazu, the Godness of the Sea. In addition to its religion function, Thian Hock Keng temple is also a testimony to the community spirit of Chinese pioneers in Singapore.



**AS YOU WALK AROUND THE SITE,
CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.**

1. How are the temple's carvings, sculptures and murals representative of the cultural traditions and heritage of the Hokkiens?



TELOK AYER TRAIL

A STREET OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Site: Nagore Durgha Shrine

Nagore Durgha is an Indian Muslim shrine located in Chinatown. It was built by the Chulias in honour of Shahul Hamid, a holy man from Nagore, south India. Early Indian-Muslim settlers visited the place of worship to give thanks for a safe passage to Singapore. Reflecting the religious and cultural mix of early Singapore. The memorial was designated as a national monument in 1974 and today, it is a heritage centre showcasing Indian Muslim culture, diaspora and heritage.



**AS YOU WALK AROUND THE SITE,
CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.**

1. How is Nagore Dargah reflective of the religious and cultural mix of early Singapore?

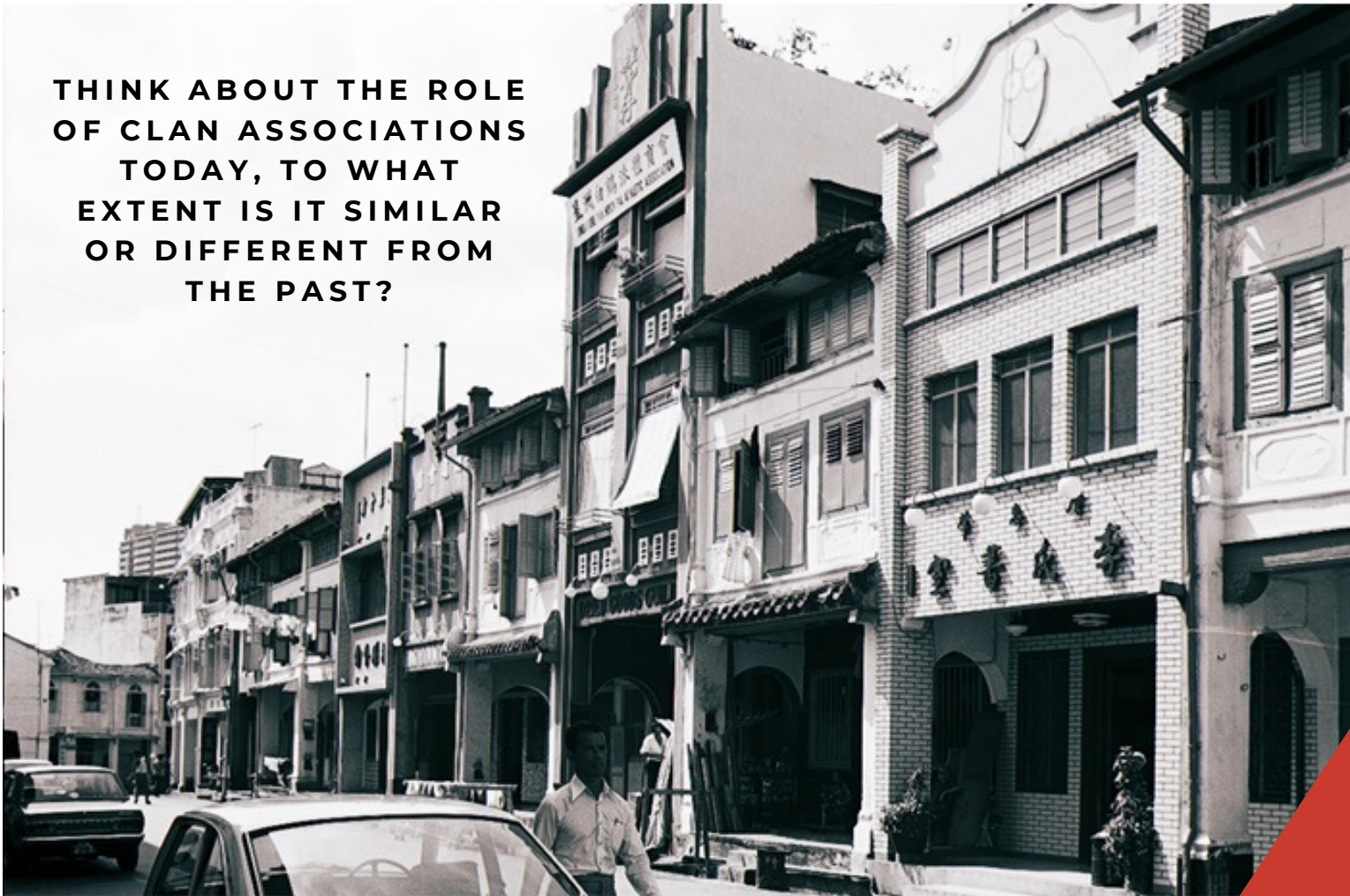
TELOK AYER TRAIL

A STREET OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Site: Amoy Street/Thian Hock Keng mural

In Chinatown, the Chinese also set up various clan associations to foster a sense of community and promote mutual help. Clan associations were usually formed on the basis of dialect, kinship and trade specialisation. Besides seeing to the immediate needs of the Chinese immigrants, the early pioneers also set up medical institutions to provide free or affordable medical services.

THINK ABOUT THE ROLE
OF CLAN ASSOCIATIONS
TODAY, TO WHAT
EXTENT IS IT SIMILAR
OR DIFFERENT FROM
THE PAST?



SCAN THE QR CODE TO FIND OUT MORE
ABOUT HOW SOME CLAN ASSOCIATIONS
STAY RELEVANT IN SINGAPORE

TELOK AYER TRAIL

A STREET OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Site: Amoy Street

Amoy Street probably got its name from Amoy, a port in Fujian Province, where many Hokkien immigrants came from. Amoy Street is also known as the 'Free School Street' because of the many schools that were established by missionaries and philanthropies. The first Anglo-Chinese School, started by missionaries in 1886 used to be located at no. 70 Amoy Street while Cui Ying School, a free Chinese school was founded by Tan Kim Seng in 1854.



WHAT DO YOU
OBSERVE ABOUT THE
DIFFERENT SHOPHOUSE
STYLES ALONG AMOY
STREET?



SCAN THE QR CODE TO FIND
OUT ABOUT THE UNIQUE
ARCHITECTURAL STYLES OF
SINGAPORE'S SHOPHOUSES

TELOK AYER TRAIL

A STREET OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Response & Reflections



Site: Amoy Street

AS YOU WALK AROUND THE SITE,
CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

1. Can you identify the different periods and styles of the shophouses?
2. Look out for a junk ship mural at the end of Amoy Street - what does it symbolise?

TELOK AYER TRAIL

A STREET OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Site: Ann Siang Hill



Ann Siang Hill is named after Chia Ann Siang, a wealthy Chinese businessman who built his house and estate on the site. Originally, there was a Cantonese burial ground at the foot of the hill but it was exhumed in 1907 and a portion of it was developed as part of the Telok Ayer reclamation project. Walking up the hill, one can see a unique aspect of Singapore's conservation efforts, which is the deliberate positioning of high-rise modern buildings next to historical districts.

**FIND A VANTAGE POINT TO SKETCH THE
JUXTAPOSITION BETWEEN OLD AND NEW**

THE EARLY PIONEERS

TELOK AYER - A STREET OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Tan Tock Seng

One of the founders of Thian Hock Keng Temple, Tan Tock Seng was known for his generosity and compassion. In 1844, he donated 7000 Spanish Dollars to the construction of the Chinese Pauper Hospital, later renamed as Tan Tock Seng Hospital.



Tan Kim Seng



A community leader and philanthropist in Malacca and Singapore, Tan Kim Seng founded Chui Eng Si E, a free Chinese school in Amoy Street. In 1857, Tan Kim Seng donated \$13,000 to the government for the construction of Singapore's first reservoir and waterworks.

THE EARLY PIONEERS

TELOK AYER - A STREET OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

An entrepreneur, philanthropist and community leader, Tan Kah Kee devoted his life to education and set up the following schools in Singapore - Ai Tong School (1912), Chong Hock Girls' School (1915), The Chinese High School (1919). He also made generous donations to Anglo-Chinese School and Raffles College. In 1929, Tan Kah Kee was elected President of the Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan.

Tan Kah Kee



Gan Eng Seng



A businessman and philanthropist, Gan Eng Seng set up the Anglo-Chinese Free School for boys and donated several of his Telok Ayer shophouses for the school's use in 1885. He also donated a large piece of property at Rochor to Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

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