



Symposium

MODERN

ORDINARY

ARCHITECTURE

& URBAN

ENSEMBLES

Sustainability

Innovation

Heritage

Preservation



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Introduction





Curator's

Note

What does it mean to Conserve and Preserve?

Conservation and preservation in Singapore has come a long way since 1989 when French architect Didier Repellin first restored an old shophouse along Armenian Street. Since then, URA has celebrated 30 years of Conservation in Singapore in 2019, developing various principles, planning parameters, and guidelines to strengthen Singapore's sense of national identity.

Furthering this relationship, the symposium began as a collaboration between the Embassy of France in Singapore / Institut Français in Singapore, with the support of Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) of Singapore. This joint effort also comes under the framework of the Digital and Green Partnership signed between Singapore and France in 2022.

In a similar vein, WY-TO's roots in both France and Singapore allows us to draw from the sensibilities from the French and Singaporean contexts. This contrast prompted us to ask ourselves: *What is the difference between conservation and preservation? How are they defined in the contexts of France and Singapore?* This process revealed the need to challenge preconceived perceptions to broaden perspectives and generate more meaningful outcomes. Therefore, the 4 themes of Sustainability, Innovation, Heritage & Preservation were explored to further dissect this very topic.

Modern Ordinary Architecture & Urban Ensembles

The recent developments in Singapore, France and elsewhere – to prolong the useful life of modern-era, post-war buildings – refurbishment, creative adaptations and even conservation of a few, point towards a new direction on how we can think about development in a world where sustainability is a common goal.

Built in the 1960s and 70s, these structures hold a special place in the collective memory of city dwellers. Some iconic examples locally, such as the extraordinary Golden Mile Complex – recently gazetted for conservation and rejuvenation, helps to honour Singapore’s history and also fosters community and promotes a more sustainable future.

Beyond the extraordinary and iconic, everyday modern architecture has played a significant role in shaping the day-to-day lives, identity and history of people in France, Singapore and around the globe. To safeguard the rich history and identity encapsulated in these structures, these ensembles of often high-rise housing, commerce and community call for more knowledge and expertise, particularly when it comes to sustaining and preserving the ordinary architecture that anchors everyday life.

A Collaborative Effort

Panel discussions, keynotes, and round-table sessions drew speakers from various backgrounds; ranging from architects, policy-makers, researchers, urbanists, and engineers, not to mention speakers from France and the region. In curating themes and speakers for each panel, experts from diverse backgrounds came together to share their perspectives in order to broaden the conversation. This highlights the need to celebrate collaborative efforts across various disciplines, especially in our efforts towards the conservation and preservation of modern ordinary architecture and its urban ensembles.

Yann Follain

Curator
Managing Director /
Head of Design -
Singapore, WY-TO

Ruth Wong

Curatorial Assistant
Architectural Graduate,
WY-TO

Symposium Information

- Formats:** Panel discussions, Q&A sessions, keynotes speeches, round-table discussions, networking sessions
- Date:** 27th November – 28th November 2023
- Venue:** River Room, Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM), Singapore
- Co-presenters:** Embassy of France in Singapore / Institut Français, Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore (URA) WY-TO Group
- Venue Sponsor:** Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM)



Symposium

MODERN ORDINARY ARCHITECTURE & URBAN ENSEMBLES

Sustainability
Innovation
Heritage
Preservation

CO-PRESENTERS:
AMBASSADE DE FRANCE À SINGAPOUR
URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
ACM
WY-TO
INSTITUT FRANÇAIS

SUPPORTER:
27-28 NOVEMBER 2023
08H30 - 18H00
ASIAN CIVILISATIONS MUSEUM
LEVEL 2, RIVER ROOM



Right and left: the restored Armenian Street shophouse and Didier Repellin (in bow tie) with French conservation masters and local team at the completion of the restoration project.



At the 30th Anniversary of Urban Conservation Programme with Didier Repellin.



Day 1 at the Symposium of Modern Ordinary Architecture & Urban Ensembles at the Asian Civilisations Museum.

Day 1

27th November 2023

AM Opening Address (SG)

By Mr Lim Eng Hwee, CEO of Urban Redevelopment Authority, Singapore

Opening Address (FR)

By Her Excellency Ms Minh-di Tang, Ambassador of France to Singapore

Keynote + Q&A: Continuity from Past, Present & Future

By Philippe Prost, Atelier d'Architecture Philippe Prost (AAPP) |
Moderated by Kelvin Ang (URA)

Panel 1 + Q&A: A New Lease Of Life!

Moderated by Dr Eunice Seng, University of Hong Kong (HKU)

Homes for All – Planning and Design of Singapore's Public Housing

By Ms Elaine Tan, Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC)

*Staunton Street / Shing Wong Street neighborhood Integrated Urban
Renewal Approach*

By Christopher Wong, Hong Kong Urban Renewal Authority (HK URA)

PM Panel 2 + Q&A: Meanings of a 'home' in the urban context

Moderated by Kelvin Ang (URA)

Building Homes - Identity & Neighborliness

By Dr Teo Ho Pin, Former Mayor of North West District of Singapore

Value-adding through Rejuvenation and Renewal

By Daniel Lim, Think City Malaysia

Round-table 1: How is ordinary architecture worth preserving and how to do it sustainably?

Participants: Philippe Prost (FR), Christopher Wong (HK), Daniel Lim (MY), Dr Eunice Seng (HK/SG) | Moderated by Yann Follain

Closing Talk: Conserving the Ordinary: Towards Singapore 100

By Dr. Johannes Widodo, National University of Singapore Department of Architecture (NUS DoA)

Day 2

28th November 2023



Opening Address (SG)

By Ms Chou Mei, Group Director Conservation & Urban Design, URA

Special Note (SG)

By Ar. Tiah Nan Chyuan, First Vice President of the Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA)

Keynote & Q&A: Urbanism of Transformation - From a Culture of the Disposable to a Culture of the Transformable

By François Decoster, l'AUC | Moderated by Kelvin Ang (URA)

Panel 3 + Q&A: Challenges Of Our Current Buildings

Moderated by Calvin Chua, Spatial Anatomy

Challenges Of Our Current Buildings

By Punto Wijayanto, Bumi Pelestarian Pusaka Indonesia (BPPI)

Challenges, Risks and Opportunities in the Restoration of Heritage Buildings

By Wong Chung Wan, MAEK Consulting



Panel 4 + Q&A: Innovations To Future-Proof Everyday Architecture

Moderated by Kelvin Ang (URA)

Advanced Prefabrication and Precast construction for Sustainable Public Housing Development

By Prof Er Lau Joo Ming, NTU School of Civil and Environmental Engineering (NTU CEE)

UrbaX

By Dr Jérôme Lombardi, NUS Graphene Research Centre

Round-table 2: In this current situation of critical climate change, what could happen if buildings are no longer demolished?

Participants: François Decoster (FR), Punto Wijayanto (IND), Calvin Chua (SG), Lim Ching Tung (SG) | Moderated by Yann Follain

Closing Talk: Everyday Modernism

By Dr. Chang Jiat-Hwee, DOCOMOMO Singapore

Opening Address

Ambassador of France to Singapore,
Minh-di Tang



Her Excellency Ms Minh-di Tang, Ambassador of France to Singapore delivering the opening speech on Day 1 of the symposium.

In a world where the majority of the population resides in urban areas, the question of the city becomes a nexus for significant issues concerning the future living environment, both in France and globally.

One central concern among these issues is the energy consumption in the building sector. In France, the building sector accounts for 43% of the country's annual energy consumption and generates 23% of its greenhouse gas emissions.

Faced with this undeniable fact, our goal is to promote the widespread adoption of positive-energy, low-carbon buildings.

This exact topic was under discussion at the Climate Change Conference 2023 (COP28) in Dubai, at the very same time we held our symposium, and it was also part of an initiative supported by France and other nations — an initiative known as the ‘Buildings Breakthrough’. Launched in December 2023, as part of the COP28, this intergovernmental cooperation focused on implementing collective priority actions to make near-zero emissions, climate-resilient buildings the new normal by 2030.

Architecture as a Solution

Today, demolishing everything to rebuild is no longer a feasible approach. Architects propose an alternative strategy: the preservation and rehabilitation of existing buildings. This approach encompasses not only structures with high heritage value but also, significantly, ordinary buildings such as residential, offices, and commercial spaces. Unlike monuments and heritage sites, ordinary buildings are not rare; their sheer number explains the density of our urban areas.

In the face of major transformations at the end of their first life cycle, these buildings present challenges and opportunities related to sustainable development and urban renewal. Architecture plays a crucial role by preserving and enhancing existing structures, supporting their adaptation, requalification, and transformation to integrate them into the city’s long-term future.

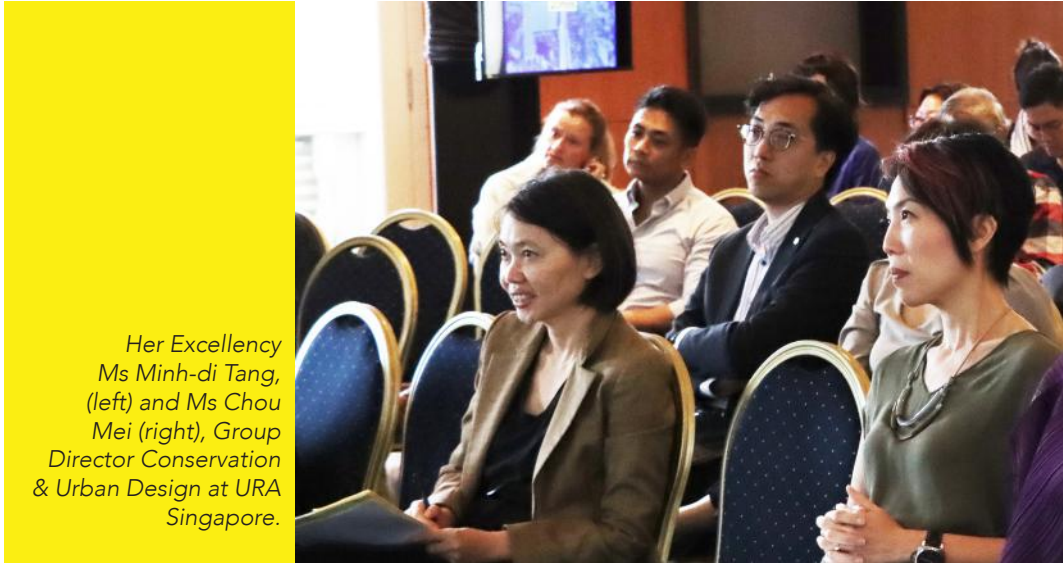
Architects, as central figures in these endeavours, harmonise the imperatives of ecological transition with the possibilities offered by the digital transition, serving as sources of creativity and vectors of innovation.

'Buildings and Climate' Global Forum 2024

Co-organised by France and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Buildings and Climate Global Forum, held in Paris in March 2024, aimed at "raising ambition and enhancing the building industry's market transformation towards decarbonization and climate resilience." Aligned with the Paris Agreement, this forum spotlighted the significant role buildings play in combating climate change, and facilitate international collaboration and the sharing of best practices throughout the building value chain.

Given that we all face similar challenges, collaboration is essential and imperative to establish new standards in city building through renewed architecture and urban planning. Particularly with like-minded countries, we must collectively explore international solutions, sharing our expertise, especially in the field of public housing development — a subject dear to Singapore's heart.

"Particularly with like-minded countries, we must collectively explore international solutions, sharing our expertise, especially in the field of public housing development - a subject dear to Singapore's heart. "



*Her Excellency
Ms Minh-di Tang,
(left) and Ms Chou
Mei (right), Group
Director Conservation
& Urban Design at URA
Singapore.*

Such collaboration translates in the organisation of this symposium, where our goal is to foster promising ideas and fruitful exchanges between our two countries, engaging experts from our respective territories and extending beyond our borders, yielding concrete proposals for actions, and setting the stage for a collective effort.

I was delighted for our Embassy to take part in the Symposium on 'Modern Ordinary Architecture & Urban Ensembles' 2023, and I want to express my gratitude to our co-presenters, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore, and the Asian Civilisations Museum. My sincere appreciation also goes to the organizing team — Kelvin Ang and John Siow from URA, Yann Follain, and Ruth Wong from WY-TO Group — for their remarkable involvement. Lastly, I would like to extend my thanks to our esteemed guests from France, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore for joining us.

Opening Address

Chief Executive Officer of the Urban
Redevelopment Authority of Singapore,
Mr Lim Eng Hwee



*Mr Lim Eng Hwee, URA
CEO delivering the
opening speech on Day 1
of the symposium.*

Your Excellency, Ambassador of France to Singapore - Minh-Di Tang, Keynote speakers, Mr Philippe PROST – winner of the French National Grand Prize in Architecture 2022, Mr Francois DECOSTER – winner of the French National Grand Prize in Urbanism, 2021, Presenters and Participants from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, Our partners at NHB (venue sponsor), Guests and colleagues.

Good morning, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the opening of the France-Singapore symposium on the important subject of how we develop new ways to prolong the useful life of the urban environment that makes up the surroundings that most of us live, work and play in.

Equally important, I am happy to see continued collaboration and dialogue between France and Singapore in extending our knowledge and practice in the topics of urban planning, urban management and sustainability. The knowledge exchange between France and Singapore goes back almost 40 years and has had much positive impact in our city and sense of national identity.

Back then, Singapore was a developing country and a young URA had benefitted much from the timely support provided by friends around the world who shared invaluable advice and professional expertise in the areas of planning, urban renewal as well as conservation.

We were very privileged to have esteemed French architect Didier REPELLIN help us to carry out a key demonstration project to restore a shophouse at 53 Armenian Street – then a rundown and empty shophouse from the 19th century.


Over 10 days in April 1987, Didier and a team of French and local craftsmen worked hard to restore 53 Armenian Street. It became a showcase of how a well restored and rehabilitated building can be reused successfully in the modern city. The result helped to grow understanding and support for the need for selective urban conservation and that it is something physically and economically feasible, and also socially desirable.

“The knowledge exchange between France and Singapore goes back almost 40 years and has had much positive impact in our city and sense of national identity.”

Where we are today – the Asian Civilisations Museum, also has a connection to France and Didier. Following the success of 53 Armenian Street, he became deeply involved in the transformation of the old and tired former Immigration Office into the Empress Place Museum. The careful restoration and sensitive adaptive reuse contributed to the character of our historic Civic District and has allowed members of the public to enjoy the heritage building.

Over the years, the increased public appreciation for our built heritage, together with extensive studies by URA, contributed to the implementation of our conservation programme in 1989. Since then, we have conserved more than 7,200 buildings and structures, including entire districts such as Chinatown, Little India and Kampong Gelam, to tell the story of our collective history and strengthen our identity as a nation. Our vibrant conserved landscape also includes buildings from our modern heritage as they come of age, such as Golden Mile Complex and The State Courts to serve as reminders of our recent past and contributions of our local practitioners.

“Conservation must be done selectively for significant buildings that can also support adaptive reuse, so that our heritage assets will remain relevant into the future.”



*Subordinate Courts
(then renamed State
Courts) by Kumpulan
Akitek and Public
Works Department,
which opened in 1975.
(Source: URA)*

The conservation of our built heritage helps us to shape a home that is anchored on a strong sense of identity. As we continue to study how we can keep the heritage gems in our midst, it is also important to be cognisant of our unique circumstances as a land-scarce nation where the current and future needs of a city and a country must fit within our tiny island. Conservation must be done selectively for significant buildings that can also support adaptive reuse, so that our heritage assets will remain relevant into the future. We will also look into ways to strengthen our sense of identity, not just through conservation, but also through means such as heritage interpretation, documentation and other forms of storytelling.

As a young nation, we still have much to learn from global examples on rehabilitation and appropriate adaptive reuse through knowledge exchange platforms such as this Symposium. Thank you to the Embassy of France in Singapore and the organising team, and NHB. I wish everyone a fruitful two days ahead.

Day 1

Keynote



Philippe Prost, AAPP

Continuity from past, present and future



“It is now fundamental to reconnect with the art of transformation and its supporting financial system that have been the very essence of architectural practice for millennia and the secret to the longevity of our human societies.”

1. How can 'preservation' be defined in the contexts of Singapore and France?

The idea and desire for architectural preservation generally arise in reaction to a historical situation, a specific moment when abandonment and demolition, followed by the disappearance of numerous buildings from a certain era or typology, predominate to the point where the risk of total extinction becomes possible.

In France, it was the French Revolution that, with its destruction and looting affecting religious, civil, and monumental heritage, led to a preservation reaction, including among certain revolutionaries, and resulted in the establishment of legislative measures to protect valuable buildings from such threats. The 1830s marked the beginning of a genuine heritage policy.

In Singapore, it seems to me that the rapid modernisation of the country following its independence led to an awareness of the possible erasure of vernacular or scholarly architectures built before 1965, which led to the desire to ensure their preservation. Today, it is the modern architectural heritage that is threatened due to seemingly inevitable demolitions for reconstruction, exacerbated by the limited territory of the city-state.



Figure 1. Gallice Port in Juan-les-Pins©Aitor Ortiz-Proposed design by Philippe PROST architect (opposite)

Figure 2. Philippe speaking at the Conference

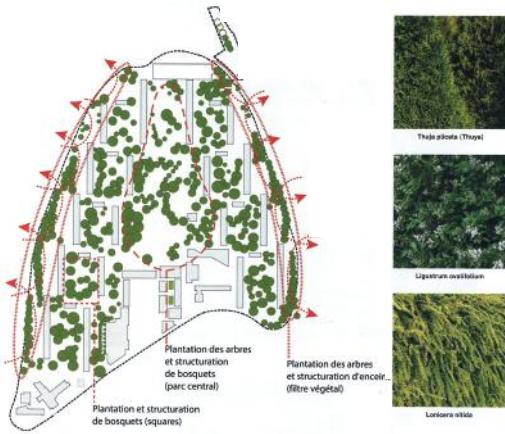
Figure 3. A German soldier walking through the ruins of Peronne, in northern France, November 1916

All images are from the author unless otherwise stated.



2. How is preservation a form of sustainable development to you?

While heritage was previously associated to the conservation of “old stones”, heritage is nowadays connected to environmental concerns. Why so? Simply because heritage is what lasts, what generations have passed down over the centuries. There is nothing more enduring than a building that could stand till today, and sometimes for several centuries. This durability results from a choice of suitable materials, careful attention to its construction and maintenance. The said building has demonstrated its ability to evolve according to needs, usages and techniques, as well as to accommodate new programs. The longevity of these structures, which have withstood the test of time, is often the result of financial efforts combined with smart construction systems. The silver lining of the current environmental crisis, is the end of the planned obsolescence of architecture that is considered as a mere consumer product. It is now fundamental to reconnect with the art of transformation and its supporting financial system that have been the very essence of architectural practice for millennia and the secret to the longevity of our human societies.



ESPACES EXTÉRIEURS / PUBLICS

Système de squares + parc

Sols fertiles

Masse arbustive + fleurs

Jardins appropriables



Figure 4. Overhead view of Les Grandes Terres by Marcel Lods & Jean-Jacques Honegger built during the 'Thirty Glorious Years' period in France

Figure 5. Landscaping strategies to create a hierarchy of differently-sized green spaces

Figure 6. A system of parks, gardens and public spaces

3. What is your design philosophy and what drives your practice?

In my opinion, there is no creation without memory. My practice is motivated by the ambition to write a new page of a site or a building, supported by the humility of inscribing the project in the long term of history. In my work as an architect, the memory of places, spaces, sensations, as well as the lives of human beings and the traces left by their presence, plays a foundational role. My creation finds its source there; it redefines forms and materials, as well as traditional knowledge and skills. My goal is to resonate the future with the present and its past, to embed in each of my projects the history of the site with its geography, its space with its uses.

At all times, we shall develop and reinvent materials, structures, and implementation methods, so that construction and execution become the contemporary expression of the project while grounding it in a territory and contributing to the revitalisation of local industries in terms of materials supply.



Figure 7. Dismantling of the Les Halles quarter, the subject of huge controversy from architects and citizens in 1971

Figure 8. This public outcry led to the conservation of Gare d'Orsay, a railway and hotel previously slated for similar demolition

Figure 9. Ricardo Bofill Taller de Arquitectura office adapted from a disused cement factory



Figure 10. Before condition of Vion Barrack, Toulouse, France - Pierre DEBEAUX architect

Figure 11. Proposed design by Philippe PROST architect for Vion Barrack

4. What is your aspiration for each project that you take on?

Demolish as little as possible, preserve as much as possible, transform as best as possible, and in doing so, continue the act of creating.

Over the years, I have embraced the concept of the Open Work, as defined by Umberto Eco in his book published in 1962, when speaking about art and science: "Every work of art, even when it is a completed and self-contained form, precisely calibrated as a perfect organism, is open in that it can be interpreted in various ways, without altering its irreducible singularity." This concept allows for approaching territory, the city, and architecture as a work in progress, with a yellow, red and black colour code that I borrowed from military engineers of the "Old Regime" (and that is now back in favour) to serve as meaningful graphic composition. For instance, a body of work is always interpreted and complemented by many hands, i.e. the Open Work, that remains available to be revealed and

transfigured, inhabited and transformed by both usage and nature. As an architect, this notion allows me to define myself both as an interpreter and author of a situation as well as a building. The idea of using the term re-creation to describe this approach to architecture as an art of transforming reality has become self-evident to me.

5. Can you share 3 insights from your project Gallice Port in Juan-les-Pins, France?

Our ambition for the Gallice port is both simple and strong: to conserve and renovate the buildings while redesigning the site by incorporating its inherent principles and objectives from its conception and construction by architect Guillaume Gillet in the late 1960s; namely, to develop a modern port dedicated to yachting on a human scale, resolutely contemporary in its architecture and perfectly integrated into its landscape. In a nutshell, our project aims to combine green with blue; natural space with maritime space, creating a port-landscape, a garden port on the Mediterranean Sea. While showcasing its beautiful modern architecture and providing sailors with today's technologies. Leveraging the initial architectural design to address environmental and energy challenges, completing the unfinished landscaping project by creating suspended gardens on the building terraces to ensure good thermal protection.

Gallice is well on its way to becoming the blue, white, and green port of the Riviera: blue for the quality of its water, white for the colour of its architecture, green for the omnipresence of vegetation.

The Gallice project was awarded the Rehab XX° prize on November 22, 2023, jointly awarded by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Ecological Transition and Territories to showcase exemplary rehabilitation projects for buildings dating from the second half of the 20th century that are not protected as historical monuments. These successful preservation projects are intended to serve as models.

Figure 12. Gallice Port in Juan-les-Pins, France ©Aitor Ortiz- Proposed design by Philippe PROST architect



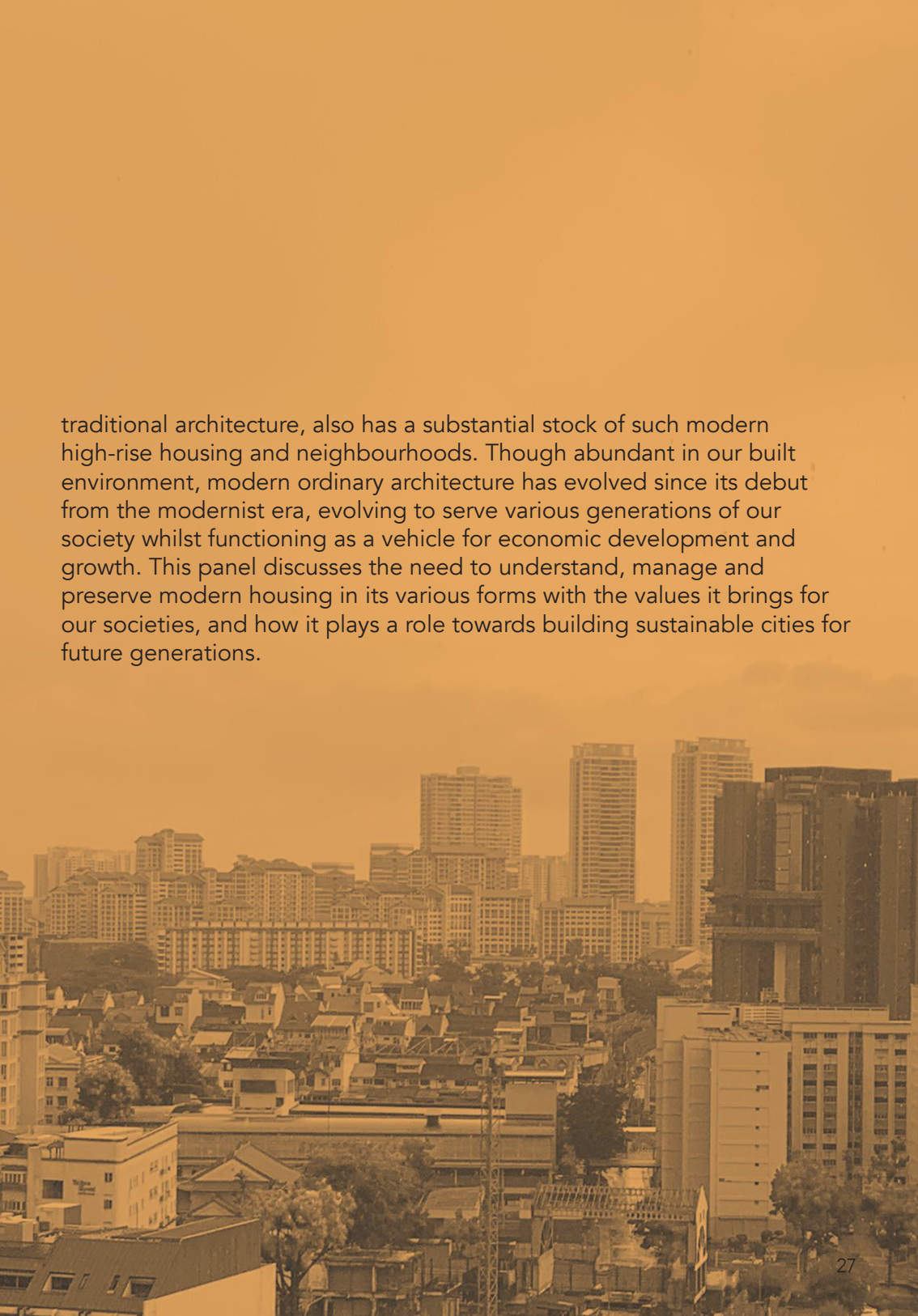
Panel 1:

A new

lease of life!

Apart from iconic buildings and structures, everyday modern architecture has held equal importance in holding essential functions for a city to grow and thrive. On the other hand, the 20th century introduced modern housing – very often in high-rise buildings such as in France and Singapore, while also in the form of low-rise buildings in the case of Hong Kong. These have become intrinsic infrastructures in the functioning of everyday life, so much that locally, almost 80% of the resident population in Singapore live in such housing. Similarly, France, while home of iconic





traditional architecture, also has a substantial stock of such modern high-rise housing and neighbourhoods. Though abundant in our built environment, modern ordinary architecture has evolved since its debut from the modernist era, evolving to serve various generations of our society whilst functioning as a vehicle for economic development and growth. This panel discusses the need to understand, manage and preserve modern housing in its various forms with the values it brings for our societies, and how it plays a role towards building sustainable cities for future generations.

Ms Elaine Tan, Centre for Liveable Cities

Conserving and Rejuvenating Singapore's Built Environment



"Conservation of our built heritage provides us with a sense of identity and memory, and adds visual richness to the city."



Figure 13. Elaine at the conference.

Figure 14. Conserved shophouses sit alongside modern buildings in Singapore's city centre (Photo courtesy of Andy Tan) (opposite)

1. What makes preservation necessary in a rapidly evolving society?

Conservation of our built heritage provides us with a sense of identity and memory, and adds visual richness to the city. Some buildings hold significant historical meaning, others have become part of many Singaporeans' lives and we have formed collective memories about the place.

Protecting these buildings can build a deeper sense of identity and rootedness for Singaporeans.

But conservation has to be done pragmatically and with careful selection. Buildings need to serve new purposes with new times and continue to contribute to Singapore's progress and development. Our conservation journey started as early as the 1960s, where we began to safeguard older areas of our city. For a small country with a short history of nationhood, Singapore has done well in its efforts to conserve its built heritage. As of now, over 7,000 buildings have been protected and restored according to accepted international practice. In addition, individual buildings of unique historical importance have been gazetted as national monuments.

Conservation also contributes to a city's decarbonisation efforts. Instead of demolishing existing buildings, the adaptive reuse of buildings can reduce embodied carbon emissions, which are greenhouse gases emitted by the extraction and transportation of building materials, and during construction and disposal. For example, in the development of Avenue South Residences in Singapore, five four-storey Singapore Improvement Trust flats were conserved and incorporated into the development and sold as heritage units. The residential project also uses CarbonCure, a type of green concrete that is lower in carbon emissions by about 4% compared to conventional concrete, reducing about 100 tonnes of carbon emissions.

2. How do you think rejuvenation and maintenance can provide better homes for all?

Singapore's Housing and Development Board (HDB) estates are known for being well-planned, providing safe and liveable homes for about 80% of Singapore's residents. The continuous rejuvenation and maintenance, or estate management, of the HDB estates also ensure that they continue to hold economic, social and environmental value through the years. This is achieved through several upgrading programmes within flats as well as at the block and precinct levels, such as the Home Improvement Programme (HIP), which addresses common maintenance issues in older flats; Remaking Our Heartlands (ROH) programme, where large-scale rejuvenation efforts are initiated to inject vibrancy into our towns and estates; and the HDB Green Towns Programme to make our towns more environmentally sustainable and liveable.

Estate management involves close partnership between government agencies, the private sector and the community. The Cool Ideas Enterprise programme is an open innovation platform that allows HDB to partner the community and industry to co-create innovative solutions to improve the HDB living environment and residents' quality of life. Participating companies are presented with real-world challenges in the areas of advanced construction, resilient infrastructure and sustainability. Awarded companies will receive financial support to develop their solutions and those that have successfully deployed their solutions in HDB environment will be able to further scale their solutions.

3. What makes the preservation of ordinary architecture important in giving its residents a sense of identity?

In Singapore, conservation goes beyond just the retention of built heritage. The recent Long-Term Plan Review has identified five Identity Corridors which are well-loved places with rich heritage and identity, and connects key neighbourhoods to the city centre. These corridors include the Rail Corridor and the Historic East, which includes the Geylang Serai Cultural Belt and the Siglap and Bayshore areas. The Identity Corridor concept builds on the previous Identity Node initiative to retain distinctive neighbourhoods and since 2002, 18 identity nodes, such as Balestier



Figure 15. : Aliwal Arts Night Crawl, a multi-disciplinary arts festival led by One Kampong Gelam (Photo courtesy of the Urban Redevelopment Authority)

and Holland Village, have been recognised and progressively enhanced. The Urban Redevelopment Authority is engaging the community to create meaningful public spaces and enhancing the walking and cycling infrastructure along the Identity Corridors.

Through involving the community, ground-up placemaking efforts also give residents a greater sense of ownership, allowing them to lead placemaking activities in historic areas. For instance, the Kampong Gelam Alliance (KGA) gathered feedback and ideas from over 1600 Kampong Gelam stakeholders and members of the public, and developed a Place Plan for the Kampong Gelam Historic Area, a strategic roadmap that aims to enhance the area's heritage, offerings and experience. KGA, together with URA, has now identified five focus areas that underpin the Place Plan, as well as a range of projects that will be introduced progressively and aims to transform Kampong Gelam into an even more attractive, inclusive and resilient historic area for all.

Christopher Wong, (Hong Kong Urban
Renewal Authority)

Sustainability, Innovation, Heritage & Preservation

Staunton Street / Shing
Wong Street neighborhood
Integrated Urban
Renewal Approach



"With more collaboration,
innovation and empowerment
through the community-making
approach, a preservation project
can create more positive impacts
to the society during the urban
regeneration process."

1. What are some key values that preservation can offer in our rapidly evolving society?

Above what is commonly perceived, "preservation" will not only offer social, historical and architectural meaning to humanity amidst the process of urbanization/ modernization, but in more profound sense, will also create "local assets" for a society in terms of allowing people to remember/ experience the heritage of past generations, retain and foster social cohesion, and at same time provide opportunities to a more diverse social economy. It is also contributing in the sense of promoting cultural diversity as preservation will also provide a different way/ perspective for development of a society by transforming in lieu of total replacement/ demolition of the existing urban fabric and structures.



Figure 16. Staunton Street / Shing Wong Street neighborhood (from 2023) (opposite)

Figure 17. Night view (from 2023)

Figure 18. Before restoration (before 2018)

2. How is community-making a way of sustainable development?



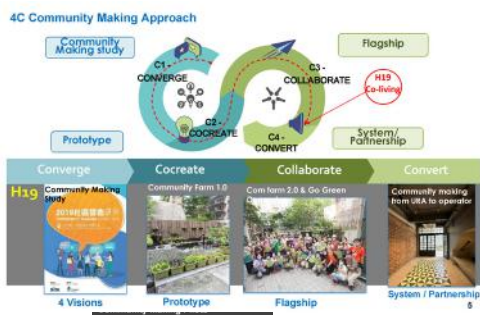
Figure 19. Christopher speaking at the Conference
All images are from the author unless otherwise stated

Community-making is about a conscious and active congregation of elements including "Place", "People" and "Programme" in the process of revitalization / preservation. By better correlation and connection of all those elements, it can facilitate



in building up a local community that embraces more energy and innovations in rejuvenating itself. Its process covering from “Converge” (envision), “Cocreate” (engage) to “Collaborate” and “Convert” (extend) forms a cyclical framework, which in turn bring about empowerment of the community and more all-round involvement of multi-sector participants to actively contribute in sustaining development of a society.

3. Can you share 3 learning points from HK URA’s pilot project Staunton Street / Shing Wong Street neighborhood?



1. Preservation is not only a matter of built environment (Place), and it is also about the relation with People and Programme, considering social and economical sustainability in one go.
2. With more collaboration, innovation and empowerment through the community-making approach, a preservation project can create more positive impacts to the society during the urban regeneration process.
3. To extend the building lifecycle via preservation, process from curation to cocreation can generate more prototypes and social capital for future operations in the long run.





Images from the left-side page:

Figure 20. Community Making – Revitalization Design Process

Figure 21. 4C Community Making Approach (second image on the left)

Figure 22. Community making pilots

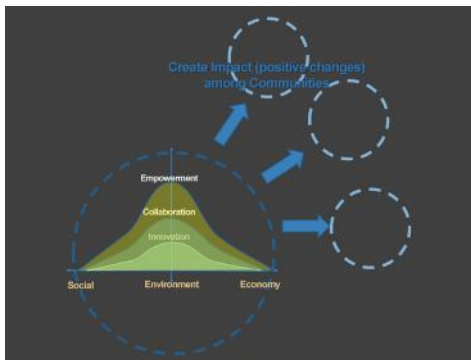
Figure 23. Process of developing a Community Garden pilot

Images from the right side page:

Figure 24. Learning Point 1: A successful Community Garden responding to Place, People and Program (above)

Figure 25. Learning Point 2 diagram (below)

Figure 26. Learning Point 3: Cocreating with communities (right)



Dr Eunice Seng, The University of Hong Kong (moderator)

A new lease of life!

What makes preservation necessary in a rapidly evolving society?

Preservation is a necessary ethical practice. Beyond keeping a thing or building from damage, decay, or destruction, preservation must be predicated on social and environmental ethics and responsibility. Every building must be maintained and periodically updated to remain relevant and useful. Preservation is damaging if it artificially freezes a building site to a particular moment or period.



"The framework of sustainable development must encompass inclusive preservation policies and strategies."

A modernist architect believes there is “an architecture of our time.” A preservationist sees the building of the past as a historical record that must be preserved as an artifact of another time. Hence, both share a historicist attitude that emphasizes a differentiation between the past and present instead of a time-tested approach to design that is contextually sensitive, where the past is part of a living continuum into the present and a guide for the future. Under the present development paradigm, preservation is a last resort when the socioeconomic mechanism fails to safeguard the livelihood of those who depend on it. Efforts to include intangible cultural heritage continually confront the relentless forces of the market. The framework of sustainable development must encompass inclusive preservation policies and strategies.

What makes it important for highly dense urban cities like Singapore and Hong Kong to value their modern ordinary buildings?

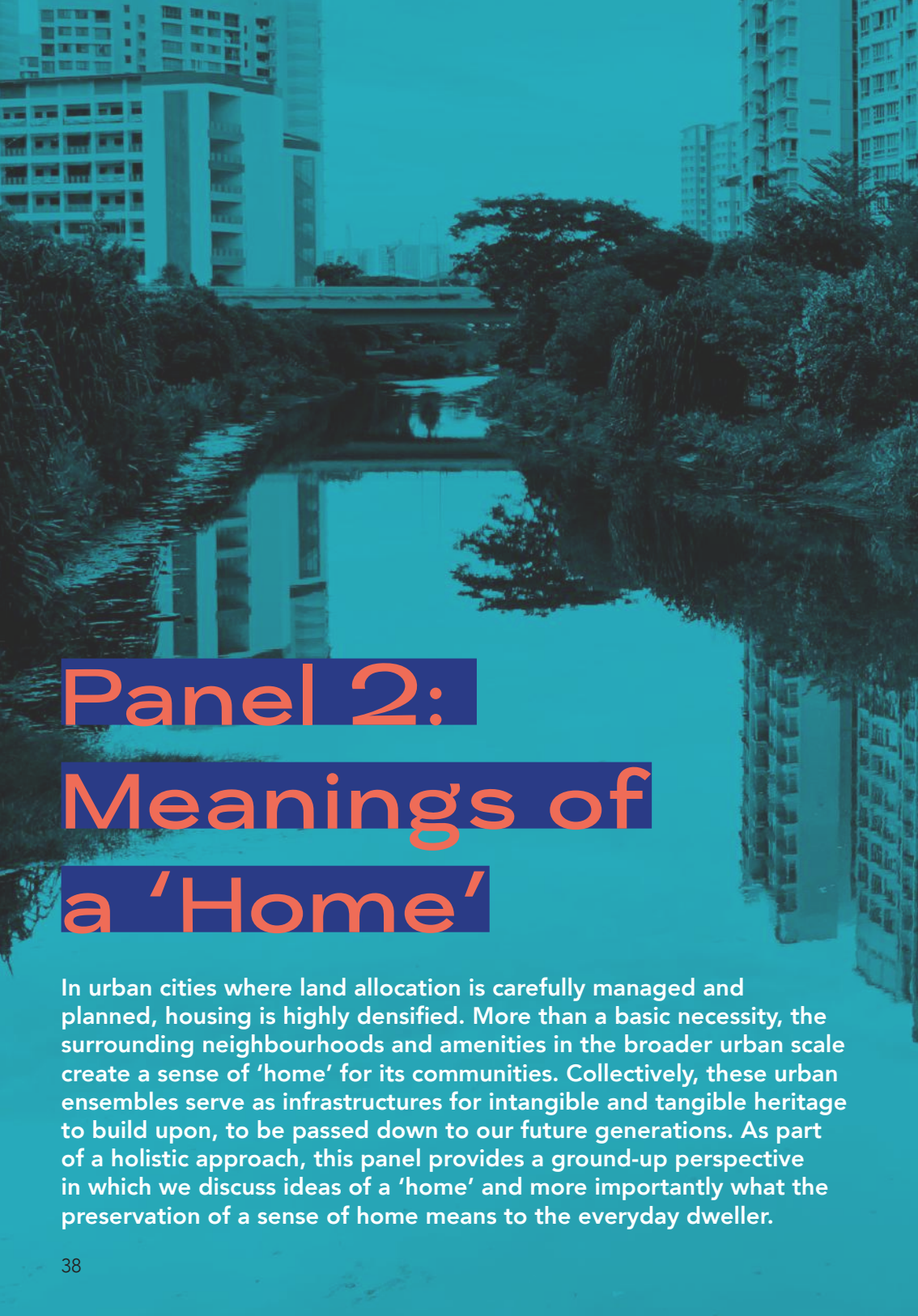
It is crucial to study, advance, and design counterproposals to the present development paradigm that offer alternative economic scenarios to accommodate the high densities and foster social inclusion. Given the significant number of people who make their homes in Singapore and Hong Kong’s public housing environments, connecting historic preservation and affordable housing is a pertinent start.

How could the preservation of our modern ordinary buildings and urban ensembles bridge different generations?

The urban built environment is replete with non-descript service buildings, support structures, and visible and invisible infrastructure. These so-called ordinary buildings and urban ensembles embody inter-generational memories and lived experiences, holding individual and collective meanings. If we tell ourselves stories in order to live, taking Joan Didion’s famous opening statement from *The White Album* (1979), we are sharing and telling old and new stories in our daily uses and travels to and through these buildings and urban spaces.

Figure 27. Cover image of Dr Eunice’s book ; ‘Resistant City: Histories, Maps, and the Architecture of Development’ (opposite)

All images are from the author unless otherwise stated



Panel 2: Meanings of a 'Home'

In urban cities where land allocation is carefully managed and planned, housing is highly densified. More than a basic necessity, the surrounding neighbourhoods and amenities in the broader urban scale create a sense of 'home' for its communities. Collectively, these urban ensembles serve as infrastructures for intangible and tangible heritage to build upon, to be passed down to our future generations. As part of a holistic approach, this panel provides a ground-up perspective in which we discuss ideas of a 'home' and more importantly what the preservation of a sense of home means to the everyday dweller.



Dr Teo Ho Pin

Building Homes - Identity & Neighbourliness



"Everyone, regardless of age, background, social status, should feel safe and be able to move seamlessly from one place to another to engage/participate in daily activities that improve their quality of life from aspects of health, wellness and happiness."

1. What makes a place liveable and a place to call home?

The ability for people to enjoy their lives through Live, Work and Play is what makes a place liveable and that can be called "Home". Everyone, regardless of age, background, social status, should feel safe and be able to move seamlessly from one place to another to engage/participate in daily activities that improve their quality of life from aspects of health, wellness and happiness. This would, in turn, impact their relationships, work satisfaction, and empower their pursuits of passions in life.

In Singapore, housing estates are well-planned to provide a wide range of amenities that are accessible and affordable to residents. This entails good transport infrastructures for travel and commuting, housing, the proximity of town centres, education institutions and public social amenities.

Figure 28. Distributing activity nodes such as inclusive playgrounds (opposite)

Figure 29. Dr Teo presenting at the conference

Figure 30. Vision for a Seamless Town

Figure 31. Vision for a Green Town

Figure 32. Vision for an Active Town

All images are from the author unless otherwise stated





2. As a former mayor and politician, what are 3 key moments that defined your idea of a “Home”?

As Mayor of North West District, my focus has always been on strengthening social cohesion among the residents through 3

areas. These areas have become our main guiding objectives for every community-building initiative. At the government level, we work closely with the town councils to implement improvement projects that will facilitate social bonding. From the ground-up, we involved community stakeholders by organising activities that encourage people to be active and healthy together. The desired outcomes of our community projects entail:

- Quality Environment – A living environment that is seamless, connected, and inclusive for everyone
- Social Cohesiveness – A cohesive community with active participation of residents and stakeholders
- Happy Families and Community – A good quality of life that increases the well-being and happiness of our people

Some of our successful community initiatives include healthy lifestyle clubs, lifelong learning programmes, and involving entities through corporate social responsibility projects.

Figure 33. Comfortable activity nodes are provided, such as through Town Centre upgrading works (top)

Figure 34. Developing community garden trails (bottom left)

Figure 35. Engaging with passionate volunteers from the community (bottom right)





3. How does community making preserve our tangible and intangible heritage?

In land-scarce Singapore, heritage can be preserved both physically and/or virtually. I feel that the focus of such efforts should be on “desired outcomes” – whether it is able to nurture a greater sense of belonging and care for current and future generations of Singaporeans. To do this, both the “hardware” (built environment) and the “heartware” (values of our people) must be aligned to inculcate a sense of gratitude among people, and empathy towards one another.

Figure 36. Lunch event by a Community gardening interest group (top)

Figure 37. Organising Dance fit clubs

Figure 38. Launching Swimsafer clubs

Figure 39. Promoting lifelong learning



Daniel Lim, ThinkCity Malaysia

Making Cities Liveable, Together



"The intrinsic connection between a place and its cultural heritage forms a tapestry of shared values that weaves a strong community fabric."

1. What makes a place liveable and a place to call home?

What defines a livable place and transforms it into a home is the intricate interplay between the physical environment, the community of people residing there, and the purpose it serves. The essence of calling a place “home” goes beyond mere physical structures; it is deeply rooted in both tangible and intangible connections. Tangibly, the built environment contributes to the sense of home, but equally important are intangible elements like familial history, cultural heritage, and the resonance of significant life events. In essence, the confluence of these factors creates a meaningful bond that transforms a place into not just a living space, but a cherished and integral part of one’s identity and existence.



Figure 40. George Town Festival (opposite)
Figure 41. Daniel speaking at the Conference
All images are from the author unless otherwise stated

2. In cosmopolitan societies like Singapore and Malaysia, what are the important elements to safeguard a sense of identity?

In cosmopolitan societies like Singapore and Malaysia, preserving a sense of identity is important due to their multicultural nature. Safeguarding this



Figure 42. Kuala Lumpur Creative and Cultural District (KLCCD) masterplan

identity involves a multifaceted approach, with a focus on cultural heritage and community cohesion. The preservation of cultural heritage such as built heritage, religious institutions, community associations, coupled with inclusive practices and a celebration of diversity, contributes to a cohesive and harmonious society that cherishes its multifaceted identity.



CORE AREA:

1.08 km²
(108 ha)

- KLCCD Core Area
- KLCCD Core Area Sub-Precincts
- 1** Traditional Shopping Street Precinct
- 2** Education Precinct
- 3** Heritage Triangle Precinct
- 4** Petaling Street Precinct
- 5** Civic Precinct

INCLUDING OTHER SIGNIFICANT SITES:

~8.96 km²
(896 ha)

KUALA LUMPUR CITY CENTRE:
~20.0 km²
(2000 ha)

- KLCCD Other Significant Areas
- KLCCD Other Significant Areas Sub-Precincts
- 1** Chow Kit South
- 2** Bukit Nanas
- 3** Bukit Ceylon
- 4** M118 Precinct
- 5** Kg. Attap Enclave
- 6** Brickfields
- 7** Cultural & Institutions
- 8** Taman Tugu



Figure 43. KLCCD masterplan created by Think City, together with Jabatan Warisan Negara and Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur to preserve culture and urban heritage Kuala Lumpur (top)

Figure 44. North Seafront Masterplan: Linear Garden and Cenotoph (bottom)

3. How can preservation bring communities together?

Preservation plays a pivotal role in fostering unity within communities by anchoring them in a shared sense of identity and place. Cultural heritage preservation, particularly through the safeguarding of the built environment, becomes a conduit for binding individuals together. The intrinsic connection between a place and its cultural heritage forms a tapestry of shared values that weaves a strong community fabric.

A community's resilience and cohesion are deeply intertwined with its ability to identify and relate to its cultural roots. Preservation not only conserves physical structures but also safeguards the intangible threads of cultural identity. When community members see their values reflected in the preserved heritage, it fosters a collective pride and a sense of belonging. In this way, preservation becomes a catalyst for community cohesion, knitting individuals together through a shared appreciation for their cultural legacy.



Figure 45. Masjid Kapitan Keling Mosque
Physical Conservation in partnership with
the community.

Day 1

Round-table





Round-table 1

How is ordinary architecture worth preserving and how can it be done sustainably?

Philippe Prost (FR)

Christopher Wong (HK)

Daniel Lim (MY)

Dr Eunice Seng (HK/SG)

Moderated by Yann Follain, WY-TO (SG/FR)

Serving as a soft conclusion to the first day of talks, the speakers were invited to a roundtable to discuss 'How is ordinary architecture worth preserving and how to do it sustainably?'. Together, the speakers: Philippe Prost (France), Christopher Wong (Hong Kong), Daniel Lim (Malaysia) and Dr Eunice Seng (Hong Kong and Singapore) shared each of their perspectives on the various approaches and perceptions of preservation in their national contexts, potential policies for the future, and the possible ways of the defining tangible and intangible value of buildings.

Disclaimer: The text seeks to capture the dynamic roundtable discussion between the speakers on stage from a range of esteemed backgrounds, experiences and expertise. In the spirit of the conversation, points often build on or contradict one another, offering a rich diversity of perspectives on the topic of preservation. Main points from the speakers were selected that best captured the lively discussion. The views stated are the speakers' own, and do not represent the views of the co-presenters.

1. With all the presentations we have seen today with expertise from France, Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia, how has your understanding of the term 'preservation' changed? And how will it impact your practice or field of intervention?

CW: That there is a number of factors to take note of when assessing if a building should be preserved, beyond only considering its age. This includes analysing the existing building conditions, degree of sharing by inhabitants, the tangible and intangible value of the building, etc

ES: There has been a shift in literacy in how people understand buildings and heritage, where heritage has expanded beyond the iconic, to ordinary and everyday architecture. Thus, new expertise is needed to read, interpret and value everyday architecture, bringing up questions such as 'Who is the expert of the ordinary?' and 'How do we work and harness that knowledge in architectural practice?'

DL: The question for me is: What are we preserving? What is significant enough whether intangible or tangible? One way would be to adopt a historic landscape approach, where interventions take into account economic realities and are integrated into the existing social fabric. For example, a pocket park that is full of community cannot necessarily be recreated in another location, as it comes with an entire ecosystem linked to it. This includes the community that lives around the park.



2. How do you think ordinary Architecture and Urban ensembles are perceived by communities in the contexts of France, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore?

DL: It is subjective to who and when you speak to someone. Someone from the village may prefer to have durable brick and mortar buildings, while a wealthy person may prefer a building using natural materials in an effort to 'go back to nature'.

ES: Time is needed to address all stakeholders and communities in the process of preservation, to make space for these different perceptions of ordinary architecture and urban ensembles. New strategies need to be created to connect with communities, and to steal time to address stakeholders in the process.

CW: The rarity of a building is a common variable used to decide if a building should be preserved. Where ordinary architecture is - by definition - commonplace, ordinary architecture is often only seen to have value when it serves as a collective point of memories. Additionally, we tend to only think of preservation when buildings from that era begin to be torn down, as certain buildings become rarer and more unique. As such, there is a need for a framework to identify the tangible and intangible values of buildings to accurately pinpoint what should and should not be preserved.



3. What are the differences and similarities between preservation and maintenance? In other words when does maintenance become preservation? If yes, is there a need for a more holistic framework for preservation from top-down actions and bottom-up initiatives?

CW: Preservation has a wider meaning than maintenance, where maintenance is focused on keeping the building functional. Maintenance in Hong Kong is quite common and done by private owners to prolong the lifespan and use of a building, even by adding balconies or a whole floor. In contrast, preservation is done by local authorities and thus must be qualified as a public good, serving a larger purpose that is wider than an individual owner's agenda.

PP: In France, it depends if it is a private or public building. Private buildings owners are similarly invested in maintaining their buildings so that they can continue to use them. In terms of preservation, while some see the preservation of their buildings as an honour, others find it troublesome as preserved buildings come with more regulations. For public buildings, there is no concern nor funding for maintenance, leading to disrepair.

DL: Maintenance and preservation go hand in hand. For example, in a shophouse, lime plaster is used for breathability of the structure and requires repainting every 2 years. This repainting allows the structure to be maintained, preserving the building at the same time.

4. What kind of policies or top-down actions could be developed to handle and safeguard young built ensembles (as opposed to ancient / classical / colonial)?



CW: In Hong Kong, an energy assessment system is used for new building works. Developers are incentivised to reduce the carbon footprint of a building, and to avoid demolishing younger buildings through GFA concessions given by the authorities. This helps to reduce carbon emissions and unnecessary demolition. However, this policy also has its limitations: if the location is good and the financial benefits are high, the system will fail.

DL: Policies should be a process to draw parameters that are specific to each site, rather than rules to be implemented across the board. This place-based approach can include a proper assessment weighing the potential financial and social impacts of demolition and preservation to make an informed decision.

5. How can we find the right balance between what can be measured and what cannot be, what is tangible, what is intangible towards preservation?

ES: Before going into identifying the intangible, tangible measurements such as measuring the carbon emissions, resource extractions, heat gain and pollution of buildings and their construction needs to be defined. These tangible quantities are often more convincing than intangible qualities, especially where preservation often goes against the financial logic for developers.

CW: Instead of measuring social benefits in terms of the jobs created or the carbon footprint of a building, a common set of guidelines or a social index should be created. This index should be well-received by developers, future users and the communities to serve as a common basis of understanding towards the preservation of a building, as different stakeholders have differing interests and goals.



PP: In France, the rehabilitation of a building is often more expensive than demolition and rebuild. While there is a global desire for sustainability, it is difficult to achieve due to the different interests of stakeholders in society.

Day 1

Conclusion





Johannes Widodo, NUS Department of Architecture

Conserving the Ordinary: Towards Singapore 100



"Urban conservation and development are not isolated endeavours but intertwined aspects of our urban landscape."

Singapore stands as a beacon of modernity and progress in our dynamic world. Yet, amidst our relentless march forward, we often fail to recognise our city's intricate tapestry. In 2002, during the 2nd mAAN International conference at NUS, Minister Vivian Balakrishnan wisely observed, "We tend to take our environment for granted, forgetting to take the time to understand and appreciate what forms the essence of our city. Perhaps it's because we are so accustomed to change, with much of our environment being relatively new and constantly evolving." As we embark on the journey toward Singapore's centenary, we must reevaluate our conservation and development approach, focusing on environmental sustainability, social responsibility, cultural authenticity, economic viability, and architectural appropriateness.



Figure 46. Golden Mile Complex marks an important mile stone in the conservation of a significant modern heritage buildings in Singapore, a decision based on economic viability and place memory. All images are from the author unless otherwise stated.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 11 underscores the importance of creating inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities. Within this framework, a specific target emphasises protecting and preserving the world's cultural and natural heritage. However, we face several pressing challenges in our pursuit of these goals. One significant challenge lies in

our tendency to prioritise investment and tourism over the true essence of heritage preservation. The consequences include mass tourism, over-development, environmental degradation, and the commercialisation of cherished heritage sites. Rising land rents and property values have displaced local communities and gentrified historic neighbourhoods. This relentless pursuit of development threatens to erase the authenticity and uniqueness of our places and cultures, resulting in irreparable tangible and intangible damage. Thus, a paradigm shift in our thinking is essential.

There is an urgent need for a shift in mindset and paradigm in this era of climate change and global crisis. Urban conservation and development are not isolated endeavours but intertwined aspects of our urban landscape. Recognising that heritage preservation does not mean freezing the past, exploiting it for branding, or relying solely on tourism is paramount. Instead, it involves safeguarding our legacy, prioritising the well-being of our people, and effectively managing change in our natural and built environment.

“Urban conservation and development are not isolated endeavours but intertwined aspects of our urban landscape.”

Drawing wisdom from our tropical climate may guide us toward a more sustainable future. Local wisdom holds a wealth of traditional knowledge that has evolved over centuries, offering invaluable insights into sustainable living in the tropics. Concepts like cross-ventilation, high ceilings, passive design, and the stack effect can seamlessly integrate into modern architecture to create net-zero energy and waste structures. NUS SDE4, a Green Mark-certified platinum net-zero energy building, stands as an exemplary embodiment of these principles. It demonstrates how positive energy can be generated through innovative design principles, reduced reliance on artificial lighting and elevators, and harnessing natural resources like rainwater. Another noteworthy initiative in Singapore is the Health District pilot project, which focuses on preventive health, holistic well-being, and integrating technology into urban planning and design.

By embracing a community-centric approach, Singapore can infuse new life into its neighbourhoods and public spaces. The adaptive reuse of shophouses and the reactivation of townhouses for contemporary living have already shown the potential to maintain authenticity while meeting modern needs. Singapore's shift toward a community-centric approach is evident in initiatives like the URA's Kampung Gelam Historic Area 2023-2028 Place Plan. This paradigm shift recognises the importance of involving the local community in shaping the future of their neighbourhoods. The Draft Master Plan 2025 further underscores this shift, focusing on creating a happy, healthy city that enables sustainable growth, strengthens urban resilience, and stewards nature and heritage.

NUS SDE4 is the first newly built net-zero energy building in Singapore. It is also the first university building in the world to be WELL Certified™ Gold, and the first building in Singapore to achieve the prestigious WELL certification.



In the journey toward Singapore 100, we must learn the importance of sustaining the essence through commonsense and ethical practices. Our cultural and natural heritage is not merely a relic of the past but a living source of life and inspiration. As UNESCO emphasises, cultural heritage is the legacy we inherit, experience today, and pass on to future generations. To achieve Singapore's centennial milestone with grace and wisdom, we must shift our paradigm toward a human-centred approach that is environmentally sustainable, socially responsible, culturally authentic, economically viable, and architecturally and technologically appropriate. This holistic approach will preserve our unique identity and ensure a brighter, more sustainable future for Singapore and its people. Singapore has the potential to stand as a source of inspiration for both its neighbouring countries and the global community.

Day 2


Keynote



Francois Decoster, l'AUC architectes et urbanistes

Urbanism of Transformation

From a Culture of the Disposable to a Culture of the Transformable



"With more collaboration, innovation and empowerment through the community-making approach, a preservation project can create more positive impacts to the society during the urban regeneration process."

1. How can 'preservation' be defined in the contexts of Singapore and France?

Urban development and modernisation in France and Singapore have largely relied on tabula rasa. In France the notion of architectural heritage emerged in the times of the French Revolution (a time of tabula rasa par excellence) and preservation and protection policies have undergone different stages throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, as Philippe Prost masterfully explained in his presentation. In Singapore, a much younger city-state, the notion of preservation is naturally more recent.

In both countries, preservation policies first focused on ancient architectures, i.e. landmarks dating from previous centuries. Things that relate to societies that are past. What is relatively recent is the consideration of Modern heritage, which is particularly important for a society as young as Singapore, but also for the French society.

What I find interesting here is that Modern heritage is maybe closer to people because it relates to things that we, at least the generation I belong to, have experienced as forms of progress in the time when they were built. It brings Modern heritage close to other notions such as "intangible" heritage which is now recognized by UNESCO or "everyday" heritage. Recognising Modern heritage as a common good opens new ways of considering preservation, perhaps as a more dynamic and optimistic process, as opposed to a form of nostalgia, museumization or commodification. So I think that considering modern and everyday heritage also helps to open new eyes on the future of older things and I think this is essential to the mental health of our societies.

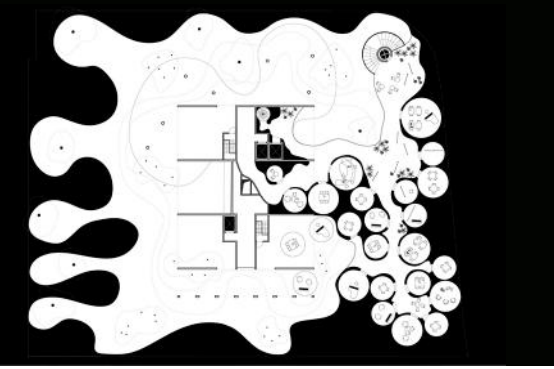


Figure 47. La Nouvelle Tour des Poissonniers, I'AUC 2025 © I'AUC (opposite)

Figure 48. Nouvelle Tour des Poissonniers, The Garden of Living Arts © I'AUC (left)

Figure 49. Francois presenting his Keynote.

2. How is preservation a form of sustainable development to you?

Not demolishing is a strong act, a resolute statement. It is an attitude towards what exists based on respect and modesty perhaps, together with new forms of ambition. Not demolishing is often not easy and requires a lot of convincing efforts and power. It requires the ability to see the new in the old. From a cultural point of view, not demolishing is an act of optimism and confidence in our societies and architectures' own resilience.

Maybe demolition and tabula rasa were signs of a Modernist form of optimism and faith in progress that made sense in their time. In the culture of today, facing the challenges of a globalised ecological crisis, it seems a rather outdated and irrelevant postulate. I do not mean that nothing at all should be demolished (though I totally respect those who do), but I strongly believe that demolition should never be a prerequisite. We can be much more creative and optimistic than that.

The non-demolition option should always be put in the balance before final decisions. What do we really gain? What do we really lose? In that sense, of course preservation participates to a more sustainable form of development. It saves a lot of carbon emissions. And it saves the cultural heritage of future generations as well.

But preservation does all this as long as it goes beyond preservation for preservation's sake and opens on the notion of transformation: from preservation to transformation for new futures.

Figure 50. Lyon Part-Dieu, Active Ground Floors © I'AUC (left)

Figure 51. Lyon Part-Dieu, Green Infrastructure © I'AUC (opposite page, left)

Figure 52. Lyon Part-Dieu, The Easy Ground figure © I'AUC (opposite page, right)

All images are from the author unless otherwise stated



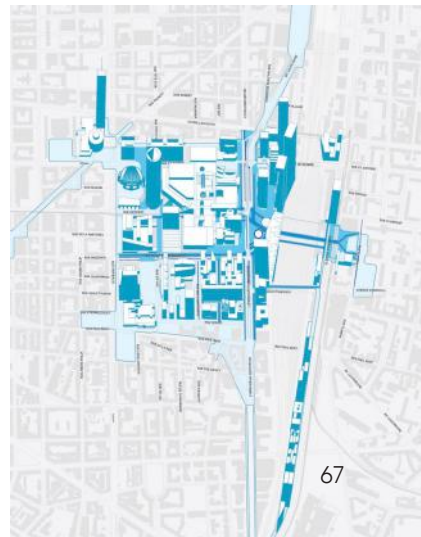
3. What is your design philosophy and what drives your practice?

At l'AUC we do not follow a pre-set methodology or seek for the duplication of solutions. Even if strong convictions or intuitions flow and echo through our work as a whole each of our projects, whether urban or architectural, is unique in the methodology we set up to develop it. Our projects emerge from our understanding of situations. We spend a lot of time observing things before proposing any answer and we always try to let enough time for situations to reveal themselves in all their complexity, contradictions and potentials.

We call that the Intelligence of Situations, which goes both ways: we try to be intelligent ourselves in the way we understand the situations we work on and we try to grasp the intelligence that these situations contain in themselves, i.e. their potential.

This attitude reflects both our own sensibilities and the context with which we deal since we founded l'AUC in 1996. The last decades in Europe have been a gradual shift from an urbanism of extension (new towns, subdivisions or new districts on former agricultural land in the periphery of cities...) to an urbanism of transformation (brownfield redevelopment, transformation of existing districts in the suburbs or city centres...).

In summary, we believe in the intelligence of situations and in an urbanism of transformation as powerful levers for architectural and urban projects in line with the challenges of our times.



4. What is your aspiration for each project you take on?

Given what I just said, our aspiration for each project we take on depends on the situation in presence and the way we read it. What we always try to do is to avoid imprisoning a question into the preconceived answer that the client usually implies in the brief that is submitted to us. When we begin a project we try to let the questions open as long as possible in order to let emerge adequate, original, unique answers. I think this is the only way to put together the complexities and systematically contradictory stakes of any urban and architectural project in ways that will make new sense.

Then we also seek to let potential open for the future. A project should never be a book that you close and put aside at the end and say "end of the story, question solved, job done". Any project should remain an open book, always considering that the city is and will never be finished.



I think this is not only true of cities but also of buildings. Everything we build, we should build it as a heritage to pass on to future generations to stimulate their own inspiration and creativity for infinite transformation.



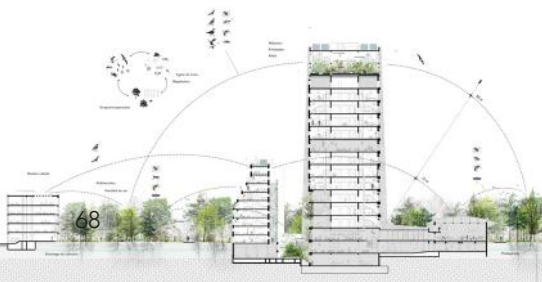
In short, our aspiration for each project that we make is to take something from one point to bring it to another point in order to give it the capacity to move along further and further.

On this page, from top to bottom:

Figure 53. CIRCUlaire, study model, Southeast view. © I'AUC

Figure 54. CIRCUlaire, The Climatic Orchard. © I'AUC

Figure 55. CIRCUlaire, A Complete Ecosystem © I'AUC



Opposite page, left to right:

Figure 56. ZIN under construction, North view © Jaspers Eysers / 51N4E / I'AUC, Drone view © BEFIMMO

Figure 57. ZIN, From WTC to ZIN © Jaspers Eysers / 51N4E / I'AUC

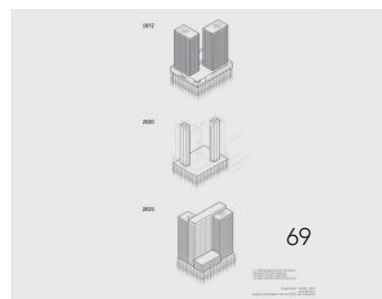
5. Can you share three insights from your collaboration on the project ZIN, Brussels?


1. Learning from the building: Most ideas in the ZIN project come from the pre-existing building and our understanding of it. For instance, the drawback of ceiling heights too low and floor areas too small for current office real estate standards is turned into an opportunity. The new connecting element that we have created between the two original towers has a double ceiling heights which makes the office floor space both efficient in terms of area and highly qualitative for office use (a landscaped open space, lots of light...). In the pre-existing towers that we kept, one floor out of two is dedicated to housing and hotel programmes which turns the monofunctional obsolete office building that the old WTC was into a multifunctional complex of offices, housing, hotel and common spaces and amenities.

2. The resilience of ideas: Our first intuition was to keep everything from the existing buildings. This intuition was challenged by technical studies which proved it made sense to keep the underground parking levels as well as the core of the

building, which already corresponds to most of the energy and carbon embedded in the existing structure. But keeping the concrete floors proved technically and economically counterproductive. So we had to demolish the slabs but managed to recycle the concrete. Hence the initial idea became realizable in the form of a circular process, which was not what we had initially anticipated but which is even more interesting.

3. Acting on a building as a means to act on the city: The question of the old WTC was not only the building itself but also its relation with the city. The slab urbanism plan from the origins had never been implemented and left the towers sitting on podiums that had no use nor relation to the public space. By adding a new element in form of a public glasshouse our project manages to establish that relation. Hence the glasshouse (together with the public rooftop) at the same time provide attractive shared amenities for the building itself and make it a collective landmark in the heart of Brussels North district, right between the train station the canal banks.





Panel 3: Challenges of our current buildings

With most modernist buildings past half-a-century old, there comes the challenge of maintenance and staying relevant. While many may consider these concrete vessels to be obsolete, many are also beginning to see the hidden potential that these buildings hold and the value that they can bring with adaptation and thoughtful refurbishment. Apart from active interventions, regulatory frameworks in the built environment are vital in enabling these possibilities and to allow for greater initiatives. In this panel, we look at how our current buildings can be more adaptable, and what are some successful examples in various contexts toward sustainable development.



Punto Wijayanto, University Triksakti, Jakarta

Challenges of our current buildings: Case of Jakarta



"These buildings serve as tangible reminders of past narratives, traditions, and communal experiences, enriching our understanding of cultural evolution."

1. How can current everyday buildings be more versatile and adaptable?

Improving the versatility and adaptability of current buildings requires prioritizing flexible design and functionality.

This entails implementing construction techniques and fostering collaboration across various sectors, including communities and government. On one hand, the use of modular construction techniques allows for easy adjustments to meet evolving demands. Embracing sustainable materials and energy-efficient systems ensures durability and relevance amidst changing trends. On the other hand, fostering community engagement and cooperation enables timely updates and renovations to meet modern needs. Zoning regulations that support mixed-use spaces further enhance a building's versatility. By integrating design skills with urban planning, ordinary buildings can maintain their significance and seamlessly integrate into the dynamic urban landscape.



Figure 58. Punto speaking at the Conference



Figure 59. The Maramis building, constructed in 1809, is envisioned to spearhead the transformation of the Ministry of Finance office area into a cultural hub following the capital's relocation to Nusantara (opposite)

Figure 60. Front of Maramis building (above)

Figure 61. The view of the urban landscape of M.H. Thamrin Street, where buildings from various periods bear witness to Jakarta's transition from being the capital to ultimately becoming a global city. (left)

2. What are some opportunities that you see with older buildings left vacant in Indonesia's shift of the administrative capital from Jakarta to Nusantara?

The relocation of the administrative capital to Nusantara in Kalimantan presents unique opportunities to repurpose historic buildings in Jakarta, especially those currently housing national government offices. Adaptive reuse projects not only rejuvenate these structures but also contribute to Jakarta's post-relocation development goals. Jakarta aspires to become a global city, and these historical buildings can serve as cultural assets. With appropriate urban planning and development visions, they can enhance the urban environment by establishing cultural districts and addressing housing and environmental concerns. These buildings can be transformed into cultural hubs, coworking spaces, residential complexes, or mixed-use developments, preserving their historical significance while fulfilling modern needs. By integrating adaptive reuse with contemporary functionality, these older buildings can remain relevant in the evolving urban landscape of Indonesia's former administrative capital.



Figure 62. The redevelopment of Jakarta focusing around the Medan Merdeka and Lapangan Banteng will present an opportunity for the unused CTC Building built between 1950-1960 to obtain a new function. (left)



Figure 63. Wisma Nusantara Building built in 1963, is a historical witness to the development of Jakarta City post-independence which has not been designated as a cultural heritage site.(right)

3. How does the preservation of our modern ordinary buildings also retain our intangible culture?

Preserving our modern ordinary buildings not only safeguards their physical structures but also protects intangible cultural aspects. These buildings encapsulate values such as societal values, architectural styles, and daily life practices of their era. These values can also evolve or change dynamically according to the experiences of their communities. By conserving them, we uphold connections to our heritage, fostering a sense of identity and continuity amidst increasingly uniform urban development trends. This is essential in mitigating the trend towards homogeneous and narrative-lacking cityscapes. Additionally, these buildings serve as tangible reminders of past narratives, traditions, and communal experiences, enriching our understanding of cultural evolution. Through adaptive reuse and innovative design, we ensure these ordinary buildings remain relevant, connecting past and present while preserving our intangible cultural heritage for future generations.

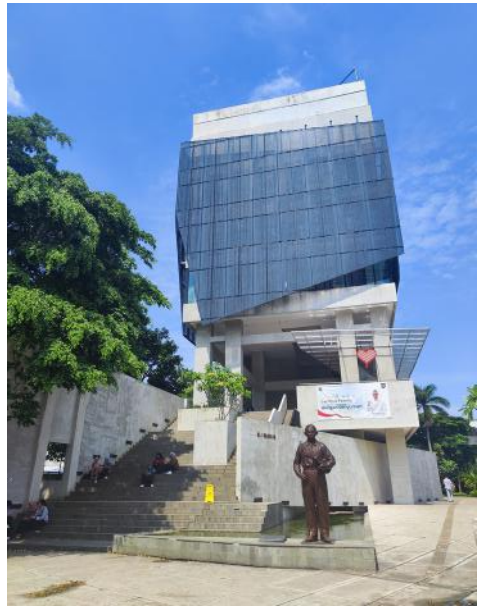


Figure 64. Sarinah building, the first shopping center in Jakarta built in 1963 has undergone transformations to remain relevant both functionally and visually while retaining its original structure.

Figure 65. As one of the centers for arts and culture, the Complex of Taman Ismail Marzuki built in 1968 will play a significant role in shaping the future of Jakarta as a Global City.

All images are from the author unless otherwise stated

Wong Chung Wan, MAEK Consulting

Challenges, Risks and Opportunities in the Restoration of Heritage Buildings



“When there is more push to keep our older buildings, we will then be able to invest in the greater training of tradesmen”

1. How can current everyday buildings be more versatile and adaptable?

Rather than limiting to a defined use of space from the original design of the building or masterplan constraints, there should be greater flexibility in the change of use for buildings. This will then attract wider potential users, occupants and tenants.

Due to the rapid evolution of technologies such as IoT, demand and requirements for services and space utilisation within the building are expected to change constantly. The designing for adaption is needed to future-proof the building by

- making internal installations easily removable
- incorporating environmental sustainability elements like "Green Mark"
- considering possible changes in the demographics of the users whom might have different needs like family friendliness, access to food and transportation, wheelchair access etc.
- factoring potential disruptive events like COVID
- including provisions to address Climate Change



Figure 66. Chung Wan speaking at the conference

Figure 67. Inappropriate past interventions lead to aggravated damages

Figure 68. Conservation works at Sri Mariamman Temple(opposite)

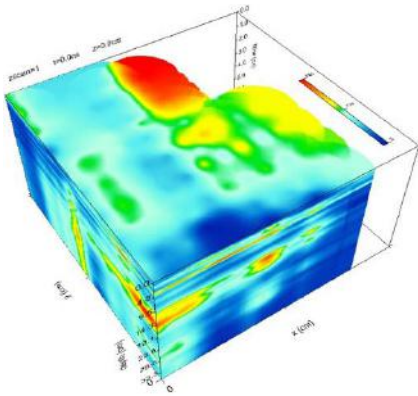
All images are from the author unless otherwise stated



2. Singapore is known to have a strong set of rules and regulations in its built environment. Does this hinder our efforts to preserve our built heritage?

Some rules and regulations unfortunately act as deterrents, such as the need to bring the building up to comply with new codes and standards which the old buildings were not originally designed for. Whilst some of the new codes are understandably essential to ensure safety of the buildings and occupants, some free-play could be accorded to the building owners or designers to provide alternative solutions such as performance-based assessment, risk assessment etc., through computer modelling.

Figure 69. Alterations from past
Figure 70. Use of advance non-destructive technology to assess historic elements



Sometimes rules and regulations are essential for proper preservation and restoration to happen. These requirements serve as guiding principles for stakeholders when it comes to handling important buildings as well as significant elements. Hence, a blanket application when it comes to rules and regulations might not necessarily be the most appropriate way forward.

3. What can we do more as a society, to bring out the potential of our old vacant buildings ?

Firstly, it will be to encourage more dialogues for different stakeholders to converge. This is so that guidelines relating to safeguarding heritage buildings can be thoroughly considered. E.g. Defining character, elements within a building, and the extent of any restoration/conservation required.

Secondly, incentivise the safeguarding or restoring of old buildings. This could be done through providing financial support, tax reliefs, GFA provisions, etc. While this might seem like a small effort, it could yield big rewards at an urban scale during urban regeneration programme where unnecessary demolitions are discouraged. When there is more push to keep our older buildings, we will then be able to invest in the greater training of tradesmen - that includes facility managers on appropriate handling methods when it comes to the dilapidation of old buildings, particularly those that are vacant. We should also encourage the sharing of best practices among everyone - from tradesmen, and professionals to facility managers.

Better heritage outreach to the public can also contribute to the valuation of our old buildings. This would entail education on the significance of them and their social impacts. Commissioned architectural and historical studies can be publicly funded. We can also allow interim use of buildings regardless of rental returns because vacant buildings deteriorate at a much faster rate than when occupied.

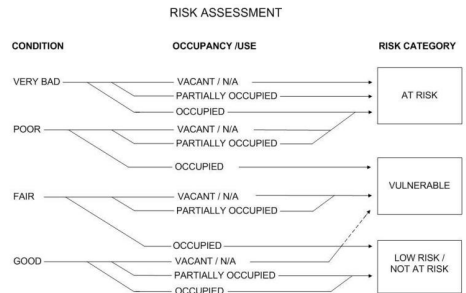


Figure 71. Risk assessment for buildings

Figure 72. Deterioration of a vacant building

Calvin Chua, Spatial Anatomy (moderator)

Challenges of our current buildings



URBATOR
DOKASHOP

MUSEUM
RESOURCE

MUSEUM
SITE

FESTIVAL
HOUSE

FESTIVAL
CLUBHOUSE



What binds people together
are identifiable everyday
shared spaces in the city.

What makes a place liveable and a place to call home?

A liveable place is one where individual basic needs (housing, food, work, education) are met and communities are bonded together through a shared sense of belonging and a sense of purpose.

In cosmopolitan societies like Singapore and Malaysia, what are the important elements to safeguard a sense of identity?

For cities and societies that celebrate diversity, the sense of identity is constantly evolving across generations and social groups. What binds people together are identifiable everyday shared spaces in the city. From commuting together on the train to eating at the hawker centre, these daily routines and practices enables everyone to form a shared identity.

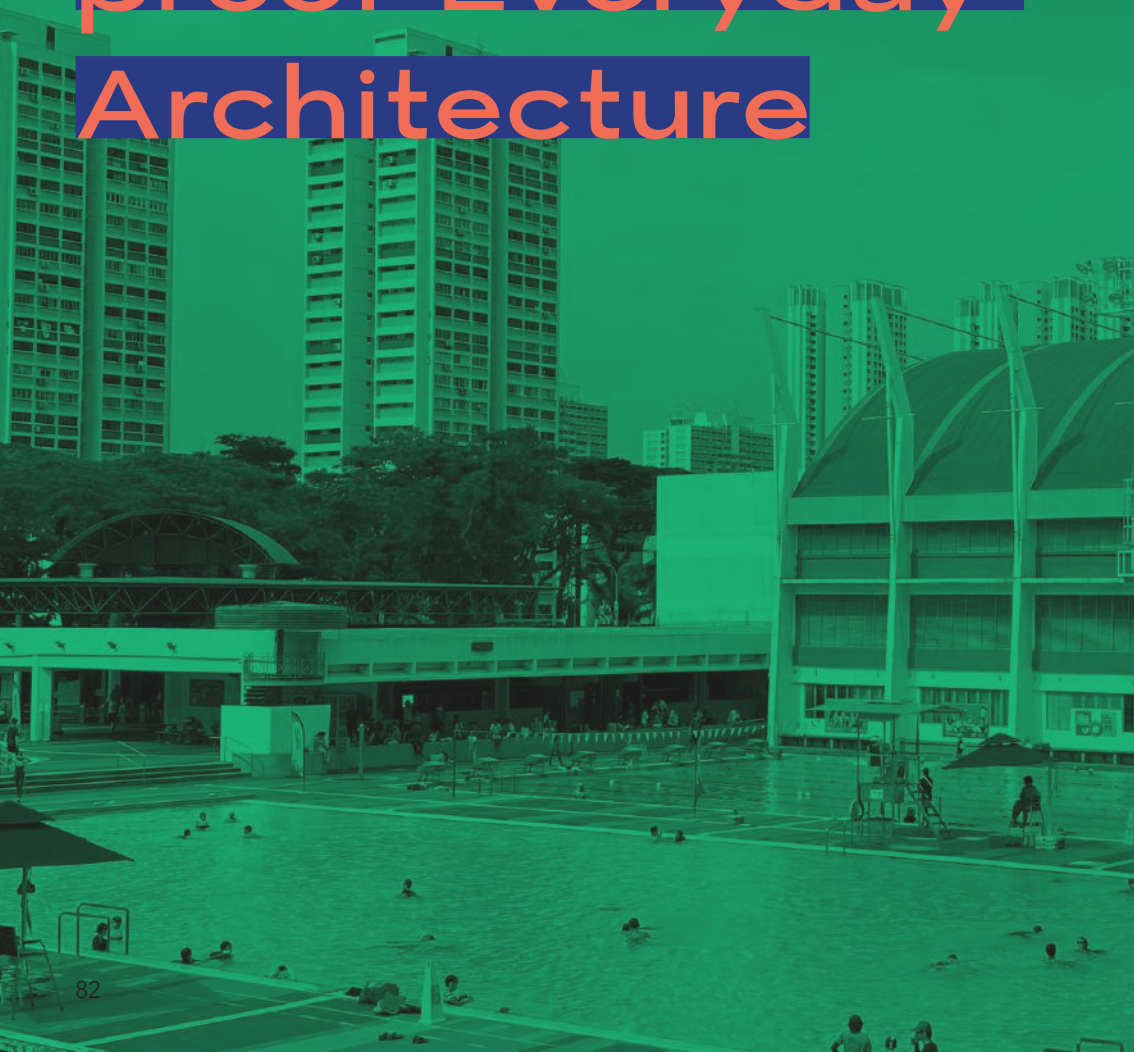
How can preservation bring communities together?

Preservation of tangible heritage provides a historical understanding of the communities' shared history, while preservation of existing intangible heritage allows communities to continue to collectively own and shape these practices.

Figure 73. Image of Archifest Singapore 2023 with the theme "Interim: Acts of Adaptation", an architecture festival commissioned by the Singapore Institute of Architects, with Calvin Chua appointed as Festival Director.

All images are from the author unless otherwise stated

Panel 4: Innovations to future- proof Everyday Architecture



Typically, the rigour of sustainable design is often developed in its details (i.e., green materials, certifications) rather than considering a building's lifespan. Alternatively, buildings can also be designed and engineered as a legacy for future generations when a non-demolition stance is considered in the first place. In this line of thought, synergy and collaboration within the industry are essential in enacting changes in mindset for a more sustainable way of approaching everyday architecture. In this panel, we look into how everyday architecture can be built for posterity and how innovations can be considered in today's building technologies for future uses.



Prof Er Lau Joo Ming
NTU School of Civil & Environmental Engineering CEE
Former Chief Structural Engineer
Former DCEO of HDB

Advanced Prefabrication and Precast construction for Sustainable Public Housing Development



"The intrinsic connection between a place and its cultural heritage forms a tapestry of shared values that weaves a strong community fabric."

1. How does innovation enable buildings to be future proof?

Singapore is a well-respected sustainable built environment in tropics with a garden setting. The journey started in 60s when it became an independent country. Innovation and system thinking, policies, planning and its execution have resulted in what we are today.

Take the example of highrise housing built in 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s etc and how innovations enable them to be future proofed to take care of different short- and long-term challenges.

The highrise buildings are built to last as long as its lease of 99 years. These buildings are not only well maintained but upgraded every 20 years or so. In a way, they never 'aged' but are refreshed to meet current and future challenges. The upgrading is not confined to buildings but the whole neighbourhood and new buildings & facilities are added in.

2. As a pioneer in Singapore's housing development, what is one thing (if it could be only one) that you are proud of?



Figure 76. Prof Er. Lau with then Minister for National Development Lim Hng Kiang's visit to HDB's Prefabrication Technology Centre in July 1995



Figure 74. Pinnacle@Duxton, © ARCStudio via CTBUH (opposite)

Figure 75. Prof Lau at the Farewell Reception

All images are from the author unless otherwise stated

For me, the process of enriching HDB's core competencies or building new ones to meet future challenges is of paramount importance. HDB has achieved significant success in housing a nation. In 1984, it completed a flat every 8 minutes and in 2010, it completed buildings its 1 million flats with its prefab story, launched the next generation of Punggol eco-town and eco-modernization of existing towns.

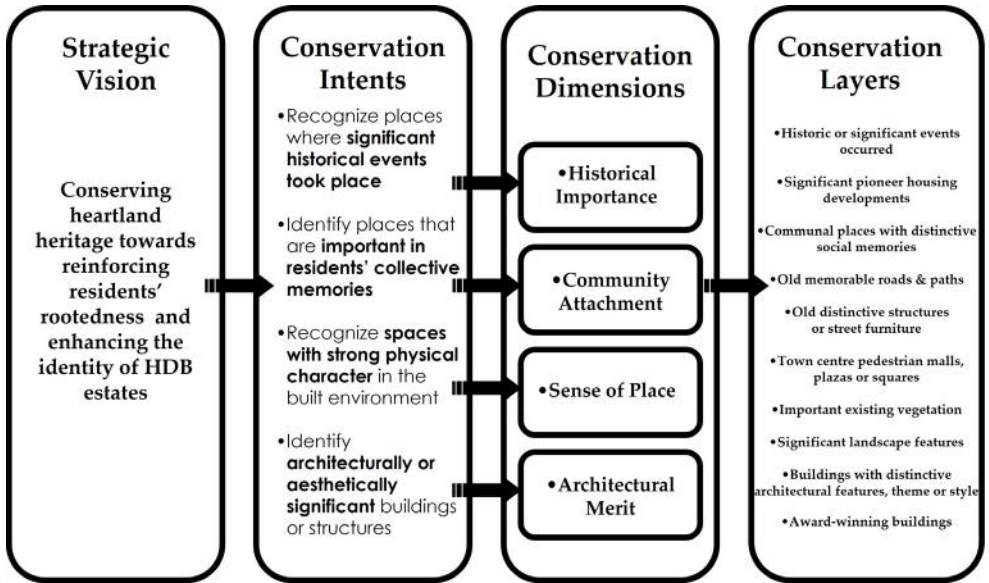


Figure 77. Early frameworks developed by HDB in Conserving heartland heritage.



Figure 78. Working frameworks developed by HDB in the "Smart HDB Town Framework" towards sustainable development.

3. What kind of advice would you give to the next generation of architects and engineers building our public housing?

Recently, I met three young officers during a mentoring session and related to them the story of the elephant and three blind men. Each man felt a part of elephant and their comprehension of what the animal looked like entirely was inhibited.

There are over 10,000 HDB high-rise buildings comprising more than 1 million flats. It is therefore important for the officers to have a broad picture in mind while working on specific assignments. This will further optimize the solutions come up with.

I strongly encourage the younger officers to seek to create excitement by coming up with innovative ideas that would be beneficial to all.

Figure 79. First town entirely designed and developed by HDB, Toa Payoh Town

Figure 80. Labour-intensive construction technologies in the 1980s

Figure 81. Development of cast-in window prefabrication technology in the 2000s

Figure 82. Rendering of HDB development

Some text has been extracted from:
<https://psdchallenge.psd.gov.sg/people/letters/keep-innovating-lau-joo-ming>



Dr Jerome Lombardi, NUS Graphene
Research Centre

Design for circularity: Materials



"Sustainability transcends building materials to incorporate the entire lifecycle of a building, from design and construction to operation and demolition."

1. How does innovation enable buildings to be future-proof?

Innovation ensures buildings are future-proof by enhancing their resilience, efficiency, and adaptability to withstand future challenges such as climate change, technological advancements, and evolving societal needs. Integrating cutting-edge materials, smart technologies, and sustainable practices are key. UrbaX is at the forefront of this movement, employing breakthroughs in nanotechnology and geo-engineering to transform low-value materials, industrial by-products and waste into superior or fit for the purpose, sustainable building materials. This not only aligns with current sustainability standards but also anticipates future environmental and technological shifts. UrbaX's approach underscores the importance of innovation in creating high-performance and durable, efficient, and environmentally friendly construction solutions, positioning the company as a leader in future-proof construction technologies.



Figure 83. UrbaX cement's bond strength and adhesive interface on a 19th C. brick, adhering to ASTM and EN industry standards and codes. (opposite)

Figure 84. Jerome Lobardi receiving a gift of appreciation

Figure 85. UrbaX's sustainability metrics

All images are from the author unless otherwise stated

2. How do you think sustainability can go beyond a building's materials, design, and specifications?

Sustainability transcends building materials to incorporate the entire lifecycle of a building, from design and construction to operation and demolition. UrbaX embodies this holistic approach by integrating waste upcycling, energy reduction, and carbon footprint minimization into its



Figure 86. Applications of UrbaX binders (left)

Figure 87. UrbaX product value (top right)

Figure 88. UrbaX's benefits towards sustainability (bottom right)

core practices. Focusing on CO₂-efficient materials enhances occupant well-being, promotes biodiversity, and ensures efficient use of resources. This comprehensive strategy underscores the significance of sustainable practices in reducing long-term impacts on urban environments and ecosystems. By adopting such a wide-ranging perspective, UrbaX demonstrates how sustainability can extend beyond the physical attributes of buildings to include broader environmental and societal benefits, thereby redefining the scope of sustainable construction.

What or who do you think is missing in the conservation conversation?

The conservation dialogue often misses the significant potential of cutting-edge technologies and cross-disciplinary collaboration in advancing sustainability. There's a critical need for increased participation from the technology sector, especially in material science, smart-technology, and geo-engineering, areas where UrbaX excels. Moreover, there's a call for more collaborative efforts among government agencies, industry stakeholders, and the academic community to address sustainability challenges effectively. By bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise, we can forge more innovative and comprehensive solutions. UrbaX's efforts highlight the importance of a multifaceted approach to conservation, stressing the need for a broader inclusion of stakeholders

and innovative technologies in the sustainability discourse. This can be seen in our partnership projects with varied stakeholders such as, in the repair and protection of a public artwork and participating in coastal protection and the growth of marine habitats.

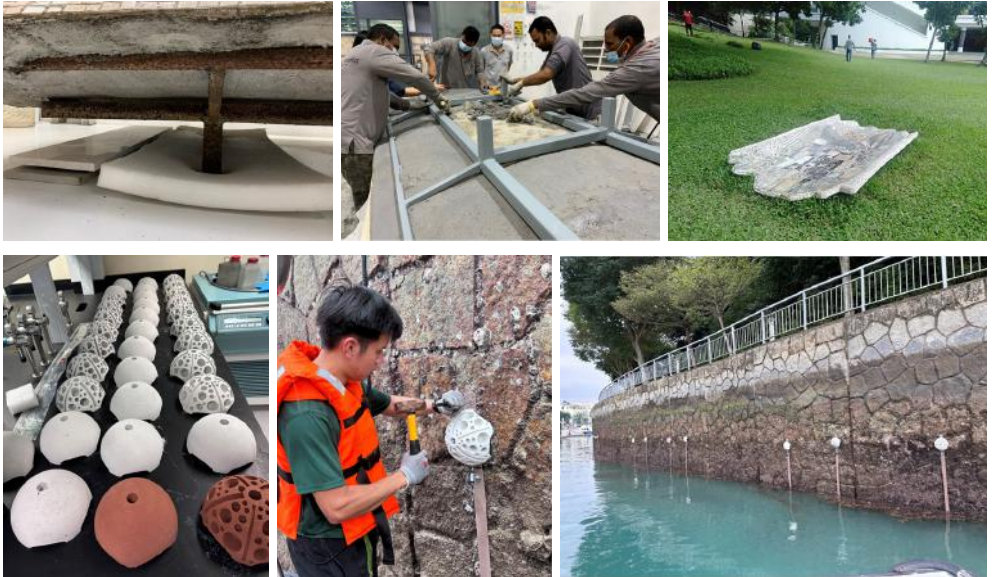


Figure 89. (From left to right) Before repair: corrosion and cracks on existing concrete base of a public artwork Picnic in the Garden by Delia Prvacki. If left untreated in the long run, corrosion will be destructive for the artwork.

Figure 90. UrbaX binder applied to repair and protect the cracked base. UrbaX binder stabilize the existing concrete and mitigate against heat, moisture and acid infiltration.

Figure 91. After repair, the public artwork Picnic in the Garden is installed at the NUS UTown in April 2023. A collaboration with artist and multiple stakeholders in National University of Singapore (NUS).

Figure 92. UrbaX collaborative partnership with The Experimental Marine Ecology Lab, National University of Singapore. Supported by Marina at Keppel Bay. UrbaX Class C binder is high strength, flexible and has smooth surface finish; ideal for precast tiles, panels and bricks. The binder absorbs CO₂ in addition to cutting current CO₂ emissions.

Figure 93. A research study conducted by Assoc Prof Peter Todd and student Sun Yan Le on the viability of UrbaX green binder vs. Portland cement; design of the RockUrchin tiles; and how the tiles are utilized by the marine flora and fauna at different tidal heights.

Figure 94. The cast RockUrchin tiles are installed at Marina at Keppel Bay on 31 October 2023. UrbaX binders are more sustainable and environmentally friendly choice for projects in the built environment.

Day 2

Round-table





Round-table 2

What could happen if buildings are no longer demolished?

Francois Decoster (FR)

Punto Wijayanto (IND)

Calvin Chua (SG)

Lim Ching Tung (SG)

Moderated by Yann Follain, WY-TO (SG/FR)

On the second day of the conference, a group of experts came together to discuss 'What could happen if buildings are no longer demolished?'. Moderated by Yann Follain, 6 framing questions were posed to the speakers: Francois Decoster (France), Punto Wijayanto (Indonesia), Calvin Chua (Singapore) and Ching Tung Lim (Singapore). Over 90 minutes, the speakers delved into what is hindering the adaptive reuse of buildings today, such as the influence of the real estate market and our consumerist approach to architecture, to what could potentially be done, charting a hope towards innovative models of collective ownership and management grounded in strong communities.

Disclaimer: The text below seeks to capture the dynamic roundtable discussion between the speakers on stage from a range of esteemed backgrounds, experiences and expertise. In the spirit of the conversation, points often build on or contradict one another, offering a rich diversity of perspectives on the topic of preservation. Main points from the speakers were selected that best captured the lively discussion. The views stated are the speakers' own, and do not represent the views of the co-presenters.



1. In the context that buildings are supposed to last forever, what are the hindrance for buildings to be adapted and re-used if they are no longer demolished?

FD: In Lyon, France, buildings that were being built in the 80s and 90s are now being demolished as they are much harder to repurpose. In contrast, buildings in the 70s and before have much more simple structures and neutral construction systems, that make them much easier to repurpose. Buildings with a strong core and good foundations can be repurposed many times by redoing the facades and the layout of the plans. Buildings should thus be adaptive and simple in their structure.

CC: It boils down to two things: the culture and ownership, including real estate. For example, one building in Singapore was being considered for adaptive reuse, but eventually the conclusion was that it could not be done because the ceiling height was too low to be considered a grade A office space. Thus, from a real estate angle, readaptation did not make financial sense.

PW: There needs to be the identification of the cultural significance, and to find the balance between the preservation of cultural value and finding a contemporary use of old buildings. If we wish to protect certain buildings, we need to justify it by identifying what kind of value they hold.

2. Where new is implied to be better and tied to societal progress, does that mean that non-demolition implies stagnation and holds us back to develop further?

LCT: In the past, there were new innovations such as Pandan Valley Condominium and Pearl Bank Apartments in the search for a new economic model of shared private housing for the upper middle class. However, in today's context, the market has a stronger control over design. We thus have to demonstrate that old buildings are still valuable and highly sought after in the market to allow non-demolition to take place.

CC: It is different for the Gen-Z generation, where they have a certain kind of nostalgia. They can feel nostalgic for a place they have not been to previously, such as Peace Centre, and have sense of attachment to these places. The idea of newness as progress is thus cultural. Springing from this, there are also movements such as Newtro (New + Retro), where things are designed to look old.

FD: It is not stagnation at all if we stop demolishing. We are creating new-new. A building can be made brand new through the intangible, by changing the way people use it and what you do in it. This includes placemaking for the community. Moreover, In terms of whether to demolish a building or not, we should not be ideological. Instead, we should consider a lifecycle assessment of the building, including the materials used, effort to demolish the previous building and maintenance costs over the lifespan over 30 to 50 years. In some cases, demolition and rebuilding could be more sustainable than maintaining a new building. In this, we must make sure that the new building will last a long time.



3. Are there differences in how buildings are valued from one generation to another? Are market forces not listening to what people want or aspire to?

FD: I think the market is very dishonest, where it creates the demand for a product and pretends to represent the majority's demands. For example, in the rise of the second-hand fashion website 'Vinted', it is unclear if it answers a demand for second-hand fashion, or if the product itself encouraged the rise in demand. Elsewhere, political motivations may have shaped the development of more individual residential typologies in France to dissuade collective action. Hence you can read market forces in multiple ways. Instead, we need to focus on what collective values we want to promote for the future.

LCT: To build connections with one another, there needs to be a focus on creating more attractive public spaces, as well as to facilitate participatory design with existing owners, empowering them to change their own environments. In addition, more publicly accessible areas need to be provided, whether in terms of physical or financial access, as well as the access to private spaces. This is especially important as the new generation of today are highly mobile, and thus we need to think of what places can attract people to stay.

CC: We should look at the different ownership models in Singapore today, such as the HDB, private housing, strata ownership. Originally when the strata model first started in 1968-69, it was a way to quickly amass funding for a development project. This has now resulted in the rise of collective sales for condos and strata buildings. Is it possible to recognise this collective process – aside from the selfish want to avoid maintenance fees or to cash-out from collective sales – by shifting the strata model to a more humanistic co-op model? This might require faith in the future generation to shift from a capitalistic mindset to one that is for the common good.

4. Learning from the challenges faced today in adapting and re-using modern ensembles, what kind of mechanisms and systems could be implemented today to ensure the adapted re-use of the current new constructions?

FD: I think new Pearl Bank will not have a long future. The old Pearl Bank was meaningful as it was a trace of the time of when Singapore was so inspiring. Now, the new Pearl Bank is another building and just another condo. It is not meaningful beyond being a real estate product. We need to find new or adapt old economic models, finding a compromise between specialised needs for different uses, such as the required area and floor height of Grade A offices. Buildings can be designed to be more modular to house different programs over time. Alongside this, developers need to accept the higher costs, or different uses of money, to make the building more adaptable or more flexible.

CC: The lack of flexibility of buildings can be solved, instead the management of buildings is a larger structural issue that we need to address. For example, what is being done well in Singapore is the adaptation of SLA-managed buildings into co-living, social spaces etc. over the constant renewal of 3-year leases. The question is: Who then can manage these changing uses?

LCT: While discussing potential mechanisms and systems to put in place, we should allow for the organic movement of people over time, such as the migration of Little Thailand in Golden mile to Aperia and City Gate shopping malls in Singapore, instead of implementing a top-down heavy approach to management.

5. Do you think that the design of Pearl Bank in Singapore was so innovative that it makes it hard to retrofit?

LCT: No, I don't think so as there are a lot of possible options and flexibility in the design. The issue is with the model of collective ownership. When we created private collective housing, we were focusing on the collective use of resources and harnessing the benefits of living together. However, this resulted in the issues of strata titles and collective ownership we can see today, where the only way for any site to regenerate is through collective sale.

LCT: In this, regeneration comes with the inherent displacement of communities. Alternative paths can include working with communities and the market, such as through the re-planning of local neighbourhoods and creating new neighbourhood visions beyond the specific site of intervention, which we are exploring in practice today. In this, we can tap onto new technologies, where financial and physical modelling can communicate the final design directly and quickly to the end users.



Ar. Lim Ching Tung is the General Manager of Archurban Architects & Planners, established in 1974 by Ar. Tan Cheng Siong. Since its inception, the firm has engaged in creating breakthroughs in urban and master planning, architectural and environmental design in both Singapore and China.

In the late 60s, Ar. Tan Cheng Siong created the Pearl Bank Apartments (demolished in 2020 after conservation attempts), the first super high-rise in Singapore that introduced quality living on the ground while living in the air. Later in Pandan Valley Condominium, he pioneered the first condominium housing typology in Singapore where community spaces were created for residents.

6. What will happen to Jakarta once Nusantara is fully operational? What will happen to the public buildings used by civil servants in the city centre? Are there any opportunities to reclaim them, to reclaim public spaces and transform them, discussions on urban regeneration or reassessment of their values? What can we learn from that, where our metropolises are growing very fast?

PW: To state some facts for those who do not know, 35 ministries will move from Jakarta to Nusantara, including the Presidential Palace. With this, 16000 people will have to move there, leaving behind many public buildings in the civic centre of Jakarta.

PW: One discussion is if Jakarta should be transformed into a global city like Singapore, Sydney or Beijing, and to understand what are the standards of these global cities.

PW: Currently, there are conversations between the Government of Jakarta (who manages development) and the Ministry of Finance (who owns the state properties) on how to use these buildings. While the Ministry of Finance is concerned with optimising the buildings as a source of funding to develop the new capital city Nusantara, there is the potential to use these strategically located properties for regeneration towards safeguarding Jakarta's heritage and future development.





Day 2

Conclusion

Dr. Chang Jiat-Hwee, DOCOMOMO Singapore

Everyday Modernism



"And in a city like Singapore, where the built environment is constantly undergoing transformation due to a combination of real estate forces and socio-economic ideology, both heroic and ordinary modernism are also bound together by their precarity to perceive obsolescence and to demolition through redevelopment."



About the talk

On Day 2, Dr Chang Jiat-Hwee gave a rousing closing address on modernist architecture in Singapore and a call to action to conserve People's Park Complex. Below are key quotes from the talk, selected by WY-TO.

"modernism is Singapore's vernacular"

So our generation lives in modernist tower and slab blocks. We play as children in modern playgrounds, studied in modern primary and secondary school based on standardized design by the Public Work Department then...And even when we engage in old practices like praying, we did so in new modern spaces like Darul Aman Mosque and the Church of St. Ignatius. And when we die, we, whatever remains of us are most likely to be stored in high-density modern columbarium as well. So our cradle-to-grave story would likely unfold in a kind of modernist environment.

"the stories we tell matter"

So for us, we would like to tell stories that fully capture the full spectrum of this modernist built environment. And to do that, we need to find the right narrative. Why is the right narrative important? Because I think the stories we tell matter. If the 1984 book 'Pastel Portrait' by Gretchen Liu did not have stories about shophouses that cast them in a new light, we might not have conserved these shophouses. They might not have changed from their original status as slums to be demolished, to heritage to be conserved. So I think stories change the way we understand things and our surroundings. Of course, stories in and of themselves are not enough, so Pastel Portrait was able to shift public opinion and policy-making with regard to shophouses, in part due to the re-envisioning of the dilapidated shophouses at Boat Quay as a vibrant commercial and cultural district called Bu Ye Tian in a project led by Dr Goh Poh Seng and William Lim Associates.



Figure 95. Dr Chang Jiat-Hwee presenting (top)

Figure 96. People's Park in the 1970s (opposite).
Credit: 1973-74 HDB Annual Report

“we need to decolonise our architectural historiography”

To write a post-colonial architectural history - one that truly supersedes colonial precept - we need to write this based on our own terms so that we are able to recognize the value of modernist architecture that we have created, based on our own distinctive processes of modernization and conditions of modernity.

Architecture vs. architecture



The word 'everyday' appears straightforward and self-evident, but its use in the field of architecture has always been part of what architecture historians often describe as a 'dichotomous and hierarchical thinking about the landscape'. Everyday architecture

Figure 97. 'Ordinary' Park Road Development by Tan Wee Lee, Peter B.K. Soo, Seet Chay Tuan, Housing and Development Board in 1968. Credit: WY-TO (left)

Figure 98. The 'heroic' Subordinate Courts by Kumpulan Akitek and Public Works Department opened 1975. Credit: Chen Si Yuan (bottom)



has been seen in opposition to Architecture with a capital A. It refers to the non-pedigree vernacular structures by... anonymous builders in contrast to the formal architectural structure by professional architects. ... Such hierarchical dichotomy also exists in the discussion of Singapore's modernist built environment.

But this kind of dichotomous and hierarchical thinking of colonialism itself really does not hold up the scrutiny because the boundary between the two: between architects working in private practice and those in state agency is not rigid and impermeable.



Figure 99. Unity house (later renamed as The Enterprise) by Tay Joo Teck. Courtesy of Horst Kiechle

Understanding modernism and modernity

So to capture everyday modernism that includes both the heroic and the ordinary, we emphasise two kinds of approaches. The first is the connection between space and society by expanding our understanding of modernism... We take a kind of inclusive view of modernism to talk about art deco, international style, brutalism and even to some extent postmodernism. But we are not just interested in aesthetic. We are also fascinated by the techniques involved and the underlying rationality... And we also think about modernism as being closely associated with a particular mode of development known as Tabula Rasa: development that treats the site as an empty slate, as a clean slate... Such tabula rasa developments were often deployed by states to accelerate modernization processes based on the belief that new architecture and urban spaces could create novel social experiences and transform society. Through shaping social experiences and transforming society, modernism also helped to construct certain social-cultural conditions that we call modernity.



Figure 101. Musicians playing at People's Park Square in 2024. Credit: WY-TO (top)

Figure 102. Exterior of People's Park Complex, estimated 1970s-1990s. Courtesy of Darren Soh (opposite top)

Figure 103. Getai held at People's Park Square in 2023. Credit: WY-TO (opposite bottom)

Calling for Decolonisation and Decarbonisation

The generational challenge for us is the climate emergency. So I think besides decolonising the history, the other thing that we really do that is related to de- is decarbonisation... We shouldn't see the old as passé, as irrelevant. We should think about how the old could be reconfigured, could be regenerated in order to conserve it...

So the conservation of Golden Mile Complex is a wonderful start. ... the Golden Mile Complex is at the northern part of this urban redevelopment district (N1) [while]... People's Park Complex is S1. Both are equally important. You cannot keep the head without the tail. People's Park Complex is part of a larger urban ensemble... next to the People's Park Square, an incredibly nice square that is still very vibrant today... And it's not just formally significant, it's also a social space of collective memory... of a certain generation.

There are degrees and gradations of going about conserving, retrofitting modernist buildings. And we should explore this whole spectrum of options rather than dismissing it... [With] the wonderful Pritzker Prize awarded to Lacaton and Vassal [recognizing] a firm that is synonymous with refurbishment... shows that architectural value is also changing. So the question is not so much whether this can be done, but whether has values in Singapore changed? ... are we there yet when it comes to architectural conservation? So I think we should really act now:

**"There is no other option,
gazette People's Park Complex
for conservation!"**



About our speakers and moderators





Keynote Speakers

Day 1



**Phillipe Prost,
AAPP**

Philippe Prost is a French architect and urban planner, professor at the Paris-Belleville School of Architecture. Winner of the Grand Prix national d'architecture 2022. He is a member of the Academie d'Architecture and was awarded the title of Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres. After dedicating ten years to research, Philippe Prost was called for help in 1991 on a 15-year long adventure at the citadel of Belle-Ile-en-Mer. In 2004, he was awarded an Equerre d'Argent special mention for a housing project in Paris. He has also written numerous articles and books on military architecture. His book "Vauban, le style de l'intelligence. Une oeuvre source pour l'architecture contemporaine" has been awarded the Architecture Book Prize in 2008. His International Memorial of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette was inaugurated on November 11th 2014 by the French President Hollande to commemorate the First World War Centenary. This project has been internationally acclaimed and won several important design awards, including the RIBA International Award for Excellence. His project for the Monnaie de Paris – a place mixing industrial, commercial and museum activities in the very heart of Paris - finally opened to the public. He is currently working on the Port Vauban project in Antibes and the Port Gallice in Juan-les-Pins.

Day 2



Francois Decoster,
l'AUC

François Decoster (1966) is a french architect and urbanist, cofounder of the architecture and urbanism office l'AUC.

l'AUC was awarded the Grand Prix de l'Urbanisme by the french Ministry of Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion in charge of urbanism, housing, construction and city politics in 2021, and the Patrick Abercrombie Prize by the UIA (International Union of Architects) which internationally recognises exemplary works of urban and regional planning and design in 2023.

François Decoster teaches urbanism and urban design at the National University of Singapore, College of Design and Engineering, Department of Architecture, Master of Urban Design, since 2003. He regularly participates and lectures in schools, institutions, talks, interviews and conferences related to planning, urban design and urbanism.

He is involved in projects and research dealing with the issues of metropolisation, urban and architectural transformation and regeneration, environment and public space.

Speakers

Panel 1: A New Lease of Life!



Elaine Tan,
Centre for Liveable
Cities Singapore

Elaine Tan is the Director of Research at the Centre for Liveable Cities, Ministry of National Development, Singapore where she oversees research in the areas of climate change, resilience, ageing and health. Prior to this, Elaine was Director of Strategic Research at the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), where she spearheaded URA's R&D efforts and directed key research programmes through Singapore's Land and Liveability National Innovation Challenge, under the auspices of the Research, Innovation and Enterprise Council. Elaine was also formerly the Director of Architecture & Urban Design Excellence at the URA, working closely with the industry to advance the state of architecture and urban design in Singapore through new initiatives and programmes. Elaine also established the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize in 2010, in tribute to Singapore's first Prime Minister, and the President's Design Award to recognise the best of Singapore's architecture and design.

Elaine studied both Architecture and Urban Design at the National University of Singapore and holds both a Masters in Urban Design and a Masters in Public Administration from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.



Christopher Wong,
HK URA

Christopher Wong is a General Manager in the Planning & Design Division (PDD) of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) with nearly 25 years of experience in architectural, construction and development field. He is now heading a team of more than 15 people with various skills under the Project Design Stream in the URA, and currently taking the role as the secretary of a Planning, Design and Conservation Committee under the Board of the URA. In his role he is vastly involved in collaboration with colleagues specialized in land acquisition, property development and project works sections, and handling communication with local stakeholders including district councils, community groups, Legislative Council and Government Bureau.

Speakers

Panel 2: Meanings of a 'Home'



**Dr Teo Ho Pin,
Tiong Seng
Holdings Limited,
former Mayor of
North West District
CDC and Member
of Parliament**

Dr Teo Ho Pin has over 30 years of experience in Township Management in Singapore, and Community development in Singapore. Dr Teo was the Mayor of the North West District of Singapore (2001 to 2020), and the Member of Parliament for the Bukit Panjang Constituency (1996 to 2020). He was a legislator for 23 years since 1996 and was the Chairman for Government Parliamentary Committees for National Development, Environment & Water resources, Home affairs and Law. He was also Co-ordinating Chairman for 15 PAP Town Councils responsible for the management of 15 towns in Singapore.

At present, he is the Chairman of Tiong Seng holdings limited, and holds Independent Directorship positions in several Singapore Stock Exchange Public listed firms. He is also a Senior Advisor to Surbana Technologies Private Limited. Dr Teo is the Patron of the Singapore International Facility Management Association, and Adviser of the Singapore Institute of Building. He is also an Adjunct Professor of the National University of Singapore and Singapore University of Social Sciences.



Daniel Lim,
ThinkCity Malaysia

Daniel leads the placemaking practice in Think City. He has spent more than a decade pioneering projects to activate spaces through placemaking in Penang, Johor Bahru and Kuala Lumpur. Aside from placemaking, he advocates for social inclusion and community participation in culture-based urban regeneration efforts.

As an associate member of Malaysia Institute of Planners, Daniel is part of the founding committee members of Placemaking Malaysia.

He has recently been nominated on the 2023 list of 100 Changemakers under Wiki Impact.

Speakers

Panel 3: Challenges of our Current buildings



Punto Wijayanto,
University Triksakti

Punto Wijayanto is a lecturer in the Department of Architecture at Trisakti University in Jakarta. He obtained his postgraduate degree in urban and regional planning from the Department of Architecture and Planning, Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Yogyakarta. Throughout his involvement in the heritage conservation field, he has participated in various research projects, training programs, and community service initiatives in various locations across Indonesia.

His research topics include historic cities, conservation management, Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approaches, and Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) studies. One of his published articles is "Community involvement in heritage conservation: The case of Kotagede, Indonesia" in the book 'Handbook on Historic Urban Landscapes in the Asia-Pacific.'

He has been an organizer and speaker at various workshops, such as the Heritage Impact Assessment organized by UNESCO Jakarta and the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (PUPR) in 2021. He works as a consultant in heritage planning and conservation.



**Wong Chung Wan,
MAEK Consulting**

Mr. Wong is the Director of MAEK Consulting Pte Ltd, a company that provides Materials Consultancy and Building Diagnostic works for both new and heritage buildings and structures. Mr. Wong is an Expert Member of the International Scientific Committee on the Analysis and Restoration of Structures of Architectural Heritage (ISCARSAH) and a Recognized Professional of the Association of Preservation Technology International.

Over 30 years of experience, Mr. Wong has undertaken major conservation projects around the region which include the Former Supreme Court and City Hall, Victoria Theatre and Victoria Concert Hall, CHIJMES, St. James Power Station, Raffles Hotel, Tanjong Pagar Railway Station, 5 museums in Singapore, Sarawak Museum and the Kuala Lumpur Parliament Building in Malaysia and the Myanmar Railway Building.

He has delivered key-note presentations at International Conferences organized by the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for Asia Pacific (WHITRAP) in China in 2013 and 2014 and the International Conference on Heritage and Cultural Conservation (InHERIT2018) in Sarawak, Malaysia. Mr. Wong also sits on a number of national committees in drafting Singapore Standards for Architectural Finishes and Façade Inspection.

Speakers

Panel 4: Innovations to future-proof everyday architecture



Prof Er Lau Joo Ming, NTU School of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE)

Professor Er Lau Joo Ming is the Senior Advisor/Consultant of MOH Holdings Pte Ltd (MOHH), Singapore. He provides advice to the Healthcare Infrastructure Projects Division (HIPD) to drive planning, development, and strategic research plans for the Ministry of Health's healthcare infrastructure projects. He mentors and guides the MOHH's young professionals to develop robust and resilient systems in managing the projects, building of core functional and technical competencies. He chairs the infrastructure and facilities management of National Health Group and an active member of Singhealth Group Property Committee. He kept abreast with Estate and Town infra management as Adviser to East Coast Town Council.

He was the Senior Advisor to the Housing & Development Board (HDB) from 2012 to 2015, Managing Director of HDB and set up Building Research Institute (HDB BRI) from 2009 to 2012. HDB BRI is the leading research arm of HDB and envisions being the global leader in housing research, innovations, and solutions for a sustainable living environment. He was the Chief Structural Engineer of HDB. During his service in HDB, some famous milestones under his leadership were the development of prefabrication technology and precast construction, transformation of HDB's quality, safety, productivity and construction technology, the building of 1 million HDB apartments, the 50th storey High-rise residential buildings Pinnacle @ Duxton, Punggol Eco-town and 3.3km Punggol Waterway.



Leading green building solutions using geomaterials and nanotechnologies. Board level industrial executive, partner and venture builder with 3 decades of leadership experience in large industrial operations, waste management, sustainability-driven transformation, and bringing industrial innovations to market.

**Dr Jerome
Lombardi,
NUS Graphene
Research**

Closing Speakers

Day 1



Dr Johannes Widodo, National University of Singapore

Dr Johannes WIDODO is the director of Graduate Programs in Architectural Conservation and Tun Tan Cheng Lock Centre for Asian Architectural and Urban Heritage (in Melaka) of the National University of Singapore. He is the founder and executive director of iNTA (International Network of Tropical Architecture), the founder of mAAN (modern Asian Architecture Network), an Executive Committee member of the Asian Academy for Heritage Management, a jury member for the UNESCO Asia Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation, member of ICOMOS International Scientific Committee, a founding member and director of ICOMOS National Committee of Singapore and Indonesia, a founding member of DoCoMoMo Macau and Singapore, served as an advisory board member of the Preservation of Sites and Monuments of the National Heritage Board of Singapore (2013-2019). He is an Associate Member of the Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA), a board member of SEACHA (South-East Asian Cultural Heritage Alliance), and a member of TCHS (The Circle of Human Sustainability (Singapore)).

Day 2



Dr Chang
Jiat Hwee,
DOCOMOMO
Singapore

Jiat-Hwee Chang is Associate Professor of Architecture and Research Leader of the STS (Science, Technology and Society) Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. He is an interdisciplinary researcher working at the intersections of architecture, environment and STS. He is the author of *A Genealogy of Tropical Architecture: Colonial Networks, Nature and Technoscience* (2016), which is awarded an International Planning History Society Book Prize 2018 and shortlisted for the European Association for Southeast Asian Studies Humanities Book Prize 2017. He is currently working on a book manuscript on the socio-cultural histories and techno-politics of air-conditioning and climate change in urban Asia.

Jiat-Hwee's latest book (with Justin Zhuang and Darren Soh) *Everyday Modernism: Architecture and Society in Singapore* follows his other research trajectory on modernism in Asia. The book, which is shortlisted for Society of Architectural Historians Great Britain's Colvin Prize, builds on his earlier co-edited volumes *Non West Modernist Past* (2011) and *Southeast Asia's Modern Architecture* (2018). Informed by his work with the NGO Singapore Chapter of Docomomo International, the book is an attempt to expand our understanding of modernism and modernist heritage through its focus on the social histories of the ordinary buildings, infrastructures, and landscapes in Singapore.

Moderators

Panel 1



**Dr Eunice Seng,
DOCOMOMO
Hong Kong**

Eunice Seng, PhD, Ir-Arch, is an Associate Professor and Director of the PhD Program in Architecture at The University of Hong Kong.

She is the founding principal of the architecture and research practice SKEW Collaborative and a founding member of Docomomo Hong Kong.

Her work explores interdisciplinary intersections, transnational connections, and agency in architecture, housing, gender, labor, and public space.

Dr Seng is the author of *Resistant City: Histories, Maps, and the Architecture of Development* (2020) and editor of themed issues of the *Journal of Architecture*, *Architecture Theory Review*, and *Ardeth*.

She is writing a book on the contingent history of private housing in Hong Kong and researching women and architectural work in Asia.

Panel 3



**Calvin Chua,
Spatial Anatomy**

Calvin Chua practices at the intersection of design, planning and advocacy. He runs Spatial Anatomy, a research-oriented design practice with an interest in urban adaptation and transformation. In parallel, Calvin teaches at SUTD and was most recently a Visiting Professor at the Korea National University of Arts.

Complementing his practice, Calvin engages the wider design community through writing for international magazines and exhibiting at various international biennales, including Seoul and Venice. Recognised for his distinct approach to design practice, Calvin was an Asia 21 Next Generation Fellow in 2022 and a finalist for the Lisbon Triennale Debut Award 2022. A registered architect in the UK, Calvin graduated from the Architectural Association School of Architecture.

Moderators

Keynote Speakers, Panel 2 & 4



**Kelvin Ang,
Urban
Redevelopment
Authority
Singapore**

Kelvin has over two decades of experience in architecture and conservation at the URA (Singapore's national planning, land use and building conservation authority).

He obtained his Graduate Diploma (Architecture) and MSc. in Sustainable Heritage, both at the Bartlett School, University College London.

Kelvin has led a multi-disciplinary team to deliver several key conservation projects including the legal protection of over 700 buildings and the showcase restoration of the 19th century 'National University of Singapore - Baba House' at 157 Neil Road. His portfolio includes public education and partnership programmes, industry development, regulatory and enforcement work.

His team is currently piloting a people-public partnership approach to integrating the conservation of tangible and intangible heritage for one of Singapore's key historic neighbourhoods – Kampong Gelam.

Kelvin is also serving in his neighbourhood (the heritage district of Tiong Bahru) as a grassroots volunteer and is on the Building Committee of the NUS Baba House and the Management Committee of the NUS ArcLab (a heritage building dedicated to the training of conservation professionals) He is presently a member of the Board of Trustees for the Commonwealth Heritage Forum.

Round-Table Day 1 & Day 2



**Yann Follain,
WY-TO Group**

Yann Follain is the Founder, Managing Director and Head of Design of WY-TO Group. In 2024, he was recognised by Le French Design as one of the Top 100 Designers and in 2016, one of Europe's 40 Under 40 emerging young designers by the European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies and the Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design.

Influenced by his multicultural formative years, Yann embraced a research-driven and holistic built environment approach to grow WY-TO Singapore. His established expertise in curating experiential journeys further value-added to the list of design services that enable WY-TO Singapore to win numerous awards that include, the first Southeast Asia country to be recognised by C40 Reinventing Cities for the former Bukit Timah Fire Station in 2021.

A frequent speaker regionally on Planet-People integrative sustainability, Yann is recognised for his commitment to systemic design which draws on contextual heritage and culture in scaling urban planning, community programming, and cultural curation. In 2022, together with his Team, he embarked on a holistic research study that quantifies well-being strategies through the lens of the built environment as a recipient of the Good Design Research initiative by the DesignSingapore Council.

Day 1

27th November 2023

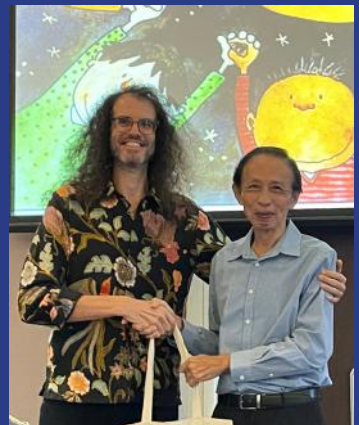




Day 2

28th November 2023









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We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who made the symposium a great success in a step towards the cause. Our heartfelt appreciation goes to the distinguished speakers from Singapore and especially those joining us from France, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Malaysia.



The recent developments in Singapore, France and elsewhere - to prolong the useful life of modern-era, post-war buildings - refurbishment, creative adaptations and even conservation of a few, point towards a new direction on how we can think about development in a world where sustainability is a common goal.

