



**National
Heritage
Board**



**PRESERVATION
OF MONUMENTS
BOARD**

PRESS RELEASE

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SIX NEW NATIONAL MONUMENTS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BOOK CONTRIBUTE TO PRESERVING SINGAPORE'S HERITAGE

11 NOVEMBER 2009 – The National Heritage Board (NHB) is pleased to announce six buildings which will be preserved as National Monuments. They are: Keng Teck Whay; Command House; Former Raffles College; Church of St Teresa; Former St James Power Station and Bowyer Block at the Singapore General Hospital. This brings the current number of Singapore's National Monuments to 61.

The six new National Monuments were selected for their social-historical significance, their importance to the community, as well as their architectural merit. These buildings represent a good mix of institutional, civic and religious buildings, each with its own story to tell. Together, they contribute to the collective Singapore story. In preserving these six buildings as National Monuments, NHB hopes to be able to leave a lasting legacy for future generations. Information on these six buildings can be found in **Annex A**, with photographs of each building in **Annex B**.

Mr Michael Koh, Chief Executive Officer of the NHB said: "These sentinels of the past speak volumes of our history and heritage. According them the status of National Monuments will ensure that the buildings and the contributions of the people behind them will remain in the consciousness of Singaporeans for generations to come."

This commitment to preserve Singapore's built heritage can also be seen in a new photography book titled *Resonance Songs of our Forefathers* by the Preservation of Monuments Board (PMB). Featuring 24 of Singapore's 55 National Monuments, the book introduces both iconic and lesser known monuments to the public through the artistic expressions of a team of photographers. It is the culmination of two years of work by avid photographer Kwek Leng Joo, Managing Director of City Developments Limited, and his team of photographers: Chow Chee Yong, Chris Yap, Darren Soh, Huang Fan, Jonathan Yeap and Raymond Phang.

Said Mr Kwek Leng Joo: "As a Singaporean, I am proud of our monuments which stand in glory for the nation's heritage and embody the dreams and fond memories of many. Being in the business of property development, buildings are naturally close to my heart. I gladly accepted PMB's invitation as it would offer a rare opportunity for me to personally re-acquaint myself with the many monuments that have been around since my childhood. The team of photographers shared a common goal and that is to present in print a combination of history and art that breaks away from convention." A biography of all the photographers can be found in **Annex C**.

Resonance highlights buildings that have not only stood the test of time, but also continue to be symbols of pioneers and leaders who made indelible marks on Singapore's development and history. Special emphasis is placed on the architectural details of these buildings, with aesthetically unique photographs offering readers a visual treat through a variety of distinctive photographic styles. The book will be launched on 11 November 2009 at the National Museum of Singapore by RAdm (NS) Lui Tuck Yew, Acting Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts.

The combined launch of the six new National Monuments and *Resonance* is timed with the PMB's ongoing efforts to increase public engagement and appreciation of Singapore's National Monuments. "We want to keep the monuments alive in the public imagination and for people to take the time to value not just the physical structures but also the stories behind these monumental treasures," said Ms Jean Wee, Director of PMB.

Resonance Songs of our Forefathers will be out in all major book stores at a recommended retail price of S\$80.00 (excluding GST).

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About the National Heritage Board

The National Heritage Board (NHB) champions the development and promotion of a vibrant cultural and heritage sector in Singapore. It makes heritage enriching, relevant and accessible to all through staging innovative programmes and forging collaborative partnerships with both private and people sector counterparts. NHB leverages on state-of-the-art technology and refreshing new approaches to make heritage more dynamic, alive and exciting for different audiences. It also manages both national and public museums, the National Archives of Singapore, and the Heritage Conservation Centre. NHB was formed on 1 August 1993 as a statutory board under the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA).

About the Preservation of Monuments Board

The Preservation of Monuments Board was formed in 1971 following the Preservation of Monuments Act enacted on 29 January 1971. It merged with the National Heritage Board on 1 July 2009. To date, 55 historical buildings have been gazetted as national monuments by the Preservation of Monuments Board. Of these, 26 of them are religious buildings, 9 are privately-owned buildings and 20 are civic/institutional buildings. All gazetted monuments are installed with plaques highlighting their historical significance. Preservation guidelines are also drawn up for each monument to ensure that the preservation and restoration works on a gazetted national monument are undertaken in a proper and systematic manner.

About the six new National Monuments:

Keng Teck Whay

Built between 1847 and 1875 by 36 members of Hokkien Chinese heritage, Keng Teck Whay was constructed using traditional Chinese building crafts and materials. It is of *min-nan* architectural style, which is from the Southern Part of Fujian Province China. The beauty of the building can be seen in the following feature: the Pavilion, being a combination of octagonal upper floor resting on a square plan with perimeter intermediate space, is unique in Singapore.

This building is a living testament to the founding members' efforts and contributions and membership is presently limited to the descendents of the founding members. Keng Teck Whay is an important component of the architectural ensemble of Thian Hock Keng. Chung Wen Pagoda, Thian Hock Keng and Keng Teck Whay are inseparable. Collectively, they contribute to the assembly of traditional Chinese buildings on Telok Ayer Street.

Keng Teck Whay is a mutual self-help association and the building is used for ancestral worship.

Former Command House at 17 Kheam Hock Road

Formerly known as 'Flagstaff House', this colonial period house was designed by architect Frank Brewer, known for his work on several other colonial style buildings in Singapore. Built in the 1930s, this house had several notable residents and was an important witness to Singapore's past. Command House served as the official residence of sixteen successive General Officer Commanding (GOC) Malaya and Singapore between 1938 and 1971. Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, the Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia Command, resided there in 1946.

Following the British military's withdrawal from Singapore, the house became the official residence of the Speaker of Singapore Parliament, Dr. Yeoh Ghim Seng who lived there until 1989. It later served as a venue for State Functions by former Singapore President Ong Teng Cheong (1993-1998). The House also has beautiful architectural features. It was built as a colonial period house, incorporating late Arts and Crafts movement features, and is designed for tropical living: it has a large overhanging roof, the rooms are well ventilated by large doors, windows and vents, and the verandas provide plenty of shelter. An interesting feature of the bungalow is that the side wings are angled forward as if to embrace and welcome visitors.

In 2007, it became UBS Wealth Management Campus 'Command House'.

Former Raffles College

Officially opened on 22 July 1929 by Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor, Straits Settlements, Raffles College was dedicated to "the promotion of arts, science and learning and the provision of higher education for students without distinction of sex, race, nationality or religion." It was the first institution on higher learning available in Malaya. The campus was designed by Cyril A. Farey and Graham D. Dawbarn of London, who were the winners of a British Empire-wide architectural competition in

1922. It was merged in 1949 with the King Edward VII School of Medicine to form the University of Malaya, the precursor to the National University of Singapore.

The buildings to be preserved are Oei Tiong Ham Building, CJ Koh Law Library, Manasseh Meyer Building, Federal Building, Eu Tong Sen Building and Li Ka Shing Building, together with the Upper and Lower Quadrangle which serves as green space between the buildings. These buildings have witnessed the chronicle of the evolution of the university campus over the years.

These buildings at the NUS Bukit Timah Campus currently house the Law Faculty, the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and four Research Institutes.

Church of St Teresa

Officially opened on 7th April 1929, the Church of St Teresa is the first rural church in Singapore. Located on Bukit Purmei, which means “beautiful” or “fair hill”, the church boasts of a dome and exhibits rare and distinctive architectural design and approach to its massing and setting on hill and control of perspective. It was originally built to serve the Hokkien-dialect Chinese Catholics in the Kampong Bahru area including the port workers; it catered to the Catholics in the territorial boundary of Havelock Road, Cantonment Road, Trafalgar Street, Outram Road, Alexander Road and Pasir Panjang.

As part of its mission, the Church initiated the setting up of Catholic Schools in Singapore, such as the Carmelite Convent, St. Teresa’s High School and Catholic High School. The architecture is modeled after the Romano-Byzantine design of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Monmartre, Paris. It has excellent exterior and interior composition of detailing, ornamentation and craftsmanship.

Former St James Power Station

Prior to becoming a one-stop nightlife destination, the St. James Power Station was Singapore’s first municipal operated power station. Built in 1926, its exterior stood out with its distinctive red brick walls. When it opened, it signified the transfer of electric generator technology to the Municipal. To expand its capacity, the station was closed while gas turbine generators were added. It was officially re-opened by Minister of Finance Dr Goh Keng Swee in 1960 and generated electricity until the 1970s.

The building is the only historical industrial building in Singapore with triple level arch shaped windows. It has voluminous space in the interior which was initially designed to house the electricity generators (machineries). After the power station was decommissioned in the 1970s, the machineries were removed. The space was converted for use for the club when the Power Station underwent restoration and conversion for adaptive re-use in 2005.

Bowyer Block at the Singapore General Hospital

Established in 1821, the Singapore General Hospital is Singapore’s oldest hospital. Bowyer Block forms an important episode in the medical history of Singapore. The original Bowyer Block was built in pavilion style with a portico and a clock tower by architect, Major P. H. Keys.

When the hospital opened at its current location on 29 March 1926, there were 800 beds and three blocks known as the Upper, Middle and Lower Blocks. Bowyer Block is the only surviving building of the original 1926 buildings. It was renamed after Dr John Herbert Bowyer, the former Chief Medical Officer who died during the war. Today the Bowyer Block has been readapted for use as the SGH Museum.

1. Keng Teck Whay



Aerial view of Keng Teck Whay Pavilion

2. Former Command House



3. Former Raffles College



Eu Tong Sen Hall



Federal Block



Library Block



Mannaseh Meyer Hall



Oei Tiong Ham Block



Old Arts Block

4. Church of St. Teresa



5. Former St. James Power Station



6. Bowyer Block



Clock Tower and part of the walkway comprising the Bowyer Block

PHOTOGRAPHER'S BIOGRAPHIES

Kwek Leng Joo (Team Leader, Photography) 郭令裕

A well-respected figure in the business community, Mr Kwek Leng Joo is the Managing Director of City Developments Limited (CDL) and Executive Director of Hong Leong Group Singapore. Beyond CDL, Mr Kwek contributes actively to the civic community through numerous public appointments in promoting arts and culture, education, youth development and heritage conservation, etc.

Mr Kwek is also a familiar name in the photography community. An avid photographer, he believes in the power of photography as a platform to advocate meaningful causes. To date, his works have raised over a million dollars in aid of various causes including the President's Challenge, Dover Park Hospice, Singapore Environment Council and Nature Society (Singapore).

Through his multiple appointments in the local photographic community, including being the Honorary Chairman of The Photographic Society of Singapore, Honorary Adviser of the Singapore Colour Photographic Society, Patron of the NYAA Young Photographers Network and Honorary Patron of the Photo-Art Association of Singapore, Mr Kwek hopes to elevate the profile of photography as a mainstream fine art form and forge a closer alliance within the community. In the hope to nurture young talents, Mr Kwek initiated the "Singapore Young Photographer Award", a biennial nationwide competition that is into its third run.

Mr Kwek's versatility in photographic subjects, approach and style is the result of his tireless experimentation driven by a desire to create visuals that mirror his thoughts and perspectives. In 2005, his first photo art book, *Heart Voyage*, was published. The second book, *Heart Voyage 2*, followed in 2008. He has also held several exhibitions including *Timeless Jiangnan* in 2002, *The Lost Horizon* in 2004 *The Secret Garden* in 2006 and *Romancing Nature* in 2008.

As a veteran in the property sector, buildings are close to Mr Kwek's heart. As a Singaporean, he is proud of our monuments which represent a country where multi-racial and multi-cultural ties are embraced. The collaboration with the Preservation of Monuments Board has given Mr Kwek the opportunity to be re-acquainted with our national gems. To Mr Kwek, each monument is unique and stands as an embodiment of the dreams and fond memories of Singaporeans and overseas visitors alike.

In creating this body of works, Mr Kwek set out to deepen his understanding and connection with the monuments. Putting aside prior impressions formed as a visitor, he took time to fully take in the charming ambience of a bygone era, observe the happenings within and around, and ponder over the relationship between the monument and its visitors. To characterize the monument in its distinctive flavour, Mr Kwek adopted different approaches – some were given a contemporary touch while others a dramatic finish to accentuate its glory.

By drawing on the diverse styles and background of 6 other photographers, Mr Kwek hopes to portray the monuments in an unconventional perspective that will offer a visual surprise to readers.

Chow Chee Yong 邹志勇

A full-time lecturer at the Temasek Design School, Chee Yong holds a BFA (Honours) degree in Photography from Western Michigan University, USA, and a MA (Distinction) degree in Photography from Musashino Art University, Tokyo, Japan. He has participated in more than 30 solo and group exhibitions in galleries and museums in Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and the United States. His original prints can be found in various corporate, private and museum collections in Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and the United States. His first publication *30th Feb* features a collection of his Surrealistic Images and was launched in 2008.

Chris Yap 葉威豪

A fine-art, editorial and commercial photographer, Chris is one of the rare breed of extremely technical and yet critical thinking photographers. In the pursuit of creating an image that is top of its class, he explores many different genres of photography to get to know the finer details in great depth. Chris' works are usually deemed to be evocative and yet subtle, as he continually challenges the photographic frontier to expand and explore the diverse possibilities in photography. His commercial works are showcased in genres of fine-art photography, renowned theatrical performances and fashion magazines.

Darren Soh 苏建隆

Born and based in Singapore, Darren has been an independent photographer specialising in travel, architecture and landscape photography since 2001. Frequently travelling around Asia on assignment, Darren nevertheless believes that there is a wealth of photographic opportunities in his home country. In 2004, Darren published his first monograph *While You Were Sleeping* — a collection of nocturnal landscapes of Singapore. His works were featured in the 2006 MICA publication *Canvas* depicting Singapore through the eyes of 14 photographers and produced as a gift to members of the IMF and World Bank. More recently, Darren was named by Photo District News Magazine (USA) as one of its 30 Emerging Photographers to Watch in 2009.

Huang Fan 黄凡

This former news editor from Wuhan, China, has lived in Singapore for eight years and is a Singaporean since 2008. Huang Fan possesses a keen sense of his surroundings and takes joy in capturing rare occurrences that often go unnoticed. While the magnificence of natural landscape has inspired the beginning of his photography journey, Huang Fan's interest has since expanded to street scenes, lifestyles and culture. With a distinctive interplay of colours and lighting, his photos represent a unique expression of art as well as a new perception on the happenings in our lives.

Jonathan Yeap 叶振忠

A full-time photographer with Singapore Press Holdings, Jonathan is most inspired by human subjects. The young lensman often roams the streets in search of

everyday subjects and opportunities to capture the decisive moment of the subject. He was a merit winner of the inaugural Singapore Young Photographer Award 2006 and later went on to represent Singapore in the ASEAN Young Photographers Award in 2007. More recently in 2008, Jonathan held his first solo photo exhibition *1.26°N 103.8°E The Port That Never Sleeps*.

Raymond Phang 彭蕾鸣

A full-time professional photographer, Raymond lives by the motto of “Carpe Diem” and considers it a true blessing to be in an environment where opportunities for artistic expression abound. Capturing historical monuments has renewed the young man’s perspective on heritage. Despite his age and being self-taught, Raymond’s achievements are commendable. His commercial works have impressed a list of renowned corporate brands from banks, fashion to automobiles. He is also a merit winner of the Singapore Young Photographer Award 2008.