

**OPENING REMARKS BY MR HAN KOK JUAN,
DEPUTY SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF LAW,
AT THE OPENING OF MAXWELL MEMORIES,
ON 25 NOVEMBER 2017 AT THE URA CENTRE**

Ms Hwang Yu-Ning, Deputy CEO and Chief Planner, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore

Prof Lucienne Blessing, Co-Director, International Design Centre, Singapore University of Technology and Design

Our pioneers from the Singapore Traffic Police Force

Colleagues from the Ministry of Law

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls

1. I am happy to join all of you today for the opening of Maxwell Memories, a public exhibition showcasing the heritage of 28 Maxwell Road.

Creating our Future

2. If you look across the street, that is 28 Maxwell Road – a classy 161m-long heritage building in the heart of Singapore’s city centre, nestled amongst many modern skyscrapers. It is currently being refurbished for the expansion of the adjacent Maxwell Chambers, the world’s first integrated dispute resolution complex, as part of MinLaw’s plan to boost Singapore’s status as an international dispute resolution centre.

3. 28 Maxwell Road has been recently renamed Maxwell Chambers Suites, to reflect its new function. When completed in 2019, it will house 50 new offices for international dispute resolution institutions, arbitration chambers, law firms and ancillary legal services. There will be exciting F&B options, set around five open-to-sky courtyards. A new 24-hour public thoroughfare through the building will allow better connection between Tanjong Pagar and the Chinatown/Club Street area.

4. Maxwell Chambers Suites will be spectacular. It will put Singapore on the world map, and raise our status as an international dispute resolution centre to the next level. It will allow us to capture new business opportunities, generate good growth for Singapore and create good jobs for Singaporeans.

Remembering our Past

5. Before 28 Maxwell Road became Maxwell Chambers Suites, it was the Red Dot Traffic Building. Many of you will remember it for its fire-red façade. But what most of you may not know, particularly the many children present here today, is that before that, it was for nearly 70 years the Traffic Police Headquarters. The building also once housed Singapore's first Driving Test Centre when driving tests were introduced in 1941, and it was Singapore's only driving test centre until the Queenstown Driving Test Centre opened in 1968.
6. 28 Maxwell Road was constructed in 1928 and designed by Frank Dorrington Ward. Mr Ward was the Government Architect of the Straits Settlements Public Works Department, when Singapore was a British colony. Mr Ward also designed other familiar landmarks such as the former Supreme Court and the former Hill Street Police Station. In 2007, 28 Maxwell Road was gazetted as a conservation building by the Urban Redevelopment Authority.
7. When the Ministry of Law started on the expansion of Maxwell Chambers, our task was clear: to develop a dispute resolution complex that will put Singapore on the world map. But we feel that we also have a duty to Singaporeans, both young and old, to preserve the rich heritage of the building and to honour the memories of pioneer TP officers – to not lose them, but to pass them down to the next generation. The refurbishment of a heritage building is an opportunity for us not just to create our future but also to remember our past, to connect with the public, and to involve the young.
8. This is also why we decided to time the opening of the exhibition with Grandparents' Day celebrations. Some *gong-gong* and *po-po* may feel shy about talking their own past, even when they have rich experiences to impart. We hope this exhibition can provide an opportunity for children and grandchildren to ask, and for our pioneer generation to share.

Connecting with the public, involving the young

9. Maxwell Memories, which we will later open, is the fruit of much labour. There are many people I would like to thank for making this possible.
 - a. First, to our pioneers from the Singapore Traffic Police Force. You built today's Singapore. Thank you for sharing with us your memories, capturing them and passing them on to younger Singaporeans. Special thanks to Mr David Pattiselanno for allowing us to make postcards out of your sketches, so that more Singaporeans can get to know of the work of Traffic Police officers against the backdrop of old Singapore.

- b. Second, to our six SUTD students for your six months of hard work to create this showcase, and to SUTD for the support. I know you have put in many hours. I hope you found working on this project meaningful, connecting with old Singapore and using your talent and craft to pass it on to younger Singaporeans.
 - c. Last but not least, to the Urban Redevelopment Authority for giving us valuable guidance and support for the refurbishment project, and for providing the space and making this exhibition possible. Special thanks to Mdm Fun Siew Leng, Assistant Chief Planner, who has been my personal special adviser for this refurbishment project.
10. Maxwell Memories will run till 31 January 2018. But our efforts to preserve the memories of Maxwell will not end with this exhibition. The Ministry of Law will put up a permanent heritage exhibit along the new 24-hour thoroughfare at the new Maxwell Chambers Suites. Next month, we will start a Design Thinking project to design this permanent heritage exhibit. I hope that this exhibition can help trigger even more Singaporeans to recollect, and to share with us their own Maxwell Memories. They can provide valuable additional inputs and materials for the permanent heritage exhibit when it opens.
11. Thank you very much.

National Archives of Singapore