



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VISIT JALAN BESAR'S HIDDEN GEMS IN ENHANCED COMMUNITY HERITAGE TRAIL

Launch of the enhanced Jalan Besar Community Heritage Trail and Singapore Portraits travelling exhibition to kick off NHB's community engagement masterplan

SINGAPORE, 4 AUGUST 2012 – Cabaret dancers, Singapore's first football stadium, a former school dating from the 1800s, and shophouses from the 1920s – the Jalan Besar area has a long and rich history. The enhanced Jalan Besar Community Heritage Trail by the National Heritage Board, will provide a more comprehensive picture of Jalan Besar, and through it, a more thorough understanding of the Singapore Story. The launch of the trail also heralds the start of NHB's next wave of community engagement.

2 The *Jalan Besar Community Heritage Trail* takes visitors on a journey through the heritage of the district, parallel to the development of Singapore. Jalan Besar, which means "Big Road", was one of the first roads to be built in Singapore. As Singapore's social and urban landscape changed, so did Jalan Besar's. After World War I, it saw a transformation as swampland and vegetable farms in the area gave way to gradual urbanisation, as an extension of the city area. These days, Jalan Besar is characterised by its numerous clan associations, beautifully conserved shophouses and places of worship. Communities over the decades that have settled and left their mark at Jalan Besar range from the Bugis and Boyanese to the Peranakans and Chinese clans.

3 The enhanced *Jalan Besar Community Heritage Trail* features an additional four new heritage sites in the district. Visitors can now look forward to learning about the life of Syed Alwee (Alwi) and the story of the road named after him, the design and restoration of the former Victoria School and the unique Chinese-style art deco architecture of the Holy Trinity Church, among other highlights. Existing storyboards and markers at well loved landmarks

such as Jalan Besar Stadium, Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital and the Chwee Kang Beo Temple have been updated with new content, presented in a brand new marker design, which incorporates a stylised look of a swamp, as a motif representing the former swampland in Jalan Besar. More information on the new sites are in Annex A.

4 Many different groups such as the former residents and business owners in Jalan Besar, as well as the old Victoria School boys stepped forward to contribute their personal stories to the heritage trail. Said Mr Tan Jee Ming, President of the Old Victorians' Alumni (OVA), "Victoria School, founded in 1876 is one of the oldest schools in Singapore. With 136 years of history, its story is invariably tied to the story of Singapore and the area. The school has produced many important personalities who have contributed much to the history and development of Singapore as a nation, including three Singapore Presidents. The old school building at Tyrwhitt Road with its grand columns and colonial period architecture has been a landmark in the Jalan Besar area since it was first built. It holds rich and fond memories for many generations of Victorians. I am proud that our school building is now part of the Jalan Besar Community Heritage Trail, and that the alumni were approached for our stories. It is an acknowledgement of our school's significance to the history of the area and Victorians' contribution to the story of Singapore."

5 Said Michael Koh, CEO of NHB, "Jalan Besar was one of the first heritage trails launched by NHB in 2006. The area has a rich history and has witnessed many changes to its landscape, but still retains its old world charm. Heritage trails are a great way to get to know one's neighbourhood, and at the same time, learn about Singapore's heritage. Under NHB's community engagement masterplan, where we will ramp up efforts to involve community in heritage activities, we can look forward to more heritage trails in the next few years. We are planning to develop trails island-wide throughout Singapore, which will provide an overview of our Singapore Story, and also highlight the unique histories of the various districts in Singapore. This is just one of the many ways Singaporeans can get to know and love our heritage."

6 The trail is launched alongside the *Singapore Portraits* travelling exhibition, which showcases reproductions of artworks from the national collection, original multi-media, and art installations from Singapore's arts and creative industries. The *Singapore Portraits* exhibition was first presented in 2011 as part of the Singapore HeritageFest and has now been brought back by popular demand, adapted into a travelling exhibition format so more

Singaporeans are able to enjoy heritage on their doorstep. Please see Annex B for more details.

7 To celebrate the launch of the Jalan Besar Community Heritage Trail, the NHB has brought back several highlights of the famous New World Amusement Park. Public can look forward to a weekend of nostalgic fun on the 4th and 5th of August as they re-live the good old days spent at the New World Amusement Park, and learn about the rich heritage of Jalan Besar through complimentary guided tours of the trail. Guided tours of Jalan Besar will be held from 3.30pm to 4.30pm. Registration for the tours will be at the atrium of City Square Mall.

- END -

About the National Heritage Board

The National Heritage Board (NHB) was formed on 1 August 1993 under the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA). Its mission is to foster nationhood, promote identity building, and champion the development of a vibrant cultural and heritage sector in Singapore. As the custodian of Singapore's heritage, NHB is responsible for telling the Singapore story, sharing the Singaporean experience and imparting our Singapore spirit. Through the national collection, NHB curates heritage programmes and presents exhibitions to connect the past, present and future generations of Singaporeans through a shared experience. NHB manages the national museums, the National Archives of Singapore, and the Heritage Conservation Centre.

National Archives of Singapore

For media queries, please contact:

Ranjeet Kaur
Manager
Email: ranjeet.kaur@hkstrategies.com
Contact: 6390 3376 / 9025 7674

Supported by:



Ministry of Information,
Communications and the Arts



Jalan Besar Community Heritage Trail

New Marker Sites

No.	Heritage Sites
1	<p><u>Syed Alwi Road</u></p> <p>Built in the 1850s and originally named Jalan Bahru, this street was later renamed Syed Alwi Road after Syed Alwi (Alwee) bin Ali Aljunied. Syed Alwi Road used to house industries such as slaughterhouses, a pineapple factory, rubber go-downs and the Sin Siong Lim sawmill. Today, Syed Alwi Road is an architectural feast of shophouses built from the late 1800s to the 1960s in a range of styles, including the elegant Rococo style with enormous <i>oeil de boeuf</i> (ox-eye) window openings between a flat arched window on each second storey. Until 1977, the popular Song Lim Market was located at these shophouses.</p>
2	<p><u>Allenby House & International Hotel</u></p> <p>The Allenby House was built in 1928 for a owner named Chittiar. Designed by architectural firm of Westerhout and Osman, it was the first four-storey building along Jalan Besar as well as the first dedicated lodging house by the road. Later, a wave of lodging houses also emerged along Jalan Besar to cater to travelling businessmen as well as visiting performers at New World before World War II. The Singapore Futsing Association which represents Singaporeans of Hockchia descent, and the Framroz soft drinks factory, a major local beverage brand, were located at Allenby House.</p>
3	<p><u>People's Association (Former Victoria School)</u></p> <p>Victoria School has its origins in 1876, when Kampong Glam Malay Branch School was founded to teach English to Malay pupils. In 1897, this school was amalgamated with Kampong Glam Malay School and renamed Victoria Bridge School. On 18 September 1933, the school moved from Victoria Street to Tyrwhitt Road and was given its present name. Notable alumni include Kesavan Soon, a sprinter who took part in the 1956 Olympics, footballers Choo Seng Quee and Charlie Chan, poet Edwin Thumboo as well as former Cabinet member S. Dhanabalan and former Presidents Yusof bin Ishak, C.V. Devan Nair and S.R. Nathan.</p> <p>This site became the headquarters of the People's Association on 29 January 2010.</p>
4	<p><u>Holy Trinity Church</u></p> <p>The origins of this church lie in a stirring Whitsunday sermon in 1856 by Revd William Humphrey of St Andrew's Church (now St Andrew's Cathedral), which aroused interest in setting up local Anglican congregations. St Andrew's Church Mission grew in strength with missionaries who held Hokkien and Foochow services at St Peter's Church in Stamford Road. Worshippers moved to the present Hamilton Road site in 1937 when the Stamford Road site was acquired by the government. The present building, designed by Ho Kwong Yew, is in a vernacular Art Deco style,</p>

	with Chinese-style green tiled roofs and decorative elements, intended to make it easier for locals to relate to the building. It was completed and dedicated on 20 July 1941 by the Venerable Graham White, Anglican Archdeacon of Singapore.
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Existing Marker Sites

No.	Heritage Sites
1	Jalan Besar Story (at Jalan Besar Plaza)
2	New World Gateway
3	Petain Road shophouses
4	Jalan Besar Stadium
5	Lavender Street
6	Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital
7	Central Sikh Temple
8	Boon Keng estate/Bendemeer House
9	Kallang Reclamation
10	Chwee Kang Beo temple
11	Sri Manmatha Karuneshvarar Temple

*The Jalan Besar Story provides an overview of the history of Jalan Besar and the overall trail route

National Archives of Singapore

***Singapore Portraits* travelling exhibition**

Singapore Portraits was commissioned as the anchor exhibition for the opening of Singapore HeritageFest (SHF) 2011 at Ang Mo Kio and is a tribute to some of Singapore's most creative personalities. It features the works and interviews of local artists which together, tell the story of Singapore - our history, people and ways of life, through their words and images.

The artworks are visual references to how Singapore has developed over the years in many different ways, and how these changes have affected the concept of home and how we relate to it.

Due to its popularity, the content of *Singapore Portraits* has been modified into a travelling exhibition to facilitate travelling to various public venues. The exhibition will be launched at City Square Mall on 4 August, and will travel to Dunman High School and the Central Library in August and to many more public venues in the subsequent months.

Notable artists featured in the exhibition include:

- **Liu Kang**

Liu Kang (b. 1911, China – 2004, Singapore) spent his childhood in Malaysia before leaving to study art in Shanghai and Paris. He settled in Singapore after the Japanese Occupation (1942-1945). Liu is regarded as a first generation or pioneer artist who, along with Cheong Soo Pieng, Chen Wen Hsi and Chen Chong Swee, helped to shape the visual vocabulary of early Singapore art. After the Bali trip, Liu ventured into new stylistic grounds as exemplified by the approach in *Artist and Model*. Pictorial details are deliberately pared and forms are simplified and rendered in solid colours and white outlines to achieve a child-like or naïve picture. The batik dyeing technique is credited as Liu's references in his use of solid colours and bold outlines.

- **Chua Mia Tee**

Born in China in 1931, Chua Mia Tee migrated to Singapore when he was a boy. He grew up in Chinatown where he witnessed the working and living conditions of many immigrant manual labourers. In 1947, Chua enrolled in the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) where his path towards social realist art took shape. *Epic Poem of*

Malaya (1955) and *National Language Class* (1959), in the collection of the National Heritage Board, are some of Chua's most iconic nationalistic paintings.

A realist painter and the leading portraitist in Singapore, Chua has shown himself to be a consistent chronicler of Singapore's social and political landscape. President Yusof Ishak's portrait on the \$2 note was painted by Chua.

- **Lim Cheng Hoe**

Lim Cheng Hoe (b. 1912, China – d. 1979, Singapore) was the leading watercolourist in the 1960s to the 70s in Singapore. The founder of the Singapore Watercolour Society, he was instrumental in the development of watercolour art in Singapore. Best known for his skillfulness and poetic sensibilities in conveying light and mood in his watercolour landscape paintings, Lim's works also include portrait drawings.

- **Chong Fah Cheong**

Chong Fah Cheong (b. 1946, Singapore) is a sculptor who works in a variety of mediums including stone, wood and bronze. His sculptures can be seen in many public places, including 'First Generation', an acclaimed sculpture in bronze located near the Fullerton Hotel and by the Singapore River.

- **Georgette Chen**

Georgette Chen (1906, China - 1993, Singapore) was one of only a handful of women artists working in Singapore up to the 1980s. Like many of her male counterparts Chen sought to paint local subject matter. Born to a well-to-do family, Chen spent her formative years living in Paris, New York and Shanghai. Twice married, she moved to Singapore in 1953 and supported herself by teaching at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts. Her students remember her as a strict teacher who was also a warm and caring person.

When she passed away in 1993, Chen left a legacy of paintings that included portraits of friends, still-life pictures and scenic landscapes. Many of these are now in the collection of the National Heritage Board.