

57

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SINGAPORE RIVER AREA

The Need for Redevelopment

The Singapore River area had severe environmental problems in the 1960s and 1970s. Chronic pollution had turned the river into a huge sewer, littered with rubbish and crowded with lighters, many of which were left idle and in bad condition. Moreover, the river played a rapidly diminishing role in our expanding economy. Increasing containerisation and the provision of modern port facilities and warehousing resulted in the lighters being superseded as a means of transporting goods. Consequently, warehouses need no longer be located along the banks of Singapore River.

In 1977, the Government decided to clean up the river and remove the sources of pollution, including the lighters. With this task essentially completed, the redevelopment of the river area to meet the new needs of our city has become an important task. The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) is entrusted with the responsibility of planning the redevelopment of the Singapore River area, with the aim of giving it a new identity and vitality.

Objectives of Redevelopment

The redevelopment plans are designed to attain the following objectives:

- (1) To create a new environment for Singapore River by retaining old buildings of architectural merit and historical importance, developing new buildings and introducing river-oriented activities.

- (2) To maximise the use of land along the river's banks so as to enhance the character of the river.
- (3) To give the river a new economic role in generating recreational activities for both tourists and Singaporeans.

Proposed Redevelopment Plans

The river area covers some 81 hectares and is bounded by River Valley Road, Hill Street, Collyer Quay, Cecil Street, Church Street, Upper Pickering Street, Havelock Road and Kim Seng Road. It can be divided into three zones:

- (i) Boat Quay area from the river mouth to New Bridge Road.
- (ii) Clarke Quay area between New Bridge Road and Clemenceau Avenue.
- (iii) Robertson Quay area from Clemenceau Bridge to Kim Seng Road.

I Boat Quay Area

- (a) On the banks of North Boat Quay is the Government and Civic Centre, comprising open spaces and historical buildings. This centre will be preserved. At the present site of the temporary hawkers' centre (Hallpike Street), a low-rise development for institutional purposes is proposed to enhance the Government and Civic Centre.

- (b) The old three and four-storey shophouses lining the crescent of South Boat Quay will be retained, forming a charming contrast to the highrise towers of the Golden Shoe Business District. The owners will be encouraged to upgrade their buildings through adaptive reuse for such purposes as commercial, entertainment and residential uses. It is envisaged that this will become another focal point of activity in the Boat Quay area. Both banks of the river will be converted into landscaped pedestrian malls.

II Clarke Quay Area

- (a) Located at the point where the river turns into a S-bend, Clarke Quay consists of predominantly low-rise warehouses of good architectural value which will be retained. The streets of Clarke Quay area, which have many characteristics of a small village streetscape, will be lined with pedestrian malls.
- (b) The strategic location of Clarke Quay links Fort Canning Park to the river with good views to and from the river. This location will be well-developed as a good complement to the Fort Canning Park to attract tourists.
- (c) The large, uncluttered warehouses are ideal for use as restaurant, dance and music studios, health fitness clubs, commercial schools and showrooms. The majority of these warehouses will be rehabilitated into new uses.

- (d) Across the river, some of the old terrace shophouses of architectural value will be retained and integrated with new low-rise developments. The developmental emphasis for this area will be on shopping, eating, sports, and other recreational facilities. Hotel and other accommodation facilities will also be provided.

III Robertson Quay Area

- (a) This area is characterised by large and solidly built warehouses of good architectural value. Some of these old warehouses will be retained for adaptive reuse, and integrated with new developments.
- (b) Hotel, shopping and residential developments, will be the predominant activities in Robertson Quay area. Certain institutional and cultural activities will also be incorporated. In future, Robertson Quay will be converted into a landscaped open space/-pedestrian mall.

Participation of Public and Private Sectors

The private sector will be invited to participate in the redevelopment of the Singapore River area. The success of the entire project will be determined by the quality of work by architects from both sectors as well as the imagination and management skills of the private developers.

The Government's role is to provide the planning framework, infrastructural facilities and to oversee the actual implementation of the projects. While URA coordinates the planning and development, it will also implement schemes through its Sale of Site programme and the Authority's own development. The planning and design guide plans for the private developers will be provided through the Development and Building Control Division (DBCD). The private sector will be encouraged to participate by developing the private lands according to the guide plans as well as through future URA Sale of Sites and, possibly, management of recreational services.

Implementation Details

Three pilot areas have been selected for the first phase of redevelopment. They include:

- (1) Boat Quay Conservation area which is bounded by South Bridge Road, New Boat Quay, South Canal Road and Circular Road.
- (2) Clarke Quay area which is bounded by River Valley Road, North Boat Quay, Clarke Quay and Tan Tye Place.
- (3) Robertson Quay area which is bounded by River Valley Road, Damar Road, Robertson Quay, Martin Road and Mohamed Sultan Road.

Different implementation modes will be tried out. The Boat Quay Conservation project, where most of the land is in private ownership, will be implemented by the private sector. The Clarke Quay area will be implemented entirely by Government while Robertson Quay area will be implemented by both Government and the private sectors.

The time frame of implementation will also vary. Boat Quay Conservation area is targetted to commence redevelopment within the next three years. Owners will be asked to submit their plans within a year and to commence construction within two years thereafter. URA will start to implement the Clarke Quay area by 1986. The timing for redeveloping Robertson Quay area will depend on market demand.

Private developers/land owners who wish to develop their lands within the Boat Quay conservation area and Robertson Quay area can submit applications to DBCD for planning approval. In the past, several parties have enquired or submitted planning applications to DBCD to develop their lands in the Boat Quay/Robertson Quay areas but such cases were deferred by the planning authority. Now that the development guidelines are adopted, these applicants/enquirers are informed by letter that they can now contact DBCD to follow up on their proposals. These letters were sent out yesterday.

As the development guidelines for Boat Quay/- Robertson Quay areas involve amalgamation of land into larger parcels for comprehensive redevelopment, land owners of individual lots must get together for joint development submission, in accordance with their parcellation plans.

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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