



National
Heritage
Board



PRESERVATION OF
MONUMENTS BOARD

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed till 6pm, 27 December 2010

TWO NEW NATIONAL MONUMENTS CELEBRATE SINGAPORE'S POST-INDEPENDENCE YEARS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF NOTABLE INDIVIDUALS

27 DECEMBER 2010, 6PM – The Preservation of Monuments Board (PMB), an institution of the National Heritage Board (NHB), will gazette the former Singapore Conference Hall and Trade Union House (now the Singapore Conference Hall), and the Esplanade Park Memorials comprising of the Lim Bo Seng Memorial, Tan Kim Seng Fountain and Cenotaph. This brings the number of Singapore's National Monuments to 63.

2 These National Monuments were built to commemorate significant events and individuals in Singapore's history. They were selected for their architectural merit and social-historical significance that span across the different communities in Singapore. The Singapore Conference Hall celebrates Singapore's self-governance and independence, while the Esplanade Park Memorials recognise the contributions of significant individuals from all walks of life.

3 Says Ms Jean Wee, Director of PMB: "With the Singapore Conference Hall, it is the first time we are gazetting a post-colonial building. Previous gazettes served to mark the architectural heritage of pre-independent Singapore. The former Singapore Conference Hall and Trade Union House was chosen as its history is closely intertwined with Singapore's path towards independence in 1965. The gazette of smaller structures such as the Lim Bo Seng Memorial, Tan Kim Seng Fountain and Cenotaph is significant as well as they allow us to commemorate the lives of notable individuals who contributed to the community and Singapore as a whole."

4 The Singapore Conference Hall, one of the 'national buildings' built in the 1960s, was designed by Singapore's pioneer architects, William Lim, Chan Voon Fee and Lim Chong Keat. It stands today as a testament to their important contributions to Singapore's built heritage.

5 The Tan Kim Seng Fountain was originally unveiled at Fullerton Square in 1882 to recognise Chinese philanthropist and businessman Tan Kim Seng's monetary contribution towards the provision of a water supply to the Singapore town in 1857. The Cenotaph was built in 1920 to remember the young men who left Singapore to fight in the First and Second World Wars, and the Lim Bo Seng Memorial was erected to commemorate war hero Lim Bo Seng's efforts in the lead up to the Japanese Occupation. More information on each monument can be found in **Annex A**, with photographs of each in **Annex B**.

6 The launch of the two new National Monuments caps a year of various outreach efforts by the PMB to increase public awareness and appreciation of Singapore's National Monuments. Ms Wee shares: "We have received positive feedback and endorsement from schools and the public of our current programmes such as the travelling exhibition, education kit and guided monument trails, and are excited to launch more initiatives next year to bring our National Monuments closer to people's consciousness."

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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, 63 historical buildings have been gazetted as national monuments. 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.

Annex A

Former Singapore Conference Hall and Trade Union House (now Singapore Conference Hall)

The former **Singapore Conference Hall and Trade Union House** was the subject of a government-held design competition announced on 14 June 1961 that was won by the trio of Singaporean pioneer architects William Lim, Chan Voon Fee and Lim Chong Keat. Completed in 1965, it was built to fulfil an electoral promise by the People's Action Party as a venue to unify trade unions and to host international conferences. Constructed between 1962 and 1965 when Singapore merged with Malaya, the building was declared open by then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in October 1965, two months after Singapore gained independence.

A significant example of a modernist building constructed in Singapore in the 1960s, its avant-garde design meant that aspects of tropical living were taken into account, such as integrating a natural ventilation system into the design of the building. The building served as the headquarters of the National Trade Union Congress till the 1990s and today, it is home to the Singapore Chinese Orchestra.

Esplanade Park Memorials

The Tan Kim Seng Fountain, a fine example of a 19th century cast-iron fountain, represents the Municipal Council's efforts to commemorate Tan Kim Seng's contributions towards bettering society. It was unveiled on 19 May 1882 at Battery Road in Fullerton Square by then President of the Municipality, Sir Thomas Scott and designed by Messrs Andrew Handyside & Co. Britannia Iron Works, Derby, Great Britain. The fountain features the four Muses in the lower bowl: Calliope holding a book or a writing tablet; Clio holding a scroll; Erato holding a lyre and Melpomene holding a garland. Tan was a supporter of the Tan Tock Seng Hospital, the President of the principal Chinese temple in Malacca and the leader of the Chinese community in Singapore. His other contributions to society include the building and endowing of the Chinese Free School, known as Chui Eng Si E, in Amoy Street.

The Cenotaph, unveiled by the Prince of Wales in 1922, recognises Singapore's participation in both the First and Second World Wars. Designed by Denis Santry of Swan and MacLaren, the memorial bears bronze tablets with inscriptions of those who perished during the First World War. It was erected with the initial objective of commemorating the 124 men from the colony of Singapore who never returned from the war in Europe. The Cenotaph features a bronze medallion comprising a laurel wreath of victory enclosing the crown which symbolises the Colony of Singapore, from which the men had departed. This was done by a well-known Swiss sculptor, Mr. R. Wenings, who happened by chance to be in the colony.

Then Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Laurence Nunns Guillermard, laid the foundation stone on 15 November 1920 in the presence of then French Premier M Georges Clemenceau. After the Second World War, a dedication was made in memory of those who fought and died during the Second World War. It is the first

Singapore military commemorative structure and the only structure that honours individuals who perished in both the First and Second World Wars.

The Lim Bo Seng Memorial is a dedicated tribute to Lim Bo Seng who perished in 1944. It was erected by the Lim Bo Seng Memorial Committee, comprising representatives from the Chung King Government, who raised funds to erect a memorial to commemorate Lim, a Malayan patriot who lent his support to the anti-Japanese war efforts. Then British Commissioner General for Southeast Asia, Malcolm MacDonald, laid the foundation stone in 1953 and then Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Loewen, Commander-in-Chief of the Far East Land Forces, unveiled the memorial on 29 June 1954.

There are four bronze plaques with text in English, Chinese, Tamil and Jawi, illustrating the life of Lim Bo Seng, embedded on the framed mouldings at the base of the memorial. Designed by pioneer architect Ng Keng Siang, the memorial is a significant piece of Chinese National Style architecture, and the only built structure to commemorate an individual who contributed to the war efforts in the Second World War.

National Archives of Singapore

1) Former Singapore Conference Hall and Trade Union House



2) Esplanade Park Memorials

Tan Kim Seng Fountain



Full shot of the Tan Kim Seng Fountain. The inscription on the base of the fountain reads, "This fountain was erected by the Municipal Commissioners in commemoration of Mr Tan Kim Seng's donation towards the cost of the Singapore Water Works".



The four Muses: Calliope holding a book or a writing tablet, Clio holding a scroll, Erato holding a lyre and Melpomene holding a garland.

Cenotaph



The side facing the Padang commemorates the war dead of the First World War, with their names inscribed on the bronze tablets.



The side facing the Esplanade commemorates the war dead of the Second World War, with the inscriptions, "they died that we might live", on each wing.

Lim Bo Seng Memorial



Lim Bo Seng Memorial with plaques in English, Chinese, Tamil and Jawi at the base. An example, of the English plaque, is shown below.



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