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Singapore Government

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**SPEECH BY MR PETER SUNG, MINISTER OF STATE
(NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT) AND (FOREIGN AFFAIRS),
AT THE AGREEMENT SIGNING CEREMONY FOR THE CLARKE QUAY
CONSERVATION AREA AT BRAS BASAH ROOM, 4TH LEVEL,
WESTIN STAMFORD ON MONDAY, 22 JANUARY 1990 AT 11.40 AM**

Today, we witness the signing ceremony for the building agreement of the Clarke Quay Conservation Area.

The Singapore River

After the clean up of the Singapore River, the government planned to bring more life to the river and its banks. The promenade along part of the banks have been improved. Work will continue to be done to widen the existing promenade so that riverside cafes can be introduced. With these, cultural, recreational, leisure and sports activities can be held in the river or on its banks. These activities will include the Lunar New Year celebrations, river regatta, boat cruises and other activities. Indeed, since the introduction of boat cruises in October 1987, more than 81,000 passengers have cruised up and down the Singapore River.

The Buildings along the River

Apart from the river and the promenades, the buildings along the river are being restored and conserved.

- (a) At Robertson Quay, three former warehouses have been restored and are being used as a discotheque. Others may be used for restaurants, riverside cafes and other commercial activities.

(b) At Boat Quay, owners of the 117 traditional buildings have responded enthusiastically to the restoration plan. Almost all the owners have submitted plans to rehabilitate their buildings. Such restoration will bring out the unique and architectural character of the historic buildings.

And the Clarke Quay Conservation project is another contribution. Covering an area of 2.1 hectares, this project is the largest to be undertaken by a single developer. It will involve the restoration of a mix of more than 50 prewar shophouses, godowns and warehouses in various architectural styles. After restoration, Clarke Quay will be an integrated shopping, entertainment, recreation and cultural centrepiece.

By 1993, Clarke Quay and Boat Quay will be throbbing with life and activity. This will provide visitors, both foreign and local, a refreshing and exciting avenue for their shopping, entertainment and recreation.

A Partnership

As with the restoration projects in Chinatown, Kampong Glam, Little India, Emerald Hill, Cairnhill and Tanjong Pagar, conservation involves a partnership between the government and the private sector. The government, through URA as the conservation authority, draws up the master plan and the guidelines. It also provides some infrastructure and environmental improvements to the conservation areas. The private sector provides the enterprise and the creativity. Together, we produce refreshing designs for the adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Rather than tearing down the historic buildings, we restore them and preserve their unique and architectural character. In the process we also preserve the anchors and bearings that remind us of our roots and our sense of history.

This Project

URA has awarded the Clark Quay Conservation project to Real Estate Holdings Pte Ltd. URA tells me:

- (a) that the tender was awarded on the basis of highest land price, superior design and skill in the adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
- (b) that it is pleased with the developer's plan to retain the original building character whilst skilfully adapting the internal spaces for modern uses.
- (c) that the developers are looking into the provision of a pedestrian bridge which links the Clarke Quay project with Fort Canning Hill. Such a pedestrian bridge would be a welcome addition to the facilities in the area.

May I congratulate both URA and Real Estate Holdings Pte Ltd on this occasion and wish both of you every success in this project.

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