

Conservation shophouse milestones

1963 First consideration given to conservation in a United Nations report to Singapore's planners

1977 14 three-storey shophouses in Murray Street rehabilitated by URA.

1970s 12 shophouses in Tudor Court rehabilitated by URA

1981 Emerald Hill Road pedestrianised

1982 A comprehensive review is taken by URA architects and planners, recommends that, among other things, significant historic districts be conserved in the city

1986 URA exhibition unveils its Conservation Master Plan proposing the conservation of seven areas: Chinatown, Kampong Glam, Little India, Boat Quay, Clarke Quay, Cairnhill and Emerald Hill - covering about 55 hectares of the Central Area including about 3,200 shophouses. Extensive public consultation conducted.

1987 32 shophouses along Neil Road restored, including 9 Neil Road, in a pilot project to demonstrate to the market how old buildings could be restored.

(Post restoration, URA sold the 32 shophouses in 1999)

1987 URA begins sales of unrestored shophouses, kicking off the first big-scale private participation in conservation.

1988 Phasing out of rent control in four stages is announced by the Ministry of National Development, removing a major impediment that had held back owners of shophouses from investing in their properties.

1989 More than 3,200 buildings including shophouses gazetted for conservation in 10 conservation areas in Chinatown (Telok Ayer, Kreta Ayer, Tanjong Pagar, Bukit Pasoh), Little India and Kampong Glam, as well as the Singapore River (Boat Quay and Clarke Quay), Cairnhill and Emerald Hill.

1991 "Conservation Initiated by Private Owners' Scheme" launched to allow private individuals to

volunteer their buildings for conservation.

1993 Government puts in resources to provide infrastructure such as power, sewers and carpark to ensure the viability of shophouses. Efforts made to refine and raise standards for restoration such as producing publications to help owners and those involved in conservation work to achieve quality outcomes.

1995 The URA Architectural Heritage Awards is introduced to recognise and celebrate well-restored heritage buildings. The Awards aim to recognise owners, professionals and contractors, and to encourage others to pay attention to quality restoration.

2002 Formation of the Conservation Advisory Panel, an independent panel made up of members from diverse backgrounds to provide advice on conservation issues to URA.

2002 URA launches Identity Plan, which recognised the importance of places with a sense of history and identity. "Old World Charm" was one of the three subject groups (the other two being "Urban Villages, Southern Ridges and Hillside Villages", and "Rustic Coast") that were exhibited and stakeholders' dialogue sessions were organised. This resulted in the protection of areas such as Balestier, Tanjong Katong, Jalan Besar and Joo Chiat as part of the 2003 Master Plan.

2006 URA's conservation programme wins the Asia-Pacific Urban Land Institute (ULI) Award for Excellence.

2006-2008 157 Neil Road (now NUS Baba House) is restored in a demonstration project carried out by URA and National University of Singapore with the generous donation from Agnes Tan in honour of her late father, Tun Tan Cheng Lock. The project is a showcase of best practices through careful research, documentation and applying the restoration principles of Maximum Retention, Sensitive Restoration and Careful Repair. The house continues to serve as a heritage house that facilitates research in architectural restoration as well as urban, social and cultural history.