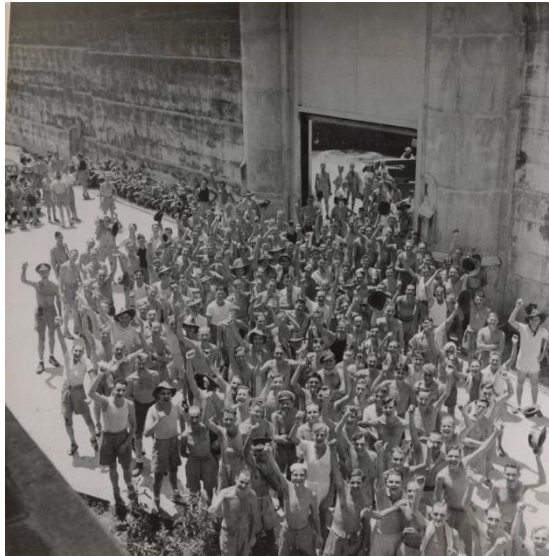


**MEDIA RELEASE**

*Embargoed till 15 February 2016, 12.00pm*

**THE NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD GAZETTES CHANGI PRISON ENTRANCE GATE, WALL AND TURRETS AS A NATIONAL MONUMENT**



*British Prisoners-of-War leaving Changi Prison, 1945  
Image courtesy of Argus Newspaper Collection of Photographs, State Library of Victoria*

Singapore, 15 February 2016 – On this day in 1942, Singapore was surrendered to the Japanese during World War II. Today, the National Heritage Board (NHB) gazettes the Changi Prison Entrance Gate, Wall and Turrets as Singapore's 72<sup>nd</sup> National Monument in remembrance of Singapore's wartime experience and as a grim reminder of this dark episode in our history.

2 Designed by the Public Works Department, Changi Prison was completed before World War II in 1936 and became operational on 4 January 1937. It was designed as a maximum security prison, with turrets serving as watchtowers and a high surrounding wall deterring escapes. During World War II, Changi Prison and its surrounding barracks formed the principal Prisoner-of-War (POW) camp in Southeast Asia. This chapter in the prison's history remains one of its most poignant and is also an important part of Singapore's World War II history.

3 Other World War II-related National Monuments include the former City Hall (1992), the former Cathay Building (gazetted in 2003), the former Ford Factory (2006), the former



Command House (2009), the Esplanade Park Memorials (2010) and the Civilian War Memorial (2013).

4 Ms Jean Wee, Director of the Preservation of Sites and Monuments division, NHB, says, "Changi Prison stands today as an enduring symbol of the suffering of those who defended Singapore during the tumultuous war years between 1942 and 1945. We hope that this monument will serve as an important reminder to all Singaporeans of the tremendous sacrifice by POWs and to treasure the peace and harmony we have today, and continue to safeguard it with resilience and courage."

#### Early Singapore: Building Infrastructure for Social Order

5 In the early years of colonial Singapore, between 1825 and 1873, two decentralised systems of incarceration co-existed in Singapore. Convicts transported from India were housed at the Convict Prison (at Bras Basah) and supervised by the head of the Public Works Department. The Civil Prison (at Pearl's Hill) held local offenders awaiting trial and came under the charge of the High Sheriff. By modern standards, prison discipline was lax, allowing for infractions such as jailbreak.

6 In 1871, the Prison Discipline Commission was convened by the British to review similar issues in prisons in various British colonies. The Commission's report, published in 1872, laid the foundation for more organised prison administration. In Singapore, the Prisons Ordinance of 1872 established the Office of the Inspector of Prisons to oversee all jails in the colony, formalise regulations for prisons management and to establish a more rigorous framework for prison discipline.

7 While such changes addressed organisational issues, the perennial problem of overcrowding proved more difficult to tackle. Although the completion of a new Criminal Prison at Pearl's Hill (near the existing Civil Prison) in 1882 temporarily alleviated overcrowding, the problem eventually returned. The pressing need to relieve prison overcrowding eventually resulted in the completion of Changi Prison in 1936. When it became operational on 4 January 1937, Changi Prison was acclaimed as the most modern institution of its kind in the East, boasting a comprehensive alarm system and electrical lights in its cells.

### Japanese Occupation: A Significant Chapter in Changi Prison's History

8 During the Japanese Occupation (1942 to 1945), Changi Prison was converted into an internment camp for civilians and POWs. After the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942, the entire area of Changi (including Changi Prison as well as Kitchener, India, Roberts and Selarang barracks) was used as the principal POW camp in Southeast Asia. On the morning of 17 February 1942, European civilians were rounded up on the Padang and marched to Changi. More than 2,500 civilians and POWs, including the entire British civil service, were packed into Changi Prison which had been designed to hold only 600 prisoners. This group included then-Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Shenton Thomas.

9 Due to the shortage of Japanese personnel, internees had partial control over camp affairs, subject to the final authority of the Japanese officer-in-charge. This allowed them to initiate a variety of activities to cope with incarceration, including the publication of a few newspapers (*Changi Guardian*, *Changi Times* and *Pow-Wow*), cricket and soccer matches, and entertainment by the Changi Concert Party.

10 Despite such allowances, the internees endured overcrowding, malnutrition and diseases such as *beri beri*, malaria and dysentery. Internees were also subjected to punishment for disobeying camp rules; the ill-treatment of internees worsened after the 'Double Tenth Incident' on 10 October 1943. On that day, the *Kempeitai* (Japanese military police) raided the prison and captured those whom they suspected of involvement in the destruction of Japanese ships at Keppel Harbour in Operation Jaywick (26 to 27 September 1943).

11 As the Occupation wore on, the living conditions in Changi Prison deteriorated. By May 1944, there were over 5,000 prisoners packed into poorly ventilated cells and food shortage was also a serious problem. Although civilian internees moved out of Changi Prison to make room for military POWs from the various barracks in Changi and those who returned from constructing the Thai-Burma Death Railway, the POWs had to resort to erecting attap huts in the courtyards of the prison to mitigate severe overcrowding. Towards the end of the war, the extreme scarcity of food forced the POWs to turn to a range of wildlife (including sparrows and rats) to supplement their diet.



### Post-War Years: Road to Independence

12 The POWs were released after the end of World War II on 6 September 1945. From 1945 to 1947, Changi Prison was the venue for several military courts and those convicted of war crimes against POWs and civilians were hanged there. The prison returned to civilian control in October 1947.

13 In the post-war years, the prison resumed its function as a civilian prison and went on to be associated with events in Singapore's progress towards independence. In October 1956, several members of the People's Action Party (PAP), who were arrested for their involvement in labour strikes, were detained in Changi Prison. This group included Mr C. V. Devan Nair, Mr Lim Chin Siong, and Mr Fong Swee Suan. When PAP won the 1959 Legislative Assembly General Elections by a landslide, Mr Lee Kuan Yew made the group's release a condition before he would agree to form Singapore's first elected government. After successful negotiations with then-Governor of Singapore Sir William Goode, over 2,000 party members and supporters greeted the men when they were released from Changi Prison on 4 June 1959.

### Architectural Significance

14 Designed as a maximum security prison, Changi Prison was originally enclosed within a perimeter wall which was more than 20 feet tall. Each of the turrets located at the four corners of the compound wall served as watchtowers and access to the prison was via a double-leafed steel entrance gate.

15 Changi Prison exemplified the "telephone-pole" layout plan which was commonly adopted for prisons constructed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The prison consisted of two four-storey blocks of prison cells, which branched out from a central covered corridor, resulting in a plan that resembled a telephone pole of that period. This layout had the advantage of facilitating quick warden access to either of the prison blocks.

16 As Singapore progressed, a new prison complex had to be developed to provide rehabilitation facilities and a more conducive environment to house the inmates. Before the second phase of construction of the new Changi Prison Complex began in 2004, key features of the former Changi Prison most representative of the facility's history were identified for preservation, namely the entrance gate, a 180-metre stretch of the prison wall



and two corner turrets. These features are collectively gazetted as Singapore's 72<sup>nd</sup> National Monument today.

#### NHB's Commemoration of the 74<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle for Singapore

17 In addition to the gazette, from 12 to 28 February 2016, NHB is partnering heritage experts, community groups and Museum Roundtable (MR) members to present Singapore's war stories through a series of guided tours to World War II sites, special programmes at MR museums and institutions, and public talks. This annual commemorative project, known as the Battle for Singapore, not only observes the significance of this period in Singapore's history but also serves as a channel for Singaporeans today to understand the resilience and unity of our forefathers during the tumultuous war years.

Please refer to **Annex A** for a complete list of the 72 National Monuments.

Please refer to **Annex B** for a list of the Battle For Singapore commemorative programmes.

**List of Singapore's National Monuments**

<b>Name of Building</b>		<b>Date of Gazette</b>
1	Former Thong Chai Medical Institution (1892)	28 June 1973
2	Armenian Church of St Gregory the Illuminator (1835–36)	28 June 1973
3	St Andrew's Cathedral (Rebuilt 1856–64)	28 June 1973
4	Former Telok Ayer Market (now Lau Pa Sat) (1890–94)	28 June 1973
5	Thian Hock Keng (1839–42)	28 June 1973
6	Sri Mariamman Temple (Rebuilt 1843)	28 June 1973
7	Hajjah Fatimah Mosque (1845–46)	28 June 1973
8	Cathedral of the Good Shepherd (1843–47)	28 June 1973
9	Nagore Dargah (now Nagore Dargah Indian Muslim Heritage Centre) (1828–30)	19 November 1974
10	Al-Abrar Mosque (1850–55)	19 November 1974
11	House of Tan Yeok Nee (The Former Salvation Army HQ) (1885)	19 November 1974
12	Tan Si Chong Su (1876–78)	19 November 1974
13	Jamae Mosque (Rebuilt 1830–35)	19 November 1974
14	Sultan Mosque (Rebuilt 1924–28)	8 March 1975
15	St George's Church (1910–13)	10 November 1978
16	Hong San See (1908–12)	10 November 1978
17	Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple (Rebuilt 1961–66)	10 November 1978
18	Abdul Gafoor Mosque (1907–27)	5 July 1979
19	Siong Lim Temple (now Lian Shan Shuang Lin Monastery) (1902–08)	14 October 1980

20	Raffles Hotel (1887–1907)	4 March 1987  (Re-gazetted on 3 June 1995)
21	Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church (1924–25)	23 March 1989
22	Goodwood Park Hotel (Tower Block) (1900)	23 March 1989
23	Former Convent of Holy Infant Jesus Chapel (now CHIJMES Hall) (1903) and Caldwell House (1840–41)	26 October 1990
24	Istana and Sri Temasek (1867–69)	14 February 1992  (Re-gazetted on 1 October 1993)
25	Former City Hall (1926–29)	14 February 1992
26	Victoria Theatre (1856–62) and Concert Hall (1902–05)	14 February 1992
27	Former Parliament House and Annex Building (1826–27)	14 February 1992,  26 June 1992
28	Former Supreme Court (1937–39)	14 February 1992
29	Former Empress Place Building (now Asian Civilisations Museum) (1864–67)	14 February 1992
30	National Museum (now National Museum of Singapore) (1884–87)	14 February 1992
31	Former St Joseph's Institution – Main Building (1855–67), Chapel (1911–12) and Classroom (1906–07) (now Singapore Art Museum)	14 February 1992  26 June 1992
32	Former Attorney-General's Chambers (now Parliament House Block C) (Rebuilt c.a. 1906)	14 February 1992
33	Former Sun Yat Sen Villa (now Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall) (1900–02)	28 October 1994
34	Yueh Hai Ching Temple (1852–1855)	28 June 1996
35	Maghain Aboth Synagogue (1878)	27 February 1998
36	Former Ministry of Labour Building (now Family Justice Courts) (1928)	27 February 1998

37	Former Tao Nan School (now The Peranakan Museum) (1910–12)	27 February 1998
38	Chesed-El Synagogue (1905)	18 December 1998
39	Former Hill Street Police Station (1934–36)	18 December 1998
40	Ying Fo Fui Kun (1881–82)	18 December 1998
41	Central Fire Station (1908–09)	18 December 1998
42	Former Nanyang University Library & Administration Building, The Former Nanyang University Memorial and The Former Nanyang University Arch (1954–56)	18 December 1998
43	The Chinese High School Clock Tower Building (1925)	19 March 1999
44	Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church (1930–31)	12 January 2000
45	Former Admiralty House (1939)	2 December 2002
46	Tan Teck Guan Building (1911)	2 December 2002
47	College of Medicine Building (1926)	2 December 2002
48	Former Cathay Building (now The Cathay) (1939)	10 February 2003
49	Church of St Peter and St Paul (1869–70)	10 February 2003
50	MacDonald House (1949)	10 February 2003
51	RC Church of St Joseph (1906–12)	14 January 2005
52	Church of Our Lady of Lourdes (1888)	14 January 2005
53	Church of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1901)	14 January 2005
54	Tou Mu Kung Temple (1919–21)	14 January 2005
55	Former Ford Factory (now Memories at Old Ford Factory) (1941)	15 February 2006
56	Former Raffles College (now NUS Campus at Bukit Timah) (1927–53)	11 November 2009
57	Church of St Teresa (1926–28)	11 November 2009
58	Former Keng Teck Whay building (now	11 November 2009



	Singapore Yu Huang Gong) (est 1831)	
59	Former Command House (1939)	11 November 2009
60	Former St James Power Station (1926)	11 November 2009
61	Bowyer Block (1926)	11 November 2009
62	Former Singapore Conference Hall and Trade Union House (now Singapore Conference Hall) (1962–65)	28 December 2010
63	Esplanade Park Memorials: Lim Bo Seng Memorial (1953-54), Tan Kim Seng Fountain (1882) and Cenotaph (1920–22)	28 December 2010
64	Former Tanjong Pagar Railway Station (1929–31)	8 April 2011
65	Civilian War Memorial (1966–67)	15 August 2013
66	Chung Cheng High School (Main) Administration Building and Entrance Arch (1965–68)	10 July 2014
67	Sri Thendayuthapani Temple (rebuilt 1980–83)	20 October 2014
68	Alkaff Upper Serangoon Mosque (1931–32)	19 December 2014
69	Jurong Town Hall (1971–74)	2 June 2015
70	Istana Kampong Gelam ( <i>circa</i> 1839-1843)	6 August 2015
71	Former Fullerton Building (1924–28)	7 December 2015
72	Changi Prison Entrance Gate, Wall and Turrets (1936)	15 February 2016