

MEDIA RELEASE

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FORT SILOSO GAZETTED AS SINGAPORE'S 74TH NATIONAL MONUMENT

The Fort is the first National Monument that comprises a site with 11 gazetted structures, and is also the first monument that is not located on mainland Singapore

Singapore, 15 February 2022 – Fort Siloso, Singapore's best-preserved 19th-century fort, was gazetted as a National Monument today, fortifying its place in Singapore's built heritage. The historic site that stands as a testament to Singapore's war years and rich military history will be accorded the highest level of protection, with 11 fort structures that collectively tell Singapore's defence story. This marks the first time that a site with structures is gazetted as a National Monument.

In commemoration of its role in the Battle for Singapore which marks its 80th anniversary this year, Fort Siloso was officially gazetted on Total Defence Day (15 February). The National Heritage Board (NHB) made known its intention to gazette Fort Siloso on 17 January 2022. The site was accorded immediate protection as a proposed National Monument, following the amendments to the Preservation of Monuments Act in 2021. NHB then engaged with key heritage stakeholders and also welcomed public feedback on the proposed monument. As a gazetted monument, Fort Siloso will continue to serve as a social and community space enjoyed by Singaporeans, as well as a tourist attraction.

3 Ms Jean Wee, Director of the Preservation of Sites and Monuments division, NHB, said: "The gazette of Fort Siloso as our 74th National Monument gives pause to the fact that on this day, 80 years ago, Singapore fell to adversarial forces. The Fort is symbolic of every effort we take as citizens in defending our Nation. Following the amendments to the Preservation of Monuments Act, 11 structures, on the almost 7-ha site, that contribute to the defence function of the Fort will be collectively gazetted."

4 Mr Michael Ma, Assistant Chief Executive, Sentosa Development Corporation (SDC), which manages Fort Siloso, said: "The gazetting of Fort Siloso not only illustrates the rich history and heritage that Sentosa is home to, but is also significant as it takes place in the 50th anniversary since the establishment of SDC and Sentosa as a leisure destination in 1972. We invite Singaporeans to revisit Fort Siloso's fortifications and historic coastal guns, and



better understand Sentosa's storied past as a naval stronghold, as we mark our Golden Jubilee as a multi-faceted leisure destination this year."

Safeguarding Singapore's military heritage

5 Constructed in 1878 as part of a set of strategic coastal fortifications in the context of Singapore's growing importance as a trading port in the late-19th century, Fort Siloso illustrates Singapore's military history from its time as a Crown Colony to the post-World War II period. The Fort's strategic location on the western tip of Pulau Blakang Mati (Sentosa today) allowed it to guard the narrow western entrance to Singapore's "New Harbour" (Keppel Harbour today) and defend the country from foreign invasions from the sea.

6 During the Battle for Singapore (8 – 15 February 1942), Fort Siloso played a critical role in the nation's defence as one of the two known busiest batteries on Pulau Blakang Mati. When Japanese troops were deterred by the seaward fortifications and invaded Singapore by land from north Malaya, Fort Siloso's guns were turned towards the mainland instead to help support the ground forces defending Singapore from the invasion. Its guns also destroyed the oil refineries at nearby Pulau Bukom and Pulau Sebarok to prevent the Japanese from using them. The Fort also served as a Prisoner-of-War camp for Australian and British soldiers during the Japanese Occupation, and later for Japanese soldiers after their surrender.

7 Singapore's defence story continued during the *Konfrontasi* period (1963 – 1966), where the 10th Gurkha Rifles Unit manned the Fort to prevent Indonesian saboteurs from landing on Pulau Blakang Mati and Keppel Harbour.

Historic collection of coastal artillery fort architecture

8 Today, 80 years after the Fall of Singapore, Fort Siloso stands as a beloved historical site and home to a wealth of World War II memorabilia, including coastal guns and a collection of fortified military structures and tunnels.

9 The Fort's layout of seemingly sporadic gun emplacements belies a carefully calculated defence strategy, with guns of sufficient overlapping arcs of fire and supporting structures scattered around the Fort for practical considerations such as line of sight and



proximity to guns. As a live defence site, the Fort was upgraded several times and at times damaged – by enemy attack or deliberately as part of the defence strategy.

10 In a collective telling of Singapore's defence story, the site includes 11 gazetted structures consisting original Casemates of an early-19th century design; four Gun Emplacements; three Tunnel complexes that functioned as underground magazines directly beneath the guns, illustrating advances in military design in the late-19th century; key defensive structures such as the Battery Command Post and the Fire Director Tower with Searchlight Posts; and the former Sergeants' Mess and Officers' Mess which provide a picture of how soldiers lived in a fort. Collectively, these coastal artillery fort architecture structures comprehensively illustrate Singapore's defence story, from its early significance as a colonial trading post that needed to be well secured, through to the fall of Singapore to the Japanese, its merger with Malaya and the *Konfrontasi* period, as well as the Fort's present use as an on-site military museum.

For more information, please refer to:

- Annex A: Information on Fort Siloso's national, historical and architectural merits
- Annex B: Map of site and more information on gazetted fort structures
- Annex C: List of Singapore's National Monuments

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About the National Heritage Board

The National Heritage Board (NHB) was formed on 1 August 1993. As the custodian of Singapore's heritage, NHB is responsible for telling the Singapore story, sharing the Singaporean experience and imparting our Singapore spirit. NHB's mission is to preserve and celebrate the shared heritage of our diverse communities, for the purpose of education, nation-



building and cultural understanding. It manages the national museums and heritage institutions, and sets policies relating to heritage sites, monuments and the National Collection.

Through the National Collection, NHB curates heritage programmes and presents exhibitions to connect the past, present and future generations of Singaporeans. NHB is a statutory board under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. Please visit <u>www.nhb.gov.sg</u> for more information.

About the Preservation of Sites and Monuments division

The Preservation of Sites and Monuments (PSM) division, under the National Heritage Board (NHB) and with advice from the PSM Advisory Board, guides the preservation of buildings, monuments and sites, which commemorates Singapore's heritage as defined under the Preservation of Monuments Act. The PSM division also leads NHB's joint efforts with National Parks Board to list the Singapore Botanic Gardens as Singapore's first UNESCO world heritage site. It also oversees the 100 heritage sites that have been marked by NHB. The PSM division's administration of the preservation gazette is complemented by its outreach objectives to promote a renewed appreciation and understanding of national monuments and their history, and to encourage people to relate to them as sites of memory that convey a sense of place, identity and belonging. To date, 74 structures have been gazetted as National Monuments. For more information on the PSM division, please visit https://www.nhb.gov.sg/what-we-do/our-work/preserve-our-stories-treasures-andplaces/national-monuments-and-marked-historic-sites/preservation-of-sites-and-monuments.



Information on Fort Siloso's national, historical and architectural merits

Fort Siloso is the best-preserved 19th-century fort in Singapore and bears an important testament to Singapore's rich military heritage. Constructed in 1878, it was part of a set of strategic coastal fortifications set up in the context of Singapore's growing importance as a trading port in the late-19th century. Fort Siloso played an important role in the Battle for Singapore (8 – 15 February 1942) as one of the two known busiest batteries on Pulau Blakang Mati (now Sentosa; the other being Fort Connaught). It served as a Prisoner-of-War camp during and after the Japanese Occupation (first for British and Australian POWs, and then for the Japanese POWs).

Historical Interest

Fort Siloso¹ was one of the five forts commissioned in 1878 as part of a large-scale extension of Singapore's defences. The Fort was part of Singapore's coastal defence system on Pulau Blakang Mati and was set up to defend Singapore's "New Harbour" (Keppel Harbour today), to protect Singapore's trade and to defend the country from foreign invasions from the sea. The Fort's strategic location on the western tip of the island allowed it to guard the narrow western entrance to Keppel Harbour. In general, the guns installed on Pulau Blakang Mati were naval and coast defence guns, as the primary objective of the forts was to counter attacks from the sea.

Roles during the World War II

During the Battle for Singapore, the coastal defences of Pulau Blakang Mati, including Fort Siloso, apparently helped to deter a Japanese seaborne invasion from the south. Colonel Masonobu Tsuji, who planned Japan's invasion of Singapore, assessed that a seaborne attack was not possible due to the seaward fortifications. As a result, the Japanese attack came from the north instead, which lacked permanent defences.

When the attack came from the north, the guns of Pulau Blakang Mati were turned landward after receiving orders to engage the invading troops. From 11 February 1942, the guns of Fort Siloso engaged enemies at the west end of West Coast Road and at Jurong River. On 13 February 1942, Fort Siloso, together with Labrador Battery, provided the 1st Malay Infantry Brigade with support fire, which enabled the Brigade to withstand attacks from the Japanese Imperial Guards Division. Its guns also destroyed the oil refineries at nearby Pulau Bukom and Pulau Sebarok to prevent the Japanese from using them. The battery at Fort Siloso was the

¹ This network included Fort Siloso, Fort Pasir Panjang, Fort Connaught and Fort Serapong. Together with Fort Tanjong Katong, they were all commissioned at the same time as part of a large-scale extension of Singapore's defences to safeguard Singapore's position as a strategic trading port.



first to be deliberately destroyed by the British themselves at 5am on 14 February 1942, when false reports of the Japanese landing came in².

During the Japanese Occupation, Fort Siloso was a Prisoner-of-War camp for Australian and British soldiers. After the surrender of the Japanese, the Fort became a Prisoner-of-War camp for the Japanese.

During Konfrontasi

During the *Konfrontasi* period (1963 - 1966), the 10th Gurkha Rifles Unit manned the Fort to prevent Indonesian saboteurs from landing on Pulau Blakang Mati and Keppel Harbour.

Present Use

Pulau Blakang Mati was returned to the Singapore government after the British military withdrew from Singapore in 1967. The island was renamed "Sentosa" and re-branded as a tourist destination in the 1970s. Fort Siloso was opened as an on-site military museum on 8 February 1975.

Architectural Interest

Fort Siloso is one of the few remaining intact examples around the world of 19th-century open artillery battery design. Designed by Henry Edward McCallum, colonial engineer of the Straits Settlements, this was an innovative concept in its time, featuring seemingly sporadic gun placements and underground structures. Fort Siloso features such "random" gun emplacements (placed not for geometry or aesthetics but for strategic firing) and underground structures, built beneath earth ramparts such that it would be difficult for enemies to engage with them. The Fort can be described as discreet, with a layout that is not easily discernible by the enemy.

First commissioned in 1878, Fort Siloso has seen major alterations to its layout and architecture as early as a few years after its completion up till to the 1940s, in response to changing needs. The Fort thus contains a unique collection of coastal artillery fort architecture structures from the late-19th century to World War II. At Siloso Point, an anti-motor torpedo boat (AMTB) emplacement with a 12-Pounder Quick-Firing gun, named OSO Battery, was constructed to combat fast-moving small vessels from raiding Keppel Harbour from the west. Improvement works included addition of a three-storey fire director tower, machine guns, searchlights and observation posts to monitor the straits and coordinate artillery fire. The Fort's underground infrastructure housed magazines, tunnels and a powerhouse that provided electricity for the Fort and submarine electro-contact and ground mines laid off the northern coast.

² Fort Connaught was the other busy battery that engaged the enemy. It joined the battle from about 2.30pm on 11 February, firing at land targets. Its three 9.2-inch guns were turned around from facing seaward to fire at targets in the centre, west and north of Singapore, shelling Tengah airfield where the Japanese had established their forward headquarters and destroyed the airfield so that it could not be used. The battery was destroyed by the British at around 7.15am on 14 February 1942.



ANNEX B



Map of site and gazetted Fort structures

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Information on 11 gazetted Fort structures

	Photo	Structure	Write-up
Clu	ister 1		• •
1		7-inch Rifled Muzzle- Loading (RML) Gun Emplacement with Shell and Cartridge Store	This gun emplacement dates back to 1878 and is still intact today. It had shell and cartridges stores underground. Bomb damage due to air attacks during WWII was visible at the emplacement, though the damage was subsequently restored in the 1990s.
	DU		
2		6-inch Quick- Firing (QF) Mark II Gun Emplacement	The "6-inch QF Mark II Gun Emplacement" is found above "Tunnel C Complex" (see #3). There were two gun emplacements that held two 6-inch QF guns before they were moved. Shells would be sent up the hoist from the tunnel to a hatch.



3	<image/>	Tunnel C Complex	"Tunnel C Complex" was a magazine which served both gun emplacements above ground. A magazine is an underground structure which stores shells and cartridges for military use, and in this instance they were sent up to the guns above via the two ammunition hoists.
4		Battery Command Post	The "Battery Command Post" was where the Battery Commander was located. The post had a clear view of the oil installations on Pulau Bukom and the western sea lanes into the Harbour. In 1896, there was only an Observation Post but it was later expanded. By 1912, a two-storey Battery Command Post was completed.
Clu	ster 2		
5		Casemates	These casemates were strong underground chambers built to provide accommodation, office and storage space. They were designed to be shellproof and faced away from the sea to protect it from hostile naval firing.



		Each room of the casemates at Fort Siloso had a specific use, and would vary throughout the Fort's active life. The walls between the rooms are about 90 centimeters thick. Today, the casemates house an exhibition which presents the history of Fort Siloso and World War II.
6	Tunnel B Complex	Similar to the gun emplacements in Cluster 1, the gun emplacements in this location were serviced by an underground magazine which is known as "Tunnel B Complex" today. There are two entrances – each of them close to a gun emplacement – leading to the magazine. Shells and cartridges were sent from the magazines to the guns through the hoists.
7	6-inch Breech Loading (BL) Gun Emplacement with Underground Magazine	The "6-inch BL Gun Emplacement" is found above "Tunnel B Complex" (see #6) and was serviced by it. From this location, the personnel in the past had a good view of the sea in front, and of Labrador Battery and the Pasir Panjang area on Singapore mainland behind. This battery was constructed in the late 1880s initially for the Mark IV 9.2-Inch BL gun. In 1908, the 9.2-Inch Gun was removed and the magazine and emplacement were modified for two 6-Inch QF guns, being moved to this location from Mount Siloso (i.e. Cluster #1). The



		updated battery and underground magazine were ready by 1912. During the 1930s, the guns were replaced by Mark VII 6-Inch BL guns and this resulted in more modifications to the mounting structure and in the magazine. The replicated gun seen here, is one of two 6-Inch BL Mark VII Guns located in these emplacements in 1942. The guns in this battery took part in the Battle for Singapore in 1942, traversing to fire landwards on the advancing Japanese troops in Singapore. They also assisted in the destruction of the oil refinery on Pulau Bukom before they were destroyed to prevent both the guns and oil refinery from falling into Japanese hands. After the war in 1946, Fort Siloso was re-armed with two of these guns brought in from the Labrador Battery and Beting Kusah Battery at Changi. They were later replaced by the newer Mark 24 6-Inch BL Guns which remained active until 1956.
8 Image: Second secon	Tunnel A Complex	In 1885, Tunnel A Complex consisted of Submarine Mining Post (present day Observation Post), Electric Light (Searchlights) and Engine Room. The powerhouse complex was later upgraded, extended and expanded with more rooms to store ammunition, and a watch duty area to



improve the complex's security. The underground complex originally housed five Ruston engines made in England, and a diesel store. The engines were later removed and scrapped when the fort was upgraded with oil powered generators. These power generators were vital to the Fort's operation, providing electricity to operate the fort's guns, which were too heavy to operate using manpower alone, and powered the searchlights and other fort defences. An oil store was added when oil replaced coal as an energy source and the two engine rooms were converted into one large room, suitable for oil-fired generators.
A unique and innovative defensive feature of Fort Siloso, specifically in this tunnel, was the electrically fired underwater mines, laid on the seabed at the western entrance to Singapore. Via remote control, these underwater mines would explode and damage an identified enemy vessel. They were controlled from a Submarine Mining Post which was housed in this underground complex. In the 1930s, the tunnel complex, which housed the Submarine Mining Post and Engine Room, was extended with the construction of a gun emplacement and a Fire



		Director Tower. More rooms for ammunition stores and duty watch were added to the Complex.
9	Fire Director Tower, 12- Pounder QF Gun Emplacement with Magazine and Searchlight Posts	The Fire Director Tower formed part of a coast artillery command which directed guns of increased range and accuracy. Its height and location at Siloso Point commanded a clear view of the western entrance to Singapore.
		The Fire Director Tower was paired with the 12-Pounder QF Gun Emplacement to take out motorised torpedo boats (MTBs) which were much smaller and faster than most naval ships. MTBs were more useful to attack harbours because they were small, fast, and difficult for big guns to track and sink. These MTBs would sneak into a harbour to seek out ships anchored there to sink their torpedoes.
		In response to the threat of MTBs, new defences such as QF guns were installed at Fort Siloso. These guns were capable of a much higher rate of fire compared to their larger cousins, and were more effective at engaging fast moving small targets. Fire Director Towers would direct fire on enemy MTBs.
		Whilst this gun emplacement at Siloso Point was designed for a twin 6-Pounder gun, only an old 12-Pounder was available when war came to Singapore in 1942. The tower directed the firing of



			the 12-Pounder QF gun and the searchlights, located on the shore below the gun emplacement. A 12-Pounder gun, a replica of which is seen here, was mounted in this emplacement in 1941 to reinforce the defences of Fort Siloso.
			The addition of search lights helped to detect enemy ships from this new advantage point. They light up the waters around the harbour at night to detect hostile fast-attack crafts like torpedo boats sneaking in under the cover of darkness.
-	er structures		
10		64-Pounder RML Gun Emplacement	This was the site of twin Lewis machine guns that were installed during World War II as anti-aircraft armament.
			There has always been a gun emplacement in this location since the Fort became operational. Changes were made while the Fort was in operation to accommodate the changes in guns from 7-inch RML to 12-Pounders to twin Lewis guns during World War II. Since then, known records have shown that changes over the years are largely to strengthen its foundation or are made to the gun carriages after the Fort was stood down, with the actual emplacement kept largely



11	Sergeants' Mess and Officers' Mess	This site features two long buildings – one used to house the barracks and officers' mess; and the other most likely housed a laundry room, cook house and tailor. The shorter building was the first known guardroom (also known as Guards' Bungalow) at Fort Siloso. This Guards' Bungalow was in use until 1919. The longer building was known as the Officers' Mess, which formerly housed a small number of officers of the unit stationed at Fort
		small number of officers of



ANNEX C

List of Singapore's National Monuments

Nan	ne of Building/Site/Structure	Date of Gazette
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	14 February 1992 26 June 1992
	Singapore Art Museum)	



32	Former Attorney-General's Chambers (now Parliament House Block C) (Rebuilt <i>c.a.</i> 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	27 February 1998
	Courts) (1928)	,
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 Singapore Yu Huang Gong) (est 1831)	11 November 2009
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	28 December 2010
	House (now Singapore Conference Hall) (1962–65)	
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
73		15 October 2019
	Anderson Bridge (1909) and Elgin Bridge (1929)	
74	Fort Siloso (1878)	15 February 2022