



TECHNICAL GUIDELINES
FOR NATIONAL MONUMENTS

A BRIEF GUIDE FOR OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS

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Preservation of Sites and Monuments
a division of the National Heritage Board



BY PRESERVATION OF SITES AND MONUMENTS, NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD



A brief guide for owners and occupiers of
National Monuments

Prepared by
Preservation of Sites and Monuments, a division of
National Heritage Board.

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INTRODUCTION

A Brief Guide for Owners and Occupiers of National Monuments explains the duties and responsibilities of being a National Monument owner or occupier. It summarises the main provisions of the Preservation of Monuments Act 2009 (Cap 239, 2020 edition).

This guide does not attempt to be fully comprehensive. You may wish to refer the Preservation of Monuments Act 2009 (Cap 239, 2020 edition) via Singapore Statutes Online and the Preservation of Sites and Monuments if you are unsure about any aspect of the Act.

Singapore Statutes Online:
<http://statutes.agc.gov.sg>

GAZETTING A NATIONAL MONUMENT

The Singapore Government Gazette is a daily publication that carries legal and other statutory notices of general interest for circulation.

The gazetting of a National Monument refers to the legal process of placing a nationally important structure or site that is of historic, cultural, traditional, archaeological, architectural, artistic or symbolic significance in Singapore under protection.

The aim of gazetting monuments is to preserve significant examples of Singapore's tangible heritage for the educational and cultural benefit of future generations.

The Preservation of Sites and Monuments division's role, as defined by the Act, is to identify and research structures and sites for preservation and make recommendations to the government.

A Preservation Order to place a monument under Preservation of Monument Act's protection will be made by the Minister of Culture, Community and Youth under Section 11 of the Act and published in the Singapore Government Gazette.

"The gazetting of a National Monument refers to the legal process of placing a nationally important structure or site that is of historic, cultural, traditional, archaeological, architectural, artistic or symbolic significance in Singapore under protection."

Example of a National Monument plaque with the State Crest.



Once a building or structure is gazetted, it is known as a National Monument and it is also marked by a plaque bearing the State Crest. Not all National Monuments are religious or state-owned. Non-religious, institutional and commercial monuments have also been gazetted as National Monuments. For a current listing of National Monuments, please visit www.roots.gov.sg.

Gazetting is restricted to the most nationally significant buildings. These are buildings with clear links to nation-building, or where communities held nationally significant events. The other means of protection for buildings is through the Planning Act, exercised by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA).

Gazetting does not affect ownership (such as the land's freehold title and other legal interests). It does, however, affect future development plans.

The Preservation Order under the Act specifies the monument protected by it. The Order extends to (a) all the land containing the monument; and (b) the land adjacent to the monument, which is under the same ownership as the monument, and defined by a boundary.

Preservation Guidelines, commonly known as the PGL (Volume 1 and 2), is a unique set of guidelines for each National Monument. The PGL is essentially a document that stipulates the conditions of preservation and identifies the elements (including fixtures) of the monument that are under PSM's protection.¹

To carry out building works on a National Monument, prior written permission from PSM is required. Under the Act, *Clause 15 – Control Over Work* explains that no person shall, without the prior written permission of PSM, and whether as principal or agent:

- Demolish, reconstruct, alter or make additions to a National Monument or any part thereof;
- Repair, renovate, repaint or redecorate a National Monument or any part thereof;
- Deposit any waste material on or flood the land on which a National Monument stands or any part thereof; and
- Do in relation to the National Monument or any part thereof or to the land on which the National Monument is located such other act as may be prescribed as an act to which this section applies.



To avoid the possibility of short term solutions, damage or poor advice from service providers which may later spiral costs, you are strongly advised to consult PSM while planning any intended works.

¹Fixtures are items or artefacts that are attached to or form part of a National Monument building or its land. Examples are built-in furniture, embedded stele and statues, water features, prayer altar and more.

WHAT WORKS REQUIRE PERMISSION?



Telok Ayer Market underwent major restoration works in 2013 after obtaining approval from PSM and other relevant technical agencies.

Any repair or upgrading works in National Monument require consent from PSM. Owners and occupiers who intend to carry out building works must notify PSM as early as possible.

PSM's role is to give technical guidance that ensures important elements in National Monuments are preserved. By engaging PSM early, monument owners will be able to formulate better work plans because PSM would be able to advise on issues including critical project milestones, the need for formal submissions to relevant building authorities such as Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), Building and Construction Authority (BCA) etc., and the need to engage specialist with relevant skills.

Over the years, PSM has reviewed applications on various types of building works, ranging from major works to minor works. There is also a small list of other works that are not building works per se but permission from PSM is still required, such as change of property ownership, change of use in a monument, banner hanging as well as stage and tentages set-up.

The list in the following page is not meant to be exhaustive. Please consult PSM if any intended work is not listed in the table.

TYPE OF WORK	DESCRIPTION
DEMOLITION	Demolishing of any parts within the gazetted boundary.
RECONSTRUCTION	Rebuilding any part of the National Monument that was historically present.
ADDITIONS & ALTERATIONS (A&A)	Any building extension, alteration or addition to the monument.
REPAIRS (Restoring the original without introducing new materials)	Repairs or redecorations of structural elements such as columns, beams, roofs, facing brick walls, staircases, towers, belfries, minarets, porches, balconies, domes, arches, gateways, boundary walls or water features.
REDECORATIONS (Restoring or replacing the original by introducing new or similar materials)	Repairs or redecorations of non- structural elements such as stained glass, tiles, Shanghai-plaster wall finishes, doors, windows, decorative ornaments/ reliefs, historical light fixtures or any elements with historical finishes.
REPAINTING	All painting works (both interior and exterior).
FACADE CLEANING	All facade cleaning works.
OTHER BUILDING ENHANCEMENT WORKS	Permanent building signage, facade lighting, repair of damage caused by vandalism and accidents, installation of a complete system such as air-conditioning, sound system, security surveillance, media system or lightning protection system.
CHANGE OF USE	When an owner has intention to apply for change of use, the owner must inform PSM in writing prior to an application to URA.

TYPE OF WORK	DESCRIPTION
CHANGE OF PROPERTY OWNERSHIP	When a monument owner intends to transfer, assign or deal with a monument building and its land affected by the Preservation Order, the owner must notify PSM in writing at least two weeks prior to the change.
SIGNAGE INSTALLATION TENTAGES & STAGE SET-UP	To ensure main facades of National Monuments are not excessively covered by signage and tentages, owners must seek PSM's permission with a detailed proposal prior to installation on site. All evaluation is reviewed independently and on a case-by-case basis. For more information, please consult PSM.

WHAT WORKS DO NOT REQUIRE PERMISSION?

Works that do not require permission include the following:

- Housekeeping (for facade cleaning works, please seek permission from PSM)
- Maintenance and repair to fittings²
- Landscaping or gardening work
- Pest control treatment
- Events, rituals and festivals (If tentage or temporary fitting-out works are required, please seek permission from PSM)
- Any other works that do not impact the critical elements stated in the PGL

When in doubt about permission, please contact PSM before undertaking any works, including "like-for-like" replacements.

²Fittings refer to things that are neither attached to nor are part of the monument and are not recorded in the PGL as critical objects that require preservation. They are typically movable objects, such as carpets, loose furniture, curtains, paintings and mirrors. Any fitting listed in the PGL is treated as a fixture and prior permission from PSM is required.

Sharing an example:



The restoration of Sultan mosque was completed in 2015.

Sultan Mosque, a National Monument since 1975 and the recipient of the URA Architectural Heritage Awards 2016, is an excellent example of careful restoration.

The mosque's restoration works have prolonged the lifespan of the monument, and affirmed that carefully and well-restored monuments can continue to be useful and relevant in modern times.

An excerpt from URA's write-up on the Sultan Mosque restoration:

The Sultan Mosque is the gleaming result of unwavering consistency in upkeep – an often overlooked aspect of heritage restoration work – by a dedicated team of community leaders.

This Indo-Saracenic architectural structure has been carefully rejuvenated, bestowing it with a stately eminence that is on par with prominent mosques around the world. From every angle, the repair and refurbishment works carried out on this stunning edifice demonstrate immense respect for its architectural roots that date back to the 1920s.

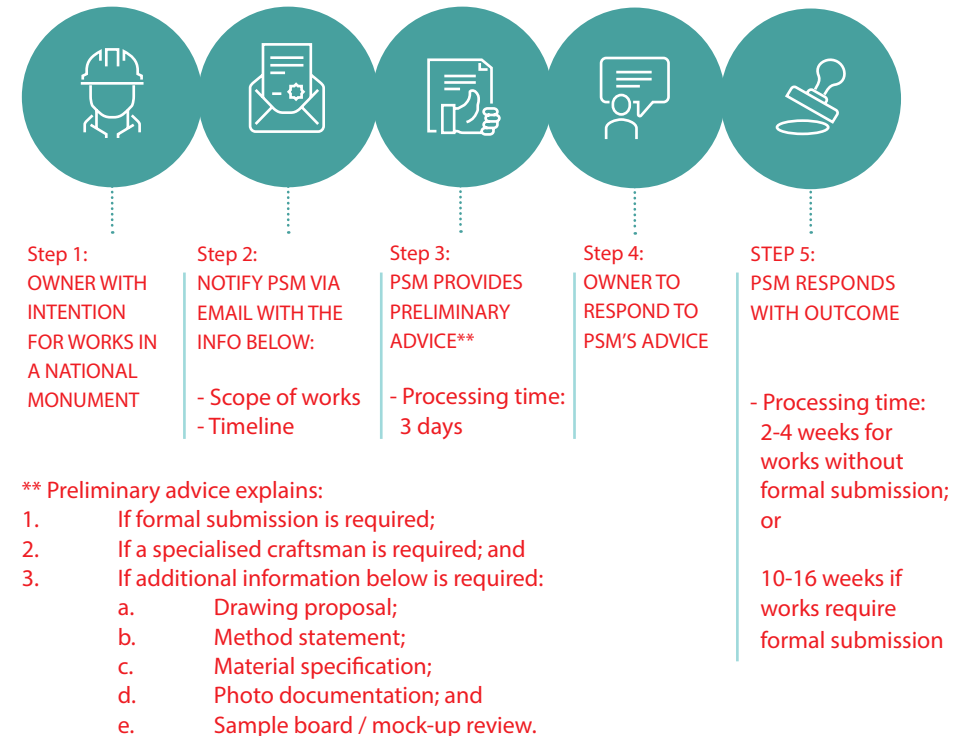
To read more, go to : www.ura.gov.sg/uol/media-room/news/2016/oct/pr16-62.

GETTING CONSENT FOR WORKS ON A NATIONAL MONUMENT

If there is an intention to carry out any building works, please write to PSM providing clear work proposals and working timeline.

Written consent from PSM must be obtained before the commencement of actual work on site. In other words, application for permission cannot be given retrospectively.

If you are in doubt, please contact PSM for guidance.



It is a requirement to seek PSM's consent for works to be carried out on all National Monuments. Any such works proceeding without PSM's prior approval is considered a violation of the Preservation of Monuments Act. The above workflow must be accompanied by formal submissions to the relevant building authority such as URA or BCA, if required.

MAINTAINING A NATIONAL MONUMENT

Under the Preservation of Monuments Act Section 13: *Duty to maintain National Monument*, an owner or occupier has a legal obligation to undertake proper maintenance of all the historic features of the monument. This is usually nothing more than what a house owner will do to maintain a property.

PSM encourages owners and occupiers to maintain their monuments in good condition by adopting sympathetic land use and good housekeeping practices. It is also prudent for owners and occupiers to have a periodic maintenance plan for their monuments. This helps to prevent large scale restoration.

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN OFFENCE?

It is an offence to carry out unauthorised works on a National Monument and its site, and to cause – intentionally or through recklessness – damage to a National Monument. Where damage or unauthorised works to a monument are suspected, such as when Section 15(1) of Preservation of Monuments Act is being contravened, PSM will investigate or may choose to refer it to the police for investigation.³



It is also an offence not to adhere to the conditions to carry out works on a National Monument.

“PSM encourages owners and occupiers to maintain their monuments in good condition by adopting sympathetic land use and good housekeeping practices.”

³Please refer page 4 for description of Section 15(1) of the Preservation of Monuments Act.

MONUMENT INSPECTORATE

From time to time, PSM's monument inspectors – with notice of their visits given in advance – may visit a National Monument to check on its condition. The inspectors will be able to advise owners and occupiers on maintenance measures.



When PSM conducts periodic inspections on National Monuments, both the exteriors and the interiors of the monuments will be checked and photo-documented. From left: PSM monument inspectors conducting checks on the Armenian Church and the Goodwood Park Hotel.

GRANTS AVAILABLE

The National Monument Fund (NMF) is a co-funding scheme that supports eligible National Monuments in their efforts to maintain and restore their buildings.⁴ Special attention is paid to structural repair and other critical works to ensure good preservation practice. The NMF comprises the following two grants:

- NMF (R) - A grant set up in 2008 to assist with the cost of qualifying restoration works, and especially urgent repair works; and
- NMF (M) - A grant set up in 2015 to assist with the cost of qualifying maintenance works essential to the upkeep of the monuments.

For more information, please visit our website at go.gov.sg/nhb-psm-nmf

⁴To date (2022), 31 National Monuments are eligible for financial assistance.



CONTACT PSM

Preservation of Sites and Monuments

National Heritage Board
61 Stamford Road, #03-08
Stamford Court, Singapore 178892

Telephone: (65) 6982 1250

Email: nhb_nationalmonuments@nhb.gov.sg