



Media Release

For immediate release

NHB EMBARKS ON NATION-WIDE SURVEY ON TANGIBLE HERITAGE

SINGAPORE, 6 May 2015 – The National Heritage Board (NHB) is launching a nation-wide survey on tangible heritage in mid 2015. This survey will cover buildings, structures, sites and landscape features of architectural, historical and/or cultural interest. NHB expects to conduct another survey on intangible heritage at end 2015.

2. The above survey was first announced by Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) at the Ministry's Committee of Supply budget debate in March this year. The main objectives of the survey are to carry out a stock-take on the current state of our heritage buildings and sites, and to develop a broad understanding of Singapore's heritage landscape for the purpose of long-term heritage planning.

3. The survey will cover buildings, structures, sites and landscape features of architectural, historical or cultural interest, including structures or sites completed before 1980, those associated with historical events which influenced the development of the nation or local community, and/or those with social, cultural or educational significance, amongst others.

4. There will be two components to the survey which comprises desktop research and field work. The former consolidates existing information from sources such as maps, newspaper records, archival materials, publications etc while the latter captures information on the current conditions of the buildings, structures, sites and landscapes through descriptions, photographs and geographic coordinates etc.

5. Through this survey, which is the most comprehensive survey to be conducted to date, NHB hopes to obtain a more complete understanding of Singapore's tangible heritage and their value, and expand NHB's existing research and documentation efforts. The same research and data will be made available to other public agencies so that heritage considerations (including preservation and/or conservation) could be incorporated during decision-making and planning phases.

6. Said Mrs Rosa Daniel, CEO of NHB, "This exercise is significant in adding to our knowledge and understanding of heritage value. As Singapore's population grows, it is important to ensure that in tandem with intensified development, there are increased efforts to preserve our heritage. This survey is a step forward to enhance our capabilities in research, documentation and commemoration. The outcomes will also contribute to our land planning and development processes to preserve heritage and mitigate the loss of heritage value".

7. With regards to the survey methodology and implementation, NHB will be guided by members of the newly-formed Heritage Advisory Panel (HAP). The HAP comprises experts from various fields, such as architecture, geography, sociology, anthropology and history.

8. Professor Brenda Yeoh, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at NUS, who heads the HAP, said, “The value-add that the panel brings to this project is that we come from diverse fields and backgrounds, and are able to offer different perspectives on heritage issues. Fellow members are able to draw on collective expertise and experience in refining the approach and methods used in the survey to document buildings and sites, and ensuring that the net is cast as widely as possible. By combining documentary research with ground-level surveys, the aim is to build a comprehensive database that will stand us in good stead in supporting endeavours to enrich Singapore’s heritage”.

9. For more details on the Heritage Survey and the Heritage Advisory Panel, please refer to the following annexes:

[Annex A](#): About the Heritage Survey

[Annex B](#): Heritage Advisory Panel

10. For media queries, please contact:

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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 now a statutory board under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. Please visit www.nhb.gov.sg for more information.

About the Heritage Survey

1 NHB will be launching a tender for the Heritage Survey covering tangible heritage in Singapore. This includes information of historic buildings, structures and sites throughout Singapore. This is the first time such a nationwide survey covering the tangible heritage of Singapore will be conducted. This was first announced by Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth during this year's Committee of Supply (COS) debate in March 2015. Apart from the survey on tangible heritage, another nationwide survey covering the intangible heritage of Singapore will be launched later in end-2015.

Scope of the Heritage Survey

2 The Heritage Survey on Tangible Heritage will cover buildings, structures, sites and landscape features of architectural, historical or cultural interest. The following aspects will be covered in the survey:

- Heritage buildings, structures or sites completed in or before 1980;
- Heritage buildings, structures or sites associated with historical events that influenced the development of the nation or the local community;
- Heritage buildings, structures or sites of unique or interesting architectural design or decoration;
- Heritage buildings, structures or sites that function as unique landmarks or widely known among local residents in a particular neighbourhood or locality; and
- Heritage buildings, structures or sites that are have historical significance in terms of with social, cultural, political, economic or value, including but not restricted to notable figures or personalities, traditional trades, festivals, cultural practices (such as customs, rituals and festivals), or community activities.

3 The survey will involve desktop research and field surveys. The desktop research will involve research and collation of information from archival materials, maps and publications, and will identify areas or individual buildings of potential heritage interest and guide the field work. The field survey will capture information of the buildings and sites, including photographs and descriptions of historic and cultural aspects of the building and its activities.

4 Information to be captured:

The following information on heritage buildings, structures and sites will be obtained from the survey:

- Information pertaining to the site, including the name, address, function and typology of the site, etc;
- Geographic coordinates of the site;
- Description of the architecture and physical condition of the site;
- Description of the historical and cultural interest associated with the site;

- Description of intangible heritage located within the buildings or sites, including cultural activities, traditional trades, crafts or businesses associated with the building;
- Photos indicating the architectural features, architectural style and physical condition of the site;
- Where there is limited information of the site, interviews with locals and other informants should be conducted to ascertain the local historical, architectural, social and other cultural information related to the site.

Synergy within NHB and Other Public Agencies

5 The survey will enable NHB to get a more complete understanding of historical sites and their heritage value across the island and allow NHB to build up its existing knowledge and documentation efforts, such as information on National Monuments as well as sites marked in NHB's Heritage Trails and Historic Sites.

6 The research data and findings will be made accessible to public agencies to enhance heritage considerations in their work and planning, and to strengthen inter-agency collaborations. Significant buildings and structures identified through the survey will undergo further research as part of the consideration process for possible preservation or conservation. Survey findings will also guide agencies to incorporate heritage consideration in future planning and developments.

Case Studies

7 In formulating the heritage survey, NHB studied and adapted learning points and procedures from similar surveys done in other cities. For example, Hong Kong had carried out a survey of historic buildings in 1996. The survey identified more than 8,800 buildings built before 1950. This was followed by more in-depth research and assessment to identify buildings of greater heritage value. The identification and listing of heritage buildings was also carried out in the City of Melbourne, Australia.

Heritage Advisory Panel

NHB has formed the Heritage Advisory Panel comprising experts across different disciplines. The Panel was set up to guide the work for the upcoming heritage survey, and advise NHB on best practices and procedures relating to the various heritage initiatives that it will be rolling out. The composition of the Heritage Advisory Panel (HAP) for the period 31 March 2015 to 31 March 2017 is as follows:

S/N	Name	Designation	Role in HAP
1	Professor Brenda Yeoh	Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS and Professor, Department of Geography, NUS	Chair
2	Associate Professor Kwok Kian Woon Anthony	Associate Professor, Division of Sociology, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, NTU	Deputy-Chair
3	Associate Professor Goh Beng Lan	Associate Professor, Department of Southeast Asian Studies, NUS	Member
4	Associate Professor Rajesh Rai	Associate Professor, South Asian Studies Programme, NUS and Assistant Director, Institute of South Asian Studies, NUS	Member
5	Dr Yeo Kang Shua	Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture and Sustainable Design, SUTD/ Honorary Secretary, Singapore Heritage Society (SHS)	Member
6	Mr Zahidi Bin Abdul Rahman	Principal Architect of Zahidi A. R. Arkitek	Member
7	Mr Ler Seng Ann	Group Director Conservation & Development Services, URA	Member
8	Mr Eric Chin	Director, National Archives of Singapore (NAS)	Member