

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

**NATIONAL MONUMENTS FUND EXPANDS IN SCOPE TO PROVIDE GREATER SUPPORT
FOR NATIONAL MONUMENT OWNERS**

Singapore, 8 June 2017 – The Chesed-El Synagogue – gazetted as a National Monument in 1998, was once described as a “magnificent synagogue” by renowned scientist Albert Einstein during his visit to Singapore back in 1922. Today, restoration and maintenance works painstakingly undertaken over the years have enabled the synagogue to retain its beauty and charm. These include a restored roof supported by beautifully crafted Corinthian columns; new tiled floors identical to the original marble flooring; and a fresh coat of mineral paint for its façade and doors.

2 All of the above are co-funded through the *National Monuments Fund (NMF)*, a scheme administered by the Preservation of Sites and Monuments (PSM) division of the National Heritage Board (NHB), which supports monument owners in the upkeep and restoration of Singapore’s National Monuments. Please refer to **Annex A** for the list of National Monuments eligible for the application of the *NMF*.

3 2016 saw the disbursement of a new component to the *NMF* – the *Maintenance Fund*, on top of the existing *Restoration Fund*. The *Maintenance Fund* aims to ensure that monument owners conduct regular maintenance work to restrain building deterioration, thereby preventing unaddressed works from snowballing into significant restoration costs. Please refer to **Annex B** for more information on the *NMF*.

Expanded Scope of Works Eligible for Funding Under the Maintenance Fund

4 In 2017, National Monuments such as the Chesed-El Synagogue will further benefit from the *NMF* with the new, expanded scope of works that the *Maintenance Fund* covers. This will allow for more types of maintenance works to be co-funded by the *NMF*. The expansion of the fund is a result of PSM’s continued engagement with monument owners to better understand the challenges they face, and address their feedback.

5 The list of eligible maintenance works under the *Maintenance Fund* has been expanded to include:

- Arborist (or tree specialist) reports to support the removal of vegetation
- Removal of vegetation close to monument to prevent damage and as a safety measure
- Maintenance works for lightning protection

6 For the Chesed-El Synagogue, the expanded scope of the *Maintenance Fund* will allow the National Monument to conduct assessment studies of nearby overhanging vegetation that is posing risk to the National Monument. This will happen alongside other restoration works such as

upcoming structural enhancements to its front canopies, complete with ornate floral plasterwork and cornices, which would greet congregants and visitors later in the year. The Chesed-El Synagogue will receive close to S\$400,000 from *NMF* for both its maintenance and restoration works in 2017.

Higher Disbursement Sum Awarded under the Maintenance Fund

7 This year, a total of S\$2.2 million will be disbursed to 17 National Monuments. Please refer to **Annex C** for the list of 2017's *NMF* recipients. Of the disbursement, about S\$200,000 will be used to co-fund Maintenance works. This is double the quantum awarded under the *Maintenance Fund* since its inception last year, and reflects the monument owners' growing awareness in the importance of conducting regular maintenance works to restrain building deterioration. Many of the applicants are going beyond basic maintenance such as termite control, and venturing into a wider range of investigative works to establish long-term maintenance plans for their buildings. These works help prevent the ballooning of restoration costs. The doubling in the *Maintenance Fund's* disbursement quantum can also be attributed to its newly expanded scope, which allows for more types of maintenance works to be co-funded.

National Monuments Fund Disbursement (2016 and 2017)				
Type of Fund	2016		2017	
	Amount	No. of Monuments	Amount	No. of Monuments
Restoration Fund	S\$2.2 million	8	S\$2 million	7
Maintenance Fund	S\$100,000	20	S\$200,000	16
Total	S\$2.3 million	23* <i>*Some are recipients of both funds</i>	S\$2.2 million	17* <i>*Some are recipients of both funds</i>

8 Ms Jean Wee, Director of the PSM division, NHB, said: "To ensure that the *National Monuments Fund* remains relevant, our monument inspectors conduct periodic inspections of the National Monuments and regularly invites feedback from our monument owners to review the scope of the Fund. The *Maintenance Fund* category was expanded as a result of this, so as to further enable monument owners to implement preventive measures in more comprehensive ways. We are happy to see the good take-up by monument owners to undertake an expanded scope of works as this reflects their increased commitment and care towards preserving our built heritage in the long run."

Importance of Maintenance Works in Complementing Restoration

9 This year, six out of the seven National Monuments which applied for the *Restoration Fund*, also applied for *Maintenance Fund*. Both categories are designed to be complementary, with the *Maintenance Fund* covering preventive measures and diagnostic approaches to prolong the

lifespan of old buildings, while the *Restoration Fund* covers rectification works that restore the spirit of the buildings' historical fabric.

10 The *Maintenance Fund* also supports investigative efforts, which will aid in identifying and guiding the subsequent restoration works required. In this way, the *Maintenance Fund* supplements the *Restoration Fund* by getting to the root of the architectural issues, and upkeeping the integrity of the building in the long run beyond cosmetic works.

11 For instance, Abdul Gafoor Mosque is working with conservators and specialists on maintenance works such as structural investigation of its roof and pinnacles. These works supported by the *Maintenance Fund* would help guide its in-depth restoration works, including the reinstatement of the exteriors and interiors of the main prayer hall building.

12 Receiving close to S\$500,000 for its restoration and maintenance works in 2017, the mosque will undergo a facelift later this year, which will see the restoration of its eclectic features. This is topped off by the repainted sundial at its pediment, adorned with the names of 25 Islamic prophets in elegant Arabic calligraphy; rising damp treatment; repairs to its stairs, roof and plastered motifs, as well as restoring stained glass windows around its dome. Together, these works will contribute to a beautiful and more conducive environment for the mosque.

13 Please refer to:

- **Annex A:** List of National Monuments eligible for the application of the *NMF*
- **Annex B:** About the *NMF*
- **Annex C:** List of *NMF* recipients in 2017

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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 www.nhb.gov.sg 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, 72 structures have been gazetted as National Monuments. For more information on the PSM division, please visit www.nhb.gov.sg/psm.

List of National Monuments Eligible for the Application of the NMF

There are currently 31 non-profit or religious National Monuments that qualify for the grant:

1. Abdul Gafoor Mosque
2. Al-Abrar Mosque
3. Alkaff Upper Serangoon Mosque
4. Armenian Church of St Gregory
5. Cathedral of the Good Shepherd
6. Chesed-El Synagogue
7. Church of Our Lady of Lourdes
8. Church of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
9. Church of St Peter and St Paul
10. Church of St Teresa
11. Hajjah Fatimah Mosque
12. Hong San See
13. Jamae Mosque
14. Lian Shan Shuang Lin Monastery (Former Siong Lim Temple)
15. Maghain Aboth Synagogue
16. Nagore Dargah Indian Muslim Heritage Centre
17. Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church
18. Singapore Yu Huang Gong (Former Keng Teck Whay)
19. Sri Mariamman Temple
20. Sri Perumal Temple
21. Sri Thendayuthapani Temple
22. St Andrew's Cathedral
23. St George's Church
24. St Joseph's Church
25. Sultan Mosque (Masjid Sultan)
26. Tan Si Chong Su
27. Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church
28. Thian Hock Keng (Chong Wen Ge & Chong Hock Pavilion)
29. Tou Mu Kung
30. Ying Fo Fui Kun
31. Yueh Hai Ching Temple

About the NMF

In 2008, the *National Monuments Fund* was introduced with a first tranche of \$5 million, dedicated to monument restoration works. In 2015, in recognition of the growing needs of our National Monuments, and to better support the monument owners in addressing these needs, the *NMF* was given a second tranche of S\$11.77 million.

In addition to its increased funding pool, the enhanced *NMF* went beyond restoration to include a new category of funding for maintenance. This *Maintenance Fund* was allocated S\$2 million from the second tranche, and aims to ensure that stakeholders conduct regular maintenance work to restrain building deterioration, thereby preventing unaddressed works from snowballing into significant restoration costs. Monument owners will be able to receive funding from PSM for regular maintenance work based on their identified needs. 2016 saw the first batch of recipients of the enhanced *NMF*, which included the *Restoration Fund* recipients, and the pioneer batch of *Maintenance Fund* recipients.

To encourage responsible ownership of the National Monuments, *NMF* is disbursed through a co-funding scheme. Application is open to the 31 National Monuments that are owned and managed by non-profit or religious organisations. To apply, monument owners will need to be able to financially support the restoration works, with the disbursement quantum individually assessed based on the severity and scope of work required for rectification.

The outstanding costs of works not covered by *NMF*, including those for upgrading and enhancement works unrelated to but done in conjunction with the restoration or maintenance process, are usually covered by donations raised by the monument owners.

List of NMF Recipients in 2017

Note: Some monuments may have been grant recipients in earlier years.

	National Monument	NMF (Restoration) – 7 recipients	NMF (Maintenance) – 16 recipients
1	Abdul Gafoor Mosque	✓	✓
2	Al-Abrar Mosque	✓	✓
3	Armenian Church of St Gregory		✓
4	Chesed-El Synagogue	✓	✓
5	Church of Our Lady of Lourdes		✓
6	Church of St Teresa		✓
7	Church of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary	✓	✓
8	Hong San See		✓
9	Maghain Aboth Synagogue	✓	✓
10	Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church		✓
11	Sri Mariamman Temple		✓
12	Sri Perumal Temple		✓
13	St George's Church		✓
14	St Joseph's Church	✓	✓
15	Tan Si Chong Su		✓
16	Thian Hock Keng		✓
17	Ying Fo Fui Kun	✓	