



GIVING A FUTURE TO OUR PAST

**SINGAPORE
HERITAGE
SOCIETY**

7 November 2020

BY E-MAIL AND BY HAND

Mr Lim Eng Hwee
Chief Executive Officer
Urban Redevelopment Authority
45 Maxwell Road
The URA Centre
SINGAPORE 069118

Dear Mr Lim,

PROPOSED GAZETTING OF GOLDEN MILE COMPLEX FOR CONSERVATION

The Singapore Heritage Society (SHS) would like to extend warm congratulations to the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) on the landmark proposal to conserve the Golden Mile Complex.

We are heartened to see that our advocacy over the years about the importance of conserving Singapore's modernist architectural icons has been noted. As you know, in August 2018 the SHS issued a position paper entitled *Too Young to Die: Giving New Lease of Life to Singapore's Modernist Icons* (<https://www.singaporeheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/SHS-Position-Paper-Too-Young-To-Die-Aug-2018.pdf>) calling for the conservation of, among others, the Golden Mile Complex.

While we lament the loss of key architectural heritage sites such as the recently demolished Pearl Bank Apartments, and other beloved foci of Singapore's cultural and social memories such as the National Theatre and the former National Library building, we are pleased that the desirability of conserving modernist architecture in Singapore is now better recognized.

The work of the SHS is guided by a conception of heritage as the living presence of the past. Emblematic of the pioneer spirit and grit of the early years of Singapore's post-independence period, the Golden Mile Complex is very much part of this living presence which we cherish. We recognize that the Golden Mile Complex is a building with unique architectural and historical value, which is rich with a sense of place and community.

The SHS strongly believes that it is by conserving our heritage that we can strengthen our society. As such, we would like to commend and support the URA's decision to listen to and work with the community, and to put forward an innovative and practical conservation proposal that seeks to balance the architectural integrity and commercial viability of the site.

We sincerely hope that the gazetting of the site, if successful, will set a precedent for safeguarding other works of modernist architecture in Singapore's landscape that give our nation its character, and help the community to feel a sense of belonging and groundedness. Let us together give a future to our past.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jack Tsen-Ta Lee', with a stylized, cursive script.

JACK TSEN-TA LEE (Dr)
President
Singapore Heritage Society

cc Mr Desmond Lee
Minister for National Development