Abstract
Conservation of built heritage is undertaken as an integral part of land-use planning in Singapore. The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) is the government agency formally empowered since 1989 under the nation’s legislation to oversee conservation, in addition to planning and facilitating the physical development of the island-state’s limited land resources.

The agency identifies historically significant areas/buildings/structures for conservation, administers the framework to legally protect them and work with building owners to restore and adapt their properties for re-use. Carried out on a highly selective basis, conservation often involves trade-offs. The fundamental approach is to keep the hardware. Owners have the flexibility to decide on the software. They can bring in new uses to extend the economic life span of the buildings.

Since conservation formally started, the operating conditions have been changing alongside economic and social progress. Today’s context see a more enlightened and vocal public, high real estate value and increasing demand for land to meet development needs to sustain economic growth and living standard.

As the state planner, URA has adopted varied approaches for different locations and sites to reconcile conflicting objectives and respond to challenges. Close collaboration with stakeholders is an important ingredient to implement conservation so as to bring benefit to the owner, the community and the State over the long term.