

9 October 2020

## Proposed conservation of Golden Mile Complex

### *Joint statement by the Singapore Heritage Society, ICOMOS Singapore, and the DoCoMoMo Singapore Working Group*

The Singapore Heritage Society, ICOMOS Singapore, and the DoCoMoMo Singapore Working Group wholeheartedly welcome the proposal from the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) to gazette Golden Mile Complex for conservation.

The proposal is unprecedented as it marks an important milestone in the way large, modernist buildings will be given recognition in the future, and this helps to ensure that examples of architecture from all periods of Singapore's development will be retained for future generations.

The conservation of Golden Mile Complex is significant in various ways:

1. Historical and Architectural Value:

Our respective organisations have repeatedly emphasised the historical significance of Golden Mile Complex as an iconic expression of Singapore's push towards modernity in its formative nation-building years of the early 1970s, as well as being an internationally acclaimed, ground-breaking architectural concept at the time.

Conserving Golden Mile Complex will enrich the story of Singapore's post-independence development for future generations through the cityscape that Singaporeans live in. The physical fabric would provide an anchor for inter-generational social memories, as well as an opportunity to retain intangible characteristics that contribute to the site's unique identity.

2. Sustainability:

As Carl Elefante said, "The greenest building is the one that is already built".<sup>[i]</sup> It is therefore pertinent that Singapore focuses on existing buildings and finds as much new potential in them as possible, thereby prolonging their shelf life.

Overseas examples such as the Brunswick Centre and Barbican Complex in London prove that the regeneration of large mid-20th century modernist structures can be very successful. With the development incentives which the URA is prepared to provide, and through innovative adaptive reuse, such projects can refresh and add value to aging buildings and the experience of the city itself.

We acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of the URA in carefully considering the various perspectives of different stakeholders in deciding to propose that Golden Mile Complex be accorded conservation status.

In response to the URA's call for the public's views, we urge Singaporeans to submit their expressions of support for the conservation of Golden Mile Complex.

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[i] Carl Elefante, 'The greenest building is... one that is already built,' *Forum Journal, The Journal of the National Trust for Historic Preservation*, vol 21, no 4, 2007, pp 26–38.

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## ABOUT



### **Singapore Heritage Society**

Founded in 1987, the Singapore Heritage Society is a non-profit, nongovernmental organisation and registered charity with Institution of Public Character (IPC) status. As an independent voice on heritage issues in Singapore, it is dedicated to research, education and advocacy relating to Singapore's history, culture and identity. Run by volunteers, the Society's active members include academics and professionals in related industries as well as serious enthusiasts from all walks of life. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in local history and heritage.

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## **ICOMOS Singapore**

Founded in 1965, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is an association of over 10,000 cultural heritage professionals present in over 100 countries, working for the conservation and protection of monuments and sites. The only global non-government organisation of its kind, ICOMOS is officially recognized as an advisory body to UNESCO. On 14 May 2014, ICOMOS Singapore, a National Committee for Singapore, was officially sanctioned by the ICOMOS Executive Committee. ICOMOS Singapore consists of multidisciplinary heritage professionals who have for many years worked closely on government and non-government projects concerning Singapore's heritage, historical sites, and monuments.

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## **DoCoMoMo Singapore**

DoCoMoMo International is a non-profit organization dedicated to the documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the modern movement. Currently, it includes 69 national chapters and more than 3,000 members, in Europe, America, Asia, Oceania and Africa comprising historians, architects, town-planners, landscape architects, conservationists, teachers, students and public officials.

DoCoMoMo Singapore is founded in 2018 as a working group, to be formalised as a National Chapter by end 2020. It is actively involved in the research, documentation, promotion and conservation of Singapore's modern built heritage.

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