

My Community recognises the need for greater cohesion and connection in assessing values to heritage buildings. These recommendations require a fundamental adjustment in the authorities' approach to embrace public participation in any form of assessment. The existing framework in Queenstown also ensures that a cordial and sustainable working relationship between the statutory boards and citizens can be conceived and easily replicated. In the long term, an institutional framework is essential to ensure that conservation programmes remain responsive and relevant to ever-changing cultural conditions.

4.1 Impact Assessment Study

Firstly, My Community proposes that a heritage and social impact assessment study be conducted in Queenstown which combines anthropology, economics, architecture and history in examining the values associated to heritage. While we acknowledge that no single value-assessment methodology can provide perfect information to influence conservation decisions given the varied nature of heritage, adopting a number of perspectives can allow better judgment on conservation decisions.

The study will involve both quantitative and qualitative methodologies derived from different epistemologies to articulate heritage values from different groups of people. Examples of the methodologies include ethnographic studies, focus groups interviews, cultural mapping and community involvement. My Community intends to collaborate with URA and HDB on the study in 2015 and we believe that the impact of the study will be wide ranging and important for assessing values attributed to heritage conservation.

1.2 Queenstown Conservation Areas

Secondly, My Community suggests that URA look into conserving a small neighbourhood area instead of isolated buildings within Queenstown. The creation of conservation areas in Tanglin Halt, Stirling and Alexandra can maintain the physical character of the estate and capture the evolution of Singapore's urban and residential development from the 1950s to 1970s.

For instance, the Tanglin Halt Neighbourhood Centre, comprising Tanglin Halt Community Plaza bordered by Commonwealth Drive Food Centre and six blocks of two-storey shop houses, is a historically identifiable market square that serves as a third space for residents to gather and interact over the past five decades. According to Ku, the Neighbourhood Centre is also one of the last remaining fragments of the original Queenstown and conserving the Neighbourhood Centre can save for future generations a vestige of the 1960s Queenstown.

Furthermore, the iconic Stirling and Margaret Drive neighbourhoods, comprising three seven-storey residential flats, thirteen two-storey terrace blocks, a sports complex, a library, a former polyclinic and a former wet market, serve not only as a tribute to the beginnings of Singapore's public housing programme, but also as a lasting reminder of Queenstown's role as Singapore's first satellite town where many social institutions were pioneered and conceived.

No	Conservation Area
1	<p>Tanglin Halt Conservation Area</p>  <p>The map illustrates the Tanglin Halt Conservation Area, a residential estate in Singapore. A red dashed line outlines the conservation boundary. Key features include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential blocks: 48, 48A, 47, 49, 46-3, 46-2, 46-1, 45, 46, 34, 2A, 1A, 71, 72, 65, 64, 64A, 50, 50A, 89, 90, 91A. Commercial and Community: 48A MKT (Market), Foodcourt, Shops, Alexandra NPP (National Park). Infrastructure: Tanglin Halt MRT station, bus stops (CP), and roads including Tanjong Pagar Road (DR) and Tanglin Halt Road (RD). Other: A 'yo:HA @ nmorwealth' facility is also visible. </p>

2	Queenstown Conservation Area (which includes Stirling and Margaret Drive)



1.3 My Queenstown Heritage Trust and Heritage Council

Thirdly, My Community suggests that the government creates a strong institutional framework to coordinate, control and resolve issues and challenges associating with heritage conservation and development in Queenstown. Currently, the three government agencies tasked with heritage issues – NHB, PSM and the URA – have overlapping and ambiguous roles and a more comprehensive approach to preserve heritage buildings is fundamental to prevent historically valuable landmarks from being demolished. However, we also acknowledge that heritage issues are often intrinsic to the context of the local community and establishing of an all-encompassing agency without public participation may not be well advised.

An independent and properly financed institution modelled after UK National Trust can be enacted to conserve, manage and operate Singapore's built heritage. The institution should be empowered to gazette heritage buildings

for conservation, properly financed to carry out restoration works and possess the necessary professional expertise to conduct impact assessment studies.

A local unit of the institution, My Queenstown Heritage Council, made up of representatives from existing government agencies and civic groups, conservation professionals, citizens and other stakeholders, can be pioneered in Queenstown to oversee matters relating to heritage conservation. For instance, the Council would have the powers to ensure that stringent conservation principles are upheld in protected sites within Queenstown. The Council will also manage a Trust Fund, which is established to fund education, research and other activities relating to history and heritage.

A successful heritage council made up of government officials and the civic society can bridge the gaps in the system and allow for greater cohesion and connection in resolving heritage issues. A successful heritage council in Queenstown can also serve as a prototype for other estates.

1.4 Heritage Tourism and Education

Last but not least, My Community urges the authorities to consider the potential economic contribution of heritage conservation in Queenstown in the form of education and tourism. While we agree that the measurement and advocacy for heritage conservation on economic grounds are insulting to the immeasurable qualities of Queenstown's built patrimony, the economic activity which can be potentially generated should not be ignored.

Guided tours to My Queenstown Heritage Trails take place on every last Sunday of the month and have attracted over 3,500 participants in the past five years. A second guided tour to the mysterious Alexandra Hospital tunnels will be launched in early 2015 and a third tour to the urban cemetery at Shuang Long Shan Wu Shu Memorial Hall will commence in 2016. My Community is also working with representatives from the Singapore Tourism Board, tourist guides from the Society of Tourist Guides (Singapore) and residents to create unique local experiences for foreign visitors. Tourists and Singaporeans alike have responded positively to the guided tours which feature personal accounts from long time residents and diverse architectural forms ranging from pre-war colonial bungalows in Wessex to post-war residential buildings and social institutions in Stirling and Margaret Drive respectively.

The biannual My Queenstown Festival, which features exhibitions, concerts and performances inspired by Queenstown or performed by Queenstown residents, aim to inspire audiences through world class performances that centre on Singapore's first satellite estate and evolving popular culture. The inaugural Festival took place in September 2013 and featured 37 exhibitions, performances and concerts which attracted over 25,000 residents and visitors.

The next festival will take place in September 2015. My Community is collaborating with STB and the National Arts Council to promote Queenstown's unique history and heritage to a wider audience.

2. Conclusion

Queenstown needs unequivocal support from the Government to create sustainable and broad ranging heritage policies that protect heritage buildings in the neighbourhood. A transparent public-private partnership in conducting impact assessment studies and institutionalising legislation arrangements can ensure that the heritage assets in Queenstown will continue to benefit present and future generations of Singaporeans.