ABSTRACT

The concept of building recycling has been around for many years but it has only been widely practiced recently in the local context. Recycling of buildings is an important concept for a land scarce island like Singapore.

Old buildings offer boundless opportunities for reuse. However, not every use may be suitable. This is where building performance evaluation comes into the picture. Old buildings must be accessed for its functional viability in a situation where it is to be reused for a purpose similar to or radically different from its initial use.

Economics is another important concern. It is not necessarily always cheaper to recycle an old building than to redevelop one and vice-versa. It also depends on the perceived use of the building when it is recycled. A radical change of use may make it uneconomical to recycle the building, but it could also be otherwise. Thus, it is by the imperativeness of such concerns surrounding the concept of building recycling that this study is aimed at putting straight. It must also be agreed that building recycling is at its infancy stage in Singapore and such a study will prove timely.

The study concludes that building recycling need not compromise on functional performance and a building’s original design should not restrict it from changing to a new use. Where economics is concerned, altruistic causes may take on a higher priority than feasibility studies at the end of the day.

Keywords: Recycling, conservation, preservation, economic viability, functional viability, building performance, system integration.