(RE)INTERPRETING THE PAST: A STRATEGY FOR ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

by

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Abstract

This paper is a study into the various approaches to architectural heritage conservation in Singapore. It commences with the case studies of 3 conservation areas in Singapore. The paper approaches the study by investigating the tendency of contemporary conservation authorities to 'commodify' heritage in the course of conservation. This is most prevalent when the resultant conservation areas are used to attract foreign tourists. The paper attempts to develop strategies for more appropriate conservation by studying the positive and negative aspects of current conservation works. It will also attempt to formulate appropriate design strategies for the conservation of individual buildings.

Part I of the paper presents issues and theories related to conservation. It provides the foundation for subsequent discourse in the later parts by examining the concept of heritage, its commodification, urban renewal and conservation in Singapore.

Part II and Part III of the paper comprises the case studies constituted namely by, Chinatown, Singapore River and Shophouse Redevelopment in Emerald Hill. The 3 studies are chosen because of their different context. More importantly, it shall be seen that the conservation approach taken in each case employed different strategies which subsequently resulted in somewhat different urbanscape.

Part IV of the paper investigates how suitable design and planning strategies can be developed to approach conservation without contrived (re)presentation.

Part V concludes the paper.