ARCHITECTURE ON THE COAST
Exploring New Frontiers in Singapore

by

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ABSTRACT

From the beginning of the 1960s and especially when Singapore became a sovereign nation on 9 August 1965, she has developed very rapidly both economically and socially. However, as Singapore progressed, its developmental needs such as housing, industry and recreation have also escalated. This presents a major challenge to Singapore due to its limited resources such as land, and is further exacerbated by the sharp rise in local population.

Land use planners have successfully intensified the development of the main island through the Master Plan and Long-range Comprehensive Concept Plan. However, optimal use of valuable coastal areas and sea-space has not been achieved in the push for urgent development since the years following the nation’s independence. Economic efficiency, therefore, lies in achieving higher productivity in existing uses and in the better utilization of available resources. Since petroleum and shipping industries have reached an “optimum” point, new niches cannot be created by expanding these activities. Resources should rather be released by trimming the capacity of these industries and reinvesting in some other sunrise industries. One proposal of sunrise industries is that of a new and novel floating marine development, to carry on from where petroleum and shipping industries have left off. This integrated multi-use concept attempts to reconcile the pressing needs of meeting urgent developmental issues on the one hand, and the better utilization as well as preservation of our coastal resources on the other. This innovative concept may very well have a future in Singapore, given a

suitable constellation of factors (political and environmental as much as economic and technical) on a small scale for an appropriate situation.

Scarcity of land for industrial, residential and other major forms of expansion will eventually fuel the drive offshore. Where neither space nor relocation are factors, there is a third circumstance in which artificial islands will begin to be employed more extensively. The use of artificial islands in Singapore will, no doubt, piecemeal increase steadily in the coming decades in response to the needs of specific situations.

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