CONTINUITY OF THE PAST:
THROUGH ADAPTIVE REUSE

by

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ABSTRACT

As most part of the world become more international in style and scale, it
is inevitable for change to occur at a relative fast speed, thus displacing most of
whatever that do not keep the same pace. Very often, in terms of architecture, it
refers to historical heritages that in the eyes of economy driven society, should
be demolished to make way for more economically viable buildings and usage.
However, one can never deny that the heritage is priceless. It is perhaps the only
tangible entity we all have to grasp our history and culture, thus the linkage to the
past. It would also define our identity and gives us our sense of belonging to that
epoch.

"[A] nation must have a memory to give it a sense of cohesion, continuity and identity...
The longer the past, the greater the awareness of a nation's identity... A sense of a common
history is what provides the links to hold together a people who come from the four corners of the

To ensure that such heritage survive the test of time, and yet do not
become obsolete, new functions and activities are often injected to revitalize the
area. However appropriate any injections are, they would only be valuable if they
were able to ensure that they retain the significant character, be it physical or
ambience of its prior state.

This dissertation arises out of looking at how one can, through change,
ensure the economic viability of heritage and at the same time, also continue the
cultural and architectural values by respecting forms, scales, contexts, styles,
textures, spaces, fabrics and even activities at times. It looks particularly at the
Singapore context and tries to evaluate how successful Singapore is in this
aspect, and so provides a guide to future adaptive reuse interventions.

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