SUMMARY

Conservation of the pre-war shophouses has taken a new direction in the Singapore property market since the government has led the way in promoting the idea. About 3,900 units of these pre-war shophouses will be conserved and rehabilitated over the next few years. The issue of maintenance considerations given during the design stage provides a relevant and timely research study.

This dissertation examines the link between design and maintenance in the conservation process of the pre-war shophouses. Attention is focussed on the design process adopted by the URA in the conservation of the pre-war shophouses. A case study of the completed pilot conservation project at Tanjong Pagar (Phase I) is examined and the problems relating to premature maintenance works are analysed and problems resulting from the lack of maintenance consideration given during the design stage are discussed.

The case study has identified some factors which have given rise to some premature maintenance problems. These factors are as follows:-

(a) materials and methods used have not gone through process of time-testing since conservation of pre-war shophouses is new in Singapore.
(b) clear indication that designers are lacking in understanding in giving maintenance considerations at design stage.

(c) maintenance personnels are not involved during the conservation process, and

(d) designers are more preoccupied in retaining of existing elements to reflect conservation efforts than giving maintenance considerations.

This dissertation further demonstrates that there is a need to give maintenance considerations in the conservation process which would extend beyond the primary concern in conserving the architectural character of the pre-war shophouses.

Designers and owners must be aware of the long term maintenance problems so that an effective approach can be adopted in the conservation of the pre-war shophouses. The development of closer interaction between the designers and maintainers as well as researches on the materials and conservation methods used in the conservation process would help in reducing maintenance costs during the occupation of these shophouses. These would almost certainly keep the rehabilitated shophouses in a better condition to last longer. This must surely be in the national interest.