Abstract

This dissertation attempts to look into the problems of continuity within historic districts by studying the problems of the conservation areas in Singapore, with particular reference to Chinatown, and aims to provide an alternative counter-point for the conservation areas in general by looking at various examples, both locally (examples of the ‘marketplace’ in Bugis Village and rehabilitation programmes at Emerald Hill) and overseas (Quincy Market Revitalisation and Chester Conservation Area).

The study has shown that the focus should be on retaining the population density and ensuring a diversity of activities within the contemporary needs of today through the notion of transfiguration. The aspects of regenerating life into the areas include the introduction of compatible adaptive reuse and rehabilitation programmes for the restored urban fabric, and the revitalisation of the street-level activities so as to ensure the vibrancy and vitality of the historic areas, so as to recapture the essence from the past.

Therefore, apart from ensuring authenticity in the physical restoration of the historic districts, the genuine continuity of the activities and people within the districts would ensure that the character of the community is retained and further enhanced to recapture the spirit of the place.