Abstract

"Singapore is a very small place in a very, very large, variable, changing world, and if it is not nimble, if it is not swift in making adjustments, it will perish and the people know that."

Lee Kuan Yew¹

Swift in making adjustments.

Too swift perhaps?

Almost all of Singapore is less than 31 years old and while there is still evidence of the past found in some parts, it is very important that this very memory of the past is represented to the next generation sensitively and accurately.

If today’s Singapore is a representation of development and progress, then these characteristics should be echoed in the urban landscape;² but this reflection must be carefully investigated so that the city does not lose the element of a memory that bridges the future with the past since according to S Rajaratnam,

"[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 came from the four corners of the earth."

S Rajaratnam³

¹ Lee Kuan Yew, The Straits Times, 27/5/90
² For the purpose of this discussion, Urban Landscape is defined as the material and physical fabric of the city landscape, with all the tangible elements like buildings and streets and others co-existing to become part of this urban landscape.
³ S Rajaratnam, A bimonthly selection of Ministerial Speeches, Ministry of Communications and Information, 1984