ABSTRACT

The initial idea of this thesis proposal came about during the course of my dissertation research concerning underground spaces. The consequence of the ongoing development of the Esplanade Mall which consists of an underground commercial mall across the War Memorial Park, linking the City Hall MRT Station, Marina Square, Suntec City and the future Singapore Arts Centre pose the crux for my thesis.

The War Memorial Park overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the neighbouring buildings exists as a transition between the two major commercial nodes, Raffles City and the Bay Area comprising the Marina Square, Millenia Singapore, Suntec City and the future Singapore Art Centre. This setting offers a mere green visual relief rather than the more significant memory of history. The luring of the crowds to the underground shopping mall would further undermine its significance. This results in a contradiction with the recent call for National Education, which objective is to prevent a general crisis of ignorance about Singapore’s history and heritage, by providing a conducive environment for the revitalisation of interest in Singapore’s past.

Thus **THE PEOPLE MUSEUM** is proposed to reinstate the monument, restoring its focus and appropriateness within the new city’s texture and fabric. The Civilian War

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2 The underground Shopping mall is the first in Singapore, linking City Hall MRT station to Marina Centre with 6 000 sq m of retail space and a peak hour pedestrian flow in excess of 24 000 persons. See Appendix.
3 The size of the four towering columns is one aspect of the monumental that make it appropriate, yet it is barely salient to passer-by due to the adjacent soaring skyscrapers.
Memorial attempts to evoke the remembrance of the distant Japanese Occupation will not be faded from the younger generation's consciousness with time, but reworked here with the transformation of the city's urban development as a 'near continuity'⁵.

The museum will serve as the premier resource centre of Singapore's history and heritage. Situated amidst the commercial activities, the museum is directed at a wider cachet of citizens than those who teach, study or take an amateur interest in it. It is planned as a part of a network of malls, which creates opportunities for the integration of the galleries and the pedestrian mall. On another level, it will also create a setting for commemorating events that mark moments of our history.