

BACK YARD⁶⁵

NAME: _____

SECTOR: 07/08	AREA: Bukit Pasoh-Tanjong Pagar	
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Welcome

to *Bukit Pasoh* and *Tanjong Pagar*. Backyard65 showcases the ever-changing landscape of Singapore, as well as the city's history and evolving architecture.



This booklet has defined three different place categories, with places of interest at each location:

Design & Architecture

In presenting the history and the culture that is authentic to



Food & Entertainment

Singapore, Backyard65 seeks to encourage the wider community to explore and



People & Events

discover different aspects of Singapore, our own backyard.

The locations in this booklet have been curated to showcase the sights and sounds of *Bukit Pasoh* and *Tanjong Pagar*, with a walking trail for users to discover the neighbourhood.

Scan the QR code⁽¹⁾ to find the places through our digital map. Alternatively, you can make use of the Plus Code featured on each page to locate the place on Google Maps.

From Tanjong Pagar MRT station to Outram MRT station, you can start from either points or even in the middle. Experience the trail your way; most importantly, enjoy our city, our backyard.



⁽¹⁾ goo.gl/maps/PmXaw8LbeTG1CaPj6

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①

SENG WONG BEO TEMPLE

> 113 Peck Seah Street, Singapore 079332

Nestled between tall hotels and office buildings, *Seng Wong Buo* Temple is a small Taoist temple that was founded in 1898 and then rebuilt in 1905. Founded by *Master Rui Yu* (1867-1953) and *Khoo Seok Wan* (1874 - 1941), the temple is dedicated to the Provincial City God or *Wei Ling Gong*, which is the most senior City God found in Singapore.

Remember the rules of temple etiquette as you enter the temple and you will be greeted by fascinating décor and religious statues.



↑ Signage of the temple at the main entrance.

②

TANJONG PAGAR PLAZA

> 1 Tanjong Pagar Plaza, Singapore o82001



(1)

Completed in 1977, Tanjong Pagar Plaza serves many people, from office workers to residents who live in the blocks above. It has many amenities, including a wet market, a food centre, a supermarket and restaurants. Walk around the plaza to experience a residential neighbourhood nestled in the cityscape of Tanjong Pagar.

Look out for the local favourites like the ⁽¹⁾traditional biscuit shops in the market and several popular bakeries, including one serving ⁽²⁾muffins. There is also a ⁽³⁾banh mi shop on level 2, serving this popular Vietnamese sandwich. Don't miss the traditional ⁽⁴⁾medical store on level one that has evolved to become a modern pharmacy. These are the many interesting finds in the plaza, which give Tanjong Pagar Plaza a distinctive flavour.



↪ The prominent signage that precedes the area of Tanjong Pagar Plaza.

(2)



NOTE:

- (1) A bookstall - five-footway library of the old.
- (2) FairPrice supermarket in the heartlands.

③

VANDA MISS JOAQUIN ORCHID GARDEN

> Yan Kit Road

The Vanda Miss Joaquim Pavilion in Tanjong Pagar marks the nearby birthplace of the Papilionanthe Miss Joaquim, the first recorded orchid hybrid from Singapore in the 1890s. The plant was named after *Agnes Joaquim*, the breeder of the orchid hybrid.

In 1981 the Vanda Miss Joaquim was recognised as Singapore's national flower. Ms Joaquim was a member of the Armenian community, one of the important early immigrant communities that made significant contributions to Singapore.



↑ Drawing of Papilionanthe 'Miss Joaquim'.

④

FORMER YAN KIT SWIMMING POOL

> 5 Tanjong Pagar Plaza, Singapore 081005



(3)

Opened in 1952, Yan Kit Swimming Pool was Singapore's second public swimming pool. The first public swimming pool in Singapore was the Mount Emily Swimming Complex in Upper Wilkie Road.

As a popular pool in the past, it was standing room only, with strict timed sessions enforced. The pool closed in 2001 but today, the original entrance façade still stands. A carpet of grass rests over the old pool, inviting visitors to enjoy the space today.

(4)



NOTE:

- (3) A popular recreation amongst the residents.
- (4) Children having fun at the pool.

5

NEIL ROAD – RAIN TREE

> 146 Neil Rd, Singapore o88875

The Rain Tree or *Samanea saman* is one of the most common roadside trees in Singapore. Originating from Central and South America, it was first introduced into Singapore in the 1870s and by the mid-1900s, was planted throughout South East Asia.

The leaves are actually leaflets that fold up in the evenings, which is probably why the Malays call it the 'Pukul Lima' or 'Five o'clock' tree.

Five o'clock was considered the sunset hour in Singapore and Malaysia before changes were made to Standard Time in the early 1980s. Shaped like an umbrella, the tree can easily open up from 20 to 30 metres in width, making it an ideal shelter.



(6)



(5)

NOTE:

- (5) This was once a back alley for night soil collection.
- (6) Located near the junction of The Pinnacle@Duxton.

(7)



⑥

SINGAPORE CHIN WOO (ATHLETIC) ASSOCIATION SIGNAGE

> 126 Neil Road, Singapore o88857

Singapore Chin Woo (Athletic) Association is one of the oldest martial arts groups in Singapore. Originating from Shanghai and established in Singapore in 1921, the members of the association are still active to this day.

The sign is a reminder that the location used to serve and still serves as a training ground for the Chin Woo Athletic Association. The Chin Woo Athletic signage is not just a physical reminder of the association's history, but also the area's storied past. The association's clubhouse is located nearby at 90 Neil Road.



↑ Chin Woo Athletic Association signage.

(8)



← Emblem of Chin Woo Athletic Association.

(9)



NOTE:

- (8) A popular recreation amongst the community.
- (9) Members of Chin Woo practising pugilistic artforms.

7

DUXTON PLAIN PARK

> New Bridge Road, Singapore o89140

Neil Road goes over a bridge that hides an underpass connecting both sides of the park today. This little corridor forms part of Duxton Plain Park that now connects New Bridge Road to Yan Kit Road.

Its unusual linear shape⁽¹⁰⁾ also belies the fact that a railway track used to run through this area. Now a quiet space for the public to enjoy, it is hard to imagine that from 1907 to around 1914, there was a railway track that ran on the same pathway used by pedestrians today.

Part of the Singapore-Kranji Railway line⁽¹⁰⁾, the track extended from the Southern Docks to Tank Road and then Kranji. As the rail network improved, the line was made defunct and was dismantled in 1925. This could also be due to the noise, which affected residents living nearby.



(10)

8

GOETHE-INSTITUT

> 136 Neil Road, Singapore o88865

The Goethe-Institut Singapore is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global network of more than 150 institutes across 92 countries. Set up with the purpose of promoting the German language abroad and facilitating international cultural co-operation, the institute was first set up in Singapore in 1978 and was relocated to its present site in the historic Neil Road area on 26 March 2014.

Located at the junction that connects Neil Road to Bukit Pasoh Road, this building is an example of Chinese Art Deco style from the 1920s and 1930s⁽¹¹⁾.

Look out for the use of Chinese green glazed tiles on the parapets and the modern interpretation of Chinese-style brackets to support the balconies. This restored building stands out as a landmark, welcoming visitors to the historic neighbourhood.



(11)

NOTE:

- (10) A backyard for the residents, traces of roosters can still be spotted today!
- (11) Prominently situated at the entrance to Bukit Pasoh Road.

9

UNITED CHINESE LIBRARY

> 53 Cantonment Road, Singapore 089753



↑ Handwritten signage by *Dr Sun Yat Sen*.

53 Cantonment Road has been the premises of the United Chinese Library since 1986. The United Chinese Library was introduced at 51 Armenian Street on 8 August 1910 by *Dr Sun Yat Sen*. Today, the United Chinese Library actively promotes Chinese culture and literature through talks and classes.

Cantonment Road runs up a hill that, in the 1830s, marked the western boundary of the colonial Chinese town south of Singapore River. Cantonment refers to a group of lodgings assigned to the East India Company's Sepoy troops that were based nearby between 1824 and 1858. The Chinese refer to the road as 'end of Bukit Pasoh'.

Look out for the wooden signboard hung over the main door of the Library. This bears *Dr Sun Yat Sen's* handwriting, written in 1917 when he was Grand Marshal in Guangzhou.

10

GRASSROOTS BOOK ROOM

> 25 Bukit Pasoh Rd, Singapore 089839

An independent bookstore since 1995, this quaint bilingual bookstore relocated to the Bukit Pasoh neighbourhood from its original location in North Bridge Road. 90% of the books are in Chinese while the rest are English-language titles. Besides literature books, the store also carries children's titles as well as gift items. Walk in for a respite from the busy streets and enjoy the little café that serves a great cuppa.

The row that the bookstore is sited on is an interesting one. Look up to the second floor and you can see windows with carvings of Chinese plants and flowers. Together with the Western cast ironwork balcony, this row of shophouses is a unique site with the Chinese Baroque architectural style.



(12)

NOTE:

(12) The area has been conserved for its architectural and historical significance.

11

SIONG LENG MUSICAL ASSOCIATION

> 4B Bukit Pasoh Road, Singapore 089816

The Siong Leng Musical Association was founded in 1941 to preserve traditional *Nanyin* and *Liyuan*, two musical forms from Southern China.

Occupying two upper level units, look for the traditional calligraphy on the façade of 2 Bukit Pasoh Road. This was done by Cultural Medallion winner Pan Shou (1911-1999), a renowned Chinese calligrapher and poet.

(13)



12

'MA JIE' TEMPLE – CUNDHI GONG

> 13 Keong Saik Road, Singapore 089120

Built in 1928, this temple is a hybrid of Hokkien-Chinese and shophouse architecture. It is also known as the '*Majie*' temple because of the domestic helpers from Shun Tak province, China, who worshipped at the temple between the 1930s and 1970s. It is dedicated to the Goddess of Mercy or *Kuanyin*.

Cundhi Gong, which was gazetted for conservation in 1989, is a blend of the traditional and contemporary, the East and West. Look above the five-footway for the elaborate wood carvings and paintings of scenic landscapes. The ^(a)circular windows at the front are a marriage between the traditional Chinese architecture and the concrete ^(b)Terrazzo frame, a Western style. Also, look for the original floral tiles produced by Belgian manufacturer Gilliot & Cie as you pass by.

(14)



NOTE:

- (13) Shop front of the musical association.
- (14) Cundhi Gong temple during the 1960s.

13

FORMER ENG AUN TONG FACTORY

> 89 Neil Road, Singapore 088849

Eng Aun Tong or Hall of Everlasting Peace was used by the Haw Par brothers as a factory to manufacture the famous Tiger Balm medicated balm. The building was built in 1924 and the factory operated until 1971.

Look out for the six-sided pavilion on top of the roof that references the famous Tiger Balm glass bottle.



↑ Artist's impression of the Tiger Balm packaging.

(15)



NOTE:

(15) Step outside and spot the similarity of the past and present.

(16)

綺蘭庭 1928



14

35 DUXTON HILL

> 35 Duxton Hill, Singapore 089613

This shophouse may look like one of the many other shophouses in the neighbourhood but **look closely** and you will find that it is the only unit on Duxton Hill that has a forecourt.

With finely moulded plaster cornices and capitals, the house is typical of a Second Transitional shophouse style. Tucked away on this quiet hill from the hustle and bustle of the city, it offers passersby a picturesque view and beckons to a bygone era.

(17)



15

16-17 DUXTON HILL

> 16 Duxton Hill, Singapore 089599



(18)

Tucked in the quiet street of Duxton Hill, this shophouse features fine details, including examples of Chinese **calligraphy** on the façade.

NOTE:

(17) Residents airing their laundry on the street.

(18) 1965 - Duxton Hill.

16

LITTERED WITH BOOKS

> 20 Duxton Road, Singapore 089486



A quiet retreat from the busy streets, this quaint bookstore still retains the original internal airwell. Explore the two levels and immerse yourself in the specially sourced books.

Look up from browsing the books for the intact examples of 19th century plaster décor in the airwells.

↑ Spot this chalkboard signage that fronts the hidden bookstore!



(19)

17

SAY TIAN HNG BUDDHA SHOP

> 35 Neil Road, Singapore 088821



(20)

The last surviving effigy shop in Singapore is *Say Tian Hng Buddha Shop*. The effigy shop continues this traditional trade with its wood block carvings of Chinese Taoist deities, which are then hand-painted with bamboo brushes.

The shop conducts workshops to educate people about the craft. Statues of the various Taoist deities line the walls from floor to ceiling so be sure to make a stop to learn more.



↑ Spot this Guan Yu effigy in the shop.

NOTE:

(19) Shop front of Littered with Books.

(20) The store is surrounded by bright and delicate effigies.



(21)

DUXTON HILL 21 APRIL 2019

18

END GABLE WALL DECORATION

> 29 Neil Road, Singapore o88818

As you make your way up to the junction of Neil Road and Duxton Road, look out for the moulded coping and ornamented mouldings on the gable-end walls.

These are common features on shophouses, many of which take inspiration from southern Chinese architecture. These ornamentation are based on the Five Elements of Earth, Fire, Metal, Water and Wood. This unit is unique because it is one of the few walls that have an additional moulding.



(22)

NOTE:

(22) Pay attention to the delicate moulding on top of the shophouse.

19

JING HUA RESTAURANT

> 21 Neil Road, Singapore o88814

Founded in 1989 by Mr. and Mrs. Han, Jing Hua Restaurant adapts Shanghainese recipes to suit the Singaporean palate.

Jing Hua was one of the first occupants of a row of refurbished shophouses along Neil Road. Jing Hua has 10 stores across the world, including one restaurant in Italy. Stop by for a break and try their famous dumplings.



(23)



↑ Must Try: signature
Xiao Long Bao.

20

TEA CHAPTER

> 9 Neil Road, Singapore o888o8

Besides being one of the earliest teahouses promoting the art of Chinese tea, No.9 Neil Road, where Tea Chapter is located, has the distinct honour of being the first building selected by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) to be its demonstration project on restoration.

As one of the biggest tea houses in Singapore, Tea Chapter has had many important guests go through its doors, including Queen Elizabeth II. The two-storey shophouse features distinct decorative wall mouldings on its front façade and is an oasis of calm on the fringes of Chinatown.



(24)

NOTE:

(23) Expect great service in this humble store.

(24) Queen Elizabeth II with Prince Philip appreciating tea served in the 1990s.



(25)



(26)

NOTE:

(25) Jinrikisha Station, 1965.

(26) Side view of Jinrikisha Station along Neil Road.

(21)

JINRIKISHA STATION

> 1 Neil Road, Singapore o888o4

Jinrikisha Station is located at the junction of Neil Road and Tanjong Pagar Road. The rickshaw station was built in 1903, serving as the main hub for rickshaws.

After the 1947 ban on rickshaws in Singapore, the building was used for several other purposes, before it was gazetted in 1987 as part of the Tanjong Pagar conservation area. Look out for the crest of the Singapore island under the dome or dates along the five-footway that tell of its history.



↑ A rickshaw puller during the 20th century.



(27)

NOTE:

(27) Spot the engraving which marks the building's establishment since 1903.

(28) National Day Parade rehearsals, 1969.

(29) Metropole Theatre show opening, 1964.

22

FAIRFIELD METHODIST CHURCH

> 1 Tanjong Pagar Road, Singapore 088437

Fairfield Methodist Church was formerly a cinema called Metropole, also known as *Jing Hua Cinema*.

It was designed by local architect *Wong Foo Nam* in a Modernist style. The cinema stopped operations in October 1985, after which Fairfield Methodist Church acquired the building.

Enter the church to see the original interior fittings from the 1950s.



(28)



(29)

23

FORMER UMAR PULAVAR TAMIL SCHOOL

> 72 Tanjong Pagar Road, Singapore o88493

This unit was where the first Tamil-medium school in Singapore was established in 1946. *Umar Pulavar* Tamil School (UPTS) was founded by the Singapore Kadayanallur Muslim League (SKML) and is a reminder of the Indian Muslim community that lived and worked in the Tanjong Pagar area since the 1920s. UPTS began with only one primary level class in a small room at the top floor of a shophouse located at 72 Tanjong Pagar Road.

The school was named after *Umar Pulavar*, a renowned 17th century Tamil-Muslim poet from the Tirunelveli district who was recognised for his literary contributions to the Tamil community.



(30)

24

BUS STOP – AFTER CRAIG ROAD

> 120 Tanjong Pagar Road, Singapore o88532

Tanjong Pagar was one of the earliest historic districts to be conserved since the start of URA's conservation programme in 1989. One key consideration in historic areas is to improve basic infrastructural services, such as electricity supply and environmental improvement.

URA specially designed these bus stops to enhance the ambience of the road. They are based on the traditional architecture of the street, with a unique gable profile and a terracotta tiled roof and ridge. Another traditional material, granite, was used for the seats.

These provide not just shelter, but they also blend in with the old-world charm of the district. Try and spot how many of these unique shelters there are in the area.



(31)

NOTE:

(30) Tanjong Pagar Road Shophouses, 2006.

(31) The prominent bus stop in 1992.

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BACKYARD 65

Follow us on *Instagram* at *_backyard65* and explore your backyard with us.

This project is a collaboration between *Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT)* and *Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA)*.



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BACKYARD 65

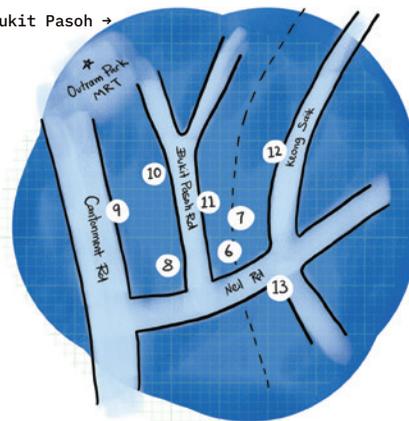
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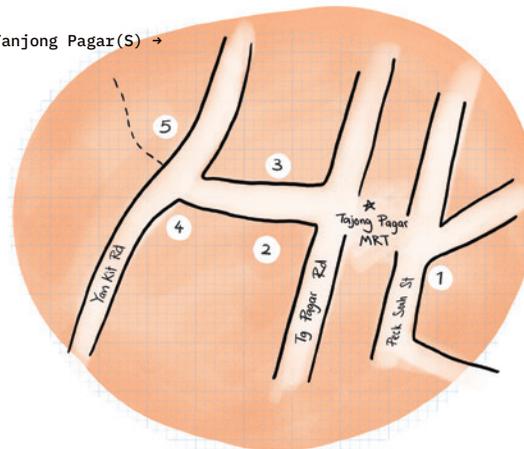
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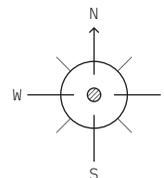
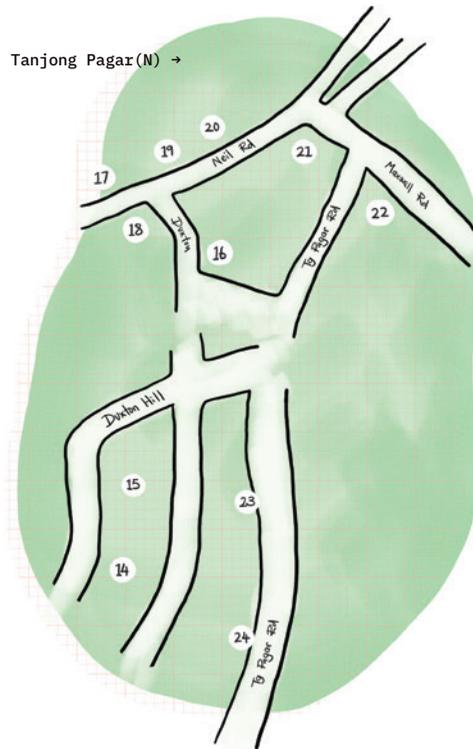
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Tanjong Pagar(S) →



Tanjong Pagar(N) →



* Map drawn for illustration purposes only.



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Sketch courtesy of Mr William Sim.

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