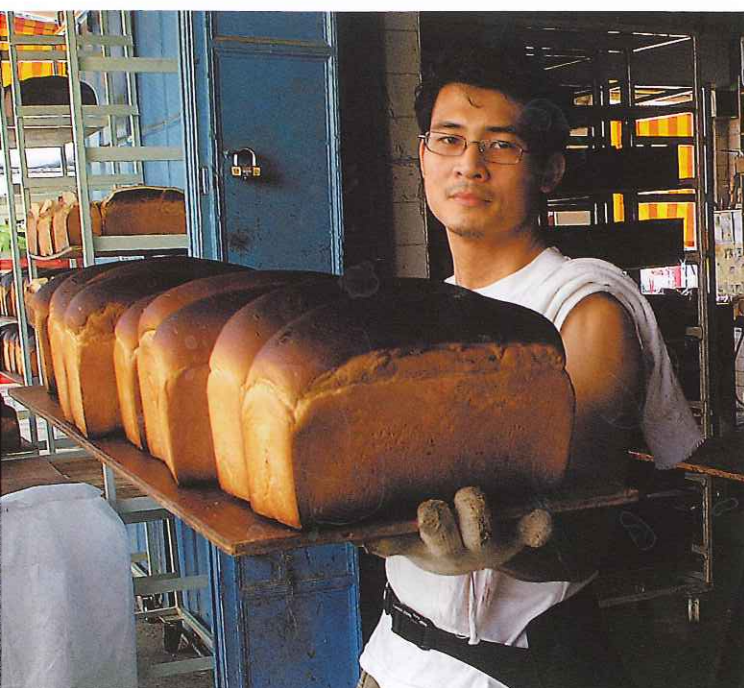


# Up-and-coming Balestier set to create buzz

By Jolene Hoon

Recognised for its strong heritage value and distinctive old world charm, Balestier was identified as one of Singapore's identity nodes under the Identity Plan in 2002. The recent award of the hotel site at Balestier Road will further serve as a catalyst for the rejuvenation and transformation of the area.



A treasure trove of cultural and architectural references, Balestier Road offers a compelling blend of old and new with more than 160 years of history. The juxtaposition of heritage shophouses from the 1800s with new buildings tells of its significant past and vibrant present.

Balestier has evolved over the years and many of us associate the area with its numerous lighting shops, hardware and home fittings shops, and shops selling delicious local fares such as Bak Kut Teh and Tau Sar Pia.



The area is rich in history, home to an interesting mix of conserved shophouses built in the 1840s, and monuments such as the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall. The Hall is a national monument that pays tribute to Dr Sun Yat Sen, the father of the 1911 Chinese Revolution.

Since the release of the Identity Plan in 2002, URA has studied the Balestier area and gazetted many conservation buildings in the area as part of the Old World Charm conservation proposals. Today, about 150 shophouses have been gazetted for conservation.

## First of its kind – a hotel within a park

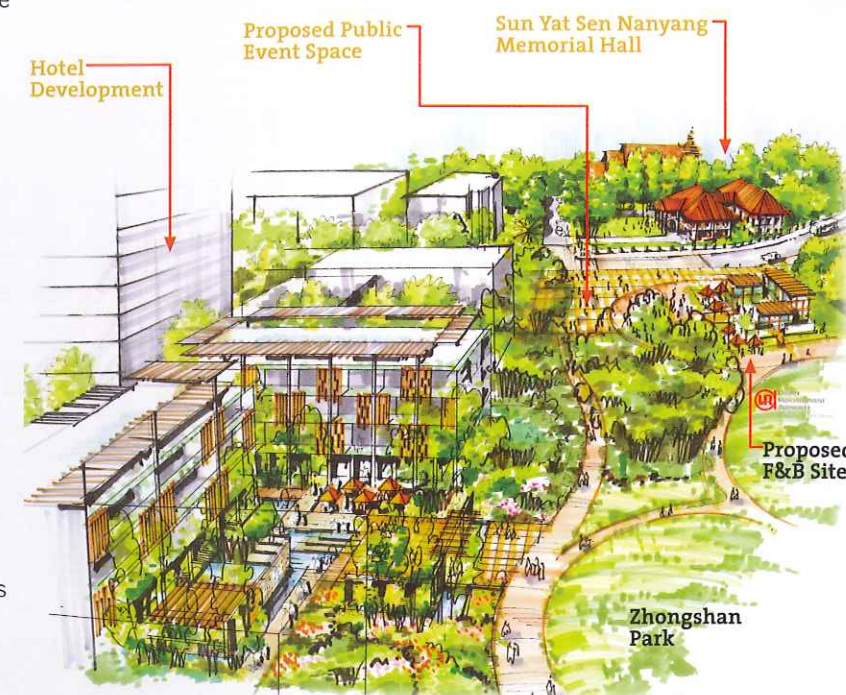
Balestier will be further transformed with the recent sale of the hotel site at Balestier Road to HH Properties in August this year.

With excellent frontage along Balestier Road, the hotel site is just a stone's throw away from the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall. A unique aspect of this future hotel development is a 0.46 ha public park named "Zhongshan Park", to be built and managed by the developer.

This unique integrated hotel-park development is the first of its kind in Singapore and is intended to celebrate its connections to the rich cultural history and architecture of the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall. It will add character and variety to the hotel mix in Singapore which is part of the government's tourism effort in enhancing visitors' experience.

Given the strong cultural and historical significance, visitors interested in discovering more about Singapore's cultural heritage may visit the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall and Zhongshan Park and stay at the Balestier Road hotel nearby to complement their cultural experience.

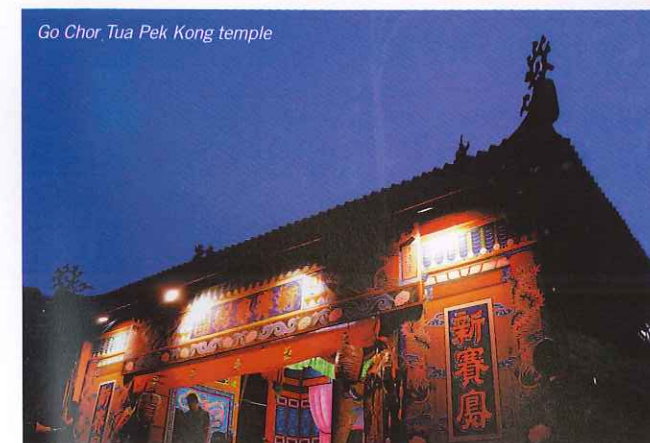
All these are part of URA's planning initiatives to facilitate a unique integrated hotel and park development to kick start the rejuvenation of the Balestier area.



An artist's impression of what the unique development at Balestier could be like



Sun Yat Sen Villa



Go Chor Tua Pek Kong temple

## Landmark development that adds to Balestier's vibrancy

The sale of the 1.77 ha site provides the opportunity for a distinctive contemporary hotel that integrates seamlessly with the Zhongshan Park and synergises with the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall and the surrounding heritage shophouses. The unique landmark development at this site will add to the vibrancy and enhancement of the environmental quality of the greater Balestier area.

A public event space will also be provided within the northern corner of the Zhongshan Park. This event space will form part of the pedestrian network for the area and serve as a gathering place for the staging of events and activities that will activate and enhance the vibrancy of the park.

To further enhance visitors' experience to area, URA also has plans to improve the walkways and landscaping in the neighbourhood.

## Old world, new concept

A Design Advisory Panel will be set up to work with the successful tenderer and its appointed architect to guide the design to achieve a desired quality outcome for the development. This will also showcase Balestier's old world charm through a new development concept that is befitting of the area. ●