

More post-war buildings approved for conservation

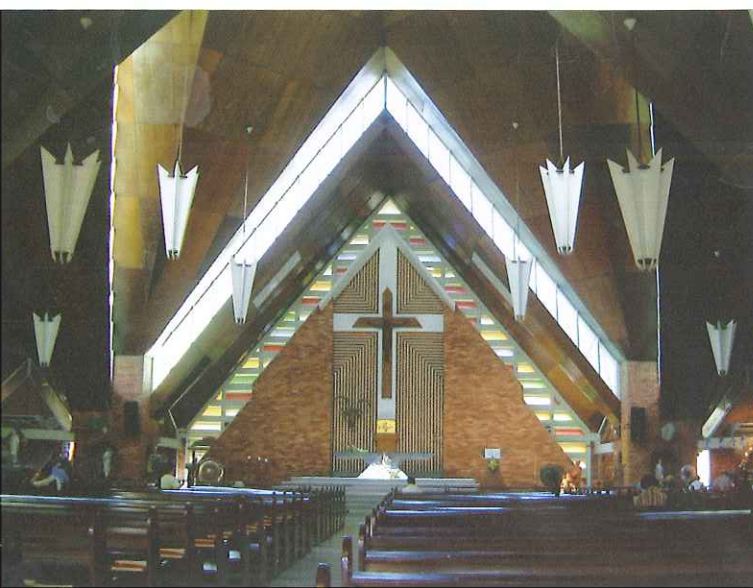
By Carol Lim

A church, a former cinema, a former school hall and a former town hall are among the latest batch of heritage buildings approved for conservation. What unifies them is that they are all post-war buildings that capture the mood and aspirations of a young Singapore nation. Skyline unearths their significance that belie their simple forms.



Church of the Blessed Sacrament stands as a signature landmark along Queensway

Indeed, the most iconic feature of this modern church building is the slate roof which is constructed in folds in the shape of a tent and it symbolises the "tent of meeting" in the Old Testament of the Bible. The roof appears to fall to the ground to wrap the interior, with portions touching the ground and resemble anchoring pegs. The cross is also another Biblical symbol used in its architecture. The main service hall is built in a cruciform shape.



The roof has integrated slits of glass panels at the junctions where the four portions of the cruciform shape meet, creating a dramatic play of light and shadows, which visually draws the eye upwards. This is a clever way of bringing light into the sanctuary



Church of the Blessed Sacrament

Designed by Y.G. Dowsett and built in 1963, Church of the Blessed Sacrament is fondly dubbed by many as the 'origami church', thanks to its huge sloping roofs that nearly touch the ground.



The sloping roofs that nearly touch the ground also cleverly double up as drainage points for rainwater

The three main entrances on the side, and lower parts of the cruciform shape are marked by concrete grids, which have multi-coloured strips of glass panels inserted within. These create an interesting air of vibrancy when viewed from the interior of the hall



The main spiral staircase, located behind the glazed curved facade at the junction, brings patrons from the main lobby to the auditorium. The main auditorium is a big voluminous concrete box with the facades adorned with small rectangular panels patterned in a grid-like manner to add interest

Former Jing Hwa Cinema (or Metropole Cinema)

Together with the Majestic and the Oriental, Jing Hwa Cinema, built in 1958, was one of Chinatown's three famous cinemas, screening Mandarin films for the Chinatown community. Also an important social and physical landmark, this Modern-style building built by local architect Wong Foo Nam marks the corner of Maxwell Road/Tanjong Pagar Road with its glazed and curved facade. At the time it was built, it was the first modern cinema to have extensive glazing for the facade and a basement car park.

It was also one of the earliest known cinemas to be air-conditioned.

The former Jing Hwa Cinema showcases characteristics commonly found in Modern style architecture. The design of the cinema follows the Modern tenet "Form follows function" closely. The simple and functional language used in the design makes

it clear from the exterior where the main functions of the building are, as well as its key circulation routes.

Since 1985-6, the building has stopped functioning as a cinema. Instead, it has been adaptively re-used as a place of worship by the Fairfield Methodist Church with most of the former spaces still kept intact.

Thin v-shaped metal supporting pillars at the verandahs add character to the interesting form and massing of the building





The building comprised two five-storey elongated blocks of unequal length parallel to each other, connected by bridge floors. Orientated along a north-west south-east axis, it took advantage of its hilltop location to maximise the surrounding views of Jurong Town

Former Jurong Town Hall

During the 1960s, the Jurong Town Corporation (JTC) was formed to oversee Singapore's early industrialisation programme. A town hall for Jurong was built to house the JTC headquarters as well as for the newly-established industrial nucleus of Jurong.

The fruit of an architectural competition in 1969 won by Architect Team 3, it was designed to capture the spirit of the new industrial and technological age, to be a symbol of Singapore's industrial and economic progress. Construction work started in August 1970 and the building was officially opened in 1975 by then Finance Minister, Mr Hon Sui Sen.

Even now, it continues to contribute to our economic growth as a popular incubator hub for new business start-ups.

Nautical references were used in the design of the building. The main elongated forms rising above slope of the hillock make reference to a ship deck, while the funnel-shaped, 50-metre tall clock tower is symbolic of a periscope or mast

The imaginative projection of the upper floors outwards over one another, and splaying inwards at the sides and corners results in a unique building form. Continuous integrated sun-shading fins also give the building a distinctive look



The former school hall of ACS recently approved for conservation

Former Anglo-Chinese School (ACS)


ACS was one of the earliest institutions established by British Methodist missionaries in Singapore, combining Christian doctrines into the teaching curriculum. Founded in March 1886 in Amoy Street, ACS was relocated in 1892 to the historic foothills of Fort Canning, next to the first Methodist church (then known as the English Church) which was later demolished. This campus was used

by the school until November 1993 when ACS Primary eventually moved to Barker Road.

The site was originally occupied by an old 1897 school building known as the Oldham Hall. It was redeveloped in 1959 into an elegant Modern-style reinforced concrete building. The different functional spaces of the building, such as the stairwells and the school hall, can be read through



the form and fenestration of the building.

Today, the building it houses the National Archives of Singapore. At four storeys, it is taller than the Masonic Hall and the Singapore Philatelic Museum but still retains a sense of scale that is in harmony with the park surroundings. 

Long, thin windows are used for the façade of the school hall, while small square windows denote the stairwells

