



The Sembawang Heritage Trail is part of the National Heritage Board's ongoing efforts to document and present the history and social memories of places in Singapore. We hope this trail will bring back fond memories for those who have worked, lived or played in the area, and serve as a useful source of information for visitors and new residents.



Supported by



Naval officers at Beaulieu Jetty saluting the aircraft carrier HMS Albion, 1965  
Courtesy of Olive Menary

## SUGGESTED SHORT TRAIL ROUTES

Covering natural and architectural landmarks such as a scenic beach and colonial-era houses, these three thematic trail routes are designed to showcase Sembawang's rich naval history and the diverse heritage of its communities. Select a suitable trail route and explore the heritage of Sembawang today!

### Historical Landmarks of Sembawang 2 hours with public transport (7km)

Sembawang houses many historical landmarks established by the British and local communities, and plays home to the only natural hot spring on mainland Singapore. This trail introduces you to the aforementioned sites that recall the major milestones in Sembawang's past.



Start your journey at the **Holy Tree Sri Balasubramanier Temple**, which is located across the road from Canberra MRT station. Dedicated to the Hindu deity Lord Murugan, the origins of the temple can be traced back to 1962 when Hindu dockyard workers of the former Sembawang Naval Base established a small shrine under a tree near Canberra Road. The temple relocated to its present site in 1996 and is known for its annual Panguni Uthiram street and chariot procession usually held in March or April.



To reach the next stop, you may choose to walk up Canberra Link and turn right at Sembawang Road or take a bus from Canberra MRT station and alight after Durban Road, then cross Sembawang Road and head towards a row of shophouses.

Popularly known as the **Sembawang Strip**, these shophouses once housed drinking holes such as Ocean Bar and Melbourne Bar, which were frequented by visiting sailors from the naval base. There was also a popular outdoor eatery next to the shops called Sembawang Patio, which was demolished in the 1980s. Today, the Sembawang Strip continues to house shops and popular eateries, where you may wish to cool down with a drink before continuing with the trail.



From the shophouses, head over to Admiralty Road East where you will see many colonial-era houses, which were former **homes in the naval base** for British staff, on both sides of the road. The larger, black-and-white houses were built for senior dockyard staff, while staff such as chargemen (supervisors) occupied the smaller houses.

Continue towards the junction of Canberra Road where you will find the main gate to the former dockyard of the naval base (now Sembcorp Marine Admiralty Yard). This facility, which opened in 1938, was where British warships were repaired until 1968, when it was transferred to the Singapore government and became Sembawang Shipyard.

Next, head up Canberra Road to take a bus towards Sembawang Road. You will pass by **Sembawang Shopping Centre**, which was built in an area that was formerly populated with rubber estates in the early 20th century. After World War II, the rubber estates were redeveloped into houses and shops. Sembawang Shopping Centre, which opened in 1986, was the first modern retail mall in this area. You may wish to stop here for a break, or alight two stops further down (after Yishun Avenue 7) to stay on the trail.



From the bus stop after Yishun Avenue 7, cross Sembawang Road and head into Gambas Avenue to reach **Sembawang Hot Spring Park**, the final stop on this trail. Discovered in the early 1900s, this natural hot spring remains a popular attraction for visitors from all over Singapore. The trail ends here, but you can explore the park, soak your feet in the hot spring water and even grab a snack from the park's café.

### Communities of Sembawang 3 hours with public transport (8km)

Since the 19th century, Sembawang has been home to many communities, from coastal villages to British families based in the former naval base. This trail brings you through these former neighbourhoods and highlights buildings that were once part of these northern communities.



Begin your journey at the **Former Admiralty House**. Built in 1939-40, this house was designed in an elegant arts and crafts architectural style and served as the residence of the most senior officer at the former Sembawang Naval Base. The house's hilltop location provided its residents with a clear view of the surrounding naval base and the nearby coastline.

Next, take a bus from Canberra Road (Block 351) and alight at Sembawang Road after Durban Road. Then cross Admiralty Road East and turn into Queen's Avenue, where you will find many black-and-white houses, which were built in the 1930s as **homes in the naval base** for British staff. Today, the houses in this area are private residences. You can admire their architecture and grounds, but please remember that entry and photography are strictly prohibited.

From Queen's Avenue, turn into St Helena Road to reach **Gibraltar Crescent**. This road has the oldest black-and-white bungalows in the naval base, which were built around 1929. Unlike the bungalows at Queen's Avenue, the houses here were designed as shared residences for two or three occupants. One unique building here is the Japanese Theatre (318-2 Gibraltar Crescent), which is believed to have been built by prisoners-of-war and served as a location for drama performances by the British.



At the end of Gibraltar Crescent, head toward Sembawang Road (via Tuah Road) and cross over to reach **Andrews Avenue**. This road was named after Thomas Edward Andrews, a manager of Bukit Sembawang Rubber Company, which formerly owned many rubber plantations in the area. After the war, Bukit Sembawang redeveloped its



plantations into housing estates such as Sembawang Straits Estate off Andrews Avenue.

Walk down Andrews Avenue until you reach Jalan Mempurong, which leads to **Masjid Petempatan Melayu Sembawang**. The last surviving kampong mosque at Singapore's northern coast, this mosque was built in 1962-63 by the villagers of the former Kampong Tengah. It also served the Muslim community from other former nearby villages such as Kampong Wak Hassan and Kampong Tanjong Irau.

Continue down Jalan Mempurong until you reach the Simpang Kiri Park Connector. You will see **PAssion WaVe @ Sembawang**, a sea sports facility which originally opened in 1961 as Kampong Tengah Holiday Camp, a campsite that was popular with youths and community groups.



To reach the final stop of the trail, which is a row of shophouses along Sembawang Road, you can choose to walk or take a bus. To walk, continue down the park connector, which is a scenic path between Sungei Simpang Kiri and a lush jungle. When you reach the Canberra-Sembawang Park Connector, turn right and you will find the shophouses. To take a bus, retrace your steps to Sembawang Road, then head to the bus stop near Andrews Avenue and alight after Admiralty Road East.

Built around 1965, these shophouses were popularly known as the **Sembawang Strip** and were part of a former settlement called Sembawang Village, which had many shops and eateries that were popular with sailors from the naval base. The shophouses mark the end of the trail, and you can enjoy some refreshments and even get a bite at the eateries here.

### From Dockyard to Shipyard 2.5 hours with public transport (5km)

Sembawang Naval Base, which opened in 1938 and closed in 1971, occupied much of Sembawang's northern coast. This naval base included HM Dockyard, Singapore, a ship repair facility which was transferred to the Singapore government in 1968 and became Sembawang Shipyard. This trail takes you to various landmarks that were part of the former naval base.



Begin at the **Former Admiralty House**, which served as the residence of the highest ranking naval officer in colonial Singapore. Built in 1939-40 as Navy House, this grand building was first occupied by Ernest John Spooner (Rear-Admiral, Malaya) and his wife Megan Foster in 1941-42. After the war, it was renamed Nelson House, and eventually became known as Admiralty House from 1958. From 1971-74, it was known as ANZUK House. The building was gazetted as a National Monument in 2002.

Next, walk up Canberra Road until you reach **Masjid Assyafaah**. Between the 1930s and early 1970s, Canberra Road was where Asian workers of the naval base had their living quarters. In 1968, Muslim staff of the naval base established a small mosque named Masjid Naval Base in this area, which closed in 2004. Its replacement, Masjid Assyafaah, is a contemporary mosque with arabesque-patterned screens and a striking steel tower bearing a crescent moon and star, the symbols of Islam.



Continue up Canberra Road and on the left, you will come across the former HomeTeamNS Sembawang clubhouse (closed in 2020). This building was originally opened in 1963 as **Aggie Weston's**, a sports and recreational facility for sailors. After the British left in 1971, it served as a clubhouse called Fernleaf Centre for New Zealand forces in Singapore until 1989.

Next, cross Admiralty Road East and you will reach the main gate of **Sembawang Shipyard**. This ship repair facility boasted the world's largest dry dock, the 305-metre-long King George VI Dry Dock, when it opened in 1938. Today, the gate serves as the entryway to Sembcorp Marine Admiralty Yard (formerly Sembawang Shipyard). While entry is prohibited, you can catch a glimpse of the former **Sembawang Fire Station** with its hose tower, which was built in 1937-38 and gazetted as a conserved building in 2007.



Continue down Admiralty Road. Along the way, you will see many pre-war colonial houses which were built as **homes in the naval base** for British staff. The larger, black-and-white bungalows were used by senior officers, while employees of other ranks occupied the smaller red-brick houses.

Next, turn into Queen's Avenue, where you will find several black-and-white bungalows that housed senior staff of the British dockyard. Today, the houses in this area are private residences. You can admire their architecture and grounds, but please remember that entry and photography are strictly prohibited.

From Queen's Avenue, enter St Helena Road and then turn left to reach Cyprus Road. Around this junction, you will see **black-and-white houses** of a different design from those at Queen's Avenue. These were the first black-and-whites built in the area during the late 1920s, and they served as quarters for the British engineers who built the naval base.

Next, turn into **Cyprus Road**. Unlike most other areas of the former naval base, which have bungalows, this road has **low-rise walk-up flats**. These flats were built after the war to house growing numbers of staff as the naval base was heavily involved in conflicts such as the Malayan Emergency (1948-60) and Konfrontasi (1963-66). They feature a simple but elegant Art Deco-influenced architecture with prominent *brise soleil* (French for "sun breakers") around the windows.



At the end of Cyprus Road, turn left to reach **Sembawang Park**. This scenic green space was formerly part of the naval base, but was later converted into Sembawang Park, which opened in 1979. A number of Sembawang trees, after which the area was named, have been planted in this park.

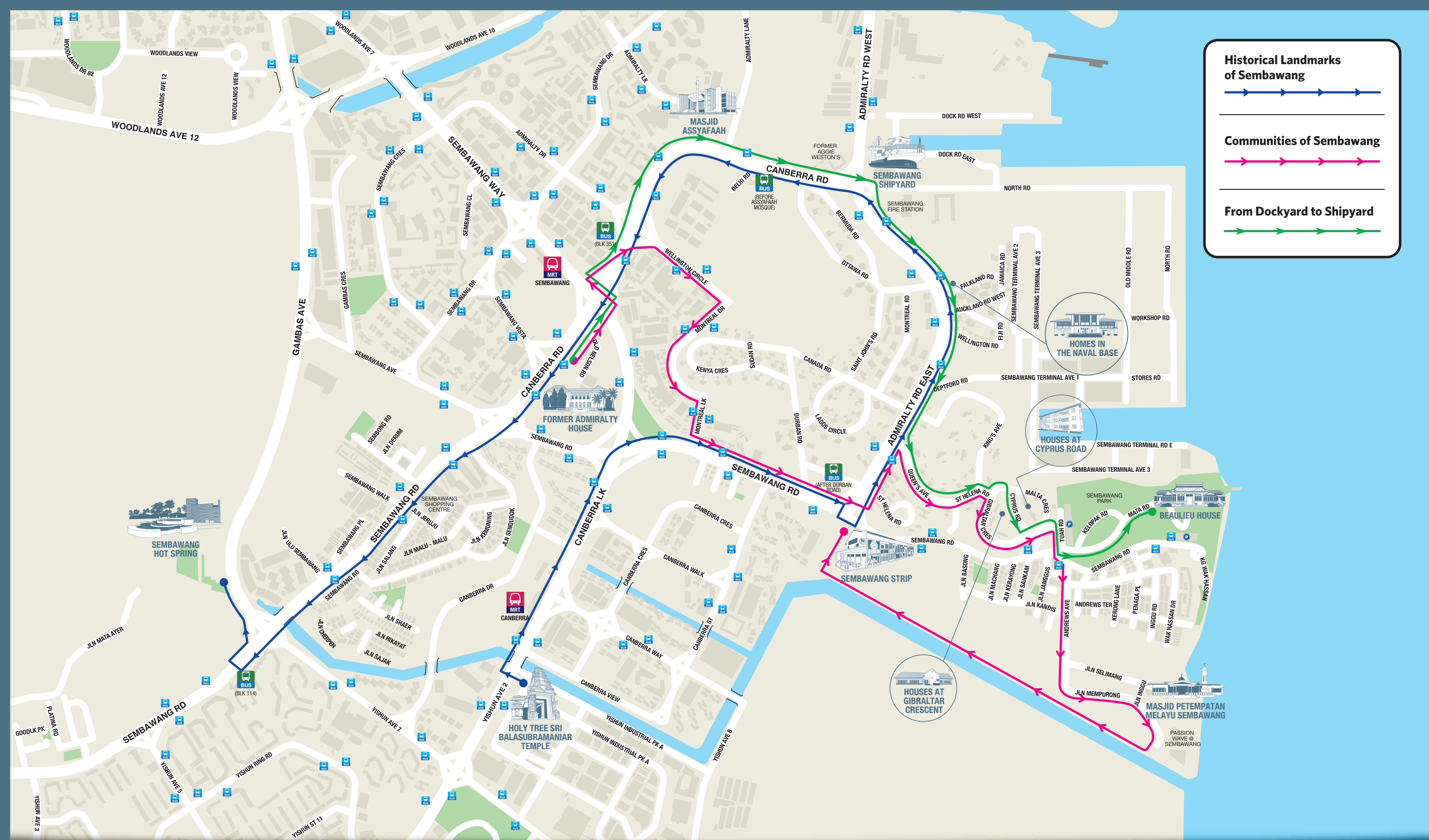
At the northern end of Sembawang Park is **Beaulieu House**, which was built in the 1910s and gazetted as a conserved building in 2005. Originally owned by Jewish businessman Joseph Brooke David, the house was acquired for the naval base in 1923 and used as a residence for senior naval officers. **Beaulieu Jetty**, which stands in front of the house, was built during World War II. After the war, senior naval officers would stand at the jetty to salute newly arrived ships. Today, Beaulieu Jetty is a popular fishing spot and offers a scenic view of the Johor Strait, a fitting last stop to this trail.



## Historical Landmarks of Sembawang

## Communities of Sembawang

## From Dockyard to Shipyard



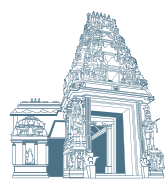
## HERITAGE SITES IN THE SUGGESTED SHORT TRAIL ROUTES



BEAULIEU HOUSE



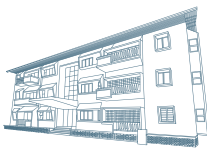
FORMER ADMIRALTY HOUSE



HOLY TREE SRI  
BALASUBRAMANIAM  
TEMPLE



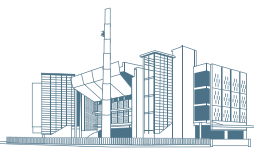
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THE NAVAL BASE



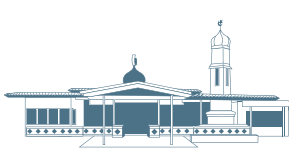
HOUSES AT CYPRUS ROAD



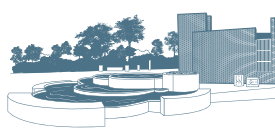
HOUSES AT  
GIBRALTAR CRESCENT



MASJID ASSYAFAAH



MASJID PETEMPATAN  
MELAYU SEMBAWANG



SEMBAWANG HOT SPRING



SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD



SEMBAWANG STRIP

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