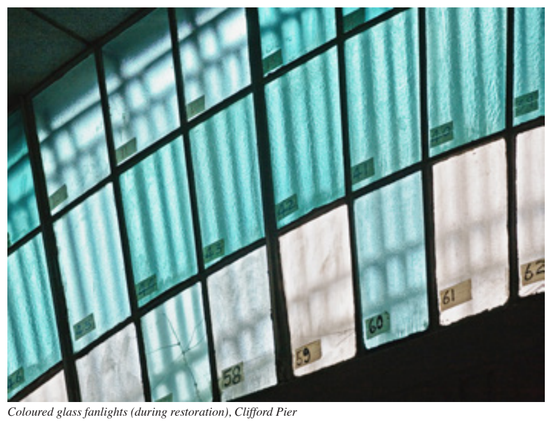


Circular balcony, Waterboat House



Coloured glass fanlights (during restoration), Clifford Pier



Coat of Arms, Straits Settlements, Clifford Pier



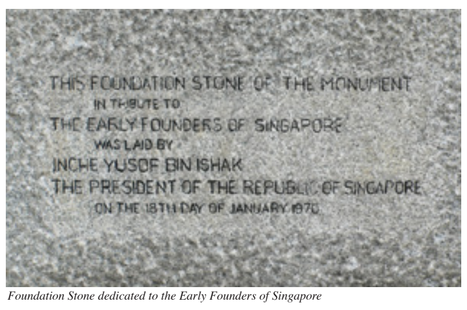
Commemorative plaque, Clifford Pier



Decorative niche, Clifford Pier



Concrete arched trusses, Clifford Pier



Foundation Stone dedicated to the Early Founders of Singapore



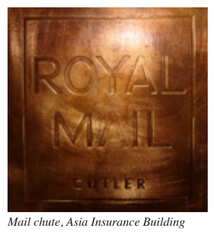
Red lamps, Clifford Pier



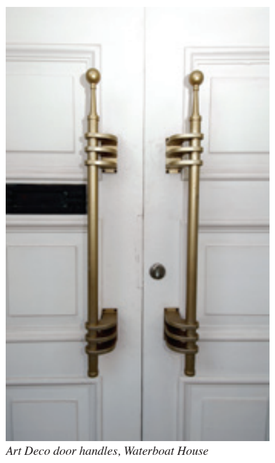
Building plaque, Asia Insurance Building



Lion head, Fullerton Building



Mail chute, Asia Insurance Building



Art Deco door handles, Waterboat House



Cast-iron lamp, Fullerton Building



Mild steel windows, Waterboat House



Former Asia Insurance Building



Aerial View 1960s



Fullerton Building



Clifford Pier



Former Customs Harbour Branch Building



Waterboat House



Fullerton Building



Change Alley Aerial Plaza

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
To make Singapore a great city to live, work and play in

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Historic Waterfront

The story of Singapore's historic waterfront extends back to the foundation of Modern Singapore as a trading post in 1819 by the British East India Company. Its physical landscape reflects the changes and development of Singapore from a fledgling port city into a major 21st Century metropolis.

Our waterfront was once the 'front' door of Singapore. Before the age of air-travel, the waterfront served as the point of entry for visitors, as well as immigrants seeking a better future. The waterfront was also an important landing point for the loading and unloading of the various goods that were traded through Singapore. As early as 1829, Fort Fullerton was built at the mouth of the Singapore River to defend the harbour and warehouses that had developed along Boat Quay and Telok Ayer fronting the sea. Interestingly, this site at the river's mouth, then known as Battery or Artillery Point, was also where the legendary Singapore Stone (circa 1230 CE),a large sandstone monolith with inscriptions from the days of ancient Singapura was discovered.

In 1856, the first major landing point, Johnston's pier was completed. It was colloquially known as "Lampu Merah" (in Malay) and "Ang Teng" (in Hokkien) after the red maritime lamp at the end of the pier. Two years later, the seawall from Johnston's Pier to the old Teluk Ayer fish-market was built and land seaward of Commercial Square was reclaimed. By the late 1860s, big shipping and commercial firms had built their offices and godowns along Collyer Quay. Notable landmarks included the first Ocean Building built in 1866 and the first Hongkong and Shanghai Bank built in 1892.

The turn of the century saw the addition of a number of new landmarks, such as the Arcade, Singapore's first indoor shopping centre built in 1909, stretching from Collyer Quay to Raffles Place. The Fullerton Building – the most important Post Office in the East, was completed in 1928. In 1933, Clifford Pier was built to replace Johnston's pier, as the main entry point for seafarers to Singapore. These important private and public landmarks created an imposing facade along the waterfront.

The post-war years saw the construction of the first high-rise buildings along the waterfront as land became more valuable and Singapore's commercial role evolved. The Asia Insurance Building, completed in 1954, was the tallest building in Southeast Asia at the time. It marked a significant phase of modern office developments and symbolised Singapore's growth as an important financial centre. The Customs Harbour Branch pier, built in the 1960s for the Singapore Customs Police, oversaw one of the world's busiest harbours as shipping and trade boomed for the now independent country. In 1970, the Change Alley Plaza was erected, a modern revolving restaurant that signalled the arrival of greater wealth for our citizens.

The waterfront was also a site for recreational activities, the most well-known being the New Year's Day Sea Sports carnival which saw participation from both the local and European community. While the waterfront skyline showcased the growth of the city as it underwent urban renewal and expansion after the 1970s, the waterfront itself receded from public awareness. This was a result of the expansion of the Port to the West of Singapore as well as the shift towards mass air travel, which reduced the number of people who landed in Singapore at Collyer Quay.

Singapore's waterfront today is now an integral part of the new Marina Bay, a 360-hectare reclamation project which started from the late 1970s as a long term expansion for the city. In the past 20 years, the maritime trade has gradually shifted to the west of Singapore, and on 1st April 2006, the last bumboat left Clifford Pier. It marked the beginning of a new era for our waterfront.

Through thoughtful planning, our waterfront today still retains important heritage buildings that are conserved and repurposed for modern uses. This is in recognition of their architectural and historical significance in recording the development of our country, and as landmarks of our city and repositories of our collective memories as a nation.


Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

A fragment of the Singapore Stone, now housed in the National Museum at Stamford Road



A map from 1931 showing the extent of reclamation in the Telok Ayer Basin and the old seawall



Courtesy of National Archive of Singapore

A view of Collyer Quay at the turn of the century (1903) showing commercial buildings lined up along the Quay with Johnston's Pier in the background



Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

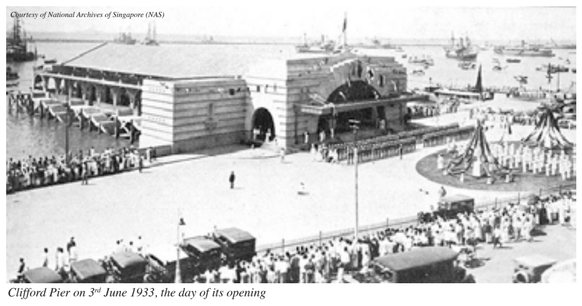
A 1920s postcard view showing Collyer Quay after road widening in the 1910s. In the background is the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank building under construction


Lee Kip Lin Collection, Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

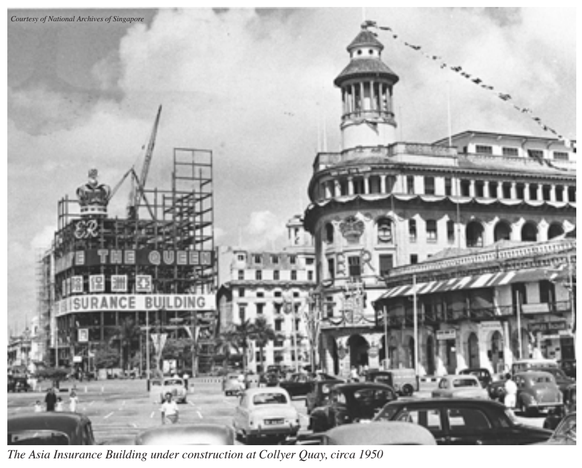
A view from the waterfront in 1932 showing the key landmarks of that era - Ocean Building (far left, with turret), Alkaff Arcade, Union Building (with turret), Hongkong& Shanghai Bank (right of Union Building) and the Fullerton Building


Lee Kip Lin Collection, Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

View of the main entrance of The General Post Office with the lofty portico and Royal Coat of Arms, crafted by Italian sculptor Rudolfo Nolli


Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore (NAS)

Clifford Pier on 3rd June 1933, the day of its opening



Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

The Asia Insurance Building under construction at Collyer Quay, circa 1950


K F Wong Collection, Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

The roadside hawker stalls at Collyer Quay were very popular eating places in the 1960s. In the background is the Asia Insurance Building, Singapore's first modern skyscraper


Yusof Ishak Collection, Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

President Yusof Ishak laying the Foundation Stone dedicated to the Early Founders of Singapore


K F Wong Collection, Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

The General Post Office, or the Fullerton Building, seen from Clifford Pier in 1962



A photograph from 1985 showing development of the modern CBD skyline and the financial district, also known as "Golden Shoe"

A Foundation Stone dedicated to the Early Founders of Singapore

The Foundation Stone is a memorial dedicated to the early founders – the "Unknown Immigrants" - of Singapore. It consists of a rectangular granite stone on a pyramid shaped brick pedestal, with inscriptions in the four official languages of Malay, English, Mandarin and Tamil. The original idea for the memorial was mooted by a graduates association in 1969 and an open design competition was held. On 18 January 1970, President Yusof Ishak laid the foundation stone for the memorial at a temporary site along Collyer Quay outside the Fullerton Hotel. However, no eventual winner for the competition was announced, and due to a lack of funds, the foundation stone itself became the memorial. The stone was later relocated to the grounds of the National Archives of Singapore at Canning Rise. With the completion of the Fullerton Heritage Gallery on 9 July 2010, the Foundation Stone was moved back to the Fullerton Hotel premises.



B Original Merlion Site

Behind the Waterboat House is a promontory where the statue of the Merlion, originally stood. The Merlion, a mythical half-fish, half-lion creature, was designed by a former curator of the Van Kleef Aquarium in 1964 for use as the logo of the Singapore Tourism Board. The statue at the mouth of the Singapore River was built in 1971 by local sculptor Lim Nang Seng, and stood at this location for many years. In 1997, the completion of the Esplanade Bridge blocked views of the Merlion from the waterfront at Marina Bay, and it was relocated to a new promontory at the Merlion Park in 2002.



C Waterboat House

The Waterboat House is an Art Deco building designed by Swan & Maclaren and built in 1941. The three-storey building incorporates a basement which was visible from the sea. It has a prominent curved facade with a semi-circular tower-like structure facing Fullerton Road. This site also used to house the Master Attendant's Office in the late 19th century, from which the Master Attendant supervised all water activities until the harbour moved to Keppel in 1852. Subsequently a Water Office was built here to supply fresh water to incoming ships, and was in use until 1990. On 21 March 2002, Waterboat House was gazetted for conservation. It was awarded the 2005 URA Architectural Heritage Award for the restoration works, which included recovery of the original grey Shanghai Plaster finish and addition of a new glass annexe.



D Fullerton Hotel (Former General Post Office)

The Fullerton Building sits on the historic promontory between the Singapore River and Marina Bay and at the edge of Raffles Place, the dynamic hub of Singapore's financial community. This seven-storey Neo-Classical-style building was commissioned in 1919 as part of the British Colony's centennial celebrations and was designed by Keys & Dowdeswell, who also designed Capitol Theatre. Completed in 1928, it housed the General Post Office, the Exchange, Singapore Club, Chamber of Commerce and various other government offices. An underground tunnel connected the building to a waterfront pier where mail was delivered to waiting ships. There was also a lighthouse on top of the building. On 20 September 1996, the Fullerton Building was gazetted for conservation and in the following year, it was sold together with an underpass and the adjacent waterfront land parcel. The building was adaptively restored and transformed to a luxury hotel development, now known as the Fullerton Hotel. Its restoration earned the project accolades such as the 2001 URA Architectural Heritage Award and the FIABCI Prix d'Excellence awards (Leisure Category) in 2003.





E Clifford Pier

Built in 1933 by the Public Works Department, the Art Deco-style Clifford Pier was known as 'Red Lamp Pier' because a red lamp used to be hung there to direct sea vessels. It was named after Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of the Straits Settlements between 1927 and 1929. The interior features distinctive concrete arch trusses spanning a large open hall. In 2006, boat services ceased to operate from Clifford Pier, and the site was sold together with the former Customs Harbour Branch building, for the development of a new waterfront development incorporating hotel, commercial and recreational uses. Clifford Pier, the former Customs Harbour Branch building and the Change Alley Aerial Plaza were gazetted for conservation on 14 March 2007. The new "Fullerton Heritage" development comprising restored and new infill buildings, was awarded the 2011 URA Architectural Heritage Award.



F Change Alley Aerial Plaza

The Modern-style Change Alley Aerial Plaza was built in 1971 by local architect KK Tan & Associates. It featured a glass-framed bridge which linked Clifford Pier to Clifford Centre and was built with pre-fabricated rolled steel section frames. The bridge used to house an assortment of merchants and money changers, similar to the vendors at Change Alley. The Plaza also features a 39-metre high revolving tower which used to house the "Red Lantern" restaurant. The bridge and tower underwent renovation works in 2009 and reopened in 2010.



G Customs Harbour Branch

The Modern-style former Customs Harbour Branch building was built by the Public Works Department in the late 1960s to meet the expanding workload of the Customs Police. The main building has a ribbed concrete roof with 'butterfly' panels and an observation tower with expansive harbour views. The building is now part of the "Fullerton Heritage" development.



H Historic seawall of Telok Ayer Basin

Next to the Customs Harbour Branch building stands the remnants of the 19th century granite seawall of Telok Ayer Basin where ships coming into harbour used to dock. The seawall was incorporated as part of the land sale site at Collyer Quay and now functions as a berthing point for sailboats.


Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

I Asia Insurance Building

Once the tallest building in Southeast Asia in the 1950s, this 18-storey building used to house the headquarters of the Asia Insurance Company, one of the pioneer insurance companies established locally. Completed in 1955, the Asia Insurance Building was one of the earliest skyscrapers in Singapore. The building was designed by local architect Mr Ng Keng Siang, one of Singapore's prominent early overseas graduates. The Art Deco-style skyscraper was clad in travertine and topped by a crown, intended to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. The building was gazetted for conservation on 18 April 2007. It was subsequently restored and converted into high-end service apartments. The restoration kept many of the original design features such as the original travertine stone cladding, antiquated window frames, brass mail chute and ornamental staircase railings. In 2009, the restored development received the URA Architectural Heritage Award.



The URA Conservation Programme

The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) is the national planning authority for Singapore. Its active involvement in conservation started as early as the 1970s with the rehabilitation of some state-owned properties for adaptive reuse. To-date, conservation status has been given to 94 conservation areas involving over 7000 buildings throughout the island.

Conservation of our built heritage is an integral part of urban planning and development in Singapore. The restoration of our historic areas add variety to our streetscapes and modulate the scale of our urban fabric, creating the visual contrast and excitement within the city while protecting the important reminders and representations of our past. In addition, it adds to the distinctive character and identity of our city, giving it a sense of history and memory of place.

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