

# SEMOGA BAHAGIA

Making space, making time

*Semoga Bahagia*

*Sama-sama maju ke hadapan  
Pandai cari pelajaran  
Jaga diri dalam kesihatan  
Serta sopan-santun dengan kawan-kawan  
Dengan hati bersih serta suci  
Sama-sama hormat dan berbudi  
Jaga tingkah pemuda-pemudi  
Adat dan budaya junjung tinggi  
Capailah lekas cita-cita pemudi-pemuda  
Supaya kita ada harga di mata dunia*

*May You Achieve Happiness*

*May you be happy  
Together we go  
Making our way in this world  
Taking care of ourselves  
And being courteous to our friends  
With a clean and pure heart  
Respect and be kind to each other  
Uphold our customs and traditions  
Reach for our dreams  
Our value in this world lies in*

## Acknowledgements

*I would like to thank Dr Lilian Chee, my thesis advisor, for her tireless guidance and encouragement throughout the year, without which the project's completion could not have been reached,*

*Zihao and Ian, whose input, support, and advice has been invaluable,*

*My classmates, for making studio far better than it would have been otherwise,*

*and finally to friends, family, and all those who have contributed to this project.*

*Leisure is productive.*

*In a city whose residents are the 2nd most overworked in the world, this thesis examines the value of leisure in the definition of citizen and nation. The architecture revolves around pauses, intervals, desire, and difference. It critiques a capitalist city built through efficiency, and for efficacy. In recuperating histories of place, notions of value are accumulated through leisurely pursuits, personal reflection, and agency, recalibrating our attitude towards - and within - the city.*

*The thesis takes the form of a Citizens' Parliament, a place to host the initiation of new Singaporeans. The Parliament occupies three sites – by the river, on the hill, and within the courtyard of the current Parliament House.*

Foreword	
Map: Citizen's Parliament	7
Postscript:	12
<b>Eighth Bridge</b>	<b>16</b>
Map: Merlion Park	17
Place-guide	20
Leisure: Fishing	26
Leisure: Swimming	28
<b>Boulder Fields</b>	<b>30</b>
Map: Fort Canning Hill	31
Place-guide	34
Leisure: Gardening	42
Leisure: Picnicking	45
<b>People's Chambers</b>	<b>47</b>
Map: Parliament House	48
Place-guide	51
Leisure: Learning Malay	57
Leisure: National Anthem	59

## **Singapore ranks 32 out of 40 for work-life balance, second most overworked city**

### **Singapore residents value leisure time, but more than half feel guilty for taking breaks**

Singapore – A new study has found that six out of 10 people surveyed in Singapore wanted to be productive even though they are taking a break from work. Out of 600 respondents, more than half answered that they feel stressed about “doing nothing.” Three out of 10 responded that they did not know how to relax.

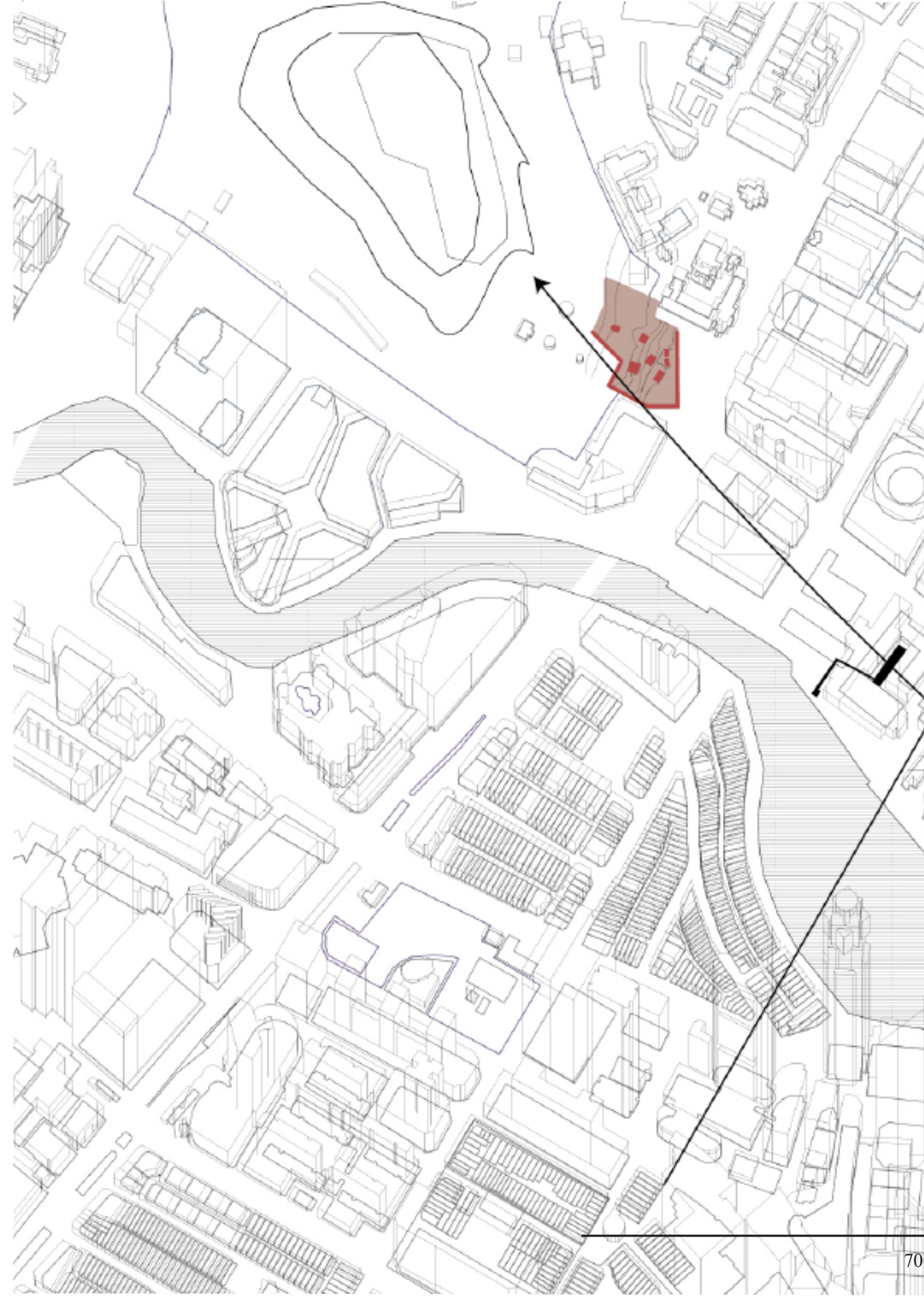
## **S'pore Ranks 2nd For Most Overworked City in 2020, Netizens Joke We Need To Aim 'Higher'**

*We dropped from 32nd to 41st in work-life balance in 2020.*

### **Just half of Singaporeans polled feel fulfilled in life, survey finds**

"Leisure is not idleness. It is not even a luxury: it is a necessity, and a necessity of first importance..."

George Bernard Shaw, 1971





0m

N





Old Merlion Park



Parliament House



Fort Canning Hill

In these 9 months, my own thesis on anti-capitalistic ideals was itself caught in capital's grip. I discovered that to oppose the capitalist logic of productivity and efficacy was foolhardy. Week after week, I created follies and nuisance-making<sup>1</sup> devices, unwittingly becoming an architectural dilettante – whose production also flat-lined, a testament to the futility of my own project.

One afternoon, while reclining in bed – the rare privileges afforded to a yet-to-be-fully productive student – I was stuck, feeling sleepy and berating myself for not being as advanced as I had hoped to be in the thesis – it struck me that I could rework the value<sup>2</sup> of dreaming and blue-sky thinking. Taking advantage of my diffused and associative mind in supine leisurely mode, I asked: What if leisure is also 'productive'?

Leisure is not without structure, rules, and outcomes. Leisure has surplus value. A song I learnt when I was 9 years old comes to mind. Written for young children by Zubir Said- the composer of Singapore's national anthem, Semoga Bahagia enthuses that one's place in the world is made by what we hold dear – friendship, kindness, our customs and cultures, caring for the other, and reaching for our dreams.

This thesis is woven around these 'surplus' concerns. It reconciles the histories, cultures and natural dispositions of place<sup>3</sup> juxtaposed with where we are today<sup>4</sup>, and reimagines the value of architecture which still holds onto desire, delay, and difference.

## 1. Nuisance

Nuisance was the preoccupation of the project in its initial stages. Its antagonism to spatial norms of the city and its architecture made it an interesting, and sometimes inspiring, phenomena.

Its inherently oppositional, discordant nature, however, would subsequently reduce its potential value towards the project. Architecture might transcend nuisance by not just rejecting the status quo, but by a substitution with a self-affirming set of values.

## 2. Revaluations of Value

In 99 Theses for Revaluation of Value, Massumi dissociates the notion of 'value' from Capital. Systems of value revolving around cooperation, interaction, or informal production of knowledge are put forth.

This reexamination of value functioned as a point of departure from Nuisance. Leisure, while critical of the capital-centric city, equally possessed value - on a local level of the individual architectures, and collectively towards a communal sense of nationhood that architecture of Capital might be unable to provide.

## 3. Malayan Picturesque

The investigation into the Malayan spatial disposition towards productive leisure - that Singapore and the region once identified with - painted a picturesque way living with elements of specific place. They are simultaneously leisurely yet useful; integral to communal sense of belonging.

A connection was drawn in the project between this elemental spatiality and the work of Malayan landscape artists in the 1950s. The methods of 'Malayan Picturesque' artists such as Cheong Soo Pieng - through a dense patterning and layered flatness - lent itself to portraying the leisurely architecture.

The project, however, attempts to engage the limitations of this style - tackling depth, interiority, precision, and the encroaching city as it moves from river, to hill, to city.

## 4. Infrastructure

In Extrastatecraft, Keller Easterling details the nature of the modern, capital-driven city and city-state as one underpinned and governed by spatial software. It is described as an 'infrastructural technology' that works through a constantly applied "active form"- the tool through which the bureaucracy of space operates. Yet, these active forms equally provide opportunities for agency- bridges, roads, sign-posts, that accumulate their own patina of meaning.

That infrastructure, so central to the productive and coded city, might generate counter-values of equally useful leisure, was central to driving the project forward. The twisting of infrastructure subverts the integrity of other, more common versions - they, too, might be used for leisure, with a bit of individual creativity.

## Image Citations

Today, “Singapore ranks 32 out of 40 for work-life balance, second most overworked city“, 08 AUGUST, 2019, <https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/singapore-ranks-32-out-40-work-life-balance-second-most-overworked-city>

Sentosa.gov , “Singapore residents value leisure time, but more than half feel guilty for taking breaks“, 27 June 2019 , [https://www.sentosa.gov.sg/resources/news/files/20190627\\_Media\\_Release\\_Make\\_Time.pdf](https://www.sentosa.gov.sg/resources/news/files/20190627_Media_Release_Make_Time.pdf)

Joanna Seow, “1 in 2 Singapore residents feels stressed out by the thought of doing nothing: Survey”, The Straits Times, 27 June 2019, <https://www.straitstimes.com/business/one-in-two-singapore-residents-feel-stressed-out-by-the-thought-of-doing-nothing-survey>

Sabrina Seng, “S’pore Ranks 2nd For Most Overworked City in 2020, Netizens Joke We Need To Aim ‘Higher’ “, MSNews, 17 Nov 2020, <https://mustsharenews.com/singapore-2nd-overworked/>

Navene Elangovan, ”Just half of Singaporeans polled feel fulfilled in life, survey finds”, Today, 24 Sep 2019, <https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/just-half-singaporeans-polled-feel-fulfilled-life-survey-finds>

National Archives of Singapore, “CONSTRUCTION OF SINGAPORE’S TOURISM SYMBOL, THE MERLION, NEARING COMPLETION AT THE MOUTH OF SINGAPORE RIVER, ” SINGAPORE PRESS HOLDINGS (SPH), 17 May 1972, <https://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/photographs/record-details/a86f0d24-1162-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad>

WayFengShuiGroup, “The One Place in Singapore where a FengShui Compass Doesn’t Work, ” Accessed 2021, <https://www.wayfengshui.com/merlion/>

A.J.Hawker, “ Road Side Hawkers Along Singapore River”, National Archives of Singapore, 1970, <https://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/photographs/record-details/cfe5e2e9-1161-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad>

Andrea Nguyen , “VWK COMMUNITY TIP: SOURCING PANDAN PLANTS”, Vietnam World Kitchen, 26 July 2013, <https://www.vietworldkitchen.com/blog/2013/07/sourcing-pandan-plants.html>

Dick Culbert, “A Ti Plant near Iguazu, Argentina. Pantropical from an origin in Polynesia and southeast Asia. Asparagaceae. x”, 5 July 2015, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cordyline\\_fruticosa#/media/File:Cordyline\\_fruticosa\\_\(20262433874\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cordyline_fruticosa#/media/File:Cordyline_fruticosa_(20262433874).jpg)

Becca Badgett,, “Torch Ginger Flowers: How To Grow Torch Ginger Lilies”, 12 July 2020, <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/flowers/ornamental-ginger/growing-torch-ginger-lilies.htm>

Nan Schiller, “THE BEST TIPS FOR CULTIVATING SHOWY GARDEN CROTON INDOORS”, Gardener’s Path, 22 Sept 2018 , <https://gardenerspath.com/how-to/indoor-gardening/garden-croton/>

UK House Plants, “BOUGAINVILLEA”, <https://www.ukhouseplants.com/plants/bougainvillea>. Accessed 2021.

Edeth Mukaro, “Carica papaya – Papaya tree”, Sun Trees, 19 Jan 2017, <https://suntrees.co.za/carica-papaya-papaya-tree/>

Catherine Cartwright-Jones ,”Henna: Lawsonia Inermis”, The Henna Page, 2004, <http://www.hennapage.com/henna/encyclopedia/growing/>

The Old Farmer’s Almanac, “GROWING SNAKE PLANTS HOW TO CARE FOR SNAKE PLANTS”. <https://www.almanac.com/plant/snake-plants>. Accessed 2021

Mango.org, “Dwarf Mango Trees: Not so Difficult to Grow”, 16 April 2020, <https://www.mango.org/dwarf-mango-trees-not-so-difficult-to-grow/>

Kyle Sweet, “Madagascar Periwinkle”, SantivaChronicle.com, 1 May 2020. <https://santivachronicle.com/news/madagascar-periwinkle/>

Kartuz Greenhouses, “Polyscias fruticosa 'Snowflake'”, <http://www.kartuz.com/p/90632/Polyscias+fruticosa+Snowflake.html>. Accessed 2021.

Amy Grant, “Fertilizing Coconut Palm Trees: How And When To Fertilize Coconut Palms”, Gardening Know-how, , 3 Nov 2020, <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/edible/fruits/coconut/fertilizing-coconut-palm-trees.htm>

Vanessa Richins Myers, “Do Bananas Have Seeds?”, The Spruce, 24 Sep 2020, <https://www.thespruce.com/do-bananas-have-seeds-3269378>

Gardenia, “Citrus x microcarpa”, <https://www.gardenia.net/plant/citrus-microcarpa>. Accessed 2021.

ariefbianski, “Know The Mangosteen Fruit That Taste Delicious & Sweet”, Steemit, <https://steemit.com/esteem/@ariefbianski/-know-the-mangosteen-fruit-that-taste-delicious-and-sweet-71f9dcd5e5657>. Accessed 2021.

parmarch, “RAMBUTAN *Nephelium lappaceum*”, Fruitipedia, 8 Dec 2018, [http://www.fruitipedia.com/2018/12/rambutan\\_nephelium-lappaceum/](http://www.fruitipedia.com/2018/12/rambutan_nephelium-lappaceum/)

Shabana Begum, “Journey back in time at new gardens in Fort Canning Park”. The Straits Times, 28 May 2019, <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/journey-back-in-time-at-new-gardens-in-fort-canning-park>

Tanya Ong, “Body of woman, 83, found floating along S’pore river on Jan. 30, police investigating unnatural death” , Mothership, 31 January 2021. <https://mothership.sg/2021/01/elderly-woman-fall-into-singapore-river/>

Bernard T. G. Tan, “The Hunt for Majulah Singapura : Its origins and adoption as Singapore’s national anthem”. Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, <https://www.mccy.gov.sg/-/media/Mccy-Ca/Feature/Resources/Journals/Cultural-Connections-Vol-4/2-Professor-Bernard-Tan.pdf>. Accessed 2021.

Cai Heng , “Masterpieces from the Gallery: National Language Class by Chua Mia Tee”. The Straits Times, 13 Oct 2015, <https://www.straitstimes.com/lifestyle/arts/masterpieces-from-the-gallery-national-language-class-by-chua-mia-tee>

# Bibliography

- Bala Starr. "Artists Imagine a Nation", Singapore : Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, 2015
- Cai Heng , "Masterpieces from the Gallery: National Language Class by Chua Mia Tee". The Straits Times, 13 Oct 2015, <https://www.straitstimes.com/lifestyle/arts/masterpieces-from-the-gallery-national-language-class-by-chua-mia-tee>
- Harvard GSD. "Keller Easterling, "Extrastatecraft"." YouTube video. April 9, 2015. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sa-KoIP5qH8E&ab\\_channel=HarvardGSD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sa-KoIP5qH8E&ab_channel=HarvardGSD)
- Ismail HafizSalleh, Mohd Sabrizaa Abd.Rashid, Siti Rasidah MdSakip, " Malay Garden Concept from the Traditional Malay Landscape Design,"Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences , Volume 222, 23 June 2016, Pages 548-556
- Kuykendall, L., Boerman, L., & Zhu, Z. (2018). The importance of leisure for subjective well-being. In E. Diener, S. Oishi, & L. Tay (Eds.), Handbook of well-being. Salt Lake City, UT: DEF Publishers. DOI:nobascholar.com
- Lim Chen Sian, "Preliminary Report on the Archaeological Investigations at the National Gallery Singapore", Nalanda–Sriwijaya Centre Archaeology Unit Archaeology Report Series No 5 (January 2017)
- Lin YY, "Semoga Bahagia (May You Achieve Happiness)". Sing MCS, SEPTEMBER 25, 2011, <http://singmcs.blogspot.com/2011/09/semoga-bahagia-may-you-achieve.html>
- Massumi, Brian. 99 Theses on the Revaluation of Value A Postcapitalist Manifesto (University of Minnesota Press 2018)
- Miksic , John, "Temasek, Singapore and modern national identity construction", pg 200, 2020. Singapore - Two Hundred Years of the Lion City ,Edited Anthony Webster and Nicholas J White, Routledge Studies in the Modern History of Art
- National Heritage Board, "NATIONAL ANTHEM". <https://www.nhb.gov.sg/what-we-do/our-work/community-engagement/education/resources/national-symbols/national-anthem>. Accessed 2021.
- NParks, MEDIA FACTSHEET D – Re-creating the First Botanic Garden, 17 March 2018, <https://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/-data/pdfdoc/20180317006/5%20Factsheet%20D%20-%20First%20Botanic%20Garden.pdf>
- Shabana Begum, "Journey back in time at new gardens in Fort Canning Park". The Straits Times, 28 May 2019, <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/journey-back-in-time-at-new-gardens-in-fort-canning-park>
- Tan, Bernard T. G."The Hunt for Majulah Singapura : Its origins and adoption as Singapore's national anthem". Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, <https://www.mccy.gov.sg/-/media/Mccy-Ca/Feature/Resources/-Journals/Cultural-Connections-Vol-4/2-Professor-Bernard-Tan.pdf>. Accessed 2021.
- Tan Yuk Hong Ian , "BRIDGES TO OUR HERITAGE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FIVE HISTORIC BRIDGES OVER SINGAPORE RIVER". Dissertation written for EDINBURGH SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, 2012
- Tan, Bonny, "Stamford Raffles's landing in Singapore", NLB eresources, January 2019. [https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/-SIP\\_131\\_2005-01-03.html](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/-SIP_131_2005-01-03.html)
- Tony, "What Raffles Saw on the Day he Landed at Singapore River in 1819", Johorkaki, 27 Jun 2020, <https://johorkaki.blogspot.com/2020/06/walking-with-raffles-at-singapore-river.html>
- Quek,Adam et al. "A guide to Freshwater Fauna of Ponds in Singapore", Tropical Marine Science Institute, National University of Singapore, 2014.

Annex A: Process documentation

Annex B: Thesis Prep (Semester 1) presentation boards

Annex C: Thesis Prep (Semester 1) supporting books

# EIGHTH BRIDGE

## Fullerton Road, Singapore River

*Anand, an IT professional and Sunita -his wife-, a teacher, came to Singapore in 2000 as students. They will soon become Singaporeans.*

*Sunita, a history teacher, was very surprised to learn about the 8th Bridge across the Singapore River.*

*The other seven bridges were all named after British administrators. They reached the 8th Bridge very early on a Saturday morning. The water was calm and sparkling; the sky a clear blue. A few fishermen were already settled in their spots; one was reeling in the first catch of the day – a fair-sized warty catfish.*

*A fisherman told Anand that he had fished with his father at this same spot when he was a boy. Sunita knew this promontory was the mouth of the Singapore River. It was dammed in 2008. Today, this is all freshwater. When Anand and her first arrived in Singapore, they took a photograph here with the Merlion with the Anderson Bridge behind it. The 8th Bridge is unlike the other seven. It meanders, and parts of it dip low.*

*On one weekend, Anand found himself left on a section of the bridge as the rising tide covered other parts of the bridge. He could not make his way to the promontory until the tide receded.*

*At first he was anxious. But waiting alone, he started to spot things he had not noticed before.*

*The slivered wooden planks of the bridge gleamed in the sun. He saw dragonflies, frogs, and small crabs. The water was alive with fingerlings and larger fish.*

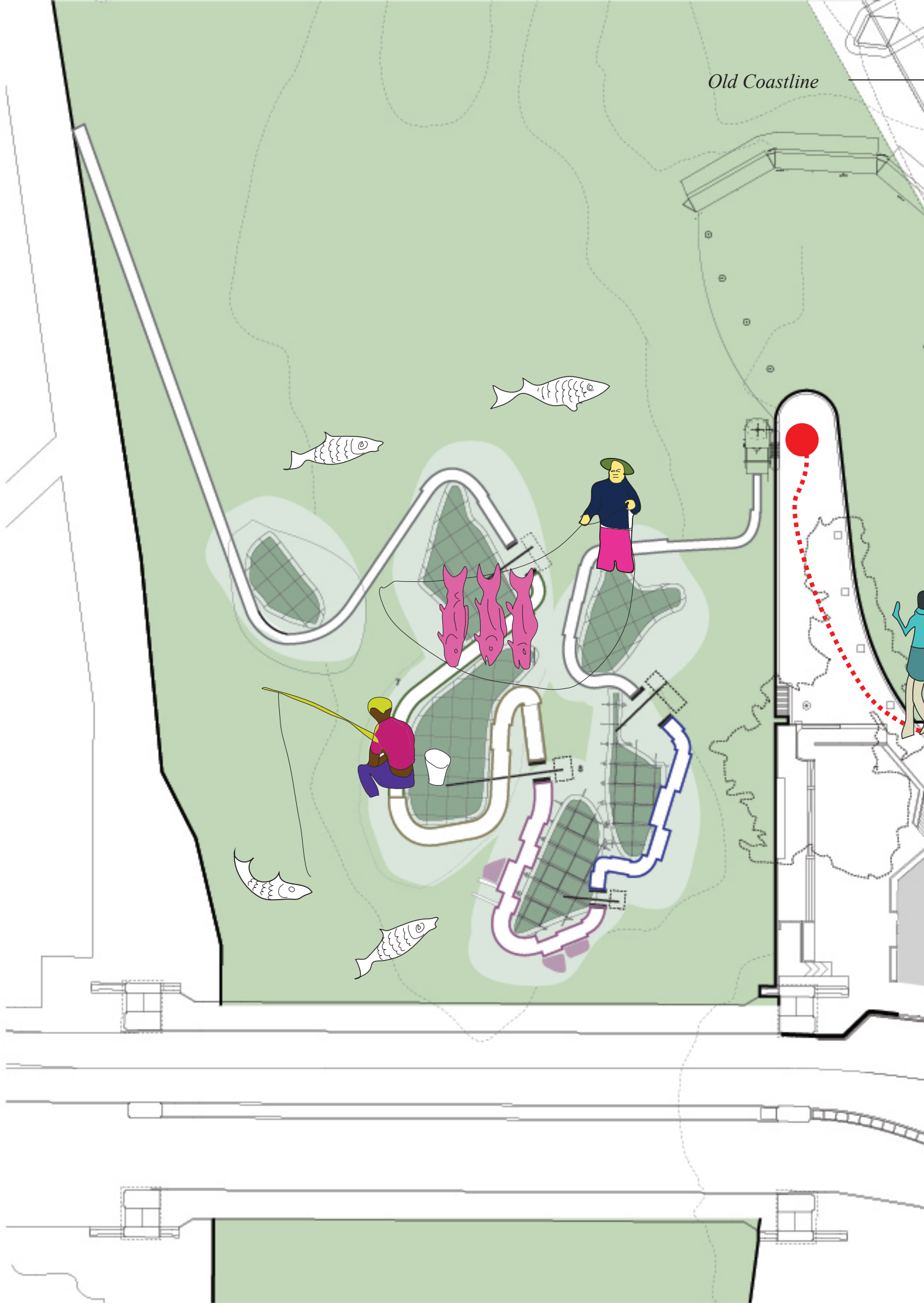
*Ahead on an unreachable segment, dried fish were bought and sold. Hammocks hung limp, ready for the next fisherman or diver. The sails on the weather station filled and emptied.*

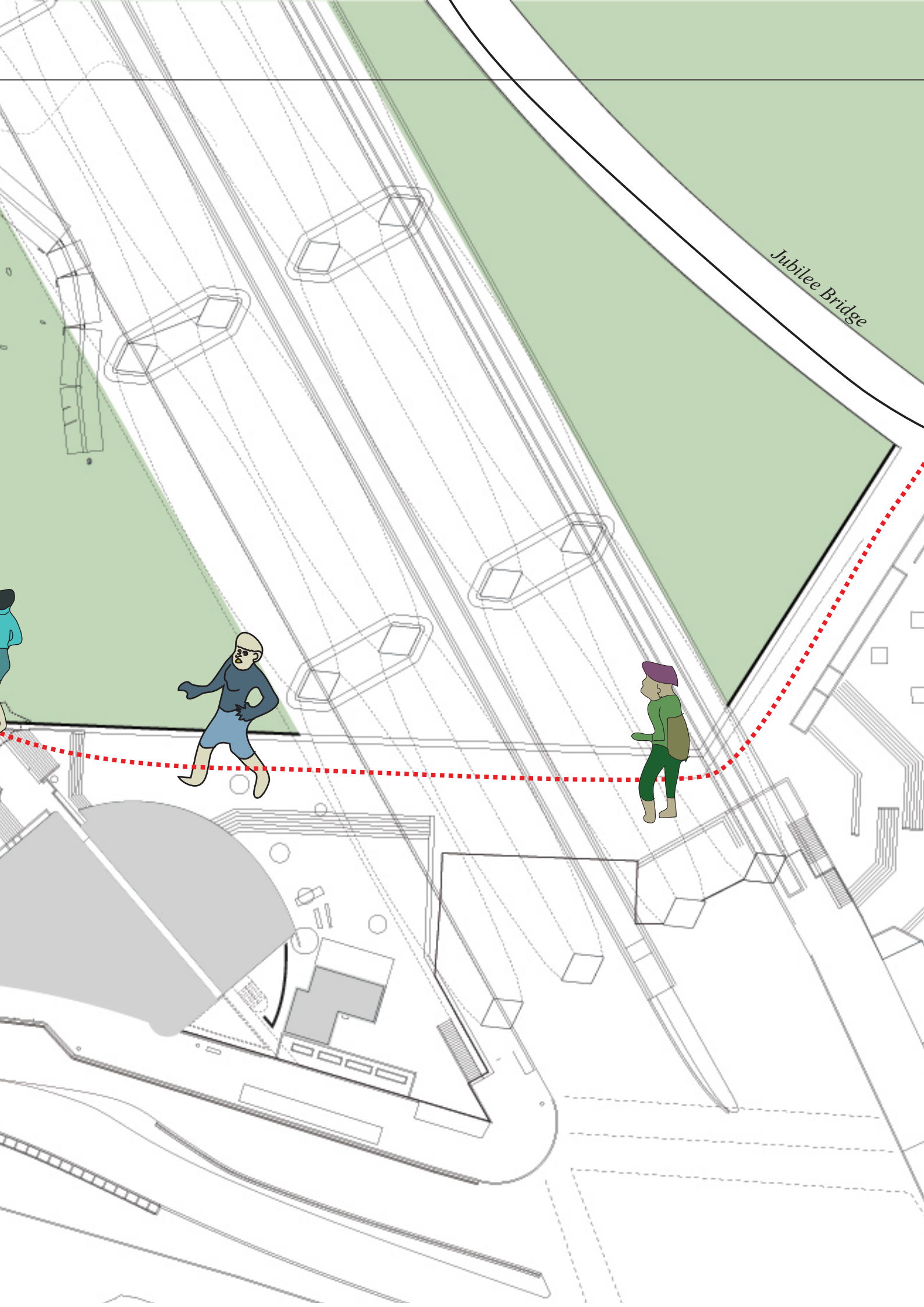
*Anand followed the other fishermen. They climbed up a small lighthouse. One offered Anand a line. Casting together with them, Anand sat with his new mates in silence. Soon, there was a bite, and then another, and in time, Anand also felt a pull. He took a small loach, his first fish in Singapore.*

*The sun started to set. He was surprised that his hands smelt of fish. Anand could see his own office tower in a distance, and wondered why he never thought of the bay in this way before.*



*Old Coastline*





Jubilee Bridge

Towards the New Coast



New Merlion Park

Marina Bay Tourist Route

*Fig 3: The Eighth Bridge*

The Eighth Bridge across the Singapore River, at the Old Merlion Park, tests and prove the vitality of the water through harbored life. It is a productive space that invokes a close, leisurely interaction with water.

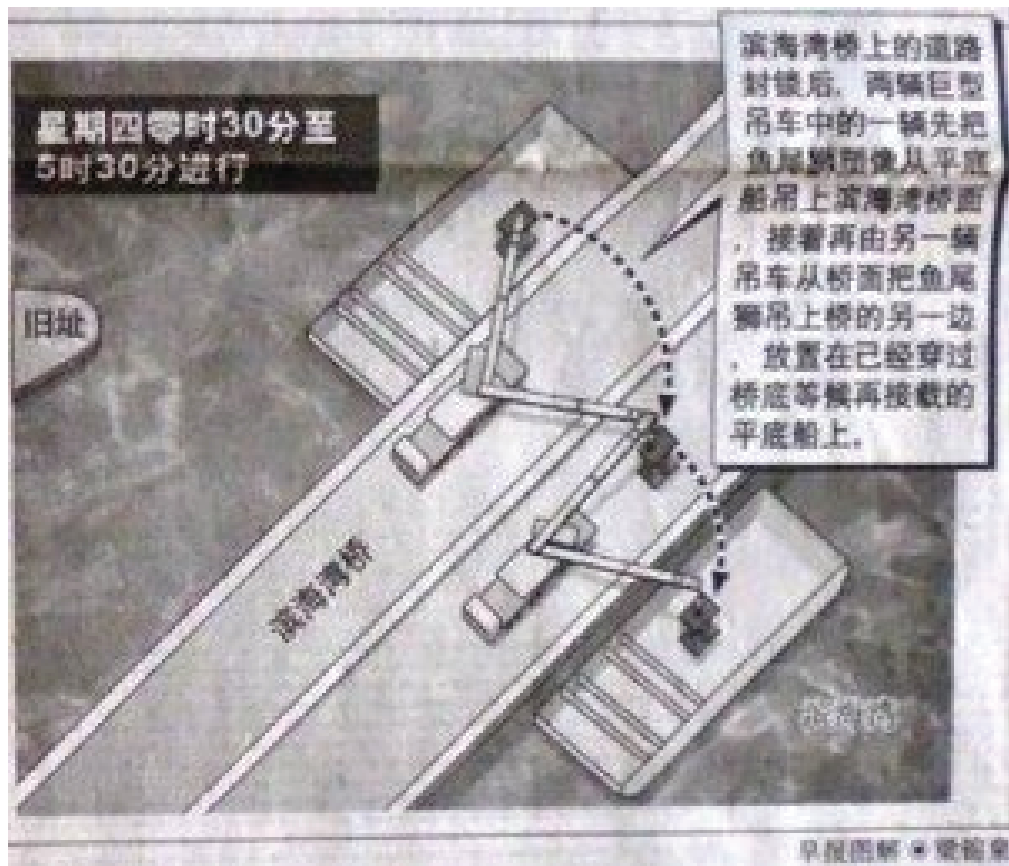
At the site of the old Merlion statue, pragmatic development of reservoirs and bridges has eroded the age-old, mythical, practical, and leisurely relationship between Singapore and water over time.

Once, it was the mouth of the Singapore River and faced the open sea. It was how travellers first saw and described Singapore, and the entrance to the city itself. The rocky coast would host Fort Fullerton, in the years immediately after colonization. After its demolition - too small, too close to the town centre - it was replaced by a stone promontory, where people used to fish, where they would sleep in boats to avoid the heat of the sun - and at high tide when the water was cleanest, a place for schoolchildren to dive off into the water.

Its prominence was such that in 1964, the Merlion - the half-lion, half-fish symbol adopted by Singapore to symbolize itself and its maritime heritage, was placed upon the tip of the promontory.



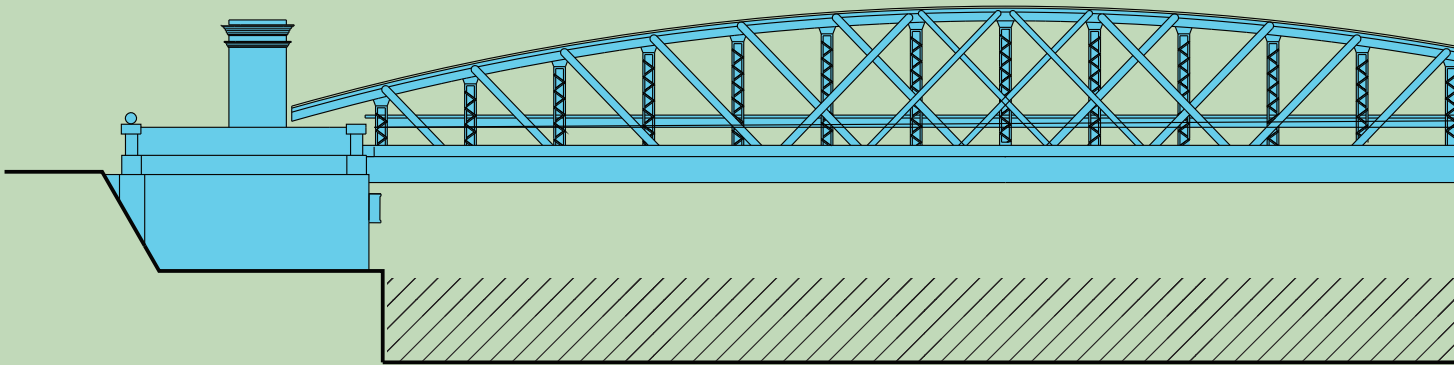
*Fig 4. "Construction of Singapore's Tourism Symbol, the Merlion, Nearing Completion at the Mouth of Singapore River" 1972, National Archives of Singapore*



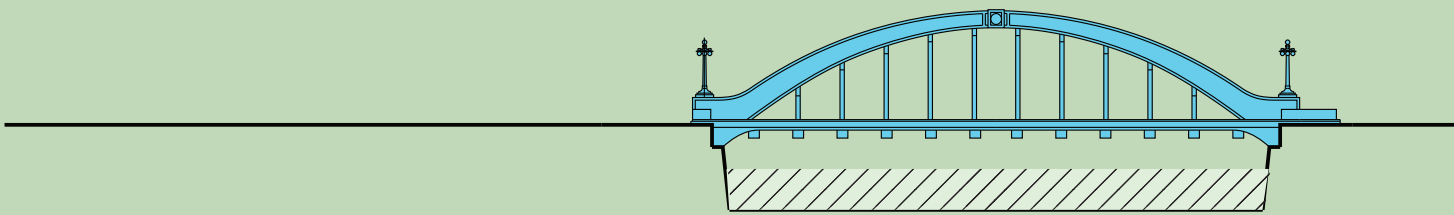
*Fig 5. The movement of the Merlion over Esplanade Bridge via paired cranes*

Much has changed in the intervening years.

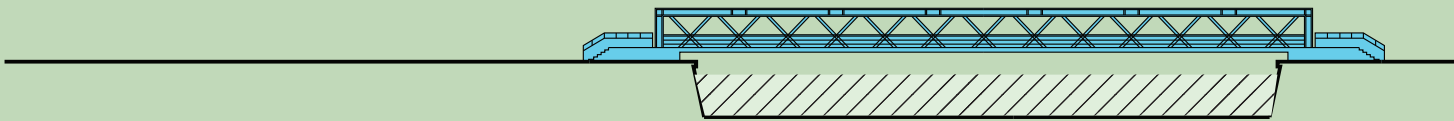
Reclamation has pushed the coast to the east. Highways and bridges have buried the site, and so the entire statue was picked up and moved to a more visible location in 2002. Following that, the completion of the seafront dam in 2008 has turned the water into a static freshwater lake.



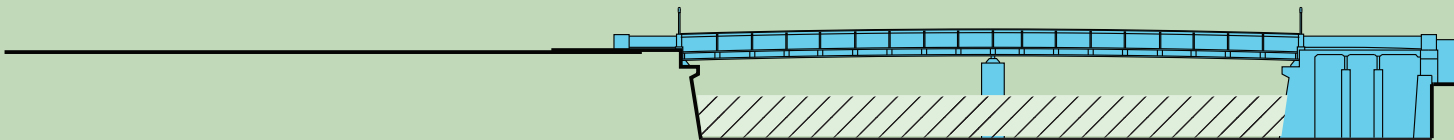
1910



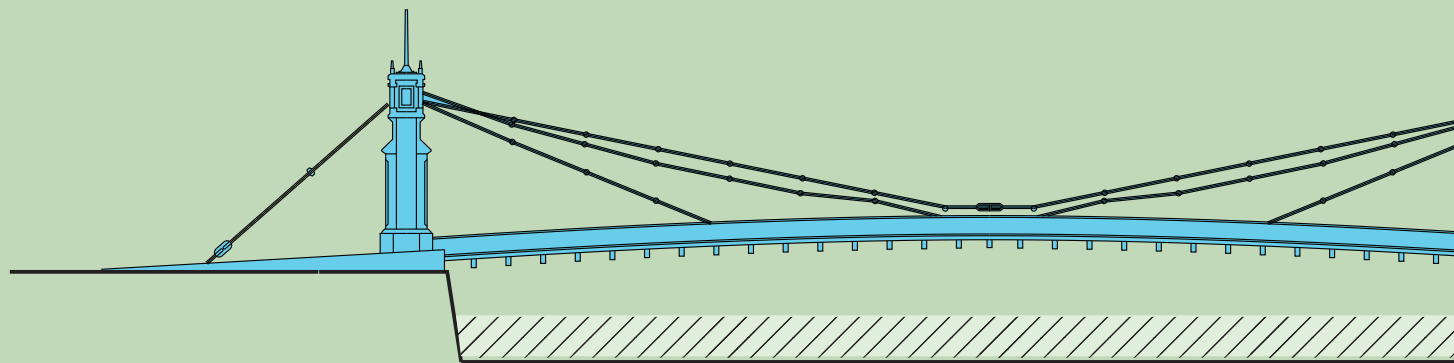
1822



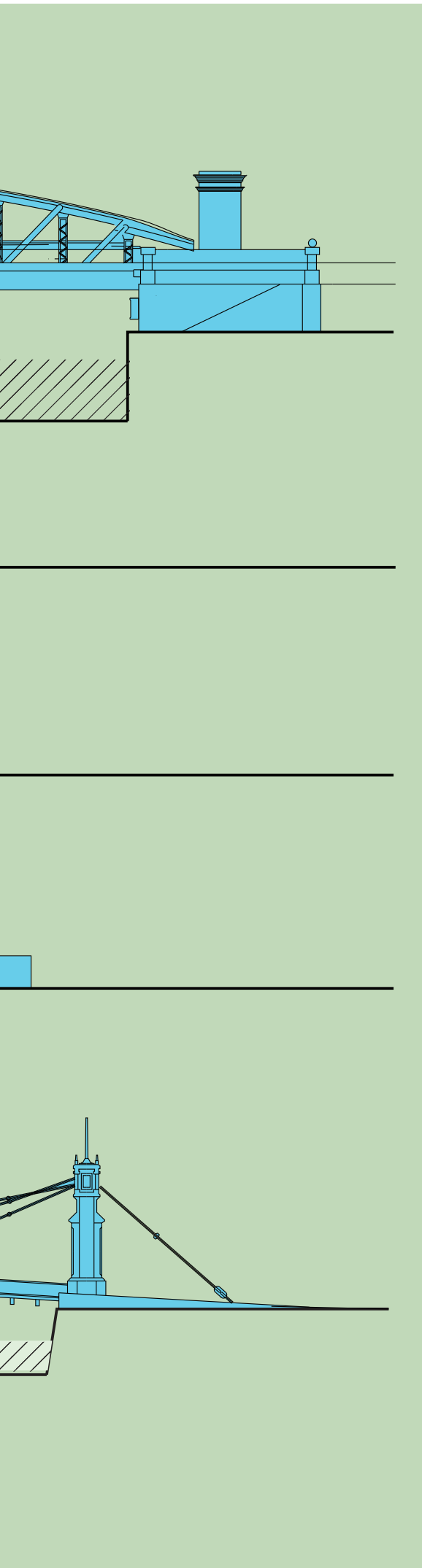
1886



1855

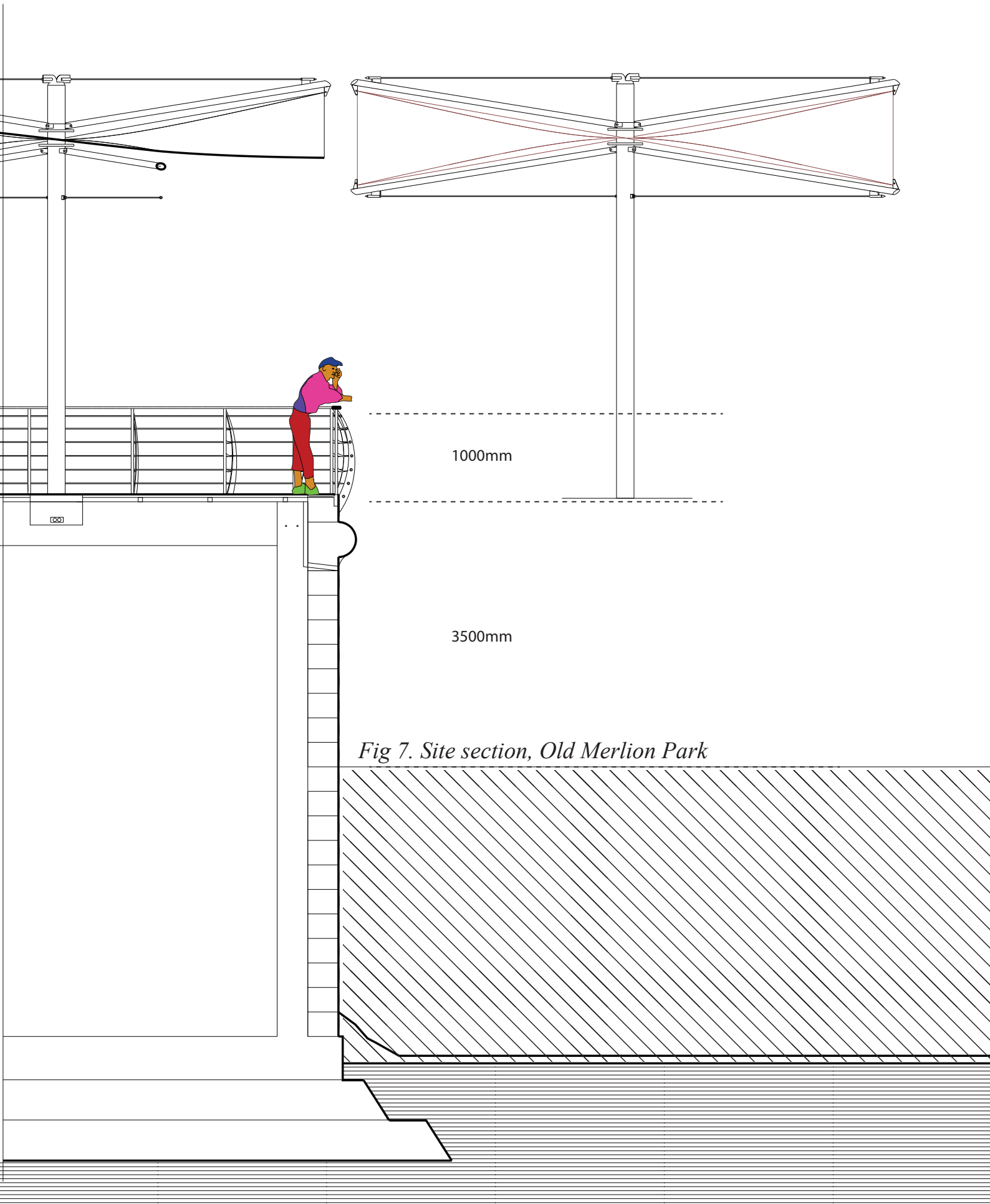


1869



*Fig 6. Colonial-era bridges*

In 1822, three years after Stamford Raffles first landed in Singapore, the prospective colonizers would begin constructing the first of seven original colonial bridges across the Singapore River. These bridges shuttled pedestrians - and later, vehicular traffic- becoming steadily more massive and imposing to cope with the strains of the city.



1000mm

3500mm

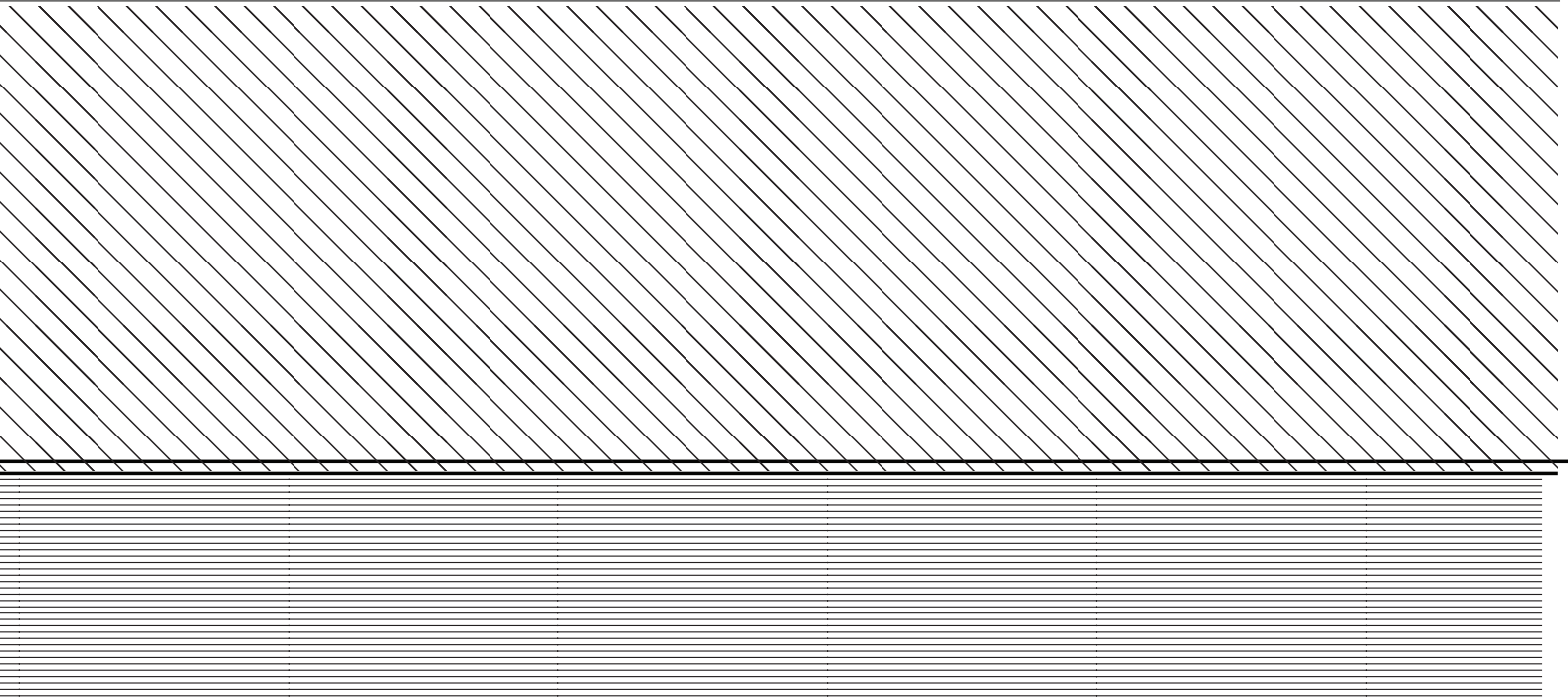
*Fig 7. Site section, Old Merlion Park*

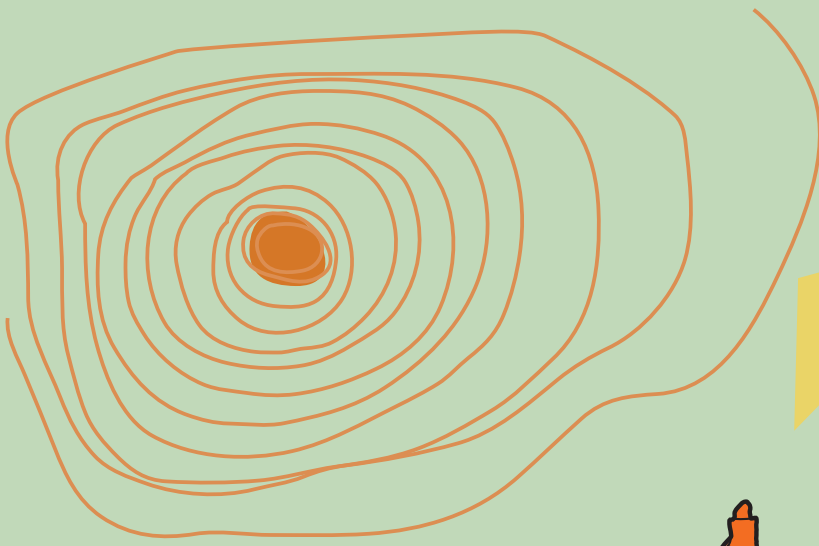




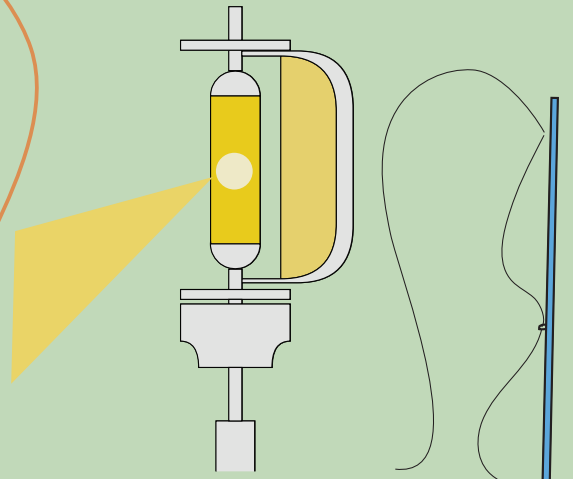
*Fig 8. "Road Side Hawkers Along Singapore River".  
National Archives of Singapore, 1970*

The desire to preserve the image of the bay as a clean and untouched reservoir of drinking water has enforced a set of edge conditions that keep people away, behind railings, on bridges and footpaths, where fishing and swimming is strictly prohibited.

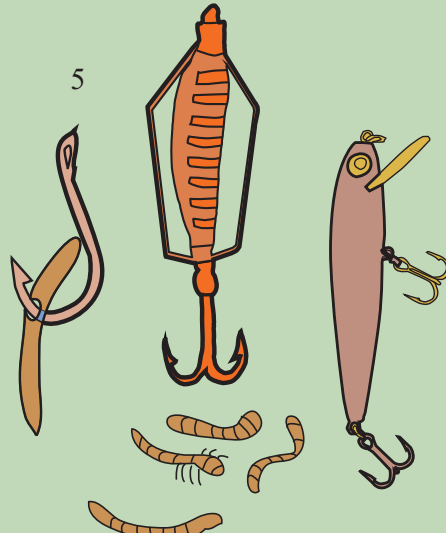




1.



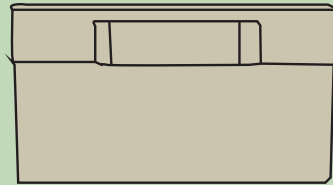
2.



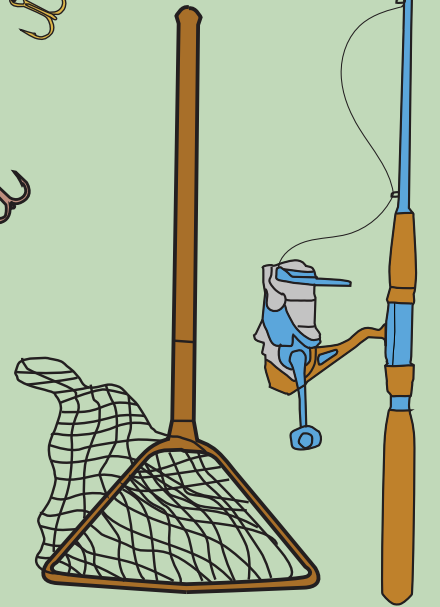
5.



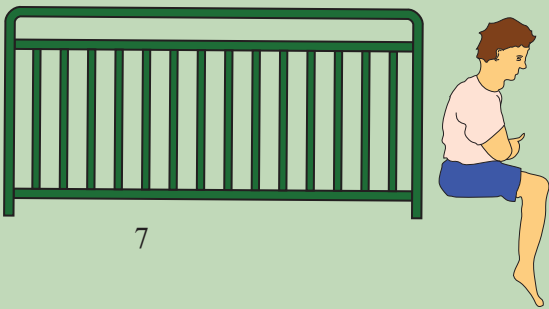
3.



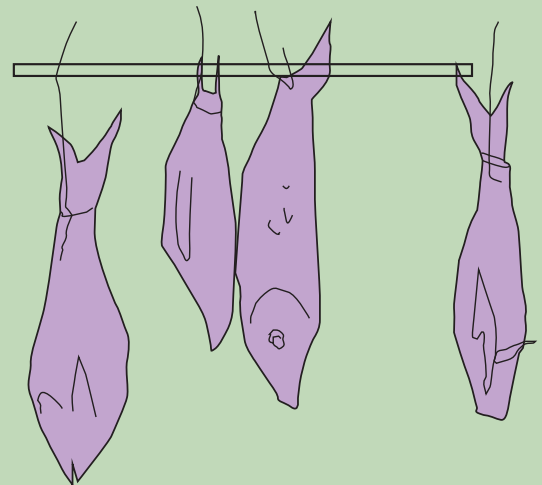
6.



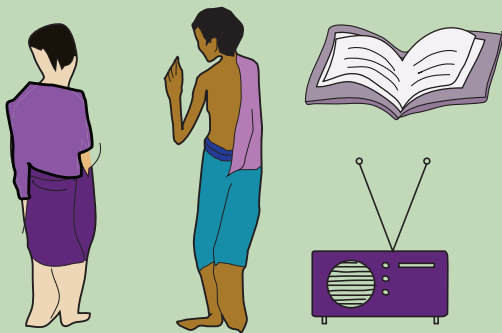
4.



7.



9.



8.

## Leisure: Fishing

*Through fishing, the sterile water of the reservoir may take on a slow, leisurely value- one that is evidently healthy and teeming with life.*

- 1. Good weather.** An important part of an enjoyable fishing trip.
- 2. Fishing spots.** Ask friends and community for good fishing spots! Fishing depends on hearsay - ask with lighthouse or which platform are the best.
- 3. Attire.** Dress cool and light, but protect yourself from direct sunlight. Bring or borrow a set of waders if you want to net-fish on the platforms.
- 4. Rods and nets.** These may be borrowed from the storage-platforms on the bridge.
- 5. Bait.** Bring your own, or borrow them from storage bins on the bridge.
- 6. Bags and boxes.** These are convenient - they help transport your items, wet fish and clothes, or just are useful to sit on.
- 7. Postures.** The bridge generates various edge-conditions. Find the type most comfortable for you - lean on railings, sit on steps with your feet in the water, wade, or bring camping-chairs for dry decks.
- 8. Books, radios, friends.** Very little time is spent actually catching fish. Fill the hours with whatever else strikes your fancy.
- 9. Preparing and drying.** If you're lucky enough to bag a fish - smoke or dry it at the middle of the bridge, or bring it straight to the barter decks at the end.

## Leisure: Swimming

*Swimming is play - where decorum is discarded with attire at the waterside.*

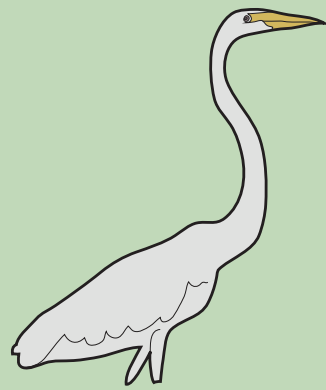
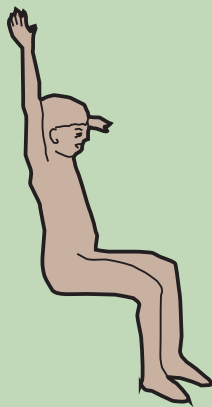
- 1. Clothes.** Keep them dry by hanging them up along the bridge- anywhere will do.
- 2. Depth sticks.** The river isn't uniformly deep, and platforms may lie just under the surface - check the depth before you jump!
- 3. Safety.** Look out for safety equipment before you jump in. Bring a friend and watch each other's backs - especially when swimming in secluded spots.
- 4. Ladders, stairs, surfaces.** Look for ways in and out of the water along the bridge.
- 5. Diving.** Observe the proper entry technique - feet first is safest for the amateur.
- 6. Ecosystem.** Watch out for the wildlife - approaching nests may provoke retaliation or damage.
- 7. Hammocks.** Rest may take place anywhere along the bridge - both in public, and in secluded towers.



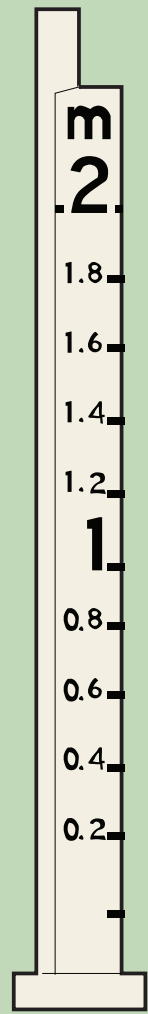
1



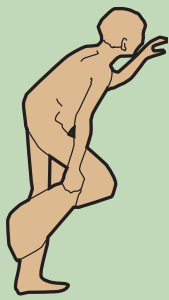
3



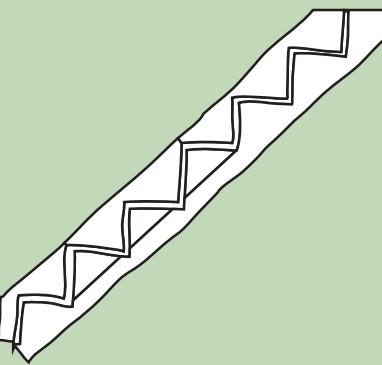
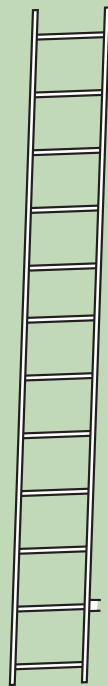
6



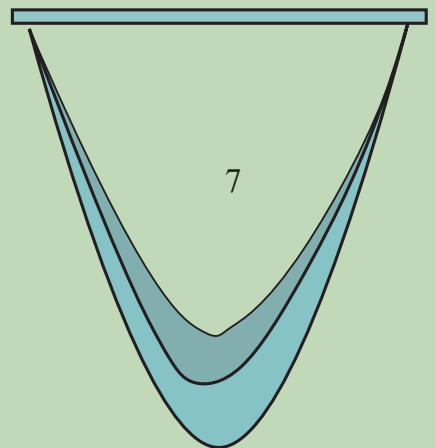
2



5



4



7



# BOULDER FIELDS

## Hill Street

*The last time they went up Fort Canning Hill together was after they got married at the foot of the hill.*

*First known as Bukit Larangan or the Forbidden Hill, this was where the Malay kings of old built their palace gardens of bountiful orchards, filled with local trees, flowering plants and herbs. Stamford Raffles had also planted nutmegs and peppers here. But it was very short-lived. Only local species, it seemed, would grow.*

*The Boulder Fields was unlike the other 9 historical gardens at Fort Canning.*

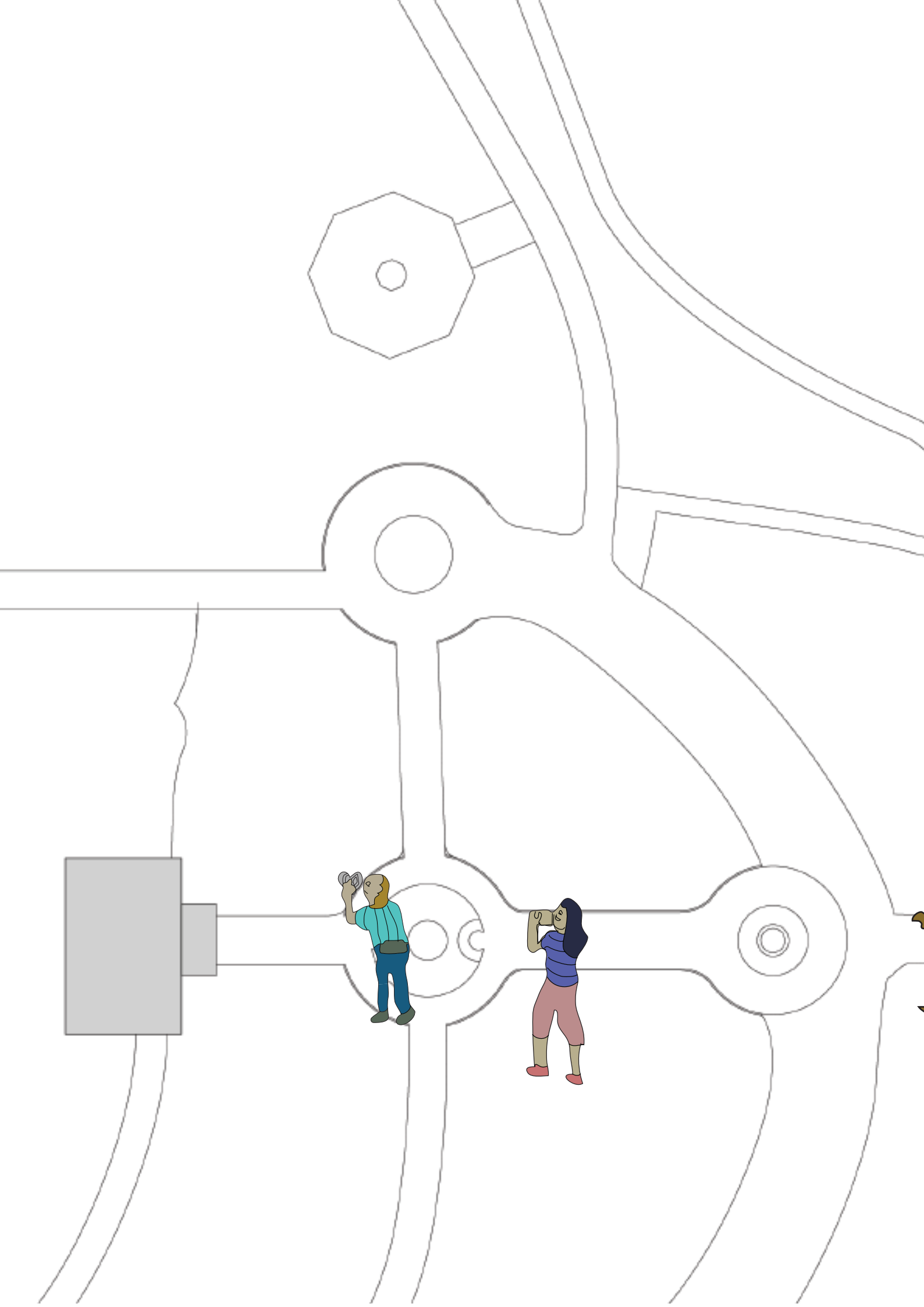
*Here, the neat path disappeared into layers of red earth. Picnickers reclined under the boughs of trees, laden with mangoes, papayas, bananas, and more. Some sat on the grass or on the earth, others on the tops of huge, half-buried boulders. The pink sandstone protruded from the soft, red soil - excavated from nearby tunneling.*

*Through repeated visits over the last 6 months, they became more confident: working with their hands, planting seedlings, picking fruits. They learnt which boulders? concealed kitchens and stores, hidden wells of rain-water, or shelters to rest. They knew when rain was coming by smelling the earth and feeling the wind.*

*Clambering on sunken roofs, they picked up fallen fruit, pocketed seeds and avoided the ant-hills. The long beans, hanging from the small netted posts, were still too small. These were all small gifts, grown from rich soil.*

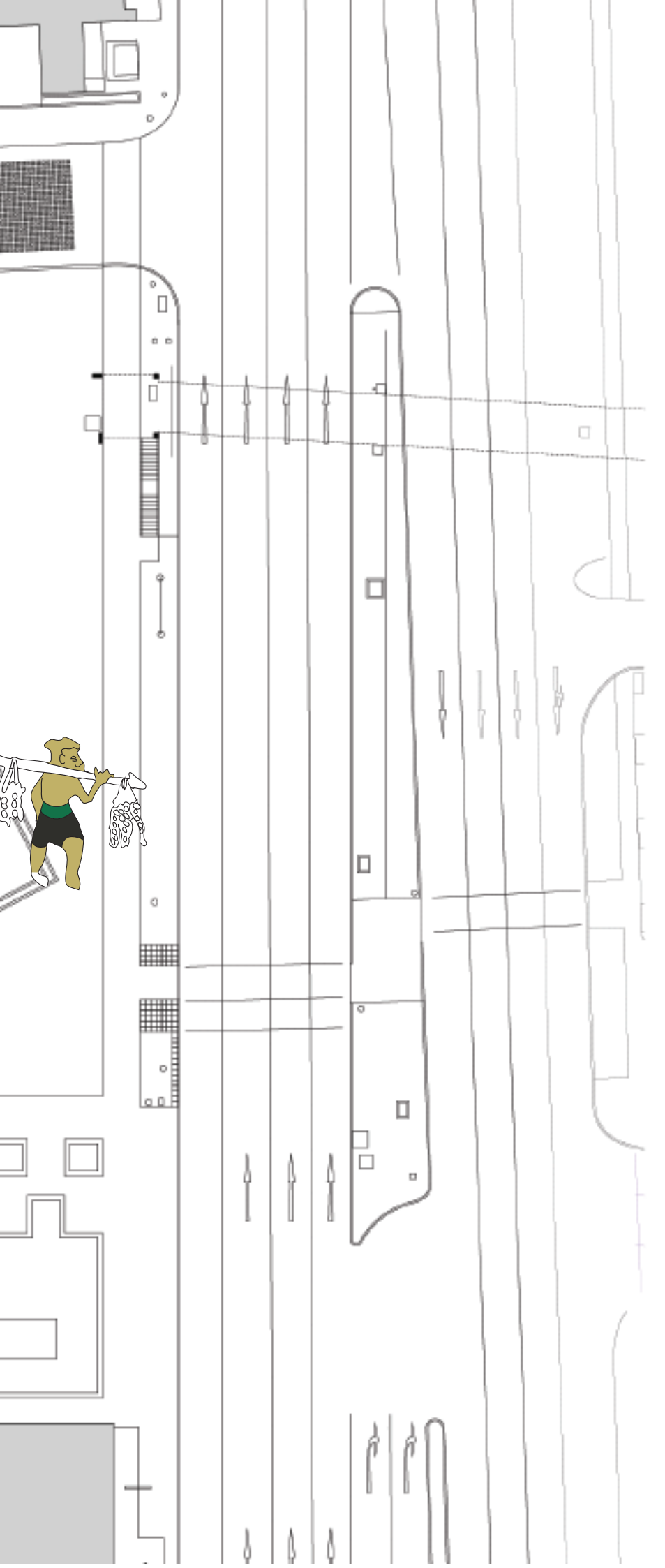
*Their favourite spot, under the rambutan tree and behind the fruit-drying boulder, was unoccupied. Meandering down, they stepped over the scattered, concrete abutments. The concrete blocks were slowly being displaced by the gnarled roots. The boulder garden was like this: it was a place that remained loose, real and messy. Over days and weeks, Anand had piled a few of the concrete blocks into a low seat. One, upturned, was filled with soil making a small private planter, from which periwinkles now thrived.*

*Sunita and Anand peeled rambutans and watched the sun slip below the city.*







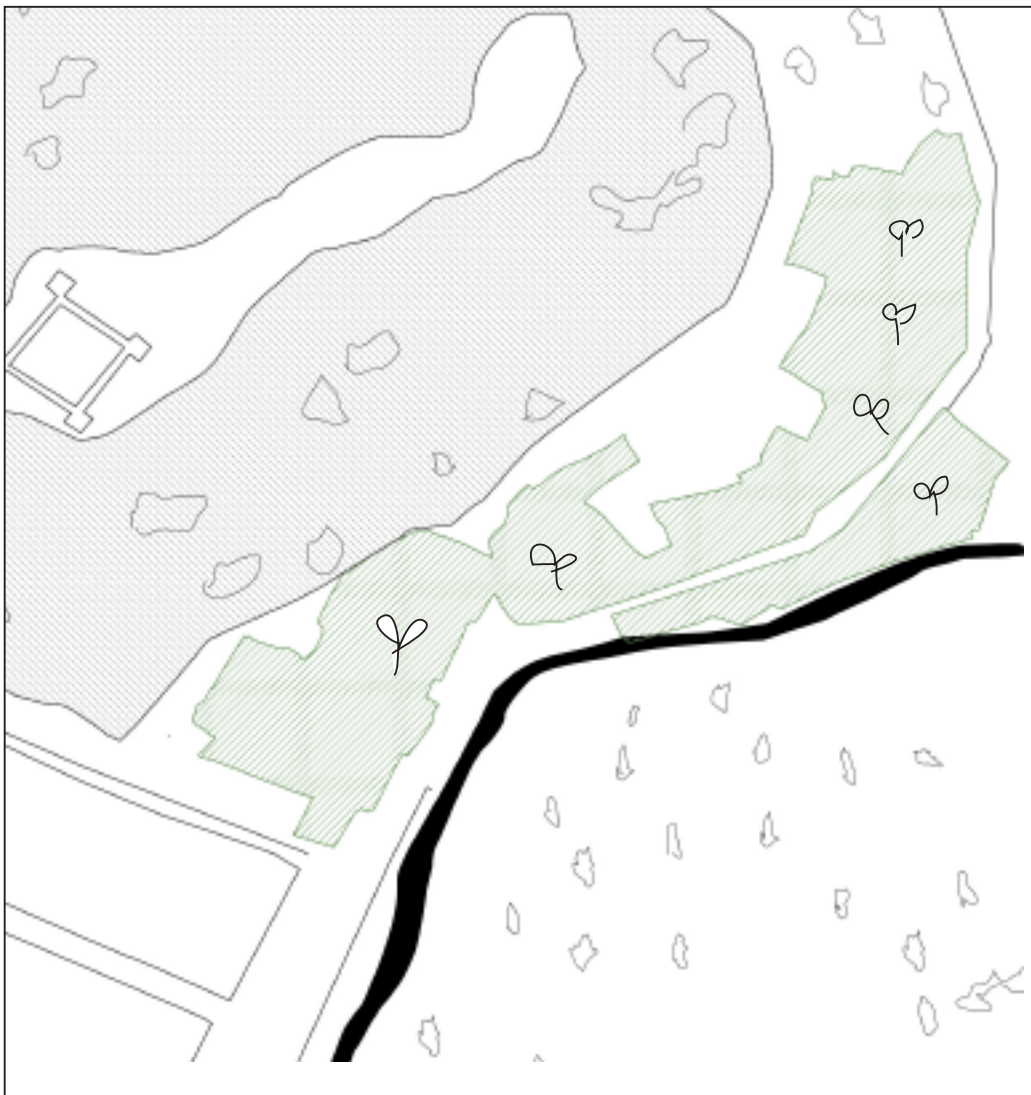


*Fig 9: The Boulder Field*

A walled, experimental garden for the trial and export of local plant species, manned by locals and foreigners who occupy the space presently, produce a shifting, changing space through cycles of planting, growth and uprooting. It explores the notion of planting, picnicking, wandering and reclining amongst the topography as picturesque leisure.

At Fort Canning, the colonial pursuit of cash crops, and the subsequent monumentalization of history in the form of memorial gardens has stifled the original productivity of its soil and ground.

When Raffles first landed, he was told the story of the Forbidden Hill by the Temenggong. Locals would never set foot on it, he said, for it was considered the leisurely gardens of kings. They had once lived there and grown fruit-trees in the fertile soil over 500 years before.



*Fig 10. "Bute Map, Tracing". 1822. Pre-colonial plantations on Fort Canning Hill*



*Codiaeum variegatum*  
Garden croton  
Up to 3m high



*Bougainvillea spectabilis*  
Bougainvillea  
Up to 12m long



*Etlingera elatior*  
Torch ginger  
5-6m high



*Carica papaya*  
Papaya  
5-12m



*Lawsonia inermis*  
Henna tree  
3-7m



*Sansevieria trifasciata*  
Snake plant  
1-2m



*Mangifera spp.*  
Mango  
30-40 m (dwarf, 3-4)



*Rosa*  
Rose  
1m



*Polyscias balfouriana*  
Ming aralia  
1-2m



*Pandanus amaryllifolius*  
Pandanus  
1-4.5m



*Cordyline fruticosa*  
3 to 4 m



*Manihot esculenta*  
Cassava  
3-4m



*Musa*  
Banana  
3-7m



*Citrus microcarpa*  
Calamansi  
Up to 3m



*Garcinia mangostana*  
Mangosteen  
Up to 9m



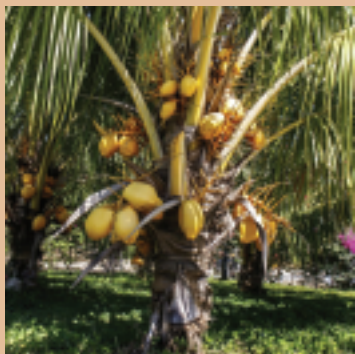
*Nepenthes*  
Rafflesia  
12-20m



*Carica papaya*  
Papaya  
10m high



*Catharanthus cultivar*  
Rose Periwinkle  
1m tall



*Cocos nucifera*  
Coconut  
Up to 30m



*Xanthosoma*  
Cassava



*Heliconia lappaceum*  
Heliconia  
20 m

*Fig 11. Species of fruiting and ornamental shrubs and trees found in Malay gardens - Records from seven historical manuscripts*

Raffles, upon learning of the fertility of the soil, attempted to capitalize on it. An experimental garden of nutmeg and pepper cash-crops was planted, attempting to turn the hill into a productive source of revenue for the colony. The foreign crops, however, failed to take root, and several years later the endeavor was abandoned.


*Fig 12. Nutmeg and Black Pepper cash-crops*




Today, these attempts - together with the other aspects of the site's long history, such as the eponymous fort, barracks and bunkers, have been turned into a series of decorative, commemorative garden and museums.

## Nine historical gardens


Fort Canning Park was spruced up to highlight the place's history and make the hill more accessible. Covered escalators, pedestrian-friendly walkways and a platform lift were installed at certain points to make the heritage-rich park more accessible to the elderly, families with young children and people with disabilities.




**FIRST BOTANIC GARDEN**  
Singapore's first botanic garden, founded in 1822 and located near the hill, focused on growing spices and cash crops. It closed in 1850. The garden has been restored as street plants along Bras Basah Road, Victoria Street and Hill Street.




**SPICE GARDEN**  
A naturalist, Sir Stamford Raffles used to grow spices such as nutmeg and cloves near his house at Fort Canning. The restored Spice Garden is lined with a variety of spice plants along cascading terraces.




**FARQUHAR GARDEN**  
Also a naturalist, Major-General William Farquhar collected drawings of the wildlife and flora native to the Malay Peninsula. This garden features some of the plant species he found notably such as gava, tars and gambier.




**Legend:**  
 Historical garden  
 First Botanic Garden  
 Platform lift  
 Pedestrian walk  
 Escalator




**ARTISAN'S GARDEN**  
The area surrounding the archaeological dig at Fort Canning Park was renovated to include informative panels and displays of porcelain, earthenware and clove-wire stanks uncovered since the 1980s.




**JUBILEE PARK**  
The green space at the foot of the hill is now a family-friendly area where children can play on swings, see-saws, logs and slides.




**PANCUR LARANGAN**  
A freshwater spring, known as Pancur Larangan (Forbidden Spring), used to flow from the hill and was used as a bathing place for royal women. In the garden, a mural wall made of volcanic rock was carved to depict life at Fort Canning Park from the 14th to 19th century.



**RAFFLES GARDEN**  
The garden, named after Sir Stamford Raffles, lies at the foot of Raffles House. It highlights the diverse plant species that Raffles encountered in South-east Asia. Using the Raffles app, visitors can spot the Raffles and a sun bear.



**SANG NILA UTAMA GARDEN**  
The garden, named after the Palembang prince, is a re-creation of the South-east Asian gardens from the 14th century. It features Javanese split gates and statues of frogs, fish and ducks - fauna believed to have been seen in the palace gardens.



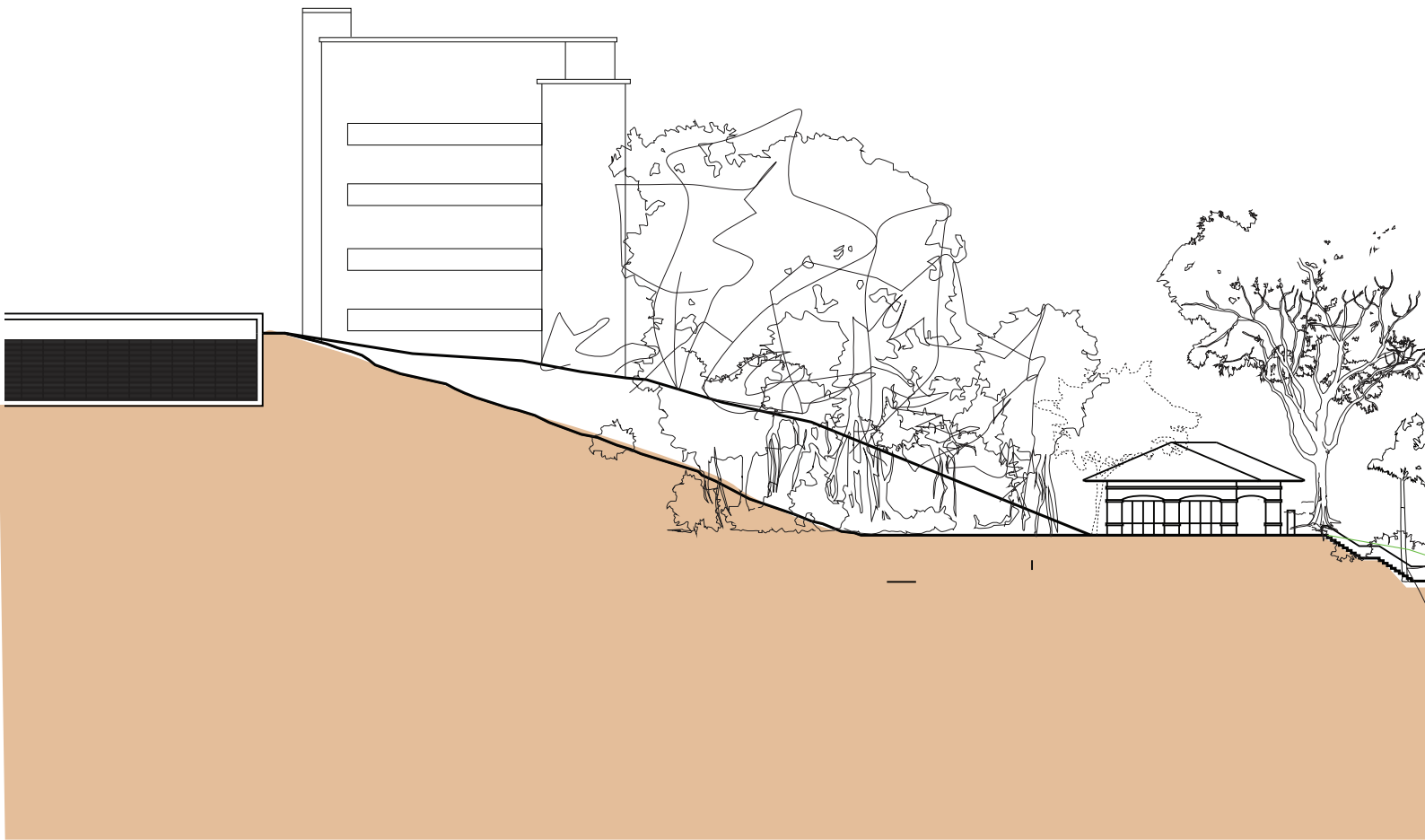
**ARMENIAN STREET PARK**  
The street was pedestrianised last year to create an event space and also to help form an expanded arts, cultural and heritage precinct within the area. Paying homage to Peranakan culture, traditional plants and spots are sorted in wooden boxes to reflect every of Nonya Kerk's regions.

SOURCE: NParks PHOTOS: LIM YEE-HUI/NParks; TEXT: SHADINA BILAL; SPACES: THE SG GRAPHICS

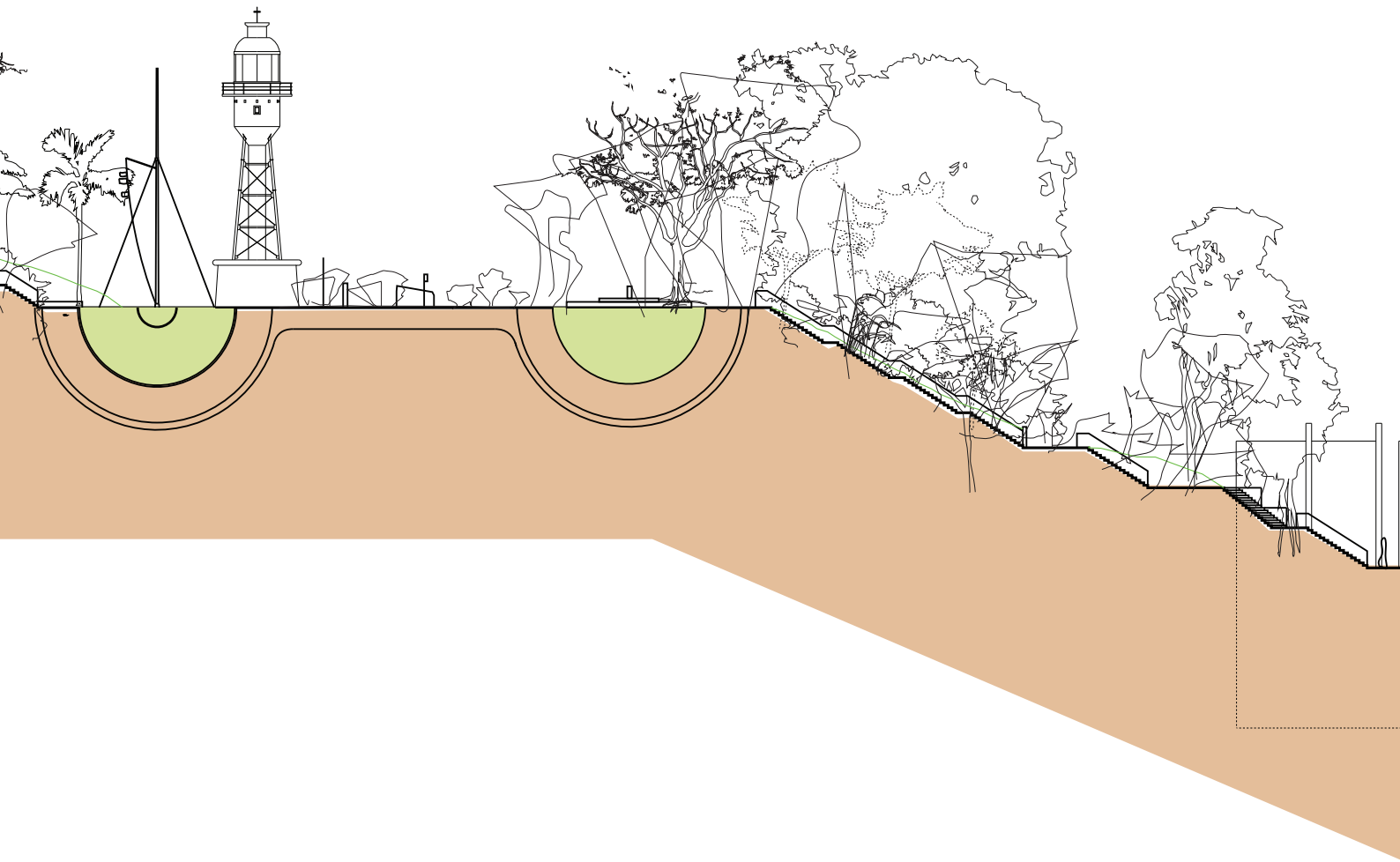
Fig 13. "Journey back in time at new gardens in Fort Canning Park", 2019, The Straits Times

*Reservoir*

*Raffles House*



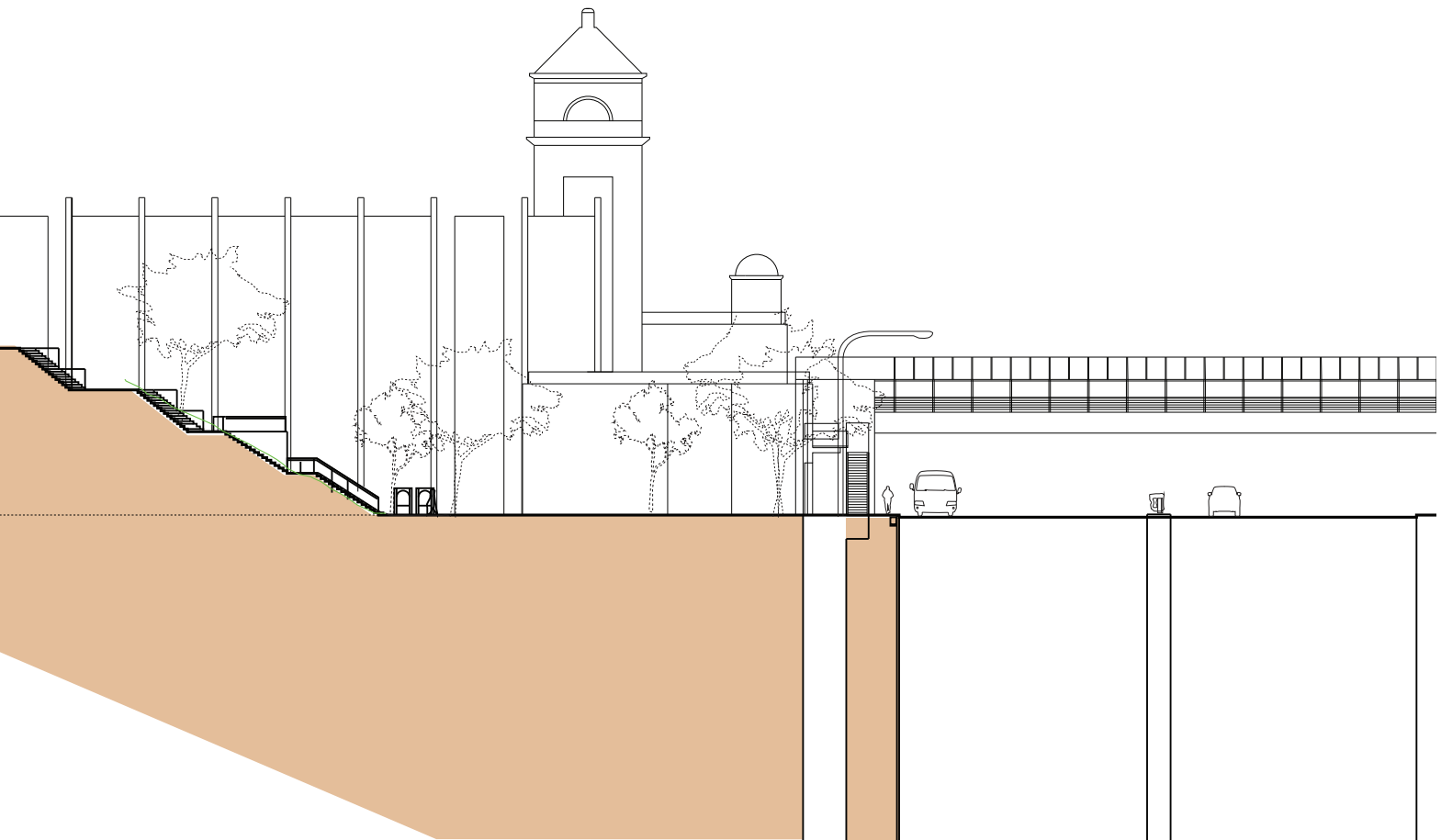
*Ornamental gardens*

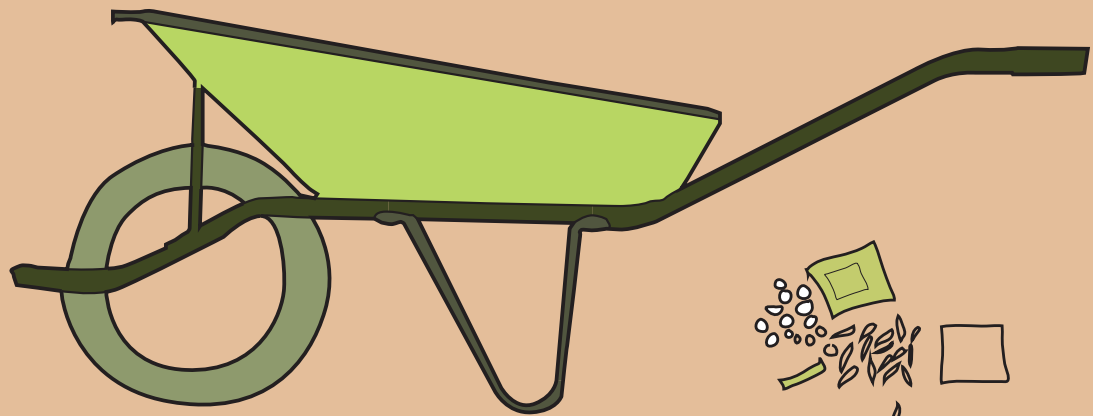


*Fig 14. Section of site today*

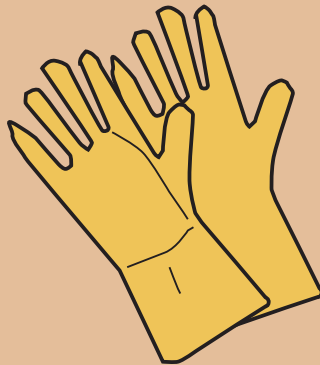
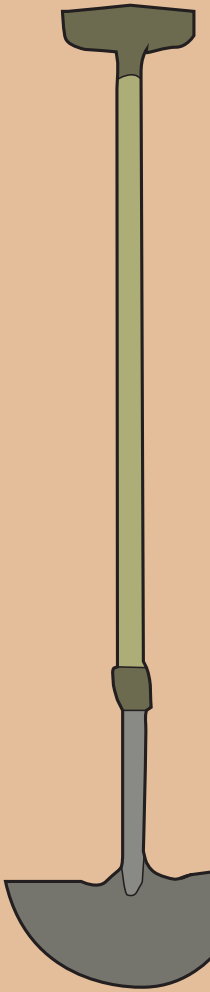
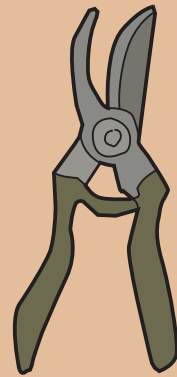
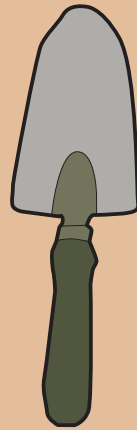
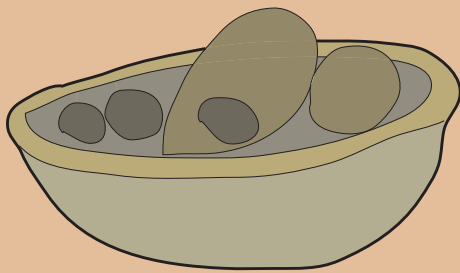


*Hill Street*



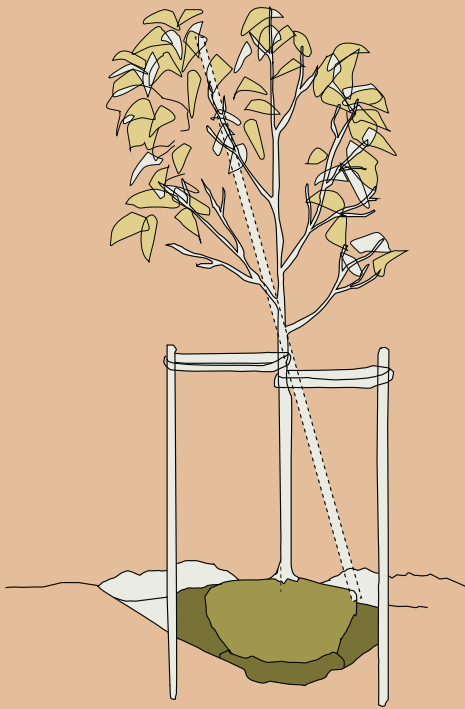


1



2

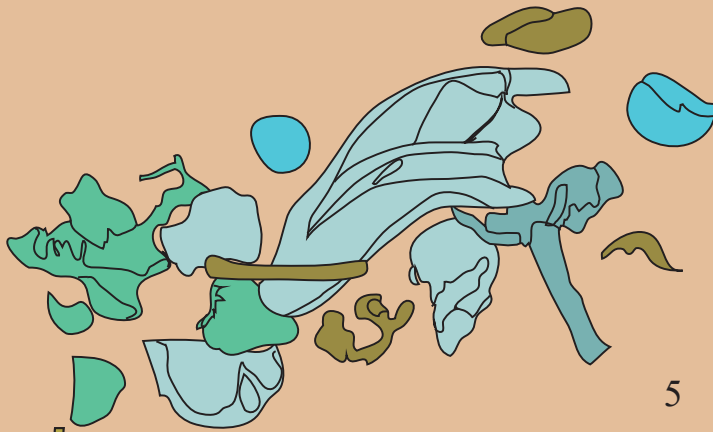




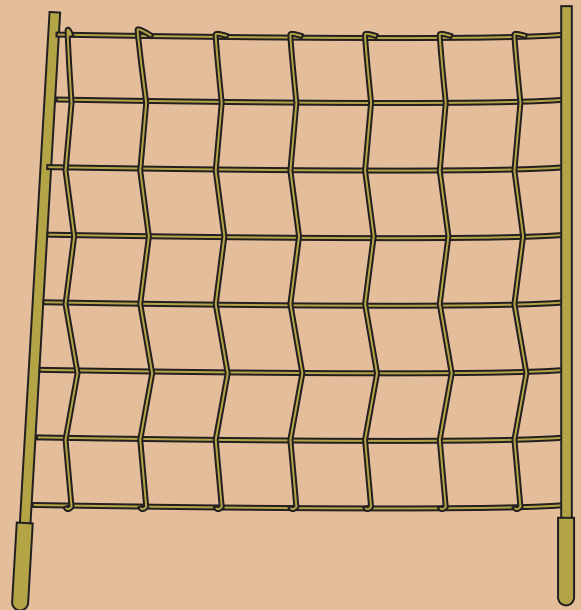
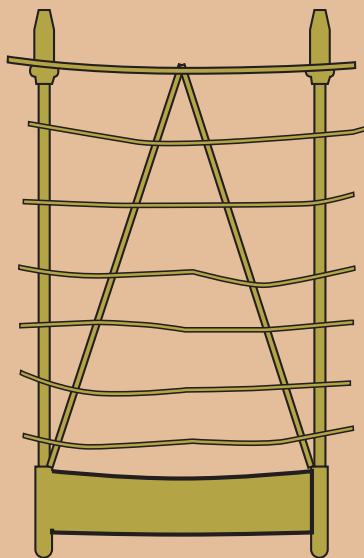
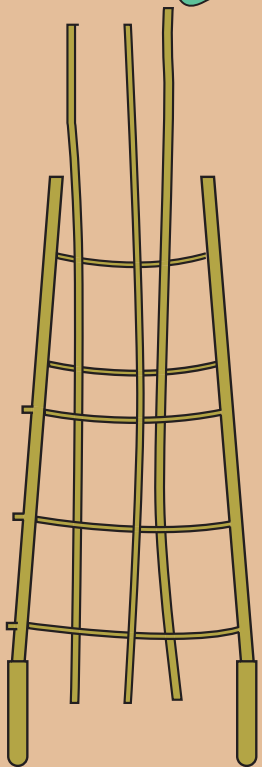
3



4



5



6

## Leisure: Gardening

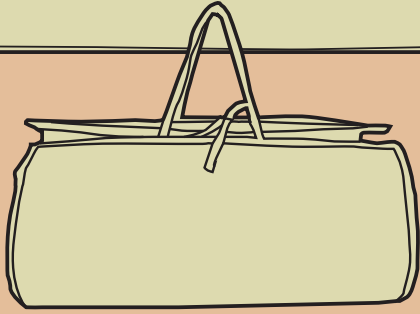
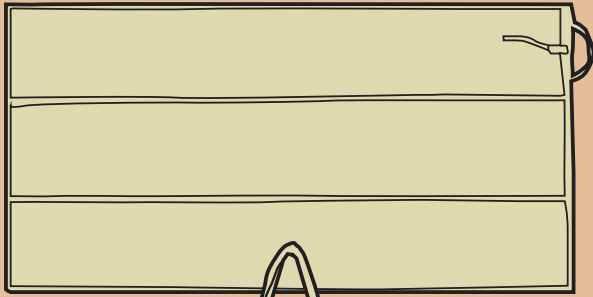
*The Boulder-Fields are a free, open gardening-space, for prospective citizens and locals alike. Prospective gardeners should keep these following tips in mind.*

- 1. Gardening kit.** Wheelbarrows , trowels, seeds, shears - everything you need to start your own garden in a corner, or maintain your existing garden, can be found in the storage boulders.
- 2. Attire.** Appropriate gardening clothes are important - don't soil your good clothes! These can also be found in the storage boulders and follies.
- 3. Transplanting.** When transplanting seedlings and saplings from the pot to the earth, care must be taken to ensure sufficient depth of backfill and support is provided.
- 4. Soil condition.** Check that the soil isn't already occupied by other growth or nearby plants. Roots in the soil mean you're too close - 2-3m distance from larger trees is recommended.
- 5. Regular maintenance.** Apply compost and water regularly to your plant- obtain these from the follies in the garden. Return often!
- 6. Other planters.** Long beans, brinjals, and other vines and fruiting shrubs may be grown from the array of nets, fences, and planters across the hill.

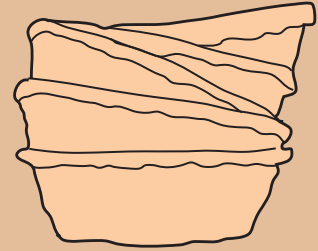
## Leisure: Picnicking

*The gardening and growth on the hill makes it a verdant site to rest after gardening, or simply to relax for no reason at all.*

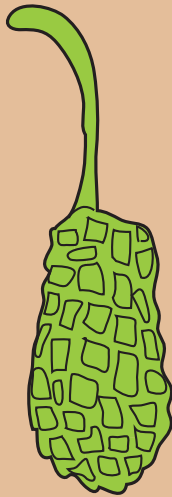
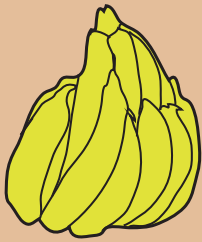
- 1. Picnic mat.** Bring a straw picnic mat, or find them in the storage boulder at the hilltop.
- 2. Food and fruit.** Prepare at the kitchen, bring, or pluck them off the trees. Unlike in the rest of Singapore, harvesting fruits is not illegal here.
- 3. Storage and containers.** Excess fruit should be collected and dried at the lower boulders.
- 4. Shade.** Many types of shade can be found - under trees, stretched tarp from abutments, or through attire. In the event of rain, take shelter inside the follies or boulders.
- 5. Comfort.** No limitations on where you can relax - pull abutments to make seats, sit on the grass, or lean against trees to your heart's content.



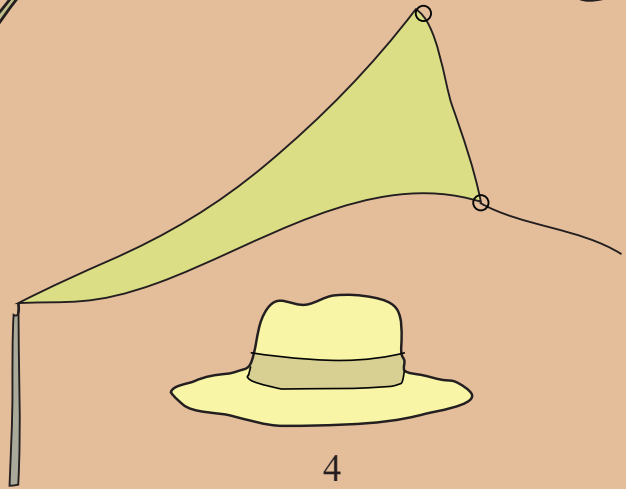
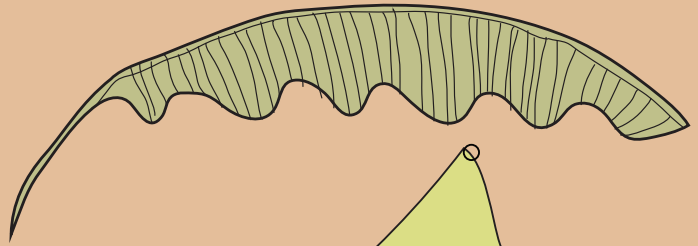
1



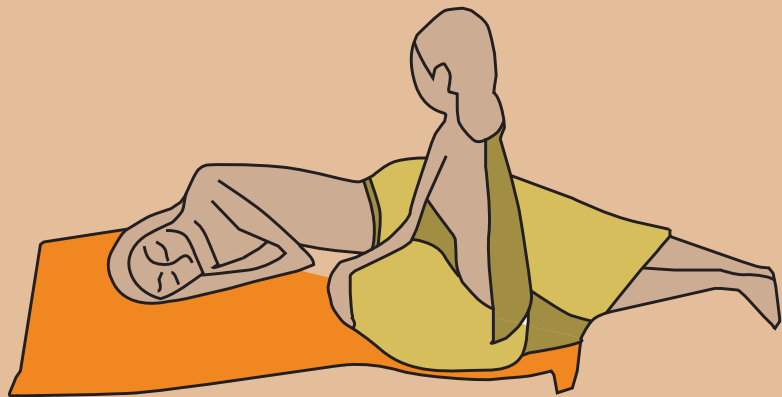
2



3



4



6



# PEOPLE'S CHAMBERS

## 1 Parliament Pl, Singapore

*When they first arrived in Singapore, they had walked along the river, by the walls of the Singapore parliament. The shuttered backs of the museums and theatres had been silent then. Today, at dusk, they are joined by many others. Some had followed them from the Boulder Fields, while others were coming the opposite way from the 8th Bridge, their shoes still wet with river-water. Silhouetted, kites danced above in the pinkish-red glow.*

*They skip in and out of sight from behind the new People's Chambers. Moving with the crowd, Sunita and Anand descend under the walls. The People's Chambers is underground but its energy reverberates above ground and to afar. Here, there is a sense of the ministers voices in parliament mixing with the rhythms of the buskers in the passage.*

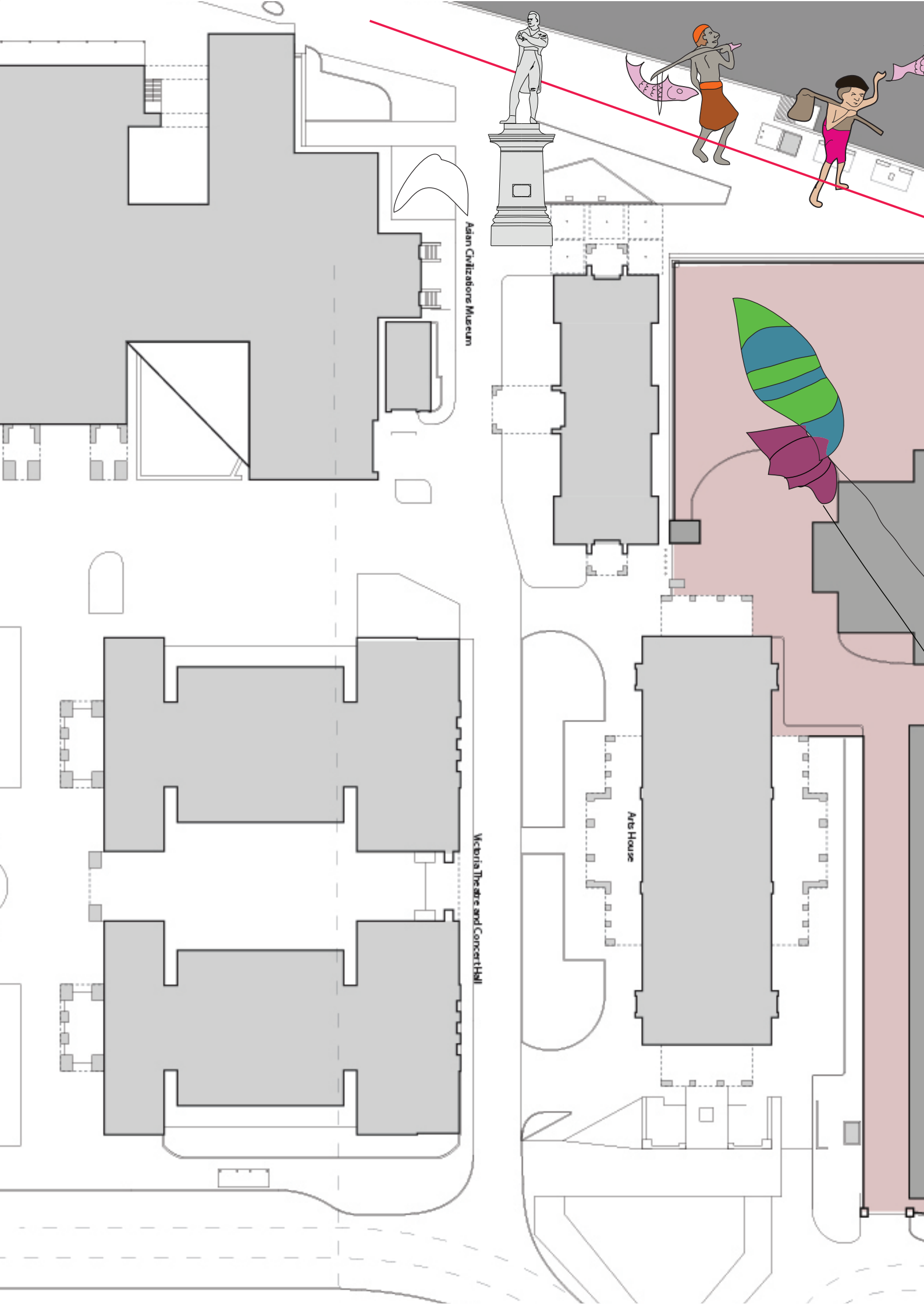
*Ahead, the chamber opens up. It fills with echoes, murmurs and voices. From an open classroom, a teacher recites a Malay song, and the scattered voices of students follow. Sunita and Anand hum along to the familiar tune - they had learnt it by heart. Voices rise and fade as they pass the columns.*

*Leaning towards the textile sheets, draping over the chamber walls, they hear snatches of a conversation here, and fragments of film-dialogue there. They are still early. Wandering into the water-chamber, they spot a fisherman who has become Anand's close friend, with his family. He has a bucket in hand. They are here to watch the initiation. He waves the couple over, and they peel into a quieter garden chamber where seeds are filed and withdrawn. The fisherman's wife describes how it was here, at the heart of the country's democracy, that the national anthem was sung, in public, for the first time. (Her children play with the voice-pipes and put up banners.*

*A bugle sounds, and for a moment, everything stops. Anand and Sunita join the crowd filing down towards the recital chamber. They go over the Malay lyrics with each other, preparing to sing Majulah Singapura. They are not fluent, but they are earnest and confident.*

*As Parliament adjourns above, the anthem begins. Their collective voices rise into the night sky.*

*Months of leisurely induction are at an end. They pass applauding crowds leaning over balustrades, pass through the People's Chambers, and step into the night air, jubilant as new citizens.*

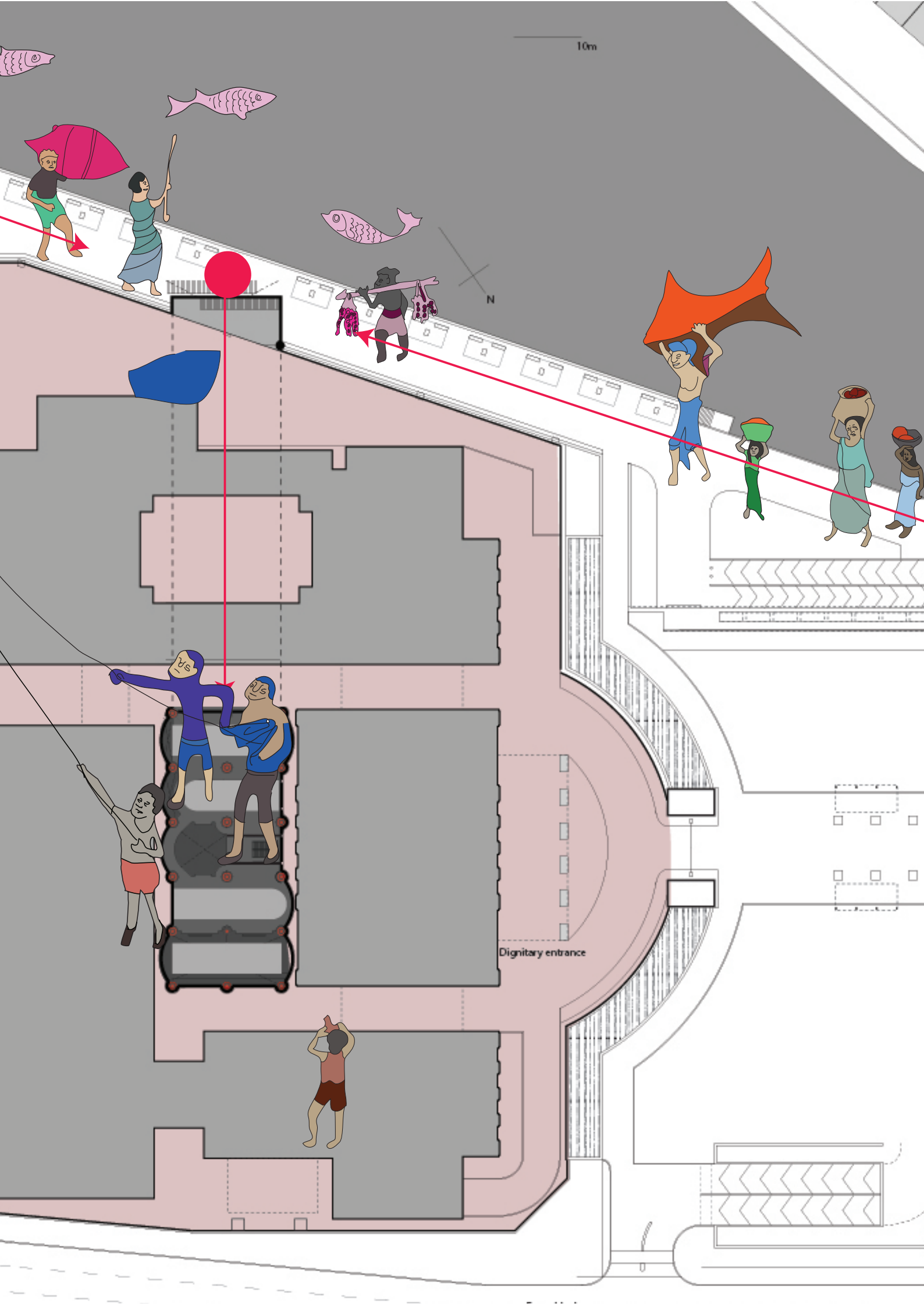


Asian Civilizations Museum

Victoria Theatre and Concert Hall

Arts House

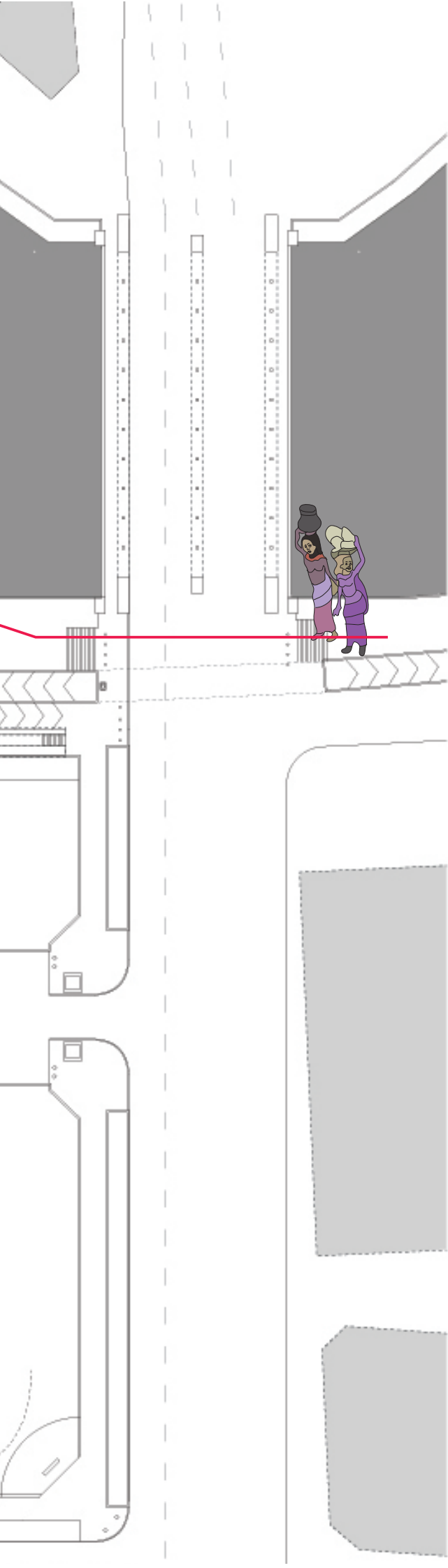




10m

N

Dignitary entrance



*Fig 15: The People's Chambers*

The People's Chambers facilitates the learning of national songs in Malay, and hosts the initiation ceremony for new citizens. It explores leisure emerging from a charged atmosphere of sound: of voice, song, music mingling and rising into the sky.

The monumental, colonial and neocolonial architecture of the parliament and civic structures around it imbue it with an air of nationhood and citizenship. It is the heart of the country's democracy. Yet, these structures of national independence, now formalized and dignified, also reflect the loss of intimate connection with a wider Malayan region, its traditions and languages, and the playful, noisy, leisurely way we once participated in the act of nation building.

When Raffles first landed, the present-day site of the Parliament was the location of the Temenggong's palace - the heart of a sea-town whose history stretched back centuries.



*Fig 16. "Bute Map, Tracing. Raffles landing site and old palace overlaid with present coast and Parliament house"*



*Fig 17. Deserted riverside at the Civic District. Hall and Theatre, 4. Asian Civilizations Museum*

This site would only increase in its importance through the 20th century as Singapore grew and eventually became a fully-independent nation. In the vicinity one would find governmental offices, courthouses, ceremonial parade grounds and monuments. It was filled with jubilation of speech and song; a public space.

Today, however, citizen contribution is excised to Speaker's Corner- a paradoxical space dedicated to voicing protest, far removed from the actual space of governance. The riverside here, by the Parliament walls, is lined with inward-looking museums which occupy the old Government quarters - a cold and silent from the lack of human presence.



3

4

*1. National Gallery, former Supreme Court, 2. Parliament House. 3. Victoria Concert  
1*

On the lawns behind the Parliament House, the National Anthem was sung in public for the first time in 1959. Originally the song of the City Council, the anthem translates to:

**Onward Singapore**

Come, fellow Singaporeans  
 Let us progress towards happiness together  
 May our noble aspiration bring  
 Singapore success  
 Come, let us unite  
 In a new spirit  
 Let our voices soar as one  
 Onward Singapore  
 Onward Singapore

前进吧，新加坡！  
 来吧，新加坡人民，  
 让我们共同向幸福迈进；  
 我们崇高的理想，  
 要使新加坡成功。  
 来吧，让我们以新的精神，  
 团结在一起；  
 我们齐声欢呼：  
 前进吧，新加坡！  
 前进吧，新加坡！

முன்னேறட்டும் சிங்கப்பூர்  
 சிங்கப்பூர் மக்கள் நாம்  
 செல்வோம் மகிழ்வை நோக்கியே  
 சிங்கப்பூரின் வெற்றிதான்  
 சிறந்த நம் நாட்டே  
 ஒன்றிணைவோம் அனைவரும்  
 ஒங்கிடும் புத்தூணாவுடன்  
 முழங்குவோம் ஒன்றித்தே  
 முன்னேறட்டும் சிங்கப்பூர்  
 முன்னேறட்டும் சிங்கப்பூர்

F=1  
4/4

**MAJULAH SINGAPURA!** Chiptaan ZUBIR SAID.

0 5 1 2	3 3 3 2 1 7	1 1 1 7 6 5	6 5 0 1 2 1
Ma-ri ki-	ta ra'yat Si-nga-pu-	ra, Ba-ngun de-ngan ber-	sa-tu sa-ma sa-
7 - 0 5 7 1	2 7 1 7 1 2	3 6. 6 6 7 1 3	2 1 7 6
ma, Ru-kon da-	mai dan ban-tu mem-ban-	tu, Su-pa-ya ki-ta sa-	ma sa-ma ma-
5 - 0 5 1 2	3 4 3 2 1 7	1 2 1 7 6 5	6 5 0 1 2 3
ju. Ki-ta hi-dop a-	man dan sen-to-	sa. Ker-ja sa-ma me-	nu-ju ba-ha-gi-
4 - 0 6 6 7	2 1 7 1	3. 6 5 - 5 0	3. 3 5 0 5 7 2
a! Chi-ta chi-	ta ki-ta yang mu-	li-a ; Ber-ja-ya Si-	nga-pu-
1 - 1 0 1. 1	4 6 6 5 # 4	5 - 0 5 7 1	2 7 1 2
ra! Ma-ri-	lah ki-ta ber-	sa-tu, De-ngan se-	ma-ngat yang ba-
3 - 3 0 1. 1	4 6 6 5 # 4	5 - 5 5 0	3. 2 1 0 1 3 4
ru. Sa-ma-	a ki-ta ber-	se-ru : MA-JU-LAH SI-	NGA-PU-
5 - 5 5 0	5. 6 5 5 4 3 2	1 - 1 1. 1	1 - 1 0
RA!	MA-JU-LAH SI-NGA-PU-RA!	Ma-ri- RA!	

Mari kita ra'yat Singapura,  
 Bangun dengan bersatu sama-sama.  
 Rukon damai dan bantu membantu,  
 Supaya kita sama-sama maju.  
 Kita hidop aman dan sentosa,  
 Kerja sama menuju bahagia!

Chita-chita kita yang mulia :  
**BERJAYA SINGAPURA!**  
 Mari-lah kita bersatu,  
 Dengan semangat yang bahru.  
 Samua kita berseru :  
**MAJU-LAH SINGAPURA!**  
**MAJU-LAH SINGAPURA!**

Fig 18. Manuscript of Majulah Singapura, with solmisasi notation. Zubir Said. Composed 1957, modified 1959



*“What does it mean when someone asks you: “What is your name?”*

*What do you say when someone asks: “Where do you live?”*

*These were two questions that artist Chua Mia Tee asked himself in 1959, the year he made this painting and also the moment when Singapore gained self-governance from its former colonial masters. What makes these two questions even more fascinating is that Chua asked them in Malay, the language that would soon become Singapore's national language in the hope of uniting different ethnic groups through a common Malayan identity.*

*In the painting, some Chinese students are seated around a table, learning the national language from a Malay teacher. Behind the teacher hangs a blackboard, on which these two basic questions about identity and belonging are written. Both questions are so simple but powerful, going to the very essence of what it means to belong to a place.”*

Masterpieces from the Gallery, Dr Cai Heng, 2015

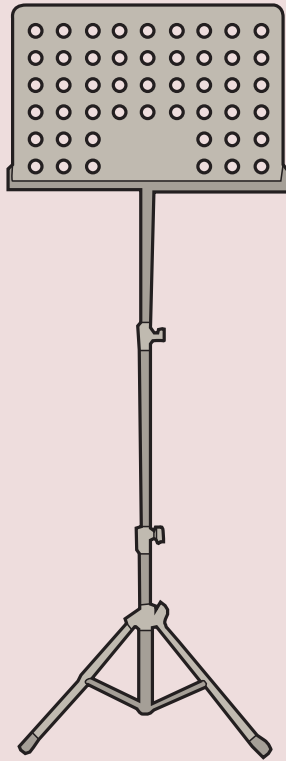
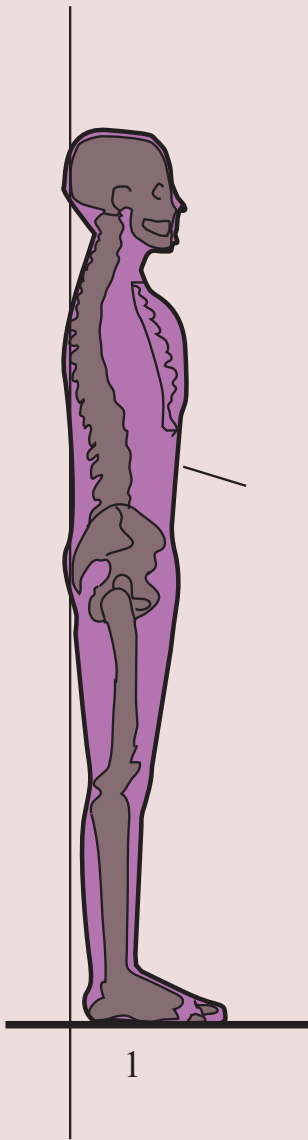
*Fig 19. National Language Class, Chua Mia Tee , 1959.*

Malay was chosen as the national language of Singapore following independence - a symbolic role derived from the indigenous population of the region - but also an attempt to unite the different ethnic groups under a broader Malayan identity.

Painted in the same year as the public debut of *Majulah Singapura*, the painting *National Language Class* by Chua Mia Tee- depicts the willingness and enthusiasm of early nationhood in the 1950s. The image harkens back to the shouts down corridors, the sounds of raised voices and singing across classrooms.

Today, the painting is hung in the old Supreme Court building, across the street from the Parliament House.





MAJULAH SINGAPURA  
ZUBIR SAID

Moderato

Ma-ri ki-ta ra-yet Si-nga-pu

ra-bang de-ngan ber-sa-tu, sa-ma-sa-mal Ru-kondar

ma dan ban-tu men-ban-tu, su-ba-ya ki-ta sa-

ma-sa-ma me-jul Ki-ta hi-dap a-mandansen-to-

sa, ker-ja sa-ma me-nu-ju ba-ha-gi-a ch-ta ch-

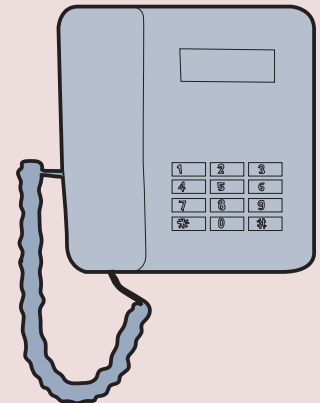
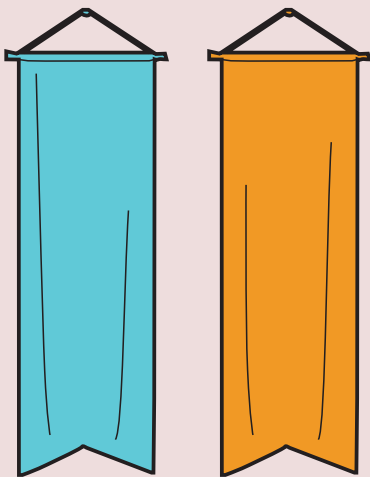
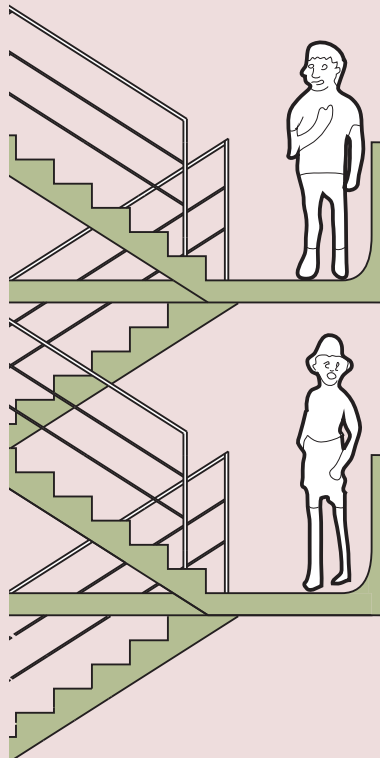
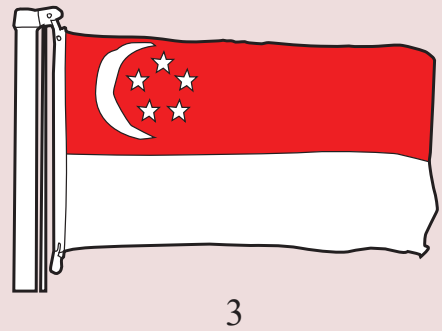
ta ki-ta yang mu-li-a berjaya Si-nga-pu

ra ma-ri lah ki-ta ber-sa-tu! De-ngan ser-

ma-not yang ba-ru Sa-me-a ki-ta ber-se-

ru! Ma-ju-la Si-nga-pu-ral Ma-ju-la Si-nga-pu-

ral Ma-ri rah



# Leisure: Singing the National Anthem

## *The Anthem*

- 1. Posture.** Decorum should be observed whenever the anthem is played. Standing at attention is both a mark of respect, and a means of singing with greater power.
- 2. Music stand and lyrics.** Bring these out before the ceremony!
- 3. Flag.** When the anthem commences, the flag will be raised. Face the flag as you sing.
- 4. Buntings, banners.** Locals who gather to watch the initiation anthem may be called upon to assist in hanging these up before the ceremony.
- 5. Corridors and stairwells.** When the anthem begins, all activities are to stop. Singing or waiting respectfully from corridors and open stairwells in line of sight of the flag is expected.
- 6. Phones.** In a return to a loyalty program early after independence, prospective citizens may dial 2 to listen to the anthem.

## Leisure: Learning Malay

*Malay is a language of symbolic, rather than practical value in Singapore.*

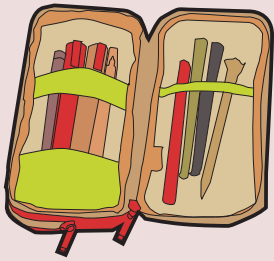
- 1. Classroom setting.** Join a class with friends or family - a good teacher and a bonded class makes learning a cinch.
- 2. Conversation.** Take any opportunities to exercise your use of the language with locals or with other learners in daily life.
- 3. Notes.** Write constantly of new opportunities in Malay.
- 4. Film.** Malay film, found in the Archive, reached a golden era in the 1960s and 70s
- 5. Books.** Textbooks or regular Malay literature for the more advanced may be found in the archive
- 6. Music.** Join in or listen to both contemporary or historical, recorded or live music - it is a highly entertaining way to learn.



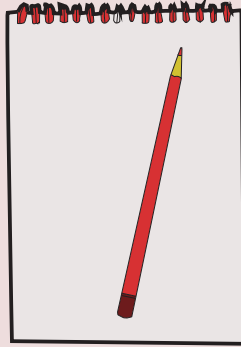
1



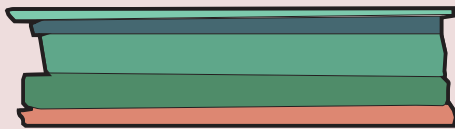
2



3



4



5



7

