



## Fact Sheet on the rejuvenated Chinatown Heritage Centre

The Chinatown Heritage Centre, opened in 2002, is a key gateway for visitors to understand the Chinatown story, with its rich collection of personal stories and enriching programmes that provide an intimate and accurate portrayal of Chinatown, from its early days as a Chinese migrant settlement to today's vibrant heritage precinct.

As Chinatown evolves and travellers become increasingly discerning, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) embarked on a rejuvenation of the Centre in October 2014 to strengthen the Centre's content and presentation style so as to better bring alive the precinct's heritage.

The key changes include a more comprehensive story narrative that goes beyond the 1960s, more in-depth collection of personal stories from the Chinatown community, deeper exploration of Chinatown's multi-ethnicity, clan associations, nightlife and heritage businesses, and enhanced multi-sensory features in the form of soundscapes, multimedia content, interactive story panels, olfactory experience and mood lighting.

A new space has also been set aside to hold temporary exhibitions and community events, thus establishing the Centre as a key platform for community engagement. A food and beverage and retail section will showcase iconic local culinary fare by renowned food establishment Old Chang Kee's Curry Times and limited edition souvenirs by local designers such as Doe & Audrey and My Paper Earrings. Visitors can also look forward to an exciting line-up of immersive tours.

The rejuvenation of the Centre is part of STB's overall enhancement efforts for Chinatown, which includes the rejuvenation of Chinatown Food Street and launch of the free Wi-Fi service in Chinatown. It is also in line with STB's drive towards Quality Tourism, in which it aims to enhance Singapore's destination attractiveness by creating compelling tourism software and experiences to attract discerning travellers.

The Centre will be operated by Chinatown Heritage Centre Pte Ltd, a consortium between Singapore River Cruise, Journeys, and Splash Entertainment. The Centre will soft launch on 8 January, 2016 (2pm). An official opening ceremony, graced by Mr S Iswaran, Minister for Trade and Industry (Industry), will take place on 28 January, 2016.

For more information: please visit <http://chinatownheritagecentre.com.sg/>  
Photos can be downloaded [here](#), with credits to Chinatown Heritage Centre Pte Ltd  
For more information, please refer to the following annexes:

### **Annex A: Overview of Galleries**

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## Annex A: Overview of Galleries

### Galleries 1 & 2: Tailor Shop and Living Cubicles Level 1 & 2



Tailor Shop



Living Cubicles

Accompanied by a visitor guide to the Tailor Shop and Living Cubicles, visitors begin their journey with the story of the Tailor and his interactions with his apprentices and family. Visitors are completely immersed in an authentic recreation of a tailor shop, typical of those that used to line Pagoda Street during the 1950s – 1980s.

Ambient soundscapes and audio conversations offer a glimpse of the neighbourly goodwill, and also of the occasional skirmish that might ensue in such overcrowded living conditions. Visitors can now step into selected living cubicles and experience first-hand what cramped living conditions were like, gaining a deeper appreciation for the resourcefulness, resilience, and sense of community that came with communal living. The cubicle occupants – Trishaw Rider, Carpenter, Hawker, Samsui Woman, Clog Maker, to name a few – tell spellbinding stories, some through personal possessions, which are sure to evoke waves of nostalgia for some. Through this journey back in time, visitors will be led to question – how did these different personalities come to occupy such premises? How did they first end up in Singapore?

Gallery 3: Leaving China – A Different World Awaits  
Level 3



Multimedia show on the migrant journey

This gallery chronicles the journey of Chinese immigrants and capture some of the defining stories and moments in the long and perilous journey to Singapore. Through an immersive multimedia show featuring animations and sound and lighting effects, visitors are momentarily taken through the hellish journey these passengers endured in hopes of a brighter future. The rest of this gallery explores the different world these early immigrants soon found themselves in upon arrival.

Gallery 4a: In Search of Fortune  
Level 3



Hidden world of Chinatown

Having survived the hellish journey to Singapore, not all was rosy as many had hoped. In this gallery, visitors will get to explore where the migrants settled in different parts of

Chinatown, the customs they brought along, and the often harsh conditions in which they eked out a living.

Visitors will also be treated to a multi-sensory and interactive experience as they peek into the hidden world of old Chinatown to discover how poor migrants impoverished themselves further through gambling and opium addictions, and the vice industries associated with secret societies.

Gallery 4b: From the Same Lands

Level 3



Clan association gallery



Interactive touchscreen table

This gallery shines the spotlight on clan associations which were formed in the spirit of mutual support to aid migrants from the same hometown, dialect group or surname. Homage is paid to prominent names in the fields of education and healthcare, such as Tan Tock Seng, as well as the lesser known. Here, a large interactive touchscreen table allows visitors to trace their Chinese surnames back to their roots and perhaps uncover affiliations with important people in Singapore's past!

## Gallery 5: Heart of the City & Chinatown Never Sleeps

Level 2 & 3



Street market scene of Chinatown



Nightlife of Chinatown

This gallery celebrates Chinatown of the 1960s, a town teeming with life. Mock-ups of the street market, heritage shops and the hive of activities along the five-foot way present stories and artefacts of a grittier Chinatown. Attention will shift from the hustle and bustle of a busy street market scene to the evening glow and night time entertainment, featuring prolific entertainment venues of the past, such as Tai Thong Restaurant, Southern Hotel, and Lai Chun Yuen. Visitors will be immersed in a multimedia projection show offering a glimpse of how the various iconic festivals to Chinatown, such as the Seven Sisters Festival and Theemithi, were typically celebrated.

Ending off on a sombre note, the final section of the gallery talks about Sago Lane and the death houses, once commonly associated with Chinatown before it was banned in 1961. Here, visitors explore the subjects of funeral parlours, processions, and paraphernalia, while immersed in a haunting and contemplative environment.

## Gallery 6: Every Step a Story and Threads of Continuity

### Level 2



Tracing the transformation of Chinatown



Separate section featuring 6 personalities whose lives are entwined with the evolution of Chinatown

In this new gallery, visitors trace the physical transformation of Chinatown and the personal memories and tales behind the modern façade. In a separate section featuring 6 personalities whose lives are entwined with the evolution of Chinatown, visitors catch a glimpse of how these individuals draw upon their families' heritage in Chinatown in forging a new future.

Visitors will end their journey with an opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences in a new feedback section, as well as have their photos taken and shared on the Centre's social media platforms and their personal email accounts.

## Exhibition Gallery & Event Space

### Level 1

A flexible and modular space easily accessible to all, visitors can expect a constant pipeline of temporary exhibitions as well as an opportunity to pick up new skills and experiences from the local community through workshops and events held here.

## Retail and F&B:

### Level 1

#### **Food & Beverage - Curry Times by Old Chang Kee**

Visitors will be able to sample Singapore's multi-ethnic cuisine such as Singapore curry and the famous "Old Chang Kee" curry puff at Curry Times by Old Chang Kee, the new F&B outlet at the Chinatown Heritage Centre.



In terms of décor, visitors will find that the café is decked with furniture and ornaments that are found in a typical Singapore shophouse in a palette that is reflective of the Chinatown spirit. Familiar items such as bird cages, louvered windows and traditional seats are also found in the restaurant.

### **Retail space**

This space is dedicated to visitors who seek unique and bespoke Chinatown-inspired souvenirs by local designers such as:

- Doe & Audrey: Haberdashery-themed brooches reflecting the Centre's location on what was famously known as "Tailor Street" in the 1950s.
- My Paper Earrings: Earring designs incorporating clogs, paper cranes and fire-crackers.
- Thepigbakesclay: Accessories inspired by popular local delicacies and snacks. Expect 'Mooncake' necklaces, 'Fancy Gem Biscuits' cufflinks and 'Kueh Lapis' earrings, among the collection.



## **Annex B: New features of Chinatown Heritage Centre**

### **1. New gallery on post-1960s Chinatown**

#### Gallery 6: Every Step a Story and Threads of Continuity

A new gallery tracing the physical transformation of Chinatown post-1960s, with the intimate memories and tales of the people that make up present-day Chinatown. Stories of a group of young Chinatown personalities, whose lives are entwined with the evolution of Chinatown, tell the threads of continuity that bind them and their family to the precinct.

- **Carmen Low, 28, Co-founder of Lepark**

Carmen's family runs a Traditional Chinese Medicine business in Chinatown, started by Carmen's great-grandfather. Carmen, the 4<sup>th</sup> generation of the family, started indie F&B/events space Lepark at People's Park Complex, to bring back to Chinatown the community spirit of her childhood, and attract young people to know more about the historic precinct.

- **Tina Tan, 40, CEO of Hock Lam Beef**

Tina represents the 4<sup>th</sup> generation of famous local beef noodle chain Hock Lam Beef. Her great-grandfather started the business on foot in Chinatown, and it now has a few outlets, including one on China Street. She tells of her experience following the footsteps of her father in the business, and her aspirations for the heritage brand to continue to be part of the Chinatown story.

- **Carmen Choy, 27, Vice-chairman of the youth wing at Chung Shan Association**

Carmen's involvement in the clan association is very much influenced by her father, who served as chairman of the association for 14 years. She feels that it is important for younger generations to remember their roots, and forge the future with the same values that her forefathers had.

- **Ming Fong, 19, and Ming Xian, 22, Siong Leng Musical Association**

The brothers are young custodians of the *Min Nan* (southern *Min*) art form of *nanyin*, an ancient musical performing art believed to have originated from the *Han* Dynasty and brought to Singapore by the early migrants. Today, they continue in their footsteps of their mother, the executive director of the Siong Leng Musical Association at Bukit Pasoh Road, in keeping the art form alive. Besides performing regularly locally and overseas, they also teach the young artistes at the association.

Visitors end their journey at a **new photobooth and reflection section of the gallery**, where they can share their thoughts and feedback on their experiences at the Centre.

### **2. More in-depth collection of personal stories from the Chinatown community**

#### Galleries 1 & 2: Tailor Shop and Living Cubicles

##### **Physician's Family**



- Formerly known as the Seamstress Cubicle, the cubicle is renamed the Physician's Family Cubicle, focusing on the story inspired by writer Wu Si Jing's father. Si Jing lived in a shophouse at the junction of Pagoda and Trengganu Streets between the early 1940s to 1950s, and documented her Chinatown experience in books *Lotus from the mud: I was a majie's foster daughter* and *Down Memory Lane In Clogs - Growing Up In Chinatown*.

### Family of Eight



- The former Painter's Cubicle that gave a glimpse of a typical family life in the shophouse is updated to feature a different family - the Kong family who used to live at 48 Pagoda Street, the exact shophouse in which part of the Centre is now housed in.

### Clog Maker



- The Clog Maker's Cubicle is refreshed based on archival accounts to focus on life of a typical family involved with the trade – the father sold clogs, customised to occasion, whilst his wife sought to make ends meet through other means, such as harvesting tobacco remnants from discarded cigarette butts, to be rolled into new cigarettes.

### Trishaw Rider



- The Coolie's Cubicle is renamed the Trishaw Rider's Cubicle. Whilst the story still mentions a group of coolies who occupied this cubicle, mostly transient, the story is focused on the trishaw rider who had a permanent bed. It is also based on archival accounts.

Visitors can now navigate the Living Cubicles with the help of a **new visitor guide (in English and Chinese)** that provides more in-depth stories about life in the 1950s shophouse, as well as the people who contributed stories to shape the gallery.

### 3. Deeper exploration of Chinatown's multi-ethnicity, clan associations, nightlife and festivals, and heritage businesses

Multi-ethnic Chinatown in Gallery 6: Every Step a Story and Threads of Continuity

Mr Raj Mohamad, treasurer of Nagore Dargah Indian Muslim Heritage Centre in Telok Ayer, shares in a video about the heritage of the Indian Muslim community in Chinatown and their contribution to Singapore’s economic and cultural growth.

Clan associations and their contribution to education and healthcare in Gallery 4b: From the Same Lands

The clan associations played a critical role in shaping the education and healthcare scene here. Details such as the Hokkien Huay Kuan and their links to schools such as Ai Tong, Tao Nan and Chongfu, as well as the setting up of Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital and Thong Chai Medical Institution to provide healthcare to the needy, are highlighted. The clan exhibit is also modelled after Kong Chow Wui Koon’s clan hall in New Bridge Road.

Nightlife of Chinatown in Gallery 5: Heart of the City & Chinatown Never Sleeps

New features on the prolific entertainment venues of the past, such as Tai Thong Restaurant, Southern Hotel, and Lai Chun Yuen. The iconic festivals of Chinatown, such as the Seven Sisters Festival and Theemithi, are also showcased.

Heritage businesses in Gallery 5: Heart of the City & Chinatown Never Sleeps



On Cheong Jewellery exhibit



Tong Heng exhibit

Heritage Chinatown brands such as On Cheong Jewellery, Tong Heng, Tai Chong Kok, Lim Chee Guan, Chop Wah On and Nam’s Supplies are highlighted.

**4. Enhanced multi-sensory features in the form of soundscapes, multimedia content, interactive story panels, olfactory experience and mood lighting**

Soundscapes introduced to give visitors an authentic feel of 1950s shophouse living scene in Galleries 1 & 2: Tailor Shop and Living Cubicles



Tailor shop at Level 1: Phone conversation between the tailor and his customer highlights typical relationship people had with their tailors; soundscape of a dinner scene gives glimpse of the close ties between the tailor's family and his apprentices; Kitchen at Level 2: Neighbourliness showcased through conversations between 2 neighbours, a housewife and an ill trishaw rider.

Multimedia content, interactive story panels and mood lighting in the following galleries

- **Gallery 3: Leaving China – A Different World Awaits**  
An immersive multimedia show featuring animations, sound and lighting effects to give visitors a sense of the hellish journey the migrants had to endure to seek better fortunes in Singapore.
- **Gallery 4b: From the Same Lands**  
An interactive touchscreen table allows visitors to trace their Chinese surnames back to their roots and perhaps uncover affiliations with important people in Singapore's past.
- **Gallery 5: Heart of the City & Chinatown Never Sleeps**  
A multimedia projection offers a glimpse of how the various iconic festivals to Chinatown, such as the Seven Sisters Festival and Theemithi, were typically celebrated.

Olfactory experience in selected galleries:

In various galleries, visitors will get a whiff of different scents such as Traditional Chinese Medicine, opium, spices, hand-rolled cigarettes, and aroma of freshly-brewed coffee.

## **5. Exhibition Gallery and Event Space**

The new space will serve as a platform for the community to either contribute to, or engage with a continuous line-up of exciting exhibitions and programmes that will showcase the dynamic nature of Chinatown.

The first exhibition will be titled "My Father Tongue", a social campaign produced in conjunction with a group of final-year students from the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication & Information, aimed at revitalising the use of dialects among youths.

## **6. Exciting line-up of immersive tours**

Visitors can also look forward to tours led by guides acting as iconic characters of Chinatown. The characters will share authentic stories that reflect their days and lives in Chinatown in the olden days.



## Annex C: Admission fees, tour schedules, opening hours, contact details

### Admission fees:

<b>Soft launch (From 8 Jan, 2pm onwards*)</b>	<b>Official launch (From 28 Jan, PM onwards)</b>
Adults – from \$12 Child – from \$8 Seniors (citizens and PR) aged 65 and above – Free with each paying companion	Adults – from \$15 Child – from \$11 Seniors (citizens and PR) aged 65 and above – From \$3 with each paying companion

### Opening hours:

9am to 8pm daily, closed every 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month.

*\*Centre will be closed on 11 Jan, 12 Jan, 27 Jan and 28 Jan (AM) for private engagements.*

### Guided tour schedule:

2.30pm & 4.30pm daily (except for days when Centre is closed)

Contact details: 48 Pagoda Street, [enquiry@chinatownhc.com.sg](mailto:enquiry@chinatownhc.com.sg),  
<http://chinatownheritagecentre.com.sg/>