Six cities offer valuable lessons

Sustainable solutions for cities of the future

Perspectives from the Ideal City
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Six cities show that bold vision, persistence and clever strategies can address difficult challenges, transform neighbourhoods and raise the quality of life for many citizens. In addition to the City of New York being named the 2012 Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize Laureate in March 2012, six other organisations have been identified for Special Mention. These Special Mentions offer equally valuable lessons for other cities to learn from.

Six cities offer valuable lessons

By Serene Tng
Khayelitsha was established in 1983 as a dormitory township. Located 35 km outside of Cape Town, it was without recreational, economic, social or cultural facilities. Today, the sprawling settlement is home to about 700,000 residents. Because of its difficult socio-economic challenges, the town has been experiencing an exceptionally high crime rate. AHT Group AG & SUN Development successfully implemented the “Violence Prevention Through Urban Upgrading” Programme that has significantly addressed the most basic need of residents — their personal safety. And it does so in a remarkably cost-efficient and effective way with relatively simple urban design measures. Buildings and structures are well-positioned to provide visual surveillance and pedestrian paths are well-lit to offer safer routes. Key to the success of the programme was the strong support of residents from extensive consultations. The programme is already accepted by Cape Town and will be implemented in other South African cities.
Ahmedabad is India’s seventh largest city. Until recently, it was caught in a vicious downward cycle. But it is starting to see some first signs of transformation as a result of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC)’s comprehensive City Development Plan initiated in 2005. The plan looks at unlocking potential land through urban reform, investing in the environment and infrastructure, addressing urban poor issues beyond basic needs, and strengthening its capacity and institutions. One early success is the development of the Bus Rapid Transit System which is addressing the transport needs of the burgeoning population. The Kankaria Lake was also redeveloped in 2008. This former dilapidated and polluted royal bathing ground has become a vibrant, cultural and recreation centre after environmental improvements, re-organisation of traffic movement and a rehabilitation of food vendors in the area. Their effort is an inspiration to cities dealing with pollution problems, worsening traffic conditions and a lack of affordable housing.
01
VIBRANT SPENCER LANEWAY
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02
CITYCYCLE IN BRISBANE (FOREGROUND) AND THE BRISBANE POWERHOUSE IN THE BACKGROUND WHICH IS NOW TRANSFORMED INTO A CULTURAL FACILITY © CITY OF BRISBANE

03
BRISBANE RIVER WITH THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT IN THE BACKGROUND
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BRISBANE
AUSTRALIA

From a “country town” blighted by sprawl and urban decay to a culturally vibrant metropolis, Brisbane has become one of Australia’s most admired cities. Brisbane City Council’s Urban Renewal Brisbane agency is recognised for its significant role in this transformation with its sustained initiatives over the past 20 years. Its efforts have revived local economies and inner-city living by regenerating derelict industrial sites and revitalising the city’s neglected riverfront.

Former industrial and warehouse areas in the Central Business District fringe and along the Brisbane River are now highly attractive, lively neighbourhoods of mixed-use that embrace and enhance the area’s industrial built heritage. By co-funding exemplary demonstration and catalyst projects, the city has fostered confidence and buy-in from the market and this, in turn, has changed attitudes towards higher-density living, city growth and urban renewal.
Copenhagen and Malmö are widely recognised as two of the most sustainable cities in the world. Since 2000, the cities have been linked by the Öresund Bridge, the longest road and Rail Bridge in Europe, which embodies their successful collaboration on infrastructure projects.
By pooling resources and sharing public infrastructure, such as the Copenhagen Airport and the Copenhagen-Malmö Port, both cities achieve benefits at multiple scales, generate greater economic vitality in the region and extend their influence beyond national boundaries. And it is this close collaboration and shared vision between the cities that have earned them a joint commendation by the Prize jury. Both cities continue to push for even more sustainable developments through active dialogues, with a clear vision and a strong commitment to integrated and comprehensive strategic long-term planning.
Over the last 40 years, the city of Vancouver has shown great foresight and boldness in resisting two of the major North American urban trends — the introduction of freeways into the city centre and the loss of residents to the suburbs. Instead, the city embarked on an inner-city densification process supported by innovative planning, which has contributed to a more liveable and vibrant city life. Today, the city is characterised by exceptional urban design that accentuates its surrounding. For instance, building heights are controlled to maintain views of the mountainous skyline and ocean backdrop. In addition, neighbourhoods are carefully designed to allow the seamless flow of private, social and green spaces, encouraging the diffusion of vibrancy and appreciation of the outdoors.

The Prize comprises S$300,000 cash, a gold medallion and an award certificate, fully sponsored by Keppel Corporation. More information on the Prize at www.leekuanyewworldcityprize.com.sg

A new 120-page coffee table book, “Cities in transformation: Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize”, is now on sale at all major bookstores. It presents insights and lessons from the Prize Laureates and Special Mentions in 2010 and 2012.
SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR CITIES OF THE FUTURE

Sustainable solutions for cities took centrestage at the World Cities Summit this July. In the face of unprecedented rapid urbanisation, world leaders have converged in Singapore at this timely global platform to exchange new ideas, learn from each other and explore collaborations to address urgent challenges cities face in water, waste and urban management.
Held from 1 to 4 July 2012 at the Marina Bay Sands, the third edition of the biennial World Cities Summit was co-located for the first time together with both the fifth edition of the Singapore International Water Week and the inaugural CleanEnviro Summit Singapore, enabling over 15,000 delegates to explore synergies and partnerships with a wider network of global industry leaders, policy makers and experts. The theme of “Liveable and Sustainable Cities — Integrated Urban Solutions” underscored the growing importance for cities to integrate city planning, urban infrastructure and services development and water and waste management together in a more holistic manner.

One major emphasis at the Summit was the facilitation of government and industry collaboration. New regional In-Focus Forums for government officials and industry players enabled them to share industry trends, policies and city-level projects in the China, India, Japan and Southeast Asian markets, and to explore partnerships. Another key feature was the celebration and sharing of success stories and the award of New York City, the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize 2012 Laureate and the six Special Mentions from India, South Africa, Australia, Denmark, Sweden and Canada.

Other programme highlights included the Mayors Forum, an annual exclusive platform for Mayors and Governors around the world to discuss challenges and share best practices. A record number of 88 cities were represented this year. There were also roundtable discussions at the Flagship Urban Solution Tracks where top government leaders, industry and academic experts touched on new trends and ideas on wide-ranging topics — investment strategies in cities, inclusive policies for ageing populations, mitigating the effects of climate change, new urban mobility models and eco-cities as a sustainable option.

Holding the World Cities Summit in Singapore was significant given its track record in serving as a sustainable model. Mr Khoo Teng Chye, Executive Director of the Centre for Liveable Cities said Singapore’s ability to bring together industry, government agencies and research institutes “to support experimentation and the generation of new ideas is one of its key strengths as a global hub for urban solutions.” URA CEO Ng Lang added: “None of this occurred by chance. Singapore’s urban development is a story of long-term planning, concerted effort and political will to see through the implementation of plans, and constant innovation to respond to changing needs.” On the future, Mr Ng said: “As we, like other cities, grapple with the challenges of making more effective use of resources and tackling climate change, there are opportunities to harness new technologies and solutions to create a more sustainable built environment. To this end, Singapore aims to become a living laboratory where companies can develop, test-bed and demonstrate urban solutions.”

Information on the Summit is available at www.worldcitiessummit.com.sg
Close encounters with bats, convincing people on the merits of conservation and ploughing through old photographs — it is all in a day’s work at URA’s Conservation Management Department. URA Planner Jevon Liew and Planning Executive Suhaimi Samsudin talk about their passion for conservation and what goes into retaining Singapore’s built heritage.
1/What is your typical work day like?

**Jevon:** If one word can describe my workday, it’s “intense”, but in a good way. My journey to work takes me along the rows of shophouses at Jalan Besar, down Kampung Glam and the Civic District and through Boat Quay and Chinatown historic districts. I keep a lookout for changes to the urban environment and if anything needs attention — people tell me this is an occupational hazard!

At the office, I reply to emails over breakfast. I can also often be found at the URA Resource Centre, National Archives or the National Library looking through archival photographs, books and journals. By late morning, I go for site visits. After lunch, it is back to my laptop, writing papers, attending to consultations, meeting stakeholders and doing reviews with management. I also evaluate and approve proposals for addition and alteration works and change-of-use applications.

**Suhaimi:** I am part of a team that works with architects, building owners and other stakeholders to ensure conserved buildings are restored according to our guidelines. I also process change-of-use applications and prepare guidelines for the restoration of building façades. In my view, my responsibility is to ensure that Singapore is not just an urbanised city with no culture and heritage.

2/Any unusual encounters on the job?

**Jevon:** I get to explore buildings or parts of buildings that are closed to public access. I once visited an old bungalow near Bukit Timah and discovered that the abandoned building had become home to a colony of bats that were darting above and past me. The smell of bat guano and urine lingered in my system for two whole days! I guess you could say this job has its share of “Indiana Jones-style” surprises.

3/What is the process for a building to achieve conservation status?

**Jevon:** Since the 1980s, URA has been identifying and safeguarding buildings for conservation study based on building themes, types and areas. Sometimes, the public suggests a building that merits conservation. Owners can also volunteer their properties.

We then do a thorough conservation study, which involves evaluating a building’s architectural merit and rarity, historical significance, contribution to the environment, identity and economic impact.

We consult the relevant government agencies and the Conservation Advisory Panel (formed in 2002, the independent panel is made up of members from diverse backgrounds, to offer advice on Singapore’s conservation efforts). We also consult relevant property owners to seek their views.

Finally, a recommendation report is prepared for the Ministry of National Development (MND), which makes the decision on whether or not to conserve the property. Under the Planning Act, owners can object to the conservation of their property and MND will evaluate and make the final decision.

4/What can go wrong along the way?

**Jevon:** Many things. Sometimes you have conflicting historical information or the lack of it. Some owners may not see the value in conserving their properties and object to it.

One example is 42 Cairnhill Road, a Victorian house with a rare bell-shaped turret. It was built in 1926 for the late Tan Kah Kee and later became the family home of the late Tan Sri Tan Chin Tuan. It is a significant landmark in the Cairnhill area and has an illustrious history, but the owners originally intended to demolish the house and redevelop the site. To address their concerns, we worked out numerous simulations to see how to best integrate the old with the new. We also allowed the rear of the bungalow to be demolished while retaining much of the significant front.

Fortunately, as the project made headway, the owners had a change of heart and Chew Gek Khim, the granddaughter of the patriarch was quoted as saying: “As I started to work on the house, I slowly began to enjoy the process and realise how fortunate I was to be able to retain the house in which I grew up in.”

5/Why conserve buildings instead of just building new ones?

**Jevon:** People form attachments to old buildings and familiar places. There are memories to be preserved and stories to be told. Older buildings also tend to have more soul and character. For the sake of completeness, there is also a need to keep old buildings as a physical representation of a particular period in architectural history.

6/How do you weigh up the worth of conserving a specific building and balance this with new developments?

**Jevon:** We have to ask ourselves what value we as a community and whether we can afford to keep everything, at least something or nothing. You also have to be objective in the evaluation of a building’s conservation merits.

The historic districts of Chinatown, Kampong Glam, Little India and Boat Quay for example, are conserved as entire areas — these are areas where our forefathers first settled and where many of Singapore’s earliest buildings can be found.

We also usually look for “win-win solutions”, for example, in the Secondary Settlement Areas like Jalan Besar, Balestier and Geylang, which were largely developed between the 1900s and the 1960s, where the front portion of buildings must be conserved to keep the historic streetscape while the rear portion can be redeveloped into high-rises to optimise the potential of the land.

7/What are the biggest challenges you encounter in working through the conservation process?

**Jevon:** Convincing people that they should want their property conserved; convincing people that we cannot conserve everything; and telling myself that a building or structure cannot be conserved although I feel it should be.

**Suhaimi:** It all boils down to conservation versus development. As much as we want to preserve our part of history in buildings, we need to take note of the land demands and
availability for present and future uses. It is also hard when you feel a certain way but cannot find archival evidence to back it up. I sometimes wish I had a time machine that would allow me to experience history myself.

**8/How do you deal with people who are resistant to some of the requirements of conservation?**

**Jevon:** Conservation guidelines are usually flouted by some people because they are unaware of certain specifics. We have to be understanding but firm, and unless it is a serious offence like illegal demolition, we adopt a “benefit of the doubt” approach and issue a warning letter. We want to encourage love and appreciation for conserved buildings and not just come down hard on people with an iron rod. However, if people continue to resist, they will be served an enforcement notice by URA and can be liable for court action. That is a last resort we all want to avoid.

Some clear and definite no-nos include demolition and altering the original façade features of conserved buildings. When in doubt, call the Conservation Hotline at 6329 3355. Do also check out the following guide on some commonly encountered issues faced by building owners and their tenants: www.ura.gov.sg/conservation/ConsGuide_Dos&Donts_BuildingGuide.pdf

**9/With their love for all things shiny and new, how do you win over Gen Y in the conservation argument?**

**Jevon:** You will be surprised that many belonging to Gen Y are pro-conservation. For the rest, we need to make them feel that conservation areas have relevance to their lives. Know what they value and feel for, and use it to the advantage of the cause. You can see how Haji Lane has found new relevance and has been transformed into a street full of creative energy and life for an even wider group of Singaporeans.

**10/What does conservation mean to you, personally?**

**Jevon:** It’s a passion, a calling, and not so much just a job. I do not want a situation where our society comes to regret what we have lost and it is already too late to do anything about it.
Imagine cycling, jogging, or having a picnic along the Rail Corridor? Well, with the formation of the Rail Corridor Partnership, this may soon become a reality.

A Rail Corridor Partnership has been set up to look into the programming and promotion of community activities along the Rail Corridor. The partnership is an expansion of the Rail Corridor Consultation Group formed last July to provide input to the government on development plans for the former railway land and its surrounding areas. Representatives from agencies such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore Sports Council, and the People’s Association will join the partnership to further foster public–people sector collaboration along the Rail Corridor.

Minister of State for National Development Tan Chuan-Jin, who chairs the partnership, highlighted the collaborative nature of the group. He said: “The expanded role of the Rail Corridor Partnership will see a stronger collaboration between public sector agencies, interest groups, and individuals to promote and support suitable activities and events along the Rail Corridor. I hope that our engagement will continue to be constructive and fruitful going forward.”

URA will work closely with partner agencies to assess the range of possible community uses and events.
President Tony Tan visits the “Journey of Possibilities” exhibition

During his visit to the “Journey of Possibilities” exhibition, President Tony Tan Keng Yam met with some of the winners of the Ideas Competition, including students from the Paya Lebar Methodist Girls’ School and the National University of Singapore who shared with him their ideas for the Rail Corridor. The President was also introduced to members of the Rail Corridor Partnership and jury members of the Ideas Competition.

“I am very encouraged that many groups and individuals are taking a keen interest in the Rail Corridor and are actively contributing their ideas and suggestions on the development and uses of the Rail Corridor. I am also glad that the URA is stepping up engagements with Singaporeans to develop the Rail Corridor into a unique feature of our urban landscape that can be enjoyed by all Singaporeans”, said President Tony Tan at the exhibition.

The “Journey of Possibilities” exhibition featured about 80 entries comprising 18 winning ideas, 19 honourable mentions, as well as other innovative entries received for the Ideas Competition. The exhibition also showcased some of the interesting feedback and suggestions received on URA’s Rail Corridor website since its launch in July last year.

The Ideas Competition sought to draw innovative and fresh new ideas from the public in addressing some of the key challenges and issues in planning for the future use of the Rail Corridor. URA will study all ideas from this competition, and distil from them suitable design principles and parameters that can form part of the brief for a possible Rail Corridor Master Plan and Design Competition.

To view the featured submissions, please visit www.ura.gov.sg/railcorridor/journeyofpossibilities/index.html as well as the necessary infrastructural requirements needed to support these activities along the Rail Corridor.

The Rail Corridor Partnership will also provide advice on the public engagement efforts and proposed activities for the Rail Corridor. Such activities could span from community level events to national events that utilise the entire Rail Corridor. The feedback gathered from these events will be used by URA to draw up the design specifications and requirements that will form part of the brief for a possible Rail Corridor Master Plan and Design Competition.
27 residential sites for the 2H2012 Government Land Sales Programme

By Heng Chan Yeng

15 Confirmed List sites and 24 Reserve List sites will be made available in the Government Land Sales (GLS) Programme for the second half of 2012 (2H2012). These sites can yield about 14,200 private residential units, including 3,100 Executive Condominium (EC) units, 388,000 sqm gross floor area (GFA) of commercial space and 3,700 hotel rooms.

The Government has placed 13 sites for private residential development on the 2H2012 Confirmed List which can yield about 7,100 residential units. This is comparable to the supply made available on the Confirmed List in the first half 2012 (1H2012). The 2H2012 GLS Programme has a total of 27 sites for residential development, including 6 EC sites and one commercial and residential site. Together, they can generate about 14,185 private residential units (including 3,100 EC units).

Most of the private residential sites in the 2H2012 GLS Programme, including the 6 EC sites, are located in Outside Central Region or in locations in Rest of Central Region where more affordable private housing is expected to be built. There is also a large supply of about 86,000 private housing units (including about 7,000 EC units) in the pipeline, of which about 38,000 units (including 1,800 EC units) are still unsold.

ATTRACTION COMMERCIAL SITES

A commercial site at Venture Avenue with a minimum office GFA quantum will be added to the 2H2012 Confirmed List to cater to users who need more affordable office space outside the Central Business District. It will also help to continue the momentum to develop Jurong Gateway into a vibrant commercial hub.

In addition, the 2H2012 Reserve List will have three sites for office developments. The commercial site at Sims Avenue/Tanjong Katong Road and the white site at Marina View, which are already available in the 1H2012 Reserve List, will be carried over to the 2H2012 Reserve List. URA has revised the sale conditions for the Sims Avenue/Tanjong Katong Road site after taking into consideration market feedback.

A new commercial site at Cecil Street will also be added to the 2H2012 Reserve List. Together, these three sites will provide opportunities for the market to initiate more office space over and above the 762,000 sqm GFA of office space in the pipeline, if there is demand.

The commercial site at Punggol Point will be transferred from the 1H2012 Reserve List to the 2H2012 Confirmed List. Located near Punggol Point Walk and Punggol Point Park, it has the potential to be developed into a rustic seaside dining destination.

The GLS Programme is reviewed regularly to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of land to meet demand for economic growth and to maintain a stable and sustainable property market. Sites in the GLS Programme are released through two main systems — the Confirmed List and the Reserved List. Confirmed List sites are released on a fixed, pre-determined date; while a site on the Reserve List will only be released for sale if the criteria for triggering the sale of the site are met.
### NEW SITES IN THE GOVERNMENT LAND SALES PROGRAMME FOR THE 2ND HALF OF 2012

<table>
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<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>SITE AREA (HA)</th>
<th>PROPOSED GPR</th>
<th>ESTIMATED NO. OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS**(ii)**</th>
<th>ESTIMATED NO. OF HOTEL ROOMS**(ii)**</th>
<th>ESTIMATED COMMERCIAL SPACE (SQM)<strong>(ii)</strong></th>
<th>ESTIMATED LAUNCH DATE</th>
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(i) The estimated number of hotel rooms and dwelling units for some sites carried forward from 1H2012 Reserve List have been updated to take into account revisions to site areas.

(ii) The actual number of housing units, hotel rooms and commercial space could be different from the estimated quantum depending on the actual plans of the developers in terms of mix of uses and the size of the housing units and hotel rooms.

(iii) Refers to the estimated date the detailed conditions of sale will be available and applications can be submitted.
It started with the old National Library and a camera in hand. A decade later, 44-year-old architect Peter Chen has a collection of photographs of post-independence landmarks that were torn down or are fast disappearing in his latest exhibition, “Perspectives from the Ideal City”. Peter Chen tells us how he got started and why we should care about Singapore’s architecture.

How did “Perspectives from the Ideal City” come about?
The project started more than 10 years ago, but in a loose sense. It was more about photographing sites that seemed “too young to die”. It wasn’t a project that began with a clear objective. I pursued it because I found it odd that buildings were disappearing (or had disappeared), and no one seemed to mind. The old National Library was one of the catalysts that spurred me and some fellow architects into action. Back in 1999, we wrote in to the newspapers and organised a forum to save the red-bricked library building. But despite some public dissent, there was just not enough of a movement or awareness back then. The library was eventually torn down in 2005.

How did you first go about collecting the material for this project?
Ironically, it wasn’t any burning sense of pride or nationalism or anything conceptual that launched the project. It was the simple acquisition of a camera that forced me to get out there and actively shoot stuff. I think that was in 2001. My early shoots were simply of vacant lots or abandoned sites. I’m sure sometimes it involved some form of trespassing but I really can’t recall when or where! In some cases like the National Stadium, I had to get approval for access as it had already been hoarded up and demolition work was ongoing. Gaining access to certain places was half the battle won.

You talk about how “the city has departed from utopian models of idealised urban typologies”. What exactly are you referring to?
In 2008, I started putting together this project and among the main references for it were the architectural paintings known as the Urbino, Berlin and Baltimore panels, which depicted an “ideal Renaissance city”. The paintings are anonymous but generally believed to be the work of 15th Century Italian artist Piero della Francesca.
Perspectives from the Ideal City

By Arti Mulchand

What is so significant about these paintings?

Besides showing the painter’s grasp of linear perspective, they also brought together the elements of what a civic city should contain or look like. Those elements included a bibliotheque (library), palazzo (apartment), column (monument), tempietto (temple) and a colosseum (stadium). It is ironic that we have these same elements in our city — post-Independence icons of the ideal city — but that they are now torn down and replaced. So while we have new versions of these buildings, it’s not quite the same.

What insights would you hope to derive from people’s experience of the exhibition?

I was thinking about this the other day. It could be the next phase of research in this project. I’d try and find out how many people in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s can claim that the following buildings still exist: 1) Their home before they went to primary school. 2) Their primary school. 3) Their secondary school? Depending on the age bracket, I believe you can see a huge shift after the 20-somethings.
How does the urban landscape create meaning for communities?

I think meaning is created through interactions within communities. The urban landscape is precisely that — a landscape. Ideally it should exist as a backdrop to facilitate interaction, for things to happen. It should evolve organically and incrementally.

How do you relate architecture to the soul of a city?

In the past, I’d have said something like “architecture is the soul of the city” but today I think the opposite is true. Also, what is the soul of a city? Is it the first impression catchphrases that one assigns to cities? If so, then Singapore is efficient, clean and safe (and now to add expensive). And so has this come to represent the soul of a city? Perhaps. Efficiency derived from pragmatism has always been a core value in our society. The city is in turn, shaped from this pragmatism. The city’s soul is embodied in its people, politics and economics. Architecture and urbanism are merely manifestations of this.

Why should Singaporeans care about the architectural landscape around them?

Something happens when cities and spaces that you have a connection to undergo such rapid change. You are no longer able to spatially relate to spaces in the city and they lose meaning for you. Then there is a period of “withdrawal”, during which you form new relationships to that altered part of the city, and create “new meanings”, so to speak. But that takes effort and time, and you need to like the “new” city — it must have some relevance to your life. Otherwise, you simply find meaningful places elsewhere.

So do we already care?

I think a small — but perhaps growing — group of people do care about Singapore’s architectural landscape. What we’ve seen from the Bukit Brown and KTM Rail Corridor discussions in the past year bear witness to a growing awareness the public has towards the environment and the city. They are willing to speak up, offer solutions and debate about such issues. That’s good.
Can you share your vision of the “ideal urban landscape” for Singapore?

I don’t think we can return to an ideal urban landscape any longer. The city is almost at the point now where it’s saturated. I think when we reach that tipping point; the city will take on its next phase of development.

“Perspectives from the Ideal City” by architect, educator, sculptor and photographer Peter Chen held its second run at The URA Centre from 19 May till 16 June 2012. Its debut was in 2011 at the Post-Museum. The photo exhibition documents post-independence landmarks and civic icons in various states of abandonment, stasis or disappearance. Peter Chen is also Assistant Professor at the Nanyang Technological University School of Art, Design and Media.
“Land use planning” and “trade-offs” may be very big words for ten-year-olds. But for the Primary Four students from Admiralty Primary School, not only were these words demystified, they also had fun learning about land use planning in Singapore.

URA recently collaborated with Admiralty Primary School to pilot a series of city planning workshops to help students understand and appreciate Singapore’s planning challenges and constraints. Armed with specially designed worksheets, students were challenged to plan their homes and neighbourhoods as part of their English lessons. They then visited the Singapore City Gallery to learn more about Singapore’s planning story before putting on their planner hats to create “LEGO cities” in a two-hour workshop. The students had to think about the needs of different groups and work together to create better cities for all.

This pilot city planning lesson and workshop is likely to be rolled out to other primary schools later in 2012. For updates on URA’s educational initiatives, check out the Programmes and Resources section at www.singaporecitygallery.sg