



Hilary Term 2025

Wednesday 5th March 2025
Lecture Room, Institute of
Archaeology, 36 Beaumont St

GAO Seminar Series

Once termly research seminar series featuring speakers from all specialities in archaeology.

Culture Interpretation: Sustainable Heritage Management for Chinese Heritage Centre in Modern Singapore

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Wednesday, 5th March 2025 at 11:00 AM



The 1980 merger of Nanyang University with the University of Singapore, forming the National University of Singapore (NUS), marked a pivotal moment in Singapore's higher education history. While existing research focuses on the challenges faced by Chinese-speaking graduates post-merger, this study examines the overlooked evolution of Nanyang University's campus, which became Nanyang Technological Institute in 1982 and later Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in 1991. Notably, the former Nanyang University library, now the Chinese Heritage Centre (CHC) and a National Monument, plays a unique role as an autonomous NTU institute.

This research challenges dominant narratives about Nantah and NTU by tracing the historical development of CHC (1955–2024) and reconstructing its role as a living museum that preserves Chinese culture and promotes multiculturalism. It fills a scholarly gap by exploring CHC's societal value and contribution to Singaporean Chinese identity in a geopolitically complex region.

Using concepts such as Cultural Landscape, History, and Memory, the study draws on participatory observation and archival research to present two key narratives: CHC's dual role as a museum and research centre, and its sustainable heritage management. It further addresses the historical struggles of Chinese society in Singapore and the implications for NTU graduates in a globalised educational landscape. Ultimately, it proposes a framework for Cultural Interpretation, positioning CHC as a dynamic space reflecting social change and the collective memory of Singapore's Chinese community.