

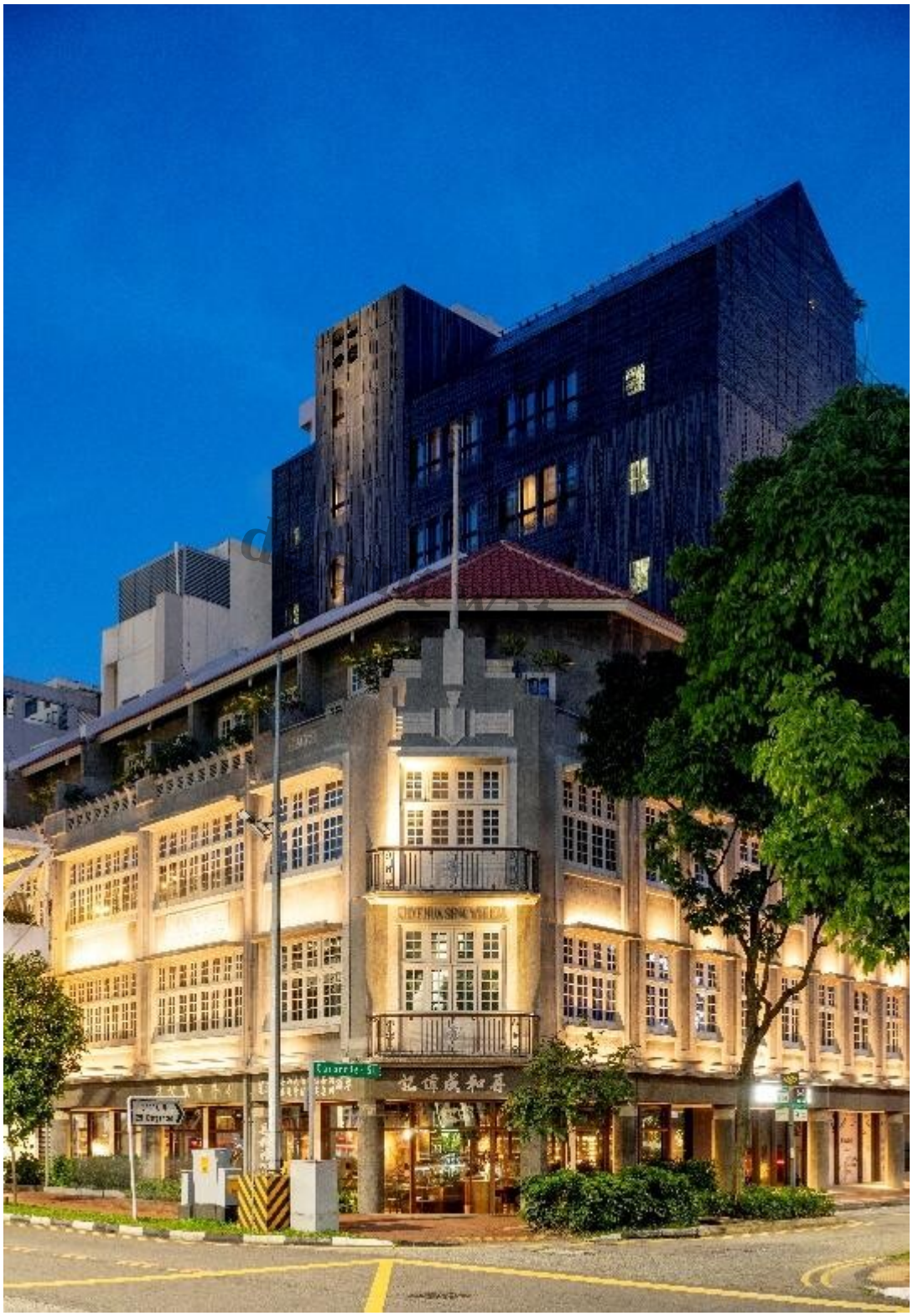
URA reviews conserved-building rules to ease upkeep, studying application exemptions for low-impact works

Description

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The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) is reviewing its rules for conserved buildings so that owners can carry out routine upkeep with less paperwork, National Development Minister Chee Hong Tat told an awards ceremony on 10 November 2026.

At the 2026 Architectural Heritage Awards at The URA Centre, Mr Chee set out a review to make conservation requirements â??more practical and less onerous for building ownersâ?•. It has two parts. URA is studying whether selected low-impact works can be exempted from application requirements, and it is looking at common code-compliant solutions for conserved shophouses and bungalows, to give owners and professionals clearer guidance on renovation and upgrading.



21 Carpenter Street won the 2026 Award for Conservation and Innovation. Image: URA

What the review covers, and what it does not yet settle

No list of exempted works, start date or public consultation has been published yet. Until URA issues revised guidelines, the current approval rules stand.

Singapore has more than 7,200 conserved buildings and structures, each of which needs ongoing care. â??We recognise that conserving and maintaining heritage buildings can be challenging for owners,â?• Mr Chee told the ceremony, adding that the aim is to make it easier â??without compromising the important safeguards needed to protect our built heritageâ?•.

The approval owners still need today

Minor repair and maintenance on a conserved building falls under URAâ??s Category 3 works, and every Category 3 job needs URA Conservation Permission before work starts. Examples in URAâ??s guidelines include adding or repositioning air-conditioning units and their screening, adding solar panels or a solar heater on an existing roof, adding or moving a flue, painting the facade, adding or removing security grilles, and putting up business signs. Owners unsure whether a building is conserved can search URAâ??s conservation portal, covered in LBRDâ??s guide on how to tell if a Singapore building is conserved, and senior-friendly fittings carry extra steps set out in EASE (Private) in a conserved home.

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The submission does not need a Qualified Person; owners and contractors can file it. It needs a letter of ownerâ??s authorisation and a proposal shown in colour photographs or scaled drawings. The application is free and typically takes two weeks. Once the work is done, the owner submits photographs of the finished job and receives a Letter for Endorsement of Completed Works. URA assesses each proposal case by case and can ask for it to be resubmitted as a larger Category 1 or Category 2 application.



The Parochial House of St Josephâ??s Church on Victoria Street won a 2026 Award for Conservation. Image: URA

Three recently conserved buildings

Mr Chee also thanked the owners of three recently gazetted properties: Orchard Road Presbyterian Church, gazetted in February 2026; Starpoint at 319 Pasir Panjang Road, the first post-independence bungalow to be conserved; and Villa Haji Kahar at 1 Bedok Avenue, a 1920s bungalow from old

Kampong Bedok. The owners of both bungalows have proposed integrating them into future residential developments on their sites.

URA has also commissioned its first Built Heritage Sector Consultancy Study, which will map the architects, engineers, contractors and other specialists who carry out conservation work and recommend how to close skills gaps.

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Author
rachelng

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