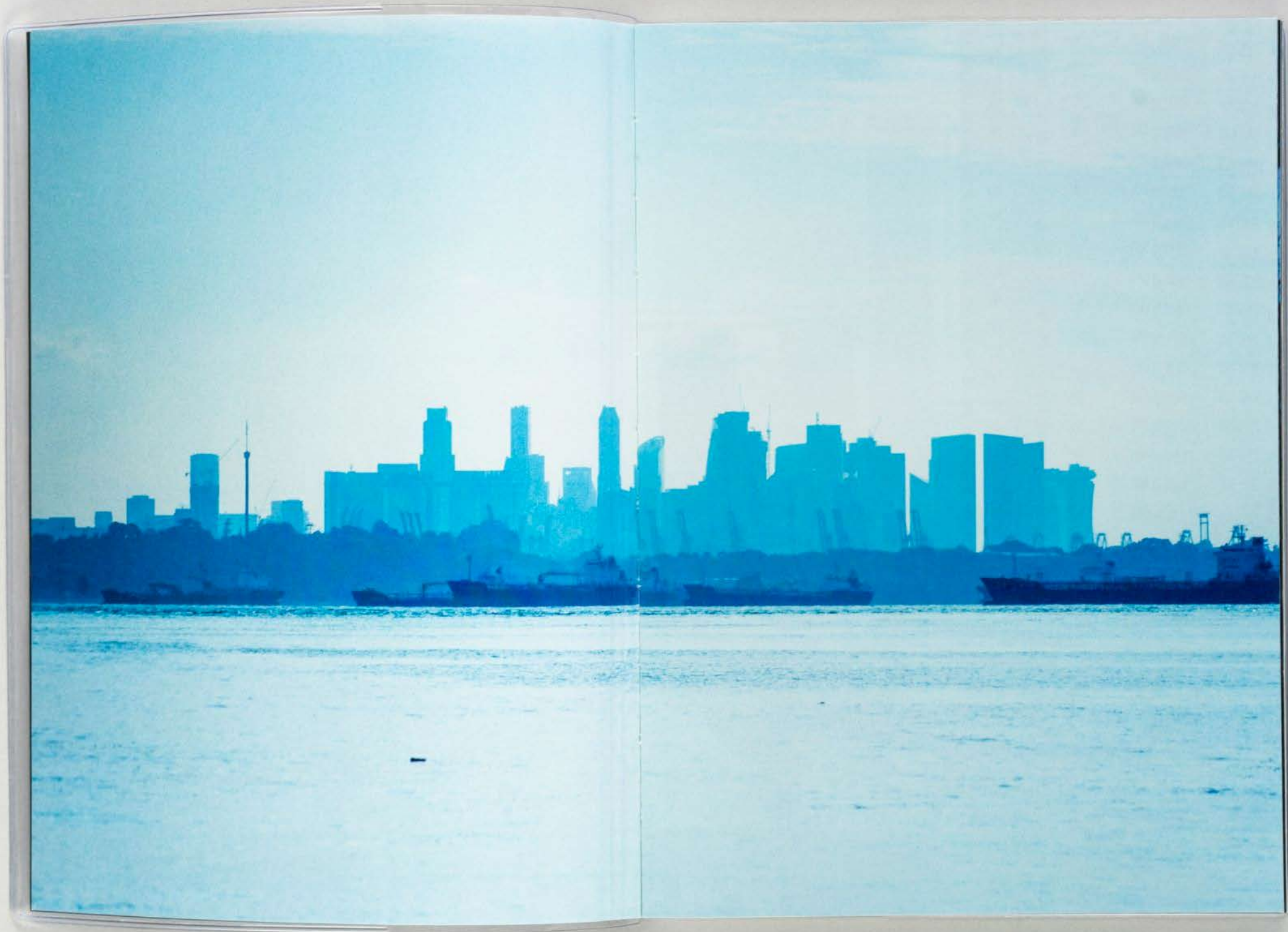


**SOME HAUNTED SPACES
IN SINGAPORE**

Marcel Jäggi, Charlotte Malterre-Barthes



**Edition Patrick Frey
N° 271**





**SOME HAUNTED SPACES
IN SINGAPORE**

Marcel Jäggi, Charlotte Malterre-Barthes

**Edition Patrick Frey
N° 271**



CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| PREFACE | |
| SPOOK SPACE | 44 |
| | |
| SOME HAUNTED SPACES IN SINGAPORE MAP | 48 |
| | |
| CASE STUDIES | |
| 1 AMBER BEACON TOWER | 51 |
| 2 SOONG SISTERS HOUSE | 67 |
| 3 OLD SIA GROUP SPORTS CLUB | 83 |
| 4 WOODY LODGE | 99 |
| 5 HAW PAR VILLA | 115 |
| 6 HILLVIEW MANSION | 131 |
| 7 BISHAN MRT STATION | 147 |
| 8 BUKIT BROWN CEMETERY | 163 |
| | |
| INTERVIEWS | |
| DENISE L. | 181 |
| CHARLES GOH | 184 |
| JONES TANG | 186 |
| LILIAN CHEE | 192 |
| | |
| ESSAY | |
| HEARSAY FROM A HAUNTED ISLAND | 196 |
| | |
| PHOTO ESSAY CAPTIONS | 219 |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | 220 |

5000
0 1000

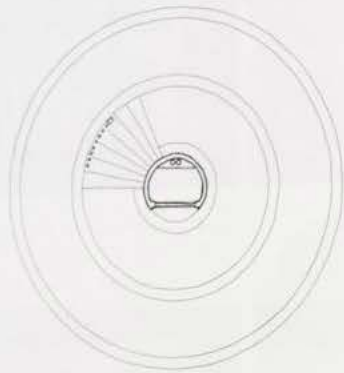


SOME HAUNTED SPACES IN SINGAPORE MAP

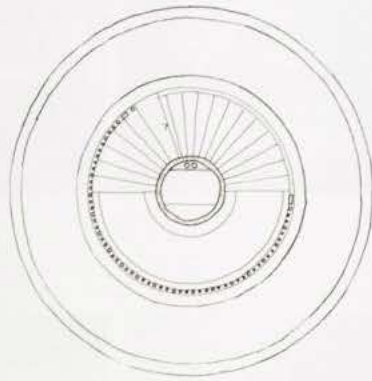
CASE STUDIES: 1 AMBER BEACON TOWER 2 SOONG SISTERS HOUSE 3 OLD SIA GROUP SPORTS CLUB
4 WOODY LODGE 5 HAW PAR VILLA 6 HILLVIEW MANSION 7 BISHAN MRT STATION 8 BUKIT BROWN CEMETERY

NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST: 9 BEDOK RESERVOIR 10 BRADDELL-WESTLAKE SCHOOL 11 CHANGI COMMANDO BARRACKS
12 CHOA CHU KANG CEMETERY 13 DAIRY FARM 14 FORMER CID HEADQUARTERS 15 FLAMINGO VALLEY CONDOS

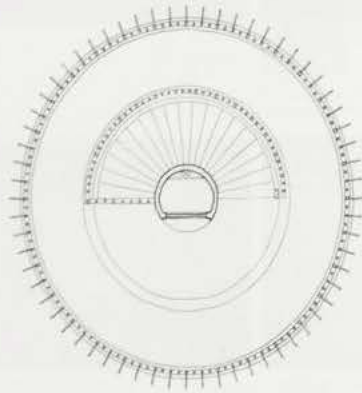
16 INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH 17 ISTANA WOODNEUK 18 JURONG CENTRAL PARK 19 KAMPONG LORONG
BUANGKOK 20 KERAMAT BUKIT KASITA 21 LABRADOR PARK 22 MATILDA HOUSE 23 NEE SOON CAMP
24 NEO TIEW ESTATE 25 OLD CHANGI HOSPITAL 26 OLD FORD FACTORY 27 OLD HOUSE AT ALEXANDRA ROAD
28 OLD JOO CHIAT POLICE STATION 29 OLD OPERA ESTATE SCHOOL 30 PULAU TEKONG 31 SEMBAWANG PARK
32 SENTOSA BEACH 33 ST JOHN'S ISLAND 34 TANGLIN HILL BRUNEI HOSTEL 35 THE RED HOUSE 36 THOMSON
SECONDARY SCHOOL 37 VIEW ROAD HOSPITAL 38 YISHUN PARK 39 PULAU HANTU BESAR/PULAU HANTU KECIL



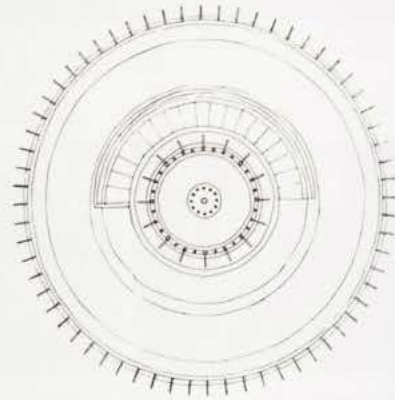
GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

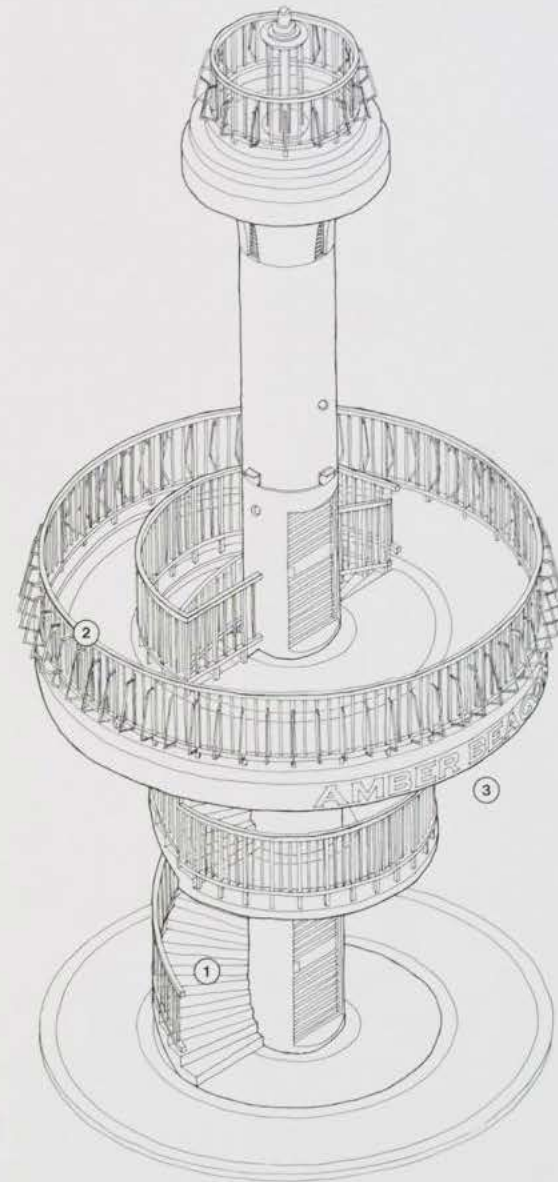


VIEWING TERRACE (THIRD FLOOR)

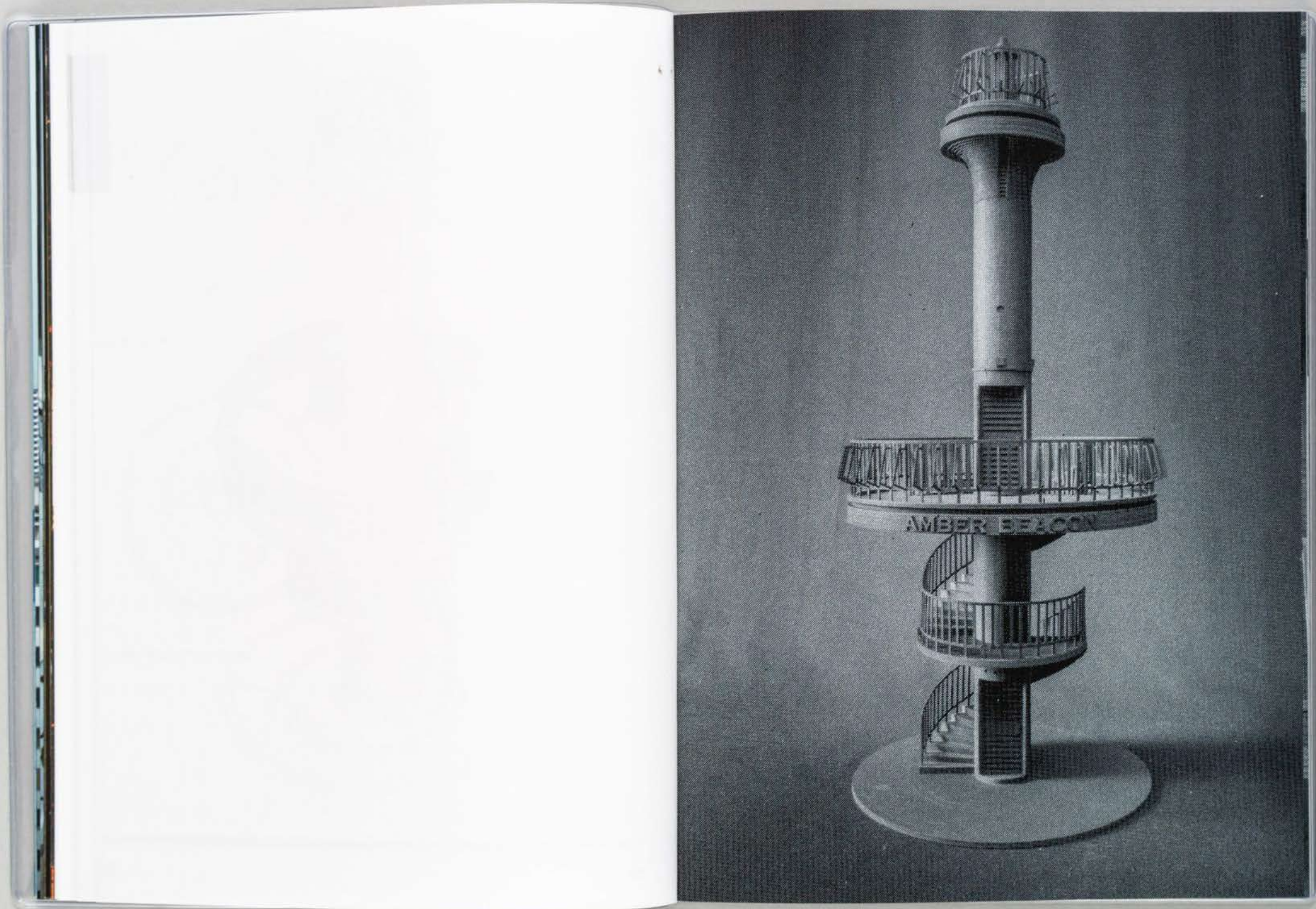


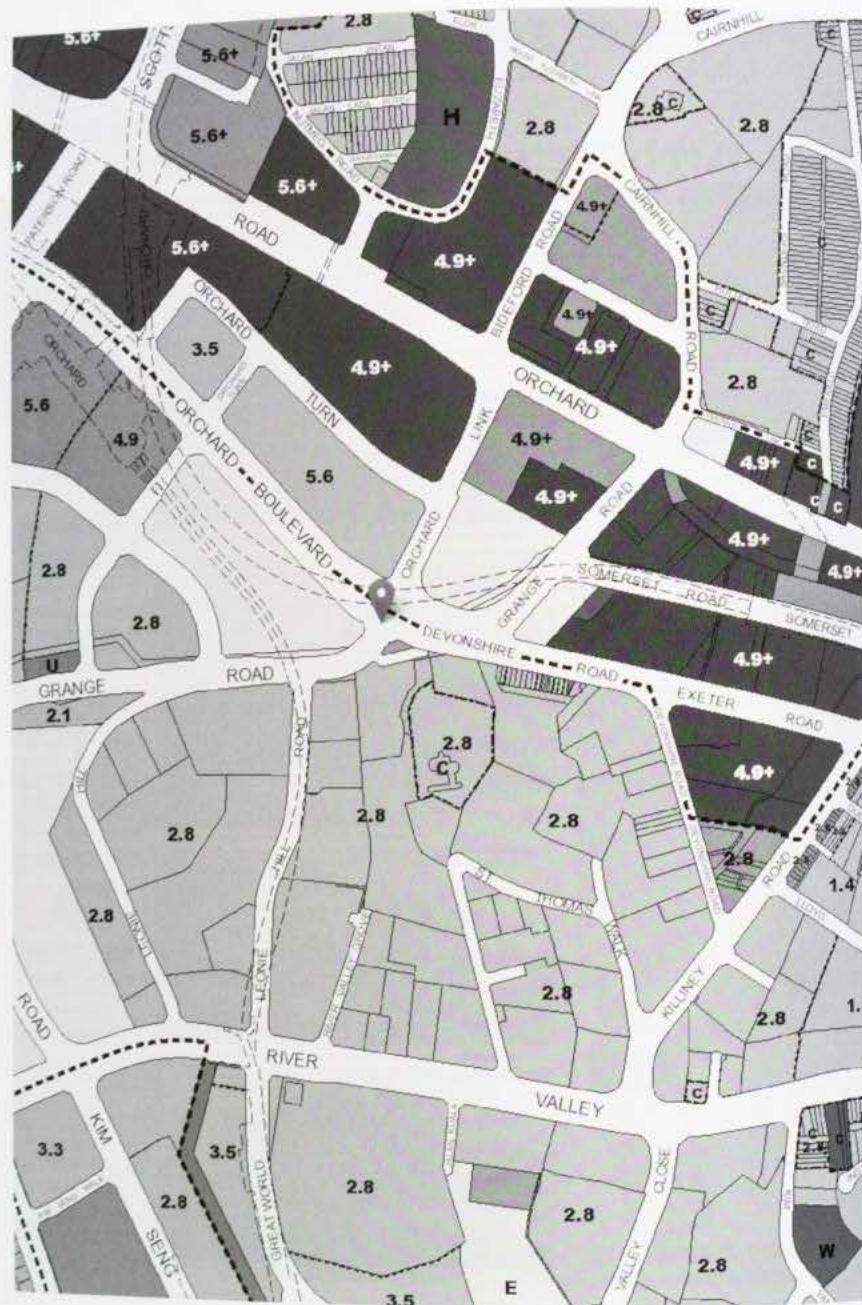
TOP FLOOR WITH BEACON

TECHNICALITIES OF MURDER—THE ARCHITECTURAL OBJECT AS A CRIME SCENE



1 CRIME SCENE (MURDER) 2 MESSAGES SCRATCHED IN HANDRAIL 3 ALLEGED SECOND CRIME SCENE (SUICIDE)

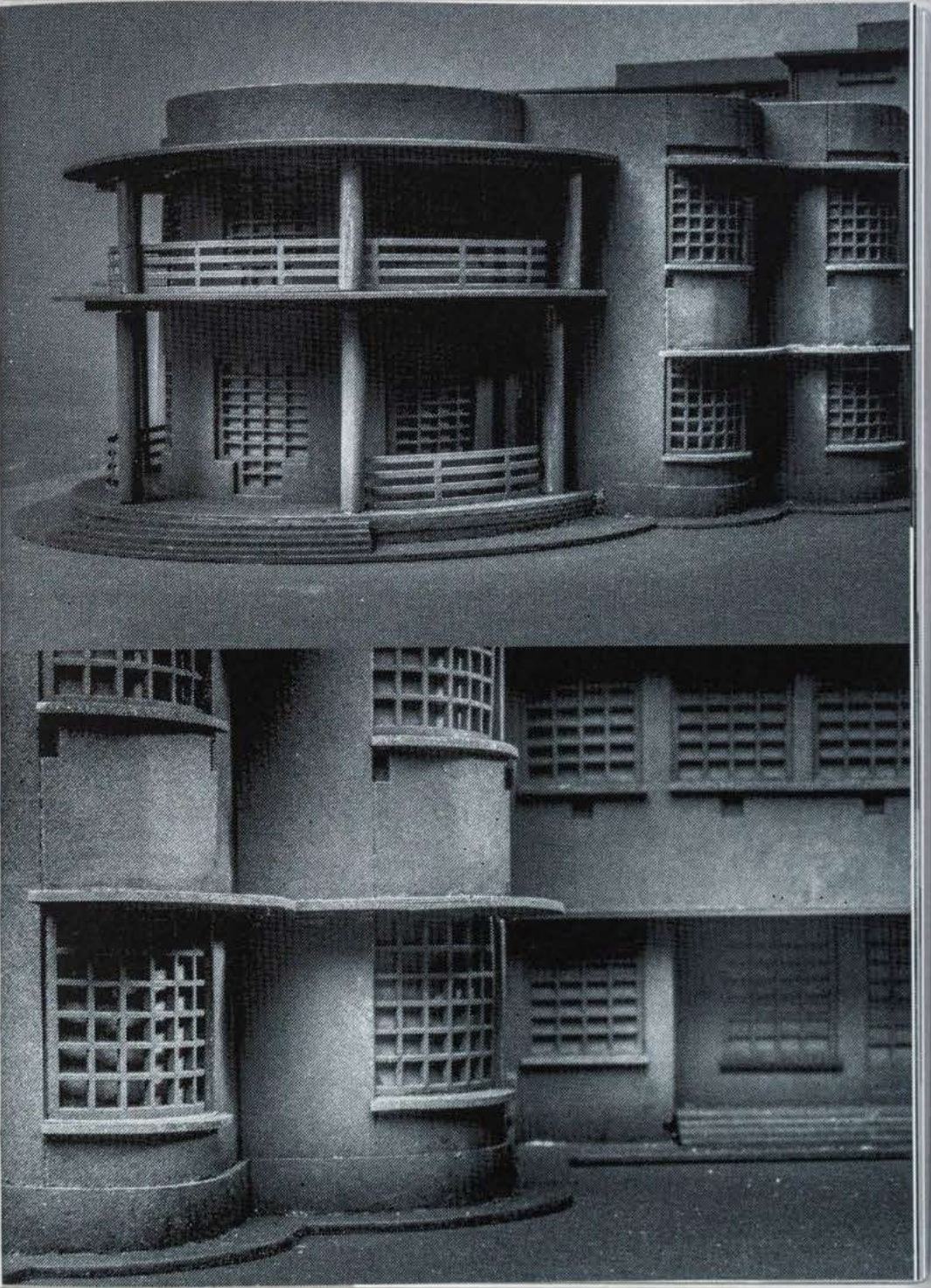




THE HOUSE STANDS IN A RESIDENTIAL ZONE WITH A PERMISSIBLE PLOT RATIO OF 2.8 AS PER LATEST MASTER PLAN (SOURCE: URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND PHYSICAL PLANNING, 2015)

| | | | |
|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| | RESIDENTIAL | | WATERBODY |
| | RESIDENTIAL WITH COMMERCIAL AT 1ST STOREY | | ROAD |
| | COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL | | TRANSPORT FACILITIES |
| | COMMERCIAL | | RAILWAY |
| | HOTEL | | MASS RAPID TRANSIT |
| | WHITE | | LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT |
| | BUSINESS 1 | | UTILITY |
| | BUSINESS 1 - WHITE | | CEMETERY |
| | BUSINESS 2 | | AGRICULTURE |
| | BUSINESS 2 - WHITE | | PORT / AIRPORT |
| | BUSINESS PARK | | RESERVE SITE |
| | BUSINESS PARK - WHITE | | SPECIAL USE |
| | RESIDENTIAL / INSTITUTION | | PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY |
| | COMMERCIAL / INSTITUTION | | PLOT RATIO BOUNDARY |
| | HEALTH & MEDICAL CARE | | UNDERGROUND ROAD / STRUCTURE |
| | EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION | | MAXIMUM PERMISSIBLE PLOT RATIO |
| | PLACE OF WORSHIP | | BASE PLOT RATIO |
| | CIVIC & COMMUNITY INSTITUTION | | MAXIMUM PERMISSIBLE WHITE QUANTUM |
| | OPEN SPACE | | MINIMUM BUSINESS (B) PLOT RATIO |
| | PARK | | CONSERVATION AREA |
| | BEACH AREA | | NATURE RESERVE |
| | SPORTS & RECREATION | | NATIONAL PARK |

MASTER PLAN LEGEND (SOURCE: URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND PHYSICAL PLANNING, 2015)





CLEARED SITE AT BUANGKOK
(SOURCE: SINGAPORE HARDWARE ZONE FORUM, 2016)

Dear Marcel

We refer to your email of 5 Jun 2015 regarding the former Woody Lodge building complex.

Last year, the site was cleared for the development of "Buangkok Square", which is a mixed use development comprising public housing and a neighbourhood centre. You may obtain more information of the development on HDB's website at the following link: [www89.hdb.gov.sg/hdbvst/eampu09p.nsf/0/14SEPBT0HGM_page_1112/\\$file/about2.htm#about2](http://www89.hdb.gov.sg/hdbvst/eampu09p.nsf/0/14SEPBT0HGM_page_1112/$file/about2.htm#about2)

For information on Woody Lodge, you may wish to refer to the National Archives of Singapore at www.nas.gov.sg/nas/ or other resources e.g. Google streetview which shows images of Woody Lodge.

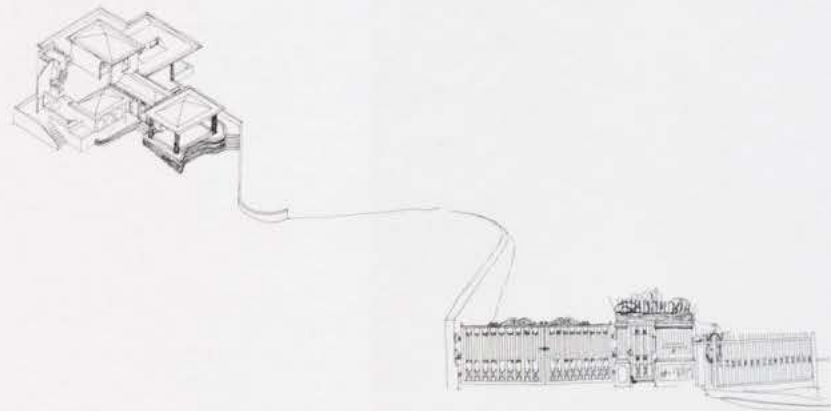
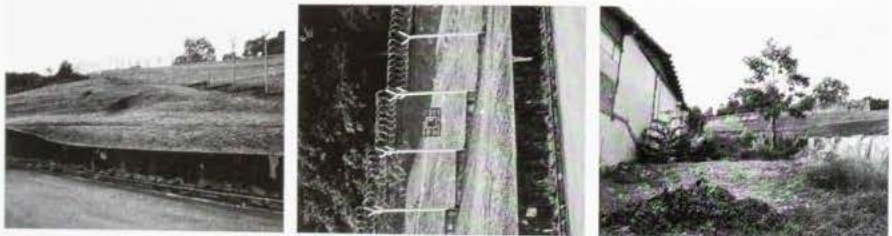
We hope you find the above information helpful. Thank you.

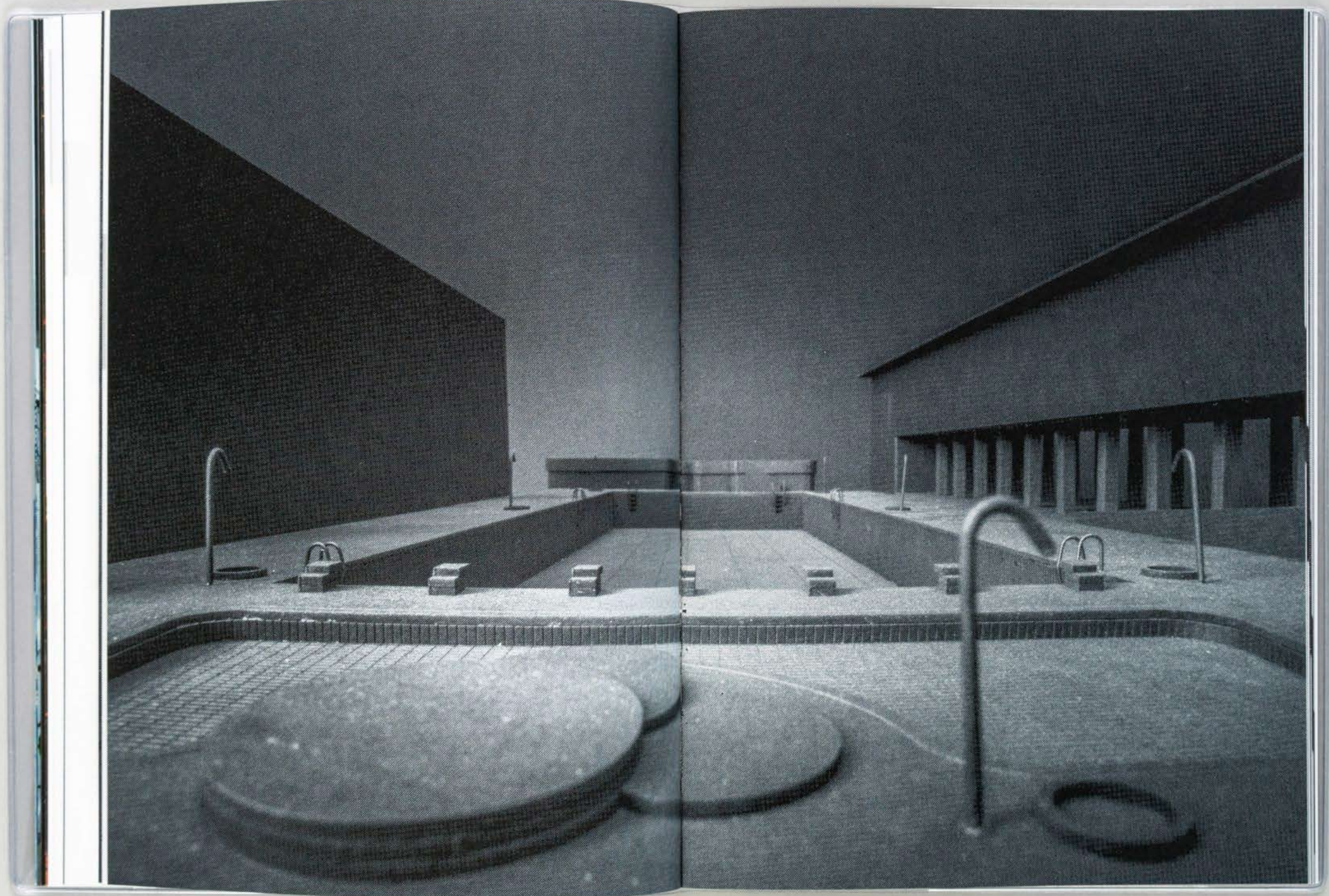
Urban Redevelopment Authority § Physical Planning, North East Department § Privileged/Confidential information may be contained in this message. If you are not the intended recipient, you must not copy, distribute or use it for any purpose, nor disclose its contents to any other person. Please notify the sender immediately if you receive this in error § Check out our website at <http://www.ura.gov.sg>

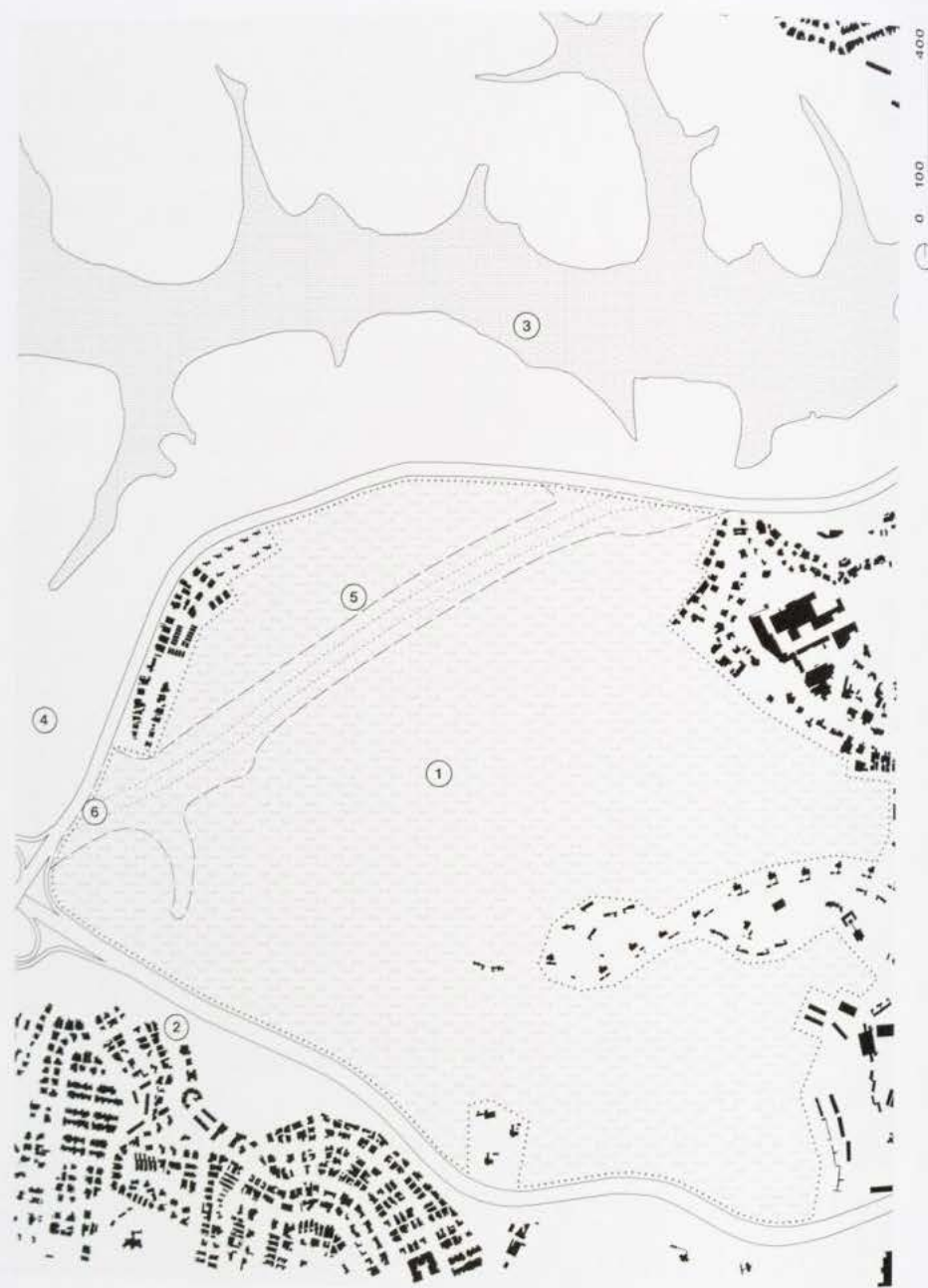
EMAIL FROM THE URA TO THE AUTHORS
(SOURCE: URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND PHYSICAL PLANNING, 2015)



FROM 2003 TO 2016, THE RAPID AND MERCILESS SCRAPPING OF THE 1920s HOSPITAL TO BECOME ANOTHER PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE IS BEST UNDERSTOOD BY SATELLITE IMAGES (SOURCE: GOOGLE EARTH, JANUARY 30, 2015)







1 BUKIT BROWN CEMETERY 2 PAN ISLAND EXPRESSWAY 3 MACRITCHIE RESERVOIR 4 LORNIE ROAD
5 NEW LORNIE HIGHWAY 6 AREA AFFECTED BY EXPRESSWAY CONSTRUCTION

BATTLEGROUND

The taxi driver does not know the way, and struggles to find the rusty gates of Bukit Brown cemetery, located just south of MacRitchie Reservoir, in the very center of the island. The meeting point for this informal visit is under the old rain tree. Since 2005, passionate citizens—"Brownies," as they call themselves—have organized public walks that start here. The Goh brothers, well-known local ghost-hunters, claim to have sparked this interest by organizing nightly ghost-spotting tours. Looking for spirits among the beautiful, opulent graves of prominent entrepreneurs, politicians, Chinese pioneers—notable Peranakan matriarchs and patriarchs—and their forgotten ancestors, "Asia Paranormal Investigators" and a few others—for example, the Nature Society of Singapore (NSS) and the Singapore Heritage Society—have revealed a fascinating and fragile heritage in the lush jungle. Today's strolls will take visitors only to a few of the 85 hectares of the largest cemetery in Singapore, a fraction of the area covered by

of reclaiming and appropriating public space for the sake of spiritual practices is hard to miss. For the positioning of these miniature altars is never random and it is argued that these “uncanny transactions” take place particularly at points of rapid spatial and social change: construction sites, infrastructure junctures, and other significant nodes of a thriving speculative economy.¹⁸

Joss paper, replica paper money collectively known as *kim zua* or “hell money,” is also burned at these altars or in specifically designated incense-burning drums provided by authorities. Large metal containers also allow for burning bigger items; paper servants, paper villas, paper computers, paper clothes, and paper cars are set ablaze, and in this way are sent to the ancestral spirits for them to make use of in the netherworld. At night, flickering red flames rise high above the heads of faithful enthusiasts as the dancing light of the bonfire reflects on nearby facades; the streets come alive and the crowd seems spellbound by the animated elements performing their purifying ritual in the city-state’s hyper-controlled urban environment. The stark contrast between the meter-high flames of sporadic fires and the restrained, clinical atmosphere of the city during Hungry Ghost Festival is a peculiar sight indeed that, as strange



DURING THE HUNGRY GHOST FESTIVAL, SOME HDB ESTATES SET UP A COMMUNAL SPOT WHERE PEOPLE COME TOGETHER TO BURN PAPER MONEY AND LEAVE OFFERINGS FOR ALL SPIRITS (SOURCE: ESTHER LEONG, AUGUST 25, 2017)

as it is, seems to capture the contradictory duality of spatial realities and spiritual unrealities. While the fires at first might evoke a sensation of violent urban riots, these rituals are performed according to well-rehearsed dramaturgies and are in fact meticulously managed via close state monitoring.

According to visual sociologist Terence Heng, these rituals, simultaneously private and public, are considered physical narratives that tell stories of beliefs, values, and identities through markers, so-called “material artifacts that perform an individual’s or collective’s ethnic identities” as manifested in space.¹⁹ These markers—made in the form of offerings—exist only for a short period and are consumed, burned, or removed once the Hungry Ghost Festival has ended, underscoring the ephemeral and only vaguely comprehensible character of this spatial event. As so many visual signs of presumed ghostly presences, the array of objects establishes a specific connection between individuals and a transient space that emerges as a mental geography of sorts, liberated from built realities.

Another element of the festival is the boisterous performance of live songs, the so-called *getai*, which typically occurs only in residential areas. These impromptu performances usually take place on temporary stages next to hawker centers,



CEREMONIES IN THE STREET DURING THE HUNGRY GHOST FESTIVAL: BACKSTAGE AT A *GETAI* THEATER (LEFT), BURNING OF HELL MONEY (MIDDLE AND RIGHT) (SOURCES: PHILLIP ALDRUP, AUGUST 2011 AND ALEXA RADU, SEPTEMBER 9, 2017)

An investigation of the collective imagination, *Some Haunted Spaces in Singapore* examines the paradox of modern urban planning and spiritual beliefs and scrutinizes elements of the built environment believed to be occupied by spirits: haunted spaces. The authors set off on a witty and obsessive expedition across the Southeast Asian island, along the fine line between rationality and absurdity.

ISBN 978-3-906803-71-5