

REPORT OF
THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON 38 OXLEY ROAD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Background

Chapter 2: Historical and heritage significance

Chapter 3: Mr Lee Kuan Yew's thinking and wishes on the property

Chapter 4: Possible options for the property

Chapter 5: Committee's views

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

1. Founding Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew's former home at 38 Oxley Road (henceforth referred to as the "Property") is a single-storey bungalow surrounded by low-rise residential developments.

2. The issue of whether to preserve Mr Lee's home after his passing, to demolish it, or some other option has become a matter of public interest. Shortly after Mr Lee's passing on 23 March 2015, PM Lee Hsien Loong addressed this issue in Parliament on 13 April 2015, where he said that "there is no immediate issue of demolition of the house, and no need for the Government to make any decision now", given that Dr Lee Wei Ling "intended to continue living in the Property". He also stated that "if and when Dr Lee Wei Ling no longer lives in the House, Mr Lee has stated his wishes as to what then should be done...however, it will be up to the Government of the day to consider the matter".

3. Though there is no immediate need for a decision, given the significant public interest in the Property, the Cabinet¹ approved setting up a Ministerial Committee ("Committee") on 1 June 2016 to consider the various options. The Committee was asked to prepare drawer plans of various options and their implications, with the benefit of views of those who had directly discussed the matter with Mr Lee, so that a future Government can refer to these plans and make a considered and informed decision when the time came to decide on the matter.

4. Specifically, the Terms of Reference of this Committee² are to assess:

- (a) the historical and heritage significance of the Property;
- (b) the wishes of Mr Lee Kuan Yew in relation to the Property; and
- (c) the possible plans for the Property and the neighbourhood, and the options to move forward

5. The Committee has since undertaken a detailed assessment of the heritage value and historical significance of the Property, and studied the possible development options, taking into consideration Mr Lee's wishes. To obtain as full

¹ Excluding PM Lee Hsien Loong, who notified the Cabinet on 15 April 2015 that he recused himself from all Government decisions involving the Property.

² The Ministerial Committee is chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean, and includes Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu, Minister for Law K Shanmugam, and Minister for National Development Lawrence Wong.

a picture as possible of Mr Lee's thinking on the Property, the Committee invited representations from Mr Lee's children, namely Mr Lee Hsien Loong ("LHL"), Dr Lee Wei Ling ("LWL") and Mr Lee Hsien Yang ("LHY").

6. This report sets out the Committee's findings and seeks to provide a reference point to guide the Government of the day when a decision on the Property needs to be made.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL AND HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

7. Based on archival plans dated 1898, two identical bungalows were built at 38 and 40³ Oxley Road. Although the Property (at 38 Oxley Road) has undergone some additions and alterations, the original form and architectural character are largely intact.

Architectural considerations

8. The building design is of an “Early style” bungalow built in the late 19th and early 20th Century. The single storey house, raised on piers above the ground and with a front verandah opening out into the entrance porch, is typical of private suburban dwelling houses that were built in Singapore at that time to suit the local climate. To date, 16 bungalows of the same style and era have been conserved to showcase the evolution of bungalows in Singapore. A comparison of the Property and two similar bungalows conserved to date is at **Annex A**.

9. The bungalow is a complex architectural type with a history dating back to 18th-century Colonial India. The bungalows in Singapore and Malaya feature innovations that were developed over time and made them unique. Most architectural historians believe that these innovations were mostly inspired by local vernacular architecture such as the Malay House. The bungalow in Singapore is a unique architectural type which is testament to its cosmopolitan past and the Property is among the few remaining houses built in this style.

10. The following list details the features typical of a bungalow, as reflected in the Property:

- (a) **Single storey**: The Property is a single-storey house which is the bungalow style preferred by the “old Indians”. However, the building was built on a slope, resulting in a single storey at the front but two storeys at its rear.
- (b) **Elevated on arched masonry**: As the house was built on a slope, the space beneath the house was used as a basement rather than left alone as a void. The arched openings are for ventilation of the basement space.
- (c) **Parallelogram/rectangular in form**: The building is built in a rectangular form. However, the shorter elevation is where the entrance to

³ The building at No. 40 has since been redeveloped in 2006 as three units of detached/semi-detached dwelling houses.

the building is located, rather than the long elevation, and this is a common variation in bungalows.

(d) Lofty ceilings: Lofty ceilings are an important feature in bungalows as they allow hot air to rise and cool air to sink – resulting in cooler rooms. The building has a high-pitched roof suggesting that the interior ceiling is high. The additional jack roof hints that the lofty ceiling in our tropical climate is still insufficient and the extra vents created by the jack roof are required to let hot air escape.

(e) Tiled roofs: Tiled roofs were a new feature in the bungalow of Chinese influence and were introduced due to the availability of economical Chinese semi-circular clay pantiles. Previously, roofs would have been in attap or thatched material.

(f) Broad verandahs: One important feature of the bungalow is its broad verandah(s) where its occupants could escape from the heat of the sun. The verandah has multiple functions. It acts as a space for entertainment, relaxation and also serves as a communal space where its occupants gather. The verandah found at the Property is a narrower variation found in bungalows after the 1880s. Part of the verandah was later enclosed and converted into a room.

(g) Classical columns on plinths: The Classical Orders played an important part in the architecture of Singapore and were used widely in bungalows in its columns. The columns at the Property are of the Tuscan order but are square instead of the usual round shape. It is not known why square columns were chosen.

(h) Deep overhanging eaves: The deep overhanging eaves serve two purposes – to channel the rainwater away from the building and to reduce the amount of direct sunlight into the house. The eaves of the Property are much shorter in depth and this is a common variation found in bungalows after the 1880s.

(i) Portico in front of building: The building has a projecting portico for drop-offs and is decorated with classical columns and plinths. The portico area has seen some changes with the addition of a new porch and wheelchair lift.

11. In addition, the Property contains a mix of features that were popular in bungalows of its time, and are not commonly found today. These features include

full-length louvre windows (French windows), fretted timber balusters, classical columns, pilasters and plinths, and vented grills that fill the arch masonry.

Historical Significance

12. The Property was the home of Singapore's founding Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew from the mid-1940s until his death in 2015. After the Japanese Occupation, in 1945/early 1946, Mr Lee started renting the Property as his family had to move out of China Building, and their home in a shophouse at Victoria Street was unsuitable. Mrs Lee Kuan Yew (Mdm Kwa Geok Choo) moved into the family home on 30 September 1950, after wedding formalities between her and Mr Lee were completed. Mr and Mrs Lee bought the Property in 1965, when security became a key concern. The compound was then fortified with steel gates, additional brick walls and bullet-proof windows.

13. In the 1950s, the Property became a place where individuals who became key players in the politics of the era came to meet Mr Lee or make plans. Some notable visitors include John Eber (Vice-President of the Malayan Democratic Union), Samad Ismail (chief sub-editor of *Utusan Melayu*), Superintendent Richard Byne Corridon (Special Branch Officer, who came to discuss Samad Ismail's case with Mr Lee), Lim Chin Siong and Fong Swee Suan (Chinese-educated unionists) and students from the Chinese Middle School.

14. In particular, the Property was where meetings took place that led to the formation of the first independent government for Singapore, and altered the destiny of the country. It was in the basement dining room that the People's Action Party ("PAP") was formed in 1954, and ideas and decisions that came to shape Singapore's future were discussed and made. The Property is closely associated with outstanding individuals including Dr Goh Keng Swee, Dr Toh Chin Chye, S. Rajaratnam, K.M. Byrne as well as Mr Lee, who collectively established a new post-colonial government for Singapore.

15. Toh, Samad and Fong recalled that about 20 people huddled around the basement dining table for discussions. Dr Toh Chin Chye was the chairman, Lee Kuan Yew, the secretary and Lee Gek Seng, the assistant secretary. Lim Chin Siong, Fong Swee Suan and Devan Nair were among those who participated in the discussions. These meetings were held secretly, as the internal security regulations then forbade such political meetings. Dr Toh Chin Chye recalled that Ong Eng Guan suggested burying the minutes of the meetings in the garden. After the 1954 party inauguration, UMNO leader and future Malaysian Prime Minister,

Tunku Abdul Rahman, and Tun Tan Cheng Lock, the founder and first President of the Malayan Chinese Association, were hosted to dinner at the Property.

16. The Property was also the first election office for the PAP, and it was on the verandah that the party's posters and banners were prepared. Until the PAP was able to secure its own headquarters, the Property was its de-facto office. In its early years as an opposition party, the PAP could not easily find places to rent as landlords were worried about upsetting the authorities.

17. The Committee assesses that the Property has architectural, heritage and historical significance. Refer to **Annex B** for a more detailed report by NHB on the historical and heritage significance of the Property.

CHAPTER 3: MR LEE KUAN YEW'S THINKING AND WISHES ON THE PROPERTY

18. To better understand Mr Lee's thinking and wishes on the Property, the Committee invited representations from Mr Lee's three children in their personal capacities: Mr LHL,⁴ Dr LWL and Mr LHY (collectively, "the Parties").

19. The Parties' views were essentially as follows:

- (a) All the Parties agreed that Mr Lee's personal wish was for the Property to be demolished after his passing.
- (b) However, they differed on Mr Lee's thinking in respect of other options, including preservation:
 - (i) Dr LWL and Mr LHY were of the view that Mr Lee "wanted his house demolished and was implacably opposed to any other outcome". They told the Committee that Mr Lee's wish for demolition "cannot be compromised in any way", and that "he never accepted in any way or form the preservation" of the Property.
 - (ii) Mr LHL's position was this: While Mr Lee's personal wish was for demolition, from the second half of 2011, after reflecting on the views of several people, including senior journalists⁵ and members of the Cabinet, he "came to accept" that there was a strong body of opinion that the Property should be preserved "in the public interest". He also accepted that when the decision has to be made, the Government in office may seek to preserve the property for these reasons. Mr Lee was "prepared to be flexible and contemplate options short of demolition".

⁴ Mr LHL has, in his capacity as Prime Minister, recused himself from all Government decisions concerning the Property.

⁵ In March 2011, Mr Lee sought by email, the views of editors from Singapore Press Holdings on his suggestion to demolish the Property and build a scale model as "major decisions were made there that have affected and shaped the future of Singapore". The unanimous view of the editors was that the Property should be preserved, in light of its historical importance. One of them voiced his belief that many Singaporeans felt the same way.

20. In reaching its views, the Committee has relied on the objective evidence placed before it,⁶ with particular emphasis on contemporaneous documents and statements made personally by Mr Lee.

21. The Committee found three aspects of the objective evidence to be particularly useful: (a) the demolition clause (“Demolition Clause”) in Mr Lee’s last will dated 17 Dec 2013 (“Last Will”); (b) Mr Lee’s letter to the Cabinet dated 27 Dec 2011; and (c) the renovation/redevelopment plans for the Property which Mr Lee submitted to the URA in Mar 2012, and obtained approval for.

(a) Demolition Clause

22. The Demolition Clause in Mr Lee’s Last Will states:

“I further declare that it is my wish and the wish of my late wife...that our house at 38 Oxley Road... (“the House”) be demolished immediately after my death or, if my daughter, Wei Ling, would prefer to continue living in the original house, immediately after she moves out of the House. I would ask each of my children to ensure our wishes with respect to the demolition of the House be carried out. If our children are unable to demolish the House as a result of any changes in the law, rules or regulations binding them, it is my wish that the House never be opened to others except my children, their families and descendants. My view on this has been made public before and remains unchanged. My statement of wishes in this paragraph... may be publicly disclosed notwithstanding that the rest of my Will is private.”

23. The Demolition Clause comprises two parts:

- (a) The first part clearly sets out Mr Lee’s wish for the Property to be demolished.
- (b) The second part then specifies his wishes in the event demolition was not possible. In such an event, Mr Lee did not want the Property to be open to the public.

⁶ In addition to his letters and statutory declarations, Mr LHL provided the Committee with a file of supporting documentary evidence, including emails and letters from Mr Lee that were referred to in Mr LHL’s statutory declarations.

Dr LWL and Mr LHY did not provide the Committee with any documentary evidence.

The Clause contemplates more than one outcome, and acknowledges the possibility that demolition may not take place.

24. In the course of the Committee's correspondence with the Parties, questions concerning the preparation of Mr Lee's Last Will were also raised (see **Annex C-1**). The Committee does not find it necessary to set out its views on these questions for the purposes of this Report.⁷ Our interest is confined to obtaining as full a picture as possible of Mr Lee's thinking and wishes on the Property, and to try and determine this as best as we can.

25. Two other documented episodes and related contemporaneous statements from Mr Lee are also relevant in understanding Mr Lee's thinking and wishes on the Property.

(b) Mr Lee's letter to Cabinet

26. The first is Mr Lee's letter to the Cabinet dated 27 Dec 2011 (see **Annex C-2**). This followed from a meeting he had with the Cabinet in July 2011 where he presented his views about the Property, and also listened to the views of the Cabinet members. The letter states:

“Cabinet members were unanimous that 38 Oxley Road should not be demolished. I have reflected on this and decided that if 38 Oxley Road is to be preserved, it needs to have its foundations reinforced and the whole building refurbished. It must then be let out for people to live in. An empty building will soon decline and decay.”

27. This was Mr Lee's last formal communication to the Cabinet on the Property.

28. Mr Lee's letter to the Cabinet was sent less than a week after he had executed his Second Will on 21 Dec 2011, which also contained the Demolition

⁷ In their submissions to the Committee, Dr LWL and Mr LHY relied on the Demolition Clause in Mr Lee's Last Will as evidence that Mr Lee was not prepared to accept preservation of the Property.

Mr LHL provided the Committee with a statutory declaration, which raised several questions about the preparation of the Last Will and the circumstances in which Mr Lee signed it, in particular whether the inclusion of the Demolition Clause was made on Mr Lee's instructions and with his knowledge.

The Committee sought assistance from Dr LWL and Mr LHY on these matters for the purpose of helping the Committee to make an assessment of Mr Lee's wishes about the Property.

Clause. The letter acknowledges that the Property may be preserved, and his views if that were to happen.

(c) Mr Lee's plans to renovate/redevelop the Property

29. The second documented episode relates to Mr Lee's approval of renovation/redevelopment plans for the Property. In Jan 2012, Mr Lee approved detailed plans to entirely overhaul the interior living areas while retaining the external structure and the basement dining room.⁸ The renovation plans appear to have been specifically prepared with conservation requirements in mind.⁹ The detailed architectural plans were then approved by Mr Lee for submission to the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) in Mar 2012, and Mr Lee affirmed these plans in April and May 2012 after the URA's approval was obtained (see **Annex C-3** for URA's Grant of Written Permission).¹⁰

(d) Conclusion

30. The Committee recognises that there are differences in views among the Parties about Mr Lee's thinking and wishes about the Property. Having looked at the objective evidence and the views expressed by the Parties, the Committee's view is that: (1) Mr Lee's preference was for the Property to be demolished. (2) Mr Lee was also aware that the Cabinet and others, including senior journalists, were opposed to demolition given the Property's historical and heritage value as well as their reading of public sentiments. In view of this, Mr Lee had further

⁸ On 2 Jan 2012, Mr LHL's wife, Ms Ho Ching ("HC"), sent an email to Mr Lee and the rest of the family (including Dr LWL, Mr LHY and Mr LHY's wife, Mrs LSF) setting out the renovation/redevelopment plans in detail. In essence, the proposal was to retain the house's external structure and the basement dining room, but change the internal layout and private living spaces to protect the family's privacy.

Mr Lee replied, telling his family that: "It is for you all to decide whether you want to refurbish and stay or to rent out. That will decide the layout... Mama would not like [it] to become a museum for people to tramp through. If it is refurbished and rented out it is OK."

In a further email reply on 3 Jan 2012, Mr Lee told Ms HC: "I have confidence in your judgment. Do what gives you maximum opportunities for later use."

⁹ In her email to the family dated 2 Jan 2012, Ms HC said the architect that she had consulted with (on Mr LHY's introduction) had explained that "conservation requirements typically do not mean preserving the house in its entirety – the interior layouts are often changed to reflect new family usage needs. So we have the option for Oxley of redoing the entire interior layout to remove any linkages back to the private family space."

¹⁰ On 30 April 2012, Ms HC updated Mr Lee and the rest of the family (including Dr LWL, Mr LHY and Mrs LSF) on the URA approvals and asked if Mr Lee needed her to follow up on anything else. Mr Lee replied: "Noted. Nothing to follow up... Permission has been granted as I had previously signed in letters to them [i.e. URA]. Will send them to you."

On 15 May 2012, Ms HC recommended that they follow up by working through the structural and other design details for the renovation/redevelopment plan. Ms HC volunteered to work with the architect and the design team as Mr Lee's representative. Mr Lee replied: "Noted. Proceed."

reflected on the matter and was prepared to accept options other than demolition, provided that suitable arrangements were made to ensure that: (i) the Property was refurbished, and kept in a habitable state; and (ii) the family's privacy was protected.

CHAPTER 4: POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR THE PROPERTY

31. The Property is located in a 2-storey mixed Landed Housing Area (“LHA”).¹¹ The current single-storey bungalow on the site is surrounded by low-rise residential developments (see **Annexes D-1, D-2 and D-3**). The basement is tucked into the sloping ground to the rear and includes the Dining Room, which is the most historically significant part of the Property.

Options

32. While there is no immediate need to decide the fate of the Property given that Dr LWL continues to live there, the following options have been studied, so that the Government of the day is better prepared to make a decision, when needed. The options can be categorised into three broad options:

- (1) Retain the Property by either:
 - a) Gazetting it as a National Monument, and the State acquiring the Property with an alternative use for the site; or
 - b) Gazetting it for conservation, and allowing the owner to retain the Property for residential use.

- (2) Retain the Dining Room and tear down the rest of the Property by:
Integrating it with an alternative use for the site.

- (3) Allow the Property to be demolished fully, and allow redevelopment by either:
 - a) The owner for residential use; or
 - b) The State for an alternative use, after acquisition of the site.

(1) Retain the Property

33. Retention of the Property (which includes the Dining Room) can be effected via: (a) preservation under the Preservation of Monuments Act,¹² which takes into consideration “historic, cultural, traditional, archaeological, architectural, artistic or symbolic significance and national importance”; or (b)

¹¹ A variety of landed housing forms are allowed within a mixed Landed Housing Area, e.g. detached, semi-detached, terraced. The Oxley LHA is one of three LHAs in the Central Area (the other two LHAs are at One Tree Hill and Nutmeg/Jalan Elok).

¹² Before a preservation order is passed, the owner and/or occupier is given a reasonable duration to raise objections, if any. Minister (CCY) will then consider all such objections and make the final decision as to whether to proceed with passing the preservation order.

conservation under the Planning Act,¹³ which takes into consideration “special architectural, historic, traditional or aesthetic interest”. Generally speaking, conservation does not confer the same national significance as preservation.

Option 1a: Retain through Preservation

34. If the national and historical significance of the Property is assessed to be high, one option is to preserve the Property as a National Monument. Once a preservation order is served upon the owner and the occupier (if different from the owner) of the monument, the architecture of the Property (including the Dining Room) cannot be modified in any manner contrary to the preservation guidelines issued by the NHB.¹⁴ Given that the Property is currently being occupied as a dwelling-house, the State is legally required to acquire it within one year from the date of the preservation order. This is to free the owner from all forms of imposition arising from the preservation.

35. Since residential use will not be tenable for the site after it is gazetted as a National Monument and acquired, the Government will need to identify an appropriate alternative use and rezone the site accordingly. Potential alternative uses can be of a Civic and Community (C&CI) or Educational Institutional (EI) nature,¹⁵ which are deemed to be compatible with the surrounding residential zoning. The alternative use could also involve restricted access to the Property, to take into account Mr Lee’s wish to protect the family’s privacy.¹⁶

36. Under this option, it would be appropriate to retain the current two-storey LHA designation for the area, to maintain the character and setting of the Property and its surrounding.

¹³ Under the Planning Act, the owner has the right to appeal against the decision to conserve the Property. The final decision rests with Minister (ND).

¹⁴ The extent of modifications allowed, if any, would depend on the specifications in the preservation guidelines. The Preservation of Monuments Act is silent on movables such as furnishings and furniture, and these items are, from a legal viewpoint, considered private property. If there is intent to retain these furnishings and furniture, NHB will have to enter into private agreements with the rightful property owner(s).

¹⁵ Examples include museum, research entity, or think tank. These can be associated with Mr Lee Kuan Yew (LKY)’s legacy, such as, a think tank affiliated with the LKY School of Public Policy, or a LKY World City Prize research centre.

¹⁶ There are precedents for restricting access to National Monuments. One example is the Istana. Access to the former Parliament House and the former Supreme Court were also restricted earlier, before they were subsequently converted to uses that allowed public access.

Option 1b: Retain through Conservation

37. Conservation is an alternative way to retain the Property for its historical and heritage value, while allowing greater flexibility for modifications to the Property. If the Property is gazetted for conservation, the building itself (including the Dining Room) will be protected by law, but more extensive modification and refurbishment of the interior will be allowed. This would also significantly address Mr Lee's concerns about privacy.¹⁷ The land can continue to be zoned for Residential landed use and be held under private ownership. Under this option, the current zoning of two-storey LHA for the surrounding area would also be maintained.

38. With conservation, the owner can continue living in the Property, undertake modifications to it, or even sell the property. Indeed, as highlighted earlier, Mr Lee had made a Development Application for modification works for the Property that was approved in April 2012.¹⁸ These works could have been supported if the Property had been conserved at that point in time.

39. Conservation can also be an interim step. Even after the Property is conserved, it is possible for the Government to subsequently "upgrade" the status of the Property and gazette it for preservation as a National Monument at a later time.¹⁹

(2) Option 2 – Retain the Dining Room and tear down the rest of the Property

40. The basement Dining Room has been assessed to be the most historically significant part of the Property. So another option is to retain the Dining Room only and allow the rest of the Property to be torn down and redeveloped. This is one way to fulfil Mr Lee's wishes to tear down the building, and still retain the most historically significant part of the house, although there may be a loss of context in preserving a room alone without the rest of the Property.

41. Under this option, the State could retain the Dining Room *in situ* by gazetting it as a National Monument,²⁰ whilst allowing the rest of the Property to be demolished. The Preservation of Monuments Act allows for the preservation

¹⁷ See footnote 8 above.

¹⁸ The works were not implemented and the approval has since lapsed.

¹⁹ This approach of conservation followed by preservation was done for the Istana Kampong Glam, The Fullerton Hotel Singapore, and the former JTC headquarters.

²⁰ Similar to Option 1a, the State will be required to acquire the Property within one year of the preservation order.

of not just entire buildings, but also parts of buildings and structures. This is unlike conservation which applies only to buildings.

42. The retained basement Dining Room can be housed within a simple structure, and if desired, be made available for guided viewing (see examples in **Figure 1** below). The structure could then be integrated as part of the overall plans for the site. One possible use is to curate the site as a park, given that the late Mr Lee was a strong advocate for the greening of Singapore. Another possibility is to incorporate the structure into a new building which could be used as a research or heritage centre.

Figure 1: Examples of structures for Option 2



*The Garden Room*²¹



*The Glass House*²²

43. This option allows public access to the Dining Room for national education purposes, while not revealing other details about the late Mr and Mrs Lee's way of life, as the rest of the Property would have been demolished.

(3) Allow the Property to be Demolished for Redevelopment

44. If the decision is to allow the entire Property to be demolished, redevelopment of the site can be allowed and carried out by either: (a) the owner for residential use; or (b) the State for alternative uses.

²¹ The Garden Room (located in Kensington, London, UK) is an example of a simple glass structure set in a garden of a residential property similar in scale to the Property. See <https://news.iqglassuk.com/garden-rooms>

²² The Glass House (located in New Canaan, Connecticut, USA) shows how a glass structure can be integrated with the surrounding landscape. See <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/architect-philip-johnson-glass-house-modernism-article>

Option 3a: Allow redevelopment by the owner for residential use

45. Based on the current two-storey LHA designation, the owner can redevelop the site for two-storey landed housing (e.g. one or two detached bungalows, a pair of semi-detached units, or three to four terraced units).

46. But in fact, under this option, there is no need to retain the LHA designation for the area. URA's preliminary assessment is that the sites in the Oxley subzone can be rezoned to Residential use at a Gross Plot Ratio (GPR) of 1.4,²³ which can allow for 5-storey residential developments. With this change, the site at 38 Oxley Road will be able to yield about 16 flat units.²⁴

Option 3b: Allow redevelopment by the State for alternative uses

47. Alternatively, the State can acquire the land, demolish the Property (and thus the Dining Room), and redevelop it for an alternative use. Possible uses compatible with the area include a public park, heritage centre, research entity, or similar public institutions as described in Options 1a and 2. This is one way to allow public access to the site. As is the current practice, the State will need to state the reasons for the acquisition (e.g. comprehensive redevelopment or public purpose) in the notice to the owner, as well as in the gazette, since it will not be for the purpose of preserving the Property.

Further possibilities

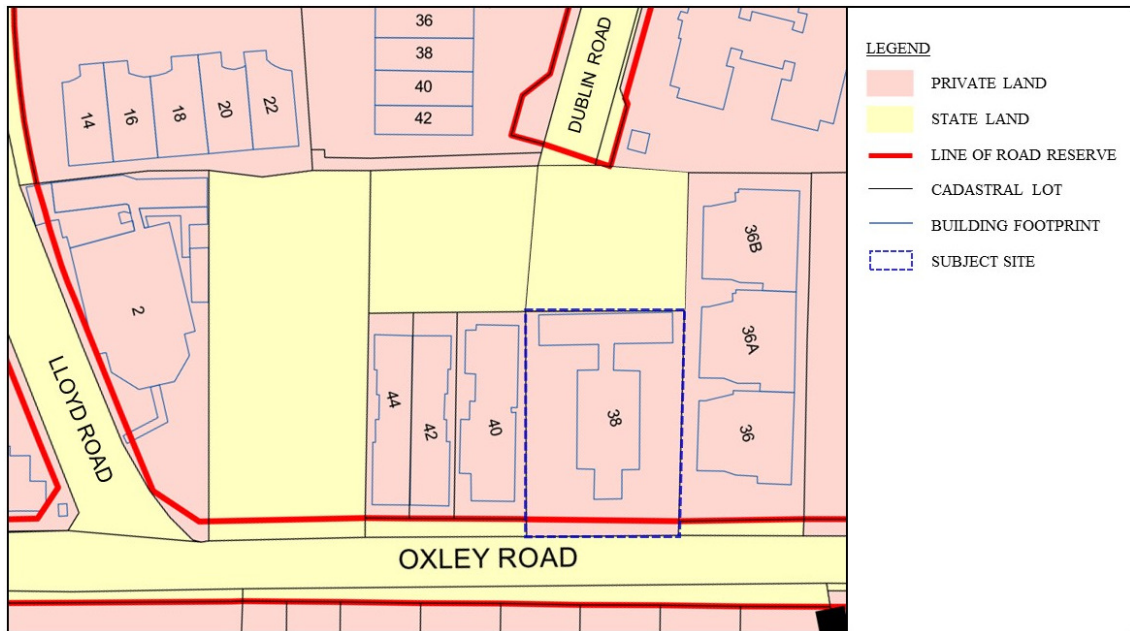
48. There are vacant plots of land to the rear of the Property and the adjacent properties at 40-44 Oxley Road (refer to **Figure 2** below). These plots have been under State ownership since the 1960s. In the scenarios where the Property is acquired by the State, namely Options 1a, 2 and 3b, it is also possible to consider amalgamating the acquired site with part of these adjacent State land to provide a larger footprint.²⁵ This will provide more flexibility to meet the planning intention and needs of the proposed use of the site, while ensuring that it remains compatible with the overall character of the neighbourhood.

²³ This is also premised on LTA's assessment of what can be supported from the traffic point of view.

²⁴ This is based on an average unit size of 95sqm, which is the current market norm for private housing in the Central Area.

²⁵ This can potentially yield a larger land parcel ranging from approximately 1,760sqm (current site and rear plot) to 4,300sqm (current site and all adjoining State-owned land). In comparison, the developable area of the current site is approximate 1,050sqm.

Figure 2: Site Map



CHAPTER 5: COMMITTEE'S VIEWS

49. **Terms of Reference (a)**. With regard to the historical and heritage significance of the Property, the Committee assesses that the Property has architectural, heritage and historical significance.

50. **Terms of Reference (b)**. In reaching its views on the wishes of Mr Lee in relation to the Property, the Committee has relied on the objective evidence placed before it, with particular emphasis on contemporaneous documents and statements made personally by Mr Lee. On the basis of this evidence, the Committee's view is that Mr Lee's preference was for the Property to be demolished. However, he was also prepared to accept options other than demolition, provided that suitable arrangements were made to ensure that: (i) the Property was refurbished, and kept in a habitable state; and (ii) the family's privacy was protected.

51. **Terms of Reference (c)**. On the possible plans for the Property and the neighbourhood, and the options to move forward, the Committee recognises that there is no need to make any decision on the Property now, since Dr LWL is likely to continue residing there for the foreseeable future. The various options outlined in this report are drawer plans to help a future Government make an informed and considered decision about the Property when it becomes necessary.

52. In working out the above options, the Committee had sought to better understand Mr Lee's thinking and wishes regarding the Property. This was the reason that the Committee sought views from Mr Lee's children. They were provided the opportunity to make any representations that they felt would be useful for the Committee's work.

53. Having assessed the issue in detail, the Committee's view is that there is a range of options available for the Property, as listed in the table below. At one end, it is possible to preserve the Property as it is, in its entirety. This can be with or without visitors being allowed to enter and see the private spaces, although allowing such entry would be totally against the wishes of Mr and Mrs Lee Kuan Yew. At the other end, it is possible to demolish the Property and allow redevelopment into a 5-storey residential building, although this would result in the loss of a historically significant property and allow commercial development to take place at this historical site, with the possibility of that history being leveraged for commercial profit. In between, there are possible intermediate options for the Property that can be considered, which would be compatible with Mr Lee's expressed wishes, and enable future generations to retain the significant historical and heritage value associated with the Property, with a range of

possibilities for public access, for example, restricted only to the Dining Room but not to the rest of the Property.

Option	(1) Retain the property	(2) Retain the Dining Room and tear down the rest of the Property	(3) Allow the Property to be demolished fully, and allow redevelopment
Sub-options	a) Gazette and preserve as a National Monument; or b) Gazette for conservation	The Dining Room would be gazetted as a National Monument, and integrated with an alternative use for the site (e.g. park, heritage centre)	a) By the owner for residential use; or b) By the State for alternative use (e.g. park, heritage centre), after acquisition of the site
Remarks	Both sub-options could include further steps to significantly address Mr Lee's concerns about privacy (e.g. significant interior renovations of the private spaces, and/or with restricted access).	Even if there is public access to the Dining Room for national education purposes, demolition of the rest of the Property including the private spaces would ensure that the privacy of Mr and Mrs Lee would be respected.	Sub-option (a) could result in the loss of a historically significant property, and the potential of that history being leveraged for commercial profit.

54. The Committee has set out the considerations for each of these options in this report. Ultimately, the Government of the day has the responsibility to consider the public interest aspects of the Property, taking into account Mr Lee's wishes, and then decide in the fullness of time what to do with it,²⁶ and carry the decision. The Committee hopes that the findings in this report will help to facilitate this decision.

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²⁶ In other countries, it can take years or even decades to decide on what to do with a property of historical significance. This also allows more considered decisions to be made that will stand the test of time.