

MEDIA FACTSHEET

Gallop Road Houses

No. 5 and No. 7 Gallop Road, are two colonial houses that were built around the turn of the 20th century. They were both designed by R.A.J Bidwell, a renowned architect who also designed Raffles Hotel and Goodwood Park Hotel some 100 years ago. The houses reflect the unique architecture of the British colonial government at that time in Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore, with their broad eaves, generous verandas and moorish arches. The houses and their grounds are intrinsically tied to the Singapore Botanic Gardens as part of the landscape masterplan for the Cluny estate.

No. 5 Gallop Road, also known as 'Atbara', is the earliest known black-and-white colonial house in Singapore. It was originally owned by John Burkinshaw who set up one of Singapore's oldest law firms. In 1903, this house and its surrounding lands were sold to Charles MacArthur, one of the earlier chairmen of the Straits Trading Company Ltd, who then built No. 7 Gallop Road, also known as 'Inverturret'.

Both houses were eventually bought over by the Straits Trading Co. in 1923, and leased to the French Government from 1939. 'Atbara' (approximately 1,111sqm) was the former French Embassy and 'Inverturret' (approximately 1,270 sqm) was the residence of the French ambassadors.

The properties were acquired by the State in 1990 from the Straits Trading Co. for general development. The French Embassy continued to rent the houses till they found a suitable site for relocation in 1999. From then, the houses were not used and were restored by the government in 2012.

Forest Conservation Interpretive Centre (No. 5 'Atbara')



(No. 5 'Atbara' – Forest Conservation Interpretive Centre. All photos to be credited to National Parks Board)

One of two colonial houses along Gallop Road, No. 5, also known as 'Atbara', will serve as the Forest Conservation Interpretive Centre – exhibiting the latest discoveries on Singapore's native habitats, and the work that goes into researching and sustaining them.

The exhibits in this Centre will summarise the outdoor visitor experience both in the Learning Forest and Gallop Road. It will introduce visitors to the ecology of Singapore's forests, showcase ongoing work to understand and conserve terrestrial biodiversity, and encourage visitors to contribute to the various conservation efforts. With an unobstructed view of the surrounding forest, the Centre will support organised group activities related to citizen science and public involvement for conservation.

Visitors can look forward to interactive displays which will engage and share information about the processes involved in forest conservation. For example, visitors will get to identify native plants using interactive keys, and explore animal sightings using interactive maps. Lessons on ecology and evolution will also be delivered through games that simulate the processes taking place within a rainforest.

Natural History Art Gallery (No. 7 'Inverturret')



(Caption: No. 7 'Inverturret' - Natural History Art Gallery)

No. 7 Gallop Road, also known as 'Inverturret', will showcase how art has played a vital role in the scientific documentation of fauna and flora. The gallery will be the home of the Singapore Botanic Gardens' botanical art collection, showcasing pieces which have been carefully collected over the past 125 years.

With some of its earliest works dating back to 1890, the Singapore Botanic Gardens has one of the largest and best preserved botanical art collections in Asia, with more than 2,000 art pieces in its care. The collection at the Natural History Art Gallery will feature botanical illustrations in various artistic styles from watercolours, ink drawings to wood block carvings.

The building will feature changing exhibitions of art and artefacts of natural history from the Gardens itself, as well as other botanic gardens and galleries around the world. Artwork and photographs from the community will also be showcased, collated from winning entries of the workshops and photography competitions organised by NParks. The gallery will include some 705 art pieces on orchid species and hybrids, and 357 pieces on nationally-threatened or extinct species.

(Pictures on following page)

Orchids of Southeast Asia



Renanthera elongata



Vanilla griffithii

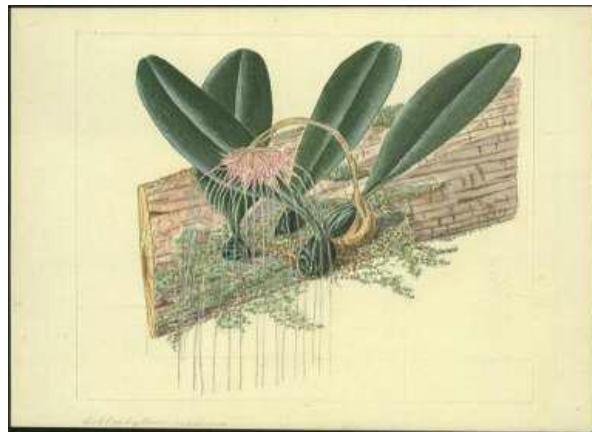


Anoectochilus geniculatus

Nationally threatened and extinct plants



Alseodaphne nigrescens



Bulbophyllum medusae

Photos to be credited to Singapore Botanic Gardens Archives, National Parks Board.