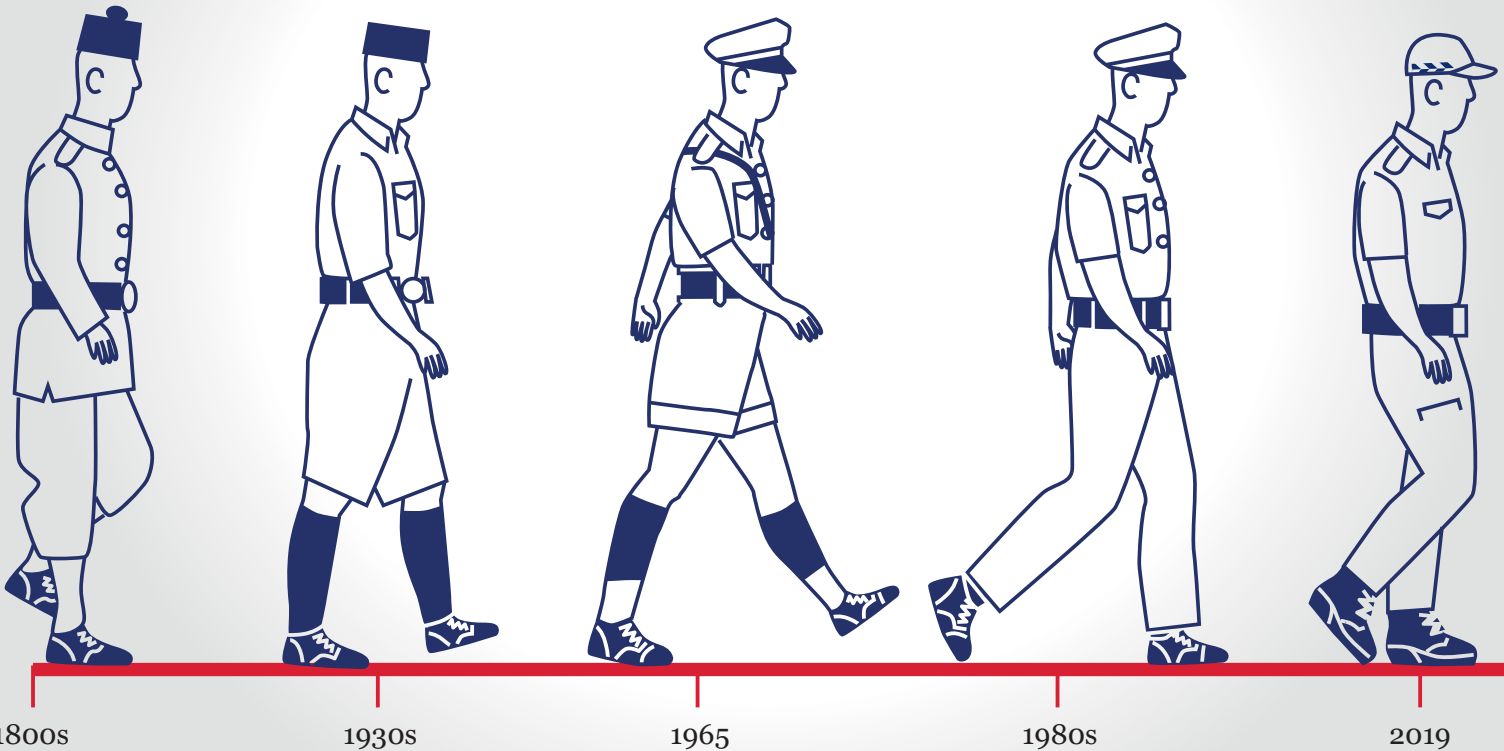


POLICE

HERITAGE TRAIL



**SINGAPORE
POLICE FORCE**
SAFEGUARDING EVERY DAY



About the Police Heritage Trail

The origins of the Singapore Police Force can be traced to Sir Stamford Raffles' founding of Singapore as a British trading post. Formed with just 12 men in May 1820, the police force has grown from strength to strength, in tandem with the nation's progress, keeping Singapore one of the safest cities in the world.

The Police Heritage Trail marks the Force's contributions in policing this city-state from its infancy to its rise to prominence as a highly developed nation. Starting from the first Police Office by the Singapore River, to key police establishments located in the civic district of Singapore, the trail reflects the developments in policing since the 1800s.

The sites and stories of the trail give us a glimpse of the complex interplay between justice and law, architecture and power. Far from serving functional roles as buildings, the sites are characterised by the unique communities that inhabited them.

We invite you to explore the trail to experience the Force's rich history.





Central Police Station, c. 1869
Courtesy of the National Museum of Singapore, National Heritage Board



View of the Central Police Station at South Bridge Road, Singapore, c. 1911
Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore



Police Courts at South Bridge Road, Singapore, c. 1900
Koh Seow Chuan Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore



Hill Street Police Station, 1980
Ronni Pinsler Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore



Central Police Station (L) and Police Courts (R) at South Bridge Road, c. 1900
Royal Tropical Institute Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore



North Canal Road Post Office, 1966
© Urban Redevelopment Authority. All rights reserved



Upper Barracks, 1965
© Urban Redevelopment Authority. All rights reserved



Police patrol cars at the Lower Barracks, 1973



Police Radio Division at the Lower Barracks, 1952
Wong Kwan Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore



Interior of the CID Headquarters, c. 1930s



Officers from the Detective Department, 1906



Radio rostrum in the Upper Barracks, c. 1960s



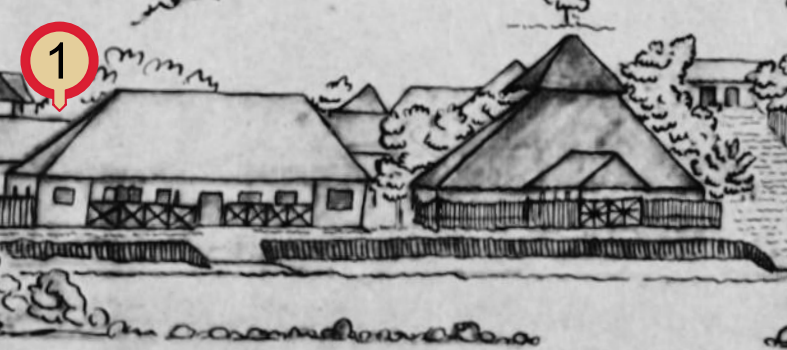
Decoration for Coronation Day at the Traffic Police Headquarters, 1953
© Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Reprinted with permission



Police radio car in front of the CID Headquarters, 1950s



Traffic Police, 1952
Ministry of Information and Arts Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore



FIRST POLICE OFFICE (Demolished)

The first purpose-built Police Office, made of attap, was situated near the Singapore River from December 1820 to 1823. Before this, the 12-man team operated out of the residence of Police Assistant Francis James Bernard – located in front of the present-day Victoria Concert Hall. Bernard was appointed to the post in May 1820 by his father-in-law, also Singapore's first Resident, Major-General William Farquhar, three months before Sir Stamford Raffles agreed to start a police force.

A sketch of Singapore Fort Canning Hill by K. M. Foong, based on a photograph of the original drawing by Lieutenant Philip Jackson (1823), c. 1950s
Courtesy of the National Museum of Singapore, National Heritage Board



OLD HILL STREET POLICE STATION

The Old Hill Street Police Station was built in 1934 as part of an extensive infrastructural scheme spearheaded by Inspector-General of Police Harold Fairburn to improve police capabilities. It amplified police presence in the city centre at a time when Singapore had the unsavoury reputation of being the “Chicago of the East”. It also enabled the police to target the heart of secret society activities in Chinatown and effectively break up gangs to clean up the town. The building was vacated by the police in 1980. It was gazetted as a National Monument in 1998. It houses the offices of the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and Ministry of Communications and Information today.

Old Hill Street Police Station, 2020



CENTRAL POLICE STATION (Demolished)

The Central Police Station was converted from Singapore's first civil jail in 1849. Nicknamed 'Yit Hor Mata Chu' (Number 1 Police Station) by locals, it stood in the heart of the commercial centre known as the “Greater Town” which ran south of the Singapore River from Boat Quay to Tanjong Pagar and Chinatown. For more than a century, this station saw much action - from riots to horrific crimes, to being occupied by the Japanese forces during World War Two, until it was demolished in 1978.

Central Police Station, c. 1911
Arshak C Galstaun Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore



POLICE COURTS (Demolished)

The Police Courts were built in 1885 to deal with increased criminal cases, concomitant of Singapore's growing prosperity as an entrêpot. Standing opposite the Central Police Station at South Bridge Road, police prosecutors tried a range of cases - murders, armed robberies, secret society activities and petty crimes. In 1954, the Police Courts were renamed Magistrates' Courts. These courts were moved, along with other subordinate courts, to the new Subordinate Courts building at Havelock Road in 1975 (today known as State Courts). In the same year, the Police Courts building was demolished.

Police Courts, late 19th century
Courtesy of the National Museum of Singapore, National Heritage Board



KRETA AYER NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE POST

From 1908 to 1988, this building housed the former North Canal Road Post Office. Built within the compound of the Police Courts, its architectural features reflect Singapore's colonial past. The entrance is graced by a decorative arch and two large moulded brackets. A large sloping hip roof extends outward to provide shelter against the sun and rain.

Kreta Ayer Neighbourhood Police Post, 2020



PEARL'S HILL LOWER BARRACKS

The Lower and Upper Barracks were part of Fairburn's plan to increase police presence in town and to house the Sikh Contingent. At their completion in 1934, the buildings struck a sharp contrast to the surrounding low-rise shophouses in Chinatown. After the Sikh Contingent disbanded in 1946, government agencies, the Police Headquarters, Radio Division, Central Police Division, and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) moved into the Lower Barracks. CID, the last occupant, relocated to the Police Cantonment Complex at New Bridge Road in 2001. The Lower and Upper Barracks were gazetted for conservation in 2008 and marked as Historic Sites in 2012. They are leased for commercial use today.

Lower Barracks, 2020



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PEARL'S HILL UPPER BARRACKS

Constructed together with the Lower Barracks in 1934, the Upper Barracks was repurposed as government offices after World War Two. Its occupants included the Ministry of Interior and Defence (1965-1970), and the Police Headquarters (1989-2001), before it moved to New Phoenix Park. In 1956, a bombproof annexe was completed amidst a period of political turmoil and violent riots, and it served as the nerve centre for police communications during crises and peacetime. Today, an exhibition of the bunker, now known as the former Combined Operations Room is open for tours.

*Tour bookings can be made on <https://www.mha.gov.sg/hta/the-former-combined-operations-room-exhibition>

Upper Barracks, 2020



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FORMER TRAFFIC POLICE (TP) HEADQUARTERS

Familiar to generations of drivers, this building at Maxwell Road was home to the Traffic Police for 69 years from 1930. The impressive structure with a white exterior was synonymous with the uniforms of TP officers, and comprised barracks for officers and their families. It also housed Singapore's first Driving Test Centre when driving tests were introduced in 1941. TP operated from this building until 1999 when it shifted to 10 Ubi Avenue 3. The building was gazetted for conservation on 2 April 2007 and refurbished in 2019 as Maxwell Chamber Suites.

Maxwell Chamber Suites, former TP Headquarters, 2020

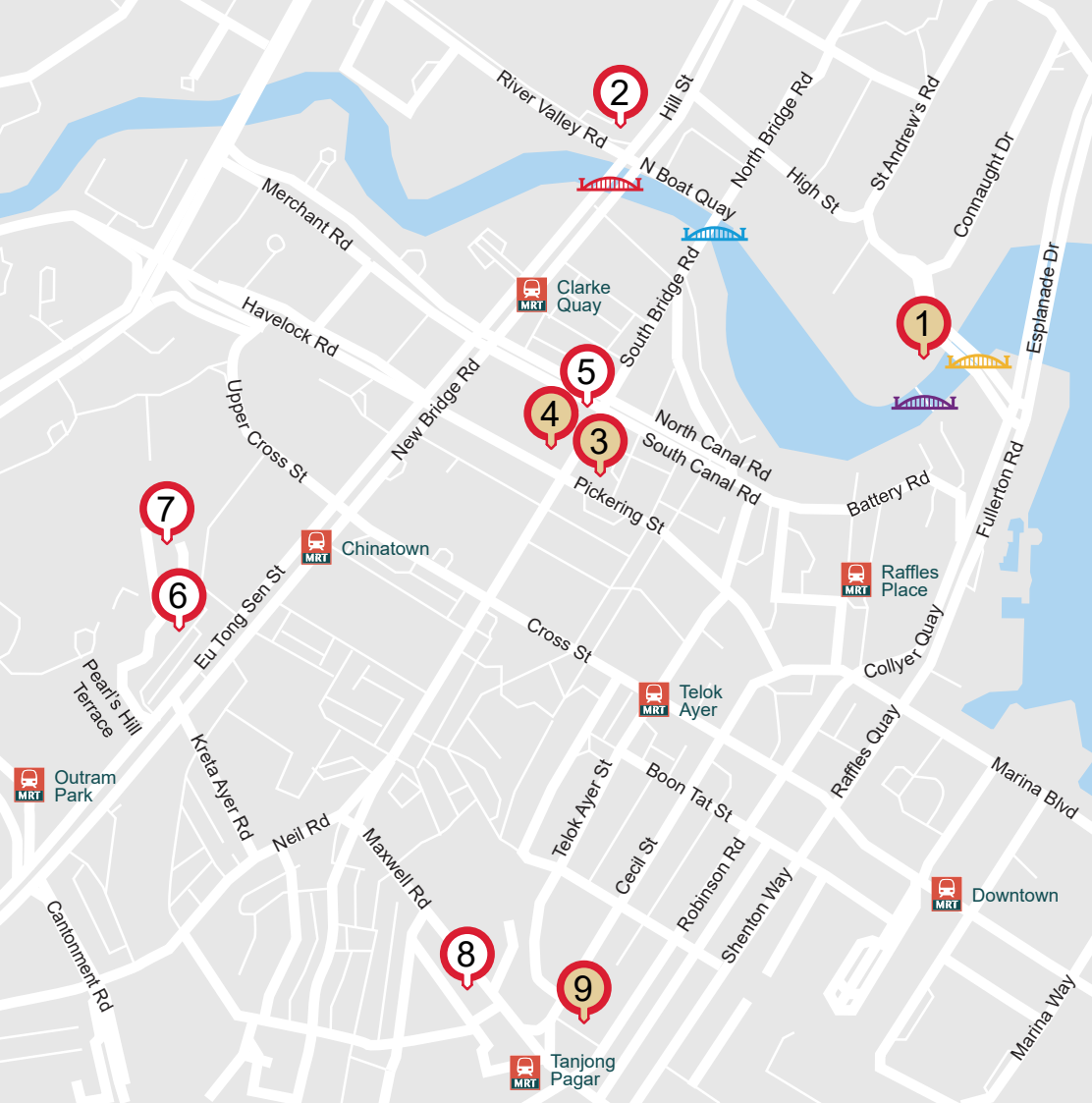


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CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT (CID) HEADQUARTERS (Demolished)

Dubbed the 'Scotland Yard' of Malaya, the CID Headquarters was built in 1931 to house what was known as the Detective Department. It boasted state-of-the-art photographic studios and a criminal registry to aid crime detection. It functioned as the base where operations were planned against crime syndicates and secret societies. The Special Branch (known as the Internal Security Branch today) operated from in the same building from 1940 - 1976 for joint crackdown efforts on secret societies and subversive organisations. After the building was demolished in 1993, CID relocated to the Lower Barracks before moving to the Police Cantonment Complex in 2001.

CID Headquarters, c. 1930s
Lee Kip Lin Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore



LEGEND

-  DEMOLISHED
-  140 Hill Street, Singapore 179369
-  55 North Canal Road, Singapore 059288
-  90 Eu Tong Sen Street, Singapore 059811
-  195 Pearl's Hill Terrace, Singapore 168976
-  28 Maxwell Road, Singapore 069120
-  Cavenagh Bridge
-  Anderson Bridge
-  Coleman Bridge
-  Elgin Bridge
-  MRT Station

To find out more about the trail, you may visit our exhibition at Kreta Ayer Neighbourhood Police Post or scan the Roots.sg QR code.

