

= Sri Temasek =

Sri Temasek is a two @-@ storey detached house built in 1869 which is sited within the grounds of the Istana in Singapore . During the island 's colonial era , it served as the residence of the Colonial Secretary or Chief Secretary . Since the establishment of the State of Singapore in 1959 , it has been the official residence of the Prime Minister of Singapore , though none of Singapore 's Prime Ministers has ever lived there . Together with the Istana , it was gazetted a national monument on 14 February 1992 .

= = Name = =

The name of the house , Sri Temasek , means " splendour of Temasek " in the Malay language . The Malay word seri or sri means " charm ; quintessence ; splendour ; glory " or a " cynosure " (something that attracts attention by its brilliancy or beauty ; a centre of attraction , interest , or admiration) Temasek , which means " sea town " in Javanese , was the name of an early city on the site of modern Singapore . Today , it is used as an epithet for Singapore . The house was originally merely known as the official residence of the Chief Secretary of Singapore (or the Colonial Secretary of Singapore / the Straits Settlements) and did not have its own name . The State of Singapore was proclaimed and the first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew assumed office in June 1959 , after which the house , which has become the official residence of the Prime Minister , has been officially named Sri Temasek , while the Government House has been officially renamed as the Istana , which means palace .

= = Design = =

The construction of the Istana Singapore (then called Government House) and Sri Temasek was ordered by the Governor of the Straits Settlements , Sir Harry St. George Ord , after the original governor 's residence had to be demolished in 1859 to make way for Fort Canning on the hill that bears its name . Sri Temasek was designed by John Frederick Adolphus McNair (1829 ? 1910) , a civil engineer who was appointed Executive Engineer and Superintendent of Convicts of the Straits Settlements , and built largely using Indian convict labour from Bencoolen . It was completed in 1869 .

A 1 @, @ 600 @-@ square @-@ metre (17 @, @ 000 sq ft) two @-@ storey detached house ? often called a bungalow in Singapore ? with European and Asian features , Sri Temasek has a symmetrical layout consisting of deep verandahs surrounding central living spaces . Notable architectural features include arches on its upper level , an intricate timber arcade with a mixture of eastern and western decorative motifs , and a Chinese moon gate (a circular gateway) on the building 's second floor . Although few records exist concerning the moon gate 's construction and usage , it is known to have made its appearance in the house in the 1960s and to have been designed and built by William Swaffield , a pre @-@ World War II Comptroller of Government House and a professional furniture designer . It is constructed of chengal , teak and meranti wood . In the middle of the driveway in front of the house , there is a brick pit that was originally used by horse @-@ drawn carriages . The house was gazetted together with the Istana as a national monument on 14 February 1992 .

Sri Temasek was not used for a number of years and fell into disrepair . It then underwent restoration between 2006 and March 2008 by CPG Consultants under the supervision of architect Maureen Soh . As the original hand @-@ crafted timber arches and railings on the first @-@ storey verandah had been damaged by termites , replacements moulded from the originals made with an aluminium @-@ cast alloy were used . Details on railings , doors and windows were restored , and several pintu pagar (traditional wooden half @-@ doors) and wooden flooring reinstated . The former servants ' quarters at the rear of the building were turned into a heritage gallery . The restoration works on Sri Temasek won the Urban Redevelopment Authority 's Architectural Heritage Award in Category A (national monuments and fully conserved buildings) in 2008 .

= = Use = =

When first built in 1869 , Sri Temasek was the residence of the Colonial Secretary of the Straits Settlements (later Colonial Secretary / Chief Secretary of Singapore) . All holders of the position had resided in Sri Temasek from 1869 to 1959 . It is currently designated as the official residence of the Prime Minister of Singapore since 1959 , though none of the past and present holders of the post , Lee Kuan Yew , Goh Chok Tong and Lee Hsien Loong , have lived in it as a family home . In the 1998 book Lee Kuan Yew : The Man and His Ideas , Lee Kuan Yew said that when he became Prime Minister in 1959 he and his wife Kwa Geok Choo decided not to move into Sri Temasek with their three children , who were then aged seven , five and two , because the couple " did not want them to grow up in such grand surroundings with butlers and orderlies to fuss over their needs " . The family did stay there in 1965 for a short time for security reasons when Singapore separated from Malaysia . Apart from that , according to a 2000 Straits Times interview with Kwa , the Lee children often played in the grounds of the house in the evening while their father played golf or made use of the practice tee and putting green .

Sri Temasek has been used mostly for official functions , particularly in the 1960s and 1970s . Prominent visitors included Tunku Abdul Rahman , the founding Prime Minister of Malaysia ; Spiro Agnew , the Vice @-@ President of the United States ; Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi ; Denis Healey , British Defence Secretary ; and King Hussein of Jordan . Sri Temasek was the venue for a party hosted in 1962 by Lee Kuan Yew to thank trade unionists and civil servants for their help with the referendum on Singapore joining Malaysia , and in 1983 the body of the late Minister for Finance Hon Sui Sen lay in state there . On 8 August 2008 , Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong delivered his National Day message from Sri Temasek for the first time . The wake for Madam Kwa Geok Choo , mother of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and the wife of Singaporean statesman Lee Kuan Yew , was held at Sri Temasek in October 2010 . In March 2015 , a private family wake for Lee Kuan Yew was held there .