

The Quest for Office Space

Text by Dr Ng Chee Kwan

As readers may already be aware, the SMA has moved to our new office premises at 166 Bukit Merah Central from July 2024. This will be the second time that we have relocated our office in just ten years.

The SMA has been renting office space for many years, to provide a suitable work environment for our Secretariat staff, as well as an official meeting venue for our volunteers, working committees, as well as senior officials from the Ministry of Health, and other local and overseas organisations. For many years, we were located at 2 College Road, a landmark building familiar to many doctors as the Alumni Medical Centre. We moved to the SMF Building at 2985 Jalan Bukit Merah in August 2018. After just six years at the SMF Building, we moved to our current premises at 166 Bukit Merah Central.

It should be put on record that we would have preferred not to have

to move our office so often; on each occasion that we had to do so, it was due to circumstances beyond our control, and done so only after considerable attempts at negotiating terms. In fact, our last lease at the SMF Building was prematurely terminated, and our master tenant had given us short notice to leave, because they were leaving as well. For our most recent move to 166 Bukit Merah Central, we were fortunate to have been offered a relatively well-kept and furnished office space requiring minimal renovation; however, we are only guaranteed a lease of four years as the building itself is reaching the end of its lease.

Moving forward, one of the priorities for the SMA would be to secure a more permanent office space. The primary reason would be to achieve stability – shifting office every few years not only incurs recurrent renovation costs but is also stressful for our staff. Having a

permanent office space would also be commensurate with our status as a professional body.

On a personal note, I am hopeful that when the time comes for our inevitable relocation in four years, we will have secured a permanent office space for ourselves. It would certainly be ideal if we could purchase our own office space. However, we also have to be financially prudent in deciding how to best utilise our accumulated funds and ensure that we do not over-extend ourselves. One of the priorities of the SMA Council in the coming years will be to look into this matter.

As I am writing this, our Secretariat has just completed the move to our new office at 166 Bukit Merah Central, and the SMA Council is looking forward to our first meeting in the new premises. We are open for business and remain available to assist Members as usual. ♦



Dr Ng is a urologist in private practice and current President of the SMA. He has two teenage sons whom he hopes will grow much taller than him. He has probably collected too many watches for his own good.

