BYE-BYE, BOUTIQUES
MOVING HOUSE
You have till next May to shop at Stamford House before it gets refurbished

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I AM still nursing sore eardrums, thanks to the shrill screams of my fashionista friend who is also quite the drama queen.

It all happened a few days ago when I casually asked if she had heard that a quirky boutique she loves to frequent at Stamford House and Capitol Building would be moving out by next year. She hadn’t known — and what happened next, apart from my sore eardrums, is history.

It seems that the quaint niche shopping area that houses Stamford House, Capitol Centre, Capitol Building and the Capitol Theatre will also soon become history.

According to an Urban Redevelopment Authority spokesperson, tenants in these buildings will have to make way for the area’s redevelopment. In future, this zone will be tendered out as a single, integrated site meant for entertainment, retail and hotel usage.

The Singapore Land Authority, which oversees the area, told Tonow that “the majority of the tenants have until next May, as that is when their tenancies will expire.”

Boutique owners affected by the redevelopment and shoppers Tonow spoke to were generally disappointed when they first heard about the news earlier this year.

Creative director Kevin Seah of the eponymous label located at Stamford House thought it was “such a waste” when he found out the area would be undergoing redevelopment.

He said: “I find this area very inspiring in terms of its old architecture and feel its facade must be retained.”

While tenants interviewed cite the area’s “old-world charm” and “beautiful architecture” as the main reasons for their reluctance to move, they can take heart in knowing that the four sites in the area are gazetted conservation buildings, which mean they cannot be torn down and their facade must be retained.

Stamford House, built in 1904, was originally named Oranjie Building and designed in the Venetian Renaissance style. Capitol Theatre and Capitol Building were built in 1929 and 1933 respectively for the Namazie family, who were of Persian origin.

For now, boutique owners have to mull over where to shift to, with many saying they are still looking around and that moving into a mall will be a last resort.

Evelyn Foo, co-owner of clothing store, Swirl, which has been in Stamford House since 2006, said she liked that Stamford House is on the fringe of town yet it exudes a relaxed vibe.

She is still looking around for possible locations to move to “but nothing has been confirmed yet”, adding that “we don’t mind moving back to Stamford House after its redevelopment if the rent is reasonable”.

KEVIN SEAH
Stamford House (6334 5128)

What: Mix of vintage pieces, head to Kevin Seah’s boutique. He does mostly mid-century pieces and specialises in French lace gowns and hand-embroidered details.

Buy: Ornate haute couture gowns with beautiful, flowy silhouettes. Kevin designed a chiffon red number for someone of Parliament, Eunice Ong, to wear during this year’s National Day Parade. It is available for sale or customisation at his boutique (price unavailable).

A ready-to-wear collection featuring modern classics in neutral palettes will also be launched this month and prices start from $399 for tops. Men are not left out too — there are suits and shirts by hand, and prices start from $2,000 and $280 respectively.

L’ERBOLARIO
Stamford House (6227 3115)

What: It’s hard to resist touching every product at this leading Italian cosmetics brand as the packaging is too pretty to ignore. Co-owner Catherine Chua will tell you more about the wide range of products, ranging from shampoos to moisturisers to feet cleansing creams.

Buy: Most of L’erbolario’s products are made with plants and herb extracts. Try the Bagnochiuma Rilassante della Sera (relaxing evening bath, $39) from the brand’s organic range. It has moisturising and restorative properties and contains ingredients such as orange flowers and lemon peel. The Green Tea Dry Body Oil ($43) is a citrusy-smelling skin moisturiser made with avocado and shea butter extracts; while the Elisir Odoroso ($44) is a non-alcoholic moisturiser which dries on your skin like liquid velvet, and has yummy ingredients like white Lily extract and oat milk.

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FELT
Stamford House (6318 3393)

What: Fall stocks clothes from local label Hansel and designer Molly, who designs Oprah gala pieces. Check out Australian labels Lisa Ho, Sass & Bide and Jayson Brunsdon. Bag lovers should also look out for Olga Berg and Catherine Manuel Design, which carry gorgeous clutches and classic bags respectively.

Buy: Manual has designed a new collection to celebrate Felt’s fourth anniversary. Adorably named “Rocket in my Pocket”, this collection is inspired by rockets. The rocket hoodie dress ($409) comes with a pretty rocket brooch to boot. For something more playful, check out the rocket babydoll dress ($379) and the rocket playsuit ($359).

EVEN tampons can be fashionable.

Australian brand Millie & More has designed Moxie — billed as “the first truly premium tampon brand” — with tongue-in-cheek slogans such as “Have a beautiful day in hell!” and “I’m disturbed. Do not disturb me”.

The private contents come in pretty, colour-coded tin canisters, which you should not leave lying around lest someone thinks they contain candy or tea leaves — like a couple of my male colleagues did.

“Moxie” was a name often used in Hollywood films during the ‘30s and ‘40s to describe stylish and confident women. Also inspired by that period are the retro-looking cans, which are about 5cm high and can therefore, be tucked discreetly in your handbag.

It also comes in crushproof packaging to prevent the contents from spilling out and from being damaged.

Now, that should make women smile in relief.

Moxie tampons retail for $10.50 per box of two tin cans at Watsons stores.

PARKSY LIM