

# No. 41 DUNLOP STREET

Reviving A Monument



**Owner:**  
Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura

**Architect:**  
SZ Partnership

**Engineer:**  
CKM Consultants Pte Ltd

**Contractor:**  
Khian Heng Construction (Pte) Ltd

*The Abdul Gafoor Mosque is a single-storey masonry structure built in 1907 to replace the Masjid Al-Abrar which was constructed half a century earlier in 1859.*

*In the early 1990s, the Mosque committee wanted to add a single-storey extension to create more prayer space. This led to the discovery that the structural integrity of the building was at risk. This also started an intense effort to save the Mosque from a gradual and certain collapse and spurred the remarkable restoration of this religious national monument.*



*Monument restored to its former glory*

## Strengthening The Foundation

Before restoration, the Mosque suffered from substantial differential settlements which caused many cracks and structural distress. An urgent solution was required to prevent the existing Mosque from serious damage.

Underpinning of the Mosque structure using micropiles was carried out. At the same time, the existing sub-basement was deepened and enlarged to a full basement to create additional prayer space and to take advantage of the underpinning work.

While the foundation system had to be modified to extend the sub-basement, careful protective measures were undertaken.

As the level of the basement was lower than the existing footing of the Mosque, extensive steel frames were used to support the existing Mosque during the construction and the grids of the first storey concrete beams were integrated with the brick piers of the Mosque. The steel frames transferred the weight of the superstructure from the existing footings to facilitate the enlargement of the basement.

## New Spaces

The interior of the enlarged basement was sensitively designed to complement the Mosque. A void was created between the full basement and the Main Prayer Hall above to provide visual and physical connectivity for worshippers.

On the space adjacent to Mayo Street, a new single-storey prayer hall of the same architectural style was added. A glass link provided an all-weather connection between the Mosque and the new extension.

## Inspired Restoration & Renovation

The engineering achievements gave a sense of relief. They inspired the artisans and craftsmen to put their hearts into the intricate and painstaking restoration works of the Mosque's architectural features.

Close and careful attention was paid to repair and replicate the intricate plaster details. Hidden architectural features like the glass decorations on the columns, which had been previously painted over, were uncovered and restored. Missing minarets, internal arches and the original boundary walls were reinstated. Calligraphy plasterworks were restored word by word.

The entrance and passageway access from Mayo Street were restored. A decorative gate was installed to provide added security. A new wing to incorporate an Imam's room was added at the second storey of the Entrance Gateway Building, completing the symmetry to the frontage of the building.

Completed in April 2003, the revival of Abdul Gafoor Mosque is indeed an inspiration to many.



*Resplendent Mosque complete its minarets*



*Pediment with elaborate sundial above the main entrance*



*Interior of the central dome*



*Hexagonal dome*



*Timber ornament reinstated*



*Uncovered glass decorations*



*Decorative plasterworks*



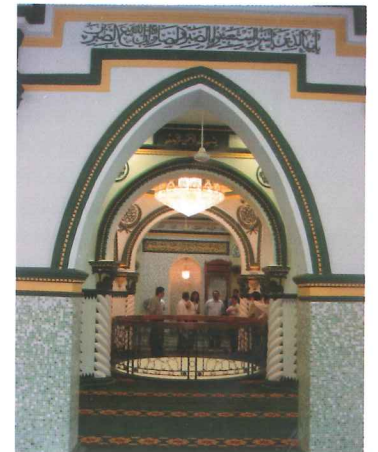
*Cinquefoil arches*



*Reinstated boundary wall*



*Restored columns*



*View into the Main Prayer Hall*