

2015 URA ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE AWARDS CITATIONS FOR THE 4 WINNING PROJECTS

9 & 11 Empress Place (Victoria Theatre and Concert Hall) 2015 Award Category A

As a major cultural and architectural landmark of Singapore's Civic District, the Victoria Theatre and Concert Hall have been exquisitely and dramatically restored to their original grace and grandeur, in their exterior and interior volumes.

Commendable efforts were made to carry out detailed archival research and building materials investigation to inform and enrich the outcome. Decades of insensitive and inappropriate interventions were removed through thoughtful design. Every part of this endeavour was painstakingly undertaken by skilled craftsmen to echo the original design intention as well as reveal the delicate period aesthetics.

Old elements such as the cast-iron legs and backrests of seats from the old theatre were reused and artfully represented in the public areas to provide hints of the past. The pipe-organ and the century-old clock were also carefully reconditioned to tip-top shape. At the ground level, the long-forgotten courtyard was recovered and glazed over to house a delightful atrium which strategically frames the view of the clock-tower, accentuating the axis of the complex. The reinstatement of the original circulation has opened up the complex and links it well to the surrounding Empress Place for greater public enjoyment.

1 St Andrew's Road (National Gallery Singapore) 2015 Award Category A

The two important and historic monuments that have long symbolised the city of Singapore have been respectfully rejuvenated and integrated to serve as the new National Gallery.

Extensive historical and materials research has resulted in sensitive harmonisation of key spaces and restoration of the original fabric and finishes. With significant historical spaces such as the City Hall Chambers and the former Courtrooms and Rotunda Library opened up, the public can now access and understand important narratives of the nation's past while building new memories of this national cultural asset. The restoration team successfully rose to the challenges posed by a multitude of building materials, which range from coffered teak ceilings to delicately cast column capitals and marbled flooring. Through laborious restoration, the rich but weathered surfaces were rejuvenated while retaining their patina of history.

Of particular note are the extensive dignified grey Shanghai plaster façades of both buildings that have been painstakingly repaired and restored. Together with the former Supreme Court's green copper dome and the new metallic filigree canopy spanning both monuments, the colours and forms unite into an ensemble to reinvigorate the historic view of the Padang.

12, 13 & 17 Rochester Park (BASF Learning Campus (Singapore))
2015 Award Category A

The set of three colonial bungalows, formerly British military housing, has been revived as a corporate training facility. Careful consideration has been given to restoring both the fabric of the buildings and their original environment-friendly features that respond to the challenges of tropical climate living.

A sensitive selection of materials such as brass fittings and period tiles, and the faithful restoration of original building details such as ceiling boards at the outdoor veranda and underside of roof eaves and ventilation panels, strengthen the development's sense of history. The project team is also commended for keeping the verandas open for natural ventilation, as well as for retaining and reusing the old outhouses.

Significant effort is also evident in the tasteful tropical landscaping. Views to and from the gardens have been reinstated. The black and white buildings and the lush greenery set off each other – a pleasing whole has been recreated to showcase the art of harmonising buildings and landscape.

66 Pheng Geck Avenue (Alkaff Upper Serangoon Mosque)
2015 Award Category B

This community-led restoration and upgrading project is commended for giving the Muslim community a reinvigorated place of worship within a modest budget.

The project team voluntarily reinstated the original pyramidal roof, while detailing on the ceilings and the design of the new flooring cover were based on careful research on the site's history and architectural heritage.

Care was also taken to retain all useable materials including the original timber doors and cast iron balustrades, while long-missing elements such as the mild steel windows were reinstated. The sense of airiness in the building has also been brought back, and the distinctive Ottoman-styled minaret remains a landmark for the wider community. The well designed historical timeline storyboard is a meaningful touch which traces the history of the mosque for all who visit.

11 Buckley Road
2015 Special Mention

The delicate restoration of internal and external details has been informed by thorough research, 3D scanning and skilled craftsmanship using original materials. In particular, the restoration of the decorative archway with its many auspicious symbols is a delight.