NEW LITTLE INDIA HERITAGE TRAIL REFRESHES TRAIL EXPERIENCE WITH ENHANCED FEATURES AND OFFERINGS

New thematic routes and digital initiatives for National Heritage Board's newest heritage trail in Little India

Singapore, 24 January 2017 – Ask any Singaporean, and most would agree that Tekka Market is synonymous with Little India. But few would know that the name "Tekka", or "Zhujiao (竹脚)" in Mandarin, actually has Chinese origins. When translated, it means "bamboo clumps", alluding to the bamboo that once grew along Rochor Canal. Few would also know that Little India, unlike its sister precincts of Chinatown and Kampong Gelam, was never intended by Sir Stamford Raffles to be an area designated for Singapore's Indian community. Instead, it developed its identity organically over the years, establishing itself as a melting pot of diverse communities and cultures, all of which have co-existed since the precinct's early beginnings. These lesser known facts of Little India will be made available and accessible to Singaporeans and visitors through the *Little India Heritage Trail*, the newest heritage trail by the National Heritage Board (NHB).

Enhanced Heritage Trail Experience with New Trail Offerings

2   The *Little India Heritage Trail* is NHB's 16th heritage trail. It features over 40 heritage sites with 18 heritage markers across four kilometres, detailing the history of the precinct which dates back to the 1800s. Aside from the staple heritage trail offerings of heritage markers, a trail brochure, and maps in four languages (English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil), all of which illustrate the history and heritage of selected sites, the *Little India Heritage Trail* goes the extra mile with specially curated thematic routes to cater to time-crunched trail-goers. The three bite-sized thematic routes are:

- "Serangoon in the 1900s" (40 minutes) – This route takes trail-goers on a historical trail to learn about the early communities that settled in the area in the early 20th century.

- "Walk of Faiths" (1 hour) – This route features the many different places of worship on the *Little India Heritage Trail*, and provides insights into the different religions and communities that have co-existed in the precinct since the early days.
- "Shop Till You Drop" (30 minutes) – This route allows trail-goers to enjoy the myriad of retail offerings in Little India, while learning more about the traditional businesses in the district.

3   Another new offering for the *Little India Heritage Trail*, launched as a pilot project, uses Bluetooth beacons installed on the heritage markers along the trail. Through visitors' mobile devices, these beacons enable them to explore the history and stories around each marker in greater detail. Trail-goers will be able to access lesser known information of the site they are at, and view photos of the site shared by other trail-goers. This new trail function is also intuitive: it helps users identify the other heritage markers close by, and features simple directions to help them get to their next destination. By recommending relevant markers in the vicinity, it not only enhances the trail experience for trail-goers, but paints a more complete picture of the multi-faceted history and heritage of Little India. Lesser known facts, presented in bite-sized nuggets of information, also help make the large volume of content more digestible and relatable, thus making the trail more appealing, especially for time-starved audiences.

4   Mr Alvin Tan, Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Community) of NHB, said: "We are always looking to improve the experiential aspects of our museums, festivals and heritage trails, and that is why we have decided to introduce new thematic sub-trails as well as Bluetooth-enhanced markers for the *Little India Heritage Trail*. These improvements will enable users to enjoy trail content that has been customised to appeal to more specific interests as well as to retrieve additional trail content with greater ease. We will continue to collect feedback from users of our heritage trails, review our trail offerings and incorporate the necessary enhancements for our future trails."

Community Giving Back Through Heritage

5   To encourage greater interest and involvement by youths in our history and heritage, NHB will be working closely with the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) and Umar Pulavar Tamil Language Centre (UPTLC) – one of MOE's Language Centres – to adopt

the *Little India Heritage Trail* for a period of three years. This is an initiative under NHB's signature *Heritage Trail Adoption Scheme*, which sees teachers and students incorporating our heritage trails and their rich content into the school curriculum. Upon completion of their training, the students from NAFA and UPTLC will be guiding their peers on the *Little India Heritage Trail* as trail guides. NHB and the Indian Heritage Centre (IHC) will also be offering guided tours for the *Little Heritage Trail* in the coming months.

6   The *Little India Heritage Trail* brochure and map (to be available in four languages) can be downloaded from NHB's heritage portal, *Roots.sg*. This will allow trail-goers to embark on their own self-guided trail, and select the route(s) that most interest them. When the new Bluetooth mobile pilot for the *Little India Heritage Trail* markers kicks in later this year, trail-goers will have access to even more information and pictures. Printed copies of the trail brochure and maps are also available for pick-up at IHC.

7   A range of merchandise, featuring landmarks along the *Little India Heritage Trail*, is available for visitors looking for mementos of the trail experience. Developed by NHB's MUSEUM LABEL, the merchandise will be sold at the various MUSEUM LABEL shops.

8   For more information, please refer to:
- **Annex A:** Little India Heritage Trail Physical Web Experience – Bluetooth-enhanced heritage markers
- **Annex B:** Little India Heritage Trail – List of the 18 heritage markers and map
- **Annex C:** Little India Heritage Trail – Information on heritage markers and lesser known facts
- **Annex D:** Little India Heritage Trail – Three thematic routes
- **Annex E:** Full list of NHB's 16 heritage trails
- **Annex F:** Little India Heritage Trail MUSEUM LABEL merchandise and promotion

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About the National Heritage Board

The National Heritage Board (NHB) was formed on 1 August 1993. As the custodian of Singapore's heritage, NHB is responsible for telling the Singapore story, sharing the Singaporean experience and imparting our Singapore spirit.

NHB's mission is to preserve and celebrate the shared heritage of our diverse communities, for the purpose of education, nation-building and cultural understanding. It manages the national museums and heritage institutions, and sets policies relating to heritage sites, monuments and the national collection. Through the national collection, NHB curates heritage programmes and presents exhibitions to connect the past, present and future generations of Singaporeans. NHB is a statutory board under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. Please visit www.nhb.gov.sg for more information.

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Little India Heritage Trail Physical Web Experience – Bluetooth-enhanced Heritage Markers
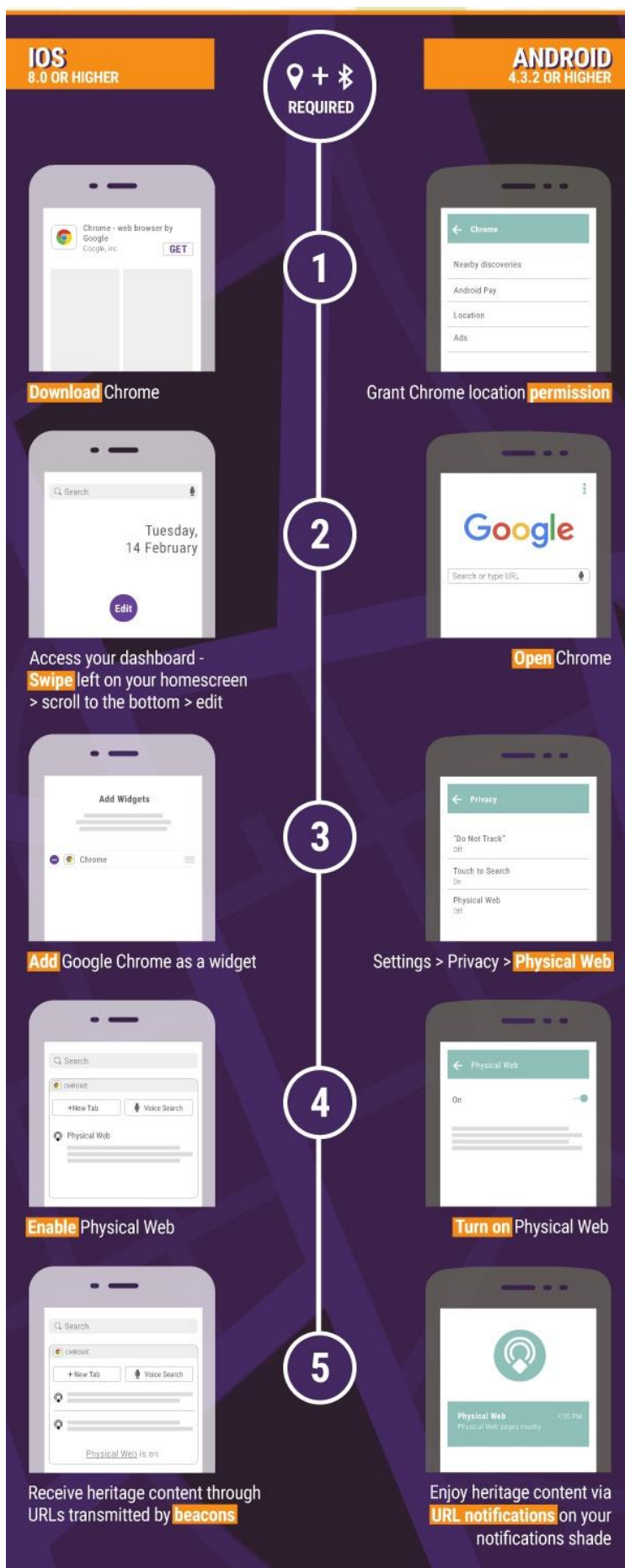
Heritage trail-goers in Singapore can now enjoy an augmented experience via their mobile devices.

NHB is kick-starting its pilot Physical Web experience for its heritage trails, with Bluetooth beacons installed at the Little India heritage trail markers. The *Little India Heritage Trail* is the first to extend the physical trail experience online.

Beacons installed at each trail marker transmit a Bluetooth signal, which can be picked up by Android and iOS devices that enable Physical Web.

As trail-goers approach the marker, they will receive a notification on their mobile devices, allowing them to access exclusive content about the location they are at. These include: bite-sized lesser known facts, archival photos, and crowd-sourced content. The Physical Web experience also guides them along the trail by recommending nearby heritage sites. Integration with Google Maps ensures you can find your way there easily. These complement what is presented on the heritage markers, and provide for a more comprehensive trail experience.

Trail-goers can follow the below steps to set up their devices to enable Physical Web. They can also participate in a promotion to redeem gifts. More details are available here: https://roots.sg/physical-web

National Heritage Board

IOS
8.0 OR HIGHER

ANDROID
4.3.2 OR HIGHER

📍 + ✳
REQUIRED

1

Chrome - web browser by Google
Google, inc. GET

Download Chrome

← Chrome
Nearby discoveries
Android Pay
Location
Ads

Grant Chrome location **permission**

2

Search 🎤
Tuesday,
14 February
Edit

Access your dashboard -
Swipe left on your homescreen
> scroll to the bottom > edit

Google
Search or type URL 🎤

Open Chrome

3

Add Widgets
Chrome

Add Google Chrome as a widget

← Privacy
"Do Not Track"
Off
Touch to Search
On
Physical Web
Off

Settings > Privacy > **Physical Web**

4

Search
CHROME
+New Tab 🎤 Voice Search
Physical Web

Enable Physical Web

← Physical Web
On

Turn on Physical Web

5

Search
CHROME
+ New Tab 🎤 Voice Search

Physical Web is on.

Receive heritage content through
URLs transmitted by **beacons**

Physical Web 4:35 PM
Physical Web pages nearby

Enjoy heritage content via
URL notifications on your
notifications shade

List of Heritage Markers on the Little India Heritage Trail

1. Abdul Gafoor Mosque
2. Church of the True Light
3. Mahatma Gandhi Memorial
4. Kampong Kapor Methodist Church
5. Leong San See Temple
6. Angullia Mosque
7. Former Racecourse
8. Sakya Muni Buddha Gaya Temple
9. Shree Lakshminarayan Temple
10. Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple
11. Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple
12. Little India Arcade
13. Former Hong Wen School
14. Former Tekka Market
15. Former Kandang Kerbau Hospital
16. Former House of Tan Teng Niah
17. Foochow Methodist Church
18. Sri Vadapathira Kaliamman Temple

INFORMATION ON HERITAGE MARKERS ON LITTLE INDIA HERITAGE TRAIL	LESSER KNOWN FACTS
Abdul Gafoor Mosque The Abdul Gafoor Mosque was constructed in 1907 to replace the smaller wooden Dunlop Street Mosque built in 1859. It served the Kampong Kapor area, which had a population largely composed of Bawaenese and Tamil Muslim immigrants. Many of the Bawaenese worked as syces (horse groomers) and horse trainers at the former racecourse nearby, while the Tamil Muslims largely traded and conducted business in this area. The mosque was named after Shaik Abdul Gafoor bin Shaik Hyder, the chief clerk in the law firm Khory & Brydges, who was one of the two trustees of the Dunlop Street Mosque *wakaf* (Arabic for a religious endowment). He raised funds for the construction of the new mosque through building and renting out shophouses and sheds around the mosque. After Gafoor's death in 1919, the mosque was renamed Abdul Gafoor Mosque in his memory. In 1927, the mosque came under the management of the Hindu and Mohammedan Endowments Board. This led to modern improvements in the following year when the Board installed electrical lighting, making it one of the first mosques in Singapore to offer such an amenity. The mosque was gazetted as a National Monument in 1979 in recognition of its rich architectural and historical value. Its unique architecture blends Saracenic and Neoclassical elements such as a beautifully coloured glass cupola reflecting Arabic and Renaissance influence. This cupola is supported by pillars inspired by Roman architecture. The exterior walls of the mosque are embellished with crescent moon and star motifs, which are symbols widely associated with the Islamic faith.	**Constructed in 1907, and features fusion architecture reflecting Arabic and Renaissance influences.**

Church of the True Light The Anglican Church of the True Light had its beginnings in 1911 when Guok Koh Muo, a part-time school master and journalist for a Chinese newspaper, responded to the call by Miss Apple, a British missionary, to start a mission for the Heng Hua and Hock Chew Chinese from Fujian province living in Singapore. He started organising gospel meetings with a handful of believers in a friend's barber shop at Bencoolen Street before moving to Pei Chin School at Queen Street. During the 1920s, the Heng Hua Mission had to relocate a number of times and once occupied the premises of an abandoned Buddhist nunnery at Victoria Street. Throughout this period, congregation members attended Sunday services at St Peter's Church at Stamford Road. It was not until the mission found a home at Jalan Besar that the name "Church of the True Light" was first used. The present site of the church was acquired in 1940 but World War II prevented Reverend Guok from raising the necessary funds to build the church. Furthermore, most of the congregation then were poor trishaw riders who could barely afford basic necessities. The current church, a conserved building, was built in 1952, and included a free clinic and a kindergarten. Reverend Guok, an ordained priest by this time, added biblical principles to the church's walls and pillars, which were written in elaborate Chinese script. Today, besides its English and Mandarin services, the church also holds services in Tamil, Malayalam, Sinhalese and Hindi.	**Majority of the congregation in its early years were trishaw riders from Fujian, China.**

Mahatma Gandhi Memorial

The Mahatma Gandhi Memorial was built following a visit by the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru in 1950. Nehru himself laid the foundation stone on 18 June 1950. The full cost of building the memorial was raised by the Indian community in Singapore.

For Indians all over the world, Gandhi was a powerful symbol of peace as well as national-cultural pride for his efforts during India's struggle for independence. In 1948, Gandhi was assassinated by a Hindu fanatic opposed to his concessions to those from other religions, particularly Muslims. Thereafter, memorials to commemorate Gandhi were built all over the world and serve as a reminder to Indians, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus that they all belong to one brotherhood.

Amongst prominent Indians who pushed for the building of the memorial were V Pakirisamy, Rajabali Jumabhoy and P Govindasamy Pillai. Pakirisamy was President of the Singapore Indian Association from 1939-41 and a founding member of the Inter-Religious Organization. Jumabhoy was a founding member of the Indian Association and the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce. Pillai was a noted philanthropist and an important member of the Hindu community. In addition, many members of the Indian working class and non-Indians also contributed towards the building of the memorial.

The Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA) used the building as its office until 1993, after which it fell into disuse and disrepair. In 2008, the Hindi Society (Singapore) leased the building as its office and restored it over the next two years. The Mahatma Gandhi Memorial is a conserved building.

The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, laid the foundation stone for this memorial in 1950.

Kampong Kapor Methodist Church

The Straits Chinese Church that became the Kampong Kapor Methodist Church started in 1890, when a small group of about 20 Malay-speaking Straits Chinese started meeting at Sophia Blackmore's house at Sophia Road. Blackmore came to Singapore from Australia and was the first female Methodist missionary to work here.

From 1891, the Straits Chinese Methodists congregated at the Christian Institute at Middle Road. Hence, when the congregation bought the building to establish their own church in 1898, it was known as the Malay Church as well as the Middle Road Church. It was also called the Straits Chinese Church in the 1910s-20s.

By 1927, the congregation of the Malay Church had grown significantly and a larger site was needed. The present location along Kampong Kapor Road was identified for this purpose. The current church building was designed by the architectural firm of Swan and Maclaren and constructed in 1929-30. The church was then declared the Bishop Bickley Memorial in remembrance of Bishop Bickley whose family donated a large amount towards its construction. The unique quasi-Art Deco design of the building has made the church a landmark in Little India, and it is also a conserved building.

By 1952, the church had become the second largest English-speaking Methodist Church in Singapore with 1,000 members. In 1957, recognising that it catered to a broader congregation than just the Straits Chinese, it took on its current name of Kampong Kapor Methodist Church. Today, the church conducts Peranakan, English, Mandarin and Tamil services, a reminder of the rich cultural diversity that characterises the Little India district.

It was started for Malay-speaking Straits Chinese in 1890.

Leong San See Temple

Leong San See Temple ("Dragon Mountain Temple" in Mandarin) is one of Singapore's most ornate Buddhist temples. It was established by Reverend Chun Wu in 1917, who arrived in Singapore in 1913 with only an urn and a statue of Guan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy. The temple was initially named Leong San Lodge and consisted of a few huts where Reverend Chun took care of the sick, with the central hut housing the Goddess of Mercy.

The present temple, a conserved building, was constructed in 1926 with building materials imported from China and funds contributed by prominent merchant and philanthropist Tan Boon Liat. The reconstructed temple has an altar with an image of Confucius, which is popular with parents who bring their children to pray for intelligence and filial piety. On certain days, free vegetarian food is served to devotees in the ancestral hall.

The abbot of the temple in the 1950s, Venerable Sek Kong Hiap, had planned for a new temple next to Leong San See Temple. However, he realised that there was a more pressing need for a school and founded Leong San School within the temple compound in 1954. The school started with only four classrooms and provided free classes in Mandarin.

Enrolment at the school grew rapidly and eventually a plot adjacent to the temple was acquired. The Mee Toh School (with *mee toh* meaning "eternal brightness" in Mandarin) was built there, and its students often visited the temple to pray. In 2004, the school shifted to its new premises in Punggol, though it continues to be closely linked to the Leong San See Temple.

The Leong San See Temple's name means "Dragon Mountain Temple" in Mandarin. It was established by Reverend Chun Wu in 1917, with a single statue of Guan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy

Angullia Mosque	
The Angullias, also known as "Angadias", were Gujarati Sunni Muslim traders from western India. Like many other Gujarati traders who ventured abroad to set up trading networks, Ebramjee Mohamed Salleh (EMS) Angullia travelled to Singapore to trade. It was EMS Angullia's son, Mohammed Salleh Eussoofjee (MSE) Angullia, who amassed a fortune in Singapore trading in spices, sugar, timber, pins and cutlery with countries in the region. By 1900, MSE Angullia had become a successful and prominent figure in the local Indian Muslim community. The Angullias acquired the grounds on which the mosque stands on 23 April 1890 and the first Angullia Mosque was built before 1892. Today, only the entrance gatehouse remains from the time of the original building and it is a conserved structure. The current main mosque building was built in 1970 following the demolition of the previous building the year before. After MSE Angullia passed on in 1904, his son, Ahmed Mohamed Salleh (AMS) Angullia, went on to acquire large tracts of properties across Singapore. At Orchard Road, the Angullias built an extensive park which was named after them. This park encompassed grounds which would span from the Hilton Hotel to Liat Towers and Paterson Road today. At the centre of this park was another Angullia Mosque which AMS Angullia completed in 1933. The Angullias are still trustees of the current mosque at Serangoon, which they hold as custodians for the larger Indian Muslim community.	**There used to be another Angullia Mosque at Orchard.**

Former Racecourse

The former racecourse was created by the Singapore Sporting Club which was established in 1842 by amateur horse racing enthusiasts. Its first members included William Macleod Read, Charles Spottiswoode and William Napier. They requested for a plot of land from the government for regular horse racing and were granted the Farrer Park site to develop into the Singapore Racecourse, which opened in 1843. The first horse race was named the Singapore Cup and subsequent races were held twice a year. From 1869, the wealthy Chinese began organising the Confucius Cup.

The racecourse also served as a rifle range, a polo field and a golf course in the 1870s-90s. When there were no sporting activities, the grounds became a popular picnic spot. The first plane flown to Singapore landed here in 1919. After the racecourse moved to Bukit Timah, the old racecourse was renamed Farrer Park after RJ Farrer, President of the Municipal Commissioners.

During World War II, British Indian forces were assembled at Farrer Park by the Japanese two days after the British surrender. They urged these Indian soldiers to join the Indian National Army. Days later, thousands of Chinese were gathered and held here for a week before they became victims of the *Sook Ching* ("purge" in Mandarin) massacre.

After the war, Farrer Park remained popular for sports and also became a regular venue for election rallies. The sports played here included hockey, cricket and football. In 1971-73, the headquarters of the National Sports Promotion Board was also situated here. Today, residential blocks occupy part of Farrer Park, while Farrer Park Primary School occupies the site of the former Farrer Park Stadium.

The first international flight to Singapore landed at the former racecourse in 1919 en-route to Australia.

Sakya Muni Buddha Gaya Temple

The Sakya Muni Buddha Gaya Temple has its origins in 1927 when a Thai monk, the Venerable Vutthisasara, erected a temporary shelter made of zinc and wooden planks along Race Course Road to house a statue of Buddha that he had carried to Singapore. Its name refers to the Buddha who was also known as Shakyamuni or Siddhartha Gautama.

The temple grew in popularity and, in 1930, Vutthisasara built the present temple building with a donation from Aw Boon Haw and Aw Boon Par, brothers best known for developing the *Tiger Balm* ointment. The temple is 15 metres tall and houses a 300-ton statue of Buddha. The statue is surrounded by a seemingly endless chain of lights, leading to the temple's popular name, "Temple of a Thousand Lights".

At the base of the statue is a fresco depicting important events in Buddha's life. On the right side of this altar are statues of baby boddhisattvas (persons who delay reaching nirvana to help others attain salvation). At the back of the hall, a chamber under the altar houses another Buddha, depicted at the end of his life and reclining beneath a Yellow Saraca tree.

According to the temple, it also houses an ebony and mother-of-pearl replica of Buddha's footprint and a piece of bark from the original Bodhi tree under which Buddha sat. This replica of the footprint was found on top of Adam's Peak in Sri Lanka, a mountain named after the belief of ancient seafaring Arabs that its summit housed the first man Adam's crypt. The temple's architecture reflects an eclectic mix of Chinese, Thai and Indian cultural influences.

The temple is popularly known as the "Temple of a Thousand Lights" as its 300-ton Buddha is surrounded by a seemingly endless chain of lights.

Shree Lakshminarayan Temple

The Shree Lakshminarayan Temple is Singapore's first dedicated place of worship for North Indian Hindus. Its name derives from a combination of the names of its main deities: "Lakshmi" and "Narayan" (Vishnu). Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth and the consort of Vishnu, while the latter is the deity responsible for the preservation and protection of the universe.

The foundation stone for the Shree Lakshminarayan Temple was laid in 1960. It was not without great difficulties that the temple was completed around the mid-1960s with the support of and donation from almost 10,000 North Indian Hindus from all classes. Prior to this, all festivals celebrated by the aforementioned community were organised by the Singapore North Indian Hindu Association and held at different venues.

The history of this community goes back to the time when Indian herdsmen from the northern and north-eastern states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar arrived and settled along the Rochor River at the beginning of the 20th century due to the extensive cattle trade in the area. The herdsmen worshipped Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu, who was a cowherd. The women of these communities visited the temple every Tuesday afternoon to perform puja (worship) and offer fruits and flowers to the deities.

The bright red pointed domes atop the building mark it out as a temple. It is a conserved building with distinctive red and white patterning on its façade. Besides its namesake deities, the temple also houses other Hindu deities such as Shiva, Kali, Ganesha and Hanuman.

The Shree Lakshminarayan Temple is Singapore's first and only dedicated place of worship for North Indian Hindus.

Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple

The Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple was built on land purchased from the English East India Company in 1851 by a group of Indian men who wanted to build a temple for Hindus in the area. A temple was subsequently built by 1885 and named the Narasinga Perumal Kovil. Narasinga (also spelled Narasimha) is an avatar of the god Vishnu while *Perumal* ("the admirable one of the trinity" in Tamil) refers directly to Vishnu.

In the beginning, the temple just had a *mandapam* ("main hall" in Tamil, deriving from Sanskrit) and a large pond fed by a tributary of the Rochor River. Devotees bathed in the pond in the mornings and after prayers. It was only from 1914-19 that a moderately ornate shrine was built and new idols imported from India.

Renovation works were carried out on the temple in the 1960s due to its dilapidated state. At this point, many elders advised that the main deity of the temple be changed from the imposing Sri Narasinga to the gracious Sri Srinivasa (Venkateshwara). The temple was thus renamed Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple, with Srinivasa having meanings such as "a source of light" and "abode of prosperity" in Sanskrit.

The present temple with its elaborate architecture was a result of the 1960s restoration during which South Indian sculptors were hired to add ornamental features to it. In 1975, P Govindasamy Pillai sponsored a *gopuram* ("entrance tower" in Tamil, deriving from Sanskrit) for the temple, depicting the story of Vishnu's earthly visits and his mythical bird, Garuda. The temple was gazetted as a National Monument in 1978.

In the 1960s, the main deity of the temple was changed from Sri Narasinga to Sri Srinivasa, as the original deity was felt to be too imposing by the elders of the community.

Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple

The Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple is Singapore's first temple dedicated to Veeramakaliamman or the goddess Kali, a fierce incarnation of Shiva's wife and "Destroyer of Evil." Hindus also believe that she destroys ignorance and protects her devotees by maintaining world order. Many pioneering Indian settlers here turned to her for a sense of security in a foreign land. They also asked the goddess for help in getting promoted or to be free from illness, while barren women sought her help to regain their fertility.

The temple was originally known in Tamil as the *Soonambu Kambam Kovil* or the "temple at the village of lime" because of lime kilns found in the area. It was believed that Tamil workers who worked the lime pits at Kampong Kapor erected a shrine dedicated to the Veeramakaliamman on this site as early as 1855. A temple was then built by Bengali labourers in 1881.

In 1908, the dilapidated temple was restored after the daily-rated municipal labourers took over the management of the temple and the overseers of the labourers were made trustees. They shipped in a statue of the goddess Kali from South India and built the main hall and shrine. The other important statues of the temple were installed by the 1930s, and the temple is a conserved building today.

During the Japanese Occupation, the temple sheltered over 20 vagrants nightly and provided them with food. In October 1943, G Maruthamuthu Pillai, a trustee of the temple, presented the Indian National Army with a sword made with a silver blade and a gilt handle. The whereabouts of this sword today are unknown.

The temple was originally known in Tamil as *Soonambu Kambam Kovil* or the "temple at the village of lime" because of lime kilns in the area.

Little India Arcade Little India Arcade consists of a cluster of conserved neoclassical shophouses built in 1913 and is currently owned by the Hindu Endowments Board. An important historical legacy of the arcade is P Govindasamy Pillai's shop which was formerly situated in the front of the building. He was a prolific philanthropist who gave generously to his community, and was affectionately known as "PGP". Most of the older Indian temples along Little India are greatly indebted to him for their reconstruction projects, including the Sri Perumal Temple. It was in the 1910s that PGP found employment as a clerk cum coolie at a provision shop along Serangoon Road. He rose at five in the morning and got to bed only at one in the night. PGP's big break came in 1929 when he took a loan to buy his employer's shop upon the man's death. From selling spices, PGP made his fortune by expanding into the sale of textiles and saris. Little India Arcade was officially opened in 1995 after having undergone conservation to commemorate the spirit of commerce of the district's early Indian settlers. This corner building includes the five-foot way (five feet wide covered pedestrian walkway) traditional to Malaya's colonial-era shophouses. It is now a prominent landmark in the Little India district and houses an array of eateries and boutique shops offering sweets, curios and other knick-knacks.	**An important historical legacy of the arcade is P Govindasamy Pillai's former sari shop, one of the earliest in the area.**

Former Hong Wen School

Hong Wen School was established in 1920 at Queen Street together with the Hin Ann Huay Kuan (*huay kuan* refers to a Chinese clan association) of the Heng Hua Chinese from Fujian province.

Beginning with just 50 pupils, the school's history was fraught with difficulties. The economic recession of 1923 forced the school to close temporarily until 1925. In January 1940, when hostilities broke out between the Heng Hua and the Foo Ching Chinese, the Hin Ann Huay Kuan was raided and Hong Wen School was damaged. When the two clans met to resolve the matter, 100 armed Foo Ching rickshaw-pullers stormed into Hin Ann Huay Kuan and destroyed the premises. It was not until the Hokkien Huay Kuan and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce intervened that peace was finally restored.

The school was closed during the Japanese Occupation and, in 1955, Hong Wen School finally found a home at Dickson Road. However, when urban renewal started in the town area in the 1970s and most of the residents started moving out, the school experienced a stark decline in enrolment and a decision was made to relocate to Victoria Street. This new school was completed in 1981 although the school moved again in 2009 to Towner Road where it continues to stand today.

The conserved Dickson Road building is architecturally interesting due to the Art Nouveau tiled decorations on its façade. The Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services moved into the building after the departure of the school and occupied the building until the 1980s. The building now houses a hotel.

The conserved Dickson Road building has an array of Art Nouveau tiled decorations on its façade.

Former Tekka Market	
Built in 1915, Tekka Market was one of the most prominent landmarks along Serangoon Road during the first half of the 20th century. The area where it was situated was known as *tek kia kha* to the Hokkiens, shortened to *tek kah*, meaning "the foot of the small bamboos" as bamboo once grew on either side of the Rochor Canal. *Tekka* also means "bamboo clumps" in Mandarin. Tekka Market was also known as Kandang Kerbau Market, with *kandang kerbau* meaning "buffalo enclosure" in Malay, due to the predominance of cattle-sheds in the area.	**This market got its name from the surrounding *tekka*, meaning "bamboo clumps" in Mandarin, which once grew along Rochor Canal.**
By the 1930s, Tekka Market had become very popular for its wide variety of fresh meat, vegetables and seafood. It was frequented mostly by people from the working class, hence it became known as the "people's market." The market's former watchman remembers it as a bustling place where one could see Indian women jostling with houseboys who served the Europeans and wealthy Asians.	
When Tekka Market was demolished in 1982, most of the store-holders relocated to the new Zhujiao Market across the street, with the new name being a hanyu pinyin rendition of "Tekka" in the Chinese transliteration system. However, the market was later renamed Tekka Centre in November 2000 to reflect the history of the place after public feedback that "Zhujiao" bore little resemblance to its old name.	

Former Kandang Kerbau Hospital

Kandang Kerbau Hospital or KK Hospital has witnessed the births of more Singaporeans than any other hospital on the island. The term *kandang kerbau* ("buffalo enclosure" in Malay) is a reminder of the buffalos that were kept in this district a long time ago.

Built in 1860 to function as a general hospital, KK Hospital became a free maternity hospital in 1924 when the Victoria Street maternity hospital shifted there. In 1997, the government decided to modernise KK Hospital and hence relocated the hospital to a new building on the other side of Kampong Java Road. It was then renamed the KK Women's and Children's Hospital.

Singapore's second president, Benjamin Sheares, was Deputy Medical Superintendent at KK Hospital during World War II. As there was only one other doctor at the hospital, both men stayed there and worked in shifts. The hospital's mission at that time was to provide good maternity care and midwifery training for medical students and pupil midwives to bring down the high maternal and infant mortality rates. Midwives were kept very busy as there were only three nurses to look after an estimated 200 babies.

In 1966, KK Hospital delivered a record number of 39,835 babies (more than 109 per day) and was listed in the 1968 Guinness Book of Records for delivering the world's largest number of babies in a single maternity facility in a year. Today, the hospital continues to be Singapore's largest maternity facility and delivers around a third of babies born in the country.

KK Hospital was listed in the 1968 Guinness Book of Records for delivering the world's largest number of babies in a single maternity facility in a year!

Former House of Tan Teng Niah

Built in 1900, the former house of Tan Teng Niah is the last surviving Chinese villa in Little India. It embodies an often overlooked story of the days when small Chinese industries operated alongside the cattle and rattan businesses at Little India. Tan Teng Niah was a *towkay* (Chinese businessman of good standing) who owned several sweet-making factories along Serangoon Road that used sugarcane to produce sweets. Behind the house, Tan had a rubber smoke-house for drying rubber which used the by-products of sugarcane as fuel for its furnace.

Tan Teng Niah's former house has eight rooms. The second storey overhangs the first to create a five-foot way (five feet wide covered pedestrian walkway) where there was once an entrance portico. On both sides of the house, there used to be carriage gates leading into a courtyard.

The *pintu pagar* (Malay for "swinging wooden half doors") is richly carved and the front room of the house is resplendent with wall scrolls. Over the entrance door is a gilded name plate with the calligraphic inscription *Siew Song* ("elegant pine" or "refined pine" in Mandarin). To the Chinese, pine denotes endurance and expresses their aspirations. Many believe that Tan built the house for his wife and that the inscription referred to her.

The house was restored and conserved in the 1980s for commercial use, and the restoration project was awarded the Singapore Institute of Architects Honourable Mention in 1991.

The former house of Tan Teng Niah is the last surviving Chinese villa in Little India.

Foochow Methodist Church

The beginnings of the Foochow Methodist Church can be traced to the work of the German Methodist missionary, Dr HLE Luering, who started a mission in 1897 for rickshaw pullers, coolies and barbers from Foochow residing near Middle Road. They congregated at the Christian Institute for church services held under Reverend Ling Ching Mee until 1924.

Thereafter, the congregation relocated to the Anglo-Chinese School along Coleman Street and again to the Tamil Methodist Church at Short Street, before ending up at a gospel hall along Queen Street in the early 1930s, where they were taught to read and sing.

By 1936, the pressing need for a proper church of their own led Reverend Dr Chen Su Lan, a lay preacher, and other church members to raise the funds to purchase a house along Race Course Road for use as a church. When works were completed in 1938, an architecturally unique building was added to the district, featuring columns designed in the classical style with high vents and round windows.

The church was damaged during World War II when a shell exploded on the north-western corner of the building. In 1947, during the repairs to the church, its front was completely rebuilt. In 1950, the back of the church was rebuilt to match its front. In 1994, the church extended its premises by building a link to an adjoining three-storey block, which it acquired in 1987 to start its Christian Education Centre. Today the church runs a kindergarten, as well as various social welfare programmes.

It started in 1897 as a mission for rickshaw pullers, coolies and barbers from Foochow residing near Middle Road.

Sri Vadapathira Kaliamman Temple

The Sri Vadapathira Kaliamman Temple was established around 1870 by the Hindus living in the neighbourhood of the temple and in Potong Pasir. This temple to the goddess Kali, the "Destroyer of Evil," started in a small hut under the leadership of a few Chettiars. By 1935, a small shed was erected to replace the old tiled roof structure.

In 1969, an architectural firm from India, Neysadurai and Associates, redesigned the temple. Two sculptors and two artists from South India were commissioned to work on its motifs. Although the *kumbabhishekam* ("consecration ceremony" in Tamil, deriving from Sanskrit) of the temple was performed on January 1974, the three archway *gopura* ("entrance towers" in Tamil, deriving from Sanskrit) and the decoration of the *mandapam* ("main hall" in Tamil, deriving from Sanskrit) were completed later.

The *mandapam* holds the main shrine to Kali and on either side are two smaller shrines dedicated to the deities Vinayagar (Ganesha) and Murugan, both sons of Shiva. Vinayagar is the "elephant god" and a remover of obstacles. Murugan's name means "the beautiful one" and he is considered the patron of the present era. To the left of the *mandapam* is an arcade with several other statues, such as that of Periyachi, the protector of children and mothers.

One of the interesting features of the conserved temple building is its elaborate *vimana* (stepped pyramid-shape tower over main shrine found in South Indian temples) adorned with deities. The tower is visible from a distance and allows devotees to pray even without entering the temple.

The elaborate *vimana* (stepped pyramid-shape tower over main shrine) adorned with deities allows devotees to pray even from a distance.

Little India Heritage Trail – Three Thematic Routes

1) "Serangoon in the 1900s" (40 minutes)

Learn about the early communities that settled in the area in the early 20th century. This route starts with a visit to the Indian Heritage Centre, before journeying to familiar sites like Tekka Centre, the Former Kandang Kerbau Hospital, and the Former House of Tan Teng Niah – the only remaining Chinese villa in Little India, and a remnant of the early days where small Chinese cottage industries thrived alongside the Indian-dominated cattle trade in the area.

2) "Walk of Faiths" (1 hour)

Gain insights into the different religious spaces, architecture and practices found in the precinct. The longest route on the Little India Heritage Trail, "Walk of Faiths" covers iconic National Monuments such as the Abdul Gafoor Mosque and the Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple. Other sites include the Kampong Kapor Methodist Church and the Sakya Muni Buddha Gaya Temple – a Thai-Buddhist temple built with a donation from the founders of the Tiger Balm ointment, which houses a 300-ton statue of Buddha.

3) "Shop Till You Drop" (30 minutes; not inclusive of shopping time)

This route offers participants a chance to try authentic Indian food at Singapore's oldest Indian vegetarian restaurant, purchase traditional clothing and even look for bargains at the various shops lined along the streets.

Heritage Trails Developed by the National Heritage Board

1. Bukit Timah Heritage Trail
2. Yishun-Sembawang Heritage Trail
3. Ang Mo Kio Heritage Trail
4. Balestier Heritage Trail
5. Jalan Besar Heritage Trail
6. Kampong Glam Heritage Trail
7. World War II Heritage Trail
8. Tiong Bahru Heritage Trail
9. Queenstown Heritage Trail
10. Resilience Trails
11. Toa Payoh Heritage Trail
12. Jurong Heritage Trail
13. Singapore River Walk
14. Jubilee Walk
15. Bedok Heritage Trail
16. Little India Heritage Trail

For more information, please visit https://roots.sg/visit/trails

MUSEUM LABEL – Little India Heritage Trail Merchandise

Item	Retail Price	Image
LITTLE INDIA HERITAGE TRAIL FOLDER	$3.90	
LITTLE INDIA HERITAGE TRAIL MAGNET – SET OF 6	$10	
LITTLE INDIA HERITAGE TRAIL MUG – RED OR BLUE	$19	

LITTLE INDIA HERITAGE TRAIL BAG – RED OR BLUE	$20	

Where to find MUSEUM LABEL

- **Indian Heritage Centre**
  5 Campbell Lane, Singapore 209924

  OPENING HOURS
  Tuesdays to Thursdays | 10am to 7pm
  Fridays to Saturdays | 10am to 8pm
  Sundays / Public Holidays | 10am to 4pm
  Closed on Mondays

- **National Museum of Singapore**
  93 Stamford Road, Singapore 178897

  OPENING HOURS
  Mondays to Sundays | 10am to 6.30pm

- **Asian Civilisations Museum**
  1 Empress Place, Left Lobby, Singapore 179555

  OPENING HOURS
  Saturdays to Thursdays | 10am to 7pm
  Fridays | 10am to 9pm

- **Malay Heritage Centre**
  85 Sultan Gate, Istana Kampong Gelam, Singapore 198501

  OPENING HOURS
  Tuesdays to Sundays | 10am to 6pm
  Closed on Mondays

MUSEUM LABEL is the retail brand behind the museum shops operated by Singapore's National Heritage Board. Through vivid storytelling, relatable cultural experiences, and close collaboration with community and partners, MUSEUM LABEL gives life to our heritage through well-designed merchandise.

Your support for the MUSEUM LABEL will help us make our museum programmes better. Visit http://www.nhb.gov.sg/shop/about-museum-label for more information.

About the Brand
Stories manifest in the different experiences we encounter, and are unfolding at every step of our journey through museums. As an extension of the museum experience, MUSEUM LABEL brings focus to the stories that are told, and serves as the window through which visitors see heritage and culture in different forms and as an inspiration for them to craft their own stories and experiences.