

= Early Founders Memorial Stone =

The Foundation Stone of the Monument to the Early Founders of Singapore , usually called the Early Founders Memorial Stone is a national memorial that is dedicated to the early founders (" Unknown Immigrants ") of Singapore . The original idea was raised by a graduates ' association and an open design competition was held for the memorial project . The foundation stone was initially erected along Collyer Quay Street outside the Fullerton Hotel in 1970 . After a series of setbacks and delays , the project was finally scrapped after no worthy design was accepted , which resulted the foundation stone becoming the memorial afterwards . In 2000 , the memorial was relocated to the National Archives of Singapore at Canning Rise before moving back to the grounds of The Fullerton Hotel in 2010 .

= = History = =

The original idea of erecting a keynote memorial at the Singapore waterfront as a dedication to Singapore 's early founders was mooted in 1969 by the Alumni International Singapore (AIS) , a body set up to represent Singaporean graduates from 11 countries who had gathered locally for Singapore 's 150th anniversary . AIS announced that a proposed memorial on Queen Elizabeth Walk by the Padang would required some S \$ 250 @, @ 000 (US \$ 163 @, @ 000) to be raised . An open design competition was held and sculptors were asked to come up with a design to celebrate the Singaporean for " his courage , his adventurous and enterprising spirit and his indomitable will , not only to survive but to make good . "

= = = Foundation stone = = =

On 18 January 1970 , President Yusof bin Ishak laid the memorial 's foundation stone along Collyer Quay Street , on what was supposed to be a temporary site . Before an audience of some 500 people , including members of the diplomatic corps , President Yusof gave a speech :

It carries no great names . In fact it has no names at all . It is for all men . It is not for the Chinese , the Indian , the Eurasian or any other single race . It is for all who in one way or another helped to create a modern multiracial , multicultural and multilingual Singapore .

The foundation stone consists of a rectangular granite stone topping off a pyramid @-@ shaped brick pedestal with inscriptions in the four official languages (English , Malay , Mandarin , and Tamil) :

This foundation stone of the monument in tribute to the early founders of Singapore was laid by Inche Yusof Bin Ishak , the President of the Republic of Singapore on the 18th day of January 1970 .

= = = Competition = = =

In July 1973 , designs for the memorial had been received from 38 sculptors but the top two prizes were not awarded ; it was found that no entry being deemed worthy of the honour by AIS panel of judges earlier . Instead , five sculptors received merit awards from AIS , together with a token S \$ 250 .

One of the merit awards recipients , Ng Eng Teng , who was to receive Singapore 's Cultural Medallion in 1981 and who now has his critically acclaimed works all over Singapore , commented unhappily : " We have never been so embarrassed or insulted in all our professional lives . No professional artist of our standing would condescend to receive such an amount . We felt we had been taken for a ride . "

In response , AIS expressed regret that the aggrieved sculptors had publicly stated their dissatisfaction . The alumni further rejected a complaint that the results were 10 months overdue , and repeated that no suitable entry had been received . Subsequently , three of the five sculptors banded together to produce a design they described as " four pieces of cuboid leaning towards each

other and pivoted on four corners " which was referred by AIS as resembling " four chopsticks " . Ironically , this was the nickname and roughly the design concept of the Civilian War Memorial , which was adopted in another separate open competition in 1966 .

In September 1975 , the alumni announced in public again that the Early Founders Project was at " a very advanced stage and will be launched as soon as Government approval has been obtained . The site of the monument has already been earmarked on the reclaimed land off the Esplanade . "

Despite the announcement , the ambitious project became inactive and was finally scrapped after no worthy design was accepted and not nearly enough of the S \$ 250 @, @ 000 funds had been raised . In 1985 , the alumni announced that the funds collected earlier would be rediverted to other projects , such as providing scholarships .

= = = Roles switched = = =

As a result , the memorial stone became the memorial itself . The monument was later moved by the authorities to make way for the gentrification of the Fullerton Building , and was relocated to the National Archives of Singapore , where it stands almost forgotten today . The authorities hope that when Singapore 's community of values had evolved to the point that a common language of art could be used to complete the task of building such a monument again .

On 9 July 2010 , the foundation stone was moved back to the corner of Fullerton Building where it now sits overlooking the Singapore River following a ceremony and speech by The Minister for Information , Communication and the Arts .