

# Students spruce up Ah Ma's drink stall on Ubin

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A rundown drink stall on Pulau Ubin has been given a new lease of life.

The 23-year-old Ah Ma's Drink Stall in Jalan Jelutong was weather-beaten and leaning dangerously because the ground was sinking.

But a group of National University of Singapore (NUS) architecture undergraduates have come to its rescue and rebuilt it. The stall reopened in the middle of last month, after closing for construction in May. It will be officially launched on Sept 23.

The stall is run by Pulau Ubin resident Ong Ang Kui, 80, who is popularly known as Madam Lai Huat So.

Open for business only on weekends, it caters to thirsty cyclists and day trippers. It is believed to be the first kampung structure to be built on the island in 20 years.

The project was initiated by three groups to revitalise the island as a living kampung.

They are: community group Kawan Ubin, Singapore Heritage Society and a group of volunteer life-guardians called Sea Angel.

The National Parks Board supported the project, which serves as a test bed for the construction and



Above: The refurbished Ah Ma's Drink Stall along Jalan Jelutong on Pulau Ubin, after a group of NUS students rebuilt it using kampung-style construction methods. Below: Madam Lai Huat So runs the drink stall – seen here before it was spruced up – with her daughter Ivy Choo. ST PHOTOS: JAMIE KOH, LIM YAOHUI

rebuilding of future kampung homes on the island.

The team of students took care to ensure that in revitalising the site, they retained the rustic character of the original timber structure. They employed kampung-style construction methods and techniques for the project.

The original Ah Ma's Drink Stall signboard was also refurbished and reinstated. The students honoured Madam Lai's blue-accented colour scheme as well.

The professor in charge of the project, Dr Tan Beng Kiang from NUS' Department of Architecture, said they are happy with the outcome and customers seem to enjoy the space.

Madam Lai's daughter Ivy Choo, 55, who helps at the stall, told *The Straits Times* business was brisk, with about 50 to 60 customers stopping at the stall each weekend after it reopened.

She said: "The new stall is much more comfortable. The ceiling is higher so the ventilation is much better. The place is also well-lit and the floor is no longer muddy, uneven and haphazard. It's safer for my elderly mother to work in."

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**ST** SCAN TO WATCH  
Pulau Ubin's Ah Ma  
<http://str.sg/ahma>


