ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the revitalization of a part of the city through an understanding of connections between different districts and how architecture can facilitate and enhance the experience of such urban networks. The project looks into the issues of how to provide lively street environments by a study of the public realm, urban form and internal programme.

The part of the city chosen for study is located at the junction of the Central Business District, a corporate district lacking streetscape, Telok Ayer, a quiet shophouse conservation district and China Square, a developing mix-used shopping, entertainment and commercial district. By the nature of the site, the vehicle for the project is a Business Library owned by the SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. It will serve the business community as a social focus and as a service-oriented institute providing valuable corporate information. The project will emphasize on the establishment of a pedestrian connection between the two districts.

The thesis research is hence approached from three directions, and from the analysis, a solution is reached to generate a design concept. The three main directions of the thesis research concerns:

1. Urban: Approaches to revitalization of urban centres
2. Programme: Changes in corporate information management
3. Architecture: The impact of information technology on architecture

The proposed building displays the process of information exchange to the public and library users in a series of staggered views and varying volumes. The act of reading, meeting, surfing and learning are revealed to the public as one moves along a pedestrian spine on the ground level. Internally, users are in constant contact with the various activities through the configuration of space. The street environment therefore attempts to create a constant flow between internal building space and external public realm, where street bazaars and cafeterias will occupy the mall and the adjacent courtyards. There becomes a co-existence between the virtual and physical environment.

On the program level, the concept intentionally reflects current society's emphasis on interactive information exchange rather than displaying books as elements of a library. Information becomes AN ASSET, A COMMODITY AND A SPECTACLE TO THE CITY.