Synopsis:

The trail is well-trodden. Its path is weary, but the stories of the travellers’ encounters have enticed other travellers from afar to walk this land. Each of them will have a different story to tell.

This story is about the new National Library of Singapore. The invitation for its design tender was limited to big architectural firms with established credibility. It restricted the participation of smaller firms; the other architects were unhappy to be left out of this monumental making of a national icon. Thus spoke the architects.

The salient question is probably whether a grand story will suffice to evoke a “national” empathy. The grand narrative may deny another texture reading of the city; the city offers itself to be used. Perhaps, the inhabitants will find their own stories.

The new library site was previously drafted as the terminating green to the Civic District. The new building is going to displace one of the few remaining green spaces within the city centre.

The thesis attempts an alternative solution with the ParkLibrary / LibraryPark, which is neither a library in a park nor a park in a library. It sets up the conditions of questioning the accepted boundaries like the one between an artefact and nature (its elements and the processes). The library becomes the landscape on which readers, books and other amenities are sited. The readers will eventually form their own opinions and read the cityscape in their own context. They have their own stories to tell.

The city is a lived experience.