ABSTRACT

In order to raise the awareness of the importance of fire safety issues in the design of retail development and its integration in the planning of the desired retail space, the author has attempted to trace the changing trends of shopping centre development in Singapore and to research into how the evolution of the retail sector has affected the fire safety standards. The importance of awareness of such issues is not only the job of the architect or the engineer. It is an issue that requires the coordination of multi-disciplines such as finance and sociology.

With commercial developments mushrooming over the island at growing rate and technology and construction innovations advancing at an extremely fast pace, the fire codes are not likely to catch up. The local Fire Codes being largely prescriptive are not always applicable. The basic fire principles and external influences that shaped today’s fire safety standards are selected to make an attempt to do a projection of the future architectural typology of shopping centres and the crucial fire issues that need to be addressed.

Complexities of fire safety issues are increasing at an exponential rate with each decade and even more so with its beginning in the development of multi-storey shopping centres that accommodates multi-occupancy. In the 90’s, shopping centres no longer function purely as shopping facilities. It has evolved into a socio-recreational complex where thousands of shoppers who would go there for different purposes. As the scales are getting larger, the control of fire sizes and smoke spread become major concerns in terms of fire safety.