TRANS-ASIAN (SINGAPORE) RAILWAY TERMINUS

TANG WEE TONG
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ABSTRACT

The debate about large scale infrastructure is becoming increasingly focused on the landscape design aspects of these works; everyone recognizes that infrastructure opens up possibilities within the urban field – but also that it negates them. Motorways and stations become sites for all sorts of facilities. Elsewhere barriers are thrown up by infrastructure. Motorways and railways both create and sever connections and are therefore, perhaps the dominant factor determining shifts in development potential within the urban field.

Architecturally, the railway terminus uses landscape as a unifying element to reconcile dialectical opposites, between the built and the unbuilt, between natural and the artificial and between the local and foreign. The urban park forms an integral part of the station architecture. Sloping down to meet the station concourse on a sunken level, the natural landscape temporarily dissolves into the architecture of the station; only to curl up, and rear itself, to become the roof plane of the station. With it's 2 finger piers, the U-shaped configuration of the train station makes a analogous reference to the sea-trade lineage of Singapore's past.

Composed to be elevated on columns on one side and to sink into the ground on the other, the 2 finger pier buildings are orientated toward view corridors and axes aligned with the waterfront. In terms of imagery, the U-shaped configuration can also be seen as a gigantic "magnet" that attracts activities and events around the city surroundings.

Whilst architecture generally channels, segments and encloses, landscape opens, offers and suggest. However, one is not subservient of the other, or diametrically opposite. The point here is to seek out potentially productive analogies to inspire the invention of a new artificial scape and built form pertinent to our contemporary, complex, multiple and transient life processes.

Thesis Supervisor : Li Xiao Dong
Title : Associate Professor