Abstract

Singapore’s CBD is dominated by the office tower. This form of commercial office building is the result of demands and requirements placed upon the building envelope by past office environments. Similarly the new generation of offices would shape the built form of the future office buildings.

This study looks into the context which gave rise to the office tower, globally and locally. It then identifies the changing business demands, which call for a new generation of offices. This new generation of offices is defined and the requirements identified. The tower form used thus far is not able to adapt to the new spatial and operational demands. Therefore a new form would have to be found to house the new generation of offices.

The design precedent for the new generation offices has already been set by the Japanese. Two examples are studied, to gain a better understanding of the office of the future. In spite of the changing demands, Singapore is still using traditional methods in planning and constructing office buildings.

Recent buildings, like Republic Plaza have been tagged, as “intelligent” buildings. Yet a comparison with the Japanese examples reveals the disparity between the two. Republic Plaza still used the tower form as a starting point. Technologies are merely added at a later stage to make the building more intelligent.

This study, with Republic Plaza as a vehicle, illustrates how different the form would have been, if the spatial demands of the new office generation had been taken into account, suggesting that the alternative form, the court form, is perhaps more viable and more suitable for the new generation of offices.