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Publication

INTERNATIONAL CITY STATION IN SINGAPORE: BRINGING THE URBAN INTO THE ARCHITECTURE

CHAI JUN YEA



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Abstract

The role of the train station in city scale has always been as the most direct and instantaneous link between major economic centres, i.e. major cities. In Europe and increasingly in United States of America, the way of rail travel has been seen as an important transportation means to link different economic zones together to form closer economic and social interaction. Major European cities such as Paris, London, Berlin and Brussels are all linked by systems of high-speed train at both international and local levels. The success of the revival of rail travel in Europe as the main mode of international movement has spurred South-East Asian leaders to consider the use of rail to link the major cities into a coherent system of transportation for people, goods and information. For this dream to work, not only does the system has to link to the major cities internationally, there has to be a continuation of the transportation system to ensure a smooth transition for travellers to move from international line to local line. It is this very basis of rail travel and the role of a train station in a city, which my thesis project seeks to address. The recent decision between the Singapore and Malaysian government to move the railway station from Tanjong Pagar, which is ideally sited at the fringe of CBD, to Woodlands, which is at the outskirts of Singapore, counters the fundamental characteristics of rail travel. The design of the railway terminus in Tanjong Pagar will try to address its role as an urban infrastructure. At the urban level, as a train station is considered as a long-term infrastructure, its design has to take into consideration of the surrounding development for the next 20 to 50 years. To solve the problem of the railway track and the highway (AYE) cutting the area into halves, pedestrian link ways are set up to link up the two parts. As a result of this intersection, the train station can become an important focus for urban activities to concentrate and intensify in the architecture. As an architecture of gateway, other than addressing the pragmatic issue of custom and security control, another important aspect of a gateway is the sense of arrival for passengers and the impression of they should get of Singapore as a cosmopolitan city. Through the use of elevated train platform, view corridors and intersection of urban axes with architectural axes, the experience of the passengers is both intense and varied within the short span of space from the time they get out of the train to the time they get out of the station and out into the city. Thus the station possesses the characteristics of the symbiotic relationship between station and the city in which it is part of it, and consumes part of it within.

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