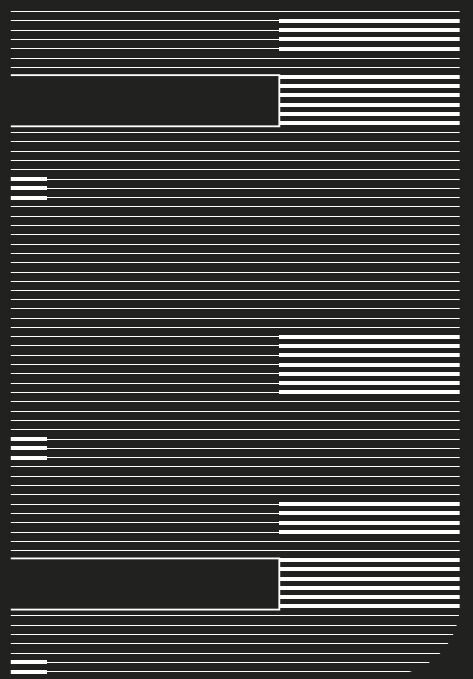
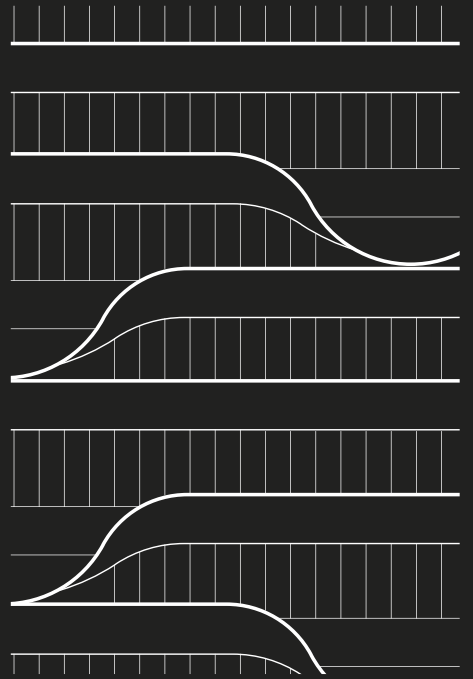
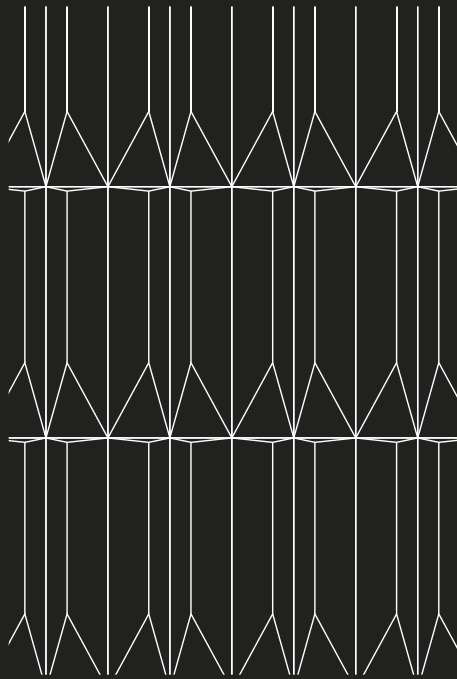
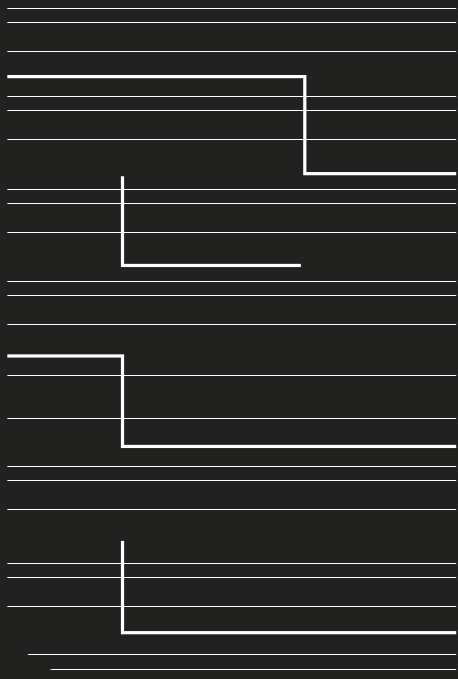
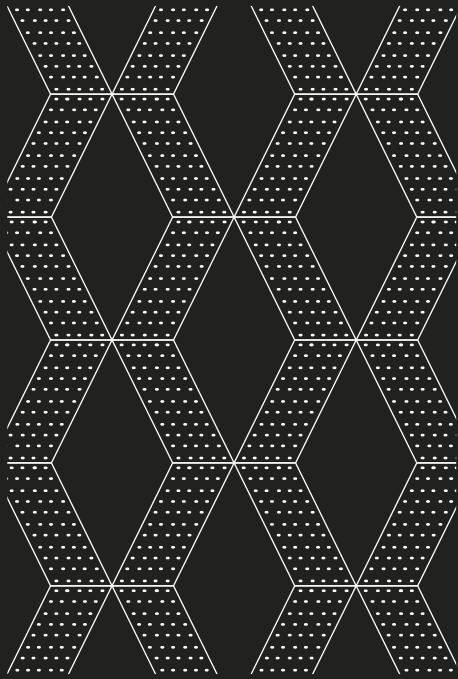
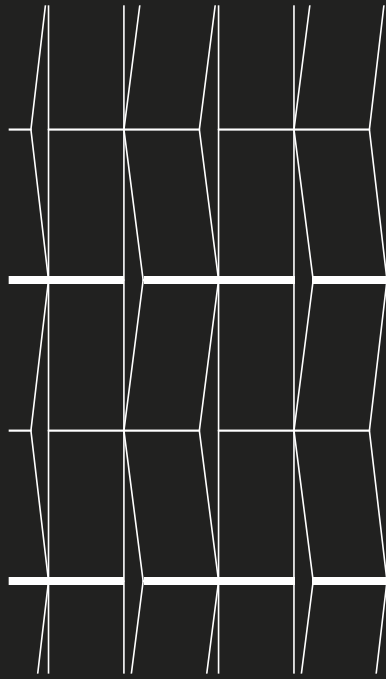
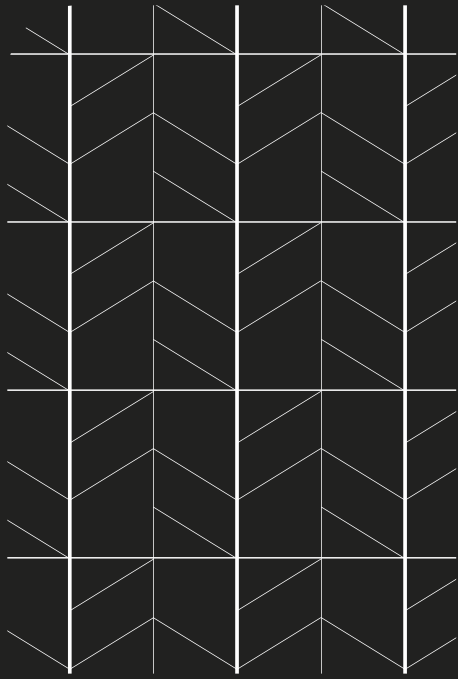


Urban

ISSUE N° 1 2025

Dialogues



A PERIODICAL BY ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN, SJ GROUP

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MDDI (P) 067/10/2025



# From Ageing Icons to Agile Assets

## The Role of AEI in Future-Proofing the Built Environment

In a city defined by density, the pursuit of excellence, and perpetual reinvention, Asset Enhancement Initiatives (AEI) have matured from stop-gap upgrades to precise instruments for urban recalibration. As we grapple with climate urgency, shifting socio-cultural dynamics, and scaling sustainability imperatives, AEI compels us not simply to polish ageing designs, but to rethink their very spatial logic.

We sit down with Ivy and Aidil who have recently taken up the mantle of leading SAA, collaborating closely with the key leadership team. Together, they discuss frameworks, friction points, and the latent potential of AEI.

### Is AEI a tool for urban acupuncture?

**Ivy:** As Singapore turns 60, a significant portion of its building stock is reaching maturity when renewal and enhancement become necessary to keep up with changing social, environmental, and economic needs. AEI delivers incremental interventions that recalibrate the existing urban fabric without the disruption or erasure caused by wholesale redevelopment.

It extends beyond façade enhancements or upgraded entrances, and involves the strategic reformulation of spatial layouts, functional reconfiguration, and the reprogramming of spaces to better align with contemporary usage.

**Aidil:** Absolutely, AEI demands surgical precision, targeted strategies, and meticulous planning.

### What factors are driving its growing appeal?

**Aidil:** Cost is a major driver. Demolishing and reconstructing an entire building incur significant costs. AEI presents a financially sound alternative to full-scale redevelopment, as retrofit and upgrade works typically require a fraction of the capital expenditure.

**Ivy:** From an operational standpoint, AEI also allows for the continued use of the building during works, minimising disruption to ongoing functions such as office tenancy and retail activity. This continuity not only sustains cash flow throughout the enhancement process but also enables property owners to incrementally uplift asset value.

**Aidil:** Furthermore, integrating contemporary mechanical and electrical (M&E) systems during retrofits enables greater operational efficiency and sustainability, yielding significant energy and maintenance savings.

(Left)  
Ivy Koh (Executive Director and Singapore Lead for Architecture + Design, SJ Group and SAA Architects) and Aidil Shukor (Executive Director, Architecture + Design, SJ Group)

(Bottom)  
Tiong Bahru Plaza





In contrast, demolition and reconstruction have a sizeable carbon footprint — which is increasingly untenable given environmental considerations.

**Ivy:** While AEI necessitates phased implementation, extended timelines, and a high degree of planning coordination, its dual economic and environmental returns position it as a compelling strategy for sustainable urban renewal.

### What are the key challenges involved in implementing AEI?

**Ivy:** An inherent challenge is working with the constraints of the existing building. Altering the programmatic DNA of a building, such as converting an office block into residential units or a hotel, demands extensive reconfiguration of M&E systems that necessitates invasive structural

interventions. The scale and complexity of these works can make such transformations financially and technically prohibitive. While there are precedents for successful programmatic conversions internationally, in Singapore, such fundamental reconfigurations remain the exception rather than the norm.

**Aidil:** Another layer of complexity lies in reconciling ageing structures with safety and accessibility standards, which are ever evolving. For instance, retrofitting barrier-free access facilities into split-level developments, or installing fireman's lifts in buildings without existing lift cores, require substantial spatial and structural ingenuity. Such interventions, especially on tightly constrained sites, often require intensive consultation and negotiation with local authorities.

(Top)  
One Raffles Place Podium

(Right)  
Temasek Shophouse

We have to demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the regulatory intent and propose creative workarounds to mitigate associated risks.

### How can AEI meaningfully improve a structure without altering its original sense of space?

**Ivy:** AEI carries the risk of diluting or erasing a building's intrinsic sense of place, especially when interventions overlook the historical, cultural, or social narratives embedded in the original fabric. This risk is particularly acute in the context of heritage structures.

In conservation cases such as the restoration and expansion of Temasek Shophouse, which soft launched recently, we conducted extensive archival research together with the client and project team to uncover and reinterpret the asset's original design intent. For example, we tried to preserve the spatial quality of the old double-volume space while adapting it for new functions. Understanding the architectural spirit is critical in guiding design decisions that honour the past.

**Aidil:** While AEI projects are often more challenging than new builds, their potential for a profound and meaningful impact makes them especially fulfilling and exciting for the team.

This dialogue underscores a fundamental shift — the future of the built environment may not lie in constructing new buildings. Rather, it lies in transforming ageing monuments of the past into architectural icons of today and beyond through adaptive reuse and redesign, thereby enhancing these assets. When approached with architectural rigour and foresight, AEI becomes an act of architectural authorship, enabling a circular, sustainability-conscious urbanism that shapes the future of cities such as Singapore, one thoughtful intervention at a time.



Image courtesy of Temasek Shophouse

# Our Design Ethos

The Common Thread through Our Work

We design with the city in mind — its rhythms, its people, and its future. Each project is a chance to elevate the human experience and reimagine possibilities.

Our design practice is guided by these core principles:

# Urbanistic

Our works interweave, engage, and influence the urban environment; creating meaningful connections between people, buildings and the cityscape.

# Humanistic

We adopt an empathetic approach to our practice. It defines how we treat one another and is integrated into the designs and spaces we build.

# Optimistic

We view build challenges as learning moments, taking the opportunity to go beyond convention in our designs.

In this age of flux, our design ethos allows us to be both grounded and forward-looking. It charges us to design with intention and integrity, creating spaces that serve, inspire, and endure. They inform our work across five strategic sectors:

- Urban Development + Residential
- Transport
- Mixed-Used + Commercial
- Healthcare + Institution
- Industrial

# A Holistic Benchmark for People-Focused, Nature-Centered Healthcare Design

**Woodlands Health Campus (WHC)** envisions a new standard in healthcare delivery by amalgamating new care models, technological innovation, and medical planning into a seamless facility set amidst lush greenery. It comprises an Integrated Acute and Community Hospital, Medical Centre, and Nursing Home.

## DESIGN INTENT

WHC is the first Singapore hospital to integrate dedicated parkland within its campus, harnessing the healing power of nature. This open campus design welcomes the wider neighbourhood to gather and enjoy its spaces, bringing a social dimension and vitality to the hospital grounds. This community-centered approach underpins the new system-wide model of care, which engages community providers and home care teams to lessen dependence on hospital-based treatment.

## PINLIGHT

WHC stands out for its award-winning sustainability efforts and advancement in healthcare standards, with honours such as the BCA Green Mark Award 2020 (Platinum) and MOHH Design Excellence Award 2023 (Platinum).



## PROJECT DETAILS

Completed: 2023  
 Location: Woodlands, Singapore  
 Floor Area: 244,218 sqm  
 Client: Ministry of Health



- 1 The boundaries of the original park were redrawn to extend the Healing Garden deeper into the campus, forming a green lung with cascading steps that double as a public amphitheatre and activity lawn for yoga and zumba.
- 2 Vehicular traffic is routed to the basement, freeing the ground level to become a spacious, beautifully landscaped public plaza for patients, staff, and the community. The Medical Centre is located near public transport nodes to encourage car-free access.
- 3 The Healing Garden also provides more introspective spaces, including rooftop gardens above the community hospital for gentle rehabilitation and a tranquil garden beside the mortuary where families can bid their final farewells.



FORM IN FOCUS

With a focus on environmentally responsive architecture, the campus employed a wide range of passive design strategies to enhance building performance and occupant wellbeing.





### How does WHC approach healthcare differently?

Embracing the principles of salutogenesis<sup>1</sup> from the outset allowed us to focus on the positive health benefits that every space within the campus could deliver. Our design intent was to create a healing campus that actively supports the community's wellbeing.

A key strategy is the harmonisation of the Acute and Community Hospital with the Nursing Home via a podium. This physical connector serves as an intuitive wayfinding device, helping patients and visitors navigate the expansive, open campus. This design approach introduced a framework for coherence and spatial clarity in an environment that can often feel overwhelming or disorienting.

<sup>1</sup> The concept of salutogenesis emphasises a strong Sense of Coherence through a human-centred approach. This philosophy prioritises comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness in healthcare, enhancing the overall experience for everyone involved.

### What were some insights borrowed from other typologies that helped rearticulate the model of care?

Beyond biophilic principles, we looked to adjacent typologies, particularly residential, to shape a more holistic, human-centered healthcare design. A central strategy is to imbue hospital spaces with the familiarity and comfort typically associated with the home environment. For example, the campus was intentionally designed to resemble the surrounding Woodlands public housing estates. Within the dementia wards, layouts include living rooms and bedrooms designed to recreate a sense of home.

#### STUDIO DIALOGUE

**Michael Leong**  
Senior Executive Director,  
SAA Architects  
Project Lead for  
Woodlands Health Campus



“Drawing on biophilic principles from other projects, we designed campus spaces that encourage connection with nature as well as intergenerational social interactions.”

#### What were some design strategies that allowed WHC to become a welcome asset to the neighbourhood?

WHC sets a new standard for what future hospitals can be — where healthcare is embedded within the social fabric. We wanted WHC to feel like a natural extension of the neighbourhood rather than an isolated institution.

At the southern entrance, we integrated a bioswale (Rain Garden) to connect the hospital grounds with the Mandai Forest Trail just across the Seletar Expressway. This green gateway makes the hospital more approachable, drawing in Woodlands residents who were already using the park connector.

We also reimagined how spaces within the hospital could serve as active, community-centric environments. For instance, the long linear courtyard shared between the Nursing Home and childcare centre acts as an intergenerational spine where seniors and children naturally come together.



# A Vibrant Destination that Bridges Industry and Community

Primed for Industry 4.0 and beyond, **Bulim Square** promotes a new generation of multi-use, multi-tenanted industrial estates. It is positioned as the social anchor for Jurong Innovation District's (JID) five precincts, fostering an active community of talent for cross-sector innovation, test-bedding, and knowledge sharing.

Situated along Singapore's western industrial belt, Bulim Square caters to sectors including advanced manufacturing, robotics, urban solutions, clean technology, and smart logistics.

## PROJECT DETAILS

Completed: 2025  
 Location: Jurong West, Singapore  
 Site Area: 45,473 sqm  
 Client: JTC Corporation



- 1 The inward façade facing the Sky Corridor has been scaled down to create an inviting atmosphere.
- 2 The Sky Corridor serves as an open plaza for a dynamic community of talent and tenants. Lined with F&B options, lifestyle offerings, open parks, and collaboration hubs, it transforms the square into a vibrant destination.
- 3 The physical and digital infrastructures have been set in place for a fully underground District Logistics Network in the near future, which will be shared with surrounding plots, to facilitate just-in-time delivery with centralised Goods Receiving Areas and Automated Guided Vehicles.

## DESIGN INTENT

Bulim Square consists of four blocks of modern industrial spaces connected at Level 2 via the Sky Corridor, a beautifully landscaped platform dedicated to pedestrians, cyclists, and future autonomous vehicles. This raised pathway is part of the grade-separated traffic plan for the wider JID, with heavy industrial vehicles routed underground via a central services tunnel, general traffic kept at ground level, and car-lite alternatives safely elevated above.

## PINLIGHT

Conceived as the nexus for Jurong Innovation District, Bulim Square is a pivotal piece in SAA and Surbana Jurong's efforts to transform the western Singapore landscape and advance the Live, Work, Play, Learn paradigm.

Bulim Square was presented with a Gold Plus at the BCA Universal Design Mark Award 2021.

FORM IN FOCUS

- Designed to accommodate diverse industries and future production technologies, Bulim Square includes high-volume factory spaces and differentiated floor loading, which provide the necessary infrastructure for a variety of tenants, from large-scale corporations to budding start-ups.
- Related businesses are clustered together to facilitate a seamless R&D-to-production industry value chain.



- An open-to-sky, landscaped courtyard was integrated into each cluster block to channel airflow and daylight, enhance occupant wellbeing, and facilitate emergency smoke dispersion. Corridors are shielded from the weather by rainscreens, providing protection without fully enclosing the space.



STUDIO DIALOGUE

**Siah Puay Lin**  
 Director, SAA Architects  
 Lead for Industrial Sector



**Sherllyn Hoo**  
 Senior Associate,  
 SAA Architects  
 Project Lead for  
 Bulim Square



The Sky Corridor also serves as a gateway that marks the start of an 11-km corridor which connects the various precincts within JID, as well as Nanyang Technological University and the Tengah residential estate.

**Puay Lin:** We envision Bulim Square as the heart of JID and a vibrant social hub where people can work, play, and learn once it reaches full operational capacity.

**“ The Sky Corridor will be a bustling community platform where tenant companies can open their doors for public outreach, showcasing their advancements in robotics and automation.”**

**How was Bulim Square envisioned differently from other industrial parks?**

**Puay Lin:** With growing urbanisation, the focus has shifted to creating socially engaging spaces that open up to the wider community, moving away from the purely functional nature of older industrial estates. Bulim Square stands out as a new benchmark where a culture of innovation and collaboration thrives, attracting top talents and industry leaders to establish a presence in Singapore.

**What is the role of the Sky Corridor in Bulim Square’s design?**

**Sherllyn:** The Sky Corridor is the vital link in bringing social energy and community into the industrial estate. This lush communal space creates a separation layer that elevates pedestrians and cyclists above busy vehicular traffic. The raised level and open expanse of green double as natural wind channels that enhance thermal comfort and create an inviting environment.

The space is also great for STEM workshops and educational programmes to spark interest among students and academia.

**What passive design strategies underpinned the project’s sustainability efforts?**

**Sherllyn:** A key starting point was the building’s orientation, which was planned to maximise natural cross-ventilation and minimise solar gain. We also catered for taller floor-to-ceiling heights beyond those of typical industrial buildings, and full-height curtain glass façades to bring abundant natural light into the interiors. Each block has its own central atrium, designed like a breathing courtyard, to further improve airflow and open up the space.

# A Choreography of Light, Layers, and Connectivity Beneath the Rain Trees

**Bayshore Station**, part of Singapore’s Thomson–East Coast Line, is an underground Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) station designed to cater to a growing residential district and a future park — while being seamlessly linked to East Coast Park via a landscaped pedestrian bridge.

In keeping with the Line’s overarching design theme, “A Sense of Place”, the station’s architecture was conceived as a dialogue with its context. Each entrance draws upon the vernacular of its surroundings and adopts their architectural language.

## DESIGN INTENT

Bayshore Station’s entrances were designed to blend with the neatly manicured boulevard of existing rain trees with wide canopies that border the East Coast Park Expressway and create a dappled sunlight effect through their leaves. Using a weave of perforated panels and horizontally-slatted screens, they allow natural light to pass through, conveying visual lightness and spatial openness. These linear lines also create a sense of movement that alludes to the speed of the trains running below ground.

To address space limitations, Bayshore Station adopted a stacked track alignment within the narrow corridor threading through back lanes of residential developments between Bedok South Avenue 1 and Bayshore Road.



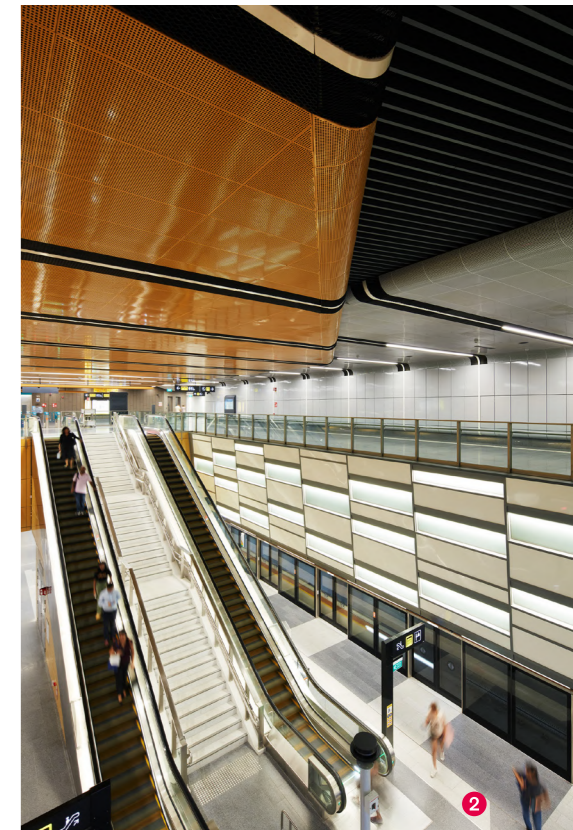
## PINLIGHT

Bayshore Station won Project of the Year (Infrastructure) at the BCA Awards 2025 for its collaborative planning and innovative construction.



## PROJECT DETAILS

Completed: 2024  
 Location: Bayshore, Singapore  
 Floor Area: 21,721 sqm  
 Client: Land Transport Authority



- 1 The entrance’s roof is supported by a colonnade of branch-like columns that line up with the rows of rain trees. The rich composition of different materials at the entrances also echoes the layers in the canopies’ foliage.
- 2 This layering effect continues underground to the concourse and platform levels, enveloping commuters to provide a personable scale against the tall station volume.
- 3 In line with the precinct’s car-free vision, Bayshore is among the first few stations in Singapore to have underground bicycle parking.

STUDIO DIALOGUE

**Rustam Tan**  
Executive Director,  
SAA Architects  
Lead for Transport Sector



**What was the design intent behind Bayshore Station?**

The surrounding site is lined with rows of mature rain trees, whose canopies cast intricate patterns of light and shadow on the ground. It was this ephemeral experience of *Komorebi* that became the starting point for our design approach.

We envisioned the entrances of Bayshore Station as open pavilions, where light filters through the porous structure to recreate the experience of walking beneath canopies. Perforated screens along the façade and skylights further echo the visual permeability of foliage, allowing not just light but air to pass through for natural ventilation.



“Looking ahead, the team is exploring multisensory design interventions, such as infusing subtle scents through the air-conditioning system. This adds a layer of sensory design and promotes a more tranquil and relaxing commuting experience.”



**What were some strategies employed in the design of Bayshore and other MRT stations to elevate the commuter experience?**

Beyond circulation and efficiency, colour plays a pivotal role in elevating the commuting experience. Calming shades of blue ease anxiety, while bold accents — such as the vibrant red at Orchard Station — inject energy and dynamism. At Orchard Boulevard Station, which connects directly to Camden Medical and welcomes a high volume of outpatients, a clean, neutral palette was chosen to evoke calmness and support the healing process.

Spatial strategies further enhance this experience. Double-volume spaces and overlooking pathways create a sense of expansiveness, generosity, and welcome within subterranean settings. Skylights, strategically introduced at stations like Orchard Boulevard, bring in natural daylight, offering moments of respite amid the busy transit flows.

**How has the design of MRT stations evolved from earlier generations?**

Earlier train stations prioritised efficiency and practicality, often with amenities such as retail spaces kept to a minimum. Today, evolving societal needs have made way for newer MRT stations to serve as multi-functional civic anchors. More stations are being conceived as part of broader Transit-Oriented Developments, integrating transport hubs with residential, commercial, and community amenities, creating new urban lifestyle nodes that augment the transiting experience of station spaces.

Moreover, each station is increasingly responsive to its surrounding context and identity. Bayshore Station, for instance, serves a precinct that encourages car-lite mobility. Hence, it includes a 300-capacity underground bicycle park to strengthen first-and last-mile connectivity.

# Designing a Community Anchor for Northern Singapore



**Northpoint City** (NPC) is the first and largest integrated development in northern Singapore, evolving from the expansion and refurbishment of the original Northpoint Shopping Centre — also completed by SAA in 1992. Today, it stands as a Transit-Oriented Development that integrates a large retail podium, private residential towers, and an assemblage of community spaces with the Yishun Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) station and bus interchange.

More than a standalone destination, NPC has become the convergent point for the Yishun neighbourhood, channelling footfall throughout the wider estate, boosting local retail and community vibrancy, and reinforcing a shared identity. Yishun was one of three heartlands that underwent the Housing Development Board’s “Remaking Our Heartland” initiative in 2007, a national effort to rejuvenate mature estates and adapt them to changing community needs.

**PINLIGHT**

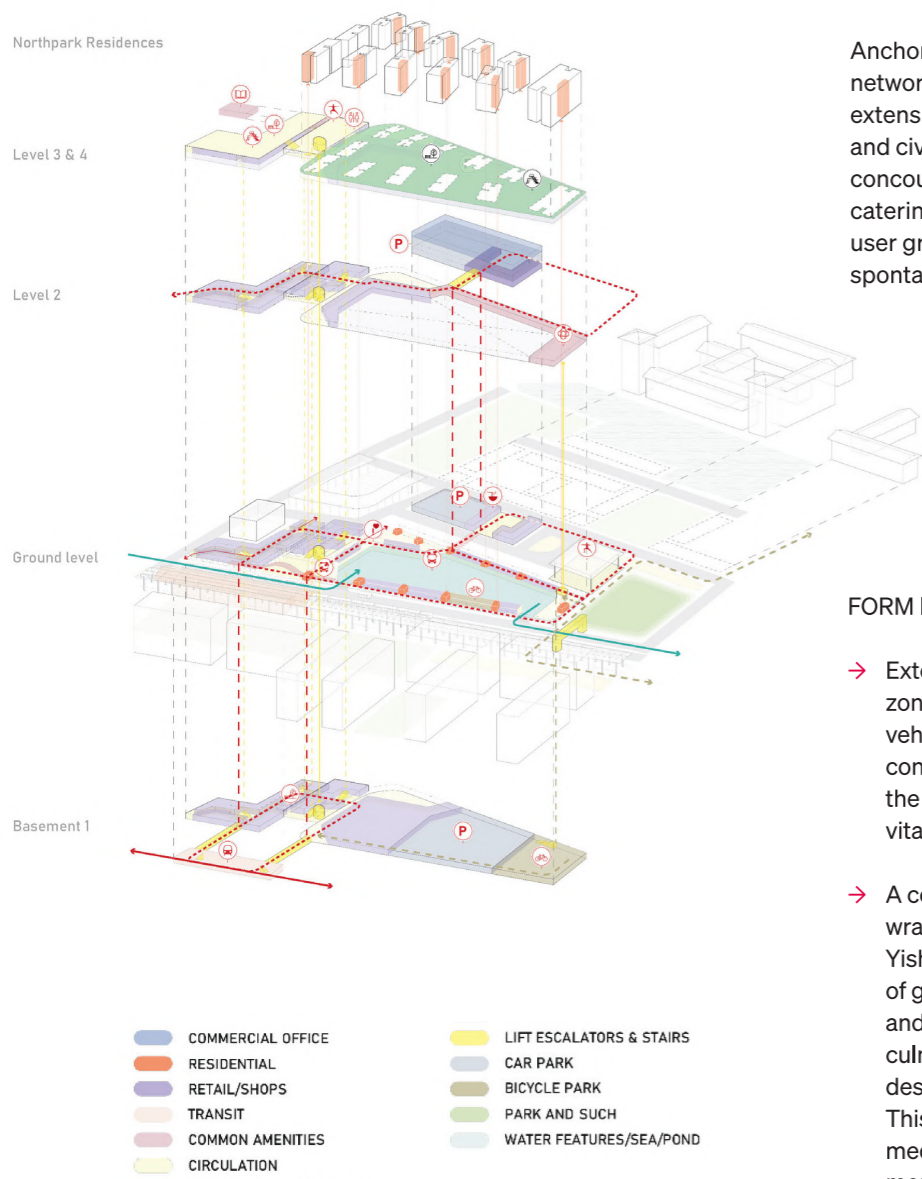
Celebrated for its transformative renewal, NPC has garnered multiple accolades, including the BCA BIM Award 2017, BCA Green Mark Award 2017, and a Silver at the China Real Estate & Design Award (CREDAWARD) 2023 for Comprehensive Commercial Project.



**PROJECT DETAILS**

Completed: 2018  
 Location: Yishun, Singapore  
 Floor Area: 130,637 sqm  
 Client: North Gem Development Pte Ltd & FC North Gem Trustee Pte Ltd  
 Collaboration: ADDP LLP (Design Architect for North Park Residences)



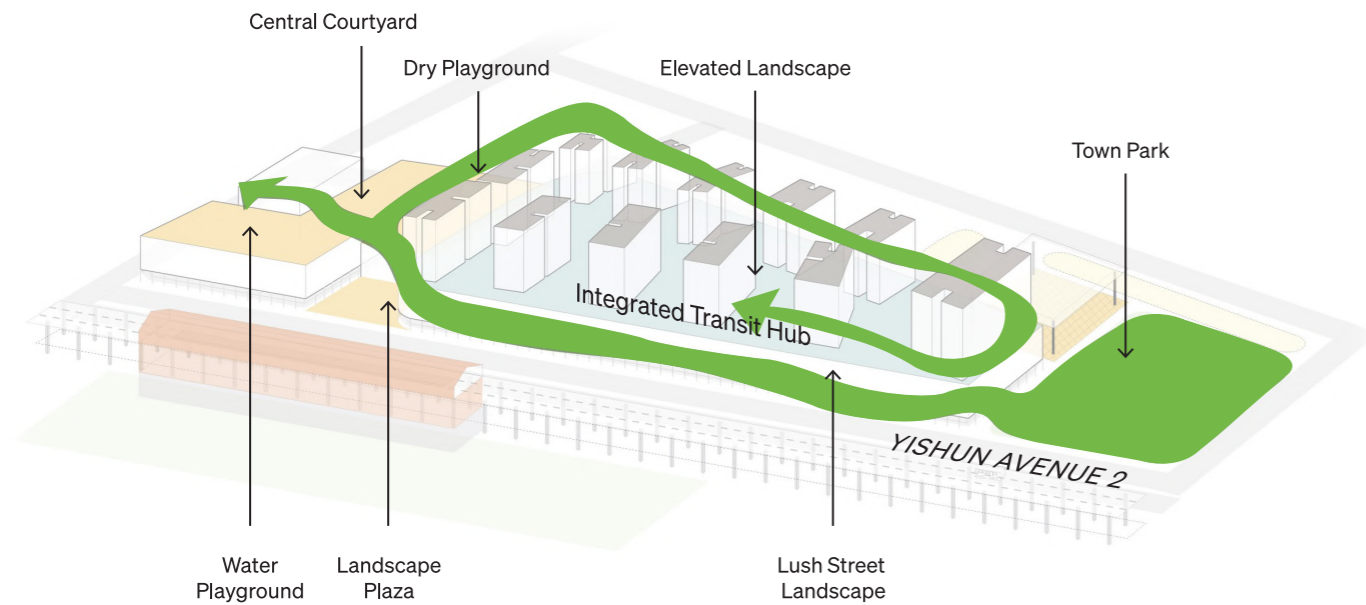


DESIGN INTENT

Anchored by the public transport network, NPC interlaces an extensive line-up of commercial and civic spaces throughout its concourses and circulation spines, catering to a wide spectrum of user groups and encouraging spontaneous interactions.

FORM IN FOCUS

- Extensive studies on sightlines, zoning, and commuter and vehicular traffic resulted in two new connectivity loops to strengthen the existing flow and enhance the vitality of the wider neighbourhood.
- A continuous “green necklace” wraps around NPC, extending from Yishun Town Garden into a series of garden paths, sky terraces, and a landscaped façade before culminating in a lush, open rooftop designed for both young and old. This generous greenery also mediates urban heat, providing a more comfortable and healthier environment for residents.



1 Designed as a social hub, the first connectivity loop brings together a sequence of public spaces, including a town square, a public library, rooftop gardens and playgrounds, and Nee Soon Central Community Club, the first to be co-located with a mall.



2 An underground loop was introduced between Yishun MRT Station and the South Wing for a smooth pedestrian flow while increasing footfall along the retail corridors. This added link completes the circuit between the MRT station, original North Wing, new South Wing and community courtyard, and Yishun Bus Interchange.

3 A large flowing canopy along its main frontage unifies the old and new wings, creating a sense of arrival and a distinct visual marker to draw in the crowd. Its warm terracotta colour mirrors the roof of the train station, gently weaving the structures into the existing urban fabric.



**How has NPC given Yishun residents a stronger sense of place?**

**Aidil:** Its design is the result of close engagement with residents and grassroots leaders. These exchanges allowed us to create spaces that feel familiar and embody the community's aspirations. One example is the community wall at the basement level, adorned with artworks by residents. Such tangible gestures help foster a genuine sense of ownership and pride.

**Patrik:** NPC offers many pockets of communal space to encourage multi-generational interaction. The children's playground on Level 3 is coupled with a plaza where seniors can hold their morning tai chi sessions. These inclusive public spaces deepen the sense of community.

**“ We were encouraged to hear that the transformation of what some have coined “the heartbeat of Yishun” was eagerly anticipated and welcomed with pride. Northpoint City’s strong connection with its residents underscores the value of meaningful community involvement from the outset.”**

STUDIO DIALOGUE

**Aidil Shukor**  
Executive Director,  
Architecture + Design,  
SJ Group  
Lead for Mixed Use +  
Commercial Sector



**Patrik Ng**  
Senior Associate Director,  
SAA Architects  
Project Lead for NPC



**What design strategies ensured NPC was in harmony with the existing urbanscape?**

**Aidil:** NPC was conceived in tandem with its wider urban context. Beyond integrating the new and old wings, we carefully considered the existing Yishun town centre and garden, the train station, and other community amenities when planning the spaces. We sought to preserve their community roles and reintroduce them as part of the integrated development.

To replace the portion of the original park that was taken over, we introduced a verdant ribbon along the entire façade — a “green necklace” — that extends the soft greenscape across the development, creating a visual continuity with the adjacent parkland. This gesture reflects NPC’s organic evolution as the nexus of Yishun.



**Are Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs) the answer to urban growth?**

**Patrik:** TODs bring the “15-minute city” concept to life. They function as efficient, self-sufficient hubs where all essential day-to-day amenities are within easy reach.

**Aidil:** As land use in Singapore continues to intensify, TODs optimise connectivity, enhance liveability, and inject new social energy into mature estates. As we have seen in Yishun, Northpoint City has played a crucial role in revitalising the precinct, increasing both the vibrancy and value of surrounding developments. TODs clearly point towards the future of urban growth.

# A New Landmark at the Crossroads of Heritage and Modern Living

**City Gate** is an iconic mixed-use development that redefines city-fringe living. Featuring two interconnected residential towers above a five-storey commercial podium, it has transformed the former office building into a thriving axis for living, retail, and lifestyle.



**PINLIGHT**

City Gate won the Award of Excellence in the Best Tall Mixed-Use Building category at the 2022 Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH) Awards.



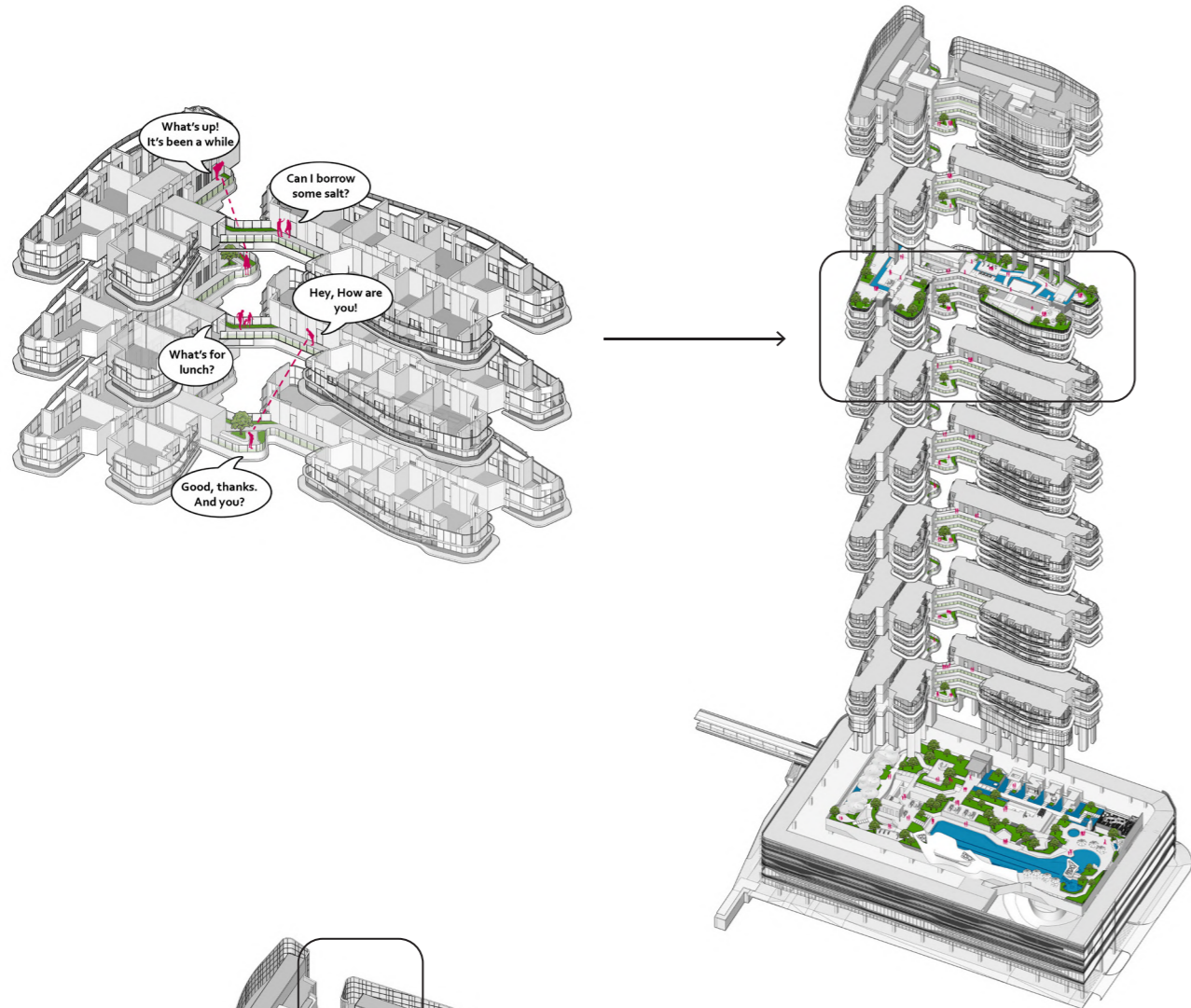
**PROJECT DETAILS**

Completed: 2018  
 Location: Bugis, Singapore  
 Total Floor Area: 36,345 sqm  
 Retail Floor Area: 28,737 sqm  
 No. of Residential Units: 331 Units  
 Client: Bayfront Ventures Pte Ltd

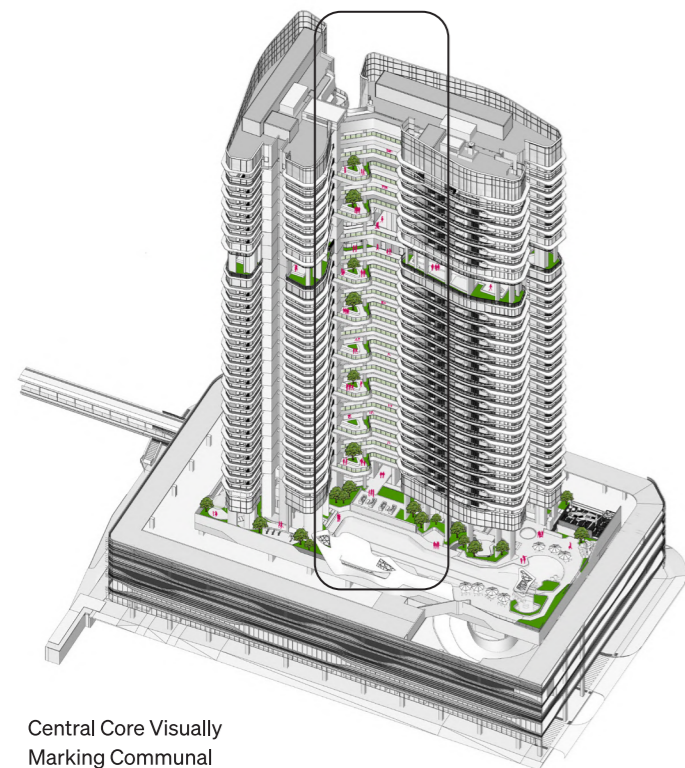
**DESIGN INTENT**

Located at an urban-heritage threshold between the Central Business District and historic Kampong Gelam, City Gate departs from the conventional rectilinear glass-and-concrete skyscraper typology. A detailed, wave-like modular façade wraps around its podium, introducing a finer-grained texture that matches the scale of the surrounding shophouses. These waves create apertures with glimpses of dining and retail activities inside, while gently rounding off the corners to ease the solid form into the streetscape.

- 1 Continuing the theme of “motion in nature”, the graceful flowing lines of the aluminum podium façade take the form of thin concrete solar protection at every residential floor of the tower, giving the integrated development a slender profile.
- 2 Communal decks exclusive to residents on the 6th and 24th storeys provide lush, private sanctuaries that insulate them from the bustle of the podium below.



+ 2 Lush Communal Floors



Central Core Visually Marking Communal Spaces of Relief

FORM IN FOCUS

- 16 sky terraces punctuate the 25-storey tower, mitigating its imposing scale. They are staggered on alternating planes, allowing a visual dialogue and social moments between residents on different floors.
- The L-shaped tower layout maximises views of the culturally-rich neighbourhood and sweeping vistas beyond, while offering dynamic elevations of the urban marker when viewed from different points across the city.



STUDIO DIALOGUE

**Charles Arnal**  
 Director, SAA Architects  
 Lead Designer for City Gate



Were any adaptations made to City Gate to fit the locale?

City Gate adopted a fluid, curvilinear form with an undulating façade that expands and contracts, creating a shifting silhouette that lends the building a dynamic, living quality.

City Gate is situated in a culturally-rich area. How did the site's heritage inform your conceptual framework of the design?

Located along Beach Road and right next to the Kampong Gelam conservation district, City Gate sits in a site steeped in history yet poised for urban transformation. Rather than competing with the heritage landmarks that define the precinct, the design draws inspiration from the surrounding architectural language and reinterprets it through a contemporary lens, creating a bold urban marker that enters into a quiet dialogue with its storied context.

“To visually anchor it at the intersection of Jalan Sultan and Beach Road, azure blue accents were traced along the perimeter of the retail podium, framing it as a striking gateway to the Central Business District.”

A perforated metal veil, resembling a field of silver stars, was meticulously wrapped around the podium block to integrate the car park on the upper floors into the overall architectural language.

How did you ensure vibrancy for the retail units and privacy for residents?

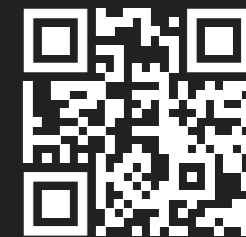
We started with a distinct spatial separation between the residential and commercial zones. The podium, which houses retail and F&B units, opens to the main pedestrian thoroughfare along Beach Road and Jalan Sultan to activate the frontage and draw footfall.

Above this lively base, we created a separate ground plane on Level Six for the two 25-storey residential towers, accessed through a private lift lobby. Our intent was to create an urban cocoon, where the vibrancy of city life coexists with the calm of a residential sanctuary.





SAA Architects' Website



SJ Group's Website

[saaarchitects.com.sg](http://saaarchitects.com.sg)

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