

SCDA ARCHITECTS NATIONAL DESIGN CENTRE IN SINGAPORE

By Staff Writer



The proposal for the National Design Centre is a showcase of innovation and encouragement in the possibilities of design. It forms a unique contribution to the urban fabric in the conservation district of Bras Basah, regenerating an existing structure to form a diverse flexible space for interaction and learning.

Conceptually, the design is a composition of four translucent boxes, cantilevering and overlapping to form an interconnected series of volumes for both public and private uses. The composition occupies a strategic location visible from Victoria Street, drawing the public inward to activate the space.

The design respects the existing building with an insertion that serves to enhance the existing spaces within. The adaptive elements in the central courtyard add to the internal volume and institute a new dimension to a previously enclosed space. To promote open courtyard interaction, the platonic boxes operate as a new dominant feature within the central space, and provide a plenitude of areas for displays and exhibitions. These boxes are detached from the external façade, creating a three-storey interstitial volume that filters light down to the gallery. In addition, the new spatial volumes create a strong visual juxtaposition with the external conserved façade.

The proposal also addresses the need to activate the street frontage by arranging key public areas on the first level. A bistro café links the street to the central courtyard, and flows into a space for retail and exhibition. Galleries run the length of the central courtyard and continue to flank the edge of the open court, opening to an alfresco café area. The insertion culminates vertically at the existing flat roof area as an open landscaped terrace, offering a place of calm respite in which to share thoughts and ideas. At night, the rooftop, together with the box forms, will be lit subtly, creating a composition of solids and voids and adding to the diversity and interest of the arts precinct.