

## Connecting Urban Engagement – Jury Review

Sustainable Tropical Environmental Design Exhibition 2011

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The strength of this 4th year batch is in producing buildings with long-life quality which would be capable of long-term occupation and reuse. The buildings should regenerate local resources to sustain economically in the long run. In the first project, the students demonstrate adequate understanding on the urban issues especially in addressing the problem of density and the way the living and commercial spaces should be designed in an urban setting. In Saiful Azam's scheme, the interlocking rectangular boxes create a series of open spaces that not only integrate the environmental and social space to work, live and play but also unite the whole building form. The final product embodies the student's idea on creating vertical environmental and social space which is badly needed in Kuala Lumpur. Meanwhile, Safarin Savikon's idea of connecting the variety of urban building typology on the street level in a high-rise deserves the accolades. In his proposal, the urban streets are reintroduced as social and environmental paths which criss-cross the building made of simple rectangular boxes thus deconstructing the activities on the street into a vertical arrangement.

In another scheme, Teh Min Shen's Urban Morphology denotes the richness of the forms connected by a spatial circulation ribbon that begins at street level moving upwards and uplifts the value on the street life in an urban setting population. The continuous and meandering corridors enhance social interaction whilst allowing inhabitants to view the overall panoramic view of Kuala Lumpur. Conceivably, Tee Khay Mee scheme as the winner of Nippon Paint Awards 2010 project (see pp. 192-193) shows a student maturity in using colours as an important design component. The scheme can be considered as an intelligent attempt of using earth colours to evoke an invigorating and healthy lifestyle that blends sustainability design principles with sinuous organic forms of urban fabric.

The second project which is located in a suburban area cemented the students' creativities in their interpretations and portrayals of a permaculture centre with a new building typology in this sustainable era. The environmentally intelligent design is intended to create an energy-active system that introduces both proven and innovative low energy consumption systems, environmental control systems and newly developed energy harvesting systems. Norhasni Ahmad's proposal breathes life to the idea of building as a source of knowledge to its occupants. The utilization of

courtyard spaces and passive design technique and clear separation of public and private spaces accentuate the environmental experience and learning which is missing in many profit-oriented conventional commercial buildings. Meanwhile, Asyraf Azmi puts forward a commendable proposal that successfully generate the environment and social interaction through a series of environmental friendly courtyards and corridor linkages that can be accessed and viewed interactively by all users. The proposal has also successfully addressed the site context by keeping the building at lower scale that creates a sense of belonging to the community.”

Meanwhile, the prevalent weakness in the artefacts is that most are lacking quality spatial experience in the units and in external spaces. Most forms are rigid basic rectangular forms in attempting to reflect the urban setting. However, it is conceivable that the form can be more fluid to counter the strict rigid urban forms; a similar case observed in the second project. In this case a transformation process based on the investigation of nature based on cell-like structure can be considered appropriate for this project. It is heartening to see the 4th year students vibrantly embarking on the main urban and sustainable issues and interpolating them into a strong design output that contains attentive ideas that can be passed on to other architectural students.