

INAUGURAL EXHIBITION OF THE  
SINGAPORE ARCHITECTURE COLLECTION

# TO DRAW AN IDEA

RETRACING THE DESIGNS OF  
WILLIAM LIM ASSOCIATES – W ARCHITECTS

The URA Centre Atrium  
28 November 2023 – 8 June 2024

Organisers



Partner



## TO DRAW AN IDEA: RETRACING THE DESIGNS OF WILLIAM LIM ASSOCIATES – W ARCHITECTS

*To Draw An Idea* follows the design evolution of William Lim Associates – W Architects through 19 projects over its 40-year history. This exhibition presents more than 500 architectural drawings – from hand sketches to watercolour renderings, construction drawings – as well as architectural models and documentation, to reveal the firm's design process. These materials have been donated to the Singapore Architecture Collection.

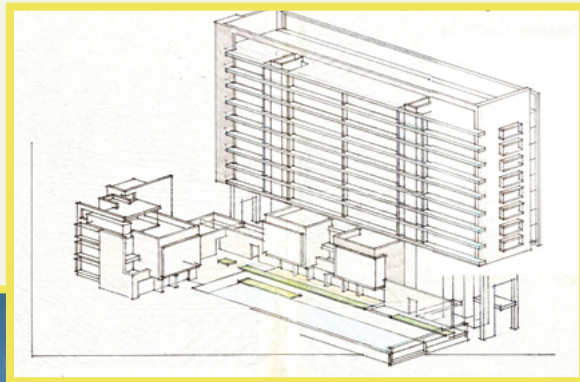
Founded in 1982, William Lim Associates (WLA) was the third firm affiliated with the architect William S. W. Lim who was involved in designing post-independence landmarks like People's Park and Golden Mile Complexes. The architect Mok Wei Wei joined WLA that same year, becoming the lead architect for many groundbreaking projects.

This exhibition celebrates the architectural works by one of Singapore's most respected practices, inviting visitors to explore its designs in the context of key events and movements in Singapore's recent architectural history.



**Bu Ye Tian – Axonometric view of Canton Court**  
Ong Kim Seng, 1982, watercolour on paper

*Bu Ye Tian* (不夜天) is a proposal for conservation and adaptive re-use of shophouses in Kreta Ayer as a cultural destination. The architect Mok Wei Wei worked with artist Ong Kim Seng to create renderings that convey the desired atmosphere, based on Mok's architectural drawings.

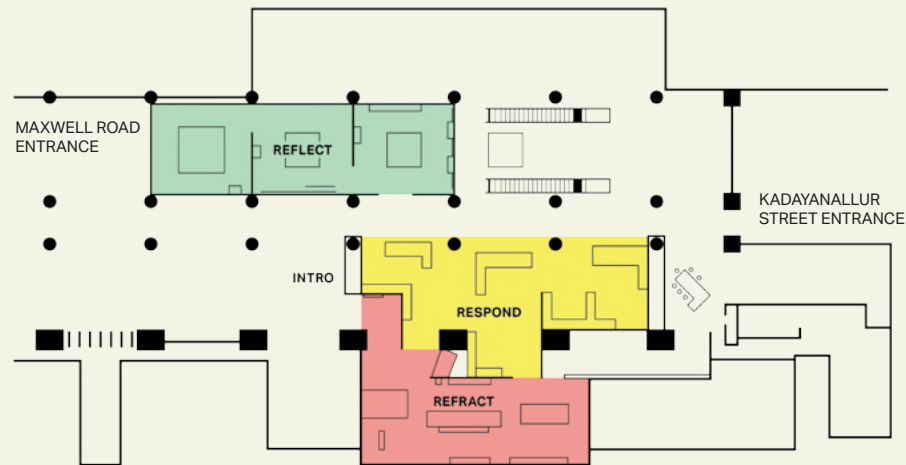


## 2. RESPOND Contextualism in a Constricting Environment

The 1990s and 2000s saw new housing types emerge to cater to a different demographic set like design-conscious, cosmopolitan, high-income professionals who desired urban lifestyles. Concurrently, planning regulations in Singapore rapidly evolved to create new parameters and guidelines that shaped design. Projects in this section depict the rise of design as a marketable asset, and the architects' creativity in responding to complex regulations.

**Three Three Robin – Massing Concept**  
William Lim Associates – W Architects, 2000 – 2006

This condominium building integrates two contrasting scales and forms. Its upper floors read as a singular apartment block, while the lower three floors are organised as three individual "houses" that respond to the ground-scape's intimate setting. This design drawing explores the arrangement of the individual "houses" to create an exterior landscaped terrace.



Three Three Robin, c. 2000s  
Photograph by Teo Zi Tong,  
courtesy of W Architects

## 1. REFRACT In Search of Fundamentals

The 1970s and 1980s were a period of urban transformation in Singapore. As the city rapidly modernised, many vernacular shophouse settlements were replaced with large-scale developments to meet economic demands. Concurrently, the global architecture scene saw the emergence of Post-Modernism in response to the shortcomings of Modernist architecture. Projects in this section explore the architects' reinterpretation of vernacular heritage, and the adaptation of global Post-Modernist trends into Singapore's architectural context.



**Chinatown Infill – Section Drawing**  
Mok Wei Wei, 1981 – 1982

This project was Mok Wei Wei's graduation thesis at the School of Architecture, National University of Singapore. Based on a site in Kreta Ayer, the design proposal retains historic shophouses and offers a home for Chinatown's rich living heritage. This drawing shows an inner courtyard space enlivened with traditional activities, including lantern making, outdoor dining, and Chinese opera performances.

## 3. REFLECT Negotiating Spatial Cultures in a Global City-State

Singapore's cultural imagination combines different ethnic vernaculars influenced by colonialism and globalisation. Against this backdrop, the architect Mok Wei Wei draws inspiration from the imagery of Chinese literary classics to create contemporary and abstract spaces. Projects in this section are shaped by considerations of culture, heritage and personal influences, where the architects' historical awareness allows them to reinterpret the past to create novel outcomes.

**National Museum of Singapore – Design Drawing of Glass Connector Space**  
W Architects, 2004

This project involves the refurbishment and addition of a contemporary wing to the National Museum of Singapore. This hand-drawn perspective drawing visualises a key space in the re-designed museum. On the second floor, a contemporary glass addition pierces through the old building's tiled roof to allow a close-up exterior view of the museum's iconic rotunda.



National Museum of Singapore, c. 2000s  
Photograph by Albert Lim K. S.,  
courtesy of W Architects



## TOURS

### Curator's Tours

Conducted in English

Fridays

19 Jan, 23 Feb, 22 Mar,  
19 Apr, 24 May 2024

2.00 pm – 3.00 pm

#### Meeting Point

Lobby, The URA Centre  
(Maxwell Road entrance)

### Public Tours

Conducted in English | Led by docents

Wednesdays

10, 17, 24 & 31 Jan 2024  
21 & 28 Feb 2024

6, 13, 20 & 27 Mar 2024

3, 17 & 24 Apr 2024

8, 15 & 29 May 2024

Saturdays

6, 13, 20 & 27 Jan 2024

3 & 24 Feb 2024

2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 Mar 2024

6, 13, 20 & 27 Apr 2024

4, 11, 18 & 25 May 2024

2.00 pm – 3.00 pm

#### Meeting Point

Lobby, The URA Centre  
(Maxwell Road entrance)

### 周末导览

华语讲解 | 由义务导览员带领

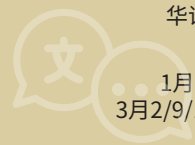
2024年, 星期六

1月6/13/20/27日 · 2月3/24日  
3月2/9/16/23/30日 · 4月6/13/20/27日  
5月4/11/18/25日

下午3时至4时于大厅

#### 集合地点

市区重建局大厅(麦士威路入口)



Please refer to  
[www.go.gov.sg/sacexhibitions](http://www.go.gov.sg/sacexhibitions)  
for more details



## PROGRAMMMES

### PUBLIC TALK

### Singapore Architectural Development Through the Lens of Darren Soh

Darren Soh, Architecture Photographer

Friday, 12 Jan 2024

7.00 pm – 8.00 pm

Possibility Room, Level 5,  
National Library Building



### CURATOR'S TALK

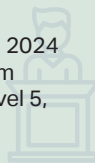
### To Draw An Idea: Retracing the designs of William Lim Associates – W Architects

Mok Wei Wei, Architect and Ronald Lim, Curator-Architect

Thursday, 18 Jan 2024

2.00 pm – 4.00 pm

Function Hall, Level 5,  
The URA Centre  
& Zoom webinar



Saturday, 23 Mar 2024

11.00 am – 12.30 pm

Possibility Room and  
Imagination Room, Level 5,  
National Library Building

### PUBLIC TALK

### Architecture Stuff & More Stuff

Wong Yunn Chii, Head, Department of Architecture, NUS  
and Kelley Cheng, Creative Director, The Press Room

Friday, 23 Feb 2024

2.00 pm – 4.00 pm

Function Hall, Level 5, The URA Centre  
& Zoom webinar



Admission to programmes is free. To  
register or for full programme listing, visit  
[www.go.gov.sg/tdai-progrm-collection](http://www.go.gov.sg/tdai-progrm-collection)





SATELLITE EXHIBITION

# DARE TO DESIGN

Singapore Architecture 1960s – 2000s

## National Library Building Level 1, Lobby

28 November 2023 – 9 June 2024



National Library Board  
Singapore

## DARE TO DESIGN: SINGAPORE ARCHITECTURE 1960S – 2000S

Singapore has amazing architecture.

The last sixty years have seen an array of buildings that reflect Singapore's development and the passion of the men and women who shaped it.

*Dare to Design* highlights iconic Singapore architecture spanning from the 1960s to the 2000s. Books, building plans, photographs, and more will be displayed in an exhibition at the National Library Building's lobby and a family-friendly roving display at selected public libraries.

Come discover Singapore architecture through the stories of these buildings and witness a boldness and flexibility that keeps people at the heart of design.



People's Park Complex, 2016  
*Photograph by Darren Soh*



Futura Apartments, c. 2000s  
*Courtesy of International Design Studio Pte Ltd*



Golden Mile Complex, 2014  
*Photograph by Darren Soh*

## EXHIBITION

National Library Building, Lobby  
28 Nov 2023 – 9 Jun 2024

## ROVING DISPLAY

Bishan Public Library, Level 1 Atrium  
28 Nov 2023 – 31 Jan 2024

Jurong Regional Library, Level 1  
1 Feb – 31 Mar 2024

Tampines Regional Library, Level 2  
1 Apr – 9 Jun 2024



Singapore Conference Hall and Trade Union House, c. 1970  
*Collection of the National Museum of Singapore, National Heritage Board, 2008-04101*



Pearl Bank Apartments, 2014  
*Courtesy of Archurban Architects Planners Pte Ltd*



Pinnacle@Duxton, 2009  
*Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts Collection, National Archives of Singapore*



Tampines Neighbourhood 4 (Street 45), 2007  
*Courtesy of P&T Consultants Pte Ltd*



National Theatre, c. 1968 – 1970  
*John C. Young Collection, National Archives of Singapore*

## ABOUT THE SINGAPORE ARCHITECTURAL COLLECTION

The Singapore Architecture Collection reflects deeper efforts to document and preserve archival materials about Singapore's modern and contemporary architecture. The collection showcases our architectural and urban design journey, as well as the innovative works of pioneer and current architects and designers, that are integral to our national heritage and identity.

The collection comprises architectural models, photographs, drawings, artefacts, oral history recordings and more. These records not only tell the stories behind the design of our landmarks and everyday places, they can also inspire current and future generations in shaping Singapore's built environment. The public can look forward to programmes and outreach activities to learn and discover more about the collection and our Singapore Story.

We invite more architects, planners, urban designers and those from the built environment industry to contribute their materials to enhance and enrich the collection.



For more information  
about the collection  
[www.go.gov.sg/sgarchitecturecollection](http://www.go.gov.sg/sgarchitecturecollection)



Access the collection on  
National Library Board's  
OneSearch catalogue  
<https://search.nlb.gov.sg>

The Singapore Architecture Collection is managed by



in partnership with

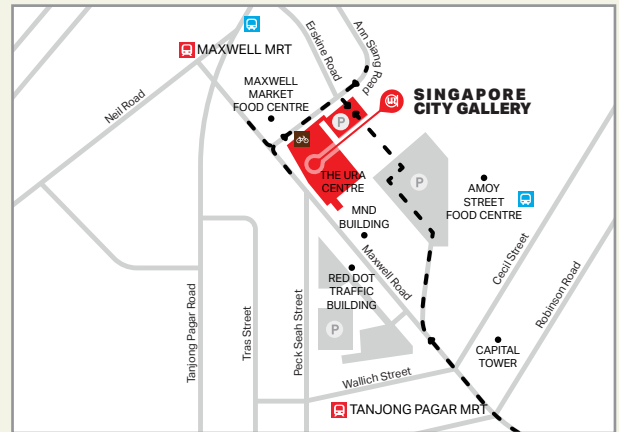


Department of Architecture  
College of Design and Engineering



Architecture and  
Sustainable  
Design

## GETTING TO THE URA CENTRE



**Address**  
45 Maxwell Road  
The URA Centre  
Singapore 069118

**Opening Hours**  
Monday to Saturday  
9.00 am – 5.00 pm  
Closed on Sundays and  
Public Holidays

## GETTING TO THE NATIONAL LIBRARY BUILDING



**Address**  
100 Victoria Street  
Singapore 188064

**Opening Hours**  
Monday to Sunday  
10.00 am – 9.00 pm  
Closed on Public Holidays

All information is correct at the time of printing (November 2023). The National Library, Singapore reserves the right to make changes to the programmes without prior notice.