

KWEK HONG PNG WING AND RIVERFRONT WING, ASIAN CIVILISATIONS MUSEUM

1 EMPRESS PLACE

Inspired Interventions



Owner:
National Heritage Board

Architect:
GreenhillLi Pte Ltd

Engineers:
Arup Singapore Pte Ltd (KHP Wing) &
Leng Consultants (Riverfront Wing)

Contractors:
Shin Khai Construction Pte Ltd (KHP Wing) &
Sunray Woodcraft Construction Pte Ltd
(Riverfront Wing)

A stately monument built in 1860s in the heart of the Empress Place precinct, the Asian Civilisations Museum is well established as an important institution, a popular venue for cultural events and a prime space for civic activities. The addition of two new wings has enhanced the museum's cultural role, affirming its eminence as an institution that both honours the past and celebrates the future.



Kwek Hong Png Wing

Masterful Balancing

To accommodate the growing needs of the museum, the new Riverfront and Kwek Hong Png Wings mark the first time that purpose-built gallery spaces in a contemporary language have been commissioned in a historical setting. Detailed research into the existing building complex history facilitated the notable expansions which replaced a recent structure in the service yard and optimised the space in a nondescript staff-carpark respectively.

A Light Touch

For the Kwek Hong Png Wing, its design as an elevated, visually simple and minimalist three-dimensional box, detached from the surrounding neo-Palladian facades was a master-stroke. This has introduced new ways for the visitor to engage with the monument. Looking from within, new vistas have been created to the surrounding Empress Place. Carefully designed delicate touches abound, together with the strategy of concealing M&E works within the new structure ensures

that the historical aspects of the building would be minimally affected. The use of connecting lightweight bridges, meticulously detailed and executed, preserves the integrity of the older wing.

The Riverfront Wing takes a different approach, with a low elongated minimalist form that underlines the historic profile of the neo-Palladian building. The entrance has a frame of slanted solid planes leading

to a naturally-lit and column-free exhibition space. Specially designed circular skylights provide diffused daylighting for the exhibits in the day and interesting floor lighting for the roof terrace at night.

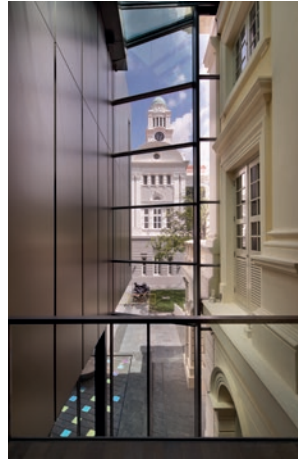
The expanded roof terrace also allows for both views to the Boat Quay skyline and an up-close encounter with the historic facade. At all sides, the encounter between the new and the old is delicately handled.

Timeless Model

The choice of titanium as external cladding for its gentle interaction with sunlight, has created an aura of timelessness, contributing to the grandeur of the monument. The sensitive and comprehensive treatment of the forms, finishes and details has successfully created additions that extended the relevance of the institution into the future. The outcome serves as a valuable reference for design processes in other heritage sites.



New volume is sensitively set back from facades



New vistas created



Carefully detailed lightweight connections



Neutral material complements the heritage building



M&E services neatly concealed



New roof terrace allows for appreciation of heritage facade and skyline



Skylight allowing natural light into new exhibition space

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2018 Award For New Design In Heritage Contexts

The masterly insertion of two new contemporary wings into the former service yard and car park is a bold and imaginative move to create more space, which enhances the 19th century neo-Palladian styled National Monument.

For the Kwek Hong Png Wing, the transparent treatment of the cuboid design at the first storey invokes a sense of curiosity as passersby can catch glimpses into the museum. The use of connecting lightweight bridges also demonstrates how new and old can co-exist successfully.

In the Riverfront Wing, the new column-free space serves as a gallery while the roof terrace above offers a new vantage point to get up close to the building's elegant plasterwork facade. Circular skylights serve a dual purpose of providing diffused daylighting for the exhibits in the day and interesting floor lighting for the roof terrace at night.

The Titanium-clad exterior of the new wings, being a 'neutral' medium that responds to changing daylight, serves to complement the monument's plaster facade. The overall effect of the two additions has created new visual connections with the monument and new vistas to its historic surroundings.

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