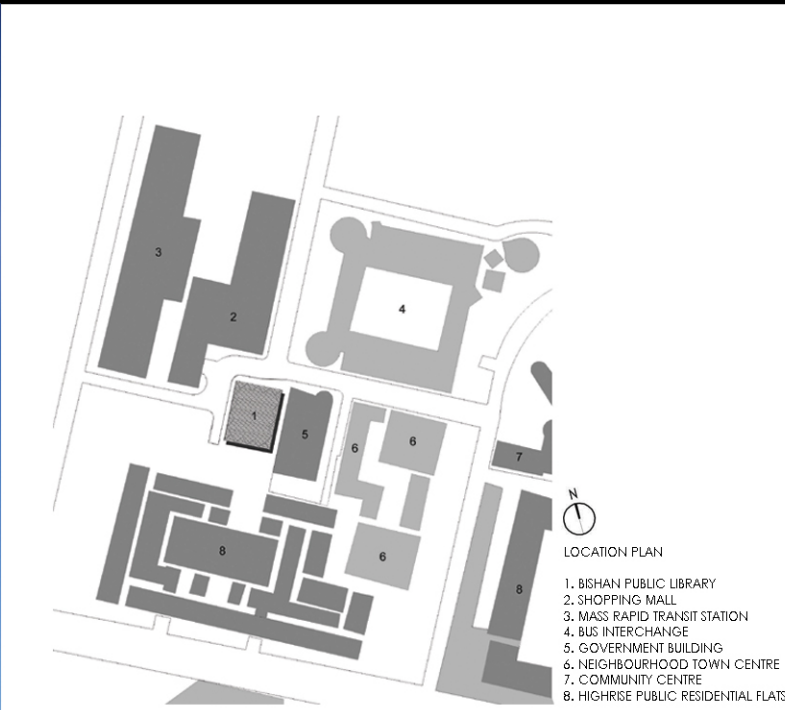


5 bishan place Singapore	
Architects	Look Architects Singapore
Clients	National Library Board Singapore
Commission	2003
Design	2003 - 2004
Construction	2004 - 2006
Occupancy	2006
Site	1,400 m ²
Ground floor	621 m ²
Total floor	4,293 m ²
Costs	5,668,770 USD

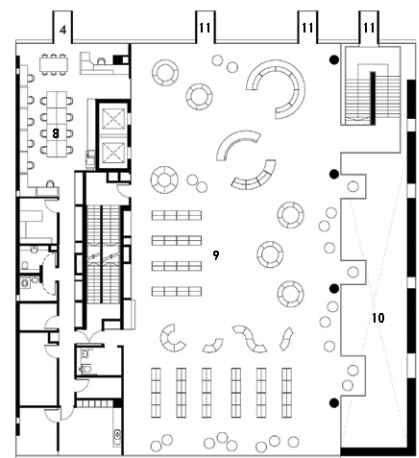
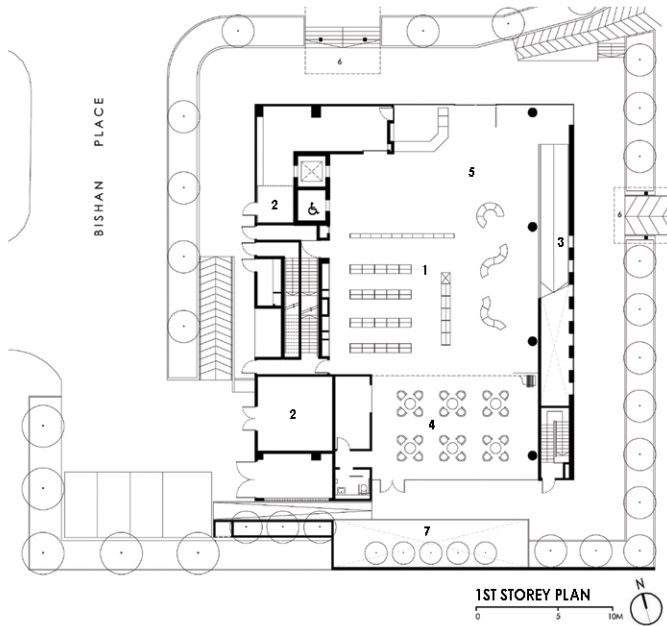
Programme An antidote to the anonymity of the existing architecture in this mixed use satellite town, the Bishan library attempts to create an environment of learning through an architectural journey of discovery and play. The design is inspired by the concept of a tree house, with ‘pods’ catilevered off the building facade that create intimate alcoves inside, and skylights, trellises and coloured glass that transform incoming daylight into into a myriad of shades and colours. An internal atrium ensures the penetration of natural light deep into the building’s main circulation zone, and the use of post-tensioned floor slabs means that there are minimal internal columns and floor space is maximized.



The metaphor of a tree house was invoked from the onset of design conceptualisation to create an environment of learning via a journey of discovery and play. The use of skylights, trellises and coloured glass transforms incoming daylight into a myriad of shades and colours, creating an intriguing dappled light quality within the library that simulates light filtered through the foliage of trees. ‘Pods’ cantilevered off the main building façade exude a distinctive charisma on the exterior and create suspended alcoves at an intimate scale from the building interior. The library is raised above the anonymity of its mixed use neighbourhood and sets out to stir the curiosity of the community.

Conflicting requirements - view orientation, solar control and regulation of unprotected openings mandated by the statutory fire safety code - were satisfied by a highly rationalised spatial strategy. An internal atrium was incorporated to introduce natural daylight deep into the main circulation zone, as well as most of the library floors, and the back-of-house was concentrated as a solid core on the western elevation to shield the building from the harsh evening sun. A gently sloping ramp leads people from the street level up to the collection zone through the atrium and also acts as an efficient discharge route for large crowds.

Departing from the traditional concept of libraries as stoic repositories of knowledge, the architectural approach for this project emphasises on the experiential quality of spaces. This is critical in an age where human senses have been seemingly numbed by the virtual world. Bishan Public Library proves that a library as a physical place can still very much offer a unique and irreplaceable experience.



- LEGEND**
- 1ST STOREY**
- 1. LIBRARY STACK
 - 2. BACK-OF-HOUSE
 - 3. RAMP
 - 4. CAFE
 - 5. ENTRANCE / FOYER
 - 6. COVERED WALKWAY
 - 7. VOID
- 4TH STOREY**
- 8. BACK-OF-HOUSE
 - 9. LIBRARY STACK
 - 10. ATRIUM
 - 11. READING POD

