

INTERIORS ARCHITECTURE DESIGN

# cubes

**GARDENS BY THE BAY**  
*Looking at the landscape feat  
a year on from its opening*

**OCBC BANK**  
*ONG&ONG redefines the  
bank's neighbourhood branch*

**K2LD ARCHITECTS**  
*Working as an open,  
collaborative practice*

**EDWIN LOW**  
*Believing in the power  
of good, honest design*

## The STAR

**PROPOSING A NEW TYPOLOGY FOR THE  
MODERN MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT**



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←  
**NEIGHBOURHOOD  
ICON:**  
*The striking form of  
The STAR makes it an  
instant landmark in  
the neighbourhood*

→  
**JEWEL CUTS:**  
*The facade of The  
STAR resembles a  
faceted jewel*

# Breaking the Mould

Text by Mizah Rahman  
Images courtesy of Aedas unless otherwise stated

The STAR offers a bold, new building typology for large-scale mixed-used developments in the region.

## THE STAR, A 15-STOREY MIXED-DEVELOPMENT

building, is no ordinary shopping complex. Bounded by Buona Vista and Dover, the project, designed by *Andrew Bromberg* of *Aedas*, is a 62,000sqm building within the larger One-North area, a research and development hub where people can live, work, learn and play.

With this context in mind, The STAR was designed with the vision to celebrate rich and varying activities within a permeable, multi-purpose building. The project challenges ideas of what a cultural, retail and civic experience can be in this day and age.

The building consists of two parts – a lower retail component (*The STAR Vista*) owned by *CapitaMalls Asia* and a perching cultural

component (*The STAR Performing Arts Centre*) belonging to *Rock Productions*, each of whom had specific briefs for Aedas. These two components are clearly articulated in form, with the latter expressed as a sealed, highly faceted jewel hovering above an open air retail component, supported by a cluster of large dancing columns – this is how the building has come to be recognised.

Despite the building's highly modern form, perhaps what is most groundbreaking about The STAR as a modern development is its treatment of its lower retail component. In a city where the air-conditioner has been hailed as one of mankind's greatest inventions, The STAR's defiant eschewing of air-conditioning for a large part





PHOTO CREDIT LUO JINGMEI





↑ **TROPICAL EMBRACE:**  
*The circulation spaces of the mall have been designed as open, naturally ventilated areas*

→ **CIVIC DUTY:**  
*A large amphitheatre within the grand foyer serves as a civic space for the community*

of its retail space is refreshing to say the least. “It is a building that breathes with its surroundings,” says Andrew Bromberg.

In a genuine step towards sustainability, the circulation spaces of the mall have been left without air conditioning, which was only applied in the interiors of shops and restaurants. Because of this, there was an overwhelming interest in tying together aspects of porosity, modulation of light and shade, and materiality in the mall. This was approached through various design strategies that harness both technological solutions as well as traditional knowledge in managing the tropical climate.

A holistic stand on sustainable design was taken through its dedicated integration of building physics techniques and analysis





of solar heat gain, glare and thermal comfort. Early in the design process, BIM and computer modeling were employed extensively to ensure the feasibility of a naturally ventilated space. Air circulation is encouraged through openings on its northern and southern elevations to welcome the prevailing breezes. Mechanical air movers have also been installed, but are used only when necessary.

Landscape was cleverly employed throughout the building as a shading agent and to soften the distinction of inside and outside spaces. Indeed, there is an ease and fluidity to which users weave in and out of spaces – there is no dogmatic prescription of how one should move about in the complex.

To this end, the floor plates are considerably layered and staggered around a 33m-high grand foyer and amphitheatre on the ground floor. While this is a move towards encouraging ventilation as

**LAYERED APPROACH:**  
*Overlapping shelters and an organic circulation build towards a rich retail experience*

PHOTO CREDIT: LUO JINGMEI



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well, it also points to an intention to design the mall as a civic space. The stepped amphitheatre offers a place for students from surrounding schools to hang out at after classes, presents line-dancers with an impromptu stage, and becomes a wet playground for children when the water feature is turned on. This foyer in which the amphitheatre sits connects the retail, civic and cultural zones visually and spatially.

Visitors to The STAR Performing Arts Centre can look down through a huge skylight from its foyer that allows a visual connection to the mall below. Meanwhile, looking from below, the cultural mass of the theatre appears to form the ‘belly’ of the building.

Holding a 5,000-seater auditorium, the cultural component of the building is impressive in both scale and form. Sweeping, scalloped walls seen from the auditorium foyer emphasise the scale of the structure, as does the complex grid of steel structures that support its glass façade. Through this, visitors are made aware of the building’s surrounds and context. Apart from the theatre, it also houses an outdoor amphitheatre, function rooms, and studios that are available for rent to the wider community.

The STAR was designed to not only allow escape from the intense sunshine but was shaped to induce cooling breezes inside. Bromberg



↑ **VISUAL DELIGHT:**  
Walls act as a canvas for coloured lights to enhance the theatrical spatial experience

→ **SUPPORTING ROLE:**  
The building facade is held together by a complex grid of steel structures



↑ **LIGHT BE:**  
*The foyer of the Performing Arts  
Centre eschews the common cave-like  
interiors of traditional theatre foyers*





↑ **FACADE TREATMENT:**  
*The building exterior is made up of a complex grid of steel structures that support its glass facade*

reveals that there was always some anxiety about whether it would truly work. However, he says one of the most exciting aspects about the project is how well the building is performing.

Admittedly, the idea of the naturally ventilated mall is not entirely new. Retail areas like People's Park Complex and Bras Basah Complex have all proven to be successful shopping models to abide by. But in an age where most malls are climate-controlled wonderlands, The STAR Vista is literally and figuratively a breath of fresh air. Yet, it makes a strong case for truly tropical and sustainable design on a large scale. It sets the tone and benchmark for other shopping malls in the region, and is a necessary alternative to the temperate model of sealed, glazed curtain-wall building. With its sensitivity not only to the locale and climate but also to the human experience, The STAR is a compelling building which might be the catalyst for a new generation of naturally ventilated shopping malls in Singapore. ♦

## ↓ THE STAR

**Client** Rock Productions Pte Ltd & CapitaMalls Asia Limited  
**Architecture Firm** Andrew Bromberg of Aedas  
**Building/ Construction Company** Hexacon Construction Pte Ltd  
**Project Manager** CapitaMalls Retail Project Management  
**Civil & Structural Engineering Firm** Thornton Tomasetti & Parsons Brinckerhoff  
**Mechanical & Electrical Engineering Firm** Mott MacDonald  
**Quantity Surveyor** Langdon & Seah Singapore Pte Ltd  
**Landscape Consultant** ICN Design International  
**Interior Design** Andrew Bromberg of Aedas  
**Façade Consultant** ALT Limited  
**Theatre & Acoustic Consultant** Artec Consultants Inc.  
**Fire & Environmental Consultant** Arup Singapore Pte Ltd

**Time to Complete** Approximately 48 months  
**Total Floor Area** 62,000sqm (24,000sqm Retail + 38,000sqm Civic)

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