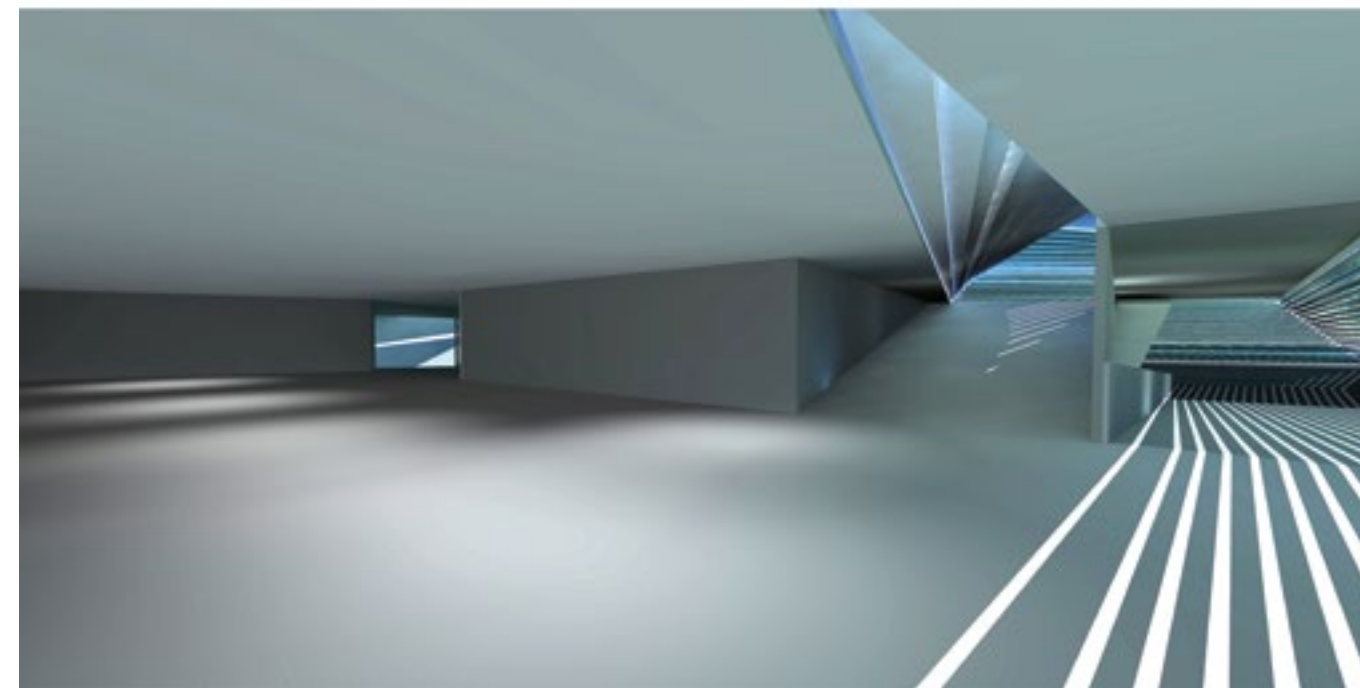
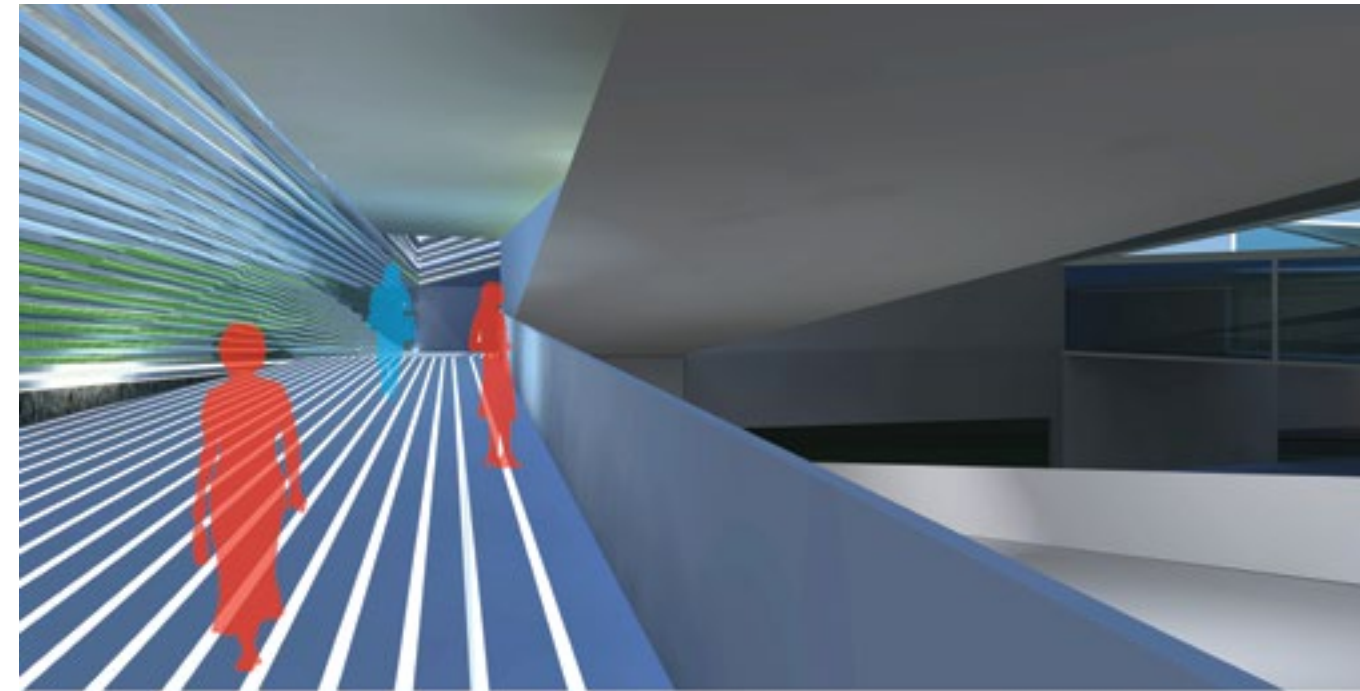
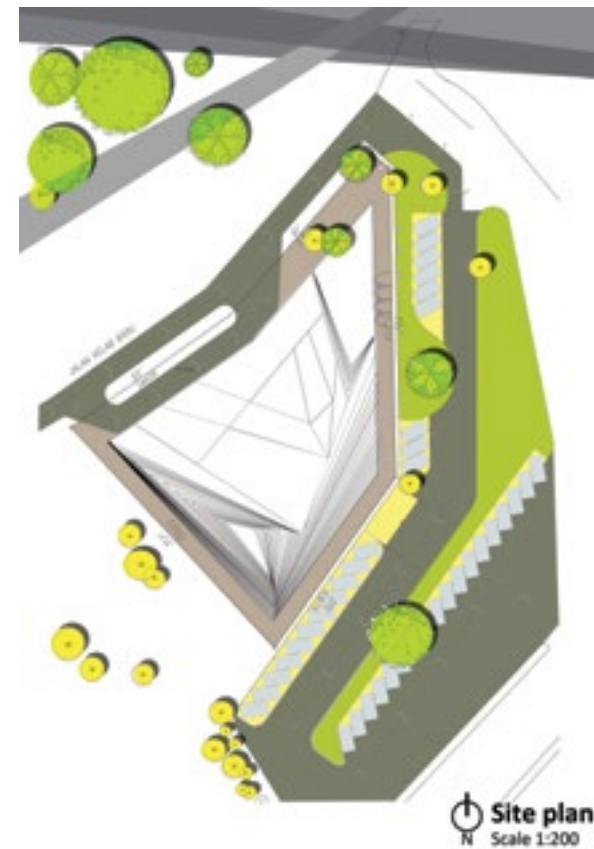


Streaks of History

Mohamad Fakri Zaky Ja'afar

The gallery is set in a green surrounding of Taiping Lake Garden, the first lake garden in Malaysia. It is meant to persuade visitors to immerse in the rich history of Taiping i.e., the tin mines, the Larut wars and the advent of British Colonialism in *Tanah Melayu*.

The design takes a different approach to buildings of heritage and history. Rather than the feel of a museum of yesteryears, the gallery conveys the idea of universality consisting, of modern ideas of forms and meaning. Strong horizontal lines indicate openings for views, light and ventilation. Realising the artefact status of the lake itself, the gallery is subdued by being pushed into the ground. Nevertheless, being at the edge of a higher ground, the sunken level still enjoys outside views of the lower part of the garden towards the lake.



Non building and anti object seem to be the overriding feature of this proposal. Other than the gentle protrusion of the two entrances on the higher ground level, the spaces are within an enclosure and seems to mimic the existing contour. Nevertheless, the presence of an intervention is made strongly by stripes of white horizontal spandrels. Rather than making a statement of being the house of artefacts which it actually is, it takes the form of a modern shelter for people to view the surrounding of the historic lake, making the connection to the past being felt more strongly. The idea of non-intrusion into the pristine site seems to be served well by the overall strategy. The need to be noticeable is nevertheless achieved by the strong white horizontal spandrels. The connection to the past i.e., direct view of the lake itself, on the other hand, is achieved by the streaks of gap between the white spandrels.

The main spaces are naturally ventilated. The need for air-conditioning is only for the supporting facilities at the rear section at the lowest level. Direct sunlight is purposely allowed to infiltrate the interior to create intriguing play of shadows in the gallery spaces and ramps. Balancing the need between daylight and heat gain is crucial in such an arrangement.

■ Xie Qi lin