

Jury Review

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This review covers three design projects proposed in the vicinity of Tasik Raban. They are the Chambered Shell, the Ripple and the Stream of Life.

One author attempted to plan the site with a central core and all other elements and spaces based on a 'Chambered Shell' concept. However, the central core appeared to indicate a level of intervention which was quite minimalist. The design of the other areas were deliberately controlled without over designing. This was further emphasised by the use of hierarchical footpaths which controlled users' movement around the site. The planning and siting of water-based element seem to be less imaginative as it linearly hugged the edge of the water while excluding the variety of experiences for users. Tropical identity is reflected by using structural plantings in abundance. The overall planning also acknowledges the presence of water body.

Good free flowing structural layout addresses the water body well in the Ripple project. Overall work is quite expressive with a good balance between structural shaded plantings and open spaces. The design's diverse spaces that replicate the uniqueness of the site's topography offer the opportunity for visitors to explore and gain knowledge about natural system on land and water. The design responds to the natural characteristics of the site by using existing topography, trees and plant materials that encourage exploration. There is also a commendable effort in the use of graphics to express idea and spirit of the place. Notable character in the structural layout is a nice balance between hard and soft spaces. The peripheral location of most man-made elements indicates sensitivity by the designer to the level of intervention on the site with the middle portion being left untouched. The literal adaptation of the 'Ripple' concept, however, is quite disappointing. What is also evident is the sense of tropicality in the use of planting species especially the abundance of structural and shaded trees and palms.

The design idea and interpretation is commendable with continuous flow and articulation of spaces based on the "Stream of Life" concept. However, the use of the light blue colour to express design is misleading and non-justifiable in this. Footpaths and many points of intersections with the surrounding landscape have made possible for wildlife and people to access the designed spaces. The concentration of structure- and shade-giving trees in the south side and anecdotal suggestions along and on the spaces on the north indicate a deliberate and thoughtful design in addressing quality and variety in a place-making endeavour. A poetic but literal concept and the lack of profundness in interpretation leave some aspects of the design much to be desired.