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# SOUTHEAST ASIA building

INCORPORATING ARCHITECTURE, INTERIOR DESIGN AND LANDSCAPING

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*Cover Story : Focus On France*

## Designing and building the city

Thomas Richez,  
DUBUS RICHEZ  
and ZDR



Bertrand Dubus.



Thomas Richez.



Zaini Zainul.

### Detailed urban design

The citizens' expectations on the quality of their environment have been growing during the last 20 years, as have their criticisms on the livability of the cities and neighbourhoods built during the 60s and 70s.

The professionals involved, for example, designers, developers, local authorities and, of course, political leaders, were challenged by this movement of opinion, and attempts have been made to address the demand for a better city, based on a lot of experience and thought.

French and especially Parisian architects, together with the local authorities, have today reached a consensus on how a new neighbourhood in Paris should be designed and developed. As this consensus was achieved some time back, developments designed in this way, have been almost completed and the results can be appreciated.

This consensus might be affected by local conditions, such as the history and historical feeling of Paris, but a look at these local conditions might help us to appreciate what, in this approach to urban design, might be useful in other places like Southeast Asia.

The Haussmann urban fabric gives its image to Paris, of the 60s' developments inspired by 'charte d'Athènes' and a few trends of the 70s and early 80s.

The Bercy development in Eastern Paris, with architect Jean-Pierre Buffi as urban designer, is today almost completed.

The Seine Rive Gauche development is in Southeastern Paris. There is special interest in the completed part, along the banks of the river Seine. R. SCHWEITZER is the architect in charge of urban design. The 'Vaugirar' development has been undertaken by DUBUS RICHEZ.

What are the sensitive issues in Paris,

today, and what approach and design strategy are being taken?

The first feature is the existence of two stages in development design. The

first stage deals mainly with land use (type of buildings, areas to be built), and general organisation of the volumes.

The second, 'detailed urban design',



5 Towers - Euralille.

deals with precise design of the public space interacting with building volumes, and including a streetscape or urban landscape concept; precise delimitation of building lines on public spaces and of building heights and building volumes; definition of a general architectural image, including some very precise elements (e.g. facade finishes, balcony design and location, superstructure etc - these elements are selected to allow each building to serve the general composition, and yet, at the same time, have its own identity); particular interest in the design of the 1st floor, as a key element of the streetscape for the pedestrian (and motorist) passing by; the livability of the apartments to be created in the built volumes, and particularly the views from the apartments to the general urban landscape.

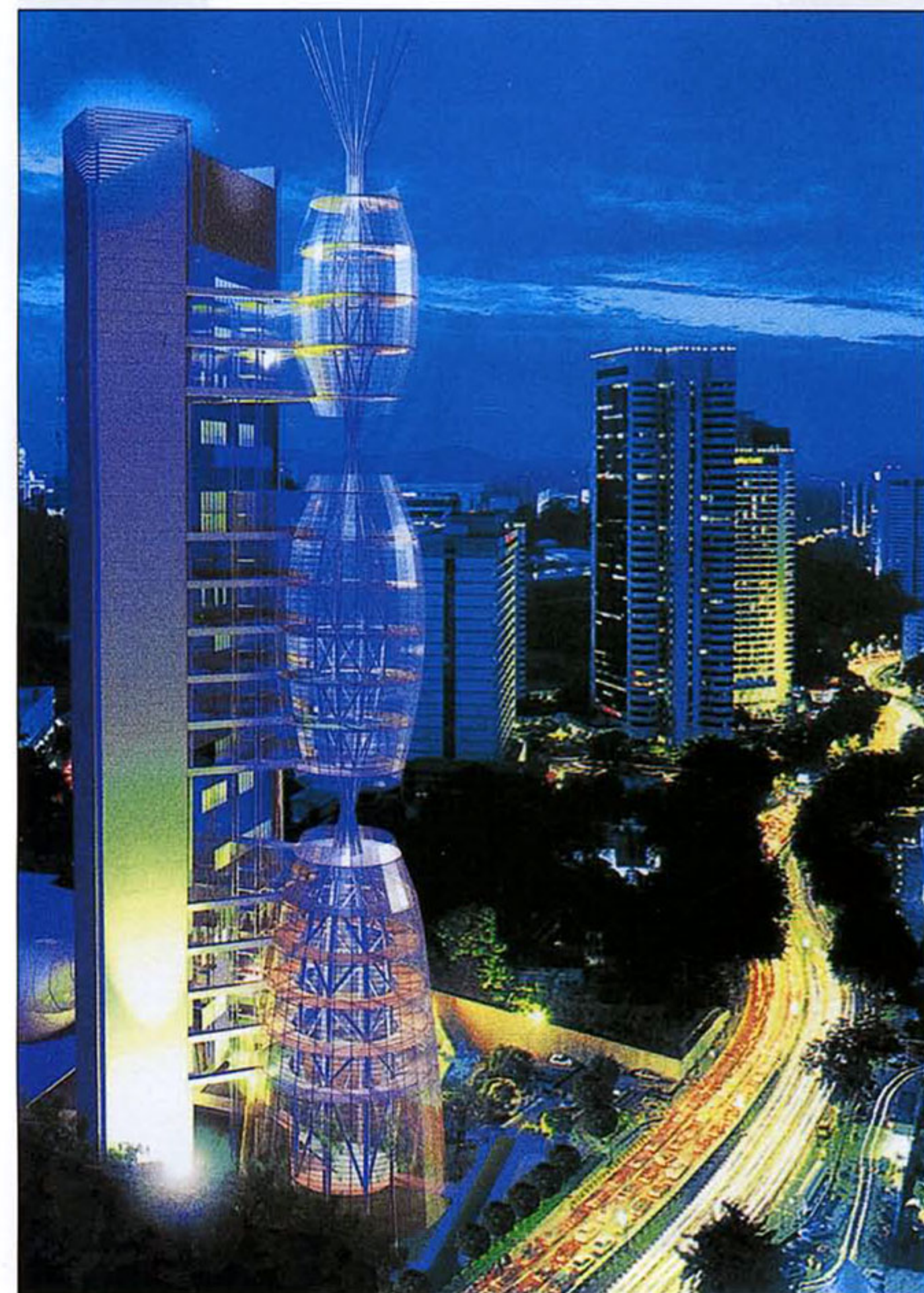
This detailed urban design phase delivers a plot delimitation and building guidelines, that the developers and architects of each plot have to follow.

Each plot, or building design unit, is limited to a size of, say, 50 apartments, to create the image of a complex and rich city, and to allow for easy future management and evolution.

### Projects by DUBUS RICHEZ and ZDR : The Malaysia Airlines Millennium Tower

Along Jalan Sultan Ismail, in Kuala Lumpur, stands the 36 storeys of the existing MAS headquarters - a simple and straight-forward building, built in the early 80s for a company whose ambition and performance have since taken it to another dimension. An

### Malaysia Airlines Millennium Tower (Malaysian Airlines Headquarters Extension - Architects Zaini Dubus Richez Sdn Bhd).



extension of the building was decided on.

The proposition was the demolition of the existing front and back podiums, and construction of an auditorium, plain and solid as a pebble, and of a new tower - a metallic structure bearing three glass volumes. Their transparency allows for anyone passing by to see from the bottom to the top of this 170 m-high structure. Scheduled to be completed by end-1999, this new landmark will be the millennium gift of MAS to the cityscape of Kuala Lumpur.

### 5 Towers - Euralille (offices, student accommodation, 'aparthotel')

The city of Lille lies at the intersection of the TGV routes between Paris, London and Brussels. A major urban project, Euralille, has been initiated within the area of the main railway stations in Lille, providing 300,000 sq m of total floor space on completion.

It has been described by the Financial Times as the biggest development project in Europe. Appointed to act as the architect of 5 Towers, to be constructed over a shopping mall, DUBUS-RICHEZ's role is to establish the urban layout proposed by Rem Koolhaas, and to act in close collaboration with Jean Nouvel, chief architect for this sector.

DUBUS-RICHEZ's task was to create an object which was 'unique' despite its contrasting requirements (for commercial space, offices, housing), and was capable of accommodating the variety of programmes involved. The solution was to design five towers of identical volume and materials, with careful control of grids and fenestration, thus creating a single facade texture which could receive lighting, signs and other illuminated graphics.

These five light-crowned towers, suspended 15 m from the ground, create a sensation of lightness. The lobbies serve to extend this feeling, successfully acting as a spacious transition between the bustle of the street and the tranquillity of the studio or office.

The buildings provide restrained surroundings for the 'aparthotels', and a relaxed environment for the student accommodation. The layout of the apartments continues the search for lightness. With platforms overlooking the city, in 100 sq m units on a floor plate of 500 sq m, the offices offer total flexibility and adaptability. The three units completed to-date are a clear demonstration of this design philosophy.

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