

RE1706 Building Form Critique

# Bible House

7 Armenian Street, Singapore

Teng Hau Wei  
2021



I used to visit one of its tenants there. The Bible House maximises rental office space to various protestant organisations. Religious buildings follow this principle: Form follows Function follows Faith.

The form is symbolic of the Bible: One side facing Fort Canning in masonry littered with small windows symbolising the Old Testament which is about law and penalty. The other side facing Peranakan Museum is a glass façade revealing an inner, red-painted wall symbolising the New Testament which is about forgiveness given in Christ's bloodshed.

The building form 100% covers and follows its odd-shaped site. Its modern building form provides a harmonic contrast with the surrounding traditional form buildings (i.e. Armenian Church). It leverages its uneven topography for a double layered carpark.

However, the building form failed to consider solar glare and the common corridors became a greenhouse oven. Blinds were installed at the glass façade and now obscures the symbolically significant red wall. The harsh Singaporean climate seems to have spoilt religious expression. Form must meet function pragmatically. The glass façade would preferably be fences instead, where it still may be symbolic of freely given forgiveness while allowing natural ventilation.

The *holey*, curved, and soft Old Testament side looks like Swiss Cheese more than the pages of strict holy law - a failed symbolism. It should look sharp and harsh. Notwithstanding, I laud LAUD Architects for their attempt in meeting form, function, and faith.

