

ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION

FOR

PROPOSED NEW VIVEKANANDA CULTURAL CENTRE
(VCC) AT 179 BARTLEY ROAD

Client:



Competition Organiser:



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1.0 Project Background & Aspirations

1.1 Introduction & Vision

The Ramakrishna Mission, Singapore will celebrate its centenary in 2028. To mark this occasion, the Mission is commissioning a new Vivekananda Cultural Centre (VCC) on its grounds at Bartley Road. The centre will promote cultural programmes, education, and community life, extending the Mission's long tradition of creating meaningful places of gathering and service.

Apart from the new Cultural Centre, entrants are to also design a new Centenary Gate to be visibly sited to mark the entrance of the compound and sensitively placed in relation to the new Cultural Centre and existing buildings. This commemorative structure is linked to a storied practice and history of similar structures throughout India.

The Cultural Centre shall be a place of reflection, learning, and purposeful activity, where the Mission's twin pillars of Spiritual growth and Service to humanity are embodied in everyday life. Rather than functioning as a casual social venue, it should provide spaces that inspire self-awareness, contemplation, and collective betterment — supporting a way of life grounded in spiritual understanding and compassionate action. The project stands as both a commemoration of the Mission's first 100 years in Singapore and a living platform for its continued service and spiritual outreach in the century ahead.

1.2 Philosophical and Cultural Foundations

1.2.1 Historical Account of The Ramakrishna Mission in Singapore

The Ramakrishna Mission Singapore was founded in 1928, in response to the growing needs of the Indian community in the region. From its earliest days, the Mission played a dual role: as a spiritual sanctuary rooted in the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and as a centre for education, welfare, and service to society.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Mission expanded its work to include schools, an orphanage and welfare programmes that reached beyond the Indian diaspora to serve the wider Singaporean community. Its institutions became known for their emphasis on holistic education — nurturing not just academic achievement but also discipline, values, and community spirit.

The Mission's campus at Bartley Road has been its home since the 1940s. The three conserved buildings on site stand as tangible markers of this legacy. These spaces have hosted (and continue to host) countless gatherings: from morning prayers and weekend classes, to cultural performances, lectures, and charitable initiatives.

Through periods of Singapore's transformation, the Ramakrishna Mission has been a constant presence — adapting its programmes while remaining steadfast in its core values of service, inclusivity, and spiritual growth. The new Cultural Centre will extend this ethos into the 21st century, offering spaces that reflect both the history of the Mission and the needs of contemporary society.

1.2.2 Profile of Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) was one of India's most influential spiritual leaders and thinkers, remembered for his vision of a world rooted in harmony, service, and the pursuit of knowledge. As the chief disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, he articulated the philosophy of Vedanta and the practice of Yoga for a modern, global audience.

His speech at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893 became historic, not only for its eloquence but for its message of interfaith understanding and universal brotherhood. He emphasised that all religions lead to the same truth, and that spirituality should go hand in hand with social responsibility.

Vivekananda believed deeply in education as a means of empowerment, and in service to humanity as the highest expression of spirituality. His teachings inspired the founding of the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897, which has since spread across the world. His call to "Arise, awake, and stop not till

the goal is reached” continues to resonate as a timeless message of courage, resilience, and self-realisation.

For the new Cultural Centre, Swami Vivekananda’s ideals serve as a guiding compass: a place where knowledge, culture, and community converge in the service of both spiritual growth and social good.

1.3 Competition Values

- I. Heritage and Continuity – honour the legacy of the Ramakrishna Mission and its conserved buildings.
- II. Inclusivity and Accessibility – ensure spaces welcome people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- III. Sustainability and Stewardship – minimise environmental impact, prioritise long-term viability.
- IV. Innovation and Relevance – design for today’s needs while anticipating tomorrow’s possibilities.

A workshop with key stakeholders was conducted on 25 October 2025. The Workshop Report can be found in the Appendices.

2.0 Site and Context

The Ramakrishna Mission site at 179 Bartley Road occupies a strategically significant position within Singapore's urban fabric. Located in the northeast region of the island, the site sits at the junction of Bartley Road and Upper Paya Lebar Road, within a predominantly residential district.

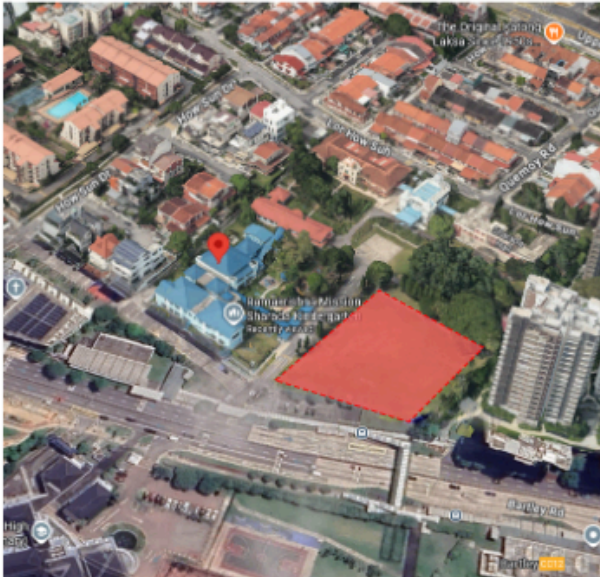


Fig 1. Overview of 179 Bartley Road and Specific Site of New VCC

The site is immediately adjacent to Bartley MRT Station on the Circle Line. This direct access to the MRT network allows for the Mission and its future Cultural Centre to be highly accessible to visitors, devotees, students, and the wider public. The station exit fronts directly onto the site boundary, providing an opportunity to shape a welcoming arrival sequence that integrates with the public transport node.

The surrounding urban context comprises:

- Educational institutions such as Maris Stella High School and Bartley Secondary School are within walking distance.
- Residential neighbourhoods — ranging from older public housing estates in Tai Seng and Serangoon to newer private developments along Bartley Road — contribute to a diverse community catchment.
- Green buffers and infrastructure define the edge conditions - including the MRT viaduct, road corridors, nearby parks and green connectors.

The Mission site itself is distinctive for its three conserved buildings, which stand as markers of heritage amidst a rapidly urbanising landscape. In this context, the new Cultural Centre has the opportunity to become a gateway landmark, balancing the tranquillity of its spiritual role with the openness and accessibility expected of a civic and cultural institution.

The project site sits adjacent to the Mission's three conserved buildings, on a lower platform approximately 9.5m below their ground level. This topographical relationship is central to the design challenge. The proposed new cultural centre should not be higher than the driveway serving the conserved buildings (SHD 115.48m).

Apart from the three conserved buildings, the Ramakrishna Mission compound also houses a kindergarten (directly adjacent to the project site) and a small garage at the rear of the project site. The assorted buildings are distinct in their architectural language and spatial characteristics. Site briefings will be arranged for entrants to visit the site and form a clearer understanding of the overall development.



Fig 1a. Notional Boundary of Design Competition Site indicated in red dotted line. Proposed building to be sited within boundary - specific footprint to be proposed by entrant.

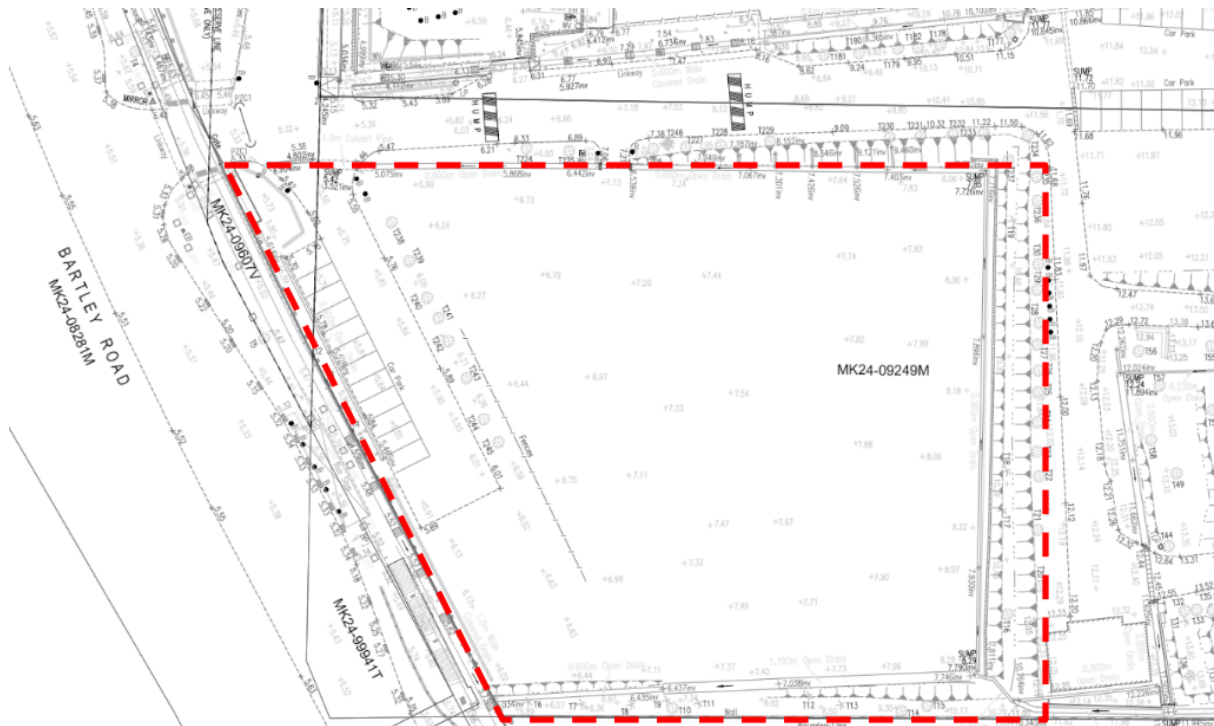


Fig 1b. Notional Boundary of Design Competition Site indicated in red dotted line on Topographical Survey Plan.

3.0 Spaces, Functions & Technical Requirements

3.1 Overview

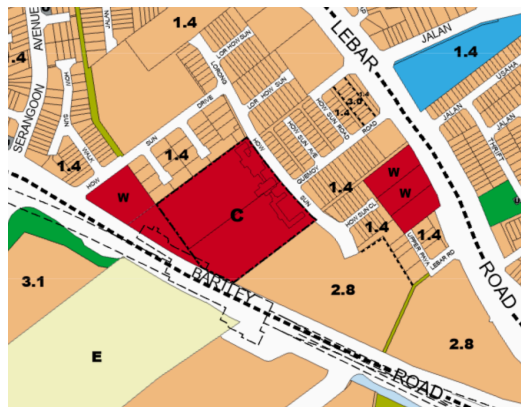


Fig 2. Site Plan extracted from URA Masterplan

1. Existing Site Area = 24,601.10m²
2. Existing Approved GFA = 6676.112m²
3. Existing Approved Plot Ratio¹ = 0.2774

The competition site is located within the compound of the Ramakrishna Mission at 179 Bartley Road, Singapore. The land is zoned Community and Civic Institution (C&CI) under the URA Master Plan, which supports community, institutional, cultural, and religious uses. This zoning allows for the development of facilities that serve the wider public while remaining aligned with the Mission's objectives and heritage context.

The proposed New Cultural Centre should be designed to accommodate a range of spaces and functions set out in the Schedule of Accommodation. Entrants are expected to organise these spaces efficiently within the massing parameters while providing flexibility for community programming and future adaptability. The appropriate massing and height of the proposed building should not exceed the level of the driveway serving the conserved buildings at the rear of the site. The building design should be generally low-rise in character and aligned to the construction budget.

The site falls within the Railway Protection Zone of the adjacent Circle Line (CCL). All proposals must therefore comply with the relevant Land Transport Authority (LTA) requirements for railway protection. Entrants should carefully consider structural loading, foundation design, excavation works, and any building elements within the protected corridor to ensure compliance and to safeguard the operational railway.

In addition, the new building will be sited within a compound that includes conserved heritage buildings. Proposals should demonstrate sensitivity in scale, materiality, and architectural language so that the new centre complements its historic neighbours while clearly expressing its contemporary civic role.

¹ * based on last approved URA Written Permission - WPP1_ES20120524R0182.ent

3.2 Key Considerations

I. Siting of New Building

The notional boundary of the project site is the open field adjacent to the kindergarten fronting Bartley Road. Entrants are encouraged to determine the optimal placement of the new building, taking into account its elevational relationship to the conserved buildings, views from key approaches, and the overall composition of the site. The siting should balance accessibility, visual harmony, and the provision of open green areas for community gatherings, reflection, and outdoor activities. The spatial arrangement should also reinforce the Mission's ethos — creating a setting that supports both spiritual contemplation and collective service.

II. Architectural Treatment of New Building

The new building should adopt a secular and timeless architectural expression, free from overt religious symbols, yet resonant with the dignity and quiet strength of the Ramakrishna Mission. Its design should complement the conserved buildings through proportion, materiality, and sensitivity to scale. Reference images from other Mission homes worldwide are provided to guide the intended "look and feel" (refer to appendices). Entrants are encouraged to interpret these references and their constituent elements contextually, developing a design that reflects the Mission's service-oriented identity in a manner that is contemporary, respectful, and grounded in place.

III. Integration of Green and Open Spaces

"The green" — comprising landscaped and residual open spaces — should be conceived as an active environmental and spiritual resource, not merely a visual setting. Entrants are encouraged to integrate these areas meaningfully with the new proposal, enabling sustainable practices such as natural cooling, rainwater management, and biodiversity support. Inspired by successful examples such as the SMU Campus Green, NTU School of Art, Design and Media, Kampong Admiralty, Bukit Canberra and others. These spaces should foster reflection, learning, and community engagement, while embodying the Mission's principle of harmony between humanity and nature.

IV. Adaptability of Spaces

Activity areas should be designed for flexible and transformative use, accommodating diverse group sizes and purposes. Features such as operable partitions, modular layouts and multi-functional furnishings are encouraged to allow ease of reconfiguration. Spaces should support both structured programmes and moments of quiet reflection, in alignment with the Mission's broader goals of personal growth and collective service.

V. Maximising Use and Value

Recognising that cultural centres often experience peak use during specific hours, proposals should explore ways to maximise spatial efficiency and relevance throughout the day. Rooms and halls may be designed for dual or overlapping functions, ensuring continuous engagement while avoiding under-utilisation. The intent is to create an inclusive environment that remains purposeful and inspiring beyond programmed activities.

VI. Structural Flexibility

A rational and technically feasible structural grid should be adopted with a sustainable approach to allow for long-term adaptability. The structure should facilitate reconfiguration, future-proofing, and the potential evolution of uses over time, ensuring that the centre remains responsive to the Mission's evolving needs.

VII. Roof as Active Space

Entrants are encouraged to explore the roof plane as a meaningful extension of the building's public and spiritual life. Beyond serving as a recreational deck, the roof could host periodic programmes, learning sessions or quiet zones for reflection, integrating greenery where appropriate to strengthen its environmental and contemplative character.

VIII. Wayfinding and Historical Infographics

Proposals should include an integrated wayfinding and interpretive signage strategy for the compound. This should provide clear visitor orientation while narrating the Mission's heritage and values in a cohesive and engaging manner. The system may include directional signs, historical markers, and infographic panels, designed for both clarity and aesthetic harmony with the overall environment.

IX. Statue of Swami Vivekananda

An iconic life-sized statue of the Swami should be located in a prominent location.



Fig 3. Reference Image of Statue of Swami Vivekananda

X. Accommodation Facility

An Accommodation Facility is to be located on the site of the existing single-storey garage (to be demolished). The proposed facility should be a discreet, single-storey standalone building - designed with simplicity, practicality, and sensitivity to its surroundings. This facility will host visiting musicians, artists and other cultural performers. The following should be provided:

- Four guest rooms (each with twin beds) with shared/ensuite bathrooms
- Store rooms
- Shared Living, Dining and Kitchenette

The design should ensure comfort, efficiency, and ease of maintenance, with architectural detailing consistent with the broader aesthetic of the compound.

3.3 Schedule of Accommodation for Vivekananda Cultural Centre

No	Facility / Room	Area (m ²)	Quantity	Total	No of Pax	Indicative usage (days per annum)	Remarks
1	Auditorium	600	1	600	300 seats	150	Partitionable space - 150 seats x 2
2	Auditorium Back of House	150	1	150		150	Shared facilities to include changing rooms, stores, and other shared facilities to support performance venue
2	Meditation Hall	150	1	150	100	daily	
3	Multipurpose Hall	300	1	300	150	200	for dining, yoga
4	Conference Room	50	1	50		150	
5	Meeting Rooms	25	2	50		daily	
6	Office	50	1	50		daily	6-8 staff
7	Exhibition / Art Gallery	100	1	100		150	Potentially contiguous spaces
8	Book Store	25	1	25		daily	
9	Servery	100	1	100		daily	
10	Store Rooms	25	2	50		daily	
11	Activity Rooms	50	4	200		100	To provide acoustic treatment
12	Recording Studio	25	1	25		50	
13	Service Spaces	50	1	50		daily	MDF Room, Consumer Switch Room, etc
	Total			1700			

Notes:

- This schedule should be read in conjunction with the earlier Key Considerations.
- Overall Gross Floor Area to account for circulation, sanitary facilities and other required spaces. The approximate estimated overall GFA is 2,000m².
- Carpark provisions, including two coach parking lots, should be sensitively designed with the overall proposal and site.

3.4 Scope of Consultancy

3.4.1 The project has a budgeted construction cost of 8 to 10 million Singapore dollars (excluding contingency, consultants' fee, authority submission fees and non-fixed interior design and fitting out works). The proposed design shall be kept within the above-mentioned budget.

3.4.2 The architect who wins the competition will be appointed as the architect for the project. The scope of services shall include, summarily, schematic design, design development, tender preparation, contract administration and authority submissions.

3.4.3 Notwithstanding the requirements stated in this competition brief, the appointed architect shall develop the program mix, planning, and design, and submit to the relevant authorities for approval.

3.4.4 The client will appoint other consultants separately to form a consultants team with the architect. The architect may propose their preferred consultants during the competition stage for the client's consideration.

3.4.5 The appointed architect is expected to provide in his scope of services interior architecture (finishes, fixed panelling, fittings, fixed furnitures) for important interior spaces (lobbies, toilets, auditorium, meditation hall, conference hall and exhibition area).

4.0 Single Stage Competition Brief, Submission, Presentation, Terms And Conditions

4.1 Introduction

The Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA) has been appointed by the Ramakrishna Mission Singapore to organize an architectural design competition to invite design proposals from interested architects for a new cultural centre (The Project), located at 179 Bartley Rd, Singapore 539784.

This is a single stage Design Competition with minimal submission requirements to gather design ideas in Stage, followed by a presentation by shortlisted firms only.

The objective of the Design Competition is to select an architectural design and architectural firm to realize a building for the proposed Project.

The law governing the conduct of this Design Competition shall be Singapore Law and the language of the Competition will be in English.

4.2 Competition Schedule

1	Launch of Competition	10/11/25
2	Site Briefing 01	14/11/25
3	Site Briefing 02	21/11/25
4	Queries Period	10/11/25 - 27/11/25
5	Response to Queries	03/12/25
6	Submission Deadline	09/01/26

4.3 Admission To The Competition

The Competition is open to architects who are registered with the Board of Architects, Singapore and who have registered for the Competition via SIA.

Only firms that have registered for the Competition will be allowed to participate. There is no limit to the number of design entries from any firm. Each submission will be differentiated by a unique submission number which is assigned upon registration.

Parties likely to be in conflict of interest are excluded from the Design Competition:

- Jurors;
- Members of the Technical Evaluation Panel and the alternates;
- Professional, Technical advisors, members of the Competition organising committee;
- The immediate family members of the above-mentioned persons;
- Employees of the above persons or consultants working for the project; and
- Any company or business which is currently debarred from participating in Government procurement shall not be eligible to participate in this competition

If an entry is submitted without explicitly mentioning that the Architect is currently debarred, Ramakrishna Mission Singapore shall treat the submission as an express continuing declaration by the Architect that the Architect is, in fact, eligible to participate in this competition and if such declaration is discovered to be false, Ramakrishna Mission Singapore will be entitled to rescind any contracts entered into pursuant to such a competition without being liable therefore in damages or compensation.

4.4 Scope Of The Competition

The subject of this Design Competition is the provision of a design for The Project, as described in the Competition Design Brief. It is important that the design should fulfil the objectives set out in the Competition Design Brief. The ideas should demonstrate an understanding of the requirements, including opportunities and constraints, the surrounding buildings, the urban and social context of the site.

The Project is slated to complete construction by mid-2028. Entrants must keep this schedule in mind and the appointed architect must competently manage the time and resources available for design development, technical design co-ordination, statutory submissions leading to obtaining approvals thereof, tender documentation, tender calling and final recommendation leading to the appointment of the main building contractor and the required sub-contractors.

Submission must not bear any motto, logo or distinguishing marks of any kind to identify the architectural firm submitting the design.

Submissions will be by electronic means only. Each submission shall be accompanied by the enclosed Competition Entry Form duly signed. The Jury Panel will shortlist entries to make an in-person presentation. Shortlisted entries may be required to print hard copies of the submitted A1 presentation boards.

4.5 Anonymity

Anonymity shall be observed during the entire competition. The entrant shall submit the Competition Entry Form as per instructions mentioned in Item 4.12 below. The A1 PDF Panels shall bear the Identification Number on the top right-hand corner of all items submitted.

The Competition Entry Form and participants' information shall be accessed after the Jury Panel has made their final decision on the short-listing. Nonetheless, at no time shall the Competition materials (boards, graphics, etc) bear any information which may reveal the identity of the entrant. Breach of these requirements may be taken as grounds for disqualification

4.6 Registration Procedure

The application to register shall be submitted via the Singapore Architect Competitions Submission Portal (<https://singaporearchitect.sg>). Please email competitions@sia.org.sg with your Submission ID for the Competition Package. Registration implies acceptance of these terms and conditions for the Design Competition.

Applications shall include the following information:

- Name of Lead Member/QP
- Official address;
- Telephone number;
- Official email address;

Ar Sri Saravanan, Competition Technical Advisor, representing SIA shall be the Registration Officer assisted by Ms Chew Jay Ying, SIA Competition Secretariat.

4.7 Briefing and Queries

Any entrant wishing to obtain further information on the Competition Design Brief or Terms and Conditions are encouraged to attend the competition briefing scheduled on 14 & 21 Nov (2 sessions). Entrants can opt to attend either briefing.

The briefing will be held at 179 Bartley Road.

Entrants may also send queries in writing by email (in English) by 27 Nov 2025 (Fri) 5pm to the Competition Secretariat at competitions@sia.org.sg.

Such email shall clearly state "VCC Competition Query" as the subject heading. The query shall be in the form of an email. Only upon receipt of an acknowledgement email sent by the Competition Secretariat shall the query be officially registered for a response.

Responses to all queries will be made known to all via The Singapore Architect platform on or before 03 December 2025.

Entrants who elect to apply for participation after 03 December 2025 shall void their rights to submit any query. However, a copy of the responses to the registered queries will be extended to these late applicants. The written responses to the queries shall form an integral part of the Competition Brief and shall be extended to the Technical Committee and the Jury Panel.

4.8 Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP)

A Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) will be formed comprising representatives from Ramakrishna Mission Singapore and SIA.

The TEP representatives will assess the entries in regards to compliance with the technical criteria. They will point out to the Jury Panel any deviations from the terms and conditions or technical requirements, including deadline established for the Competition and be available for any clarifications required by the Jury Panel.

4.9 The Design Jury Panel

The main duties of the Design Jury Panel will be to shortlist entries for presentation and to select 1 entry from the shortlist as the winning design submission.

The Jury Panel shall comprise the following esteemed members:

- President Swami Samachittananda, Ramakrishna Mission Singapore
- Mr. Gopinath Menon, Advisory Committee Member, Ramakrishna Mission Singapore
- Ar. Rita Soh, SIA Past President
- Ar. Ashvinkumar Kantilal, SIA Past President
- Ar. Tiah Nan Chyuan, SIA President, 65th Council

Jurors



President Swami Samachittananda joined the Ramakrishna order in 1982. He has served in many centres of the Ramakrishna Order in India. He spent 15 years as one of the Vice Presidents of the Singapore centre from 2001 to 2016 before being transferred to Argentina Centre of the order as its vice president for 2 years. He continues to serve as the President of Ramakrishna Mission, Singapore since 2018.



Mr Gopinath Menon is a member of the Ramakrishna Mission Advisory Committee. He is a Civil/Transportation engineer. He was the Chief Transportation Engineer of the Public Works Department and later the Land Transport Authority for ten years. Concurrently, he held the appointment of Adjunct Associate Professor at the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the Nanyang Technological University for fifteen years. He now provides freelance transportation engineering consultancy services, locally and overseas.



Ar. Rita Soh, is the Managing Director of RDC Architects Pte Ltd. She has served as President of the Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA), the Board of Architects (BOA), and the Architects Regional Council Asia (ARCASIA). Most recently, her project, the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was awarded a Merit at the Singapore Institute of Architects Design Awards 2024.

Reflecting on her career, she shares:

"I have always been passionate about design and how it can impact lives, be it in arts, architecture or the built environment. Learning & practicing architecture is a beautiful journey. One never fails to discover new ideas, novel solutions and even develop new attitudes & interests in life! I love learning... acquiring new knowledge, creating better experiences which in turn reinforce the need for more knowledge! With the current digital disruptions, it is both terrifying yet exhilarating ventures!"



Ar. Ashvinkumar s/o Kantilal, the Group CEO of ONG&ONG Group Pte Ltd, is a registered architect since 1990 with a Bachelor of Architecture (Honours) from NUS. With over 35 years of experience, he is passionate about Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) and has led numerous projects, including Jadescape and Heartbeat@Bedok, to achieve Greenmark Platinum or equivalent status.

He served as President of the Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA) from 2009-2012, was conferred Fellow (Life) in 2022, and is a registered ASEAN and APEC Architect. Ashvinkumar has received the PBM award in 2015, as well as the MND Long Service and Distinguished Service Medals in 2019, for his significant contributions to various boards and committees, including the Indian Heritage Centre.

He currently chairs the Board for the Teaching and Testing of South Asian Languages and has held positions on boards such as the National Museum Board and the Singapore Green Building Council.



Ar. Tiah Nan Chyuan is a Director at FARM, a cross-disciplinary design practice that won the President's Design Award Design of the Year in 2010 and was featured in Wallpaper's Architects' Directory 2018. In 2017, Nan Chyuan was also recognised as one of Singapore's emerging architects in URA's third edition of "20 Under 45" exhibition. He was elected to the SIA Presidency in 2025.

4.10 Judging Criteria

The Jury Panel will be looking for a design which is:

- Creatively addressing the brief
- Culturally Sensitive
- Appropriate to Urban Context
- Environmentally Sustainable
- Buildable

4.10.1 Design Criteria

- Ability to meet the Competition's Design Brief
- Understanding and incorporation of the values of Ramakrishna Mission Singapore in planning, outlook and aspirations
- Interpretation and Expression of identity in contemporary form
- Creative response to the urban context and programmatic brief
- Environmental response to climatic conditions with sustainable strategies
- The functionality of design proposals

4.10.2 Technical Criteria

- Operational Performance
- Economic Feasibility
- Land Optimization (Façade, CFA, Floor efficiency, Building form & Height)
- Buildability and Constructability
- Design for maintenance
- Innovation

All decisions by the Jury Panel will be final.

4.11 List Of Documents To Be Provided To Entrants

The following information will be provided to all the entrants:

- This Architectural Competition Design Brief and its competition requirements, terms and conditions;
- Competition Package; and
- Competition Entry Form as shown on submission form on the Singapore Architect platform

No other information will be provided.

4.12 Submission Requirements And Terms Of Conditions

Registered participating teams will not be reimbursed for the cost of the preparation of their submission for the Competition, or any other associated costs and expenses.

Shortlisted teams will be invited to present their proposals to the Jury as part of the final evaluation process. Following these presentations, one (1) Winning Scheme will be selected and awarded a prize of SGD 15,000. In addition, up to four (4) Merit Schemes will each receive a prize of SGD 3,000. The prize money awarded to the Winning Scheme will form part of the overall Architect's professional fee for the commissioned project.

Submission Requirements

The anonymous submission will be restricted to the following:

- Two (2) 'A1' boards in PDF file, in landscape orientation, to present the design proposals, concept plans and drawings in minimum 1:500 scale sufficient to deliver and illustrate the project proposal. The board sequence is to be indicated in the file name (1 of 2, 2 of 2) (shortlisted schemes may be requested to submit their component images at a later date);
- A completed submission form on the Singapore Architect platform which includes a copy of entrant's valid and prevailing Practising Certificate

The drawings should capture the following:

- Site plan, floor plans;
- Elevations;
- Sections; and
- Appropriate renderings to succinctly illustrate the concept proposal.

Copy of entrant's valid and prevailing Practising Certificate and where applicable, the valid and prevailing Practising Certificate of the Collaborators, are to be submitted.

An Acknowledgment of Receipt showing only the identification number will be issued at the time of submission.

Submission Method

Submission will be by digital means only via the SIA online competitions portal.

Successful submissions (successful downloads) will be acknowledged with an email from the Organisers.

The Organisers are not liable for any Internet disruptions or faulty links that may affect the timeliness of submissions. Participants will not be allowed to revise or resend their submissions after the deadline.

Submission Deadline

All submissions are to be sent by **2359hrs on 09 Jan 2026**.

Shortlisted entrants will be required to give a presentation to the Jury Panel, projected to be in the week beginning on 23 Jan 2026.

The design shall comply with relevant local building by-laws and statutory requirements.

4.13 Disqualification

Submission to the Competition shall be excluded from consideration for any of, but not limited to, the following reasons:

- If it is received after the closing time and date stipulated;
- If in the opinion of the Technical Evaluation Panel, and as concurred by the Jury Panel, does not comply substantially with the requirements of the Design Brief;
- If any of the conditions or specific instructions are disregarded;
- If a entrant/firm discloses their identity or improperly attempts to influence the Jury's decision; or
- If the design is found not to be the original work of the declared entrants/architects.

4.14 Power Of Waiver

The Jury Panel reserves the power to waive or to vary any of the conditions in circumstances wherein its view, the best interest of the selection exercise would justify the course of action. The decision of the Jury Panel shall be final and the Jury Panel is not obliged whatsoever to give any reasons for the rejection of any submission.

4.15 Ownership Of Designs Submitted

Ramakrishna Mission Singapore and/or SIA shall have the right to publish, display, reproduce or otherwise publicize or communicate all submissions, including all drawings, etc., submitted by the entrants/participants at any stage of the Design Competition. Such right shall be exercisable by Ramakrishna Mission Singapore and/or SIA without any payment, charge or fee whatsoever to any person.

All the intellectual property rights to the designs, drawings and all other items submitted relating to the winning scheme for the said project shall vest in and belong to the author upon the announcement of the winning scheme.

Entrants consent to grant Ramakrishna Mission Singapore and SIA the rights to use all other submissions for exhibition, publication and publicity purposes. Ramakrishna Mission Singapore shall have the rights to use, adopt and modify the design scheme of the winner to suit end-users' requirements as may be the case.

The entrants/participants or firms that submit entries shall indemnify Ramakrishna Mission Singapore and/or SIA against any action. These include, and are not limited to, claims, damages, charges and costs arising from or incurred by reason of any infringement or alleged infringement of the use of patents, design, copyright or other statutory or common law rights comprised in the designs, drawings, and all other items submitted by them; and any prize awarded shall be cancelled and shall be refunded to Ramakrishna Mission Singapore.

4.17 Architect's Fee And Reimbursement Of Shortlisted Entries

The winning Architect will be commissioned to develop the design with Ramakrishna Mission Singapore and will receive a professional fee of 7.5% of the overall building construction cost (estimated between S\$8.5 million to S\$10 million) excluding non-fixed items.

4.18 Safekeeping And Return Of Physical Submission Materials

The Competition Secretariat will take reasonable measures for the safekeeping of the entrants' physical submissions but will accept no responsibility for loss or damages however caused.

Any presentation material not collected within the stated deadline will be destroyed.

4.19 Commission Of The Project

Ramakrishna Mission Singapore will be responsible for entering into Professional Service Agreement contracts with the architect, consultants, contractors, suppliers and other service providers. The Architect shall be commissioned to complete the project under Ramakrishna Mission Singapore's engagement.

At any time, if the Architect is deemed by Ramakrishna Mission Singapore to be unable to satisfy Ramakrishna Mission Singapore of their capability or readiness to undertake the delivery of the new project, Ramakrishna Mission Singapore may require them to collaborate with another architect of relevant experience in administering similar sized projects and to be approved by Ramakrishna Mission Singapore. Therefore, in the event that the Architect does not have sufficient experience or resources to undertake the project, he or she will be required to form a legal association to the satisfaction of Ramakrishna Mission Singapore.

Failure to form a satisfactory association can be grounds for termination and, for the avoidance of doubt, the Architect shall consent without any delay to entitle Ramakrishna Mission Singapore to proceed with the development using the designs, models, drawings and all other items related and submitted for the winning scheme for the said project.

Ramakrishna Mission Singapore reserves its rights to commence exploration with other entrants of the Design Competition or any other architect for the purpose of appointment in the event that the architect does not deliver progress on the project to the satisfaction of Ramakrishna Mission Singapore.

Conditions of appointment shall be at the discretion of Ramakrishna Mission Singapore, which shall be in accordance with its procurement practices.

5.0 APPENDICES

5.1 Notification

The appended appendices are only for reference purposes and to assist the designers in the technical evaluation of various existing site features and constraints. However the appointed consultant/designer is advised to liaise with various authorities to obtain the latest updated services plans and design to accommodate any changes that may have been updated in the latest services drawings by the service providers or authorities.

5.2 List of Attached Appendices

- Appendix 5.2.1: Reference Images of Ramakrishna Mission Homes
- Appendix 5.2.2: Summary of Workshop with RKM Stakeholders
- Appendix 5.2.3: Topographical Survey Plan
- Appendix 5.2.4: Railway Protection Plan
- Appendix 5.2.5: Road Line Plan
- Appendix 5.2.6: Sewerage Information Plan
- Appendix 5.2.7: Drainage Interpretation Plan
- Appendix 5.2.8: Water Services Plan

Appendix 5.2.1



Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Lucknow, India



The Universal Temple at the Ramakrishna Mission in Mylapore, Chennai, India

NEW VIVEKANANDA CULTURAL CENTRE
DESIGN COMPETITION



Ramakrishna Mission General Library, New Delhi, India



Ramakrishna Ashrama & Ramakrishna Mission, Jashore (Jessore), Bangladesh

Appendix 5.2.2: Summary of Workshops with RKM Stakeholders

Overview

The youth and senior workshops, together with survey responses, generated a rich body of insights for the design of the Vivekananda Cultural Centre (VCC). What emerged is not simply a list of functional requirements, but a vision of identity, purpose, and aspiration.

The VCC is consistently imagined as more than a facility: it is to be a living embodiment of the Mission's ethos, where spirituality finds form through service, and where culture is celebrated as both heritage and living practice. Participants framed this vision in three interrelated domains: Identity and Meaning, Function and Experience, and Environment and Future.

1. Identity and Meaning

Cultural Emphasis and Positioning

Participants were clear: the VCC must be cultural and secular. This distinction positions it as open to all of Singapore while remaining grounded in Hindu and Indian traditions. For the youth, the Mission was described as *"home, secular yet spiritual, a beacon of harmony."*

A strong theme was the ambition for the VCC to become the "go-to" place for Indian arts and culture in Singapore. Seniors emphasised that while Indian arts are practiced widely, there is no single institution that embodies them holistically. The VCC could fill this gap:

- Hosting high-quality performances, exhibitions, and workshops
- Providing training in Indian classical music, dance, and literature
- Acting as a custodian of heritage while supporting innovation and contemporary interpretation

For youth, this "go-to" role was tied to identity formation: a place where younger generations of Indians reconnect with their heritage, and where non-Indians discover the richness of Indian culture in an accessible way. This aspiration elevates the centre's role: it is not only a Mission project but potentially a national cultural landmark.

Inclusivity

Inclusivity was not understood as neutrality but as identity with openness. Youth hoped visitors would encounter *"Compassion, Harmony, Service"* and teachings of the Holy Trio, while seniors wanted the centre to project *"vastness and belonging"* - associative with spiritual spaces. The building should be recognisably Indian in spirit but universally welcoming in form.

This inclusivity could be conveyed architecturally through wide thresholds, open courtyards, and spaces that invite rather than exclude. Programmatically, inclusivity means offering activities across faiths and communities — meditation sessions, cultural classes, exhibitions, and discussions — all in a spirit of dialogue and openness.

Symbolism and Symbolic Architecture

Symbolism was a deeply felt theme. Ideas included:

- A centenary gate, referencing Ajanta–Ellora motifs
- A memorial to Swami Vivekananda’s 1893 visit
- Galleries narrating the Mission’s century of service in Singapore
- Design gestures inspired by Belur Math’s domes, Indian stone columns and other historically ingrained motifs

A visitor’s journey through the centre should reflect the Mission’s philosophy: moving from public activity into spaces of reflection, experiencing harmony between culture and spirituality.

2. Function and Experience

Flexibility

Flexibility was seen as key to relevance and sustainability. Both youth and seniors supported a 300-seat auditorium, subdivisible for smaller gatherings. Beyond this, participants wanted multi-use classrooms, workshops, and galleries that could serve:

- Traditional uses: chanting, scripture learning, language classes, music practice
- Contemporary uses: debates, interfaith dialogues, art exhibitions, yoga, Ayurveda workshops
- New modes of engagement: youth suggested an “Idea Lab” for social service projects and a podcast studio to broadcast talks, interviews, and oral histories to digital audiences

This combination of traditional and modern functions positions the VCC as both a platform for cultural continuity and an incubator for innovation.

Accessibility

Seniors pointed out the lack of lifts and barrier-free access in current Mission buildings. The VCC is expected to improve this with universal design from the outset: lifts, ramps, barrier-free toilets, intuitive wayfinding, and acoustically and visually inclusive spaces. Accessibility is not only technical but philosophical: ensuring dignity and equal participation for elderly, children, and differently-abled visitors.

3. Environment and Future

Sustainability

Sustainability was described in both spiritual and technical terms. Youth envisioned architecture that blends with nature: courtyards, open halls, and walkways that allow light and air to flow. There were also suggestions for rooftop solar panels, low-maintenance durable materials, natural ventilation where possible, and acoustic performance.

Beyond efficiency, sustainability was linked to legacy. Seniors hoped that in 50 years, the VCC would be remembered as a nationally significant cultural monument, admired for both its ecological responsibility and cultural vitality.

Outdoor and Rooftop Spaces

Nature was central to participants' imagination. Youth highlighted gardens, courtyards, and shaded walkways as spaces of peace and connection. Seniors proposed rooftop gardens, landscaped courtyards, and facilities like a tennis court. Outdoor spaces were not seen as ancillary but integral: places for informal gatherings, reflection, and intergenerational connection.

These natural elements reinforce the VCC as not just a venue for events, but a sanctuary in the city.

Summation

Taken together, the workshops and surveys converge on a powerful vision: the VCC as a living hub of culture, spirituality, and service, distinct from but complementary to the temple, rooted in Indian identity yet open to all.

The VCC should thus not only be a commemoration of the Mission's century of service but also a gift to Singapore's cultural landscape, a place where Swami Vivekananda's message of universality and service is appropriately adapted into a space for all.