

## Design Rationale

In order to accommodate the many activities and micro-public spaces that characterize the neighbourhood, the design of the new elderly residence has to incorporate a great degree of flexibility. The challenge of marrying the criteria of universal design and flexibility, in a specific tropical climate, immediately informs certain limitations but many possibilities.

One of the key design objectives is to create an environment where residents could recognize their own place by virtue of the approach and entry to their room. This could be realized if each room, like a house, has its own entrance and leading up to each house there was a street. By creating new 'grounds' on floating slabs that aims to characterize the openness and changing nature of the street level, it became possible to redefine the relationships with the surroundings. The informal nature of these ambiguous spaces also contributes to a spontaneous environment that allows visitors of various age groups to interact with the residents. Multifarious activities can spring up along these ambiguous spaces (as compared to dreary waiting areas), and interaction between the public and the elderly would occur on an everyday basis. This way, the residence would not be isolated, but instead allow for spaces forming an interesting demographic mix.

The ward floors are function-centric, such that individual volumes of rooms are determined by the spatial requirements that the various activities or occupancy require, and expressed as individual boxes that house the residents. The circulation space that is created from space between the volumes doubles up as usable area where residents can walk around or choose to transform it depending on its character. Hence, each level is given a unique home-like quality. Based on the appropriate heights required for the various categories of activities, the levels alternate between single-storey and double-storey floors, thereby creating an interesting elevation that contrasts with the institutional quality of a typical residence. Mezzanine levels on double-storey floors would be made to house other age groups in proximity to the elderly residents.

The ground level is treated similarly with the surrounding site, scattered with essential functions and micro-public spaces that generate spontaneous gatherings and integration between the residents and the rest of the society. Ultimately, through openness, flux and flow, discreteness and isolation disappears into a continuous field of changing life.