

Downtown Henge

Silicon valley has an important role in deciding the path humankind took and will take in the future. A landmark needs to be carved out in the valley where ideas gave birth to a new future. The ever growing nature of silicon valley leads to just one question. Where is the centre of silicon valley? The design proposes to elevate Arena Green as the centre of silicon valley. The site which is located in the confluence point of a river and a creek is an ideal location to act as a focal point of a city.

The circle is the simplest shape that can represent the focal point of a region. In the design, a circle is used to represent the focal point of Silicon Valley. Then, more circles radiate indicating the growth from the centre. The form is inspired from one of the earliest creations of humankind, the Henge. Monolithic structures were erected in a circular pattern to indicate a focal point. The doorway to the past and future have always been our creations.

The design uses the first circle to weave together the different parts of the site. The circle takes life when the site is open for possibilities in form. The circle uses the site to carve itself into the desired structure. The constraints in the site itself decided the function of the circle at different parts of the site. The resultant curves on the site gave rise to four main forms, the gates. The gates open to all four sides of the site, welcomes people from all over the world. This represents the nature of San Jose with a thriving multi cultural community. The north gate is a pedestrian bridge that connects the Arena Green west and east. This lets the community as well as tourists explore the park and its rich flora and fauna. The south gate rises 135 foot to transform by dusk into an illuminated tower, directing people into the park. The east gate holds the signage of Silicon Valley and acts as a selfie point for the tourists. The west gate is the main entry which holds the solar panel on top and storage units, harvests and supplies energy to light the structures of the Downtown Henge.

The second circle constitutes 'The shades'. These are smaller arched structures in the park surrounding the gates. The shades are where the friends and family gather around to spend time together. There are eight shades in the park, 4 each on the west and east sides. The third circle of seats are spread throughout the park surrounding the shades. These are where those quick silicon valley discussions happen that give birth to new ideas. The gate structures, the shades and the seats are made out of beaten steel sheets to give a monolithic texture. The coordinated use of structures and furniture give the design an everlasting sculptural identity. The structure makes use of carefully integrated solar cells on top to harvest energy for the lighting thus making it capable of taking care of the entire energy requirement in the park. In case of additional requirement, canopy structures with solar cells can be integrated to the Northern bridge.

Neon lighting is provided along the sweep of the gate structures to enhance the silhouette of the forms. The neon lighting can be integrated in such a way as to decrease the light pollution in the environment.