

BENGAL FOUNDATION ARTS AND CRAFTS CENTRE

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Architecture in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Architecture

Department of Architecture
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

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Approval

The thesis/project titled “ Bengal Foundation Arts and Crafts Centre ” submitted by Aditi Haque (16108018) of Spring, 2021 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Architecture on 29/05/2021.

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Ethics Statement

All information used in the paper is collected and generated through integrity, fidelity, honesty and no intellectual property was damaged through the process.

Abstract:

Arts and culture have always been an integral part of society, having its mark all over history and one of the key factors to understanding how humans have lived in the past. Within the present situation, with more and more of the world's population opting to live in an urban context, there is an increase in urbanisation. As people's lives get more hectic with living in an urban context, spaces for the arts are needed to not only bring in a respite, but to also allow the people in the arts to share their skills.

In order to bring in a platform for a multitude of arts to be showcased, the project will aim to address the best way to approach this ideal. Considering the environment and how to best utilise the surrounding conditions, the project will attempt to bring about a space for the arts and crafts. Research based on how arts and crafts centre work on an international scale and how to bring about a sustainable approach to the project is thus vital. By analysing the location, through careful mapping, surveys and studies, and having an understanding of the problems and the strengths of the site, a space can be created to allow for cultural exchange.

Keywords: Arts; Culture; Respite; Crafts; Platform; Sustainable

Acknowledgments:

I would like to express my gratitude to my parents and my sister for supporting me throughout my journey and for being a pillar of strength during the hard times, especially considering the situation and for providing help whenever they saw necessary. I would also like to thank my friends from school who have stuck with me for years and have seen me go from my worst and now to a more stable position.

To my teachers, I wish to express my heartiest gratitude for being a gentle guidance and for being understanding through the times, without whom the project would not have been possible to imagine.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Introduction

When asked about their future plans, most people would not pen in a pandemic that would gripe the whole world into their houses for an unforeseeable time period, where staying inside one's house is considered the safest possible scenario, and the interactions with the outside world become limited. Yet, in the year 2020, a pandemic that no one could have foretold has kept the population troubled and anxiety at an all time high. In an effort to keep people's mental health from suffering even more, frequently people ask themselves the question "What will I do once things are better?". It's a question that gives them hope, that gives a notion that eventually life will move on. The answers tend to range between going to a cafe with their friends, visiting a concert, attending festivals, or appreciating the activities that were once taken for granted in their lives.

Places for a short respite are still a rarity within the metropolitan area, more so are areas for celebrating the arts and culture. Having had limited mobility these past few months, the creative professions have had an especially harsh time. Many art exhibitions and festivals have been cancelled due to fear of spreading the virus, and the turnouts for any that are open are relatively low for the same concerns. And the general public have felt the loss in recreational activities very deeply as well. Being trapped within the four corners of the same four walls, a splash of colour is a much needed entity. The mind can only take in performing the same mundane activities over and over again before regressing to negative thoughts.

Many institutions around the world have turned to hosting exhibitions that are curated online, in order to reduce physical interactions. Seminars and lectures are also being conducted in the same manner. However, it is not possible to replicate the same feelings that are held when visiting these events physically. The emotions of being in the presence of thought provoking artwork, the exhilaration of seeing a performer bring their passion alive on stage, or the feeling of being in a crowd of people from all walks of life and being able to share a discussion, these are all very hard to replicate through an online medium. Being able to attend events, where in so we can exercise these feelings, is a boon within the ordinary working life.

Thus, an arts district, an area where the general public can rest and seek recreation through the creative field would be greatly appreciated within this urban context.

1.2 Project Rationale

Bengal Foundation has had a history of being able to host events for the arts periodically. Having had established places like Bengal Boi and Bengal Institute, and organising a repertoire of events, there is already a general reputation amongst the public about projects organised by the Bengal Foundation. However, a venue for hosting large enough events can be hard to find at times, especially when considering a larger showcase. In order to bring in a place where not only can creative minds are able to share their works and expressions, but also to bring about a space for the public to relish the work of others and for a multitude of art related festivities to have a venue. As shown with the popularity of the Dhaka Art Summit, events showcasing the arts bring a moment of respite for most dwellers within the metropolitan area. Hence, Bengal Foundation, having secured a location to provide an outlet for these kinds of events, has hopes to foster an art district.

With an arts district, the opportunity for people to not only visit exhibitions is possible, but also to acquire skills like printmaking through workshops. Rather than having sporadic events in different locations, having one place to host different facilities would be greatly appreciated, especially as it's not possible to travel to different locations all the time. Convenience is always the better alternative compared to lumbering around a difficult path.

1.3 Objectives of the project

The main aim of the project is to bring in a place for art and cultural showcase and to allow Bengal Foundation to have a venue for hosting a multitude of events with a broad audience range. The objectives are including:

- i) Creating a place where the Bengal Foundation is able to store their vast collection of artwork and installations.
- ii) Having residential facilities for those who wish to stay within the area and remain for the festivities for a long time, or to host guests.
- iii) Being able to host events for fields like Architecture, Music, Dance, Painting, Sculpture, Art installations, Photography, Crafts, Poetry, Fiction, Non Fiction, Cinema
- iv) Making the art district self sufficient, and to have commercial activities that can sustain its management.
- v) Take advantage of the river surrounding the site.
- vi) Mix in a bit of the old traditions with new ones.
- vii) Being able to organise events that can be held on a monthly basis

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to Savar

Savar is found towards the northwest of Dhaka City, with the municipality being found on the Dhaka-Aricha Highway. Initially the Savar region was mostly defined as agricultural land, having had mostly fields for growing crops, however it underwent a very rapid process of industrial growth. Starting from the 1980s, up to the year 2011, there was a reported number of 70 factories established, which meant that for many people there was an occasion to find work within those factories, and in order to reduce travel time, started to migrate to the region. Eventually the municipality of Savar was established in 1991. According to studies, an approximate of 62 percent of the population was to be said to be from people who migrated to the region, with an average of 4000 people moving to the municipality per year (S.R Amin, 2009). This means that eventually the land used for agricultural purposes has been slowly decreasing and has shown a future trend of decreasing and an increase in urbanization.

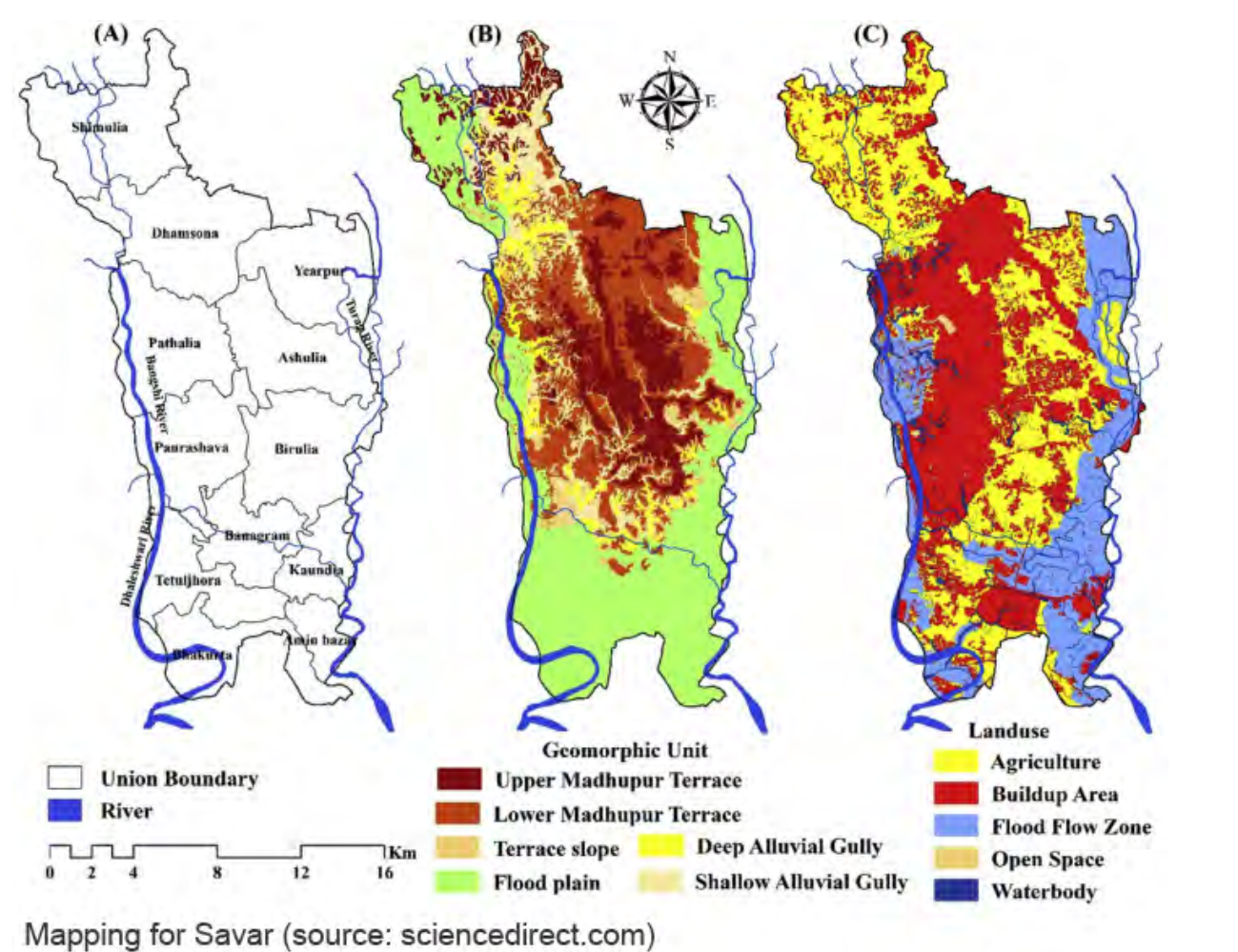
5.01 Number of selected industry 2011

Upazila	Textile mill	Garments factory	Rice mill	Match factory	Steel and engineering	Aluminium	Jute mill	Sugar mill	Others
Dhaka Metropolitan	7	1227	19	8	14	30	4	0	0
Dhamrai	3	5	87	0	6	11	2	0	16
Dohar	0	0	142	0	0	0	0	0	0
Keraniganj	0	58	80	0	0	0	2	0	500
Nawabganj	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Savar	22	198	164	0	4	0	0	0	0
Total	32	1483	492	8	24	41	8	0	516

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

Savar is considered the second largest upazila within the Dhaka district having had a total area of 280.11 square kilometer. As it is, there are 13 unions present that make up the upazila. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the total population of Savar is 1385910, thereby making the population density 4948 per square kilometer. Meaning that compared to Dhaka Metropolitan city, which has a staggering population density of 30551 per square kilometer, there are less problems with people living, and has a fair amount of space for recreational activities, barring the land for industrial and agricultural use.

As with most regions in Bangladesh, Savar experiences very heavy monsoon rainfall, having had high precipitation and humidity, and is prone to flooding. As the Savar region has three major river systems, with the Bangshi River, Dhaleshwari River and Turag River flowing through the region, they affect the flooding hazard of the land. Within Savar, there are three kinds of plains available: terrace, gully and flood plain. Majority of the land (about 47%) is categorised as terrace, while the next majority (about 39%) can be categorised as floodplains with the remaining (about 14%) is considered as gully.



Geomorphic units and their aerial coverage in km².

Major Geomorphic Unit	Subunit	Area (in km ²)	Area (%)
Terrace	Upper Madhupur terrace	43	15.35%
	Lower Madhupur terrace	63	22.48%
	Terrace Slope	25	8.92%
Gully	Deep Alluvial Gully	12	4.28%
	Shallow Alluvial Gully	27	9.63%
Flood Plain	—	110	39.34%

source: sciencedirect.com

2.2 Approach to Dhaleshwari River

As a majority of the Savar region is categorised as flood plains, the way the river banks are treated is significant to how the land is developed. Usually, there are two ways to approach the river embankment, one is the Cordon Approach and the other is the Open River Approach (Nazrul Islam, 2016). Bangladesh has primarily used the Cordon Approach from the 1960s (EPWAPDA, 1964). When it comes to the Cordon Approach, the flood levels are usually controlled using the construction of embankments, that will section off the river channels from the flood plains. This means that there is significant harm befalling on the people who live outside of the embankment, causing a rift between the people who live inside and the people who live outside of the embankment.

As Bangladesh is bearing the brunt of the effects of Global Warming on the Himalayas, there is an increased need for handling the river banks with more sensitivity. With Global Warming, the ice caps on the Himalayas melt at a faster rate, causing the rivers to overflow and create more instances of flooding. With flooding, the silt level of the river beds rises, which makes the soil easier to be prone to soil erosion. With Bangladesh being the largest delta in the world, this means that a significant portion of the land will be undergoing massive change to the land according to the predictions by geologists due to the impact of global warming.

Therefore, when handling flood plains, the river's banks should be using an open river approach, in order to have an ecologically safer standpoint. With an Open Approach, the intensity at which the flooding of the river water can be decreased at a staggering amount. Having the river water lay out on the flood plains, instead of closing them off from the flood plains, it can help reduce the chance of soil erosion, if the silt build up is gradual. This would mean that settlements along the floodplain would have to be aptly prepared for seasonal flooding in order to avoid having a disaster in their hands. The approach does necessarily mean that there will be no usage of embankments, rather that embankments should not be used to close off the river from the flood plains. There is also the chance of using land levelling and terracing to direct the flow of the river towards the flood plains.

2.3 Arts and Crafts Centre Definition

An arts and crafts centre can be recognised as a mixed use area, which can be used to promote activities of cultural significance, all while having a space for the community to gather as well. The commercial impact of an arts and crafts centre should be benefiting the city, and should also be a place for the local artisans to have a place for showcasing the arts. Within an urban context, it can be visualised as an area where the arts and culture can be preserved within the society, while also having an economic value (Steiner and Butler, 2007). An arts and crafts centre can be defined as something similar to an arts district, as they have the same properties. According to Americans for the Arts, an arts district, which can also be known as a cultural district, can be divided into certain types:



source: americansforthearts.org

i) Cultural Compounds:

These are art districts that have a history, having been established since the 1930s. Primarily situated out of the cityscape, they have large masses of open space, however they do not have as many commercial facilities, rather focusing on public spaces like parks, for communities within a housing, etc.

ii) Major Cultural Institution Focused Districts

These are locations with a major institute, like an opera hall, a concert hall, an exhibition space or a library, and the art district is built up according to the central institute. They can be located close to commercial areas, or near areas that generate a lot of economy, like in popular tourist destinations.

iii) Arts and Entertainment Districts

They do not require one major institution, rather built up by different smaller institutions or smaller arts related business enterprises and galleries. They can have facilities like cafes and restaurants, or movie theatres, and have a more down to earth and approachable feel compared to other districts.

iv) Downtown Area Focus District

It takes the entire downtown portion of a city and dedicates it to the arts and culture providing a destination that becomes sort of a landmark, and can create revenue as a popular tourist attraction. The district is mainly pedestrian friendly and allows for different kinds of artists to showcase their work on the roads themselves.

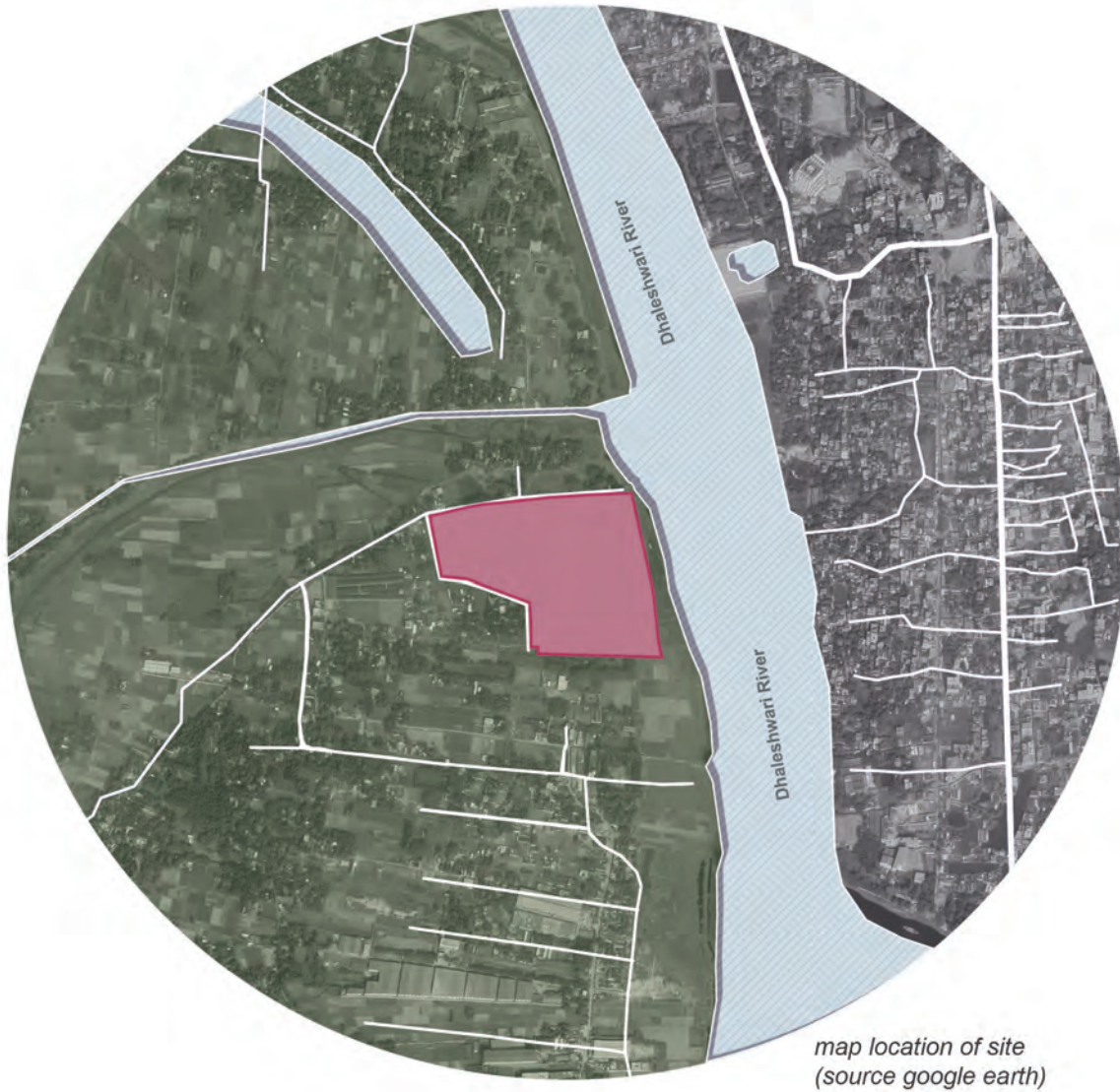
v) Cultural Production District

The sort of district that gathers institutes where the culture can be produced or can be taught, with facilities for different kinds of artist to practice their skills and to allow them an area for production. Can house in studios and workshop areas for the artists. Usually based out of community needs rather than venturing towards commercial benefits as a tourist destination.

With an arts district, there should be long term planning, and there should be special care taken into how the management of the whole institution and how the local arts are being considered within the organisation. If there are any existing places of cultural significance, they should be highlighted in an arts district, while also considering how it impacts individual artists who will be using the arts district as a means of business and as a way to gain exposure.

CHAPTER 3: SITE ANALYSIS

3.1 Site Location

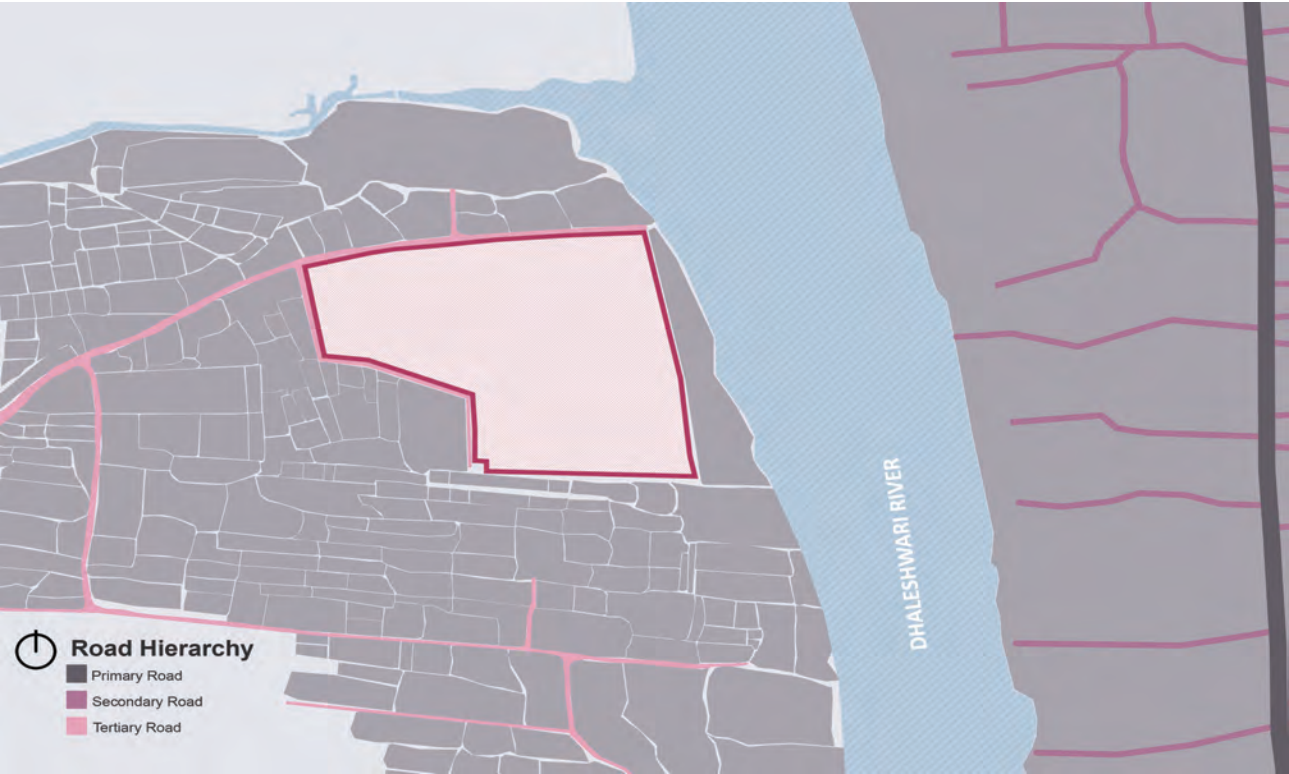


Location: Ford Nagar, Dhamrai, Dhaka

Site Type: Rural

Site Area: 22 acres

3.2 Movement and Infrastructure



map depicting road hierarchy



<Site can be accessed using the Savar- Manikgonj Highway, having a time period of 30 min to reach by car.

map depicting movement by car
page| 14



map showing transportation routes

> Transportation via boat is the more preferable option with a port right in front of the site..

>Boat ride across the Dhaleshwari River can take 20-25 min and offers a scenic route for visitors.

>Transportation by car is still possible and the entry point can accomodate for both access.

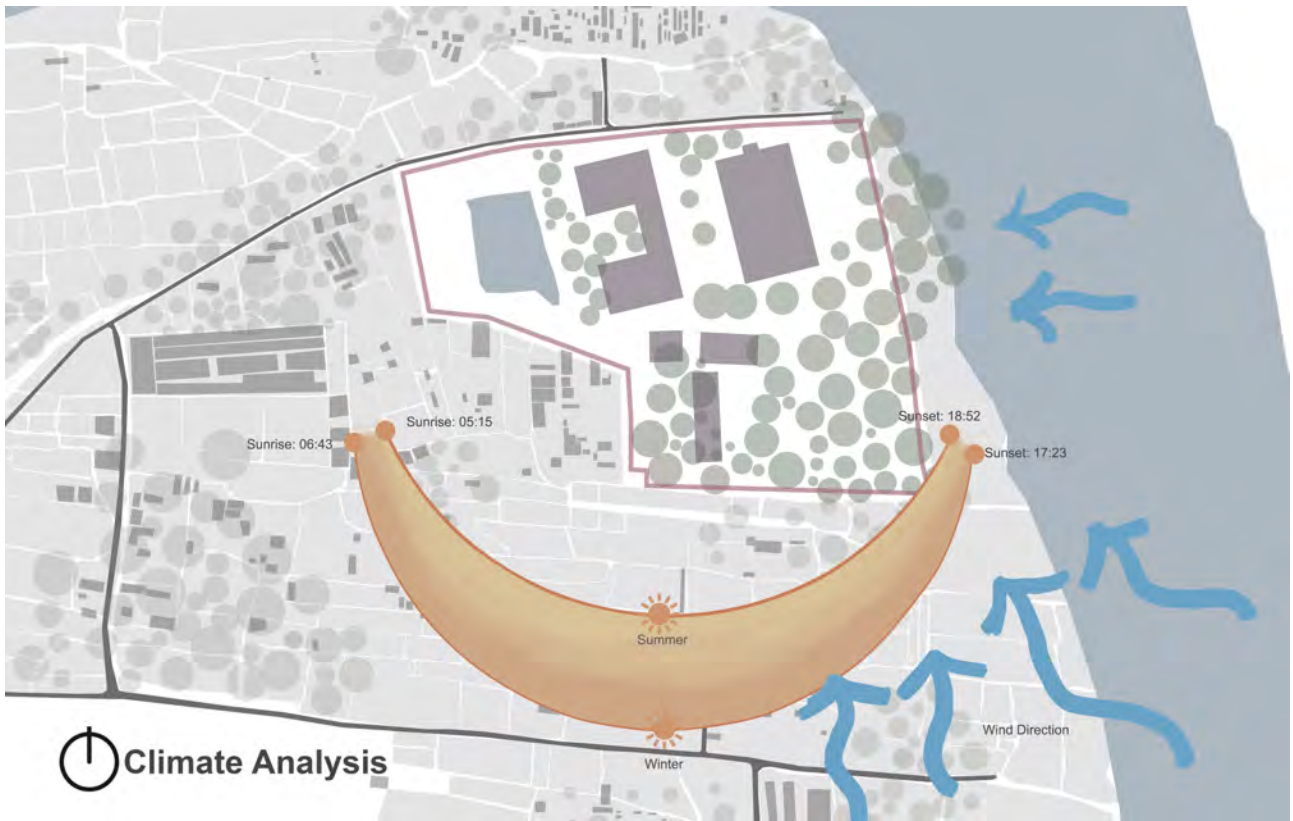


Images showing examples of boat rides to access the site (source: author)

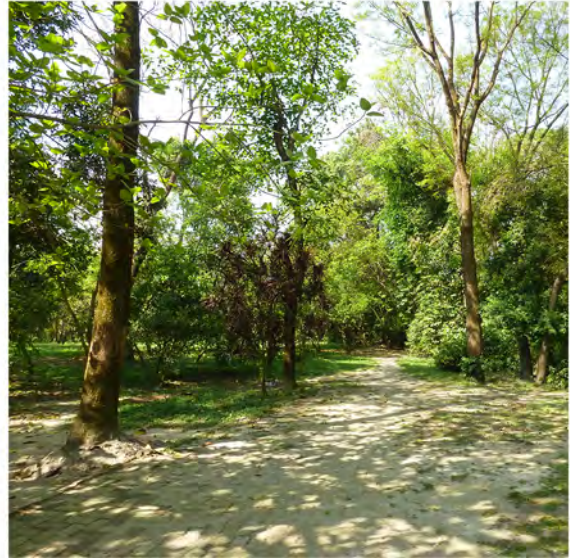
3.3 Landscape



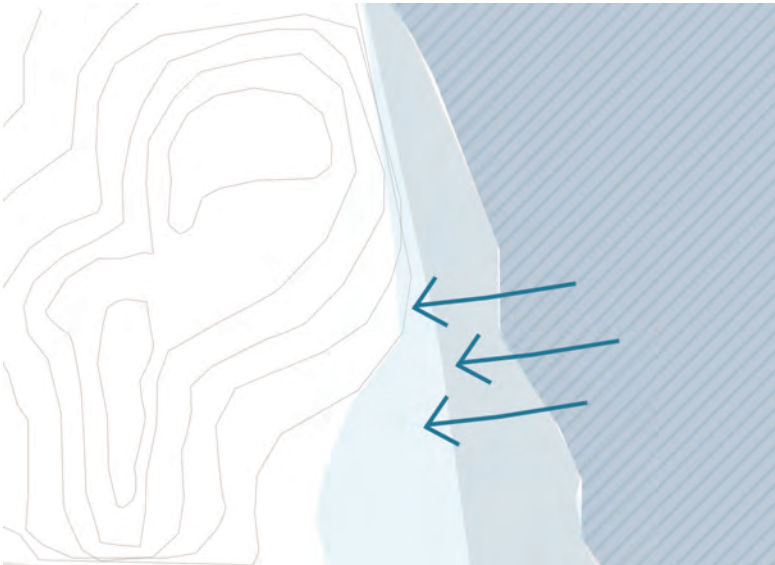
map depicting topography of the site



map depicting climate analysis



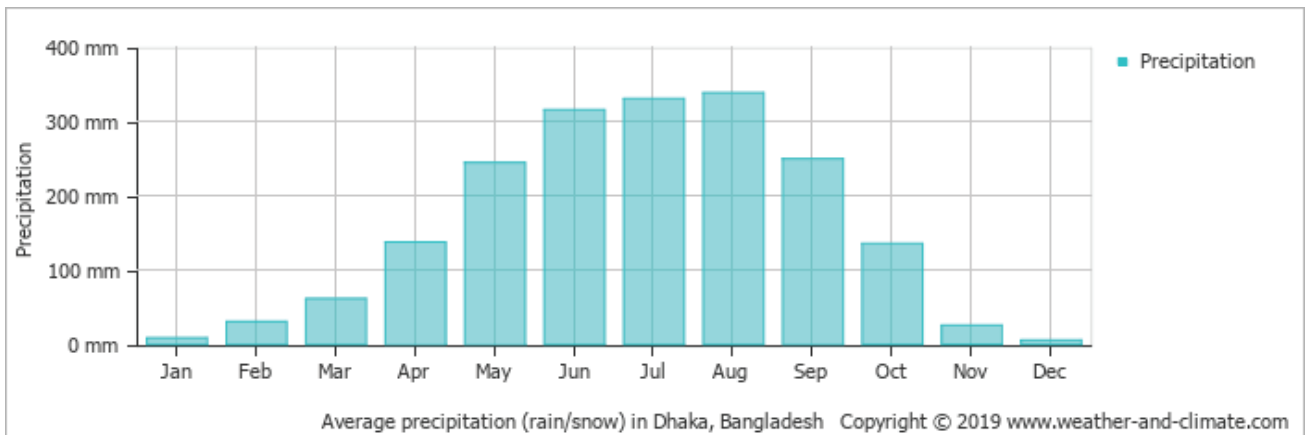
images of the site (source: author)



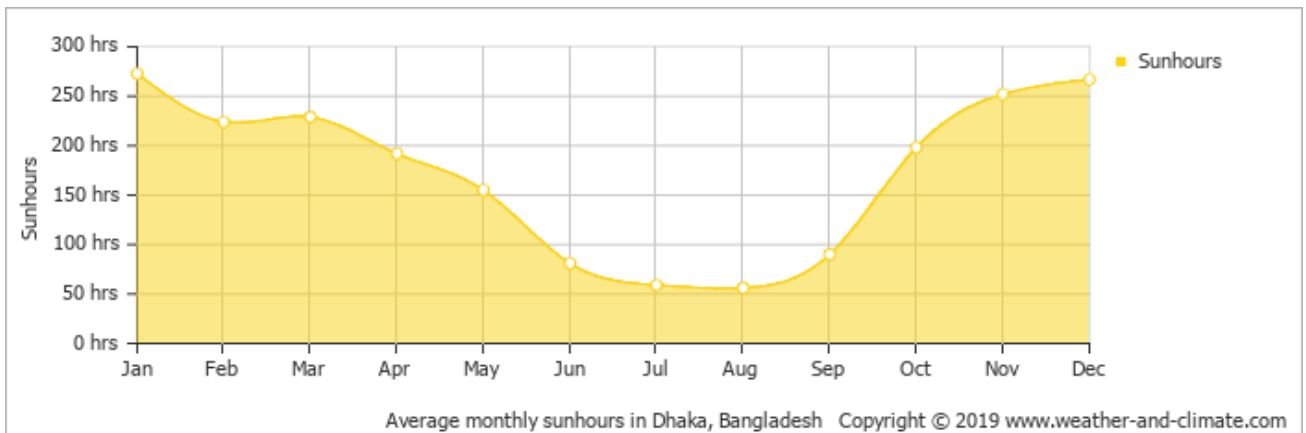
< During monsoon season, as the area lies on a flood plain, the river has a tendency of overflowing as a result of heavy rains



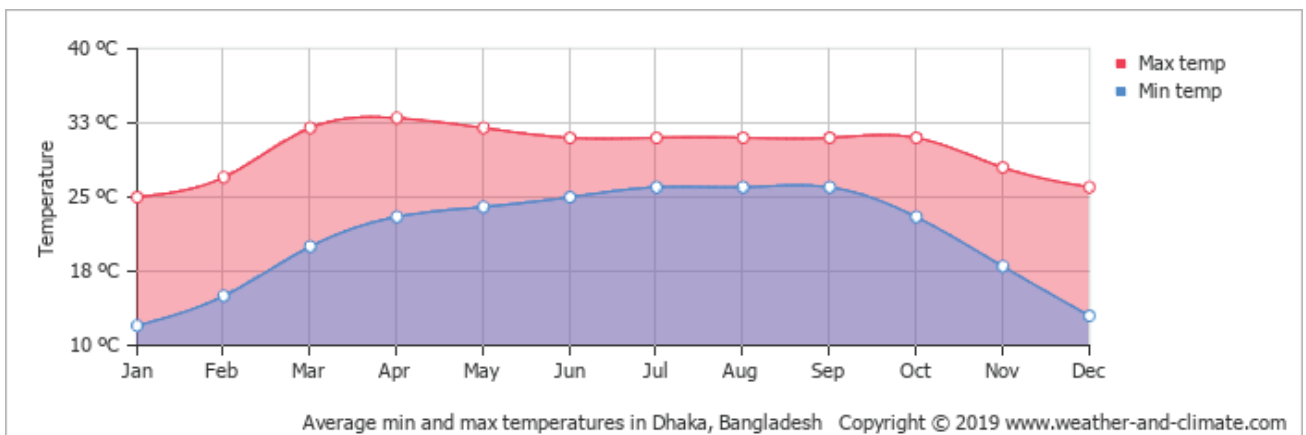
Image showing a result of the water overflowing from the river during monsoon season (source: author)



Average precipitation in Dhaka (source: weather-and-climate.com)



Average hours of sunshine in Dhaka (source: weather-and-climate.com)



Average temperature recordings in Dhaka(source: weather-and-climate.com)

3.4 Existing Structures



*pre-existing
structures within
the site*

*images showing
the state
of the factory
(source: author)*

>The site has a history of being used for industrial purposes from the 1980s before falling into the possession of Bengal Foundation

>The factories were used for jute mill production and have not been maintained for along time.

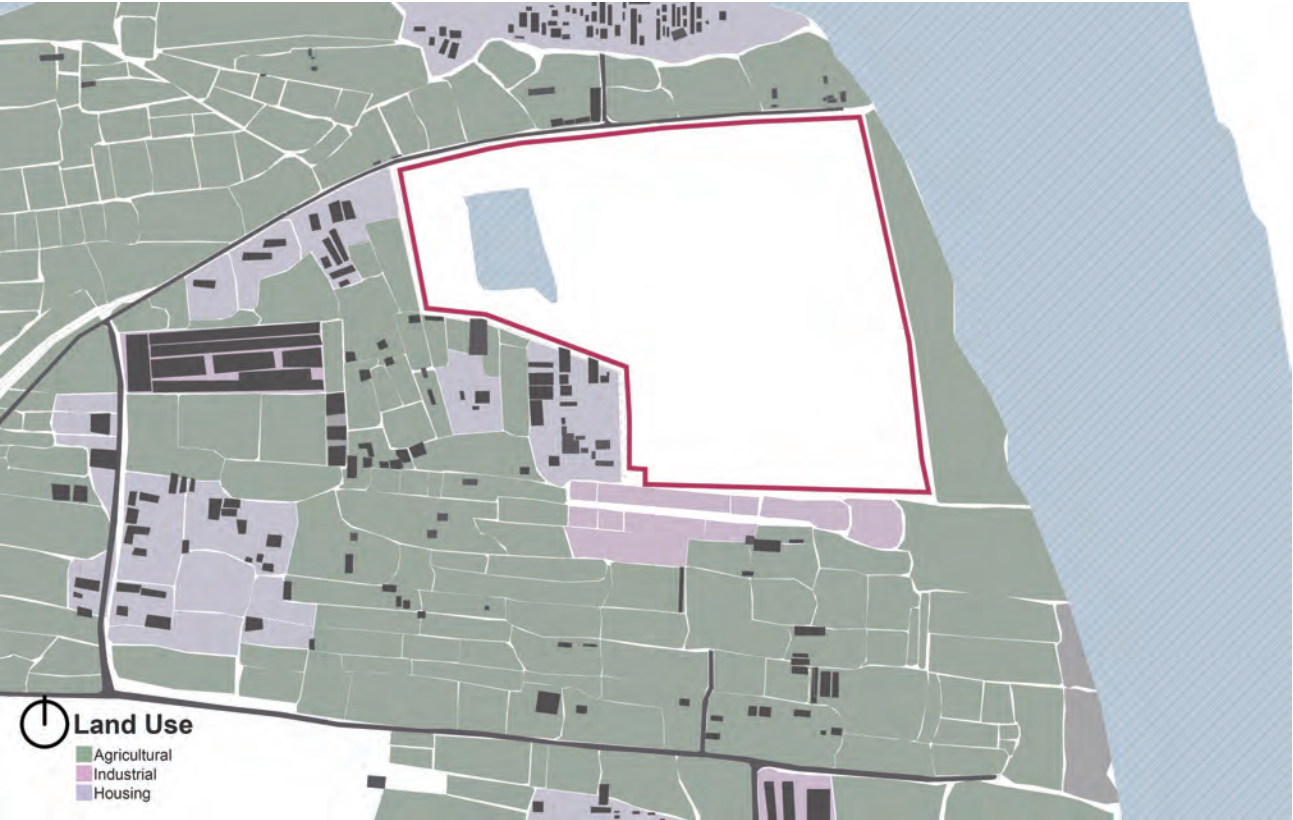
> The material used to build the structures was not meant to be permanent, hence why right now they're in a dilapidated state.



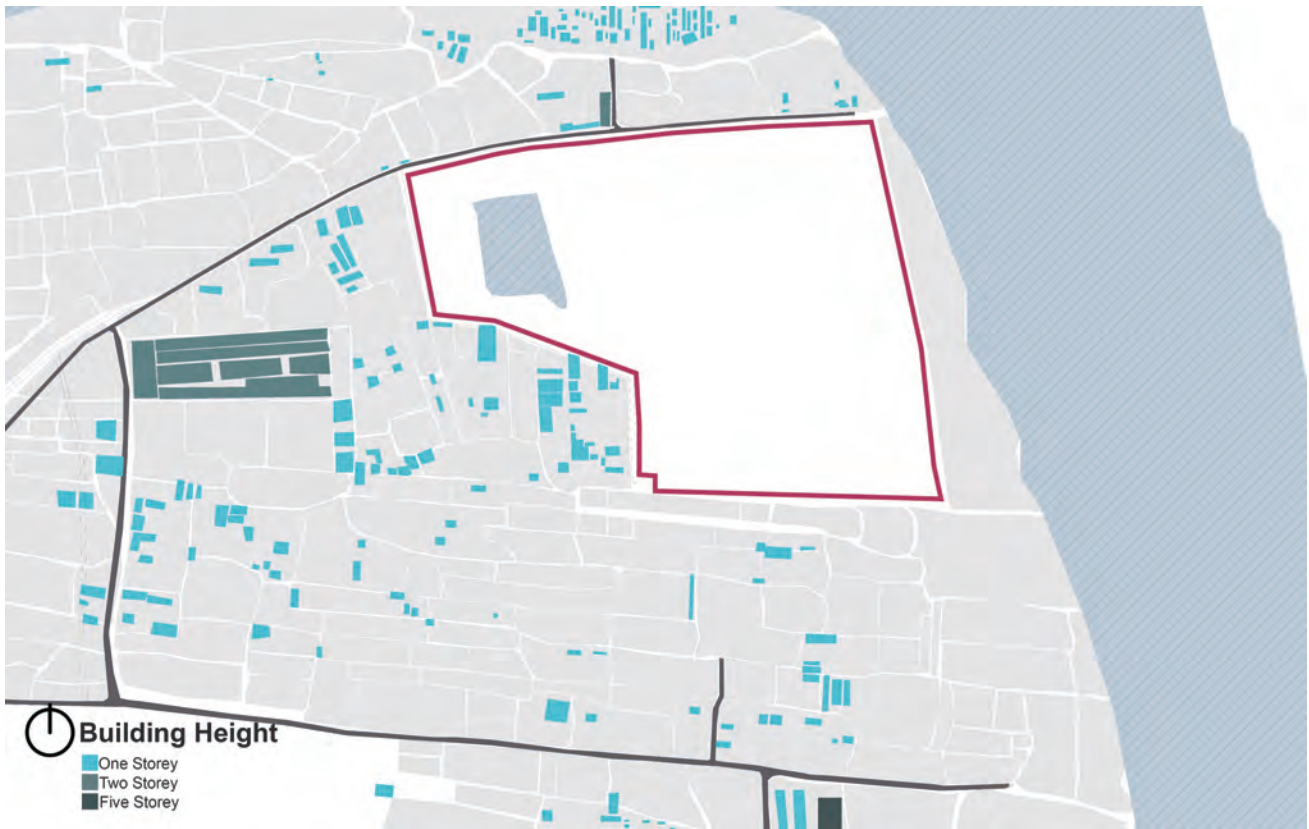
3.5 Context Analysis



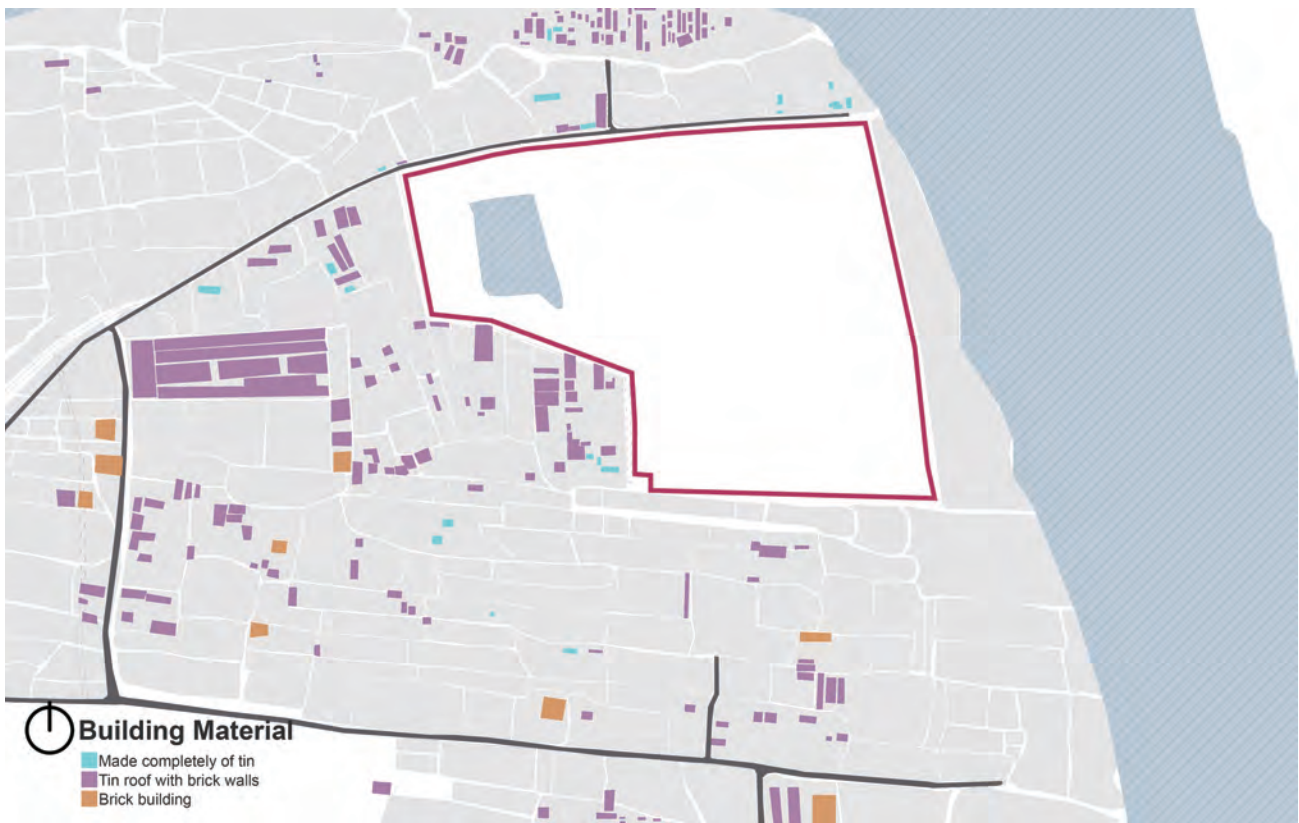
map showing building typology surrounding the site



map showing land typology surrounding the site



map showing building height surrounding the site



map showing building material surrounding the site

CHAPTER 4: PROGRAM ANALYSIS

4.1 Program List

Function	No. of User	Net Unit Area (in sft)	No of Unit	Total Area (in sft)
Entry				
Entry Lobby		500	1	500
Admissions		50	1	50
Cloak Room		80	1	80
Shop		420	1	420
Cafe		580	1	580
Administration				
Reception		150	1	150
Director's Office	1	200	1	200
Deputy Director's Office	1	150	5	750
General Office	30	1350	1	1350
Copy/Work Room		180	1	180
Filing and Storage		80	1	80
Conference Room	12	770	1	770
Toilet		86	4	344
Permanent Gallery				
Preparation Space		200	1	200
Exhibition Space		7000	1	7000

Workshop Room	30	600	2	1200
Maintenance Room		100	1	100
Storage		1700	1	1700
Toilet		86	7	602
Temporary Gallery				
Preparation Space		200	1	200
Exhibition Space		7000	1	7000
Workshop Room	30	600	2	1200
Maintenance Room		100	1	100
Storage		1700	1	1700
Toilet		86	7	602
Theatre/Auditorium				
Lobby		200	1	200
Theatre Hall	300	3600	2	7200
Seminar Room	100	1200	2	2400
Multi Purpose Room		4700	1	4700
Storage		300	1	300
Toilet		86	4	344
Hospitality				
Lobby		200	1	200
Guest House	60	325	60	19500
Utility		200	1	200
Kitchen		515	1	515
Multipurpose Room		2000	1	2000

Laundry		150	1	150
Dining	100	1040	1	1040
Toilet				
Utility and Services				
Security and Surveillance		208	1	208
Fire control Room		60	1	60
Guard Room		60	1	60
Mechanical Room		800	1	800
Total Net Area				66935
Circulation (30% of Net Area)				23427.25
Gross Built Total Area				90362.25

4.2 Program Analysis

The program was developed according to the standards set in the industry and according to the estimated monthly visitors. Using prior events like Dhaka Art Summit and other prior exhibitions held with the Bengal Foundation, an estimation can be made about the number of visitors that would need to be accommodated. If an average of 500 visitors is estimated to be visiting an event, then the exhibition spaces are set with enough space to accommodate the number. Considering the fact that the Bengal Foundation has a very sizeable collection of artworks and installations, there would be a need for a storage to keep them in condition, and also a possibility to showcase them on a permanent gallery, while also keeping a temporary gallery for exhibitions that can be held on a more frequent basis. The opportunity to hold workshops and seminars alongside the exhibitions is also a given, considering that people would want to learn more from the exhibitions they would be experiencing.

With the Dhaleshwari river overlooking the site and plenty of vegetation, an opportunity to bring in open spaces that allow for visitors to have interactions between the outside and inside spaces. In order to accommodate for any international guests, guest houses are also facilities that are required, according to the clientele. These can also be rented out to the public, as a way of generating income, which can be a way to sustain a sustainable economic situation for the arts district.

CHAPTER 5: CASE STUDY

5.1 HeyTown Art Centre, Beijing



Image by Haiting Sun

Location: Beijing, China

Architect: META - Project

Area: 3300 square metre

With Beijing growing rapidly as a city, due to a boost in the economic situation, many of the urban spaces fail to bring about places for culture and the rapid urbanisation has led to many industrial spaces being practically unused and deteriorating its functionality. In order to bring in more life into the area and to stimulate a cultural zone, and to bring about a space that can unite the surrounding community of the area, the project was finalised.

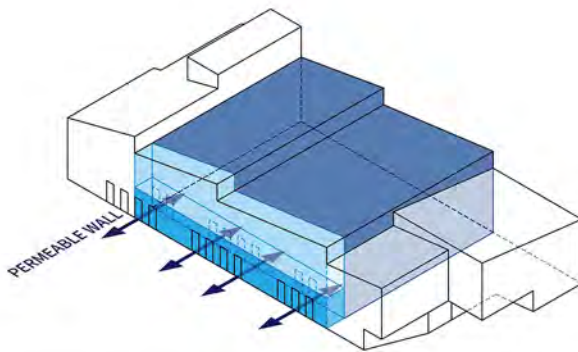
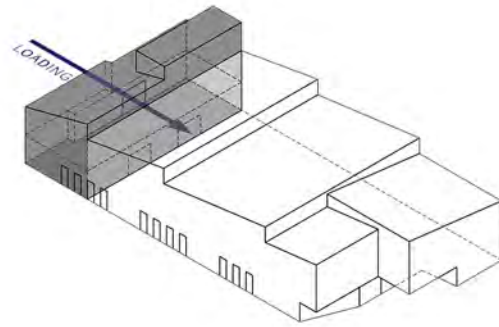
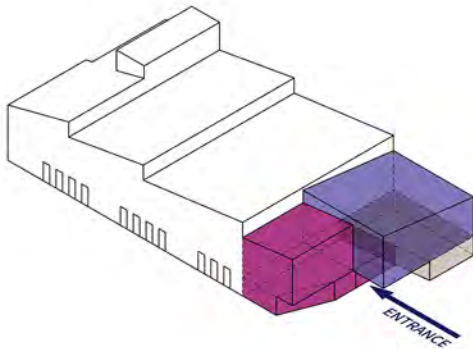
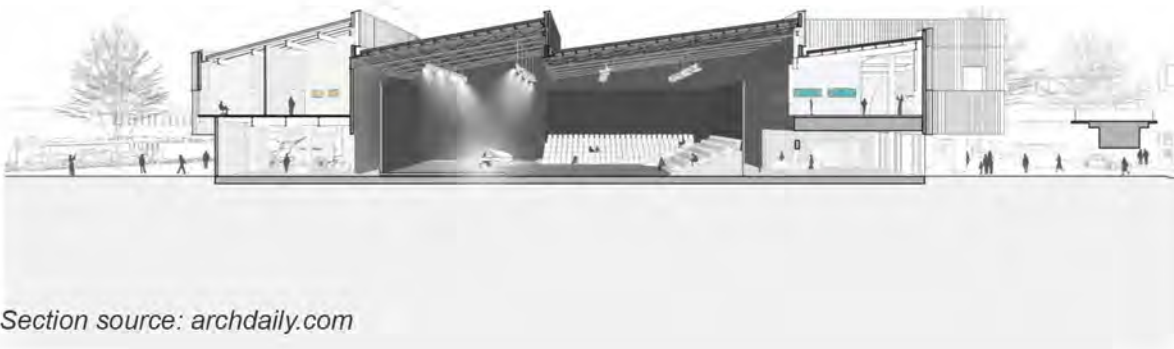


Diagram source: archdaily.com

In terms of functionality, with the intention of the project being a place to revitalize the cultural roots of the community while also allowing the community to feel a connection between themselves, the main focus of the structure is a hall that can be used for both displaying exhibitions and for organising events or stage performances.



Section source: archdaily.com

Image by Haiting Sun

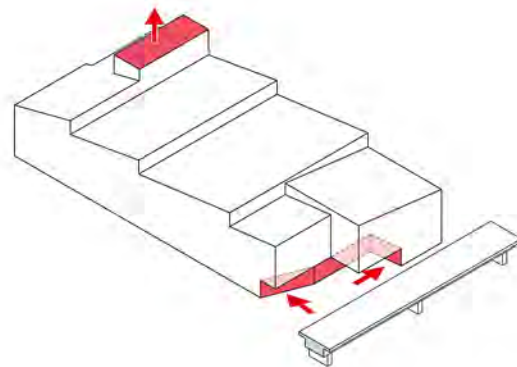
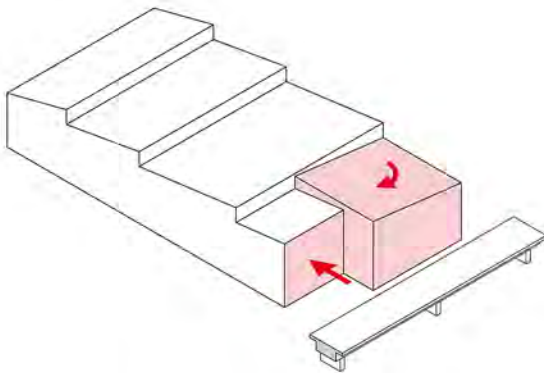
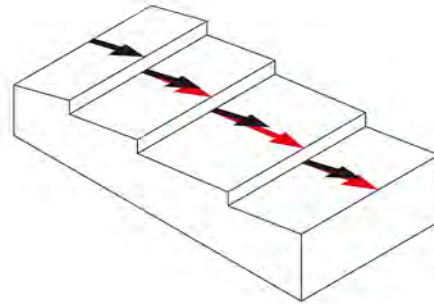
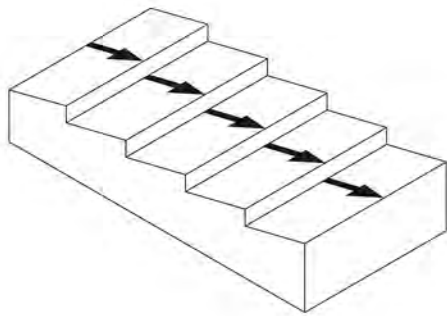
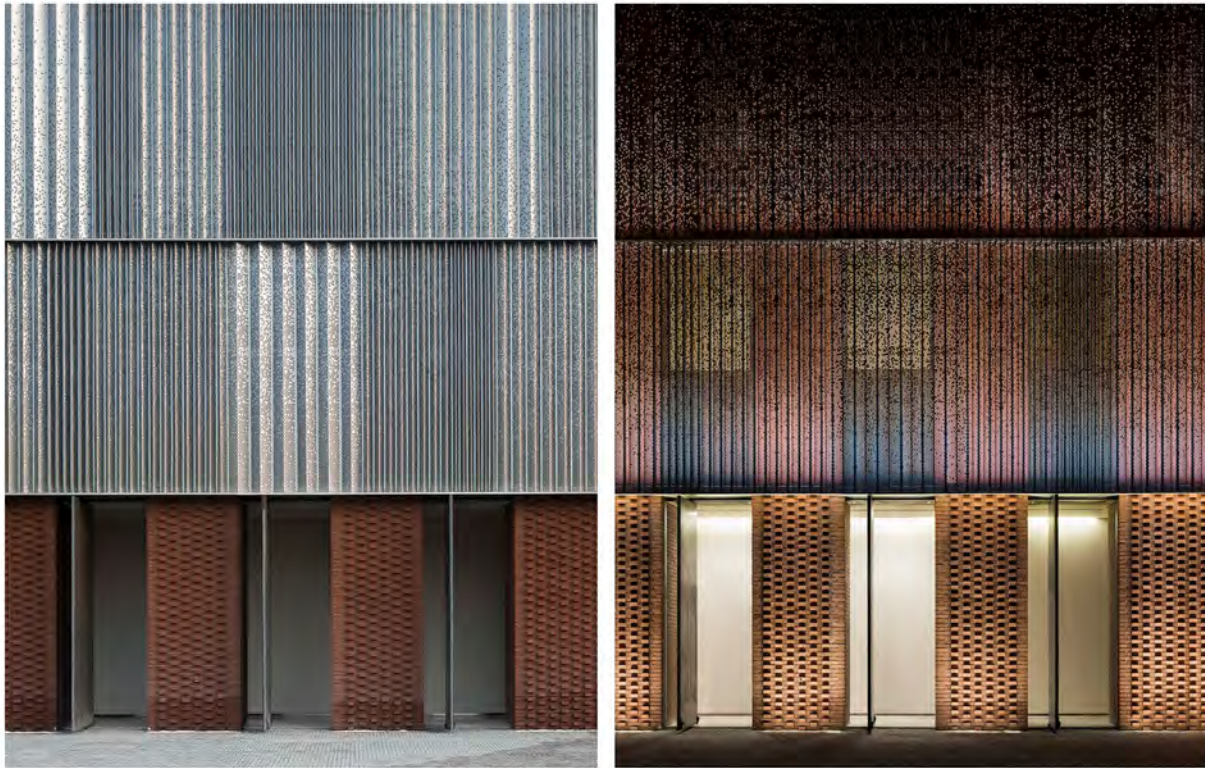


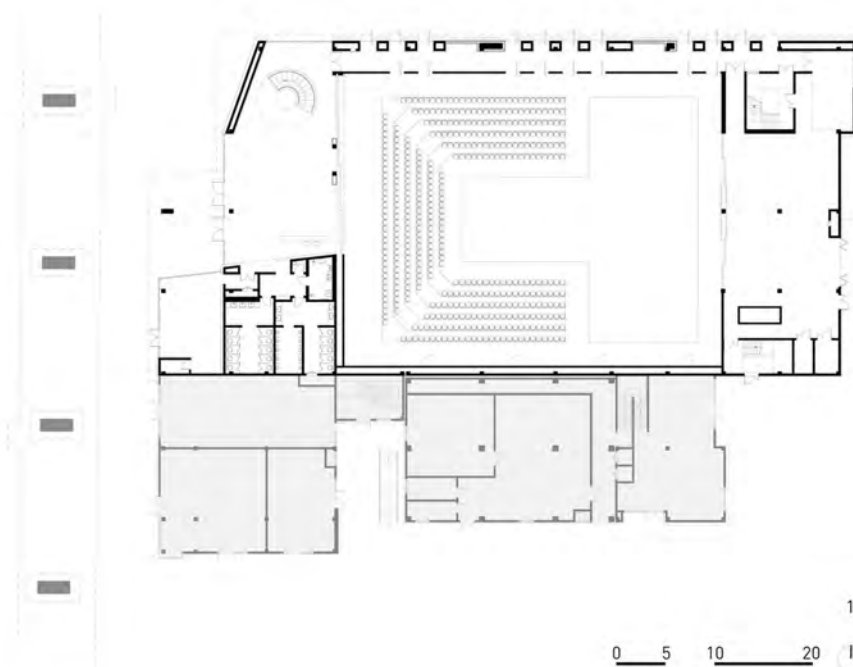
Diagram source: archdaily.com

The main inspiration for the form comes from the original shape for industrial buildings. Having had a history of factory buildings, the form chooses to embrace its roots rather than to hide it. The shape of the roof is adjusted according to the functional needs of the project, with the main exhibition space being regarded as the focal point, thus giving the most emphasis on it. In order to form a connection with the network of transportation, the entrance is carved out on the side which faces the railway connection. To break the monotony of the height of the roof, the main area of vertical circulation extends higher.



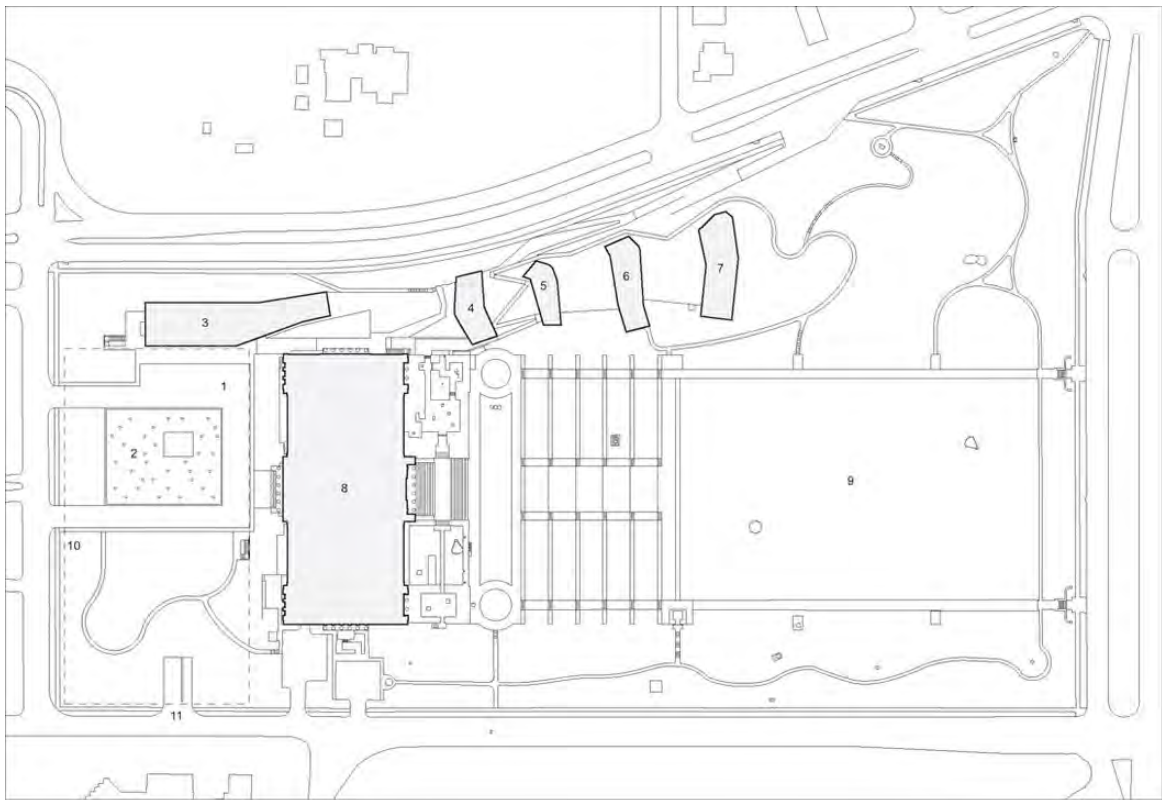
Images by Haiting Sun

For the purpose of providing the right ambience for both stage performances and for exhibitions, there is an aluminium covering surrounding the entire form which are perforated with very tiny holes in order to bring a sense of lightness. The perforations allow for diffused light to enter through to the spaces, but also allowing to control the look of the form from the outside, bringing about a sharpness to the building.



1F First floor plan
(source: archdaily.com)

5.2: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City



SITE PLAN

- 1 Entry Plaza
- 2 Reflecting Pool
- 3 Lens 1 Lobby
- 4 Lens 2
- 5 Lens 3
- 6 Lens 4
- 7 Lens 5
- 8 Original Museum
- 9 Sculpture Park Lawn
- 10 Garage Below
- 11 Garage Entrance

Site Plan (source: archdaily.com)

Location: Kansas City, United States

Architect: Steven Holl Architects

Area: 15329 square metre

Designed as an extension to the already existing museum, the aim of the extension was to allow for a space for exhibitions to be held and to allow for interactions between the landscape and the sculptural garden and the visitors for the exhibition spaces.

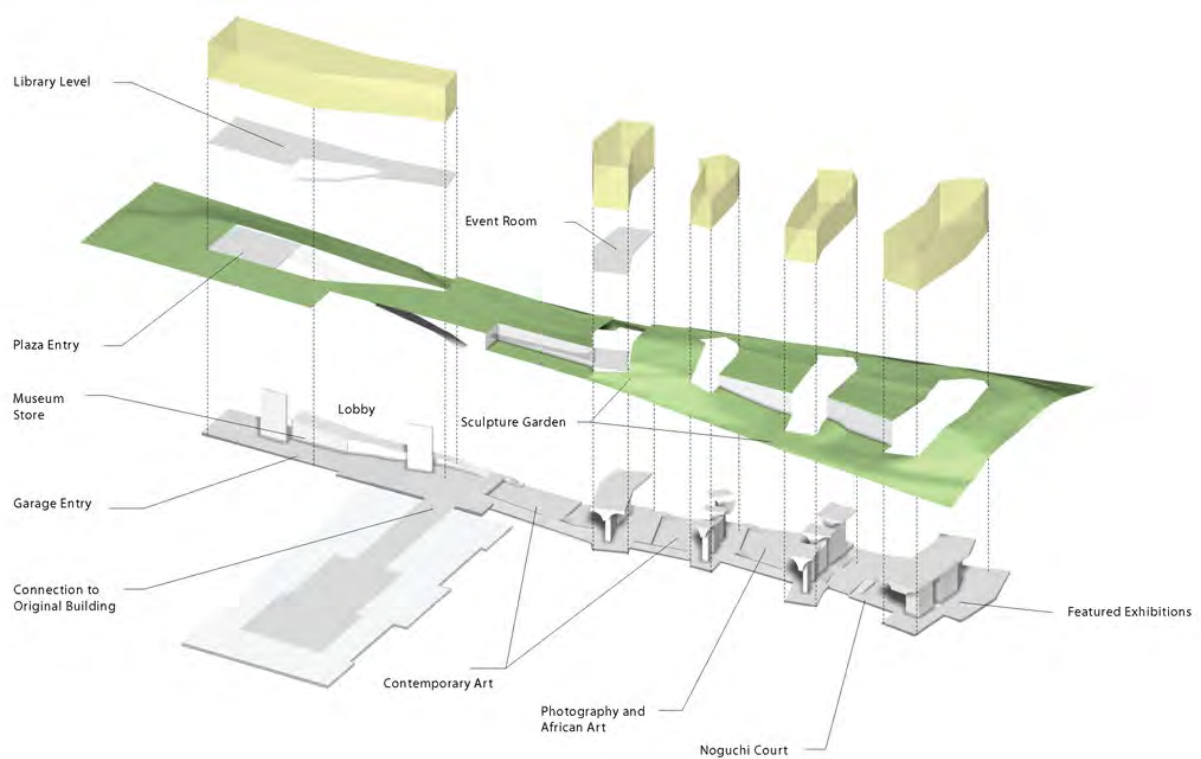


Diagram showing functional relationships (source: archdaily.com)

As the sculptural garden had already been considered as the highlight, the design interlopes with the flow of the garden, allowing for the featured exhibition spaces to have a “lens” that lets the people from the outside have a peek into the exhibition inside and also to allow for a light well that can illuminate deep within the exhibition. As with dealing any sort of artwork, it is important to make sure the light is filtered out and does not directly damage the artwork.

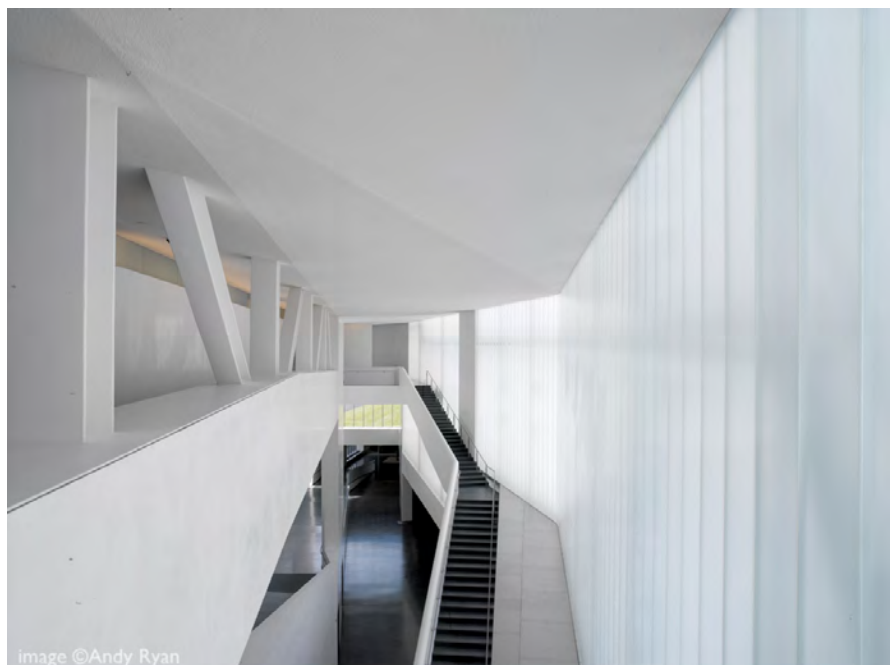


Image by Andy Ryan



image ©Andy Ryan

Image by
Andy Ryan

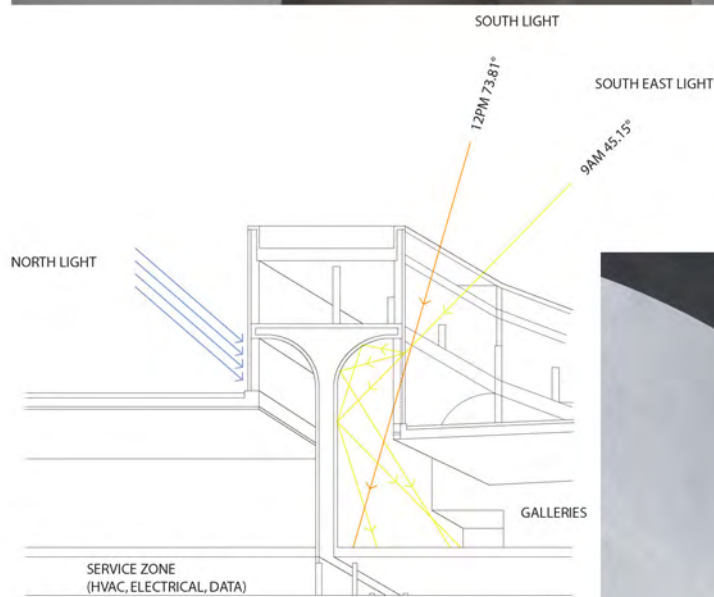


Diagram showing how the lens acts as a way to allow natural light from outside to enter the gallery spaces in a controlled way, so as to not allow for the exhibits to be affected by the sunlight, as artwork tend to have a reaction from it over a long period of exposure. (source: archdaily.com)

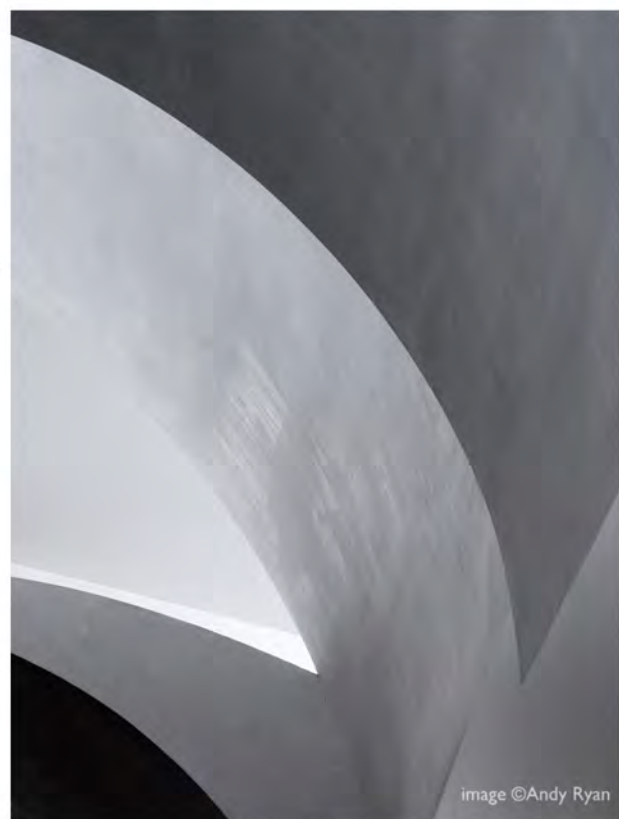


image ©Andy Ryan

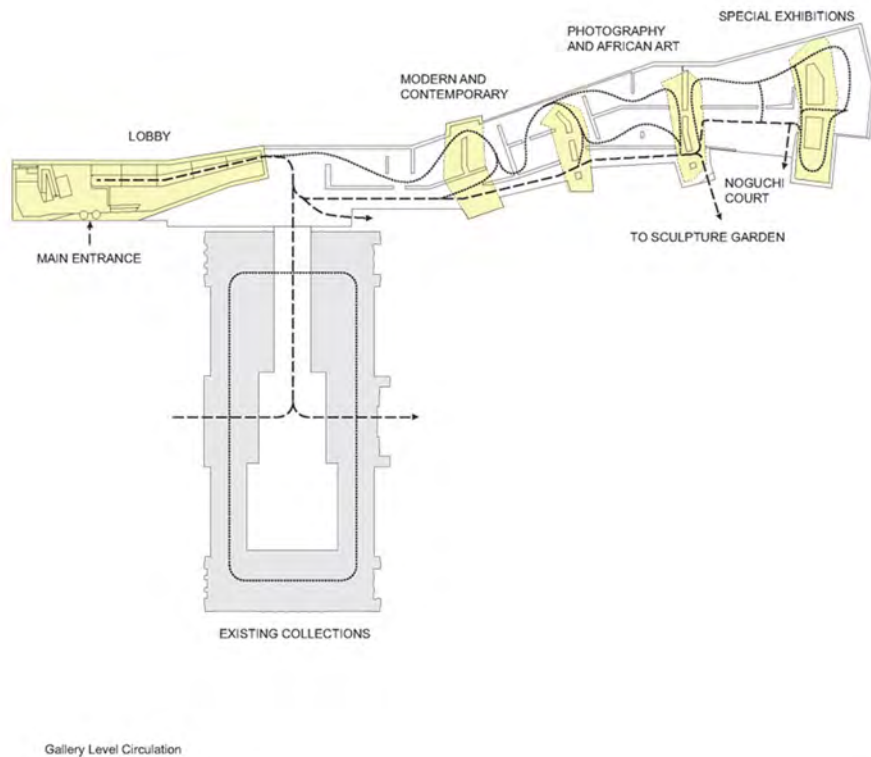
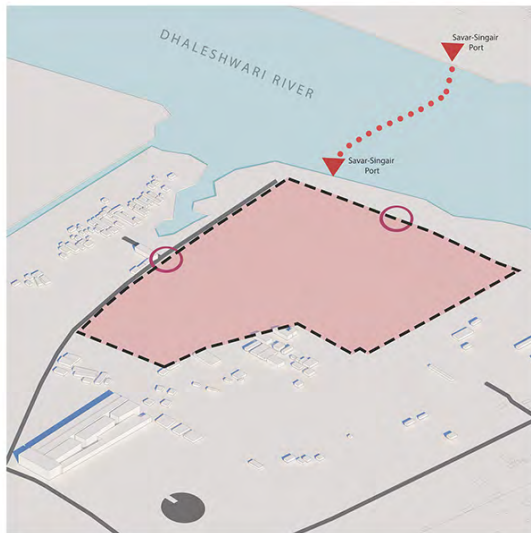


Diagram showing how the circulation works within the gallery and how the existing building is also incorporated within the extension as well. With an art gallery, priority goes to how to guide the visitors along the exhibition without exhausting them. (source: archdaily.com)

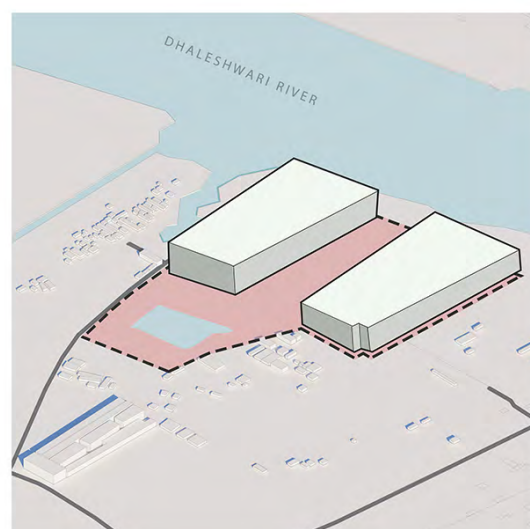


CHAPTER 6: CONCEPT AND DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



Existing site conditions like the existing forest and existing factory buildings were considered while determining the footprint of the building, in order to keep the natural vegetation and not compromise the ecodiversity of the site.

The possible points to access the site were also considered while designing as well, with the only vehicular access from the north side of the site, and the river allowing for access to the site via boat ride.



By also taking into consideration that there is an existing water body in the site, creating a visual connection with the river was a design factor that was brought into attention.

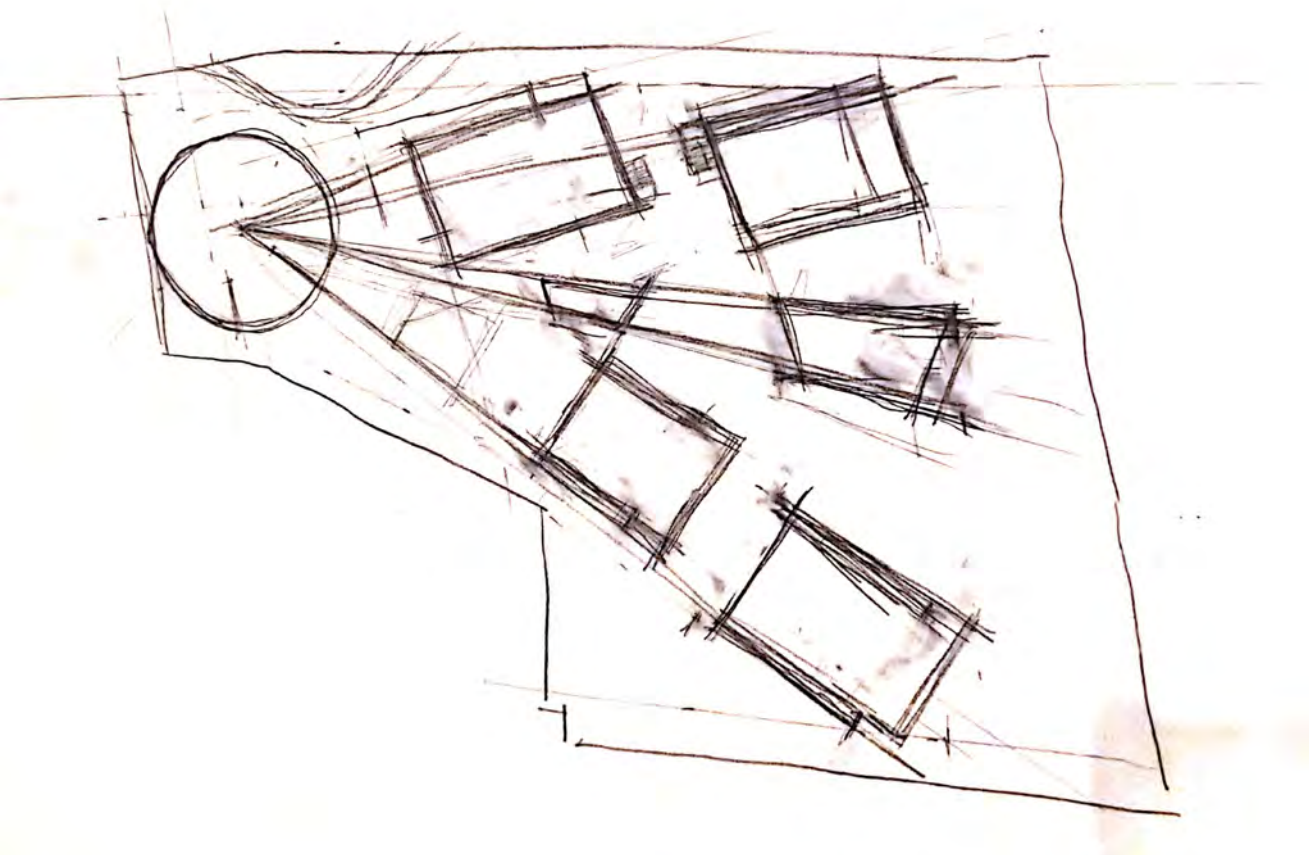
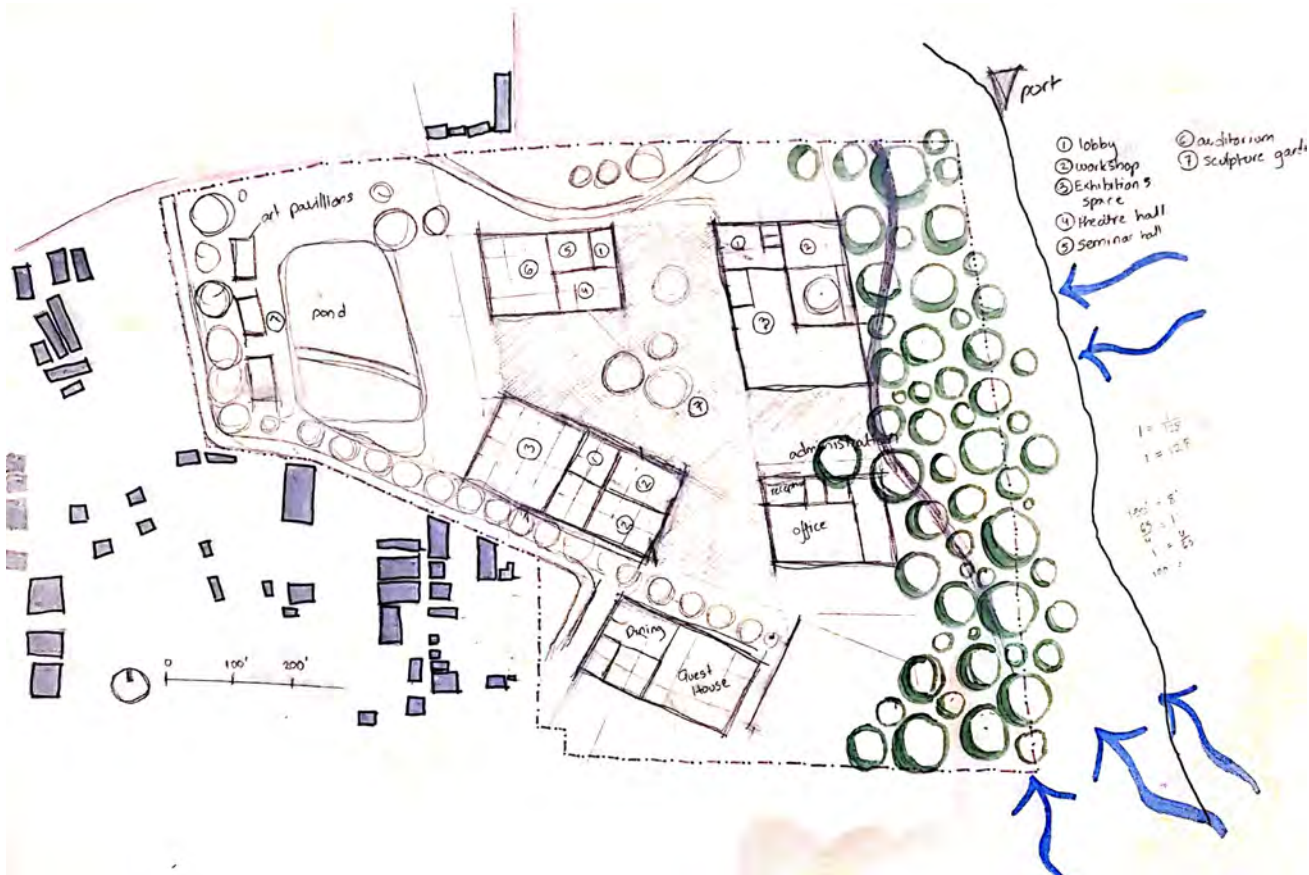


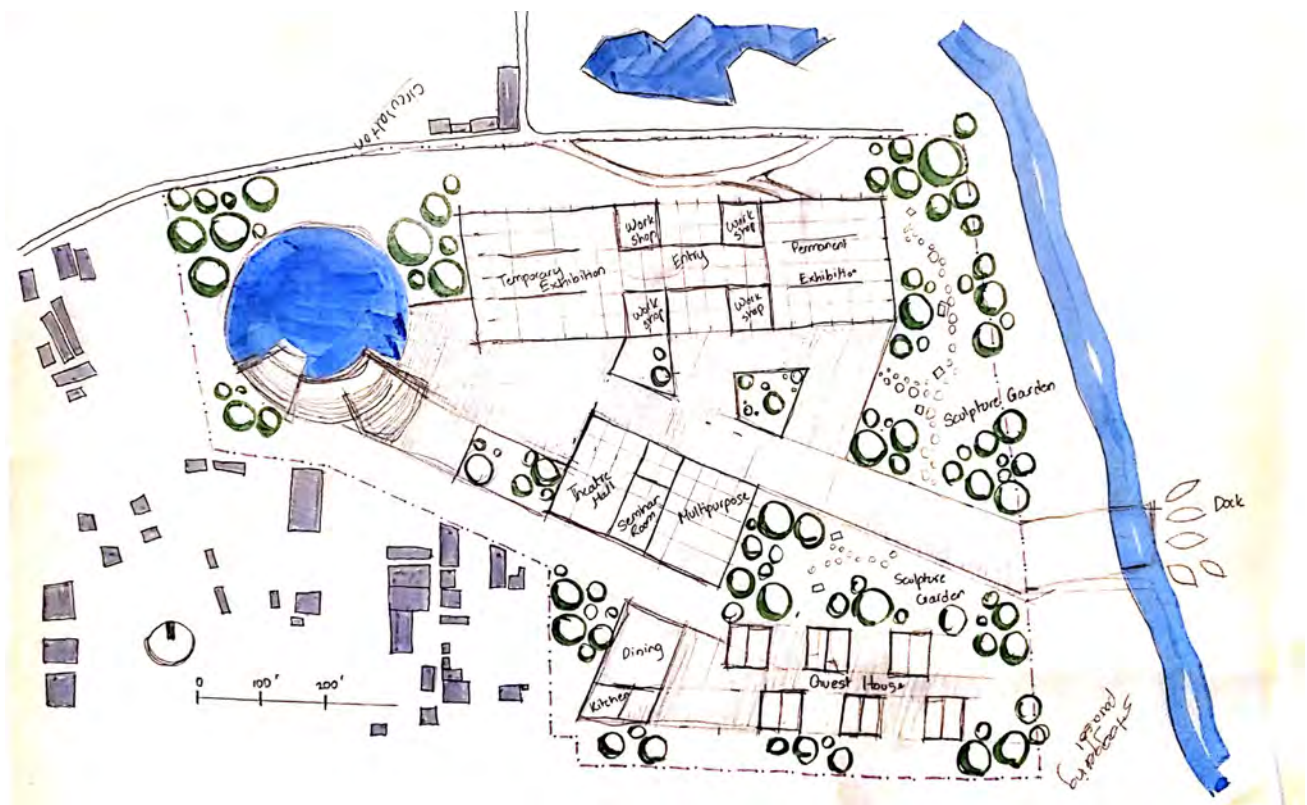
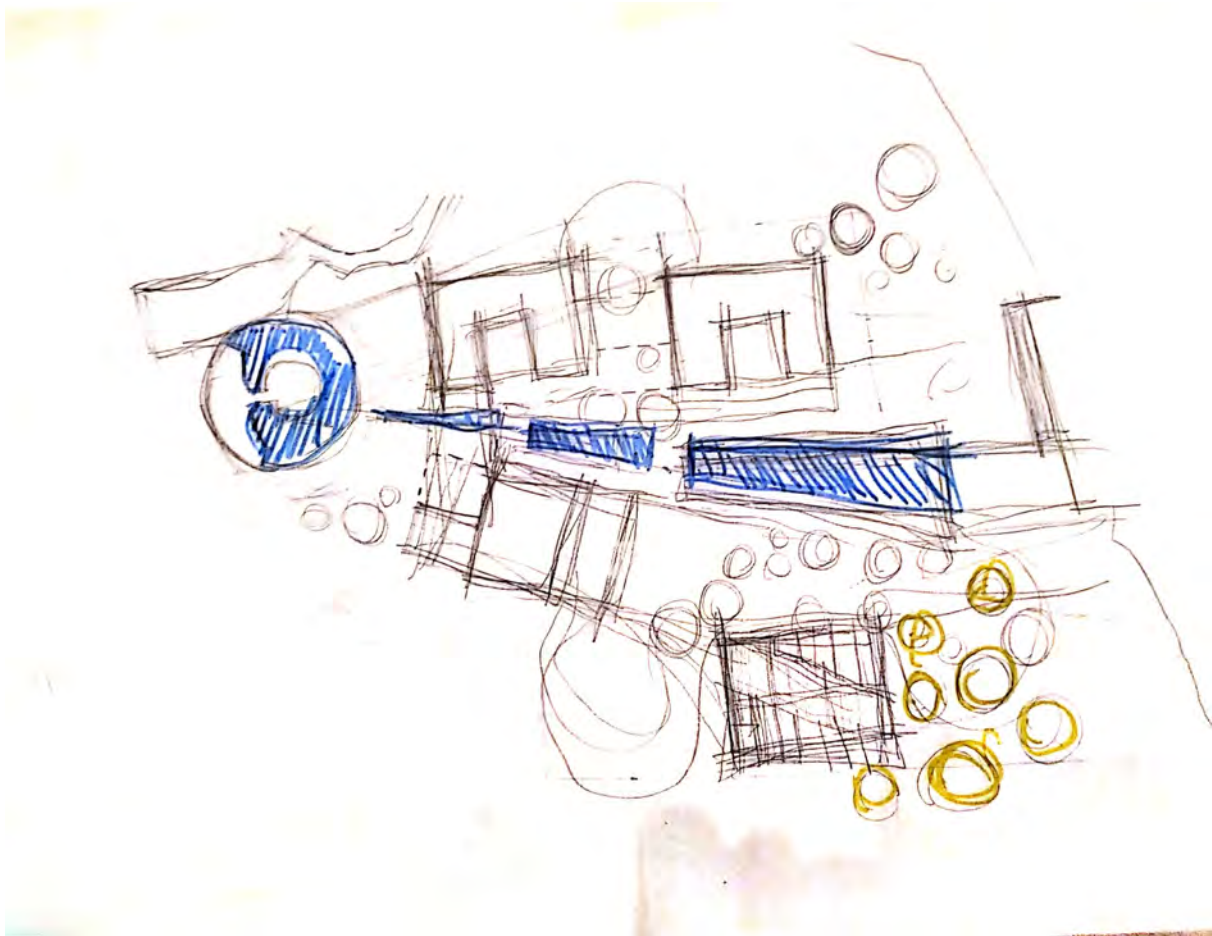
Finally, utilising the space from the previous conditions, and by incorporating the space requirements from the program, the spaces were generated. The functions were divided according to the how accessible they are to the public, with the main gallery space being placed near the vehicular entry as they are most open to the public and will generally be the most visited area.

The multipurpose area and the restaurant area is slightly further away from the vehicular entry so as to allow access mainly for people who will be visiting for functions or events held in the multipurpose area, and also for people who will need some time to ease and take a bite after taking a visit to the gallery.

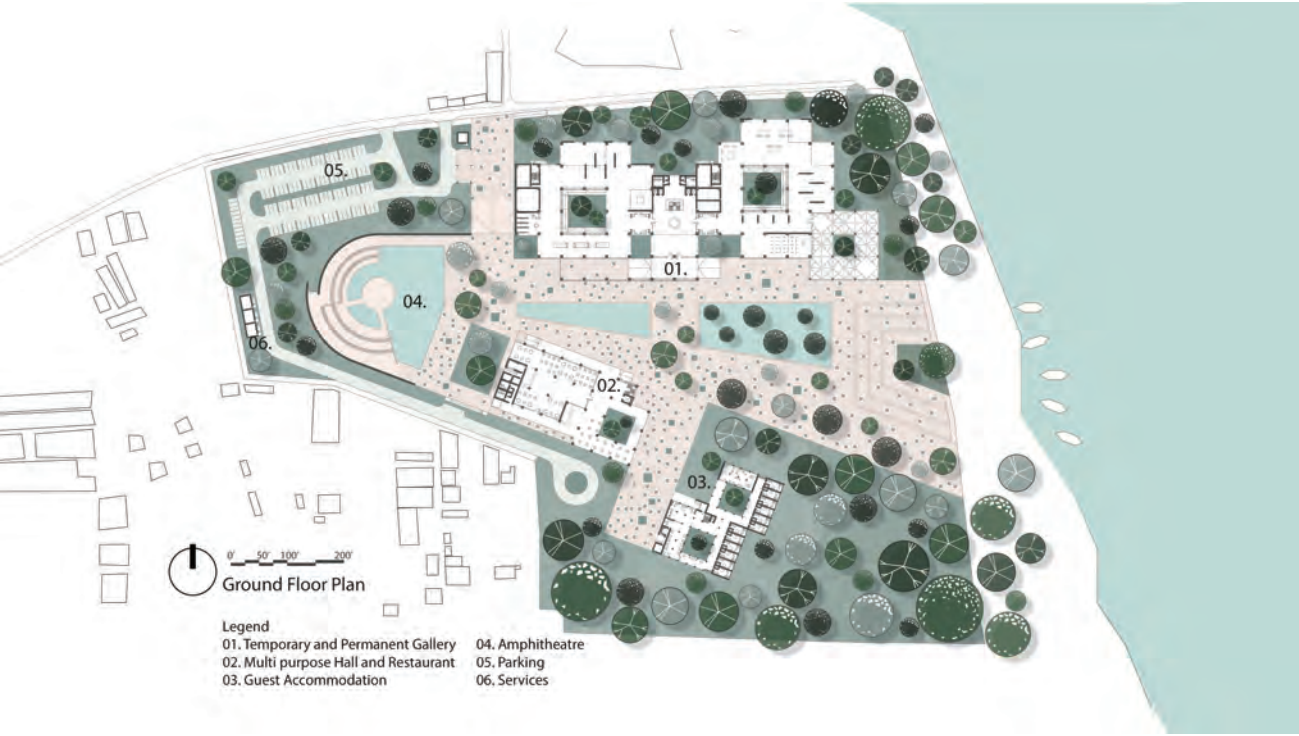
The guest accommodation area is the furthest away from the public access, as it will be housing guests for the Bengal Foundation, either from outside of the district or from outside the country, and would be the living quarters for them during their stay. View of the river for the guest were also considered, so all the guest accommodation suites face the direction of the river.

Sketches Showing Design Development





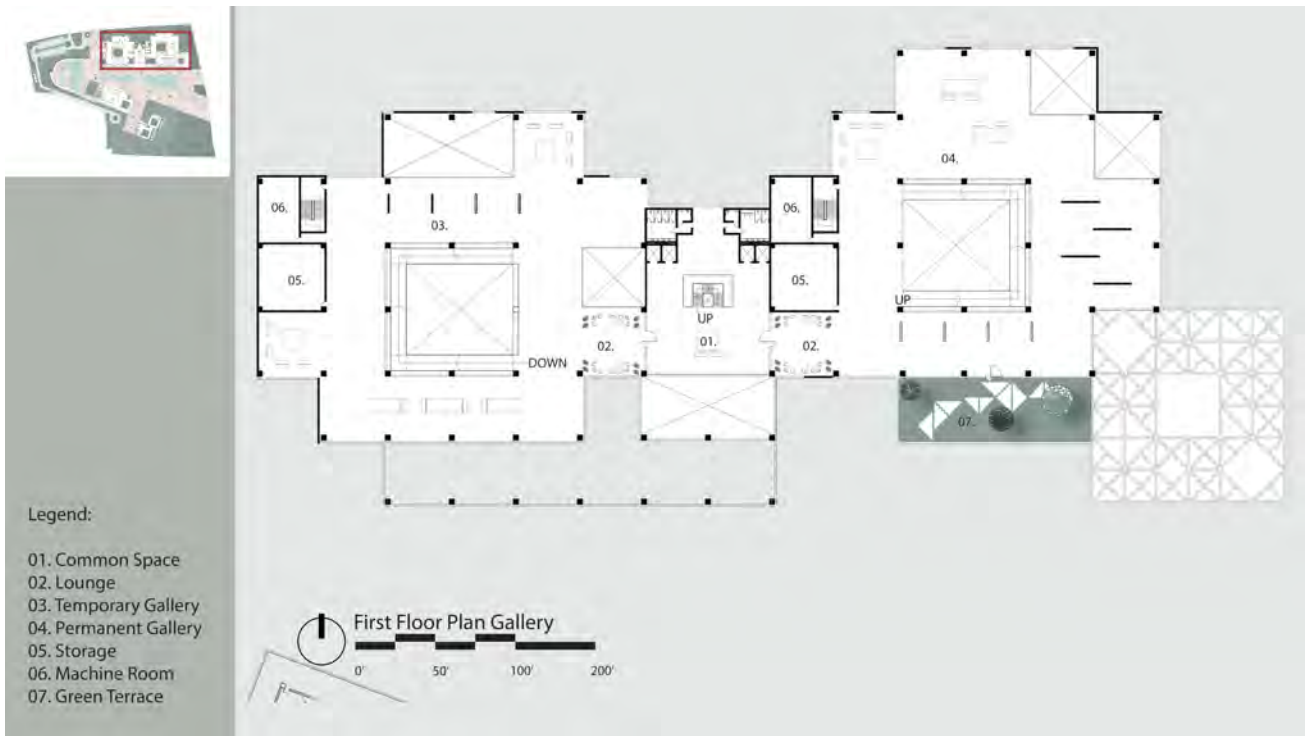
CHAPTER 7: FINAL DESIGN



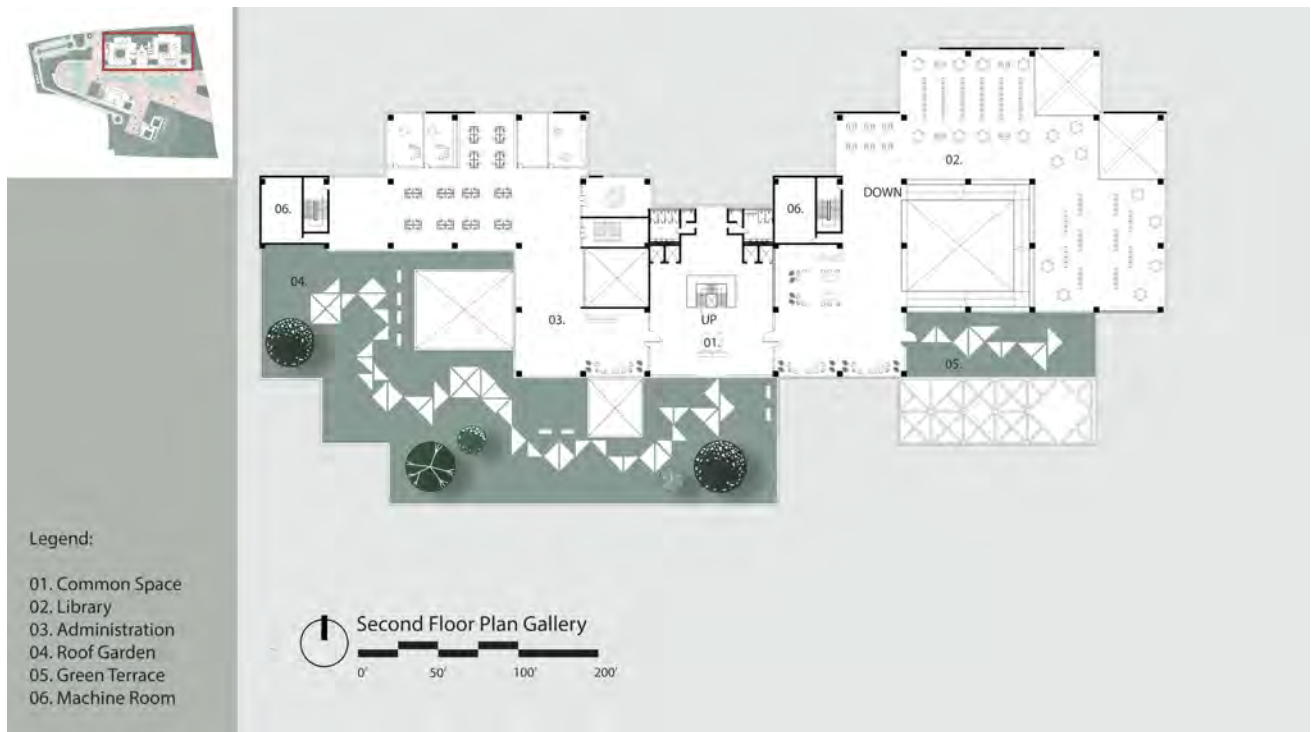
Ground Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan (Gallery)



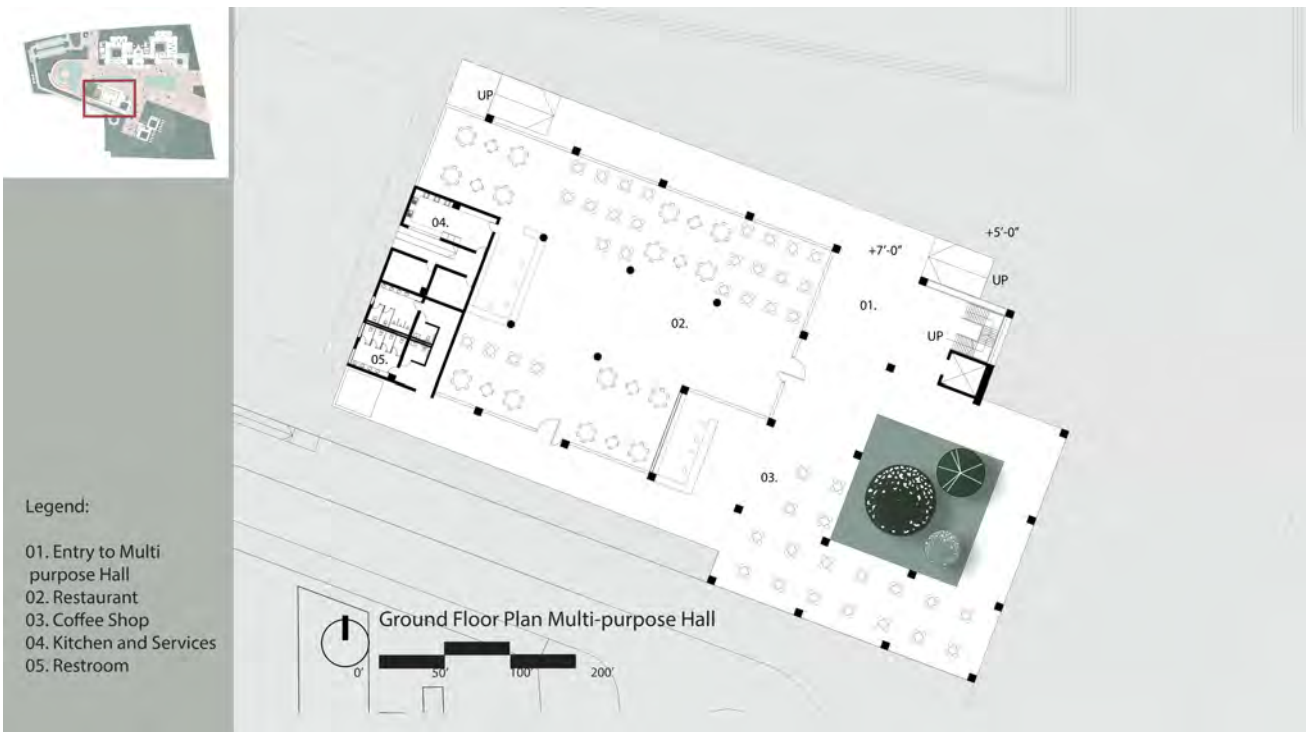
First Floor Plan (Gallery)



Second Floor Plan (Gallery)



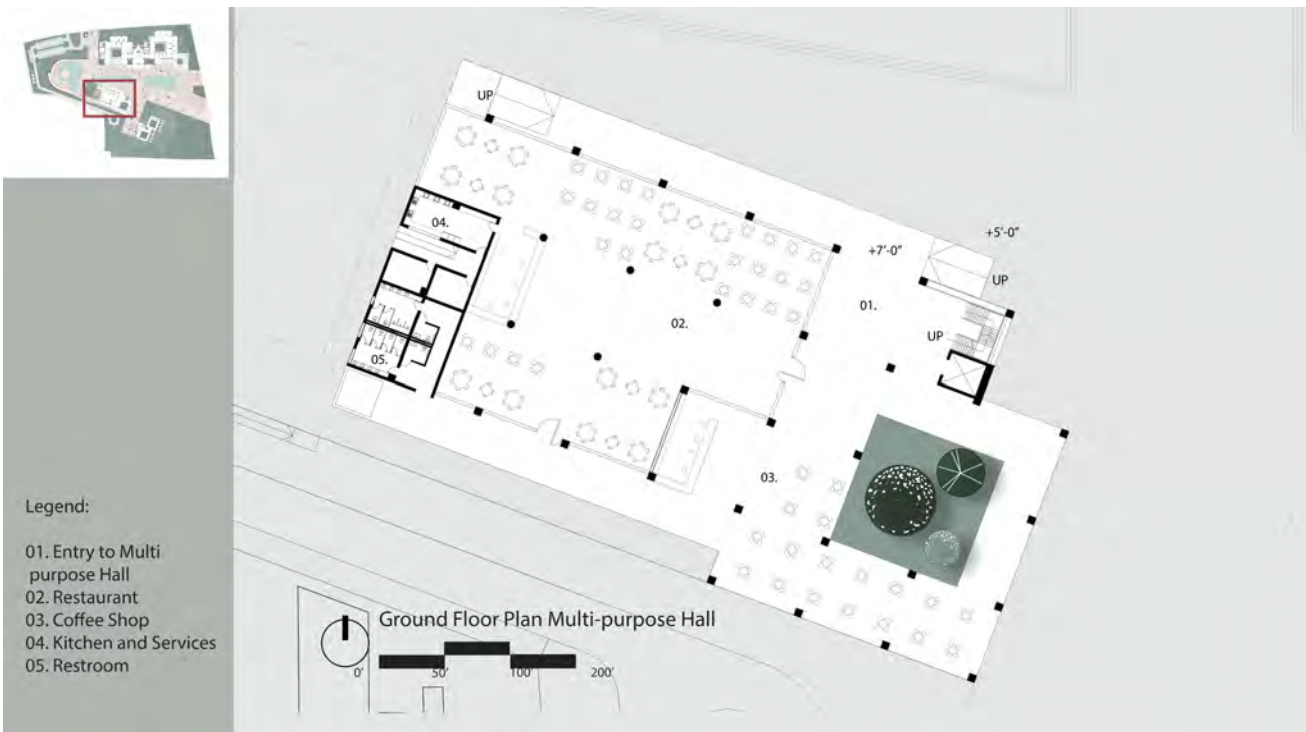
Roof Floor Plan (Gallery)



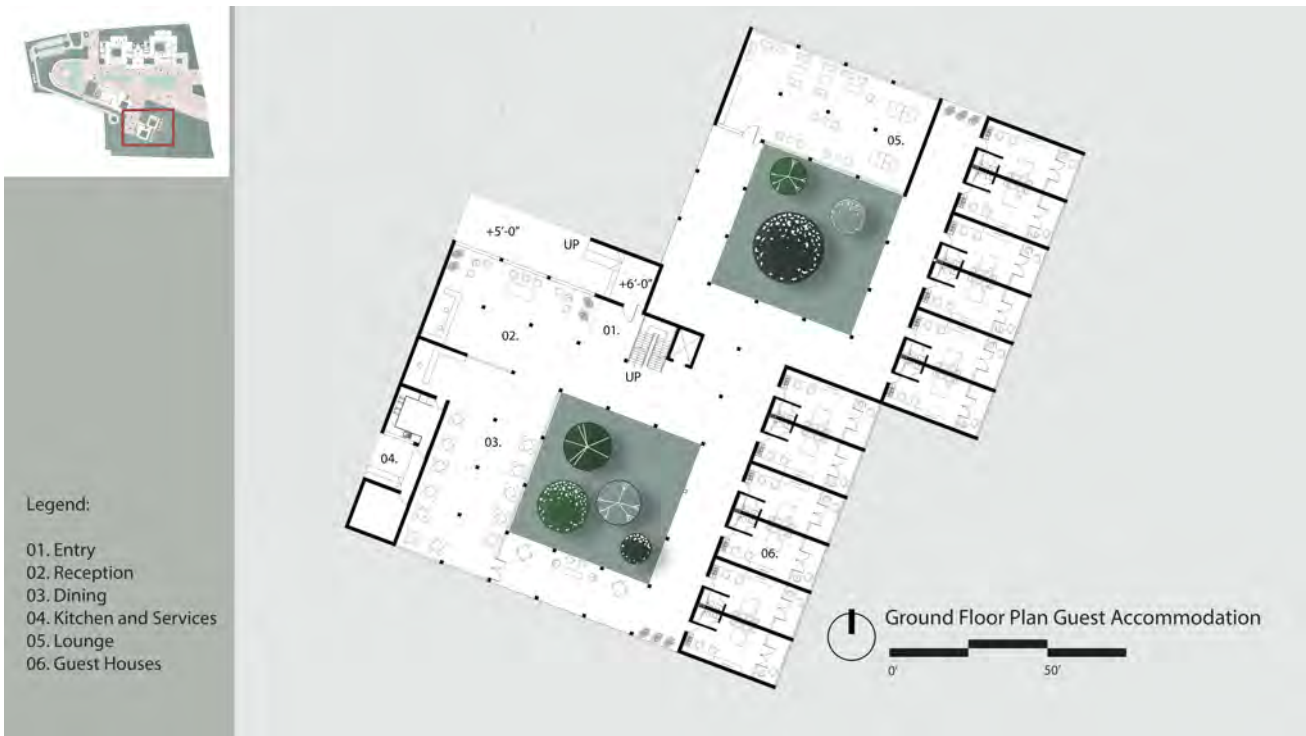
Ground Floor Plan (Multi-Purpose Hall)



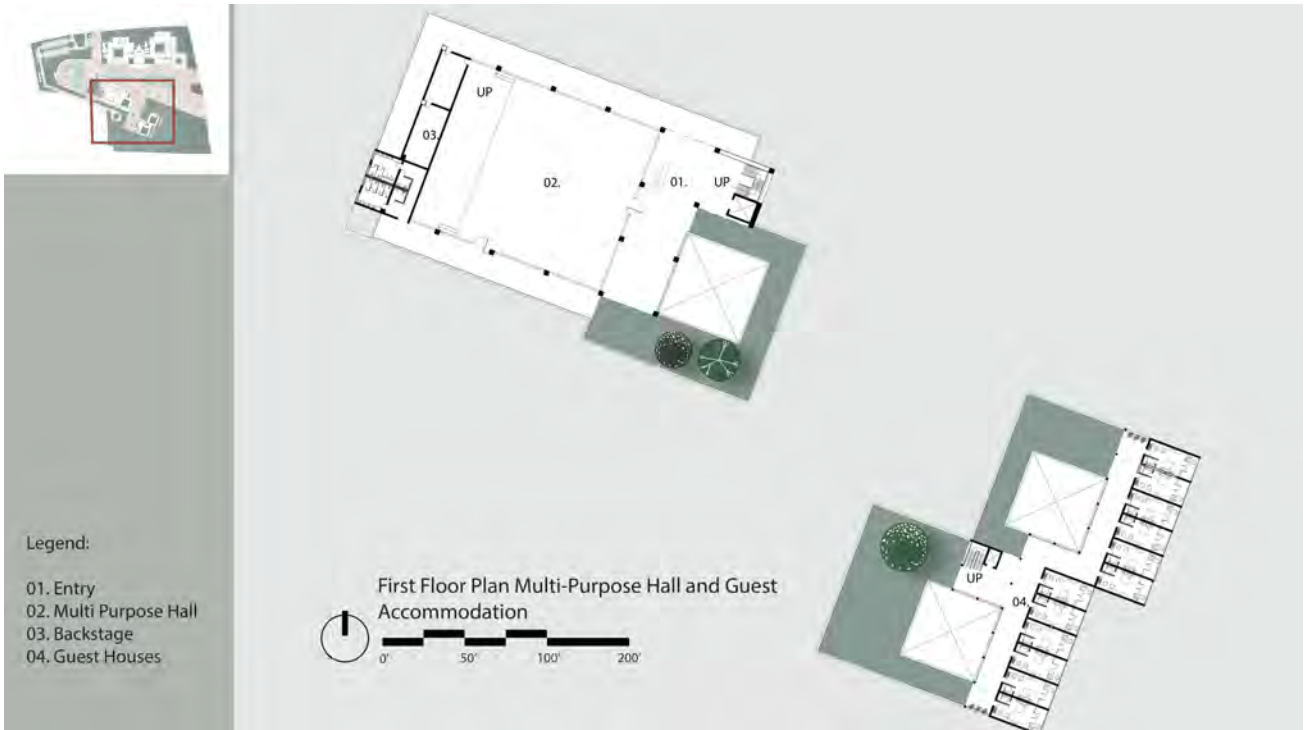
Roof Floor Plan (Gallery)



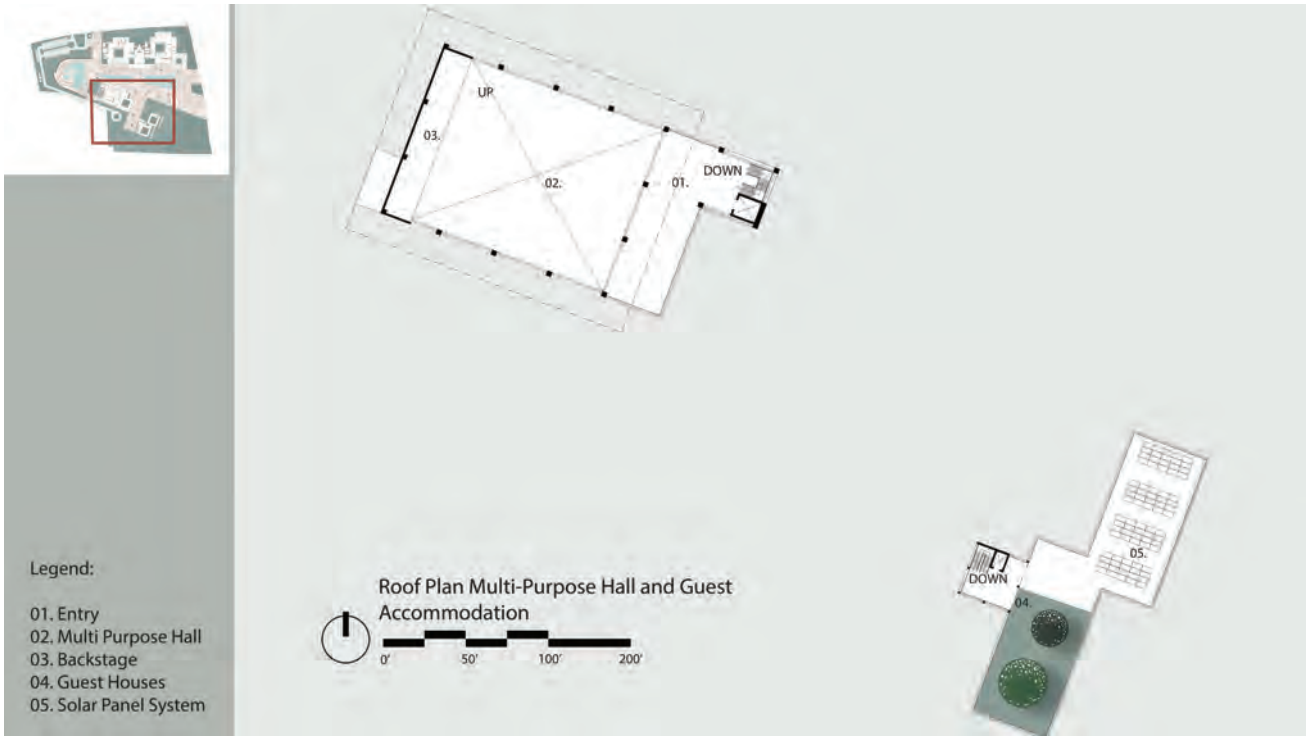
Ground Floor Plan (Multi-Purpose Hall)



Ground Floor Plan (Guest Accommodation)



First Floor Plan (Multi-Purpose Hall and Guest Accommodation)



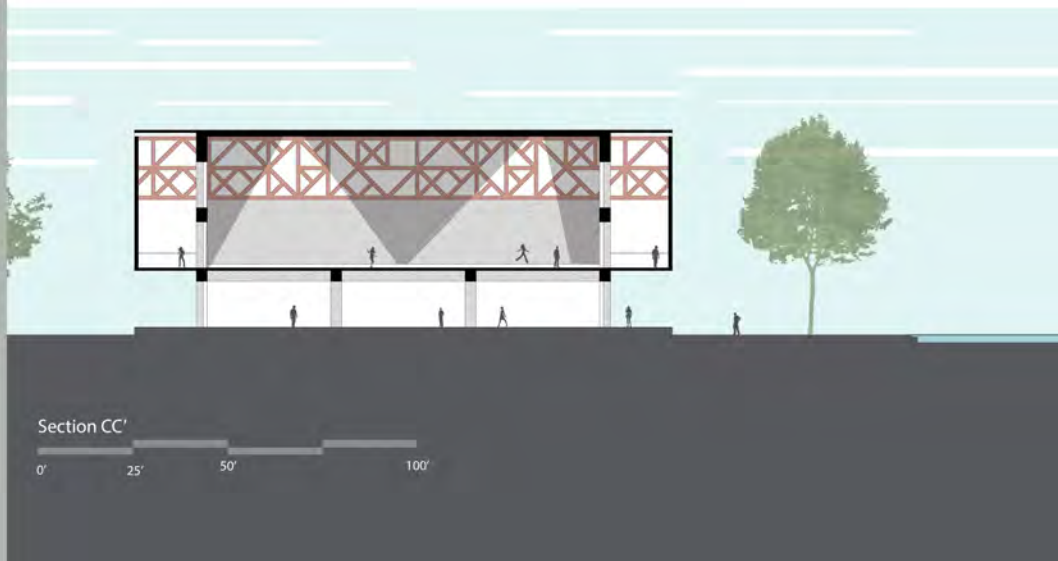
Roof Floor Plan (Multi Purpose Hall and Guest Accommodation)



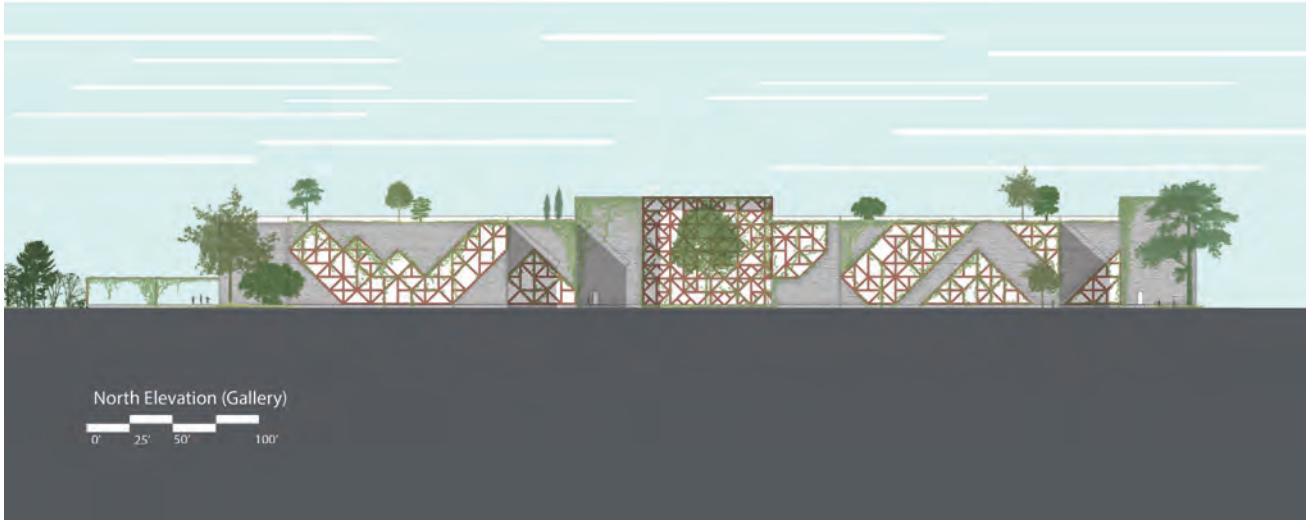
Section AA' (Gallery)



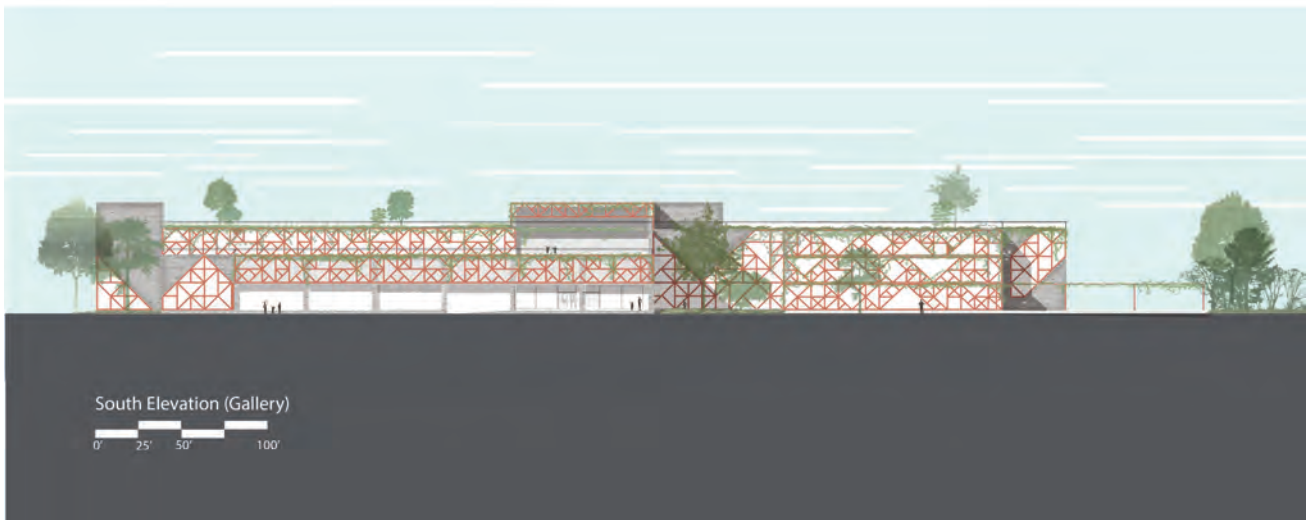
Section BB' (Gallery)



Section CC' (Multi-Purpose Hall)



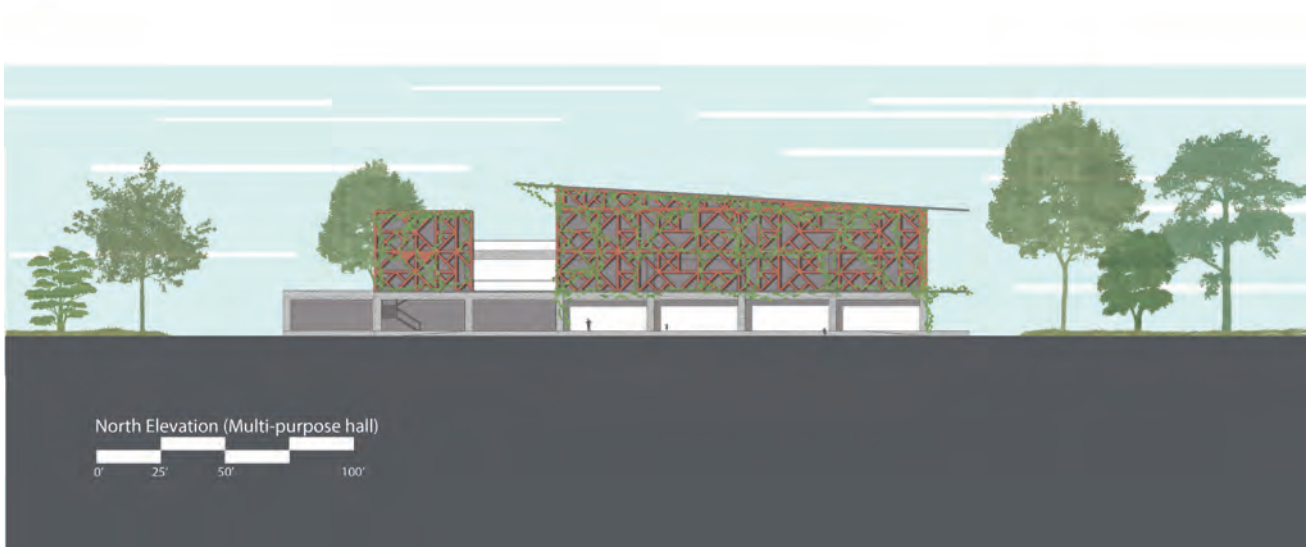
North Elevation (Gallery)



South Elevation (Gallery)



East Elevation(Gallery)



North Elevation (Multi-Purpose Hall)

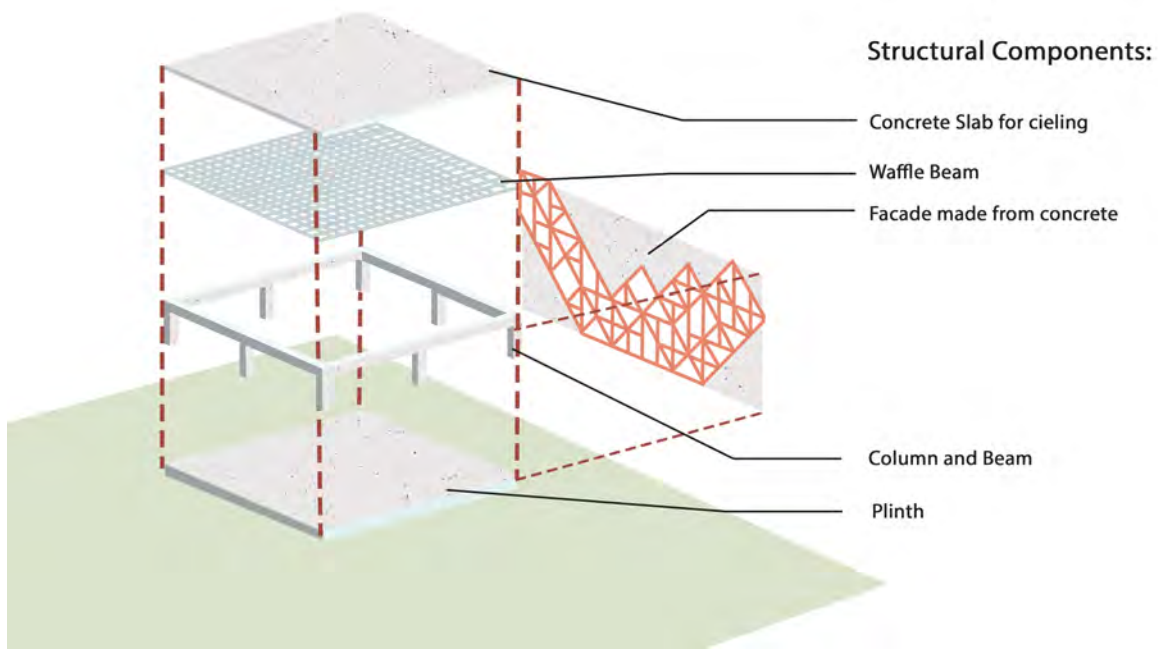


Diagram showing the structural components

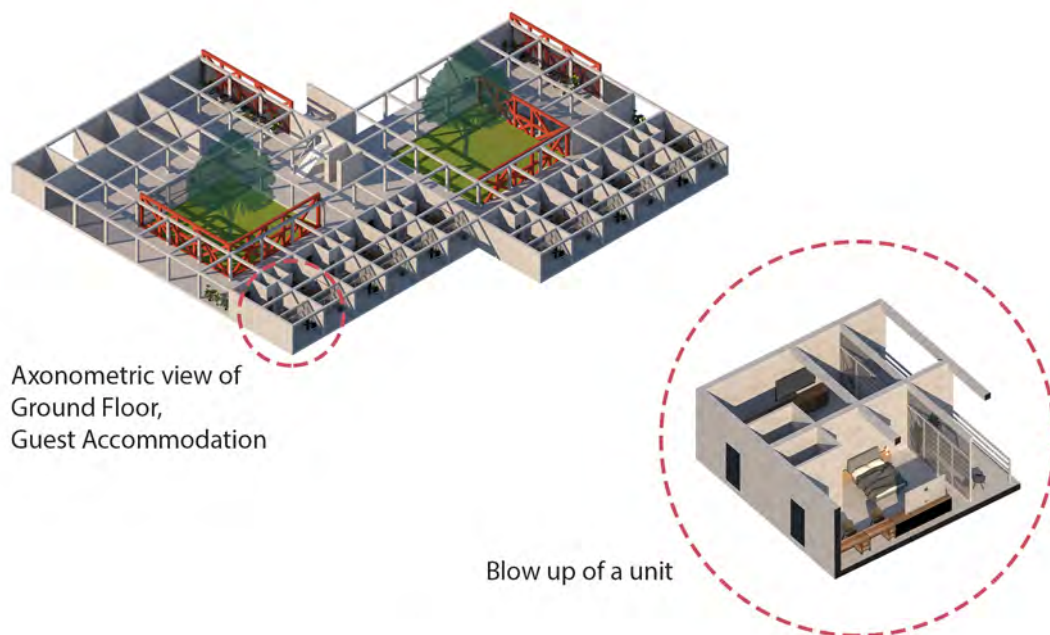
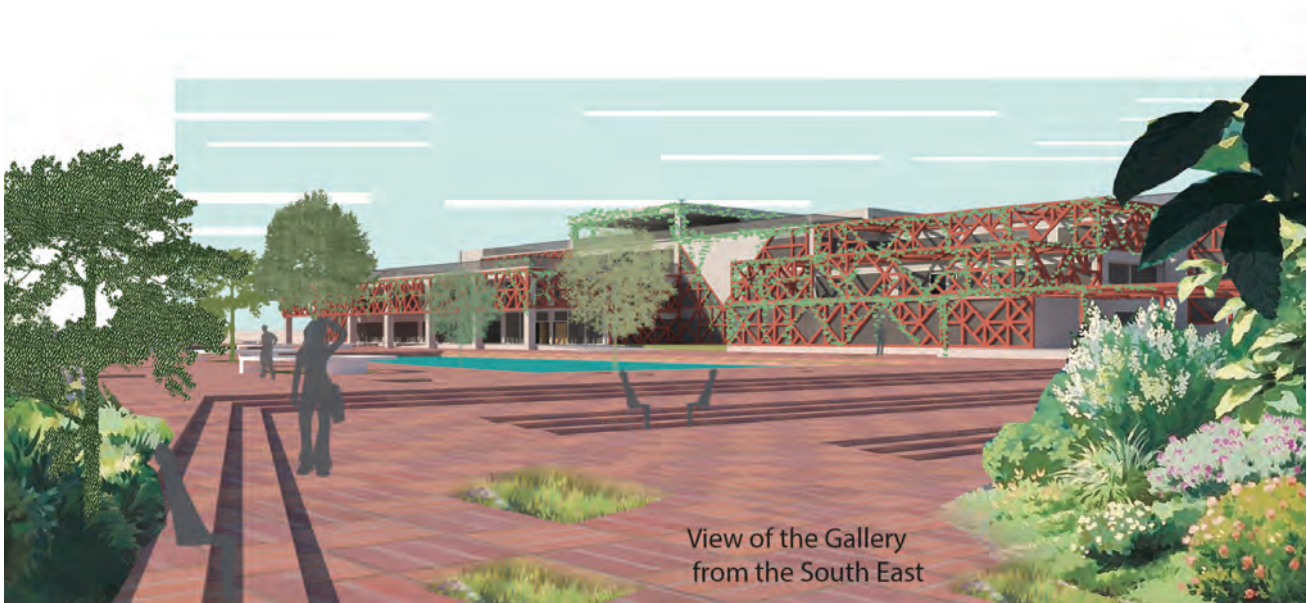


Diagram explaining the Guest Accommodation

Perspective Views





View of the deck in
the main gallery

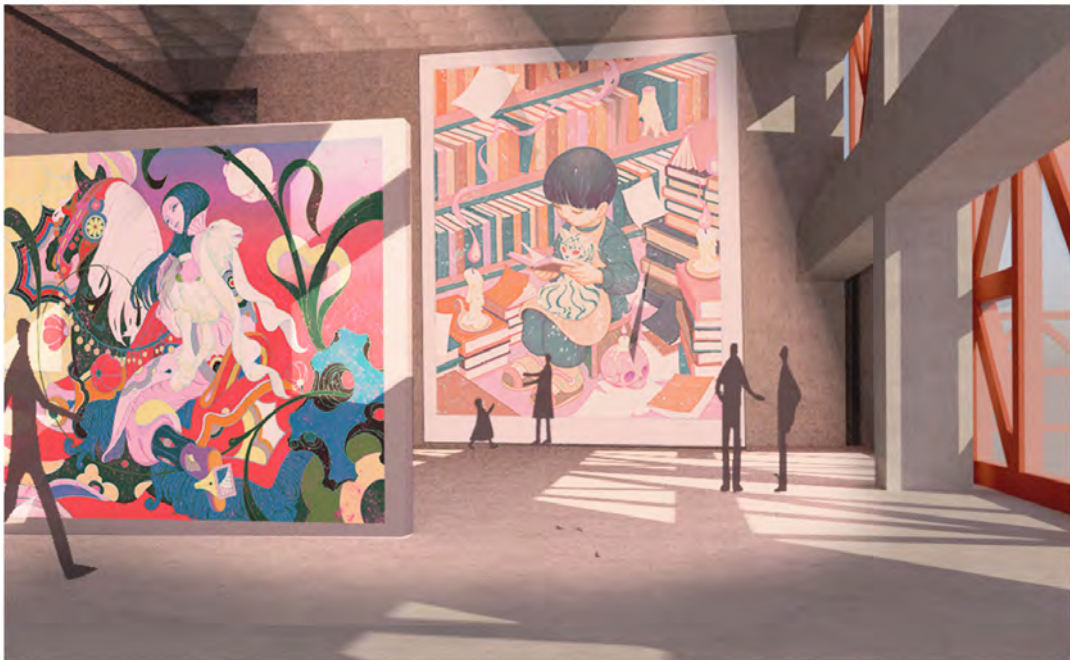


View from the
roof garden



Interior view of the gallery





8: TABLE OF REFERENCES

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