

REVIVING THE LOST HERITAGE OF MAINAMATI

Ву

Faiyaz Hasnain Khan 12108030

> Seminar II ARC 512



Submitted to:

Dr. Akter Mahmud

Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed

Ar. Abul Fazal Mahmudun Nobi

Department of Architecture

BRAC University

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Abstract

Archaeology is the threshold between the past and the present. Bangladesh is blessed with rich archaeological wealth, especially of the medieval period both during the Muslim and pre-Muslim rules. Unfortunately, many of these are still ignored and unexplored to its potential. The area of archaeological fieldwork and research was not given its due importance for a long time for various reasons, such as are its difficult geography and climate and remoteness from the main centres of the subcontinent. Few field projects are initiated by the Government of Bangladesh in 1971 including exploration of the previous unexplored areas and ambitious scheme of excavations on selected sites. Even after the work at present has very little to do with progression, the discoveries already made have been significant. These recently explored information's are likely to add to our knowledge about our past, ancient history and her culture. Through promoting heritage tourism, the glorious pride about our past can be instilled in

the general mass. Thus, creating awareness, heritage conservation will be done. And through facilitating tourism special attention will be given towards the religious interest of the minority Buddhist in our country.

Key words: Heritage, culture, heritage tourism, religious interest, heritage revival.

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CHAPTER 01: BACKGROUND

1.1 Motivation

Archaeological heritages have been playing a role of time machine or threshold between the past and the present. The archaeological sites all over the world has been of substantial importance in escalating nation's pride and empirical knowledge about their national identity thus promoting solidarity. Moreover, these sites stimulate regional economic growth through developing heritage tourism.

1.2 Project brief

Bangladesh is young as a state but its land, people and culture are stepped in history, the cultural heritage of Bangladesh reflecting the creative genius of the people was enriched by the great civilizations that flourished in the region of well over two millennia. We can watch about 1200 to 1300 years ago past history throughout the archaeological heritage site of Mainamati, Paharpur, Mahasthangarh. From these we can perceive that we are very rich from the very ancient time by our culture, art and crafts and architecture. Around 50 sites being discovered in and around Comilla. From Khadgas to Devas many rulers lived but left us little to draw a picture out of it.

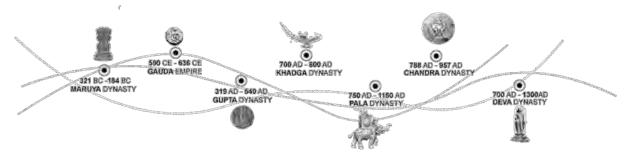


Figure: Historical timeline. (Author)

Selected archaeological sites: 50 sites

Explored: 23 sites

Completely explored: 10 sites



ARCHAELOGICAL SITES = 50 SITES

EXPLORED = 23 SITES

COMPLETELY EXPLORED = 10 SITES

The obligation of this project is highly essential in Bangladesh's context, as the rich architectural and cultural heritage of our country is struggling to continue its existence in the rapidly developing Bangladesh. This project will hence attempt in research and excavation for the historic buildings and a vision of through back the past history of Buddhist period.

1.3 Project title



REVIVING THE LOST HERITAGE OF MAINAMATI

1.4 Hypothesis

Reviving the lost heritage in Mainamati through architectural intervention.

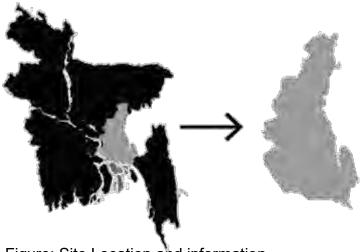
1.5 Client

Department of Archaeology, Ministry of Culture and Department of Public Works.

1.6 Site

This site is located just besides the Mainamati Buddhist Vihara. The department of

archaeology of Bangladesh have been thinking of the public facilities of the archaeological site of Mainamati.



COMILLA DIVISION

WARD = 27 NO.

POPULATION= 4595557

AREA = 53.04 SKM

WATERBODIES = MEGHNA, GUMTI, KAKODI

MALE = 49.8 %

FEMALE = 50.2 %

MUSLIM = 94.6 %

HINDU = 5.3 %

BUDDHIST = 0.009 %

CHRISTIAN = 0.09 %

OTHERS = 0.021 %

Figure: Site Location and information.

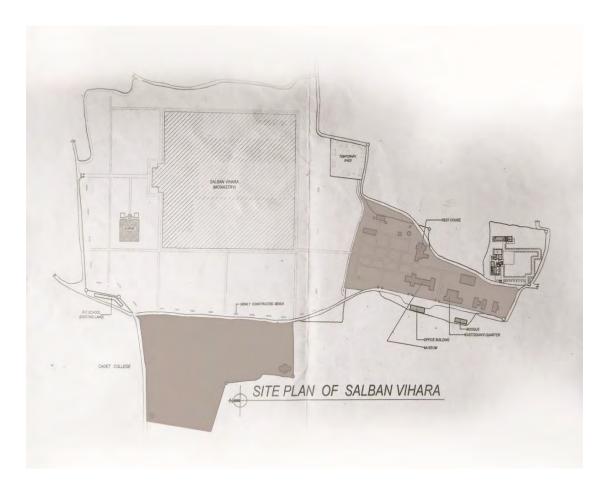


Figure: Proposed site (Source: Collected from Department of Archaeology Bangladesh)

1.7 Aims and objectives

The overarching goal of this project is to create heritage awareness among the general mass as an essential element of heritage conservation and to cater facilities for the tourists, archaeologists, young researchers and art enthusiasts as well. Eventually this project will enhance our historical and cultural identity at the world stage. Above mentioned goal of the project will be met by

- Introducing museum facility that will be a platform for learning and experience
- Creating research facility for this site, so that it can be the centre of research and excavation for Bangladesh Heritage forum
- Enlightening the people (both national and international) about our glorious past
- Providing accommodation, cafeteria and other miscellaneous facility to promote tourism
- Addressing the inclusiveness of the project for promoting cultural activities

1.8 Why should the lost heritage be revived?

Heritage is something that we pass onto the next generation. Similarly, the heritage of Devaparbata (Ancient name of that place) or Mainamati should be revived for multiple reasons. The heritage value may initiate social value, economic value, development value, archaeological value etc.



Figure: Infographic diagram. (Author)

These aspects are taken into account in order to formulate the design proposal. From these analysis and understanding the framework of my thesis proposal has been made.

1.9 Methodology

Mixed method research approach has been taken so far. For the study, articles, literatures and research papers of relevance are reviewed. Few information is gained and analysed through semi structured interviews taken from the designated person of Department of Archaeology. Along with the qualitative research, some quantitative research was also done. For qualitative analysis site visit is primarily considered till now along with reading different articles and research paper which are present as the possible source. On the other hand, for quantitative analysis different dependable, national and international sources are prioritized along the research of mine until now.

Other than these, going to different offices and talking to different resource persons and last but not the least my own course instructors along with my seniors and peers are being extremely helpful for initiating the research journey.

1.10 Project rationale

- Buddhism had flourished to a significant extent (Art, Architecture & Knowledge) in Bengal in the medieval period (8th century to 13th century). Therefore, research and study base facility will attract young researchers and archaeologists. (Research centre Library)
- Promote heritage tourism. (Accommodation Restaurants Shops Museum)
- Through promoting tourism economic growth can be achieved.

 Greater exposure about our archaeological heritage can be made and thus cultural heritage conservation management will be improved.

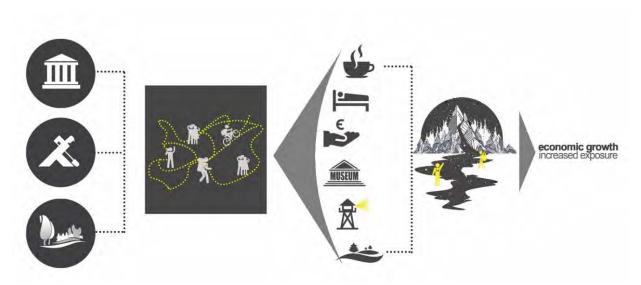


Figure: Provision of different facilities. (Source: Author)

The first and foremost task before conceiving a project is to understand its credibility and rationality. Other than analysing this aspect of any project, successful outcome cannot be thought of. Therefore, the rationality of the proposed project is determined on the basis of the impact it will have on the society, economy and morphology or existing fabric of the designated area respectively. The impact the project may yield is briefed below:

Social Impact

Our part of the sub-continent which is now Bangladesh was once prominent for its Buddhist reign. The history dates back to 8th century and backwards which is more than fifteen hundred years. The past is equally glorious and wretched. During this time frame many rulers invaded, ruled and also faded into oblivion. Among them few noteworthy

Buddhist rulers are Gupta dynasty, Pala dynasty, Deva dynasty etc. During Pala dynasty Buddhist School of Art had flourished in a significant scale. The discovery of legendary archaeological sites such as Sompura Mahavihara, Maninamati Shalban Vihara, Mahasthangarh, Bhasu Vihara, Halud Vihara and Buddhist Vihara in Bikrampur simply provides credibility to the history we have. The ancient history and its ruins are the cultural heritage to us, the people of Bangladesh. Therefore, the proposed project will have substantial contribution by facilitating tourism both domestically and internationally. Through this project or platform, the people of the country will not only know about their glorious past but also be able to take pride. Eventually, this phenomenon will indirectly have a crucial part to play in national unity.

Economic Impact

Heritage tourism is very important economic activity in many countries around the world. Along with its direct economic impact, the industry has indirect and induced impacts of substantial importance. The impact encompasses the local economy and the domestic economy. According to WTTC (WORLD TRAVEL &TOURISM COUNCIL), The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP (including wider effects from investment, the supply chain and induced income impacts) was BDT840.2bn in 2016 (4.3% of GDP) and is expected to grow by 7.2% to BDT900.7bn (4.3% of GDP) in 2017. It is forecast to rise by 7.1% pa to BDT1,783.0bn by 2027 (4.7% of GDP).

Physical Impact

Any kind of architectural intervention is an innovation specific to the site. The proposed project will be no different and consequently it will have direct and indirect impact on the surroundings. Moreover, the platform provided by the proposed project will house music fest, fairs and other cultural activities along with primary facilities as designed. Accordingly, the local infrastructural development will be amplified. This project will give rise to the future establishment of other ancillary projects. This project will cater facilities for tourists thus increasing the footfall in the given area. Which will eventually influence the change factor of the specific area.

CHAPTER 02: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 History of Buddhist architecture and culture in Bengal

According to Reza (2012) the possible existence of Gupta dynasty is found. The Gupta reign dated back to c.319-495 AD. Then from c.650-750 AD the history of Bengal is clouded by darkness. In history this particular time frame is well established as Matsannaya. Then the reign of Pala Empire began. The tenure of Pala dynasty was from 8th to the 12th centuries in ancient Bengal. While a distinctive form of Bengali architecture and art known as the "Pala School of Sculptural Art" was founded by the

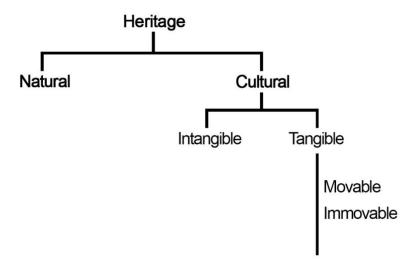
Pala Dynasty. The monumental structures of Vikramashila Vihar, Odantpuri Vihar, and Jagaddal Vihar were the magnum opus of the Pala's. Unfortunately, the infamous Bakhtiar Khilji destroyed these mammoth structures. The Somapura Mahavihara, a creation of Dharmapala, at Paharpur, Bangladesh is the largest Buddhist Vihara in the Indian subcontinent. It was declared as the World Heritage Site by UNESCO in the year 1985 and described as "pleasure to the eyes of the world". The Pala architectural style influenced the south-eastern Asia and Tibet, China and Japan. "Mistress of the East" was rightfully conferred upon Bengal. Dr. Stella Kramrisch says: "The art of Bihar and Bengal exercised a lasting influence on that of Nepal, Burma, Ceylon and Java." Two celebrated Pala sculptors were Dhiman and Vittpala. But if significant amount of resource and money were to invest for the excavation of Somapura Mahavihara, who knows what extraordinary discoveries could have been made. There are monasteries in Bangladesh and boys have accommodation facility along with schooling facility where they learn Bengali and some Pali (an ancient Buddhist scriptural language). It is of common practise for men having finished their schooling to return at regular intervals for certain periods to stay at the school. The local Buddhist shrine is considered as the important centre for commemoration of village life. Buddhism has absorbed and adapted indigenous popular creeds and beliefs of the regions to which it has spread. In most areas religious ritual focuses on the image of the Buddha, and the major festivals observed by Buddhists in Bangladesh commemorate the important events of his life. Although doctrinal Buddhism rejects the worship of gods and preserves the memory of the Buddha as an enlightened man, popular Buddhism contains a pantheon of gods and lesser deities headed by the Buddha. According to the Legend, Gautama Buddha came

to this region to spread Buddhism, and it was speculated that one or two individuals followed his footsteps. However, Buddhism did not gain much support until under the reign of Asoka when Buddhism gained substantial momentum. The Pala Empire that control the Indian subcontinent spread many Buddhist ideologies in modern Bangladesh and built many monasteries such as the Mahasthangarh and the Somapura Mahavihara. Also, within the same Pala era, a famous preacher named Atisha who was born in the city of Bikrampur and spread Tibetan-Buddhism ideology. Chandra Dynasty's Puranchandra and Subarnachandra adopted Buddhism, as did their successors Trailokyachandra and Srichandra who ruled Harikel and Chandradwip. Khadga Dynasty were a Buddhist dynasty that carried the surname Bhatt. They made several temples and monasteries. For example, Raja Bhatta of the monarchy was a very committed Mahayanist Buddhist. Buddhism in various forms appears to have been prevalent at the time of the Turkish conquest in 1202. The invading armies apparently found numerous monasteries, which they destroyed. With the destruction of its centres of learning such as Nalanda University, Buddhism rapidly disintegrated. In subsequent centuries and up through the 1980s nearly all the remaining Buddhists lived in the region around Chittagong, which had not been entirely conquered until the time of the British Raj (1858-1947). In the Chittagong Hills, Buddhist tribes formed the majority of the population, and their religion appeared to be a mixture of tribal beliefs and Buddhist doctrines. According to the 1981 census, there were approximately 538,000 Buddhists in Bangladesh, representing less than one percent of the population.

2.2 Culture and heritage

The complex history of the word "culture" has been conveniently summarized by Raymond Williams in his useful guide to words used in the social sciences. Nowadays "culture" is used with two primary meanings. In everyday speech, it usually refers to "high culture", such as grand opera, orchestral concerts, fine arts, folklores etc. and other exotic and expensive activities. In academic discourse, however, "culture" is used as a general term for how we behave.

Edward B. Tylor's classic definition of 1871 is: "Culture or civilization taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art,



morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." There are two important points here: First, "culture" includes all aspects of belief and behaviour; and, second, it is learned through social interaction, often unconsciously. It is not genetically inherited. Heritage is anything that holds

immense significance and consequently passed on to the future generations for its beneficial parameters. The divisions of heritage are briefed as follows:

- Natural Heritage
- Cultural Heritage

Cultural Heritage has a strong lineage with heritage sites (monuments, archaeological sites etc.) folklore, traditional activities, customs and practices. There are two categories of cultural heritage and are given below:

- · Tangible Heritage
- Intangible Heritage

Tangible heritages are those which have physical aspects such as monuments, architectural buildings, paintings, statues etc. Tangible heritage is of two types and are as follows

- I. Movable Heritage
- II. Immovable Heritage

Movable heritage, which can be moved from one place to another i.e. objects

Immovable heritages are those which cannot be moved from one place to another i.e. infrastructures

Intangible heritage deals with the immaterial aspects of the heritage for instance literature, music, religious ceremonies, traditional practices, language etc.

Natural Heritage includes all components of our surroundings which have not been created by man and which are of cultural, aesthetic, spiritual, biotic or ecological value. In addition to these, it could be of usable resource.

Discussing cultural heritage associates various other words or phrases that includes:

Ethnic group is commonly used to refer to a social minority, such as the Chakma, Murong, or an immigrant population. But "ethnic" really means any group that is in some way set apart, including the dominant social group and occupational groups, including the police, the military, or religious communities, all bodies that develop their own "corporate culture." Consequently, on this definition anyone is likely to have membership in more than one kind of ethnic group.

Identity in this context means the psychological self-perception of an individual or of a group. Inevitably, what is special about us is the way in which we differ from others.

"The other" refers to those who are perceived as different from us, those in other ethnic groups. This us versus other dichotomy is a very deep, fundamental, emotional, and influential aspect of human behaviour because our identity is, by definition, how our group differs from others. It is revealed in many ways: loyalty, pride, rivalry, hostility, aggression, patriotism, chauvinism, and more.

Voice is the self-expression from within an ethnic group asserting assent or dissent.

Archetype is the term applied to typical or characteristic examples. In cultural studies, definitions and boundaries are often unclear or do not exist. There may well be a continuum of transitional forms between recognizably different examples. In the absence of clear definitions, explanations have to be qualitative and discursive. In this

situation, speaking in terms of typical examples (archetypes) of different groups makes discussion much easier.

Authenticity refers to the origin and form of objects and behaviours. When examined closely, determining what is and what is not "authentic" becomes problematic. An object may have the proper origin but be uncharacteristic or it may be of the expected form but of some alien origin. In any case, it is easy to overlook the actual variety and hard to know the true origin of objects and behaviour.

Cultural heritage includes resourcefulness from which our cultural identity is formed.

Culture is about present and cultural heritage is historical.

2.3 Importance of cultural heritage

The importance of cultural Heritage is immense, considering its multifaceted influential aspect over the society. Through four basic aspects we can understand the significance of cultural heritage. These aspects help to determine the management policies and procedure pursuant to the particular site. Therefore, it's important to determine the significance holistically before embarking on a heritage project. According to Raja, T. (2013) there are four aspects to determine the importance of cultural heritage and they are briefed below:

· Historical Significance

The age or relationship to the historical era, person or event. Historical significance is a relatively easy and over bearing trait in heritage management.

· Social significance

Social Significance is hard to ascertain. It refers to the social, spiritual and other community-oriented values attributed to a place. This maybe because the place has existed to serve a certain important role in the society for a period of time.

Aesthetic significance

It refers to this special sense of importance of a place. This could be in terms of architecture, scale or even the designs seen on the place.

· Scientific significance

It refers to the scope or possibility of scientific findings from a site, monument or place. Here the importance lies more in the information that may yield out of understanding and researching the place or site. This can mostly be attributed to archaeological site or ancient monument.

2.3.1 Significance of cultural heritage

- Identity for a specific social community or group
- Economic development through cultural heritage
- Platform which allows us to the diversity of the world thus promoting mutual comprehension
- Creates awareness about the past and enhances national unity and pride

- To influence individuals and social groups, especially to infuse loyalty instilling cultural heritage and the sense of identity is used.
- · Cultural heritage has lot to do with individuals' self-identity, self-esteem, and relationships with others.

2.4 Heritage and tourism

Cultural Heritage and Tourism has deeper link and the most visible aspect of the contribution of culture to local development is enhanced by Tourism. ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites has taken the challenge in establishing a healthy relation between the cultural heritage and tourism and their principles of the charter are as follows:

- 1. Encourage Public Awareness of Heritage
- 2. Manage the Dynamic Relationship (Between heritage places and tourism)
- 3. Ensure a Worthwhile Visitor Experience
- 4. Involve Host and Indigenous Communities
- 5. Provide Benefit for the Local community
- 6. Responsible Promotion Programmes

Heritage tourism and its economic contribution is immense. The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was BDT840.2bn (USD10.6bn), 4.3% of GDP in 2016, and is forecast to rise by 7.2% in 2017, and to rise by 7.1%pa to BDT1,783.0bn (USD22.6bn), 4.7% of GDP in 2027. Some stats are given in accordance to WTTA (World Travel & Tourism Council).

2.4.1 BANGLADESH: Total contribution of travel & tourism to GDP

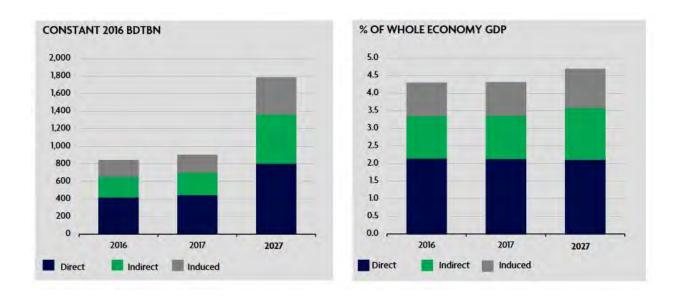


Figure: Contribution of travel tourism to employment. (Source: Collected)

2.4.2 BANGLADESH: Total contribution of travel & tourism to Employment

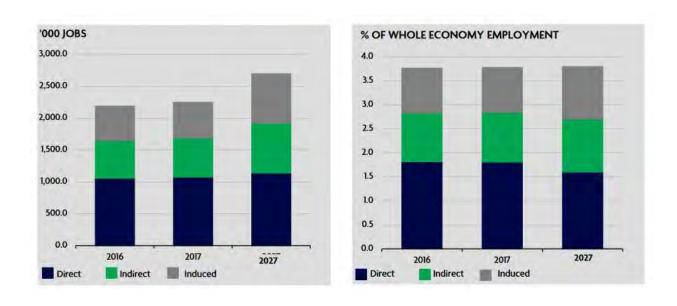


Figure: Contribution of travel tourism to employment. (Source: Collected)

2.5 Present situation of excavation and archaeological sites in Bangladesh

Remarkable Buddhist archaeological sites are located in certain places of Bangladesh. To understand the significance of these sites, one must consider the overall context of the development of Buddhism in certain locations. This area of archaeological sites refers to Paharpur in Naogaon, Mahasthangarh in Bogra, Mainamati in Comilla and Bikrampur in Dhaka district. Each of these sites has unique qualities as part of history. Some archaeological sites are important for both Hindu and Buddhist investigation because religious sculptures of each can be found.

Historically, the Pala Dynasty, a series of Buddhist rulers spanning 7th – 12th centuries, dominated Bengal. Under their patronage, many world-famous monasteries were built, the remains of which are revealed in the archaeological sites in Bangladesh. Due to political exclusion, when Hindu and Muslim Rulers dominated Bengal, many important monasteries and stupas were rebuilt and replaced by the later construction. As a result, what we see today is not necessarily the original Buddhist construction, but a combination of historical changes.

Specific Buddhist archaeological sites

According to Dipananda, (2013) there are six particular Buddhist sites which are of massive importance. These are grouped into two-time frames of reference, earlier excavations and recently excavated archaeological sites. The earlier excavated Buddhist sites are Sompura Mahavihara, Shalban Vihara, Mahasthangarh, Bhasu

Vihara and Halud Vihara, and the recently excavated site is the Buddhist Vihara in Bikrampur of the Dhaka District.

2.5.1 Paharpur Buddhist Monastery (Sompura Mahavihara)

The monument at Paharpur was first excavated in 1922-23 and it is considered the largest monastery in the Indian sub-continent. It is known as the Sompura Mahavihara, located in Rajshahi district. The site covers an area of 27 acres of land that includes a quadrangular court measuring more than 900 feet. The external walls on each side stand about 16 feet in thickness, and measure 12 feet to 15 feet in height. The total complex of 177 rooms has 45 rooms on the north side and 44 in each of the other three sides. The excavated findings have been preserved at the Varendra Research Museum in Rajshahi. It is interesting to note that the Borobudur temple in Indonesia was the contemporary of Paharpur Buddhist Monastery as their foundation.

According to research, the Sompura Mahavihara was so glorified in Tibet during the 9th -12th century that many Tibetan monks visited to Mahavihara. The world-famous Buddhist scholar Atish Dipanka Srijnan (11th C.) stayed at the Mahavihara for many years. It is one of the most important archaeological sites in Bangladesh and declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985.

2.5.2 Mainamati Shalban Vihara

At Mainamati the principle monument is the Shalban Vihara which is the main interest here. During Mr. Nalini Kanta Bhattasali's tour, he found several Buddhist sites including Shalban Vihara and reported his findings in his book Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum (1929). It is mentioned that about 55 scattered ancient remains of settlements from the 8th - 12th century AD known as Mainamati Lalmai are located throughout the Comilla district. The Shaban Vihara is the middle of the Mainamati range and consists of 115 small rooms. Excavations have continued since 1955, and items such as copper plates, gold and silver coins, and more than 150 bronze statues have been found. The largest number of stone sculptures and terra-cotta plaques were found in Comilla's archaeological sites, representing Bengal and the sub-continent. Many items can be seen in the Mainamati site museum, which is the richest in artefacts amongst other museums in Bangladesh. The excavations of the Mainamati sites are noteworthy for revealing previously unknown facts about Bangladesh's political, religious, historical and Buddhist architecture.

2.5.3 Mahasthangarh

The Mahasthangarh archaeological site is the oldest site in Bangladesh. It is a known Hindu site and considered a great sacred place. In 1907, the excavations revealed gold ornaments, coins and terra-cotta objects, which are now preserved in the Mahasthangarh Museum. Although it is not as well known for Buddhists, there are probable remains of the Gupta and Pala period temples which are remarkable for both Buddhists and Hindus. During 1928-29, the excavations at Mahasthangarh uncovered buildings thought to be Hindu religious, such as Govinda Bhita and Lakshmindarer Medh.

2.5.4 Bhasu Vihara

During Cunningham's tour, he identified this site six kilometres north-west of Mahasthangarh. Excavations have exposed two large Buddhist monasteries and a medium-sized Buddhist shrine. In 1970-80s further excavations revealed a small monastery consisting of 37 small rooms. From the Bhasu Vihara site, bronze statues and terra-cotta plaques have been found. The buildings indicate three types of religious architecture (monasteries, shrine and cruciform structure).

2.5.5 Halud Vihara

The Halud Vihara is located 15 kilometres west-south-east of the Paharpur Buddhist Monastery. There are many scattered ancient monuments, including large area mound 100 feet across and 25 feet high. The Department of Archaeology of Bangladesh excavated the site in 1984 and 1993 and found stone items, metal images, terra-cotta plaques and ornamental bricks. Unfortunately, local people are building houses on the south-eastern corner of the monument today and damaging the integrity of the site.

2.5.6. Buddhist Vihara in Bikrampur

The excavation on the Buddhist Vihara in Bikrampur of the Dhaka district was jointly conducted by the Department of Archaeology of Jahangirnagar University and the Agrasar Bikrampur Foundation. After four years' effort a Buddhist monastery was completely unearthed by March 2013. More than 100 statues and sculptures have been found in the monastery site. The Project researcher Sufi Mostafizur Rahman said that the monastery is related to Atish Dipankara Srijnan (980-1054), a renowned Buddhist scholar who was born in Bikrampur.

It is noteworthy to mention that archaeological researchers in Bangladesh are asking the government for increased budgetary allocations in order to preserve the important cultural heritage sites in this country. And with good reason - Bangladesh is somewhat of a forgotten repository of the South Asian Buddhist heritage, and it is high time that its sites are given the attention and care they deserve.

CHAPTER 03: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

3.1 Brief historical background of the sites

Mainamati an isolated ridge of low hills in the eastern margins of deltaic Bangladesh, about 8 km to the west of Comilla town is a very familiar name in our cultural heritage, where archaeological excavations have revealed very significant materials. A landmark of our ancient history, it represents a small mass of quasi-lateritic old alluvium. The ridge, set in the vast expanse of the fertile lower Meghna basin, extends for about 17

km north-south from Mainamati village on the Gumti River to Chandi Mura near the Lalmai railway station. In its widest parts, the ridge is about 4.5 km across and its highest peaks attain a height of about 45 metres. These highlands were once thickly wooded with an abundance of wild life, but modern developments have rudely disturbed its serene and idyllic setting. With an ever-expanding Cantonment at Mainamati, in the northern half of the ridge, and a fast-growing township at Kotbari in about its centre, the fairy-tale beauty of the place is already a thing of the past.



Figure: Salban Vihara, Mainamati. (Source:collected)

The twin names - Lalmai- Mainamati - of the place have significant link with the past: Lalmai or the southern part is identical with Lalambi-vana of the Chandra epigraphs, while the northern part recalls the name of the legendary Chandra queen 'Mainamati',

mentioned in local ballads and folk-songs. The archaeological finds have now established beyond any doubt that the cultural and political centre of ancient Vanga-Samatata (southeast Bengal) was located here. The glory and magnitude of that remarkable past is emphatically manifest in the innumerable monuments, mounds and excavated remains, adequately supplemented by an impressive array of stray finds from the area. Mainamati today is, however, better known for its Buddhist remains exposed by excavations. Here, indeed, lies the greatest assemblage of ancient Buddhist remains in Bangladesh. The Discovery During the course of rebuilding the old axial road through these hills in 1875, workers accidentally uncovered the ruins of what at that time was thought to be 'a small brick fort'. It was actually a Buddhist monastery. Some 72 years earlier (1803), from the same area, was discovered the first Mainamati relic, the copperplate of Ranavankamalla Harikaladeva, dated 1220 AD, which records a description of the capital city of Patikera as 'adorned with forts and monasteries'. The name now survives in the modern Patikara pargana of the locality. The Mainamati ruins were rediscovered during the Second World War. While setting up an advance camp, the military came across ancient remains at a number of points in the ridge. In the hurried survey that followed, 18 sites were recognised and protected by the government. In more regular and systematic surveys undertaken between 1955 and 1957, when the entire ridge was undisturbed by human occupation, more than 50 sites were located. Most of those sites lie in the northern half of the ridge, now within the Cantonment. Archaeological excavations started in January 1955. In several phases of excavation of the 50 odd sites nine have so far been exposed. Though the excavations have not yet been completed and have been limited in many respects, the results so far

obtained and the information gained provide a sound archaeological basis for the reconstruction of the history and culture of the early period of this hitherto obscure region. (Methila, 2015)

3.2 Other archaeological sites of Mainamati

There are several scattered archaeological ruins are discovered along the Lal Mai hills in Mainamati, Comilla. These ruins hold major significance in terms of enlightening us about our ancient history of the past. These ruins are named below with pictures:

4.2.1 RUPBAN KONNAR BARI



Figure: Rupban Konnar Bari, Mainamati. (Source: Collected)

3.2.2 MAINAMATI MOUNT 1A

Mainamati Mound 1A situated near the Mainamati bus stop north of the Dhaka – Chittagong highway. Limited excavations carried out here have revealed six long walls, straight roads and crossroads, gateways and other scanty remains. The remains here indicate that there were ten rectangular blocks, five containing major structures and five open courtyards, together with an elaborate gateway complex (13.9m*9.8m). The remains seem to be secular in nature.



3.2.3 ITAKHOLA MURA

Figure: Itakhola Mura, Mainamati. (Source: Collected)

3.2.4 BHOJA VIHARA

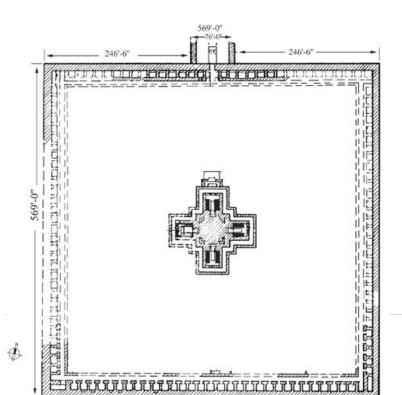


Figure: Bhoja Vihara. (Source: Collected)



3.2.5 ANANDA VIHARA

Figure: Ananda Vihara, Mainamati. (Source: Collected)

3.2.6 KOTILA MURA

3.2.7 PAKKA MURA



3.2.8 CHARPATRA MURA

Figure: Charpatra Mura, Mainamati. (Source: Collected)

3.3 Site location

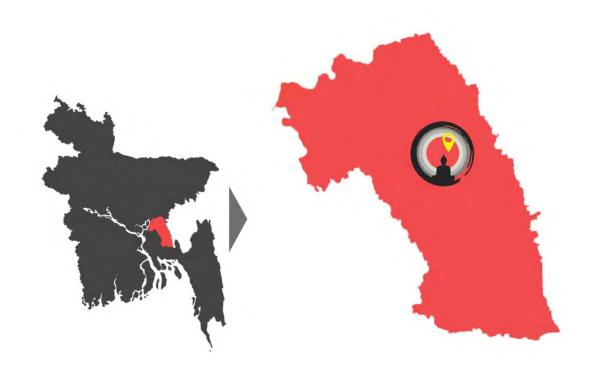


Figure: Comilla City and Mainamati Shalban Vihara. (Source: Author)

Area of Comilla City: 5 3.04 Square K.M.

Population of Comilla City: 5 Lac

Comilla not so far away from Dhaka is renowned for many reasons. The main attraction for its archaeological sites scattered all over the Mainamati ridge, War cemetery and many more.

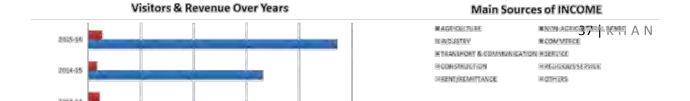


Figure: Economic data per year and the income source of people Comilla. (Source: Author)

Different economic activities are prevailing in Mainamati. Per year tourists pay visit in Shalban vihara. If people could know about the other archaeological sites, the footfall of the tourists would have been more. Though, with passing years the growth is promising and the revenue generated is also promising. It's the perfect time to rethink the current landscape. Which will have more appropriate public facilities and research atmosphere for the researchers, As a lot of the ruins are still in danger and still not explored.



Figure: Maninamati Shalban Vihara, Comilla. (Source: Author)

3.4 Landmarks

The site is surrounded by many important architectural interventions and as well as archaeological sites. The site is situated in the middle of the Lal Mai ridge. And the surrounding of the site is now comprised of many institutional buildings like BARD, Comilla University, Comilla Cadet College, Technical Training Centre etc. Moreover, centring the site there are few archaeological heritages scattered along the periphery.

3.4.1 Landmark analysis

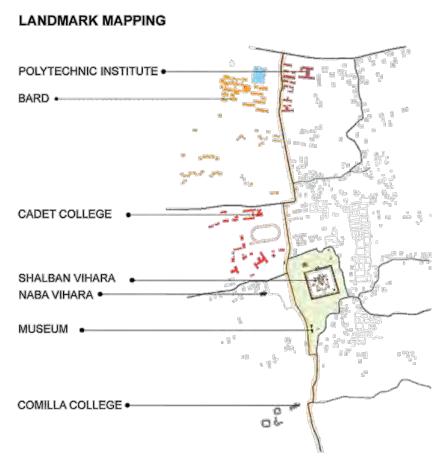


Figure: Landmark Mapping. (Source: Author)



Figure: Academic Landmarks. (Source: Author



Figure: Archaeological sites around the proposed site. (Source: Author)

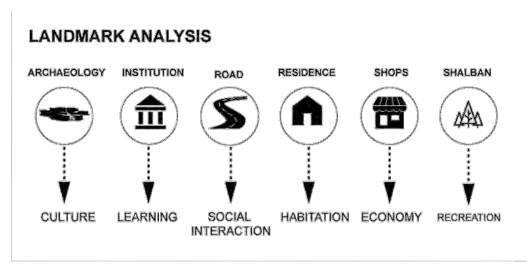


Figure: Landmark analysis. (Source: Author)

3.4.2 Mapping

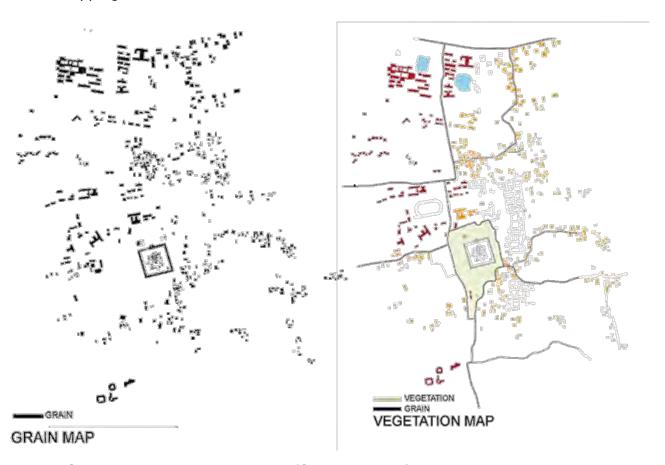


Figure: Grain map and vegetation map. (Source: Author)



Figure: Vegetation map. (Source: Author)

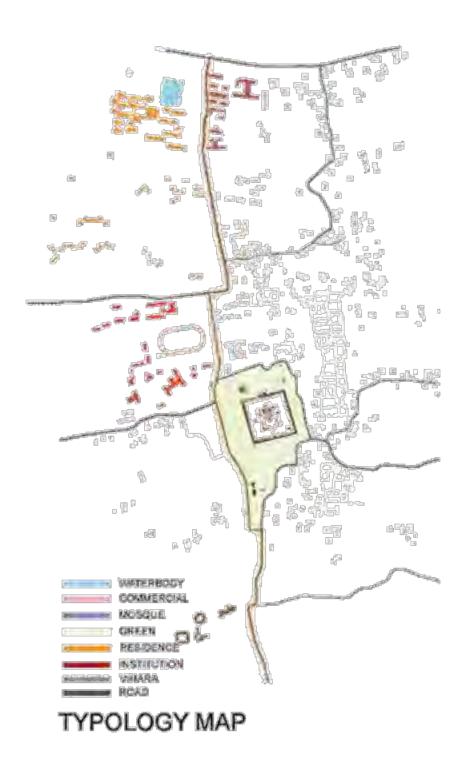


Figure: Typology map (Source: Author)

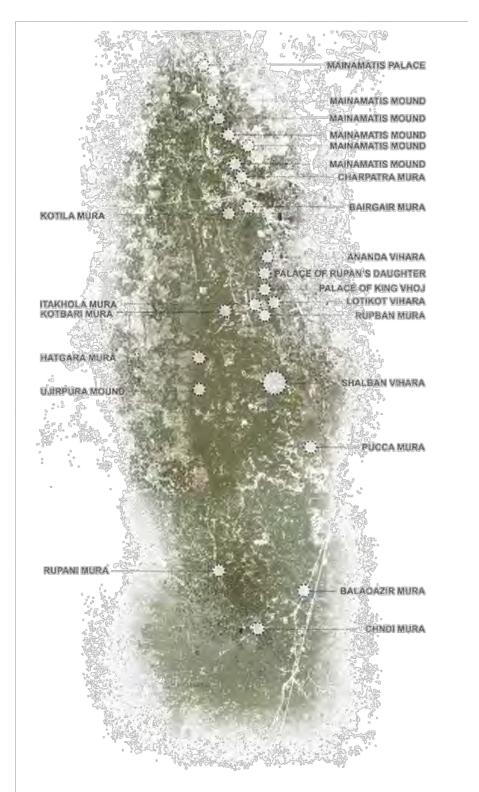


Figure: Archaeological landmarks of Buddhist reign in Mainamati ridge. (Author)

3.5 Findings & Interpretation

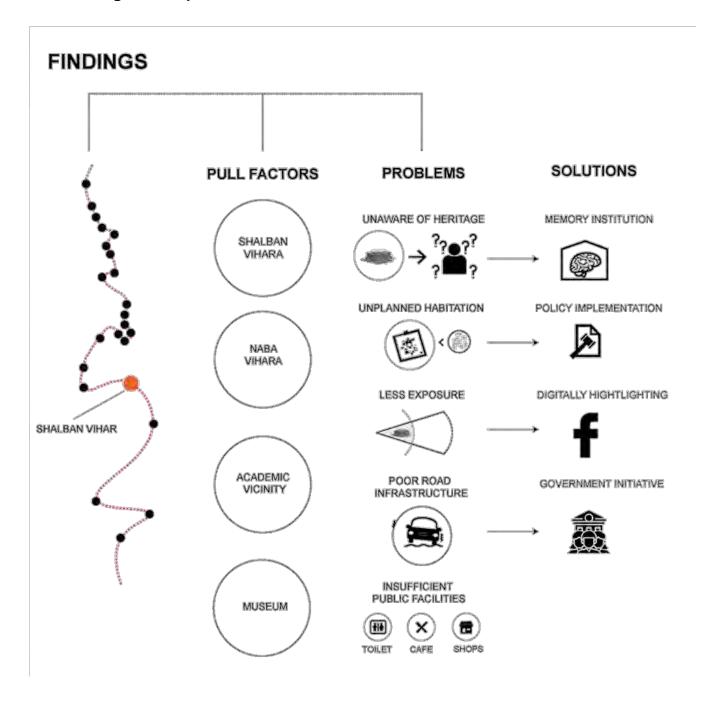


Figure: Findings from surrounding and interpretation. (Author)

The existing site and surrounding has all the resources necessary to pull tourists. Moreover, there is a museum which is inappropriate in current situation. For unplanned habitation policy implementation is needed which will be taken care by the govt. bodies. Poor road and infrastructure shall be developed. These works need the attention of a multidisciplinary team. Other than these creating heritage awareness and facilitating public or tourist through public facilities may be achieved through architectural means.

Therefore, installing a memory institution which will have galleries as well as archives, library. Besides, public amnesties (Cafeteria, fresh room, information centre) are also part of the programmatic scheme.

3.6 Site photos



Figure: Site. (Source: Author)



Figure: Proposed site. (Source: Author)



Figure: Site from the road. (Source: Author)



Figure: Mainamati Shalban Vihara. (Source: Author)



Figure: In front of Mainamati Museum. (Source: Author)

3.7 S. W. O. T analysis

Strength

- · The site is adjacent to the national heritage site that is Minamati Shalban Vihara.
- · Shalban forest is there behind the proposed site.
- Landmarks are there around the proposed site.
- · Lot of tourists pay visit thus increasing the public footfall around the site.
- · A new Vihara is built just behind the site which creates dialogue with the old Vihara.
- Enriched with cultural heritages and natural landscapes.

- Mostly dry and no such catastrophe is seen or observed.
- Not so far away from the capital Dhaka.

Weakness

- Insufficient infrastructure to accommodate different need of the area.
- There is no accommodation facility or rest place around the site.
- No designated place for parking for the large vehicular arrival in the site.
- Missing of certain programs which generally cater facilities for the tourists.

Opportunity

- The site offers a variety of opportunities for the future development. For e.g. establishing an ideal public platform.
- Enough land resource is there for the future architectural interventions.
- Huge amount of green belt is surrounding the site.
- Existence of the heritage site besides the proposed site.
- Academic institutions around the site will certainly influence the future development of the site

Threat

- Degradation of the existing atmosphere within the site.
- Land encroachment around the coveted site.

- Loss of the heritage value of the site due to lack of proper maintenance and knowledge.
- · Redundancy in the flow of tourist due to lack of facilities.
- · Loss of the spirit of the place due to unplanned developments.

CHAPTER 04: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND FUNCTIONAL

ANALYSIS

4.1 Program derivation

Heritage tourism is the prime factor for acknowledging the genius loci of the proposed site. Consequently, for program derivation considerations are taken to promote heritage tourism through taking following steps below:

- Improve tourism conditions. (Memory Institutions, Accommodation, Restaurant, Infrastructure, Landscapes etc.)
- Promote locality and local entertainments. (Music, Drama, Fairs, Festivals)
- Research Centre. (Researchers and Trainee)
- Showrooms

- Museum, Library, Archive etc.
- Specialized tours and collecting stories/sagas. (Religious and historical sagas relating to Buddhist community)
- Training courses. (Workshops and Heritage awareness program)

4.2 Targeted user group

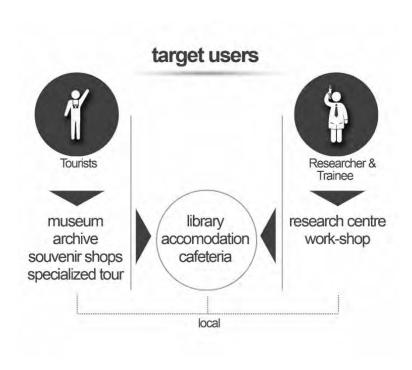


Figure: Targeted users of the site (Source: Author)

The project is conceived in creating heritage awareness thus contributing in heritage conservation. To create awareness its necessary to have certain group of people as the

client or patron of this proposed project. Here, on the basis of the research and analysis done so far, the predicted audiences or users of this project are mostly tourists and researchers respectively. Accordingly, to engage certain users its significant to cater facilities for them such as memory instituions, research centre, work-shops, souvenir shops etc. Through serving these targeted users the local inhabitants of the area will be served too.

4.3 Religious Visitation

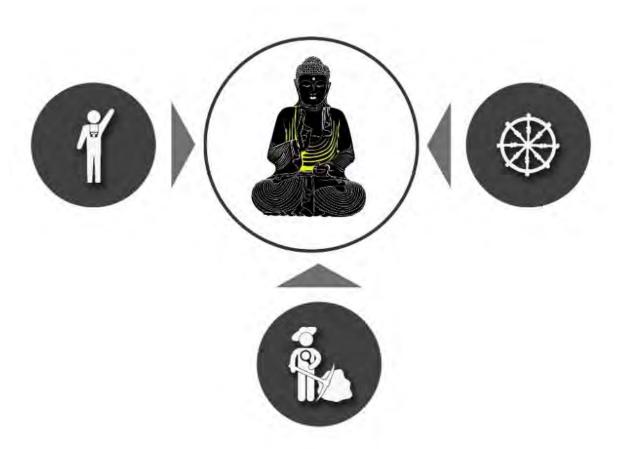
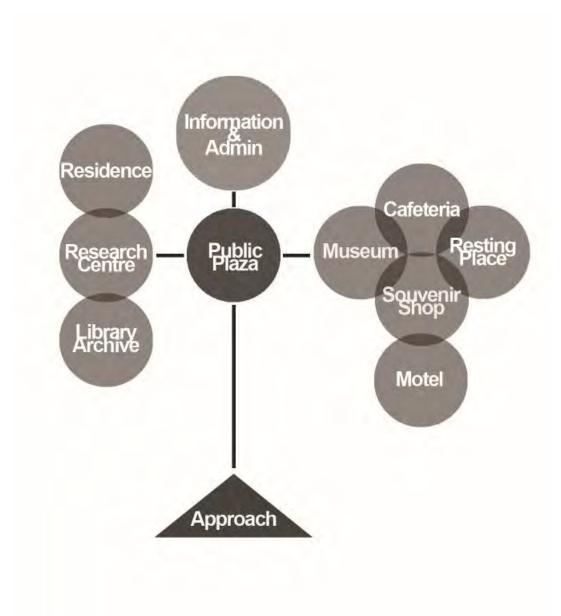


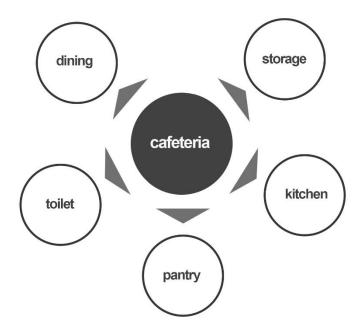
Figure: Religious visitation (Source: Author)



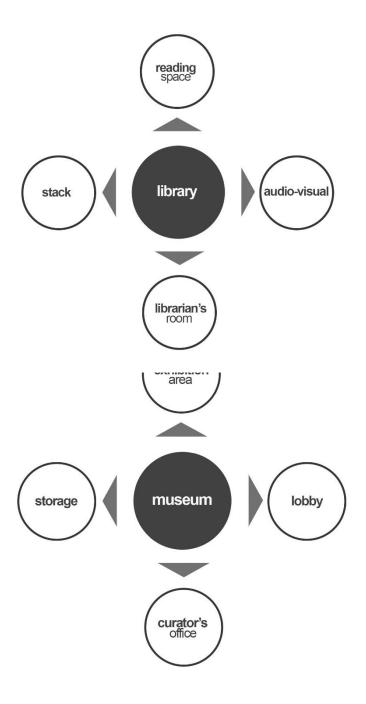
4.4 Functional flow and programmatic development

Figure: Functional flow of programs. (Source: Author)

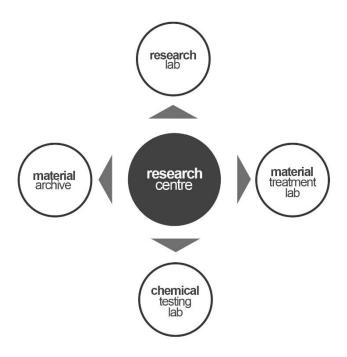
4.4.1 Cafeteria



4.4.2 Museum



4.4.3 Library



4.4.4 Research Centre



4.4.5 Administration

4.5 Tentative square feet of the programs

| RECEPTION AND LOBBY | 2000sft |
|---------------------------|----------|
| SOUVEINIR SHOP | 3600sft |
| KHADI CLOTHING WORKSHOP | 5600sft |
| POTTERIES WORKSHOP | 5600sft |
| GALLERY | 12000sft |
| MULTIPURPOSE HALL | 4000sft |
| OFFICE AND ADMIN FACILITY | 2000sft |
| LIBRARY | 3000sft |

| ARCHIVE | 3000sft |
|------------------------|----------|
| DORMATORY | 12000sft |
| RESTAURENT | 4000sft |
| EXCAVATION AND RESARCH | 2400sft |
| FACILITY | |
| LABORATORY | 1200sft |
| STORAGE | 600sft |
| PARKING | 2560sft |

Total 84720sft

Total with circulation 1,10,136sft

PROGRAM DERIVATION

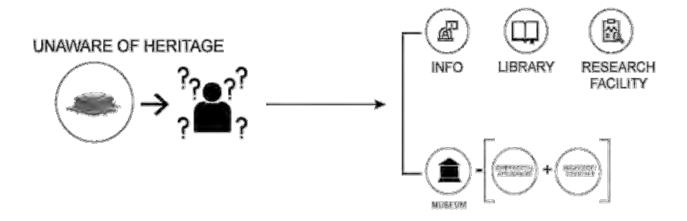


Figure: Programs that may help creating heritage awareness. (Source: Author)

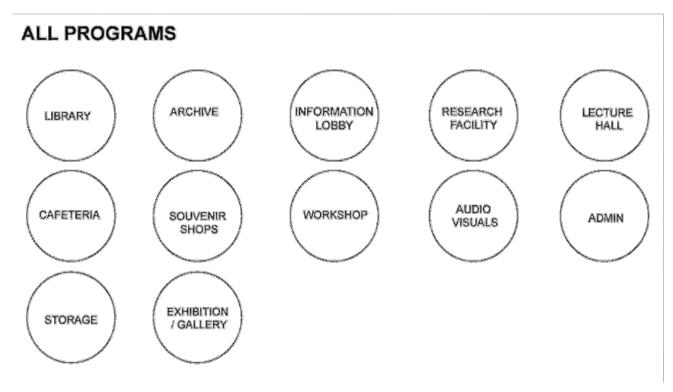


Figure: All the rationalized programs . (Source: Author)

CHAPTER 05: CASE STUDIES

5.1 Kolumba Museum

5.1.1 Background

The Kolumba Museum is a remarkable work of Swiss architect Peter Zumthor, a Pritzker Prize laureate. In a display of mastery and sensitivity, the architect manages to fuse the ruins of a destroyed Catholic church, with modern, sober and minimalist architecture, and highly sensitive to the theme of the works it houses: religious art.

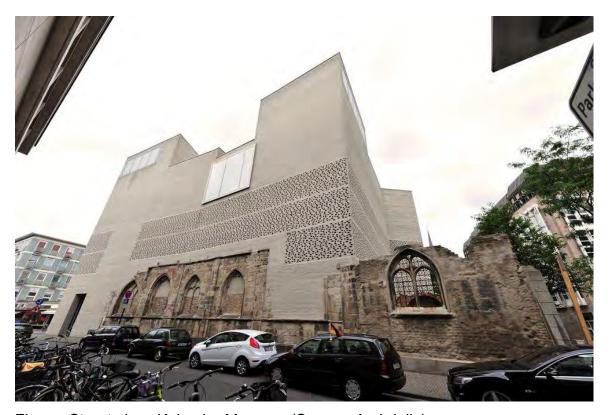


Figure: Street view, Kolumba Museum (Source: Archdaily)

5.1.2 Project specifications

Project Title: Kolumba Museum

Location: Cologne, Germany

Architect: Peter Zumthor

5.1.3 Approach to design

Peter Zumthor won the competition with an ambitious and humble idea at the same time: the building completely surrounds the ruins of the church and in fact merges with them while using the upper level and a side wing to house the exhibit areas. Zumthor's design delicately rises from the ruins of a late Gothic church, respecting the site's history and preserving its essence. "They (the Archdiocese) believe in the inner values of art, its ability to make us think and feel, its spiritual values. This project emerged from the inside out, and from the place", stated Zumthor. Externally, the building is characterized by its massiveness, a simple and severe composition of warm-colored volumes and thus integrates both to its urban context as well as the historic site where is located.



Figure: Interior showing walkway and columns above ruins, Kolumba Museum (Source: Archdaily)

5.1.4 Materials and details

- ☐ Grey brick to unite the destroyed fragments of the site. These fragments include the remaining pieces of the Gothic church, stone ruins from the Roman and medieval periods, and German architect Gottfried Böhm's 1950 chapel for the "Madonna of the Ruins".
- ☐ The texture of thin grey custom-made brick frames the remains of the old chapel achieving a remarkable integration between new and old.
- ☐ Perforations on the facade, forming a kind of lattice made on the basis of the bricks themselves. This effect lightens the perception of the volume.

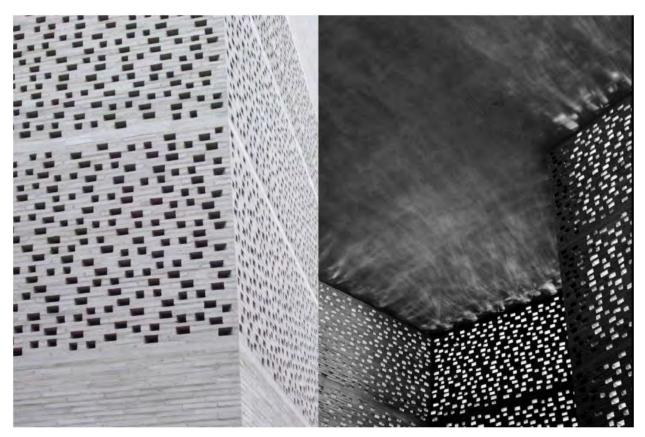


Figure: Perforations on wall, Kolumba Museum (Source: Archdaily)

Besides the chapel, the building includes 16 exhibition rooms arranged on three levels, including the area on top of the church, and at the heart of the building, a secret garden courtyard-a quiet and secluded place for reflection. In these areas, works of ancient and contemporary religious art are displayed, including some books of sacred art. The building also opens its views to some courts designed in a serene Zen minimalism, which houses works by famous sculpture like Richard Serra and Joseph Wolf.



Figure: Courtyard at the heart of the building, Kolumba Museum (Source: Archdaily)



Figure: Winding passage, Kolumba Museum (Source: collected)

5.2 Madinat Al Zahra Museum

5.2.1 Project specification

Architects: Nieto Sobejano Arquitectos

Location: Córdoba, Spain

Architect in Charge: Fuensanta Nieto, Enrique Sobejano

Project Architect: Miguel Ubarrechena

Project Year: 2009

Photographs: Fernando Alda_, Roland Halbe

5.2.2 Project photos

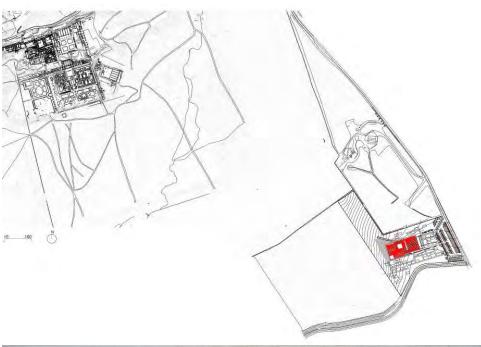








Figure: Interior photography of the project. (Source: Arch daily)

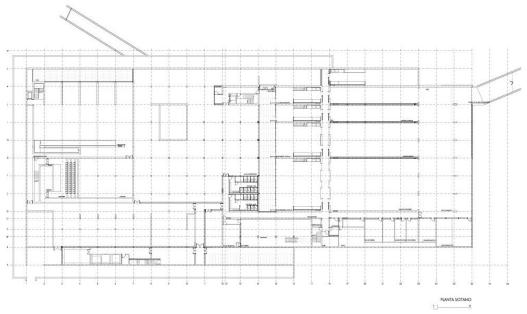


Figure: Plan view of Madinat Al Zahra. (Source: Arch daily)

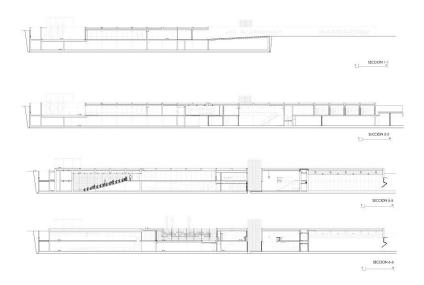


Figure: section of Madinat Al Zahra. (Source: Arch daily)

5.3 Comparative analysis

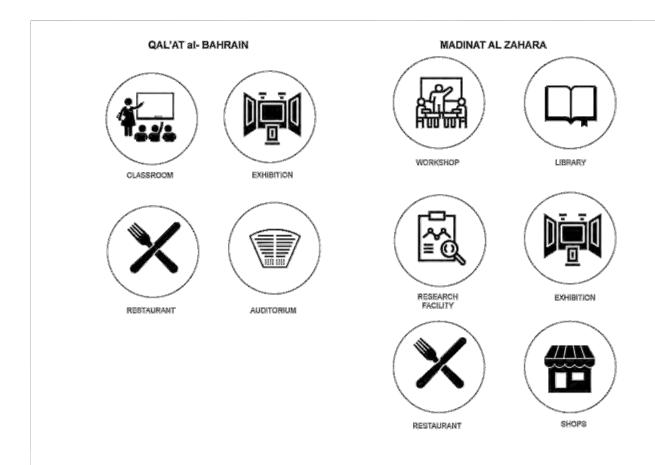


Figure: Programmatic analysis between two projects. (Author)

Here, comparative analysis between QAL'AT-AL-BAHRAIN and MADINAT AL ZAHRA are made. Though, QAL'AT-AL-BAHRAIN (Case study for the thesis project) is mentioned in this paper but its study documentation is not shown here. These, two projects are mostly of the same genre (Archaeological museum near archaeological

sites). From the comparative study of these projects, major part of the programs in the proposal are made.

CHAPTER 06: DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Introduction

The design process started keeping in mind the focus which is to revive the heritage awareness. Apparently, the designated site comprises of all the factors that would have addressed the much talked about heritage. Unfortunately, its not happening. Therefore, the problem came into being. Here, all the consideration is made only to achieve the desired target through minimal architectural intervention. Eventually, which will make a bigger impact but for now it will act as a catalyst. All the missing links that came up through the research and studio discussions are given immense importance thereby formulating programmes that will accommodate the needs of the users. These programmes mentioned below are currently absent.

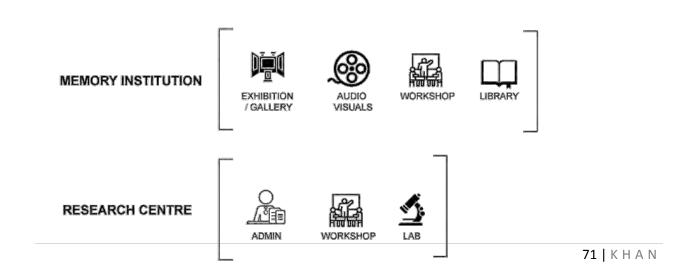


Figure: Programmes as catalyst to revitalize the heritage awareness. (Author)

6.2 Initial Sketches

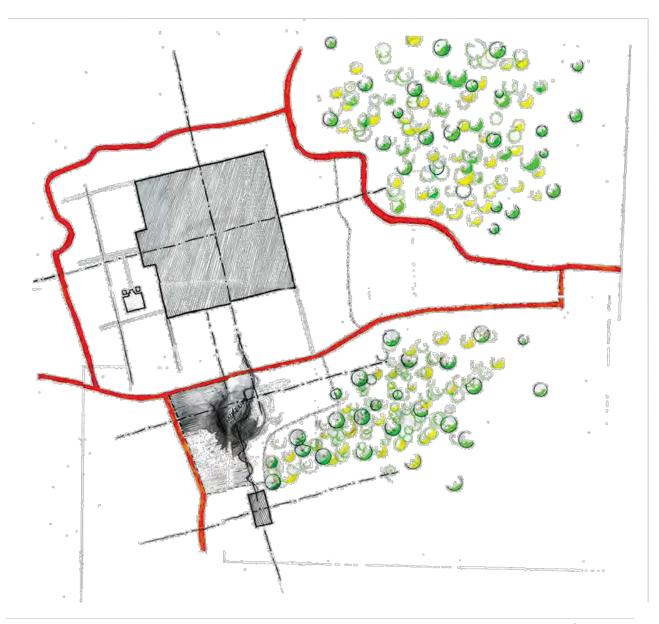


Figure: Linking the axes prevailing in the landscape. (Author)

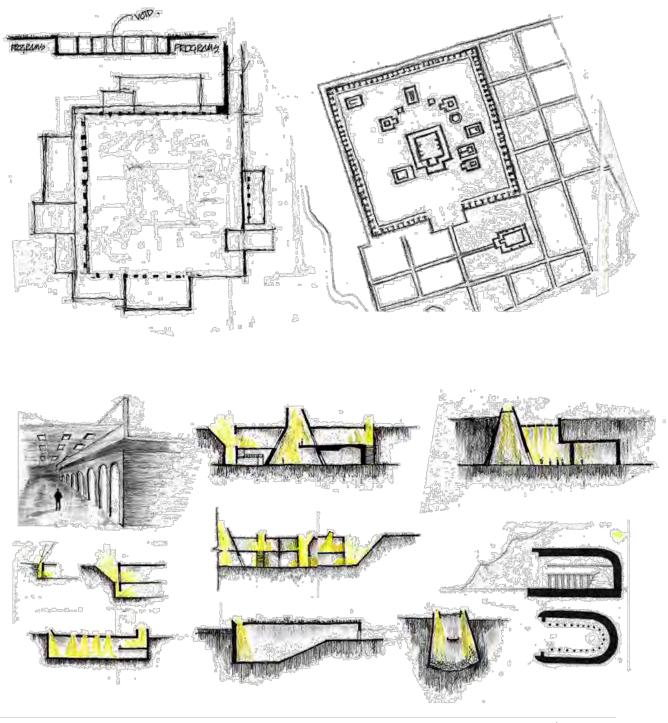


Figure: Initial sketches to perceive spaces and its arrangements. (Author)

6.3 Concept formulation

The proposed site is just besides the Mainamti Shalban vihara. Therefore, deliberate attempt was taken to go underground as it would not overpower the 1300 years old ancient settlement. Again, archaeology deals with unearthing monuments that has been concealed within. Form that perspective it does add credibility to the thought that digging inside the earth will recreate an experience that will allow the visitors to have dipper realization and of course the sense of discovery.

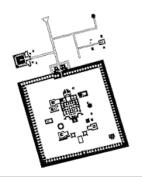


Figure: Diagram of the main idea of the project. (Author)

The newly built vihara is just facing the old Shalban vihara. Standing statue of the Buddha looking towards the old vihara evoked thoughts in my mind.

6.4 Design Intervention

Influences from the existing Shalban vihara is taken into account in order to create the museum complex. And linking the newly built vihara to the old one through the underground creates series



of contemplative spaces and emotions.

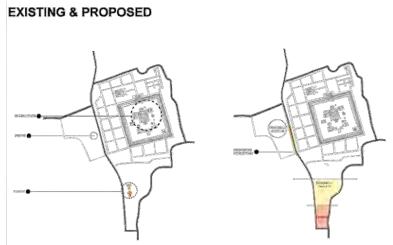


Figure: Intervention through shuffling the existing programs. (Author)

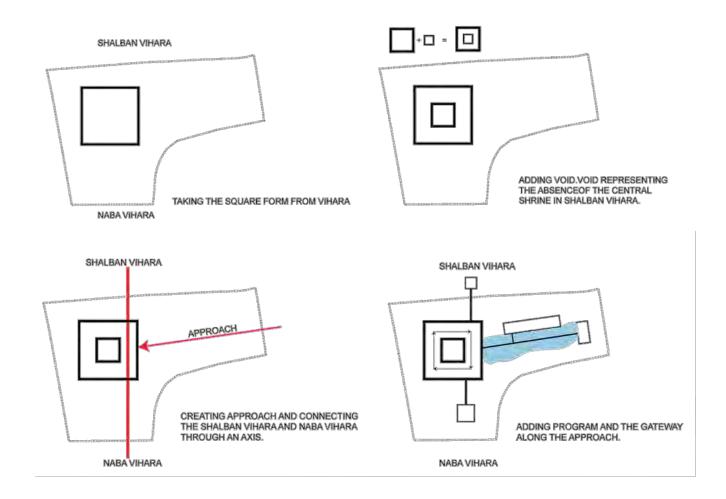


Figure: Diagram of the design development. (Author)

6.5 Plans & Sections

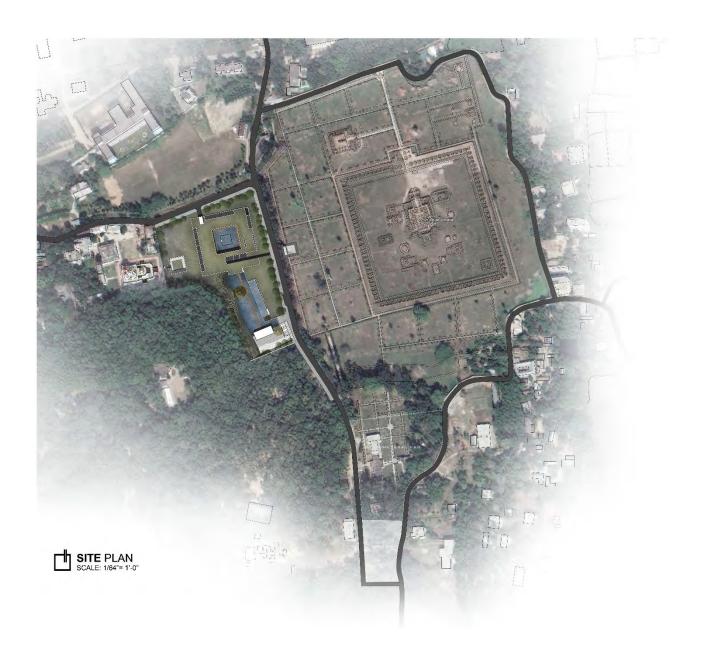


Figure: Master plan. (Author)

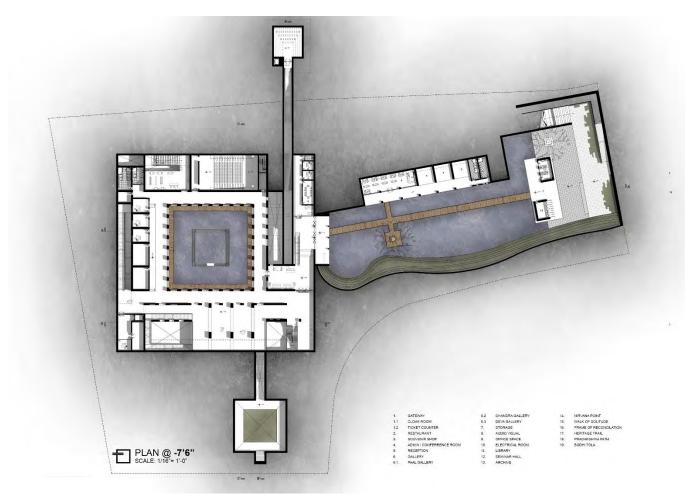


Figure: Plan @-7'6". (Author)

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Figure: Section DD'. (Author)

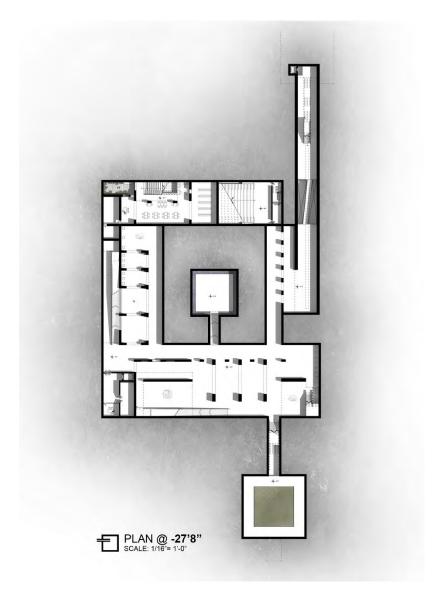


Figure: Plan @-27'6". (Author)

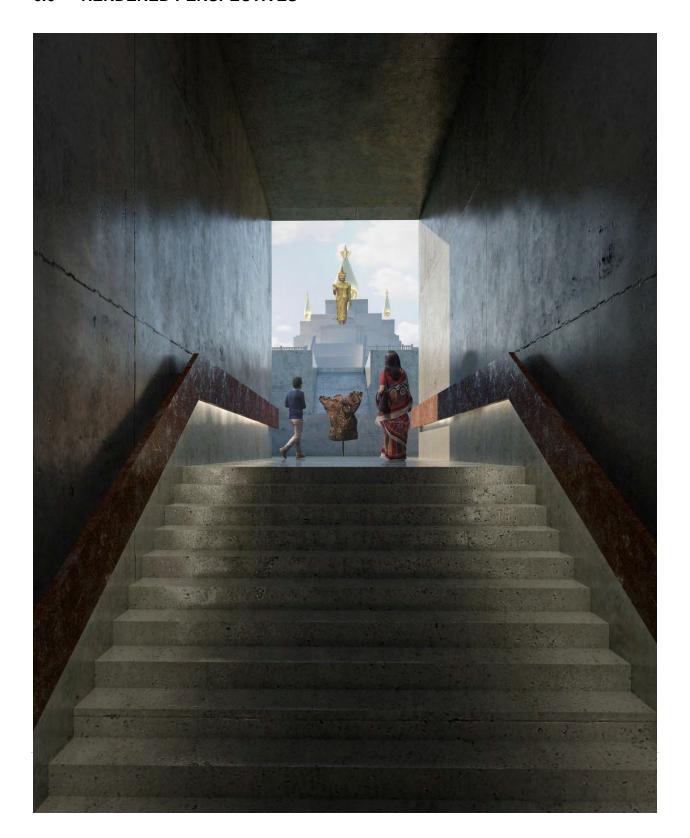
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Figure: Section CC' (Author)



Figure: Section BB' & AA' (Author)

6.6 RENDERED PERSPECTIVES



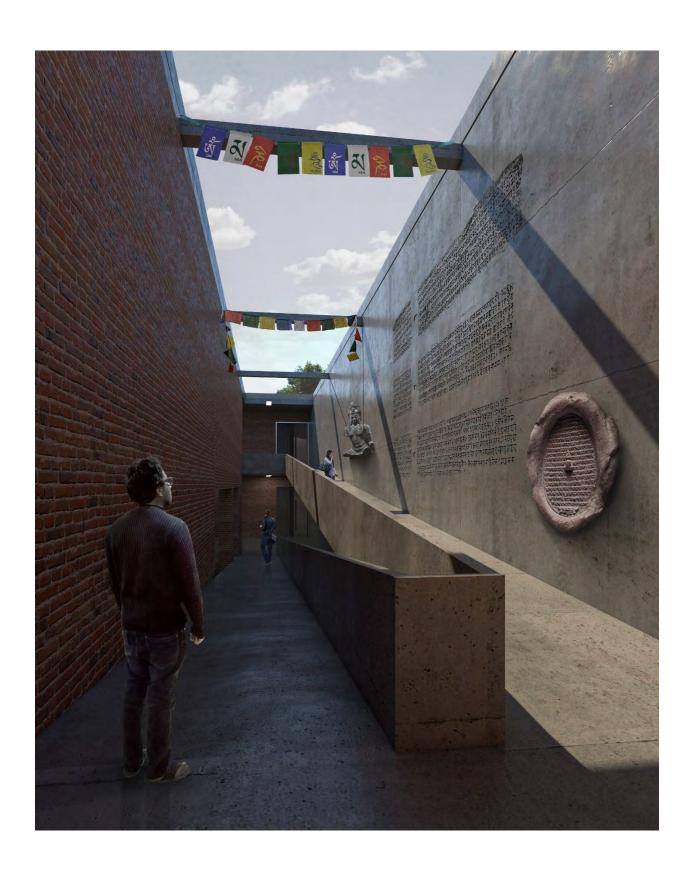






Figure: Rendered perspectives of different spaces. (Author)

6.7 Model Images

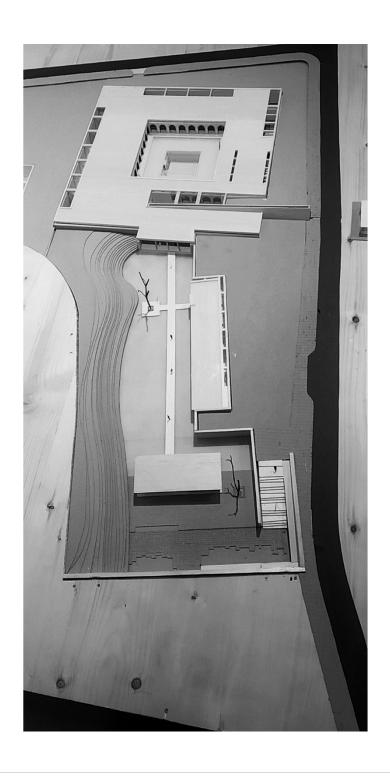


Figure: Blow-up model. (Author)

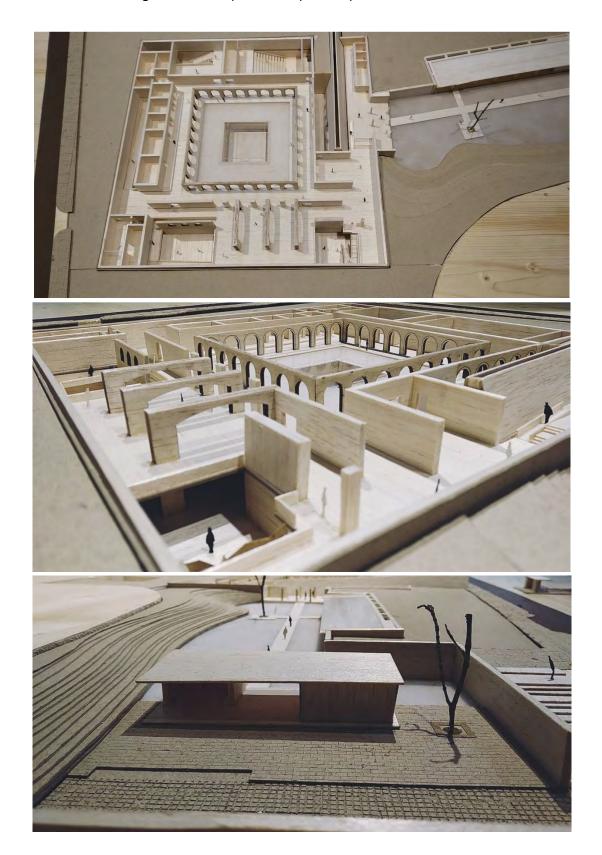


Figure: Blow-up model. (Author)



Figure: Blow-up model. (Author)



CHAPTER 07: CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this project was to make a statement of realization. How privileged we are as a nation and country both to have such glorified ancient civilization. Though we are unfortunate that we couldn't take good care of the archaeological remaining's. For centuries the designated site was used as the Buddhist educational center and victory camp respectively. Mainamati is one of the richest archaeological jewels in our country. Which should have created an unprecedented tourist attracting atmosphere from all over the globe. Eventually, through implanting the knowledge amongst the tourist through experiential atmosphere heritage awareness could have been harnessed. Thereby national unity is strengthened.

Keeping this realization in mind I started researching by which mean it can be attained also keeping in mind many constraints as parameters. Through minimal architectural intervention in the proposed site which will be accommodating the current needs of the time and as well as cater facilities to promote heritage awareness. Thus, the lost heritage will reshape our perception and would make us proud through upholding out integrity.

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