

# Ecology and Humanity



**The Architects Regional Council Asia (ARCASIA)**  
26 Eng Hoon Street, Singapore, 169776



**The Architectural Society of China (ASC)**  
9 Sanlihe Road, Beijing, China, 100835



**Tongji University**  
1239 Siping Road, Shanghai, China, 200092

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+880 2 55007197

E mail@iab.com.bd

W www.iab.com.bd

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T/F +673 2394021

E pujaoffice01@gmail.com

W www.pujajournal.com

### The Architectural Society of China (ASC)

No. 9, Sanlihe Road, Beijing, CHINA 100835

T +86-10-88082237

F +86-10-88082222

E gjb@chinaaso.org

W www.chinaaso.org

### The Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA)

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CHINA

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E sekretariat@iaiacid

W www.iaiacid

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F +81-3-3408-7129

E jiacontact@jia.or.jp

W www.jia.or.jp

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of Korea

T +82-2-3415-6827

T +82-2-3415-6828

F +82-2-3415-6899

E secretary@kira.or.kr

W www.kira.or.kr

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(ALACE)

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Chanthaboury District, P.O. BOX: No 8806, Vientiane

Capital, LAOS

T +856-21-260530

F +856-21-264736

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T (853) 28703458

F (853) 28704089

E maacuaam@macau.aam.net

W www.macaooarchitects.com

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PAM Centre, 99L, Jalan Tandak, Bangsar, 59100 Kuala

Lumpur, Malaysia

T (+603) 2202 2566

F (+603) 2202 2566

E info@pam.org.my

W www.pam.org.my

### The Union of Mongolian Architects (UMA)

Ulaanbaatar city, Sukhbaatar district, 8 kharoo,

Bulgarian street 27, Mongolia

T 976-77115300,

976-77130638,

976-77113760

F 976-77130638

E uma.org.mn@gmail.com

W www.uma.org.mn

### Association of Myanmar Architects (AMA)

No. 228-234, 3rd Floor, Bogyoke Aung San Road,

Department of Urban and Housing Development

Building, Botahtaung Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar

T (959) 443154460,

(959) 265 465 884

E amarchitects2001@gmail.com;

secretary@ama.org.mm

W www.ama.org.mm

### The Society of Nepalese Architects (SONA)

Churahi Complex, China Town Shopping Centre,

Bagdurbar, Sundhara Kathmandu

T +977-1-4262252

F +977-1-4262252

W sona.org.np

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IAP House, ST-1/A, Block 2, Kalkashan Clifton, Karachi,

PAKISTAN

T +9221 35879335

F +9221 35879335

E info@iap.com.pk

W www.iap.com.pk

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Street, Diliman, Quezon City 1103, THE PHILIPPINES

T +63 2 4126403,

+63 2 4126364,

+63 2 4120051

F +63 2 3721796

E uap@united-architects.org

W www.united-architects.org

### Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA)

79B Neil Road, SINGAPORE 088904

T +65 6226 2668

F +65 6226 2663

E info@sia.org.sg

W www.sia.org.sg

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120/7, Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 7, SRI LANKA

T +94 112 689900,

+94 112 689888,

+94 112 689777

E secretariat@architects.lk

W http://www.slia.lk

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Patronage (ASA)

248/1 Soi Saonvijai 4, Rama IX Road, Bangkok, Huay

Kwang, Bangkok 10310 THAILAND

T (662) 319-6555

F (662) 319-8419

E asaisaoffice@gmail.com

W www.asa.or.th

### Viet Nam Association of Architects (VAA)

40 Tang Bat Ho, Hai Ba Trung Dist., Hanoi

T +844 393 60755

F +844 393 49240

E vaa@hkt.vn

W kienviet.net



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# Editorial

The core value of architectural space lies in the precise coordination between its symbiosis with the natural environment and its resonance with the social context. For different users, space carries vastly different meanings, and its form and function evolve accordingly. This issue features projects from across Asia—including India, South Korea, Thailand, and China—with functions ranging from education and housing to the revitalization of industrial heritage. The goal of this issue is to distill the essence of contemporary Asian architecture rooted in regional context, offering a practice-oriented paradigm and theoretical reference for architectural creation within a globalized discourse.

These projects collectively highlight the dual focus of contemporary Asian architecture: a commitment to both nature and humanity. China's Dingshu Vocational School of Pottery fosters deep social links by rooting its workshop-style layout in a thousand-year-old pottery tradition, sustaining the social fabric of apprenticeship while remaining open to the community. Similarly, in India, the Vedic Vidya Kendra focuses on spiritual needs, materializing abstract Vedic philosophy into a spatial sanctuary for cultural transmission, while the Lakshmi Mills renovation revitalizes industrial heritage through the adaptive reuse of social spaces, integrating diverse functions to bolster urban services. Meanwhile, the Baan Nonn house located in Thailand reimagines traditional cluster housing to interpret the multi-generational family bond through modern materials. The pursuit of ecological harmony is equally profound: South Korea's MIGIUI prioritizes ecological restoration by receding into the recovered topography, while the Blue Insight Cave Space in China, inspired by natural sea caves, minimizes environmental intervention to blend a raw, natural texture with a humanistic atmosphere. Finally, Thailand's Varee Valley Restaurant uses transparency to allow for an immersive experience within the native jungle.

The seven selected projects are grounded in locality, driven by ecological philosophy, and guided by humanistic care. By building upon traditional Asian architectural wisdom while embracing innovations in design and technology, these works vividly demonstrate the unique cultural value and contemporary significance of Asian architecture today.

# Dingshu Vocational School of Pottery



A low-density campus where people can meander



Eaves and seats around zelkova tree square



Continuous classroom units



The exhibition building and the classroom units on the south side

Architect Firm: genarchitects  
 Principal Architect: Xue Zhe, Fan Beilei, Kong Rui  
 Design Team: Wang Shiyu, Tao Shuting, Liu Yang, Xian Haohui, Xue Jun, Xiao Xinyu, Qian Jia, Li Lanruo, Guo Zhenghao, Liu Jinghuan, Huang Fanlang, Xie Rugui, Li Yunhong, Chen Xi, Wang Shiyu, Chen Xi, Qian Jia, Chi Zenglei, Qu Hao, Zhang Zhun, Zhang Chongohong, Chen Xuejian / AND Office, M&E Consultant and Corporate Design, Liang Ming, Pan Shen, Wan Huajun, Liu Jianping, He Anoheng / SGIDI, Du Jie / Suzao Construction, Du Jie / Suzao Construction, Mao Yong / Keyan Construction & Decoration, Huang Huang / Dingzhong Material, Yan Qianfeng / Fanhang Construction  
 Location: Yixing, China  
 Area: 10905 sq. m  
 Completion Date: April 2021  
 Photography: Su Shengliang, Chen Hao

Dingshu, located in Yixing, Jiangsu Province, 200 kilometers away from Shanghai. This small town on the shore of Taihu Lake has a history of pottery making for thousands of years. All kinds of pottery produced are famous, among which the most well-known is the Zisha teapot, which is made of Zisha clay. For centuries, possessing an elegant Zisha teapot has been a lifelong pursuit of Chinese literati and tea drinkers. With the increase of demand and the development of pottery culture, Dingshu has gradually developed into the center for the production and

trade of pottery. Therefore, the life of local community residents is also closely related to pottery culture. Dingshu Vocational School of Pottery, one of the few schools specialized in pottery training in the national rural adult education system, aims to increase the income level and improve the local livelihood by offering academic education and skill training, and is supposed to open up to rural communities that lack public facilities after school hours as a venue for public education and activities.



The side porch along the exhibition building towards the central Zelkova tree square

Through the study of the local pottery history, genarchitects learned about the way pottery making was handed down from master to apprentice in workshops. By having seminars with people from the surrounding communities, practitioners, teachers and craftsmen, we found the clue of creating "an artisan school," and the design goal of a low-density campus centered on a "pottery workshop" was gradually established. Instead of designing a common campus with massive buildings

and extensive squares, Dingshu Vocational School of Pottery is a low-density cluster of buildings that adopted the meandering spatial layout of traditional artisan workshops. The four essential buildings, i.e. two workshops, a multifunctional hall, and an exhibition hall, are placed at the center of the campus, and the Beech Tree Plaza enclosed by them serves as a central stage for outdoor events. The architects prioritized the unique spatial requirements for each step in the

process of pottery making, and arrived at a variety of unique spaces, including classrooms with open views and soft light for reading and drawing, introverted and quiet workshops for sculpturing and embossing, and an exhibition hall with a tranquil atmosphere surrounded by large beams and columns for exhibiting the outstanding pottery works. Each function acquires its corresponding space, structure, and equipments, resulting in a series of single buildings on their own.

A dozen of scattered, low-rise "small buildings" are thus arranged, with different types of exterior spaces existing between them. Each building has good natural lighting and ventilation. These juxtaposed various internal and external spaces are linked by porches and corridors, forming a diverse environment. The pleasant landscape and the atmosphere of free communication serves as a source of inspiration for pottery creation. At the same time, the architects also considered the economy of construction costs in choosing materials and structural systems. As a result, the fundamental

enclosure structure is made of 400mm thick double-leaf sandwich walls, combined layers of aerated concrete block, insulation layer, and brick, which ensures the thermal performance of the building and reduces energy consumption under the local climate situation of hot summer and cold winter. Brick, concrete, and sandstone are the main materials for this campus. Brick firing, wall masonry, and concrete casting are similar to pottery making and convenient for local workers to take on. The use of ordinary materials combined with new construction techniques allows the

campus to easily merge into the existing context of the town. Upon completion, the builders and local residents immediately feel so close to the new campus. Born from the development of pottery, this school now provides high-quality pottery training every year for thousands of local residents, improving their professional skills as well as living standards. Meanwhile, the ongoing cultural demonstration and exchange activities taking place at the school also benefit the local community and keep the long tradition of pottery making alive in this small town.



Looking at the zelkova tree square from the second floor of administration building through the elm tree courtyard



Zelkova tree square at the center of campus



Terrace of the exhibition building is covered by the canopy of a Chinese hackberry



Pottery trainees resting in the cloister courtyard



The wide corridor not only provides the connection between classroom units, but also is a place for people to stop and rest



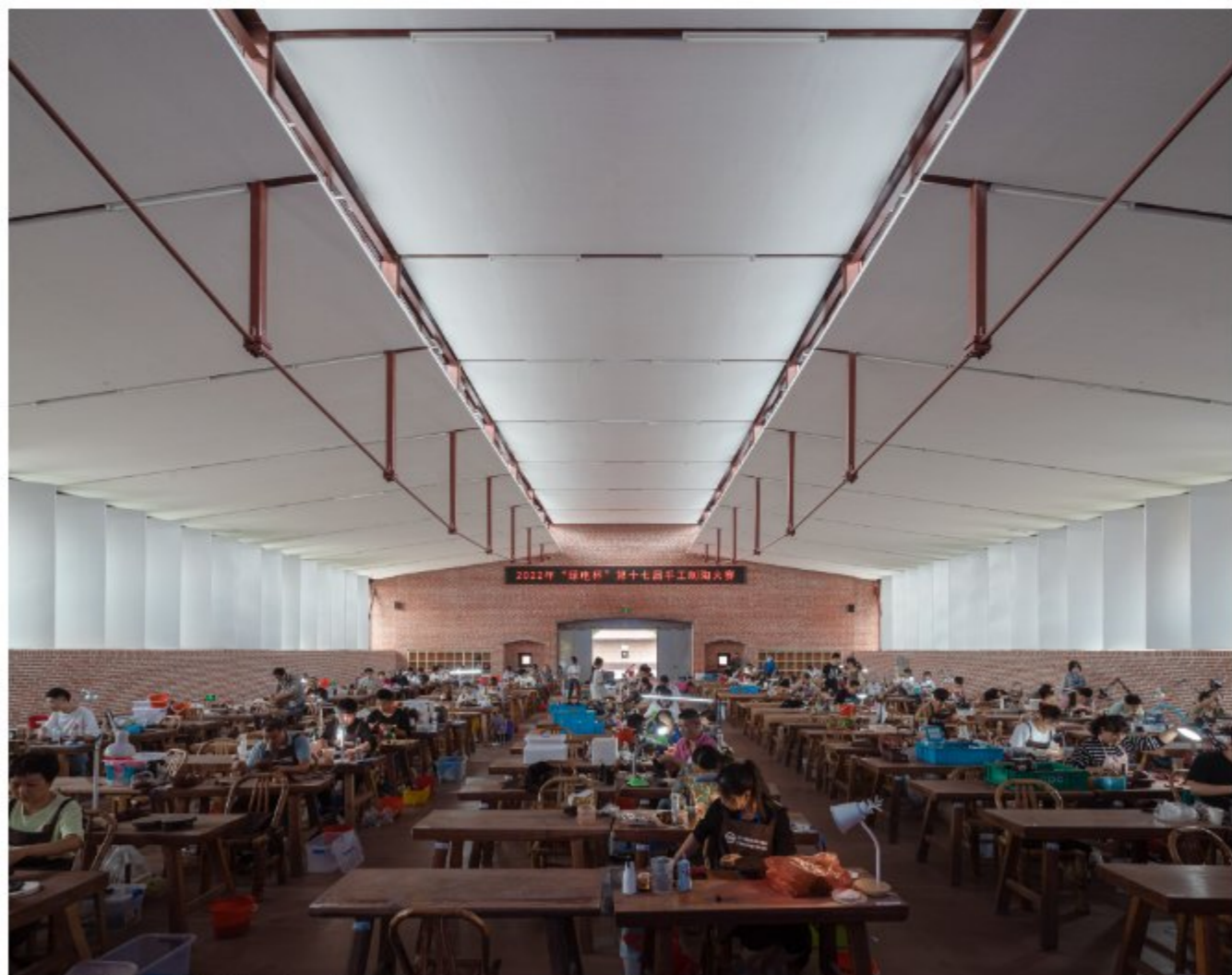
View from the terrace of the exhibition building towards the administration building



Looking through the elm tree courtyard towards the minor workshop and the exhibition building



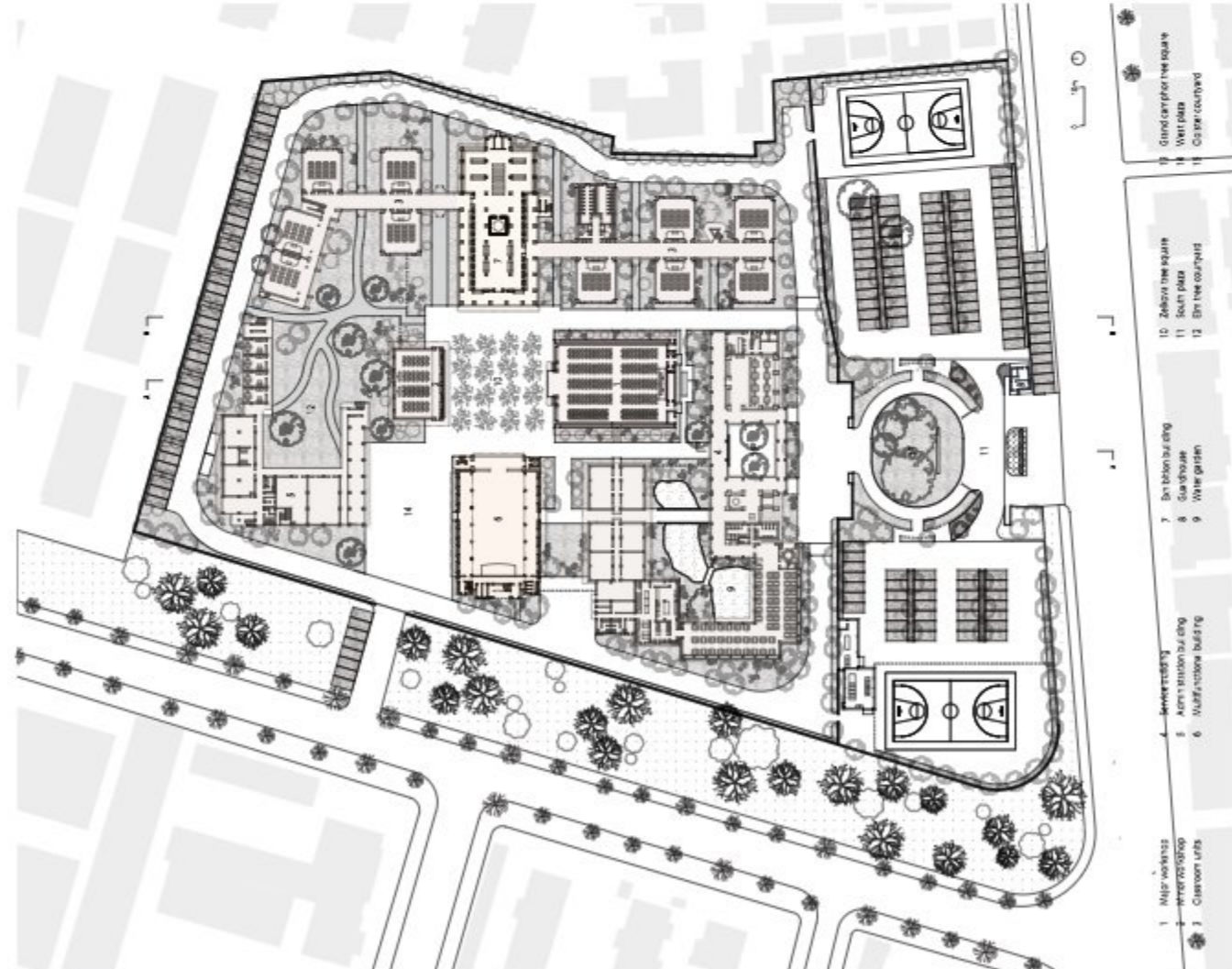
Craftsmen are concentrating on making Yixing clay teapot in the major workshop



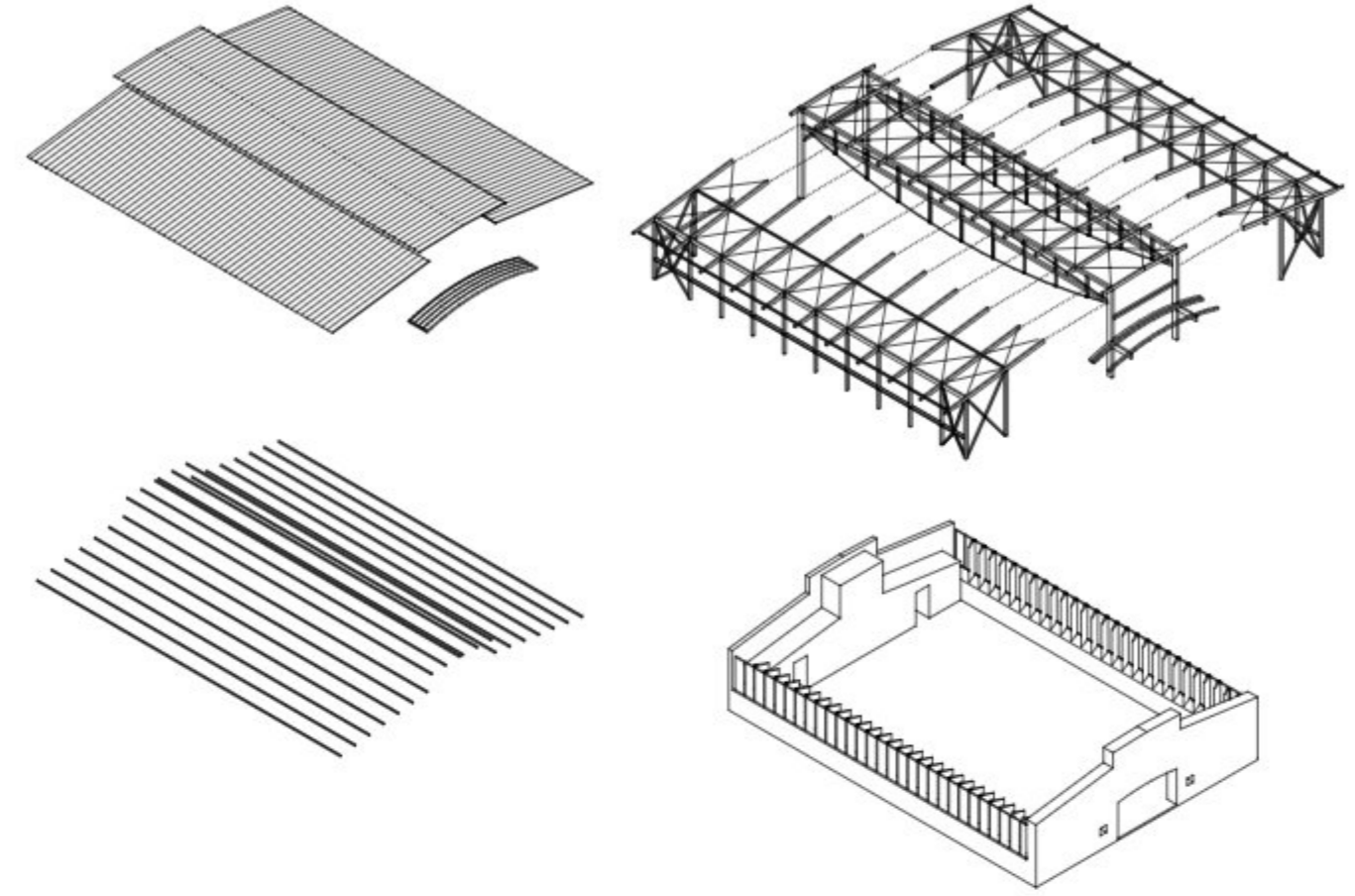
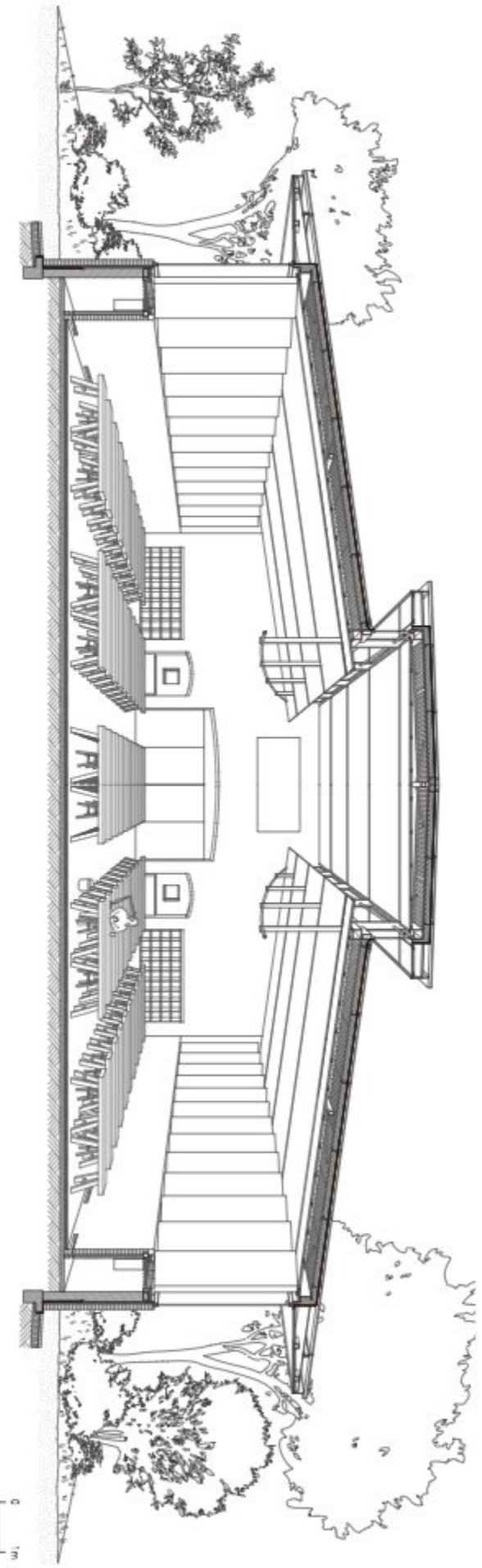
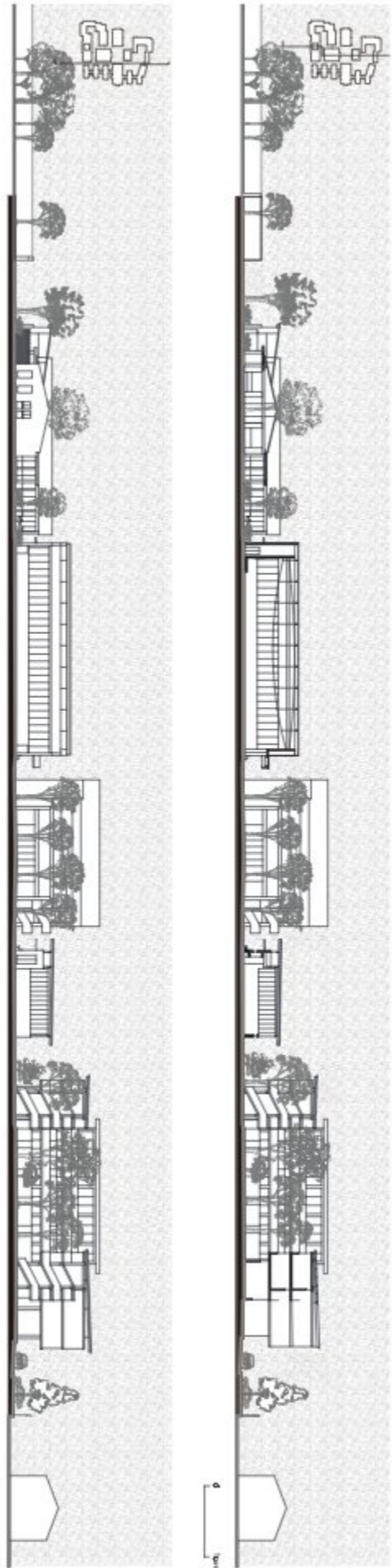
The annual pottery competition in the major workshop



Site plan



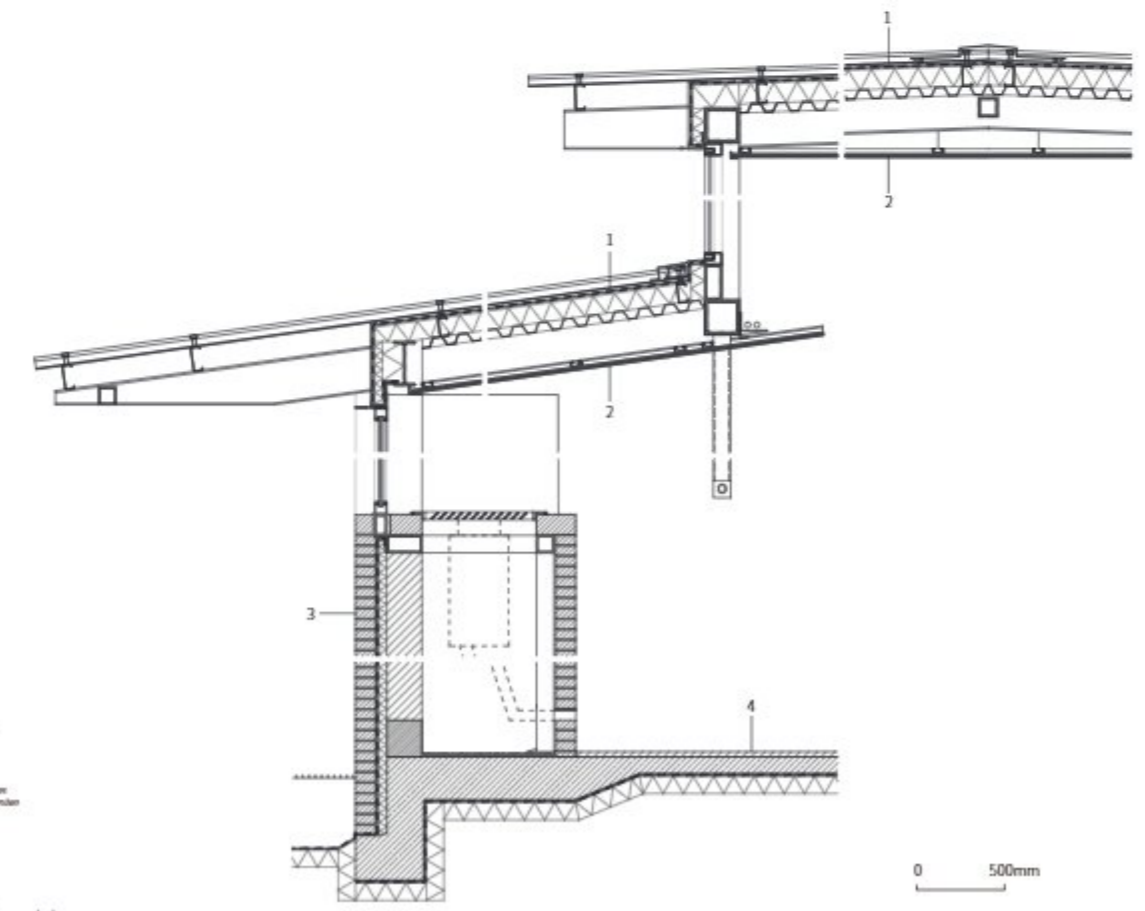
Ground floor plan



Exploded axonometric drawing of the major workshop

- 1. Standing seam metal roof  
175mm wavepanel  
Insulation  
Vapor barrier  
Steel purlin  
Steel beam  
Steel panel
- 2. Light steel keel  
Gypsum board  
Molded plaster  
Chilly insulation layer  
White paint
- 3. Thick  
Water proof membrane  
Anti-cracking membrane  
Alkali resistant mesh fabric  
100mm ceramic insulation panels  
Adhesive  
Aerated concrete blocks
- 4. Polished fine stone concrete floor  
Fine stone concrete slope finding layer  
Covered slurry with construction adhesive  
C15 light concrete bedding  
Completed mesh

Sectional detail of the major workshop





Architect Firm: Studio Lotus  
 Principal Architect: Amrish Arora, Sidhartha Talwar  
 Design Team: Yatin Tokas, Somik Beura, Raunak Raj, Subrata Ray, Shamik Chatterjee, Mohit Chopra  
 Location: Coimbatore, India  
 Area: Phase-1: 11,148 sq. m  
 Phase-2: 2,787 sq. m  
 Completion Date: April 2023 (Phase-1), September 2024 (Phase-2)  
 Photography: Suryan and Dang

In an era marked by rapid urbanization and greenfield development, India's cities are grappling with the challenge of vehicle-centric planning and a critical scarcity of genuine communal spaces. Against this backdrop, a cluster of defunct cotton mills has been given new life—and a new purpose. Formerly home to Lakshmi Mills, one of India's oldest yarn and fabric manufacturing companies, the iconic site at a major urban node is now the focal point of a massive redevelopment initiative. This project exemplifies the potential of

adaptive reuse and placemaking, revitalizing underutilized urban areas and fostering a deeper sense of connection between people and their cities. Straddling a major traffic artery, the 84,984 square meter site functions as a walkable community hub with a host of public functions. A visually permeable boundary wall was designed to blur the lines between the precinct and the surrounding neighbourhood. Specific structures and sheds were earmarked for demolition or restructuring to enhance



Dravidian-style entrance arch retained from the older mill

circulation and functionality, while vehicular access was restricted to the periphery to prioritize walkability and create a pedestrian-friendly environment. Open green areas and avenues lined with shade-giving trees have been integrated into the design scheme as a counterpoint to the site's industrial landscape, offering respite from the urban bustle. Secondary walkways have been reinforced, linking public nodes and providing diverse routes for circulation, further encouraging exploration and discovery. Wayfinding

totems are thoughtfully placed to improve connectivity, while historical accounts and plaques elevate the experience by facilitating guided narrative walks and tours. Studio Lotus' approach towards revitalization is driven by a deep commitment to honoring the mills' original architectural features and quirks, including the industrial shell, existing roofing system, and structural elements. Exposed brick walls and steel beams complement contemporary finishes, creating a unique

blend of old and new that speaks to the site's industrial heritage. The phased redevelopment has converted 48,562 square meters of the 84,984 square meter site into a bustling hub of activity, attracting an average of 2,600-3,600 visitors on weekdays and swelling to 6,000-10,000 on weekends. Anticipating this level of engagement, ample parking provisions were incorporated from the outset, ensuring a seamless visitor experience. Anchored by a 11612 square meter Lulu Mall, the precinct hosts the first



Birds-eye view of the pedestrian entry to the Lakshmi Mills redevelopment premise.



View of an F&B destination within the redeveloped complex



Pedestrian circulation path within the complex

Starbucks in Coimbatore, several international brands, and a curated selection of local businesses. The ongoing development of an 11148 square meter indoor street market promises to further solidify Lakshmi Mills as a vibrant epicentre of commerce and culture in Coimbatore. Newly established businesses have reported a 15-20% increase in sales

compared to initial projections, indicating their substantial contribution to the revitalization of the area. Proactive programming and placemaking strategies have been integral to the project from the outset. Even as the renovation progresses in the third phase, the precinct remains a dynamic, ever-evolving space. Plans for a container food park, outdoor

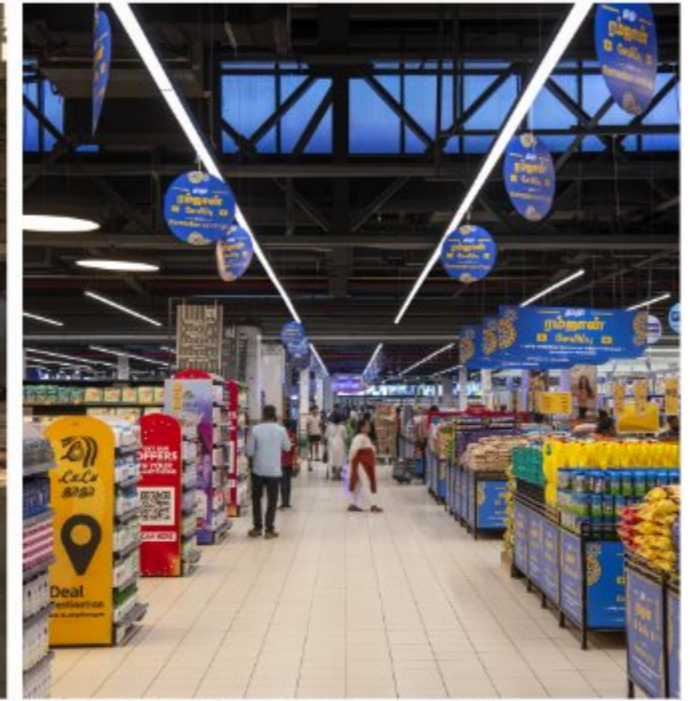
screening areas, and interactive kiosks promise to enrich the visitor experience further. As the project progresses, it continues to emphasize the ideas of community, sustainability, and architectural innovation, promising a vibrant and beloved destination for generations to come.



Plaques of the retail stores designed to aid wayfinding



View of the Industrial structure before intervention



View of the Industrial structure post-intervention with retail function



Exterior view of a restored industrial shed

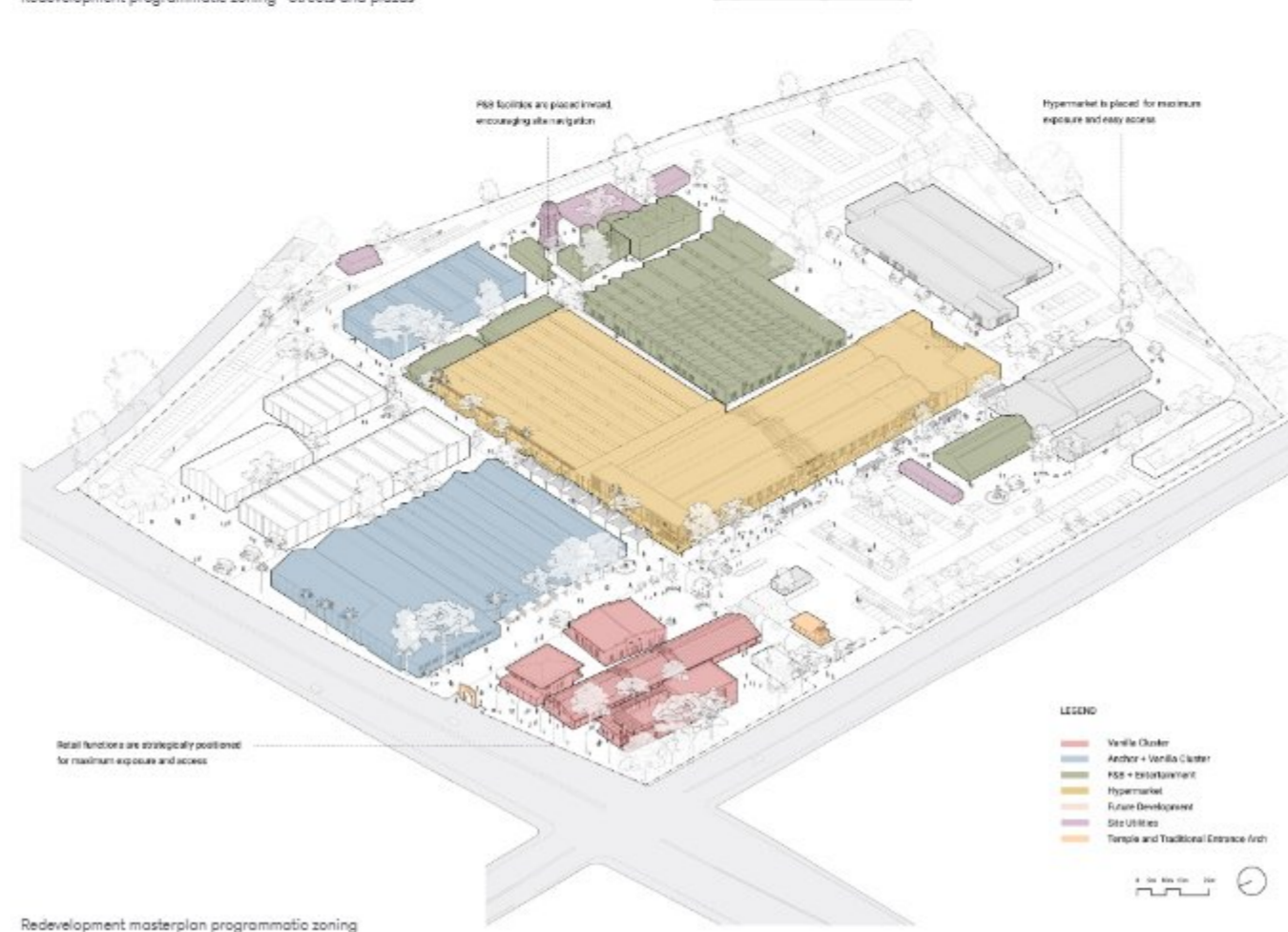
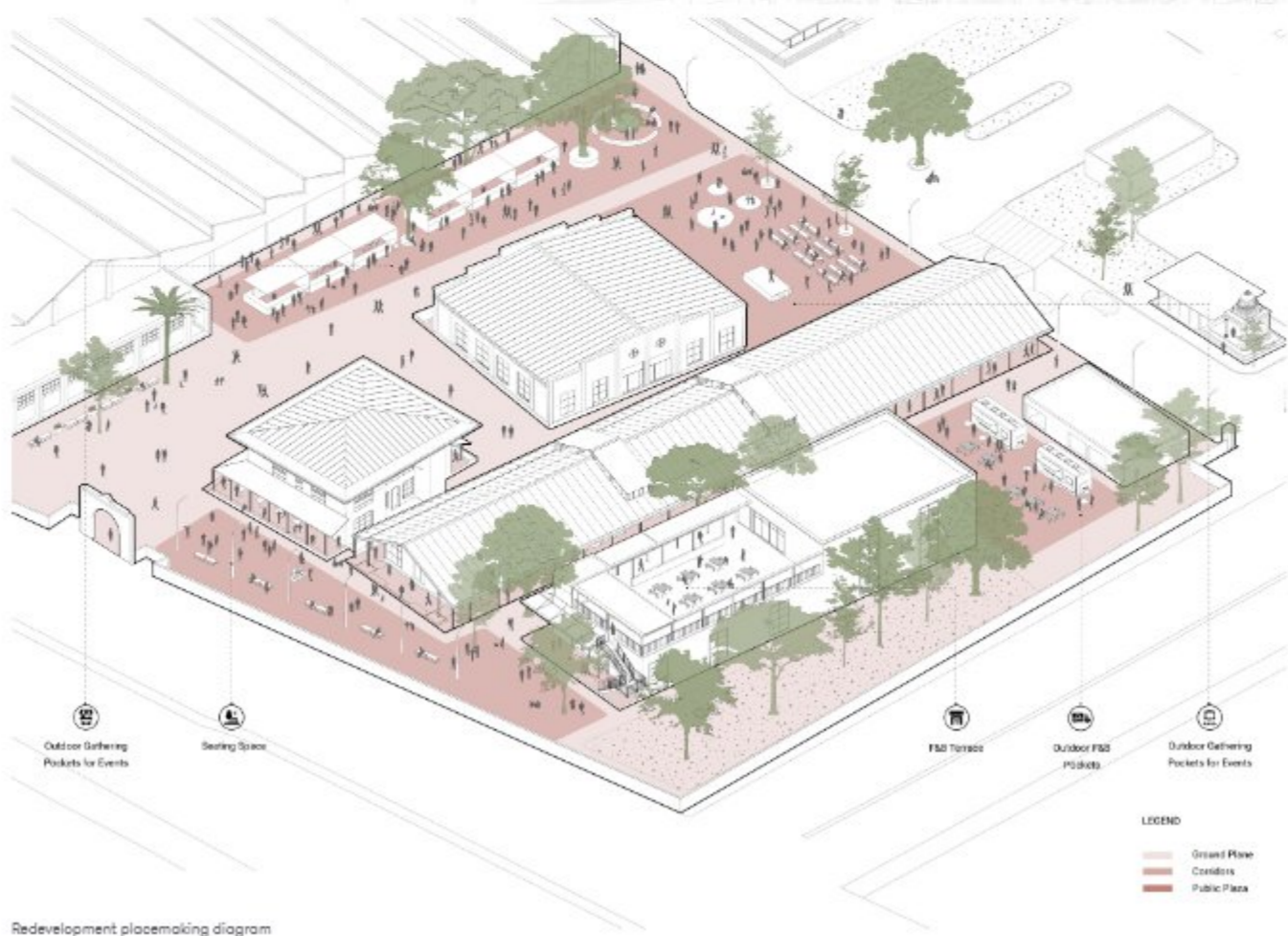
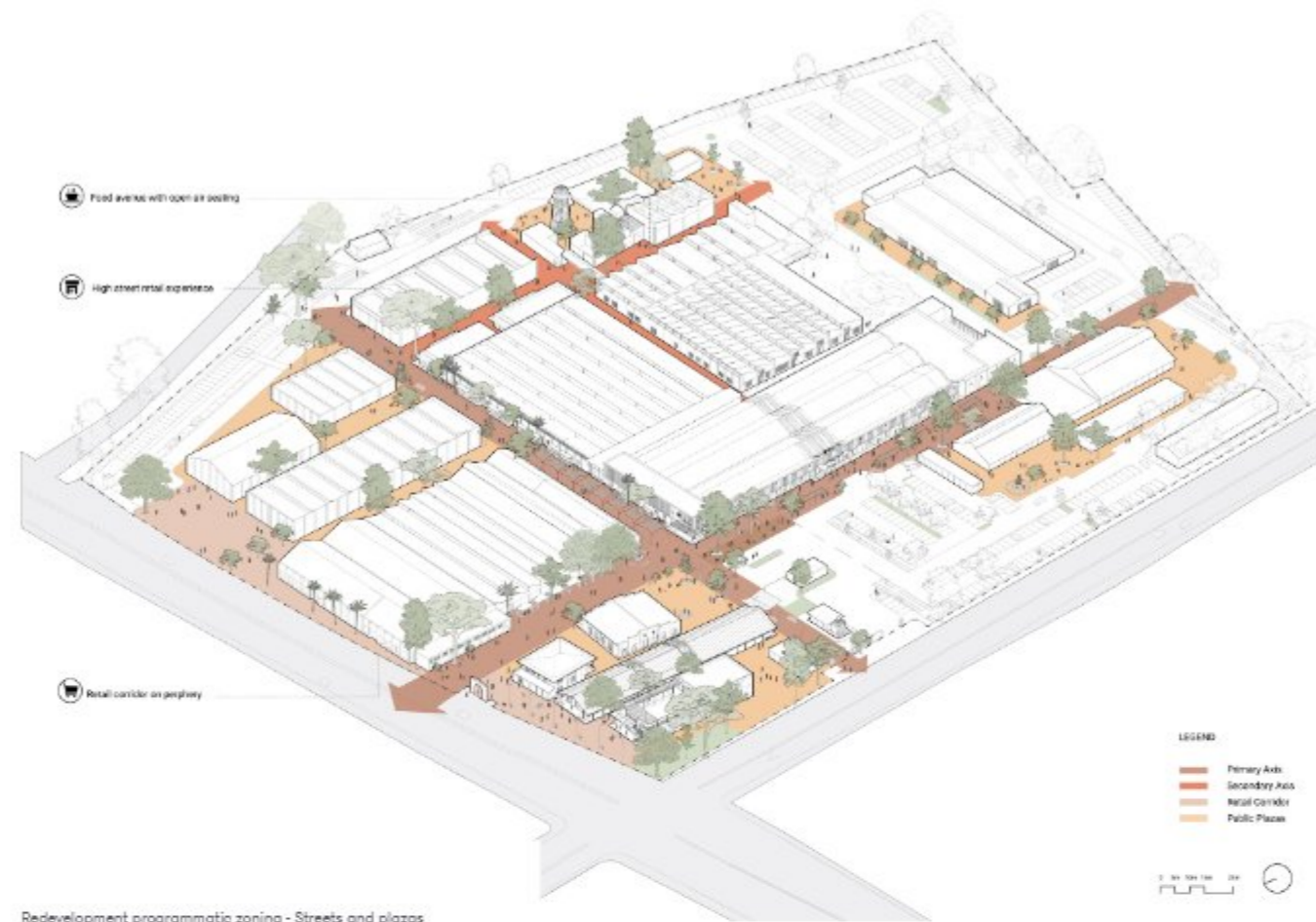


A small temple retained within the complex as a cultural marker



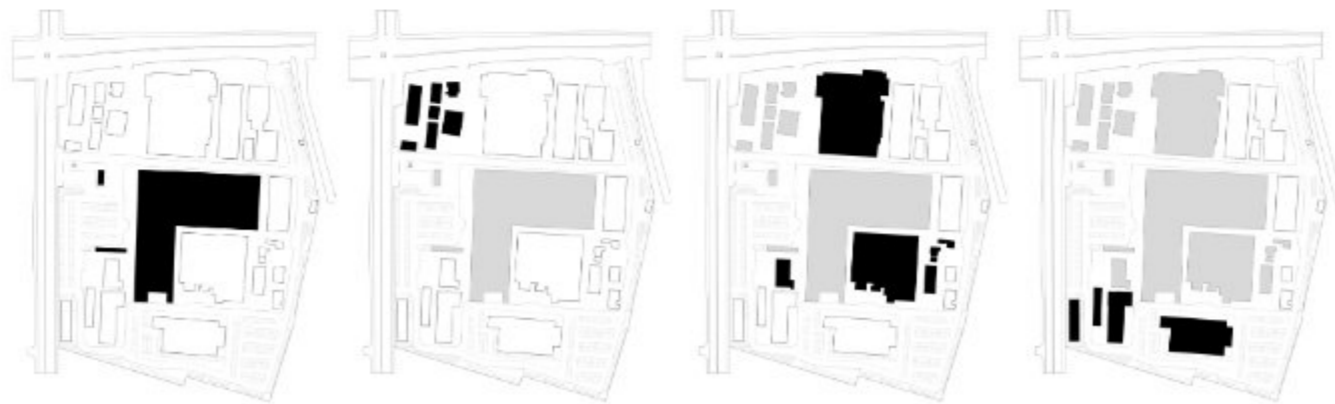
View of a retail outlet within the complex



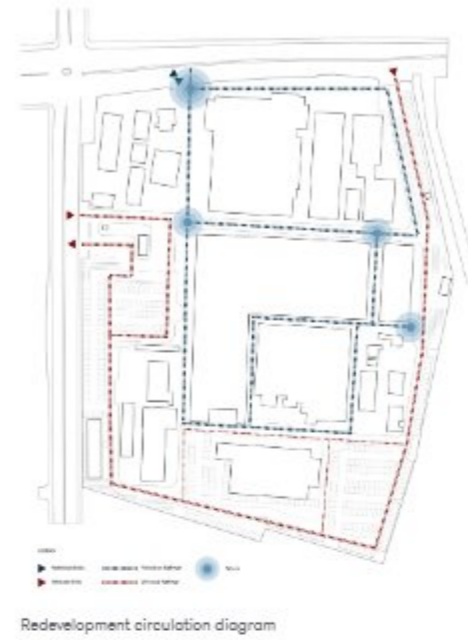




Redevelopment masterplan

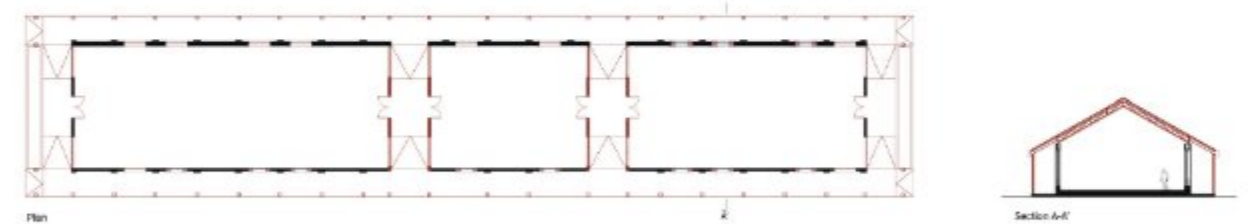


PHASE 1  
PHASE 2  
PHASE 3  
PHASE 4  
Redevelopment phasing diagram



Adaptive reuse of building 1 (Starbucks)

■ Retained ■ New Intervention



Adaptive reuse of building 2 (Reliance Block)

■ Retained ■ New Intervention

## MIGIUI



Fall Main

Architect Firm: Architect-K  
 Principal Architects: Kichul Lee  
 Design Team: Choi Younwoo, Lim Guktae,  
 Kim Hwimin, Im Yujeong, Park Jinhyeong  
 Location: Ulsan, South Korea  
 Area: 459.31 sq. m  
 Completion Date: October 2023  
 Photography: Yoon Joonhwan

### MIGIUI: Where Nature and Humanity Intertwine

Can architecture vanish into the landscape and guide us back to nature? At a site once untouched by human hands—later scarred by artificial interventions—this question became our starting point. Rather than imposing form on the wounded terrain, we sought to listen: to the ochre-colored soil, the quiet reservoir, and the forested backdrop of Goun Mountain. Architecture here was not designed to stand apart, but to move with the land—to form a gentle path through which nature and people might meet once again.



Spring\_Bird's Eye



Spring\_Top View

### Restoring the Land's Original Memory

The site lies within a Hanok village in Ulju-gun, Ulsan, nestled in the foothills of Goun Mountain, part of the Yeongnam Alps. Initially preserved by strict development regulations, the land remained untouched for years. But following the construction of a neighboring Hanok village to the north, the site was abruptly severed by a reinforced stone wall, and its natural hilly contours were flattened. After building restrictions were lifted, the site remained deserted—its topography erased, its soil exposed, its landscape fragmented. Yet when we visited, the adjacent Golan-mot Pond reflected the warm autumn colors of the mountain, revealing the quiet resilience of nature beneath the scars. Rather than interpret the site through an urban lens, we chose to trace the shifting layers of time embedded in nature. Our aim was to create a place where human life and the natural world could once again co-exist and interact.



Spring\_North View



Spring\_West View



Fall\_Concierge



Spring\_Event Space



Spring\_Cafe



Fall\_Corridor



Fall\_Event Space

### A Journey of Self-discovery Through Nature

The first step was restoring the land. The western part of the site was lowered to reconnect with the reservoir, and a soft slope was formed toward the eastern road. Native trees, stones, and water elements were reintroduced to evoke the memory of the original forest. Architecture followed this gesture—conceived as an 80-meter-long forest path connecting the entrance and the water's edge. Café spaces, rest zones, and courtyards are quietly embedded along this route, dissolving the line between built and natural environments. Three open courtyards blur the boundaries between inside and outside, guiding visitors through a slow ten-minute walk that fosters reflection. The café operates with limited access, allowing a calm, immersive experience. Menus inspired by natural elements—wood, stone, and water—enhance sensory engagement with the landscape.

### Minimum Architecture Maximum Nature

To heighten this experience, the architecture was minimized in its presence. A 28mm-thick curved glass façade brings maximum transparency, demanding technical solutions in structural design, insulation, and installation. Stainless steel eaves trace the building's curves, regulating sunlight and reinforcing the flowing form. Multi-layered eaves and rooftop landscaping integrate structure and ecology, while prefabricated metal components streamline construction and precision.

### Embracing the Unknown

MIGUI—meaning “unknown” in Korean—represents the space between architecture and nature, between stillness and presence. It invites visitors into a quiet journey of rediscovery—not only of the land, but of themselves.



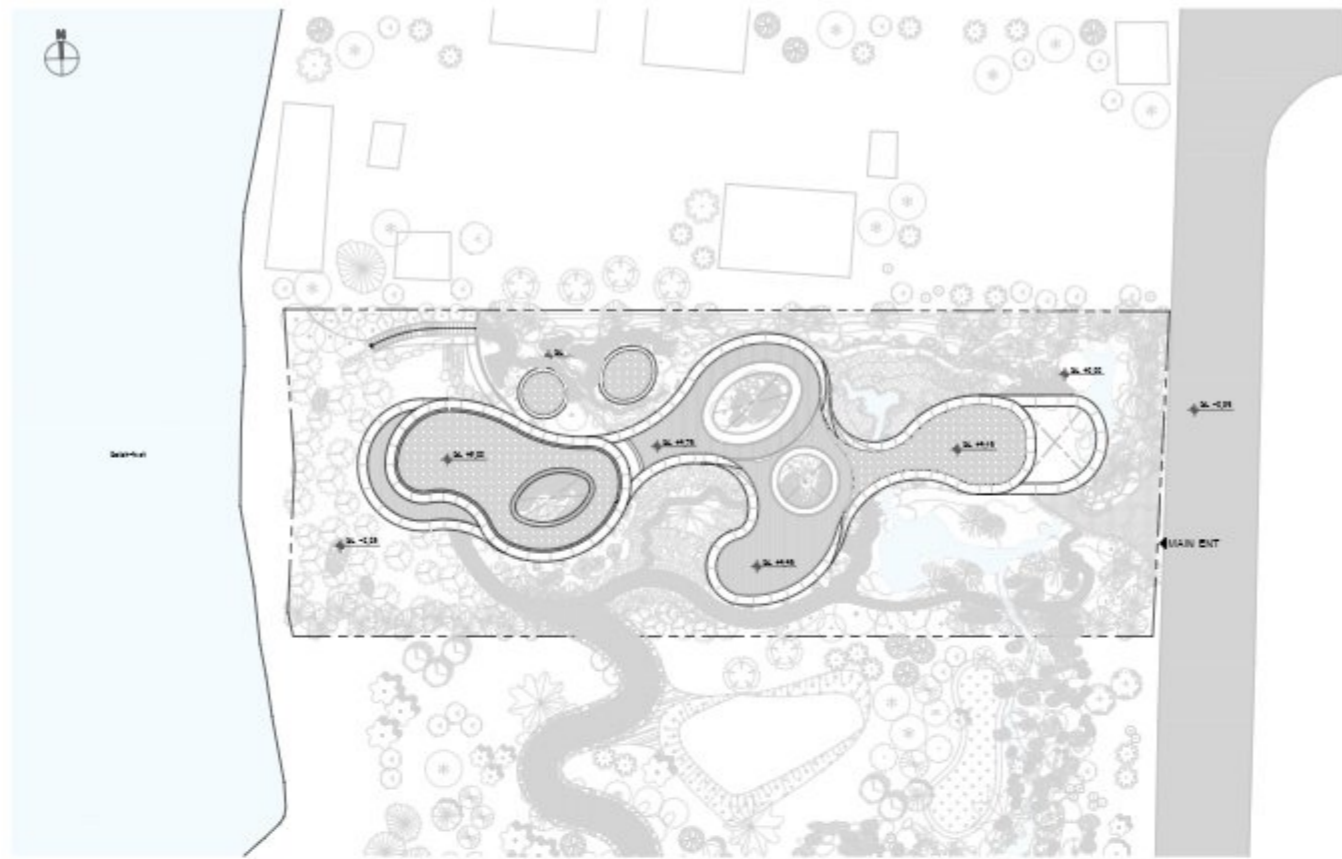
Spring\_Corridor



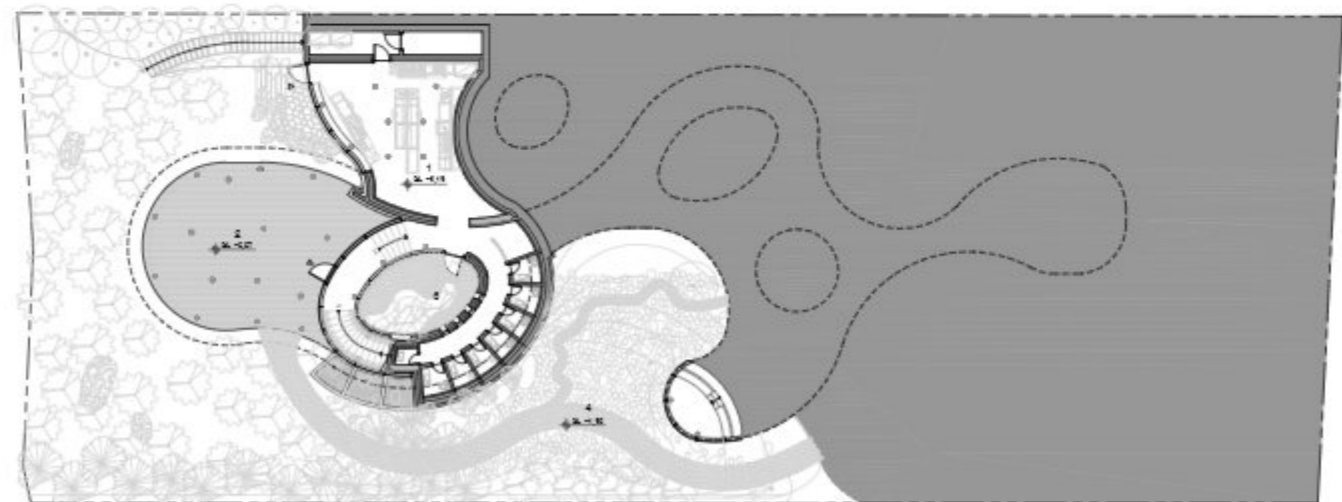
Fall\_Bamboo Garden



Spring\_Northwest

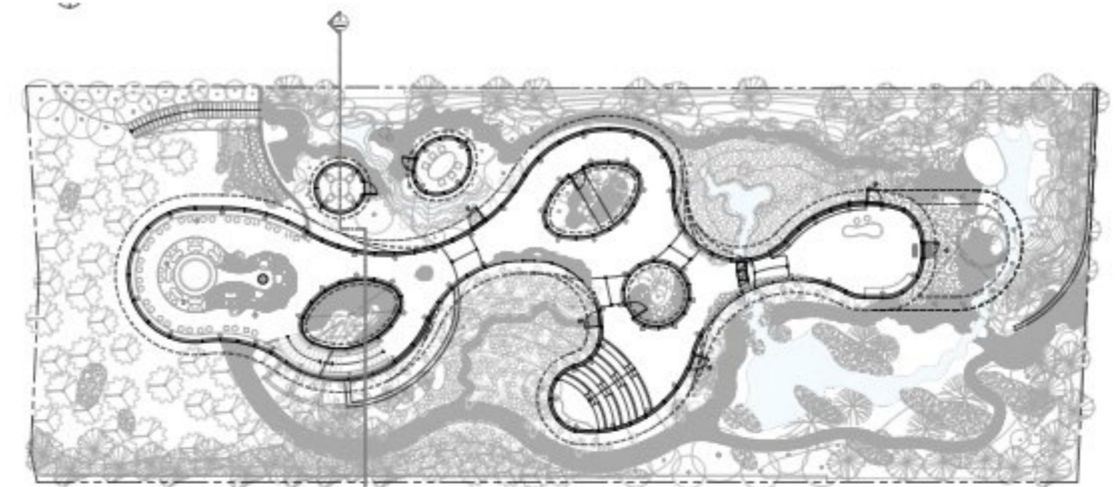


Master Plan  
0 1.7 5 10M



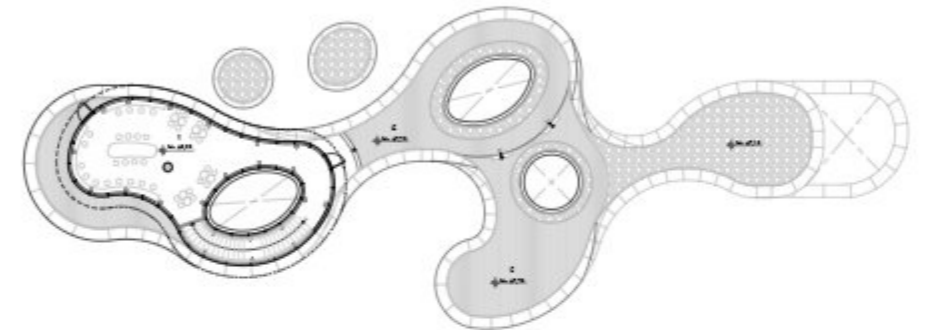
B1 Floor Plan  
0 1.7 5 10M

1. Auxiliary Kitchen
2. Picnic Garden
3. Bamboo Garden
4. Rock Yard



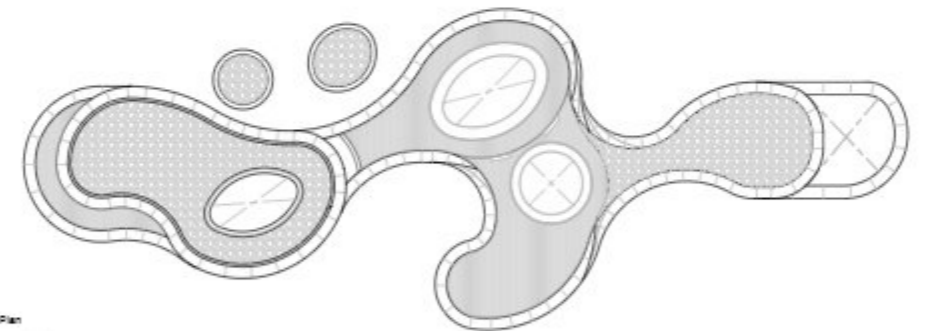
1st Floor Plan  
0 1.7 5 10M

1. Concierge
2. Event Space
3. Cafe
4. Private Dining Room-1
5. Private Dining Room-2
6. Bamboo Garden
7. Sky Court
8. Jade/Ju Rock Garden
9. Mok-Mok Garden
10. Hwa-E Garden
11. Bi-Ul Garden
12. Baek-Ya Garden

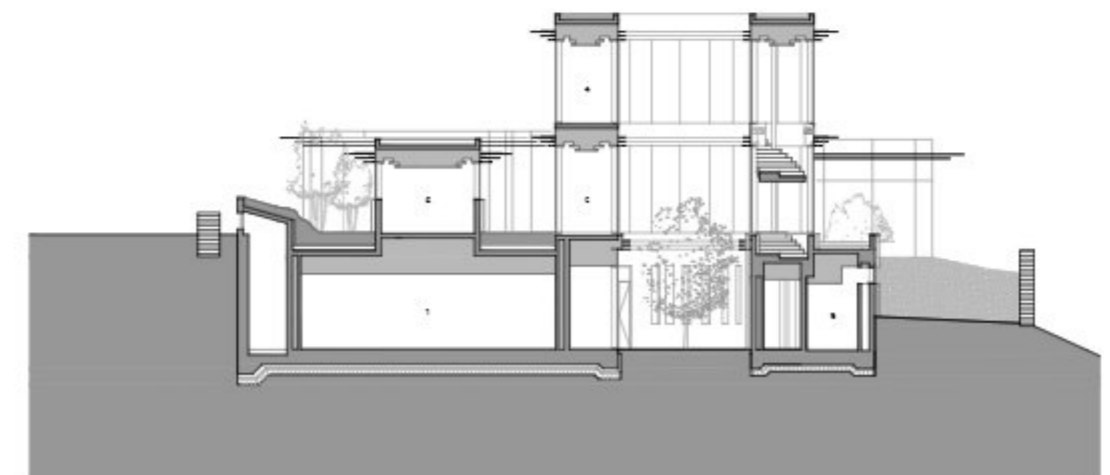


2nd Floor Plan  
0 1.7 5 10M

1. Fine Dining
2. Rooftop Terrace-1
3. Rooftop Terrace-2



Roof Floor Plan  
0 1.7 5 10M



Section 1  
0 1.7 5 10M

1. Auxiliary Kitchen
2. Private Dining Room-1
3. Cafe
4. Fine Dining
5. Toilet

# The Blue Insight Cave Space



The building adopts a soil covering form, and the main part is semi-underground

Architect Firm: Sandwich Design / He Wei Studio  
 Principal Architect: He Wei  
 Design Team: Wang Ziyi, Wu Wenquan, Liu Hao, He Xingchen, Meng Xiangting, Wang Jun, Zhi Haiyang, Zhou Xuanyu  
 Location: Ningde, China  
 Area: 460 sq. m  
 Completion Date: September 2024  
 Photography: Dong Image

The project is situated along Donghai No.1 Road, Ningde City, Fujian Province, China. The site boasts a vast vista. Directly in front of the platform stands Bijia Mountain Island, rising majestically from the sea, with numerous reefs and sea caves lining the cliffs below. The building should provide cultural activities, gathering and resting places for tourists while maintaining a good sea view effect on the original site, taking into account certain catering functions.



The building is embedded in the site and presents an irregular shape

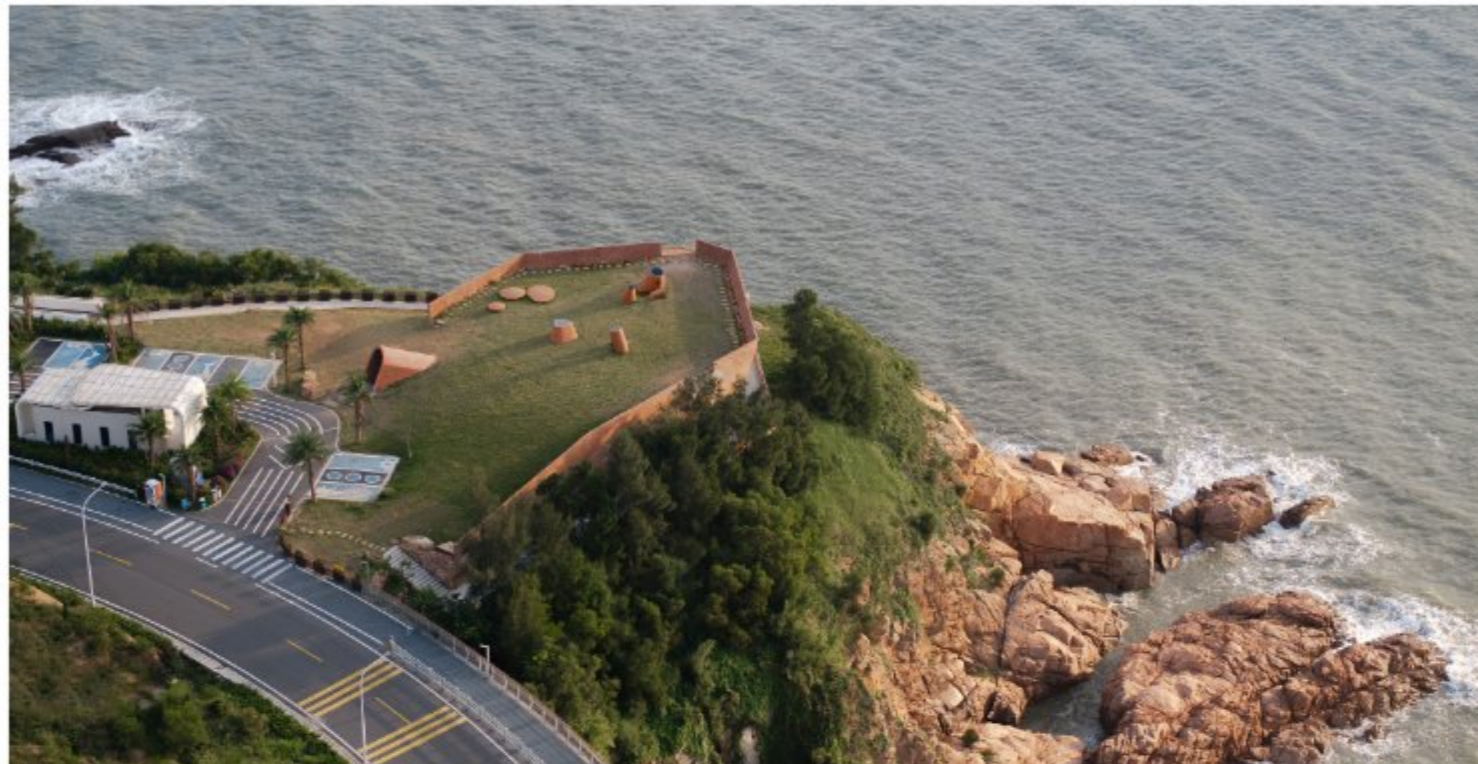


The bird's-eye view

The architectural design emphasizes the relationship with the environment and also takes into account the concept of low-carbon and energy-saving. The design inspiration comes from the reefs and sea caves around the site. The building has an irregular shape, and the non-right-angled shape reminds people of the reefs. The building adopts a soil covering form, which minimizes the occupation of land to the greatest extent possible. The main body of the building is hidden underground, which not only respects environmental factors but also maintains a relatively stable indoor temperature, reducing the energy consumption of cooling in summer.



The building adopts a soil covering form, and the main part is semi-underground



The building is integrated with its surroundings



The building draws inspiration from the surrounding reefs and sea-eroded caves



North facade



South facade



The building is semi-hidden underground



The roof platform is opened at the corner to form an overhanging terrace



The roof of the building returns to the earth

The roof of the building is also a viewing platform, and the covered soil and newly laid vegetation enable the building to achieve the concept of "zero land used". The roof has several uniquely shaped ventilation and lighting openings. Their shapes imitate marine creatures in forms of flat circles, triangles, or long tubes, freely combined and distributed in the middle of the grassland. They can be used as installations on rooftop grasslands for tourists to play and take photos of, while ensuring indoor ventilation and lighting. The exterior of the building is designed in an irregular shape. By utilizing structural and functional openings (doors and windows), the wall presents a geometric cutting and combination relationship, accompanied by different angles of inclination of the walls, and the building looks like a moderately abstract reef. In order to create a more natural texture, the concrete is treated with roughening to give the building a more rock-like feel.

The main entrance of the building is located on the west side of the roof, with a semi-circular shape that extends from underground. From here, people can enter the interior of the building through the descending passage. The interior of the building is composed of multiple interconnected "cave" spaces. The architect drew inspiration from the surrounding sea-eroded landforms and created an organic and dramatic space through mimicry. The indoor space is

divided into three areas: lobby, main space, and logistics space. The main space consists of two areas, salon and gallery, both located on the side of the building facing the sea, with a good view. This place can host exhibitions, small gatherings, and provide catering services. The architectural lighting is restrained as much as possible, striving not to affect the surrounding environment and the activities of animals at night. Only low-power lighting fixtures are installed in important

locations of the building (entrance, roof lighting pipes, and corners of exterior facades) to shape the building's form while ensuring a peaceful atmosphere.



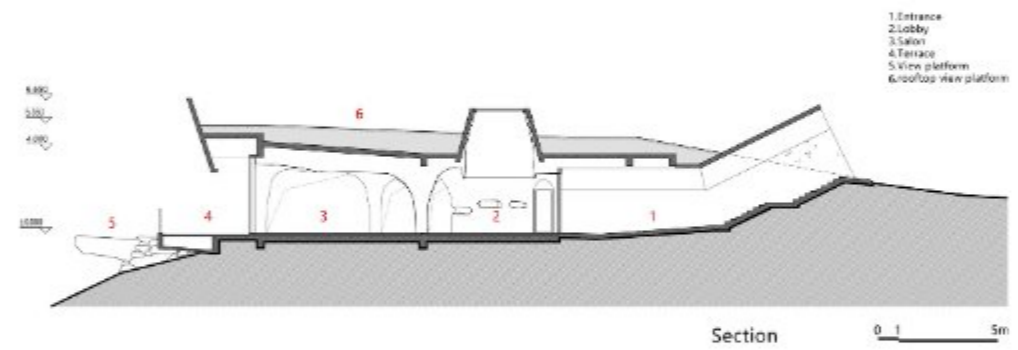
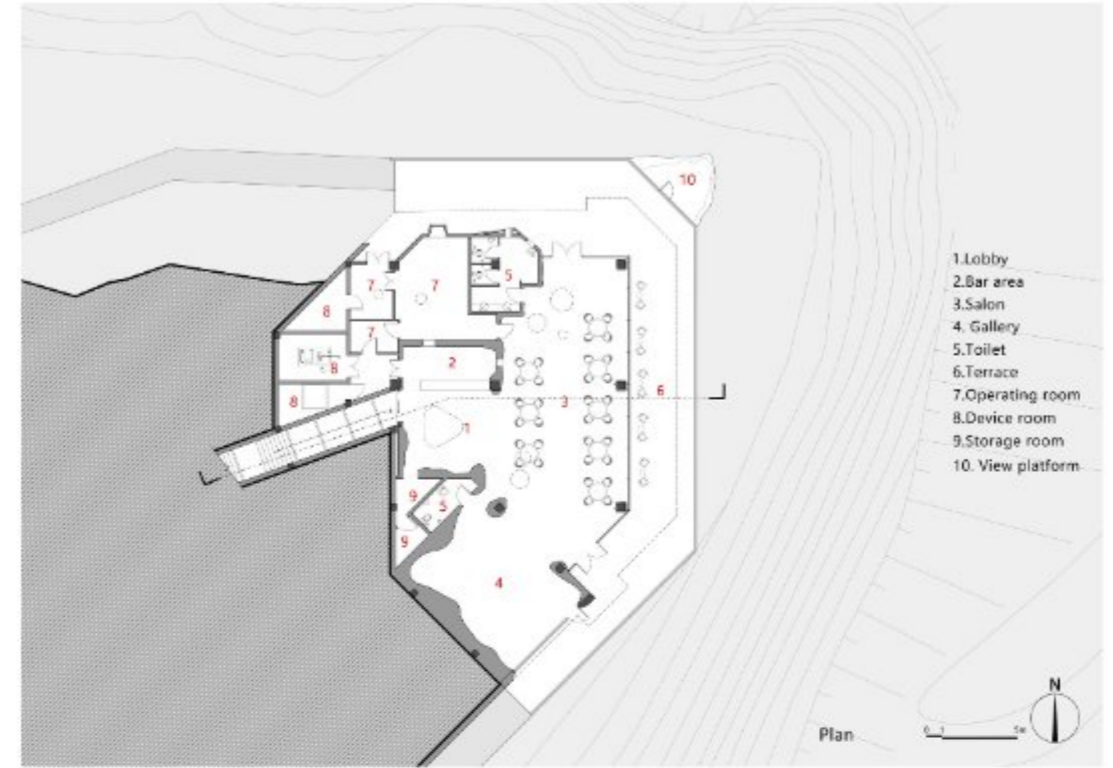
Entrance space, the void in the roof connects the indoor and outdoor



The exterior facade uses the colored roughened concrete



Interior space



The main entrance is illuminated to guide people into the building



The lighting uses silhouettes to express the sculptural feeling of the roof lighting openings

# Baan Nonn | Thai Family Bond House



View from Main Street



Cubism Free Form Pool

Architect Firm: SPACE | STORY | STUDIO  
 Principal Architect: Pipol Likanapaisal  
 Design Team: Apichart Rojthoranin, Buncha Layangkoon  
 Location: Nonthaburi, Thailand  
 Area: 1,000 sq. m  
 Completion Date: February 2021  
 Photography: Nattakit Jeerapatmaitee

Tucked within a quiet residential enclave in Nonthaburi, just northwest of Bangkok, Baan Nonn offers a thoughtful reinterpretation of Thailand's traditional extended-family home. Designed for three generations living under one roof, the house gracefully balances privacy, connectivity, and cultural continuity—drawing inspiration from the spatial logic of vernacular Thai cluster homes, while embracing the needs of modern life.

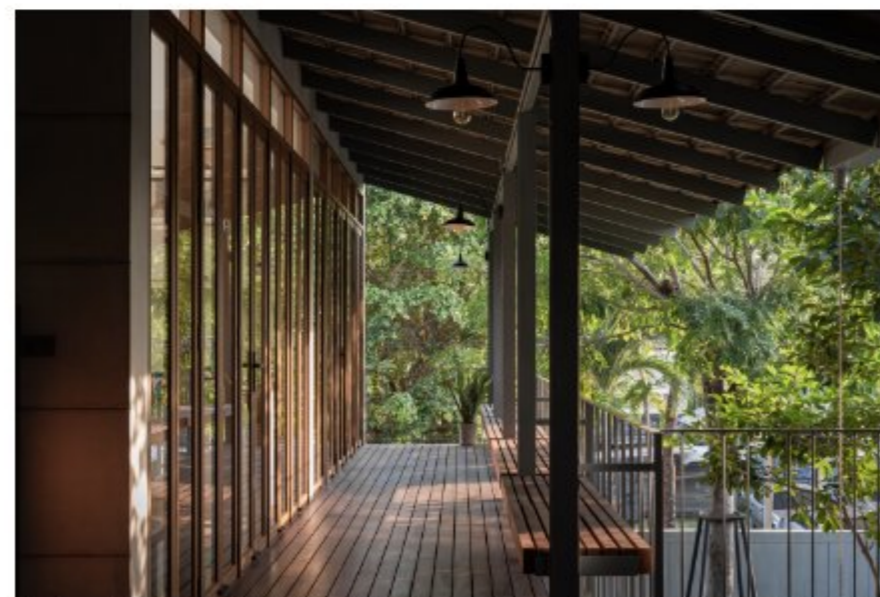


The Pool with The Sunken Seating

The project began with the complete renovation of a 20-year-old two-story home situated on an 800-square-meter plot. Rather than approaching it as a single residence, the design team envisioned a contemporary compound that could evolve with the family over time. Inspired by the open-air clusters of rural Thai houses, the plan introduces multiple interconnected volumes centered around a shared courtyard—offering both visual openness and flexible living arrangements. At the heart of the home lies a tranquil courtyard and swimming pool, enclosed by a large L-shaped building. This spatial configuration not only creates a sense of retreat within the dense urban context, but also enables passive ventilation, soft daylight,

and spontaneous interactions among family members. The original structure has been repurposed as a communal zone, housing a reception area, gym, kitchen, and dining space on the ground floor, while the upper level serves as a private residence for the elder generation.

A new wing was added to accommodate three self-contained residential units, each with its entry via a covered platform that weaves along the house's exterior. This outdoor circulation strategy fosters a gentle separation between generations while preserving a sense of togetherness—essential to Thai family culture, where caregiving and connection are central to daily life.



The Balcony Access to the Junior Units



Main Stair of Junior Unit

Materially, Baan Nonn reflects a hybrid approach that merges durability with warmth. The architects avoided traditional hardwoods in favor of modern alternatives more suitable for the local climate and lifestyle. Faux-wood aluminium siding, engineered wood panels, and clear-coated brickwork were selected for their low maintenance, thermal performance, and aesthetic resonance with traditional Thai houses. Aluminium-framed doors and windows mimic the visual softness of timber but perform to contemporary standards, while slim trims and clean details emphasize simplicity and coherence throughout. The structure itself employs a mix of steel framing, masonry, and light cladding—allowing for spatial openness while ensuring

thermal comfort and long-term resilience. The use of framed voids and shaded walkways reflects a keen sensitivity to the tropical context, encouraging airflow and reducing reliance on air conditioning. The interior layout encourages interaction without compromising comfort. Open-plan living and dining areas offer flexibility, while a central floating staircase doubles as an informal social node. A glass elevator connects both levels, providing accessibility for older family members and a visual anchor across the courtyard. At the rear of the plan, the kitchen becomes a symbolic center—where meals are prepared and shared, anchoring the emotional rhythm of the home.



Junior Duplex Unit\_Lower



Junior Duplex Unit\_Upper



The Master Bedroom

Baan Nonn is more than a renovation; it is a reinterpretation of cultural values through architectural form. By weaving together tradition and innovation, the house stands as a quiet manifesto for the enduring strength of Thai family life. In doing so, it preserves the essence of intergenerational living—proximity without pressure, privacy without disconnection—and reflects how architecture can be both a mirror of memory and a stage for the future.



The Connectible Verandah



The Indoor Recreation Area



The Family Room



Front Facade Detail

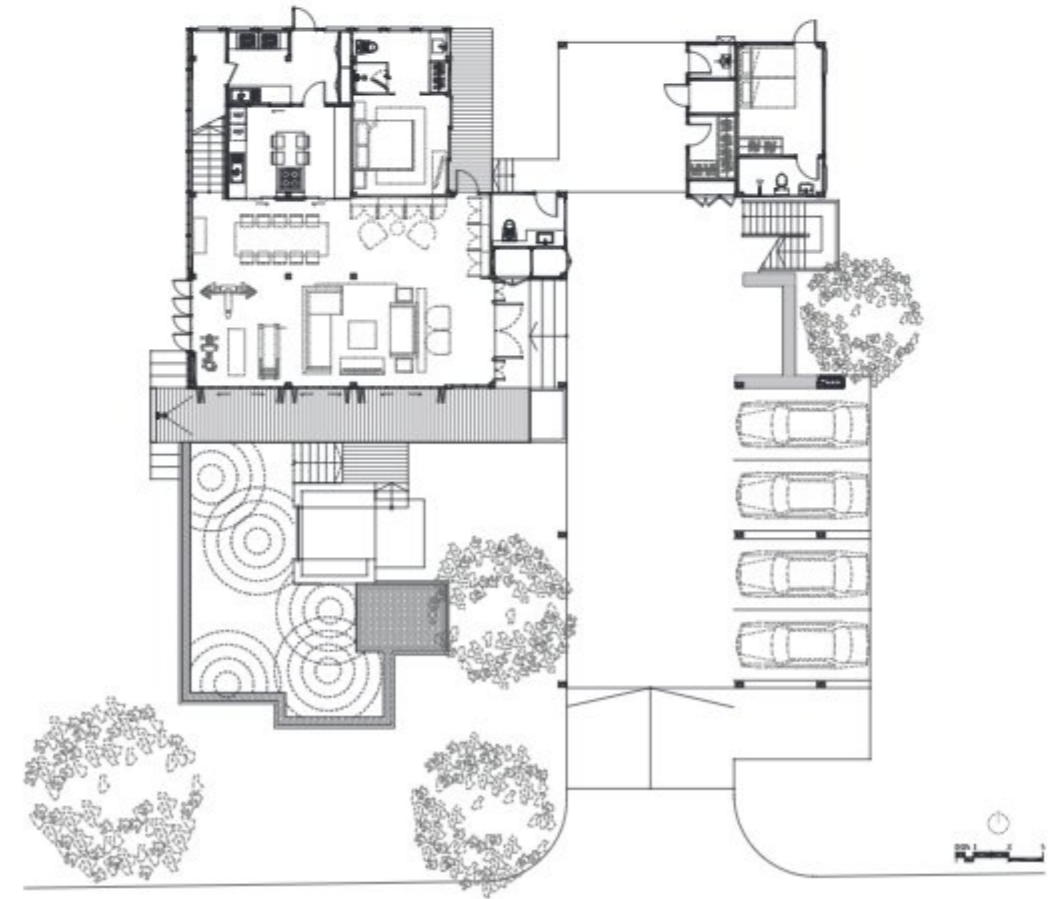
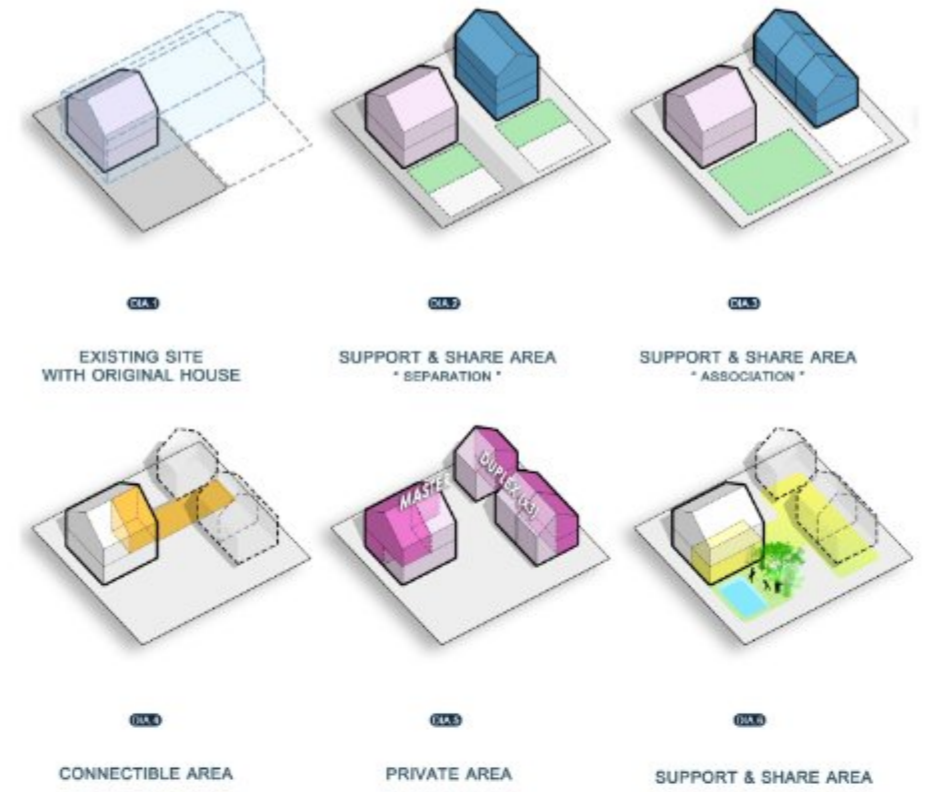


The Antique Door as a Partition between the Recreation and the Service Area

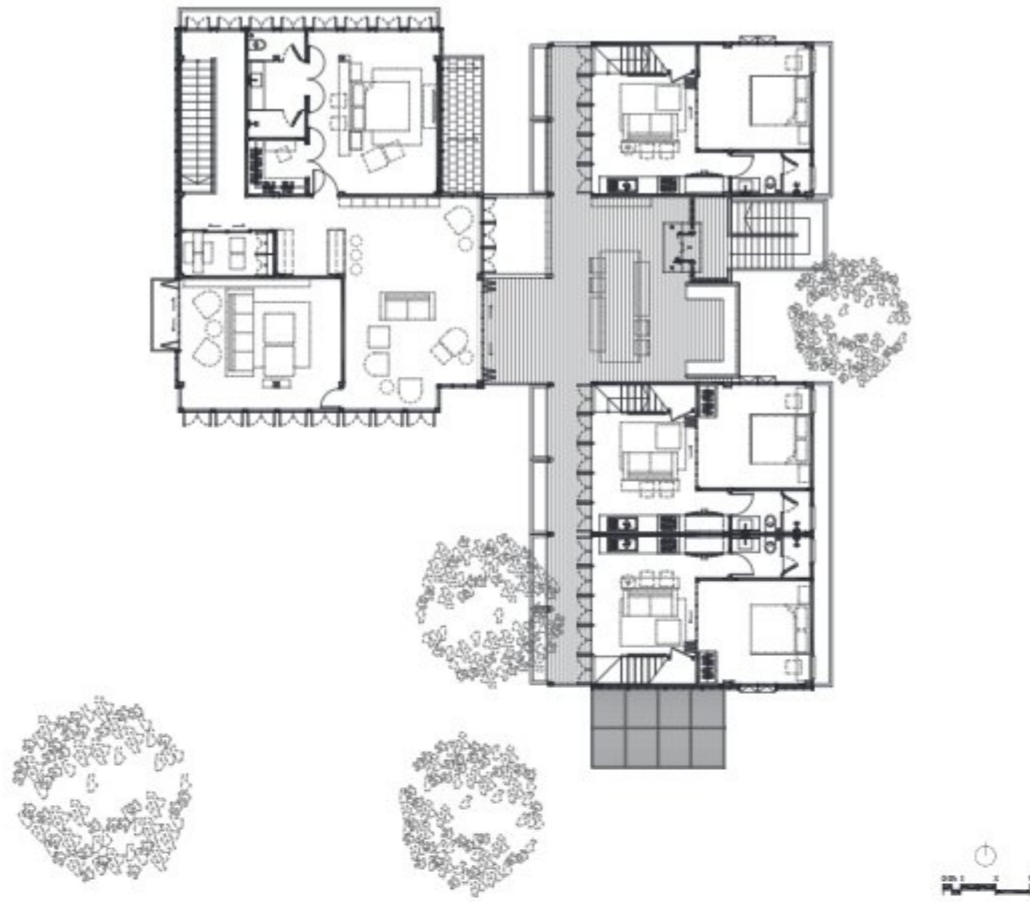


The Continuation of Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Area

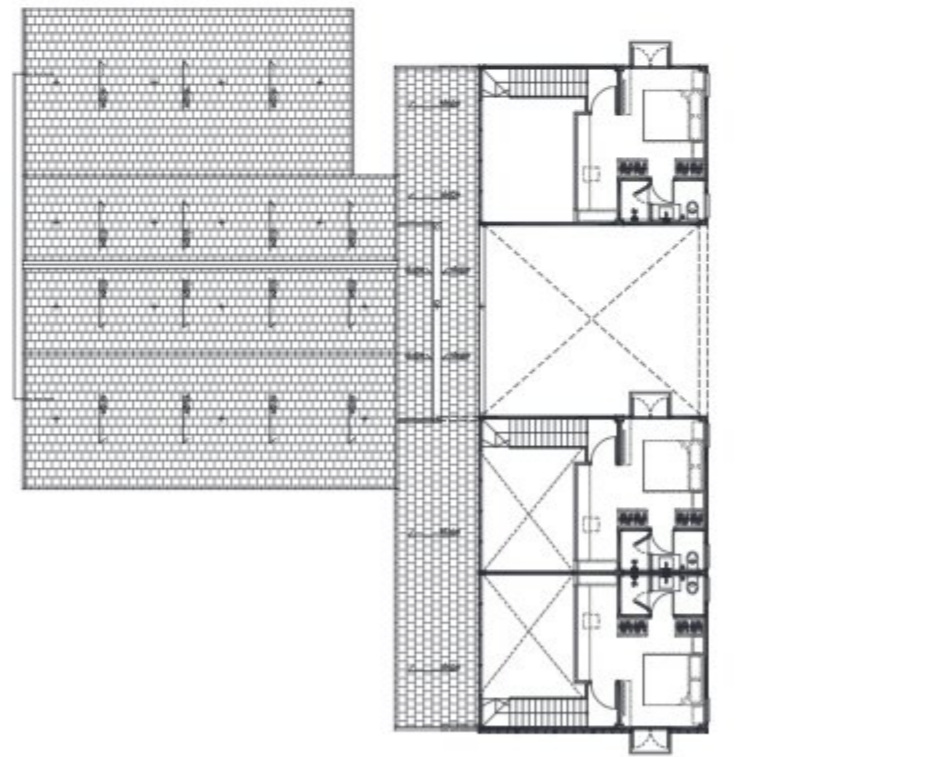
CONCEPT MASS DIAGRAM



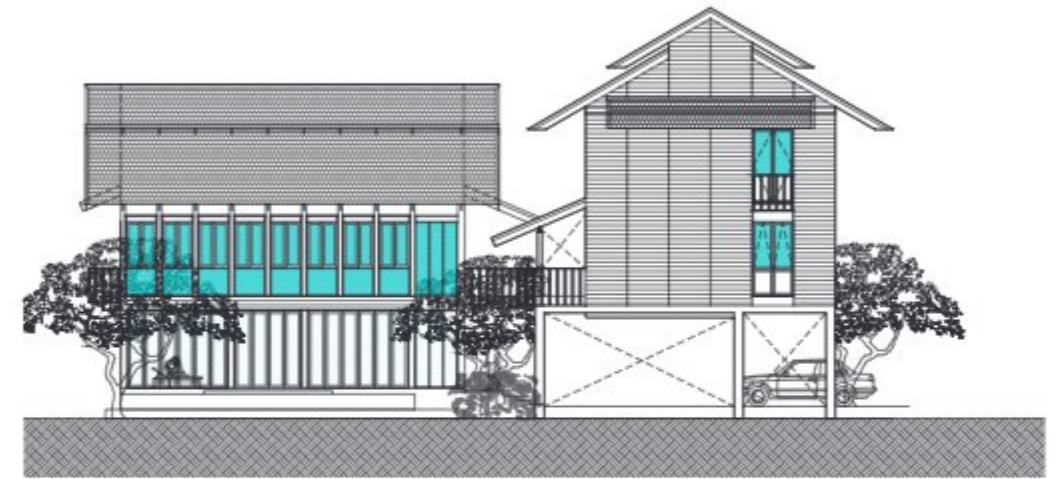
First-floor Plan



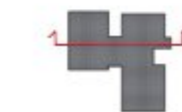
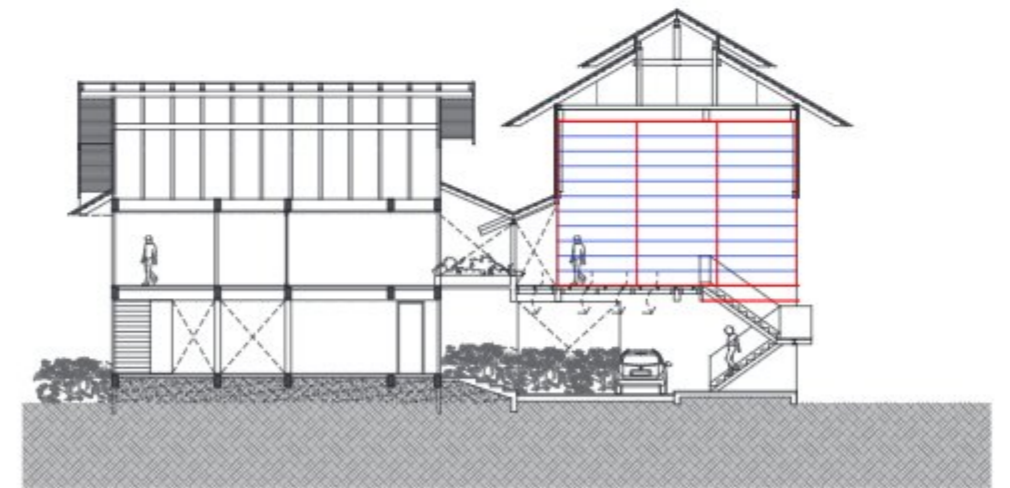
Second-floor Plan



Mezzanine-floor Plan



Front elevation



Verandah section

# Vedic Vidya Kendra



WK entrance



WK entrance

Architect Firm: SHANMUGAM ASSOCIATES  
 Principal Architects: Shanmugam A, Raja Krishnan, Santhosh Shanmugam, Ramya Raman  
 Design Team: Suriya Kumar, Sofia Nathan, Surya Narayana  
 Location: Puducherry, India  
 Area: 16268.03 sq. m  
 Completion Date: 2024  
 Photography: Denis Amirtharaj



Parking area



Jalli wall



Exterior views

Vedic Vidya Kendra in Puducherry is an integrated Vedic spiritual centre envisioned by the Arya Samaj Society, Chennai. Rooted in the teachings of Swami Dayanand Saraswati Ji, the Kendra serves as a retreat for both short- and long-term seekers, offering a setting for inner reflection and spiritual growth. The architectural expression of the Kendra is intentionally raw and earthy, integrating seamlessly with the natural landscape. The design prioritizes meditative spaces, environmental harmony, and a sense of spiritual calm.

The Gurukul brings back the traditional Indian learning system, where the bond between teacher and student is central to both intellectual and spiritual growth. The layout promotes interaction and contemplation through semi-open spaces that dissolve the boundary between inside and outside. Vanaprastha, a sanctuary for aged ashramites, houses 52 Kutirs (cottages) designed for solitude and introspection. Here, the interplay of natural light and shadow guides residents inward toward quiet reflection.

At the centre of the Kendra is an expansive courtyard that acts as the heart of the campus. The Yagnashaala, aligned along the sacred east-facing axis, is the spiritual core where daily Yagnas are performed in the open air, accompanied by resonant Vedic chants. The courtyard encourages natural ventilation, communal interaction, and daily yoga practice. Adjacent to this is the Bhojanalaya, where residents receive Saatvik meals while seated on the floor, in line with traditional customs. The design ensures seamless planning of washing, disposal, and storage.

Administrative facilities are positioned near the entrance and include a reception, Sahitya Nidhi (library), and Vidya Niketan (learning centres), each with its own private garden. The Sabha Mandap is a multipurpose hall hosting discourses, spiritual events, and cultural activities. Additional spaces include the Dhyaan Gruha (meditation hall), Shivar Nivas (dormitories for guests), and Seva Gruha (service quarters) for staff. A designated Jal Neti area supports daily cleansing rituals, underscoring the Kendra's holistic health philosophy.

Landscaping is integral to the design. Meditative gardens are spread across the campus, an herbal garden lines the western path, and private gardens adjoin educational spaces. Reflexology paths stimulate the senses, while traditional sports areas for mallyudh and mallakhamb support physical discipline. A rooftop multi-sport arena and a 760-meter landscaped walking path surround the property. For the elderly, an outdoor gym within the Vanaprastha zone adds to the wellness infrastructure.

Vedic Vidya Kendra is a space for self-learning, spiritual discovery, and inner transformation. Every space, material, and form is crafted to echo the core values of Vedic philosophy—education, simplicity, spirituality, and community offering an environment where architecture becomes a silent guide on the journey within.



Central courtyard



Central courtyard



Courtyard views



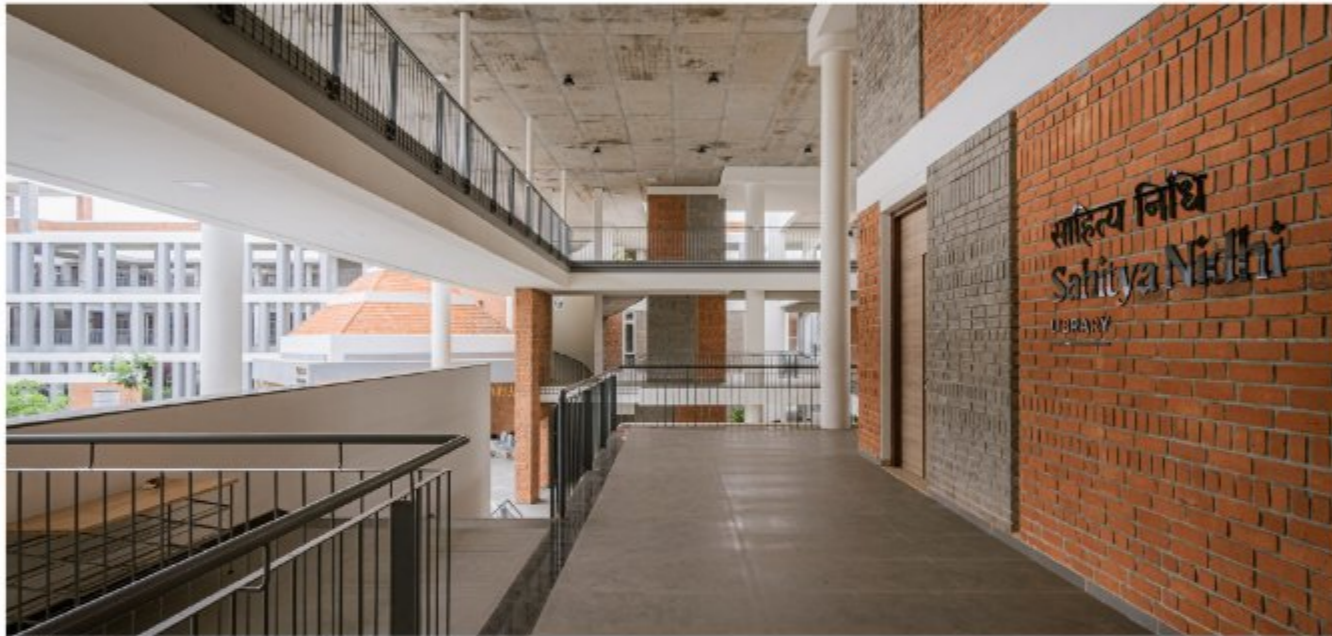
Courtyard views



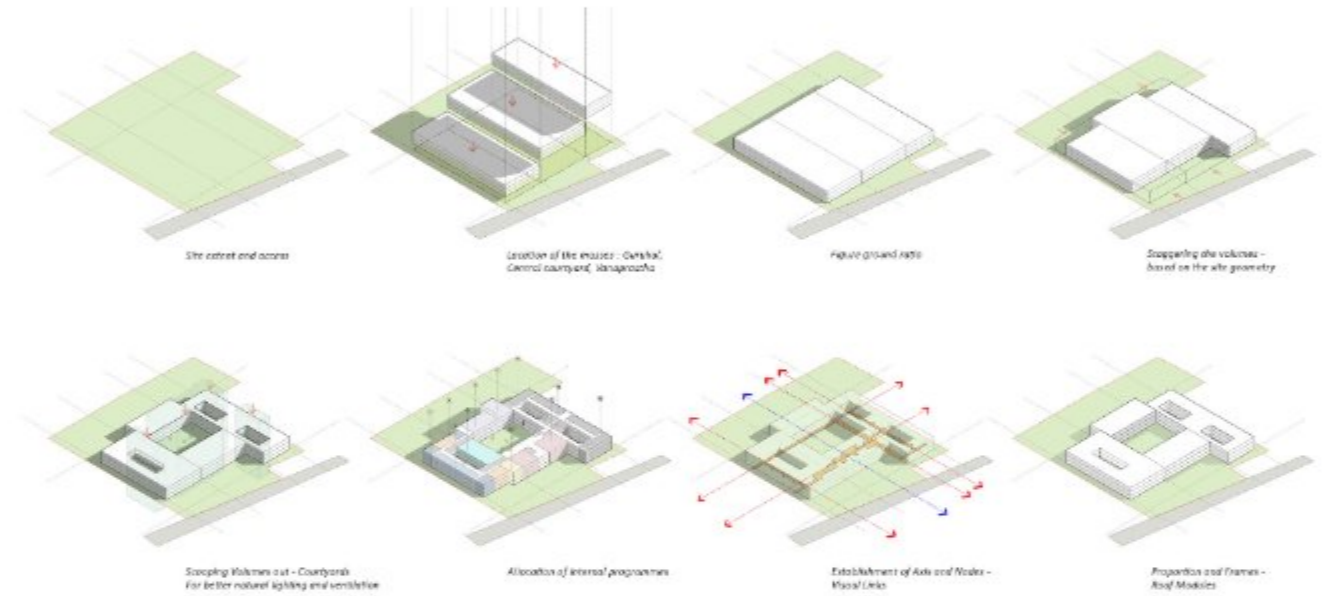
Entry staircase



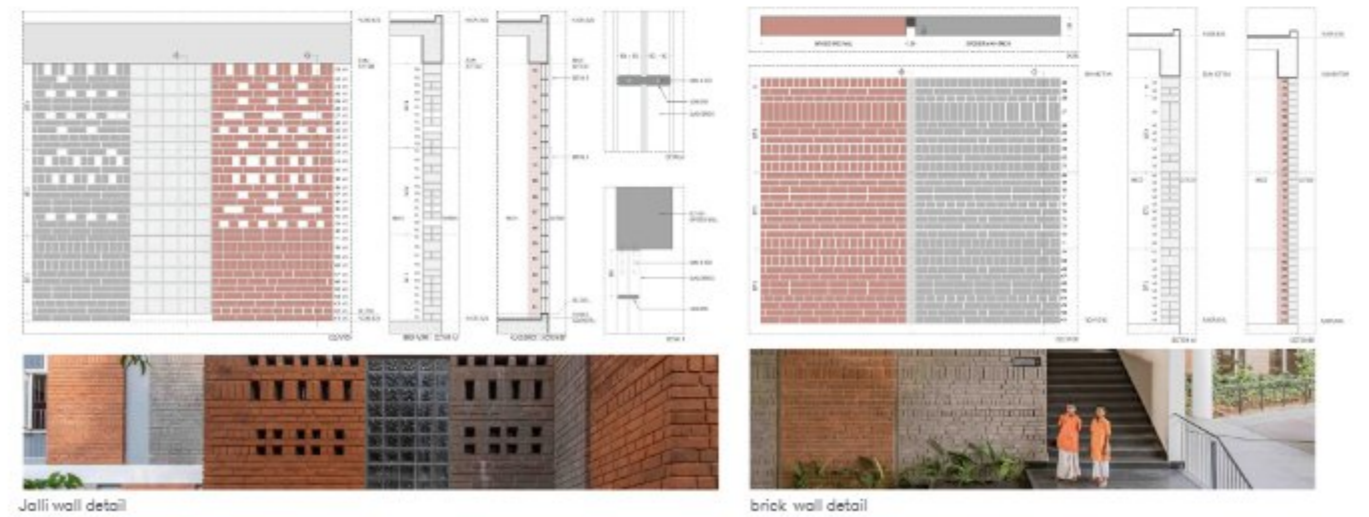
Shivar nivas interior view



Corridor views



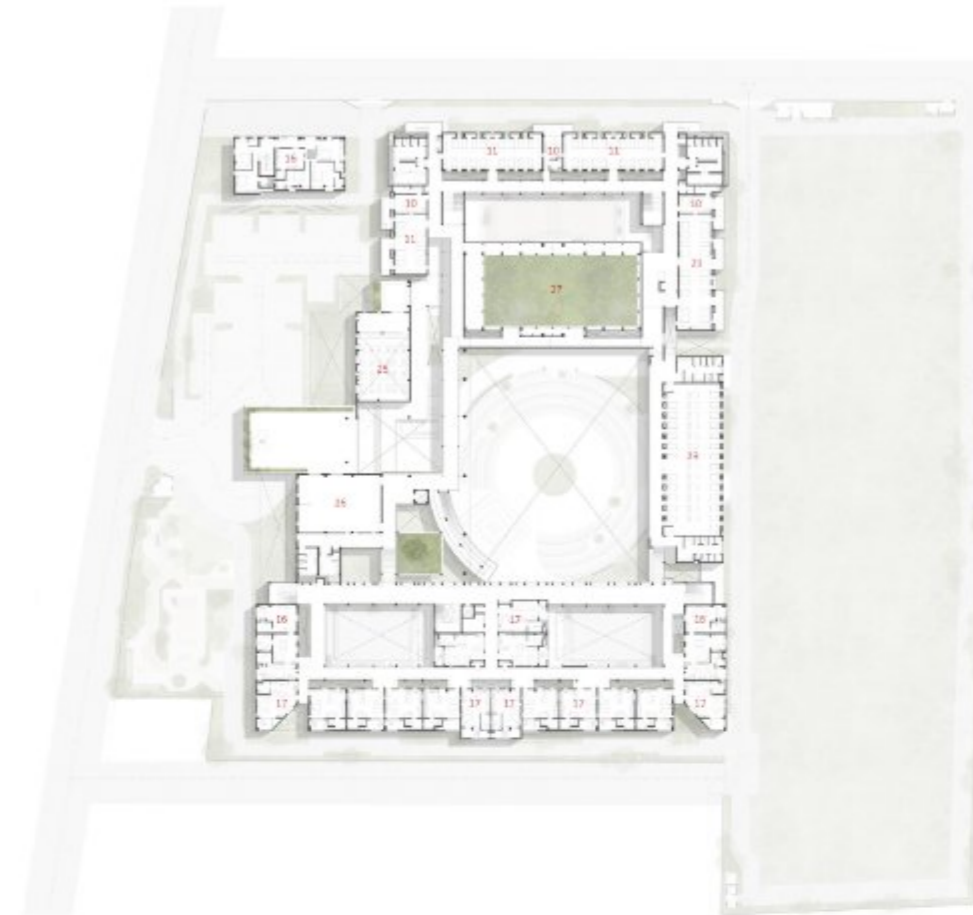
Bhajanalaya interior view





GROUND FLOOR

- 1 Main entry
- 2 Parking
- 3 Entrance lobby
- 4 Shop
- 5 Pump room
- 6 Electrical room
- 7 Admin
- 8 Conference room
- 9 Classroom
- 10 Acharya's room
- 11 Dormitory
- 12 Malyuth/ Mallakhamb
- 13 Multipurpose hall
- 14 Yagnashala
- 15 Bhojanalayam
- 16 Family apartments
- 17 Studio apartments
- 18 Dorm
- 19 Courtyard (Morning yoga)
- 20 Audio Visual hall
- 21 Reflexology/ Herbal garden
- 22 Sevak Griha
- 23 Camp Dorm
- 24 Computer lab
- 25 Library
- 26 Meditation room
- 27 Turf
- 28 Laundry



SECOND FLOOR

- 1 Main entry
- 2 Parking
- 3 Entrance lobby
- 4 Shop
- 5 Pump room
- 6 Electrical room
- 7 Admin
- 8 Conference room
- 9 Classroom
- 10 Acharya's room
- 11 Dormitory
- 12 Malyuth/ Mallakhamb
- 13 Multipurpose hall
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FIRST FLOOR

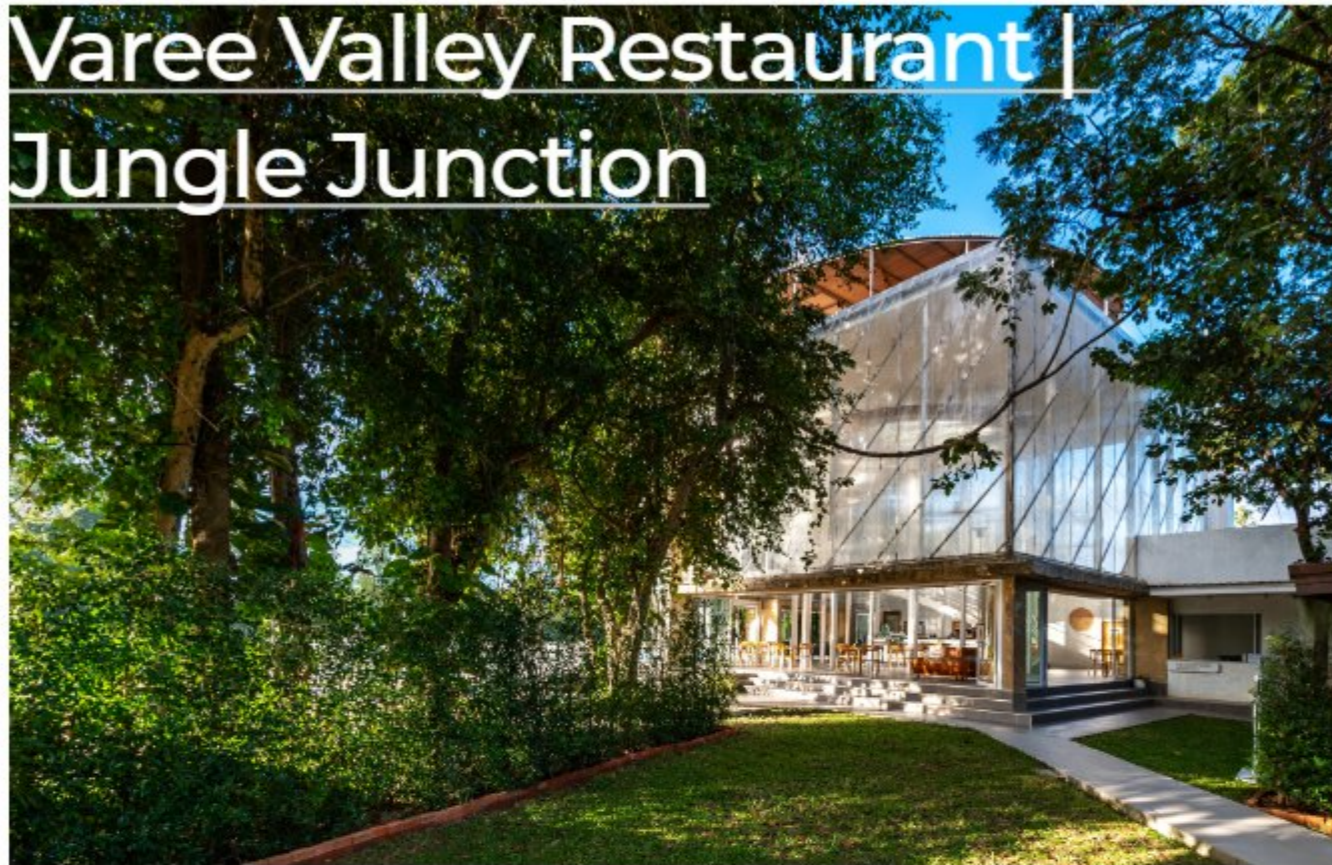
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- 23 Camp Dorm
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- 26 Meditation room
- 27 Turf
- 28 Laundry



TERRACE FLOOR

- 1 Main entry
- 2 Parking
- 3 Entrance lobby
- 4 Shop
- 5 Pump room
- 6 Electrical room
- 7 Admin
- 8 Conference room
- 9 Classroom
- 10 Acharya's room
- 11 Dormitory
- 12 Malyuth/ Mallakhamb
- 13 Multipurpose hall
- 14 Yagnashala
- 15 Bhojanalayam
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- 23 Camp Dorm
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- 28 Laundry

# Varee Valley Restaurant | Jungle Junction



Approach

Architect Firm: NPDA studio  
 Principal Architect: Nutthawut Piriyaparakob  
 Design Team: Kanrakorn Vinitwattanakoon,  
 Chayakarn Sriubonmas  
 Location: Khonkaen, Thailand  
 Area: 800 sq. m  
 Completion Date: December 2021  
 Photography: Tanet Chantaket

The Isan people (Thai Northeast people) of Thailand have been living in harmony with forests, mountains and rivers for a long period of time. Their lives and nature are intertwined and inseparable. Nature has the source of life, cultures and beliefs for these people, even though, during the Cold War, the Northeast people were used as political manipulative tools by politicians and defamed as uncivilized and barbaric.

Varee (River) Valley Restaurant was built on the base of the original restaurant cabin, in the middle of the exuberant forest, on the riverside of the Northeast. The main idea of the design was to build a connection between humans and nature to create activities, foods, traditions and beliefs of the Northeast people from the past to the present.



Wedding Ceremony



Main Entrance

This architecture was designed as a simple box on the base of the original building in the middle of the forest. The transparent materials were used to reflect the shape of trees and the surrounding nature in ever-changing times.

The white structure was meant to create a light feeling, permeating itself into the woods. The small cross-section iron pillars that support the rooftop were to be compared with trees that were standing tall in the forest. The spiral staircase was

meant to slowly bring people to the top for the appreciation of the surrounding view. The main round pillar was not only used as a main support of the building, but also used as a rainwater drainage into the middle of the building. This pillar was designed to have a lower height than the wall around so that high surrounding walls can create an opening for a wider view. The skylight aperture was open to let the light into the center of the building. The main center pillar was also to be

compared with the main pin of the area, which is the same way the Isan people used the trunks of large trees as a meeting point for space creation, where the shades of large trees created activities, traditions and beliefs.

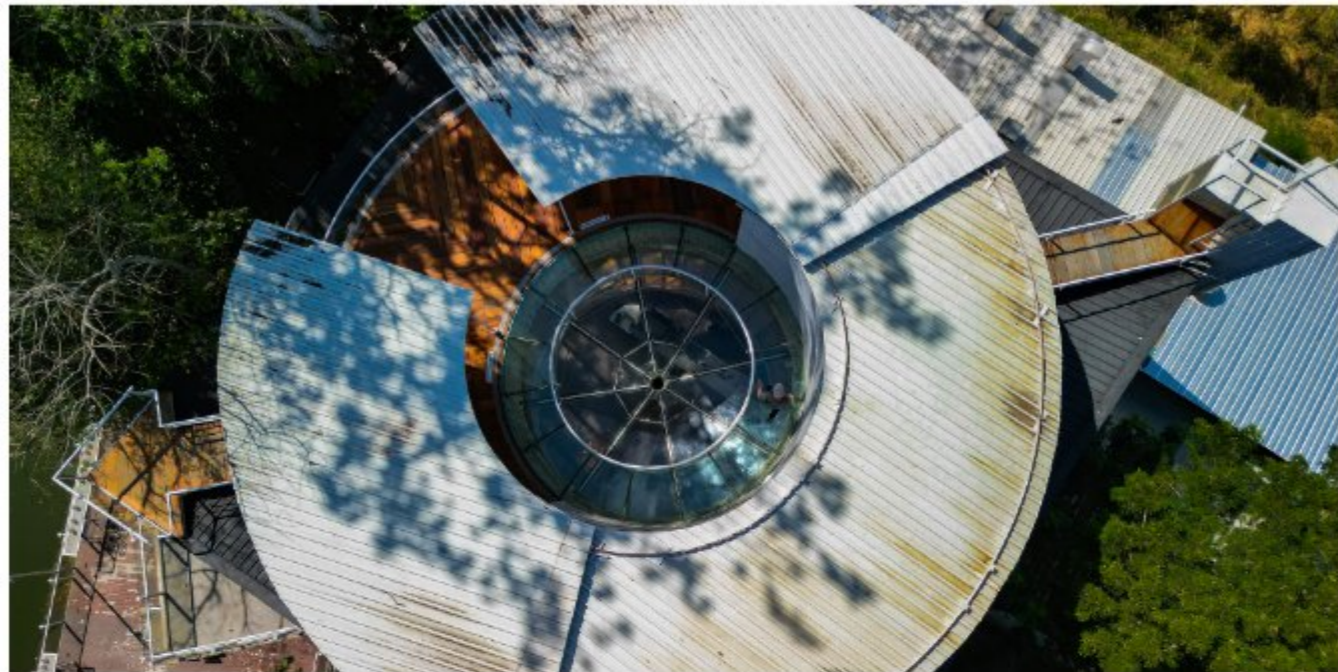
This restaurant not only serves as a place for food but also as a place for activities, which create cultures and lifestyles for the Isan people from now on and into the future.



Main Stair



Skylight



Roof



Hall Space



Sky Light



Wooden & Bamboo Stair



Hall Space



Deck



Sky Walk



Party Private Room



Wooden Couch



Building with Context



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