

ESCAPE PORTAL

RELAX, REJUVENATE AND UNWIND



THESIS BY HANISHA RUDHRARAJU

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ADVISED BY KRISTA VAN WASSEN



PREFACE

I have always been captivated by the power of design to enhance our human experience. From the earliest stages of my creative journey, I held a deep-rooted desire to create spaces that were truly centric to the needs and well-being of people. I have always believed that our surroundings should be more than just structures; they should be transformative environments that enhance and enrich the lives of those who inhabit them.

Moving from India to the United States was a colossal transition, both physically & emotionally. The sprawling cities overwhelmed me and the weight of the bustling activities left me feeling strained and restless.

Amidst the concrete jungles, I yearned for a place of solace - a haven where I could sit, breathe, and find peace within myself. While the city boasted numerous parks and common areas, they often felt like mere patches along the roadside, and also proved inaccessible during the harsh winter months, failing to provide a true disconnect from the urban chaos.

Determined to address this unfulfilled need, I embarked on a journey to bring my vision to life - a space that would welcome and embrace people, a space that would provide respite and rejuvenation amidst the fast-paced urban existence.

In undertaking this endeavor, I have been fortunate to have had the unwavering support of my advisor, Krista Van Wassen. Her constant encouragement and constructive criticism have been invaluable, pushing me to surpass my own limitations & refine my ideas. Without her guidance and belief in my abilities, I would not have had the courage to undertake such a challenging endeavor.

Furthermore, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all the advisors in my pod. Their patience, encouragement, and valuable feedback have been instrumental in refining and improving my design.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to William Mangold, who has been a wonderful mentor throughout my time at Drexel. To all my Professors at Drexel who have been a source of inspiration and pushed me forward.

To my incredible cohort, I am forever grateful for your warmth and friendship that made my transition to the United States a smoother and more enriching experience.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to my parents Rama Krishnam Raju & Lalitha and my sister Akshitha for their love and support which has been a source of strength. My pet Dia for being my ultimate stress buster. I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to my in-laws Srinivasa Raju and Sita for their support & belief in my aspirations.

Above all, to my loving husband Gautham, who has been my rock, providing unwavering support, encouragement, and love throughout this journey.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to BTS for being my source of inspiration. You have touched my life in ways words cannot express.

As I pen down these words, I reflect upon the journey that has led me to this moment - This project has been a labor of love, and it is with immense pride that I present the space I have designed.

Every detail and aspect has been carefully crafted to create an environment that facilitates relaxation, rejuvenation, and connection with oneself and others.

It is a testament of human-centric approach that has always been at the core of my designs.

Through the pages that follow, I invite you to join me on a journey that will take you into the heart of this endeavor - exploring the transformative power of design and creating a space within the urban fabric that offers a slow, multi-sensory experience and provides relaxation and rejuvenation.

- Hanisha Rudhraraju

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THESIS PRESENTATION BOARDS

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Link: <https://youtu.be/WnsmEBpRcgo>



QR CODE

THESIS BRIEF

In today's fast-paced world, stress has become a major concern, especially for people living in urban areas. The hectic pace of life, the constant stimulation and the limited access to nature can all contribute to stress and its negative effects on health and well-being.

While urban green spaces have been recognized as potential solutions, access to these much-needed environments is limited due to scarcity of free space. Furthermore, existing green spaces often fall short of providing the much needed restoration as they primarily cater to visual stimulation, neglecting other senses.

Building on this need for better restorative environments in cities, my thesis aims to design a space that renders a slow and sensory experience through a gradual progression into the interior, providing an escape from the fast-paced urban environment.

The goal of my thesis is to create a restorative built environment, incorporating biophilic design principles with emphasis on multisensory and contemplative design, that fosters stress relief and supports wellbeing by inviting user to relax, rejuvenate and unwind.

KEY WORDS

Stress | Restoration | Procession | Immersive | Interactive | Biophilic design | Multi sensory design | Contemplative design



01 RESEARCH

1.1 LITERATURE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is one of the main health-relevant changes humanity is facing in our time. Today more than 50 percent of the global population is living in cities; by 2050, this rate will increase to nearly 70 percent.

With growing urbanization, more and more people are exposed to risk factors originating from the urban social (e.g. poverty) or physical environment (e.g. traffic noise), contributing to increased stress, which in turn is negatively associated with mental health.

It is important to understand effective strategies that help mitigate stress and promote restoration. The following literature review aims to discuss the positive effects that contact with nature has on human health and well-being and highlights the characteristics and benefits of biophilic, multi-sensory and contemplative design, accentuating the need to incorporate them into built environments to create better restorative environments within the urban fabric.

CITIES & STRESS

Urbanization initiated the large-scale separation of people from nature and has been linked with problems such as crowdedness and segregation, leading to social issues such as alienation, aggression, and to mental disorders.

People living in cities also experience an increased stimulus level: density, crowding, noise, smells, sights, disarray, pollution and intensity of other inputs which could cause sensory overload.

Sensory overload is when your five senses —

sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste — take in more information than your brain can process. When your brain is overwhelmed by this input, it enters fight, flight, or freeze mode in response to what feels like a crisis, making you feel unsafe or even panicky.

As seen in Figure 1 these inputs could trigger cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and physical symptoms of stress.



Fig 1 Source: Symptoms of overload

Hence, identifying the tangible and intangible characteristics of environments that can support psychological well-being is of high importance.

RESTORATIVE ENVIRONMENTS

The field of restorative environments emerged in the late 1980s and has gained greater relevance in the last decades within environment behavior and landscape research.

Restoration has been defined as the recovery from the psychological resources that diminish after meeting everyday demands, including cognitive (e.g., attentional performance), affective (e.g., positive mood, energy) or social resources (e.g., Communication, leadership).

Research on Restorative Environments has been guided by two main theories: Attention

Restoration Theory (ART) and Stress Recovery Theory (SRT) which frames nature, or certain natural environments, as the prototypical providers of restorative experiences that may help recover from attentional fatigue and emotional distress and improve people's psychological state.

Rachel Kaplan and Stephen Kaplan in ART have pointed out that awakening a feeling of psychological distance from daily nuances (being away), displaying a rich and well-organized content (extent), providing aesthetic value and interest (fascination), and fulfilling people's needs and inclinations (compatibility) as the four main properties of restorative environments.

Roger Ulrich in SRT presented urban environments, especially the ones lacking green or water features, as settings precipitating cognitive and emotional fatigue due to their limited aesthetic potential and the presence of noise, traffic, and a high number of people.

Drawing on these theoretical premises, most research on restoration has focused on the restorative potential of natural environments which influenced policy and practice of international institutions and governments to address the need for healthy settings by naturalization of cities through green infra-structure such as pocket parks, street vegetation, community gardens, etc.,

However, arguably, the implementation of only these strategies cannot be the only way forward for healthy cities as it might not always be possible either due to the decreasing amount of available free space in current cities or due to other practical reasons.

Which is why effective strategies that can promote psychological wellbeing in built environments are needed for effective restoration within the Urban Fabric. Based on existing evidence, the hierarchy of restorative potential, the characteristics necessary to allow restoration in Urban Settings, have been assessed as shown in Fig 2

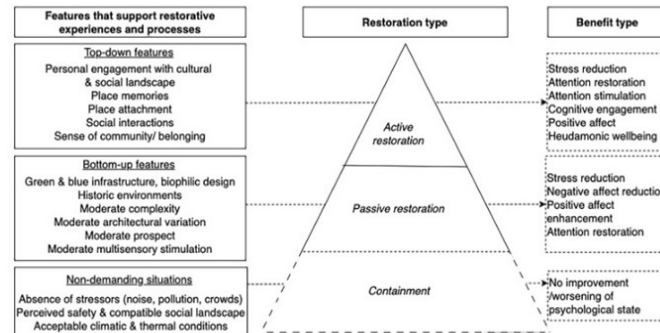


Fig 2 Source: Psychological restoration in Urban Built settings

BIOPHILIC DESIGN

The need for beneficial contact with nature continues to be critical to people's health and fitness, but its satisfactory occurrence in today's-built environment has become highly challenging. Biophilic design addresses these deficiencies of contemporary building practice by establishing a new framework for the satisfying experience of nature in the built environment.

However, it is vital to understand that it is not based solely on the simple addition of trees and greenery within the built environment. Instead, biophilic design focuses extensively on humanity's relationship within nature and nature's place within society culturally and sustainably. It is essential that biophilic built environments actively promote a relationship with nature that is mutual, respectful and enriching

to human well-being.



Fig 3 Source: 14 patterns of biophilic design -Terrapin Bright

As shown in Fig 3, biophilic design can be organized into three categories – Nature in the Space, Natural Analogues, and Nature of the Space – providing a framework for understanding and enabling thoughtful incorporation of a rich diversity of strategies into the built environment.

MULTISENSORY DESIGN

Though evidence that experiences of nature can benefit people has accumulated rapidly, perhaps because of the domination of the visual sense in humans, most research has focused on the visual aspects of nature experiences. A walk through a forest is invigorating and healing due to the constant interaction of all sense modalities. Which is why creating similar experience by stimulating multiple senses at the same time may possibly lead to better restorative potential within built spaces. For example, one study found that while a virtual nature environment was able to reduce stress

in participants, these participants also felt negatively towards the virtual environment, and expressed a sense of missing the full sensory experience of real nature. This example highlights the possible shortcomings of assuming visual delivery is the dominant pathway through which nature benefits are delivered.

Multi-sensory design stems from the idea that humans experience space in multiple ways; more than just through what we see. Even though sight is what people tend to think of first when it comes to design and architecture, we respond just as strongly to sounds, smells, temperature, humidity, textures and flavours.

Biophilic design is (wrongly) often just associated with visual access to the natural environment. Biophilic Design, by its very nature is multisensory and it seems likely that many benefits are delivered through the non-visual senses.

CONTEMPLATIVE DESIGN

Contemplative space, according to Brian Corr, is a spatial environment that provides one with the opportunity to experience a change either psychologically, emotionally, or spiritually through the help of the different designed architectural elements. A growing body of literature documents the social and biological benefits of contemplative practices, including stress and pain management, weight control, sustained physical activity, and promoting emotional health and overall fulfillment, purpose, and meaning.

The characteristics of contemplative space are divided into two categories: a) Elements and b) Properties. Contemplative elements are

components in space which with their relationships encourage feelings of daydreaming and contemplation, while contemplative properties are subjective qualities that are feelings or ambiances of a space that can enhance the experience of contemplation.

The contemplative elements are characteristics that are physical. Space that can support the experience of contemplation will be created using the interaction and dynamics of these 3 elements: 1) centers that provide a specific position for the subject; 2) references that direct the focus and attention of the subject; 3) frames that physically limit the surrounding space. The properties on the other hand, are subjective characteristics of contemplative space. Contemplative property is an important spatial quality in creating the atmosphere and ambience of a contemplative space. According to Moir there are seven contemplative properties, namely: 1) Imagability; 2) Inhabitability; 3) Tranquility; 4) Movement; 5) Detachment; 6) Security; and 7) Accessibility

CONCLUSION / FUTURE DIRECTION

To urban dwellers, for whom nature getaways cannot be an everyday destination, it is important to provide accessible public spaces that promote restoration by incorporating effective strategies that can offset the negative influence of the busy urban lifestyle on mental health.

The goal of my thesis is to create An Escape Portal, where one can relax, rejuvenate, and unwind from the fast-paced outer world. Drawing from my findings I hope to create a restorative environment, replicating a deep natural

connection with in an indoor setting, through incorporating biophilic design strategies with emphasis on multi-sensory and contemplative design.

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1.2 PRECEDENT STUDIES



INTRODUCTION

Originally called Forecourt Fountain or Auditorium Forecourt, the park opened in 1970 in an area that was part of the Municipal Auditorium. In 1978 it was named Ira Keller, in honor of the head of the Portland Development Commission in the period 1958-1972.

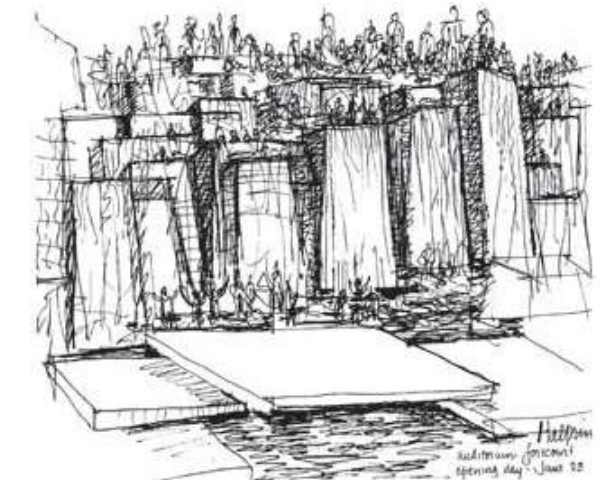
The main feature of the park is its large water fountain, made of concrete. While the park is called Keller Fountain Park, the source itself is called Ira Keller Fountain.

DESIGN

The urban space was designed by Angela Danadjieva, collaborating with the study of Halprin. In their design work done with linear and irregular shapes seen, echoing natural phenomena. It is an excellent example of abstraction of nature from close observation of processes, shape and interaction of materials, staying true to them.

The design of the fountain is envisioned as a theater set or an event space, rather than a fountain solely for viewing. The waterfall allows visitors arrive and stand or swim in the top of the concrete forms.

Its surface offers many places to sit and relax, without losing sight of the attractiveness of the source in full only under the shade of trees or large concrete slabs.

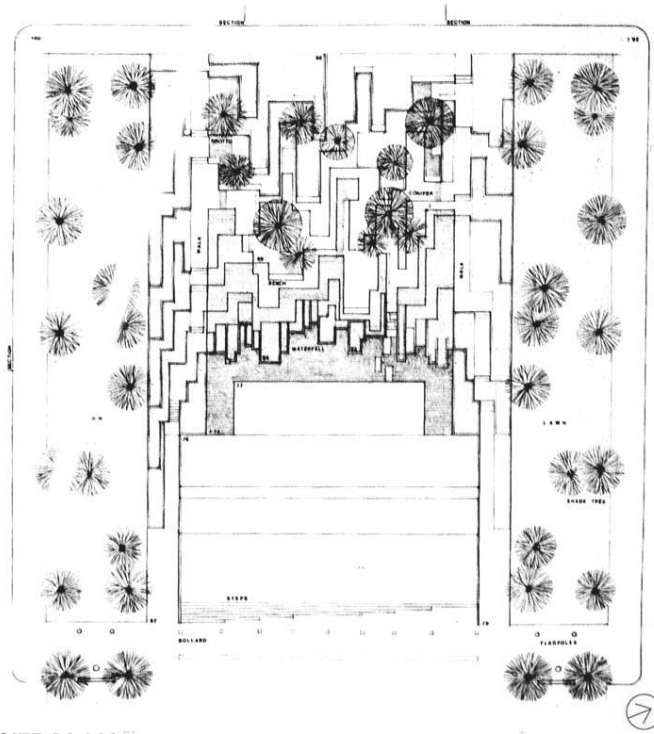


Throughout my thesis research, I have conducted comprehensive precedent studies on multiple architectural projects, including Naman retreat pure Spa, 50% Cloud artists lounge restaurant, Ira Keller Fountain and Sancaklar Mosque.

As my thesis topic evolved and my project objectives took shape, I found Ira Keller Fountain and Sancaklar Mosque to closely align with my vision, goals & programming.

While I have focused on Ira Keller Fountain and Sancaklar Mosque as the primary precedent studies for my project, I have also extensively researched and analyzed Cloud 50% and Naman Retreat.

Although not directly incorporated into the current thesis narrative, these studies serve as valuable references and are included in the appendix of this book.



SITE PLAN

The flow of water begins as a fast-paced trail that goes evenly into a series of stepped pools, overflows and falls into a broad quieter stretch. Adapting to the urban context and human interaction, all functions are simplified, seeking the essentials.

Adapting to the urban context and human interaction, all functions are simplified, seeking the essentials. The use of straight lines permutations absorbs micro desert, but the volume of the concrete slabs given the complexity and topographic integrity from the edge of the water to vegetation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Climbing down the series of stairs to get to the waterfalls from the abutting road creates a gra-



-dual procession and also provides a visual barrier from the busy city.

The sound of the waterfalls barricades the outer urban noise creating a tranquil space

The fountain is not just for viewing but rather is designed as an interactive space which invites the viewers to interact with the water and also climb atop the geometric forms.

The space as a whole creates an inviting and interactive experience for the user and succeeds in providing an immersive & restorative experience.

SANCAKLAR MOSQUE

ISTANBUL, TURKEY | AMRE AROLAT ARCHITECTS



INTRODUCTION

The building was designed as a response to the Sancaklar Family who wanted to build a mosque on a site overlooking the Buyukcekmece Lake, at a neighborhood of many gated communities.

The main issue was a confrontation with the classical Ottoman mosque scheme, which became a blank anachronism with today's construction techniques.

Depending on the fact that a mosque does not have a predefined form and anywhere clean may be a prayer's room, the project focused solely on the "essence" of a religious space, by distancing itself from discussions on form.

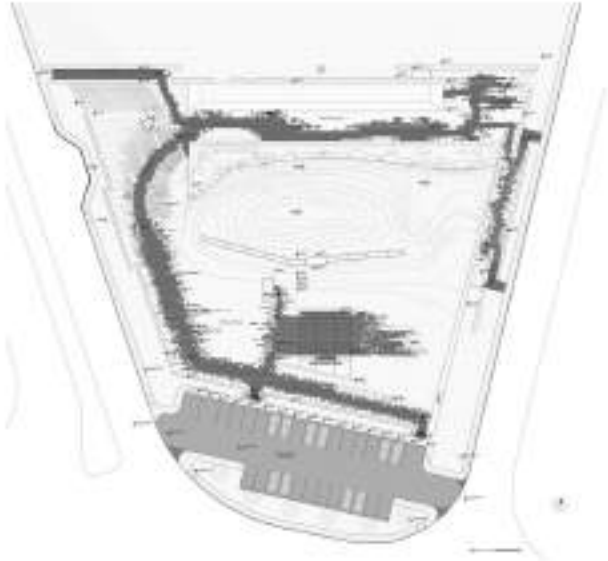
The project site is located in a prairie landscape that is separated from the surrounding suburban gated communities by a busy street. The only visible elements of the mosque are the courtyard surrounded by horizontal walls and a

vertical prismatic mass of stone (minaret), which depicts that this is a "place" and the inscription signifies that this is a place for praying.

DESIGN

The cascades following the natural slope turns into steps as one moves through the landscape, down the hill and leads to the entrance at the lower courtyard.





SITE PLAN

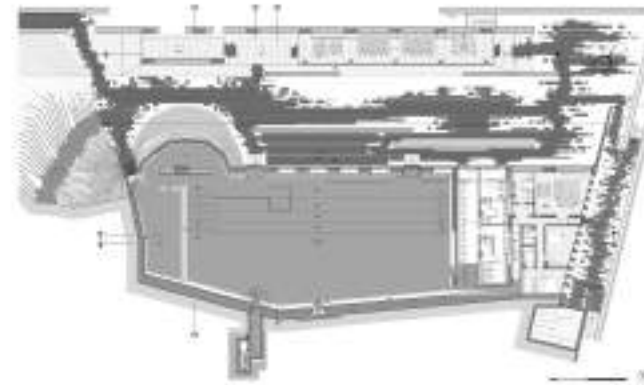
The tea house, communal space and the library just across the mosque enriches the gathering feature of this open space.

The prayer hall reached directly, a simple cave like space, becomes a dramatic and awe inspiring place to pray and be alone with God.

The interior is simple where materials put forward themselves as they are, free from redundancies. The walls and the ceiling strengthen the feeling of purification and humbleness.

The space may be defined as a meditation space. The only ornament is the daylight that leaks on the Qiblah wall, changing according to the time of the day.

The slits and fractures along this wall enhances the directionality of the prayer space. A very special element is the letter "waw" on the reflective black wall of infinity.



FLOOR PLAN



SECTION

First time in mosque architecture, women have the chance to pray just in the same row as the men, contrary to being at the back as in all others.

They are placed at an elevated and separated part of the hall. The complex includes the ablution halls, restrooms and the imam's house from where one can reach the hall directly.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

The high tower is the only architectural element visible from outside. One must go down the hill through the stairs, move through the landscape and between walls to enter the mosque, creating a clear boundary from the outer world to the inside.

The interior of the mosque is a simple cave like space that is lit by the natural light entering through the slits in the wall and the materiality creates a dramatic, calm & tranquil space to pray and be alone with God.



1.3 CASE STUDIES

RODIN MUSEUM

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA | PAUL CRET & JACQUES GRÉBER



The Rodin Museum and its vast collection are the legacy of one of the city's great philanthropists, Jules E. Mastbaum (1872–1926). It contains one of the largest collections of sculptor Auguste Rodin's works outside Paris.

Jules hired the landscape architect Jacques Gréber, who had conceived the overall design of the Parkway and Paul Cret, a professor of architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, to design the site.

The architects created an impressive yet intimate Beaux-Arts-style building that blends seamlessly with the garden, creating a museum experience that merges art and nature.

Originally opened to the public in 1929, the beaux-art architecture and formal French garden were wonderfully unique. However, several large outdoor sculptures had to be brought indoors to protect them.

In 2012, the museum re-opened after a three-

year, \$9 million renovation that brought the museum back to its original vision.

The museum reopened with an inaugural installation dedicated to *The Gates of Hell*, a large bronze project that consumed Rodin for almost four decades but was unfinished in his lifetime. The doors of the piece depict the lost souls of Dante's "Inferno" sinking into Hell.



I have visited and studied multiple projects and places in and around Philadelphia for my case study research which include - Rodin Museum, Barnes Foundation, Magic Gardens, Comcast Center, Terrain Cafe and Longwood Gardens.

The case studies of Rodin Museum and Barnes Foundation are mentioned here, as they align with my thesis approach.

My visit to Magic Gardens has been an inspiring experience that has influenced my design intent and my observations are included in the appendix of this book.



Rodin sculpted more than 100 figures for this massive 5.5-m-tall bronze doorway which was originally created for the Museum of Decorative Arts from 1880 until his death in 1917. This casting is one of the three originals. Several of his most famous works, including *The Thinker*, are actually studies for these doors which were later expanded into separate works.

OBSERVATIONS

The approach into the Museum from the parkway is through a garden sequence with symmetrical paths and planting beds.

The entrance is through a grove



of sycamore trees that leads to a free-standing stone gate, with Rodin's iconic *The Thinker* in front of the entrance passage.

The gate leads into a central courtyard on axis with the building.

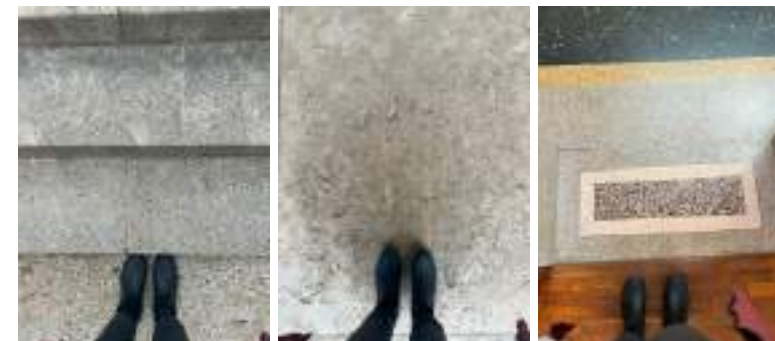
The courtyard's focal point is a symmetrical, rectangular reflecting pool and wall fountain with pathways that wrap the edge of the pool and planting beds along the perimeter.

These paths lead to the main building, which is raised on a plinth and accessed by stone stairs that are perpendicular to the building face, where you are met with the "Gates of Hell".



SITE PLAN

As you move into the building it is like entering a special world. Visitors can see the various stages of Rodin's development. The rooms are not large, yet allow viewing from all angles. The large windows & skylight let in ample natural light and connect the exterior to the interior.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Sequencing of the space from entry to exit.
- Well planned landscape with water feature and seating nooks.
- Change in thresholds and flooring materiality from pavers to wood enhancing the feeling of intimacy as one keeps moving into the interior.
- The large windows let in ample light and frame the views of the beautiful landscape creating a connection to outside nature from every room.



BARNES MUSEUM

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA | TOD WILLIAMS, BILLIE TSIEN & LAURIE OLIN



Originally housed in a Paul Cret gallery in an arboretum in Merion, Pennsylvania, the Barnes Foundation collection is re-located to a 93,000sf building in Benjamin Franklin Parkway in downtown Philadelphia.

African sculpture, Pennsylvania Dutch decorative arts, and other important works is presented in a 12,000 square-foot gallery that replicates the scale, proportion and configuration of the original Merion spaces.

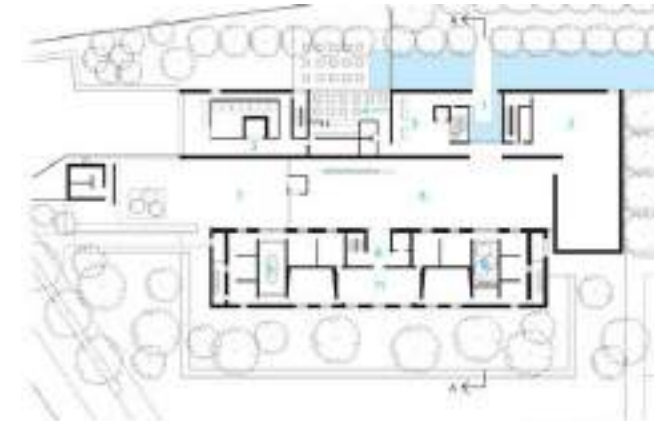
Conceived as “a gallery in a garden and a garden in a gallery,” the new building honors the Merion facility and provides visitors with a personal and contemplative experience. Clad in a tapestry of fossilized limestone and crowned by a luminous light box, the two story building, with an additional level below grade, is set in an inviting public garden.

To emphasize the founder's commitment to education and the visual interplay between art and nature, the galleries now include a class room on each floor, an internal garden, and

The tripartite building plan consists of the Gallery housing the collection, the L-shaped support building, and a generous Court between the two. The L-shaped building provides facilities for the Foundation's core programs in art education, as well as for conservation, temporary exhibitions, and visitor amenities. The legendary Barnes art collection of Impressionist, Post-Impressionist and early Modern paintings,



SECOND FLOOR



MAIN FLOOR



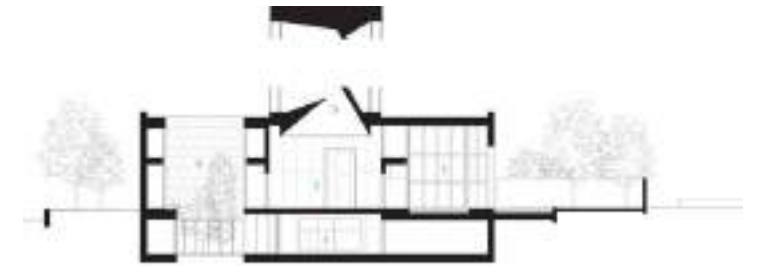
LOWER LEVEL

vastly improved lighting conditions.

The light box, running the length of the building and cantilevering over a terrace, casts daylight into the court space below. At night, the ethereal light box is transformed into an iconic beacon for the new Barnes Foundation.

OBSERVATIONS

A walkway lined with London Plane trees, horse chestnuts, and eye-popping red Japanese



SECTION AA'

LEGEND	
1	ENTRANCE
2	EXHIBITION
3	LOBBY
4	CAFÉ
5	SUPPORT
6	LIGHT COURT
7	TERRACE
8	GALLERY FOYER
9	CLASSROOM
10	GARDEN
11	GALLERY
12	OFFICE
13	BALCONY
14	AUDITORIUM
15	SHOP
16	LIBRARY

maples gently guides the visitor from the park way curb to the entrance. The entrance landscape captures the spirit of the original site while offering a Parisian-style public park that fits into the urban context and implements contemporary sustainable practices. Vine-covered walls and hedges discretely mask the visitor parking and bus loading points.

On the way, you pass the long sleek horizontal water table. An underground cistern captures





stormwater for on-site irrigation. The water in the basins is re-circulated while certain degree partially shaded by either the building and the vegetation limit the loss to evaporation while providing cooling for people and plants. Water is directed through planted areas and granular materials to aid in filtering and cleaning it. This conservation of resources has contributed substantially to the LEED certification goals of the project.

Within the gallery there is an open to the sky central courtyard. The gallery building opens to two separate out door spaces - one is a lush garden and terrace adjacent to the museum's café. The other is a paved open terrace overlooking the Parkway, suitable for more intimate events, decorated with antique benches, platforms for seating, loose furniture, a fireplace and flowering trees.

The architects partnered with Laurie Olin to create an experience of the landscape that shut out the city beyond the garden, making the new Barnes both a "Gallery within a Garden a Garden within a Gallery".



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Leading the visitor from the exterior to the interior with clever design and landscaping features - Fountains, pools, causeways, and other water features greet the visitor approaching by way of gently ascending ramps from the entrances and car parks. The well planned seating spaces create opportunities to take in the lush scenery.

- The cleverly designed landscaping and the water features create a tranquil environment for visitors. The materials chosen provide a serene environment: transparent glass, Belgian linen and oak wood battons, a walnut staircase, translucent green curtain, sand-blasted architectural concrete and limestone.

- The Light Court brings in ample natural light into the building and creates a transitional space that can be used for casual seating, conversation and group orientations during the day and flexible event space at night.



SURVEY SUMMARY

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Living in Cities:

While a few said they preferred the life style most respondents said they preferred living away from the city but in close proximity to stay in commuting distance to work. People of colour stated that they prefer cities as they offer diverse population & they feel safer to live there.

Perception of stress in Cities:

The majority of respondents acknowledged experiencing varying levels of stress on a daily basis due to factors such as work, commute, and urban environment. Common stressors mentioned included noise pollution, lack of green spaces, and a fast-paced lifestyle.

Importance of Restoration:

Respondents expressed a strong desire for spaces and amenities that promote relaxation and offer an escape from the urban hustle.

Preferred Spaces to De-Stress:

In the responses Green areas, quiet zones, fitness facilities, spas meditation spaces, museums and cafes were frequently cited as preferred spaces to feel a sense of calmness and relaxation.

Preferred Features or Amenities in those spaces:

Majority stated Privacy, and safety as the most important features and that they preferred visiting spaces that block the surroundings and have a calm atmosphere. Many also stated cleanliness, comfort and amenities that support their favourite activities as their preferred features.

I have also conducted a small survey to gain insights into the experience of living in a city, the perception of stress, and the preferences for amenities that contribute to relaxation and stress relief. The responses received provided valuable information that helped in determining my programming and design approach.

QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO PHILADELPHIA

Favourite Public Spaces to De-stress:

Fairmont Park, Wissahickon Valley Park, Penn treaty Park and Philadelphia Art Museum

Opinion on existing Public spaces:

Mostly cater to Children, donot really provide a respite as they are mostly open to surrounding streets and vehicular traffic, privacy, proper ammenities, maintenance, etc., are lacking and need improvement.

Outdoor v/s Indoor Facility:

Most responded that they wouldnot mind as long as it caters to their need. While a few preferred outdoor spaces, most said they would prefer an indoor facility as it can be utilised year round.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Majority agreed with the need for spaces that aid in destressing and that there is a shortage in such spaces.
- A space that would transport them to a quiet and calm environment.
- Preferred Green spaces.
- A space that supports activities they enjoy.
- Majority of the respondents said they would prefer a destination rather than a space they could pass through.
- Privacy, Safety and Comfort were the most important aspects.

FAIRMOUNT PARK

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



Fairmount Park with more than 2,000 acres of rolling hills, relaxing waterfront and shaded woodlands, keeps a wealth of natural landscapes in East and West sections of the park, divided by the Schuylkill River. It houses miles of trails for off-road cycling, horseback riding and deep-woods hiking. The expanse provides a refuge from the bustling city, keeping quiet natural landscapes within close reach of all residents and visitors.



As most respondents mentioned Fairmont Park and Wissahickon Valley Park as their most preferred locations in Philadelphia. I visited them in person to better understand the features and amenities that make them stand out.



FAIRMOUNT PARK - photographed during my visit on January 7, 2023

WISSAHICKON VALLEY PARK

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



Wissahickon Valley Park a lush, 1,800 acre gorge, has miles of trail crossing forest and meadow before plunging down to the sun-dappled waters of the Wissahickon Creek that drops more than 100 feet in altitude as it passes through the gorge before it finally merges with the Schuylkill River. Visitors find themselves lost in a feeling of wilderness as they walk, bike or ride horses through this gem.





WISSAHICKON VALLEY PARK - *photographed during my visit on January 7, 2023*

OBSERVATIONS

- Both Fairmount Park and Wissahickon Parks offer stunning natural landscapes with lush greenery, wooded areas, and scenic waterways, provide an urban oasis where people can reconnect with nature, relax, and recharge amidst the busy urban environment.
- These parks provide a wide range of recreational opportunities for visitors. From hiking and biking trails to fishing spots, picnic areas, and sports fields, there are activities available for people of all ages and interests.
- The parks offer a space for outdoor enthusiasts to engage in physical activities and enjoy leisure time with family and friends.
- They serve as community gathering spaces where individuals can come together to celebrate events, participate in festivals, and enjoy recreational activities, fostering a sense of belonging and promoting community engagement.
- Their accessibility via public transportation or short drives makes them easily accessible to residents and visitors alike.
- The drawback is during the winter months, when parks like these appear less lively and potentially less accessible. With many trees and plants enter a dormant phase, resulting in a more barren landscape compared to the lush greenery of other seasons.
- Winter season also has reduced or altered programming, with fewer events or activities. This can contribute to a perceived lack of vibrancy and limited engagement opportunities.



02 PROGRAMMING

2.1 SITE

SITE

GENERAL INFORMATION



Neighborhood: FISHTOWN

Located directly Northeast of Center City

Landmarks: Penn Treaty Park, The Piazza, and Temple University,

Accessibility: SEPTA's Market-Frankford Line, by bus, the Route 15 trolley and by car.

WHY?

- It is the Hot spot for art, entertainment, new dining establishments and trends attracting locals and tourists alike.

- Delaware River Waterfront Corporation Master Planning improvement will provide more access to the neighbourhood improve the waterfront and create opportunities for outdoor activities.

Site: PECO POWER PLANT

Former Delaware Generation Station
1917 - 2008

Built up area – 223,000
Waterfront - approx. 1,000 ft
Total land area – 16.4 acres

WHY?

- The urban proximity, ample square footage needed to design the facility I am planning and a 1,000-foot stretch of waterfront adjacent to Penn treaty park made this an ideal site choice.

- Additionally, the master planning improvement effort by the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation, will connect the casino to Penn Treaty park making this location one of the most walkable outdoor destinations in Philadelphia.

PECO DELAWARE POWER PLANT

BUILDING INFORMATION



HISTORY

Dating back to 1917, the building served as the former Delaware Generation Station, Philadelphia Electric Co., and the former home to "PECO Towers". Sitting adjacent Penn Treaty Park, along the banks of the Delaware River waterfront, the plant provided the city with enough electricity to empower Philadelphia's 20th-century economy.

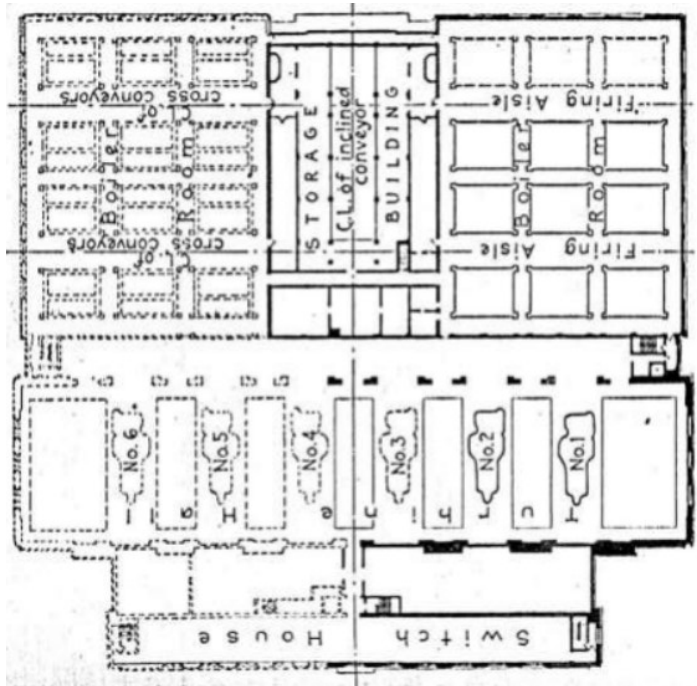




overwhelm the PECO and cause systemwide power shortages.

DESIGN

So, John T. Windrim, was hired to design the new facility. He sought to use the Beaux-Arts style to create a monument for electricity and impart a sense of stability and permanence. Stone & Webster, a national engineering and construction firm, was hired as the general contractor.



Initially, the complex was to be erected with steel, but a shortage of materials due to war led to the use of reinforced concrete, which required anchoring the power plant down to bedrock at a much higher cost.

LAYOUT

The Boiler Houses, Storage Area, Turbine Hall, and Switch House represented the component functions in the electrical generation process.

Boiler House No. 1 and No. 2, separated by a five-story central coal storage area, were built of reinforced concrete with "The Philadelphia electric company" and "Delaware station" inscribed in teal-colored ceramic tiles on the exterior.

The roof contains eight cylindrical metal steam stacks. To the west of the Boiler Houses was the Turbine Hall, the main operating space where turbines, powered by steam created in the boiler houses, generated electricity. The Turbine Hall was lit with six gabled skylights. The Switch House, fronting North Beach Street, contained electrical substation equipment for the Philadelphia Electric Company.

OLD FLOOR PLAN

In 1913, Joseph B. McCall, board chairman of PECO, purchased 8½ acres for the site of a future power plant along the Delaware River, close to PECO's primary coal yard.

When United States entered into the Great War in 1917, the city of Philadelphia blossomed under strong industrial growth, threatening to



EXTERIOR - Abandoned



PRESENT - Under Redevelopment



photographed on January 22, 2023

INTERIOR PHOTOS



INTERIOR CONDITIONS - Abandoned

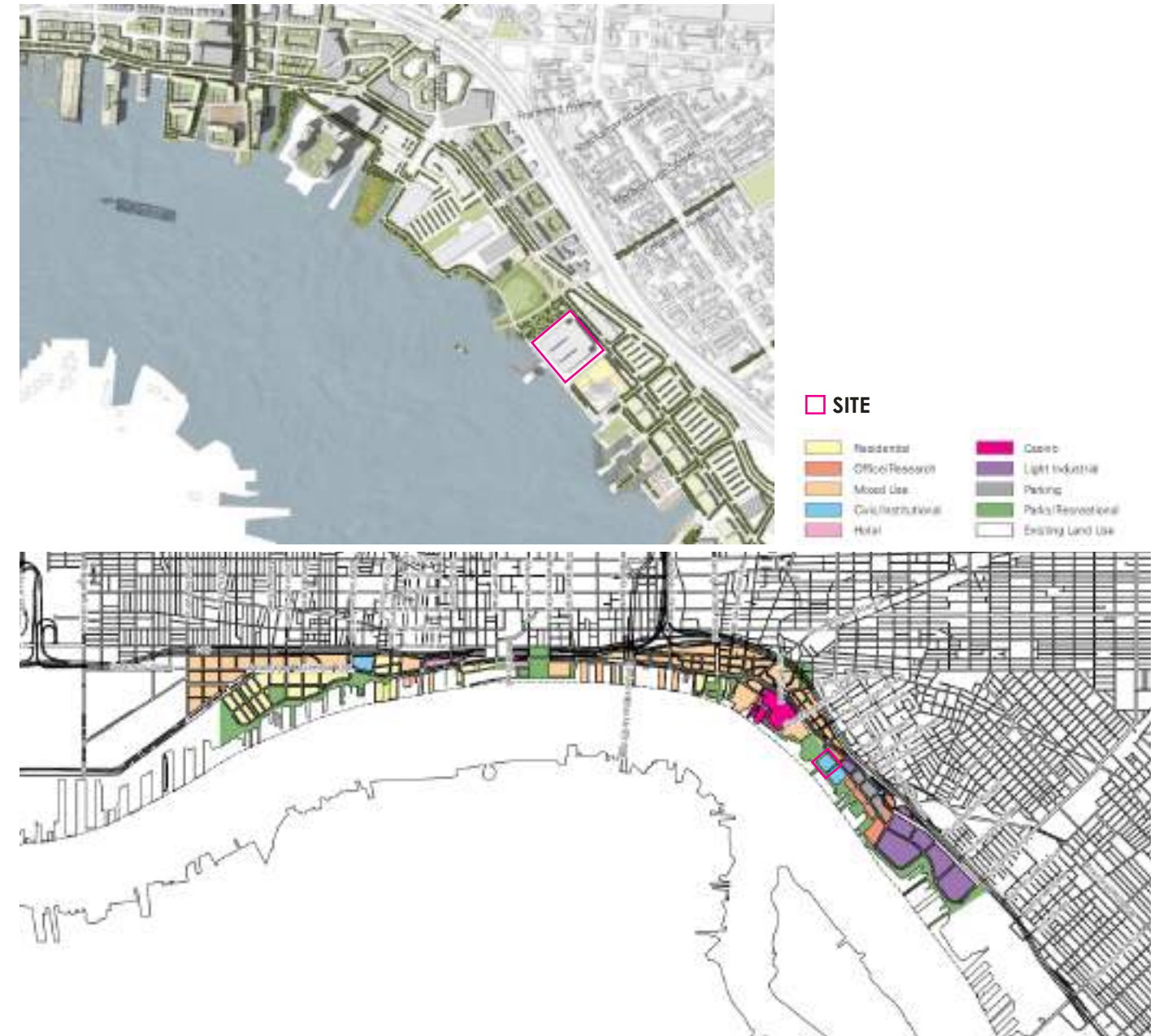




INTERIOR CONDITIONS - Abandoned

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT

MASTER PLAN FOR CENTRAL DELAWARE REDEVELOPMENT - *Transforming Philadelphia's waterfront*



SITE IN CONTEXT TO THE WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

SITE PLAN



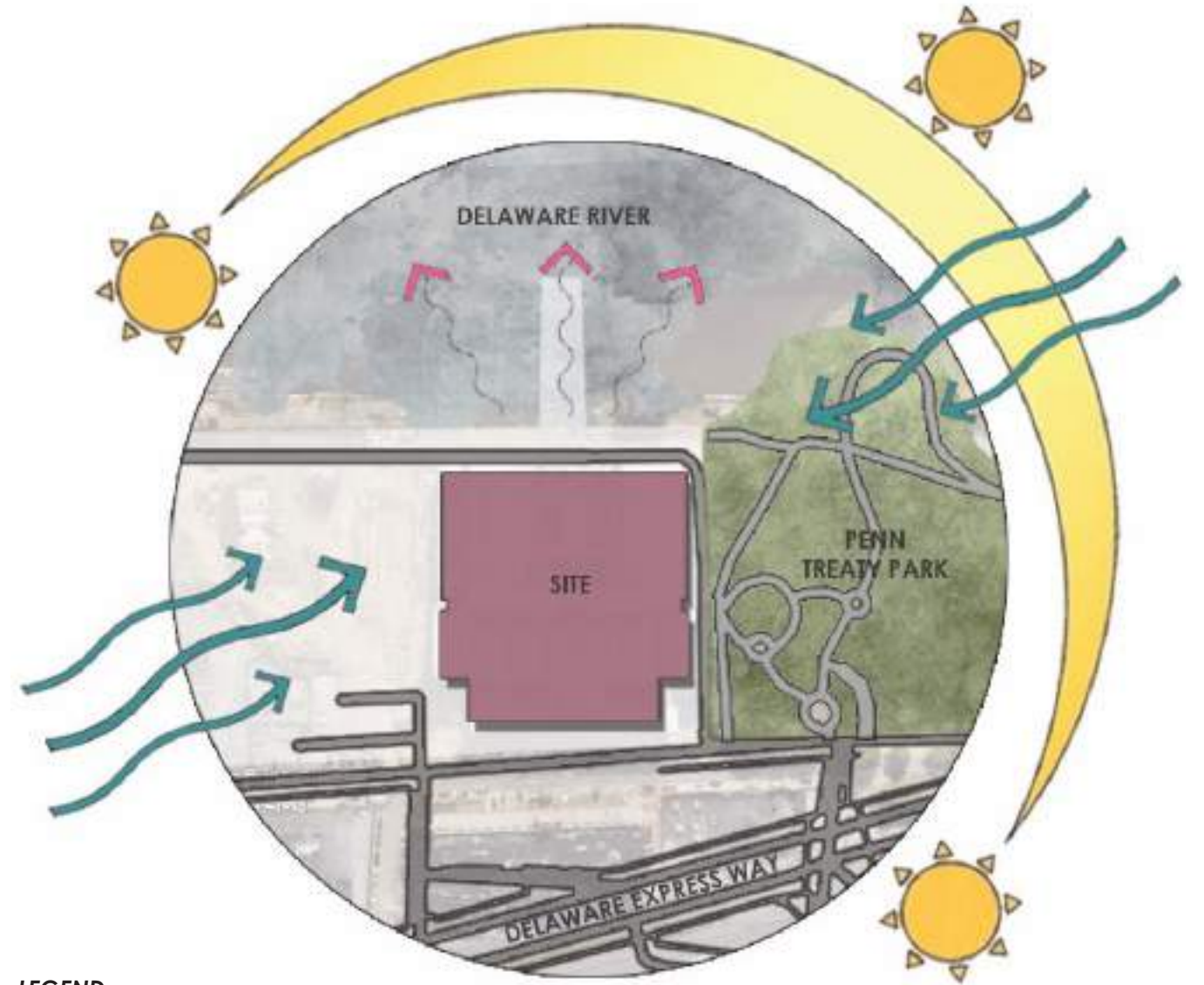
LEGEND

- TOTAL SITE - 1.4 ACRES
- SCOPE OF WORK - 130,470 SQ.FT (BUILDING FOOT PRINT)



SITE ANALYSIS

EXISTING CONDITIONS



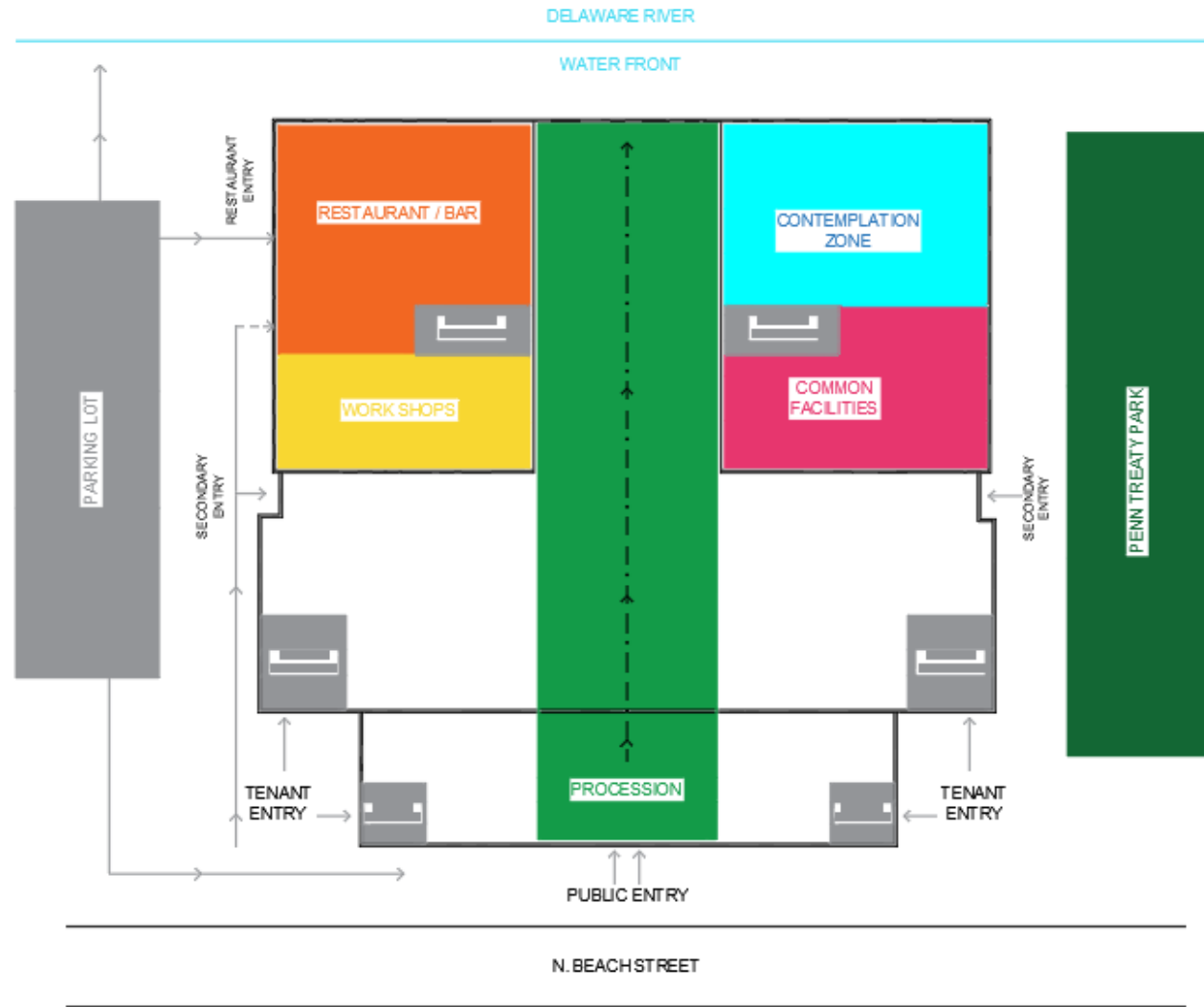
LEGEND

- WIND DIRECTION
- VIEWS



2.2 PROGRAMMING

FINAL PROGRAMMING



PROGRAM IN SITE

The initial idea was to develop different zones that are intended to support varied activities for relaxation and restoration.

But as I progressed further in my thesis and through discussions with my thesis advisor and feedback from professors, it became apparent that the entry threshold can serve more than

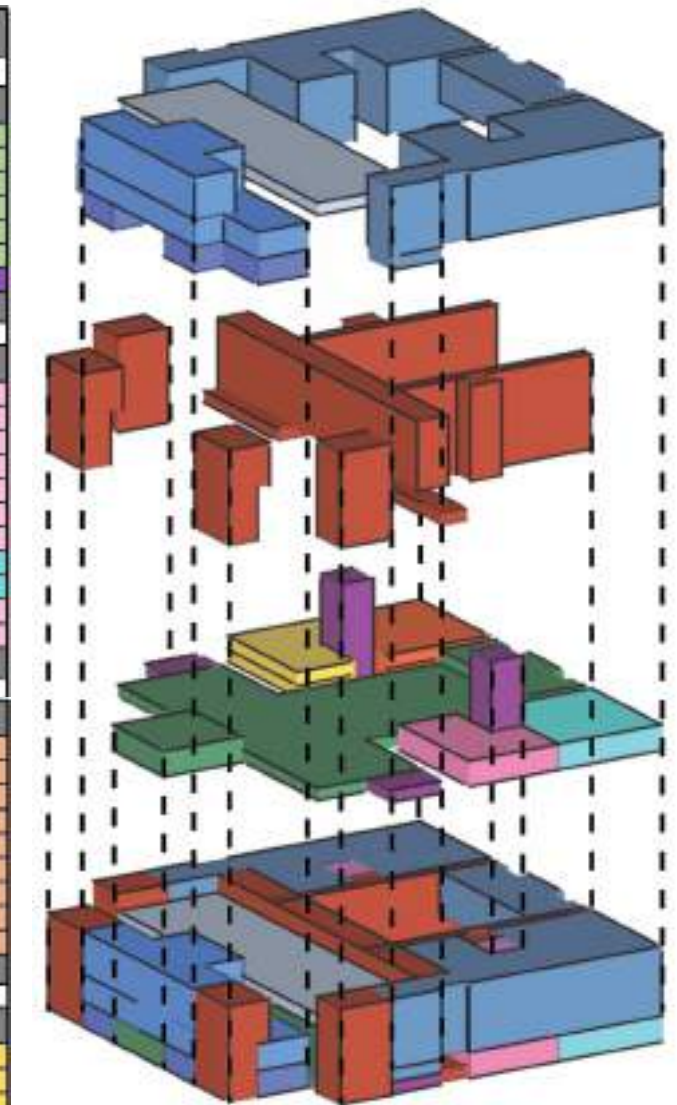
just a physical entry point and can extend far beyond it.

The focus of my design shifted to prioritizing the threshold as a key design element, to create a lasting impression on visitors, and setting the stage for subsequent zones and experiences within the space.

PROGRAMMING AND SQUARE FOOTAGE

PROGRAMMING	
PROCESSION	
TRAIL	5,139 sq.ft
FOREST	8,187 sq.ft
CAVE	9,028 sq.ft
WATER FALLS	12,210 sq.ft
ZENITH	3,914 sq.ft
Activity / Seating / Gathering Spaces	15,000 sq.ft
Toilets	3,981 sq.ft
Total	56,739 Sq.ft
GALLERIES & QUIET ZONE	
Entry & Lounge	1,766 sq.ft
Retail	258 sq.ft
Peco Gallery	2,748 sq.ft
Interactive Gallery	3,693 sq.ft
Library	2,310 sq.ft
Sculpture Garden	3,623 sq.ft
Gallery	6,165 sq.ft
Immersive Space	790 sq.ft
Quiet / Meditation Spaces	5,890 sq.ft
Staff Spaces	1,865 sq.ft
Storage	621 sq.ft
Total	29,428 Sq.ft
RESTAURANT	
Reception and Lounge	750 sq.ft
Restaurant Seating	7,252 sq.ft
Live Kitchen	245 sq.ft
Private Dining	1,112 sq.ft
Buffet / Service area	561 sq.ft
Main Kitchen	792 sq.ft
Bar Counter	365 sq.ft
Bar Seating	4,150 sq.ft
Staff & Support Spaces	1,885 sq.ft
Total	17,842 Sq.ft
WORKSHOP	
Entry & Lounge	966 sq.ft
Retail	983 sq.ft
Open workshop space / Event Space	5,470 sq.ft
Studio Space	1,895 sq.ft
Makers Space	852 sq.ft
Staff Spaces	431 sq.ft
Storage	706 sq.ft
Lockers	198 sq.ft
Total	11,301 Sq.ft
Total	115,210 Sq.ft
Common & Support Facilities (10%)	40,323 Sq.ft
Total	155,533 Sq.ft

BUILDING MASSING DIAGRAM



LEGEND

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| TENANT OFFICE | TENANT OFFICE |
| TOILET | COMMON AREA |
| STAFF/PECO GALLERY | COMMON AMENITIES |
| GALLERY / QUIET ZONE | TENANT RETAIL |
| WORKSHOP | RESTAURANT |
| RESTAURANT | CIRCULATION |

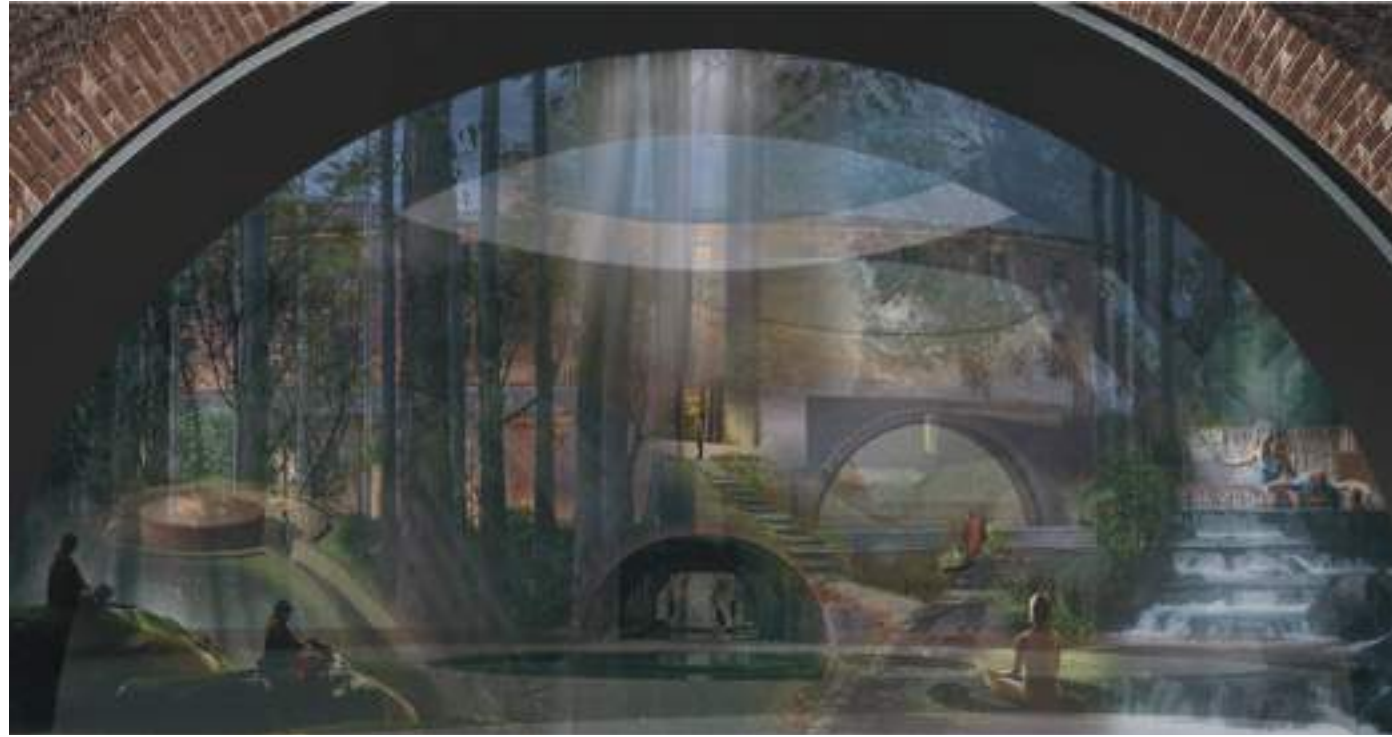


03 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



3.1 DESIGN INTENT | INSPIRATION

DESIGN PROBE - ATMOSPHERE



This collage serves as a visual representation of the serene and tranquil atmosphere that I aspire to create in my design. Through the incorporation of biophilic design principles, with emphasis on multi-sensory and contemplative aspects, I aim to immerse individuals in a space that fosters a deep connection with nature.

The collage exemplifies the environment I envision, one that creates a sense of sanctuary, escape, and rejuvenation providing individuals with a much-needed respite from the fast-paced world we inhabit.

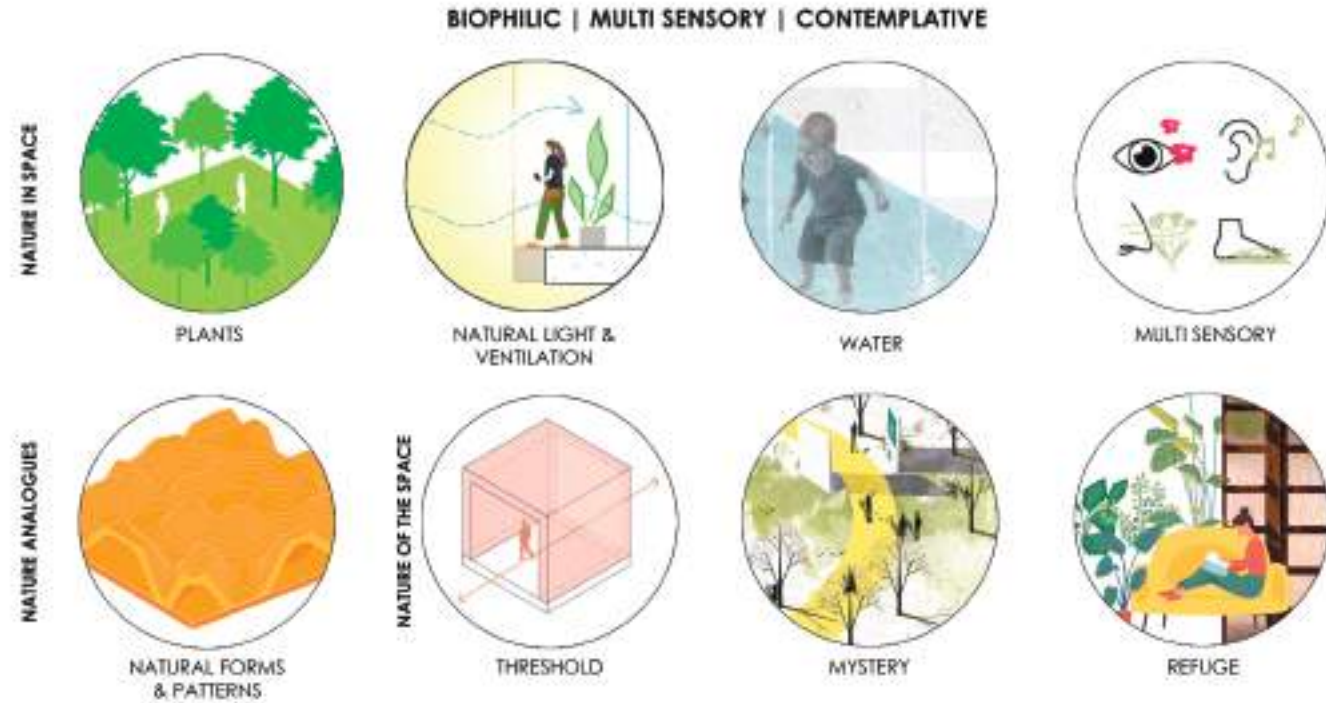
DESIGN PROBE - EXPERIENCE



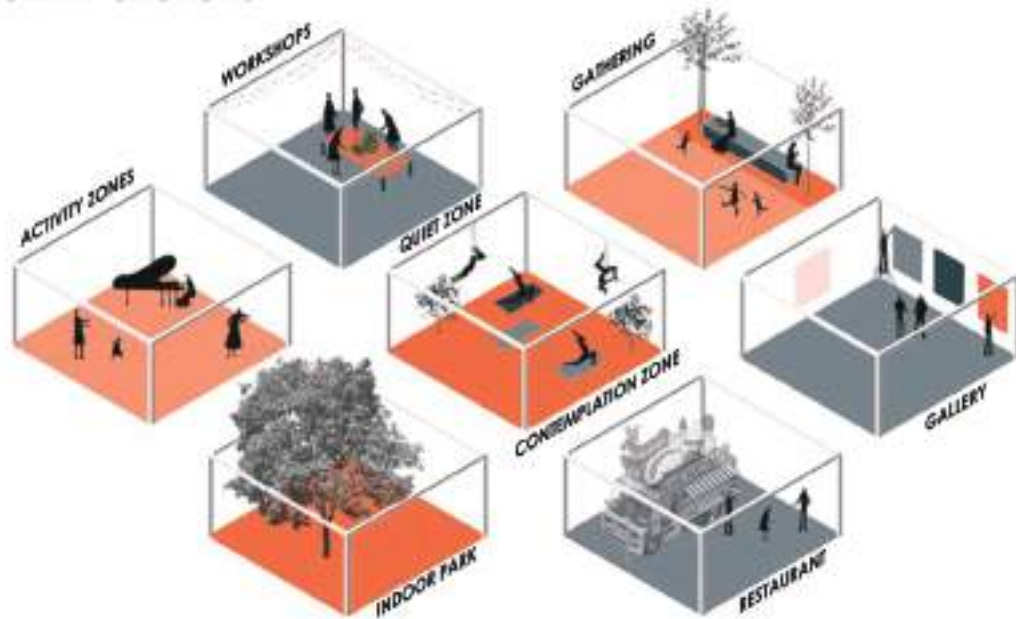
This collage encapsulates the experiential journey that I aim to provide through my design. It portrays carefully crafted natural and architectural elements, creating a harmonious blend that captivates the senses.

It embodies the essence of a space that encourages engagement and restoration, providing a range of experiences that cater to individual preferences and needs. It represents the experiential journey that users can embark on within my design.

DESIGN LANGUAGE

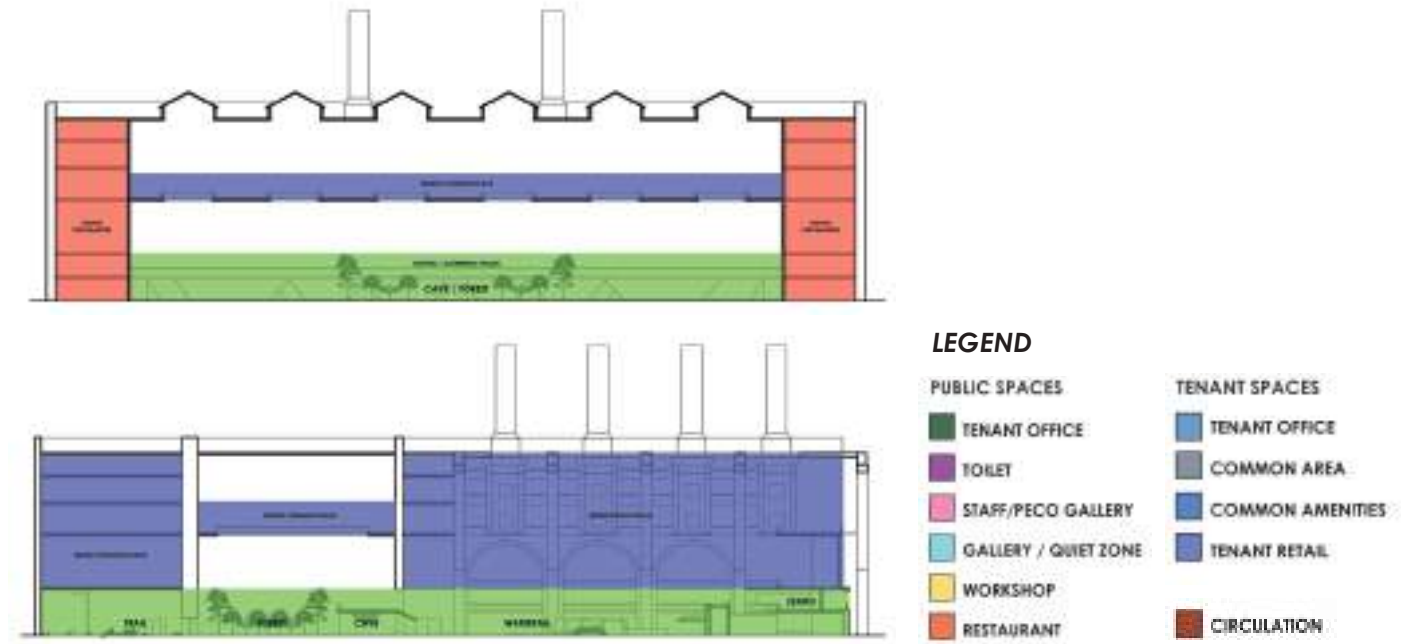


PROGRAM FUNCTIONS



Incorporating Biophillic design with focus on multi-sensory and contemplative design strategies to create a space that provides an escape from the urban chaos and fosters a sense of well-being and restoration.

DESIGN INTENT - ESCAPE PORTAL



Escape Portal is an innovative architectural concept that seeks to redefine the traditional notion of building design and user experience.

It represents a dynamic and transformative space designed to provide a means of escape from the fast-paced Urban environment.

It is envisioned as a mixed use structure that houses public space at the lower levels and commercial spaces in the upper levels.

This vibrant and bustling space is adorned with striking architectural and landscape features. It acts as a hub for diverse activities filled with varied amenities and functions.

The Public space, features an array of captivating attractions including cascading pools, lush greenery, interactive spaces and other

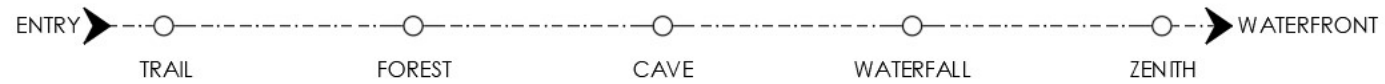
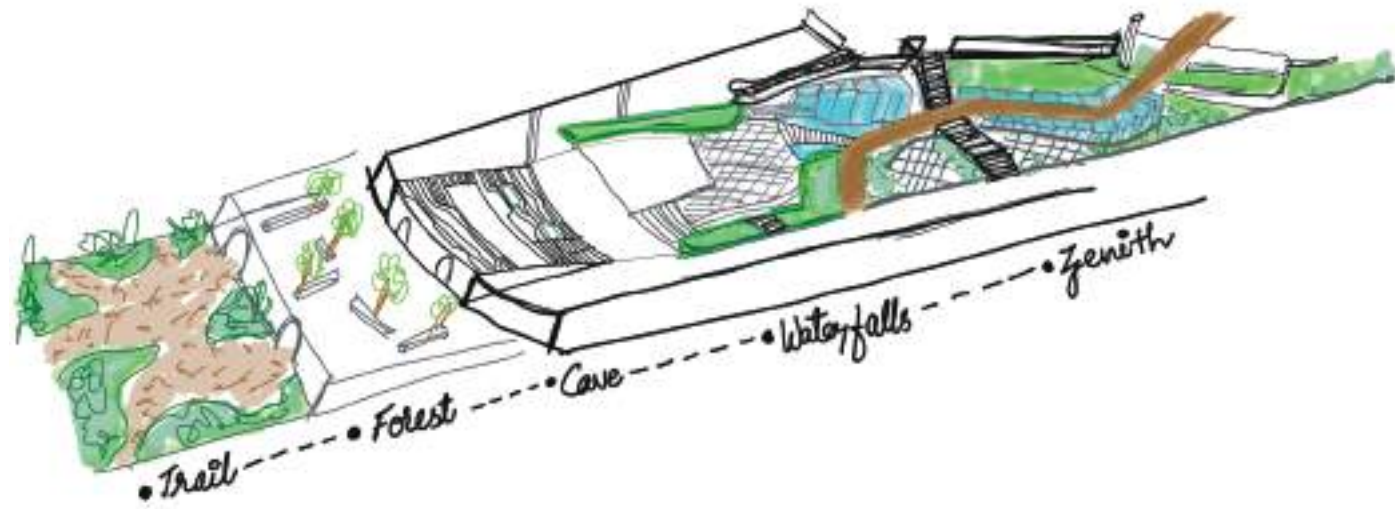
entertainment options.

It hosts gathering spaces, restaurant and bar, gallery spaces, workshops and retail spaces creating an inviting environment for both locals and tourists.

As one ascends through the building, the upper levels transition into private tenant spaces, accommodating offices, co-working areas, conference halls, gym and event spaces, that have visual access to the lower atrium spaces providing a unique work environment.

Overall, The Escape Portal is a structure, where public, retail and commercial spaces intervene. It aims to create a destination that stimulates the senses, fosters well being, and creates a tranquil environment for those who enter its captivating realm.

NATURAL LANDSCAPE AS INSPIRATION



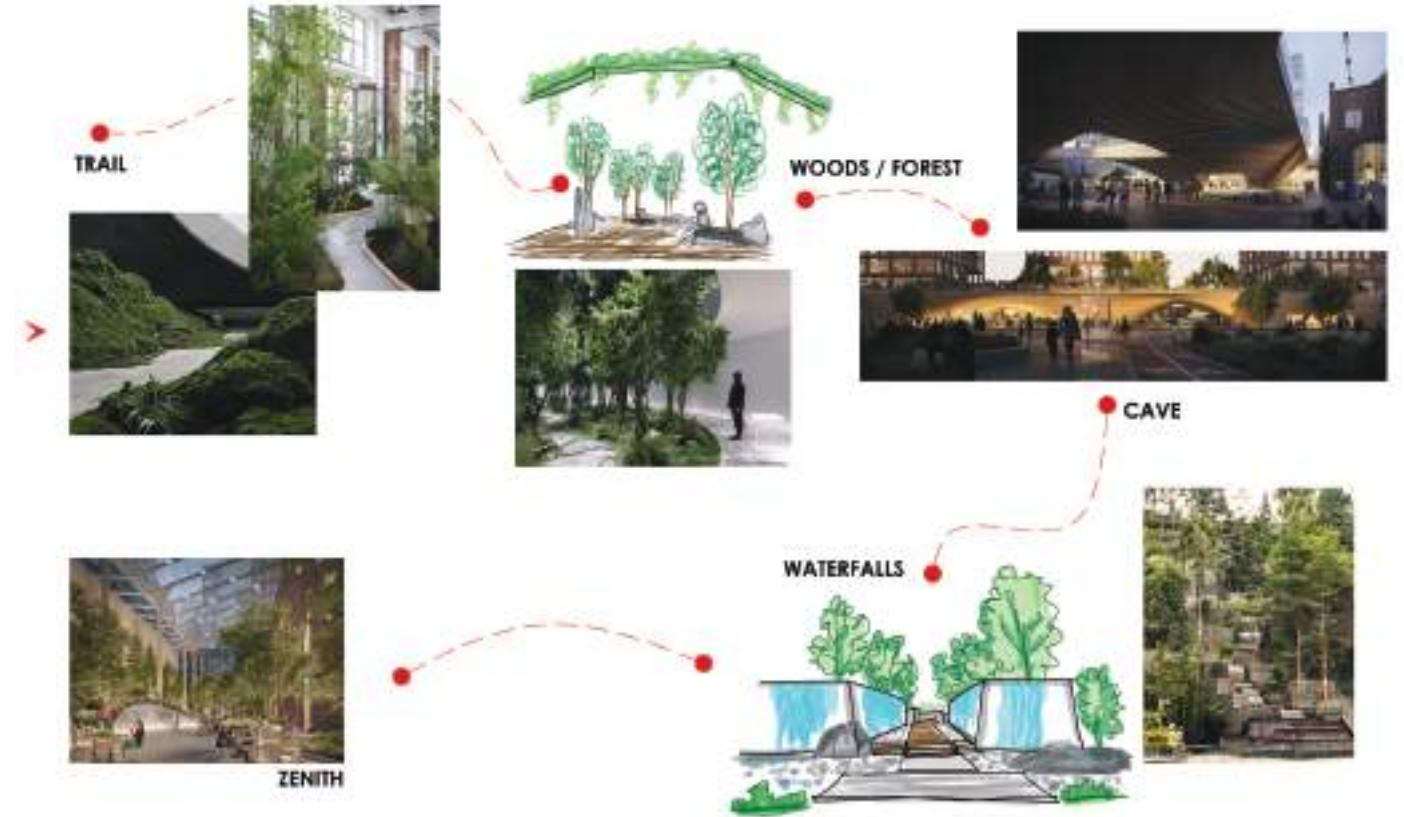
The natural landscape served as the profound inspiration behind the design, and it is through the concepts of **Trail, Forest, Cave, Waterfall,** and **Zenith** that a carefully crafted progression was developed.

The primary objective was to create a journey that gradually unfolded, and rendered **a slow, multi-sensory experience.**

A threshold acts as a progression which gradually draws the user into the space inviting them to embark on a transformative journey.

Ultimately facilitating the users with a **sense of escape** from the pressure of fast paced urban environment and providing them a much-needed opportunity where they can **relax, rejuvenate,** and **unwind.**

ENTRY - - - - - | THRESHOLD - PROCESSION | - - - - - WATERFRONT

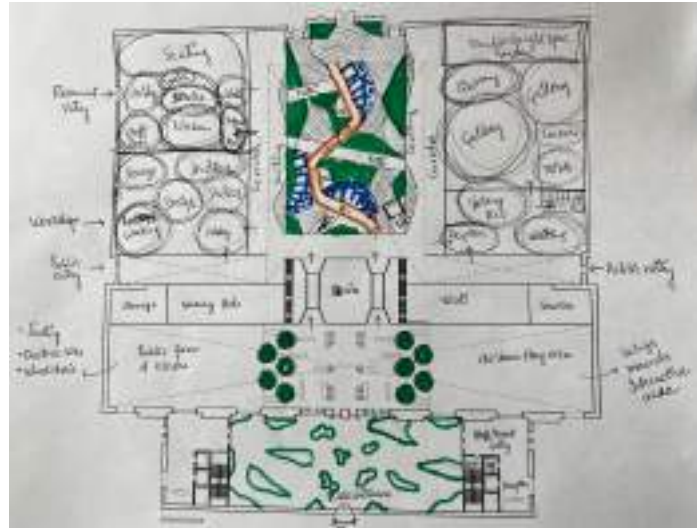


INSPIRATION IMAGES



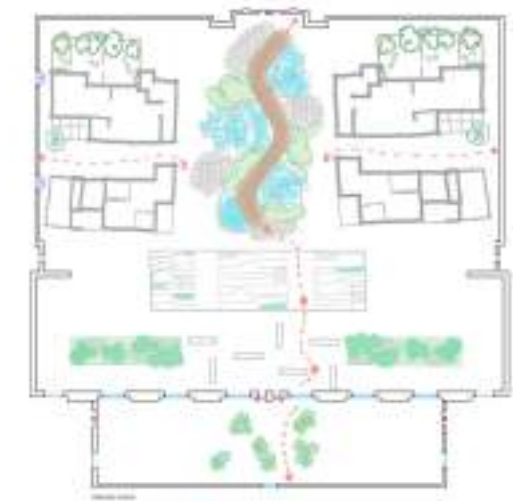
3.3 SCHEMATIC DESIGN

SCHEMATICS

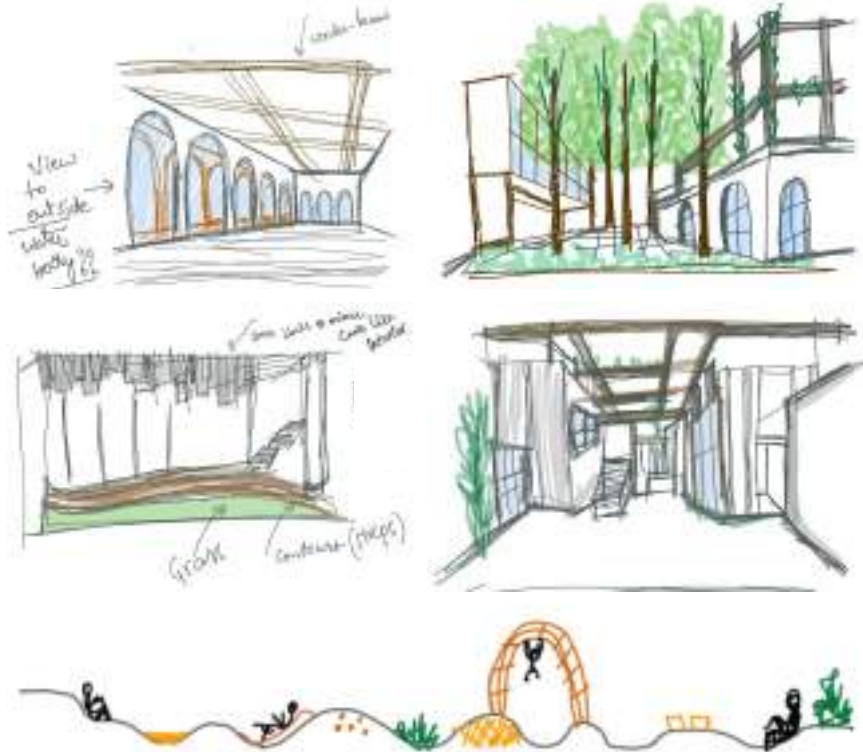
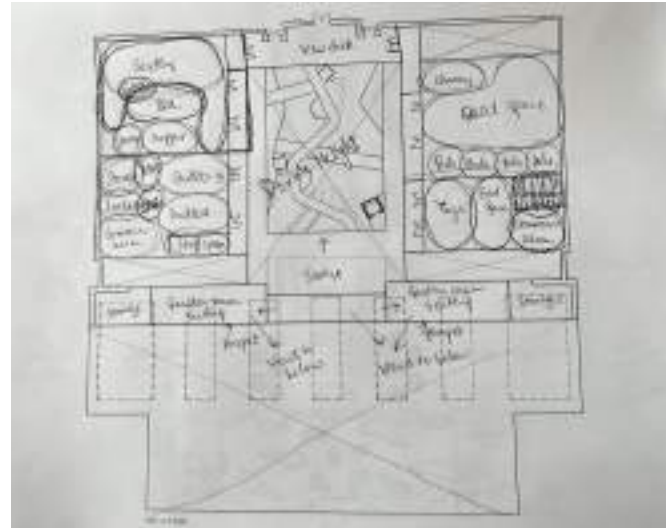


FIRST FLOOR

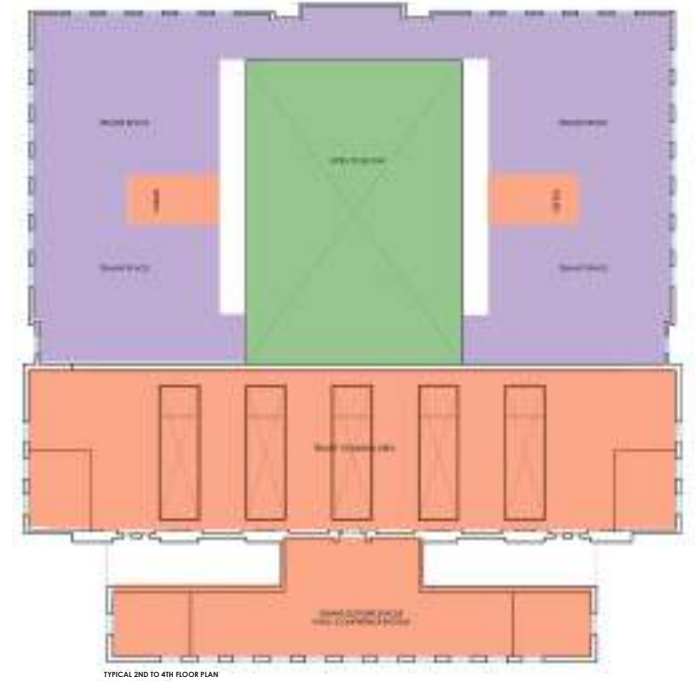
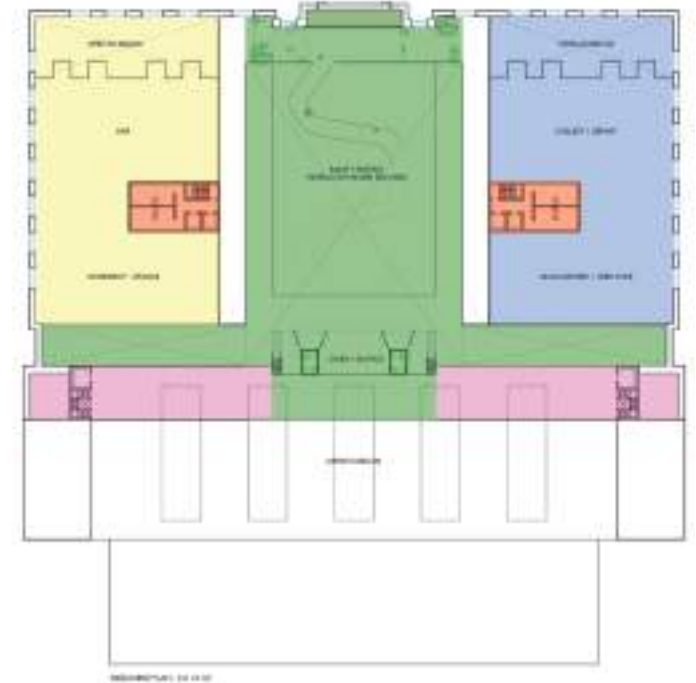
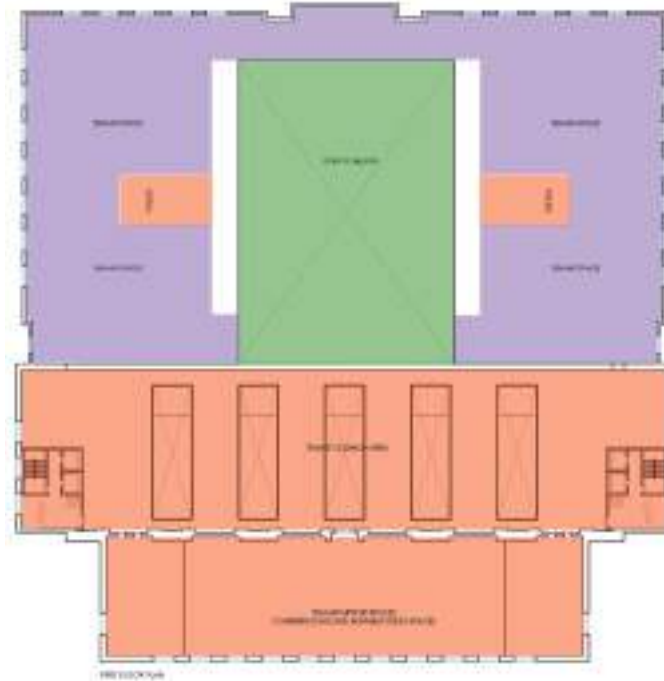
CONCEPT SKETCHES



MEZZANINE FLOOR

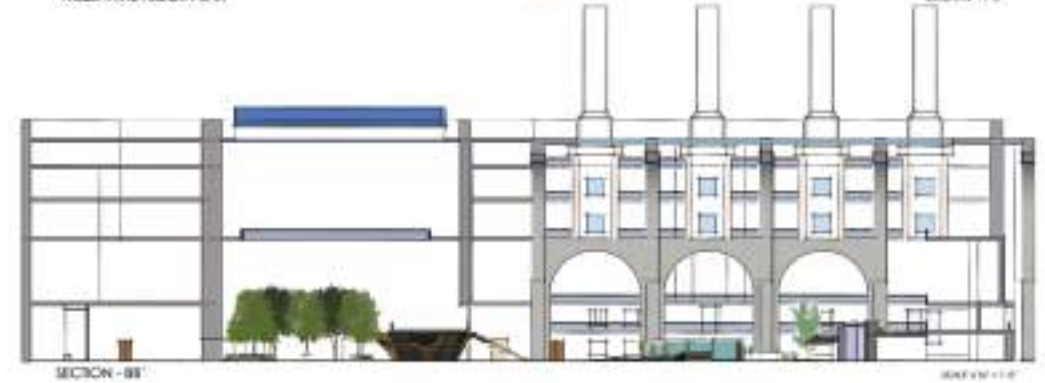
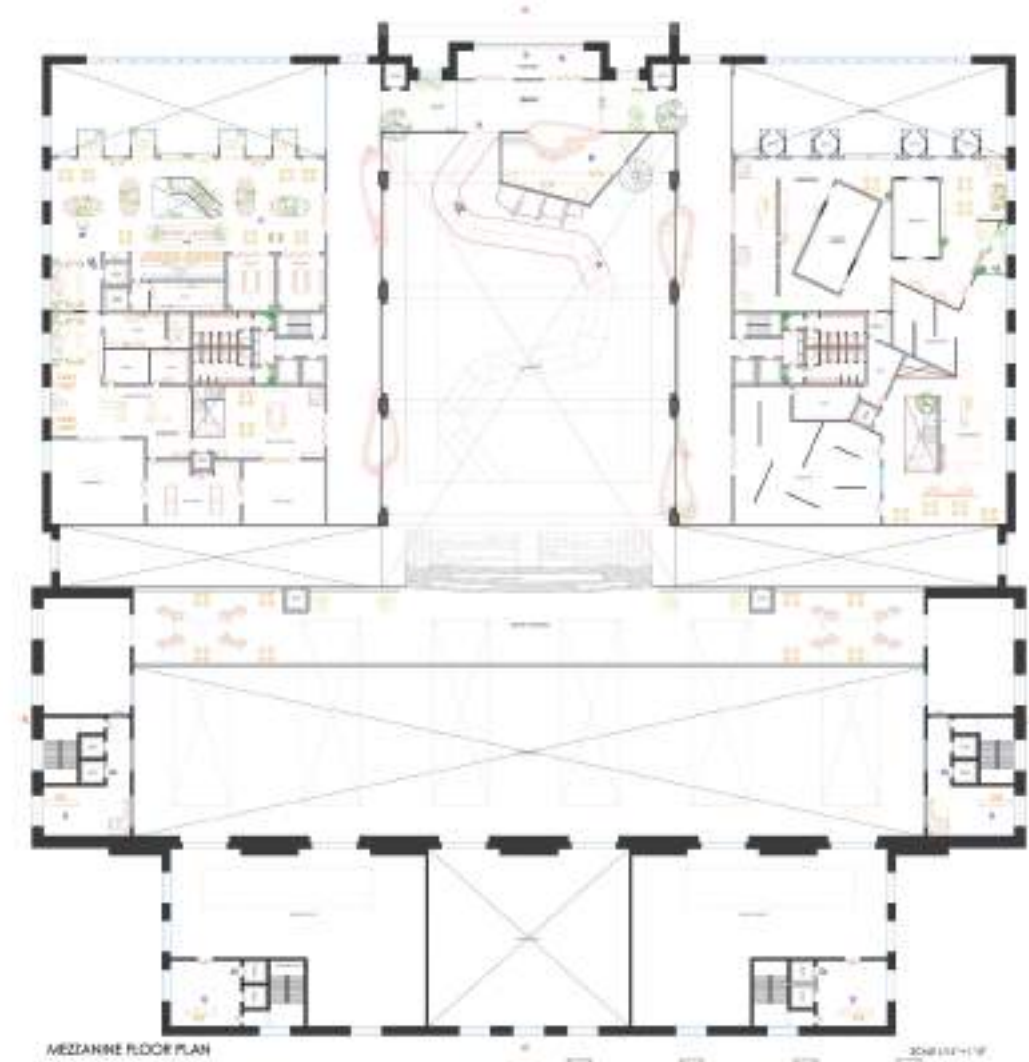
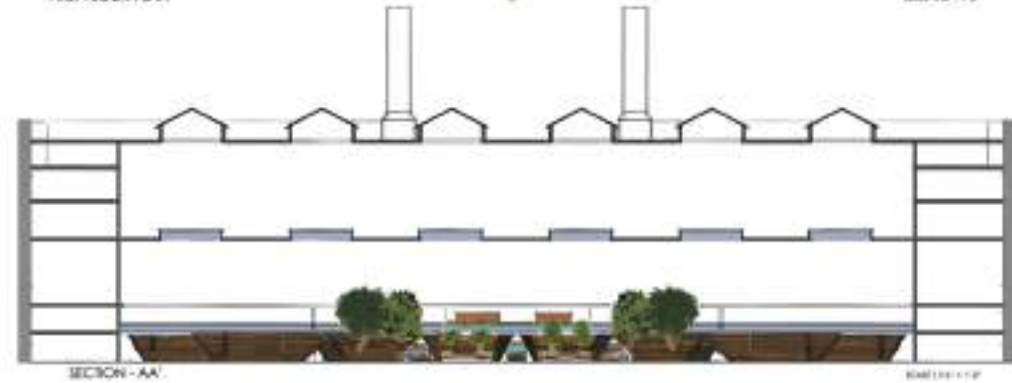
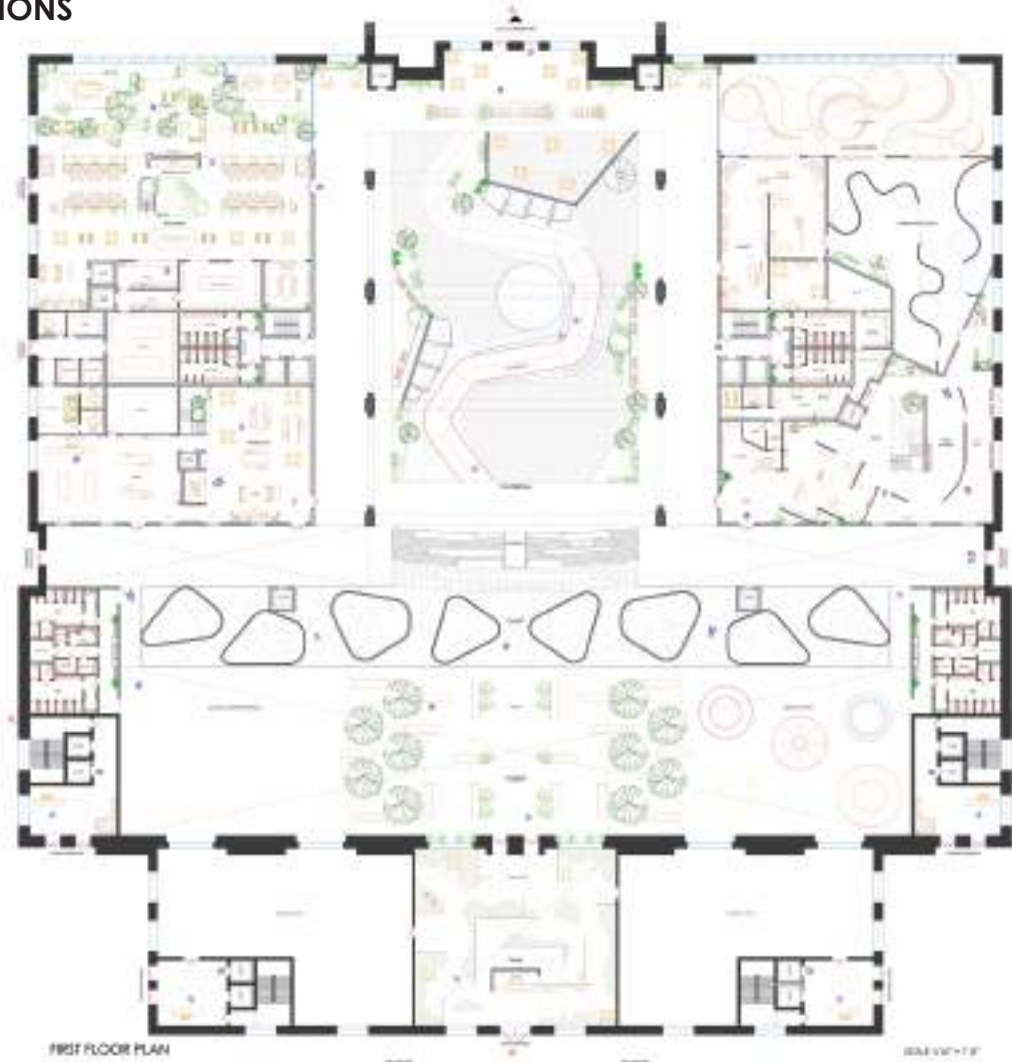


BLOCKING



3.4 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

FLOOR PLANS & SECTIONS



TRAIL | FOREST | CAVE

After the initial planning phase, my design direction shifted towards prioritizing the development of the threshold as the key element.

While the other zones, including galleries, workshops, restaurant and bar, were not the primary focus, they were considered and explored to serve as integral components of the overall design vision.

The schematic design of these zones helped inform the design intent, ensuring a seamless integration of the overarching narrative and providing complementary experiences to the central threshold.

The goal in designing the Threshold was to create a gradual and transformative experience from the very beginning.

This intentional approach acknowledges the power of a well-designed entry experience in setting the tone for the entire journey, inviting users to disconnect from the outer world and embrace a restorative, immersive and rejuvenating environment.



FOREST & CAVE PERSPECTIVE



CONCEPT SKETCH



WATERFALL | ZENITH



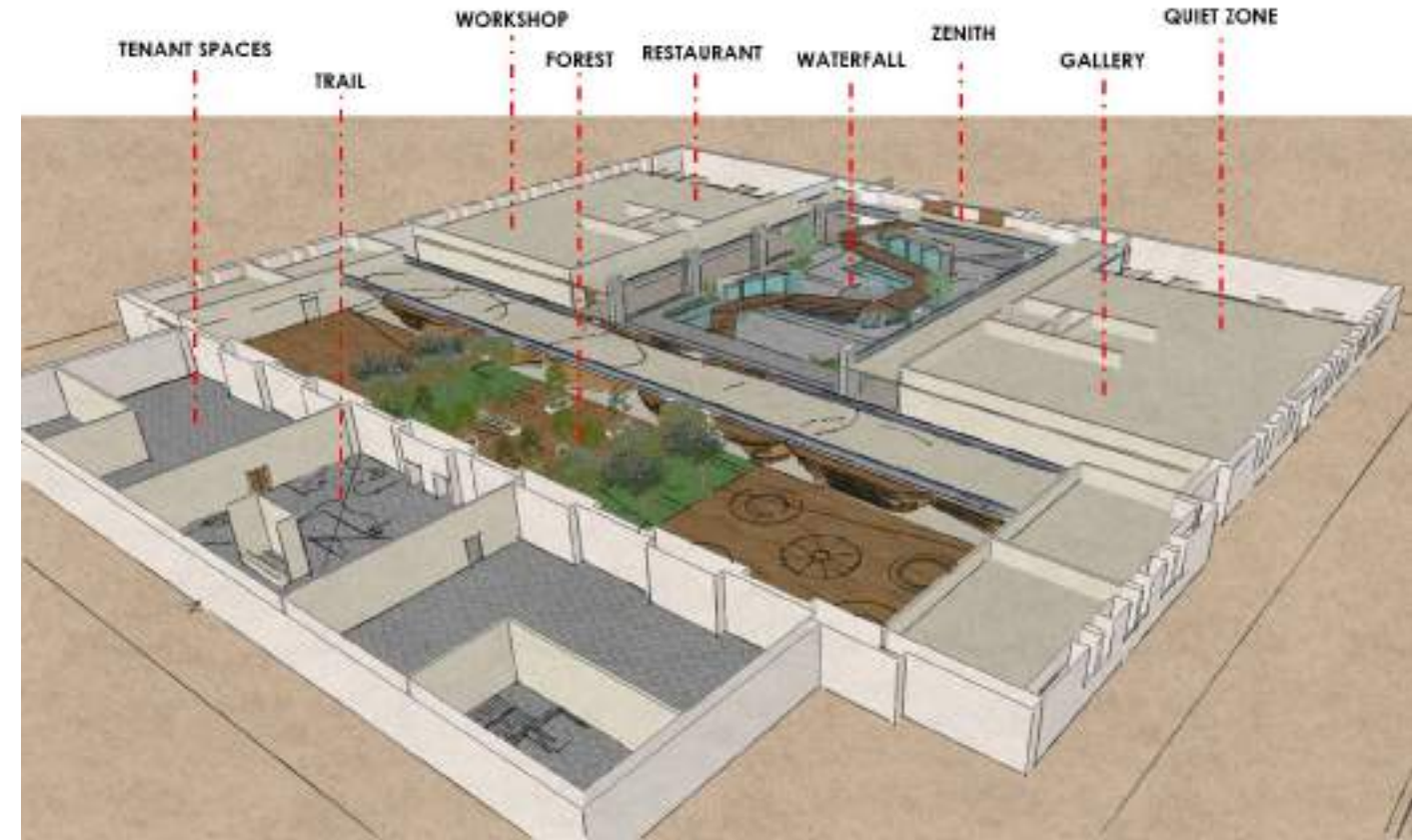
WATERFALL PERSPECTIVE



CONCEPT SKETCH



AXONOMETRIC VIEW



CENTRAL ATRIUM PERSPECTIVE



CONCEPT SKETCH



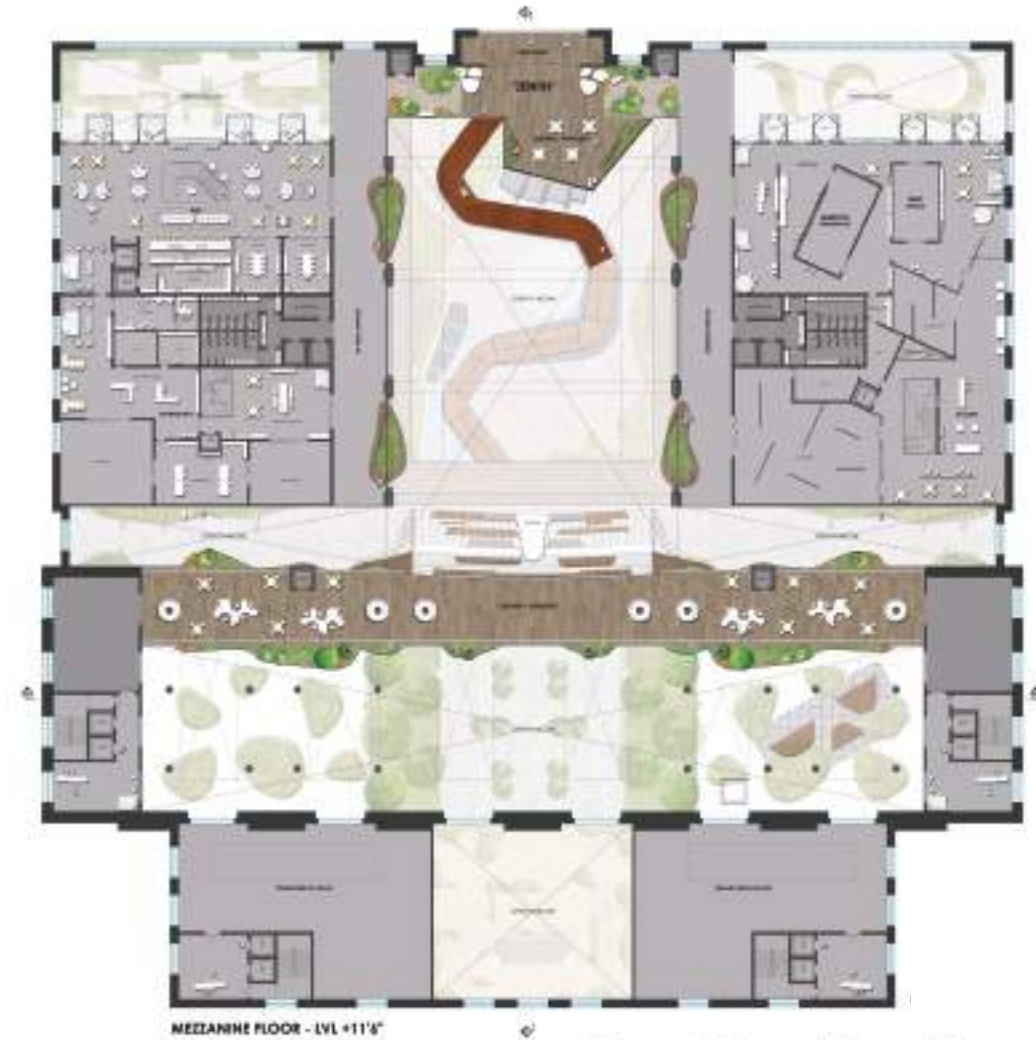
FLOOR PLANS & SECTIONS



FIRST FLOOR



SECTION - AA'



MEZZANINE FLOOR - LVL +11'0"



SECTION - BB'



PERSPECTIVES



TRAIL - Information desk



FOREST - Seating & Gathering space

PERSPECTIVES



CAVE - Steps overlooking the waterfall



WATERFALL

FLOOR PLANS & SECTIONS



FIRST FLOOR



SECTION - AA'



MEZZANINE FLOOR - LVL +111'



SECTION - BB'



TRAIL | FOREST | CAVE



WATERFALL | ZENITH



THE JOURNEY

Through the following pages, embark on a captivating journey of exploring each zone:

Trail | Forest | Cave | Waterfall | Zenith

Each zone presents its own treasures as you traverse the trail, venture through the forest, navigate the cave, behold the waterfall, and ascend to the zenith, rendering a slow multi sensory experience.

The threshold, creates a sense of escape facilitating relaxation and rejuvenation.



TRAIL

AXONOMETRIC VIEW



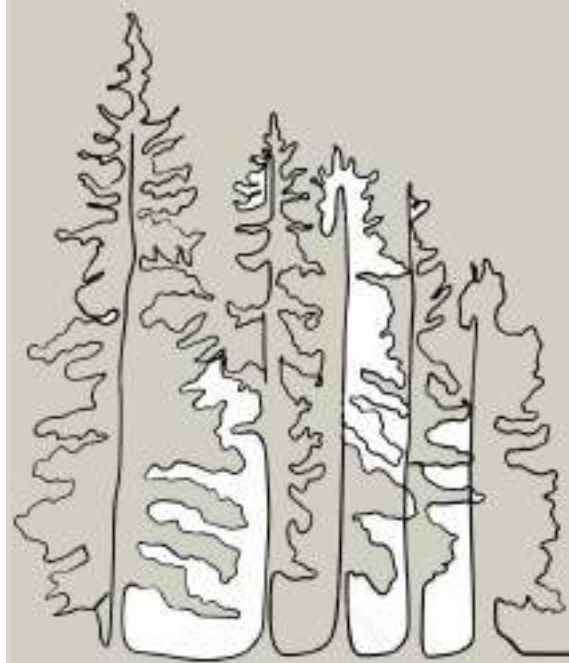
PERSPECTIVES



TRAIL - Pathway & Information desk



TRAIL - Pathway & Private nooks



FOREST | CAVE

PERSPECTIVES



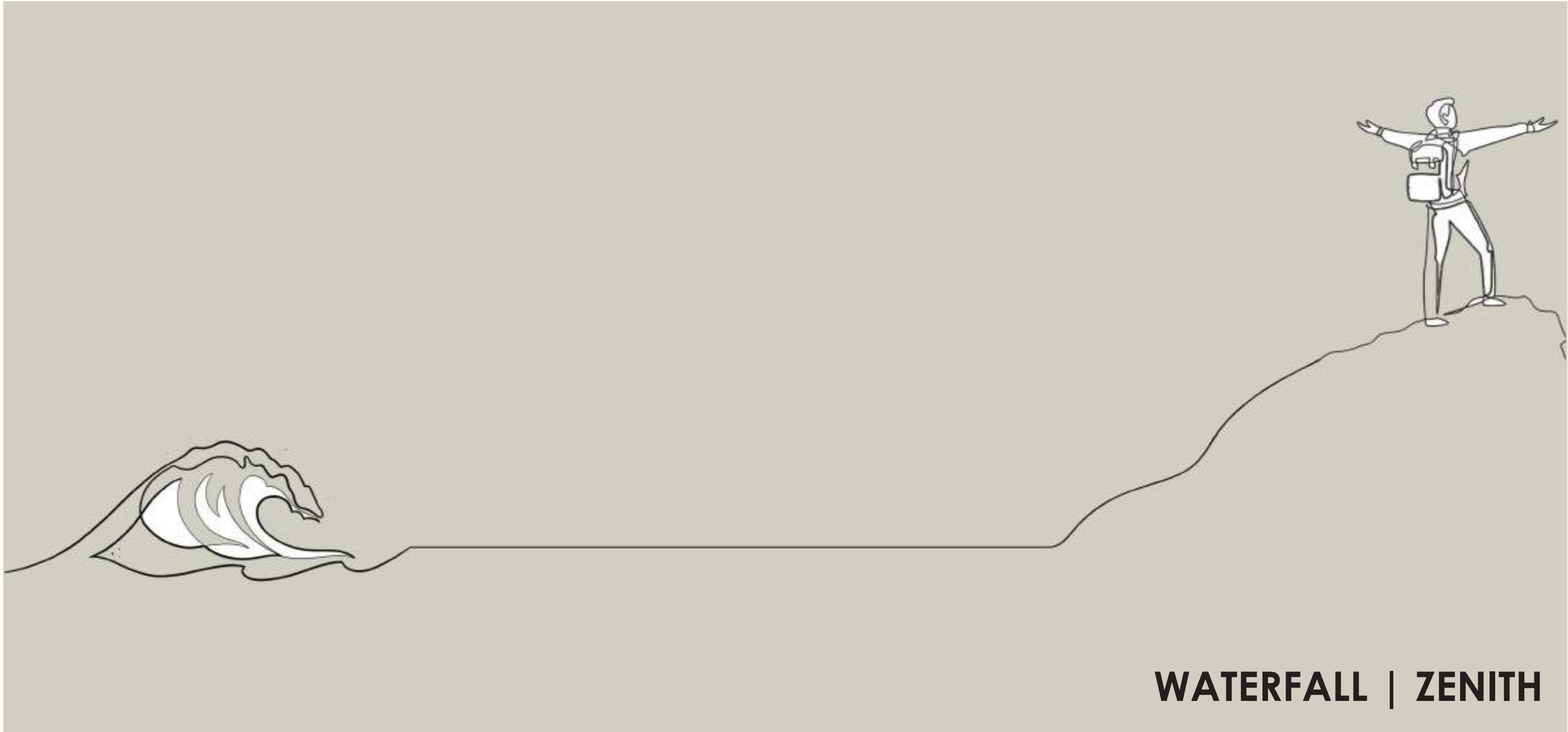
FOREST - Seating & Gathering space | CAVE



FOREST - Pathway & Seating | CAVE



FOREST - view from Mezzanine floor



WATERFALL | ZENITH

AXONOMETRIC VIEW



PERSPECTIVES



WATERFALL



WATERFALL - Steps/ Seating Overlooking waterfalls

PERSPECTIVES



WATERFALL - Overall view



WATERFALL - close up

PERSPECTIVES



WATERFALL - Interactive water feature

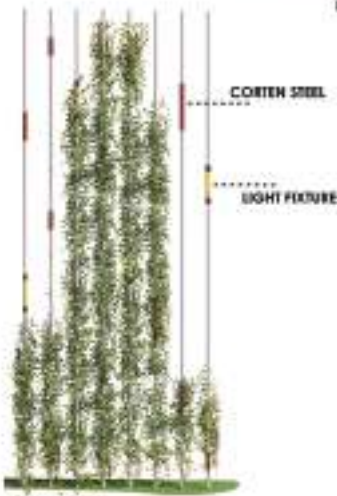


WATERFALL - Steps/ Seating Overlooking waterfalls

MATERIAL PALETTE



CUSTOM FURNITURE AND FIXTURES



PARTITION



BENCH SEATING



COLUMN | HIGH TABLE



SEATING | PLANTER



SEATING | PLANTER



SEATING | PLANTER



BENCH | TABLE | BIKE RACK



BENCH | BIKE RACK

FINAL PRESENTATION BOARDS

BOARD 1

VERBAL PRESENTATION

Good morning, everyone! My name is Hanisha, & I am honored to present my thesis today on 'The Escape Portal for Urban Dwellers to Relax, Rejuvenate, & Unwind. In today's fast-paced world, stress has become a major concern. The relentless pace of urban life, constant stimulation, & lack of access to nature have significantly impacted the well-being of individuals. It is evident that we need restorative environments integrated within the very fabric of our cities.

The field of restorative environments which emerged in the 1980's is rooted in two main theories: Attention Restoration Theory (ART) & Stress Reduction Theory (SRT). Rachel Kaplan and Stephen Kaplan, in ART, recognize the feeling of being away | extent | fascination & compatibility as the four main properties of restorative environments. Roger Ulrich's, SRT theory, describes the urban environment, lacking greenery or water features as settings which can cause cognitive & emotional fatigue, due to their limited aesthetic

potential & the presence of noise, traffic & a high number of people.

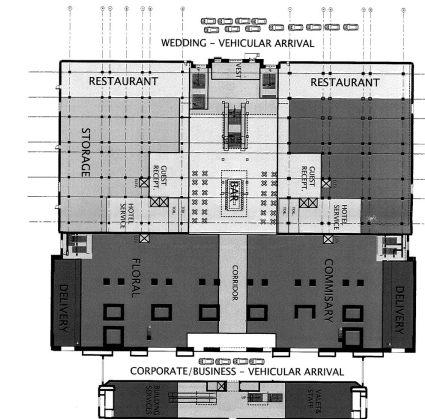
These theories have encouraged development of urban green spaces as a means of providing relief from stress & promoting well-being. However, access to these spaces is often limited due to the scarcity of available free land. Moreover, existing green spaces tend to prioritize the visual aspect & overlook the potential to engage other senses fully.

Recognizing this need, my research focuses on exploring potential indoor opportunities to create improved restorative environments, where urban dwellers can find solace, rejuvenate & unwind.

To inform my design process, I have looked at various precedent projects, including the Ira Keller Fountain & Sancaklar Mosque, which have helped me identify key principles such as gradual

DIGITAL PRESENTATION SLIDES

EXISTING FLOOR PLAN



SOURCE: JKRP ARCHITECTS

BUILDING EXTERIOR CONDITIONS



DIGITAL PRESENTATION SLIDES



PROGRAMMING	MEASUREMENT
ENTRANCE	1,000 sq ft
TRAIL	2,000 sq ft
FOREST	3,000 sq ft
CAVE	4,000 sq ft
WATERFALL	5,000 sq ft
ZENITH	6,000 sq ft
RESTAURANT & BAR	7,000 sq ft
GALLERY	8,000 sq ft
WORKSHOP	9,000 sq ft
QUIET ZONE	10,000 sq ft
OFFICE	11,000 sq ft
RETAIL	12,000 sq ft
RESIDENTIAL	13,000 sq ft
COMMUNITY CENTER	14,000 sq ft
LIBRARY	15,000 sq ft
ART STUDIO	16,000 sq ft
CAFETERIA	17,000 sq ft
GYMNASIUM	18,000 sq ft
THEATER	19,000 sq ft
CONCERT HALL	20,000 sq ft
PLAZA	21,000 sq ft
PARK	22,000 sq ft
TRAIL	23,000 sq ft
FOREST	24,000 sq ft
CAVE	25,000 sq ft
WATERFALL	26,000 sq ft
ZENITH	27,000 sq ft
RESTAURANT & BAR	28,000 sq ft
GALLERY	29,000 sq ft
WORKSHOP	30,000 sq ft
QUIET ZONE	31,000 sq ft
OFFICE	32,000 sq ft
RETAIL	33,000 sq ft
RESIDENTIAL	34,000 sq ft
COMMUNITY CENTER	35,000 sq ft
LIBRARY	36,000 sq ft
ART STUDIO	37,000 sq ft
CAFETERIA	38,000 sq ft
GYMNASIUM	39,000 sq ft
THEATER	40,000 sq ft
CONCERT HALL	41,000 sq ft
PLAZA	42,000 sq ft
PARK	43,000 sq ft
TRAIL	44,000 sq ft
FOREST	45,000 sq ft
CAVE	46,000 sq ft
WATERFALL	47,000 sq ft
ZENITH	48,000 sq ft
RESTAURANT & BAR	49,000 sq ft
GALLERY	50,000 sq ft
WORKSHOP	51,000 sq ft
QUIET ZONE	52,000 sq ft
OFFICE	53,000 sq ft
RETAIL	54,000 sq ft
RESIDENTIAL	55,000 sq ft
COMMUNITY CENTER	56,000 sq ft
LIBRARY	57,000 sq ft
ART STUDIO	58,000 sq ft
CAFETERIA	59,000 sq ft
GYMNASIUM	60,000 sq ft
THEATER	61,000 sq ft
CONCERT HALL	62,000 sq ft
PLAZA	63,000 sq ft
PARK	64,000 sq ft
TRAIL	65,000 sq ft
FOREST	66,000 sq ft
CAVE	67,000 sq ft
WATERFALL	68,000 sq ft
ZENITH	69,000 sq ft
RESTAURANT & BAR	70,000 sq ft
GALLERY	71,000 sq ft
WORKSHOP	72,000 sq ft
QUIET ZONE	73,000 sq ft
OFFICE	74,000 sq ft
RETAIL	75,000 sq ft
RESIDENTIAL	76,000 sq ft
COMMUNITY CENTER	77,000 sq ft
LIBRARY	78,000 sq ft
ART STUDIO	79,000 sq ft
CAFETERIA	80,000 sq ft
GYMNASIUM	81,000 sq ft
THEATER	82,000 sq ft
CONCERT HALL	83,000 sq ft
PLAZA	84,000 sq ft
PARK	85,000 sq ft
TRAIL	86,000 sq ft
FOREST	87,000 sq ft
CAVE	88,000 sq ft
WATERFALL	89,000 sq ft
ZENITH	90,000 sq ft
RESTAURANT & BAR	91,000 sq ft
GALLERY	92,000 sq ft
WORKSHOP	93,000 sq ft
QUIET ZONE	94,000 sq ft
OFFICE	95,000 sq ft
RETAIL	96,000 sq ft
RESIDENTIAL	97,000 sq ft
COMMUNITY CENTER	98,000 sq ft
LIBRARY	99,000 sq ft
ART STUDIO	100,000 sq ft

procession into the space, creating immersive and interactive experiences, and effective strategies to generate restoration.

Through my case studies and survey, collecting data on the experiences and preferences of urban dwellers, I observed that urban dwellers prefer spaces that have access to nature & supported physical activities. They also prioritized privacy & safety.

When it came to site selection, along with access to nature, additional criteria were that the building be located in an urban neighborhood & have ample square footage.

The Historic PECO Delaware Station power plant is located in Fishtown, Philadelphia. The urban proximity and its 1,000-foot stretch of waterfront adjacent to Penn treaty park made this an ideal site choice.

This site is currently under redevelopment into a mixed-use building. So I couldn't go inside the building but I was able to obtain old drawings & photographs of the site.

By bringing together all these findings and understanding the characteristics of different types of restoration, I wanted the space planning and design of my escape portal to succeed in disconnecting the user from the outer world, while providing various zones that cater to different activities and moods.

Which brings us to my Initial programming

- The Entry threshold,
- Gathering spaces
- Activity zones
- Galleries
- Quiet zones
- Workshops
- Restaurant and Bar

Initially I focused on developing all these zones. But after the initial planning phase, as I progressed further in my thesis and through our discussions, it became apparent that the entry threshold can serve more than just a physical entry point and can extend far beyond it.



BOARD 2

My design direction shifted towards prioritizing the development of the threshold as the key element. The goal was to create a lasting impression on visitors, and using the threshold to set the stage for the subsequent zones and experiences within the space.

While the other zones, including galleries, workshops, restaurant and bar, were not the primary focus, they were considered and explored to serve as integral components of the overall design vision.

The schematic design of these zones helped inform the design intent, ensuring a seamless integration of the overarching narrative and providing complementary experiences to the central threshold.

The goal is to create a progression through the threshold which renders a slow multi-sensory experience and gradually draws the user into the space, providing an escape from the urban chaos, fostering a sense of well-being and restoration.

This intentional approach acknowledges the power of a well designed entry experience in setting the tone for the entire journey, inviting users to disconnect from the outer world and embrace a restorative, immersive and rejuvenating environment.

The Inspiration for my design was the natural Landscape through the concepts of

- Trail
- Forest
- Cave
- Waterfall and
- Zenith

Each zone presents its own treasures as you traverse the trail, venture through the forest, navigate the cave, behold the waterfall, and ascend to the zenith, rendering a slow multi sensory experience. The threshold, creates a sense of escape facilitating relaxation and rejuvenation.



BOARD 3



BOARD 4

VERBAL PRESENTATION

THE TRAIL

The first space you enter is the Trail where you are greeted by the Front desk and a 20' high living wall. The path is made of gravel to engage both your sense of touch and hearing.

The gentle crunching sound as the gravel moves beneath your weight creates a rhythmic harmony as one progresses through the space. Unlike traditional straight pathways, this gravel path meanders through the space drawing the user deeper, encouraging exploration and curiosity.

Along the path, custom-built partitions are strategically placed, creating private and semi-private nooks within the space. These partitions create cozy and intimate areas where you can pause, relax, or engage in conversation.

This thoughtfully designed space, which is the starting point in the procession invites you to embark on a sensory adventure and encourages you to explore, discover, and find moments of tranquility within this space.

THE FOREST

Upon crossing the Trail, you enter the Forest zone. The atmosphere transforms as you find yourself surrounded by tall trees and the space opens to soaring 40-foot-high ceilings. The walkway continues through this zone, with the towering trees on either side.

As the greenery evokes a sense of tranquility the refreshing smell from citrus trees further adds to the sensory experience. The sun rays that come through the huge skylights above filter through the leaves, casting a gentle play of light and shadow on the pathway, enhancing the serene ambiance.

To the right of the walkway, you will find gathering spaces that are designed to encourage social interactions. These spaces are carefully arranged amidst the trees, providing a tranquil setting for people to come together, relax, and engage in conversations. Soft grassy patches invite visitors to sit and relax, fostering a sense of connection with both nature and one another.

To the left you encounter the kids zone designed to cater

for the younger visitors. It features play structures and interactive installations.

THE CAVE

As you continue moving through the pathway, faint water sounds begin to fill the air, intriguing your curiosity. The source of the sound remains hidden, urging you to keep walking and uncover the mystery.

Gradually, you enter the cave zone, the organically curved walls and passages and the sudden drop of ceiling to 10 feet high, creates the experience of truly walking through a cave as you navigate through the winding paths.

THE WATERFALL

Emerging from the cave, you encounter magnificent waterfalls, and the ceiling opens up to an expansive skylight at 90 feet, which is adorned with custom lights and live foliage hanging down.

Carefully designed seating spaces and interactive features invite you to engage with the environment, creating an immersive experience. You can feel the cool mist from the waterfall on your skin, heightening your senses and connecting you with nature.

THE ZENITH

A 10-foot wide Corten steel ramp guides you further along the journey. As you walk along the ramp, you have a closer look at the cascading waterfalls, allowing you to appreciate their grandeur. The rhythmic sound of water accompanies you, as you progress to the final stop of your journey.

Finally, you reach the zenith at the mezzanine level, elevated at 11'-6" and from this vantage point, you are rewarded with a breathtaking view of the Delaware River. The elevated position offers a sense of serenity and a unique perspective on the surrounding landscape.

In conclusion, by incorporating biophilic design with emphasis on multi-sensory & contemplative design strategies the progression invites the visitors to embark on an experience, that renders a deep connection with nature, creating a portal of escape from the stress – a place to relax, rejuvenate, and unwind.



IMAGE | SEATING OVERLOOKING WATERFALL SCENE

CUSTOM FIXTURES & FURNITURE



These are the custom furniture and fixtures which have been carefully designed throughout the threshold.

A few concept sketches informing my design intent.

Coming to the material palette a deliberate choice was made to incorporate natural materials to symbolize and represent the essence of nature.

Natural stone, wood, slate and travertine were used throughout the space to establish a seamless integration between the built environment and the natural world.

The choice of Corten steel for the ramp was driven by its unique oxidizing properties, which align with the ever-changing nature of the environment. The evolving patina of Corten steel mirrors the transformative qualities of the natural world.

Over time, the steel's surface develops a rich, earthy hue, reminiscent of the weathered textures found in the natural environment. This dynamic oxidation process creates a sense of authenticity and visual interest, making the ramp a captivating element.

THANK YOU.



FINAL THESIS PRESENTATION PIN UP

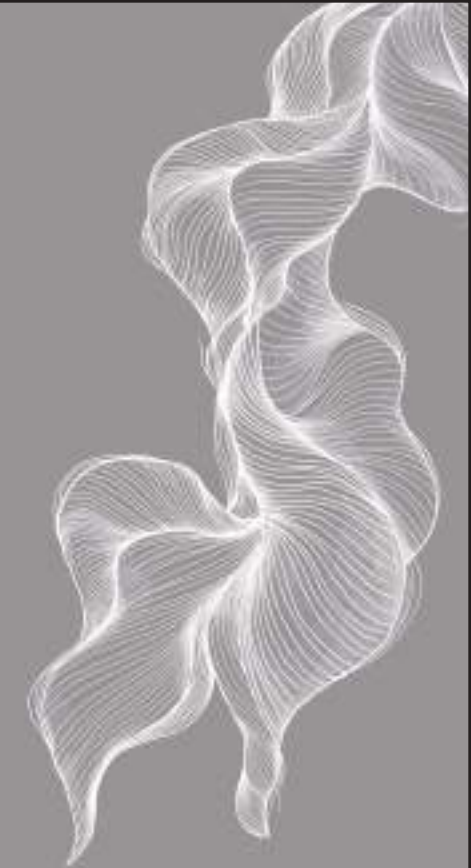
WALKTHROUGH

Go to this link or scan the qr code to view the walkthrough video.

Link : <https://youtu.be/WnsmEBpRcgo>



QR CODE



05 APPENDIX

5.1 DESIGN PROBES

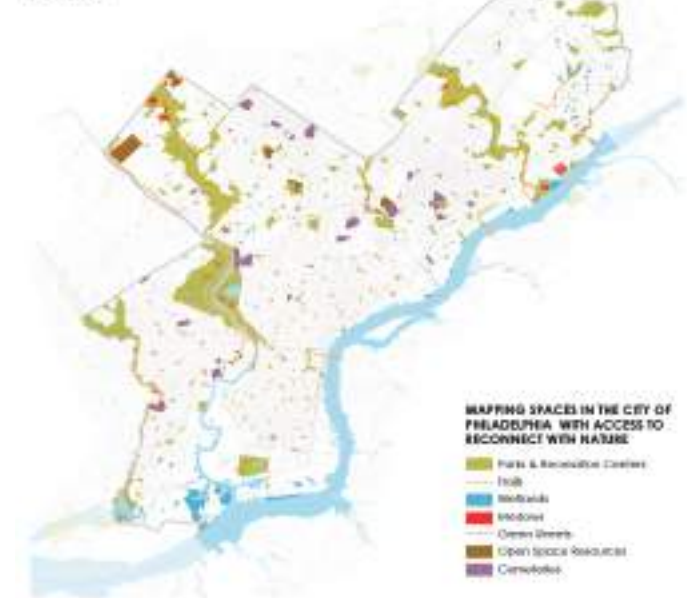
DESIGN PROBE - MATERIALITY

INSPIRED FROM NATURE
RAW | ORGANIC | EARTHY | PLEASANT | SENSORY



DESIGN PROBE - SCALE & MAPPING

DESIGN PROBE - 3
MAPPING



MAP BY THE TRUST FOR LAND PARK SCORE



ANALYZES PUBLIC ACCESS TO EXISTING PARKS AND OPEN SPACES AND THE AREAS THAT NEED IMPROVEMENT



INSPIRATION
WEAVER BIRDS NEST
AND GRAVITY YOGA / MEDITATION
REDUCES STRESS AND ANXIETY



THE NESTED SWING

**INSTALLATION - PUBLIC
PARKS - COLLEGE OPEN
SPACES**

A PRIVATE SPACE - REFUGE
TAKE A MOMENT TO
UNWIND
A PLACE OF SOLACE
PEACEFUL
PART OF NATURE - WITH IN
NATURE
COMFORT



5.2 PRECEDENT STUDY



INTRODUCTION

Named 50% Cloud, this unusual cluster of buildings created by Chinese local artist Luo Xu manifests as red brick mounds that mushroom within Dongfeng Yun Town.

The buildings look like a mega art installation and half of a cloud that undulates in the sky. They feature solid facades, curved contours and volumes set at staggering heights.

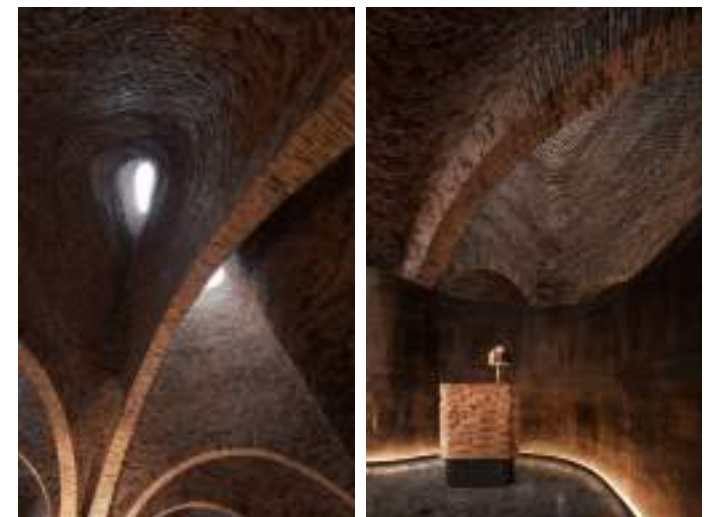
DESIGN

Composed entirely of locally produced red bricks, sans a single steel bar or nail, these unorthodox, fantastical mounds exist between the realms of land art and architecture and are described as a 'utopia built on red soil'.

Skylights which are circular openings cut into the roof let in filtered daylight, while other sources of natural light are placed evenly throughout the brick architecture.

Guests sitting inside can perceive an excellent interplay of filtered sunshine and cloud shadows, lending the cavernous space warmth and a theatrical charm.

The elements inside are planned and placed according to how the light shifts during the day and hits the bare, rough brick walls, creating interesting spatial arrangements.





FLOOR PLAN

Leafy trees punctuate the brick sculptures outside and accompany the front steps, and a few of them find their way inside the restaurant as well, overlooking seating booths.

The space is enlivened with soft lighting, earthy furnishings and a modest yet classy material palette. The interior design of 50% Cloud Artists Lounge is both rustic and refined, it sits as an extension of the natural curves of its skin, articulated by large-span arches and soaring ceilings accentuated by natural light.

The curved lines of the building's exterior are extracted and applied to the entirety of the interior space. The curved steel panel at the entrance leads guests to enter the interior, while adding an artistic touch to the space and evoking imagination as well.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Access to Natural Light through Skylights, creates an excellent interplay of filtered sunshine and cloud shadows, lends the space



warmth which changes the atmosphere and ambience through out the day allowing the guests to connect with nature.

- Trees punctuate the brick sculptures outside, and also accompany the front steps, a few of them find their way inside the restaurant which creates an inside outside Environment.

- Composed entirely of locally produced red bricks without a single steel bar or nail give the restaurant a raw and natural ambience.



NAMAN RETREAT PURE SPA

DA NANG, VIETNAM | MIA DESIGN STUDIO



INTRODUCTION

The Naman Retreat Pure Spa designed by MIA is an oasis of tranquility housing a five-star retreat.

Fifteen stunning treatment rooms are endowed with lush open-air gardens, deep soak bathtub and cushioned daybeds built for two.

A sleek health club with gym, meditation and yoga spaces at the open lounge garden at the central Courtyard.

DESIGN

The ingenious use of natural ventilation keeps the building cool and gives the guests a very refreshing experience.

With use of local plants, each retreat becomes a healing environment where the guest can enjoy a luxurious wellness in privacy.

The ground floor contains open spaces with relaxing platforms surrounded by serene lotus ponds and hanging gardens. A true space



ELEVATION

where all senses are touched, and the mind comes to peace.

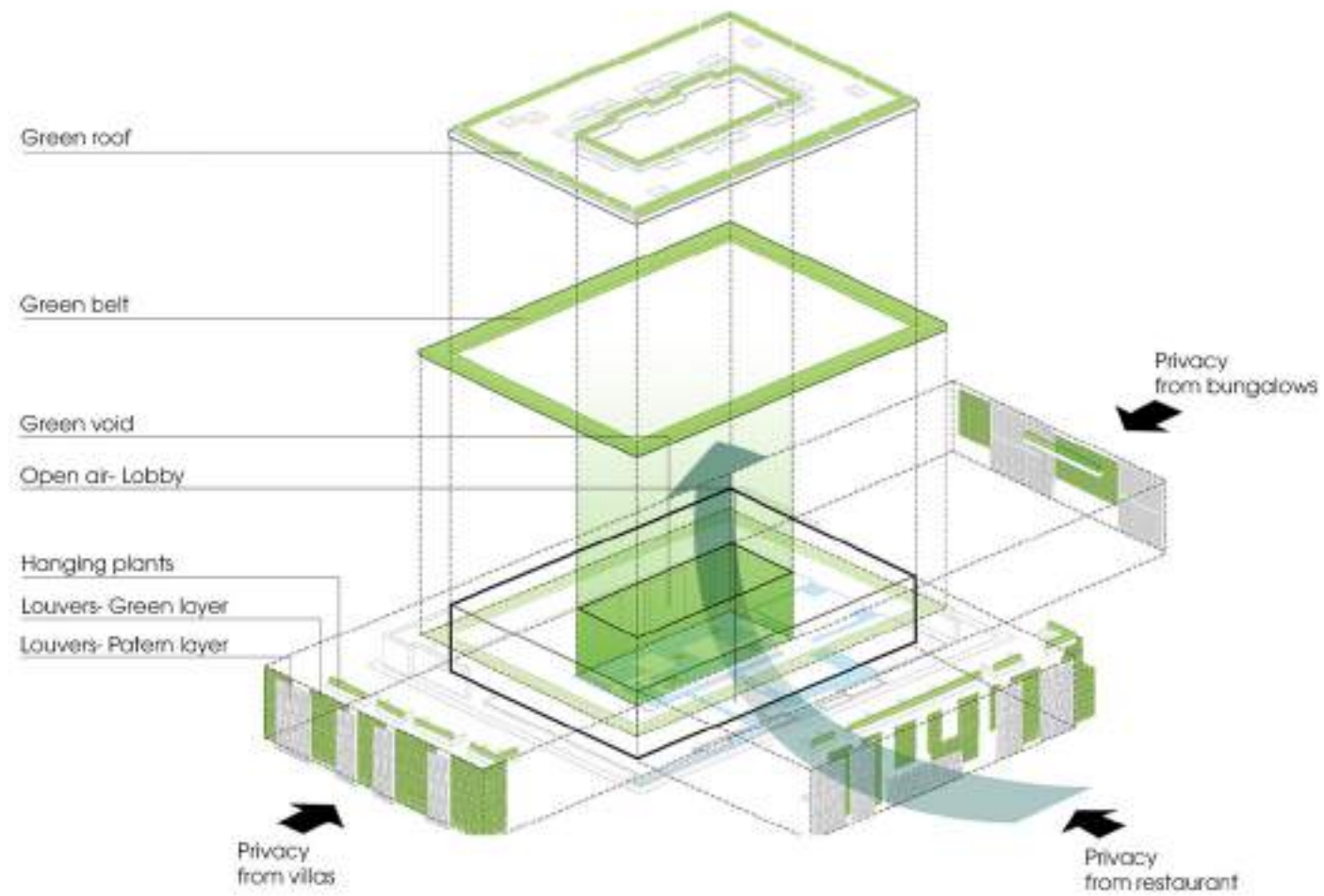
Different area's flow smoothly into each other and the beautiful landscape creates a journey into a dream like experience.

The facade is composed by lattice patterns alternated with vertical landscapes that filter the strong tropical sunlight into a pleasant play of light and shadow on the textured walls. The Landscaping is carefully designed as if they are a part of the architectural screens, giving the structure a unique look and feel.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Access to Natural Light through Central Courtyard and Louvers used as the exterior Wall interlaced with plants creates a pleasant play of light and shadow.





EXPLODED DIAGRAM

- Using plants cleverly to embody the structure and enabling them to act as the structure itself creates a beautiful harmony and connection.
- A Neutral palette and use of materials such as Natural stone and wood creates a tranquil atmosphere.
- The Lotus pond with in the central courtyard surrounded by plants creates a pleasant and

serene environment.

- The structure is well designed to provide good ventilation and protect the visitors from the harsh climate of the region creating a relaxing environment.
- Care was also taken to try and block the outer environment creating a peaceful space within.



5.3 CASE STUDY

MAGIC GARDENS

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA | ISIAH ZAGAR



Philadelphia's Magic Gardens (PMG) is an immersive mixed media art environment that is completely covered with mosaics.

In 1991, Zagar started working on the vacant lots located near his studio at 1020 South Street. He first mosaicked the buildings on either side of the property, then spent years sculpting multi-layer walls out of found objects.

The creator, Isaiah Zagar, used handmade tiles, bottles, bicycle wheels, mirror, and international folk art to chronicle his life and influences.

In 2004, the Boston-based owner of the lots discovered Zagar's installation and decided to sell the land, calling for the work to be dismantled. Unwilling to witness the destruction of the now-beloved neighborhood art environment, the community rushed to support the artist. His creation, newly titled Philadelphia's Magic Gardens, quickly became incorporated as a nonprofit organization with the intention of

preserving the artwork at the PMG site and throughout the South Street region. Zagar was then able to develop the site even further; excavating tunnels and grottos and has opened to the public in 2008.

OBSERVATIONS

Philadelphia's Magic Gardens, is made up of two indoor galleries and a bi-level outdoor



sculpture garden.

It invites visitors to participate in tours, art activities, hands-on interpretive experiences, workshops, concerts, exhibitions, and much more.

The outdoor space is an interactive art exhibit featuring a maze with mosaic walls bursting with color and texture. Walls of found and repurposed objects like glass bottles, bicycle parts, and ceramic dishes cluster together and create a whimsical wonderland to get lost in.

Catching a glimpse of the first mural, then the second, and you're suddenly searching for more. The unique style and bewitching energy attracts Philadelphians and tourists alike.

Your eyes are enticed to take in your surroundings, creating an immersive experience making a large, urban city feel breezy and quaint.



THANK YOU..!!

Dear Reader,

Thank you for your time, attention, and engagement in exploring the pages of this thesis book.

This project has been a labor of love, a culmination of countless hours of research, design, and reflection.

As you close this book, I hope that the ideas, concepts, and designs within these pages resonate with you.

- Hanisha