2024 Architecture Portfolio

Hafsa S. Syed

AAdip RIBA Part 2, Architectural Designer
MArch at the Architectural Association School of Architecture, London, UK
BA (Hons) Architecture at University of Westminster, London, UK

Table of Contents

The following body of work explores the intrinsic entanglements of ecology, material culture, and building technology.

It re-imagines architecture as a catalyst. One that cultivates community-centered practices, uniting multi-species communities in the face of the environmental crises.

ACADEMIC PROJECTS

PROFESSIONAL PROJECTS

DESIGN AND BUILDS

01

Fluctuating Flyways

Birds as Messengers for Rituals of Collective Care

PROJECT	Academic Project, Diploma 12 at the Architectural Association, London, UK
YEAR	2023–2024
TUTORS	Inigo Minns, Manijeh Verghese
GRADING	High Pass Grading with **AA Distinction Award in Technical Research**

Project Summary Video

On site photograph of 1:1 willlow structure designed and built for 'Fluctuating Flyways' thesis project

N.E.S.T

Network for Endangered Species Typologies

We are currently at risk of loosing 200 migratory bird flyways across the globe.

Migratory birds challenge the very notion of our geopolitical borders, highlighting our global interconnected dependencies. Living amid the sixth mass extinction, architecture's role in species preservation becomes urgent to consider.

The "N.E.S.T" (Network for Endangered Species Typologies) project focuses on communities along the migratory path of the red-listed house martin, declared endangered in the UK in 2020.

Drawing inspiration from the disappearing '**Hima al-Tyur**' bird towers across the Islamic world, it proposes self-built pilgrimage sites that unite birdwatching communities for deep listening to birdsong as an embodied practice of ecosystem monitoring.

The project re-imagines architectural material culture as a tool for trans-regional ecological stewardship, connecting conservation communities along house martin's migratory route: from stopover sites in the UK to Morocco to The Gambia.

Image of Pigeon Hima (dovecote) in Egypt, Photo Credit: Ranong Payakapan

Image of Pigeon Hima (dovecote) in Isfahan, Iran

Pigeon nesting in pigeon tower in Isfahan, Iran

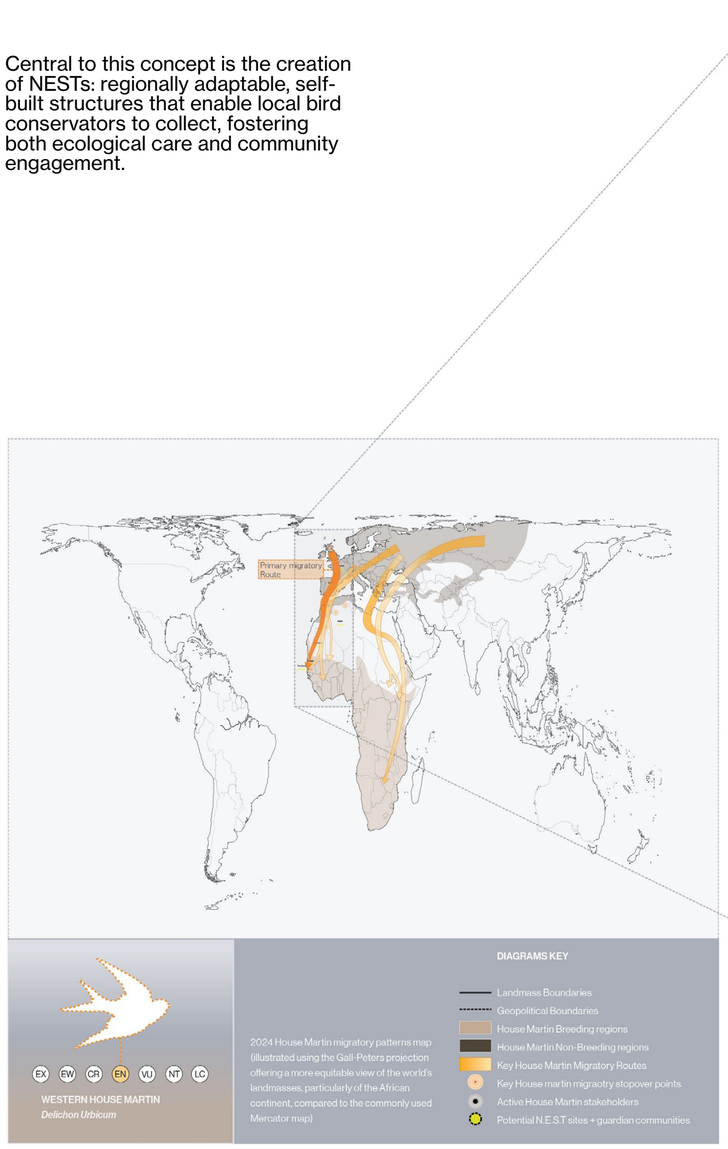
Islah – an Arabic term for peacemaking or reform – is a key but under-documented function of bird towers (Himas) in the Islamic world. As industrialized farming replaced these interspecies structures, N.E.S.T explores methods for their contemporary revival.

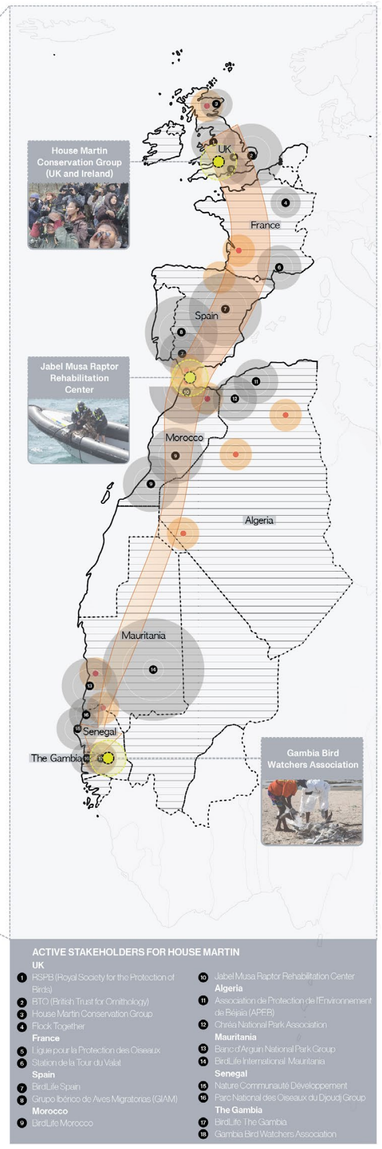
NESTs

Designing Care in the Age of Extinction

The project focuses on key stopover locations along the house martin migratory pathway, connecting existing communities with a shared mission to support bird populations. It proposes developing a distinct architectural typology for birding communities – one that serves as both an identity and a new kind of pilgrimage site.

Central to this concept is the creation of NESTs: regionally adaptable, self-built structures that enable local bird conservators to collect, fostering both ecological care and community engagement.





Re-imagined NEST at the "Mountain of Moses" in Morocco, located along the vital migratory highway of the Strait of Gibraltar. The structure serves as a meeting point for local Raptor Rescue Teams, which play a crucial role in safeguarding house martins and numerous other migratory bird species.

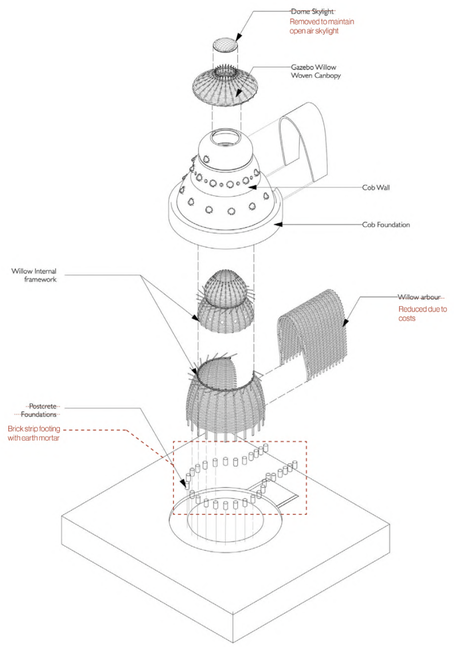
Weaving a NEST

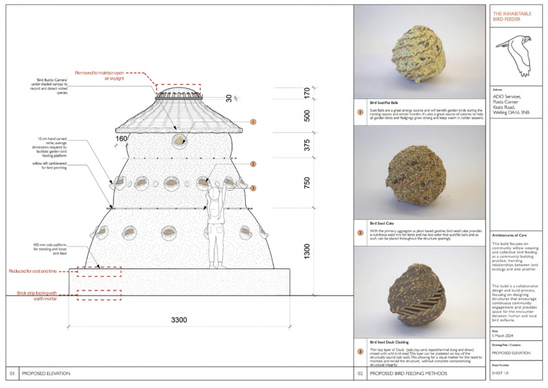
Building a Barometer

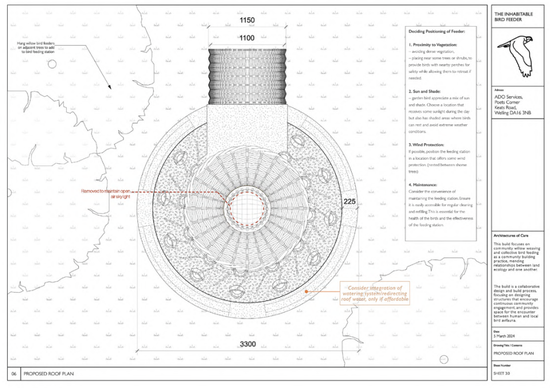
In an age dominated by globalized supply chains, the N.E.S.T project emphasizes locally sourced, bio-based materials: such as willow and cob in the UK.

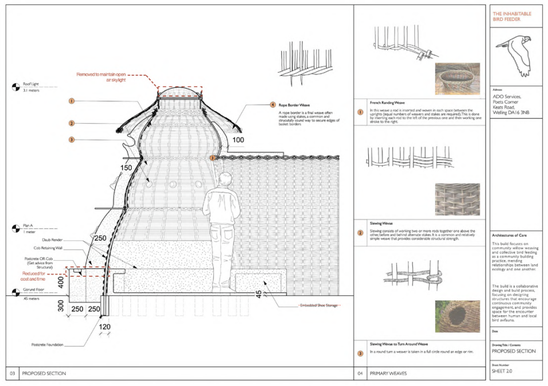
The building process, or ‘nesting,’ prioritizes community collaboration.

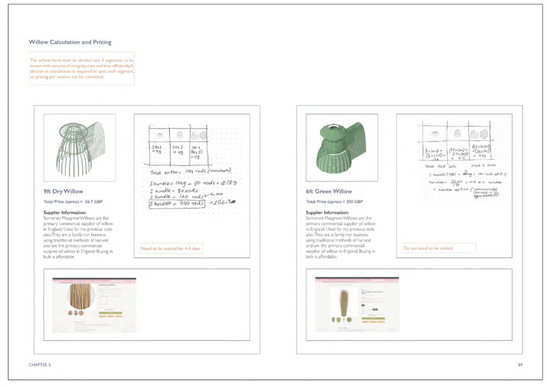
The architecture nurtures care on multiple levels – for the environment, the structure, the species it shelters, and the connections formed through the act of building.











Architectural drawings, further adjusted on site, during the build in Hooke Park Forest in Dorset, UK

The British NEST

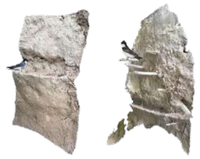
An muti–species ecosystem barometer

A NEST is a collectively-built, adaptable typology that celebrates regional differences through local weaving and earth construction methods.

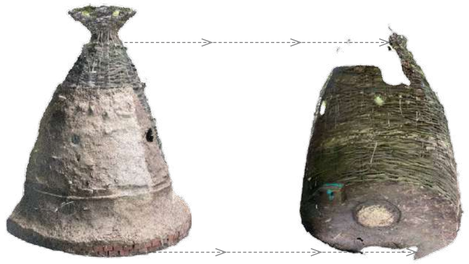
It serves as a living document of environmental health, based on multi-species interactions.

The primary framework for a NEST typology entails:

1. **Exterior earth render** – adaptable for nesting and feeding spaces for local birds.
2. **A conical form** – designed for deep listening to the local bird eco-scape as a form of citizen science.
3. **A structural interior weave** – translatable vernacular across regions.
4. **Refined yet beginner-friendly weaves** – that foster community through collective weaving, developed and tested through hosting multiple workshops in community gardens.



1
Shapeable Earth Render



2
Conical Form for deep listening

3
Structural Interior weave

4
Refined yet beginner-friendly weaves

Snails inhabiting cob niche, with cantilevered willow perches for songbirds

Common Blue mint beetle (*Chrysolina coerulans*) attracted to birdseed niche of NEST

A locally endangered Blue Tit, (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) attracted to NEST structure

Meticulously woven NEST structure, built in Hooke Park, Dorset, UK using regionally sourced willow and cob

Initial 1:1 willow experiments to develop and refine NEST typology

Test 1: Community workshop for living willow tunnel

Test 2: Community workshop for living willow dome

Test 3: Interior gathering space for living willow dome

Translating a NEST

to The Gambia

In 2023, Gambia's Kotu Creek wetland, a key wintering ground for house martins, faced a devastating avian flu outbreak that killed over 7,000 birds. Yaya Barry, head of the Gambian Bird Watchers' Association, described how hundreds of volunteers buried the dead birds along the shores with minimal resources. Each year, the Association issues open letters seeking funding and international support.

The N.E.S.T. proposal envisions a network of sites facilitating cross-geographic communication, advocating for the fluctuating financial redistribution needed along migratory flyways. By translating barometers, the proposal archives material cultures, highlighting diverse ways of being and caring. Architects are redefined as facilitators, channeling resources between the Global North and South, while preserving ecological and cultural heritage through an archive of localized weaving and earthen construction techniques.

Research images of Gambia's 2023 Bird Flue Outbreak, sent directly to me by 'Yaya Barry' the head of the Bird Watchers Association in the Gambia

Gambian NEST renders generated on Unreal Engine software

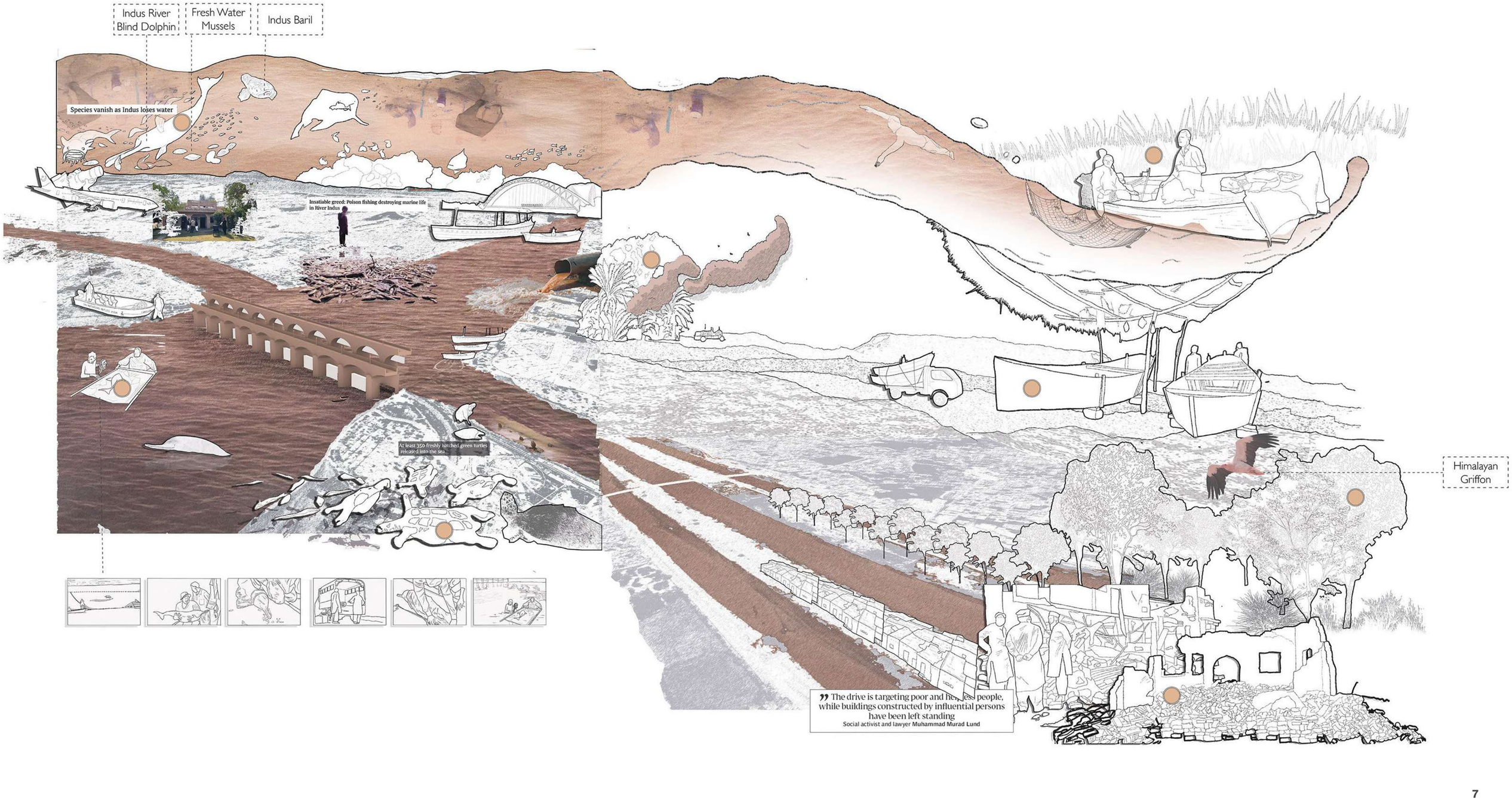
02

Illuminating the Indus

Decentralized
Epistamologies of Ecology

PROJECT	Academic Research Project, Diploma 13, Architectural Association, London UK
YEAR	2022–2023
TUTORS	Merve Anil, George Masood
GRADING	High Pass Grading with **High Pass in Technical Research**

Project Summary Video



The Blind Dolphin

The revival of 'Bulhan'

There are only six surviving species of river dolphins, all endangered or critically endangered.

The Indus River dolphin (Bulhan) in Pakistan is the only species, in the world, with a rising population, thanks to efforts by the local Wildlife Department in Sukkur.

'Illuminating the Indus' is a research proposal developed in communication with the Sindh Wildlife Department, aiming to provide a shift for current conservation efforts, towards a community-based, anti-colonial approach to monitoring the endangered ecosystems along the Indus.

Inuds Dolphin image from Sindh Wildlife Department

Inuds Dolphin Rescue mission, footage from Sindh Wildlife Department

On site boat trip Indus Dolphin Game Reserve segment of Indus River

Interview with local fishermen in Sukkur

Local Boatmakers construction space in Sukkur

Local Boatmakers construction space in Sukkur

Government of Sindh Wildlife Department office in Sukkur

Redesigned office space for Mr. Adnan, the head of the Sindh Wildlife Departmnet in Sukkur, Pakistan.

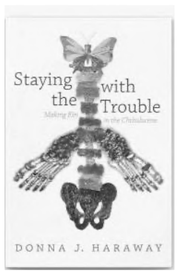
Collaborative Conservation

Sukkur is home to the first barrage constructed on the Indus River during British colonial rule in 1932. This thesis critiques the colonial gaze, evident in cartographic representations of the river – readings that that ignored countless indigenous understandings of the river's ephemeral nature, reducing its dynamic ecologies to a static line.

This "extractive gaze" persists in the 1990s scientific research on the endangered Indus River dolphin.

As such, the thesis seeks to subvert this perspective – by positioning the architect as a 'facilitator' of local knowledge systems – directly engaging with current dolphin community stakeholders.

It provides a method of ecosystem monitoring that is spatially accessible to the local muti–species inhabitations along the river.



Key feminist and decolonial readings used to develop passive and noninvasive monitoring approaches for the project.

The Indus River Dolphin as a tool for community mobilisation and the expansion of the Wildlife Department in Sukkur, Pakistan

Fishers, dolphin researchers, boat makers, and wildlife department collaboratively deliberating conservations strategies

Acoustic Eco-monitor and communal birdfeeder

Spatial Zoning Infrastructures

In the speculative future, local boat makers collaborate with university labs to create pollution-detecting sensors (pH and O2) and passive wildlife monitoring devices. This network forms a public infrastructure for tracking threatened wildlife and their environments.

Local boat-makers rigging-up boats with environmental monitoring sensors

PH sensors visualizing pollution levels for local fishers and zoning inhabitable regions for endangered wildlife

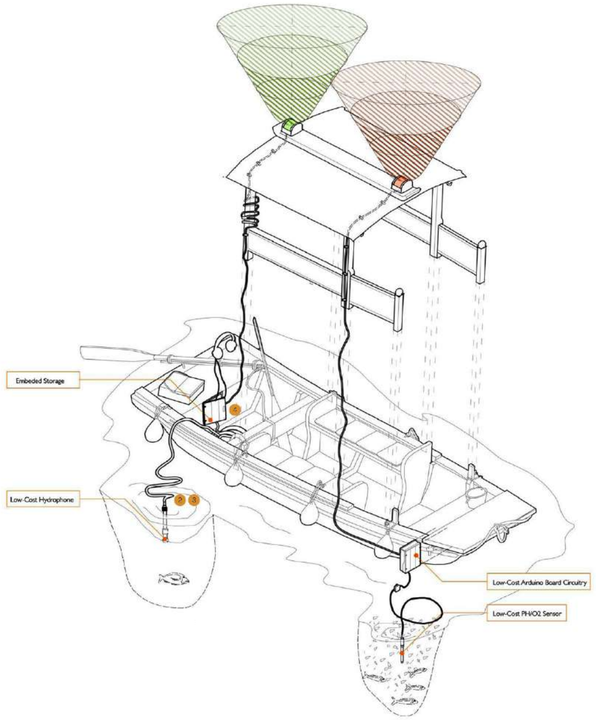
Submerged perspective, with pH sensors to monitor endangered Indus River Turtles

Illuminating the Indus

By decentralizing environmental knowledge and providing the public with real-time information on polluted areas, the “Illuminating the Indus” scheme serves as a method of public counter-mapping.

This establishes a new zoning system that has the potential to span the entirety of the Indus River, with the beloved Indus River dolphin symbolizing the impetus for ecological awareness and change.

Acoustic monitoring of Indus River Dolphin, a non-invasive alternative to existing dolphin data tagging methodologies



Spatial countermapping infrastucre for the indus river, using interconnected ecosystem monitoring deivces.

03

Living a *Wild*Life

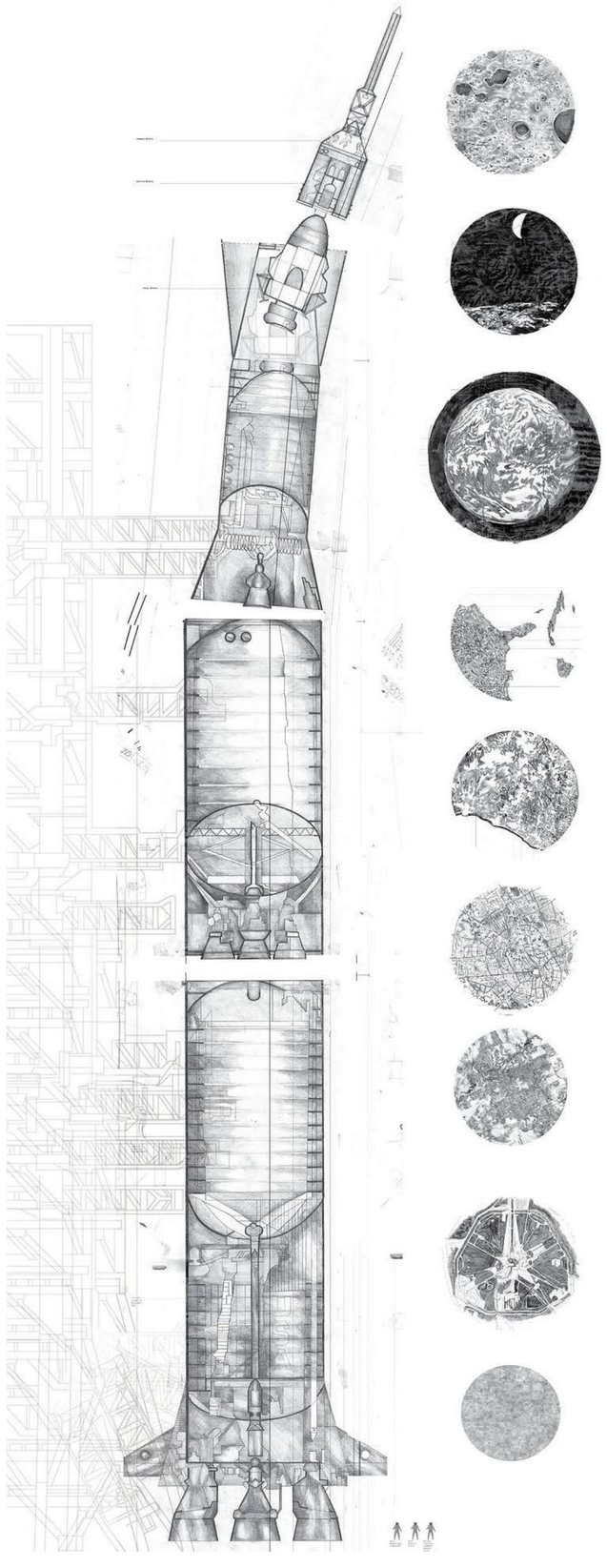
Ecological Enclave in the City

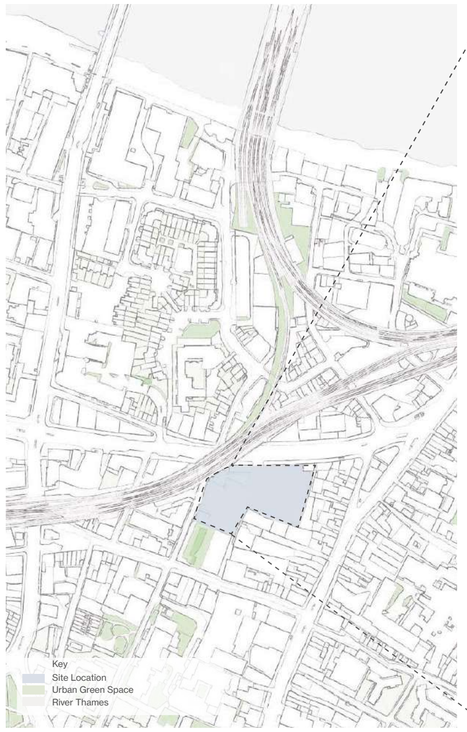
PROJECT	Academic Design Project, Year 3 Undergdraduate, University of Westminster, London, UK
YEAR	2020–2021
TUTORS	Jane Tankard, Thomas Grove
GRADING	Honors Grading with **RIBA Silver Medal Nomination**

The Cognitive Shift Effect

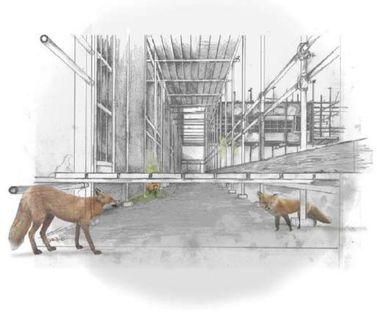
In 1969, Apollo 11 refocused our gaze on Earth, teeming with life. As we replace forests with rubble and waste, wildlife adapts, thriving in urban areas.

As such, ‘Living a *Wild*life’ is a housing scheme in the heart of central London in Southwark. It re–imagines ways to coexist with the city’s thriving biodiversity, in a post COVID-19 urban landscape.

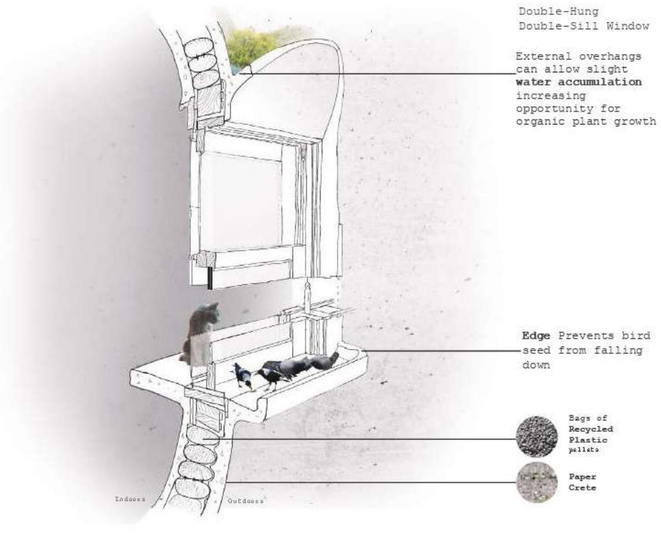




Scaffolding terrace view



Fox corridor view



Into the ‘Woods’

The ‘Living a *Wild*life’ housing scheme in Southwark, London re–images notions of “a forest in the city” , a place where diverse life forms thrive.

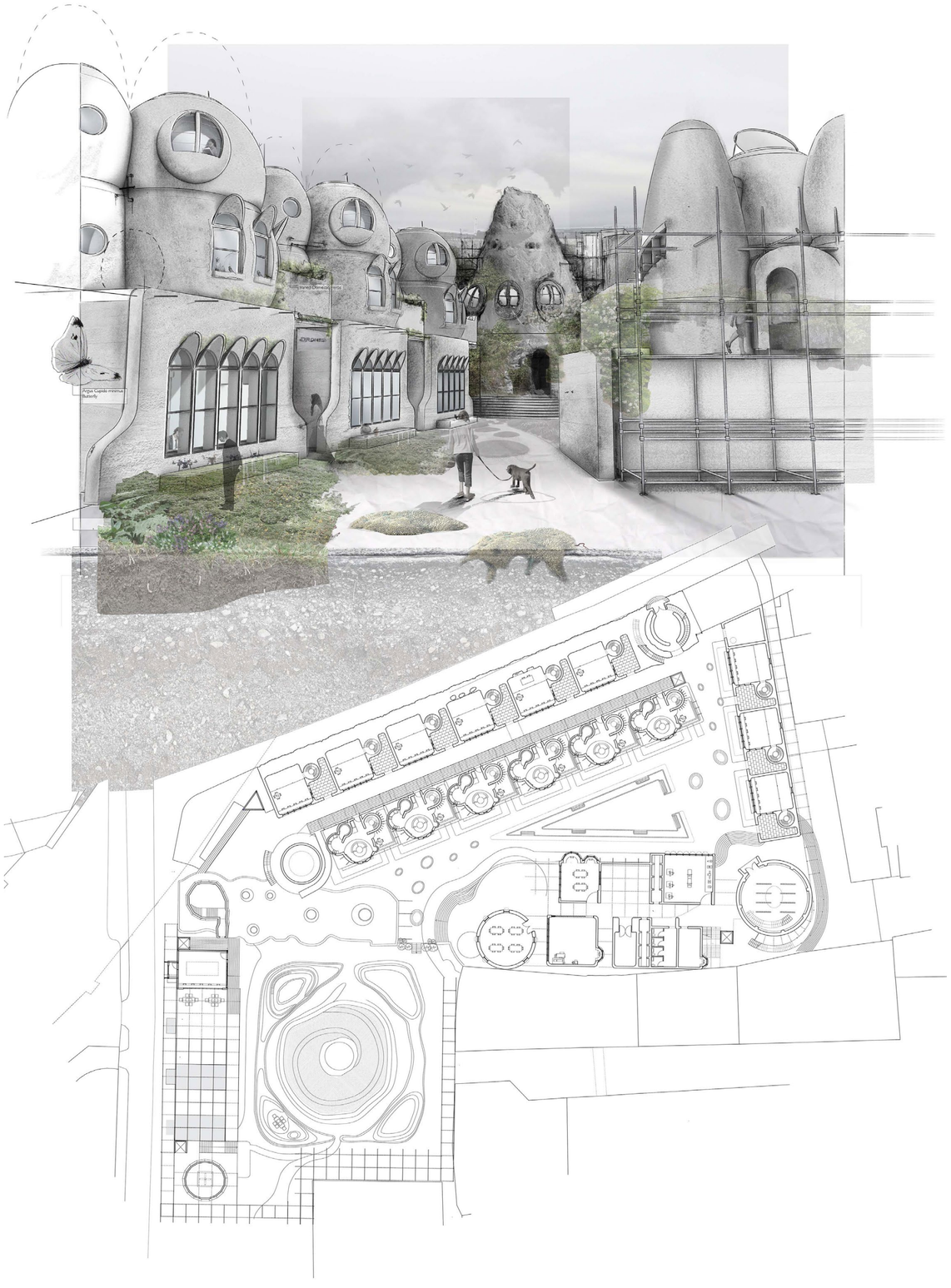
It serves as a hub for creativity and self-sufficiency, with in-house fabrication facilities enabling residents to design a sustainable future while observing and protecting local wildlife.

Co-working space + Animal Activity Archival

Photography Garden

Wildflower Meadow

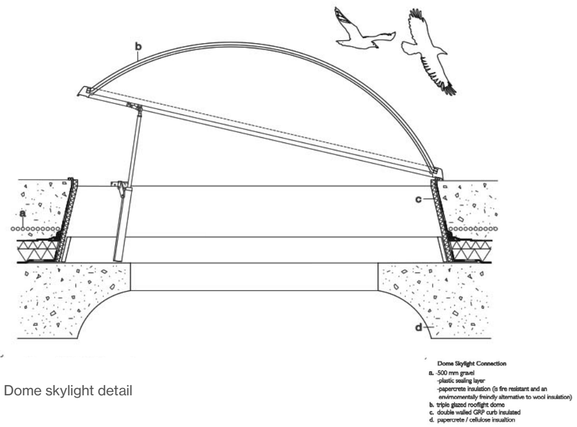
Multi-species Cohabitation



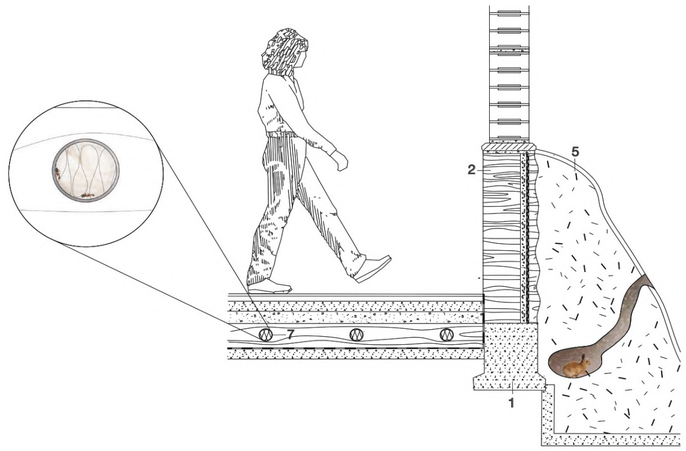
Constructing the Community

In January 2018, China banned the import of most plastic and paper waste, disrupting global recycling. As a result, 2,500 metric tonnes of unrecyclable refuse were redirected, with much now buried in UK landfills as camouflaged mountains of waste.

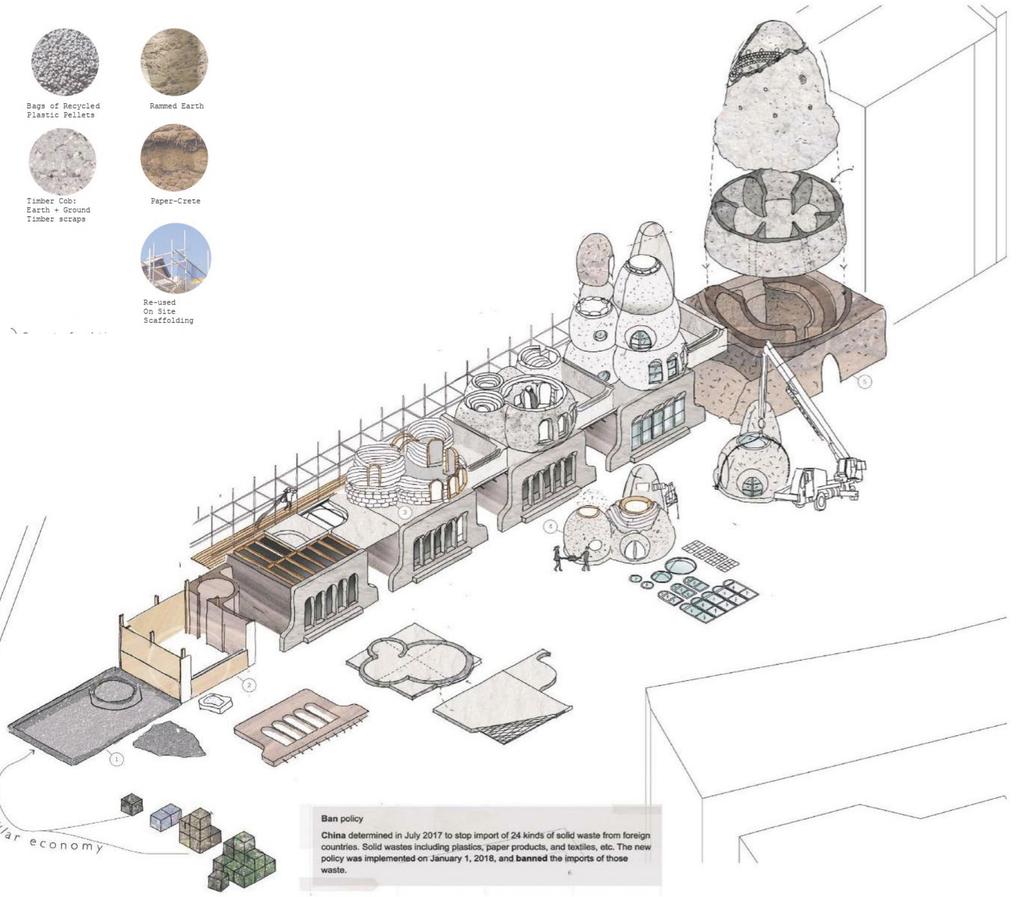
The scheme is a speculative beginning, proposing the integration of vernacular construction methods using excess un-recyclable materials, a foundation for future research into reuse building technologies.



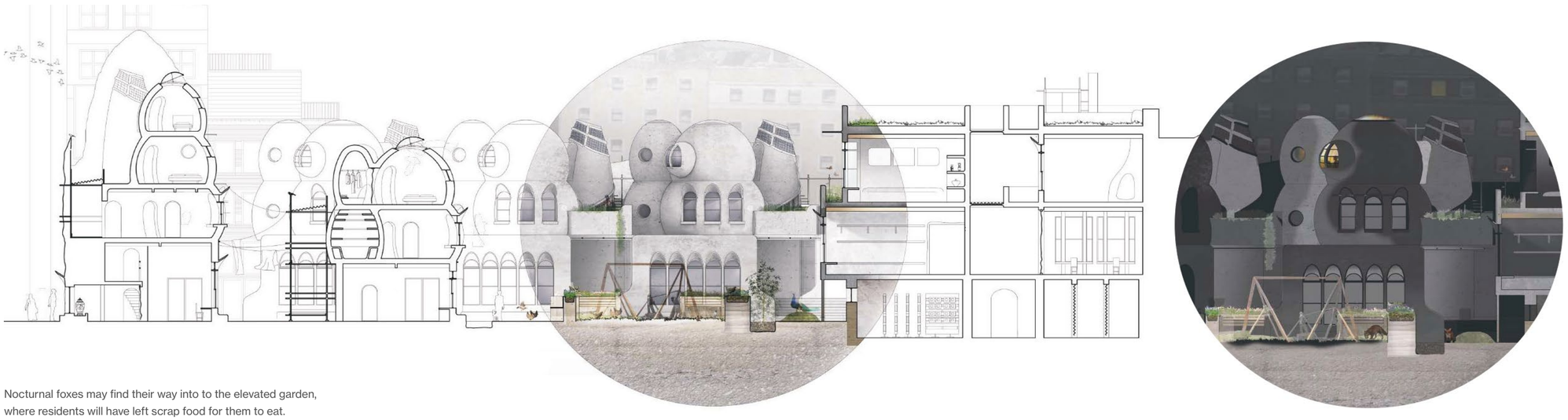
Bedroom Dome skylight detail



'Living walls' detail, fostering non-human inhabitation within the proposed architecture



Construction sequence of part of the proposed scheme

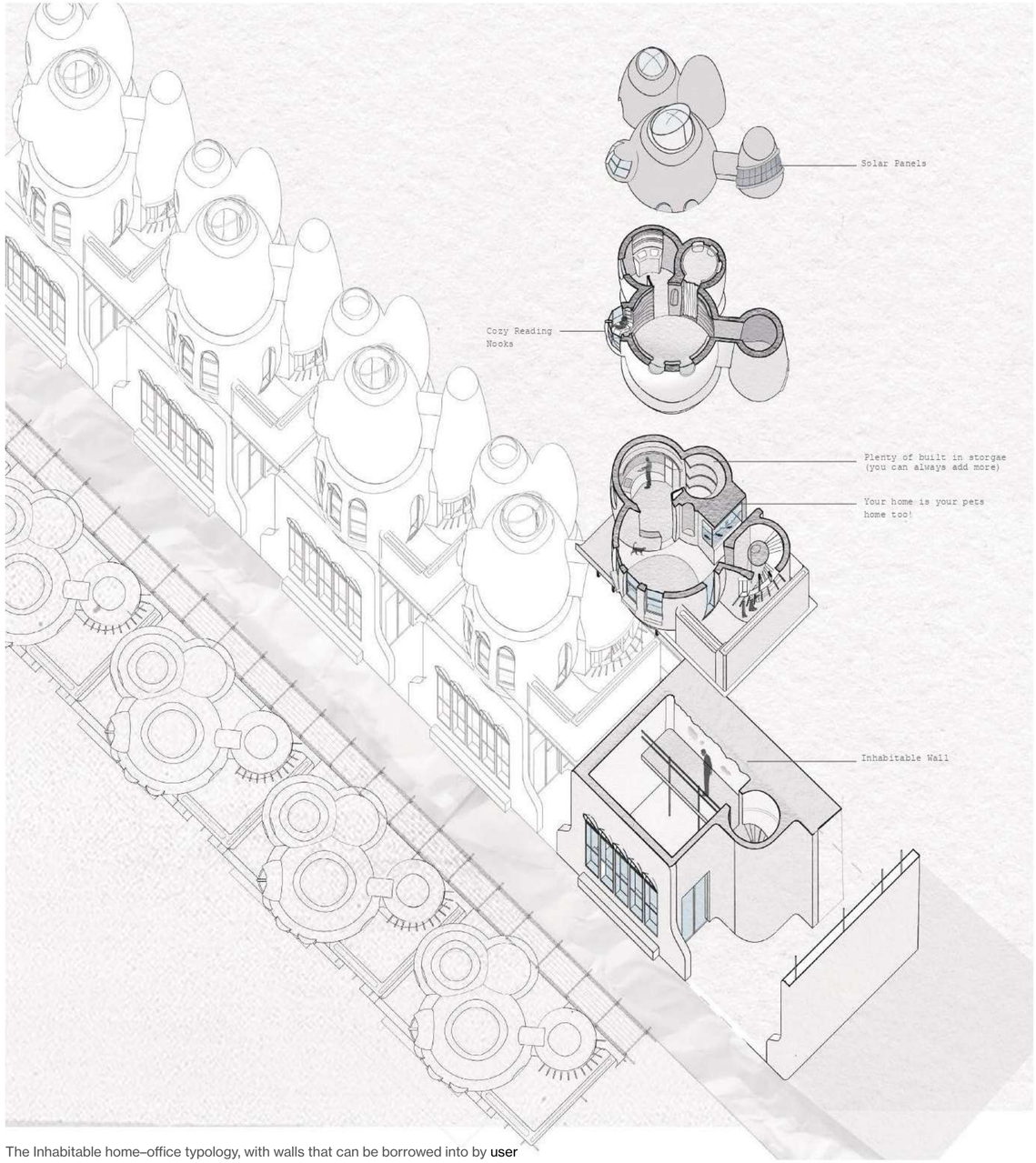


Nocturnal foxes may find their way into to the elevated garden, where residents will have left scrap food for them to eat.

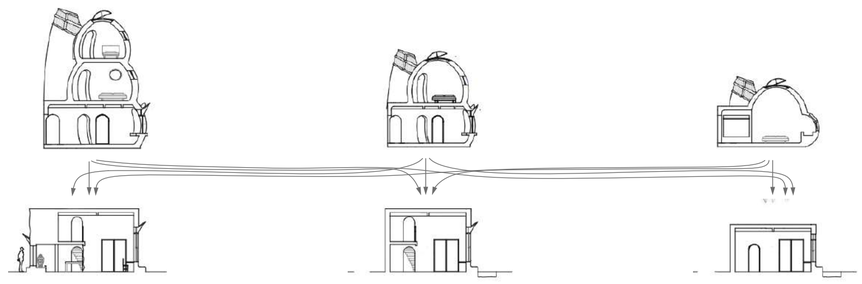
The Inhabitable Home

“Living a Wildlife” provides the community with a variety of workspaces and housing typologies. The buildings are designed to resemble living landscapes, incorporating elements that can be burrowed into and expanded.

Human inhabitants, much like the surrounding nonhuman life, may customize aspects of their dwellings, thereby reconnecting with their innate animal instincts of engaging and adapting their built environments.



The Inhabitable home–office typology, with walls that can be borrowed into by user



The base house types are 2 bedroom home, 1 bedroom home and studio home. Each housing option is available with 3 workshop layouts.

04 Texan Typologies

OFFICE	Brett Zamore Design, Houston, Texas, USA
YEAR / STATUS	2022 / Built
ROLE	Full time Architectural Assistant, RIBA Part 1

Photographed by Brett Zamore Design

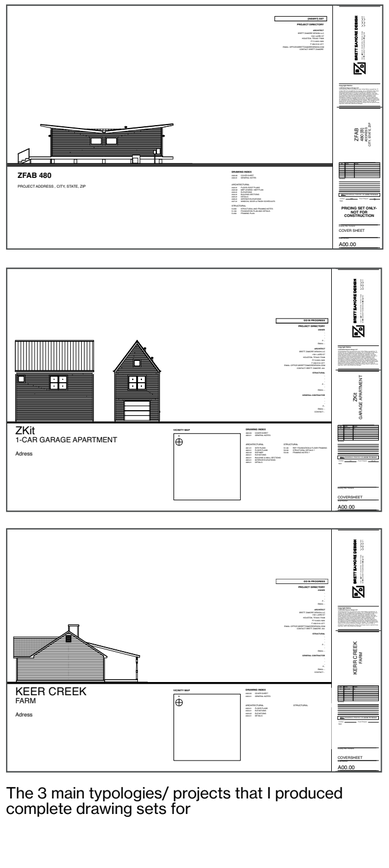
zFAB – Pre-fabricated Modern Homes

At Brett Zamore Design, alongside collaborative drafting work, I created full drawing sets for three small-scale residential typologies, including architectural, structural, and MEP drawings using BIM modeling.

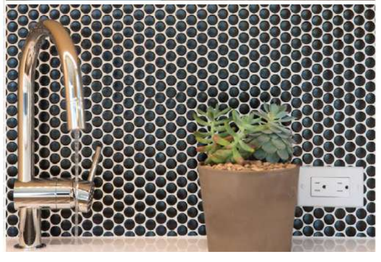
A prominent output was The zFAB is a pre-fabricated house design offering affordable, efficient homes under 800 sq ft.

Role and Responsibilities:

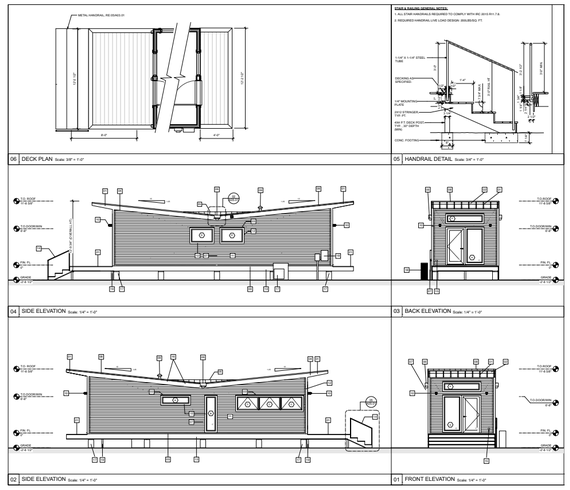
- Drafted for commercial projects
- Produced full drawing sets for 2–3 small scale residential projects
- Fully redesigned the firm's website
- Managed social media and engagement

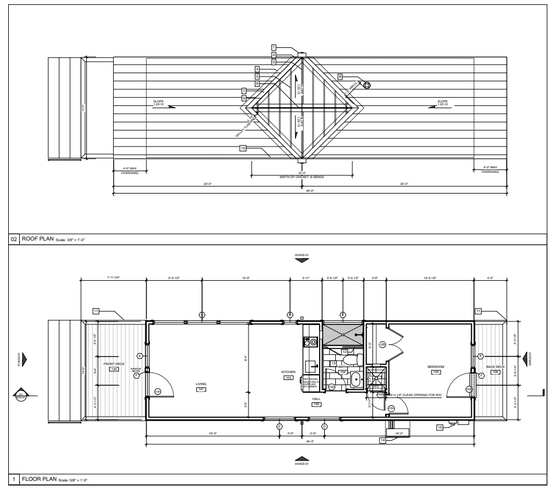


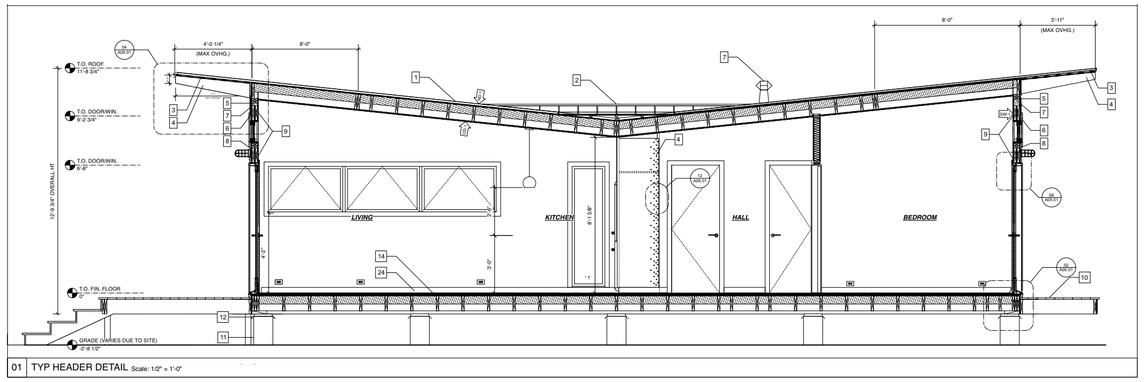
The 3 main typologies/ projects that I produced complete drawing sets for

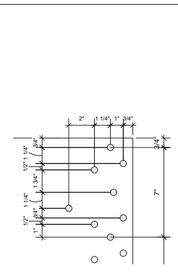


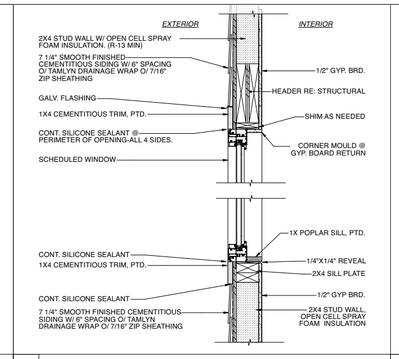
zFAB images by Brett Zamore Design

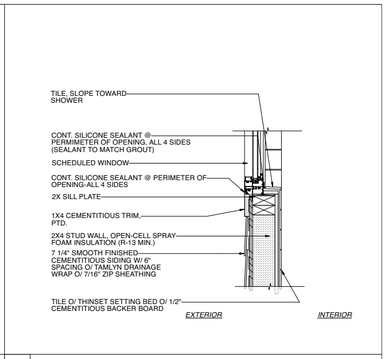


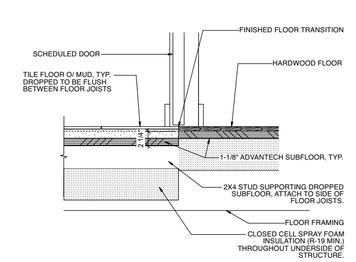


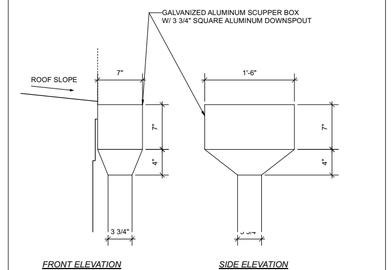


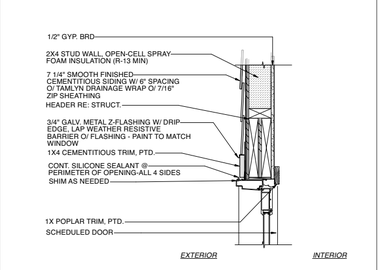












Bridegland Activity Centre

As part of the design team at Brett Zamore Design (bZD), I contributed to the development of the Bridgeland Creekland Activity Centre, a mixed-use project designed for a residential community. The project focused on enhancing the visitor experience while maintaining the integrity of the natural environment.

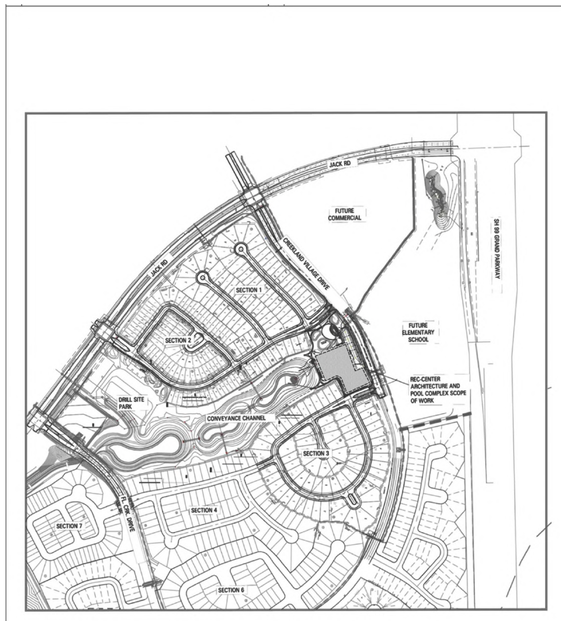
Role and Responsibilities:

• Assisted with drafting and detailing across various phases of the project

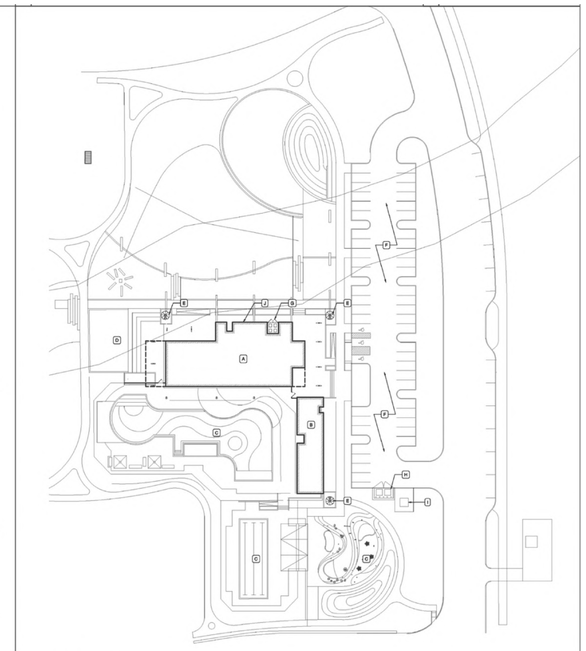
• Coordinated material orders and communicated with suppliers for timely deliveries

• Prepared multiple presentations for client meetings

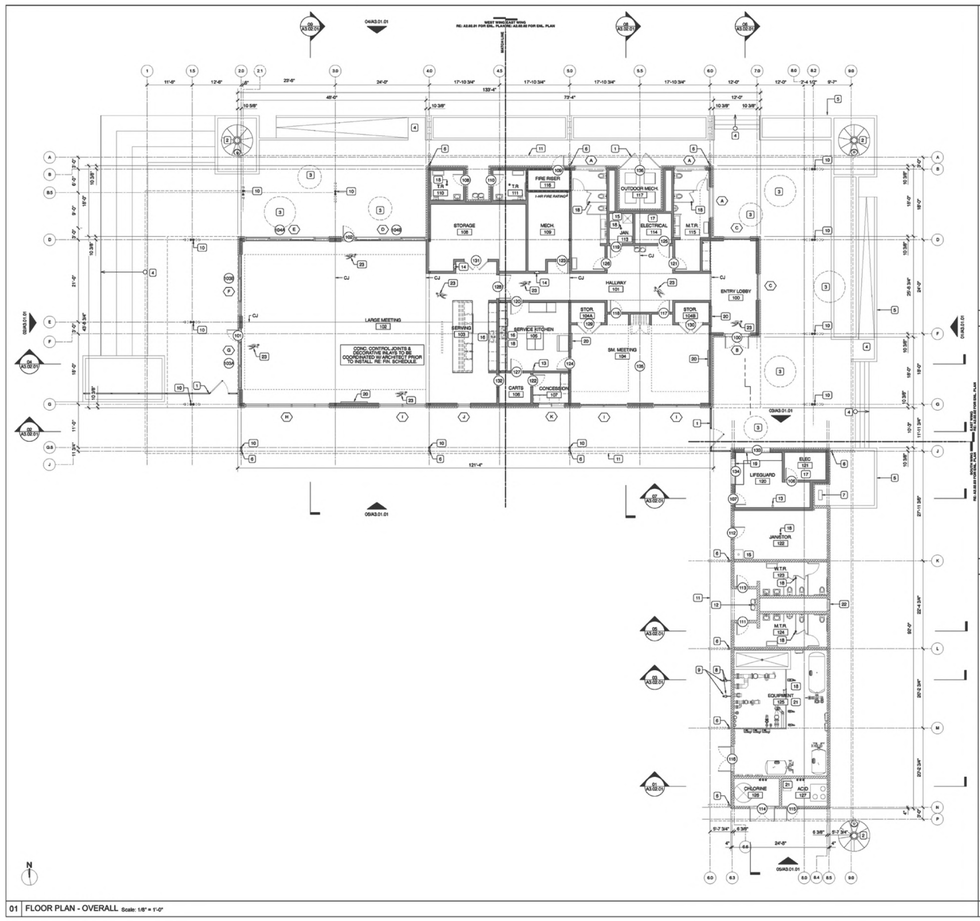
Rendered visuals for Bridgeland Creekland, produced in collaboration with the bZD design team



03 | VICINITY SITE PLAN Scale: N.T.S.



02 | SITE PLAN Scale: 1" = 30'-0"



01 | FLOOR PLAN - OVERALL Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

GENERAL NOTES

1. GATE, RE: SITE PLAN
2. STEEL WATER STORAGE TANK, RE: LANDSCAPE/MEP/STRUCTURAL
3. CIRCULAR SKYLIGHT, RE: ROOF PLAN
4. ALL RAMPS/STAIRS/ RAILINGS, RE: LANDSCAPE
5. RETAINING WALL, RE: LANDSCAPE
6. 6" Ø METAL DOWNSPOUT CONNECTED TO CUSTOM ROUND DOWNSPOUT BOOT AT 12" A.F.F., RE: CIVIL/MEP
7. HEAT PUMP FOR MINI-SPLIT AC UNIT, RE: MEP
8. OUTDOOR SHOWER, RE: MEP
9. FLOOR DRAIN FOR OUTDOOR SHOWER, SLOPE GRADE AWAY FROM STRUCTURE, RE: MEP
10. STEEL COLUMN, PTD, RE: STRUCTURAL
11. EDGE OF ROOF/CEILING ABOVE
12. DRINKING FOUNTAIN W/ BOTTLE FILLER, RE: MEP
13. FIRE EXTINGUISHER, WALL-MOUNT, RE: SPEC
14. FIRE EXTINGUISHER IN RECESSED CABINET, RE: SPEC
15. MOP SINK, RE: MEP
16. SINK, RE: MEP (SINK NOT TO BE USED FOR FOOD PREP OR SERVING)
17. 4'-T, PLYWOOD BACKING FOR IT EQUIPMENT, RE: ELECTRICAL
18. FLOOR DRAIN, RE: MEP
19. ROLLING METAL SHUTTER, RE: DOOR SCHEDULE
20. WALL-MOUNTED TV (OFCI), PROVIDE BLOCKING AS REQUIRED FOR FIXTURE AND POWER MOUNTING HEIGHT
21. EYE WASH BASIN, RE: MEP
22. 30"X30" METAL ACCESS PANEL, PTD. COLOR TO MATCH ADJACENT CMU
23. BRONZE TURTLE INLAY (MFG. LOCATION TBD BY ARCH PRIOR TO INSTALL, RE: FINISH SCHEDULE

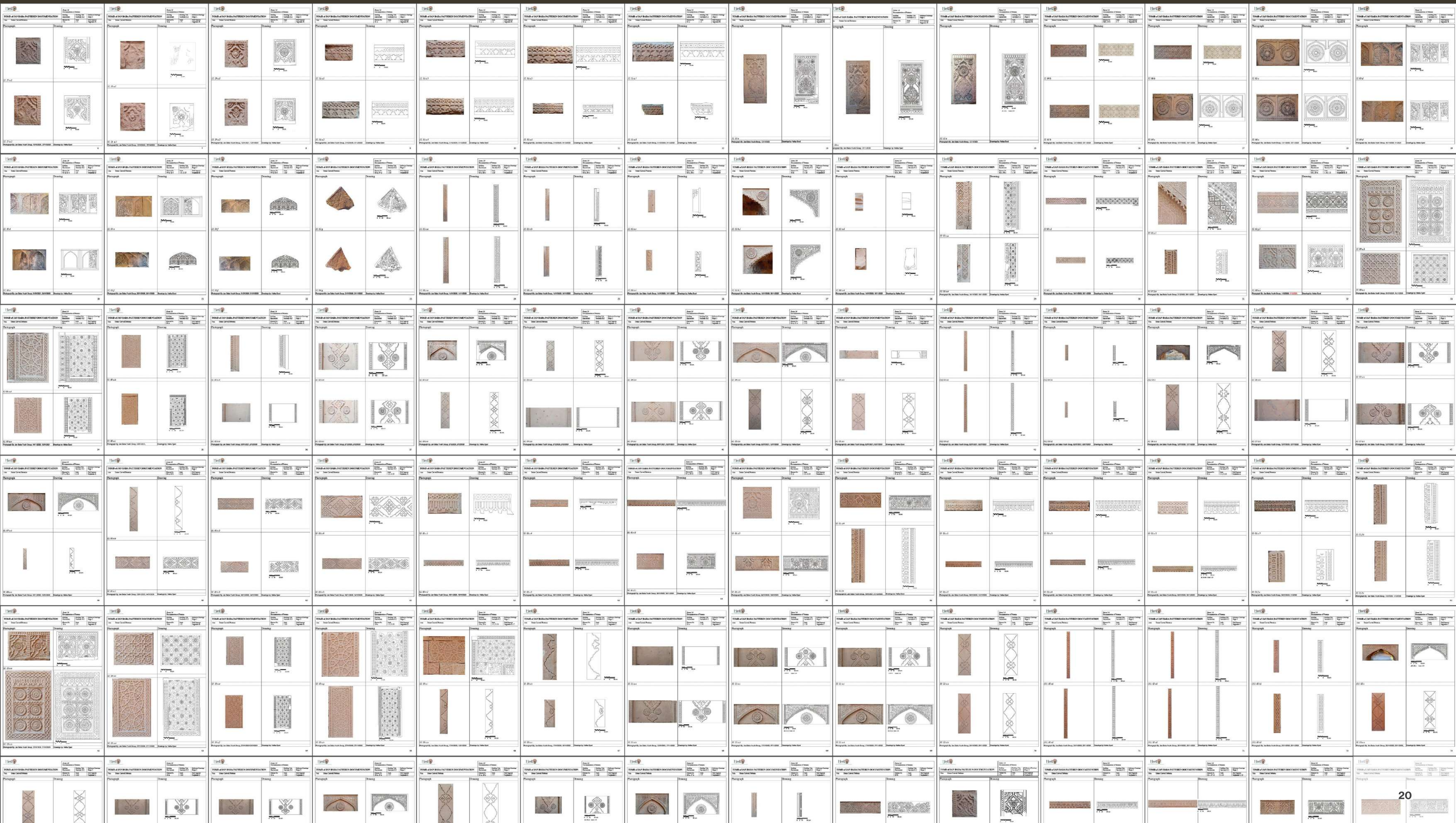
FLOOR PLAN KEYED NOTES

05 UNESCO, Youth, Heritage

OFFICE Yasmeen Lari's – Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, Makli, Pakistan

YEAR / STATUS 2021 / Complete

ROLE Full time Architectural Assistant, RIBA Part 1



UNESCO, Youth, Heritage

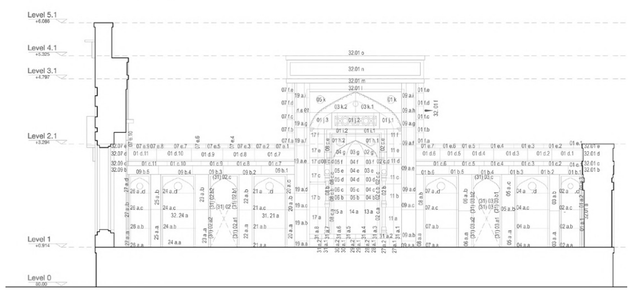
The ‘Tomb of Mirza Jan Baba,’ a 1608 monument within Makli Necropolis, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Sindh, Pakistan. Sadly, it faces erosion of its intricate craftsmanship.

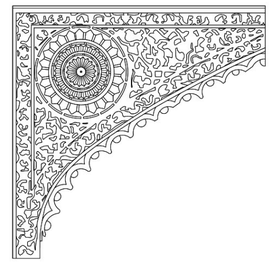
As such, in collaboration with the British Council, this project aimed to archive its artistry while also educating local youth on history and conservation. I led the project, conducting community workshops, creating over 260 CAD drawings of carved motif panels, and contributing to the Heritage Foundation of Pakistan’s archive.

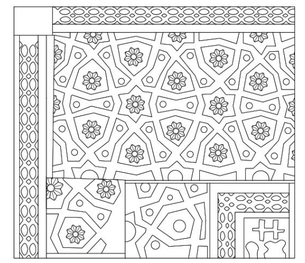
Role and Responsibilities:

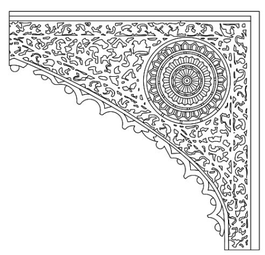
- Hosted workshops to educate youth about the site history and documentation.
- Produced +260 CAD drawings of custom carved motif panels.
- Compiled bi-monthly illustrated reports for the British Council

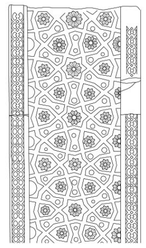
On Site and Online workshops teaching local youth of Makli about history and archival

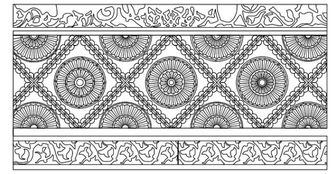


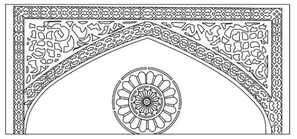


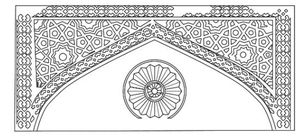


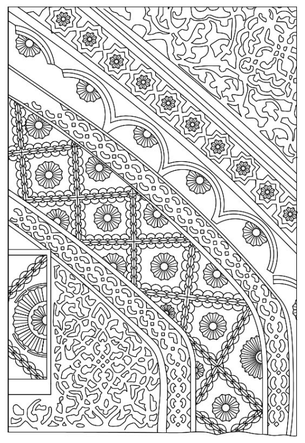


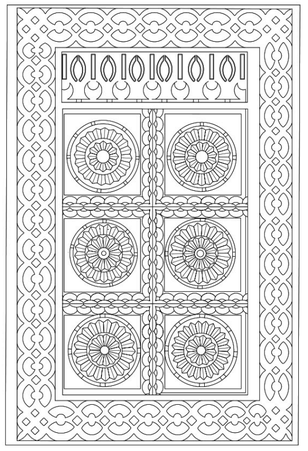


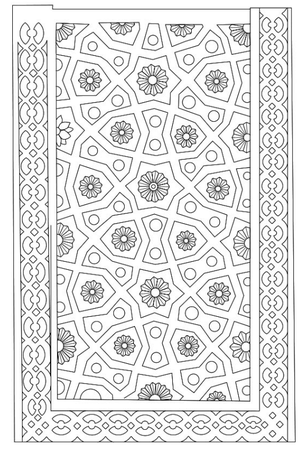












06

Floating Bamboo Pod

Makli, Sindh, Pakistan

OFFICE	Yasmeen Lari's – Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, Makli, Pakistan
YEAR / STATUS	2021 / Complete
ROLE	Full time Architectural Assistant, RIBA Part 1

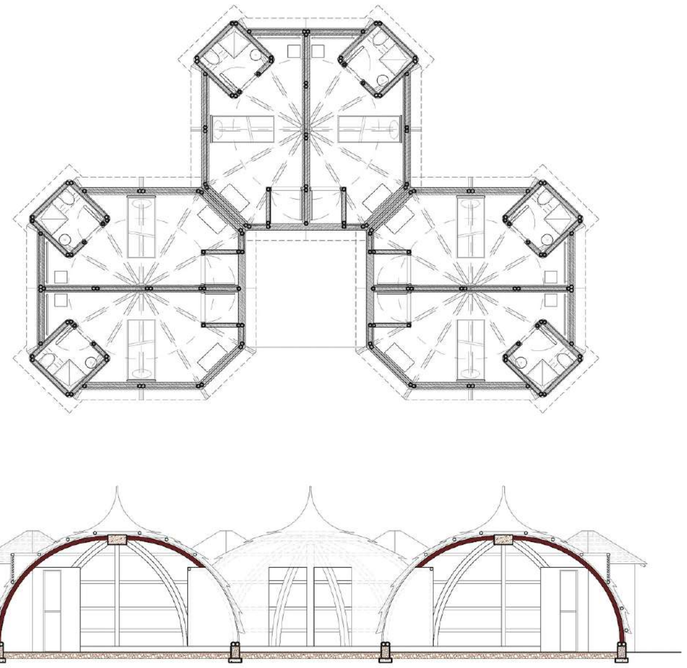
Floating Bamboo Pod

Zero Carbon Centre, Makli, Sindh, Pakistan

The Floating LOG Shikara (Lari-Octa Green) is a mobile typology designed by architect Yasmeen Lari to adapt to the region's flood conditions. It functions as both floating 'quarantine shelters' during emergencies, like COVID-19, and as residential clusters for post-crisis use.

Role and Responsibilities:

- Drafting and technical drawings for the project.
- Assisted with on-site construction and management
- Engaged with local communities to gather feedback and insights on the design's functionality and impact



Floating Pod typology designed as an adaptable typology to create settlements post its initial usage. (drawing produced in collaboration with the HFoP design team)

Using scoring method to bend dried bamboo

Bamboo pod typology constructed at Yasmeen Lari's Zero Carbon Centre in Makli

Bamboo pod covered with that roof to provide shade before submerging into canal

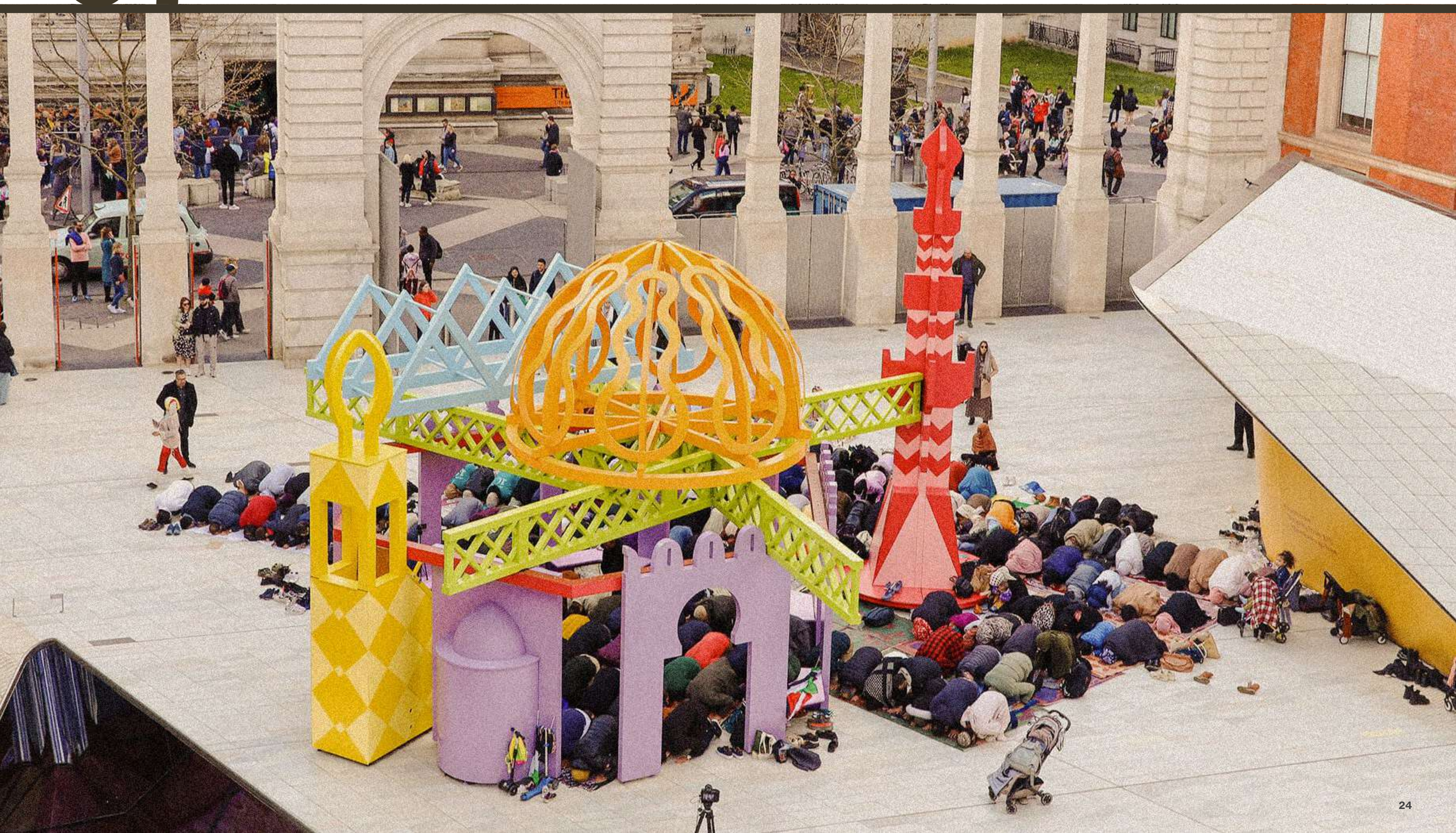
Bamboo Pod cladded with thin layer of earth-lime plaster to provide shelter

07

V&A Museum Mosque Pavilion

Make-space Architects and AKII

PROJECT TEAM	University of Westminster in collaboration with MakeSpace Architects, AKT II
YEAR / STATUS	2023 / Complete
ROLE	Working as ‘dome design’ pair, within student-group



V&A Museum Mosque Pavilion

Make-space Architects and AKT II

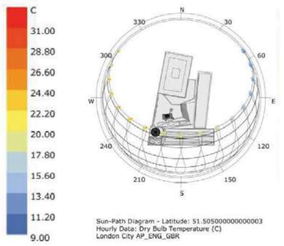
My co-designer and I were selected from our university batch, to develop the timber dome structure and conducted technical analysis for the “Evolution of the British Mosque” exhibit at the Victoria and Albert Museum’s Sackler Courtyard in London.

Role and Responsibilities:

• Developed model iterations for the timber dome structure.

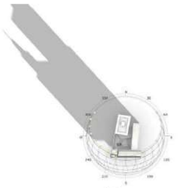
• Conducted site analysis using Grasshopper to refine the overall pavilion design.

• Compiled technical reports detailing the construction and assembly processes for dome structure.



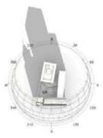
8am

9am

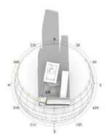


10am

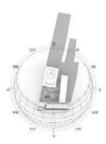
11am



12pm



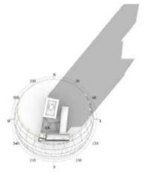
1pm



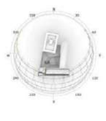
2pm

3pm

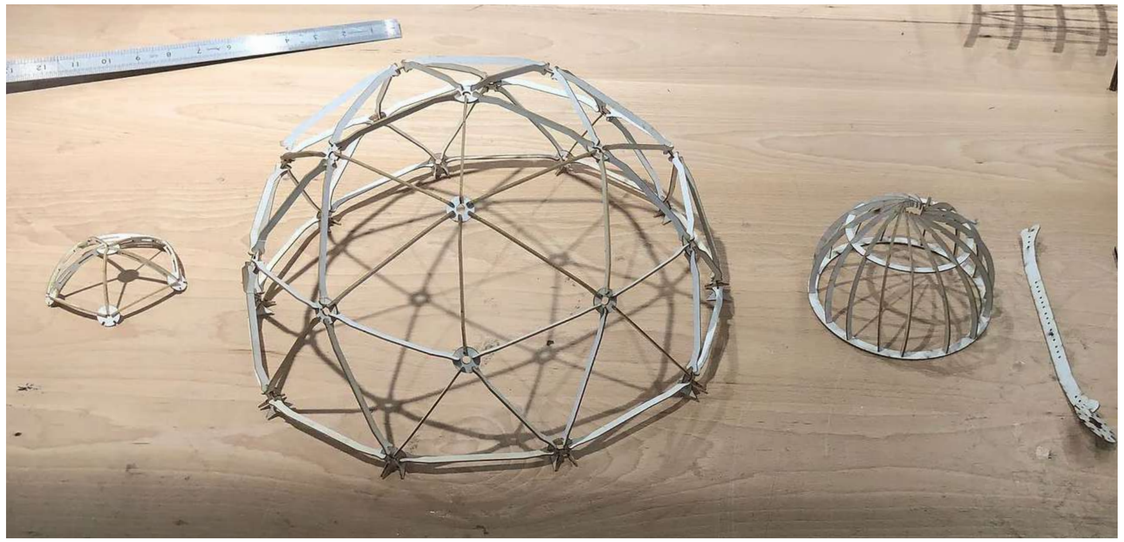
4pm



5pm



8pm



08

Watermelon Place

Niigata, Japan, AA Visiting School

PROJECT	Shin Egashira's Architectural Association Visiting School in Koshirakura Niigata, Japan
YEAR / STATUS	2023 / Built (1 week time frame)
ROLE	Student-Group led design and build

Watermelon Place

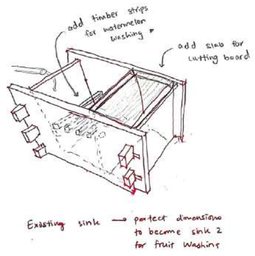
Niigata, Japan, AA Visiting School

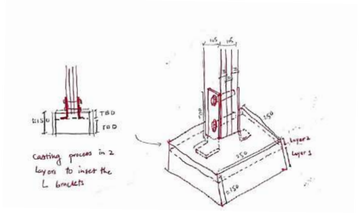
The Koshirakura workshop, a long-standing AA initiative in rural Niigata, Japan, engages a post-agricultural community by learning from the elderly and addressing local needs using locally sourced materials.

The ‘Watermelon Place’ project revitalizes a spring used for washing and drinking locally grown watermelons. It features reclaimed timber water channels, a foot sink, and a canopy that provides shade in summer and protection from winter snow, ensuring the spring’s continued use.

Role and Responsibilities:

- Attended local festivals and community events to maintain longstanding relationships with local villagers
- Collaborated with a team of 10+ students in design and construction
- Focused on concrete foundation and footings as my personal task
- Focused on timber sink details as my personal task





In-process sketches during the design and build of the canopy structure

Annual tree cutting festival and ceremony

Construction in progress using locally sourced timber

Completion of Watermelon Place project, July, 2023

Timber sink with a wooden water channel directing fresh water stream into designed concrete-cast pebble basin.

Hirosun, a local villager, enjoying the fresh spring water after repair of public water channel and sink and project completion

For more work and project media,
please visit my website:

www.hafsasyed.com