

RETHINKING URBAN VOIDS

In Search Of Spaces For Public In The Dense Urban Context Of Dhaka, Bangladesh

A Thesis

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2018

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(David Prytherch)



RETHINKING

URBAN VOIDS

BY NAZIA TARANNUM

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I have to start by thanking my awesome set of parents. These two persons, despite the patriarchal context, brought me up more as a human being and less as a girl. Despite all their anxiety regarding the uncertainty, they always inspire me to explore the world and chase my dreams. Thank you so much, Ammu-Abbu, for letting me grow as I want to. Thanks to my brother Arka, too, for keeping me busy with all his annoying mischiefs!

Also, thanks to everyone connected to my Master of Architecture journey here in the College of Creative Arts. I want to thank my classmates and all my faculty who helped me so much. Special thanks to David, my amazing Consultant, and Diane, the greatest reader I could ever imagine and Gerardo, the ever patient Chair of my thesis committee!



Rethinking Urban Voids: In Search Of Spaces For Public On The Dense Urban Context Of Dhaka, Bangladesh

NAZIA TARANNUM
Miami University

ABSTRACT

Looking at any growing city and its urban voids, a few uncomfortable questions inevitably arise: Where is the space for the urban people? Where is the space to breathe? Where is my/our space in the city? The pre-occupation with eminent urban and political issues has fueled these questions, but the responses to these seemingly trivial issues are sometimes clearly portrayed by a superficial picture. Relevant issues are only rarely addressed or responded to on a substantial structural level and the resolutions appear to have little space-defining effect.

For the urban contexts in the developed countries, the vicious circle of crippling self-referentiality is rising everyday. Soon we will need to be aware that any context exists within a global context irrespective of its congestion and density. The developed and planned cities are also going to face the similar problems the developing ones have. To learn about the architectural handling of substantial issues and to break away from the comfortable fluffiness of current practice is the aim of the paper.

While analyzing the urban situation, liminality of space becomes an important issue here. The urban voids refer to the spaces in between built forms and these 'liminal spaces' play a great role to accommodate urban people and such urban voids are studied and incorporated to the design solution. The paper will bring light to the scarcity of usable and useful urban voids in growing cities, and the diversity in architectural and urban plans for urban voids. For this analysis and design task, some cities like Vienna, Detroit, Philadelphia are analyzed. Later, Dhaka- a growing city- is taken as a sample and the site to be worked upon.

INTRODUCTION

When I look at the urban environment in my city- Dhaka, I cannot find much of urban 'space'/'void' even if I try hard. There are parks and green areas. The ratio of the open space to the built area is so high that the open space is almost invisible. The little open space in the city is also inaccessible to people from different strata. In some cases, authorities have prohibited access. In others, people feel unsafe and/or unwanted. This means, the open spaces do not accommodate the density and the diversity of

the city. For a third world country, this is not an unusual situation. In Dhaka, the built forms are mostly congested to facilitate space for the growing population. In the same city, I have seen an open architectural competition to design 6 individual residences for 6 families only in a 42-acre land. This felt like an atrocity to me, when the scarcity of space is beyond imagination. This calls for a huge change in policies. We, architects are designing for clients. But is that good enough? What is our social obligation? We cannot just design a building in a given plot or piece of land. We must address the context, not only to design the building in question but also to make it a better place. In a developed country, I can see the difference. The cities are planned; the open spaces are designed in most cases. The places are accessible for people to use for socialization and many other purposes. The abundance of space is evident. But the density growing is evident, too. Therefore, I start thinking anew. What if such developed cities come down to a saturation point and face the same fate with respect to congestion and scarcity like Dhaka or similar cities? Is it not obvious that we are moving towards such a condition?

Then there is the other issue- diversity of people and culture. Dhaka has a vast range of cultures in terms of religion, lifestyle, education and work. Even in the developed countries, is diversity being accommodated in a designed way? Are we sensitive enough to notice the lack of spaces that aspire empathy? Or, is it high time that we design urban spaces such that they not only address the people but also the diversity in them. There will be differences. Is it not upon us if we see the differences as diversity and embrace them? If we do so, how this whole thing can be facilitated in urban voids or spaces? This brought light to the fact that I want to work with urban voids. I want to design them to accommodate urban people and, the urban diversity of people and culture.

METHODOLOGY

A number of different case studies from various places show different forms of urban voids. Some of the urban voids were designed, some were created with time and added value, some depict blight. Case studies of Vienna, Detroit and Philadelphia are analyzed to address Urban Space and Urban Voids with respect to theory and practical usage. Urban Voids can be used as breathing spaces, safe spaces, useful spaces, accommodating diversity and interaction. Safe Spaces are spaces that are not intimidating to

anyone irrespective of social strata, financial condition, educational background or religion or other features.

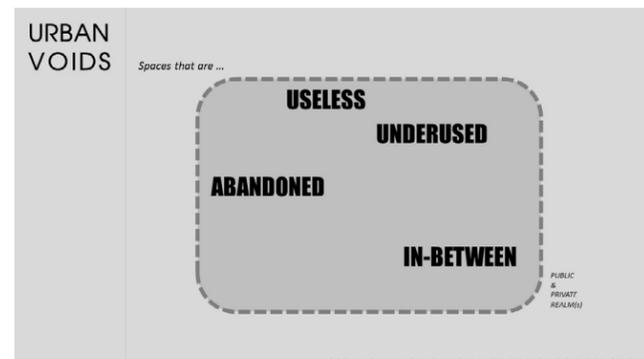
The analyses include design strategies for Urban Voids designers or authorities have made and/or implemented. In the city of Dhaka, the strategies are not there or are not of any use to people. In the city of Toledo, they are there in black and white but not implemented. In the city of Vienna, designers and authorities specified and implemented the strategies in a way they should be, because the strategies such as area zoning, use of urban equipment like hard and soft paves, existing vegetation, water features etc. enable the users/public to use the space more effectively. The Campus Martius is analyzed in the city of Detroit to understand how the quality of an urban open space can be changed to attract people.

Urban Voids often exist in the in-between spaces of buildings and streets, parks and buildings, parking lots and other urban built forms. These in-between spaces or liminal spaces can also contribute as utilitarian urban spaces. The analyses of liminal spaces in Toledo downtown area can lead towards the design strategies for such usage. The reason for choosing liminality is that I am cognizant of the scarcity of space in an urban context. I am cognizant also of the necessity of accommodating diversity to facilitate peace. Therefore, I shall be discussing Liminality and Diversity, and looking for ways to design the urban voids with respect to these two.

For growing cities, the need for having designed Urban Voids is increasing rapidly. But, do the parks and green areas aloof from the built spaces do what we need from them? If not, then what should be the design and definition of an Urban Void? I shall try to seek answer to these questions through designing such voids for a growing city like Dhaka.

URBAN VOIDS

Urban Voids, by usual definition, are the useless, underused or abandoned in-between spaces. They are defined by the built forms or infrastructures. The images below show the different types of urban voids. From the drawings, it is also clear that the edges of the built forms or infrastructures impact the



quality and formation of the space and therefore, the usage of it.

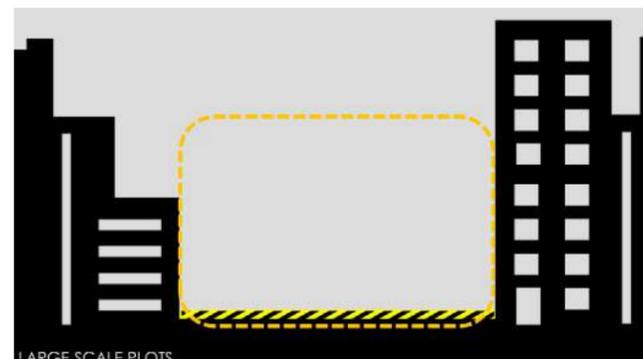
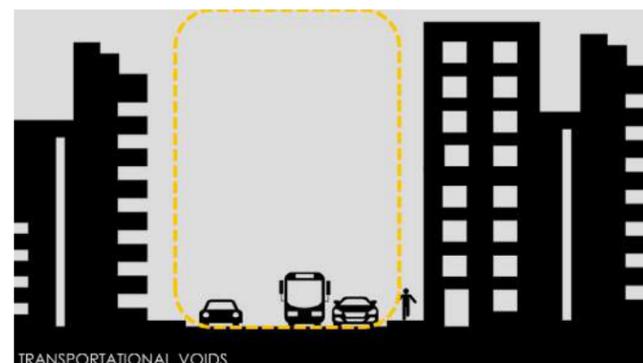
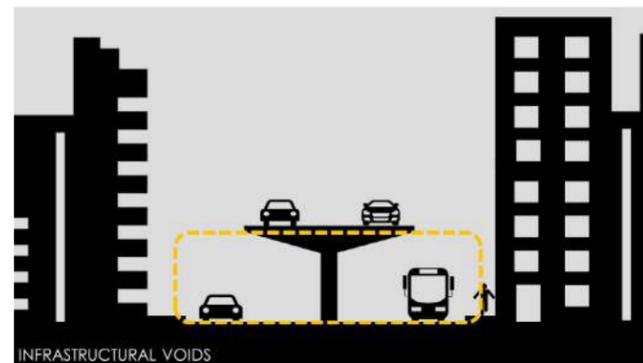
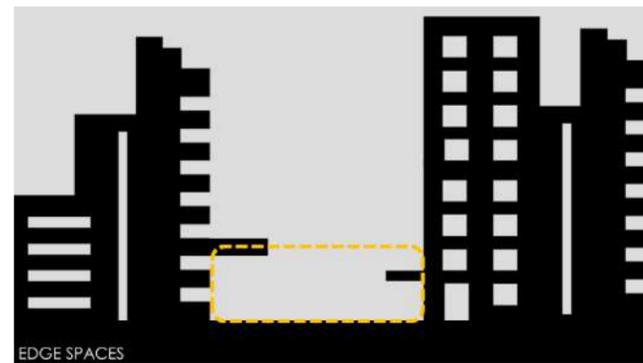
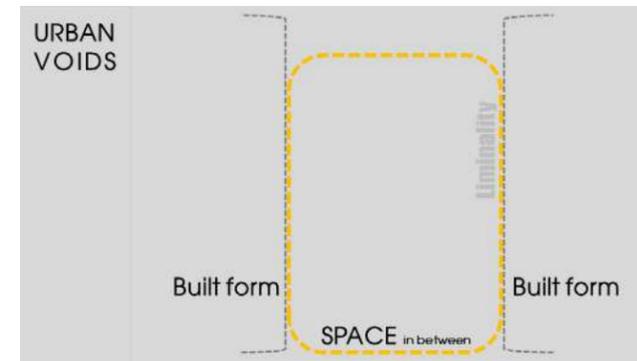


Figure: Various formation of urban voids



CASE STUDY 001

Mariahilferstrasse, by Bureau B+B & Orso.Pitro (ULRIKE PITRO, FRANZISKA ORSO), in Vienna, Austria. 01

Even though this project is more known as a landscape architecture project, it has successfully addressed the urban issues of the site and designed the environment for the urban people there. This is why I chose this as one of my cases to study. According to the designers, there are so many parameters to consider in landscape architecture that some of them overlap with others in either urban design or other similar disciplines.

Mariahilferstrasse- the most important shopping area is in the center of Vienna- has the city train station on one end and the Museum Quarter on the other. Both the city people and the visitors use this one-and-a-half-kilometer long street frequently. And thus, the street had become a vehicle-heavy one and could not accommodate the pedestrian traffic at all. There was little room for intervention as the whole scene had become complicated with the vehicular traffic, the commercial activity and the life around the area. Bureau B+B focused on people's convenience and easy everyday life and smooth commercial activities. The residents and the visitors who were the prospective users of the street, did take part in the design process. The design proposition speaks for a process that simplifies and clarifies the existing urban situation rather than reshaping it.

Design Strategies

The first strategy was to do a pedestrian friendly zoning. The vehicular lane has been narrowed down drastically to accommodate more pedestrian areas. The central plaza with a church became pedestrian wholly. Asymmetrically placed green areas are designed to accommodate people and life.

The second strategy was the use of urban equipment. Urban park furniture and other accessories have been designed to accommodate different dynamics and densities of people. Main intention was to house a range of activities. While designing a variety of furniture, very limited use of materials was deliberately chosen to keep the design clean and homogenous.

The third strategy was to maintain the existing vegetation along with planting new trees. The new planting



Figure: Before and After Images by Bureau B+B

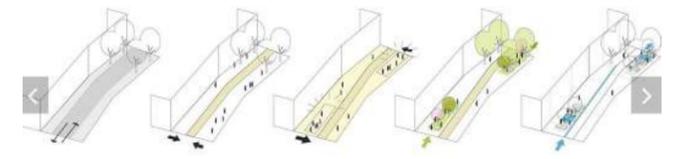


Figure: Concept development drawings by Bureau B+B & Orso.Pitro

beds were designed around the existing truck base. This way, old and new plants together would make the area green and lively.

The fourth important strategy was to introduce some water features, as they work as a connecting thread

Figure: Proposed Street Section drawings by Bureau B+B & Orso.Pitro

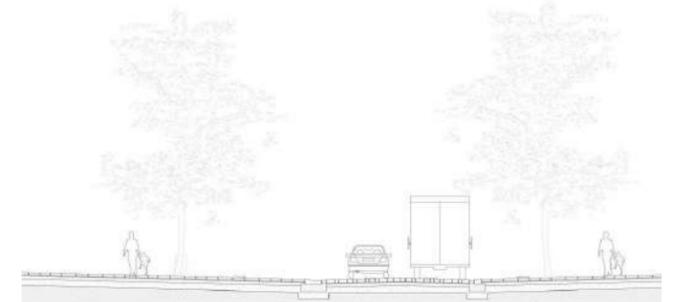


Figure: Image by Bureau B+B & Orso.Pitro showing Community Participation

among the urban spaces. Here, a water feature disappears and there, catches your eye after a while. Thus, a sense of continuity is designed through it.

The analysis of this project also illustrates the necessity of communication with the community, as seen in the photos below. Users are of prime priority and therefore, they have the right to choose the features of the space they are going to use.

CASE STUDY 002

Campus Martius, City of Detroit. 02

The heart of the downtown Detroit had an island overwhelmed with heavy traffic. The city worked with Project For Public Spaces (PPS) to reclaim the space for public. The intention was to change the space quality of the urban void to attract more people.

The concrete island with a sculpture: Soldier's and Sailor's Monument in the center was replaced by an urban park designed such that it stays active all the year round. The surrounding abandoned buildings were renovated and a lot of floor areas were open for

Figure: Before and After Images of Campus Martius



retail marketing. These strategies helped bringing people and life to the urban void.

The analyses show that the mayor's vision and stance were strong and the community participation was overwhelming. These acts transformed the dead place to a live one.

Also, proper management body and strategy were formed to make sure that the activity is continued in that place.

On the other hand, as a result of the park and the activities, a number of new buildings were built around the green way. Thus, a growing cycle of urban park was established to ensure life here in Campus Martius.

CASE STUDY 003

City of Philadelphia. 03

he abandoned lots in the city of Philadelphia had to be addressed. This proposal published in the microcities.net addresses this issue and derives some strategies for the previously unwanted urban voids. In the existing situation, the urban voids are shown as disparate and unused. In the proposal, they are

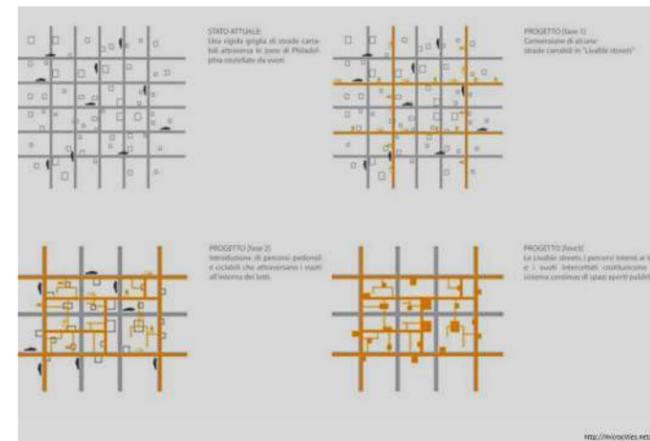


Figure: Current state and proposed project phases



Figure: Existing and Proposed Site Section

connected with the help of livable streets and pedestrian paths.

The plans by Microcities show the design strategies in macro level. From the sections and the visualizations, the implementation and the connections are more clearly visible. The streets and the pedestrian ways are adorned with plants and in some places, with sculpture and art installations.

DHAKA

With a population of 14.54 million in 104.2 square miles of area, Dhaka is the most densely populated city in the world. Urban open spaces are so rare that people often feel suffocated. Nothing could be a better place

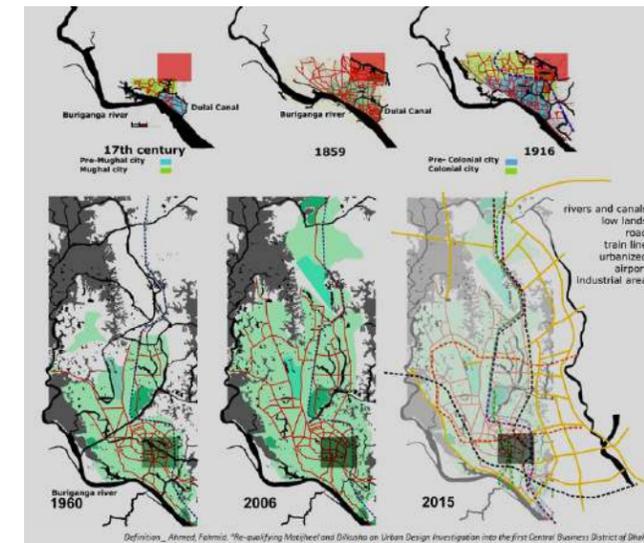


Figure: History of Urbanization in Dhaka

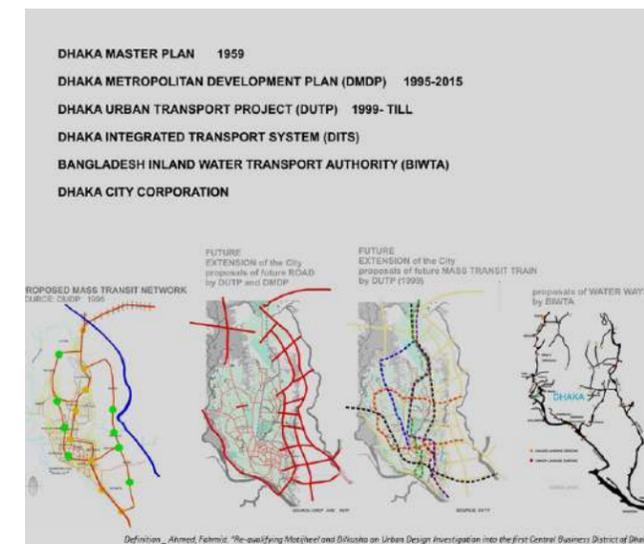


Figure: History of Urbanization in Dhaka in terms of infrastructure etc.

URBAN PARKS or OPEN SPACES in DHAKA

Historically >>

1. Boldha Garden, Old Dhaka
2. Bangabhaban Garden [Out of bounds]
3. Alleys in Shankhari Bazar, Old Dhaka
4. Courts in the Lal Bagh Fort [?]
5. Osmani Udyan [Not safe]
6. Ramna Park & Suhrawardi Udyan [Huge Open space, prevailing till date]
7. Pilkhana (BGB) [Out of bounds]
8. Sangsad [National Parliament Building] Premises [Now out of bounds]
9. Chandrima Udyan
10. Old Airport Area [Out of bounds]
11. Kurmitola Golf Club [Out of bounds]
12. New Airport Area

to intervene to create usable urban voids other than this city.

Dhaka is a 400-year-old city. The urbanization started in 1600s and it kept growing ever since toward North. The Buriganga river surrounds it on West and South. The history of urbanization is shown in an image below. The central business district is shown in the red quadrangle.

The river gives an opportunity to create waterway surrounding the city and the government and responsible authorities have plans to do so. Thus, not only inside the city but also THE river bank areas have the scope to be designed as urban open spaces.

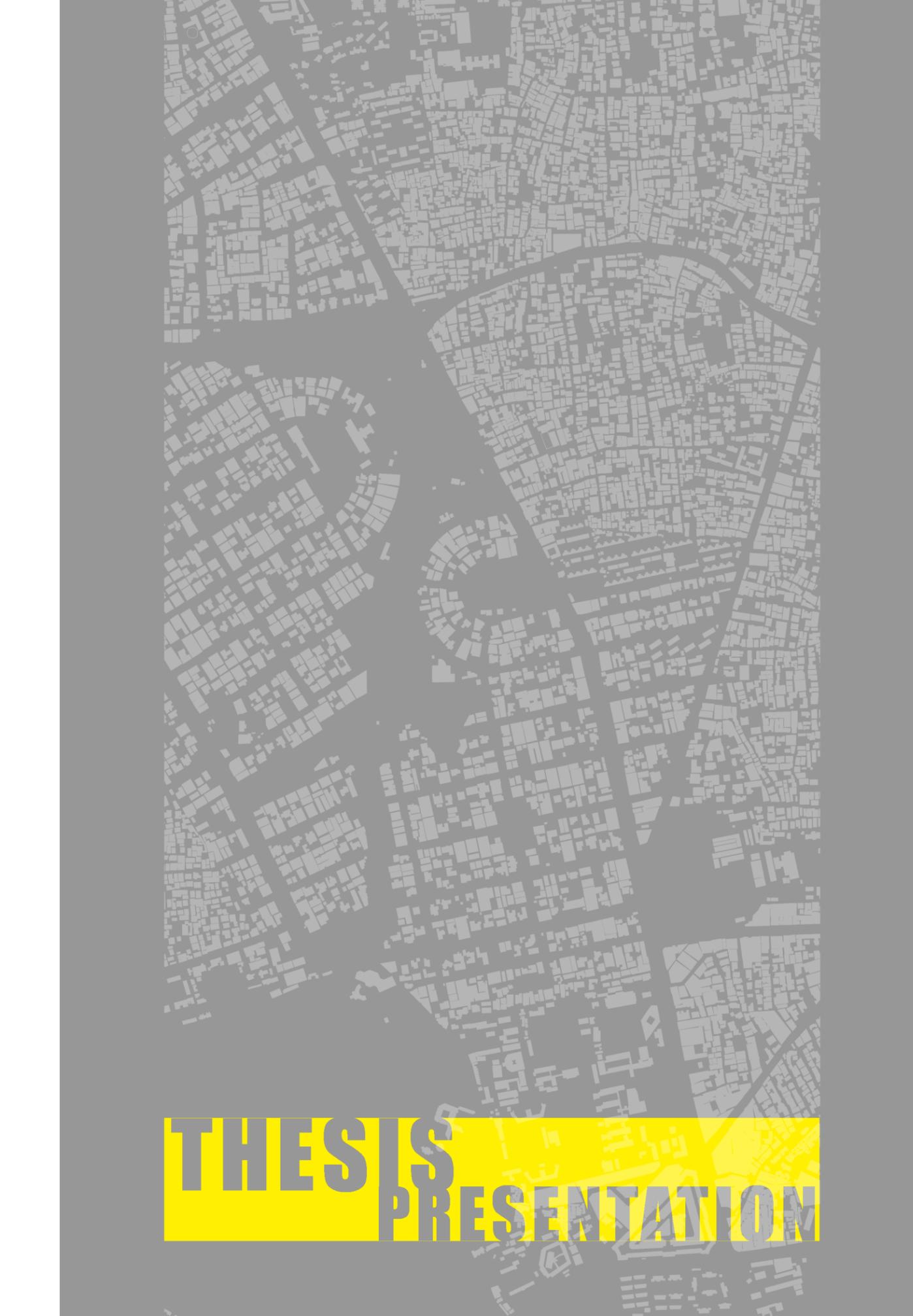
Along with urbanization, Dhaka city kept losing open spaces. One can count the parks in the city in no time as they are so less in number. Also, there are open spaces that are not accessible to the city people for one reason or the other. A preliminary list of open spaces is given below:

CONCLUSION

All the case study analyses provides a range of design strategies for urban voids in city areas with different conditions. Dhaka, being deprived of usable urban open spaces, needs intervention strategies at the earliest. This requires study of the urban voids and liminal spaces in Dhaka city. The study will lead to the design guidelines for Dhaka city in this case.

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02. Ansari, Aamir; Rethinking urban voids- innovative ways to revitalize lost spaces; CEPT; 2016
03. <https://microcities.net>
04. Definition _ Ahmed, Fahmid. "Re-qualifying Motijheel and Dilkusha an Urban Design Investigation into the first Central Business District of Dhaka."

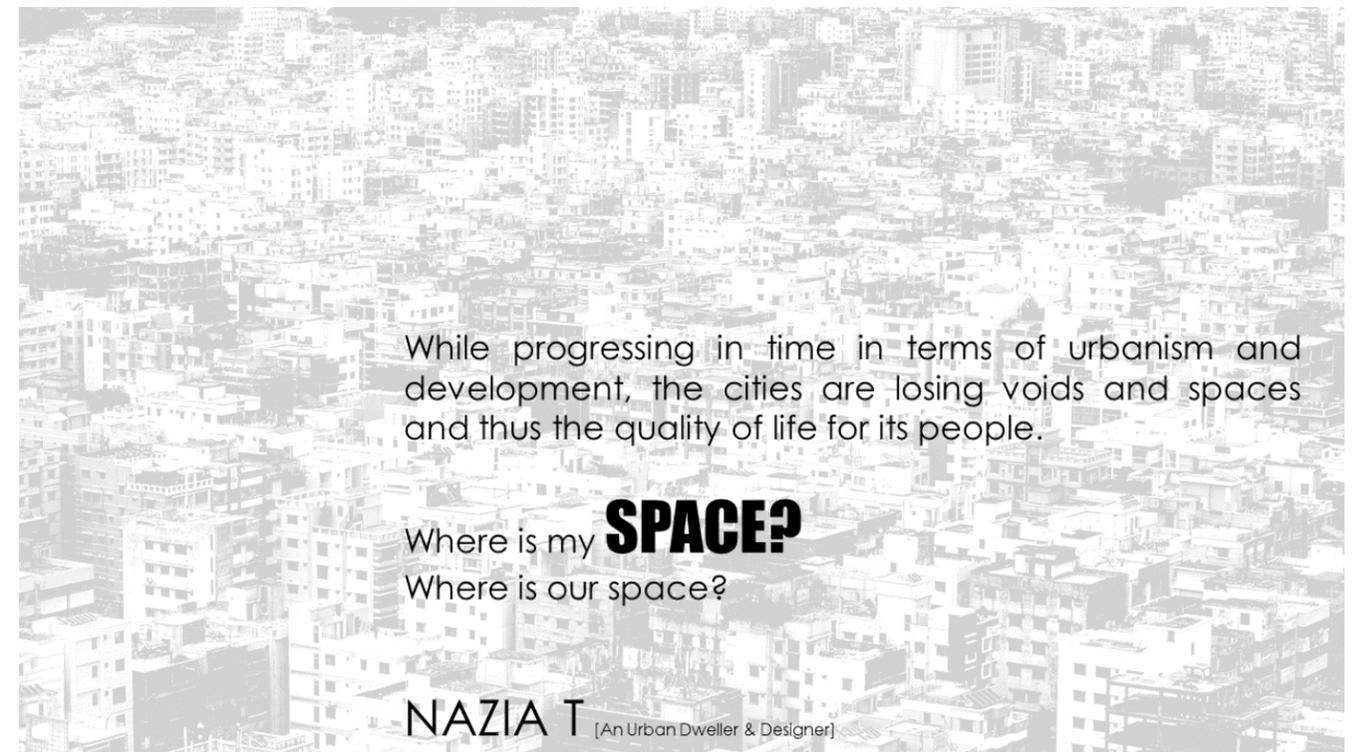


**THIS IS
PRESENTATION**

“A building and a film have much in common.

... .. create open space to preserve **emptiness**,
so we are not only faced with fullness, but have the
emptiness in which to repose.”

WIM WENDERS [A German Filmmaker]



While progressing in time in terms of urbanism and
development, the cities are losing voids and spaces
and thus the quality of life for its people.

Where is my **SPACE?**
Where is our space?

NAZIA T [An Urban Dweller & Designer]

CASE STUDY

MARIAHILFERSTRASSE

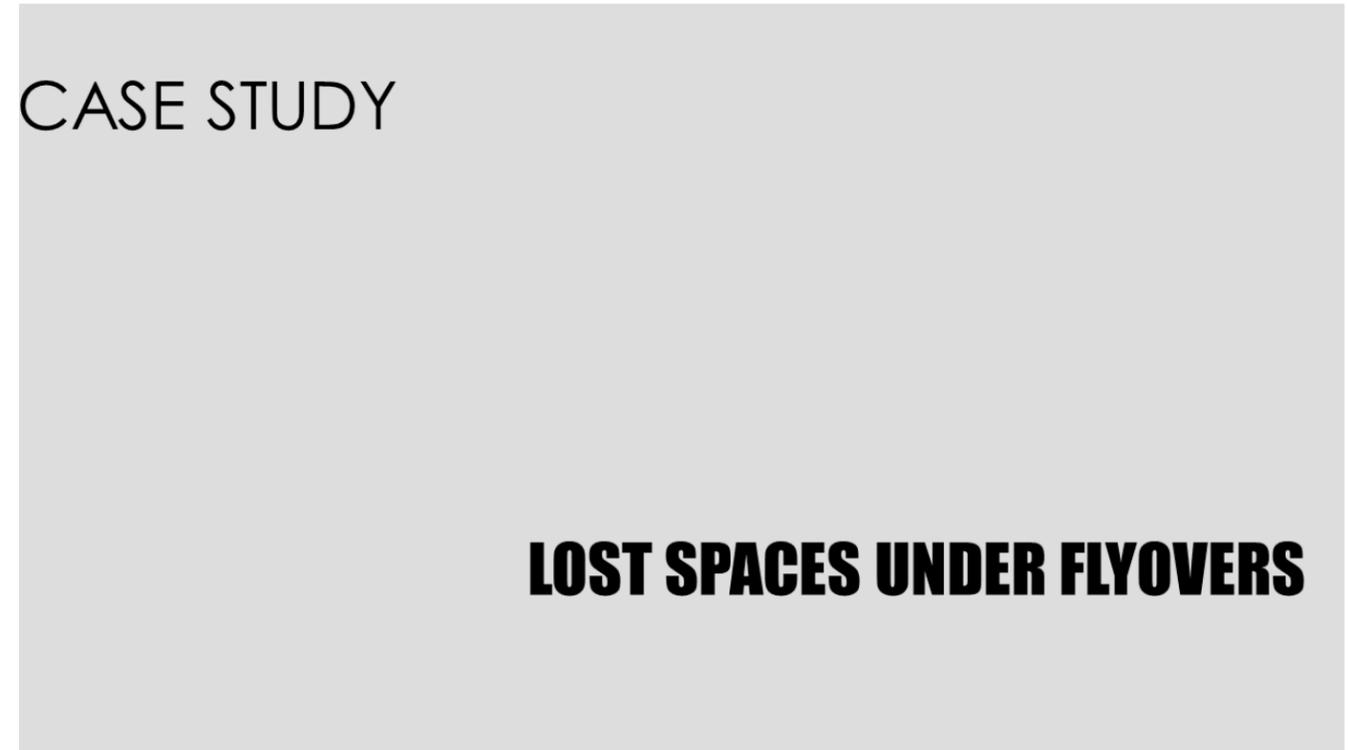
Vienna, Austria

Bureau B+B & Orso.Pitro (Ulrike Pitro, Franziska Orso)



CASE STUDY

LOST SPACES UNDER FLYOVERS





RETHINKING | DESIGN TOOLS

6 Low-Cost Techniques to **Activate** Underused Urban Space

- Moveable Furniture
- Bright Colors
- Additional Lighting
- Green Lawn
- Digital Elements
- Community Involvement

Source: Australian Institute of Landscape Architects





Photo by Jackie Chan Lighting

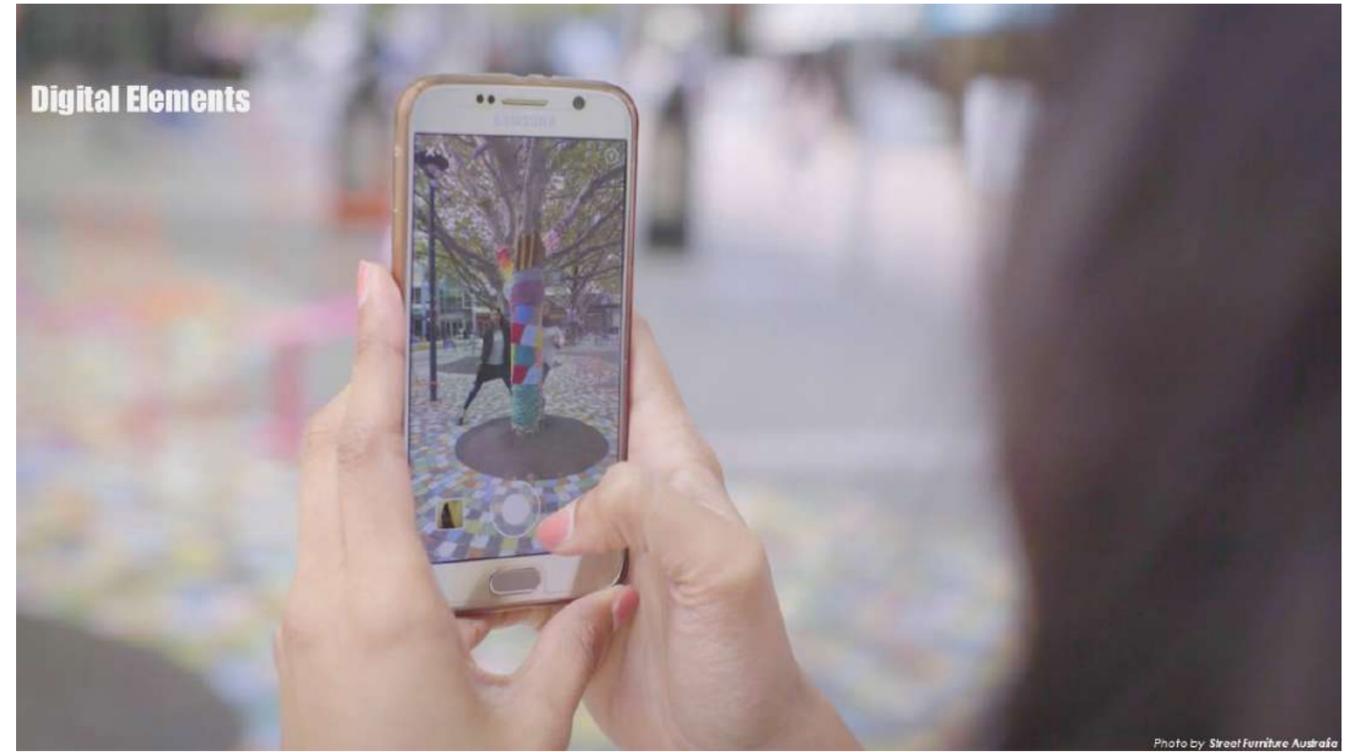


Photo by Street Furniture Australia

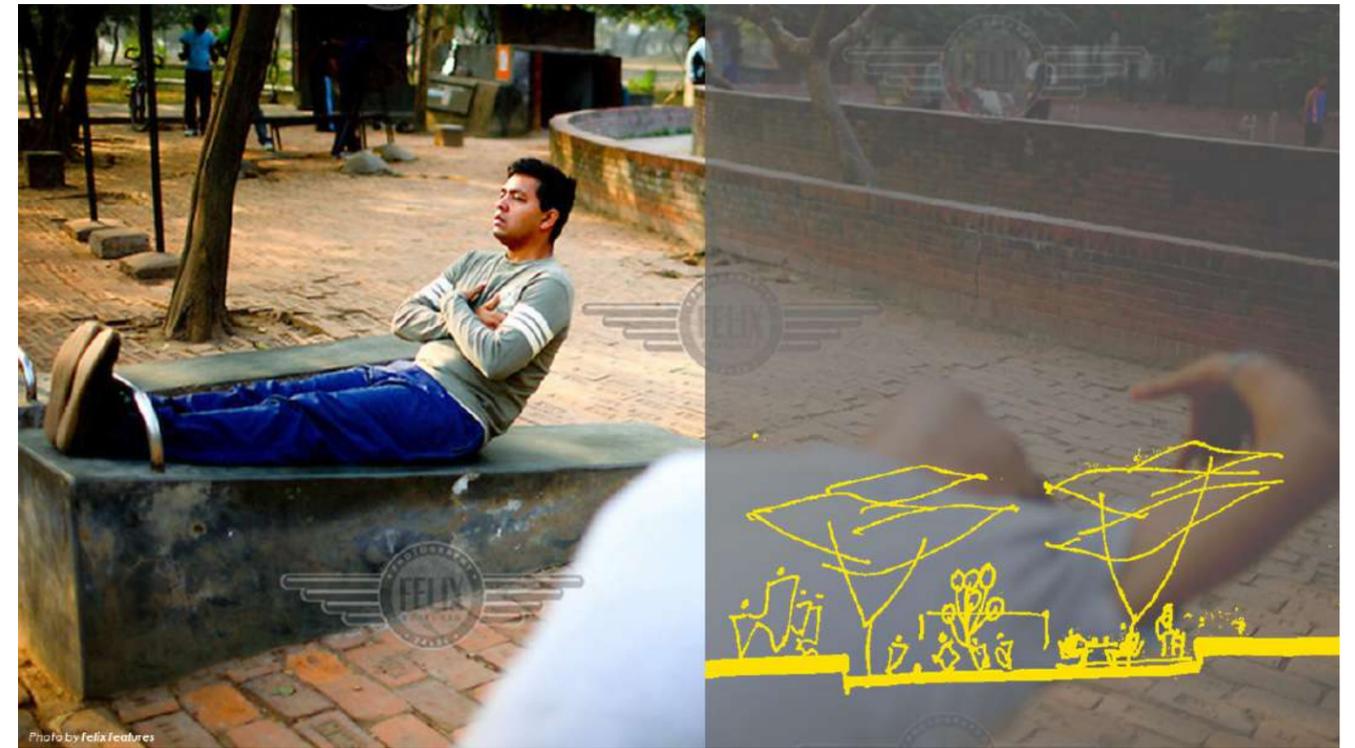


Photo by Street Furniture Australia

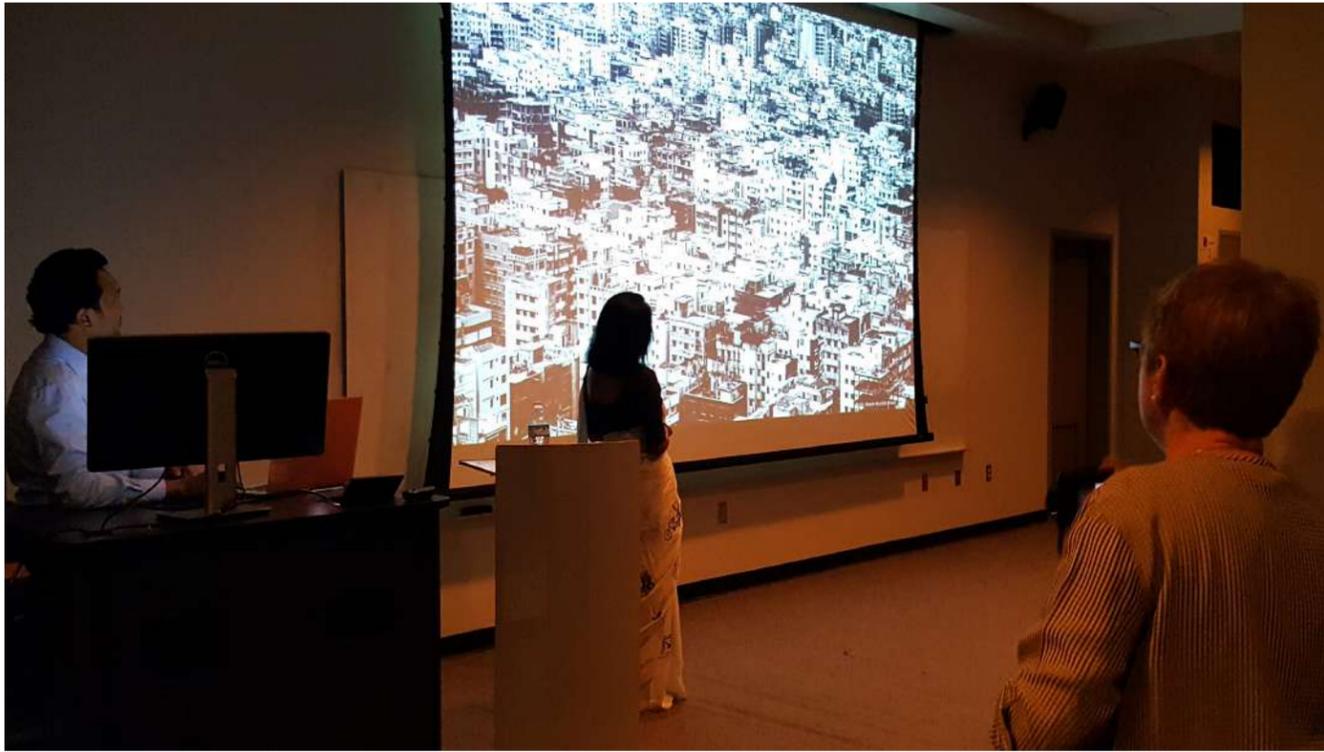


Photo by Street Furniture Australia

DHAKAite ways to **Activate** Unused Liminal Space







CCA Graduate Symposium 2017 | NAZIA TARANNUM presenting her Thesis "Rethinking Urban Voids"



CCA Graduate Symposium 2017 | End of Session DISCUSSION with the Thesis Respondents

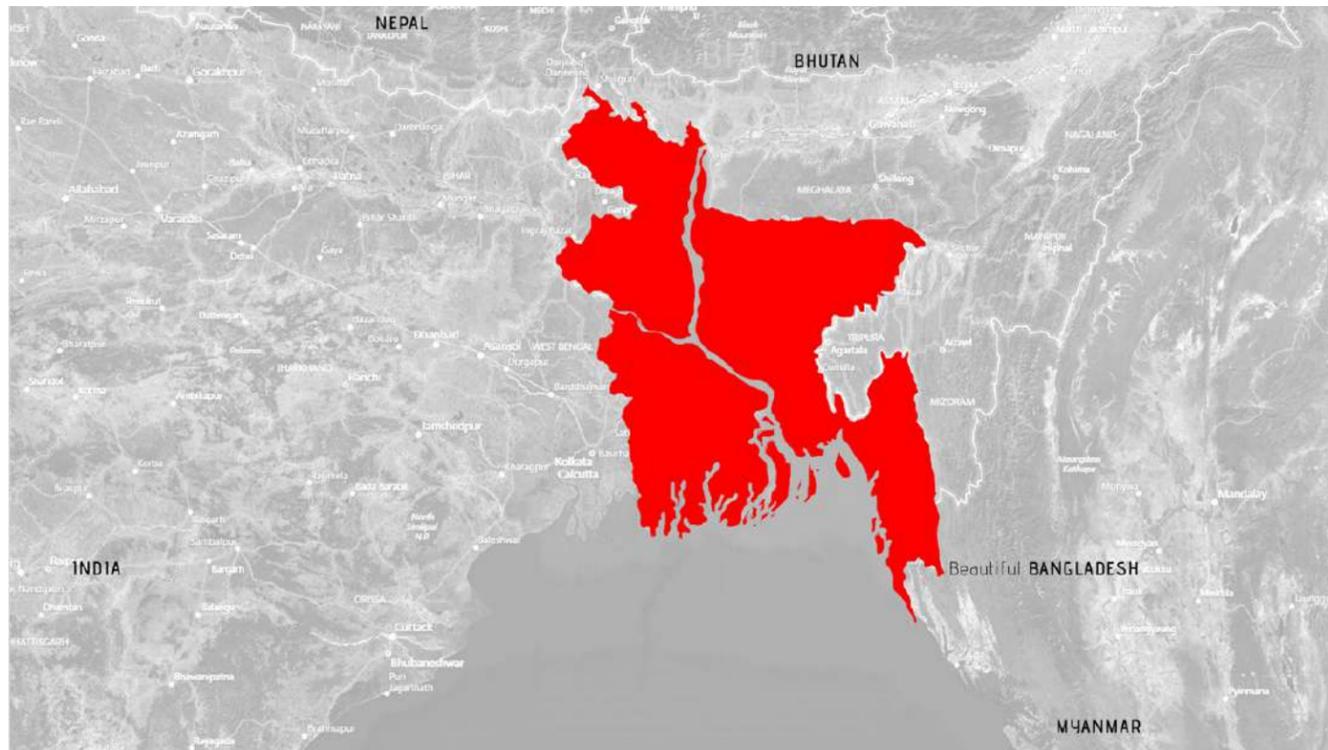
SITE DOCUMENTATION & ANALYSIS



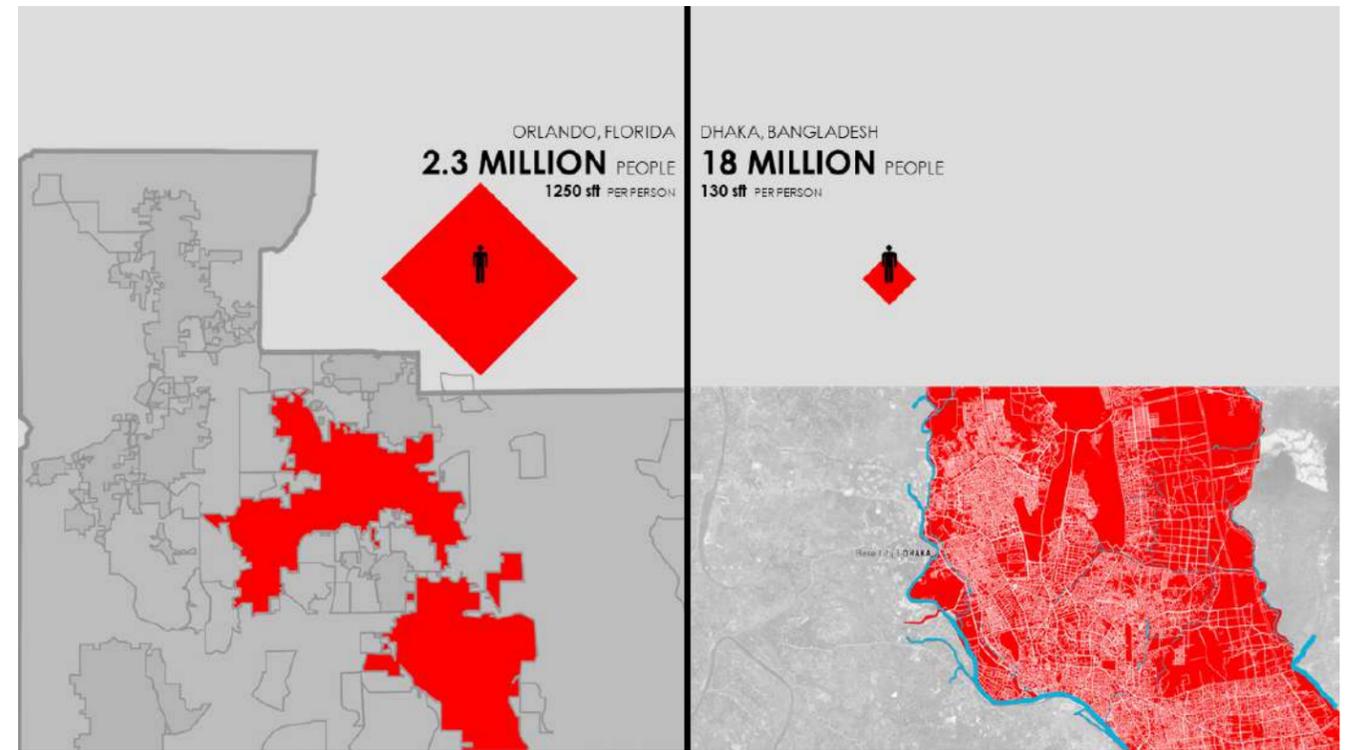
Where to Intervene | Introducing BANGLADESH in the World map



Where to Intervene | Introducing DHAKA the capital of Bangladesh- the country of rivers, green and people



Where to Intervene | Introducing BANGLADESH with respect to the neighboring countries



Where to Intervene | Comparing DHAKA to Orlando, Florida- a similar sized city- with respect to population and per capita space



Where to Intervene | Introducing mighty BURIGANGA River that flows around Dhaka and demarcates the human face on the map!



Where to Intervene | Introducing BAITUL MUKARRAM MOSQUE- the 10th biggest mosque in the world- at the heart of Dhaka



Where to Intervene | Introducing the serpentine streets in and around Dhaka city



Where to Intervene | Introducing Dhaka people blocking the streets with rickshaw and praying there! Not because we do not have mosques but because we have a huge population



Where to Intervene | Introducing Green Parks in Dhaka city that are fenced up and not accessible to the urban people



Where to Intervene | Introducing BAITUL MUKARRAM MOSQUE- the 10th biggest mosque in the world- at the heart of Dhaka



Where to Intervene | Introducing pedestrians walking literally alongside the vehicles on the streets making Dhaka a 'truly walkable city'!



Where to Intervene | Introducing Dhaka people blocking the streets and celebrating the first day of Bangla New Year!



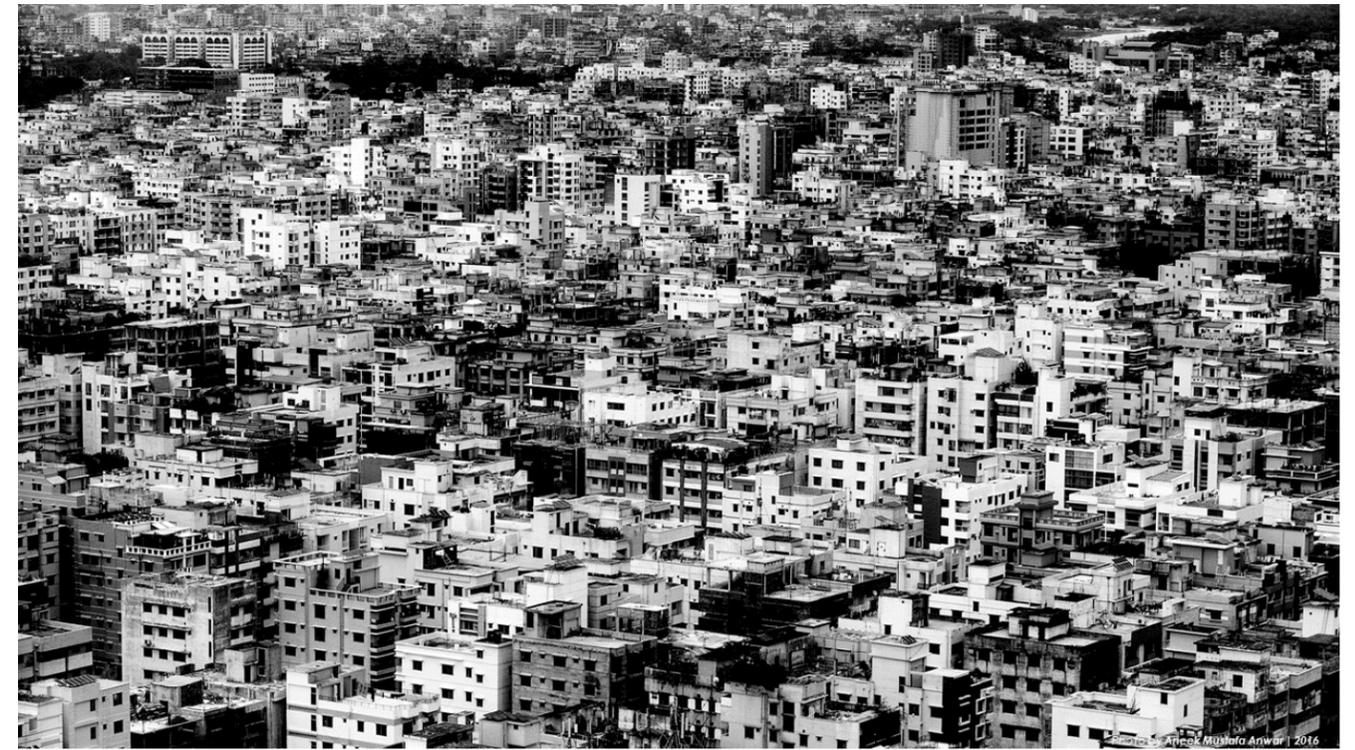
Where to Intervene | Introducing the masterpiece by Louis I Kahn- the parliament building of Bangladesh- Shangshad Bhaban



Where to Intervene | Introducing people flying kites for the Shakrai festival on the last day of a Bangla year, from their rooftops



Where to Intervene | Introducing visitors taking photographs from outside the fence around the inaccessible Shangshad Bhaban premises



Where to Intervene | Introducing the recent DHAKA- engaged and filled up with people and built forms leaving us with almost no space

PRECEDENT ANALYSIS

PHILADELPHIA VOIDS in Philadelphia, USA | Microcities

Architecture | Cityscape | Landscape
RETHINKING URBAN VOIDS | Precedential Study | Nazia T

CLIENT: VAN ALLEN INSTITUTE
DESIGN: METROPOLIS ARCHITECTURE
CITYSCAPE, LANDSCAPE
LOCATION: PHILADELPHIA, USA
STATUS: COMPETITION DESIGN

PARCHE URBANI
CORRIDOI VERDI
LIVABILE STREET
PIAZZE DI QUARTIERE
PARCHE DI QUARTIERE
STRADE DI COLLEGAMENTO TRA LOTTI
PIAZZE LOCALI
GIARDINI PUBBLICI
STRADE INTERNE AI LOTTI
SPAZI DI QUIETE
COMMUNITY GARDEN

1. LIVING STREET FOR THE URBAN
2. PIAZZA LOCALE CON CANTIERE
3. PIAZZA LOCALE PER CANTIERE E PIAZZA URBANA
4. SPAZIO DI QUIETE CON RETROSCENIO E PIAZZA URBANA
5. PIAZZA URBANA PER CANTIERE E PIAZZA URBANA

Case Study 01

MARIAHILFER STRASSE in Vienna, Austria | Bureau B+B & Orso.Pitro

Architecture | Cityscape | Landscape
RETHINKING URBAN VOIDS | Precedential Study | Nazia T

CLIENT: CITY OF VIENNA, DEPARTMENT OF URBAN DESIGN (MARE)
DESIGN: BUREAU B+B URBAN DESIGN AND LANDSCAPING, AMSTERDAM
DESIGNER: ARCHITECTS, VIENNA
LOCATION: VIENNA, AUSTRIA
SITE AREA: 10,000 M²
STATUS: FIRST PART COMPLETED 2014

AIM & [DESIGN] PROCESS
ACTIVITY
AFTERMATH

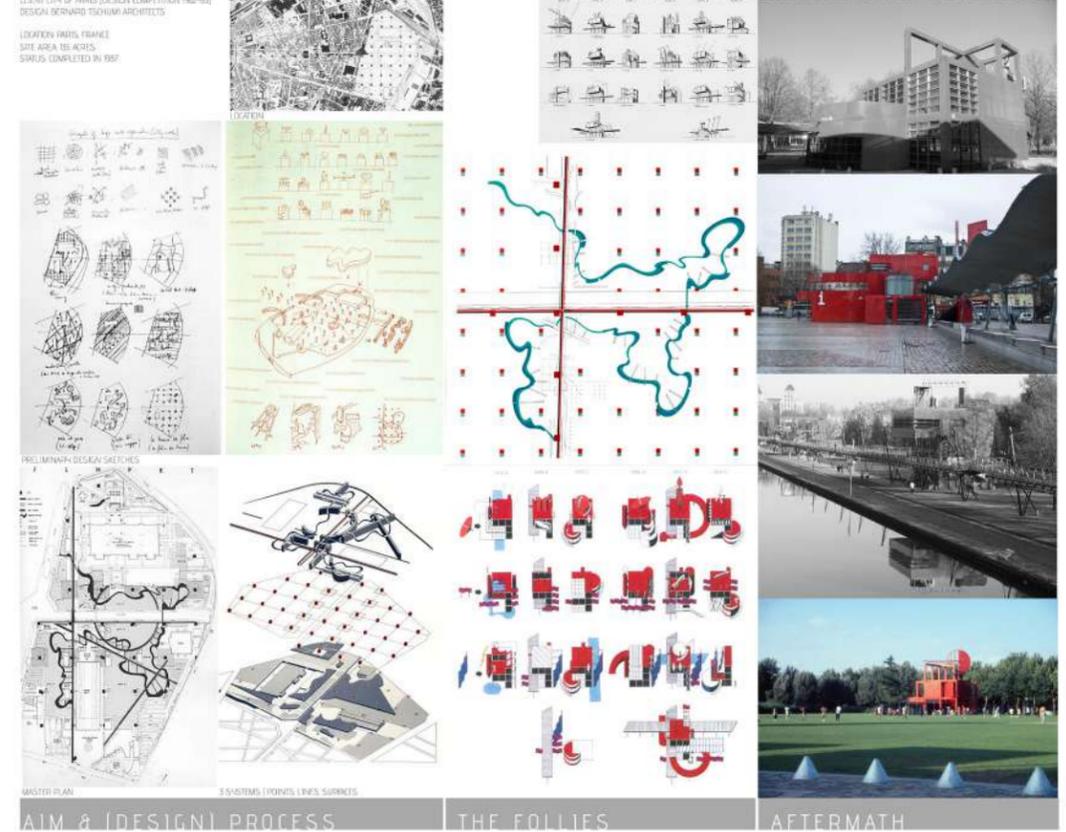
Case Study 02

A Collection of **POCKET PARKS & LIMINAL SPACES** in Various Places
 RETHINKING URBAN VOIDS | Precedential Study | Nazia T



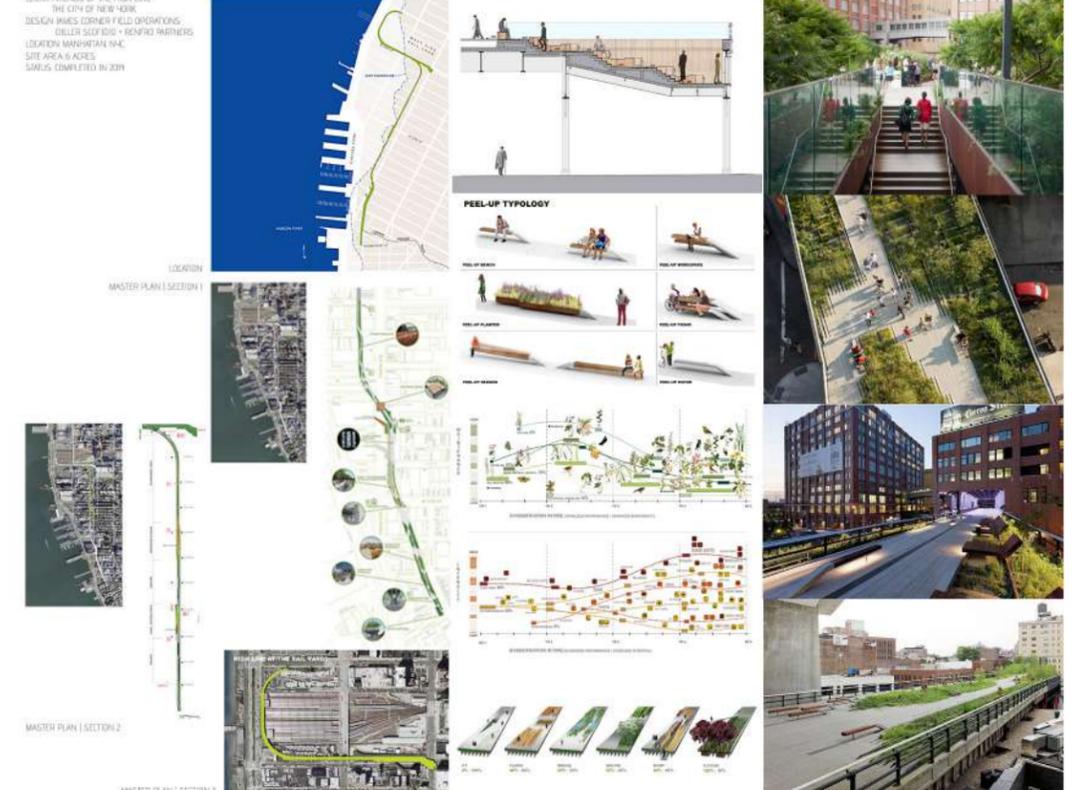
Case Study 03

PARC DE LA VILLETTE Paris in Paris, France | Bernard Tschumi
 RETHINKING URBAN VOIDS | Precedential Study | Nazia T



Case Study 04

THE HIGH LINE in Manhattan, NY | James Corner, Diller Scofidio, Renfro Partners
 RETHINKING URBAN VOIDS | Precedential Study | Nazia T



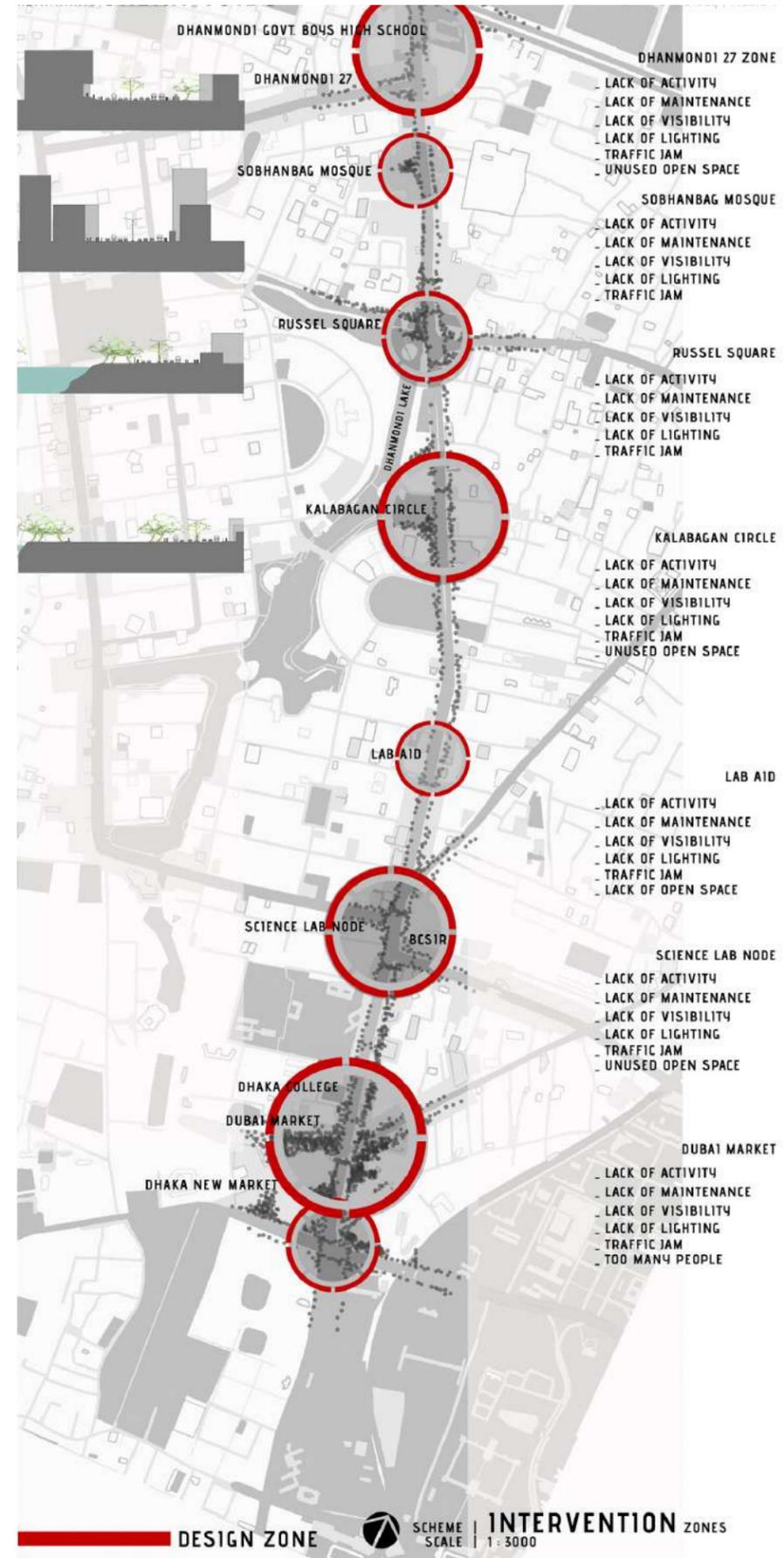
Case Study 05

THE ZIDELL YARDS MASTER PLAN in Portland, OR | Sasaki & West 8
 RETHINKING URBAN VOIDS | Precedential Study | Nazia T



Case Study 06

PROGRAM ANALYSIS

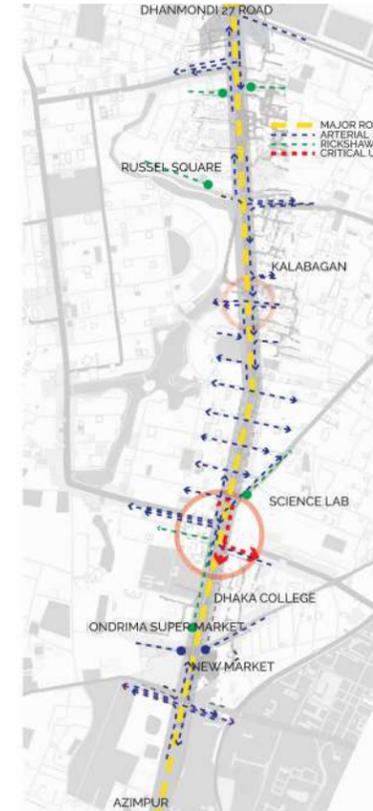


Throughout the design process, the program had changed multiple times. The Site Analyses and the Precedent Analyses led the designer to a range of problems along the Mirpur Road. The designer thrived to design an array of spaces for various activities and thus, a PATTERN LANGUAGE for Public Spaces for Urban people in dense cities.

DESIGN PROPOSAL



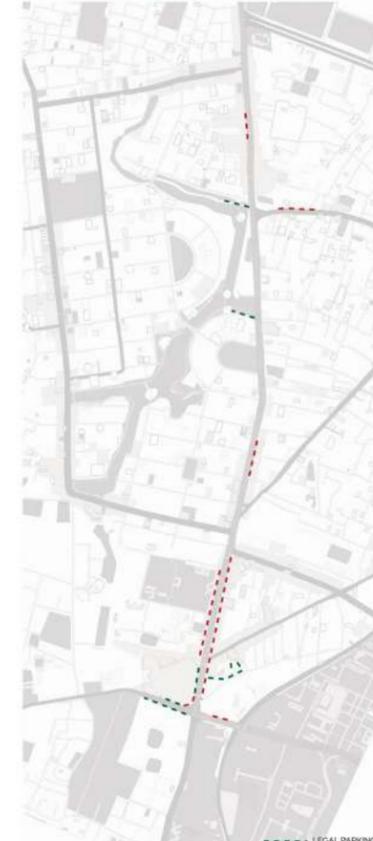
BASE SURVEY SCALE | 1:6000
PEDESTRIAN FLOW
(Source: Romi Architects, Bangladesh)



BASE SURVEY SCALE | 1:6000
VEHICULAR TRAFFIC FLOW
(Source: Romi Architects, Bangladesh)

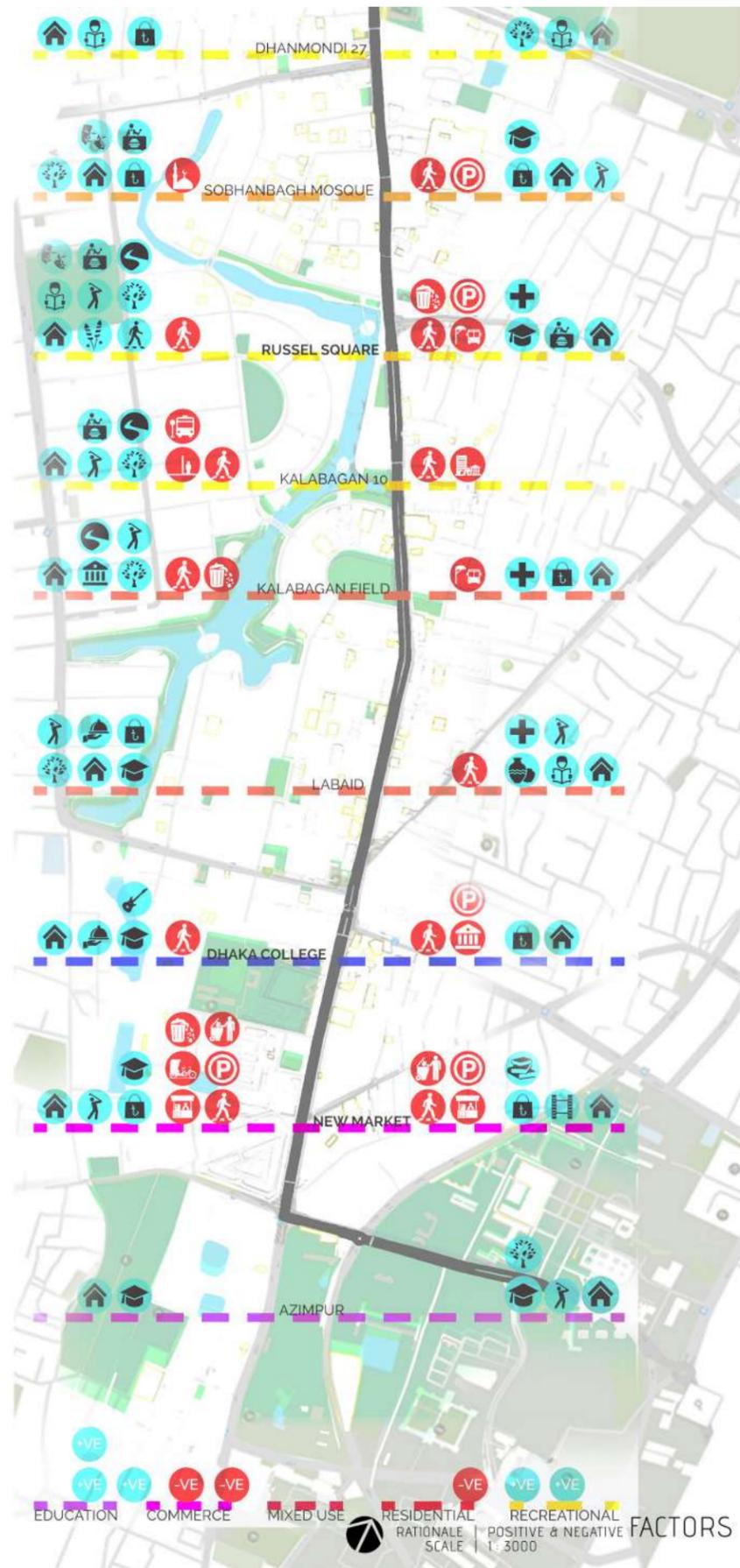


BASE SURVEY SCALE | 1:6000
STAKEHOLDERS
(Source: Romi Architects, Bangladesh)

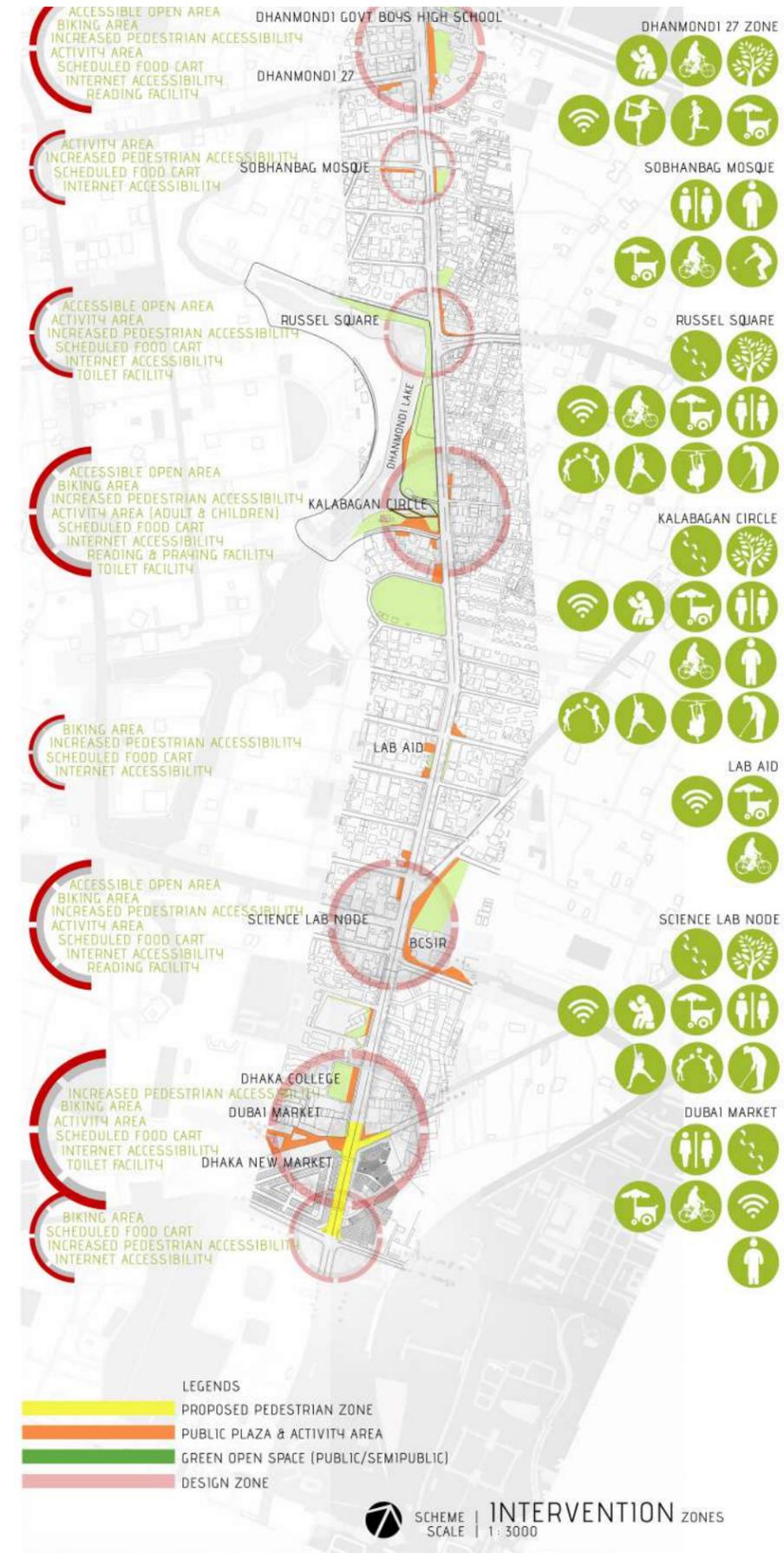


BASE SURVEY SCALE | 1:6000
PARKING SITUATION
(Source: Romi Architects, Bangladesh)

The site is analyzed with respect to many different factors. Only the vital ones are shown in here.

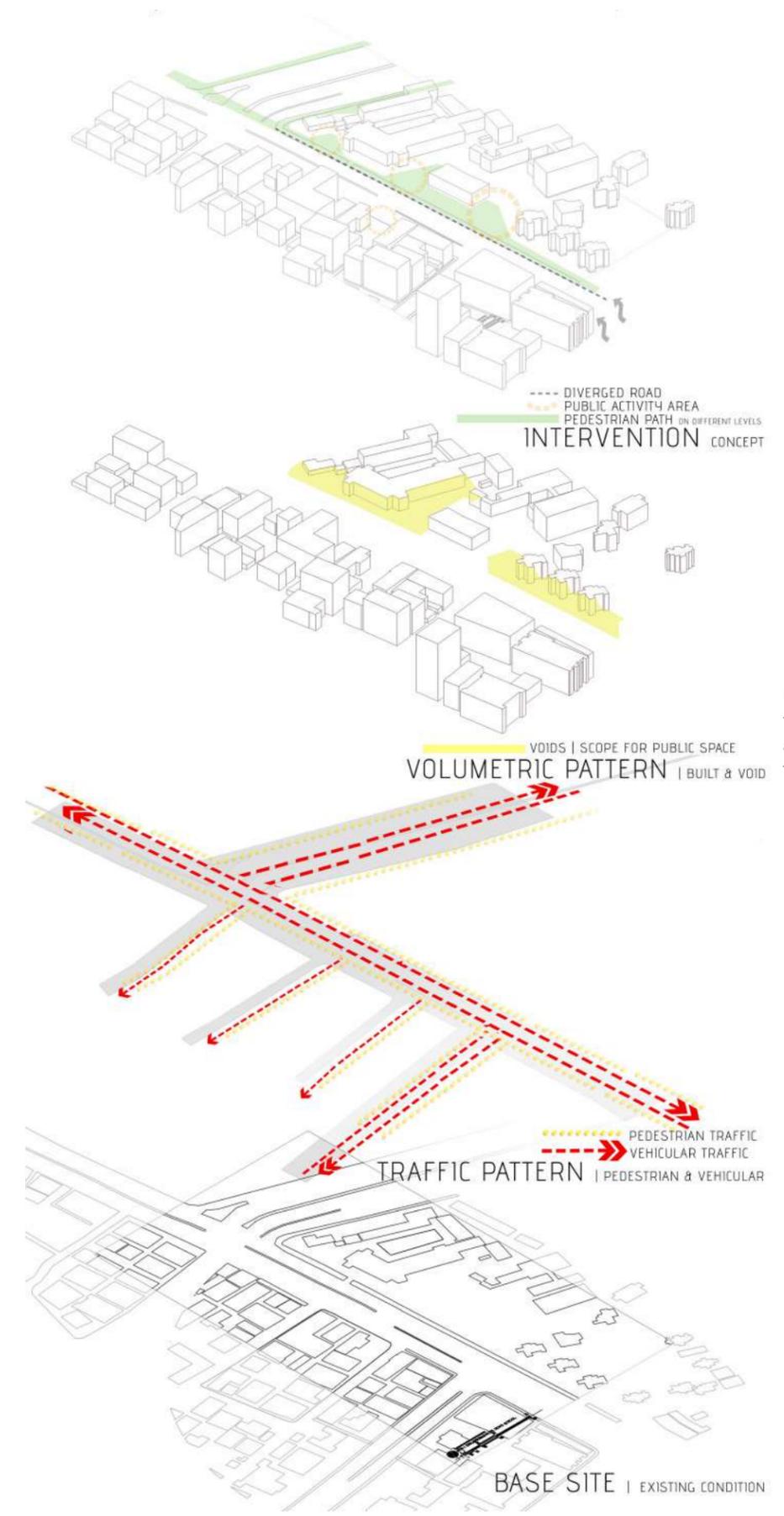


A thorough site analysis, with adequate help from Form.3 Architects Bangladesh, led to this diagram where all the positive and negative factors are determined along the stretch of Mirpur Road.

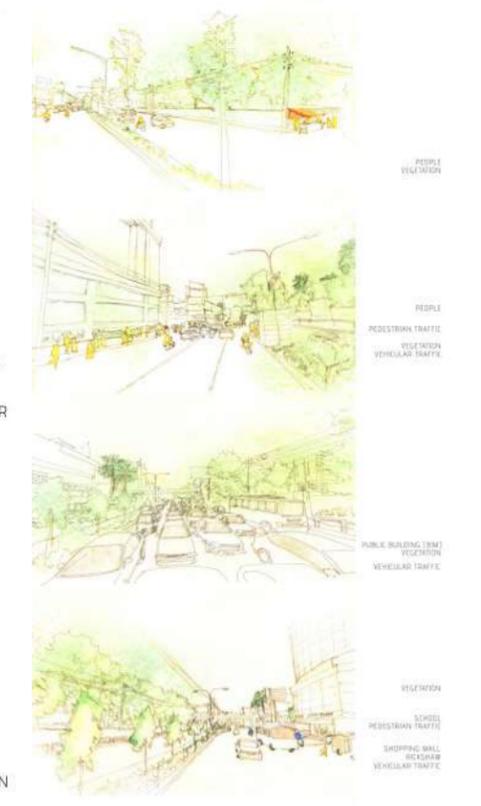


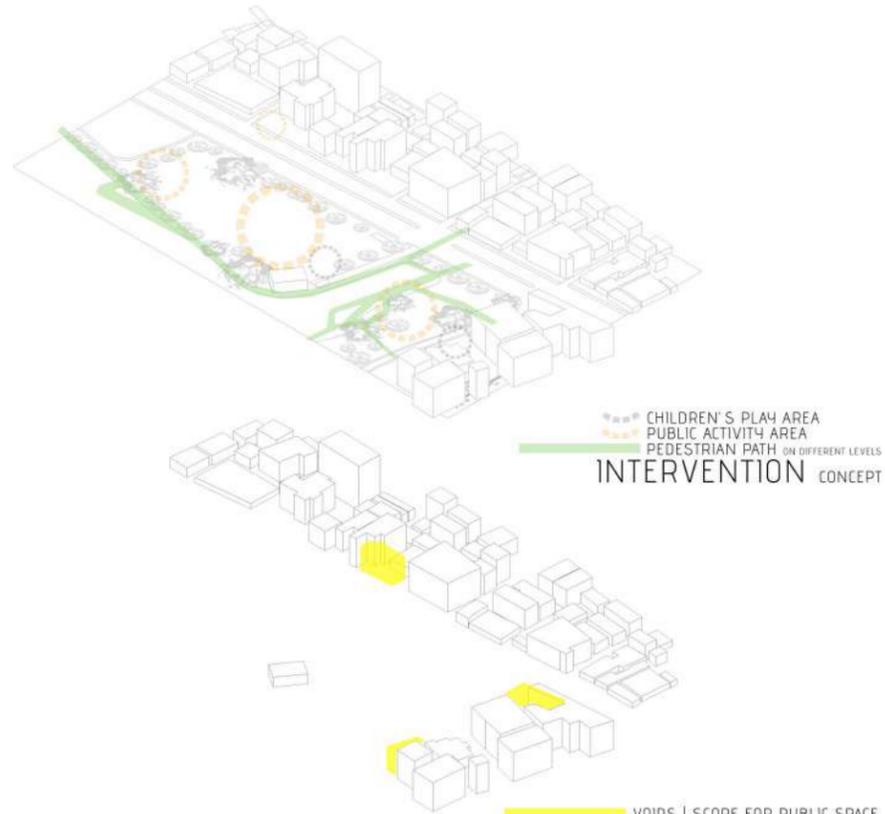
The array of activities to rejuvenate the urban voids are shown in the drawing here. This is the preliminary idea of the Pattern Language of Public Activities.

SUBSITE DESIGN PROPOSAL

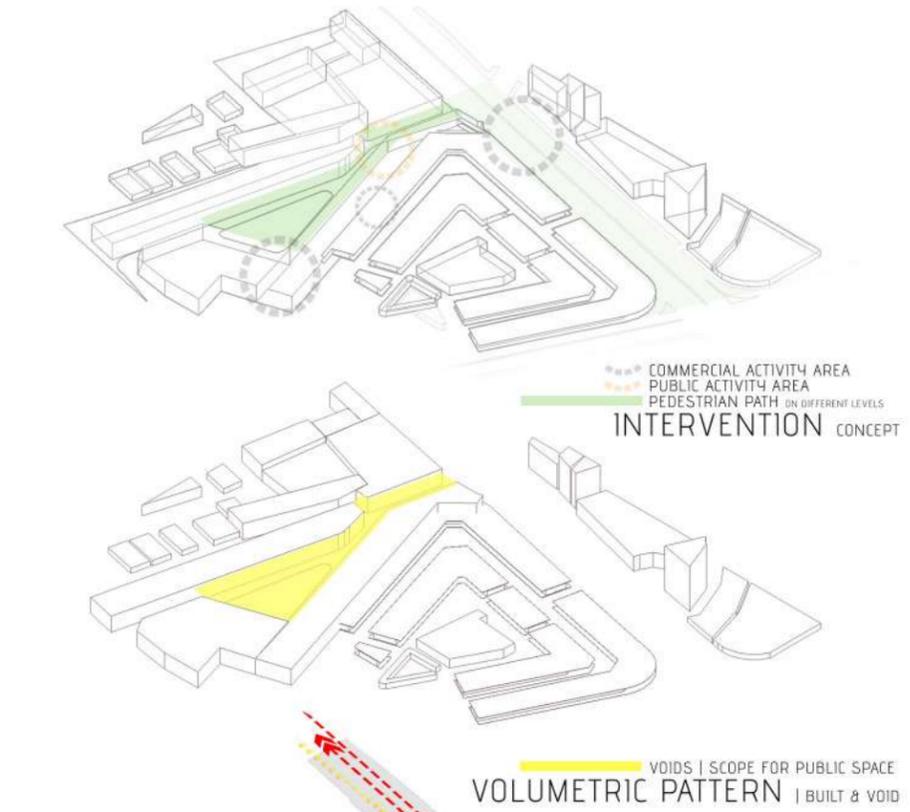
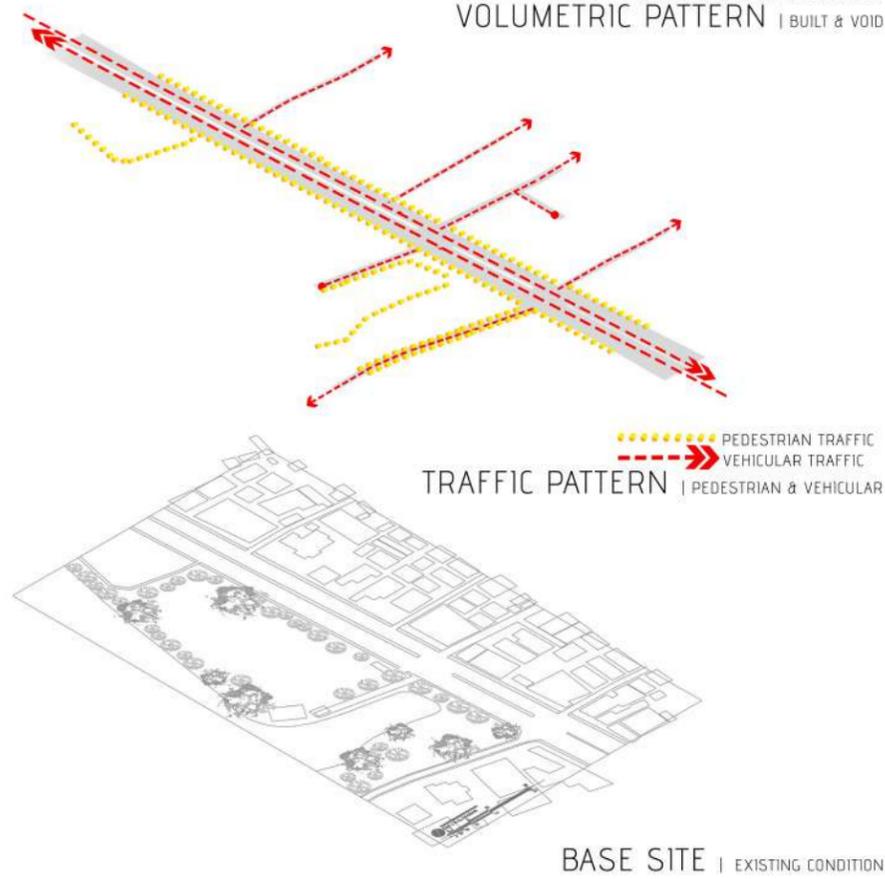


For the scale of the site and the time constraint, three subsites were chosen through a vigorous analysis and discussion with the thesis committee. The first one is the Dhanmondi Govt. School Zone [mixed usage dominated] and is analyzed here.

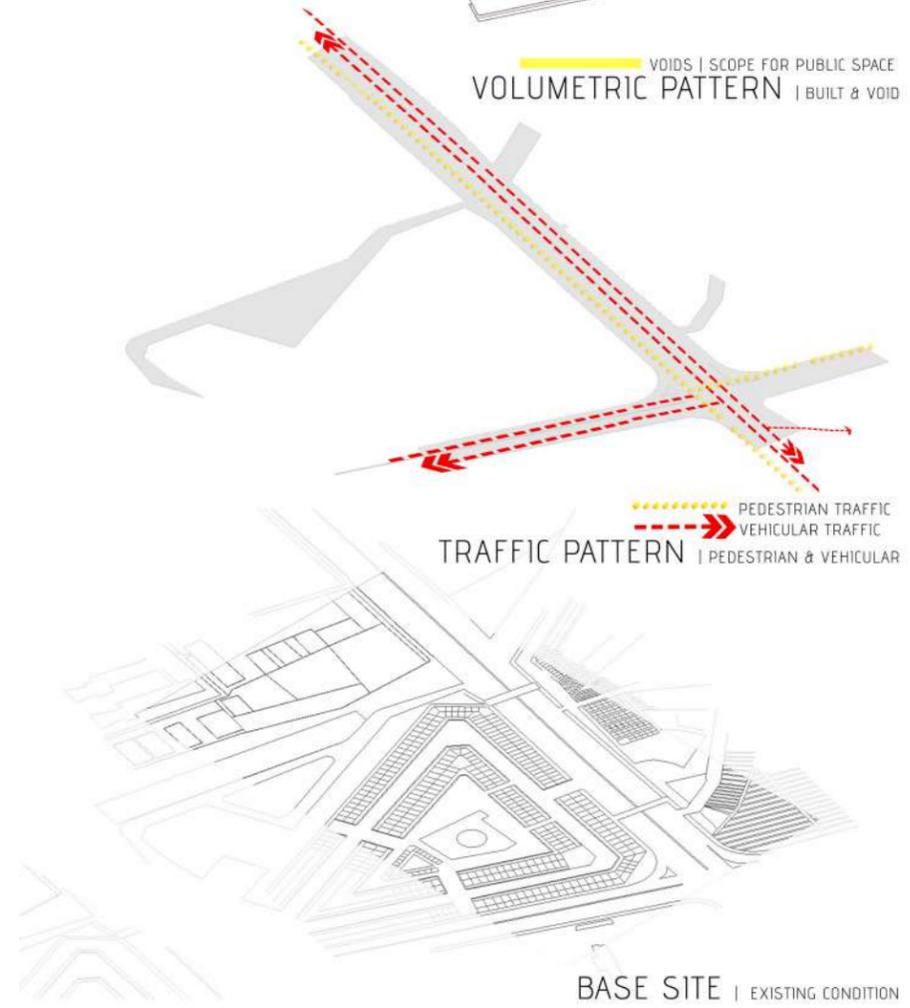
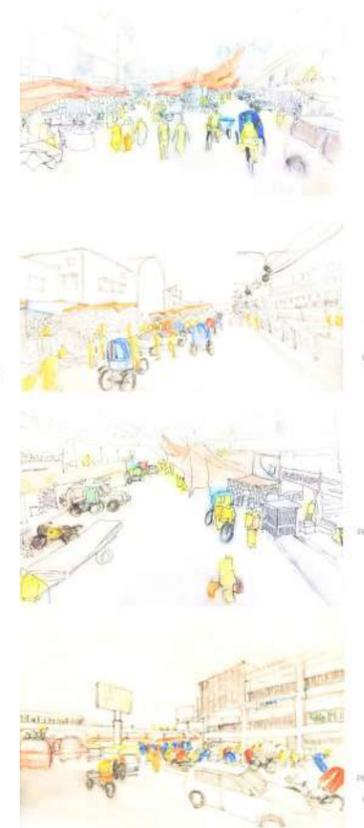


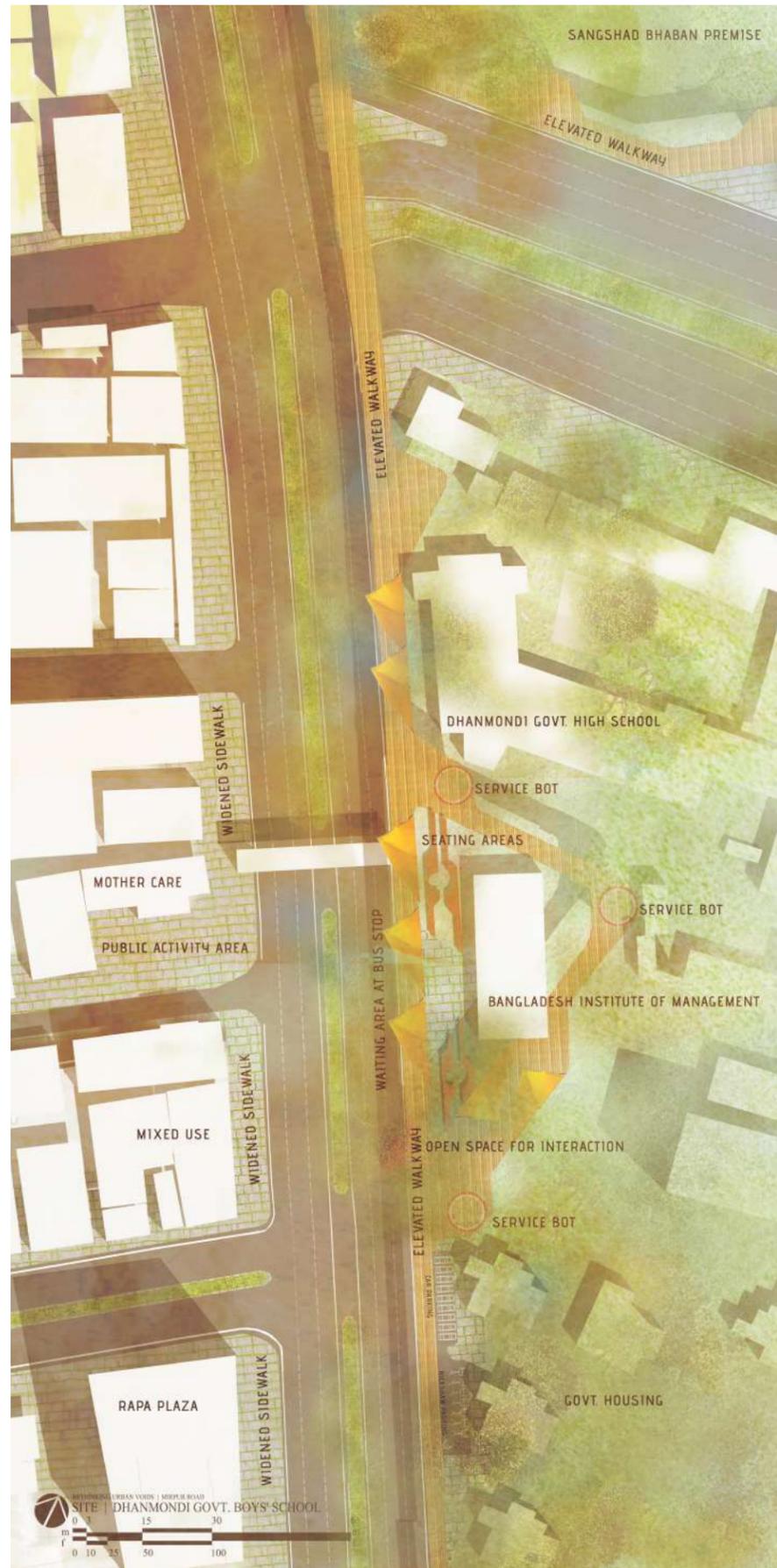


The second SubSite is the Kalabagan Zone [residential usage and open space dominated] and is analyzed here.



The third SubSite is the New Market Zone [commercial usage dominated] and is analyzed here.

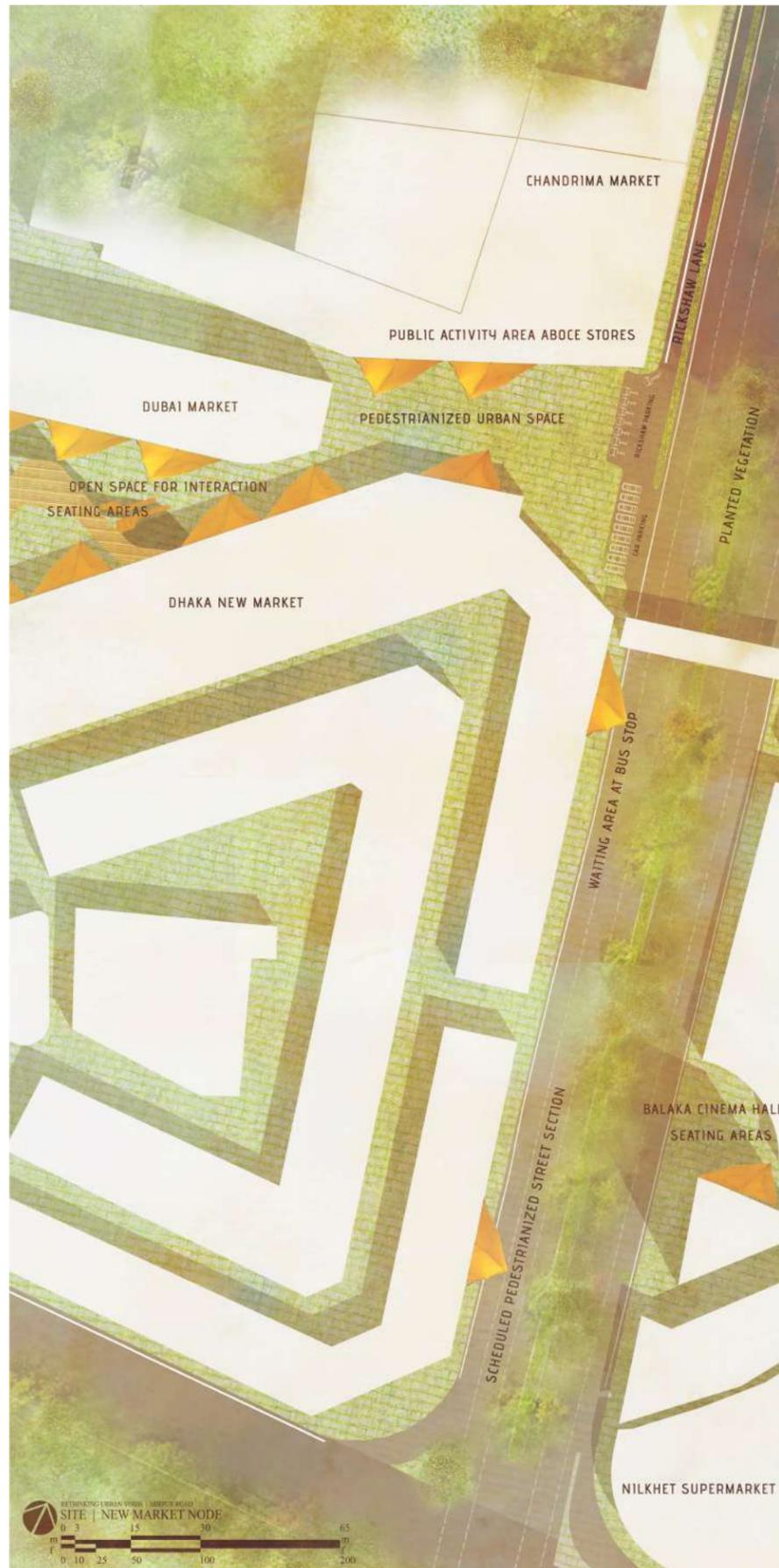




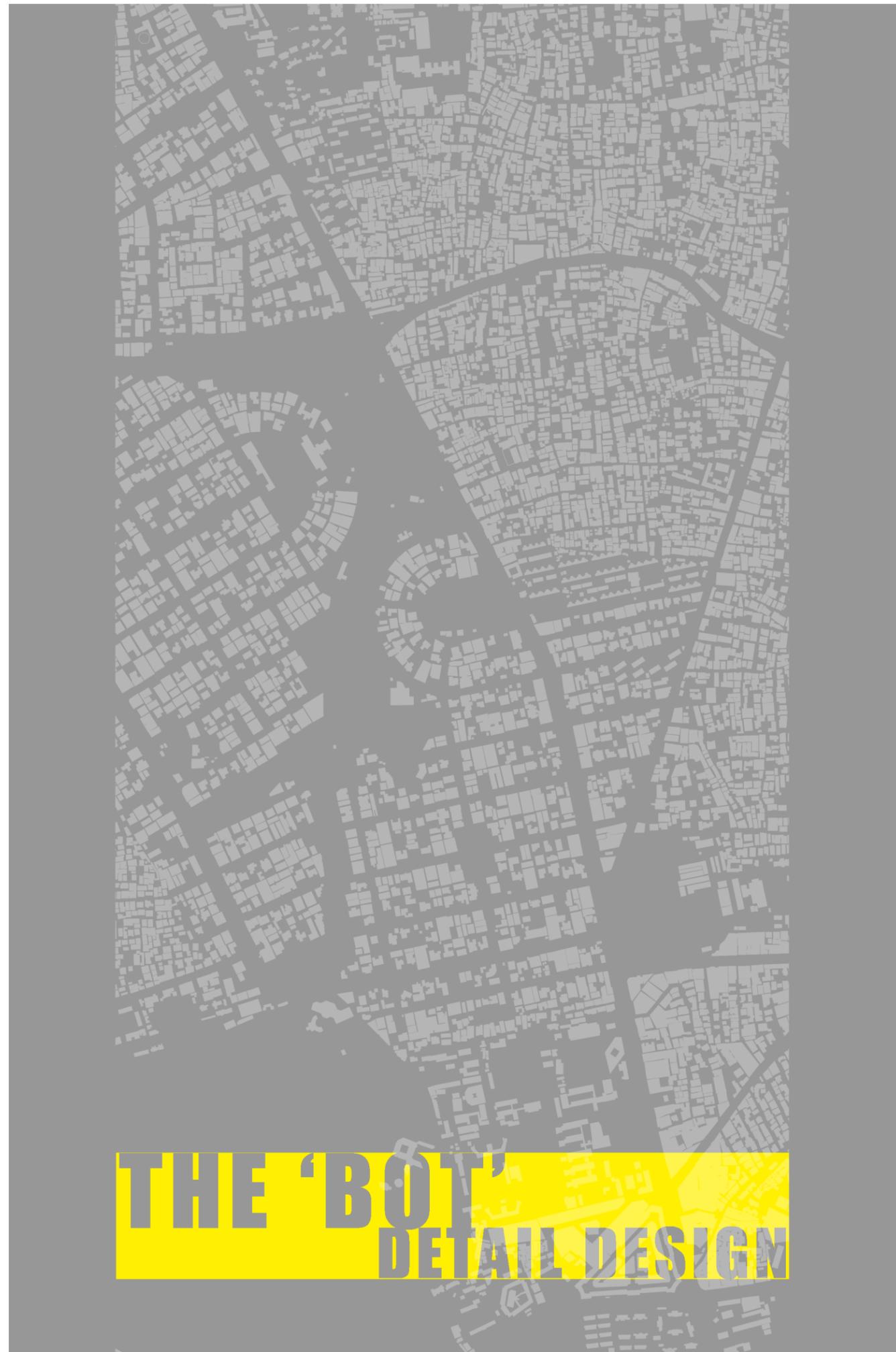
The proposed design for the Dhanmondi Zone

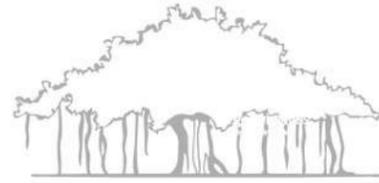


The proposed design for the Kalabagan Zone



The proposed design for the New Market Zone

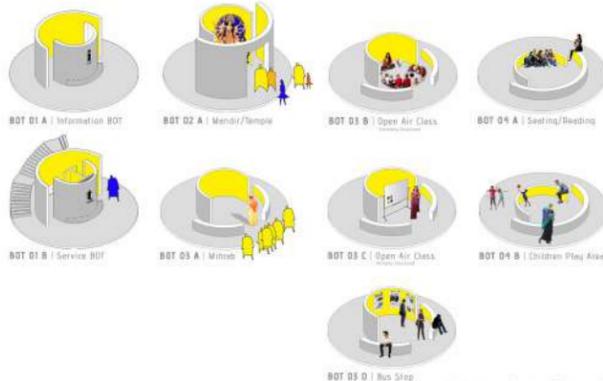




PROVIDES WITH A HOLLOW CORE
 THE CORE CAN BE USED FOR PUBLIC FACILITY(S)
 PROVIDES WEATHER PROTECTION



INTEGRATED WITH ORIENTAL CULTURE
 RELATED TO PUBLIC GATHERING(S)
 INTEGRATED WITH BAZAAR(S)
 RELATED TO CELEBRATION(S)

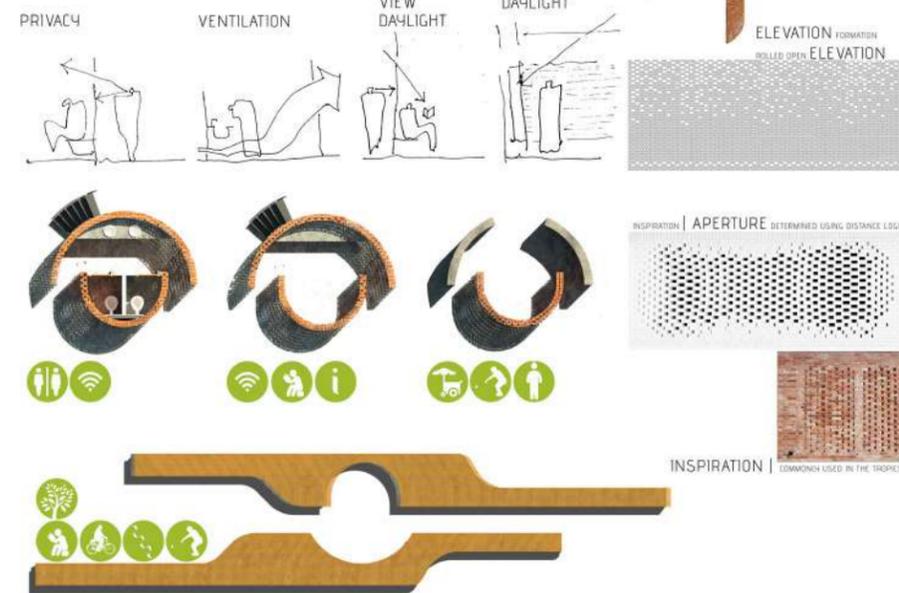


PLAN FORMATION MODULE 02
 INFORMATION, TOILET, SOCIAL SERVICES,
 SEMI OPEN AND ENCLOSED

PLAN FORMATION MODULE 01
 SEATING, READING, WAITING,
 OPEN AND SEMI OPEN

VARIOUS TYPES OF BOTS SERVING MULTIPLE PUBLIC FUNCTIONS

BOT DESIGN



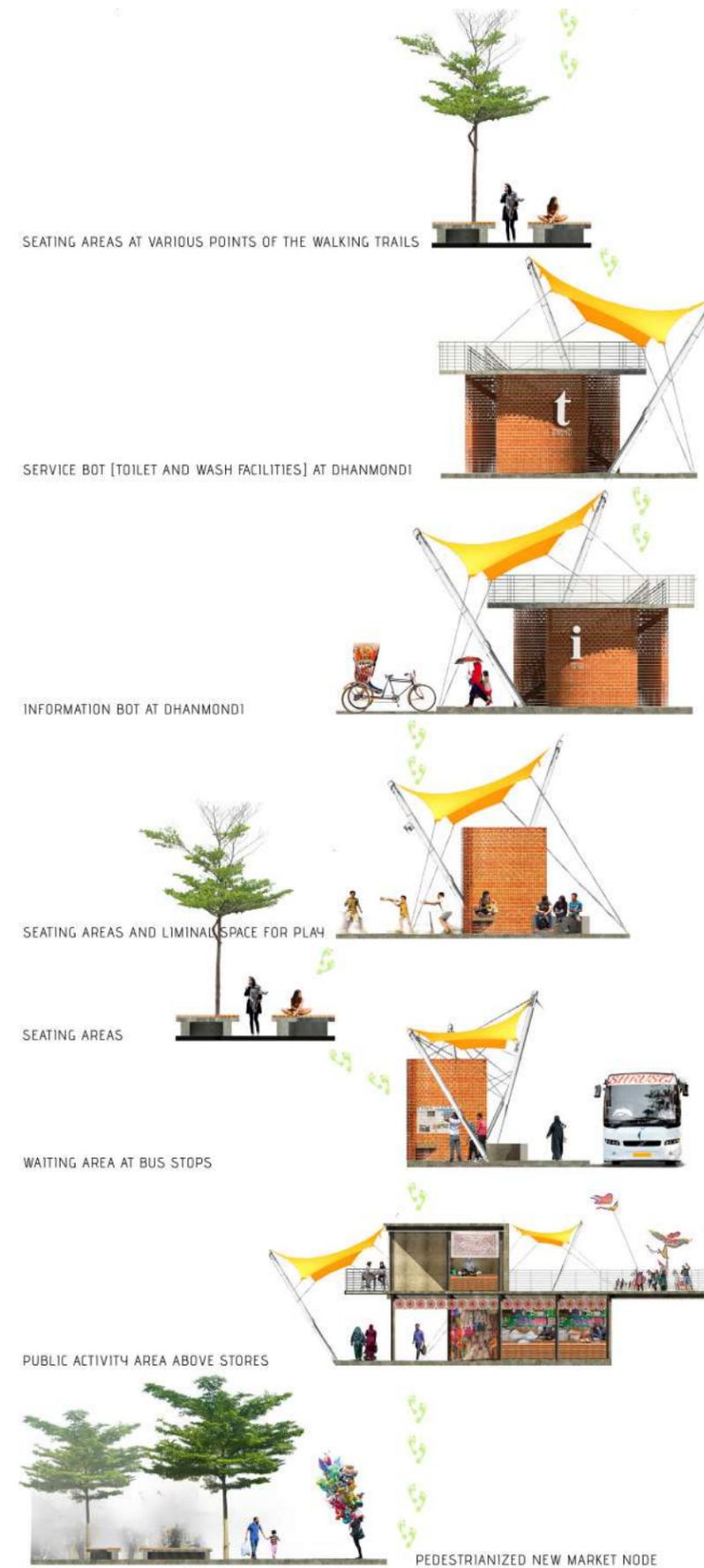
DESIGN INTERVENTION MODULES



REMEMBRANCE DESIGN

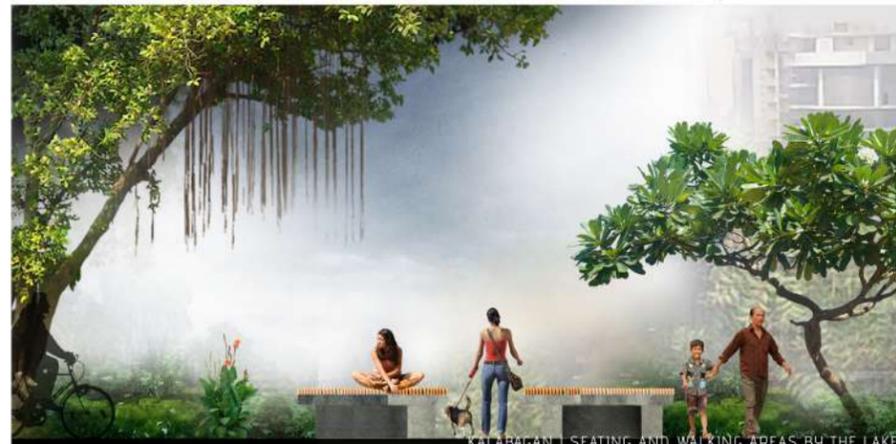


The proposed design for MIRPUR ROAD showing the three SubSites



Rethinking Urban Voids

The BOTs are designed and placed along the stretch of Mirpur Road in a way that they are imprinted on people's mind through repetition of form, material, function etc. This way, a sense of remembrance is created through the design so that the moment a Dhaka person sees a BOT or the tensile membranes above them, s/he knows where to go to find some information or a space to interact with others or simply for public toilet service.



KALABAGAN | SEATING AND WALKING AREAS BY THE LAKE
KALABAGAN | SERVICE BOT [INFORMATION]



KALABAGAN | SERVICE BOT TOILET
NEW MARKET | MODIFIED SHOPPING STREET



DHANMONDI | WAITING AREA AT BUS STOP
DHANMONDI | MULTILEVEL PEDESTRIAN PATH AND SERVICE BOT

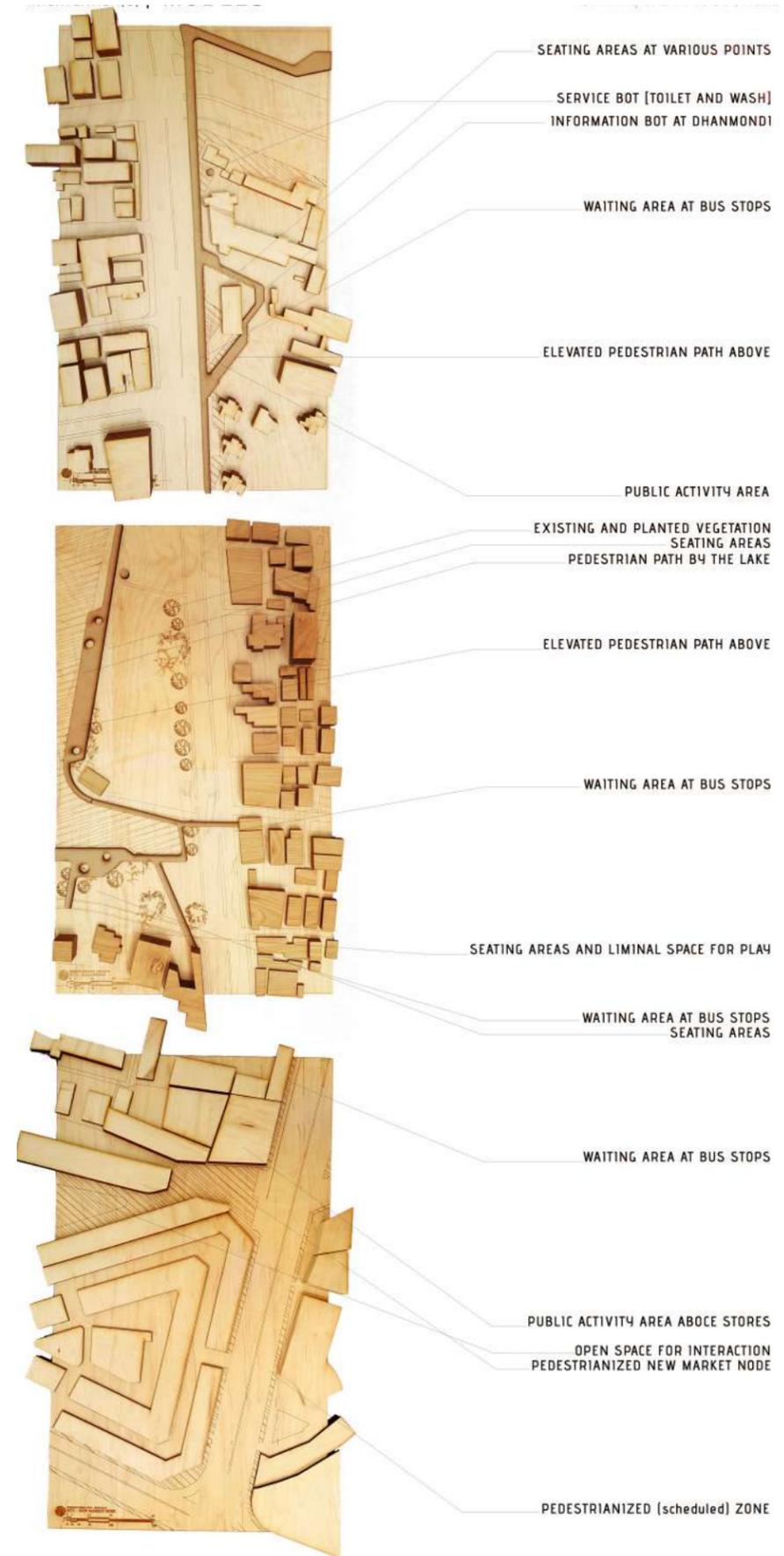




Glimpses of Designed Spaces in Dhaka's Context



MODEL PHOTOGRAPHS



**FINAL
PRESENTATION**

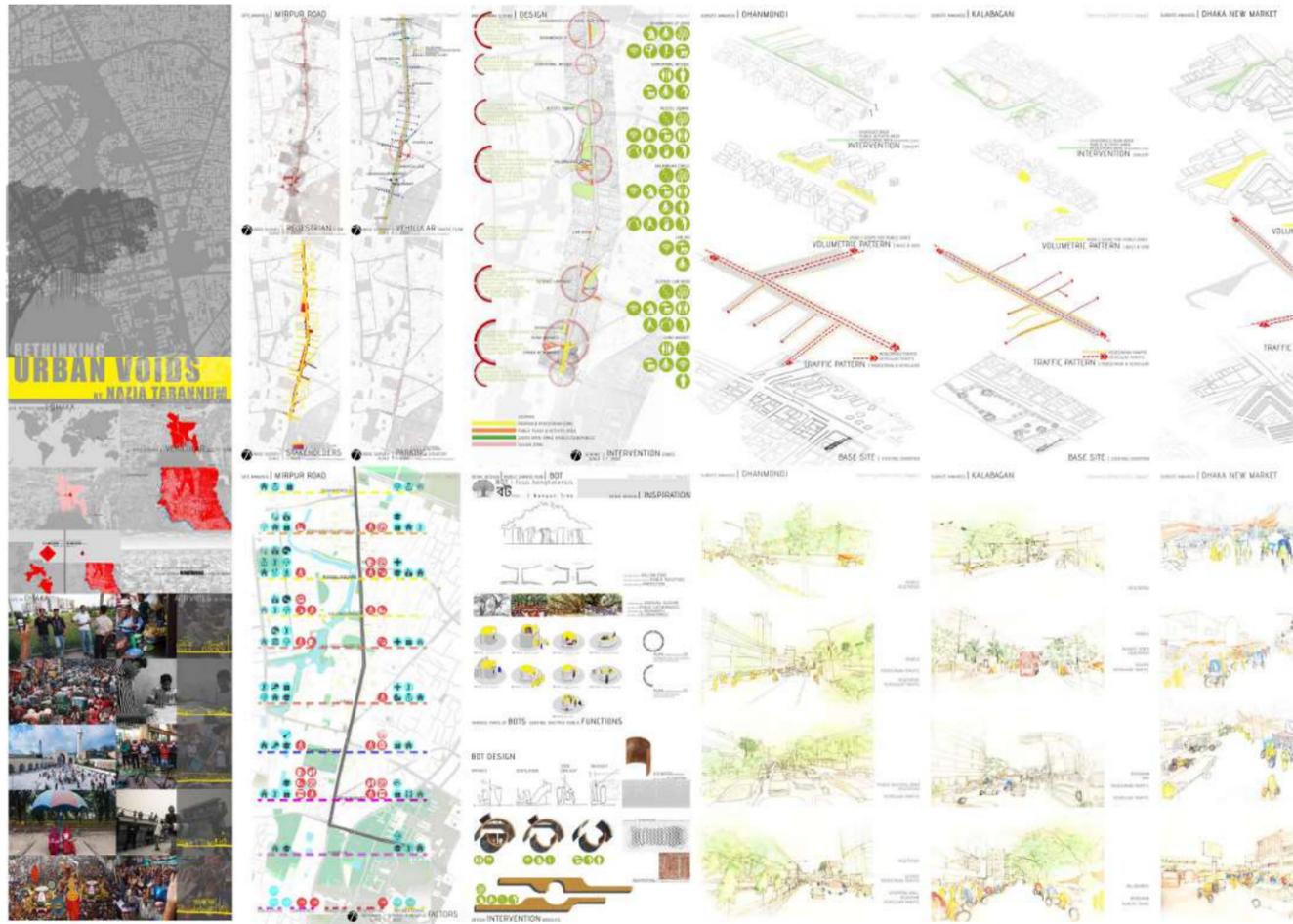


Final Presentation | Nazia Presenting her Research and Design Process

Final Presentation | Critics commenting on the research and design process



Rethinking Urban Voids

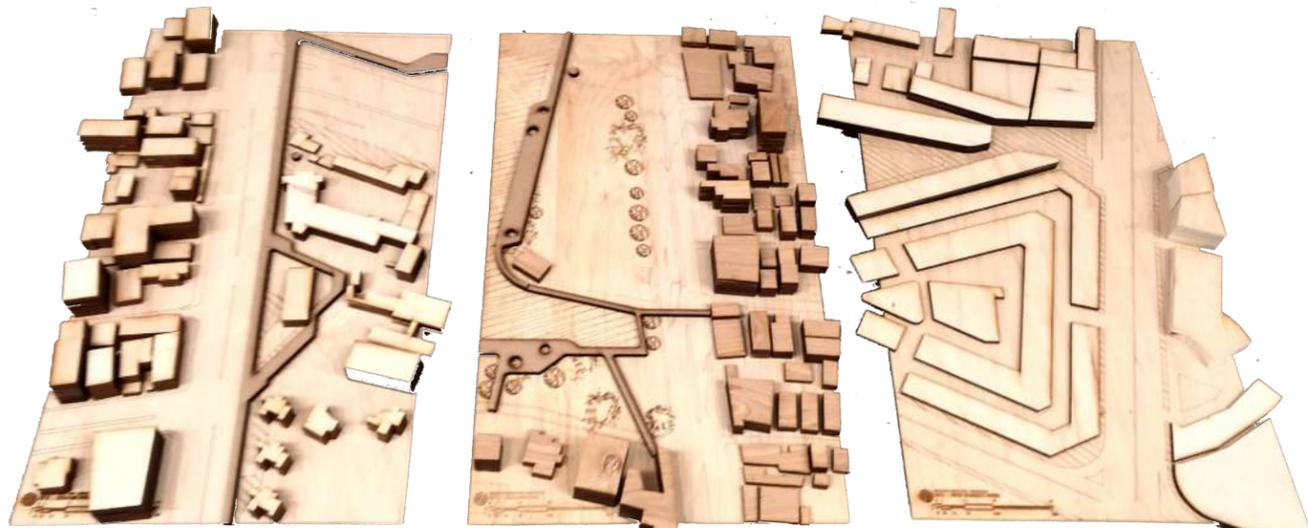


Final Presentation | Boards From Left



Final Presentation | Boards From Right

Final Presentation | SubSite Models



Final Presentation | Nazia Presenting her Research and Design Process



Who?

Nazia is an academic and practitioner in the discipline of architecture. She considers herself a global citizen originally from Bangladesh. Pursuing a career in architecture has been a life-long passion, especially ever since she saw models of buildings as a young kid. She got the opportunity to study at the Department of Architecture, Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology. The early feelings of belonging in the discipline contrasted with how the concepts and rigors of architecture challenged her creativity and aptitude. However, in designing projects, she felt both calm and excited at once, seeing the design task's rationale, scope and needs and seizing the projects to utilize her creativity and architectural knowledge.

After graduating in 2012, she worked as an associate architect with Form.3 Architects and as a lecturer in the Department of Architecture, the University of Asia Pacific for 4 years. With the Form.3 Architects team, she worked in an array of commercial, residential, industrial, and mixed-use building projects with a varied client base. The experience back in Dhaka strengthened her intention of being a designer whose job it is to establish the connection between the user and the space. Currently, she defended her masters' thesis 'Rethinking Urban Voids' which emphasizes the collaboration between urban design and architecture.

What?

A research on urban voids in the dense metropolitan cities around the world. Most dense cities do not have spaces for the urban people to interact, to breathe and to congregate in. She wanted to look for such places and/or design some without demolishing the existing built forms and contexts. As Nazia knows Dhaka best, Dhaka being one of the most densely populated cities and she having lived all her life there, she decided to intervene in this 400-year-old city- the capital of Bangladesh.

Why?

Nazia has always been interested in the variation in perception of scale, which led her to the project 'Bangladesh Film City' in the Undergraduate Thesis Studio. Designing one 'Hollywood' for Bangladesh seemed the right thing to cogitate on, as this would require spaces with heterogeneity, and the most efficient production line management as well. Having worked as an academic and practitioner for 4 years after finishing undergrad, she realized more and more that 'For her masters thesis, she chose 'urban voids' as her topic as she has always missed 'the space for public' in Dhaka while growing up and living there. She wanted to look for scopes and opportunities to create the space and activity for the public in the nooks and corners of Dhaka- a dense urban context.

Feedback!

Nazia presented her thesis problem in the Grad Symposium 2017 exclusively arranged for the M Arch Candidates of CCA, Miami University in the last quarter of 2017. Then she continued her research and design process and defended on April 16, 2018. It was a great and fruitful conversation with the critics and guests. She had boards presenting her research, analyses and design process along with the sub-site models. She also showed an audio-visual clip showing the Dhaka city context from different eye levels and perspectives to communicate the life there with the audience.

The critics gave valuable feedback. They appreciated the thesis question, approach, design process. The only big criticism Nazia got was that there should have been 'before and after' photos of the same nodes/places. She showed her design interventions in actual forms and contexts using photomontages. But she needed to show the previous condition of the same contexts. She took this comment with enthusiasm and is working on modifying her presentation boards. The critics loved the photomontages very much. They also appreciated sincerely the amount of work produced in the given amount of time and encouraged her to continue with the research even beyond graduation.

Conclusion!

As the critics suggested and Nazia herself as always wanted, she hopes to continue with the research even after graduation. Her primary goal was to analyze the dense urban context and taking her research outcome to Dhaka, Bangladesh, to propose it to the Government. As she is a full member of the Institute of Architects Bangladesh and she had worked with the organization very closely for years, she still hopes to do that. But she also wants to take her work further and pursue the research for the greater good. Therefore, she sees this thesis as only the beginning of what she wants to do: end of the lack of public space in dense urban context.



**THE END
OF THE BEGINNING**