



Engagement with Nature

Noorizan Mohamed

The landscape is not simply an element but a microcosm of nature in which static and dynamic processes are balanced. In the process a sense of harmony and well-being is achieved by unifying the indoor and outdoor environments. The natural factors that contribute to the balance of any environment such as physiography, climate, vegetation, wildlife, etc. are actually very closely related and interdependent. They individually contribute to the ecology of site. The unification of the environment and the symbiotic relationship of factors conspire to create a place of inspiration and relaxation for people. The following projects explore and utilize the power of nature in offering a refreshing antidote to dull and mundane spaces of extremely important learning environment.

In the midst of a busy Metropolitan Centre, the project titled "Rhapsody of Bamboo" engages nature in architectural design of a retreat house located in the Bukit Nenas Reserve. The overall idea is to have a contrasting environment and construction materials vis-à-vis the concrete jungle of skyscrapers in the vicinity. This project stresses on marrying the functional spaces and nature together, physically and visually through unification of outdoor-indoor spaces. It is intentionally design for an exemplary experience to people who appreciates the existence of nature.

Consequently, green patches or green spaces can also bring back a magical memory of past experience with



nature to certain people. The project on "Dusun Contoh" is one good example where the designer attempts to highlight the historical and nostalgic values of the space through contemporary solutions. The transformation that embraces ecological consideration and protects the natural settings would not only refresh one's memory of the wondrous era but it also creates a new image to the space.

Similarly, the Students' Center project introduces a more holistic approach where lush greeneries and man-made elements blend as one entity; complementing one another. Plants are selected for their unique forms, shades of colours and notable characters that would create spatial sensation to users. Trees, shrubs, ground covers and turf are seen as

instruments for exterior solar radiation control- one of the challenges that the design must resolve. In addition, the natural topography and its overall ambience serve to alleviate physical and emotional stress thereby could enhance the quality of campus living.

Lastly, the final project explores the potential of having outdoor spaces for learning and recreation through interactions of the present spatial elements. The existence of distinct ecosystems is the source of inspiration for ecological application in solving the site's problems. The design reckons for bolder material explorations without compromising on the complexity of nature with its effective functional capabilities.

The Rhapsody of Bamboo

- Nik Ismail Azlan Rahman

This is a highly innovative solution to a residential design. A brave venture indeed for the student in coming up with new ideas in building construction using bamboo. The concern would be whether the bamboo can wither the effects of our weather and other natural process. An in-depth research could help in developing sound and sustainable any design solution especially when using bamboo as part of the foundation of the house within an environment of green living. Research and development could entail further contribution to the design effort of using bamboo as the main building material. The decorative function of the upper level of the house could be a subject of safety and security concerns. The student is commended for coming up with such innovative idea. If the design idea is feasible it could lead to commercialization of the product and sustainability of the design. A product design of this nature is very novel and could be the beginning of a new input in tropical design solution.

-Saravanan a/l Lingeswaran

An interesting project related to sustainable living within the urban context. A thorough understanding of the site and surrounding nature strengthens the design concept. It is a good idea of conserving the existing forest and explores the usage of bamboo as part of the building material. There is evidence of a deep concern on the environmental issue. However, potential of the site context was taken for granted and there is very little indication on how it can be integrated with landscape design. The sustainable issue is doubtful where the bamboo material is concerned.

Initiating the Essential

-Ismail Said

At a glance, the master plan of this project is impressive illustrating a complex design work. The spatial planning of the outdoor space for the UPM Student Center seems in order. However, the conceptual basis of the design was not displayed. In addition, the design aim or purpose was not included in the drawings. Therefore, it is difficult to judge whether the master plan serves the design purpose. There is a lack of site analysis on the landscape elements and social attributes of the site. Hence, it is difficult to judge whether the scheme is workable for the users of the site.

-Charles Teo Kae Siang

The site analysis of this particular project was not clear and not critical to support the size of the site. However, there is some design process and synthesis plan showing the thinking process before it reached the master plan. However the process seems a bit too sudden to get into the overall master planning without clearly showing how and where each functional zone relates to each other and other site elements. A lot of emphasis on the planting itself is good. However, the overall master plan did not have a strong design in term of flow, harmony and focal elements. I have to compliment the student for some of the detail features in this garden. They are interesting such as the shadow walk and the unique hardscape design. The drawings display excellence sketching skills.



Jury Review

Students Center, UPM

-Ismail Said

From the drawings, it seems that the theme of this project is connectivity that is linking the site - UPM Student Center - with the surrounding areas. The theme is appropriate to the campus community but the master plan did not show how the spaces and their greeneries are linked to its surrounding areas.

-Charles Teo Kae Siang

There are some brief analysis and study on the site and the proposed design idea supporting the concept right from site characteristic to planting design. However, each zone should be more clearly illustrated to show the design intention. There is a mention on the planting or landscape planning will reduce 30% of the temperature. On the other hand, it will be much stronger if a study data is included to support the design decision. The flow of the design process presentation is somehow weak as it is started with Design Ideas at the left side of the panel. As most of the plan is view from left, it is recommended it start with the analysis and site study and then gradually flow into design ideas and plan. Overall, I lost track on where to start and where to end by looking at the presentation.

FRSB Outdoor Lab

-Ismail Said

This is a project without a title. From one of the drawings, the objective seems to be an outdoor space for education and entertainment. Visual presentation of the master plan was interesting but lacked the information to suggest the function or purpose of the spaces. The theme was

ecological corridor; a scheme that meets the journal requirement. It would be good to illustrate sections or details suggesting the ecological principles applied in the design. For example, a cross-section cutting the stream and landform would be helpful to illustrate aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems where insects and lizards inhabit the outdoor space. Hence, as a Master of Landscape Architecture project, this is an incomplete scheme.

-Charles Teo Kae Siang

The project intended to create an outdoor lab within the vicinity of FRSB compound. From the first stage of the study and analysis, it clearly had shown the understanding of the site with SWOT on various aspects such as land use, circulation, views and vegetation. However the next process of development of idea and space planning weakened the whole process as it did not show clearly how each of the space is defined for its purpose based on the recommendation from the analysis. The flow from site study to final plan and artist impression come in as "sudden". It did not address the step by step process. The ecological corridor as the selling point in this design was not strongly addressed on why and how it appears on the plan. It seems that the existing site for the ecological corridor was an access road and why there is a proposed riparian and ecological corridor with swale appearing in the middle of site does not connect to the site context. The project also did not address the detail component of other section such as the outdoor lab which is something needing to be highlighted. Rather, the focus was just on the ecological corridor. The artist impression is great and well done but the design process needs to be polished.



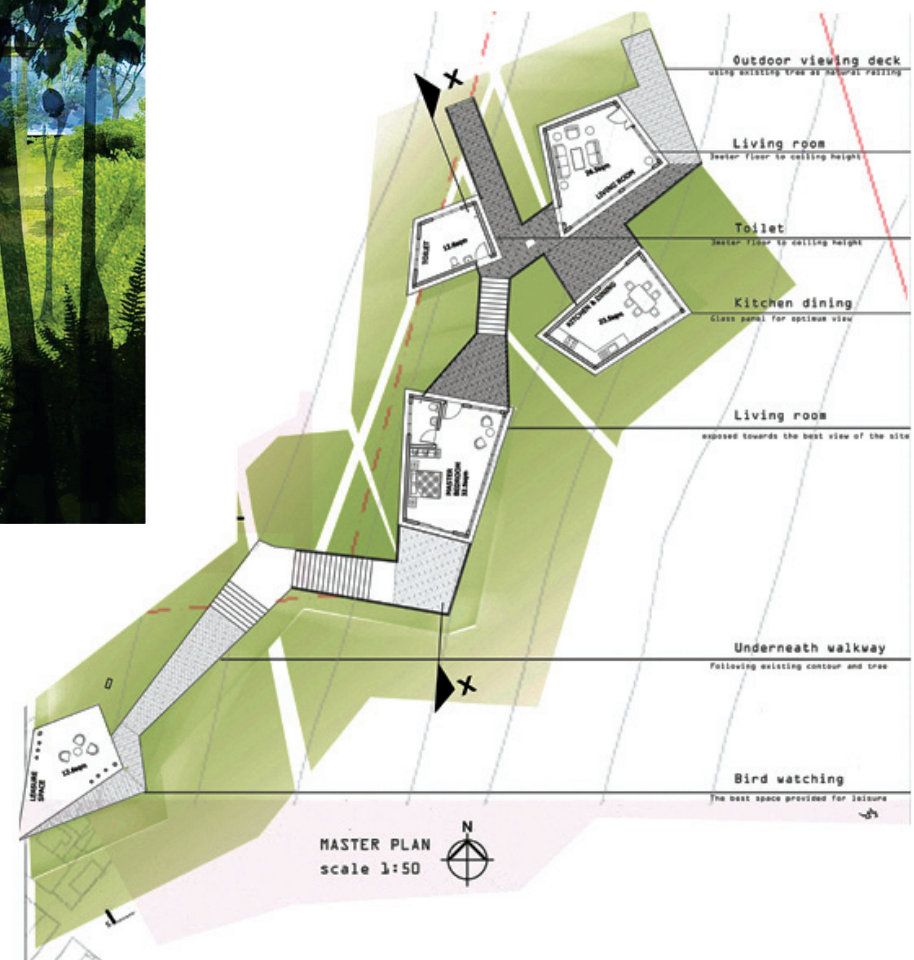
The Rhapsody of Bamboo

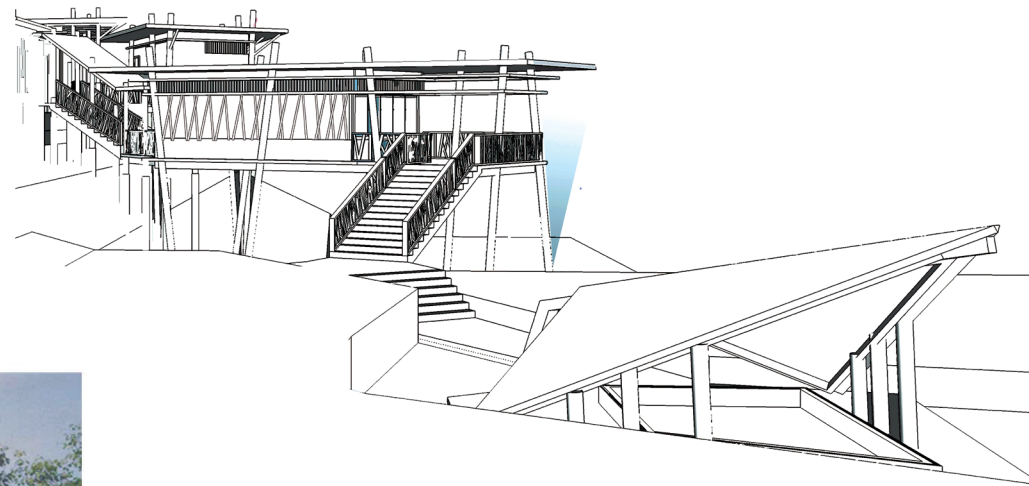
Norsidah Ujang

The unique beauty and biodiversity of the Bukit Nanas Forest Reserve in the centre of Kuala Lumpur has inspired the design of the retreat house. The presence of bamboo in the area evokes the idea of building with nature by exploring the vernacular's ecological and climatic capabilities in design. In contrast with the surrounding urban context, the house fulfils the need for privacy through a distinct union between functional spaces and nature. Growing out from the natural setting, a simple display of lightness, verticality, layering of

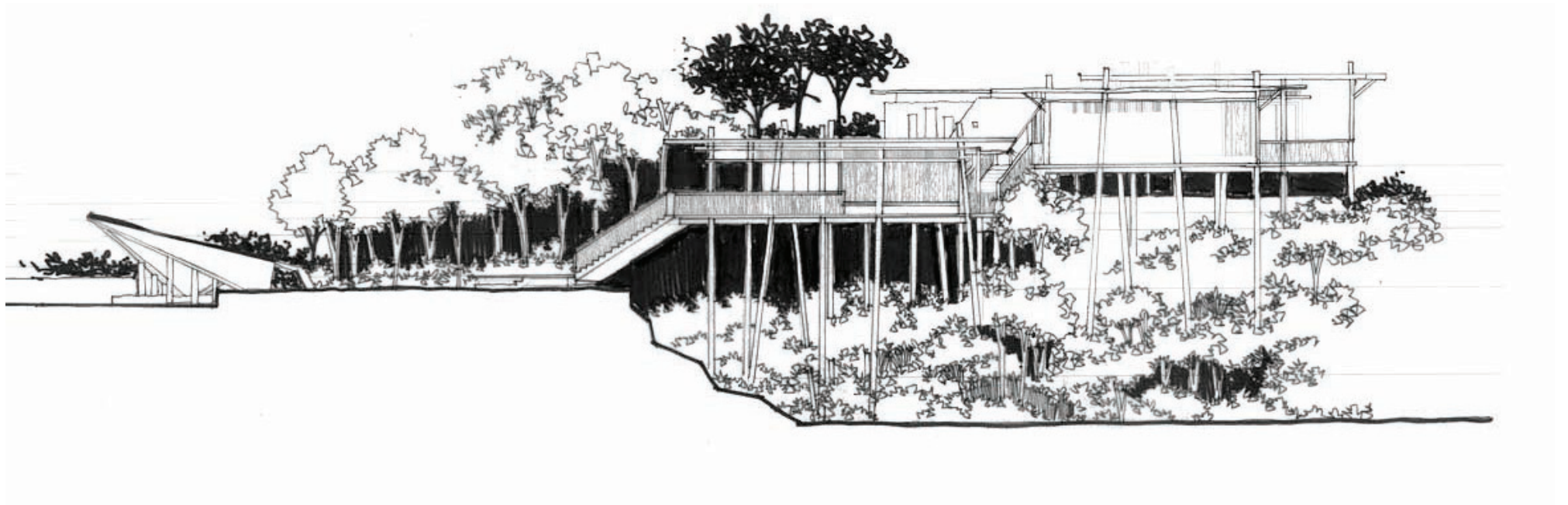


■ Mohd Shah Irani Hasni





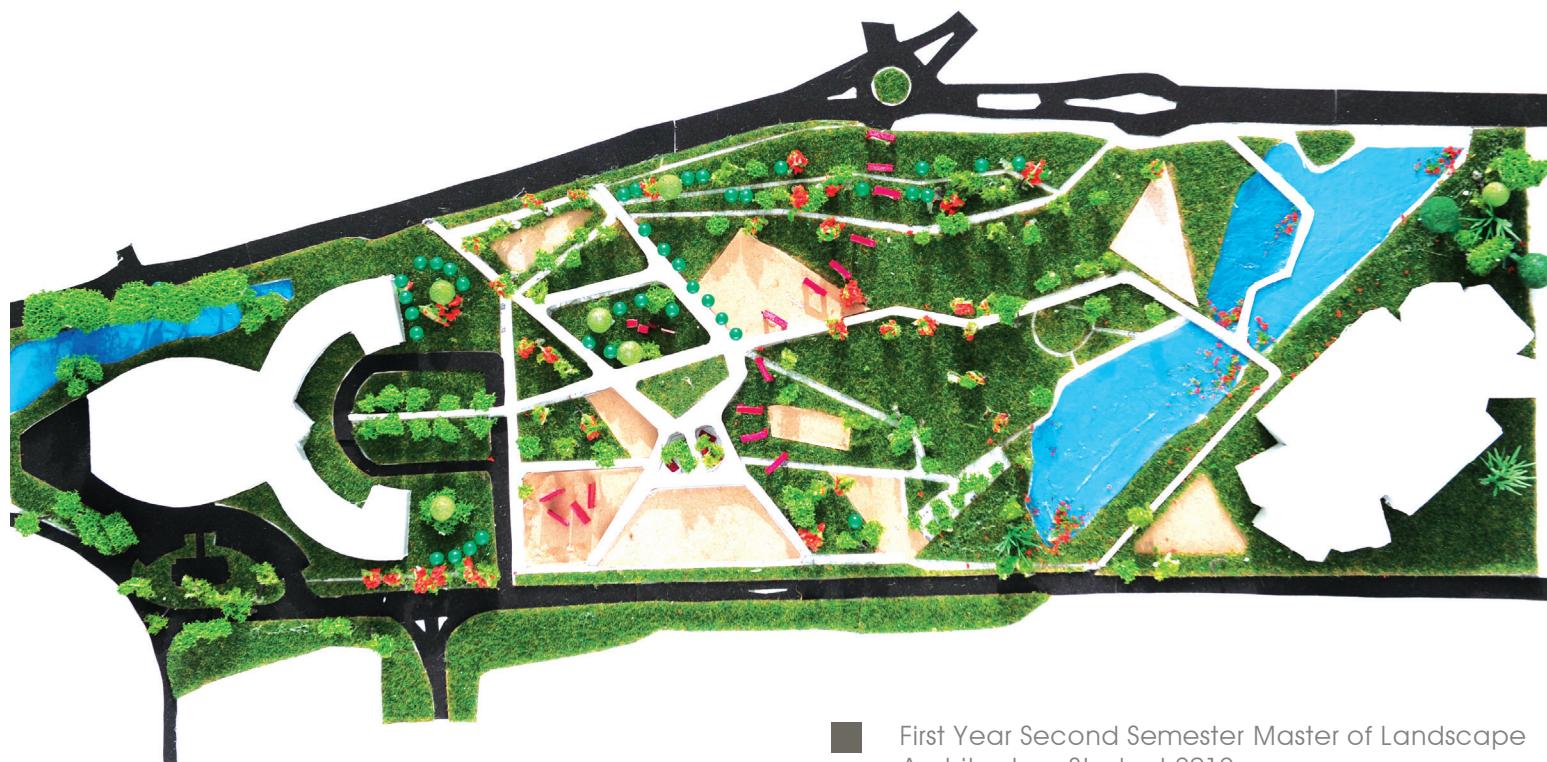
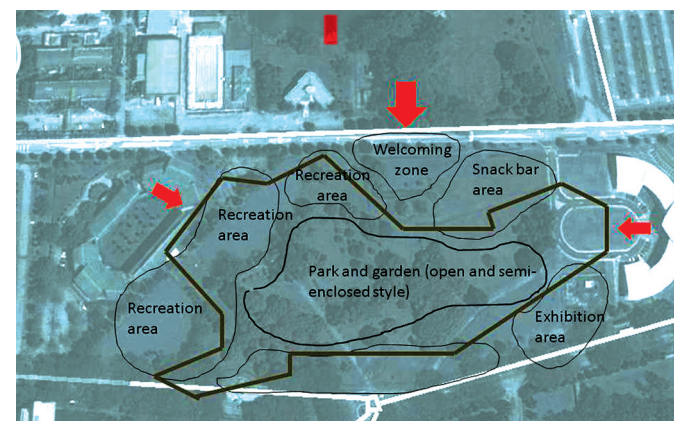
spaces and repetition of architectural elements creates a harmonious setting. It allows for maximum natural view, sunlight and ventilation. The house renders an expansive view of a bamboo forest and continuous decking as an extension of interior space visually distinctive through the changing in plane and floor level. The natural interior is concealed by a cubic façade, with the use of bamboo, glass and timber as building materials. Existing in the continuous presence of nature; the house is a home that is designed for flexibility, adaptability and spirituality.



Initiating the Essential

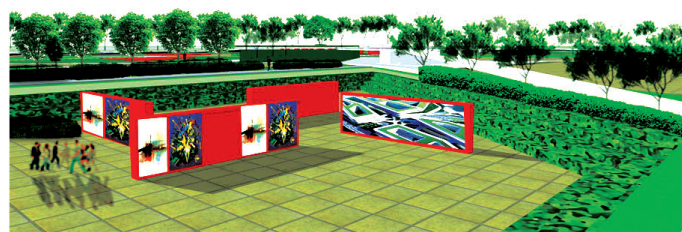
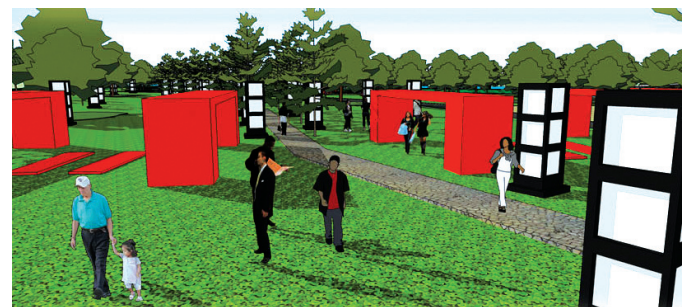
Suhardi Maulan, Asraf Abdul Rahman & Mohd Johari Mohd Yusof

In the middle of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) campus lay a green patch known as "Dusun Contoh" or Exemplary Orchard. The green patch provides a reminder of UPM's long lasting legacy as a premier agriculture university. In the past, the space was bustling with teaching and learning activities as well as a centre for students' activities. Today it is perceived mostly as a green patch providing a green look and nostalgia of UPM's past. Nevertheless, the location of Dusun Contoh is very strategic to be reignited to be a centre for campus activities again. To reignite the space, the process of design began by trying to understand stakeholders' vision and preferences for the space. A public participatory workshop was held involving various stakeholders and among others are the students' bodies, alumni, development office's personnel and staff. The



■ First Year Second Semester Master of Landscape Architecture Student 2012

findings from the public participatory clearly stated the design needs to blend the historic and nostalgia values of the spaces with the user's needs. Therefore, to make the design essential, the designers overlapped the users' needs onto the existing landscapes. Elevated structures, walls, signages and poles have been strategically placed to make the space more visible. The concept of overlapping the existing landscape and people's needs showed that nostalgia and historic values of a particular landscapes can be protected together with its existing ecological system with few vegetations and landform being changed or transformed. At the same time, the concept also provides new spaces besides a positive identity and image for UPM which would essentially attract users to the spaces.

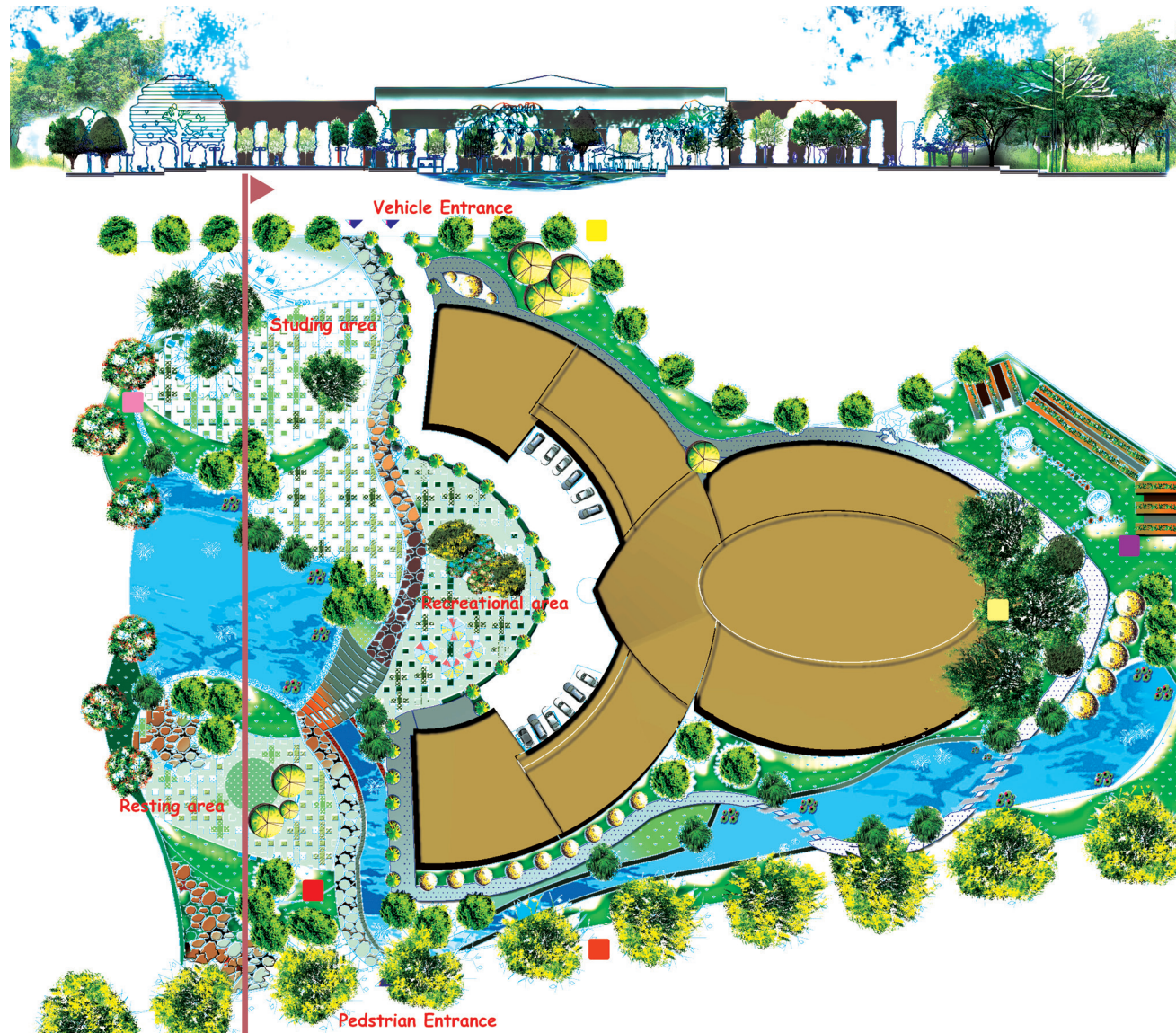


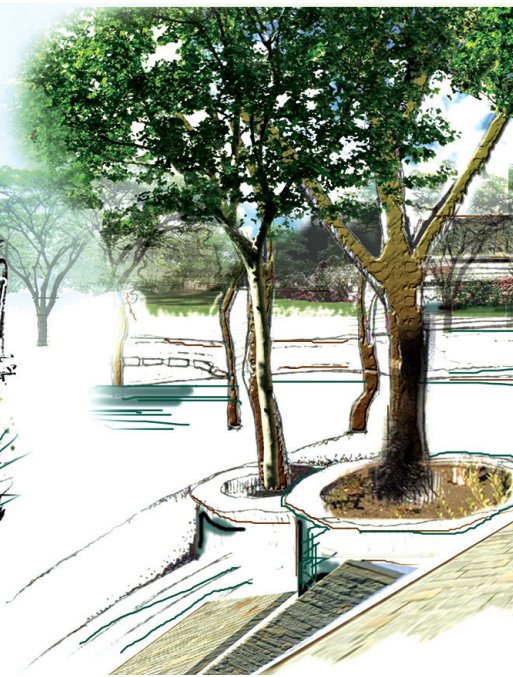
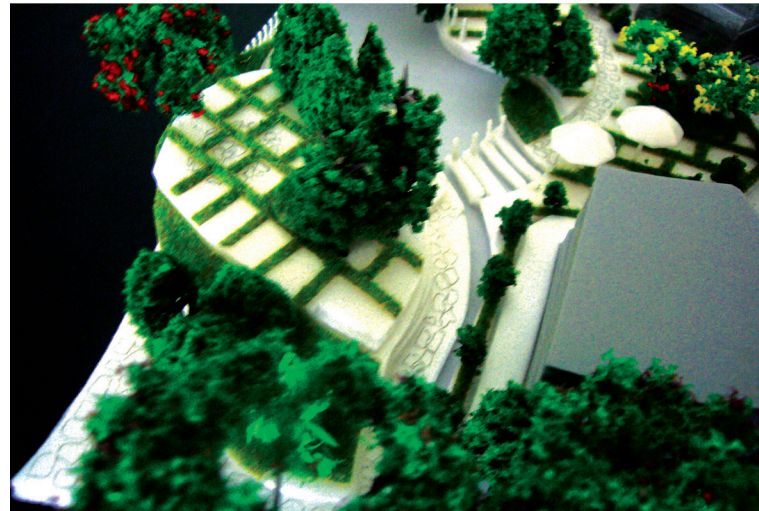
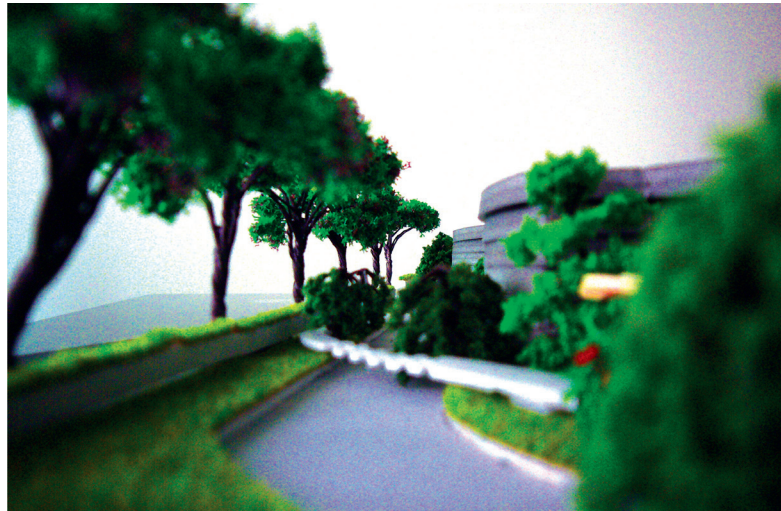
Students Center, UPM

Noorizan Mohamed & Ina Krisantia

The quality of outdoor spaces is important in contributing towards a better quality of life. The Students Center is a core public space that gathers students on campus for socializing and carrying out day-to-day activities. The design of related outdoor spaces is being influenced from the climatic condition of the site by blending together softscape and hardscape elements in providing a more

comfortable and sittable space around. Using principles of unity and repetition, plant materials with dense canopy, screening character, contrasting colours, forms and suitable heights are selected for spatial definition. The designed form is being shaped by the natural settings and site topography.





Hosna Shams

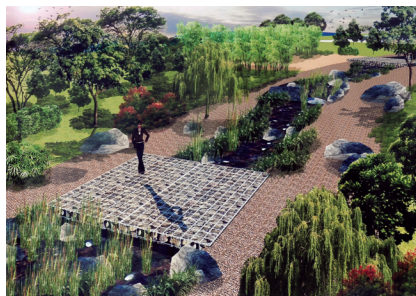




STEDEx '12

FRSB Outdoor Lab

Noorizan Mohamed



Maizura Mazlan

Linking outdoor spaces for educational and entertainment activities using ecological approach demands great deal of sensitivity and creativity. The project's strategy is to minimize the impacts to the environment through a corridor of riparian habitat as the primary spine across the site. It connects nature and the built form in order to inspire an edu-tainment experience shaped by the different spaces along the corridor for users. Being a central connector, the riparian corridor also serves as a natural drainage system collecting and discharging excess surface water flow from the surrounding area, making it more conducive for the intended purpose. Besides, the use of natural material for hardscape construction further emphasizes the intention.

