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Neighbourhood Revitalization

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Jury Review

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Neighbourhood Revitalization

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UPM 5th year Bachelor of Architecture programme (2009 -2010) comprehensive design project is the final design exercise in the formal education of a architecture student. It tests the accumulated knowledge and skills in handling architectural problems. It also provides opportunity for students to showcase their talent to design a complex building from the preparation of brief to design proposal accompanied by a full documentation of investigations, findings analysis and conclusions.

Initially, the students were required to study a particular Malaysian urban entity before embarking on an individual project. Working in a group, 3 urban entities in Kedah i.e. Alor Setar town, Kuala Kedah town and Gunung Keriang District were studied. The typical site contextual issues including environmental, socio-cultural and physiological of each entity were analysed and considered as design generator in the process. Major aspects of the urban fabric were identified and influences which had shaped the study areas were examined. The complexity of issues was reduced at this stage for the students to embark upon their preliminary proposals.

In the next phase, the proposed new development was derived from the old urban fabric and transformed into a refined urban code to emphasize the importance of the place in local context. The four proposals were recommendations for sites along the peripheral of Sungai Kedah. They needed to address the provision of an active functional network which linked the locals and the environment of Kuala Kedah development in order to revitalize the riverfront or urban area. The four projects selected have demonstrated appropriateness in terms of human needs, environmental, social and cultural contexts as well as aesthetic response. They have also opened up a new pathway in understanding a sustainable riverfront urban development.

Jury Review

Syed Sobri Syed Ismail

The group of artefacts represents intelligent urban designs which are intended to create a sustainable development that can become a growth catalyst to the particular surrounding. The concept posits the powering of buildings by the whole façade of community and the environment that can stimulate the existing urban forms. Norizyan Salleh's Aquatic Center operates as a new sustainable social fabric stimulating economic growth within and along the Kedah River through environmental regeneration, recycle and social reconnection as an approach. The low scale of building blends seamlessly into the overall surrounding. The upper floor terraces and balconies bring along a sense of freedom to the users. In another artefact, William Tan's Pekan China revitalization reminds us of the humble side of our design in association with the existing urban fabric. The old physical design features of the existing artefacts remain intact with additional modern features to supplement the old to ensure that the rusticity of China Town is kept unimpaired. A new market facelift will surely benefit the town as a new place of interest. The choice of earth based eco-friendly material such as timber accentuates the adaptive reuse development typology in a very contemporary manner.

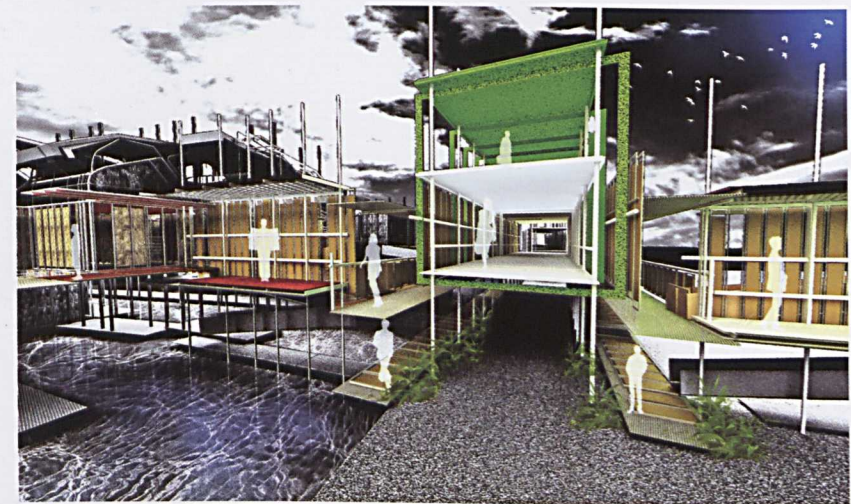
Meanwhile, in another proposal, Toon Yin Yee uses the scale and rhythm of the immediate neighbourhood of Pekan Kobo, Alor Setar through a central spine communal area of shop houses that acts as a medium for a mini urban revival. The multiple accesses to the spine can be seen as a noble way to integrate all the town sectors with the new development. Perhaps, the most compelling project is Mohd Khairi's Higher Learning built environment that blends well with the natural surroundings. The buildings are elevated from the ground allowing breathing space for the social networking whilst enhancing the existence of the mangroves.

The manner in which the schemes attempt to facilitate the local community's participations leaves several issues that need to be apprehended. The physical linkages between the new proposals and the surrounding developments need further investigations. For instance, the placement of high-rise blocks along the main road which does not allow the travellers or the locals to view the interior of the proposed development alienates the proposed building and the local community. In many cases, the hybrid of nature and the built environment can be further enhanced by providing less building footprints. Needless to say, the manner in which the users experience the spaces remains as a potent determinant to enhance their environmental and social experience. The development should be based on how the local community should react to the development. Nevertheless, the projects redefine the concept of scale; the integration of appropriate building forms and shapes to enhance the social and environmental experience in an urban environment. It is an issue that should interest the urban planners, architects or developers in attaining sustainable urban development.

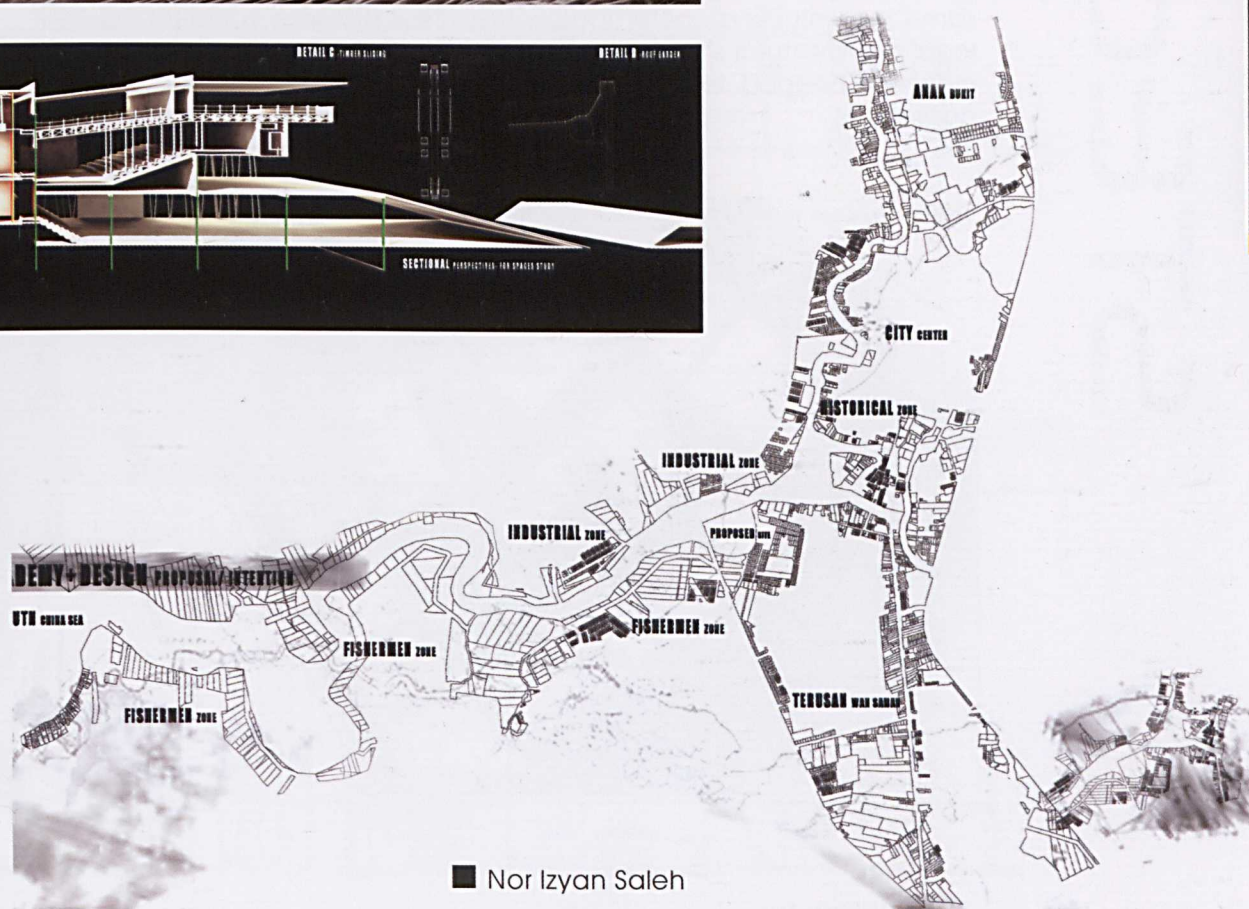
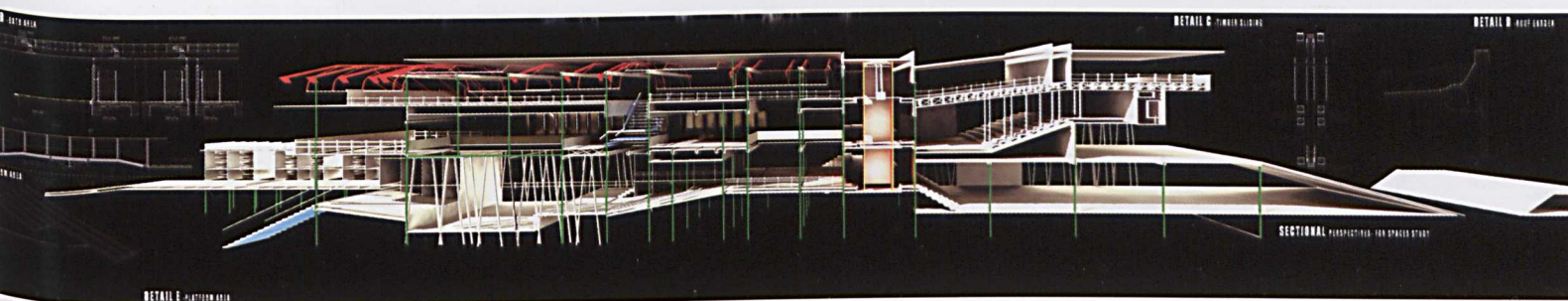
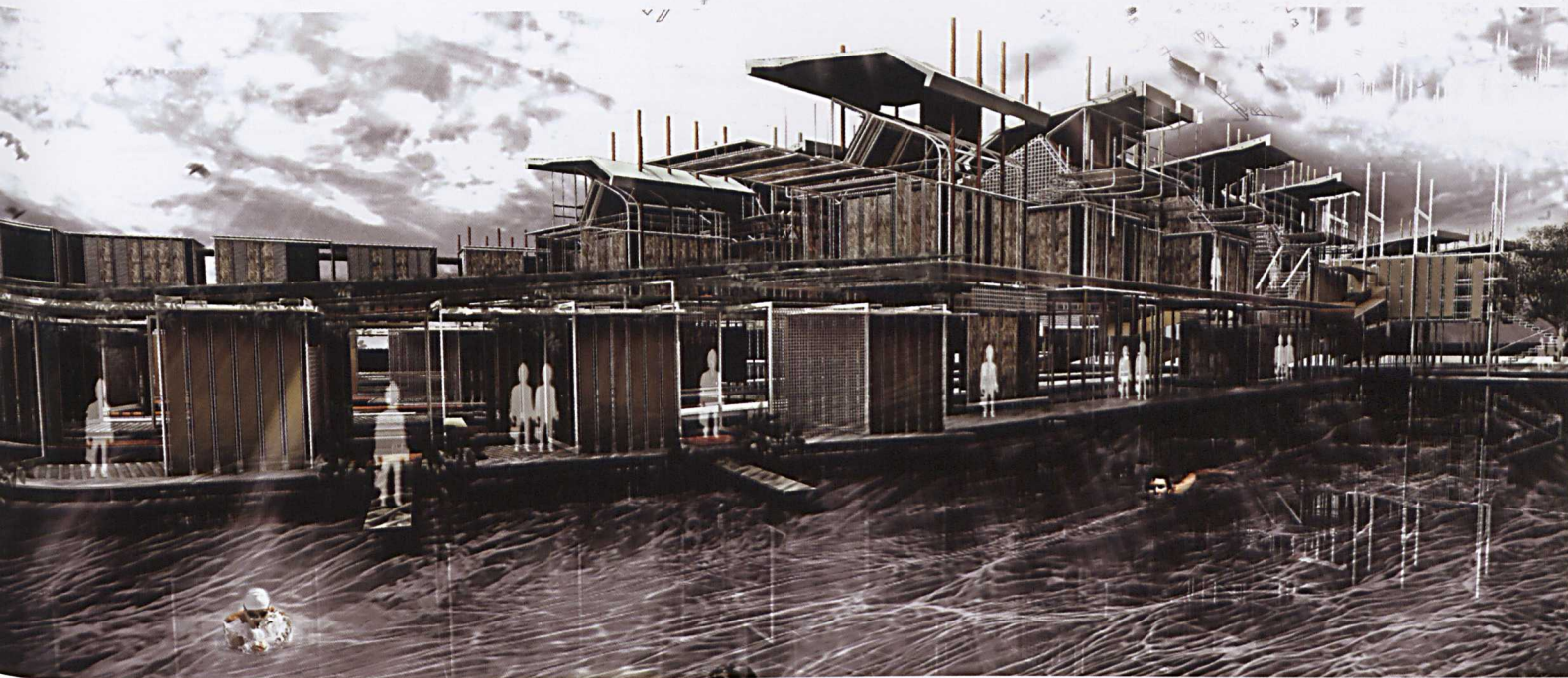
Redefining Aquatic Academy

Azizah Salim Syed Salim & Elias Salleh

Alor Setar needs sustainable development that creates public space in association with the Kedah River and the riverine community. The intent is to provide a riverfront development in an appropriate scale that creates a sense of belonging and place for the community. In this vein, Norizyan Saleh Alor Aquatic Academy portrays a unique vision for eco-urbanscape which posits to redefine contemporary conditions and outlook between architecture, land, water and the eco-friendly community in a sprawling layout. The proposal also activates multiple conditions of water as catalyst to generate the interesting features for the academy where a distinct union between nature, architecture, and advanced sustainable technology is achieved. With regeneration, recycle and reconnection as an approach, the proposal operates as a new sustainable social fabric stimulating economic growth within and along the Kedah River.



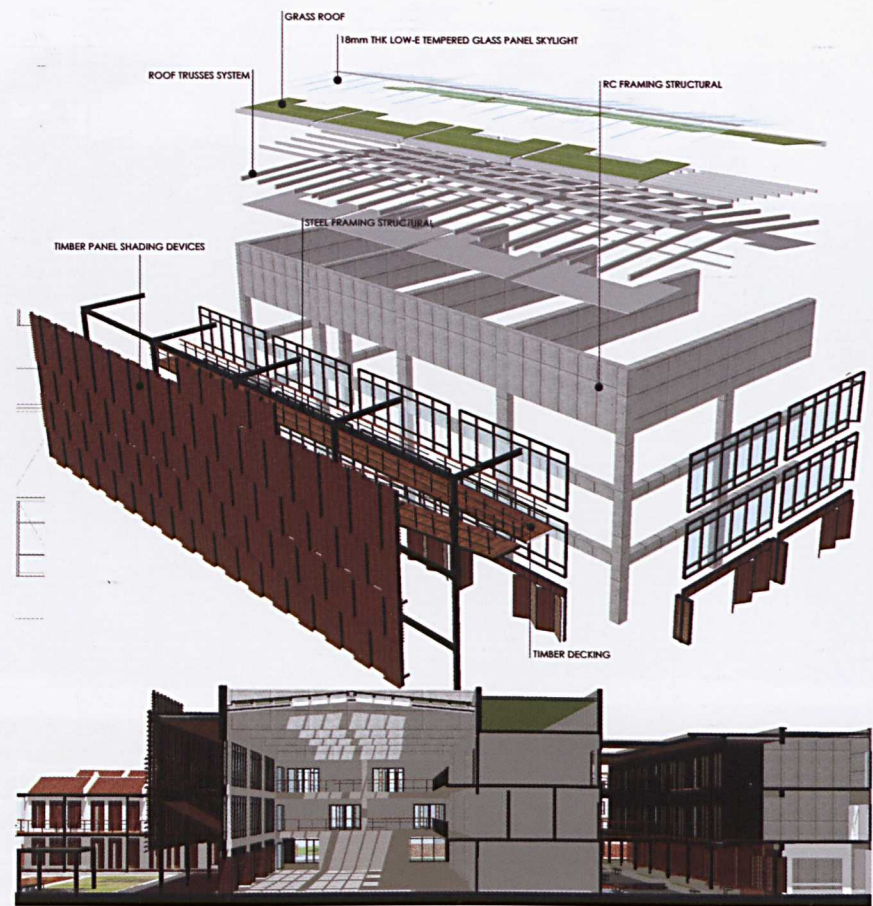
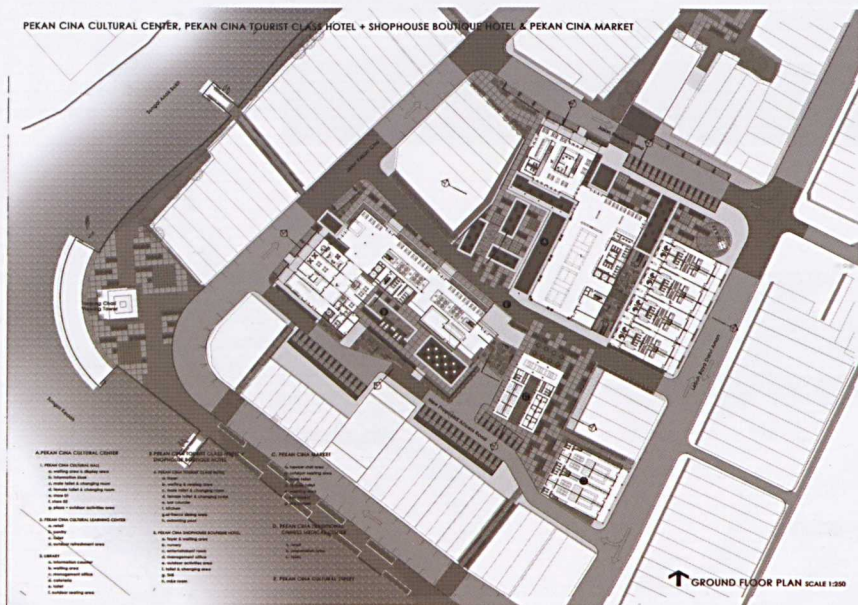
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Pekan Cina Revitalization

Azizah Salim Syed Salim & Mohammad Yazah Mat Raschid

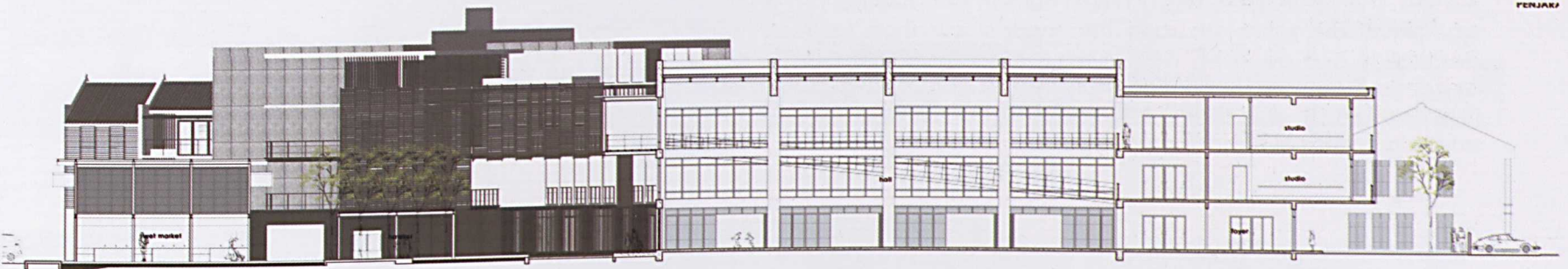
Pekan Cina Revitalization in Alor Setar must form a responsive intervention to the urban fabric with a contextual scale and sensitivity to the physical, social and cultural environment. The whole development comprises of rezoning the functions of the shop houses, designation of a heritage walk and the provision of a new Pekan Cina Cultural Centre which acts as a congregational building for the elderly and the younger generation to reconnect and participate in cultural activities. William Tan's overall design concept and idea is inspired from the existing shop houses façade elements and courtyard. This application of adaptive reuse respects and retains the importance of existing shop houses' and at the same time infuses a contemporary layer that provides value for the local architectural style in the future. It significantly delineated the response needed to revitalize an urban setting in the Malaysian context.



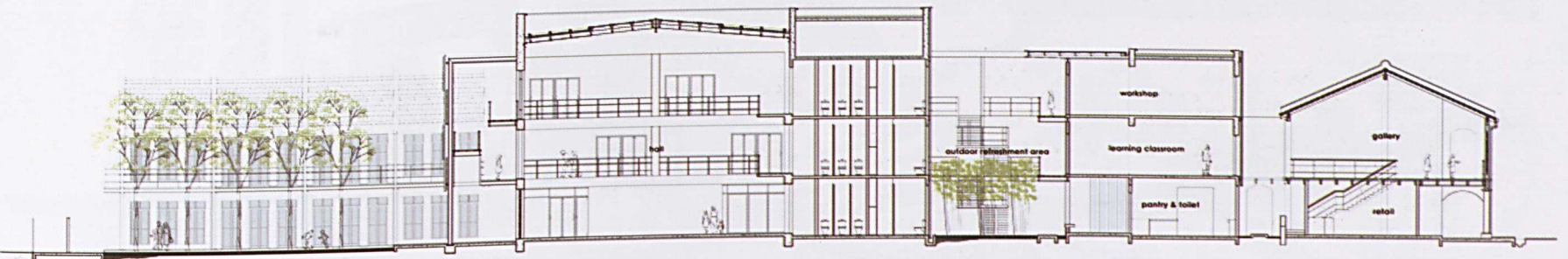
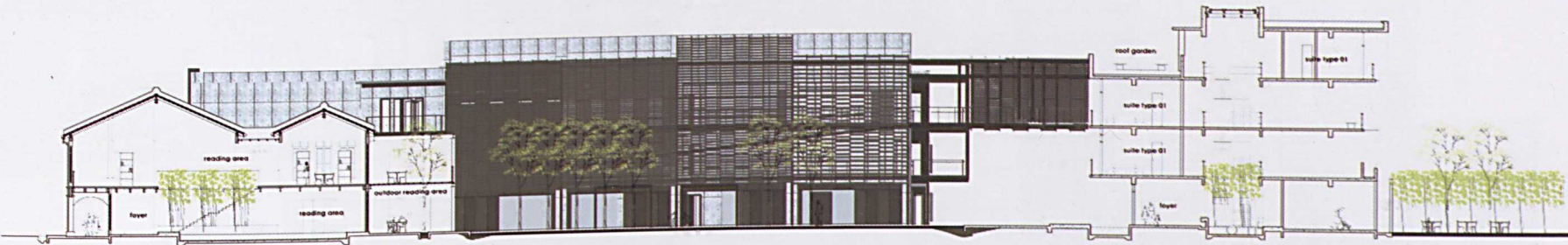
William Tan

STEDS X REPORTS

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FENJAK

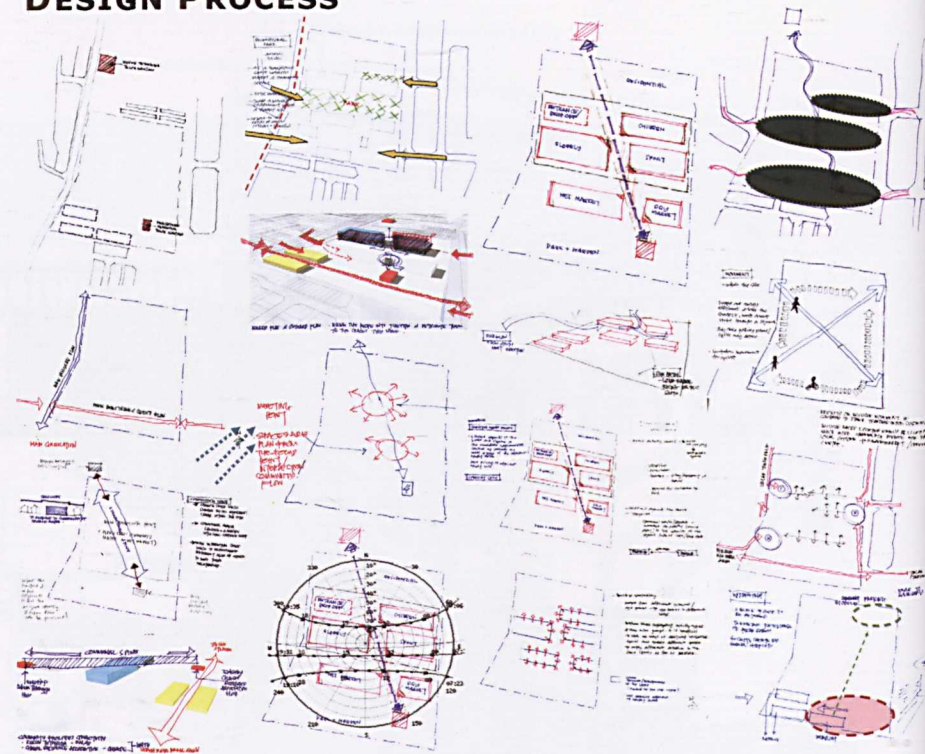


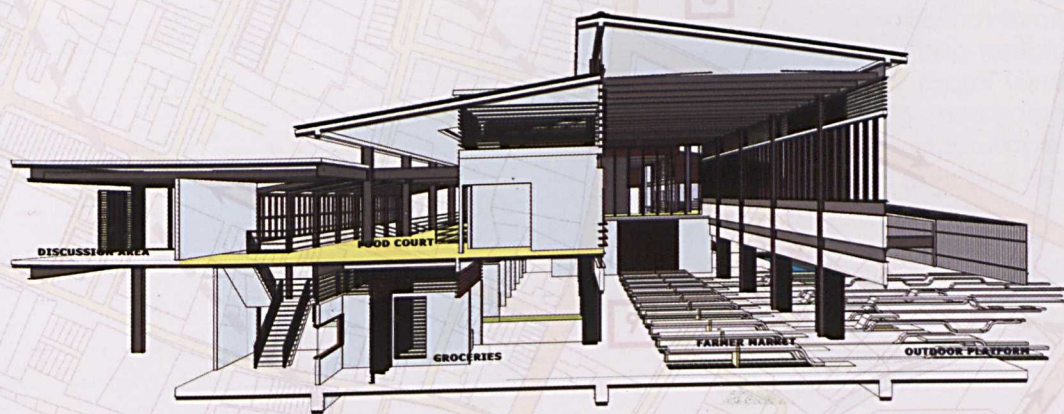
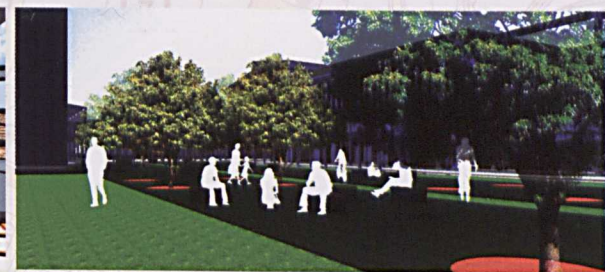
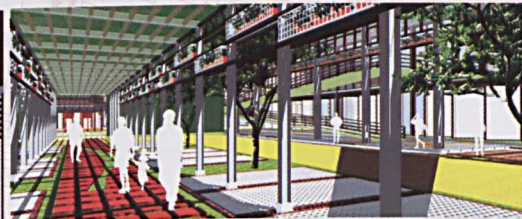
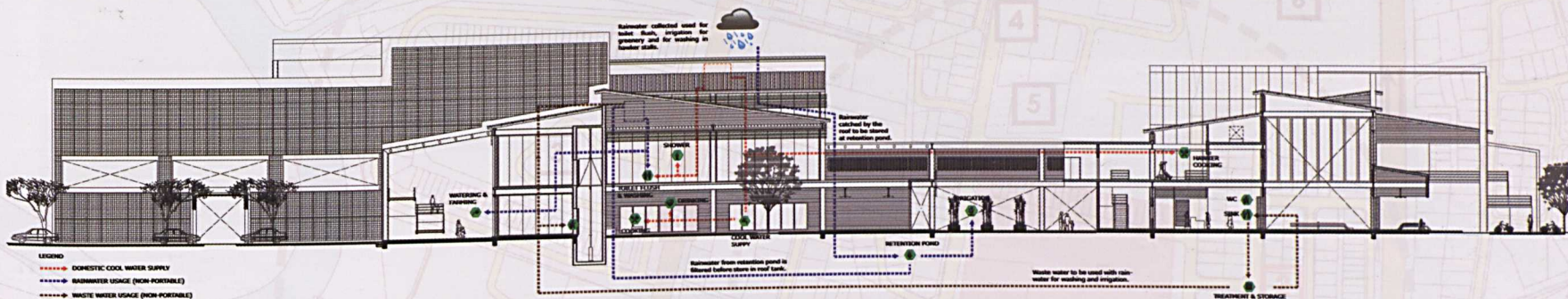
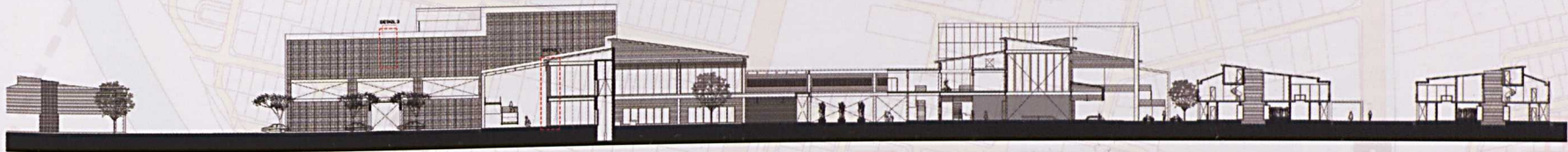
Reinvigorating Urban Community

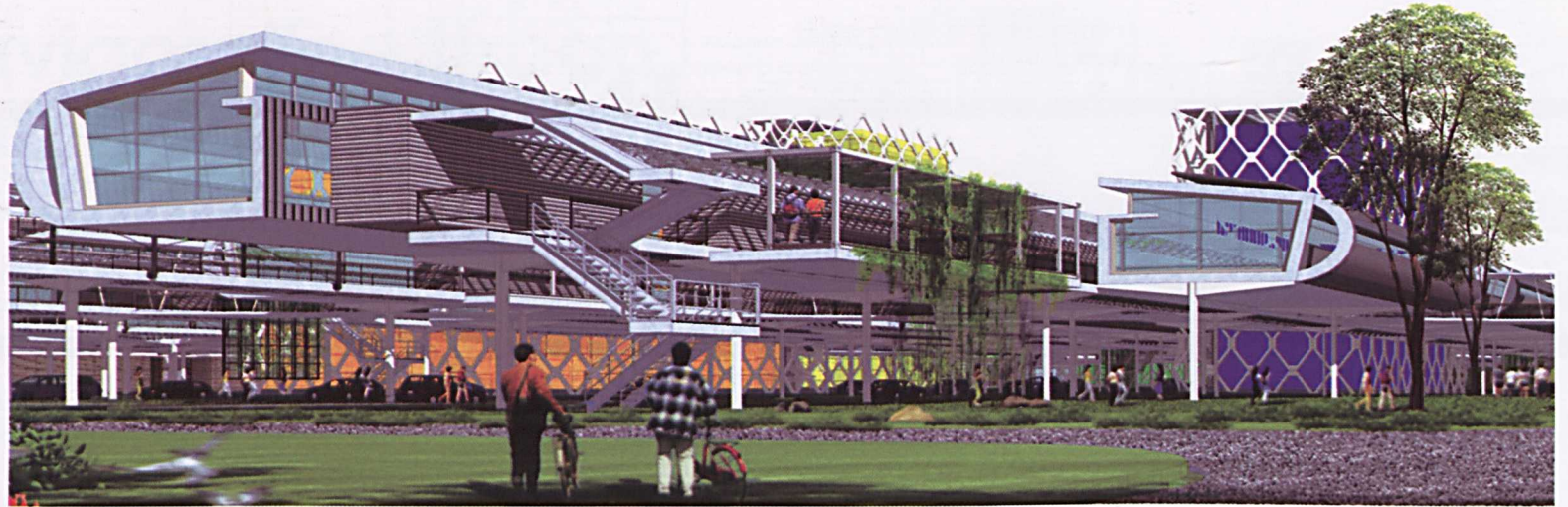
Azizah Salim Syed Salim & Elias Salleh

The sensitivity of urban design prevails in Pekan Kobo Telok Wan Jah with Kobo Street as the dominant pedestrian-cyclist linkage to the site. The strong historical and cultural images within the site are the vibrant activities of existing wet market and the rows of wooden shop houses which will be integrated especially in terms of social cultural aspect. In Toon Yin Yee's proposal, a communal spine is created between the Rukun Tetangga base and Chinese Residence Association Hall where activity nodes are located including the proposed Community Centre itself. Natural accesses are created by connecting existing accesses to the site. This concept is derived from human behavioural preferences where humans prefer to take the shortest distance to reach their destination and generally do not like to be forced with a single route of access. The scale and rhythm of the immediate neighbourhood is fully captured in the design scheme with the continuity of the mass and grid system of the adjacent blocks.

DESIGN PROCESS







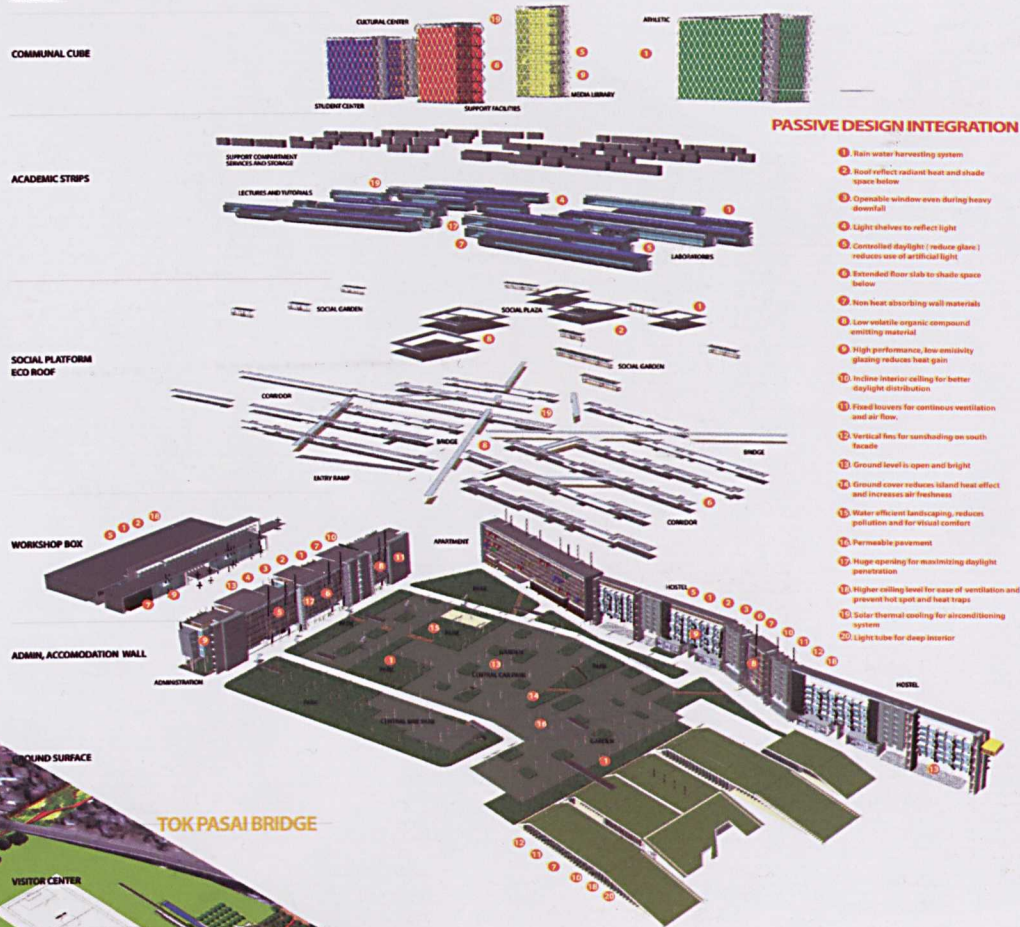
Hybrid Architecture

Azizah Salim Syed Salim & Elias Salleh

A strip of mangrove area in Kota Kuala Kedah poses a challenge to the designer in proposing a university campus that is in sync with the natural environment and the local community. The aim is to put forward architectural territories that function as a campus within the comfort of mangrove forest so as to foster high quality learning. In Muhammad Khairi's final thesis, he proposes a green network of circulation paths, elevated walkways and corridors as linkages to all the learning facilities whilst keeping the mangrove forest intact with minimum intrusion from the habitat. Maximizing the passive design techniques throughout the area ranging from rainwater system and environmental screens also brings out the idea of hybrid architecture alive. The project significantly demonstrates the importance of natural hybrid in a built environment as a potent design strategy for a Higher Learning Institute.

ARCHITECTURAL SUBSYSTEM ELEMENTS

The design explore the interface between the community and it's University Campus, and proposes a territory that functions simultaneously, as campus and civic cultural center, blurring the distinction between the community and its institutions....



■ Muhammad Khairi Ismail