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Complimenting Nature

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Studio LAN 3002 Site Planning Studio Year 2 of Bachelor of Landscape Architecture conducted a course work in the district of Lenggong, Perak. The place is known by its own pre-historic values and made famous by the discovery of 'Perakman' as well as the historical caves. In addition, it is set in a serene natural setting which is well-preserved until now. Tasik Raban is recognised as one major pulling factor for natural landscape enthusiasts. Basically, the site is categorised as a sensitive landscape area. The site is located in-between the Highway that connects the East and the West coasts of Peninsula Malaysia. It is 15 kilometers from Kuala Kangsar and 20 kilometers from the town, Grik. Nevertheless, the site could never be a real attraction to visitors if it is only a place to pass by. The course work required groups of students to analyse the site to identify its potentials for future development.

Based on their analyses, three potential landscape design proposals with sustainable landscape approach were put forward. The designers are Chen Fei Wen, Kong Kok How and Raymond Ling Guang Kowng. These four landscape design proposals bring about concepts that are relevant to current condition and the future of Lenggong district especially in the vicinity of the unique Tasik Raban.

In the individual approach by Raymond Ling Guang Kowng, he had used a more down-to-earth concept but fulfils the objectives. The concept "Chambered Shell" with organic shapes succeeded in making the spaces and activities to blend in naturally without affecting the ecological values of the site thus yet adding values to the natural environment.

On the other hand, Kong Kok How—in a contemporary—approach used repeated geometrical shapes with the concept 'Ripple' to create different types and characters of spaces. Spaces were designed to suit all age groups for them to enjoy. The geometrical spaces influenced the flow of activities to be more coordinated and systematic. The beauty of the visual qualities was also a concern. 'Ripple', in overall, has enlivened the chosen site.

Chen Fei Wen's 'Stream of Life' concept depicts what is supposed to happen in a water sport complex that is located in a sensitive area. The designer succeeded in conserving the original topography by blending in multiple levels of organic spaces with the existing unique environment. Practical spaces are to give comfort and at the same time to be functional to users. The objective to have water-based recreational spaces is successfully achieved.

Overall, the course work has given the opportunity for students to be more explorative and to understand landscape site planning especially in moderately-scaled sensitive areas. Emphasis has been given to attain more sustainable and competitive design, appreciating and respecting physical characteristics as well as conserving and improving the culture and visual of the surrounding.

Jury Review

Hasanuddin Lamit & Khairina Zek Khairuddin

This review covers three design projects proposed in the vicinity of Tasik Raban. They are the Chambered Shell, the Ripple and the Stream of Life.

One author attempted to plan the site with a central core and all other elements and spaces based on a 'Chambered Shell' concept. However, the central core appeared to indicate a level of intervention which was quite minimalist. The design of the other areas were deliberately controlled without over designing. This was further emphasised by the use of hierarchical footpaths which controlled users' movement around the site. The planning and siting of water-based element seem to be less imaginative as it linearly hugged the edge of the water while excluding the variety of experiences for users. Tropical indentify is reflected by using structural plantings in abundance. The overall planning also acknowledges the presence of water body.

Good free flowing structural layout addresses the water body well in the Ripple project. Overall work is quite expressive with a good balance between structural shaded plantings and open spaces. The design's diverse spaces that replicate the uniqueness of the site's topography offer the opportunity for visitors to explore and gain knowledge about natural system on land and water. The design responds to the natural characteristics of the site by using existing topography, trees and plant materials that encourage exploration. There is also a commendable effort in the use of graphics to express idea and spirit of the place. Notable character in the structural layout is a nice balance between hard and soft spaces. The peripheral location of most man-made elements indicates sensitivity by the designer to the level of intervention on the site with the middle portion being left untouched. The literal adaptation of the 'Ripple' concept, however, is quite disappointing. What is also evident is the sense of tropicity in the use of planting species especially the abundance of structural and shaded trees and palms.

The design idea and interpretation is commendable with continuous flow and articulation of spaces based on the "Stream of Life" concept. However, the use of the light blue colour to express design is misleading and non-justifiable in this. Footpaths and many points of intersections with the surrounding landscape have made possible for wildlife and people to access the designed spaces. The concentration of structure— and shade—giving trees in the south side and anecdotal suggestions along and on the spaces on the north indicate a deliberate and thoughtful design in addressing quality and variety in a place-making endeavour. A poetic but literal concept and the lack of profoundness in interpretation leave some aspects of the design much to be desired.

Chambered Shell

Asraf Abdul Rahman, Mohd Nazri Saidon & Ina Krisantia

Tasik Raban is situated strategically along the East-West highway which connects the east coast and east west coast of Peninsula Malaysia. It has been identified as having high potential to be developed. Tasik Raban in Lenggong is blessed with an archaeological site famous for the 'Perakman'. The site is specifically located in a natural area surrounded by the lake, river and mountain range that are still preserved with their own unique characteristics. They provide the ambience of peacefulness, serenity and inspiration to nature lovers. In fact, the visual quality of the area is simply breathtaking.

In proposing a landscape development, Raymond Ling has chosen the small island of Pulau Raban as the site. The island is found to be the most suitable and relevant to be developed based on this analysis. There is a need to have a development to attract more visitors to Pulau Raban that could help improve the an economy of the local community via tourism industry.

Hence, the designer proposed to develop a small-scaled non-exclusive island resort that can integrate well with the natural environment as the best option forward in the future. This type of development is expected to minimise the impacts to the natural environment once development takes place. Moreover, it can be appreciated by tourists and visitors.



For development purposes, the designer has chosen the concept 'Chambered Shell', a fossil that is synonymous to the daily life of the ancient community in the Lenggong district. The spaces in the form of chambered shells depict the functional spaces and connect each other naturally. The concept suits the character of Pulau Taban which exists as a piece of land and then simulated as chambered shells. This concept succeeds in connecting the spaces in each island where most are located at the fringes of Pulau Taban. The concept 'Chambered Shell' also portrays how the greenery in Pulau Taban can be integrated with water elements that surrounds the island and make it look more natural.

Raymond Ling has proposed landscape elements such as fishing platforms, swimming pool, spa centre, restaurant, jetty, management office and also chalets for visitors. The vehicle-free concept forces the pedestrian spaces to become the spine that connects every practical spaces created on the island.

Overall, the design concept is relevant with the naturally sensitive physical character. While organic shapes give a more subtle touch, nevertheless, it will be more effective if the designer would consider the development of the surrounding context where the circulation network could give continuous support for future development.

Raymond Ling Guang Kowng

The Ripple

Mohd Nazri Saidon, Asraf Abdul Rahman & Ina Krisantia

This project is about designing a space extension of Tasik Raban Resort called 'the Ripple'. It aims to be highly attractive to visitors to experience the beautiful views towards Tasik Raban. This area has been identified is currently an attractive location for eco-tourism in the Lenggong District, Perak.

The ripple design proposed by Kong Kok How has two main objectives: adding the quality interaction of space between human and nature, and enhancing and connecting the existing space with the proposed site. These aims are intended to improve the surrounding, landscaping and identity of the space. The ripple design is derived from an analogy of wavelike motion on the water surface. This analogy intends to replicate the power of waves to add energy to the surrounding area and becoming more happening and interesting.



■ Kong Kok How

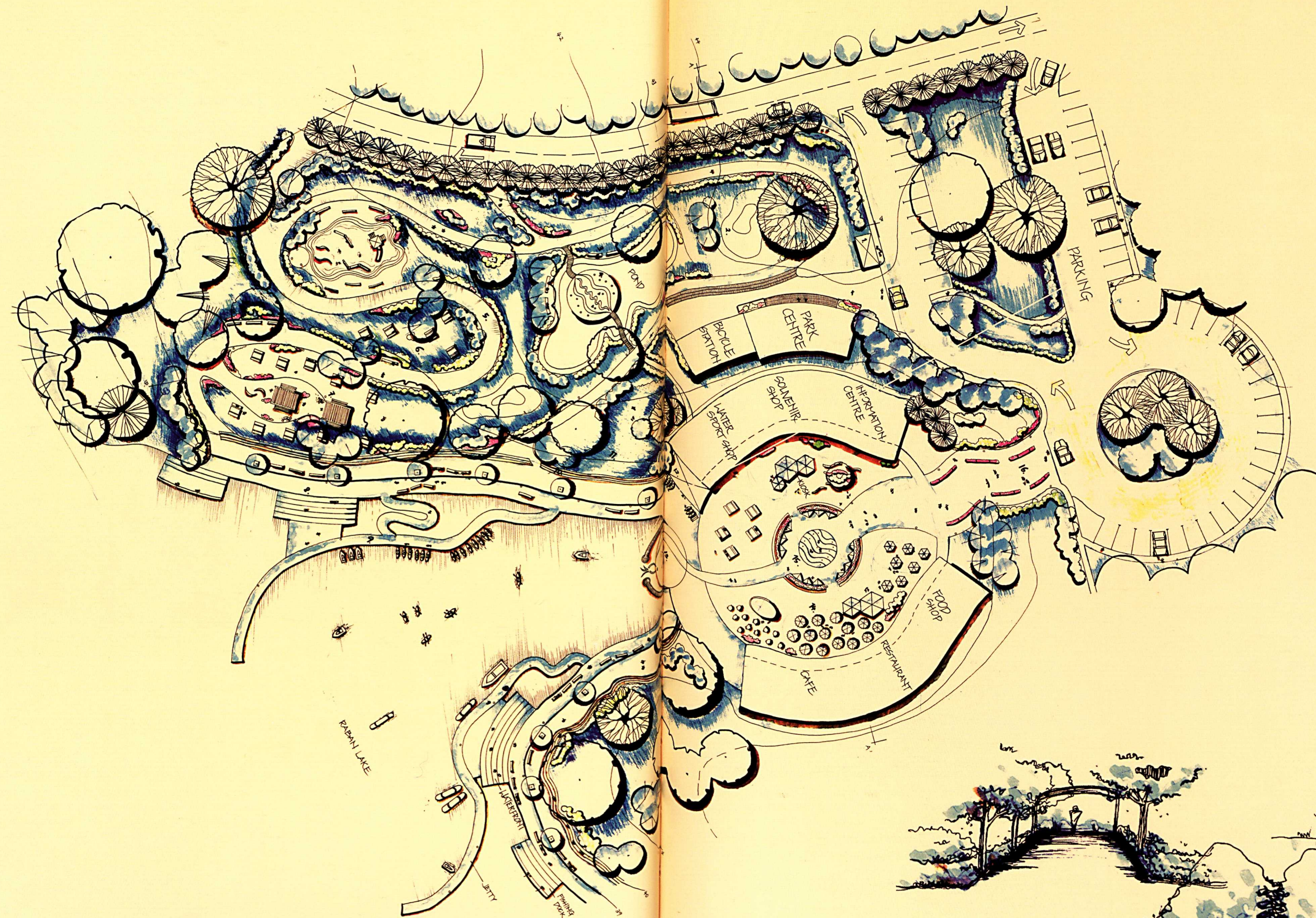
Kong Kok How focus the planning in uniting two areas, the proposed café and plaza, with well-connected pedestrian paths. A series of air walk, avenues and silent paths connect as the main path to tie all the landscape areas. These paths allow a series of experiencing nature such as flora and fauna, landforms and water elements. Overall, the smooth movement provides visitors with both man-made and natural environmental experiences.

Stream of Life

Ina Krisantia, Asraf Abdul Rahman & Mohd Nazri Saidon

This project is located in a sensitive area of Tasik Raban, Lenggong, Perak. The site is surrounded by oil palm and rubber plantations. The current site has potential sceneries but lacks activities and connectivity. Hence, it is not fully utilised.

Chen Fei Wen has proposed several public recreational activities to enhance the environment. The designer has proposed a unique concept called "The Stream of Life" as a design metaphor. The stream concept is implemented in the flow of circulation and life was implemented in the greenery environment to increase the quality of life. This concept is further translated into an organic form in the master plan.



■ Chen Fei Wen

With this concept, Chen Fei Wen proposes a flow of circulation in every interesting spot to create interesting connectivity throughout the water sport center and park. In the central park, she has proposed a link made of pedestrian pathways and jogging tracks to connect all the spaces with the parking area.

In addition, she also proposes a green environment in the recreational area to increase the quality of life. The design accommodates passive recreational activities for adults and children in a series of small park spaces for picnics, walking and jogging. These new activities are proposed to enliven this area.

As a conclusion, the design attempts to embrace the Stream of Life concept which includes the flows of circulation and greenery environment. With the design metaphor derived from a stream, the life concept has been clearly illustrated in the proposed master plan.

