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Breathing Space

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Natural Breathing Spaces

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The assigned projects are profoundly about an environmental design discipline which vigorously shapes the human environment. Students mapped, interpreted, imagined, drawn, built, conceptualised and synthesised ideas that would transform landscapes. They were also taught and exposed to understanding issues about the environment, ecosystems, cultural frameworks, functional systems, social relevance and creative expressions in the design process. Students in the programme learnt to change the world around them by re-imagining and re-shaping a space and its environment to enhance its aesthetic and functional dimensions, ecological system, cultural significance and social relevance. The students' comprehensive project addresses broad range areas of landscape in urban, suburban, rural and wilderness settings. The students are challenged to undertake a study, preferably of their interests and they are tasked to complete their whole landscape planning and design process. They would draw upon scientific, historical and cultural knowledge besides minor research findings in applying their creative and technical skills in planning and designing an environment serving useful, aesthetic, safe and enjoyable purposes. Overall, the students would be able to communicate well and work effectively with others on complex land design and planning problems. They would have learnt to appreciate the ethical, social, environmental and ecological dimensions of issues involving changes in the landscape.

Jury Review

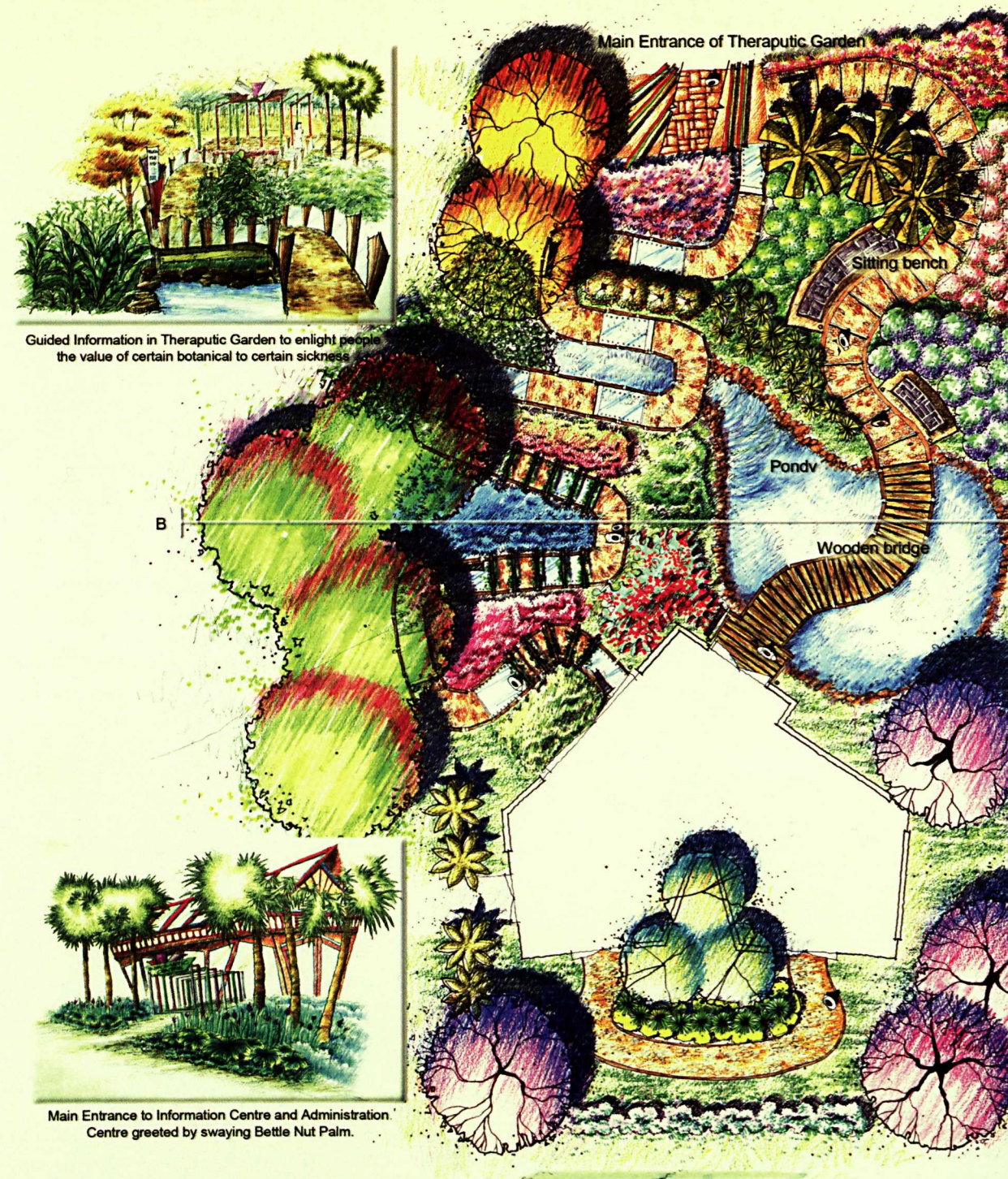
Hasanuddin Lamit & Khairina Zek Khairuddin

It was pleasing to see that all the works have displayed great and intellectual design process. Their mature standings and initial training are reflected in many of the works that manifest the process. However, what is wanting is the carry through or interpretation of this preliminary commendable work into actual design. All, but one, has shown a credible attempt to creatively and intelligently translate an idea into design. Others were rather too complex which might indicate a poor control of the design process thus resulting in an output that is non-singular and lacks coherence. Design principles are clearly evident in some projects while others are vaguely noticeable. The overall complexity and sophistication of design are pleasures to behold.

Breathing Space

Mohd Nazri Saidon, Noorizan Mohamed, Murad Abd Ghani & Ina Krisantia

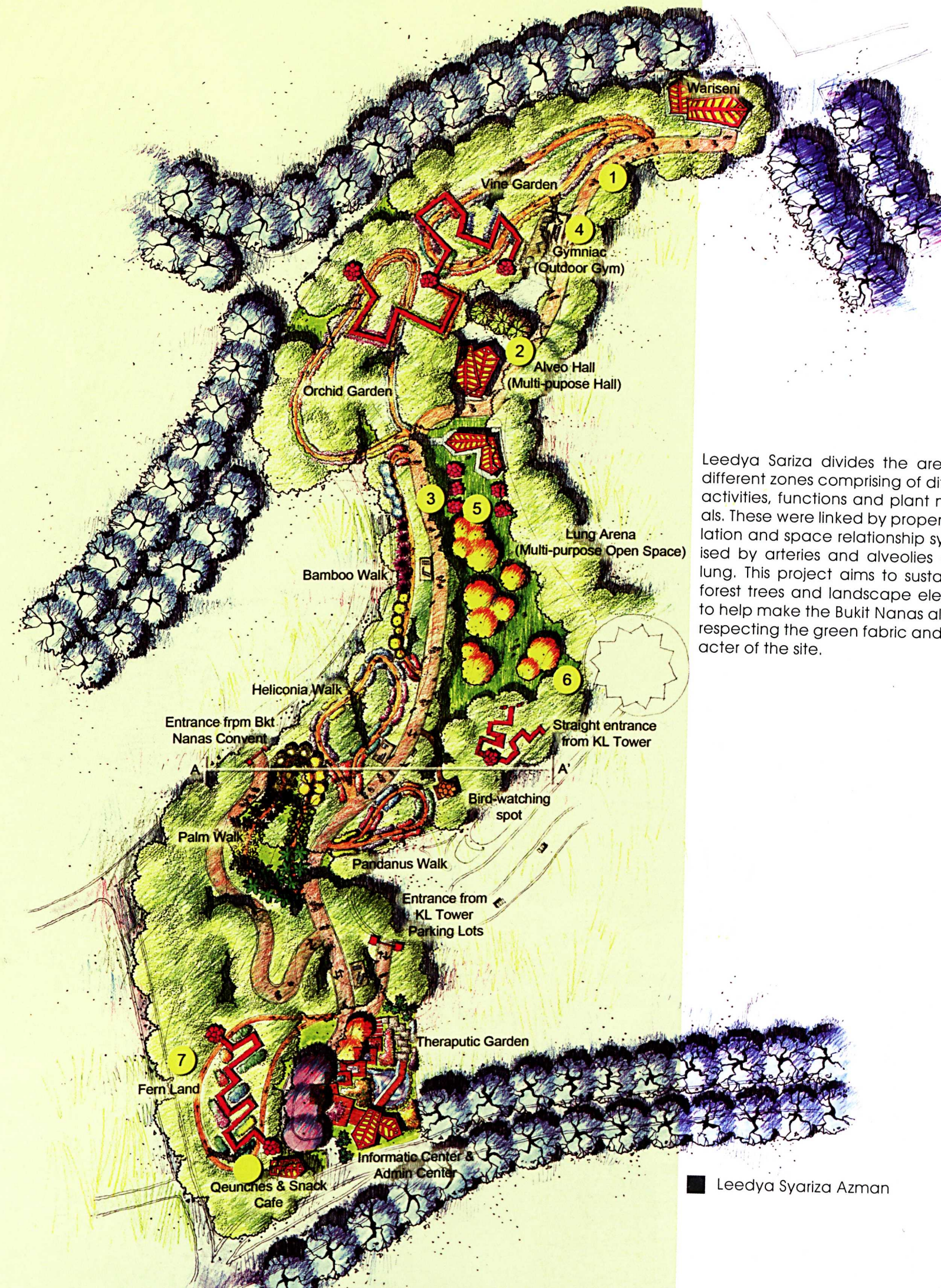
This project intends to enhance and promote the preservation of Bukit Nanas Forest Reserve which covers approximately 11 hectares. This area is the only virgin tropical forest left in the city of Kuala Lumpur. The concept is derived from the significance of lung as an essential respiration organ in all breathing animals and a crucial system in continuing life. The "green lung" concept is inspired by green plants acting as filters to improve the microclimate within the urban boundary.



Guided Information in Therapeutic Garden to enlighten people on the value of certain botanical to certain sickness.



Main Entrance to Information Centre and Administration. Centre greeted by swaying Bettie Nut Palm.



Leedya Sariza divides the area into different zones comprising of different activities, functions and plant materials. These were linked by proper circulation and space relationship symbolised by arteries and alveolies of the lung. This project aims to sustain the forest trees and landscape elements to help make the Bukit Nanas alive by respecting the green fabric and character of the site.

Leedya Syariza Azman



Wetland for People

Suhardi Maulan

Wetlands have long been neglected as wastelands and as a result, the wetlands have been converted into a more "meaningful" uses such as agricultural and housing. However, for the last few years, especially after the infamous tsunami tragedy that struck Indonesia and Thailand in 2005, wetlands' values and benefits to the mankind have been explored, if not revisited. Studies found wetlands having a long list of values and benefits that people were not aware of even though scientists have long discovered them and warned of the consequences of losing wetlands quite a long time ago (Mitsch and Gosselink, 2007).

However, wetlands, especially those in the urban areas cannot be left without any uses attached to them because studies have found that people have less preference to wetlands because of their appearances that often look messy and untidy (Kaplan, R. & Kaplan, S., 1989). Nevertheless, Che Rashid, in his design, tries to bring wetlands closer to people. Using wetlands associated with the Sungai Paya Pagar at Bera, Pahang, Malaysia, he first surveyed people's visual preferences for wetlands as well as the site's potential uses. His study concluded that the wetlands at Sungai Paya Pagar have potential to be conserved and the uses should be limited to eco-recreational activities (Che Rashid, 2009).

Che Rashid has taken a very utilitarian approach in planning and designing the Sungai Paya Pagar wetlands. To a certain extent, his design is recommended to the public and town municipality because it relies heavily on sustainability and centered on recreation, sight-seeing and educational activities. He proposes the construction of the site to be based on industrialised building systems. However, the development of the landscape seeks economic viability of the project as well. It is worrisome that the development would flourish only for a number of years but later be abandoned partly due to the lack of public funding. To overcome this problem, Che Rashid proposed a limited number of exclusive chalets. In addition, the wetlands educational center, would require visitors to pay to enter. It is crucial because the amount generated from these two activities could be used to sustain the wetlands. People may argue that public goods should be free. On contrary, this is also a time to test how much would people be willing to pay in exchange of environmental benefits and values.

This project, indeed, neither looked very complicated nor full with design philosophy. Instead, wetlands have sensitive ecology where architects need to make a choice whether to make a design statement within this ecology or to be humble with nature. For this project, Che Rashid has shown his ability to read the sensitive landscape at a very fundamental level and chose to be humble with nature rather than going against it.

References:
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 2. Kaplan, R. and Kaplan, S. (1989). *The Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, New York.
 3. Che Rashid, Che Seman (2009). *Pandangan Masyarakat Setempat terhadap Pembangunan Kawasan Tanah Lembab di Sungai Paya Pagar, Bera, Pahang*. Unpublished MLA Dissertation. Universiti Putra Malaysia.

■ Che Rasid Che Seman

STED QUARTS