HERspace

REDEFINING URBAN RETAIL SPACE FOR WOMEN



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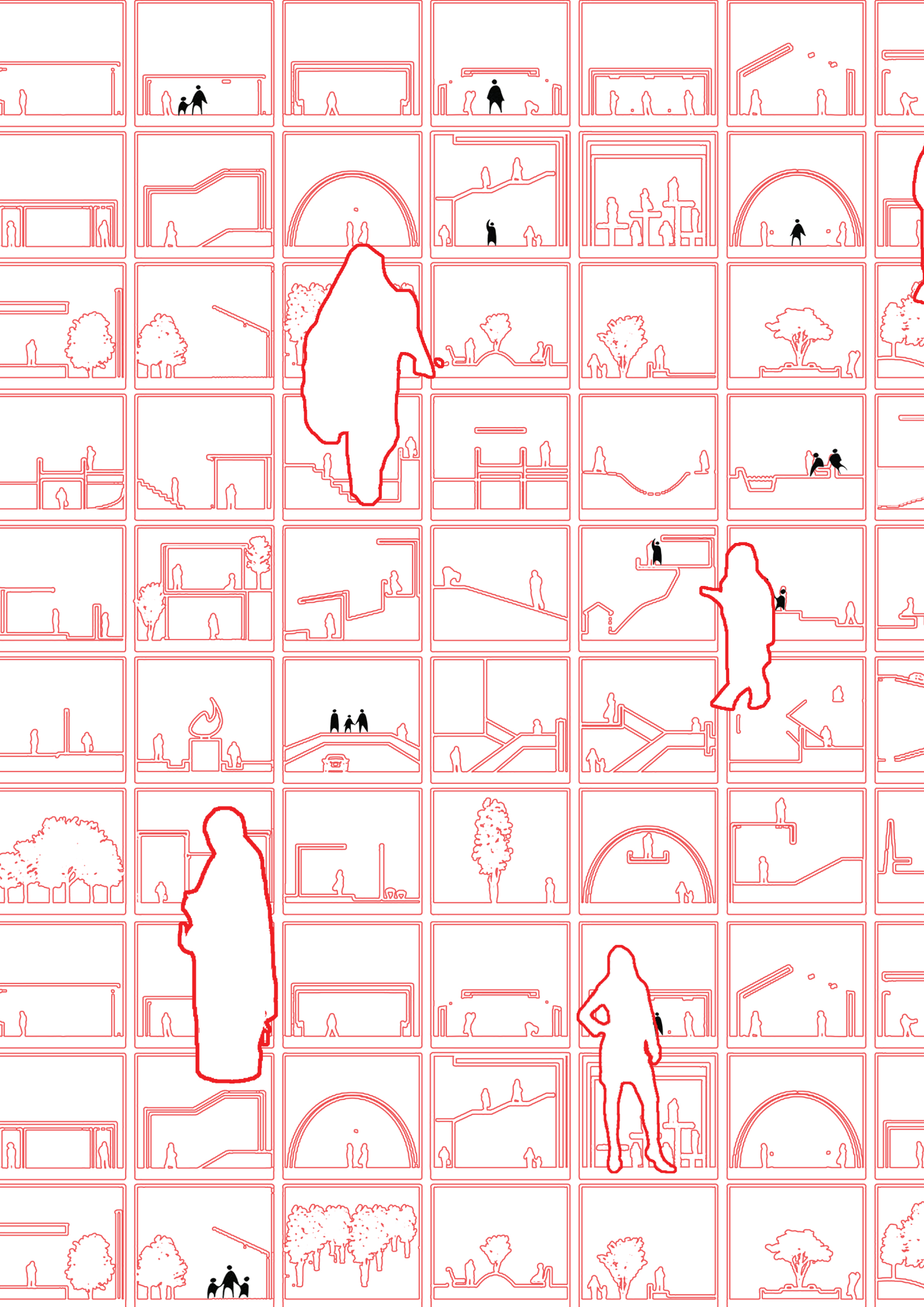
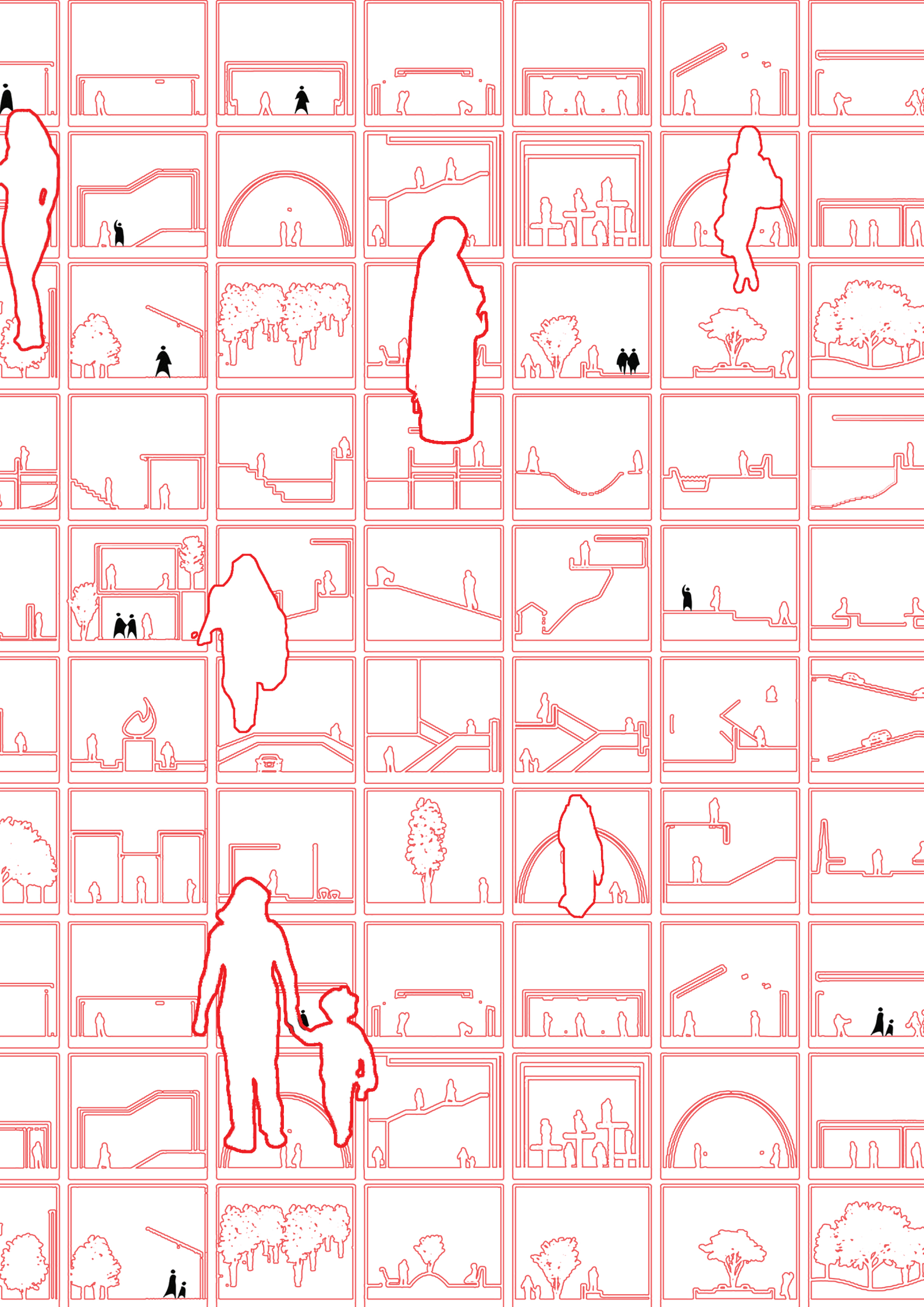
Cheers to making it to the finish line, and may our futures be filled with even more challenges, growth, and laughter.







ABSTRACT

The thesis 'HERspace' examines the intersection of gender equity and bazaar/retail architecture in the post-colonial world, with a particular focus on women's right to commercial spaces. Drawing on the works of postcolonial scholars and writers, this thesis argues that colonialism has had a profound impact on the architecture of bazaars, which has subsequently affected women's access to and ownership of these spaces. Furthermore, the paper contends that patriarchal structures within postcolonial societies have further marginalized women in the realm of commerce. To address these issues, the thesis suggests a reimagining of bazaar architecture that is inclusive of women's needs and experiences, as well as the creation of policies that protect and promote women's economic participation. By prioritizing gender equity in bazaar architecture, it is possible to create more just and equitable societies in the postcolonial world. The site of the thesis is GAWSIA Market in Dhaka city of Bangladesh. Like many bazaars in the postcolonial world, GAWSIA Market has historically been shaped by patriarchal structures and gender inequalities that have limited women's access to and ownership of commercial spaces. By creating more inclusive and equitable commercial spaces, it is possible to promote greater economic participation and empowerment for women, which can ultimately lead to more just and equitable societies.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INTRODUCTION

1

Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, is home to a vibrant and bustling retail sector. Retail spaces are an integral part of this city's urban fabric, providing important economic and social hubs for local communities. However, the design of these spaces has been shaped by a complex set of social, cultural, and historical factors, including the legacy of colonialism and gender inequalities. The history of retail spaces in Dhaka dates back several centuries, with the city's bazaars and markets serving as important centers of trade and commerce during the Mughal era. British colonialism in the 19th and early 20th centuries brought significant changes to the city's built environment, with the introduction of European-style architecture and urban planning. This had a profound impact on traditional retail spaces, which were often reconstructed to fit a Western design aesthetic, neglecting local needs and cultural practices.

Postcolonial theories offer a framework for understanding the ways in which colonialism and imperialism continue to shape the design and use of retail spaces in Dhaka. As scholars such as Edward Said and Homi Bhabha have argued, colonialism is not simply a historical event but a ongoing process that shapes cultural and political relations in the present. The imposition of Western design standards on traditional retail spaces in Dhaka is one example of this ongoing process, which perpetuates a Eurocentric and hierarchical view of the world.

Gender issues are another important factor in the design and use of retail spaces in Dhaka. Women, who make up a significant portion of the city's informal retail sector, face numerous challenges in accessing and owning commercial spaces. Patriarchal norms and societal expectations limit women's mobility and agency in the public sphere, reinforcing gendered hierarchies in the retail sector. Women's participation in the retail sector is often seen as secondary to men's, and they are often relegated to low-paying and low-status jobs.

To address these challenges, there is a growing recognition of the need to design retail spaces that are inclusive and gender-sensitive. This includes creating spaces that are accessible and safe for women, promoting women's ownership and control of commercial spaces, and recognizing the diverse needs and experiences of women in the retail sector. Designing retail spaces that are responsive to the needs



Figure: Dhaka New Market
Source: Author

How have postcolonial power relations and cultural influences impacted the design and use of retail spaces in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and what are the ongoing effects of these factors on the accessibility, ownership, and control of commercial spaces?

How have gendered hierarchies in the retail sector in Dhaka, Bangladesh, affected women's access to and ownership of commercial spaces, and what policies and practices can promote gender equity in this context?

How can the design of retail spaces in Dhaka, Bangladesh, be reimagined to be more inclusive and responsive to the needs and experiences of diverse stakeholders, and what are the potential social and economic benefits of such redesign efforts?


Janata Bank
Limited



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2

From the histories of the cities throughout the world, we can see that they originally developed around the places where trading activities took place. On Max Weber's account, the existence of a city is necessarily marked up by the existence of a trading place(Weber, 1989). As one of the basic actions of humankind, commerce has always shaped the city structure in civilization. From the 'Harvard design school guide to shopping', edited by Rem Koolhas, Chuihua Judy Chung, Jeffrey Inaba, Sze Tsung Leong, it can be seen how structure and mechanism of marketplaces have shaped towns and cities. Public commercial spaces have always been a place of interaction, expression and extension of public life. We can trace back the retail culture from Greek agora where these places were used both for trading and meeting. European plazas and squares also shared the same principles. Also in eastern civilization, the 'bazaars' were a fundamental part of city structure where cultural, social, political and economic functions took place. Stephen Carr in his book 'Public space' has mentioned the various activities that took place in public spaces from which we can gather the five needs of public space- active engagement, passive engagement, comfort, relaxation and discovery(Carr, 1992). These activities are also true for present commercial spaces.



Figure: Commerce on the water(Chinese Scroll painting)
Source: Xu Yang, 18th Century Painter from Suzhou, China

In the 20th century, consumerist culture has influenced the transformation of modern commercial spaces. The modern technological revolution, increased mobility, urban sprawl and growth of urban population have encouraged the specialization of urban functions and changes in traditional urban spaces. The new consumption places like shopping malls and departmental stores have changed the traditional definition of public places, replacing parks, open spaces and squares as new collective space. Contemporary commercial places are created with more scope of entertainment and recreation besides buying and selling activities(Birol, 2003). As a result, in the present world, one can not deny the role of commerce when developing the urban quality or urban environment. At the same time, the design of commercial spaces can not be purely focused on economic activities, but also has to take into account the development of urban life.

In Bangladesh, the major commercial activities took place on the streets. As the big commercial complexes like Easter plaza, Bashundhara city, Jamuna future park emerged, the trading scenario has changed. Better service, entertainment opportunies, appearance, popularity- these factors are now crucial in attracting the consumers. Aslo social images and interaction- such social factors play a crucial part. Shopping malls are now dominant features in the contemporary commercial arena of Bangladesh.

This ever-existing relationship between commercial places and cities has been subject to many changes and still in a process of evolution. With the rise of e-commerce and changing consumer preferences, the definition of market places are also being modified. This modification consequently had an impact on structuring the city, both from planning perspective and socio-cultural one. So it is important to design these marketplaces or bazaars with new age demands so a more sustainable development of cities can be achieved.

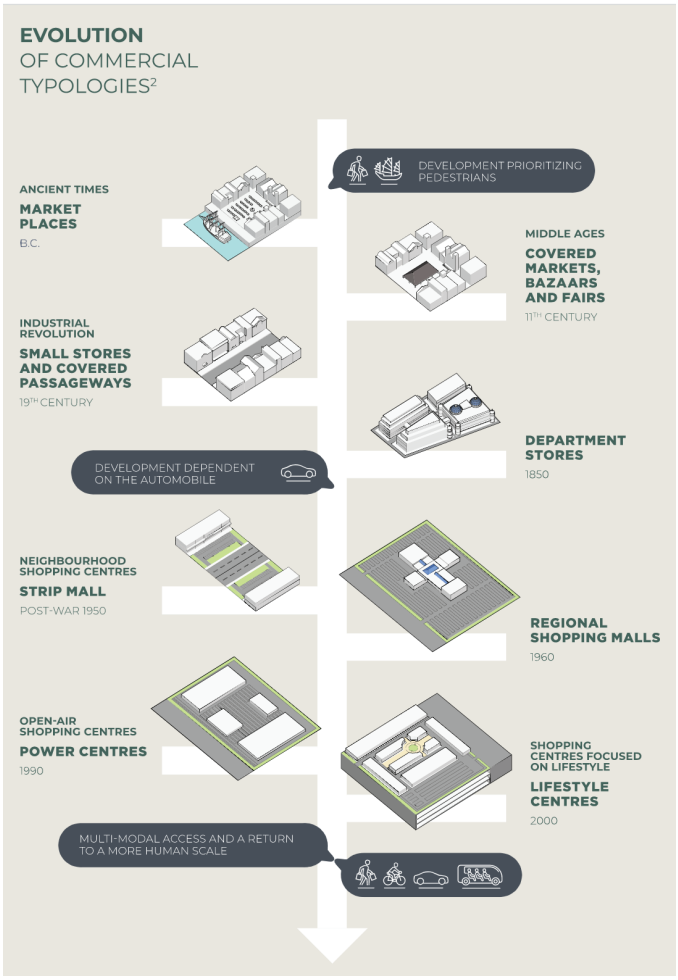
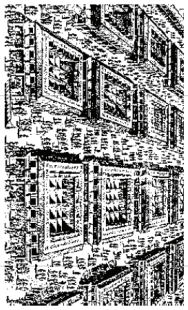


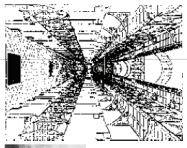
Figure: Changes in commercial typologies
Source: De Moncan, Patrice (2008). Histoire des centres commerciaux en France, 331 p.

Evolution of retail types

Diagram by SZE TSUNG LEONG







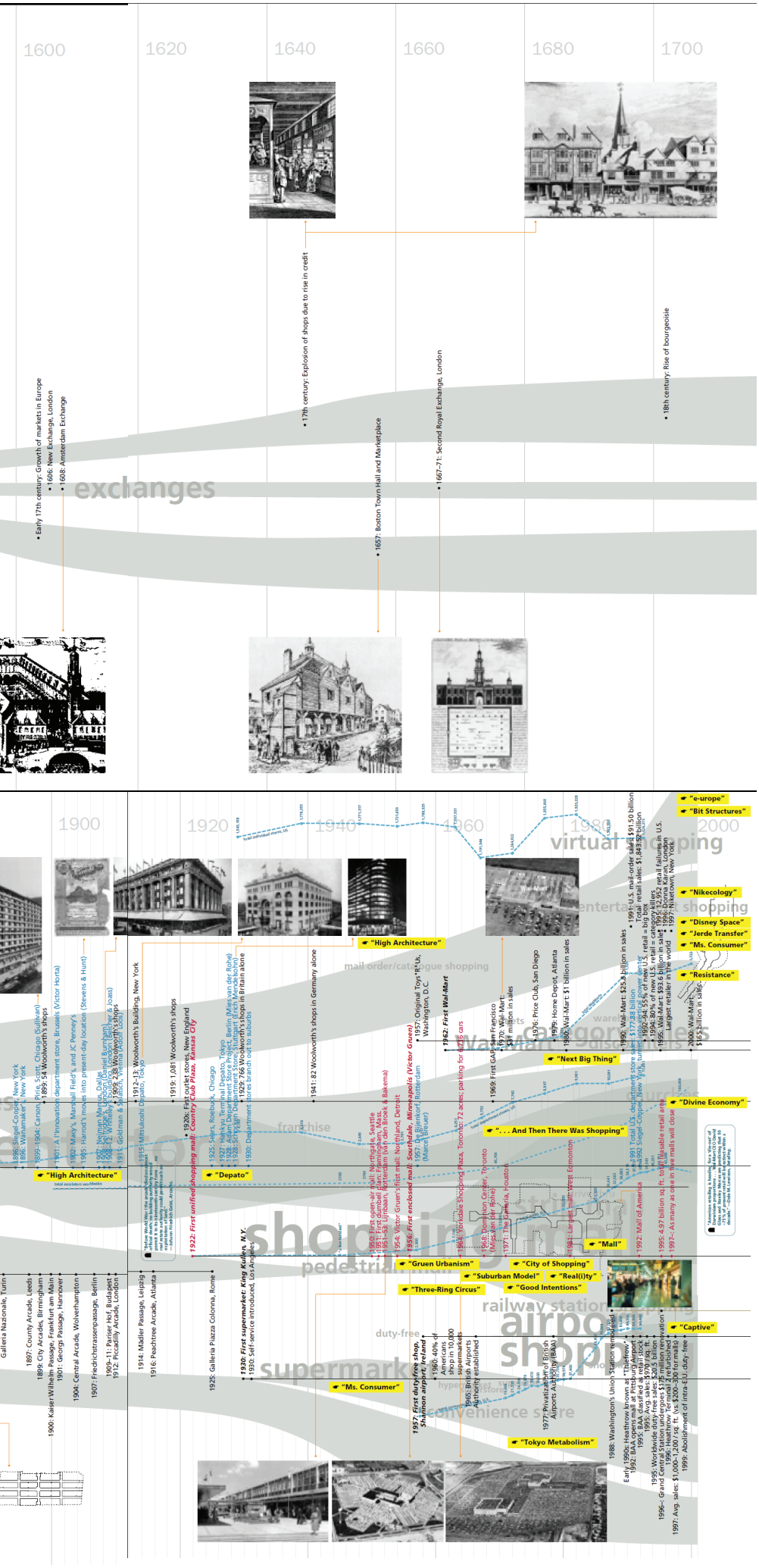


Figure: Evolution of Retail Type

(Project on the City II : The Harvard Guide to Shopping)

Edited by Chuihua Judy Chung, Jeffrey Inaba, Rem Koolhaas, Sze Tsung Leong

Source: OMA Website

In dense urban cities like Dhaka, where space is limited, and the population is high, creating viable retail spaces that cater to the needs of specific groups can be challenging. However, this is crucial to ensure that the city's diverse population has access to goods and services that meet their needs and preferences.

When it comes to retail spaces, women are a significant consumer group whose needs and preferences are often ignored. Creating better and viable retail spaces that cater specifically to women's needs can have a significant impact on their quality of life and contribute to the city's overall social and economic development.

Why Women?

The thesis topic addresses a significant gap in the retail space in Dhaka and suggest a positive impact on women's quality of life, safety, and economic empowerment. Women are often ignored in the design of retail spaces due to a lack of representation, male-dominated industry, traditional gender roles, and cost considerations whereas Women represent a significant proportion of shoppers. Women are often the primary decision-makers when it comes to shopping for household items, clothing, and personal care products.

Women's participation in the formal and informal workforce has been steadily increasing in recent years. According to the World Bank, women in Bangladesh represent 48% of the workforce. Women work in a range of sectors, including agriculture, garments, healthcare, education, and microenterprises. Women-owned businesses are on the rise in Bangladesh. According to a report by the International Finance Corporation, women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh are running businesses in diverse sectors, including retail, hospitality, services, and manufacturing. In spite of being a vital contributor to overall retail system, the present retail space planning of Dhaka largely ignores the needs of the women demographic by failing to provide adequate privacy and safety measures, changing and seating areas, lighting and ventilation, accessibility, and female representation.

Postcolonial Theories

Postcolonial theories examine the social, economic, and political effects of colonialism and imperialism on societies. One key area of concern for postcolonial theorists is the position of women in society and in urban spaces. Colonialism and imperialism often disrupted traditional gender roles and social structures, and this legacy can still be seen in many postcolonial societies. Women's roles and positions in society were often redefined during colonialism, and patriarchal structures were often reinforced. Postcolonial feminist theorists argue that women's experiences and voices have been marginalized in the postcolonial world, and that they face multiple forms of oppression based on their gender, race, class, and other social factors. Women's access to resources, education, and economic opportunities is often limited, and they are often excluded from decision-making processes.

According to Gayatri Spivak, women in postcolonial societies are often excluded from the dominant discourse and are positioned as subalterns. This exclusion leads to the construction of a gendered identity that reinforces patriarchal values and limits women's mobility and agency in the urban space (Spivak, 1988). Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity emphasizes the dynamic and fluid nature of culture

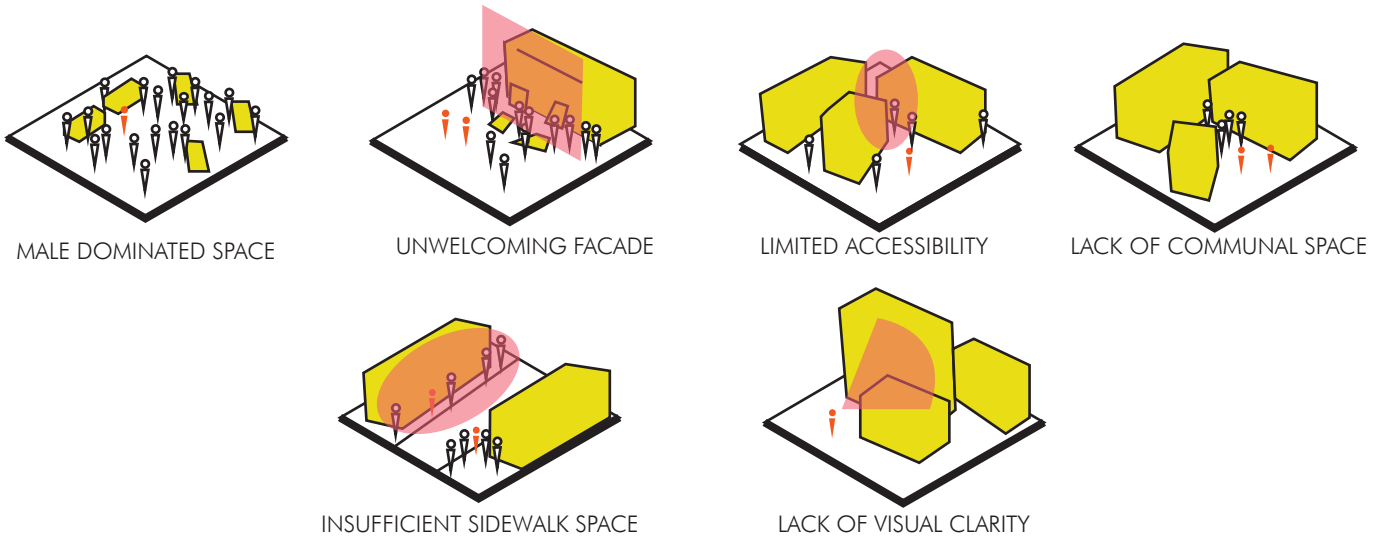


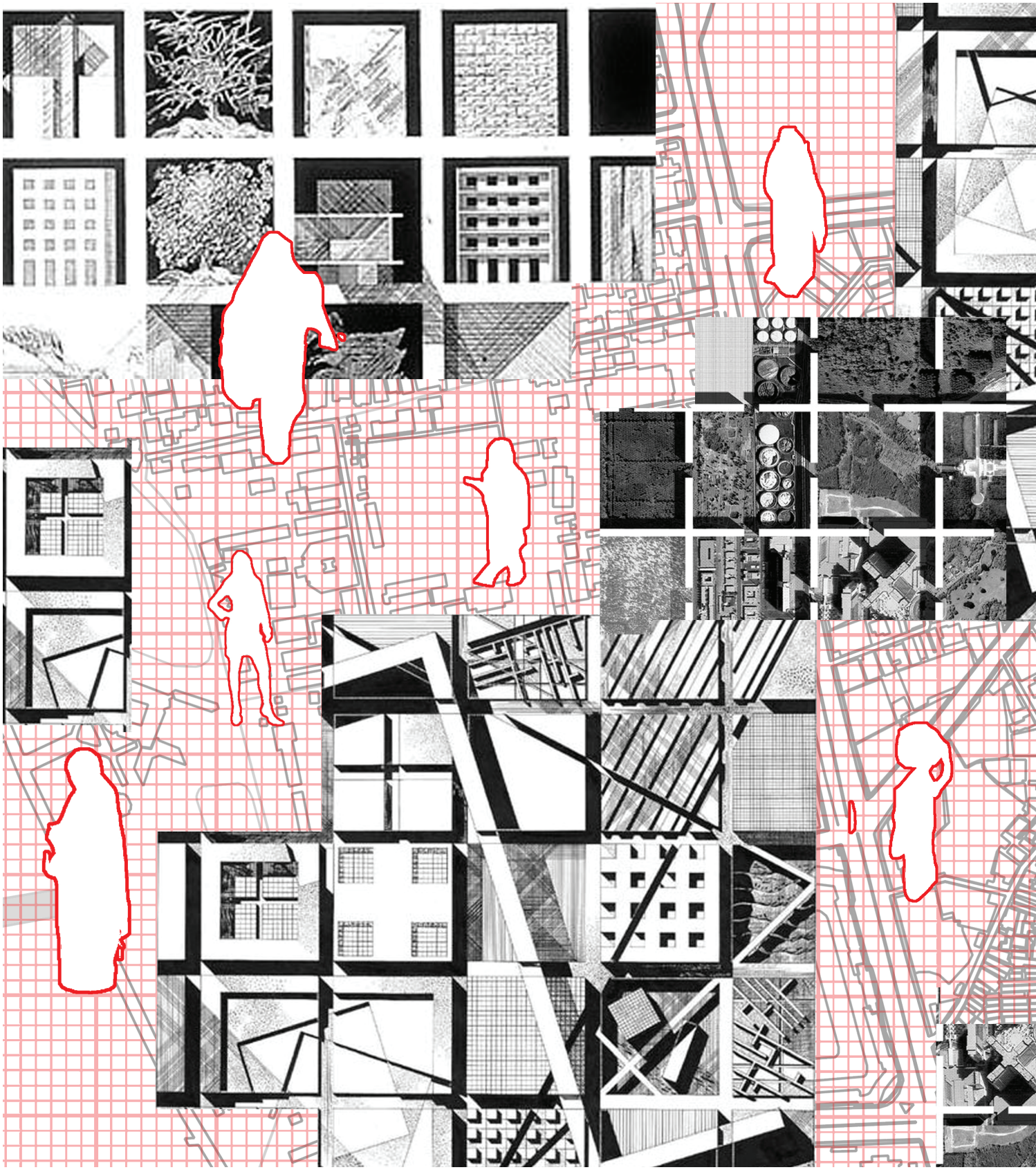
Figure: Limitations in Women's movement in Retail Sapces in Dhaka
Source: Author

in the postcolonial world. Bhabha argues that the dominant culture tries to homogenize the subaltern, but the subaltern resists and creates their own hybrid culture that challenges the dominant culture's authority. In the context of women, this hybridity can create spaces where women can resist patriarchal norms and create their own identities and forms of agency in urban spaces (Bhabha, 1994).

In urban spaces, women's experiences are shaped by multiple factors, including urban planning, architecture, and social norms. The built environment can often be designed in a way that reinforces patriarchal structures, making it more difficult for women to access public spaces and services. Ananya Roy's work on "subaltern urbanism" emphasizes the importance of understanding the urban experience of subaltern communities. Roy argues that the urban space is not neutral but is shaped by power relations, particularly in terms of class, gender, and ethnicity. In the context of women, Roy argues that women's experiences in the urban space are shaped by their social and economic position. Roy emphasizes the need to empower women economically and socially to challenge the gendered power relations that limit their agency in the urban space (Roy, 2009).

Postcolonial feminist theorists argue for a more inclusive approach to urban planning and design, one that takes into account the needs and experiences of women. Both women and men have the ability to negotiate their positions in space through an interrogation of their respective social positions. In the postcolonial and gender contexts, these spaces and positions can always be renegotiated.

In many postcolonial cities, retail spaces such as bazaars and markets are shaped by gender inequalities that have limited women's access to and ownership of commercial spaces. This has resulted in women being confined to certain types of retail activities that are considered more suitable for them, such as selling handicrafts or food items, while being excluded from other types of retail activities that are considered more lucrative and prestigious, such as selling electronics or luxury items.



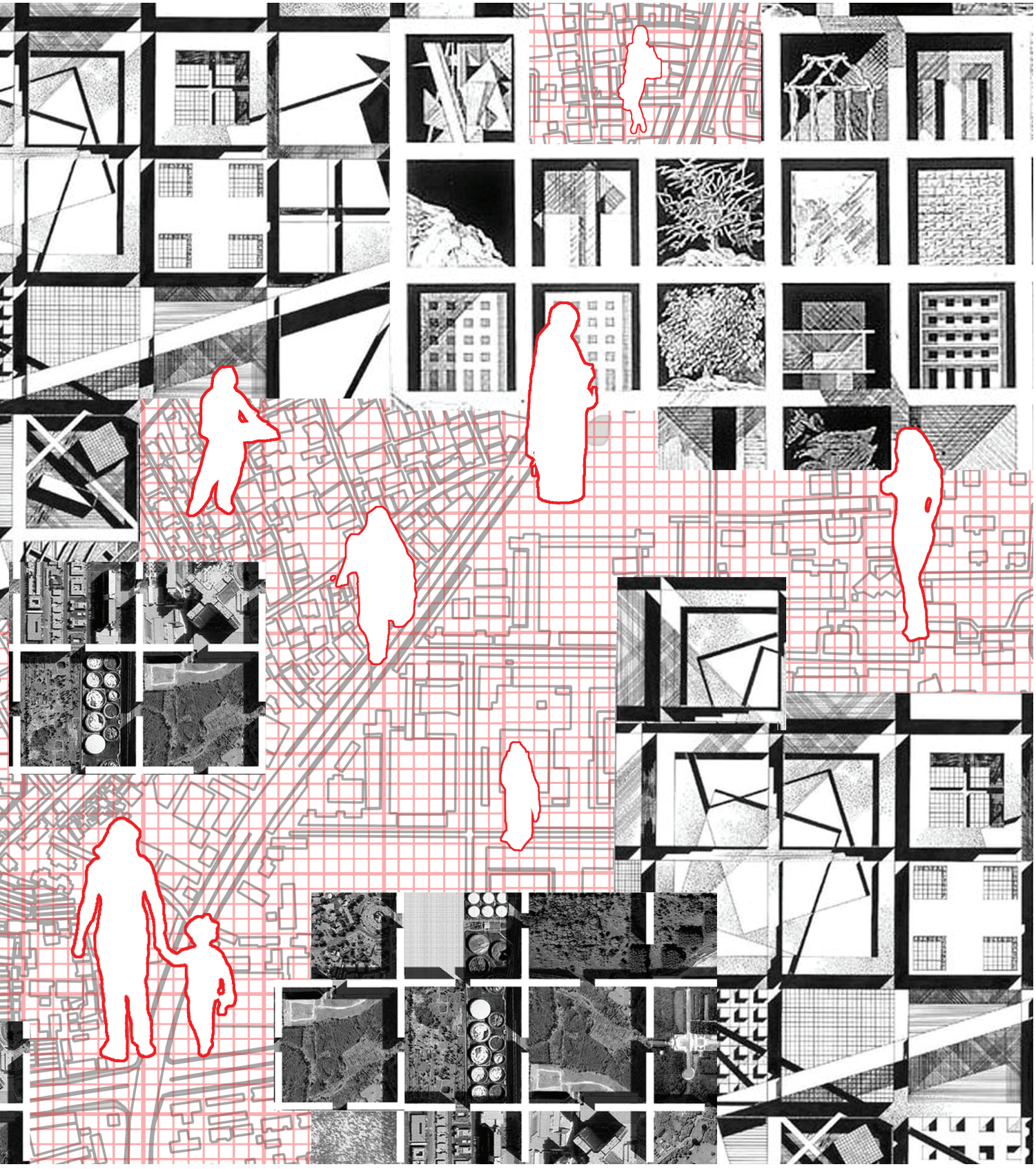


Figure: Illustration showing how Women's movement gets limited withing Urban spaces, The Urban spaces are imagined as blocks, where only certain blocks are accessible to women where other boxes remain inaccessible. The illustration is an representation of postcolonial women's presence in their context.
Source: Author

Despite their significant role as consumers and vendors, women in Bangladesh are often denied access to and control over commercial spaces due to patriarchal structures and gender-based discrimination.

In retail spaces, women are often relegated to the margins, occupying less desirable locations or smaller stalls, and receiving less visibility and recognition than their male counterparts. A study conducted by the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research in Bangladesh found that women's stalls were often placed in less visible areas, reducing their opportunities to attract customers and generate income. Moreover, women's stalls were also found to be smaller in size and less well-maintained compared to those owned by men.

In addition to these issues in retail spaces, women in Dhaka also face exclusion and marginalization in urban spaces. Women's mobility is often restricted due to cultural norms and societal expectations, which may limit their access to public spaces and transportation. This, in turn, may restrict their opportunities to engage in economic activities and limit their access to social and cultural resources.
Furthermore, women in Dhaka also face significant safety concerns in urban spaces. Sexual harassment and violence against women in public spaces are prevalent in Dhaka and remain a significant obstacle to women's participation in public life.

To address these issues, there is a need to challenge patriarchal structures and promote gender equity in both retail and urban spaces. This can be done through the creation of policies and programs that support women's economic participation, promote their safety and security in public spaces, and address cultural norms that restrict women's mobility and access to resources. It is essential to recognize and address the intersectional nature of gender-based discrimination, taking into account factors such as class, caste, religion, and ethnicity, to create more inclusive and equitable retail and urban spaces for all.

The thesis bringsattention to the issue of GENDER INCLUSIVITY in retail spaces in Dhaka and highlight the specific needs and preferences of women shoppers. This can create awareness among retailers, designers, and policymakers, leading to a more inclusive approach to retail space design
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This thesis also provides PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS for designing retail spaces that cater to the needs and preferences of women shoppers in Dhaka. These recommendations can be used by retailers and designers to create gender-inclusive retail spaces that meet the needs of all shoppers.

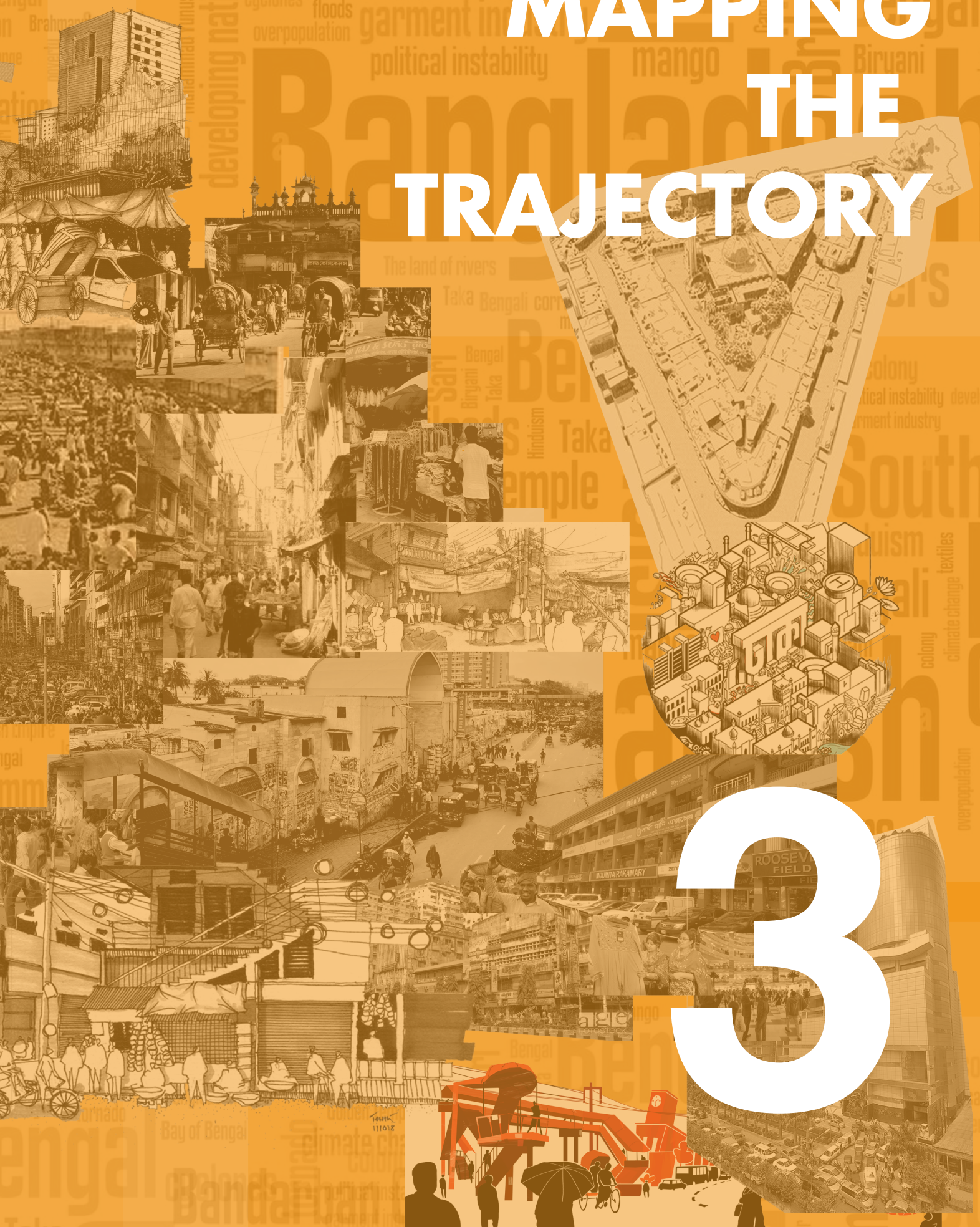
Lragely, this thesis can serve as a STARTING POINT FOR FUTURE RESEARCH ON GENDER INCLUSIVITY in retail spaces in Dhaka and beyond. This can contribute to a better understanding of the issue and lead to further improvements in the design of retail spaces.



Figure: Images showing Women's mirginalization in Urban Retail Areas
Source: Author


row house
courtyard
node
street
Square-shaped Courtyard
Rectange-shaped Courtyard
Amalgamated Courtyard
Bengal
cyclones
floods
Taka
Golden Temple
Hinduism
Islam
South Asia
Brahmaputra
Bengali
British Empire
Dhaka
Bangladesh
Ganges
garment industry
political instability
mango
poverty
The land of rivers
Biryani
textiles Sari Dhaka
Bay of Bengal
tornado
colony
developing nation
Bangladesh
Muhammad Yunus
climate change
corruption
Chittagong
Golden Temple

MAPPING THE TRAJECTORY



3

To begin the analysis of the commercial spaces in contemporary Dhaka, its important that we look back to how these spaces has been evolved throughout the history of this city. This megacity dhaka has a history of 400 years old, during which this city has gone through tremendous changes due to developments in trades in business. Actually, the city came into being with the introduction of trade to this area. The gradual flourishment occurred with the spread of business activities and eventually that small twonship in bank of buriganga become one of the desert megacity of the world. To have a better understanding of this commercial phenomenon, the history can be divided into five major socio-economic and political period that Dhaka went through(1).

Pre-Mughal Period

A small settlement and trading center came into existence in the bank of River Buriganga. As to the reference of little known history, from the Buddhist reign to the Sena Dynasty and from their to the arrival of Islam in Indian Subcontinet, Dhaka remained as the small trading hub. Small business communities of specialized craftsmen were the oldest inhabitants of this area. Markets were growing along the streets during this period. During the Sultantae period, with construction of various built structures, industrial activities were also going strong and more attention were brought to this part of kingdom. The commercial characteristic can be better explained with the traditional name that Dhaka got, 'Baunno Bazar O Teppun Gulli' which means a city of fifty two markets and 53 streets.(Bradley-Birt, Francis Bradley. The Romance of an Eastern capital. Smith, Elder, & Company, 1906.)mobility and agency in the public sphere, reinforcing gendered hierarchies in the retail sector. Women's participation in the retail sector is often seen as secondary to men's, and they are often relegated to low-paying and low-status jobs.

Mughal period(1608-1764)

When Dhaka came under the reign of Mughals, its commerical sense became more solidified. Both its social and political charatecer went high up during Mughal period and with that the trading activites were also on rise in this particular area. The handicraft industry became significant not only in home, but also in abroad. The present Chawk Bazar area, back then known as Badshahi bazar was one of the main bazars which served different social classes and became one of the public activity point. Till today, this bazar has retained it trading characteristic as the pioneering bazar formation in Dhaka.

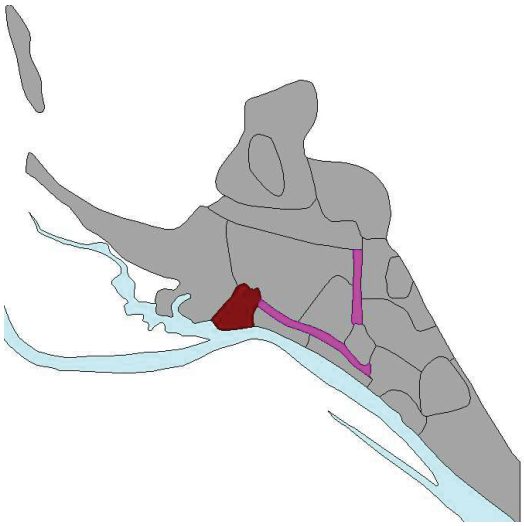


Figure: Commercial land use of Dhaka in 1910
Source: 10Islam, 1996

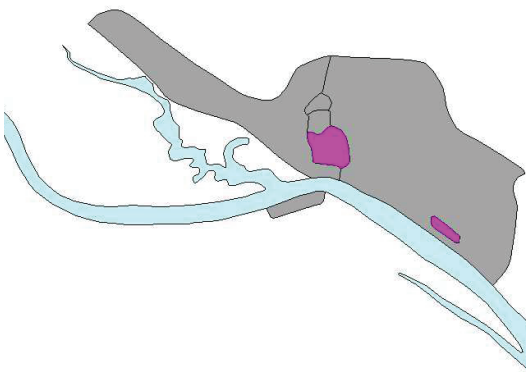


Figure: Commercial land use of Dhaka in 1700
Source: Islam, 1996

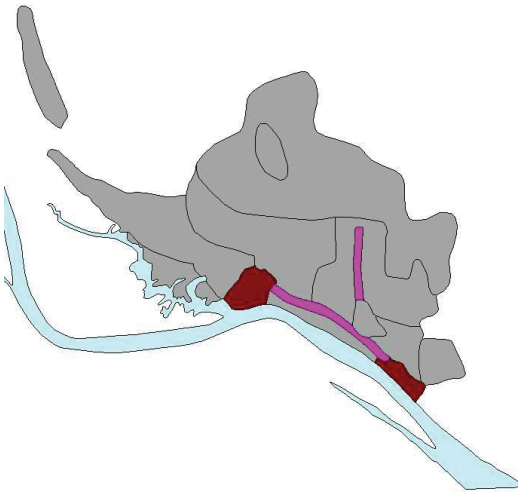


Figure: Commercial land use of Dhaka in 1945
Source: 10Islam, 1996

East India Company and British rule

Fall of the Mughal empire and the aftermath of the battle of Palashi War in 1757, left Dhaka in a disoriented state. The political unrest and social instability heavily affected its commercial sector. The small cottage industries were ruined due to policies adopted by the British. At first it went under the administration of the British East India Company till 1857, and from 1858 to 1947 it remained under the British Raj Rule. The commercial development mainly took place to the north, where most affluent inhabitants lived. The retail Chawk Bazar was converted into a wholesale center by 1930. Till now it is the oldest wholesale center of the city.

Pakistan Period

After the partition of India, Dhaka became the capital of East Pakistan. Though the political unrest was prevailing, the commerce and industrial sector were developed in a planned way. Some major architectural developments took place during this period. One of that was the establishment of New Market in 1954. Motijheel area became the central business district. It was a significant take on transforming the traditional bazar structure into the modern definition of shopping center adopted by the western countries. The construction of New Market inspired the growth of other retail activities in adjacent areas. Many other shopping centers came to existent. One interesting feature about these shopping centers or bazaars were, they design were heavily influenced by the courtyard style of traditional architecture of the region, the intention of making these places as gathering places or social hubs was there. Many of these shopping centers late expanded in size, but that left those places being congested and dependent on artificial venting. Another 'ribbon development' of market places also took place in the 1960's along the elephant road in Dhaka.

Even with all these new markets coming to existence, the Chawk bazar kept its importance as the wholesale market of the city. The adjacent market places of Chawk Bazar also sustain their traditional business activities.

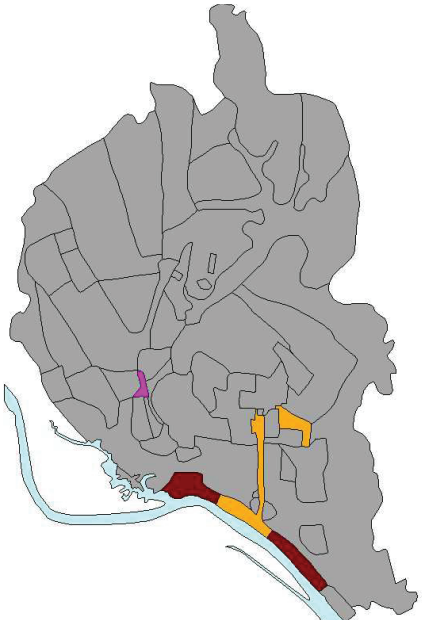


Figure: Commercial land use of Dhaka in 1962
Source: Islam, 1996

Present Bangladesh

After the liberation war, Dhaka became the capital of new born Bangladesh. The urbanization and uncontrolled growth of population, led to the rise of unplanned development of market places. Rural to urban migration introduced a huge number of informal workers in the city. Roadside retail shops became a common thing. One of the concerns in these ribbon development was the scarcity of parking space.

In the 80's, a new modern shopping complex in the standard of western culture, came into reality in Dhaka, the credit to the private developers. Soon enough, mixed use developments took place to meet the demand of the users. Many residential areas

were converted to commercial uses. Now this unplanned development of both residential and commercial spaces had an impact on the social and economic life of the city. In 2004 another mega shopping mall was introduced in Dhaka- The Bashundhara City shopping mall. Another such large-scale shopping complex was constructed in 2010. These shopping complexes were the output of the globalization effect, building markets with respect to structures developed by western countries. Though they gave the city that international flavor, placing of such complexes without proper land use mapping and zoning consideration, has created a severe impact on the transport system. This standardization has been adopted in developing other market places too.

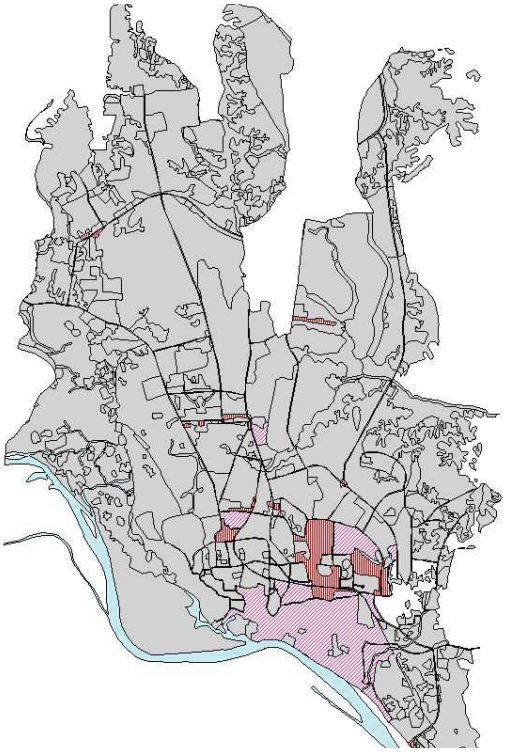


Figure: Commercial land use of Dhaka in 1984
Source: 10Islam, 1996

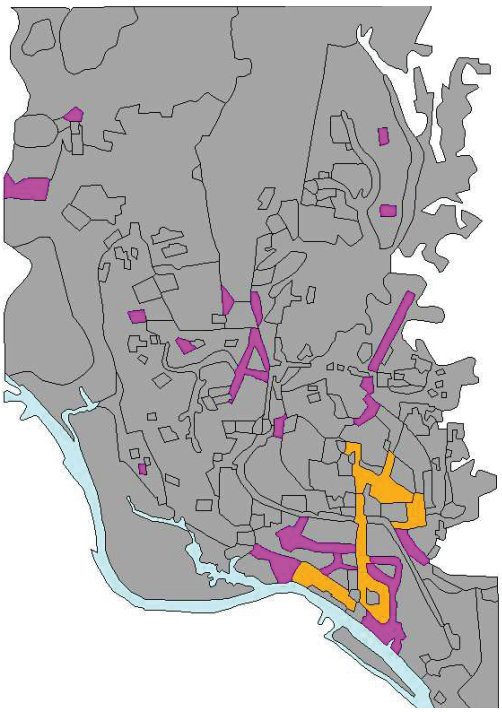


Figure: Commercial land use of Dhaka in 1974
Source: 10Islam, 1996

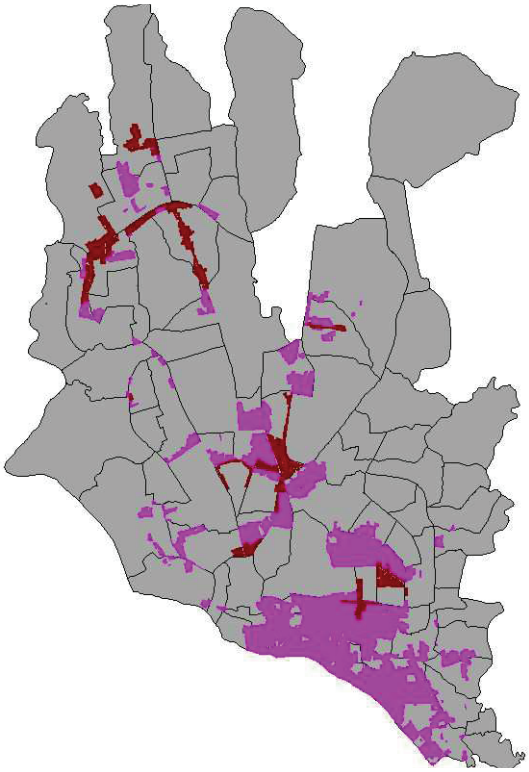


Figure: Commercial land use of Dhaka in 2004
Source: 10Islam, 1996

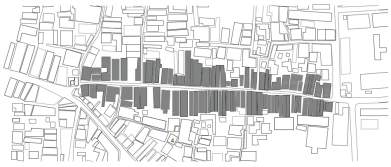
Transformation of Retail Space

Retail building forms in Dhaka, Bangladesh have undergone a significant transformation over the years, from the traditional courtyard type assembly of shops to the emerging shopping mall culture. This transformation has been driven by various factors, including globalization, economic growth, and changing consumer preferences.

In the past, the retail building form in Dhaka was centered around bazaars, which were open-air markets that featured a collection of small shops and stalls. These bazaars were typically located in the heart of the city and served as a vital economic hub, attracting both locals and tourists alike. The bazaar architecture was typically designed to accommodate the needs of the local population, with an emphasis on communal spaces and pedestrian-friendly areas. However, over time, the retail building form in Dhaka has evolved, with the emergence of shopping malls and other modern retail spaces. These modern retail spaces are more influenced by western architecture, with an emphasis on glass facades, sleek lines, and modern materials. These contemporary retail developments often lack communal spaces and pedestrian-friendly areas, creating a more congested experience for shoppers.

Moreover, this transformation has created negative spaces for women in particular. While traditional bazaars were open and inclusive spaces for women, modern retail spaces tend to be more exclusive and male-dominated. Women are often uncomfortable in these spaces due to the lack of proper facilities such as washrooms, breastfeeding stations, and safe changing areas.

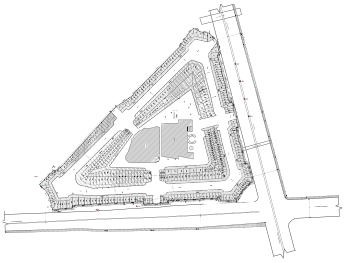
This transformation has had a significant impact on the urban fabric of Dhaka, as well as the social and economic dynamics of the city. The shift from traditional bazaars to modern retail spaces has created a new class of consumers who have different needs and preferences. However, this transformation has also raised concerns about the impact of globalization on local culture and the exclusion of marginalized groups, such as women.



PLAN OF SHANKHARI BAZAR



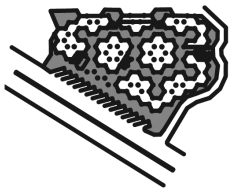
PLAN OF CHAWK BAZAR



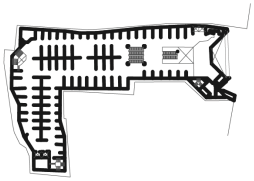
DHAKA NEW MARKET



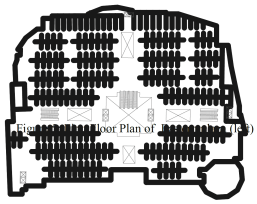
NUR MANSION AND GAWSIA MARKET



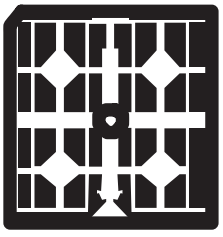
CENTURY ARCADE



EASTERN PLAZA



BASHUNDHARA CITY



JAMUNA FUTURE PARK

Figure: Morphological Transformation Retail Spaces in Dhaka

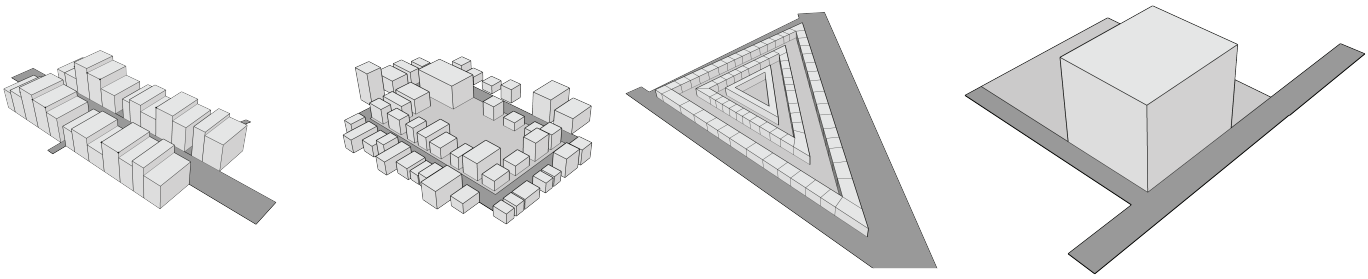


Figure: Form Evolution of Retail Building in Dhaka
Source: Author

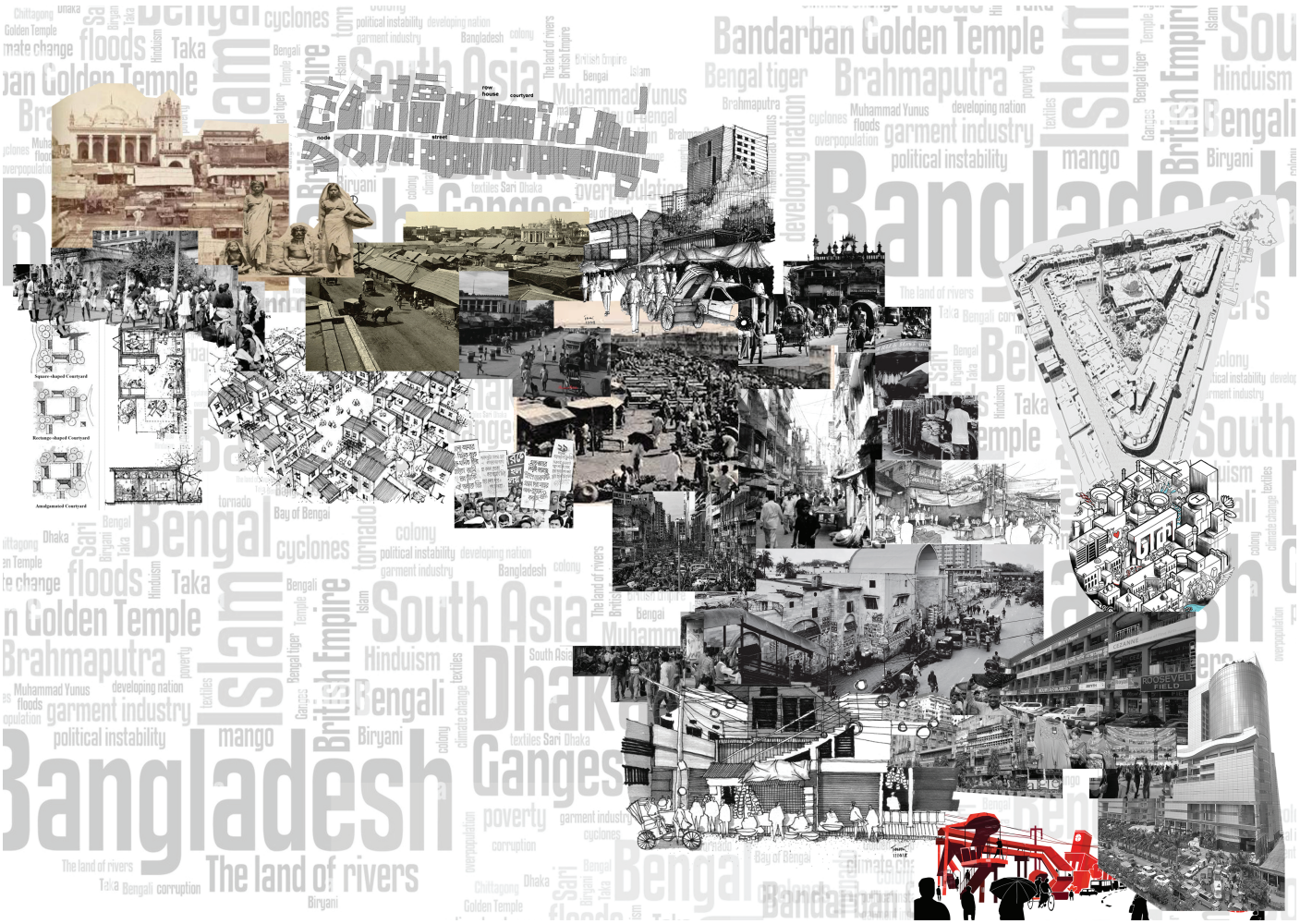
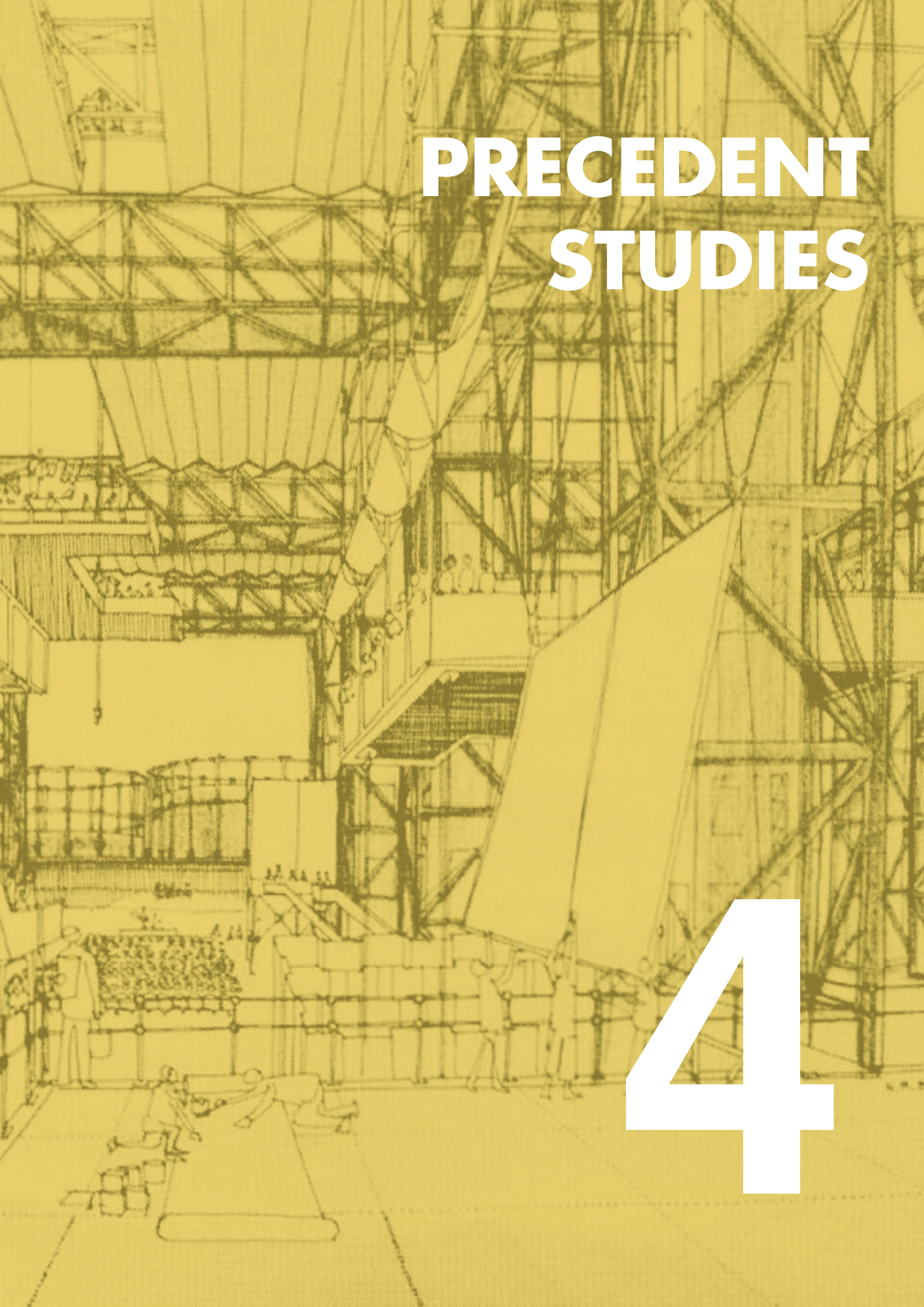


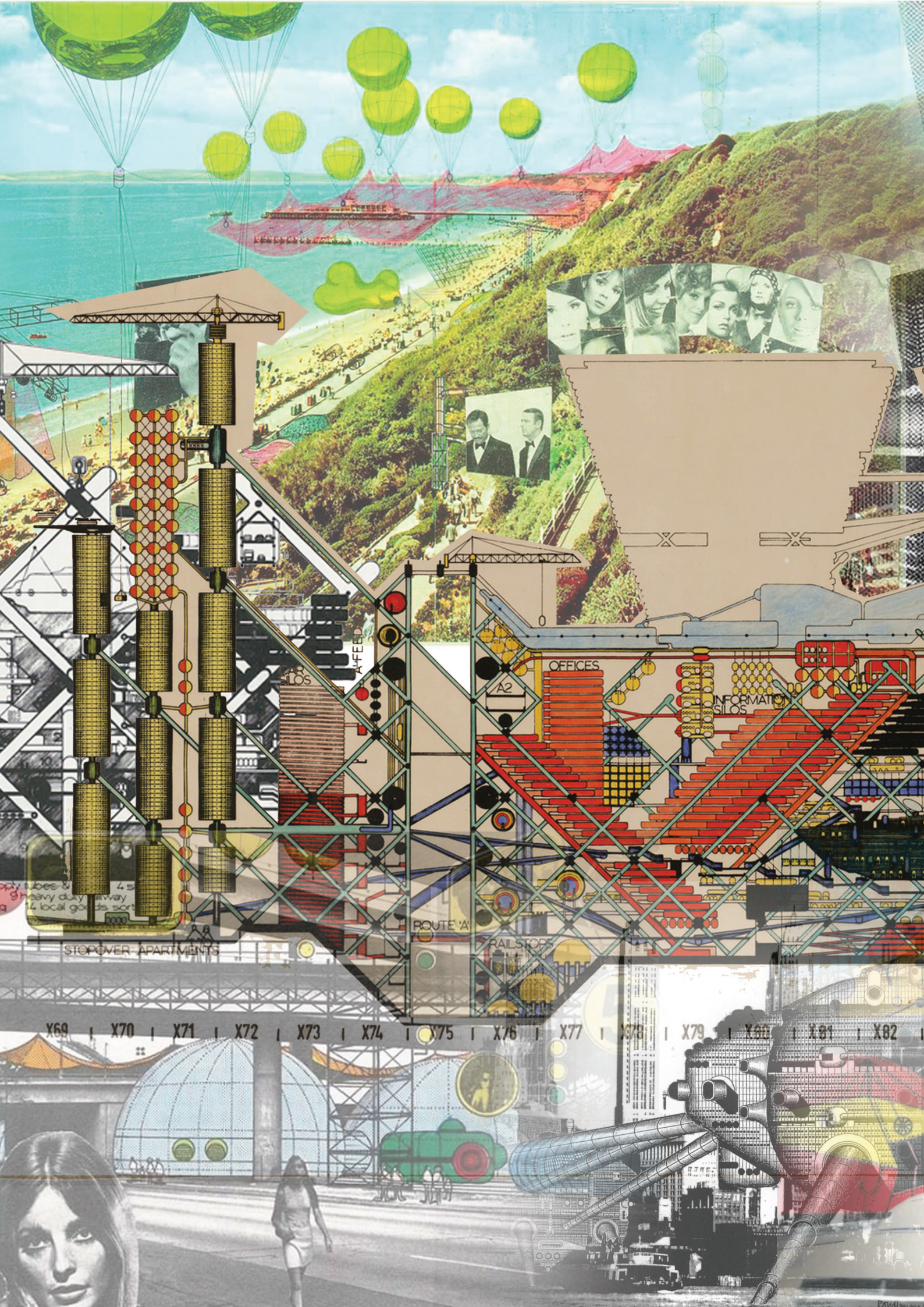
Figure: Collage Showing Retail Space Evolution in Dhaka
Source: Author





PRECEDENT STUDIES

4


A-FEED
CAR SILOS
A2
OFFICES
INFORMATION SILOS
ROUTE 'A'
RAILSTORE
STOPOVER APARTMENTS
X69
X70
X71
X72
X73
X74
X75
X76
X77
X78
X79
X80
X81
X82

Finding relevant precedent studies for this thesis was challenging, particularly for a topic that is not commonly researched or discussed. The challenge mainly lie in the fact that women's spaces are not always explicitly designed as such. Instead, they may be incorporated into larger retail environments and not given the same level of attention or consideration as other areas of the space.

Additionally, there is a lack of research or documentation on the design of women's spaces in urban retail environments, particularly in the context of postcolonial theories and marginalized communities. This made it difficult to find relevant precedent studies that address these specific issues.

Another factor that contributed to the difficulty of finding relevant precedent studies is the specific geographic and cultural context of the thesis. Depending on the location of the research, the unique cultural and societal factors that impact the design of women's spaces in retail environments, are not be fully addressed in existing precedent studies from other regions.

Despite these challenges, it the search for relevant precedent studies, provided valuable insights and inspiration for the design of gender inclusive spaces in urban retail environments.

Fun Palace

Cedric Price and Joan Littlewood

A result of the situationist movement, the Fun Palace was a radical project of collaboration between celebrated theater director Joan Littlwood and one of the visionary architects of the 20th century, Cedric price. The time this project was conceptualized, the architecture of building and urban design was heavily constrained by functionalism. Characterized by the patrons as 'laboratory of fun' and 'a university of streets', this space was meant to accommodate cultural facilities like music, dance, drama etc which people can enjoy or even participate in.

The structure of the building was steel frames with which is serviced by traveling gantry cranes. The prefabricated walls, floors, stair and ceiling, all were movable modules. The space was designed to be flexible in its use so it can be responsive to its users needs. The spaces within can be assembled and rearranged according to the user demand. This was aligned with Price's belief of architecture providing individual freedom. The flexible nature of construction was to rationalize the viability of a structure which remains only for 10-20 years. Technological advancement in a society demands space for new structures or accommodation for new functions within the new socio-economic context. He also experimented with cybernetic and artificial intelligence to have those spaces self regulated. It also allowed the used to control the environment of their own respectives spaces within the structure.

One aspect of the Fun Palace that could be relevant to this thesis is its focus on creating flexible and adaptable spaces that can accommodate a variety of activities and users. This approach recognizes the diverse needs and interests of different groups in society, including women, and seeks to create spaces that can be customized and personalized to meet those needs.

Furthermore, the Fun Palace was designed to be an open and inclusive space, accessible to all members of the public regardless of their gender, race, or socio-economic background. This is particularly relevant to the issue of marginalization of women in retail and urban spaces, as it emphasizes the importance of creating spaces that are welcoming and inclusive to all members of society.

In this sense, the Fun Palace can serve as a precedent for designers and planners seeking to create more equitable and inclusive retail and urban spaces for women. By adopting the principles of flexibility, adaptability, and inclusivity, designers can create spaces that empower women and other marginalized groups and provide them with the tools and resources they need to thrive in today's rapidly changing urban landscape.

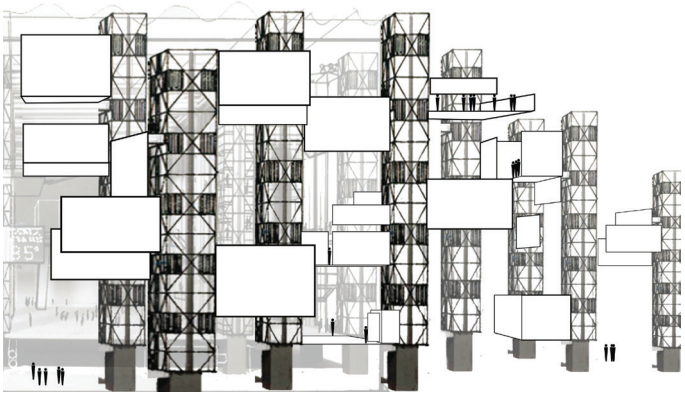
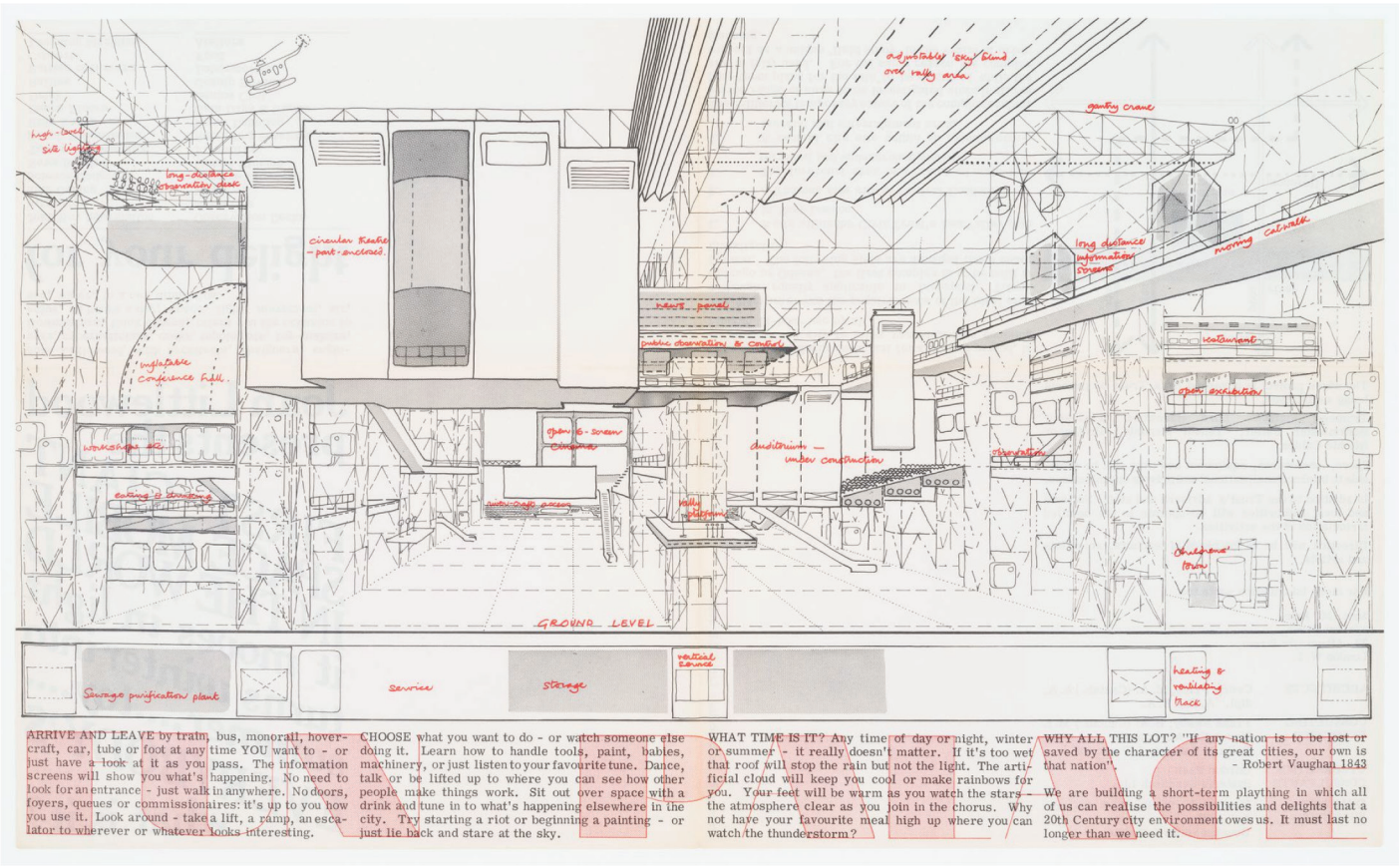


Figure: Digital Sketchup Model of Fun Palace
Source: https://www.behance.net/gallery/3105379/Cedric-Prices-Fun-Palace-Ad-dition-(2009)/modules/23701729



ARRIVE AND LEAVE by train, bus, monorail, hovercraft, car, tube or foot at any time YOU want to - or just have a look at it as you pass. The information screens will show you what's happening. No need to look for an entrance - just walk in anywhere. No doors, foyers, queues or commissionaires: it's up to you how you use it. Look around - take a lift, a ramp, an escalator to wherever or whatever looks interesting.

CHOOSE what you want to do - or watch someone else doing it. Learn how to handle tools, paint, babies, machinery, or just listen to your favourite tune. Dance, talk or be lifted up to where you can see how other people make things work. Sit out over space with a drink and tune in to what's happening elsewhere in the city. Try starting a riot or beginning a painting - or just lie back and stare at the sky.

WHAT TIME IS IT? Any time of day or night, winter or summer - it really doesn't matter. If it's too wet that roof will stop the rain but not the light. The artificial cloud will keep you cool or make rainbows for you. Your feet will be warm as you watch the stars - the atmosphere clear as you join in the chorus. Why not have your favourite meal high up where you can watch the thunderstorm?

WHY ALL THIS LOT? "If any nation is to be lost or saved by the character of its great cities, our own is that nation". - Robert Vaughan 1843

We are building a short-term plaything in which all of us can realise the possibilities and delights that a 20th Century city environment owes us. It must last no longer than we need it.

Figure: Cedric Price and Joan Littlewood. Fun Palace promotional brochure, 1964
Source: https://www.behance.net/gallery/3105379/Cedric-Prices-Fun-Palace-Ad-dition-(2009)
/modules/224572117

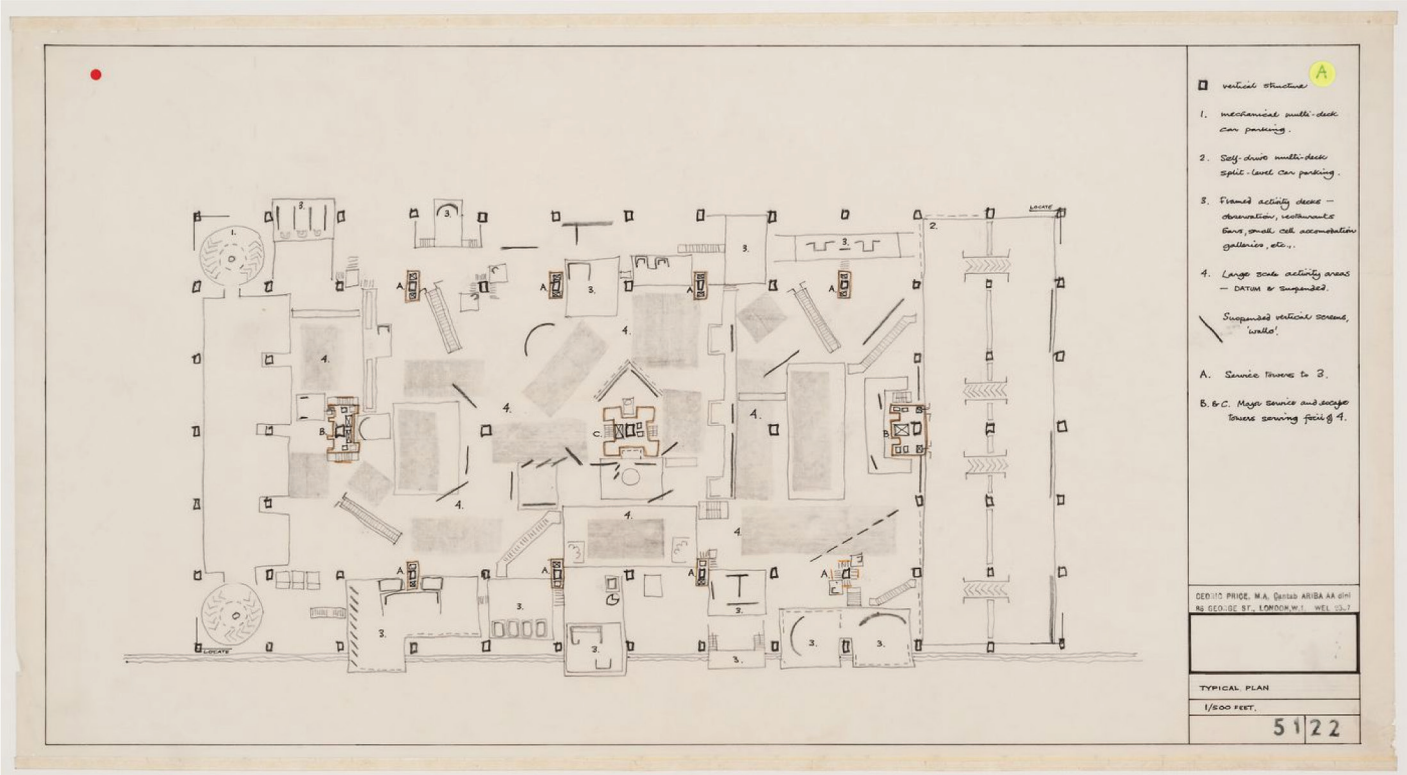


Figure: Fun Palace: diagrammatic plan
Source: https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/search/details/collection/object/309747

New Babylon

Constant Nieuwenhuys

A result of the situationist movement, the Fun Palace was a radical project of collaboration between celebrated theater director Joan Littlwood and one of the visionary architects of the 20th century, Cedric price. The time this project was conceptualized, the architecture of building and urban design was heavily constrained by functionalism. Characterized by the patrons as 'laboratory of fun' and 'a university of streets', this space was meant to accommodate cultural facilities like music, dance, drama etc which people can enjoy or even participate in.

Constant's New Babylon is a highly relevant precedent for this thesis, as it offers insights into how architecture can create spaces that empower individuals to shape and control their environment. New Babylon was a visionary project that proposed a new kind of urban space that would be liberated from the constraints of traditional architecture and allow people to create their own environments. The project was a response to the growing dissatisfaction with the alienating and restrictive nature of modern cities, and aimed to create a new kind of urbanism that would empower individuals and encourage creativity and exploration.

New Babylon was designed around the concept of the "unit," a modular structure that could be combined in endless configurations to create different spaces and environments. The units were designed to be highly adaptable, with movable walls and floors that could be reconfigured to create different spaces and encourage exploration and experimentation.

The idea behind New Babylon was to create an urban space that was constantly in flux, and that could be shaped and transformed by its inhabitants. This concept of "user-generated architecture" is highly relevant to the design of women's spaces in urban environments, as it emphasizes the importance of creating environments that are flexible, adaptable, and responsive to the needs and desires of their users.

In addition to its innovative design, New Babylon was also highly political, and reflected Constant's belief in the power of architecture to create social change. The project was an expression of Constant's utopian vision for a new kind of society, one in which individuals were empowered to shape and control their environment, and in which creativity and exploration were valued above all else.



Figure: New Babylon by Constant Nieuwehuys
Source: https://www.museoreinasofia.es/en/collection/artwork/new-babylon-1

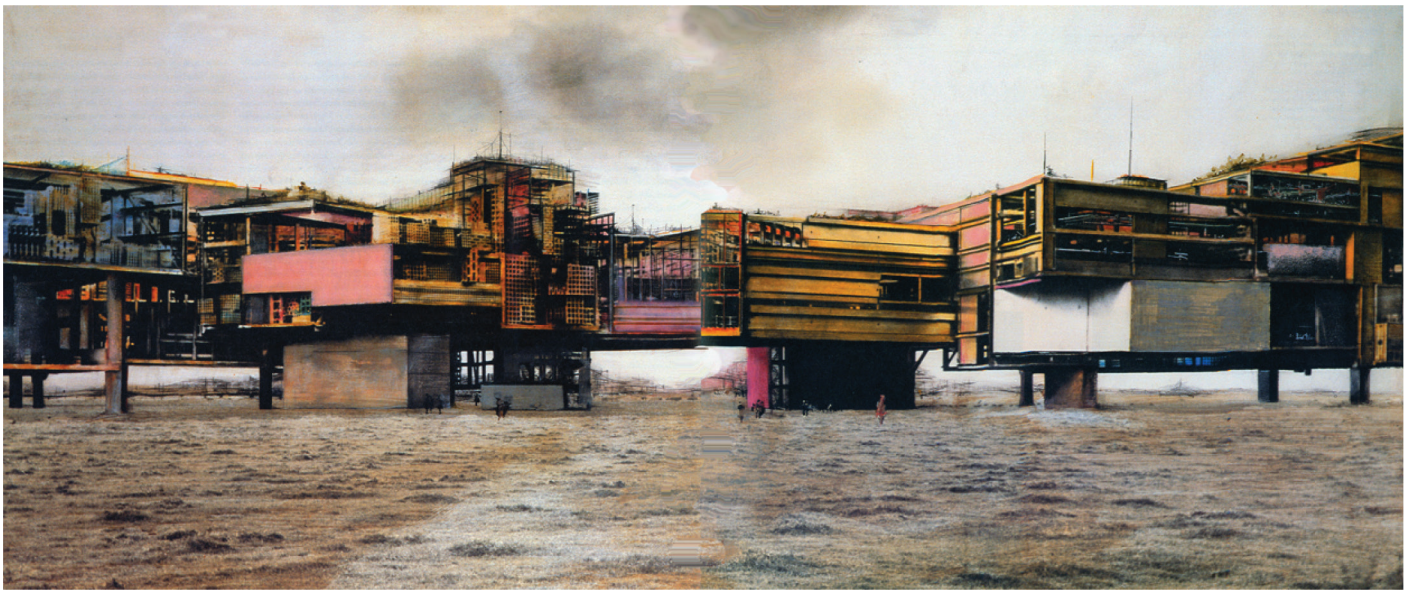


Figure: New Babylon by Constant Nieuwehuys
Source: https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/New-Babylon/C20B674D46C95E29

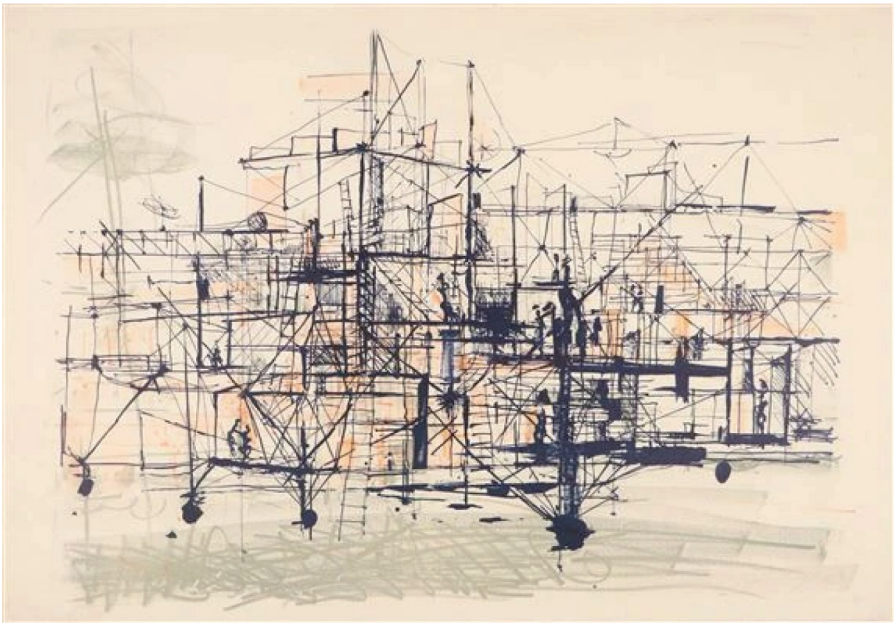


Figure: New Babylon by Constant Nieuwehuys
Source: https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/New-Babylon/C20B674D46C95E29

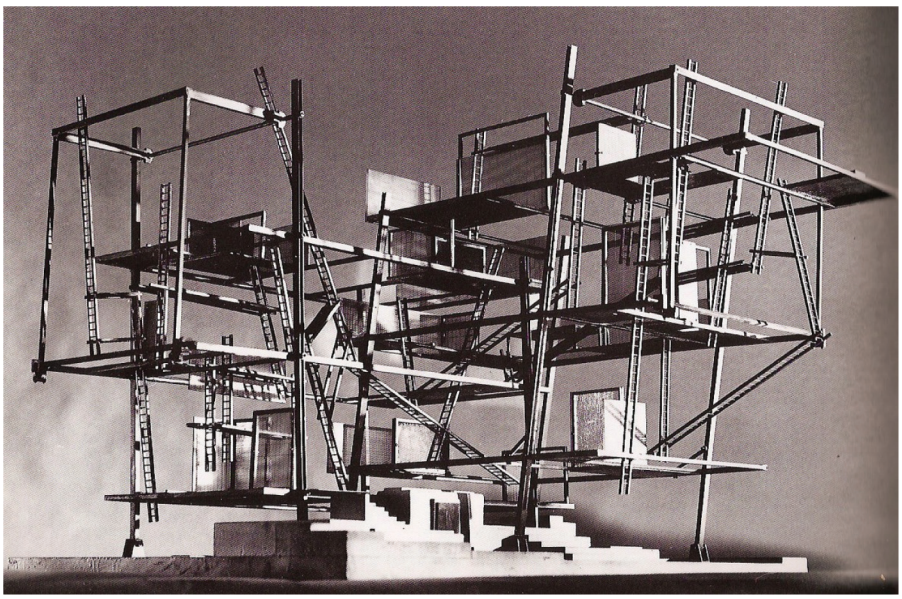


Figure: New Babylon by Constant Nieuwehuys
Source: https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/New-Babylon/C20B674D46C95E29

Post Houston Redevelopment Project

OMA

Built on a closed facility of USPS, post houston is a new proposition of public venue with a series of programs to meet the needs of the city. The design proposal of OMA was a wholesale preservation which will not emphasize on its industrial characteristics, rather integrating it to the urban fabric of downtown Houston. It would be an agglomeration of commercial activity, cultural venue and social meeting point for the people of the city, introducing a new public realm for the city of Houston.

The design focuses on a series of connections to the city from downtown by creating horizontal thoroughfares into and through the site. The warehouse volume is divided into three zones- retail and cultural, food market and collaborative workspace. The building houses commercial, office spaces and rooftop park on its three levels. The divided volumes have atriums within them each containing monumental staircases. The staircases are designed not just to access the rooftop but also to encourage interaction between people. A fourth void is also introduced on the eastern wing to accommodate a music hall.

One of the key features of the development is its emphasis on public space and accessibility. The project includes a central plaza that is designed to be a gathering space for the community, with a variety of retail and dining options surrounding the plaza. This emphasis on public space is particularly relevant for the thesis on retail spaces in postcolonial cities like Dhaka, where public space can be limited and marginalized, especially for women.

The Post Houston development also includes a significant amount of green space and outdoor areas, which can be important for creating safe and inviting spaces for women in urban environments. In addition, the development includes a variety of affordable housing options, which can be crucial for addressing issues of economic inequality and providing access to safe and affordable housing for women.



Figure: Post Houston Development by OMA
Source: OMA Website



Figure: Post Houston Development by OMA
Source: OMA Website



Figure: Post Houston Development by OMA
Source: OMA Website

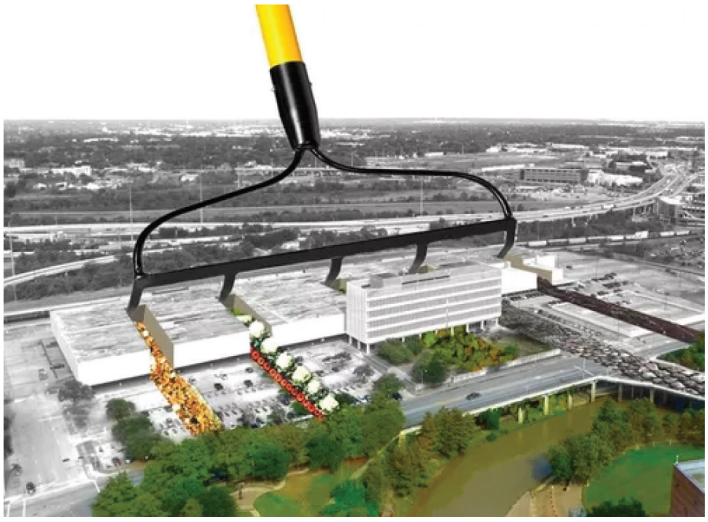


Figure: Urban pathways in connection with the structure
Source: OMA Website



Figure: Post Houston Development by OMA
Source: OMA Website

Distrito Sur Master Plan

Sasaki Architects

The Distrito Sur Master Plan, designed by Sasaki architects, is a comprehensive plan for the sustainable development of 130 hectares of land in the fast-growing area of the South of Culiacán city, Mexico. The plan provides a vision, program, and framework for the creation of a new centrality in the city and is driven by the sustainable development of the property as part of a 25-year planning horizon. The plan identifies a new strategy for the district's land use, circulation, and the creation of development and open space parcels intended to support the highest and best use for the land as part of a bold new vision for urban living.

The plan includes a network of community hearts, which are structured around a series of community amenities and spaces for social gathering, while also creating a sense of community cohesion. The district is defined by a network of open spaces that form the connective tissue for the built form and integrate with the existing neighborhood context. The network includes several public plazas, a linear open space along the district's western edge, and key pedestrian connections internal to the block structure. A diverse mix of uses will be strategically located across the district to create a vibrant environment for the community and its visitors, and the district will also benefit from active ground floor uses along the main corridors and pedestrian plazas.

The plan's design also accounts for the region's extreme weather conditions by promoting well-shaded landscape design, solar optimal building orientation, and a range of district-wide storm-water strategies. The Distrito Sur Master Plan's emphasis on creating a sustainable, inclusive, and vibrant urban district, integrating open spaces and community amenities, and being responsive to the region's weather conditions makes it a relevant precedent for the thesis on designing women's spaces in the urban context.



Figure: The Master Plan identifies a new urban district for the southwest sector of Culiacán
Source: Sasaki Architects Website



Figure: View looking down at the District Center Plaza with the proposed church, market and community center
Source: Sasaki Architects Website



Figure: Aerial view of the future Salud Digna Campus Headquarters
Source: Sasaki Architects Website



Figure: View of the District Center Plaza looking north
Source: Sasaki Architects Website

Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture

Rem Koolhaas, Elia Zenghelis,
Madelon Vriesendorp, Zoe Zenghelis

Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture, is a speculative project by Rem Koolhaas, Elia Zenghelis, Madelon Vriesendorp, and Zoe Zenghelis that was developed during their time at the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) in the 1970s. The project imagines a world where cities have become too crowded and polluted, and people have to flee to the countryside to escape. However, rather than building traditional houses, they construct massive, self-contained structures called "cities in the air."

The Strip (Aerial Perspective) is one of the drawings produced for the project, depicting a linear city stretching along a vast landscape. The city is composed of towering skyscrapers, interconnected by a network of bridges, highways, and pedestrian walkways. The drawing is notable for its highly detailed and complex depiction of the city, which appears to be both a utopian vision of the future and a dystopian critique of contemporary urbanism.

Exodus has been influential in the field of architecture, particularly in the way it challenged traditional notions of urban planning and the role of architects in shaping the built environment. The project proposed a radical alternative to the conventional approach to urban design, where individual buildings and their functions are organized into a coherent whole. Instead, Exodus envisioned a highly interconnected, highly dense city that blurred the boundaries between different types of space and functions.

In terms of relevance to the thesis, Exodus could be studied as a theoretical precedent for thinking about the role of architecture in creating alternative urban environments that are more inclusive and responsive to the needs of marginalized communities. The project's emphasis on density, connectivity, and flexibility could provide insights into how architects can design spaces that are more accessible, adaptable, and sustainable for diverse populations.

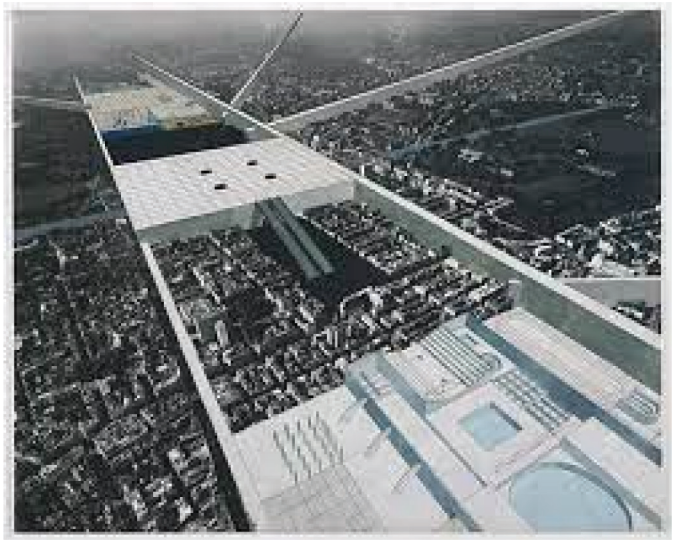
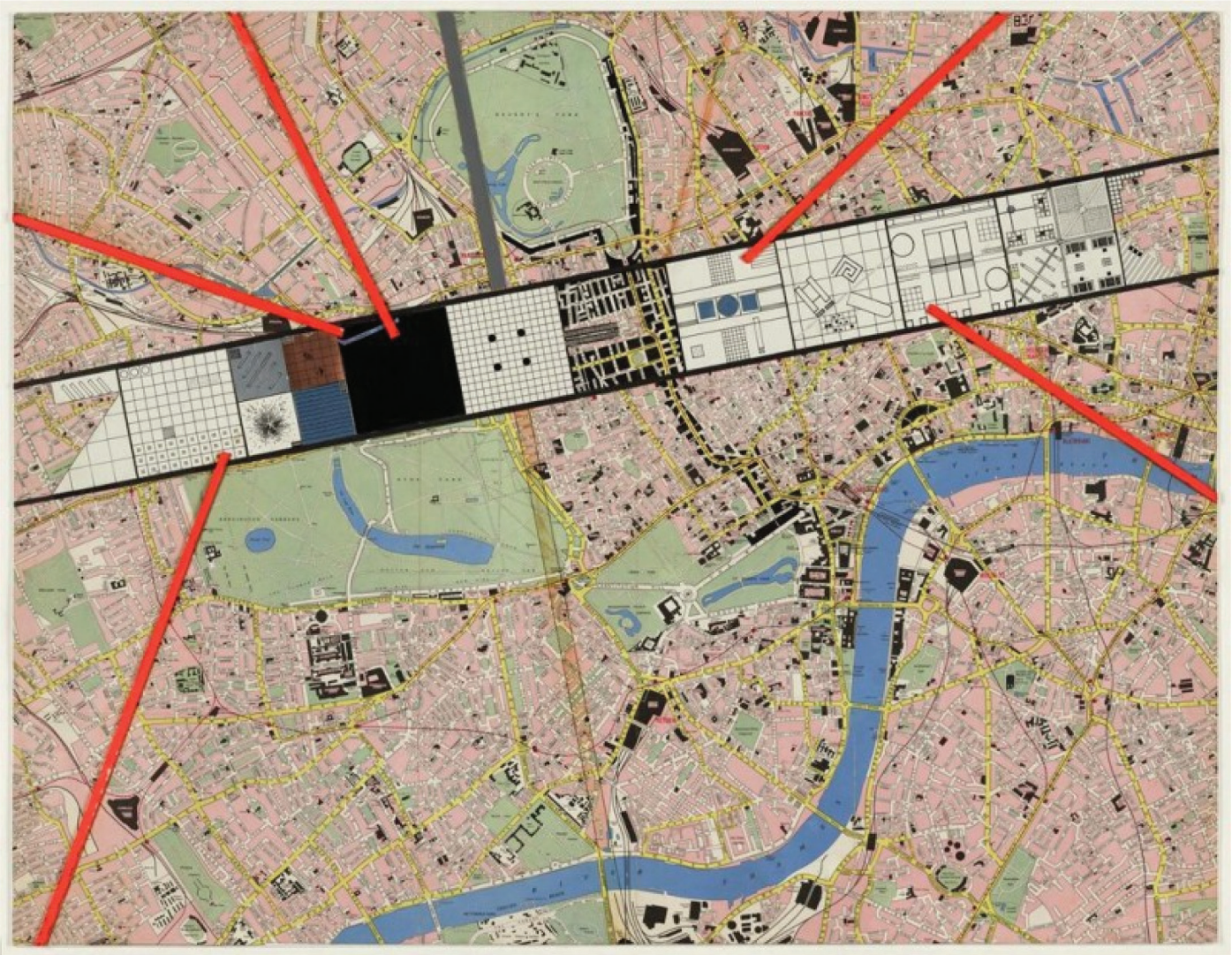


Figure: Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture: 1972
Source: The Museum of Modern Art, Architecture and Design Collection
© 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / BEELDRECHT, Hoofddorp, NL



Figure: Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture: 1972
Source: The Museum of Modern Art, Architecture and Design Collection
© 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / BEELDRECHT, Hoofddorp, NL



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Source: The Museum of Modern Art, Architecture and Design Collection
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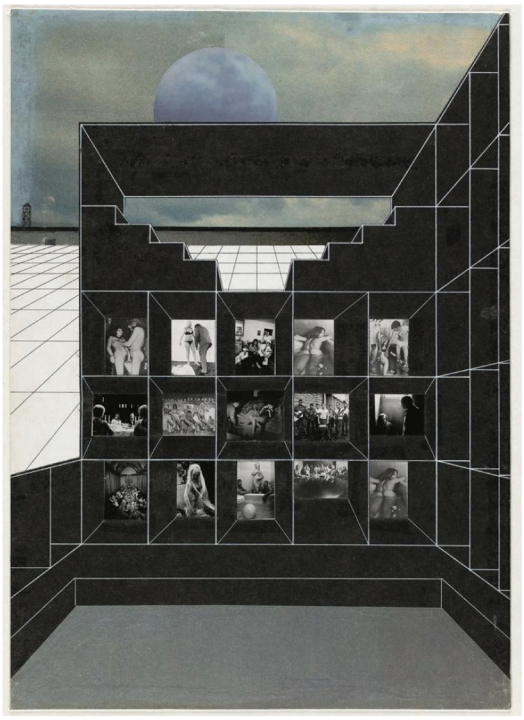

Figure: Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture: 1972
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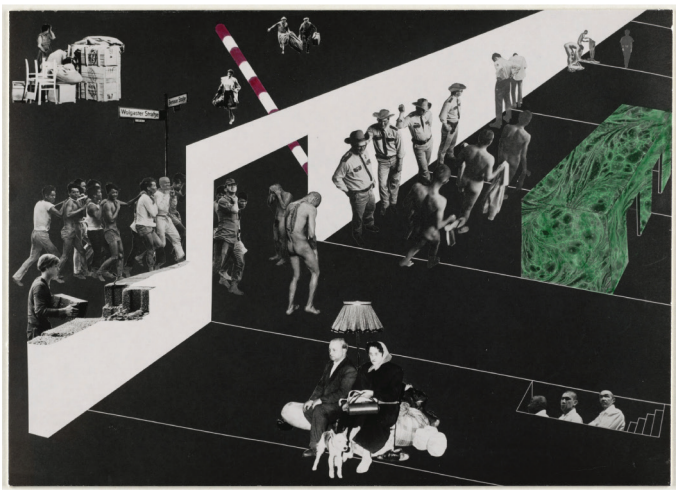

Figure: Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture: 1972
Source: The Museum of Modern Art, Architecture and Design Collection
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SITE ANALYSIS

5

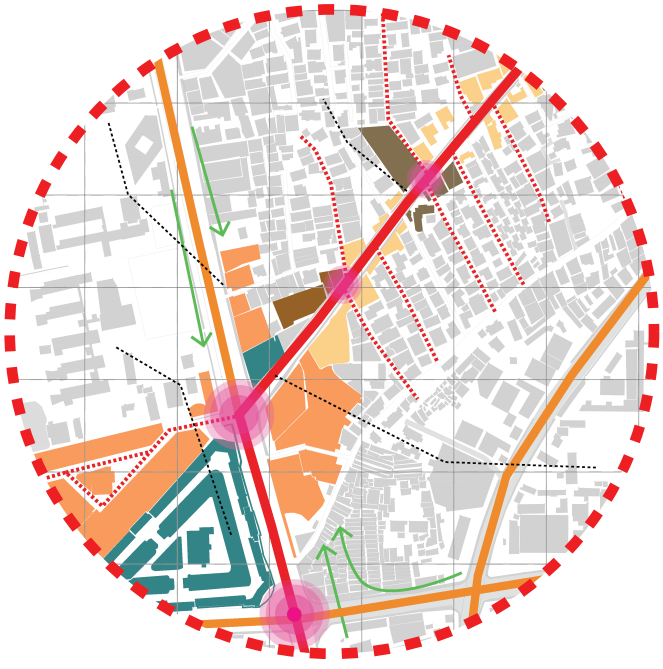
The Dhaka Gawsia Market is a relevant site for the thesis on redefining urban retail spaces for women in Dhaka due to several reasons. Firstly, the market has a high concentration of women shoppers, making it an ideal location to study the specific needs and preferences of women shoppers. Secondly, the market offers a diverse range of products, from traditional clothing to modern accessories, providing an opportunity to study the different types of retail spaces and how they cater to women shoppers. Additionally, the market's location in a dense urban area can provide insights into designing retail spaces that can accommodate the unique challenges of shopping in a crowded and busy environment. The existing infrastructure of the Gawsia Market can also be studied and evaluated in terms of its gender inclusivity to identify strengths and weaknesses and provide recommendations for improvement.



Figure: Gawsia Market, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Source: Internet



Figure: Gawsia Market, Dhaka, Bangladesh, figure-ground drawing
Source: Author

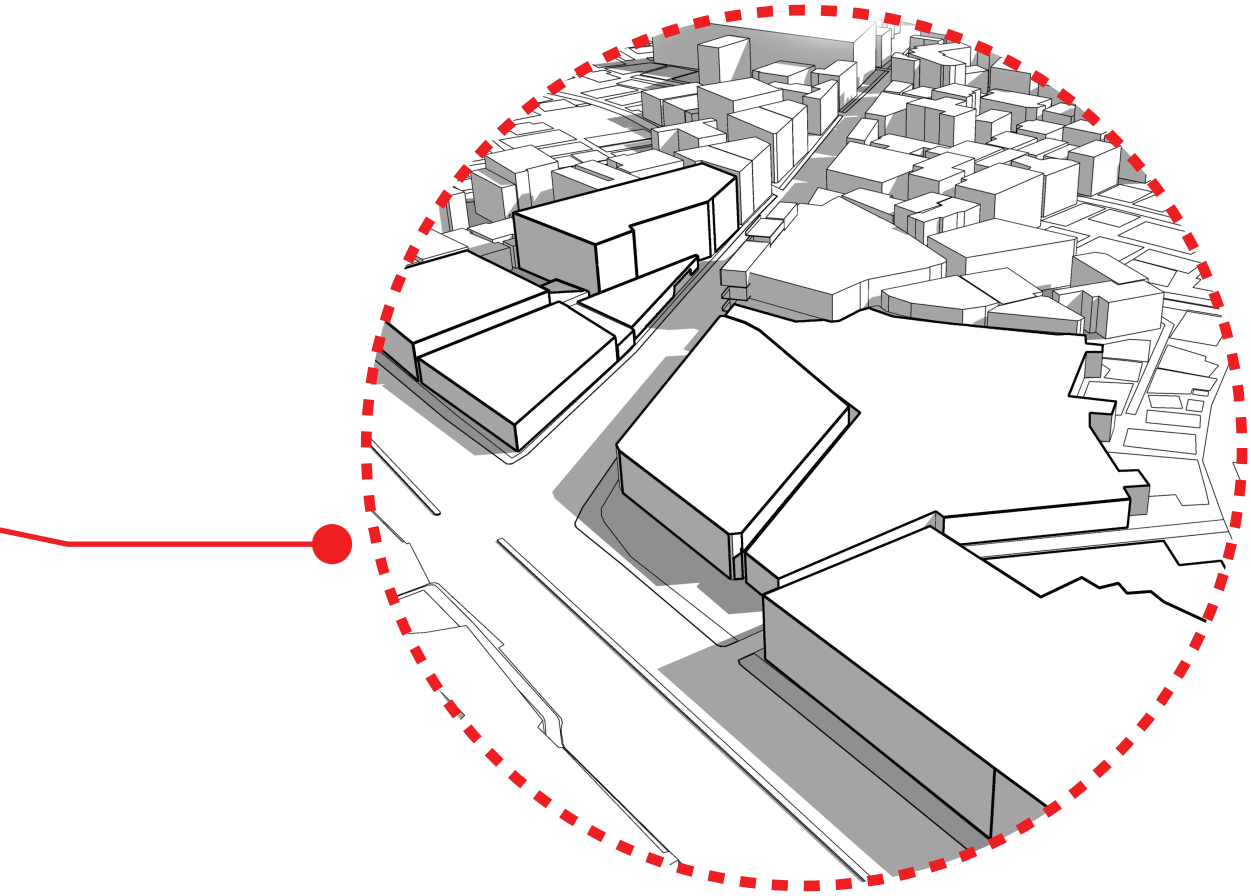


The primary road goes from southt to north.The road to gawsia starts at an intersection of Dhaka New Market.
Though Secondary roads injects into the surrounding urban texture, the accessibility is very limited.



LAND USE PLAN

- Commercial use
- Mixed use
- Residential use



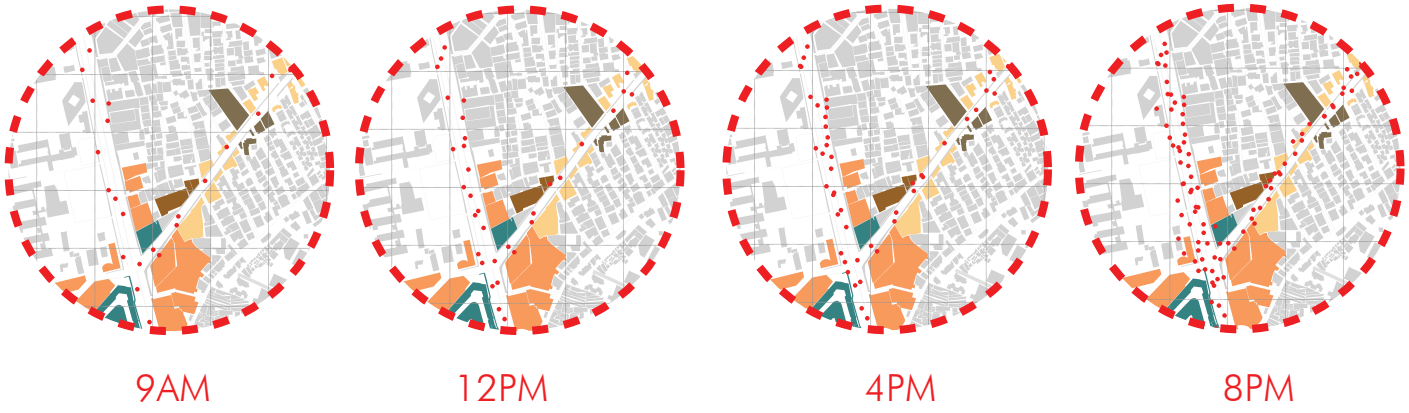


Figure: User movement in the site
Source: Author

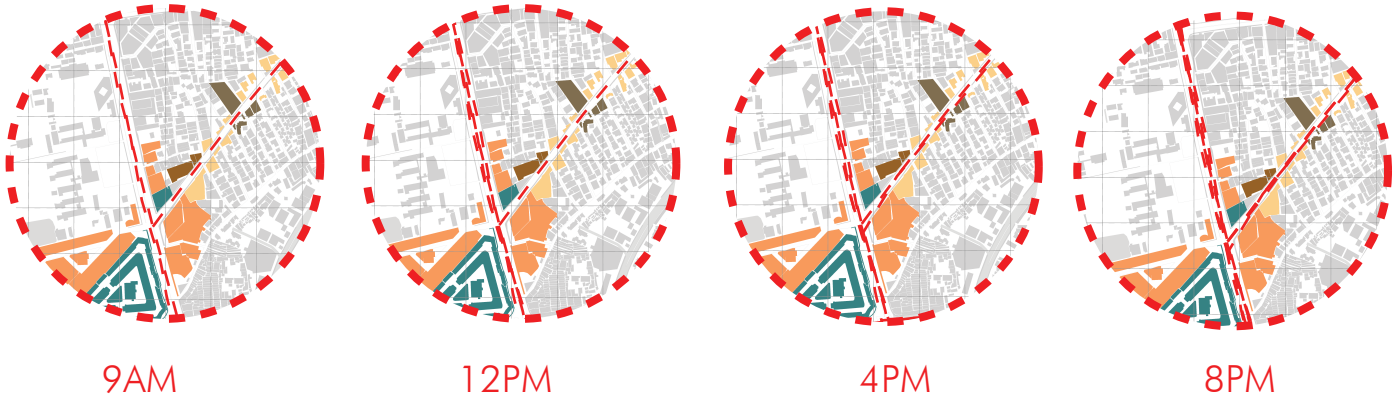


Figure: Vehicular Movement in the site
Source: Author

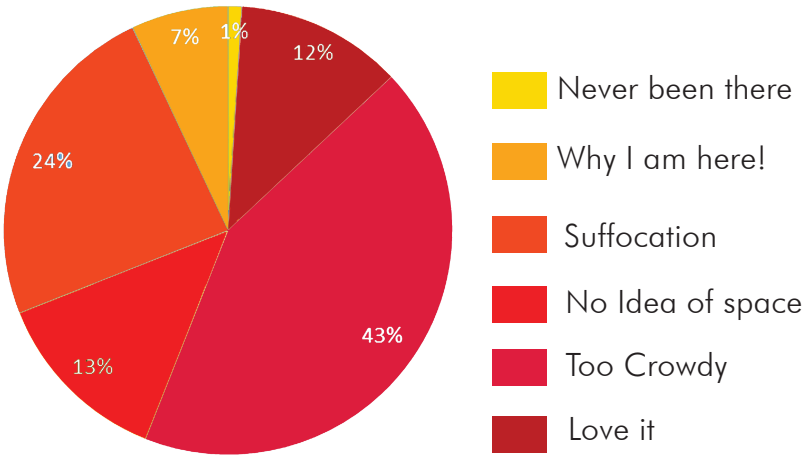


Figure: First Impression Of The Market
Source: Author



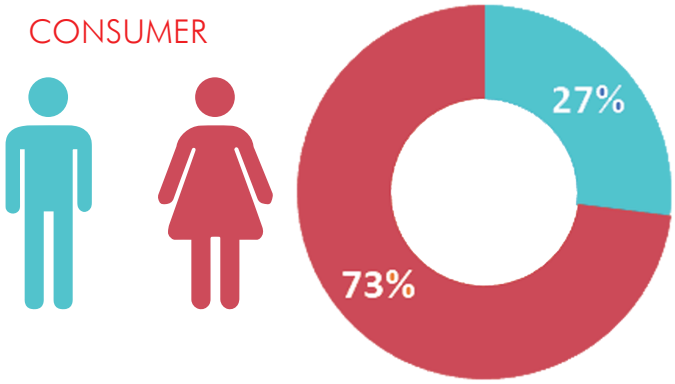
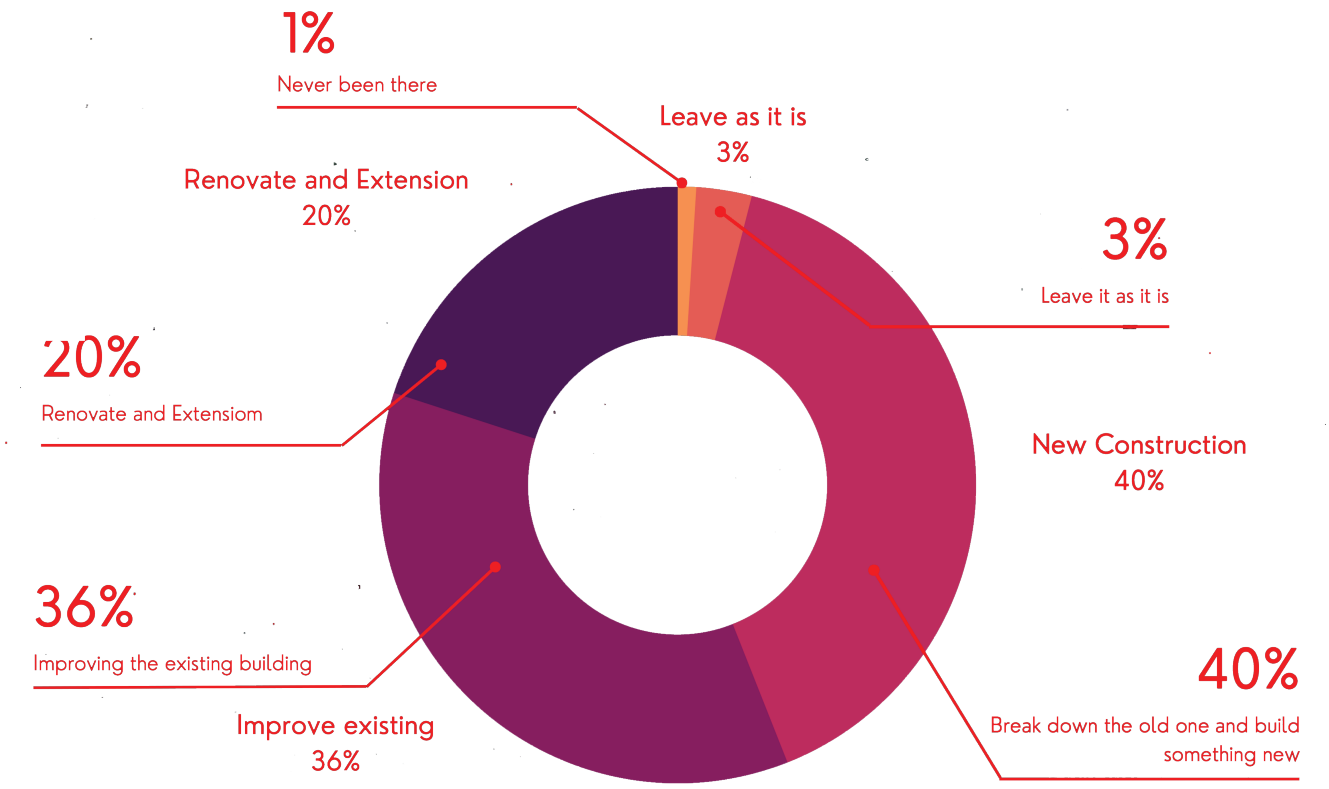


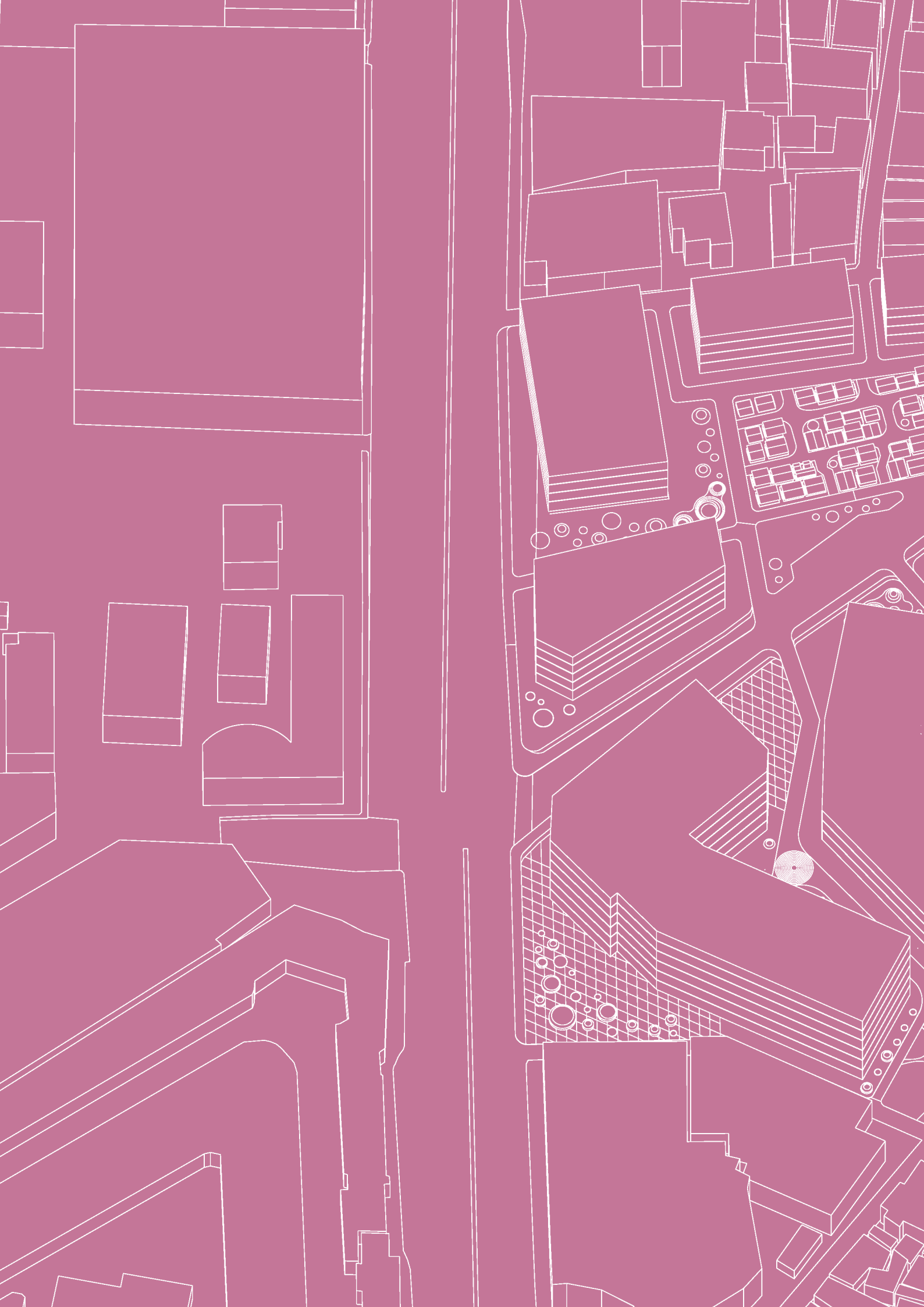
Figure: Consumer ratio of Gawsia Market
Source: Author


Its hard to get a rickhshaw or auto. Cause you can't bargain as the crowd is always on move. if one vehicle stops even for a
Men would literally overpower you in the sidewalks! Sometimes I dont even feel like walking on the sidewalks, rather I would walk on the road, its risky, but at least no body is touching
its really hard for me to walk in the sidewalks, specially when it is the holidays and the roads are relly busy! Also the
Once you are inside the mall, its hard to distinguish whether its day or night! Its really
Sometimes its like a competition to get on the upper floors of the market! So crowded stairs and unhygenic condition!


1%
Never been there
Leave as it is
3%
Renovate and Extension
20%
3%
Leave it as it is
20%
Renovate and Extensiom
New Construction
40%
36%
Improving the existing building
40%
Break down the old one and build something new
Improve existing
36%


Since: 1964.


MANIK
MANIK

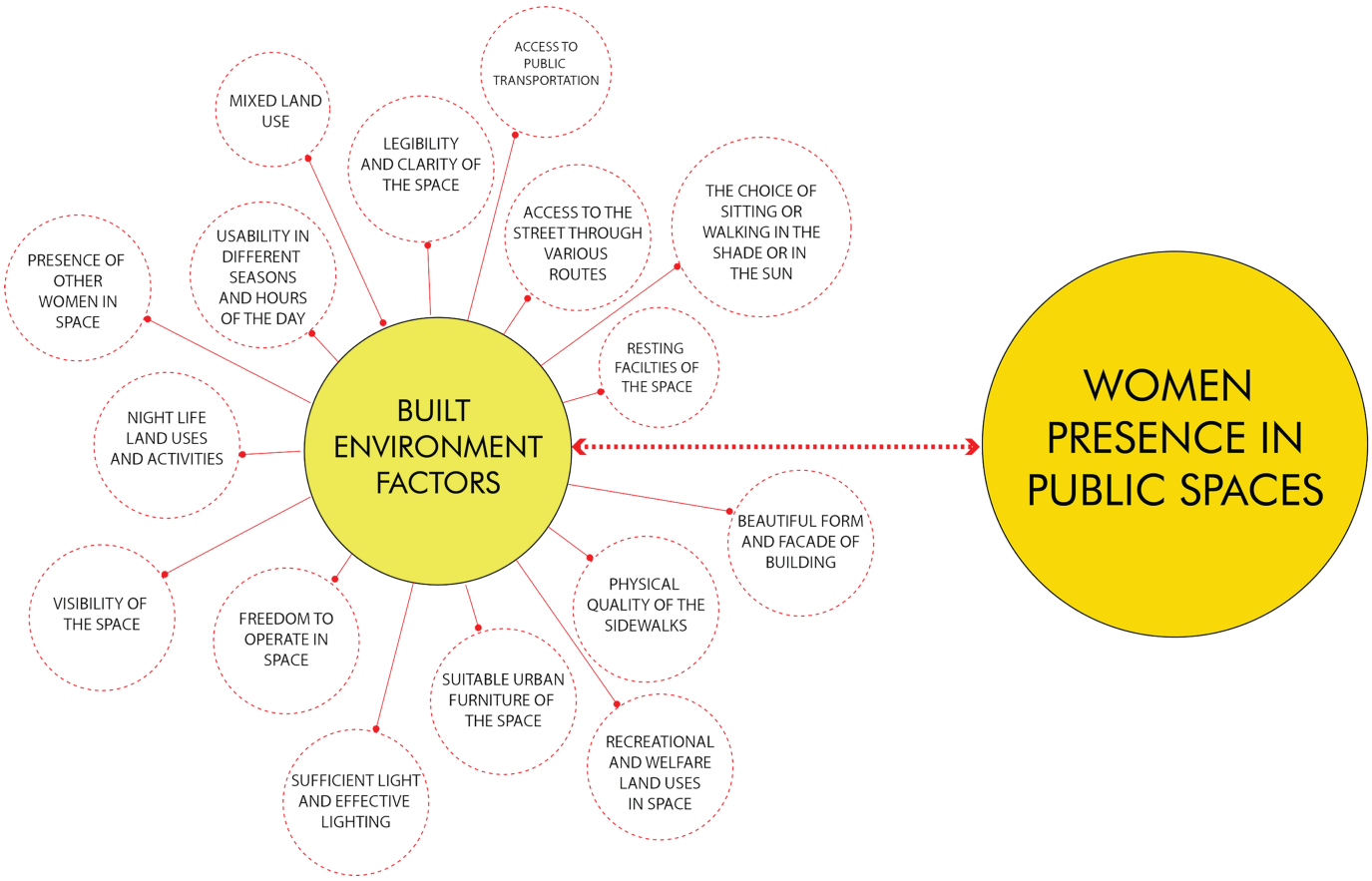




DRAWING NEW LINES

6

The design process for the thesis involves creating a dedicated retail space for women entrepreneurs and business women in an urban environment. The master plan is based on the physical factors of the built environment that influence women's presence in public spaces. To address the absence of spaces for women in the greater urban area, a primary pedestrian-oriented road is proposed to create a safe and relaxing retail experience for everyone. The development includes a designated zone for women vendors and businesswomen to protect them from patriarchal politics. Additionally, the design features a retail exhibition center and communal space for women to showcase their small businesses. The goal is to create a safe and attractive retail experience for both men and women, with a particular focus on empowering and supporting women in the retail sector.



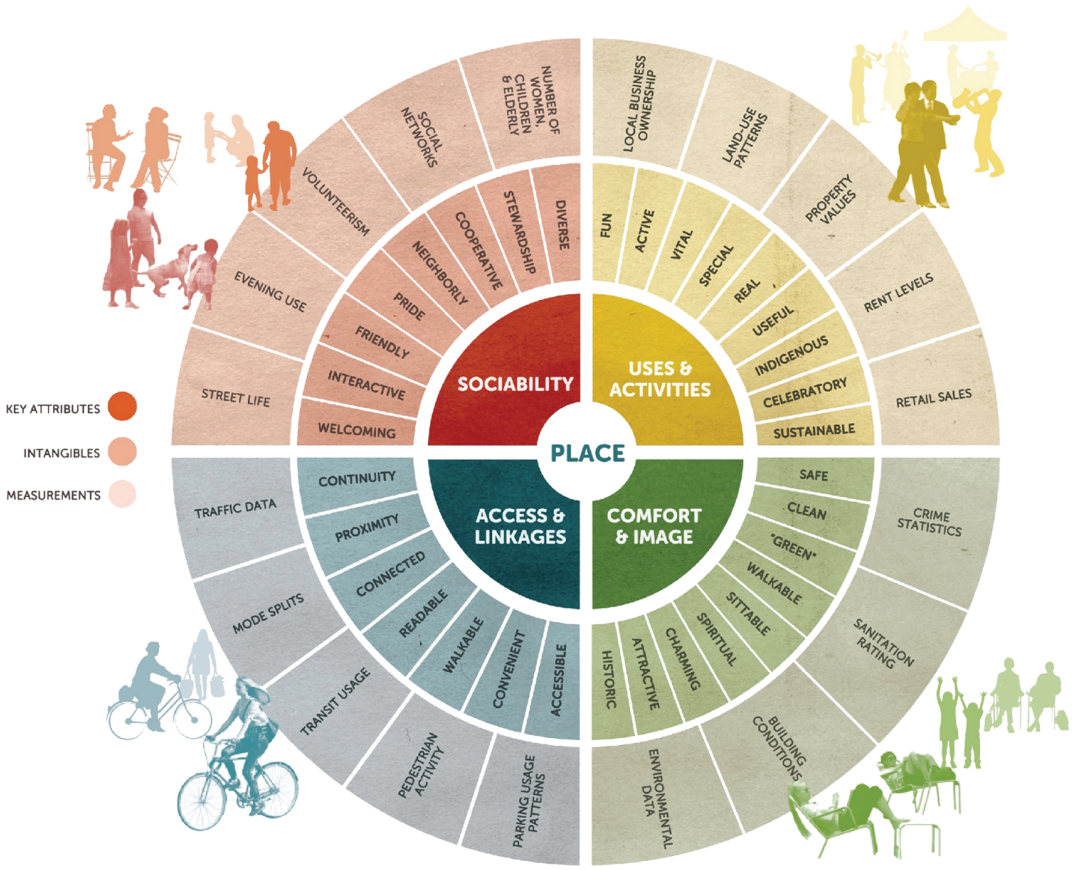
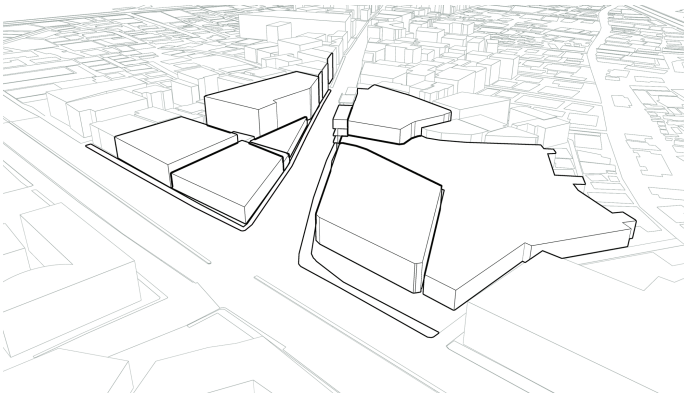
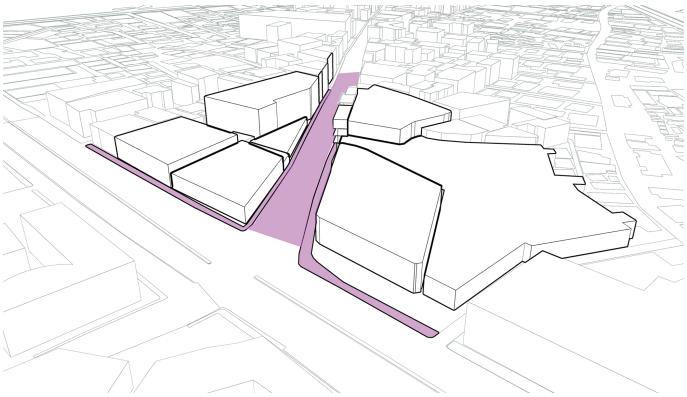


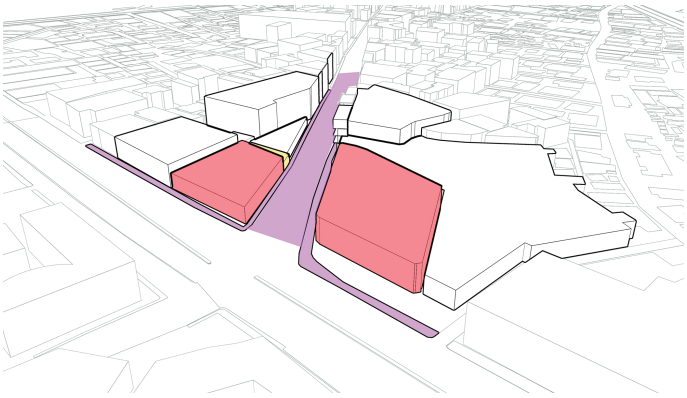
Figure: The Place Diagram
Source: Project For Public Space



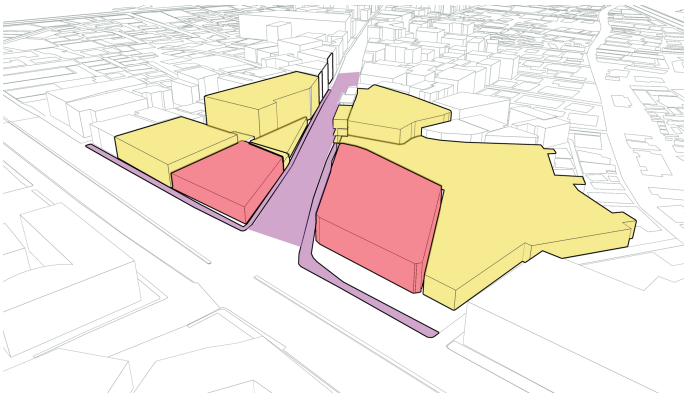
EXISTING SITE



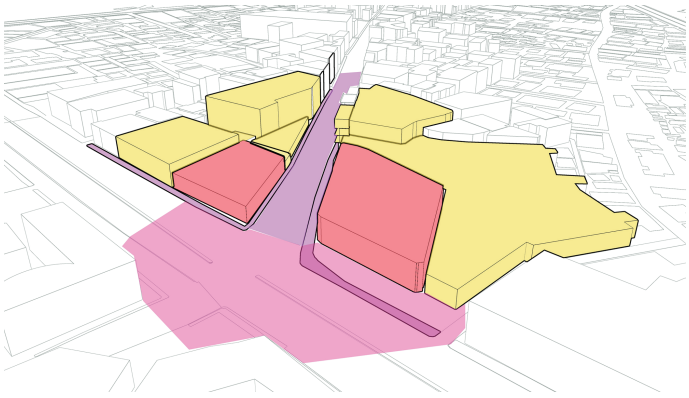
CORRIODR TO INTERVENE



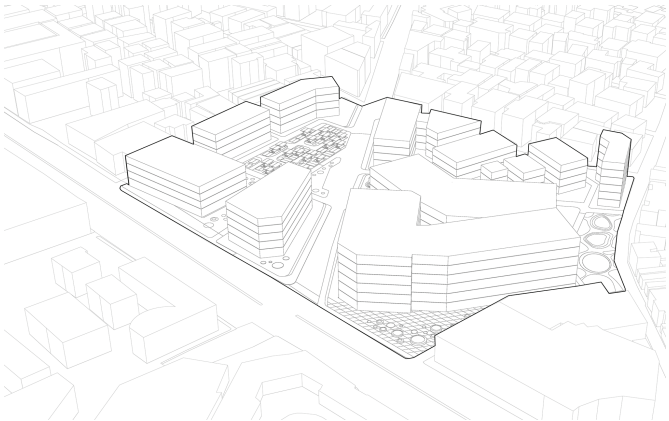
PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPMENT



POTENTIAL FUTURE DEVELOPMENT



IMPACT ON URBAN AREA



SUSTAINABLE GENDER-INCLUSIVE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Figure: Design Strategy
Source: Author



Figure: Zoning Diagram

The intention here was to create a dedicated retail for women entreprenures and business women, to create spaces for women which are largely missing from greater urban area. The primary road of the corridor is proposed to be pedestrain oriented, so it becomes a safe and relaxing retail experiecne for everyone.

Source: Author

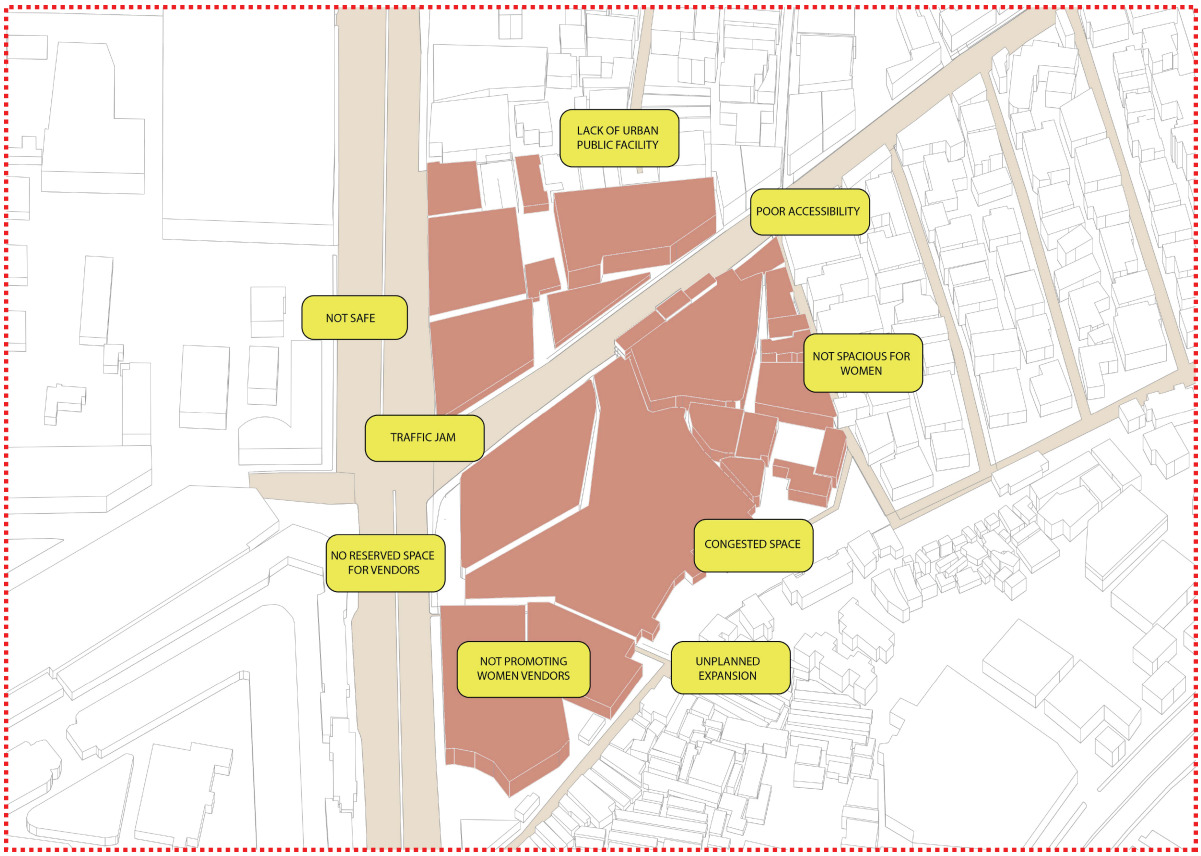


Figure: EXISTING SITE CONDITION

Existing urban condition is exhibitis unsafe, lackluster, cogested, unplanned retail development which is not a very women friendly design. Though the market is a popular destination for women in the city due to its diverse range of products and strategic location.

Source: Author

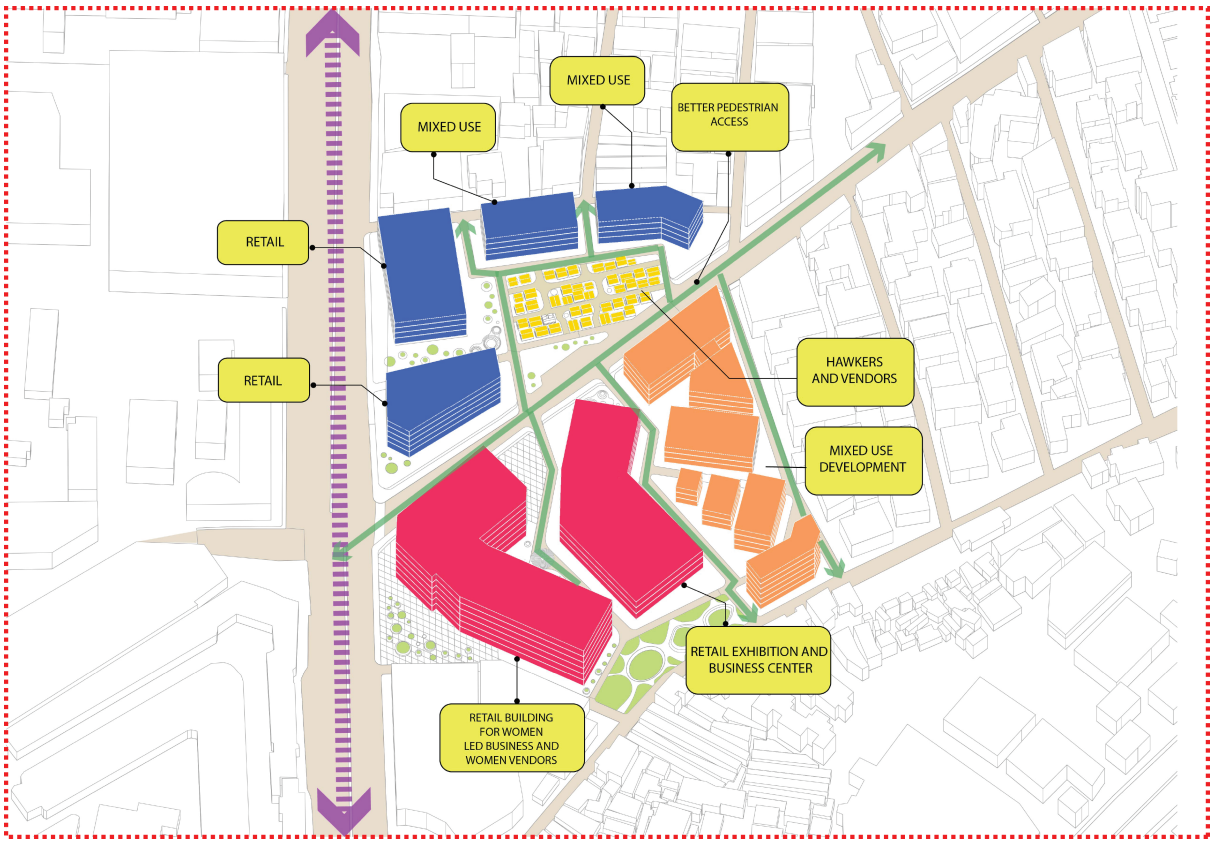


Figure: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The proposed development envisions a safe and attractive retail experience for both men and women. A particular zone is dedicated for business women and women-vendors, so theydont become victim of patriarch society's polticis. The design also features a retail exhibition center for women to showcase small business and also a communal space for them.

Source: Author

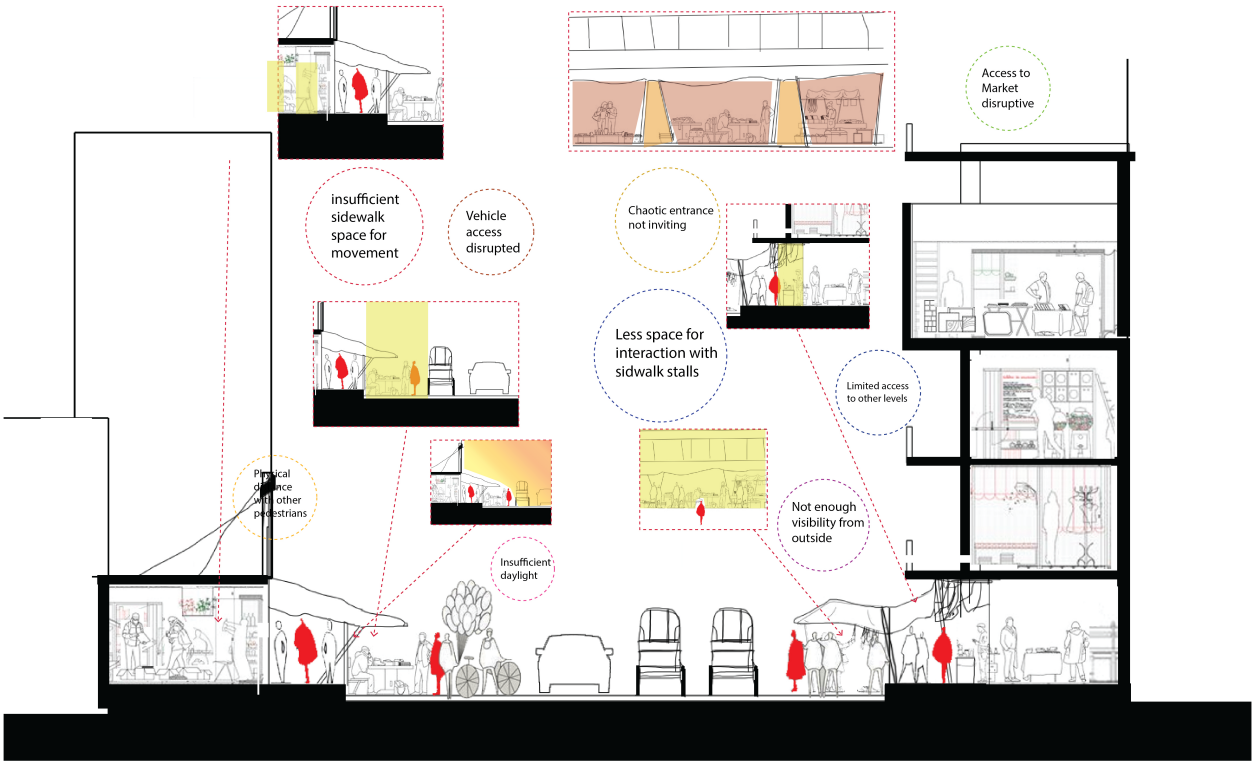


Figure: Existing Street Section
Source: Author

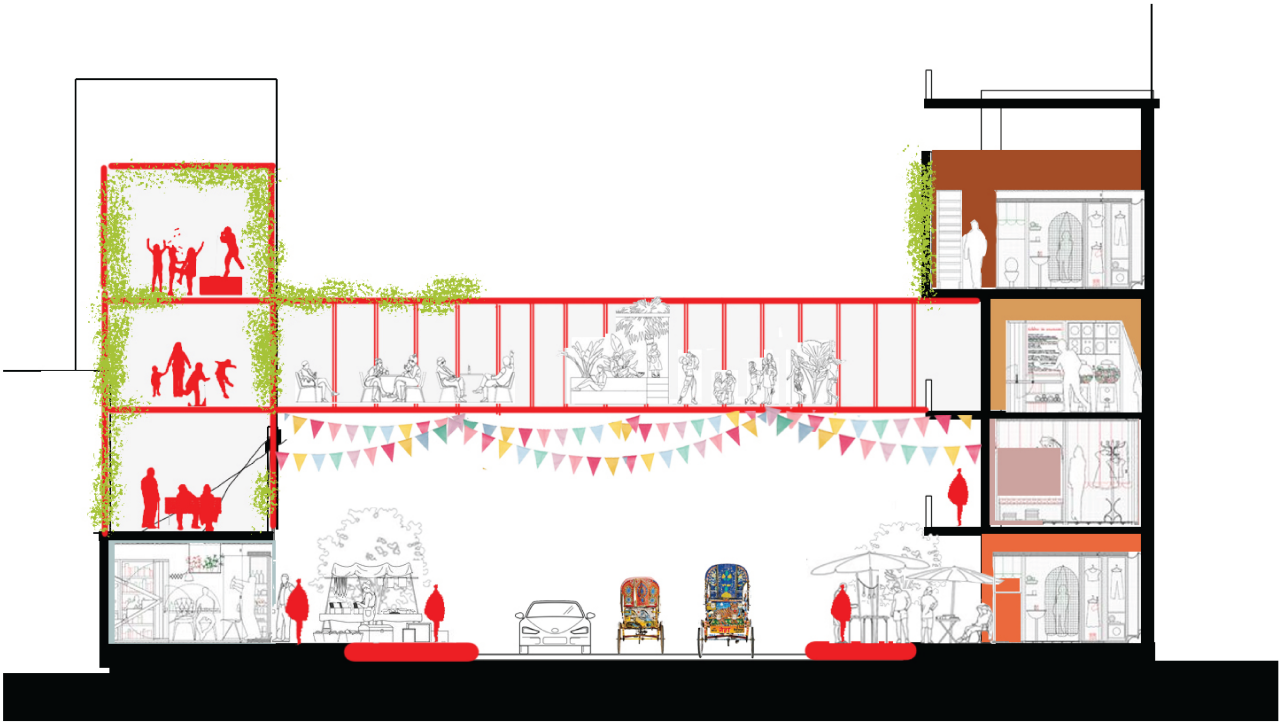


Figure: A possible designed Street Section
Source: Author

ACCESSIBILITY

The design provides with a more accessible road network for the retail space. Women can access the site through various routes.



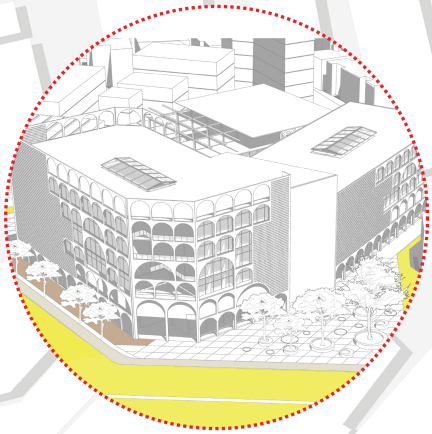
SIDEWALKS

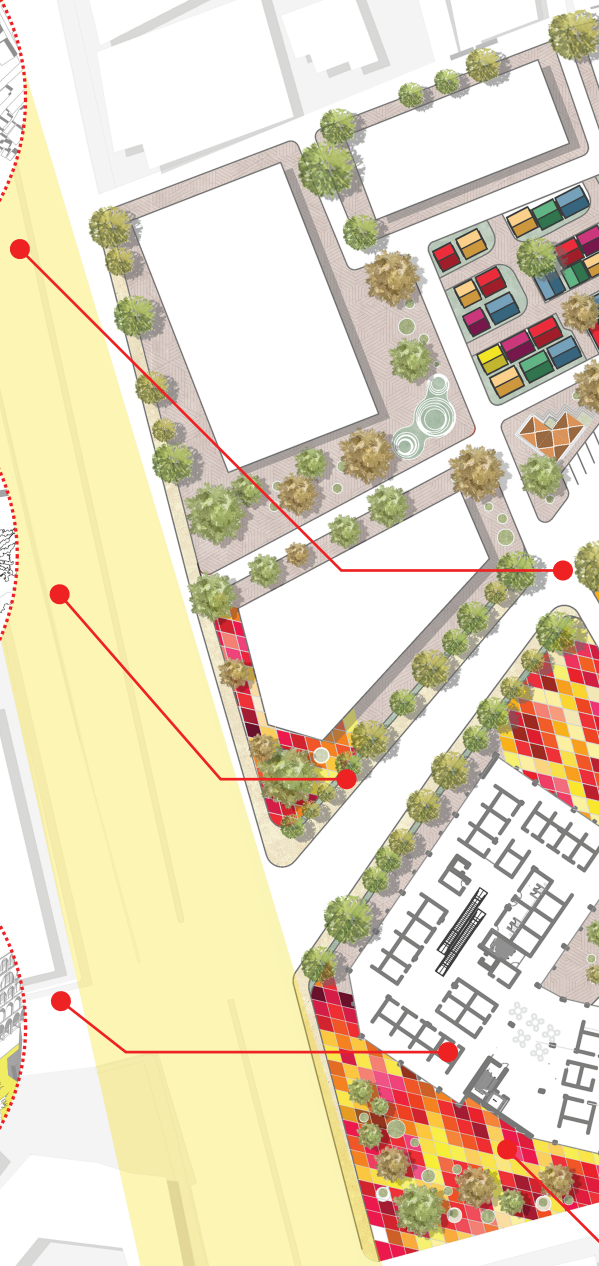
An integral part of the deisng is the modified sidewalk spaces which provides more space for women compared to the non-existibg side-walk scenario in current situation.



ATTRACTIVE BUILDING AND FACADED

The design proposes a building with attrac-tive facade treatment and building form. The facaed, in contrast to the existing one, provides better visual and physical connec-tion to its adjacent environment.







RESTING FACILITIES

The master plan includes the the various placement of resting facilities and amenities, so women can rest as they want. Bench, pavilion and other features are to be included in this.

COMMUNAL SPACES

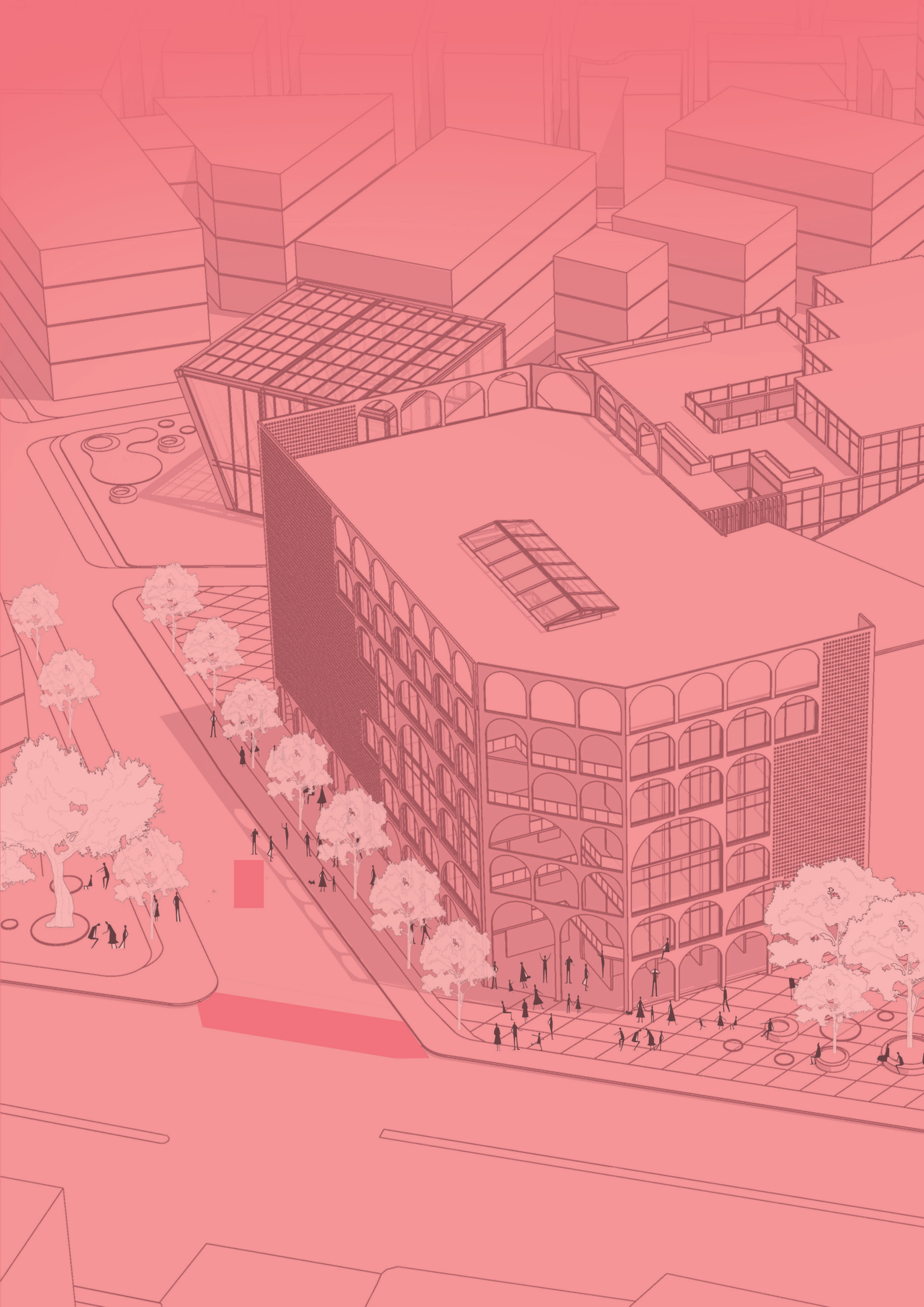
Various public open spaces are introduced in the master plan, to provide women with better communal space. The vibrant activities and interaction, creates a better urban experience for women.

URBAN PARK

An park is proposed in the design to provide green spaces in the densed urban condition. The park can be a place for women to relax or to have morning/evening walk.

VIBRANT PLAZA

The colorful treatment of the plaza makes the place more attractive. The color is here celebrates woman and also represents the vibrance of retail culture. This will attract more customer and public to come to the space, which makes it economically beneficial.



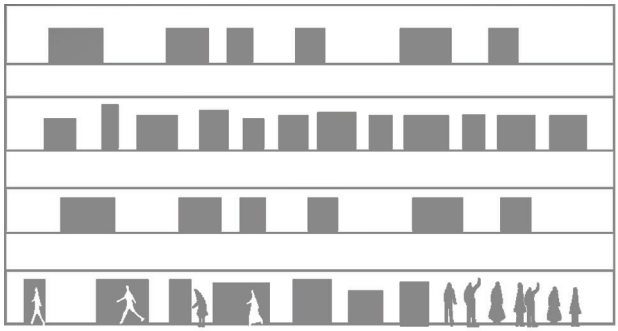
DESIGNING RETAIL



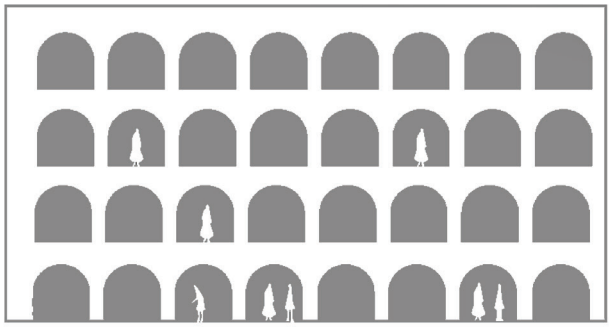
7

The designed retail building is a unique and striking addition to the urban fabric of Dhaka. Its arched exterior facade is a nod to the city's traditional and religious influences, while the variations in the arches create a dynamic and contemporary look. The seamless connection between the exterior and interior spaces is facilitated by the arched openings, which allow for an open and inviting atmosphere. Inside, the spaces are designed with the needs of women in mind, with ample room for browsing and shopping. However, the building is not limited to women buyers only, as it is open to everyone. The back courtyard provides a welcoming space for social gatherings and activities, enhancing the sense of community and connection. The building is also designed to be pedestrian-oriented, accommodating the high foot traffic that is characteristic of the city's commercial areas.

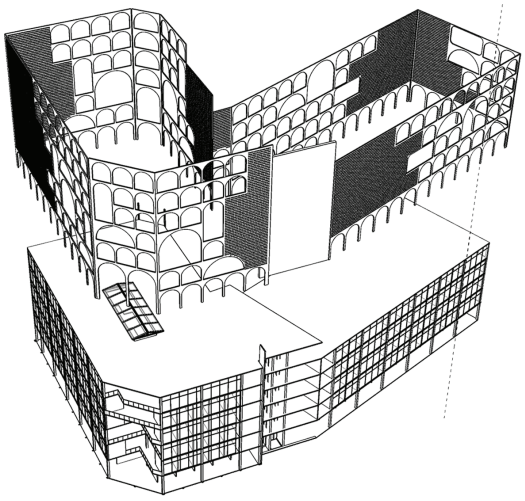
The design of the retail building also takes into consideration the climatic conditions of Dhaka. The arched openings on the outer skin of the building not only provide a cultural and aesthetic touch, but also serve as a functional solution to the hot and humid climate of the city. The inner skin of the building features glass openings, which create a double skin facade treatment that helps to reduce heat gain and improve energy efficiency. In addition, the arched openings are designed to turn into brick jalis in certain areas, providing shade and ventilation while maintaining a connection with the surrounding environment.

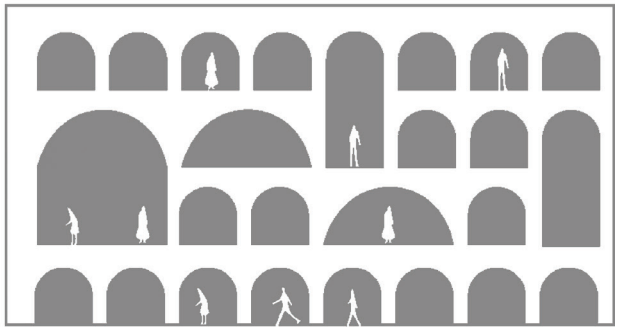


Existing facade



Arched facade



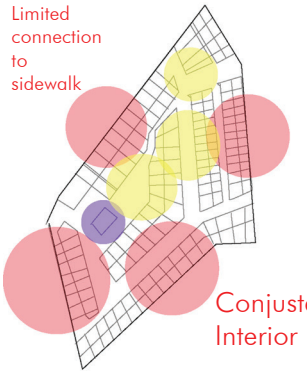


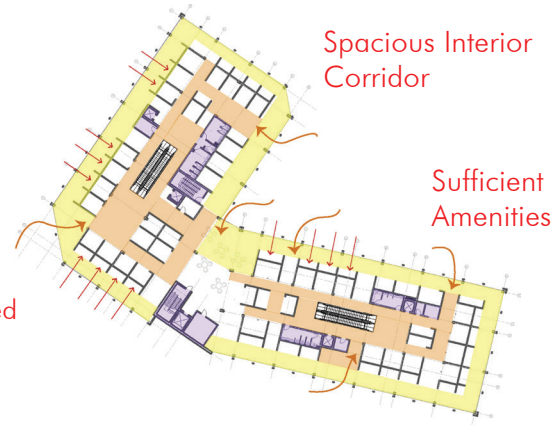
Arch Variation

Figure: Facade Concept
Source: Author



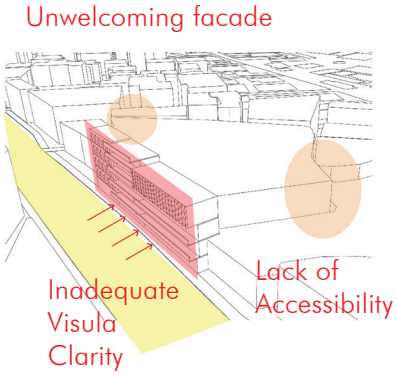
Figure: Retail Building
Source: Author

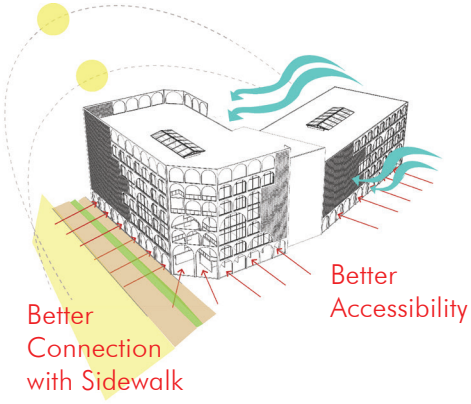




Existing Retail Market Plan

Proposed Market Plan





Existing Retail Market Facade

Proposed Retail Facade

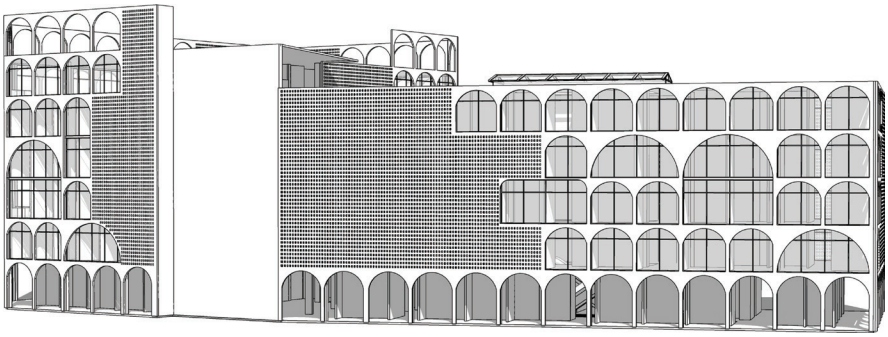


Figure: Arch opening with brick jali. allows privacy but also air

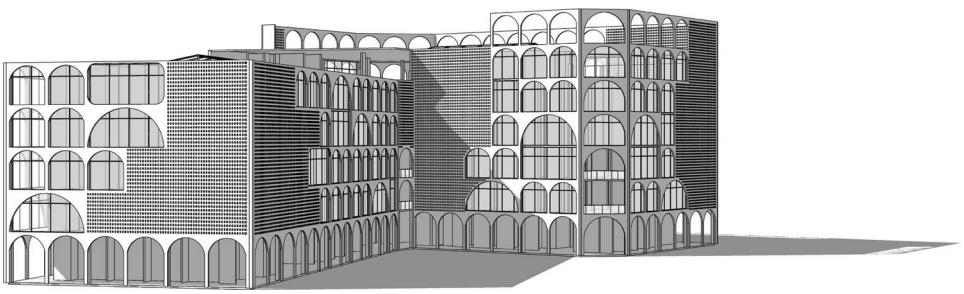
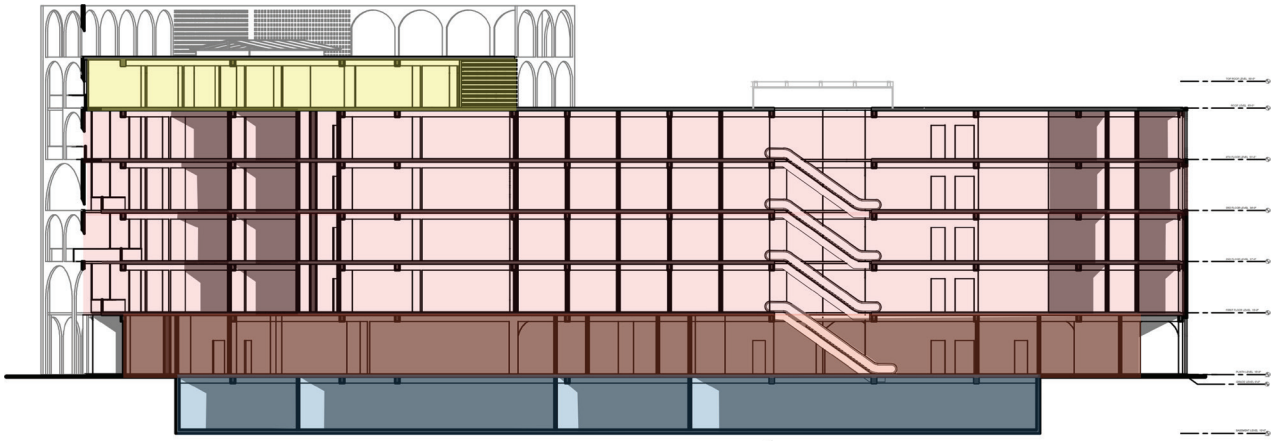


Figure: East Side courtyard



Figure: Plans of Retail Building
Source: Author



WOMEN OWNED BUSINESSES
WOMEN HAWKERS AND VENDORS
STORAGE
PUBLIC FACILITY

Figure: Section of Retail Building
Source: Author

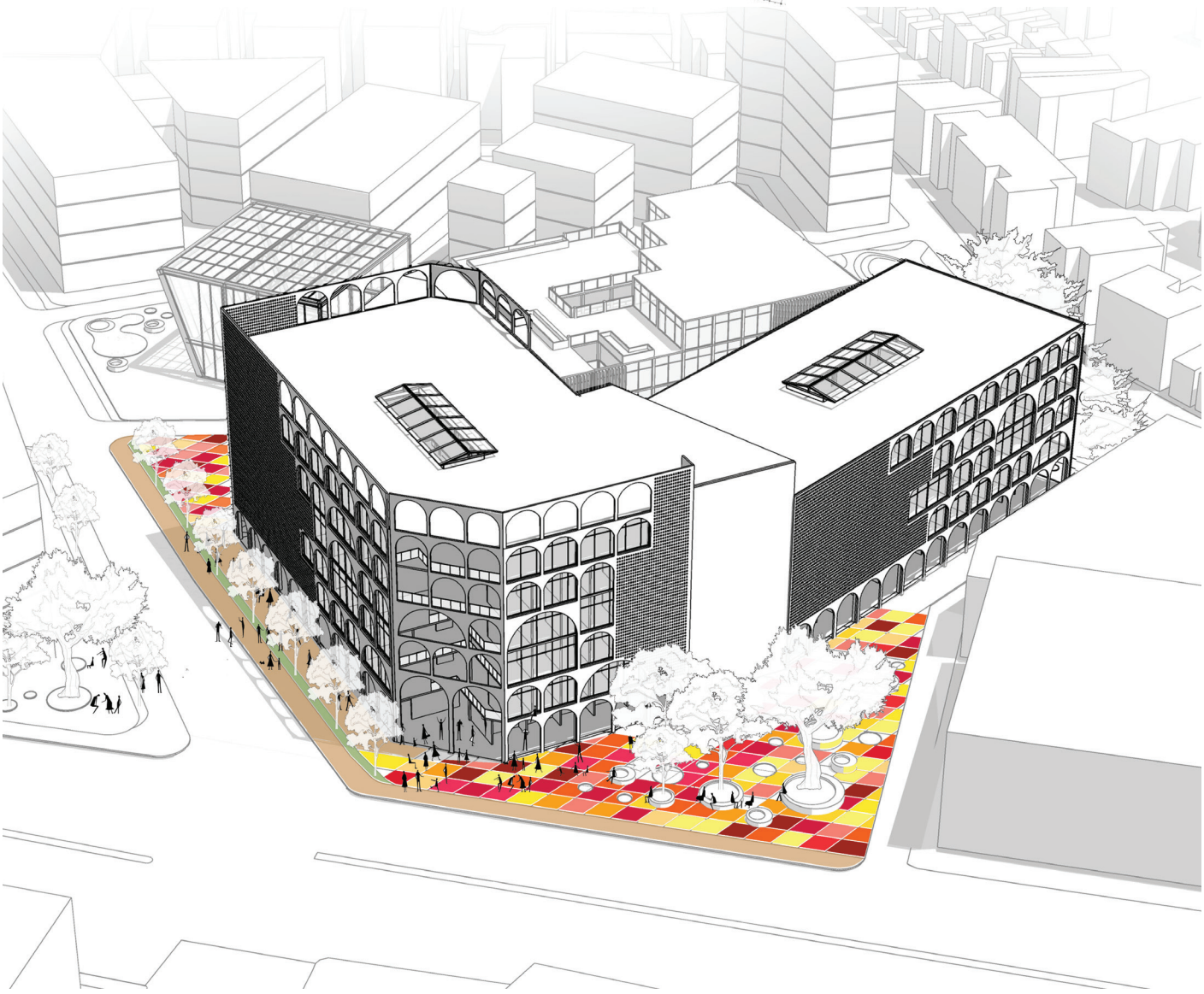
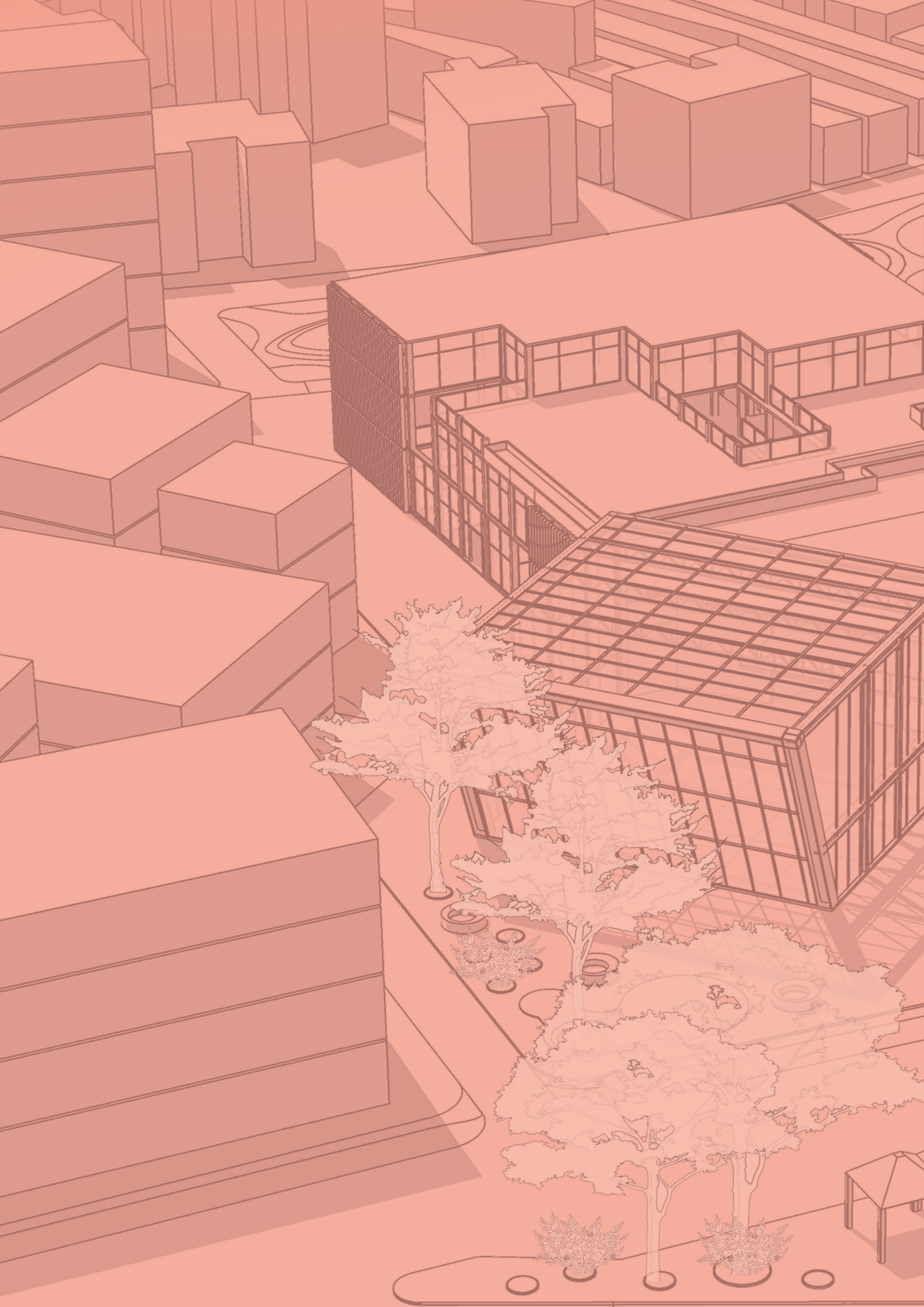


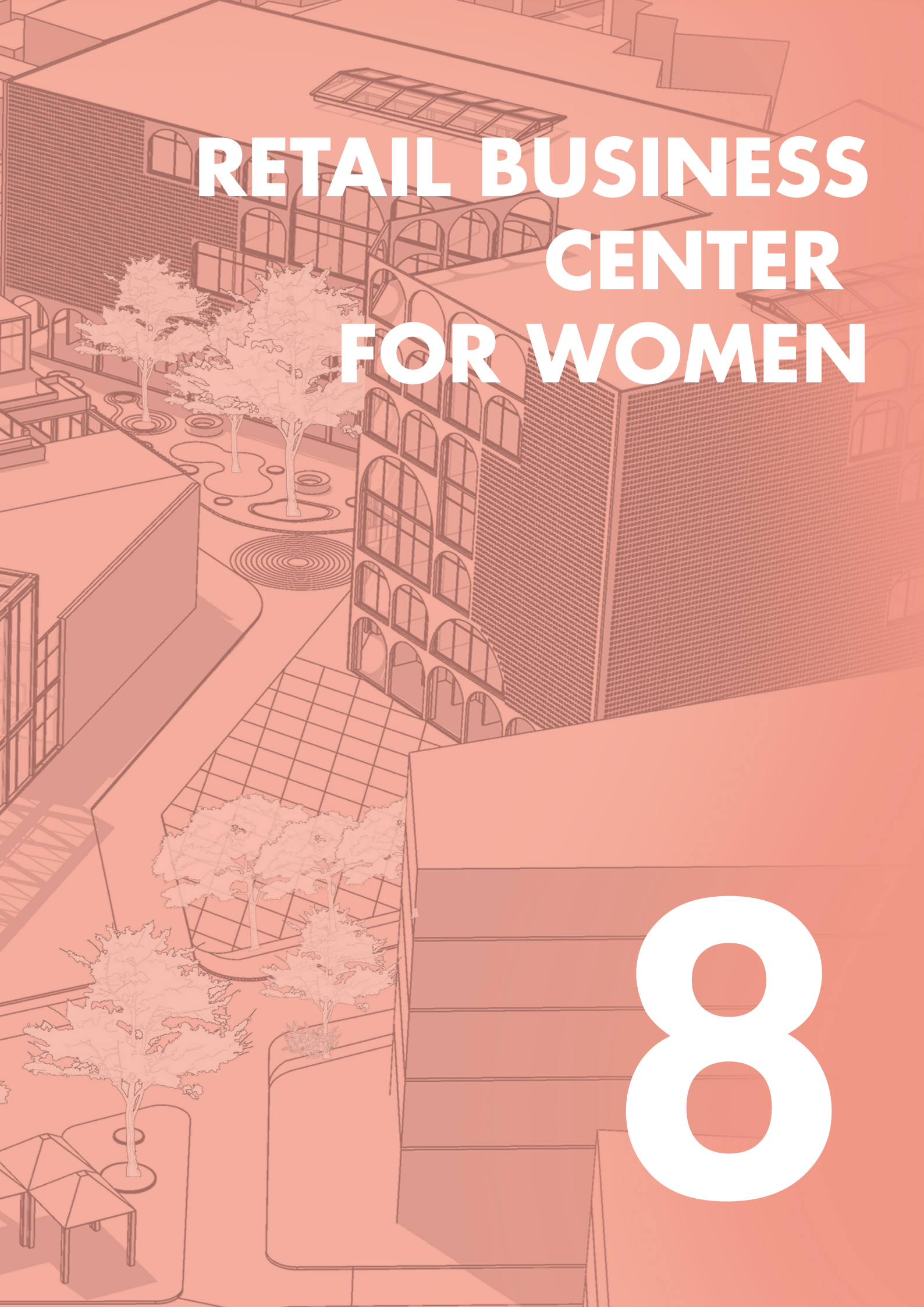






Figure: East Side courtyard Visualization
Source: Author





RETAIL BUSINESS CENTER FOR WOMEN

8

The designed retail business center for women is a comprehensive space that goes beyond just shopping. It serves as a communal space for women, providing a variety of programs to cater to their diverse needs. The retail space includes a variety of shops catering to different budgets and preferences, ranging from high-end boutiques to fast-fashion stores. The cultural exhibition space showcases the work of female artists, designers, and creatives, providing an educational element to the center. The workshop space hosts classes focused on art, design, and other creative pursuits, attracting a diverse range of women. The performance space hosts cultural performances, adding to the lively atmosphere within the center. Food and beverage options, including cafes, juice bars, and restaurants, are also incorporated to enhance the shopping experience and create a social hub within the center. Childcare services, wellness centers offering fitness classes and meditation sessions, co-working spaces, and outdoor spaces such as a rooftop garden or terrace are also provided.



Providing space for women entreprenuers to exhibit their product

Platform for activity for women



Empowring women artisan and entreprenuers



Showcasing traditional and contemporary product





Creating sense of community

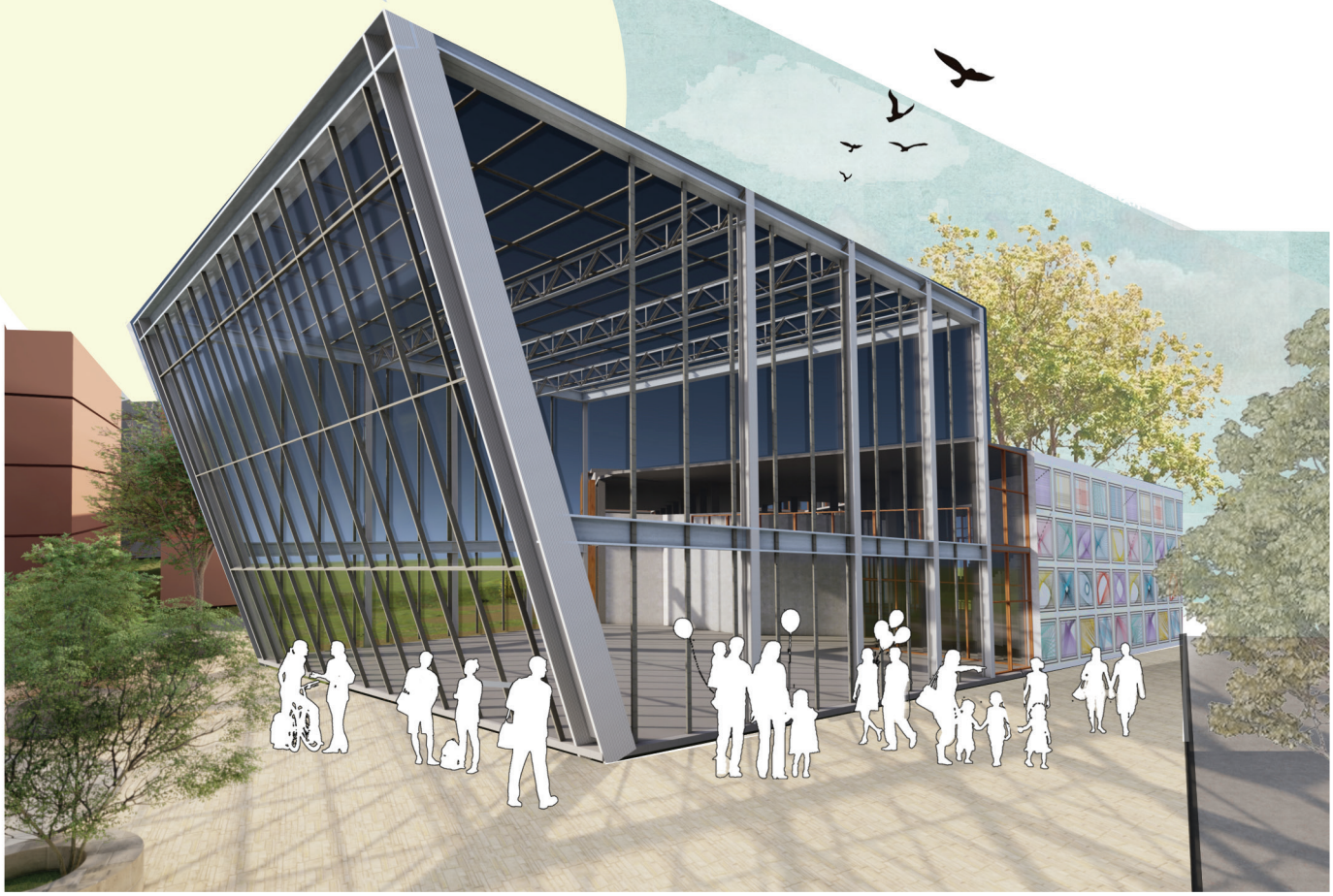
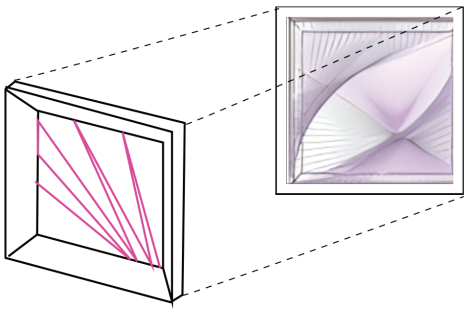


Figure: Retail Business Center For Women

Source: Author



Bangladesh is today one of the world's largest garment exporters. There are 4 million garment workers in Bangladesh of which more than 58 percent of whom are women..

The thread block wall commemorate this significant role of women garment workers in Banglladesh economy.

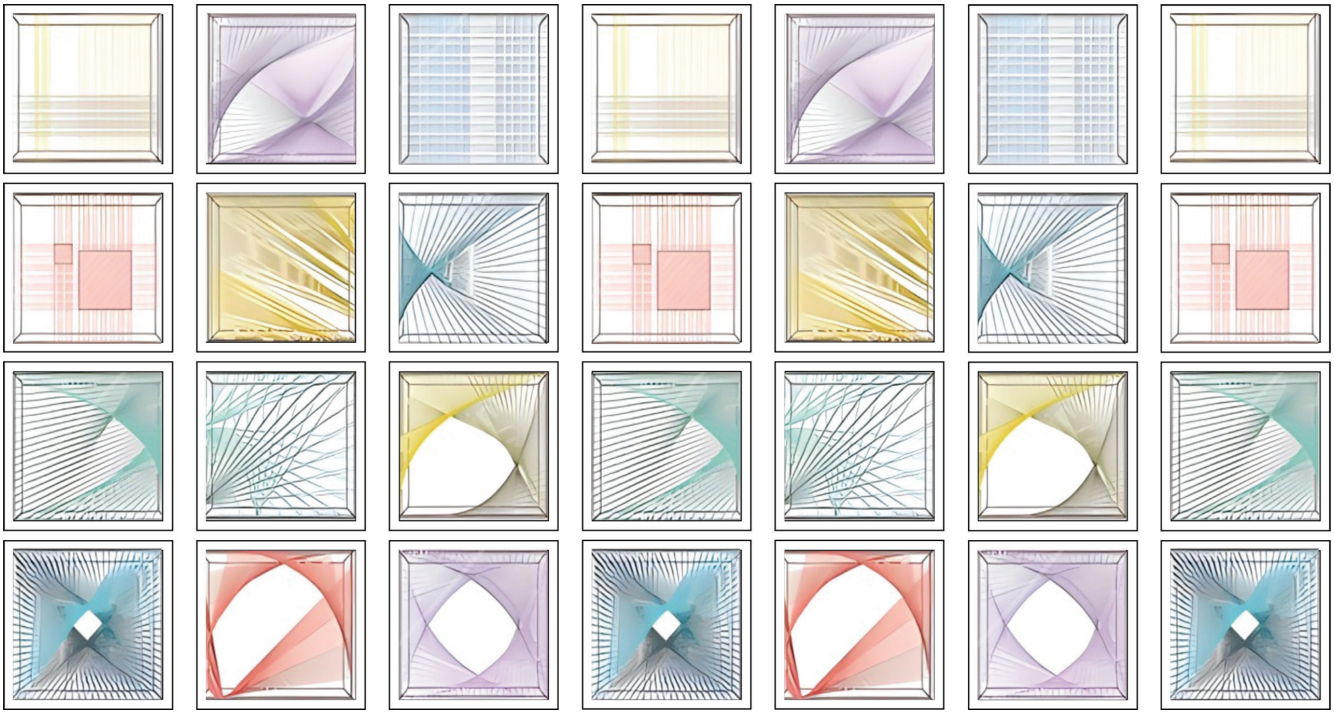
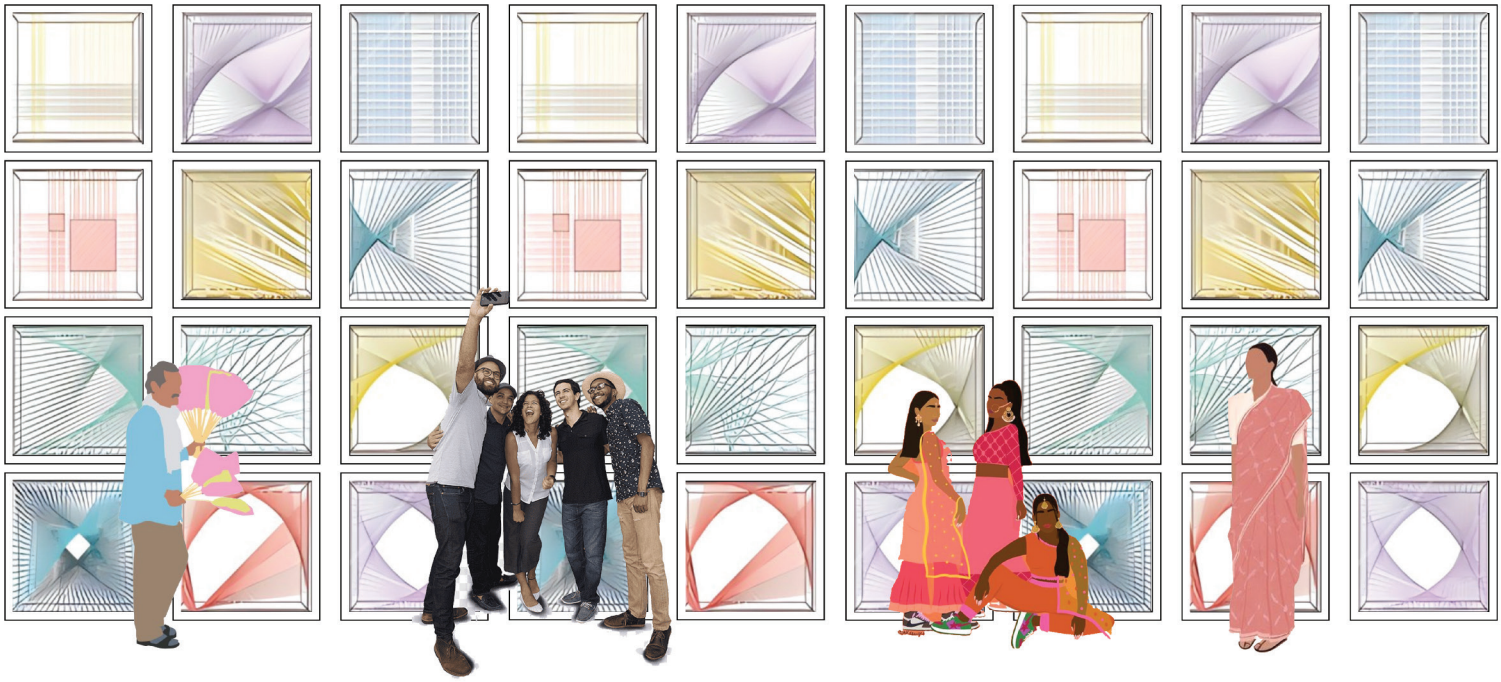


Figure: Fabric Panel Wall
Source: Author



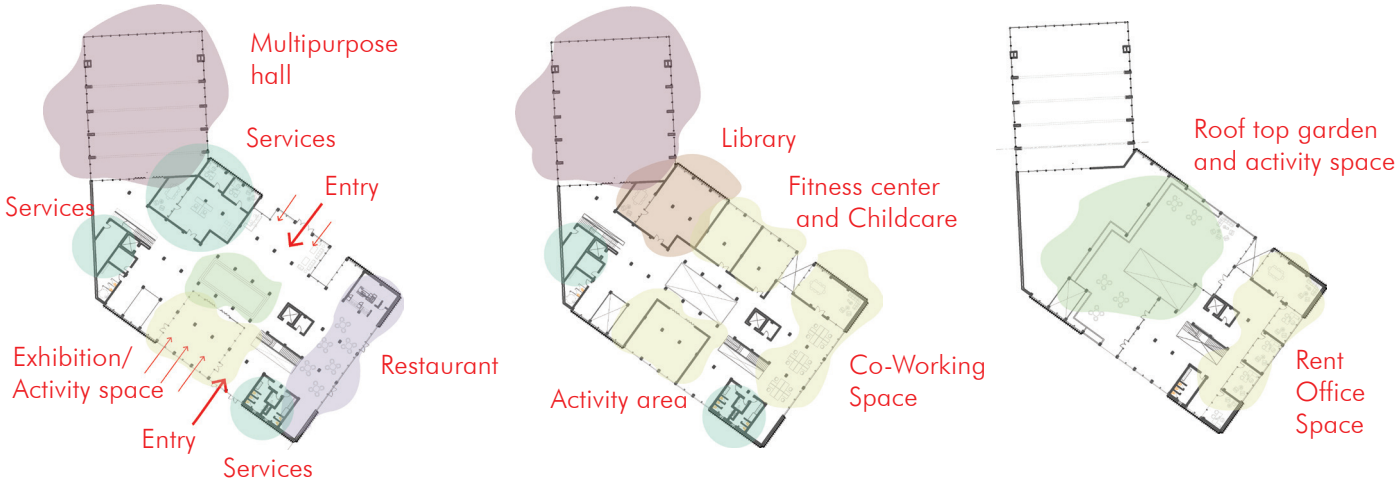


Figure: Zoning Plan of Retail Business Center For Women
Source: Author



Figure: Floor Plan of Retail Business Center For Women
Source: Author

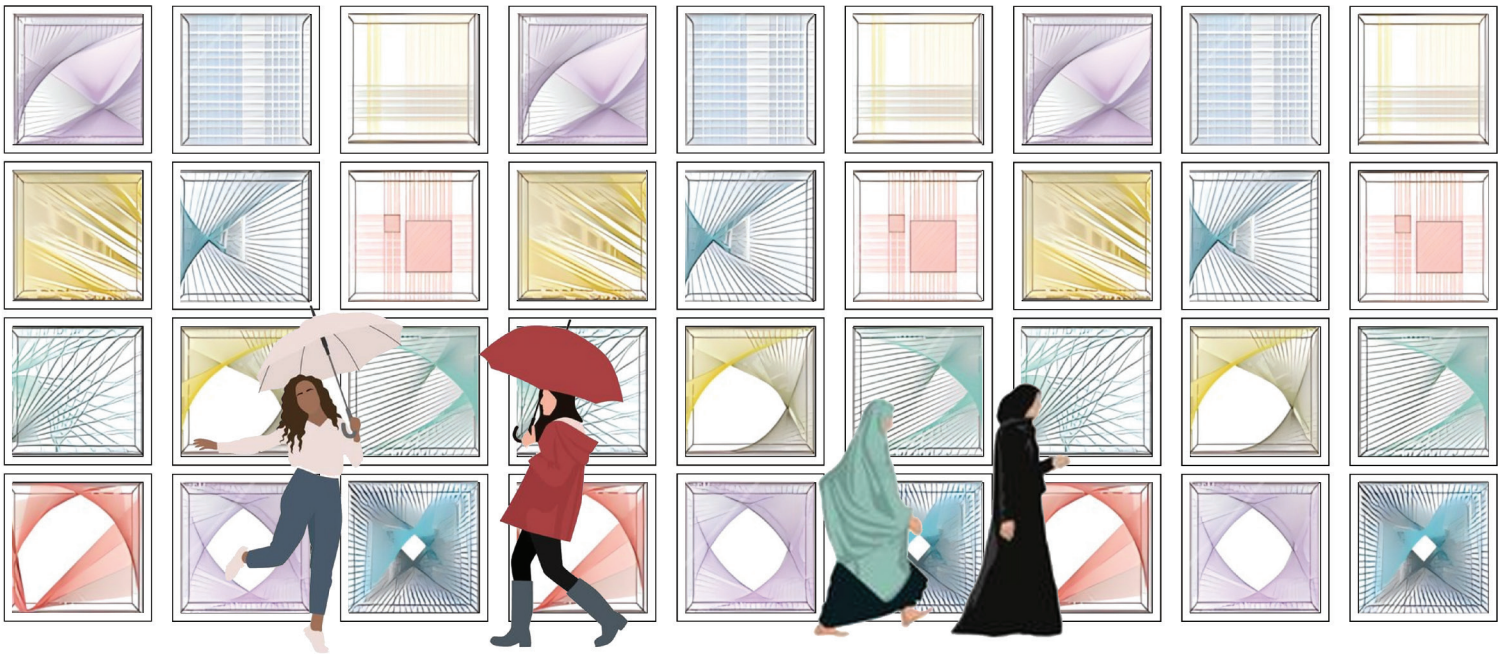


Figure: Fabric Panel Wall
Source: Author

The building is designed to cater to the needs of women who may not have access to regular work spaces or selling spaces. It consists of two main masses, one of which is dedicated to a multipurpose hall, while the other houses general programs and services. The building serves as a platform for women to showcase their products and also provides them with affordable work spaces. The large multipurpose hall is designed to be flexible and adaptable to various usages. It is equipped with a glass facade that allows the inside activities to be visually connected to the outside. The back portion of the building is used for general purposes such as office, restaurant and activities. The building also features an inner courtyard for small gatherings and festivities. Vertical louvers are used in the back portion of the building for screening and shading purposes.

Program:

1.Temporary Retail Space: A variety of temporary retail spaces are incorporated to cater to different shopping preferences and budgets. This could include high-end boutiques, fast-fashion stores, beauty and wellness products, and lifestyle and home goods stores, which requires temporary places.

2.Cultural Exhibitions: The dedicated space for cultural exhibitions, featuring the work of female artists, designers, and creatives, adds a unique and educational element to the retail center.

3.Workshop Space: The dedicated space for workshops and classes focused on art, design, and other creative pursuits attracts a diverse range of women, from beginners to professionals.

4.Performance Space: The performance space that hosts music, dance, theater, and other cultural performances which provide entertainment and create a lively atmosphere within the center.

5.Food and Beverage: Incorporating a variety of food and beverage options, including cafes, juice bars, and restaurants, enhances the shopping experience and create a social hub within the center.

6.Childcare Services: Providing childcare services, such as a supervised play area or a dedicated child-care center, allows mothers to shop and participate in activities within the center with peace of mind.

7.Wellness Center: The wellness center offers fitness classes, meditation sessions, and other wellness activities can attract health-conscious women and provide a holistic experience within the retail center.

8.Co-Working Space: The co-working space attracts female entrepreneurs and creatives, providing them with a space to work, collaborate, and network within the center.

9.Outdoor Space: Incorporating outdoor space, such as a rooftop garden or terrace, provides a relaxing and visually appealing element to the retail center.

10.Rent Office: Women can rent offices per their needs. The offices are located in the top floor seprarted from other activities.



Figure: West Side elevaion showing the fabric panel wall
Source: Author

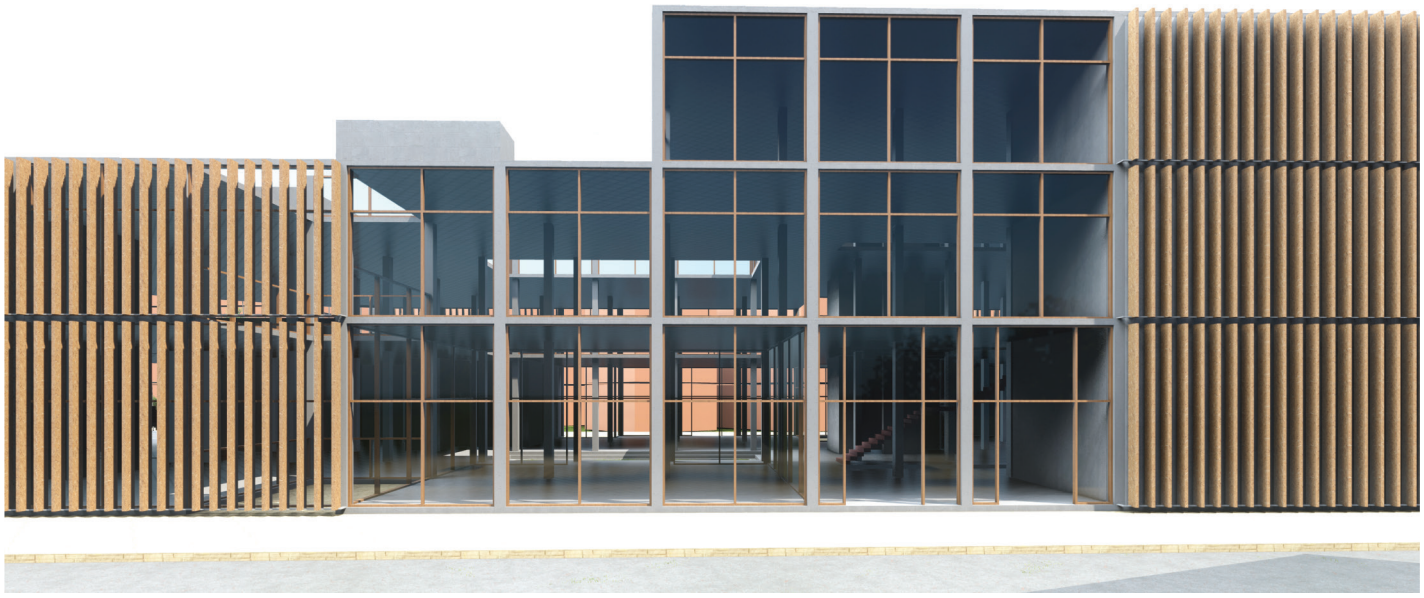


Figure: Louver Facade treatment for protection from direct heat gain
Source: Author



Figure: View of Multipurpose Hall From Road
Source: Author

The retail business and exhibition center for women can create a positive impact on the retail of women in a number of ways. Firstly, by providing a dedicated space for women entrepreneurs and business owners, the center can support the growth and success of women-led businesses. This can lead to a more diverse and inclusive retail landscape, which can ultimately benefit consumers as well. Secondly, by providing a range of programs and services, such as workshops, co-working spaces, and childcare services, the center can create a supportive and empowering environment for women. This can encourage more women to start and grow businesses, and can also help to address some of the barriers and challenges that women may face in the business world. Finally, by showcasing the work of female artists, designers, and creatives, the center can highlight the contributions of women to the retail industry and to society as a whole. This can help to promote greater visibility and recognition for women in these fields, and can inspire future generations of women to pursue their passions and ambitions.



Figure: Interior View
Source: Author

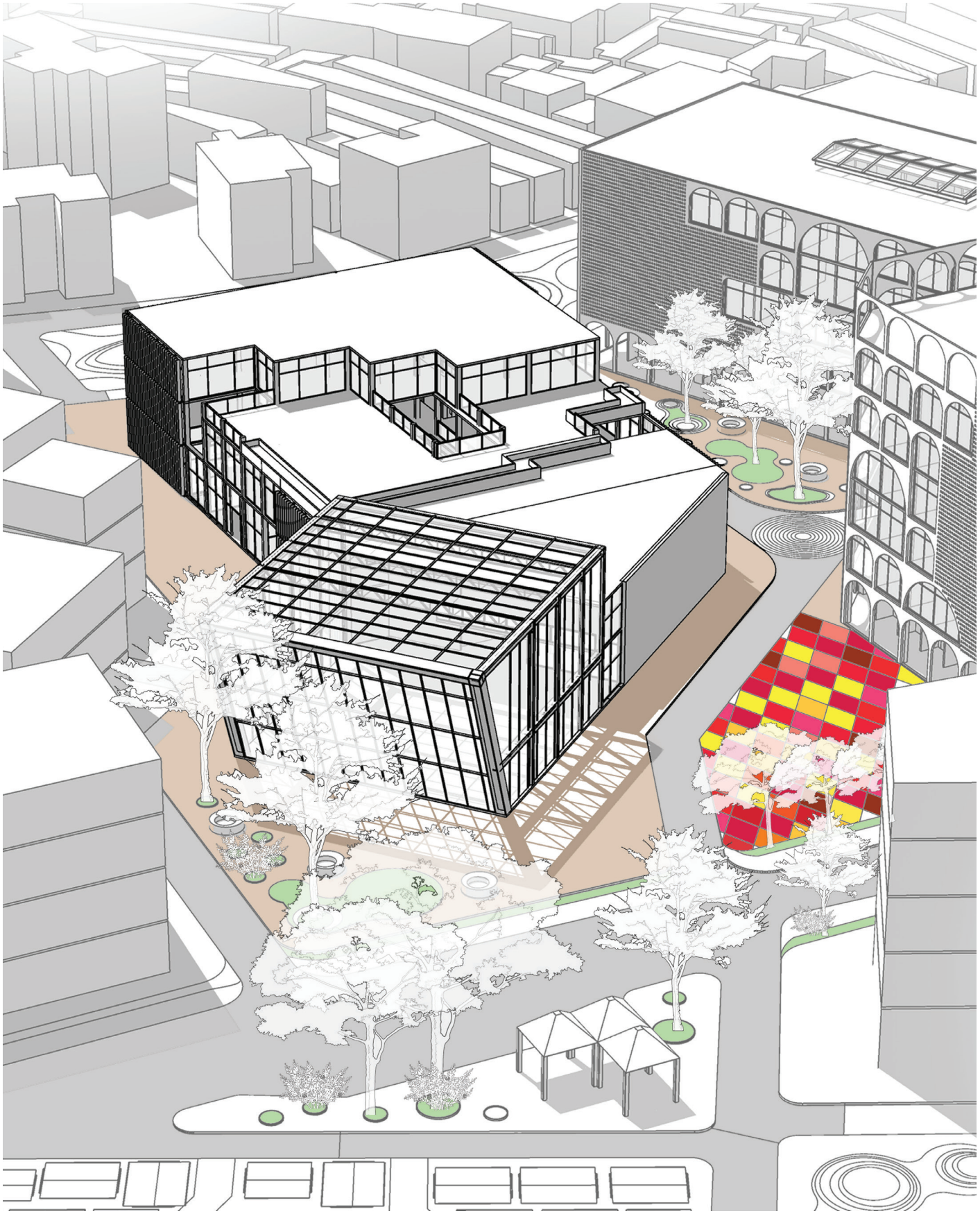


Figure: Office Interior View
Source: Author

Initiatives like the retail business and exhibition center for women can help address some of these challenges by providing women with access to affordable retail and workspaces, as well as networking and training opportunities. This can not only increase the participation of women in the retail industry but also improve the quality and diversity of products and services available to consumers.



Figure:Rooftop View
Source: Author




basic invite
FranklinCovey
CELEBRATING
35
years



Figure: Aerial View of Retail Business Center for Women
Source: Author

Figure: View of Multipurpose Hall
Source: Author

RETHINKING SURROUNDING

9

The hawkers space and urban park in the master plan provide additional benefits to the retail business center for women. The hawkers space serves as a platform for informal vendors to sell their products, which can increase foot traffic and create a lively atmosphere around the area. This can also provide an opportunity for the women entrepreneurs of the retail center to expand their reach by setting up stalls in the hawker space.

On the other hand, the urban park provides a green space for visitors to relax and take a break from shopping. This can attract more visitors to the area, who may then visit the retail center as well. The park can also host various events and activities, such as concerts, festivals, and exhibitions, which can further promote the retail center and increase its visibility.

Additionally, the hawkers space and urban park can create a sense of community within the area, which can be beneficial for the overall retail business. This can lead to increased loyalty from local customers and positive word-of-mouth marketing.

Overall, incorporating the hawkers space and urban park in the master plan can provide multiple benefits to the retail business center for women, including increased foot traffic, expanded reach, community building, and promotion through events and activities.

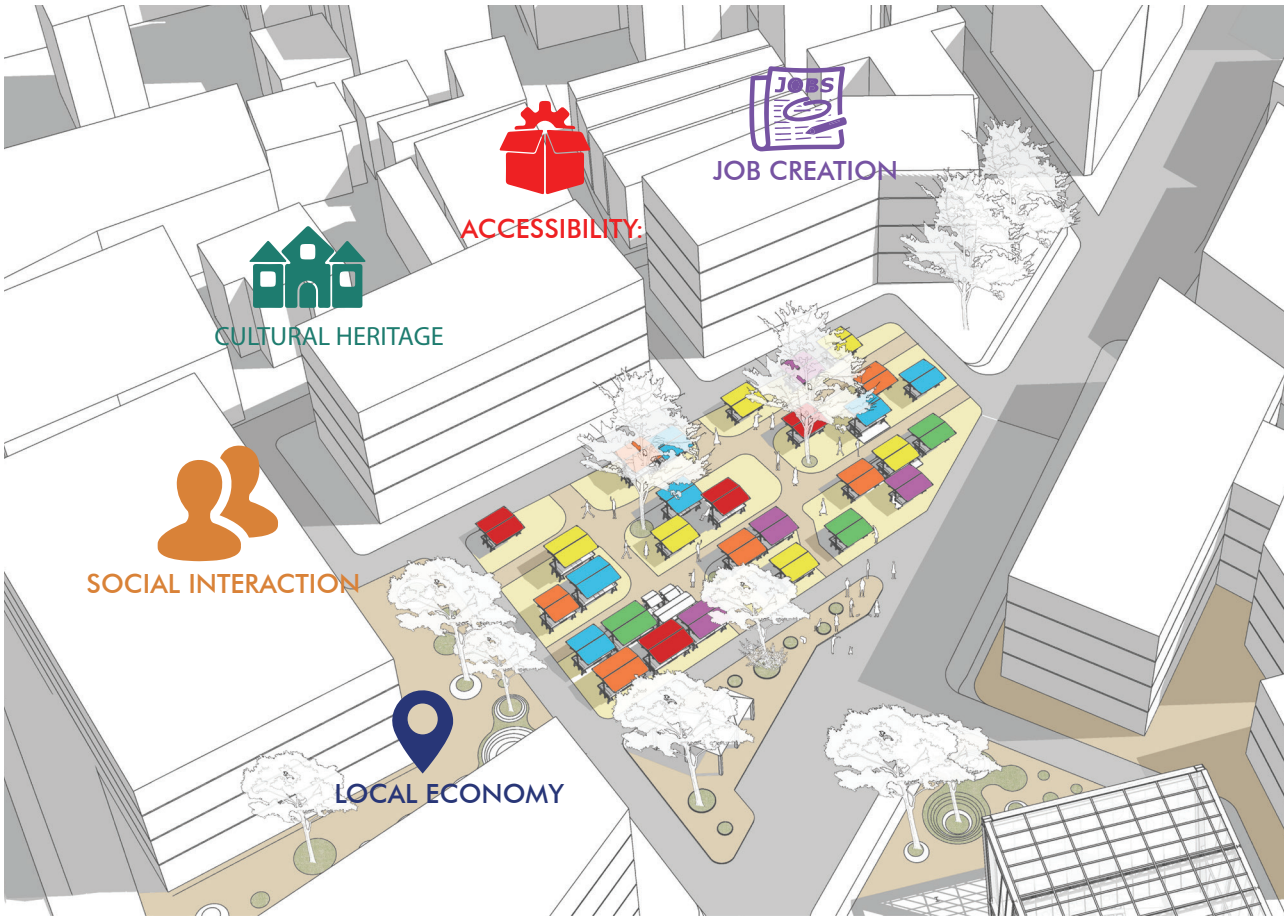


Figure: Space for Hawkers and Vendors
Source: Author

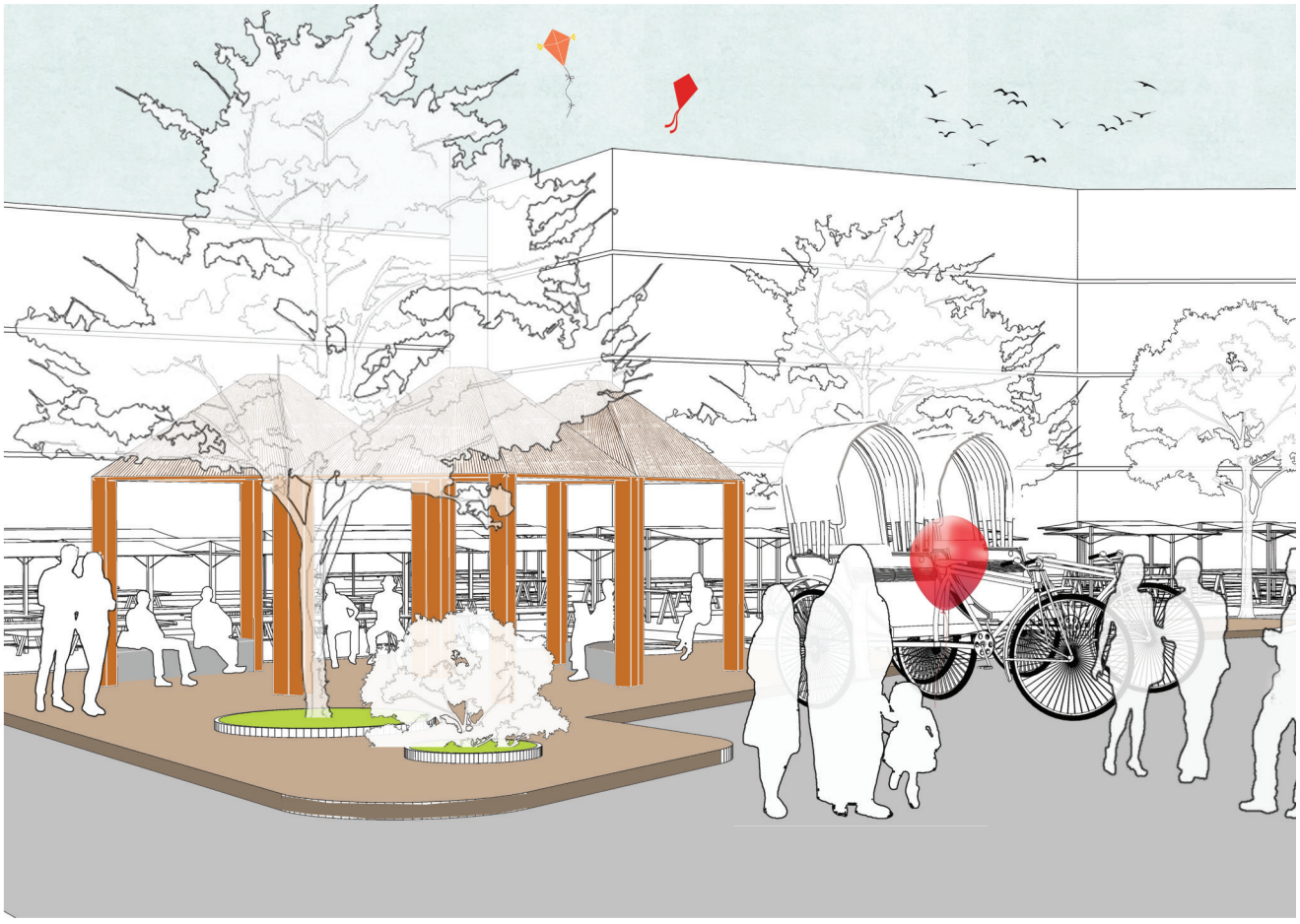


Figure: Resting Space and Vehicle Stoppage
Source: Author

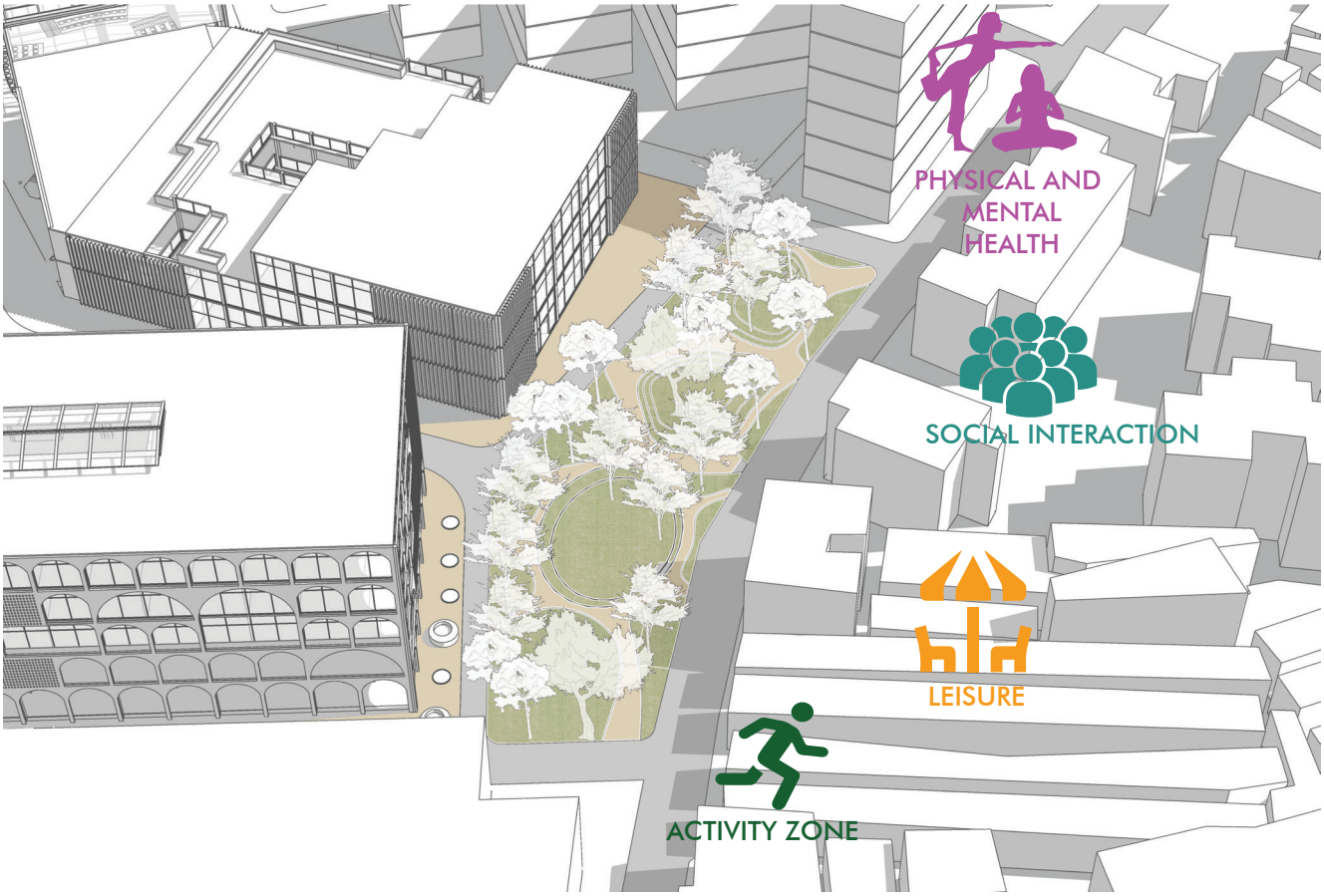
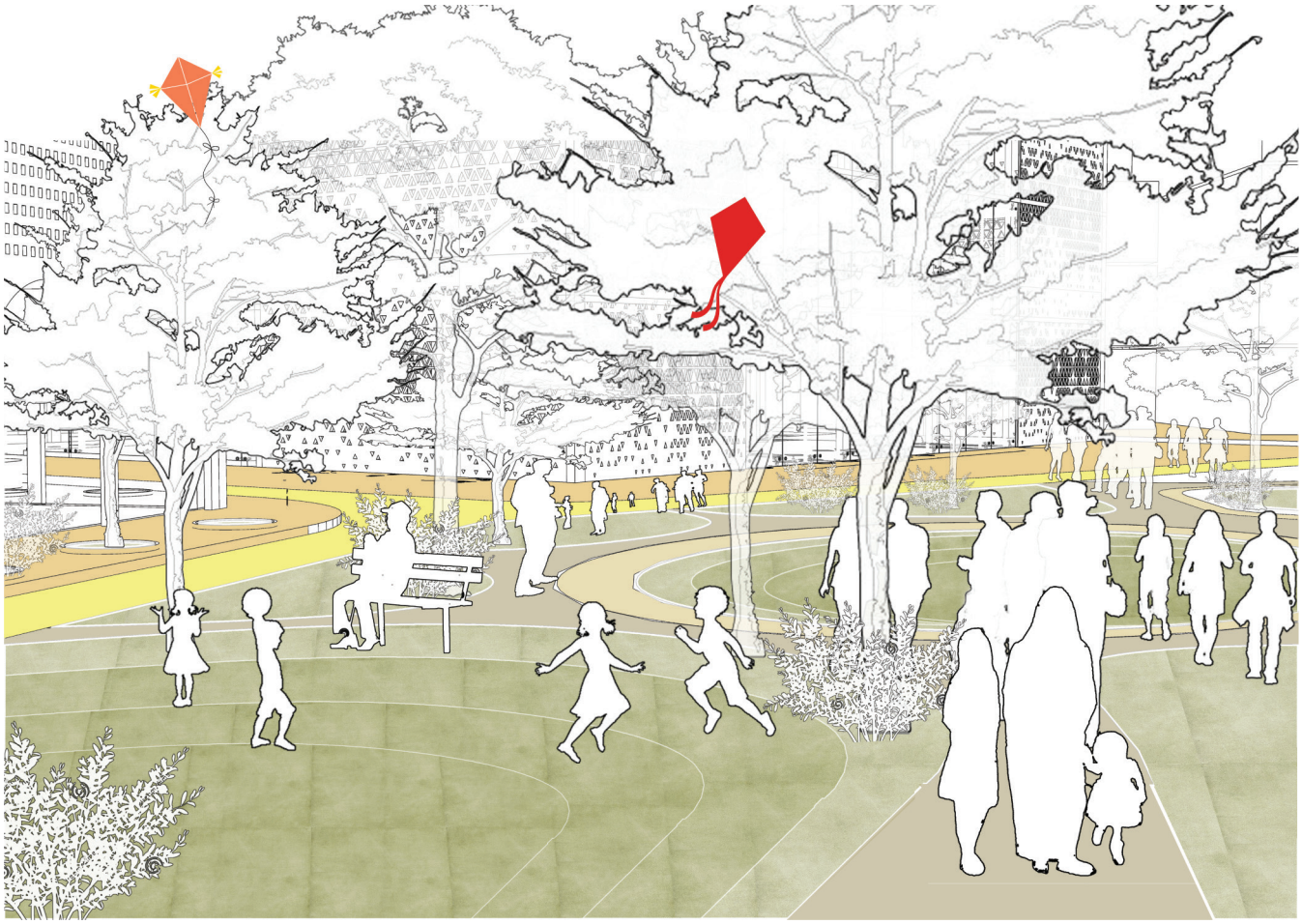


Figure: Urban Park
Source: Author



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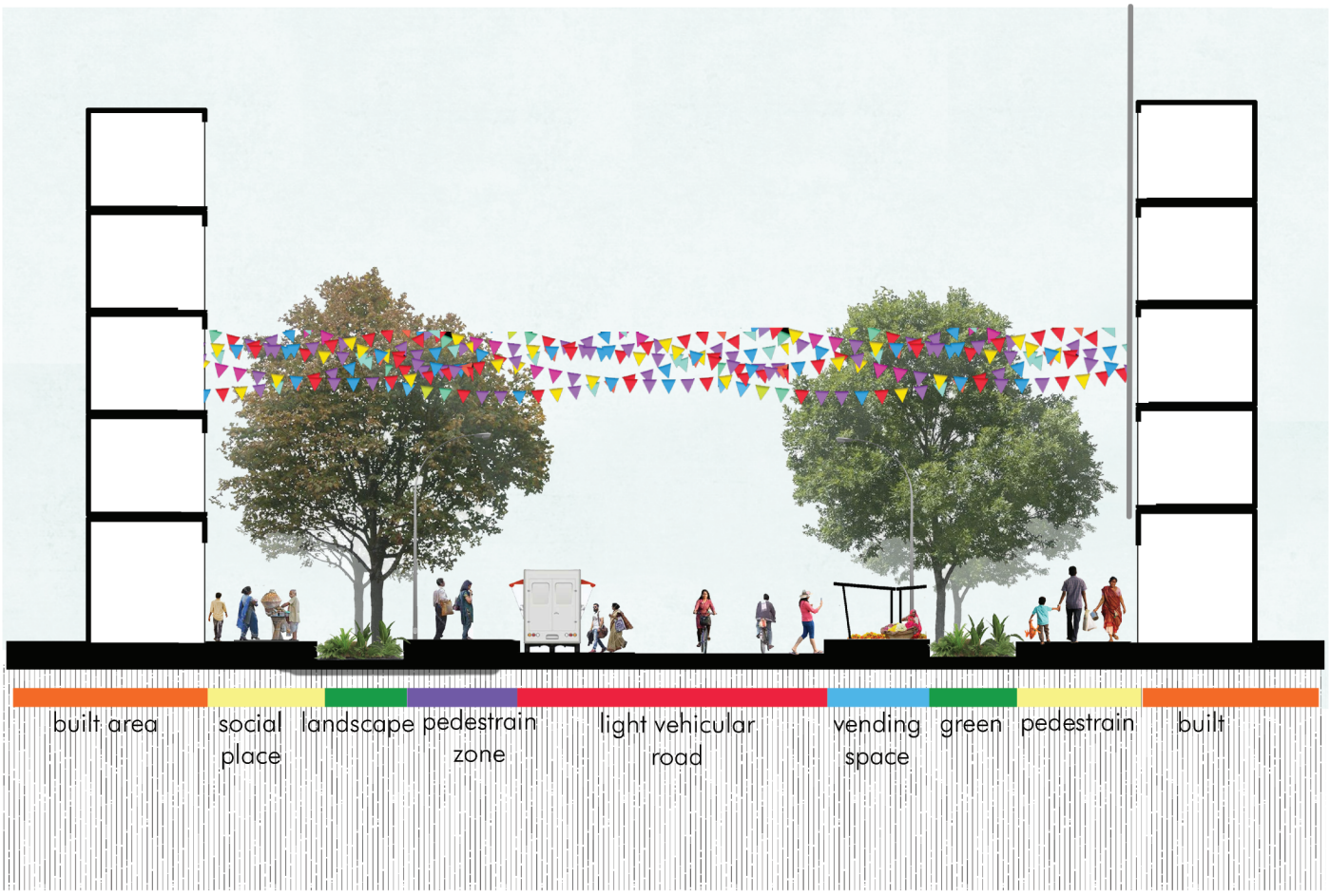

Figure: Road Section
Source: Author

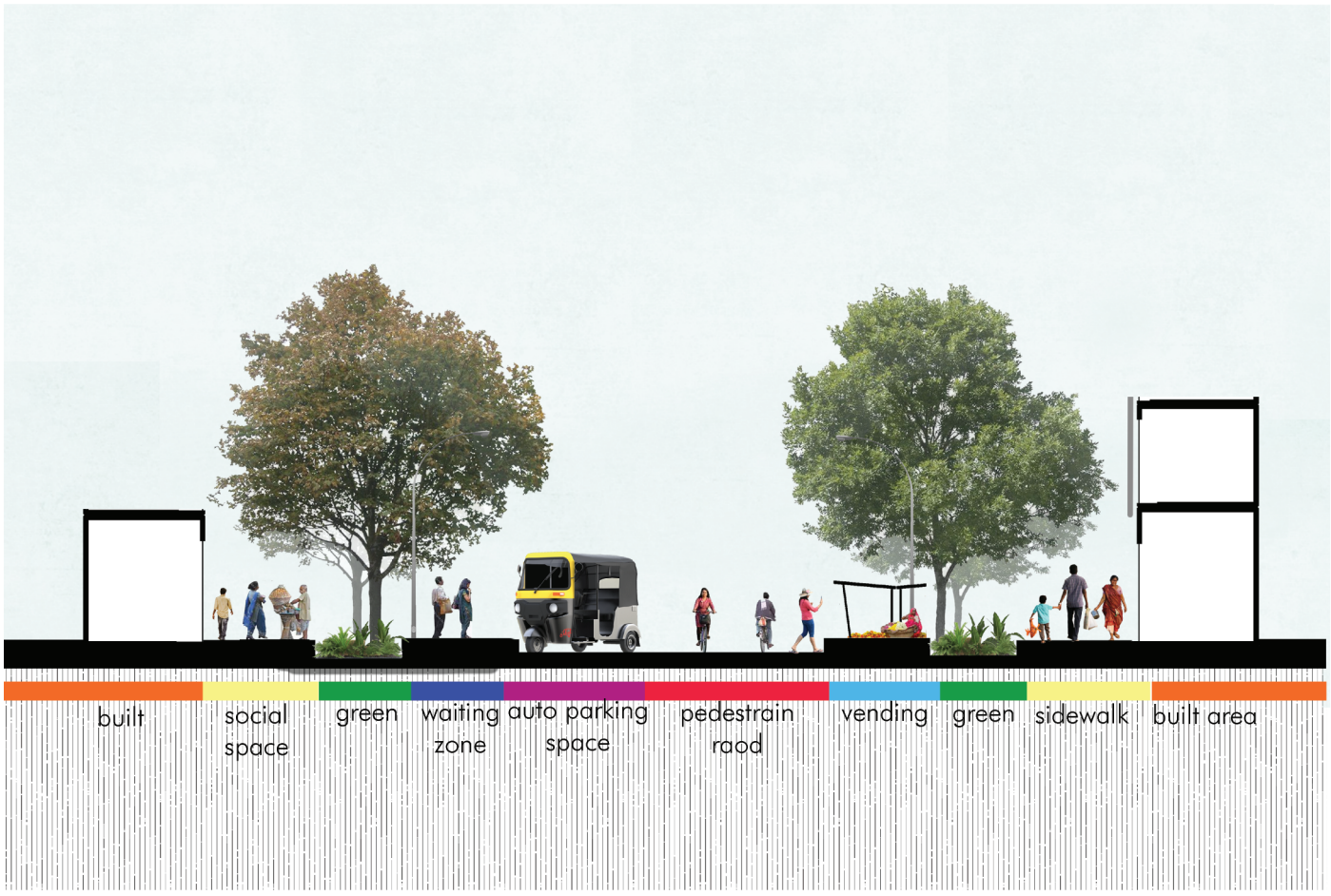

Figure: Road Section
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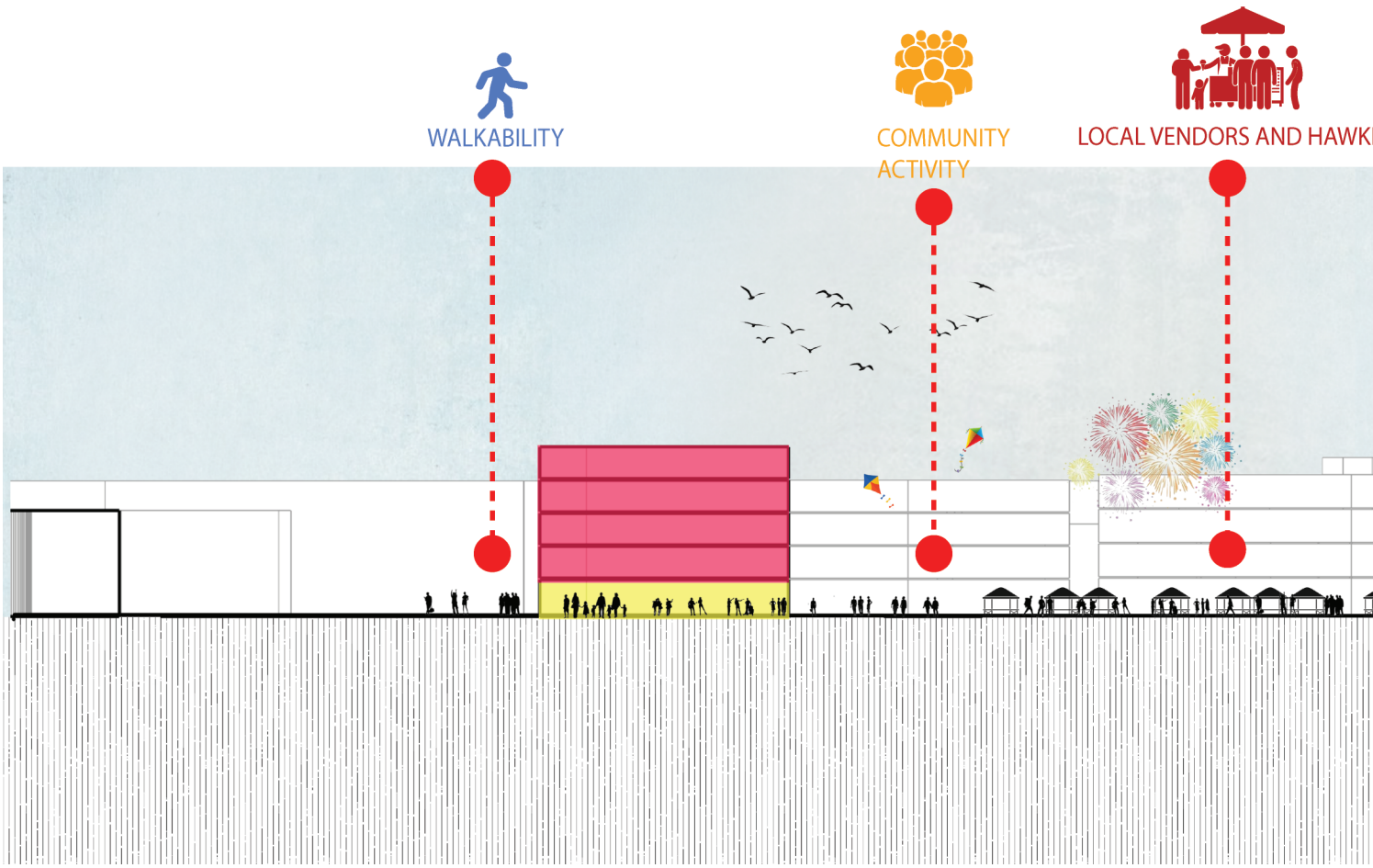
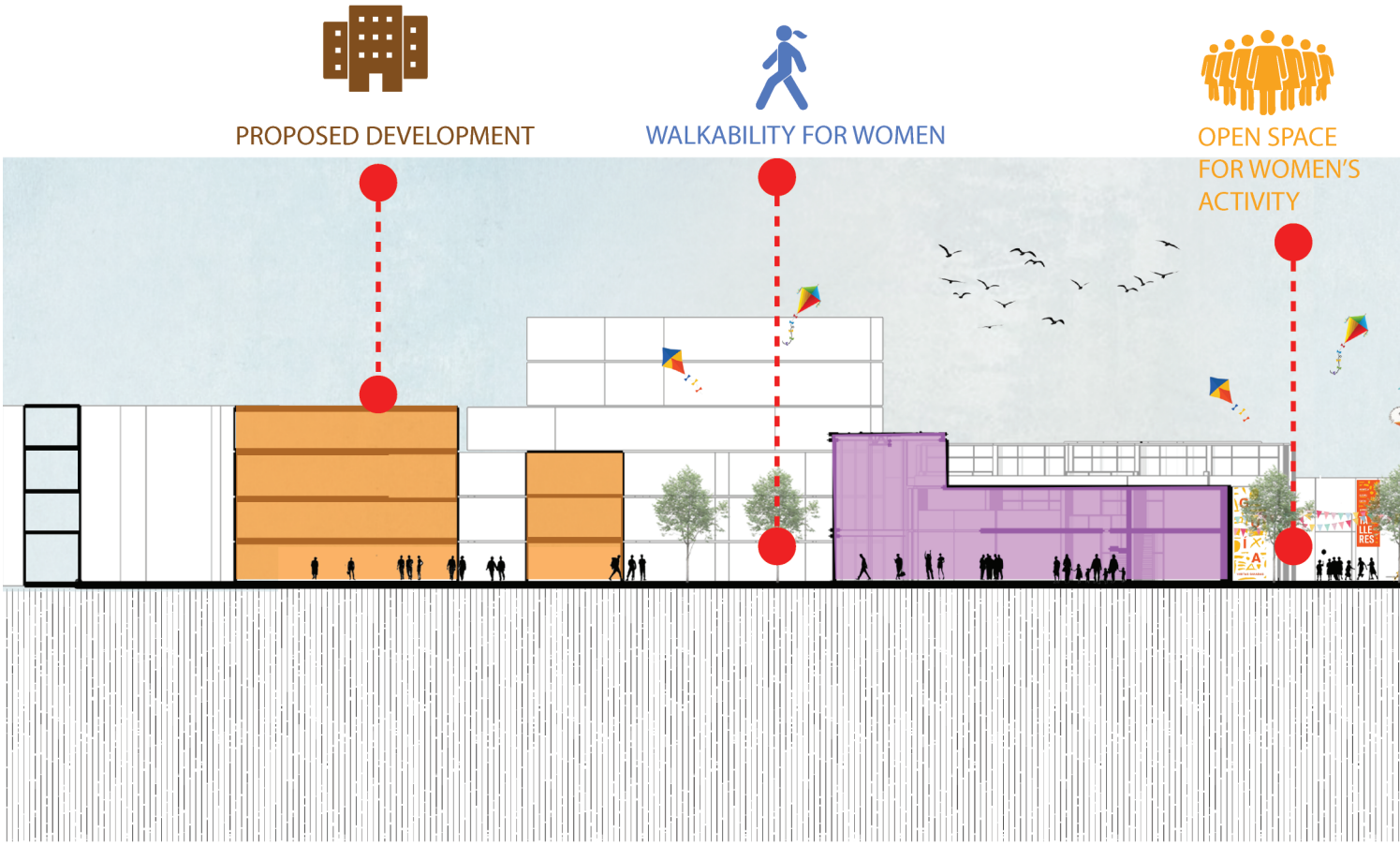
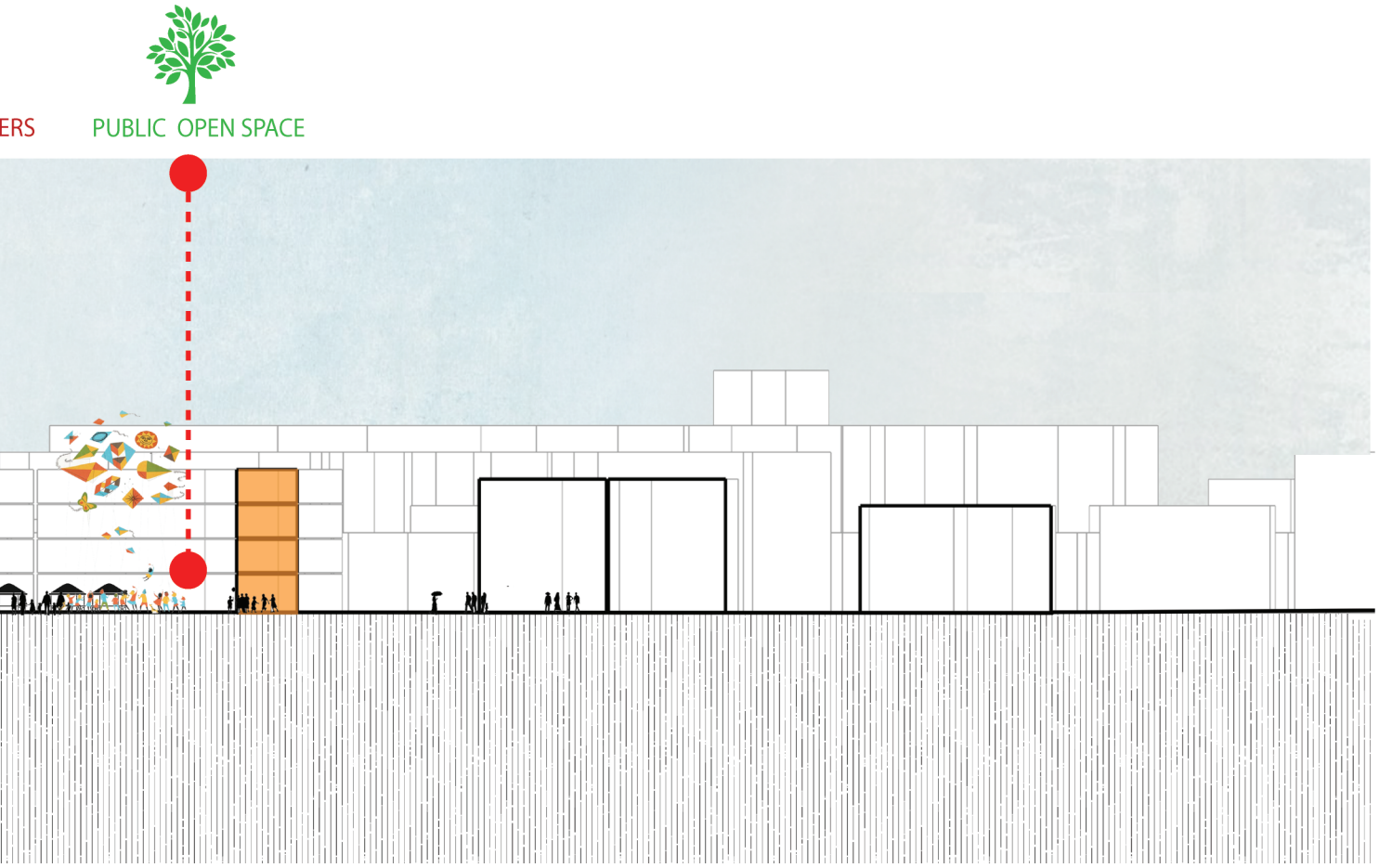

WALKABILITY
COMMUNITY ACTIVITY
LOCAL VENDORS AND HAWK


PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
WALKABILITY FOR WOMEN
OPEN SPACE FOR WOMEN'S ACTIVITY



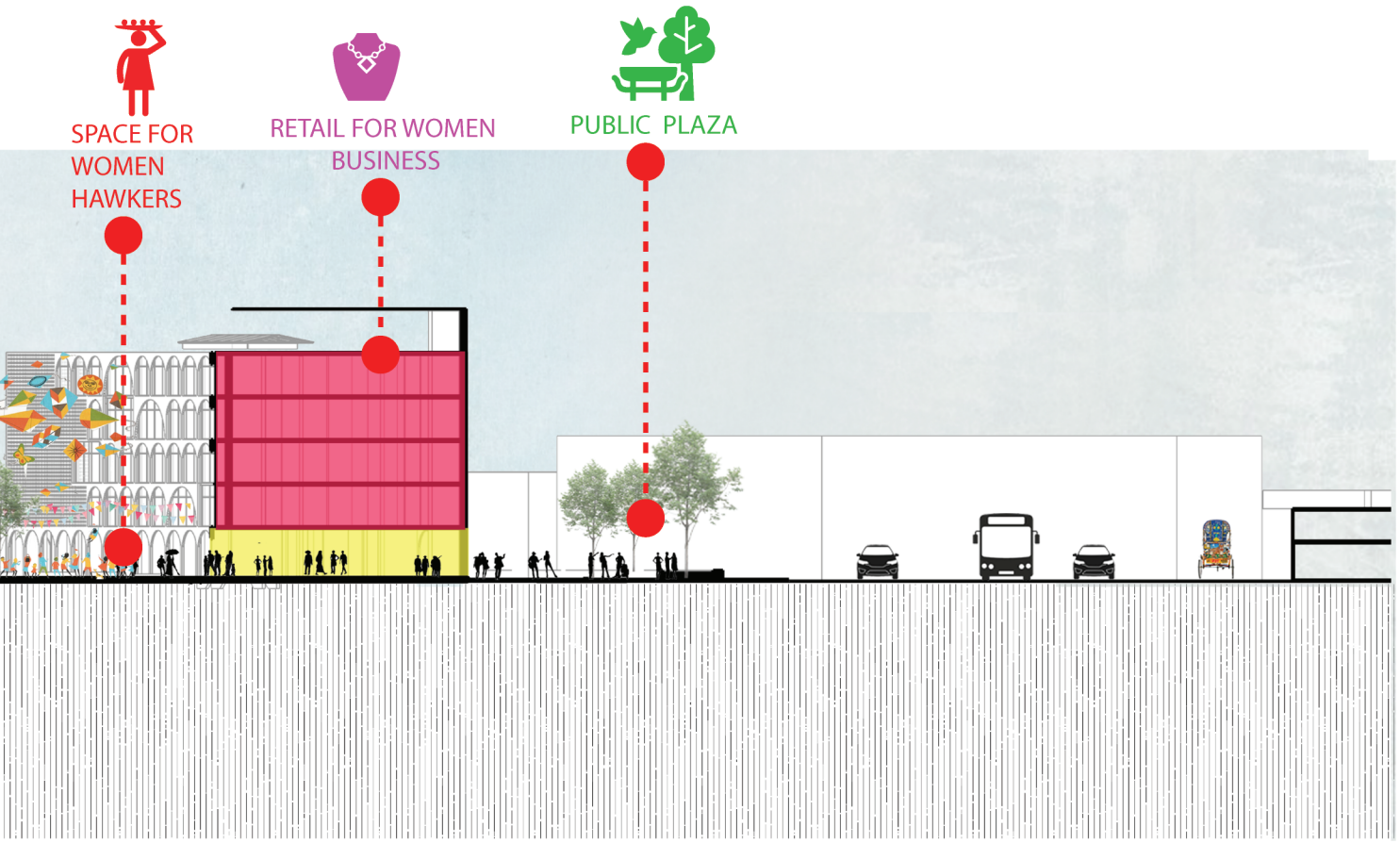
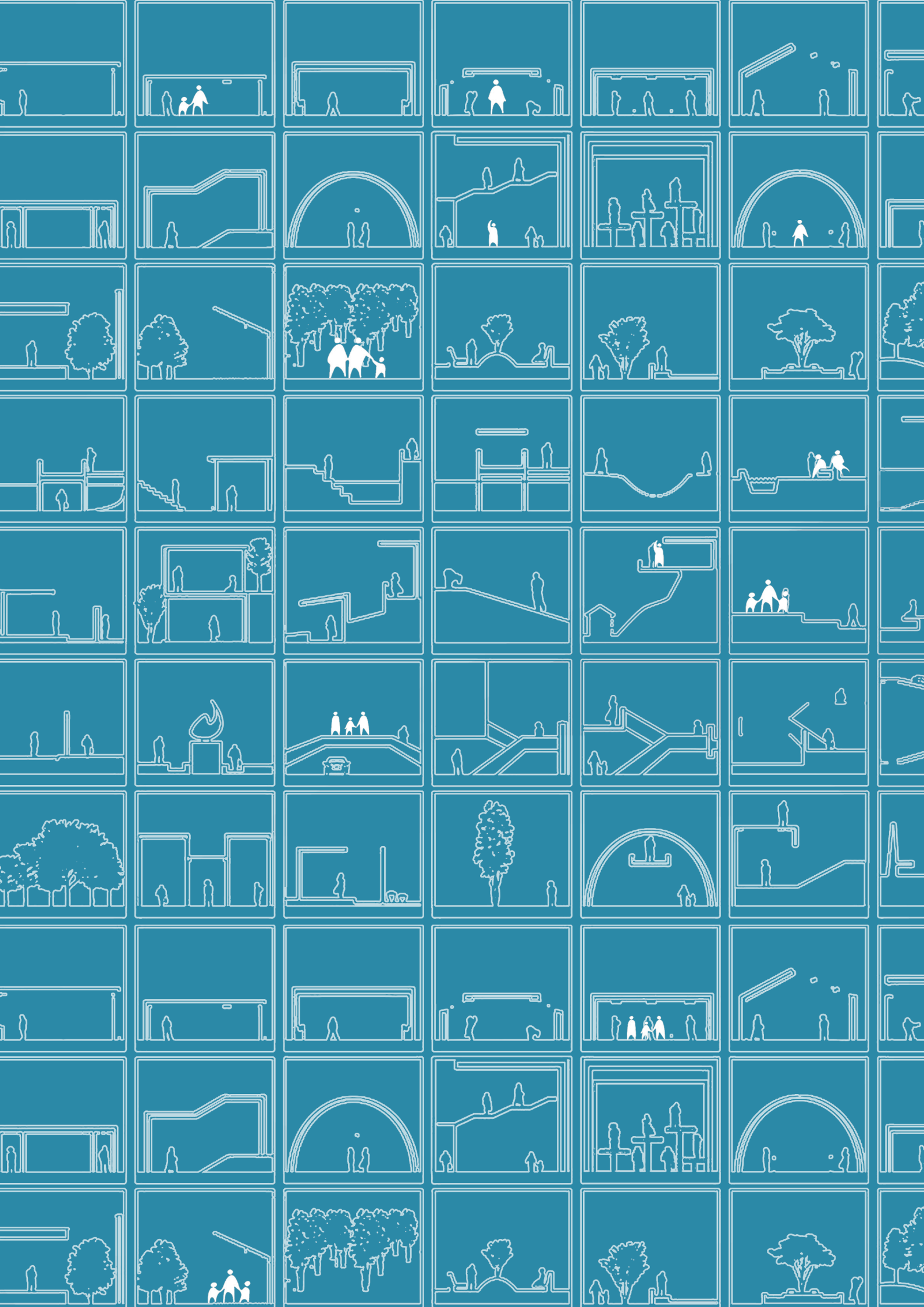


Figure: Site Sections
Source: Author



CONCLUSION

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In conclusion, the design of the master plan with gender-inclusive retail business and exhibition center, coupled with the creation of a dedicated urban park and hawker's space, has the potential to create a positive impact on the retail environment for women and empower them to claim their right to urban space. The center provides a communal space for women to showcase their products, participate in workshops, attend cultural exhibitions and performances, and access wellness and co-working spaces. The hawker's space and urban park provide a platform for small-scale entrepreneurs to sell their products and interact with the community.

Through the use of climate-responsive design strategies, such as the double skin facade and vertical louvers, the building provides a comfortable and sustainable environment for users. Moreover, the inclusion of childcare services and accessible design ensures that the center is accessible to all women, regardless of their socioeconomic background or physical ability.

By encouraging the participation of women in the retail and entrepreneurial sector, the center can contribute to greater economic empowerment and gender equality. Additionally, the creation of a safe and inclusive urban space can help to challenge social norms and promote greater acceptance and appreciation of women's contributions to society. In this way, the design of the retail business and exhibition center, along with the hawker's space and urban park, can be a catalyst for positive change and empowerment for women in urban environments.

The thesis bringsattention to the issue of GENDER INCLUSIVITY in retail spaces in Dhaka and highlight the specific needs and preferences of women shoppers. This can create awareness among retailers, designers, and policymakers, leading to a more inclusive approach to retail space design.

This thesis also provides PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS for designing retail spaces that cater to the needs and preferences of women shoppers in Dhaka. These recommendations can be used by retailers and designers to create gender-inclusive retail spaces that meet the needs of all shoppers.

Lragely, this thesis can serve as a STARTING POINT FOR FUTURE RESEARCH ON GENDER INCLUSIVITY in retail spaces in Dhaka and beyond. This can contribute to a better understanding of the issue and lead to further improvements in the design of retail spaces.





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THANK YOU

