THE MARKET

Arcades in Colonial Khartoum

The Omdurman suq, main street

The Khartoum suq with arcades
The center of economic activity, was frequently found near the Friday mosque and comprised a series of streets with commercial stalls on both sides. The main effect of this contiguity was that the mosque was never far removed from the center of activities of daily life. It also necessitated a traditional architectural symbolism to effect the move from the common place of the street to the spiritual space of the mosque.

This is a settled hierarchy which governs the layout of Muslim market and is surprisingly constant from North Africa to India- food stuff are generally sold in the open air. The market has various types, there is the open suq and the bazaar, which is a net work of streets covered with vaults or domes. The bazaar is one of the classic defining features of an Islamic “town, a commercial “ spine” of the Urban Fabric linking different buildings together, e.g. the mosque, the school, etc.

There is also what called the vaulted streets suq, which is lit by aperture in the center of each bay, creating a cool and well ventilated space that is ideal for hot climate. These various architectural forms prevails over the whole Islamic world.

My intention was to combine both open and covered suq (market) concept, structurally and functionally, by following the courtyard grid to establish the suq layout. The courtyard grid, is a combination of concrete strips and brick infill. The grid is 2.10 x 2.10 m, with a concrete tile located at the intersection point which is 20 x 20 cm.
Steel cover with embedded spot light to illuminate the suq area.
These tiles will be transformed to concrete columns at the market (suq) area, which will differentiate between the horizontal courtyard grid and the vertical suq grid. The suq grid is composed of concrete columns and beams as the main structure, combined with wood beams, its main function is to support the wood trellis. The wood trellis is used as a shade for the suq. The market is divided to 20 bays, each bay is divided to 4 parts by the wood beams, where the wood trellis fit in between. The concept is to allow fair amount of light and shade. At the level of detailing, each concrete column is capped by a metal box that embodies a light source to illuminate the suq area at night, and to emphasize the continuity of the courtyard grid, by having these lights following the same grid.
The side walk that represents the wall, elevates to erect the wall of the first building along the path, the library. The library preforms a dual function, as an educational place and architecturally as the first landmark in the Island. The site is open and spacious, which helped me to redesign the area surrounding the library and provide the Islanders with a general layout that defines the main road and provide more spaces for housing.

As the side walk follows the main road it creates a triangular shape in front of the site, which is designed to function as an outdoor reading area.

The design is based on the concept of having a courtyard that is surrounded with rooms, and enclosed with a high wall, which is originally the same wall enclosing the edge courtyard. The library is a two storey building; housing an open courtyard surrounded with an arcade. The arcade is constructed of wood columns and trellis, that hold the walkway in the second level.
The walls are load bearing brick of 50 cm thick, which embody narrow windows. The floor finish varies, internally, they are mainly of concrete, externally, the courtyard is finished with brick while the surrounding area is finished with larger concrete tiles of 60 x 60 cm. The roof is concrete slabs and beams.

In the external reading area, the floor is finished with brick and concrete strips. Concrete used for seating is finished with wood. The outdoor reading area is one of the few spaces where the Islanders can gather. It is important to use vegetation intensively to create a more pleasant environment and provide shade for people walking.
ELSAHA (THE PLAZA)

Is the second landmark in the Island. The existing site, as it shows in the key map, is an open space, located between two main roads in Tuti Island. This makes it important and suitable for being a meeting and gathering place, which is generated from the idea of having two roads meet at that point, making it possible for people to rest and meet before continuing their journey towards the center of the Island or any other place.

The wall runs along the west side of the plaza, it maintains the same concept of being a side walk then transforming into a wall when it meets a building. It creates a space that is used as a bus station in the west side of the plaza, as it shows in the perspective of the main street, and then it continuous as a side walk towards the center.

The design is once again based mainly on the concept of a courtyard, which is mainly open and surrounded by scattered rooms. The plaza represents a courtyard for the surrounding houses, since it is located in the middle of scattered houses, which depict the scattered rooms, supporting the concept of being a meeting place.

The background photo is for the existing site.
The plaza is mainly an open space surrounded with a combination of brick and concrete arcades, housing an open space with different levels to define the space. The material used for the floor of the central part is a combination of brick and concrete strips, carrying on the same concept of the edge site.

The arcade brick columns are 20 x 20 cm thick and 3.00 m high, these columns are capped with a metal cover which houses a light source. The columns are connected with brick arches, as it is shown in the isometric of the arcade.

The plaza provides the area with a green look, which it lacks. It is amazing to notice the contrast between the inside and the outside of Tuti, since it is surrounded externally with a lot of vegetation and it lacks this green look internally.