THE CORE OF TUTI’S VILLAGE
The background photo shows the existing situation in Tuti’s center

LEGEND
1- Main courtyard
2- Store
3- Library
4- Gift and book store
5- Center plaza
6- Two storey stores (kiosks)
7- Offices
8- Transportation station
9- The wall
LEGEND

5- Center plaza
6- Two storey stores (kiosks)
7- Offices
8- Transportation station
9- The wall
10- The cafeteria
11- Exhibition halls
12- Apartment

A center kiosk
This is the original commercial center of the village, where the main transportation road that connects the edge of the Island to the center ends. It represents a commercial and a transportation center for the Island. Most of the houses that surround the center are one storey, accommodating small stores, that are a part of the periphery wall of the house.

The attempt is to redevelop the area to provide more space to establish a well organized commercial center that accommodates a larger number of stores; and wider space which will facilitate the flow and circulation of traffic.

The challenge is to design a space within an existing and tight site, the idea is to establish a second level for most of the existing stores, to determine a strip of two level stores around the center plaza. These stores (shops) should be facing the plaza and have no opening towards the house’s courtyards which are in the back, to maintain the concept of privacy. Thus these stores (shops) will act as a barrier for the houses and will enclose the center plaza that will distinctly represent the courtyard for the whole Island.
This will furnish the area with the sense of a communal, commercial and transportation center. The sidewalk will continue until it reaches the center plaza where it transforms into a wall, which is the main element in forming the center building, the third landmark. The center building is a two storey building, housing at the first level, the main courtyard surrounded by stores, while in the second level it houses an open cafeteria and exhibition rooms, that is furnished with historical collections that speak of Tutu's history. The wall ends with a three storey tower, just as it started with four storey tower. The tower accommodates mainly a staircase that takes the visitor to a higher level, which enables him to look back to view his path, while the primary tower takes you downward towards the water. The space at the top of the center tower is designed to allow the viewer to have a wide view of the old village and locate the position of the first mosque, which is the origin of the village.
The center building is constructed of load bearing brick walls and partitions, concrete floors and ceiling and wood trellis that covers the cafeteria on the second level. This demonstrates that the concept of using brick as the main structure and the concrete for the floors and ceiling has been adopted from the very beginning.

The wall as it forms the center building also separates between the pedestrians and the vehicles circulation in the plaza. The wall also embodies seating places that are characterized by arches and light sources that are placed in niches along the wall.

In designing the center building, the aim is to establish a recognizable language which is used in house design. The arcades that surrounds the courtyard are symbolic of the arcades that surrounds the mosque’s courtyard. The brick floor finish and the niches used for seating are symbolic of the niches used for storing, all are design elements of a traditional house.
One of Tuti's newly constructed houses
The name Mashrabiya is derived from the Arabic word “drink” and originally meant “a drinking place.” This was a cantilevered space with latticed openings, where small water jars were placed to be cooled by the evaporation effect as air moved through the openings. Now the name is used for an opening with a wooden lattice screen composed of small wooden balusters that are circular in section and arranged at specific regular intervals, often in a decorative and intricate geometric pattern, fig (1,2).

Mashrabiya has five functions: (1) controlling the passage of light, (2) controlling the air flow, (3) reducing the temperature of the air current, (4) increasing the humidity of the air current, and (5) ensuring privacy. It is usually a projecting room in the upper floors, hanging over the streets to create more internal space and right angle corners. Such projecting structures shade the streets they overhang and protect passersby from rain and sun. They are supported on wooden, brick or stone corbels, and elaborately decorated.

In some parts of Sudan it is used differently, by having it cantilevered from a multistory building, fig (3), while in the center it is used as a balcony which is wider and open, which contradicts the original function of the mashrabiya.

I tried to combine both concepts by having a concrete projecting box, that has only narrow strips of windows, to allow a slight amount of light to penetrate. It is used to demarcate between the corners of the building and allow more internal space. These spaces are used as exhibition rooms that speak about Tuti’s history, at both the center and the edge.