

VITI:
THE BRIDGE OF
MOANA-NUI

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The overwhelming narratives of explorers and exploiters shouting our “faults” and whispering our triumphs has hindered us through time, those loud voices have become legend and the whispers, myth.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the Acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed _____

Date 15/11/2021 _____

ABSTRACT

Viti (Fiji) lies at the centre of Mōana-Nui (the Pacific) where the lines of Melanesia and Polynesia converge. Its location has brought about a unique culture where one can find people, arts, crafts, foods, traditions, and protocols influenced by trade with cultures from neighbouring islands from Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia.

However, globalization and cultural assimilation associated with British colonies has led to a loss of Itaukei (indigenous people of Viti) culture and tradition. Like many other indigenous island groups, Viti did not use written transcripts to record their history and culture till around the 20th century. Their history was recorded in other ways, namely in the tangible art of building.

To survive and thrive as a people their shelters and modes of transportation were key pillars in learning about ones culture and self, how they rested and how they moved on the earth, so no matter where they found themselves their culture and knowledge of self was with them. Vale (fale) and Waqa (waka) were vessels of learning which elders would use as tools to pass on knowledge, through building techniques and processes.

The deterioration of Itaukei Waqa and Vale building has seen the culture as a people deteriorate. The physical and mental health of Itaukei peoples is in decline. The loss of our Waqa connecting us to Mōana-Nui, has destroyed the intelligence, confidence, bravery, and strength of Itaukei to conquer the impossible. The absence of Waqa to travel, has left us static, leaving us in a mode of rest, disconnecting our relationship to Moana-Nui and our stories, people, resources, which are all part of our cultural identity.

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Vinaka vakalevu,

GLOSSARY

Bete: Priest.

Bigness: Enlargement of self and cultural identity.

Bose Vakaturaga: Meeting of the Council of Chiefs.

Bose Levu Vakaturaga: The Great Council of Chiefs.

Buabua: Native Itaukei hardwood.

Bukuta: Propose a compact.

Buli: District chief.

Bure: Itaukei meeting house.

Bure kalou: Temple.

Itaukei: Natives of Viti

Koro: Village

Lavaki: Legal order or ordinance.

Lotu: Christianity, the Christian Church.

Luveniwai: Woodland and river dwelling fairy.

Mana: Power and wisdom.

Matanitu: Government.

Mataqali: Itaukei land-owning unit.

Rara: Village green.

Ratu: Chiefly title conferred on men.

Reguregu: Condolence gathering.

Roko Tui: Government provincial chief.

Siganilewa: Judgement Day.

Smallness: A belittled self and cultural identity.

Soro: Ceremony to ask for forgiveness.

Tamata Dina: True believers.

Tauvu: Traditional rivalries between vanua.

Tikina: District.

Tokatoka: Clan or smaller constituent of a mataqali.

Tuka: Immortality.

Turaga ni koro: Government appointed headman.

Vakaviti: The Itaukei way.

Via Kaukauwa: Show of force.

Vuli: Itaukei student minister.

Vanua: Land polity.

Tabua: Whale's tooth used in Itaukei ceremonies.

Tavuki: Turned upside down.

Turaga ni lewa: Magistrate.

Vale: House or shelter

Viti: Viti

Wai ni Tuka: Elixir of life.

Waqqa : Canoe or Boat

Yaqona: Traditional Itaukei ceremonial drink prepared from pounded pepper root.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Project

The effects of colonization have many impacts on a nation's identity and health. What once was common knowledge and second nature to the Itaukei (indigenous people of Viti) is now foreign. Traditional stories and ways of living have slowly faded. As time goes on, elders of Itaukei knowledge are passing, and this knowledge lost with them as they leave this earth.

With the globalization and urbanization of land in Viti, its cultures, and traditions are dying, some have become nearly extinct. Economic development in transportation, housing, farming, and many other things have evolved. This has changed the way people live. The dominance of Western culture has deemed indigenous knowledge and culture primitive, irrelevant, or a myth, a story told to children.

This loss of indigenous knowledge can be found in the social fabric of Viti today. There is a lack of importance relating to the architecture, arts, crafts or material culture of waqa building. This project aims to recover,

preserve, and advance indigenous knowledge associated with traditional cultural practices.

The Fiji Museum is an example of the conflict associated with colonization and the loss of cultural heritage. In this museum, traditional Itaukei artifacts are dislocated from their traditional contexts. They have become artefacts housed in a colonial non-Itaukei space. From the interior spaces of the Museum to its external façade, a dominance of Western mode of thinking indifferent to indigenous forms of expression is asserted.

Waqa building and voyaging, is an art form, and skill that Itaukei and islanders from Mōana-Nui were masters of. This is an artform and cultural practice that connected islanders across the ocean, through exploration and trading between different island groups. This is how we shared knowledge and resources. Waqa building was important as a way of sustaining strong connections between communities and cultural practices that have lost importance, nearly becoming extinct. This loss is slowly erasing our identity and who we are as a people.

PROJECT OUTLINE

To collect, preserve and store is a foreign concept to Itaukei people. In Museums, Itaukei culture and traditions are displayed in cabinets or rooms, frozen in a state of inertia. This counters Itaukei traditions where life and death cycles are enacted through everyday cultural practices and exchange.

Traditional ceremonies were conducted by Itaukei to construct a waqa or vale. Waqa construction occurs with the death of an individual, a marriage, the birth of a family member, the death of a plantation or the need to gather resources of land to settle.

The practice of traditional waqa building is nearly extinct. Knowledge has been lost over generations. The recovery and regeneration of this knowledge and development of ways to pass it on to future generations is key to sustaining and maintaining Itaukei cultural practices.

The aim of this research is to create a structure for building waqa that will be used as a Museum and Marine and educational facility to provide an inspirational foundation to revitalize Itaukei cultural identity. This building will be located on the current Fiji Museum site based in Suva. It will demonstrate an indigenous way of working

with indigenous treasures. It will preserve cultural forms of expression, and promote the education of Itaukei culture through dynamic practices associated with waqa. How waqa building is practiced and experienced is key to a notion of regeneration, to inspire youth to take an interest, innovate and hopefully compete with the rest of the world using wisdom drawn from traditional knowledge.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This research explores the history of traditional building of waqa or vale and through this knowledge derives a methodology to inform the design and construction of a facility that promotes Itaukei cultural heritage.

The proposed Museum and maritime exhibition and waqa building facility will acknowledge, inform, and express the rich history of Viti's boat building traditions. The educational and construction facilities will bring knowledge holders and young together in one space to share techniques and build knowledge and explore and research new ways of building and constructing.

The design will include a waqa storage facility and waterfront arrival area. The intension is to design and build a space to host voyaging competitions, like the Americas cup, but between groups from Mōana-Nui, to create an incentive and opportunity for younger generations from this region to become involved with Itaukei traditions. The overall design will support the creation of a structured regeneration of the art of waqa building and form a foundation of Indigenous knowledge revitalisation.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can Itaukei waqa and vale building concepts evolve a design for a Museum, Marine educational and construction facility that will help regenerate the voyaging knowledge and culture in Viti?

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Due to the recent epidemic of Covid-19 all proposed plans of travel have been cancelled. Since my project is based in Viti have been limited to using online resources to research and explore maps and literature based on the topic.

The project is based on the site of the Viti Museum. The aim is to redesign the Maritime exhibition and to construct an educational theory and practical waqa building facility and provide waqa storage facility near the shore to cater to future festivals and competitions that showcase voyaging culture from Mōana-Nui.

This research project and design propositions intend to recover, regenerate and advance indigenous knowledge of this region.

STATE OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE FIELD

This research considers literature on colonization, globalization and cultural regeneration and recovery, from authors such as Epele Hau'ofa, Elise Huffer and Ropate Qalo and Sir Basil Thompson, these texts will influence the approach in design.

It involves an analysis of the way material culture as well as intangible culture, influences the spatial arrangement and functionality of spaces incorporated within the structures relating to the theme of cultural regeneration and revitalisation.

METHODOLOGY

To ensure my research successfully responds to the research question. Initial research will dive into the history of Viti and Itaukei cultural practices. This will create the foundation of the thesis and an understanding of the rationale for this thesis.

Different literature investigations From Epeli Hau'ofa's *Our sea of islands*, Elise Huffer and Ropate Qalo article "*Have We Been Thinking Upside-Down? The Contemporary Emergence of Pacific Theoretical Thought*" and Sir Basil Thompson's *Decay of a Culture*, will create an understanding of some of the contextual issues relevant to the history and current events of today, to understand the issues of cultural knowledge and the loss of it, what has occurred, what solutions can develop from this and how will it affect the design? What needs to be designed? And how to design it?

Further investigations in material culture and intangible culture will help provide further insight into Indigenous practises as well as the ceremonial protocols that these materials have in everyday Itaukei life and how can it be incorporated into the design.

The research will involve an evaluation of the site of the Fiji museum, located at Thurston gardens in Suva city, which runs along the Suva harbour. It also considers nearby landmarks and narratives that contribute to the design of the structures and the spatial arrangement.

Research gathered and explored, will inform the design process and how to proceed in terms of design, structure, spatial arrangement, programme, curation, preservation, and exhibition arrangement.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

VITI

A culturally rich land with over 300 islands¹, sitting at the center of convergence between the regions of Melanesia and Polynesia², although it is a Melanesian nation it is mixed with tradition, language, craftsmanship, identity, and stories of Mōana-Nui, which make Viti truly unique.

¹ Klaus Kästle, "Fiji Islands - Country Profile" Nations Online Project, accessed July 18, 2021, <https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/fiji.htm>.

PRE-COLONIAL MIGRATION

Prior to colonization Viti is believed by some researchers to have been partly/completely inhabited by two different waves of migration groups, the first being the Lapita people³ with settlements on the islands of Viti dated about 3500 years ago⁴, archaeological evidence is found throughout the southern parts of Viti which follows their movement towards Polynesia and the isles of Tonga, Samoa, and further East. The second wave of migration being Melanesians, which followed 600-1000 years after⁵, bringing with them their crops, technology, and ways of life, migrating, and inhabiting the isles of Viti, forming many different tribes, with differing and distinguishing traditions, languages, and belief systems, some of these characteristics can still be heard and seen today in the many dialects spoken in Viti.

² Donnelly, Quanchi, and Kerr, *Fiji in the Pacific*, 106.

³ (Kirch, 1997:2)

⁴ Donnelly, Quanchi, and Kerr, *Fiji in the Pacific*, 3.

⁵ "Fiji Republic, Pacific Ocean," Place, Britannica, accessed August 25, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Fiji-republic-Pacific-Ocean/History>.



Figure. (2) by Author

EUROPEAN TRADERS

Knowledge of the islands of Viti by Europeans have been documented since 1643, by its first recorded European contact with Dutch explorer Abel Tasman.⁶ Further exploration began over a hundred years later and thus founded a relationship of trade between the Itaukei people and European sailors. Sandalwood became a highly valued item of trade to Europe and parts of Asia, trading with locals anything from clothing, boots, tobacco, weapons, and metal tools, eventually the Sandalwood trade died. Later Christianity was introduced to the island group.

⁶ Geraghty (1995),

EUROPEAN MISSIONARY PERIOD

Three Tahitian missionaries were sent to the region of Lau by the London Missionary Society in 1830 spreading Christianity on the island of Lakeba⁷. The neighboring nation of Tonga had already converted to Christianity and with trade activity and movement through the Lauan group frequent, so did the message and gospel of Christianity through the Tongans residing in Viti.

Missionaries and other colonial officials spread the influence of Christianity slowly inwards to the island of Bau. Bau housed by the paramount chief Ratu Seru Epenisa Cakobau. He was a respected chief and feared among neighboring regions. His successful conversion ensured missionary success across Viti. Ratu Cakobau's conversion was politically expedient in supporting the conversion of many others under his rule⁸ This ultimately led Viti to colonization.

⁸ (Routledge 1985: 82-7)

The Methodist mission in Viti was organized in a way that mirrored the systems of governance used in British colonies elsewhere under indirect rule. Colonial governance was used to promote leadership through chiefs or an educated elite⁹.



Figure. (3) by Author

COLONIAL RULE

On 10 October 1874, Viti was proclaimed a British colony. After years of deliberation between British government officials, the annexation became official¹⁰. In effect the British government had no hesitations in taking advantage of this newly acquired territory and its resources.

INDENTURED LABOUR

Between 1879 and 1916, Sir Arthur Gordon, and subsequent governors oversaw the migration of 60,965 indentured labourers to Viti. The majority from India.¹¹ Gordon had adopted this system to preserve a customary Itaukei society, noting that indigenous engagement in plantation systems in the West Indies had been highly detrimental.

The indentured labourers worked on plantation crops included cotton, copra (dried coconut kernels, from which oil is sourced) and sugar cane. Even though these plantation

crops were highly profitable, they required large numbers of cheap labourers.

They were contracted to 5-year terms, the indentured labourers (known as Girmitiyas) could return to India but at their own expense but if they renewed the five-year contract, their return home would be covered by the government, unfortunately many labourers became stranded as this was not honoured by the government, which has led to the large Fijian Indian population in Viti¹²

By January 1919, recruitment of Girmitiyas and indentured labourers officially ended, by then there were 60,533 indentured labourers in Viti, with the Antislavery committee putting pressure on the abolishment of the system¹³, as the Western world had started to change its political thoughts on slave labour and the United States of America changed their laws on slavery, it was essential Great Britain made changes.

¹⁰ F.O. 58/142 : Layard to Derby, Political no. 10, 10 October 1874.

¹¹ Gillion, "The Sources of Indian Emigration to Fiji."

¹³ Lonely Planet, "Fiji in Detail."

Figure. (4) By Author



COLONIAL INFLUENCE

Levuka had been a settlement for foreign traders and sailors over some decades post 1830s. Not long after the annexation of Viti, a decision was made to move the capital from Levuka to Suva. Suva was established as the capital in the 1880's and developed into a colonial township by early 20th century. Large movements of migration from colonial neighbors Australia and New Zealand saw the growth of the capital. The fabric of Viti started to change, architecturally and technologically the new township was built in a Victorian style, typical of colonies elsewhere, replacing and influencing indigenous *Bure* structures. Modes of transport also shifted as traditional waqa of Viti became obsolete, with steam and coal powered technology becoming prevalent.

This change led to a fall in trade between Pacific nations throughout the Lau group. Interaction between islanders fell, and the culture of sharing knowledge, resources and craftsmanship slowly disappeared.

POST-COLONIAL: VITI TODAY

96 years after the annexation, Viti won its independence on October 10, 1970, and became its own sovereign state. Ratu Kamisese Mara was appointed as the first prime minister. Since then, Viti has struggled to extract itself from the imprint of colonization. A Westminster system of government and racial tensions between indigenous peoples and "Fijian-Indians" has led to four Coups¹⁴ and everyday social tensions.

Traditional craftsmanship, arts, and other aspects of Itaukei culture have become a rarity over time. Under the dominance of a Western hegemony and education system, knowledge of traditional practises has become scarce. The health and vitality of indigenous cultural practices have consequently suffered.

¹⁴ Ramesh, "Fiji, 1987-2007: The Story of Four Coups,"

Figure. (5) By Author



Rerevaka na Kalou ka doka na Tui

LITERATURE REVIEW

The examining of these texts is to form an understanding of the position and issues I intend to discuss and address within the design. To understand what it is that has occurred in the past, what it is that's happening today and how or what can be done to start a process of recovery and regeneration.

A STUDY OF THE DECAY OF CUSTOM

A study published in 1908 by Basil Thomson, contained research on the decay of indigenous customs of peoples of Viti. A vast amount of research compiled for the study was from a commission in 1903 to investigate a decrease in natives.

This study focused on Viti society and the impact on customs by which the Itaukei lived within the context of 1908. It considered the impact of warfare, the effects of foreign substances, such as tobacco smoking, early encounters of European missionaries, explorers, and exploiters. The research compared pre- and post-colonial impact and observed the affects that were taking place at that time.

The study gave insights into the systematic and premeditated implications that led to loss of Indigenous knowledge, cultural practise and identity, inferiority complexes

and a loss of self-sufficiency as well as other traits of colonization.

In writing about this study, Thompson notes that Viti's cultural state, mentally and physically today was affected by a well-established process, that was dealt to many civilisations since the earliest days of colonization. His writing gives insight to the methods used to create this decay. If one were trying to counteract, recover, regenerate culture and identity, it is necessary to understand the root implications that were used to create this decline in culture which has spread its roots further and deeper, making it hard to decipher the root cause.

Within the text, Thompson explores the idea of *law of custom* and the distinction between "civilized" and "uncivilized"¹⁵ peoples, which take on roles as coloniser and the colonised. A distinction is made under the law of custom, where progress is impossible. For the coloniser, the law of custom is identified with the old way. This halts "progress". To encourage "progress",

new needs are established, and new laws are made to ensure that its "civilised" people cannot revert to "uncivilised" ways. "Progress" is the only option.

By making a distinction between "civilised" and "uncivilised" peoples, Thompson argues that previous affairs of warfare in the process of colonization are different to current British practises. Instead of leading with a strong hand of old, Thompson writes "we saunter into their country and annex it; we break down their customs, but do not force them to adopt ours; we teach them the precepts of Christianity, and in the same breath assure them that instead of physical punishment by disease which they used to fear, their disobedience will be visited by eternal punishment after death"¹⁶. This explicitly acknowledges intent of cultural genocide, not physically but mentally enforcing one to assimilate, by taking away their systems or dismissing indigenous thought and ways of living, leaving one with no other choice but to conform to the customs of the colonizer.

¹⁵ Thompson, *A study of the decay of custom*,7

¹⁶ Thompson, , *A study of the decay of custom*, 10

British colonials understood that the law of custom is interwoven with religion and primarily enforced by a fear of earthly punishment, a practise which typically was found in religions of ancestral worship and that whilst on the earth they must abide by ways set by their ancestors. To detour from those ways is to disrespect their ancestral gods and thus they will be punished while they dwell on earth, for example being struck by disease, so the only time a person was unbound to these beliefs and rituals was after death. The proposal of eternal punishment after death reshaped the concept of living, changing future Itaukei belief systems in religion and spirituality.

The absence of indigenous belief systems creates an absence of purpose and knowledge of self, not only as a human being but primarily as an indigenous person, leaving one vulnerable to being exploited. The stories of ancestors and gods were driving factors to practises which honoured them. Removing ancestral belief and worship removed purpose and a meaningful relationship to certain ways of living, and the foundations to one's identity.

It was only natural the material culture that followed traditional customs declined, taking away the theory or ideology then left customary practises in a vulnerable state. The currency used in Itaukei customs for trade and offerings in negotiations, warfare, marriage, reconciliation, and Gods, were of a traditional kind and can still be found today such as in Masi (a special bark cloth), Ibe (woven mat) and Tabua (whales' tooth). Masi, Ibe and Tabua are only a fragment of what was traditionally traded and so only the stories and histories that come with those elements remain. Other practises like Waqa building, have faded alongside stories and histories of the Itaukei.

A change in belief systems, to a more "civilised" belief of "eternal punishment after death", has now altered the "law of customs" way of life, therefore changing the process by which Itaukei live. The means to build Waqa to travel great distances for affairs, trade, resource gathering, and exploration has been removed. This removes the connection between islands, people, disconnecting knowledge, resources, histories, and family, losing part of their knowledge of self.

With colonial influence in full affect, Itaukei have now transitioned further from "uncivilised" to "civilised", change and adaptation of new customs and new laws have become normalised as that is the way of the "civilised", but as belief has shifted into a Christian god and Western ways of living, thinking and being, it has left Itaukei with fragments of its old self, new houses of gib board, pictures of a white male as a god, with printed Masi and Mats as decorations but unable to decipher the patterns and prints which once had meaning and told stories of who they were and where they came from, instead knowing the ins and outs of Christian scriptures. These tangible materials of culture that are held on to, are reminders to oneself of an identity, it offers a slight comfort linked to a past self, a vague reminder that they have a place and an identity in this new Western society.

While some remaining practises have found meaning and purpose for Itaukei today, it could be said that other practises of Itaukei culture that have not transitioned forward into this new world, by design and by chance, were not continued because one could not realise the entire purpose and

potential of what these practises offered within the new world.

With the new problems of today's society for Itaukei, one must look at what has kept part of Itaukei culture intact and more importantly what has been taken away and left holes, leaving it vulnerable to being overwhelmed by future changes and "progress" that will keep creating more needs that we are unable to satisfy, which could only lead to further detriment of Itaukei culture.

Williams concludes by saying, "For the transition stage we now have is undoubtedly worse than what it has displaced. The Fijians have been slow to adopt foreign habits, and for more than a generation they have been crawling upon the stumps of their old customs propped by rigged fragments of European innovations." This is a clear revelation of a change in behaviour and sense of loss in direction and purpose by living in a new way. How much has the Itaukei "progressed" during this period? Or is that as much progress as Itaukei can make, using foreign tools and systems. Could these missing parts in their cultural identity be the force that is needed to create a thriving people, has this "progress" peaked for

Itaukei? Uncovering and integrating Itaukei systems of the past with systems of the new creates new solutions and new possibilities for Itaukei people and culture to thrive and provide for themselves and their society. The idea that the West are the providers of "progress" is outdated.

OUR SEA OF ISLANDS

An essay written by Tongan academic Epele Hau'ofa, expresses key ideas that this thesis tries to illustrate through its design, a change in thinking of oneself and the scale of how we perceive our self and cultures.

Hau'ofa's paper exposes and expresses the ideas and narratives of Pacific islands being small and calls for a change in the way people of Moana-Nui view themselves but also the way the world views them, not only culturally but also geographically.

Colonial explorers and academics throughout history have been known to belittle other cultures and their feats, a common reoccurrence of colonial territories, in this case the smallness can be found through the imposed geographical lines of 19th century imperialists dissecting the islands and territories of Moana-Nui, creating small isolating boundaries and limits to the vastness of everyday Moana-Nui people's

lives and their true connection to Moana-Nui. Hauofa makes a plea to reassess the perceptions of these boundaries and limits of smallness and isolation that have become the lens of Pacific peoples.

Hau'ofa opens the essay by distinguishing that there are two parties of society that operate in perpetuating this smallness, knowingly and unknowingly, a hierarchy in a system that starts from the top with government, regional and international politicians that have the role of discussing the future for the average person and their development within a society. These discussions preserve the current system and hierarchy. Bureaucrats, diplomats, business representatives and military organisations, all work internationally with groups that seek to lend aid, provide investment and other things that increase a dependency towards foreign agencies to supply aid, causing a lack of self-sufficiency, and ability to maximise their productivity in society.

The other level operating is the ordinary people, the common folk of the island, the ones whose lives are being decided for by

the top of the hierarchy, supplied with limited opportunity and resources to develop. This system more than often fails to support the bottom tier as the interest of grassroots is either misrepresented or misinterpreted and the wants and needs of the bottom tier is never fully realised because of a disconnection between one another, alongside the top fighting to preserve the culture of the system and their privilege, leaving the bottom fighting to survive in a system chosen for them.

Hau'ofa highlights the role this two-tier system plays in a misperception of self that Moana-Nui people have found themselves inflicted with, and the influence the two tier system has on the way "views held by those in dominant positions about their subordinates could have significant consequences for people's self-image and for the ways they cope

with their situations”¹⁷. The inferior group will always act as how they’re imagined by the superior to perpetuate the relationship”. In the context of Viti, the top tier was once held by colonials, which has had a detrimental influence in maintaining a long lasting and negative view of Itaukei culture and history. A system once used to oppress and suppress their views and voices, which has been placed back in the hands of “Fijians” (Fijian Indians and Itaukei) since the independence of the Viti, with no change. Reinforcing the role of the top tier and ensuring that Western ideals and thought continue to dominate the Pacific Education curriculum and uphold systems of colonial oppression.

Hau’ofa goes on to acknowledge the inherent Western ideals of Moana-Nui people and their island homes and his own role in perpetuating that narrative, that the system was structured to have Indigenous believe that the livelihood of Moana-Nui people is one of certain

struggle and detriment if it were not for the aid that is received from foreign bodies, and that this notion was so strongly pushed that even he started to perpetuate this message. He went on to say “the reactions of my students when I described and explained our situation of dependence. Their faces crumbled visibly, they asked for solutions, I could offer none”¹⁸ illustrating that he in a position of the top tier was perpetuating this smallness, belittlement and dependency, creating a limit or smallness to their thinking in trying to think bigger to address this smallness.

Hau’ofa challenges and questions the thinking that has perpetuated this idealism and argues that thoughts of being too small and too poor were the result of narrow geographical and economical lenses the Western world prioritises in evaluating a countries condition. This approach fails to recognise other standards or values which Hau’ofa speaks of, such as Cultural history and World

enlargement by the expansion of peoples across Moana-Nui and around the world, where one can find a richness and a bigness. He suggests that “the idea of smallness is dependent on the calculation of what is included and excluded.”

Hau’ofa also speaks of the outlook and mentality that ancestors of Moana-Nui had. Looking through oral traditions of myth, legend, and cosmologies they didn’t perceive or measure themselves or their homelands to the boundary of an island but that the endless horizon of Moana-Nui never wavered their belief to just limiting themselves to the shores of an island, they continued to build Waqa to navigate the Moana Nui in a known network, trading, visiting family and exploring. The ocean was the road, with the earth and stars as maps, which shows a bigness to their way of thinking.

Hau’ofa by reassessing this smallness of a “sea of islands” goes onto state that “Islanders have broken out of their confinement, and are moving around and

¹⁷ Epeli Hau’ofa, “*Our Sea of Islands*,” *The Contemporary Pacific* 1, no.1 (1994): 3.

¹⁸ Epeli Hau’ofa, “*Our Sea of Islands*,” *The Contemporary Pacific* 1, no.1 (1994): 4

away from their homelands, not so much because their countries are poor, but because they were unnaturally confined and severed from many of their traditional sources of wealth, and because it is in their blood to be mobile. They are once again enlarging their world, establishing new resource bases, and expanded networks for circulation” which explicitly illustrates the vast connections that these Island people have made, although not on a Waqa, they are using that same instinct of their ancient ancestors to explore the horizon, make connections, create networks, mine resources and supply it back to their homelands of Moana-Nui. This offers a sense of empowerment, self-sufficiency and bigness in identity that is missing from views of the past, which in turn is received with the traditional practise of reciprocity, a system where people hold on to their homelands, maintaining the vanua and upkeep with their local affairs while other members of the group are off exploring and gathering

across Moana Nui, like the old ways, it is a communal task that everyone participates in.

In an essay entitled “ How we know” by Gegeo and Watson-they state when “outside researchers, including anthropologists” have examined other cultures, they have done so from their own theoretical constructs, not from those of the societies they have observed”¹⁹ This process of self and cultural reflection and analysis, exploring and recovering knowledge and creating new perspectives, standards and narratives by which indigenous can measure themselves, is important for indigenous people in order to support indigenous ways of thinking. This removes the sense of smallness and creates a sense of bigness and pride to the achievements of ancestors, to develop a new narrative for younger generations to build from, not one that limits them.

¹⁹ Gegeo, Watson-Gegeo, “How We Know”: Kwara’ae Rural Villagers Doing Indigenous Epistemology. *The Contemporary Pacific* 13:5–88.

Have We Been Thinking Upside-Down?

The Contemporary Emergence of Pacific Theoretical Thought

An article written by Elise Huffer and Ropate Qalo published in the *Contemporary Pacific, Volume 16 of the University of Hawaii in 2004*, discusses the lack of concern and consideration for Pacific thought. They highlight and examine Pacific theorists, their writings, the importance of the concepts raised and the relevance and possible usefulness they provide for their contemporary societies and how the lack of reception and acknowledgement from academics and politicians have left people linked to Moana Nui with the same problems and same solutions of old.

Huffer and Qalo address current academia within the Pacific, the lack of acknowledgment by academics within the Pacific community and persons in power and influence, failure to see the importance and opportunity Pacific thought holds, and an approach to the revitalisation of culture that does not rely on a complete replication of past practise but

enables concepts to be reinterpreted within a contemporary context, to mutually serve the people and nation.

Huffer and Qalo make the observation that “Christianity cannot survive without integrating existing fundamental values of local societies (even though the Church has a checkered record on this issue), there are parallels and meeting points between the two systems of thought as well as areas where one may be enriched by the other”. This highlights the importance of different knowledge systems and the significance and efficacy of integrating knowledge systems, how they can occur, influence, and empower in a contemporary way.

Huffer and Qalo highlight the importance of indigenous theorists and how Pacific theorists are at the ground level of issues at hand and are relaying information that hold significant importance and relevance to these communities and the policies that govern them, Huffer and Qalo state “Their work documents and interprets efforts by local communities they are associated with or part of, to validate and explore their own epistemologies and to renegotiate development on their own terms”

Huffer and Qalo explore these theories and pose the construct of a “body of thought” which they state “are a set of applicable concepts and values to guide interaction within countries, within the region, and with the rest of the world. The ethic must be acknowledged, understood, and respected by all who interact with Pacific Island communities”. These values form a set of independent thought for indigenous groups of the Pacific, to use as a foundation of knowledge which create frameworks and voice Indigenous thoughts, which can be integrated within the foreign concepts of politics and capitalist systems, to enable a more stable and sustainable society within that context.

Huffer and Qalo also speak of the unrest that has plagued Moana-Nui. Political issues have shown the need for new approaches to tackle old issues. One doesn’t have to look too far to see issues in Viti of tension between Itaukei people and Fijians (Fijian Indian), with Itaukei “demanding total political control”²⁰ by overthrowing the government by means of Coup. Itaukei academic Asesela Ravuvu speaks of the struggle of indigenous peoples trying to maintain a place in today’s society, a fight against foreign systems and ideals that

²⁰ Lal, “Fiji Coups,” in *The Pacific Islands : An Encyclopedia*, 261.

have been in place for over a century “this effort [re-activating some aspects of lost traditions and culture] was not, and has not been smooth and easy, not only because of changes in technology and democracy but also due to the continuing existence of social, economic and political systems established during the colonial era”²¹

Huffer and Qalo provide a brief analysis of written material to show the importance and potential these theories provide in creating local solutions for local issues. Another paper that is relevant to the context of Viti is a book published by Ilaitia Tuwere, in his book *Vanua: Towards a Fijian Theology of Place*, Tuwere insists that understanding the concept of Vanua (land) is crucial for the organisation of the Church, Huffer and Qalo add that it should be pushed and applied to any organisation who interact with Viti. Within this concept of Vanua, Huffer and Qalo highlight key components such as the concept of a Matanivanua, a “Mediator” who “sets in motion the principle of ‘relationship’ or relatedness. . . . This is someone who speaks and listens, represents, reconciles, mends broken relationships, negotiates, introduces,

²¹ Aseela Ravuvu, “Culture and Traditions: Implications for Modern Nation Building,” in *Culture & Democracy in the South Pacific*, ed. Ron Crocombe et al. (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 1992), 57

announces and so on. Because of this rather alarming list, a *matanivanua* must know their *vanua* inside out”²² because they represent a specific group, typically their tribe or clan.

Huffer and Qalo raise the importance of such a concept which is non-existent within the politics of Viti today, a society that is still strafed with issues of Indigenous people and their struggle to connect or thrive in a Western system. Huffer and Qalo state that “As a concept, it can be transformed, enhanced, and reapplied to a context that has also evolved, bringing new tensions and conflicts in its wake” highlighting the fact there is indigenous thought being constructed and that they hold a strong relevancy and importance to today’s society, which enforces the issue Huffer and Qalo raised earlier and that the lack of acknowledgment for Pacific thought plays a strong role and that it hasn’t allowed Pacific thought to become part of mainstream discourse because of this lacking, particularly from the non-indigenous Fijian population, which in the 2007 census the indigenous population was 56.8% ²³, leaving nearly half the population unaware of such concepts and discourse to be had.

²² Ilaitia Tuwere, *Vanua: Towards a Fijian Theology of Place, Fijian Views of The Land* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 2002), 33.

Huffer and Qalo conclude their work by stating that Pacific values and worldviews are striking and highly applicable to Moana-Nui, but they are simply underpublicized. Pacific thought or philosophy is does not have a coherent voice. “It has been lessened, especially in the arena of policy making”. To bring these thoughts and concepts into mainstream discourse it is to be promoted at a grassroots level first, and invested in by local communities researching, listening, recovering, and building upon these theories and concepts. This creates an awareness that allows for further conversations about systems of power and thoughts of indigenous people, enabling a body of thought to emerge which can provide a stronger cultural connection for younger generations to perpetuate. It is also important for indigenous knowledge to be acknowledged within positions of power and knowledge, by politicians, professionals, and educators.

²³ FIBoS, *1.2A Census Population of Fiji by Ethnicity*, Fiji Bureau of Statistics (Suva, Fiji: Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2012), 3, accessed September 3, 2020, http://prdrse4all.spc.int/system/files/1.2a_census_pop_by_ethnicity_0.pdf. Note: ethnicity data is taken from the 2007 census as none was provided in the 2017 census

VITI, SMALLNESS WITHIN MOANA-NUI

As this research intends to build a stronger connection of cultural identity and pride through revitalization of indigenous knowledge, within the Itaukei people, one must be aware of the internal sub-conscious constraints that can hinder the process.

Addressing the external struggles of respect and acknowledgment from our Western thinking peers, one must deal internally before moving externally. From the essays of Epli Hau'ofa it is evident people of Moana-Nui have fallen victim to the perpetuation of regionalism through the dissection of Moana-Nui, disconnecting and minimizing her body of islands, people, stories, and knowledge, causing people to forget or sever their connections whether Melanesian, Micronesian or Polynesian.

Itaukei and peoples of the Melanesian group have suffered a smallness and belittling within its home of Moana-Nui. The perpetuation of Western ideals and standards of judgment dealt heavy to the darker members of the Moana-Nui family, praising fair skin of Polynesians and Micronesia, and damning the darker skinned peoples of Melanesia, this racial bias has created identities in the Moana-Nui family, which has left Itaukei in a position of inferiority amongst its own community and family, enforcing the devaluation of their culture, thought and identity. Albert Wendt describes a scene which showcases this belittling and devaluing attitude “some Samoan elders present at the first South Pacific Festival of Arts in Suva in 1971 laughed at and even scorned ni-Vanuatu men from Malakula for their “primitive” Melanesian costumes — bark belts and nambas (penis wrappers)”²⁴

²⁴ Wendt, Albert, Afterword: Tatauing the Postcolonial Body. In *Inside Out: Literature, Cultural Politics, and Identity in the New Pacific*, 400



Figure. (6). By Author

COLONIAL NARRATIVE

The writings of Western explorers, missionaries, traders, and academics during the 19th century, presented a consistent but negative narrative of Itaukei people to the world. Often in texts, explorers would refer to Polynesians as “The Friendly islanders” but title Viti as the “Cannibal Islands”.

Viti became smothered with this title, its richness in culture and technology demeaned and new identity pushed and branded for the world to see, so if the Polynesian is barbaric and savage but “Friendly”, is there any lower position in society for Itaukei if they’re below the barbaric savages of the “Friendly Islands”. It’s fair to say that there is reason to believe this has affected and damaged the lens of how the world has seen them and their extended Moana-Nui family but more importantly how Itaukei see themselves.

Colonials had Itaukei act out scenes of cannibalism, taking photographs, creating post-cards such as “The banquet” (Figure. 7) but also the famous P.T. Barnum's Museum, Menagerie and Circus, which he acquired 4 Itaukei people as human exhibitions, titled the “Fiji cannibals” for Human exhibitions²⁵, (Figure 8). These acts reinforcing this narrative and creating an identity for the people of Viti around the world.

The overwhelming narratives of explorers and exploiters shouting our “faults” and whispering our triumphs has hindered us through time, those loud voices have become legend and the whispers, myth.

²⁵ P.T. Barnum, *Struggles and Triumphs; or Forty Years' Recollections of P.T. Barnum* (Buffalo, NY: Warren, Johnson, 1873 [entered into copyright 1871]) 760.



Figure. (7).

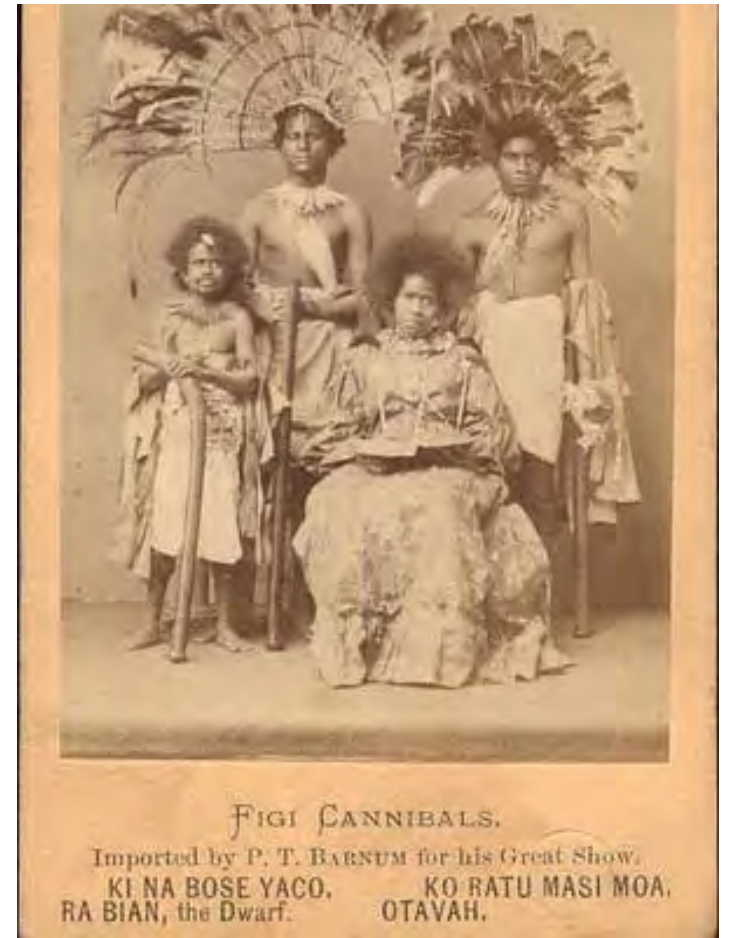


Figure. (8).

ITAUKEI NARRATIVE

Whilst this cannibalistic narrative perpetuated through the 19th century, it was during this same period of interaction where colonials had witnessed Itaukei operating arguably the most sophisticated sea-faring vessel in the world at that time, a double hulled vessel called a *Drua*.

Colonists presumed Itaukei were lower than a “savage” and their culture was “barbaric” but at the same time they were operating a piece of technology that was developed like none other than colonials had seen before, But the narrative perpetuated by them lacked praise. One could argue that maybe the idea of an indigenous people developing and operating technology ahead of Western thought was detrimental to their own identity, as demeaning racial stereotypes and prejudices were key to colonial progress, how could the “civilised” learn from the “uncivilised”.

In this new day and age, the world has become more open in terms of exposure, with platforms to share stories direct from people and places that didn’t have a voice in the past, creating an environment for Itaukei to collectively begin a process of recovery and regenerative healing of its past traumas and stigmas of identity, to look at its own past and share the beauty in its history and culture that were kept quiet. For Itaukei to realize their identity and potential within this world.

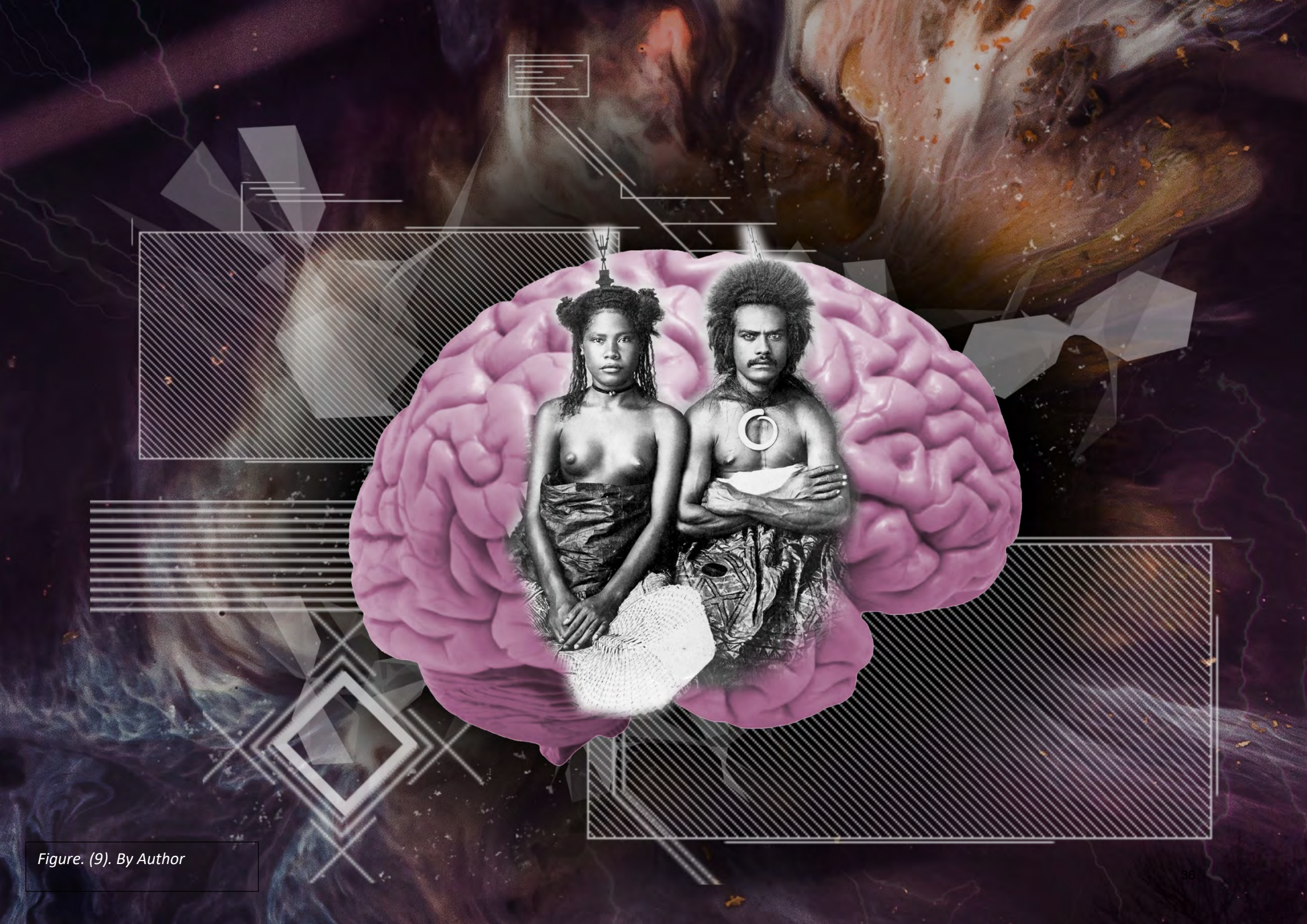


Figure. (9). By Author

LAU: THE BRIDGE BETWEEN THE PACIFIC

The Southeastern region of Viti, known as the Lau group, is a group of islands which lie between Melanesia and Polynesia. A bridge between the two different territories, it was a region of diversity, intermarriage, trade, and innovation, responsible for crafting the greatest known ocean-going vessel of the Pacific, the Drua. This region is responsible for many traditions, crafts, foods, language, and many other things that are shared between Melanesia and Polynesia²⁶.

Viti is a hub of resources for its neighboring islands, especially Polynesia. This encouraged exchanges to occur. Trade relied on its abundance in timber and a special timber, called the *Vesi loa*, found in the limestone belt of islands in the southern Lau group, which was known to be resistant to the Teredo worm found in salt water which rotted wood.

Samoans and Tongans lived and travelled to and from Viti hundreds of years before the arrival of the Europeans to trade with the Itaukei in exchange for resources and part take in tribal affairs, an exchange that ties the Chiefs, Kings and Queens of those regions. European missionary and colonial migrants arrived and observed this network at its height.

This region and theme of bridging and networking is key to my design as it is based on knowledge sharing, building, and ultimately creating a body of thought, that was acknowledged by different indigenous groups who took part in these practices from ceremonial affairs to constructing material goods, specifically the art of Waqa building, elders taught their young apprentices these ways, which spread back on the Waqa to different islands, creating a sharing in a body of thought, language and ceremony between Moana-Nui people

²⁶ Calvert, 1982:3,4.



Figure. (10). By Author

MASTERS OF WAQA

“He has now devised the most complicated, the swiftest, and in many respects the most beautiful sailing machine in existence—the sailing canoe.”²⁷

When one asks of the origin story of Itaukei or Fijians in general, the most well-known and documented migration story of the Lutunasobasoba comes to mind, the forefathers of Viti landing a shore the Yasawa islands of Viti, in a Waqa named Kaunitoni²⁸, which then progresses on to tell of the spreading of Itaukei through the islands of Viti, using Waqa.

In this story much focus is drawn upon the individuals and the lands they sailed to. A story which may have been met with this lens of smallness, not realizing the significance of excellence within a story like this, this section looks to revisit and acknowledge the excellence and mastery of waqa building

processes and knowledge and the bigness within their past and identity.

²⁷ Thompson, *The decay of culture*, 291

²⁸ “Fiji in Detail: History,” Fiji, Lonely Planet, accessed August 26, 2020, <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/fiji/background/history/a/nar/e27c7631-44ce-44d2-95bd-0fffc863b332/362585>



Figure. (11). By Author

WAQA

The Itaukei word refers to a water going vessel such as a yacht, boat, or canoe. Like many other indigenous people of Moana-Nui waqa have been essential to the sustainability of their way of life and culture, pre colonization and still to this day. In Viti, the Waqa was particularly important to Itaukei because of the geographical makeup of the region, made up of over 300 islands. It was essential for survival that one could navigate a region of this nature.

TYPES OF WAQA

Itaukei had developed a range of Waqa, as well as different building techniques that were essential for different types of voyages, from river rafting, fishing to warfare, which shows how much their life revolved around Moana-Nui.

DRUA

A variant of the double hulled canoes of Moana-Nui, typically made from the Vesi Loa tree found in the southeastern isles of Viti in the region of Lau, a strong and toredo worm resistant greenheart wood made it less susceptible to timber rotting, creating strong Canoes²⁹. Refer to Figure (7)

Since the beginning of colonial interaction in Viti it had been long documented in many texts of these great seafaring vessels and their stature, which varied in size as different building techniques were used based on the type of Drua that needed to be built. Drua's varied in size because of their use in long voyages and short voyages of internal affairs amongst tribes and long voyages typically of trade between Tonga, Viti, and Samoa, so building techniques were developed and varied to create these impressive vessels.

In the text *Fiji and the Fijian*, Williams recorded the dimensions of a Drua "Extreme length 118 feet, length of deck 50 feet, width

of deck 24 feet, length of mast 68 feet, length of yards, 90 feet"³⁰

Drua: Saucoko

Used for smaller Drua, using single hollowed logs to raise the base of the Hulls, with a single lashed strake used to raise the height of the hull. This Drua would be used for short and long trips, with medium sized crews to accompany it, resource gathering and trade from neighbouring islands or to accompany the larger Drua into Warfare.

Drua: Tabetebete

This Technique was used to build the largest types of Drua's, known as *Waqa tabu* and *Musu Waqa*, these were typically built for Chiefs. The takele (keel) is formed from two or even three scarfed planks and then the hulls are built up using several planks per side³¹. In the text *Canoes of Polynesia* described the size of the structure "the beam would be 6 to 8 feet [and]... a man could easily walk in the hold (Hull) without touching the deck"³²

²⁹ Banack and Cox, 'Ethnobotany of Ocean-Going Canoes in Lau, Fiji,' *Economic Botany*, XLI, 2 (1987), 148–162, 161.

³⁰ Williams, Thomas, James Calvert, and George Stringer Rowe. 1858. *Fiji and the Fijians*. London: A. Heylin. 63

³¹ Williams, Thomas, James Calvert, and George Stringer Rowe. 1858. *Fiji and the Fijians*. London: A. Heylin. 62

³² Hornell, *Canoes of Polynesia*, 326.

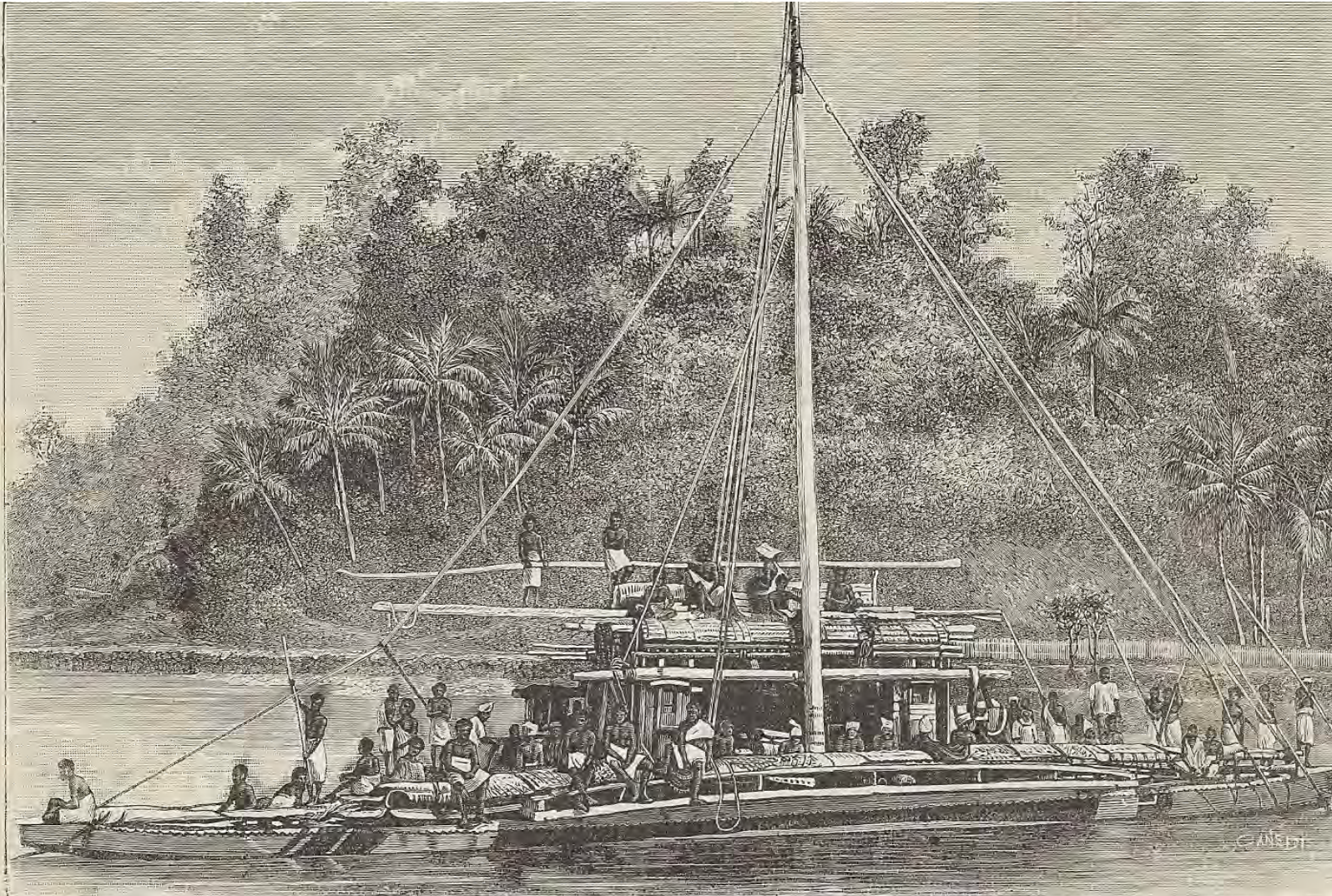


Figure. (12)

CAMAKAU

Is an outrigger canoe, blue water capable and was used for closer inter island voyages but on occasion long distance, carrying goods but mostly transporting people, magnificent in maneuvering through the water with its shallow and light hull, the preferred choice for missionaries to and from Tonga as opposed to their crafts, as its structure was typically built from a single hollowed log. (Refer to Figure (13)).

TABILAI

An outriggered, blunt-ended Fijian war canoe used for ramming enemy canoes. Length about 60 feet, the hull of single-log length³³.



Figure. (13)

³³ Ronald Gatty, *Fijian-English Dictionary with Notes on Fijian Culture and Natural History, Igarss 2014* (Suva, Fiji: R. Gatty, 2009), 245.

BAVELO

Simple dug-out canoe, made from a single log with no outrigger³⁴, still occasionally used in the highland rivers, as well as coastal areas, and smaller islands and is typically propelled by poling and paddle.

BILIBILI

Typically made of bamboo, often made in the east highlands, to descend the river system to the coast. Propelled the current of a stream or river as well as poling and pushing. Itaukei may live on the raft for three days or more as these rafts would be used to transport Bananas, Taro, and Kava, down to the coast, to sell around Suva or Nausori. Which are then disposed of at the end of the journey³⁵. Refer to Figure (14)



Figure. (14)

³⁴ "Bavelo", Fiji Museum-Virtual Museum, <http://virtual.fijimuseum.org.fj/template.php?id=79-1&next=DCS7&cat=48>

³⁵ "HMS No Come Back", Fiji Museum-Virtual Museum, <http://virtual.fijimuseum.org.fj/template.php?id=79-1&next=DCS7&cat=48>

MATERIAL CULTURE

The material culture of Itaukei is vast and rich as Itaukei have stored and used their ancestral knowledge to survive and thrive throughout Moana-Nui, and developed distinctive construction methods to build shelters and vessels to cross the vast ocean of Moana-Nui. Through their craftsmanship they have maintained stories and traditions, Itaukei material culture is a reminder at how everything is interconnected. Some knowledge systems have survived barely and are practiced by very few.

This section highlights the significance of ancient practices to Itaukei culture and the importance of reinvigorating these practices in contemporary contexts.

“Tangible Cultural Heritage’ refers to physical artefacts produced, maintained and transmitted intergenerationally in a society”³⁶

³⁶ “Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage,” Projects EU., Riches Resources, accessed October 9, 2020, <https://resources.riches-project.eu/glossary/tangible-and-intangible-cultural-heritage/>

TABUA

The Tabua, taken from the word “*Tabu*” meaning sacred, is a Sperm whales’ tooth with Magimagi (woven sinnet) woven through the ends of the tooth, forming a necklace like structure. It is considered *kavakaturanga* or a ‘chiefly thing’, making it a heavily prized item amongst Itaukei culture that one can possess³⁷.

It is often the token of offering at ceremonies such as weddings, births, and funerals but it is usually the most effective way to give weight to an apology or atonement.

The importance is said to be linked to a tale of a man asking for a chief daughters hand in union/marriage, the chief told him if he wanted his daughter, to swim to the bottom of Moana-Nui, fight the biggest animal that grace those waters, to pull from its jaw a tooth and bring it back to him, only then will he know he worthy of the gift of his daughter.



Figure. (15)

³⁷ *Tabua (ceremonial whale tooth)*, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa, <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/topic/1100>

MASI

Is a fibrous cloth made from the inner bark of the masi tree (mulberry tree), it is highly valuable amongst Itaukei and amongst other Moana-Nui islanders, so it is typical to see it gifted to one another. It is a heavily spiritual item as they were once used to hang from the top of a “Bure Kalou” (spiritual house from pre-colonial times) draped from the top to the bottom, which was considered a pathway connecting the vanua to lagi, a pathway from earth to the heavens.

Nowadays Masi is typically seen used as a special mat on top of layered lbe to sit on at special ceremonies for the honorary or hanging from a wall as a decorative item, for Itaukei it can be worn as a garment only for special occasions, such as weddings and funerals as were done in older times.

“Masi contains the spirit of the land it comes from, the tree it was once part of, and it also contains the essence of the women who beat the cloth and decorate it.”³⁸



Figure. (16). By Author.

³⁸ Catherine Spicer, *Fiji Masi: Cloth of the Gods* (Porirua, NZL: Pātaka Art + Museum, 2009), 3.z

IBE

A woven mat made from *Voivoi* (pandanus leaves) they are considered of high value amongst Itaukei, so they are often gifted at special occasions. These mats are used at all traditional occasions as the grounds for a ceremony to take place on, they once fabricated the Sails of Waqa to catch the mighty winds of Moana-Nui, but have now become a place to sit on even ground and communicate, one does not stand and talk down, as the only thing to be above the people is Lagi or the heavens, so when one crosses along the Ibe to sit down, they will often be hunched over bowing their head, saying “tulou” pardoning themselves to the others and to the spirits above.

As the Architectural structures of Itaukei are open in design the Ibe will help to dictate the spatial arrangement for gatherings, in any space whether enclosed or open, they are arranged in a certain way to how people will communicate, the elders will help dictate who sits where on the Ibe when you enter the space.



Figure. (17).

YAQONA

The Itaukei word for “Kava” as Polynesians would call it, a Cultivated shrub, *Piper methysticum*, Piperaceae, aboriginal introduction from Vanuatu, used as a ceremonial and social beverage ³⁹. Made by pounding the dried root of the plant into a fine powder and then sifting and straining with water to form the traditional beverage.

Originally used as ceremonial drink of high Chiefs, this beverage was typically used to seal a covenant made by the partakers in the ceremony, and still this day it is used in that setting but has now become more of a social drink, between family and friends of talanoa, talking or communicating.

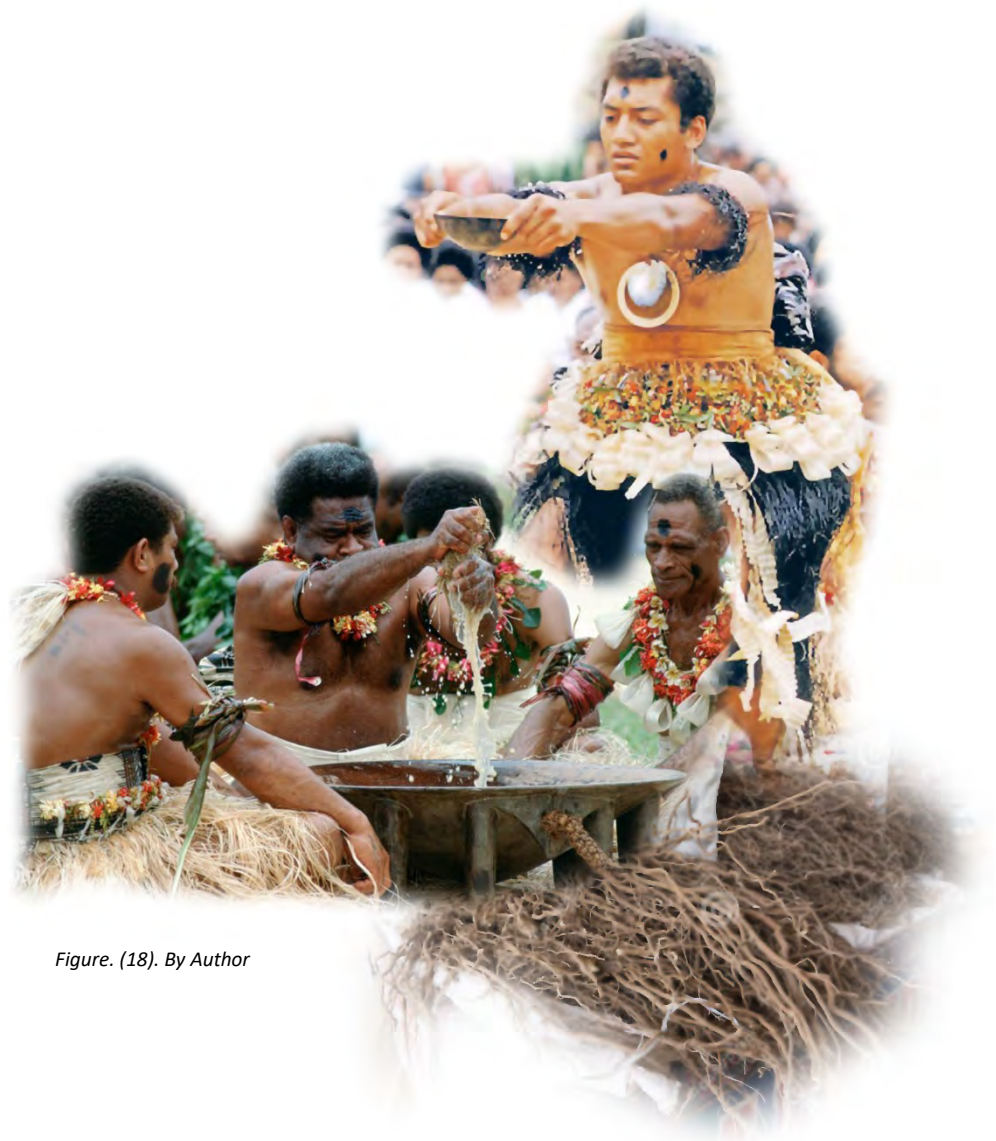


Figure. (18). By Author

³⁹ Ronald Gatty, *Fijian-English Dictionary with Notes on Fijian Culture and Natural History*, Igarss 2014 (Suva, Fiji: R. Gatty, 2009), 328.

MAGIMAGI

A material made from fibrous coconut husks, which are boiled and soaked in water for several days, then pounded and dried in the sun and formed into a fine rope, to build and maintain sea-going vessels, and for the construction of Bure or Vale.

Magimagi is used in the practise of Lalawa or Lalava, as known in Tonga, which is a functional and decorative lashing technique, which is done typically in buildings of significance these days, churches and meeting houses, using traditional patterns within the Lalawa tell stories within the patterns.

Size of magimagi rolls varied, with a sighting of being nine feet high and thirteen feet in circumference⁴⁰

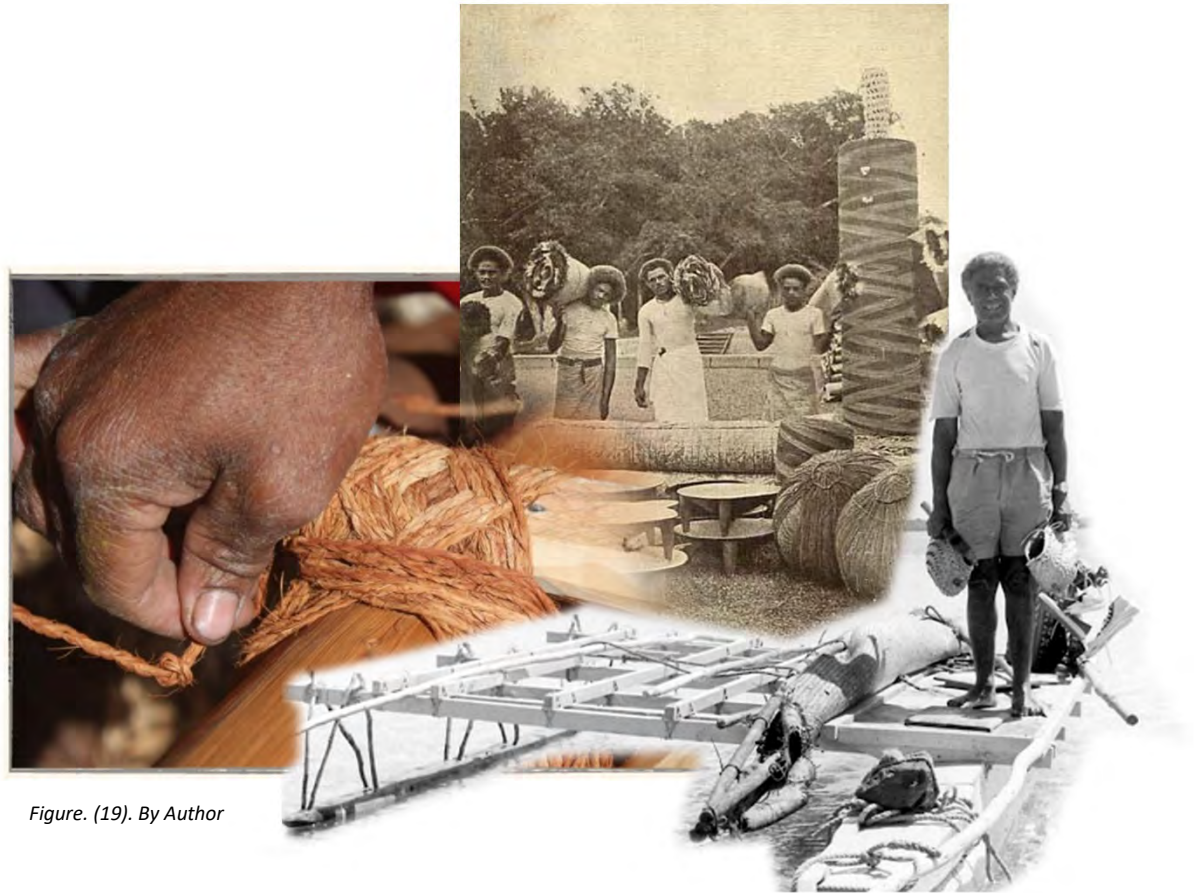


Figure. (19). By Author

⁴⁰ Williams, Thomas, James Calvert, and George Stringer Rowe. 1858. *Fiji and the Fijians*. London: A. Heylin. 59

INTANGIBLE CULTURE

‘Intangible Cultural Heritage’ indicates ‘the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their Cultural Heritage’.⁴¹

The section looks to investigate and analyze types of spatial arrangement within Itaukei culture, particularly the spatial arrangement of “*Na Koro mai Lau*” *the villages of Lau*, in particular villages of significance to Waqa building, that will drive spatial arrangement within the design.

⁴¹ Riches Resources, “Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage.”.

BURE / VALE

SPATIAL ARRANGEMENT

The three spaces inside the bure are Loqi (private space), Loma ni Vale (meeting/transitional space), and Soliqa (public space).⁴² These spaces will dictate the hierarchy and social status within the context you are in.

The bottom region called the *Soliqa* is where the general members of the family or ceremony will inhabit ⁴³.

The middle space called the *Loma ni vale* is where the members or persons of Importance of the ceremony will sit, guests of honour, chiefs, or elders of the group.

And the top space called the *Loqi* is private to the owners or caretakers of the Bure, where one may sleep.

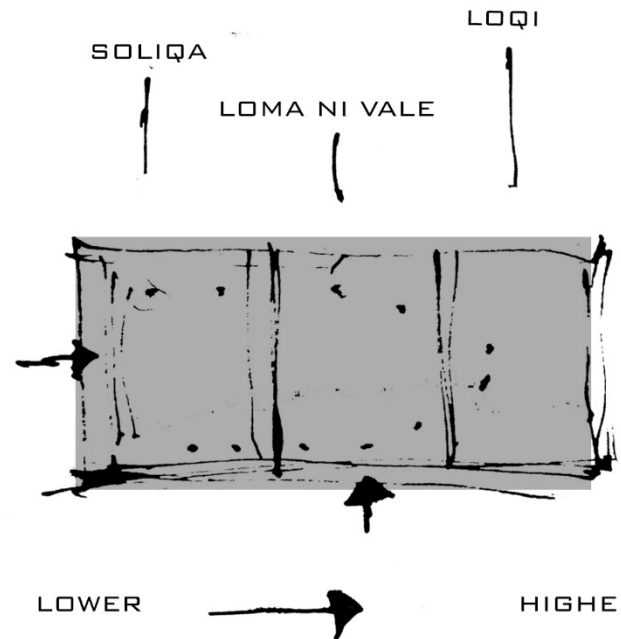


Figure. (20). By Author

⁴² Ferenc Zamolyi, "Architecture of Fiji," in *Encyclopaedia of the History of Science, and Medicine in Non-Western Culture* (Vienna, AUT: Springer, 2015), 25 - 26.

⁴³ 92 Zamolyi, "Architecture of Fiji," 25 - 26.

NA KORO MAI LAU

The spatial arrangement of these villages is of significant interest because of their history in building Waqa and how they orientated themselves to Moana-Nui, for the accessibility of people coming and going using Waqa, which is specific to the planning and spatial arrangement of my proposed design structures, from docking the Waqa and the circulation to accessing the Museum space.

TUBOU, LAKEBA , LAU

Figure, (21). By Author



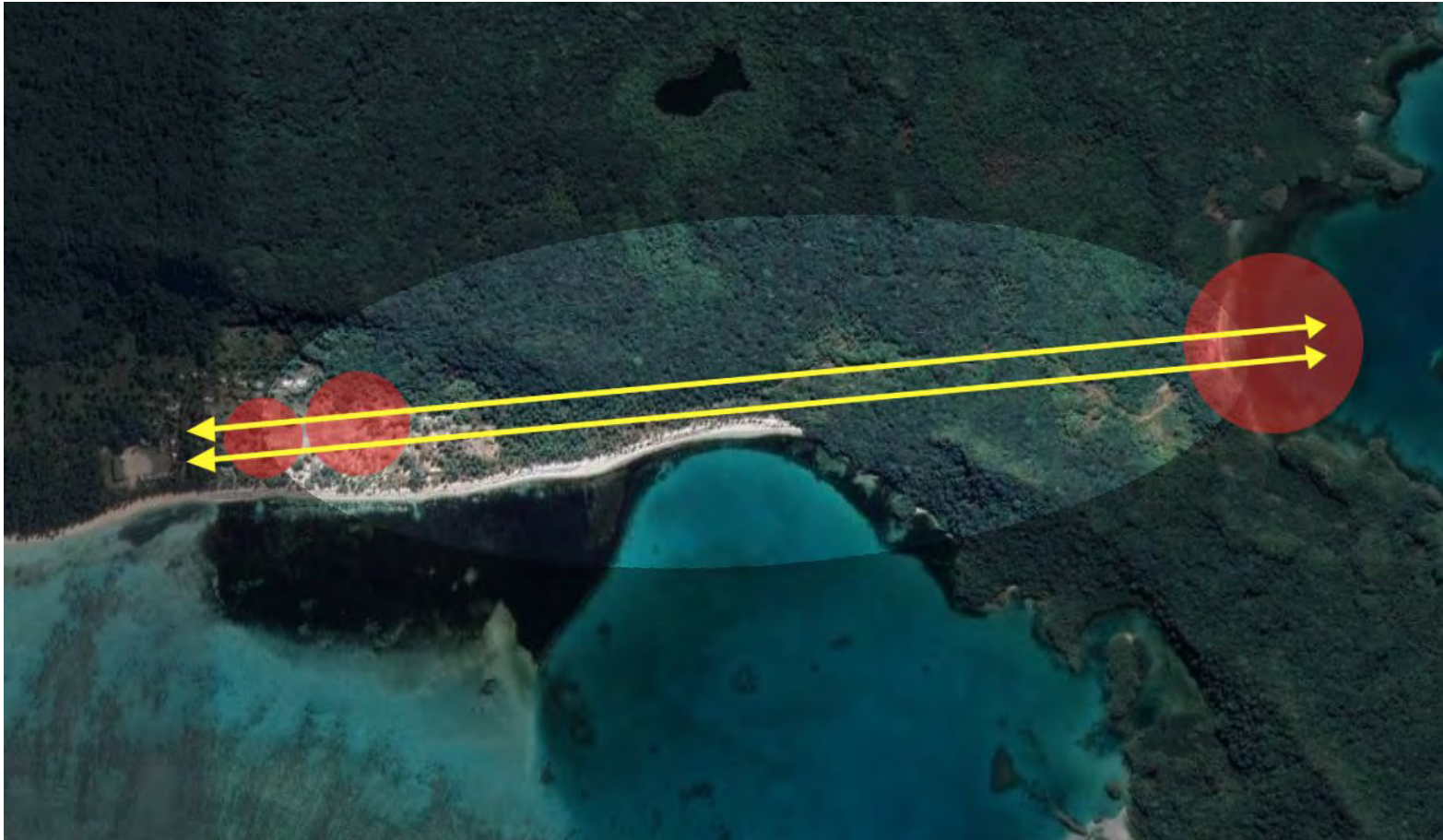
OQEA, OQEA , LAU

Figure, (22) By Author



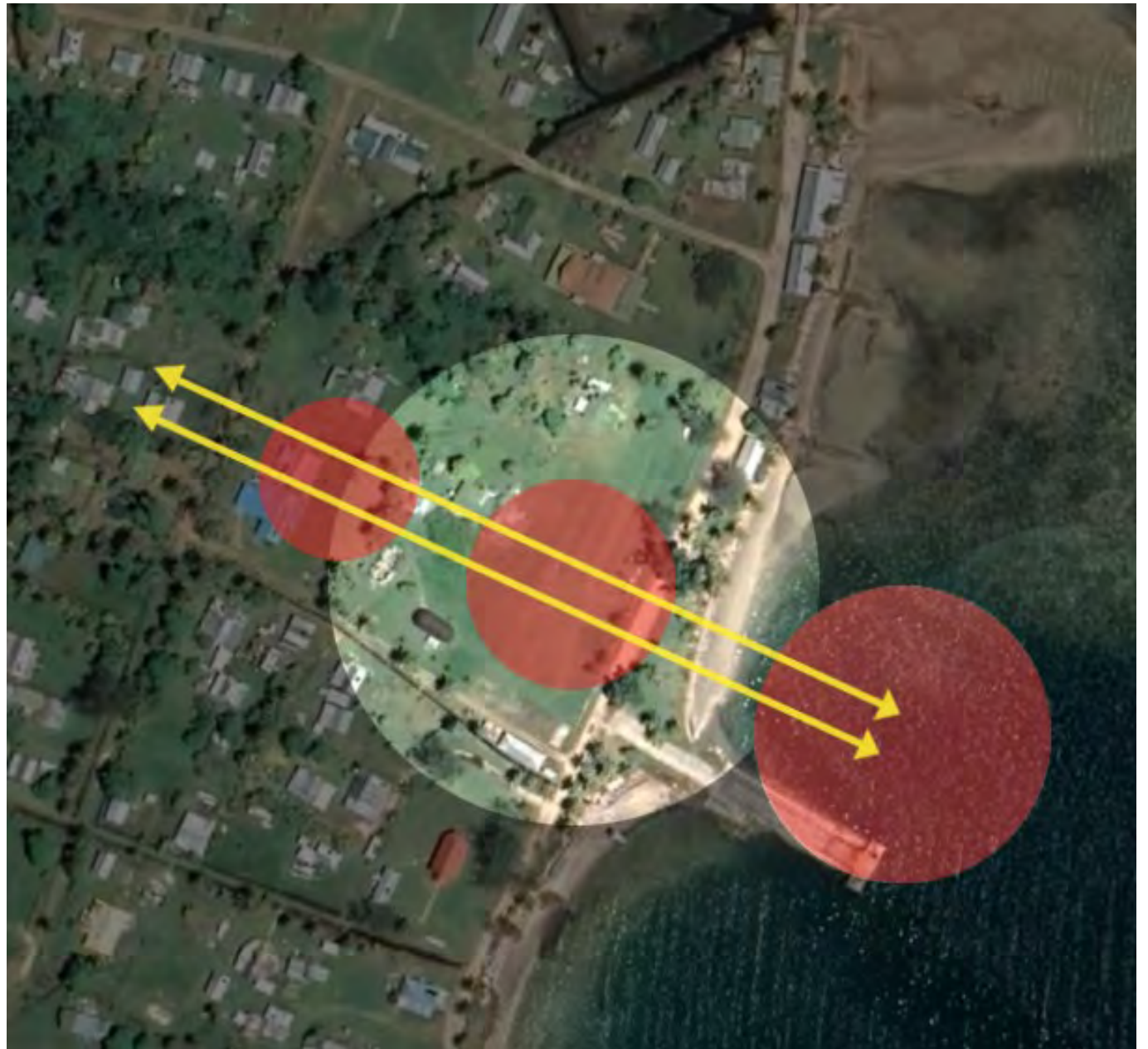
VULAGA, LAU

Figure, (23). By Author



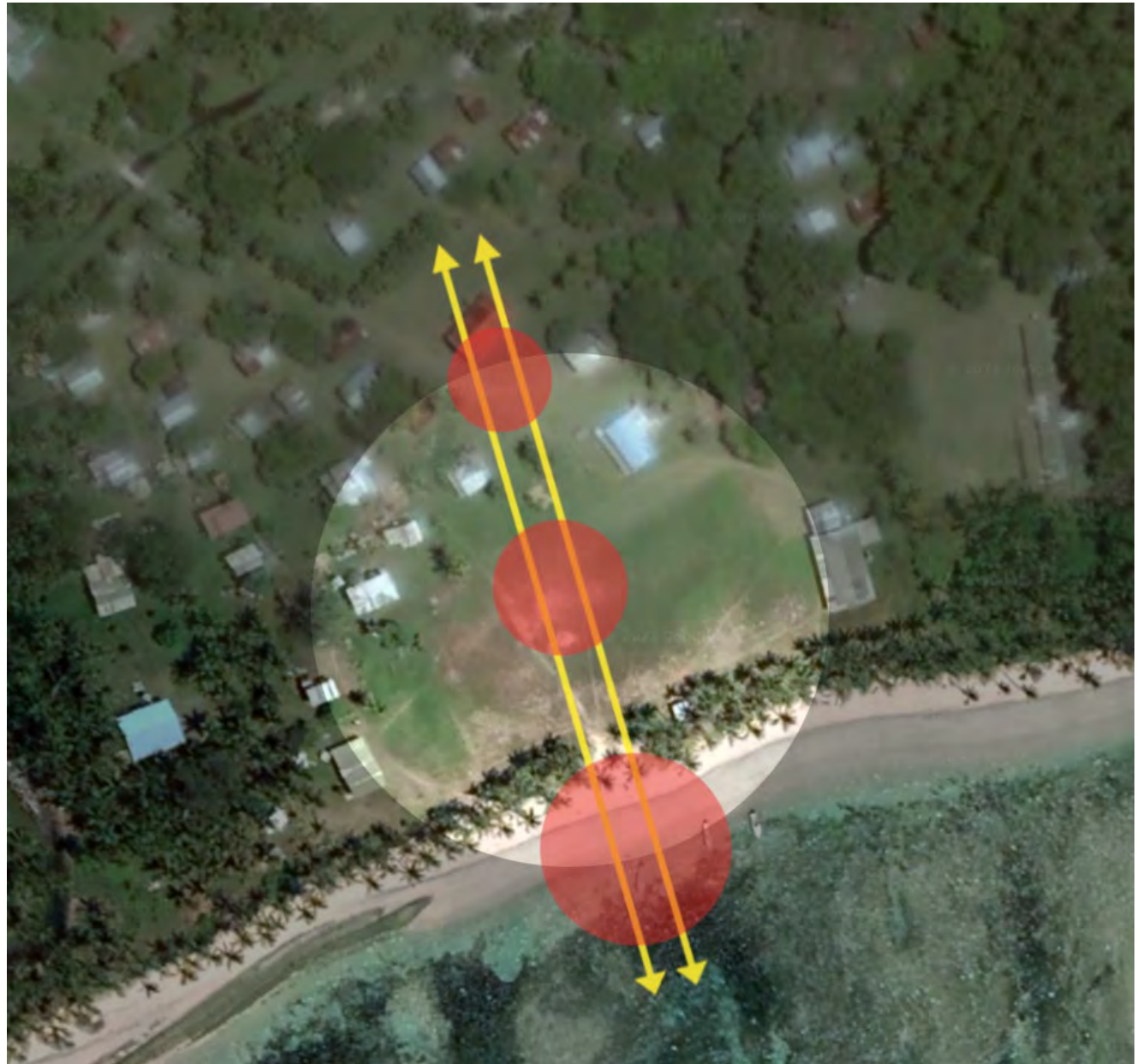
**LOMALOMA, VANUA BALAVU,
LAU**

Figure, (24). By Author



LEVUKAIDAKU, MATUKU, LAU

Figure,(25). By Author



OBSERVATIONS

Observing these Koro of Lau, there's commonalities the spatial arrangement and the linear axis that it flows in, very similar to the spatial arrangement inside a Bure or Vale. (Mentioned previously in this section.)

The entrance of the beach acting as the *Soliqa*, then with Bure and trees channeling a path onto the Rara (Village grounds) acting as the middle ground or *Loma ni Vale*, which is the threshold to the village meeting house, which is typically the village church, this can be seen as the sacred or special space acting as the *Loqi*, which for my design proposal would be the housing of the Artefacts, the museum.

DESIGN: SITE

This section will be exploring the proposed site, the design of the existing site what is being done and what isn't, the prospects of what can or should be done and what shouldn't be and how can it be done better.

As I propose to impose more onto the site, adding more inhabitation in terms of designed structures and persons, will require sufficient space and planning.

PROPOSED SITE:

As this research has investigated the society of Lau and the network that had been developed and established within that region, to provide the foundations to an evolving network of trade as well as technology with the building of waqa, it gives precedence for what should be considered when establishing a site.

I look not to replicate an identical future of the past I have investigated but look to find elements which helped provide an environment for growth of its people and culture within Lau and to use those elements.

- Networks, internally and externally from within a site,
- Sufficient space for planning and functioning of the facilities
- Access to ocean

SUVA

The capital of Viti is the preferred location as it houses certain aspects within its infrastructure that lays an important foundation to my research proposal.

SITE CONTEXT

A settlement which was originally derived by people from Tamavua and Vuivui, which is in Colo-i-suva and the surrounding area. These villages migrated towards what is known as Suva harbour and on the land of the Thurston gardens⁴⁴. But was raided and burnt down in 1843, with no trace of its inhabitants with vales and bures up to the Nasova police barracks ⁴⁵

Later, the land of Suva transferred hands to colonials, who at the time were trying to acquire land to farm, to use the labour of locals and later the indentured, this ultimately reshaped the landscape of Suva and its inhabitants and with the increase in parties of the crown from Australia and New Zealand visiting and inhabiting Suva, Suva was the Perfect point of contact for ships to port at, rather than Levuka and Galoa.

⁴⁴ "Origins of Suva," The University of the South Pacific, Fijian History, accessed July 1st, 2022, <https://fijianhistory.com/origins-of-suva>.

⁴⁵ Fijian History, "Origins of Suva."



Figure, (26).<https://earth.google.com/web/@-18.14938444,178.42388845,7.84760298a,722.54112469d,35y,54.16539146h,60.00110029t,0r>

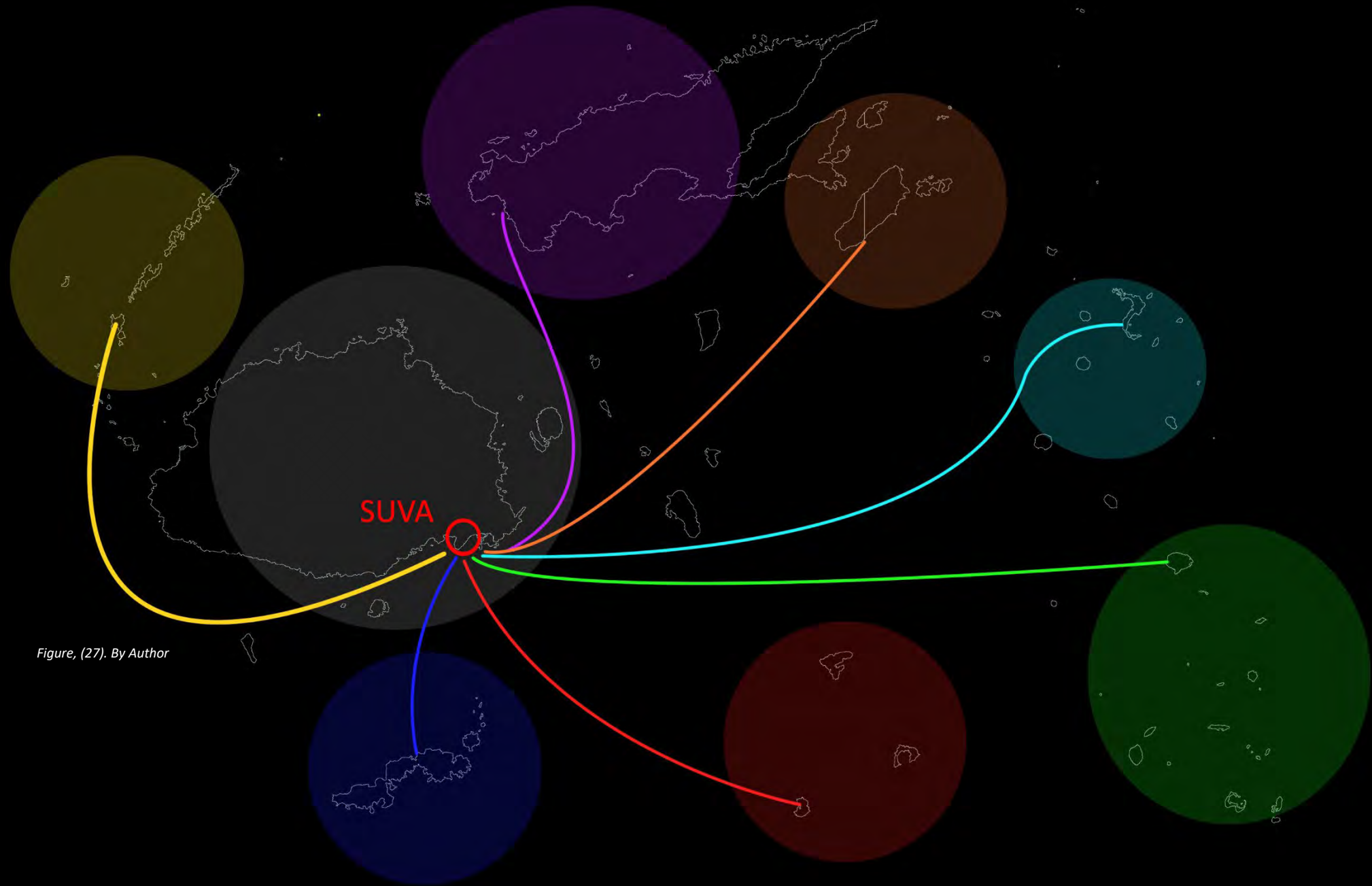
SUVA NETWORK WITHIN VITI

Currently has the most diverse population of cultures and knowledge within Viti, home to the Government buildings of parliament, houses the universities of USP and FNU and key to the economic growth and sustainability of Viti is the port of Suva. These are key elements as this proposal seeks to design a structure that is to house and cultivate knowledge, to integrate and grow it within the people of Itaukei and other people of cultures and geographically a site that can allow for networking internally within Viti and externally.

Suva's geographical location plays a critical role in the networking of the isles as it is relatively central amongst the region of islands and the mainland, the difference in Lau's period of networking was its centrality to the extended islands of Samoa and Tonga,

so to expand and trade within the context of Viti, by waqa, Suva is the perfect hub.

To expand waqa awareness and knowledge amongst Itaukei in Suva is key to establishing a knowledge base that can influence outer networks and routes to and from these subgroups to the mainland of Suva, establishing a stronger network that common folk can use, gaining that sense of self dependency and resilience that's been missing, not purely relying on foreign aid and commercial vessels coming and going between the islands.



Figure, (27). By Author

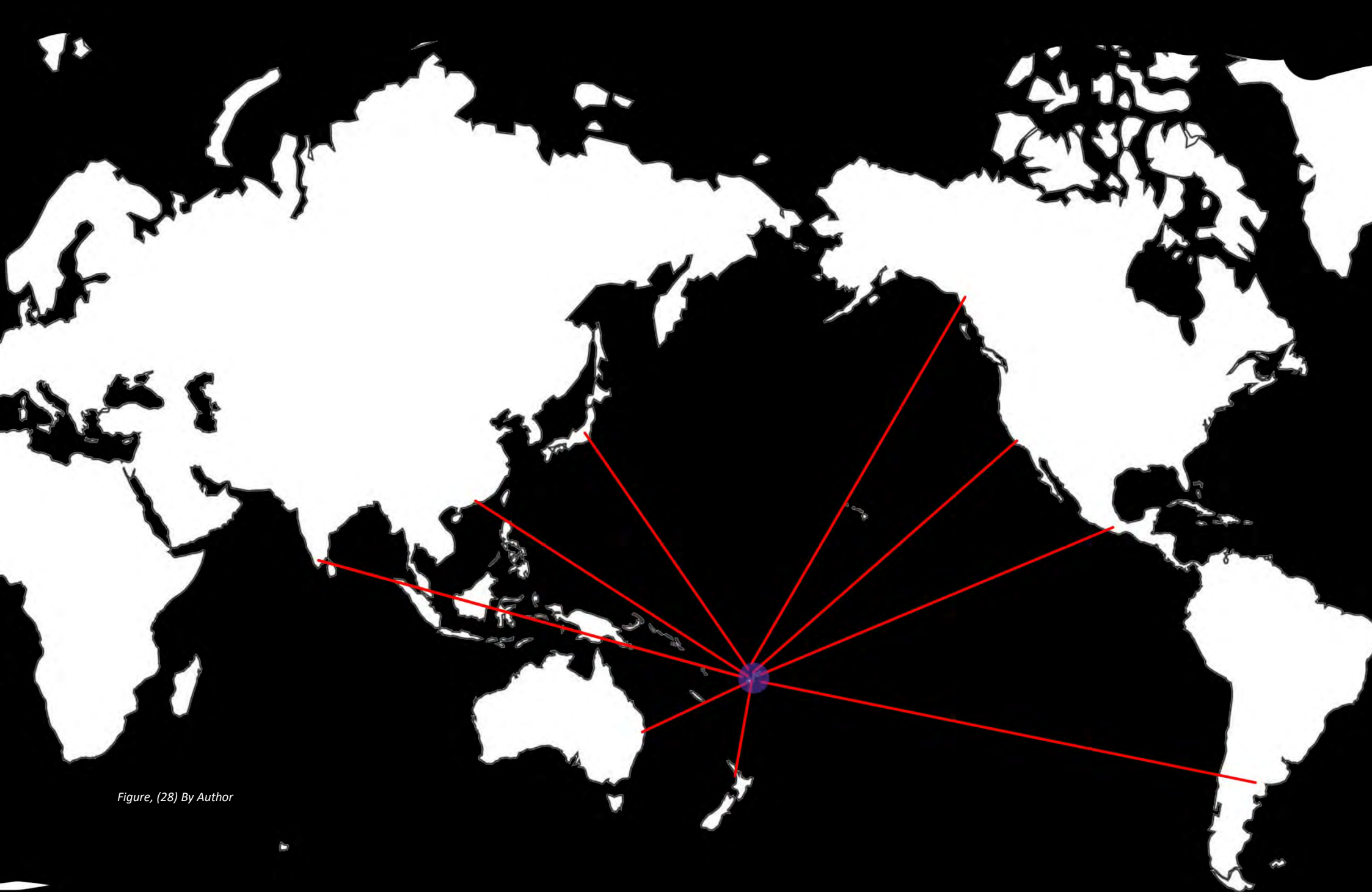
SUVA NETWORK OUTSIDE VITI

This can open and allow for a more direct connection between Itaukei in the rural areas to the urban areas, to expand resource in terms of knowledge, culture, and materials goods from both those of Indigenous heritage and those of other cultural backgrounds.

Suva's network extends outside Viti, with its own airport and the ports of suva, which allows for further connection between those internally and those abroad, as close as neighboring islands of Moana-nui and the expanded network to the Americas and Asia.

Hau'ofa spoke of the expansion of networks and the role that it plays in the reclaimed identity of Indigenous peoples of Moana-nui "The world of Oceania may no longer include the heavens and the underworld; but it certainly encompasses the great cities of Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada. And it is within this expanded world that the extent of the people's resources must be measured"⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Epeli Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands," *The Contemporary Pacific* 1, no.1 (1994): 10



Figure, (28) By Author

THURSTON GARDENS, FIJI MUSEUM

From within the scope of Suva, this site is of particular interest and significance to my thesis and design proposal. As I look to establish a site that has the site-specific conditions that will allow for the proposed structures.

It lies to the west of Suva city running along the coastline of Suva harbour, the existing Museum is tucked away further on the slope of the site looking over the harbour and is abundant in space which hosts little constraint to impact on design.

Figure, (29). By Author



SITE HISTORY: FIJI MUSEUM

The inception for a Fijian museum was in 1904, which later that year Sir William Allardyce presented his collection to the Suva Town Board and displayed his artefacts in the town hall.

In 1908 the Fijian Society was formed with the specific aim of researching and preserving the country's history and culture. The collection remained on display in the Town Hall until 1919 when a substantial part of the hall was destroyed by fire. The collection was shifted to different venues till the Trustees convinced the government to build a National Museum.⁴⁷

Then the passing of the Fiji Museum Ordinance in 1929, the museum was formally inaugurated as a Government Statutory Body with a Board of Trustees. Where locals presented their artefacts to the town board where trustees would purchase these artefacts.⁴⁸

The museum of today was opened in 1955 by the governor of Fiji, Sir Ronald Garvey. Housing the displays, reserve collection and storage. The in 1972 and 1978 two adjoining sections were built, providing the history gallery, masi gallery, art gallery and indo-fijian gallery, temporary exhibition space, storerooms, and gift shop.⁴⁹

Not much interest was shown in the early days of the museum, till around the 1960s as programs were being developed by the museum to hold craft programs and an education series.

And as time has progressed research conducted by academics within the region have helped to establish the museum as a small center for academic excellence.

⁴⁷ "History of the Fiji Museum," Museum History, Fiji Museum, accessed October 22, 2021, <http://fijimuseum.org.fj/museum-history/>

⁴⁸ Museum History, "History of the Fiji Museum."

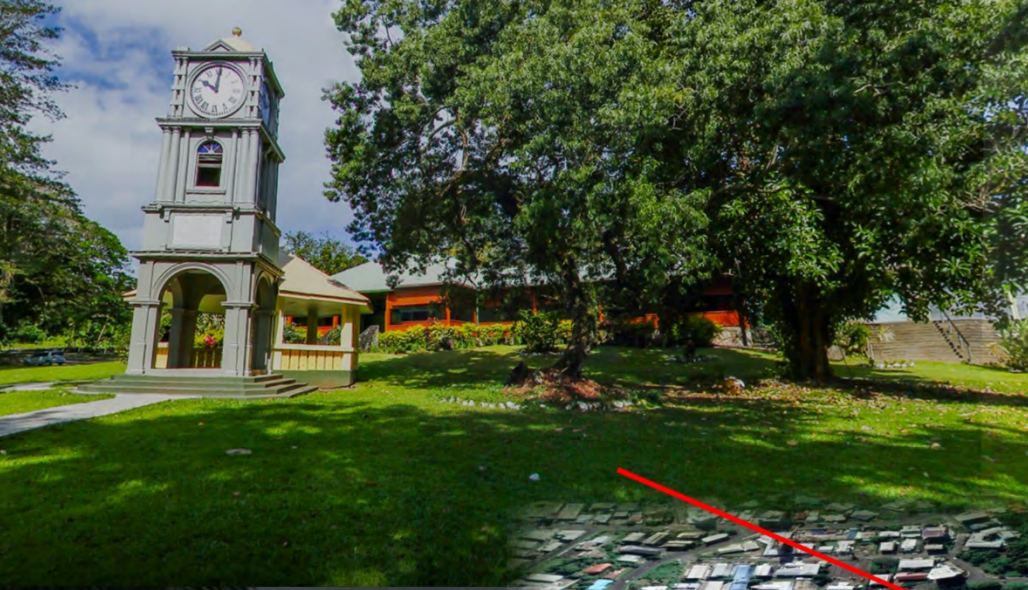
⁴⁹ Museum History, "History of the Fiji Museum."



Figure, (31). By Author.

SURROUNDING SITE

Its centrality to significant sites within Suva, with the neighboring Government buildings next door it allows for welcoming guests to the vanua, a more traditional and representation of Viti and its traditional affairs than the blank concrete canvas of the ports of Suva. Also, the access to and from the site with the main coastal road of Queen Elizabeth drive and Victoria parade which provide efficient accessibility of resources to the site, such as timber materials and access to and from the ports of Suva and the industrial area, and ease of access for students as the University of the south pacific which can be found further along the road of Queen Elizabeth drive and for tourists visiting the Suva city.



Figure, (31). By Author

DESIGN BRIEF:

The brief of the project is to re-design the Fiji Museum and design a new Maritime construction and educational facility. Whilst incorporating aspects of my research into the design, from spatial arrangement, themes, and functionality of spaces.

DESIGN: DERIVING AND DEFINING CONCEPT:

MUSEUM

My research question break downs down into “evolving the museum” and designing a facility that would “help regenerating the knowledge and culture of voyaging of Viti”

The process of evolving the design for the museum begins by analysis of the design of the museum, from spatial arrangement to its architectural language and style and to provide solutions that take into consideration the theme of knowledge and culture regeneration that is key to the theme in this thesis, while also in consideration as its key function as a museum is preservation.

It was evident that the influence of style and language was Art deco and of early Victorian settlement cottages and absent of Itaukei design and building practices. Very conflicting in the idea of culture preservation and the culture it intends to preserve, which would oppose the theme that is key to my thesis of Itaukei culture.

The structure itself is part of this process and theme of culture preservation, the experience does not begin after one has entered and paid at the kiosk, so I aim to use Itaukei building techniques and languages from interior to exterior with modern influence to walls.

Amongst the display galleries there were no order or hierarchy to exhibitions in terms of cultural significance, as there are roles and meanings to certain pieces like any culture, they have their own value which is critical to understanding cultures.

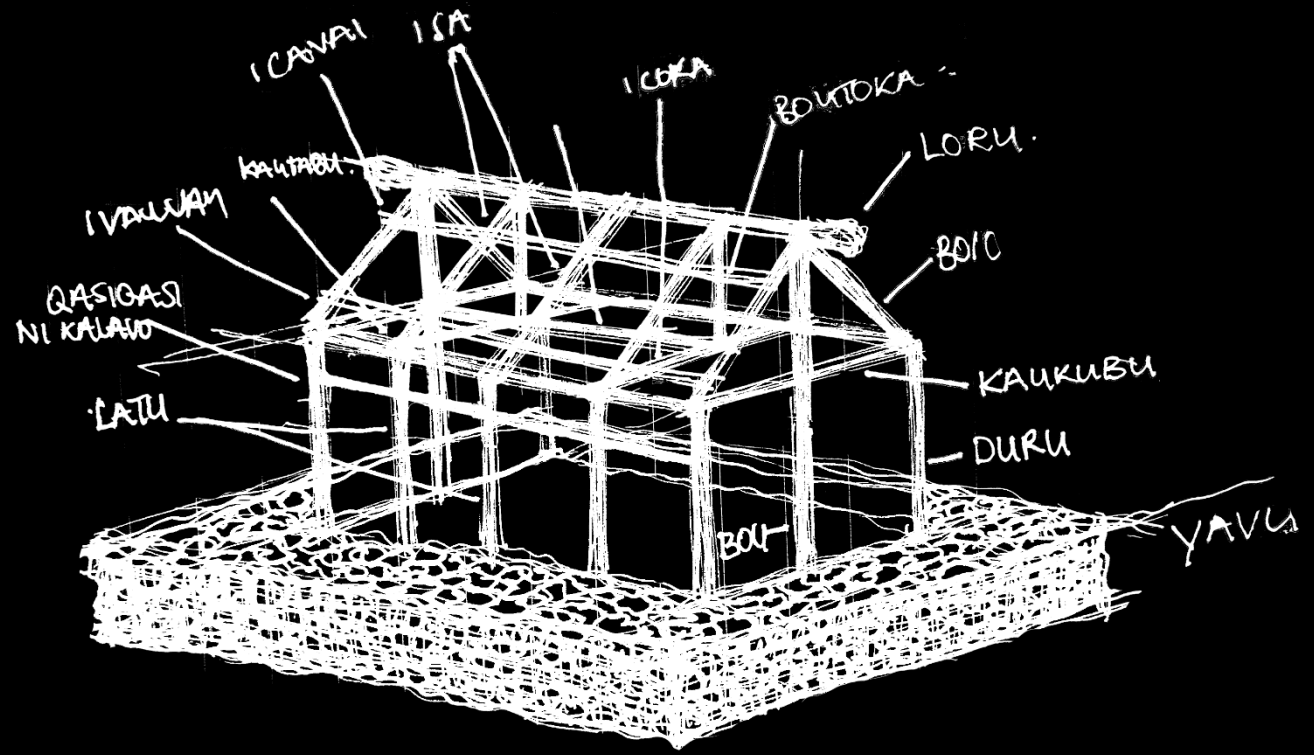
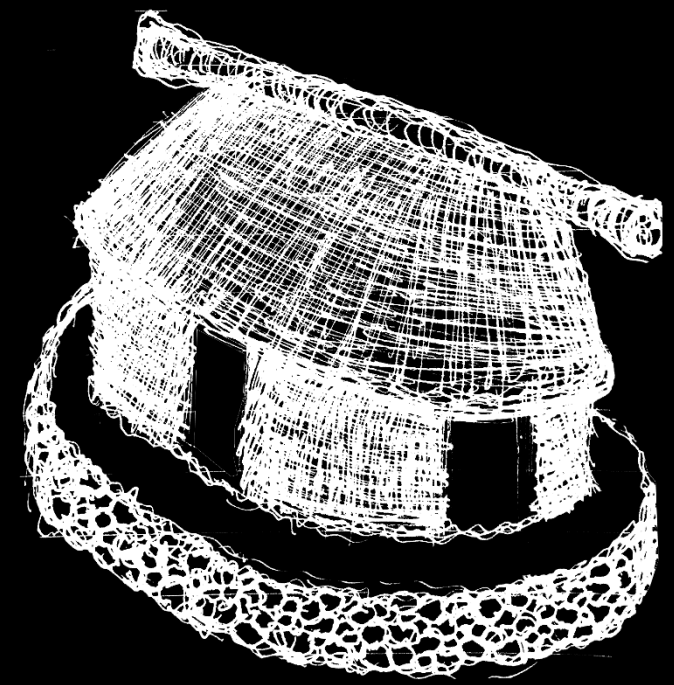
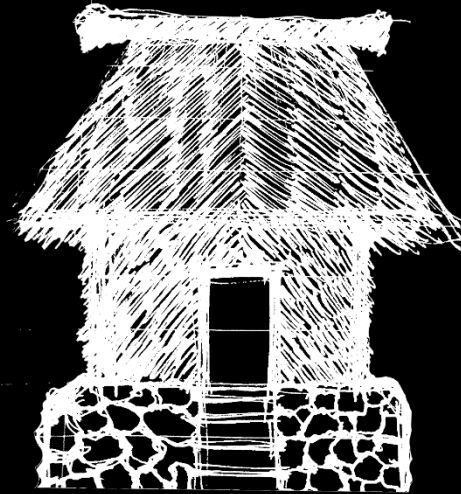
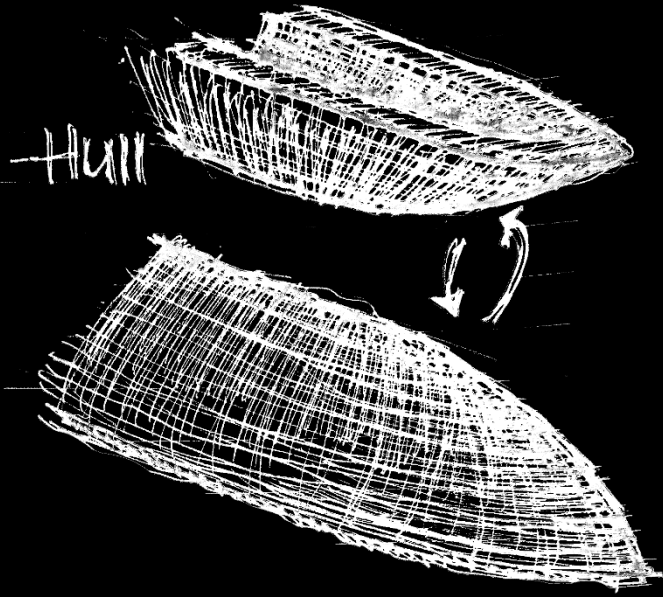


Figure. (32) By Author

DESIGN: DERIVING AND DEFINING CONCEPT:

MARITIME CONSTRUCTION AND EDUCATION FACILITY

To regenerate knowledge and culture of the past, using traditional building concepts and methods, it is essential that it be done with visions of the contemporary and future of Waqa culture and the evolutions that generations to come will build upon..

Which leads the design of the structures, to signify both practice of what was and what it can be, that the practice itself is not static and that it evolves as we evolve.

So, with the Museum structure bearing the theme of the past as it holds the artefacts of Viti's past, its architecture is to enrapture that essence of viti's past practise and culture, bearing the knowledge.

With the structures of the Maritime facilities, enrapturing the regeneration of those

practices but also its evolution in time and practice, its key that the structures evolve with the evolving of the waqa as it is crafted through the different structures and lastly launched from the docking area of the facility, depicting the growth of the young and being propelled into the future with the horizon in its view.

As it does function in that way moving forward, it plays major role in those visiting the past, to enter the docks as visitor and to travel back through the pathway, observing the evolution back to its foundation in the traditional structure of the Museum containing inside it the sacred artefacts of Itaukei.

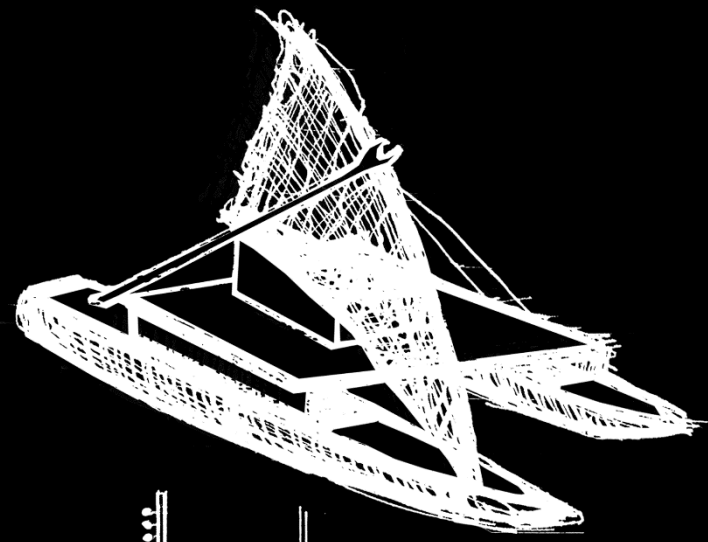
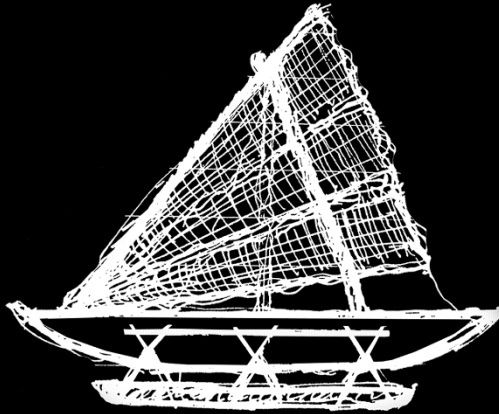
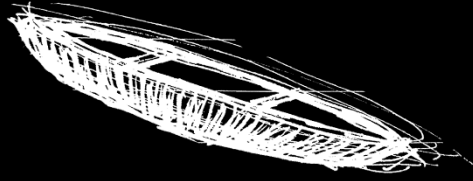
Essentially this path or space becomes the bridge and network between the past, present and the future, and whether looking ambitiously to the future horizons which bare much uncertainty, this bridge can connect the young to their ancestors for guidance along the journey into the horizon, on their waqa.

**Waqa conceptual exploration is 1:50 and based off the waqa recorded in the text Fiji and the Fijian, Williams recorded the dimensions of a Drua "Extreme length 118 feet, length of deck 50 feet, width of deck 24 feet, length of mast 68 feet, length of yards, 90 feet" ⁵⁰*

⁵⁰ Williams, Thomas, James Calvert, and George Stringer Rowe. 1858. *Fiji and the Fijians*. London: A. Heylin. 63

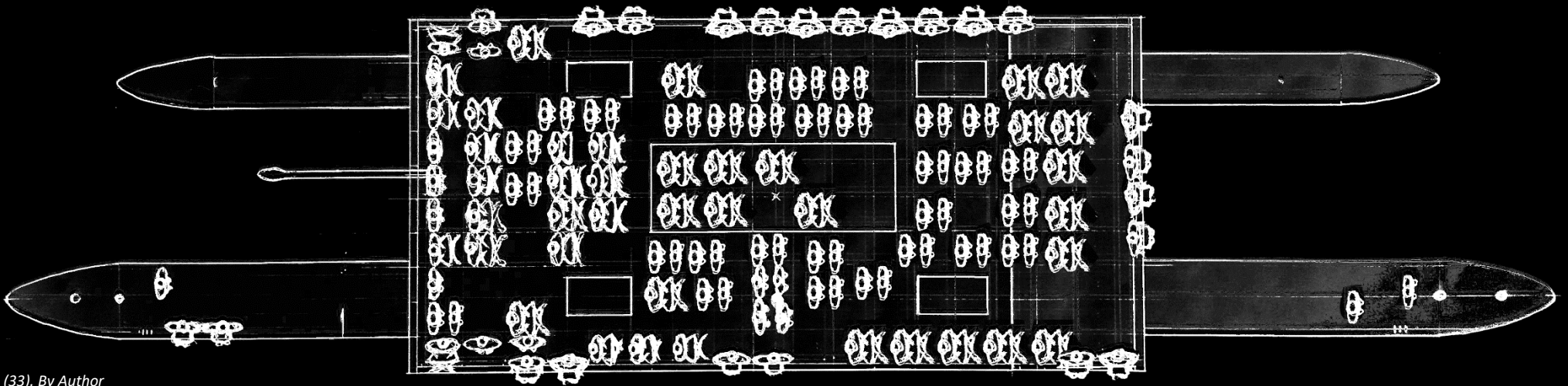
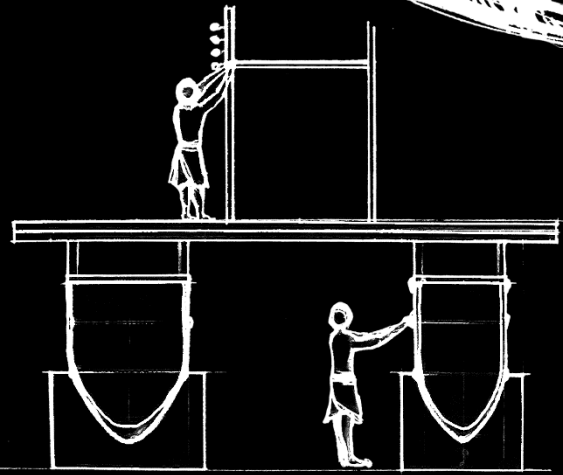
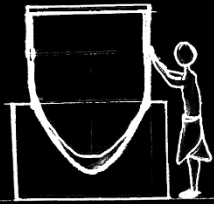
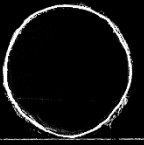
PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTION

+
TIME



=

PROCESS OF EVOLUTION



Figure, (33). By Author

DESIGN: PROGRAMME AND PLANNING

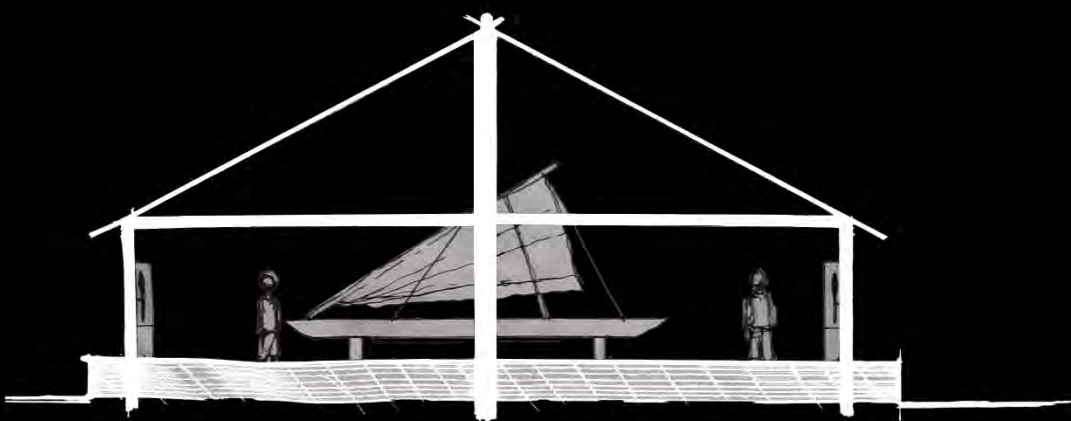
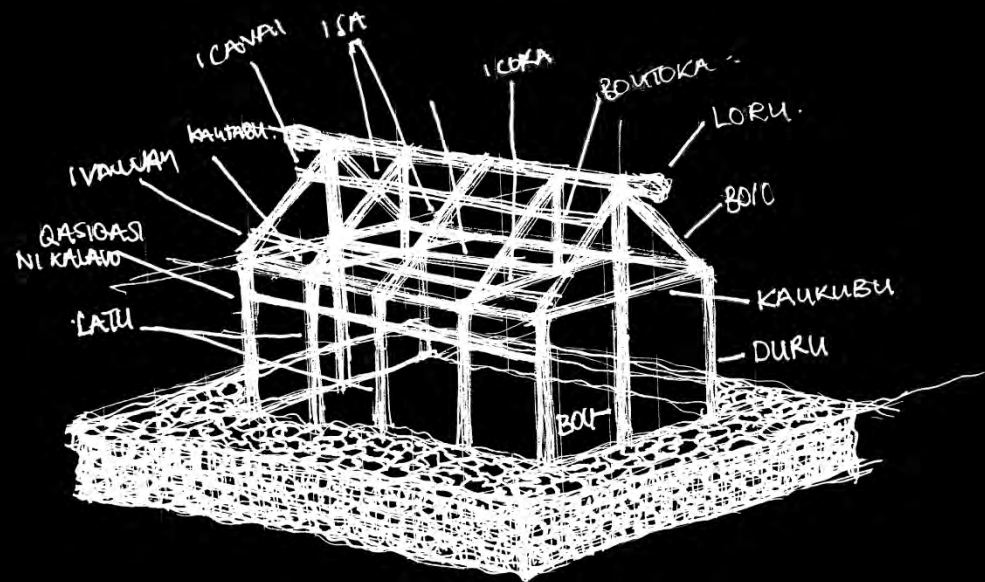
MUSEUM

The Museum will be comprised of 3 structures, planned along two axis intersecting each other.

- **KATUBA LEVU** – The entry and buffer between the gallery spaces.
- **BOU NI VANUA** – The gallery of the land and the material culture that comes with that
- **BOU NI WASAWASA** – The gallery of the ocean and the material culture of that, housing the existing Waqa and artefacts.

With these structures using the spatial arrangement spoken of previously, called the *Soliqa*, *Loma ni vale* and the *Loqi*, using this as the hierarchy of ceremony and importance within a space and organizing the collections accordingly.

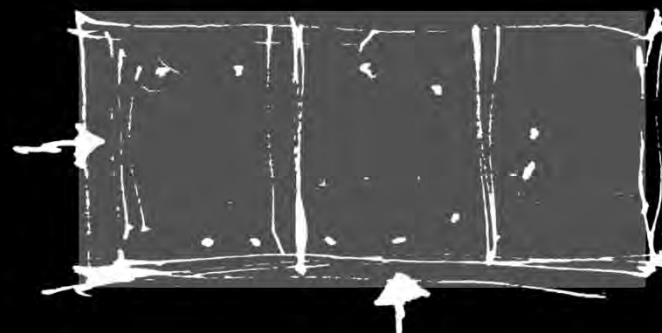
FOUNDATION



SOLIQA

LOQI

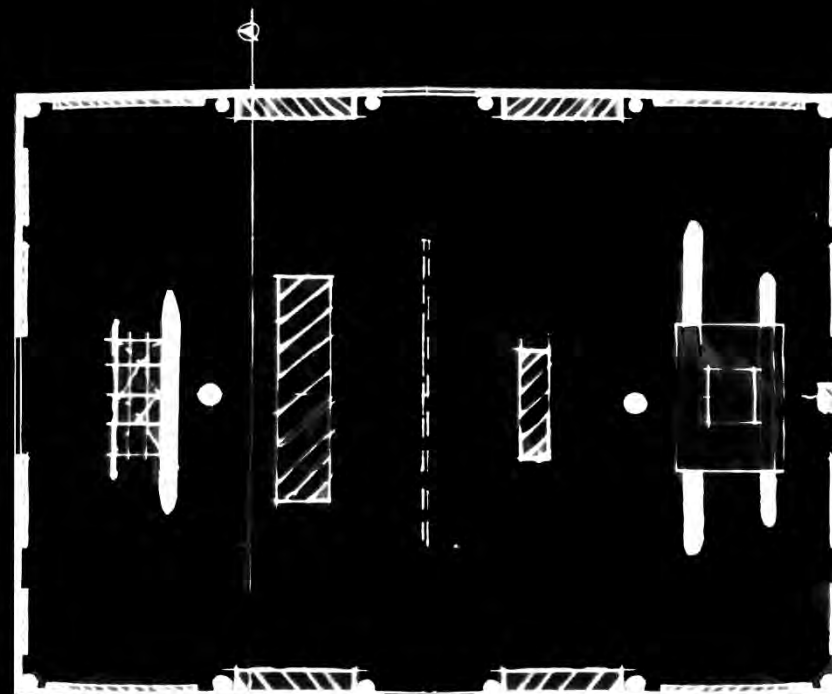
LOMA NI VALE



LOWER



HIGHER



Figure, (34). By Author

DESIGN: PROGRAMME AND PLANNING

MARITIME CONSTRUCTION AND EDUCATION FACILITIES

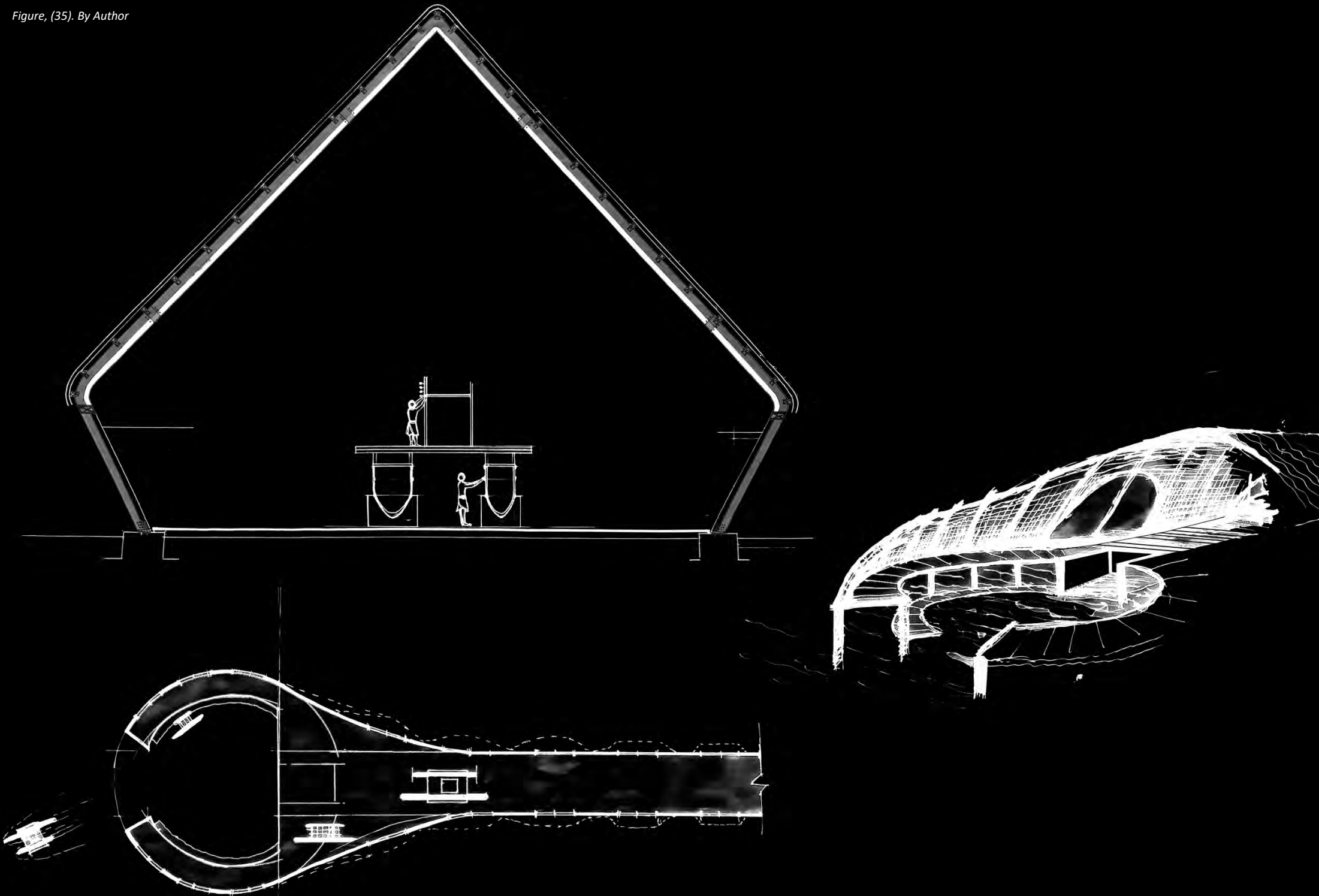
The Maritime facilities will run along an axis directly from the coastline to the Museum. It is to be compromised into 3 structures, in order from museum to coastline,

Based on experimental sketches of the process of construction of waqa, the structures will be dimensioned to that of a waqa, stated in the Waqa section of this paper.

Program following the process of construction, which leads to evolution in the mental and physical of the person and waqa but also the building, in its structural technology and physical size.

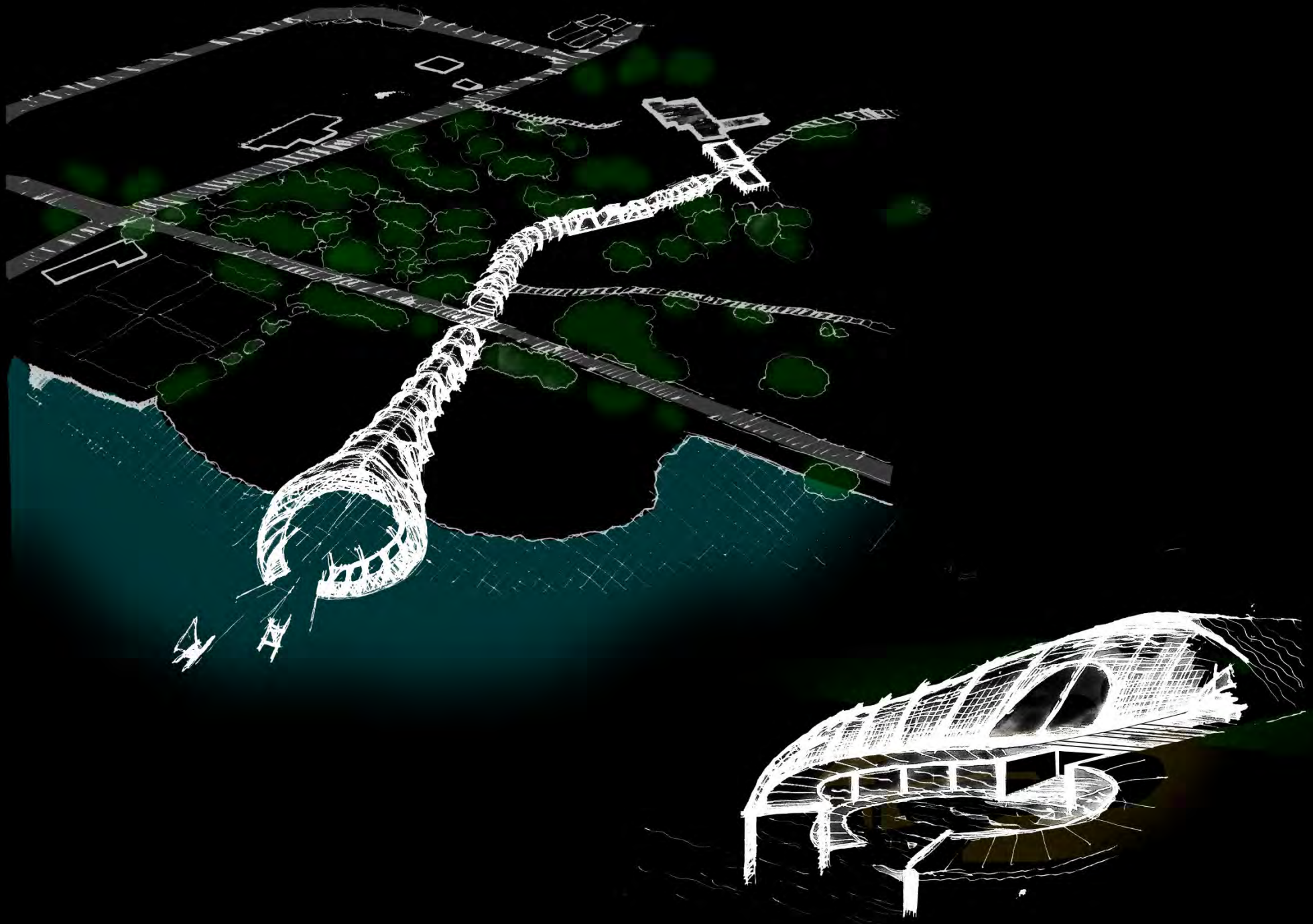
- **Vale ni Sucu** – this is the first structure where all raw materials are to be developed here, this is where the magimagi making, masi making and lbe making, and storage space will be as well as the first point of contact for the cutting of raw materials for timber or the cutting or manufacturing of parts to waqa.
- **Vale ni Bula** – the second structure where the cut pieces are assembled, using the magimagi and to attach the Sail made from the lbe.
- **Vale ni Waqa** – the third structure located on the coastline intersecting with the wasawasa (Ocean) this is where waqa, big or small, will be housed and launched. With also viewing platforms, ceremonial talanoa spaces and eating spaces. Smaller platforms for docking, fishing, and swimming

Figure, (35). By Author



DESIGN: MASTERPLAN DEVELOPMENT

Using the analysis of spatial arrangement within the Lau group Koro settlements, found in the intangible knowledge section, this is key to the Master planning of the site and its functionality and circulation.



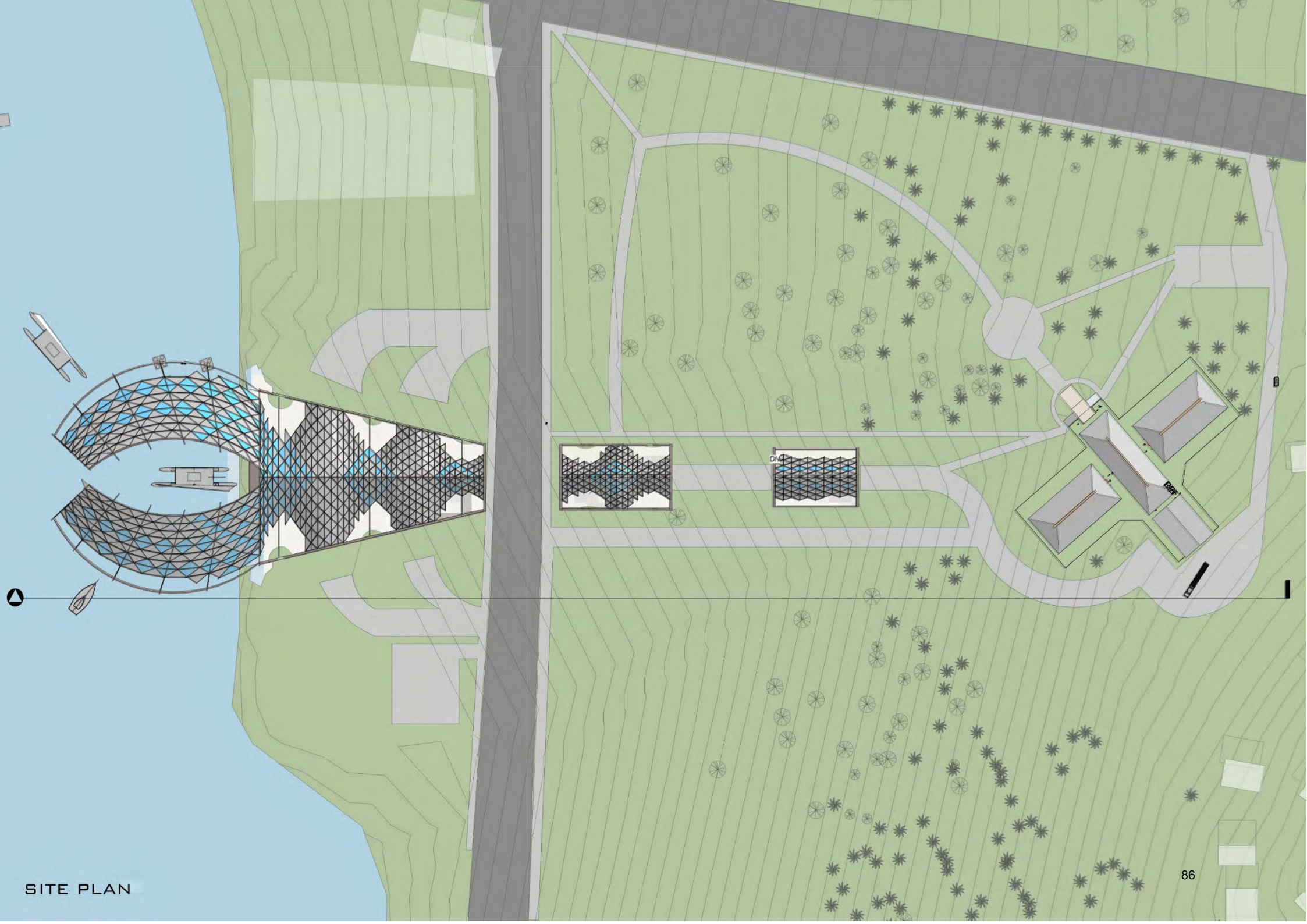
Figure, (36). By Author

DESIGN: EVOLVED CONCEPT:

FINAL DESIGN WORKS

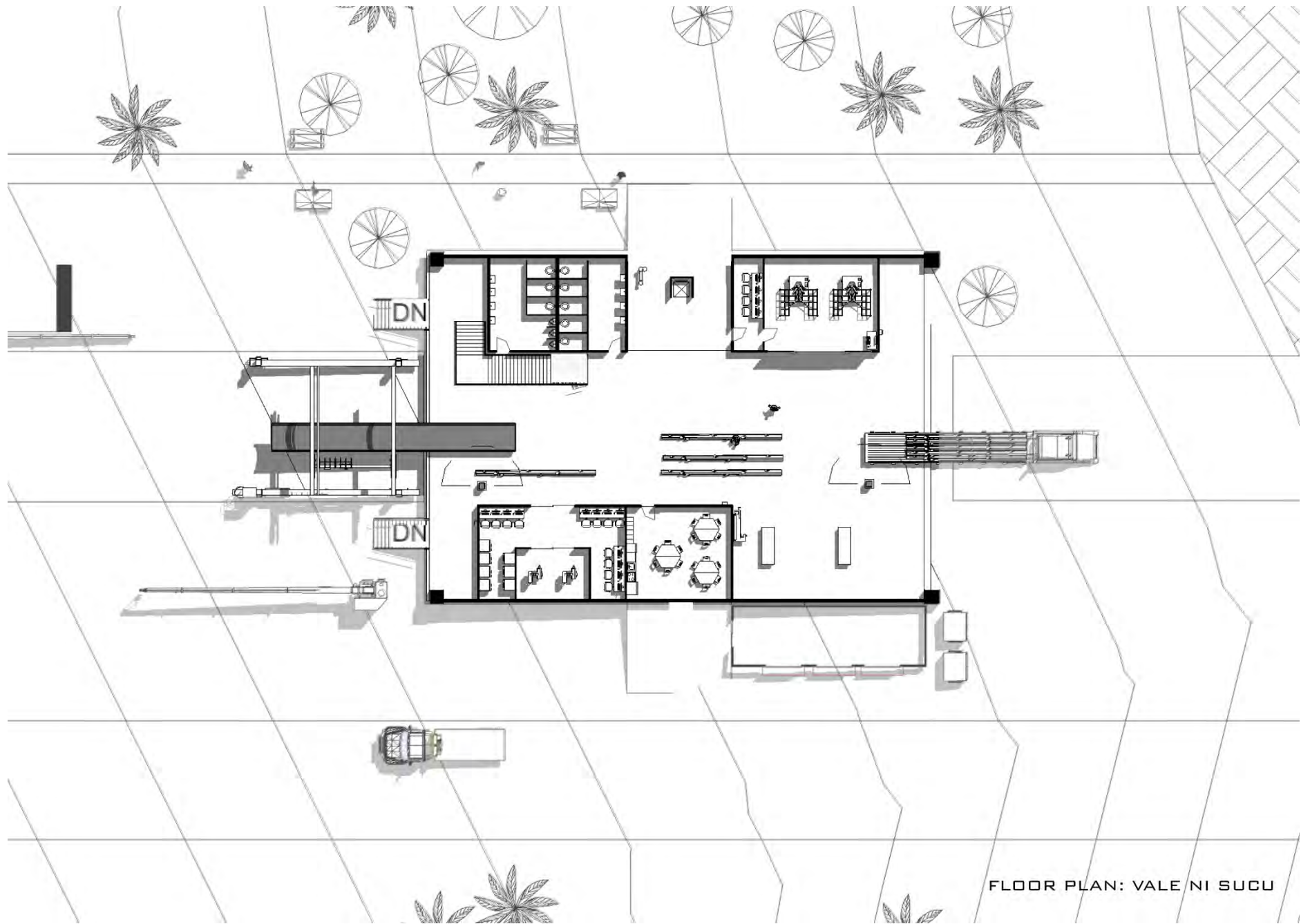
I was able to develop the proposed concepts into structures which incorporated the key ideas of Itaukei waqa building from traditional to contemporary, elaborating on the bridging between people and generations.



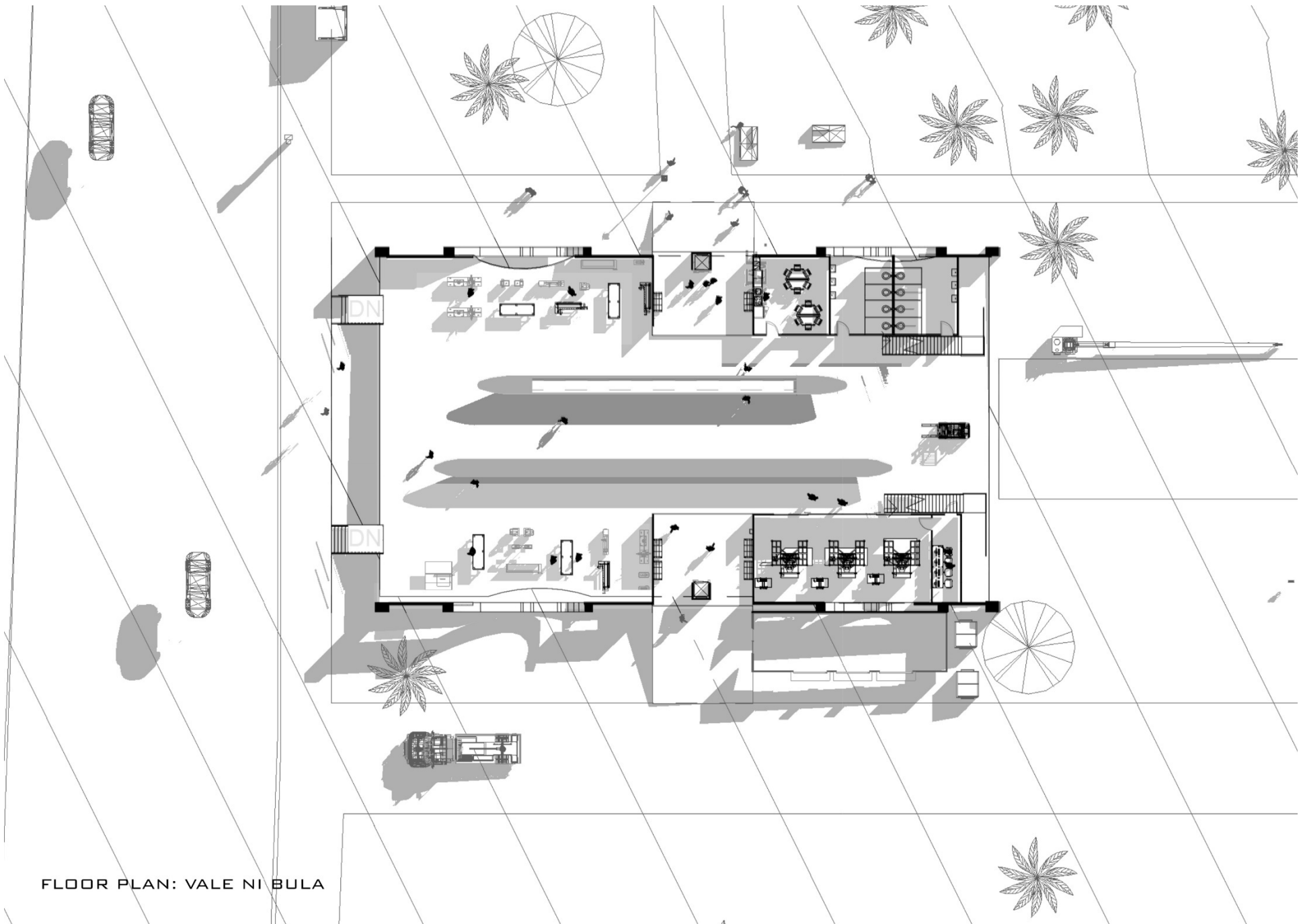




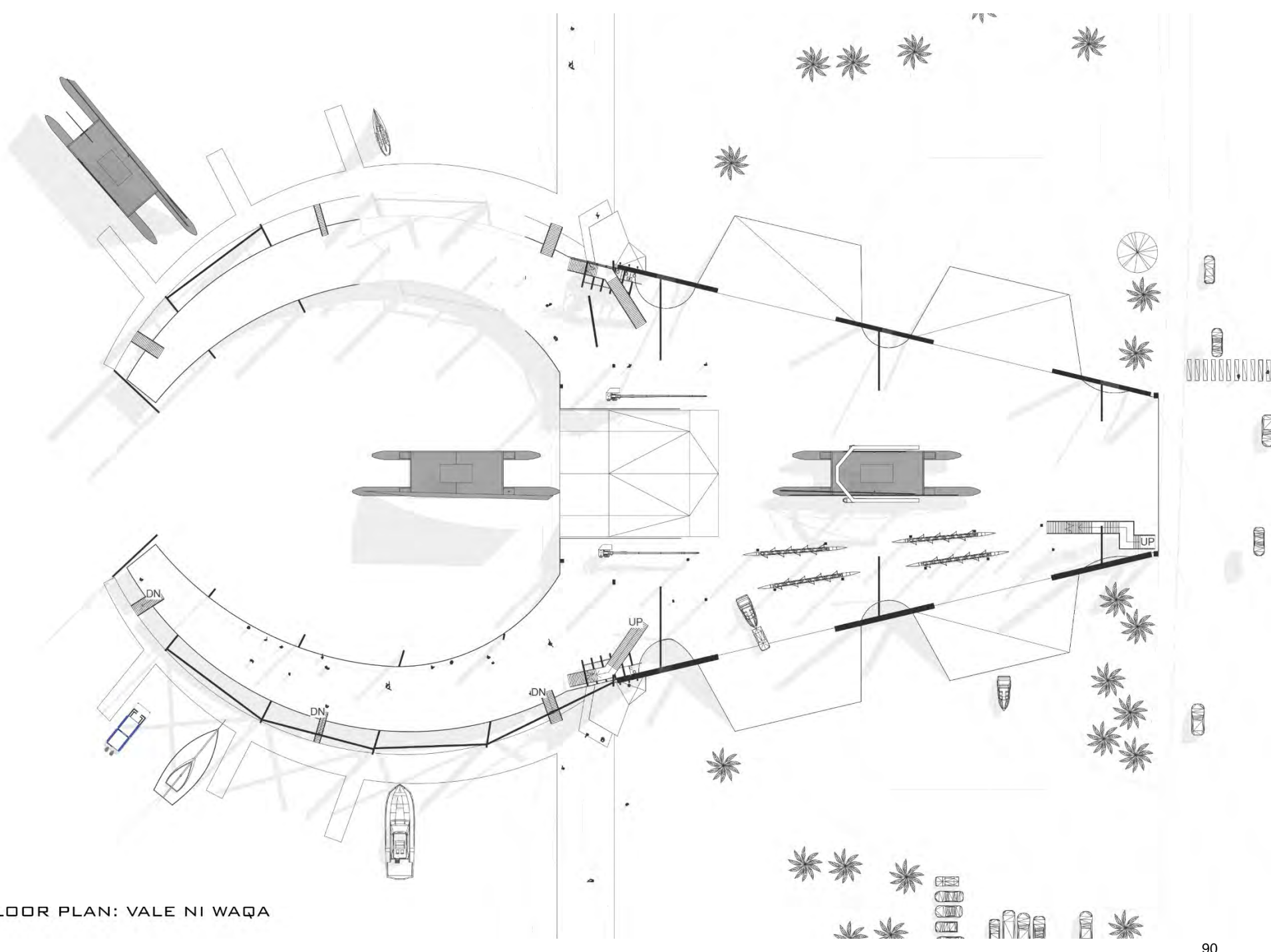
FLOOR PLAN: MUSEUM



FLOOR PLAN: VALE NI SUGU

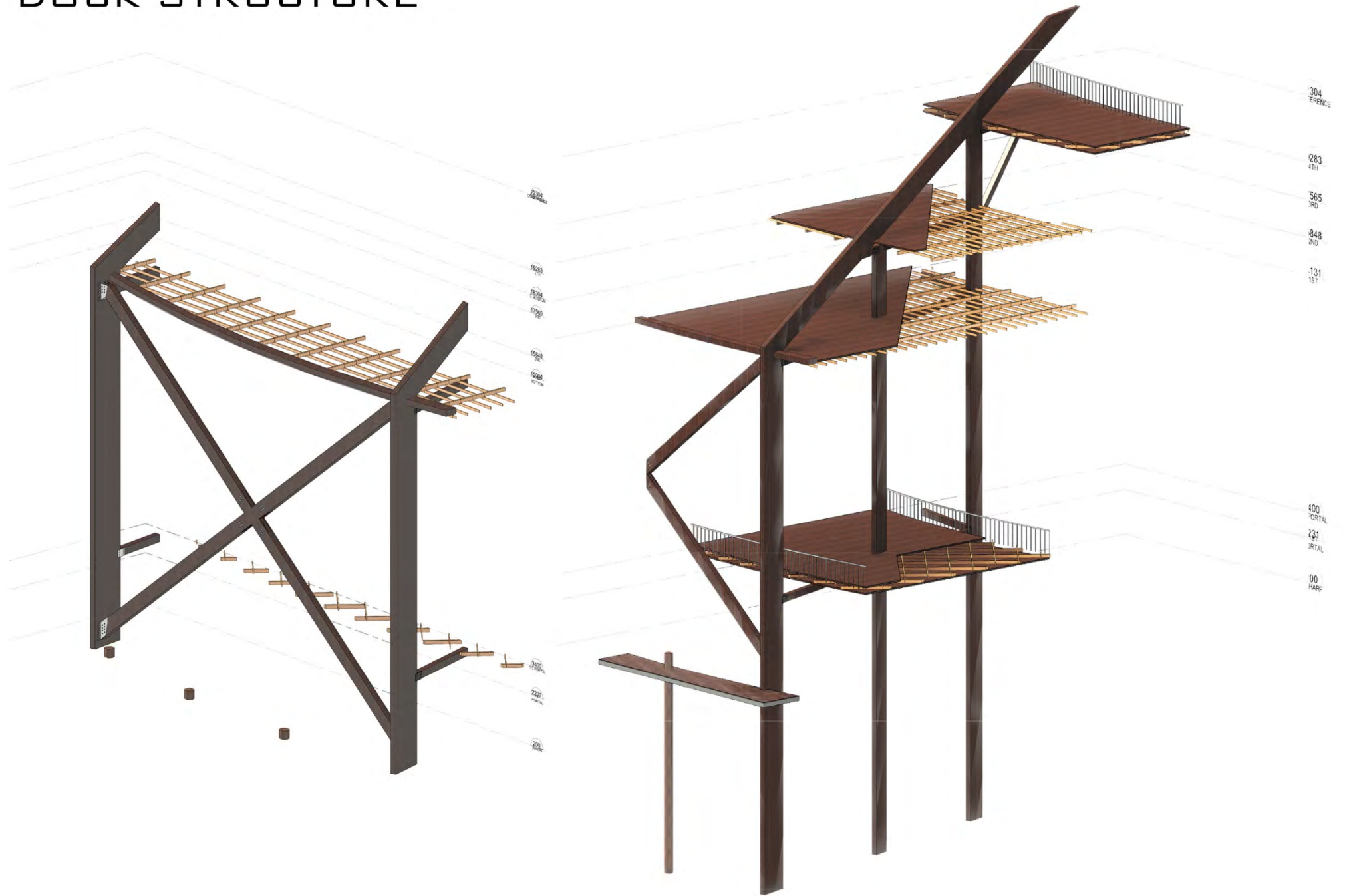


FLOOR PLAN: VALE NI BULA

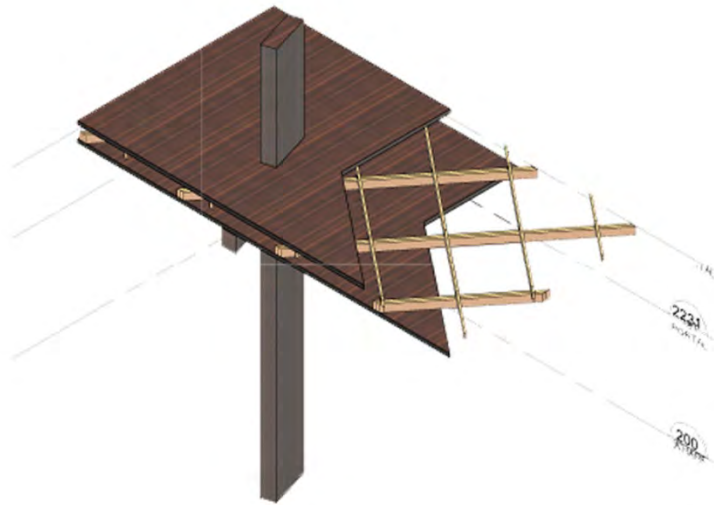
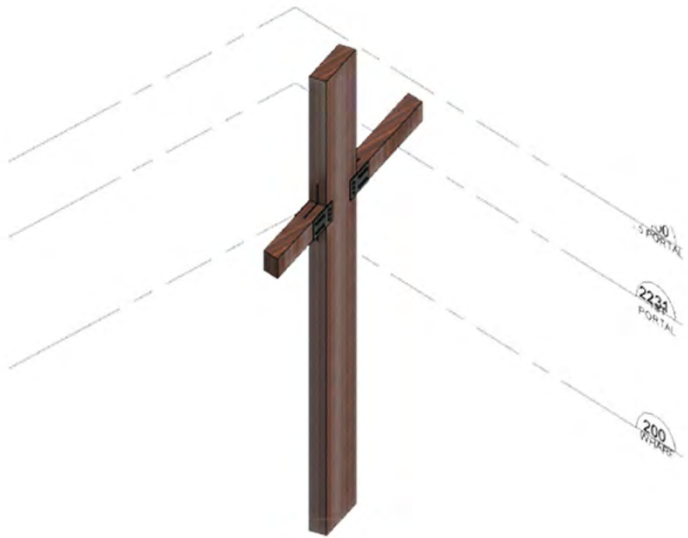


FLOOR PLAN: VALE NI WAQA

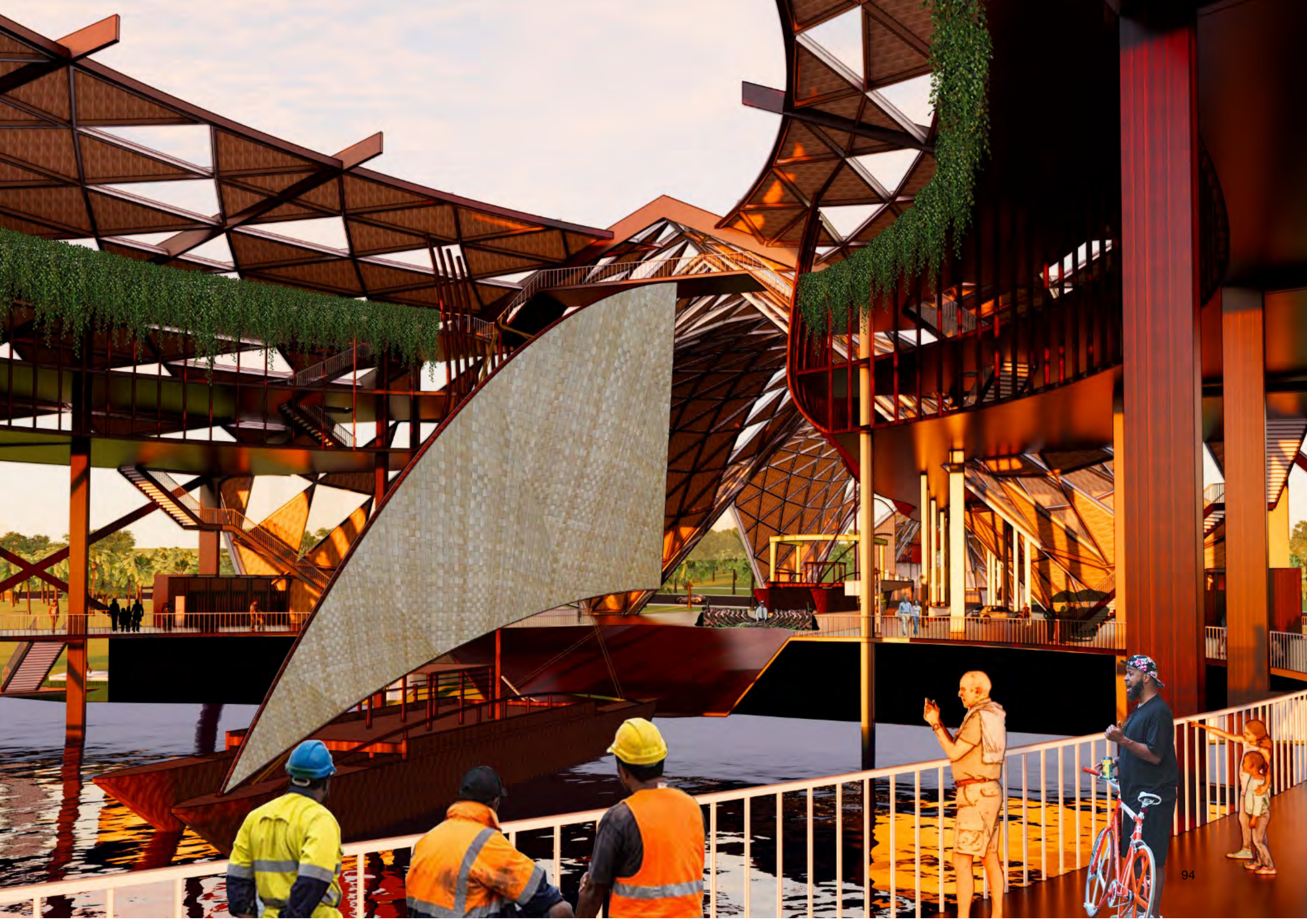
DOCK STRUCTURE

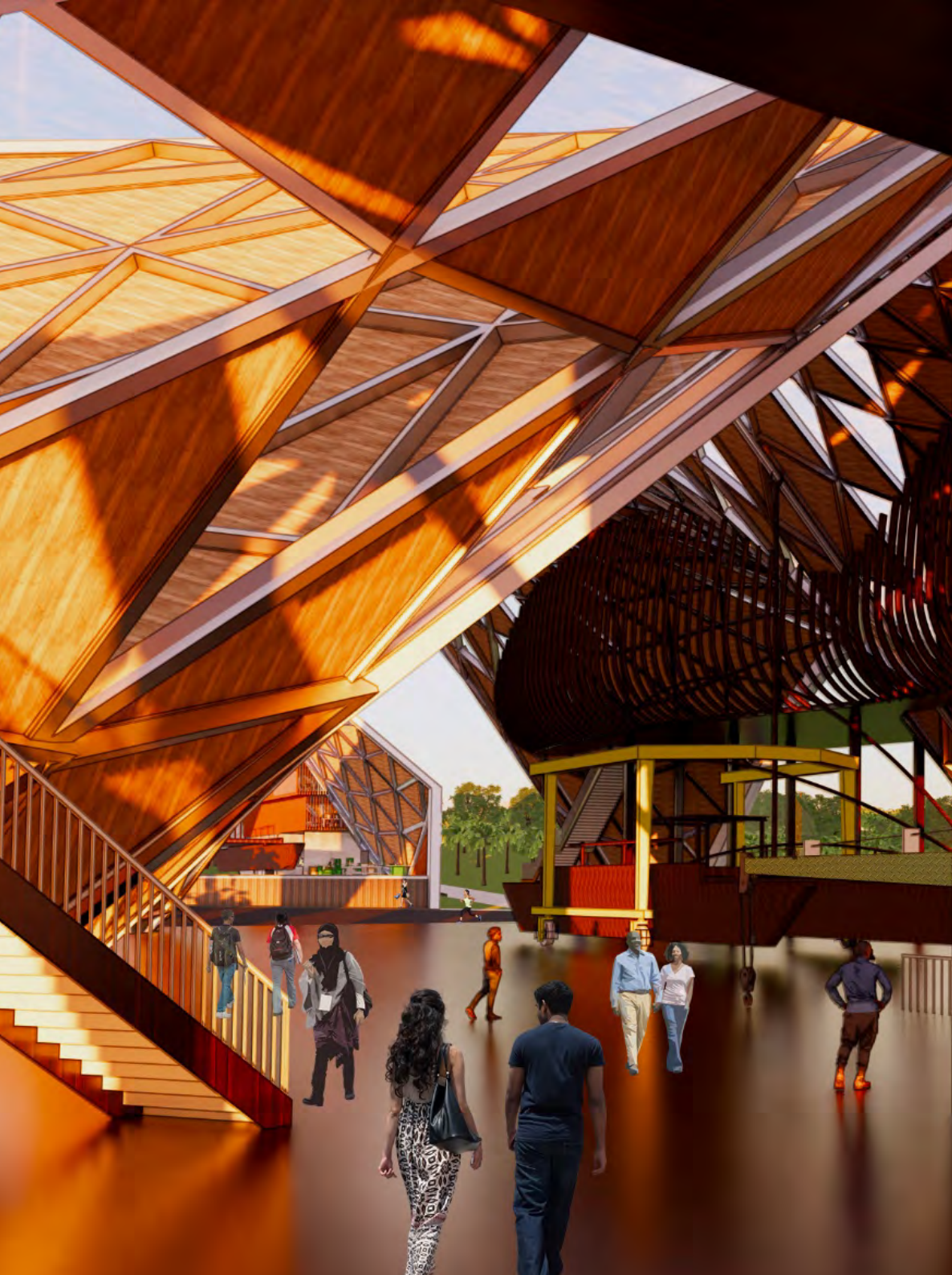


DOCK STRUCTURE DETAILS

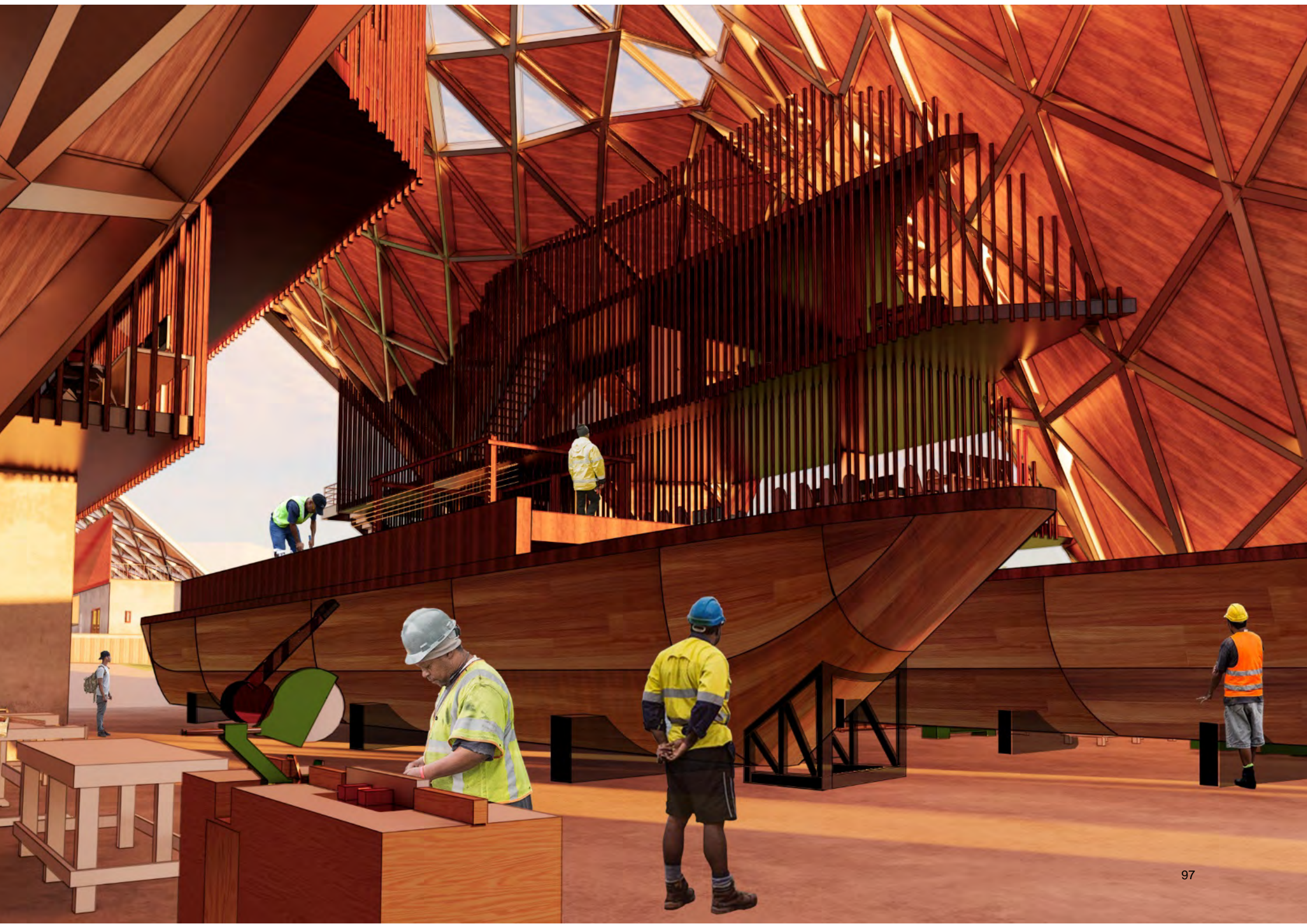


















DESIGN: CONCLUSION

The research provided gave me great insight to where the Itaukei society lies within today's context. To understand the social constructs that have brought them to this place in time is a result of many social inequalities felt from colonization, which requires a deeper insight to fully comprehending the extent of its atrocities.

But with the insight gained it has brought about design which holds a greater representation of Itaukei building culture and knowledge, a representation of past, present, and future and bridging the gap between them.

A structure that reminds Itaukei that there is a bigness within the structure, in the stories told and histories that have been recorded, but more importantly within them, depending on perspective, a perspective that this design looks to reidentify with, of past greatness and pride and bridging that mana to the present

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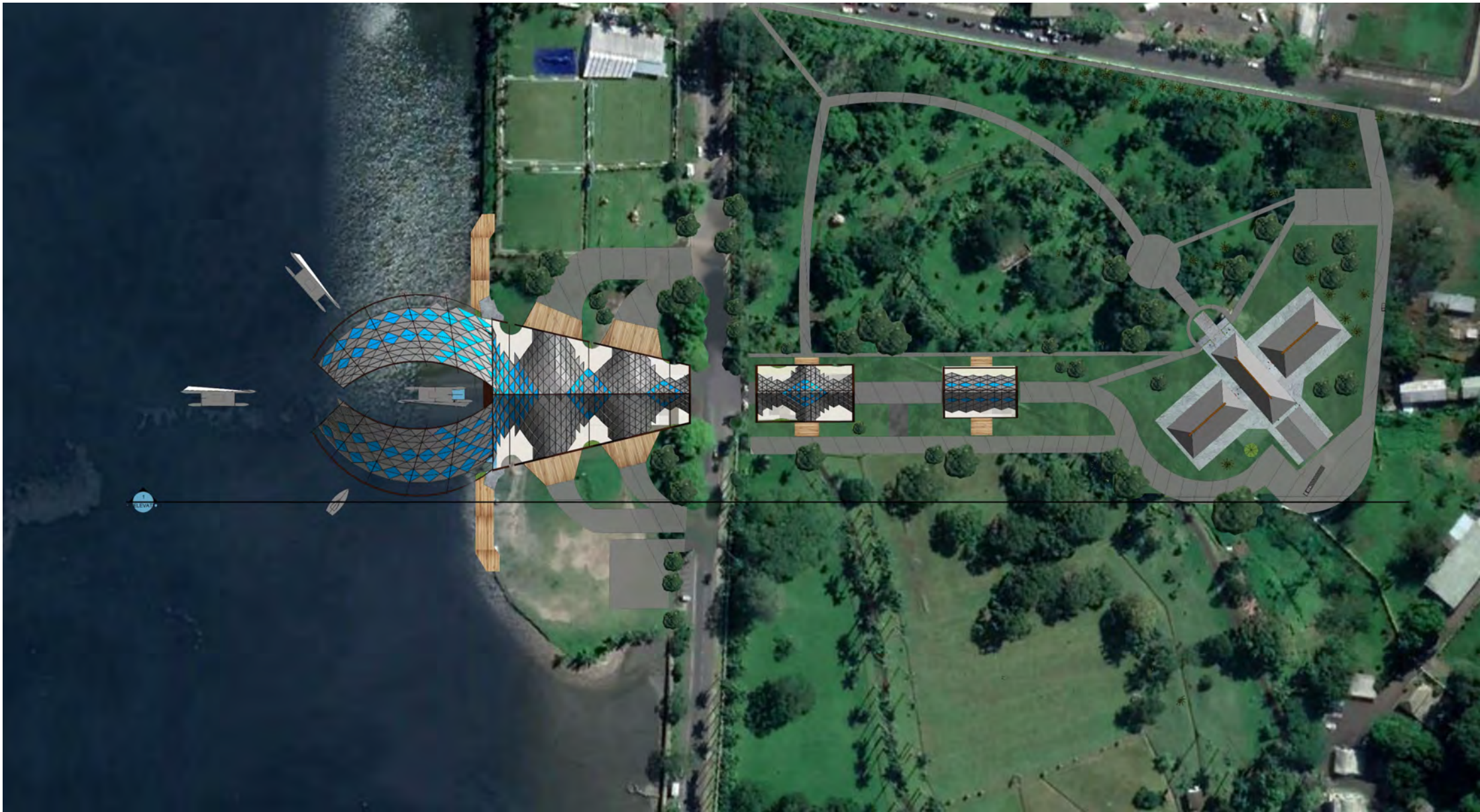
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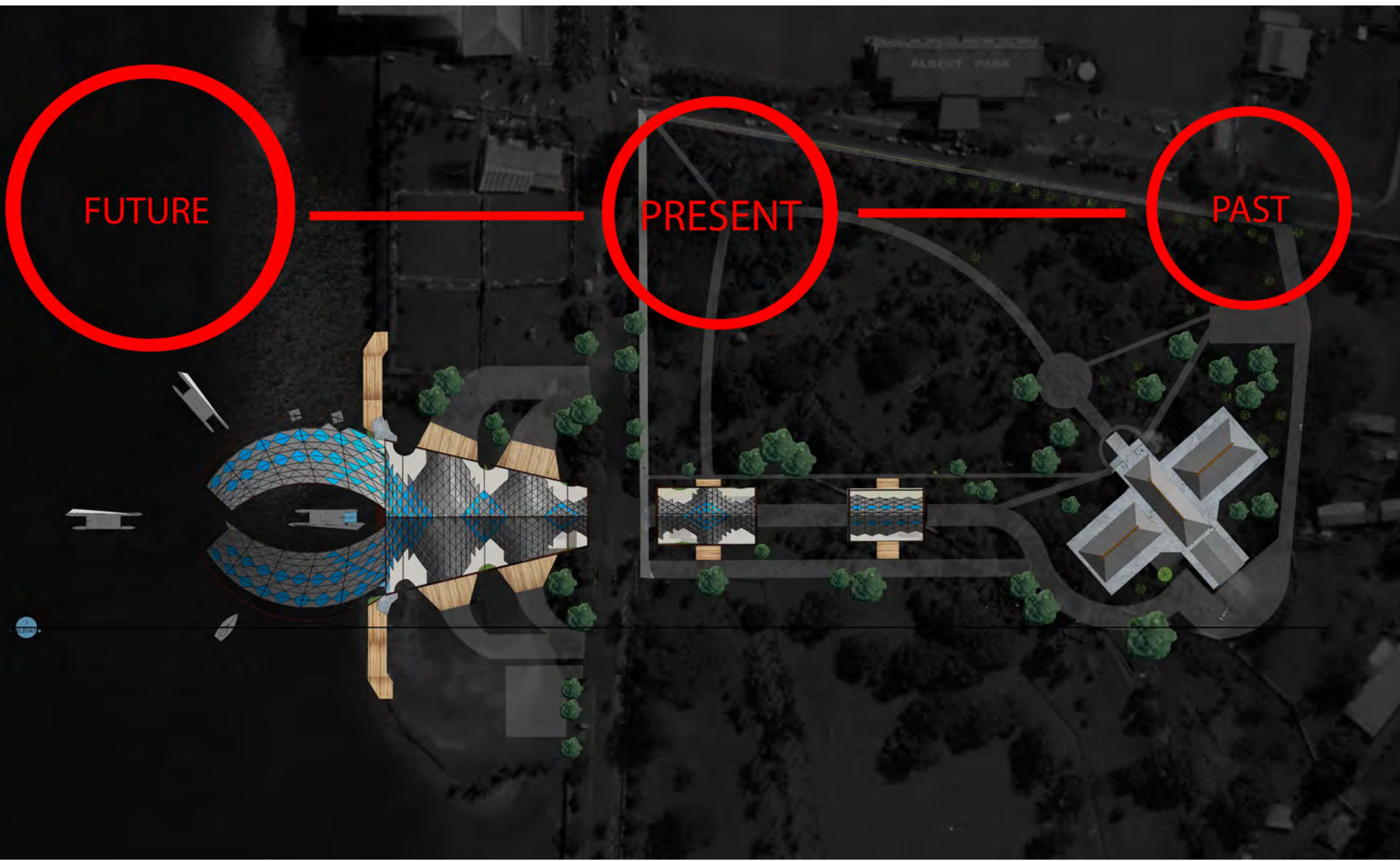
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PRESENT

PAST



FUTURE

PRESENT

PAST

EVOLUTION

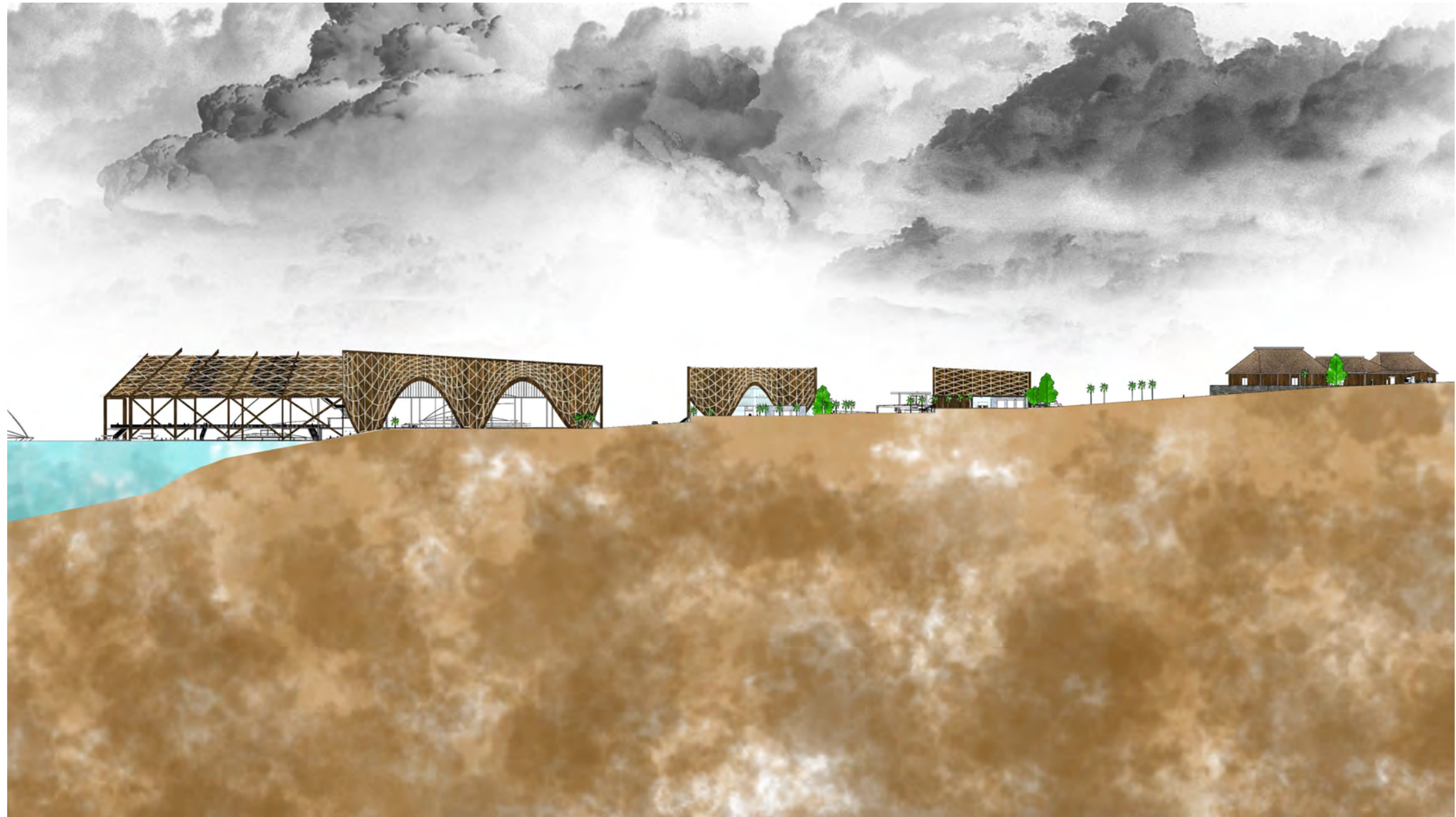
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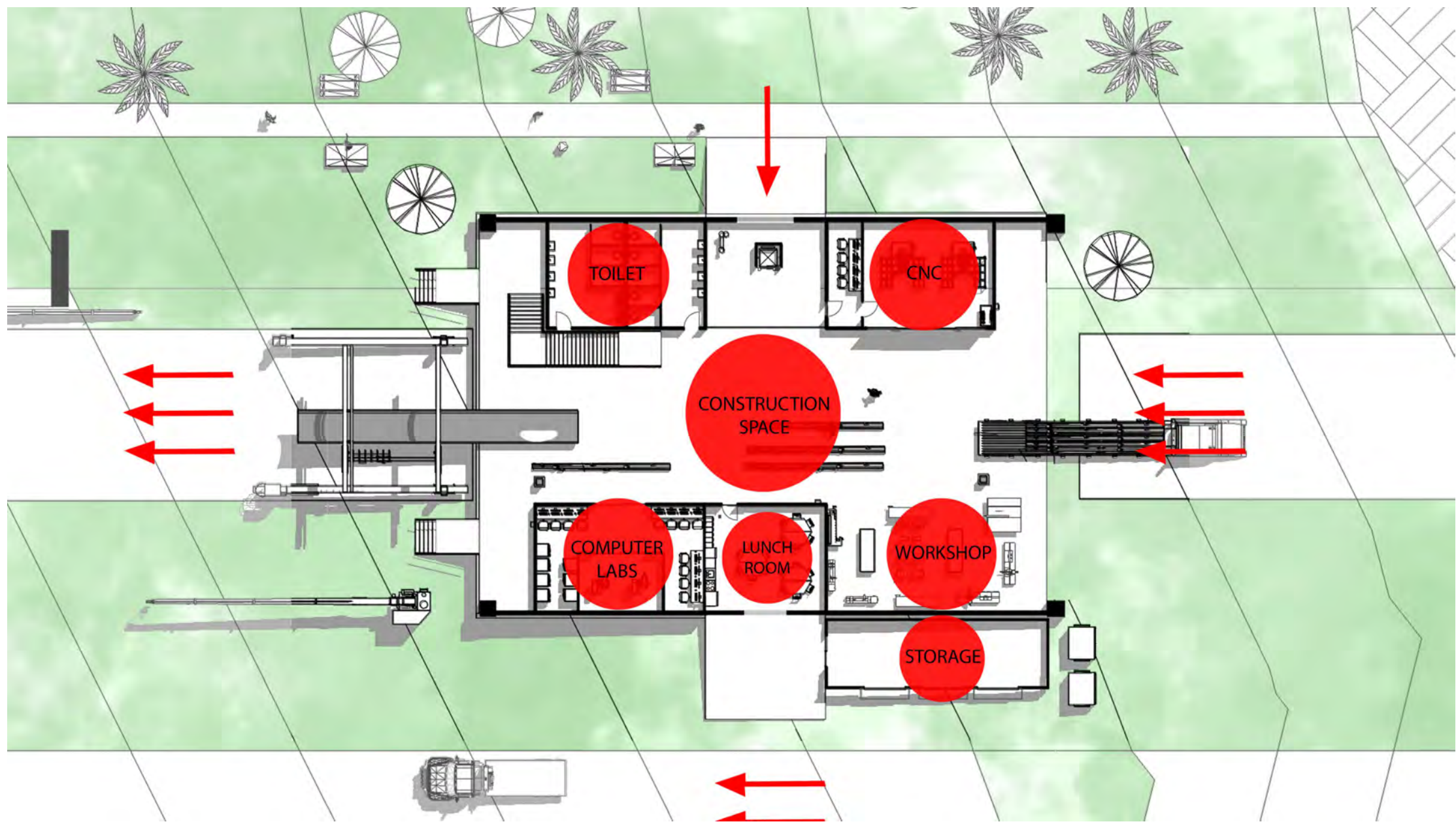
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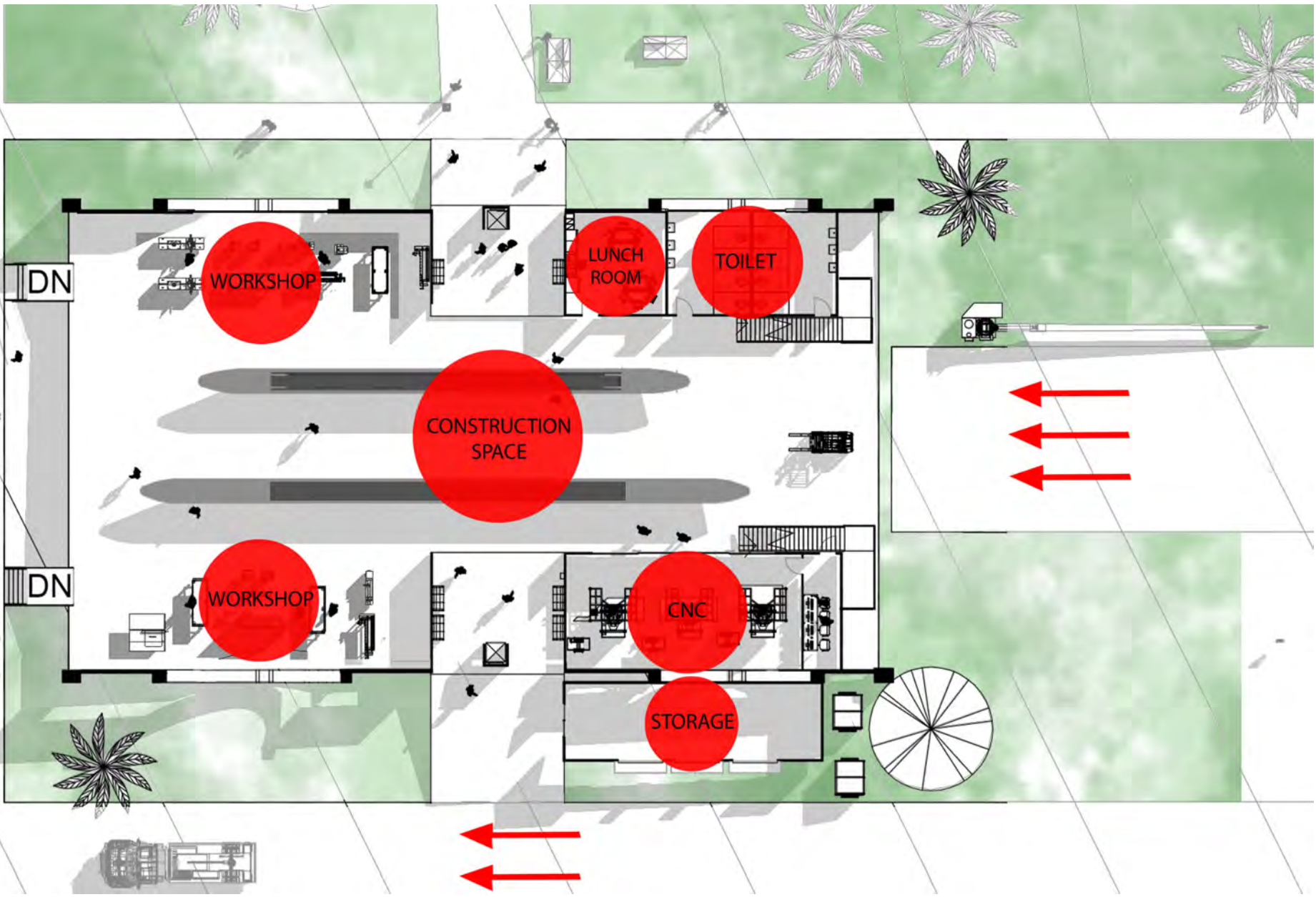
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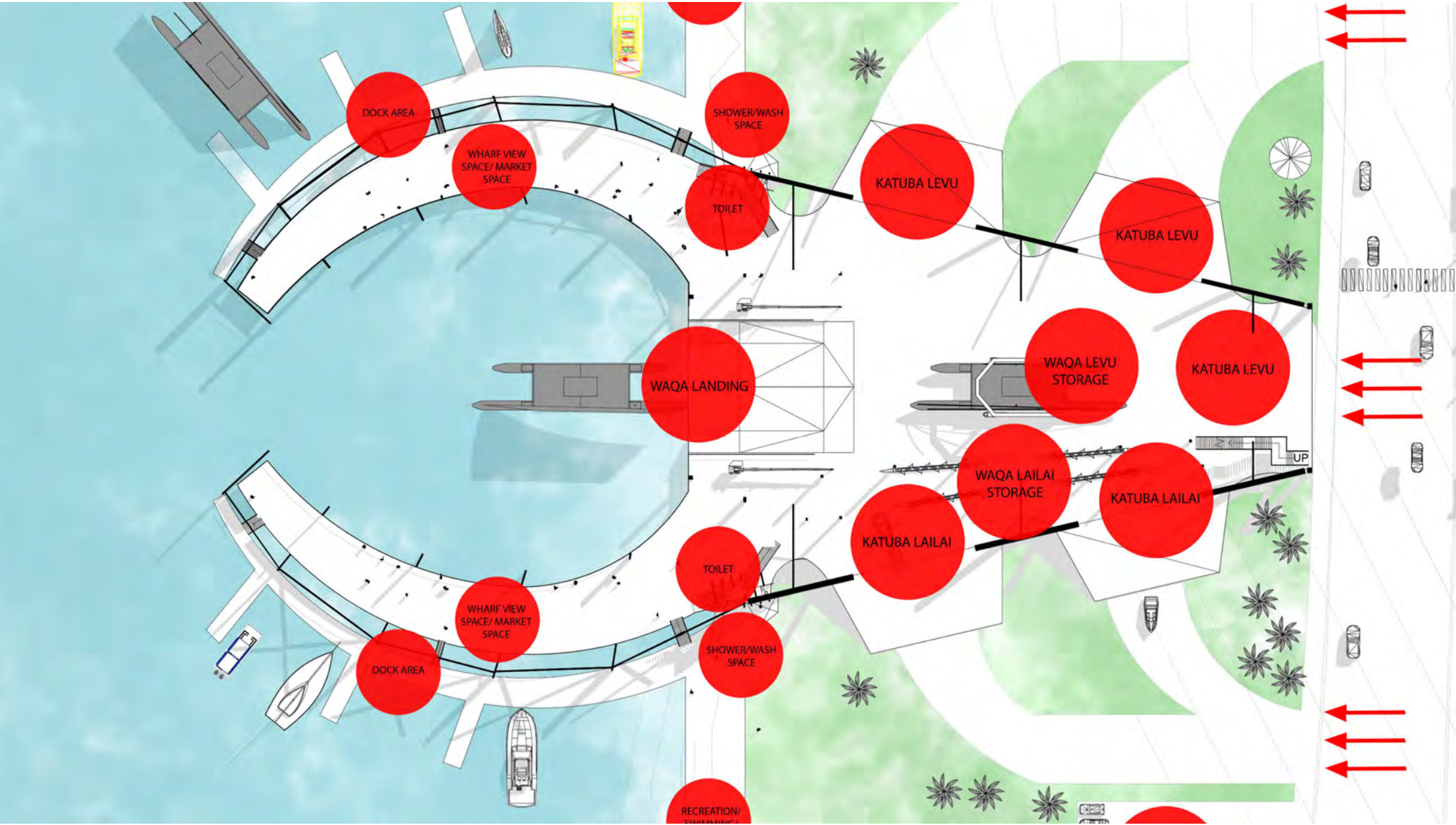












FUTURE

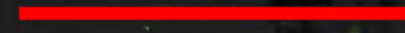
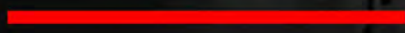
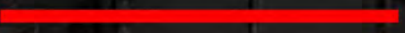
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TIME

TIME

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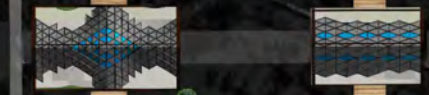
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KNOWLEDGE



VINAKA VAKALEVU