

# **MONASTIC TRANQUILITY**

**(A meditation retreat in Manang rooted in Himalayan spirituality &  
and indigenous culture)**

**Manang, Nepal**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of  
BACHELOR OF ARCHITECTURE**

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**AUGUST 2025**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis titled "MONASTIC TRANQUILITY" is the result of my own independent research work. I have carried out the research under the guidance and supervision of Ar. Kamala Dangol, Thesis Supervisor.

This thesis has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for any other degree or diploma or any other intuition. All the sources and references used in the work have been appropriately acknowledged.

I have adhered to the ethical standards and guidelines prescribed by the Khwopa Engineering college, Libali Bhaktapur throughout the research and writing process.

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**ABSTRACT**

Manang, a secluded valley in the Annapurna region, embodies a unique confluence of Tibetan Buddhism, Bon traditions, and local indigenous practices. Due to its high altitude, Manang has a cold, arid climate with low vegetation, similar to Tibetan plateau landscapes. Known for its breathtaking landscapes, diverse ecosystems, and deep cultural heritage, it is a popular destination for trekkers & nature dwellers.

This study will examine how a wellness center in Manang could integrate traditional monastic principles with contemporary meditation practices to create a sanctuary for mindfulness, self-discovery, and personal transformation. This study will also explore how the retreat facility's architecture and natural surroundings could foster a sense of enlightenment and tranquility using interdisciplinary approach that includes historical, architectural, and cultural analyses.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our thesis advisor, Ar Kamala Dangol, for her unwavering support, guidance and continuous supervision during the preparation of this dissertation. Her insight and expertise were invaluable in shaping this work, and I am deeply grateful for her mentorship. Kindest regard goes to Ar. Archana Bade Shrestha, Head of Department of Dept. of Architecture for allowing me to accomplish the design project. In addition, we are grateful to the staff and faculty of the Department of Architecture at Khwopa Engineering College, who provided us with a stimulating academic environment and access to valuable resources. Thank you all for your support and encouragement.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION OF MONASTIC TRANQUILITY

Nepal is a beautiful country popular not just for trekking, mountaineering, or family vacations but also for meditation retreats, cultural trips, and spiritual quests. Nepal is home to innumerable religious temples, stupas, and monasteries spread across the country. What makes Nepal a prominent land is the birthplace of Lord Buddha. Every year Nepal welcomes pilgrims from around the world, especially those who wish to explore and pay homage to the monasteries. That said, here are some of the beautiful monasteries that are must.visit while traveling in Nepal.

Monastic tranquility is a state of profound inner peace, cultivated in monastic settings through meditation, spiritual practice, and harmonious architecture. It embodies an atmosphere of deep introspection, mindfulness, and connection with the divine, cultivated through centuries.old traditions of monastic life. At its core, monastic tranquility is not merely about silence or isolation—it is an intentional way of being, achieved through discipline, rituals, and the design of sacred spaces that support meditation and inner harmony.

The spatial design of meditation centers for monks and priests, incorporating local construction techniques and sacred Himalayan symbols. The concept of integrating cultural hospitality and agritourism in the Himalayan region, specifically focusing on the design and implementation of a sustainable hotel and meditation Centre's in Manang, Nepal. By leveraging the region's unique natural beauty, cultural heritage, and agricultural potential, the project aims to create a model for sustainable tourism that benefits local communities and supports environmental conservation.



## 1.2 BACKGROUND

Manang exists as an isolated district in Nepal's Annapurna region which features spectacular Himalayan scenery together with extensive Tibetan Buddhist tradition and spiritual importance. The geographical position near Tibet has brought Tibetan cultural elements and religious traditions to Manang thus making it an excellent place for meditation retreats that draw on Himalayan spirituality. The region hosts many Buddhist monasteries along with chortens and prayer walls which display its profound spiritual heritage. The local Buddhist community maintains traditional practices through its established monastic institutions. The ancient Bhag Monastery along with other sacred places in the region demonstrate its historical ties to Vajrayana Buddhism. Through



*Figure 1-5 Braga Monastery*



*Figure 1-4 Ghyaru Monastery*

history these religious sites functioned as meditation centers and educational institutions which provided spiritual sanctuary to monks together with their students.

Bhraka (also known as Braka or Braga), Ghyaru, and Pisang are traditional villages located in Nepal's Manang District along the renowned Annapurna Circuit trekking route. These settlements offer unique cultural experiences and stunning Himalayan vistas. Bhraka is situated at an elevation of approximately 3,480 meters (11,417 feet) in the upper Manang Valley, nestled between the villages of Manang and Pisang. The village is renowned for its ancient Tibetan Buddhist monastery, perched on a hillside, which is a focal point for both locals and trekkers. The monastery's white-washed walls and traditional architecture reflect the rich cultural heritage of the

region. Ghyaru is a picturesque village located at an elevation of about 3,670 meters (12,040 feet). Trekkers often reach Ghyaru after a challenging ascent featuring numerous switchbacks, rewarded by panoramic views of the Annapurna range. The village's stone houses and narrow alleyways exude traditional Himalayan charm, and its strategic location offers breathtaking vistas of surrounding peaks. Pisang comprises two settlements: Lower Pisang and Upper Pisang, both located around 3,200 to 3,300 meters (10,500 to 10,800 feet) in elevation. Upper Pisang is particularly noted for its traditional architecture and a prominent Tibetan Buddhist gompa (monastery) that overlooks the village. The village provides trekkers with panoramic views of Annapurna II and other peaks, making it a favored stop on the Annapurna Circuit.

The architecture of Manang's monasteries is influenced by Tibetan Buddhist principles, featuring:

- **Stone and mud construction** adapted to harsh Himalayan climates
- **Flat roofs** to withstand strong winds and snowfall
- **Ornate wooden windows and doors** with Buddhist iconography
- **Sacred mandala-based layouts** to create spiritual harmony
- **Integration with natural surroundings**, often positioned on cliffs or hills for isolation and meditation

Buddhism is a **spiritual** and **philosophical** tradition founded by **Siddhartha Gautama**, known as the Buddha, in the 5th century BCE in ancient India. It encompasses a variety of teachings and practices aimed at understanding the **nature of suffering** and **achieving enlightenment (nirvana)**. Central to Buddhism are the **Four Noble Truths** and the **Eightfold Path**, which provide a framework for ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom.

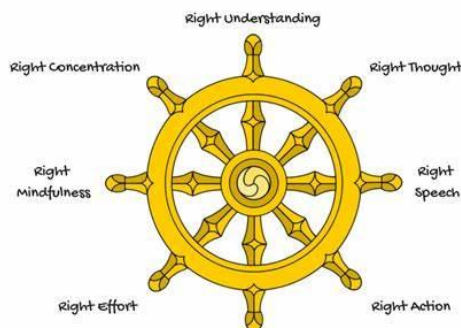


Figure 1-7 Wheel of life



Figure 1-6 Mandala

There are various meditation techniques within different Buddhist traditions, including:

- **Samatha (Calm Abiding) Meditation:** Focuses on developing concentration and tranquility.
- **Vipassana (Insight) Meditation:** Aims to develop insight into the true nature of reality.
- **Metta (Loving-kindness) Meditation:** Focuses on cultivating unconditional love and compassion for oneself and others.
- **Zen (Zazen) Meditation:** Central to Zen Buddhism, this practice emphasizes seated meditation and mindfulness in everyday activities.
- **Tibetan (Vajrayana) Meditation:** Includes complex practices such as visualization, mantra recitation, and ritual.

The two main branches are Theravada and Mahayana, Vajrayana is part of the Mahayana. The Sanskrit term [vajra](#) translates to "diamond" or "the thunderbolt." This term refers to our indestructible true nature, which is deathless, ever awake presence inseparable with emptiness. This is what we seek to realize, and then fully actualize consciously into every moment of our lives. Often Vajrayana is translated to simply mean “the diamond vehicle”.

Meditation is an ancient practice that dates back thousands of years. Despite its age, this practice is common worldwide because it has benefits for brain health and overall well-being. The two main branches are Theravada and Mahayana, Vajrayana is part of the Mahayana. The Sanskrit term vajra translates to "diamond" or "the thunderbolt." This term refers to our indestructible true nature, which is deathless, ever awake presence inseparable with emptiness. This is what we seek to realize, and then fully actualize consciously into every moment of our lives. Often Vajrayana is translated to simply mean “the diamond vehicle”.

### 1.3 PROJECT BRIEF

The spatial design of meditation centers for monks and priests, incorporating local construction techniques and sacred Himalayan symbols. The concept of integrating cultural hospitality and agritourism in the Himalayan region, specifically focusing on the design and implementation of a sustainable hotel and meditation centers in Manang, Nepal. By leveraging the region's unique natural beauty, cultural heritage, and agricultural potential, the project aims to create a model for sustainable tourism that benefits local communities and supports environmental conservation.

The deep sense of peace, stillness, and spiritual serenity found within a monastic environment. It embodies the calm, disciplined, and mindful way of life practiced in monasteries, where monks and seekers engage in meditation, prayer, and contemplation.

Monastic – Related to monasteries, monastic life, or the practices of monks and nuns who follow a disciplined, spiritual path.

Tranquility – A state of profound peace, free from disturbances, where the mind is calm and centered.

Tibetan monastery architecture is a rich and profound expression of Buddhist philosophy, deeply intertwined with the cultural, spiritual, and geographical context of the Tibetan plateau.



*Figure 1-8 Map of Manang*

## 1.4 OBJECTIVES

1. To study the basic concept of monastic tranquility centre.
2. To Study local materials, climate-responsive design, and indigenous construction methods of the Himalayan region.
3. To use the project as a medium to honor, respect, and revive threatened local traditions through design.
4. Design a center that offers a serene, contemplative environment for spiritual retreat, meditation and mindful living.
5. To integrate traditional monastic principles with modern sustainable design that supports inner peace and harmony with nature.

## 1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATION

1. Focused on planning, spatial layout, zoning, and architectural expression inspired by Himalayan spirituality.
2. Exploration of locally available materials such as stone, wood, clay, and their appropriate construction systems.
3. Focused on the design philosophy, spatial planning, and architectural detailing at conceptual and schematic stages.
4. The use of Buddhist elements is respectful but not derived from formal religious consultations.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Meditation is done for multiple reasons, from reducing stress and improving health to deepening spiritual awareness. Whether practiced for relaxation, self-improvement, or enlightenment, meditation offers profound benefits for both mind and body, making it an essential tool for personal growth and well-being.

Vajrayana Buddhism, also known as the "Diamond Vehicle" or Tantric Buddhism, is a unique and esoteric branch of Buddhism primarily practiced in Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, and parts of India and Mongolia. It integrates meditation, ritual practices, mantra chanting, visualization, and energy manipulation to achieve enlightenment. One of its key aspects is the understanding of chakras (energy centers) and their role in meditation and spiritual transformation.

Meditation in Vajrayana is highly structured and involves:

- **Mantra Meditation (Japa Yoga)** → Chanting sacred syllables (e.g., "Om Mani Padme Hum") to invoke spiritual energies.
- **Visualization (Deity Yoga)** → Meditating on Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, or Mandalas to cultivate their enlightened qualities.
- **Tummo (Inner Fire Meditation)** → A technique that works with energy channels and chakras to generate spiritual heat and awareness.
- **Mahamudra and Dzogchen** → Advanced meditation techniques to directly perceive the nature of the mind.

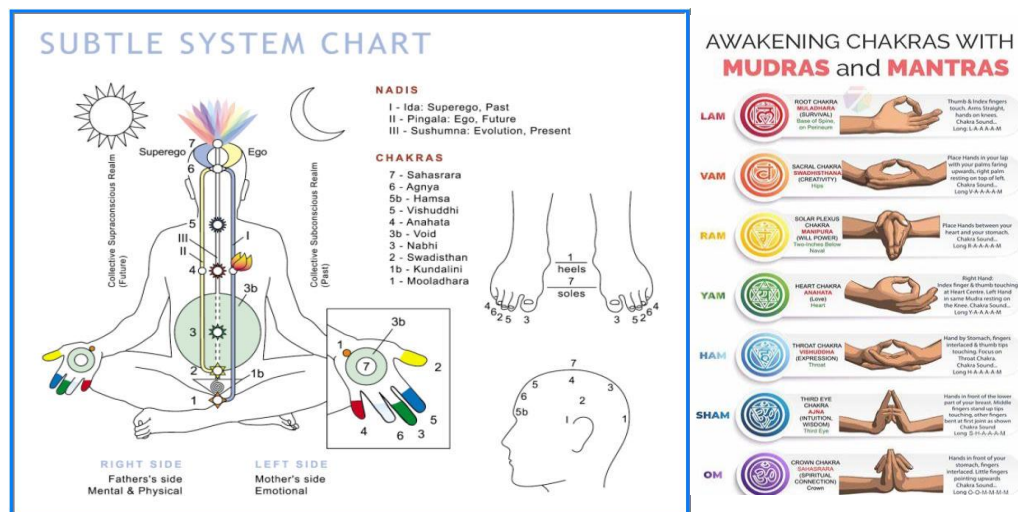


Figure 2-1 Chakras of the Human Body

In Eastern spiritual traditions, including Vajrayana Buddhism, meditation is deeply connected to the **chakra system**, which represents the body's **energy centers**. These chakras regulate physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. There are seven primary chakras, each associated with a specific energy vibration.

- Meditation is used to **awaken and balance chakras**, allowing energy (prana or life force) to flow freely.
- Blocked chakras can cause **emotional and physical imbalances**, while open chakras lead to harmony and enlightenment.

## 2.1 SINGING BOWLS

Singing bowls, also known as Tibetan singing bowls or Himalayan bowls, are ancient musical instruments traditionally used in Buddhist spiritual practices, meditation, and healing. These bowls are typically made from a combination of metals, including copper, tin, zinc, iron, silver, gold, and sometimes mercury, creating a unique alloy believed to enhance their vibrational qualities.

When played, either by striking or rubbing the rim with a mallet, singing bowls produce a resonant, harmonic sound that lingers in the air. The sound varies depending on the size, thickness, and composition of the bowl, creating deep, calming tones.



*Figure 2-3 Singing Bowls*



*Figure 2-2 Bajra and Bell*

Singing bowls are closely associated with meditation due to their ability to create sound vibrations that promote deep relaxation and mindfulness. Their connection to meditation can be understood in several ways:

**1. Inducing a Meditative State**

- The resonant sound of the singing bowl helps calm the mind, making it easier to enter a meditative state. The vibrations stimulate the brain, leading to a state of deep relaxation and heightened awareness.

**2. Sound Healing and Chakra Balancing**

- In many spiritual traditions, each sound frequency produced by the bowl corresponds to a different chakra (energy center) in the body. Practitioners use singing bowls to balance and heal these energy points, promoting mental and emotional well-being.

**3. Focus and Concentration**

- The sound of the singing bowl serves as an auditory focal point, helping meditators stay present and centered. It can be used at the beginning and end of meditation sessions to signify transitions in practice.

**4. Deepening Breath Awareness**

- The sustained tone of the bowl encourages slow, deep breathing, which enhances relaxation and mindfulness. This synchronized breathing fosters a deeper meditative experience.

**5. Stress and Anxiety Reduction**

- The soothing vibrations of the bowl create a sense of tranquility, reducing stress and anxiety. Scientific studies suggest that sound therapy, including the use of singing bowls, can lower heart rate and blood pressure, contributing to overall well-being.

**6. Cultural and Spiritual Significance**

- In Buddhist and Himalayan traditions, singing bowls are often used in rituals, prayers, and healing ceremonies. Monks and practitioners incorporate them into spiritual practices to enhance their connection to the present moment and higher consciousness.

**Example of Singing Bowls and Chakras Alignment:**

1. Root Chakra (Muladhara) – Deepest, grounding tones
2. Sacral Chakra (Svadhithana) – Warm, flowing tones
3. Solar Plexus Chakra (Manipura) – Powerful, energizing tones
4. Heart Chakra (Anahata) – Soft, harmonious vibrations
5. Throat Chakra (Vishuddha) – Higher pitched, clear tones
6. Third Eye Chakra (Ajna) – Deep, mystical resonance
7. Crown Chakra (Sahasrara) – Highest, celestial tones

**2.2 FEATURES OF TIBETIAN ARCHITECTURE**

Tibetan monasteries are designed as sacred spaces, reflecting Buddhist philosophy, Himalayan culture, and the harsh climatic conditions of the region. Below are the essential architectural and symbolic elements:

**2.2.1 Dukhang (Assembly Hall)**

The **Dukhang** is the main prayer hall of a Tibetan monastery, where monks gather for rituals, prayers, and teachings. It typically contains a central Buddha statue and smaller deities, representing the spiritual core of the monastery. The hall is often adorned with intricately carved wooden pillars and vibrant paintings.

**2.2.2 Lhakhang (Shrine Room)**

The **Lhakhang** is a smaller, more intimate space dedicated to Buddhist deities, revered teachers, or sacred relics. These rooms are used for meditation and individual worship, often filled with incense, butter lamps, and ritual objects that aid in spiritual practice.

**2.2.3 Kangtsang (Residential Quarters)**

**Kangtsang** are the living quarters for the monks and spiritual teachers. These spaces are typically arranged around a central courtyard, creating a sense of community and shared life. The simple, functional design encourages a monastic lifestyle of meditation and study.

#### 2.2.4 Chörten (Stupa)

A **Chörten**, or stupa, is a sacred structure often found at the entrance or central points within a monastery. It represents the Buddha's mind and the path to enlightenment, housing relics or sacred items. The stupa serves as a focal point for meditation and prayer.

#### 2.2.5 Mani Walls & Prayer Wheels

**Mani Walls** are stone walls inscribed with mantras, such as *Om Mani Padme Hum*. Pilgrims walk along these walls as part of their spiritual practice. **Prayer Wheels**, cylindrical wheels inscribed with mantras, are spun to accumulate spiritual merit and are placed along walking paths for daily use.

#### 2.2.6 Courtyards & Debate Halls

Monasteries often feature open **courtyards** used for debates, communal activities, and religious ceremonies. These spaces foster intellectual exchange, with some monasteries, like **Sera Monastery**, being famous for their daily monk debates. The debates are an important part of monastic education and spiritual practice.

#### 2.2.7 Multi-tiered Roofs & Golden Finials

Tibetan monasteries are known for their **multi-tiered roofs**, designed to withstand heavy snow and harsh weather. These roofs are often topped with **golden finials** or **Dharmachakras**, which are symbols of Buddha's teachings, representing enlightenment and protection.

#### 2.2.8 Wall Murals & Thangkas

Monasteries are adorned with **wall murals** and **thangkas** (painted scrolls), which depict Buddhist cosmology, historical events, and spiritual figures. These visual elements are used to educate and inspire, and they help narrate the teachings of Buddhism through art.








#### 2.2.9 Entrance Gate & Protector Deities

The **entrance gate** of a Tibetan monastery is often flanked by protective **deity sculptures** or paintings. These figures, often fierce in appearance, are meant to guard the monastery from evil spirits and ensure that only those with pure intentions can enter the sacred space.

### 2.2.10 Library (Gonkhang)

The **library**, or **Gonkhang**, houses sacred **Buddhist scriptures** such as the **Kangyur** (Buddha's teachings) and the **Tengyur** (commentaries). These libraries are important centers of learning and scholarship, preserving ancient Buddhist knowledge for future generations.

The color representation and their significant meaning that it holds:

						
Color	<a href="#">Blue</a>	<a href="#">Black</a>	<a href="#">White</a>	<a href="#">Red</a>	<a href="#">Green</a>	<a href="#">Yellow</a>
General Meanings	coolness, infinity, ascension, purity, healing	primordial darkness, hate	learning, knowledge, purity, longevity	life force, preservation, the sacred, blood, fire	balance, harmony, vigor, youth, action	rootedness, renunciation, earth
Seen in:	turquoise, lapis lazuli	black thangkas	White Tara, white elephant	coral, red thangkas	Green Tara	saffron robes of monks
Emotion, Action	killing, anger	killing, hatred	rest and thinking	subjugation and summoning	exorcism	restraining and nourishing
Transforms:	anger into mirror-like wisdom	hate into compassion	delusion of ignorance into wisdom of reality	delusion of attachment into the wisdom of discernment	jealousy into the wisdom of accomplishment	pride into wisdom of sameness
Buddha	Akshobhya	n/a	Vairocana	Amitabha	Amoghasiddhi	Ratna-sambhava
Part of Hum 	the dot (drop) on the crescent	n/a	the crescent	syllable 'ha'	vowel 'u'	the head
Body Part	ears	n/a	eyes	tongue	head	nose
Element	air	air	water	fire	n/a	earth

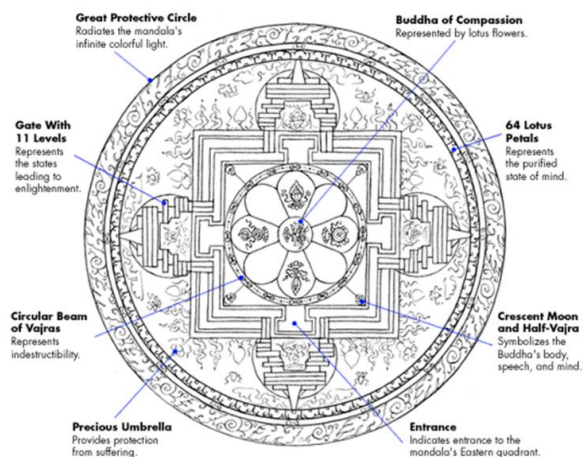
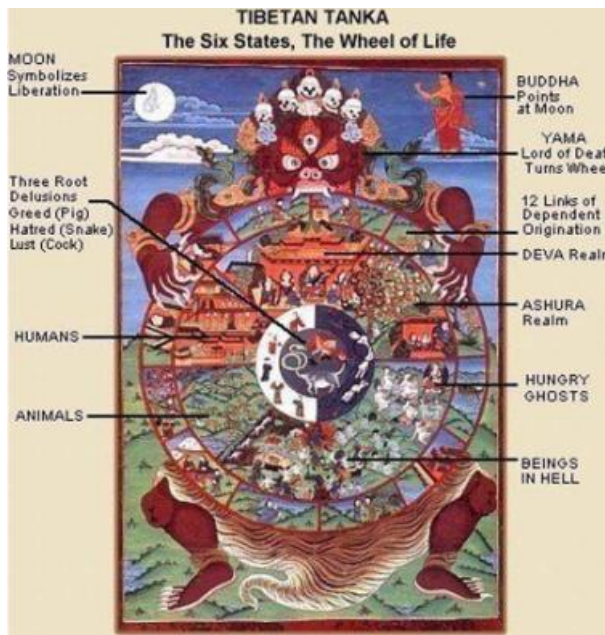


Figure 2-4 Paintings that are found in the walls of a monastery

## 2.3 DESIGN GUIDELINES

### 2.3.1 Lhakhang (Shrine Room)

Lhakhang known as main Prayer Hall or Main Shrine where meditation is conducted. Lakhang is mostly found in rectangular shape and its orientation is towards south, east, & southeast. About 10% of the space is occupied by Main deity, 5% by Tulku sitting, 5% Kangur and Tangur (Buddhist scriptures), (20%.60%) by sitting for monks, (10%.50) by sitting for lay and 10% by circulation space. The space requirements for each activity are as follows: For Chanting: Chanting is done by sitting on the floor. Thus, the maximum space requirement for chanting is 2 sq.m per person.

For Prostration: The maximum space requirement for prostration is 3 sq.m. per person.

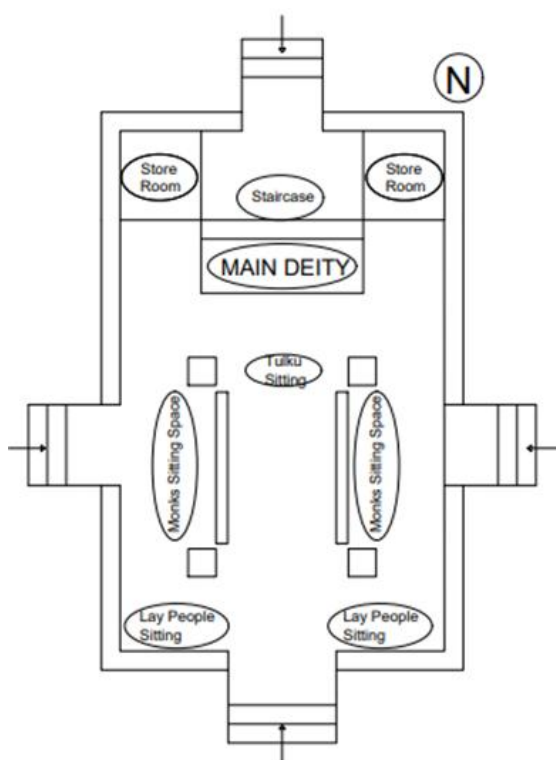


Figure 2-5 Floor plan of the main prayer hall of a Monastery.



Figure 2-6 Entrance to the Tharlam Monastery at Boudha, Kathmandu.

### 2.3.2 Labrang (office)

- 1.The office consists of the reception and waiting hall in general.
- 2.The dimension of the office room will be determined by the placement of furniture's and in accordance of the office use
- 3.A representative calculation of the space requirement for workstation is:  
Free circulation space: minimum 1.5 sq. m per person, but minimum 1m wide
- 4.A single workstation requires minimum of 4.  
5 sq.m area. Two desks should be placed in minimum of 75cm.90cm distance

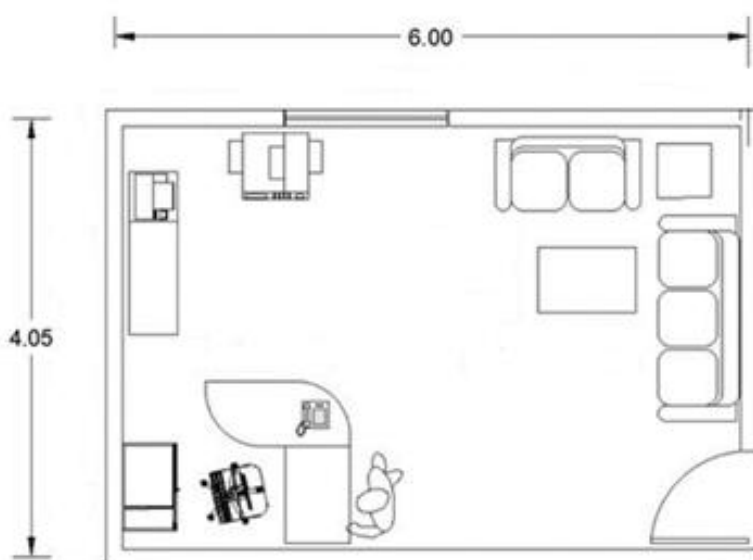


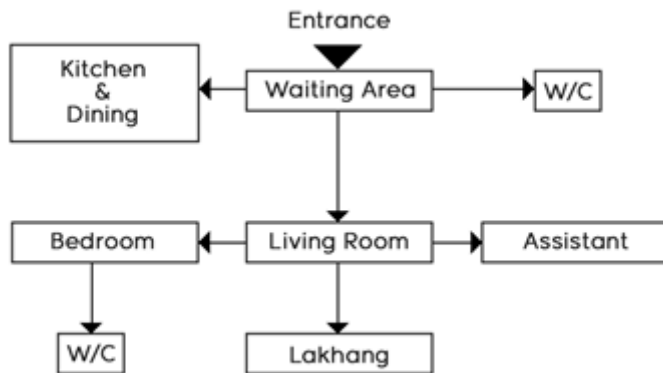
Figure 2-7 Floor plan of an office at a Monastery.



Figure 2-8 Office at the Tharlam Monastery at Boudha, Kathmandu.

### 2.3.3 Zimchung and Accommodation

Zimchung is the living quarter for the head monks i.e. Tulkus and Rinponche. This is generally at the top of the Lakhang also can be built in a different building block. Zimchung is same as the residential building having all the amenities including living room, kitchen & dinning, bedroom with attached and detached toilets.



NUMBER OF PEOPLE	COMMON ROOM, MIN. SQ. FT	DINING AND COMMON ROOM, MIN. SQ. FT
10	150	220
15	225	330
20	300	440
25	375	550
30	450	660
35	525	770

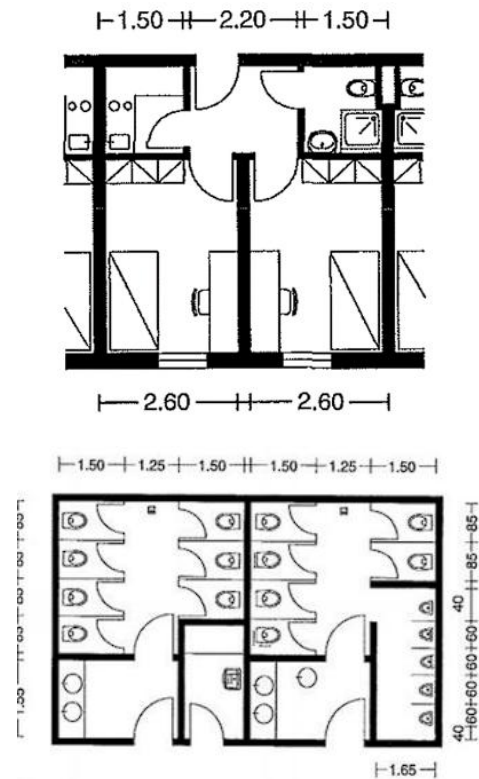


Figure 2-9 Layout planning for kitchen & dining at a Monastery.

### 2.3.4 Kitchen and Dining area

To maintain efficiency and hygiene, the kitchen is divided into specialized areas:

- **Preparation Zone** – Cutting, chopping, marination, etc.
- **Cooking Area** – Equipped with stoves, ovens, grills.
- **Plating & Service Counter** – Quick meal assembly and serving.
- **Cold Storage & Dry Storage** – Refrigeration for perishables, separate dry ingredient storage.
- **Washing & Waste Management** – Dedicated dishwashing zone and compost bins for organic waste.

To be able to eat comfortably, one person requires a table area of around 60 cm wide by 40 cm deep. This provides sufficient clearance between adjacent diners. Although an

overall width of 80.85 cm is suitable for a dining table

#### 2.3.4.1 Dinning Layout

- Table size vary with no. of persons
- For 2 persons: 600×600
- For 4 persons: 600×1100
- Area of restaurant: 1.3.1.9 sq.m per person
- Ratio of service area to total area: 25.50%

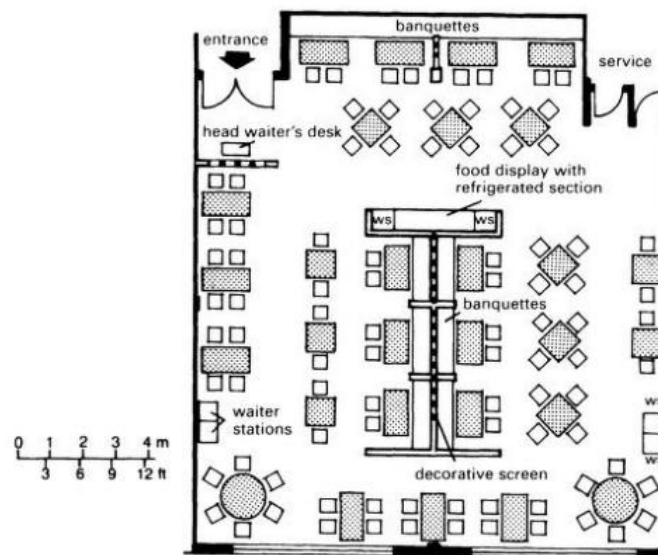


Figure 2-10 Typical Dinning Layout

#### Serving Area:

- The serving area is a crucial transition space between food preparation and dining, ensuring smooth service flow and guest satisfaction. Its space requirements depend on:
  - . Menu complexity
  - . Work organization
  - . Number of guests served

- The **counter length** is determined by the **variety and volume of food served**. A standard estimate for **counter width** is **14 feet**, which includes:
  - **4 ft.** – Patron Lane space for movement
  - **1 ft.** – Tray slide
  - **2 ft. 6 in.** – Counter width for food placement
  - **44 in. (3 ft. 8 in.)** – Space for workers behind the counter
  - **2 ft. 6 in.** – Back bar/storage space

### Space Efficiency in Different Service Models

- Fast Food / Self.Service – Requires minimal space, as food moves directly from kitchen to consumer.
- Buffet / Cafeteria Style – Needs longer counters and designated queuing areas.
- Fine Dining – Requires more server space, including staging areas for plated meals.

### Storage Areas:

- Storage space is planned based on the volume and type of items received and stored.
- Dedicated cold storage for fresh, organic produce.
- Compost bins for sustainable waste management.

#### 2.3.4.2 Kitchen layout

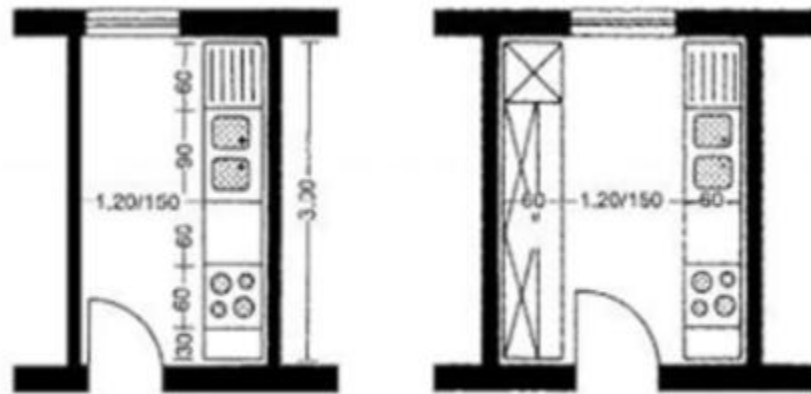


Figure 2-11 Kitchen layout

### 2.3.5 Guest Accommodation

#### 1. Single Room Unit (300.400 sq. ft.)

- Compact yet functional with an **attached bathroom and balcony**.
- **Large windows** for natural **cross.ventilation**.
- **Sustainable materials**: Locally sourced **bamboo, timber, or stone**.

#### 2. Double Room Unit (400.500 sq. ft.)

- **Small lounge area** for guest relaxation.
- Designed for **high thermal efficiency** (thick walls, insulated roofs).

#### 3. Dormitory/Shared Accommodation

##### Eco.Dormitory (50.75 sq. ft. per bed)

- **Bunk beds with privacy curtains** for a budget.friendly yet comfortable stay.
- **Common washrooms** equipped with **water.saving fixtures**.

### Design Considerations for Guest Units

#### 1. Layout & Spatial Organization

- **Low.rise buildings** or **scattered villas** preferred over high.rise blocks.
- Larger than typical hotel rooms to accommodate **longer stays and luggage storage**.
- **Corridor design**:
  - **6m<sup>2</sup> per room**
  - **Width: 1.50 – 1.80m**

#### 2. Views & Orientation

- **Maximizing natural views**: Waterfront units must have **large windows, terraces, or balconies** facing scenic landscapes.
- **Sustainability & Comfort**:
  - If views are **not the priority**, rooms should be **North.South oriented** to enhance **solar efficiency** and **reduce heating/cooling loads**.
  - Design should **minimize lateral wind impact** while ensuring proper ventilation.

#### 3. Service & Utility Areas

- **Dedicated storage spaces** for **linen, vending, electrical, and telecommunication equipment**.

- Efficient **housekeeping circulation** for operational ease.

### Different Bedroom size

Table 2.1 Standard bedroom sizes

Type	Size(sq.m)
Twin	2 Twin Bed 1*2
Double.Double	2 Double Bed 1.35*2
Queen	1 Queen Bed 1.5*2
King	1 King Bed 2*2
California King	1 King Bed 1.8*2
Oversize Twin	2 Twin Bed 1.5*2
Queen.Queen	1 Double Bed and Convertible Sofa
Double.Studio	1 Queen Bed and Convertible Sofa
King Studio	1 King Bed and Convertible Sofa
Parlor	1 Convertible Sofa
Wall Bed	1 Wall Bed

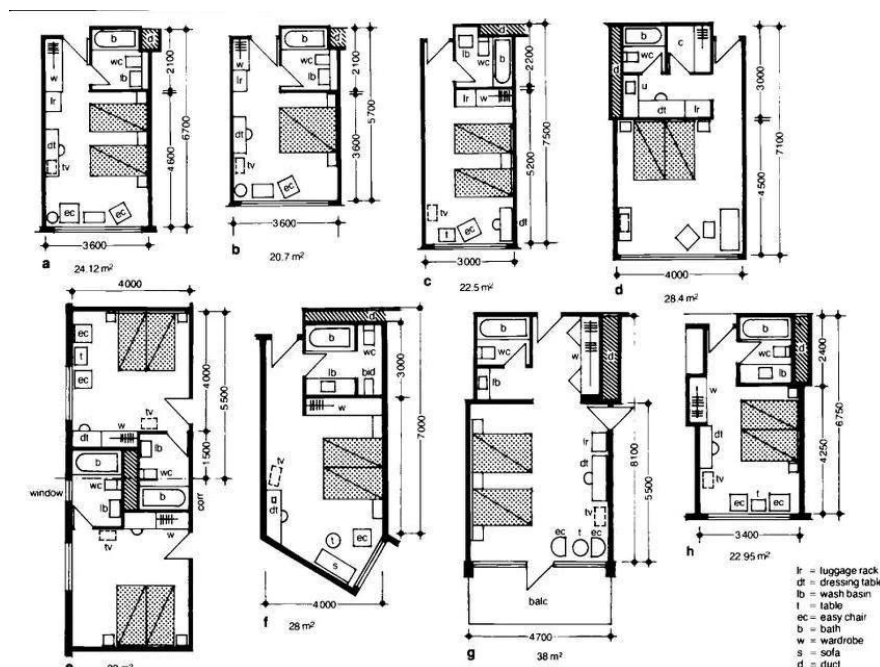


Figure 2-12 Guest room layouts

Table 2.2 Guest room characteristics

	<b>Guest Characteristics</b>	<b>Purpose of Travel</b>	<b>Guest Room Design Factors</b>
<b>Group</b>	Single of Double Occupancy	Business: Convention, Conference, Professional Association, Sales And Training Meetings	King, Twin, Double .Double, Bath With Dressing Area; Lounge Seating with Good Work Area
<b>Individual</b>	Single Occupancy	Business: Corporate Business; Sales: Convention, Conference	King; Standard Bath with Shower; Lounge Area With Exceptional Work Area
<b>Family</b>	Double Plus Occupancy (Includes Children)	Pleasure: Family Vacation; Sightseeing; Sports: Family Activity	Double .Double, King Sota, Or Adjoining Rooms, Lounge Area and Television; Generous Compartmentalized Bath, Balcony, Deck, Outside Access
<b>Couples</b>	Double Occupancy	Tours, Clubs, Associations, Sightseeing: Theater, Sports; Weekend Packages; Shopping: Vacation	King; Dining. King Sofa, Moderate Storage, Compartmentalized Bath
<b>Singles</b>	Single Occupancy	Tours, Clubs, Associations; Culture, Arts, Theatre, Shopping	Queen, Dining, Work Surface, Standard Bath

### 2.3.6 SPA (Sauna and Wellness)

Purpose:

To promote relaxation, fitness, and nature-based activities, resorts often focus on a wide range of recreational amenities that enhance the guest experience. Beyond traditional activities such as touring, trekking, mountaineering, and sightseeing, people also visit resorts for swimming, playing golf, tennis, bowling, fitness, spa treatments, and sauna experiences. Recreation can be divided into two categories:

- **Site.Specific Activities:**

These activities are unique to the location and take advantage of natural surroundings, including bungee jumping, rafting, lake/river activities (boating, swimming, fishing), mountain views, sightseeing, rock climbing, canoeing, skiing, and safaris.

- **Non.Site.Specific Activities:**

These include amenities like health and fitness facilities, indoor and outdoor sports, landscaped areas, and casinos, which can be enjoyed regardless of the location.

- **Location of Recreational Facilities:**

The positioning of recreational spaces is critical to balancing privacy and accessibility. Some resorts place their recreational complex at the far end of the guestroom wing, well-separated from the public areas, to allow external business activities during the day. Another common layout places these facilities centrally, near the lobby or where the guestroom wings intersect with public spaces, often on lower levels to maintain a sense of separation from the main public circulation.

#### 2.3.6.1 Key Recreational & Wellness Facilities:

##### a. Swimming pool:

"Water is the most interesting object in a landscape and the happiest circumstance in retired recess; captivates the eye at a distance, invites approach and is delightful when near, it refreshes an open exposure and enriches the most crowded view. In form, in style, and in extent, it may be made equal to the greatest composition."

The swimming pool area serves as a focal point for relaxation, socializing, and recreation.

Thoughtful planning is essential to create a functional and visually appealing space. Outdoor

pools, in particular, offer leisure opportunities for people of all age groups, and the layout and amenities surrounding the pool are crucial for enhancing the experience.

#### 2.3.6.2 Key Design Considerations:

##### 1. Location and Layout:

- The placement of shaded areas, views, and proximity to other spaces like lawns or cafes influences how people gather around the pool.
- The kid's pool should ideally be located beside the adult pool, allowing parents to keep an eye on their children while they enjoy the pool.
- Privacy can be maintained by screening the pool area using plants or other materials, creating a more secluded environment.
- Supporting facilities, such as toilets, changing rooms, showers, and cafes, should be located close to the pool for convenience.

##### 2. Seating Arrangement:

- Seating around the pool should facilitate social gatherings, with arrangements that allow for both group interactions and isolated spaces to maintain personal space and privacy.
- The pool area can also serve as a visual and recreational focal point for a nearby conference center, and careful planning of deck spaces, seating areas, bars, and food displays will enhance its function as a social gathering space.

##### 3. Construction and Maintenance:

- Choosing appropriate construction methods and finishing materials is essential to ensure durability and aesthetic appeal.
- Proper mechanical and electrical systems should be in place to support the pool's operation, and space requirements should be adjusted based on the number of users.
- Water treatment and regular changing of water should be part of the pool's maintenance strategy to ensure cleanliness and safety.

##### 4. Pool capacity and Bathers (for ratio 3:2)

- 1 person per 20 sq. ft of pool and deck area combines.
- For male, 1 w/c combination, one laboratory and 1 urinal for first 100 bathers.

- 1 w/c combination extra for 150 then 200 additional bathers.
- For female, 2 w/c combination. first bathers.
- 1 w/c combination. 75 additional bathers.
- 2 shower heads min.100 first bathers, 1 additional for 50 female bathers.

#### a) Open air swimming pool

##### I. Swimming pool

- Water area 417.1250 sq.m.
- Depth of water. 1.8m.
- Pool sizes depend upon the number of swimming lanes.

*Table 2.3 Standard sizes of swimming pool*

Lanes	Pool width	Pool length
6	16.66m	25
6	16.66m	50
8	21m	50
10	25m	50

##### II. Infinity.edge design (blending with the waterfront)

A true infinity pool, also known as a negative edge pool, must be constructed on sloped ground to achieve its signature disappearing edge effect. This design allows water to flow seamlessly over one or more edges into a weir or secondary pool, creating the illusion that the water extends infinitely into the horizon.

Infinity pools are most commonly installed overlooking bodies of water such as lakes or the sea, enhancing the visual effect of continuity between the pool and the natural landscape. The term "infinity" itself, as defined in the Oxford English Dictionary, represents something boundless or endless, symbolized by the Greek infinity sign ( $\infty$ ).

It is important to distinguish an infinity pool from a deck.level or overflow pool. In a deck.level pool, the water's edge is at the same level as the surrounding deck or patio, flowing into a perimeter grate rather than cascading over an edge.

**b) Spa & Therapy Rooms (600.1200 sq. ft.)**

- **Treatment Rooms:** 100.150 sq. ft. per room, accommodating a massage table, seating, and storage for oils and towels.
- **Couples Therapy Suite:** 200.250 sq. ft., including two massage tables, a relaxation area, and ambient lighting features.
- **Hydrotherapy & Sauna:**
  - **Sauna/Steam Room:** 80.150 sq. ft., with insulated walls and temperature control.
  - **Hot & Cold Plunge Pools:** 150.250 sq. ft., with slip.resistant flooring and controlled depth.

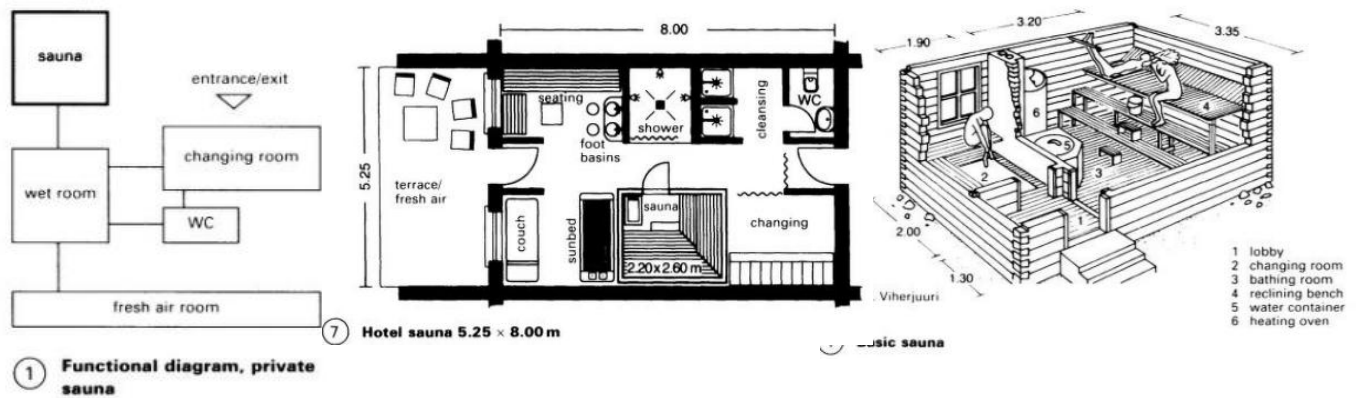


Figure 2-13 Typical layout of Sauna

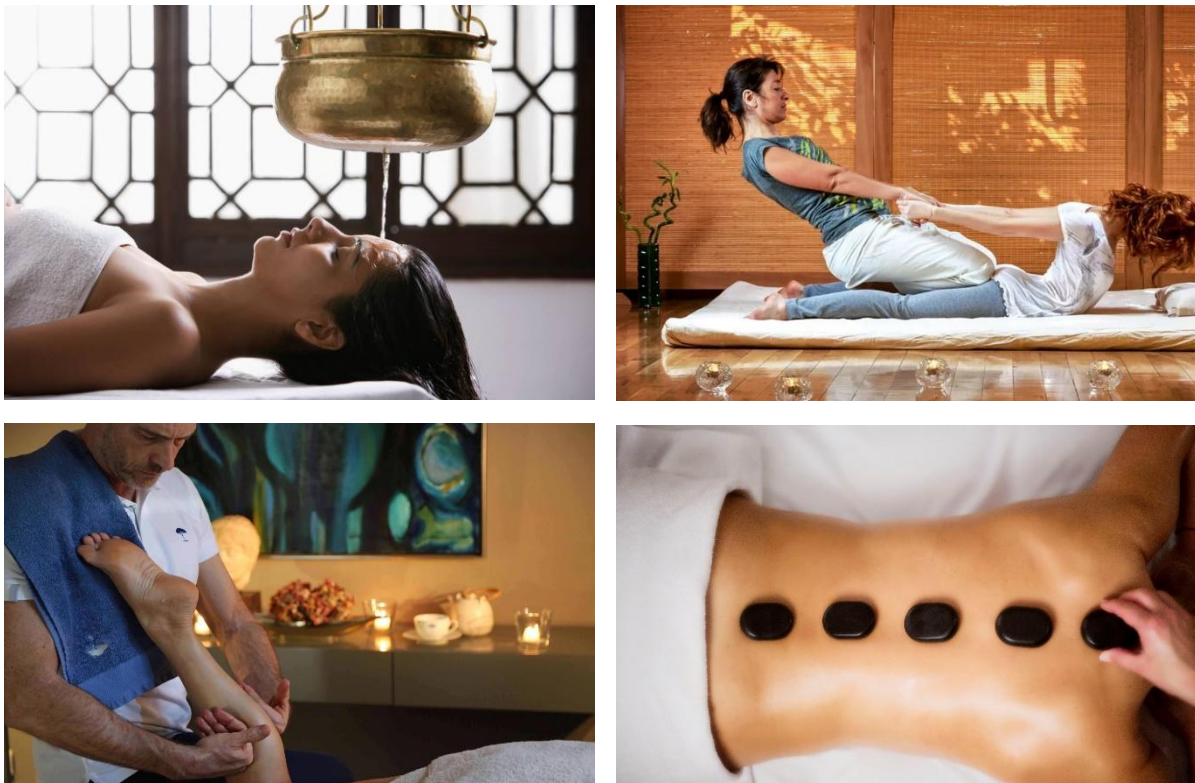
## 2.4 MASSAGE THERAPY

Massage therapy is manual manipulation of soft body tissues to enhance a person's health and well-being. People seek massage therapy for variety of reasons. to reduce stress and anxiety, relax muscle, rehabilitate injuries, reduce pain, and promote overall health and wellness. Massage can be applied with hands, fingers, elbows, knees, forearm, feet or devices.

Types:

1. **Shirodhara:** Shirodhara is a unique treatment where specific medicated oils are poured to the THIRD EYE (fore head) in a regular stream for a definite period. It is an effective therapy for mental relaxation. It cures insomnia, stress, depression and decrease mental agility.
2. **Ayurvedic Massage:** In Ayurvedic massage herbs and essential oils are used to improve the blood circulation and relieve stress. Certain ailments related to muscles, ligaments and nervous system can be completely healed through this massage. It also helps to create more clarity and regenerate the mind and body activity for better functioning
3. **Aromatherapy Massage:** Aromatherapy Massage is a massage therapy with the addition of one or more scented plant oils called essential oils to address specific needs. These massage oils are relaxing, energizing, stress-reducing, balancing, etc., One of the most common essential oils used in aromatherapy massage is lavender. Aromatherapy massage is particularly suited to stress-related conditions or conditions with an emotional component.
4. **Deep Tissue Massage;** Deep Tissue Massage is one kind of massage technique that focuses on the deep layers of muscle tissues. It aims to release the chronic patterns of tension in the body through slow strokes and deep finger pressure on the contracted areas, either following or going across the fibers of the muscles, tendons and fascia.
5. **Spinal Massage:** A Spinal Massage is best given as part of an overall body or back massage. For an initial general massage, one may or may not use massage oil. Spinal massage relieves stress and anxiety.
6. **Hot Stone Therapy:** Heated, smooth stones are placed on certain points on the body to warm and loosen tight muscles and balance energy centers in the body. Holding heated stones and applying gentle pressure give warmth that is comforting. It is good for people who have muscle tension but prefer lighter massage.

7. Swedish Massage: Swedish Massage is comprised of five basic strokes and their variations: effleurage, petrissage, friction, tapotement (or percussion) and vibration. The many benefits of Swedish massage may include generalized relaxation, dissolution of scar tissue adhesions and improved circulation which may speed healing and reduce swelling from injury.
8. Thai Massage: The application of hand, knee, foot and elbow comprises the Thai Massage. It stretches the muscles, increases the joints movement and balances the low oft energy throughout the body to promote healing and well.being. Thai massage provides fully illustrated, step.by.step instruction to enable one's body Parts.
9. Head & Shoulder: Head and shoulder massage improves blood circulation to the head, relaxing to the muscles and nerve fires. It helps to refresh both the mind and the body. It nourishes, lubricates and strengthens the hair roots and the skin of the scalp.
10. Trekker's Massage: This massage is specially provided to those people who go for short and long trek. It is a mixture of Thai and Ayurvedic massage where the trekkers get relief from many agonies.



*Figure 2-14 Various types of massages*

### 2.4.1 MESSAGE ROOM SPACE

- Should be in noise and distraction free area
- Access to water is needed such as an adjacent restroom or small wash sink.
- Massage table dimensions vary, but a standard table is about 30 inches wide and 73.85 inches long, plus about 12 more inches for the head cradle.
- Therapist need at least 3 feet of space around every side of the table to work in.
- Standard massage room is around 120 to 140 sq. ft.
- Room needs to feature small sink and enough storage space for linens, equipment and supplies.
- Some storage can be placed outside the room to save space inside, such as the bulk of your clean linens, larger equipment and bulk lotion and oils.
- Paint the room a neutral earth tone. Soft, neutral colors promote a relaxed mood.
- Provision for clothes hooks. (How to Design a Massage Room, 2021)

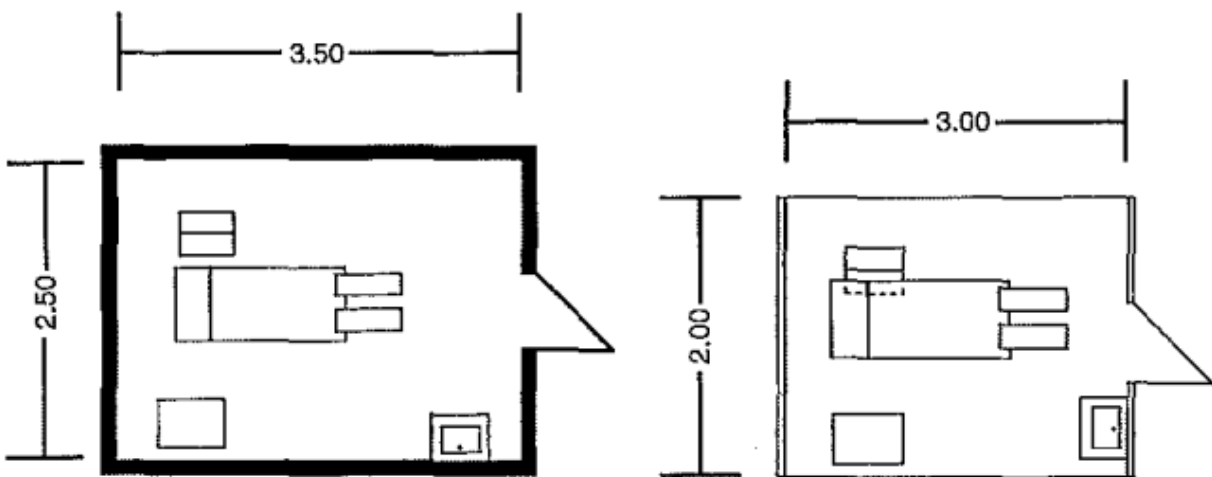


Figure 2-15 Layout of a Massage Room.

## 2.5 SAUNA

A sauna is typically a room heated to between 70 to 100 Celsius. A sauna use can raise the skin temperature to roughly 400 Celsius. It is more than just a method of bathing, but a whole-body physical cleansing. The principle involves the alternate application of hot and cold air. Bathers sweat in dry hot air, and then in hot pure steam emissions, which are created every 5. liter of water on heated stones. This cycle results in strong 7 minutes by pouring stimulation of skin and increases resistance against illness. Constructed by timber, it needs good heat insulation for enclosing walls since the heat difference between inner and outer air is very high.

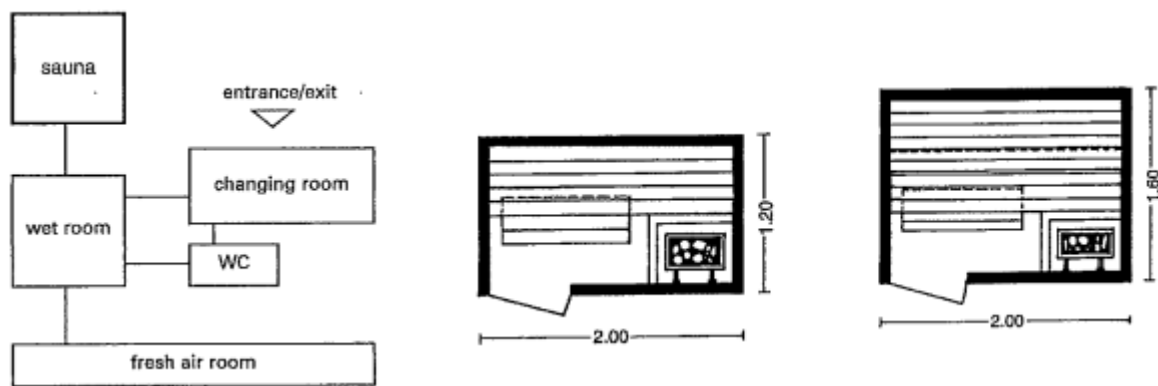


Figure 2-16: Dimensions for a Sauna room.

### 2.5.1 Types of Saunas

There are several types of saunas, based on how the room is heated include.

1. Wood burning: Wood is used to heat the sauna room and sauna rocks. Wood burning saunas are usually low in humidity and high in temperature. The Wood burning sauna is the original Finnish sauna type. The wood is used to heat the sauna by burning it in the stove. The necessary temperature is reached by controlling the amount of fire in stove. The ideal temperature for traditional Finnish sauna is not less than  $65.5^{\circ}$  when measured where a person is sitting. Throwing some water on the heated rocks controls humidity in the sauna.
2. Electrically heated: Similar to wood.burning saunas, electrically.heated saunas have high temperatures and low humidity. An electrical heater, attached to the floor, heats the sauna room.

3. Infrared room: Far.infrared saunas (FIRS) are different to wood.burning and electrically.heated saunas. Special lamps use light waves to heat a person's body, not the entire room. Temperatures are typically lower than other saunas, but the person sweats in a similar way. Usually, infrared saunas are about 60 Celsius.

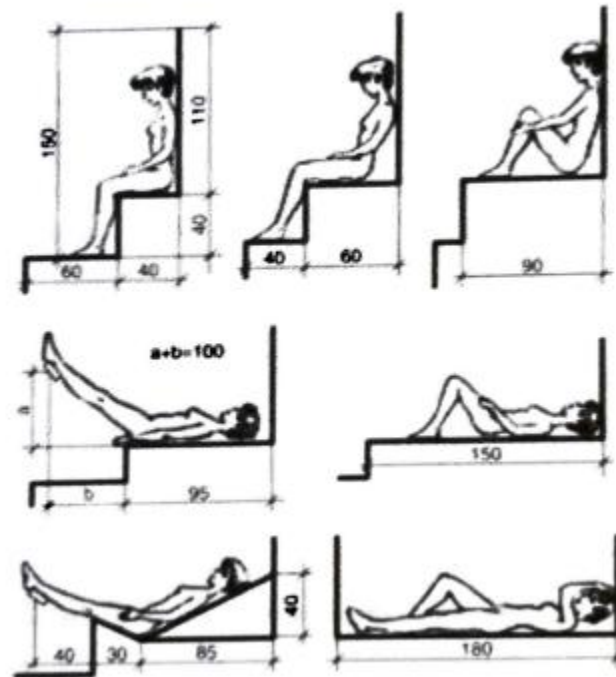


Figure 2-17: Anthropometrics for Sauna

## 2.5.2 Sauna Design Guidelines

- Height: The minimum permitted ceiling height is 6'.6". The average sauna ceiling height is 7'.
- Benches: An upper bench area can be used as the main calculation in terms of how many users one likes to accommodate. Factor in about 2 of bench space per individual sauna bather.
- Heater location: The ideal positions include along the front or side wall. Seating: should be made at a safe distance from the heating element.
- Ventilation: There should be an upper outlet vent approximately a 1/3 of the way up off the floor, usually under the top bench. The lower intake vent should be at floor level near the sauna

heater, which helps to circulate by convection. For indoor saunas, instead of the lower vent, it is acceptable to just leave a 1/2" gap under the door.

## 2.6 STEAM

These are different from saunas. Instead of dry heat, a steam room involves high humidity and moist heat. A person bathes completely in steam which is produced by specially designed steam producing machines. There are two types of steam:

1. Steam Bath.box.
2. Steam Bathroom/

Relative humidity  $\Rightarrow$  100% in this room. This gives a soothing effect to the body and mind, thereby reducing stress levels and tension. And Provides muscle relief and kills the harmful microbes invading the human body. Increases the blood circulation, helps control excessive weight gain and prevents skin diseases too.

Steam room design guidelines:

- Approximate size of Steam Bath.box: Length: 2'.4" Depth: 3'.0" Height: 4.0"
- Steam Bathroom ceiling height is limited to 8' (2.45m) with 7' (2.15m) preferable, result in hot or adequate temperatures near the ceiling but uncomfortably cool floor temperatures.
- Steam rooms in use for more than 2 hours a day will need to be vented preferably to the outside. The recommended air change rate should be 10m<sup>3</sup> per hour per person,
- Skylights and exterior windows are not recommended.

## 2.7 Hot tub/Jacuzzi

Large tub or small pool full of heated water used for hydrotherapy or relaxation. Some have jets for massage purposes.

There are many types of hot tubs:

1. Hot tub wooden barrel.

Made from wooden slates and has a water pump and filtering system to circulate and clean the water. It is usually installed outdoor and benches around the perimeter so that people can soak comfortably with their heads just above water level

2. Fiber glass whirlpool.

High pressure jets that create a whirlpool effect useful for water massage or hydrotherapy. It is used at public swimming pool or health clubs. Also known as Jacuzzis.

### 3. Bathtub spas.

It is used in private homes as a replacement for regular bathtub.

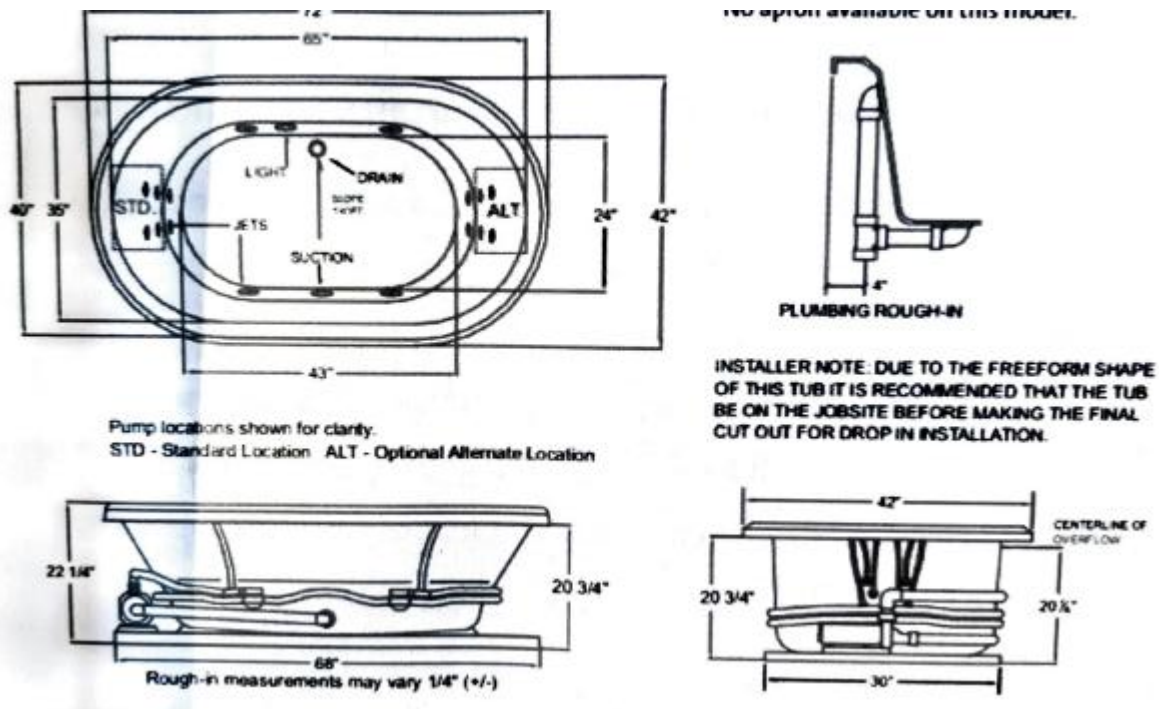


Figure 2-18 Standard dimensions for a Jacuzzi.

### 3 CASE STUDY: International Case Study

#### 3.1 SASI PAWAN WISDOM CENTER

##### 3.1.1 General Information:

**Location:** Pak Chong, Thailand

**Architect:** Architects 49

**Site Area:** 1941 m<sup>2</sup>

**Year:** 2021



*Figure 3-1 3D view of the Sasi Pawan Wisdom Center*

##### 3.1.2 Introduction:

The complex of buildings is designed to be unique, elegant, and distinct, with a natural form that merges art and architecture imbued with the Thai spirit. The contemporary architectural design focuses on minimalism and the philosophy of sufficiency which promotes the teachings of Buddhism for the good of society.

##### Concept:

The Sasi Pawan Wisdom Center is a space designed to foster mindfulness, spiritual growth, and intellectual reflection. It features a mandala-inspired layout symbolizing interconnectedness and the journey to enlightenment. The center uses natural, sustainable materials like stone and wood to create a peaceful, eco-friendly environment. Key spaces include meditation halls, community learning areas, and healing spaces like yoga and sound therapy. The center also focuses on preserving Tibetan culture, offering areas for rituals, debates, and cultural workshops. The goal is to create a harmonious environment for personal transformation and community engagement.

### 3.1.3 Location and Context:

The Sasi Pawan Wisdom Center is carefully integrated into its site, leveraging the natural landscape for spiritual and environmental harmony. Positioned in serene, mountainous regions, it uses local materials like stone and wood to blend with the surroundings. The layout aligns with sacred directions, enhancing meditation and spiritual practices. The center's architecture responds to the climate with features like sloped roofs and courtyards for comfort. It also connects to the local Tibetan culture, fostering cultural exchange and community engagement, reinforcing the center's mission of mindfulness and peace.

### 3.1.4 Target Group:

The **Sasi Pawan Wisdom Center** caters to a diverse range of target groups, each seeking a different aspect of spiritual, cultural, and personal development. The primary target groups include:

1. **Spiritual Seekers & Meditators:** Individuals seeking peace, mindfulness, and a deeper connection to their spirituality through meditation and Buddhist practices. This group would engage in retreats, silent meditation, and contemplation.
2. **Tibetan and Buddhist Practitioners:** People from Tibetan or Buddhist traditions who wish to engage with the culture, participate in rituals, and deepen their understanding of Tibetan Buddhism through teachings and sacred practices.

3. **Cultural Enthusiasts & Researchers:** Scholars, artists, and cultural enthusiasts interested in preserving and learning about Tibetan culture, art, architecture, and philosophy. The center offers opportunities for **workshops, cultural exhibitions, and lectures.**
4. **Wellness Seekers:** Individuals seeking holistic well-being, including practices like yoga, sound healing, traditional Tibetan medicine, and wellness therapies. These visitors would benefit from the center's **healing spaces and wellness programs.**
5. **Monastics and Buddhist Scholars:** Monks, nuns, and scholars who want to engage in study, intellectual debate, and meditation practices in a monastic setting. The center offers spaces for **debates, scripture study, and retreats.**
6. **Tourists & Pilgrims:** Visitors from around the world, both spiritual and secular, who wish to experience Tibetan culture and spirituality. The center offers guided tours, pilgrimages, and opportunities for engagement in local rituals and festivals.
7. **Local Communities:** Tibetan and Himalayan communities who would benefit from the center's cultural and educational programs, fostering local engagement through events, social services, and support for Tibetan heritage.

### 3.1.5 Architectural Design and Planning:

#### 1. Master Plan and Zoning:

The Sasi Pawan Wisdom Center is thoughtfully designed with a clear zoning approach to support its spiritual, cultural, and wellness functions while integrating harmoniously with the natural environment. The core spiritual zone is centered around a sacred shrine room or stupa, serving as the heart of the center for meditation and rituals, surrounded by peaceful gardens and courtyards for reflection. The residential and communal zone includes monastic quarters and shared spaces such as dining halls and communal areas, promoting a sense of community and spiritual growth. A cultural and learning zone houses a library for Buddhist texts, a debate hall for intellectual engagement, and exhibition spaces for Tibetan art and culture. The wellness and healing zone provides areas for yoga, sound healing, and traditional Tibetan medicine treatments, offering holistic well-being. The pilgrimage and public zone welcome visitors with sacred pathways for mindful walking and prayer, alongside a visitor center for cultural exchange. The site is organized in concentric zones, with the most sacred spaces at the center, and pathways that encourage reflection while guiding visitors through the center. The architecture is built with sustainable, local materials, blending with the terrain

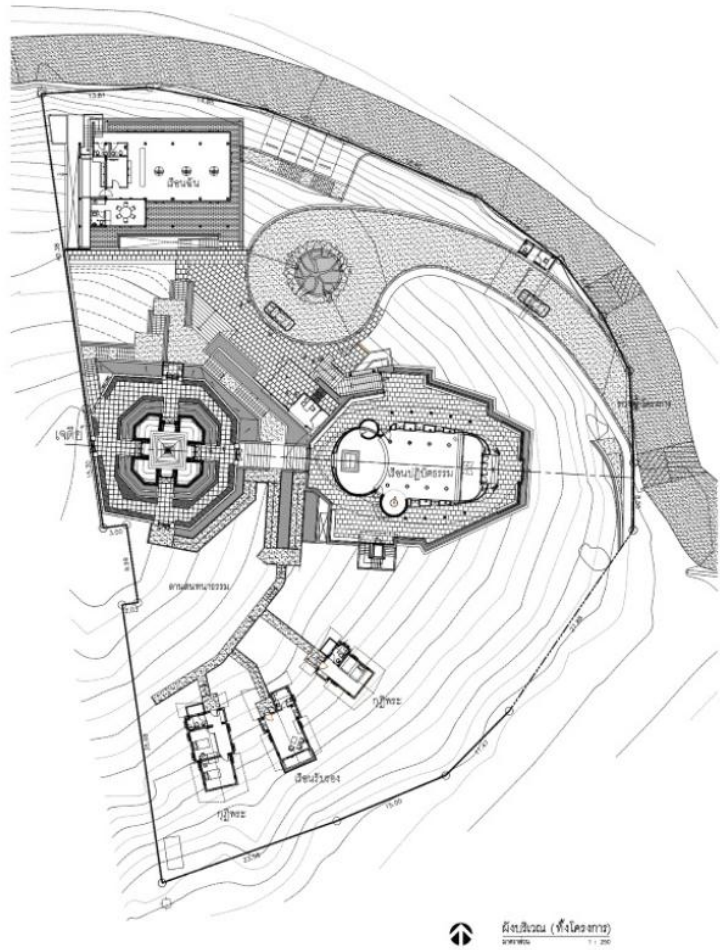


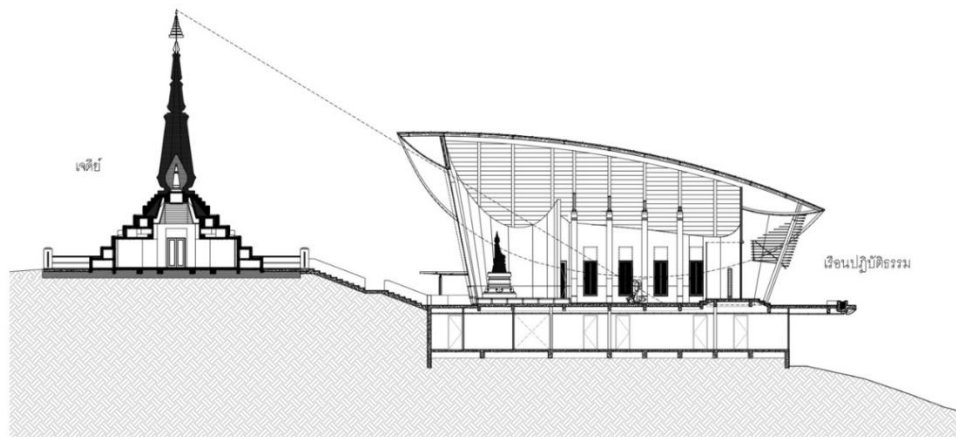
Figure 3-2 Site Plan of Sasi Pawan Wisdom Center

and integrating solar energy, rainwater collection, and natural ventilation to reduce environmental impact.



*Figure 3-3 Hand drawn Sketch of Sasi Pawan Wisdom Center*

“Sasi Pawan” is not a place of worship but, rather, a spiritual retreat where practitioners can come to study meditation and immerse themselves in the Buddha’s teachings, as well as Thai values, arts, and culture. The center’s serene atmosphere cultivates the soul, giving people the spiritual fortitude to face the challenges of daily life.



*Figure 3-4 Section view of Sasi Pawan Wisdom Center*

The sectional elevation visually conveys the vertical relationship between spaces, showcasing the architectural hierarchy from the sacred and spiritual levels at the top to the communal, residential, and wellness spaces below, all while integrating seamlessly with the landscape and using sustainable design elements.

## 2. Interior of meditation space:

A glass pagoda is positioned at the highest point of the site. Constructed from layers of glass sheets, the pagoda is airy and translucent, creating a distinctive symbol of purity. The Buddha's relics are enshrined within the base and spire of the pagoda. A many-tiered umbrella that traditionally rests atop the pagoda's spire is made from metal gilded with gold leaf from the base to the topmost tier. At the heart of the Glass Pagoda, there is a central shrine or meditation space, where the most sacred rituals and practices take place. The interior is minimalist, with low wooden platforms or seating cushions arranged in concentric circles or rows, allowing visitors to sit in meditative silence. This area is illuminated by natural light, streaming through the transparent glass walls, symbolizing enlightenment and clarity. The central focus is a Buddha statue and a large mandala to create a spiritual focal point.

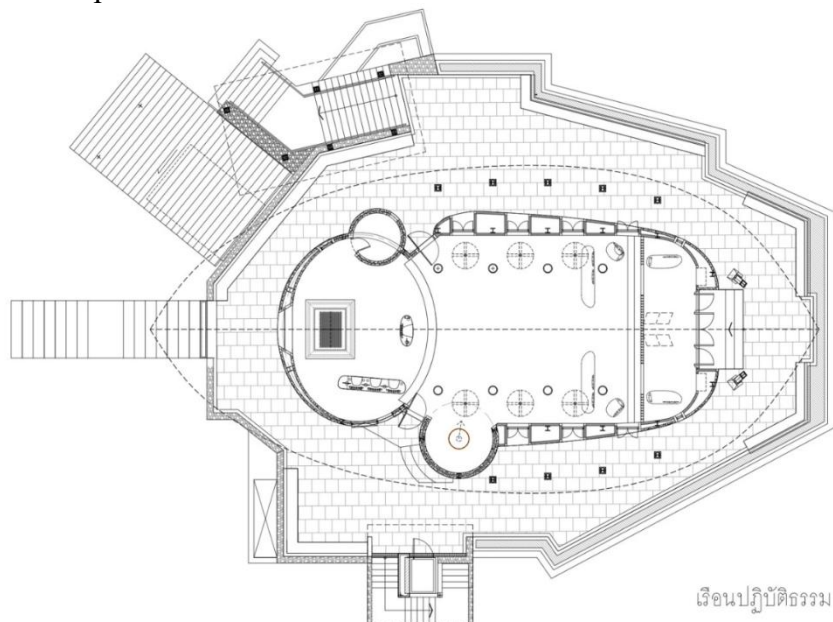


Figure 3-5 Floor plan of the meditation at Sasi Pawan Wisdom Center

A key feature of the Glass Pagoda interior is the play of light. With large windows and glass walls, the space changes throughout the day as sunlight shifts, creating a constantly evolving atmosphere.

The reflection of light on glass and the surrounding landscape contributes to a meditative ambiance. At night, strategically placed soft lighting illuminates the interior, focusing on sacred objects, while subtle underfloor lights might enhance the sense of floating and serenity. The design also emphasizes fluidity and movement in the space. Curved or flowing lines in the layout encourages a sense of spiritual journey and the path to enlightenment. The movement through the pagoda is reflected in the soft transitions from open, airy spaces to more intimate corners or contemplative alcoves where individuals can engage in private reflection.

### LEARNINGS



*Figure 3-6 Interior of meditation block at Sasi Pawan Wisdom Center*

- **Blending Tradition with Modernity:** Combines traditional forms like the pagoda with modern materials such as glass, balancing cultural authenticity with contemporary design.
- **Natural Light Integration:** Maximizes daylight through glass walls, creating dynamic spaces that shift with the changing light, enhancing the spiritual experience.
- **Transparency and Nature Connection:** Blurs boundaries between indoor and outdoor, fostering a strong connection with the natural environment and emphasizing openness.
- **Minimalism for Spirituality:** A minimalist design focuses on simplicity, reducing distractions to enhance meditation, reflection, and spiritual practice.

- Sustainability: Incorporates eco.friendly features like solar panels, rainwater harvesting, and natural ventilation, emphasizing harmony with the environment.
- Spatial Fluidity: Organizes space to guide movement, supporting a progression toward spiritual growth and enlightenment.
- Acoustic Considerations: Utilizes sound.absorbing materials and ambient features like water elements to maintain a tranquil atmosphere.
- Symbolism in Design: Every design element, from sacred symbols to spatial organization, reflects Buddhist philosophy and cultural meaning.
- Multi.Sensory Experience: Engages all the senses—visual, tactile, auditory—to create a rich, immersive environment.
- Verticality and Hierarchy: The design uses elevation to symbolize spiritual ascension, emphasizing hierarchical relationships in sacred spaces.

## 3.2 SIX SENSES

### 3.2.1 General Information:

**Location:** Thimpu, Bhutan

**Site Area:** 5.3 hectares

**Topography:** Contour Land

**Design Initiation:** 2019



*Figure 3-7 Six Senses Premises.*

As Thimphu is the capital city of Bhutan, the Castle Concept has been brought into the design in part of the Main Facilities. With the location is set high above on the mountain with the city scenic view below, an extra.large pond is created to reflect the above sky. The reflection makes the building look as if it is floating in the sky and taking the view of the earth below. There is a pray room which located facing to the Big Buddha statue so the prayer is similarly praying to big Buddha too.

### 3.2.2 History & Background:

Six Senses Bhutan is a luxury resort that integrates Bhutan's cultural heritage with sustainable luxury and wellness experiences. The resort chain, a part of the renowned Six Senses brand, offers

five lodges spread across the country in regions such as Thimphu, Paro, Punakha, Bumthang, and Gangtey. These lodges are designed to blend seamlessly with their natural surroundings while incorporating traditional Bhutanese architecture and local materials. Six Senses Bhutan places a strong emphasis on sustainability and environmental responsibility, using renewable energy sources like solar power, rainwater harvesting, and eco-friendly materials. The resorts also reflect Bhutan's unique cultural values, offering guests opportunities to immerse themselves in the country's spiritual practices, wellness treatments, and local cuisine. The wellness programs at Six Senses Bhutan focus on holistic healing, meditation, and yoga, offering a transformative experience for visitors seeking mindfulness and rejuvenation. Through this blend of cultural immersion, sustainability, and luxury, Six Senses Bhutan offers an exclusive experience that aligns with the country's Gross National Happiness philosophy and fosters a deep connection to nature and local traditions.

### 3.2.3 Introduction:

Six Senses Bhutan is a unique and luxurious resort that offers an extraordinary blend of modern luxury, sustainability, and Bhutanese cultural immersion. Nestled in the heart of Bhutan's stunning landscapes, this collection of five distinct lodges is spread across key regions, including Thimphu, Paro, Punakha, Bumthang, and Gangtey. Each lodge is designed to seamlessly blend with its natural surroundings, incorporating traditional Bhutanese architecture and local materials to create a harmonious connection with the environment. The resort's philosophy centers on holistic wellness, offering guests transformative experiences that include meditation, yoga, traditional Bhutanese healing therapies, and authentic local experiences. Committed to sustainability, Six Senses Bhutan emphasizes eco-friendly practices such as solar power, rainwater harvesting, and natural building techniques. With a strong focus on mindfulness, spirituality, and environmental stewardship, Six Senses Bhutan provides a sanctuary where travelers can reconnect with nature, rejuvenate their spirit, and immerse themselves in the rich cultural heritage of Bhutan.

#### **Concept:**

The concept of Six Senses Bhutan is to create a unique, immersive, and sustainable luxury experience that harmonizes with Bhutan's rich cultural heritage and stunning natural landscapes. The resort is designed to offer guests a transformative journey through wellness, mindfulness, and

cultural immersion, all while preserving the environment. The five lodges, located in the country's key regions Thimphu, Paro, Punakha, Bumthang, and Gangtey are each thoughtfully designed to blend traditional Bhutanese architecture with modern, eco-friendly practices, using local materials and incorporating renewable energy sources like solar power.

At its core, Six Senses Bhutan focuses on providing guests with a sanctuary that supports both physical and mental well-being. The resort offers a range of wellness services, including holistic spa treatments, yoga, and meditation, rooted in Bhutanese healing traditions. Guests are encouraged to immerse themselves in the spiritual and cultural practices of the country, such as visiting monasteries, participating in traditional ceremonies, and tasting authentic Bhutanese cuisine.

The overarching concept is grounded in sustainability and environmental stewardship, aligning with Bhutan's commitment to Gross National Happiness a philosophy that values well-being over material wealth. By offering an intimate, luxury experience deeply connected to nature and culture, Six Senses Bhutan aims to provide an exclusive yet mindful retreat where guests can rejuvenate, reflect, and deepen their understanding of both themselves and Bhutan's cultural heritage.

### 3.2.4 Location and Context:

Thimphu serves as the center of Bhutan's modern development, blending traditional Bhutanese culture with contemporary infrastructure. Despite being the most populous city in Bhutan, Thimphu has maintained its unique charm through a strict adherence to the country's architectural regulations, which mandate that all buildings follow traditional Bhutanese architectural styles. This includes the use of wooden elements, sloped roofs, and intricate carvings, ensuring that the city retains its cultural identity.

The city is a key gateway to Bhutan's heritage, hosting important landmarks such as the Tashichho Dzong, the National Memorial Chorten, and the Buddha Dordenma statue all of which are significant cultural and religious sites. Thimphu is also known for its vibrant markets, temples, monasteries, and the annual Thimphu Tsechu festival, which attracts both locals and tourists.

The context of Thimphu lies in its role as the capital of a country that cherishes Buddhist traditions, environmental sustainability, and a holistic approach to development. Its location within the Himalayan range provides a perfect backdrop for those seeking a peaceful yet vibrant place where

nature, spirituality, and modernity coexist. For a resort like Six Senses Bhutan, Thimphu's context offers a deeply spiritual environment with a blend of traditional Bhutanese culture and luxury experiences, making it an ideal destination for guests seeking both cultural immersion and wellness in a serene mountain setting.



*Figure 3-8 Conceptual Diagram*

### 3.2.5 Architectural Design and Planning:

#### 3.2.5.1 Master Plan and Zoning:

Thimphu's location within the valley surrounded by the Himalayas provides a scenic backdrop for the resort. The master plan takes advantages of the natural contours of the land, with terracing and landscaping that follows the existing topography. This reduces the need for major earthworks,

preserving the natural flow of the environment and offering expansive views of the mountains and valley below.

- Views: The resort's layout is designed to maximize panoramic views of the surrounding landscape, particularly from the guest rooms and communal spaces.
- Vegetation: Local flora, such as pines and cedars, is incorporated into the design, blending the resort into the natural environment.

### 1. Zoning and Functional Layout:

The resort is organized into different zones based on their function, ensuring a balance of privacy, community, and spirituality.

#### a. Arrival Zone:

- The arrival area is positioned near the entrance of the resort, offering a welcoming and serene first impression.
- Guests are greeted by a reception or lobby designed with traditional Bhutanese architectural elements and natural materials, like wood, stone, and woven textiles.
- A lounge area allows guests to relax and absorb the surroundings upon arrival.

#### b. Accommodation Zone:

- The guest suites or villas are spread across the resort to ensure maximum privacy and views.
- Each accommodation is designed as individual units, perhaps resembling traditional Bhutanese farmhouses or monastic retreat structures, using local timber, stone, and other natural materials.
- The villas are situated on different levels or terraces, allowing guests to feel deeply



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d to nature and offering expansive views of the valley and mountains.

- The placement of each accommodation ensures minimal visual disruption and maximum seclusion, enhancing the feeling of retreat and peace.

c. Wellness and Spa Zone:

- A key feature of the Six Senses experience, the wellness zone includes spas, yoga studios, and meditation rooms, each designed to integrate with the natural surroundings.
- The spa area incorporates traditional Bhutanese healing techniques using local herbs and rituals, blending modern wellness practices with cultural traditions.
- The spa includes both indoor and outdoor spaces, with the possibility of private treatment rooms nestled in secluded areas of the resort.

d. Dining and Social Zone:

- A central dining area serves as the heart of the resort's social activities, where guests can enjoy local Bhutanese cuisine as well as international options made from locally sourced ingredients.
- A multi-purpose lounge or bar area offers a comfortable space for socialization, relaxation, and cultural exchange, possibly with outdoor seating options to enjoy the mountain views.
- The dining spaces also includes traditional Bhutanese tea houses or an area for hosting cultural performances or festivals.

e. Spiritual and Cultural Zone:

- Considering Thimphu's cultural and spiritual significance, the resort incorporates a dedicated meditation or prayer area.
- The spiritual zone includes a small temple, stupa, or sacred garden where guests can participate in meditation, prayer, or Bhutanese cultural rituals.
- Guided tours or spiritual programs are organized to help guests immerse in Bhutan's Buddhist traditions.

f. Activity and Nature Zone:

- The resort includes areas for guests to engage in outdoor activities like hiking, trekking, and exploring the surrounding nature.
- A nature trail connects different zones, leading guests through forests, meadows, and near water features like streams or waterfalls, promoting environmental awareness.
- Sustainable initiatives such as organic gardens and farms are integrated into the resort's design, where guests can participate in local agricultural practices.

2. Sustainability and Eco-friendly Design:

- The resort's design emphasizes eco-friendly architecture and infrastructure, including solar energy, rainwater harvesting, and waste management systems to minimize its environmental footprint.
- Local materials are used in the construction of buildings and pathways, ensuring that the resort integrates seamlessly with the surrounding natural landscape.
- Green roofs and vegetative walls are utilized to support local biodiversity and reduce the visual impact on the landscape.

3. Connectivity and Circulation:

- Pedestrian pathways are carefully planned to connect various zones, ensuring ease of movement while maintaining the peaceful, serene environment.
- The resort limits vehicular traffic within the main areas to maintain tranquility and minimize environmental impact.
- There are shuttle services to connect guests with different zones or local attractions if needed.

4. Integration with Local Community:

- The master plan includes spaces for the local community to interact with guests, such as workshops, cultural demonstrations, or artisan markets, providing a deeper connection between guests and Bhutanese traditions.

- Local artisans are engaged to create handcrafted furniture, art, and other elements that reflect Bhutan's cultural heritage.

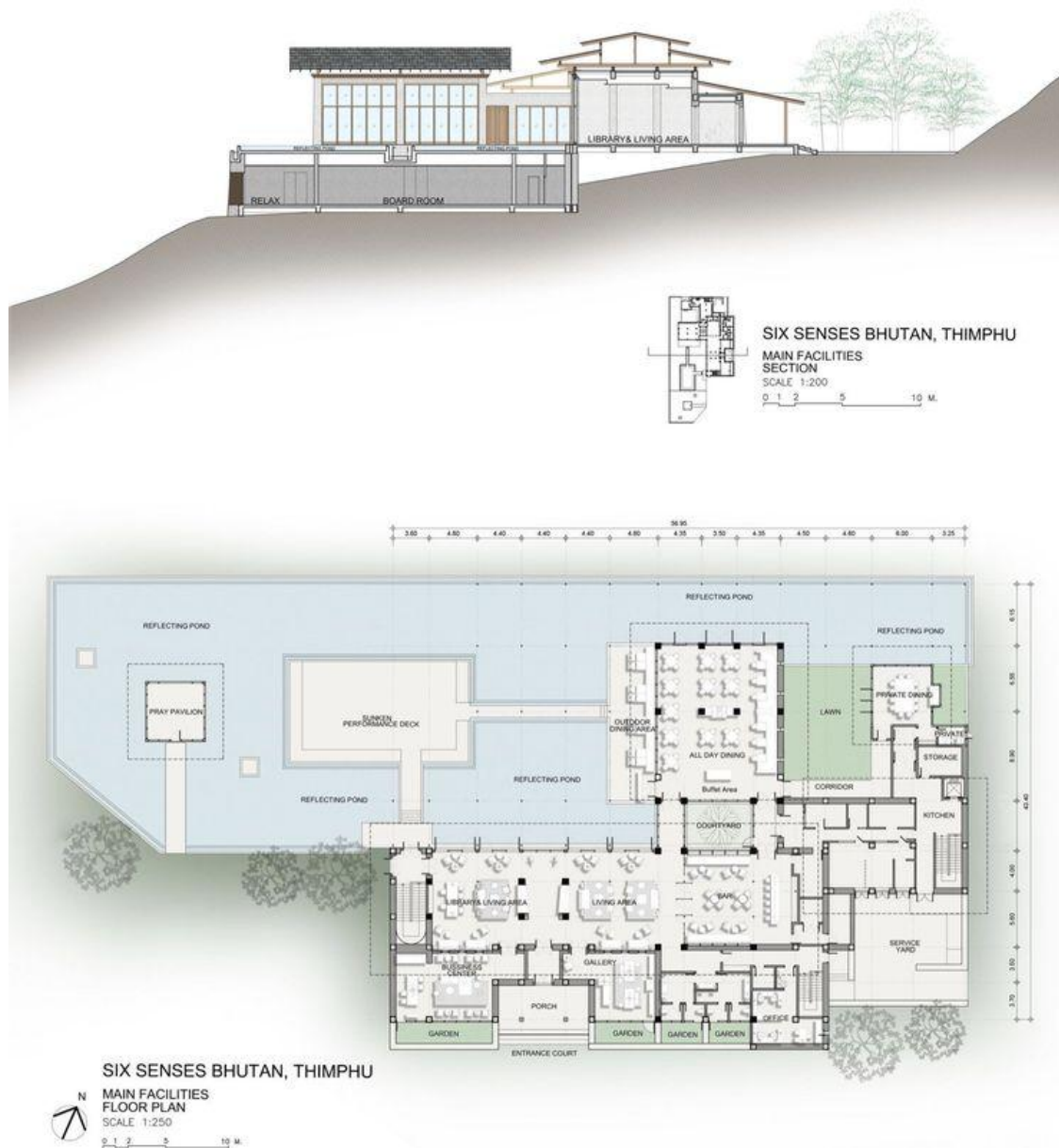
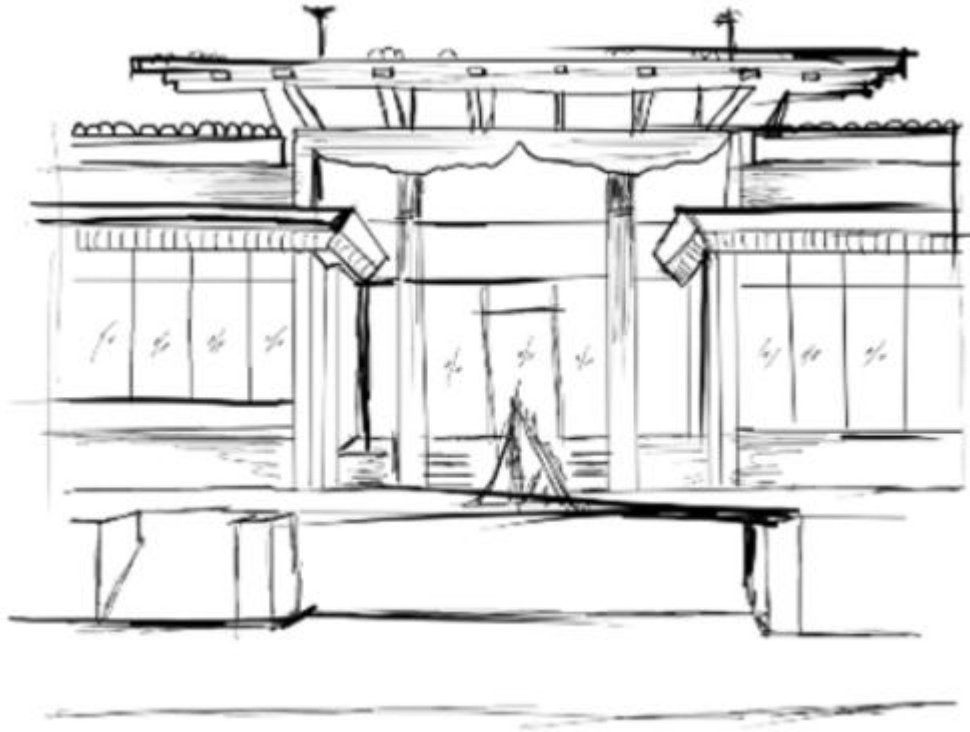


Figure 3-9 Site plan of arrival block at the Six Senses.

A grand arrival experience with a monastic courtyard-like setting. High stone walls and large wooden doors create a sense of exclusivity. The arrival leads to an open, light-filled lobby with panoramic valley views.



*Figure 3-11 Hand drawn sketch of arrival gate at the Six Senses.*



*Figure 3-10 Interior at the Six Senses.*



Figure 3-12 Hand drawn sketch of pavilion facing towards the large Buddha statue.

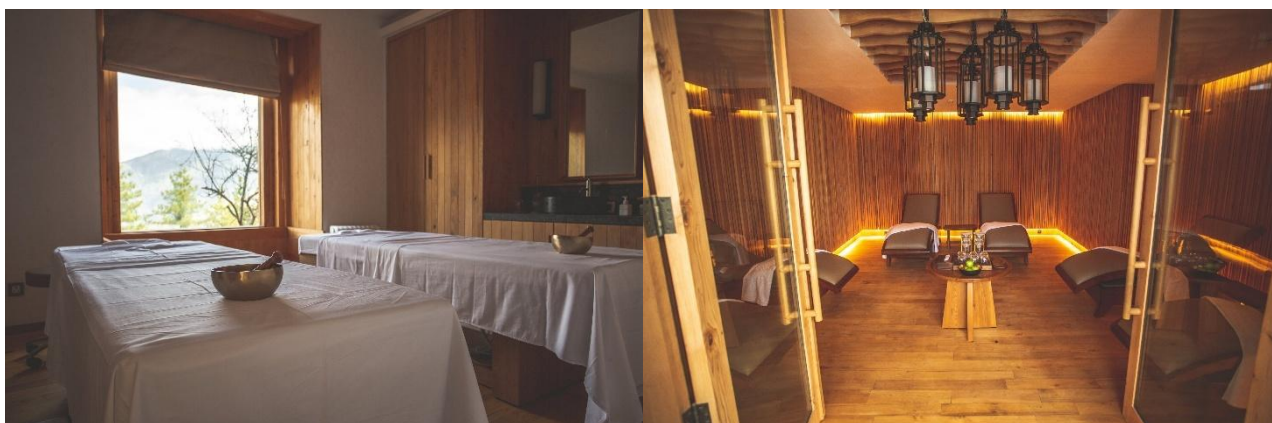


Figure 3-13 Master plan of the Six Senses

## 3.2.5.2 Wellness and Spa

At Six Senses Bhutan, the wellness and spa offerings provide a holistic approach to well-being, blending traditional Bhutanese healing practices with modern wellness therapies. Guests can experience a range of treatments such as Bhutanese Hot Stone Therapy, Tibetan Healing Massages, and Aromatherapy, all aimed at promoting relaxation, detoxification, and energy balance. Wellness programs include yoga, meditation, detox retreats, and stress relief sessions, designed to enhance both physical and mental health. The spa also emphasizes nutritional counseling, mindfulness, and spiritual healing, offering guests personalized wellness journeys that connect them to Bhutan's natural beauty and cultural heritage.

1. Hot stone bath
2. Five treatments rooms including two couple rooms
3. Steam and sauna
4. Indoor Yoga Studio
5. Prayer and Meditation
6. Pavilion
7. Fitness Center
8. Indoor pool
9. Herbal Garden
10. Alchemy Bar
11. Manicure and pedicure room



*Figure 3-14 Interior of the wellness area.*

### 3.2.5.3 Accommodation Units

#### 1. Forest Villas

- BHK: 1BHK (1 Bedroom, 1 Living Room, 1 Bathroom, No Kitchen)
- Description: A private villa nestled within the forest, designed for guests seeking tranquility and natural surroundings. It includes spacious living areas and a private outdoor space but does not feature a kitchen.

#### 2. Mountain View Villas

- BHK: 1BHK (1 Bedroom, 1 Living Room, 1 Bathroom, No Kitchen)
- Description: These villas offer panoramic mountain views, a private plunge pool, and large windows. They have a luxurious living space but do not have a full kitchen.

#### 3. Tented Villas

- BHK: 1BHK (1 Bedroom, 1 Living Area, 1 Bathroom, No Kitchen)
- Description: A unique, adventurous stay with luxury tent accommodations. It features a spacious living area, private outdoor space, but lacks a kitchen.

#### 4. Suites

- BHK: 1BHK or 2BHK (1 Bedroom + Living Room, 1 or 2 Bathrooms, No Kitchen)
- Description: Larger suites designed for couples or families with spacious living areas and luxurious interiors, offering a mix of comfort and tradition. Kitchen facilities are not provided in the suites.

#### 5. Two.Bedroom Family Villas

- BHK: 2BHK (2 Bedrooms, 1 Living Room, 1 or 2 Bathrooms, No Kitchen)
- Description: Ideal for families or groups, these villas offer two bedrooms and a large living area. They provide ample space but do not include kitchen facilities.

#### 6. The Bhutanese Lodge

- BHK: 1BHK or 2BHK (1 or 2 Bedrooms, 1 Living Room, 1 Bathroom, No Kitchen)
- Description: A traditional Bhutanese lodge featuring wooden interiors and a cozy, elegant atmosphere. It includes a living area and one or two bedrooms, but there is no kitchen provided.



*Figure 3-15 Elevational view of the villas at Six Senses*

## LEARNINGS

- Integration with Nature: Seamless blend of architecture with the surrounding landscape using local materials and minimal environmental impact.
- Cultural Sensitivity: Incorporates traditional Bhutanese architectural elements, respecting local culture.
- Sustainability: Focus on eco-friendly practices, solar energy, rainwater harvesting, and local materials.
- Wellness-Centric Design: Thoughtful design of spa, meditation, and wellness areas promoting health and tranquility.
- Privacy and Intimacy: Scattered accommodation ensures privacy while offering expansive views.
- Simplicity in Form and Materiality: Use of natural, minimalist materials to create calming spaces.

- Spatial Fluidity: Smooth circulation and connection between different areas for a cohesive guest experience.
- Light and Ventilation: Maximizes natural light and ventilation for comfort and connection to nature.
- Symbolism: Incorporates spiritual and cultural symbols to create meaningful spaces.
- Human.Centered Design: Focus on emotional and physical well.being of guests through thoughtful design elements.

## 4 CASE STUDY: National Case Study

### 4.1 Tharlam Monastery

#### 4.1.1 General Information:

**Location:** Boudha, Kathmandu

**Built Year:** 1981

**Affiliation:** Tibetan Buddhism



*Figure 4-1 Prayer Hall at the Tharlam Monastery*

#### 4.1.2 Introduction:

Founded in 1981 by H.E. Deshung Tulku Rinpoche, Tharlam monastery is a historic monastery of Boudhanath, Kathmandu. While Buddhist philosophy and the practice of the Vajrayana path are central to the education of our sixty-one student monks, the monastery incorporated modern education of the sciences, math and languages to the curriculum in 2015.

#### 4.1.3 Historical Background:

Tharlam Monastery, established in the early 1980s by Lama Tenzin Zopa in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, is a Tibetan Buddhist monastery that plays a significant role in preserving Tibetan Buddhist teachings and culture. It is affiliated with the Foundation for the Preservation of the

Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), and offers teachings, retreats, and spiritual guidance for both monastics and lay practitioners. The monastery serves as a cultural and spiritual hub for the Tibetan community, including refugees, and promotes the study of Buddhist philosophy, meditation, and compassion. Tharlam also contributes to social welfare and environmental sustainability, and continues to be a place for cultural preservation and spiritual growth.

#### 4.1.4 Concept:

The concept of Tharlam Monastery is to create a spiritual and cultural center that preserves and promotes Tibetan Buddhist teachings and Himalayan traditions. It serves as a sanctuary for monastic life and meditation retreats, offering a space for study, reflection, and community. The monastery focuses on mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom, while fostering cultural preservation, supporting Tibetan refugees, and engaging in eco-friendly and socially responsible practices. It's a place for both spiritual seekers and those interested in learning about Tibetan Buddhism and its traditions.

#### 4.1.5 Location and Context:

##### **Location:**

- Kathmandu Valley, Nepal: Tharlam Monastery is located in the Kathmandu Valley, an area rich in cultural, spiritual, and architectural significance. The valley is home to several Buddhist sites and temples, including stupas and monasteries, making it a focal point for Tibetan Buddhism and spiritual practice in Nepal.

##### **Architectural Context:**

#### **1. Traditional Tibetan Buddhist Design:**

- The monastery's architecture reflects traditional Tibetan Buddhist forms such as stupas, prayer wheels, and pagoda-style structures. These elements promote both spiritual practice and the symbolic meaning of the journey toward enlightenment.
- The main temple or prayer hall be the central architectural feature, often with a large Buddha statue and murals depicting Buddhist teachings. The architecture would also include spaces for meditation, study, and community rituals.

#### **2. Integration with the Environment:**

- **Courtyards and gardens** are designed as sacred spaces for walking meditation and reflection, connecting the built environment with the natural surroundings. This layout encourages mindfulness through interaction with both the interior spaces and nature.

### 3. Community Spaces and Residential Areas:

- **Monastic living quarters and guest accommodations** for retreatants are simple and functional, promoting solitude and introspection. These areas are designed to encourage a peaceful atmosphere conducive to meditation and contemplation.
- **Communal spaces** such as dining halls, study rooms, and shared courtyards foster interaction among the monks, retreatants, and visitors, supporting a sense of community while maintaining the principles of mindfulness and simplicity.



*Figure 4-2 Premises of Tharlam Monastery*

#### 4.1.6 Target Group:

The target groups of Tharlam Monastery in Boudha, Kathmandu primarily include a diverse range of individuals seeking spiritual growth, education, and cultural engagement. The monastery serves both monastic communities and lay practitioners, as well as tourists and researchers interested in Tibetan Buddhism. Below are the key target groups:

1. Monastic Community – Resident monks, and novice learners.
2. Local Tibetan & Nepalese Buddhists – Devotees, elderly pilgrims, and ritual participants.
3. International Spiritual Seekers – Retreatants, mindfulness practitioners, and Buddhist tourists.
4. Scholars & Researchers – Experts in Buddhist studies, history, and anthropology.
5. General Visitors & Tourists – Cultural enthusiasts and casual travelers exploring Tibetan heritage.
6. Social & Humanitarian Groups – Tibetan refugee support organizations and charity groups.

Its location near Boudhanath Stupa makes it a key center for Buddhist practice, cultural preservation, and spiritual retreats.

#### 4.1.7 Architectural Design and Planning:

##### 4.1.7.1 Master Plan and Zoning:

The monastery follows the classic Tibetan monastic layout, with a main prayer hall (Lhakhang), stupas, and monastic quarters surrounding a courtyard. The use of mandala-inspired floor plans and symbolic spatial organization reflects Buddhist cosmology and philosophy. Like many Tibetan monasteries, Tharlam features an open courtyard that acts as a communal space for prayer gatherings, debates, and festivals.



Figure 4-3 Zoning of the Tharlam Monastery

- Hierarchy of Spaces – Private areas for monks are separated from public zones to maintain a peaceful environment.
- Orientation & Symbolism – Traditional Tibetan monasteries are often aligned with cardinal directions and Buddhist cosmology.
- Integration with Nature – Courtyards, gardens, and water features enhance tranquility and mindfulness.
- Accessibility & Circulation – Clearly defined pathways for monks, visitors, and pilgrims facilitate smooth movement.

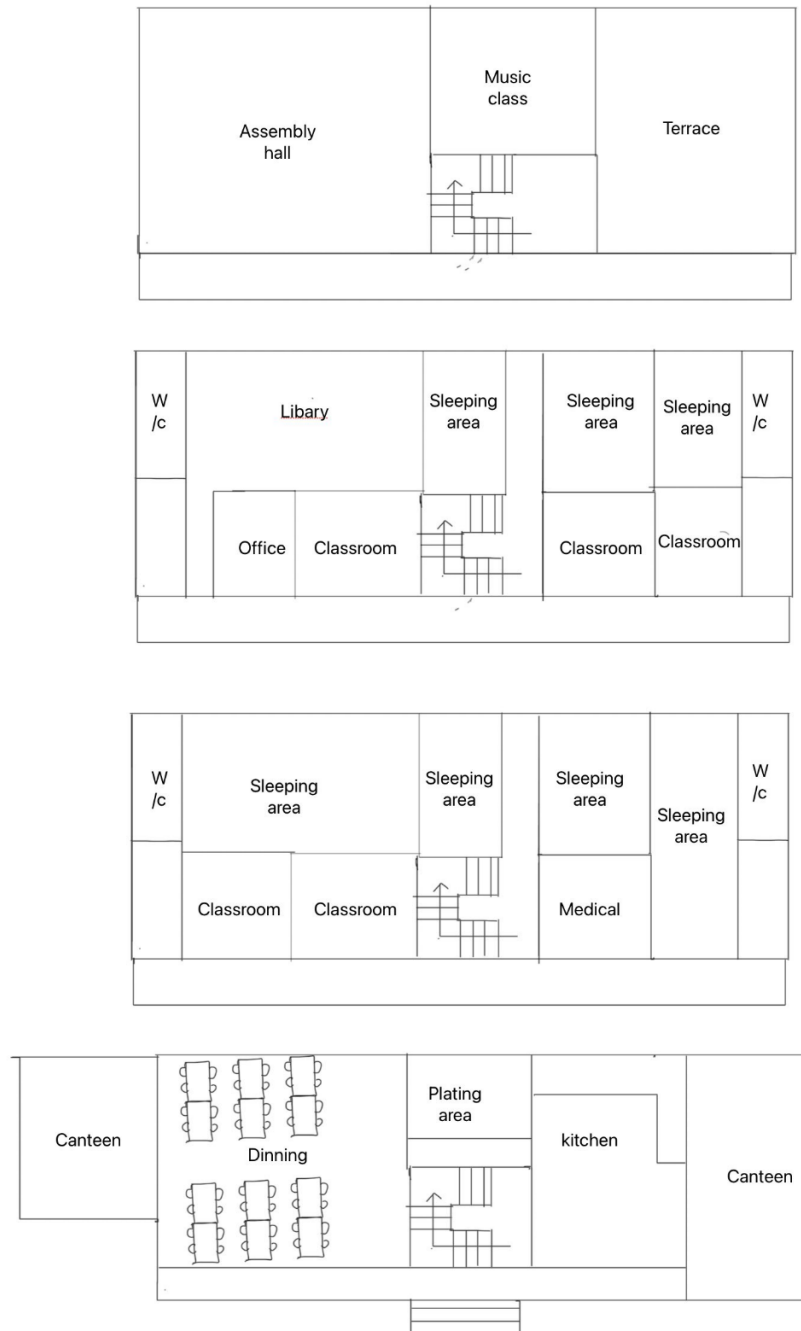


Figure 4-4 Floor plan of the residential unit at Tharlam Monastery.

The typical floor plan of the residential unit for the monks shows all the required spaces for the monks whereas public spaces like dinning and kitchen are kept at the ground floor where as the other are placed at the front like classrooms and the private are like sleeping are kept at the back of the building.



Figure 4-5 Interior of the Kitchens at the Tharlam Monastery.

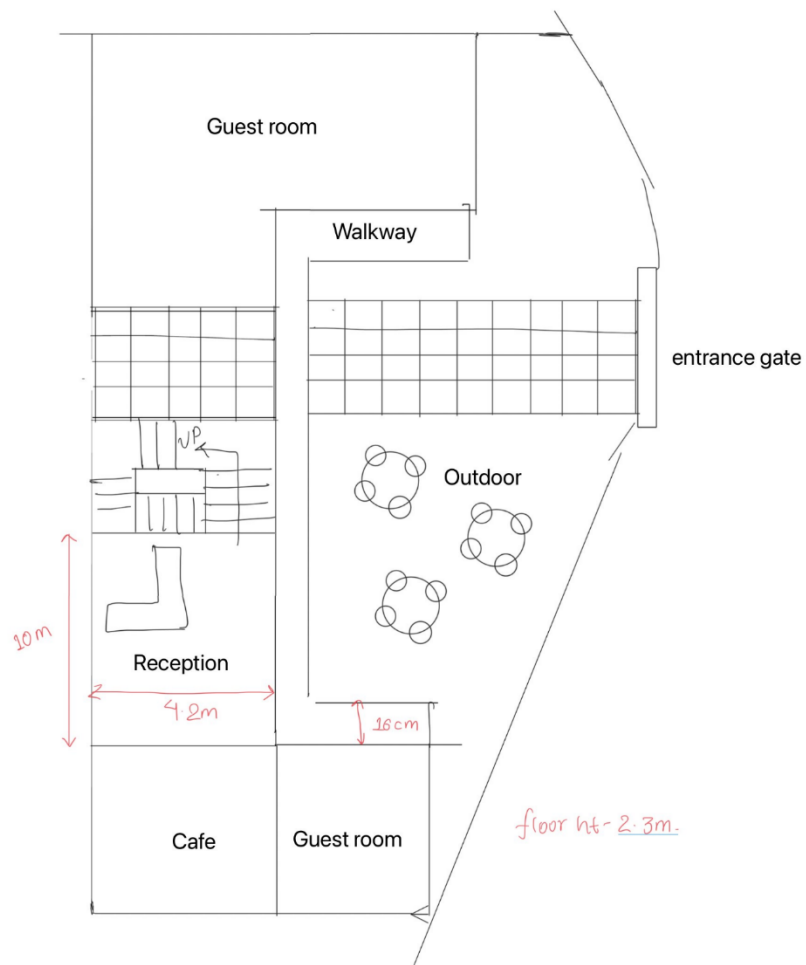


Figure 4-6 Floor plan of Tharlam Guest House.

The guest accommodations at Tharlam Monastery are typically located within the monastery premises but separate from the monk's residential quarters. This ensures privacy for both the monks and the visitors while allowing guests easy access to the temple, prayer halls, and common areas.

The guest quarters are designed to maintain a quiet and peaceful environment with controlled movement patterns to avoid disruption to monastic activities. Visitors have designated paths leading to the shrine hall, dining area, and meditation spaces, ensuring that they do not interfere with the monks' daily routines. Some monasteries include inner courtyards or cloistered walkways to allow guests a meditative walk within the monastery complex. The guest accommodations at Tharlam Monastery are designed to offer a monastic experience, allowing visitors to detach from worldly distractions and immerse themselves in meditation and Buddhist teachings. The setting encourages inner peace, mindfulness, and a deeper understanding of Tibetan Buddhist practices.



*Figure 4-7 Courtyard of the Guest house.*

Tharlam Café is a small yet peaceful café located near Tharlam Monastery in Boudhanath, Kathmandu. It serves as a quiet retreat for monks, visitors, and locals who seek a relaxed atmosphere away from the busy streets of Boudha. The café is known for its serene ambiance, simple yet delicious food, and a community-oriented environment that reflects the monastic values of peace and mindfulness.



*Figure 4-8 Interiors of the Guest House.*

## 4.2 Kopan Monastery

### 4.2.1 General Information:

Kopan Monastery is a Tibetan Buddhist monastery situated on a hilltop north of Boudhanath Stupa in Kathmandu, Nepal. It is one of the most well-known monasteries in Nepal, attracting both local and international visitors seeking spiritual teachings, meditation, and retreat experiences.

**Built Year:** Around 1960

**Land Type:** Hill with contour land

**Affiliation:** Tibetan Buddhism

**No. of monks residing:** 360 monks

After entering the main gate of Kopan Monastery, visitors encounter several key buildings and



*Figure 4-9 Kopan Monastery*

spaces arranged in a well-planned manner. The layout is designed to maintain a spiritual atmosphere while accommodating both monastic life and visitors.

#### 4.2.2 Historical Background

Kopan Monastery, perched on a hill overlooking Kathmandu, Nepal, is a renowned Tibetan Buddhist institution established in the early 1970s. It was founded by Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche, two prominent Tibetan Buddhist masters, with the vision of preserving and spreading the teachings of the Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) tradition of Mahayana Buddhism. Originally, it began as a small retreat center for serious Buddhist practitioners but quickly grew into a thriving monastic community. The monastery became the primary center for the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), an international Buddhist organization dedicated to Dharma education and meditation practice. Over the years, Kopan expanded to include a large prayer hall, monastic residences, meditation retreats, and the Khachoe Ghakyil Ling Nunnery, providing Buddhist education for women. It gained international recognition for its November meditation courses, attracting students and seekers from around the world. Today, Kopan Monastery remains a vital center for Buddhist learning, meditation, and humanitarian efforts, upholding the rich spiritual heritage of Tibetan Buddhism in Nepal.

#### 4.2.3 Architectural Design and Planning:

##### 4.2.3.1 Master Plan and Zoning:

The monastery is built on a hilltop with expansive views over the Kathmandu Valley. The orientation of the buildings, as well as the placement of meditation areas and the temple, takes advantage of these views, creating a sense of openness and connection to the natural world. The placement on the hill also adds a sense of elevation and spiritual transcendence, aligning with the Tibetan Buddhist practice of seeking higher understanding.

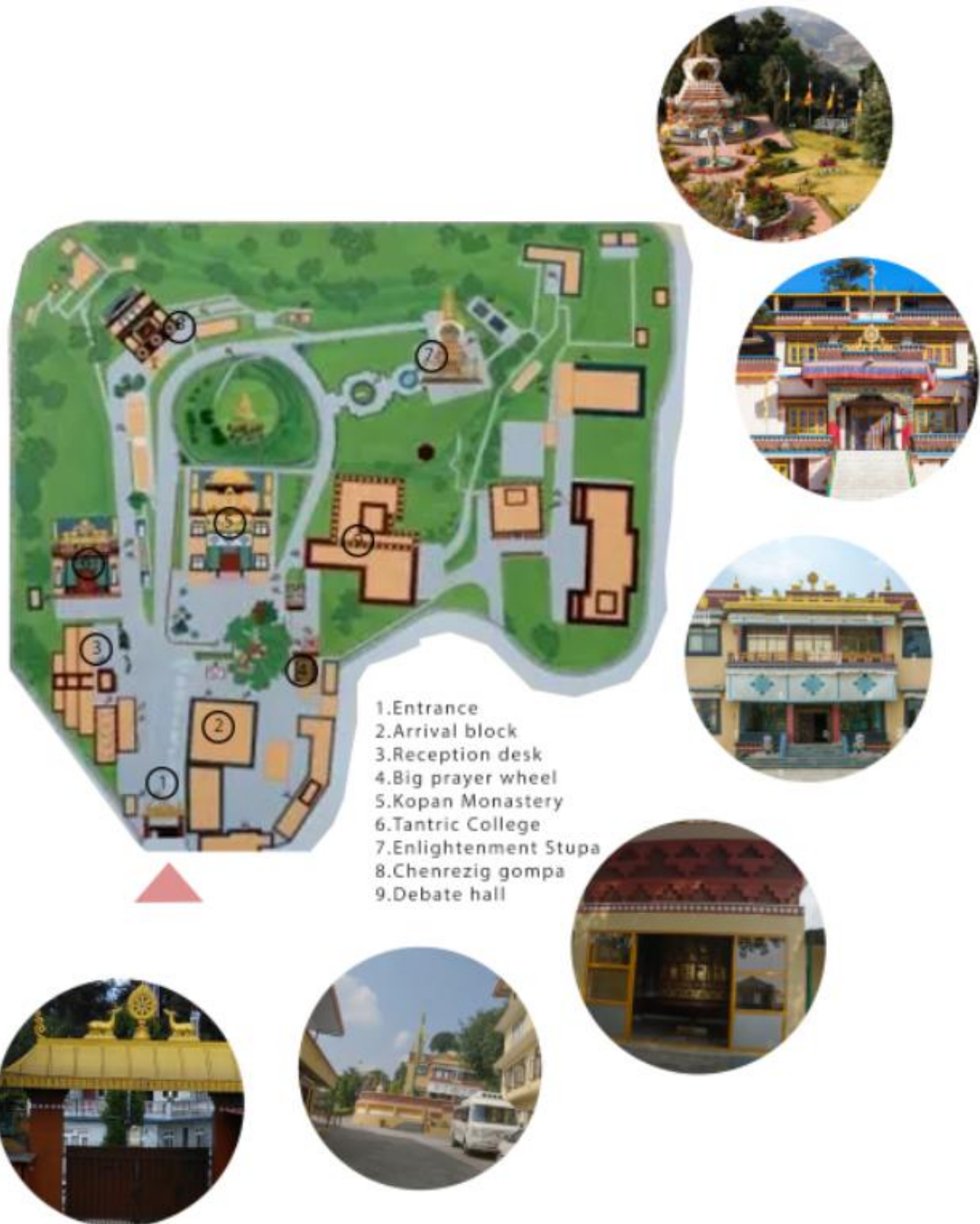


Figure 4-10 Master plan of the Kopan Monastery

At the entrance of the temple, the Dharmachakra, or the wheel of Dharma, is prominently displayed over the front entrance or on the roof. This symbol represents the three turnings of the wheel of the Dharma by Shakyamuni Buddha and the three higher training on the path to liberation from samsara. The rim of the wheel represents higher training in concentration, while the spokes signify higher training in analytical wisdom, and the hub represents higher training in ethics. The eight spokes represent the Buddha's noble eightfold path, leading to the destruction of obscurations to liberation and omniscience.



*Figure 4-11 Stupas at Kopan Monastery*

Kopan Monastery features stupas, which serve as both spiritual focal points and architectural landmarks. These stupas represent the Buddha's enlightenment and act as places for meditation and reflection. As in the broader design of stupas, the architecture reflects sacred geometry, with the domed structure symbolizing the Buddha's mind, and the spire representing the path to enlightenment. The space around the stupa is often designed for meditation, where practitioners can walk around the stupa in a ritualistic manner, cultivating mindfulness and reinforcing spiritual focus.



*Figure 4-12 Stupa at the Kopan Monastery.*

### 4.2.3.2 Accommodation

Kopan Monastery offers a variety of accommodation options for tourists and retreat participants, especially for those seeking a deeper connection with Tibetan Buddhist teachings and meditation practices. The accommodations at Kopan are designed to maintain the monastery's tranquil atmosphere and simplicity, while still providing comfort for visitors who wish to stay for meditation retreats or just to visit and learn about Tibetan Buddhism.

#### **Types of Accommodation at Kopan Monastery for Tourists:**

##### **1. Basic Retreat Rooms:**

- These rooms are designed for individuals or small groups participating in meditation retreats at the monastery. They are simple and modest, with minimal

furnishings to reflect the Buddhist monastic lifestyle. The rooms are usually equipped with a bed, a desk, and basic amenities such as blankets and hot water (depending on the season). The focus of these rooms is on creating a peaceful and distraction-free environment for contemplation and practice.

- **Shared bathrooms** are typical for these rooms, which is in line with the communal atmosphere of the monastery.

## 2. **Private Rooms:**

- For visitors who prefer a bit more privacy, Kopan offers **private rooms** with simple furnishings. These rooms tend to have more space compared to the shared rooms and may have more direct access to nature, often with windows that offer stunning views of the surrounding area. They might come with **en.suite bathrooms** or a shared bathroom depending on the specific room and price point.
- These rooms are designed for individuals or couples who want a quiet retreat experience but with a bit more solitude.

## 3. **Dormitory.Style Accommodation:**

- For larger groups or individuals on a budget, **dormitory.style accommodation** is available. This type of room typically accommodates several people and features shared sleeping spaces. It's an ideal choice for those attending short-term meditation courses or wanting to meet other visitors who share an interest in Tibetan Buddhism.
- Similar to the basic retreat rooms, dormitories have shared bathrooms, and the focus is on maintaining a simple and focused environment conducive to mindfulness.

## 4. **Guest House:**

- The **Kopan Monastery Guest House** offers a more comfortable option for tourists who are visiting the monastery for a shorter stay but still want to experience the peaceful environment. Rooms here are slightly more modern and may include amenities such as private bathrooms, comfortable beds, and possibly even small kitchenettes for long-term stays.

- The guest house provides a balance between comfort and simplicity, making it a good option for tourists who are not necessarily attending a retreat but still want to experience the monastery's spiritual atmosphere.

**5. Meals and Dining:**

- Accommodations at Kopan often come with access to the **monastery's dining hall**, where guests can enjoy traditional Tibetan meals, as well as vegetarian options that cater to those on a more plant-based diet. The food served is designed to align with the monastery's principles of simplicity and nourishment, focusing on wholesome, nutritious meals that support meditation and spiritual practice.

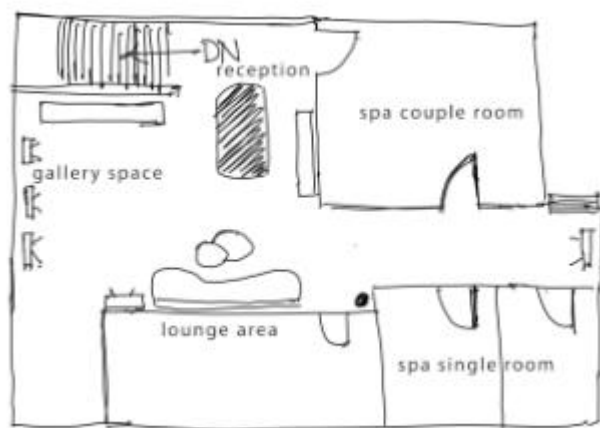
**6. Meditation and Spiritual Activities:**

- Many of the accommodations at Kopan are designed for guests who are interested in engaging in **meditation, study, or spiritual retreats**. Accommodations are often provided in close proximity to the main temple, meditation halls, and classrooms, where guests can join group meditations, teachings, and talks. The monastery's serene environment and daily routine encourage quiet reflection and mindfulness, even for those who are not attending a formal retreat.
- **Meditation classes, Dharma talks**, and other spiritual activities are available to those staying at the monastery, allowing guests to deepen their understanding of Tibetan Buddhism and meditation while they are there.

### 4.3 Soma Wellness Studio.

“Soma” is the Greek word for body. However, it means more than just the flesh and bone that gives physical shape to our person. Soma is the embodiment of our essence, of our person. The social and emotional dimensions of our lives are captured with the term Soma.

LOCATION: PEPSICOLA TOWNPLANNING



*Figure 4-13 Floor plan of Soma Wellness Studio.*

The gallery space is also used for ground meditation and various other sessions which mostly focused for the women. The wellness studio creates ample opportunities for all the aged group people to feel the impact of massage and sound healings.



*Figure 4-14 Interior at Soma Wellness Studio.*

#### 4.4 Peaceful Therapy

Peaceful Therapy delivers different spa services such as Moroccan bath, Sauna bath, Steam bath, Body treatments, massages, facials, pedicure and manicure. Their biggest motive is to make well-being part of your lifestyle with our Wellness.

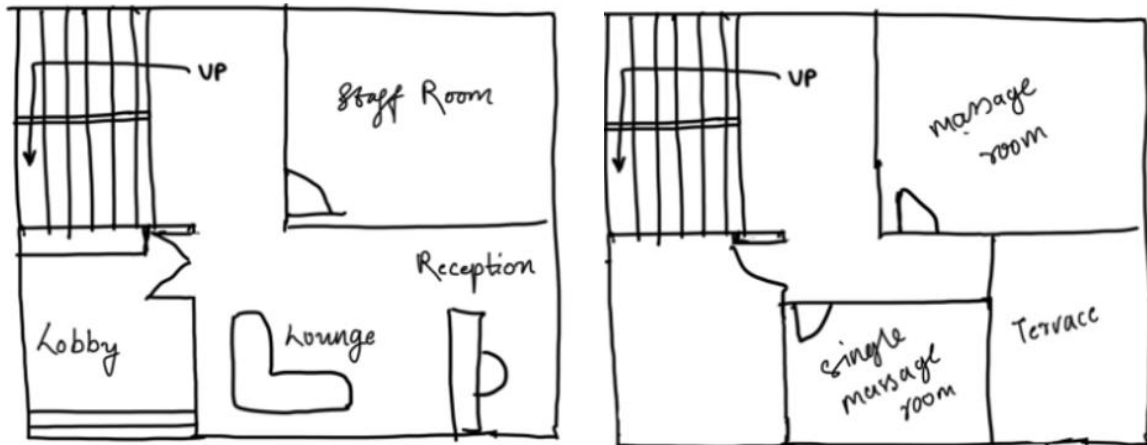


Figure 4-16 Floor plan of Peaceful Therapy.

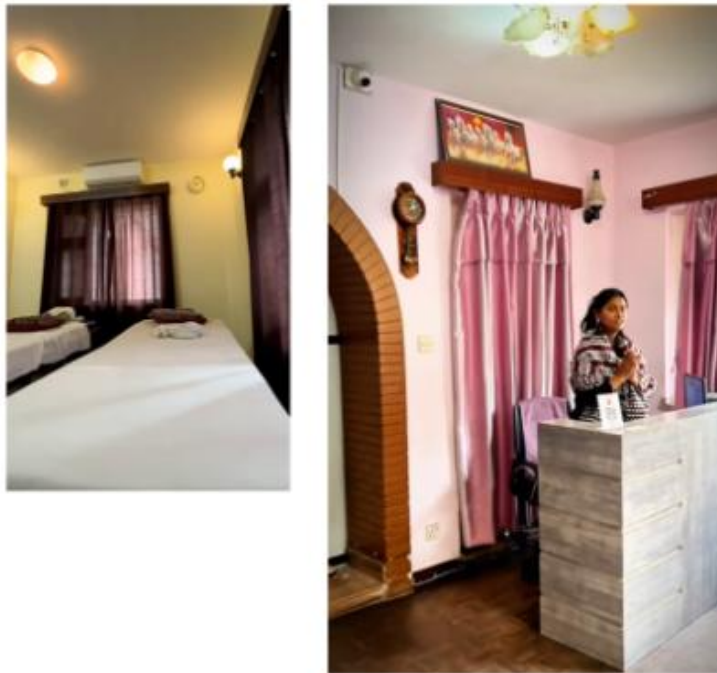


Figure 4-15 Interior of Peaceful Therapy.

## 4.5 COMPARITIVE STUDY CHART OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES

	Sasi Pawan Wisdom Centre	Six Senses	Tharlam Monastery	Kopan Monastery
Planning	Open Play Design Incorporating Natural Elements	All the facilities are distributed with their own private space	Traditional Layout with Central Courtyard	Main Monastery Surrounded by the various other elements
Location	Pak Chong, Thailand	Thimpu, Bhutan	Boudha, Kathmandu	Kapan, Budhanilkantha
Topography	Gentle slopes with lush greenery and forest and mountains	Steep Hillside Valley view	Inside the core area with plain Land	Top of the mountain with the view of the city
Climate	Tropical, wet and dry seasons	Subtropical,	humid Subtropical	humid Subtropical
Form	Organic form with modern architecture	tiered blending into the nature	multitiered, traditional tibetian style	multitiered, traditional tibetian style also with more no of monastery
Connectivity	Road access	Road access	Road access	Road access
Material	concrete, wood, glass, copper roofing, bricks	stone, timber, rammed earth, wood	brick, timber, stone, concrete, glass, wood	brick, timber, stone, concrete, glass, wood, mud plaster, clay, slate and metal roofing
Structure	concrete frame, wooden elements and copper roofing	load bearing walls	rcc structure	rcc and steel structure
Light	natural light	natural light	natural light	natural light
Ventilation	cross ventilation	cross ventilation	cross ventilation	cross ventilation
Color	earthy tones, natural wood colour and glass transparency	onewashed Walls, Neutral, Relaxing Tones, natural	red, white, blue, yellow	red, white, blue, yellow, green, black
Function	meditation teaching and spiritual growth	wellness resort and spiritual health	monastic education, meditation and cultural preservation	monastic education, meditation and cultural preservation
Style	modern architecture with thai influence	traditional bhutanese architecture	traditional tibetian architecture with religious symbolism	traditional tibetian architecture with religious symbolism
Order	non linear, exploration , nature interaction	blending with the nature	hierarchical organization of areas	hierarchical organization of areas
Circulation	open layout, nature pathway	open layout , with their own private space	central courtyard, clear pathways	central monastery, pathways around them

## 5 SITE ANALYSIS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Manang District is located in the Gandaki Province of Nepal, nestled in the trans.Himalayan region north of the Annapurna range. Known for its rugged terrain, high.altitude valleys, and rich Tibetan.influenced culture, Manang is a key part of the Annapurna Circuit. The district is sparsely populated, with communities that preserve ancient Buddhist traditions, vernacular architecture, and sustainable mountain lifestyles. Its remote setting and spiritual atmosphere make it an important destination for both trekkers and those seeking cultural and meditative retreats.

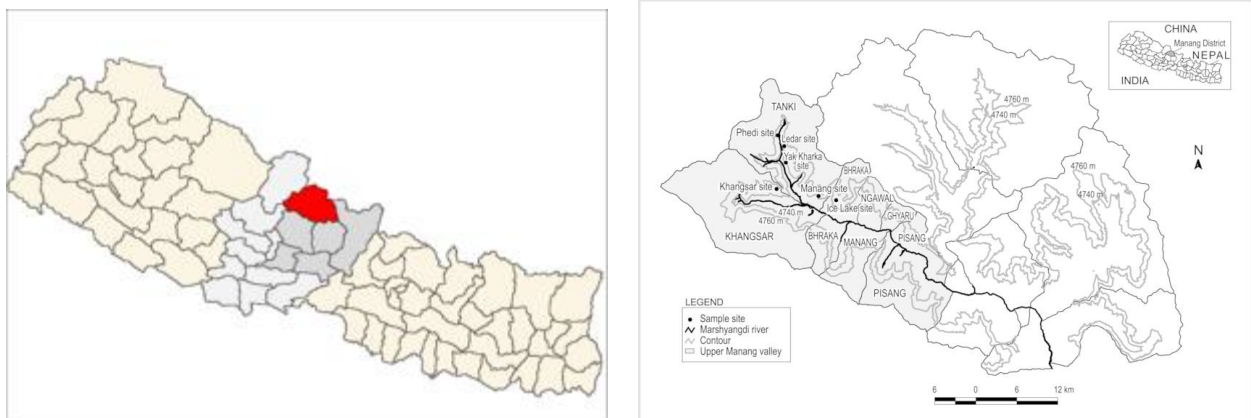


Figure 5-1: Map Showing Manag District

The district is sparsely populated, with ethnic groups such as the Gurung, Manangi, and Tibetan.origin communities forming the cultural fabric of the region. Tibetan Buddhism heavily influences the lifestyle, architecture, and festivals of the area, reflected in its monasteries, chortens, and traditional stone houses. Culturally, Manang is rich in Tibetan Buddhist heritage. The local population, mainly Gurung and people of Tibetan origin (often referred to as Manangis), have preserved ancient traditions, dialects, and customs. The region is dotted with centuries.old monasteries, mani walls, and chortens, reflecting deep spiritual roots. Traditional stone architecture, seasonal migration practices, and a strong connection with nature define the cultural identity of Manang.

### 5.1.1 Reasons behind the bhraka site selection.

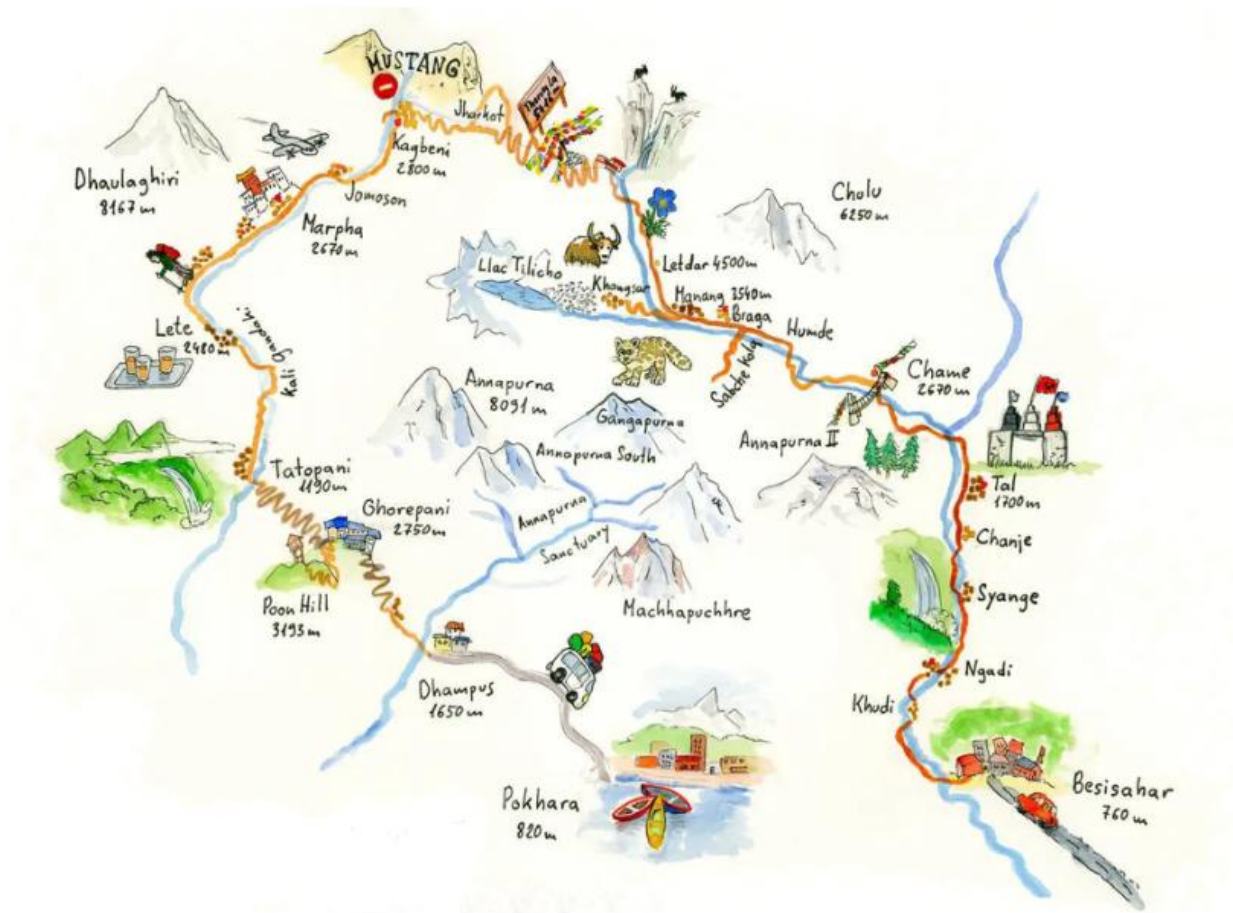


Figure 5-2: Annapurna Circuit Trekking route.

- **Spiritual Significance:**

Home to the ancient Braga Monastery, a key center of Tibetan Buddhist practice in the region, enhancing the retreat's spiritual depth.

- **Cultural Authenticity:**

Inhabited by communities that follow traditional Tibetan Buddhist customs, preserving rituals, festivals, and vernacular lifestyles.

- **Natural Serenity:**

Surrounded by dramatic cliffs, Himalayan peaks, and vast skies, offering a peaceful and contemplative atmosphere ideal for meditation.

- **Traditional Architecture:**

The village features clustered stone houses and organic forms that blend with the landscape, providing inspiration for context.sensitive, mindful design.

- **Strategic Location:**

Located along the Annapurna Circuit with proximity to Manang town, balancing accessibility with peaceful seclusion.

- **Cultural Preservation Opportunity:**

The retreat can contribute to sustaining local heritage, encouraging cultural exchange, and supporting the local economy in a respectful, low.impact way.

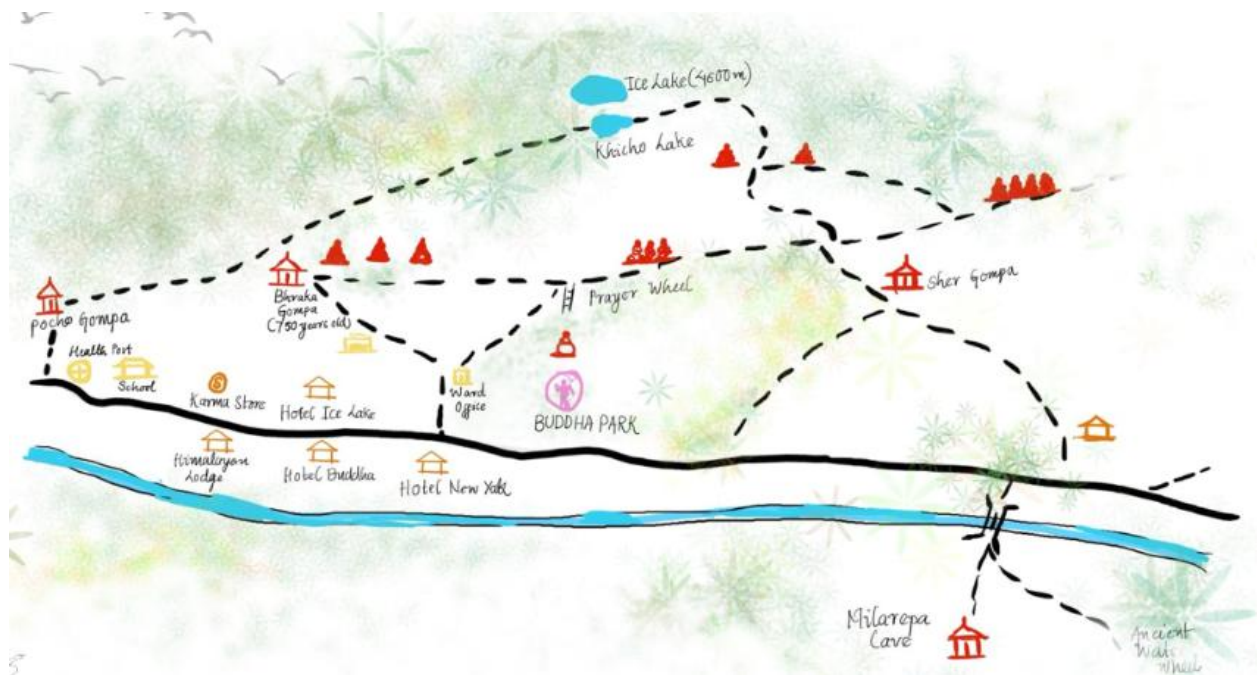


Figure 5-3: Local Map of Bhraka.

## 5.2 SOCIO.ECONOMIC ASPECTS

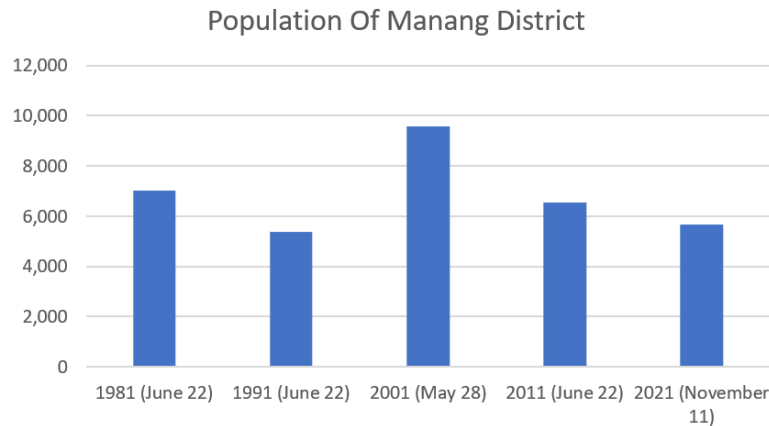


Figure 5-4: Population of Manang District from 1981 to 2021.

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Government of Nepal. National Population and Housing Census Reports (1981, 1991, 2001, 2011, 2021).

The population trend of Manang District over the past four decades reveals a fluctuating yet generally declining pattern. According to census data, the population was approximately 7,000 in 1981, which declined to around 5,500 by 1991. A significant rise occurred in 2001, reaching a peak of about 10,000, possibly due to temporary migration, improved census coverage, or local development efforts at the time. However, this growth was not sustained, as the population sharply dropped to around 6,500 in 2011 and further declined to approximately 5,800 by 2021. This downward trend suggests ongoing challenges such as outmigration, limited livelihood opportunities, harsh climatic conditions, and accessibility issues. These demographic shifts

**HOUSEHOLD POPULATION DATA OF BHRAGA**

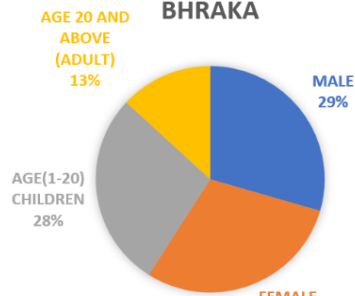


Figure 5-5: Houshold Population data of Bhraka (left), People of Bhraka in traditional attire(right)

Source: Aurthor survey.

highlight the need for sustainable development strategies, such as promoting cultural tourism and meditation retreats, to help revitalize the region while preserving its unique heritage and environment. The population of the manang covers more of the Gurung, Ghale and Bika.

The combined male and female population (59%) shows a typical household structure with adults present, but the smaller adult percentage shows a possible trend of out.migration. High proportion of children (28%) indicates the need for facilities and services catering to younger age groups.

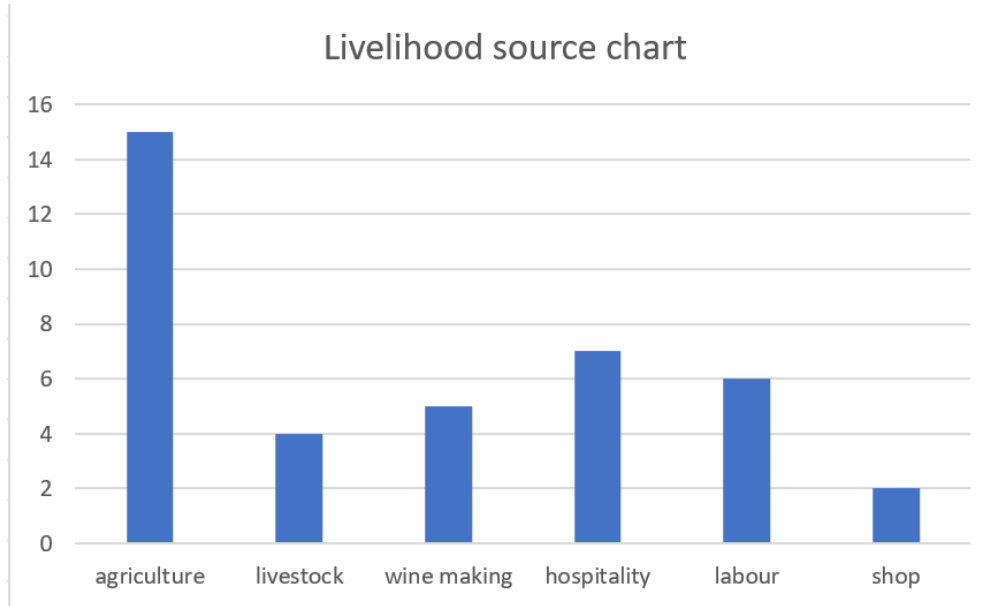


Figure 5-6: Livelihood of People of Manang.

Source: Author Survey

Agriculture dominates, indicating a traditional livelihood dependency on farming. The prominence of hospitality and labor highlights the community's involvement in tourism. The



Figure 5-7: Agriculture in Bhraka.

presence of wine making suggests interesting cultural aspects. A small portion of the population engages in running small shops or retail businesses, likely catering to locals and tourists.

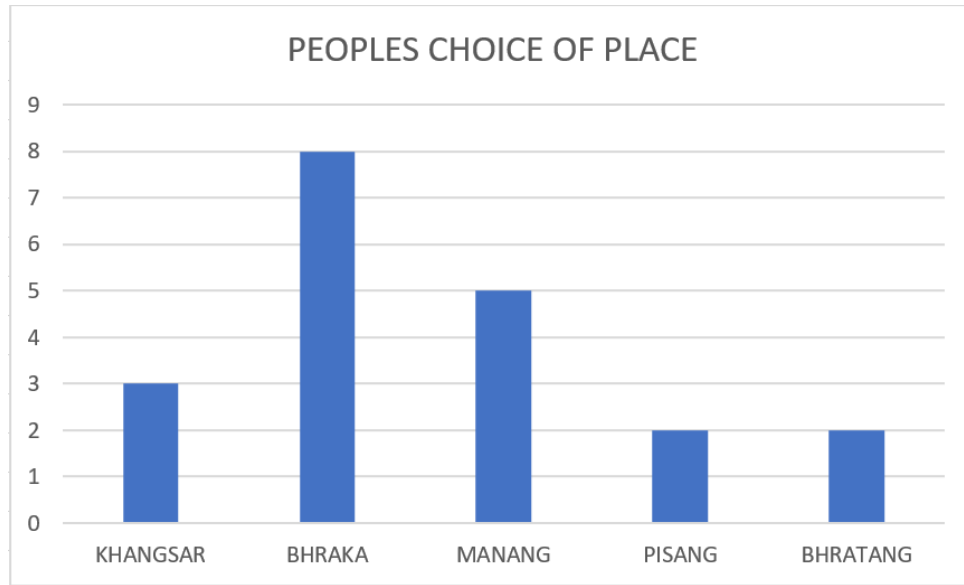


Figure 5-9: People's Choice of Place.

Source: Author Survey

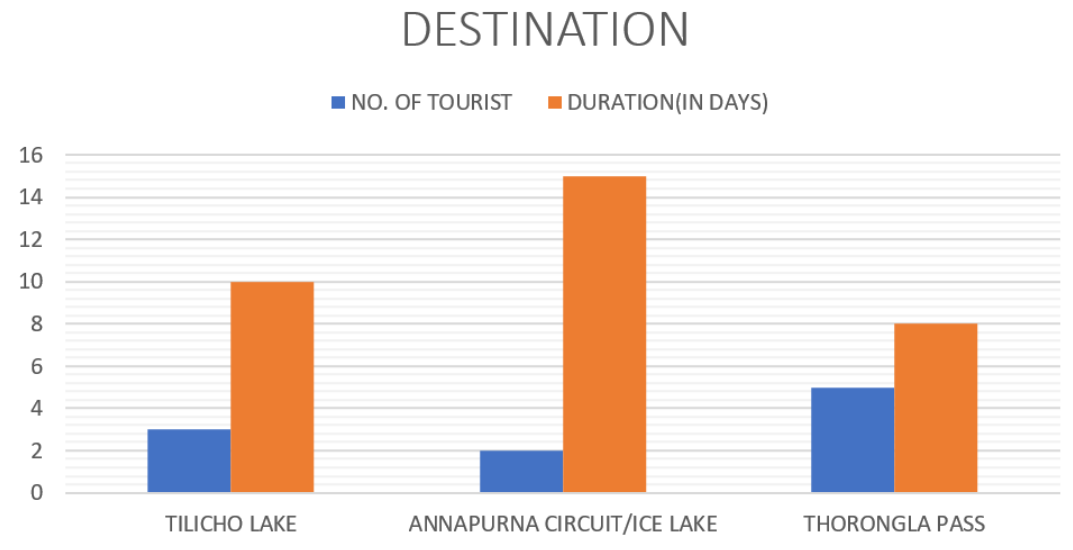


Figure 5-8: Destination of the tourists visiting Manang.

Source: Author Survey

As a village deeply rooted in Buddhist traditions and indigenous architectural styles, Bhraka offers a unique opportunity to establish a meditation retreat that harmonizes with its spiritual heritage. The local culture, characterized by traditional monasteries, stone-built houses, and peaceful surroundings, makes Bhraka an ideal site for creating a space dedicated to mindfulness and healing.

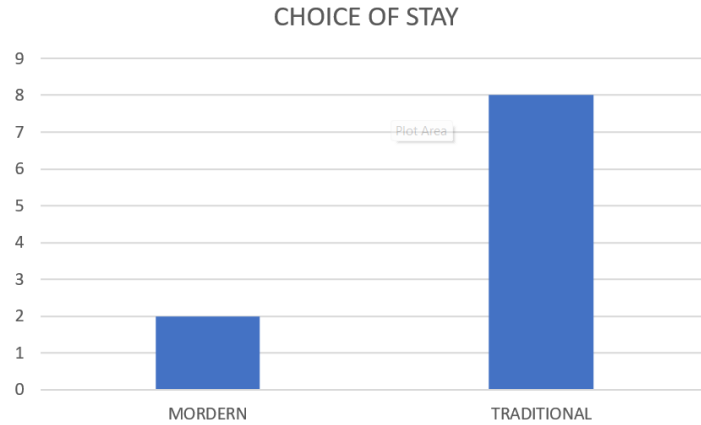


Figure 5-10: Choice of stay of the tourists.

Source: Aarth's Survey

Furthermore, its popularity among visitors and locals alike enhances the potential for the retreat to serve as both a spiritual sanctuary and a culturally immersive experience. Bhraka, a picturesque village in the Manang District of Nepal, is strategically located along the popular Annapurna Circuit trekking route, making it a well-known stop for trekkers heading towards various destinations. Its proximity to key trekking paths and natural attractions significantly contributes to its appeal among visitors seeking adventure and spiritual experiences.

### 5.3 CULTURAL ASPECTS

#### 5.3.1 Festivals

##### YARTUNG

It is one of the big festivals celebrated in summer which is also known as horse festival. The festival goes on for five days. It is said that celebrating festivals means gratitude towards their deities for blessings and good crops and peace in village.



Figure 5-11: Yartung Festival

## MITHA

It is one of the other major festivals celebrated around april every year. It is an archery festival



*Figure 5-12: Mitha Festival.*

## LOSHAR(Tibetan New Year)

It marks the Tibetan New Year, which usually falls between January and March, depending on the lunar calendar. The festival symbolizes renewal, purification, and prosperity.



## DUMJIFESTIVAL

A Buddhist festival commemorating the birth of Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava), the founder of Tibetan Buddhism.



*Figure 5-13: Loshar festival (top), Dumji festival (bottom).*

## 5.4 FLORA AND FAUNA



Figure 5-14: Flora and Fauna of Manang.

## 5.5 FOOD



Figure 5-15: Food found in Manang.

## 5.6 ARCHITECTURE OF BHRAKA VILLAGE

### 5.6.1 Settlement Pattern

The villages are very compact with rectangular shapes being dominant in buildings. The buildings get attached to each other, creating small alleys from cold winds and snow storms. This reduces the surface-to-volume ratio and hence, heat losses in adverse cold conditions. Houses sit on the southern slope of hills or flat valleys to enhance solar heat gains during the day. In Manang, closed courtyards and U-shaped buildings are quite common as they protect the inhabitants and the buildings from the cold and strong winds while allowing almost all rooms inside to receive daylight.

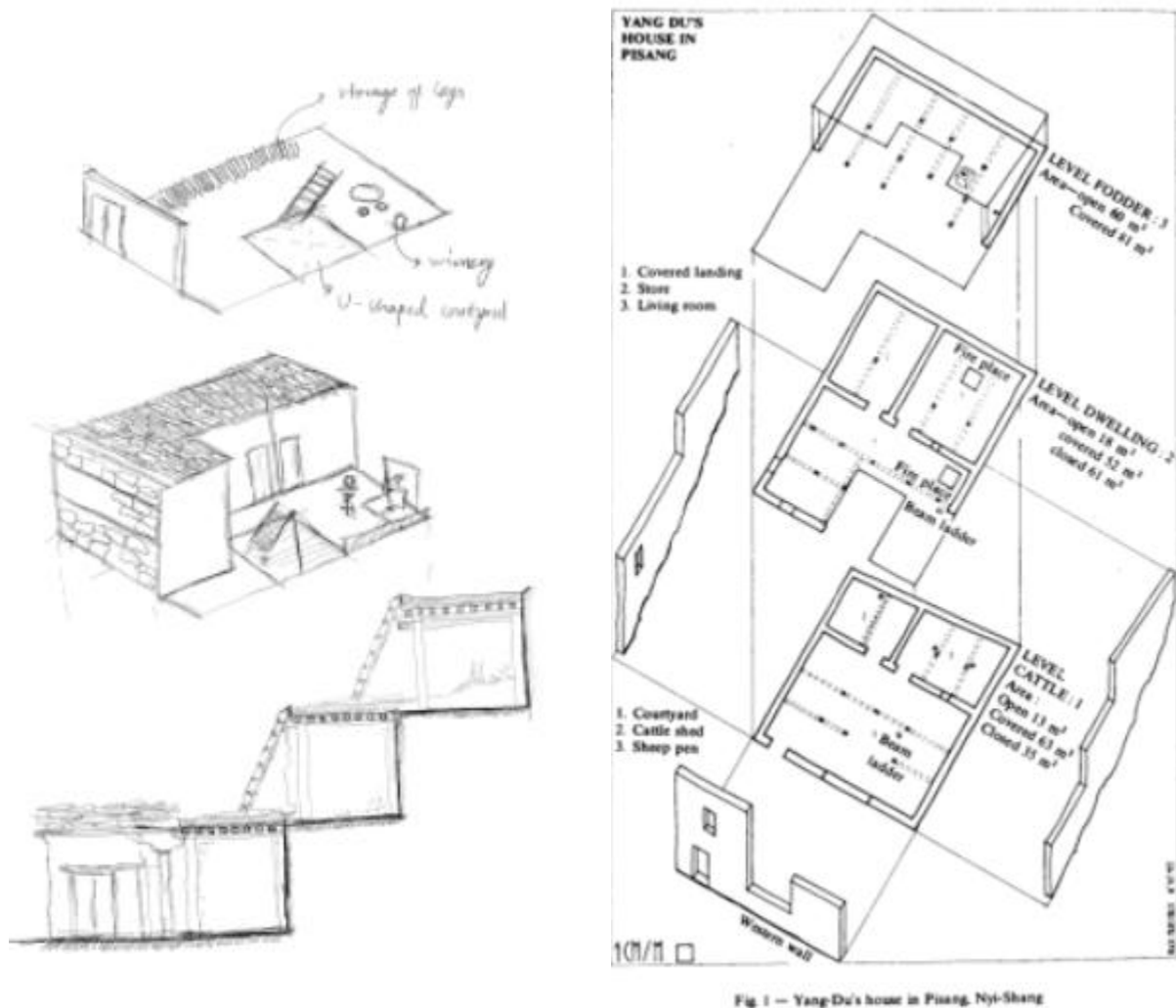


Figure 5-16: Floor Plan and Sectional Elevation of the Local Household in Bhraka.

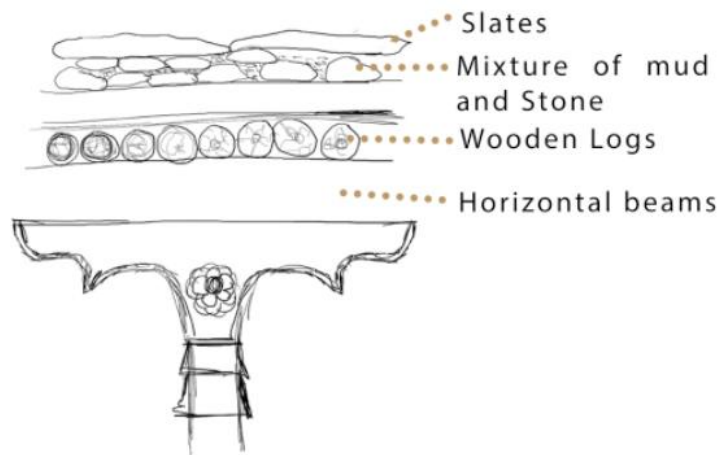


*Figure 5-17: Settlements of Bhraka and Monastery.*

#### 5.6.1.1 Roof

Traditional Bhraka village houses set flat roofs with earthen coverings, appropriate for a trans-Himalayan climate and cultural lifestyle. Made from materials generally found in the locality, the roof structure usually includes a line of wooden beams (sometimes juniper or pine) upon which smaller branches and twigs are laid, ultimately receiving a thick coating of compacted mud mixed with straw. Such roofs provide fine thermal insulation: the compacted mud kept warm through the night while inside stays cool during day time. The flat roofs stand best said to be practical and sustainable because the location of Bhraka in the rain shadow of the Annapurna range causes it to receive very little rainfall. These roofs are a multifunctional shelter: drying crops, keeping firewood, or gathering as outdoor spaces in the warmth of the sun in spring and summer. From the rooftops, the very culture of the region rises-high and is peppered with prayer flags and religious

paraphernalia extolling the Tibetan-Buddhist traditions of the people. The roofing design therefore stands testimony to the close relationship of the people with the forces of nature and their traditions.



*Figure 5-18: Roof Details found in Houses of Bhraka.*

### 5.6.1.2 Wall Details

In short, Manang houses are built with thick stone and mud walls, providing insulation against the cold Himalayan climate. The walls are often reinforced with wood, and exterior surfaces may be plastered or painted with natural materials. Small, high-set windows offer ventilation while maintaining warmth. The walls often feature traditional wooden carvings or stone inlays, reflecting local craftsmanship and cultural symbolism. The construction emphasizes thermal mass, allowing the house to store and release heat, making it well-suited for the region's extreme temperatures.

- **Stone:** Most houses in Manang are built with stones, specifically dry-stone masonry, which is a common technique in the region. The stone walls provide insulation against the harsh cold winters and can be seen in both load-bearing and non-load-bearing walls.
- **Mud:** The stone masonry is often reinforced with mud or clay to fill gaps and provide additional thermal insulation. In some areas, mud bricks or adobe may also be used.
- **Wood:** Wood is incorporated into the walls in the form of beams, columns, and supports for upper floors. The wood is typically sourced from the local forests, and the use of wood in the architecture reflects the availability of timber in the region.

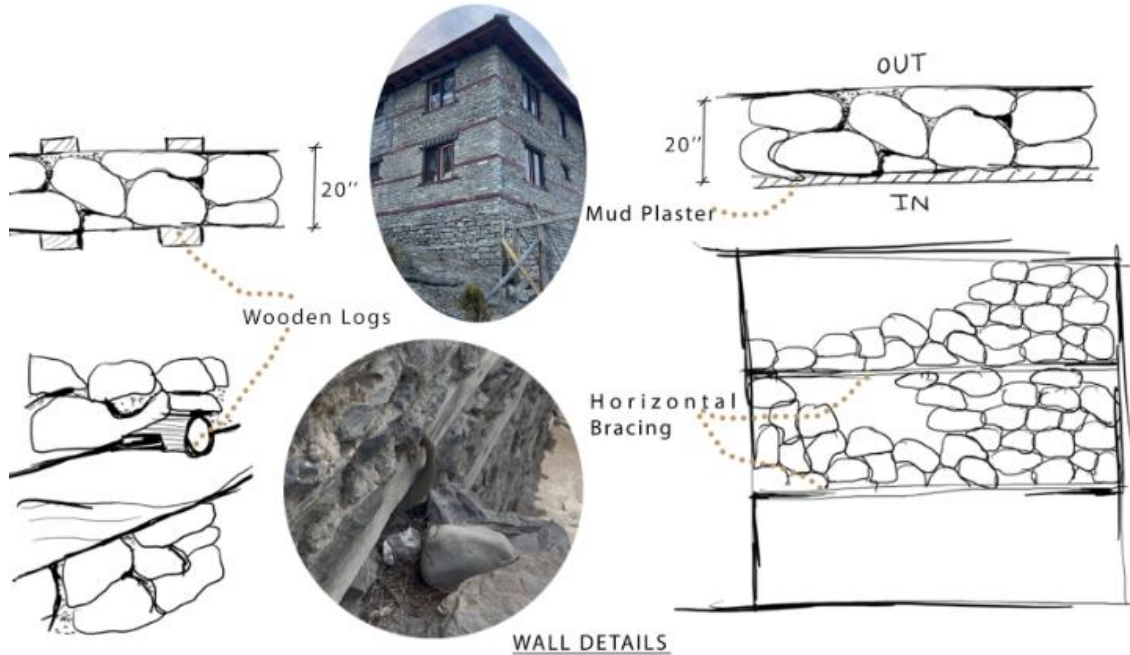


Figure 5-19: Wall Details found in Houses of Bhraka.

### 5.6.1.3 Door and Windows

In Manang, doors are made of durable wood, often with simple designs or intricate carvings, and are typically small for insulation and security. Windows are also small, placed high up for light and ventilation while conserving heat. Both doors and windows have wooden frames, and some feature decorative carvings reflecting local culture.



*Figure 5-20: Doors and Windows of traditional houses in Manang.*

## 5.6.2 BHRAKA MONASTERY

### 5.6.2.1 Introduction



*Figure 5-21: Bhraka Monastery*

Bhraka Monastery, also called Braga Monastery, is one of the oldest and most revered monastic establishments in Manang District of Nepal. Sitting on a cliff opposite the village of Bhraka, this 600-year-old monastery belongs to the Nyingma lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. The weathered-thru style stone walls, very old wall paintings, and collection of sacred books are a testament to the ancient spiritual heritage of this corner of the region. Traditionally, the monastery was not only the abode for worship and meditation for the local lamas but also a cultural center for the Himalayan communities around it. Set along the Annapurna Circuit, the monastery began to receive pilgrims and trekkers alike, thus retaining its spiritual aura whilst also remaining the beacon of Himalayan Buddhist ethos. From ancient times, it has stood as an important edifice for religious education, meditation, and communal ceremonies, while guiding and providing spiritual shelter to the local populace. In these precincts there are fascinating collections of old thangkas (Tibetan Buddhist paintings), manuscripts, and statues-if legend holds true many of Tibetan origin, which bear witness to the rich cultural and spiritual exchanges.

5.6.2.2 Master Planning and Zoning



*Figure 5-22: Masterplan of Bhraka Monastery.*

The planning and zoning of Bhraka Monastery reflect traditional Himalayan monastic principles. The monastery captures the unique and hardy features of the Himalayas as it sits in a rocky outcrop facing east to greet the sun—the symbol of enlightenment. The spaces of the monastery are arranged in a compact, inward-looking configuration. The core and most sacred space of the monastery are the integrated Kyekur or Dukhang, the main assembly hall, where communal prayers, rituals, and meditation are held. Subsequently, the main shrine rooms, which are also integrated and surrounded by the Dukhang, are devoted to personal veneration and offerings to a variety of deities and other holy figures. The main hall also has living rooms for the monks and the lamas, which are exceedingly simple and austere. These rooms foster community and contemplation. The Dukhang and its peripherals are also surrounded by sacred features like chortens and mani walls with amassed inscriptions of the Buddhist maxims which delimit the spiritual borders of the site. The monastery buildings are made of local stone and timber, which ensure the structure is to the local harsh mountain climate. The small windows and thick walls insulate and conserve heat. These spaces also include simple and modest rooms for communal and contemplative living for the monks and lamas. The peripheral spaces have simple storerooms for ritual and cultic objects and supplies. There are flat roofs and terraces for the aforementioned purposes as well as for outdoor rituals and festival gatherings.

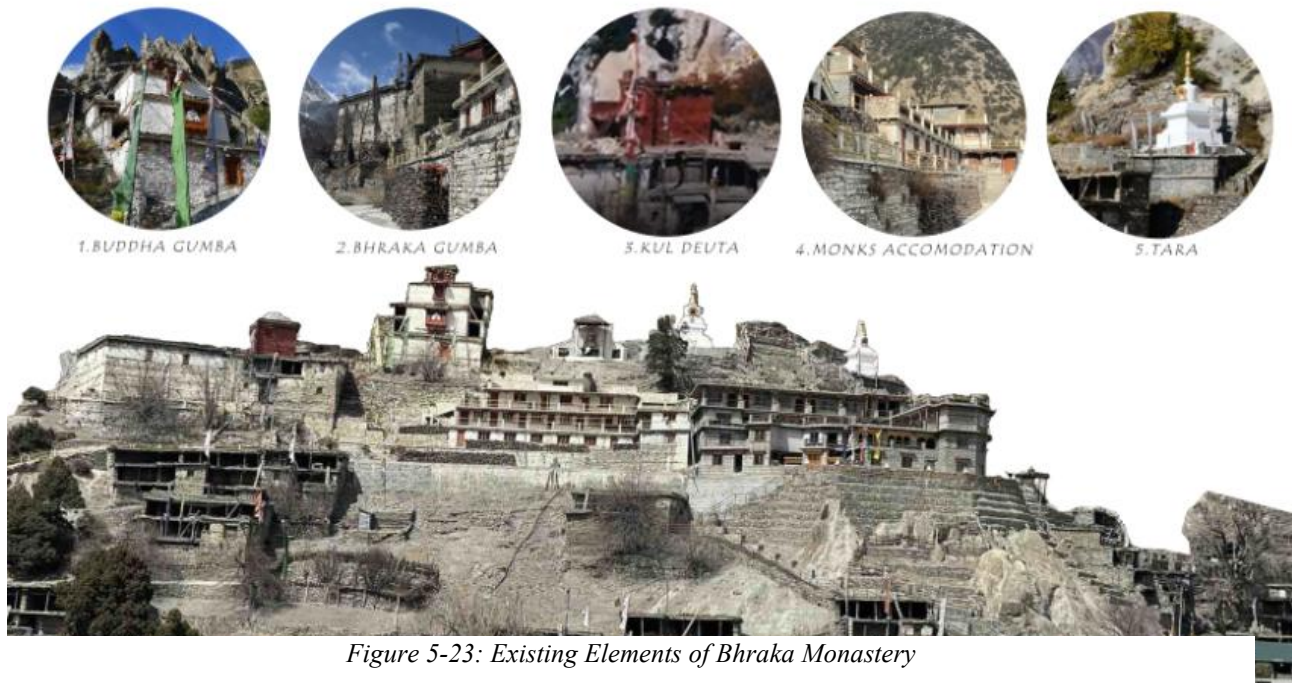


Figure 5-23: Existing Elements of Bhraka Monastery

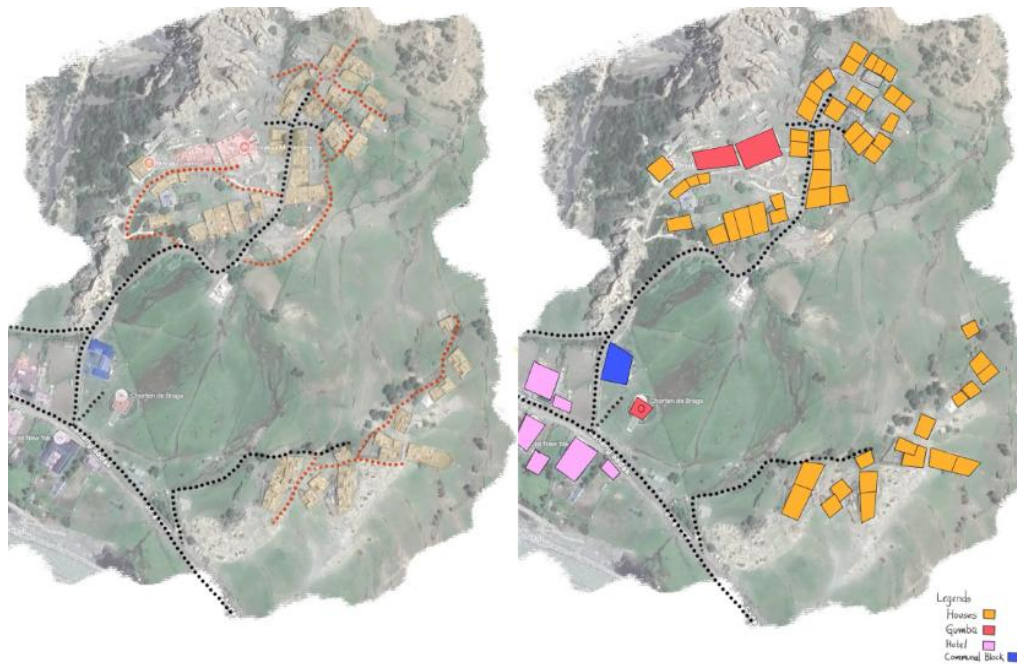


Figure 5-24: Map Showing Various Routes Used in Bhraka.

The roadways in Bhraka are primarily narrow, unpaved footpaths designed for pedestrian and mule movement, as motorized transport is limited in this remote region. These paths connect the village internally and link it to the surrounding settlements along the Annapurna Circuit, one of Nepal's most popular trekking routes.

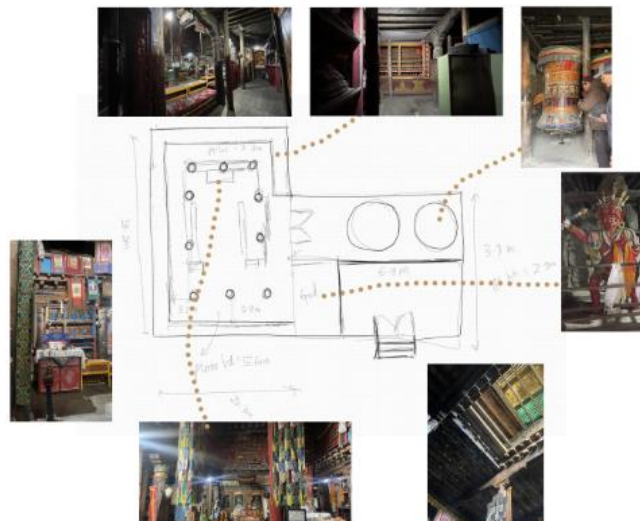
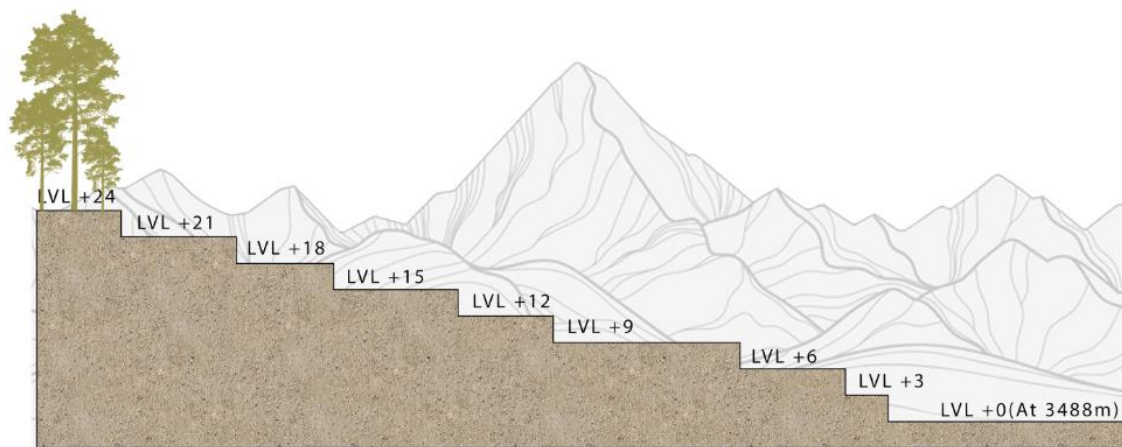


Figure 5-25: Floor Plan of Bhraka Monastery Showing its Interior Spaces.

## 5.7 EXISTING SITE

Bhraka (also known as Braga), located in the Manang district of Nepal, offers a unique and sensitive environmental context for architectural design. Situated at an altitude of approximately 3,500 meters above sea level, the village lies within a cold, arid zone in the rain shadow of the Annapurna range. The region experiences long, harsh winters with snow and short, dry summers, characterized by significant temperature fluctuations between day and night. The terrain is steep and rugged, featuring natural terracing that influences settlement patterns and building placement. Vegetation is sparse due to the altitude and primarily consists of hardy alpine plants, low shrubs, and cultivated crops such as barley and potatoes.

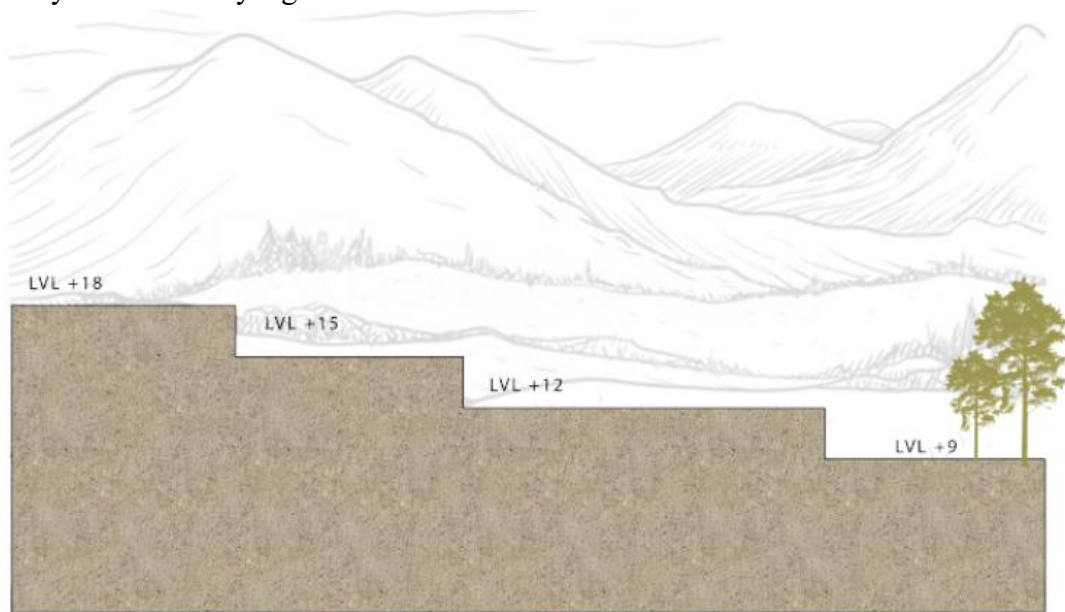
Although there are forested areas with pine and rhododendron at lower altitudes, timber resources are limited and traditionally used sparingly. Construction in Bhraka predominantly uses locally available materials such as stone and mud, with flat roofs designed to accommodate low rainfall and snow load. Water sources primarily come from glacial melt and snow-fed streams, which are often channeled through ancient irrigation systems known as “kulo.” The area is also seismically active and may be prone to landslides or rockfalls due to its steep slopes. Additionally, strong valley winds and intense solar exposure influence design strategies, promoting the use of passive solar techniques for heating. The natural environment of Bhraka is deeply intertwined with its spiritual and cultural identity, especially given its proximity to the historic Braga Monastery, making the site both ecologically and culturally significant.



SECTION AT XX

Bhraka, also known as Braga, is situated in the Manang district of Nepal and presents a unique and sensitive environmental context for architectural design. Located at an altitude of approximately 3,500 meters above sea level, the village lies within a cold, arid zone in the rain shadow of the Annapurna range. This region experiences long, harsh winters with snow, followed by short, dry summers, resulting in significant temperature fluctuations between day and night.

The terrain is steep and rugged, with natural terracing that influences settlement patterns and building placement. Vegetation in this area is sparse due to the high altitude, primarily consisting of hardy alpine plants, low shrubs, and cultivated crops such as barley and potatoes. While forested areas with pine and rhododendron exist at lower altitudes, the availability of timber is limited and is traditionally used with care. Construction materials in Bhraka predominantly include locally sourced stone and mud, with flat roofs designed to accommodate low rainfall and snow load. Water sources primarily come from glacial melt and snow-fed streams, often channeled through ancient irrigation systems known as “kulo.” The area is also seismically active and may be prone to landslides or rockfalls due to its steep slopes. Additionally, strong valley winds and intense solar exposure necessitate design strategies that encourage the use of passive solar techniques for heating. The natural environment of Bhraka is deeply intertwined with its spiritual and cultural identity, particularly due to its proximity to the historic Braga Monastery, making the site both ecologically and culturally significant.



SECTION AT YY

## MONASTIC TRANQUILITY

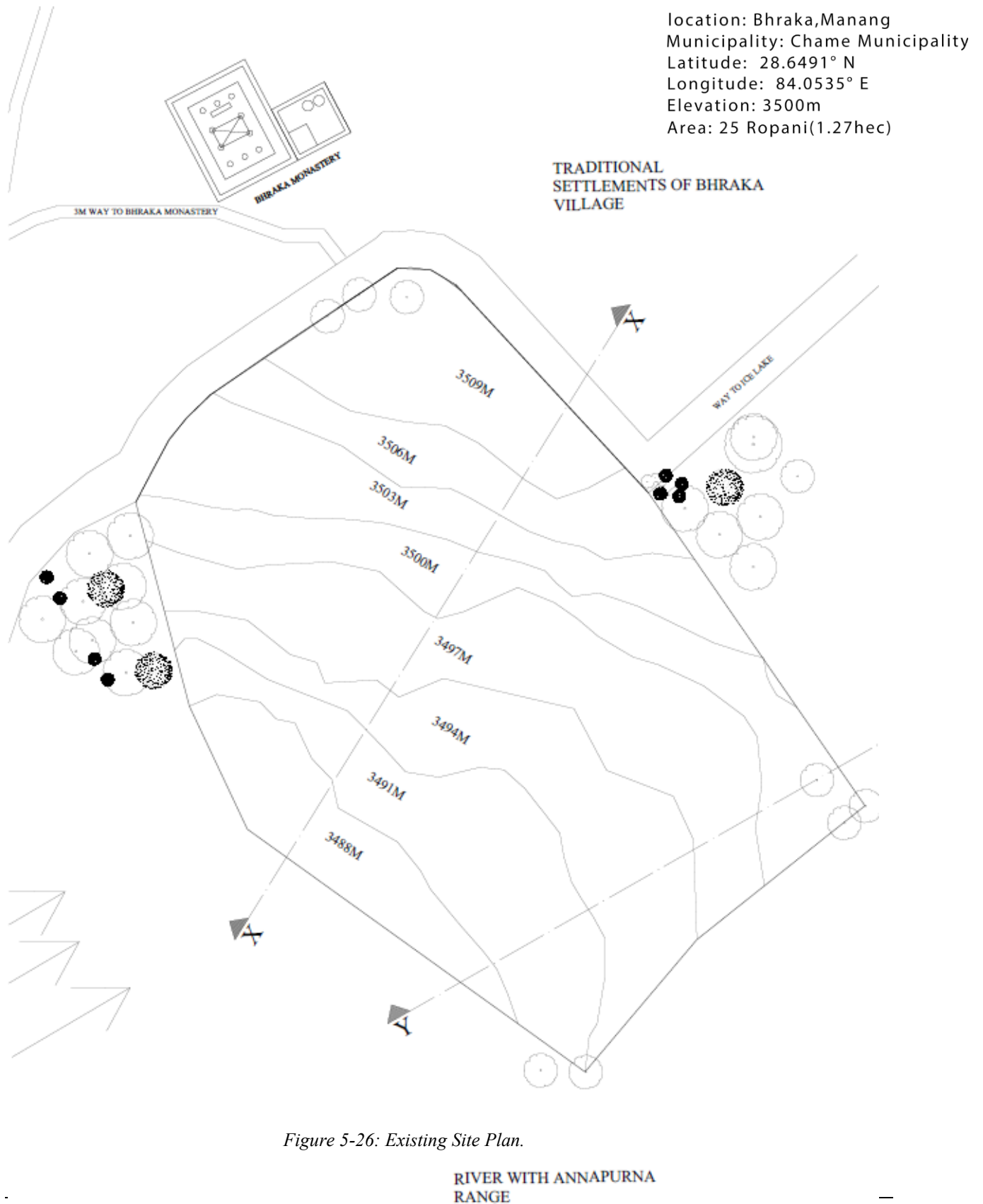


Figure 5-26: Existing Site Plan.

## 5.8 CLIMATIC CONDITION

Nepal's alpine climate is far colder and dryer. The buildings are often attached to each other creating small alleys that are protected from the cold wind and snow storms.

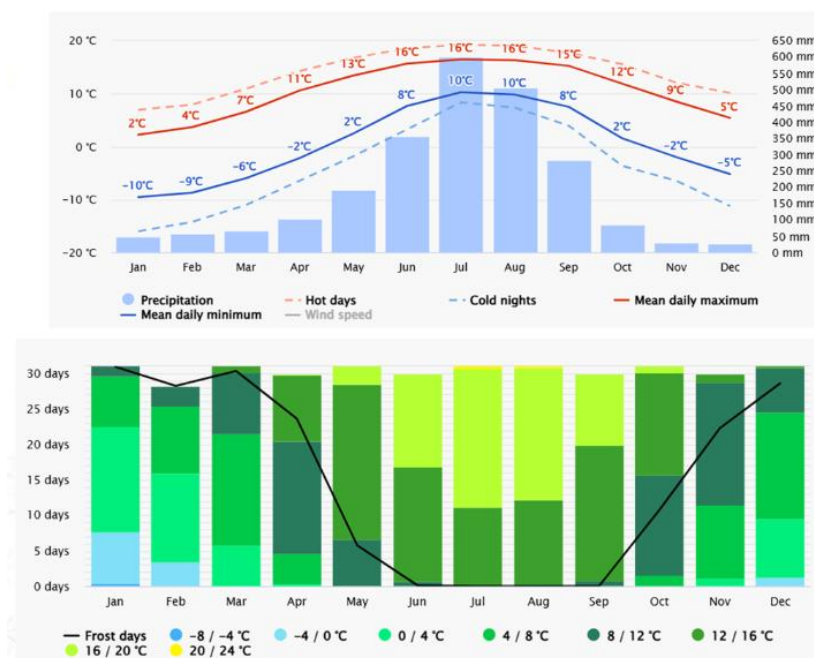


Figure 5-28: Temperature throughout the year in Nepal's Alpine region.

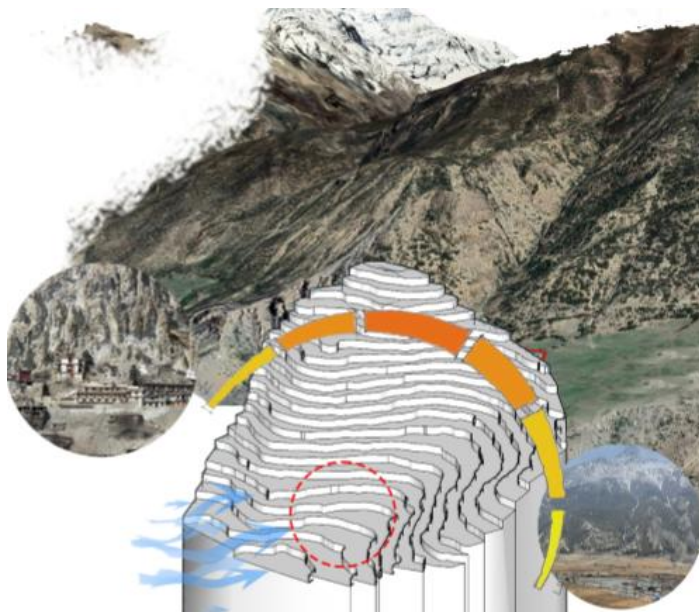


Figure 5-27: Figure Showing Wind Path and Sun Path at the Site.

## 6 PROGRAM FORMULATION

### 1.ARRIVAL AND RECEPTION

Space Type	Area Allocation (%)	Total Area (sq.m.)	Area per Person (sq.m.)	Capacity (Persons)	Description
1. Entrance & Reception	30%	90	3	~30	Welcoming area with a check-in counter, information desk, and seating.
2. Orientation Hall	30%	90	2.5	~36	Small auditorium for introduction sessions, video presentations, and group.
3. Waiting Lounge & Resting Area	20%	60	2	~30	Comfortable seating with traditional decor, offering tea & refreshments.
4. Luggage Storage & Cloakroom	10%	30	1.5	~20	Safe storage for visitors' belongings before check-in.
5. Washrooms & Utility Spaces	10%	30	-	-	Restrooms, drinking water points, and minor utility spaces.
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>300 sq.m.</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>~116 People Max</b>	<b>-</b>

### 2. THANKA SCHOOL AND GALLERY

Space Type	Area Allocation (%)	Area (sq.m.)	Description
1. Painting Studio	40%	160	Large well-lit workspace for students and artists, with individual painting
2. Classroom / Lecture Hall	15%	60	Teaching space for history, philosophy, and techniques of Thangka
3. Exhibition Gallery	15%	60	Space to display completed Thangka paintings for visitors and
4. Storage & Drying Room	10%	40	Safe storage for pigments, canvas, and completed artworks.
5. Administration & Office	10%	40	Office space for school management and artist coordination.
6. Circulation & Utility Areas	10%	40	Includes corridors, washrooms, and resting areas for artists.
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>400 sq.m.</b>	<b>-</b>

### 3.SPA AND SAUNA

Space Type	Total Area (sq.m.)	Description
Changing Rooms & Lockers	50	Secure space for guests to change and store belongings.
Storage for Oils, Herbs & Equipment	40	Safe storage for wellness products and tools.
Staff & Therapist Rooms	60	Office space and resting area for spa professionals.
Circulation & Pathways	70	Connecting different wellness zones with smooth transitions.
<b>Total</b>	<b>220 sq.m.</b>	<b>-</b>

### 4.ACCOMODATIONS

Room Type	Number of Rooms	Area per Room (sq.m.)	Attached Toilet (sq.m.)	Circulation (sq.m.)	Total Area (sq.m.)	Description
1. Single Room	10	15	5	20	200	Basic rooms with bed, seating, and attached bathroom. Ideal for solo travelers.
2. Duplex Room	5	30	10	30	200	Two-level rooms with bedroom upstairs, living area below, and attached bathroom.
3. Triplex Room	3	45	15	30	180	Two-level suites with living, sleeping, meditation areas, and attached bathroom.
4. Service Spaces (Corridors, Toilets, etc.)	-	-	-	120	120	Includes common toilets, corridors, housekeeping, and maintenance facilities.
<b>Total</b>	<b>18 Rooms</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>700 sq.m.</b>	<b>-</b>

## 5.MEDITATION AREA

Space Type	Total Area (sq.m.)	Area per Person (sq.m.)	Capacity (Persons)	Description
Main Meditation Hall	200	3	~66	Large hall for guided group meditations, ceremonies, and spiritual
Singing Bowl Meditation Zone	50	3	~16	A dedicated space for sound healing and deep relaxation.
Walking Meditation Path	75	4	~18	Open-air or enclosed path designed for mindful walking meditation.
<b>Total</b>	<b>325 sq.m.</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>~100 People Max</b>	<b>-</b>

## 6.KITCHEN AND DINNING

Space Type	Total Area (sq.m.)	Area per Person (sq.m.)	Capacity (Persons)	Description
Main Dining Hall	250	2.5	~100	Large communal dining area with wooden seating, warm lighting, and traditional decor.
Outdoor Dining Terrace	100	3	~33	Open-air seating with mountain views for a tranquil dining experience.
Private Dining Rooms (2x)	50	5	~10	Small, enclosed spaces for private meals and discussions.
Tea & Herbal Drink Lounge	80	2	~40	Space for herbal tea, meditation drinks, and light
<b>Total</b>	<b>480 sq.m.</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>~183 People Max</b>	<b>-</b>

Space Type	Total Area (sq.m.)	Area per Person (sq.m.)	Capacity (Persons)	Description
Main Cooking Area	150	-	-	Fully equipped kitchen with traditional and modern cooking techniques.
Cold Storage & Pantry	80	-	-	Storage for fresh ingredients, herbs, and dry goods.
Food Preparation Zone	100	-	-	Space for meal prepping, cutting, and arranging
Baking & Special Diet Kitchen	50	-	-	Dedicated area for making bread, gluten-free, and special meals.
Dishwashing & Cleaning Zone	70	-	-	Equipped with sinks, dishwashers, and waste management systems.
<b>Total</b>	<b>450 sq.m.</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

## 7 DESIGN CONCEPT

### 7.1 CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

“Sacred geometry and mandala based planning : spatial and sonic harmony rooted in himalayan spirituality”

A mandala reflects the structure of the cosmos — from the outer realms to the innermost sacred core. It often includes:

- Cardinal directions: symbolizing harmony with Earth and sky,
- Concentric geometry: balance, unity, proportion,
- A central point (Bindu): the source, origin, or divine center.

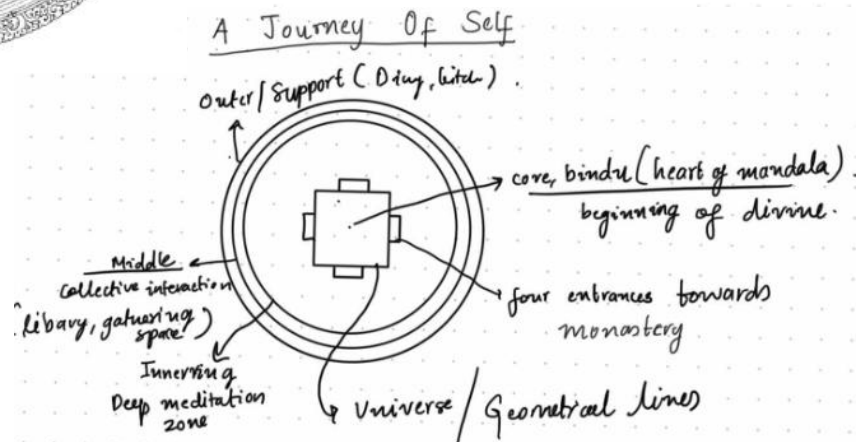
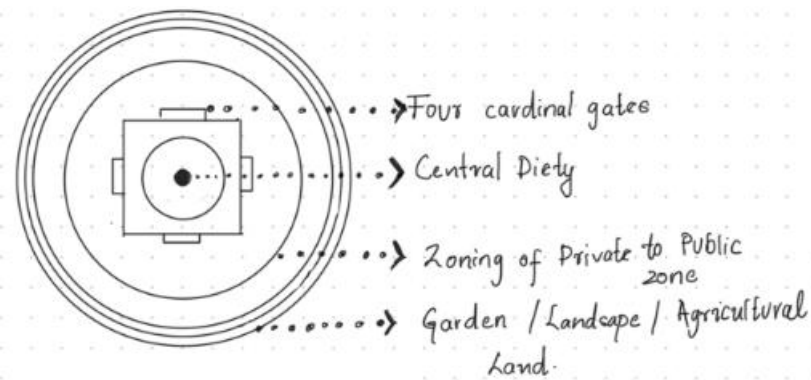
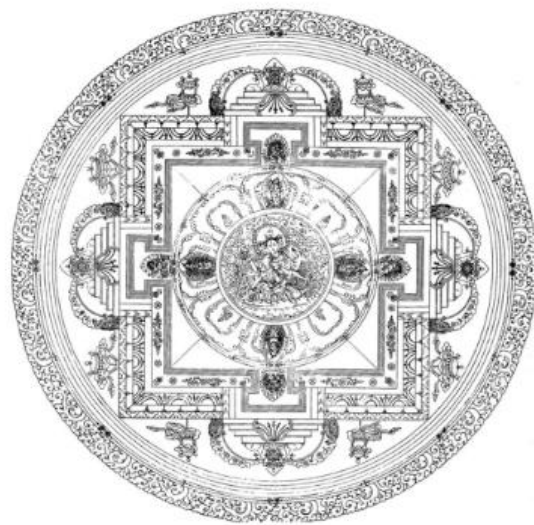
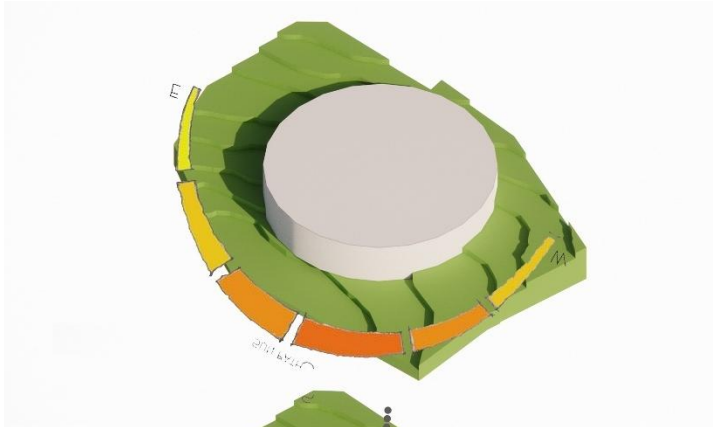
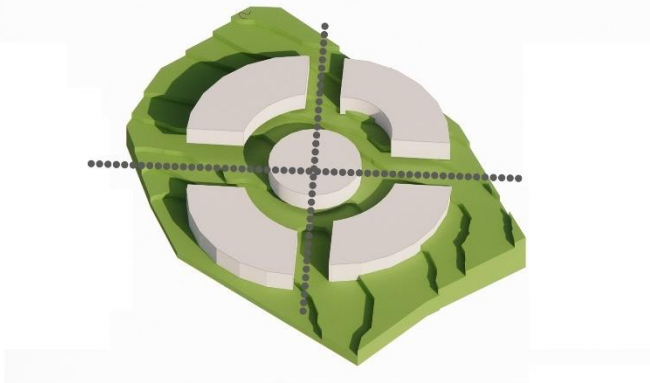


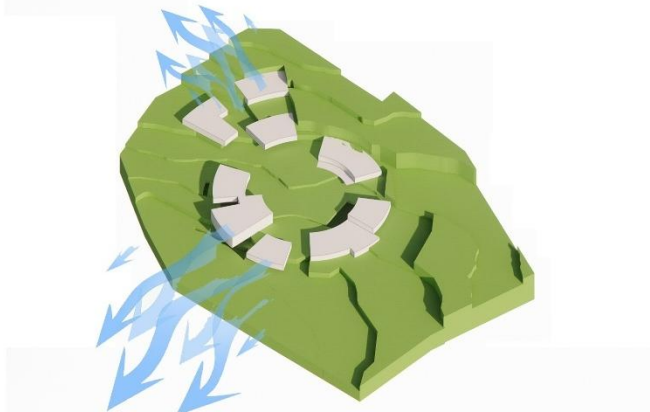
Figure 7-1 Mandala



Building facing towards south for more sunlight into the building



Division into four cardinal direction depicting like in the mandala with four cardinal directions opening also centre core space



Views of the mountain like annapurna i,ii and iii and the various views of its own traditional settlement



Assesbility and enclosing the whole space through one core centre structure

Rooted in Tibetan Buddhism, the mandala symbolizes the universe, the journey toward enlightenment, and the balance of cosmic elements. Applying this concept to the layout of the meditation retreat allows for a spatial narrative that mirrors the meditative path from the outer world of distractions to the inner sanctum of stillness. The retreat can be organized concentrically, with communal and transitional spaces forming the outer ring, contemplative and learning areas in the middle, and a sacred central space reserved for deep meditation or spiritual practice. This inward progression not only reflects the structure of traditional mandalas but also supports a meaningful journey for practitioners. By drawing from the elemental symbolism of the mandala earth, water, fire, air, and space architectural materials and spatial qualities can be thoughtfully chosen to enhance sensory awareness and tranquility. Furthermore, integrating ritual movement through pathways of circumambulation and axial alignment can foster a spiritual rhythm within the retreat. In this way, the mandala becomes more than a visual motif; it becomes the very blueprint of **monastic serenity**, merging Himalayan spirituality, local cultural heritage, and architectural intention into one cohesive, meditative experience.

Integrating the **singing bowl** as a meditative element in *Monastic Tranquility* adds a profound sensory and spiritual layer to the architectural experience, resonating with both the physical and metaphysical aspects of Buddhist practice. Singing bowls traditionally made of a blend of seven metals have been used for centuries in Tibetan Buddhism as instruments of healing, meditation, and ritual. Their deep, harmonic tones are believed to aid in centering the mind, balancing energy, and invoking a state of inner peace. The sound produced by the singing bowl is not just an auditory experience but a **vibrational presence**, aligning closely with Buddhist concepts of impermanence, mindfulness, and the interconnectedness of all beings. The **singing bowl** and the **chakra system** share a deep and interconnected relationship rooted in vibrational healing, energy alignment, and spiritual awareness. While singing bowls are prominently used in Tibetan Buddhism, and chakras are primarily a concept from Hindu yogic philosophy, their synergy is widely embraced in holistic and meditative practices, especially in the context of healing and inner balance.

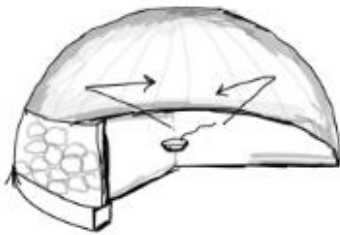
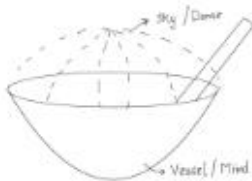


Figure 7-3 Singing bowl

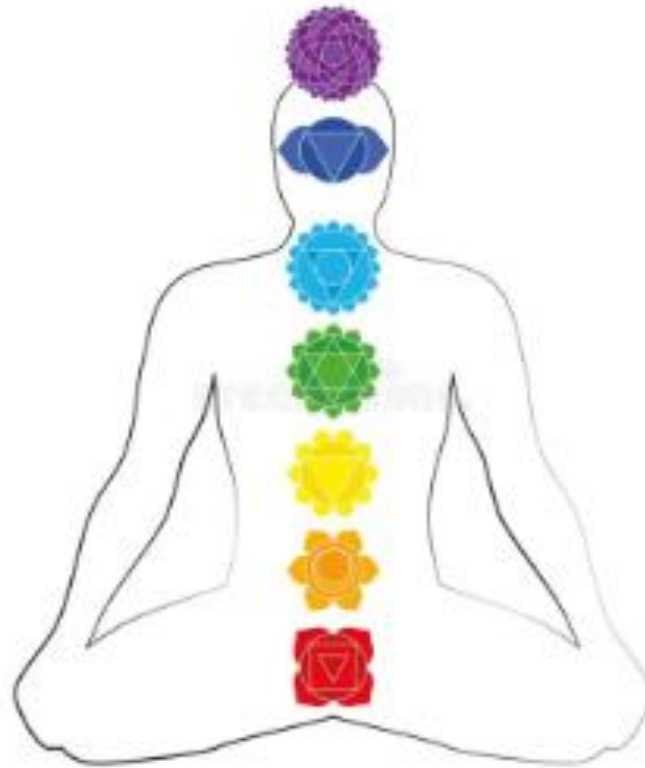


Figure 7-2 Seven chakra in human body

## 7.2 ZONING

The public zone is positioned as the outer layer of the retreat, accommodating areas designed for communal interaction, orientation, and learning. This includes the entrance and reception area, Muesum, multipurpose hall, dining space, and outdoor gathering courtyards. These spaces are intentionally open, welcoming, and extroverted, allowing for social engagement, cultural exchange, and shared rituals that form the foundation of collective spiritual experience. As one moves inward, the architecture gradually transitions into the private zone, a sanctuary of silence and introspection. This inner ring houses the meditation hall, individual retreat cells or hermitages, healing spaces for sound therapy, and quiet gardens each crafted to support solitude, mindfulness,

and deep inner work. These private areas are more enclosed and serene, with subtle architectural cues such as narrow pathways, softened lighting, and natural materials guiding practitioners toward stillness. Between these two realms lie transitional spaces, such as cloisters, shaded walkways, or contemplative courtyards, which act as thresholds helping visitors gradually detach from external distractions and enter a state of meditative presence.

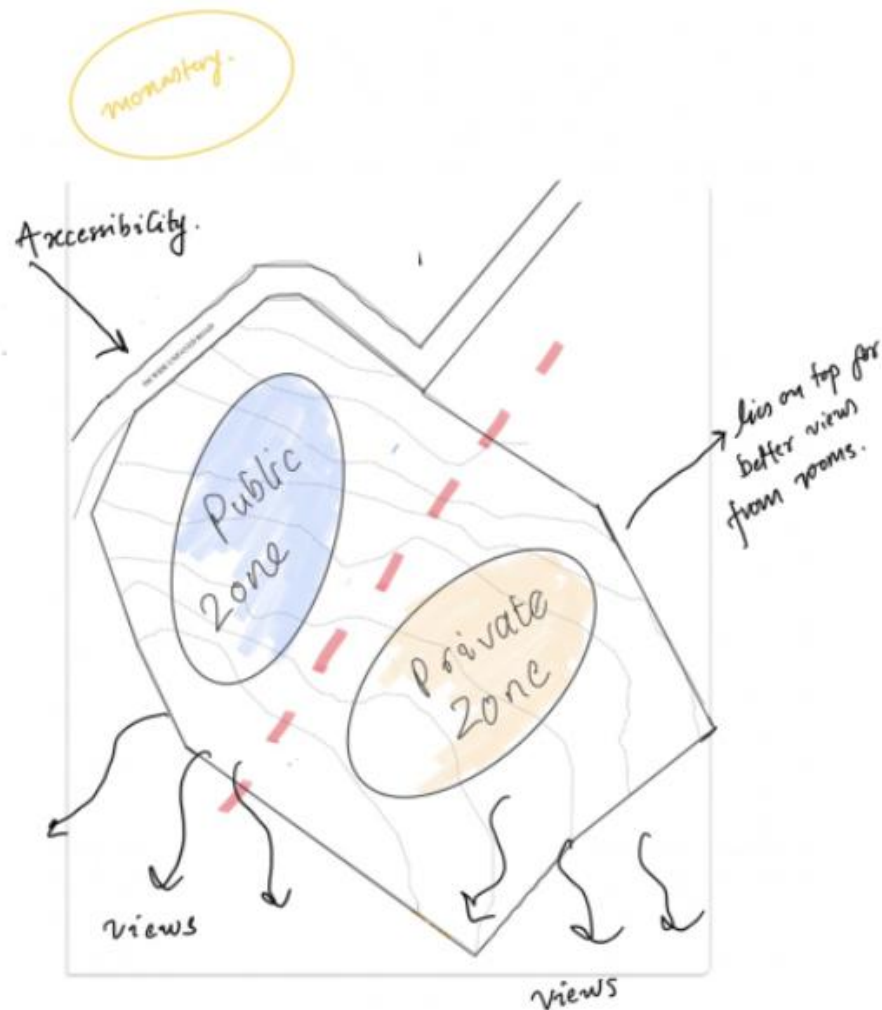
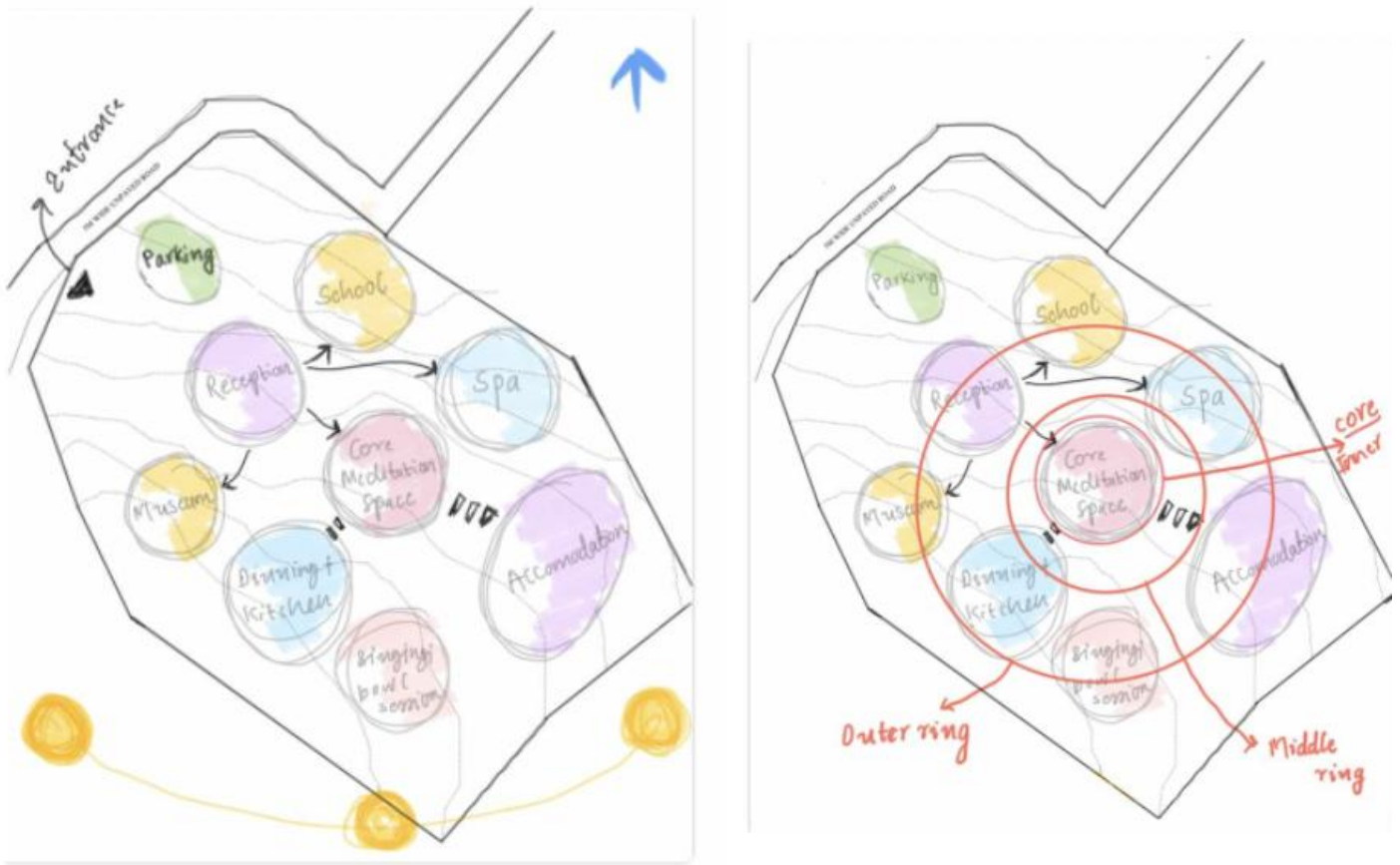
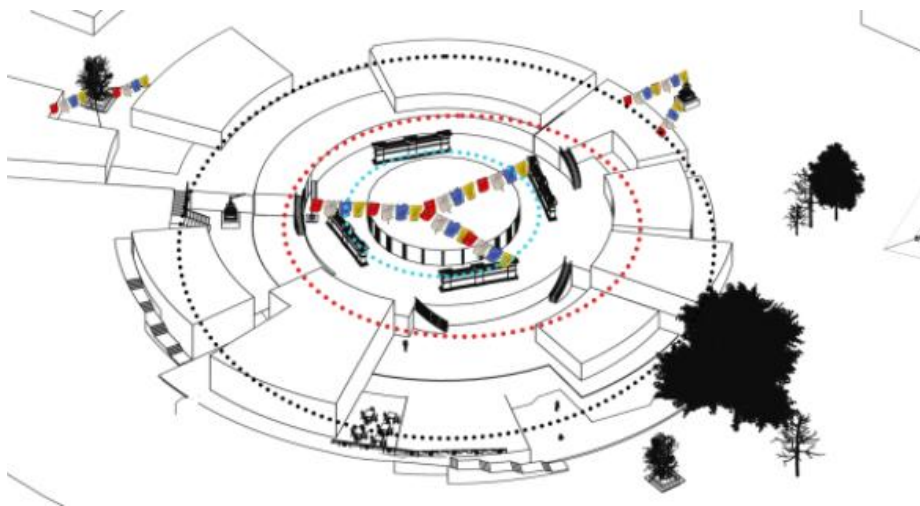


Figure 7-4 Zoning diagram of private and public spaces



This zoning strategy, inspired by the concentric logic of the mandala, ensures that the retreat not only functions efficiently but also resonates symbolically with the inner journey of transformation central to Buddhist practice.



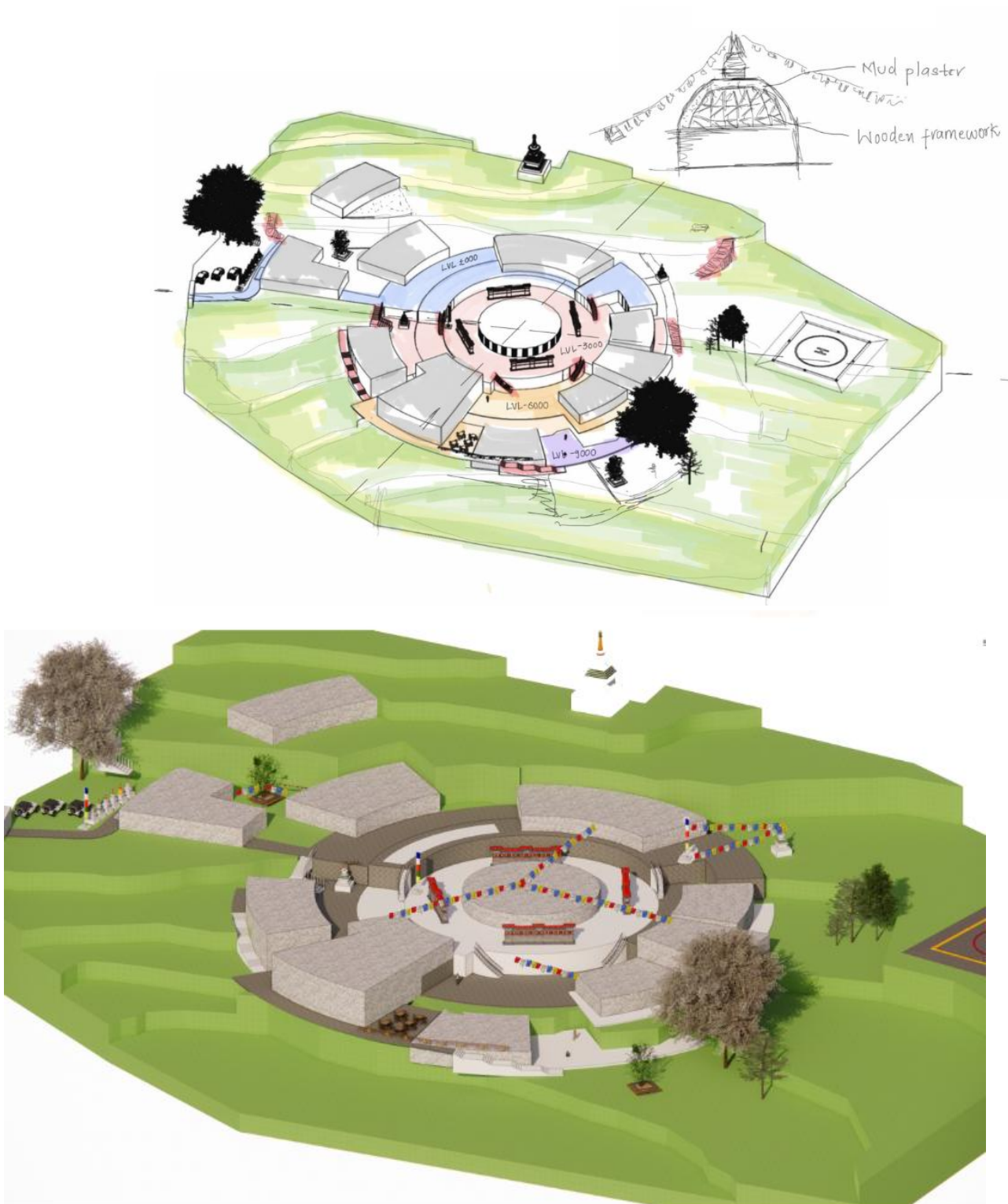
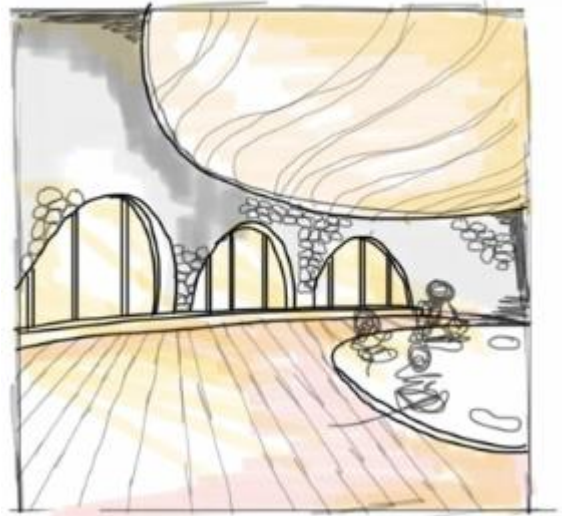


Figure 7-5 3D Conceptual block view



*Figure 7-7 Sunspaces for more sunlight*



*Figure 7-6 Core Meditation block with seating areas*



*Figure 7-8 Alleys for the students to play and protect from harsh winds*



*Figure 7-9 Prayer wheels around the meditation block*

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