



A Multi-Facility Tourist and Spiritual Recreation Centre Promoting Buddhism in Assam

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Abstract: Sustainable tourism is the concept of visiting a place as a tourist and trying to make only a positive impact on the environment, society and economy. A key aspect is respect for the people who call the location home, the culture and customs of the area, and the socio-economic system. Assam is one of the North Eastern states of India, which lies in the southern side of the Great Himalayas. The diversity of religious beliefs is very well seen in Assam with many Hindu temples, Masjids and Gurudwara. Buddhism also prevails in the heart of Assam and there are many temples that mark the presence of this religion. The site is situated at Amingaon, a town across the Brahmaputra River in the greater area of Guwahati, capital of Assam. The aim is to design a centre that provides learning facilities for the local residents, a museum and canteen that caters the tourist. The objective is to understand and implement the elements of Buddhist architecture style in the design. A geometrical concept was selected to represent the context of the design.

1 Introduction

Tourism is an important sector of every nation's economy. It not only boosts the economy but also helps in conserving the nation's cultural heritage. Many communities or practices long lost under the quest for urbanization are brought to the surface and presented in a new interesting form. Thus, tourism also helps in promoting the cultural wealth of the country. Sustainable tourism is the concept of visiting a place as a tourist and trying to make only a positive impact on the environment, society and economy. A key aspect is respect for the people who call the location home, the culture and customs of the area, and the socio-economic system. It focuses on respect for an area's cultures and customs.

Tourism in Assam is dominated by the nature and pilgrimage sites. Buddhism prevails in the heart of Assam and there are many temples that mark the presence of this religion. There are many small Buddhist monasteries around Assam that are not known to the crowd properly yet but have great potential and scope for development and tourist attraction.

2 Background

Most traces of the great Mahayana Buddhism are now erased from modern Assam - what remains are just some relics, legends and historical analyses. In modern Assam, Buddhism survived in its Theravada form, mainly due to the presence of communities like the Tai (Phake, Alton, Khamyang and Turunng), Singphos, Khamti, Chakmas and the Chittagong Baruas.

The Assam Buddha Vihara is situated at Amingaon, a town across the Brahmaputra River in the greater area of Guwahati, capital of Assam. It is located by the side of a national highway and surrounded by bountiful greenery and can be recognized by a prominent Buddha statue rising up through the trees high on a hill.

The site requires facilities that caters the tourists and serves the local residents. It lacks a centre where people can experience and learn the rich culture of Buddhism, its history and influence.

2.1 Scope of the project: The scope of the project includes the following:
To promote Buddhist tourism.

1. Designing a place of learning for the local residents and a provision to experience the culture and history of Buddhism for the tourist.
2. The study would also include the understanding and implementation of the elements of Buddhist architecture and its interpretation in modern context.

2.2 Location of the site: The site, the Assam Buddha Vihara, is situated at Amingaon, a town across the Brahmaputra River in the greater area of Guwahati city. It is located by the side of a national highway and surrounded by bountiful greenery and can be recognized and viewed because of a prominent Buddha statue rising up through the trees high on a hill. (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2)

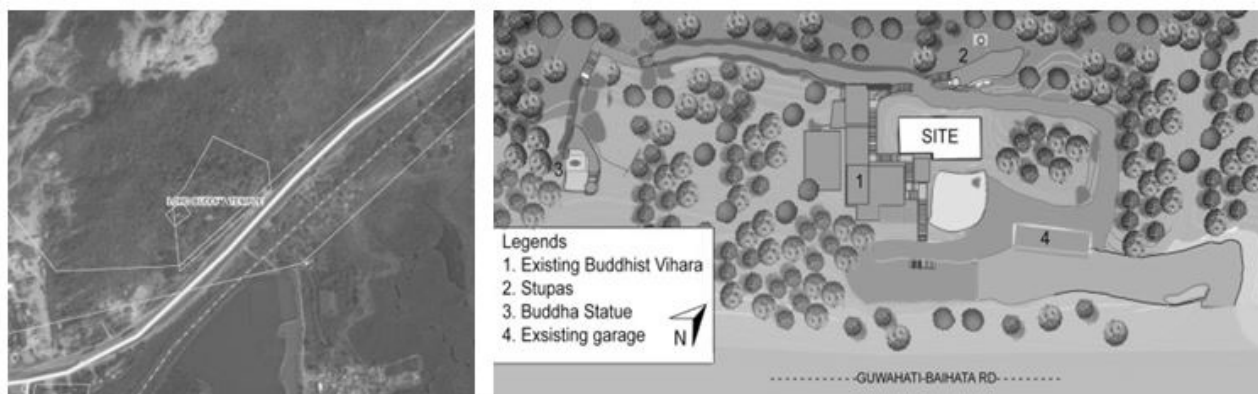


Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 The Assam Buddha Vihara located in Amingaon, Assam and the site.

3 Aim and Objectives

3.1 Aim: To complement the tourist and local resident's facility of Amingaon's Buddha Vihara by analyzing the need and demand of such a facility. And accordingly design a multi-facility centre on the proposed site that caters to the demand of the clients.

3.2 Objectives

To study and implement the architectural requirements for a building that provides multiple facilities- learning centre, museum and a canteen.

1. To create a centre where people can experience and learn the rich culture of Buddhism.



2. To understand and implement the elements of traditional Buddhist architecture style in the building design.
3. To design a facility that caters to tourist as well as local residents

4 Design

4.1 Concept

Function without interruption: The building is designed such that the different floors have their own set of functions and the floors are connected such that they don't interfere in each other's flow.

1. Multiple circulations around the spaces: Two different ways to each floor are provided so that the flow of people going in and out is different and not obstructed by each other.
2. Transparency: The provision of lots of glass windows lets the visitors to experience both the exhibition spaces and enjoy the views outside. It also creates a unity among the visitors whether they are inside or outside.

4.2 Concept Development

- a. Zoning the floors to different functions: learning centre, museum and canteen. (Fig. 2)
- b. The ground floor is connected to the second floor by two ways on opposite sides such that the flow of people going in and out is different and don't obstruct each other. (Fig. 3)
- c. The entrance to the building is provided from two sides: the ground floor and the third floor for easier access easily from different levels of the site. (Fig. 4)
- d. The provision of windows around the building such that the visitors can enjoy the view and as well as feel openness whilst inside the building.(Fig. 5)

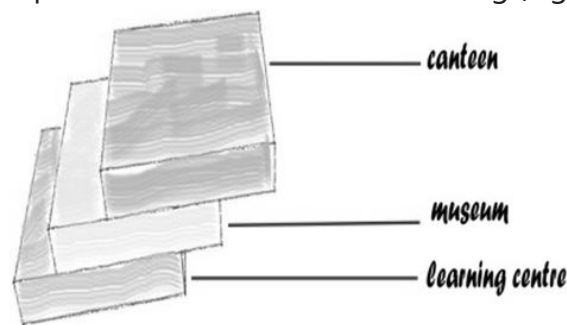


Fig. 2 Zoning the floors

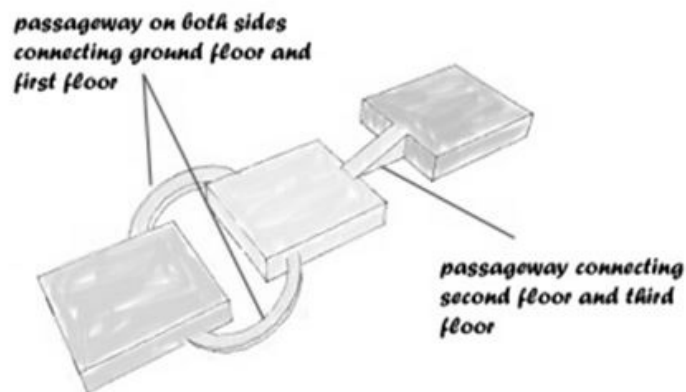


Fig. 3 Joining the floors

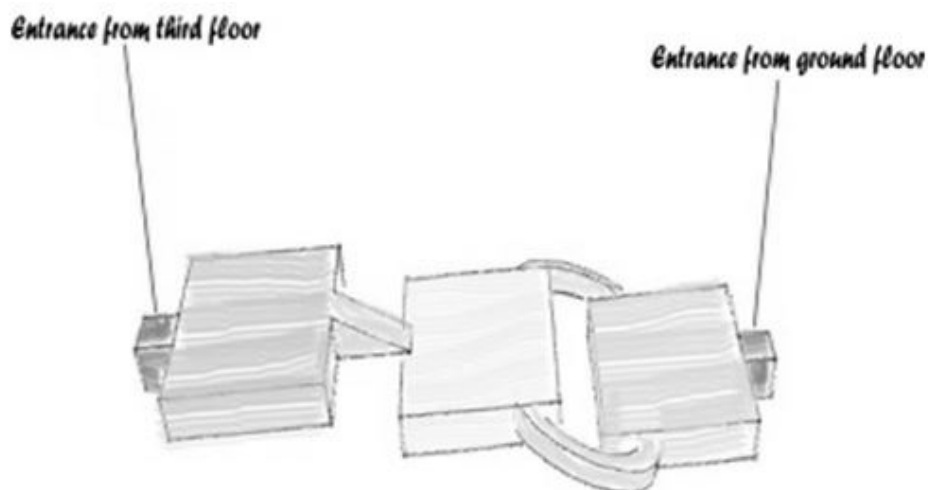


Fig. 4 Provision of two entrances

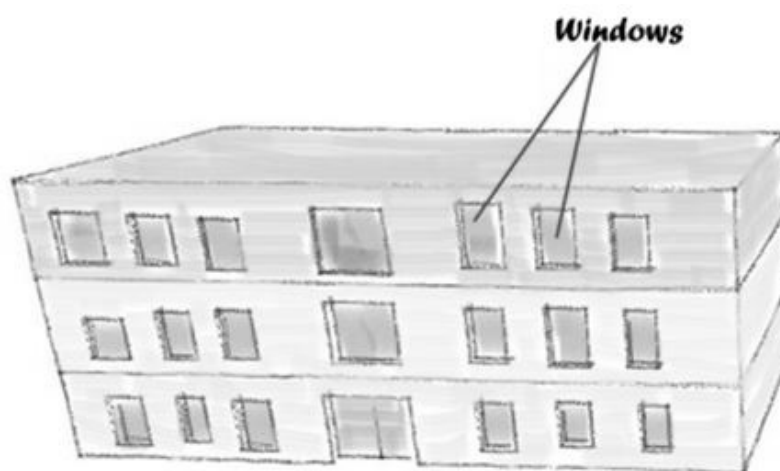


Fig. 5 Provision of windows

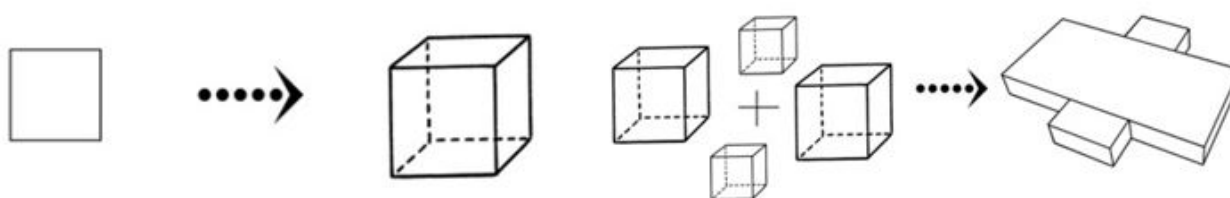


Fig. 6 Square

Fig. 7 Final Form

4.3 Form Formation

- a. The square in Buddhist Architecture is considered as the purest form of geometry for monumental edifices. The square in 3-dimension will form the cube. (Fig. 6)
- b. The combination of two big cubes and two small cubes gives us a so-phisticated yet a symmetrical form. (Fig. 7)

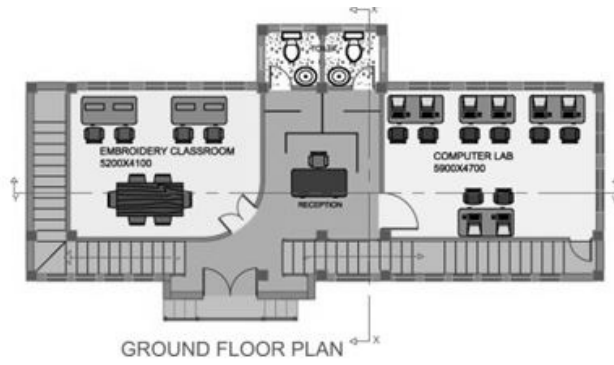


Fig. 8 Ground Floor Plan

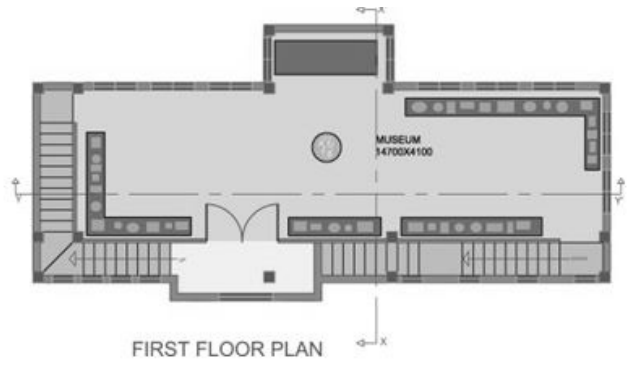


Fig. 9 First Floor Plan



Fig. 10 Second Floor Plan



Fig. 11 Front Elevation



Fig. 12 Right Side Elevation



Fig. 13 Left Side Elevation



BACK ELEVATION
Fig. 14 Back Elevation



SECTION XX'
Fig. 15 Section XX'



SECTION YY'
Fig. 17 Section YY'



Fig. 18 View of the Bridge

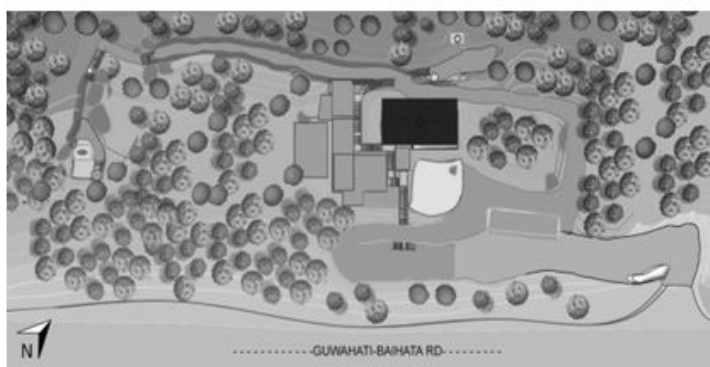


Fig.19 Roof Plan and Site Plan



Fig.20 Second Floor Showing Bridge

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