Bait ur Rouf Mosque
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Architect: Marina Tabassum Architects
Client: Sufia Khatun

Project description

An adherence to the essential – both in the definition of the space and the means of construction – was crucial in formulating the design of Bait ur Rouf Mosque. With land donated by her grandmother and modest funds raised by the local community, the architect has created an elemental place for meditation and prayer.

The irregularly shaped site is covered by a high plinth, which not only protects against flooding but provides a gathering place set apart from the crowded street below. On top of the plinth sits the mosque, a perfect square, 23m x 23m and 7.6m high. Within this square is a cylinder, displaced to the northwest corner of the perimeter wall to create additional depth for the colonnade and the ablution area on the south- and east-facing sides respectively. And within this cylinder is in turn a smaller square, 16.75m x 16.75m and 10.6m high – that is, 3m taller than the perimeter wall. Rotated within the cylinder to orientate itself with the qibla, this pavilion contains the prayer hall, which is separated from the rest of the building by open-to-sky lightwells.

There are two structural systems in place – the load-bearing brick walls that define the outer perimeter and the smaller spaces, and the reinforced-concrete frame that spans the column-free prayer hall. The brick walls exploit the depth between the outer square and the inner cylinder, allowing...
for buttressing in the interstitial space. This in turn makes it possible for panels between the load-bearing structure to have a jali of brick, leaving out alternate bricks and rotating them. In the prayer hall itself a simple vertical gap in the brick denotes the direction of the qibla, but the recess is splayed so that worshippers are not distracted by sight lines onto the busy street. What they see instead is sunlight bouncing off the wall behind. Awash with light, open to the elements, the mosque ‘breathes’. 

**Jury citation**

“In a transitional area caught between urban hyper-density and rural proximity, the terracotta mosque is an exquisitely proportioned building that is both elegant and eternal. Funded primarily by community donors, the mosque design challenges the status quo and understands that a space for prayer should elevate the spirit. The mosque does so through the creation of an interior space that is rich with light and shadow, but at the same time possesses a robust simplicity that allows for deep reflection and contemplation in prayer.

“The mosque appears to be inspired by multiple sources – one essentially traditional reference is to the heritage of the formal terracotta brick structures of the Bengal Sultanate of the fifteenth century; another inspiration is the Capitol complex built by Louis Kahn in Dhaka.

“The quality of construction frequently raises the quality of life. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Bait ur Rouf Mosque, which contains an intricate geometric layering of space – a square prayer chamber contained within cylindrical walls, which are in turn enclosed by a square terracotta brick structure that serves as the austere public face of the building. Within the prayer chamber, the architect has created a delicate interplay of bare walls textured in red brick and pierced by shafts of light that create an abstract, almost primeval symbolism when viewed in conjunction with the spots of light that punctuate the surface of the bare floors at different moments of the day. This abstract symbolism is undiluted by conventional forms of mosque architecture. Gone are the dome and the ever-prevalent minarets, the decorative panels of designed relief and calligraphy. In their place stand intricately structured brick walls that imbue the structure with a unique aura of spirituality.”

http://www.akdn.org/architecture
Project data

Clients
Sufia Khatun, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Marina Tabassum, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Bait ur Rouf Mosque Committee, Dhaka, Bangladesh:
• Mohammad Abdul Hai, head and treasurer
• Zulfiqer Ali Hyder, member
• Jamal Abdul Naser, member

Architect
Marina Tabassum Architects, Dhaka, Bangladesh:
• Marina Tabassum, principal
• Asaduzzaman Chowdhury, Tomal, Chowdhury, Hysum Mohammad Neville, Nazmus Saquib Chowdhury, Sabrina Aftab, Kaniz Saima Tuly, Shawly Samira, Sadia Afroze, Hassan Mohammad Rakib, Rahfatun Nisa Nova, project team

Structural engineer
Daud Khalid Sarwar, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Electrical engineer
Mohammad Rafiqul Islam, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Site engineer
Bazlur Rahman, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Brick and concrete work
Shariful Islam, brick mason, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Terrazzo, tile and floor
Mohammad Esharul, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Project data

Site area 755 m²

Ground floor area 700 m²

Cost 150,000 USD

Commission April 2005

Design June 2005 – August 2006

Construction September 2007 – July 2012

Occupancy September 2012
Marina Tabassum

Marina Tabassum graduated from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) in 1995. The same year, with Kashef Mahboob Chowdhury, she founded URBANA, an architecture practice based in Dhaka. In 1997, her second year into practice, the firm won a prestigious national competition to design the Independence Monument of Bangladesh and the Liberation War Museum.

In 2005, Tabassum ended her ten-year partnership in URBANA to establish MTA (Marina Tabassum Architects). MTA began its journey in the quest to establish a language of architecture that is contemporary to the world yet rooted to the place. The practice is consciously kept and retained at an optimum size, and projects undertaken are carefully chosen and are limited by number per year.

Marina Tabassum is the academic director of the Bengal Institute for Architecture, Landscapes and Settlements. She has conducted design studios in BRAC University since 2005. She taught an Advanced Design Studio as visiting professor at the University of Texas.

Tabassum has lectured and presented her works and ideas on architecture at various prestigious international architectural events. She has curated exhibitions and directed architecture symposia in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Her project the Pavilion Apartment in Dhaka was shortlisted for an Aga Khan Award in 2004. Tabassum received an Ananya Shirshwa Dash award which recognised the top ten women of Bangladesh in 2004.

Website

http://mtarchitekts.com/
Friendship Centre
Gaibandha, Bangladesh

Architect: Kashef Mahboob Chowdhury/URBANA
Client: Friendship NGO

Project description

The centre is a training facility for the NGO Friendship, which works with communities living in the rural flatlands of northern Bangladesh. In this region permanent buildings are conventionally raised 2.4m off the ground, to mitigate flooding, but the budget did not allow that here. Instead, an earthen embankment was built around the site, with stairs leading down into the building from open ends. Adopting the vocabulary of a walled town, the programme is organised around a series of pavilions that look inwards onto courtyards and reflecting pools. Because of the embankment wall, there is no horizontal light, so in essence the centre is top-lit. This connection, between an architecture of the land and the light coming down from above, makes for a very elemental building.

The plan is cruciform. Circulation runs lengthwise down the centre, connecting the two external stairs, while the two parts of the programme bisect the site in the other direction – the ‘Ka’ block contains the more public spaces, such as teaching rooms and offices, and the ‘Kha’ block, the more private accommodation. Between the two blocks are large tanks for collecting rainwater. The landscaping is in two planes – at grade, brick paving in all the circulation areas and courtyards; and above, earthen rooftops with green cover, which act as insulators and absorb the rain.
Traditional brick masonry is used in a modernist idiom. The bricks were sorted for size, shape and colour by the site engineers, who kept only three out of every ten bricks produced by the local kiln. Of these, only the most aesthetically pleasing were used to create the exposed brick finish, while the remainder were incorporated into the foundations and other unseen parts of the building. In parts, the structure is reinforced with concrete, as this is a seismic zone.

Monolithic, a seamless continuity of material in harmony with its surroundings, the Friendship Centre embodies what Louis Kahn described as an ‘architecture of the land’.

**Jury citation**

“Looking at the sunken brick compound of the Friendship Centre, one is reminded of the archaeological remains of the nearby Vasu Bihara Buddhist temple, built during the third and fourth century. The Friendship Centre blurs the boundaries between an archaeological site and an architectural and landscape project. Through its configuration and its use of grassed rooftops it becomes part and parcel of the surrounding landscape. This *grounding* is both literal and metaphorical. The quadrilateral layout and the skilful brickwork reflect continuity with local architectural traditions.

“The integrative design approach is registered in every aspect of the project, and at every scale. The imbrication of outdoor and indoor spaces, together with the treatment of the roofscape, make this an unusual and innovative building. With its spaces sunk into the ground and the vegetation growing on its roofs, the compound blends beautifully into the natural surroundings. Its relationship to the landscape and to history and archaeology is remarkable in every way.

“An attention to detail, to the human scale, is expressed in the simplicity of the well-designed furniture, in the creation of a series of small pavilions and reflecting pools, and in the landscaping elements. All help to create a friendly atmosphere, supporting the building’s function of empowering a marginalised rural community living on a precarious flood plain.

“While every aspect of this project is local – local inspiration, local builders, local materials, local architect, local NGO – its architectural value and qualities are undeniably universal and merit both appreciation and attention.”
Project data

Client
Friendship NGO, Dhaka, Bangladesh:
- Runa Khan, executive director
- Rifiquzzaman Pollob, manager – field operations

Architect
Kashef Chowdhury/URBANA, Dhaka, Bangladesh:
- Kashef Mahboob Chowdhury, principal
- Anup Kumar Basak, Sharif Jahir Hossain, design team
- Matiur Rahman, structural engineer
- SM Hafizur Rahman, engineer
- Albab Yafez Fatmi, Sharijad Hasan, construction managers
- Ahsanul Haque Ratan, Amrul Hasan, supervising engineers
- Nahidur Rahman, site engineer
- Zafar Ahmed, electrical design

Contractor
M/S Golam Mostofa Ltd, Dhaka, Bangladesh:
- Golam Mostofa, proprietor

Plumbing design
SEA-Consult, Bangkok, Thailand:
- Phansak Thew, Jongsak Kuntonsurakan

Project data

Built area
3,053 m²

Cost
900,000 USD

Commission
May 2008

Design
May 2008 – December 2010

Construction
December 2010 – December 2011

Completion
December 2011
Kashef Chowdhury

The son of a civil engineer, Kashef Mahboob Chowdhury graduated in architecture from the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) in 1995. He established the practice URBANA in partnership in 1995 and, from 2004, has continued as the sole principal of the firm. He has a studio-based practice whose works find root in history with a strong emphasis on climate, materials and context – both natural and human. Projects in the studio are given extended time for research so as to reach a high level of innovation and original expression. Works range from the conversion of a ship and low-cost raised settlements in “chars” to a training centre, mosque, art gallery, museum, residences and multi-family housing, as well as corporate head offices.

Kashef Chowdhury teaches both at home and abroad. In 2006, he attended a Glenn Murcutt masterclass in Sydney, Australia. He also takes an active interest in art and has worked as a professional photographer. Chowdhury has designed and published three books: Around Dhaka, 2004; Plot Number Fifty Six, 2009 and The Night of Fifteen November, 2011 – a photographic and recorded account of some survivors of Cyclone Sidr in the coastal areas of Bangladesh.

Website

http://www.kaschefchowdhury-urbana.com/home.html
Hutong Children’s Library and Art Centre
Beijing, China

Architect: ZAO/standardarchitecture

Client: Dashilar Investment

Project description

The hutongs of Beijing are fast disappearing. The residential compounds, with their layering of spaces and multiple courtyards, are often viewed as messy and insalubrious – almost as slums. If they find a place in the modern city, it is often in sanitised form, as a tourist attraction, filled with boutiques. The attempt to find a new use for this traditional building form – one that would benefit the local community – motivated this proposal for a space that would serve both the pupils from the nearby primary school and the hutong’s remaining, mostly elderly, residents. Besides a children’s library and exhibition space, the centre hosts a local handicrafts studio and classes in painting and dance.

Key to the design was the renovation and reuse of existing elements in the courtyard, which included informal add-on structures, such as kitchens. The massing follows the conditions found at the site, and the height of the boxes is dictated by the height of the roof around them. Gathering together all the masses and activities is a giant scholar tree, perhaps 600 years old – as old as the courtyard itself.

The redesigned buildings in the centre of the courtyard have a lightweight steel structure and a ‘floating’ foundation – hollow steel beams simply laid on the ground – to protect the roots of the tree. The materials – chosen to blend with the urban surroundings – are principally grey bricks, both new and recycled, and, for the library, concrete mixed with Chinese ink – an innovation tested here for the first time.

http://www.akdn.org/architecture
Inside the library, windows frame unusual views out into the courtyard and follow the interior functions – as, for example, in the glazed reading nook that children reach by climbing some steps. The adaptable furniture – seating that can become an ad-hoc table or a ‘secret cave’, say – accommodates the spontaneity of childhood.

On the outside, the insertion of an outdoor staircase alongside each structure creates viewing platforms amid the tree’s branches where the users of the courtyard – children and adults alike – can survey the neighbourhood and enjoy a breath of rare, chlorophyll-laced air.

**Jury citation**

“Urbanisation in China has a complex relation with the past. How do you move forward while recognising the values of the built heritage? The response to this question has often led to a stark contrast between the old and the new, with the latter being seen as the sole marker of progress. Yet others have sought alternative strategies for urbanisation. Increasingly there is a call for a more nuanced consideration of the old and the existing, as potentially indispensable parts of urban developments.

“The Micro Yuan’er Children’s Library and Art Centre is an exemplary representative of the modification and adaptive re-use of a historic building. In Beijing, as in other places, a growing number of hutongs are being restored. But this hutong is not a typical restoration project. By providing new structures and new public uses in the middle of the building’s courtyard, it entwines the private lives of the older inhabitants with the public use of a new children’s library and art centre.

“The architectural strategy of this modest but highly articulate intervention is to use the existing buildings and landscape as the armature for the new construction. The use of a limited palette of materials, such as brick, wood and glass, helps the space of the courtyard to become denser through the addition of the new structures.

“The hutong provides an example of how the adaptive re-use of an older building can become the basis for a new form of micro-urbanism that constructs productive reciprocities between the private and the public. This is an approach that can be potentially replicated in other locations and within a diversity of communities.”

http://www.akdn.org/architecture
Project data

Client
Beijing Dashilar - Liulichang Cultural Development Ltd., Beijing, China:
• Jia Rong, director

#8 Cha’er Hutong inhabitants
Wang ZengQi, Giao DaZhen, Man WeiGuo, Feng YuBao, Zhang JianKun, Beijing, China

Architect
ZAO/standardarchitecture, Beijing, China:
• Zhang Ke, principal
• Zhang Mingming, Fang Shujun, Ao Ikegami, Huang Tanyu, Margret Domko, Ilaria Positano, project team

Contractors
• Liu Shanjie, Beijing, China
• Wang Changjun, Beijing, China
• Wang Zhanjun, Beijing, China

Project data

Total area
145 m²

Cost
105,000 USD

Commission
September 2012

Design
September 2012 – July 2014

Construction
March 2014 – December 2015

Completion
September 2014 – December 2015
Zhang Ke

Zhang Ke received his master’s degree in architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, having previously studied at Tsinghua University in Beijing. He is the founder of studio ZAO/standardarchitecture, a new-generation design firm engaged in practices of planning, architecture, landscape and product design. Based on a wide range of completed buildings and landscapes over the past ten years, the studio has emerged as the most critical and realistic practice among the young generation of Chinese architects and designers.

Consciously distancing itself from many of the other ‘typical’ young-generation architects who are swallowed up by a trend of noise-making, the office remains detached in a time of media frenzy and their focus is consistently positioned to enable the realisation of urban visions and ideas. Although ZAO/standardarchitecture’s built works often involve exceptionally provocative visual results, their buildings and landscapes are always rooted in their historic and cultural settings, the outcomes produced through a process of intellectual debate.

Website

http://www.standardarchitecture.cn/
http://www.z-a-o.cn
Superkilen
Copenhagen, Denmark

Architect: BIG-Bjarke Ingels Group, Superflex, Topotek 1

Client: Copenhagen Municipality

Project description

Superkilen is a kilometre-long urban park located in Nørrebro, a diverse and socially challenged neighbourhood of Copenhagen. Designed by architects BIG-Bjarke Ingels Group, artists Superflex and landscape architects TOPOTEK 1 in collaboration with the local – predominantly Muslim – community, the park takes the historical themes of the universal garden and the amusement park and translates them into a contemporary urban setting. With a healthy dose of irreverence, it sheds light on the positive dimensions of cultural diversity and invites people – young and old – to play.

Superkilen is part of a larger urban renewal plan developed as a partnership between the Municipality of Copenhagen and the private philanthropic association RealDania. Its name refers to the physical constraints of the site, a narrow ‘wedge’ (kilen) extending between two important traffic arteries. The park’s pedestrian paths and cycle routes provide better connections between these two roads, while its public lighting creates a greater sense of security – an important consideration in an area historically blighted by crime. Opening up previously hard-to-reach neighbourhoods to the west and east, Superkilen plugs the area back into the infrastructure of the city as a whole.

Colour plays a significant role in the park, which is formally divided into three distinct zones organised around different programmes – Red Square (market/culture/sport), Black Market
Of these, the most visually striking is the Black Market, inspired, according to the architects, by the Lars von Trier film *Dogville* (2003), which uses a minimal stage-like set with white lines on black ground. In the same way, the Black Market could be seen as a stage on which the local residents enact their identities in public space.

These multiple identities are evident in the trees and objects that furnish the park, chosen through an intensive participatory planning process. A swing bench from Baghdad, a star-shaped fountain from Morocco, chess tables from Sofia, basketball hoops from Mogadishu – these are among the park’s 108 objects from the 62 home countries of the local inhabitants. Together they form an exhibition of best-practice street furniture from all over the world, and symbolise the residents’ ownership of the park.

### Jury citation

“Living with people who differ – racially, ethnically, religiously or economically – is the most urgent challenge facing contemporary civil society. At a time of growing global uncertainty and insecurity, it has become fashionable to talk in terms of ‘worlds’ – the third world, the Islamic world, the Arab world – as though these occupy a parallel universe, disconnected from the rest and subject to different rules. Superkilen, a new urban park in one of Copenhagen’s most diverse and socially challenged neighbourhoods, emphatically rejects this view with a powerful mixture of humour, history and hubris.

“It is at once a highly personal yet deeply collective experience, marrying the experiences of migration with an eclectic assembly of displaced objects and innovative landscaping. Here architecture, landscape and art are fused in a truly interdisciplinary manner, providing new opportunities for shared public engagement. A number of different activities – cycling, walking, basketball, hockey – are offered in three separate but connected parks which together form a continuous surface with a marketplace, cafés, retail spaces and open-air gathering spots. In this way, the urban park becomes a public ‘stage’ where neighbours, strangers and visitors meet. Diversity, as the architects have noted, was not seen as a ‘problem’ that required a solution, but rather as a tool in a fluid, creative process that allowed the park to become both a powerful marker of identity and a subtle cultural mediator for the residents of this historically challenged neighbourhood.”

[http://www.akdn.org/architecture](http://www.akdn.org/architecture)
Project data

**Clients**
Realdania, Copenhagen, Denmark:
- Hans Peter Svendler, director
- Astrid Bruus Thomsen, programme manager

Copenhagen Municipality, Denmark:
- Laura Koch Rotne, project leader & landscape architect
- Marion Louw, construction manager
- Sanne Gaarde Nielsen, project manager
- Thomas Maare, lighting manager
- Tina Saaby, city architect

**Architect**
BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group, Copenhagen, Denmark:
- Bjarke Ingels, partner-in-charge
- Nanna Gyldholm Møller, Mikkel Marcker Stubgaard, project leaders
- Ondrej Tichy, Jonas Lehmann, Rune Hansen, Jan Borgstrøm, Lacin Karaoz, Jonas Barre, Nicklas Antoni Rasch, Gabrielle Nadeau, Jennifer Dahm Petersen, Richard Howis, Fan Zhang, Andreas Castberg, Armen Menendian, Jens Majdal Kaarsholm, Jan Magasanik, project team

**Landscape architect**
Topotek 1, Berlin, Germany:
- Martin Rein-Cano, Lorenz Dexler, partners
- Ole Hartmann, Anna Lundquist, Toni Offenberger, project managers
- Katja Steckemetz, Christian Bohné, Karoline Liedtke, Danielle Choi, Dorothee Holzapfel, Lisa Oregioni, Hannes Zander, Marius Hüther, Filippo Tiozzo, David Zimmermann, project team

**Art consultancy**
Superflex, Copenhagen, Denmark:
- Jakob Fenger, Rasmus Nielsen, Bjørnstjerne Christiansen
- Toke Gade Kristiansen, Nikolai Heltoft, Johanne Aarup Hansen, Troels Kahl, project team

**Engineer**
Lemming & Eriksson, Køge, Denmark:
- Knud Bay, partner-in-charge
- Lars Kofoed, Thomas Kaæe-Bodker, project managers
- Pia Christiansen, Anne Aaroe Brolund, project team

**General contractor**
Aarsleff, Åbyhøj, Denmark:
- Mads Hellmers, head of projects
- Finn Pedersen, president

http://www.akdn.org/architecture
**Kilebestyrelsen, Local Governance Board Involved in Selection of Objects**
Andreas Nøhr, Arsalan Alvi, Besarm Rakipi, Brigitte Kabel, Claus Raasted, Klaus Lorentzen, Samar Subhie, Martin Wåhlin, Mikkel J. Clausen, Mohammed A. Rasmussen, Uzma Ahmed Andersen, Salim El-Chahabi, Troels Glismann, Valdemar Mehrsohn Stauning, Copenhagen, Denmark

**Project Data**

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Design</td>
<td>January 2009 – February 2010</td>
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**Bjarke Ingels**
Bjarke Ingels started BIG Bjarke Ingels Group in 2005 after co-founding PLOT Architects in 2001 and working at the Office of Metropolitan Architecture in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Through a series of award-winning design projects and buildings, Bjarke has developed a reputation for designing buildings that are as programmatically and technically innovative as they are cost- and resource-conscious. He has received numerous awards and honours, including the Danish Crown Prince’s Culture Prize in 2011, the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale in 2004, and the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Award for Excellence in 2009. In 2011, the Wall Street Journal awarded him the Architectural Innovator of the Year Award and, in 2016, Time Magazine named Bjarke one of the 100 most influential people in the world today.

**Martin Rein-Cano**
Martin Rein-Cano was born in Buenos Aires in 1967. He studied art history at Frankfurt University and Landscape architecture at the Technical Universities of Hannover and Karlsruhe. After working in the office of Peter Walker and Martha Schwartz in San Francisco, in 1996 he founded TOPOTEK 1, a practice which partakes in a wide variety of international projects and has achieved first prize in various competitions. Several professional books and articles have been published exclusively on his work, which has been honoured with many awards and prizes. Martin Rein-Cano has been appointed as a guest professor in different academic institutions in Europe and North America, such as the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard University. Presently he is teaching at the Dessau Institute for Architecture. He frequently lectures at internationally renowned universities and cultural institutions and regularly serves on competition juries.

**SUPERFLEX**
SUPERFLEX is an artist group that was founded in 1993 by Bjørnstjerne Christiansen, Jakob Fenger and Rasmus Nielsen. Their works, which challenge power structures and relate to economics, copyright law and self-organisation, are described by SUPERFLEX as tools, as proposals that invite people to participate in the development of experimental models to alter given structures and conditions. SUPERFLEX works within, and outside of, traditional art contexts. The group collaborates with architects, designers, engineers, businesses and marketers on tools which have the potential for social or economic change.

**Website**
http://www.big.dk/
http://www.topotek1.de/
http://superflex.net/

http://www.akdn.org/architecture
Tabiat Pedestrian Bridge
Tehran, Iran

Architect: Diba Tensile Architecture

Client: Nosazi Abbassabad Co.

Project description

Tabiat Pedestrian Bridge spans a busy highway to connect two parks in a city with a very dense urban fabric and mostly utilitarian architecture. More than a point of connection between two discrete green zones, the bridge is a popular gathering place for the people of Tehran, offering numerous seating areas over its three levels and restaurants at either end. Like many such green spaces within urban areas, it has come to serve as a locus of identity for the city and its inhabitants.

The tree-shaped columns that support Tabiat Pedestrian Bridge echo the forms within the adjacent parks. Their locations were also carefully chosen to minimise the need to fell trees. And where the bridge meets Abo Atash Park, the structure is left open in three places to allow the trees to grow through it, creating the sense of one continuous green space.

Given the complex curving form of the three-dimensional truss, each of the steel elements had to be cut in a different shape, and this was carried out partly by CNC machine and partly by printing the unrolled shape from the 3D model. The tubes were cut, sandblasted and painted with primer in the workshop, then delivered to the site. During the whole process of construction, the flow of traffic on the highway continued uninterrupted.

Rather than focusing on the experience of those viewing the bridge from afar, the design is characterised by an inward-
looking approach: the sequences of spaces are all centred around the users. The various deck levels are connected by continuous ramps at the bridge’s southern end: the decks themselves are covered in Resysta, an imported fibre-reinforced hybrid material made from rice husks, common salt and mineral oil. The same material – which is both recyclable and weather-resistant – was used for the seating.

Jury citation

“Tabiat Pedestrian Bridge is a breath of fresh air in an otherwise austere and haphazardly built area of Tehran. The challenge of connecting two parks separated by a highway is met with an approach that is exemplary in the context of an infrastructure project, not just in Tehran but perhaps anywhere in the world.

“The apparent reinterpretation of the original brief, which called for a straightforward connection between two parks, has transformed a ‘bridge’ into a ‘destination’. Inviting people to congregate, interact and appreciate the vista in every direction, the bridge has become a promenade and one of the most successful public spaces in modern Tehran.

“The bridge’s use of technology and integration of architecture and structure is commendable, particularly in the light of the challenges the team would have faced in the design and procurement stages of the project. Though the jury felt that there was scope for further aesthetic refinement of the structure, it acknowledged that some design decisions may have been influenced by the fact that the bridge lies in an area of high seismic activity.

“In spite of this, the bridge displays a structural logic that is at once simple yet robust, orderly yet chaotic, but always functional, provocative and inviting. The physical footprint of the structure is minimised, with respect shown towards the existing trees and topography. The sophisticated layering of the bridge deck, which allows and encourages different activities, is commended by the jury.

“Tabiat Pedestrian Bridge is a successful example of a calculated risk taken by a client, met with the youth and enthusiasm of a group of competent professionals whose work is commendable and deserving of recognition.”
Project data

Client
Nosazi Abbasabad Co., Tehran Municipality, Tehran, Iran:
• Seyed Javad Mirhosseini, head of architectural department (2008 – 2015)
• Behnam Atabaki, managing director (2008 – 2011)
• Ghasem Amouzandeh, deputy to managing director (2008 – 2011)

Architect
Diba Tensile Architecture, Tehran, Iran:
• Leila Araghian, Alireza Behzadi, co-founders
• Sahar Yasaei, associate
• Mina Nikoukalam, Homa Soleimani, Farhad Elahi, Nader Naghipour, Kourosh Shirani, Adel Mohammadi, Masoud Momeni, Payam Golfeshan, project team

Structural engineering
Maffeis Engineering SpA, Solagna, Italy:
• Massimo Maffeis, Marco Grigoletto, Loris Frizon, structural engineers

Contractor
Shahid Rajaei Company, Tehran, Iran:
• Mojtaba Keshtkar, Hossein Saemi, executive managers

Steel structure construction sub-contractors
• Azar Teif Sepahan Company, Tehran, Iran
• Mashin Sazi Arak Company, Tehran, Iran

Consultants
• Aram Shahriari, mechanical engineer, Tehran, Iran
• Mahmoud Abdolhasani, electrical engineer, Tehran, Iran
• Pouya Tarh Pars, local structural approver, Tehran, Iran

Construction company
• Azar Teif Sepahan Company, Tehran, Iran

Project Data
Total length of the bridge 269 m
Total combined floor area 7,950 m²
Cost 18,200,000 USD
Commission September 2009
Design September 2009 – December 2010
Construction October 2010 – October 2014
Completion October 2014

http://www.akdn.org/architecture
Diba Tensile Architecture

Diba Tensile Architecture, founded in 2005, was the first company in Iran to specialise in the design, fabrication and installation of membrane and tensile structures in Iran. The main idea behind starting the firm was to bring a new industry to the country’s construction industry. The approach at Diba is to integrate architecture and structure with the maximum attention to detail and to the execution of a project, as well as to the quality of the spaces that are created. In 2008 Diba won the competition to design Tabiat Bridge, and, since then, it has undertaken larger-scale projects with sophisticated structural characteristics in close cooperation with Maffeis Engineering SpA.

So far Diba has completed over 300 projects on various scales in Iran, structures that are specifically designed and constructed to meet client needs. These include bridges and open-air amphitheatres, monumental structures, building entrances and parking lots, as well as temporary structures such as sunshades, covers and gazebos. It continues to grow in both the design and construction of innovative projects.

Website

http://www.dibats.com/home

http://www.akdn.org/architecture
Issam Fares Institute
Beirut, Lebanon

Architect: Zaha Hadid Architects

Client: American University of Beirut

Project description

‘This building asserts confidently that we are not a university that stays rooted in time and place; rather we challenge conventional thinking and actively promote change and new ideas’, says Peter Dorman, President of the American University of Beirut (AUB), of the Issam Fares Institute, the latest addition to the AUB. In terms of its form, the building is undeniably bold, yet it also displays a sensitivity towards time and place – towards the context, both built and topographical.

The context in this case is the AUB’s upper campus, set on a hilltop with views of the Mediterranean. In the immediate vicinity are four historic buildings and some equally venerable – c 150-year-old – cypress and ficus trees, as well as one of the most important open areas on the campus, the Green Oval. Responding to the givens of the site, the architects significantly reduced the building’s footprint by cantilevering a large part of the structure over the entrance courtyard – a move that also draws the space of the adjacent Green Oval towards the base of the new building. The existing landscape is preserved, including all of the old trees, which form a kind of datum line determining the height of the institute, as is evident from a look at the south facade. Further connections with the landscape are established by the roof terrace, with its expansive views, and by the circulation ramp that snakes smoothly through the trees to the southern entrance on the second floor.
The Issam Fares Institute – a research centre for public policy and international affairs – has a combined surface area of 3,000m², divided into six floors. Its facilities include research spaces and administration offices, seminar and workshop rooms, an auditorium, reading room, recreational lounge and roof terrace. The interiors are divided by walls of partially pigmented glass (though the original idea was for the glazing to be clear, for maximum transparency). The structure is of high-quality in-situ reinforced concrete, in tune with the local construction culture of working with concrete, and particularly fair-face concrete.

Jury citation

“As the last in a series of buildings, the Issam Fares Institute completes the central oval courtyard of the upper campus of American University of Beirut, located on a hill overlooking the Mediterranean. This educational building solves a dense programme within a surprisingly small footprint in a manner that is sensitive to its context. With its contemporary form and the purity of its architectural language the building differentiates itself from its neighbours, though it is not in conflict with the campus and its architecture.

“Cantilevering over the courtyard and overlooking the old cypress and ficus trees, the building presents an extremely powerful and authentic volumetric structure without obstructing the view of the buildings behind. The building’s height, matched with that of the trees and the surrounding structures, serves to strengthen the powerful relationship it creates with its context. Throughout, a fluid planning strategy has turned to advantage the level variances of the site, and a welcoming environment has been created by providing entrances at various levels via ramps that weave through existing trees, in the process becoming part of the landscape themselves.

“The building makes a courageous – and at the same time fully respectful – contribution to the multilayered physical environment of this historic and rooted university campus. With its simple, exposed concrete surface and strong volumetric presence, it is an elegant yet unique solution to a complex and special context.”
Project data

Patron

Issam Fares, Beirut, Lebanon

Client

American University of Beirut (AUB), Beirut, Lebanon:
- Peter Dorman, president
- Bassem Baroumi, facilities planning and design unit director
- Alain Eid, Issam Fares Institute project manager
- Tarek Mitri, director of Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs
- Rami Khouri, founding director of Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (2006-2014)

Architect

Zaha Hadid Architects, London, United Kingdom:
- Zaha Hadid, Patrik Schumacher, partners
- Saleem A. Jalil, project manager
- Christos Passas, Saleem A. Jalil, Graham Modlen, Human Talebi, Brandon Buck, Miya Ushida, project team
- Saleem A. Jalil, Rokhsana Rakhshani, Teakjin Kim, Ben Holland, Charbel Chagoury, Anas Younes, Fulvio Wirz, Mariagrazia Lanza, Renata Dantas, competition team

Rafik El Khoury & Partners, Beirut, Lebanon:
- Rafik El Khoury, principal
- Hazar Mansour, Roger Skaff, architects
- Georges Sfeir, Maya Charry, Guy Ghosn, structural engineers
- Issam Mourad, mechanical engineer
- Karim Nammar, electrical engineer
- Wassim Sader, acoustics
- Zeina Bou Mikhael, contract administrator

Contractor

Kettaneh Construction, Beirut, Lebanon:
- Bahzad Choubassi, project director
- Elie Awaad, site manager
- Sabine Choubassi, Assem Soubra, project coordinators
- Georges Saade, mechanical coordinator
- Darwesh Haddad, structural engineer

Sub-contractors

Skylight: Alumco, Choueifat, El Kobeh District, Mount Lebanon

Metal stairs and railing

Mechrek Group, Beirut, Lebanon

Mechanical room aluminium louvers

SKAB, Metn, Lebanon

Lifts

Mitsulift Elevating Standards, Metn, Lebanon

Concrete floor

De-Concrete, Beirut, Lebanon

Gypsum boards and paint

Pillar Plan, Beirut, Lebanon

Blinds

Libel, Jal El-Dib, Lebanon
Mechanics, electrics and plumbing

CLIMTECH - Climate Technology Electro-Mechanical Contracting, Beirut, Lebanon

Internal glass-partition profiles

- Gemino, Padua, Italy
- Debbas and Mirodec, Beirut, Lebanon

Tables and kitchens

- DuPont Wilmington, Delaware, USA
- H.E.C., Beirut, Lebanon

Carpet floor finish

- Pictura, Jdeidet el Metn, Lebanon

Internal wooden doors and kitchens

- Awale Awale, Beirut, Lebanon

Internal steel doors

- Fitzpatrick Sal, Beirut, Lebanon

Project data

- Total site area: 7,000 m²
- Total floor area: 3,000 m²
- Building footprint: 560 m²
- Cost: 8,800,000 USD
- Commission: May 2007
- Design: July 2007 – December 2009
- Construction: January 2010 – April 2014
- Completion: May 2014

Zaha Hadid Architects

Zaha Hadid Architects is a global leader in pioneering research and design investigation. Collaborations with corporations that lead their industries have advanced the practice’s diversity and knowledge, whilst the implementation of state-of-the-art technologies has aided the realisation of fluid and dynamic architectural structures. Hadid’s vision redefined architecture for the 21st century and captured imaginations across the globe. Her legacy endures within the DNA of the design studio she created. Working with office partner Patrik Schumacher for three decades, Zaha Hadid Architects’ work arranges form and space into breathtaking spatial compositions.

Zaha Hadid’s work of the past 30 years was the subject of critically acclaimed exhibitions at New York’s Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 2006, London’s Design Museum in 2007, the Palazzo della Ragione, Padua, Italy in 2009 and the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 2011. Zaha Hadid Architects recently completed the Salerno Maritime Terminal in Italy and Oxford University’s Middle East Centre at St Antony’s College. The practice is currently working on a diversity of projects worldwide including the new Beijing Airport Terminal Building in Daxing, China, the Sleuk Rith Institute in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the King Abdullah Financial District Metro Station in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and the new Mathematics Gallery at London’s Science Museum. Zaha Hadid Architects’ portfolio also includes cultural, academic, sporting and infrastructure projects across six continents.

Website

http://www.zaha-hadid.com/