

Location : Kafr Elsheikh, Egypt
Typology : Public Buildings, Unrealized

CRAFTING STORIES-ONE KILLIM AT A TIME



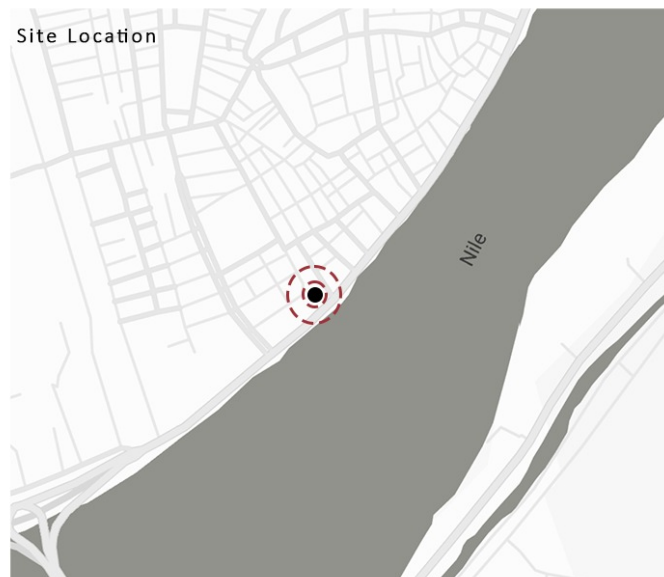
*Located in the culturally rich city of Fuwah, Kafr Elsheikh in Egypt, where history and craftsmanship intertwine, this project revitalizes the city's enduring heritage of the place. Amidst the charm of the old city, where artisans have long woven their stories through kilim and craft, arises a design that bridges the past and present. The contemporary intervention embraces the authenticity of the historic fabric while introducing a refined architectural language that harmonizes with its surroundings — a space that celebrates continuity, creativity, and the art of storytelling through design. Named "Crafting Stories – One Kilim at a Time," the project reflects the woven narrative of culture, memory, and place.
(Shot 01 : Hub Main Entrance)*

In Fuwah city, Kafr Elsheikh, living conditions reflect the challenges faced by many historic yet underdeveloped rural centers in the Nile Delta. Despite its cultural richness and craftsmanship heritage, the city struggles with limited urban development, outdated infrastructure, and economic dependency on traditional industries such as weaving and agriculture. **Construction materials typically include red brick, reinforced concrete, and corrugated metal roofing, with minimal insulation and unfinished interiors**, reflecting both the modest economic resources and the enduring craftsmanship that define the city's character.



These images reflect Fuwah's dual essence — enduring craftsmanship amid decaying heritage. The worn textures and handcrafted details evoke resilience, memory, and the quiet persistence of culture through time.

Kilim workshops blend tradition with function, built from **local stone** or **mud brick** that merge with their surroundings. **Large openings** bring in natural light and ventilation, while simple interiors with **clay floors**, **wooden beams**, and open spaces accommodate looms and artisans, reflecting the tactile essence of the craft itself.



This project reimagines a deteriorated heritage building—**once a theater and cotton gin**—into a vibrant **public space** that serves as an exhibition, library, and cafeteria. Conceived as a humanitarian and community-driven intervention, integrates seamlessly with its surroundings, the transformation embraces self-construction methods that allow local participation without reliance on heavy machinery or specialized labor. Using locally available and **recycled materials** such as **brick**, **timber**, and **metal**, the design minimizes environmental impact while revitalizing the urban fabric.



"From Earth and Timber: Foundations Rooted in Resourcefulness"

The early structures shown here embody **the ingenuity of communities building** with what was locally available—mud bricks, stone, timber, and corrugated metal. These environments, while functional, often lack stability, weather resistance, and long-term durability. Despite these limitations, they **represent an honest response to pressing educational needs, highlighting resilience and adaptability in under-resourced settings.**

"Evolving Materials, Elevated Spaces"

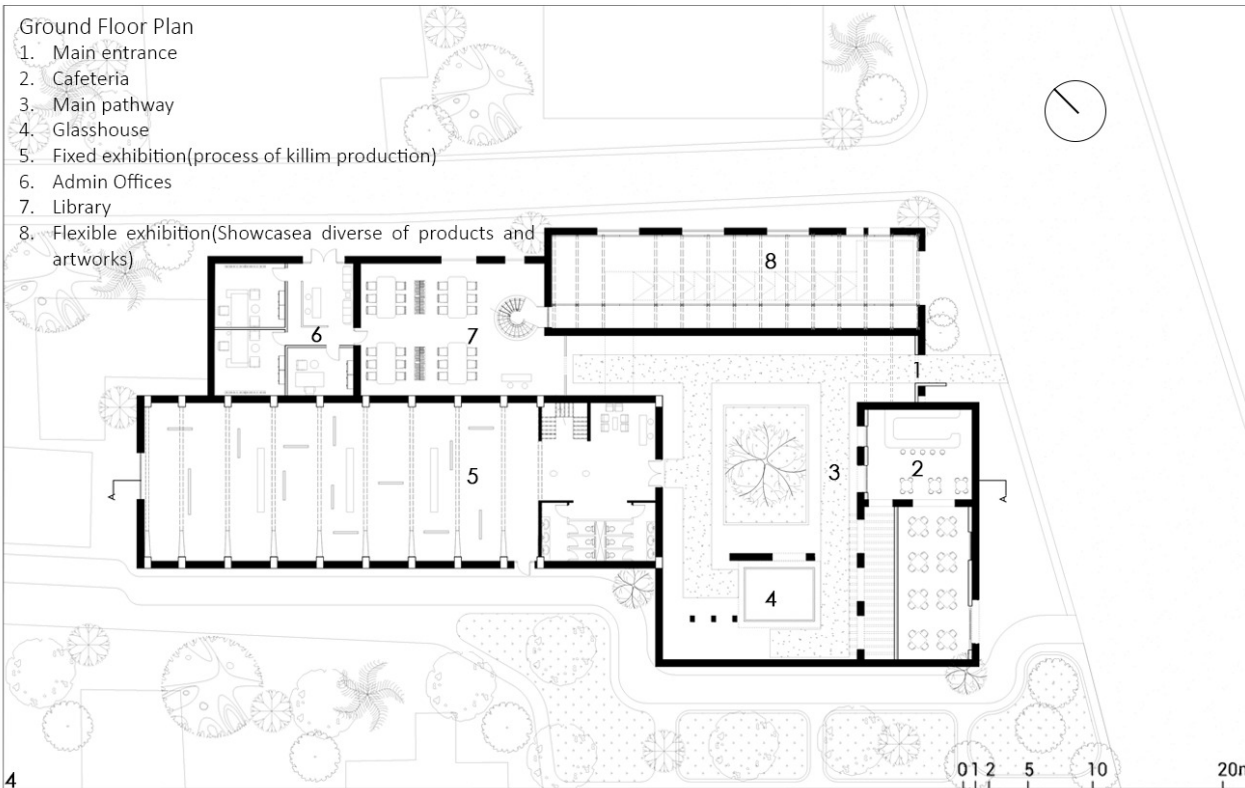
This reimagined corridor integrates refined materials like steel, glass, and dressed stone to create a tranquil, light-filled space that blends seamlessly with the surrounding textures. The shift toward modern materials doesn't erase the past but elevates it—offering a space that is structurally resilient, aesthetically refined, and psychologically enriching, while still rooted in the natural essence of the place.(Shot 02 : Exhibition Corridor)



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The exterior composition captures a dialogue between heritage and modernity, where the preserved stone walls contrast with the clean geometry of the new white volumes. Natural light enhances the textures of the old structure, emphasizing continuity and respect for the past. Inside, the corridor becomes a transitional space where light, shadow, and materiality interact to evoke reflection and calm. Together, these spaces embody the project's essence — a balance between memory and transformation. (Shot 03&04: Exterior Facade and Corridor)



The transformation of the existing structure evolves through a sensitive balance between preservation and innovation. The integration of **new solid volumes**, **transparent enclosures**, and a **defining circulation spine** reinterprets the site's identity—linking past and present through material contrast and spatial continuity. Ultimately, the project creates an environment that promotes interaction, adaptability, and sensory engagement, allowing users—especially students—to experience the architecture as a journey through layers of history, light, and space. It stands as a living framework where the old structure is not replaced but reactivated, sustaining its memory while embracing new forms of learning and connection.

Construction and transformstion process

Step 6: Establishing the Main Circulation Pathway

A linear pathway is created to organize movement, connecting the various functional zones and visually uniting the old and new architectural layers.

Step 3: Installing the Steel I-Beam Framework

A lightweight I-beam steel structure is implemented to support the new roof and upper components, ensuring structural stability while allowing open, flexible interior spans.

Step 2: Introducing New Solid Volumes

New solid masses are added to enclose open spaces and define interior functions.

Step 5: Defining the Courtyard

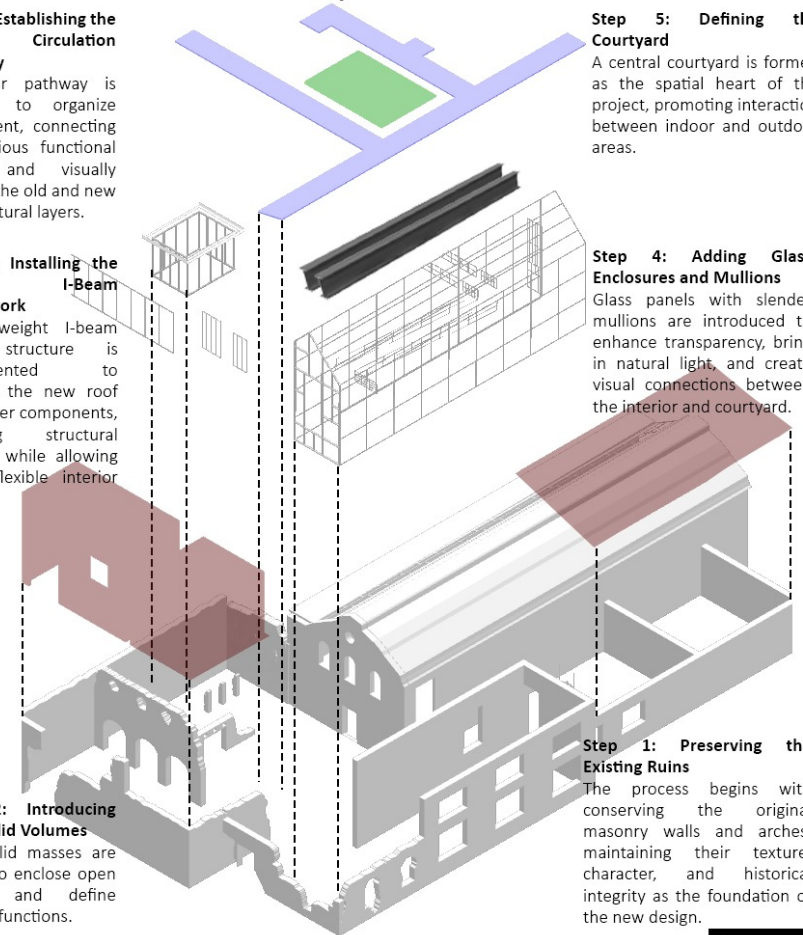
A central courtyard is formed as the spatial heart of the project, promoting interaction between indoor and outdoor areas.

Step 4: Adding Glass Enclosures and Mullions

Glass panels with slender mullions are introduced to enhance transparency, bring in natural light, and create visual connections between the interior and courtyard.

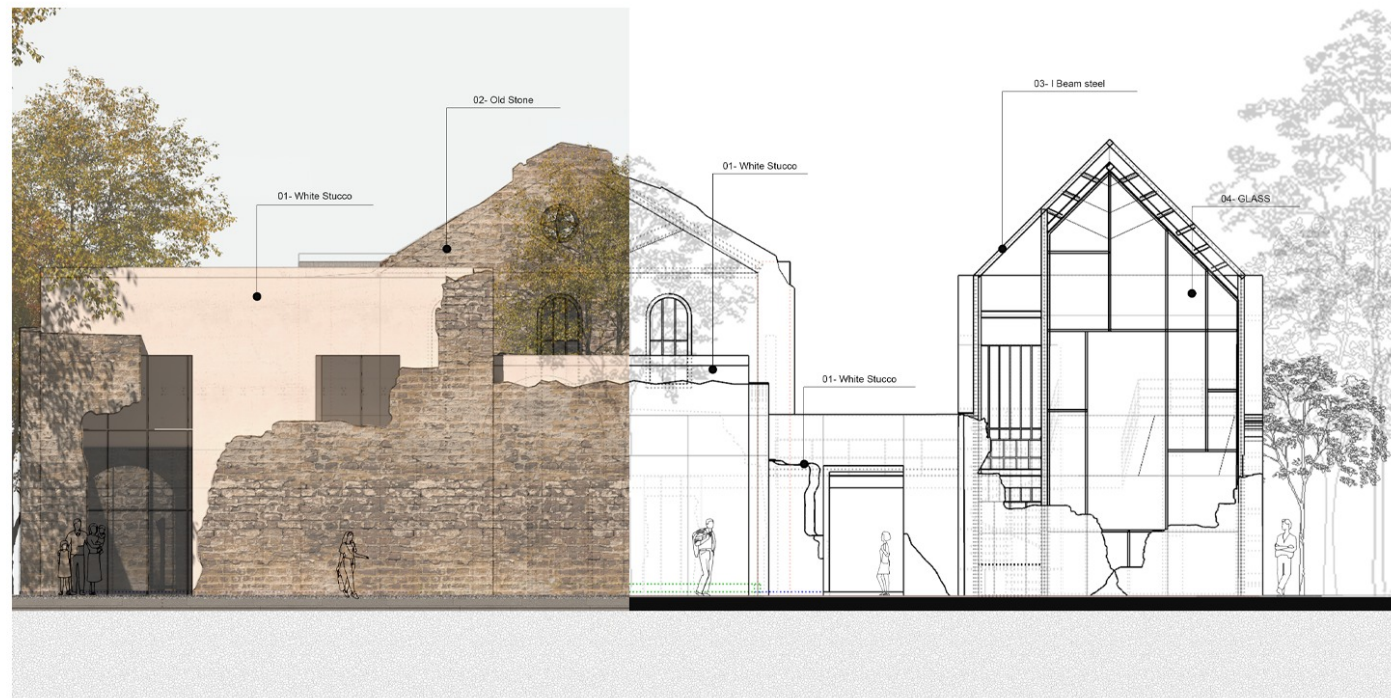
Step 1: Preserving the Existing Ruins

The process begins with conserving the original masonry walls and arches, maintaining their texture, character, and historical integrity as the foundation of the new design.

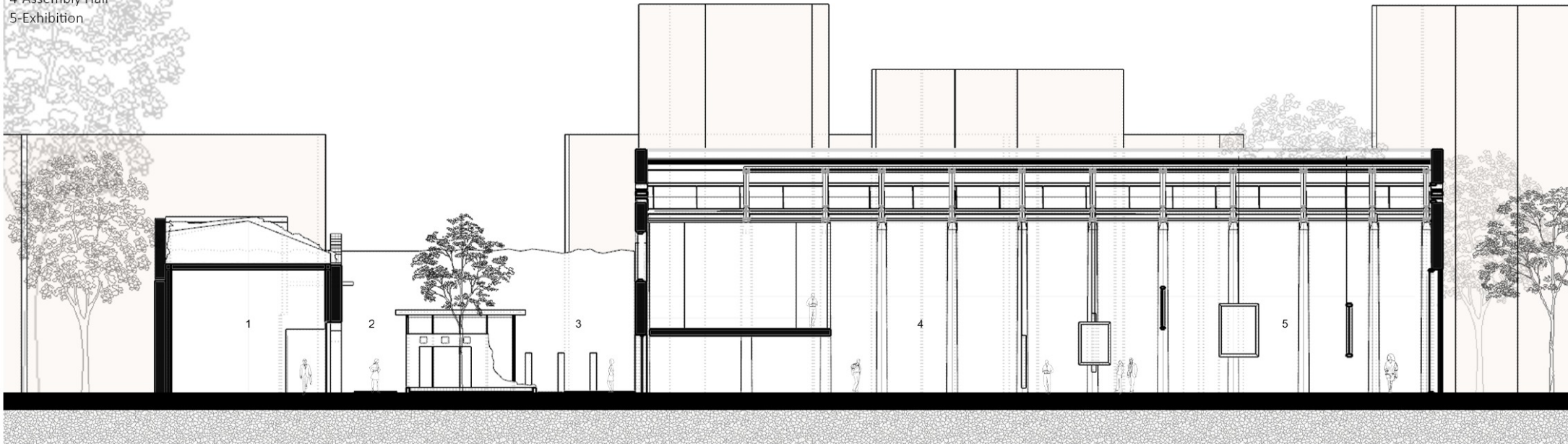


The integration of elements embraces a palette of natural yet refined materials to strike a balance between **tradition and modernity**. **White stucco** surfaces **provide a clean and minimal backdrop** that enhances light diffusion and complements the texture of the preserved old stone walls, creating a dialogue between past and present. **Glass facades and enclosures foster visual continuity and transparency**, encouraging interaction with the surrounding landscape. **Mud bricks, and stone introduce warmth and tactile richness**, while enhancing sustainability and local identity.

This elevation reveals the spatial sequencing of the complex, highlighting the fluid transition between interior functions and outdoor courtyards. Anchored by the assembly hall and exhibition spaces, the design promotes openness and natural light while maintaining a rhythm of solid and void creating an engaging, breathable environment that supports learning and community. (Shot 05: Layers of interaction)



- Section A-A
 1-Cafeteria
 2-Court yard Glass House
 3-Exhibition court yard entrance
 4-Assembly Hall
 5-Exhibition



By reprogramming the space with communal functions, the **intervention reinforces the idea of adaptive reuse** — preserving heritage while fostering new patterns of interaction. The cafeteria becomes a shared ground between locals, visitors, and students, celebrating the cultural and social life of Fuwah City. Its open layout within the preserved stone walls promotes a sense of inclusivity, continuity, and belonging, turning the **once-abandoned structure into a living part** of the community once again.

The courtyard, once an abandoned void within the ruins, is reimagined as a social heart where the restaurant activates the space with life and community. Framed by preserved stone walls and softened by nature, it becomes a shared ground that merges heritage, leisure, and collective experience. (Shot 06: Courtyard Between Cafeteria and exhibiton)





The renovation transforms the remnants of the **old theater into an exhibition space** celebrating the traditional Kilim-making craft. Retaining the original stone envelope preserves the memory of its cultural past, **while the adaptive reuse introduces a new layer of identity centered on craftsmanship and education.** Natural Sunlight filters gently through the restored skylights, tracing patterns across the aged stone walls and suspended frames and evoking the rhythm of weaving itself. The interplay between shadow, texture, and material honors both the building's history and the artistry it now exhibits, creating a contemplative and inspiring environment for visitors.

Once a decaying theater, the space now unfolds as The Weaving Hall — a serene environment where light, texture, and memory intertwine. The rawness of the original structure contrasts with the delicacy of the displays, evoking a tactile dialogue between craft and architecture.

(Shot 07 : Fixed Exhibiton)

The complex is envisioned as a **vibrant public hub** that interweaves learning, culture, and community life within the restored **fabric of Fuwah's historic ruins**. Each function — from classrooms and workshops to exhibition and dining areas — is organized around a network of courtyards that foster openness, interaction, and continuity. The preserved walls act as anchors of memory, while the new lightweight structures and glass roofs introduce transparency and renewal. Together, they form a living system of spaces where education meets everyday life, encouraging exchange, creativity, and a shared sense of belonging.

An interconnected network of courtyards and adaptive spaces transforms the ruins into a cohesive public hub — where learning, culture, and community coexist within layers of history and light.
(Shot 08: The Public Hub Complex)



Used Materials

- **Old Bricks / Stone Masonry** – Retained from the existing structure and restored where needed for walls, arches, and facades. Preserves the historical authenticity and tactile memory of the original theater. The aged texture contrasts beautifully with the new interventions, emphasizing continuity between past and present.
- **White Stucco** – Applied on new infill volumes and facades. It introduces visual purity and calmness, allowing the original brick texture to stand out. It represents renewal and clarity while maintaining a harmonious dialogue with the rough, historic surfaces.
- **Steel I-Beams** – Form the structural framework for roofs and new extensions; ensure stability while expressing a modern, industrial aesthetic. Exposed beams also express the industrial character of the adaptive reuse approach.
- **Corrugated Metal Sheets** – Used for roofing and exterior cladding; create a lightweight enclosure and emphasize the project’s adaptive reuse character.
- **Concrete** – Used for flooring, foundations, and pathways; offers structural solidity and a neutral surface that unifies old and new zones.
- **Glass with Steel Mullions** – Used in facades, skylights, and courtyard enclosures; introduces transparency, natural light, and visual continuity.
- **Vegetation and Gravel** – Used in courtyards and outdoor zones; softens the built environment, enhances sensory experience, and connects users to nature.

Material	Estimated Unit Cost (EGP)	Usage Unit	Estimated Quantity (project-wide)	Estimated Subtotal (EGP)
Old Bricks / Stone Masonry	~ EGP 1,000 per 1,000 bricks	per 1,000 bricks	100,000 bricks	100 × 1,000 = 100,000
White Stucco	~ EGP 180 per m²	m²	1,200 m²	1,200 × 180 = 216,000
Steel I-Beams	~ EGP 38,500 per ton	ton	20 tons	20 × 38,500 = 770,000
Corrugated Metal Sheets	~ EGP 6,000 per 7 m² pack (~860 per m²)	m²	500 m²	500 × 860 = 430,000
Concrete	~ EGP 2,100 per m³	m³	300 m³	300 × 2,100 = 630,000
Glass Panels with Steel Mullions	(estimate) ~ EGP 2,500 per m² (typical mid-range)	m²	400 m²	400 × 2,500 = 1,000,000
Vegetation & Gravel Paving	(estimate) ~ EGP 350 per m²	m²	800 m²	800 × 350 = 280,000
Estimated Total Material Cost: EGP 3,526,000				

Assembly and Construction Process

1. **Site Preparation and Stabilization:** The process begins with cleaning and securing the ruins, removing debris while preserving stable structural elements such as stone and brick walls.
 - Consolidation of deteriorated masonry using lime-based mortars.
 - Structural stabilization with temporary scaffolding and steel supports to ensure safety during subsequent stages.
2. **Structural Reinforcement of Existing Walls:** Original walls are reinforced internally through a concealed steel framework that stabilizes them without altering their appearance.
 - I-beam columns and ties are introduced to support roof loads.
 - Repointing and sealing of existing brickwork preserve its texture and integrity.
3. **Insertion of New Structural Systems:** New architectural elements are designed as light insertions within the old fabric.
 - Steel I-beam frames and corrugated metal roofs are assembled on-site using modular connections, enabling rapid and low-skill assembly.
 - Concrete foundations and slabs are cast in place to anchor new volumes and ensure structural continuity.
4. **Envelope and Finishing Layers:** New enclosures are applied with careful contrast and respect to the existing context.
 - White stucco coatings are layered over insulation panels on new walls to create a smooth, reflective surface.
 - Corrugated metal sheets are mounted on lightweight purlins for roofing.
 - Glass panels and skylights are installed to enhance transparency and light diffusion throughout the courtyards and interior spaces.
5. **Landscape and Courtyard Integration:** The final phase focuses on integrating vegetation and open areas to complete the spatial sequence.
 - Paved courtyards and planted zones are established with local materials.
 - Shading elements like bamboo and recycled wood structures are added to mediate light and create comfortable microclimates.