

ARCHITECTURE POLITICS: POLITICS ARCHITECTURE

Politics as the underlying force of Muzharul Islam's Architecture of a Bengali

Modernity

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1. INTRODUCTION

Architect Muzharul Islam is considered the pioneer of modern architecture of Bangladesh. When he started his career, it was at the time when modern architecture was just taking off in the subcontinent. He laid down the foundation of Bengali modernism and modern architecture, which spearheaded the architectural development of the country. Muzharul Islam's work was unique because it was without any post-colonial hangover, and neither was it a simple follow through of the international style. His work was so powerful that even today they stand as landmarks and as inspirational points for Bengali architects. It would be important to understand what led on to develop his work in the particular manner that he did, and not only that, it is also important to understand the value systems and ethics involved in developing what he called his own Bengali modernity. Islam was a socialist, an activist and a nationalist, he was involved in left-wing politics and also very active in a cultural revolution for Bangladesh. Bangladesh at that time was East Pakistan, Pakistan a country torn into two, west and east, with huge cultural differences. Islam and his colleagues at that time understood that it was important for us to retain our own cultural identity and our identity was greatly different from that of West Pakistanis. It is from this understanding of our own cultural identity that Muzharul Islam formed his own political stand point about a culturally different country.

At that time all the intellectuals of the country were predominately left-wing and they were also very much connected to this cultural revolution of East Pakistan. Muzharul Islam's role in the cultural identity building of our country is unique, he did not only collaborate with artists, thinkers, literates and politicians, and he himself was able to give guidance and inspiration to different fields.

The purpose of this thesis is not only to document and record Muzharul Islam's first two works which are extremely important; and critical study of these two works are not been done till date. The thorough analysis of these two works will be carried out in this thesis, but at the same time it will actually bring out that his works were not only that of an architect trying to set up the idea of Bengali modernity, but also trying to set up a national identity. This nation building politics was a unique character of Muzharul Islam and has strong connections to his work. Within his first two works we will also see how his politics of nation building work plays a strong role. It will be interesting to record and show this, because at this time when architecture is developing in our country where politics and Cultural Revolution at the moment do not play a strong role in the minds of architects.

Muzharul Islam's work is also a departure from contemporary modernist in India and other neighbouring countries, because of his political stand point he was able to bring to his work a different layer and an insight, where the work itself became a way of politics. His idea of nation building was also shared by his contemporary artists, literates and even politicians. The purpose of this thesis is also to bring out his association with those people at that time and to show that how these group of people, who were all connected, went on to be masters in their own fields; and the uniqueness of their works were based around their political

viewpoints. This political view point of nation building that brought force to their works and still sets their works apart from the works that is being done today.

The thesis will cover the detail analysis of his first two works and show his role of association with other thinkers of his time, and also it will try to bring out the whole idea of nation building and a role of an architect in nation building. The thesis will evolve around the idea of how an architect's personal politics becomes his way of architecture and how his way of architecture stands today as a symbol of politics of an architect.

The two books that have been published till date while speaking of Islam's political involvement, has stayed shy of demonstrating how his politics was the main pivotal force for his work it is my impression that if we study his work carefully we will see that it was the series of political events in the country, his own political position. his association, all were responsible for the outcome of his own perception of a "Bengali Modernity".

2. FORMATIVE YEARS

Birth and Childhood

Muzharul Islam's philosophies and his idea of what it meant to be a Bengali were significantly influenced by the environments he grew up in—his itinerant youth, secular ménage, and a multidisciplinary academic journey.¹ Born in 1923 amidst the peak of the movement against British colonization, Islam's ideologies were indubitably shaped, first by this “colonial experience”² and eventually by the surrounding cultural and political events that followed in Bengal.³ Muzharul Islam's life passed through a series of political events that instigated a sensitive Bengali nationalism in him. After the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan, “the aggressive Islamic ideology of Pakistan introduced a second and a more deadly wedge”.⁴ The religion was often employed deceitfully to destabilize the perception of a Bengali culture.⁵ This was followed by the Language Movement in 1952 that echoed a strong Bengali identity—the fight to make Bengali the mother tongue as opposed to Urdu was a manifestation of the people's rising consciousness of their Bengali culture. The War of Independence in 1971 saw a heightened Pakistani involvement resulting in a reinforced Bengali struggle against it.⁶ In short, the development Bengal's identity was a result of a series of long periods of resistance:

Bengali culture faced a trichotomy with European traditions and Pakistani-Islamic ideology: While British colonialism deeply affected the intellectual and economic base, Pakistani domination created an antagonism between native spirituality and an ideological version of Islam.⁷

Muzharul Islam was born in a village called Shundorpur in the Murshidabad district, which was his maternal hometown. Growing up in a bungalow designed in the typical colonial style, he would wander around the building and the courtyard, exploring different elements such as the walls, windows and the wooden staircase, developing naturally an eye for architecture.⁸ He also took a keen interest in watching the pottery artisans working on their crafts, often visiting their workplaces and observing their works. This shows his interest in arts and materials from a very young age.⁹ His father Omdatul Islam was a Math Professor who had to travel for work, as a result of which Islam studied in both West and East Bengal, the latter becoming East Pakistan after the 1947 partition.¹⁰ However, despite being a mathematician, his father was a close friend of Shauquat Osman, who was renowned for Bengali Art and Literature, and thus exposed Muzharul Islam to the world of arts at a young age.¹¹ Although his father was from Chittagong, he married into a family in Murshidabad, thus exposing

¹ Adnan Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics: Muzharul Islam's Faculty of Fine Arts (1953–56)’, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, v. 76, n. 4 (December 2017) p 539.

² Zainab Faruqui Ali and Fuah H Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect* (Dhaka: BRAC University Press, 2011) p 13.

The authors define the “colonial experience” as a “fatal and irreversible condition created by its disruptive mechanisms”.

³ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 539.

⁴ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 13.

⁵ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 13.

⁶ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 13.

⁷ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, pp 13-14.

⁸ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 539. Much of the information on the early life of Muzharul Islam has been derived from conversations with his colleagues as well as from direct dialogues with the architect.

⁹ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares, (Dhaka, 2017)

¹⁰ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 539.

¹¹ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

Muzharul Islam to the cultures and dialects of both the places.¹² He chose to speak in the refined Murshidabad dialect as opposed to the crude one from Chittagong, reflecting his affinity towards refined elements at a very young age. Islam married his maternal cousin in 1946, strengthening his ties to his mother's hometown in West Bengal and its cultures.¹³

Rajshahi University and Calcutta

During his middle and high school, Muzharul Islam stayed in Rajshahi, a district in East Bengal, where his father joined Rajshahi Government College as a teacher in 1932.¹⁴ The Rajshahi Museum, during that time, was very enriched, thus exposing Muzharul Islam to art and heritage.¹⁵

Islam went on to achieve his Bachelor of Science degree at Calcutta University in West Bengal, where he returned in 1940.¹⁶ He studied Civil Engineering from 1943 to 1946 at the Bengal Engineering College of Shibpur under the University of Calcutta.¹⁷ He was very good at drawing and was often praised by his teachers and perhaps possessed an artistic awareness within him even then.¹⁸ It was during his presence at West Bengal that he developed an awareness in left-wing student politics, advocating social justice with a strong influence from the writings of Marx and Lenin.¹⁹ Muzharul Islam was also exposed to the philosophies of the renowned writer and poet, Rabindranath Tagore²⁰ who resided in Calcutta where Islam spent much of his time. In 1941, during Islam's academic years at Calcutta University, Tagore passed away in his house in Calcutta.²¹ Being a passionate student of Tagore, the long procession leading to his funeral possibly embedded a deep sensibility of Rabindrik ideologies in him and his exposure to Tagore's literature in Calcutta and Shibpur was evidently a strong influence on his own belief system.²² Tagore, in his novel, *The Home and the World*, highlighted how the subversion of the values of a nation is a result of the fusion of "nationalism" and "ethnocentrism":²³

It was tragic because the popular mass sentiment that incited nationalism in colonial India associated Western notions of universality with the perpetration of colonial violence by the British. Therefore, both needed to be rejected for a "pure" native culture to be recaptured. Rather than resort to a reactive pursuit of identity—something that often derives from a glorified precolonial past—

¹² Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

¹³ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

¹⁴ Morshed, 'Modernism as Postnationalist Politics', p 539.

¹⁵ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

¹⁶ Morshed, 'Modernism as Postnationalist Politics', p 539.

¹⁷ Morshed, 'Modernism as Postnationalist Politics', p 539.

¹⁸ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

¹⁹ Shamsul Wares, 'Creation and Creator: Bangladesh's First Modern Architecture', *Kali o Kolom* (September 2012) p 39.

²⁰ Tagore was the most epochal personality in India in terms of literature and was the first Asian and non-European to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913.

Partha Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1922–1947* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007) pp 15-7.

²¹ Morshed, 'Modernism as Postnationalist Politics', p 545.

²² Morshed, 'Modernism as Postnationalist Politics', p 545.

²³ Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Home and the World', trans. Surendranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore *Omnibus III* (New Delhi: Rupa, 2005). Also see Satish C. Aikant, 'Reading Tagore: Seductions and Perils of Nationalism', *Asiatic* 4, no. 1 (June 2010) pp 61-3.

Tagore argued, one could strengthen the premise of identity by transcending its very political necessity.²⁴

Thus, the influences of Rabindrik and Marxist philosophies on Muzharul Islam were contradictory in their basic concepts—Rabindrik literature praised “creative spirituality”²⁵ while Marxist theory highlighted “materialistic rigor, suspicious of artistic spirituality”.²⁶ His understanding of the socio-political and cultural surroundings is further highlighted in a conversation between him, Kazi Khaleed Ashraf and Saiful Haque, where he emphasised on the importance of these factors in architecture:

I might have a creative idea, an urge to design buildings, etc., but an architect cannot perform well without an understanding of social, economic, political and cultural influences, the environmental impact of what one does as an architect.²⁷

Univeristy of Oregon

Muzharul Islam’s formative years passed through a period unprecedented political turmoil. Being deeply socio-politically conscious, all these events shaped his political and cultural standpoints during that time. It is important to chart the political events of that time and see how they could have influenced him in his formative years. In 1947, the partition of Bengal took place, giving rise to India and Pakistan. Islam received a post-war scholarship from the government of East Pakistan in 1950, thus initiating his journey in the field of architecture. He enrolled in a five-year undergraduate Architecture program at the University of Oregon in Eugene, USA, which he completed in two years, having much of his modules waived because of his previous degree in Civil Engineering.²⁸ The Architecture department at this university detached itself from the principles of and the strict adherence to a style-oriented education in architecture.²⁹ In 1922, the University of Oregon was the first architecture institute in the USA to come away from the Beaux-Arts curriculum and adopt a modernist method endorsed by Eliel Saarinen at the Cranbrook Academy of Art.³⁰ Having eschewed the stylistic canon, the University of Oregon instituted a program based on “experimentation, openness, and collaboration” which echoed the modernism of the Bauhaus.³¹ Thus, from his academic years at the University of Oregon, a new interest in architectural modernism developed in Muzharul Islam.³²

Muzharul Islam was strongly inspired by two of his professors at the university. Wallace Stanford Hayden (1905–94) was in architectural practice on residential buildings when he taught at the University of Oregon.³³ As a design studio instructor, he advocated an integrated

²⁴ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 545.

²⁵ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 15.

²⁶ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 16.

²⁷ Kazi Khaleed Ashraf, *An Architect in Bangladesh: Conversations with Muzharul Islam* (Dhaka: Loka Press, 2014) p 31.

²⁸ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 539.

²⁹ Leland Roth and Amanda C. Roth Clark, *American Architecture: A History*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2016) p 422.

³⁰ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 539.

For details on Beaux-Arts, see Joan Draper, ‘The Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Architectural Profession in the United States: The Case of John Galen Howard,’ Spiro Kostof ed., *The Architect: Chapters in the History of the Profession* (1977; repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

³¹ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 540.

³² Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 540.

³³ Wares, ‘Creation and Creator’, p 38.

design method, encompassing “design concept, program development, site analysis, climatic adaptation, and building material selection” as congruous aspects which should be considered simultaneously when designing a “site-responsive” building. This inspired Islam to avoid adhering to prescribed forms and instead design buildings based on site and location.³⁴ His knowledge and meticulous care in materials are evident in his use of bricks in the projects he worked on upon his return to East Pakistan.

Another professor, Marion Dean Ross (1913-91) was a professor of Architectural History, who taught art and architectural history at the university for over thirty years.³⁵ From him, Islam not only viewed architectural history as an active source of knowledge,³⁶ but he also realized the importance of going back to one’s roots, culture and heritage in order to work on a country’s development.³⁷ Ross completed his Master of Architecture at Harvard University, under the supervision of Walter Gropius, “learning modernism at its very source”.³⁸ He considered European modernism a driving force which enabled American architecture to move from historicist to modern concepts.³⁹ As a result of being taught by Ross, Muzharul Islam became closely acquainted with the works of European modernist architects Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Alvar Alto, and Le Corbusier.⁴⁰ Islam’s own personal library was built with a rich collection by authors listed in Ross’s article “*Ten Books on Architecture*”. The influence of modern architecture on Islam’s ideologies are evident in his own designs and from Ross, he learnt to consider architectural history and modernism as interrelated entities.⁴¹

Muzharul Islam’s modernist philosophies transcended architecture and went on to politics and socio-cultural aspects when he returned to East Pakistan amidst a turbulent political setting.⁴² As elucidated by Adnan Morshed in his book on Muzharul Islam,

If Calcutta University during World War II introduced him to socialist student politics, the University of Oregon transformed him into a cosmopolitan thinker, able to recalibrate architecture for the political exigencies of his postcolonial country, particularly the contested role of religion in identity politics.⁴³

Political situation after University of Oregon

Muzharul Islam returned home to East Pakistan in 1952 having completed his studies at Eugene. Upon his return he was caught amidst a bitter political unrest resulting from irrepressible differences between East and West Pakistan—which was separated geographically by India in between them—in terms of uneven authority, languages, and their varied viewpoints on the nexus between different ethnicities and Islamic nationalism.⁴⁴ The

³⁴ Wares, ‘Creation and Creator’, p 38.

³⁵ Wares, ‘Creation and Creator’, p 38.

³⁶ Wares, ‘Creation and Creator’, p 38.

³⁷ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

³⁸ Leland Roth, ‘Marion Dean Ross (1913–1991): A Man Who Left a Hole in the Water’ (Marion Dean Ross Lecture, University of Oregon, Eugene, 28 Oct. 2012) p 7.

³⁹ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 541.

⁴⁰ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 541.

⁴¹ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 541.

⁴² Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 541.

⁴³ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 541.

⁴⁴ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 532.

power of the government was located in West Pakistan, and the differences in the two regions' viewpoints further heightened this imbalance. The governing leaders of West Pakistan attempted to establish a nation based on the ideals of the religion Islam, which they believed would not only separate them from the Hindu-majority India but also coalesce the various ethnicities under the umbrella of Islamic principles.⁴⁵ This was resisted by intellectuals and leaders of East Pakistan, who advocated a secular and humanist Bengali identity in terms of culture, religion and language, as opposed to Islamic chauvinism.⁴⁶ Muzharul Islam, like many other Bengalis, resisted the concept of political Islam. When he returned from the USA in 1952, the language movement had already embedded a Bengali identity into the people of East Pakistan.⁴⁷ Muzharul Islam's idea of a Bengali identity and his pride to be a Bengali heavily influenced his works upon his return. Soon after the 1971 war, he started to dress in Bengal's national attire.⁴⁸ Naturally, from that pride he became more interested in Bengali literature, music and arts. His way of defining himself as a Bengali was unique in its own right:

There might be 2% Chinese in my blood, 3% Portuguese, 5% Black, 6% Madrasi, 7% this-or-that, I don't care, I don't give a damn. The fact is I am a Bengali. I am a Bengali with all these. I don't have to have a pure blood. I am, in fact, enriched because I possess in me all these. I am a Bengali because of this enrichment, and because of that whatever is in my past is mine. That is why I claim the Buddhist *math* as mine, as I do the Hindu temple, the Christian church, and the mosque. I see no distinction. If a Muslim building is beautiful, I say so, and the same with a Hindu building if it is so.⁴⁹

Muzharul Islam's philosophy of combining modernism and one's own roots⁵⁰ reflected how modern Bengali society developed on the foundation of a complicated mixture of "resistance and acceptance"—a resistance to colonisation and the domination of West Pakistan; and an acceptance of global ideas that allowed "social and intellectual liberation", and of one's own understanding of their culture.⁵¹

Although Muzharul Islam's works reflect architectural modernism, they involved a more complicated thought process.⁵² He eschewed the idea of the picturesque by designing buildings not for photographic exhibition, but for its honesty in construction. Because of his political awareness, his relationship with architecture transcended buildings and reached a wider ambit of his roles as a mentor and a political activist, transmitting the possibilities of architecture beyond the conventional parameters.⁵³ Although he emphasized on the importance of beauty, his definition of "beauty" encompassed a wide range of features including materials, planes, textures, colours, the total three-dimensional composition, doors, windows, how light and air enter a space, and so forth.⁵⁴

⁴⁵ Morshed, 'Modernism as Postnationalist Politics', p 532.

⁴⁶ Morshed, 'Modernism as Postnationalist Politics', p 532. For details, see: Zillur R. Khan, 'Islam and Bengali Nationalism', *Asian Survey* 25, no. 8 (Aug. 1985)

⁴⁷ Morshed, 'Modernism as Postnationalist Politics', p 546.

⁴⁸ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

⁴⁹ Ashraf, *An Architect in Bangladesh*, p 33.

⁵⁰ Morshed, 'Modernism as Postnationalist Politics', p 541.

⁵¹ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 12.

⁵² Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 11.

⁵³ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 11.

⁵⁴ Seminar discussion between a group of architects and Muzharul Islam, Tape 4 (Dhaka, -----)

After returning to East Pakistan from Eugene, Muzharul Islam joined the Department of Communications, Buildings, and Irrigation (CBI) as an assistant engineer in 1953.⁵⁵ During that time, two British architects, Edward Hicks and Ronald McConnel were already a part of the department since 1948 and had developed a number of city planning projects – mainly the plans of Azimpur and Motijheel – and large-scale buildings in Dhaka.⁵⁶ Muzharul Islam criticised that their designs could hardly manifest Bengal’s cultural objectives.⁵⁷ He was given the responsibility to design the Faculty of Fine Arts in 1953, and with his association with artists Zainul Abedin and Quamrul Hassan, Islam produced a design which went into construction in 1954 and was completed in 1956.⁵⁸ The Faculty of Fine Arts was a gateway for modernism to enter East Pakistan,⁵⁹ the reason why Muzharul Islam is considered the pioneer of modern architecture in Bangladesh. The building’s radically new elements rationalized the establishment of modernism as “the only appropriate style for an independent India”, creating a clear separation from the styles of the former colonial era.⁶⁰ Another project that he was commissioned to develop by McConnel was the National Library, which, along with the Faculty of Fine Arts, brought about the modern movement in this country. Islam’s projects and his political sentiments were to some extent analogous:

He refused to fall into the trap of viewing Bengali as a calcified ethnic type. In a similar vein, the design impetus that propelled the Faculty of Fine Arts cannot be explained with any fixed definitions of tropical design or any static notion of Western modernity.⁶¹

Although his work was strongly based on a Bengali political identity, Islam did not lapse into the use of signs and symbols or traditional motifs.⁶² In fact, he abhorred the idea of symbols and believed that the “human society had been kept in darkness for thousands of years by the use of symbols”.⁶³

AA School of Architecture

After his first few works, Muzharul Islam left for England to participate in a course called Tropical Architecture at the Architectural Association (AA) in London. This program was a conceived by both Edwin Maxwell Fry and Otto H. Konigsberger,⁶⁴ who were propagators of tropical architecture and wanted to promote the idea of tropical architecture throughout Asia, Africa and certain parts of South America.⁶⁵ Having already developed a thorough knowledge of the connection between architecture and location—including the culture,

⁵⁵ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 543. For details on Muzharul Islam’s life, the essay by his colleague Shahidullah may be an useful source: Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah, ‘A Colleague’s Experience of Working with a great Architect’, *Kali o Kolom*, (Sept. 2012) pp 8–9.

⁵⁶ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 543.

⁵⁷ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 543.

⁵⁸ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 543.

⁵⁹ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 543.

⁶⁰ Rachel Lee and Kathleen James-Chakraborty, ‘Marg Magazine: A Tryst with Architectural Modernity’, *ABE Journal 1* (2012), abstract, <https://abe.revues.org/623> (accessed 6 July 2017).

⁶¹ Morshed, ‘Modernism as Postnationalist Politics’, p 543.

⁶² Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 14.

⁶³ Ashraf, *An Architect in Bangladesh*, p 19.

⁶⁴ The names were derived from the archive at the AA library.

⁶⁵ Conversation between author and Muzharul Islam, 2006

climate, politics and tradition of the location— he did not find anything that would influence his architectural ideologies in any way beyond what he already knew. The reason being that his first initial three works had already done what they were trying to advocate for at that time. The National Library, the Fine Arts Institute and Nipa Building evolved not only from the site and climate, but embraced much more in terms of their allusions to the socio-political aspects of the country. Architecture resulting just out of climatic calculations possibly did not interest him much. This is evident in the special publication on Tropical Architecture by *Architectural Review* which primarily focused on climate.⁶⁶ The examples of architecture featured here did not really incorporate much culture, history or the place at that time. Moreover, a huge amount of the publication is dedicated to the work in Africa with only three pages dedicated to Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, probably to concentrate on places where Fry and Konigsberger were working.⁶⁷ The work displayed from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India were only a few and only one work was given from both East and West Pakistan and that was the National Library of Muzharul Islam. Even then the only thing that was highlighted about the work was the latticework of the façade, only focusing on how that lattice was responding to climate; it did not include anything of the site, the program or the culture of the country, thus completely overlooking Muzharul Islam's thoughts on architecture. Islam never really spoke about the school much, probably because his education at the AA did not influence his understanding of architecture and was mainly a repetition of what he already had been doing when he returned to Bangladesh from Oregon.

The corruption when he returned

Muzharul Islam faced a pool of corruption during his professional years in Bangladesh. Abdul Hussein Thariani was a Pakistani architect who had taken over most of the government works in Dhaka, all the works that can be seen along the Motijheel road.⁶⁸ He was a graduate from the JJ school of Arts with a three-year diploma in Architecture. He came to Bangladesh and acquired all the non-Bengali works like Nabisco, Tibet, Ispahani and Adamjee and went on to acquiring government projects through bribing.⁶⁹ In an interview with Shamsul Wares, the architect emphasizes on the amount of corruption Thariani induced in the government of Bengal which, he asserts, is prevailing till today.⁷⁰ Thariani's work was a reflection of the Art Deco movement, and Pakistanis introduced Art Deco through the Islamization of designs—Islamic arcs and motifs were introduced to brick buildings,⁷¹ possibly to reinforce the metaphor of Islamic nationalism. One of the most evident examples in this style is the Supreme Court building, which flaunts 'Islamic' arcs and motifs laid out on a masonry elevation. Attempting to constantly avoid corruption in practice, Muzharul Islam

⁶⁶ *Architectural Review*, v. 127, n. 761 (July 1960).

⁶⁷ Otto H. Koenigsberger, 'India, Pakistan and Ceylon', *Architectural Review*, v. 127, n. 761 (July 1960) pp 53-8.

⁶⁸ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

⁶⁹ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

⁷⁰ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

⁷¹ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

eventually landed in conflict with his partner Shahidullah, who succumbed to similar malpractices.⁷²

Muzharul Islam strongly opposed the unethical practices that surrounded architecture, eventually developing a strong aversion to the Biharis and the Pakistanis who exploited the Bengalis, and thus becoming a strong supporter for an independent Bangladesh.⁷³ Being a social activist, Islam concentrated not only on city planning but on a quintessential physical environment which would improve the living conditions of all types of people. As an advocate of left-wing politics, he objected any policy that would result in social discrimination.⁷⁴ Muzharul Islam emphasised on the importance of education in architecture, and reflected on why there was a lack of intervention in physical planning in Bengal:

“...our country continued to be a colony under the imperialist system until 1947 and that is why there was no need for having well planned houses, towns, or cities. We are not given, nor did we ask for an education system that supported the building of a healthy and pleasing environment. There was no awareness about architecture or town planning at any level of the society and neither the common people nor the collective society as a whole ever thought of architectural education as vital for the development of society.”⁷⁵

It was as a result of this prudence and efforts that the ministry of Physical Planning was established in Pakistan.⁷⁶

Yale University

Muzharul Islam returned to the USA to pursue yet another degree in architecture. In September 1960, he enrolled into a master program at Yale University under Paul Rudolph.⁷⁷ It was at Yale that he met and befriended Stanley Tigerman, who eventually became his partner for the five Polytechnic Institutes located in Pabna, Rangpur, Bogra, Sylhet and Barisal.⁷⁸ Being the oldest in class and evidently more mature, Islam was described by Tigerman as a “‘Le Corbusier’ sycophant” but before that “a man of his own people”.⁷⁹

The real change in Muzharul Islam’s design philosophy possibly came during his time at Yale. One was Louis Kahn’s⁸⁰ works, the two art museums, that he got to see for the first time.⁸¹ Kahn at that time was also quite celebrated in Yale and his work in America was also being widely discussed in the architectural discourse at that time. Rudolph, the great vanguard of brutalist architecture, was again a huge influence on Muzharul Islam and it is perhaps during this time that he realized that architecture placed on just place and region or a building responding to just climate was not going to be enough. At Yale Islam saw absolutely no celebration of any regional architecture or any climate responsive architecture.⁸² He knew that an architecture so compartmentalized as tropical architecture would not really become a

⁷² Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

⁷³ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

⁷⁴ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

⁷⁵ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 25.

⁷⁶ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

⁷⁷ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, pp 8-9.

⁷⁸ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 8.

⁷⁹ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 8.

⁸⁰ Ashraf, *An Architect in Bangladesh*, p 137.

⁸¹ Conversation between author and Muzharul Islam, 2006

⁸² Conversation between author and Muzharul Islam, 2006

part of mainstream architecture. It is this realization that led him to change or rethink his style completely.

Upon returning to his country, Islam took it upon himself not only to establish a modernist language of Architecture in this religion that was sensitive to our social, cultural, climatic and economic context, but also to organize the practice and education of architecture in the country. Much later, in a book published on his works, Muzharul Islam addresses the importance of pedagogy to establish a “sound architectural education system”.⁸³

“Handicapped by the lack of theoretical knowledge our society then was not capable of assessing the aesthetic qualities or the long-term consequences of these changes. People depended on masons and labourers to build their houses and they did not have a minimum level of training or knowledge to think creatively. This (knowledge) is only possible through education—and through a knowledge-based wisdom required to appreciate things that are good.”⁸⁴

Muzharul Islam also started looking at architecture on a more abstract and a more international level. Geometry, space, form, material—all these started becoming more important to him and he wanted to find an architecture which will be acceptable on an international platform. This realization within him did not, however, did not seem to change his attitude towards his own personal belief of the purpose of architecture; that he saw architecture as a way to build a new nation and a new society. Perhaps, the concept of the Bangladeshi culture, the heritage of Bengal, the people and their way of life—all that along with the place and climate remained his backdrop against which he went on to design a new kind of architecture. Returning from Yale, his work immediately showed a much stronger interest in formality; geometry was an integral part of his master plan and consequently his form development. His architecture now seemed to claim a wider ambit of acceptance on an international level—something which will not get marginalized as merely tropical or regional architecture. This evasion from being reduced to an event of a particular location seemed to be of paramount importance to him.

The exploitation of East Pakistan by West Pakistan and the uneven power division led to another political turmoil in the nation, leading to the War of Independence in 1971. The same year, East Pakistan was liberated as a new nation and became Bangladesh, and it was around this time that Muzharul Islam developed some of his most significant projects.⁸⁵ Already strongly influenced by the Bengali culture and the Rabindrik literature, Muzharul Islam formed a heightened pride and sensitivity to these aspects following the independence of Bangladesh.⁸⁶

For Muzharul Islam, architecture was thus not a separate entity but a holistic approach towards an improved lifestyle of the Bengali people.⁸⁷ Islam’s dedication towards a better life for his people is evident in his attempt to bring “‘good’ architecture” to Bengal.⁸⁸ Besides proposing that the design of the Polytechnic Institutes be commissioned to him and Tigerman jointly in 1974, Islam also recommended that Paul Rudolph work on the extensions to the

⁸³ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 25.

⁸⁴ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 25.

⁸⁵ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

⁸⁶ Interview between author and Shamsul Wares.

⁸⁷ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 8.

⁸⁸ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 9.

Mymensingh Agriculture School.⁸⁹ During the same time, Louis I. Khan, was working on his project on the National Parliament Building in the capital of Bangladesh. Originally commissioned to design the building, Muzharul Islam believed it was imperative to create an architectural paradigm that would work as a source of reference for future generations, and thus suggested that Kahn take on the project. This sacrifice that he made for the benefit of his nation was perhaps never really acknowledged.⁹⁰

Muzharul Islam's formative years were key in developing his architectural standpoints. From an itinerant upbringing, to his strong attachment to the culture of West Bengal; from his secular humanist ideologies to his love for Bengal and its people; from a site responsive design concept during the early years of his career to the integration of formality to his already established design philosophies during the post-Yale days, Muzharul Islam's viewpoints inherently drew strong references from global modernism and local historical roots.

⁸⁹ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 9.

⁹⁰ Ali and Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 9.

3. THE FOUR SIDES OF THE TABLE” THE MATTER OF ASSOCIATION

During his formative years Muzharul Islam was associated with a number of people that not only had a strong bearing on him but also, they together laid down the foundation stone of a “Bengali Modernity” in their respective fields.

These people were regular visitors to his house for tea and also to his card table. At that time little did they know that each of them would go on to not only be the best in their field but also to lead the way in their respective fields too.

This phenomenon in my opinion was because of their political consciousness and that was also their common thread.

This is a unique scenario and probably never has happened anywhere in the world, where these people who were closely associated, each of them not only went on to become masters of their fields but also being able to show through their own work, their strong attitude towards the nation building politics. It is from this association from which we are able to understand how Muzharul Islam drew strength for his work and also was able to share his ideas to other people of different fields.

The four sides of the table can be seen as Zainul Abedin and Quamrul Hassan for Arts, Shamsur Rahman for Literature, Kalim Sharafi for Music, Muzharul Islam for Architecture and Professor Muzaffar Ahmaed who was a leader of the National Awami Party as their political inspirator.

In order to go forward to understand the common thread of their “Association”, it is important to understand these individuals first.

Zainul Abedin

(29 December 1914 – 28 May 1976)

Zainul Abedin joined Calcutta Government Art School in 1932⁹¹. There he trained in the British/European academic style for six years⁹². After graduation he joined the same school as a faculty in 1939⁹³.

Zainul always felt like he wanted to develop his own style beyond his western style training. But his unique outlook came into view when he drew his famous sketches of Bengal's starvation amid the devastating famine in 1943. His moving sketches quickly made him famous and it was in these sketches that he found his own identity. The starvation series were first published in a book in 1944 'Darkening Days' which was distributed by the

⁹¹ *A saga of Man & Nature: The Art of Zainul Abedin*, (Dhaka: Bengal Foundation, 2004) p 157.

⁹² *A saga of Man & Nature*, p 157.

⁹³ *A saga of Man & Nature*, p 157.

communists⁹⁴ and later on prohibited by the British because it exposed not only their total failure to look after Bengal but also how their actions of forced cultivation of indigo and unreasonable taxes rendered many without food and hope.

Through these sketches not only did Zainul make a departure from his training but also displayed deep consciousness of the situation of that time and his desire to speak out. His deep patriotic nature and sociopolitical awareness started to surface very early on⁹⁵.



Figure 1: Zainul Abedin at his residence. Burhanuddin Khan Jahangir, *The Quest of Zainul Abedin*, First Edition (Dhaka: Journeyman books, 1995) p 112.

⁹⁴ *A saga of Man & Nature*, p 157.

⁹⁵ Burhanuddin Khan Jahangir, *The Quest of Zainul Abedin*, First Edition (Dhaka: Journeyman books, 1995) p 12.



Figure 2: Famine sketch (no.02) in 1943 medium: brush & ink preserved at Bangladesh National Museum. Arts of Bangladesh; series-1, Zainul Abedin by Nazrul Islam, page 46; 2nd edition, June, 1997, Bangladesh Shilpokola Academy.

Figure 3: Famine sketch (no.02) in 1943 medium: brush & ink preserved at Bangladesh National Museum. Arts of Bangladesh; series-1, Zainul Abedin by Nazrul Islam, page 46; 2nd edition, June, 1997, Bangladesh Shilpokola Academy.



Figure 4 :Famine sketch (no.14) in 1943 medium: brush & ink. Preserved at Bangladesh National Museum. Arts of Bangladesh; series-1, Zainul Abedin by Nazrul Islam, page 58; 2nd edition, June, 1997, Bangladesh Shilpokola Academy.

Figure 5 :Famine sketch (no.14) in 1943 medium: brush & ink. Preserved at Bangladesh National Museum. Arts of Bangladesh; series-1, Zainul Abedin by Nazrul Islam, page 58; 2nd edition, June, 1997, Bangladesh Shilpokola Academy.

He left Kolkata in 1947 and settled in Dhaka⁹⁶. In 1948, with the help of few of his colleagues, Zainul Abedin started an art institute in Dhaka. He became the Principle of the Institute and led the modern Bengali Art movement.⁹⁷

He met Muzharul Islam for the first time in 1952 who designed the Fine Art Institute that till date remains one of the most influential school of its kind. A strong friendship formed between him and Islam and also Quamrul Hasan the other most important Artist of Bangladesh who was at that time also one of the most significant artists and a pioneer of the Modern Bengali Art.⁹⁸

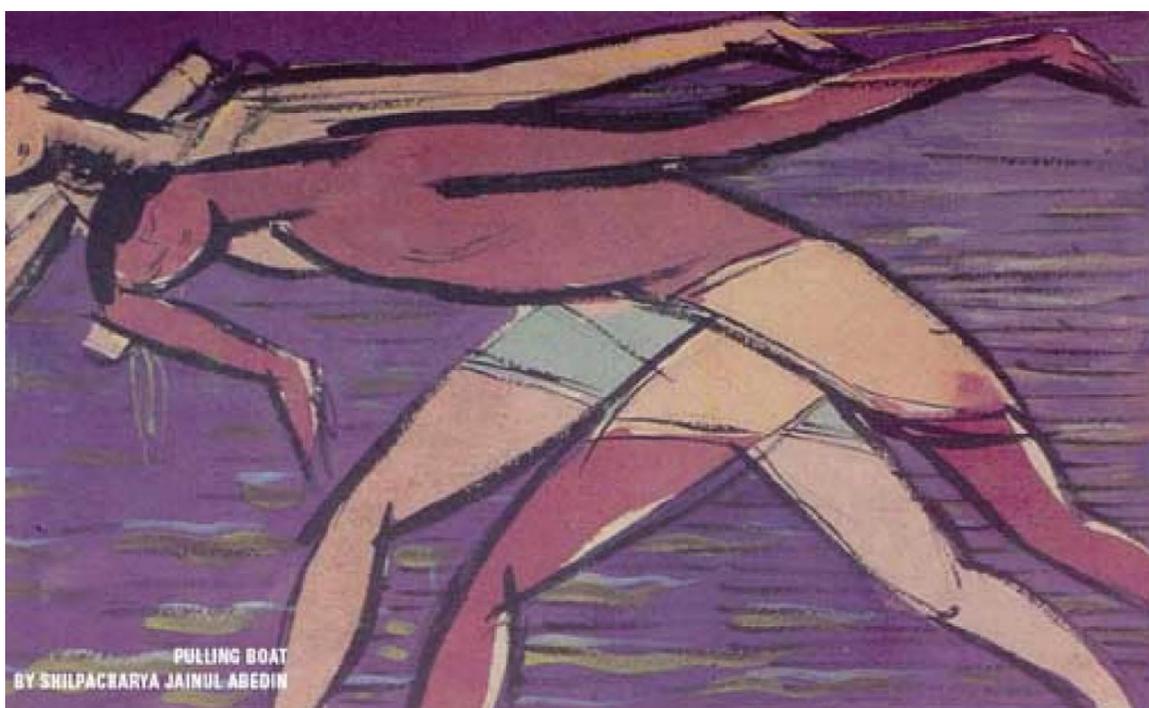


Figure 6: Pulling Boat, 1955 medium: Gouache. Preserved in Bangladesh National Museum. Arts of Bangladesh; series-1, Zainul Abedin by Nazrul Islam, page 66; 2nd edition, June, 1997, Bangladesh Shilpokola Academy.

From the partition in 1947 and onwards Zainul went on to be continuously part of politics. He was part of the Language movement and also the Liberation movement in 1971.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Arts of Bangladesh; series-1, Zainul Abedin by Nazrul Islam, page 27; 2nd edition, June, 1997, Bangladesh Shilpokola Academy

⁹⁷ Jahangir, *The Quest of Zainul Abedin*, p 112.

⁹⁸ Jahangir, *The Quest of Zainul Abedin*, p 113.

⁹⁹ Jahangir, *The Quest of Zainul Abedin*, p 115

He was at the forefront of the culture of the cultural movement to re-establish the Bengali identity, marginalized by the Pakistan government, his contribution to fine arts has been evaluated and acknowledged through numerous essays, articles etc. Zainul Abedin's role and contribution can always be revised and reevaluated in the context of the socio-economic, cultural and political history of Bangladesh.¹⁰⁰

He retired from the Dhaka Art Institute in 1967 and was presented the privileged title of 'Shilpacharya' by the organization.¹⁰¹ Zainul formed Charu O Karu Shilpi Sangram Parishad, which is a unique movement of artists who say their work as activists.¹⁰² In 1973, Zainul got a privileged D.Litt from Delhi University.¹⁰³ He was pronounced national educator in 1975. He established the Folk Art Museum at Sonargaon in Narayanganj, and Zainul Abedin Sangrahashala, a display of his own works, in Mymensingh in 1975.¹⁰⁴

Quamrul Hassan

(1921-1988)

Alongside with Zainul Abedin, Quamrul Hasan was one of the most important painters of Bangladesh. He works not only set the foundation stone of a modern Bengali movement in art but was also had strong representation of political events of his time. He, like many of his contemporaries set a strong example of sociopolitical consciousness and the strong attitude to speak out against injustice. Two of his work has become a piece of Bangladesh's political history. The first, an interpretation of Yahya Khan¹⁰⁵, the Pakistani president who instrumented the genocide in East Pakistan and the second, portraying the then tyrant of Bangladesh, Hossain Mohammad Ershad .

¹⁰⁰ Jahangir, *The Quest of Zainul Abedin*, p 115

¹⁰¹ Jahangir, *The Quest of Zainul Abedin*, p 114

¹⁰² *A saga of Man & Nature*, p 160.

¹⁰³ Jahangir, *The Quest of Zainul Abedin*, p 116.

¹⁰⁴ Jahangir, *The Quest of Zainul Abedin*, p 116.

¹⁰⁵ Syed Azizul Haque, *Art of Bangladesh series-3, Quamrul Hasan* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Shilpokola Academy, June 2003) p 14.



Figure 7: 'Annihilate these demons'. Drawing for poster done during war of liberation, 1971. Art of Bangladesh series-3, Quamrul Hasan, p 109; June 2003; Bangladesh Shilpokola Academy

Quamrul Hassan was born in Kolkata on 2 December 1921.¹⁰⁶ His father, Muhammad Hashim, was administrator of a Burial ground¹⁰⁷ He was born in a conservative family which did not encourage the field of Arts. In any case, Quamrul's passion and love for painting influenced his father to enlist Quamrul to the "Government Establishment of Expressions (now Government School of Craftsmanship and Specialty), in 1938, under the condition that Quamrul had to pay for his own educational cost.¹⁰⁸

After his enlistment to the school, Quamrul kept himself occupied with many different activities besides his drawings and illustrations. For example, the Bratachari movement¹⁰⁹ in 1939, he joined ARP amid the Second World War, he became associated with the Forward Square, Gononaty Andolon (Individuals' Theater) and even with a few pioneers of the Socialist Party.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Haque, *Art of Bangladesh series-3*, p 110.

¹⁰⁷ Haque, *Art of Bangladesh series-3*, p 110.

¹⁰⁸ Sultana Doula, 'Quamrul Hassan, his colors, paintings & women', Final paper, MFA, University of Development Alternative.

¹⁰⁹ Haque, *Art of Bangladesh series-3*, p 23.

¹¹⁰ Doula, 'Quamrul Hassan, his colors, paintings & women'.

Amid the time of English control, youthful Quamrul, illuminated by the thoughts of Master Sodoy Dutta, started the Brotochary Andolon. He was able to motivate many young individuals to become Patriotic and socio-politically conscious. It was an important phenomenon how many people from fine arts and music were involved in political awareness and even action at that time.¹¹¹

He was directly involved in the Language movement and the Liberation war movement. His political compositions mirrored his political consciousness and patriotism. There are numerous works in which Quamrul spoke of socio-political inconsistencies.¹¹²

Quamrul Hasan was the chief illustrator of the Bangladesh Government. He planned the state monogram of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Bank, the Parjotan Corporation and Biman Bangladesh Airlines.¹¹³

Quamrul Hassan received many awards, among them the President's Gold Medal (1965), the Comilla Foundation Gold Medal¹¹⁴ (1977), the Independence Day Award (1979), Bangladesh Charu Shilpi Sangsad Honor (1984) and Kazi Mahbubullah Trust Gold Medal (1987). He was made a Fellow of bangla foundation in 1985. The Government of Yugoslav (1985), The Government of Bangladesh (1986) issued memorial stamps utilizing his artistic creations, Tin Kanya and Naior individually.¹¹⁵

Quamrul Hasan's work spearheaded modernity in Art in East Pakistan/Bangladesh. His work which was strongly influenced by Cubism till date remains as wonderful examples of how everyday Rural and Bengali scenes and people could be depicted in a manner beyond realism.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Haque, *Art of Bangladesh series-3*, p 14.

¹¹² Doula, 'Quamrul Hassan, his colors, paintings & women'.

¹¹³ Doula, 'Quamrul Hassan, his colors, paintings & women'.

¹¹⁴ Haque, *Art of Bangladesh series-3*, p 114.

¹¹⁵ 'Quamrul Hasan', Banglapedia. (Accessed: October 2019)

¹¹⁶ Haque, *Art of Bangladesh series-3*, p 115.

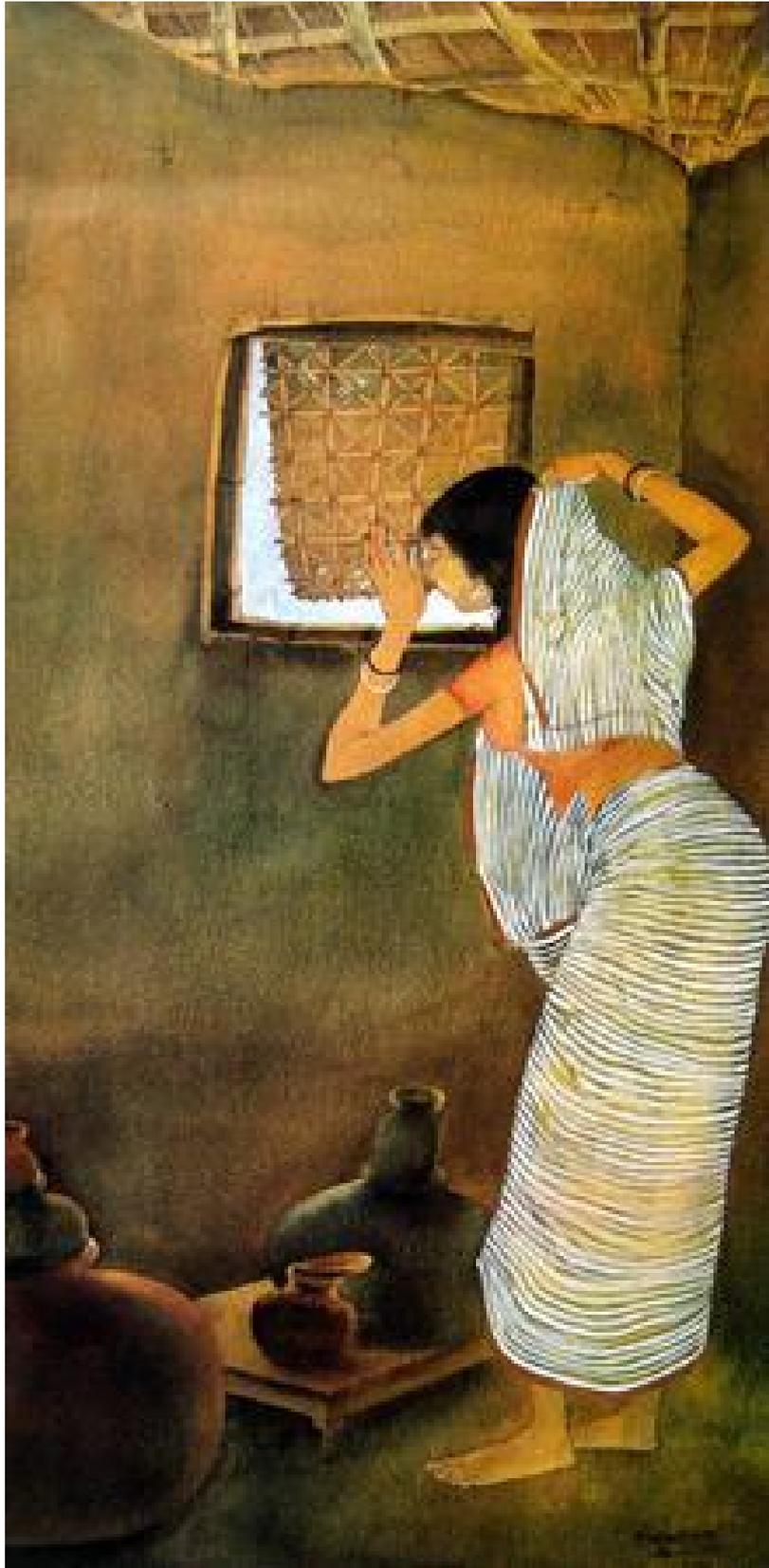


Figure 8: 'Peep' Gouache, 1967. Collection: Sumana Hassan. Art of Bangladesh series-3, Quamrul Hasan , p 53; June 2003; Bangladesh Shilpokola Academy.



Figure 9: Woman with a pitcher water color 1970 Collection: Nurul Quader Khan [14] Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir, Quamrul Hasan, First Edition (Dhaka: Journeyman books, 2015) p 127.



Figure 10: Three Women-2 oil painting, 1983. Syed Azizul Haque, Art of Bangladesh series-3, Quamrul Hasan (Dhaka: Bangladesh Shilpokola Academy, June 2003) p 53.

Kalim Sharafi

(8 May 1924 – 2 November 2010)

Kalim Sharafi was a Bangladeshi Rabindra Sangeet singer. He is considered as one of the few extraordinary Rabindra Sangeet vocalists of the subcontinent.

When he was just a student in Calcutta Aliya Madrasa in 1940¹¹⁷, Kalim Sharafi got engaged with anti-British movements. He passed Matriculation examination in 1942. As a dissident of the Quit India Movement he was captured in 1942¹¹⁸ and kept bound in Siuri correctional facility of Birbhum for 15 months till 1943. It was in prison that his passion for Rabindranath Tagore was rekindled.¹¹⁹

During this period of his life, he became a member of “Bharatiyo Gononatya Shangha”, Popular Theatre Association.¹²⁰

Kalim Sharafi played an active role in creating non-communal public opinion against communal riot in the Muslim majority area of Kolkata in 1946.¹²¹ It was at this time that his first recording of mass-songs was published.

In 1947 he joined the music school 'Dakshini'¹²² established by Shuva Guha Thakurata.¹²³ He was again arrested in 1948 and was soon released. In the backdrop of chaos in Gana Natya Sangha in 1948, Kalim Sharafi along with Monoranjan Bhattacharya¹²⁴, Sambhu Mitra, Tripti Mitra¹²⁵ and Mohammed Ismail¹²⁶ created a dramatic association styled as Bahuroopi¹²⁷

He produced the documentary film Venice which achieved international award.¹²⁸

¹¹⁷ Kalim Sharafi, *Smriti Amrito* (Dhaka:Agami Publishers, February 1993) p 18.

¹¹⁸ Sharafi, *Smriti Amrito*, p 21.

¹¹⁹ Sharafi, *Smriti Amrito*, p 23.

¹²⁰ Sharafi, *Smriti Amrito*, p 27.

¹²¹ Sharafi, *Smriti Amrito*, p 33.

¹²² Sharafi, *Smriti Amrito*, p 78

¹²³ Sharafi, *Smriti Amrito*, p 78.

¹²⁴ Sharafi, *Smriti Amrito*, p 79.

¹²⁵ Sharafi, *Smriti Amrito*, p 78.

¹²⁶ Sharafi, *Smriti Amrito*, p 79.

¹²⁷ Sharafi, *Smriti Amrito*, p 84.

¹²⁸ ‘Kalim Sharifi’, Banglapedia. (Accessed October 2019)

With the introduction of NEC Television Channel in Pakistan in 1964 he joined there as Program Director. In 1965 due to his various ant-government activities he became a victim of conspiracy of Pakistan government and was debarred from attending a training program in Japan by invalidating his passport. Disappointed and aggrieved for long, Kalim Sharafi resigned from the post of Program Director of NEC Television in 1967¹²⁹ The same year he was elected as chairman of Udichi and continued in this position till 1986.

He had a significant contribution during the Liberation War in 1971. He participated in different programs in the UK and US to pull in support for the war.¹³⁰

Kalim Sharafi was also the founder convener of Zahidur Rahim Smriti Parishad (1979, later Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Sammilan Parishad).¹³¹

He established a music school in 1983 “Sangeet Bhaban” of which he was the chairman. He was also the chairman of Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha.¹³²

Kalim Sharafi organised the artists and cultural activists to join the movement against the autocratic rule of General Ershad. For his involvement in “gana-adalat “, a demand for trial of the war-criminals, sedition case was brought against him in 1991.¹³³

He was awarded the Ekushey Padak in 1985 and the Shadhinota Padak in 1999. He received the first Rabindra Award 2010 for his contribution to promoting and preserving Rabindra Sangeet. Kalim Sharafi will always be considered, a maestro of Rabindra Sangeet¹³⁴and will continue to inspire generations for his unmatched renditions of patriotic songs.

¹²⁹ ‘Kalim Sharifi’, Banglapedia. (Accessed October 2019)

¹³⁰ ‘Kalim Sharifi’, Banglapedia. (Accessed October 2019)

¹³¹ ‘Kalim Sharifi’, Banglapedia. (Accessed October 2019)

¹³² ‘Kalim Sharifi’, Banglapedia. (Accessed October 2019)

¹³³ ‘Kalim Sharifi’, Banglapedia. (Accessed October 2019)

¹³⁴ ‘Kalim Sharifi’, Banglapedia. (Accessed October 2019)

Shamsur Rahman

(23 October 1929 – 17 August 2006)

Shamsur Rahman was a Bangladeshi poet, columnist and journalist. Rahman, who emerged in the latter half of the 20th century, wrote more than sixty books of poetry of heartfelt, often fiercely patriotic poetry and is considered a key figure in Bengali literature¹³⁵. He was regarded as the unofficial poet laureate of Bangladesh. Major themes in his poetry and writings include liberal humanism, human relations, romanticized rebellion of youth, the emergence of and consequent events in Bangladesh, and opposition to religious fundamentalism.

His campaign for political and social justice made him an iconic figure among liberals¹³⁶, but he was criticized by conservative religious factions. His secular beliefs almost cost him his life in 1999, when he narrowly escaped assassination by a group of suspected Islamist extremists.

In 1953, a literary festival at Shantiniketan, 5-member team of litterateurs represented East Bengal and Shamsur Rahman was one of them.¹³⁷ Shamsur Rahman started his professional career as a co-editor in the English daily Morning News in 1957. Later he left this job and went to the Dhaka center of the then Radio Pakistan. But he returned to his own rank at Morning News in 1960 and was there till 1964. Initially a romantic poet, Rahman began writing on political and social issues after a military coup in Pakistan in 1958.¹³⁸

While living at Paratoly he wrote his very popular politically charged poems 'Swadhinata Tumi' and 'Tomakey Paoar Janya, hey Swadhinata'.¹³⁹

After liberation his book *Bandi Shibir Theke* was published from Calcutta in 1971. This seminal work showed his respect for the freedom fighters expressed his solidarity with them and also his pain and helplessness for his own confinement and aspiration for freedom.¹⁴⁰ His poems on the war were so inspiring that they were recited at the camps of freedom fighters.

Shadhinota Tumi (Freedom, you) is considered to be his most famous poem which he wrote in 1971, during Bangladesh's war of independence.¹⁴¹

¹³⁵ 'Shamsur Rahman' *Banglapedia*. (Accessed, October 2019)

¹³⁶ Shamsur Rahman, *Kaler Dhuloy Lekha*, page 86; Boimela, 2004; Anyaprokash

¹³⁷ Rahman, *Kaler Dhuloy Lekha*, page 99

¹³⁸ 'Shamsur Rahman' *Banglapedia*.

¹³⁹ 'Shamsur Rahman' *Banglapedia*.

¹⁴⁰ Rahman, *Kaler Dhuloy Lekha*

¹⁴¹ Rahman, *Kaler Dhuloy Lekha*

He also wrote his poem 'Samson' in 1971. Shamsur Rahman superimposed the Israeli Hero Samson in place of the Bengali Hero Sheikh Mujib in Pakistani prison.¹⁴² The killing of Sheikh Mujib along with almost his entire family in the early morning of 15 August 1975 severely jolted him and he wrote one of his best poems 'Bangladesh Svapna Dyekhe'.¹⁴³

Towards the end of Hussain Muhammad Ershad's autocratic rule (1982-1990), Shamsur Rahman became involved in the anti-autocracy movement of the people. He was one of the 31 distinguished citizens who issued a milestone statement demanding end of the autocratic rule and restoration of democratic policy (30 March 1987). At about the same time the country's poets formed their own 'Kavita Parishad' to join hands with others in opposing the rule. Shamsur Rahman was made its president.¹⁴⁴ For three years from 1988 to 1990 the country's poets led by him observed with great enthusiasm on February 1 and 2 a poetry festival under a huge canopy in front of the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University.¹⁴⁵

Shamsur Rahman has left a distinct mark of originality in his poems. He has added a new dimension to modernism in Bengali poetry.¹⁴⁶

He won many prestigious awards- the Bangla Academy Award (1969) and Swadhinata Award (1991) including Bangladesh's most prestigious literary award, Ekushey Padak in 1977.¹⁴⁷

His most famous Poem “Shadhinota Tumi” freedom you are, given below will demonstrate his deep patriotism and how he wished to raise cultural and political awareness among the youth.

¹⁴² Rahman, *Kaler Dhuloy Lekha*, p 82.

¹⁴³ Rahman, *Kaler Dhuloy Lekha*

¹⁴⁴ ‘Shamsur Rahman’ Banglapedia.

¹⁴⁵ ‘Shamsur Rahman’ Banglapedia.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Shamsur Rahman’ Banglapedia.

¹⁴⁷ ‘Shamsur Rahman’ Banglapedia.

LIBERTY, YOU ARE ¹⁴⁸

(translated by Professor Kabir Chowdhury)

Liberty, you are
Tagore's ever-youthful poetry, his indestructible songs.
Liberty, you are 0
Kazi Nazrul Islam, that noble soul with his shock of wavy hair,
always acquiver with the ecstasy of creation.
Liberty, you are
the bright assembly on the immortal twentyfirst of February at the foot of the Shaheed Minar
Liberty, you are
a festoon-bedecked slogan-chanting fiery procession.
Liberty, you are
the peasant's smile on his crop-laden field.
Liberty, you are
The free unrestrained swimming of a village belle in mid-tank on a sunny noon.
Liberty, you are
the bright gleam in the eyes of a liberation soldier
moving in the frontier in pitch black darkness.
Liberty, you are
the scintillating discourse of a young trainee under the shade of a banyan tree.
Liberty, you are
the stormy dialogue in tea-stalls, play grounds and corn fields.
Liberty, you are
the summer thunderstorm lashing the sky from horizon to horizon.
Liberty, you are
the heaving bosom of the vast Meghna in the rains.
Liberty, you are
the generous expanse of my father's soft prayer mat.
Liberty, you are
my mother's snow-white sari fluttering in the breeze on the clothes-line.
Liberty, you are
the red colour of Mehdi on the tender palm of my sister.
Liberty, you are
the flaming poster shining like a star in my friend's hand.
Liberty, you are
the thick black dishevelled hair of my wife blowing in the wind.
Liberty, you are
the coloured shirt on my son, the play of sunlight on my daughter's cheeks.
Liberty, you are
my garden, the song of the cuckoo, the rustling leaves of an ancient banyan tree,
the exercise book where I write my poems just as I choose.

¹⁴⁸ Kabir Chowdhury, *Selected Poems by Shamsur Rahman*; (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, April 1986)

Muzaffar Ahmed

(14 April, 1922- 23 August, 2019)

He was born on April 14, 1922 in Dewibddar PS under Comilla District. He was an outstanding student of the Economics Department of University of Dhaka he completed both his BA and MA and went on to teach in the department of Economics of Dhaka University in 1952-54.¹⁴⁹

He was deeply involved in our Language movement in 1954 and later on in the Liberation war movement. He was also a member of the Mujibnagar Government during the War.¹⁵⁰

Professor Muzaffar Ahmed began his political career in 1937 when he was a student. In 1958, governor Ayub Khan issued arrest warrant against him because he was writing against President Ayub Khan. He was the Joint Secretary of the Pakistan NAP, in 1967, became President of the-then East Pakistan NAP.¹⁵¹

He played a central role against Ayub Khan for which he was put behind the bar. He even went to the Round-Table Conference in Rawalpindi in 1969 summoned by Ayub Khan as a main political figure from the previous East Pakistan.¹⁵²

During the War he visited many countries and Also the UN in order to raise international support and to expose the atrocities being carried out by the West Pakistanis.¹⁵³

After Liberation he was offered the position of a minister but from his deep belief of his politics he refrained from accepting any such post.¹⁵⁴

In his own words, “I believe in politics that involves sacrifice, patriotism and humanity. But now there is politics based on conspiracy and business everywhere in the country”, Muzaffar said. He also said, “My friend Mujib [Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman] had offered me ministerial post several times, but I did not accept that. I don't do politics for posts, and I don't believe in such ethics.”¹⁵⁵

He was a member of the parliament and the Chairman of the fraction called Muzaffar NAP (National Awami party) a strong socialist party of which later, Muzharul Islam became the treasurer of.¹⁵⁶

As we can see that all these great people who were frequent visitors to Muzharul Islam's Tea table and Card table were extremely socio-politically conscious and also very much active.

¹⁴⁹ Muzaffar Ahmed, 'At a Glance', Daily Bangladesh Protidin, (October 11, 2013)

¹⁵⁰ Sohrab Hassan, 'Muzaffar Ahmed, Communism & Independence'; *Daily Prothom Alo*, (26th March, 2016)

¹⁵¹ Bivuranjan Sarker, 'Remembering Sir'; *Bdnews 24*, (April 14, 2018)

¹⁵² Ahmed, 'At a Glance'

¹⁵³ Ahmed, 'At a Glance'

¹⁵⁴ Hassan, 'Muzaffar Ahmed, Communism & Independence'

¹⁵⁵ Hassan, 'Muzaffar Ahmed, Communism & Independence'

¹⁵⁶ Sarker, 'Remembering Sir'

They were active all together at a timeline of heist of political unrest which led to our Liberation War movement. From their background we can see that all of them observed partition of India, were actively interested in language movement and experienced Pakistani ruler's discrimination towards Bengali people. All these political events led them sharing the common thread of speaking out against the oppression at that time.

They were politically conscious but also used their own "media" as a point of expression of their views. It is also interesting that they took it as a weapon to develop an identity of Bengali society and also saw Modernity and socialism to deliver to the people of East Pakistan/ Bangladesh. Their association frequently met at Mazharul Islam's house as they looked up to him as a visionary philosopher and gave each other strength to speak out to protest against any forces that was active to demolish Bangladeshi identity. Their resistance found association with national politics which at that time influenced liberation war of 1971.

4. MODERNITY WITHIN MODERNITY (MUZHARUL ISLAM'S FIRST WORKS)

The Fine Arts Institute and the public library, now the Dhaka university library are the first 2 works of Muzharul Islam. Even though these two works are considered as the foundation stones of Bangladeshi modern architecture, it will be unfair to judge them just as the beginning of Bangladeshi modern architecture without understanding that these two works are very symbolic to also Muzharul Islam's personal philosophy of his life and his works and also his political standpoint.

Muzharul Islam was a highly politically active and motivated person. All his works embodies his political viewpoint and his way of thought about how he wants to build a nation. This nation building politics was inherent in all his works and pronounced in his first two works. One must not forget that even though these two works were the first works of M I as an architect, he was quite mature as a person and he was very much aware about what he wanted to do with architecture. He had already secured 2 degrees, one in physics and one in engineering. He had already worked as an engineer for the Bangladesh Government and had been posted in different locations outside Dhaka. And even from his college life he was very much aware of the political climate of the country and had first-hand observed many events which were happening in east Pakistan at that time. By the time he went to Oregon for his undergrad degree in architecture he had already strong personal standpoint towards politics. He was Marxist, very left in his thoughts and he like other intellectuals of that time believed that it was going to be left-wing politics that was going to build a country such as ours. His whole political standpoint rather being just pure nationalistic or pure political was more that of nation building. And he looked at architecture as works which will promote the concept of nation building and promote his politics of nation building.

This overlay of architecture and his politics is an extremely unique characteristic of his works and they have shaped his works in such a way that his work cannot be just defined as modern architecture but rather should be seen as a different modernity within modernity itself. His thoughts about architecture is fueled from his political belief and his patriotism. He was a combination of a very strong left wing political and nationalistic beliefs. For him the Bengali identity was paramount. All his works are motivated from establishing the modern Bengali. One should understand that at the same time he was trying to drive a nation which was constrained by many years under brit rule and west Pakistan rule and liberate the thoughts of the people from this confinement into a modern era. He wanted to empower our people by giving them modern ideologies and believed that we needed to move into a modern way of life and embrace modernity and modern ideas in our society and culture.

For him modernity was almost a combo of rationalism and socialism. Because for countries such as East Pakistan which at the time was extremely influenced by religion and culture. Religion being very important, because it was a country that had just come out of the partition in 47 and it was a country based on religious divide. And he thought to actually take away this religious divide by replacing it with more secular and socialistic viewpoint and that

is how he looked at embracing modernism for a country. his modernity wants one has to understand was extremely overlaid with his cultural standpoint, that is how he probably sweated away from Marxism because he needed to make space in his belief system for the Bengali culture and identity rather than trying to create just a uniformity which did not always support cultural identity. I think looking at his first 2 works, one should overlay it with his political and cultural beliefs in order to understand these two projects in its totality.

In this chapter I will firstly discuss these first 2 projects in details and explain how I believe his political viewpoints is overlaid in the work and then later on I will talk about the projects evolving from the Yale after he went to Yale for his master's and how the architecture has changed after his Yale days.

THE FINE ARTS INSTITUTE

The Fine Arts Institute was Muzharul Islam's first built work designed and commissioned between 1953-55. Upon returning from Oregon he joined the Bangladesh Government Public Works Department, that time known as CBI and was given the responsibility to design the Fine Arts Institute by McConnell, who was the chief architect of the time. The British architect Ronald McConnell and Edward Hicks was running the CBI from 1948 onwards.

Adnan Morshed, in his article "Modernism as Post nationalist Politics" writes "Muzharul Islam considered their architectural antinationalism "soulless" understanding that these buildings hardly captured the new Nation's cultural and social aspiration.

At that time Calcutta was the stronghold of the development Fine Arts in the region and Zainul Abedin and his colleagues felt the strong need to develop a school in Dhaka. Abedin had been teaching since 1939 in the government college of art and crafts. (ref)

After relocating to Dhaka during the partition, Abedin along with other artists and intellectuals set up the Collage of Arts and Crafts. The government later (1950) allocated a wonderful parcel of land, in the Shahabagh area, for the Institute, dotted with large trees with a round ditch at the end.

McConnell assigned the task of designing the Institute to Muzharul Islam in 1953.

Islam had a great fondness for the Ramna and Shahbagh area.

He would say that "this area defines what the architecture in Dhaka should be like.

Everything should be designed as a Bagan Bari (house in a garden). Instead of making a building and then trying to design its landscape, one should take into account the existing trees and gardens and then buildings should be designed to "BE" with them." (ref)



Figure 11: Entry pavilion, Institute of Fine Arts

The first sketch will show how Islam was searching for a place for the students to gather under the wonderful shade of the existing trees in the site.

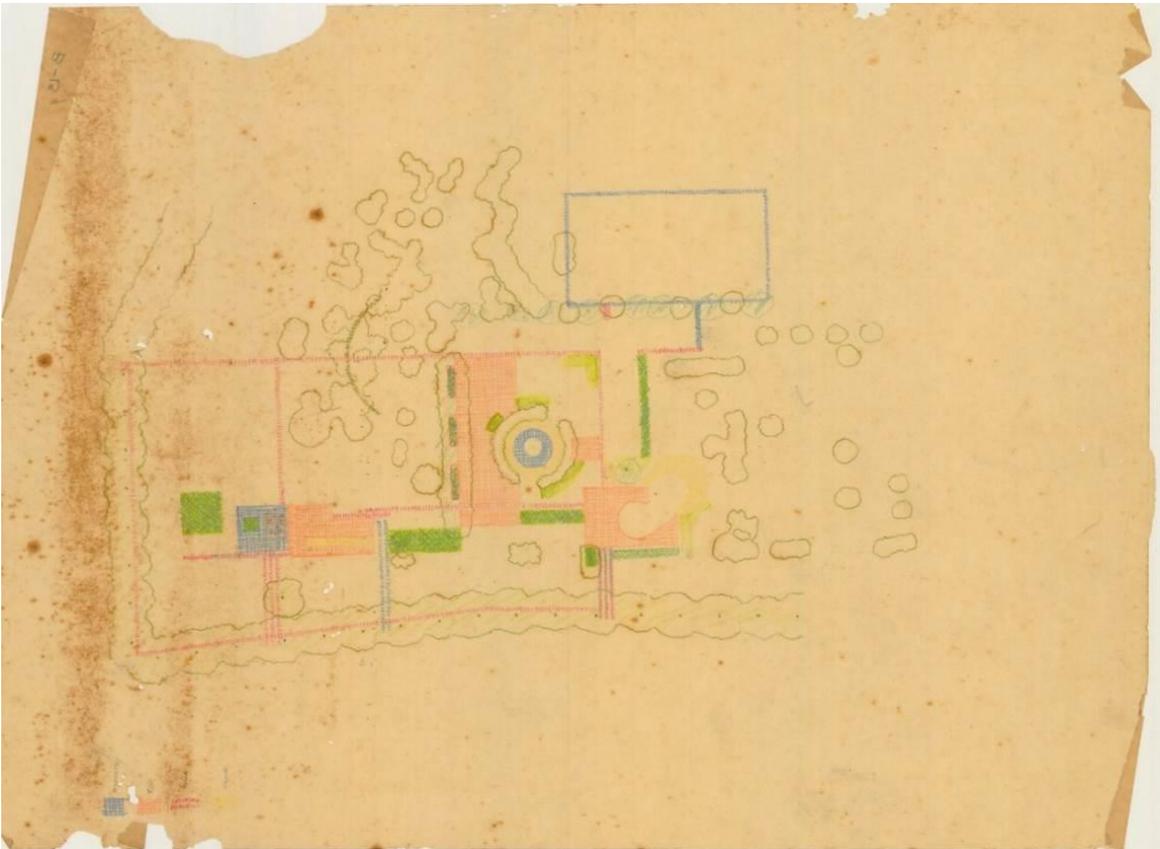


Figure 12: First drawing, Institute of Fine Arts

The first drawing done for the Fine Arts Institute is showing how Islam was trying to articulate a place of gathering among the existing trees.



Figure 13: Student gathering area under the existing large trees, Institute of Fine Arts.



Figure 14: Student gathering area under the large trees, Institute of Fine Arts.

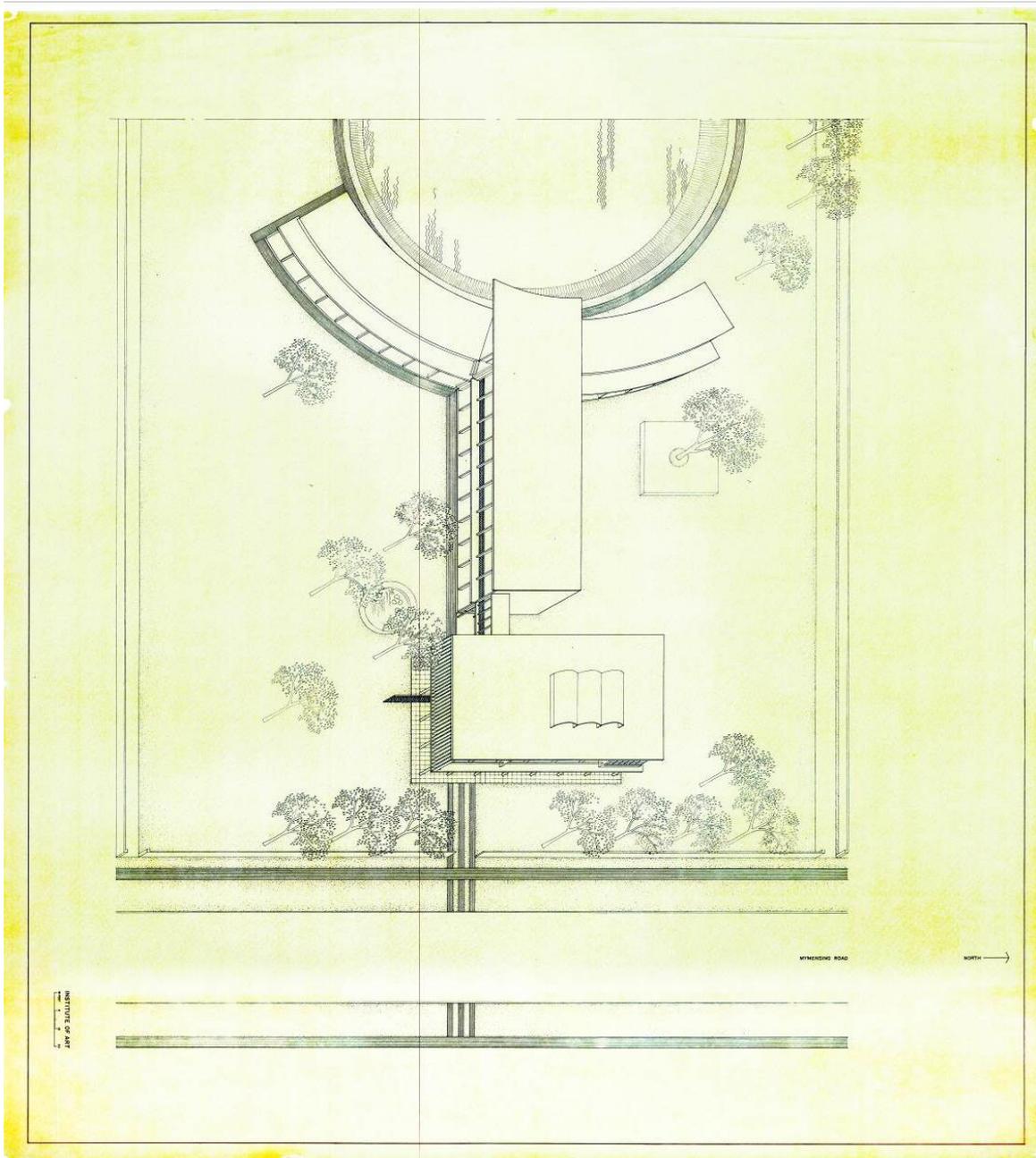


Figure 15: Axonometric drawing, Institute of Fine Arts.

This particular site that was given for the project had a strong impact on him. “I decided not to cut any trees, rather I placed the building between the trees”(ref)

The painting galleries are placed in between the trees in such a way that they are oriented north and south for light and air and they terminate into a curved segment which houses the print making section along the round ditch. With this very apparently simple layout, the project begins with an open pavilion and the galleries, beyond which, on the right, is the staircase that leads to the upper floors housing the administration, the library, the girls' common room and the sitting pavilion.

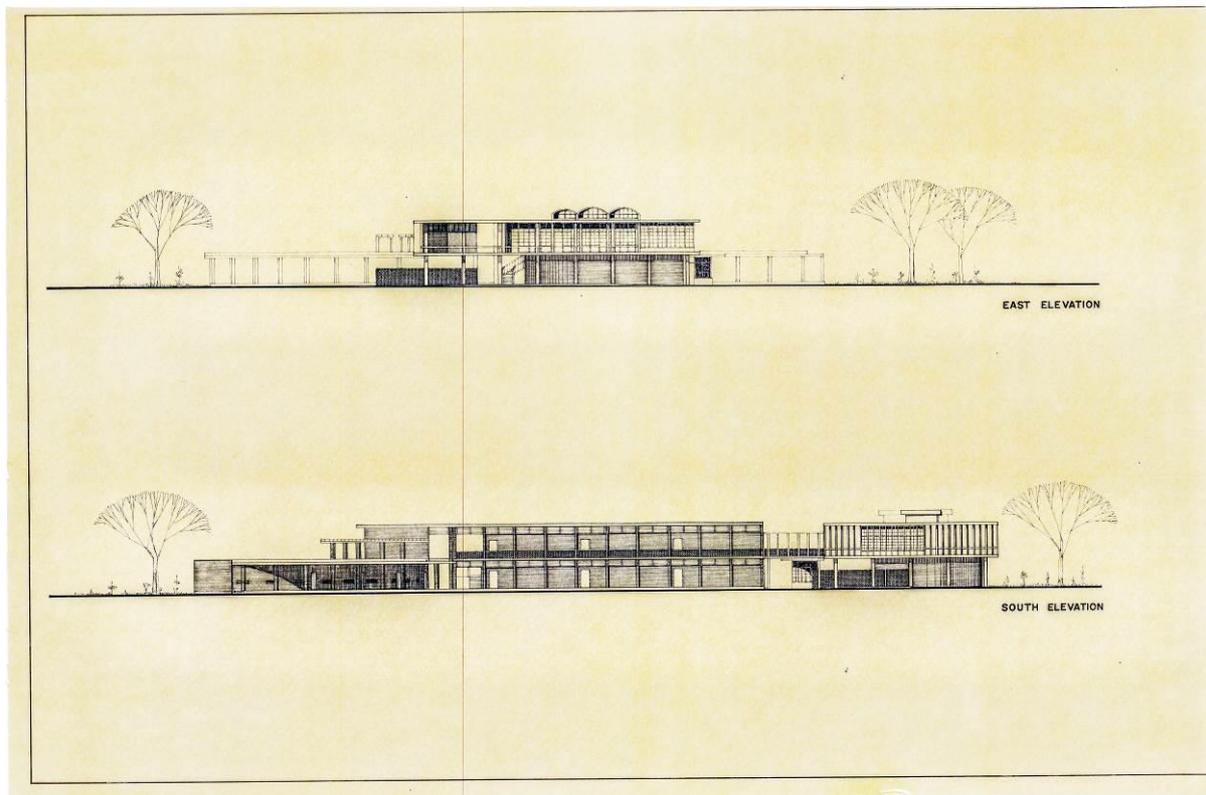


Figure 16: Elevation, Institute of Fine Arts.

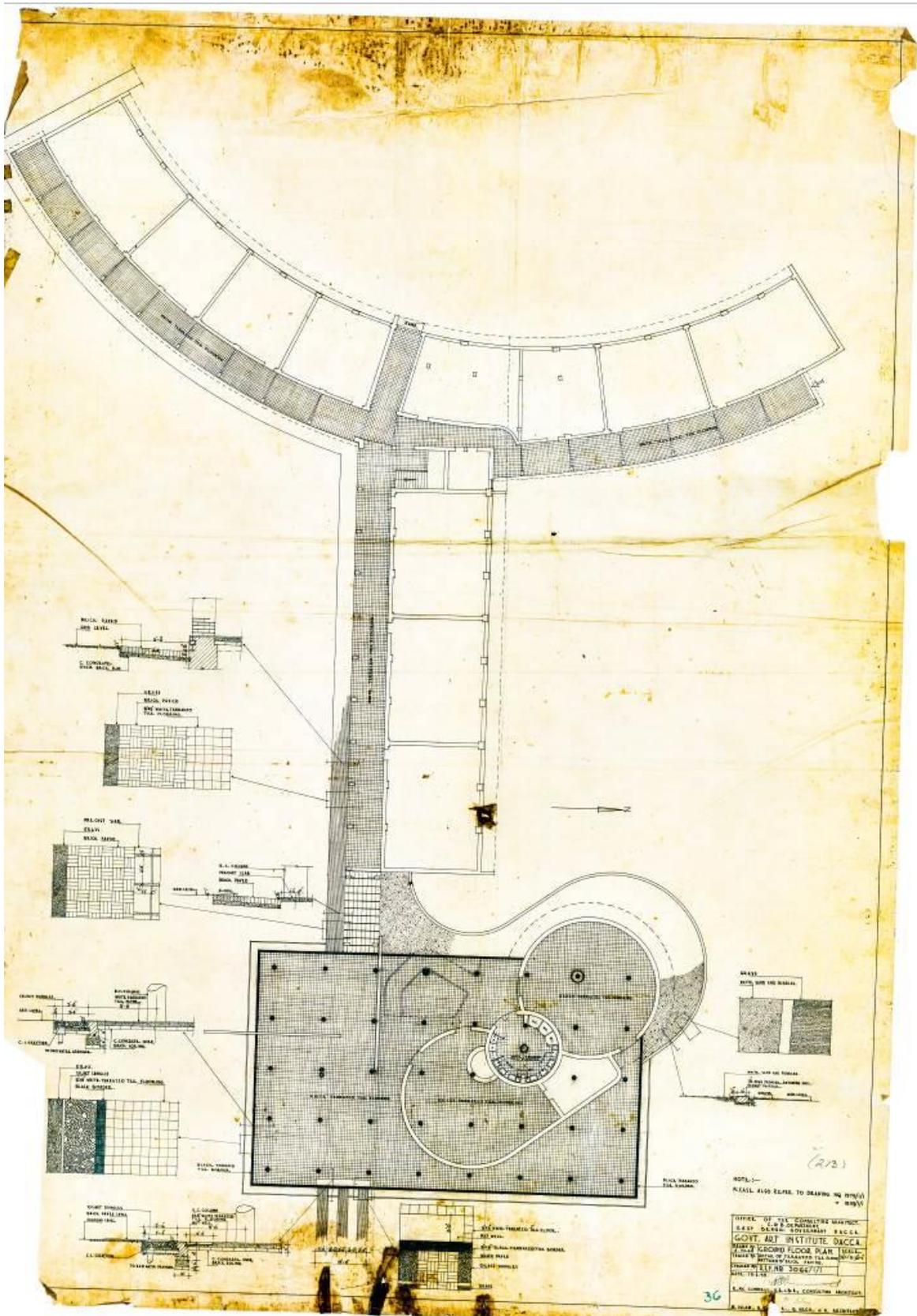


Figure 17: Floor Finish drawing, Institute of Fine Arts.

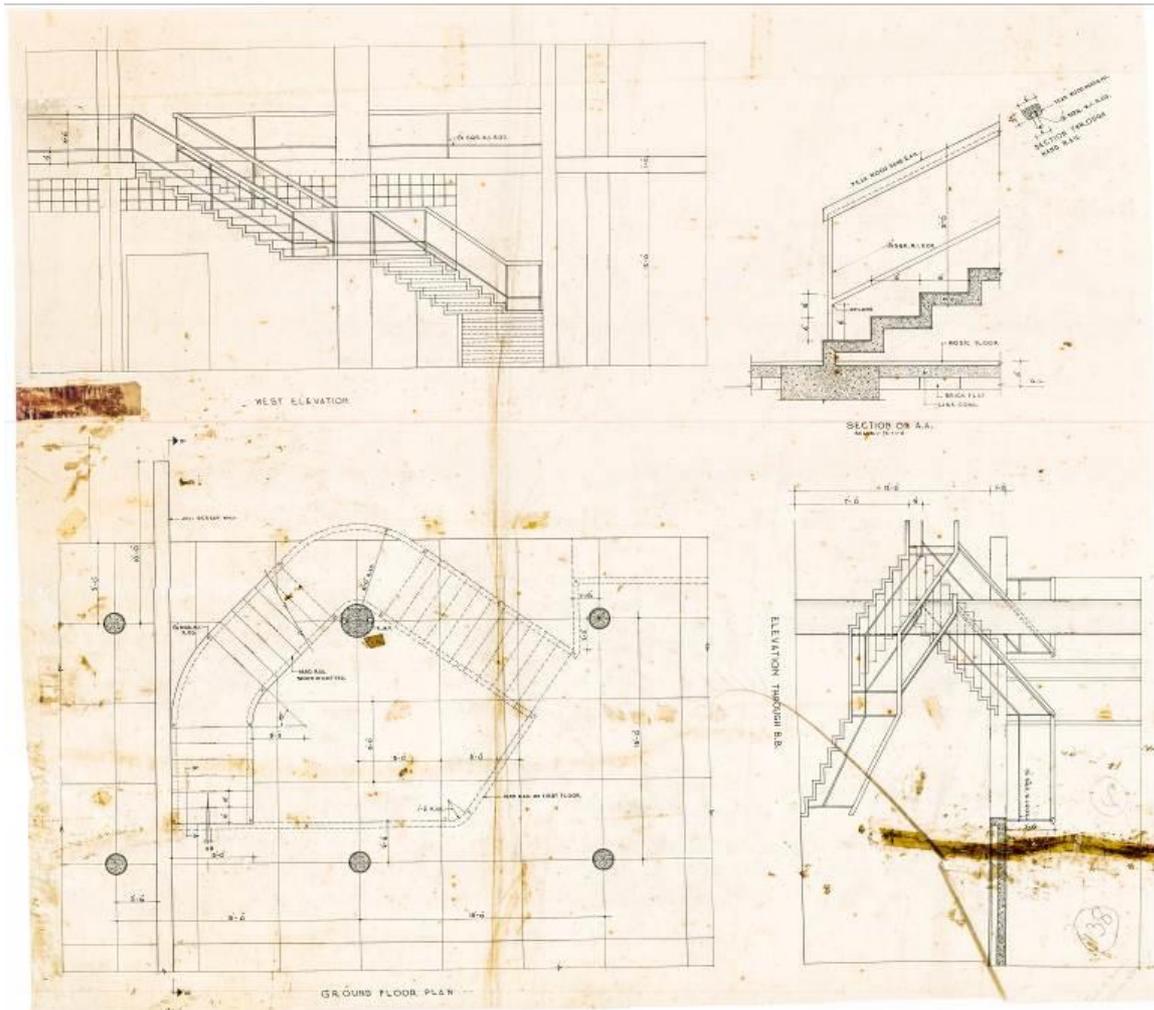


Figure 18: Detail of Sculptural Stair, Institute of Fine Arts.

The entry pavilion is extremely democratic and a universal entry for all, from where one can go into the galleries and, through the beautiful stairs, to the other functions above

The very approach to the building, the entry pavilion, which leads up to the first-floor stair and also opens up into the festival crowned at the north side of the building is a wonderful example of equality. There is no gate, so the approach can be made from any side. There is no ceremonial approach, no confinement and no separation. The pavilion almost resides within a garden. This idea comes from Islam's strong belief that Dhaka's architecture should be of houses and gardens. Dhaka has a huge heritage of buildings situated in gardens and often against canals and was once called the Venice of the East. This placing of buildings in green gardens was a unique characteristic of Dhaka. From the old buildings made by the Portuguese to the Curzon Hall and other buildings like the governor houses, all of them were situated in such a way that they appeared to be houses in gardens. The Fine Arts Institute was no exception and the placing of this pavilion in a garden entry made this building different than those which existed in the city at the time. The lack of formality and the absence of a defined entry, gate or door made the spaces extremely social and approachable.



Figure 19: Entry pavilion, Institute of Fine Arts.

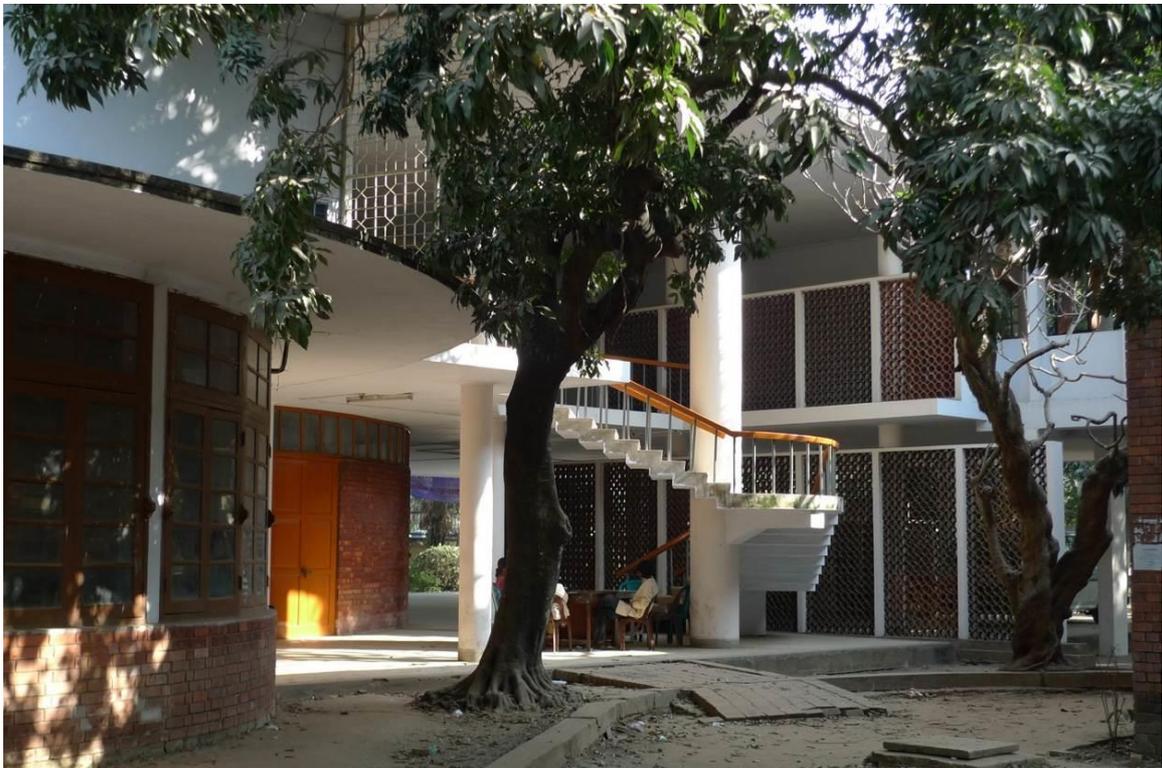


Figure 20: Internal Courtyard, Institute of Fine Arts.

In his mind he seemed to have looked at this project in a way where anyone shall feel comfortable to enter this building. And from his nation building politics it was important for him to see everybody in the nation as equal and to lead them forward in an equal standpoint. Beyond this pavilion, the space for painting classes is separated by a small depression, a small change in height, with a small step-up and step-down, working as a threshold on the ground level.



Figure 21: Entry Pavilion, Institute of Fine Arts.



Figure 22: Threshold between entry pavilion & main building, Institute of Fine Arts.

Even though the work stems for profound ideas that set the compass for a modern architecture for Bengal it does not fall short of being pragmatic and of place.

On the south there are no windows but ventilators to draw in air, so there is no disturbance from the people using the circulation corridor but good air ventilation through the studios. The painting studios have large openings on the north above eye level, so that the light does not fall directly on the works.



Figure 23: Veranda on the South, Institute of Fine



Figure 24: Large openings on the North, Institute of Fine Arts.

The corridors are protected from rain with hanging louvres, a common feature in the Assamese bungalows which can also be found in the Sylhet region. The building can effortlessly appear as a collage of many images which one can find almost a genetic strain to, for example the bungalows from the British period, the emphasis of the garden of the Sultanate and Mughal period, the terracotta works from the terracotta temples and mosques architecture, and as a pure Bengali archetype, the creation of the pavilion. The building consists of so many layers that it gets almost lost when these layers are flattened out into observations such as just of modern architecture.

But within this work, what is extremely important to notice is that how alongside this wonderful sense of equality and transparency he was still careful enough to bring out a strong nationalist standpoint.

Just behind the stair is a wall with a certain protrusion of bricks creating a mural-like wall. This abstract mural seems to be like a tribute to all the terracotta planks and architecture of Bengal—an abstract reference to our great heritage of terracotta. Every brick on the wall was designed and the owner of the brickfield made the brick just for this one project. The brick that was used over here is not something that was readily available. He had designed the cast of the brick in such a way that they will transfer vertical grooves at beautiful intervals onto the brick. The result is that when we look at the brick walls of the whole project, we see that the whole wall is actually subtly decorated. This presence of decoration again feels like a tribute to the architecture of Bengal which had low relief decorations as a part of their architecture.

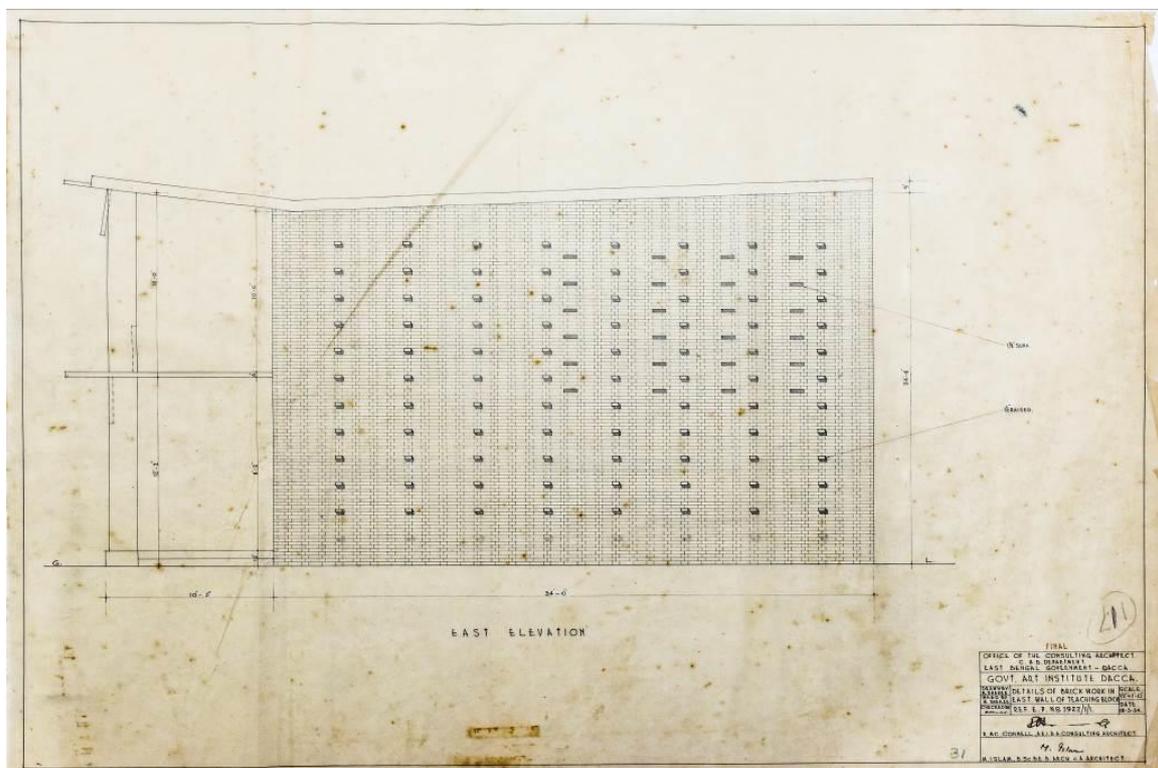


Figure 25: Detail drawing of Mural wall, Institute of Fine Arts.



Figure 26: Open Stair, Institute of Fine Arts

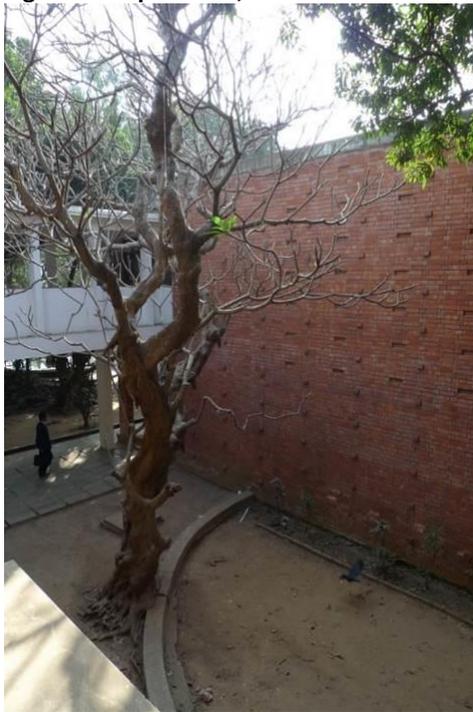


Figure 27: Internal Court, Institute of Fine Arts

Muzharul Islam's reference to history is so subtle that it almost gets missed. The other thing to notice is the brick/terracotta jali free-standing walls which work as separators and also create certain divisions and thresholds. These free-standing walls resemble the 'bera' of the village. This subtle link to almost a vernacular element transforms into a modern building but performs the same act of separation and threshold as in the villages. This layering of history, the architecture of the common people and transferring them into building as contemporary

of that time as the Fine Arts Institute is a truly amazing feat, the overlays defeating our linear perception of modernism.

The work is also extremely climate responsive and designed to a point where it can be just highlighted as a great work of tropical architecture, although Muzharul Islam did not want to leave his architecture into such compartmented categories. As one walks into the Fine Arts Institute, he or she becomes immediately aware of the open space and the trees from which the design stems. The exterior space has always been an important part of the Bengali archetype. From the village huts and their relationship with the front ‘uthans’ to other architecture with their courtyards and their gardens—all basically highlight the importance of this indoor-outdoor relationship in our architecture. Muzharul Islam’s center becoming this open area underneath the tree which he reestablished with the beautiful waterbody where students can sit under the shade of the trees is a wonderful expression of the outdoor.



Figure 28: Pond, Institute of Fine Arts



Figure 29: Garden, Institute of Fine Arts.

Islam's Fine Arts Institute oscillates between different polarities such as the formality of the outdoor to the rationality of the indoor spaces, from the absence of the entry to the articulated thresholds, from the rationalistic approach of a tropical design to the abstract design of a very fluid layout. All these throw this building into a much complex situation which should not be resolved in an over simplistic manner. This project was designed in an extremely short period of time during which Muzharul Islam was able to come up with an architecture which was extremely unique and modern and had shown absolutely no sign of colonial hangover or regional overtones. This work will always remain as the epitome of and also the beginning of Bengali modern architecture.

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Between 1953 and 1954, Muzharul Islam was also commissioned by McConnel to design the public library, now the Dhaka University Library. Situated very close to the previous project, the library again is a very clean piece of architecture in many ways, but with many other layers and subtle philosophical standpoints.

The main building which houses the stacks is raised on pilotis that connect the gardens from the east to the west. He thus created an entry where the front flows into the garden and the garden flows into the front side of the building. The idea of a building in a garden is also manifested in the design. The columns on the ground floor pavilion are narrow and placed together in groups of three, so as to merge with the trees of the garden. This soft motion of spaces and the transition of the building into the gardens reflect Muzharul Islam's sensitivity not only towards nature, but also towards the stimulation of the senses as one passes through the spaces of the building. The entry would serve as a common space which also connected to the Dhaka University campus and allowed people to gather on the pavilion. This ground floor design was later altered by the authorities when the library was transformed into the Dhaka University Library.



Figure 30: Reading Hall exterior view, Public Library



Figure 31: Approach towards the Library, Public Library

Fig 28:.

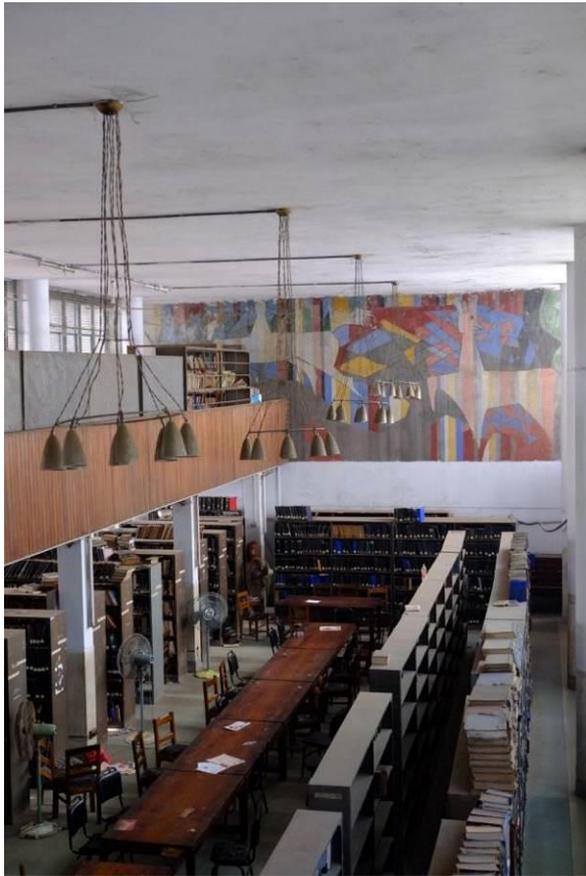


Figure 33: Reading Hall Interior view,

Fig 29: Approach, Public Library.

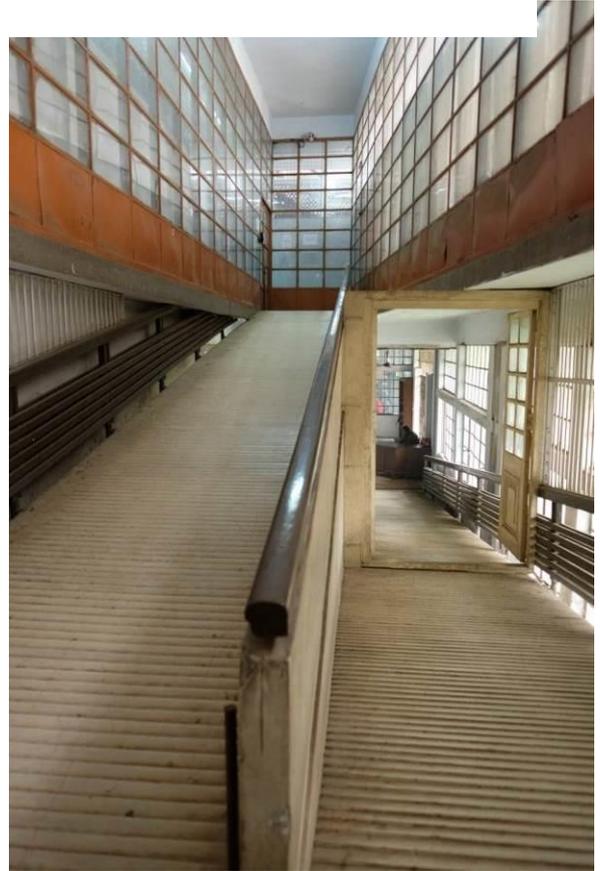


Figure 32: Ramp to reading hall, Public Library



Figure 34: Exterior view, Public Library.

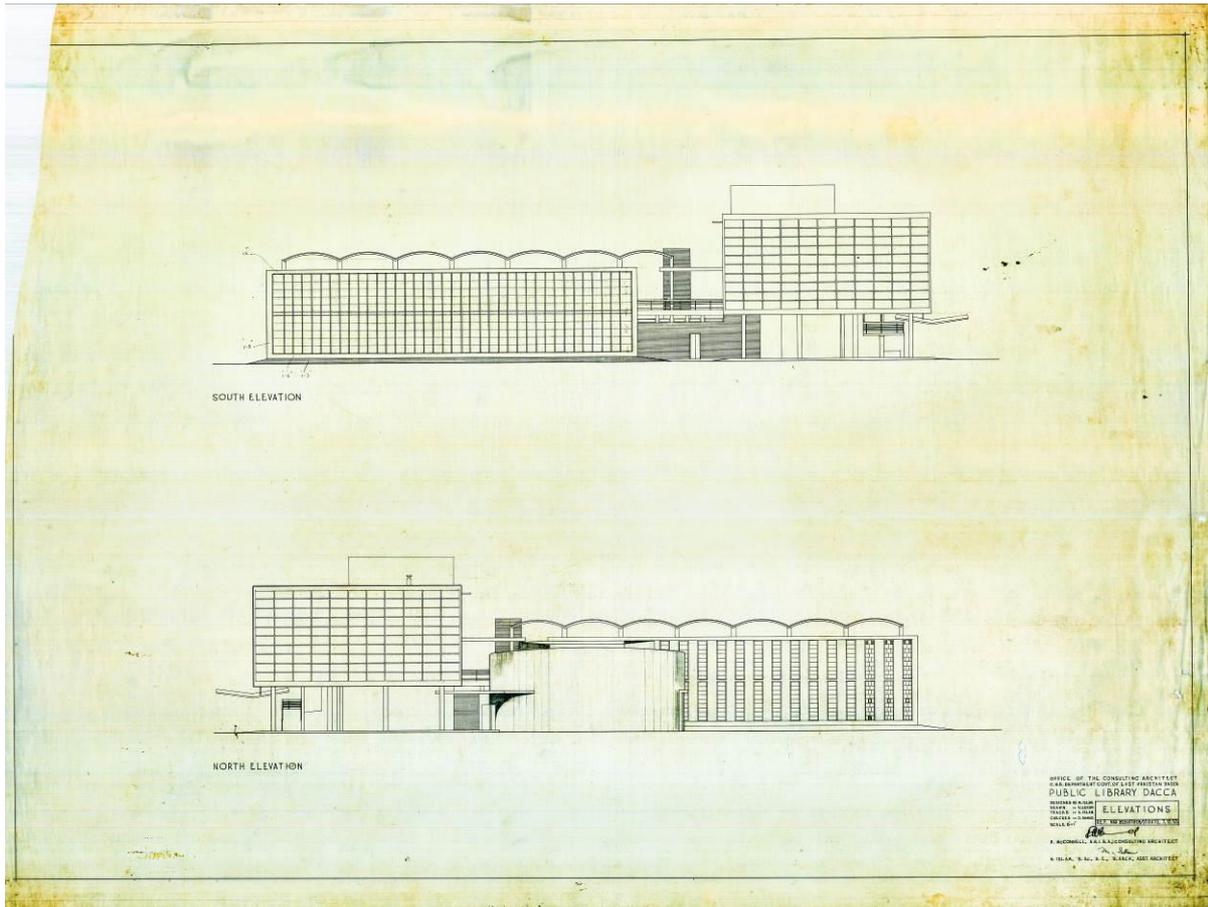


Figure 35: South & North elevations Office of Consulting Architect. CBB Department of Cont. Of East Pakistan Dacca. Public Library, Dacca.

What could have been seen from the street level would just be a ramp that led to the first level where all the offices and stacks are situated. This part was then linked to the reading hall, which was actually an approach to the upper mezzanine layer, from where one would be able to stand and see the reading hall, as if it was a grand hall for a grand event such as the pursuit of knowledge. So over here, the whole concept of education and knowledge was celebrated almost in a ceremonial way but at the same time the layout of the building was almost purely rationalistic. However, there is also a lack of ceremony of approach which again came from the architectural motivation of being extremely equal and socialistic.

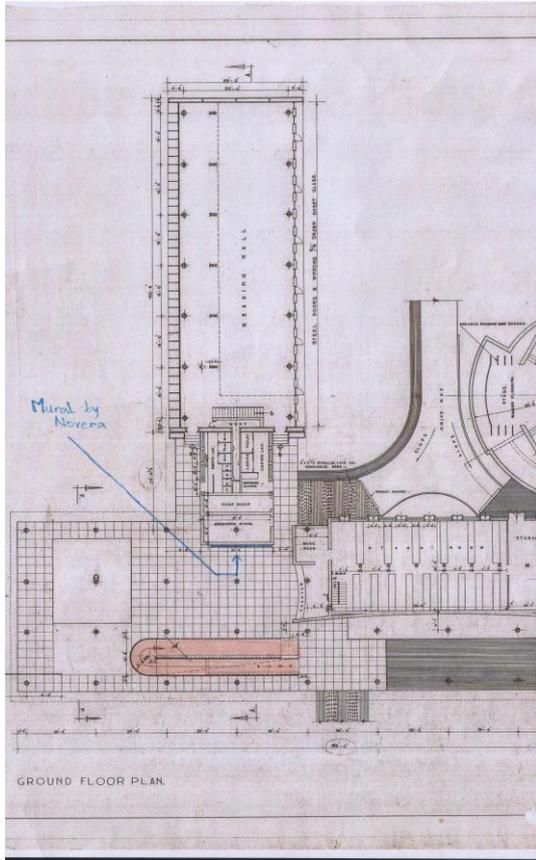


Figure 36 : Fresco - First Floor

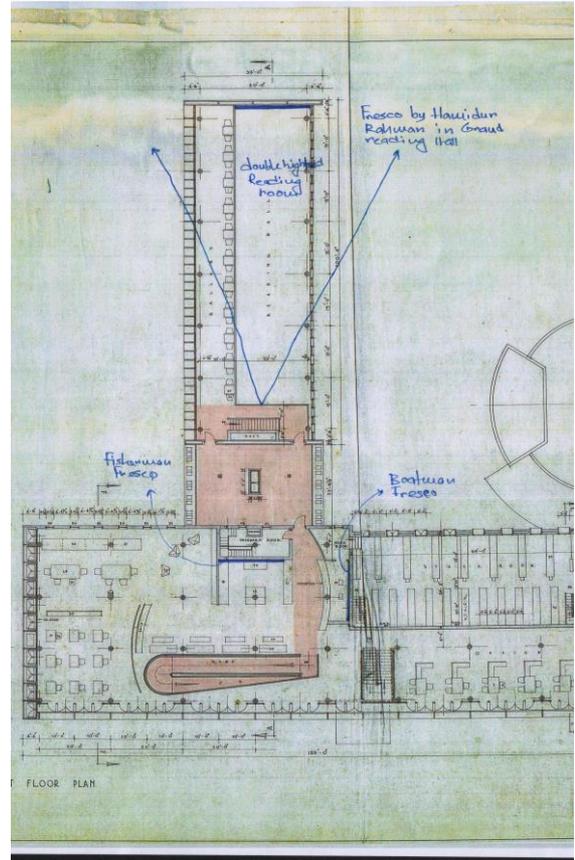


Figure 37: Fresco - Second floor

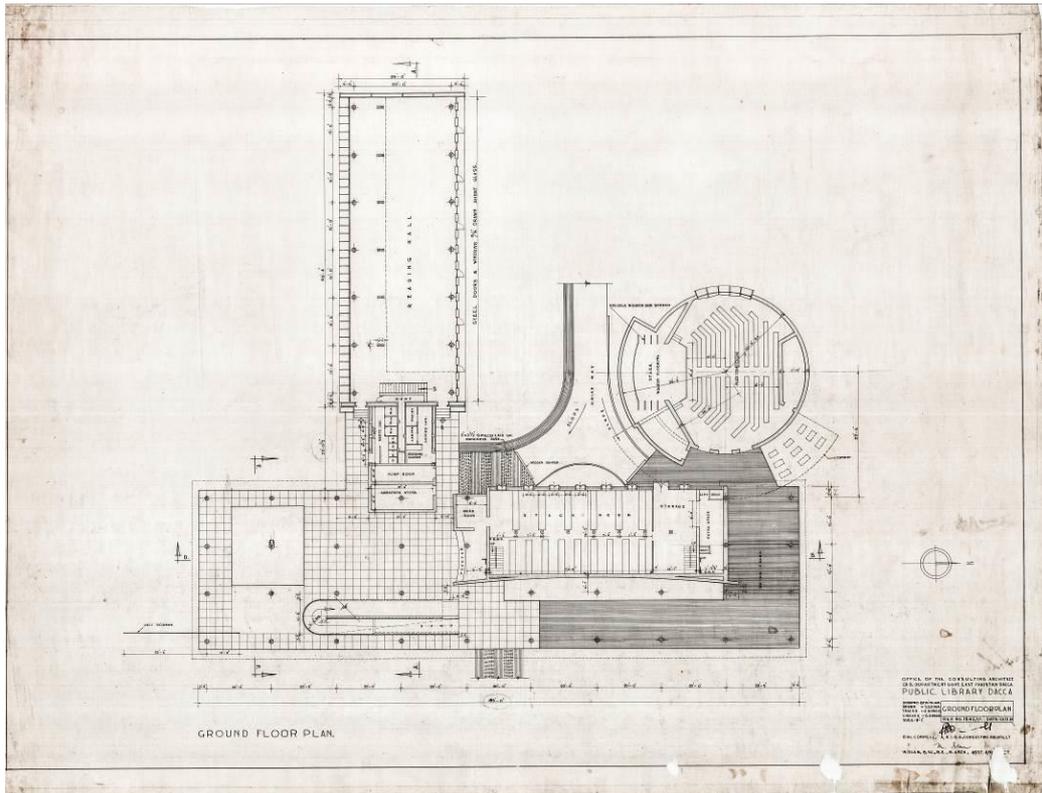


Figure 38: Ground floor plan Office of Consulting Architect. CBB Department of Cont. Of East Pakistan Dacca. Public Library, Dacca.

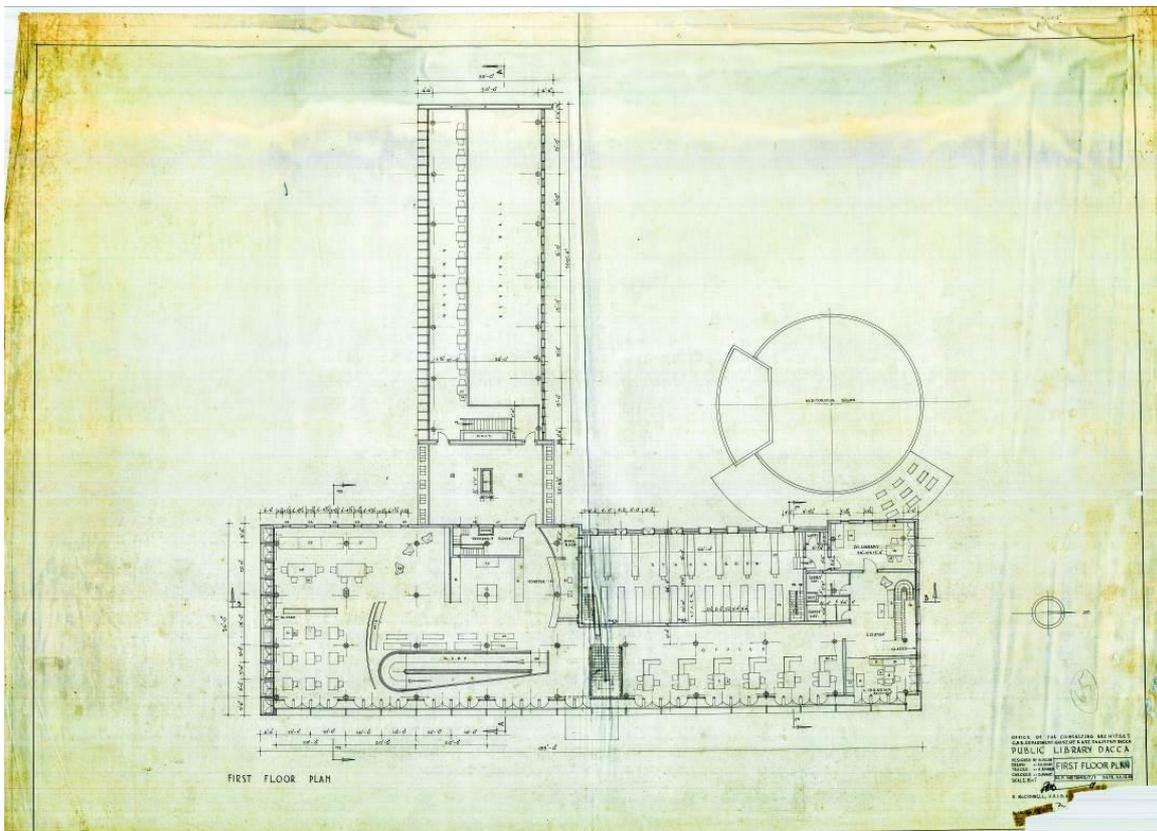


Figure 39: First floor plan Office of Consulting Architect. CBB Department of Cont. Of East Pakistan Dacca. Public Library, Dacca.

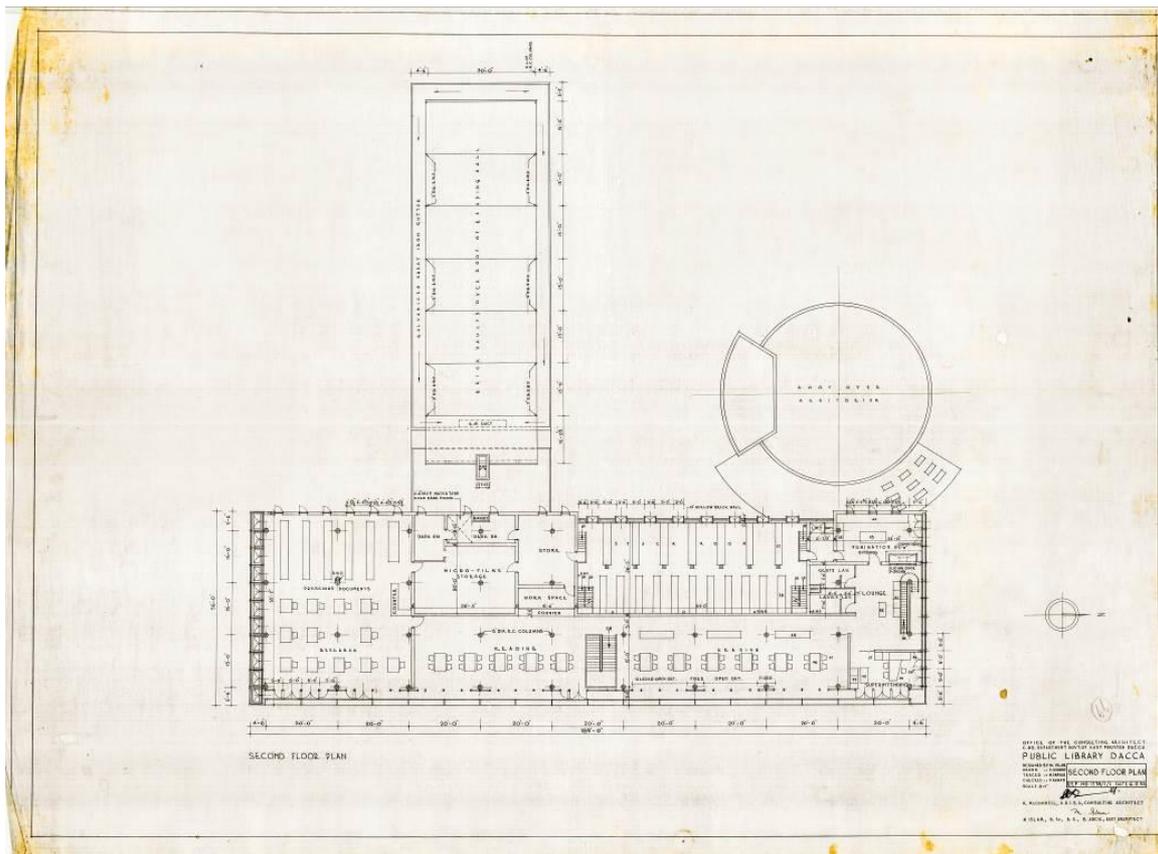


Figure 40: Second floor plan Office of Consulting Architect. CBB Department of Cont. Of East Pakistan Dacca. Public Library, Dacca.

The overtones of Muzharul Islam’s Marxist politics can be felt more strongly in this building. Some of the murals commissioned to artists over here resemble the artworks that were being commissioned at that time in public buildings in Soviet Russia. The mural on the ground floor, created by Novera Ahmed, was placed in a way that it faces the person approaching the building.

Placed across the hall opposite the ramp, Muzharul Islam made sure the fresco could be perceived more clearly as one moves up the ramp to the first floor. The two murals on the first floor were created by Hamidur Rahman. The placement of these murals was also done carefully so as to take over the most prominent walls of the library interior. The first one was placed right behind the reception which every visitor would inevitably pass by to get to the reading areas. The second one was placed on the wall at the end of the reading mezzanine hall. This wall is visible to everyone who approaches the first floor.

All the artworks were portrayals of power of the common people—it was there to talk about the country and the importance of everyone in the country being a part of the nation, so to have fishermen and boatmen and all these depicted on buildings such as the public library was an interesting phenomenon because even though it was about higher education, it had this left wing attitude to have a socialist standpoint of incorporating everyone from every stratum as a part of the nation and its growth. It almost felt like this artwork was there to remind the people who would come here to study about how to perceive their nation beyond the isolation of the city. What is more important to notice here, is that he commissioned all the works in the building to people who were part of his Marxist left-wing politics. At that time the two artists who did this work, Novera and Hamidur Rahman were extremely left wing, and at one time Novera even left East Pakistan because left wing politics was almost

under attack at the time. She was also known to be extremely progressive in her ways and was often criticized for this and her left wing attitude. But it was this position of these two artists that made them close to Muzharul Islam and it was their way of thinking that he also wanted to bring into this project and establish as a socialist standpoint in this building.

Novera Ahmed is the most iconic female sculptor of Bangladesh. She was born in the 1930s in Calcutta. During the partition, her family moved to then East Pakistan. She was always considered a rebel as she studied fine arts against her family's wishes. Being a strong advocate of left- wing politics and thought, she had a strong nationistic attitude.

She was one of the designers of the 'Shahid Minar', the monument of our Language Movement. Novera's work holds strong references to both traditionalism and the Avant-Gard. Her progressive nature and her quality of work was the reason why she was chosen to be the artist for the very important mural on the ground floor of the library.

Muzharul Islam was also acquainted to her because of their common political view, and thus she was commissioned for the work.

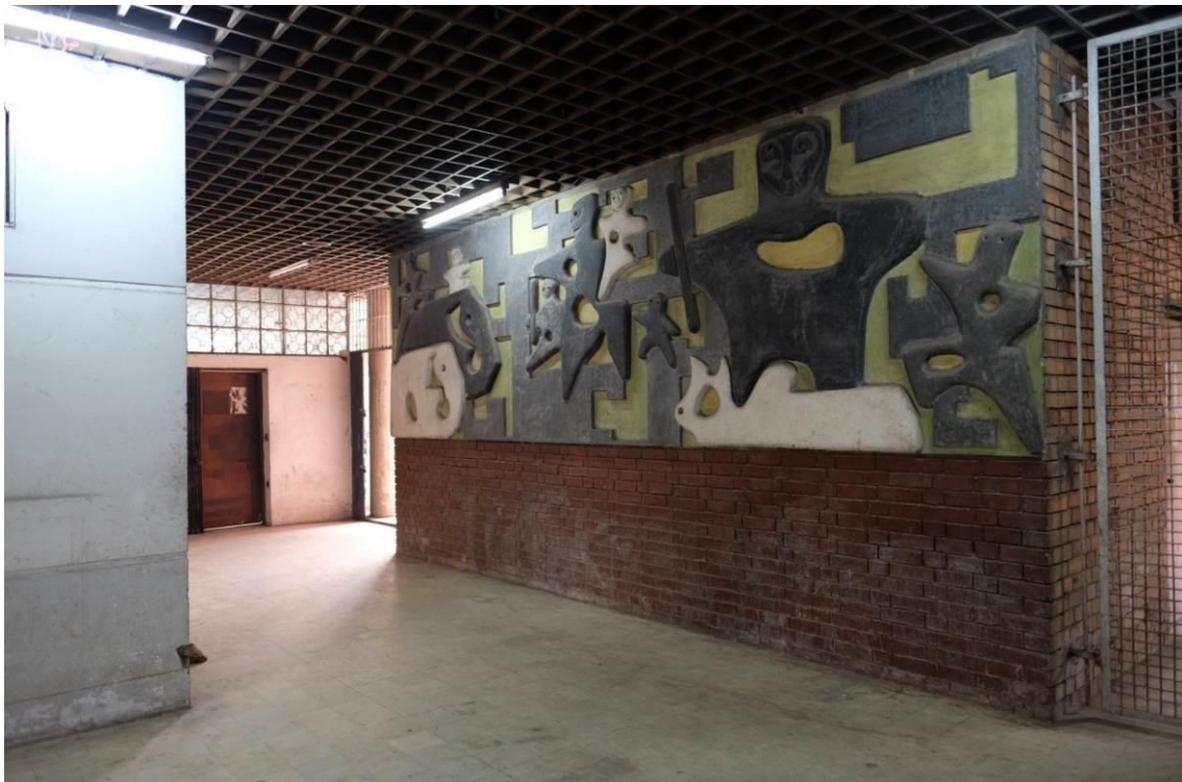


Figure 41: Untitled mural by Novera Ahmed.

Hamidur Rahman is well known as one of the designers of our monument for the 'Language Martyrs Monument' attended the "Ecole de Beaux Arts" in Paris from 1950-51. Acknowledged for his abstract expressionism, like Novera, he was a strong believer of left-wing politics and was also close friends with her. He was a strong nationalist, the key designer of 'Shahid Minar' and later went on to create many murals that spoke of nationalism and the importance of the common man.

Muzharul Islam was acquainted with him, both because of his work and political stand point. He was asked to do 3 murals, two of which was on the first floor of the main building and one on the main hall of the library. His works on the first floor of the library, “Boat composition” & “Fisherman’s village” still remains as two of his iconic works where he was able to use traditional images in abstract forms.



Figure 42: The Boatmen fresco by Hamidur Rahman



Figure 43: The Fishermen fresco by Hamidur Rahman



Figure 44: Untitled fresco by Hamidur Rahman

This direct expression of socialist politics in this building gives it a unique identity and almost creates a tension with just pure modernist approach, devoid of any kind of political overtone. The uniqueness of this building coming from these commissioned artworks also makes this particular building a project to ponder about in many ways. It is an example for us to show how it was so important for Muzharul Islam to have the next generation think strongly about their nation and about the common people of the nation and how they should focus not just on individualist pursuit of career but pursuit in the improvement of the totality of the nation and one's role in nation building.

5. THE TROPICAL SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE EXPERIENCE (1956-57: British Council Scholarship for studying Tropical Architecture at the A.A. School of Architecture)

After his first few works, Muzharul Islam left for England to participate in a course called tropical architecture. This course was introduced by Fry, who at that time was the director of the course. It was actually a brain child of both Fry and Konigsberger, who were big time instigators of tropical architecture and who wanted to promote the idea of tropical architecture for architecture all over Asia, Africa and certain parts of South America.

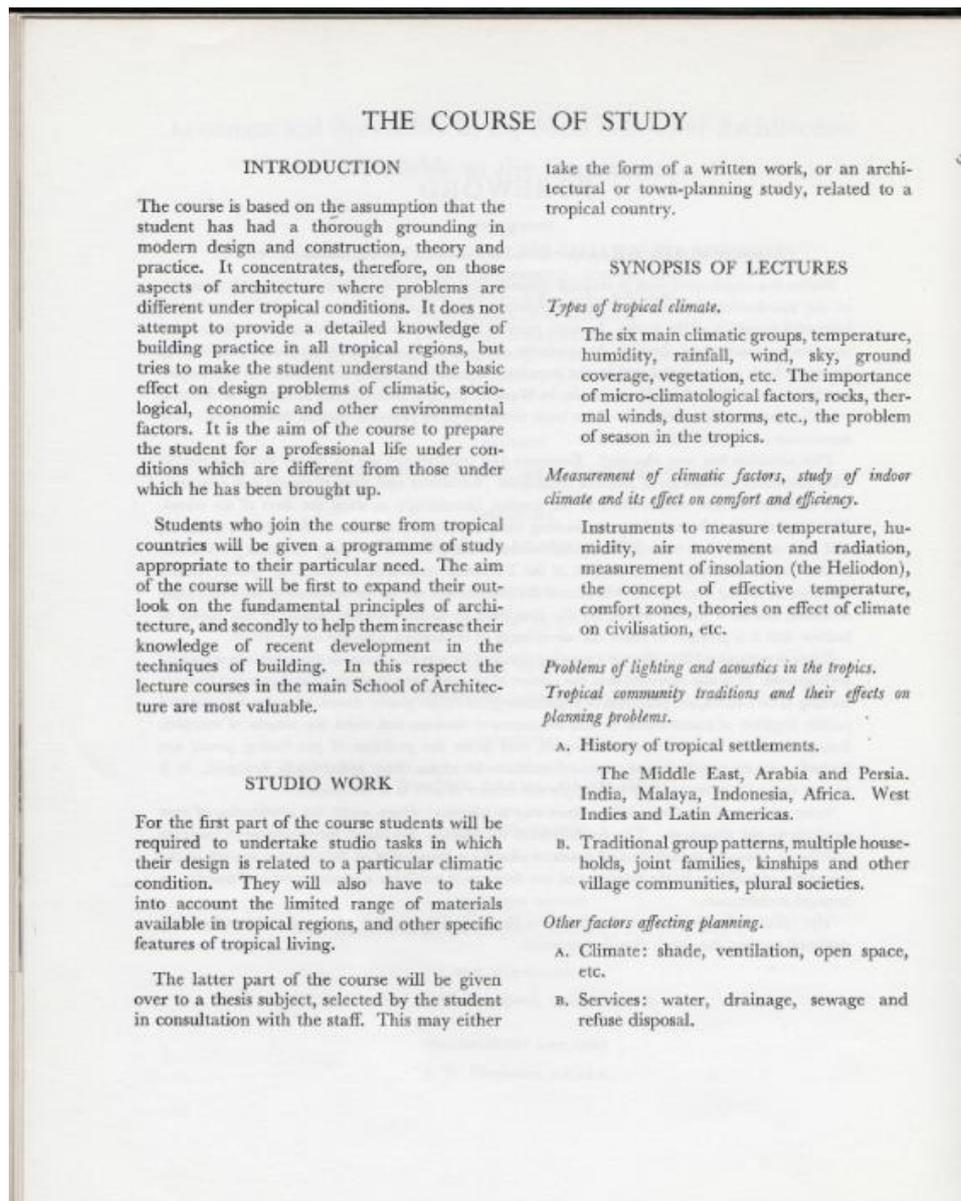


Figure 45: Course-outline, Department of Tropical Studies

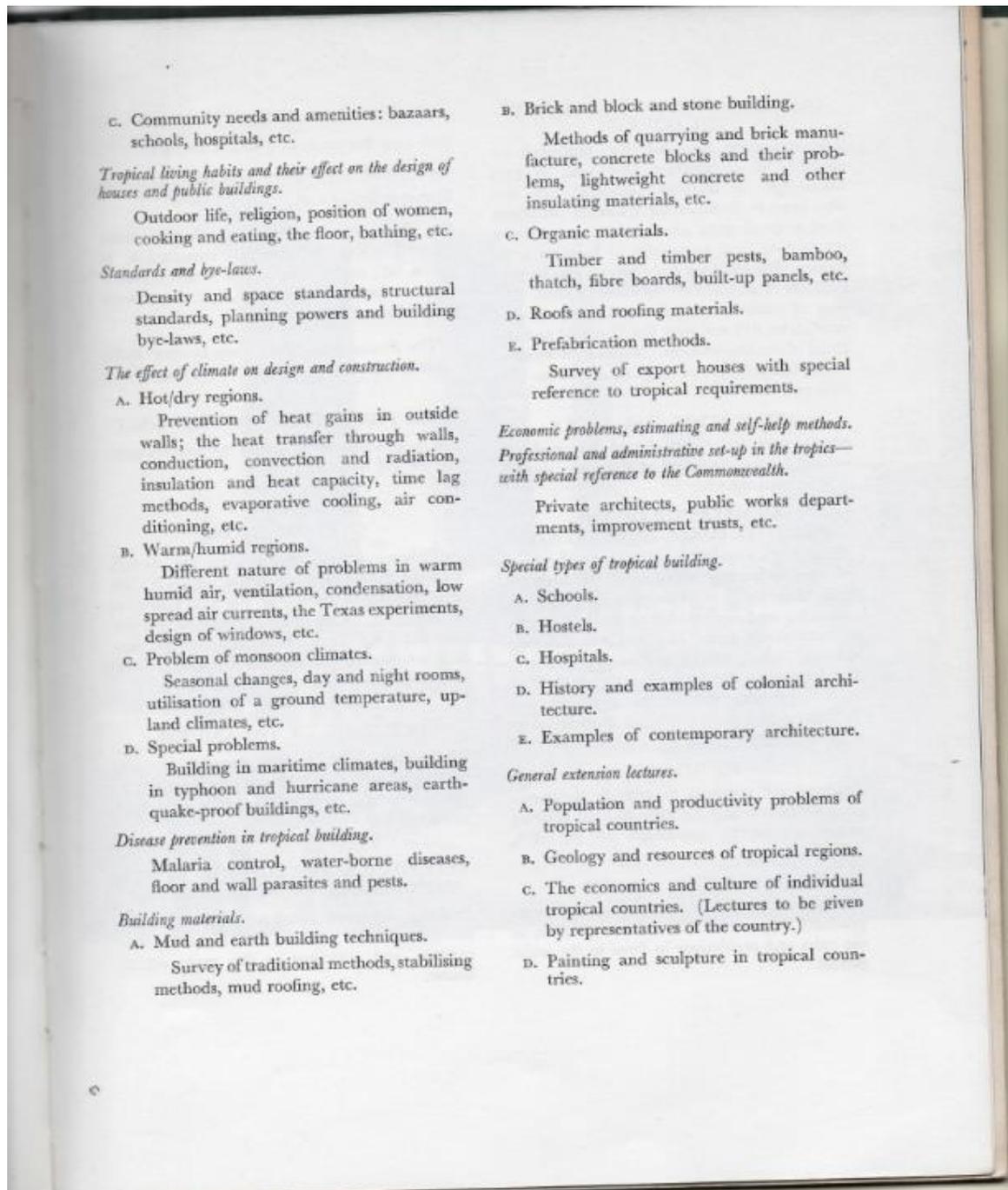


Figure 46: Course-outline, Department of Tropical Studies.

QUALIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE COURSE

The course is intended for post-graduate students of architecture who wish to gain knowledge of tropical building. It will also provide facilities for qualified architects from tropical areas who are anxious to bring up to date their knowledge of building techniques. The full-time day course is also open to students of architecture who are in their final year of training. In all cases, acceptance of candidates will rest with the Principal and the Head of the Department. Normally deferment from National Service is granted to bona fide students.

APPLICATION FOR ENTRY

Applications for entry should be made in writing to the Principal stating age, qualifications, training, etc.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION

All students accepted for the Department are required to become members of the Architectural Association (subscription £4 4s. od. annually) and are entitled to the full benefits of membership (see "The Architectural Association," which can be had on application to the Secretary). Students who are not qualified as architects are entitled to apply for probationary membership of the Association at a reduced subscription.

EQUIPMENT

Students are required to provide their own drawing boards and instruments. All drawing materials can be purchased at the A.A. materials bureau.

ADMINISTRATION

All students taking the course in the post-graduate Department will have to conform to the rules and regulations in force in the main School.

FEEES

Full-time day study at £50 a term—£100.

A.A. annual subscription—£4 4s.

Entrance fee—£2 2s.

For those who reside and work fifty miles from London the annual subscription is £2 2s. od., and in the case of Fellows, Licentiates or Associates of the R.I.B.A. no entrance fee is charged.

The Council may from time to time make variations or additions to the above fees.

FEEES FOR LECTURE COURSE ONLY

For those who wish to attend the lectures only, the fee will be £15.

QUALIFICATIONS

Attendance at the course does not qualify students for the A.A. Diploma, which is only available for those doing the full course of architecture, as recognised for exemption by the R.I.B.A. Those students who complete satisfactorily the course in the Tropical Department will receive a Certificate of Study.

DURATION OF THE COURSE

The course is of six months' duration, starting each year on the last Monday in September. There will be a short holiday of fourteen days at Christmas.

ATTENDANCE AT LECTURES IN THE MAIN SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

Students admitted to the Department are encouraged to attend the lectures, discussions and criticisms in the main school course.

Figure 47: Course-outline, Department of Tropical Studies

DEPARTMENT OF TROPICAL STUDIES

A CROSS-SECTION OF RECENT WORK AND TEACHING METHODS



Tropical architecture has become an accepted subject of specialisation and study, so much so that one realises with some surprise that only ten years have passed since the first Conference on Tropical Architecture was held in London. It was at this Conference that for the first time voices were heard proclaiming the then revolutionary opinion that our craft and tradition bound teaching of architecture was of little use for countries with different climates and different social and economic backgrounds. The Conference passed resolutions demanding the establishment of special courses in tropical architecture.

The first such course was established in the following year at the AA, and this was copied seven years later in Melbourne, Australia. Schools in several other countries are considering the establishment of Tropical Architecture Courses, but none has begun to operate so far.

The AA Course proved popular from the very beginning, not only with British architects wishing to practise in tropical countries, but more so with architects from the tropics who were anxious to improve their standards of design and equip themselves better for the tasks confronting them in their own fast-developing countries.

The first years of the course led quickly to the recognition that there would be no point in replacing the rules of thumb which were traditionally taught to students and apprentices in Britain by other sets for tropical countries. The conditions encountered within the tropics were too varied to make this practicable and it was necessary to go more deeply into the problem of environmental control and to establish universally applicable principles of design. This led to a more scientific and scholarly approach in questions of physical as well as social environment.

Generally speaking, the Department offers four types of facility, namely:

- i. Opportunities for students of architecture to specialise in the last year of their education.
- ii. Post-graduate education for practising architects from tropical countries who want to bring themselves up-to-date and acquire a better understanding of environmental problems and possibilities in their own countries.
- iii. Special training for teachers of tropical architecture, and
- iv. Facilities for research.

The equipment and instruments available to research students at the AA, particularly to those of the Tropical Department, are expanding rapidly. This year a low-speed wind tunnel has been completed and an artificial sky will soon be available for the study of daylighting from overcast skies. For the study of direct and reflected sunlight, a heliodon has been available for some years. Analogue models for the study of heat flow are under construction. The results of two year-long research studies by recent post-graduate students will shortly be ready for publication. The subjects of these studies are: 'Heat Flow through Roofs in the Warm Humid Tropics' and 'Air Movement within Buildings'.

The following pages give examples of the teaching methods of the Department taken from the work of the 1962/63 Session, the first part of which concluded on March 27th, with the Annual Exhibition of the Department at the AA. This Exhibition marks the end of the formal course of lectures and group studio work, and the beginning of individual studies in

subjects of special interest to particular students.

In the following presentation of recent student work we have tried to illustrate the educational intention of the various exercises. The examples shown were not selected because they represent perfect solutions, but as illustrations of the teaching sequence and method used in the course.

FIRST TERM

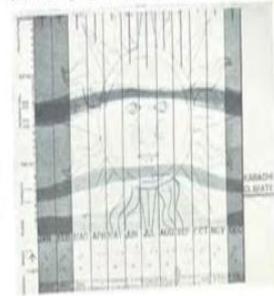
Basic Climatological Studies

Problem: To compile, digest and illustrate all the significant factors of the particular climate with which the student considers himself most familiar.

Objective: Students should become sensitive to climatic factors, learn relative usefulness of different climatological data and of the sources for such data, and begin to acquire the ability to relate statistical information to the real problems of habitation and building construction.

Duration of Exercise: One week.

Example by: K. K. Mumtaz (Pakistan).

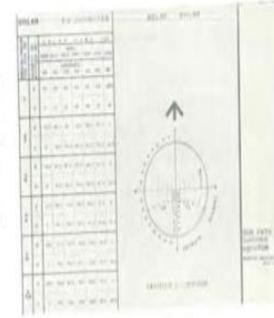


Problem: For a given latitude, calculate and plot at hourly intervals on selected dates distributed through an entire year the position of the sun in the sky.

Objective: Student should become familiar with the meaning of the Solar Chart and the method of its construction.

Duration of Exercise: One week.

Example by: K. K. Mumtaz (Pakistan), I. G. G. Ngarah (Indonesia), C. B. Ong (Singapore).



Problem: For a given orientation and location of a building and an opening of given size, determine the required shading periods and design a device capable of producing the desired shade conditions.

Objective: The student, in applying his newly acquired knowledge of prediction of the sun's apparent movement, realises the variety of choice open to the designer in producing shade. He also comes to appreciate the often conflicting requirements of shade, daylighting and view.

Duration of Exercise: One week.

Example by: O. J. Peries (Kenya).

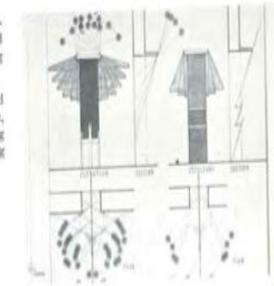


Figure 48: A Cross-section of recent work and teaching methods.

FIRST TERM

Design of School Building for Industrialised Production (Group exercise)

Problem: Adaptation of an industrialised primary school plan (viz: The 'CLASP School' for the Milan Exhibition) for three contrasting climatic, technological and economic situations.

Objective: Team of students to acquire an understanding of the effects of climate and technological background on

systems building methods and to become acquainted with Development Group principles.

Duration of Exercise: Nine weeks in three equal stages.

Examples by: Baghdad Team: K. K. Munsta (Pakistan), C. A. Panamee (India), P. I. Wally (UK); Lagos Team: T. Al-Jeda (Iraq), B. S. Hakim (Iraq); Delhi Team: M. Avon (Trinidad), R. C. Cockburn (UK), M. M. Shabandar (Iraq).

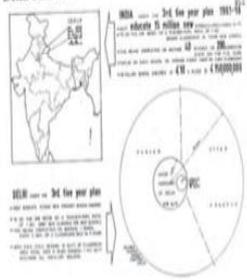
Baghdad School



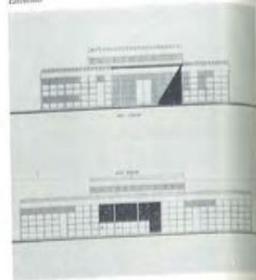
Lagos School



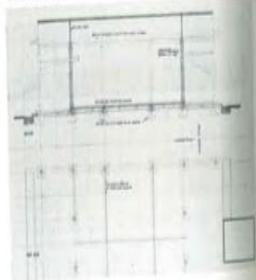
Delhi School



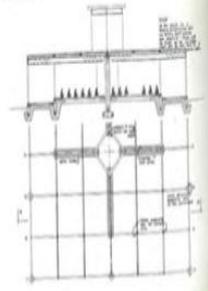
Elevations



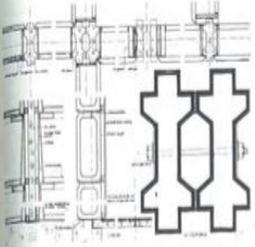
Plan of Section



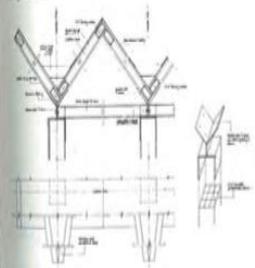
Plan of Section



Wall detail



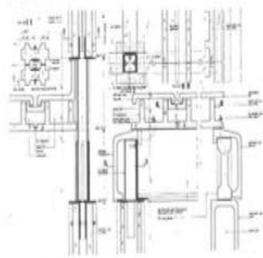
Roof detail



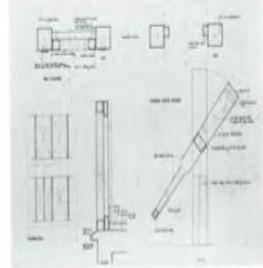
Roof detail

PROPERTY OF MATERIALS & COMPONENTS FOR BUILT FORMER SCHOOL	
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Roof Detail



Window Detail



Wall Unit

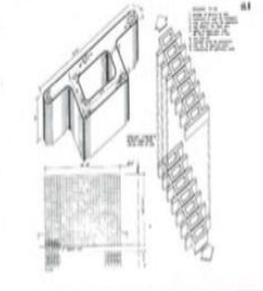


Figure 49: Course Outline, Department of Tropical Studies.

SECOND TERM

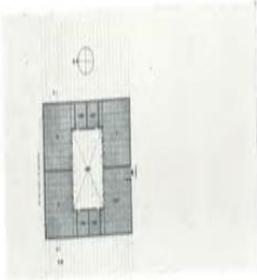
Revision of Industrialised Schoolbuilding Projects

Problem: Different teams undertake modification and simplification of three selected first term projects.

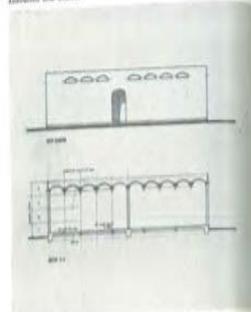
Objective: Feed-back of the total of previous term's experience, including criticism by outside jury. Teams to go more deeply into questions of mass manufacture of components, transport and erection.

Examples by: Baghdad Team: M. Asou (Trinidad), T. Al Jela (Iraq), B. S. Hakim (Iraq), I. G. G. Ngarah (Indonesia), M. M. Shabandar (Iraq); Lagos Team: A. K. Amartye (Ghana), F. W. Smith (Fiji), B. Sobowale (Nigeria), K. R. Surintraoom (Thailand), V. P. Tarazi (Lebanon); Delhi Team: J. M. English (S. Rhodesia), A. Fakiro (Rhodesia), D. V. Kulkarni (India), S. V. Patkar (India), B. Sahasrabhojane (India), O. M. A. Salim (Sudan), S. H. Wandrekar (India).

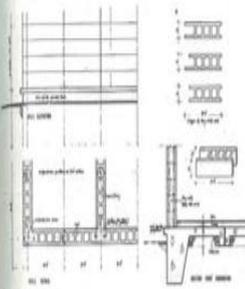
Baghdad School



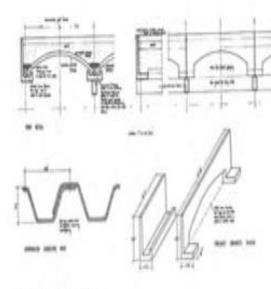
Elevation and Section



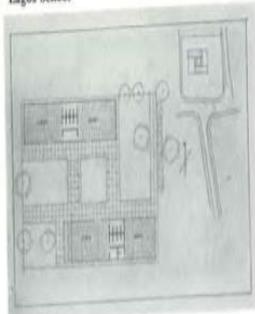
Wall Detail



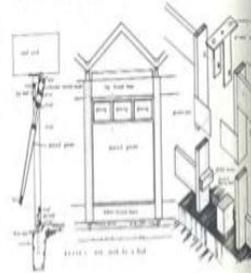
Roof Detail



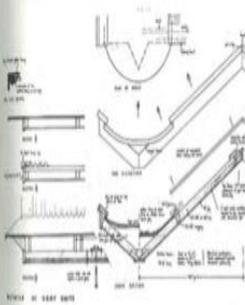
Lagos School



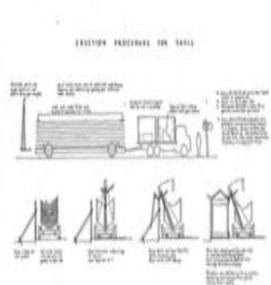
Window and Wall Details



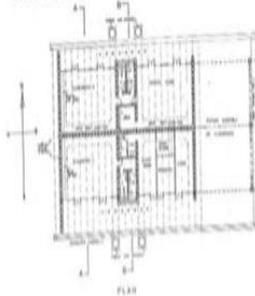
Roof Detail



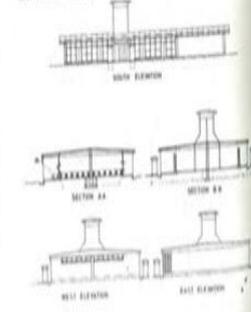
Transport and Assembly



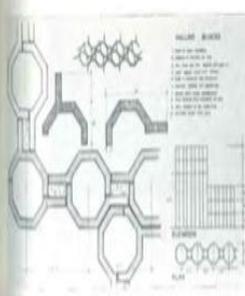
Delhi School



Elevation and Section



Wall Detail



Ventilation System

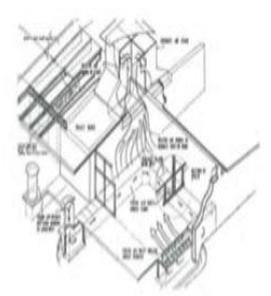


Figure 50: Course Outline, Department of Tropical Studies.

When Muzharul Islam came to this course, I think what happened to him at that point is that he did not find anything new or something that would influence his architecture in any way. The reason being that his first initial three works had already done what they were trying to advocate for at that time. His first three works; the library, the fine arts institute and Nipa building were strong designs, evolving from site and climate, but they embraced even much more. And in my considered opinion, the architecture resulting just out of climatic calculations and responding to climate only did not interest him much.

This is evident if we look at the special publication on tropical architecture by architectural review, we will see architecture that only focus was actually climate. they did not really incorporate much or talk about culture, history or the place at that time. Islam never really spoke about the school much. In my opinion it was because his time in AA did not have much influence on his understanding of architecture, it was almost like a repetition of what he already had been doing in then-East Pakistan after returning from Oregon.

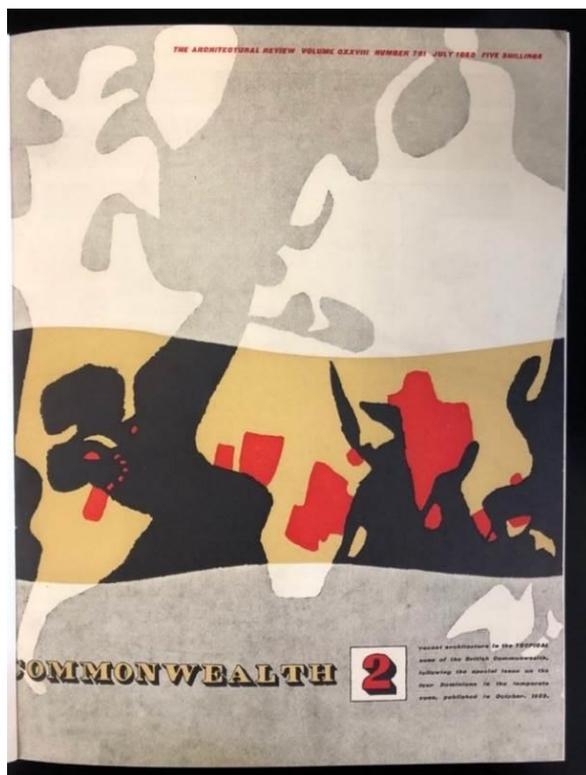


Figure 51: The Architectural Review, v 127, n 761, (July 1960)





INDIA, PAKISTAN AND CEYLON

For the poor of Asia shelter has always been, and still is, a matter of self-help. The peasants of India, Pakistan and Ceylon need but little of it, because most of their lives are spent in the open; but they do need some protection from sun and rain, occasional privacy, and safe storage places for their belongings. Their urge to beautify and decorate is seldom applied to the whole house, but to essential parts, such as the door or threshold (the Indian housewife decorates the threshold of her house every morning with patterns of rice flour), to images of domestic gods, oil lamps, clay or brass pots and other objects of daily use. The flowers used to adorn the domestic altar and the hair-do of women are significant signs of the need to brighten an incredibly hard and drab life.

The poor man's (and woman's) need for spectacular buildings as subjects of his day-dreams was catered for in the past by the houses of his gods with their incredible wealth of figurative decoration, and by the splendour of the palaces of maharajas and emperors. The fact that the architecture of the imperial palaces from the Moguls to the British Viceroys was basically foreign and that of the maharajas imitated the worst Victorian horrors did not affect its capacity to satisfy this need.

Independence brought a complete change. Gandhi and his disciples had established an image of a new country

that was both romantic (going back to the simple life and self-contained economy of the village, wearing hand-spun and hand-woven cloth) and puritan (prohibition, reduction of top pay-scales, abolition of rajahs, imposition of a luxury tax). The leaders of the new India accepted Lutyens's New Delhi as a convenience, but resented it as an inappropriate setting for the hard-working public servants of a poor country. They prepared five-year plans for a community of responsible citizens and scorned any idea of fobbing off the ruled with *panem et circenses*.

It was in keeping with this general attitude, which prevailed to a lesser degree also in the first years of the new Pakistan and Ceylon, that architectural interest concentrated at first almost exclusively on low-cost housing. The best brains of the three countries were concerned with new towns (India started twelve between 1945 and 1951), prefabrication, village improvement and community development.

Public buildings, instead of being welcomed as opportunities of expressing the aspirations of the new countries, were treated as necessary evils. Confusion reigned as to their shape and style. The 'moderns' wanted to prove that Asians could do as well or better than the West in applying new technologies. The traditionalists advocated a return to historical patterns in the belief that one could

Figure 52: The Architectural Review, v 127, n 761, (July 1960) p 53.

thereby create something typically Pakistani, Indian or Ceylonese. Many intellectuals thought that attention to climate and the use of local materials would be enough to create a new national style.

It is necessary to understand the Indian background as well as these post-war currents of emotion and thinking to appreciate the impact of Le Corbusier's work at Chandigarh. The High Court and Secretariat building of the Punjab capital were the urgently needed proof that public buildings in India could be modern, yet different from contemporary work—even by the same architect—elsewhere. That does not mean that they were popular. A public-opinion poll amongst literate Indians (still a minority) would probably produce a strong vote against them. But more important than approval or dislike is the fact that the buildings of Chandigarh were the first examples of post-war architecture that aroused heated discussion throughout the country. Their high costs enhanced rather than diminished their importance as focal points of public interest, and of the day-dreams—if not of the poor Indian masses, at least of a new generation of Indian architects.

After the completion of these Chandigarh buildings we find at various points of the sub-continent architects who if they do not exactly imitate Le Corbusier, have the courage of their own convictions and try to find their own mode of expression. They are still lonely swallows, but they are emerging. Their efforts are helped by the trends of the second and third five-year plans which have gone far towards restoring the balance between village development on the one side and industrialization

and modern technology on the other and have increased confidence in technical progress.

India, Pakistan and Ceylon have strong and highly developed engineering professions. Indians lead in irrigation engineering and command vast experience in the construction of dams and canals. The architectural profession has developed only in the last four decades, and the number of qualified architects is small—about one per million of inhabitants in India and one per ten million in Pakistan. Practising architects are concentrated mainly in the large cities. Most of the design work in small towns and villages is handled by civil engineers or small builders.

India has five schools of architecture with five-year courses and examinations controlled by a governmental Board of Technical Studies which aims at standards comparable to those in Britain. One Indian school, that of the Indian Institute of Technology at Kharagpur (Bengal), has a Graduate School of Design modelled on that of MIT. Pakistan and Ceylon have no schools of architecture and depend on training abroad, but Pakistan has plans for the establishment of schools at Karachi, Lahore and Dacca, one under Colombo Plan auspices and the other two with the help of the Ford Foundation.

An architect practising in Bombay or Calcutta could in theory command all the materials and equipment available to his colleagues in the West. In practice, he is restricted by shortages of steel (Indian steel production is increasing rapidly, but is still far short of the country's needs), and his choice of panelling and cladding materials and fittings is limited. More and

more building materials and components are made in India, but many of the less frequently used items must be imported. The shortage of steel accounts for the almost complete absence of steel-frame construction and the preponderance of concrete. The use of large areas of glass is ruled out by climatic considerations.

Air conditioning is used more and more in important commercial and public buildings, but is still far too expensive for universal application. In most buildings, the architect must combat severe climatic conditions without it. India, Pakistan and Ceylon include climatic regions of great variety and contrast, ranging from the warm-humid equatorial areas of Western Ceylon, the Malabar Coast and Bengal to the hot-dry desert or near-desert conditions of Rajputana and Sind. Large areas of the sub-continent have Intermediate or Monsoon climates; that is, they are hot and dry for almost two-thirds of the year and warm and humid for the remainder. The hill-towns of the Himalayas have to cope with severe winters, settlements in Assam and in the Malnad 'boast' of the highest rainfall figures in the world and some areas such as the Mysore plateau enjoy a pleasant almost sub-tropical climate.

Traditional building practices and local materials vary in accordance with the different climates, and these affect contemporary buildings as they have affected those of the past. It is still far too early to discern clearly Indian, Pakistani, or Ceylonese architectural movements. The new countries of Asia need time to develop modern vernaculars of their own, but promising beginnings can be found as the following pages show.

Figure 53: The Architectural Review, v 127, n 761, (July 1960) p 54



1

1, the High Court at Chandigarh, the new capital of East Punjab, of which Le Corbusier is the planner as well as being the architect of this and other public buildings. The High Court forms one of a group of buildings, all of fully exposed reinforced concrete, raised up above the rest of the city on what is known as the capitol, at the northern end of the main axis. The photograph shows the southern side, seen across an artificial pool.

INDIA

55

2



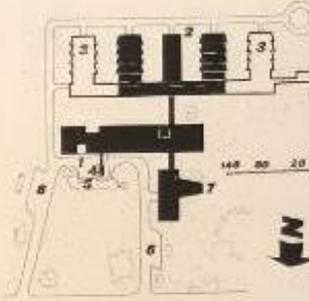
2, the Millowners' Building at Ahmedabad (architect, Le Corbusier): an office building, containing also conference and meeting rooms, for the local Association of Millowners. It is of exposed reinforced concrete construction and is shown in the photograph from across the Sabarnati river.

Figure 54: The Architectural Review, v 127, n 761, (July 1960) p 55.

INDIA

10 (far right), Central Electronics Research Institute, Pilani, Rajasthan province (architects, Koenigs and Rai): one of a chain of national research laboratories. The buildings, on a flat site, are in three groups—see plan on right: the main group, housing the quieter activities (centre of photograph), including offices, research laboratories, museum and library; a lecture theatre and cafeteria group (on the right behind the tower); and a technological group containing workshops, etc. (on the left). The tower, which is linked to the main buildings by a bridge, is for cosmic ray research. The structure is a reinforced concrete frame with brick infill walls, faced with stone on the main buildings which also have a system of vertical adjustable asbestos louvers for sun-protection.

- Key
 1, lecture theatre
 2, technological block
 3, main building
 4, tower
 5, reading room
 6, car park
 7, cafeteria



Site plan, Central Electronics Research Institute, Pilani.



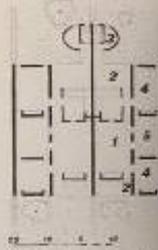
11 (above), staff houses for the Physics Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad (architects, Vasu-Shilpa; partner in charge, Balkrishna V. Doshi): one of a series of dwelling types evolved for research organizations. Construction is wholly brick, including the reading rooms. Windows are unglazed, and have either wooden shutters or metal louvers. The site sits under the vault has only flyovers.

PAKISTAN

12, public library, Dacca (architect, Muzharul Islam). It is of reinforced concrete construction and the reading-room wing on the far side has a vaulted roof of shell concrete. Also in Dacca (capital of East Pakistan) is a Government Institute of Arts by the same architect.



- Key
 1, living room
 2, veranda
 3, terrace
 4, balcony
 5, courtyard



Plan, staff houses in Ahmedabad.

CEYLON

13, house at Kandy (architect, Minnette de Silva). The photograph shows the garden front. The different sections of the house change level to follow the slope of the ground. Construction is reinforced concrete and timber.



14 and 15, house at Colombo (architect, Minnette de Silva): a reinforced concrete structure planned round a garden court. 14, looking from the entrance through the living-room into the garden. On the left is a wooden trellis between living-room and courtyard. 15, shows the car-port beneath the overhanging first floor, with the courtyard to the left. The triangular nests in the pable are traditional in shape and also serve as niches for oil-lamps during festivals.



Figure 55: The Architectural Review, v 127, n 761, (July 1960) p 58

In my view what is important is to notice will be that how in the publication of the architectural record, huge amount of the publication is dedicated to the work in Africa and only 3 pages are dedicated to Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. So, in my opinion, it concentrated on where Fry and his colleagues, like Konigsberger, were working. The work that has been displayed from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India were only a few and only one work was given from both Pakistans and that was the library of Muzharul Islam, and even then the only thing that was highlighted about the work was the latticework of the facade and again just the focus of how that lattice was mitigating climate; it did not speak anything of the site or the program or anything about the country or anything about Muzharul Islam's thoughts of architecture.

The other thing that is important to note here is that the school was very much concentrated of spreading there ideas of designing in the tropics which did not involve the history, anthropology, culture, and society of a place.

Islam who was highly political would have also taken a strong dislike to this kind of neo colonization kind of approach hence he never talked much about the school or learning anything from the school. In his mind he was sure he was already doing “climate responsive architecture” with greater understanding of place , culture and people.

Architectural Association School of Architecture

Tropical school of Architecture

Batch-56-57

Name-Islam. M

Roll no -13

Project name	Grade
1.Nigerian Preliminary School	Pass
2.Dead Sea Hotel	Pass

Class mates-

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1.Argvelles A | 10.Gandhi M.M | 19.Shukes S |
| 2.Barvcha.B.A | 11.Guneshakara V.K | 20.Siaaihves A |
| 3.Brown P | 12.Harrington F.R | 21.Smith R.J |
| 4.Branche P.A | 13.Islam M. | 22.Soewoko |
| 5.Chan H.K | 14.Jani K. | 23.Winkler H. |
| 6.Dequeker .P | 15.Kudianavala. P. | 24.Branch D. |
| 7.Enav. Z | 16.Salih A. | 25.Sozmarsono |
| 8.fernandez.J.S | 17.Scarr W.K | 26.Gillings R. |
| 9.Frishman M.J | 18.Shah P.C | |

Collected from the official register at the AA school’s archives on 13th November 2019 by Nurur Rahman Khan.

6. THE WAY FORWARD (QUEST FOR A STRONGER, ABSTRACT AND TIMELESS ARCHITECTURE)

After his return from The tropical school Muzharul Islam continued to work and in 1959 received a scholarship to go to Yale to do a Masters in Architecture and Joined the program in 1960. The one member from his graduate master class of 1960-61 was Stanley Tigerman¹⁵⁷, who turned out to be a huge influence on his life. In fact, two of them became close enough to make Mr. Tigerman declare Islam as his best friend and from this friendship, both of them found elements to grow. They were in regularly in argument as one was pro-Corbusian and the other was pro-Miesian – resulting in common grounds and also differences¹⁵⁸. Tigerman helped Islam to get a position as a visiting critique and admired Islam's stubborn political position, which reached to an extent where Tigerman had to save him from a direct physical conflict with a fellow master student¹⁵⁹. It is at Yale where he met Louis I Kahn and got a treasured friendship with Tigerman. These Yale years had a huge and permanent effect on him and changed his outlook on architecture forever.

On coming to Yale, a couple of things should be observed carefully. First of all, he was probably the eldest in his class and Stanley Tigerman was much younger to him. On coming to Yale, I believe, the two most important things that influenced him was one, Kahn's works that he got to see for the first time, the two art museums. Kahn at that time was also quite celebrated in Yale and his work in America was also being discussed quite a bit in the architectural discourse at that time.

Rudolph, the great vanguard of brutalist architecture, was again a huge influence on Muzharul Islam and I think the realization that came to him at that point was that architecture placed on just place and region or responding just to climate was not going to be enough because in this Yale school he saw absolutely no celebration of any regional architecture or any climate responsive architecture or anything called tropical architecture. And he knew that an architecture so compartmentalized as tropical architecture would not really become a part of mainstream architecture. I think this realization led him to change his style or rethink his style totally. He started looking at architecture on a more abstract and a more international level. Geometry, space, form, material, all these started becoming more important to him and he wanted to find an architecture which will be acceptable on an international platform. But in my view what is important to understand is that having this change or this realization within him did not however change his attitude towards his own personal belief of the purpose of architecture, that he saw architecture as a way to build a new nation and a new society. So, I think the concept of the Bangladeshi culture, the heritage of Bengal, the people and their way of life, all that along with our place and climate remained his backdrop against which he went on to do after that a new kind of architecture.

¹⁵⁷ *Master of Architecture Enrollment Year: 1960-61-Collected from Yale archives by Ishraq Zahra Khan, PhD candidate 2019, Yale.*

¹⁵⁸ *Interview between author and Stanley Tigerman, (Chicago, 2016).*

¹⁵⁹ Stanley Tigerman, 'Designing Bridges to Burn' Oro Editions, 2011, Canada, pp. 56.

Returning from Yale, his work immediately showed a much stronger grounded presence where formality was becoming important, geometry was a very much integral part of his master planning and his form development from then on. In the projects that we will discuss over here, we will highlight how he started changing his architecture towards something that would be more timeless, something more acceptable on an international level, something which will not get cornered or marginalized as tropical or regional architecture.

This, I believe, was of paramount importance to him that his architecture does not get marginalized or chaptered into only an event of a particular location. I think this strong attitude to take architecture to a level where it will be celebrated as great architecture or good architecture without any kind of connotation of regionalism was of great importance to him. The works that we will see in the following will cover one by one his most significant works and significant changes within his works, post his Yale education days.

On returning from Yale he set up his Practice Vastukalabid with new vigor and he also became involved with teaching. He also got a Rockefeller Fellowship at that time to see Europe.

1961: Rockefeller Fellowship for studying The State of Contemporary Architecture in Europe.

1962: Housing of Fourth Class Employees, Azimpur Estate, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

1962-64: Member, Academic Council, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Dhaka;

1963-64: Design for Khilgaon Railway Rehabilitation Zone, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

1963-64: Plan for New Rangamati Town, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh.

OWN HOUSE (1964)

One of the early projects that marked the change in him from his Yale exposé was his own residence.

In 1964 Muzharul Islam designed his own house at Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

This project marks his departure a way from simplistic spaces to more complex volumetric spaces held within an abstract interplay of parallel walls. While the project has a modernist formal expression its has strong articulation of site, climate and materiality.

The house is set towards the north east of the site opening up the greenspace towards the sun and wind of the south and east. This strong siting shows us how even though Islam had matured on to develop a Architecture of a more universal modern language he had not departed from his strong sensibility of place and climate.

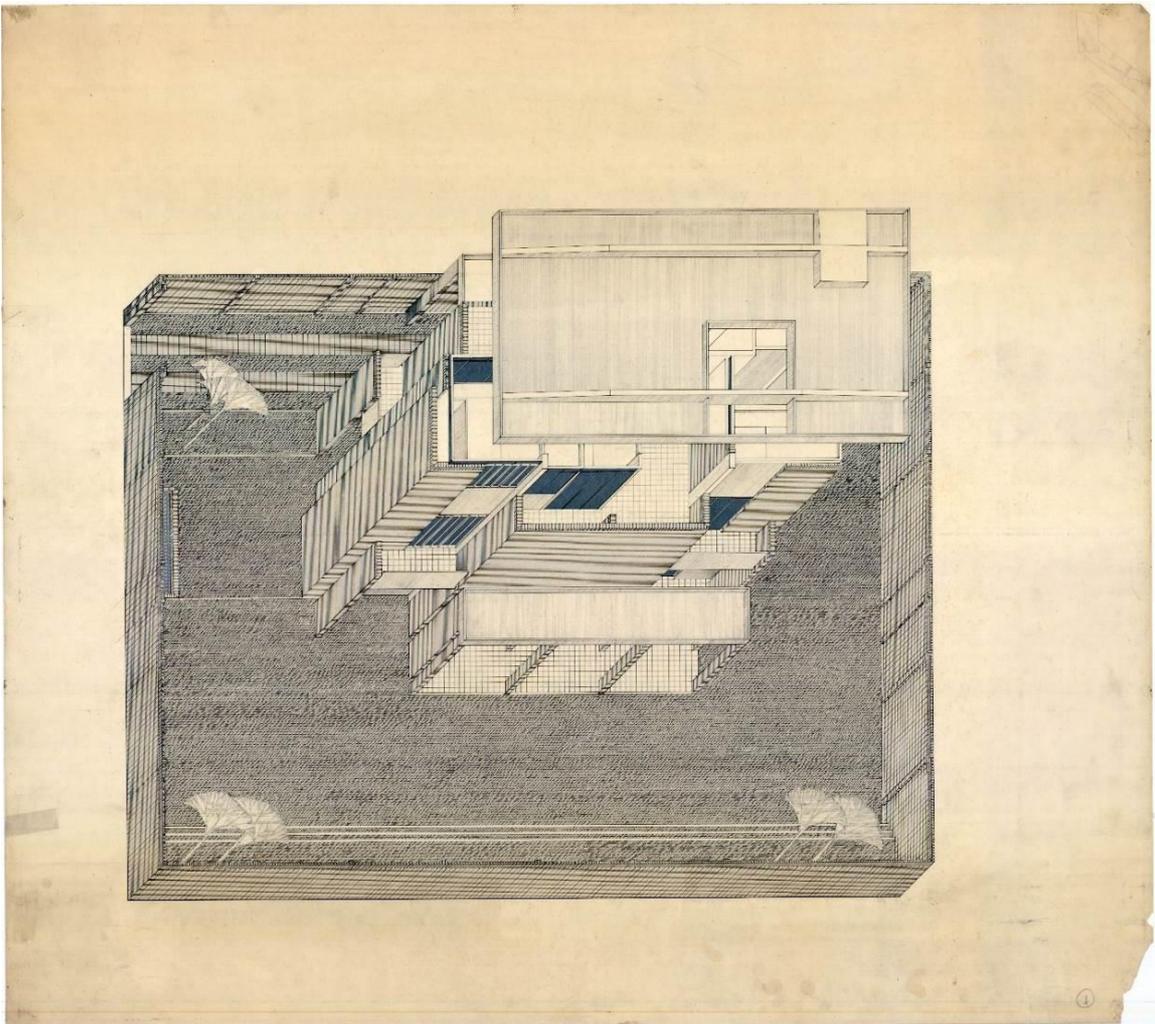


Figure 56: Axonometric view, Own Residence, 1964.

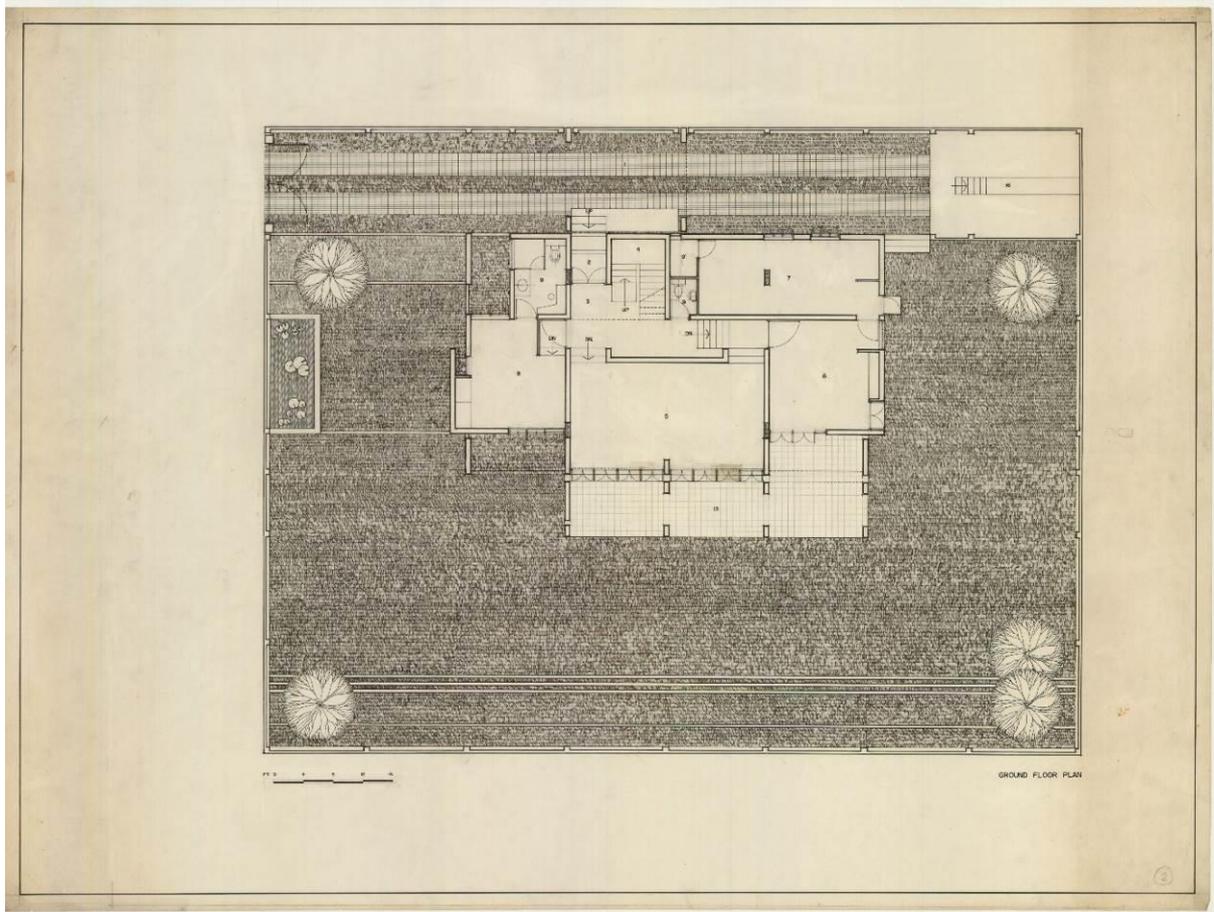


Figure 57: Ground Floor Plan, Own Residence, 1964.

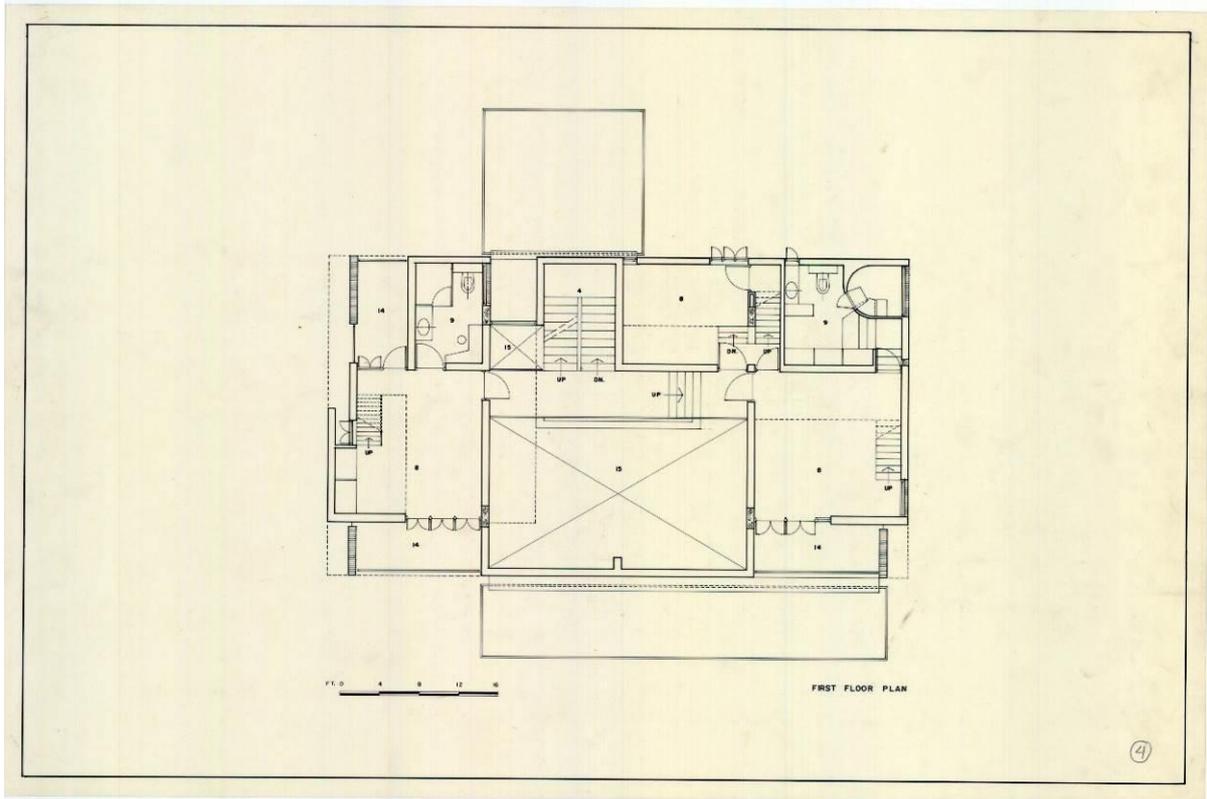


Figure 58: First Floor Plan, Own Residence, 1964.

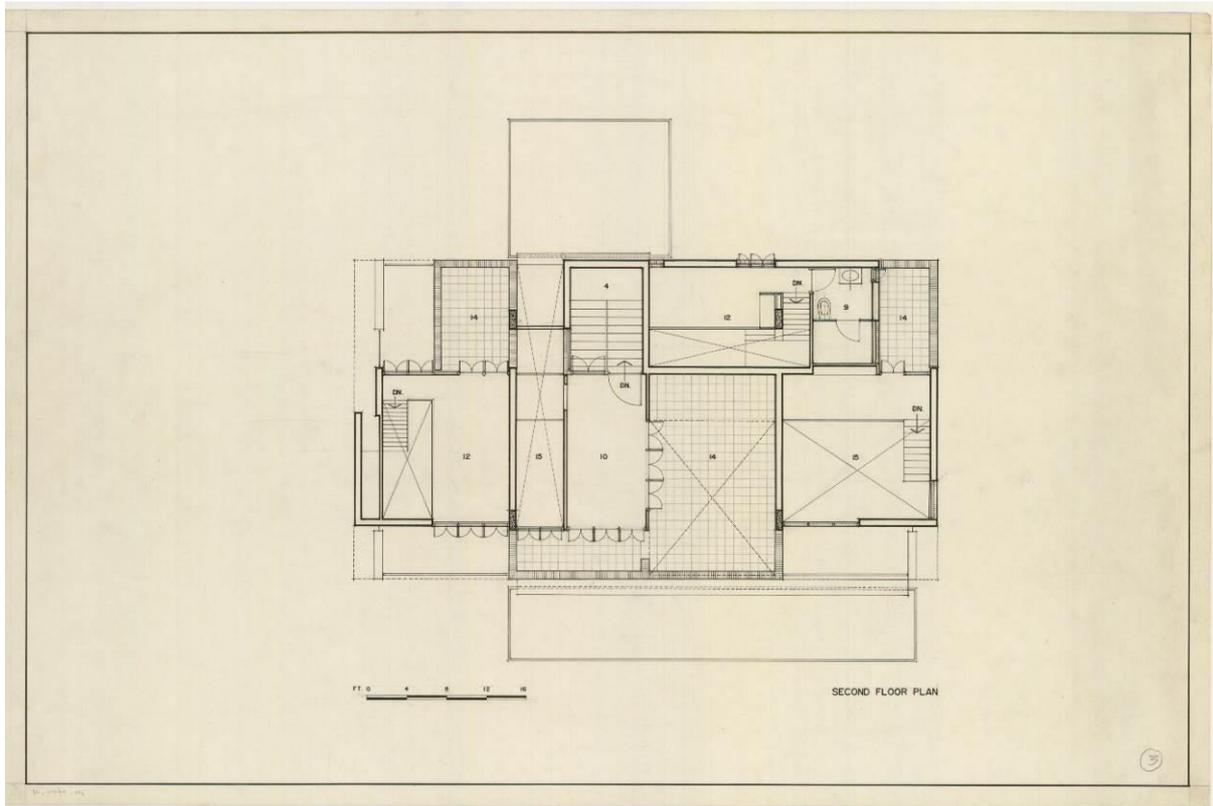


Figure 59: Second Floor Plan, Own Residence, 1964.

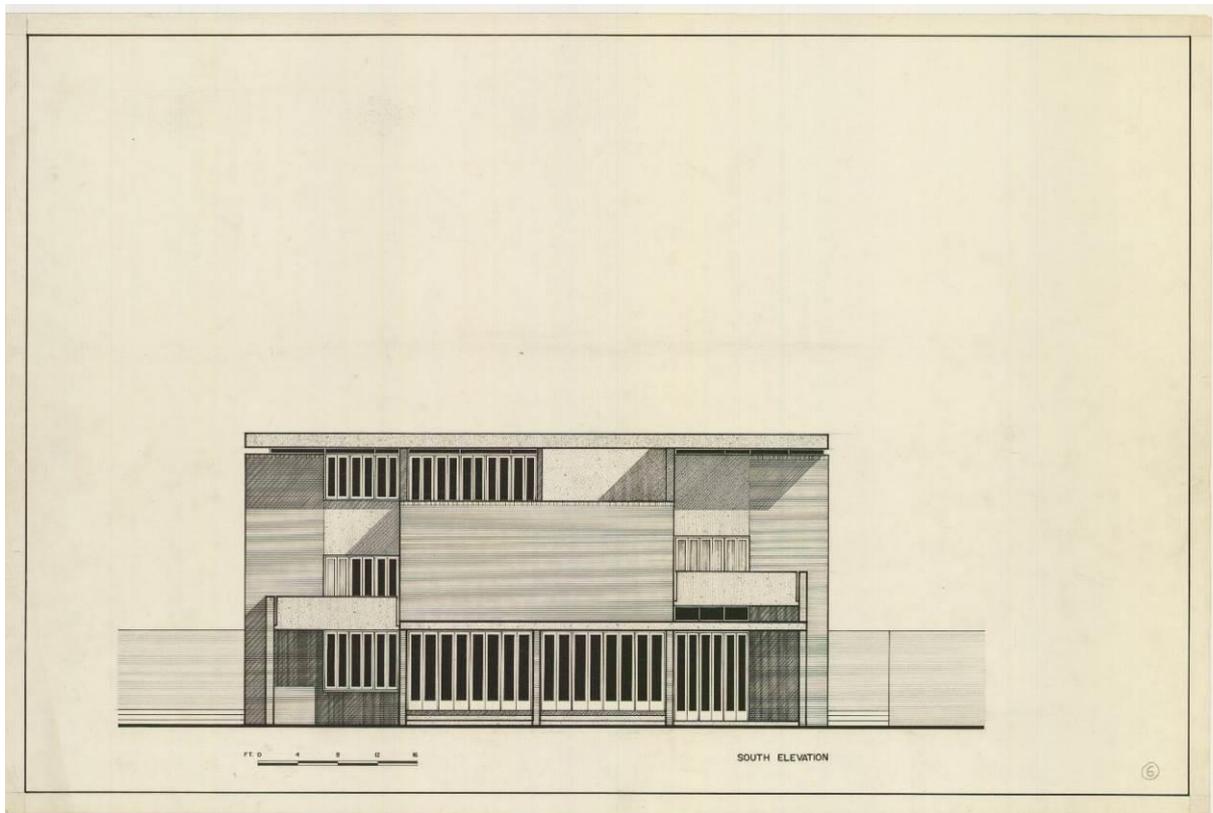


Figure 60: South Elevation, Own Residence, 1964

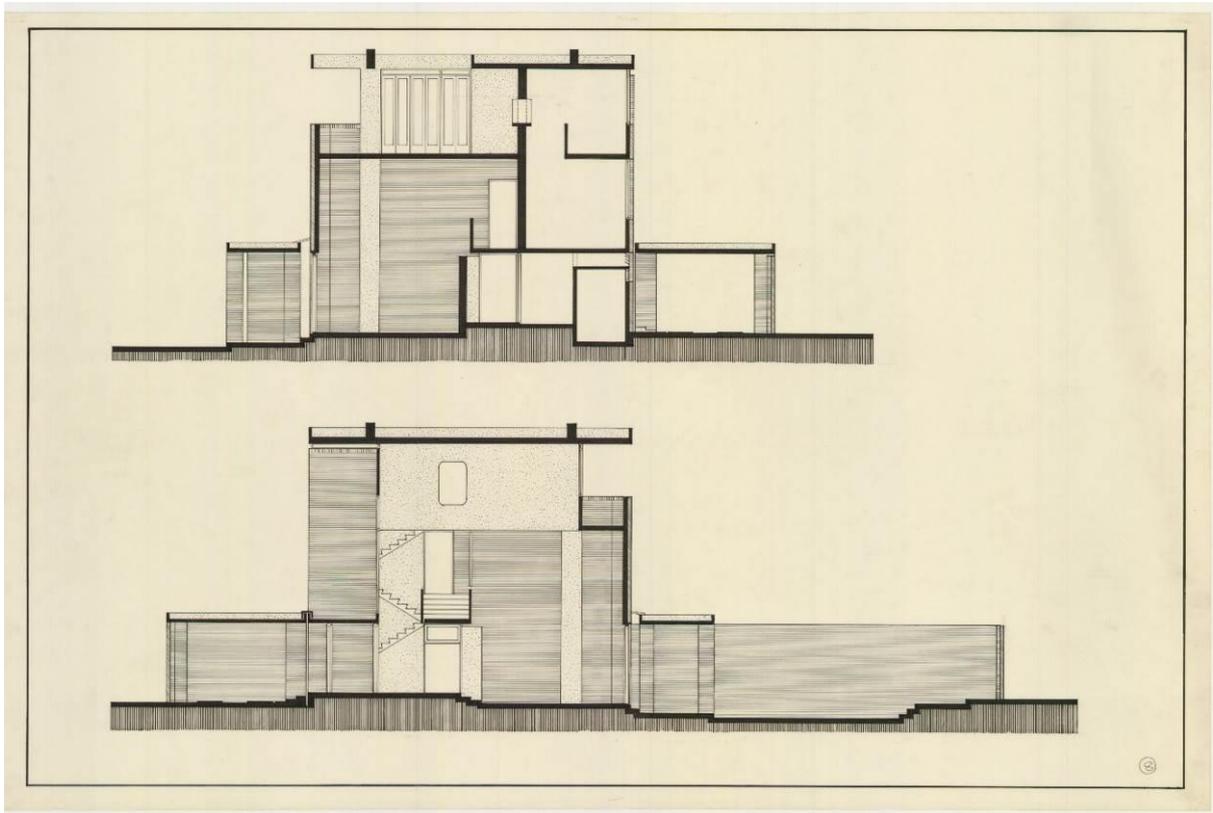


Figure 61: Sections, Own Residence, 1964.

This is one of his first projects after he immediately came from Yale University. This is a turning point of Muzharul Islam's life because this is a project in which the buildings tend to get more grounded rather than lighter, the forms tend to look heavier than his other buildings. But what still remains is that even though the building was becoming more formal, the whole idea of how it has to respond to nature remains unchanged. The parallel walls of the building seem to be a direction giver to the southern breeze. The southern breeze blows through all the important spaces of the building like the living room, the dining areas, the bedrooms and they wonderfully ventilate the house throughout.

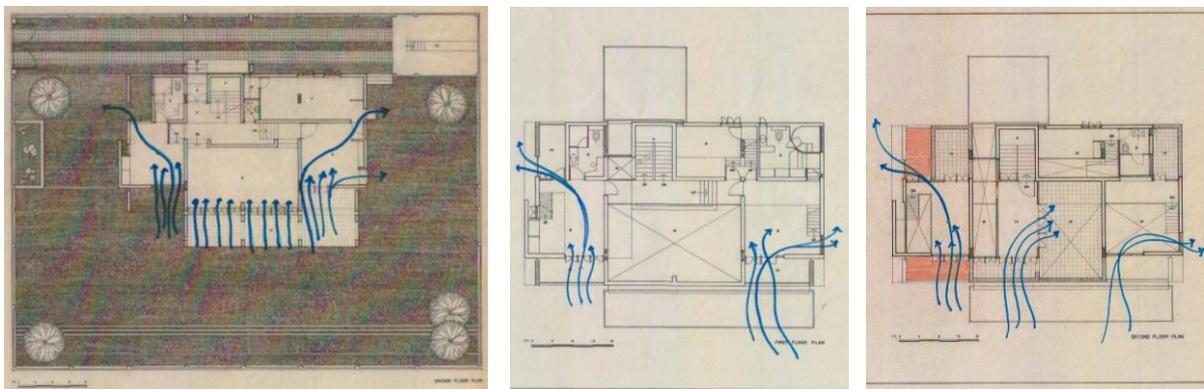


Figure 62: Wind flow, Own residence

The other thing is that where he pushes the building further towards the north leaving all the driveway on the north and leaving most the green areas of the building onto the south. This is where the sun will move from east across the south to the west and he knows that is where he will have to keep the green in order for any kind of vegetation to survive or to have any kind of lawn. The Roof terrace and the ground level veranda both open up towards the south and the green field onto the south. What is important to notice that even the things that will allude us in this particular design is that it is a culture in good weather to have a usually the afternoon tea in either the veranda or the lawn. This is something that Muzharul Islam also maintained almost throughout his life. The extended verandah on the ground floor as much a lived space as the interior living room. Even though the Project has the strength of his Yale exposé he is still able to retain all aspects of his society, culture, place and climate, without resorting to any forced regionalism.

This culture of using the semi-outdoor and outdoor space is deep-rooted and goes back to our village habitats. Muzharul Islam celebrated this wonderful lawn in a plot which was not so big but where it shows that how important that the lawn was as not besides just a social, but actually was a place where he would through large parties he would have people gathering or even they would be having tea or the children would be running around in the afternoon. This can be understood from his subtle steps that he has placed towards the wall on the southern side where it would be a place where may be the children would rest between games or it would be a place of large gatherings when people would actually sit on the steps and thus it becomes informal sitting areas alongside the chairs and tables in the lawn. The subtle inclusion of this steps with the green is extremely powerful statement which talks about how open space becomes event-space for us. It was also the beginning where Muzharul Islam was able to incorporate everything that is socially, culturally and climatically ours but still incorporated into architecture which is stronger, more modern and more abstract in many ways.

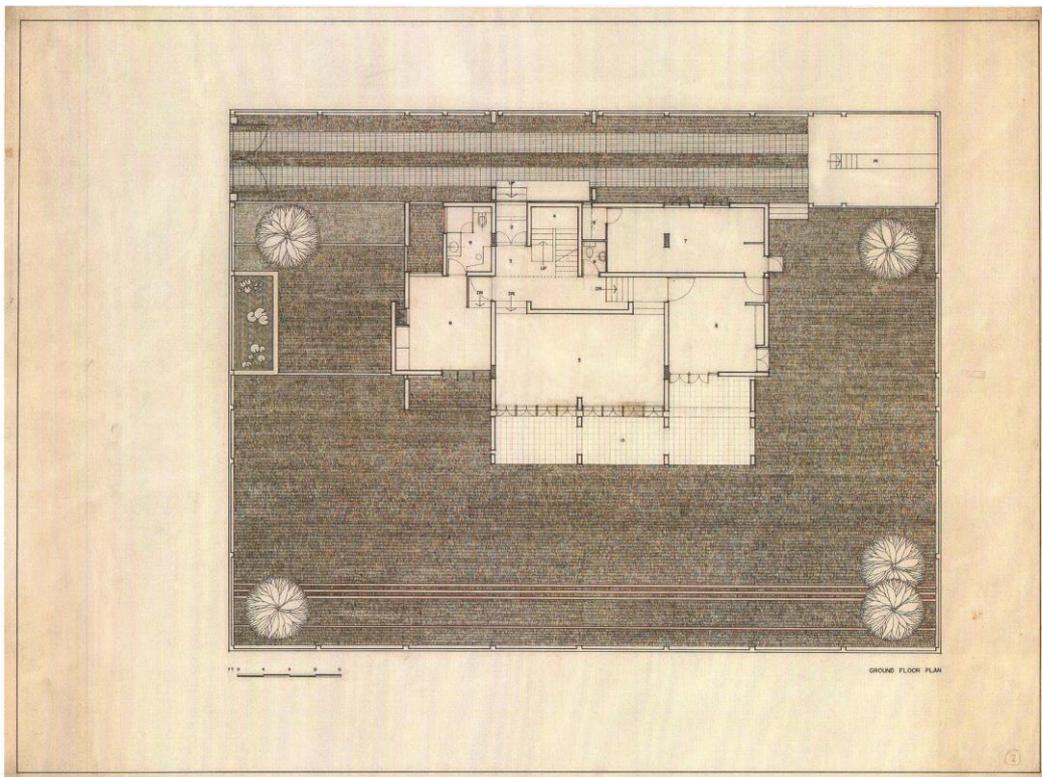


Figure 63: Landscape detail, Own Residence

MUZHARUL ISLAM AND KAHN

It is also very Important that to note that Islam on returning from Yale was always exploring ways to bring in people that he came in connection with or came to know to work on projects in East Pakistan, and it could be said that Islam was exposed with the thoughts of Louis I. Kahn at the time he was passing at Yale¹⁶⁰. This might have been preamble for Kahn ending up designing the parliament building in Dhaka.

However, Islam's intentions become iterated more by the fact that he was responsible for Bringing in his professor Paul Rudolf ¹⁶¹ to work on the Agriculture University in Maymansing, also his classmate and close friend Stanly Tigerman to work with him on the project of building five Polytechniques in the five districts of East Pakistan, and very importantly bringing in Kahn to work on the National Assembly Building ¹⁶².

It all began in June 1959 when it was decided to have a legislative capital in Dacca. The work of designing the second capital primarily was given to Architect Muzharul Islam ¹⁶³, who later suggested that the nation would be better served, and the future generation of architects would have an iconic work to learn from if a master architect could be brought in to do the work. He short listed three architects namely, Le Corbusier, Alvar Alto and Louis I Kahn, and convinced the government to send out formal invitations. ¹⁶⁴

At that time, Le Corbusier was working in this part of the world with his Chandigarh project and he was too busy to take the offer, and Alvar Alto was unwell to take over such a task at that time. As circumstances dictated, the project was handed to the last person on the list, Louis I Kahn, and he accepted. Kahn received the commission for the project in 1962 and continued working on it till the last days of his life in 1974.

Not only Islam was responsible for Kahn coming to Bangladesh, sacrificing his own commission, he also was educating Kahn about this part of the world by giving him books and taking him on tours around Dhaka and even the country. Time to time, when Kahn would be in Dhaka he would drop by Islam's office in the afternoon for a discussion and they could be seen deeply involved in conversation.¹⁶⁵ This led to even taking Islam over to the site to show the work. It is undoubtedly clear that the fondness they had for each other, getting nurtured from this relationship.

Architect B V Doshi in a discussion eloquently stated , when one looks at the Parliament building in Dhaka one can feel Islam whispering in Kahn's ears. Truly Islam's Nation building attitude had left its marks even in Kahn approach to this project. ¹⁶⁶

The observations of Kahn about this land and its people gets reflected in this building. Not only does it capture the deep-rooted culture of building in the delta, but also it takes it to an abstract level. It embodies the nature of people, how they build in this climate and how they live with the elements of nature. Perhaps without Islam beside Kahn this deeper understanding would not be possible at all. From the delta to the streets, from water to religion, the understandings that make this come into being, belong to Islam as much as it belongs to Kahn. Perhaps it is because of this that the Building by Kahn in Dhaka shows such

¹⁶⁰ Interview between author and Stanley Tigerman, (Chicago, 2016).

¹⁶¹ Zainab Faruqui Ali and Fuah H Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect* (Dhaka: BRAC University Press, 2011) p 09.

¹⁶² Zainab Faruqui Ali and Fuah H Mallick, *Muzharul Islam Architect* (Dhaka: BRAC University Press, 2011) p 09.

¹⁶³ Rabiul Husain, ' *The totality of Muzharul Islam* ', *Kali O Kolom*, (Sept., 2012) pp 48.

¹⁶⁴ Rabiul Husain, ' *The totality of Muzharul Islam* ', *Kali O Kolom*, (Sept., 2012) pp 48.

¹⁶⁵ Rabiul Husain, ' *The totality of Muzharul Islam* ', *Kali O Kolom*, (Sept., 2012) pp 50.

¹⁶⁶ Interview between author and Mr. B.V. Doshi, (Ahmedabad 2000)

sensitivity to place people and their culture and religion. This has been wonderfully coined as “situated modernism” mentioned by Sarah W. Goldhagen where the cover remains an image of this building. 167

It is also evident that in Muzharul Islam’s own works, Kahn had tremendous influence. The Yale Art Gallery by Kahn was completed in 1953 and when Muzharul Islam arrived at Yale, it was one of the most significant projects near his campus. The clarity of the design of the gallery and the organization of served and servant spaces had tremendous influence on Muzharul Islam’s work in his post-Yale3 years. It is important for us to understand that Muzharul Islam must have been moved by Kahn’s works to great extend and had admiration for Kahn’s ideological viewpoints about Architecture and how monumentality was important to hold the aspiration of people. This notion also appealed to Muzharul Islam, whose personal politics of nation building was his prime agenda. It is therefore I think Muzharul Islam must have associated with Kahn’s statemental and inspirational ideology of architecture. And it is why that Islam shortlisted Kahn as one of the designers for Parliament Complex.

FIVE POLY TECHNICS (1966-68)

In 1966 , Muzharul Islam asked his classmate and close friend Stanley Tigerman to join him in a important Government Project, the 5 new polytechnics in 5 districts.

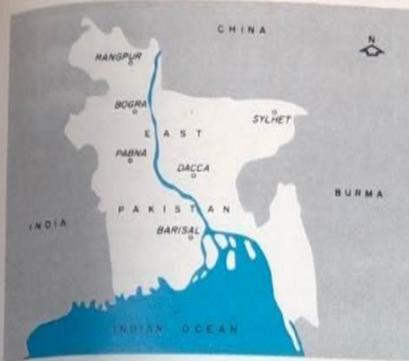
For this project in Muzharul Islam and Stanley Tigerman made a elaborate study on typology and tectonics, ecology, climate and materials. Their study resulted in a major report, which was featured in the 1968 September issue of “Architectural Record”.

The study covered a in depth study form that was conceived as a resultant rather than a imposition, which is very interesting because both of the did their Masters in YALE which was one of the vangaurds of brutalist Architecture at that time under the Head of Paul Rudolf. It is evident that it was Muzharul Islam you pushed the idea of a more climate responsive, and place responsive , design.

From my interview with Stanly Tigerman it also was clear that both of them under the leadership of Islam believed in this process of doing a elaborate study as a part of the design process.

¹⁶⁷ Sarah Williams Goldhagen, ‘Louis Kahn’s Situated Modernism’, Yale University Press, 2001.

By Raymond Lifchez



MASTER PLAN STUDY GIVES EAST PAKISTAN NEW APPROACHES FOR TROPICAL ARCHITECTURE



A unique master plan has recently been completed for the expansion of five technical institutes in East Pakistan. When built, the new facilities for existing institutions in the cities of Pabna, Rangpur, Sylhet, Barisal and Bogra will represent more than additional accommodations. They will demonstrate architecture as rational building, for they were conceived of as congruous forms, based upon a sympathetic understanding of the country's environment and the way of life enjoyed by its people.

Formulation of the master plan has taken two and one-half years to complete. Design and working drawings, related to work on the various sites, are now in process, and construction will begin this year. The study which backs up the master plan represents an achievement of architectural significance not only to Muzharul Islam and Stanley Tigerman, the project's architects. They believe that when available in book form, the study will be of considerable use to architects and builders of East Pakistan, whether or not they are specifically interested in designing polytechnic schools. Their research, meticulously organized, is the first of its kind compiled for that country. It should become an especially valuable tool for native builders in a country that suffers, like many others, a kind of architectural schizophrenia: the result of rational native practices in conflict with European styles imported during generations of foreign domination. In having produced such a study, the architects now believe they will leave something behind them other than buildings: a work that could be part of a continuing process.

The study from which the specific building programs were written is comprised of several parts. These deal with the formulation of design criteria based upon the exploration of the unique problems of this geographical locale and its people. When they first undertook the project, the architects quickly discovered that there was neither documentation of existing standards nor of performance or quality of work, and they set out to collect such information.

Having completed their basic research, the architects then proceeded toward a synthesis of their findings as built forms. The result was a compendium of construction details, spatial arrangements and siting configurations that could be tested against the country's unique problems and environment. It was only after these initial steps were accomplished—qualifying architectural forms in terms of all determinants—that the specific requirements for polytechnical training were introduced. Throughout the study, existing practices were often challenged by the architects in an effort to sort out current educational intentions from a morass of old practices and prejudices. Ultimately, a set of building forms was arrived at that is well-related to accommodating teaching, administrative, recreational, social and housing needs: a *kit of parts* which will contribute to the future development of all of East Pakistan's polytechnic institutes, and perhaps to the betterment of architecture in all places with similar problems.

ARCHITECTURAL RECORD September 1968 153

Figure 64: Raymond Lifchez, 'Master Plan Study Gives East Pakistan New Approaches For Tropical Architecture', *Architectural Record*, (September 1968) p 153.

BASIC RESEARCH EVOLVES SEVEN GENERATORS OF ARCHITECTURAL FORM

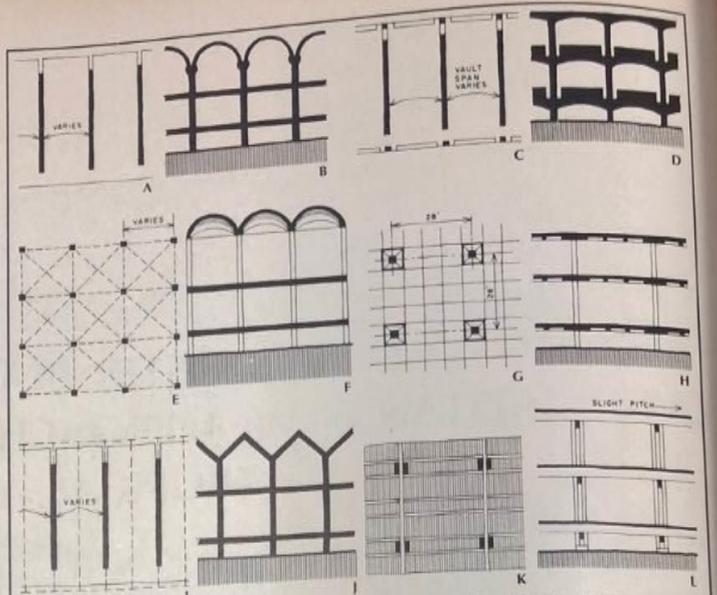
The architects' first concern was the evaluation of what they have come to call *generators of architectural form*. This includes research of cultural and sociological patterns, economics, environment, esthetics, function, flexibility, structures, materials, and construction methods related to the existing architecture of East Pakistan.

"Normally", Tigerman points out, "a master plan of this scope is based on natural and sociological criteria already documented. Since, in a large measure, this body of data was unavailable, we gathered, compiled and prepared such data as would be useful as background for our expansion program. The result of this data gathering process now equips us, as the architects, to do our job more adequately.

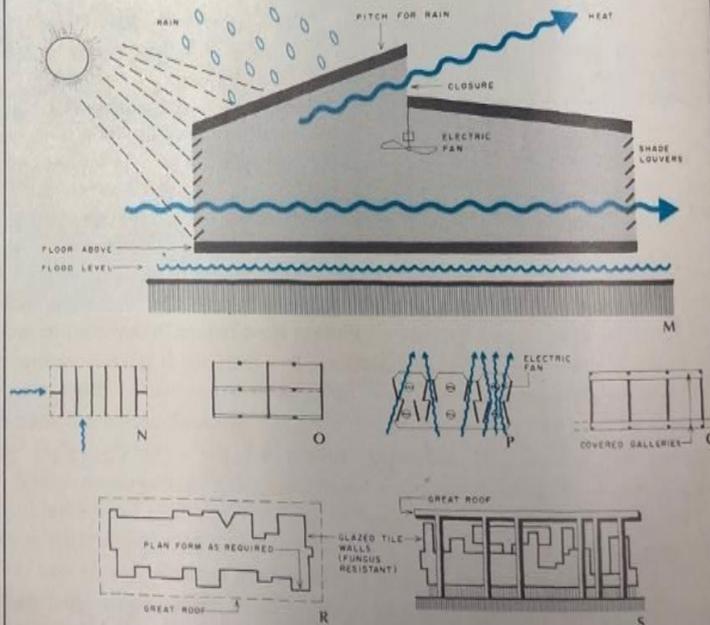
"There are three parts to the study. The first part is general and could be useful to anyone building in Pakistan. This part has nothing particular to do with the teaching of polytechnics, but discusses in broad terms natural and sociological criteria as design determinates. The second part of the study is concerned with existing and future programs of the Director of Technical Education. This part has much general information as well as being specifically related to this particular project. The first and second parts are being used in designing our project, of course, but are not determined by it. The third part is the specific project. As you see, the study may be used in three ways: by all architects, by those working on future polytechnics, and by the people on our project."

East Pakistan is a small portion of Pakistan; 55,000 square miles. It is principally agricultural; the country's industry is located in the other sector, west of India. Natural resources are largely untapped. The climate is tropical. Building techniques are either native, or patterned after European methods, which are not entirely suited to the environment. The people are Moslems and their buildings must be thoughtful interpretations of traditional life styles that are not easily challenged.

In the first phase of the study the architects found that natural phenomena of geography and climate could be more readily interpreted as built-forms than could cultural concepts. The correct interpretation of the latter, however, would ultimately prove the success of the undertaking.



GENERATORS OF ARCHITECTURAL FORM are explored in the Master Plan in seven sections: form through structure; materials; environment; cultural and sociological patterns; function, fixity and flexibility; form; and economics and construction methods. The sections are illustrated and are related to detailed analyses of related problems.



BUILDINGS IN EAST PAKISTAN MUST BE PROTECTED from the deleterious effects of moisture and fungus, which erode such commonly used building materials as plaster and concrete. To this end, the architects are experimenting with native glazed tile, which for centuries has proved a perfect surface material, and with "umbrella roofs", which keep building surfaces free of stain moisture which is conducive to mold.

Figure 65: Raymond Lifchez, 'Master Plan Study Gives East Pakistan New Approaches For Tropical Architecture', Architectural Record, (September 1968) p 154.

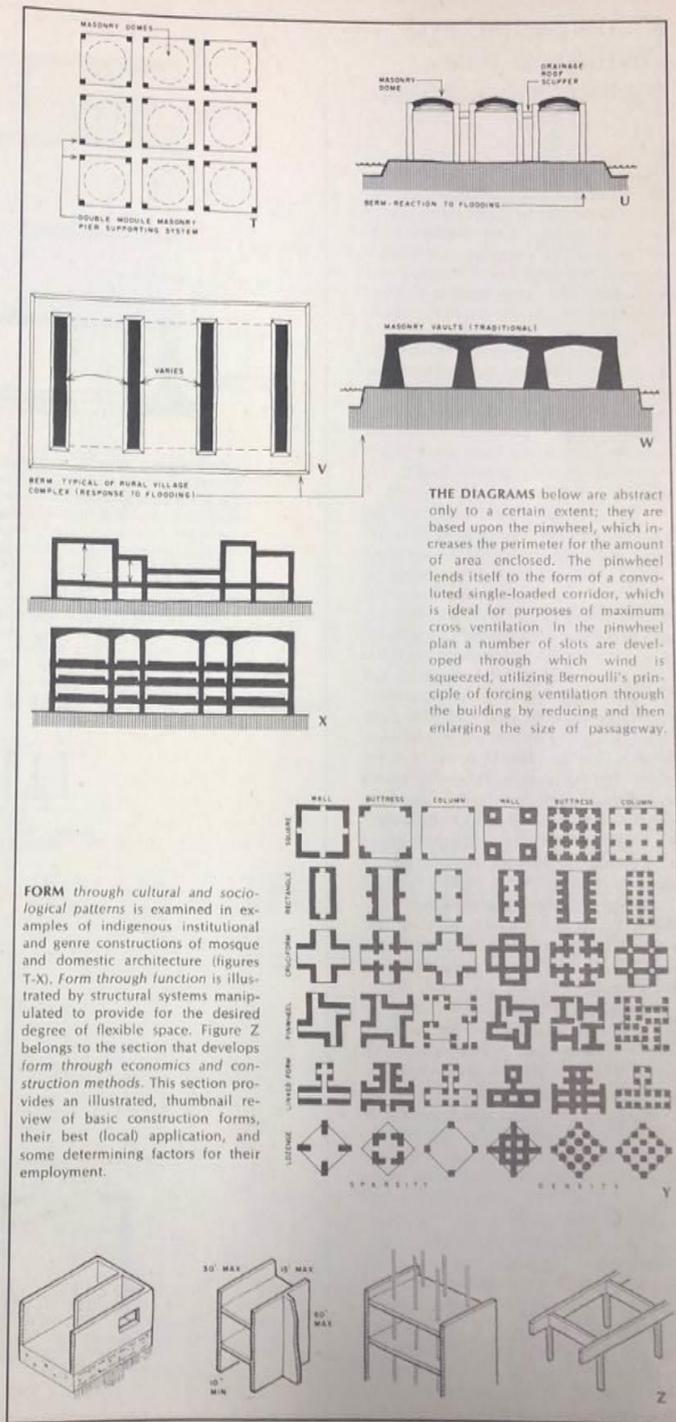
Social habits and customs, physiology, education, family structure and recognized idiosyncrasies of the East Pakistani were recorded wherever they appeared relevant to making suitable accommodations. The Pakistani's concept of "public" and "private" had to be understood both in terms of accepted cultural patterns, determined largely by economic exigencies, and the future of these patterns in light of sociological change as a result of education, urbanization, and prosperity.

Statistics on labor, materials and construction costs were compiled. These figures were given a specific architectural context in relation to economical building forms and mechanical systems in general use in the country. Good practices born of native ingenuity were brought into focus, especially when exploring the problems of construction and materials in the monsoon season. Figures A-L are some of the 22 diagrams explaining form through structure and form through materials. These illustrate various combinations of columnar and wall and/or composite systems, employed to achieve either flexible or fixed spatial systems. Vaults, domes and arches, and folded plates are illustrated because of their relevance to building techniques in East Pakistan.

Form through environment is illustrated by diagrams (M-S) that show hypothetical building sections under different weather conditions: sun, wind, rain, air movement, flooding, etcetera. In the tropics, a building's relation to climate is extremely important. Mechanical air-conditioning systems are seldom used because of their high initial expense and operating cost. During the winter, the lightly-clothed East Pakistani may experience some discomfort at night when the temperature is 45-50° F. minimum. He compensates for the problem by closing the openings of his home to keep out the night air. During the hot, humid monsoon season, natural ventilation is the basic means of maintaining comfort, facilitated by large building openings. But when this fails, electric fans are sometimes used.

In the study Tigerman offers a section called form through form (figure Y). Unlike other sections in the book, this one, he insists, is not to be translated "literally." He explains, however, that formal configurations, extended from the abstract, may form a basis of architectural esthetics and esthetics are important in East Pakistan, where, as in most places, self-respect is heightened by beautiful architecture.

For those who may be doubtful, the usefulness of this kind of "formal analysis" (as illustrated in the diagrams at right) will be found in the buildings.



THE DIAGRAMS below are abstract only to a certain extent; they are based upon the pinwheel, which increases the perimeter for the amount of area enclosed. The pinwheel lends itself to the form of a convoluted single-loaded corridor, which is ideal for purposes of maximum cross ventilation. In the pinwheel plan a number of slots are developed through which wind is squeezed, utilizing Bernoulli's principle of forcing ventilation through the building by reducing and then enlarging the size of passageway.

FORM through cultural and sociological patterns is examined in examples of indigenous institutional and genre constructions of mosque and domestic architecture (figures T-X). Form through function is illustrated by structural systems manipulated to provide for the desired degree of flexible space. Figure Z belongs to the section that develops form through economics and construction methods. This section provides an illustrated, thumbnail review of basic construction forms, their best (local) application, and some determining factors for their employment.

Figure 66: Raymond Lifchez, 'Master Plan Study Gives East Pakistan New Approaches For Tropical Architecture', Architectural Record, (September 1968) p 155.

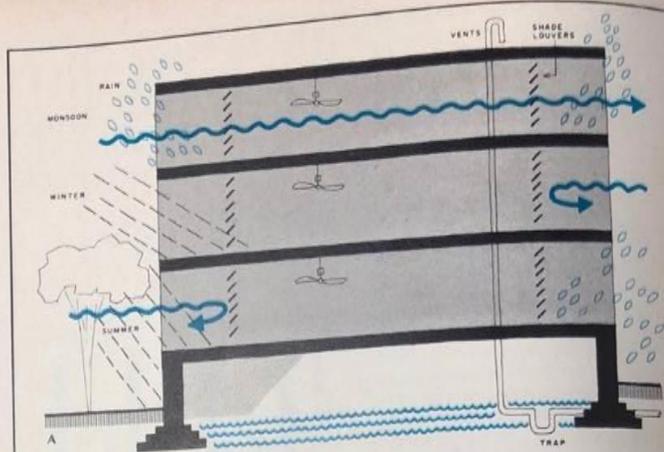
BUILDING CONCEPTS SYNTHESIZED FOR A TROPICAL ENVIRONMENT

The primary synthesis of built form and environmental determinates is illustrated by a schematized typical building section shaped in response to the varying seasons of the country: monsoon, winter, and summer. The same diagram is then used to illustrate a secondary synthesis: that of a building's response to materials, vegetation, and pests.

Natural forces affecting climatological human comfort—temperature, humidity, air velocity, and light—are commonly acknowledged as design determinates. The master plan study points out, however, that factors of age, sex, skin pigmentation, clothing, general health, and acclimatization are also critical factors.

The climate of East Pakistan is of the tropical monsoon type. Winter (November through mid-March) has temperatures ranging from 45° to 90° F., clear skies, little rain, wind velocities from one-half to two and one-half mph, and low humidity. Summer (mid-March through mid-May) has the highest temperatures (100° F.), 15 per cent of the total annual rainfall (100-220 inches), and frequent violent thunderstorms with wind velocities up to 120 mph. During the monsoon (mid-May through October) over 80 per cent of the annual rainfall occurs. Frequent storms are characterized by steady, moderate rain lasting from several hours to several weeks. Wind velocities are slightly lower than during the summer; maximum temperature is above 90° F., humidity is at its annual peak, and skies are generally overcast. During monsoon, most of the tropical cyclones occur bringing storm winds in excess of 75 mph and very heavy rainfall.

Appropriate architectural form, its critical dimensions and proper orientation, is to be derived in response to the specific demands of the country's climate. Also, certain building practices must be observed: topsoil must be stripped and replaced by sterile silt to control growth of vegetation; ground cover must be planted to reduce reflected solar gain; house traps must be water-sealed to exclude rats and cockroaches; windows, doors and vents should be screened to exclude vermin. The living platform of all structures must be elevated above monsoon flood level. Large overhangs and louvered openings are to be oriented to allow for control of wind, light, and rain in the different seasons. Massive roofs are useful in winter as a solar heat reservoir for night time reradiation.



SCHEMATIZED TYPICAL BUILDING PLANS are shaped in response to climatological forces of East Pakistan. Certain rules-of-thumb are established for good building practice. All wall openings should be maximum sized for maximum ventilation; closures should be of materials affording little interference with ventilation, such as screens and nets. A north-south orientation of walls takes advantage of prevailing winds. Exterior galleries facilitate dry, ventilated interiors and also promote air circulation. Many variations of the ideal linear form are possible. The continuous gallery can be interpreted both for public service and as a private veranda (fig. D), depending upon the disposition of interior spaces. Masonry walls should, at least at one point, make one right angle turn for seismic stability. Windows and doors should be louvered. Eaves are extra-heavily anchored and weather joints are designed for high wind-driven rain. All sanitary and cooking facilities should be placed to the leeward side of the building.

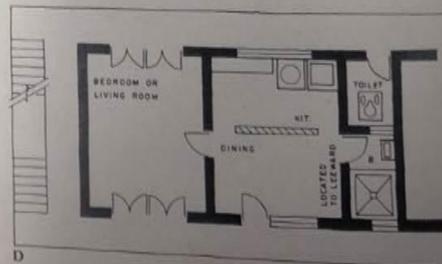
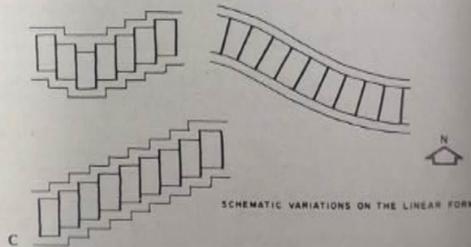
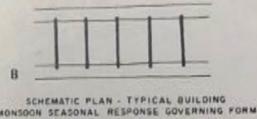


Figure 67: Raymond Lifchez, 'Master Plan Study Gives East Pakistan New Approaches

A KIT OF PARTS FORMS THE PROTOTYPICAL POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

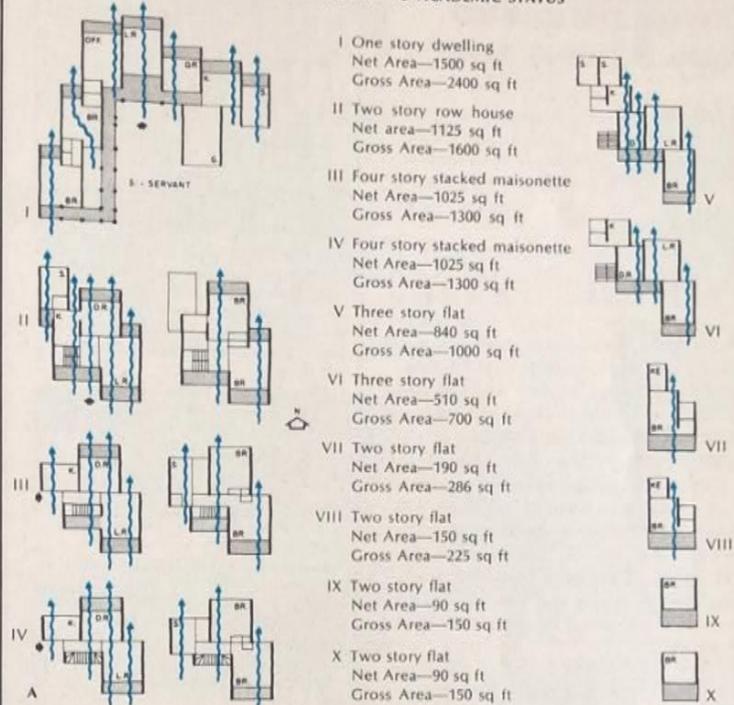
Undertaking the existing and future programs of the Director of Technical Education, the architects developed component parts for a prototypical polytechnic complex. Spaces were developed for administration, classes, twelve kinds of laboratories, seven kinds of shops, ten kinds of staff housing, student housing, recreation, medical and religious facilities.

What evolved was a "kit of parts". The elements are rationally formulated configurations in themselves, but they remain to be interpreted as architecture in response to the specifics of a given site and program. For example, traditionally 10 different housing units were considered necessary to accommodate the various ranks of teaching staff (figure A). Upon evaluation, the architects decided this distribution to be excessive and unjust. They were able to modify their designs to only four types, providing approximately the same accommodations for all, varying them only in space.

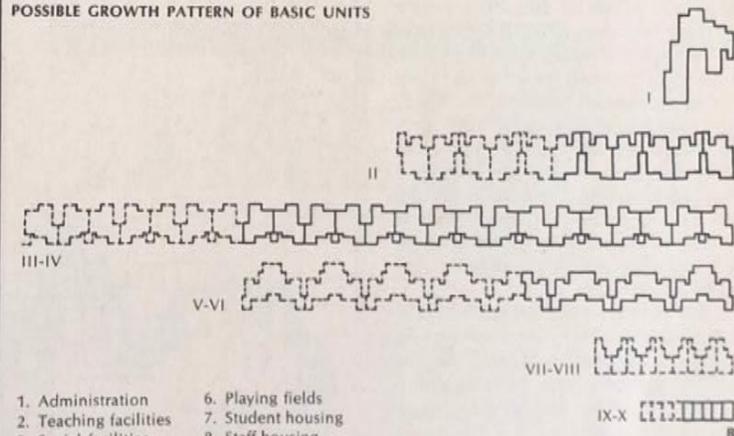
The individual modules of space for each program type were developed in such a way as to allow for interpretation in response to environment or esthetic preferences (figure B). Tigerman considers this the "exciting part of systematic thinking, of working in systems analysis and permuting multiples. To achieve diversity is a desired goal. Normally diversity is achieved only by the intuitive mind. But if the problem, let us say, is housing for the poor of East Pakistan—I mean dealing in something where cost is an issue—then you have to somehow find a system, a really taut plan, a taut module, so that that module may be repeated to form many varieties which would not look 'project-like'; forms which will not necessarily reveal the individual modules that made them up. Thereby the analytic mind can be at work on something to achieve the end of diversity, which is one of those things sought by human beings: something different that is theirs, their piece of *terra firma*, their house, their thing. And there is no way to do this out of the intuitive mind alone through form or esthetics while still trying to be operative in the taut planning context of solutions dealing with the poor."

A large reservoir or tank is incorporated into the plan of each prototypical site. The tank serves to collect some of the annual rainfall of 100 to 220 inches. Such tanks are to be found in every village. At the school, as in the towns, they will be used for recreation and bathing.

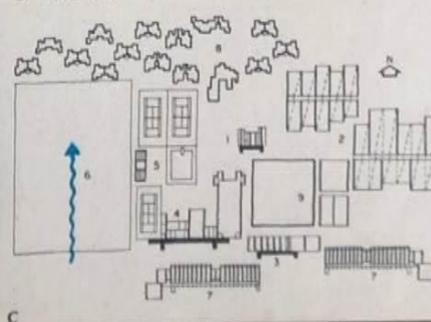
CHARACTERISTIC SPACE ALLOCATION RELATED TO ACADEMIC STATUS



POSSIBLE GROWTH PATTERN OF BASIC UNITS



1. Administration
2. Teaching facilities
3. Social facilities
4. Recreation
5. Water tank
6. Playing fields
7. Student housing
8. Staff housing
9. Reservoir



THREE PROTOTYPICAL POLYTECHNIC SITES were developed. These are considered site diagrams based upon function, environmental determinates and expansion possibilities. Each one is developed in terms of land-use flexibility: phasing building programs, indeterminate growth patterns, obsolescence. They are not based upon any relationship with outside facilities, such as a town or other educational institutions. Actual site relationships—physical, social and cultural—will shape each institution into a unique environment. Typical plan shown, left.

Figure 68: Raymond Lifchez, 'Master Plan Study Gives East Pakistan New Approaches For Tropical Architecture', Architectural Record, (September 1968) p 157.

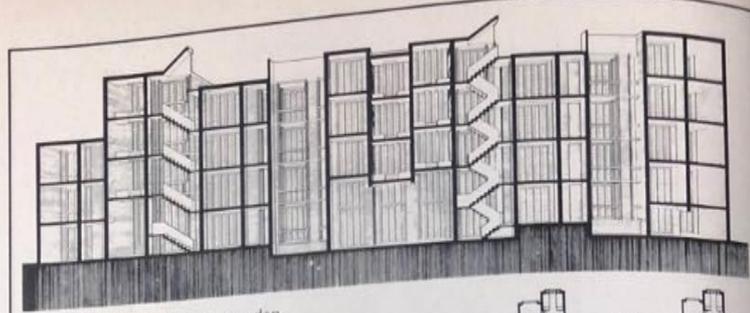
PROTOTYPICAL DESIGNS CONSOLIDATED INTO BASIC BUILDING TYPES

Out of the numerous programs to be spatially accommodated, four building types were established: housing for students, faculty and administration; laboratories, offices and classrooms; shops; and recreation facilities of all types.

To refine the requirements for living accommodations, questionnaires were sent to all students and faculty at existing institutions. The architects were especially interested to know current attitudes toward Western conveniences. To many Pakistani Western models are equated with modernization. In Pakistan cooking facilities and sanitary conveniences are radically different than those in the West, and it was decided, on a purely pragmatic level—because many of the residents will spend much of their professional life abroad—that they be introduced to the differences. This meant that both traditional hearth stoves and Western appliances, flush valve and squat toilets would be provided.

The boys' hostel includes common facilities for dining, a dispensary, prayer hall, and various public rooms. The basic living unit is a split-level room which sleeps four. In two of these rooms eight boys have their own veranda. Four rooms receive a toilet and stair. Each floor, with its cluster of rooms, is meant to represent a tiny neighborhood. Separated from their homes and having little social intercourse with either townspeople or families of the faculty, the boys rely upon congenial groupings for companionship. Socializing with one's peers in a meaningful way is particularly important in Pakistan, where the boys, when at home, had led a very cloistered family life.

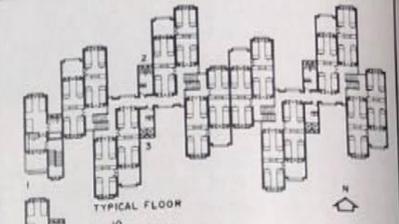
The architects consider it an accomplishment to have been allowed to group apartments for different categories of teaching staff into one building form. Normally, since the various ranks carry certain social distinction, the groups are separated. The architects hope that proto-



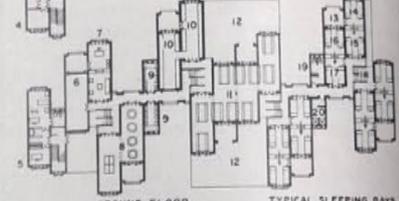
THE HOUSING UNITS are an adaptation of the single-loaded corridor plan, and are oriented to take advantage of the prevailing south wind. All rooms can be opened to allow for cross-ventilation through the building.

The student's rooms are split-level. The levels are stepped in ascending form from north to south. Each level provides a place for two boys to sleep. The beds for each pair of boys are slightly elevated, exposed to the wind, and thus afforded maximum ventilation. Stairwells serve as a kind of ventilation chimney. These open on to roof decks, which are popular in summer for communal sleeping.

Economically, no glass sections could be used in openings. The most appropriate section for a closure is a louvred panel with operable slats. Tests show that entire walls made of such panels are best for optimum ventilation.



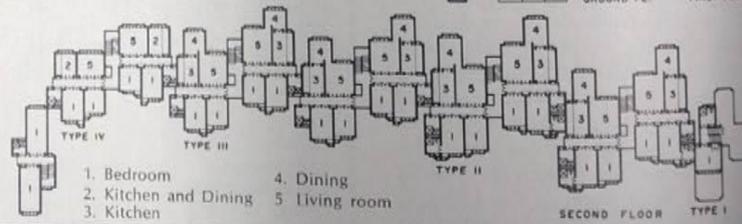
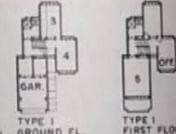
TYPICAL FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

TYPICAL SLEEPING BAYS

- 1. Dispensary
- 2. Toilet
- 3. Shower
- 4. Dispensary (upper level)
- 5. Dispensary
- 6. Prayer hall
- 7. Lounge
- 8. Recreation
- 9. Lavatory
- 10. Kitchen
- 11. Dining
- 12. Dining terrace
- 13. Veranda
- 14. Bedroom
- 15. Bedroom
- 16. Bedroom
- 17. Bedroom
- 18. Access way
- 19. Toilet
- 20. Shower



- 1. Bedroom
- 2. Kitchen and Dining
- 3. Kitchen
- 4. Dining
- 5. Living room

SECOND FLOOR

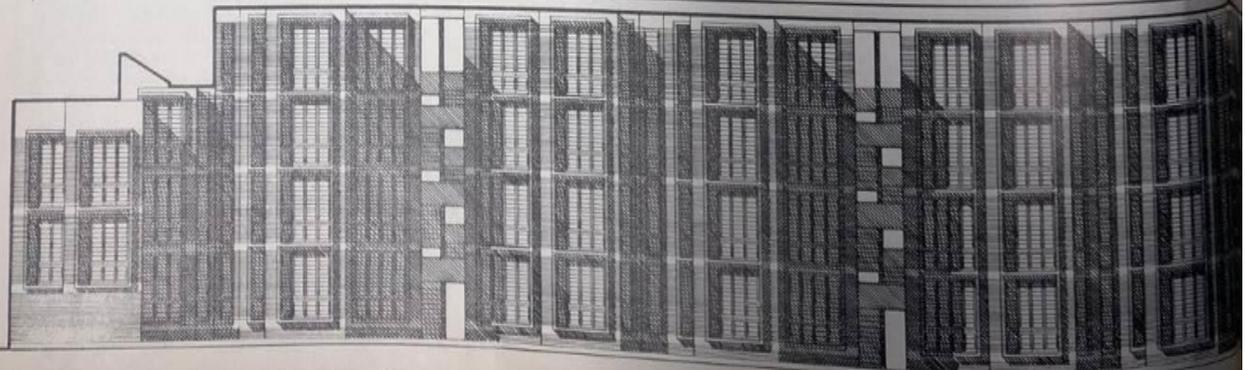


Figure 69: Raymond Lifchez, 'Master Plan Study Gives East Pakistan New Approaches For Tropical Architecture', Architectural Record, (September 1968) p 158.

col may eventually give way as residents chance upon one another.

No common facilities are provided for faculty and staff (opposite). Entertainment for the residents takes place at home, to which relatives and friends are frequently invited. Typically, women and children occupy certain rooms and the men others when there are guests.

Tigerman points out that purdah as a system is not so pronounced as it once was, but many of the traditions remain. "So we had to accommodate in the housing, as you see in the various plans, a way that women can move around in the kitchen and dining area, where they spend most of their day, and a place for men to retire after meals, especially when there are invited guests. No matter what social position a family may hold in Pakistan, individuals would expect this kind of accommodation. Custom necessitates a variety of separate spaces within a home which serve the entire family on many levels of sociability. Friends and relatives drop in at all hours, and as there are generally no telephones, a family must be ready to receive them. Traditionally, impromptu visiting is in bad taste during meal time, so it is important, to prevent embarrassment, that all dining may be done privately, separate from the other public areas of the house. However, since the Pakistani family is always blessed with the presence of some relative, every corner of the house, no matter how assigned, is likely to be someone's bedroom."

When the 10 prototype living units were reduced to four, the architects were able to appreciably improve upon the overall design concept for staff housing.

Each unit now has the same number of rooms, with the exception of the principal's, which has an office and servant's room. Now, they believe, there is a certain equality for the four staff grades in the housing. By Pakistan standards, the quarters are considered quite adequate. However, distinctions of rank are quite rigid, and it would not be possible—in the foreseeable future—that a person of lower rank, but with a large family, might enjoy the increased spaciousness of a higher-ranking apartment.

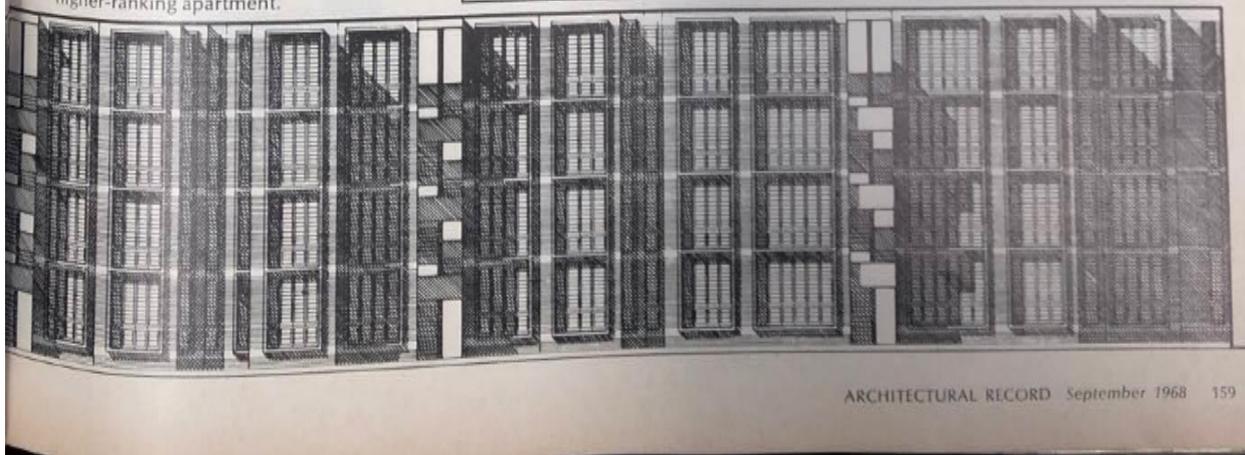
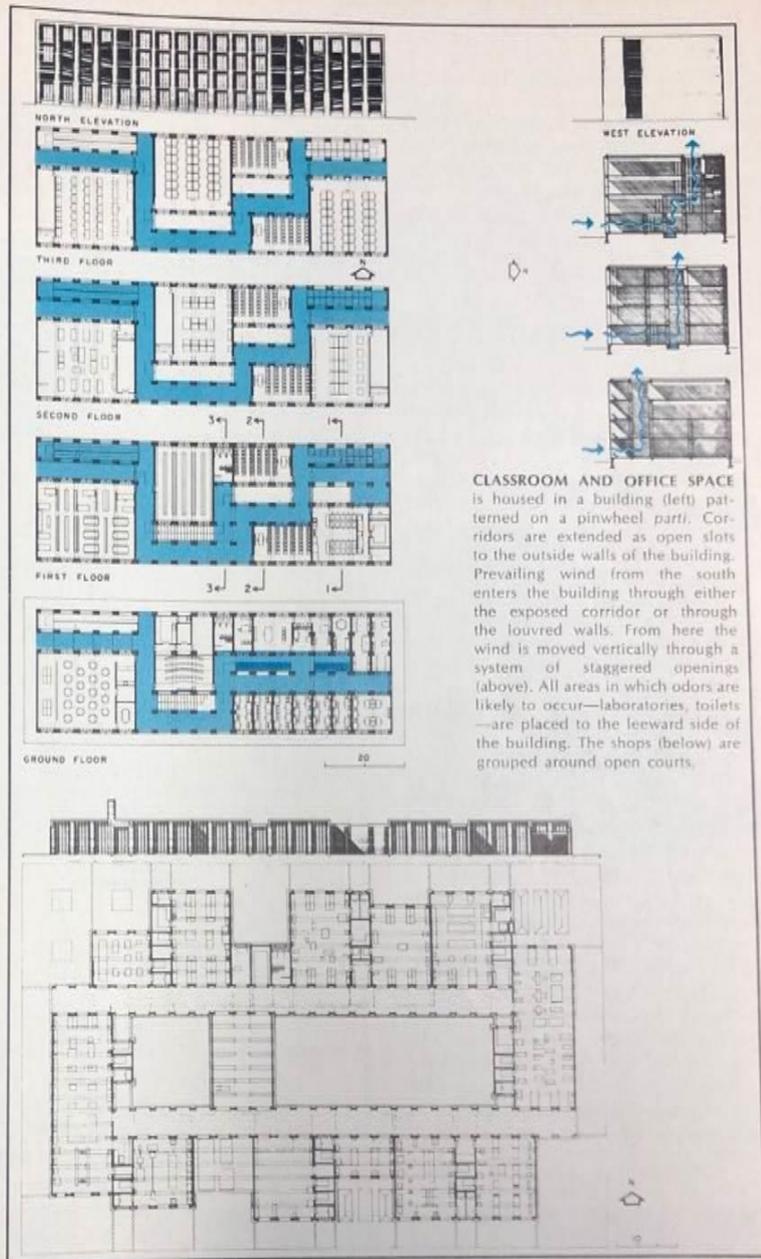


Figure 70: Raymond Lifchez, 'Master Plan Study Gives East Pakistan New Approaches For Tropical Architecture', Architectural Record, (September 1968) p 159.

EAST PAKISTAN INSTITUTES

The sites for the expansion of the technical institutes are in existing towns. Resident families and students rely upon the town for a certain amount of socializing and entertainment. Family marketing is done by the servants and male householders at the bazaar. Restaurants are the principal meeting places for male companions. Everyone attends the movies.

Even though at this time the five sites are little more than small towns, the architects have now turned their thoughts to multi-storied forms to meet the needs of future urbanization. The Master Plan study allows for such an open-ended interpretation in making the final decisions about design. When Tigerman was in Dacca at the end of June, he and Islam designed the first multi-purpose form to come out of the Master Plan: they amalgamated the classrooms, shops, and administrative offices into one three-story building. This form will provide for a huge open space on the middle several floors. At the outset, the building may seem unfinished; only a certain amount of floor space will actually be filled in.

The unbuilt space will allow for expansion, but meanwhile, it will serve as a large veranda. Perhaps the next step is to place the housing above teaching space, shops, etcetera, which would certainly make sense in smaller sites than the ones selected. The multi-storied building will cost less, maintenance will be less, and the students will, in terms of climate, have a better environment.

This kind of planning and changing has occurred time and again, and has been allowed for in the way information in the Master Plan has been assembled. Tigerman has confidence in the quality of these changes. "We all keep growing and I keep learning more and more about the particular problems of East Pakistan. The designs, as they change, begin to solve the problems, in our judgment, in a better way."

FIVE POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTES AT BARISAL, BOGRA, PABNA, RANGPUR AND SYLHET, EAST PAKISTAN. Client: Directorate of Technical Education, Government of East Pakistan. Architects: Stanley Tigerman and Muzharul Islam.

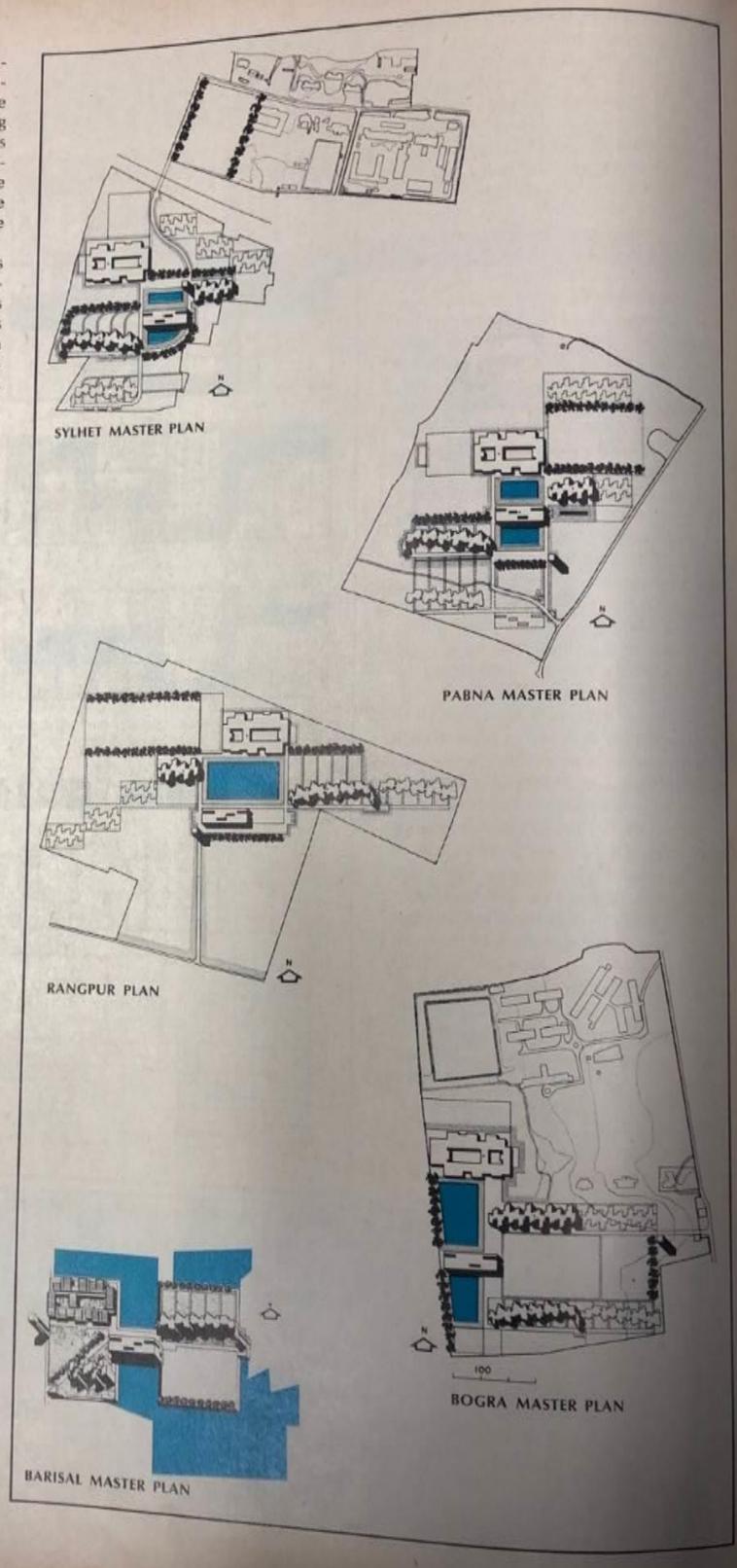
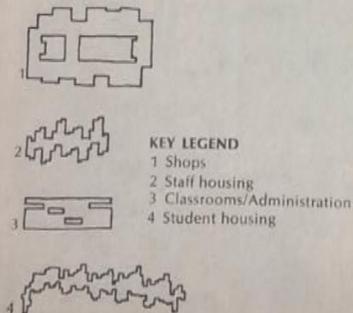


Figure 71: Raymond Lifchez, 'Master Plan Study Gives East Pakistan New Approaches For Tropical Architecture', Architectural Record, (September 1968) p 160.

The report was a genuine search for the authentic architectural language of Bangladesh (Then East Pakistan) that compliments the tropical climate and simple life style of its people lead this extensive study so meticulous that it turned into a booklet for the architects and the builders of East Pakistan. The research took almost two and half years and is a compilation of several realizations, understanding and considerations regarding the environment, climate and other several other design elements. As Quoted in the report “The Architectural Schizophrenia” has been a direct result of the generations of foreign domination* in this region; and to overcome this identity crisis, one needs to address the problems first.

This research, consists of three different parts, evolves around the basic design principles that generates the idea and functionality of a space. This includes cultural and sociological pattern, economics, environment, aesthetics, function, flexibility, structure, materiality & construction methods. Anyone related to building construction can relate to the first part as it gives a very general idea on the natural and sociological aspects of the society, while the second part focuses on the balance between existing & future program arrangement. The third segment is the combination of all the predetermined measures for a specific project. Agriculture oriented East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) was a small portion of Pakistan. Islam being the principle religion has contributed several aspects of lifestyles that often contradicts with the apparent ease of living in a tropical region. This research directly attended this particular contradiction moreover suggests techniques that not only covers the building construction methodology but also put focus on how a well executed architecture can accommodate the trifling household habits of a resident.

Several statistics on labor, material and construction cost and several ways of formal expressions were compared according to the specific context and need. Islam has always put emphasis on the logical explanation of a form through environment, function, material. These explanations were analyzed with illustrated diagrams. Being a part of the hot and humid zone, natural ventilation during summer & monsoon through the study of the orientation, enclosure and passageway and minimum dependency on mechanical cooling has been mentioned several times throughout the research.

Islam’s emphasis on design elements not being only the supporting objects, rather the supporting aspects of life and surrounding shows why this research covers topics as essential as topsoil, planted ground cover and elevated flood platforms; as innovative as window and louver treatment and large overhangs and as basic as water sealed house traps. The study indicates apart from the air, temperature and humidity as design determinates other factors such as age, sex, skin pigmentation, clothing and health are also the vital points to affect climatological human comfort.

As the study focuses on the prototypical masterplan for the technical institutes of five towns more existing scenarios of the culture, the socio-economic imbalance and the west influenced architecture practice of this country came to light. Islam and Tigerman refined the requirements by creating a questionnaire for the existing students and faculty members. They came up with an idea of a clustered neighborhood that will accommodate the students living far from their home with people they have minimum interaction with. Coming from a cloistered joint family culture to a separated isolation this concept of a boy’s hostel can become there only way of keeping the pace. All the masterplans had segments for future expansions which acts like a terrace for the proposed layout being an open ended possibility

for the future. Multi-purposed and multi-storied buildings were proposed by Islam & Tigerman as its financially more convenient.

The interesting part of this research is that it highlights on the social structure of Bengali families as well. How the socializing is done on a daily basis, how the servants are responsible for the household chores and why the most interesting meeting places are the restaurants and the movie theatres. And how these urban lives shape the architectural journey of the country. Response to the varies season, materiality & culture is the key measures according to this study. Different aspects like screening, privacy for women, private dining, can be achieved through layout stimulating variety of spaces within a home, as Tigerman quotes “ The design, as they change begin to solve the problems”

After the report, as the work progressed Islam started to take more charge and he changed the main workshop building and the masterplans.

He sought to make the building in load bearing brick wall because of availability of material , familiarity of construction and economy.

But even though he took the most familiar construction method that could be easily executed around Bangladesh, he transformed the load bearing walls into a lyrical composition.

He ingeniously developed a pattern of the bays that allowed him to achieve all the spaces yet built in the structural grid.

This abstract composition of the walls was a new dimension that we see in him where his work was displaying geometric and graphical mastery along with climate and construction sensitivity.

The other thing that Islam brought into play was the uniqueness of each District in each of the Masterplans. For example in the Barishal and Sylhet Masterplan the approach was past a waterbody and the waterbody played a important role in the design both in composition and placement and also in function such as bathing and social space, because in those areas the abundance of waterbodies are a major character. In the Bogora masterplan the approach is past a Mango Orchard because the north of Bengal is famous for its Mango plantations. This kind of demonstration of the characters of the Districts was important to Islam because he always wanted the future generation to be aware of their country , its character, its resources, and to have a sence of pride of their own individuality and identity.

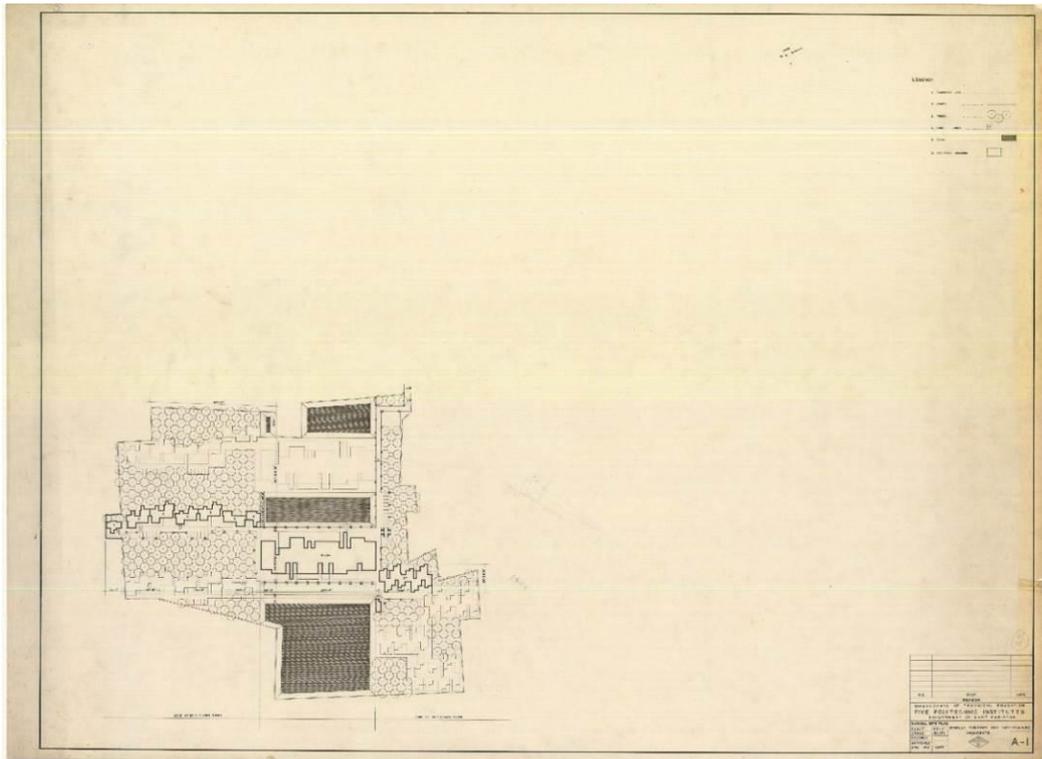


Figure 72: Master Plan, Barishal Polytechnic Institute, 1966.

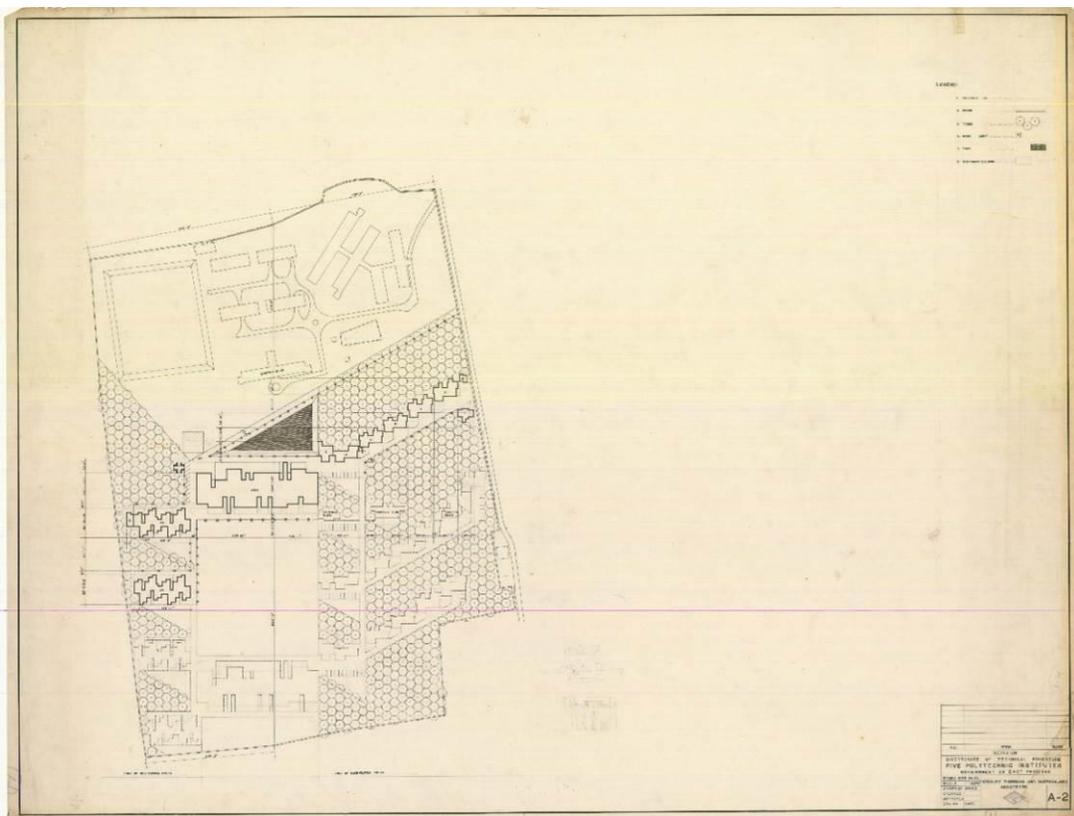


Figure 73: Master Plan, Bogra Polytechnic Institute, 1966.

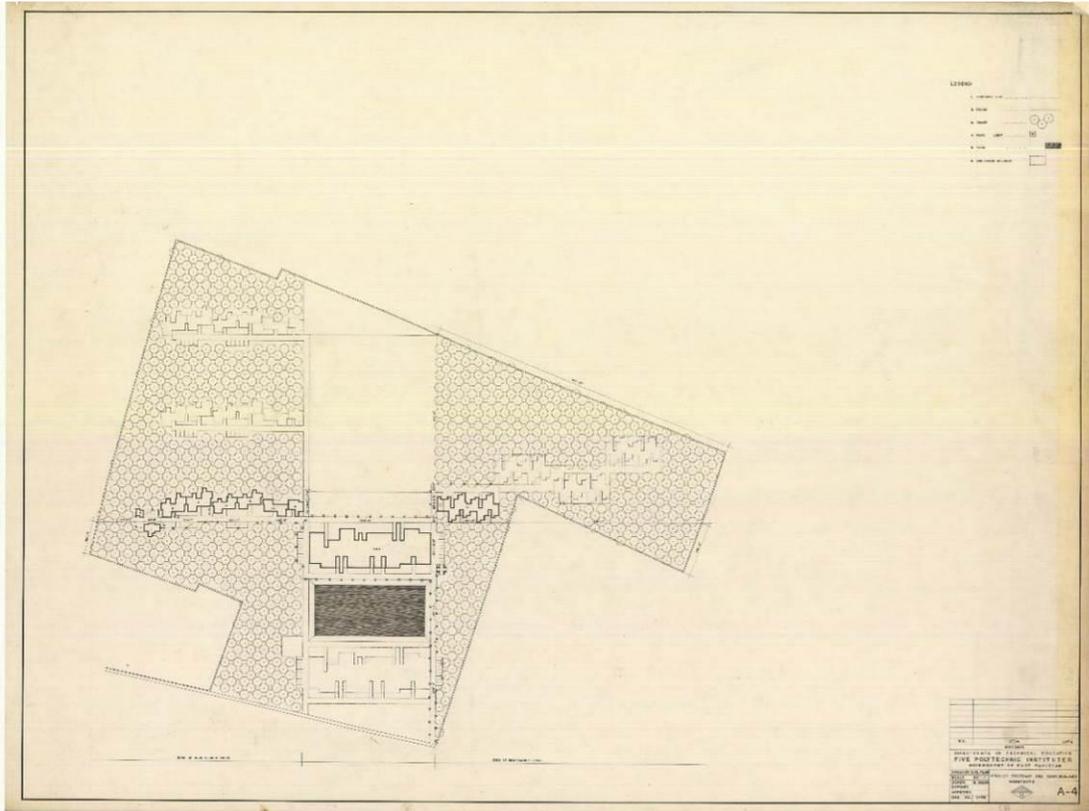


Figure 74: Master Plan, Rangpur Polytechnic Institute, 1966.

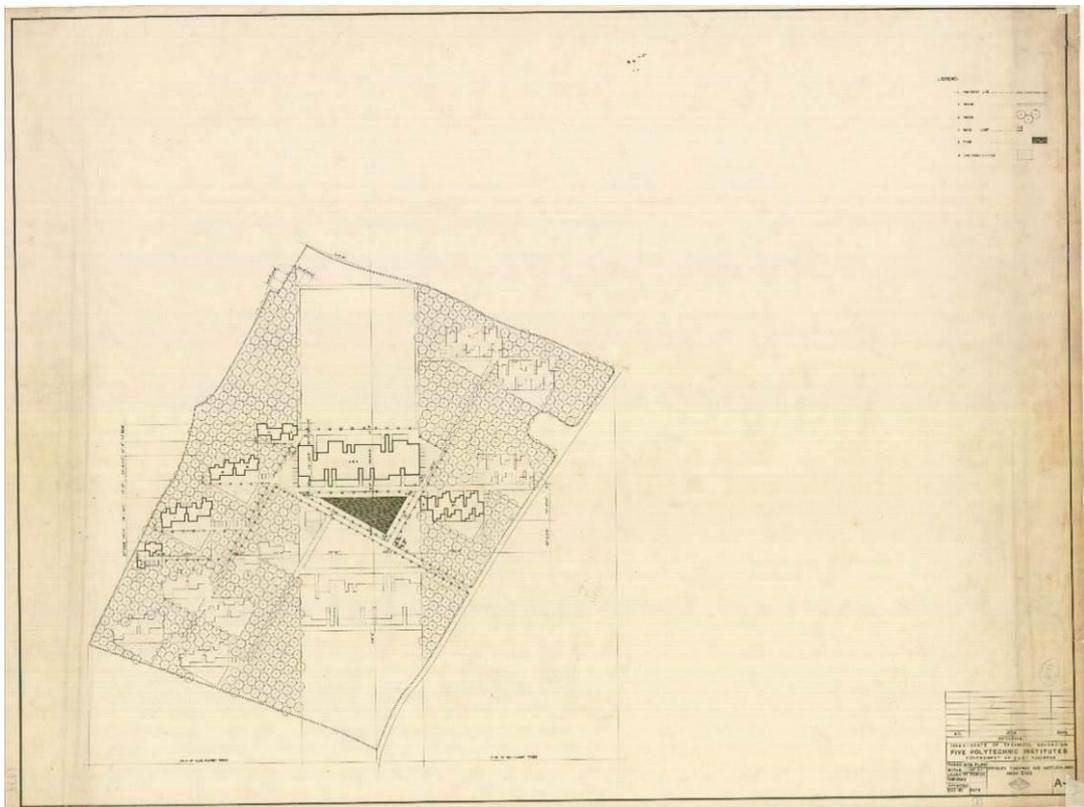


Figure 75: Master Plan, Pabna Polytechnic Institute, 1966.

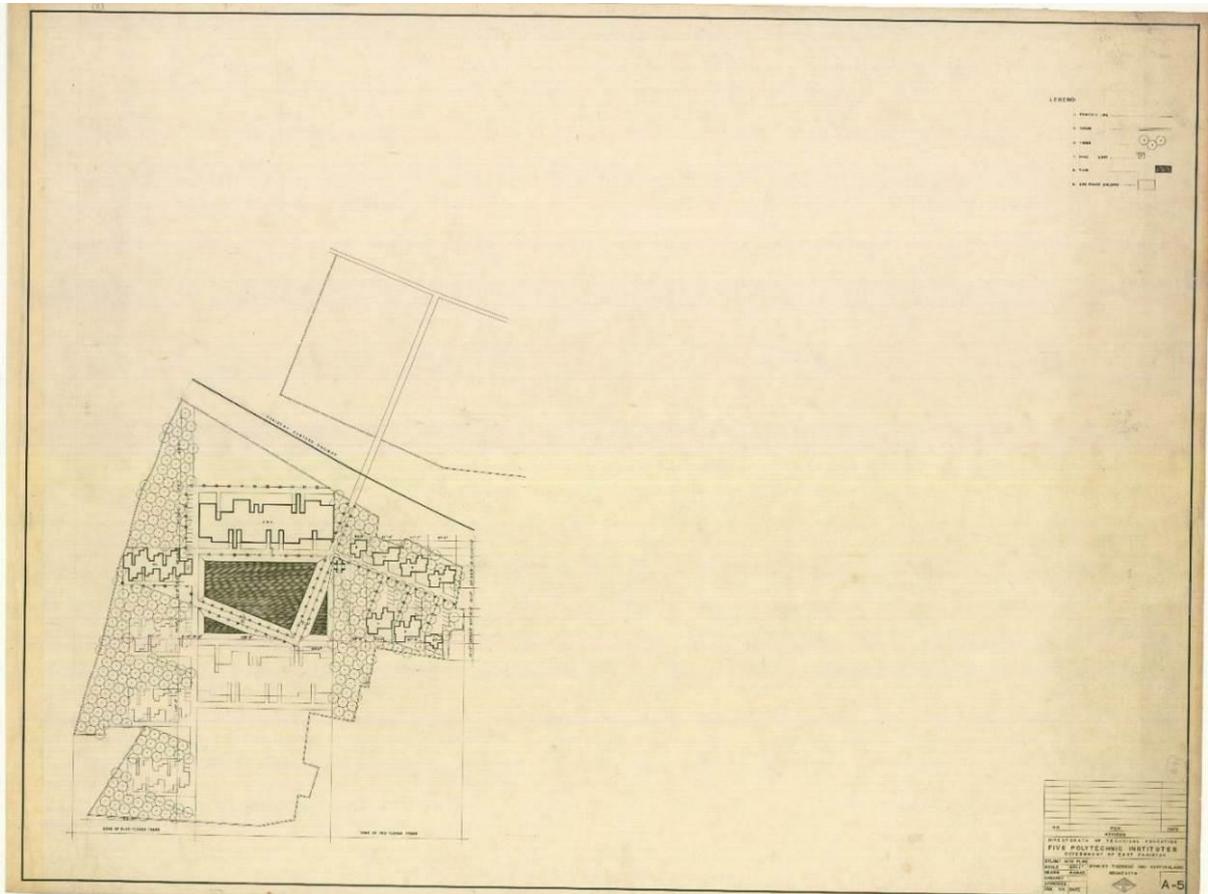


Figure 76: Master Plan, Sylhet Polytechnic Institute, 1966.

Barisal Polytechnic Institute (1966)

Barisal is identified with the term “Dhan Nadi Khal, ei tin e Barishal. Which means that the paddy field, the rivers and the water channels, these three defines Barishal. It is a place of water ways and water bodies. The rivers have provided the alluvial soil and the narrow water ways have provided the necessary irrigation for vast production of rice in this area. Muzharul Islam in the master plan of Barisal Brought this identity of Barisal forward. The water bodies play the central role in the master plan. If you notice the main polytechnic building, it’s situated with water bodies on two sides of it. Even the proposed extension will end up having water bodies on two sides of it. The approached road approach in such a way that when someone passes before arriving at the building enters into the presence of a water body, and then as they move forward towards the main polytechnic building, they can see the building reflected into another water body. So the presence of the water body is predominant and the building is enhanced by its reflective presence also in the water body. When the main entry is past the side of the building and in front of the building which is flanked again by a large water body. So the building front plaza leads on to a large water body where the students would have probably gather in the afternoon and this large water body becomes an integral masterplan part with the main building. And this rightfully represents Barisal because all the students would be going through the city and they probably would have grown up in a city where most of their afternoon time or free time would have been sitting or playing next to a water body.

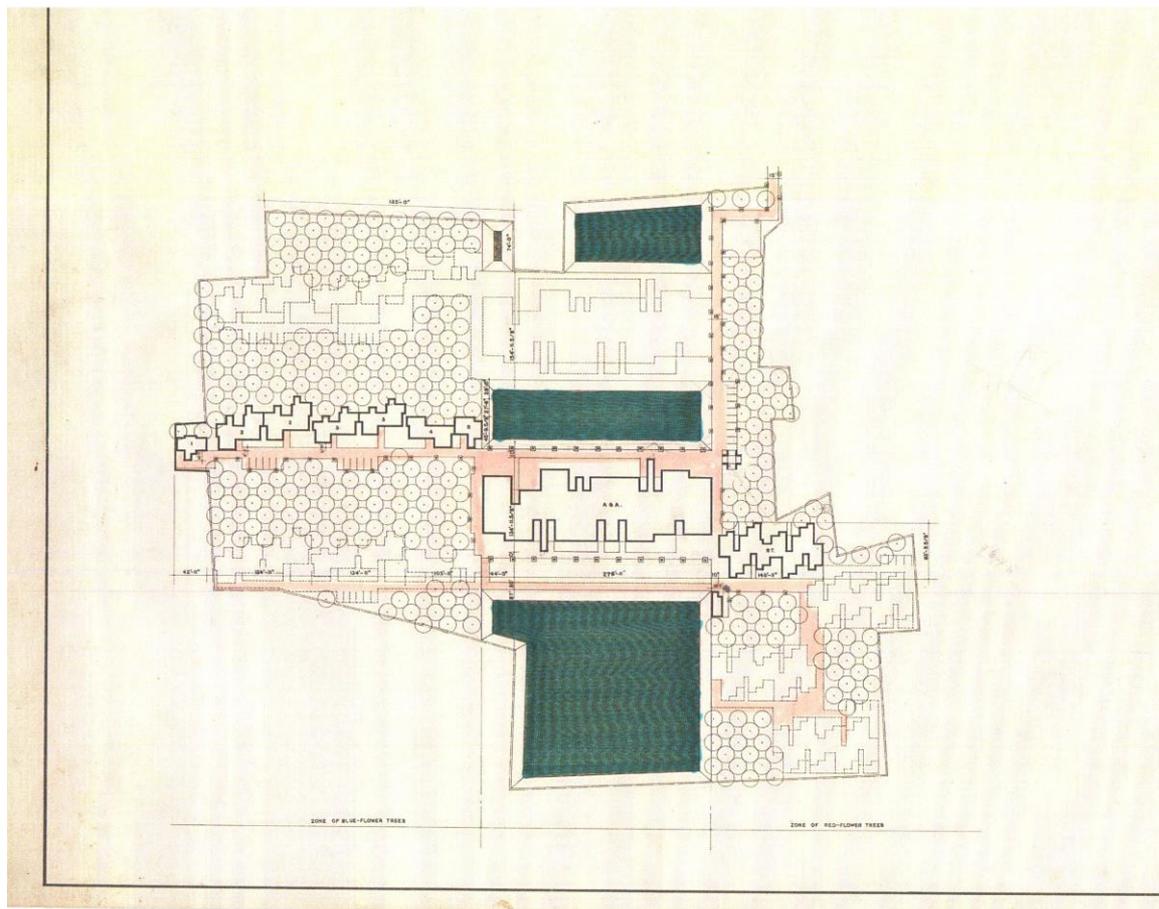


Figure 77 : Barisal Polytechnic Institute, Planning Concept

Bogra Polytechnic Institute (1966)

The entry of Bogra Polytechnic Institute is a remarkable phenomenon. Beside the site there is actually another govt. complex. So he created the entry along the boundary wall of the other complex. On one side he has kept orchards of mangoes. Bogra is famous for its mangoes and litchis; so in this whole master plan he has created many orchards which will actually provide for the inhabitants over here. And the orchards are the true reflection of Bogra itself. So the entry is along orchard and then as one gets closer to the building they see the building being reflected in a triangular water body. The water body again is a wonderful relief in a climate which can become quite warm at times. One then turns around the side of the building to the front of the building on which there is a large play area or event area for the whole complex. So the dramatic approach to the building where you pass the orchards, the water body, and when you to the front of the building all of a sudden you see the large vastness of the open field is truly a wonderful series of experiences which is highlighted with the beautiful shade of mango orchard which in season when it's flowering will offer a beautiful aroma of the mango flowers throughout the complex and when the mangoes will be ripe and ready for harvesting, it will provide for everyone in the complex.

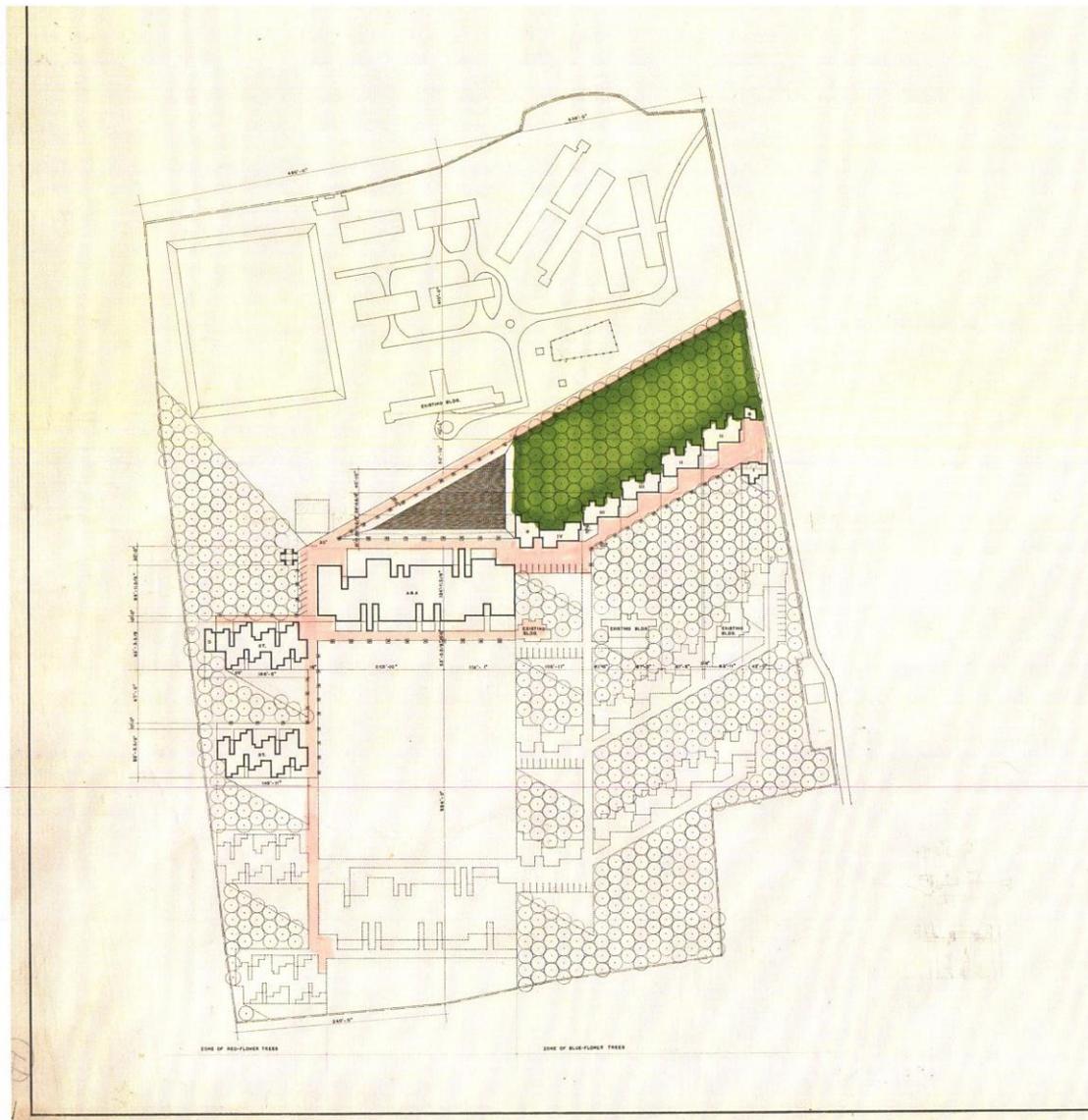


Figure 78: Bogra Polytechnic Institute, Planning Concept

Rangpur Polytechnic Institute (1966)

As you enter into the masterplan of Rangpur Polytechnic Institute, you see the building reflected onto a beautiful pond and you enter literally past the dense vegetation and water body. Rangpur is a hotter area of Bangladesh and can get quite hot during the summers. So over here the dense plantation of the master plan immediately creates a relief to every part specially to the residential areas and it becomes a powerful statement in the whole master plan. But again both the presence of the water body and the dense plantation gives a relief and a sense of coolness in an area which is a hotter part of Bangladesh and this scheme is thus very welcomed. And what is important to note is the residences is created in a situation where both on the north and south there are series of threes. So a wonderful micro-climate has been created for specially the houses where it is important to drop the temperature. It is also important to note that the water body is only on the south of the main polytechnic building workshop. Because then breeze the will come over the water, will be slightly humid and will have more water quantity and that is very welcomed in a climate which can become very dry. So he is hoping that the breeze that will come from the south side over the pond will be cooler in temperature and will be welcome relief for the people working through the day in the workshop.

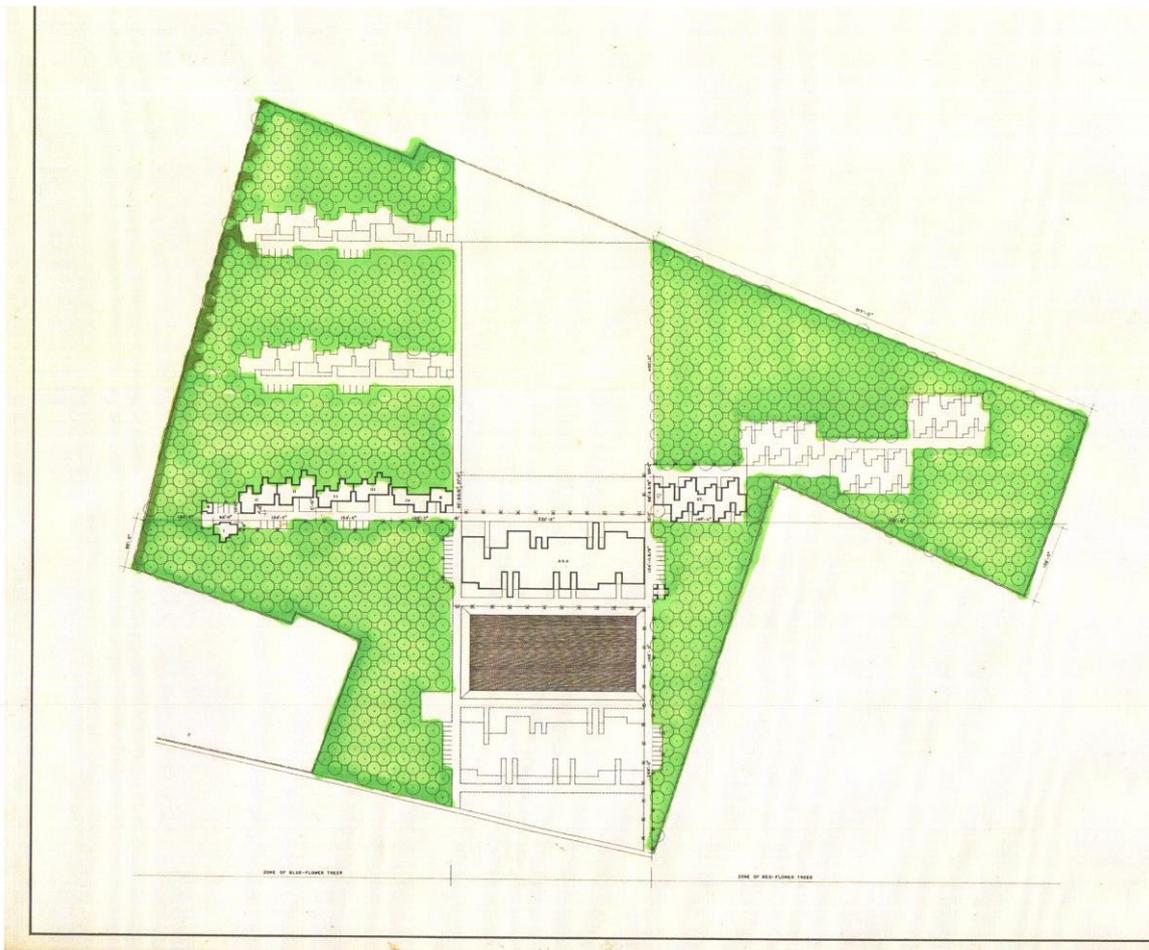


Figure 79 :Rangpur Polytechnic Institute, Planning Concept

Pabna Polytechnic Institute (1966)

The site of Pabna is queued almost at 30°-60° angle from the cardinal axis and Muzharul Islam articulated the plan in such a way that the cardinal axis and the lines perpendicular and parallel to the site creates its circulation route throughout the site. Within that he has again placed the water body and the fields in a wonderful way that both the cardinal and the direction of the site together creates the pathways and the open spaces of the whole master plan. Pabna is in the Rajshahi district famous for its fruits, hence one can again see its dense plantation which would have been a mixture of flowering trees and of orchards. In this particular way Muzharul Islam is not only addressing the nature of Pabna in Rajshahi but also he is addressing the immediate site itself.

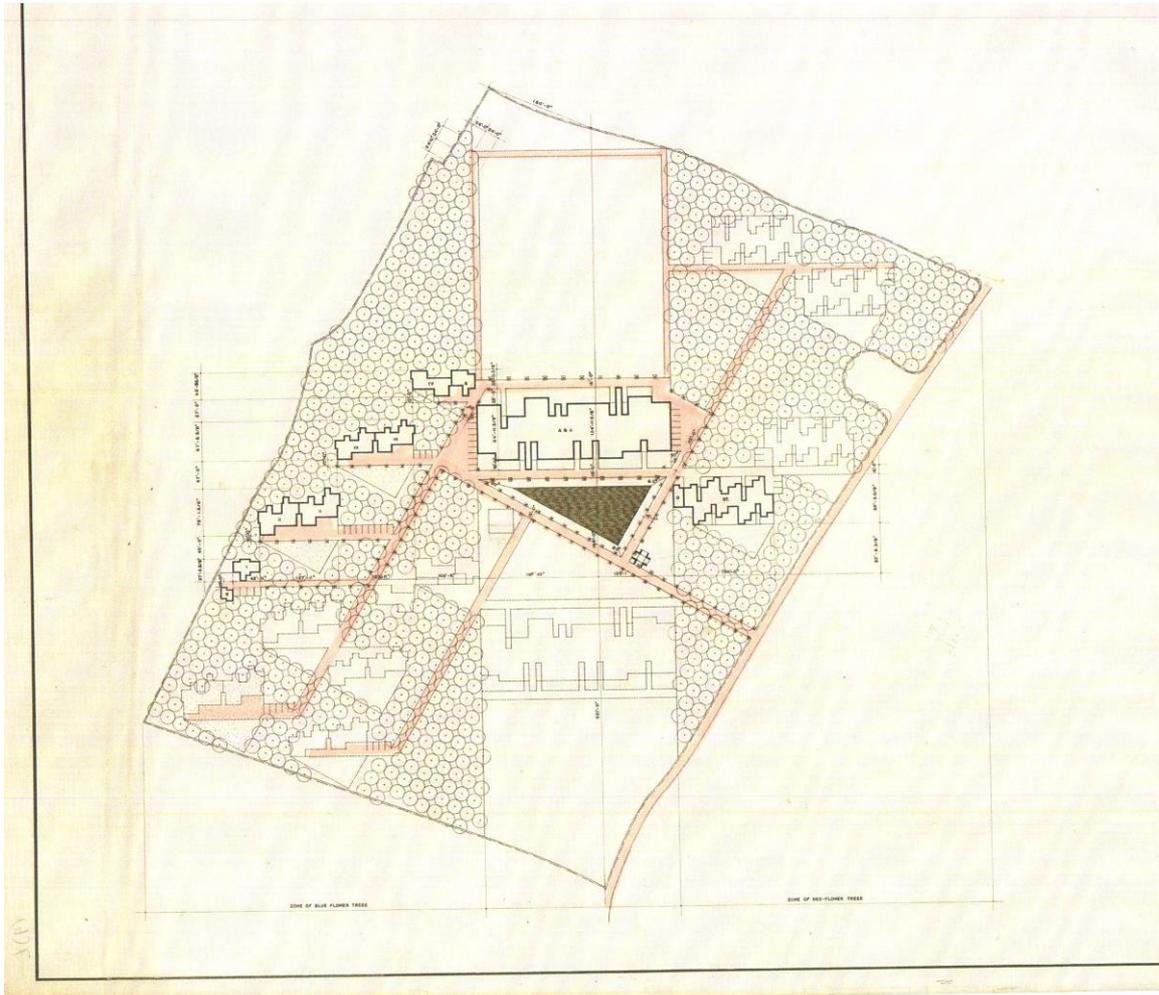


Figure 80 : Pabna Polytechnic Institute, Planning Concept

Sylhet Polytechnic Institute (1966)

Sylhet is renowned for its ponds and haors (A haor is a wetland ecosystem in the north eastern part of Bangladesh which physically is a bowl or saucer shaped shallow depression, also known as a back swamp). So, Muzharul Islam designed the building in such a way that you literally cross over a water body to reach to the housing and the building. And the main drive path ambulates around the pond. But by having this path he creates one large water body and two smaller water bodies. Muzharul Islam emphasized in creating a beautiful interpretation of a place and using only the water bodies and the path to create abstract representation of which district the polytechnic he is making in.

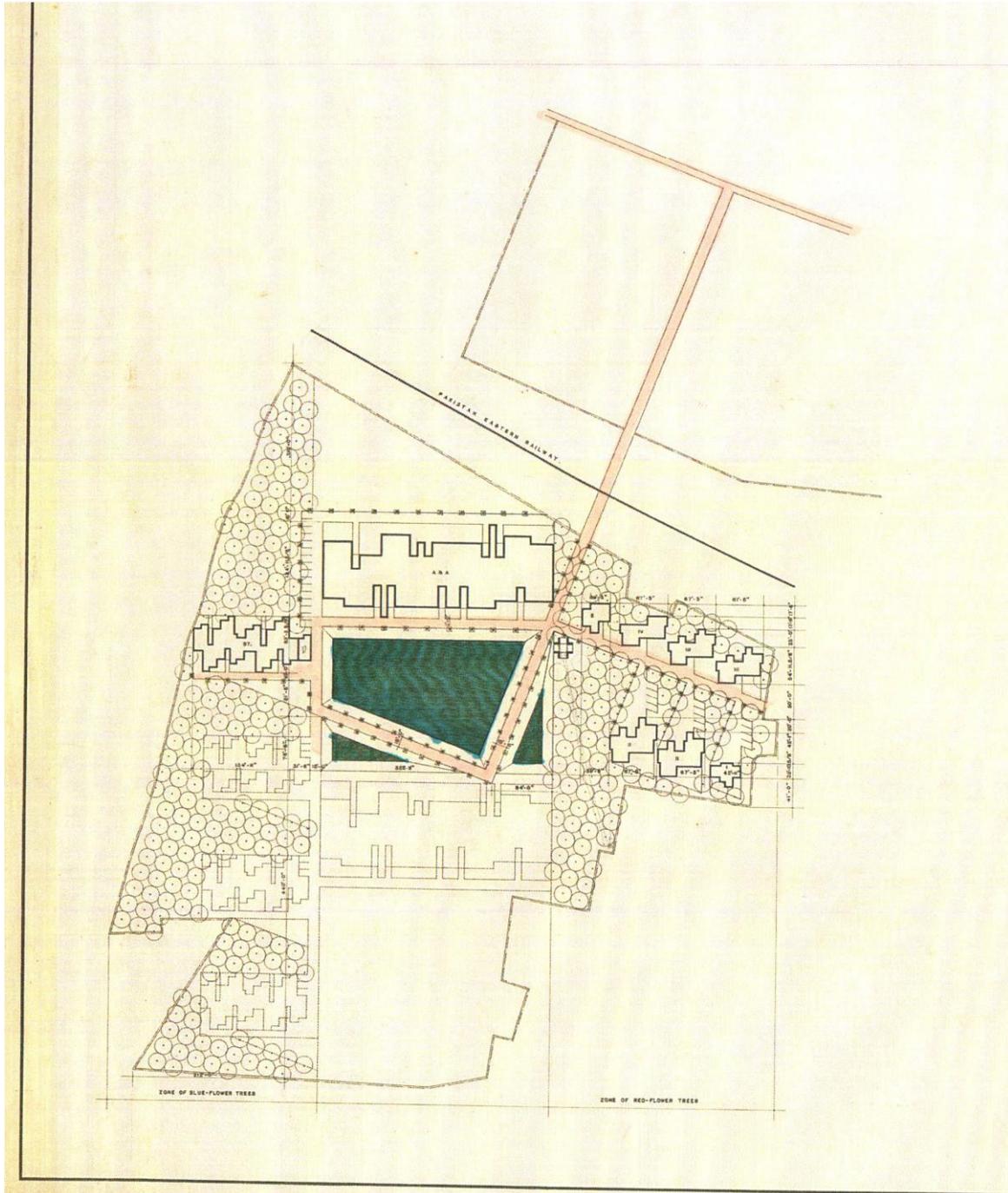


Figure 81 :Sylhet Polytechnic Institute, Planning Concept

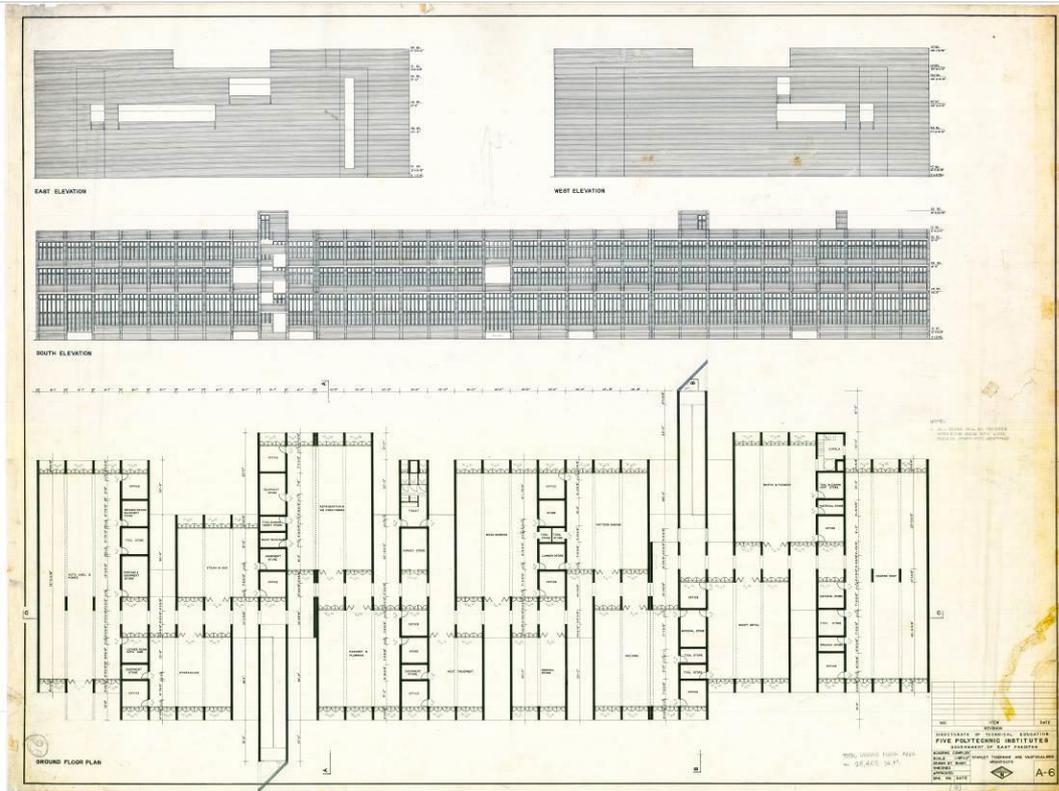


Figure 82 :Ground Floor Plan, Workshop, 1966.

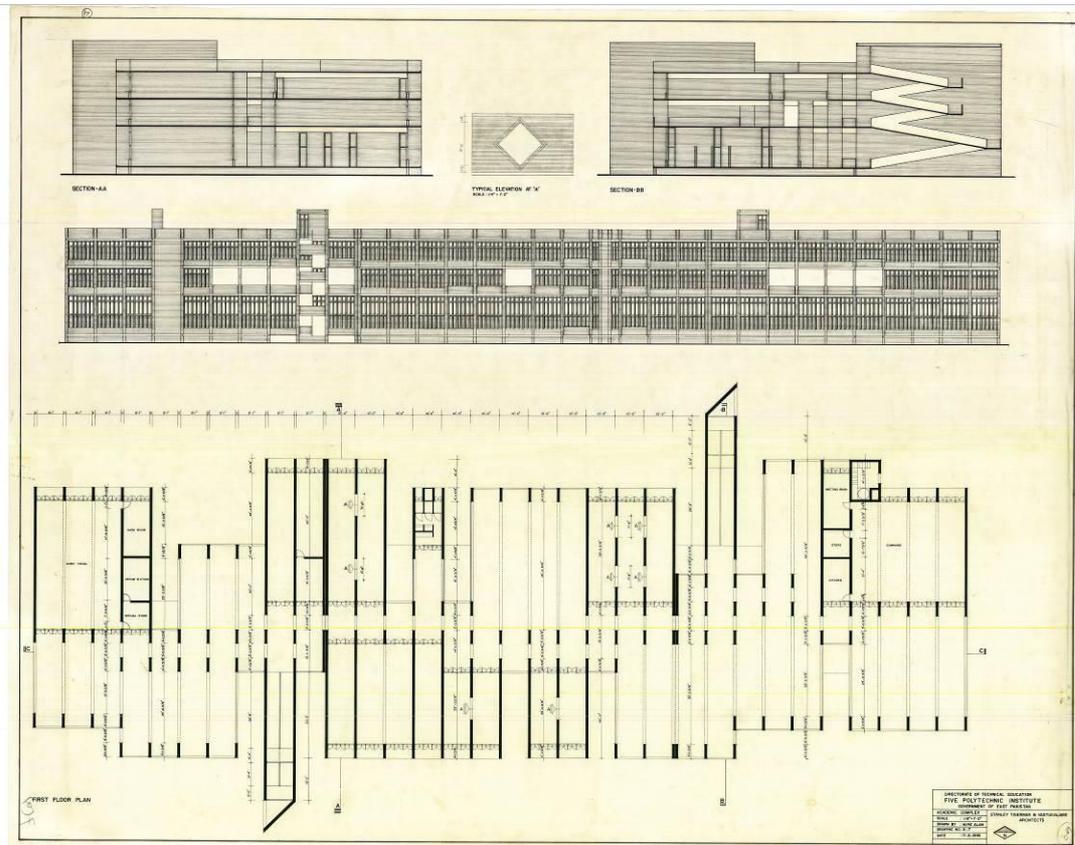


Figure 83: First Floor Plan, Workshop, 1966.

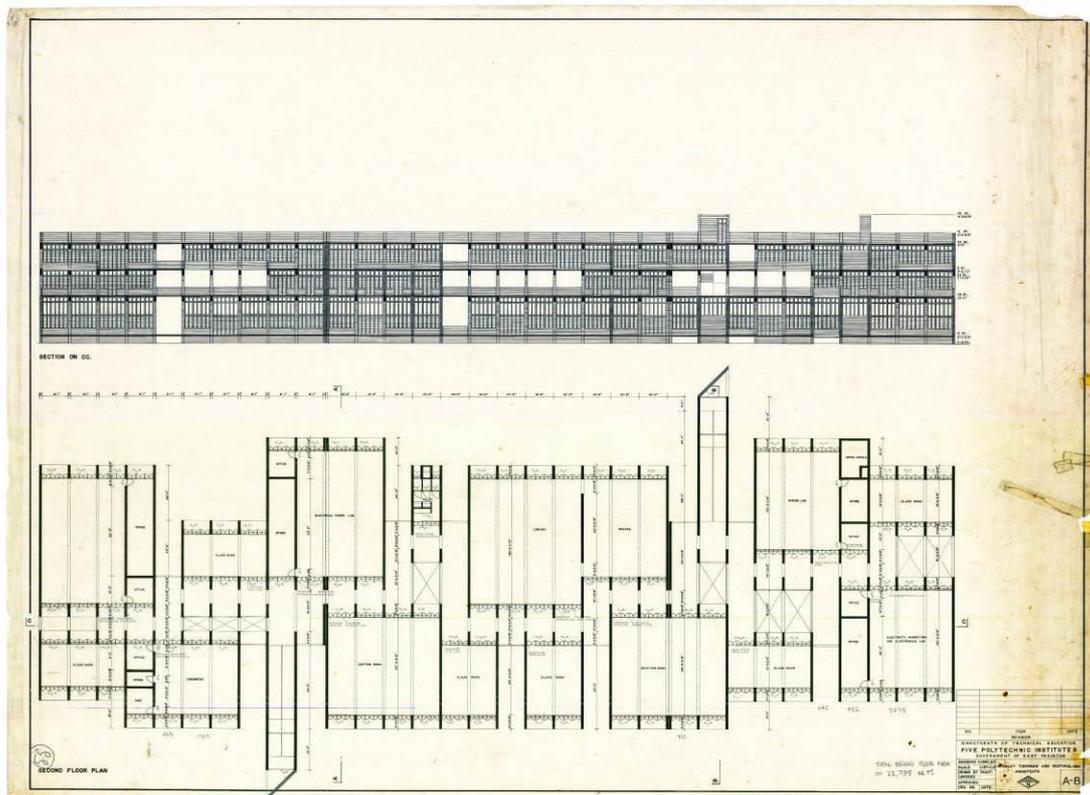


Figure 84 :Second Floor Plan, Workshop, 1966.

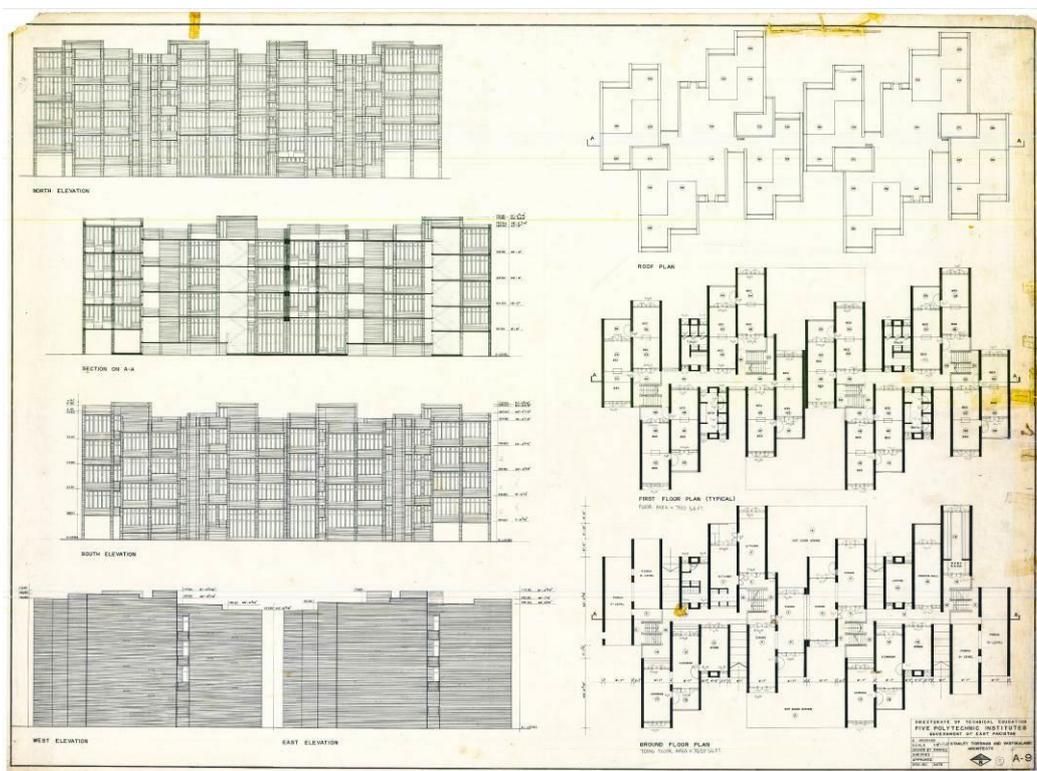


Figure 85 :Floor Plans, Elevations and Sections. Housing, Polytechnic Institute, 1966.

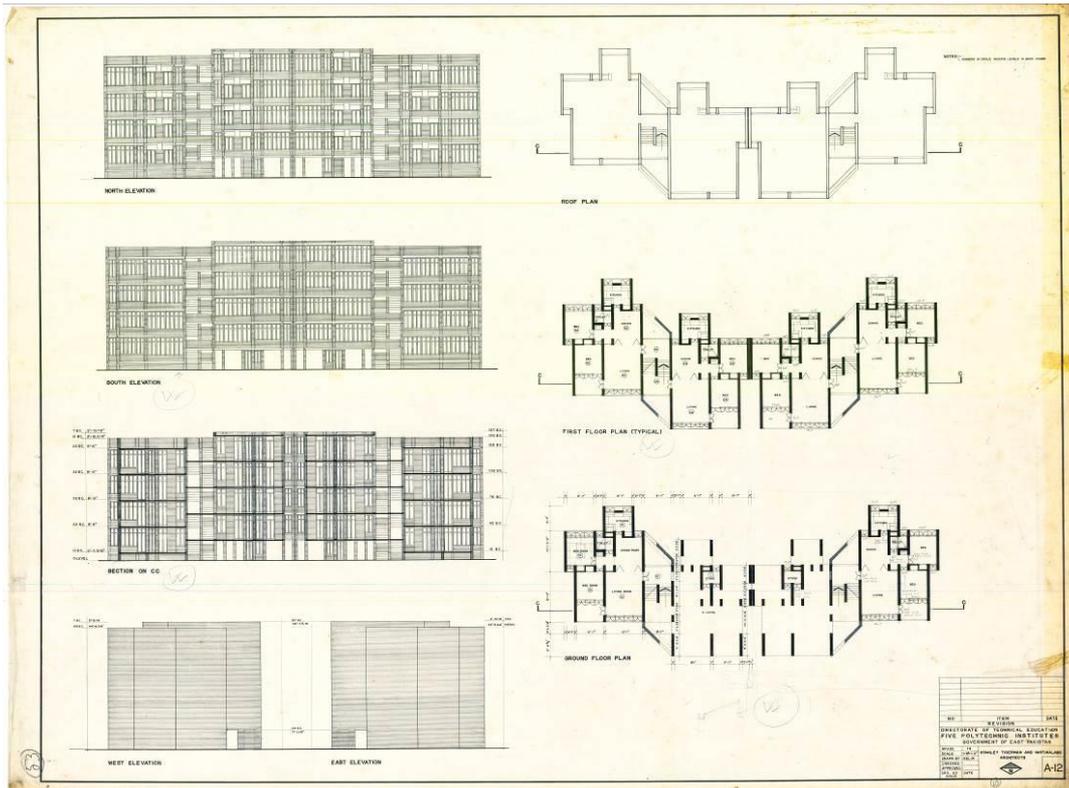


Figure 86 :Floor Plans, Elevations and Sections. Housing, Polytechnic Institute, 1966.

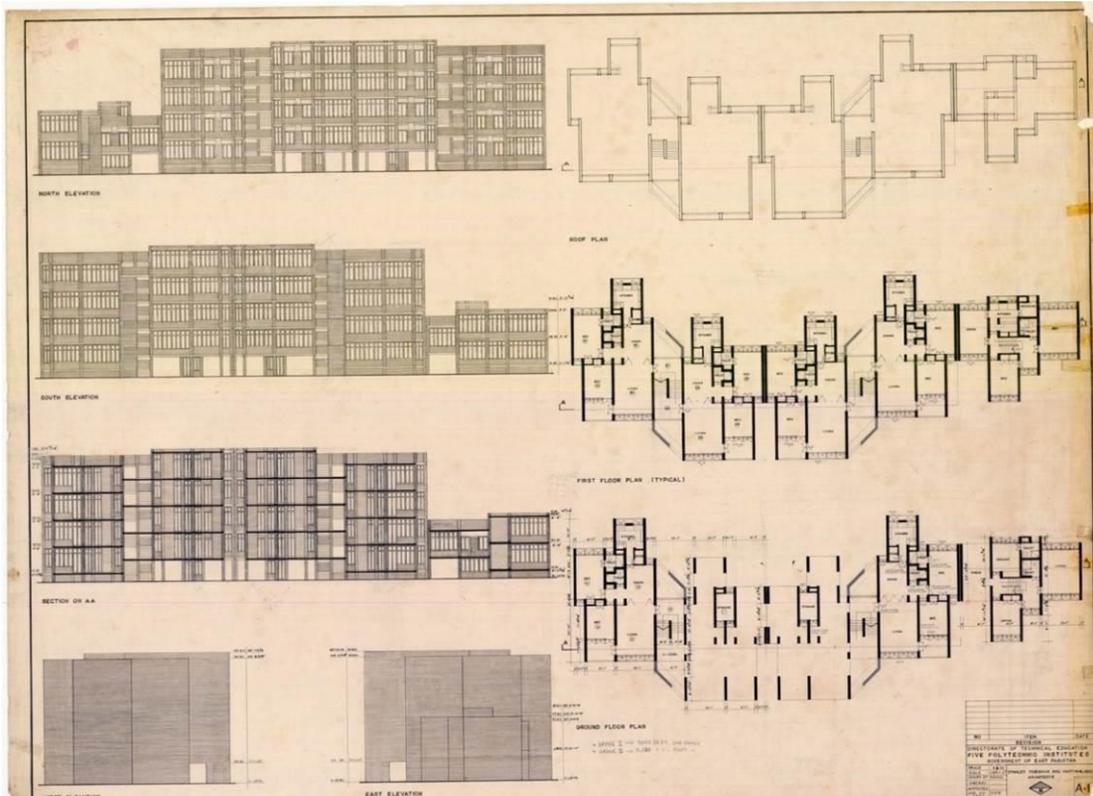


Figure 87 :Floor Plans, Elevations and Sections. Housing, Polytechnic Institute, 1966.

Workshop building of Polytechnic

One studies the plan of the main workshop building of Polytechnic, it will show a wonderful mix of a post-Yale Muzharul Islam and yet a Muzharul Islam who always remains true to his country's context and situation. He was developing a workshop which needed to be ventilated naturally given our climatic and economic conditions. He needed to develop a design where the whole building will have air moving from the south to north. Stanly Tigerman and Muzharul Islam together developed the first scheme of the plan where Stanly played a more leading role in organizing the workshops. Later, Muzharul Islam modified it into a system which he could build in just brick foundation because that would reduce the construction cost and Brick was something that our workers were more used to handling and this is where he could maintain the construction quality to all parts of Bangladesh with the illiterate workers. Concrete construction would have needed leaned engineers and would have needed much more quality control which should have been very difficult to do in all the five places where Polytechnics were going to be built that time. And out of the five Polytechnics, three would've been in the north western side of Bengal where the brick construction was very common. He opted to go for composite brick construction method where brick would be the pre dominant building material and the façade material in the project itself. Having taken the structural system and the need for natural ventilation into account he came up with a scheme in which composite brick columns were closely placed all through the project. But within the project, the circulation space varied far beyond that of a normal double loaded corridor system. But what is even more interesting is that if one notices carefully, one can see that the building is actually a wonderful arrangement of what one would call served and servant spaces in the building. So if one notices how the servant spaces are tightly placed in a narrow grid, served spaces are opened up into open spaces because of the tight organization of the servant spaces one cannot but wonder that how the Yale Art Gallery of Louise Kahn may have influenced him on this project where in the Yale Art Gallery the servant spaces is in a narrow strip with the served spaces on two sides of the strip.

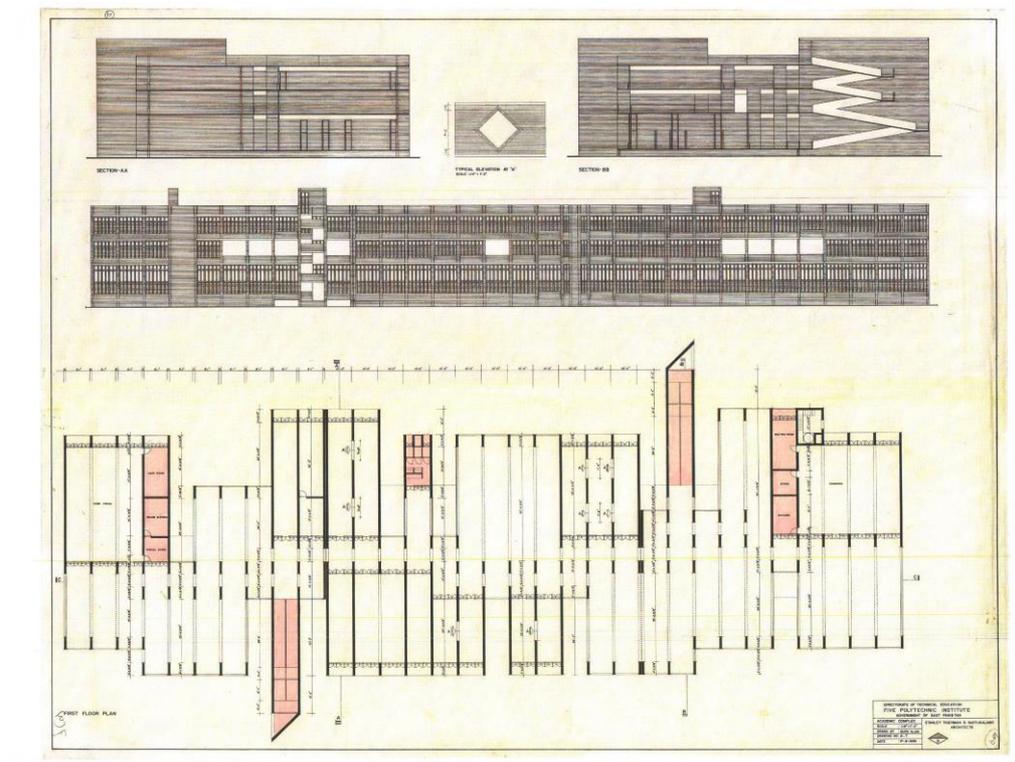




Figure 88 :Sylhet Polytechnic Institute. Photograph taken by the author, 2009

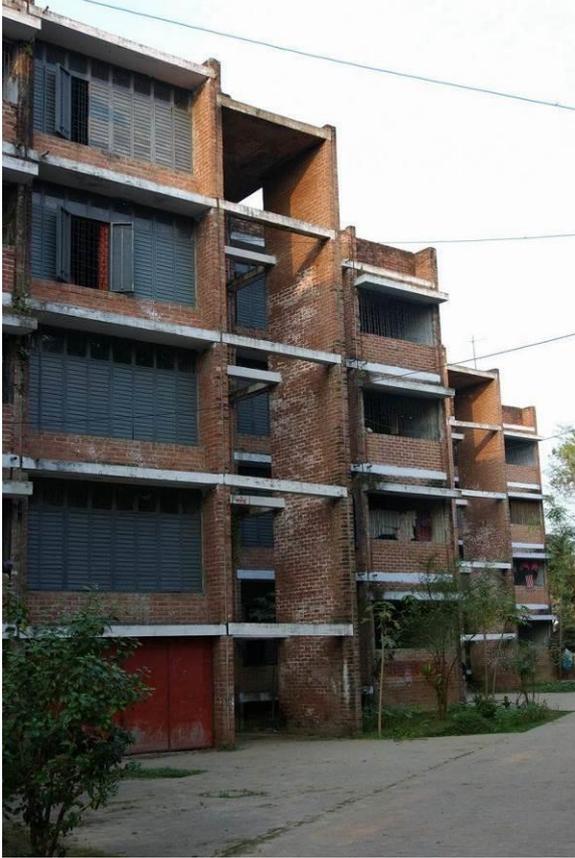


Figure 89: Housing, Bogra Polytechnic Institute.
Photograph taken by the author, 2009.



Figure 90: Workshop, Bogra Polytechnic Institute.
Photograph taken by the author, 2009.



Figure 91: Director's Bungalow, Bogra Polytechnic Institute. Photograph taken by the author, 2009.



Figure 92 :Water Tower, Sylhet Polytechnic Institute. Photograph taken by the author, 2009.

JAHANGIR NAGAR UNIVERSITY (1967-70)

East Pakistan Government, in 1966 decided to have a second university for Dhaka on the outskirts of Dhaka, in a place called Jahangir Nagar. Muzharul Islam was awarded the project.

The site was in a remote area at that time with had only some agriculture land and a vast lake. Islam came up with a Masterplan that would be extremely Strong and Geometric, yet will keep the waterbody almost untouched and in its natural form interweaving throughout the whole masterplan. Even the very few parts of the masterplan was completed in his original design , the decision to preserve the lake in its totality was kept and this has been so successful that the lake is the largest migratory bird sanctuary. Islam’s uncanny mastery of adopting modern lines without effecting the site negatively is a remarkable attitude that showed his strength of character.

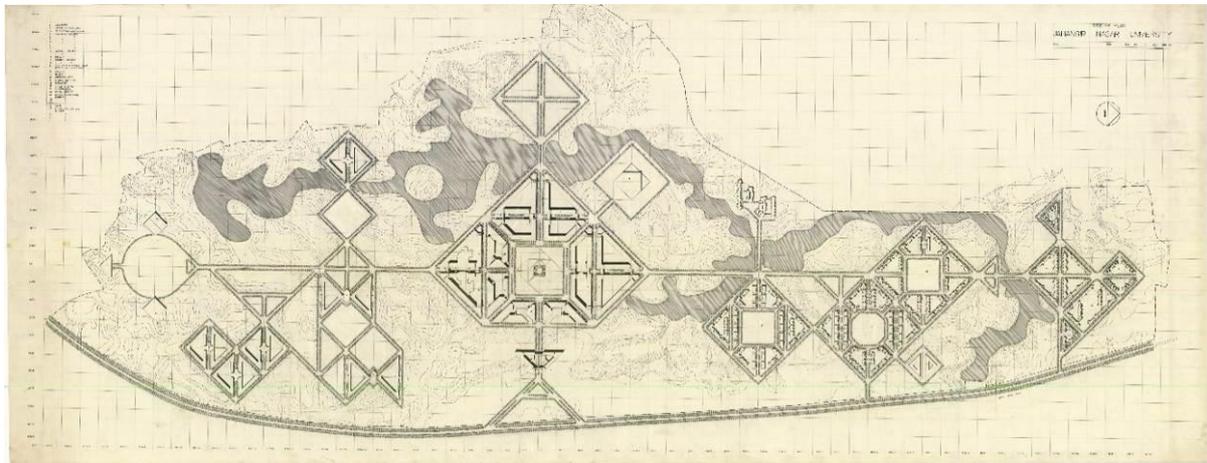


Figure 93 :Master Plan, Jahangirnagar University, 1967.

He chose to design all the buildings in brick but not succumbing to any regionalist attitudes. He chose strong form to what he called “developing a backbone” of the students. The large courtyards were conceived to make the students aware of the “scale” of their institution, that they had come to study in a “university”.

In the form of the dormitory he also solved the problem of orientation in a ingenious way, by adopting a angular division of spaces to the form. The simple articulation of the end angular brick gave the building a wonderful detail that gave it scale and beauty.

Islam , who was opposed to capitalism and consumerism, did not want to resort to the market and that’s why designed all the furniture and even the switch boards.

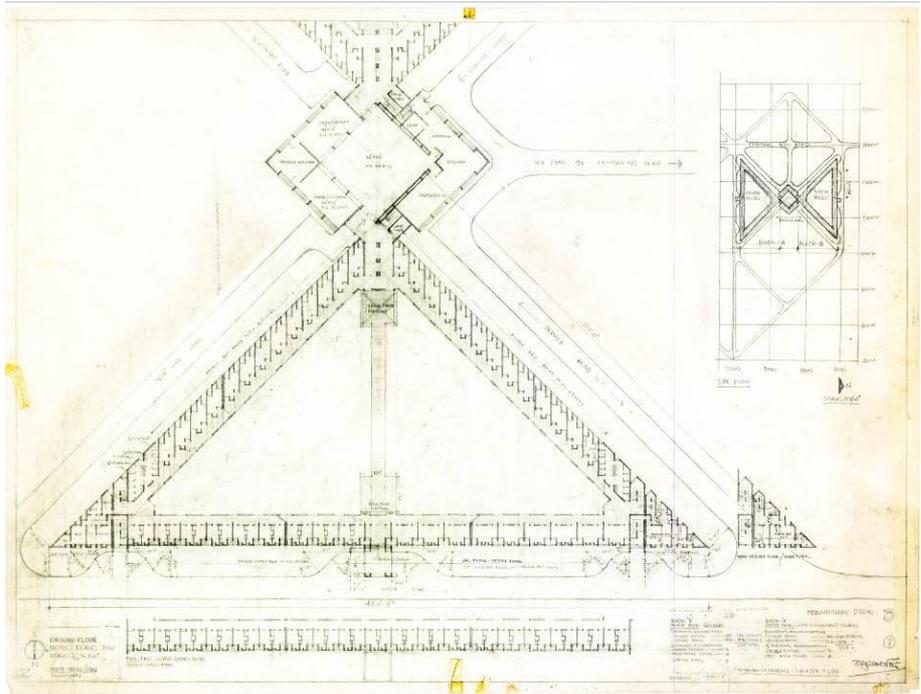


Figure 94: Students' Hostel, Jahangirnagar University, 1967. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 129-DS-027

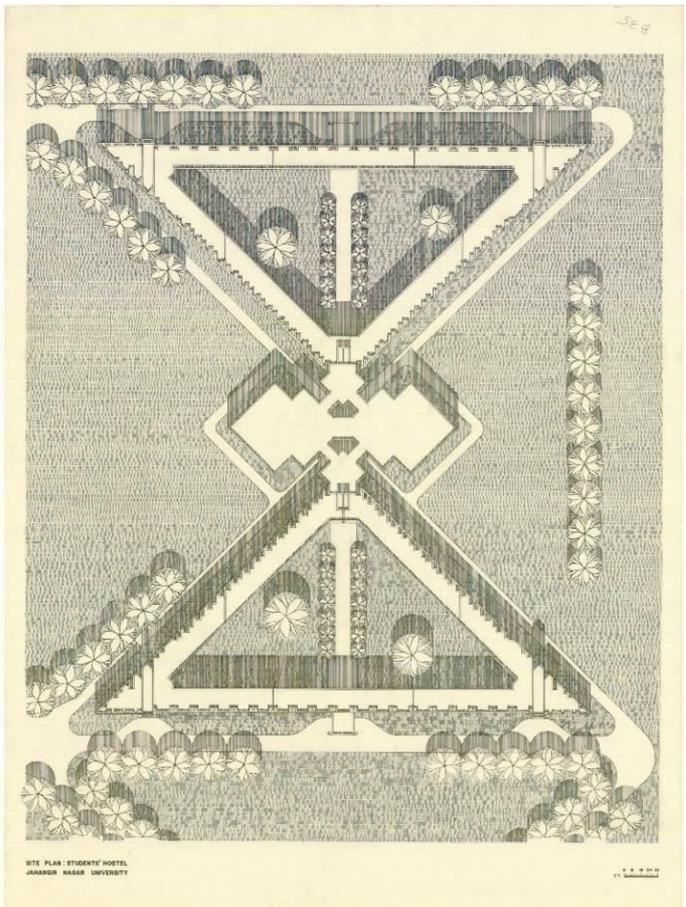


Figure 95: Site Plan of Students' Hostel, Jahangirnagar University, 1967. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 129-DS-027

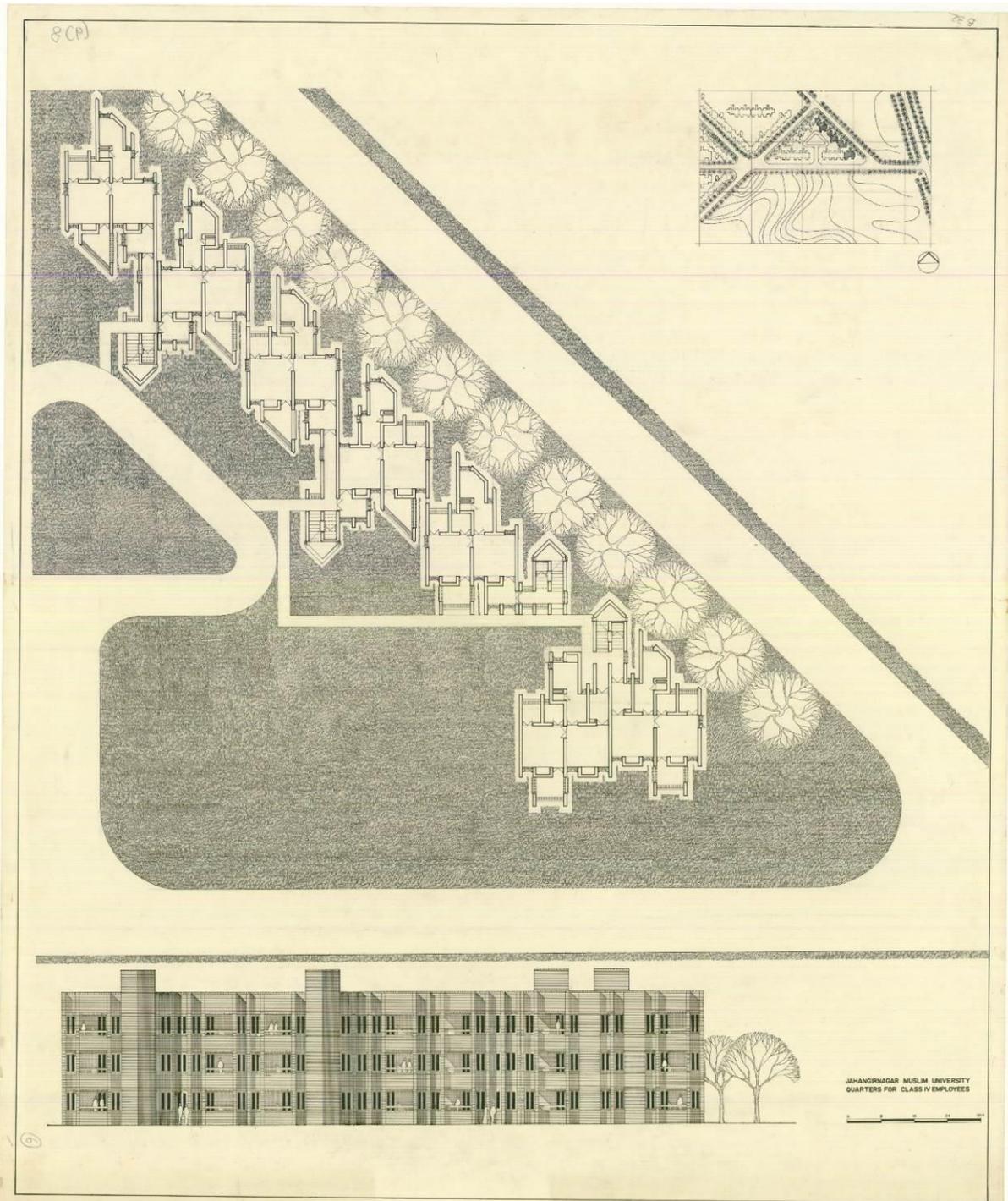


Figure 96: Class IV Quarters, Jahangirnagar University, 1967. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 129-DS-024

Here Muzharul Islam got a wonderful site with a beautiful water bodies running through almost the entire length of the site. So this waterbody and its natural setting is so beautiful that it is also one of the places where the migratory birds in the winter come and take refuge. Muzharul Islam wanted to retain this wonderful nature of the waterbody and he designed a master plan that intertwines with this wonderful waterbody. The master plan is harnessed in a beautiful angular geometry and this geometric intervention is almost like duet of manmade and nature. He also thought that the orthogonal grammar in the master plan would have been too rigid and would have not been as participatory as the one that he has drawn. He neither wanted to draw in a curvilinear geometry because that would be almost trying to compete with the nature itself. So in between diagrams of angular lines and links that he has brought forward the dialogue between the manmade and the nature.

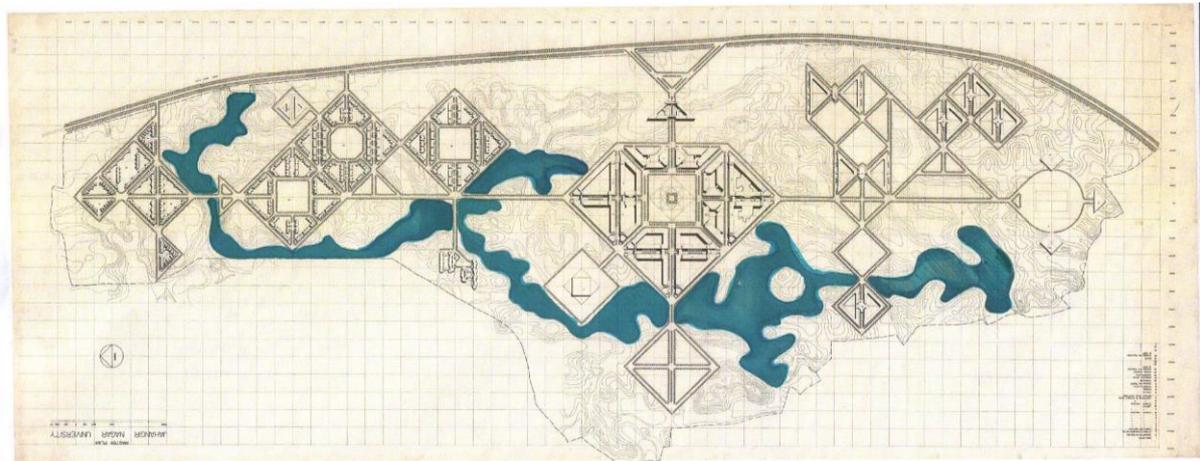


Figure 97 : Jahangir Nagar University Planning Concept

Hostels of Jahangir Nagar University

Really express his true genius. Even though the courtyard is the ideal social space in Bengal but the real problem with the courtyard is that only two arms are climatically correct and the other two arms become more exposed to the west which is not the preferable orientation that the openings of a building should be exposed in our climate. What Muzharul Islam does he is able to take a building and still orient the rooms internally in the north-south direction. And by doing that on the triangular arm side, he is able to actually block off the western sun. As we can see in the photographs he creates a wonderful elevation where you do not see the windows directly, they are protected by the building itself. But at the same time, he is able to draw in the north-south breeze successfully throughout the project. So by this way of where he is able to change the geometry of the rooms by maintaining the north-south orientation of the windows creates a wonderful pattern not only in the elevation and the layout of the building itself, but also is a master full of showing that how climate can be successfully addressed and a courtyard can be defined.

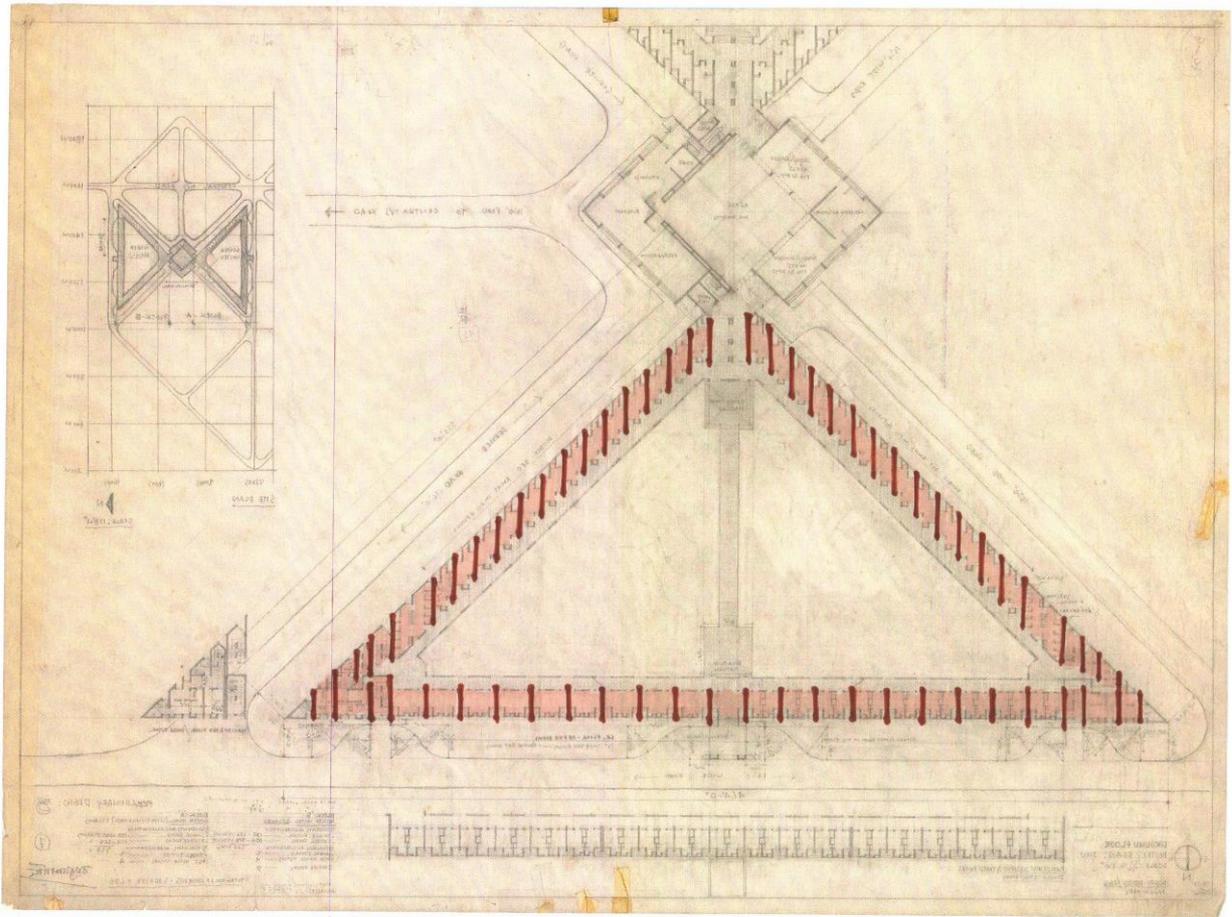


Figure 98: Jahangir Nagar University Hostel Planning Concept



Figure 99: Students' Hostel, Jahangir Nagar University. Photograph taken by the author, 2009.



Figure 100: Students' Hostel, Jahangirnagar University. Photograph taken by the author, 2009.

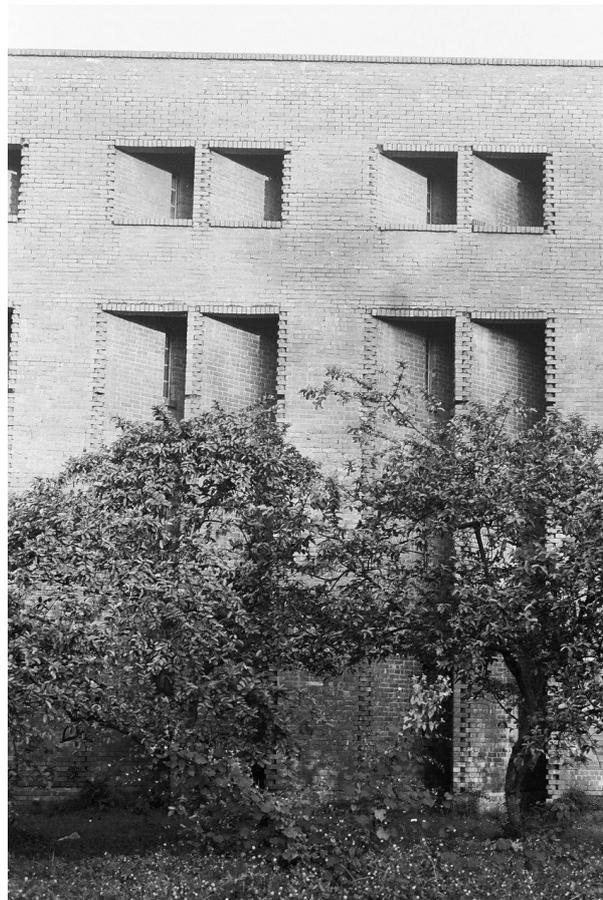


Figure 101: Students' Hostel, Jahangirnagar University. Photograph taken by the author, 2009.

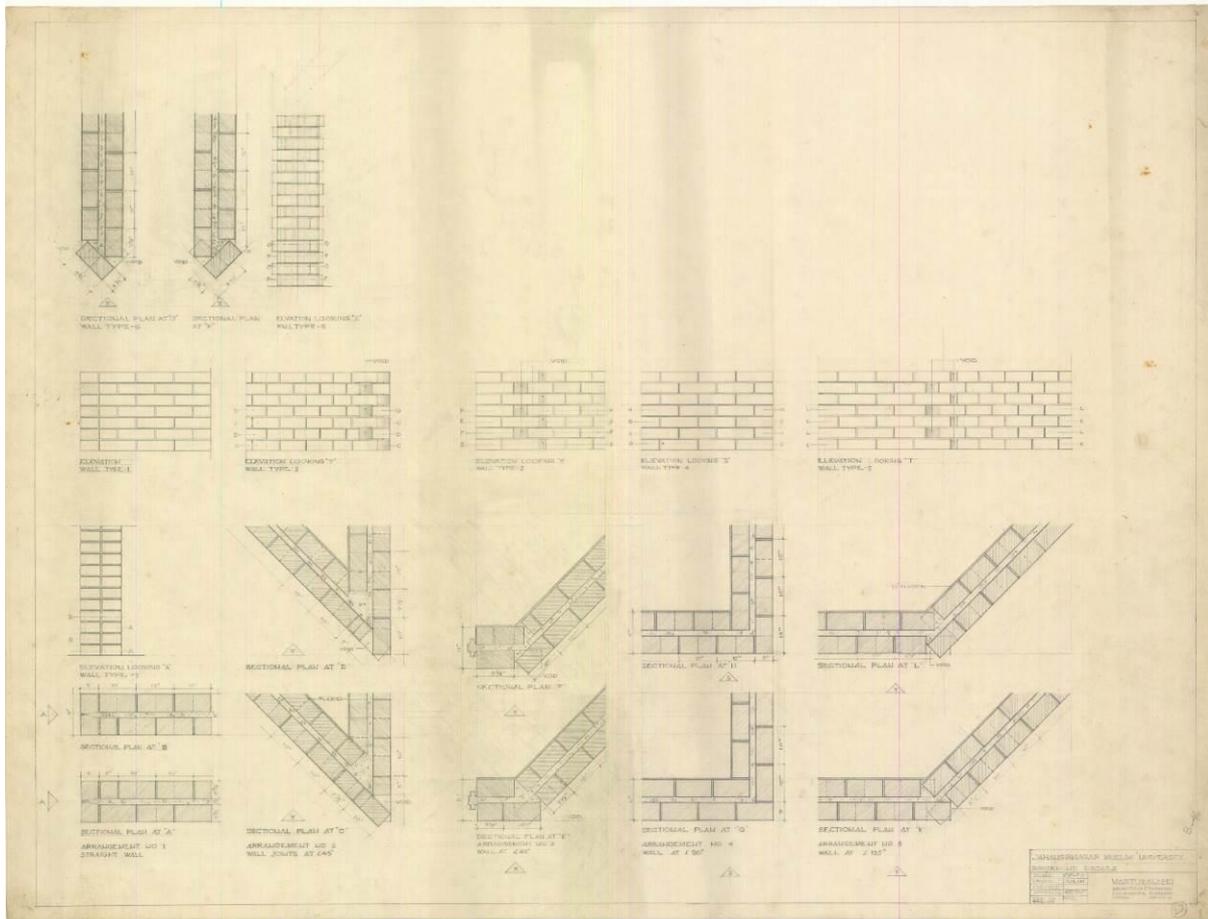


Figure 102 :Brick joinery detail at window edge, Jahangirnagar University. Photograph taken by the author, 2009. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 129-DS-022

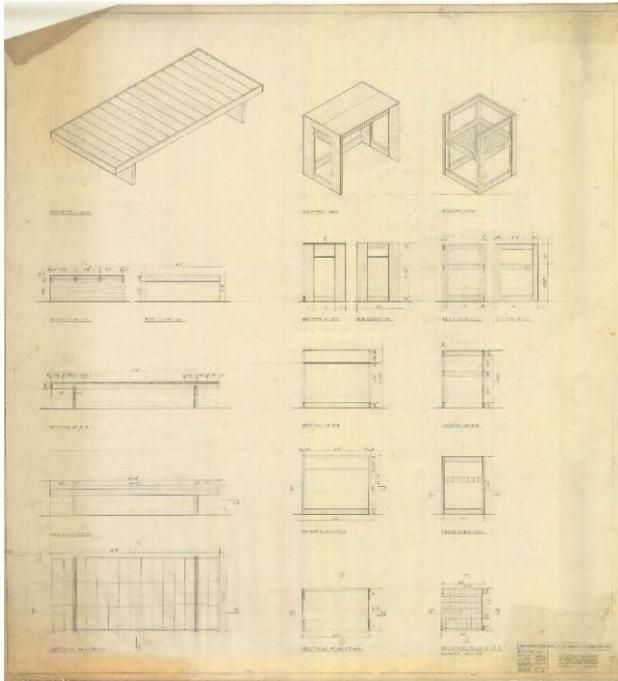


Figure 103: Detail of bed and side-table, Students' Hostel, Jahangirnagar University. Photograph taken by the author, 2009. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 129-DS-020.

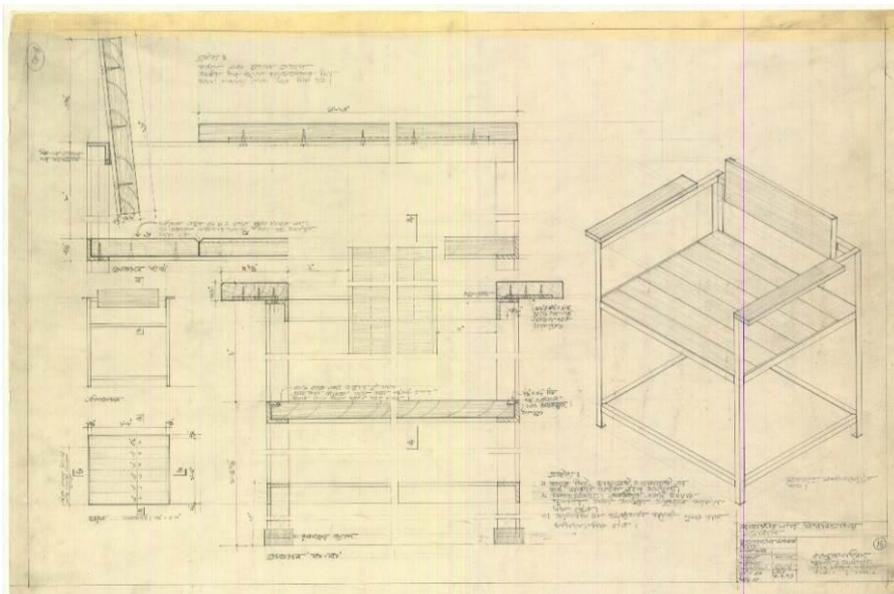


Figure 104: Detail of chair and table, Students' Hostel, Jahangirnagar University. Photograph taken by the author, 2009. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 129-DS-018



Figure 105: Communal rooftop space, Students' Hostel, Jahangirnagar University. Photograph taken by the author, 2009.



Figure 106: Students' Hostel, Jahangirnagar University. Photograph taken by the author, 2009



Figure 107: Corner brick detail, Students' Hostel, Jahangirnagar University. Photograph taken by the author, 2009.

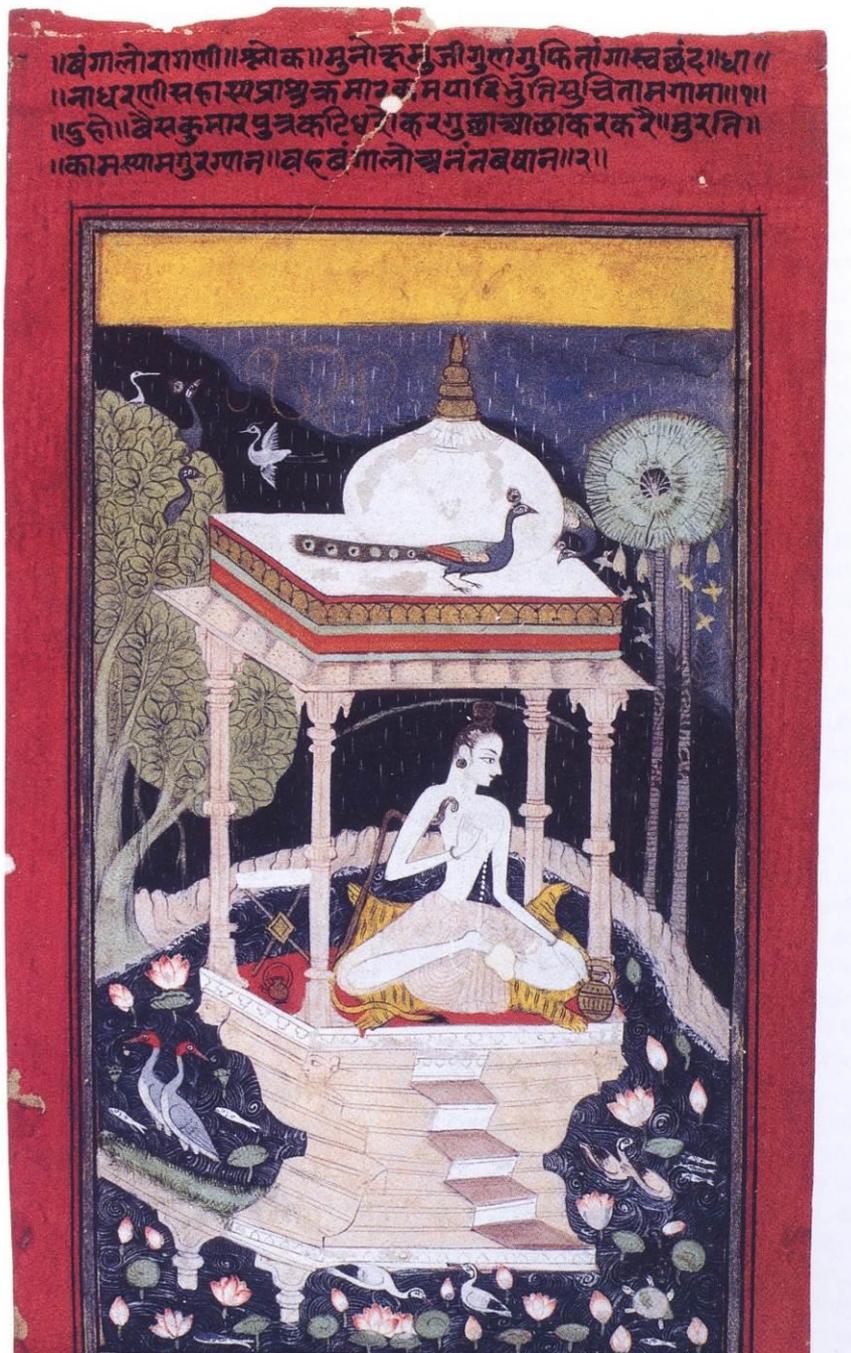


Figure 108: Unknown Artist, Banglar Ragini. This was the artist's impression of a pavilion in Bengal.

“Banglar Ragini” eloquently describes the Architype of Bengal. It not only tells us how the Pavilion is the most correct form for a warm humid place like Bengal but it also draws a powerful statement of how our built forms are to be situated and how we must attain a

ecosystem engaging our total surrounding and our flora and fauna. It also tells us about our climate and specially about our rain and indirectly about our landform and waterbodies as a resultant of our climate.

This deep understanding of where we are and our total environment is often ignored and Architects are too quick to propose there “built forms” as a grand picturesque solution.

The onslaught of international style brought forward to many such building to this part of the world in the name of Modern architecture.

Muzharul Islam in his NIPA building showed how even though he strongly believed that a modern architecture without the shackles of regional overtones was much needed to take our country forward, a deep understanding of “place” can be achieved.

The nipa building is far beyond the mathematical solutions advocated by tropical schools of architecture at that time , it responded to climate, specially the sun and the rain, in a profound and poetic way creating spaces to enjoy the “rain” rather than just to escape from it.



Figure 109: NIPA Building. Photograph taken by the author, September 2012.



Figure 110: NIPA Building. Photograph taken by the author, September 2012.

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The building is one of the first as cast concrete buildings of then Pakistan and had a very strong character and presence even though it harboured extremely poetic relationships with nature.

When asked about this Building Muzharul Islam commented that he wanted a strong building so that our students may have a “strong backbone” or they will always suffer from post colonial hangover because of the strong monumental buildings of the colonial era. He wanted them to have strength and usher in a new era of Modernity for them.

This building thus remains as a strong example of his “nation building politics” and a great demonstration of how “modernity within modernity” can be achieved which was able to represent Bengal and its Archetype in abstract language without any superficial regional strains.



Figure 111:NIPA Building. Photograph taken by the author, September 2012.



Figure 112: Shaded corridors/veranda of NIPA Building. Photograph taken by the author, September 2012.



Figure 113: Shaded corridors/veranda of NIPA Building. Photograph taken by the author, September 2012.



Figure 114: Staircase of NIPA Building. Photograph taken by the author, September 2012.





Figure 115: NIPA Building. Photograph taken by the author, September 2012.

CHITAGONG UNIVERSITY (1968-71):

Chittagong University Master Plan and designs of Students' Hostel, Science Building, Humanities Building, Administrative Building, Readers' Quarter, VC's Quarter, Professors' Quarter.

The site of Chittagong University was just outside Chittagong main city in a location of wonderful contoured area with many hillocks, dotted with countless trees.

The challenge was to find a scheme that would work a campus which would be predominantly residential, within this terrain that provided very little flat land to construct on. Islam who had a deep understanding of place knew that our earthen hillocks cannot be disturbed with construction because it will lead to the disruption of its integrity and then to landslide. The earthen hills in our country only provides two logical solution, either on the top plateau with a small footprint and far away from the edges of the plateau, or below the hills on the flat lands.

Looking at the masterplan drawing one can easily understand how much of a daunting task it was to find the buildable locations and then find the routes of links.

Islam adopted angular lines for connection because not only that allowed him to creatively navigate and be more adaptive, but at the same time become the shortest routes.

Islam also maintained the north south orientation of all the building because that is the only correct solution to make buildings naturally ventilated in our country. Imposing this limitation on himself and being absolutely uncompromising in doing the right thing made it even more difficult to formulate a masterplan on this challenging contoured site.

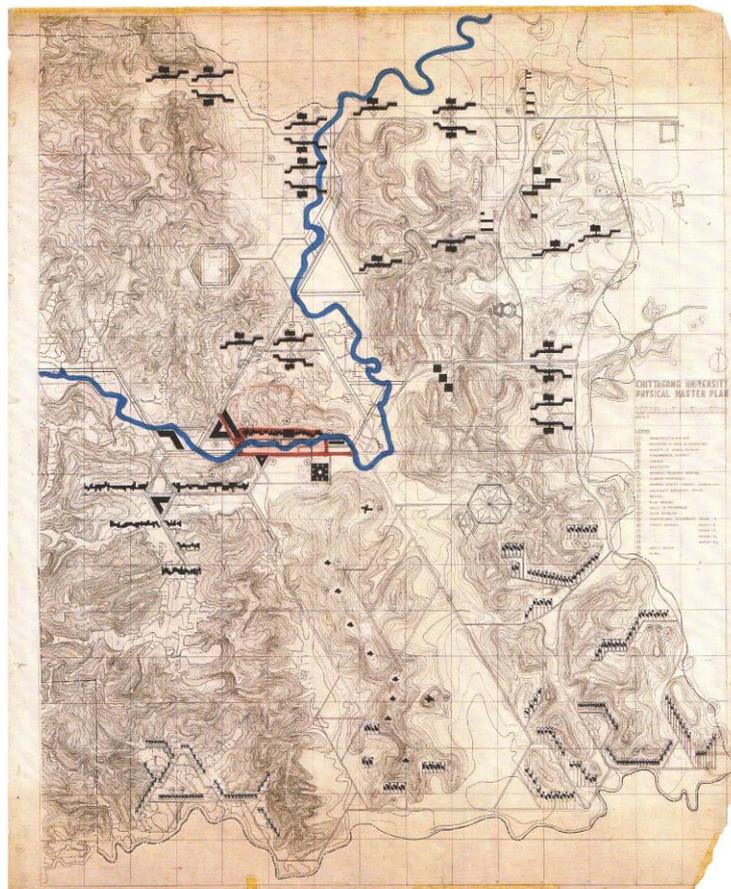
But Muzharul Islam did not only masterfully designed the scheme he also took it a level further where turned the limitations in to a solution that enhanced the design considerably.



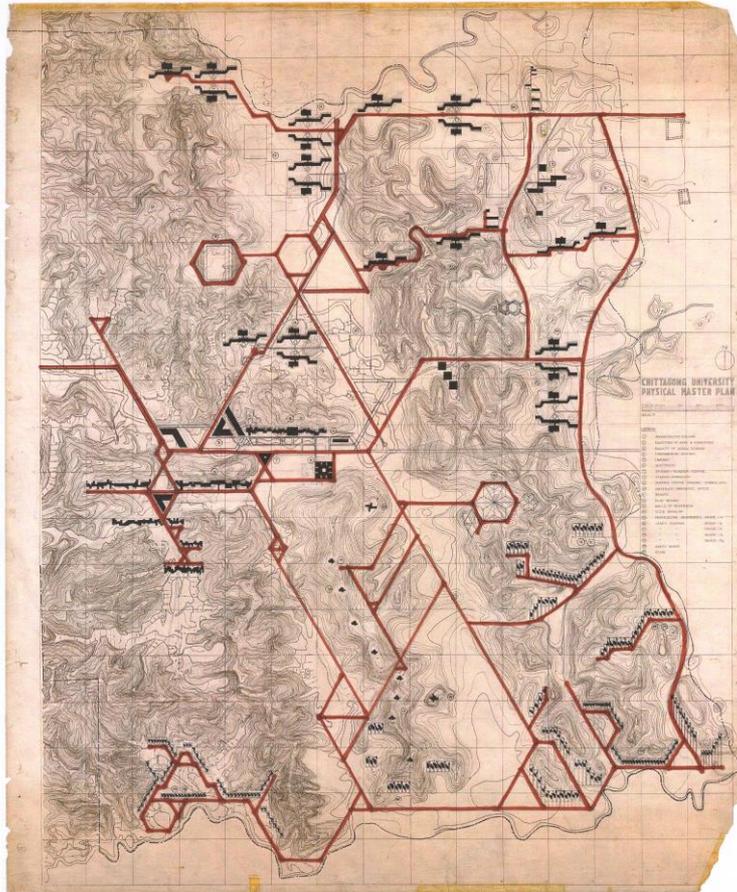
Figure 116: . Master plan, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-011

If one looks at the site of Chittagong University, one would immediately have to question that how does one start a masterplan in a terrain that is so unfriendly. We have to understand that the hillocks in our country are usually of soil and you cannot build on the sides of these

hillocks. Only possible place to make is either on the top or on the flatland below the hillocks. So again the question remains that how does one start to design on a terrain like this. What Muzharul Islam located were two things; there was a natural water channel in the terrain that took all the water away from the particular site and one can never touch the water channel because it will disturb the total eco-system of the area and will lead to drought or landslides. The next thing that he looked for was where in the site the water channel was the longest in the east-west direction giving the possibility of a building to exits on the north-south orientation against the water. And this is where Muzharul Islam was able to identify that there was only one area where the length of the water ran the longest and it also was the only area where the hillock behind it also allowed the positioning of a building between the water and the hillock itself. And this is exactly where he placed the main academic building and started located everything else starting from there and also it is also the point where the main road enters into the project and arrives at the forecourt which houses also the cafeteria, the library and other buildings that lead to the main academic building.



He needed to organize the rest of the residential buildings and the academic building. The idea of placing the buildings on the bottom of the hillocks again close to the hillocks remained throughout the site. By having the buildings close to the hillocks he was able to a wonderful Dialogue between built form and the slope of hillocks themselves which I will explain in the diagram of the section. In this diagram, it was important highlight the wonderful angular geometry which leads to the farthest corners of the project.



Islam pushed his building quite close to the hills and staggered them in section that it created spaces from where one would feel suspended in air because he will see the slope of the hills in close proximity , a slope that will not only flow upwards but also flow downward beyond ones vision. This wonderful dialogue is almost like a “jugol bondi”, a musical duet between the nature and the Man made.

It’s not only a wonderful “ being” in the site but also “being “ one with the site.

The effortless master stroke shoes us the level of genius of Islam, where he transforms all the limitation of the site into a wonderful “inhabiting” with the site that till date remains a refence point to learn from.

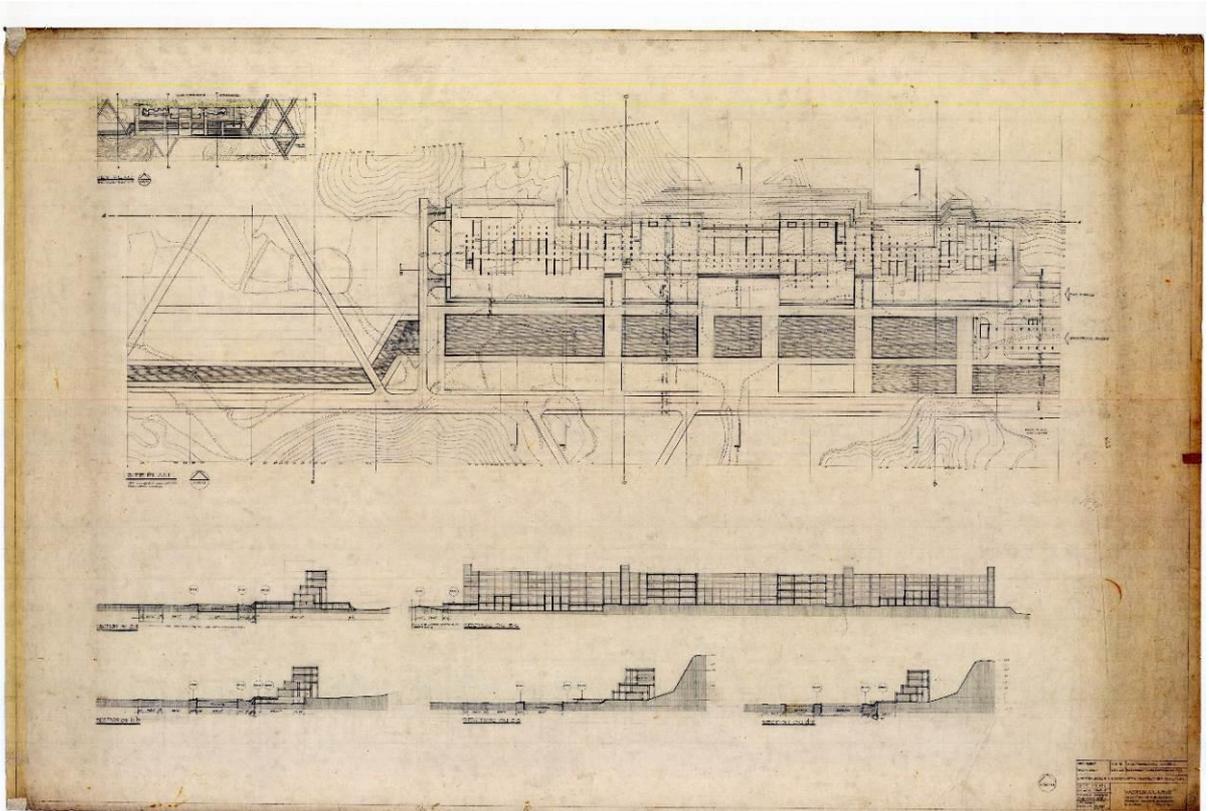


Figure 117: Main Academic Building, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-029

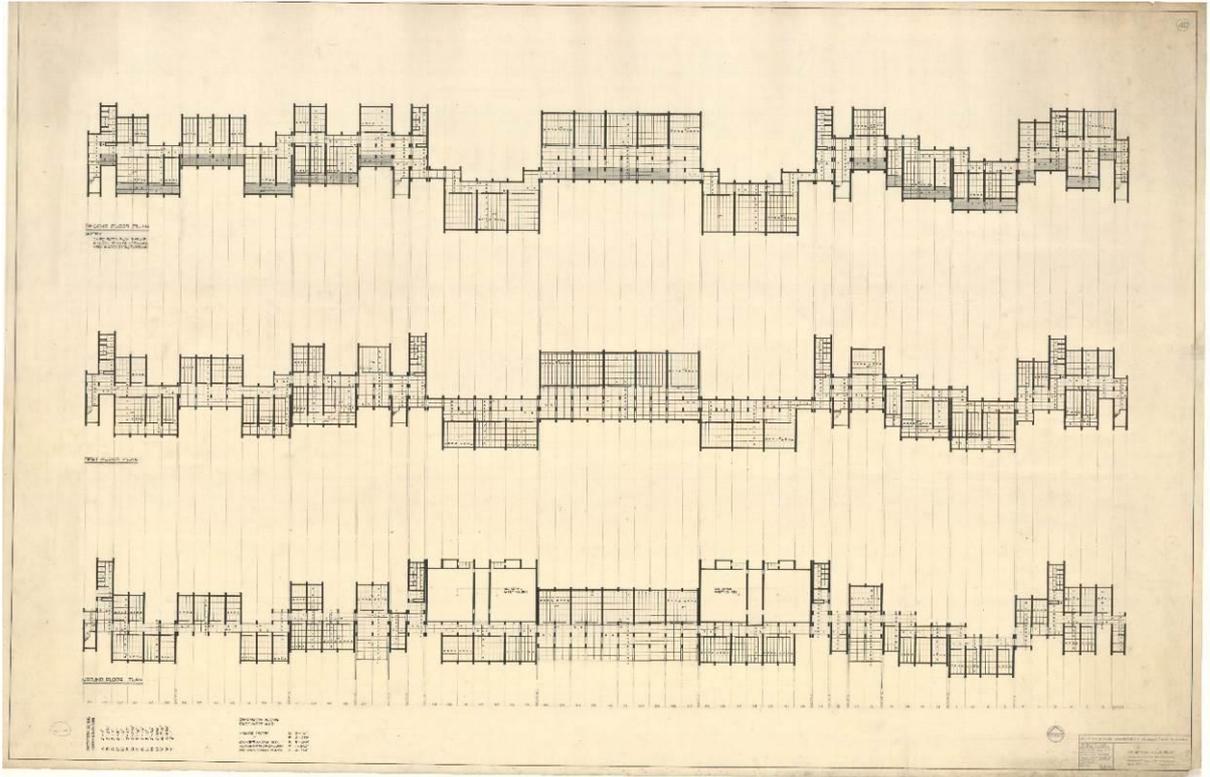


Figure 118: Floor plans of Academic Building, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-029

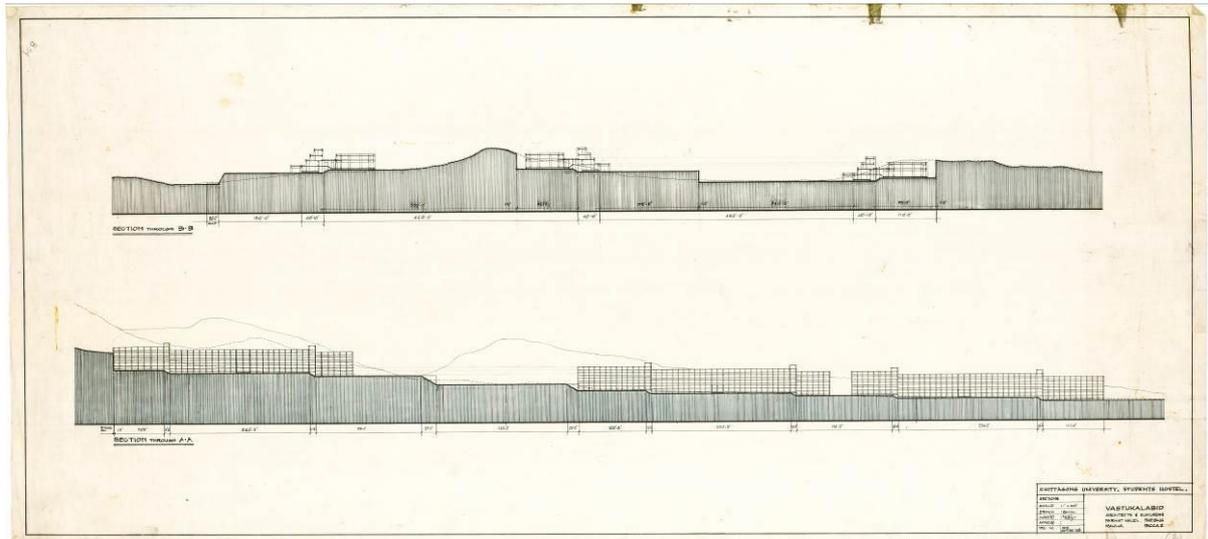


Figure 119: Section of Students' Hostel, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-006

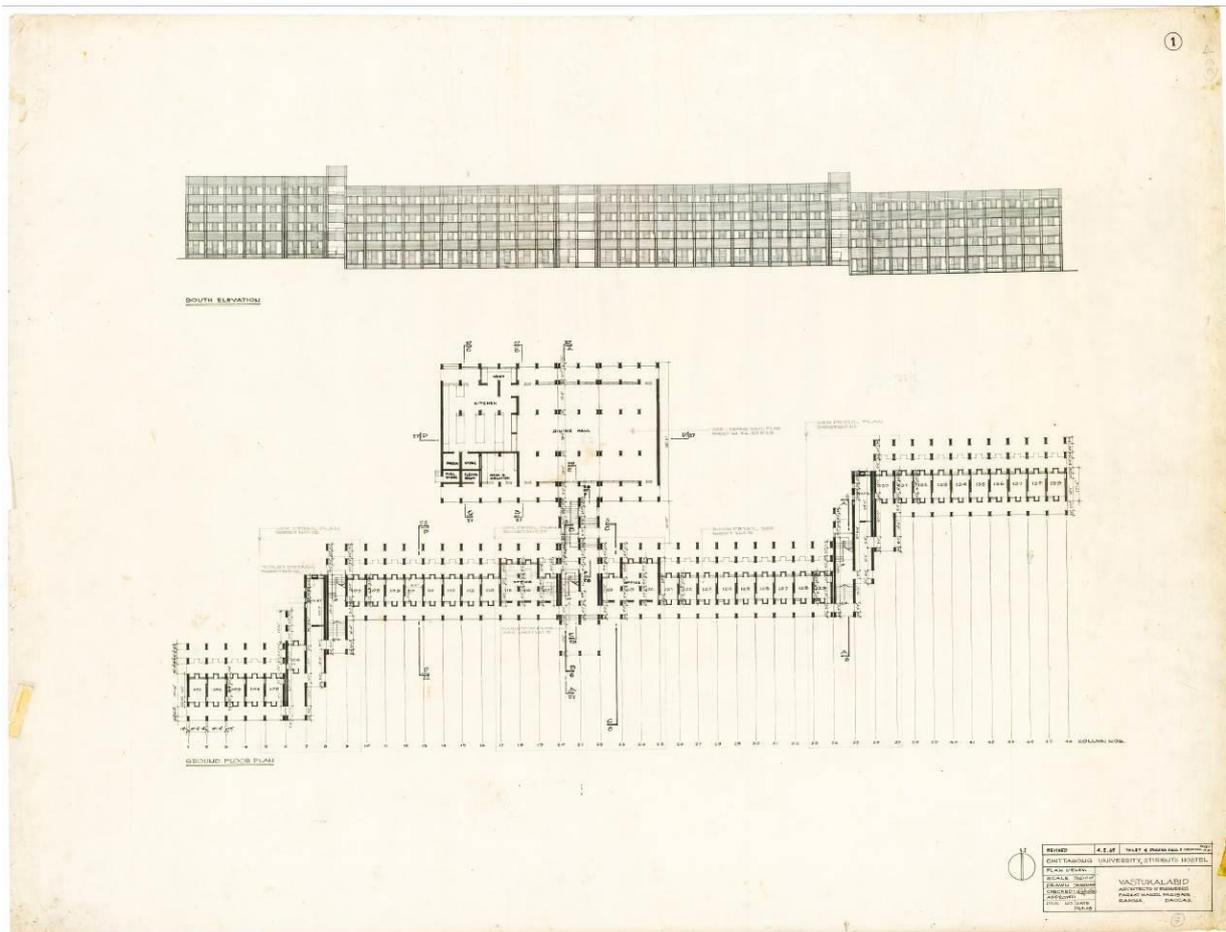


Figure 120: Elevation and Ground Floor Plan of Students' Hostel, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-004

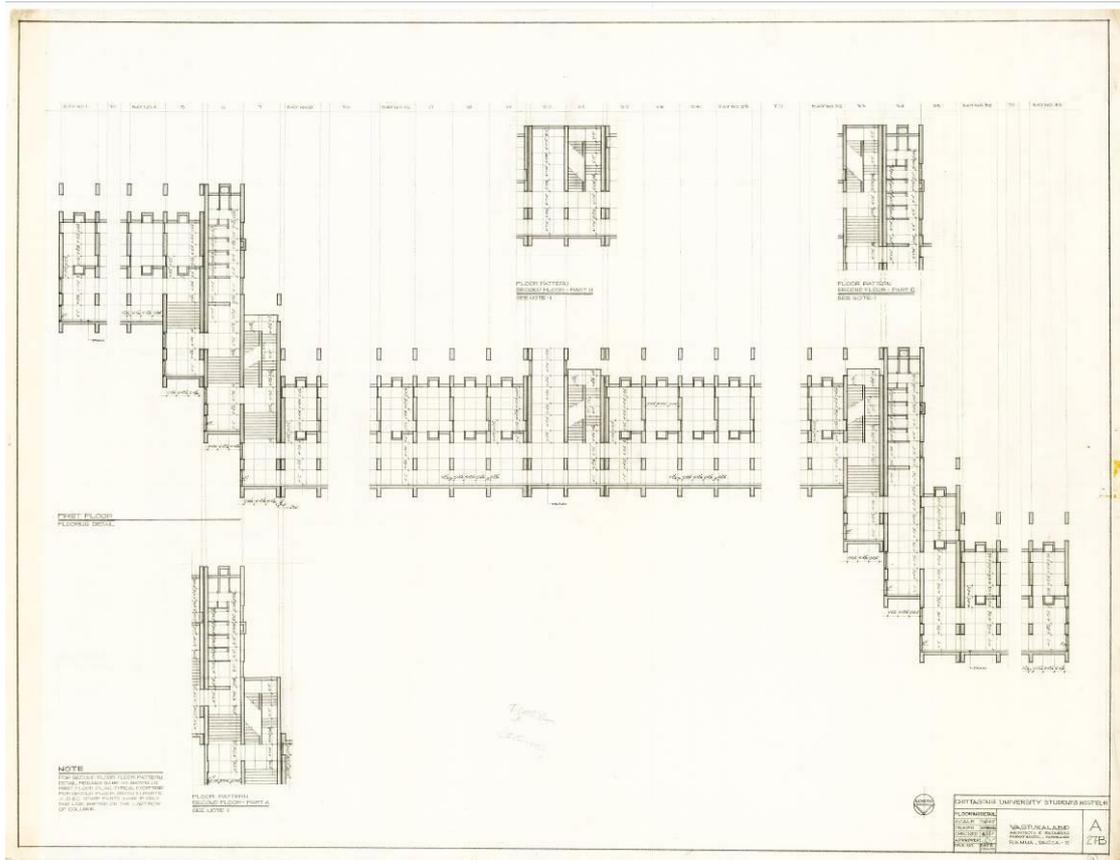


Figure 121: First Floor Plan of Students' Hostel, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-004



Figure 122: Students' Hostel, Chittagong University. Photographed by author, 2009.



Figure 123: Students' Hostel, Chittagong University. Photographed by author, 2009.



Figure 124: Students' Hostel, Chittagong University. Photographed by author, 2009.

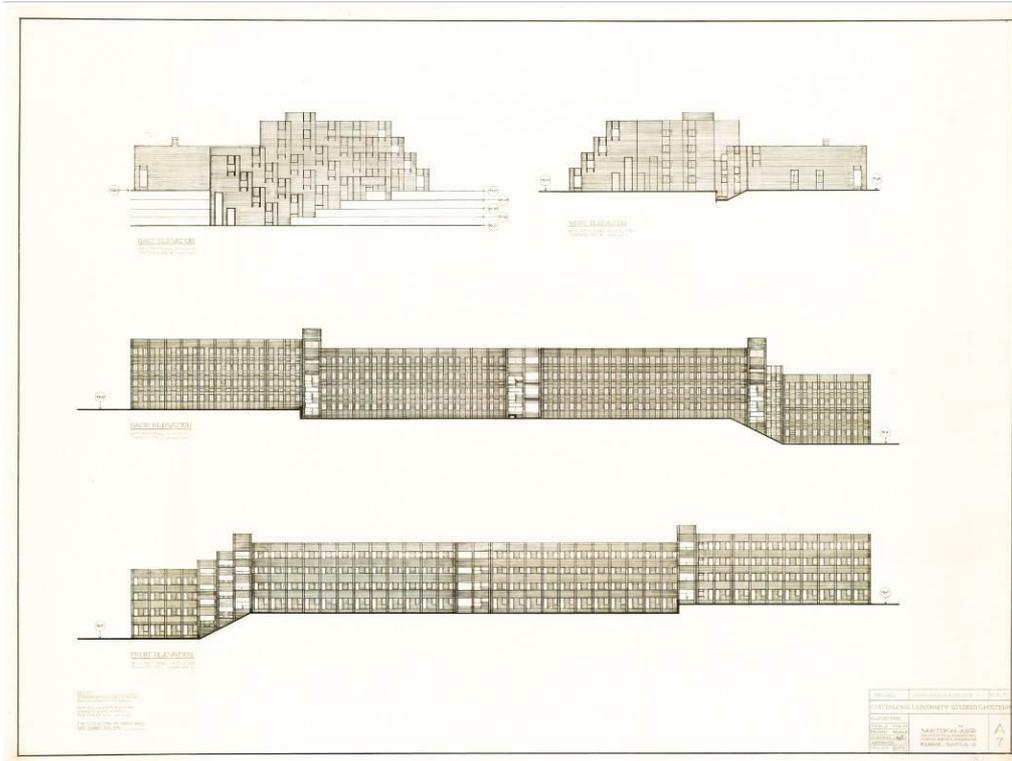


Figure 125: Elevations, Students' Hostel, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-008

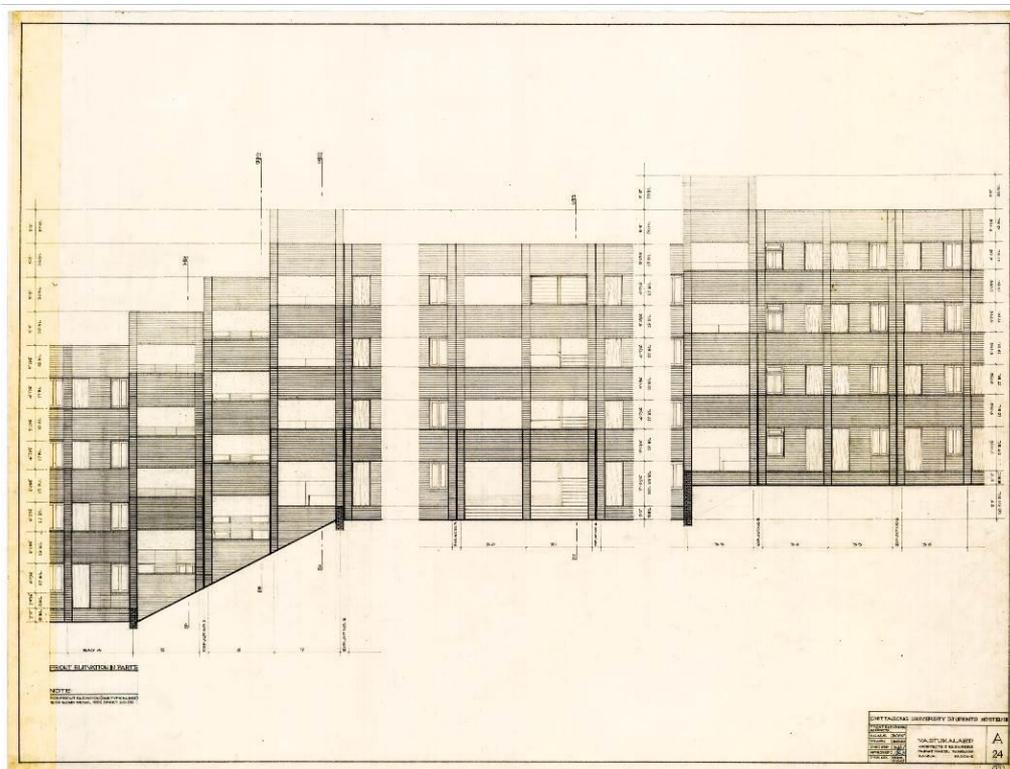


Figure 126: Elevations, Students' Hostel, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-008

The creation dialogues between the built form and the site, the inside and the exterior , shaped his forms into sculptural entities.

Specially the elevation and sectional drawing of the hostels show us how with simple shifts he brings about an array of spaces that are in total harmony with the contoured site. It is interesting to note that instead of providing complex dimensioning, he has drawn every brick for brick. Because this would be the best way to communicate with countless masons that do cannot read or write.

Here, also one can pick up his strong sensibility to the common man , in how he instead of intimidating the workers, acknowledged their worth and provided them with the information they would need in a way that they would understand.

This was so powerful that later Louis I Kahn after seeing this and speaking to Islam developed most of the red brick work in the parliament building in Dhaka in the same scheme of drawing them brick for brick.

It is truly masterful that how in a work that is truly modern with any inhibitions of regionalism, he can imbed not only great understandings of, site and climate , socio-economic condition of the country, materiality, but also at the same time have a socio political standpoint.

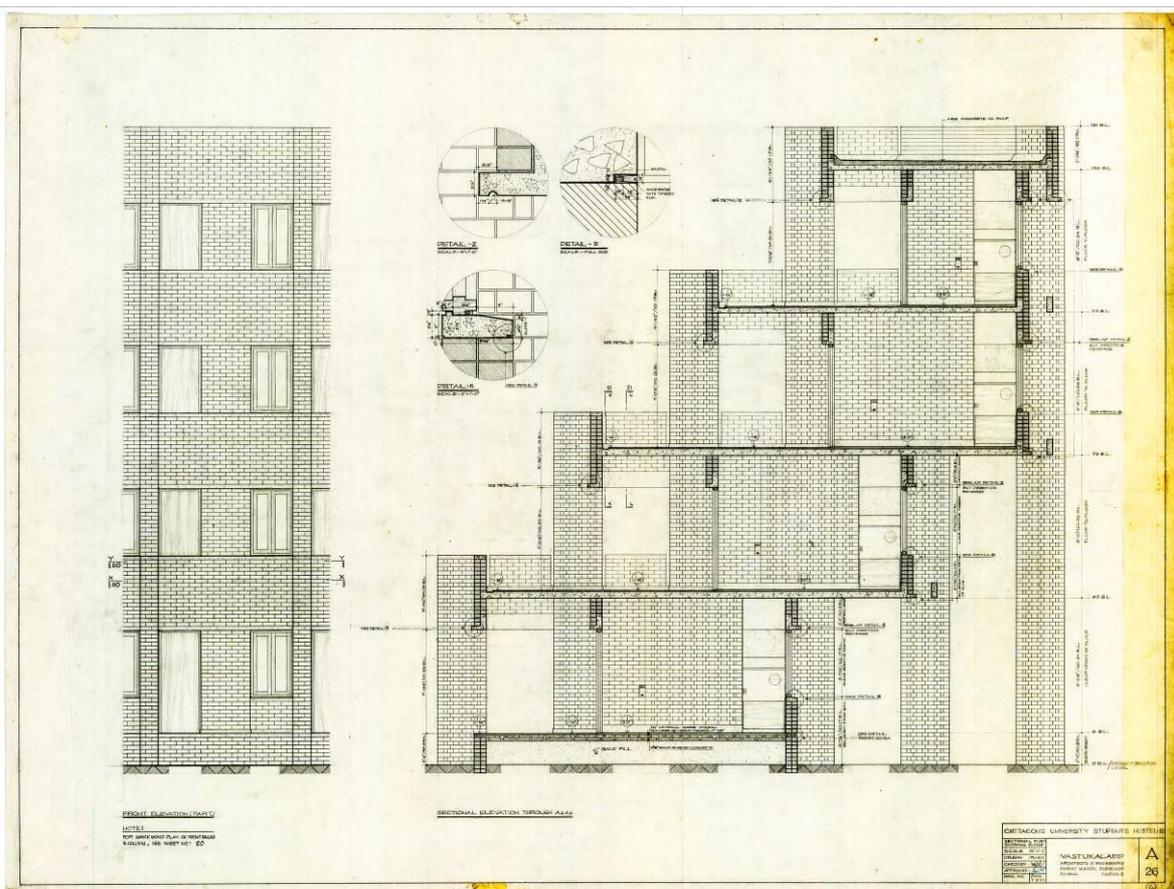


Figure 127: Sections, Students' Hostel, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-017

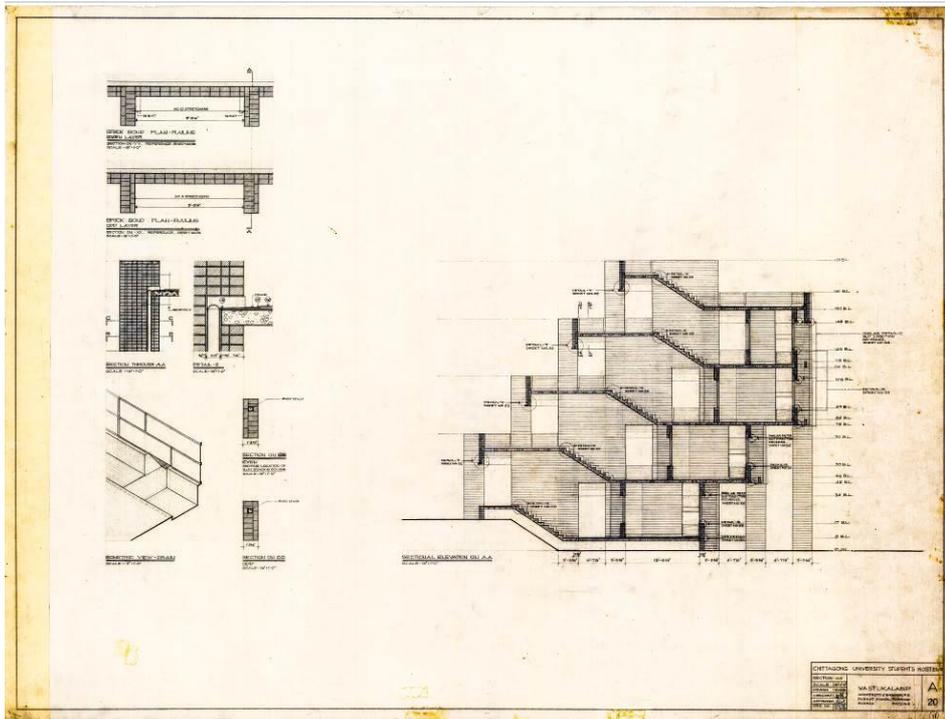
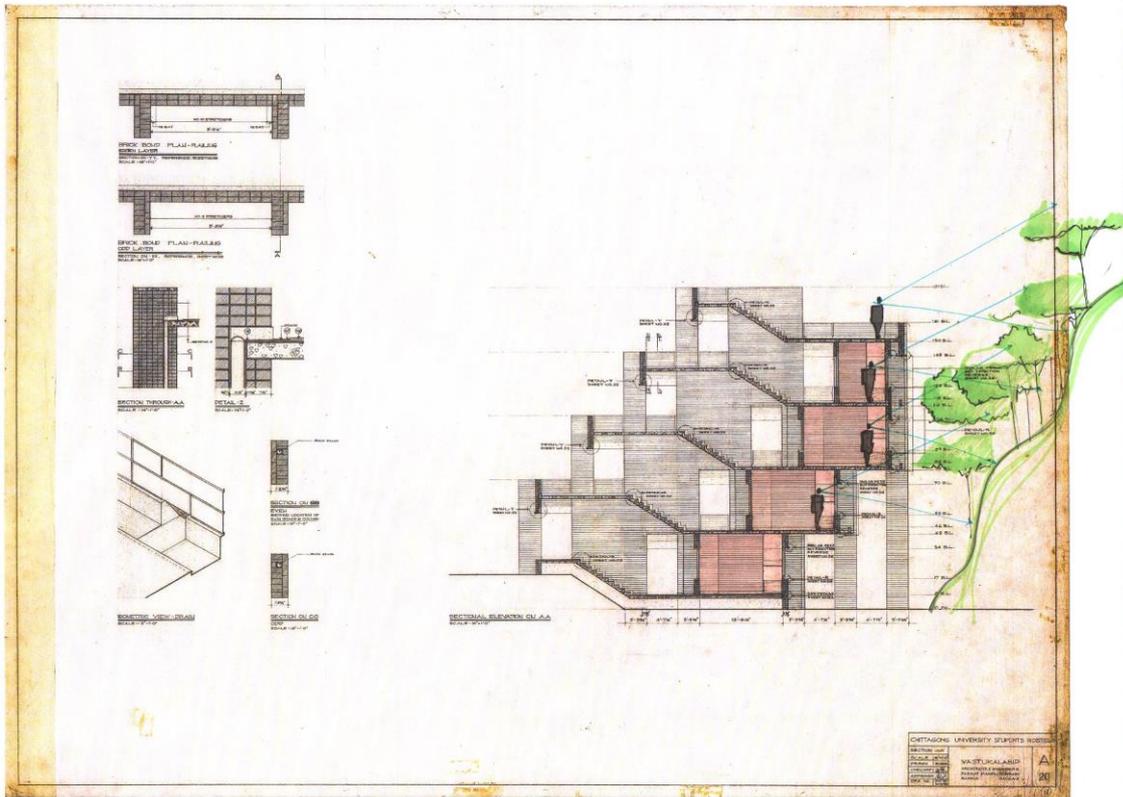


Figure 128: Sections, Students' Hostel, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-017



Figure 129: Students' Hostel, Chittagong University. Photographed by author, 2009.

The other challenge of the sites was if you wanted to place all the buildings in a dialogue against the hillocks on the bottom of the hillocks and orient them north and south, then what you need is to find a geometry of the arterial roads that will link all these. It is only when you look at the arterial roads and how he has worked out the shifts and the nodes throughout the masterplan when you really understand the another layer of the genius masterplan. The arterial roads and the way they are shifted links the whole site from one end to another in a beautiful road that shift and turn in between the hillocks in a very wonderful way. It would have been much easier to do this in a curvilinear pattern but Muzharul Islam was not one to resort easy means of escape.



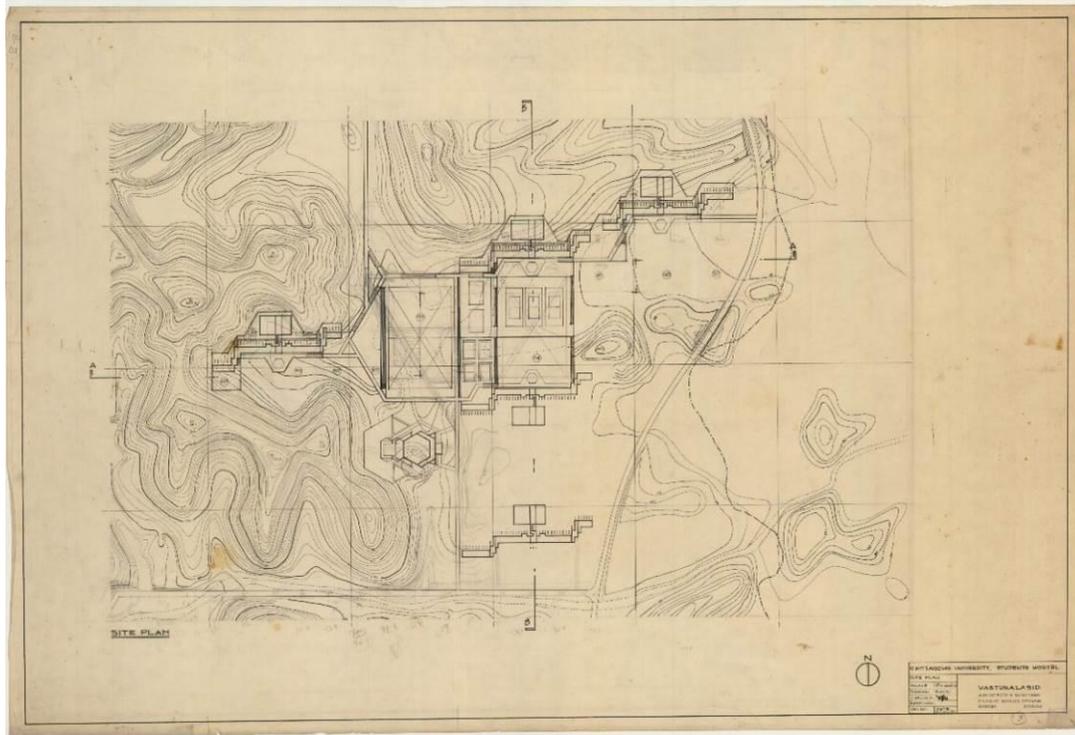


Figure 130: Site Plan, Students' Hostel, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-014

In the master plan probably the two strongest structures that seem way before its time are the Auditorium and the Language Martyred Monument. Both stem from pure geometry, extremely modern, but highly sensitive to site.

The Auditorium is intentionally situated near to the contour of a gentle hill so that slope becomes an amphitheater against an outdoor stage whose backdrop wall is the back wall of the auditorium, and also shares the same greenroom as the stage within the auditorium. This co-existence of the two stages one inside and one outside is almost like drawing a tread between our age old performances that took place in the open air and to modern times where some performances for some time in the year will require a sheltered enclosed interior space.

Islam's effortless ability to always keep connection with our strong cultural routes and our way of life within the framework of modern timeless architecture is outstanding and transforms apparently simple schemes into profound thoughts.

It's also fascinating that he developed the whole design just from the geometry of the stage and the best way to arrange the seating to see the stag.

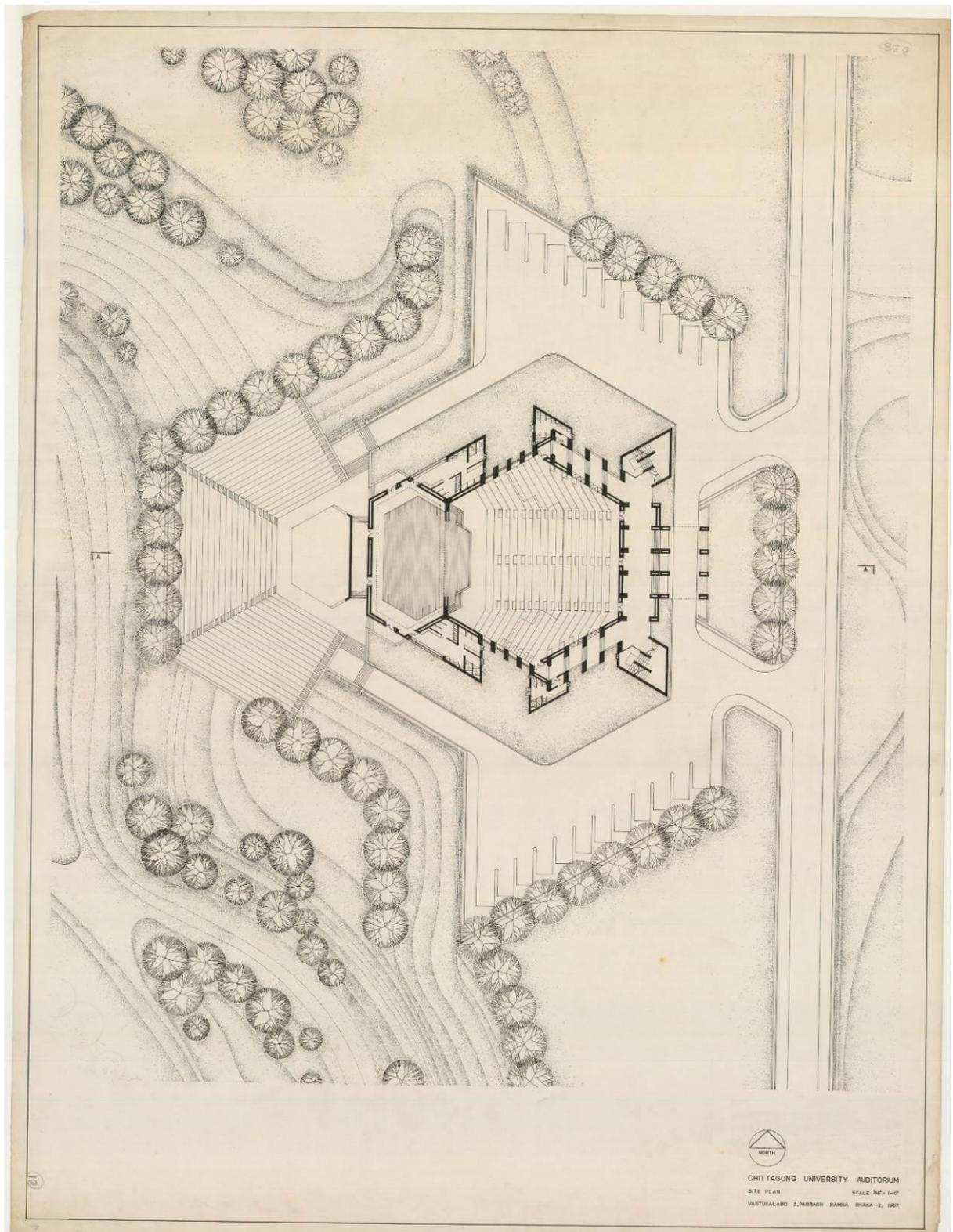


Figure 131 :Site Plan, Auditorium, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-015

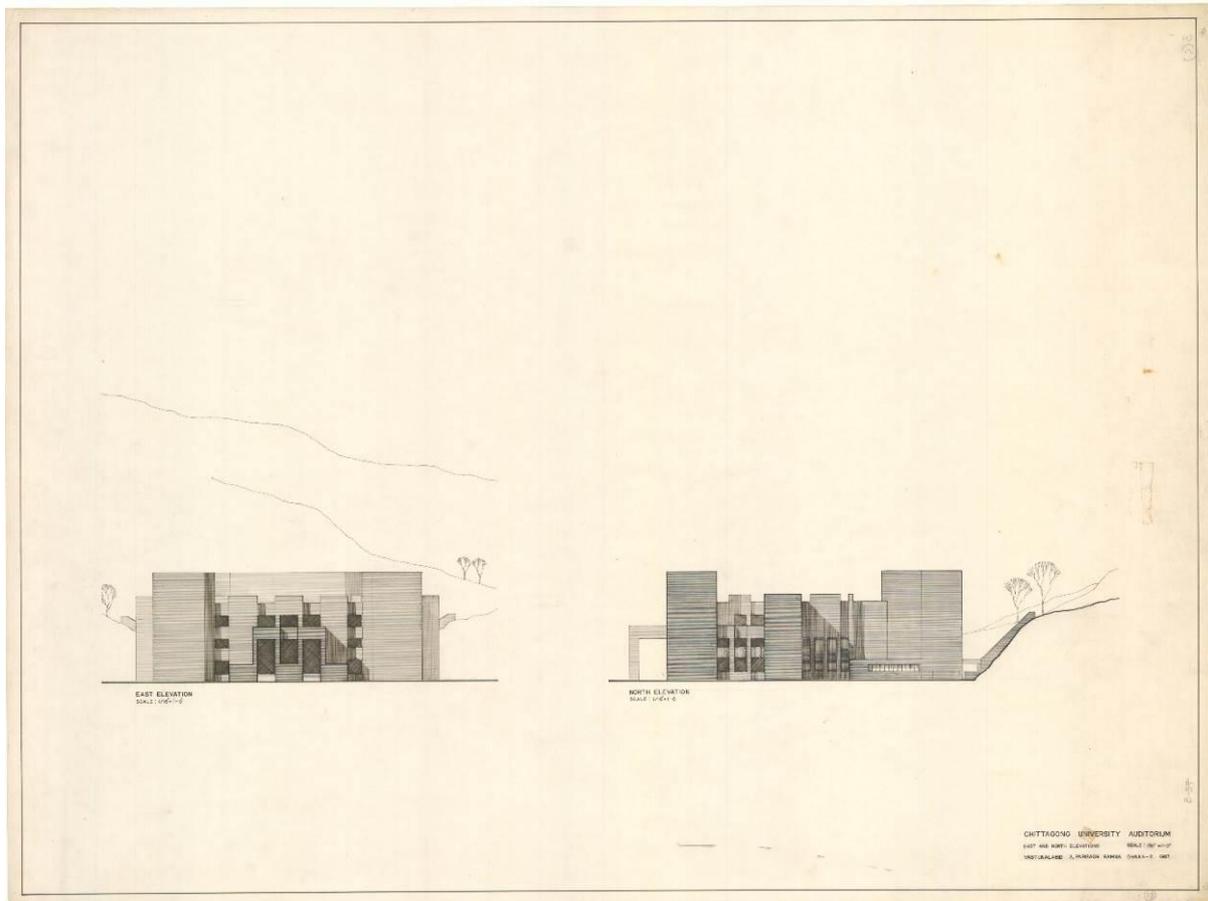


Figure 132: Elevation, Auditorium, Chittagong University, 1968.

The architecture of the buildings of the projects specially the dormitories and the academic building has been designed to create a wonderful duet between the hillocks and spaces in the built form. The buildings are placed close to the hillocks but on flat ground because it is next to impossible to build on this earthen hillock in Bangladesh. But what he has created is the series of suspended verandas where people stand, they are not really seeing the sky, but they see the beautiful green slope which not only extends upwards but also passes below his eyesight towards the ground. So this suspended position where man is situated in a position where does not see the sky, he does not see the ground but he sees green passing beneath him and extended above him is truly a wonderful space that was first introduced or even thought of in Bangladesh by architect Muzharul Islam. Within the strong geometric nature of the buildings Muzharul Islam is still able to create this extremely poetic dialogue with the surrounding therefore enhance the surrounding. He really has taken this wonderful site and has done a justice by creating the spaces which are in true harmony and in complete dialogue with its natural setting. Muzharul Islam maintained the spaces of suspension throughout the scheme of the project. So much is so that he has really been to understand how to create a dialogue with the slopes of the hillocks and the building in an extra ordinary way. When he was planning the auditorium of the project he placed the auditorium close to the slope of a hillock in such a way that he basically created two places of performance. One, the same

green room was serving the internal stage and the auditorium sitting and was serving the external stage and the amphitheater which was the natural slope of the hillocks.

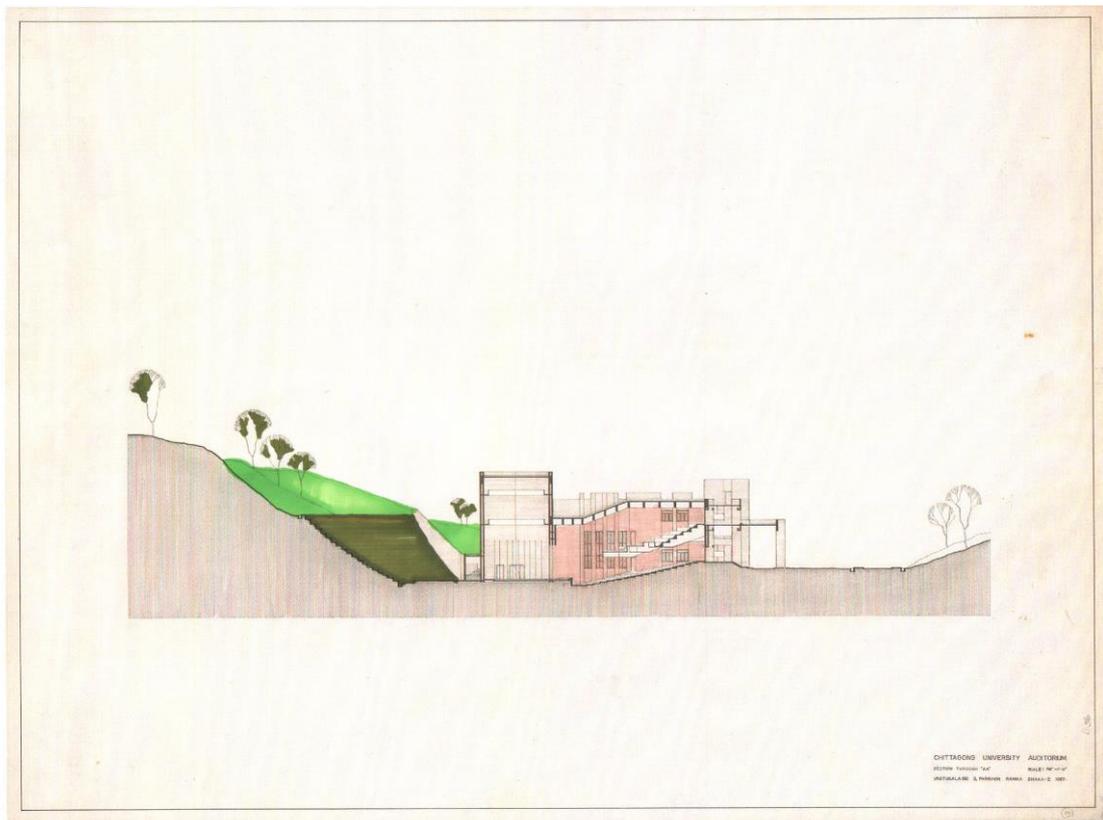
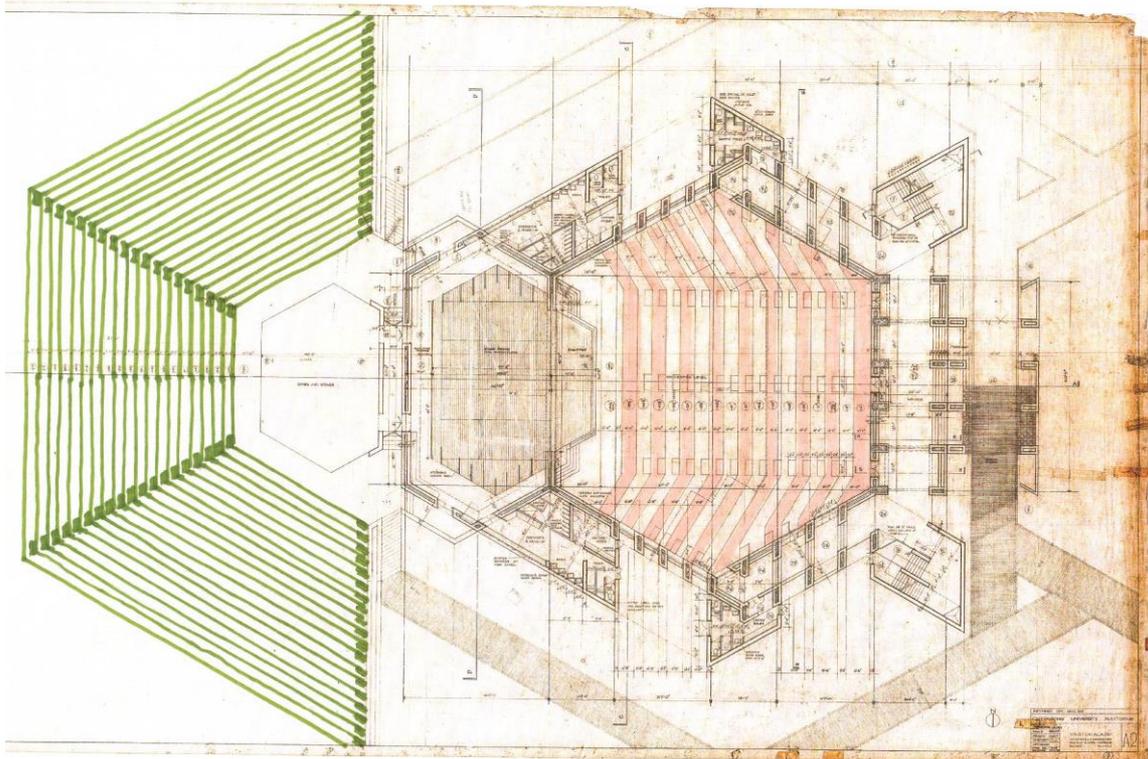




Figure 133 : Auditorium, Chittagong University. Photographed by author, 2009.

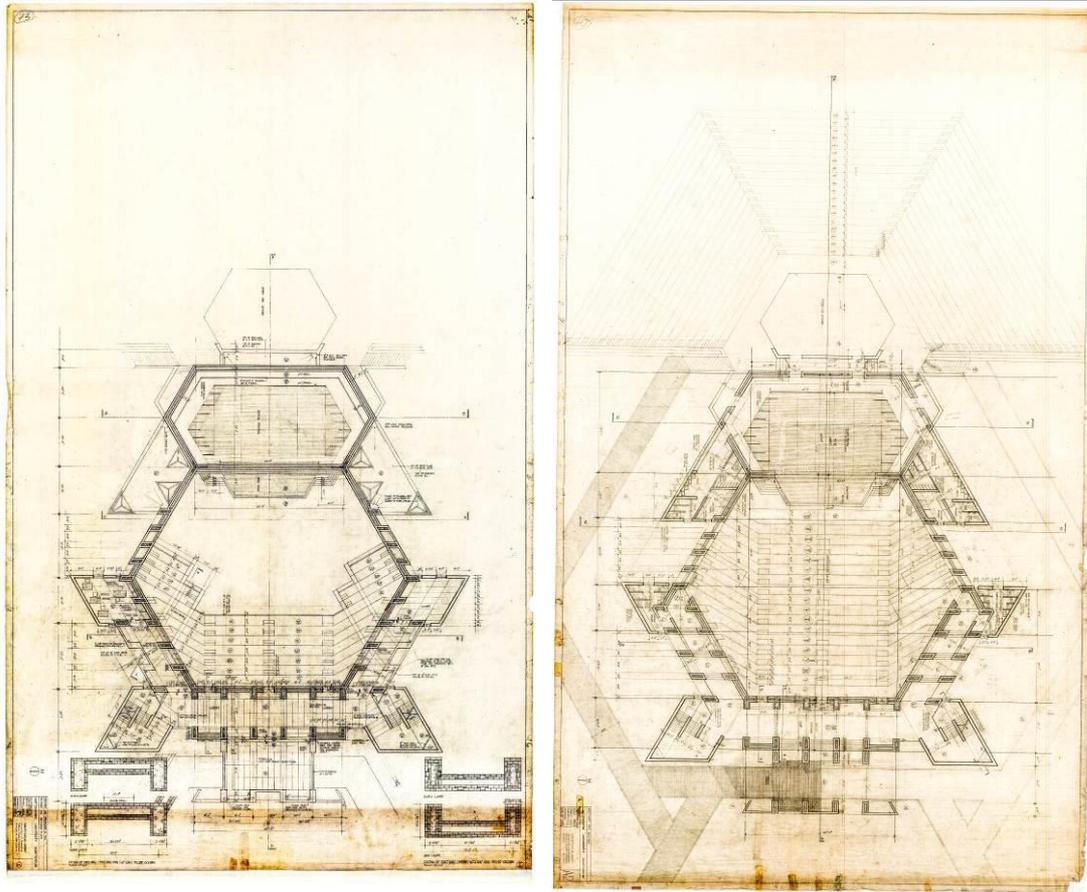


Figure 134: Floor Plans, Auditorium, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-025

The Monument for the language martyrs, is truly an outstanding work. A composition that even today will be considered contemporary, yet designed to be built with the simplest of materials, brick.

The design was to stand like the presence of eternal souls as one would wander among the but was designed to omnidirectional (different from the frontal design in Dhaka) because of its location in the masterplan and the nature of the site.

The monument would stand tall, yet co-exist with the surrounding trees and hills.

It is years later that Louis Barragan designed something similar in Mexico, which stands as a monument in the city.

Islam's ability to make no compromise of the monument to have a strong respectful presence, but yet to set it in dialogue with the site and even the other buildings because it too was made of brick, makes this simple work a masterpiece.



Figure 135: Model of martyr's monument, Chittagong University, 1968. Sthapatyacharya Muzharul Islam-
Life:Work:Philosophy, July 2009.

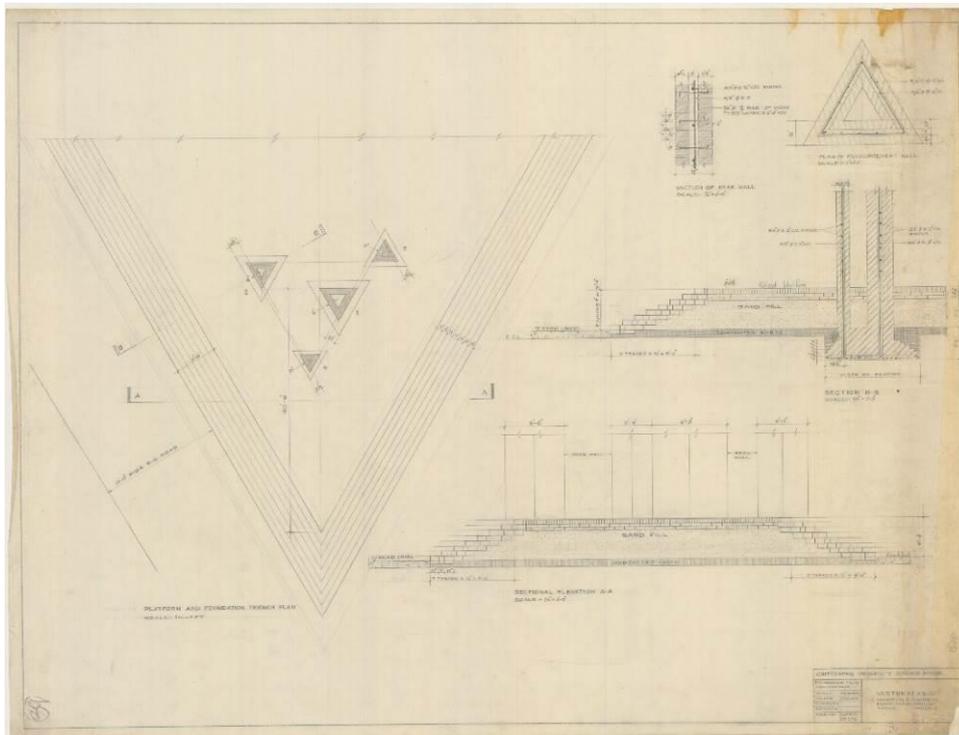


Figure 136: Plan and details of martyr's monument, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive.
Reference no. 125-DS-031

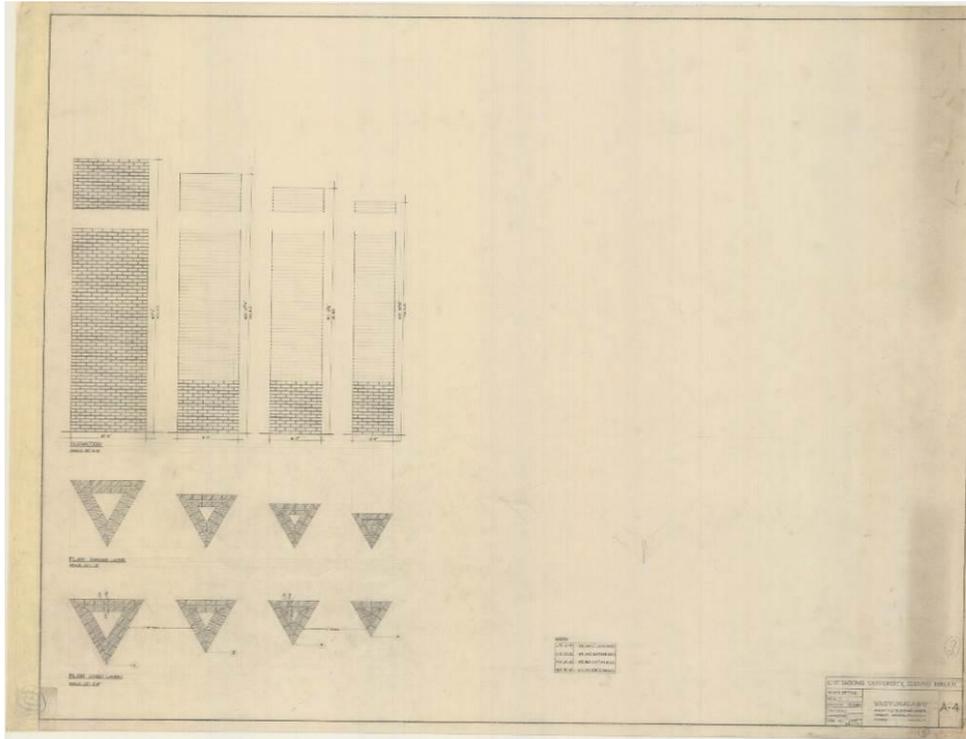


Figure 137: Plan and details of martyr's monument, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-009

Besides the buildings that were placed besides the larger hillocks he was also using the softer contours extremely poetically.

The readers quarters shows us how he was taking even gentle slope and making them a part of the scheme.

The series of houses with their gardens we placed on a gentle hill that had beautiful trees and a wonder correlation was created with the existing trees, while the building were designed in a geometry of simple parallel lines that channeled the air from south to north. His strong socio- economic position always drove him to find the most logical, comfortable, buildable solution, with no unnecessary complexity and expenses, but at the same time the quality of the Architecture both in terms of form and scale and its dialogue with place, would remain uncompromised.

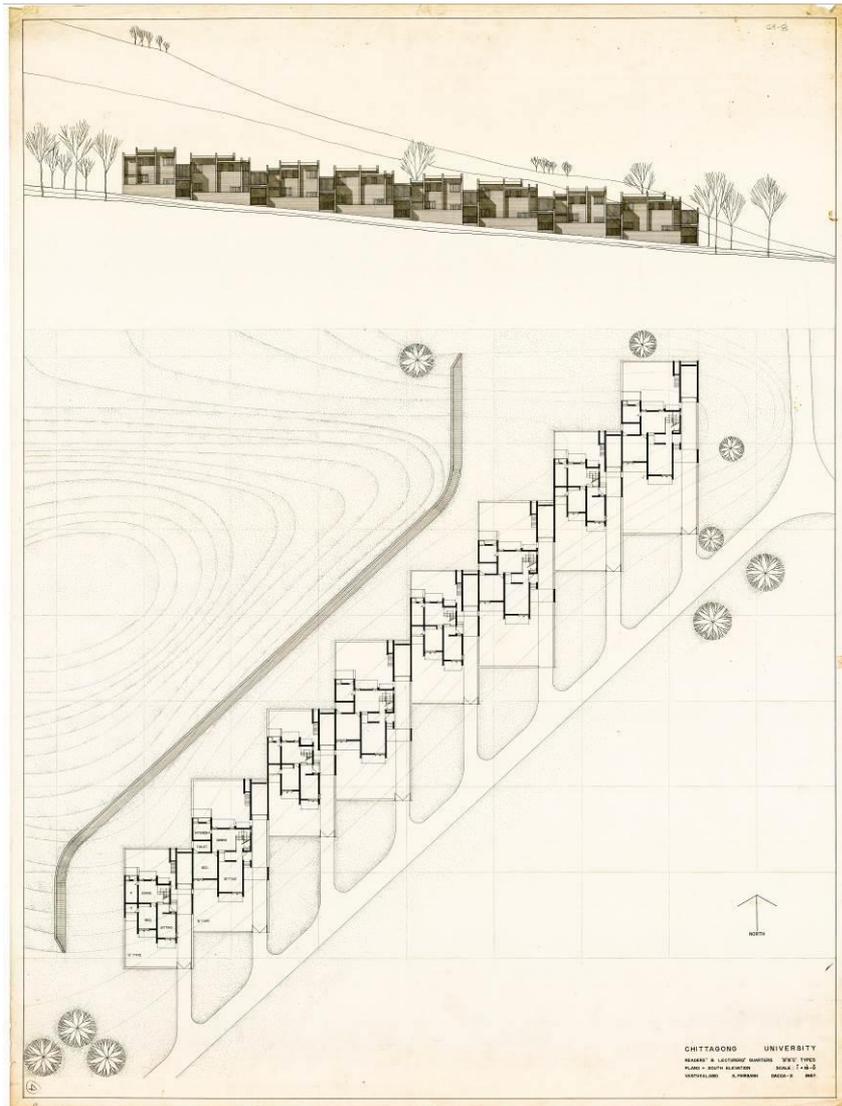


Figure 138: Site Plan of Readers' Quarters, Chittagong University, 1968. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 125-DS-028



Figure 139: Readers' Quarters, Chittagong University. Photographed by the author, 2009



Figure 140: Readers' Quarters, Chittagong University. Photographed by the author, 2009.



Figure 141: Students' Hostel, Chittagong University. Photographed by the author, 2009.

JOYPURHAT HOUSING FOR LIMESTONE FACTORY (1978)

In the housing project Islam work reached a new level where he was able to arrive at a truly timeless work in the language of abstract modernity. But having said it its greatest achievement was that this “modernism “ was a modernism within modernism , a work of universal language , yet highly particular drawing from heritage, place, climate way of life material and above all people and country.

This layering of the “particular” within a project that is designed in a totally modern timeless language makes the work an unsung masterpiece.

The work is even taken further by bringing dynamism and fascinating scale to the scheme in a wonderful effortless way. Being near to the great monastery of Pithampur it draws its energy from its monumentality and its sharpness of its outer edge, and yet with the arrangements finds wonderful inner “uthans” courtyard spaces for the children and the community.

The Dynamism and scale of the project is further complicated with the Austerity of detail and material and also the masterful angular layout of the housing units that is the only way to provide right orientation in the four sides of a square geometry in our country. (In fact it was Islam who first came up with this solution)

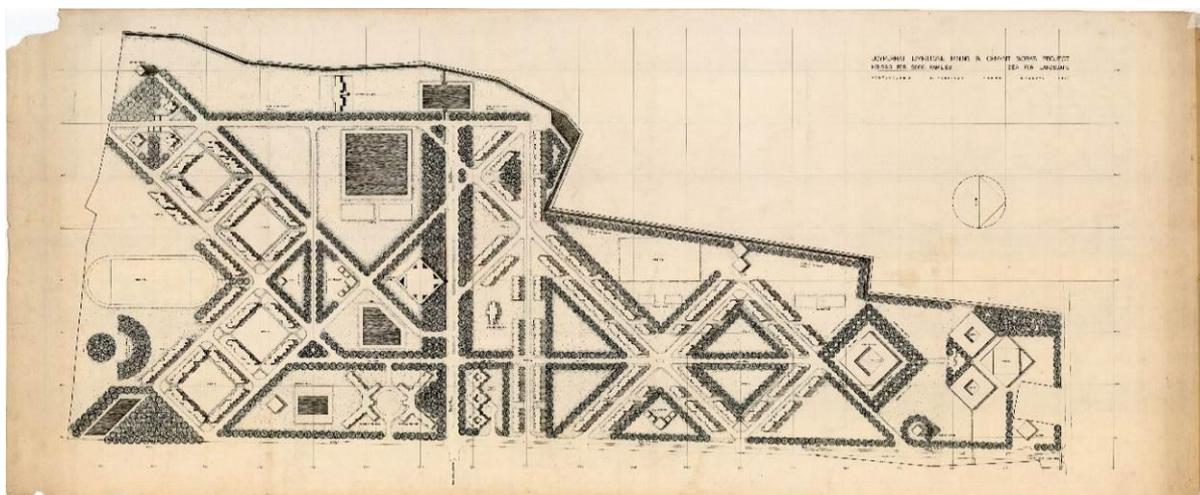


Figure 142: Master Plan, Joypurhat Housing, 1978. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 035-DS-001

The masterplan of the housing of the Limestone Factory in Joypurhat is again a mark of Muzharul Islam genius. This project is situated on the north-western part of Bengal where the climate is more on the hot dry side. This area is also very near to the beautiful Monastery of Paharpur. In this project Muzharul Islam takes his strength of the square plan of Paharpur complex and yet he is able to break it down into a wonderful scale in the project itself. The housing units revolve against courtyard which becomes the social spaces of the residents. One must know that the courtyard has been the social spaces in all our habitats of Bangladesh. The problem with courtyard however is that when a building tries to create a courtyard, climatically two arms of the courtyard are correct because they will fall on the north-south axis and the other two arms become more exposed to the west; and the sun the

west is quite harsh and unwanted in our climate. Both the sun from the east and west can become very low and penetrate directly into the units themselves. In order to achieve thermal comfort, we usually align building to the north-south axis. But that would create a linear pattern of housing. This has been usually the way housing has been designed by many architects in Bengal. Muzharul Islam did not want to do so. He wanted to have this enclosed social space and yet overcome the problem of the exposed west façade of the square. His solution was thus to tilt the square at 45° and then divide the square in north-south lines where the units themselves take an angular configuration where the windows can be placed on the north-south and yet parts of the design appeared to block off the western glare of the sun. So when one looks at the project from the west, no one sees the direct windows or the glazing, hence the harsh western sun cannot penetrate into the interior. But as one immediately shifts to the north or south they can see that the other windows have been oriented on the north-south even though there are large arms facing the western side of the building.

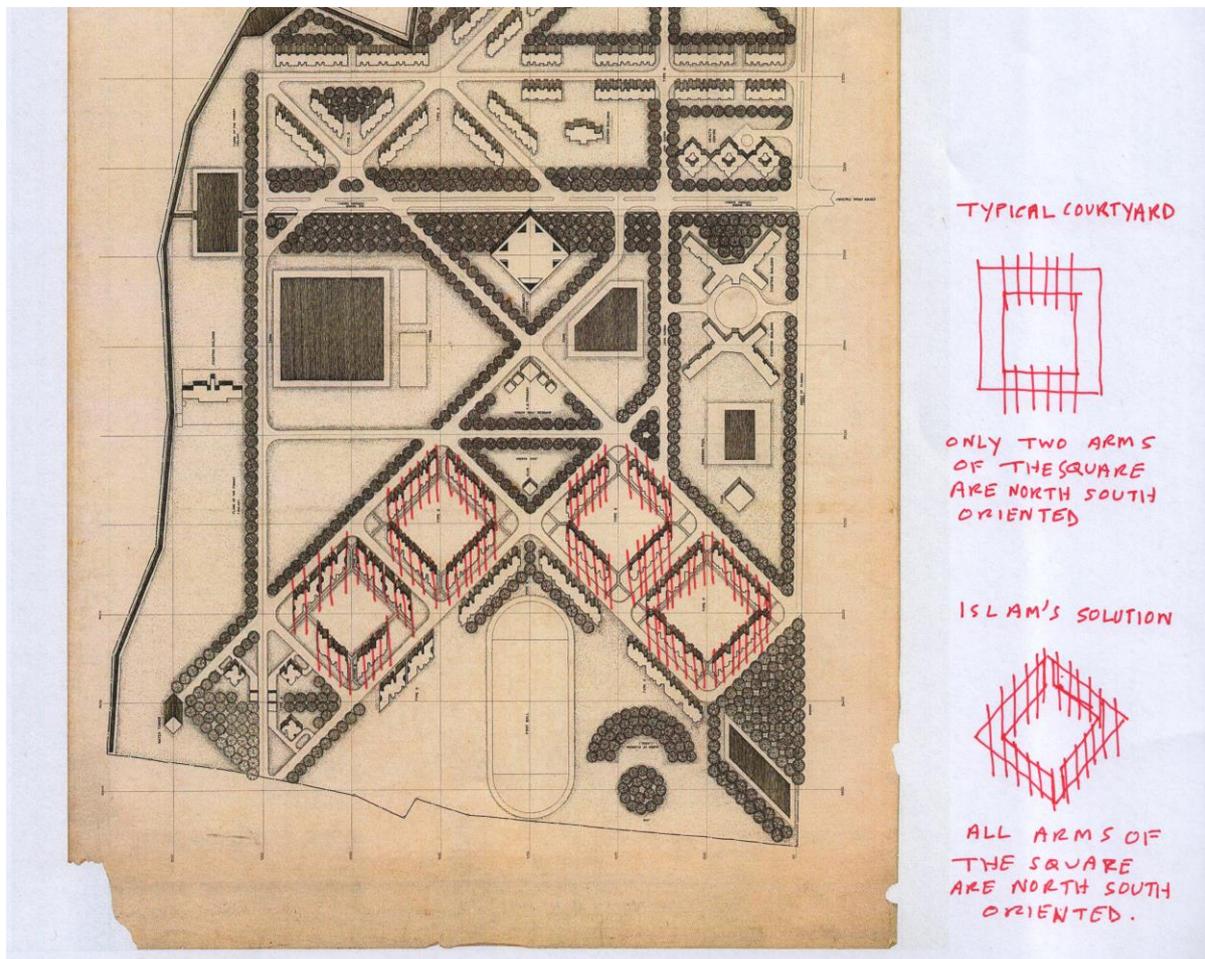




Figure 143: Joypurhat Housing. Photographed by author, 2008.

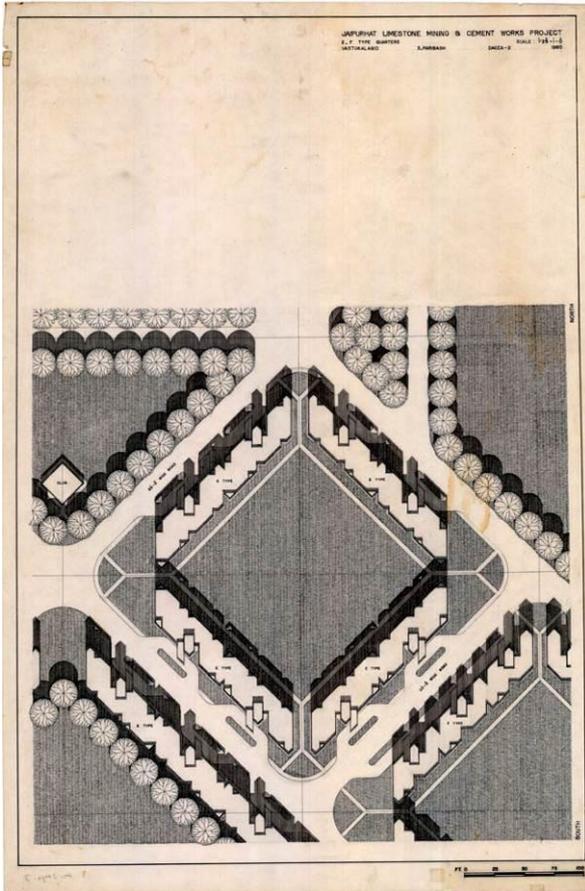


Figure 144: Cluster Plans, Joypurhat Housing, 1978. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 035-DS-004

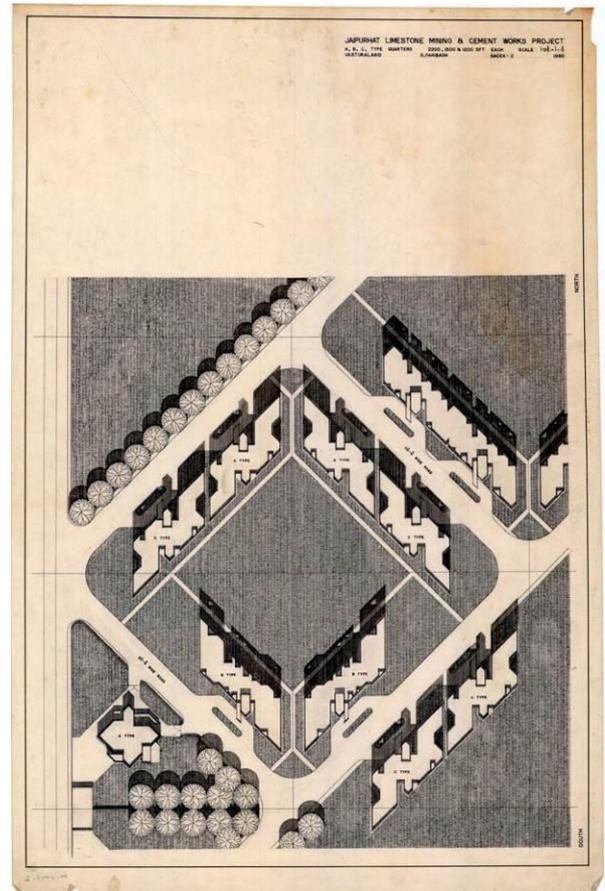


Figure 145: Cluster Plans, Joypurhat Housing, 1978. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 035-DS-003



Figure 146: Elevations, Joypurhat Housing, 1978. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 035-DS-005



Figure 147: Joypurhat Housing. Photographed by author, 2008.

The Unit Plan is not only skillfully designed it with its apparent modern approach still captures our way of life without undermining it in anyway. For example beyond the kitchen there is a kitchen verandah that has is used for certain modes of cutting and preparing spice when is done sitting on the ground, also it has a wash area for our kind of utensils that do not fit into a kitchen sink, and even a prescribed location and height for cloth drying line because we air dry or sundry our clothes. The angular scheme as mentiomed not only correctly orients the units the scememe provides proper verandas and shading for the window areas.

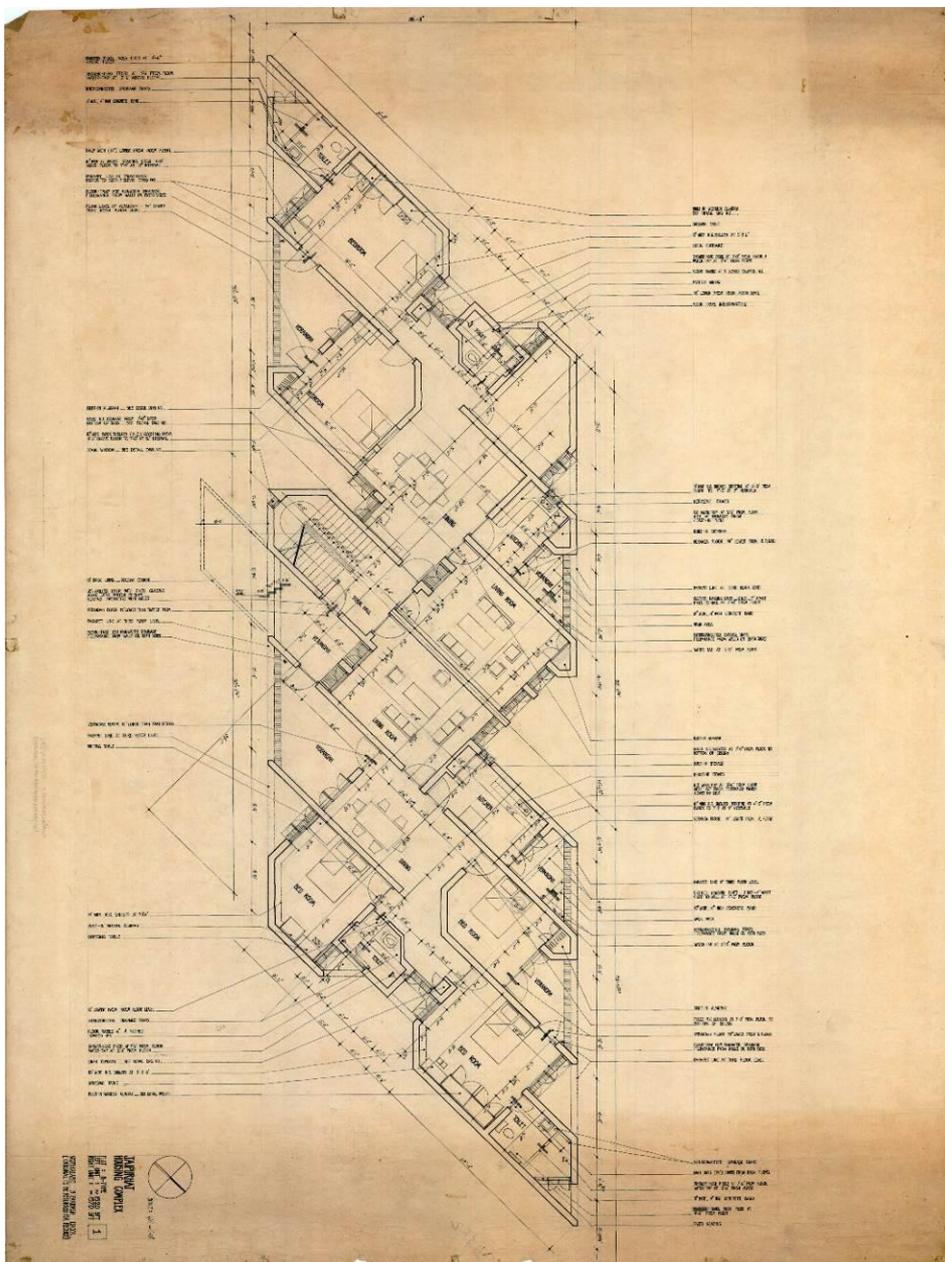


Figure 148: Floor Plan, Joypurhat Housing, 1978. Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 135-DS-002



Fig. Joypurhat Housing. Photographed by author, 2008.

The club house of the project displays a level of maturity that takes Islam to truly a international level of excellence. One has to start to wonder that since by this time Islam has interacted considerably with Kahn and the Parliament building complex was done, it would have inspired him to reach for greater heights.

It is in this project and finally in the project that came after this , the national Library and Archives in Dhaka that Islam achieved the complete circle of modernity that he had in his mind where saw himself to see his country in the heights of the great monestries made over 1600 years ago which became the mother form for many other work later on, asserting his identity, and yet rearranging himself in the universal language of modernity.



Fig. Club House, Joypurhat Housing. Photographed by author, 2008.

NATIONAL LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE (1978-1979)

Since only one of the building was built and the other was built in another design much later. This work has eluded most scholars for a long time. It was Khaled Ashraf who rightfully included this work in the exhibition and the catalogue.

It is in this work where Islam in his search for self finally reconstructs our identity.

The work does not try to emphasise on who we are in the scheme of a regional or particular architecture, it moves away from any notions of elements or references, it discards the vernacular and it makes no attempt to place us in a romanticised idea of our selves.

Asraf writes:

The work draws from all that is ours , adheres to the truth of climate and place, our materials and building techniques but does not use there rhetoric.

The philosopher , the politician , the nation builder Islam is bale to finally in a free country mark the way forward for us through this project where it no longer strives to creature any rapture but to come to a position of completeness.

In my opinion this masterwork was also forced by the fact that it was within the area of Louis I Kahn's masterplan and after much of Kahn work was complete.

The proximity to Kahns masterpiece definitely had som bearing on Islam and it becomes evident in the choice of deriving the plan fro a pure geometry.

Having said that Islam goes beyond the form and brings "himself" into the design with the layer of understanding of climate, which was the logic zoning of functions, materiality and austerity, and yet a scale and strength that would find its strains back over 1600 years.

The library building was designed to have its reading rooms and offices to the south and east because our windflow is predominantly from the southeast.

The auditorium is to the west because that is the least desired for light because we have a lot of glare ahe heat gain from that side. The stack ares in the middle away from the reach of any rain and humidity.

In the archive building again offices and study area and maps area on the south and east , main archive in the center and some stores and classroom in the west sheiled by a secondary wall with a space between to draw in light and air.

Both buildings had wonderful feasures that took light and air deep into the form and at the same time ventilated the toilets that were masterfully kept away from the main facades.

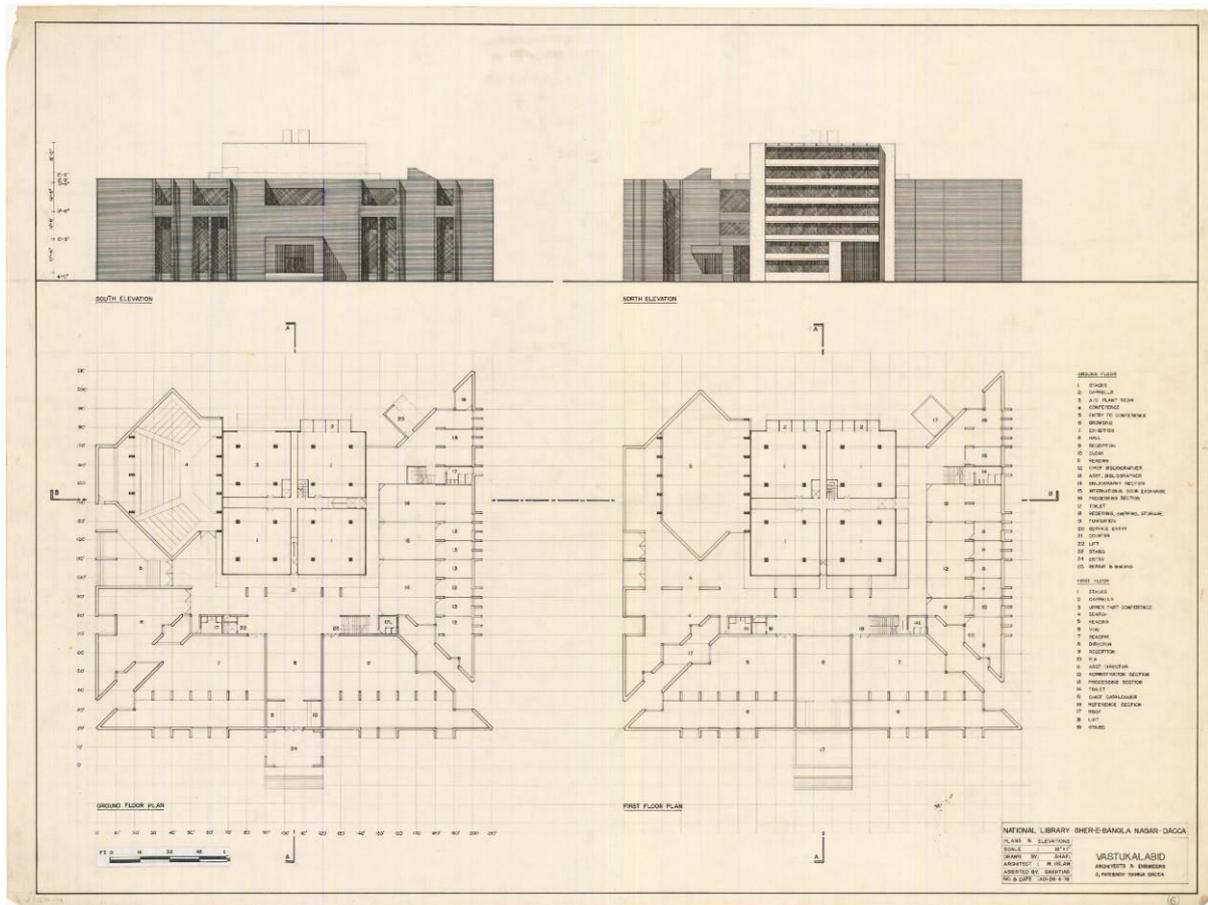
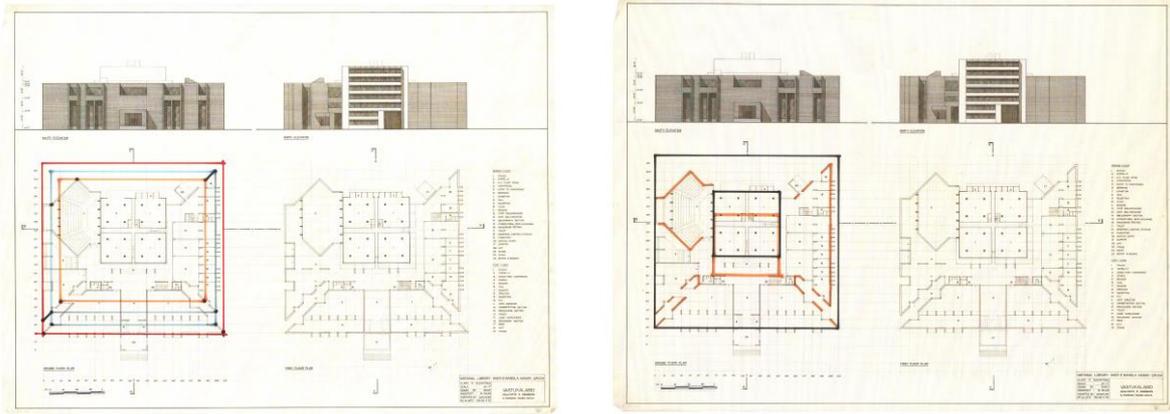


Fig. Plans and Elevations, National Library, 1978
Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 145-DS-003

The library and the archives used to be deliberately designed starting off with square and monumental in nature because it lies within the masterplan area of the Parliament Building designed by Louise I Kahn. But Muzharul Islam's monumentality of this building is not the same as Kahn's way of looking at monumentality but rather that of monumentality as idea that his countrymen needed at that time to establish themselves as a new nation. The idea of archives and library to be important was also probably the driving force of its monumental nature. However, if one looks carefully at the plan, one can see that how Muzharul Islam has worked beyond the outline of the square. If the corners are completed, one will realize that it is not actually one square but rather the design is a complex juxtaposition of probably three squares which actually at different points aligned with different nodes. This is very interesting because even though the plan seems like derived from a square, it is not really derived from one square and little shifts create a tension within the plan which makes the plan more interesting, more beautiful in composition rather than what would have happened if it was derived from only one square.



The other thing to note would be that even though Muzharul Islam was one way doing a very monumental structure over here, in many ways in harmony with what Khan was doing around the Parliament Complex. He has created angular features which take light deep into the structure and also which will naturally ventilate the toilets. The angular lines which are again not symmetrical and yet they feel in balanced which is achieved by throwing the whole composition a little off balance by making the central stockroom which apparently looks like a center which is not actually the center but slightly shifted. Since the center is shifted, all the other angular lines also are no longer in symmetry and this complex asymmetry of the composition comes together in a beautiful manner and creates more interesting drama to the plan rather than that which could have derived if everything was just geometrically taken around a center or around symmetry.



Fig. National Library, Dhaka. Photographed by author, 2007.

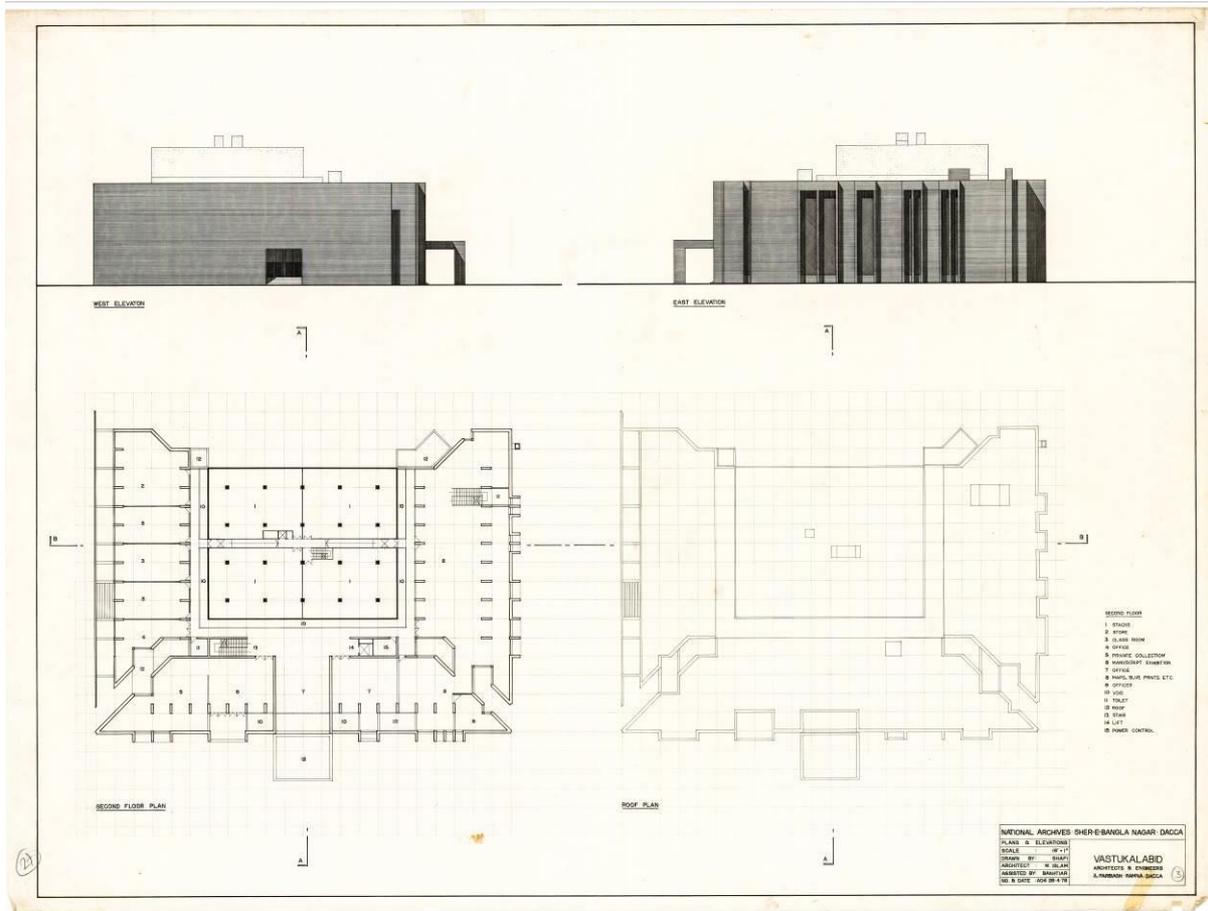


Fig. Plans and Elevations, National Archive, 1978.
 Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 145-DS-009

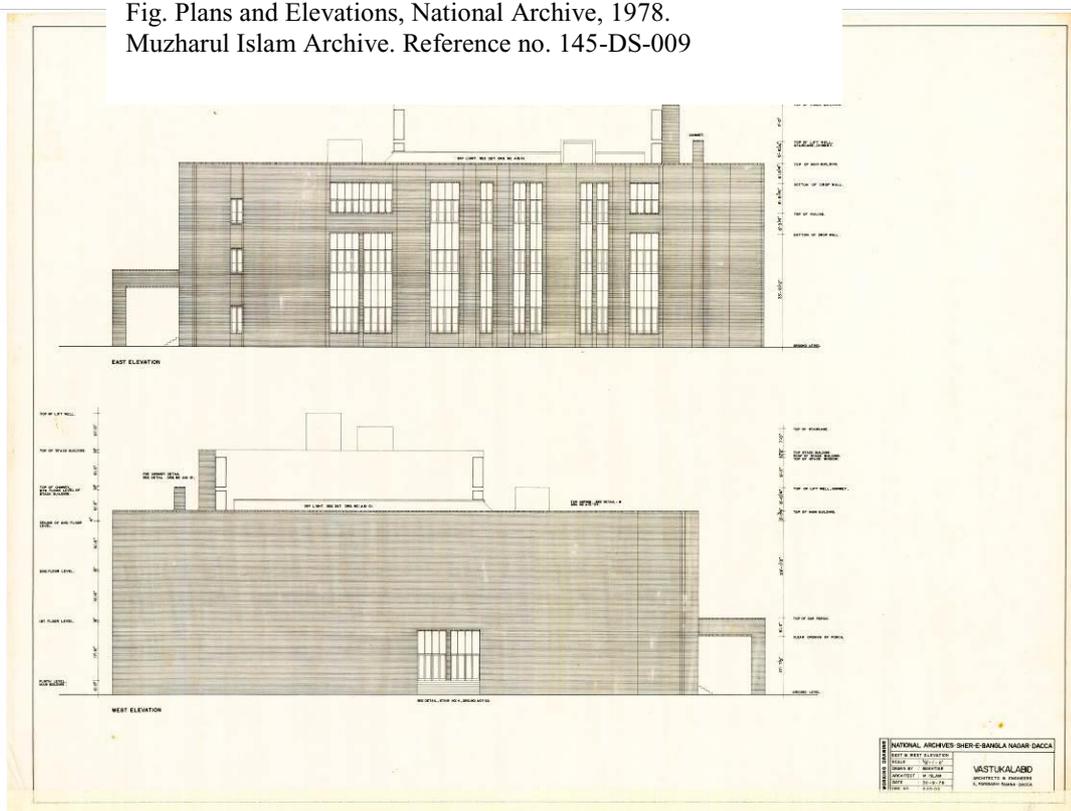


Fig. Elevations, National Archive, 1978.
 Muzharul Islam Archive. Reference no. 145-DS-007

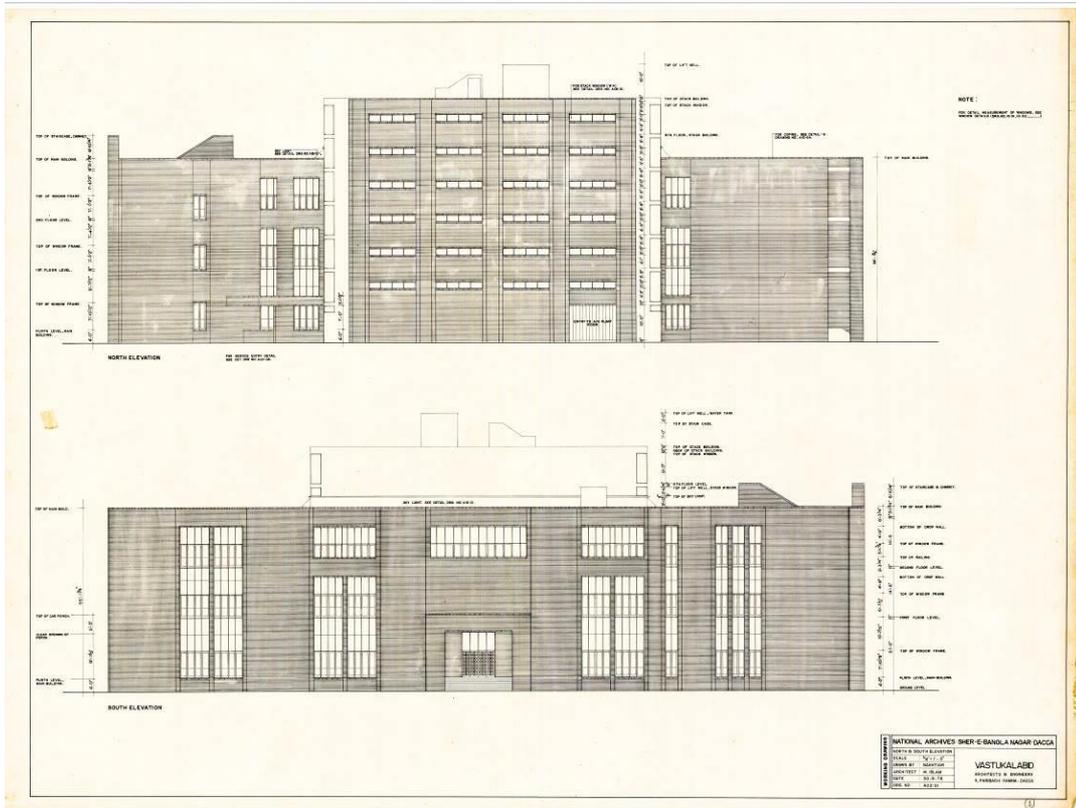


Fig. National Library, Dhaka. Photographed by author, 2007.



Fig. National Library, Dhaka. Photographed by author, 2007.

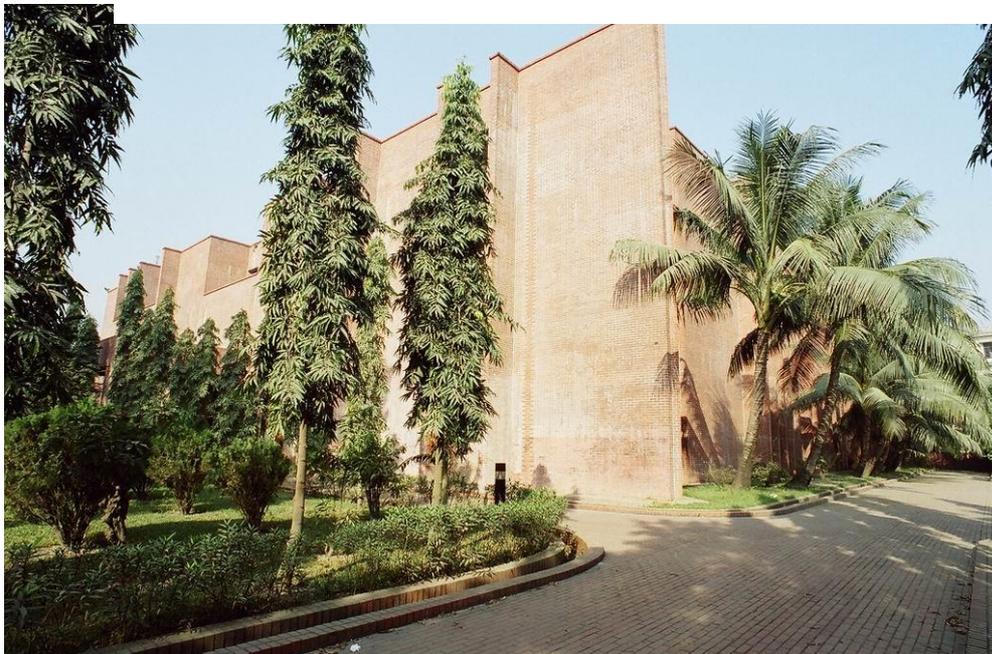


Fig. National Library, Dhaka. Photographed by author, 2007.

The timeless design of the national library in which Islam has embedded our history, our Psyche, our truths of place and climate and materiality, which only is reveal in careful

observation but not as a statement, truly uphold his politics of nation building. It speaks of a free country that no longer need to ponder its baggage from occupied times but now need to embrace its freedom and position its self not only in equal level, but to assert its glories heritage. It radiates self-respect and strength, free from any inhibition, fit to inspire the next generation.

7. An Architect for a Country

It is important to understand that Muzharul Islam did not have an isolated philosophy or standpoint of architecture. He had a philosophy of life from which; he arranged all his thoughts of his own life, of his aspirations for the nation and of his architecture. For Islam being a patriot was not a task, neither anything different from his own self. He embodied the belief to work for his country and to love its people and to search for its betterment. His daughter Dalia Nowshin wrote in her article “About my Father” that Islam had dedicated his life entirely for the betterment of the people of his country. For him, country was above all and the love for his country occupied the most precious place in his heart.¹⁶⁸ Within this statement, lies the fact that, Islam was so occupied with his endless meetings and discussions with artists, intellectuals and politicians to find a way to build a nation, that his family came second. Still, one can observe from her total awe of him as a person and of his selfless patriotism. His family also understood the importance of Islam to lead from the front and provide vision and became integral to the converging of artist, writers, politicians and other significant people of the society.

It is from her recollection from her father, that one can start to formulate the three most important aspects of Muzharul Islam’s total conviction in modernity, his search for a modern Bengali identity and his politics of “Nation Building”. She recollects that Islam was extremely fond of Classical Music but also fond of many singer’s both Bengali and foreign. He had a collection that ranged from Tagore, Nazrul, Rajnikant to Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, Joan Baez etc.¹⁶⁹. In the 60’s many cultural troupes used to visit then East Pakistan. He would take his family to see Russian Ballet, Chinese Circus, Circorama, Opera etc. From these testimonies, it is important to observe that Islam was truly a modern man and strongly believed in embracing modernity rather than to bind oneself in the shackles of only the regional identity. At the same time Islam was a strong advocate to assert one’s own identity but within the framework of a modern Bengali identity. “This politics of searching for a collective modern Bengali identity led him to hold countless gatherings of cultured and intellectual people to discuss both culture and politics”¹⁷⁰.

Eminent artist Rafiqun Nabi states that, it was him who showed the intellectuals and artists of his time that searching for one’s cultural identity could become a process of resistance. In my analysis (Four Sides of the table) I have shown that he was very close to some significant people from the field of arts, music, literature and politics, with whom he used to sit on a regular basis and it was this group that became the epicenter of a modern Bengali cultural movement. This group was also advocating of socio-political movement, and they later found themselves aligned with national politics in different capacities, including the independence war.

The other most important aspect of Islam, was his political stand point. This was a trinity of his strong Marxist and left-wing politics, his activism to assert a Bengali identity and finally his politics of nation building. As we know, Islam was exposed to Marxist politics during his college days and university days in Shibpur.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Dalia Nowshin, ‘About My Father’, *Kali O Kolom*, September 2012, pp. 134.

¹⁶⁹ Dalia Nowshin, ‘About My Father’, *Kali O Kolom*, September 2012, pp. 133.

¹⁷⁰ Rafiqun Nabi, ‘At The Institute of Craft & Fine Arts’, *Kali O Kolom*, September, 2012, pp 33.

¹⁷¹ Rabiul Husain, ‘The Totality of Muzharul Islam’, *Kali O Kolom*, September, 2012, pp. 46

East Bengal at that time, was ruled by the communist party¹⁷², and left winged politics remained the main discourse among the intellectuals. His strong political view point is further confirmed by Dalia Nowshin, who recollects that in their house there was a separate room full of books on politics; among them were books on Lenin, Stalin, Mou Tse Tung, Gandhi, Castro, Che Guevara, Martin Luther King etc.

It is interesting to note that Islam was an entity of Three counterpoints, Marxist politics¹⁷³, American higher Education from Liberal Schools¹⁷⁴ and a strong cultural standpoint of a Bengali Identity. It is these three counterpoints that not only shaped Islam's attitude of life but also his Architecture, which for him was one¹⁷⁵.

It is important here to note that this counter positioning remained the ethical and ideological core of his works which has been analyzed in the previous chapters. Strong socialist attitude alongside western rationalism and modernity with culture and identity acting as the moral compass is what becomes evident in his work.

It is therefore an incomplete reading of Islam when his work is only brought under the discourse of a modern Bengali Architecture and seen with an anxiety to place it in the structured context of Modernity.

As his work progressed through time and in his journey to create a truly modern Bengali architecture, he was constantly "retuning" and "departing" which as Khaleed Ashraf points out.

Since for Islam it was neither "retuning" or "departing" but a search for a transformed "self" based on greater truths, his work can be seen as statement of self-awareness which is fated to a constant journey of reconstruction¹⁷⁶. In this constant journey Islam's true compass remains his "politics" of nation building and the search for a truly modern Bengali identity. Islam's work has always been a part of this journey and not just his profession.

Asraf also wrote in his essay 'Muzharul Islam's Modernity & The Idea of Return Home'¹⁷⁷ that Islam reminds us of our greater existence within the unresolved tensions Idealization and the real, social engagement and artistic autonomy and political ideology and architectural production. But in my opinion Islam had somewhat resolved these tensions because for Islam his "politics" of a modern Bengali Identity and Nation building, took position. This not only gave him focus but also liberated him from the preoccupation of heritage.

Through my research and analysis one can see that Islam's Architectural career went through 4 major shifts. Before he even started his Architecture education Islam was well formed in his Attitude and politics. It is at that time when he was a college student and also an

¹⁷² Rabiul Husain, 'The Totality of Muzharul Islam', Kali O Kolom, September, 2012, pp. 48

¹⁷³ Rabiul Husain, 'The Totality of Muzharul Islam', Kali O Kolom, September, 2012, pp. 48

¹⁷⁴ Adnan Morshed, 'Modernism as Postnationalist Politics: Muzharul Islam's Faculty of Fine Arts (1953–56)', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, v. 76, n. 4 (December 2017) p 539.

¹⁷⁵ Stanley Tlgerman, *Foreward, Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 8.

¹⁷⁶ Kazi Khalid Ashraf, 'Muzharul Islam's Modernity and Idea of Returning Home', *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 14.

¹⁷⁷ Kazi Khalid Ashraf, 'Muzharul Islam's Modernity and Idea of Returning Home', *Muzharul Islam Architect*, p 21.

engineering university student he was exposed to the Anti British movement, The partition of India, India Pakistan war, Marxist politics, the rise of the cold war period etc.

After graduating as an Engineer he served as a government engineer and was able to connect to even the remote areas of the country. It was at that time probably both his socialist politics and also his nation building politics took strong hold.

Probably that is why, even though he went to study Architecture in the states he was not swayed away from his standpoint of nation building politics.

With his education of Architecture, he saw a new possibility to designing in totality and armed with his new training he immediately turned his works into statements of Bengali Modernity and the starting of a climate and context responsive design and visionary statements of economy and socio cultural context.

Since he was the first Architect of Bangladesh this connected him to both the social elite and cultural elite. He quickly emerged as a person that artists, writers, politicians, and other significant people of society gravitated towards.

With his belief system strongly set in the progressive ideals of Modernity, social stance of Marxist politics he was able to give our country its first Architectural Direction beyond post-colonial hangover and superficial regionalism.

As we can see from my research that he at that time went to topical school of architecture at the AA school for a Diploma in tropical design. But it was at that time he also realized that he cannot keep looking at his work from context and climate responsive design, because that will compartmentalize his work. He also felt that there was not much he could get from the program because he on his own was able to deal these issues ad more even in his first two works.

It is at that time that he decided that he was not going to push his work forward only as vanguard of climate responsive design. Being there he realized very quickly that an architecture based sole on climate will not be a strong contestant in the development of a Mainstream architecture and runs the danger of being marginalized.

As my research and analysis shows that after his Yale years his work took another turn. His works started to become more formal and more geometric in their development. It is evident that his exposure to Kahn in his Yale years had tremendous effect on him. (which even resulted in his shortlisting Kahn as one of the probable designers for the Parliament Building). One can see Kahn's influence in the monumental nature of Jahangir Nagar university and the Joypurhat housing, and the Auditorium of Chittagong University. But one should not confuse this monumental nature with that of just any monumental building, this monumentality was what he felt was needed to express his ideas and also to give the people of a new country a sense of hope and also for him to strongly set the nature of modernity removed from any weak regionalism. It was also his adopting a more abstract and global architectural language. But from my analysis it also becomes clear which the strong modern and abstract nature of the buildings he remained extremely site responsive and climate responsive, while even carefully engaging his left wing nation building politics within the scheme as economic considerations and development of democratic and social spaces.

His political and moral compass always remained constant even though Architectural Language was changing.

His work takes a final turn in the design of the National Library and Archives. We can sense a more relaxed Muzharul Islam in a Liberated country where he longer needed his architecture to be to instigate people or give them a “identity”. This work is in many ways removed of tensions and responds to purer architecture. The work is true of a “international” main stream architectural language. The need for natural light and ventilation in certain areas breaks up the geometry in a masterful way without becoming the forefront of the design development as it is in the other projects. But still the statement of the work remains that of one to build the visions of a nation, subtly drawing strengths and memory of thousands of year of history of our Buddhist monuments and yet filled with Islam’s nation building politics thrusts us into a new era of modernity.

In charting Islam’s formative years, his associations, and his political and socio cultural visions, and analyzing his works in this thesis, we are able to see his work and intentions more clearly, and become aware of his nation “building politics” as his driving force.

This thesis has through its course has established that for Islam his “politics” was his Architecture and his Architecture “was” an outcome of his “politics” It is from his political standpoint he was able to develop from the role of an activist to that of a guide and in a free country, that of a visionary.

Islam’s “politics” his house the gravitational center for intellectuals. artist, politicians, activists alike.¹⁷⁸ It was the “political” Islam that drew all these people to him and he was able to propagate his ideas through them. As we know that Islam later joined NAP and became directly involved in national politics.

Stanly Tigerman records that when he met Kahn returning from Dhaka in 1974, Kahn stated that he never understood Islam chose to be so involved in politics.

It was Tigerman , Islam closet friend who knew him more than anyone who knew that Islam strong inclination to politics was because he “felt that his country’s troubles could be better mitigated primarily by his work in politics and only then secondarily through the practice of Architecture”¹⁷⁹

This “priory” has shaped life and his work as have been analyzed in this thesis extensively. it is with this understanding that one need to approach his work or the true measure of Islam the person and his work will remain if not misjudged, at least discounted.

In order to ascertain “priory” of politics this thesis has gone through an in-depth analysis of his formative year showing how early Islam had stared to become political. The thesis also brings out the very important fact of the people he associated closely with were also in the same mind of a nation building politics and a cultural revolution. From then on, the thesis has covered some of his most significant works showing how is political standpoint remains the strongest undercurrent in the development of all the work.

Bringing forward Islam’s politics of Architecture and his architecture of politics gives us better insight about the idea that led to them and also a better understanding of Muzharul Islam.

¹⁷⁸ Dalia Nowshin, ‘About My Father’, Kali O Kolom, September 2012, pp. 134.

¹⁷⁹ Stanley Tigerman, ‘Designing Bridges to Burn’ Oro Editions, 2011, Canada, pp. 141.

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9. Talks of Muzharul Islam in Master Class in BRAC University recorded by Nurur Rahman Khan

People may say that I overplay with Architecture. But the thing is, there was no educational facility of Architecture in Bangladesh. There was no one we could call an architect. In fact, the educational facility of architecture we have now in our country is truncated. Architecture is a complicated art form. In British period, the foreign architects were being hired for working in our country. I was basically an engineer. After 1947, I started working for the government. After working for three years, I got a scholarship and went to study Architecture in the United States. Then I completed my master's degree in Yale University. After coming back in Bangladesh, I practiced architecture for thirteen years. After that I left my job and start my own firm 'Vastukalabid'. I have worked there along with many young professionals and did the masterplan and designs of Chittagong University, Jahangirnagar University etc. I have realized one thing that not only we, but the whole world is being ruled by Europe and America. And you will face obstacles if you learn something and want to utilize it for your country, your people.

I was president of 'Institute of Architects, Pakistan'. That time, I proposed for Ministry of Physical Planning. Because Architecture is not just about designing buildings. The designs should be complete for the whole society. Rivers, canals, hills, trees, settlements, everything should be in order. In some areas of Europe, America are organized by physical planning; even in China and Japan, they are organizing everything by this manner. After 1971, Pakistan and India formed Ministry of Physical Planning, but we could not. It is more important for us as we have limited land with a huge population. Actually we don't talk about totality, we don't think about totality. In 1947, our population was 4.5 crore but now we have 14.5 crore. I even cannot perceive it, this is unimaginable.

I am seeing Dhaka for 50 years. Dhaka was on the bank of river Buriganga initially. It has been expanded 20 times. The whole planning and organizing should have been done with the leadership of the architects.

You won't find people to move you forward but you will find many people to stop you. I have seen people forcing me their decisions, saying that I have no say in anything except the mere designs. I have argued with them. You won't believe, even one university project chief had sent people to beat me up. I was alone to fight. There was no one to help me. You are fortunate that you are not alone. Trust me, no one knows, no one understands what architects can do. No one will help you. You will design buildings, but you have to fight for the city. You have to plan the whole country ultimately.

I have worked thirteen years. Then I was forced not to work. For fifteen years.

Fight for the ideas

Architecture is a whole thing. Whole life. Whole life. If you work considering this, you'll see your country moving forward.

The road in front of Art College had a tree with beautiful flowers. The tree was vanished overnight. We are destroying visually beautiful things. And we don't even know what functional beauty is. We don't notice. You have to think about how a city will be developed, how a village will be developed, how much area the agricultural land will consume, same with the roads and rivers, you are the one who can decide, you are the one who can design. You are the one who can detect the wrong practices. You can think three dimensionally. You can work three dimensionally. No one knows what you know. You are the leaders. You are the teachers. You have to think considering the totality and create theoretical ideas and you have to fight for the ideas.

We don't have enough architects compared to the population. So, what you are saying is not said by anybody else. The planning laws are not based on our knowledge and education. These are done by the foreigners. There are no laws about the open space, male play space, female play space. There is no law about how many people should live in a land of three Bighas. There can live three people, thirty people, three hundred people. This depends on how many stories I am building; how many apartments I am building. I am seeing multi-storied buildings in Gulshan area and no apartment is getting natural light or air. Population is a huge problem now. They are my people. I am among them. You cannot kick them out. Only 56 thousand square miles land we have. The population is 14/15 crores. Dhaka has 1.5 crore. How can you live? Do you want your children to live on the 13/14th floor of a building and tell him/her this is life? That's why I am saying you have to think with totality in every aspect. You have to show a way out.

Unfortunately, we are a few in numbers. Moreover, the political leaders are ignoring their responsibilities. I am 83 years old now. I am working since 1950. I have worked for the government and then I started private practice. I have tried to design in a way that it ensures enough open spaces and greens in every work I have done. When I designed the universities, I spoke about the rights of the students and people from the powerful came to beat me up. You should not fear. Your responsibility is the biggest. You have studied architecture. You have the knowledge which no one else has. No one will take the responsibility and work. If they think, they think with their borrowed knowledge which is not good for our country.

Think about Totality

Architects are now more interested in earning money. They are correct from one perspective, but from the other, they are not. I am studying architecture for five years and then I am starting to work, my profession is supposed to be a decent profession which will make me do beautiful things. You have to have this knowledge first. If you are a poet, you have to be good with language first. Architects responsibility is huge. The funny thing is that architecture, town planning, regional planning, etc. are not different things, it is not that architects will not understand or do anything about town planning. Architects should play the leading role. We fought a lot till Bangladesh was born and even after that.

My home is in Chittagong. Chittagong is an unbelievably beautiful place with hills and rivers. Similarly, Dhaka was on the bank of a river. But this city has been extended wrongly. History is being studied in every university. But not history of Bangladesh. As we are architects, we can design our own buildings, own city; if we know that we have something to be proud of. We were taught in the British period that we had an agricultural land, we used to grow rice, etc. That's all. Indian history was written like that. But now we are discovering that we already had cities 3000 years ago. We were not taught like that. We didn't know that our ancestors were like that. My white-skinned friends used to call me Blackie. I am happy being Blackie with my three thousand years old culture and heritage. You are only 150/200 years old. I am three thousand years old. I am proud of that.

I am telling all these to tell you that you have to think about totality.

Beauty includes everything

My University of Oregon campus was beautiful. The walking roads, the flower trees, buildings made of bricks, everything was very beautiful. One day I asked my two professors why they don't mention in our study about Taj Mahal. They smiled at me and said that there are separate books about Indian architecture. But in the curriculum, we were only taught about European and American architecture.

I have traveled and visited many places in the world. France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Soviet Union, many countries of Europe, I have visited China also. Beijing has unbelievably

beautiful places with old buildings. Why would I not see them, know about them? Because these are in China? I have never thought that way. Even India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have unbelievably beautiful Temples, Mosques. We don't see them either.

Architecture is not only about enjoyment of the present. Architecture is about doing beautiful things, doing things beautifully for the future also. Beauty is something you have to be careful about. Because what you are designing, if that is not beautiful, nobody will even want to see it. This 'Beauty' includes everything.

You have to realize what you had and maintain the continuity. This thing cannot be taught in Universities.

There are no pitch rules of beauty. It depends on various things:

- The ultimate form of the building. Form has its own liability.
- Textures and colors of the materials
- Planes: horizontal and vertical planes, straight and curved plane planes
- The two dimensional composition
- The three dimensional composition: when you draw, you do two dimensional compositions. Then you go for three dimensional compositions. You make models. I don't know if you do it or not, I have done this, I made portions of walls with the laborers while doing the Art College, then I approved the wall. But most of checking should be done in drawings, or else the cost increases.
- Woods: doors and windows
- The ventilation system

I am designing a University. They are telling me to design for two thousand students. I told them that two thousand is not enough in the context of our country. We should design for twenty thousand students. I have argued over this. So, you have to think that how far your country can go with what you are doing. Very hard, I know. But life is hard and you are fighting for an idea. You have to work for your idea. You will see that you won't get what you wanted but you have to move forward. And if you move forward with people to help you, it is not that hard. I was alone. I was almost killed.

Chittagong University

In Chittagong University, the area was huge. There were hills, there were forests. I didn't touch 50% of the forests. Even deer come at night there. I could compact the master plan but I didn't do it deliberately so that people can enjoy the site.

Jahangirnagar University

I have tried two things. One, preserving the canal. Two, preserving the forest. I think I am successful; migratory winter birds visit this place every year.

Utilize natural phenomena

I have studied in Krishnanagar Collegiate School. Established by British. I don't think they had done the design consciously. Still, the north-east sides were open and there was no classroom in east-west sides. So we used to get natural light and air. I have done a six-months long course on tropical architecture in London. They use models and electric lights to teach sun paths. Unfortunately, there is nothing like this in our country.

Why should I buy things from Europe and Japan and China? We don't need these. We can make our own essentials. You can generate electricity. But you won't, because you won't work that hard and let them earn money. And water, air, light are parts of your life. You should utilize it.

I left the government job in 1964. I designed around 15/11 private buildings after that. Every building has been destroyed. The residential buildings were mostly in Dhanmondi. There are

now multi-storied mid-rise buildings in Dhanmondi. The single-storied, two-storied buildings have been destroyed and ten-storied building have been built. Nobody approached me ever. Not even my friends who were the owners.

You are called as ‘living master’. But we know that it is very tragic that you stopped working by the time you were 50 years old, whereas Louis Kahn said that an architect can be an architect after he is 50.

Unfortunately, I consider politics as a very big matter of fact. Whatever you are talking about, you need political support. That doesn't mean that you have to be a politician. If you understand politics, that is enough. You have to work as an architect and work as a countryman. You should know that this is your country. You love its people and people love you. No one is superior, no one is inferior here. Architects are the biggest friends of architects and architects are the biggest enemies of architects. You have to work together.

Interview of Muzharul Islam taken in various times by Nurun Rahman Khan

Muzharul Islam: Since there was no educational facility in architecture in our country, I went abroad to study architecture taking a scholarship. I was an engineer, I had a degree in engineering, so many things were comparatively easier for me then. I knew few things from Shivpur where I studied engineering. We used to do bricklaying and some iron welding works practically in first two years in Shivpur. And the standard was quite high. So, the practical courses in America were easier for me. The teachers behaved very well with me. I traveled a lot taking advantage of the scholarship. I have seen the works of Frank Lloyd Wright and other American architects. It is true that the cities had master plans and arrangements to control it, but the economy had the main control. They have town planning control in every city. But, the power of money does some work beyond control of city planning. But America is a vast country. When I came back, I was the first architect here who went through an educational process. I started my work after six months. The delay was deliberate by the government. My works were the Art College and the Library. I worked as per my knowledge and understanding. I had seen my country. I knew what we had. I could not imagine a city without trees and flowers. But the planning system was separated from architecture, and we, the architects were only to design buildings, we couldn't control what was happening to the environment. When I started working, I was alone from Bangladesh, in Pakistan there were some contemporary architects. Initially we didn't get any support. Then were able to establish some laws by the Institute of Architects, Pakistan.

Now, there are over four/five schools of architecture. I think if one school was properly concentrated first and then the other schools were formed, it would be better. I told them by the time of formation of BUET (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology) to choose a good school of abroad and invite teachers from there four or five years. I told them to form a group first. Do you know that a team of nine teachers from University of Pennsylvania came to Dhaka? And they submitted the proposal for their accommodation and teaching honorarium. Then I will say the evil man, Doxiadis said that no need to have them, he would teach, he told this to both sides of Pakistan. And they made a mess of everything. Then came some people from Texas, they were not faculty there. They became faculty here. There was my objection. But nobody listened. Vice Chancellor was Rashid Saheb. He was one or two years senior than me from Shivpur Engineering school. One day, there was a meeting of executive committee where I objected in some points. Argument started and I left, I told them that if your attitude remained like this, cut me off from your discussions and decisions.

If teachers are good, the school is good. School without good teachers are of no use. You can't learn anything if there's no good man in your school. Architecture is not about a degree. It's like painting. It is an art form. I believe that a few people with strong creative ability and strong ability to work hard are very important for a society. This is very sad that there were a very few people who used to think about our country, our people. The contemporary engineers did not understand what architecture was, what architects did.

Your political involvement started at a very early age.

My father was a professor. He had a very clam and quiet personality and not involved in politics. But he never stopped me; I was involved in politics from a very early stage of my life, from my late school and college life. But, it was not that serious thing in my life then, I just played a leading role in my groups. When I was in Shivpur, the anti-British movement, the division over religion, etc. were happening. I was fully involved when I started my job. I started to know the people who were political leaders. I started to react on my own. I used to live in Dhanmondi then, which I designed. In 1971, when the Independence war with

Pakistan began, we along with my relatives left Dhaka and moved to Korotia. We were ninety in number. Korotia was like a developed village then. I used to help people to reach Army Headquarters of Bangladesh. Then I came to Dhaka, and again left for Tripura then Kolkata. I was in Kolkata about eight months of the nine months of war. After Independence, I was automatically involved in politics. I used to talk about designing the buildings, the cities and the country. I used to talk about three dimensional design of the whole country. I used to talk about organizing the rivers, canals, hills, trees, land, cities, villages, everything. The idea was new here. Nobody thought that way here. Suppose, there is a river, you have to talk with the river experts to decide how much water it should have, the transport system, the settlement on the bank of it, how you will utilize the river for the sake of people. You can say this was overplayed. For one man, yes, it was. But you have to think about the totality. You have to know that everything is connected to our history of past 2500/3000 years, to the life of people, to everything people have witnessed. This is hard because you are to study so many things, you are to draw the architectural detailed drawings; plans, sections, elevations, you are to check the three dimensional changes by making models or mock-up structures, then you are to finalize something that is ideal to your own sense and will create or maintain a national consciousness.

I had traveled to Soviet Union. I stayed there for three months, attended some meetings and visited the cities there. There are cities which were established by strong arrangement system. Transport system, job facility, accommodation, markets, male and female separated play areas, mixed play areas everything was organized. This is obviously very hard for those who want to maintain the capitalist system, those who think about their own benefit. But I was hurt in Soviet Union too. Because the system was being broken in some places. And that was spreading.

You have designed a city. Rangamati.

Here is an interesting story. When I was in government job, a white-skinned man called McConnell. I was being forced not to design. When I designed Art College and Library building, one article was published reviewing some architectural works of Pakistan and Bangladesh. And after that, McConnell did not want me to do design works. I then shifted from architectural works to large scale works like drawing the railway lines in a shifted railway station. At that time, the hill tracts of Rangamati were also in the plan. I was very interested as I often used to visit Rangamati. The king and his relatives knew me and my family very well. If they visited Chittagong, they used to stay at our home. I used to stay at theirs when I used to go to Rangamati. That home went under water. The uncle of the King, we used to call him 'Kakababu', he asked me if there was something I could do to help. So, I planned for Rangamati and the development work was done to some extent.

The main goals were to rehabilitate the inhabitants whose homes went under water, organize their homes and plan a small town with hills and rivers. Not only in my plan, even the people there also wanted a town which would be a beautiful place for travelling. I designed hotels with bamboo and woods. I never visited after the development work started. I don't know what is the present condition. May be one or two building of my design is there. I didn't even go to my own home in Chittagong. Don't know what happened to it.

You said that when you designed the Art College, you started from a point that you would keep the trees untouched.

I tried to keep the trees untouched. When I got the site, it was a part of Paribagh. It was a garden with fruit trees and flower trees. It interpenetrated to University area. And these used to belong to Nawab Family. But when Pakistan for formed, it was taken by the government. There was beautiful field, trees, pond on the south side, there was a temple by the pond. There was Dhaka Club also. When I started working, I knew the engineers working in this

project. I used to discuss so many things with Zainul Abedin; he was the principal of the art college, there was Quamrul (Quamrul Hassan) Bhai also. Mostly painters were there, and they were very friendly. The experience was good.

But I argued with Abedin Saheb (Zainul Abedin). What you are teaching is an art form. It is not mathematics. It is not like any other subjects. No matter how hard you try to teach, a poet is a poet by nature. Original qualities are very important in any art form. You should help if you get any quality full student, you should help open up the brain so that he or she can see the whole world in his or her own way. Otherwise, not possible.

I kept telling. Didn't work. I gave up. I am 81 years old now.

Living till 81, specially in Bangladesh is a rare thing. I have seen so many things in my life. I was born in 1923, in British Period. I have studied in different schools. I had graduated from engineering school in 1946 and started working here in 1947 after the Partition (The partition of India in 1947 was the division of British India into two independent dominion states, the Union of India and the Dominion of Pakistan). After working for three years I went to study architecture in America. I consider myself fortunate that I have had some famous and good teachers in both my bachelors and master's degree (University of Oregon and Yale University). And I will value them the most till my death.

Humans go through some processes from birth to death. I should acquire the knowledge. Knowledge about what is happening around. I think I am fortunate enough to get the opportunity to learn, to study, to play, to live a life. We fought in 1947, then again in 1971, we achieved a country, but what happened after that and what is happening even now in country, there is a huge gap in the matter of totality.

Architect should work considering certain things. There is many type of pressures in his work. There is social pressure in which he has to react in the right way. This particular profession, architecture is a very complicated form. It should be. Because from my birth to death, my every activity needs space; and architects' responsibility is designing particular space for particular activity. In our country, people don't want to involve themselves in the activity of organizing spaces beautifully and considering the totality, not even the architects. Most of them. So the gap is increasing.

In our country it is very important to recognize the fact that our population is increasing but our land is being in the same size. From 1947 to present, our population has increased from 4.5 crore to 14.5 crore. But the land is still 56,000 square miles. So, we have to work considering the fact, but I cannot see any reflection of that. I am not saying that only the architects are responsible. No one is taking their responsibility actually. It has gone beyond control already and the society is suffering. We are seeing this, but not doing anything. Let me give you an example, 15/20 years ago, this Gulshan area was organized in a manner that there were large plots with many trees synced with the old city. But now, the so called development has made this area such a place where there's no space for walking on the streets, no place for vehicle movement. It has become not only ugly, even people are not getting any facilities they were supposed to have. So, architects are to consider many things. Because they are the leaders. Because Architecture includes everything. Roads, buildings, light and air, electricity everything is related to it.

I am not saying that one family should get a huge space. I am saying that you have to organize beautifully what their requirements are; so that, they don't suffer. But we are failing collectively. We are not contributing anything.

It is related to education. Total education. I don't know if I am being able to make you understand. We have now only one desire, desire of money. And you see, the rich groups are sending their children to study abroad. Around twenty thousand students from Bangladesh

are studying in America as far as I know. This even sounds peculiar to me. If I need to educate my people, I need to educate them from here.

Isn't this political consequence?

I won't say this is political. Everyone should be conscious. We are blaming only them and doing nothing. People involved in politics are remaining uneducated, so are we. But people from every profession has to contribute.

Don't you think that we have to make a strong economical foundation and then work for the development in our health care, education etc.?

You cannot make money in the name of economic base. This is not development. We have to educate our people being a poor country. We have to educate our 14 crore people. You know that we were under the British rulers for 190 years. British were not civilized in 500 AD or 600 AD. They have forcefully grabbed many regions and grabbed their wealth. Whatever they have done, done by the power of money. There's no question that we are not going to do anything like this. There are 150 countries in the world. Whatever we have to do, we have to do it by being educated. You know that we were taught that we were poor, we don't have anything except our agricultural land. But the interesting thing is that recently we have come to know that we have plenty of coal, we have granite, we have limestone. We have limestone in such an amount that we don't need to import cement. But our responsible people are taking money from foreign companies and not letting this to happen. We have coal in such an amount that we could establish factory as it has a 98% pure carbon. But this is not happening either.

But I won't say this is political. Because if we name it political matters, people are making money and you are not concerned about the nation. You can name it anything you like. You can divert the thought in another way. But the fate of the nation will not change then.

The interesting thing is, in Pakistan period, we have arranged meeting, asked for forming a Ministry of Physical Planning. This ministry would deal with planning the villages, planning the cities, total planning with roads, rivers and canals, agricultural land etc. The architects would play a leading role in this issue. The funny thing is, Pakistan has formed it. India has formed it. Only we failed to form it here.

You discussed with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Would like to ask you why it didn't happen?

I went on a world tour about 15/16 days before Bangabandhu was killed. Then after 15 days, I came to know about the news. I did not come back for two and a half years. When I came back, I was locked under solitary confinement for three days. I cannot describe how horrible a solitary confinement is. You are locked in a room, for nothing. You cannot see anybody. Then I was locked for one years.

I did not say these things ever. What will happen if I say these? These are my own sufferings. Sufferings of my family also.

All of my work contracts were withdrawn. Some of my friends and some people I used to know have me few works. I did the Limestone Factory and National Archives.

When Bangladesh was born, you had a good relation with Bangabandhu. It was obvious that you would work for the betterment of the country. But in reality, the opposite happened. There was not even any policy in architecture. What do you think the reason behind it?

I have an interesting question, I have seen people I used to know, people who were my friends going in a good position, why nobody ever told me to work together? Architects have an attitude that they want to work alone. Achieve alone.

I was not asked to work from the government also.

I was involved in politics. But I would say that I was not involved politically; I was involved in the total planning issue. Architecture is essential for life. You cannot cut off architecture from anything.

What do you think the reason behind not utilizing you?

In Sheikh Saheb's (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman) period, the first two/three years were tough as Bangladesh was newly formed and it was vulnerable in many ways. So it took two/three years to manage the initial stage. Then when I talked with him, I noticed that in many points, we were thinking alike. He told me to make a paper with my ideas. I made a paper with 35/36 pages and gave it to him. He was killed in 1975. Before that probably on 25th March of '75, he gave a lecture which included my ideas about villages and cities. I mentioned to form one big town and one University in each district. And I wanted that the whole education system should be running under the Universities. And I talked about specialised education system for each University. Suppose in one place, we are getting coal, so the University of that place should offer special education about coal. Similarly, Chittagong University was supposed to offer special courses of forest and fisheries etc. So, he had talked about these in his lecture. But unfortunately, he was liked.

Your ideas have a mark of socialism. Our power grabbing people have a fear of that. They have a tendency to avoid that.

Absolutely correct. Actually they don't even understand socialism much. They don't even study anything. Actually by socialism, what we mean crudely is that every human being has the equal right. Right of getting education, right of getting work.

Look at the shelves here. These are my books collected from 1940/42 when I was in Shivpur. I tried to read, may be could not do much. If you want to learn, you have to read thousands of books. You have to earn an attitude in life. Then you have to work. You have to educate yourself and create a vision. We, Bangladeshis lack this.

I am not saying capitalism means uneducated society. I am saying that education and whatever you say, everything is for one goal here, making money. This is such a system that, few people become the richest and the others become the poorest.

When I was at the University of Oregon in America, I got to know that only 5% of the students go to Universities after passing higher secondary examination. Rest of the 95% start working. But I think the opposite. I talk about educating everyone; I talk about establishing a system about educating everyone.

Sometimes you will notice that your servant is more intelligent than your son. But he/she has no way to live a decent life. This is our society. I am also running the same system. This is very sad. If anyone wants to have a home, who are you not letting that to happen? That doesn't mean that he needs a huge building to live. He needs to live beautifully.

Architects have a responsibility to let that happen. To make a beautiful building is not the only responsibility of Architects.

Would you tell us about the Ministry of Physical Planning?

Actually 'design' is always concerned about totality. Architectural design is three dimensional design. Architects work with many things, considering many things. They work with some programs. They are to organize things; and organizing is always three dimensional.

Architecture should be conscious about the whole space surrounding humanity. This should include everything. One person and the whole society are not the same things. Everything is multiplied then. Now, if you discuss about the whole society, you will discuss about these

settlements, villages, cities. You have to discuss about their education, jobs and their ability to choose their own space.

Anything that is physical, the land and the things on the lands; organizing these is the fundamental work. And fundamental work cannot be done by anyone except the architects. Because no one knows what an architect can do. Because no one can do what an architect can do.

I was president for two years in the Institute of Architects, Pakistan. I talked about total physical planning. Pakistan was then developing a system in which government had the main control of everything. I was opposer of that; they knew. They did not behave wrong with me though. They honestly utilized me in their work.

Just before the war began, the physical planning ministry was almost being formed. But then, they were able to form it, India was able to form it, but we could not. They had a population which was less than us with a vast land. It's very important for us to form it, and time is running out, because our population growth is running so fast, this is a very negative thing, because we have the same land we had when our population was 7.5 crore (in 1971). We are not thinking about the accommodations or education. We are not organizing anything for them. The condition has become extreme now. If you see the newspapers now, you will see the red front page; color of blood. You'll see brother killing brother, son killing father, mother killing child, a peculiar society has been formed. So we have to be concerned about totality.

If you don't educate your people, don't give opportunities to be educated, if you don't give them any facilities, they cannot live a decent life, they cannot live proudly.

Interview of Stanley Tigerman taken by Nurur Rahman Khan

Stanley Tigerman: I was very sorry to hear that Muz's wife, Ara, died. She was a very sweet woman. She was a long suffering wife because being Muzharul Islam's wife was not an easy task because of his propensity to rant and rave about whatever because he had an opinion about everything. There was no subject on which he had no opinion. So, that's why I think it was difficult for her, because at some level, I think it's fair to say he became ostracized by his own profession, at some level because he was, how do I say it, unforgiving. If you are a younger architect in Dhaka, Mr. Islam was very tough on you. If you didn't do something for what he considered his people, the poor people, which is everybody, the jute worker, if you did something behaviorally incorrect, he was on your case. He was a true patriot. His name, Muzharul Islam means the flag bearer of Islam. Although he wasn't a flag bearer of Islam, the religion, but he was one for the Bengalis, for the people of East Bengal. So obviously he was a great supporter of workers housing and all of that. However, all of that did not make an easy life for Ara. It just didn't. Or for his kids, particularly, Dalia. I want to say that Tanvir couldn't give a shit. I mean Tanvir was always interested in being a success and he became a success and made a lot of money. So all his father's rantings went over his head. But the brunt of all the raving went over Rafiq, Dalia. But mostly Ara bore the brunt of Islam's rough edge personality. Having said that, I loved him. I thought he was great, he changed my life without question, without doubt. His anti-capitalist ways tragically for me and my country have proved out. But it didn't make his life any easier in Dhaka. First in terms of his colleagues because they thought he was a raving fool and he was someone "out there". But if they would've paid more attention to him it would have been better. Of the newest generation, coz I have seen some of their works, there are some very good architects in Bangladesh, from whatever I've seen. There is a book called 50 under 50, which is a book about 50 architects under the age of 50, and one of the organizers was Faruque Amin. So almost from the get go, when I first met Mr. Islam, was when he came to join the Masters class in the Summer of 1960. I had just gotten my Bachelors at Yale and was in the same Masters class as him. We met early on the semester and we became friends. One of our classmates was a South African, an apartheid type who was brutal with Mr. Islam, talked down to him because of his skin color or whatever and they were constantly fighting and I got really pissed off at this guy and I let him have it one day! So Islam and I bonded as a result of that altercation and so we became very good friends until he finally became my best friend. Like many students, you know we talked about, dreamed about maybe working together at some point, to expand upon our friendship. And sure enough, in 1963, I guess, or 1961, he then won a full bright and he travelled around the world and he came Chicago, by which time I was teaching at the University of Chicago and I got him a job as a visiting critique and so we talked together and then he went back to Dhaka and the World Bank was looking to, firstly expand by doing expansions at the agricultural college at Mymensingh and so Islam contacted Paul Rudolph and wanted him to come do that which he did. At the same time, he asked me to come to Bangladesh so we both could work together on the five polytechnic universities. So we did that and then as they say the rest was history. So I spent a lot of time in the next ten years going back and forth to Dhaka. I made 25 trips, almost once every 3 or 4 weeks. I frankly loved it. I thought it was great. I used to call him my *bhai*, *Muza Bhai*, because he was my brother. But like all brothers, we quarreled endlessly. There is a picture in that book I gave you, where we were standing in front of the house he designed and you could tell from our expressions that we were arguing. The picture showed two very unhappy people. We always quarreled because I wasn't going to let him get away with all the anti-capitalist and Marxist ravings. But in the end, I did listen to him and he actually changed the way that I am as an adult as much an architect. I also became, in my country,

troublesome, pissing off a lot of people. So he became for the better of the worst, a paradigm, a role model, for me. So we were very close, needless to say. Close meaning, his daughter worked at my office, Rafiq came to Chicago and lived with my Ex-Wife's in-laws in Highland Park when he was doing the circles with the UIC. I mean we were sort of an extended family. We were very close. I loved their family. They had their own problems. I'm not going to wash dirty laundry in the public but I had problems with Dalia and as for Rafiq, life never worked out for him. He married this fabulous woman from whom he got divorced. A Pakistani woman, who was absolutely lovely, terrific, a wonderful woman. But they got divorced. Anyways, like all families, they had their problems too. Nothing is perfect. Including Muzharul Islam and me. But with all of Muza Bhai's imperfections, you know I was the last architect to see Louise Kahn alive? Because it's been recorded in the book the Ricky Warman did. We met at Heathrow. He was on his way back from Ahmedabad and I was on my way to Dhaka and we met at transit at the Heathrow lounge, quite by chance. He'd been our teacher in New Heaven, a visiting critique, and we got into an argument about Islam because Louise never understood, and never liked Islam spending so much time in politics. The Awami league and all that. And he couldn't understand that the architecture by itself couldn't solve East Pakistan's problems. But you know, people like me that cruised on those great rivers, The Meghna, The Brahmaputra, The Ganges, so I'd said to Muz for years that they should bring in dredgers to dredge out canals and make it a sort of Venice of the East. But I was wrong, because if they would have done that, then what had happened during Hurricane Katrina and the hurricane in New Orleans, would have been disastrous. I don't know what is to become of Bangladesh but I love Bangladesh. But there are no simple answers for the country in the larger sense. So the canals dredged by dredgers is simplistic approach to a country whose problems are vastly more complex than simplistic answers that one comes by.

Interviewer: Could you talk about your days together at Yale?

ST: Well, there again we didn't agree on a lot of things. Islam was huge Le Corbusier psychopath, how else do you put it? And I was a Meisian psychopath. Of course in Chicago that was it. So we used to argue endlessly on that. I think he would have been a better architect if he weren't a Corbusier psychopath. If he didn't measure things via the modular and all that. For example, I think he was inadvertently influenced by Louis Kahn. Also by me. And so I love his Jahangir Nagar University design. That was fabulous. And that was when he broke out of the Corbusiean paradigms. He was a good architect and at the end Louis Kahn, who was also far less than perfect, I'll tell you a story about that. But Kahn was right, if Islam would've gotten free and spent more time, architecture, like anything in life takes time and here we have such a precious short time, we only have 40 or 50 years to work and you can't waste it away on other things, even though those other things make sense, for say your country, as in Politics. He spent more time laboring behind freedom from West Pakistan's problems, which they still have. He would have been a better architect. He was looking at architecture as not just as nature's form but behaviorally and socially. He thought should be more of service to people. He would have loved what I am working on now, which is low cost housing in Chicago. He would have loved that because that's what he thought architecture should be doing. We may not have jute workers but do have very poor people.

Interviewer: I heard when you guys were doing the polytechnics you did a study. Could you talk about that?

ST: So our client for the polytechnic was a man named Dr. Waqir Ahmed who was from Karachi. But he was the head of the director of the technical education for Bangladesh. He didn't want to do the master plan. He just wanted to do the buildings. Islam badgered him

extensively and we prevailed and I did have a masterplan. There was a big architectural record in the late 1960s about our master plan. Islam wanted to use the polytechnics commission to spend time, in addition to doing the work, to create the information for the next generation of upcoming architects in Dhaka. He did this because there wasn't any single document before our master plan that among other things detailed the size, micro culture, the climatic conditions like wind direction and all. So wanted us to prepare a document and we did. We came up with a giant amount of information. Whether it is still used or not it was a great exercise. Even though we were insisted upon not doing it, we still went ahead and did it regardless what anybody had to say or do. Islam, for own benefit or not was a very highly opinionated person. Once a view was established by him, it was very difficult to change his opinion. I mean tried and succeeded in a couple of small ways.

Interviewer: When I see the plans of the polytechnics, which is my absolute favorite, I think that's where he truly brought out the socio macrocosm of Bangladesh, and addressing that through architecture was a very unique thing. But when I look at the plans of the polytechnic, they are just musical notes to me, when I look at the different level of plans and see the same narrow grids, and how the walls move away and we have these different functions and different layers. For that was fantastic.

Formalistically, I think, the work of Jahangirnagar University was much better than the polytechnics. All that was good, but all that was done at the expense of symbolism. There was no symbolic content, it was vacuous from that point of view. So Bangladeshis, were deprived of something that I could have brought to it. Be that as it may, I still love the project. I loved working there in Bangladesh, there is no question about that. We had so many things. We had trip to the Sundarbans together, my ex-wife and the chief consort were in the forest for a week, it was fabulous.

Interviewer: When you were in Bangladesh, did you ever meet Louise Kahn there?

ST: All the time. So there was this problem, right. Kahn was Muz's great hero. But in the spirit of nobody's perfect, So I'm having breakfast say with Kahn at the Intercontinental Hotel, that's where we usually stayed whenever we were in Bangladesh. And if a bearer or the waiter would bring him the wrong change he would abuse the shit out of him, Kahn would. Or if he was slow and Kahn had another appointment, Kahn would be a typical Westerner. What can I say? He was used to a speedier pace. Me too, but I was forced by Islam me to "go native". So, I did. He forced me to drink the water and eat the food so of course I got Dysentery but once I recovered, I gained weight when I was in Dhaka because I loved the food and drank the water there. We went to this Bengali wedding of two young kids we've never seen each other before. And to see their expression, when the mirrors came and they saw each other through it, that was priceless. I mean there is no question. I've read all about it in this book, all about it. So I loved it. I'm a Jew and I'm as much of a non-believing Jew as Muz was a non-believing Muslim. So we got along very well. I can say this that I never experienced any Anti-Semitism. Even the smallest bit of it. None. Zero. Because in the way that dark skinned people have become sensitive to the slightest nasty thing like racial slur, so is the Jews are sensitive to Anti -Semitism. I'm telling you, nothing. All I ever got was love from them, from everybody. And gossip. They loved to gossip. So Bengali Muslims are like Jews. They gossip. So they would know weeks before, ever Islam knew that I was coming to Dhaka. It was because of a general love. They used to play tricks on me. Like because of my name, Tigerman, *Baag manush*, so they kept saying when are you going to the Sundarbans to see your namesake? So I had go to the Sundarbans. So I had a lot of

experiences that are normal for people who lived in Dhaka. I experienced their world and it was so much for the better of it.

Interviewer: Were at the sites of the construction when the projects were being built? What did you think about the workers there?

ST: Absolutely, I was there. The workers there were terrific. You know what American don't realize is the so many poor people like *Darwans*, gate guards, peons, etc., are "uneducated", that they are stupid. They're not stupid. At night the same gate guards when they would socialize and talk to each other, squatting, sitting at their heels and just chatting, what were they talking about? Do you want to know the truth? They were talking about physics, physical laws, Newtonian physics, Euclidian physics. That's what the gossip was about! It wasn't bullshit. Whose daughter is marrying whom, none of that non sense. Islam himself had no interest in small talk. Islam, who was highly educated was like the poorest gate guard because he could talk to them about the same subject that he could talk to me or you about. So he was very empathetic to their ways. I mean he was a great role model in my view for the poorest of the poor jute workers in the field.

Interviewer: Didn't you find it interesting that the workers who had no former education at all, making buildings?

ST: They had done it fabulously! We could have done it better with the polytechnic although, because working with that shitty brick which is loaded with salt so it looks like crap, which if you leave it unattended, which it is nowadays, it really looks like it's been swallowed by the jungle. And it has. That's why everything is whitewashed and plastered, to make it look "clean". We could have done something better, in my view.

Interviewer: Did you go to see Kahn's building when it was being constructed?

ST: Absolutely. I last time I went back was 2005, I think, I don't remember.

Interviewer: So did Kahn talk to you when he was working on that building?

ST: Yea, all the time. Because he was there all the time so we overlapped all the time. I had lots of meals with him. Breakfast, dinners, whatever. When I wasn't having dinner with Muzharul Islam or others, I would sometimes have dinner with him.

Interviewer: Did you have any architectural talks with him, about his buildings at any point?

ST: I always told him how much I admired his buildings. I've always felt that the building is like a page, it looks like the caricature drawings, the prion drawings because people are walking in the thickened walls which forms the path around the assembly. That was a knockout. It was an amazing experience. But favorite buildings are not the capital buildings so much but the all the housing with all the windows and the cut outs and all that. That was fabulous. Kahn was a fabulous architect, in my view.

Interviewer: When you were making all those presentations to the government, do you remember anything at time that was interesting, when you were trying to sell the idea to them?

ST: I think because Dr. Waqar Ahmed and others, the World Bank people saw that we were deeply involved in the culture of the country and that we wanted to do something good. That's why Islam, brought in Paul Rudolph, he was responsible for bringing them here, not

anyone else. Islam was the chief architect of the PWED. Initially, the government asked Islam to do the buildings. But he wanted to bring in someone from the outside. So Islam came up with a list which included Le Corbusier, Mies Vandro, Alto and Louis Kahn. So Islam himself was instrumental in getting Kahn the job. So he is in many ways unsung. Even in politics. He is unsung. He was very close with Mujibur Rahman and was one the main people who struggled out for a free Bangladesh. That's why I was to stay in Calcutta sometimes during that period for my safety.

Interviewer: As an architect, how do you think Islam stands out among the others?

ST: Do you want the truth? Not much. I don't think he was nearly as good an architect as he could have been. And I think there are better architects today in Bangladesh. The younger generations. There are some very good works. Islam's work was of the moment, in the late 60s early 70s, meaning, it was not critically derived. It was, on the basis of what we were trained in, in Yale, aesthetically derived. So he had no particular theories that he put to use in the design of buildings, which I criticized him for all the times. Having said that, in context of his time, according to his socioeconomic situation, he was a very good architect. Maybe not great but very good. In particular, when he did Jahangirnagar, that to me is verging on greatness, not there but it's verging on it.

Interviewer: As the first architect of Bangladesh, do you think he had a role to play, in setting a standard for the coming generation to follow, keeping in mind the socioeconomic condition under which he had to work that made things more complex.

ST: Yes, of course. That was the problem. He expended a lot of time on things other than architecture. Thus his problem with Kahn. He spent a huge amount of intelligent capital on things non-architectural. If you were to put that on even working in theory of aesthetics, visual theory even, his work could have been better. Which begins again to show in his work in Jahangirnagar. The library, good building, not a great building. Clearly made with Corbusian influence. Chittagong University, ok, not great. Did he have it in him to become a great architect? Yes, he did but he didn't put enough time into it. He wasted a lot of it in politics. Politics is just full of bullshit.

Interviewer: Do you remember meeting any artists in his time?

ST: No, not any that I remember. But I know he was a supporter. I may have met a couple of weavers. People that did tapestries. But nothing stands out in my mind. What does stand out in my mind, was Islam focusing on housing for the poor, Worker's housing. Doing something for the poor, as he referred to, his country's people, my people was how he referred to them. By the way, I understand all of that, I do, but as an architect, I would say he could have been better. He was burdened by not just his time, but other international architects weren't burdened with it, that is he was the father of architecture in South East Asia so he always felt a huge responsibility to his people, to the next generation. Having said that, he was really shitty to the younger generation. I mean he was nasty; I have seen this! He was nasty with his workers as well as his students. I saw him in juries, he was vicious. Very unforgiving, and that is just a euphemism. He was especially ruthless to student who didn't have the social welfare of his people in his mind through in the vehicle of his or her work, he was ruthless with them. So it was no surprise that they turned their back on him. That first generation of younger architects because they thought he was a crazy, ranting person. But that fact in there was he had his obligation, that weighted in on him like anything. And he did that by becoming a role model. There is no question. The best thing that ever happened to the young generation of architects in Bangladesh was Muzharul Islam. Without him, there wouldn't have been a standard that a native born architect could claim as sufficient to garner the discussion of people around the world.

Interviewer: What is interesting is that it took almost thirty years, for architects to really appreciate his work. The generation now absolutely love his work and value it a lot, that this is one person who tried to do something. He stood apart in stark contrast from all the other architect of that time who created rather crappy works. We own him a lot for what he was done for our country.

ST: You do! In fact, one of the favorite sons of that time, of East Pakistan was Fazlur Khan, the structural engineer. As a structural engineer he was terrific. I knew him very well. But even he didn't have anywhere near the love of his people as Islam did. So for example, because Fazlur Khan was a partner in Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, you know they had a Jewish Partner, they had a woman partner and now they had a Muslim partner. So he felt the obligation to get them work in some city in East Pakistan. But instead of partnering up with Islam, who in my opinion was the only capable architect of that time, they tried working with other crappy architects. Islam was the only genuine architect of that time, the others were all commercial rip offs. Because they were all taught by those crappy Texans, who were by definition racists. My first trip to Dhaka was with Paul Rudolph. The second night we were there, there was a party at the governor of East Pakistan's mansion, whose son was trained in either Oxford or Cambridge, he was a snotty person, but the people from Texas were there, Dick Roman and all those guys. They did not bother at all with Muzharul Islam because he was dark skinned, they were shit! They were just crappy racist people, so Islam had no use for them.

Interviewer: I think happened was, the reason I spent so many years with Muzharul Islam, looking after his work and then his twelve books that are on their way, books on his selected drawings. Those are very important because they speak about his thoughts, since he didn't generate any architectural philosophy as such, and he didn't really put down a theory against which it worked, but the beautiful drawings he had of the buildings that he brought forward held the ideas or the values system which gives us kind of a direction.

ST: It does so now but when he first came back, in other words, his personality grated against people who would have otherwise appreciated it. Secondly, in this period, if you are not a poet in your own home town, I mean he was too close to them and so they never realized that he was a terrific architect. Yes, I mean Islam suffered, and in the end of his life, the last ten years of his life were crap because he died before they could really express their appreciation of his work.

Interviewer: So what made him bring people like Kahn, Rudolph, to Bangladesh to do various projects?

ST: So there this very interesting story I have. One day, I'm flying into Dhaka, and I'm looking out the window and around the old Dhaka's area, I see this fabulous checker board sort of place there, like courtyard and house checker board. So after I arrived, I asked Islam what that was he said was the housing by Constantine Doxiadis. So I told him want to see them. So I went to see them. Since Doxiadis was a fool, he didn't really bother to understand about the people's culture, micro climate there, the religion and all that, so when he designed it he does this thing, where the courtyard and the building is one to one ratio, so that in the first placed was stupid since it didn't allow for wind to come through into the buildings. Then he puts the squatting slabs and the kitchen on the windward side of the building so the place stinks. So you know in this country you get away with that because the people are scared of their shadows. But in Dhaka what those poor people did was they changed it. They ripped

that walls on the squatting slabs down and put them on the other side, the walls that were forcing the wind not to go in were all brought down. They turned it into a ruin. When I saw that, I couldn't believe it. Islam and I have had a lot of such experiences.

Interviewer: What is interesting is that he was someone wanted to build this country but he did not shut himself in and wanted to bring in others into the scene so that they could leave behind exemplary building for the coming generations to follow.

ST: Yes, to a degree. He brings them in but he never did listen to them. I mean it took twenty years of my life to make him listen to try and develop a theoretical position in his work and ultimately he did, to a degree. But did he listen, generally, no.

Islam was uncompromising. He was a highly principled. Now to come back to Ara, being married to that was not so easy. But she loved him. You know I always think of her, in that movie about Gandhi, there is a moment where Gandhi and his wife were trying to explain to this younger foreign journalist, how they met and when they got married, and they were Hindu but I always think of Muza Bhaia and Ara as them, when he explains that in the Hindu rituals of marriage the woman circles the male while he recites certain things he wants her to do and she always agrees because he is her guru. And I see the two of them like Muz and Ara. She absolutely worshipped him. She had to love him. He was away for so long. First at Oregon then at Yale and he got that Fulbright and travelled around the world. Our interaction at Yale started when I took his side in one of the arguments he had with this South African idiot. He was treating him as if he was a black.

I miss Islam. He was sort of my conscience, to some degree. At a behavioral, sociologically speaking, humanistically speaking, he was my conscience. Although he was sort of my generation, he was around 7 years older than me, he became one of the people who influenced me. Amongst Mies Vander, Paul Rudolph, John Haddock. As a person he was exceptional.

Interview of Shamsul Wares taken by Nurur Rahman Khan

Q: Could you talk a bit about your time with Muzharul Islam? Who were his friends? We heard people from Udichi used to come visit him and practice there. What are your observations of the time during which you used to work with him? Who were his friends and why do think he remained friends with them? What did he look for and liked in a person?

A: To talk about that I would have to go back in time to his background. Muzharul Islam studied in Calcutta's Shivpur University where he studied, civil engineering. He studied under Bengal School of engineering. Bengal college of Shivpur under the university of Calcutta. He was very good at drawing. His faculties always used to praise him for his drawings. It can be inferred from this that he always had an artistic cognizance. He was not studying architecture then, though. There were not any institutes teaching architecture then around the whole of East Bengal. His father was a professor of Mathematics in Rajshahi college. His father's name was Omdatul Islam. His colleagues included the likes of Shauquat Usman. Therefore, through his father, Muzharul Islam had contact with Shauquat Usman. At that time, Mr. Usman was already quite prominent in Bengali Literature and Poetry. You see, even though his father was a Mathematician, he was good friends with a poet, so you can see that he was drawn towards the arts. Another point is, during his time in Rajshahi, he did his schooling in Shundorpur, which is his maternal hometown, a village in Murshidabaad. During that time, he was very interested in watching the pottery artisans working on their crafts. He often used to visit their work places and observe their works. This shows that from a very young age he was quite interested in such arts and materials. Another interesting fact about him he never came to Dhaka that time. His home was then in Chittagong, his father worked in Rajshahi and before that in Murshidabad. His father got his marriage proposal while he was working in Murshidabad. Therefore, even though he was from Chittagong he married into a family in Murshidabad. What I find of importance is that even though Muzharul Islam was in from Chittagong and thus was exposed to their language, as well as the language of Shantipuri. He was exposed to two different dialects of the same language, one a crude dialect and the other more refined. Even though now-a-days we do not take one as inferior over the other, still he chose to communicate through the more refined language. It was a deliberate choice. I have never heard him speak in the dialect of Chittagong, even when he spoke in anger. Even though his hometown was in Chittagong, he spoke in the dialect of Murshidabaad. The west Bengal dialect of Calcutta. Therefore, what is important to notice here in his deliberate choice of using refined language over the crude one is that he strove to do things in a refined and organised way. This decision of choosing the better one from very young age showed his strive towards refined things.

The Rajshahi Museum used to be much enriched at the time when he was in Rajshahi, so he was exposed to that sort of heritage and art. He used to attend college there from where he acquired BSC degree, after which he was admitted into Shivpur's Bengal School of Engineering. However, he was delayed for a year due to some political disturbance due to some sort of Revolution against British Rule in 1942, due to which the college was closed for 3 or 4 months. During that same time, Rabindranath has passed away, and Muzharul Islam around that time has gone to Calcutta and was probably part of the procession that was led during his funeral passage. That is probably why he had an influence of Tagore on him since he was exposed too much of

that culture. This influence was prevalent him due to the fact that he was more inclined towards Shivpur and later on passed a lot of time in Calcutta both places which had a lot of Influence of Tagore. Moreover, he mingled with many influential people from various backgrounds and countries in Engineering college, which further added to his cosmopolitan outlook towards things. Calcutta that time was a very cosmopolitan city. Then in 1946, he got married to a maternal cousin of his. So again, his ties to west Bengal got stronger from this marriage. Then in 1947, he came to Dhaka and joined CBNI, which is now PWD. He worked there in the building department as an assistant engineer. When he came to Dhaka. He used to live in a government housing in Bailey Road. During that period, there were not many houses in Dhaka. He was given a small house in Bailey Road by the government. Around that period, August 1947, a huge amount of people migrated into that area, the both west and east Bengal Muslims all migrated into Dhaka before 14th August. All the government officials who were Muslims migrated from west to east Bengal. So to accommodate this surge of people, a lot of crude housing made of tin sheds, thatch and such materials. There was a barrack in Nilkhet, quite similar to the Polashi Barrack. All the government officials had to be accommodate into those since there was no other way out. During that, time there was a lot of enthusiasm towards an Independent Bangladesh. Therefore, a lot of work was going towards that movement. It was during Muzharul Islam's time was the prime time of the revolution against the British he was in the midst of the revolution. During that time, there was such a huge surge of educated people migrating into the country. Suddenly there was an urgent need for more housing. Around that time, we had two British architects, McConnell and Higgs. They came over to Dhaka in 1947 too along with the others. McConnell joined as the chief architect until 1971. He used to drink a lot and was not that productive. McConnell's boss was Higgs. Higgs was more productive however; his contract was not renewed for some issues after two years after which he left. He was the one who designed the master plan, which we knew of as the Dhaka Plan around 1948 and 1949, mainly the master plan for Azimpur and Motijheel. British architects designed all the design for Holy Family Hospital, New Market, and Gulistan Cinema Hall. Higgs did some of and then had to leave after which McConnell took over the responsibilities of the design. During this time, Muzharul Islam acquired a scholarship from Calcutta while working as an assistant engineer. The scholarship was study architecture in Oregon. However, his scholarship was delayed because of the partition. Therefore, in 1950, he left for Oregon and during that time, there was not much work that was being done in Dhaka. He completed his studies in Oregon and returned in 1953. When he returned, McConnell was the chief architect and he gave him two major works, The National Library and The Art College. He had a good relation two faculties of his from Oregon. One was Philip Ross who thought History of Architecture. One thing he told me that he learnt from the History class is that in every country's history, development came from working on the cultural and heritage aspects of the country. This concept was very well endowed in him. That just transferring knowledge from one place to another will not work. It is important to go back to your roots and working with one's culture and heritage and develop on that basis. His design teacher was Professor Hayden, who taught him how to rationally deal with design. After that, he returned to Bangladesh and worked on the two projects, which had Corbusier influence like pilotes and flat plate and lightweight buildings. I think what western influence he had were of Bauhaus, Corbusier, Mondrian and De Staël. Mainly he worked with straight lines and composition. He also took meticulous care towards material, knowledge he acquired from his time in Oregon. Previously, in all the British designed works, plaster was

used but in the works of Muzharul Islam, like in the Art College, he used red bricks and wood. This showed care taken towards material. These two works brought about the modern art movement in this country. About the other works done by the British architects, I have found in their history that it was influenced from a movement of that time called the Art Deco. It was a movement of that time originating in France, in 1935 and was largely accepted by the British designers. So if you notice the design of the New Market it is a simple building with no decoration, if orientation, circulation or ventilation. Muzharul Islam on the other hand took meticulous care about these factors in works. This is why we consider Muzharul Islam's work as modern and not the one's before that since it was Art Deco.

The concept of Art Deco was formulated in Bombay. The JJ School of Art was a follower of Art Deco. There was an English teacher there by the name of Cloth Batley and Percy Brown. Lockwood Kipling, Rudyard Kipling's father used to teach there too. They taught in JJ School, in Lahore and in Calcutta. JJ School of Art started the architecture school in 1936. Doshi studied there too as well as Kanvinde. Kanvinde later went to Harvard and Doshi went on to work with Corbusier since he had also worked in the Chandigarh project with him.

After Muzharul Islam came back to Bangladesh from Oregon, one of the biggest influence in his work and methodologies was his pride that he was a Bengali. He was strongly proud of the fact that he was Bengali. He always used to say, "I am Bengali" in aspects of his life. What is different in his pride was that other patriotic people say "We love Bangladesh" but that was not the case with Muzharul Islam, he was proud of the fact that he was Bengali. This fierce pride started in him especially after 1972 after the Independence War. It is after that he started to the national attire of the country, before that he used to wear western clothing. His concept was if I am Bengali then why should I wear western cloths, it is contradictory. Naturally, from that pride becomes more interested in Bengali literature, music and arts. It is important notice that this not because he loved Bangladesh but because he was a proud Bengali. Not Bihari but Bangali. That time many high class Muslim Bengalis used to prefer speaking Urdu or have an Urdu dialect in their spoken Bengali but Muzharul Islam deliberately steered clear from that and that shows in his deliberate used of Shantipuri dialect of Bengali. He would not easily compromise in situations where a Bengali would give in and speak in Urdu with a Pakistani. That was one of his identities.

Another factor was Thariyani; who had taken over most of the government works, all the works that you see along the Motijheel road. None of it was Muzharul Islam's. Somehow, Thariyani won over the government officials and took over all the works. Therefore, most of those works were not that up to the mark, which all influenced by the Art Deco movement. He also did Baitul Mukarram. All in the Art Deco form. Bombay was a great influence of Art Deco and they are still very proud of it and want to keep the movement strong, which would not be a good movement for us, in our modern movement. Another place where there is a lot of Art Deco work is in Miami, where the British somehow managed to influence the movement there. In Dhaka, Thariyani managed to take over most of the government projects. He was a graduate from the JJ school of arts with a three-year diploma in architecture. In that time, we did not have a five-year course and JJ school was the only school in the whole of India that offered a degree in Architecture. Although he identified as a Pakistani he was a Gujrati. He came here, then East Pakistan, and worked. He had gotten the most work here in Dhaka. He did Baitul Mukarram, Shilpokala Academy, the previous design with the round building, DIT building. All the buildings in Motijheel, around 50 residences. In fact, his office used to be in this same plot as my house! It was a two

story, neatly designed building then. It was an elevated building with the ground floor floating, to stop the damp from creeping in. The engineer for the building was Mokbullur Rahman, who was a bit senior to Muzharul Islam. Since Thariyani was a discipline of JJ School, which emphasized on Art Deco. All his designs showed that form of influence. The problem with Art Deco is it is not completely decorative neither is it completely art. It is somewhere in between. There is no definite classical, gothic, or any other major style to the designs. Three countries in the world have seen a major outbreak of art deco - Miami, Mumbai and Manila.

It is a bit curious how this style reached Miami, but somehow probably they bought it all. Like how New York city was done by, of all the people, the Dutch. You will find it in Rem Koolhaas' book *Delirious New York*, that the Dutch had bought all the working rights from them for a very cheap price. Anyways, coming back to Thariyani, he came to Bangladesh and acquired all the non-Bengali works like Nabisco, Tibet, Ispahani and Adamjee. Then he started acquiring government projects by bribing and this way he acquired a lot of work. In fact, he was one of the first people to induce corruption in the government. Even now, it is next to impossible to acquire a government job without corruption. Which is why you seldom see any good architects working in government projects or offices. Ironically, during the Pakistan regime, all the famous architects like Louise I Kahn, Stanley Tigerman, and Paul Rudolph, all worked in government projects and excellent works were done that time. However, due to Thariyani's practices a lot of other firms started springing up, all bribing the government to acquire projects. Muzharul Islam never did this, which is why he had a problem with his partner Shahidullah who used take part in these corruptive ways. Everyone during that time paid huge amounts of money to acquire works. All government works are based on corruption now and the initiator of all this was Thariyani.

Another imprudent thing that was introduced by the Pakistanis in the Art Deco style was Islamization of the design. The biggest example of this is our Supreme Court building, which can be observed in the way "Islamic" arcs, and motifs were forcefully incorporated in a masonry building. You could call it "Islamized Art Deco" for want of a term. They did not produce much good works here and even back in Pakistan, too they did not produce much good works. In fact, they do not have any one like Muzharul Islam in Pakistan. In fact, the works that were produced by Muzharul Islam, around the 50s, was something that was new in the whole of the Asian subcontinent. Some works were although done by Kanvinde who was a bit senior, but Muzharul Islam did most works. Charles Correa and Doshi came later around the 60s. Doshi and Kanvinde designed many projects especially in Ahmedabad. Like ATIRA, a textile industry building, the carpenter's center then Louise I Kahn did the IIM building.

Back to Bangladesh, Muzharul Islam was against this whole concept of commercializing the Architecture practices with bribing and corruption. Which lead to his dislike of Biharis and Pakistanis because of their practice of exploiting the Bengalis and eventually his support for an independent Bangladesh. In one side, we had acquired a new land as east Pakistan but then came the issue of being over powered, ruled and exploited by the West Pakistan. In 1971, we were granted the independence and that is when the important works of Muzharul Islam were produced. During that time there was a lot of revolution for an independence and consequently the growing interest in Rabindric literature and Bengali culture had become more prominent, which obviously greatly influenced Muzharul Islam's works. Being exposed to this culture and literature like Satyajit Ray's works brought about more pride in him as a Bengali. Since he also lived for a long time in Calcutta plus his wife

was also from there so he had an affinity to the place. There came a time when we started to call this place East Bengal instead of east Pakistan. In a country strived for independence, Thariyani had laid out a monopoly of business. The volume of works he got was more than all works acquired by all the firms including Muzharul Islam's at that time. He had laid out a monopoly within a period of 10 to 15 years. Thariyani was not even originally west Pakistani. He was a Gujrati who later migrated there as a Muhajir. Gujratis are very business minded. Even Doshi is a Gujrati. He owns one of the most expensive diamond business to date. They are sort of like the Jews of India. Gujrati, Marwari and Farsi people are considered the Jews of Indian in the business sense. Even now Farsi in India own most of the money in the economy.

So to put things in perspective, Muzharul Islam's mind-set was formed from Calcutta, Rajshahi and later when he migrated into Dhaka during independence. His interaction with highly educated engineers and scholars like Shafiuddin, Quamrul Hassan who also migrated from Calcutta that time, help in solidifying this mind. He was especially close with Quamrul Hassam. They felt a close bond due to their similar trail of thoughts. He was close with prominent poets of that that time like Sikander Abu Zafar and Sanaul Haq.

Muzharul Islam also liked playing cards. His main partners were Haq, Zafar and Mirana Zaman's husband. My problem was I was an employee at his firm and I used to leave right on the dot at 5 in the evening! All these social all these gatherings happened after that. So after 5 he used to socialise, do some reading or work on his own and then meet us again the next day in the morning at 9. I did not see much but I remember seeing Quamrul Hassan coming a lot and later Rashid Chowdhury started coming a lot. Shawquat Usman and Professor Rabbi, who was a very prominent doctor at that time, used to come too. In the political circle, Chayanaut's Wahid ul Haq used to visit him a lot along with his wife Sanjida Khatun. Kabir Chowdhury used to come to along with the editor of *Shongbad*, Khairul Kabir and Ahmedul Kabir. They were a bit of a leftist. Moni Singh, Farhad from the Bangladesh Communist Party used to visit him too. However, Muzharul Islam was not in Bangladesh Communist Party. He was in Mozaffur NAP, he was a treasurer there. He got introduced to Mozaffur NAP since he was extreme Marxist and Leninist which appealed to Muzharul Islam. Over all a lot of people who came over from west Bengal used to visit him a lot due to their connection.

Q: He used to patronize Udichi and other such groups, what is interesting here is how did he become the centre of all this? Even though he did not much visit, them but everyone else used to make his home the hub. Why was do you think this is?

A: During that time most the economy and money was in the hands of the Biharis and West Pakistanis, Bengalis did not have much money. This exploitation is what brought about the revolution. Muzharul Islam was one of the few people who was oriented towards the art culture and he had some sort of income. In those days, earnings were low but sufficient. So he used to patronize as much as he could. Whenever anyone came for help, he used to help as much as he could. The reason why he became the center is because he had a lovely backyard and lawn and his house was quite large so it was a good place for like-minded people to hangout. That time most of the artist people used to live shabbily so in contrast to that his house in Poribagh was decent, clean and very welcoming. He used to serve casual refreshments to like tea, biscuit

and muri-chanachur, never anything fancy. If fancy food was needed, then he would serve a white roshogulla and nimki. This was a tradition of Calcutta. Even now if you go to Calcutta and are served a white roshogulla and nimki it a sign that you have been entertained a lot. If you visit Anisuzzaman's house, he is from Calcutta too, you will be served such a meal. Muzharul Islam did not have much connection with him thought, mainly because Anisuzzaman was a bit self-centered in organizing his works whereas Muzharul Islam was more social and preferred working in groups.

Q: Lastly, I would like you to name 3 people in the Literature field, Music field and Art field, who were very close friends with Muzharul Islam.

A: In literature, it would be Sikander Abu Zafar, Sanaul Haq and Sawquat Usman. In Art it would be Quamrul Hassan, Rashid Chowdhury and Aminul Islam. He had a relation with Zainul Abedin but it was not that close because he did not consider him that modern. That was the problem of students of Bengal School. Even though they had exceptional artist, they were not that modern. So if closely examine his work it was not that modern. He was extremely good at sketches and used to produce fantastic works. Mustafa Monwar was another artist who was exceptional in watercolor paintings.

Muzharul Islam did not bond as well with Zainul Abedin, probably during the construction of the art college. Probably Zainul Abedin wanted more traditional huts, decorations and pitched roofs. What I understand is Zainul Abedin was purely Bangali, from his roots. Bengal School was completely and deeply rooted on Bengali culture and had works of Jamini Ray. They were greatly inspired by Rajasthani paintings, Kalighat paintings and Moghul Miniature. They deliberately tried to keep their art different from the western culture. They consciously left out the western influence in art, which stopped their painting from becoming modern. Even though they did create something that was different in the Indian Subcontinent, it was not modern. So since Zainul Abedin graduated from that school and was a teacher there, his work prominently showed that style. It was then Calcutta Government Art College. From there he left then started another school, first in old town in Alauddin then in Shegun Bagicha followed by the Art College with Muzharul Islam in 1956. However, I think Muzharul Islam did not have a good chemistry with Zainul Abedin. He had a good bond with Qamrul Hassam though and I think it was due to their shared roots in Calcutta. As for Shafiuddin, he was a very reserved person who would not socialize with many people and even if he did it was mostly with Muzharul Islam.]

In the field of music, I would say Kalim Sharafi, Wahidul Haq and Sanjida. Mostly people from Chhayanaut used to visit him. Many prominent singers of that time used to visit him. However, they were not that intimate with them, as in intimate enough to play cards with them. Another factor would have been the intellectual match, which would be a bit of a disadvantage with the singers. Many would sing very well but would not have that much of an intellectual grasp on things.

Interview of Rafique Islam (Son of Muzharul Islam) taken by Nurur Rahman Khan

Q: What do you remember about Muzharul Islam and his politics?

A: Well, from the time I was a little kid, say about 7 or 8 years old and I recognized what politics was, because I think I had asked my mother or my father, either one of them, what is it all about they are screaming, every night that some friends come. This was at the time he was working for the government with the CNB, and McConnell was the chief architect. He (Muzharul Islam) was number two. He would go to work in the morning and come back and the evenings he would be with us. We would have a lot of fun, being with him, do all kinds of things, and play cards, this, and that. Then his friends who were my uncles and other people came in and usually talked politics. You know, by then the Bangla movement had already started, they had done in 1952, we were very little kids at the time, we did not know much, around 1956 and 1958, we began to understand however. Where our house was, at the third floor veranda, we could see the graveyard and on the 21st of February, all these people in white clothes and black armbands would come singing inside the graveyard. This one particular time my brother and myself, both had measles, so my mother was standing with my little brother, I was on my father's lap, and they were telling us what had happened. So I knew about this politics since I was maybe six years old, and through it I slowly I grew. He got involved much later, after he got into private practice, but before that, this was kind of a fun thing, because everyone used to know all the engineers around the place. Very nice people. They got educated about what politics was; what Bengalis should have and should not have and what the Pakistanis were doing, that it was not right, and that we had to have our rights back. That was my introduction to politics.

Q: So this was when he was working as an engineer for Bangladesh Government after which he went out and did his Bachelors, so when he was doing his Bachelors of Architecture, what was the situation in the family at that time?

A: Family was part of everything. It was regular. He would come in the evening and spend time with us. When he went to the states, we moved to Baily Road at that time. The government would not let him go, when he got the scholarship. However, he said, "No I am going to go, whether you like me or fire me or whatever you want to do, you do it." He told us that it would be difficult for us. He told that to my mother and she said it is ok. Thereafter, he went to do his Masters at Yale while the four of us lived in Baily Road and one of my mother's brothers used to come and stay with us. We were quite safe and Baily road was a nice place.

Q: So when he returned from the States, was there any change in his political orientation. The reason why I ask this is because, we feel that his left wing politics was, instigated from his education in Calcutta, since Calcutta at that time very left wing as were the intellectuals of that time. So maybe his strong inclination towards the left was from his time in Calcutta, which had a strong impact on him. However, after his return from the States, he had lost his fascination towards Russia; at least that is what some people would think. What would you think about this thought?

A: No, that is not true. His thing about Marx and Lennon's doctrines and about Russia remained with him even after he returned from the States. What had happened after he came back though was he established that thought. He left the government and established that on his own. I think when he was on his own, he was a little freer to say or do things. Then people like Professor Muzaffar started coming to him and sitting and talking with him and they would become very good friends. Therefore, there was some influences from them also. However, his idea on planning Bangladesh was always there and I think eventually when the Sheikh came, after '71, for a particular period, he planned things with the Sheikh like the Adorsho Graam. When the Sheikh was murdered, he was actually in Russia, because he had severed the government and Sheikh said he will take care of things here and that he had to go get treated in Russia. However, when he heard about the Sheikh, he could not stay there anymore. He had to come back. However, he left Russia and went to England instead of coming back because he had been informed that his name was also in the list along with my younger brother. So my younger brother was somehow smuggled out by my uncle to Calcutta, Delhi and then to London. Therefore, my father went to London to meet my brother and so did my mother. Then he came to Chicago to see me, I was quite surprised. He stayed with for two weeks or so. However, this the first time in my life I saw him lying in bed without a book. He was an avid reader; even if he went to the bathroom, he would take a book with him! We used to joke about it with him. You know at the dining table, none of us were allowed to bring anything but he would have a book and we used to ask our mother was this fair? It was a joke. Anyways, I had never seen him that quite in my life, ever. Then, he got up one day he said, "What is this? You are feeding me burger and all this?" So, I said, "what can I do? I don't know what to do." He said, "Come with me. Take me to a shop." I took him to a shop. He bought spices and everything. He came back and he taught me how to cook. I learnt how to cook and it was very simple and fun. Of course, after that we met Stanley and Dr F R Khan, he was alive then. We would get together and have a lot of fun. I used to call him Fazli Chacha. We used to have these serious table tennis matches between my father, Stanley, Dr Rahman and myself. It was a lot of fun. It was like a picnic.

Q: Talking about people he associated with, there is another thing that intrigued us was that the people he associated with, such as Shamsur Rahman, Kalim Sharafi, Zainul Abedin and Quamrul Hassan. All these people who used to set around in these tea parties and talk to each other, all of whom went on to be the best in their fields. So can you tell me a bit about these people who saw coming to your place often? Who were the main players? Who were these people who used to come and discuss issues?

A: All the top artists used to come around, Rafiq Chowdhury to Quamrul Hassan. Quamrul Hassan literally stayed in Paribagh. My father had an easel for him to come and paint, different kinds of paper, paint brushes, everything. He would come whistling in the afternoon or whenever and just paint. It was so much fun to watch. Zainul Abedin used to come to but he was more serious. I was more afraid of him. Nevertheless, Quamrul Chacha (uncle) and Rashid Chacha were very close. They would try to teach me things. "Not like this, like that. Let me show you how."

Q: Regarding from the literature world, who were the people who he used to meet?

A: Everyone used to come from the literary world. Samsur Rahman used to come. I cannot remember everyone's names though. However, even from the social side many people used to come. Like Sunal Haque, Mr Ahsan. They were all secretaries. All secretary level of people. They would all come it down, have a cup of tea and talk politics. They would come to talk politics. That is all they did, they were all slanted towards the leftist. They would have different opinions that each one would exchange.

Q: We heard that Kalim Sharafi used to have a close relationship with your father. Can you name other people from the music world who would meet your father?

A: From the music world, many people used to come. At one point of time, Chhayanaut had no place to go to, so he offered Vastukalabid. In the evenings, Vastukalabid used to become Chhayanaut. This was for almost two years. However, I do not remember much since I had left in 1969, so at that period I was not there. Between 1969 and 1971, many things had happened. Many strong political things had taken place at that time.

Q: Did you meet Kalim Sharafi ever?

A: Just the formal greetings.

Q: So as you said, one of their major discussion was politics, which would actually shape into; how do we fix our country, how do you take it forward, how do we free ourselves? One thing that always intrigued was; all these people had this attitude, that 'we have to move the country forward', 'we have to move its people forward'. They had this nation-building attitude within them. Eventually they did end up building the nation. I am sure when they were talking amongst themselves they did not know they would be the fathers of their fields. What do you think drove them into this attitude?

A: I think that started when we were part of Pakistan. Because you know how Pakistan was formed, firstly. Secondly, we got just little piece, we should have had a bigger area. Calcutta, Assam, Tripura, all of those should have been ours. They found a way not to give it to us. So this was a major thing, Pakistanis did not behave with us on an equal level. They thought we were second-class. This was a major issue, a major trigger where they treated you and looked down upon you. Which is why we could not accept when they said everything would be in Urdu and there will be no Bengali. Firstly, Bengali is such an old language besides so many different things.

Q: Do you remember any other people who used to come to your place since was the centre?

A: Everybody came. I do not remember the names of the sculptors but they used to come too. Vastukalabid was a hub of all artists and architects. It was a very strong magnetic pull for all the artists.

Q: Where did this cultural inclination come from?

A: I think we went into 100 of years of Bengali culture and where it was and comparing that with Pakistan. Pakistan helped us get in to a place. They were a target for us making it easy to do. Now if you look at it, it is very difficult to get Bengalis together. Everyone is spread out; the ideas are so spread out. People are separated by money, class, politics, everything. There used to be a time when Bengalis used to get the boot for everything. You know we were not taken into the army, air force, navy because they thought we were small workers until the 1965 war.

Q: When I was having a talk with Shahidullah (Partner of Murharul Islam in Vastukalabid), he has said that Muzharul Islam's main difference in his works was his priority towards focusing on the nation. Architecture was later, the country and the nation should come first. For many people it was hard to understand. However, you were I closed quarters, you must have experienced his passion for this culture and revolution and his love for this country. Could you frame that for me?

A: Yes. In this matter, I would like to tell you about a question I always had. I had asked Stanley Tigerman this too; "What is architecture? How do you define it?" Because we study everything, which is why when Mr. Islam is thinking about architecture, he is thinking about the country. When he is thinking about the country, he is also thinking about architecture. Therefore, from a small dot to the whole country, he is thinking how to organize everything including the people. There have been ideas thrown around recently because there 7 billion people in the world there are going to be 8 billion in the future, so there was a proposal, and I won't name the big guys who said it, they said get rid of 5 billion people! That is not a solution! That is totally a laughable idea. Now when you think Bangladesh can hold 50 million people, we have 160 million people, which means Bangladesh is layered three times. Hence, you must try planning like that. You must try telling the people that enough food is not there. You must try to give them housing, give them a place to live, give them work, give them all of that. It is a very long story but everything can be organised. Engineers, architects, doctors, everybody should sit together and do this together. He has been this for a long time. We have so many rivers but we are allowing India to shut this river, to shut that river, whimsically I will not give any more water, the West Indian minister says. Now that is ridiculous. Now this kind of politics comes into this. If the people have come together, if they were educated, they would understand, they would stand up for it, and so would the government. So I think when you think about the country, when he was thinking about it, he was also thinking about architecture, how the buildings should be, which place it is in, which part of the country it is in, how it relates to everything else and we have floods, north souths, we have rain. All this goes into consideration. Therefore, when you are thinking politics, being an architect, it is automatically at the back of your head when you are designing. Politics becomes a part of architecture in that sense. It is sort of a hidden thing within the building, that when you look into the building you see the politics in it. You see how the country is. You see how different it is from any other building in another country. Automatically, you do not try to do it. It just comes out. Therefore, I think this is what he thought about most of the time.

Q: One thing I always wanted to know is, what was his connection with the communist party?

A: I really do not know. He was really close to Moni Singh, which is all I know, as far the communist party goes. He supported them, but he was more of a socialist. He was never really, outright left or outright right. He was somewhere in the middle. He was more of a socialist in that sense, which is why he was with Professor Muzaffar. They always had an argument; the discussion always went back and forth, about what is Socialism actually, how it would develop. As you know, the big people in the world have been trying to write about it, think about it and do all this. So this went back and forth with them. Moni Singh was something part of that and I remember times when they were close friends because during the time of martial law, I remember they would come to our house at about eleven or twelve at night, they would sleep, eat, hide. Then he would feed them, give them some money to survive because they were hiding, they were underground. Both Muzaffar and Moni Singh. He also knew Bhasani. But that is about all I know. They had a lot of discussions and talks. But Moni Singh was close enough that I think the last house he did, that is before yours, it was a clinic, that Mr. Shahidullah came with some drawings and said Moni Singh's son wanted him to do that. So he did that. About the politics I do not know but about their relationship I know they were very close. He always talked Moni Singh as a decent person and everything else. And of course Professor Muzaffar was a very close friend.

Q: During the war, you had against his knowledge crept into Bangladesh at that time from India, we have heard that story. So what was the situation of your family during that time? How did you get involved in the freedom fight?

A: It's a long story but I will try to make it short. I was working for Stanley at that time, so when I walked into Stanley's office on the 26th morning, everybody read the newspaper. So I very jokingly said, "What is this? Is this the newspaper time?". I hadn't seen anything, I didn't know. Everybody turned around and looked at me, there were about twenty people and Stanley was in the corner and the way they looked at me, I was like something was wrong. What is wrong? They didn't say anything. Then Stanley called me over and asked me to sit down and showed me. I was in shock at that time. We didn't know what to do. Stanley asked me to come to the conference room and we sat there and we decided to call Mr. Fazlur Rahman. We told them this has happened; we need to do something immediately. He said to go to his house that evening and we will figure something out. We decided to form a Bangladesh Association and that was first day we made and the Association and decided how to raise money and then send help to Bangladesh. I had no idea where my father was. I had gone absolutely nuts. No telephone or anything. I didn't know if they were alive or dead. So, after sometime, we met a few times and then we started gathering people and the association actually took place and I told Stanley that I have to find my parents. I have to know whether my family is dead or alive. They said you are in the middle on the semester. I said I don't care. I have to go. We have been waiting for this war for a long time. This is my fight. And I did fight. I did all these postering in 1967 when the Sheikh was in jail, all-nighters you know. Blocking roads, putting up blockades, so I was very involved politically at that time. Eventually, I decided, I told Fazli Chacha that I would take pictures and send them here to Chicago so they can publish it to the world, so let me go. They said how will you go? You don't have anything. So I called around and found the embassy in New York, and they said they would interview me, I had a Pakistani passport. So I flew to New York and I went to them

and they gave me Bangladeshi passport which was a sheet of paper with my name on it and which said Bangladesh passport. They said you can get into India with this. So against all my school people nobody would let me go. They said are you crazy? Everybody is coming out and you are going in to war? I said I have got to go. This is my fight. I have to find my parents and fight for the country. So I flew into Calcutta and I found my parents. I found my father, mother and sister in an uncle's house, where I went to from the airport, they were there. Everybody was shocked, they were like, what are you doing here? I said trying to find you guys! Then after that for some time for two or three months they wouldn't let me go to war, of course they just found me they won't let me go, because Tana, my younger brother was already in Sylhet fighting. He was with Shafayet Jamil. Then accidentally, one of my uncles came from the war, he was an engineer but he had joined in and he came and he said what are you doing here? I said waiting for somebody to come and take me to war. He said come on I will take you. He convinced my parents, that everything is safe and to let me go. So I joined Captain Huda. After about a week or two three days, I don't remember, the Indian Authorities sent out an arrest for me. They were looking for me because they knew I had a Pakistani passport. So they thought I was a spy. They sent one of my cousins saying if you don't come back we will arrest your parents and put them in jail. So I said ok, I told Captain Huda, I have to do this and then I will come back. He said don't worry about it. Two of my cousins are here they will replace me. I went back to Calcutta and of course had a thing with the Police Chief. Eventually we found out that the Police Chief was from Mymensingh so he is taking it out on us. My father asked what have we done. He said no one in the family has a passport, at least he has one. You are arresting the wrong person. So they first put me on house arrest then they said I cannot get out of Calcutta. Then eventually they let me go. My brother was fighting at that time. My uncle actually found him at the command hospital, flat with the floor, he was that sick. He had blood dysentery. They saved him. He is alive still.

Q: So you and your brother were fighting in the war. Your father was fine with it?

A: He really didn't want us to go, as a father. But he believed that we should participate in what he would have done if he had the choice. However, we survived through it. I think when the first war took place, in Chikurgacha I think, was the first to get attacked, with the sabres, FAT680s. three of the sabres were dropped by the Indian Minks. So my uncle said you can come now, it's free. So my father said I'll go with you, I want to see. So Major Salahuddin, two other guys, my father and myself went off in a jeep and on the way we met people. They were changing, in the sense the Indian para troopers had dropped into the war zone and they were coming out and Gurkha was going in. so they were changing and the Pakistani soldiers had drawn all the way to Khulna. We could hear all the shooting going on. Since all the bridges were torn down, the Indians built pontoon bridges. So we crossed over that and I found that my headquarters was in Jessore circuit house. So everybody was happy to see everybody else. It was a happy moment to free the country. The feeling of putting your foot on the ground of your own country, is indescribable. I just can't tell you how it feels. It's incredible.

Q: People used to be totally scared of your father in the office. What do you have to say about it?

A: That was very funny! Even he thought it was very funny. Everybody thought he was a tiger or something but you know he was a very soft guy. One time, a brand new draftsman came and he did a drawing. He finished his drawing sheet and he was standing in front of my father. So my father said, "Yes what can I do?". So he put the drawing in front of him. So my father looked at the drawing, the doors were all hatched and we don't hatch doors in the drawing. So he just asked "What is this?". The guy started shaking. My father looked at him, since he hadn't seen him yet and he said "What's wrong?" and the guy just started shaking! Then he called the peons and Kalam and by that time the guy fell down! He just passed out! So they had to feed him warm milk and put water on his head and wake him up. Eventually he went to the bathroom and then we couldn't find him because he ran away! He couldn't work here. That is the funniest incident. Yes, people used to be afraid of my father for whatever odd reasons.

Q: So the people who used to work for him, of those who are the people you remember the most?

A: Head draftsman, Mr. Kalam and Mr. Shafi. Among the architects, Wares bhai and Robiul. Some of the others were Architect Zahid, when he came back from Harvard, he came to work, there was no space there so my father said you work in my office and I used to watch him work because after I came back from work my job was to practice writing or if Rashid Chacha was there he would make me paint. So Zahid was very nice. I think he was part of the UFC building by the stadium.

Q: You are an architect yourself and you have worked with Muzharul Islam. If you were to choose one word for him, what word would you choose?

A: Architect

Q: And as a son?

A: A Father. I remember him from the time I was a little kid. He was always the same.

Q: Shahidullah said something very important that whoever really knew him, were all inspired by him. Everybody would be inspired by him. Among his parents, was there someone in the family who was like that? Was it something totally his own or was it was it something he found in someone else?

A: I have never seen my great grandparents but both my grandparents were soft people, so it wasn't them. That was himself. He was always like that. You know he would tell you to do things. Mostly he would ask you to read. He would show you things and he would ask you to read more. Sometimes he was difficult with me, in the sense I would feel stumped. I didn't know how to ask him things. If I asked him he would just say read! He'd be funny, he'd have a smile on his face and say go read! I never understood in what way he meant it. But as I grew up I understand that even when you're reading there are things that you pick up when you're thinking something. You don't just read, you read with a purpose then you find somethings when you read. If you don't understand then it is difficult but if you understand they its enjoyable and there are incredible things to learn from reading. I

understood that later on. So my father has always been good to me even the last few years when he was very sick and he wouldn't talk much. But as soon as I would enter the door, he would raise his hand and call me Rafiq! Rafiq! I would come and sit down with him. He would ask for me if anything had happened in the house. So we had a thing between us. But he was also reserved. He wouldn't have let out everything. Like I am open. I let the dam open but he didn't do that. He was very controlled. I think it was some people's thinking that letting everything out may not be appropriate. However, for his children, for us, he would do anything. He's really loved us.

Interview of S M Shahidullah (Partner of Muzharul Islam in ‘Vastukalabid’) taken by Nurur Rahman Khan

Mr. Muzharul Islam was more than an architect. He thought about the society, how to transform it and how to make it good for the nation as well as good for the society. This commitment was there from him all the way. He was not an architect in the ordinary sense, he was a social worker he was a thinker he was a politician in that sense, without politics you can't make changes in the society so that is why he is relevant in politics also. But his main goal was to improve the lives on people specially the aesthetic part, he wanted that people should not only earn a living but also should enjoy the life through cultural experiences. That is the way I found Mr. Muzharul Islam.

Q: You also did politics together. Can you shed some light on that?

A: Not together, sometimes opposite also but we shared our views and we sometimes took antagonistic views. Most of the times we shared our views, sometimes I opposed him but it was not a matter of principles but on practice.

Q: He was part of the communist party at one time. Can you talk about that time a bit?

A: In that sense, he was never part of the communist party rather he was friendly towards it, as far as I know. Neither was I. so it is a question of respecting each other's thoughts. That a party like communist party should devote itself to the uplifting of the society at the same time get sustenance of the society through new cultural experiences. To him culture was a part of living. Therefore, without culture, without sense of belonging to the society, that is a question of professionalism.

Q: When did he join Awami League?

A: He did not join Awami League but he thought Awami league could do some good and therefore he joined the Bangla Porishod. I am not aware or consulted, or I was not involved in such ventures but he of his own accord did his politics, only for uplifting the society, uplifting their lives and also for the good of the country. Whether that materialised or not that is another thing. Whether it coincided with their view or not is another matter.

Q: Initially he was very left wing. Was he active in any kind of political organization?

A: He was always a left wing person. He was active in the communist party; he was active in Awami League. So in that sense he was not a member of any of the parties but he wanted that through such involvement, he could do service to the society. That was his only goal.

Q: During the time when we were East Pakistan, there was a strong urge that he was saying that we have to build the nation. So can you name other people who used to be together, that all of you thought together to build the nation? Who were the people with whom he associated? We know about Qamrul Hassan and Zainul Abedin. Can you name others?

A: Yes, I can tell you, however apart from our artist Qamrul Hassan, we as a group with many members, like the late Mir Mostafa Ali, who was Ceramic Sculptor, then Dr. K. S. Murshid, he was with us too, and then Kalim Sharafi, however he was not there at a large extent. Nevertheless, whoever was there, were very prominent people, the ones who worked with us. All the progressive, leftist people were always with us.

Q: How did you first meet Muzharul Islam?

A: When I first met him, I was in a rickshaw and he was in his car. He hailed me and asked what I do. I told him that I am in contracting but it is failing. It has not made any profit. It is losing. Then he offered me to start an architecture consultancy firm with him, where he would be the architect and I would be the civil engineer with 60% share of his and 40% of mine. I agreed at once. That was a rickshaw versus car conversation. After that, we bought an office space, which went on to become Vastukalabid. Qamrul Hassan had christened the place. The office was situated in a quite building in Poribagh.

Q: So when he called you from his car, did he already know you?

A: People knew me that time as an engineer, so he knew that. He also understood the fact that I was not on the right track, I was groping in the darkness at that time. He wanted to use my talent for whatever reason in the correct path. He rather led me into the correct path. After joining him, I learnt many things especially about the wellbeing of the society. Prior to this I never really comprehended the nitty gritty details into fine-tuning the nuance of the society. I was enlightened about all this meeting him.

Q: When I met him, I noticed he was uncompromising with it came to the country. So can you tell me about his drive to mould the society, to create a Bengali culture since the time of East Pakistan? Where did his conflict with West Pakistan lie?

A: It was not a conflict. We just wanted liberty. We wanted freedom. That is a better way to put it. A party wants to plunder us and we wanted freedom from it. We wanted the nation's people to have freedom. Therefore, conflict does not figure out here. They were aggressors and we were freedom lovers.

Q: In their *cha er adda*, some of the participants were Kaleem Sharafi, Zainul Abedin, Samsur Rahman, or as we have heard. They use have Udichi practices. So could you talk about that time?

A: I remember Qamrul Hassan the most. However, during the starting of the Gas and Oil Committee to prevent plundering of natural resources, when I was more involved, he was not there much since he had aged. He was around 65. Through the Student Union we were able to patronize the students a lot.

Q: How much involved was he with literary people? Especially Samsur Rahman?

A: Not that they were very close or liked each other but apart from Samsur Rahman, he had good relations with other literary people. However, all were concentric around Qamrul Hassan. Muzharul Islam had good relation with the literary people who were friends with Qamrul Hassan. Since Qamrul Hassan was an artist, and the others weren't artist they were occupied with political manifestos, that is why Muzharul Islam didn't have much closeness with the politicians.

Q: Could you shed some light on *Adorsho Graam*?

A: He was very persistent with physical planning. Architecture was his main objective. He used to say that the villages should be planned to details where even how green and where the grass should be planned so that the whole country looks like a garden. So physical planning was very important for that. He wrote a lot on ministry of physical planning. He was of the notion that architecture had a limit. People can design where

they live and all but when you are designing a whole country then physical planning is necessary. That is why he emphasised on physical planning a lot.

Q: When he was doing the *Adorsho Graam* project, it was not completed since the Sheikh did not follow it through. What do you have to say about it?

A: Muzharul Islam's concept for the project was grand but if it was realizable or not was difficult for him to discern. Adorsho Graam itself, unless the socialist movement supports it, it is not doable. It cannot be done legally where there was no discussion of the lease agreement. In this project, many have plundered and been victim of plundering. In this scenario how can this project stand? Therefore, his concept was employing architecture to plan a physically sound Adorsho Graam. By itself, the Adorsho Graam cannot stand unless the social program supports it.

Q: When you both started the firm initially, what was first major work?

A: Professionally there were many major works. We had the universities' projects like the Jahangir University and Chittagong University. Apart from universities, we had the Polytechnics, which was a World Bank project. Muzharul Islam had a good rapport with World Bank. Therefore, World Bank had asked him to employ an American Architect to be assigned as the principal architect while designing the five Polytechnics. Hence, we got Stanley Tigerman, who was his classmate from Yale, to be the principal architect of the project. Muzharul Islam was the second architect and we, Vastukalabid were the professional assistant.

Q: Islam sir always used to say that the biggest irony in his life was his patron was Ayyub Khan. He gave him a lot of work.

A: yes, as you know Chittagong University was a work given by him. Ayyub Khan sanctioned many other works in Bangladesh to him. There are usually competitions for such works where Muzharul Islam's work was far superiors to others and hence he got the projects. Many times they employed architects from West Pakistan to do major works but it would not be up to the mark, in the other hand the works that happened in East Pakistan were all top notch works

Q: Can you mention some of the other architects who worked with him?

A: Shamsul Wares was one of them; he was a good architect. Then there was Robiul Hussain.

Q: You have worked with other architects too. What would you say sets Muzharul Islam apart from others?

A: I always say the Muzharul Islam was more than an architect. He always thought of the society. Physically plan was of utmost importance for him without which architecture would not be successful. Their own sphere limited other architects in this. That was the main difference, other architects were limited because they did not think of the interaction of their work with the society but Muzharul Islam always thought of the most intimate interactions.

Q: Both of you were very good friends at that time and eventually you leaned heavily on the left especially as you keep saying that the country is getting plundered, national assets are being destroyed. In fact, whenever there was a talk on resources you were there. Islam sir was also in lieu with you. Can talk a bit about that?

A: Yes, he was always in it with me but the difference between us was he always thought of things in a big scale. Big scale in the sense, we thought of oil and gas in the small scale but he thought water management and planning of the whole country. So, there lied our difference. We were limited in a small scope while he thought of larger scopes. However, towards the end he drifted way for whatever reasons.

Q: Can you recount with stories from when you both worked together?

A: It is very difficult to mention any specific memory since there are many. I was introduced to many people while working with him and that was a great experience for me. This would not have been possible if I was only professionally involved with him. So in that sense, I am grateful to MuzharulIslam for that. He took me in as a structural engineer and introduced me to the intellectual society, which I was not a part of before.

Q: For MuzharulIslam, Bengali nation was of prime importance. To the point, even though he studied abroad, he could not take in the fact that money would flow out from the country. What can you say about that?

A: He was an epitome of patriotism. Country was everything for him.

Q: Was National Archives and the universities conceived before or after Independence?

A: National Archives were made after the independence but the universities were made before.

Q: Before bringing in Louis I Kahn, Muzharul Islam had initially taken up partnership, probably, with a small French and British company to work on the Shongshod Bhaban. Do you remember who they were?

A: It was a small company but I do not remember their name. However, he always employed proper talents for the appropriate works. He brought in many foreign architects. He got Paul Rudolph to work on The Agriculture University. This exposed Bengali culture outside a lot and was a boom for Bangladesh. One main advantage of Muzharul Islam was that he knew many foreign architects and secretaries by name. Those days' secretaries were very powerful. This helped to bring in foreign architects more easily. In this sense, West Pakistan was very poor. This set us apart from West Pakistan because Muzharul Islam wanted there to be good works of architecture in Bangladesh and for that, we brought in the appropriate talent in the country. West Pakistan on the other hand were not keen on this aspect. Many people think that he was financially beneficent in these endeavours; on the contrary, he did not take a single penny in commission. He did it just for the betterment of the country.

Q: Muzharul Islam as a nation builder, why would do think he had this attitude of building the nation?

A: what mattered more than him being a nation builder was the fact that he was a society builder. He wanted the society to grow as a literary entity. That was his main plan, not nationalism in actuality. Hence, he always wanted people with talent to come to the country to build the knowledge base of the nation for which he handpicked these talents.

Q: How was your relation with his family?

A: Not that good. I say so because, his wife used think that the partnership between him and me was not reasonable, that I used to get more benefits. Muzharul Islam was a great person; he did not garner any grudges towards such matters. He took me in at my worst, when I was financially very weak, as a contractor I was failing; I was in a lot of problem. When we first started our firm, it was given its name, Vastukalabid, by Qamrul Hassan; there were three of us to in the beginning one of them, was wealthy while Muzharul Islam and I both were low on funds. His name was Azimuddin and he was my uncle in law too. However, in the beginning, Muzharul Islam and he were not on the same page but since he had the major funding, they both compromised. Eventually they became good friends. Eventually after three years, he was let go of since we were not in financial need anymore, all though doing this was not a good thing, which I will admit.

Q: When did you leave Vastukalabid?

A: I did not leave. Muzharul Islam made me leave. Actually when I went to jail in 1969 and was eventually released in 1971, during that time, Muzharul Islam and Stanley Tigerman visited me in jail and shad a letter signed by me, stating that I will not be a part of Vastukalabid anymore. I signed willingly thinking since I was not actively working, getting any share of whatever work they were doing was not fair. After I was released, I when back to Muzharul Islam asking to be taken back but he did not show any interest so I did not pursue it any further. So then, I went and started my own firm, Shahidullah SS. However, after I left was when his firm's down fall began. The reason for this was his working pace slowed down since he was alone. So most people were reluctant to go to him and came to me instead since I had more people and faster pace. Never the less, I never held any grudges against him and we had maintained a good relation. I always used to send many good works or more architecturally complex work to him because always remembered his talent and his earnest interest towards society.

Q: Would you like to add something about him?

A: Sure! Muzharul Islam was a great man, philosopher, and patriot. In fact, if there are people like him in society, that society will hardly ever deteriorate. Whenever he inspires a person, the values that are embedded once will never disappear. That was and still is my feeling. He was a great inspiratory.

Q: Describe Muzharul Islam in one word.

A: Great Philosopher.

Q: Do you think Muzharul Islam's background as an engineer had any affect in his works?

A: No. an architect who also thinks of the engineering part of the work can never succeed. It is not his job to calculate measurements of beams and all. His work is to ensure designs have good aesthetics. Therefore, that is why he never showed any influence of his engineering background.

Q: When you both were supporting leftist teachings, India that time was pro Soviet; did that influence you in any way?

A: No, I was more pro Chinese although Mr. Islam was pro Soviet I was pro Chinese in the sense Pro Soviet was more in line of take control of Bangladesh whereas the Chinese were in favour of giving us our complete freedom. At least that was my conception, although later that proved to be wrong.

10. Book List of the Library of Muzharul Islam

<i>Sl</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Author</i>
1	Socialist Realism and the Modern Literary Process	A. I. Ovcharenko
2	A New Certificate Chemistry	
3	A complete Course	Addison Wesley
4	Jibonjoyer Pothe - Part 2	Anton Makarenko
5	V.I. Lenin. Speeches at Party Congresses (1918-1922)	Lenin, Vladimir Il'ich
6	Jibonjoyer Pothe - Part 1	Anton Makarenko
7	Jibonjoyer Pothe - Part 3	Anton Makarenko
8	An American Rhetoric - Third Edition	William W. Watt
9	Students Words Worth - Part I	Muhammad Ismail
10	Bachte Sekha	Anton Makarenko
11	Political science made Easy	
12	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 1	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
13	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 2	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
14	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 3	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
15	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 4	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
16	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 12	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
17	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 15	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
18	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 14	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
19	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 13	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
20	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 11	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
21	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 10	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
22	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 5	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
23	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 6	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
24	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 7	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
25	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 8	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
26	Bangladesher shadhinota juddho Part 9	Ministry of Information Govt. of Bangladesh
27	Karl Marx frederick engels Collected works - Vol 7	Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx
28	Karl Marx frederick engels Collected works - Vol 3	Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx
29	The Poverty of Philosophy	Karl Marx
30	Lenin's Plan of Building Socialism	Dmitrii Mikhailovich Kukin

31	Agrarian Relations in the USSR	P. A. Ignatovsky
32	The Economy of the Soviet Union Today	T. Khachaturov
33	Arab Struggle for Economic Independence	Malumud Ata Alla
34	Arab Struggle for Economic Independence	Malumud Ata Alla
35	Arab Struggle for Economic Independence	Malumud Ata Alla
36	Arab Struggle for Economic Independence	Malumud Ata Alla
37	Industrialization of Developing Countries	
38	Industrialization of Developing Countries	
39	Socialist Long Term Economic Planning	V.N. Kirichenko
40	Outline history of the Soviet Working Class	A.I. (Eds.) Borisova, Y.S. Kotelents
41	The World Communist Movement	Zagladin
42	The World Communist Movement	Zagladin
43	The World Communist Movement	Zagladin
44	The World Communist Movement	Zagladin
45	Leninism and the World Revolutionary Working - Class Movement	Y. (A. Rumyantsev) (T. Timofeyev) Kushov
46	The USA and Western Europe	A. Kirsanov
47	V.I. Lenin. Against Revisionism	V.I. Lenin
48	Annals of Rural Bengal	W. W. Hunter
49		Graham Holderness
50	Bangladesher Samaj Biplobe Bangabandhur Darshan	
51	Bangladesher Samaj Biplobe Bangabandhur Darshan	
52	Anti-Dühring	Friedrich Engels
53	Dialectics of Nature	Friedrich Engels
54	Readings from Left to Right	Victor E. Amend, Leo T. Hendrick
55	ARTICLES from the Neue Rheinische Zeitung	Marx and Engels
56	The poverty of Philosophy	Marx
57	On the Paris Commune	Marx and Engels
58	On the Paris Commune	Marx and Engels
59	On Religion	Marx and Engels
60	On Colonialism	Marx and Engels
61	The Business Word Book- Spelling, Usage & Vocabulary Guide	John L. Dusseau, Sheila Sloane
62	On Literature and Art	Marx and Engels
63	The poverty of Philosophy	Marx
64	Bangladesher Samaj Biplobe Bangabandhur Darshan	
65	Against Right-Wing and Left-Wing Opportunism, Against Trotskyism	V.I. Lenin
66	The nearest neighbor is 170 km away	Dick Walda
67	V.I. Lenin Rachna Sankalan	V.I. Lenin
68	V.I. Lenin Rachna Sankalan	V.I. Lenin
69	Experience of CPSU: its World Significance	V.I. Lenin
70	Parting the Waters	Taylor Branch
71	An introduction to Statistics	Ideal Library Dhaka
72	Between the two Revolutions	V.I. Lenin

73	Karl Marx Capital Vol- I	Karl Marx
74	The national Liberation Movement in the East	V.I. Lenin
75	On the Unity of the International Communist Movement	V.I. Lenin
76	Karl Marx Capital Vol- II	Karl Marx
77	Karl Marx Capital Vol- III	Karl Marx
78	Theories of Surplus Value	Karl Marx
79	Theories of Surplus Value	Karl Marx
80	Bachte Sekha	Anton Makarenko
81	Lenin Selected Works Vol-3	
82	Lenin Selected Works Vol-2	
83	Lenin Selected Works	
84	Lenin Selected Works Vol-2	
85	Lenin Selected Works Vol-2	
86	Lenin Selected Works Vol-3	
87	Guided English	
88	Gothic Architecture	Penguin Books
89	Gothic Architecture	Penguin Books
90	The man-made world- Engineering Concepts Curriculum Project	McGraw-Hill
91	Inside Bengal Politics	
92	Government in Modern Society	
93	Sociology: Man in Society	Scott, Foresman
94	The Art and Architecture of China	Penguin Books
95	Art and Architecture in China 1600-1760	Penguin Books
96	Pregnancy, Birth & Family Planning	Alan F. Guttmacher
97	Lenin Selected Works Vol-3	
98	Lenin Selected Works Vol-3	
99	Lenin Selected Works Vol-3	
100	Lenin Selected Works Vol-2	
101	Lenin Selected Works Vol-2	
102	A history of English Literature	
103	Riders to the sea	
104	Architecture in Spain and Portugal	Penguin Books
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106	Essentials of Trigonometry	
107	Psychology Today	
108	Facts are Facts	Wali khan
109	The seven Lamps of Architecture	Ruskin
110		Alfred Neumeyer
111	Encyclopaedia of 20th Century Architecture	
112	Bulletin Rhode Island School of Design	
113	Vitruvius- The ten Books of Architecture	Dover
114	New Times	Bashtu Kalabid
115	New Times	Bashtu Kalabid
116	New Times	Bashtu Kalabid

117	New Times	Bashtu Kalabid
118	Moscow	
119		Fred Halliday
120	Antonio Gramsci- Selections from Political Writings	
121		Theodore Dreiser
122	A great Personality	
123	Gorky on Literature	
124	Bulgarian Co-Operative Farms	
125	On Trial Castro/Debray	Lorrimer
126	CUBA- Anatomy of Revolution	Huberman & Sweezy
127	Witness to Surrender	Siddik Salik
128	Only one Life to Live	Hazera Nazrul
129	DUTCH ARCHITECTURE AFTER 1900	R. Blijstra
130	People's Army, People's War	Vo Nguyen Giap
131	Bangladesher Itihas	
132	Bangladesher Genocide And World Press	
133	Bangladesher Jonoprotinidhittomulok Sarkarer Krombikas	Harun Or Rashid
134	The World of Art	
135	Personnel Second Edition	
136	The Hidden Dimension	Edward T. Hall
137	Concerning Architecture	
138	Designriti O Stapottodhara	Abu H. Imamuddin
139	A modern Theory of Architecture	Bruce Allsopp
140	Design with Nature	Ian L. McHarg
141	Archetypes in Architecture	Thomas Thiis Evensen
142	Conversations with Architects	John W. Cook, Heinrich Klotz
143	Foundations of Modern Art	Amédée Ozenfant
144	Kim Philby	Eleanor Philby
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148	Revolution in the Revolution	Régis Debray
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153	The Joke	Milan Kundera
154	On the Track of Unknown Animals	Bernard Heuvelmans
155	Mao's Betrayal	Wang Ming
156	Secret weapon in Africa	Oleg Ignatyev
157	The African Communist No 79 Fourth Quarter 1979	
158	US Neocolonialism in Africa	Stewart Smith
159	Southern Africa Stands Up	Burchett
160	Antarctica Ahoy	Juhan Smuul

161	History of the August Revolution	
162	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	
163	New States of W. Africa	Ken Post
164	Which way Africa?	Basil Davidson
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167	Geological Prospecting and Exploration	Vladimir M. Kreiter
168	Encyclopaedia of Modern Architecture	
169	Bangladesher Genocide And World Press	
170	Chorompotro	M. R. Akhtar Mukul
171	Utopia	
172	A textbook of Geology	
173	The State, Democracy and Legality in the USSR	V Chkhikvadze
174	A short history of the CPSU	
175	The soviet Worker	Vitaly Moyey, Anatoly Garanin
176	The soviet Worker	Vitaly Moyey, Anatoly Garanin
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178	The cruel birth of Bangladesh	Archer Blood
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196	Architecture and Design	Vastukalpa Dhaka
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210	Architecture and its Interpretation	Juan Pablo Bonta
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226	The Archeworks Papers Voll Number One	
227	The Archeworks Papers Voll Number Two	
228	Defining Decade	Harold Lee, Anne Biswas
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246	World of Islam	Paul Hamlyn
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249	Le Corbusier: The Machine and the Grand Design	Norma Evenson
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262	Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches	
263	Rajnaitik Bislesandhormi	Alhaj Sayed Abul Hossain
264	Spring 1971	
265	Liberation and Beyond- Indo Bangladesh Relations	J. N. Dixit
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267	Epic Stories in Terracotta	Nazimuddin Ahmed
268	Who's who in Bangladesh Art culture Literature	
269	Bangladesh Global Politics Vol 3	S. R Chakraborty
270	Bangladesh History and Culture Vol 4	S. R Chakraborty
271	A concise history of Modern Sculpture	
272	Life in America	
273	Life in America	
274	History of Bangladesh 1704-1971	Sirajul Islam
275	History of Bangladesh 1704-1972	Sirajul Islam
276	History of Bangladesh 1704-1973	Sirajul Islam
277	Dusho Cheshotti dine Swadhinota	Mohammad Nurul Kader
278	American Indian Art:Form and Tradition	
279	The gardens of Mughals	
280	Shaheed father William Evans	Harun Or Rashid
281	Bangladesh: Economic and Social Development Principles	
282	World Development Report 1985	
283	Bangladesh: Growth and Human Development	
284	World Development Report 1984	
285	Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa	
286	Proceedings of the united Nations Conference Vol5	
287	World Development Report 1982	
288	The World Bank Annual Report	
289	The World Bank Annual Report	
290	The World Bank Annual Report	
291	The World Bank Annual Report 1981	
292	The World Bank Annual Report 1980	
293	Violence in Society The formative years	

294	The Brutal Friendship	William Deakin
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300	Dialectical materialism Vol III	
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305	Communitas	
306	The Pale Horse	Agatha Christie
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308		Erle Stanley Gardner
309	And Why Not Every Man?	Herbert Aptheker
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311	Flow of external resources into Bangladesh	
312	Architect's Working Details 4	Susan Dawson
313	Architect's Working Details 5	Susan Dawson
314	Architect's Working Details 6	Susan Dawson
315	Architect's Working Details 7	Susan Dawson
316	Architect's Working Details 8	Susan Dawson
317	Architect's Working Details 9	Susan Dawson
318	Architect's Working Details 10	Susan Dawson
319	Architect's Working Details 11	Susan Dawson
320	Architect's Working Details 12	Susan Dawson
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327	Bangladesher Itihas	
328	Chitrokotha	Vinodbihari Mukherjee
329	Bangalir muktir Onnesa	
330	Tagore- A study	
331	Phantoms of Chittagong	Major Gen. S. S. Uban
332	Muktijodher BrittoBondhi Itihas	Shahriar Kabir
333	1971: Documents on Crimes against Humanity	
334	Bangabandhur Vason	
335	Bangladesh: Roktakto Adyay 1975-81	Shakhawat Hossain
336	Rajakar o dalal Ovijog e Greftarkritoder Talika	A.S.M. Shamsul Abedin
337	Shadhinota Sangram e Nababganj er Shaheed	Harun Or Rashid
338	Protirodher Prothom Prohor	

339	Islamabad	Abdul Karim
340	Juddher Arale Juddho	
341	Muktijodher Itihas Nababganj Anchal	Harun Or Rashid
342	Prottokhodoshir chokhe muktijuddho	Harun Habib Compilation
343	Ekattorer dalalera	
344	Amra sadhin holam	
345	Ondhokare Chondraloke	Matin Boiragi
346	Mahan Muktijuddho Brihottor	
347	The city Shaped	
348	Megastructure- Urban futures of the recent past	
349	The Architecture of Richard Neutra: From International Style to California Modern	Arthur Drexler, Thomas S. Hines, Richard Joseph Neutra
350	Hendelsohn	Arnold Whittick
351	R. Buckminster Fuller	John McHale
352	Handcrafted Doors and windows	Rowland
353	Alfieri 1965-1966	
354	The site	Richard Neutra
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359	International Development in a Changing World	Melissa Butcher
360	The resume of Building Construction & Management with C.P.M.	Siddiquee, Mohammed Ali.
361	Wittgenstein	Anthony Kenny
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