HELLO, I'M

Ananya Goyal

A UX designer with an architect's eye. I create digital experiences that feel as considered as the best physical spaces.

The Journey

From designing buildings to designing experiences

5 Years in Architecture

Designed residential, commercial, and institutional spaces. Learned to see how people actually move, behave, and feel.

Observing Behavior

Architecture taught me that good design is invisible. People shouldn't have to think about how to navigate a space.

The Pivot

Realized digital products need the same human-centered thinking. The screen is just another space to design.

UX Design Today

Now I bring spatial reasoning and design maturity to digital products. Same empathy, new medium.

"

Spaces and interfaces alike have the power to hold us — when designed with empathy, patience, and care.

— My design philosophy

Selected Work

Case studies from both worlds

Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath

Redesigned the museum experience with wayfinding, audio guides, and curated trails — making artworks accessible to every visitor.

WannaDOO!!

A behavior-design app that turns idle moments into micro-activities. Built around habit psychology to make small wins feel rewarding.

Holiday Homes

Conceptual holiday housing exploring low-rise residential units organized around landscape, emphasizing climate-responsive design and indoor–outdoor living.

Site Development

Site development and planning project focused on land use, circulation, and infrastructure layout, integrating built form with topography and environmental constraints.

chitrakala parishath

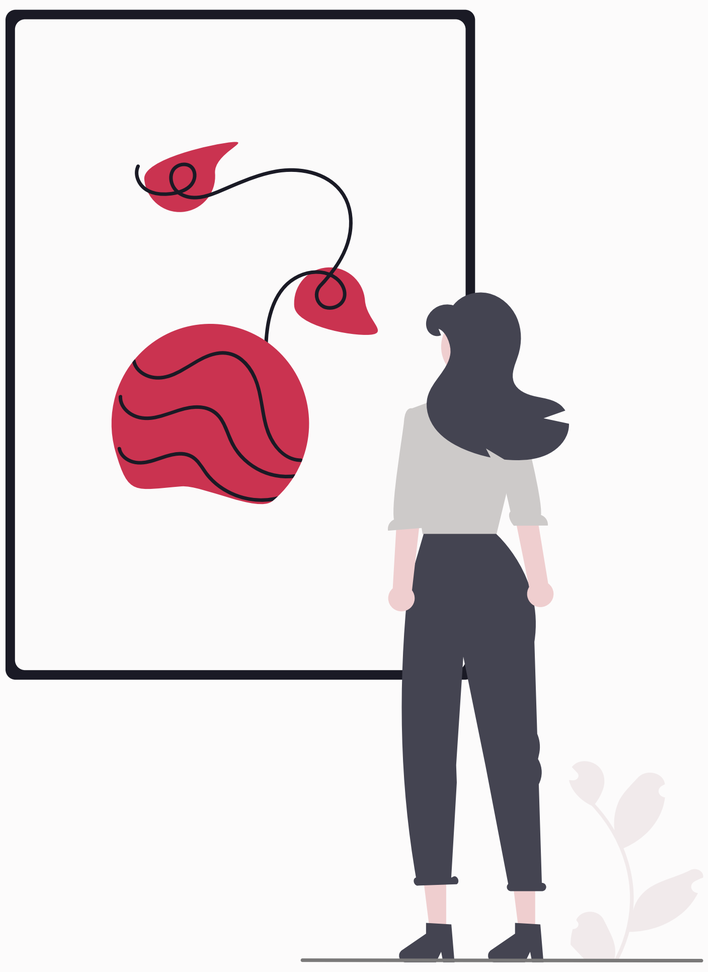
A Digital
Museum Companion

Reconnecting a new generation to Indian art through a thoughtfully designed mobile experience for Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath.

Ananya Goyal | UX Designer

Intro

Where it all Began



I have always loved going to museums.

I can't remember my first one—but ever since I've had a say in planning my travels, museums have been non-negotiable. There's something deeply grounding about them. **The stillness. The reverence. The kind of silence that isn't empty, but alive.**

Studying architecture trained me to observe how spaces shape the way we feel and behave. **And museums, more than any other space, ask you to slow down**. They ask you to engage not just with your eyes, but with your whole self. They soften your voice, stretch your gaze.

I live in Bangalore—a city often called *'The Museum Capital of India'* (Jahnavi T.R. & Mahek Fathima, 2022).

We have dozens of museums across disciplines: art, textiles, crafts, archeology. But something about them feels fragile, like **they could disappear and most people wouldn't notice.**

Looking closer

A Quiet Decline

At first, I thought it was just a Bangalore thing. But the more I looked into it, the more I realised it's a national, even global, pattern.

> *"Most Indians visit museums only on school trips."* (Tripathi, 2022)
>
> I thought of my own childhood visits—uniformed, rushed, checklist-driven. No one ever told us a museum could be a place of wonder.

> *"They remain frozen in time, with little innovation in outreach or engagement."* (Art historian Kavita Singh)
>
> In 'A Public Failure?', she points to a deeper issue. Reading that, I couldn't help but nod. The faded labels, the silence mistaken for disinterest.

> *"When was the last time you visited a museum in India?"* ('A Trip to the Museum' -The Hindu)

> The Heritage Lab listed seven key challenges Indian museums face. Top of the list? **A lack of storytelling, and almost no digital infrastructure.**

The realisation stayed with me.

The idea

A Digital Possibility

As I read more about museums around the world, one pattern stood out: thoughtfully designed mobile apps.

> *"Apps act as digital companions,"* wrote Museums Explorer, *"offering real-time guides, stories, and ways to explore beyond the exhibit."*

> *"Apps can transform passive viewing into active exploration,"* said Debbie Morrison, *"but only when they prioritize design, usability, and emotion."*

> Another article described them as *"democratic, self-paced tools"*—perfect for a new generation of visitors who crave autonomy and context.

I wondered: **Could an app spark curiosity again? Could it help people feel what I feel when I walk through a gallery?**

I decided to start small — ONE idea, ONE app, ONE Museum.

Choosing the Museum

ONE Problem?

Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath (KCP)

The KCP is one of Bangalore's **oldest and most beloved** art institutions. It hosts exhibitions, artist studios, folk art collections, and rotating events.

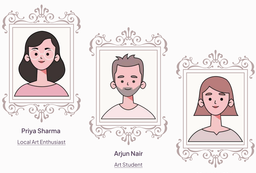
However, the museum **lacks the digital infrastructure needed to engage modern audiences**. Without an accessible way to preview exhibits, discover events, or connect with artists, **the museum remains disconnected from a younger, tech-savvy, and increasingly global audience.**

Problem Statement –

How might we create a digital experience that captures the emotional richness of the museum, while making it more ***discoverable, usable, and culturally relevant*** *to today's diverse visitors?*

User Personas

Our Patrons



Priya Sharma
Local Art Enthusiast

Arjun Nair
Art Student

Vanessa Lim
International Tourist

A museum is never one-size-fits-all.

To ground my design decisions, I developed six diverse personas based on common audience groups at KCP. Built for the MVP, I needed to focus. Using prioritisation matrix, I narrowed it down to **three main personas:** *local enthusiasts, art students, and international tourists.* These groups reflect the museum's core audience and have clear, distinct needs — cultural connection, learning, and easy exploration.

The others — *families, content creators and senior visitors* — were set aside for now. Their needs are either more complex or less critical for the first version, but they're noted for future updates.

Local Art Enthusiast

Priya Sharma

34, Bangalore
Software Engineer at an MNC
Newly Married; MSc Engineer

> *I want to stay connected to my cultural roots through art while balancing my career in tech. The museum is my creative sanctuary.*

Scenario

Priya frequently checks the various spaces for new exhibitions, but often misses openings due to her unpredictable work schedule. Last month, she learned about an exhibition featuring her favorite contemporary artist three weeks after it opened, giving her limited time to visit before it closed.

At the museum, she found herself wanting deeper context about the artistic techniques and historical influences but had to research this separately after her visit.

With the KCP app, she would receive timely notifications about upcoming exhibitions, could explore detailed background information during her visit, and continue engaging with the content even after leaving the museum.

Goals

- Stay updated on new exhibitions and events
- Deepen her understanding of Indian artistic traditions
- Connect with the local art community
- Find respite from her tech-focused work life
- Support local artists and cultural institutions

Frustrations

- Limited time due to busy work schedule
- Frustrated when she misses exhibition openings
- Wants more in-depth information than what's typically available on plaques
- Sometimes struggles to connect contemporary art to its historical context

Motivation

VALUE CONSIGUOSNESS
COMFORT & CONVENIENCE
KNOWLEDGE SEEKING

Personality

INTROVERT — EXTROVERT
ANALYTICAL — CREATIVE
PASSIVE — ACTIVE

User Journeys

Experience Arc

Once I had my personas in place, I started mapping how different users move through the museum experience — **what they look for, what they need, and when they need it.**

These journeys helped me understand intent more clearly: some users are exploring casually, some are focused on planning a visit, and others are engaging with the space in real time.

Mapping this out gave me a clearer picture of the kinds of support users expect — **from discovery and planning to navigation and deeper learning.**

Local Art Enthusiast – Priya Sharma

As a local art enthusiast, I want to receive timely updates and access in-depth information about exhibitions so that I can better engage with art despite my busy schedule.

Stages	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
Action	Check for new exhibitions	Plan museum visit	Visit the museum	Explore artwork in-depth	Continue engagement after visit
Tasks	1. Open app 2. Navigate to exhibitions section 3. Browse current and upcoming events	1. Check exhibition dates 2. Review personal calendar 3. Add to calendar	1. Browse artwork list 2. Access digital map 3. Locate featured exhibitions	1. Scan artwork QR codes 2. Read detailed information 3. Save favorites	1. Review saved artwork 2. Research artists further 3. Share experiences
Emotions	1. Excited 2. Curious	1. Organized 2. Anticipatory	1. Prepared 2. Curious	1. Engaged 2. Enlightened	1. Reflective 2. Satisfied
Opportu-nities	1. Brief exhibition descriptions 2. Option to filter by art style/period	1. Simple one-tap calendar integration 2. Optional reminder setting	1. Personalized route suggestions 2. Offline access option	1. Essential artistic context 2. Artist background information	1. Curated follow-up content 2. Notification for related future exhibitions

Parallel Needs

Outside v/s Inside

As I worked through the journeys, I noticed something important.

The needs of users change drastically depending on whether they're inside the museum or outside it.

Outside the Museum
(planning, browsing, discovering)

Inside the Museum
(navigating exhibits, getting info)

I wondered, can an app have two modes for when a user is – **Outside the Museum** or **Inside the Museum ?**

Competitive Audit

Research

To understand this better, I looked at how leading museums around the world shape their digital experiences. I went through six apps — including the Rijksmuseum, The British Museum, and the Cleveland Museum of Art — to understand what features they offer and how those features support different types and needs of visitors.

Key Observations:

- Most apps support features needed both inside & outside the museum, **but do not clearly separate the two.**
- Audio guides, navigation tools, and collection search are common inside museum features.
- Ticket integration, information on galleries and artworks and tour bookings are common outside museum features.
- Educational content varies widely. Some museums go deep with archives and essays, while others barely touch it.
- **Personalisation is provided but often surface-level.**

This analysis helped me understand where the bar is — and where KCP's app could offer something more focused, more local, and more learner-friendly.

Initial Impressions

	Rijks Museum	Walt Disney Museum	The British Museum	Cleveland Museum of Art	Art Institute Chicago	National Museum (NOR)
Product Offering	Mobile app with digital collection access, guided audio tours, and personalized art experiences	Interactive app showcasing Disney family history, animation techniques, and special exhibitions	Comprehensive app with 3D artifact models, virtual tours, and global collection access	ArtLens app with augmented reality features, collection exploration, and in-museum interactive experiences	Mobile guide with detailed artwork information, thematic tours, and offline accessibility	Digital platform showcasing Norwegian cultural heritage, Viking artifacts, and contemporary exhibitions
Target Audience	• Art enthusiasts • Tourists • Students • Educators	• Disney fans • Families • Animation lovers • History buffs	• History fanatics • Researchers • Tourists • Students	• Art lovers • Local community • Educational groups	• Art scholars • Tourists • Students • Members	• Cultural tourists • Nordic history enthusiasts • Locals
Key Strengths	• AI-powered personalisation • AR art feature • High-quality masterpiece reproductions	• Storytelling and narrative focus • Animation learning elements • Family-oriented content	• Extensive global collection breadth • 3D artifact models • Academic depth of information	• Cutting-edge AR technology • Facial recognition art matching • Gesture-based interactions	• Stability and performance • Exceptional accessibility • Theme connections between artworks	• Nordic design aesthetic • Cultural identity • Contemporary Norwegian art emphasis

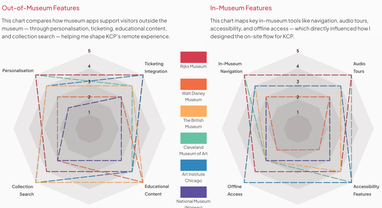
Features Comparision

Out-of-Museum Features

This chart compares how museum apps support visitors outside the museum — through personalisation, ticketing, educational content, and collection search — helping me shape KCP's remote experience.

In-Museum Features

This chart maps key in-museum tools like navigation, audio tours, accessibility, and offline access — which directly influenced how I designed the on-site flow for KCP.



Design Goals & outcomes

After mapping users, journeys, and the competitive space, I paused to define clear goals — anchoring the project before moving into the next phase.

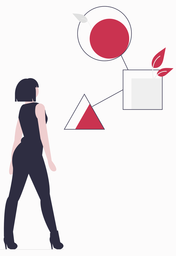
Goals :

- Create a calm, minimal, emotionally engaging digital extension of the museum.
- Enable users to plan visits, explore exhibitions, and engage with artists and events.
- Make the experience inclusive across languages, ages, and tech familiarity levels.
- Encourage reflection, connection, and repeat engagement.

Projected Outcomes :

- Increase in workshop and event participation
- More engagement from local, younger audiences
- Higher awareness of artist and exhibition offerings

Information Architecture App Skeleton



So far, it has been theoretical. But now that it is time to execute these two distinct mindsets, I reach an impasse. I know that –

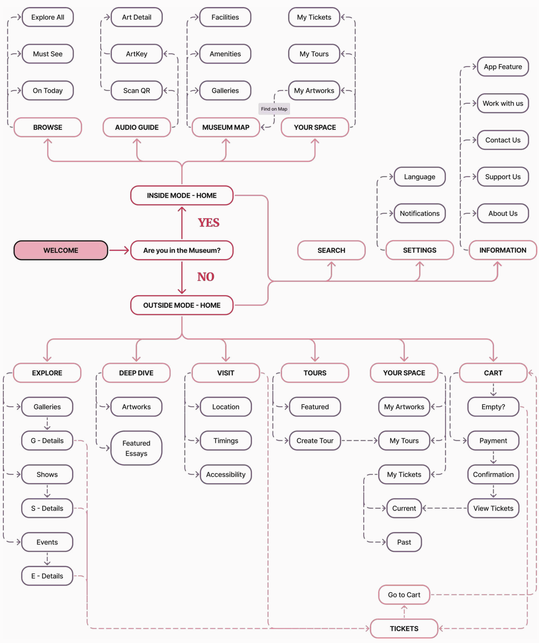
The Outside Mode

- Helps users plan their visit (timings, tickets, location)
- Lets them explore galleries, shows, and events remotely
- Provides access to artist bios, essays, and archives for learning

The Inside Mode

- Offers an interactive map for navigation
- Provides audio guides through QR scans or ArtKey
- Gives quick access to exhibits, facilities, and amenities

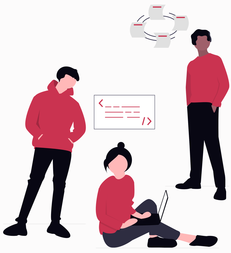
The challenge? Make the experience feel seamless, but still give users the control they deserve.



User Flow Pathways

Moving onto user flows, I faced an important decision — should I structure flows around individual personas, or focus on broader user intents?

I realised that while each persona (like Priya, Vanessa, and Arjun) had unique backgrounds and motivations, **many of their actions overlapped.** Booking tickets, exploring exhibitions, or engaging with artworks were common tasks, but the depth of interaction and context differed.



Hybrid Approach for User flow:

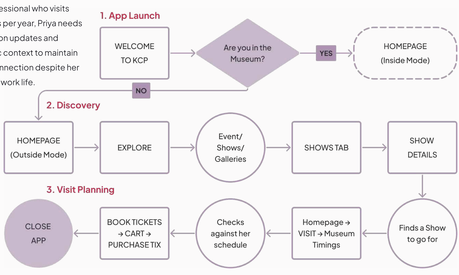
For my primary persona, Priya, I designed a detailed persona-based flow to showcase empathy, depth, and how her specific needs shape her journey.

- For rest of the tasks, I created intent-based user flows to streamline shared actions across user types.

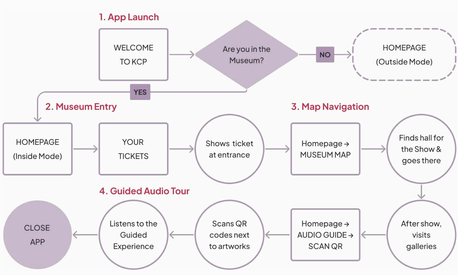
This hybrid approach kept the user flows simple, purposeful, and inclusive.

Local Art Enthusiast: Priya Sharma (Outside Mode)

As a busy professional who visits KCP 4–5 times per year, Priya needs timely exhibition updates and deeper artistic context to maintain her cultural connection despite her tech-focused work life.



Local Art Enthusiast: Priya Sharma (Inside Mode)



Designing for Two Mindsets

Seamless Shift

Before diving into wires and flows, I stepped back to ask:
What does a good experience look like here?
The following became my guiding stars — simple, user-first, and friction-free.

Privacy First
No creepy assumptions. No forcing location permissions.

Context Awareness
Enhance the experience when possible, but don't guess blindly.

User Control
Let the user decide where they are and what they want to do.

Light, Fast and Friendly
No heavy onboarding or extra steps that slow people down.

Flexible & Adaptive
Adjust if patterns change over time — but always ask first.

Options explored to Switch Contexts (2 of 6)

1. Location Permission-Based Segregation

Automatically detect if the user is at the museum.

→ Seamless, automatic context switching without user input.
→ But... many users don't like sharing location for "just an app."

Useful as an optional enhancement, not reliable as the main method.

2. At onboarding: "Where are you using this app?"

Simply ask the user where they are.

→ Clear, respectful, no permissions needed.
→ But asking this every time = friction.

Works well if designed to minimise repeat prompts.

Options explored to Switch Contexts (4 of 6)

3. Default Flow with Manual Toggle

Assume a default experience (say, outside the museum), but give an easy way to switch modes.

→ Low effort for the user, keeps them in control.
→ Needs a user survey to set the right primary default.

Strong candidate. Flexible and user-friendly.

4. Time & Day Patterns as Soft Cues

Use smart defaults based on time (e.g. weekends = likely visits).

→ Adds contextual awareness without being intrusive.
→ Can combine with user preferences for better accuracy.

Useful as a enhancement layer, but not as the primary method.

Options explored to Switch Contexts (6 of 6)

5. Persistent Context Switcher in UI

A clear, always-visible way to switch between "Inside the museum," and "Outside the Museum."

→ Obvious, user-driven, zero ambiguity.
→ But can cause clutter without thoughtful UI placement.

Reliable & transparent. Gives control back to the user.

6. Adaptive UI Based on Usage Patterns

Learn from how the user interacts over time.

→ Makes the app feel personal and intelligent.
→ But requires behavioural data and smart defaults.

Nice-to-have for long-term adaptability.

Switching Contexts - The Finale.

After testing multiple models, I landed on a blended solution.

1. Onboarding (shown only once)

Sets a soft default without assumptions. Users are in control from the first screen.

2. Persistent Context Switcher in UI

Lets users switch context instantly. No guessing, no hidden state.

3. Behaviour-based Prompt

Gentle suggestion based on actual usage. Never assumes, always asks.

It's not flashy, but it works — because it respects the user and quietly adapts in the background.

Low Fidelity

Prototype

I began with lo-fi wireframes to shape the core structure and flow of the app.

- **Onboarding & Mode Selection:** Set the stage with language, context ("Are you inside the museum?"), and user goals.
- **Global Chrome & Utilities:** Built flexible navigation with two states — one for in-museum, one for outside — along with persistent access to search and settings.
- **Outside–Museum Flow:** Users can browse galleries, check timings, explore events, and purchase tickets. A lightweight profile section gives access to their bookings.
- **Inside–Museum Flow:** Once on-site, the interface shifts to tools that support real-time exploration — scan artwork, listen to audio guides, or navigate via the museum map.
- **Shared Details:** I created simple templates for artwork and event details, with space for key info and quick actions like saving or adding to cart.

These wireframes helped me test the structure early, make fast changes, and ensure that the experience was always aligned with the visitor's needs.

Usability Testing

testing 1 2 3 ..

To validate the first version of the museum app, I conducted **an unmoderated, remote usability test with 14 participants.**

The results helped me identify key friction points across **mode switching discoverability, navigation, interaction clarity, and booking flow.** The insights informed several critical design improvements.

Testers:
14 participants

Avg. Satisfaction Score:
4.1/5

Top Friction Point:
Mode switching discoverability

Task Completion Rate:
92%

"I didn't realize the FAB was to change modes—I thought it was a scan button."

"The event card looks nice, but where's the book button?"

"The map's just an image. I expected to tap things."

Mode Switching

Lo-Fi : Segmented Control was unclear

A segmented control would allow the users would always know which mode they were in and could switch context seamlessly from any page.

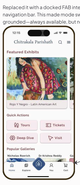
User #4 — "I thought tapping 'Outside' would show me outdoor sculptures, not change my nav bar."

User #5 — "I will need the inside mode only when I go to in the Museum. This persistent control is distracting."

User #12 — "Why does a button at the top affect what happens at the bottom? That disconnect tripped me up."

Hi-fi : Docked FAB

Replaced it with a docked FAB integrated into the centre of the bottom navigation bar. This made mode switching feel both prominent and grounded—always available but never intrusive.



Impact :
→ Improves discoverability—always visible in the navigation bar, reducing confusion.
→ Enhances consistency—aligns with standard navigation patterns for intuitive use.
→ Balances efficiency & control—quick switching without accidental taps or clutter.

Tour Personalisation

Lo-Fi : No custom flow

Users could not personalise their visit experience.

User #4— "Would've been cool to make my own path. I kept bookmarking things and wishing they'd turn into a tour."

User #5 — "I didn't find a way to plan my own visit based on my interests."

Hi-fi : "Create Your Own Tour" added

Let users select exhibits of interest to generate a custom tour with route and duration.

Impact :
→ Empowered user agency— and improved engagement, especially for students or repeat visitors.

Audio Guide

Lo-Fi : Audio stopped on nav

Audio stopped if users navigated away, disrupting the experience.

User #3— "I started an audio clip, then switched tabs—and it stopped. That was really annoying."

User #6 — "It feels like it should keep playing in the background, like a podcast or music app."

Hi-fi : Continuous playback with mini-player

Implemented persistent audio playback, with mini-player control on screen.

Impact :
→ Allowed continuous listening—while exploring related content or browsing.

Design Systems

I wanted the visual language of the app to reflect the museum's **quiet richness — warm, grounded, and culturally rooted**. So I built a system that balances elegance with clarity, **deep jewel tones, calligraphic type and soft neutrals.**

Type System

I used Rosarivo for headings and Raleway for body text. Rosarivo adds a touch of quiet elegance — expressive, but not loud. Raleway keeps things clean and readable across screens. Together, they strike the balance I was after: expressive but usable, heritage with a modern edge.

Headers – Rosarivo		Body – Raleway	
Headline One	24 px regular, 32 px leading, +1.0 tracking	Body Copy One	16 px regular, 24 px leading, +0.75 tracking
Headline Two	22 px regular, 30 px leading, +0.75 tracking	Body Copy Two	14 px regular, 20 px leading, +0.5 tracking
Headline Three	20 px regular, 28 px leading, +0.5 tracking	Title One	14 px medium, 20 px leading, +1.0 tracking

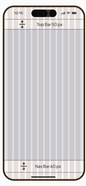
Colour System

The palette balances visual richness with usability. Each colour was chosen for both emotional tone and contrast.

#1A2F50 Deep Regal Blue (Primary) — Buttons, Headings	#A38C5B Muted Gold (Secondary) — Accents, Active states	#752B3C Berry Wine (Tertiary) — Highlights, Section dividers
#F9F4EC Cream (Light Neutral) — Backgrounds	#2E382E Black- Green (Dark Neutral) — Body text	#C0392B Deep Red (Error) — Alerts: Validation

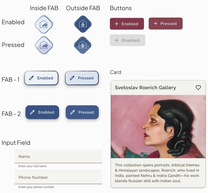
Layout & Scale

12 column grid, 16 px margin,
8 px gutter; 8pt spacing system



Core Components

Every component was built to feel intentional — minimal, clear, and tactile enough to work well inside the museum context.



Accessibility

I made sure that a minimum contrast ratio of at-least 7:1 for AAA compliance were met for all elements.

Contrast 8.3:1 — Primary #274A77 / On Primary #ECF1F9	Contrast 17.27:1 — Surface #8BEFEB / On Surface #070807
Contrast 7.32:1 — Secondary #3A4F39 / On Secondary #F6F4EF	Contrast 17.43:1 — Background #FEFDF8 / On Background #F1F0A
Contrast 8.41:1 — Tertiary #752B3C / On Tertiary #FBECEF	Contrast 12.14:1 — Outline Variant #FAF6EF / Outline #3E2E14
Contrast 7.16:1 — Error #992115 / On Error #FDEEED	

the Design Finale

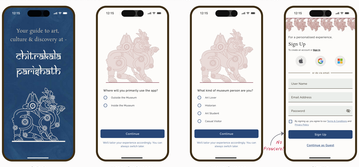
After refining the structure, flows, and visual system, I brought the interface to life through high-fidelity designs.

Each screen was crafted to **reflect clarity, cultural richness, and ease of use** — whether someone is planning from home or standing inside the museum.

The final design reflects the split modes, core tasks, and emotional tone that emerged through earlier research and iteration.

onBoarding

I introduced the museum's tone through the logo and guided users based on their intent — whether they're planning a visit or already at the museum. A quick preferences step helps personalise content right from the start, with flexible sign-in options.

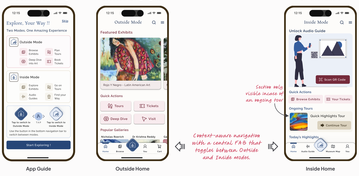


Context Switching

Introducing two modes and context switching

Outside home — Quick access and highlights

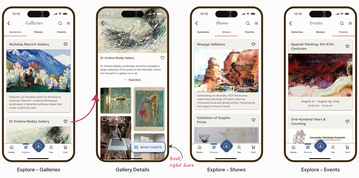
Inside home — Tailored for on-site visitors



App Guide — Outside Home — Inside Home

Outside Mode – Explore

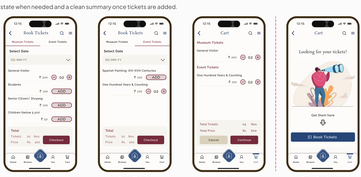
This section lets users browse by gallery, show, or event. I kept the layout visual and card-based to make scanning and discovery feel natural.



Explore – Galleries — Gallery Details — Explore – Shows — Explore – Events

Outside Mode – Tickets & Cart

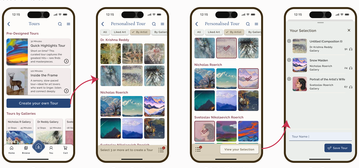
The booking view is split into Museum and Event tabs with real-time totals. The cart updates as they go — showing a friendly empty state when needed and a clean summary once tickets are added.



Museum Tickets — Event Tickets — Cart — Cart – Empty state

Outside Mode – Tours

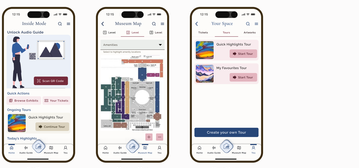
Visitors can follow a pre-designed path or create their own. This flexibility lets people explore the museum in a way that suits their pace and interest.



Tours — Personalised tour — Selected Artworks — Save Tour

Inside Mode – InMuseum Hub

In-Museum Hub – Core tools for navigation, saved content, and starting points — designed for clarity and context on-site.



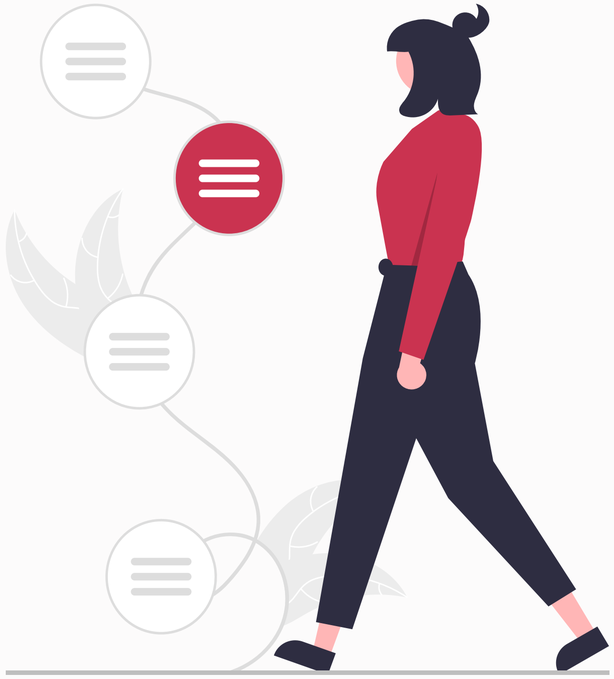
The Player — Museum Map — Saved Tours

Next Steps & Reflections

now what?

Next Steps :

- **Usability Testing:** I would run tests with older visitors, students, and casual users to catch confusion or drop-off points.
- **Multilingual Support:** Including Kannada and Hindi is essential to accessibility, and would require testing across scripts and text density.
- **Audio Guides & AR:** Adding immersive audio or AR layers for certain exhibitions could enhance in-museum use.
- **Admin Dashboard:** A backend tool would help KCP staff upload exhibits, track visits, and manage bookings.
- **Offline Mode:** For people with limited internet access, an offline "saved exhibits" mode would ensure continuity.



This wasn't just a design project. It became an emotional one. Designing this app made me think harder about what makes experiences meaningful.

It pushed me to think like a visitor, not just a designer, and if it helps even one more person find their way into a gallery, feel that stillness, and return? Then I'd consider it's done its job.

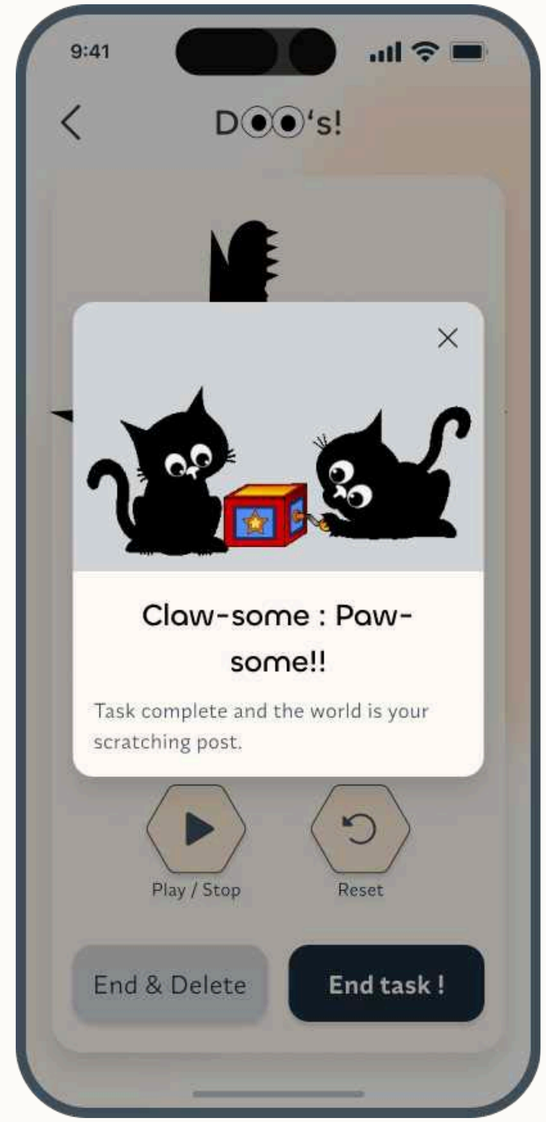
Thats all

Folks!

Ananya Goyal was here.

WannaDOO!!

Fill your spare moments with delightful little DOO's.

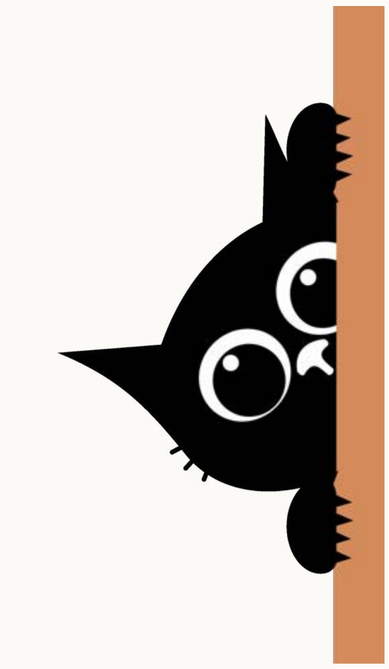


Mobile App Design

Turn Free Time Into Mini Wins

WannaDOO! is an app designed to solve the **"Inertia of Idle Time"**. It connects users with their personal 'want-to-dos' by transforming fleeting, unplanned breaks into **intentional progress on personal goals**.

We defeat the doom-scroll by making purposeful action the path of least resistance.



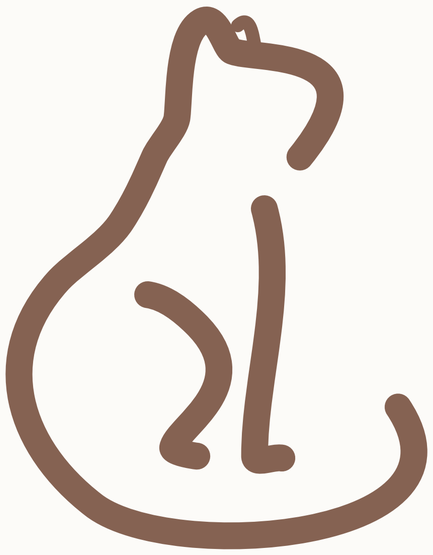
Project	Role	Timeline	Tools
Solo	UX/UI Design, User research	1.5 week design sprint	Figma, Miro

Why Boredom Wins

(for Now)

Let's be real: Everyone dreams of chipping away at goals or hobbies, but the moment there's a break, the brain wants the easiest dopamine hit—hello, social feeds.

The real design problem is bridging the gap between wishing and starting.



The Big Idea

Make "Starting" Irresistible

Break big goals into snack-sized actions, serve up custom-fit ideas based on how much time there is, and sprinkle in just enough reward so new habits actually stick.

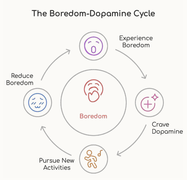
The result? *Wasted minutes become wins, and tiny breaks become real progress*—without tedious setup or guilt.

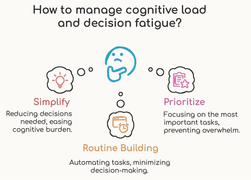
1. DISCOVER

a. Insights from research: The science of 'wasted' time

- **Decision Fatigue** → The more choices, the less likely we act.
- **Dopamine Loops** → Apps like Instagram hook users with instant rewards, making them the default filler.
- **Habit Science** → Small, easy wins compound into lasting routines.

> *People need a frictionless, rewarding alternative to scrolling.*





Why we get bored & how dopamine tricks us

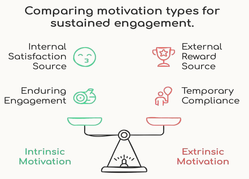
Boredom triggers dopamine cravings, leading to mindless distraction if unmet.

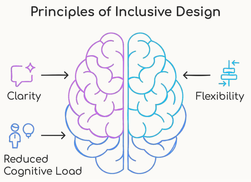
> *The experience must be a low-effort, high-novelty alternative that provides a better dopamine hit than social media.*

Avoiding Decision Overload

Too many choices drain mental energy, leading users to choose the path of least resistance (avoidance).

> *The solution must automate the decision process by curating based on the user's available time.*





Motivation: Lightning in a Bottle

Intrinsic interest drives engagement, while subtle extrinsic rewards boost habit formation and sustained behavior.

> *The system needs a balanced reward structure to encourage consistency without adding external pressure.*

Inclusive Design: For All Minds

Principles like simplicity, clarity, and reduced overwhelm create effective solutions for all minds alike.

> *Prioritising a non-cluttered, flexible, and low-pressure design eliminates common roadblocks to starting and finishing tasks.*

b. Talking to humans: The voice of frustration

Interviews with 06 participants (ages 25-55).

- **Mindless wins:** 70% fill short breaks with auto-scrolling; changing this is top priority.
- **"Later" is a trap:** 45% get overwhelmed by too many saves; 35% forget about them entirely—curation, not just storage, is key.
- **No plan, No win:** Even with short breaks, most want simple productive/restful tasks but default to "no plan = out comes the phone."
- **Progress = happy:** 70% want to track personal progress—gentle, visible tracking is welcome.

c. Competitive Analysis: Who's in the Arena?

App	Effort	Personal Curation	Empowerment	Time-based?	NO Inclusive design?
I am Bored	Low (no account needed)	Low (generic randomness)	Low (no sense of progress)	Yes	No
Duolingo	Low (simple tap-to-learn)	Low (preset content only)	High (visible streaks)	Sort off	No
Insta-paper	Low (save and read later)	Medium (no smart surfacing)	Low (provides no motivation)	Yes	No
Forest	Medium (setup required)	Low (same experience for all)	Medium (non tailored rewards)	Yes	Sort off
Goblin Tools	Low (beginner-friendly)	Medium (AI breaks down tasks)	High (clear, supportive tone)	Yes	Yes

No competitor blends low effort, personal curation, and gentle empowerment for those **"what now?"** moments. That's WannaDOO's spot to shine – **making meaningful action as easy as distraction.**

d. MVP: What Comes First

e. Research Synthesis: Pain Points & Key Insights

The Struggles

Getting Started	Micro Motivation	Decision Paralysis	Invisible Progress	Follow-through hangups	Overwhelmed by clutter	Inertia of Habit

The Path Forward

LOW FRICTION	COGNITIVE EASE	FRIENDLY SUPPORT	FOLLOW-THROUGH
Time-First Curation, ask *how long* users have, not *what they want to do.*	**Single-Action Focus,** presenting only one curated task at a time	**Cheerful avatars & gentle nudges** for a safe, judgement-free environment.	**Micro-Rewards&** visible progress tracking

2. EMPATHISE

a. Personas - Humans Behind "Idle Moments"

Based on the research, I developed three personas representing the core audience: those seeking productivity, those seeking wellness, and those needing a neurodivergent-friendly experience.

- Maya (28, Professional) → Needs mindful pauses between meetings.
- Rhea (35, Parent) → Wants to reconnect with herself during break from responsibilities.
- Taran (23, Student) → Wants to complete tasks without getting overwhelmed or bored.

> *Each persona shared one need: "Give me something easy, fast, and meaningful to do right now."*

Maya

Ambitious Multitasker

28, Marketing Strategist
Single, lives with friends

"I want my breaks to feel like progress, not just mindless scrolling!"

Maya is a 28-year-old marketing strategist at a growing startup. Always striving to learn new things and stay ahead in her field, she often *finds herself saving articles, videos, and ideas between meetings, but seldom returns to them.* She lives with two friends in a busy urban apartment and enjoys socialising, but **aims to become more intentional with her downtime**.

Background

Tech Habits: Tries every productivity app, toggles between work and personal content

Personality: Driven, organised, but easily distracted by social media

Empathy Map

Thinks:	**Feels:**
"I want to fill my breaks with something meaningful—otherwise this window is gone."	Frustrated by wasted time, motivated by progress, overwhelmed by options.
Says:	**Does:**
"Just show me something useful fast. I don't want another cluttered app."	Saves dozens of articles but rarely revisits them; toggles between apps.

Day-in-the-Life

Between sales meetings, Maya opens WannaDOO and is shown a TED Talk. She feels a small win, then moves on with her day.

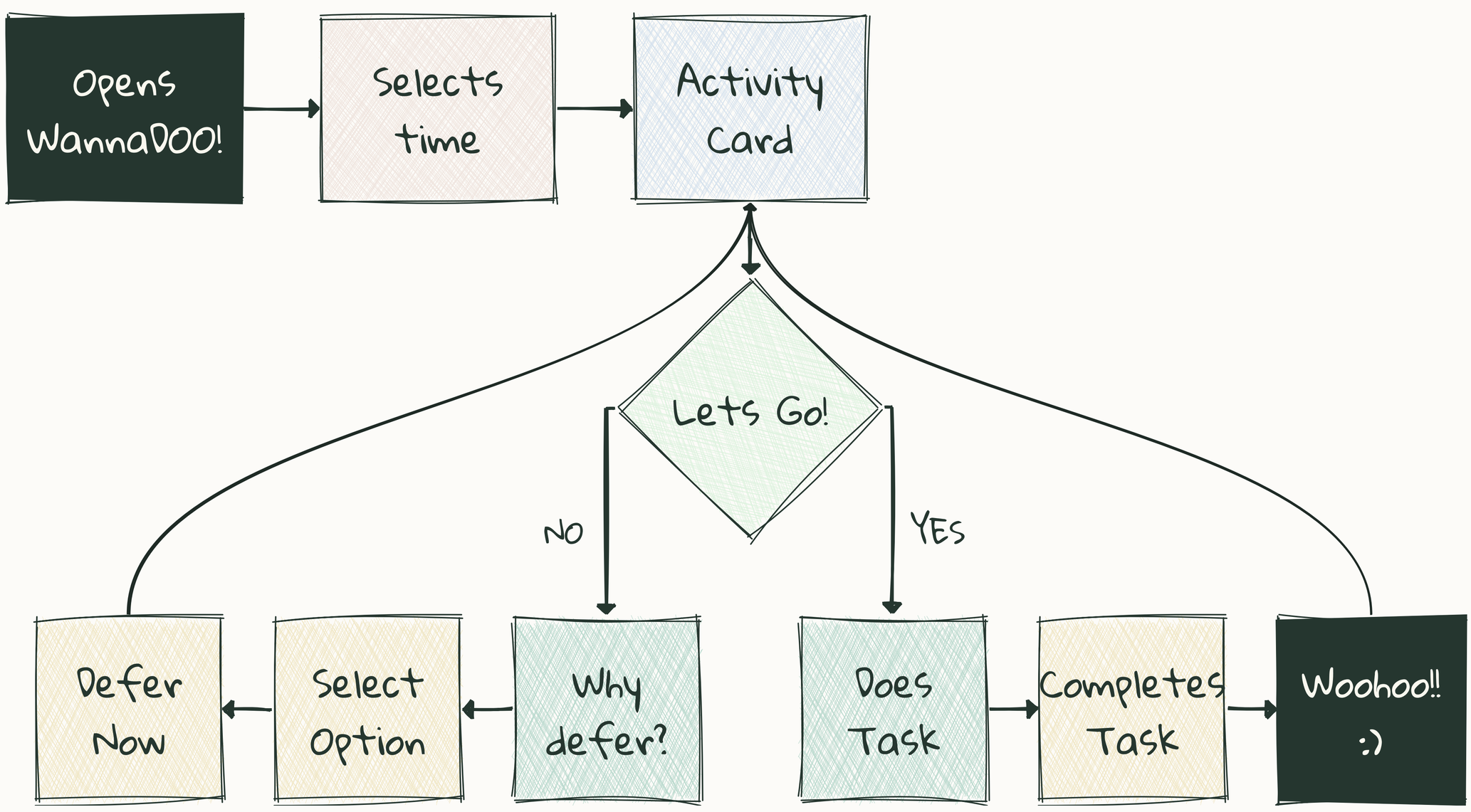
Goals

- Use breaks during her hectic workday to tackle personal growth activities.
- Actually act on her long 'to-do/learn' list, not just bookmark endlessly.
- Replace social media habits with meaningful quick wins.

Frustrations

- Forgets about her saved content.
- Overwhelmed by the clutter of unorganised bookmarks and apps.
- Feels guilty after mindlessly scrolling and missing out on personal growth.

b. User Flow



3. IDEATE

a. How Might We...

.. surface the "one thing" users want to do, instantly?

.. eliminate analysis paralysis and make starting rewarding?

.. be the default, "I'll do this instead of scrolling" app?

.. provide instant micro-rewards which feel gratifying

.. be an inclusive platform for challenges—like overwhelm and time blindness

b. Wild Concepts via Crazy 8's

Rapid-fire ideas:

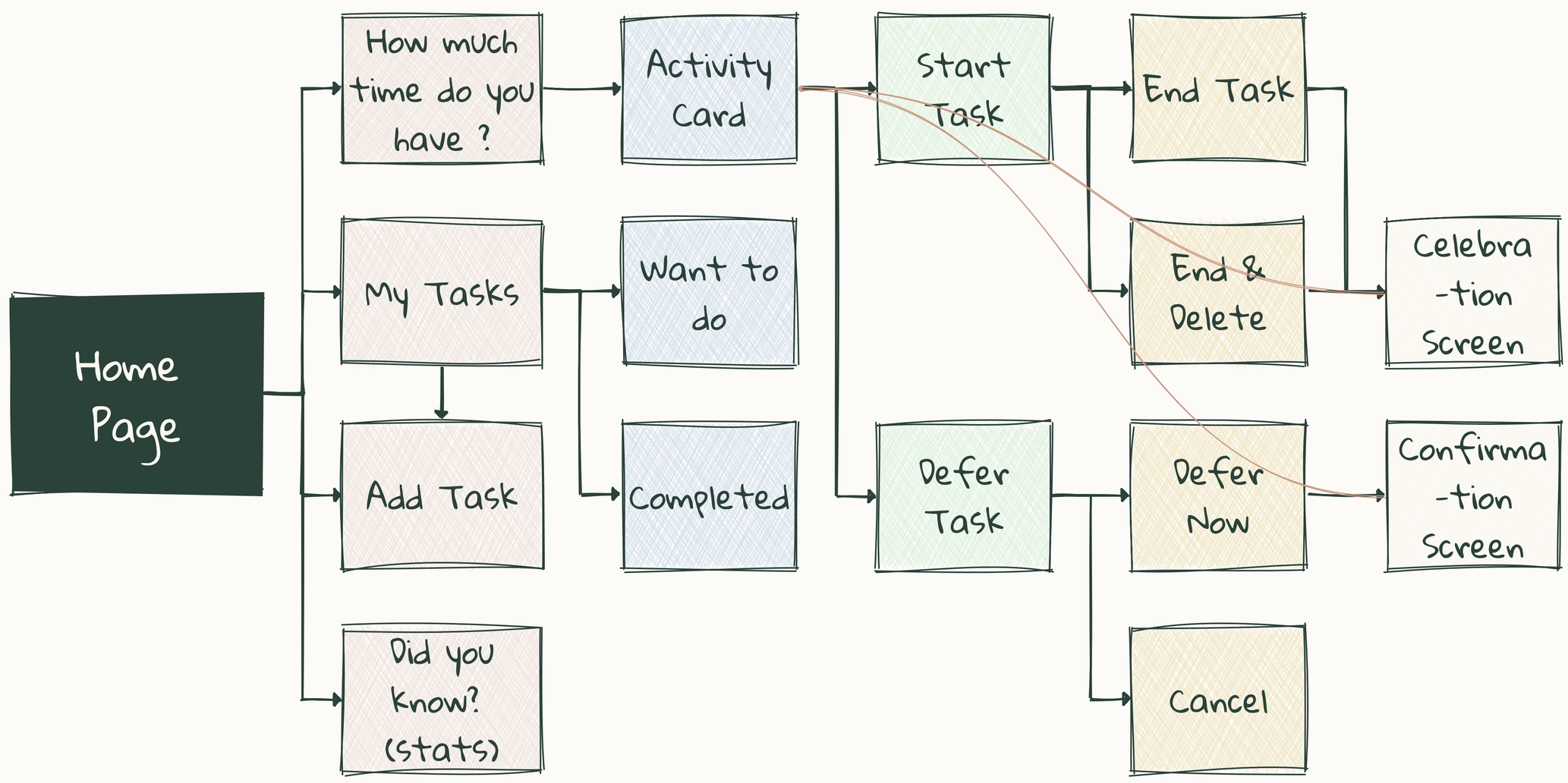
- **Cute avatars** as emotional companions
- **Game journeys:** unlocking levels per task
- **Smart chatbot:** "What's one thing you fancy?
- **Swipe playlist:** Stack of options, never stuck

Features:

- **Time buckets:** "Quick," "Short," "Deep"
- **Card deck:** One activity per card; prioritises unfinished tasks
- **"Surprise Me!"** randomiser for the indecisive.
- **Gentle habit stats:** eg. "You turned 10 minutes into progress!"

> *SO MANY IDEAS! Instead of layering gimmicks and having everything, focus on the most critical design element: making the first moment of interaction effortless.*

c. Information Architecture

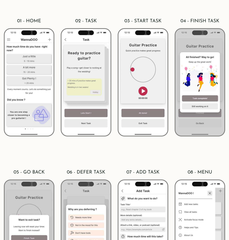


4. PROTOTYPE

a. Wireframes & Lo-Fi Screens

Home, activity card and start task screens

Defer task, add task and menu screens



b. Visual Styles

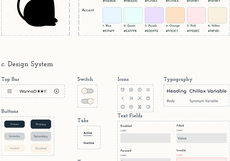
Mascot

Cheeky black cat – playful, supportive, never judgmental.

Colour Palette

Muted pastels for playful and approachable look that brings warmth and calmness to the app.

c. Design System



d. Usability Testing

The tests confirmed the core concept was sound but revealed critical areas where the UI and language needed refinement to truly achieve zero friction.

Methodology & Participants

- **Participants**: 5 Users (diverse in age, tech comfort, and focus.)
- **Tasks**:
  - Find an activity to do right now.
  - Add a new task/habit.
  - Defer a task.
- **Key Metrics**: Time to task completion, perceived cognitive load, and qualitative feedback on tone.

Before After

'End' vs 'Exit' confusion

Feedback

End and Exit Task sound the same. I don't know which one to tap.

Users couldn't distinguish between completing versus deleting a task.

Implementation

Rename actions for clarity:

- **"End Task"** – for tasks that might be recurring
- **"End and Delete Task"** – for removing the task from the list after completion

Before After

Unclear hierarchy

Feedback

"Is delete already selected? It deleted my task without confirmation. Also, all options look similar."

Visual hierarchy failure – destructive actions blended with neutral ones.

Implementation

Separate "Delete Task Forever" with a red accent

Add a confirmation modal before deletion: "This DOO will vanish forever – like a toy under the fridge."

Before After

'Continue later?' confusion

Feedback

"Why would I continue later if I've already finished?"

The completion screen didn't clearly communicate what comes next.

Implementation

Show this screen as a pop-up overlay and return to the task screen after closing – encouraging re-engagement instead of redundancy.

Before After

'Deadlines are irrelevant'

Feedback

"Why is there a deadline option? I only want to add tasks which don't have a deadline."

The app is designed for spontaneous, low-pressure tasks – deadlines contradict the core intent.

Implementation

Remove the deadline field entirely

Add tags (e.g., hobby, wellness, focus) to help with personalised stats displayed on the home screen.

e. Hi-fi Design

After rounds of research, sketches, wireframes, and testing, it was time to bring WannaDOO to life – not just as an app, but as an experience that feels warm, alive, and a little mischievous.

> The final prototype blends
> - the science of habit loops,
> - the softness of emotional design,
> - and a touch of cat-inspired chaos.

The Entry Point: Time-First Gateway

Starts with time, not task – **flipping decision logic to reduce friction.**

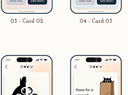
Soft hexagons, friendly tone, and progress feedback ("You've achieved 45 mins of DOO-it") make the first step feel rewarding.

01 - Home 02 - Card 01

Single-Action Focus :The Cure for Paralysis

DOO! cards show one task at a time – light, colourful, and human. Clear options: Start or Defer.

The cat avatar brings humour and empathy, turning small choices into micro-wins.



05 - Card 02 04 - Card 03

Engaged Mode: Focus without Fear

A minimal screen with a clear timer and the DOO! Companion for focus. Provides a satisfying "End Task" path.

The Graceful Exit: Life Happens

Allows users to stop without guilt by providing low-pressure reasons for deferral, ensuring the app remains a companion.

05 - Start task 06 - Defer task

The Micro-Rewards

Task completion triggers the DOO Companion's celebration and positive feedback, reinforcing the habit with a quick dopamine boost.

Non-Judgmental Removal

A simple confirmation to permanently remove goals. The gentle tout maintains the app's low-pressure tone.

07 - Finish task 08 - Delete task

Hidden Management

All essential management features (My Tasks, Help) are tucked away to prioritise the main Time-First flow and minimise clutter.

Low-Friction Input

Streamlined process to add goals, immediately classifying them by Time and Type. This powers the curation engine.

09 - Menu 10 - Add tasks

Organised Backlog

Grouped by time bands (Just a Little, A Bit More, Get Plenty). Soft gradients keep hierarchy without clutter.

Encouraging Reset

The screen uses the companion to frame a cleared list as a positive moment, encouraging quick replenishment of goals.

11 - My Tasks 12 - Empty state

5. REFLECTIONS

What I wanna do with WannaDOO next?

- **Smart Suggestions to Reduce Defers -** Use AI/ML to learn user rhythms and suggest "just-right" DOO's that match their moment — easing choice overload.
- **User Profiles & Multi-Device Sync -** Introduce secure profiles and cloud syncing so users can seamlessly switch devices and keep their progress (and cat) consistent everywhere.
- **Evolving the Cat-versations -** Evolve the black cat's role into a smart companion — dynamic expressions, witty reactions, and context-aware messages that celebrate effort, not outcome.
- **Smarter Progress Insights -** Turn patterns into motivation — show when users thrive or defer, transforming data into gentle encouragement.

nom nom

That's a wrap!

You've earned infinite head-boops and slow blinks from our grateful cat overlords.

case study by Ananya Goyal

Holiday Homes

Designing a Managed Estate for the Urban Weekend Lifestyle

Location

Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka - 250 km from Bangalore

Project Type

Mixed-use estate development (residential plots + resort)

Timeline

February 2024 - July 2024

Role

Masterplan strategy, housing prototype development, iterative refinement

Overview

City dwellers often dream of a weekend home; a place to reconnect with nature and escape the urban grind. But that dream quickly turns into a nightmare: managing security, arranging maintenance for months of non-use, and dealing with remote legal complexities.

Goal:

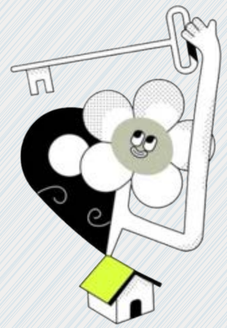
Transform a **92.8-acre coffee estate** into a community of plotted weekend homes supported by a 12-acre resort, balancing privacy, access, and a strong connection to nature.

Outcome:

A managed estate framework with 36 plots organised into social clusters, supported by centralised infrastructure. The design accommodates diverse user needs through seven housing typologies (1,630–2,960 sq ft) adaptable to varying topography, budgets, and lifestyle preferences.

Who Are the Users ?

The Owner



An urban professional seeking -

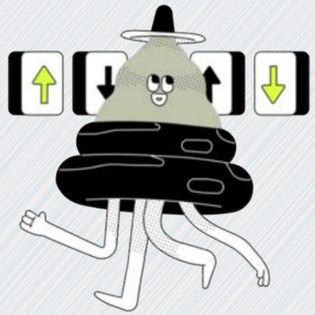
- Weekend escape
- Gathering space
- Nature immersion

The Guest

Resort guests seeking -

- Leisure & experience
- Accommodation & amenities
- Activities

The Staff



Estate staff seeking -

- Operational efficiency
- Clear access & road networks
- Service zones

What Do They Need ?

Tranquil Environment →	Low visual clutter, simple material palettes.
Privacy vs. Community →	Users want both, requiring careful clustering.
View Maximisation →	Homes oriented to views and landscape.
Usage Flexibility →	Flexible spaces with open plan, folding doors etc
Connection with nature →	Strong indoor–outdoor flow via decks and verandas.

What Do They Worry About ?

Administration

Complexity of documentation and legal processes.

Difficulty of oversight for city-based owners.

#owners

Security

Lack of continuous, professional remote monitoring.

Concerns over security during periods of non-use.

#owners #guests

Maintenance

Burden of estate upkeep and landscaping

Difficulty securing reliable rural service providers.

#owners #staff

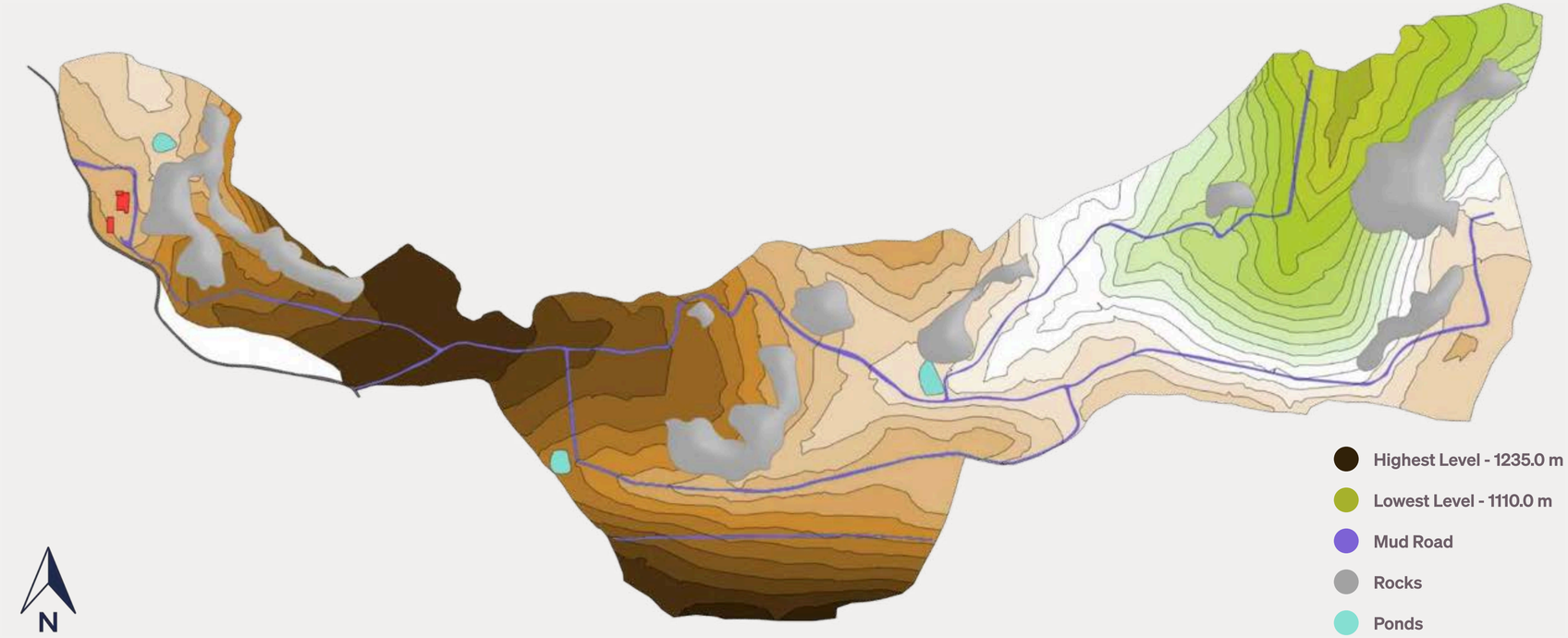
Construction

Difficulty of overseeing construction remotely.

Risk of unexpected expenses and schedule slippage.

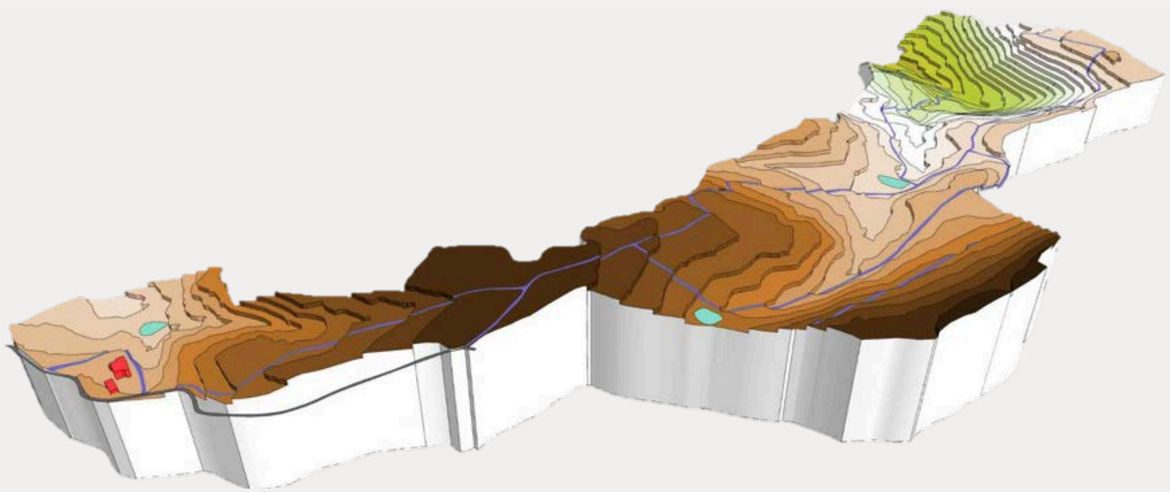
#owners

Site Analysis



The 92.8-acre estate spans varied terrain, with elevations gradient up to 125.0 m.

Road access and sight-lines helped define the quiet zones and activity zones.



Steep edges, natural rock clusters, and dense tree pockets shaped where homes could sit without disturbing the landscape.

The site opens to the rolling Giris hills, which became a key orientation anchor for plots and homes.

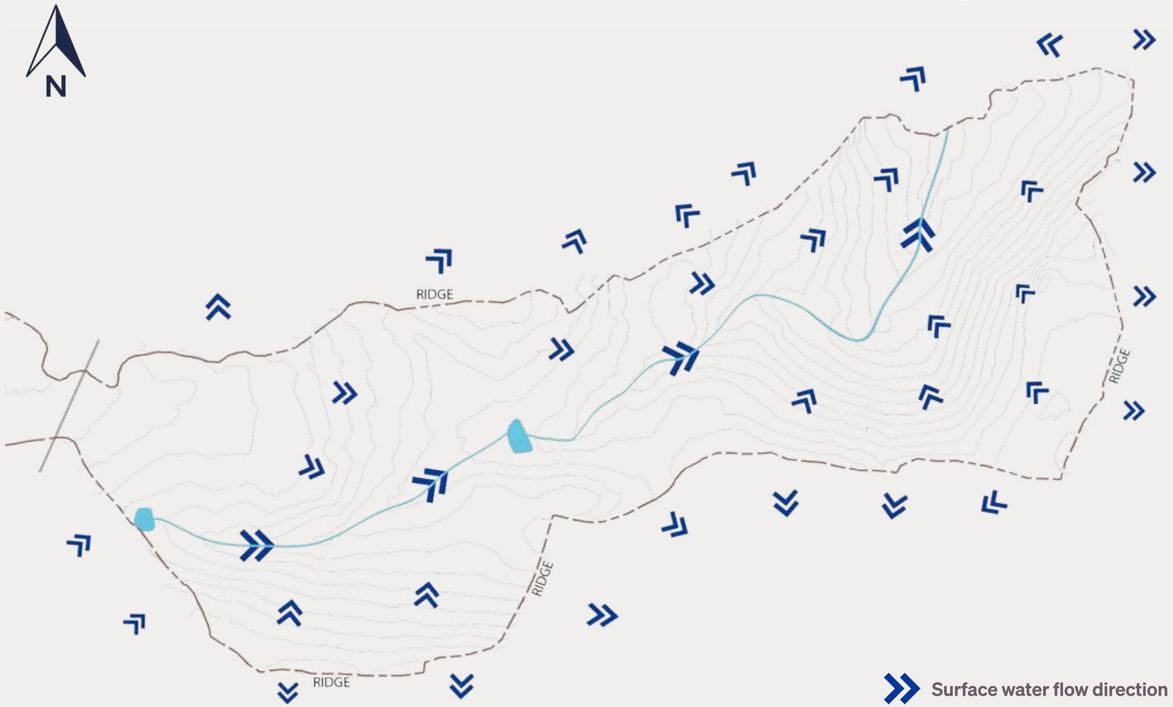
Site Character

Existing Site Utilisation

Coffee plantation dominates the estate, with natural rocks, ponds, and informal paths shaping the primary constraints and opportunities for development.

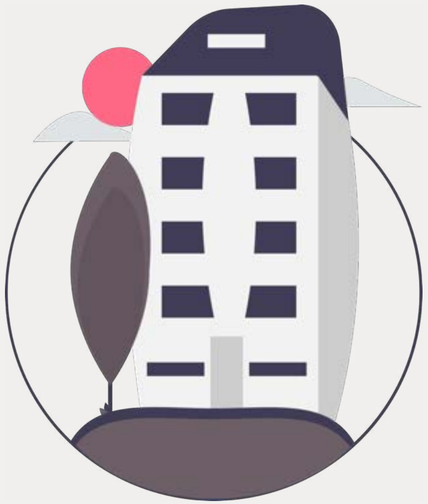
Terrain & Water Flow

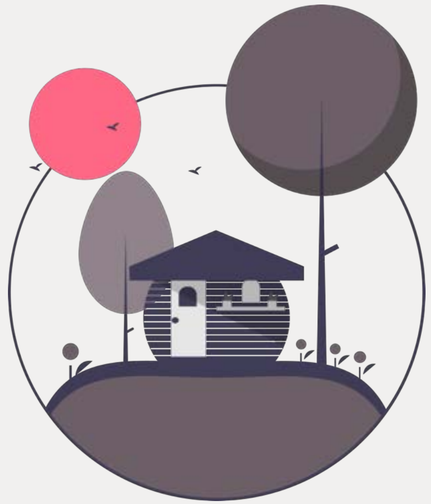
Ridge–valley formations guide natural drainage, identifying zones best suited for building and zones that should remain ecological buffers.



Weekend Home vs. City Living

Weekend homes function differently from primary residences. The goal was to identify the behaviours and emotional cues that should drive the typology system.





	CITY DWELLING	WEEKEND HOME
Location Context	Urban or suburban, close to daily amenities and services	Rural or semi-rural, surrounded by landscape and natural
Usual Typology	Compact, vertical units with shared outdoor amenities	Low-rise layouts with generous private outdoor space
Size & Layout	Stable family size; efficiency-led planning tailored to urban life	Fluctuating group sizes; layouts centred on leisure and gathering
Features	Dedicated functional rooms	Convertible sleeping zones with large shared spaces

Experience Principles

These behavioural needs get translated into design principles -

1. Design for Pause and Relaxation

- Window seats create small-scale refuges
- Fireplaces serve as natural gathering points
- Verandas offering transitions encourage slow movement

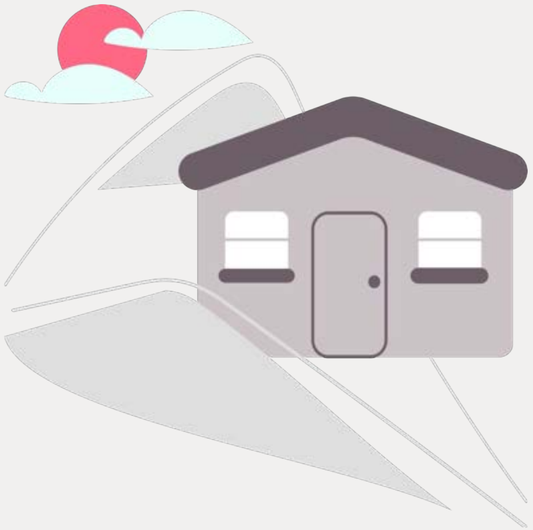
2. Indoor-Outdoor Flow

- Living and dining spaces oriented to capture downhill views
- Large verandas and decks act as the primary living zones
- Large operable openings allowing rooms to extend onto decks.

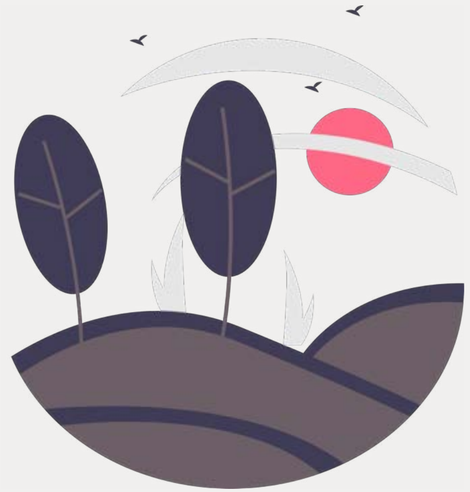
3. Flexibility for Changing Group Sizes

- Open-plan living spaces allowing usage patterns to adapt.
- Family rooms double up as bedrooms with convertible furniture.
- Double-height spaces creating spatial drama.

4. Adapt to Terrain



- Single-level plans for moderate slopes, emphasising horizontal flow and accessibility.
- Split-level configurations for moderate slopes, creating spatial variety and maximising view access from upper floors.
- Multi-level designs for steep terrains maintaining visual connection between levels.

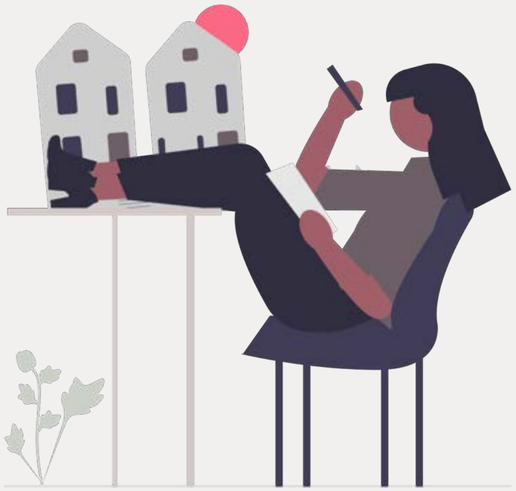


5. Climate Response Through Passive Strategies

- Cross-ventilation through operable louvers and windows.
- North-facing glazing to maximise indirect daylight.
- Roof overhangs provide shade and protection during rains.
- Rainwater harvesting integrated with design and site grading.

6. Personalisation Within Systematic Framework

- Rustic or modern styles applied to the same underlying plans
- Components remain standard across varying spatial layout.
- Style choices offered during architectural design stage.



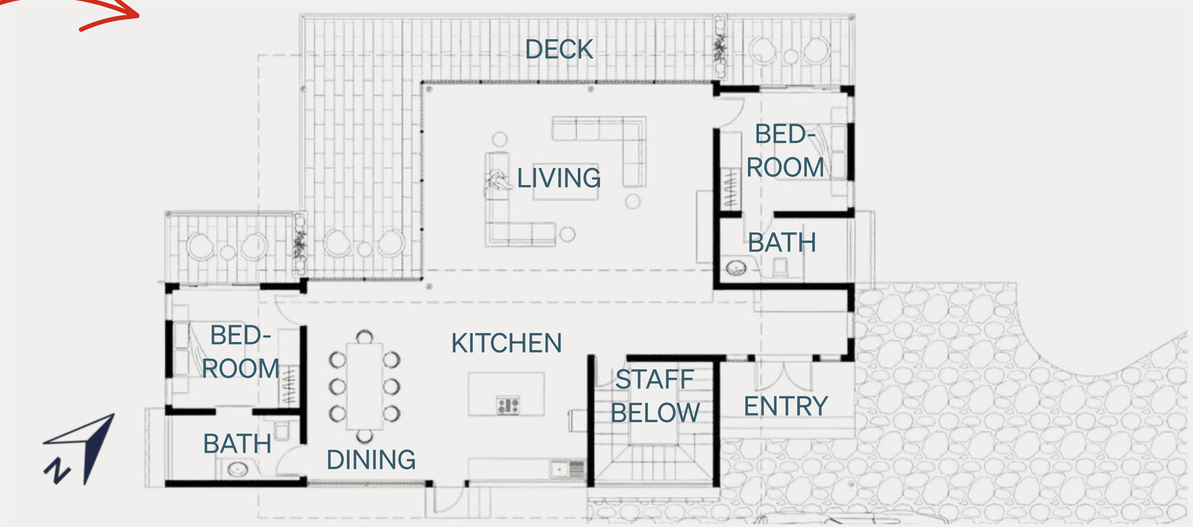
Iteration & Feedback Integration

Design Evolution: The Standard Type

Following a single design across iterations reveals how user needs, constraints, and feedback shaped the final outcome.

v_01 Initial Concept

- Area = 3050.00 Sq.Ft.
- Large expansive glazing
- Separate staff entry
- Basement for Utilities



v_02 Refinement

- Area = 2350.00 Sq.Ft.
- Introduction of louvers
- Compact utility zone
- Dedicated powder room

v_03 Final Product

- Area = 2096.00 Sq.Ft.
- No powder room
- 25% less glass
- Internal staff access

Feedback <--> Iteration

The evolution of the Standard Type reflected broader feedback patterns affecting all typologies.

We received critical feedback on maintenance, cost, and operational complexity, which directly informed the further redesigns.

Stakeholder Input	Design Response	Impact
"Excessive glazing is hard to clean & invites monkeys."	Reduced Window Area by ~30% and integrated operable louvers.	Lowered maintenance and increased security.
"Compact footprint is essential for cost control."	Reduced average footprint from ~3,050 sq ft to ~2,100 sq ft.	Optimised construction cost and minimised site impact.
"Powder rooms add cost without clear value."	Combined usage with bedroom toilets for guests.	Simplified plumbing and reduced total square footage.
"Separate staff access complicates design."	Integrated Staff Access from within the utility area.	Simplified building envelope and improved operational flow.
"Need size options for different budgets."	Created 4 distinct size classes ranging from 2,000 - 2,800 sq ft.	Created a scalable product line catering to diverse user financial tiers.
"Basement adds cost, should be utility-only."	Restricted Basement Use to storage/utility functions only.	Focused budget on high-impact living areas.

The Typology Portfolio

The iterative refinement process culminated in a coherent typology system. It guided diverse users through personalisation options without overwhelming them with complexity.

Seven housing types emerged, organised into **three tiers** by **size, terrain response & character :**

TIERS	AREA RANGE	FEATURES
STANDARD	1630 Sq Ft → 2050 Sq Ft	Focused on efficiency and essential connection. Ideal for smaller plots and minimal slopes.
DELUXE	2320 Sq Ft → 2390 Sq Ft	Introduced multi-level complexity for moderate slopes, adding dedicated family/gathering spaces.
LUXURY	2850 Sq Ft → 2960 Sq Ft	Featured dramatic double-height volumes and central features, suited for the steepest, most dramatic terrain.

Choice Framework

The system was designed to prevent choice paralysis by filtering options through clear constraints:

Budget Tiers: Buyers start by picking what they're comfortable spending — Standard, Deluxe, or Luxury.

Terrain Matching: The slope of the plot narrows the options. Gentle slopes suit single-level homes; steeper land works better with split- or multi-level types.

Spatial Character: Within the shortlist, buyers choose the style that fits how they live—open and social, or familiar and traditional.

Budget → Terrain → Lifestyle = **Recommended Typology**

Standard Type 1

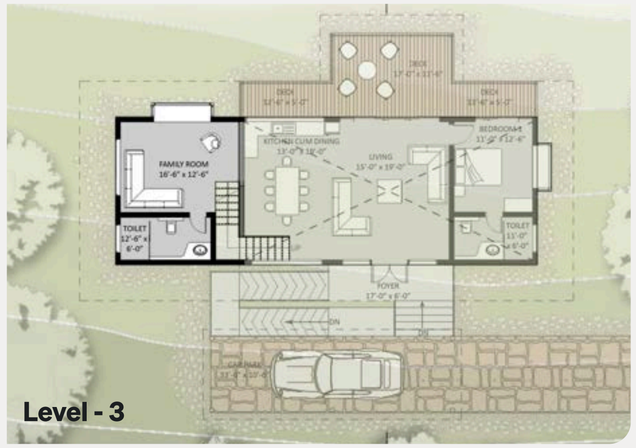
Car Porch	-	270.0 sqft.
Deck	-	650.0 sqft.
Built-up	-	1130.0 sqft.
Total Area	-	2050.0 sqft.

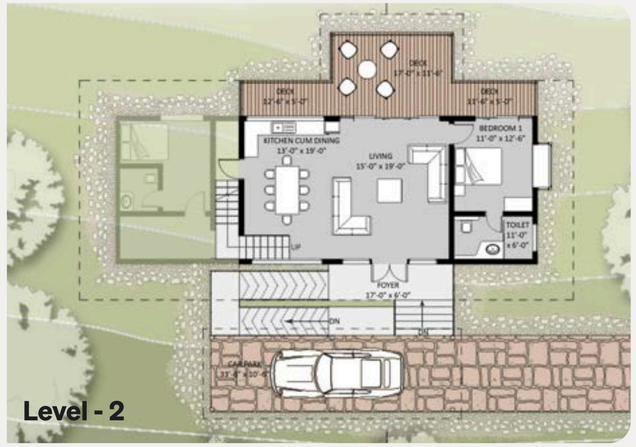
Staggered open plan with large decks.

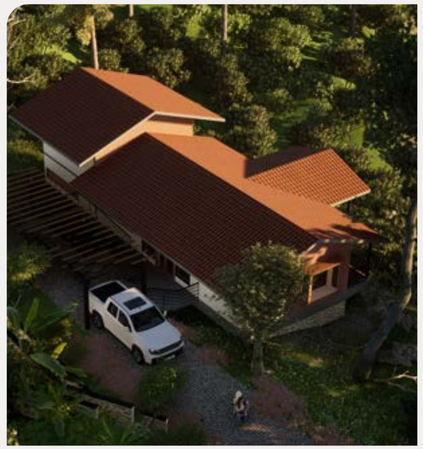
Butterfly roof form and expansive glazing give modern aesthetic.

Suits minimal-slope plots.

Deluxe Type 1







Car Porch	-	270.0 sqft.
Deck	-	540.0 sqft.
Built-up	-	1510.0 sqft.
Total Area	-	2320.0 sqft.

Family room at mid-level overlooking living areas, doubling as third bedroom.

Staff and utilities tucked beneath family room level.

Addresses moderate slopes

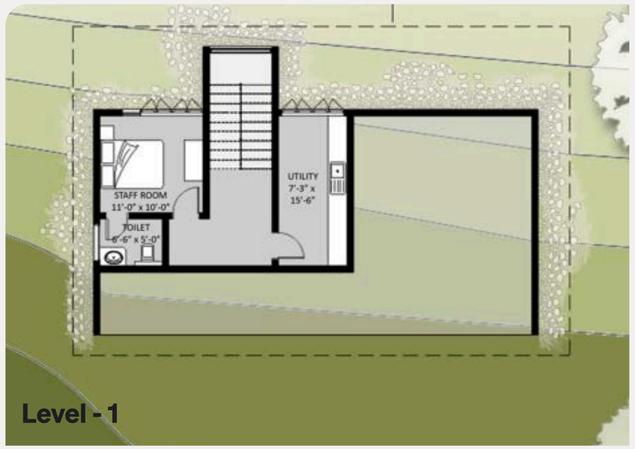
Luxury Type 1

Car Porch	-	270.0 sqft.
Deck	-	540.0 sqft.
Built-up	-	2150.0 sqft.
Total Area	-	2960.0 sqft.

Three-level design with central stair as architectural focal point.

Stacked bedroom organisation. Family room overlooks living area.

Suits steep plots, with views across multiple levels.



Outcomes

Value Across the Ecosystem

The final typology framework created a robust value ecosystem for all stakeholders involved in the estate's lifecycle.

For Buyers

Clear, bounded choices preventing decision paralysis

Meaningful personalisation via style/material selection

Predictable pricing for each typology

Reduced acquisition friction through managed processes.

For Developer

Efficient construction through repeated typologies

Bulk procurement across shared components

Reduced custom design time per unit

Predictable timelines and costs for the project

For Management

Standardised requirements - utility and maintenance

Predictable operational needs across property types

Quality control through repeated construction processes

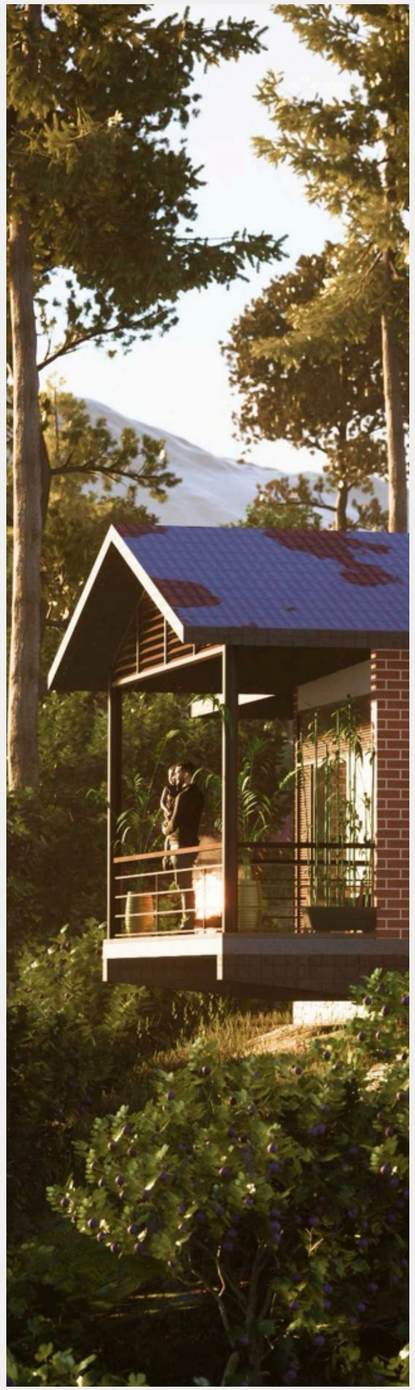
Clear buyer communication through documentation

Outcome

The final output is a family of scalable, user-aligned house models that plug into a larger managed estate system.

Each typology supports a different user tier and budget, while still feeling part of one coherent framework.

We successfully solved the problem of second-home ownership friction, proving that design can bridge the gap between urban aspiration and rural reality.



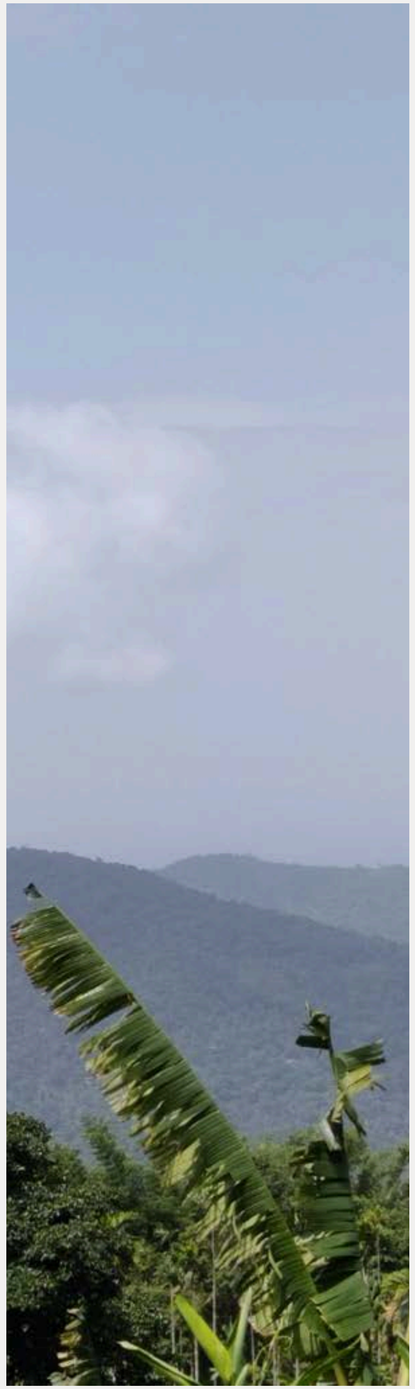
Thank you. *:)*

Credits

My team at **Anand & Associates** &

Our clients **Bogase Realty Pvt. Ltd**

Site Development



Site Development: Designing with Terrain

Balancing Cost, Access, and Experience on Complex Topography

Projects:

- Favorich Mega Food Park, Karnataka
- Tranquil Peak Resort, Kerala

Scope:

- Site analysis, grading strategy, access planning, infrastructure coordination

Approach:

- Terrain-driven design processes
- Prioritising natural landforms
- Cost optimisation through minimal earthwork
- User accessibility across elevation changes.

Introduction

How do you develop sites on challenging terrain while balancing construction costs, user accessibility, and site character?

Two projects- an industrial food park and a hillside resort required fundamentally different approaches to the same core problem: **making challenging topography work for human activity.**

The terrain analysis became the primary design driver. Despite serving completely different users and programs, both required systematic processes to turn topographic complexity into functional, cost-effective solutions.

Favorich Mega Food Park needed to deliver level, accessible industrial plots while minimising earthwork costs. ***Tranquil Peak Resort*** needed to create intimate guest experiences on steep slopes while maintaining universal accessibility.

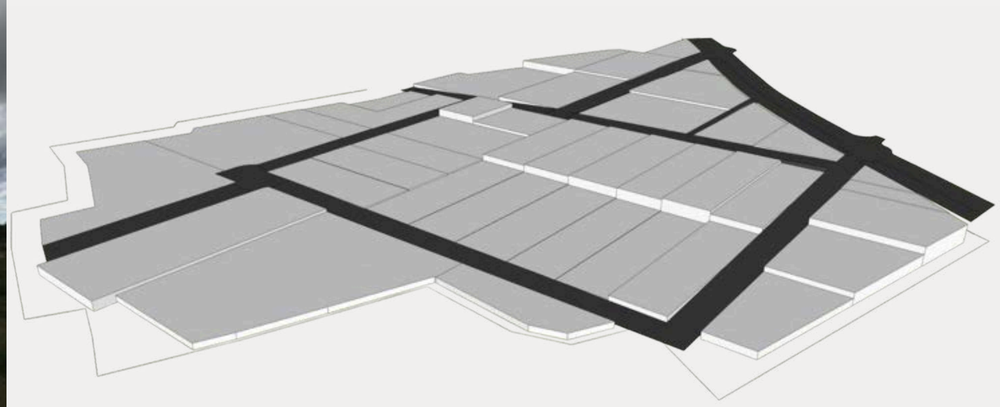
Project 1

Favorich Mega Food Park, Karnataka, India

60 Acres | Industrial Site Development | Built

The Problem

Favorich with their 275-acre industrial food park in Karnataka had begun developing a 60-acre parcel in Phase 1. The site exhibits significant level variation, with a pronounced high point toward the north-east and multiple low points toward the south-west and south-east edges.



EXISTING LAYOUT

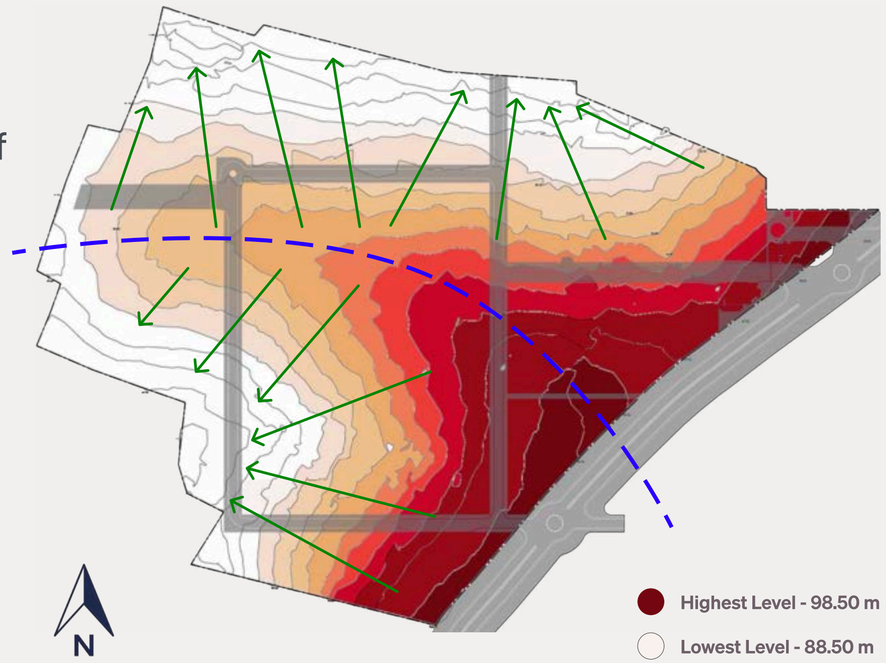
Initial infrastructure works had begun before a comprehensive grading strategy was established, resulting in:

- **Inaccessible plots:** Level differences between road & multiple plots made access impossible.
- **Undefined retention:** No clear system for managing soil between adjacent sites with level differences of up to 10.0m
- **Stormwater Management:** Gravity-flow sewage lines weren't feasible for large portions of the site.

Terrain Analysis

A detailed contour study across 60-acres of phase 1 change was carried out to identify:

- Natural movement of water across the site to map drainage patterns
- Areas suitable for collection and harvesting of rain water
- Existing infrastructure worth retaining
- Problem zones with excessive level differences



This analysis made it clear that flattening the site uniformly would increase earthwork volumes, construction cost, and long-term drainage risk.

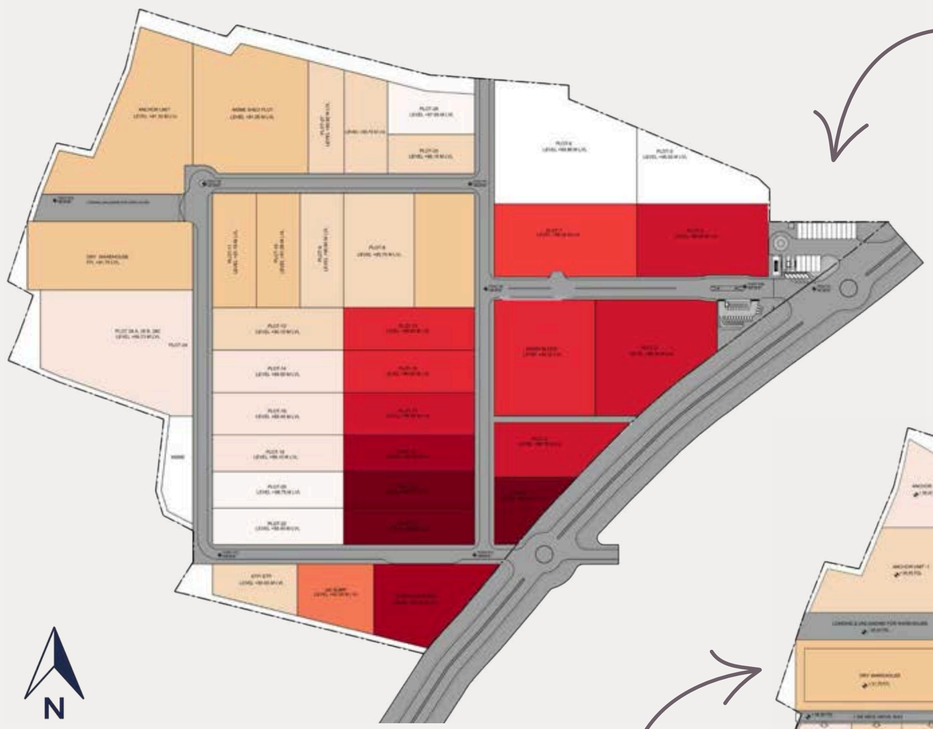
Design Objectives

Established measurable, client-validated goals:

- All plots are flat and 0.30 m above adjacent road level to prevent flooding and ensures drainage.
- Retaining walls are used only where elevation difference exceeds 1.50 m for cost control.
- Stone-pitched embankments of 1:1 slope are used where space permits, between plot edge and site boundary.
- Existing roads and drains are retained wherever feasible to reduce waste.
- Factor cost of saleable land used for infrastructure into total project cost (holistic economics)

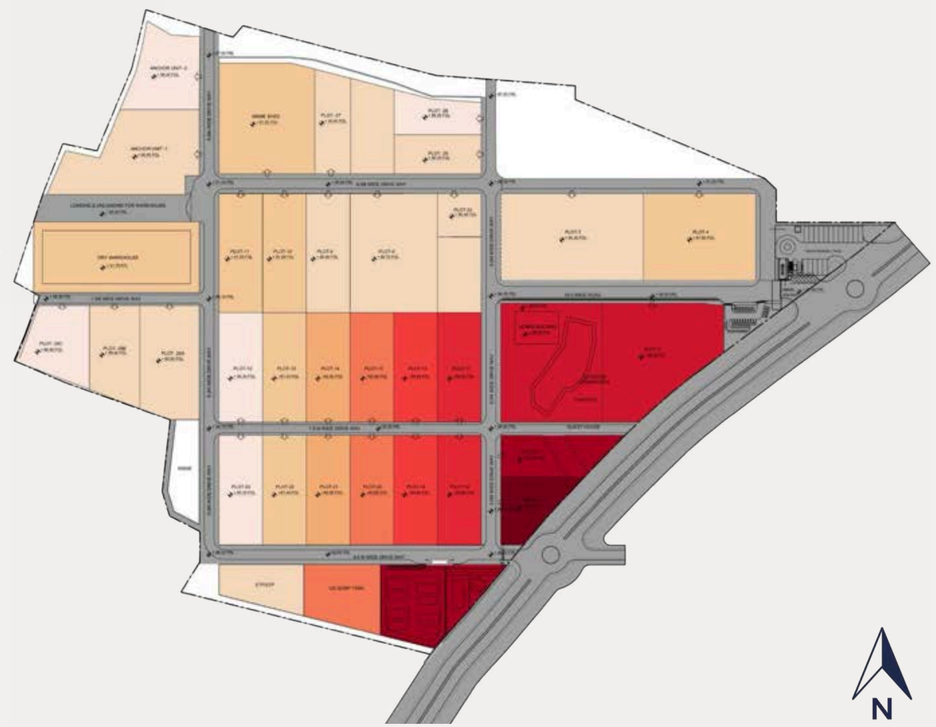
Grading Strategies

The cost of the existing layout formed the benchmark for evaluating alternative strategies. Three distinct grading and layout options were generated, each with complete BOQ breaking down costs across earthwork, retaining structures, roads, and land consumption.



Existing Layout (Baseline: ₹14.90M)

- Original problematic layout with irregular terracing and extreme elevation jumps (+88.5m to +98.5m)
- Multiple plots requiring excessive retaining walls
- Poor accessibility and undefined retention systems

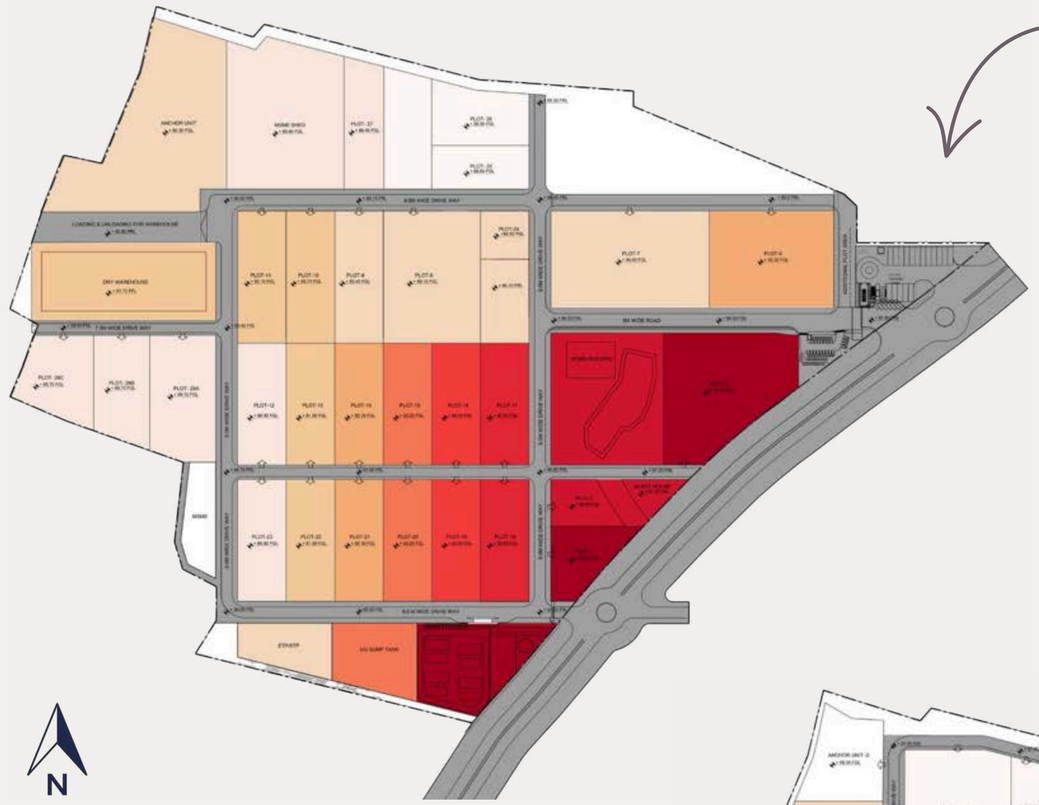


Option 1 (₹13.10M; -12% vs. Existing)

Modified road alignment following mid-slope contours
More regularised grid with smoother elevation transitions
Still required 684 running meters of retaining walls up to 10.5m height

Option 2 (₹12.40M; -17% vs. Existing)

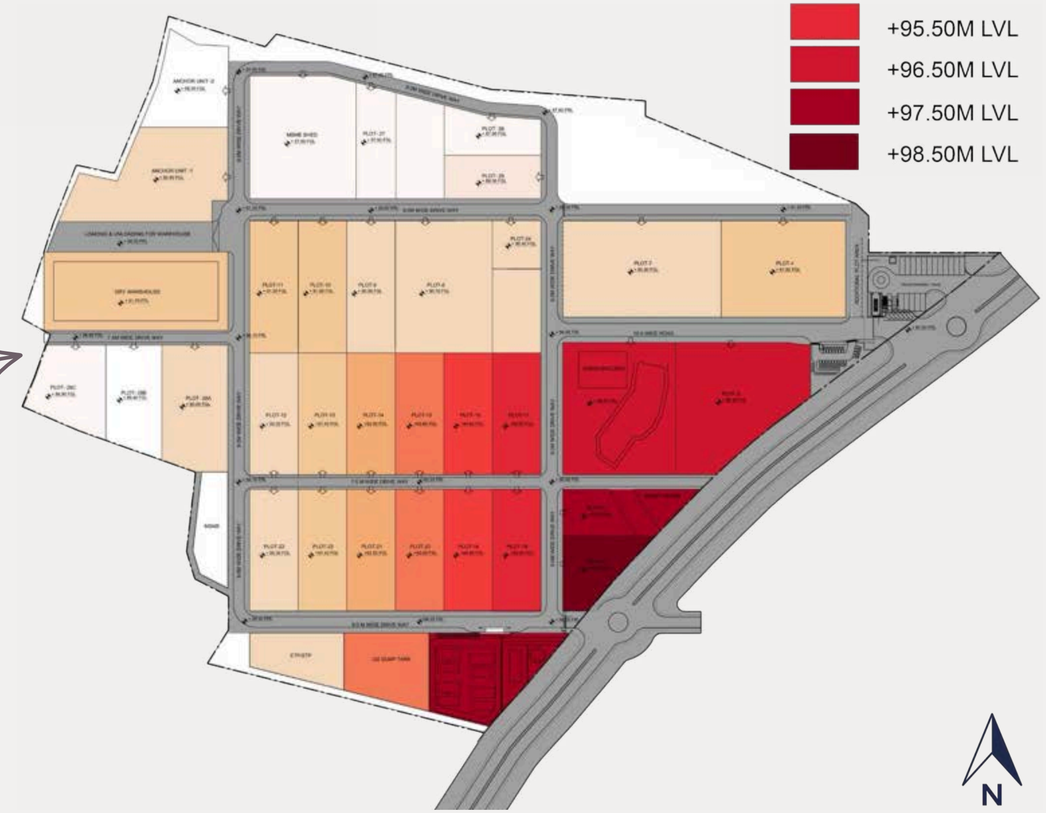
Terrain-responsive grading minimising cut-and-fill
Roads follow natural contours creating gradual terracing
Smoothest colour transitions indicate minimal earthwork intervention



+88.50M LVL
+89.50M LVL
+90.50M LVL
+91.50M LVL
+92.50M LVL
+93.50M LVL
+94.50M LVL
+95.50M LVL
+96.50M LVL
+97.50M LVL
+98.50M LVL

Option 3 (₹13.60M; -09% vs. Existing)

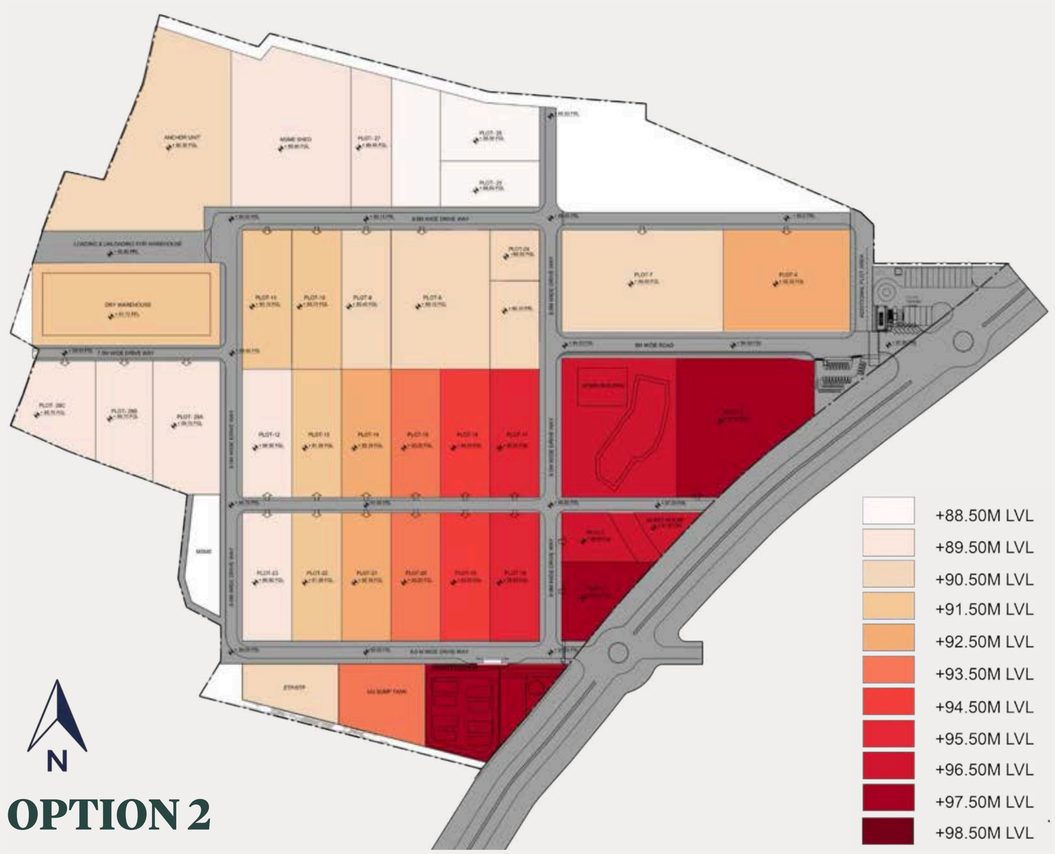
Alternative retention strategy with more retaining walls
Similar plot reorganisation to Option 2
Higher retaining wall costs offset other savings



The Solution

Option 2 delivered the best overall economics, despite requiring the most new road construction (more than double other options).

- **Balanced cut-fill:** Minimal brought-out earth reduced material costs and disposal complexity
- **Modest retaining walls:** Only 289 running meters at manageable 2-5m heights
- **Terrain-responsive logic:** Roads followed mid-slope contours, creating natural terracing
- **Moderate land consumption:** 1.59 acres to infrastructure—middle of range
- **Superior drainage:** New alignment worked with natural ridge-to-valley flow



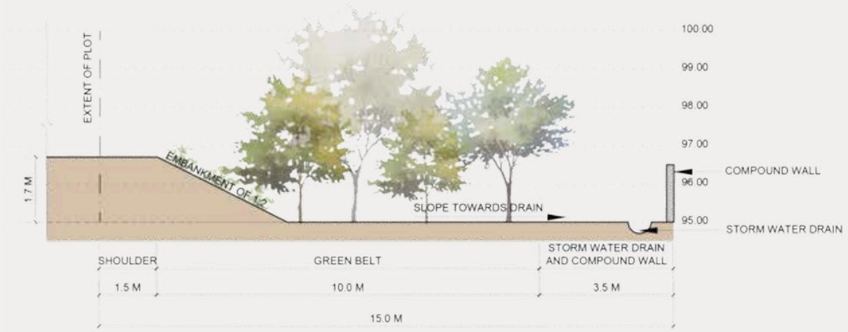
OPTION 2

Smooth colour gradients indicate fewer abrupt elevation transitions implying gradual changes and less dramatic earthwork. The layout solved accessibility and drainage problems that made the existing layout non-functional.

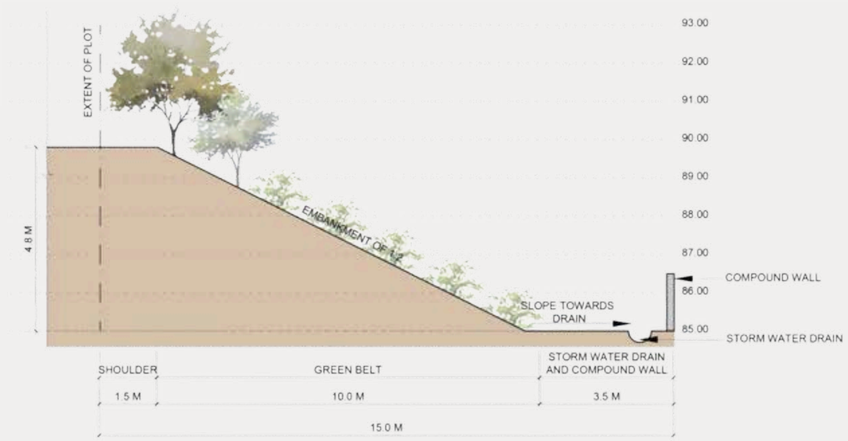
The best option isn't always the cheapest; it's the one that solves the core problems while delivering the best value.

Embankment Cross- sections

Three standardised cross-sections were developed to address varying terrain conditions across the site:



Section AA (Moderate Slope)



Section BB (Steeper Terrain)

Section CC (Maximum Grade)

The embankments respond to terrain: gentle level differences required smaller embankments and areas with steep level difference of above 5.0m, required a concrete toe wall with the embankments.

- 1.5m wide shoulder was provided for running utilities.
- 10m green belt offered visual buffer & erosion control
- 3.5m drainage zone with compound wall and storm water drain at the bottom handled water runoff.

Stone pitching at 1:1 slope replaced expensive retaining walls where space permitted, reducing costs while maintaining stability.

The Outcome

Quantifiable Results:

- **17% cost reduction** from existing layout (₹2.5M savings in Phase 1)
- **100% plot accessibility:** every site has proper vehicular approach
- **5.7% land for roads**: roughly half the typical 10-12% allocation for industrial parks
- **Clear drainage logic:** defined stormwater system working with terrain

Process Value:

Cost analysis validated design choices, the numbers proved terrain-responsive approach was both better functionally and economically.

Multiple costed options gave client clear comparison basis.

Detailed BOQ enabled accurate budgeting and contractor selection.

Technical Deliverables:

- Detailed master plan showing all plot boundaries, roads, and services.
- Cross-sections through roads showing grading, embankments, and drainage.
- Quantification of all earthwork: cut, fill, retaining structures, embankments.
- Bill of Quantities with technical specifications for all civil work.

Project 2

Tranquil Peak Resort, Paithalmala, Kerala

8 Acres | Hospitality Site Planning | In Progress

The Problem

Tranquil Peak Resort is located on a 8-acre steep hillside in Paithalmala, with an elevation difference of approximately 75 meters across the site. Two natural valleys with seasonal streams cut through the terrain, rendering large portions unsuitable for construction.

Requirements

A boutique resort with:

- 8-10 accommodation units serving diverse guest types
- Main facilities: reception, dining, kitchen, spa, gym, pool
- Staff accommodation and utilities

User Needs

Privacy: Seclusion from other units

Views: Panoramic views on south and west

Connection to nature: Immersive hillside experience

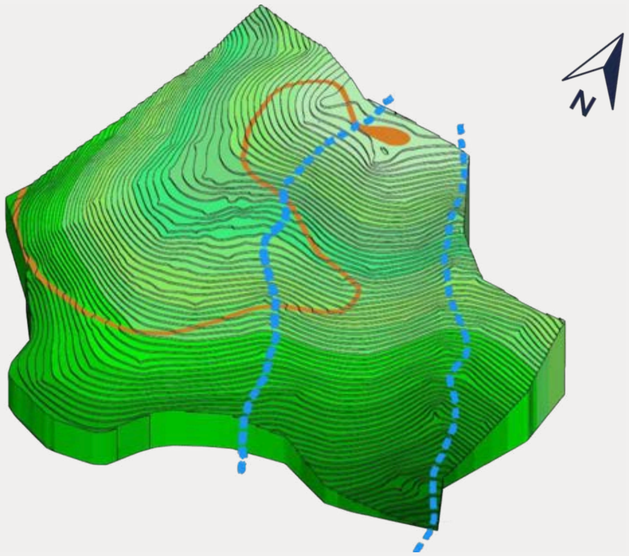
Accessibility: At least one universally accessible unit.

The Design Challenge: How do you create distinct, private experiences on contoured terrain while maintaining accessibility and delivering a memorable spatial sequence?

Site Analysis

Terrain Characteristics

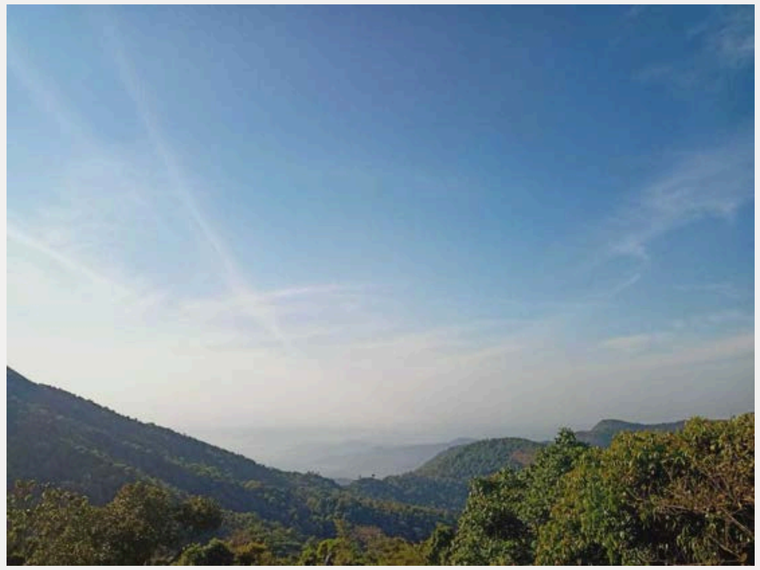
- Maximum slope: 35 degrees (within Kerala's 45-degree building regulation limit)
- Two seasonal valley streams running through site (must remain as ecological buffers)
- Best views toward south and west from upper elevations
- 75m total elevation change across full 8-acre site



Strategic Insight: Rather than fighting the slope, use elevation changes to create spatial hierarchy and experiential drama.

Towards West

Towards South



Design Evolution

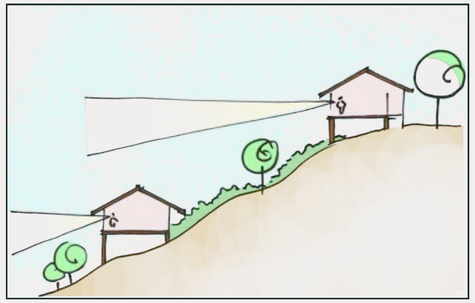
The project evolved over three major revisions across 18 months, with each iteration responding to emerging operational, environmental, and experiential challenges.t

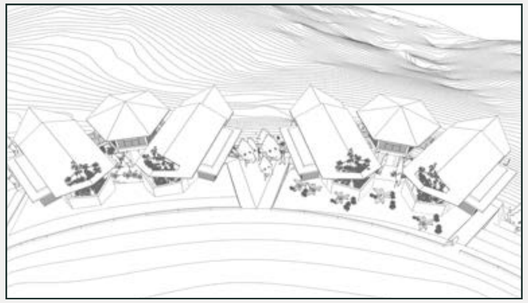
Initial Iteration - March 2022

The earliest site plan focused on programmatic zoning driven by views.

- 8 large standalone suites (each ~645 Sq.Ft.) spread across upper elevations
- Separate spa & pool block at lower level accessed by pedestrian paths
- Reception and restaurant as distinct buildings
- Staff accommodation at site perimeter
- Presidential suite with private pool

Client feedback: "This feels too spread out. Guests and staff will struggle with distances. Operations will be complicated."





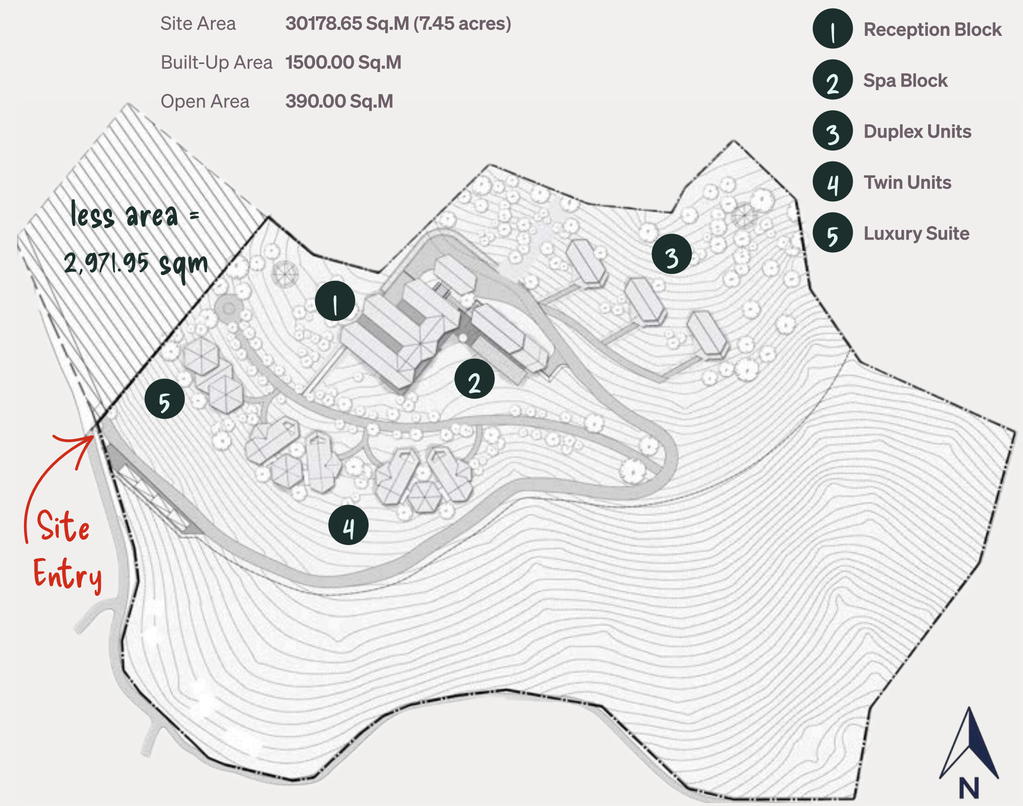
All buildings offer scenic and unobstructed views to the surroundings.

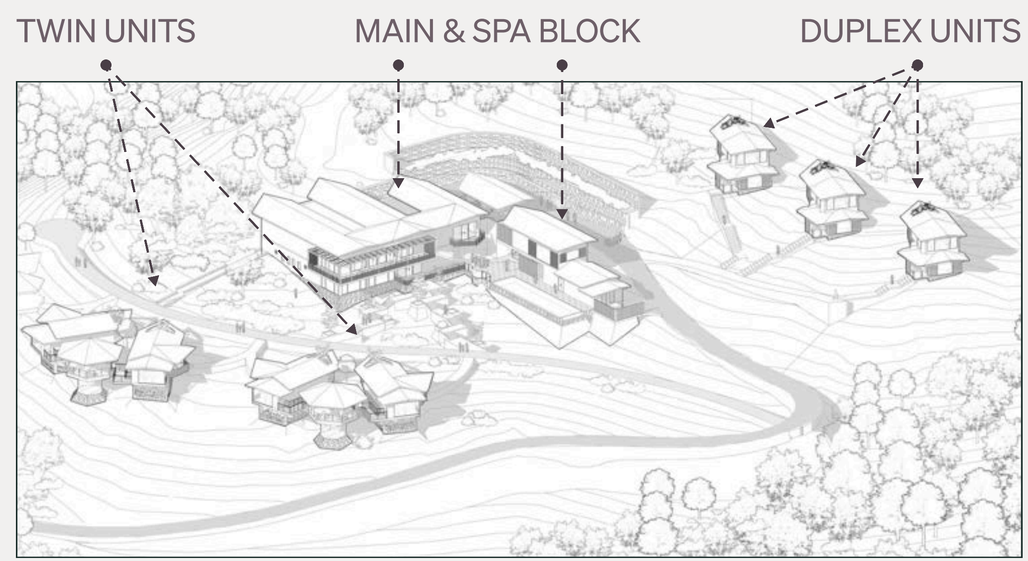
Second Iteration- August 2022

A strategic shift toward compact planning to improve access, security, and operational clarity was made.

Main block integrated all public functions - reception, dining, spa, gym, pool into split-level design. Guest accommodation reorganised into twin units and duplex units. Vehicular access was restricted to a primary road, and pedestrian movement became dominant. Valleys and steeper slopes were consciously left untouched, reducing the developed footprint.

Client feedback: "We are concerned about circulation being uncomfortable for guests, due to accessibility challenges and insects."





Ariel View

The Final Solution

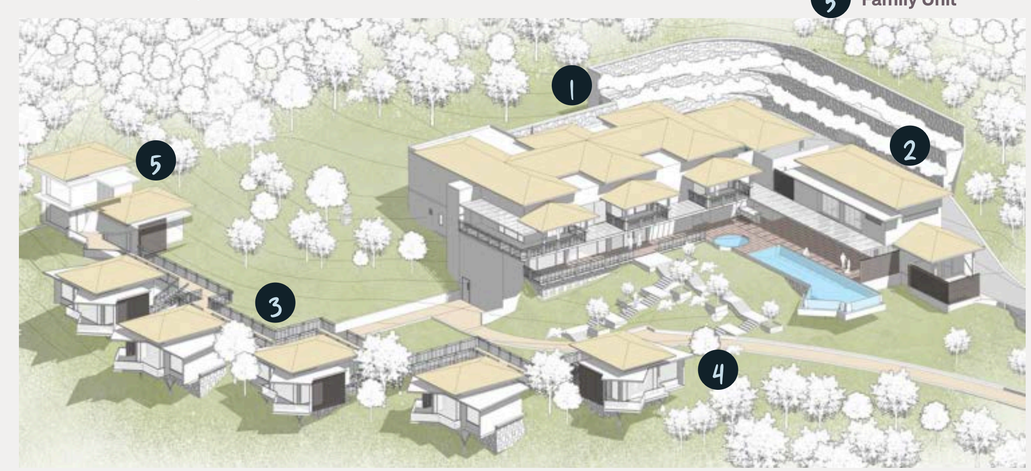
The final layout treated terrain as the organising structure for both movement and placement.

It directly addressed concerns around accessibility and comfort.

90 m of elevated pathways create a barrier-free circulation.
Guest rooms raised on stilts, reducing contact with ground vegetation and insects
Accommodation mix refined to include four independent units, one accessible unit, and one family unit.

Guest Room Diversity:

- *Independent Units:* Units on stilt, designed to work with the slope
- *Accessible Unit:* Ramp access from elevated pathway
- *Family Unit:* With three- bedrooms, to accommodate one large group or multiple smaller groups



The Elevated Pathway System:

A 90-meter network of raised walkways redefined circulation as a core spatial experience rather than a purely functional link.

- Raised a minimum of 1.5 m above ground, creating a sense of moving through the landscape rather than across it
- Connects the main block to all guest units along a consistent level
- Integrated ramps ensure barrier-free access without regrading the terrain
- Movement becomes experiential, offering shifting views and changing perspectives
- Natural ground plane preserved, with no excavation beneath the pathways

The Outcome

Project Metrics

- Total project cost of ₹16.4 crore, including ₹5 crore allocated to the elevated pathway system
- Built area of 1,460 Sq.M supported by 670 Sq.M of open decks
- Six accommodation units designed to serve the distinct guest profiles
- Full site accessibility achieved on a steep hillside without flattening the terrain

Spatial & Experiential Outcomes

Circulation reimagined as a memorable spatial sequence through elevated movement

Buildings raised on stilts preserve the natural ground plane and create a sense of lightness

Privacy achieved through vertical separation and orientation rather than physical barriers

Spa and pool positioned to leverage elevation for uninterrupted views

Process & Learning Outcomes

- An 18-month iterative process shaped by evolving client input and cost constraints
- Three major revisions, each addressing a different layer of the problem:
  - Rev 01 clarified spatial distribution
  - Rev 02 resolved operational efficiency and budget alignment
  - Rev 03 strengthened experiential quality and accessibility
- Continuous client collaboration allowed the project to mature beyond its initial vision, demonstrating how iterative refinement can produce more resilient and thoughtful outcomes

Conclusion

Learnings from Site Development & Terrain-Led Planning

Terrain as a System, Not a Surface

Treating topography as the primary organising structure led to clearer access, drainage, and grading decisions. Working with contours reduced earthwork, cost, and long-term maintenance.

User needs shape the response

Understanding who the site was for shaped every major decision, from road alignment to building placement. Similar site constraints produced very different solutions because user priorities differed.

Iteration Improves Outcomes

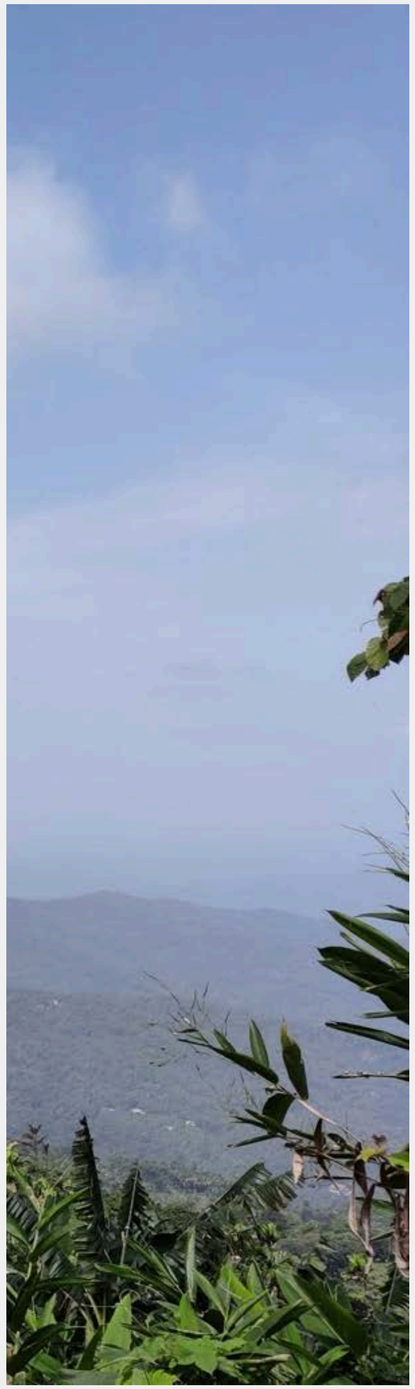
Design quality improved through structured revisions rather than adherence to an initial vision. Each iteration addressed a different layer: layout clarity, operational efficiency, and experiential quality.

Accessibility Without Erasure

Inclusive movement emerged from circulation strategy and spatial planning. Both projects challenged the assumption that difficult terrain requires aggressive intervention to achieve accessibility.

Constraints as Design Drivers

Constraints became drivers of innovation. Existing infrastructure, steep slopes, and cost limits forced more thoughtful, system-level solutions. The most effective design moves emerged not despite constraints, but because of them.



Across both projects, site planning became an exercise in systems thinking: aligning terrain, movement, cost, and user needs into coherent, buildable frameworks.

Thank you. *:)*

Credits

My team at **Anand & Associates** &

Our clients **Favorich infra pvt ltd** &

Mr. Benley

What I Bring

The best of both disciplines

UX Craft

User research, journey mapping, wireframing, prototyping in Figma, and clear communication that bridges design and development.

Architecture DNA

Spatial reasoning, design maturity, managing complex projects, and an intuition for what feels right — or when something's off.

Beyond the Portfolio

I make **origami** and **kirigami** to think with my hands.

I'm a noticer — patterns, people, the way light falls.

I live for **coffee** and the rare cat that decides I'm trustworthy.

Let's Connect

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