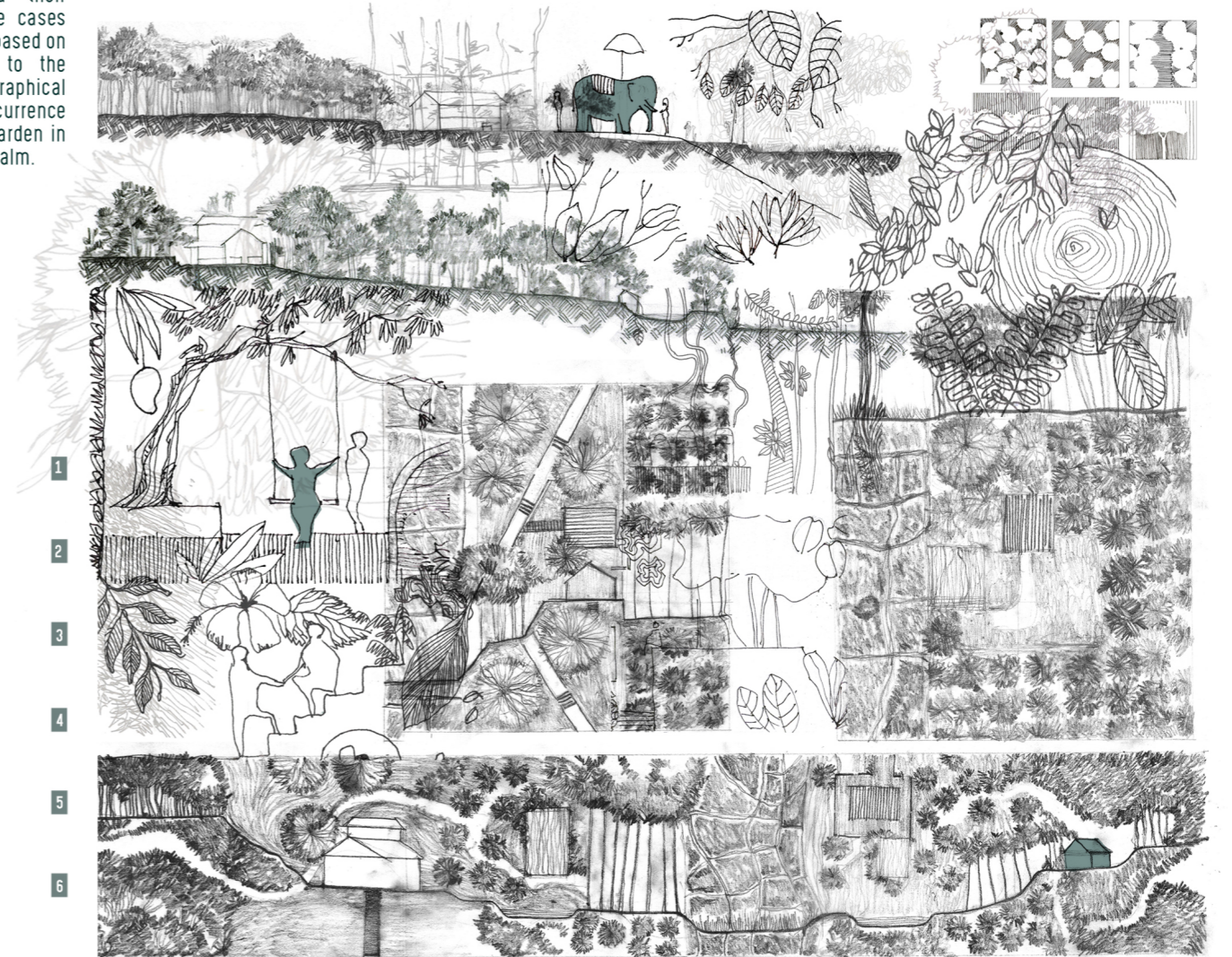


Along the river 'Nila' more than fifteen homestead gardens were studied during site exploration. Detailed anthropological field work was carried out in each case. Further six homestead gardens were identified for detailed exploration and analysed in terms of tangible fabric and their associated meanings. The cases were thoughtfully chosen based on specific criteria evident to the region like the geographical location, purpose of occurrence and the maintenance of garden in their present residential realm.

- Karingamantha melethil**
Naduvattom, Kerala
10.875153, 76.003235
Elevation-15 Metres MSL
- Poomulli mana**
Nagalassery, Kerala
10.741096, 76.131558
Elevation-29 Metres MSL
- Opallapamanna mana**
Vellinezhi, Kerala
10.903598, 76.345247
Elevation-46 Metres MSL
- Pankulam veedu**
Paikulam, Kerala
10.742032, 76.327864
Elevation-36 Metres MSL
- Kalappurai**
M. Pudur, Kerala
10.602483, 76.796684
Elevation-171 Metres
- Veluthakkal Tharavad**
Nellikode, Vandazhi, Kerala
10.574751, 76.518873
Elevation-63 Metres MSL

Homestead Gardens of 'Nila' Riverine region



landscape fabric and their associated meanings

Country / City Ahmedabad, India

University / School CEPT University

Academic year 2017 -18

Title of the project Homestead Gardens of 'Nila' Riverine Region

Authors Anuja J.





PERFORMATIVE NATURE

Barcelona International Landscape Architecture Biennial

September 2018 **Barcelona**

SCHOOL PRIZE

X International Landscape Architecture Biennial

Máster d'Arquitectura del Paisatge -DUOT - UPC

ETSAB- Escola Tècnica Superior

d'Arquitectura de Barcelona

Avenida Diagonal, 649 piso 5

08028 Barcelona-Spain

TECHNICAL DOSSIER

Title of the project Homestead Gardens of 'Nila' Riverine Region
Authors Anuja J.
Title of the course Independent Thesis (Sem 4)
Academic year 2017 -18
Teaching Staff Divya Shah
Department/Section/Program of belonging Masters in Landscape Architecture, Faculty of Architecture
University/School CEPT University

Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

The study region lies in the south of Indian subcontinent in the state of Kerala. It extends across the flood plains of river Nila, which originates in the Western Ghats and empties into the Arabian Sea in the west. There exists a unique cultural fabric along the river, where the vernacular homestead gardens represent a complex and rich microcosm of the larger setting defining itself as a place that in the process defines and in return holds the imprints of a certain way of life people lead. In order to describe these vernacular gardens one cannot be satisfied with a formal description of its environment, because the garden is a deliberately maintained biotope that depends upon the social culture of its gardeners for survival over time. These vernacular gardens are places that contribute to the maintenance of a subculture within a broader cultural context. The region has developed its specific forms owing to the varying eco regions as a response through variation in shape, size, proportion and content of the architecture of the home and its garden. Homestead gardens are a place for family, socialization, experimentation, and cultivation of plants related to sustenance. These, though are places of small scale beauty and precision, but they are also keepers of the larger impressions of the cultural context. The study explains a method of mapping, understanding and decoding these homestead gardens to understand the cultural landscape in relation to people's connection to the locality and explores its outcomes in terms of various frames of references.

For further information

Máster d'Arquitectura del Paisatge -DUOT - UPC

T: + 34 93 401 64 11 / +34 93 552 0842

Contact via email at: biennial.paisatge@upc.edu

Consult the web page <http://landscape.coac.net/>

Regional setting

Cultural landscape manifests the intimate connection between man and his natural surroundings. Landscape can be used as a medium to demarcate the boundaries, in its natural, built or political forms. The landscapes created by water, hills, forest or river are considered as natural while the fences and walls are considered as built. These spatial zones enclose all the elements which allow the community to sustain by itself.

The one and only river in the country which denotes the name of the nation and most probably the river which carries a masculine identity after the Brahmaputra is Bharatapuzha down south. The river, also known as Nila interestingly witnesses a complete cycle of a human life. The river has been the silent witness and a strong subject to the rise and fall of many great poets, praising her glory in abundance that helped enhance the ethnic environment of the region and the state.



Journey of 'Nila' through the landscape

Detailed exploration

Every region has developed their specific house forms owing to the varying eco regions as a response of specificity in architecture through variation in shape, size, proportion and content of the garden. This variation is unique considering the highly scientific and technical that are adaptive environments

The traditional vernacular gardens are place for family, sociability, amateur experimentation, and cultivation of high quality fruits and vegetables. This place can be considered a place to study the small scale beauty and precision. Here the study of homestead gardens are described through one example.

Context

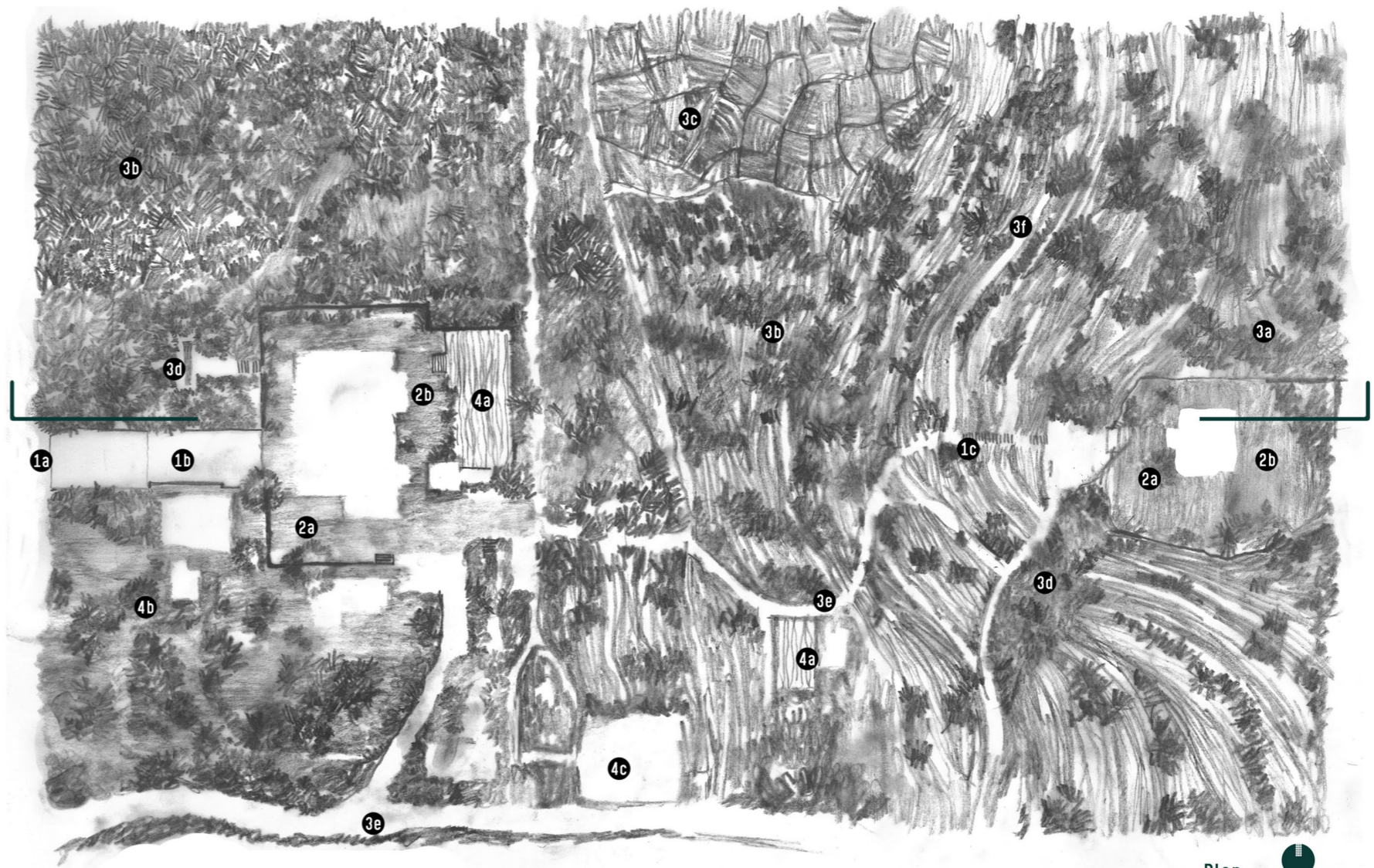


Plantations, groves and gardens
Paddy field
Natural Vegetation

The Garden image



Section
0 10 20 30

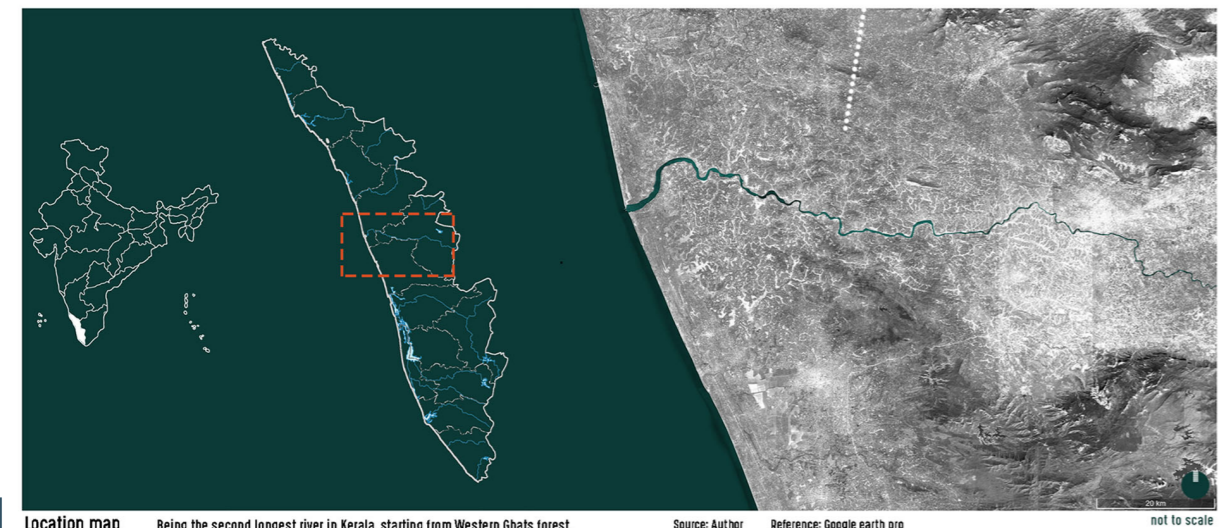
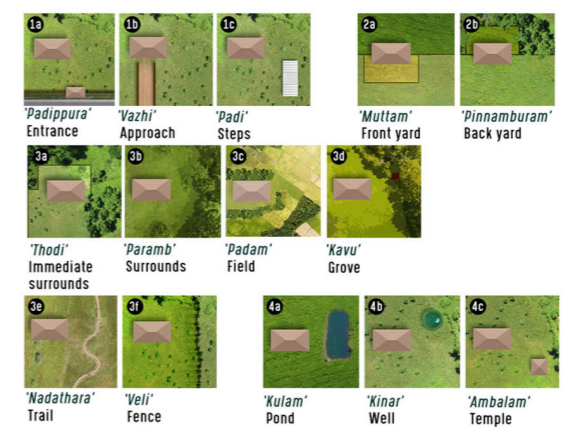


Plan
0 10 20 30

Olappamanna mana Vellinezhi Kerala

Olappamanna Mana , one of the centuries old feudal Namboothiri (Kerala Brahamin) Illam (house), have a glittering cultural heritage in the field of Kathakali (classical dance form), Carnatic Music, Melam and Thayampaka (classical percussions), Literature and Rig Veda.

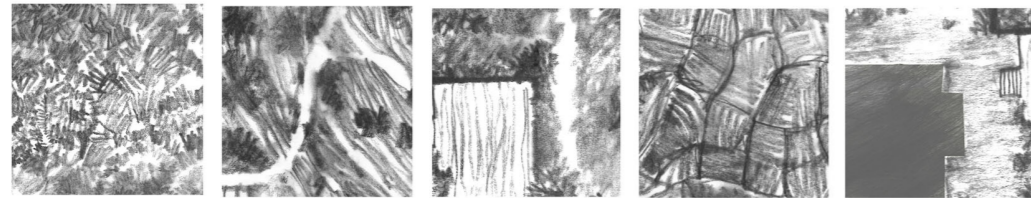
The Mana (house) is located at Vellinezhi, a small village 40 kms (25 miles) away from Palakkad town, Vellinezhi surrounded by the unpolluted river Kunthi (tributary of Nila) on northern and western side is literarily known as Thourathrika Gramam (village with perfect blend of Music, Rhythm and Dance.)



Location map Being the second longest river in Kerala, starting from Western Ghats forest, it travels almost 210km before it reaches the Arabian Sea at Chamravattam Source: Author Reference: Google earth pro not to scale



Plant associations



Mapping the plant species present in the garden and aimed at understanding the many relations man shares with nature. The cultural associations are studied considering the mythological, Festive, Symbolic, Edible, Medicinal, Decorative and utilitarian relations. The evident occurrence of each species in the garden are also represented using key thumbnails.

In the garden, trees and plants grow self-same wild and variety of species are seen in abundance. In Kerala ten flowering plants are considered sacred and all these plants are seen in the yards of the garden. Mixture of these ten auspicious herbs according to the regional tradition are used as Ayurvedic medicine for curing chronic diseases.

- Myth
- Festival
- Symbolic
- Edible
- Medicinal
- Decorative
- Utilitarian
- Daily
- Seasonal
- Natural occurring
- Planted

Landscape grains

Irrespective of spatial reference, similarity and variation of landscape grains differ in all the areas. There are areas with no variations like the front yard and areas with maximum variation like the surrounds.

During monsoon the 'paramb' (surrounds) get filled with seasonal flowering plants. Flowers from these plants which grow during this particular time are used to make 'athappo' (Floral pattern) during Onam festival. Thumba is one of this kind.

Some leafy vegetables, which Keralites named 'pathila' (ten leafy vegetables), have an amazing effect on our health, especially if consumed during 'Karkidakam' (month in traditional calendar) season. 'Pathila' are highly affordable, and are very good for health and are abundantly used by Keralites in traditional dishes.

Variety of plants present in the garden, their kind of occurrence, seasonal associations and cultural relations and altogether the many relations that man shares with nature are understood.

Cultural association

Thumba is a small erect diffusely branched annual herb. It flowers abundantly during monsoon. Their flowers are tiny shoe shaped and white in colour. In Kerala it is also used in traditional medicine for cough, cold and painful swellings and skin eruptions, as an antipyretic and insecticide.



Thumba
Common name: Ceylon slitwort
Scientific name: *Leucas zeylanica*

Daily food associations



Kariveppila
Common name: Curry leaves
Scientific name: *Murraya koenigii*



Manjal
Common name: Turmeric
Scientific name: *Curcuma longa*



Thengu
Common name: Coconut tree
Scientific name: *Cocos nucifera*



Puli
Common name: Tamarind
Scientific name: *Tamarindus indica*

Sacred associations



Ezhilam pala
Common name: Devil tree
Scientific name: *Alstonia scholaris*



Elangi
Common name: Bullet wood
Scientific name: *Mimusops elengi*



Kanjiram
Common name: Quaker buttons
Scientific name: *Stychnos nux-vomica*



Shangupushpam
Common name: Asian pigeonwings/
Butterfly pea
Scientific name: *Clitoria ternatea*



Karimkoovalam
Common name: Kerala flora
Scientific name: *Monochoria vaginalis*



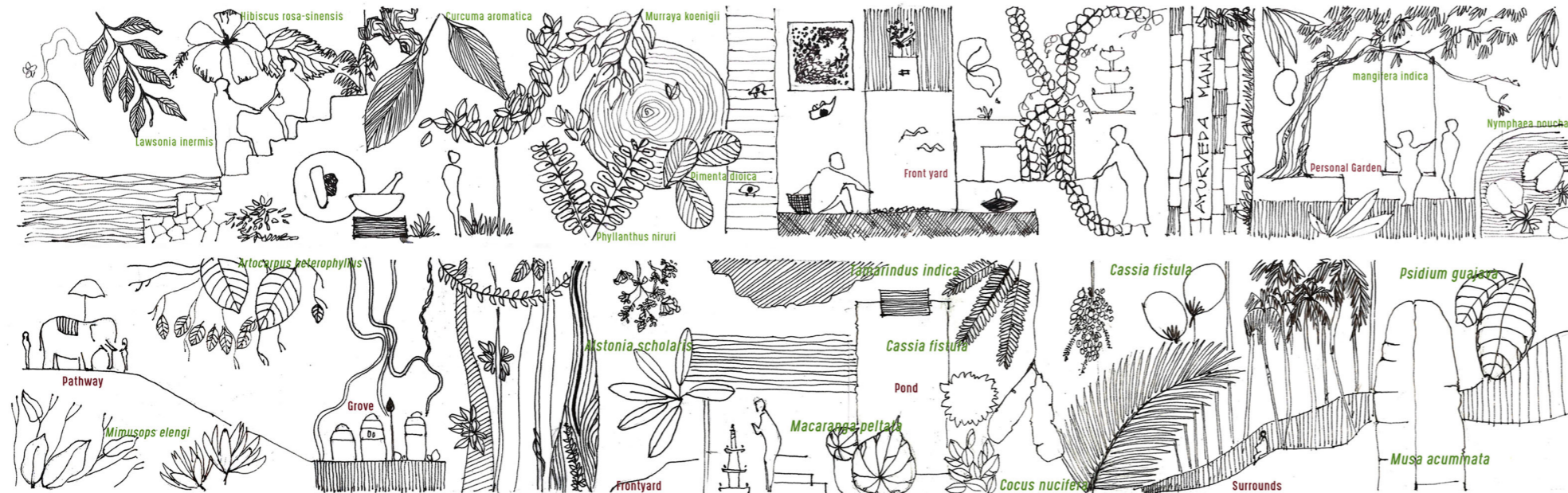
Chembarathi
Common name: Hibiscus
Scientific name: *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*



Adakka
Common name: Areca tree
Scientific name: *Areca catechu*



Mailanchi
Common name: Henna plant
Scientific name: *Lawsonia inermis*



Sketch representing impression of garden

Impression of garden

Experiential mapping



- Imageability** ■ Pronounced physical feature, Social meaning- Ceremony
- Interaction** ■ Place of arrival, Gathering
- Restorative benefit** ■ Separation from distraction, Provision for rest, Presence of water, Psychological engagement
- Direction** ■ Ease of movement, Linearity of floorscape, Psychological engagement
- View** ■ Sense of there-ness,
- Threshold** ■ Change in direction/ Sudden change in level, frames, gateway
- Corridor** ■ Human scale, Linear continuity of material
- Segment** ■ Central focal point, Linear continuity of material, Physical engagement, Choice of direction
- Ephemeral** ■ Sun to shade, wet to dry, Seasonal effect
- Area** ■ Degree of privacy, Use and activity

Meanings and impressions

Definition of space



Plants

boundaries and barriers



Plants and the built



Levels



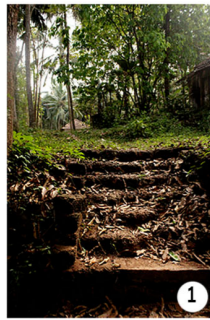
Bunds



Walls



Meaning of the garden is abstracted through model as an expression of space. It is a personal, perception based expression as impression of garden. The associated meanings are abstracted through sketches as well. These models were made during the course of analysis of spaces and while deriving major landscape preferences which was one major aim of the research.



1
Ease of movement
change in direction
Seasonal effect



2
Pronounced physical feature
Presence of water
Sudden change in level



3
Gathering
Use and activity
Seperation from distraction
Degree of privacy
Gateway



4
Social meaning
Place of arrival
Linear continuity of material



5
Seasonal effect
Use and activity



6
Ease of movement
Linear continuity of material
Sun to shade

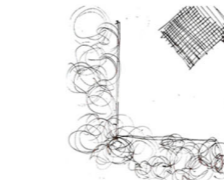


7
Ease of movement
Sudden change in level
Wet to dry, Seasonal effect



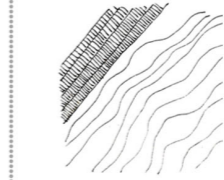
8
Presence of water
Physical engagement
Degree of privacy

Spatial interface



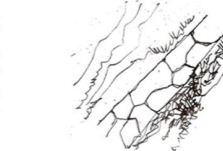
Strong interface

One meeting the other of reliable character



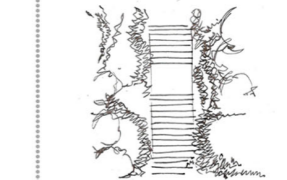
Strong interface

Built -nature interface



Obvious

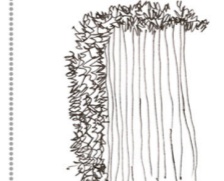
One meeting the other of dissimilar character



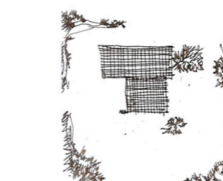
Obvious



Subtle interface



Subtle interface



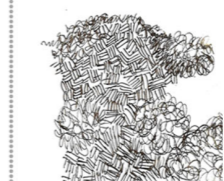
Blurred



Blurred



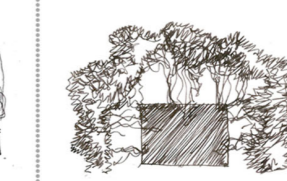
Invisible



Invisible



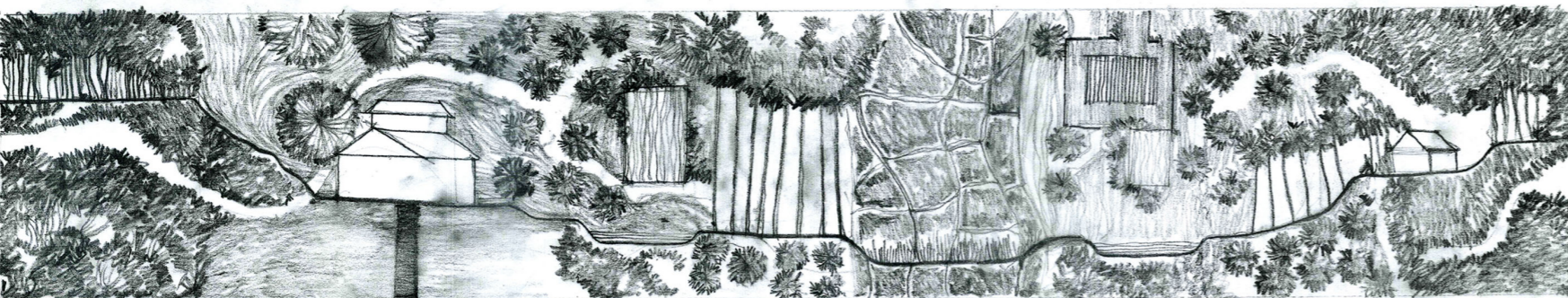
Blurred



Blurred

Parameters Indicator

The character of garden resembles a miniature valley where plants and trees grow in abundance. There are no clear visual lines directing to any of the garden spaces but sense of direction is achieved through trails. Very prominent experiential qualities like sense of there-ness and belongingness is felt in many of the garden spaces. Ponds present in the site are a pronounced physical feature with multiple characters which satisfy different experiential qualities. According to the use and activities, the garden spaces can easily be categorized into areas like groves, plantations, agricultural land, front and back yards. The definition of these categories are the reasons why the garden spaces are organised in order and also why they act as a single unit. Sense of enclosure is one of the major spatial characters perceptible in the garden. The definition of space under changing enclosures vary in character. The varying experience created by plants and trees and the built are dependent on the type of spatial enclosure.



Landscape-meanings- Artistic expression

Exposition

Geographic location.....Mid-land
Proximity to river.....Near- by
Interaction with immediate...Medium surrounding

Extent of garden space.....Spread
Influence of belief systemPresent
Richness in floraPresent

RelevanceSoceital
Man-made arrangement of spaceVisible
Limit of gardenNot marked

Purpose of maintainance..... Unique
conservation of ecosystem..... Strong
Landscape expressionOrganic

