The embankments, whatever job they are doing to control the incursion of flood-water, also raise a key question about the edge of the city, about marking a boundary between what will remain dry and what will stay wet. There is a great ecological and economic divide around that. It is within those premises of the sixth morphology, of the realization that Dhaka is an island, and that the city knowingly and unknowingly maintains a precarious relationship with a vast stretch of wetlands that are periodically flooded, that the architecture exercise focused on.

Seven sites of intervention were selected along the western embankment of Dhaka, strung all along its length from near Showari Ghat area, the oldest part of the city, to the area up in the north at the Mirpur botanical garden. Each site was carefully selected, with its immediate peculiarities and special conditions in mind, to address a whole series of issues for the edge of Dhaka.

Site 1: Old Dhaka, begin at the beginning

The "site" is one of the busiest and most built up areas in Dhaka -- the original, old city -- with Showari Ghat at one end and the foot of the new bridge at the other end. The site marks the physical end of buildable land, as well as the cultural and economical importance of the river. There is, in fact, no site here in the conventional sense.

With such limited land at that site it seemed only natural to build on water itself. So the class introduced a continuous, porous structure that is meant to mediate between the growth of the city and the lack of land on the site. By looking at how indigenous buildings built on stilts were constructed along the river's edge they developed a grid system that ran all along the site. The introduction of a continuous element along the edge would create an ordering element that could counteract the random nature of the immediate city.





View of housing at the tip of Kamrangir Char