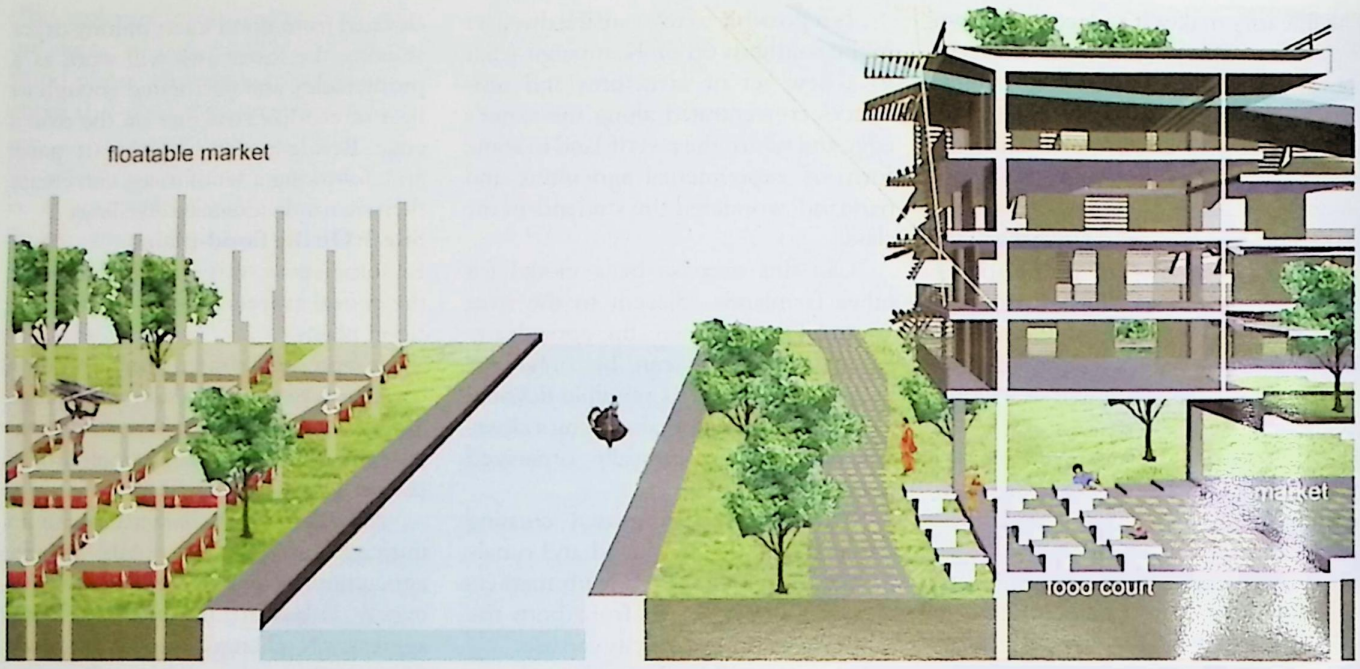
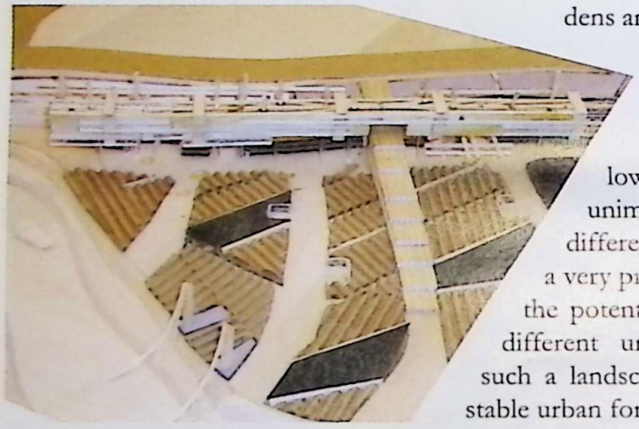


A partial view through the new canal between the commercial buildings and the islet on the left



a process that marks the so-called urbanization of Dhaka all around its edge.

The aim of the class was how "to bring the city into the flood-plain and the flood-plain into the city." They focused on an existing canal on the flood-plain side of the embankment and used that as a main organizer. They proposed to re-establish the canal within the city-side (which has been ingloriously filled up) and thus unify the city by a waterway, reminding the citizens that they live in a waterborne city.

The class proposed a new network of cautious and careful development -- streets, walkways, housing and public places -- that was mostly elevated either on stilts or non-continuous earth mounds over agricultural fields, gardens and parks, each at different elevations and responding to different levels of flooding.

The porosity at the lower level allowed an unimpeded flow of water at different seasons. While this is a very provisional idea, it offers the potential to think of a very different urban morphology on such a landscape -- a more or less stable urban form overlaid over a fluid landscape.

Site 4: Near the Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial

The class went much beyond the embankment to ponder over dwellings in a totally aquatic landscape. Looking at the overall agricultural land and wetlands, especially along the Bashila Road (created on a local embankment) near the Martyred Intellectuals' Monument, they understood that "the relationship of land/water/man is not balanced, rather it is a biased and disconnected one propagated by unplanned intentions."

Their key question was: How does one inhabit the water? Seeing how important the cyclical water flow and management is to Dhaka, they decided to blur the fabrics between land/water/human by fragmenting the embankment at points. They proposed this in two ways: one, by creating a designated "green/water" buffer between the embankment and the built city characterized by wetlands, reservoirs, retention ponds, and parks; and, two, by tentatively building up on the side of the floodplains (with the Bashila Road embankment as the first attempt).

In the second scheme, people would be connected through a series of circulation paths: an organizing device which would ultimately generate a more diverse palette of leveled spaces for multiple uses (park, agriculture, and housing).

Site 5: At the bend of the river

The class, accepting the huge pressure of the city to spill beyond the embankment into the flood-plains, proposed a wholly different building and landscape morphology. They proposed "ribbons" of development running along the embankment that will contain, primarily, housing and commercial spaces. While the "ribbon" structures will hover over the landscape like some gigantic creature on thin legs, some of the community and recreational spaces will run perpendicular to the ribbons in order to reach out to the flood-plains in gradual tiers (in the form of stepped gardens and parks).