



## Bamiyan: a Bridge connecting Past & Future

*Bamiyan Cultural Centre is a Bridge, a Cultural Bazaar, a natural Stage*

### Ideas

It is a **Bridge**, because the Museum literally allows visitors to walk on its curved roof to reach a great viewing point in a permanent dialogue with the valley and its Buddah Cliff, crossing barriers of cultural historical time.

It is a **Cultural Bazaar**, as the building develops a single long space taking the rich islamic architectural sheltered typology: this honours one of the most important eastern anthropological qualities that explains the islamic spirit: the **journey**.

It is a privilege public **Stage** for national multicultural events, where the Valley becomes its natural background: taking advantage of the two ground levels, a **grand amphitheater** is placed articulating the lower and the higher site levels; sitting terraces fill the existing natural steep. Heart of the landscape idea, this public performing open space is of national projection.

### Spatial concept

The building is reached from its back, the columnated lobby frames the Buddah Cliff. Inside the building, visitors submerge in a trip, softly descending through three exhibition terraces. A 1,50m ramp links the levels, both for disable and small cargo trolleys.

Main function areas are "free plan" platforms (research, library, rooms), flexible, divided by light panels.

The museum can be inaugurated in stages. Future 300sm to add are already built as research's roof platform, access level.

All rooms directly face the Buddah Cliff (performing, tea house, exhibition) or indirectly (research, library) from the interior.

### Functionality

**Access** is in the upper level. Following the bazaar typology, a long circulation connects the different **terraces** through staircases and a **multipurpose central ramp**, spinal cord of the exhibition wing. Public spaces follow the terraced path; public/private appear on the **intermediate level** (research, library, quiet rooms), and all **private** (storage, adminin.) are on lower level, under the previous one.

### Organization

After passing the gate, visitors walk by the **34 Provinces Park**, following a path and reaching the **columnated lobby**. From this roofed hall (that frames the Buddah Cliff) they either go to: **Performing wing**, **Amphitheater** (outdoors), or **Exhibition wing**.

Once in the Exhibition, a single **long terraced space** contains all the building's programme.

From the upper/access level to the lower level, the visitor will pass by:

**Information, Shop, Restrooms, Tea House** (Glass Cube, indoors-outdoors), **Permanent Exhibition Terraces**, access to **Research, Library, Quiet Rooms** (all facing the exhibition, with a back service circulation), and finally reaching the lower level, the **temporary collection** (which faces the "eye" window that frames the **mirrored Buddah Cliff Storage**; **loading access** and **administration** complete this level. The **ethnological** displays at the left hand side, **historical artefacts**, opposite.

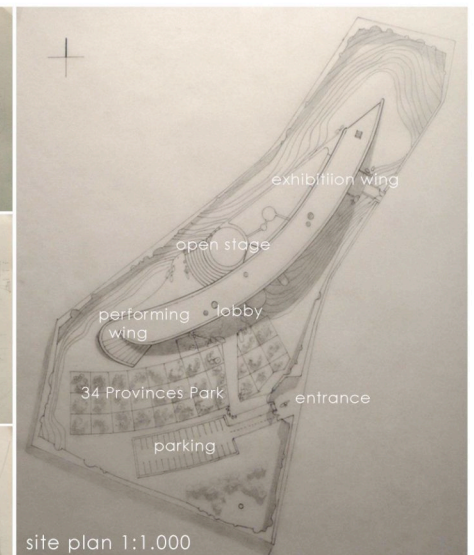
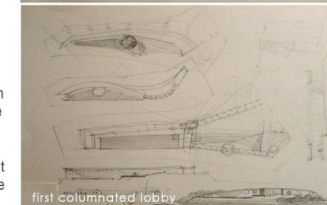
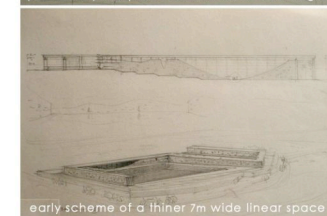
### Structure

The structure is made of 17 pairs of **reinforced concrete** round **columns frames** of approximately 0.40m diameter, piled down as required in the ground and linked by top and lower beams. Thick 1m. **Walls** (air chamber and steam layer permits good insulation) are built using the **Pakhsa** technique on top of **lower beams** that links both the front and the back walls, (similar to that of Le Corbusier's in Ronchamp). The long axially negative curved roof is a single or double thin reinforced concrete platform (hanging on frame's beams); double water insulation is expected due to snow defrost.

### Illumination

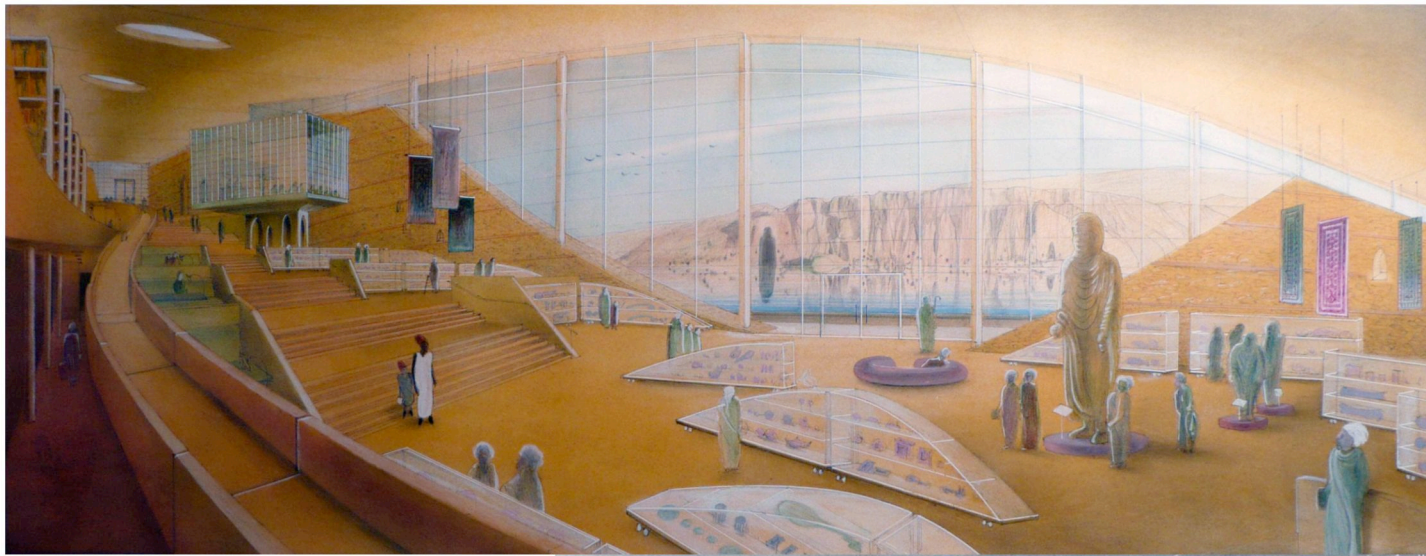
In the exhibition area there is only one window: the "eye" curtain-wall, bringing the mirrored Buddah Cliff as the central scenographic view.. The eye faces north, and because of the curved nature of the north-west wing, it never receives direct light, not even in summer.

All the rest of the space gets indirect light from a long gap in between the ceiling and the top of the thick walls, in both sides. A small reflective curved screen is on top of them, to reflect direct light that reaches the wall top at certain hours in winter. A series of holes reinforce natural illumination in three areas: columnated lobby (exterior), Tea House's access, Library and Permanent Exhibition terraces.



The building articulates and preludes the Buddah Cliff view. Pedestrian and car access are located in the same zone. The columnated lobby links 2 wings (perf, exhib) and amphitheater. The 34 Provinces Park has frutal gardens of all Afghanistan.



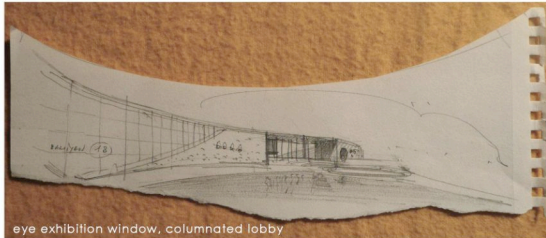


## On Perspectives

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Both the main perspective and the interior one are self-explanatory: they set a dialogue with the Valley and its rich history; the project honours the past, and it is a bridge towards the future. The exterior perspective from the Buddah Cliff shows the Cultural Centre as a bridge itself, a viewing point in a dialogue with nature and human culture. The main interior perspective explains the Museum as a cultural bazaar, an educational path descending through time, to finally reinstate the water of the Valley as 50.000 years ago: from inside the Museum, we can see the Cliff mirroring on the water. Contemporary architecture has lost something very crucial: the sense that beauty is still possible; architecture should become a bridge between Mankind and Cosmos.

When we remember spaces and also when we walk within real buildings we are surrounded by a series of indeterminate, infinite rich perceptions that cannot be registered as fixed photographic images. The authoritarianism imposed by technology has limited the stage of *composing spaces* in our mind and representing them with our own hands, which can be quite conscientious in terms of perceptions and emotions, expressing deepness, textures, proportions, light and even movement.



eye exhibition window, columnated lobby



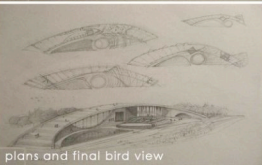
eye, amphitheater, columnated lobby



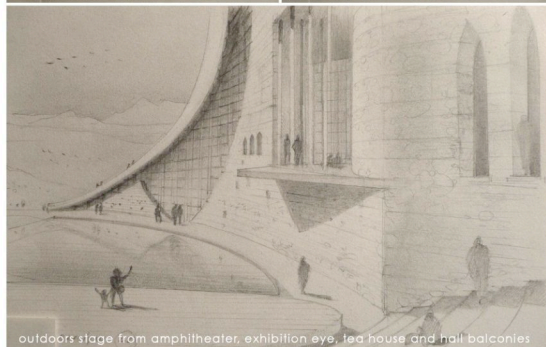
early terraced interior from access



early pool and bigger tea house



plans and final bird view



outdoors stage from amphitheater, exhibition eye, tea house and hall balconies



main plan - exhibition bazaar, amphitheater, performing, landscape - 1:200

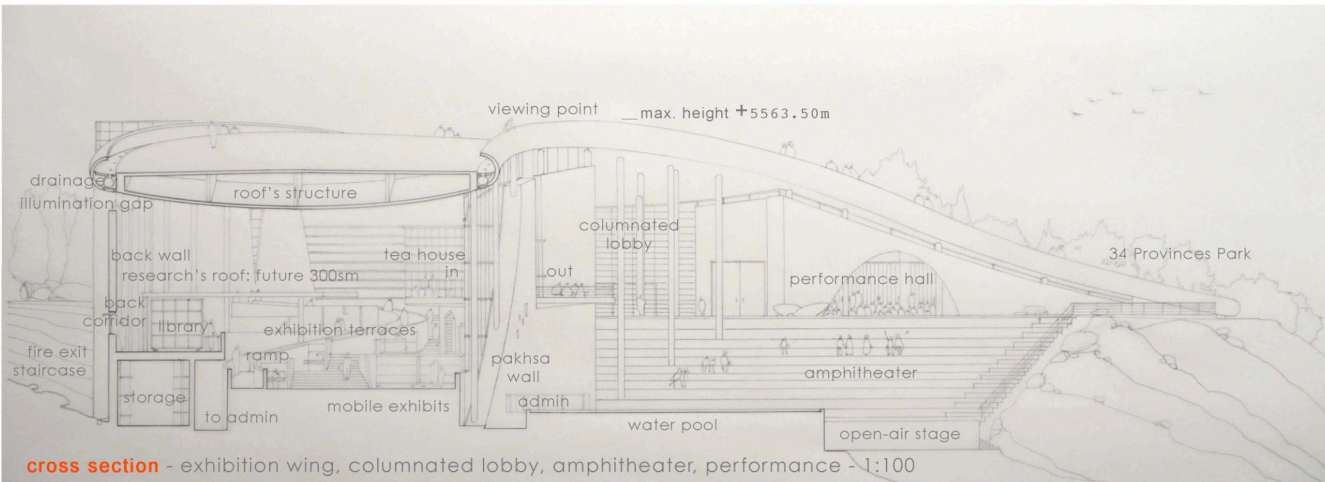
note: plans and long sections in scale 1:200 because of building length, 175m

long section - 1:200



## On Construction

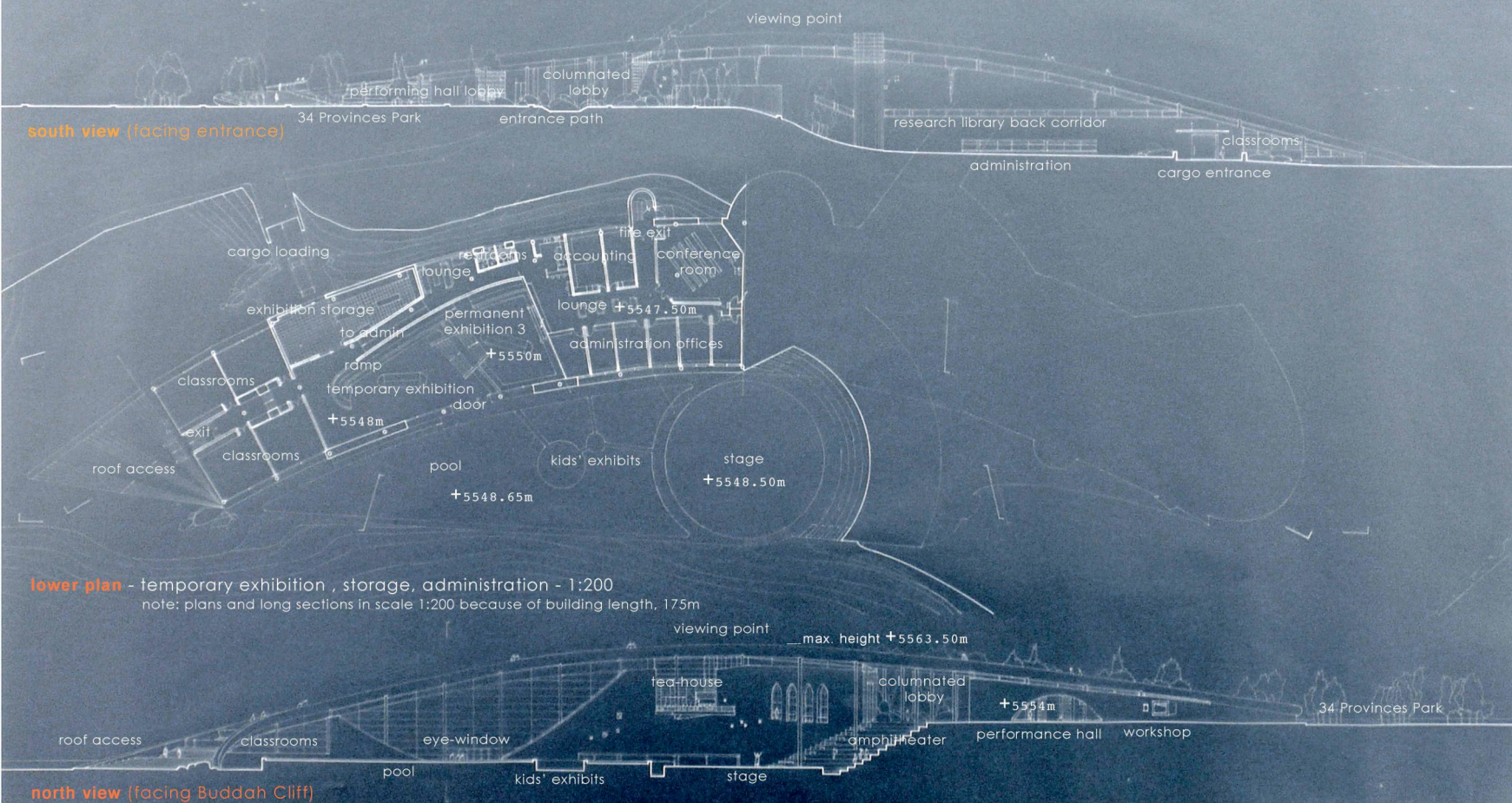
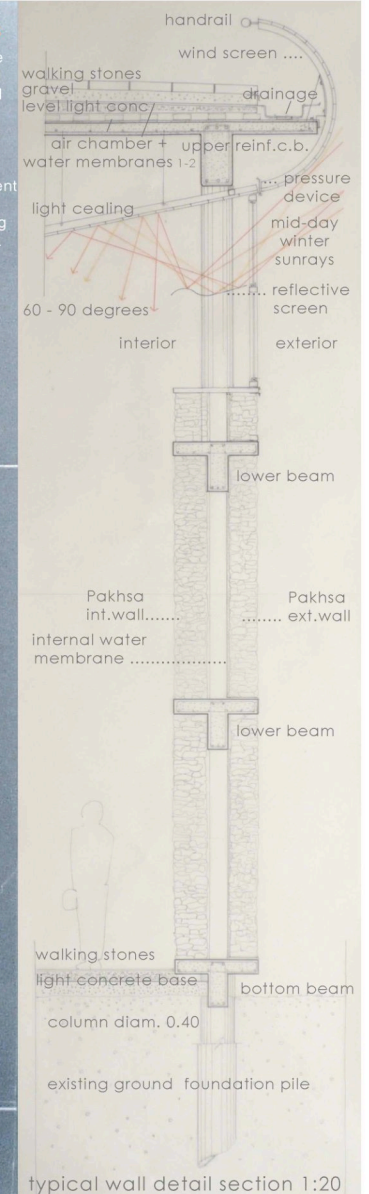
At the stage of this preliminary design, the building cost is just referential. Normally, an ordinary structure takes about 20 to 25% of the total budget. In my team there are two EU collaborators, a senior civil engineer (expert in optimizing concepts) and a structural engineer expert in light construction. In the next stage, the detailed design will adjust to the budget and local limitations. The idea of creating a "skeleton" of reinforced concrete to be "filled up" with thick Pakhsa double walls follows the low local labor cost. Therefore I expect the structural cost to reach up to 40% of the budget. Please note that there are not internal walls, but light mobile panels in the performing hall, research centre and administration, which, like the exhibition terraces and amphitheater, are made of reinforced concrete and light concrete enriched with local gravel. Also relevant, the illumination top gaps are of simple manufacture. Beyond the futuristic atmosphere, I expect to use local carpenters to execute key pieces like the Tea House or window frames, combining the availability of local wood, craftsmanship and industry.



cross section - exhibition wing, columnated lobby, amphitheater, performance - 1:100

## Sections comment: on Khyber Pass

The cross section shown at the left describes the core idea of the project: a single space where all activities, public and private are represented and reflected sharing one space. This concept of global living will offer Afghans a unique sense of unity. Like the *Khyber Pass*, that forced them to be in contact with foreigners for centuries, the Bamiyan Cultural Centre is a passage, a statement for a better future, where different cultures can share a space in peace, becoming a unique living example for the world in these challenging times.



lower plan - temporary exhibition, storage, administration - 1:200

note: plans and long sections in scale 1:200 because of building length, 175m

north view (facing Buddah Cliff)