

UNIVERSAL TEMPLE : NATURE'S VESSEL

INTRODUCTION

The concept for the Universal temple emerged from the sacred ideologies and prayers that form the Sufi Order International. Our premise for the design was to reclaim the existing foundation, demonstrating its historic spiritual value, and form a new enclosure that symbolically and phenomenologically expressed unity and nature. Our proposal, Universal Temple : Nature's Vessel, represents unity and nature symbolically through sacred movement and phenomenologically by serving as an index of nature's five basic elements.

SYMBOLIC ASPECTS

Symbolically, the temple's geometry is analogous to the motion similarly created by the Sufi Dance which signifies the unity of all spiritual experiences. It is based on torus knot with a central point, or divine point. From this point the geometry radiates into infinite path. The geometry lies both above and into the earth. It unifies the existing foundation with the new temple, earth with the divine, and inside and out. An aperture to the sky and the aperture to the ground frame a space of ETHER which forms nature's vessel. The radial structure is divided into four sets of three segments. The four sides represent the elements and makes reference to the previous design that incorporated the four Buddhas. The four sets of three segments also symbolize and even more dramatically index the phases of sunlight and moonlight. The material selection of stone and wood also connect the temple to nature.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Phenomenologically, the temple's geometry is designed to temporally index nature's five elements. The temple is therefore not only characterized by the static architecture, but more so by the interaction of nature and its constant state of change. In the center of the temple, lies a visual space or vessel of ETHER that is framed by an aperture to the sky and to the ground. In this space, nature temporally coexists in the form of the four elements, with the temple's occupants, depending on the environment's condition. This space is constantly in flux and provides a unique space at each visit. Natural lighting in the form of sunlight and moonlight, nature's own FIRE, helps illuminate the elements as they enter the vessel or temple. When raining, WATER filters into the spatial vessel and collects in the altar- slowly draining back into the ground. Changes in humidity can also light particles of WATER in the vessel. EARTH is also present in the form of floating particles that refract light. Wind or AIR can be felt rising through convection in the vessel and seen through its interaction with floating particles. The structure allows AIR to flow horizontally into the temple and allows warm air to leave vertically through the aperture above. When moonlight and sunlight are not sufficient, FIRE can also occupy the vessel to light the space. The geometry of the temple is also specifically designed and oriented towards the sun and moon phases. There are four slits in the enclosure that mark morning, noon, afternoon and midnight. Sunlight

and moonlight can directly enter the center of the temple each day at sunrise, noon, sunset, and night irrespective of the altitude of the sun that time of year. It marks the times of prayer and indexes time throughout the day and years. The largest of the slits on the north side of the temple also forms the entry, always in indirect sunlight. The strength of this proposal is in how it creates a framework for nature, in the form of its elements and light, to actually cohabit and create a sacred space for unity, prayer and meditation that is always in flux and directly connected to nature.

CONSTRUCTION AND COST ESTIMATE

The construction of the temple can be identified into 3 components- site work, the interior floor and altar, and the overhead enclosure. The site work consists of a new prominent entry and minor maintenance to the grounds and existing stone wall and beam. The entry paving stones would be made from local stone. The stepping stones would change in spacing as they move into the temple. The interior stone wall of the temple would be finished in smooth unpainted cement stucco that combines fine particles of local stone to create a natural tone. The interior floor would also be made of unhewn local stones following a radial pattern. These stones would then continue vertically to create the central altar/vessel in the center of the temple. The overhead enclosure, measuring 22' in diameter and 24' high, would be constructed of 2x6 wood. It would be preferable to use a cedar wood, but a pressure treated wood would likely be a more economical choice. The 2x6 members would be cut in segments, according to the design documents, overlapped, and screwed into one another where they overlap, creating laminated wood columns. Dowels would be used to guide the members into the correct placement. The lumber would be constructed into larger units that could be assembled easily on site. The carefully limited selection of natural materials creates a cost benefit for the temple. We have estimated that the necessary wood, approximately 1150 pieces of 2"x6"x10', would amount to \$5,750. We would need about 400 SF of stone for the interior floor, altar, and entry at approximately \$800. This would leave a balance of \$15,450 for labor and secondary materials. We have estimated that we could build this temple for under \$22,000, using 30% of the budget for materials and 70% for construction.

FIRM : INDEX SPACE ARCHITECTURE

We are very excited to present this design proposal to the sufi order international. Spirituality is also a central part of our life, and we have always wanted to apply our talent to a sacred program. We have devoted our time and talent in research and design to create a temple that is universal at natural at its core. We pray that this competition affords a divine universal temple and we thank you for considering our proposal.

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Index Space Architecture focuses on the exploration and experimentation of static and dynamic systems to define space. Through index and reference, our firm utilizes design strategies that create time-relative adaptable boundaries between the architecture and its users-both the microclimate and the inhabitants. Inherent to our process are material and construction techniques that capitalize on local trade and new technologies to benefit each particular project's scope and budget. The rigorous methodology employed yields case-specific, integral solutions.