Final Year Design Project Showcase
Batch-2021
Year 2026

Department: Architecture and Planning Programme: Architecture and Planning	
1	**Project Title** Narrative Architecture: Telling the Stories of 1947 Partition through Space
2	**Project Idea** This thesis explores how architecture can become a medium for storytelling and emotional experience through the design of a 1947 Partition-themed museum in Karachi. The project aims to preserve the fading memories and personal stories linked with Partition by creating immersive spaces that allow visitors, especially younger generations, to emotionally connect with the themes associated with the creation of Pakistan. Through narrative architecture, the museum transforms history from something that is only observed into something that is spatially experienced.
3	**Process** PHASE 1: RESEARCH A qualitative and exploratory approach was adopted, focusing on narrative architecture and the study of local and international museums. Primary data was collected through interviews and questionnaires to understand emotional responses to different architectural spaces, youths' perceptions of local museums, and both youths' and adults' perceptions of the 1947 Partition. Secondary research included a literature review, archival interviews of first-hand witnesses of Partition, and case studies of selected museums. The collected data was analysed through thematic analysis, emotional response analysis, and an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the case studies. The key findings derived from this research informed the final museum design. PHASE 2: DESIGN The concept behind the Partition-themed museum design is the transformation of memories of the 1947 Partition into architectural experiences. A 3.08-acre site within Bagh-e-Jinnah, Karachi, was selected for its high visibility, accessibility, strong context, and views. The museum tells the story of the emotion-based journey of Partition that starts with the struggle for freedom, proceeds through loss, pain, migration, and ends with the sense of relief and hope in arriving at the new homeland. Chronologically arranged thematic galleries use form, material, lighting, scale, and symbolism to create the atmosphere associated with each stage, while transition zones prepare visitors for the next experience. Along with the galleries, the museum includes parking, reception, administration offices, visitor restrooms, an art gallery, outdoor theatre, food court, and a souvenir shop, creating a complete visitor experience.

4	**Outcome** The final outcome is a 1947 Partition-themed museum that narrates the emotional, social, and historical journey of partition through architecture that evokes remembrance, empathy, and healing. It demonstrates how architecture can be used for storytelling while addressing the disconnect between today's youth and museums through interactive and engaging spaces. The museum aims to preserve the stories, sentiments, and experiences of Partition for future generations, helping them understand the struggle, sacrifice, migration, and hope behind the creation of Pakistan. It also encourages reflection on identity, freedom, gratitude, and collective memory, fostering a sense of responsibility towards the country.
5	**Evidence (Theoretical Basis)** 1. ARCHITECTURE AS A STORYTELLING MEDIUM: According to the "Storyscapes: The Intersection of Narrative and Architecture" article, architecture can function as a storytelling medium by using spatial layout, materials, light, and transitions to shape visitors' experiences and emotions (Mamauag 2024). Similarly, phenomenological theories and Peter Zumthor's book "Thinking Architecture" highlight the role of sensory experience, atmosphere, and memory in creating meaningful and emotionally engaging spaces (Zumthor 1998). 2. EMOTIONAL & SENSORY IMPACT OF DESIGN ELEMENTS: According to the articles on colour and light, different colours and lighting conditions can influence emotions, with cool tones and soft lighting creating calmness and reflection, while warm colours, harsh lighting, and darkness can evoke energy or tension (Melhan 2023). Similarly, the article on architectural scale shows that monumental, intimate, and shock scales can create feelings of awe, comfort, contemplation, or strong emotional reactions (Ghisleni 2025). 3. MEMORIES OF PARTITION: PERSONAL & COLLECTIVE According to Anam Zakaria's book "The Footprints of Partition", personal memories of Partition include experiences of migration, violence, loss, refugee camps, and trauma (Zakaria 2015). These individual experiences contribute to the collective memory of Partition, which, according to Zakaria (2015) and Blakemore (2022), continues to be passed through families, history, and media. Such memories provide evidence of the emotions and experiences that can be translated into architectural spaces. 4. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT & RELEVANCE OF MUSEUMS IN PAKISTAN: According to the "Culture Clout" article, Pakistani museums often struggle to engage young people because their displays are static, text-heavy, and lack interactive and sensory experiences (Ghufran 2025). This evidence highlights the need for approaches such as narrative architecture that use spatial and sensory design to create a stronger connection between young visitors and history.

6	**Competitive Advantage or Unique Selling Proposition**	
a	**Attainment of any SDG** SDG 4: QUALITY EDUCATION The museum supports quality education by helping visitors learn about the history and human experiences of 1947 Partition through experiential learning and spatial storytelling. SDG 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES The museum promotes inclusivity through universal accessibility, including ramps and accessible circulation for people with disabilities. SDG 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES The project supports cultural preservation and strengthens collective memory by preserving the stories and lived experiences of Partition survivors for future generations, before they fade with time.	
7	**Target Market** The museum is designed as an inclusive public space for people of all ages and backgrounds. Its primary focus is youth, as they play an important role in preserving Partition memories for future generations, especially as many survivors have passed away. The museum uses engaging, experiential, and sensory design to make these stories easy to understand for young visitors, who may otherwise find traditional museums boring.	
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