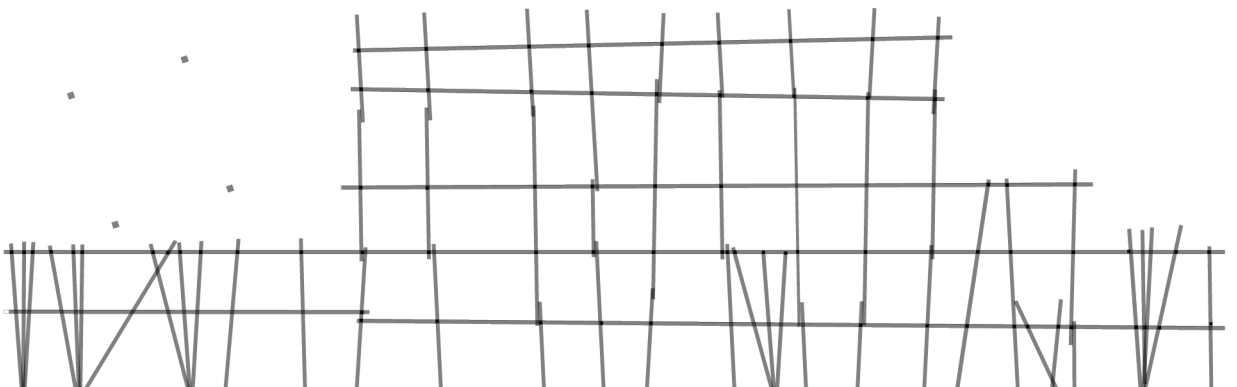
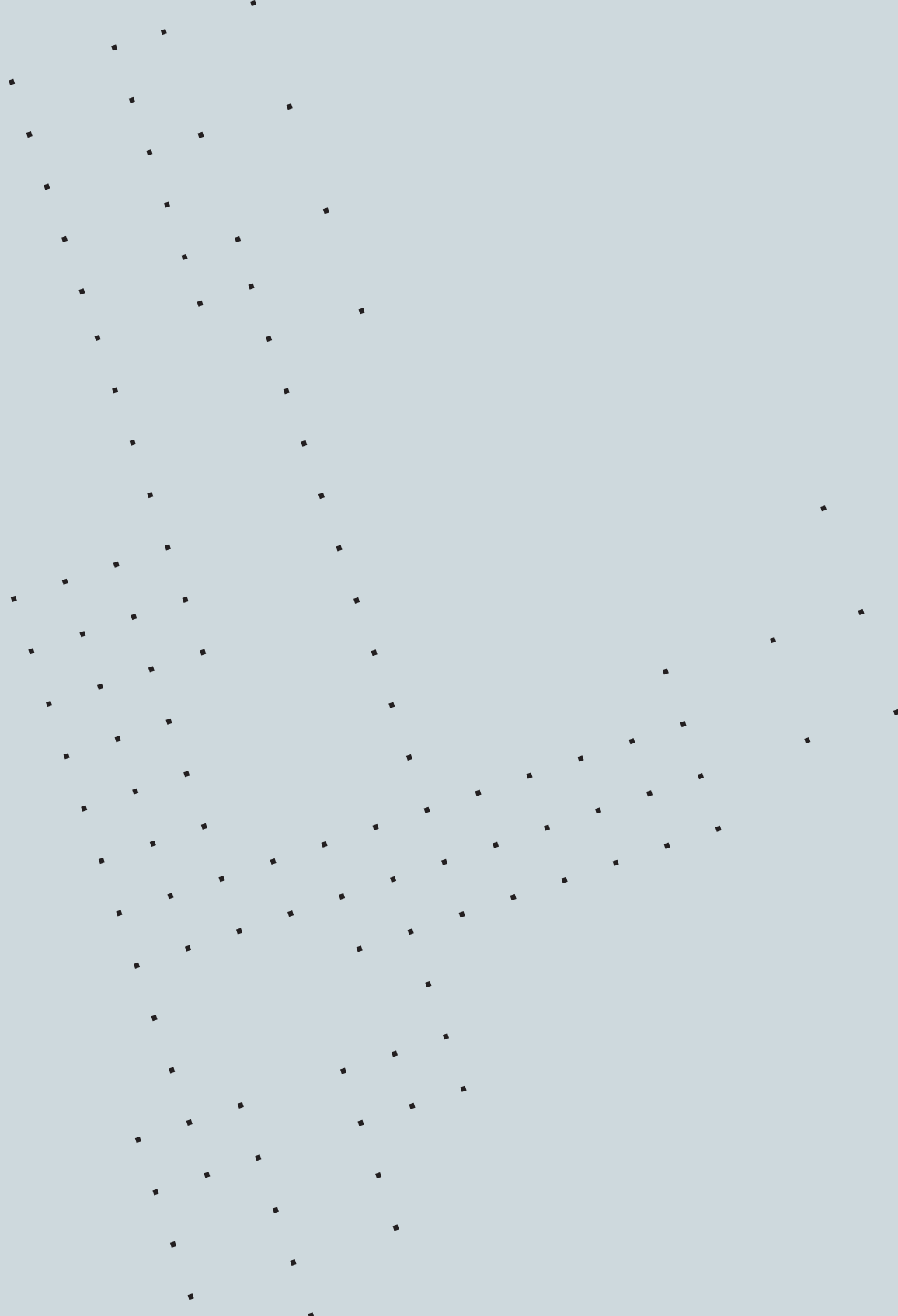




SEEING WALLS

Micah Cagampang Heller





SEEING WALLS

A Study of Separation and Connection in Manila

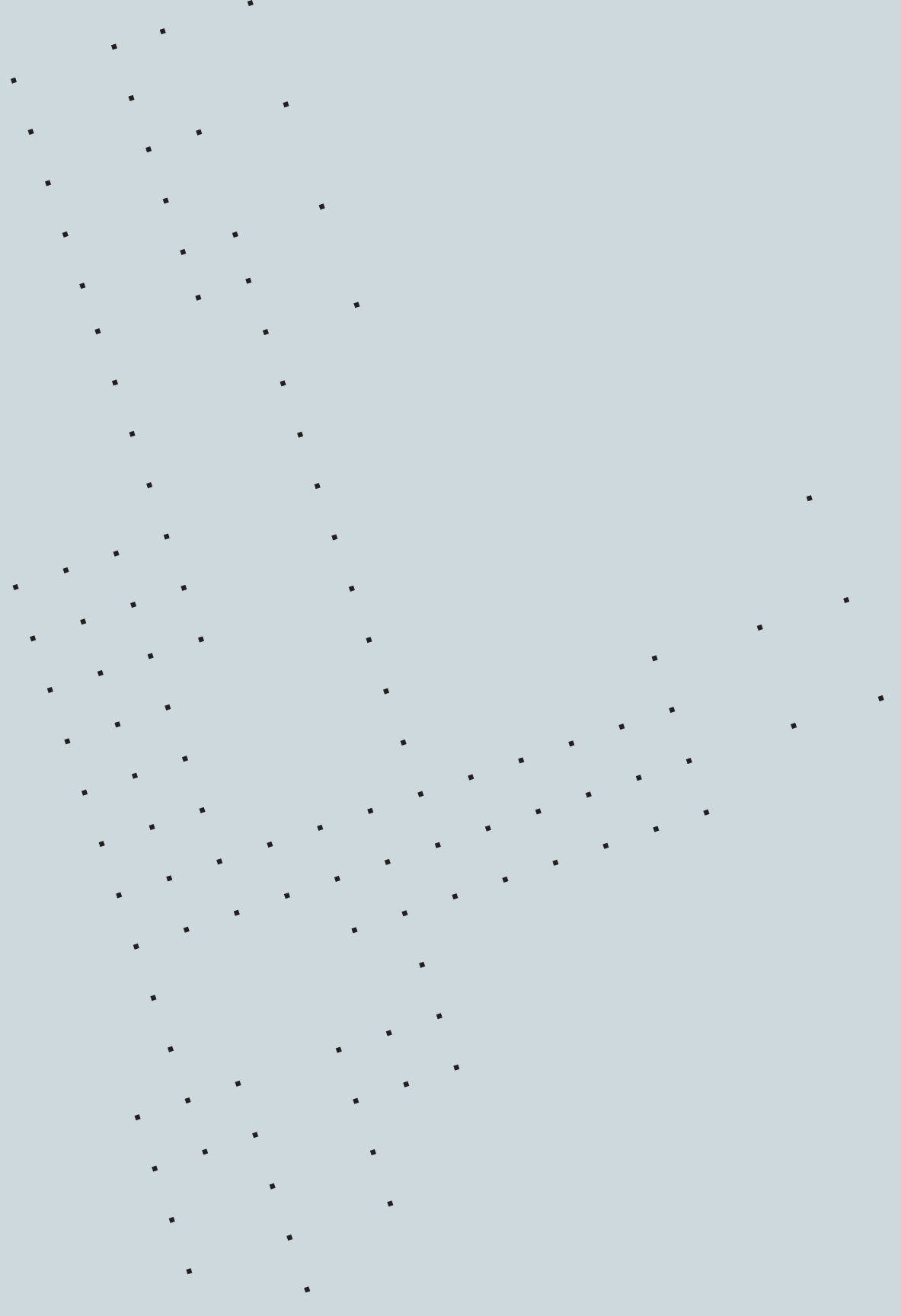


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Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Darling and Professor Wu for their support since my first year. And Professor Haber-Thomson, thank you for arriving in time for my senior year, your support has been invaluable.

To my family and friends, thank you for your encouragement and patience along the way and for never forgetting to laugh with me (and at me when that was necessary) everyday.

Abstract

A careful reading of the form and materiality of colonial infrastructure in Manila exposes the extent and limitations of the colonial dominated archive. Seeing Walls reveals a history of material resistance against the walls that divide the city through informal architectural additions throughout the city.

Given the strategic location of the archipelago that make up the Philippines, Manila provides a site in which walls – understood broadly as both divisive and connective - are part of the landscape. For example, the ocean offered a protective wall to early inhabitants but, with the development of boat technology, that same water became temporarily habitable and permeable. The oceanic wall thus enabled extensive trade routes that connected the Pacific Islands and China. Since then, architectural walls have been built as part of colonial projects and, likewise, have been subverted through transient and perishable interventions. As examples, the *Intramuros* fortification was built during the Spanish colonial rule to separate Spanish and native Filipinos. But, woven throughout, Sari Sari shops and food carts inhabit this colonial infrastructure. These small moments of deliberate “misuse” complicate our understanding of the planned use of the city fabric. The simple act of providing people shade and respite from the tropical weather are evidence of colonial refusal. These documented examples of resistance expand the archive and recontextualize historical images.

My thesis considers the rich history that produced precedents of resistance and proposes a design strategy that deconstructs and transforms the *Postigo de La Nuestra Señora De Soledad*, a small hidden gate in the *Intramuros* fortification. By partially obscuring and inhabiting this section of the fortification, using bamboo scaffolding of coastal villages and textile boat sails in juxtaposition with the stone wall, my aim is to circumvent the reproduction of colonial ideology in architecture.

Introduction

Using archival material, this project works to expand the definition and understanding of walls in colonial and post-colonial urban space. The standard definition of a wall is “a continuous vertical brick or stone structure that encloses or divides an area of land.”¹ Within architecture, this definition is accepted without thorough consideration. Architects primarily frame their own production of walls as a tool to establish privacy and separation from the elements and street for their clients. When considering the materiality of the walls, comfort of the occupant dictates building materials rather than the experience of the passerby. When flipping the consideration to the experience of the neighbors, for example when the front elevation presents a monolithic facade to the street, the wall is experienced as a deliberate tool to deter entry. Revealing that, even at the smallest scale, the definition of a wall is too neutral.

The neutrality of the definition of walls is even more problematic as the scale increases. Political border walls demonstrate how walls dictate who belongs and who does not. The first US highways split towns in half, bisecting neighborhoods. Still more, walls don’t necessitate a built element at all. Areas of the Mexico/US border do not have built infrastructure; as they depend on the uninhabitability of the Sonoran Desert. Or, examples of redlining throughout the US were drawn on paper and written into policy, only becoming physically evident years later “in the wake” of those decisions.² Walls do not require verticality to be divisive and impassible.

Considering this full range of wall typologies this project will examine how colonial powers worked to separate and control space (Figure 1). The colonial paradigm is a process in which an empire seeks to control a region for the empire’s economic benefit.³ The colonizing power uses a breadth of wall typologies to justify, establish, and maintain hierarchy. To further explore how walls are used and resisted in the ongoing process of colonization, my project is sited in the Philippines.

¹ Oxford Languages

² Sharpe, Christina. “The Wake.” In *In the Wake*, 1–24. On Blackness and Being. Duke University Press, 2016.

³ De Leon, Adrian. “Introduction: Histories from the Hinterlands.” In *Bundok*, 6–22. A Hinterland History of Filipino America. University of North Carolina Press, 2023.

Before the colonization of the region, the Philippines was not a singular nation. Located off the coast of continental Asia, in the Pacific Ocean, the archipelago is made up of more than 7,000 islands and the water that lies between. The islands are part of Austronesia, a culture/language group connected by/organized around maritime relations and a fluid network of cultural exchange.

The colonial capital, Manila, on the island of Luzon, offers a site in which the layers of colonial history and present exist simultaneously. A careful reading of the form and materiality of colonial infrastructure in Manila exposes the extent and limitations of the colonial dominated archive. As scholar de Leon observes, the official colonial archives are created and recreated by “industrial and corporate imperialists, in addition to the communities built along the infrastructures of their wealth extraction” in “their efforts to taxonomize an industrial labor force in Luzon and beyond.”⁴ Today, the official architectural archive is composed of monumental stone and concrete constructions.

However, adjacent evidence of colloquial inhabitation complicates our understanding of the colonial archive and narrative. *Seeing Walls* reveals a history of material resistance and a counter archive that works against the dividing walls through architectural additions that one can find throughout the city. In particular, this project examines transient and perishable architectural forms. In maritime “tropical regions where stone or brick constructions were rare” there is an added barrier to access and expand the archives beyond colonial narratives, as they “leave no such record” of inhabitation and organization through architecture.⁵ However, counter archives gained from reading against the grain and reconsidering the perishability and transience of colloquial constructions can offer a new perspective. Using these methods, “racial calculus and. . . political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago” can begin to become undone.⁶

⁴ *ibid.* p.6

⁵ Sutherland, Heather. “Introduction.” In *Seaways and Gatekeepers*, 2. Trade and State in the Eastern Archipelagos of Southeast Asia. NUS Press, 2021.

⁶ Sharpe, Christina. “In The Wake.” In *The Wake: On Blackness and Being*, 13. Duke University Press,

WALL TYPOLOGIES

To draw attention to how imperial logics continue to maintain colonial hierarchies, this project draws from scholar Christina Sharpe. Her work considers the realities of living in the wake of slavery in the United States. Sharpe writes, “I am interested in how we imagine ways of knowing that past, in excess of the fictions of the archive” and, she continues, “in the ways we recognize the many manifestations of that fiction and that excess, that past not yet past, in the present.”⁷ To begin working with counter archives necessitates “living in the afterlife” of colonialism rather than memorializing a finite history.⁸ Sharpe writes, “to be in the wake is to occupy and to be occupied by the continuous and changing present of slavery’s as yet unresolved unfolding.”⁹ This project borrows this framing of being in the wake to my reading of Filipino history and Manila’s built environment.

Starting with a history of walling and its many permutations and typologies, this project aims to design an intervention that exposes the layers and continuation of colonial walls. Rather than focus on the tourist or force a reeducation of people experiencing the “wake,” the proposed intervention physically undoes walling, leaving traces of enclosure all while introducing permeability and habitability. My intervention reconfigures and repurposes the stones that compose a colonial wall and metaphorically composes a colonial narrative by providing a physical experience of the past and not yet past. So if, “Museums and memorials materialize a kind of reparation (repair) and enact their own pedagogies as they position visitors to have a particular experience or set of experiences about an event that is seen to be past,” then, Sharpe asks, “How does one memorialize the everyday?”¹⁰

This project aspires to begin to answer this question by imagining a postcolonial future.

2016.

⁷ *ibid.* p.13

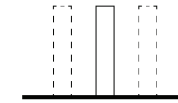
⁸ *ibid.* p.15

⁹ *ibid.* p.2

¹⁰ *ibid.* p.20

Figure 1: Wall typology diagram

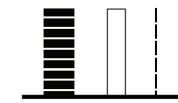
Territoriality



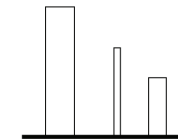
Literality



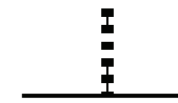
Materiality



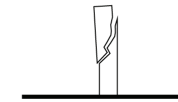
Dimensionality



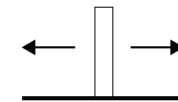
Permeability



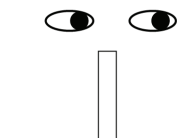
Temporality



Directionality

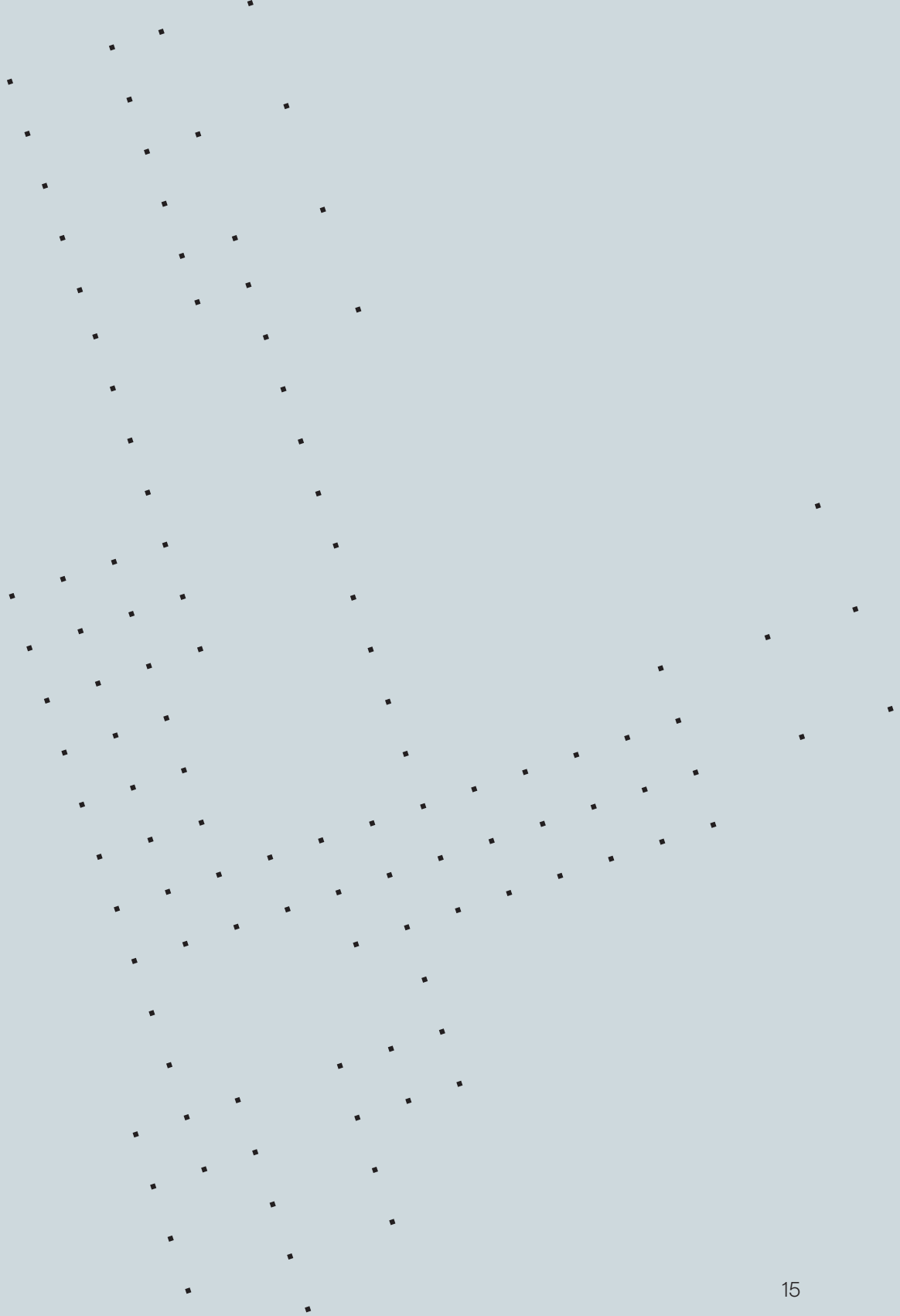


Protectability



Exclusivity





CHAPTER ONE
Walls and Resistance



Walls and Resistance

Prior to colonization, the Austronesian islands were separated from each other and mainland Asia by the Pacific Ocean (Figure 2). The water established a natural protective wall, forcing disconnection between people. To overcome the separation produced by the island conditions, it became vital to develop a tool to traverse the distance between villages. The development of early boats enabled purposeful connection and inhabitation of the ocean. The earliest boat that has been discovered is from the 4th century, physically archiving the movement of people between the islands. The people indigenous to the Philippines built single outrigger and lashed lug boats which are “strengthened transversely with frames secured by [Abaca fiber]”¹ (Figure 3 and 4). Forming networks of trade and governing, the natural boundaries and configuration of space were challenged.

To take advantage of the trade routes the ocean afforded, the indigenous people established villages along the coasts (Figure 5). Strategically placed in inlets and bays, the villages utilized the ocean’s natural protection while still being sheltered from direct oceanic tides. The villages along the Pasig River were populated with small, palm and bamboo homes on the water. The living space was built on top of bamboo stilts that allowed the natural patterns of the water to go unobstructed while allowing homes to remain dry throughout the year.² By designing homes with an open understory, villages could remain close to the oceanic trading routes and food sources.

The significance of the ocean and the inhabitation it supports throughout the region prior to colonization is additionally marked by the traditional, pre-Catholic burial practices. Inhabiting the ocean even after death, the

1 Lacsina, Ligaya. “The Butuan Boats of the Philippines: Southeast Asian Edge-Joined and Lashed-Lug Watercraft,” January 1, 2015. p.45
2 Reed, Robert Ronald. Colonial Manila : The Context of Hispanic Urbanism and Process of Morphogenesis. University of California Publications in Geography ; v. 22. University of California Press, 1978.

Figure 2: Map of the Philippines and surrounding islands in the Pacific Ocean (Google Maps)



natural wall between peoples was made permeable with the construction of boats. In recent years, coffins in the form of boats were found and are understood to function as “‘a mode of disposal of the dead in hollowed-out pieces of logs’ which are fashioned into boats and then laid in caves or rock shelters”³ (Figure 5) This practice suggests that “maritime peoples of Southeast Asia...considered the boat as a vessel for carrying the souls of the departed into another world”⁴ (Figure 6 and 7).

Beyond the islands of the Philippines, development of boat technology allowed for extensive trade networks and, therefore, greater cultural and religious exchange throughout Austronesia (Figure 8). To understand the scale of the movement, it is necessary to “frame Philippine migration through the lens of an ‘earlier globalization,’ starting from the year 1250 when the shift in trading routes occurred from overland to ocean trade, particularly the Indian Ocean.”⁵ In the south, the systems of oceanic trade enabled people to migrate from Arab nations, particularly Yemen, introducing Islam to the islands.⁶ Like many cultures, these large networks of influence enabled pre-colonial Philippines to be connected with the world, despite the physical isolation that the ocean implies.

As trade connections grew within the region, Manila, or Maynila, “was the principal shipping point for goods entering or leaving pre-colonial Philippine society” before the arrival of the Spanish in the mid 16th century.⁷ The bay

3 Dakudao, Michaelangelo E. “The Development of Cemeteries in Manila Before 1941.” *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 20, no. 2/3 (1992). p.133

4 *ibid.* p.136

5 Cruz-del Rosario, Teresita. *International Migration in Southeast Asia : Continuities and Discontinuities*. Springer Nature eBook. 1st ed. 2016. Springer Nature eBook. Springer Nature Singapore, 2016. p.149

6 *ibid.*

7 Morley, Ian. 2016. “Modern Urban Designing in the Philippines, 1898–1916.” *Philippine Studies: Historical & Ethnographic Viewpoints* 64 (1): 3–42.

Figure 3: Archive image stilted coastal village and boat (National Archives)

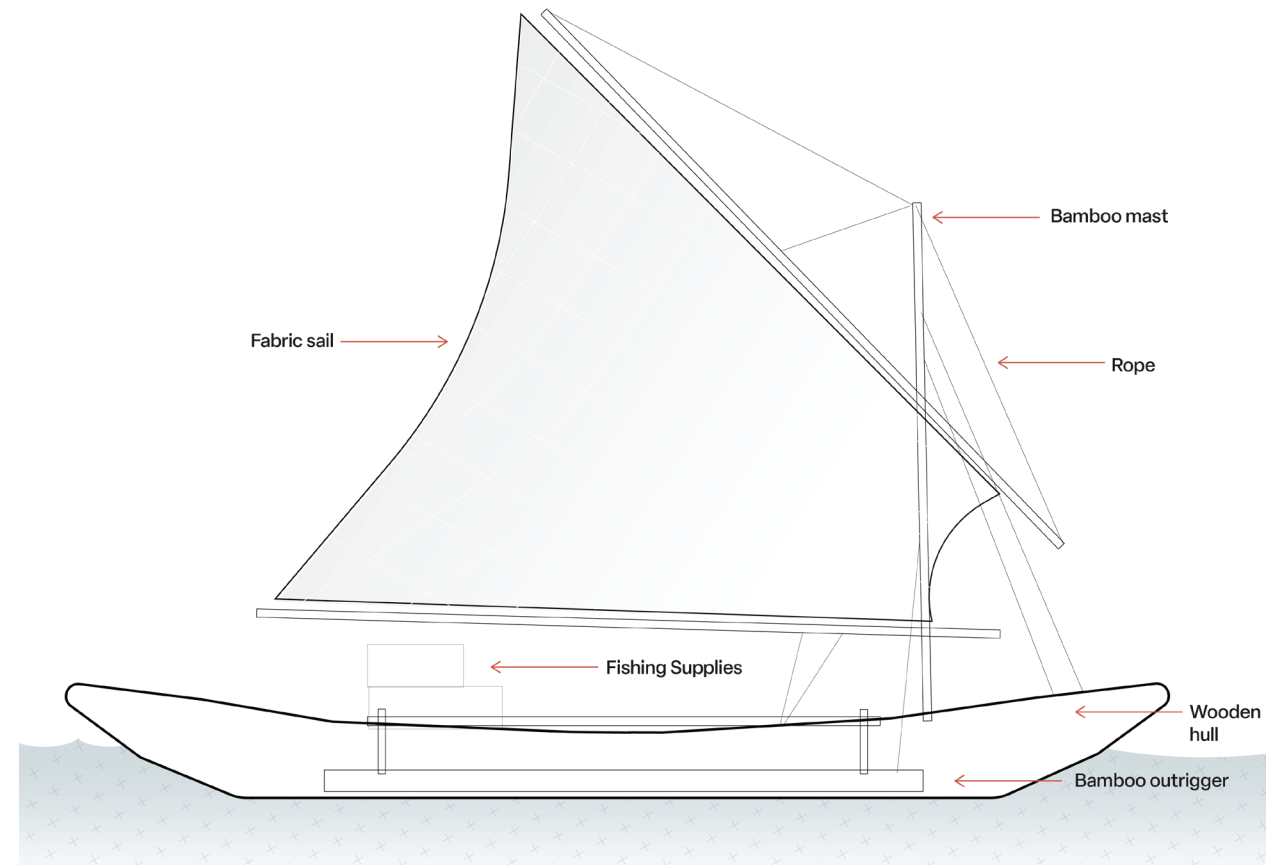
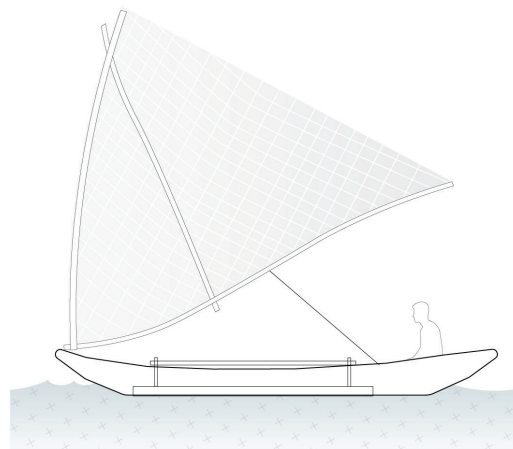
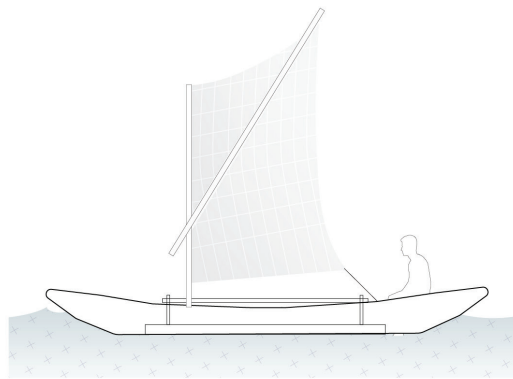


Figure 4: Diagrams of various boat typologies



Figure 5: (opposite) Vernacular housing from Nipa palm and bamboo (ETH Bibliothek)



Figure 6: Manunggul burial jar (National Museum in Manila)

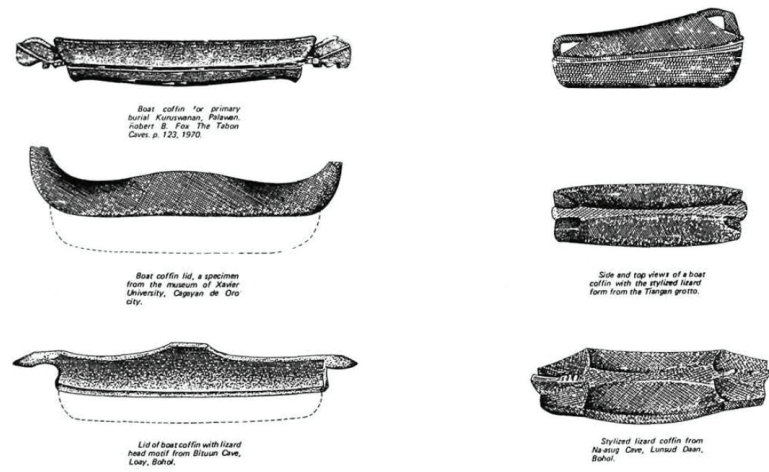


Figure 7: Boat coffin forms and burial site (Tenazas)

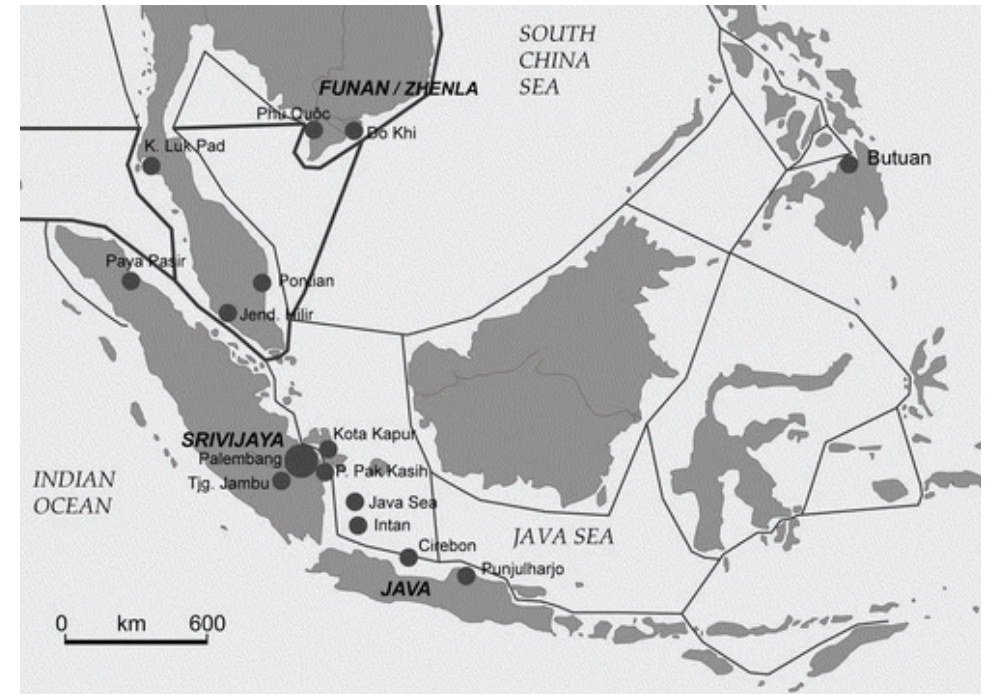


Figure 8: Pre-colonial trade networks (Manguin)

was inhabited by “a collection of Sangley (Chinese traders) and Tagalog (Malay-Muslim Filipinos) settlements that thrived on the strategic trading position, locally at the mouth of the Pasig River.”⁸ The people resided under a series of rulers, the last being Rajah Soliman who died in 1590. He maintained a bamboo fortress on the site of Fort Santiago⁹ (Figure 9). Throughout this time, Manila Bay thrived, as it was a part of the Maritime Silk Route, connecting the region across water. The development of the boat enabled the transformation of a town ‘walled’ off by the Pacific Ocean into a trading center located on a pathway between villages.

The fort, made of perishable bamboo, was burned in 1570 and no archive remained (Figure 10). Deciding that the central location of Manila would be beneficial to the Spanish Empire, Legazpi, a Spanish explorer, decided “to transfer the base of Spanish operation in the Philippines to Luzon.”¹⁰ In the Battle of Maynila between the Spanish and the Sangley and Tagalog people, the fort was burned to the ground and the “city of Manila was formally established [by the Spanish] on 24 June 1571.”¹¹

⁸ Poco, Leandro. Spanish Colonial Enclave Urbanism: Manila’s Intramuros and How Exclusion and Waterway Connectivity Created the Binondo (Manila Chinatown) Trading District, 2022. p.5
⁹ ibid.

¹⁰ Newson, Linda A. “Manila and Tondo.” In *Conquest and Pestilence in the Early Spanish Philippines*. University of Hawai’i Press, 2009. p. 115

¹¹ ibid; Poco, Leandro. Spanish Colonial Enclave Urbanism: Manila’s Intramuros and How Exclusion and Waterway Connectivity Created the Binondo (Manila Chinatown) Trading District, 2022; Sangley: old term to refer to people of pure overseas Chinese ancestry or mixed Chinese-Filipino ancestry living in the Philippines; The Spanish began to explore the island region in the 1500s when Ferdinand Magellan led an expedition to the Philippines in 1521. After Magellan’s death in Cebu, the Spanish continued to explore the area, hoping to establish themselves within the Portuguese dominated trade routes. Following Magellan’s death, expeditions led by Juan Garcia Jofre de Loaysa, Alvaro de Saavedra, and Ruy López de Villalobos all failed to settle in Southern Philippines due to successful resistance by the native Filipinos, inability to find sufficient food, and exposure to harsh weather. With each expedition, Spain was able to create an increasingly accurate map of the Pacific and argue that the Philippine Islands were not Portuguese. In 1564, Legazpi set sail with limited instructions from the Crown, only to avoid Moluccas which was controlled by the Portuguese.



Figure 9: Example of bamboo fencing (Google Maps)

In contrast to the Spanish colonies in the Americas, colonizing the islands of the Philippines provided oceanic connection to external economies (Figure 11). Using Tagalog trade relationships and knowledge, the colony expanded the Spanish Empire's "opportunities for trade rather than the development of agricultural or mining enterprises."¹² Soon, the Spanish colonial city became a main stop of the Galleon Trade route that bridged Spanish colonies in the Americas with China.¹³ Until 1834, the Galleon trade was closed to countries other than Spain and "in many ways the global port of Manila was a closed world. Manila became a city where the portal-threshold was also symbolically and practically a gated community."¹⁴ The Spanish Empire established a monopoly on trade, expanding their economic profits and sphere of colonial control across oceans, all under the ideological guise provided by the Doctrine of Discovery and the Requerimiento of 1510.

The Spanish instituted a system of physical and ideological walls within Manila following the Leyes de Las Indies (or the Law of the Indies). Written by the Spanish Crown in 1573, it specifies the ideal location to settle a new colonial outpost (Figure 12). Among the 148 laws, number 37 states that they "should have good access and outlet by sea and by land, and also good roads and passage by water, in order that they may be entered and departed easily with commerce, while bringing relief and establishing defenses."¹⁵

¹² Newson, Linda A. "Manila and Tondo." In *Conquest and Pestilence in the Early Spanish Philippines*, University of Hawai'i Press, 2009. p.124

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ Murphy, Peter, and Trevor Hogan. "Discordant Order: Manila's Neo-Patrimonial Urbanism." Thesis Eleven 112 (October 8, 2012). p.12

¹⁵ "The City Planning Ordinances of the Laws of the Indies Revisited, I", *Town Planning Review*, vol. 48, July 1977, pp 247-268. Translation of ordinances 92, 102-7 by Ramon Trias. English translation by Axel Mundigo and Dora Crouch



Figure 10: Fort Santiago plaque (Ryomaandres)

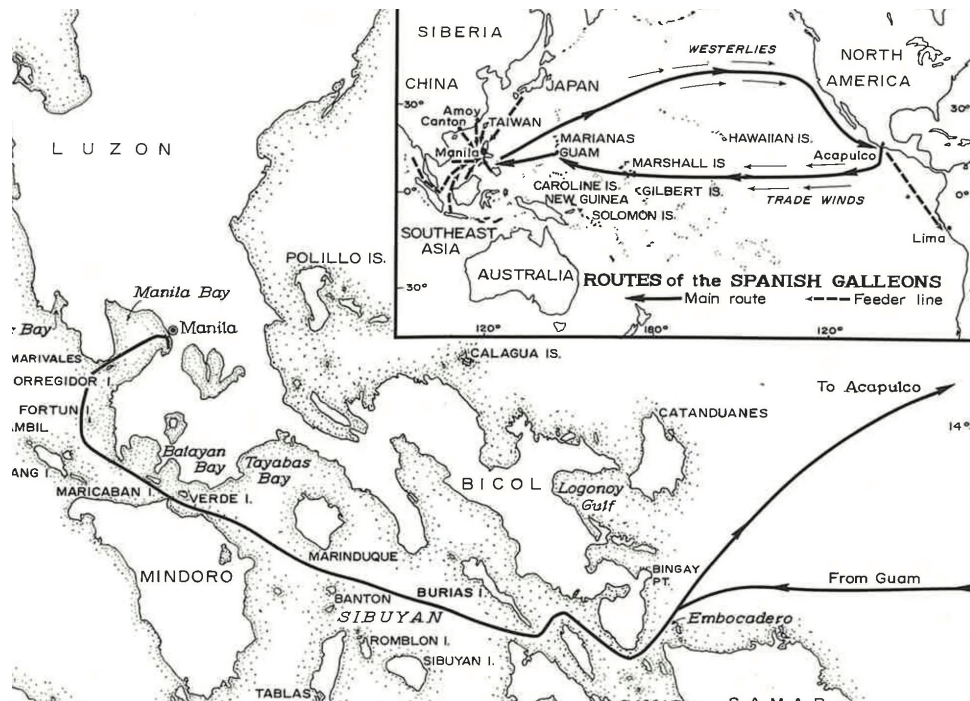


Figure 11: Spanish Galleons (Reed)

Chosen Manila as the colonial capital, the Spanish embedded their belief in the superiority of the crown into the physical space of the new colony. Shifting to a reliance on artificial walls to maintain separation, the laws outlined how to administer colonies religiously, economically, and spatially. Focused on separation of people, the Spanish introduced a class hierarchy by creating haciendas and ethnic enclaves that physically separated indigenous Filipinos from Chinese merchants.

The layout and infrastructure of the new colonial city culminated in the erection of *Intramuros* (directly translated as within the walls) at the threshold of the Pasig River, enclosing the Spanish colonists. The Law of the Indies also specified the internal layout of *Intramuros*. For example, number 112 states that, “the main plaza is to be the starting point for the town...the plaza should be square or rectangular, in which case it should have at least one and a half its width for length inasmuch as this shape is best for fiestas...”¹⁶ The laws also distinguished public and private space in relation to the plaza, stating in number 126 that in “the plaza, no lots shall be assigned to private individuals; instead, they shall be used for the buildings of the church and royal houses and for city use.”¹⁷ After designating a place for the plaza, a street grid should be drawn. Number 116 states that streets “in hot places narrow; but for purposes of defense... it would be better if they are wide.”¹⁸ Implementing the set of laws, the Spanish Crown organized the colony to prioritize defense and surveillance, first building Fort Santiago in place of the Sultanate’s bamboo fortress.

The internal organization was “based on Augustine’s distinction between the chaos of the City of Man and the lucidity of the City of God represented

¹⁶ *ibid.*
¹⁷ *ibid.*
¹⁸ *ibid.*

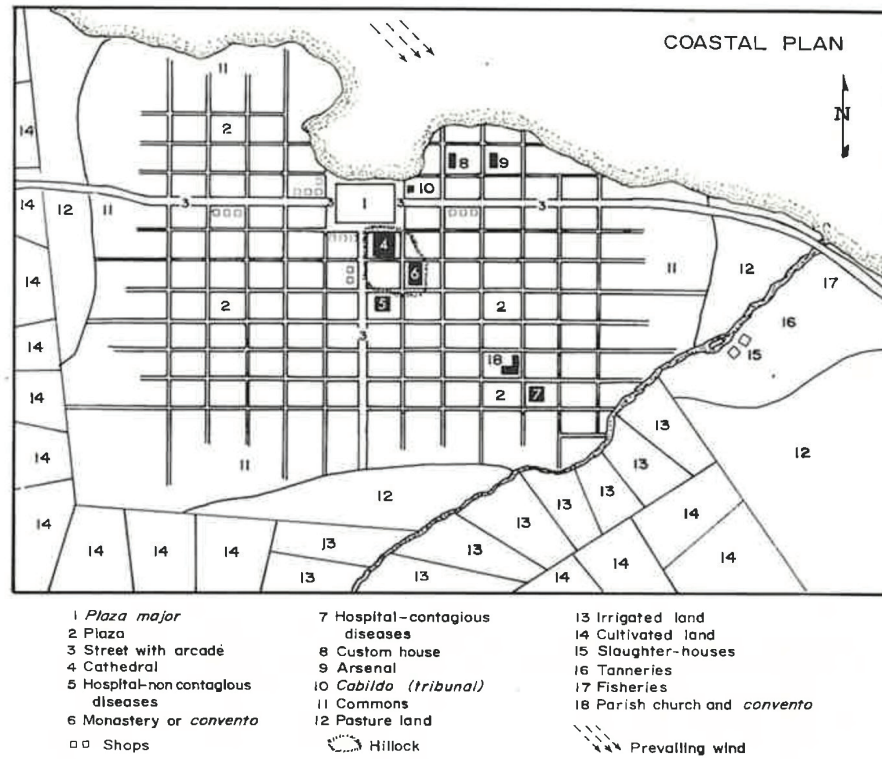


Figure 12: Coastal fortification plan (Reed)

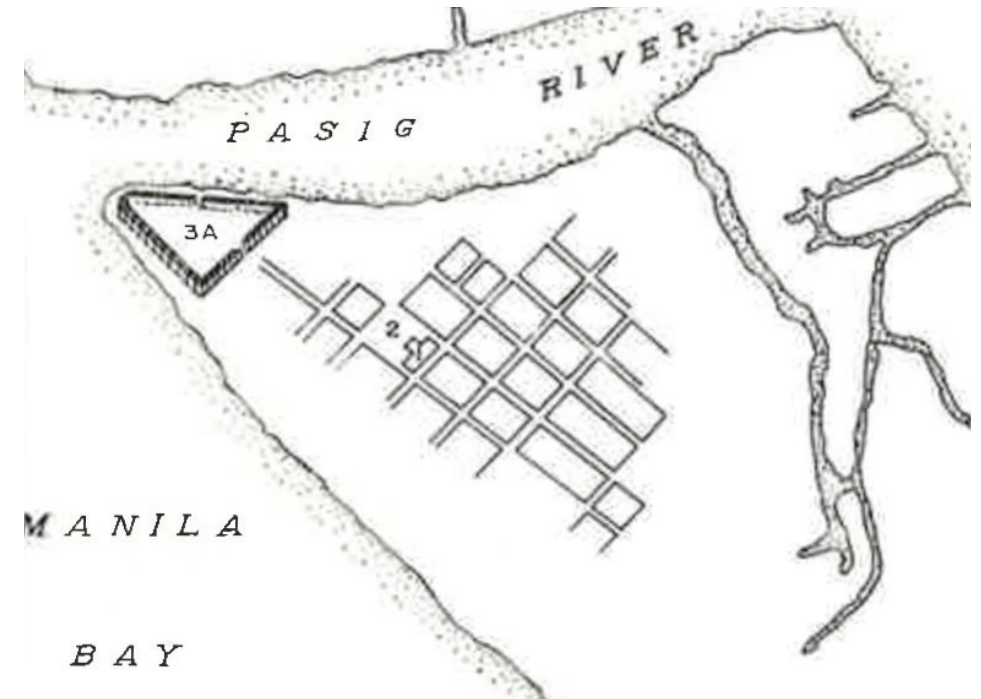


Figure 13: Fort Santiago fortification (Reed)



Chinese Enclave

Fishing Villages

Pasig River

Fort Santiago

Intramuros

Manila Bay



Figure 14: Rizal Province Quarry, 1935 (University of Milwaukee)

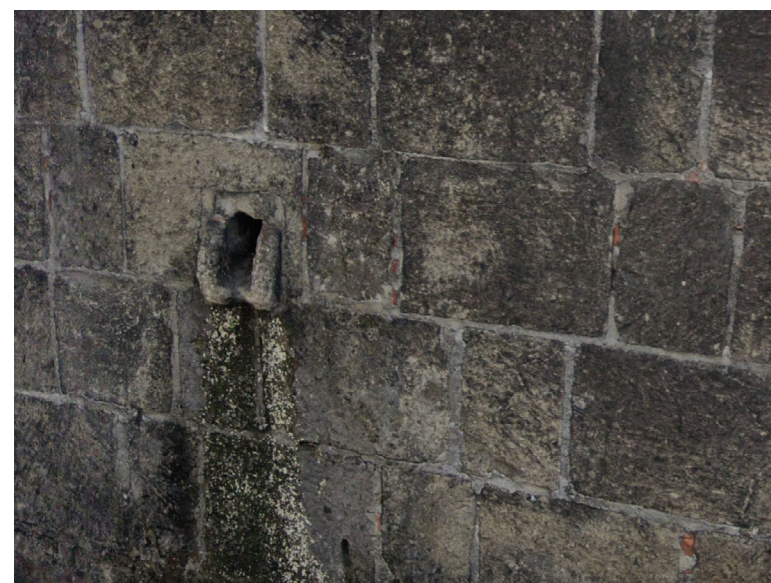


Figure 15: Intramuros wall details (Google Maps)



Figure 16: Raised promenade of Intramuros (Velasquez)



Figure 17: Revellin de la Puerta Real de Bagumbayan (National Archives)

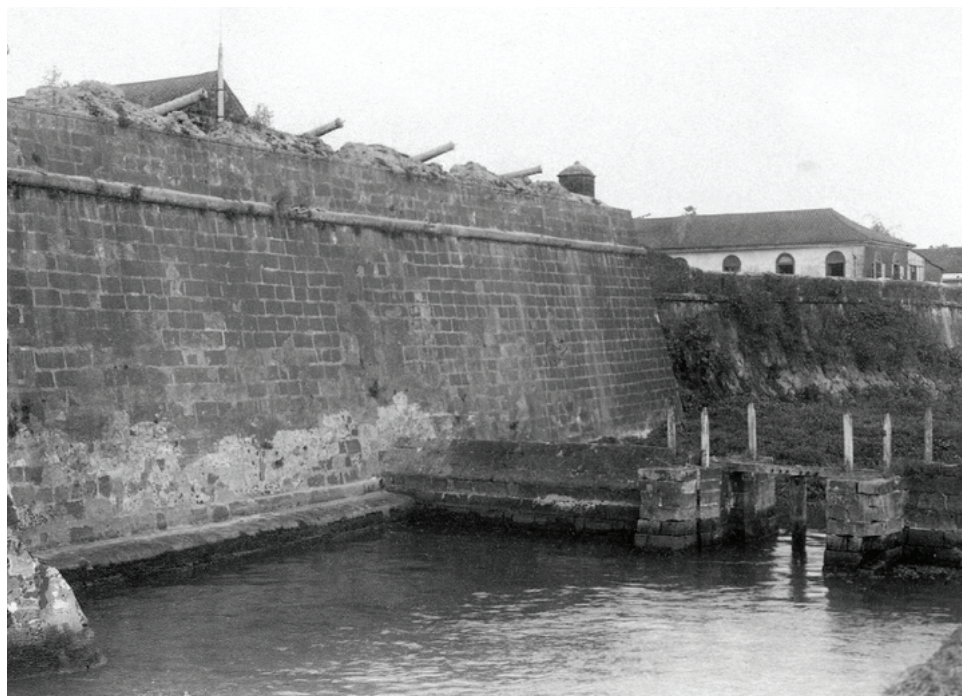


Figure 18: Moats beyond the *Intramuros* wall (National Archive)

by the Church,” beyond the walls the feared chaos of the *other* existed.¹⁹ The Spanish lived within the walls of *Intramuros*, “‘being outside in the public’ [was] aberrant behavior,” and the third, public space between, ceased to exist.²⁰

In 1603, Fort Santiago was completed and by 1650 the entirety of the *Intramuros* wall was constructed (Figure 13). The walls were built from volcanic Guadalupe tuff quarried from Makati, just south of Manila proper (Figure 14 and 15). Tuff, called adobe in the Philippines, is “an igneous rock, a product of solidified magma” produced from the earth’s core and then expelled through “craters, vents or fissures.”²¹ After the magma cools, porous rock is left in large quarries. Roughly 1’ x 1.5’, the tuff is stacked with a thin layer of mortar in between each row. Filipino and Chinese laborers built the wall, transporting the stone from the quarry and constructing the wall under the supervision of the Spanish administration. Altogether the wall is about 22 feet high and 8 feet wide which allowed the Spanish military to patrol from “a raised promenade... transforming the entire city into a sort of giant, urban panopticon”²² (Figure 16 and 17). The fortification encloses 160 acres with only five gates built into the wall, facilitating control of traffic in and out. By 1718, construction of the moat around the fort began, further separating *Intramuros* physically and visually from the greater area and non-Spanish population (Figure 18).

As evidence of the exploitive labor practices, the advent of food carts

¹⁹ Murphy, Peter, and Trevor Hogan. “Discordant Order: Manila’s Neo-Patrimonial Urbanism.” Thesis Eleven 112 (October 8, 2012). p.15

²⁰ *ibid.* p.17

²¹ Paterno, Maria Cristina. “A Study of the Weathering of Volcanic Tuffs in a Tropical Environment, Including the Evaluation of a Consolidant.” University of Pennsylvania, 1999. p.16

²² Martinez, Diana. “Concrete Colonialism: Architecture, Infrastructure, Urbanism and the American Colonization of the Philippines.” Columbia University, 2017. p.48



Figure 19: Food cart in Manila (Google Maps)



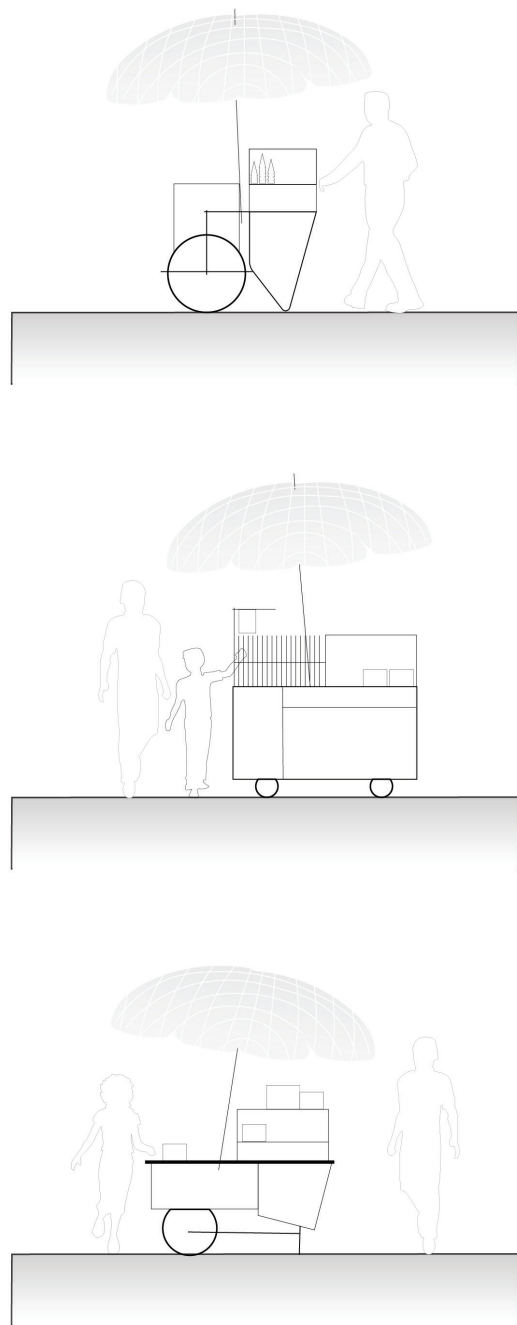


Figure 20: Diagrams of food cart in Manila

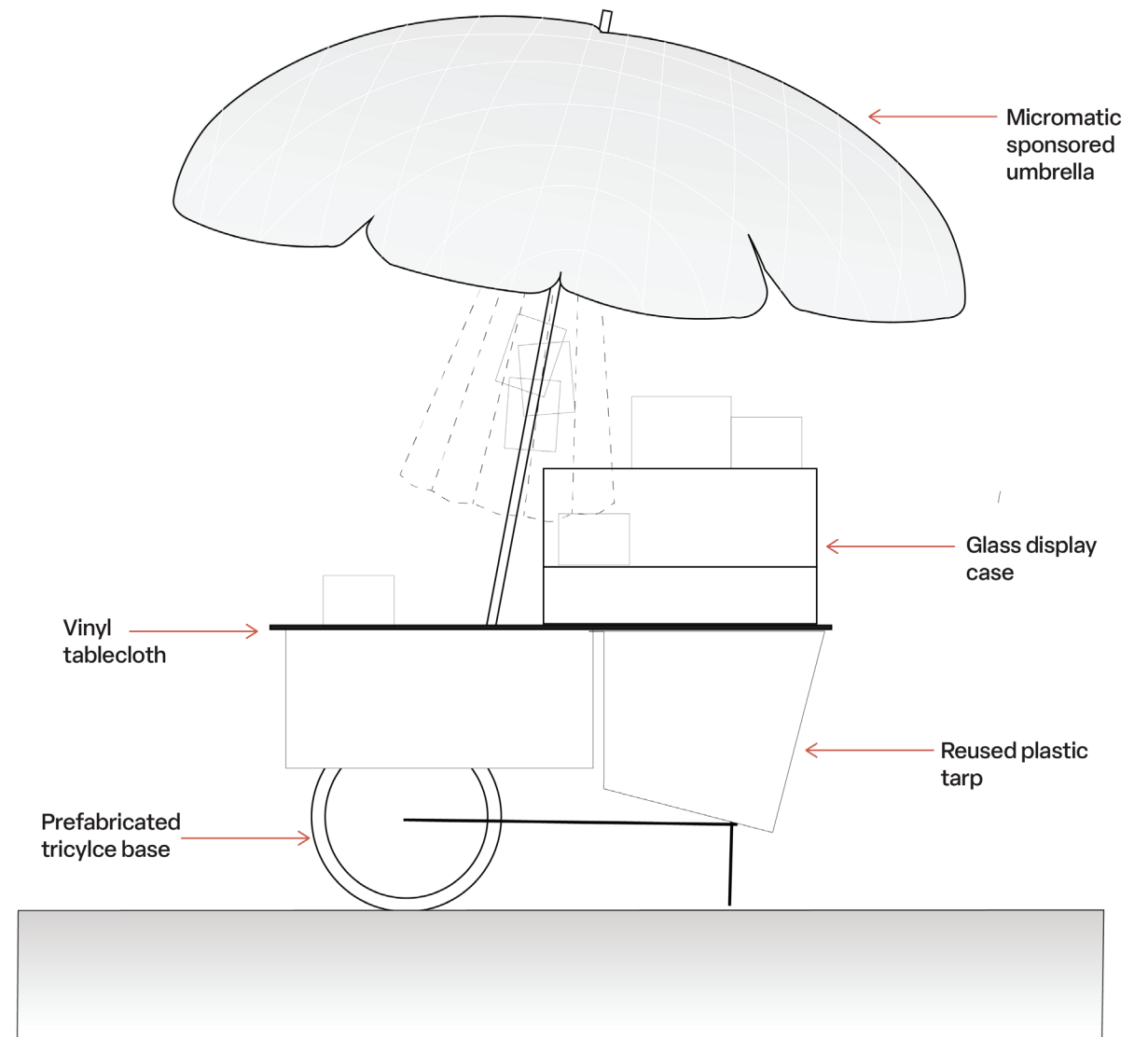




Figure 21: US soldiers and Filipino prisoners (Library of Congress)

provided meals for laborers (Figure 19 and 20). Vendors park daily along the sidewalks and retain agency over where they are located. “The first documentation of street food in the country dates back to”...when indigenous people were at “the bottom of the colonial caste system, along with the native tribes and Chinese.”²³ In contrast to the specificity of the Laws of the Indies, laborers’ basic needs were left unconsidered. The carts provide mid-day meals and snacks to workers and allow people to have portable versions of familiar foods.

Unlike the bamboo fortress of the Sultanate, *Intramuros* was left without significant damage after the Spanish American War ended in 1898. With the signing of the Treaty of Paris, the Spanish Empire lost control over the last of its colonies and they sold the Philippines, without the consent of the Filipino people, to the United States for \$20M (Figure 21). Transferring colonial control of the Philippines to the US, President McKinley stated that the US “come[s], not as invaders or conquerors, but as friends, to protect the natives in their homes, in their employments, and in their personal and religious rights.”²⁴ While not directly addressing Spain, McKinley distinguishes US’s foreign involvement and highlights the American aspirations of benevolence. However, America’s imperial ambitions, thinly veiled under the guise of western salvation, proved to be no different from Spain.

Promising modernization and order, the US quickly began to extend the colonial capital beyond the city limits drawn by the Spanish. Without “republican rights,” US colonies allowed US architects and planners “to test bold ideas with practically no resistance, oversight or consequences.”²⁵ Follow-

²³ Franco, Gian. “Origin Story of Filipino Street Food,” June 6, 2021.

²⁴ Executive Order 132, December 21, 1898

²⁵ Immerwahr, Daniel. *The Iron Hand of Power: US Architectural Imperialism in the Philippines.* Architectural History 64 (2021). p.6



Pasig River

Fort Santiago

Intramuros

Port

Manila Bay

Luneta Park

700m

N

HISTORICAL CONTEXT 1905



Figure 22: Burnham's plan for Chicago World Fair (Library of Congress)

ing this logic, the US hired Daniel Burnham, to imagine Manila as the “first American City in the east,” and attempt to realize an unconstrained vision of the American urban city.

At the time, Burnham was most widely known for his city plan for the White City in Chicago for the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, which marked the 400-year anniversary of Christopher Columbus landing in the Americas (Figure 22). Like other world fairs, the pavilions exhibited people taken from colonized countries.²⁶ Burnham's temporary city of Chicago was vastly larger in scale than his previous projects and gave him new freedom to create his “Ideal City of the Progressive Era.”²⁷ He decided to paint all 200 buildings white, visually reflecting the start of the US's global empire and its imperial ideology of bringing order and modernity. Though Burnham was entrusted with this plan, he was just one of many working to realize the physical form of the American imperial project.

The White City in Chicago would serve as the blueprint for Burnham's work in the Philippines. Not dissimilar from other colonial projects, the American Empire did not value an architect's familiarity with the site. Instead, the site was considered a ‘blank slate,’ offering the architect complete design freedom to replicate and expand their own desires. Prior to accepting this project, Burnham had never visited the Philippines. In 1904 at the start of the project, during a six week visit to the island of Luzon, he interacted with almost no Filipinos and only consulted other colonial officials²⁸ (Figure 23). He finished the plans for Manila in six months and after receiving approval

²⁶ Du Bois, W. E. B. W.E.B. Du Bois's Data Portraits : Visualizing Black America : The Color Line at the Turn of the Twentieth Century. First edition. The W.E.B. Du Bois Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2018.

²⁷ Yalzadeh, I., Blumberg, N. “City Beautiful movement.” Encyclopedia Britannica, January 4, 2019.

²⁸ Moore, Charles. Daniel H. Burnham, Architect, Planner of Cities. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921.

from American authorities, construction began three days later.²⁹

Burnham's plans represent a moment in the American colonial project in which spatial representation was central to communicating ideology. Burnham decided to preserve *Intramuros*, and it continued to be the governmental center of the city. He justified his commitment arguing, the wall "...possessed singular historical and archaeological interest."³⁰ However, politically, the decision to preserve the wall served as a convenient way to differentiate the US occupation from the Spanish as "the comparison would frame the empire itself as a morally neutral institution."³¹ Publicly denouncing the power of the Spanish, Burnham planned to build several new gates into *Intramuros* to semi-integrate the two sides of the wall. Even with this change, Burnham's plan retained the prominence of the Spanish rule in the city and created a visual contrast with the US's form of governmental power in the Philippines, again using the built environment as way to morally justify their presence.

Designing a sprawling city signaled future economic growth and the opportunity for Americanization of Manila's urban space. Burnham faced little pushback due to the silencing of Filipino thought, and as a result, his plans were bold. The approved plan expanded radially, well beyond the Spanish colonial footprint, establishing city lines that are almost identical to the footprint of Manila-proper today. Taking advantage of the city's destruction following the Philippine-American War, he ignored the remaining built environment.³²

29 *ibid.*

30 Burnham, Daniel. "Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila" in Annual Reports of the War Department, Vol 10. Washington: Government Printing Office, Pg. 630.

31 Martinez, Diana. "Concrete Colonialism: Architecture, Infrastructure, Urbanism and the American Colonization of the Philippines." Columbia University, 2017. p.49

32 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Philippine-American War." Encyclopaedia Britannica, March

In its place, the US built many non-monumental walls and boundaries throughout the city that dictated and surveilled movement. Equally divisive, the form of the city and the numerous buildings they did build, ingrained control and separation. Focusing on the international optics of US imperialism, Burnham successfully built a city that supported "a strategy of exclusion and dispossession was built up in a hidden network of closed doors, service quarters, and country clubs— methods of exclusion masquerading in the breezy togs of mañana ambiance."³³ This enabled the US to spread their colonial control and perpetuate the economic and racial hierarchy established by the Spanish without religion or a traditional fortification.

Vast impassable and privatized open space became a new method of walling off different parts of the city. Just south of *Intramuros*, Burnham designed Luneta Park, a 140-acre plot inspired by the National Mall in Washington, DC (Figure 24 and 25). Burnham designed the park to be a public space that would promote the democratic and egalitarian values idealized in the US.³⁴ Completed in the early 1910s, the park was one of the first elements of the Burnham Plan to be realized and successfully became the landmark Burnham envisioned. Not dissimilar to *Intramuros*, the visually imposing park at the core of the city served as a visual reminder to people of the power of the occupying government. Rather than employing explicit "tools of surveillance, physical threat or exclusion" used by the Spanish, the US addition "operated through the employment of an intimidating though attractive

28, 2025.

33 Martinez, Diana. "Concrete Colonialism: Architecture, Infrastructure, Urbanism and the American Colonization of the Philippines." Columbia University, 2017. p.58

34 Pierre L'Enfant, the planner of Washington DC, and Georges-Eugene Haussman, who carried out Napoleon's urban renewal of Paris. Both are expressions of power through being able to bulldoze and redesign large parts of cities. This mindset and form served as inspiration for Burnham.



effect.”³⁵

In addition, the moats surrounding *Intramuros* – now deemed unnecessary for the American governance system and associated with the the Spanish colonial government – were drained as a sanitary measure and planned to become a public park. However, instead, Burnham built a golf course which at its core continued the legacy of class separation and helped to catalyze Americanization by creating an urban elite who embraced and benefited from advancing American capitalistic ideals (Figure 26). Inspired by the parks and lawns in the US, the open grass fields omitted opportunities to find shade to escape the intense year-round heat. As a result, the space is left unusable and failed to invite public use the way that Olmstead’s Central Park or L’Enfant’s National Mall did in the US. While the integration of *Intramuros* was supposed to reconnect the city, the addition of Luneta Park and the golf course surrounding the wall deepened the separation.

More conventionally, Burnham designed a new system of wide boulevards forcefully dividing the city into triangular quadrants inspired by European diagonal streets (Figure 27). Originating from Luneta Park’s wide, symmetrical paved walkways, Burnham’s plan replaced unpaved and cobblestone streets with concrete. With disregard for a climate where narrow streets provide necessary shade and relief from the sun, Burnham built roads with unprecedented width. Built to prioritize efficient movement for the elite, the roads enabled American colonists to bypass lower-class neighborhoods and street activity. As a result, the main arteries, veiled with a false idea of improving accessibility, became walls that were inaccessible and uninhabitable by local people.

³⁵ Martinez, Diana. “Concrete Colonialism: Architecture, Infrastructure, Urbanism and the American Colonization of the Philippines.” Columbia University, 2017. p.48

Figure 23: Burnham Plan for Manila (Martinez)

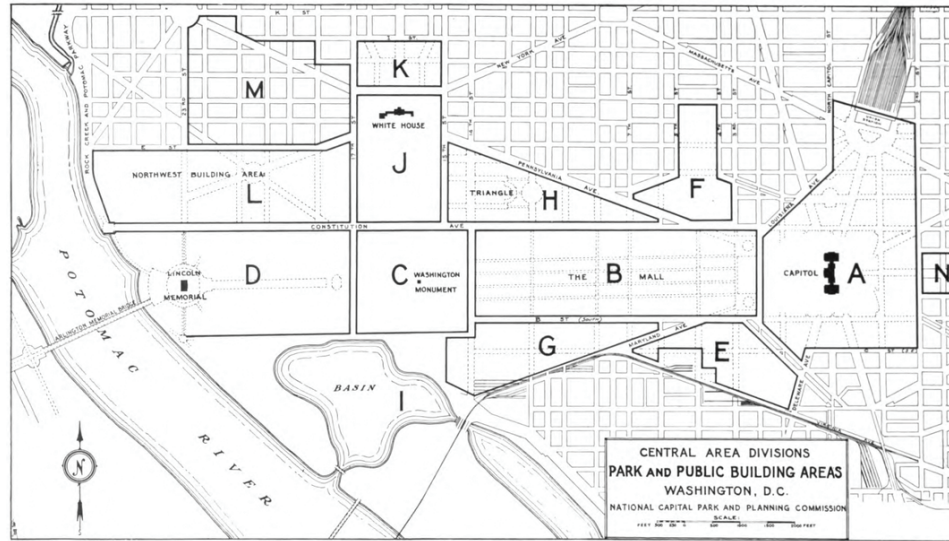


Figure 24: DC National Mall Plan (National Park Commission)

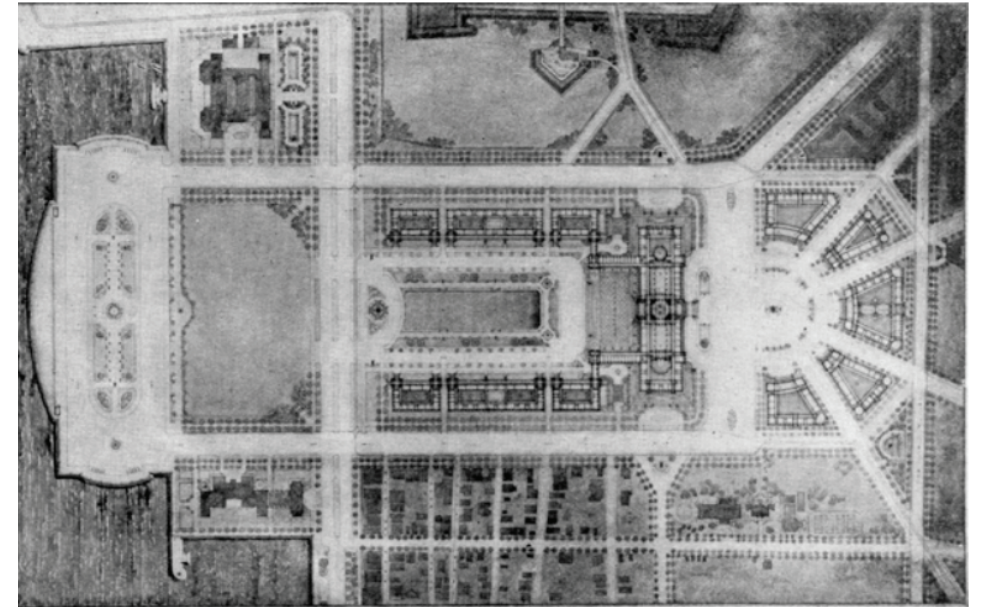


Figure 25: Luneta Park Plan (Martinez)



Figure 26: Golf courses (Tewell)



Figure 27: Dewey Boulevard (Philippine Institute of Architects)



Figure 28: Manila Hotel (Worcester)

Along the new boulevards, Burnham designed infrastructure inaccessible to local people. For example, Burnham began the expansion of the city with the Manila Hotel (Figure 28). The hotel was intended to be the landing place that would host government officials and potential investors. This decision to prioritize leisure infrastructure pointedly reflects that the new city was built for colonial settlers and elite Filipinos. The addition of leisure reinforced the capitalistic ideology prevalent in the US and served as sites where businesspeople and American ambassadors could socialize and discuss business opportunities.³⁶ Modeled after Washington DC, neoclassical, government buildings surround Luneta Park. On the face of “Manila’s City Hall ... Labor, Wealth, and Capital are personified” demonstrating the values of US colonialism.³⁷ Almost coming second to leisure, government buildings served to further reinforce the structural economic hierarchy, racial division, and colonial control the US aspired to impose.

The materials used to build the new infrastructure also contributed to the experience of separation and exclusion. In the first ten years of the American rule in the Philippines, millions of barrels of Portland cement were imported and “thousands of miles of concrete road” were poured³⁸ (Figure 29). Concrete’s portability and “ability to..move far beyond its point of origin [is what] render[ed] its particular importance to processes of colonization.”³⁹ Quickly replacing labor intensive stone and perishable wood architecture, concrete offered a new strong, cheap, and efficient building material. The material itself communicates dominance and permanence through its juxtaposition with the tropical environment and traditional building materials.

³⁶ *ibid.*
³⁷ *ibid.*, p.46
³⁸ *ibid.*, p.2
³⁹ *ibid.*, p.6



Figure 29: Portland cement factory in Michigan in 1910 (WFMK)

In response to the widened roads and new, impenetrable concrete facades, small, transient shops are free standing along the street or temporarily attached to the new concrete structures (Figure 30 and 31). These Sari Sari shops sell convenience store items in single use portions to make items affordable. With operable tarp awnings and informal seating (and an occasional place to nap), American efficiency is temporarily, but continually, disrupted.

During WWII, Japan occupied the islands, and the fight for Filipino independence followed (Figure 32). The years of violence and bombings decimated the built environment, but *Intramuros* and many American buildings survived, maintaining a colonial presence within the built environment after official independence July 4, 1946.

Today, continued colonial influence has led to an ever-growing wealth gap in the city between families who collaborated with the succession of colonists and the families who did not. This is reflected in the built environment. Edge cities and enclaves are connected by new stilted highways, built above the colonial core, continuing the US legacy of using concrete throughout the city.⁴⁰ Rather than invest in low-cost public transportation, private interests are expanding Burnham's plan for road networks; new roads and highways enable outward growth of the city. The "immaculately maintained and mostly new [and air conditioned], Filipino cars on the road act like mobile bubbles of sanctuary from unpalatable public space" allowing wealthier residents to bypass the city center and neighborhoods that are of lower economic levels and slum areas.⁴¹ Prioritizing hyper-individual modes of

40 Poco, Leandro. Spanish Colonial Enclave Urbanism: Manila's Intramuros and How Exclusion and Waterway Connectivity Created the Binondo (Manila Chinatown) Trading District, 2022.

41 Murphy, Peter, and Trevor Hogan. "Discordant Order: Manila's Neo-Patrimonial Urbanism." Thesis



Figure 30: Sari Sari store (Google Maps)



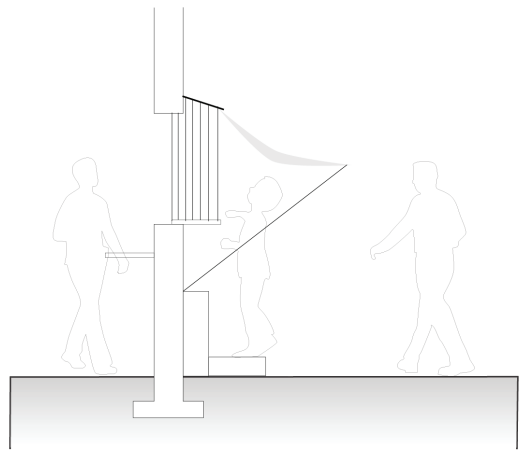
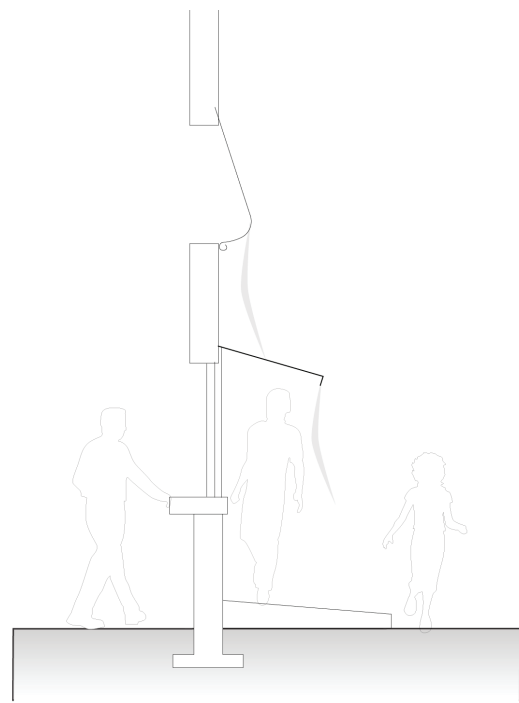


Figure 31: Diagram of Sari Sari store typologies

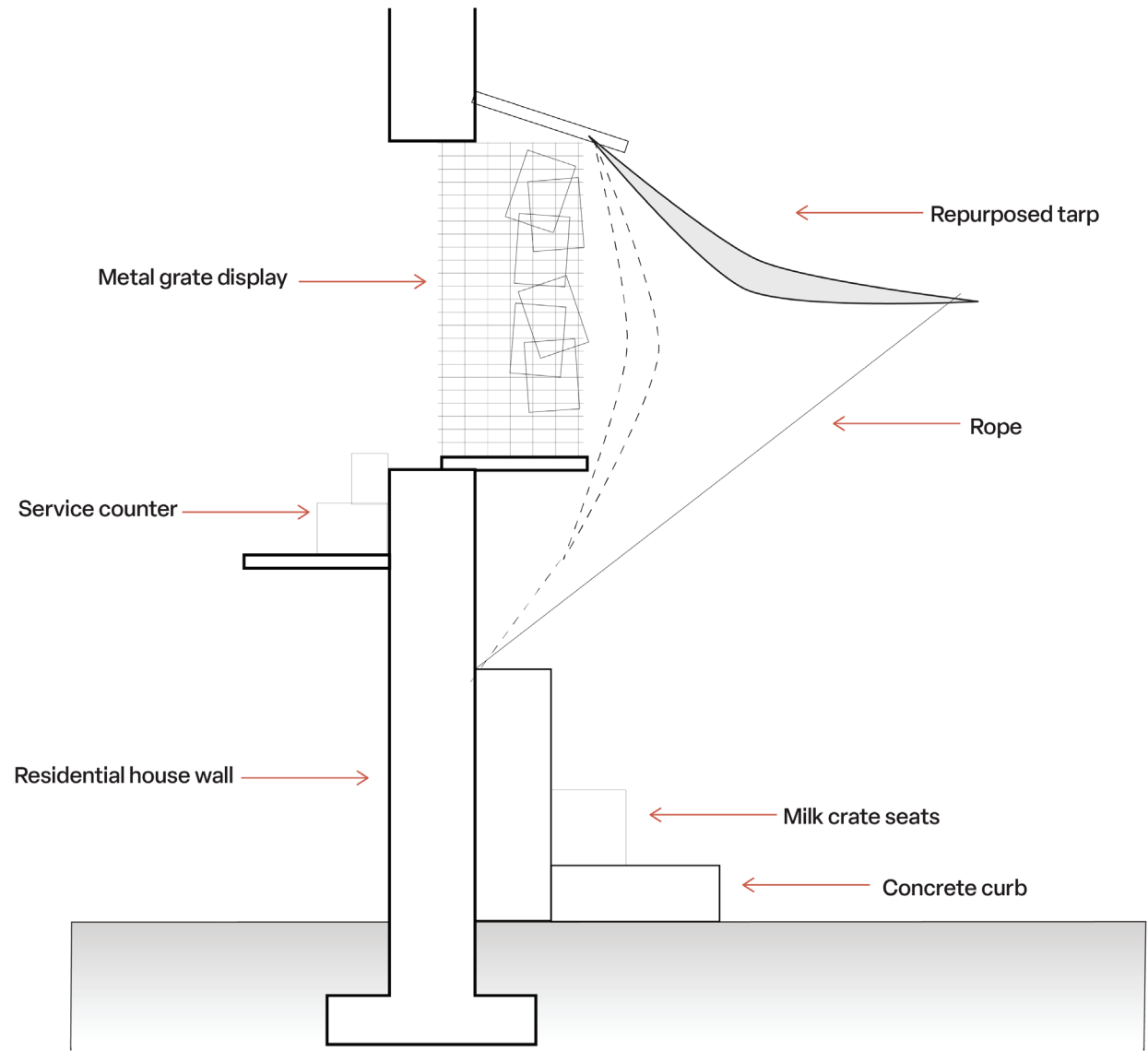




Figure 32: Post WWII (Eve)

transportation, the elite hire private drivers to navigate the congestion of the city.

The post-colonial car infrastructure and expansion beyond the colonial core also “forget[s] the historic waterside connectivity that cities were built on.”⁴² For example, “present-day Metro Manila has been hollowed-out, with a long-blighted historical core; and has seen most development turn its back from the Pasig River that carried trade and commerce” during the Spanish and American colonial period.⁴³ Nevertheless, the post-colonial period has seen a continued rise in globalization and therefore continued growth of the Port of Manila.

Complementing or completing the separation occurring at the urban and neighborhood scales, individual families who live within gated communities, have adopted the vocabulary of the wall to build perimeter walls at the scale of the family or individual plot. Homes are separated from the street with wrought-iron gates and neighborhoods are walled off and divided from the greater urban fabric⁴⁴ (Figure 33 and 34). Unlike elite gated communities in the US, “everyone except the utterly dispossessed in the Philippines erects gates and fences and walls around their property and around themselves. Even the most modest dwellings are gated with ceiling-high wrought-iron fences. Rich and poor alike have their own security guards and private armies.”⁴⁵ This history of separation and systemic privatization has made the Philippines, “possibly the first society in the world to have universalized

Eleven 112 (October 8, 2012). p.12

42 Poco, Leandro. Spanish Colonial Enclave Urbanism: Manila’s Intramuros and How Exclusion and Waterway Connectivity Created the Binondo (Manila Chinatown) Trading District, 2022.p.2

43 *ibid.* p.1

44 Murphy, P., & Hogan, T. (2012). Discordant order: Manila’s neo-patrimonial urbanism. Thesis Eleven, 112, 10–34.

45 *ibid.* p.12



Port

Pasig River

Fort Santiago

Intramuros

Port

Manila Bay

Luneta Park

PRESENT CONTEXT 2025





Figure 33: Gated home (Cagampang Heller)



Figure 34: Gated community entrance (Google Maps)

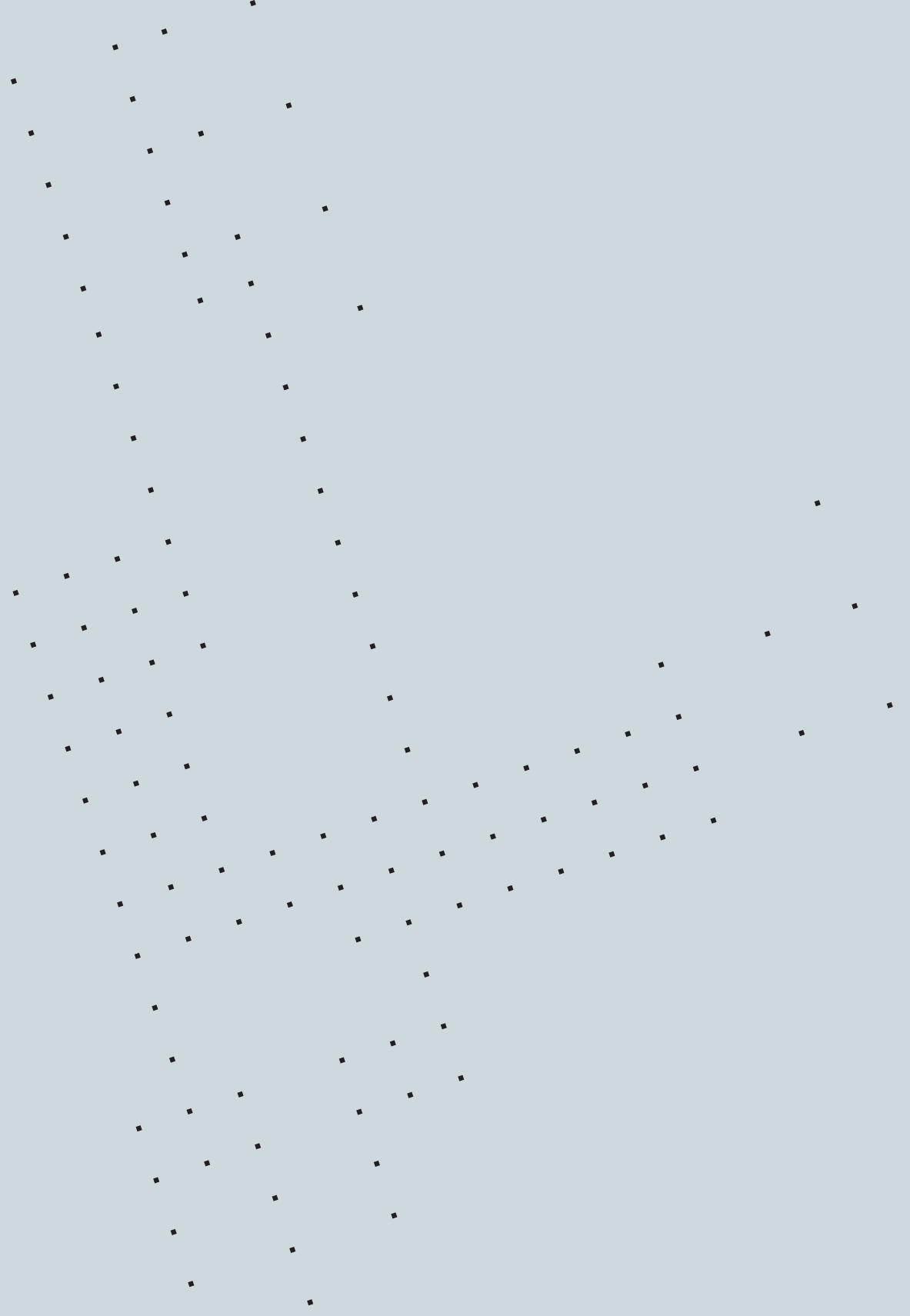


Figure 35: Food stands along old factory wall (Google Maps)

the gated community.”⁴⁶ This continuation and expansion of walling reflects the unexamined colonial hierarchies that still promote individualized solutions to the ongoing impact of colonialism.

This history of the built environment highlights both the seen and unseen layers of walling in Manila (Figure 35). By shifting the focus of study away from the traditional, colonial archive, this account of history makes way for an informed architectural intervention. The pre-colonial built environment, as well as, resistance to colonization and its present manifestations, together help to inform a postcolonial material vocabulary. Particularly in a colonial capital city like Manila, resistance to colonial imposed walls and narratives needs to be considered in post colonial architecture.

46 *ibid.*



CHAPTER TWO
Site Context



Figure 36: Postigo de La Nuestra Señora De Soledad (Google Maps)

Site Context

I read *balangay* boats, food carts, and *sari sari* shops as precedents which create an opening for an architectural intervention that affirms and amplifies what Filipino people have done for as long as they have been living under the presence of colonizing regimes that maintain walls and walling in Manila. My design proposal deconstructs and transforms the *Postigo de La Nuestra Señora De Soledad*, a small hidden gate in the *Intramuros* fortification (Figure 36).

This postern is located where Manila Bay and the Pasig River historically converged. This intersection was where the Sultanate fortress once stood, and where Fort Santiago stands today. Unlike the main gates which allow the public to enter *Intramuros*, this doorway was used by Spanish colonists as an escape route and only opened to the public in 2017. The postern leads to an exterior walkway that looks out across the Pasig River to the Manila Port and historic Chinatown.

Today, there are various tourist sites and memorials within Fort Santiago, but the site lacks a place to sit, be, and inhabit, as a visitor, local, and worker. The space is defined by linear paths that prevent and discourage lingering and connection with the water. The wall itself is massive and intimidating, reasserting the colonial influence in the city.



1570 Coastline

1906 Coastline

HISTORIC COASTLINE OVERLAY



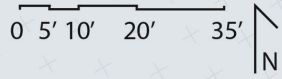


Fort Santiago

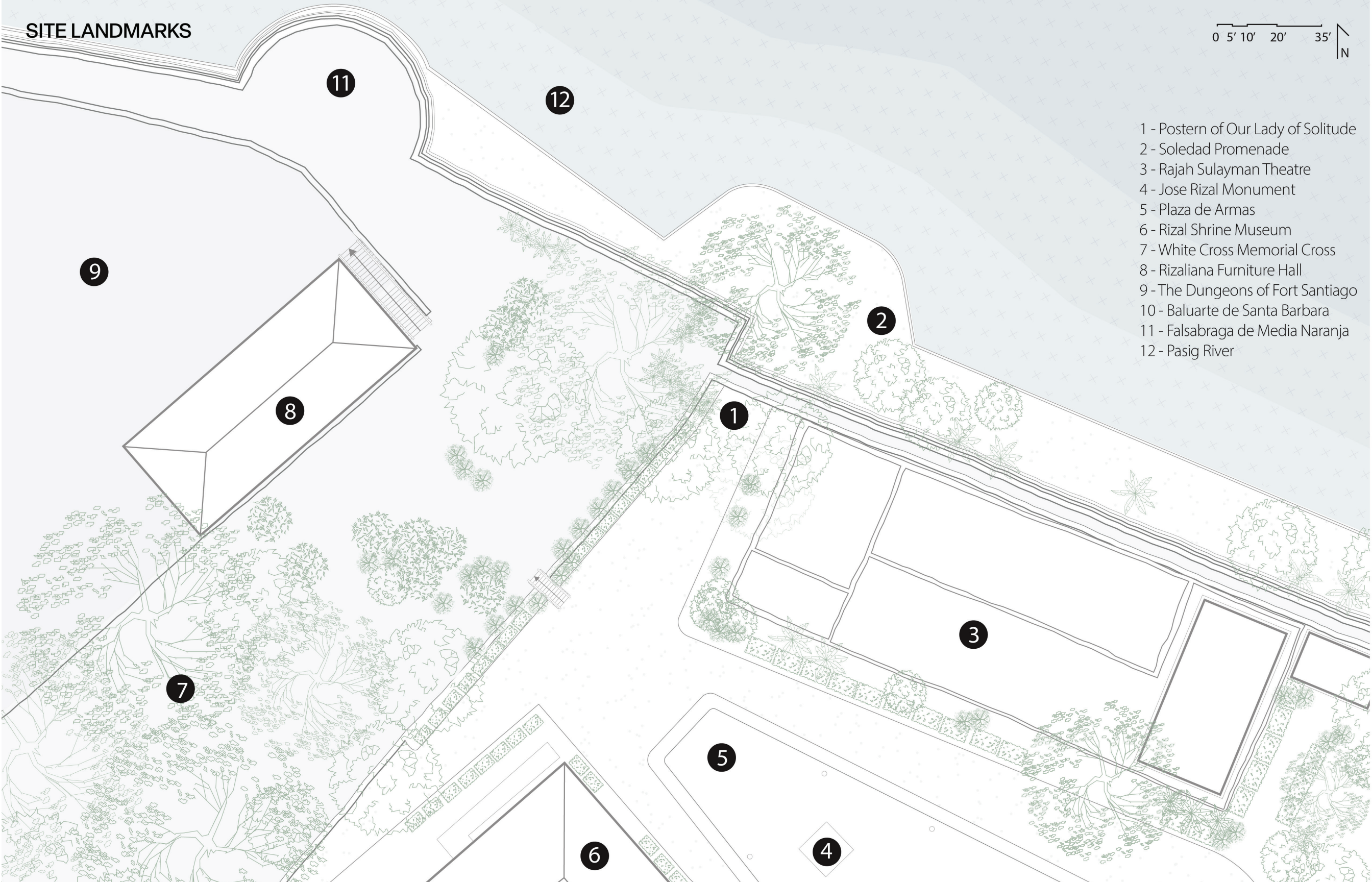
SITE AT CITY SCALE

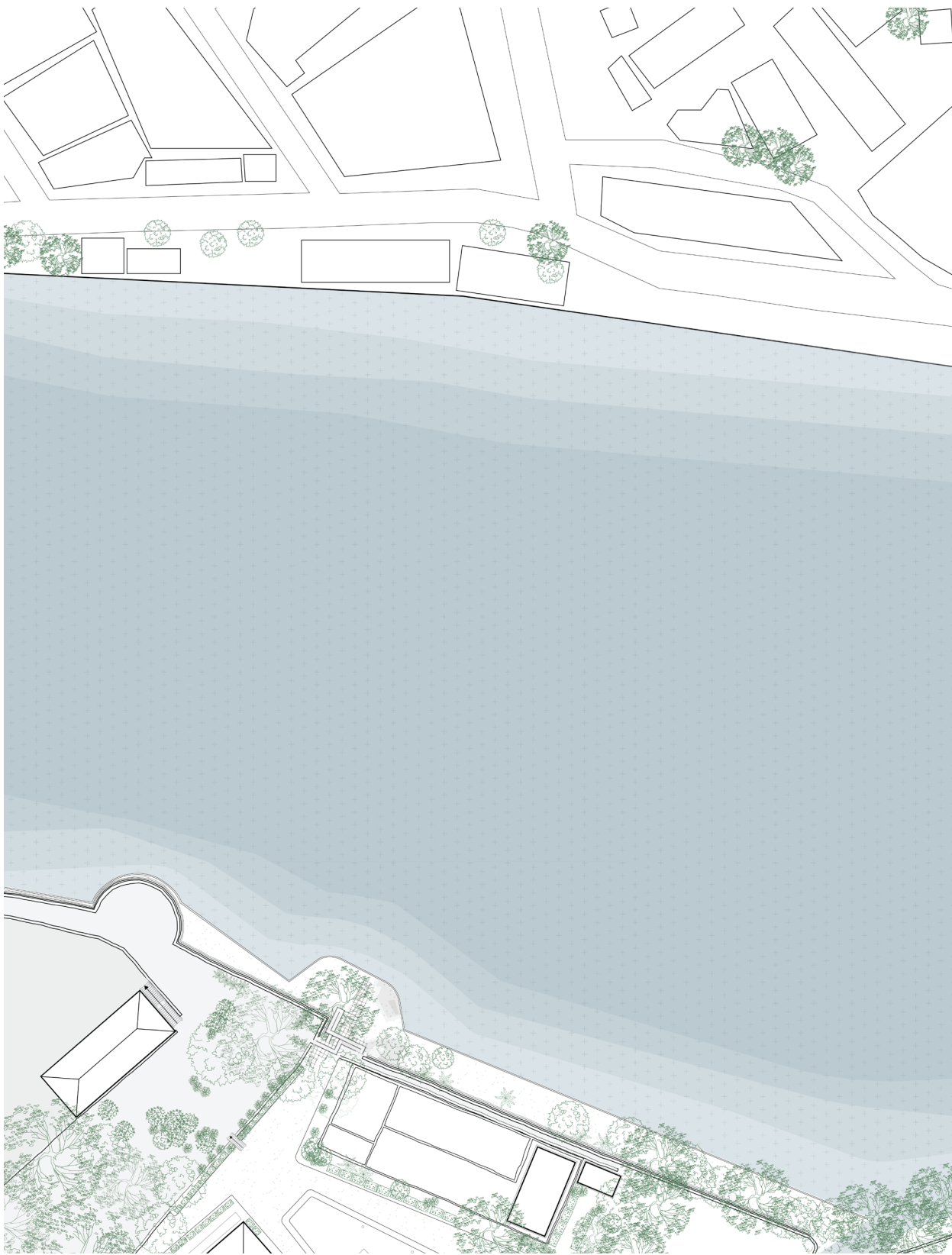


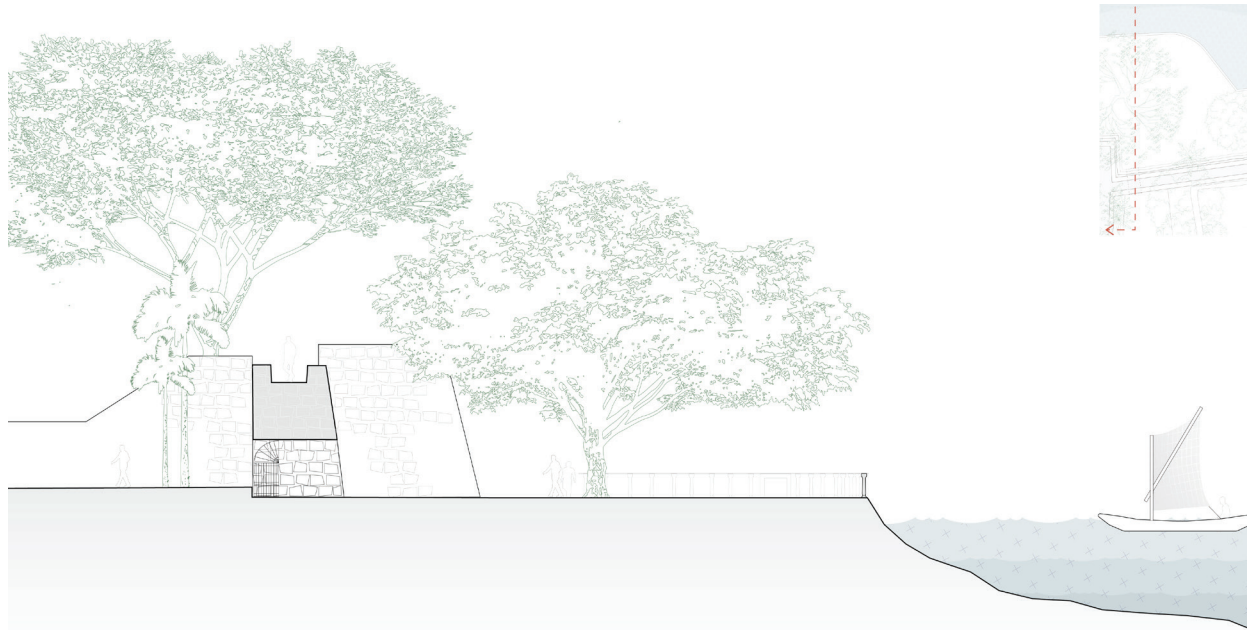
SITE LANDMARKS



- 1 - Postern of Our Lady of Solitude
- 2 - Soledad Promenade
- 3 - Rajah Sulayman Theatre
- 4 - Jose Rizal Monument
- 5 - Plaza de Armas
- 6 - Rizal Shrine Museum
- 7 - White Cross Memorial Cross
- 8 - Rizaliana Furniture Hall
- 9 - The Dungeons of Fort Santiago
- 10 - Baluarte de Santa Barbara
- 11 - Falsabraga de Media Naranja
- 12 - Pasig River

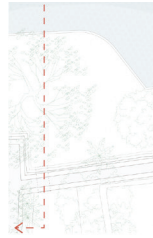






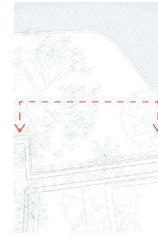
SECTION 01

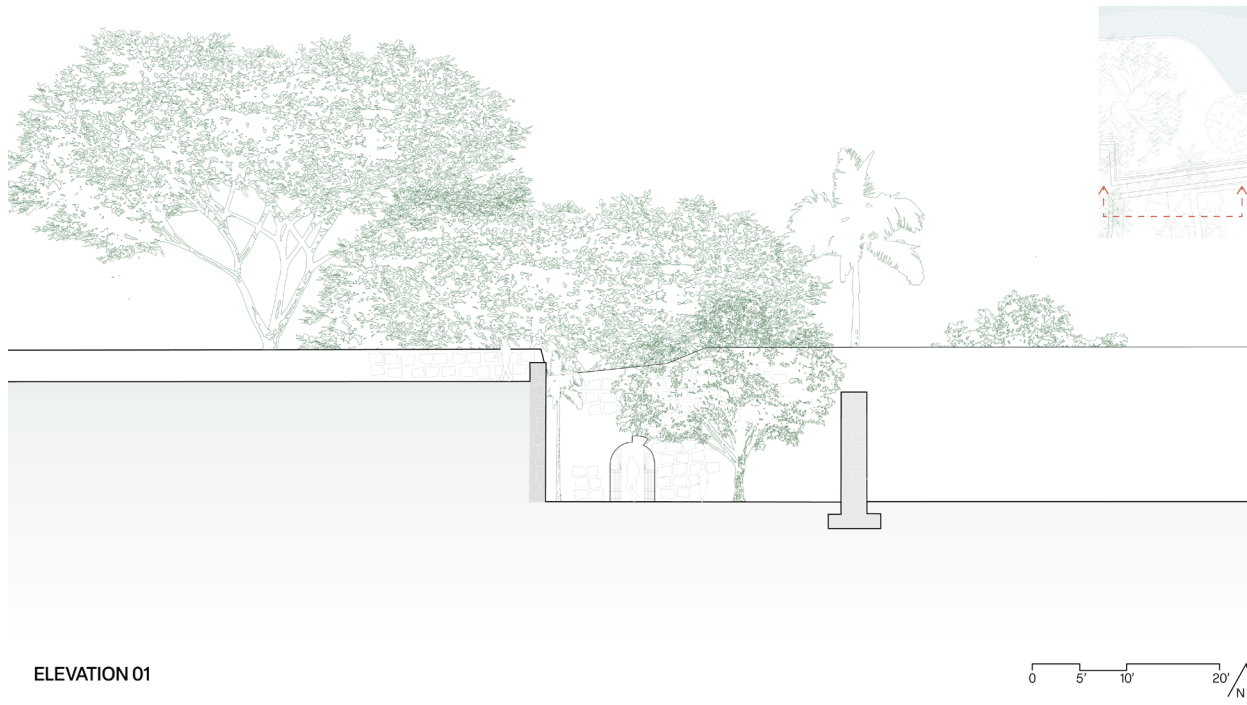
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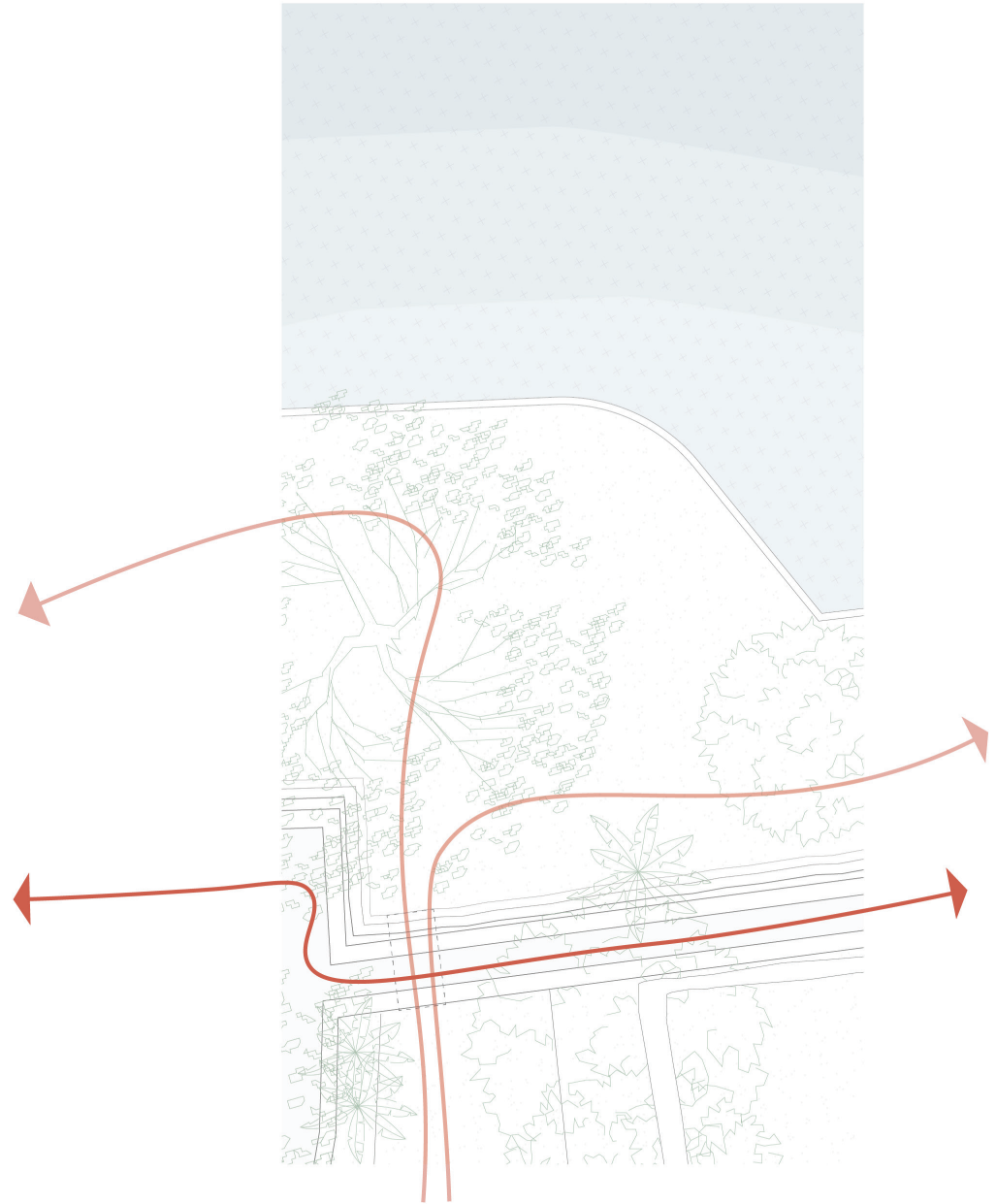
ELEVATION 02

0 5' 10' 20' N

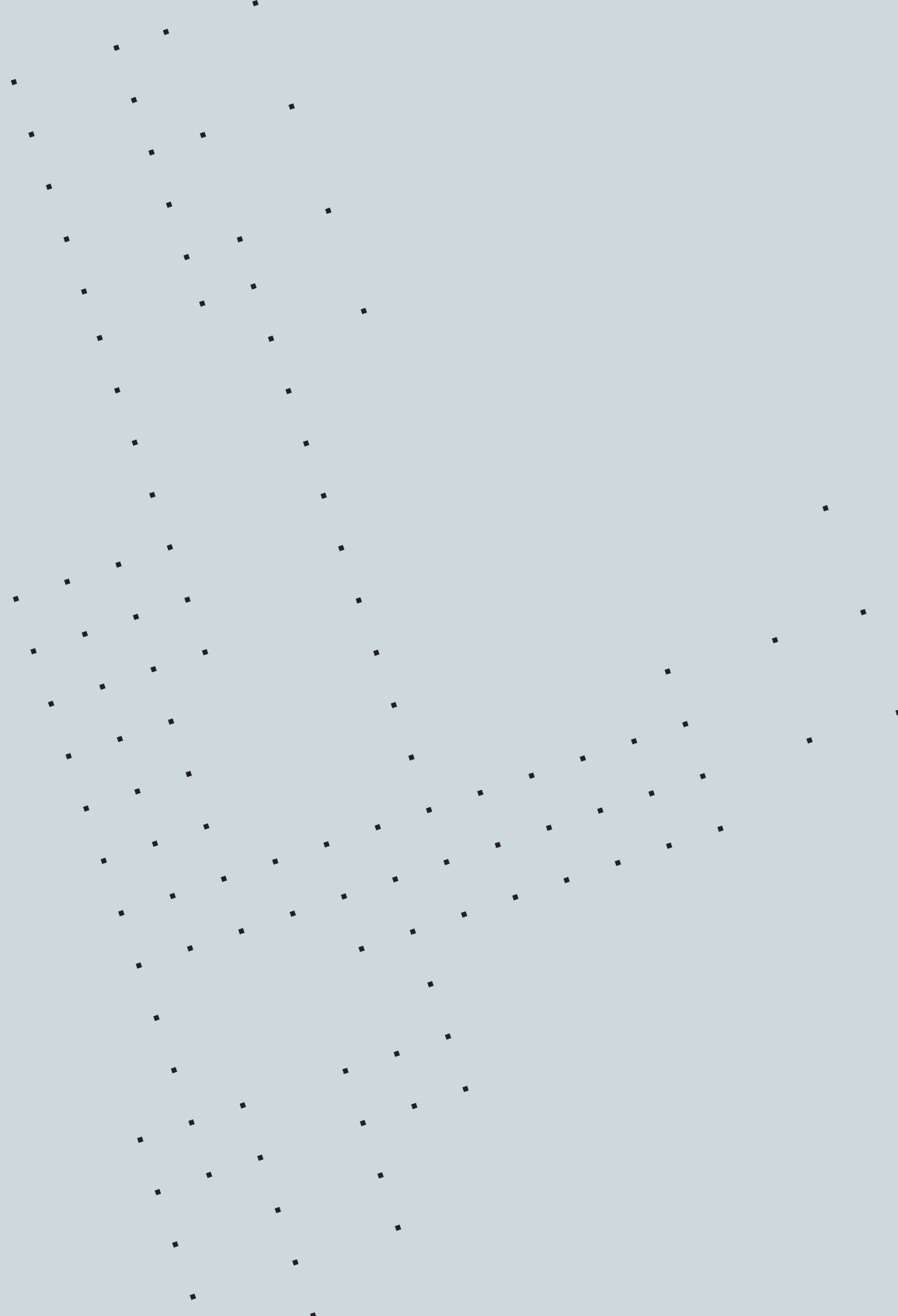




ELEVATION 01



EXISTING CIRCULATION



CHAPTER THREE
Intervention Proposal



Figure 37: Fishing boats opposite Port of Manila (Google Maps)

Intervention Proposal

To continue the legacy of refusal through architecture, my intervention slows time to establish a place to stay rather than traverse. By partially obscuring and inhabiting this section of the fortification, using bamboo scaffolding of coastal villages and textile boat sails in juxtaposition with the stone wall, my aim is to circumvent the reproduction of colonial ideology in architecture and memorialize the everyday (Figures 37-40). I employ three elements: the relocation of the stone, bamboo scaffolding, and fabric shade structures.

Contradicting the legacy and presumed permanence of *Intramuros* itself, the permanent removal and relocation of the quarried stone to the ground beyond the wall imagines the heavy stones returning to the earth from which they were cut, directly undoing the work of the Spanish colonial project. On the ground, they bring the user in and become places to play, sit, and gather.

Along, within, and beyond the now deconstructed *Intramuros* wall, perishable bamboo scaffolding allows the wall to be scaled as it was both for the process of building and now, the unbuilding. In addition, the bamboo references the historic sultanate fortress and the stilted homes found throughout the Philippines. The design of these traditional bamboo structures enable the construction to exist in tandem with the surroundings and the natural ebb and flow of water. In my intervention, the bamboo scaffolding frames the traces of the doorway and becomes an inhabitable structure. Establishing new ways to traverse the wall with a series of ramps embedded within the scaffolding, the intervention slows time and establishes a place to stay and explore.

In addition, the user can add temporary additions to the scaffolding. Continuing the presence of soft building materials and local plant fibers, Piña fabric introduces adaptable shade structures that can be tied to the bamboo scaffolding with Abaca twine. Similar to umbrellas and tarps throughout the city, the Pina shade structures are adaptable and can deploy and move as the direction of the sun changes throughout the day. The construction creates the opportunity for people to set up food carts and shops, fully allowing people to inhabit and adapt the space. The

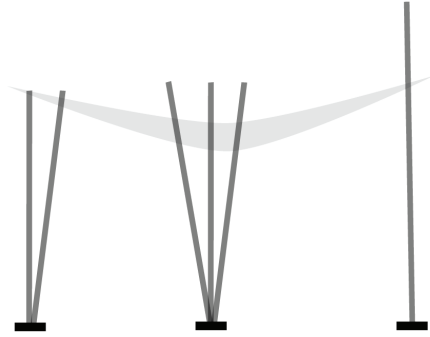


Figure 38: Umbrellas along the street (Google Maps)

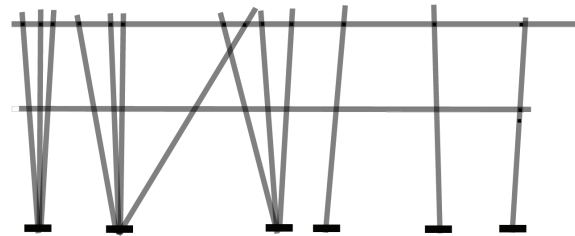


Figure 39: Coastal stilt housing (Icamina)

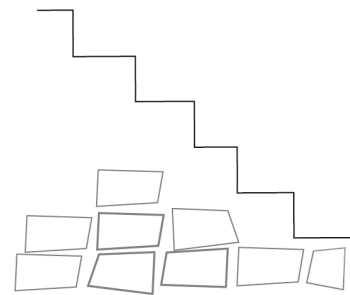
Adaptable Shade Structures



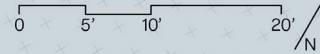
Bamboo Scaffolding



Stone Relocation



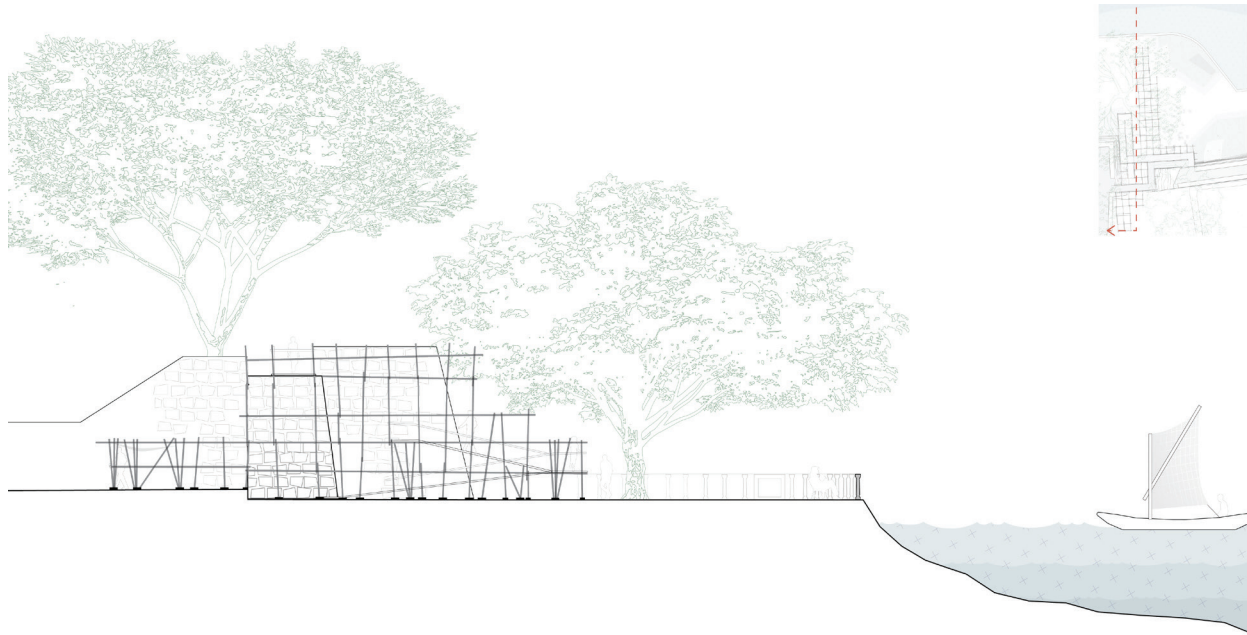
INTERVENTION SITE PLAN



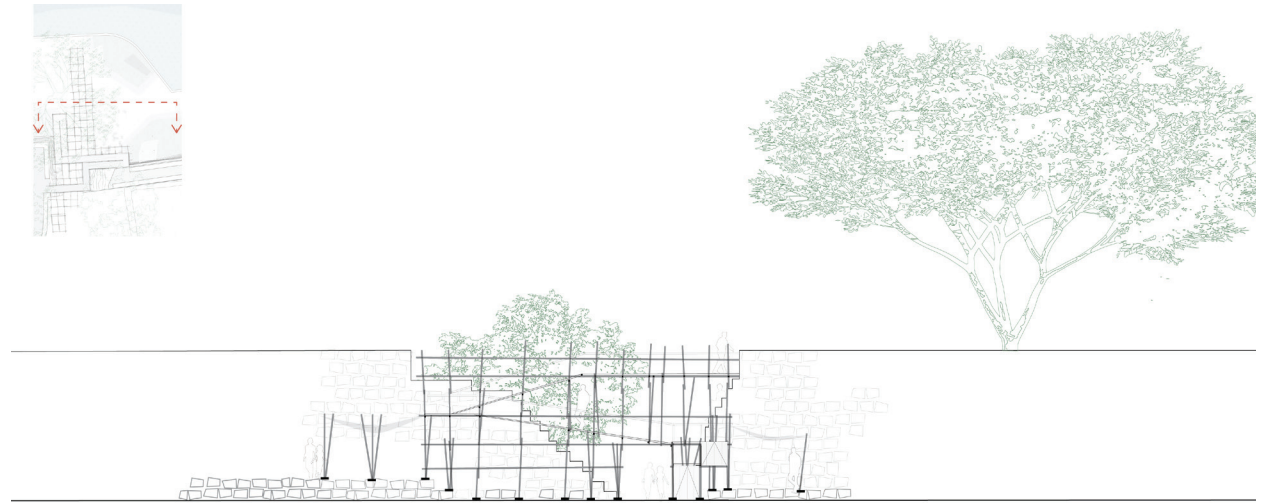
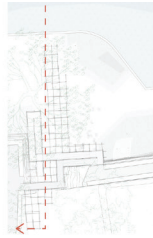
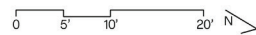
simple act of providing people shade and respite from the tropical weather are evidence of colonial refusal.

These three elements create directionality on the site to connect the space within *Intramuros* with the water and the view beyond and, vertically, the ground with the raised promenade. This movement implies ability and freedom to move, but significantly does not require movement. At the same time, the user has an awareness and grasp over the space they are inhabiting, creating a sense of invitation and comfort.

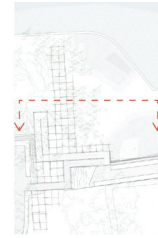
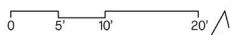
The juxtaposition of light and heavy material connects architectural forms past and present throughout the country. The more expansive view beyond the walls, both literally and into the future, opposes the limited sight and dead-end created and suggested by the existing walls. Together the relocation of stone, bamboo, and local fiber subvert the doorway while retaining physical traces of the historic opening. The traces continue the experience of exit, but without the stone enclosing the area. By obscuring and inhabiting this section of *Intramuros*, the user physically experiences the reconfiguration and repurposing of the past and not yet past.

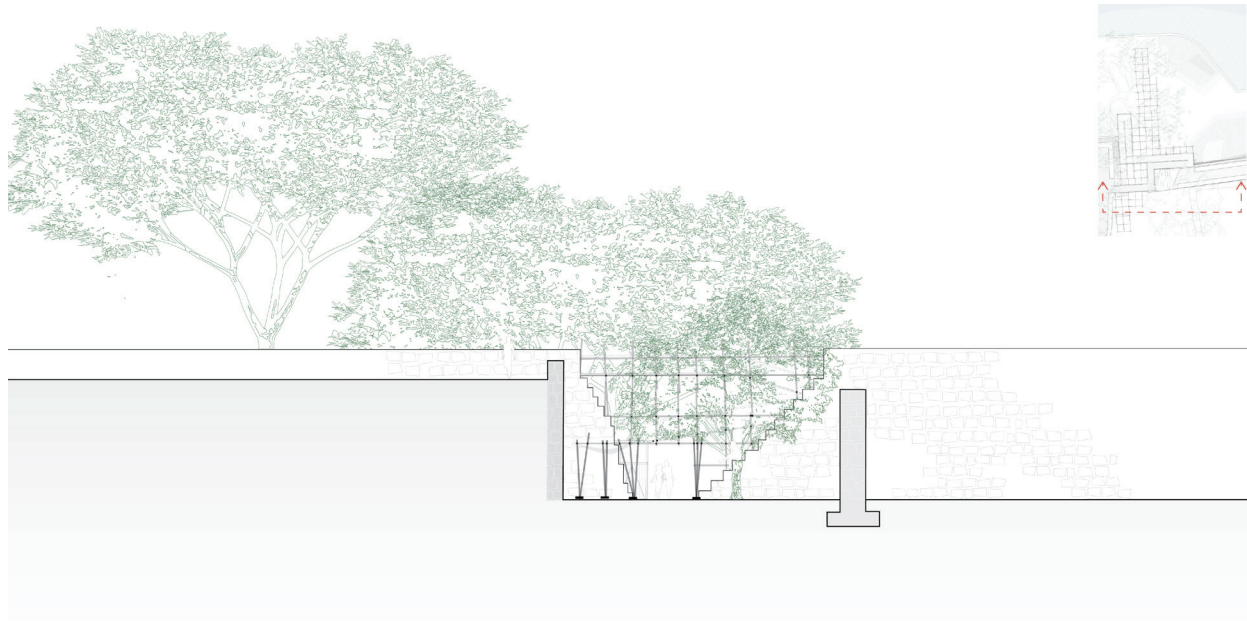


SECTION 01

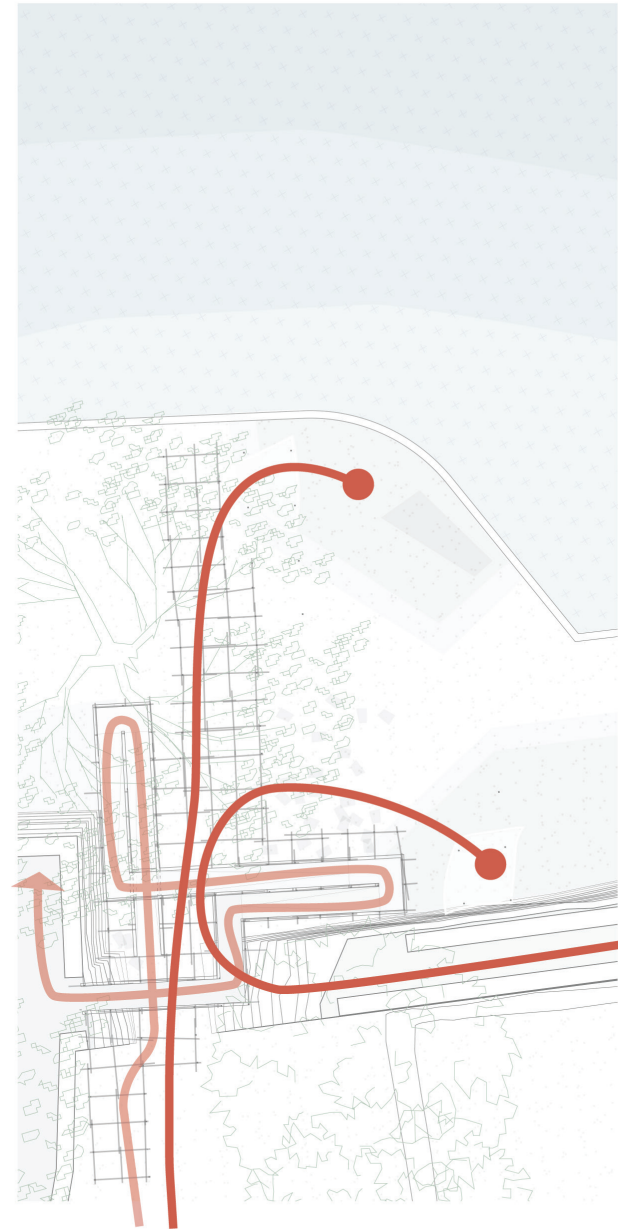
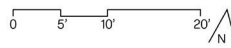


ELEVATION 02

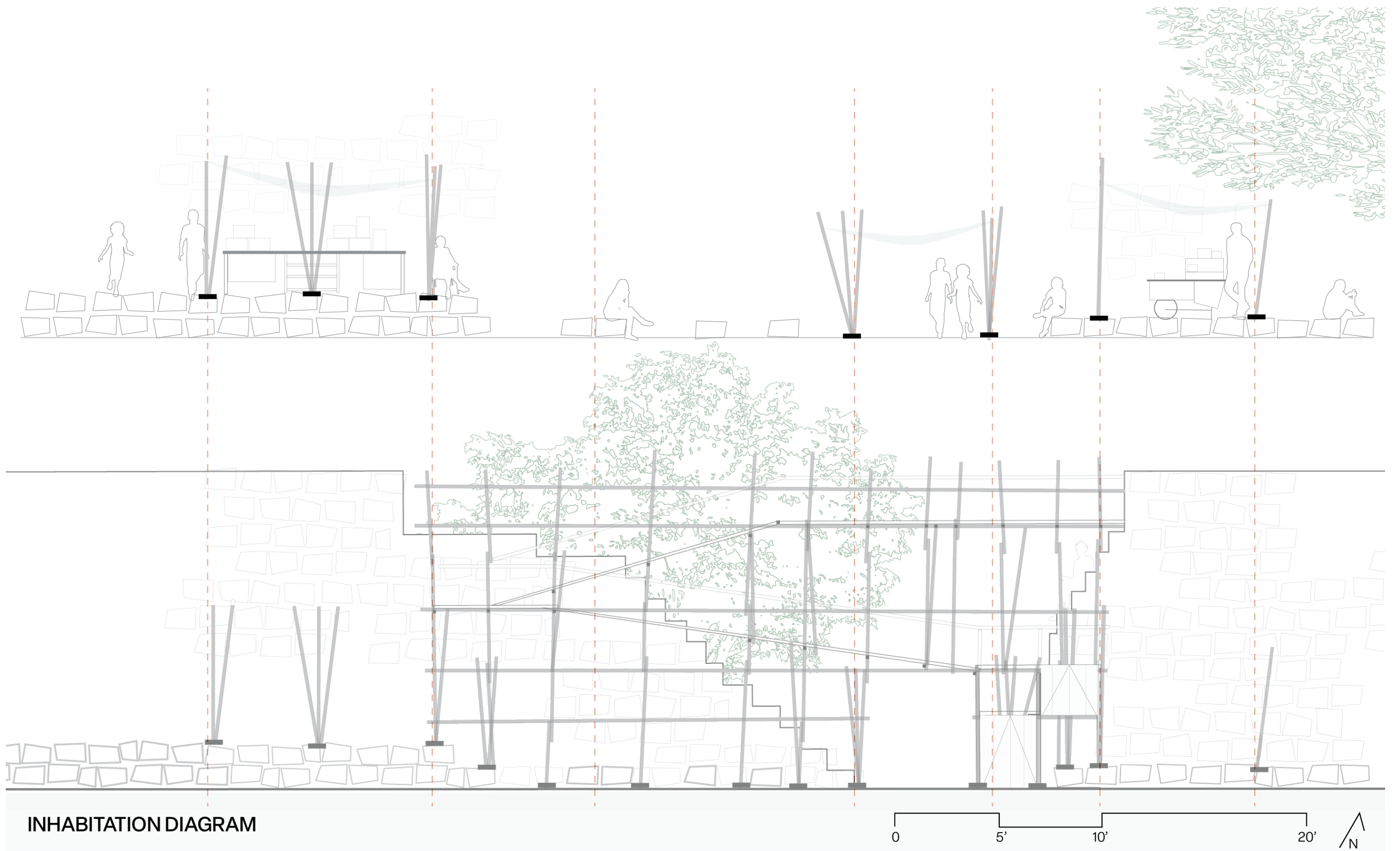




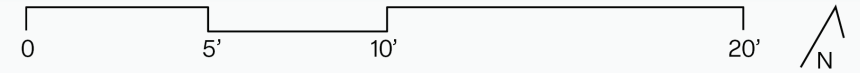
ELEVATION 01



INTERVENTION CIRCULATION

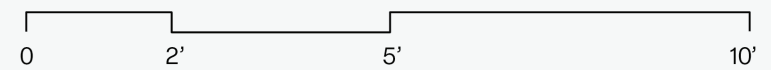


INHABITATION DIAGRAM





TRACES DIAGRAM









Conclusion

The history of the Philippines can be seen as a history of “walling:” from oceans to stone and concrete construction to social hierarchies and their parallel histories of resistance. In that sense, the site of Manila itself forms a physical archive of the years of colonial instituted control and separation, which exists beyond traditional archives. Walling, as such, works in parallel with patterns of knowledge production, reinforcing hierarchies of material qualities that support permanence. By analyzing the evolution of the city fabric, both what once stood and what continues to stand, the layers and continued presence of walling becomes apparent in not only the built environment, but also the narratives that persist.

That being said, not all physical barriers necessitate extractive violence. Given the very nature of the physical location of the islands of the Philippines, separation has always been present. And in response, long before the arrival of the Spanish colonizers, ecosystems of trade and movement to China and throughout Southeast Asia were enabled by navigating the water on boats. Employing fabric sails, people inhabited the Pacific Ocean. Learning from the tools that enabled the water to be traversed, fabric has continued to be a tool for unwalling. Fashioned into moving and adaptable structures along the street and against building facades, these transient constructions have made pieces of the city permeable and inhabitable for everyday people. The presence of fabric, today most often in the form of prefabricated umbrellas and tarps, provides shade and respite from the heat, and a break from, and resistance to, the insistent demands of extractive forms of capitalism. To continue this legacy of constant misuse, I used fabric in combination with bamboo scaffolding to form a physical vocabulary for resistance that confronts colonialism as a past and not yet past that haunts the city.

Building on this long history of urban intervention, using traditional materials in combination with the physical unbuilding of the seemingly permanent wall *Intramuros* gives way to continuous subversion and evolving forms of inhabitation. Memorializing the everyday through a not-static intervention invites users to interact with the traces and undoing of the once private doorway within the most aggressive form of colonial walling.

This project aims to put forward the idea that architecture participates in the reinterpretation and renarration of history. Through interventions in the built environment, we can reclaim the city as an archive of resistance to disrupt the reproduction of colonial ideology.

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