

The Threshold between Micro and Macro Environments

Salome Shahzad

Sally_shahzad77@yahoo.com

Abstract

This project has been designed for orphan children. Before entering the society, children should be in contact with people. The main point is to create an interesting open space near residential buildings where the communication between children and people takes place. What are the criteria in designing an open space as a link between micro and macro environment? Location and rural quality, an interrelated view between inside and outside, encouraging people to come to the link and the internal forces that shape the site are the four crucial factors. In summary, the purpose of this article is to describe how to create an interrelated space between orphan's residential zone and the city.

1. Background

Last year, I decided to design a living place for orphan children. After conducting a comprehensive research about residential spaces, playgrounds, open spaces and orphan children's needs, I designed a house, a school and a yard. Although everything seemed to be perfect, I felt that something was missing. What could it be? What else do they need? My original design included a beautiful prison with no contact with the outside world! How are these children supposed to learn to communicate with other people and children? I enhanced this design to include a link as well, a link between the city and the house, between outside people and the children. In fact, it was a threshold between the children's micro world and the macro world outside. Thus, I established some criteria for finding a location which has a visual and mental relationship with the city.

2. Location and rural quality

Locating the site in a suitable place was one of the first needs of this project. The edge of the city seems to be a perfect locality for this purpose, as it is between city and countryside. This situation is proper for designing a threshold between inside and outside.

The northern edge of Tehran meets the Alborz mountains from which one enjoys a fantastic view of the city. Moreover, the rural quality of this territory is so pleasant, calm and friendly that it seems to be ideal for raising children. Furthermore, in this neighborhood you can find an excellent hospital for kids. The nearest highway provides quick and easy access. So, this locality seems to be a perfect candidate for the intended design.

3. The interrelated view between inside and outside

The two-way vision between micro and macro worlds is significant. Standing in the link and looking toward the town, we will find a connection to the real world. In addition to the view of the city, the site located at the foot of the mountain has a natural beauty. So, in the design of the intended link, it is crucial not to ruin any aspect of the view.



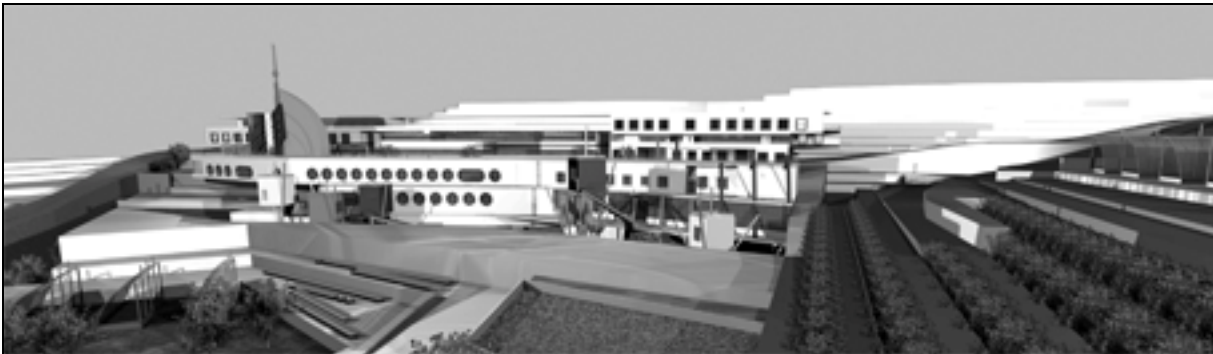
1. The view of the city.

You have a view of the city without being part of it; at the same time, you know that you are not out of it either. This special situation will give you the perception that you are in a link between the micro and macro environments.

4. Attracting the public

Encouraging people to visit this site is the most important requirement. The brilliant scenery makes the link more fascinating for people; we can design a walking path leading toward the site. Locating some interesting public activities nearby. for instance, restaurants, a few shops, a theatre, a park and etc. would entice both children and adults to come and enjoy.

We can also locate an open-air theatre facing the view. When a play is being performed, people will watch the stage and when the play is over, they can sit and watch the town as a live stage.



2. The link and the house.

The orphans can use these facilities as well; moreover, the income from these facilities could be allocated for betterment of their living condition.

5. The internal forces that shape the site

There are some internal forces at each site that will be a help in planning.. Gravity is one of these forces which cause a powerful effect on the sites with a complex topography. The combination between topographic lines and the force of gravity makes some directional resultants. Discovering these vectors will guide us to find some concepts for designing.

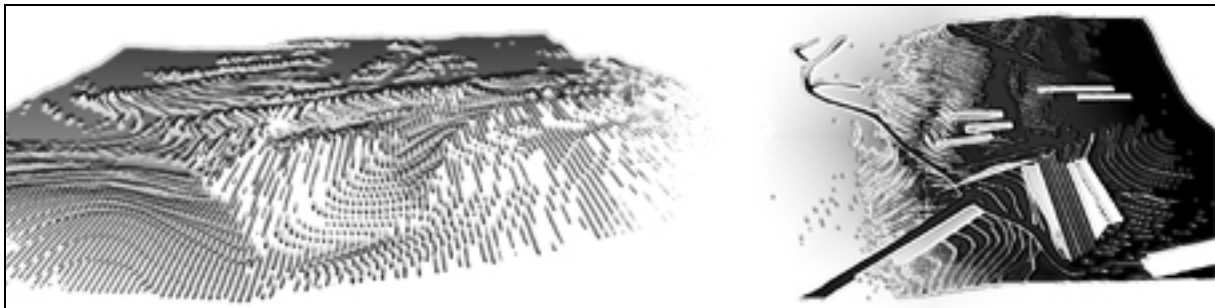
Using a model is an easy way to find the energetic momentum of a site. As a case in point, we can sink a small ball in ink and drop it on one spot of the model. As it rolls down, it will color its path and mark the vector we mentioned. Repeating this procedure on different areas of the model will enable us to have most of these directional resultants.

Or we can cover the model with wooden glue. If we pour ink on a spot of its surface, it will flow and color its path. Repetition of this action will guide us to another type of resultants.

We can even use animals to get the lines! Animals have a powerful instinct to find the best way; for example, in ancient times people used to find the easiest flat way in the mountains by following the paths of horses and donkeys.

In this project ants can be useful. Just put a thin line of sugar on top of the model. Then free plenty of ants at the bottom. Because ants like sugar, they will go up to find it. If you take photos while they are moving toward the sugar, you may find an interesting result, which may help us to find the best access.

After obtaining various energetic momentums, we can take photos of them. By entering the results in a computer and performing some effects and filters by *Photoshop*, this may guide us to concepts for designing. The pictures shown below are my concepts:



3. *The concepts of the project.*

6. Conclusion

After these researches, I developed a new pattern for making a home for orphan children in which they can be in contact with the world outside. This pattern can be useful in the future for developing a viable threshold between two different worlds, between a micro and macro environment. In brief, the criteria in designing a link for communication between residents and people are: locating public activities to encourage people to visit, and creating a visual and mental relationship between the micro and macro environments.

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