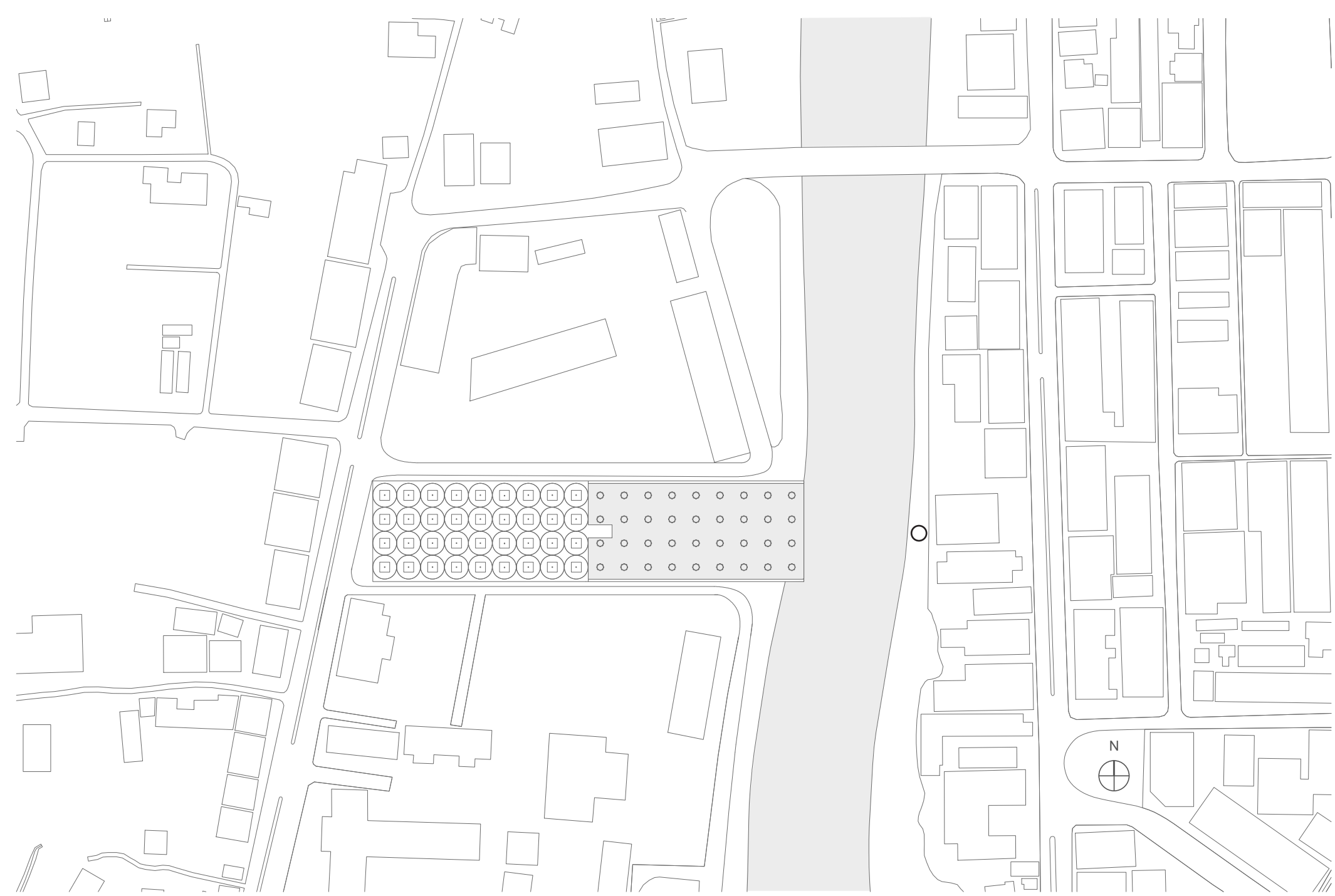
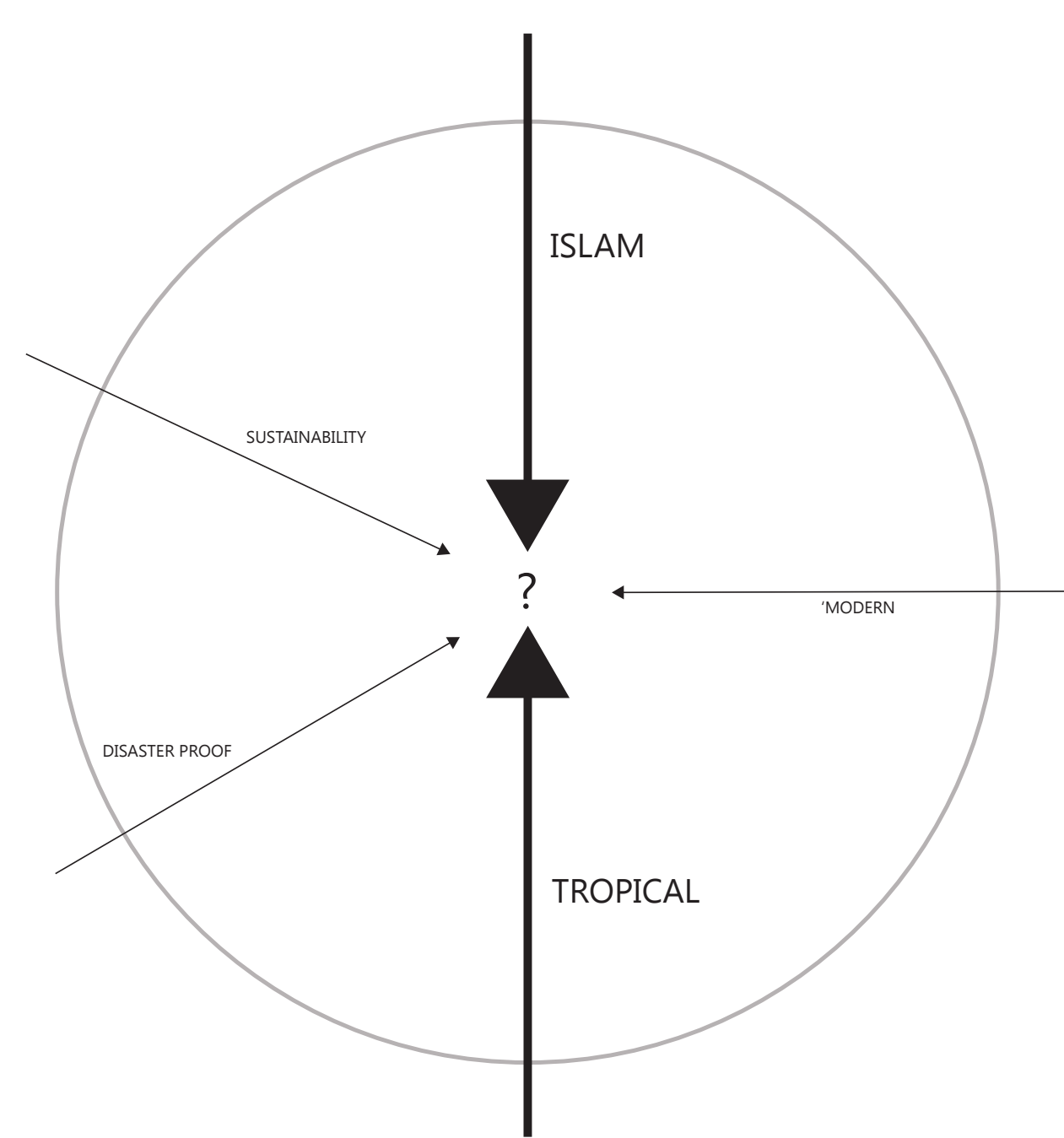


# a temple of knowledge



site plan, city centre of Banda Aceh, Indonesia

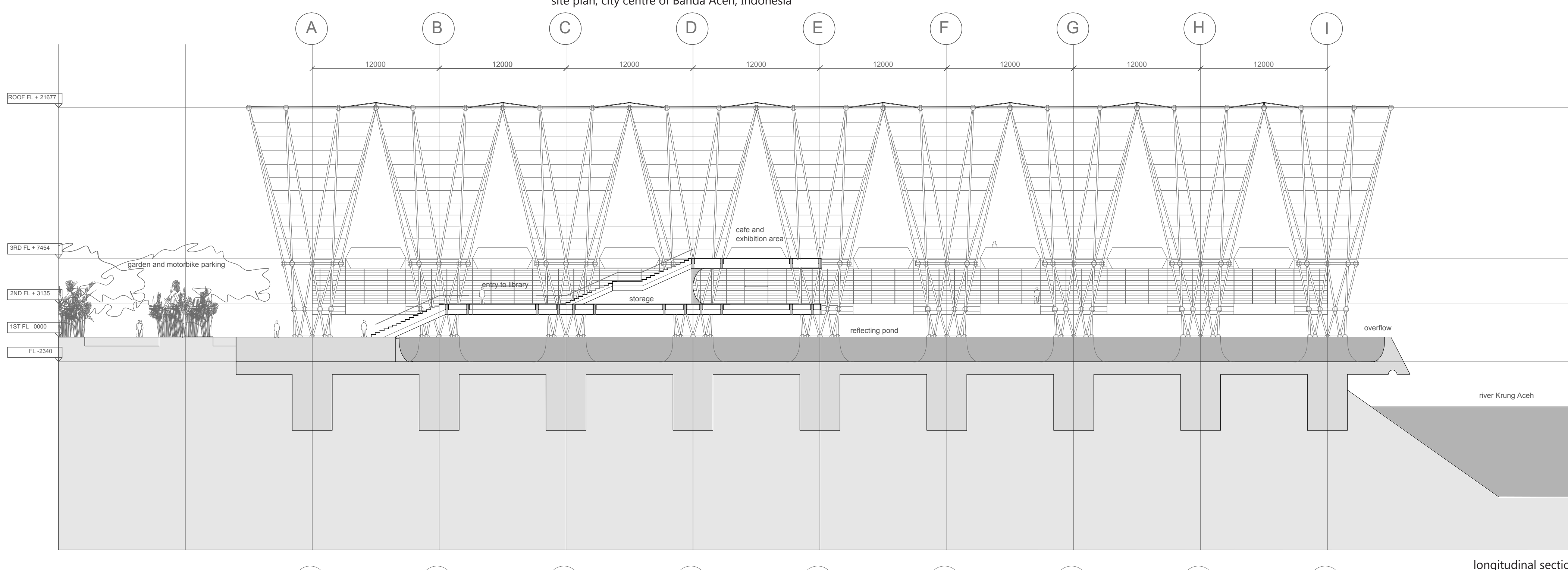


Aceh, Indonesia, was not only devastated by the 2004 tsunami, it has also been damaged by earthquakes and a war. Situated in the Islamic and tropical world, both with very different architectural needs, the Acehese people have been looking for an architectural representation of their cultural identity.

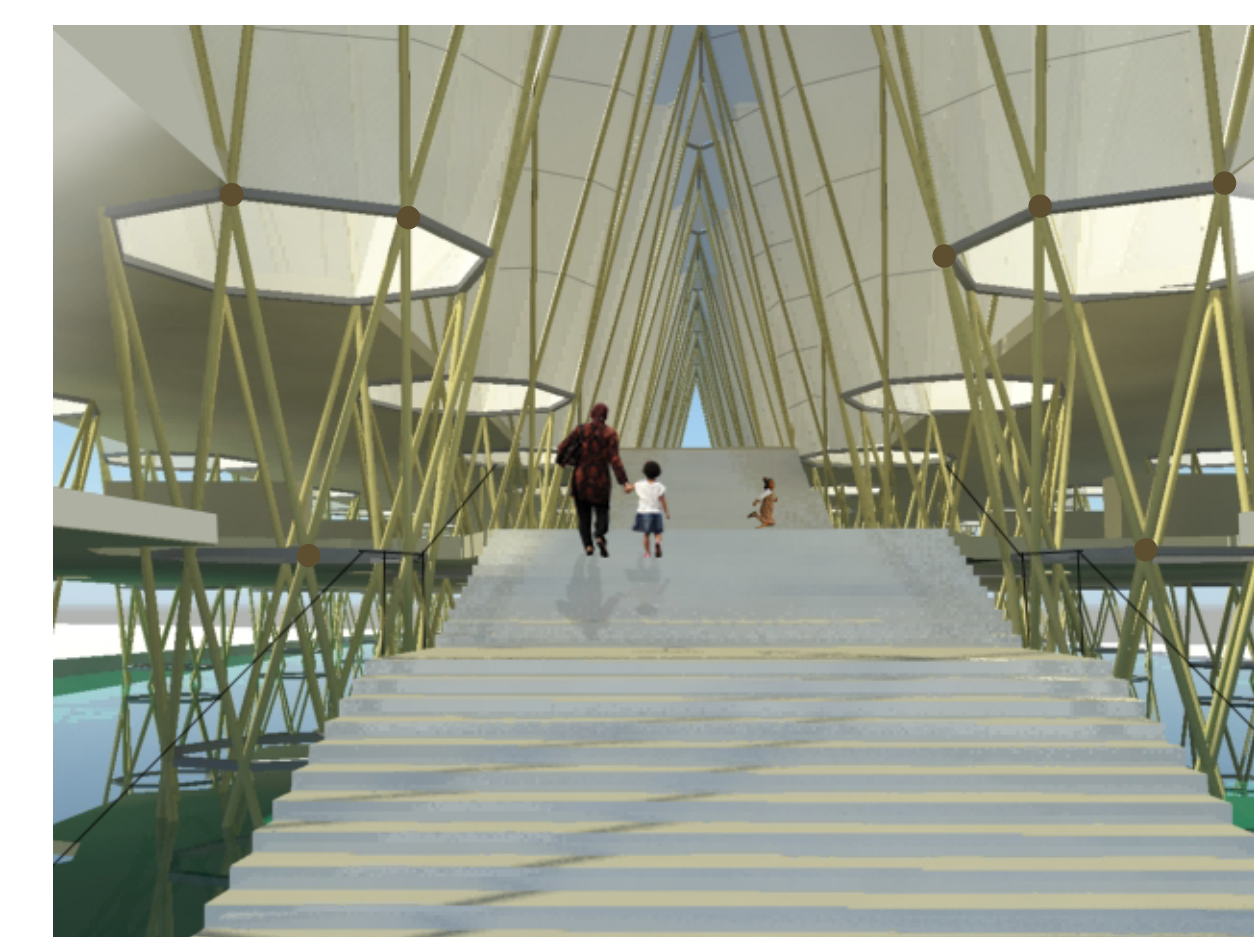
To accommodate the needs and desires of the Acehese people I wanted to design a building that looks modern, yet is disaster resistant, sustainable, and suitable for the local climate at the same time.

Its appearance had to be something the locals could be proud of: a real icon. Additionally, the building had to support the development of the local people, especially women and children. It had to also provide public space and reestablish an old city axis, which was ignored during the reconstruction of the town, and which used to connect the centre with the river.

The design has become a sort of temple: formal, organized, serene and impressive. A large sensational community building which houses a library, but where you can also eat, drink and relax. A building that fills every inhabitant of Aceh with pride when he or she sees it, because it looks very modern, but at the same time meets requirements, like sustainability, disaster and climate resistance, with respect for the Islamic lifestyle.



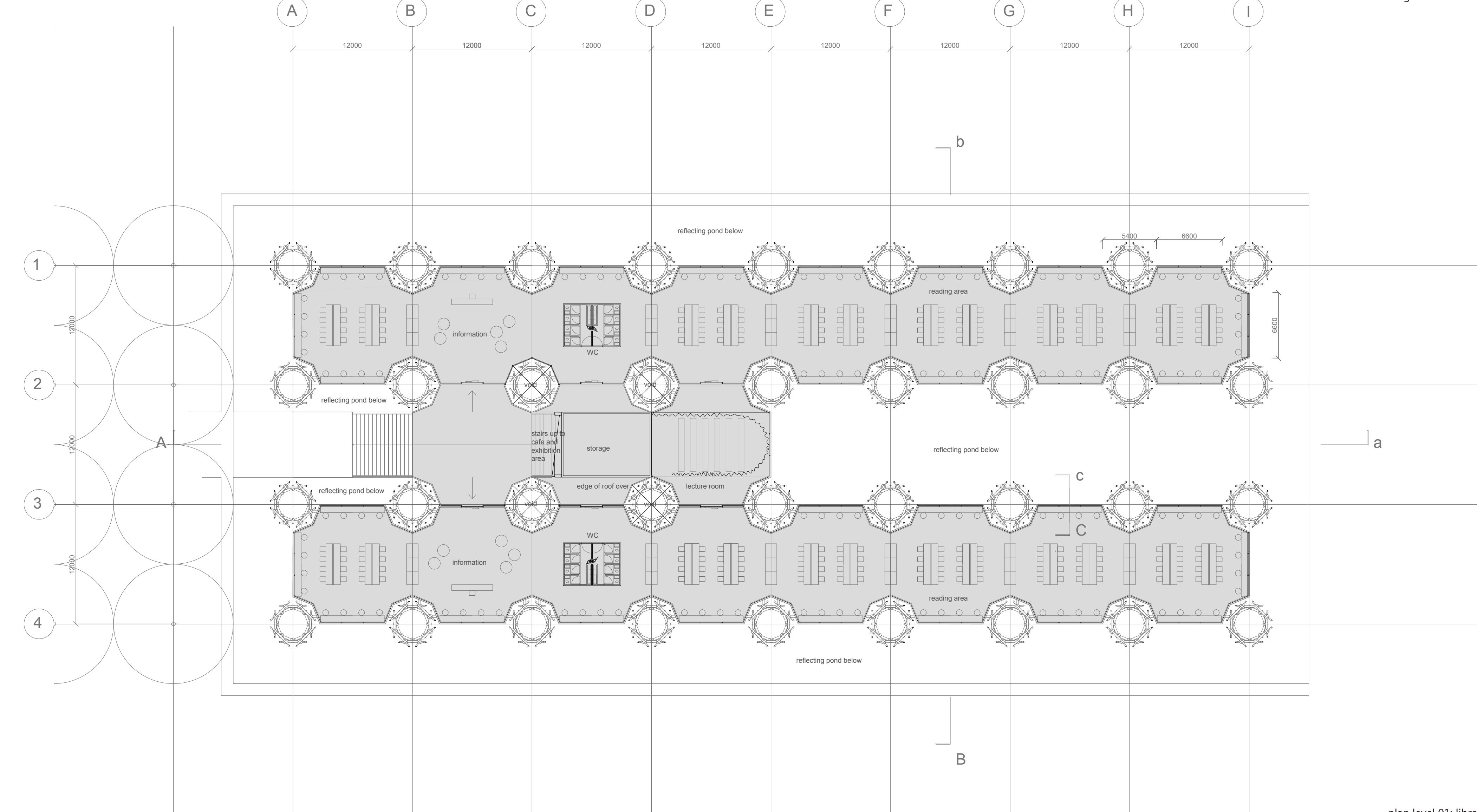
longitudinal section



stairs connect the city with the river and the three levels, pond, library and cafe/exhibition area, with each other



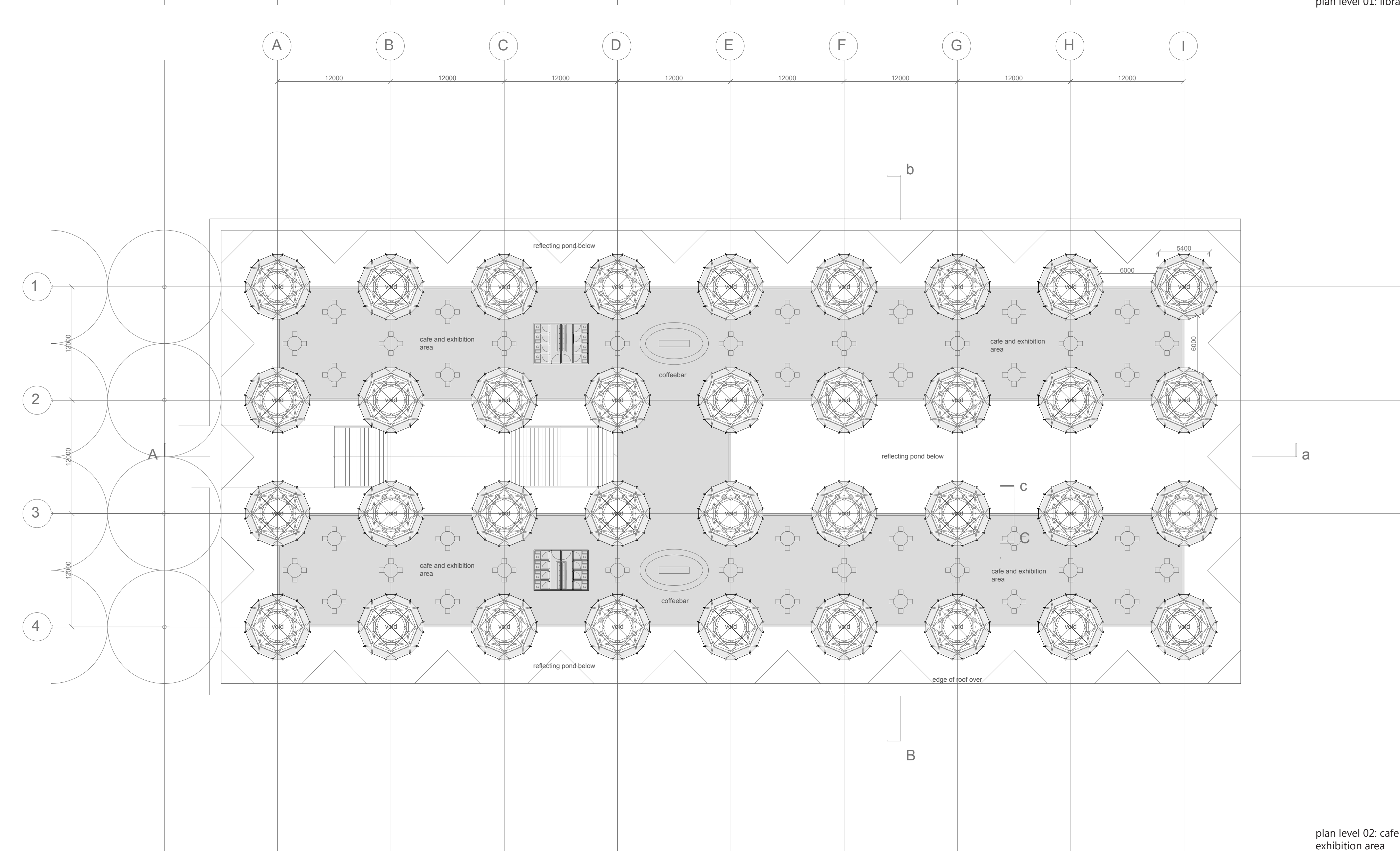
space between the openwork columns and library facade makes the water become part of the interior



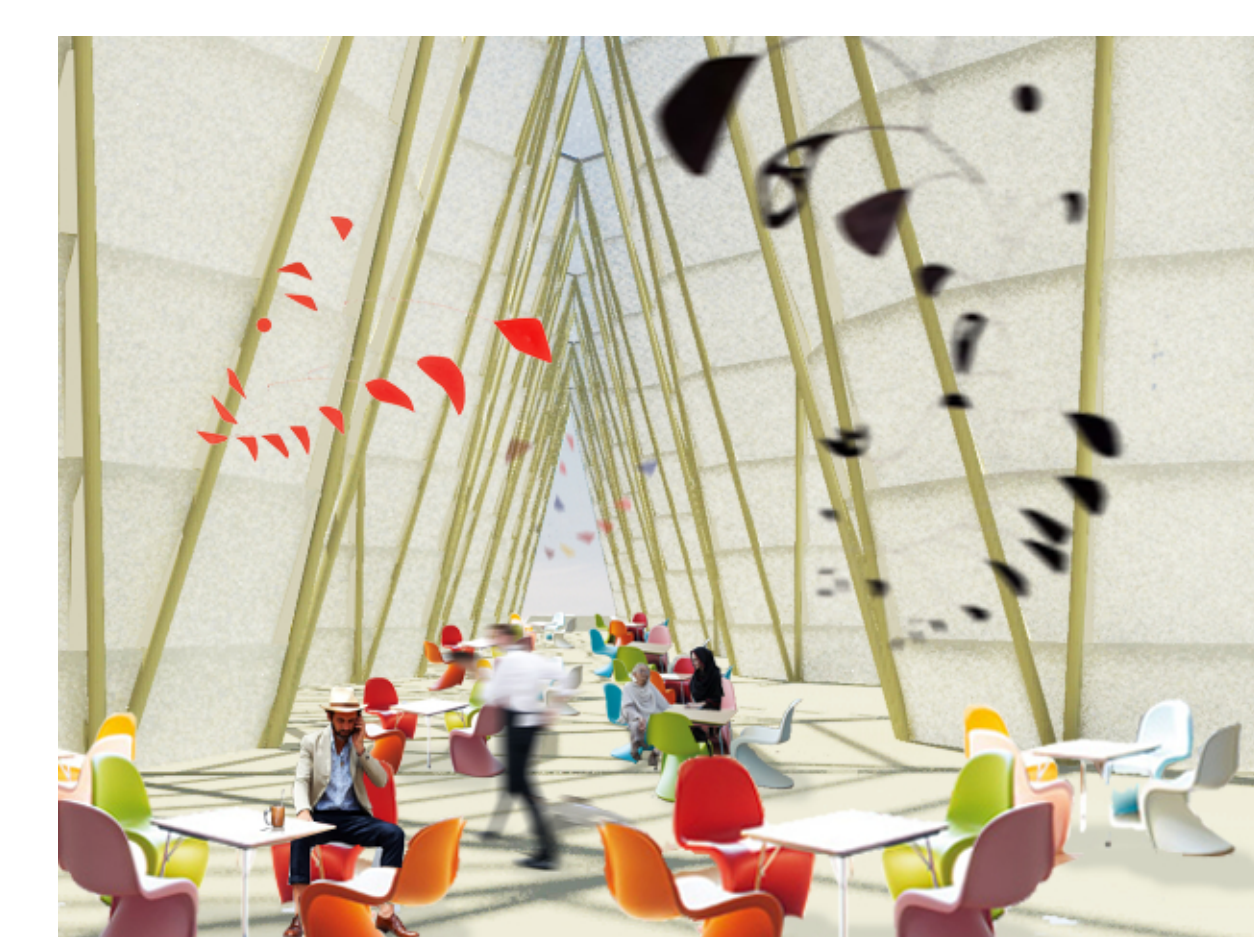
plan level 01: library



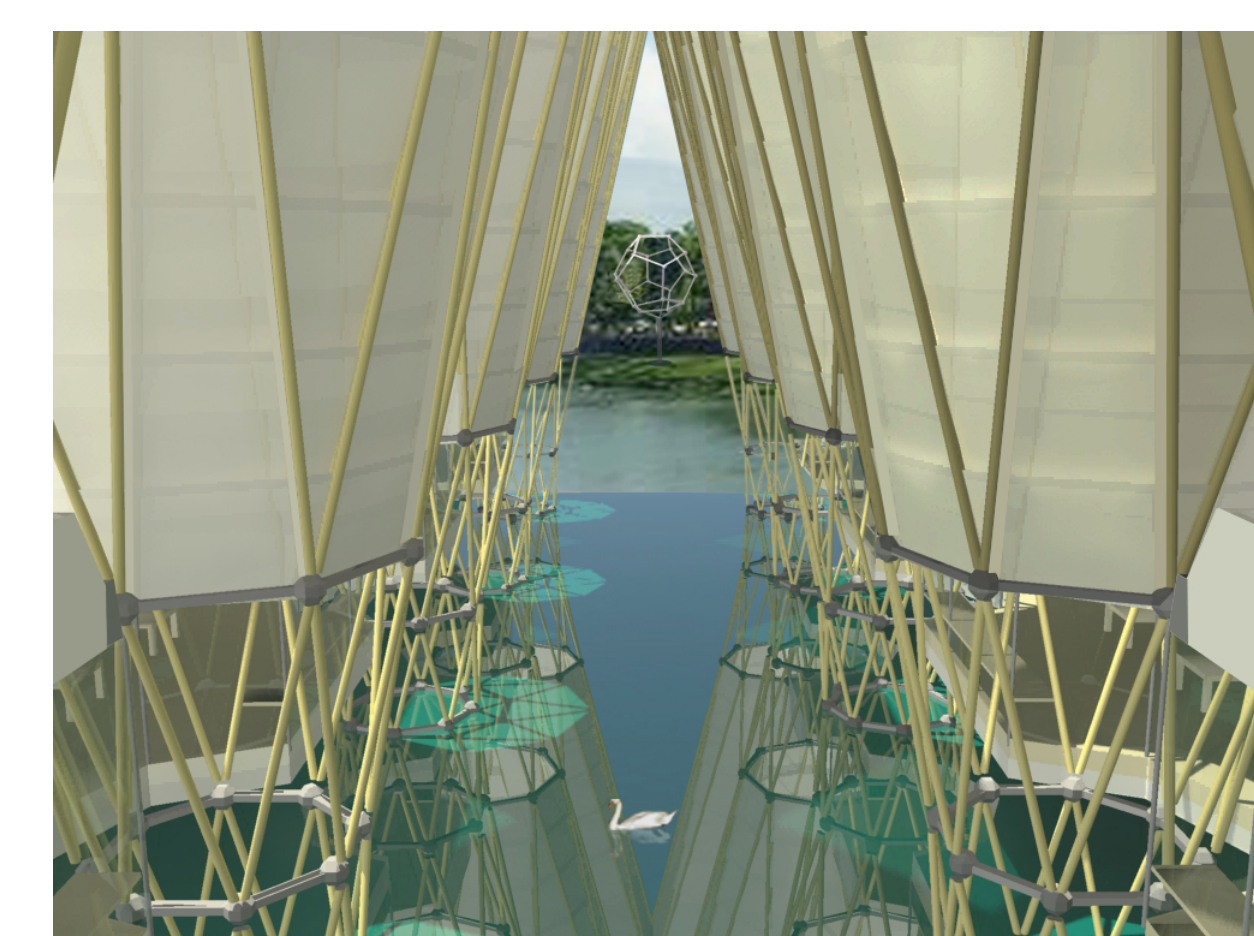
the western side of the library is coloured by poinciana trees of the garden



plan level 02: cafe and exhibition area



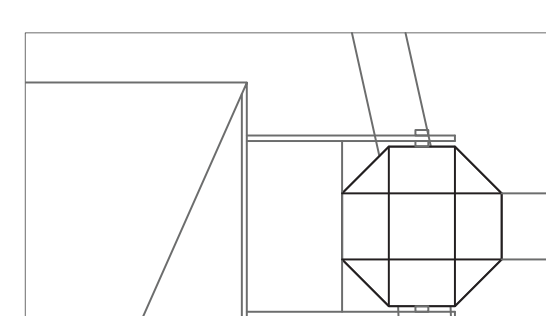
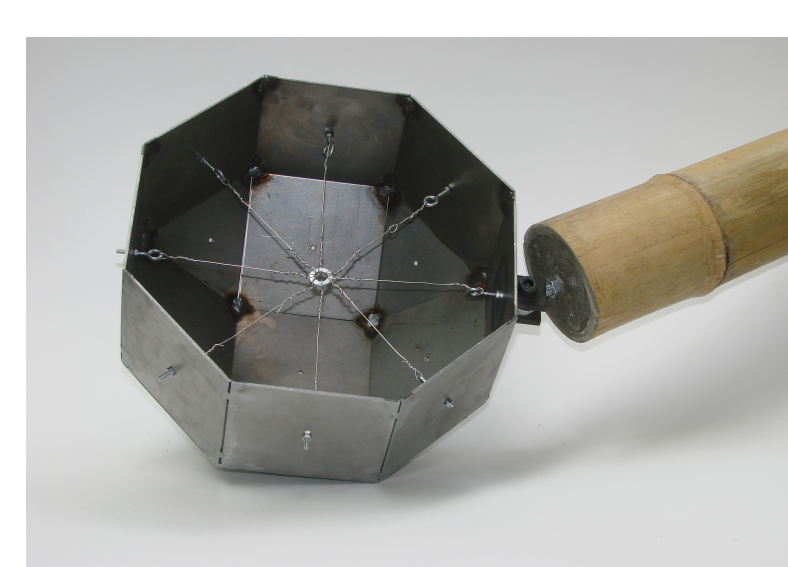
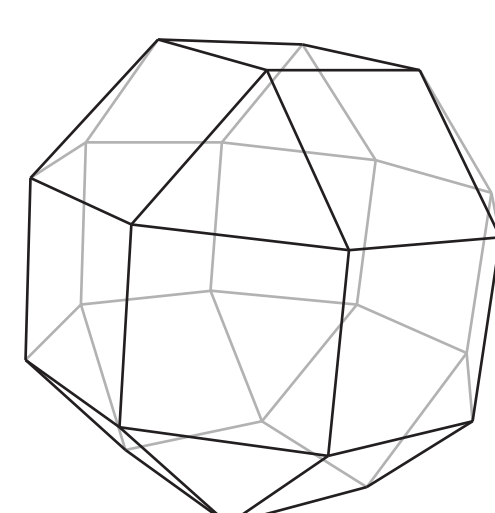
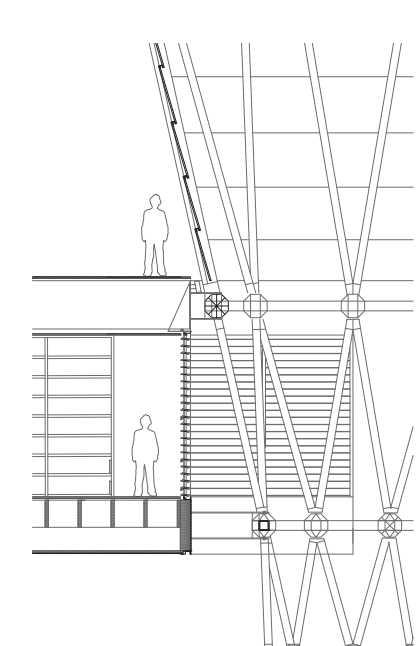
the upper level functions as a cafe and exhibition area



a rotating dodecaedron is situated on the other side of the river



the pond is lit in the evening



The node where laminated bamboo floors, steel rings and bamboo culms come together, is special. The triangles of the vertical structure and the squares of the horizontal structure, meet in an object which consists of triangles and squares, not a platonic but an Archimedean solid called rhombicuboctaedron: an octagon in section, it fits perfectly on the ring. As the bamboo culms are organic, and will need to be replaced from time to time, the connection is easy to assemble. Just like bamboo, a small amount of concrete is always available in Aceh. It can be poured into the end tips of the culms and connected to a special ball hinge. They can be fixed in the right angle and move a little bit. And the nodes can move a little bit up and down. The floors can move slightly as well. The beam rests in the beam shoe on a small ball joint: a ball in cavity. The beams can move a little bit in all directions. In case of an earthquake the building will dance a little bit and this will stop it from falling down.