



Seine River Champagne Bar

48°51'32.20"N 2°20'19.28"E

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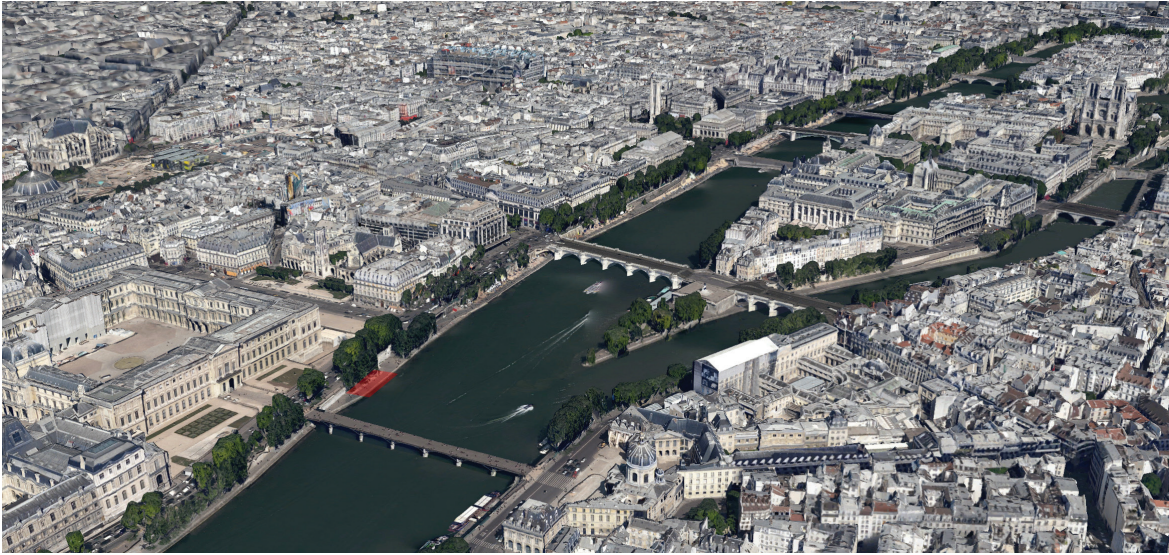


Figure 1: Île de la Cité is in close proximity to the site, here highlighted in red

Held by AC-CA, this architectural ideas competition aimed to celebrate architecture at a medium scale through the design of a river champagne bar along the embankments of the Seine River in Paris, France. A couple main considerations were to be accounted for within the design: the relationship between the built space and the water, and the creation of additional curated social spaces within the city. Within our initial research, precedent cases, and final result, I believe that we have achieved a submission that effectively addresses these areas of interest.

the context

Paris, the capital and most populous city of France, has long been considered a world-class city. It is appreciated for its haute couture, gastronomy, and artistic and intellectual communities. Architecturally, it boasts culturally rich icons interspersed with eclectic contemporary innovations. The modern city has extended outward from the original establishment of the Île de la Cité (Figure 1) situated on the Seine River, to form the surrounding twenty arrondissements.¹ In order to join the two divided banks, connections are made with major arterial thoroughfares and pedestrian bridges. (Figure 2)

Our site, situated on the right bank in the first arrondissement, is within close proximity to the celebrated Pont des Arts. This bridge is located just east of the Île de la Cité, connecting the Institut de France with the central square of the Palais du Louvre (initially called the Palais des Arts, where the bridge derives its name from)², as well as many other monuments. (Figure 3). Originally

¹ "History of Paris," *Lonely Planet*, accessed September 1, 2014, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/france/paris/history>.

² "Pont des Arts," *From Paris*, accessed September 2, 2014, <http://fromparis.com/pont-des-arts.html>.

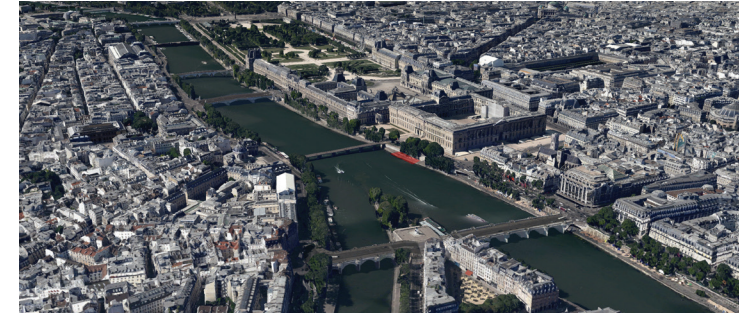


Figure 2: Site view looking west, showing succession of bridges

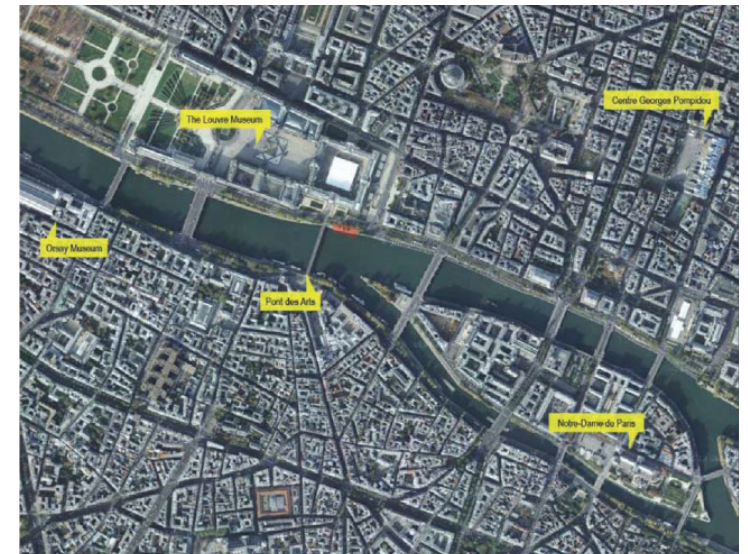


Figure 3: Various landmarks located close by the site



Figure 4: Pont des Arts lover's locks

conceived in 1804, Paris' first iron bridge underwent serious structural failures, ultimately collapsing in 1984 after being hit by a barge. It was reconstructed in 1984 with minor changes to the original design, most notably decreasing the number of arches from nine to seven. In modern days, the bridge serves as a popular venue for artists and photographers. It is also a thriving tourist destination as lovers have taken to attaching engraved padlocks to the bridge's railings, throwing the keys into the Seine below.³ (Figure 4)

the site

The site itself is nine meters below street level, where the river meets the bordering cobbled quays. Locals use this bank as a refuge from the city, where picnics and drinks are had whilst watching the sunset in the summer months. (Figure 4) Currently, there are iron rings attached to the retaining wall of stone block, used for mooring merchant vessels. Directly in front of the wall are four marble benches on a raised platform and three large trees between each bench. There are two sets of stairs that lead down to the pedestrian walkway. The site is accessible from the street level by a concrete stair that is included within the bounds of the site as well as a gradual inclined ramp used for small boat transport further beyond the extents. (Figure 5, 6, 7)

the framework

The rules of the competition were not particularly extensive, however there were some hard requirements. The programme was provided in detail:

- entrance hall with security guard and host: 10m²
 - cloakroom connected directly to the entrance: 10m²
 - performance area/platformed stage to host live jazz and other musical performances: 15m²
 - facilities with four unisex toilet cubicles and two accessible cubicles: 50m²
 - kitchen/storage for small snack catering and washing services: 20m²
 - administration area designated for office use, changing rooms and storage: 40m²
 - plant, containing boiler, electrical and other systems: 15m²
 - VIP area, enclosed for private parties, seating maximum 20 people: 40m²
 - general seating area with a capacity for 20 tables: 150m²
 - terrace: open to participant's discretion
 - bar counter: open to participant's discretion
- total area: approximately 350m²

Additionally, the existing stone staircase within the bounds of the site was to remain, and be incorporated into our design.

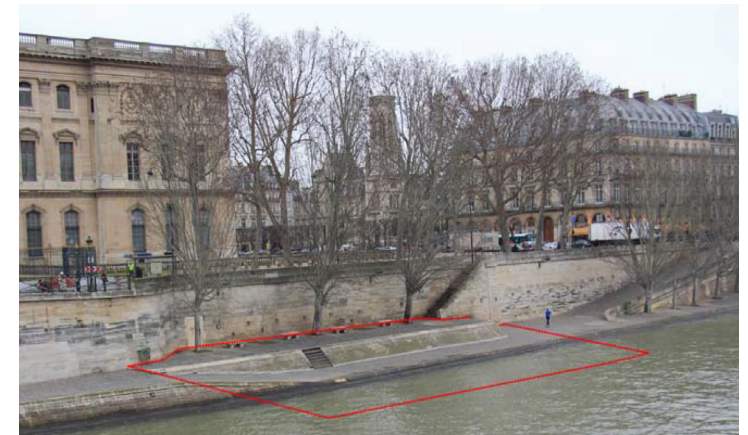


Figure 5: Site bounds looking north at retaining wall

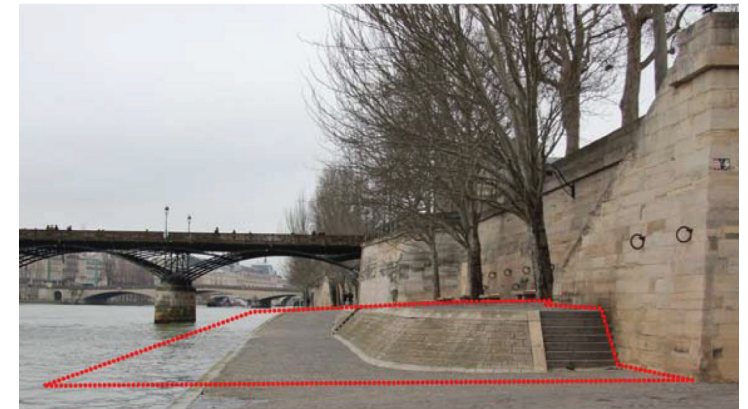


Figure 6: Site bounds looking west at Pont des Arts



Figure 7: Site Bounds looking at both retaining wall and bridge

³ "Pont des Arts," *Wikipedia*, accessed September 1, 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pont_des_Arts.

LEVEL 1 - STREET

- 1 entrance
- 2 cloakroom
- 3 existing stair

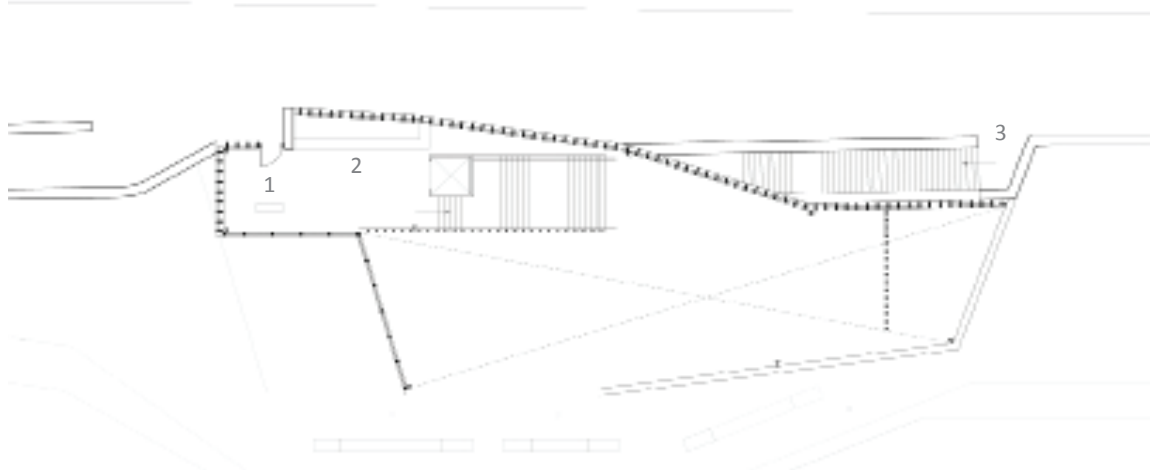


Figure 8: street level plan

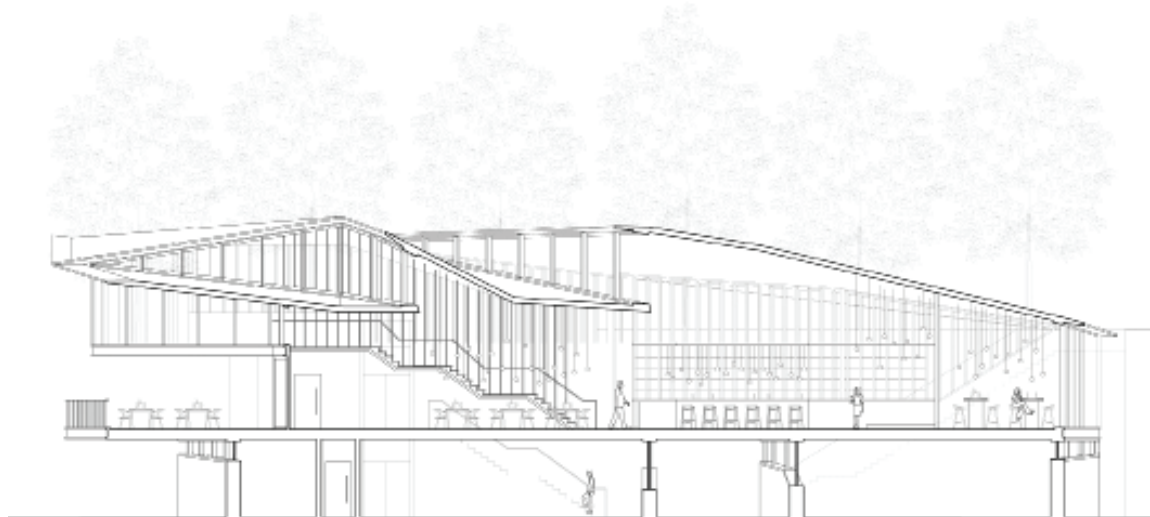


Figure 9: A - Longitudinal section through entire building looking north

the overall

In order to clarify the design intention, the three distinct levels of the building design, are herein referred to as, “the street” for level three, “the building” for level two, and, “the river” for level one.

the street (Figure 8)

The programme reads particularly well in section, as the building was designed with care for vertical circulation. (Figure 9) The entry at the street level was designed to look nondescript, a gradual rise of wooden fins guiding the user to the front door. (Figure 10) Upon entry, one is immediately met with views out to the river through the roof light wells, as well as onto the dining space, directly below the entry platform. After being greeted by the host and being accommodated by the cloakroom directly beside the entry, one begins their descent towards the main dining floor. This descent was first envisioned as a display, where one could view and be viewed by the other patrons. The bar at the bottom of the staircase acts as an intermediary area between arrival and dining, where a user can linger or wait for a fellow diner’s arrival via a direct sight line to the entry. This element of observation toys



Figure 10: Test render of front of building

with the idea of voyeurism, and taps into a deeper notion of classism, playing off of champagne's early marketing toward nobility as an exclusive beverage and eventually the upper middle class.⁴

the building

Adjacent to the bar is the platformed stage, visible to nearly every user in the building. Behind the stage, a wall of wooden slats separates the general dining area from the VIP seating area. With direct access to the bar, a private view, and proximity to the performance area, the VIP area presents itself as a desirable space. The general seating area is oriented along the water, with views out towards the longest extension of the site. With windows surrounding the seating area entirely, the Seine and the Pont des Arts become backdrops to the interior architecture. (Figure 11)

4 Paris 10 Competition Brief, provided by AC-CA



Figure 11: Interior view



Figure 12: View from street level, showing visibility of entry and patio

Beside the kitchen is the elevator drop-off, as well as another stair down to the river level. The kitchen is in close proximity to both the main dining area and the exterior patio, which can be opened out onto by way of large glass sliding doors. In the summer time, the warm weather is taken advantage of as the interior and exterior flow into each other, allowing for ambient comfort for all of the seasons. (Figure 12)

The general structure was decided to be wide-span steel columns and beams, as the ceiling form demanded large floor-to-floor spans. I beams were spaced around the perimeter of the structure, to allow for a column free interior. The form of the roof was to be clad in wood, while the I beams were conceived as being painted white.

The faceted roof structure itself became a captivating architectural form, following its functions of improving light quality and allowing interesting views. The two primary light wells are shaped inverse of each other, mainly for visual interest with seams extending downward, away from the



Figure 13: Precedent - Asakusa Culture Tourist Education Center by Kengo Kuma & Associates

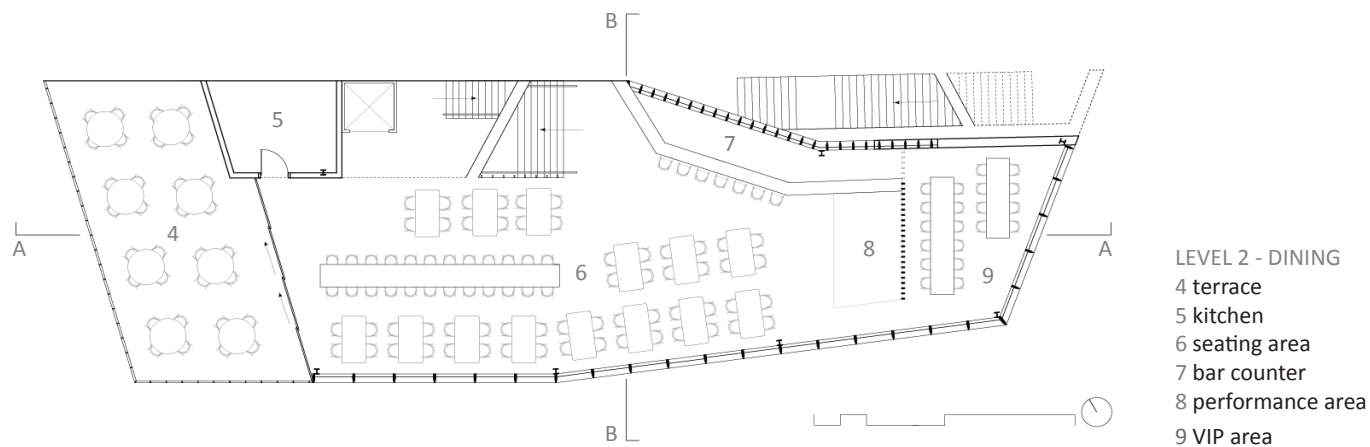


Figure 14: Precedent - Arnhem S ARTA Cluster by Kengo Kuma & Associates

building, for weather-proofing viability. The roof structure extends out in certain areas, acting as a cover for the balcony, as well as a shading device for the dining area. (Figure 13, 14) The wooden paneled materiality, adorning lights and warm, sun soaked space were all conceived of as allowing the space to achieve a dream-like quality.(Figure 15, 16, 17) As the sun sets, the space glows from within, and the users become on display to the passerby, particularly to those on the bridge. This again toys with the idea of voyeurism, as well as allows the commercial space to advertise itself. (Figure 18)



Figure 15, 16 ,17 (L-R): Mistral Wine & Champagne Bar by Studio Arthur Casas, Pakta Restaurant by El Equipo Creativo, El Fabuloso by MEMA Arquitectos



- LEVEL 2 - DINING
- 4 terrace
- 5 kitchen
- 6 seating area
- 7 bar counter
- 8 performance area
- 9 VIP area

Figure 18: Building level plan

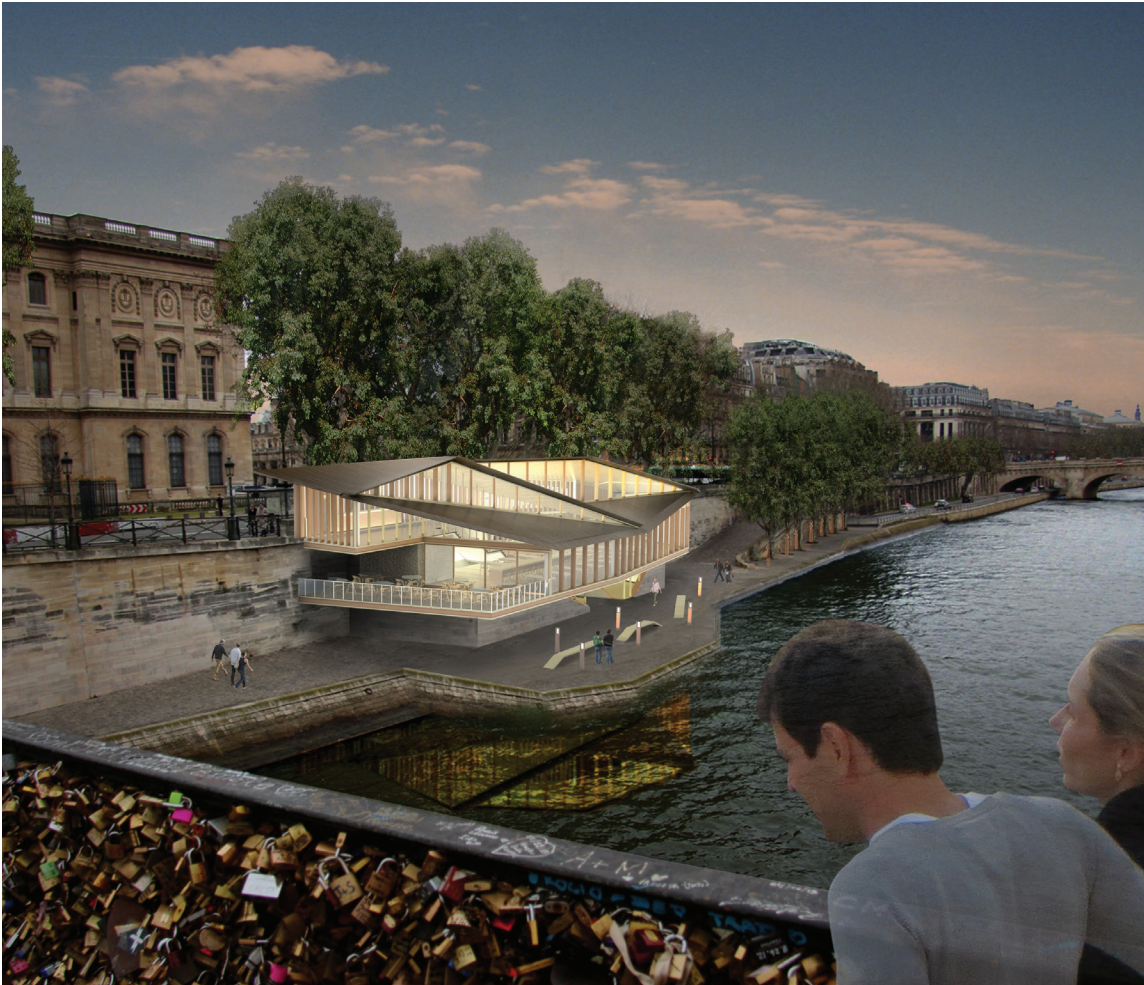


Figure 19: Dusk view from bridge illustrating pedestrian walkway

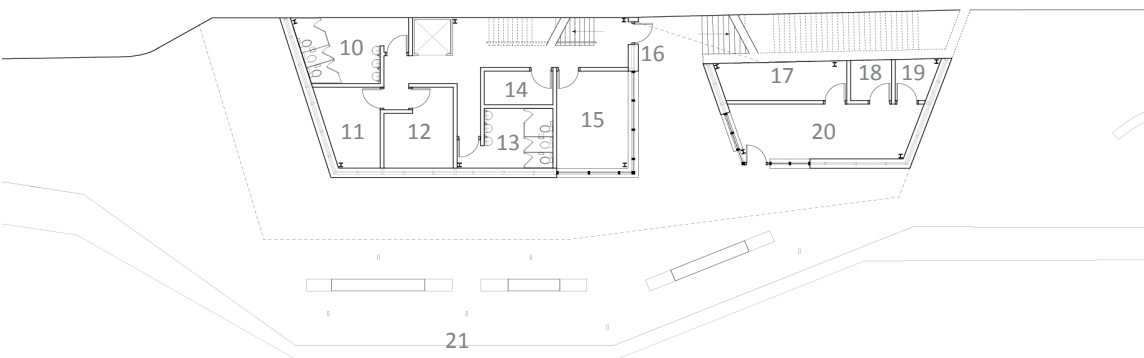


Figure 20: River level plan

the river

All access was required to meet disability accessibility standards. This included existing elements, and thus as a preliminary design decision, meant first the removal of the raised platform, as the two stairs leading down to the walkway were not to code. While there was no obligation to leave the walking access path along the river uninterrupted, it was decided that this passage would become a defining characteristic in our design. (Figure 19) Rather than interrupting an already successful social space, we aimed to maintain and improve this condition. With the main structure raised above, constructing an interstitial space between river and road, a covered walkway was created, notably alongside the additional programmatic element of a champagne store. (Figure 20)

The staircase that was required to remain posed an issue initially, but ultimately strengthened our idea at the river floor. If an individual's intention was to take the stair down to the river level to bypass the building, we wanted to expose some of the champagne bar to them, before they made their final decision of whether or not to visit it. As one descends, the dining area and the bar are briefly seen, affording only glimpses of the interior through the wooden slats. At the bottom of the stair, the user finishes at the commercial storefront. This encourages individuals to continue to use the river level as a social gathering, as one can purchase bottles of

LEVEL 3 - RIVER

- 10 washroom facilities (f)
- 11 changing room (f)
- 12 changing room (m)
- 13 washroom facilities (m)
- 14 storage
- 15 admin space
- 16 emergency exit
- 17 plant
- 18 storage
- 19 office
- 20 retail
- 21 walkway extension & public seating

champagne and enjoy the riverscape on benches in front of the structure, on an extended embankment. (Figure 21, 22)

Along the river level are the administration areas, bathrooms and emergency exit. By separating the admin offices from the commercial space, employees can come and go without detection from the patrons. The stair and the elevator, both within close proximity to the exit out toward the river, service the bathrooms.

the conclusion

Within our design, we strived to create a realistic relationship between the river and the bar, built upon reinforcing the already successful social model that was intact. We also aimed to create a place desirable for individuals to gather, no matter what purpose their presence had. Through careful cultivation of both partner's ideas, we managed to create an intriguing space architecturally, and a veritable submission for the design competition.

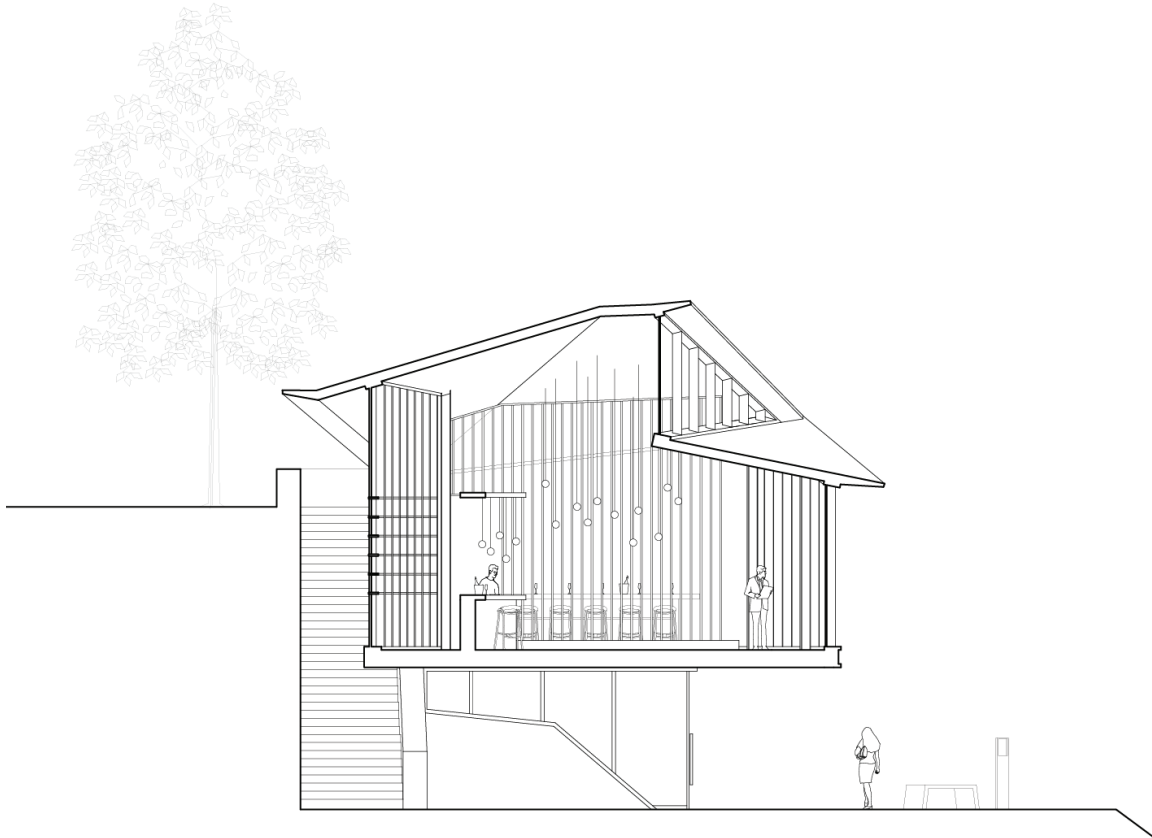


Figure 21: B - Section looking east

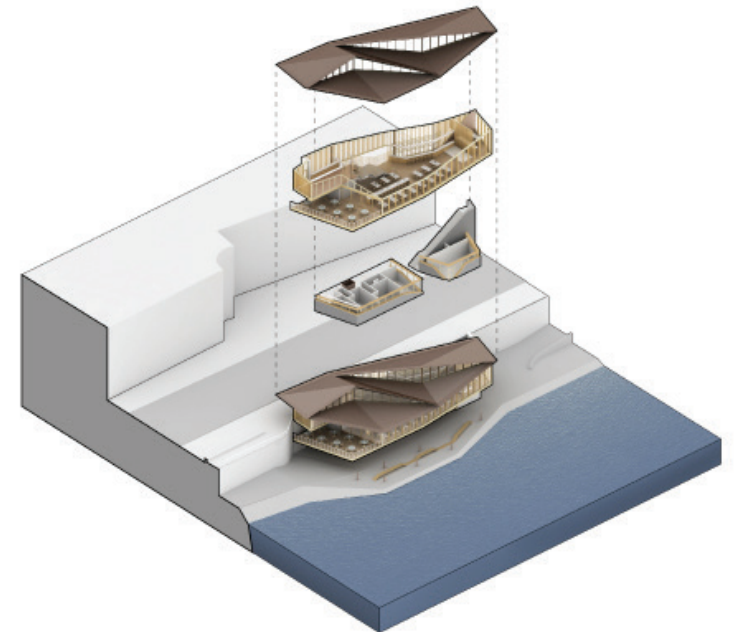


Figure 22: Exploded Axonometric

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Figure 4
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Figure 5-7
Provided by AC-CA

Figure 8-12
Own Images

Figure 13
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Figure 14
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Figure 15
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Figure 16
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Figure 17
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Figure 18-22
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