SWIFT

Pilgrim's Village

Rethinking transit shelters of Amarnath.

https://**competitions**.uni.xyz

Img_1: People trekking towards their final destination. Location - Amarnath, India Source

Basis

Pilgrimage essentially is a spiritual journey where a person goes in search of a new or expanded meaning - **about self, others, natural or higher good**.

In India, the concept of unity is a religious one. So pilgrimage (or **yatra**) is *"as much about sociology as it is about religion. As much an endurance event, as much it is a spiritual practice"*. Long back when the means of communication and transport were rather poor, people walked hundreds of miles bearing the harshest of conditions to seek divine blessings.

Over time it has become a duty that is passed on to every generation. Alongside with overgrowing population, a lot of people go to pilgrimage at once to practice their religion. It has now become a celebration of faith, which unites people from different cultures. A sense of belonging improves and encourages the pilgrim's willingness to **learn, grow** and **socialize**.

RELIGION

PILGRIMAGE

COMMUNITY

The Amarnath Pilgrimage

Spiritual destination in Hinduism abodes from tales of mythology. The 'holy cave' of **Amarnath** is the place where Lord Shiva narrated lessons to his wife Parvati. This has made Amarnath a revered destination for thousands of pilgrims.

The cave is situated at an altitude of ***3,888 m*** (12,756 ft), about 141 km (88 mile) from Srinagar, India. In old times, the pilgrimage, which spanned 15 days was undertaken by sadhus and civilians totaling a thousand people. But since 1990s, the demographics of the Yatra have changed. With growing population and changing lifestyle, lakh of pilgrims started to take part.

Now every pilgrimage is an embodiment of *local and regional elements*. This culture concentration is usually found at the resting points for pilgrims (camp sites). Structured by ill-planned resting spaces, pilgrims have to rest in slushy tents making movement around tough.

Present

Amarnath Yatra, India

Site cramped with tents, overlooking the need of community experience. No spaces around or in-between for movement.

Increased number of pilgrims has led to a collective experience, but it also facilitates macro level problems like 1. Garbage and Sewage disposal, 2. Lack of consolidated spaces for horses, potters and saints and 3. Pedestrian traffic.

With paramount religious significance and tourism being encouraged by the government, we cannot escape the growing demand. **Can design help making this experience better?**

Img 3: Sheshnag Tent City by Matthew Crompton *https://www.flickr.com/photos/matthewcrompton/8166082055/in/photostream/*
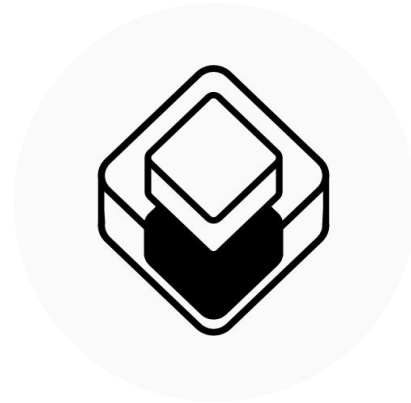
Brief

The definition and purpose of pilgrimage has changed. From an isolated retreat, it has become a space for thousands seeking blessings and religious virtue. In India, it is an opportunity for the people living in distant areas to know different cultures. It is an experience where people come together and leave behind the differences that divide them.

In times when the value of faith is transcending into growing number of pilgrims, how can an ecological sensitive area accommodate the changing demand?

The design challenge here is to design a campsite with modular transit shelters for the pilgrims on Amarnath. This entire campsite is only active for 48 days in an year. Hence the challenge not only looks at the spectrum of the pilgrimage, but also at the storage and reinstallation of the structures.

Objectives

Modularity

Exploring temporary modules
of housing, beyond typology
of tent

Lean Design

Design using resources and
techniques that save time, effort
and overall cost.

Temporality

Strategies should be explored
how structures can be
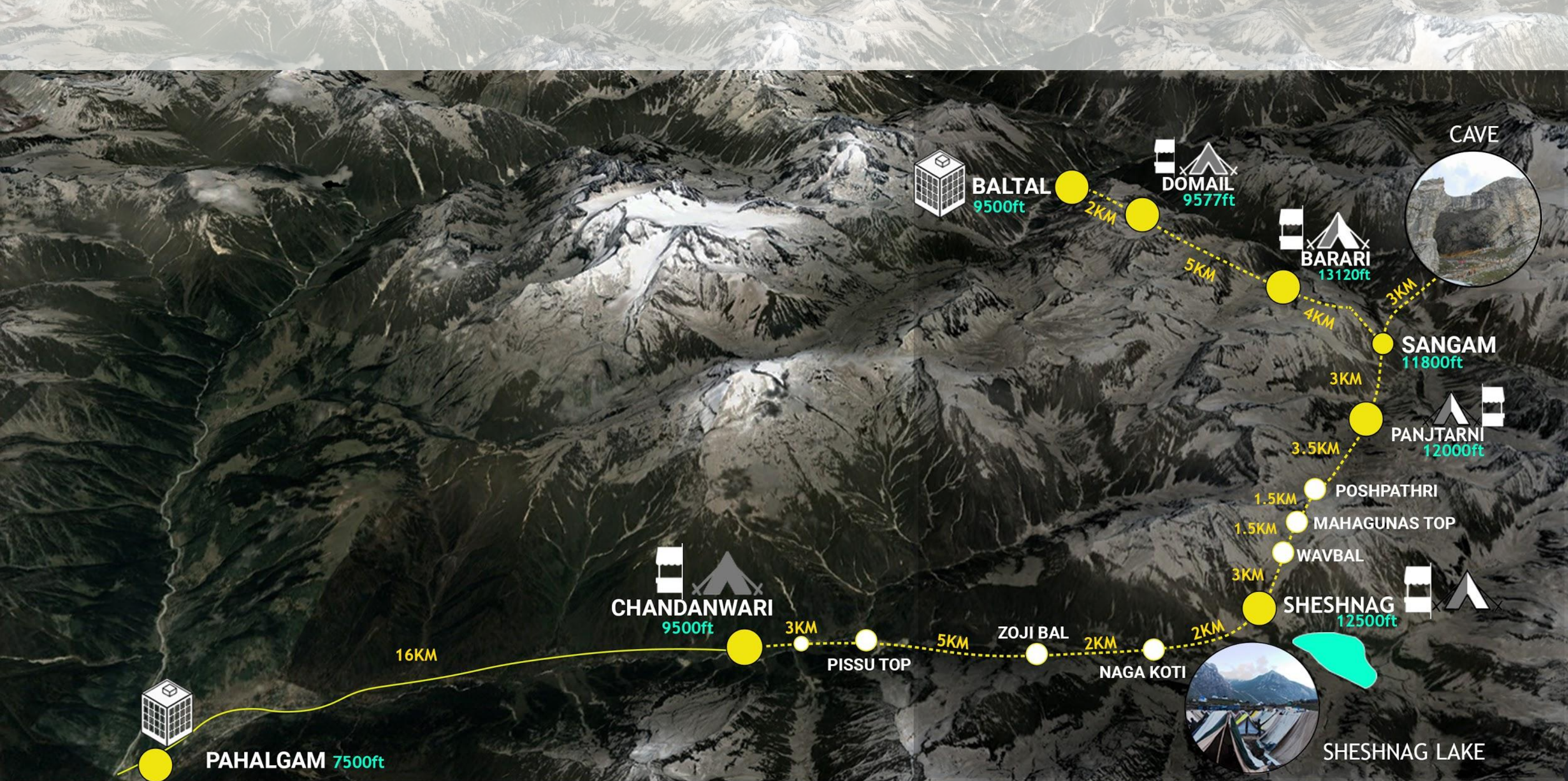dismantled and stored.

Environment Friendly

Design should respond to the
context - climatic conditions,
terrain and ecology of site.

The following objectives can be a point of
beginning to conceive this design.

Main objective is to redesign overnight
**resting points that can act as a focal
point for community integration.
Structures are removed once the 48 days
of the pilgrimage are over, hence the
thought extends way beyond permanent
architecture.**

**Beyond the regular placement of tents
and tin shed washrooms, how can design
enhance pilgrimage experience and
provide better services.**

Participants can assume data wherever
necessary.

Img 5::Google Earth View of Amarnath route. The trail being highlighted

The Route

The cave is situated at an altitude of **3,888 m (12,756 ft), about 141 km (88 mi)** from Srinagar, India. Considered to be one of the holiest shrines in Hinduism, the cave is covered with snow for most part of the year except the summers when it is open to public. The area has a ***carrying capacity of 4,300 people on a single day opposed to 12,353 pilgrims*** visiting the cave on the first day of pilgrimage. To serve them, 2425 toilets and 367 baths have been installed and connected with soakage pits. The route has a provision for **public dining points** also known as **Langars**, which serve free food to pilgrims.

LEGEND   Army Camp   Public Camp   Langar   Campsite   Small Langar   Start Point

Place - Sheshnag Lake

Sheshnag Lake is a high altitude lake situated at an altitude of **12500** ft. Located along the track leading to Amarnath cave, it is at a distance of **28 kilometer** from Pahalgam (starting point). Pilgrims travelling on foot camp here on their first night. Hundreds of tents which are erected by locals can be hired for a night's stay.
The resting point is situated near a lake. A water body, which roots a symbolic meaning in all religious verses.

With toilets placed alongside lake edge and water getting contaminated by direct waste disposal, immediate intervention is required.

Issues

The ecologically sensitive area is under constant threat due to increase in number of pilgrims

Efforts are being made by the Amarnath board but **lack of disposal system** has contaminated the environment. Inadequate **space management** for the existent user groups - local, tourists and horse potters.. This has led to heavy **pedestrian traffic and ill-managed garbage spillage**

At micro level, *social divisions* get further aggravated by lack of consolidated spaces. Separate langars (public dining points) organised for Kashmiri people and horse carriers. Religious differences aggravate the culture differences.

Lack of provision for the 10,000 registered ponies and their carriers, create further divide between pilgrims, carriers and forces.

Garbage Disposal

The means are present but not adequate neither sustainable.

Space Management

Route gets congested with sadhus, vendors and horse carriers due to lack of designated space.

Unhygienic Living

Despite campsite provided with toilets, due to lack of hygiene or increase load - many people are found defecating in open.
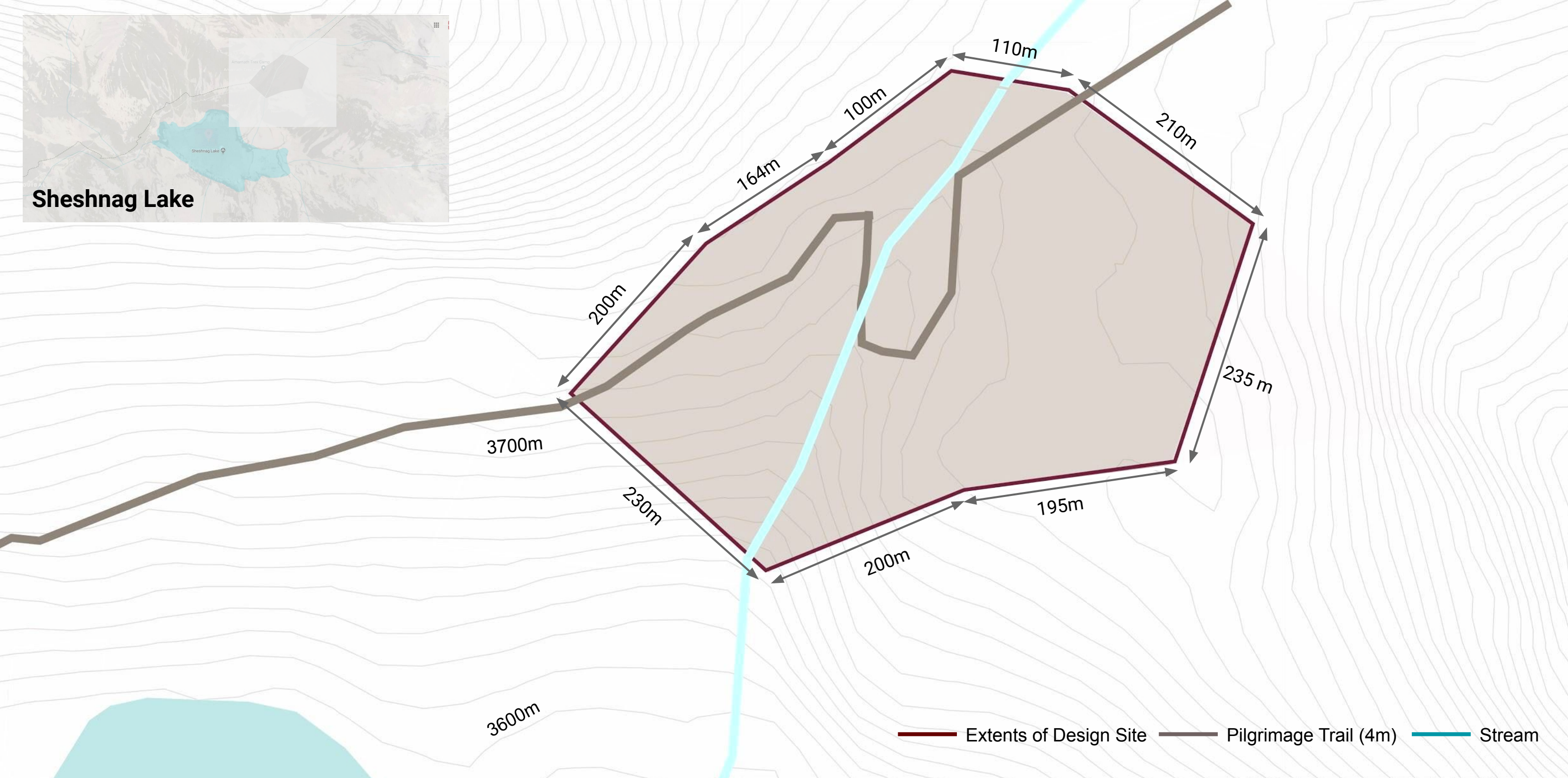
Uneven Roads

Uneven roads, made slippery by melting of ice. Leads to accidents

Inadequate Services

Pilgrims have to live in congested and slushy tents, making movement tough.

Sewage Disposal

Liquid and solid waste from **langar** (food stall) goes into stream

Sheshnag Lake

110m
100m
164m
210m
200m
235 m
3700m
230m
195m
200m
3600m

─── Extents of Design Site   ─── Pilgrimage Trail (4m)   ─── Stream

Img 9: Design Site. with contours at height of 10 m

Site Plan

Sheshanag Camp being at an altitude of **11500 ft**, is located near the lake which makes it a primary tourist destination. On flip side, issues like contamination of lake due to sewage disposal and slushy living spaces make the experience unpleasant.
Design site has pilgrimage trail and water stream which can become directives for intervention. The primary intent is to design a transient modular accommodation and community space. You can take a portion of site to build your campsite based on your design rationale.

Area - 171,419.38 sqm (42.3 Acre)
Coordinates - 34°05'59.4"N 75°30'21.5"E
Ground coverage - Not restricted.
Temperature - 18°c to 28°c
Weather - Mostly Sunny

Primary Users

Following are the user groups that occupy the resting points for overnight stay. The blocks created from can be a combination of different units with common areas for interaction and services.

GROUPS

Pilgrims
Modular accommodation for group of people. Try to cater to families and provide facilities for the elderly

Quantity: 3000/10000
(Min/Max)

Porters
People providing porting services to pilgrims on their backs on hire.

Quantity: 2000/6000
(Min/Max)

Ponies
Horse shed along with accomodation facility for porters who take care of ponies

Quantity: 1250/4000
(Min/Max)

STORAGE NEEDS

Pilgrims
A bag with clothes, medicines, documents and toiletries. Sleeping Bag and Pillow

Back Carriage
Attached to back of porter, it's used to seat pilgrims.

Shoulder Carriage
Carried by 6 men, it's a suspended chair supported by logs

Hay
Fodder to feed horse

Programmatic Outline

Accomodation

- Housing Units
- Storage

60%

Community

- Gathering Space
- Bhojnalaya (Eating space)
- Information Center
- Retail Stores

30%

Service

- Reception/Waiting Area
- Storage
- Staff Facility (Office)
- Public Washrooms
- Dispensary
- Fodder Store
- Animal Husbandry

10%

The programme must include the spaces schematically. These spaces (besides modular housing and community planning) need not be done in detail. However, the participants are free to add other programmatic facilities and change the percentile depending on their design.

Submission

You have to deliver an architectural outcome on the following site, based on the given outlines.

• A maximum of 4 boards / sheets. − **[2362px x 3544px]** or **[400mm x 600mm in 150 dpi]** in <u>portrait</u> digital format (JPEG).
• Each image should be less than **15MB**
• You can find the preset PSD, AI and INDD template files in the '<u>additional resources folder</u>' and <u>here</u>.

This additional resources folder contains: FAQ Questions, High Res maps, Sketchup Model of the terrain and CAD file of the site plan.

Minimum requisites in the sheets are 3 sheets/boards + Cover image containing:

• Site plan (Compulsory)
• Key conceptual sections x 1 (Minimum)
• 3D views x 4
• Cover image/Thumbnail of size 2000 x 1000 px or larger in aspect ratio 2:1.
• Floor plans, images, sketches (if any) can be added to support the entry in the form of additional images.
• Answer 6 FAQ questions in the discussion section as given on the '<u>additional resources folder</u>'.

+ The team limit for this competition is 4 members maximum.
+ Use exploded views to discuss multi levelled conceptual models better.
+ Ensure that the final sheets which are submitted do not include your name or any other mark of identification.
+ Mention sheet number on corner of every sheet.
+ This is a design ideas challenge only. There is no built commission/realization is associated with the problem
+ Plagiarism of any idea / form / design / image will be disqualified with a notice.

Registration page here: https://competitions.uni.xyz/pilgrims-village

Submission Deadline: March 15, 2020
Submission closes this day.

Public Voting begins: March 25, 2020
Submitted entries are open for voting.

Public Voting ends: April 15, 2020
Voting ends on this date.
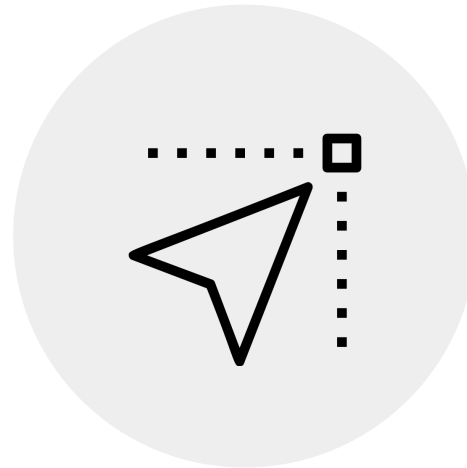
Result Announcement: April 25, 2020
Result day!

Rewards

Grants of up to a total of **20,000$** can be won on this challenge. Learn more about the full conditions on the competition page here.

Judging Criteria

The entries will be judged by an international jury of the competition on the following criterions:

Presentation

The fundamental to a good entry is a good presentation.

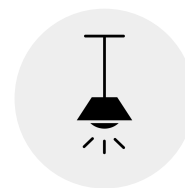**Concept/Idea**

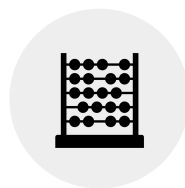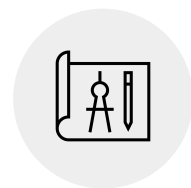Quality of thought and intent in pre-design phase.

Spaces/Programme

How the spaces are calculated and ordered.

Design Output

The final architectural outcome of the solution.

The judging panel can also add other criterions based on their internal discussions - which will be in line with the problem statement. Participants are advised to fulfil above given criterions first in their design.

About

SWIFT

Swift serves as a unit block for **UNI** in the field of transient architecture realm. It intends to break the fusion of traditional design barriers and methodologies by making it a platform for experimentation and conceptual exchange of ideas in **modular, transient and mobile architecture.** It is a research initiative dedicated to provide opportunities for designers from all domains to explore ideas that go beyond the boundaries of the discipline and enrich our built environment holistically; thereby opening up possibilities for promotion of temporal architecture thought at a global level.

Queries: support@uni.xyz
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Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/uni.xyz/
Discover FAQ's about this competition on our help forum here: http://help.uni.xyz/

(From Left to Right)

Img 8: Pilgrims in thousands at Chandanwari waiting to start their journey
Source -
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/amarnath-yatra-resumes-from-jammu-biggest-batch-of-7993-pilgrims-leaves-for-kashmir/articleshow/70214541.cms

Img 9: Sadhus (Hindu saint) on trekking
By Showkat Shafi
https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2012/07/201279173912384628.html

Img 10: Langar (food stall) providing free food to pilgrims
By Showkat Shafi
https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2012/07/201279173912384628.html

Img 11: Pilgrim being carried in Dandi
By Tristan Savatier
https://www.loupiote.com/photos/4055523326.shtml

Img 12: Kashmiri porter playing traditional instrument. Culture thrives in camp.
By Matthew Crampton
https://www.flickr.com/people/matthewcrompton/

Img 13: Pilgrim being carried in Pithu.
Source -
http://ponypalki.com/product/amarnath-yatra/baltal-route/labourer-pithoos/baltal-to-panjtarani-one-side/

Img 14: Sheshnag Camp along the stream
By Tristan Savatier
https://www.loupiote.com/photos/4055523326.shtml

Img 15: Modes of Transport - Pilgrims either on foot or being carried by ponies. Helicopter's operate till Sangam.
By SandeepChetan -
https://sandeepachetan.com/amarnath-yatra-on-foot-pahalgam/

Making pilgrimages sustainable.

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