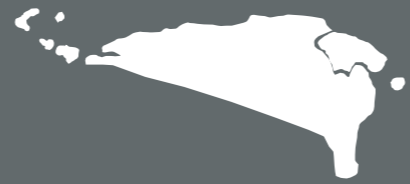


**Sherbro Island**  
Sierra Leone



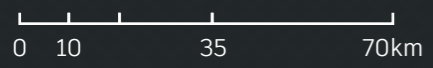
**Foster + Partners**

## **i. Project Introduction and Aspirations**



An introduction to  
**Sherbro Island** Sierra Leone

7.5554° N, 12.6676°  
Total Area: 230 sq.miles (600 sq.km)





Africa is a continent of extraordinary diversity, potential and opportunity. One of its' many exciting offerings is Sherbro Island. Located 2.5 miles off the coast of Sierra Leone, Sherbro Island is a tranquil, tropical island 32 miles long and up to 12 miles wide, totalling 230 sq. miles (600 sq.km). With approximately 50 miles of natural beaches, mangrove forests and coastal villages, the island is home to a relatively small population of 40,000 people with the majority residing in Bonthe Town, the Island's chief port and commercial center.

Sherbro Island City special economic zone (SEZ) will be a vibrant West African hub. Leveraging its location in the center of West Africa, where 350 million people reside within a 3-hour flight radius and 1.2 billion people within a 6-hour flight radius. This intra-Africa tourism potentially leverages the appetites of affluent and culturally aware (often younger) consumers for an enclave combining a distinctly African cultural identity with access to global economic opportunities and technology.

**Sherbro Island**

7.5554° N, 12.6676° W Total Area: 230 sq.miles (600 sq.km)

○ Prominent Existing Villages  
○ Fishing Sites/Settlements

0 2,000 6,000 10,000m

**- Population Estimate & Dwelling Unit -**

**1,000,000+** people\*  
Approx. **166,667+** houses\*

**Assumptions**

\*Projected 10-15 Year Growth  
\*6 people per household  
\*2.5 working adults per household

**- Gross Development Density -**

**4348** person/sq.mile\*  
**1667** person/sq.km\*

**Assumptions**

\*Based on Benchmarking Study  
\*Sherbro Island Area  
(230sq.miles/600sq.km)

**- Total GFA: up to -**

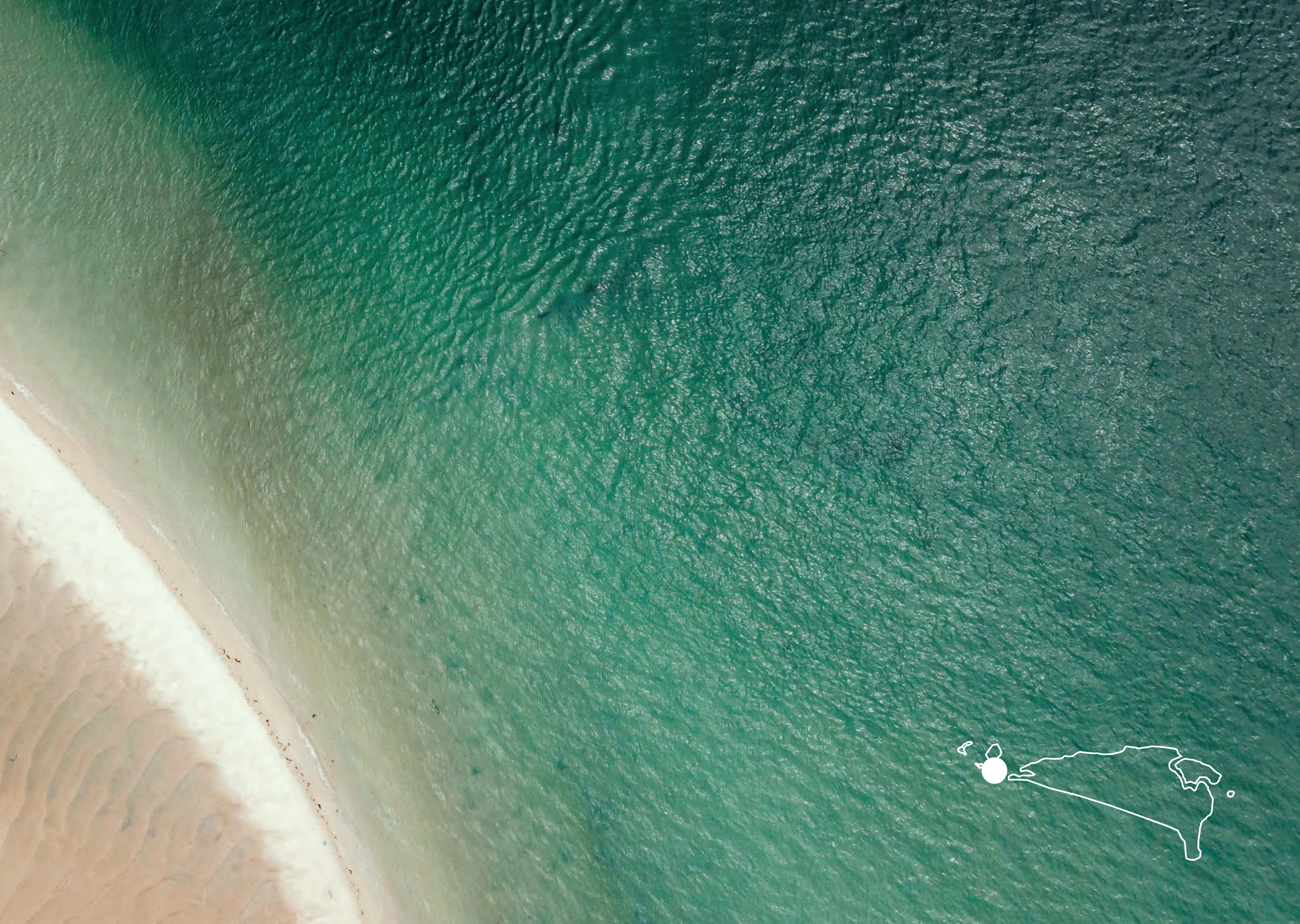
**Approx. 19,000,000** sq.m\*

**Assumptions**

\*100-120 sq.m per household

**Project Aspirations**

7.6310° N, -12.9567° W



Sherbro Island is positioned as the continent's newest economic city that will have a diversified services-based economy that leverages the island's heritage and natural beauty. This will be initially centered on tourism, residential housing, media/entertainment, education and local agriculture/ aquaculture. It will seamlessly merge the vibrancy of contemporary Africa with its deep-rooted traditions and culture, nestled on a pristine 230 sq.mile (600 sq.km) tropical island along the Sierra Leonean coast in the Atlantic Ocean.

Founded on the creation of a new, transparent regional administration, the Sherbro Development Authority (SDA) will be semi-autonomous governance and authority led by the private sector to administer the planning, construction and operation of the new city on the Island with the objective of attracting investment, human capital, and a diverse range of enterprises.

The Sherbro Island City special economic zone (SEZ) will have the best-in-class business enabling environment with the legal, institutional, and technology features designed to attract human and financial capital, protect and improve the livelihoods of the locals, and position the Island as an attractive destination for investment while protecting the Island's unique natural biodiversity as a legacy for current and future generations.











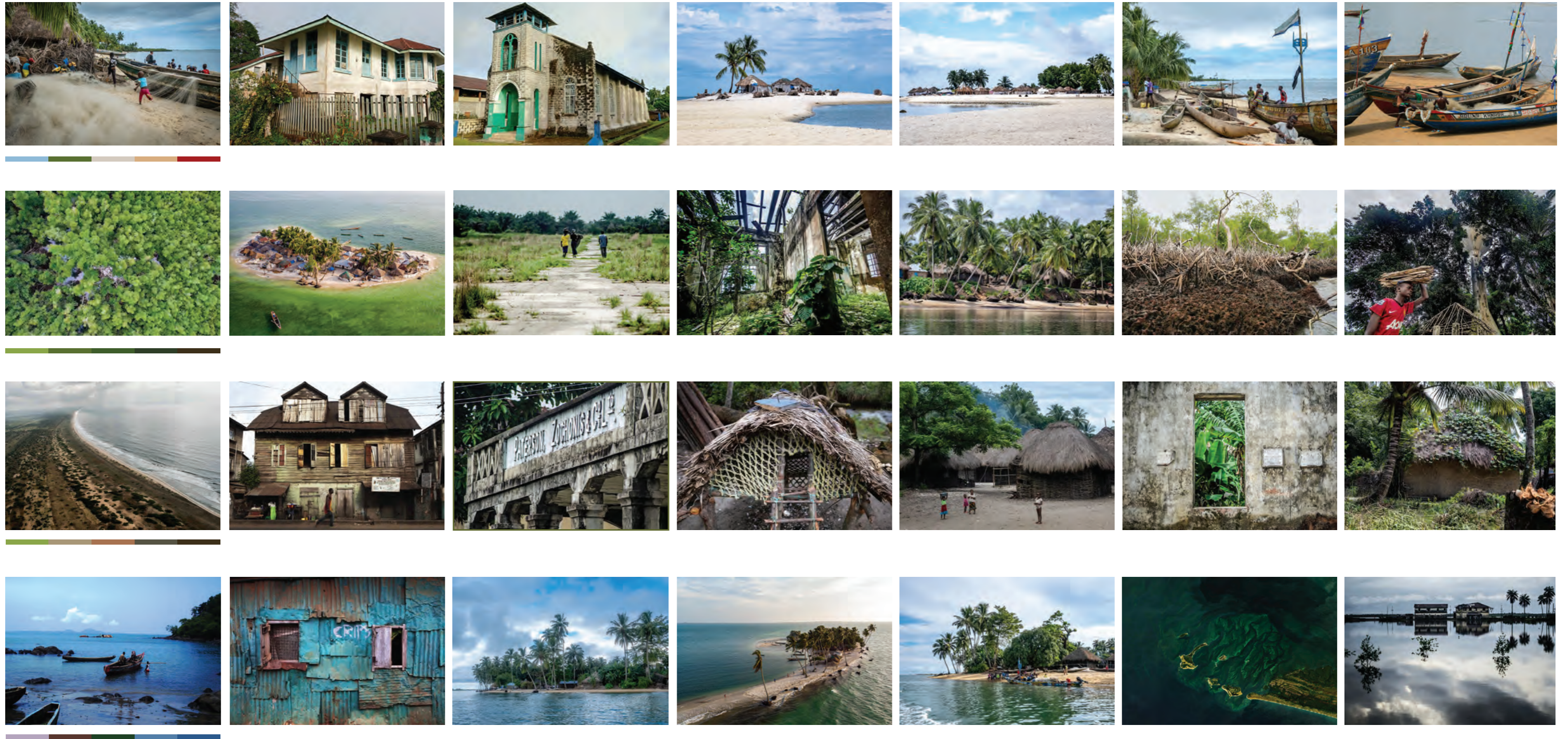




Cheppu of Sherbro Island.

## **ii. Location and Nature Studies**





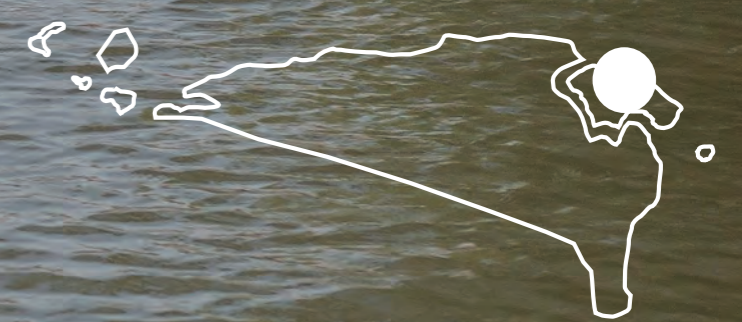
## Location Studies

An exploration of Sherbro Island and wider Sierra Leone





Chogoda, Sherbro Island.





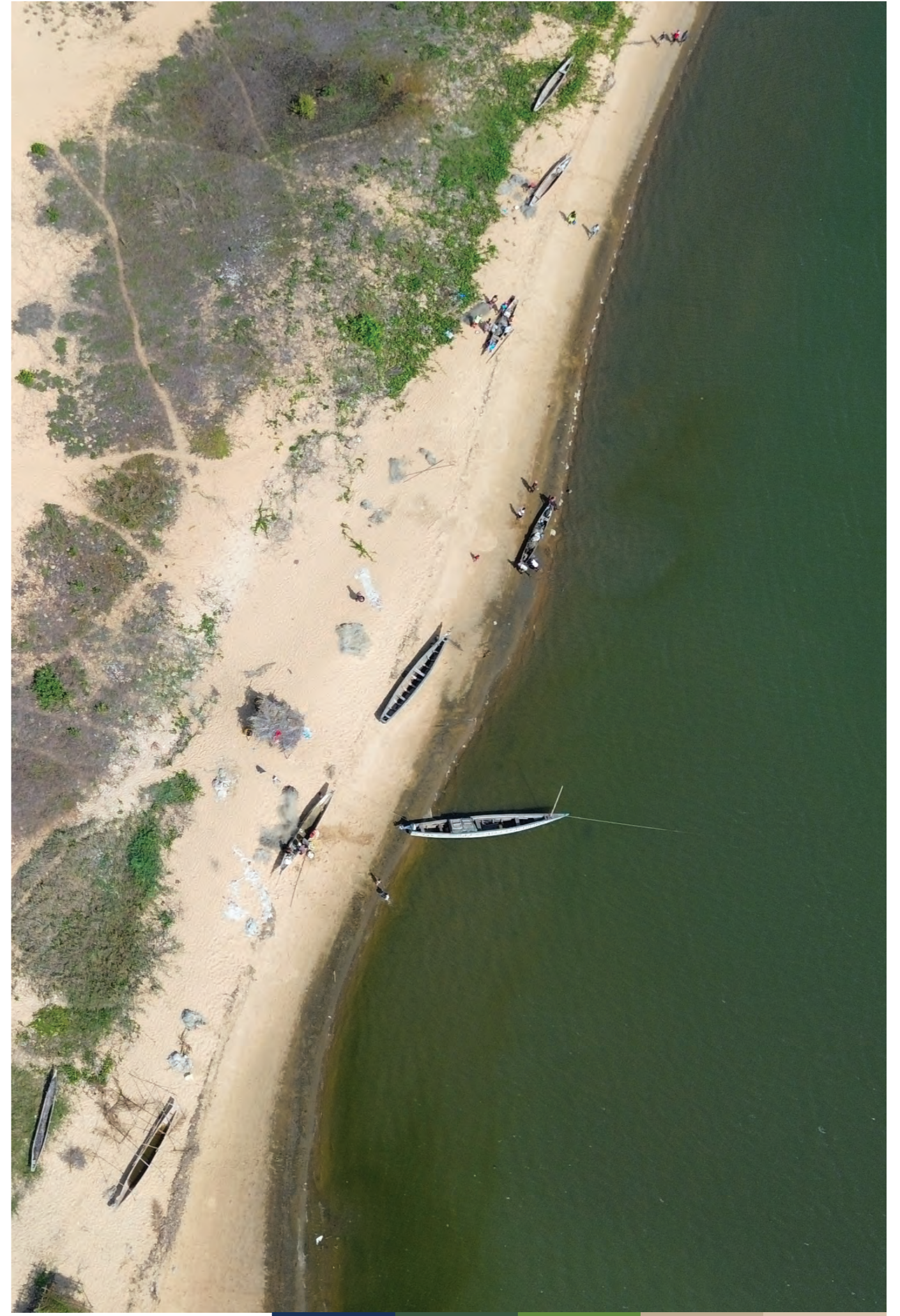
Chogoda, Sherbro Island.







Beautiful small settlements and villages are scattered throughout the island, mainly along the coastlines. Many districts have capitals and part of a wider Chiefdom. The Sherbro people, who dominated a large area of what is now Sierra Leone are now concentrated in the southern and central part of Moyamba District. They make up by far the largest ethnic group in the island, where the total population is roughly 40,000. The island has approximately 50 miles (80 km) of tropical beaches.





The village of Yoni, Sherbro Island.



The town of Jayahun in the Sherbro estuary.





Mania, Sherbro.



Fornima, Sherbro Island

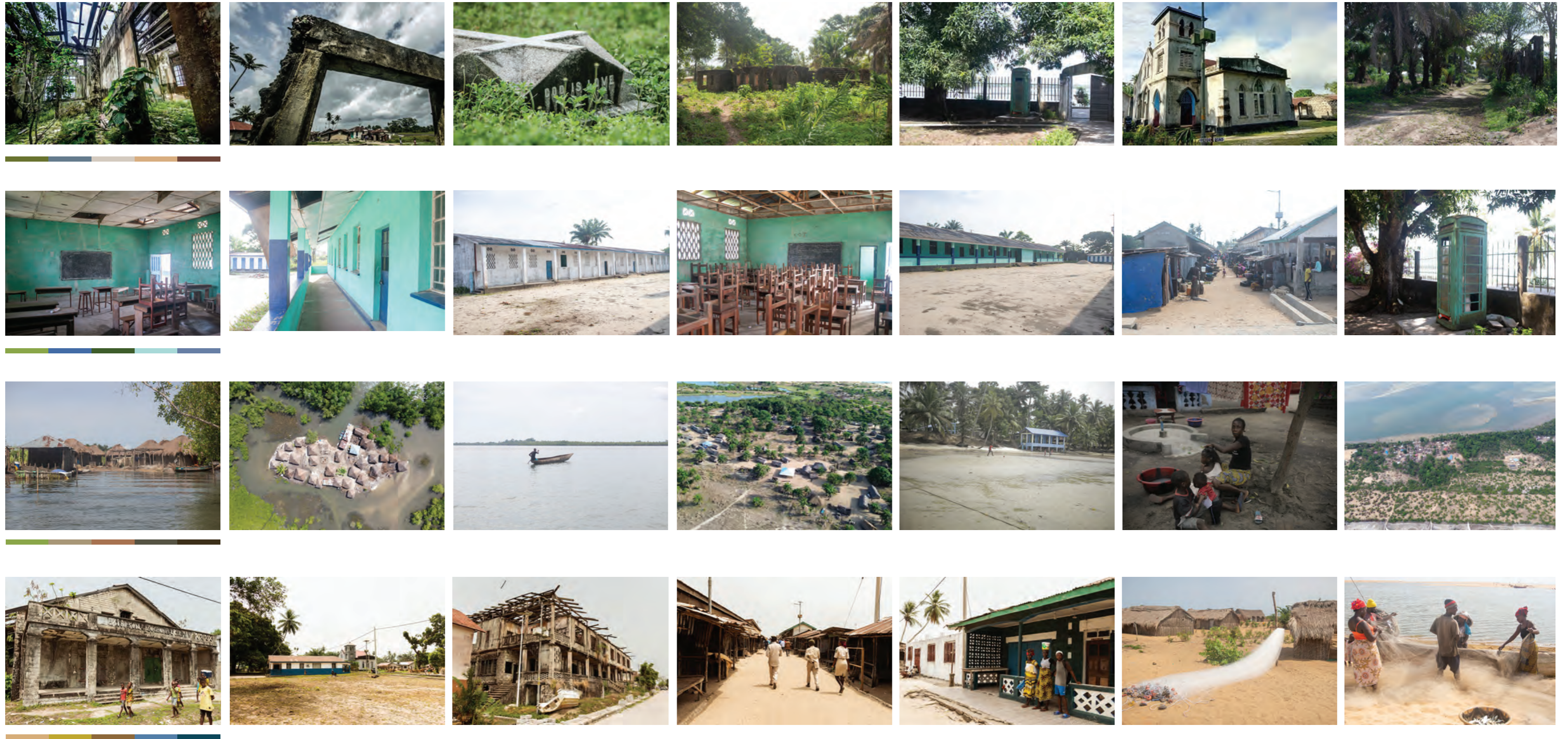


Tenkisan, Sherbro Island



A fisherman from Fornima, Sherbro Island.





## Location Studies

An exploration of Sherbro Island









Mangroves nearby Bamba, the south eastern coast.







The settlement of Yoni, Sherbro.



iii. **Location Studies** Sherbro Island





**Bonthe - Sherbro Island**

Sierra Leone

7.5273° N, 12.502° W





Once a thriving trading post and a major town, today Bonthe is a sleepy and impoverished fishing village – a victim of its remoteness. The island was originally home to the Sherbro people, but the demographic changed as European powers fought over the island for generations and waves of freed slaves returning from the British Empire and the Americas established new communities here throughout the 19th century.

Trade thrived, and even as late as the 1970s, resident Krio families talked of Bonthe as a vibrant town with a social scene to rival the country's rapidly growing capital Freetown, said historian Joseph Opala. But as Freetown grew and businesses gradually migrated to the mainland, Bonthe lost its importance as a trading town. The island's past is never far away. The former glory days are embedded in the crumbling remains of Bonthe's history lining its sandy streets.

American-style Krio board houses, brought back by returning slaves, stand next to long unused colonial water hydrants and the ruins of early European trading companies. An incongruous British telephone box overlooks rusting fishing boats on the seafront. The signs of the town's past life can be found everywhere, fighting a futile battle against the brutal humidity and the tropical undergrowth that is slowly reclaiming them.

## **Bonthe - Sherbro**

The largest and oldest settlement on Sherbro



Sunset over Bonthe.





Bonthe, the largest town on the island, is now a sleepy town with sand roads and crumbling colonial buildings, revealing its once-bustling past. Traditionally, the island was home to the Sherbro people, one of Sierra Leone's indigenous ethnic groups.

Later, it became an important centre for the trade of enslaved people, and after abolition, formerly enslaved people returning from the Americas and British colonies established communities there.

Bonthe grew to become a bustling town, rivalling Freetown in terms of trade and social life until as late as the 1970s. Then, it fell into a slow decline – only traces of its former grandeur survive now.

## **Bonthe - Sherbro**

In a state of decay - a victim of it's remoteness.







A solitary arch is all that remains of a building on the edge of Bonthe Town



Greek George Zochonis and Scottish George Patterson set up their now-closed shop on Bonthe in 1884



Typical of houses in English style, slave masters used to build such houses across Sierra Leone. Today, krios are synonymous with this style of architecture. The streets of York are well-planned and are similar to houses in the deep south of the United States.

## Bonthe - Sherbro











Ruin amongst the overgrowth, Bonthe.







Bonthe Secondary School, Sherbro Island









One of the tourist sights of the town is the Clock Tower at the end of the main street, Medina Street. Unfortunately, even though the tower is now painted in patriotic colours, it no longer has a clock. The rusted remains of one face languishes inside the tower. The photo taken in 1958 shows the clock in situ. It also shows the palm trees a little shorter and either telephone or electricity wires – which are long gone.

In what has been described as a strategic move to safeguard the country's heritage assets, President Julius Maada Bio has unveiled the historic clock tower on Bonthe Sherbro Island. The tower which was restored by the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs through the nation's heritage protection entity, Monuments and Relics Commission, would greatly improve the time management of the people while equally keeping them informed.

The Government of Sierra Leone fully funded the restoration of the clock which became silent in 1977 according to the Deputy Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, William IK Robinson.

## **Clock Tower - Bonthe - Sherbro**

The restoration of the Clock Tower in Bonthe Sherbro Island.









Children play in the evening sun nearby the Clock Tower, Bonthe.



The iconic water tower in Bonthe.











**Bonthe - Old Places of Worship**





The old Wesleyan Methodist church, Bonthe.







## Bonthe in the 1960s - Sherbro

A series of images taken in late 1960 depicting the lifestyle and vitality of Bonthe, through the recording of traditional dances to the construction of huts.







Victoria Road, Bonthe, Sierra Leone.

*Free-Town 18-3-1911  
A. Lizza*

FREE TOWN  
BONTHE  
SIERRA LEONE



An aerial photograph of a tropical coastline. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, transitioning to a deeper green further out. A narrow strip of white sand beach runs along the edge of a dense, lush forest of palm trees and other tropical vegetation. Several small wooden boats are visible on the water near the shore. The overall scene is serene and idyllic.

**The Turtle Islands** Sherbro Island,  
Sierra Leone



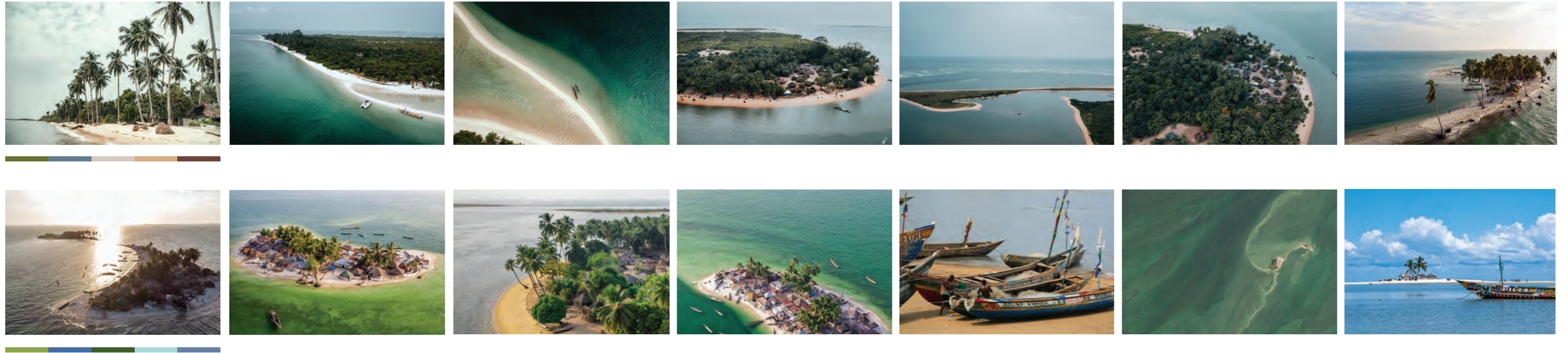


Turtle Islands - Sherbro

0 2,000 6,000 10,000m



Tropical beaches surround dense vegetation, Turtle Islands.



## Location Studies

An exploration of Turtle Islands and wider context.



Turtle Islands is a remote destination and the fishing communities have preserved their faith and tradition in a vivid manner. Eight small islands—Bakie, Bumpetuk, Chepo, Hoong, Mut, Nyangei, Sei, and Yele—form the Turtle Islands, an undeveloped archipelago located near Sherbro Island’s western shore. These islands offer pristine sandy beaches, surrounded by clear blue waters and palm trees against a blue sky. While inhabited, they hold local folklore, like Chepo being home to the paramount chief and Hoong being exclusive to initiated men. Close to the western shore of Sherbro villages such as Tombe and Moyema, the islands have been described by one old-time resident as a place where the Sherbros ‘spend their evenings in groups, drinking and singing traditional songs of bravery and romance’.

## The Turtle Islands - Sherbro

Nyankai and Nyangei, Turtle Islands.













## The Turtle Islands - Sherbro

Turtle Islands.





Boats left ashore, Turtle Islands.





Fishermen collect on the shore, Turtle Islands.

























iv. **Location Studies** Wider Context





The once pristine and bustling Island of York which is a part of the Bonthe Island Municipality presently stands the risk of relegation from history because of the recent declaration of the Sherbro River as a Marine Protected Area (MPA). Business life is now almost dormant, social amenities are conspicuously absent and social welfare amenities in virtual collapse all due to neglect.

The Mayor of Bonthe Municipal Council, Layemin Joe Sandi disclosed to Awoko that indigenes of the Island are leaving to other places in the country "to seek a better life", a situation he attributed to the declaration of the Sherbro River as a Marine Protected Area and the poor or nonexistent of basic social amenities on the Island.

### Sierra Leone - York Island



" SANBRIDGE "

Photo. W. S. Johnston



Sierra Leone Protectorate—York Island, Sherbro



Aerial views of Freetown



Colonial-era wooden buildings

### Sierra Leone - Freetown

Sierra Leone's bustling port and capital city of Freetown



The Cotton Tree, In the heart of Freetown









St. George's  
Cathedral,  
Freetown.

Lisk-Carew Brothers, Photo., Freetown, Sierra Leone.  
Registered.



On an escarpment, 250m above the city of Freetown, is the small settlement of Hill Station. This was an exclusive resort built for the British colonial administrators and staff between 1902 and 1904. Modelled on the Indian hill stations (such as Simla) and the sanatorium at Aburi, Ghana, it aimed to provide cooler, more healthier abodes for the Colonists.

Ronald Ross's recent discoveries on mosquitoes and malaria also prompted the move away from the city, and the increasing desire for racially segregated housing and cordon sanitaires. The houses were exported as kits from the UK ready to be assembled and clad on site. Hefty concrete bases are topped with steel frames that provide living accommodation at first floor level. Access is via a perpendicular staircase leading to a verandah.

The raised bungalows catch the breeze and offer far reaching views over the forest, city, and ocean below. A club offered the only source of entertainment for the residents of this leafy, isolated, community. Today, just 12 of the original 24 two-storey houses survive, still occupied by civil servants and their families (and still without a piped water supply). Many of the houses are being modified and extended, and the large plots split-up and sold to facilitate new development.

### **Hill Station - Freetown - Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone's bustling port and capital city of Freetown









St. John's Maroon Church is a Methodist church in Maroon Town, a neighbourhood of Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital. It is one of the country's oldest churches. The church is regarded as one of the most beautiful historical sites in Sierra Leone.

The Maroons increasingly abandoned their African beliefs in favor of Christianity. In 1820, they were granted land in Maroon Town between Percival and Liverpool Streets. Unhappy with the conditions of worship in Nova Scotian chapels, a group led by Charles Shaw Harding established St. John's Maroon Church in 1822. A short white wall surrounds the small white building.

While the Maroons progressively incorporated into Freetown society, many of them remained churchgoers. They practiced their own style of Methodism, remaining independent of the Methodist establishment until 1900. The congregation has shrunk, yet it still exists. In 2007, the congregation of St John's Maroon Church celebrated the 200th anniversary of its foundation. Under the Monuments and Relics Ordinance on 1 June 1947, the church was designated a national historic site in 1956.

### **Saint John Maroon Church - Freetown - Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone's bustling port and capital city of Freetown





Fourah Bay College is a public university in the neighbourhood of Mount Aureol in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Founded on 18 February 1827, it is the first western-style university built in Sub-Saharan Africa and, furthermore, the first university-level institution in Africa. It is a constituent college of the University of Sierra Leone (USL) and was formerly affiliated with Durham University (1876–1967)

### **Fourah Bay College - Freetown - Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone's bustling port and capital city of Freetown





York is a characteristically Krio community with a rich history, yet it also includes members of other tribes. Prior to the advent of the liberated slaves, the Sherbro had established themselves in the area, and the village was known as Momimi. York hamlet is nearly 200 years old, is largely Christian, and has stunning architecture and fauna. York is also the region's rural district headquarters.

The town's layout and house architecture are reminiscent of those found in the deep south of the United States, a tribute to the early settlers and re-captives who began a new life in the nineteenth century. After the slave era, the royal family was stationed in the neighborhood during WWII (and the prison yard, are still present).

In 1819, 202 ex-Royal African Corps (freed slaves who served Britain in the Napoleonic Wars) arrived in York. A large number of these ex-soldiers married Sherbro ladies. In 1822, 89 freed Africans were added to the colony, and by 1880, York had the largest canoe fleet on the Peninsula, with 51 canoes.

A visit will take you throughout York, where you will meet community leaders who will gladly enlighten you about the city's history. Give the elders a little token of thanks and appreciation for allowing you into their community, as is usual when visiting any local village, and they will be pleased to share stories with you. Please do not hesitate to ask queries.

### **York, Western Province - Sierra Leone**

Architecture as a result of Sierra Leone's colonisation by the British

















A Sande society helmet mask (1940-1965).



Sande mask.



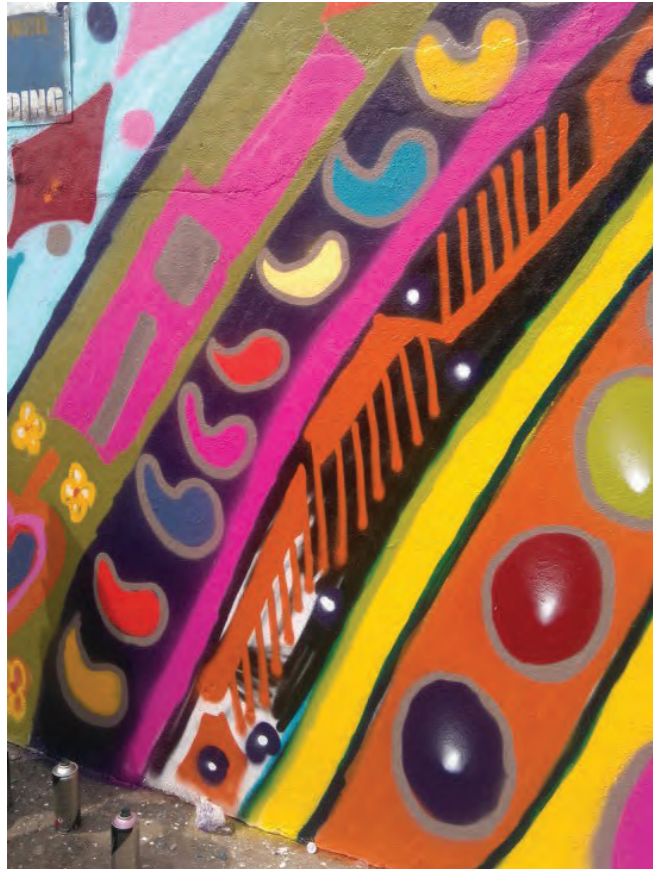
Odelay mask by Temne people.



Ivory carving of approximate 1500s origin.

Ngadi Smart is an artist and photographer who focuses on documenting cultures, subcultures and intimacy. Her work looks at how people self-identify and choose to present themselves in front of the lens. For this opportunity she has created a series of self-portraits as photo collages that are about self-identity and intimacy.

## Sierra Leone Arts and Culture



King Dus Art Festival

A collection of artists led by Valona Taylor and Yaya Turay and named after legendary artist King Dus. The annual Street Art Festival, where local and international artists collaborate on street art installations throughout Freetown, has become one of the most exciting fixtures in the Sierra Leone creative calendar.



Ngadi Smart - Weekendavisen: Africa, a continent of Literature (2022)



Ngadi Smart - Kyotographie Exhibit (2021)



Ngadi Smart - Do The Green Thing (2019)

Ngadi Smart is an artist and photographer who focuses on documenting cultures, subcultures and intimacy. Her work looks at how people self-identify and choose to present themselves in front of the lens. For this opportunity she has created a series of self-portraits as photo collages that are about self-identity and intimacy.



Sierra Leone Arts and Culture - King Dus Arts Festival







Commission | The National Archives (2023)

**Sierra Leone Arts and Culture - Ngadi Smart**  
Illustration & Design



Commission | Riverhead Books: Ishmael Beah (2020)

**Space** Africa's nascent aerospace industries are all set for blast off

**Entertainment** Why global audiences are tuning into African culture

**China** Beijing must help the African continent climb out of its debt trap

# The World Today



**African voices want to be heard**  
Can leaders deliver the democracies they need?





Mustapha is the Chief of the Komima Community (Bo District), and also contributes to making the Wicker bags the community sells. He stands holding one of the bags on his head, and the textures adorning his face are from the bags he makes.

Uma James poses with brooms made from Palm Leaf, which she farms herself. Products such as this are made and sold as a way to sustain themselves, along with the community's primary source of income, the fabrication of Wicker and Bamboo goods.

*Wata Na Life (Krio for 'Water is Life'), is a phrase I heard time and again in Sierra Leone, a country where water is very much a currency. Commissioned by Wateraid and British Journal of Photography, I spent three months in the country of my heritage exploring the link between water and our changing climate. What I found were communities adapting as best they could to the fall-out from increasingly volatile climate brought on by climate change. The project is a marked rejection of the "dehumanising" way developing African nations have historically been portrayed by Western media — countering tropes of "poverty porn" with vibrant collage; celebrating the essence and identities of the people and places of Sierra Leone, blending each location's scenery, portraits, and objects I photographed, to form a more authentic representation than I felt any single photo could convey. I want Sierra Leoneans to look at this work and feel proud. That's the most important thing.*

### **Sierra Leone Arts and Culture - Ngadi Smart**

Water Na Life, Konima, Bo District





7.5534° N, 12.6676° W



Ja Kingdom, Freetown. Remenets of a community building damaged by the 2017 mudslide.



Informal housing settlement up high in the hills of Tengbeh Town - Freetown.



Mme Musu Kamara, with one of her chickens.



Ibrahim Abubakar Kamara, a nuts farmer, holding Groundnuts next to a hut where nuts are being roasted.

This series taken and collaged by Ngadi Smart, explores the livelihoods of various settlements within Sierra Leone. These are more often than not governed by the sites abundance of resources, often highly scarce. These images not only suggest the profound link between the people and their occupations but also, effectively displays the vernacular architecture that is as heavily dependent

### **Sierra Leone - Vernacular**

Water Na Life, Konima, Bo District





A typical Pewama home made of thatch from Palm leaves



Gongoli, ai mask made and worn by the Mende people of Sierra Leone.





Sierra Leone School, Freetown, 2009  
Foster + Partners





Foster + Partners unveiled a model for the design of a school in Sierra Leone at the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition in London. They had worked together with Article 25, Save the Children, and Buro Happold. This unique project aimed to establish a design prototype, and it resulted from close collaboration with the local community to create a series of highly flexible buildings with larger classrooms, effective ventilation, and natural light. The design drew parallels with a number of early social projects. Its modular system embraced floors, walls, and roofs on a flexible plan and could be easily assembled and reconfigured to meet the different demands of communities in Sierra Leone.

The response to climatic and economic restraints had produced something close to a new vernacular: an architecture without architects. Visually, the scheme resonated with existing schools, yet functionally, it was a dramatic departure. This had ensured widespread acceptance of the design, enabling teachers for the first time to circulate in classrooms that were light and naturally ventilated, offering better security and supervision. The design had been jointly funded by Foster + Partners, Article 25, and Buro Happold, and construction was to be financed by the Foster family. Norman Foster had said, "The project to design a school for Sierra Leone was both an exciting design challenge and an ambitious undertaking to help improve education in one of the world's poorest countries. Our approach sought to achieve the most with the least, using indigenous techniques and materials to create a prototype for a modern, flexible school building that was uplifting and inspiring to use."

**Sierra Leone School, Foster + Partners**  
Freetown, 2009

## School Sierra Leone

The Sierra Leone school is a unique project that aims to create a design prototype for a school building that can be applied throughout the country. It is a shared endeavour with Article 25 and Save the Children and is the result of a number of visits to the site, which involved working closely with the children of the local community. It has been driven by a desire to create a highly flexible school with larger classrooms, better ventilation and access to natural light.

Using standard locally sourced components, like a construction kit, the school is a framework that embraces floor, walls and roof so that the plan is completely flexible and waste is kept to a minimum. Interestingly, this was similar to the starting point for a number of early social projects and it is an approach pursued subsequently by the practice in airports and other building types at increasing scales. The design is based, for example, around the size of standard timber planks and generic modules of sheet tin for the roof. The walls are created from bush-sticks, with slim apertures to admit natural light and to reduce contrast to the daylight outside. The pitch of the roof is at an increased angle of 30 degrees to minimise solar gain and encourage cross-ventilation. The roof is extended to create a generous overhang at either end of the building, which provides shaded external areas for informal teaching or play.

Aesthetically, the building has a resonance with the existing school, yet functionally it is a dramatic departure. This has ensured widespread acceptance of the design, while enabling teachers, for the first time, to circulate in classrooms that are at a comfortable temperature and benefit from natural light. It is also an entirely modular system that can be reconfigured at will to allow for the regular changes in student demographics.



1



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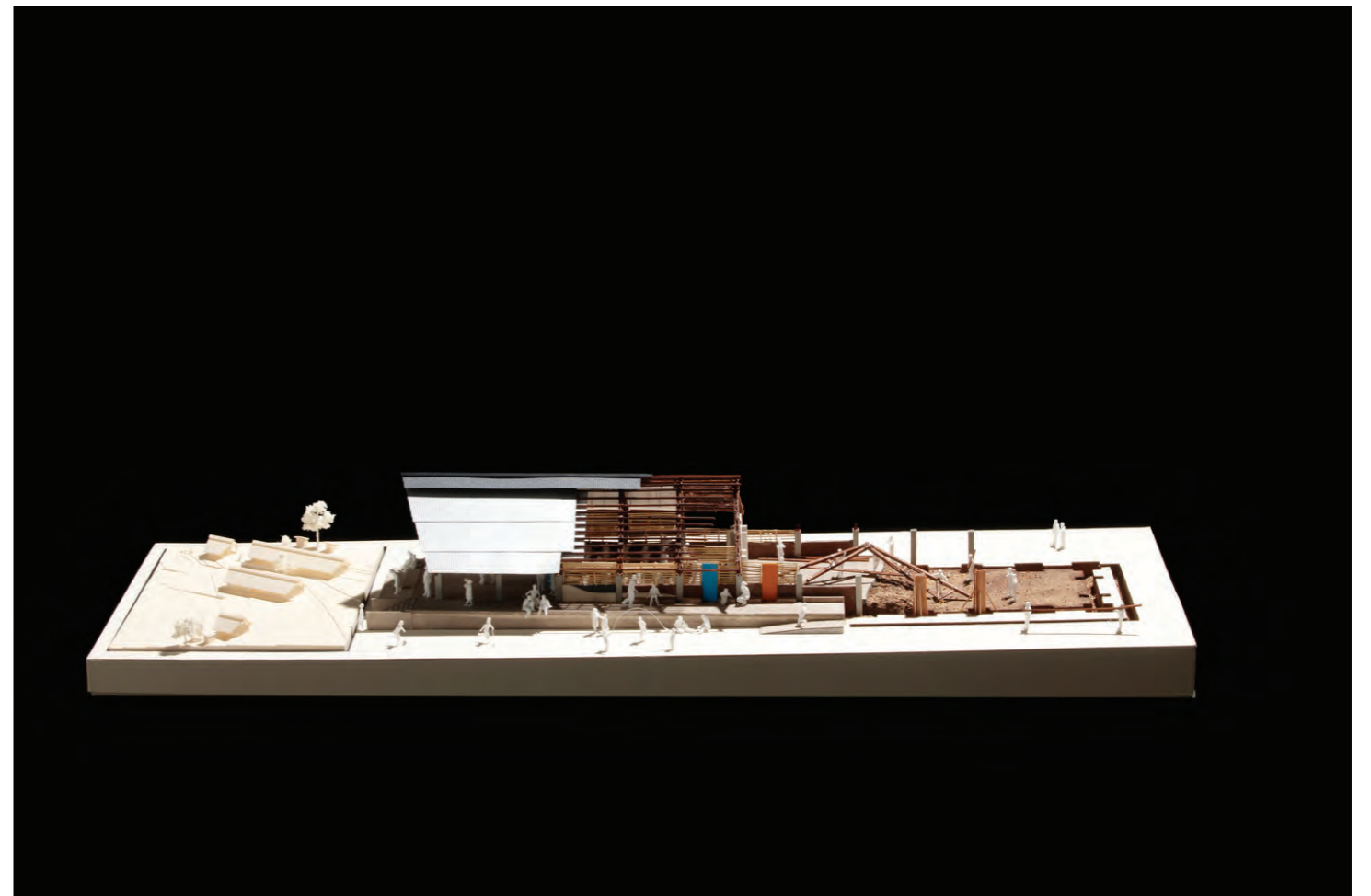
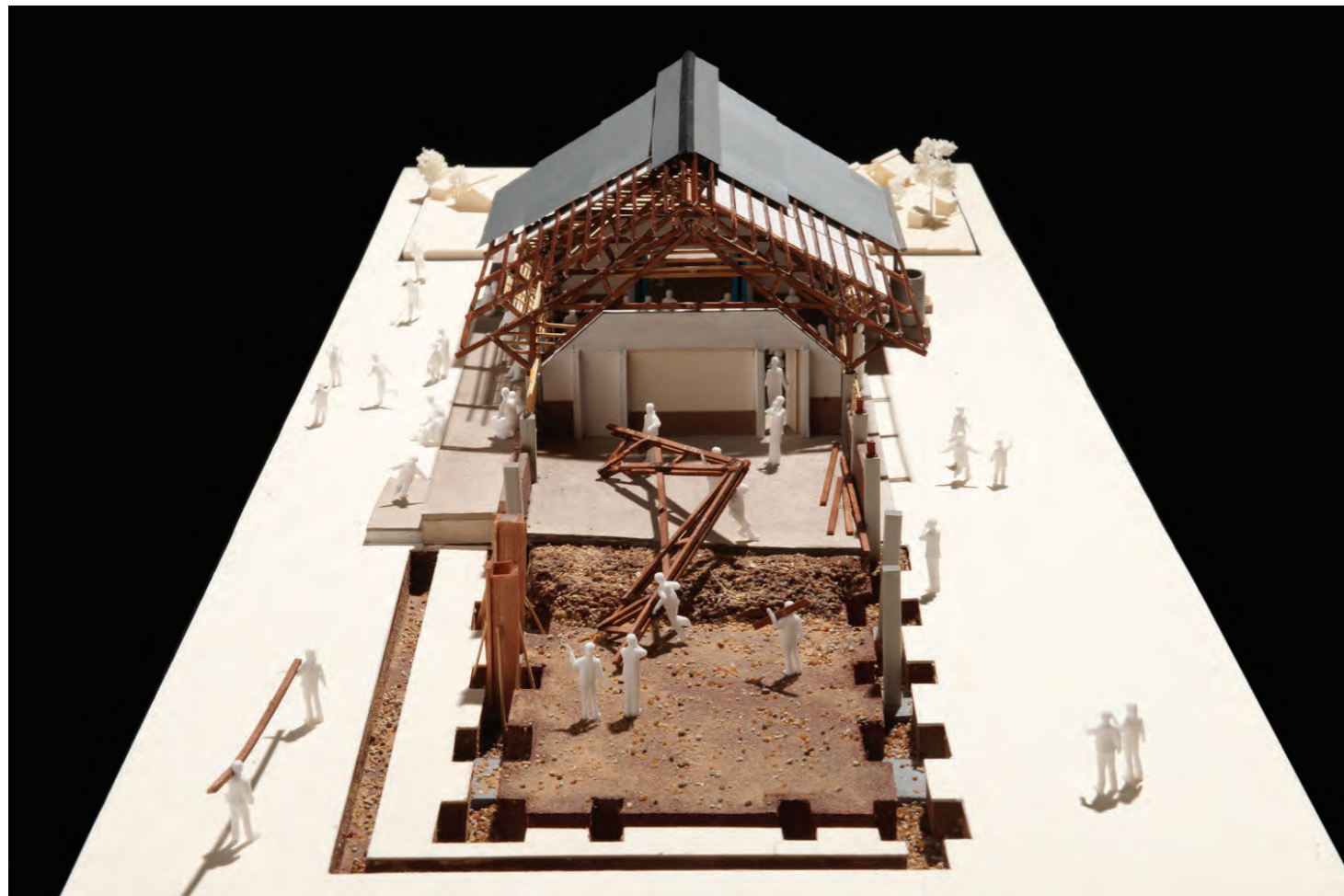
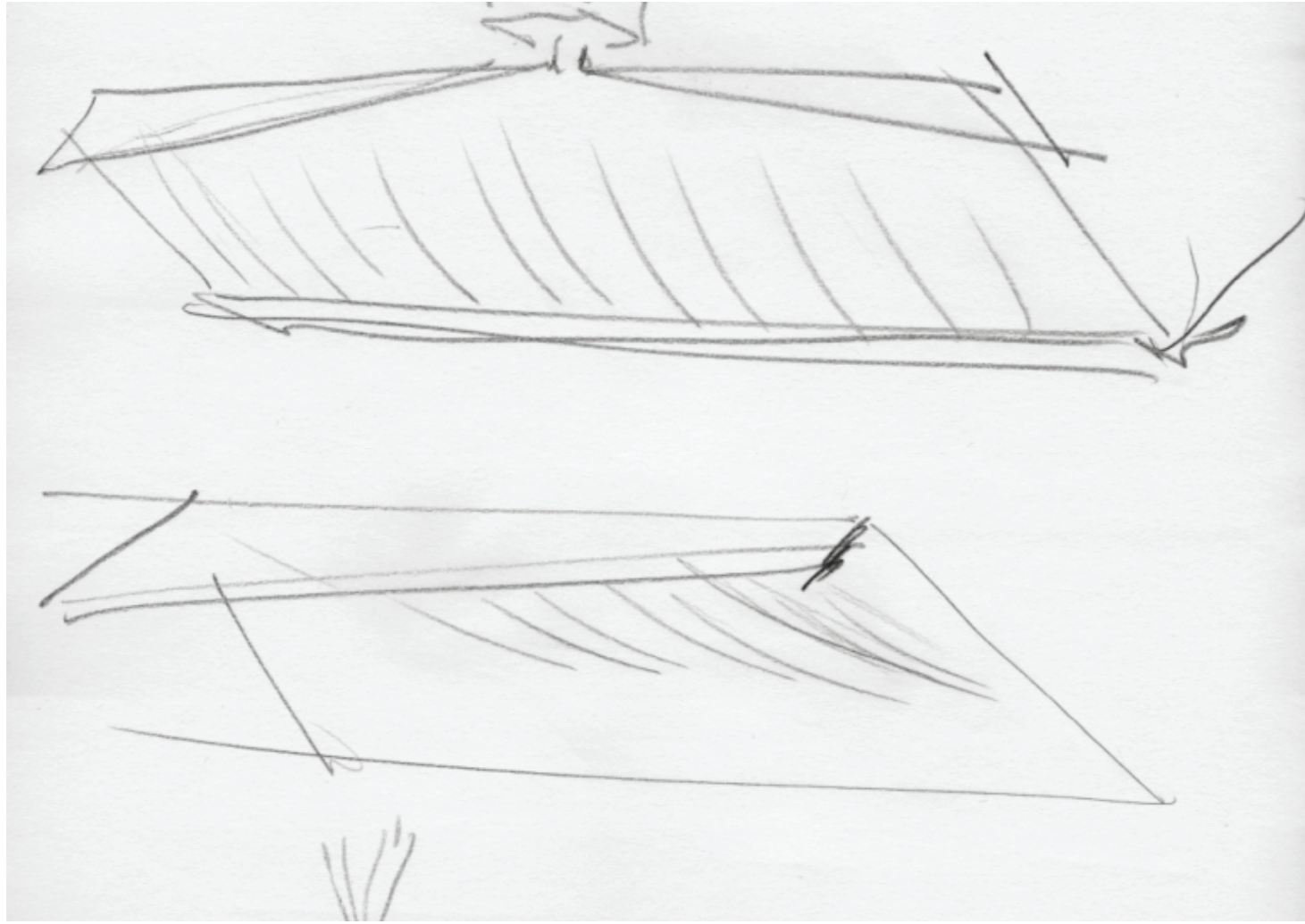
1. Photomontage showing the proposed prototype school buildings in the landscape.

2. Partner, Narinder Sagoo, working with the local community.

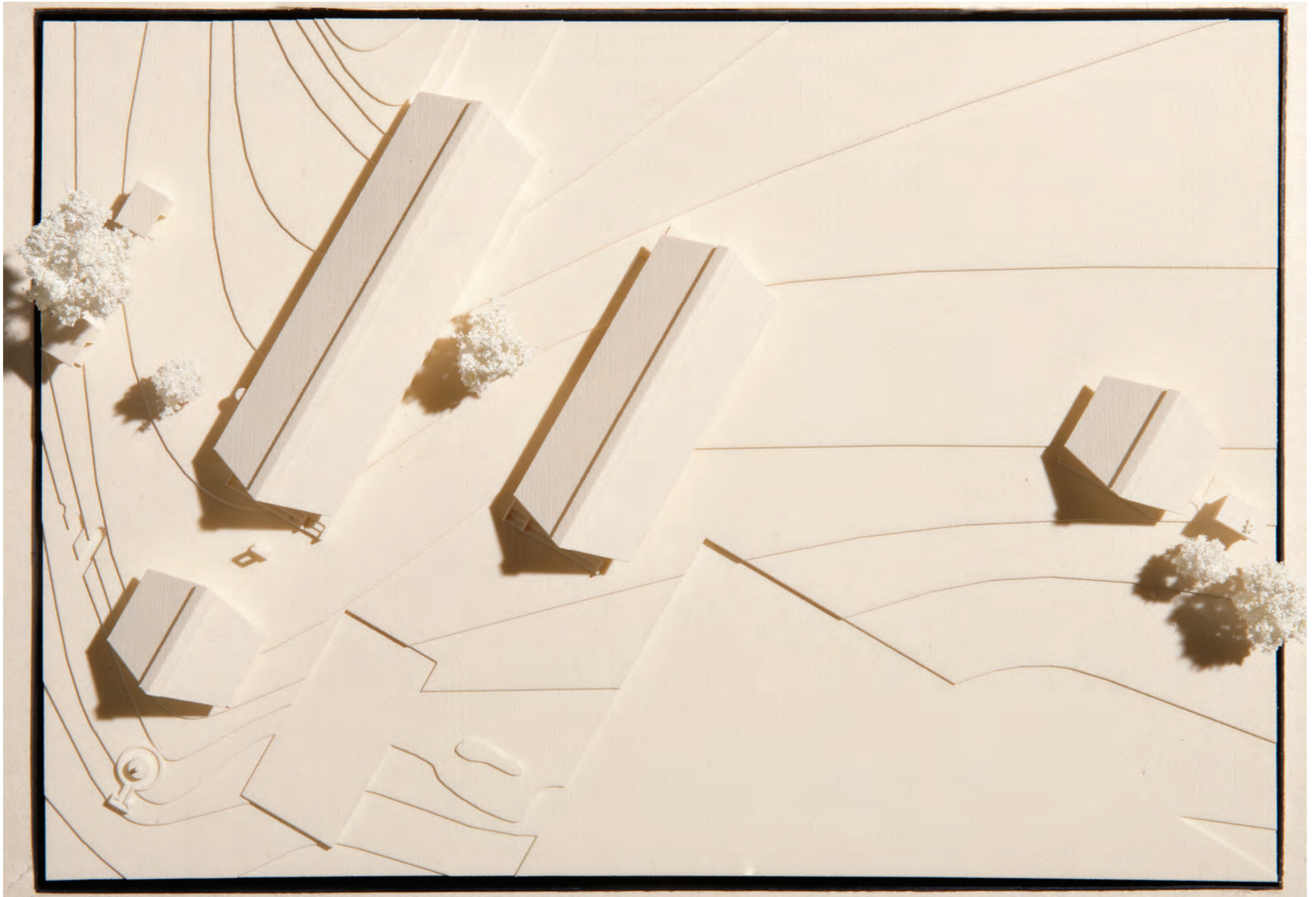


3









Good School build <sup>sun</sup> Church build

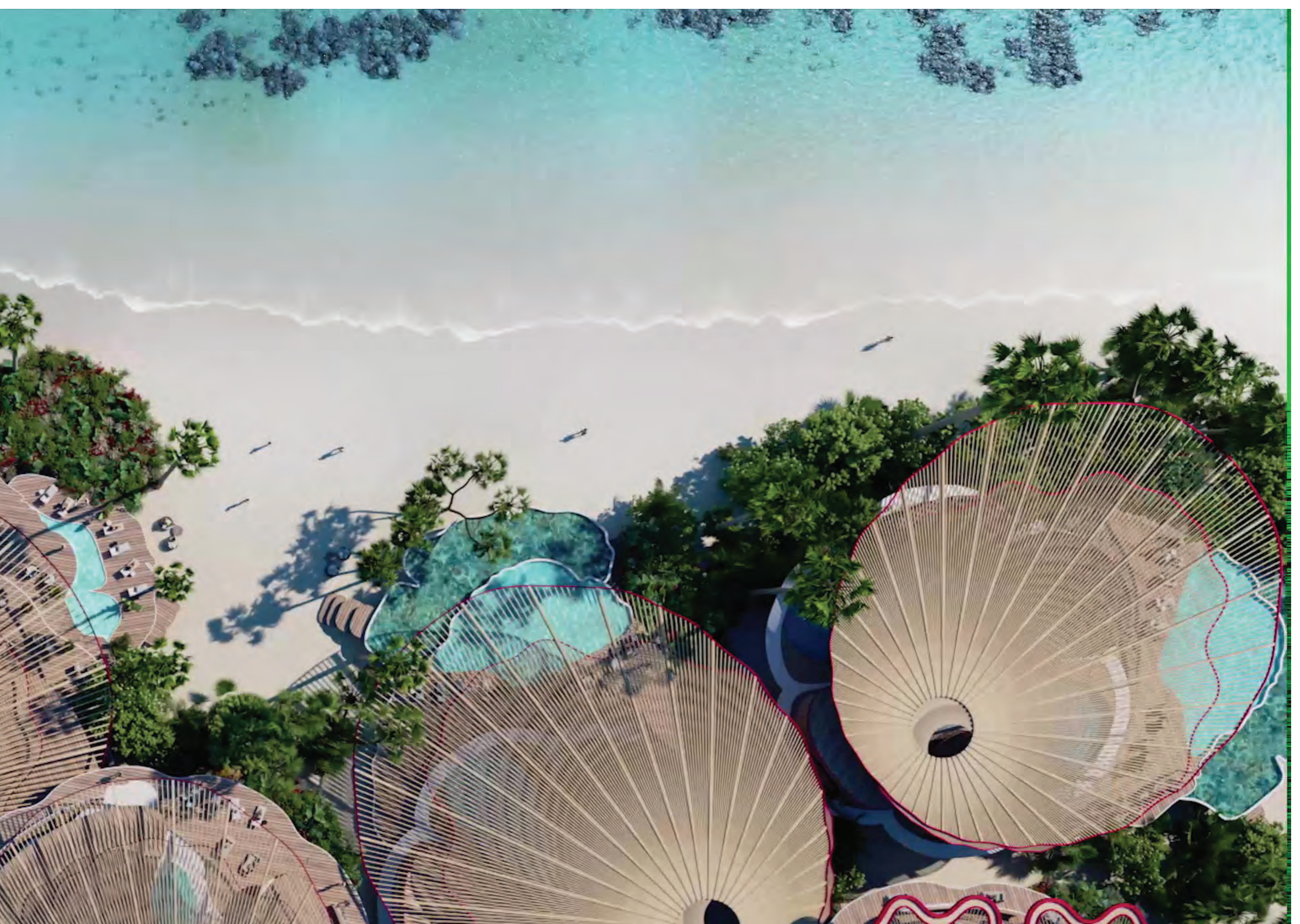


HAPPY PEOPLE .....



**Shurayrah Island, Red Sea Project, Saudi Arabia 2019**  
Foster + Partners









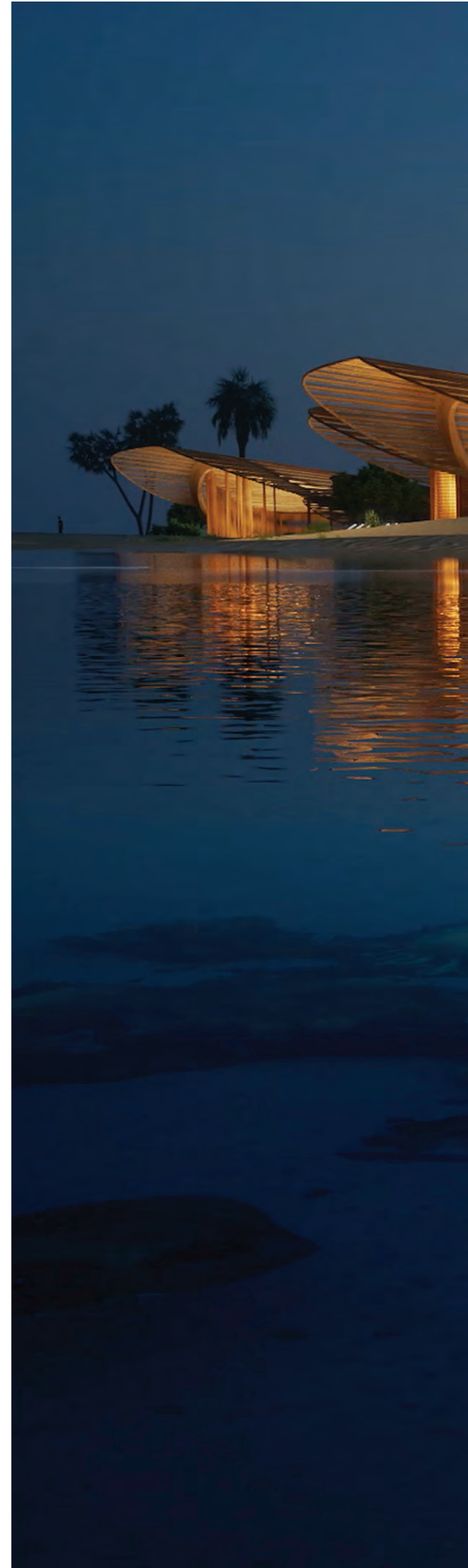
The Saudi Arabian Red Sea coast is one of the last remaining healthy coastal ecosystems on Earth. The Red Sea masterplan offers an opportunity to capitalise on its unique natural wonders to create an exclusive tourist destination. The central thrust of the project is to use the preservation of the rich biodiversity as a catalyst to enhance visitor experience and make Saudi Arabia a leader in global ecotourism. The masterplan for the special enterprise zone includes an airport and several other inland developments. Coral Bloom is envisaged as the hub island for the luxury coastal development and will serve as the only connection to the mainland for the entire development. The project pursues the highest environmental standards of sustainability in an effort to preserve and protect the region's stunning natural biodiversity for generations to come.

**Shurayrah Island** Foster + Partners  
Red Sea, Saudi Arabia, 2019















**Laheq Island** Red Sea Project, Saudi Arabia 2020  
Foster + Partners





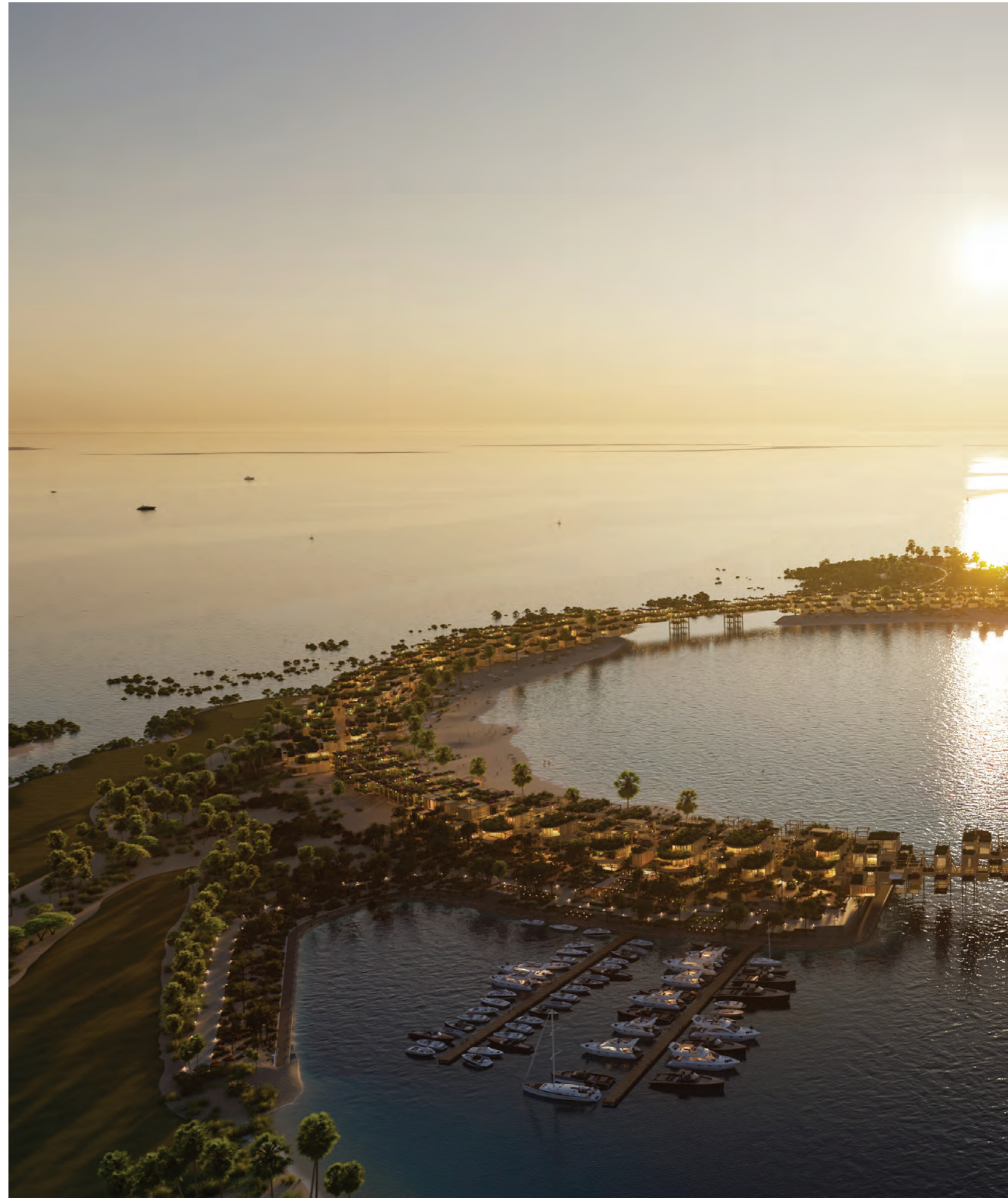






The driving philosophy for Forever Garden at Laheq Island is the creation of something that has never been seen before but also something that is low impact, sensitive and ecological - a hospitality centred destination suitable for the Next Generation of travellers. The concept originated from three core principles; a light touch approach to the island, being immersed in nature and an ecological island resort that continues to grow and evolve. The green ring, at the heart of the island, embodies these principles, creating an architecture that is unique to the Red Sea, with a strong uniform identity. At approximately 800m in diameter and encapsulating a tranquil swimming lagoon, bordered by soft sandy beaches, the ring creates a truly unique holiday destination – a one-of-a-kind experience. There are a diverse range of activities and destinations for guests to enjoy throughout the ring, including the Marina and Boutique Hotels, Golf, Mangrove and Beach Apartments and the Souq and it's courtyards - wellness, market garden and banquet. The thing that binds all of these experiences together are the beautiful gardens that connect them. The continued evolution of the gardens over time promote the concept that the more you visit, the better the experience becomes. Each hotel and their gardens are envisaged as part an island-wide pre-manufactured growing system - a framework that is flexible and adaptable enough to allow the creation of variety and difference but one that can also harness the benefits of repetition and Off-site manufacturing processes.

**Laheq Island** Foster + Partners  
Red Sea, Saudi Arabia, 2020









**Southern Dunes** Red Sea, Saudi Arabia 2019  
Foster + Partners





Situated a short distance inland from the Red Sea coast, Southern Dunes is a new luxury island resort that is set to become a new destination for global tourists. The project is a celebration of Saudi Arabia's amazing desert landscape and pursues the highest environmental standards of sustainability in an effort to preserve, protect and restore the region's stunning natural biodiversity for generations to come. The larger masterplan for the special enterprise zone includes an airport and several other island developments including Coral Bloom on Shurayrah island – the hub island for the luxury coastal development.

**Southern Dunes** Foster + Partners  
Red Sea, Saudi Arabia, 2019























