

# 10

## REVIVING SOULS: ENHANCING LAMAN KAED AS COMMUNAL PUBLIC SPACES IN UNIVERSITY

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### ABSTRACT

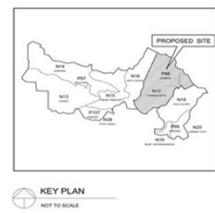
*Laman KAED* at the Kulliyah of Architecture and Environmental Design (KAED), IIUM, has the potential to serve as a central hub for interaction, creativity, and spiritual reflection. However, the space is currently underutilised, and lacking in vibrancy, inclusivity, and functional character. This project aims to revive and transform Laman KAED into a multifunctional, sustainable, and *Shariah*-compliant environment that reflect the faculty's identity and fosters community engagement. A collaborative methodology, including site assessment, user observation, precedent review, design development, and cost assessment guides the proposal toward a holistic intervention. The design introduces paved walkways for improved circulation, kiosks as income-generating elements, and a stage to support academic and social activities. Together, these innovations emphasise harmony between nature, humanity, and divine principles while creating a meaningful, inclusive, and financially viable space. The outcome positions "Revive" as a purposeful, dynamic, and sustainable transformation that restores both the physical and symbolic value of Laman KAED. By integrating passive systems, multifunctional structures, and biophilic design, the space evolves into a living environment that adapts to changing academic and social needs while nurturing creativity, interaction, and well-being. Grounded in Islamic values, the project aspires to deliver long-lasting academic, social, and spiritual benefits, establishing Laman KAED as an iconic landmark that strengthens community identity and belonging.

**Keywords:** *Laman KAED, Social Development, Interaction, Sustainability, Shariah compliance*

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

*Laman KAED*, a pocket garden located in front of the Kulliyah of Architecture and Environmental Design (KAED), IIUM, holds significant potential as a communal space for students and staff. Aesthetic and vibrant gathering spaces are vital for fostering interaction, creativity, and a sense of belonging, while also supporting mental well-being and academic engagement. Efficient use of such spaces ensures inclusivity and sustainability, with multi-purpose areas accommodating diverse activities in line with *Shariah* compliance. In this context, the study aims to transform Laman KAED into a sustainable landscape that reflects KAED's architectural identity and values by harmonising nature, humanity, and divine principles. Proposed interventions such as paved walkways, kiosks as income-generating elements, and a stage for lecturer–student interaction will enhance circulation, encourage community participation, and establish the pocket garden as a multifunctional hub that supports both academic excellence and social development.



### 2.0 METHODOLOGY

Figure 1 shows the process undertaken to achieve the design project's objectives. The process began with a literature review, followed by site analysis, precedent studies and formulation of design concept. Consultation sessions with the supervisors were carried out regularly to finalise the design. Lastly, the process of the project design was documented in an E-magazine and a multimedia presentation.



Figure 1: Research methodology chart  
(Source: Authors, 2025)

### 3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Placemaking and the Role of Communal Spaces in Malaysia

Recent studies show that well-designed communal spaces in Malaysia provide social, environmental, and psychological benefits when supported by sustainable planning. Tharim et al. (2023) highlight how biophilic strategies implemented in Malaysian green-rated office buildings improved user comfort and enhanced environmental resilience. Similarly, Manan, Artha, and Putri (2025) examined public perception of biophilic design in Kuala Lumpur high-rise buildings, suggest that natural integration positively shaped how users engaged with urban communal environments. These findings reinforce that communal spaces, when embedded with ecological and cultural sensitivity, can foster vibrant interactions and long-term usability. Parallel insights from design research also demonstrate that interactive and playful interventions in shared environments, such as those explored by Raja Abdul Rahman et al. (2020), can temporarily activate communal areas and encourage social participation, illustrating the potential of adaptive furniture and spatial strategies to enhance placemaking.



Figure 2: Dataran Merdeka's new pedestrian upgrades  
(Source: My Kuala Lumpur Pass, 2024)

#### Wellbeing and Cognitive Benefits of Biophilic Campus Spaces

Recent research underscores how biophilic and restorative environments on campuses can significantly enhance wellbeing and cognitive function. Thani (2024) demonstrates that students' engagement in biophilic landscapes fostered restorative experiences that improved focus and prolonged interaction with communal spaces. Similarly, Sakip (2024) highlighted that biophilic elements in university libraries not only enhanced cognitive performance but also contributed to stress reduction and greater academic productivity. Zamri (2025) further notes that such design interventions directly alleviate stress, depression, and anxiety, reinforcing the mental health value of natural integration in campus settings. Collectively, these findings suggest that embedding restorative and biophilic qualities into campus communal areas transforms them into living laboratories that support both academic excellence and holistic student wellbeing.



Figure 3: University of Malaya Rimba Ilmu Biophilic Communal Space  
(Source: Hati NGO, 2025)

#### Biophilic Design and Strategies for Reviving Connection with Nature

Biophilic design has gained momentum globally and locally as a way to strengthen user connection with nature while improving mental and physical health. Tekin et al. (2025) identify key gaps and emerging trends in biophilic design research, noting its capacity to restore psychological wellbeing and enhance built environment sustainability. Khan (2025) further emphasises that integrating elements such as greenery, daylight, and natural ventilation fosters human sensory comfort and reduces stress. In the Malaysian context, Zahir (2024) explores how biophilic architectural features in Geoffrey Bawa's works reshaped spatial perception, reinforcing the relevance of culturally rooted nature–architecture integration. Together, these studies show that reconnecting architecture with nature enhances healing, restoration, and environmental performance.



Figure 4: Biophilic design integration  
(Source: Bonaiuto et al., 2025)

#### Management challenges in Revitalising Public Communal Space

While communal spaces offer multiple benefits, their quality is often undermined by governance and maintenance gaps. Zamri (2025) emphasises that under-maintained environments exacerbate stress, anxiety, and reduced wellbeing, particularly in dense urban settings. Likewise, Syafinaz and Md Sidik (2025) argue that Malaysian urban public spaces need structured biophilic interventions and stronger community involvement to overcome issues such as poor upkeep, limited coordination, and declining user participation. Hilmi Hanisah. et al. (2020) describe that entrepreneurial products and mobile initiatives can temporarily activate underutilized urban areas, but they also reveal the management challenges of sustaining user participation and ensuring long-term coordination. Collectively, these findings suggest that addressing management challenges through co-management and nature-based strategies can ensure sustained engagement.



Figure 4: Abandoned Skatepark in a Malaysian Forest  
(Source: Publicly documented, Selangor, 2025)

## 4.0 PRECEDENT AND CASE STUDIES

### Crossrail Place Roof Garden, Canary Wharf, London, United Kingdom



Figure 6: Crossrail Place Roof Garden



Figure 7: Crossrail Place Roof Garden's multifunctional green roof strategy

Located above the Crossrail station in Canary Wharf, the Crossrail Place Roof Garden is an innovative green space that fuses nature and architecture. Designed by Foster + Partners and Gillespies, the garden is enclosed in a striking timber lattice roof, creating a sheltered environment that supports a unique blend of Eastern and Western plant species, which reflect the site's location on the Prime Meridian line. The space is more than just a garden, it includes seating areas, performance spaces, and winding walkways that invite exploration. It's a peaceful sanctuary in one of London's busiest financial districts, offering both commuters and visitors a refreshing pause amidst the urban rush.

### Garden of Cosmic Speculation, Dumfriesshire, Scotland



Figure 8: Garden of Cosmic Speculation's landscape



Figure 9: Garden of Cosmic Speculation's curves design

The Garden of Cosmic Speculation, created by landscape architect and theorist Charles Jencks, is a remarkable private garden that integrates science, philosophy, and art into its landscape design. Spanning over 30 acres, it features a range of imaginative sculptures, geometrically designed earthworks, fractals, black holes, and DNA-inspired elements, that each representing concepts from the universe and human understanding of space and time. The garden's flowing curves and mathematical symmetry are not only visually stunning but also intellectually stimulating. Though only open to the public one day a year, it has become globally renowned as one of the most thought-provoking gardens in the world.

### TRX Citypark, Kuala Lumpur



Figure 10: TRX Citypark garden



Figure 11: TRX Citypark - Birdview

TRX City Park is a landmark public park located at the heart of Kuala Lumpur's new international financial district, the Tun Razak Exchange. Spanning 10 acres, the elevated park was designed to seamlessly integrate green spaces with the urban skyline. It offers wide open lawns, tree-lined promenades, shaded rest areas, and sustainable rainwater management systems. The landscape incorporates local flora and eco-friendly materials, creating an inviting space for both leisure and community activities. Surrounded by iconic skyscrapers, the park functions as the "green lung" of the city, enhancing the quality of life and urban biodiversity while promoting healthy, outdoor living in the city center.

### Taman Tasik Titiwangsa, Selangor, Malaysia



Figure 12: Taman Tasik Titiwangsa's reflective water body  
(Source: Authors, 2025)



Figure 13: Taman Tasik Titiwangsa's jogging paths  
(Source: Authors, 2025)

Taman Tasik Titiwangsa is one of Kuala Lumpur's most iconic recreational parks, offering a serene escape in the middle of the bustling capital. Centered around a scenic lake with views of the KL skyline, the park covers over 95 hectares and features lush green landscapes, cycling and jogging paths, water activity zones, children's playgrounds, and reflective water bodies. A recent revitalisation project introduced modern features such as interactive water fountains, dedicated sports areas, and improved accessibility, making it even more family-friendly and inclusive. The park is a cherished green space where residents and tourists alike gather for exercise, picnics, or simply to enjoy nature within the urban environment.

## 5.0 SITE ANALYSIS

Laman KAED is an open communal courtyard located within the Kulliyah of Architecture and Environmental Design (KAED) at the International Islamic University Malaysia, Gombak Campus. Its strategic location positions it as a key transitional node for students and staff. Pedestrian movement remains constant throughout the day. The physical characteristics of the site reveal a gently sloping terrain with a mix of hardscaped walkways and soft landscape elements such as lawns and scattered trees. While this open layout allows for flexibility of use, the space currently lacks defined programmatic functions that would strengthen its role as an active communal hub within the kulliyah.



Figure 14: Laman KAED's entrance



Figure 15: Students activity at pavillion at Laman Kaed

In terms of climate, the location is representative of the usual tropical climate of Malaysia, where high temperatures, high humidity, and a lot of rain affect outdoor comfort. Laman KAED's openness permits a certain amount of natural ventilation, but the lack of flora and shade structures leads to extended exposure to sunshine and precipitation, discouraging extended occupation. Although they partially shade the adjacent buildings, some of them also block cross-ventilation. These environmental considerations emphasise how crucial it is to incorporate sustainable design elements, such tree planting, water-sensitive landscaping, and covered pavilions, to enhance the site's microclimatic resilience and comfort.

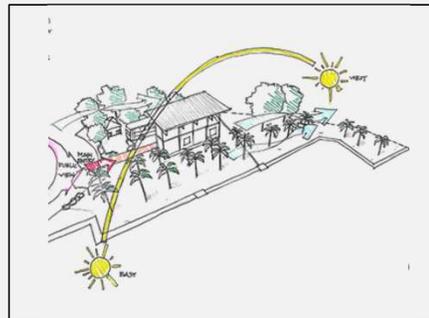


Figure 16: Sun path study of Laman KAED  
(Source: Authors, 2025)

In terms of usage and potential, Laman KAED is primarily employed as a spillover area for informal discussions, student activities, and circulation, yet its spatial and environmental qualities suggest broader opportunities. A comprehensive site analysis indicates that the space could be transformed into a dynamic micro-community hub by addressing current weaknesses, such as limited seating, shading, and functional diversity. Through careful planning and design, the site may evolve into a living laboratory for sustainability and creativity, aligning with KAED's academic vision while enhancing the overall student experience. This positions Laman KAED not only as a transitional courtyard but as an integral element of the kulliyah's identity, contributing to IIUM's aspiration of holistic, sustainable, and experiential learning environments.



Figure 17: Laman KAED's seatings  
(Source: Authors, 2025)



Figure 18: Laman KAED's decking  
(Source: Authors, 2025)

### SWOT Analysis

Table 1: SWOT Analysis

Categories	Description
<b>Strength</b>	The site has a natural gradient terrain suitable for landscaping, allowing ease of pedestrian movement.
<b>Weakness</b>	Current cultural uses are scattered with no structured events to consistently highlight KAED culture.
<b>Opportunity</b>	The site's rich plant biodiversity and calming environment can create an educational nature park.
<b>Threat</b>	The nearby drainage, while currently not a problem, could produce odours if maintenance declines during certain weather conditions.

## 6.0 DESIGN CONCEPT

### Reviving Souls

The concept of “Reviving Souls” reimagines Laman KAED as a lively and sustainable space that transforms an underutilised site into a hub for learning, creativity, and community engagement. Rooted in the idea of renewal, this concept emphasises reinstating the space’s fundamental functions such as facilitating interaction, nurturing creativity, and supporting academic and social learning. It seeks to reconnect people with the site, restore its memory and social value, and harmonise the presence of nature within the KAED environment.

The design objectives highlight reconnecting users through layered spatial experiences, generating a sustainable source of income for KAED, and restoring the space’s functionality for daily usability. To achieve this, the spatial strategy focuses on revival through temporal adaptability, where multifunctional structures cater to diverse activities; regenerative elements, such as a rainwater-fed greenhouse, ensure ecological resilience; and material transformation turns raw, unused surfaces into inviting and functional platforms.

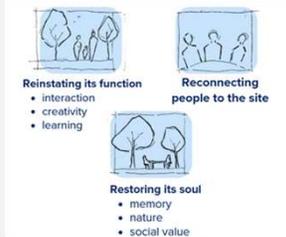


Figure 19: Core ideas  
(Source: Authors, 2025)

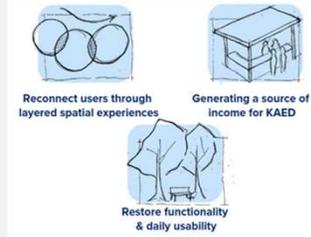


Figure 20: Design objectives  
(Source: Authors, 2025)

Stylistically, the project adopts an industrial-biophilic approach, integrating exposed structural elements with natural features. Passive water systems, strategic planting, and structural integration embody a design language that bridges human activity and environmental awareness. These interventions allow the site to evolve as both a practical and symbolic place of gathering, grounded in Islamic values. The essence of Revive resonates with the verse from *Surah Al-Baqarah (2:261)* emphasises the concept’s spirit of growth, generosity, and multiplication of benefits, where a modest intervention blossoms into manifold outcomes that is academic excellence, community strength, and spiritual enrichment.

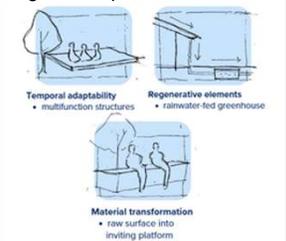


Figure 21: Spatial strategy as revival  
(Source: Authors, 2025)

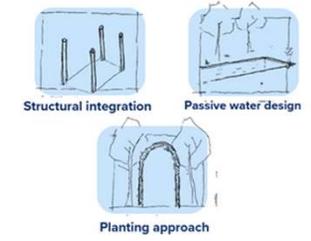


Figure 22: Industrial biophilic styling  
(Source: Authors, 2025)

## 7.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

### 1) Zoning and Bubble Diagram

The zoning divides the site into the pocket garden, multipurpose area, commercial zone, and parking for clear functional separation. Each zone is placed to maximise accessibility and minimise conflict between uses. The bubble diagram develops this further by adding activity nodes such as seating, kiosks, bicycle parking, and water features. All nodes are connected with clear circulation routes to create a smooth and engaging user flow.

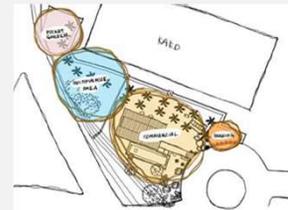


Figure 23: Laman KAED's zoning  
(Source: Authors, 2025)

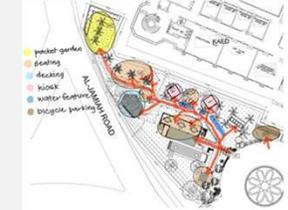


Figure 24: Laman KAED's bubble diagram  
(Source: Authors, 2025)

### 2) Gridline and Space Planning

A gridline system is introduced to provide structure and proportion to the layout. It organises pathways, seating, and kiosks into a balanced rhythm across the site. Space planning ensures the multipurpose area remains central with other functions arranged around it. This stage creates a practical and flexible plan that can adapt to different activities.

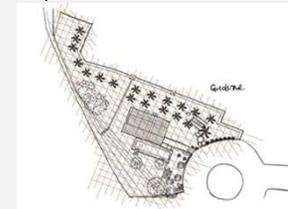


Figure 25: Laman KAED's gridline  
(Source: Authors, 2025)

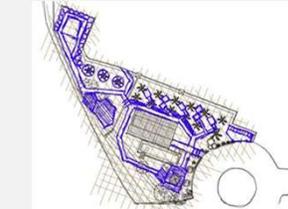


Figure 26: Laman KAED's space planning  
(Source: Authors, 2025)

### 3) Final Design

The final design combines zoning, bubble diagrams, and gridlines into a cohesive layout. Circulation is clear and connects the entrance, commercial spaces, multipurpose hub, and pocket garden seamlessly. Landscape and water features are distributed to create comfort, harmony, and visual interest. The result is a sustainable and inclusive design that supports both daily use and community events.

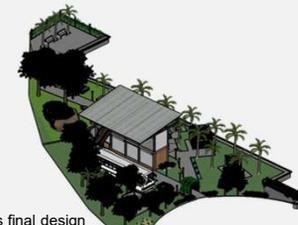


Figure 27: Laman KAED's final design  
(Source: Authors, 2025)

## 8.0 DESIGN FINALISATION

The concept of Reviving Souls in the students' spaces revolves around fostering a collaborative and inspiring environment where ideas can thrive. These spaces are intentionally designed to cater to various activities that support idea generation, such as self-study, group discussions, and moments of rest. Additionally, they allow students to engage with and appreciate the work of others, further fueling creativity. By accommodating diverse interests and needs, the spaces create a dynamic ecosystem that encourages students to connect with ideas and each other, ultimately enhancing their academic and personal growth.



Figure 28: Exterior perspective of Laman Kaed



Figure 29: Exterior perspective of Laman Kaed



Figure 30: Exterior perspective of Laman Kaed



Figure 31: View of Kiosks at Commercial Area



Figure 32: View of Stage at Multipurpose Area



Figure 33: View of Seating at Multipurpose Area



Figure 34: View of Pocket Garden



Figure 35: View of Arches at Entrance



Figure 36: Bird's-eye perspective view

Figure 28 to 36 shows the perspective views of the Laman KAED  
(Source: Authors)

## 9.0 DRAWINGS

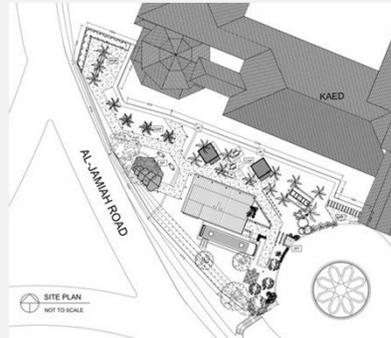


Figure 37 : Site Plan

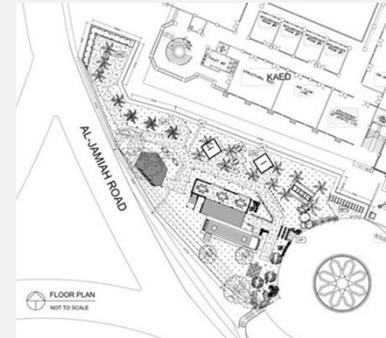


Figure 38 : Floor Plan



Figure 39 : Front Elevation



Figure 40 : Right Elevation



Figure 41 : Rear Elevation



Figure 42 : Left Elevation



Figure 43 : Section B-B



Figure 44 : Section A-A

Figure 37 to 44 shows the rendered drawings for Laman Kaed  
(Source: Author)

## 10.0 CONCLUSION

Revive redefines Laman KAED as a purposeful, dynamic, and sustainable space that restores both the physical and symbolic value of the site. Rooted in principles of renewal and community, it harmonises ecological resilience with academic and social engagement. By integrating passive systems, multifunctional structures, and biophilic design, the space evolves into a living environment that adapts to changing needs while nurturing creativity, interaction, and well-being. Anchored in Islamic values and inspired by the spirit of growth from Surah Al-Baqarah (2:261), Revive aspires to multiply its benefits academically, socially, and spiritually, creating a long-lasting impact on the KAED community and beyond.

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2. Roziha Che Haron
3. Sufian Hamat
4. Raja Intan Suhaylah Raja Abdul Rahman
5. Mohd. Fairullazi Ayob
6. Asiah Abdul Rahim
7. Siti Noorfairus Che Abdullah

Table 1: Students' list

GROUP 5			
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4	MUHAMMAD ALIF BIN MOHD HISHAM	2313569	ARCH
5	NURUL AINA BINTI ABDULLAH	2313608	ARCH
6	NIK RUWAIDAH BINTI NIK MOHD NIZAM	2313640	ARCH
7	AMIR FAIZ BIN AHMAD FADZIL SUMBANDY	2311765	AQS
8	MUHAMMAD HAFAZLIE BIN HASAN	2311791	AQS
9	WAN ALIYA NADZIFAH BINTI WAN KAMARUZAMAN	2311984	AQS
10	DEWI NAF'AN QUZANDRIA BINTI KAMAL	2312028	AQS
11	AYSHA BINTI MUSTAFA	2312092	AQS
12	HASYA DINA BINTI NUZRA EFENDI	2312146	AQS
13	SITI HAJAR IRIS BINTI SAHID	2312602	AQS
14	ILHAM TSAQIEF BIN SANUSI	2214801	AAD
15	DAMIA BATRISYIA BINTI MOHD RAFI	2215098	AAD
16	MUHAMMAD AMIR NASRULLAH BIN ZABIDI	2215407	AAD
17	MUHAMMAD AMMAR BIN MOHD NOR HIDAYAT	2215593	AAD
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