

Realizing Dharavi

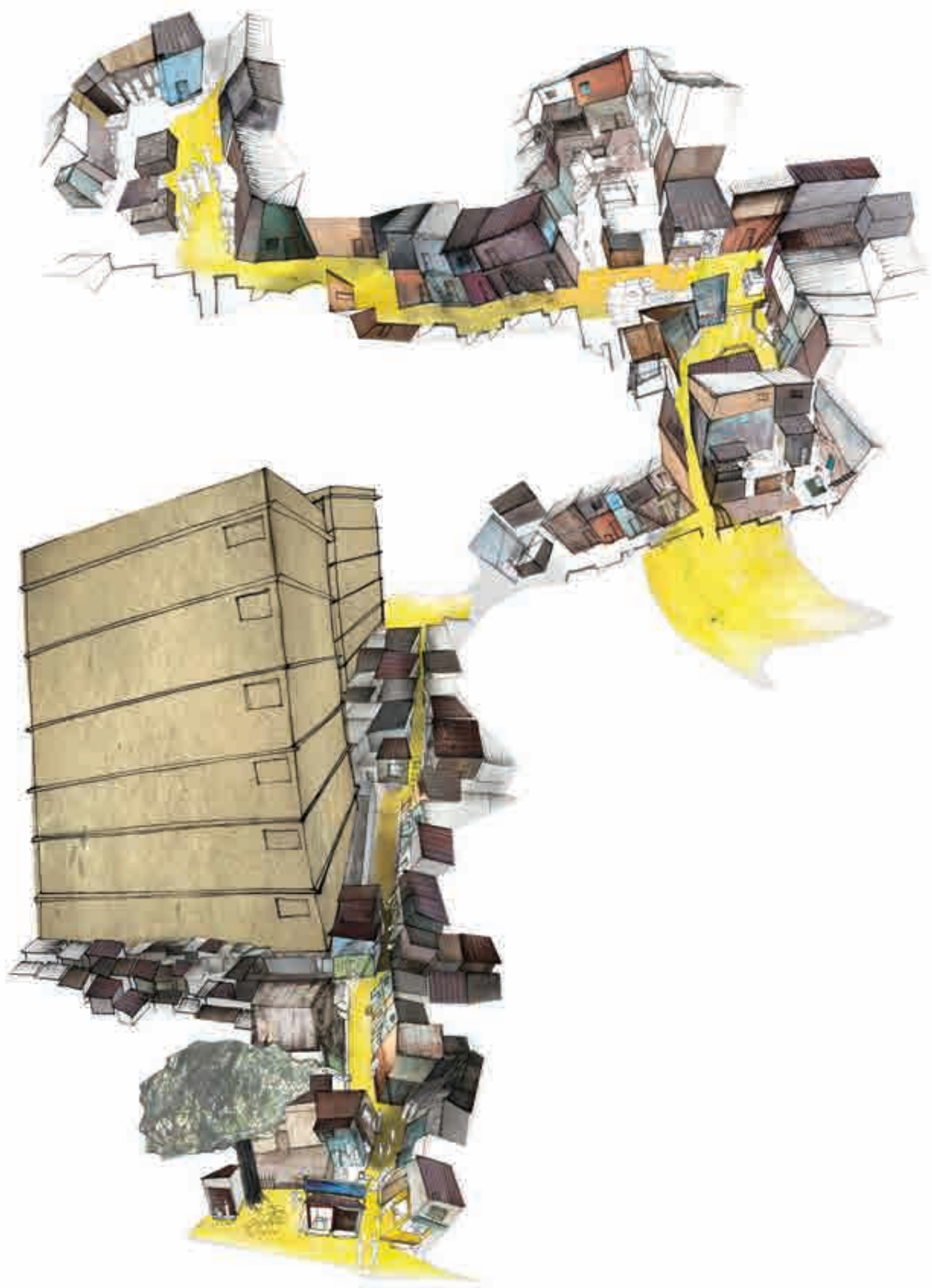
02

HONOURABLE MENTION

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The proposal focuses on common social and cultural activities developed at the community level to produce new ideas rather than an imposed master plan. Interventions are suggested at the core, on the borders and boundaries and in the networks through an inter-disciplinary group comprising of communities, NGOs and professionals and separately worked out financing for each stage. The jury particularly appreciated the exceptionally high artistic quality of illustrations in the proposal.



PREMISE

Dharavi is a vast network of communities, events, individuals and activities originally located at the edge but now in the centre, confined by space and perhaps time, this collection of homes, factories, community facilities has evolved over the years. This evolution has not been conceived of by a single consciousness which leads to an inherent conflict with the notion of reinvention.

Upon experiencing the streets, shops and homes of Dharavi, it quickly becomes apparent that life in Dharavi takes places in very different ways. Homes in the morning become shops in the afternoon become informal cafés in the

evening not to mention the ever changing upper levels, sometimes self-contained residences, sometimes rented out, sometimes being extended. Life here is not confined to specific areas at specific times and therefore the notion of the fixed plan as a generator around which to order life is redundant.

Flexible and effective urban development strategies, combining different academic disciplines with local knowledge, are desperately needed, especially given that neither top-down nor government led initiatives have worked without external financial, technical and other support.

Our proposal is more of a master idea that can be adapted as needed to its micro context rather than an attempt to impose a new order on Dharavi.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A collaborative approach is required which focuses on the inclusion of the key qualities of Dharavi such as diversity, adaptability, flexibility and innovation to produce spatial solutions.

While participation aims at involving local populations in planning and decision-making processes, ownership should be one of its results. Solutions developed together with natives, give the local population a sense of 'ownership' which is necessary in terms of acceptance and maintenance. Besides, the much deeper insights of the local population lead to more effective and sustainable solutions.

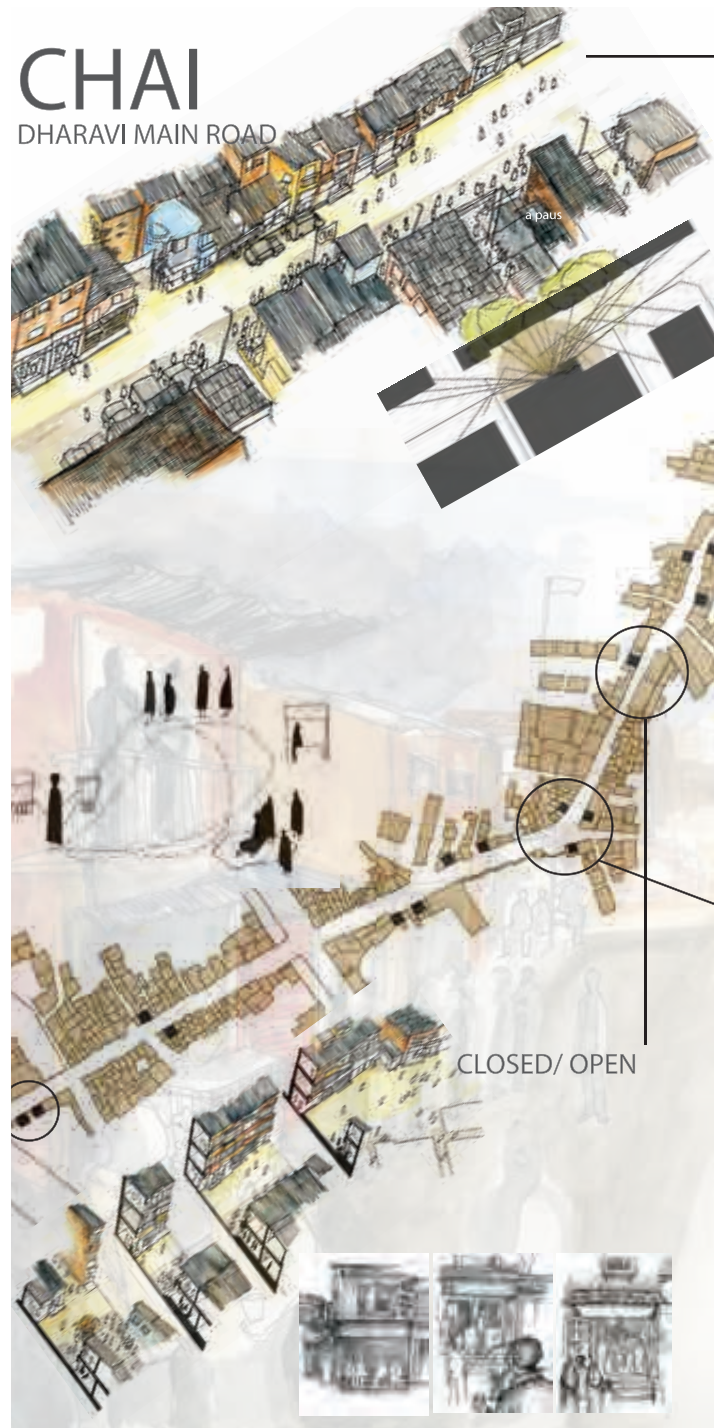
Ideally, participation empowers people to start projects based on their own ideas and modifies power hierarchies. Therefore, empowerment means handing over power and responsibility to local people. In doing so, the efforts and solutions become more sustainable. It is imperative to combine flexible urban development strategies and different academic disciplines with local knowledge to produce effective solutions for Dharavi.

This proposal focuses on common social and cultural activities at the community level and located strategically to produce new connections with the communities.

collect sort pro

CHAI

DHARAVI MAIN ROAD



Activities in Dharavi

cess combine choose innovate

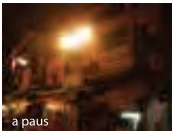


Day and night in the industrial area

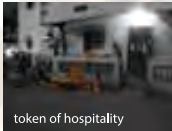
DAYTIME/NIGHT TIME



an invitation



a paus



token of hospitality

A PART OF A DAILY ROUTINE



part of the morning routine



while observing



strengthening a social group



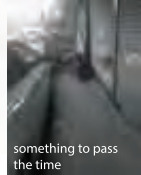
an informal meeting



part of the morning routine



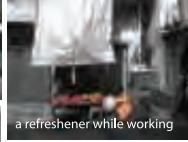
while taking care of the house work



something to pass the time



while taking a paus from the house work



a refresher while working



an invitation



an energizer after eating



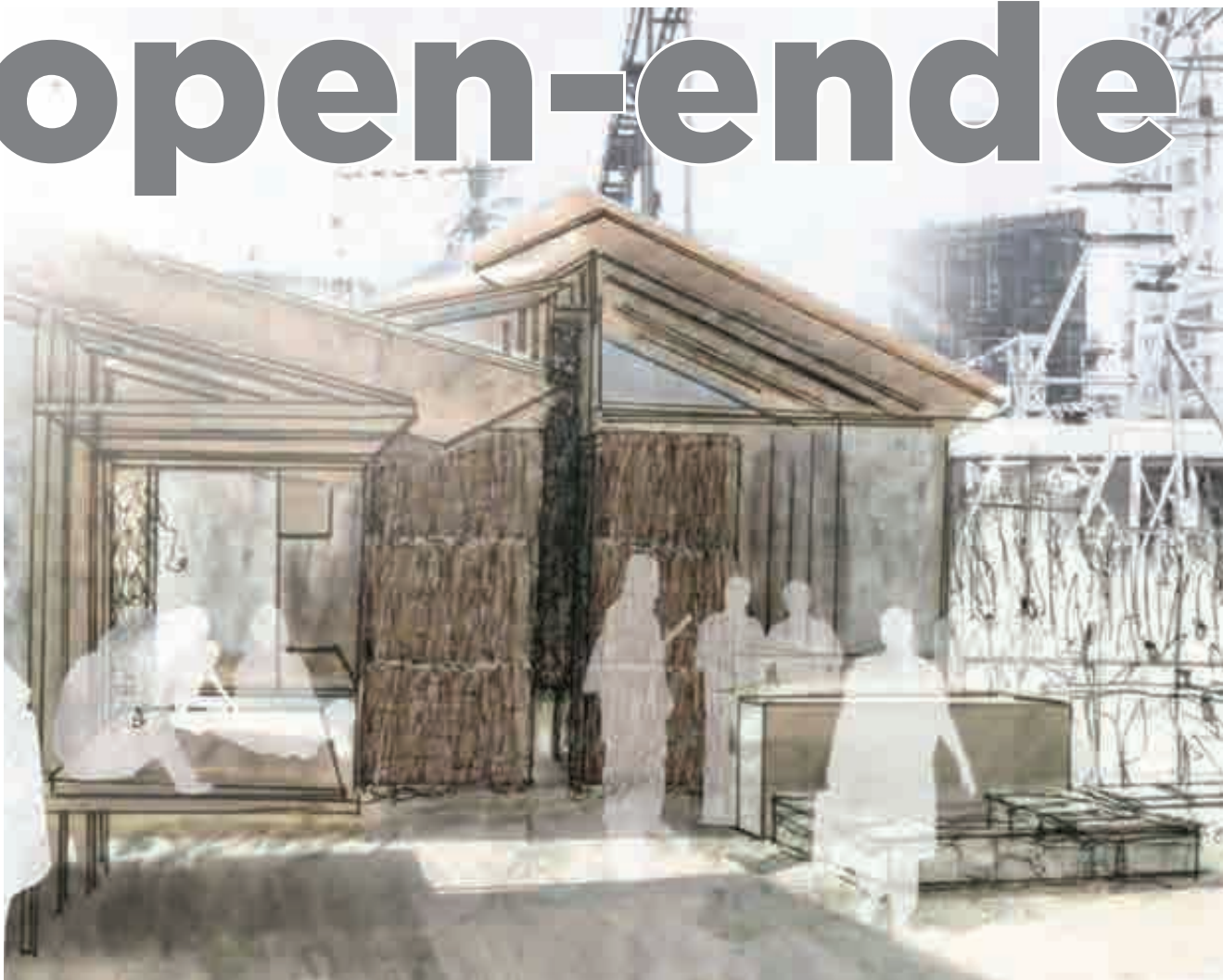
while shopping

A PART OF TEMPORARY ACTIVITIES



innovation sustainability
stories patchwork
community **borders**
cores collaborative
combine inclusive
experiences *choices*
layers **participatory**
boundaries diversity

open-ende



v a r i e t y l a y e r s
exploration opportunities
p r o c e s s c o l l e c t
self-sufficiency **empowerment**
s o r t i n g i n v o l v e
responsibility information
networks **inventive**
situations e v o l v e

d research



GOVERNANCE

The first step to self-development must come from using community based interventions at the grass roots levels. An Inter-Disciplinary Group works with communities to investigate issues and generate proposals.

Dharavi contains residential communities, *mandals*, that organise everything from the cleanliness and maintenance of common spaces and toilets, to the resolution of social issues, to the organisation of festivities, marriages and funerals. It also has occupation-based communities, *Associations or Unions*, that not only make business decisions together but also work on the maintenance of their common spaces, which might be a market street, even if they are not the official owners.

The researchers and investigators of the Inter-Disciplinary Group (IDG), through the method of Open-Ended Research, look at various *Edge Situations* in Dharavi and along with other stakeholders propose specific project proposals for each of those individually. Furthermore, IDG acts as mediator between Unions/communities/local actors and Government/investors to propose an international competition for these Edge Situations.

PLANNING

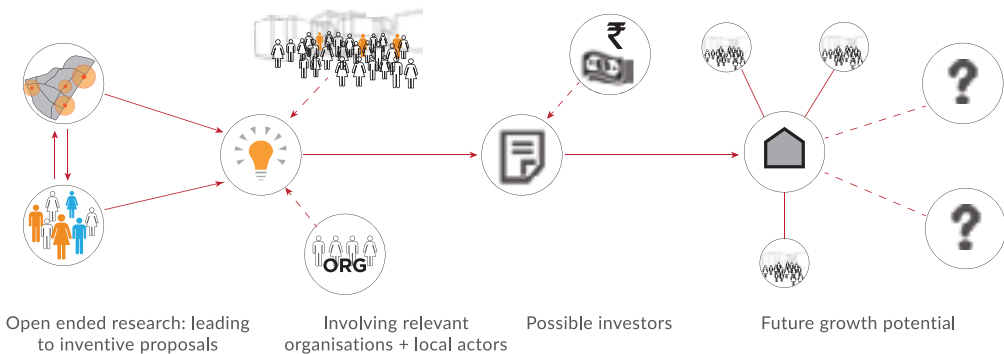
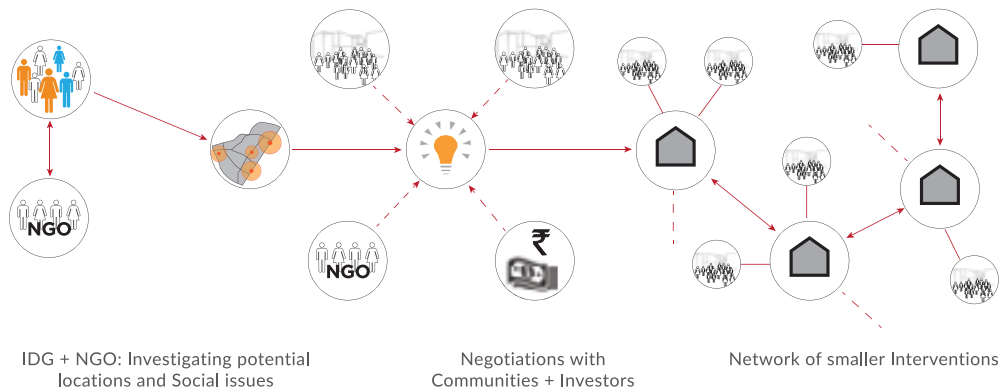
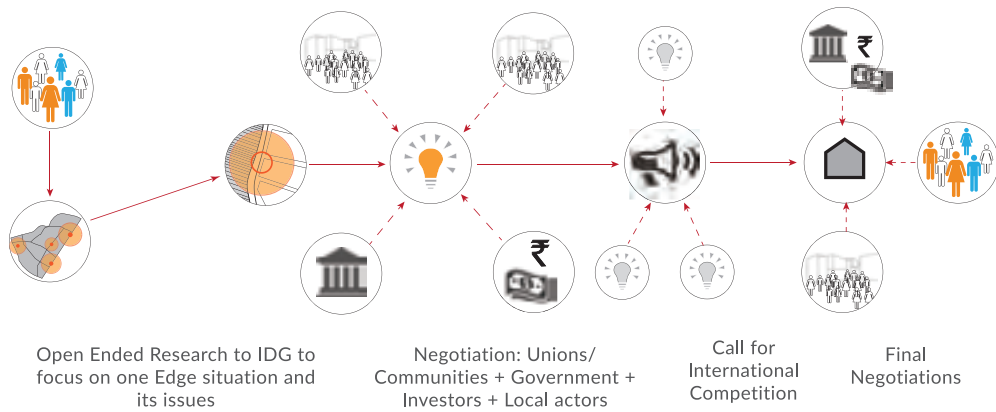
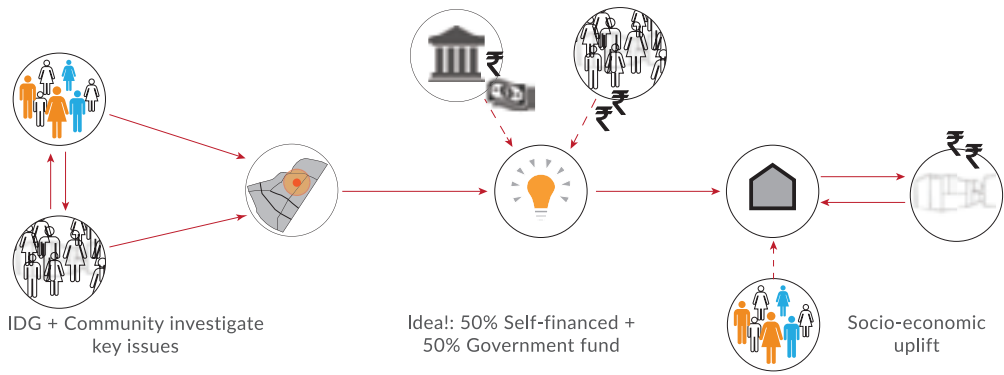
The idea is to propose a network of smaller interventions rather than self-contained projects.

The planning strategy for elevating Dharavi is to rethink the borders and boundaries as not only physical manifestations but also as social edges.

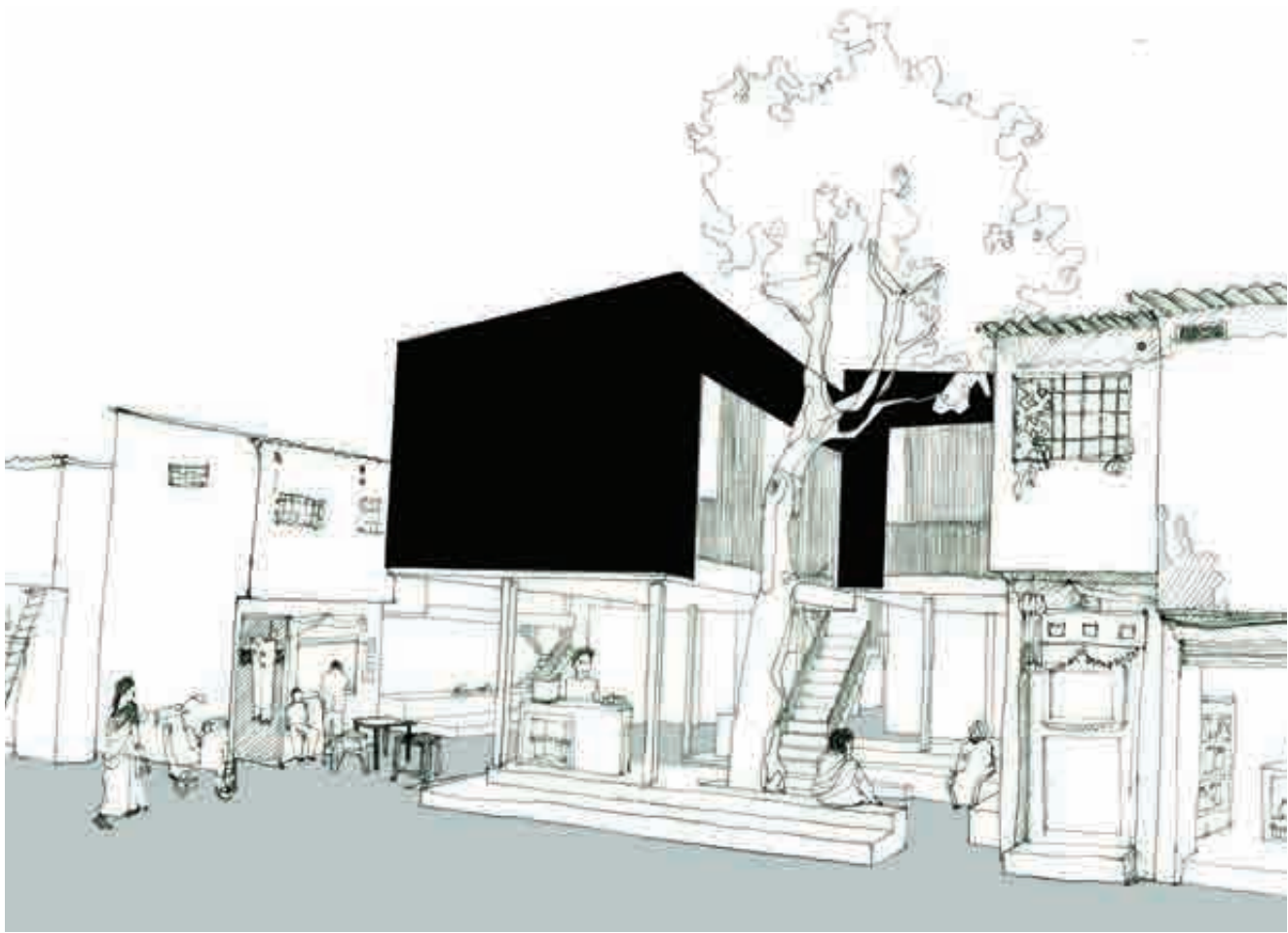
In an intense society such as Dharavi, networks of smaller projects with social agendas can have a more widespread and deeper impact than standalone icons. Such small-scale interventions already exist in Dharavi i.e. the newspaper booths in Transit Camps. These are strong conceptual ideas, but unfortunately very few of them work due to either an inappropriate location or a lack of understanding of the social needs of the communities.

IDG proposes these small interventions in public spaces, larger open spaces that are co-owned by communities or as a part of existing institutions and should act as a public interface. IDG proposes to address key issues through projects dealing with education, health and hygiene, child-care etc.

In this strategy, IDG, which uses methods of Open-Ended Research, perceives Dharavi not only as one entity but as a rich variety to be explored, from not one but several viewpoints. This would enable IDG to speculate and propose inventive interventions and also to discover existing ideas / projects.



Proposed governance structures



'core'



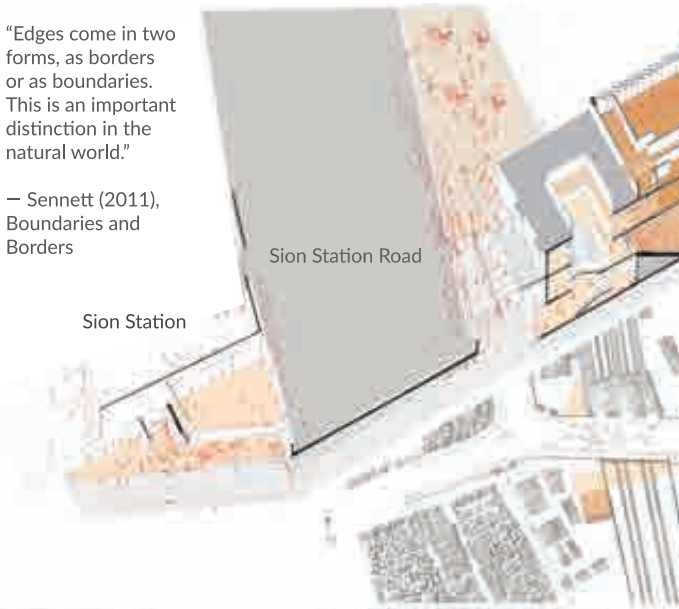
The following arenas of intervention are suggested - the Core of communities, the Borders and Boundaries, both physical and social, the myriad of Networks that form the links within Dharavi and beyond, and through the encouragement of Inventive collaborations and cooperation.

'boundaries or borders'



"Edges come in two forms, as borders or as boundaries. This is an important distinction in the natural world."

— Sennett (2011),
Boundaries and Borders



'network'



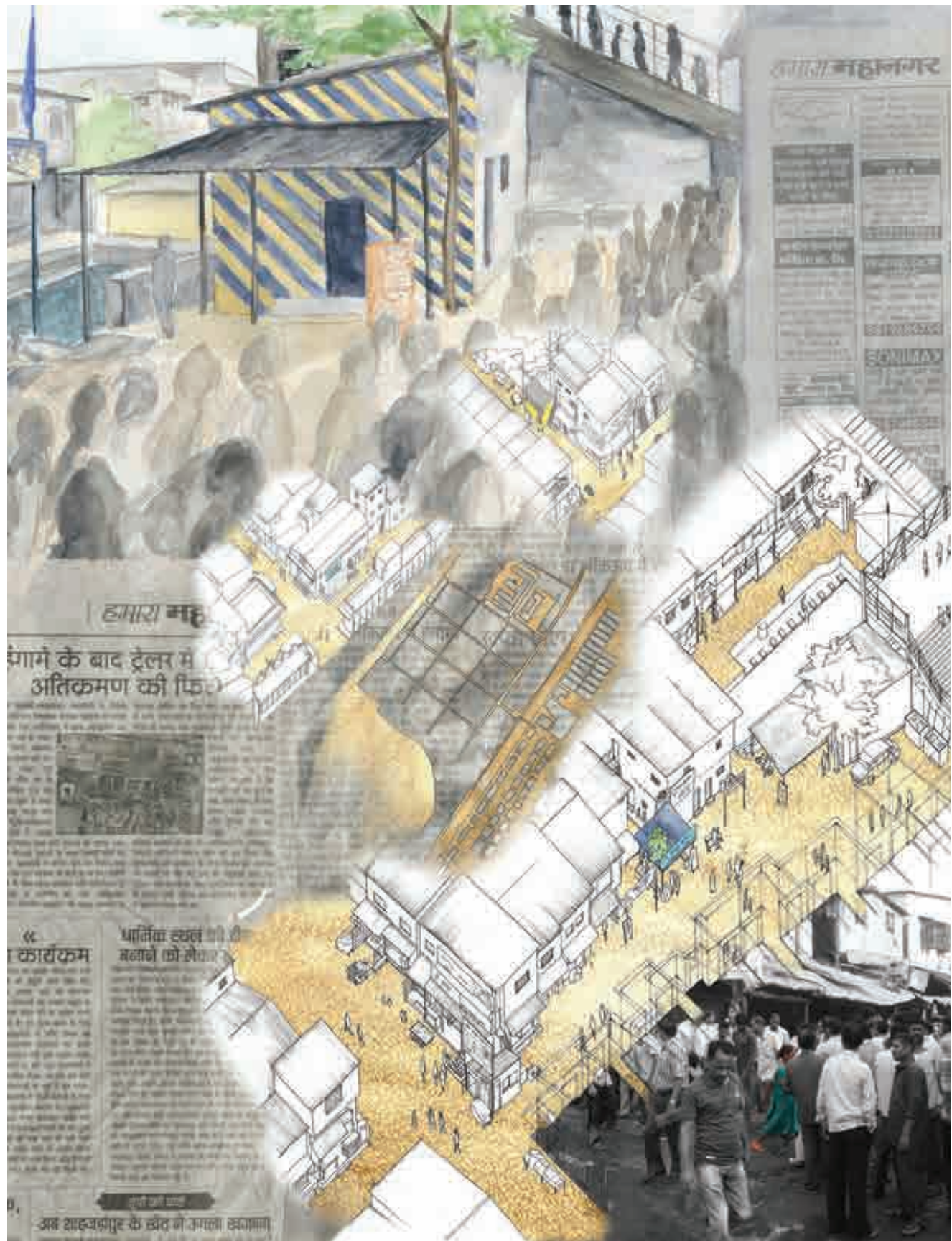
SOCIAL AMENITIES

Based on the observation that life in Dharavi often orbits around tightly knit, homogeneous communities, and the argument that such social organisations tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groupings, which in turn is connected to ethnic and political conflict, a need for inter-community interfaces becomes evident. Spaces where people of different communities may meet and interact with one another. Such a space already exists - the streets. They are the heterogeneous and kaleidoscopic spaces of Dharavi.

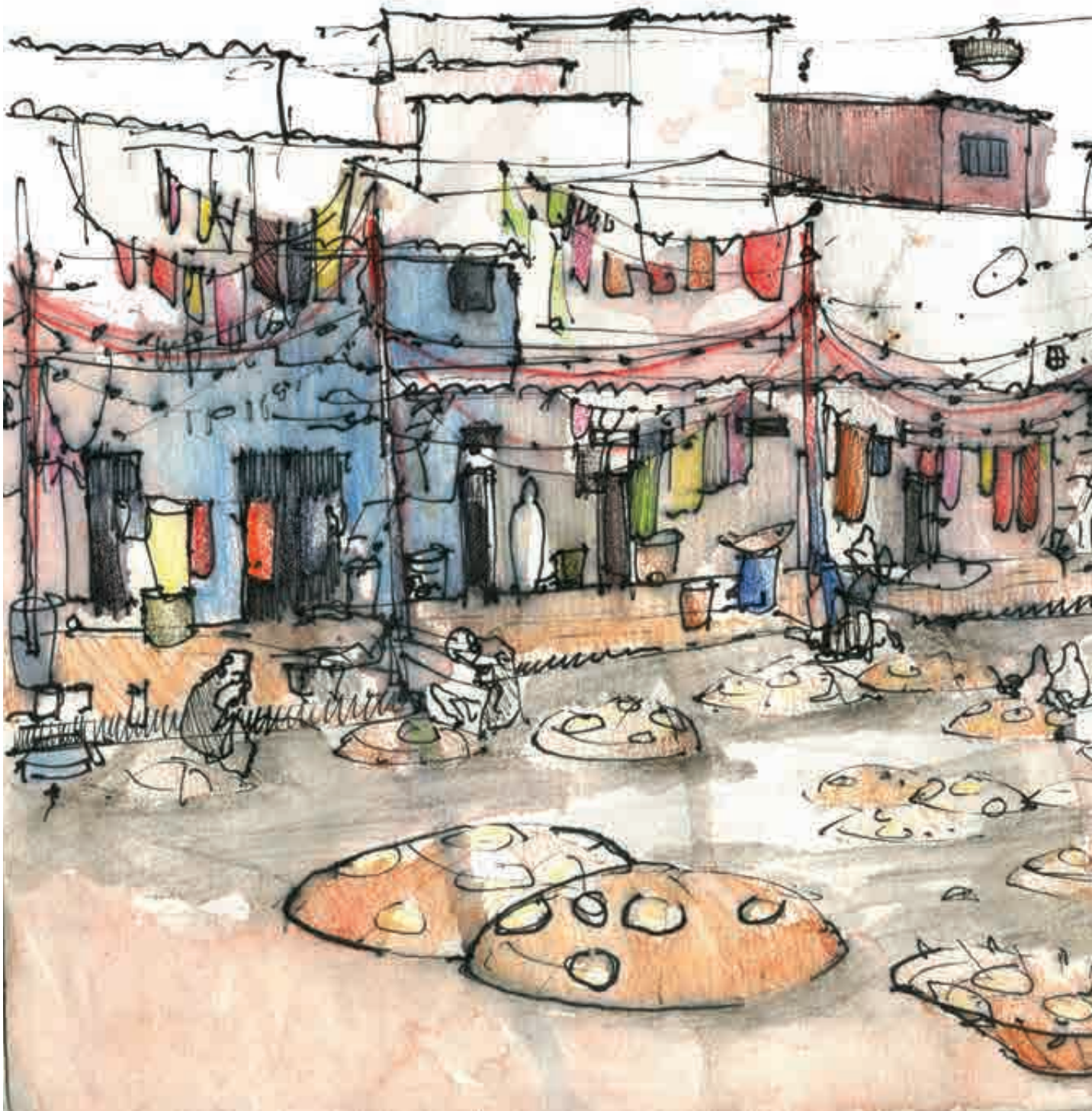
Newspaper Stalls

People reading newspapers are a common sight on the streets. This is a study of public spaces, where reading occurs and how these spaces are manifested in the physical environment. Printed information is just one of the ways through which stories are being told in Dharavi. They can also be told through performances, movies or simply be stories of everyday life, shared while working or drinking *chai*. The street is often the social arena where these stories are told.





bridging streetscapes meetings diff
encounters



erences collisions community square



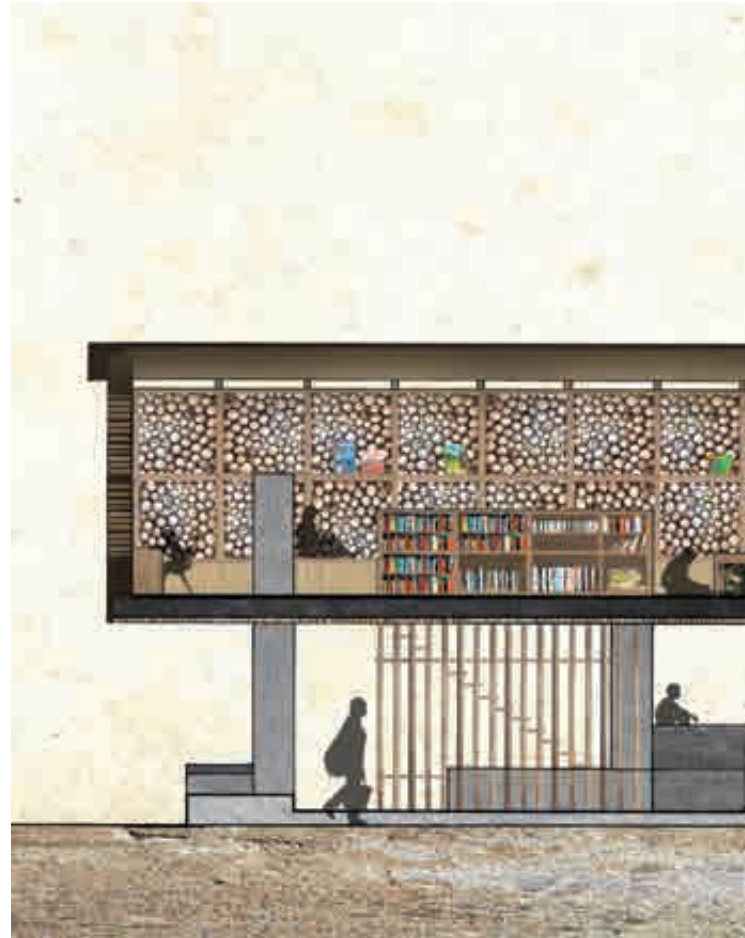
Children's Libraries and Education Centres

The house of stories is based on an idea of several smaller children's libraries and education centres, which also function as communal meeting places. These are located in several different areas to allow easy access for different communities. By regularly exchanging the books, they offer access to a diversity of reading material over time.

The project consists of two parts, one public and one more secluded for reading and studies. The main material of the facade is bamboo, which not only offers a beneficial internal climate and light condition but also provides a different character of space where these activities can take place. By keeping these libraries small and technically simple they are affordable interventions and the communities might be able to participate in the building process.

In Dharavi, many parents feel that having an education is important. They hope for a better future for their children. Not only does access to libraries improve the children's reading skills but they also provide calmer spaces away from the busy streets where children can do their homework, learn new things and expand their horizons. Libraries could also create educational opportunities for illiterate adults in Dharavi, targeting women in particular.

The aim of this project is to extend and bridge the social spheres of the neighbourhood, *maidan*, out onto the intersection, and thereby generate eddies in the stream of people passing through the area. This combines the social qualities of the traditional maidan with the fluxes of the streetscape to make space for a larger sense of community.



STREETSCAPE

MARKETPLACE/STAND



MAIDAN

STAGE/PUBLIC COMPUTERS

STREETSCAPE

Creating Opportunities for Women

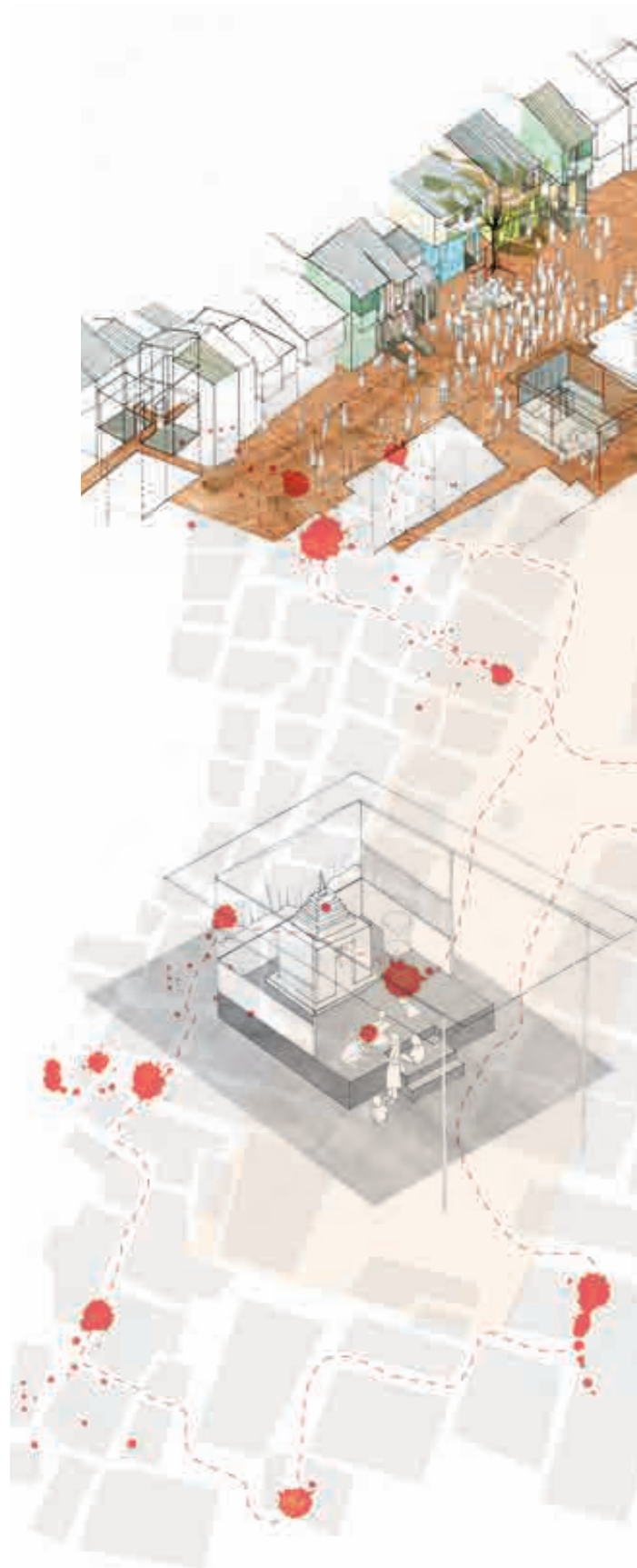
A study of spaces that women commonly access suggests possible sites of intervention for providing amenities related to education and health.

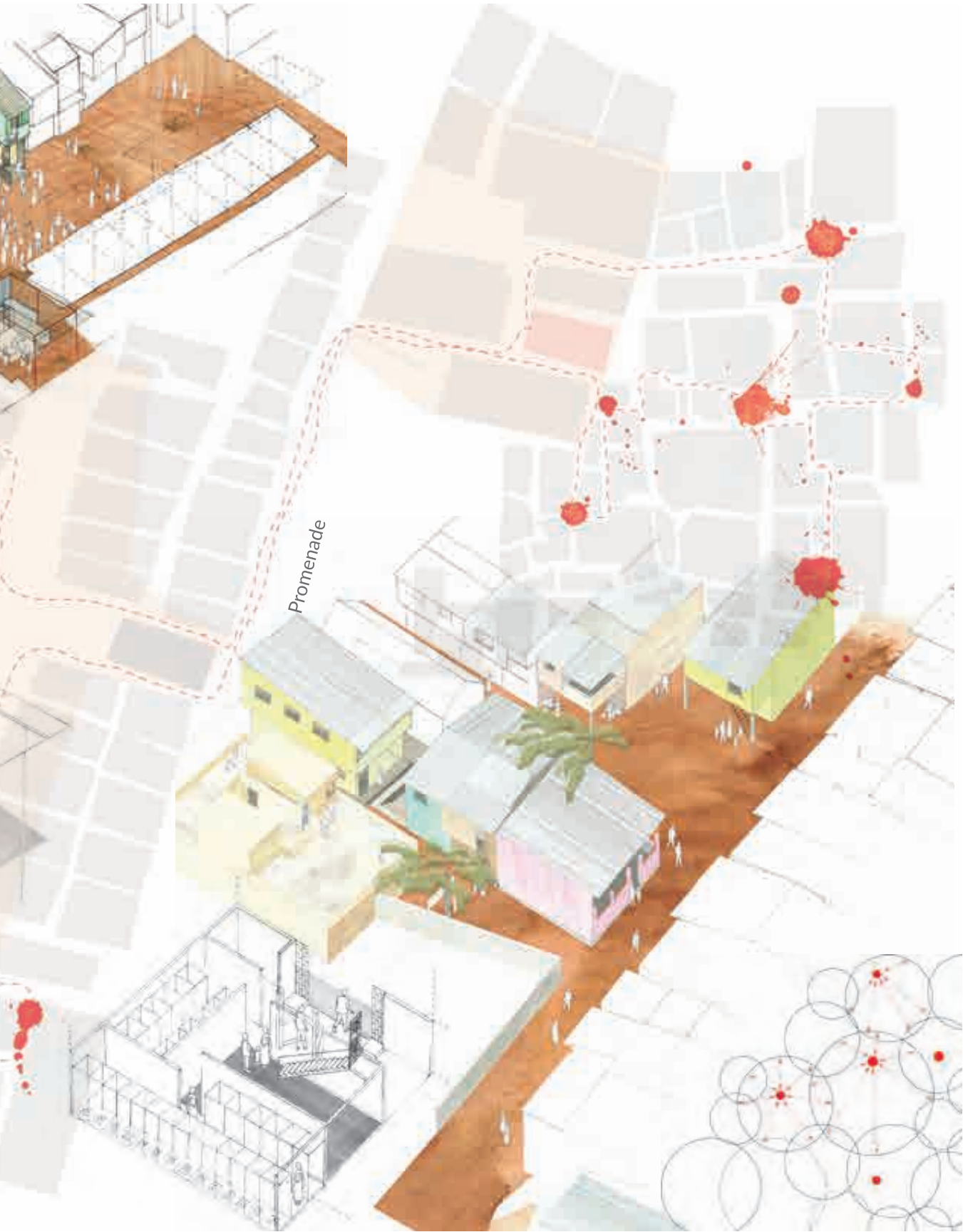
Through mapping and research it became clear that most of the women of Dharavi stay close to home on a day-to-day basis. It was observed that the temple was a place where women sat down in public. It was also observed that the community toilet was also a place where women went daily regardless of income, religion or age.

A larger women's centre, within walking distance of the smaller hubs, is proposed with the following activities:

- Communal toilets, staffed 24 hours;
- Educational facilities, focusing on health, cooking and urban farming;
- A public restaurant, staffed by women, for them to earn money as well as to generate an income for the upkeep of the centre;
- Rehabilitation living units for female victims of domestic violence.

A network of sites provide opportunities for women to become more frequent users of public spaces.





Promenade

HOUSING

The aim of this project is to critically experiment with alternative ways to redevelop Dharavi. The typical high-rise building blocks which are currently being built bring social alienation upon its inhabitants. They disconnect people from the street, away from the everyday interaction that occurs within the existing *gallis*, on the *otlas* and in the streets. They weaken the community and destroy social life as the interaction within the community becomes a formal decision. The vertical journey creates barriers which generates passivity amongst the inhabitants.

This project is an investigation in connecting the idea of a vertical building with existing principles found in the low-rise settlements of Dharavi that works to strengthen the sense of community and belonging.

Attention is drawn to the transition spaces between the silent and dark cores of the private dwellings and the buzzing and vivid public life of the streets. As in the low-rise settlements, the in-between spaces blur the borders of what occurs inside and outside, private and common, common and public. This sequence helps to generate a strong sense of community, where there is space for the inhabitants to come together in groups, for festivities or for daily activities.

QUALITIES FOUND IN LOW-RISE SETTLEMENTS

‘galli’



Activities such as washing, laundry and cleaning dishes takes place on the threshold between the home and the galli.

Dark and narrow.

‘pocket’



Used for activities within the community such as play, festivals, drying laundry and storage.

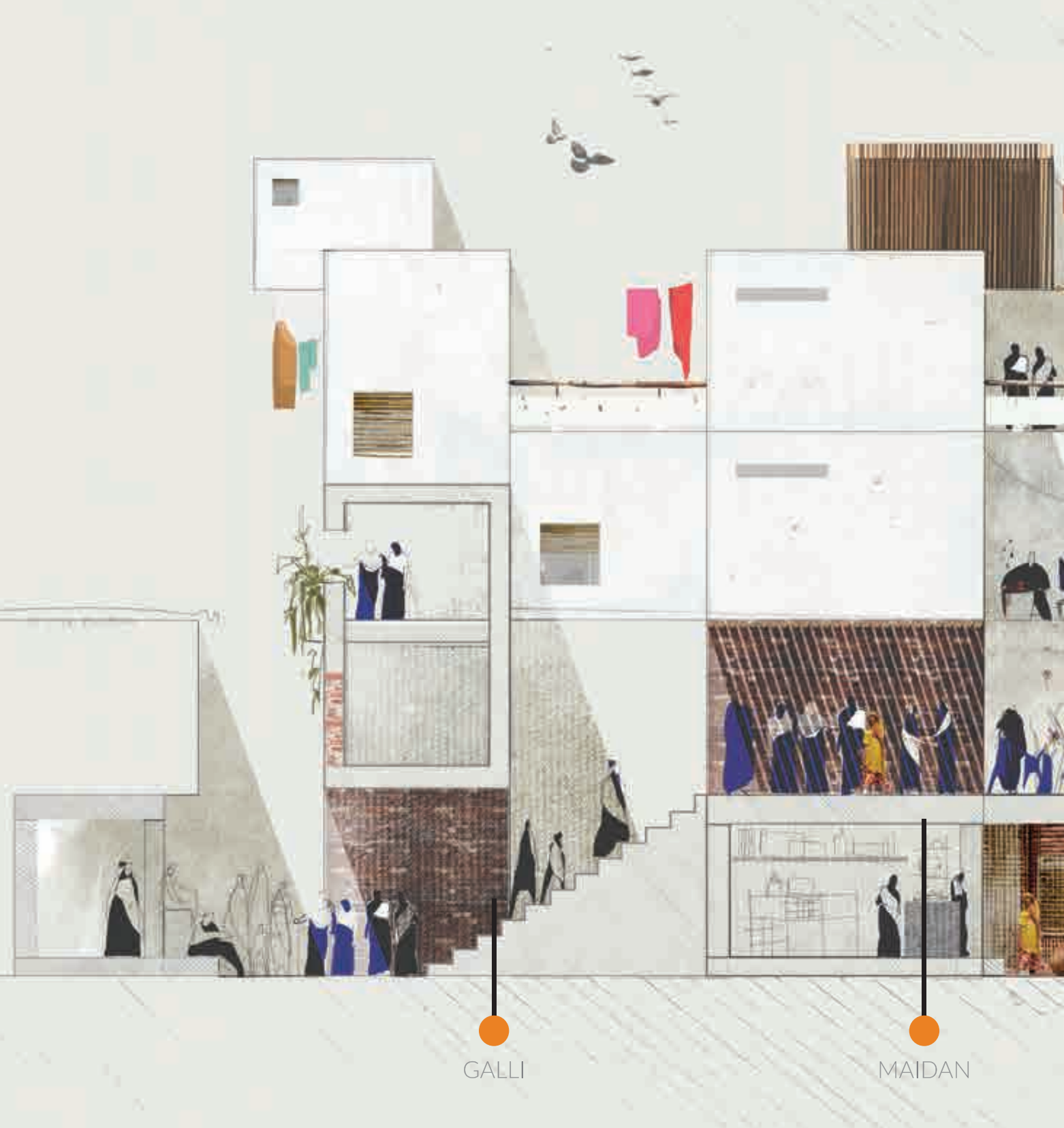
Open to sky.

‘maidan’



A place of exchange, commerce and social interaction that goes beyond the community.

Light and exposed to the sun.



Dwelling-unit



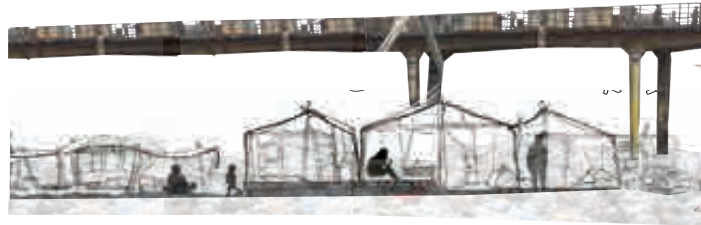


Dharavi attracts people from different cultural backgrounds. These interventions propose to improve the conditions of those groups which are often excluded from the discussion and encourage a coexistence of different groups.

This proposal has explored a site which lies between a formal area and the railway tracks, occupied by migrants, and facing the threat of eviction.

This isolated community is connected to neighbouring areas through changes in the urban fabric - such as opening up common spaces for livelihood activities. These may be implemented incrementally, creating smaller courtyards by replacing the existing 2-storey dwelling units with 3-storey units.

Organised temporary housing may be provided for the migrant and integrate with the community.





SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE

The proposal addresses the issue that ‘architects don’t know how to design toilets’ as proposed to them by Jockin Arputham, NSDF. In their exploration, the team discovered some community-led toilets which were in fact better built. These community-led interventions finance a family which takes care of the toilets and is provided a living space above the structure. There are separate entrances for women, and specially designed toilets for children. The lesson is that Dharavi can become a radical laboratory for urban development rather than close academic training.

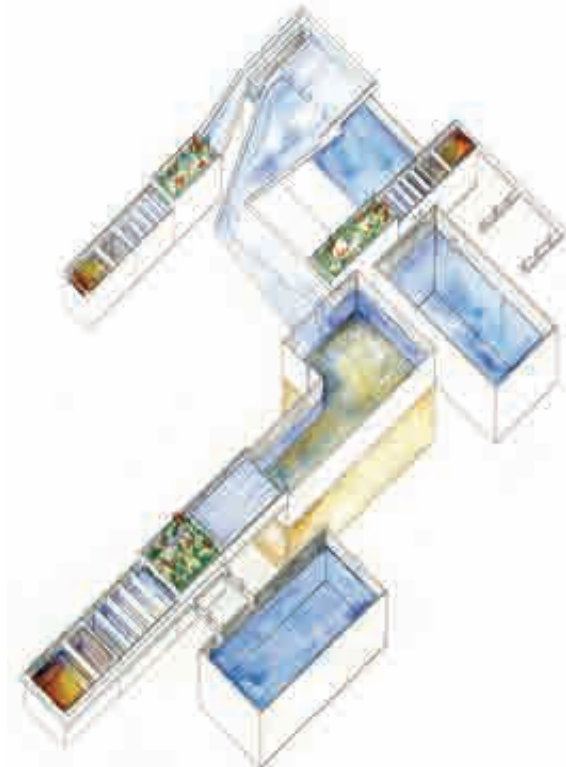
LIVELIHOOD

Dhobi Ghat

Work drives Dharavi. It is what makes the people living there want to live there. At the *Dhobi Ghat* in Dharavi, right by the pedestrian bridge to Sion, a group of families started a laundry business in the 1940s which allowed them to send back money to their families living in villages, and in one sense they thrived. In the 1990s this started to change, water regulation and an increasing population resulted in the contamination of their water supply which reduced a successful business for 40-50 families to a continually declining business serving only six families.

This proposal focuses on the possibilities to be found within Dharavi and the inventiveness of the people that inhabit this important area of Mumbai. DEWATS filtration systems which filter contaminated water can be incorporated so that it can be reused in the *Dhobi Ghat*. Rainwater collection systems with tanks can provide drinking water all year around.

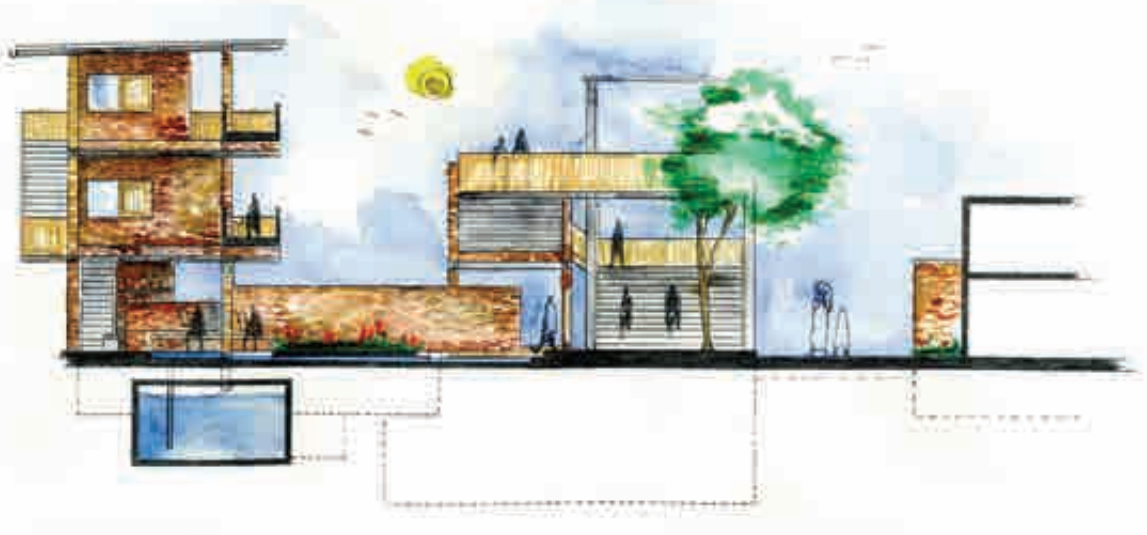
Undoubtedly, there are substantial challenges facing Dharavi in terms of hygiene, equality, external pressures and the intensive use of limited space. These issues can best be addressed through involving and empowering individuals and communities to produce their own innovative solutions.



‘sustainability

community





automatically self-sufficient'

