Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts

# Research on the Design of Urban Public Space from the Perspective of Canal Culture

(on Example of Yangzhou Urban Study)

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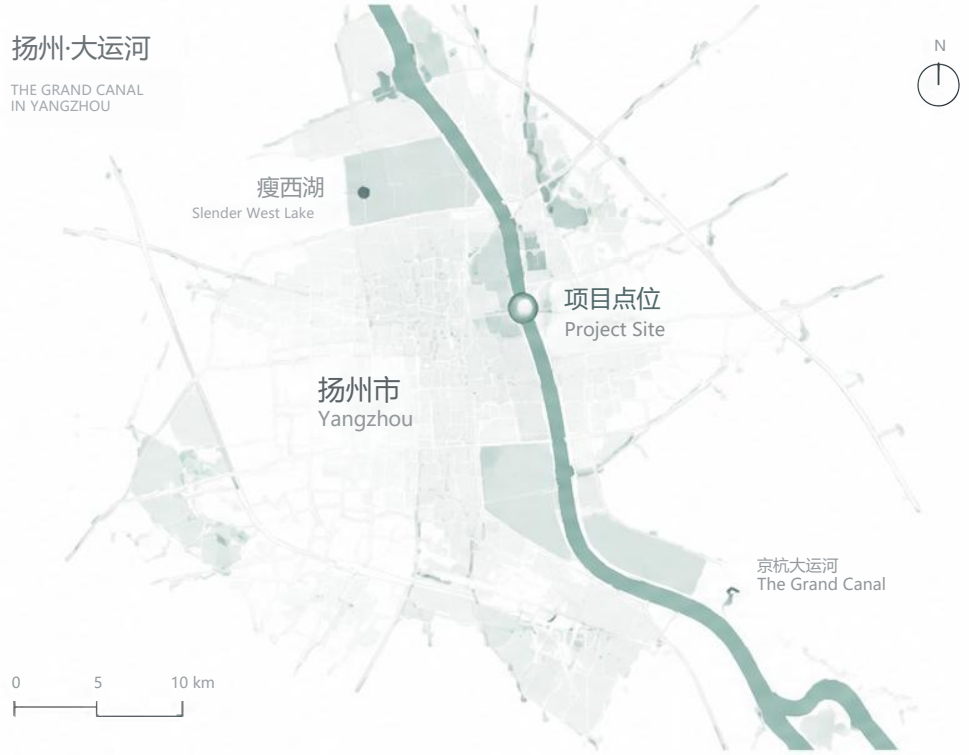
Yangzhou · Canal · Urban Public Space



# PART. 01

## Preliminary Research and Theoretical Basis







# Research Overview

## 01Research Subject

Public indoor spaces along the Grand Canal in Yangzhou,
taking **urban studies** as a carrier,
to explore the contemporary expression of Grand Canal cultural memory.

## 02Research Question

Contemporary public spaces along the Grand Canal generally face the dilemma of superficial cultural symbolization and disconnection from everyday life.
How can we construct canal memory places that are both
**everyday and culturally** meaningful?

## 03Research Tasks

1. **To sort out the intrinsic relationship between place memory theory and the translation of Grand Canal culture.**
2. **To conduct site diagnosis and target user demand analysis.**
3. **To propose design strategies based on place memory and achieve spatial implementation.**

# Background Analysis

Policy Background



Urban Background



Design Trend



- 文化转译 Cultural Translation
- 在地营造 Place-Based Design
- 数字叙事 Digital Storytelling
- 公共阅读 Public Reading

## RESEARCH BACKGROUND

**Policy:** Grand-Canal cultural belt construction requires contemporary public space for canal heritage.

**Urban:** City reading rooms are rapidly developing as vital public reading venues.

**Design Trend:** Modern cultural space shifts from simple symbol stacking to abstract-form translation.

## KEY DESIGN PAIN POINTS

**01 Cultural Level**

Cultural representation relies on decorative symbols,lacking abstract form translation

**02 Urban Spatial Level**

Homogenized template-driven design, missing local waterfront features of Yangzhou

**03 Public Narrative Level**

Physical space has limits in presenting full canal-related historical narratives

## RESEARCHFOCUS

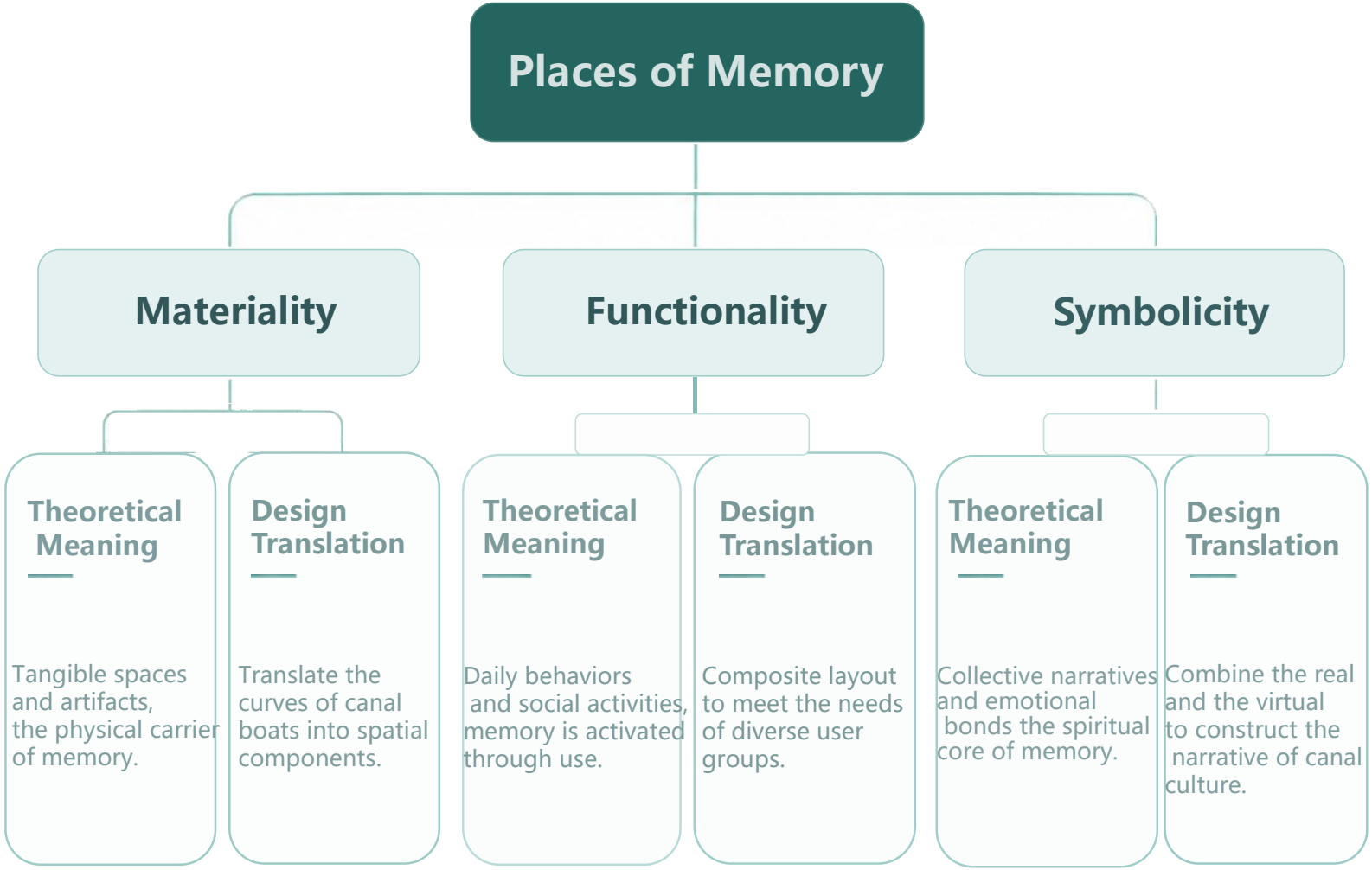
This project focuses on Yangzhou canal-side city reading room, exploring abstract canal-culture translation for both locals and visitors.

# Theoretical Foundation: Places of Memory (Lieux de Mémoire)

Pierre Nora

**A living carrier** at the intersection of collective historical memory and contemporary daily life; opposing the museum-like display of history and advocating for the **continuous activation** of memory through everyday use.

This project takes the threefold attributes as a framework to guide the cultural translation of the canal city library.



# PART. 02

## Site Analysis and Concept Formulation

# Site Location Analysis

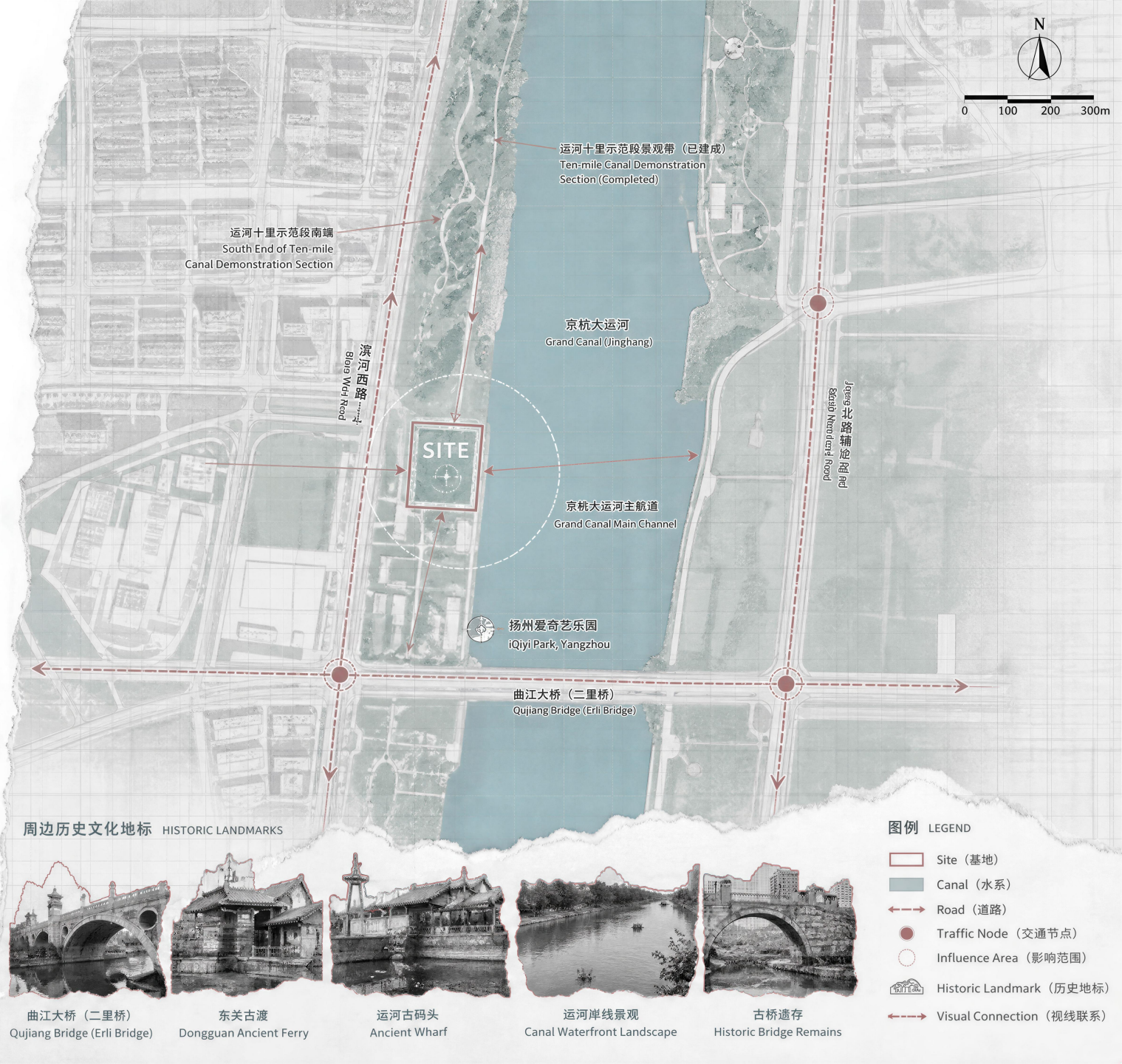
## | Location Overview

- The site is located in Guangling District, Yangzhou, along the demonstration section of Grand Canal. It undertakes dual roles of community service and canal- culture presentation.

## | Feasibility Analysis

- Cultural fit: Located on core canal corridor, physically responsive to canal- culture theme.
- Functional compatibility: Surrounded by residence and tourism resources, serving locals and visitors.
- Implementation condition: Urban public green space with good accessibility, suitable for public cultural building.



# Site Status and SWOT Analysis

## Strengths

- Adjacent to the Grand Canal
- Rich historical heritage
- High population density around

## Weaknesses

- Site boundary constraints
- Elevation difference between urban
- roads and waterfront



## Opportunities

- Construction of the Grand Canal Cultural Belt
- Promotion of urban reading room policies
- Integrated development of culture and tourism

## Threats

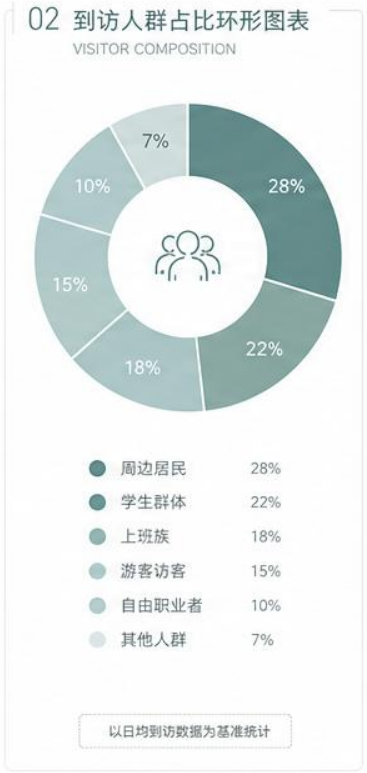
- How to avoid the piling up of cultural symbols
- Balance daily reading needs of local residents and cultural experience of visitors

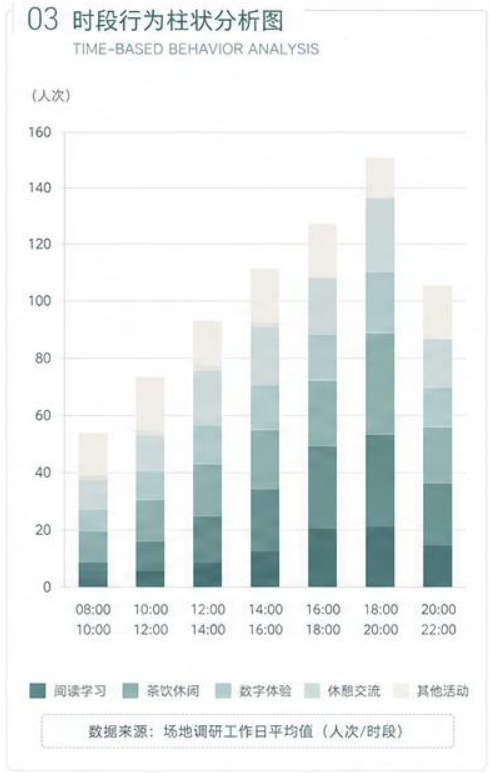
Design Response Overview: This project aims to create a public reading room that balances daily reading needs and the cultural experience of the Grand Canal.

# Population Analysis

This city study takes local residents and students as core users, also serving office workers, freelancers and tourists. Local users focus on regular reading and community communication, while tourists pursue short- term canal- cultural perception. The design balances daily reading- social needs and canal- cultural experience, rather than treating the space merely as a cultural- tourism exhibition venue.









# Concept Interpretation

## Mooring Boat of Books

Mooring: Waterside site serves as connection between city and canal heritage.

Boat: Ancient boat- hull arc is formal motif translated by shape- grammar.

Books: Public- reading- oriented space for daily use and canal- cultural experience.



# PART. 03

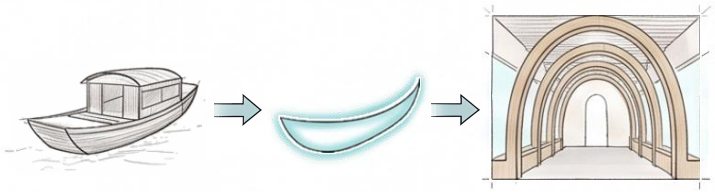
## Design Strategy and Form Translation

# Design Strategy System

## Spatial Design Path Based on the Threefold Attributes of Memory Place

### Form Strategy

Materiality



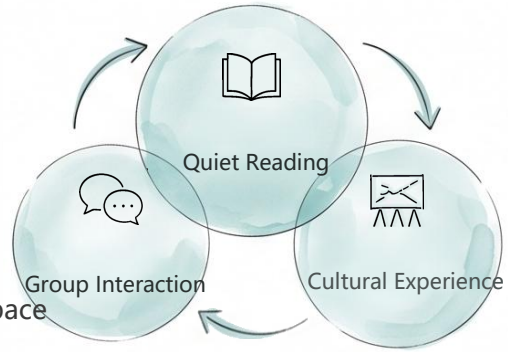
Boat Outline  Extract Curve  Translate to Archway Space

Extract elements from boats and water ripples, abstractly translate into spatial components

Avoid direct symbol piling

### Function Strategy

Functionality

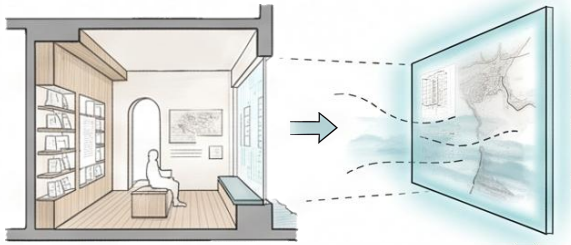



Layered layout of diverse functions, with daily reading as the core

Balance social interaction and cultural experience

### Narrative Strategy

Symbolism



Physical Space  Digital Screen

Translate physical space combined with digital narrative

Build immersive Canal Memory experience

### Atmosphere Strategy

Integrated Perception

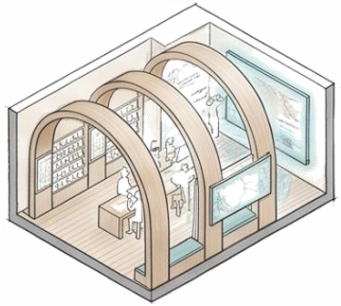


Natural Wood  Off-White  Low-saturation Canal Teal  Dark Grey

Natural wood material paired with canal teal tones

Respond to the waterfront, create a warm memory atmosphere

The four major strategies jointly support the construction of Canal Memory Place

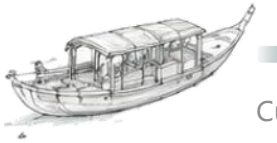


Strategies guide subsequent spatial generation and design implementation

# Canal Cultural Element Extraction & Spatial Translation

## 形态要素 Morphological Elements

01Hull Profile of Canal Boat



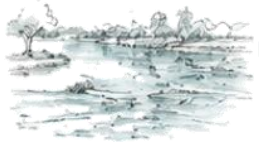


Curved Line Motif



Curved Front Desk &
Arched Reading Interface

02Meandering Flow of Canal





Wave Curve



Flowing Floor Pattern
&Water Light on Ceiling

03Undulating Boundary of Wharf





Horisontal Shoreline



Window-side Reading Counter
& Leisure Platform

04Gentle Curves of Boat Structure





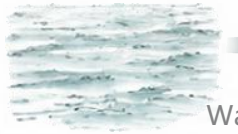
Rounded Arch Form



Spatial Corner
& Curved Bookshelf

## 物质意象 Material Imagery

01Texture of Canal Water





Water Ripple Pattern



Terrazzo Floor with
Water Patters.
Egia Nareative Screen

02Texture of Shoal Gravel





Dot Texture



Gravel Landscape
in Lounge Area

03Texture of Old Wharf Timber





Wood Grain Texture



Timber Bookshelf
& Furniture Finish

04 Reeds and Rushes on Riverbank





Plant Motif



Indoor Waterside
Planting

## 人文行为 Human Activities

01 Gathering at the Wharf





Tea & Social Lounge

02Reading Quietly by the Canal





Window-side Public
Reading Area

03Literary Gathering by the River





Digital Narrative
Experience & Cultural Salon

Extracted for shape grammar derivation and spatial generation of Mooring Boat of Books

# PART. 04

## Overall and Functional-space Design

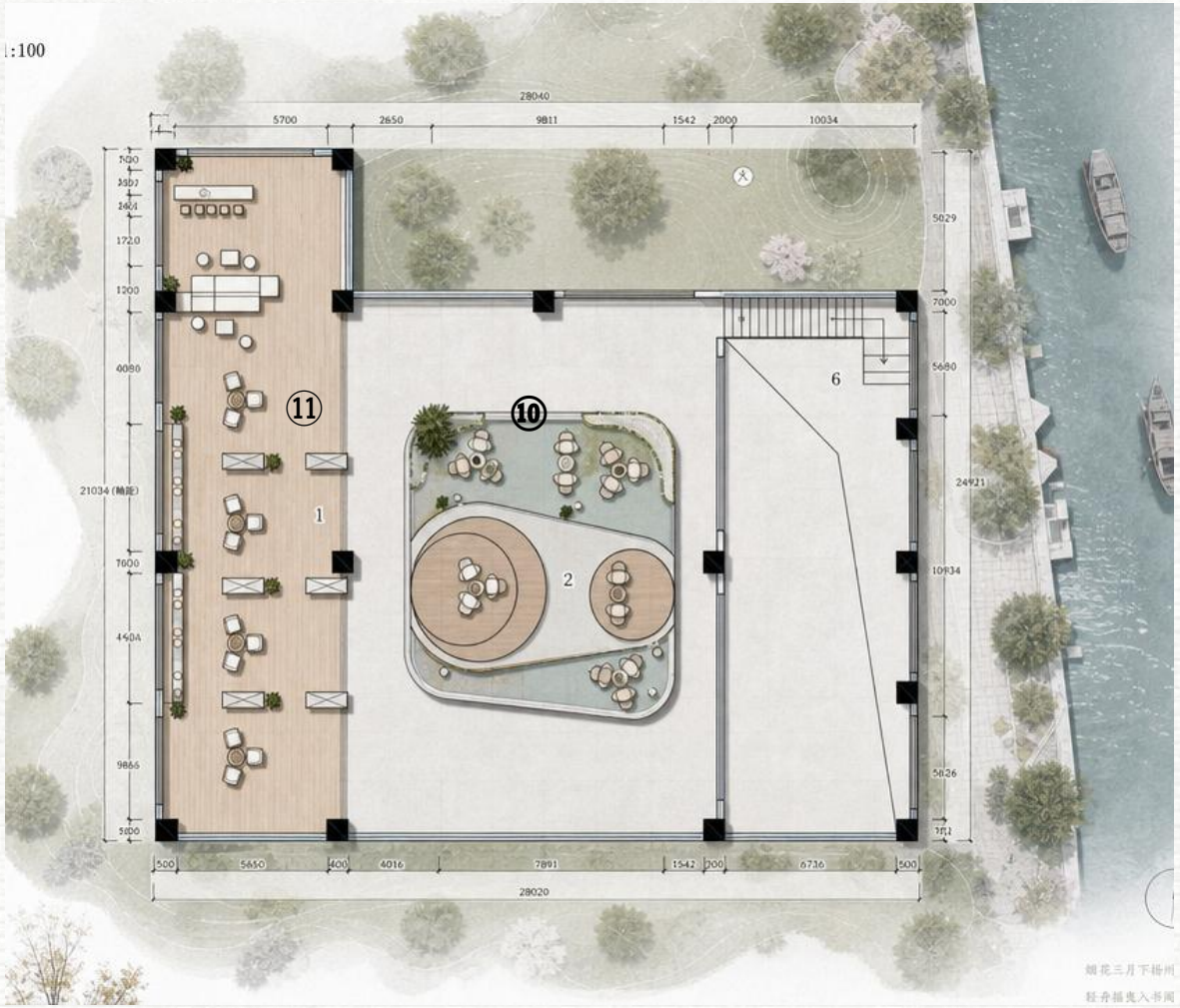
# FLOOR PLAN




FIRST FLOOR PLAN | 1:100

① Main Entrance
② Canal Wharf Lounge
③ Bridge-Arch Book Stacks Area
④ Comprehensive Service Area
⑤ Canal Poetry Reading Area
⑥ Storage Area
⑦ Restroom
⑧ Quiet Study Area
⑨ Staircase

# FLOOR PLAN

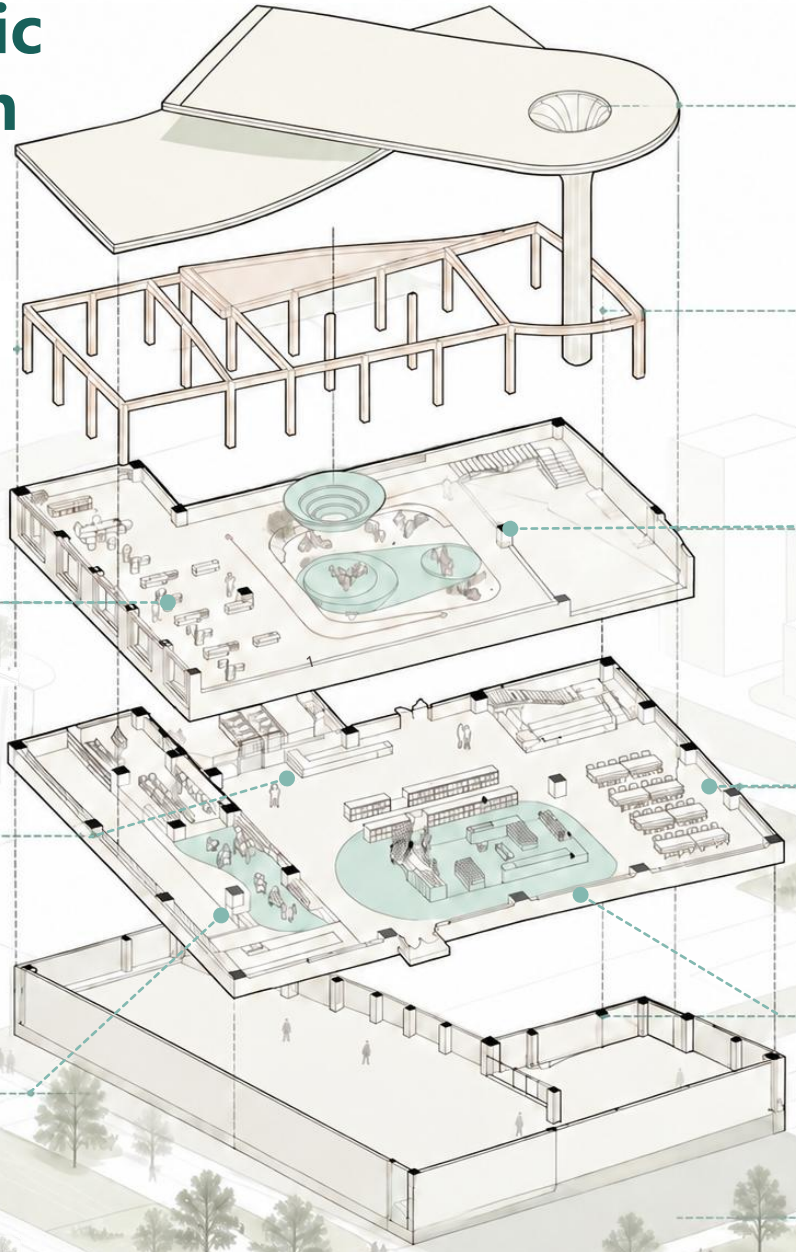



SECOND FLOOR PLAN | 1:100

⑩ Digital Narrative Experience Area

⑪ Window-side Reading Lounge

# Exploded Axonometric Construction Diagram



### Canal Poetry Reading Area



Books, poetry and canal elements create a cultural reading space.

### Window-side Reading Lounge



Waterfront views connect reading with the canal landscape.

### Comprehensive Service Area



A boat-inspired counter creates a canal-themed entrance node.

### Canal Wharf Lounge



A wharf-inspired space for gathering and relaxation.

### Roof Layer



A flowing roof form inspired by canal waves creates a light spatial expression.

### Structural Frame Layer



The structural framework provides support for the overall spatial system.

### Digital Narrative Experience Space



Digital media presents canal history and culture, transforming traditional memories into an immersive contemporary experience.

### Quiet Study Area



A full-height bookshelf and movable ladder support focused reading.

### Bridge-Arch Book Stacks Area



The bridge-arch form integrates book storage with canal-inspired spatial memory.

### Site Base Layer

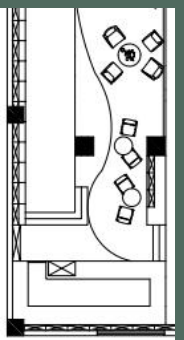


The site base connects the building with the surrounding waterfront landscape.

# PART. 05

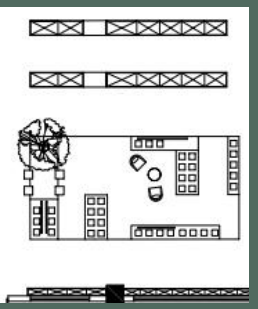
## Rendering Presentation

# Canal Wharf Lounge



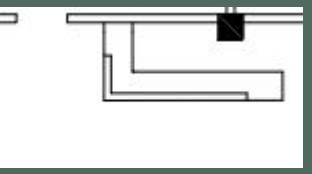
A timber platform organizes clustered seating, while water-textured flooring and flowing edge lines reinterpret the pause, rest and social interaction of a canal wharf.

# Bridge-Arch Book Stacks Area



A sequence of bridge-like arches forms the book-storage interface, while the central reading island and layered blue-green backdrop reinforce memories of canal bridges.

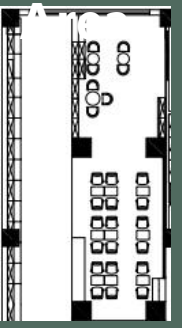
# Comprehensive Service Area





A boat-inspired curved counter, translucent blue-green finishes and flowing floor lines integrate imagery of boats and water into the entrance service area.

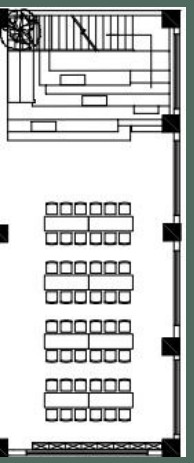
# Canal Poetry Reading





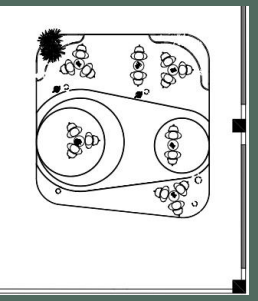

Continuous bookshelves define the reading area, while flowing canal-inspired lines extend across the walls, floor and ceiling, integrating Yangzhou canal poetry into the spatial experience.

# Quiet Study Area



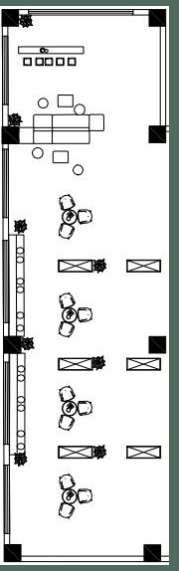
Window-side study tables define a quiet learning space, while translucent blue-green wave panels and flowing floor lines introduce the imagery of canal water.

# Digital Narrative Experience Area



Circular timber platforms organize the viewing experience, while a large digital media wall and rippling ceiling light reinterpret the landscape and cultural narrative of the Yangzhou Canal.

# Window-side Reading Lounge



Low bookshelves and clustered seating are arranged along the windows, while flowing floor lines and a curved ceiling create an open setting for reading, conversation and views.



# THANK YOU

