
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

A CITY STUDY
IN YANGZHOU

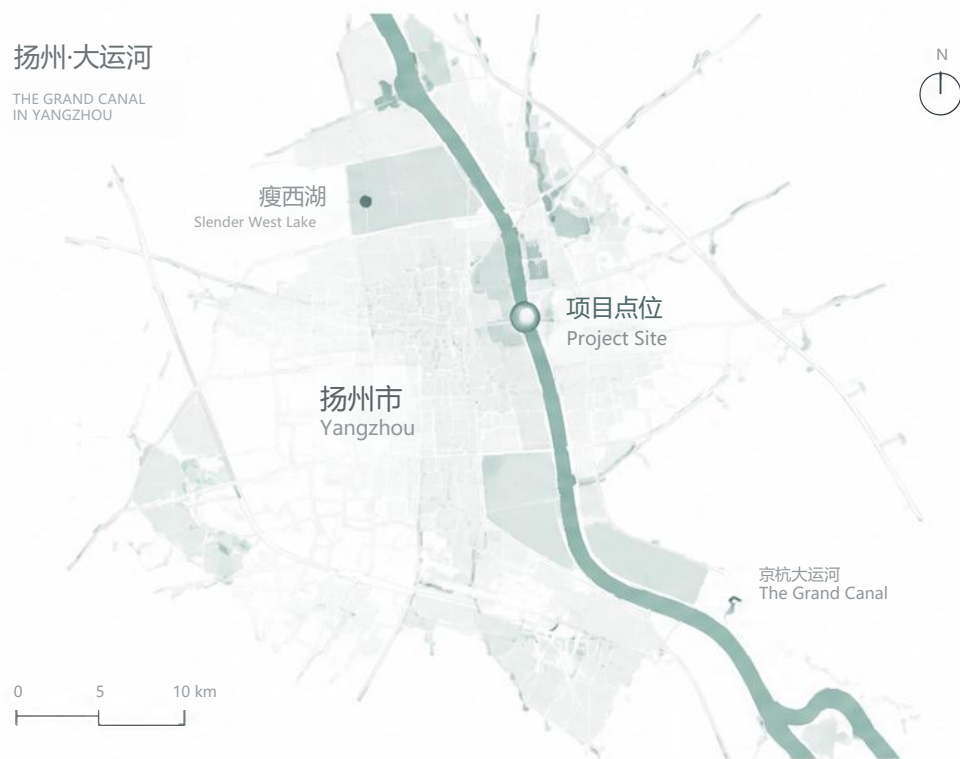


PART. 01

Preliminary Research and Theoretical Basis

扬州·大运河

THE GRAND CANAL
IN YANGZHOU



城市书房

URBAN
LIBRARY

阅读运河
连接现实与记忆

READING THE CANAL
CONNECTING
PRESENT AND MEMORY



Research Overview



01 Research 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.



02 Research 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?



03 Research 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



| RESEARCH FOCUS



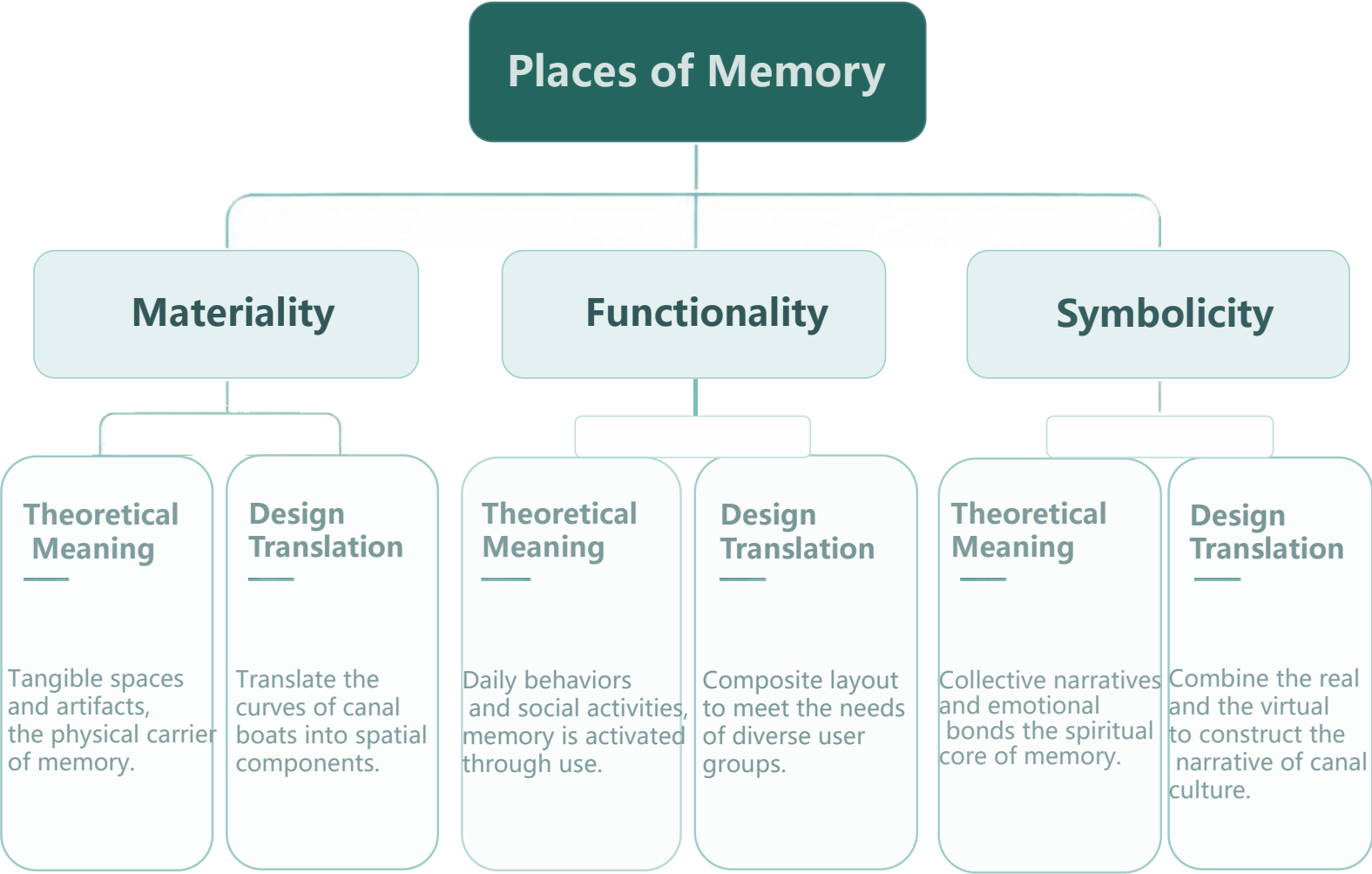
This project focuses on Yangzhou canal-side city reading room, exploring abstract canal-culture translation for both locals and visitors.

| 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.

Guangling District, Yangzhou



周边历史文化地标 HISTORIC LANDMARKS



图例 LEGEND

- Site (基地)
- Canal (水系)
- Road (道路)
- Traffic Node (交通节点)
- Influence Area (影响范围)
- Historic Landmark (历史地标)
- Visual Connection (视线联系)

| 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



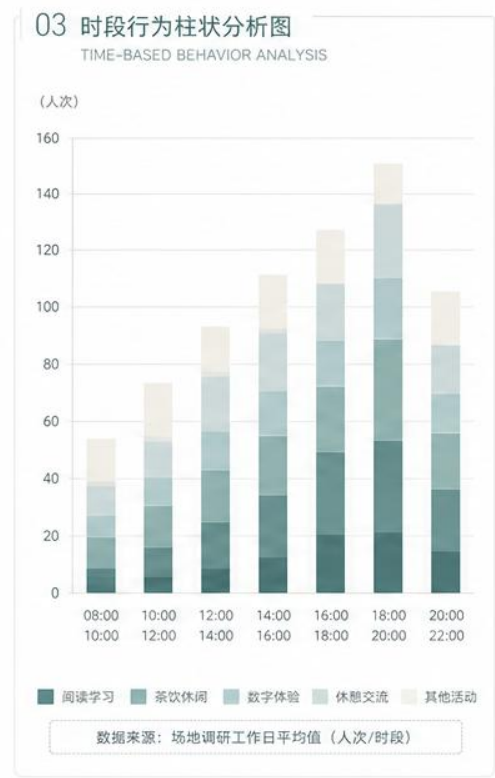
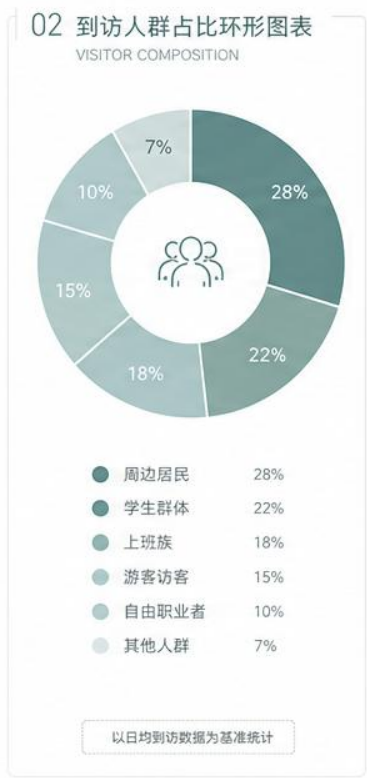
Threats

- 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.

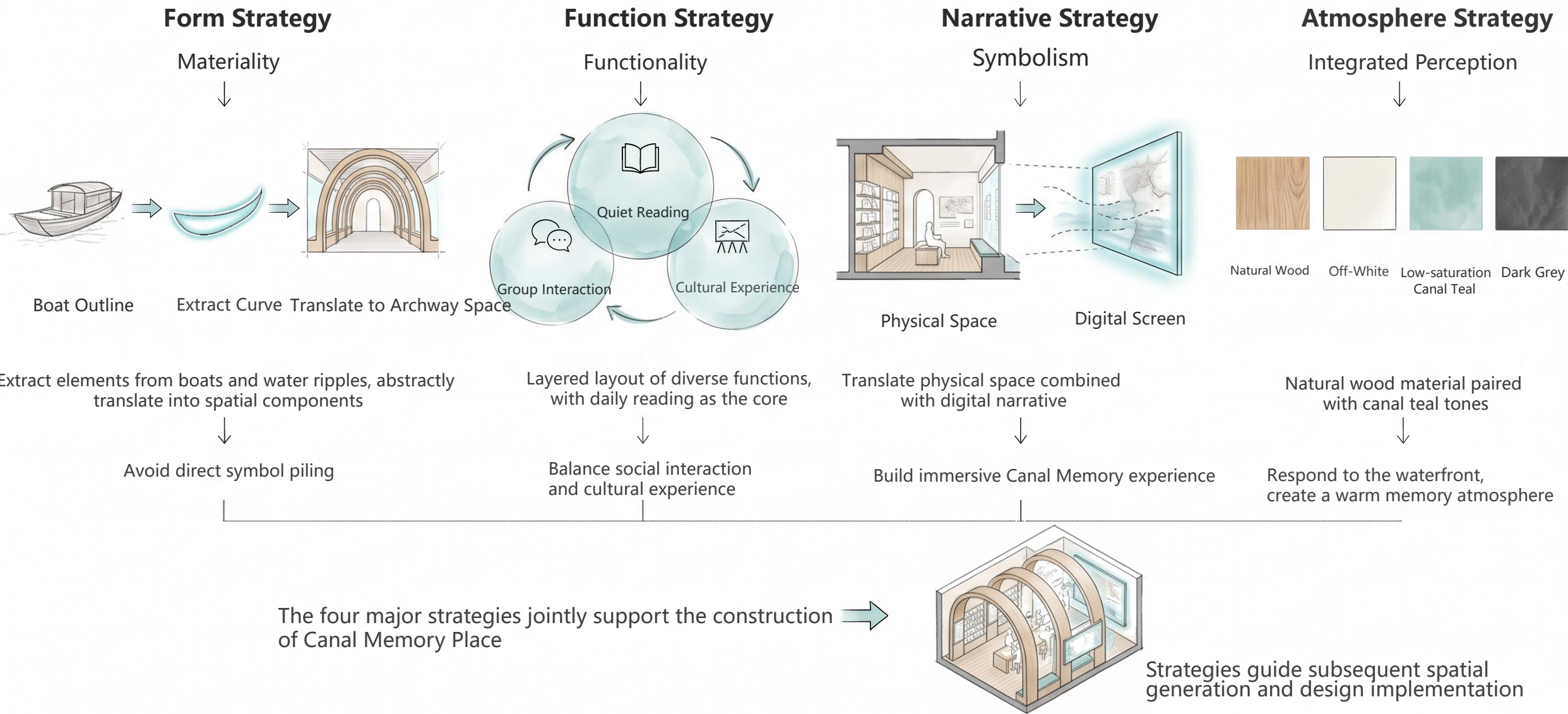


PART. 03

**Design Strategy and
Form Translation**

Design Strategy System

Spatial Design Path Based on the Threefold Attributes of Memory Place



Canal Cultural Element Extraction & Spatial Translation

形态要素 Morphological Elements

01Hull Profile of Canal Boat

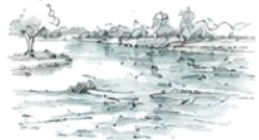


Curved Line Motif



Curved Front Desk & Arched Reading Interface

02Meandering Flow of Canal



Wave Curve



Flowing Floor Pattern & Water Light on Ceiling

03Undulating Boundary of Wharf

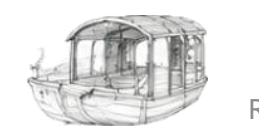


Horizontal Shoreline



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 Patterns. Egia Narrative 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**

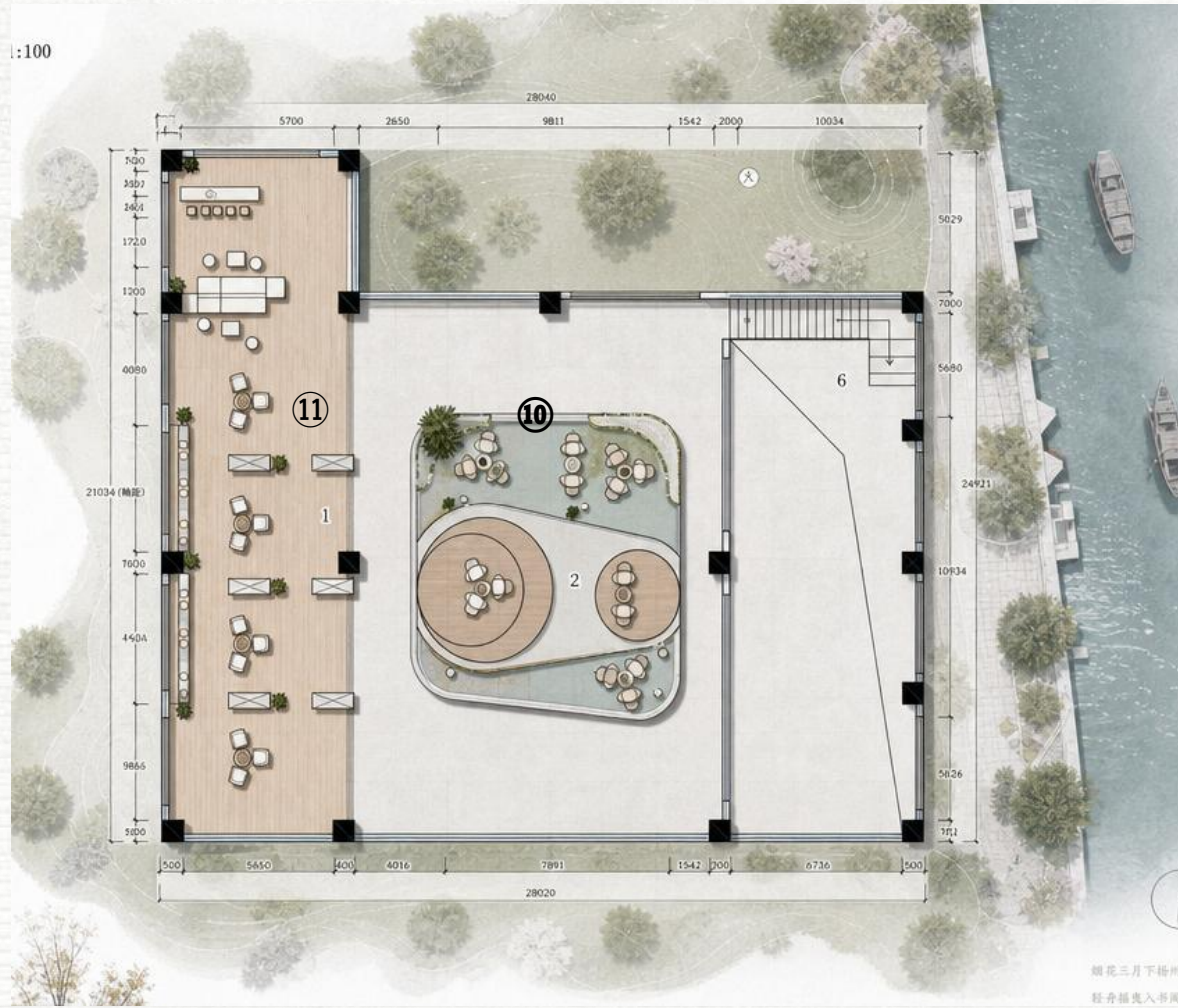
FLOOR PLAN



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

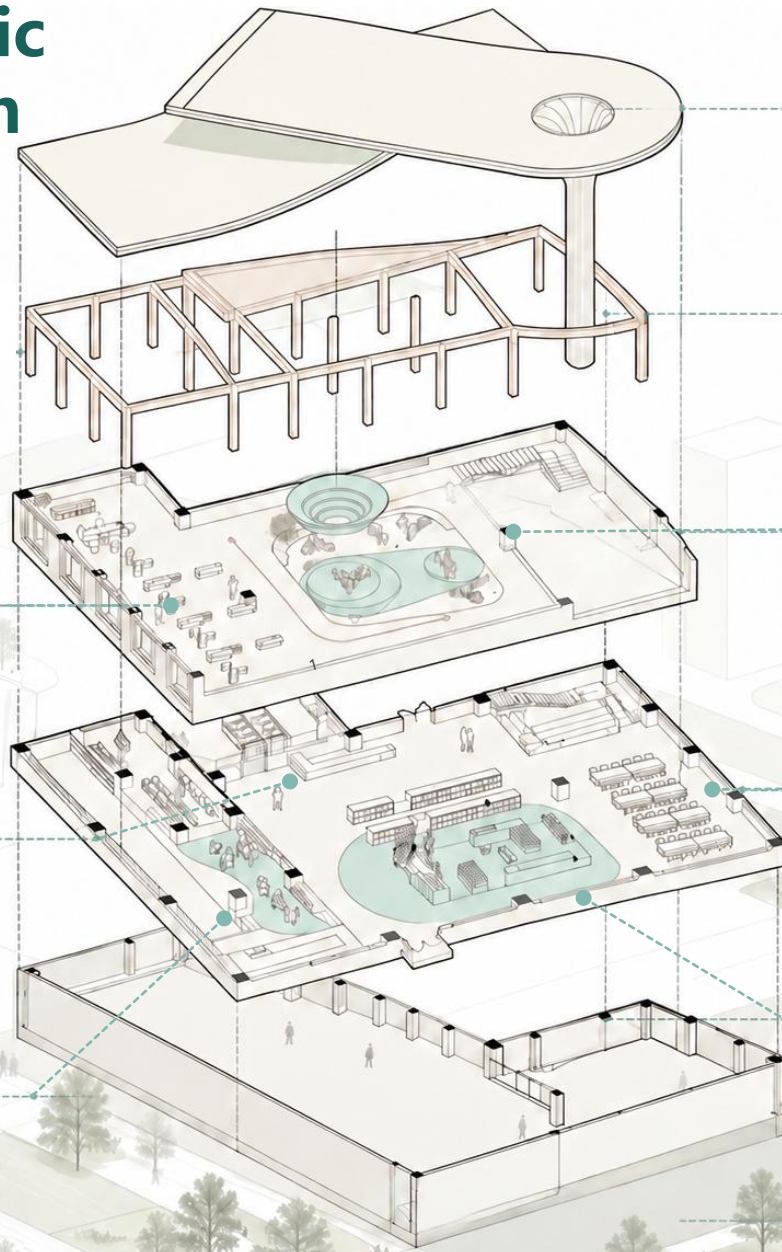


⑩ Digital Narrative Experience Area

⑪ Window-side Reading Lounge

SECOND FLOOR PLAN | 1:100

Exploded Axonometric Construction Diagram



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.

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.

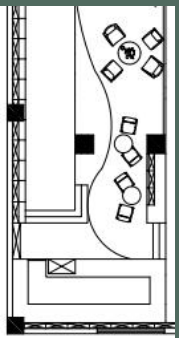
PART. 05

Rendering Presentation

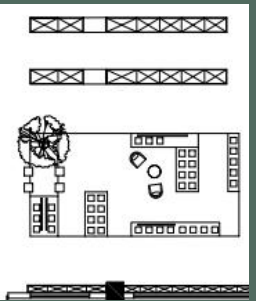
Canal Wharf Lounge



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



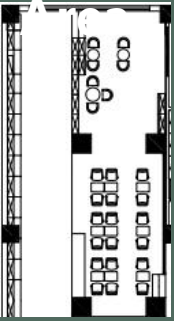
A sequence of bridge-like arches forms the book-storage interface, while the central reading island and layered blue-green backdrop reinforce memories of canal bridges.

Comprehensive Service Area



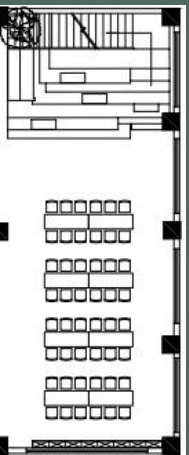
A boat-inspired curved counter, translucent blue-green finishes and flowing floor lines integrate imagery of boats and water into the entrance service area.

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

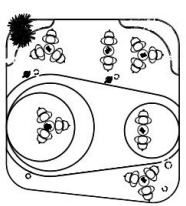


Window-side study tables define a quiet learning space, while translucent blue-green wave panels and flowing floor lines introduce the imagery of canal water.

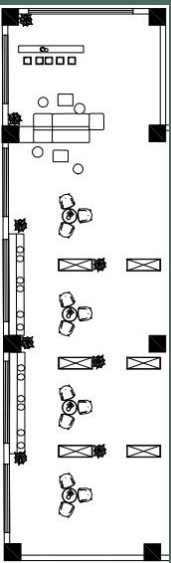
Digital Narrative Experience Area



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

