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A D V E N T  
S I M P L I C I T Y

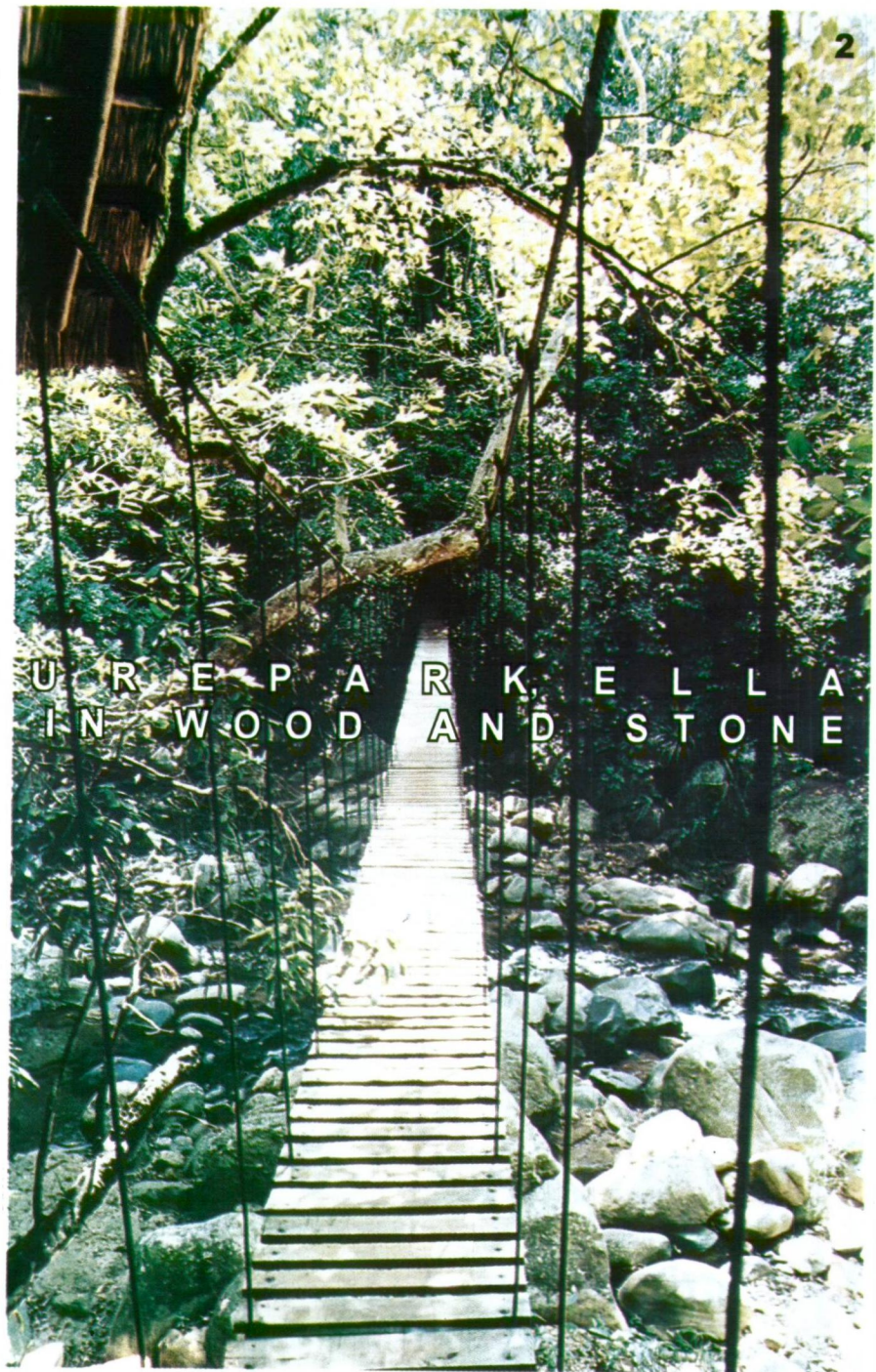
Archit. Bernard Gomez

"Eco Tourism", today is a fashionable phrase among marketeers, and those in the hospitality trade, satisfying the growing public demand for the "Green Experience"

Loosely applied, to anything from a 5-star hotel skirting a forested ridge, to a series of mud huts simulating a traditional village, the term "Eco-Friendly" is carried through, from the architectural design of the building, to a concept of hospitality and leisure, is rarely if ever seen in most of the examples visible today.

The Camp-Site: Adventure Park, Ella designed by Architect Sunil Gunawardena, succeeds where most others fail, in being unpretentiously simple in concept: A series of small, low scale single storeyed structures, resting lightly on the terrain, on a structural support system of treated tree trunks, supporting raised timber decked floors, and a timber rafter frame, supporting a roof of "Illuk" thatch. The site is accessed via a 2km trek along a jungle foot path, where the visitor experiences the rich biodiversity of the area. Jungle steams, boulder strewn natural ravines,

Designer -  
Archit. SUNIL GUNAWARDHANA

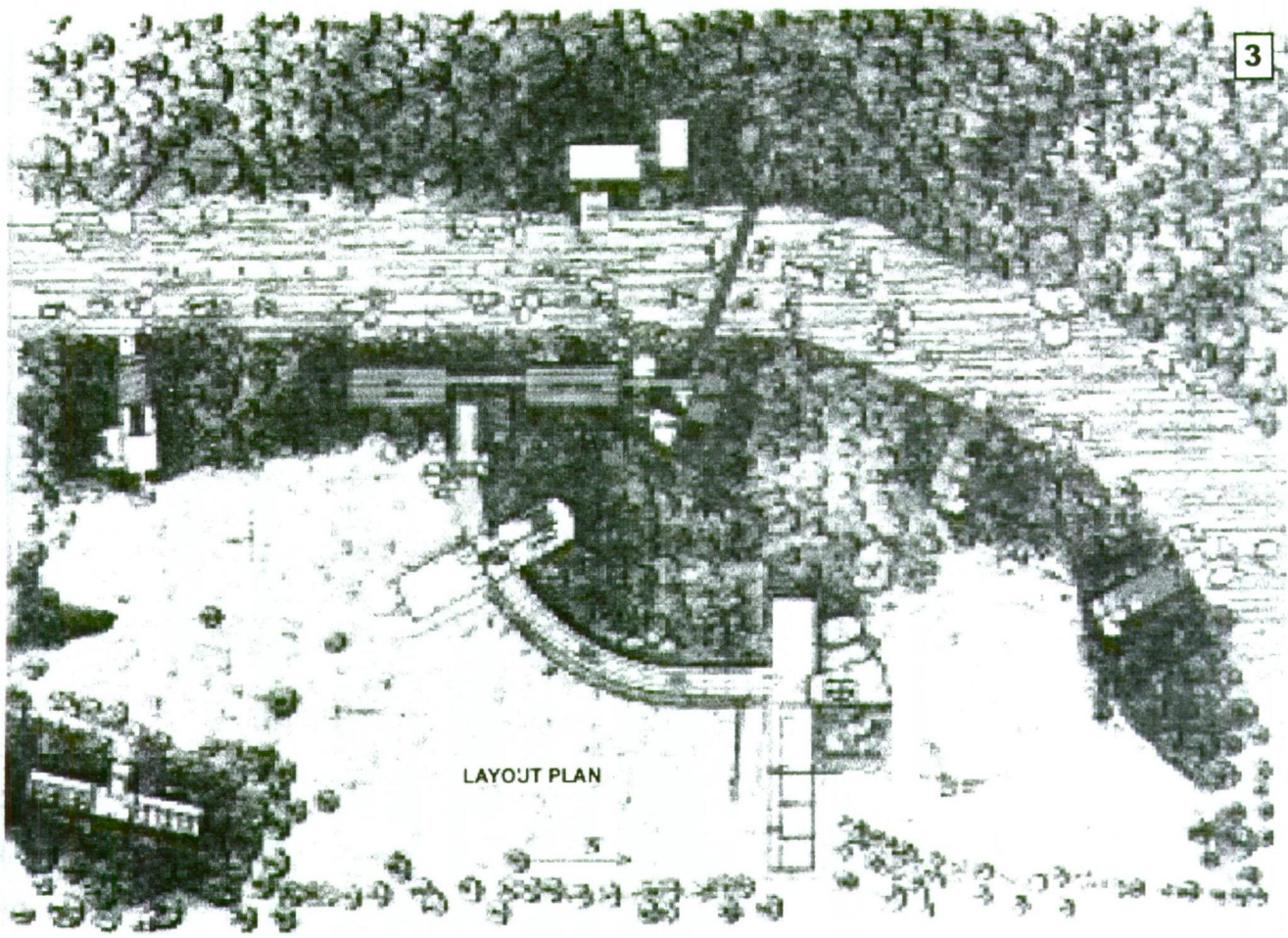


abundant bird-life, and an interesting selection of indigenous trees, notable among which are magnificent specimens of the "Riti" tree, like living sculptures rising 25-30M into the forest canopy.

The jungle trail culminates in a 1m foot-bridge of timber planks, suspended on steel cables, which span diagonally across the Kirindi Oya river. The river is the outstanding natural feature of the site and a major focus of public activity, combing large boulders with still natural pools and a

thick growth of forest trees along its banks.

The rather, hair-raising walk across the river culminates in a series of charming, elevated pavilions, fronting the river, linked by covered walkways. These act as lounges, while also serving as viewing decks into the river. The experience created is that of being on a series of elevated platforms among the trees, with some of the trees themselves used as structural

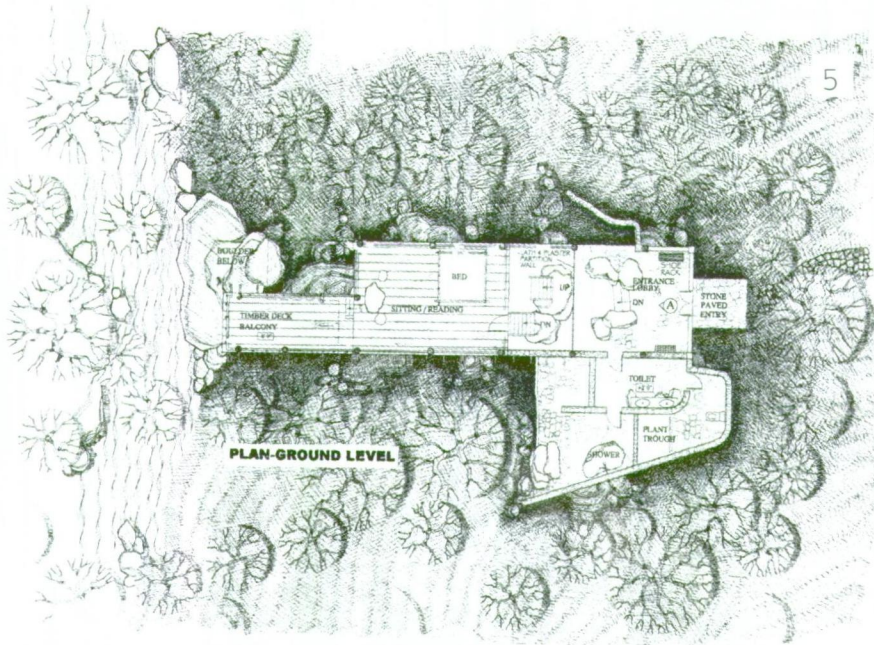


- 1. Elevated timber decks on stilts, less disturbance to terrain
- 2. Entry transitional space, suspended bridge
- 3. Layout plan
- 4. Linear timber deck lobby

supports to the buildings. The individual pavilion-like building forms are linked together to the rest of the complex by the strong, sweeping, curve of the service corridor, a single storey structure of timber posts, supporting a low eaved roof of Illuk thatch. This 2m wide path links up with the kitchens and the service area, hugging the contour edge of a paddy field to the North. As one moves along the corridor the visual experience of jungle poles, thatch, and stone paving is heightened by the view of the rice paddies, ending up in a forested hill slope to the far North.



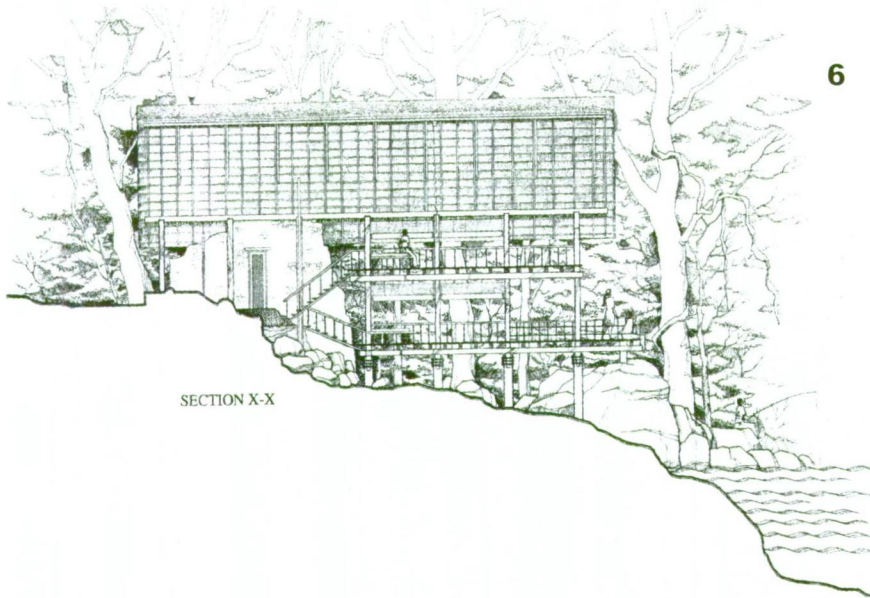
The corridor continues as an open foot-path which leads to the 2 storey cabana units, which front the river. These are of timber, post and beam construction, with timber decking for floors, supported off the ground by reinforced concrete stubs. The roof is a steep sloped thatch of Illuk, and the dominant feature of their design, defining the space of both upper and lower decks.



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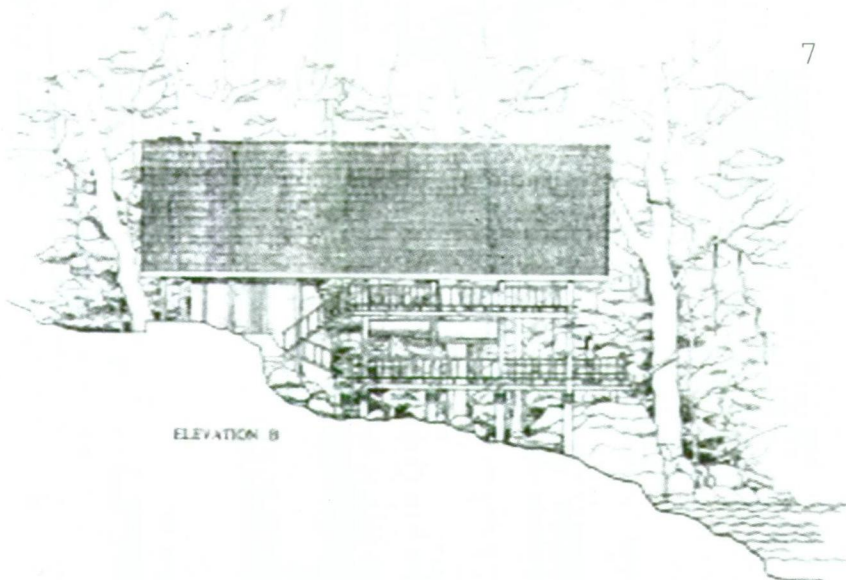
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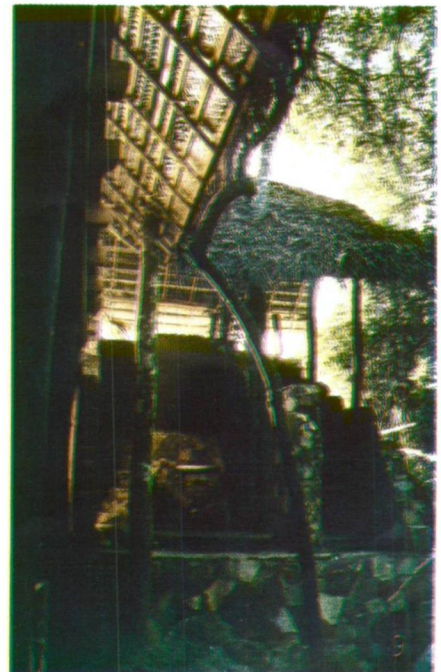
SECTION X-X

- 5. Plan sleeping hut
- 6. Section through sleeping hut
- 7. Side elevation sleeping hut
- 8. Sleeping deck on stone wall
- 9. Thatched roof, mud, stone walls more harmony with rustic quality of jungle



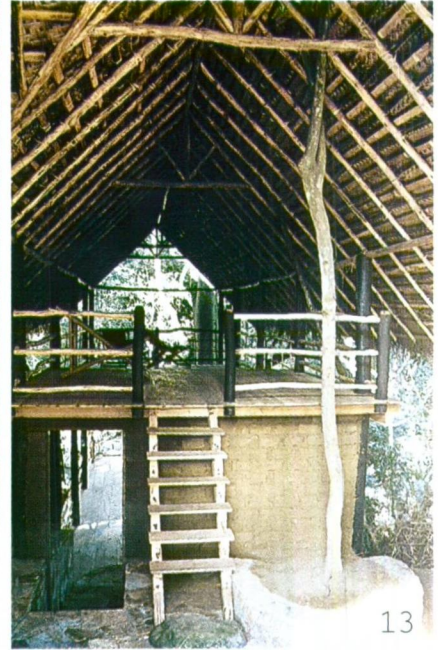
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ELEVATION B





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- 10. Thatched grass roof sits on elevated timber deck parallel to natural roof
- 11. Open sleeping decks close to nature
- 12. Curved services corridor
- 13. Leaner gable roof form unobtrusively fill into the existing voids



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The units themselves, effectively portray the concept of a comfortable jungle hut, comprising a single space which combines as a bedroom cum sitting area, opening out on to viewing decks at both levels, fronting the river. The units are devoid of doors and windows, with screens made of PVC mesh, bamboo mats, and extended eaves for weather protection.



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As the name "Adventure Park" suggests, the design of the camp-site, attempts to link outdoor spaces with simple open pavilions, which act as informal leisure spaces, having a certain flexibility of usage. One sees the effectiveness of the design lying in the Architect's sensitive use of simple natural materials like timber, stone, mud walls, and traditional thatch, put together, with an attention to detail, creating an appealingly, rustic ambiance, which give credence to its marketed image as an eco-friendly tourist destination.