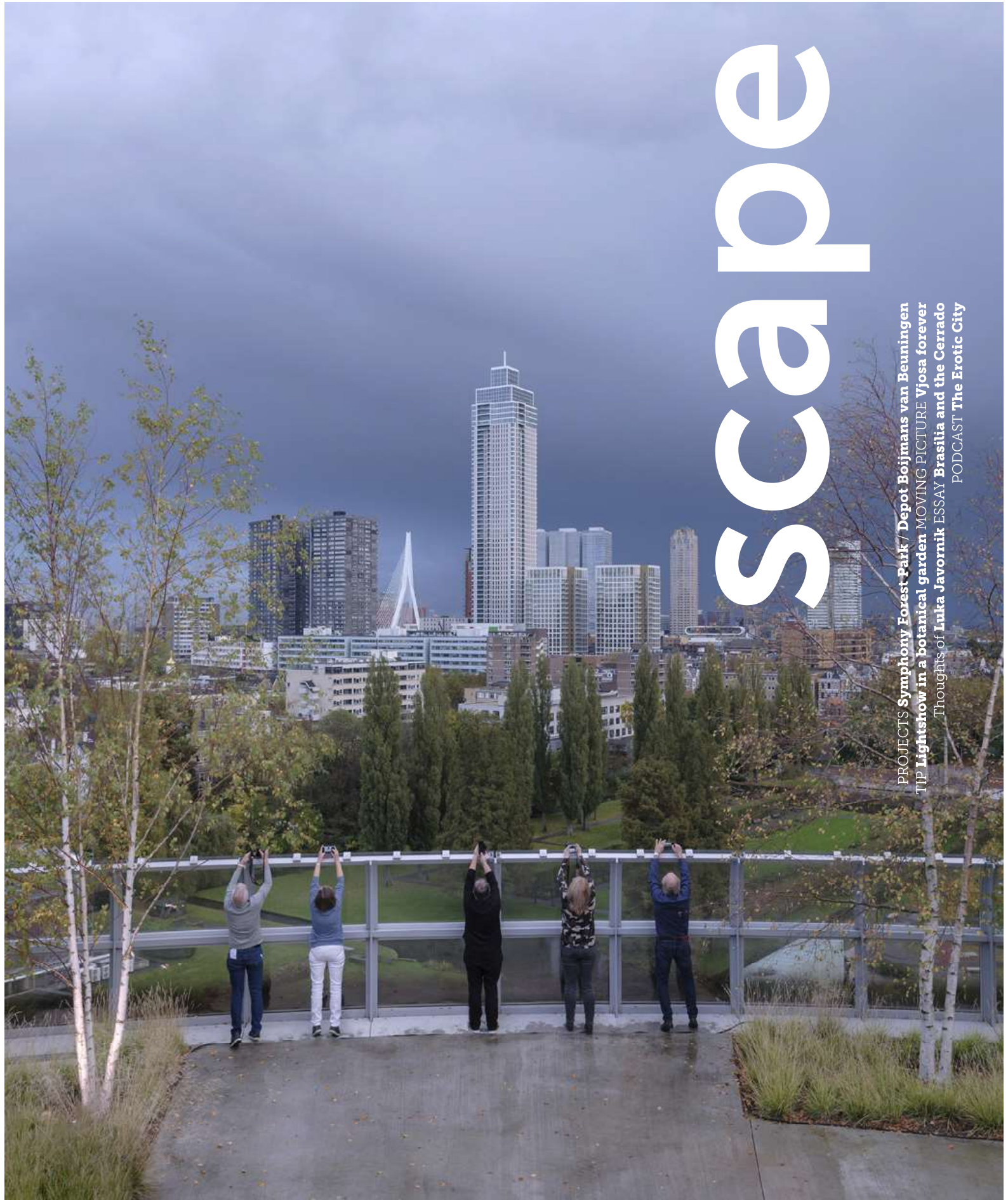


# scap<sup>e</sup>

PROJECTS **Symphony Forest Park / Depot Boijmans van Beuningen**  
TIP **Lightsnow in a botanical garden** MOVING PICTURE **Vjosa forever**  
Thoughts of **Luka Javornik** ESSAY **Brasilia and the Cerrado**  
PODCAST **The Erotic City**



# urbscape

Digital magazine #4/5

## PROJECTS

- > **SYMPHONY FOREST PARK**  
India  
urbscapes
- > **DEPOT AND ROOF FOREST OF MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN**  
Rotterdam  
MVRDV, MTD

## TIP

- > **LIGHT SHOW**  
Botanical Garden in Meise

## DESIGNER'S THOUGHTS

- > **LUKA JAVORNIK**  
His motives, examples and sources of inspiration

## MOVING PICTURES

- > **VJOSA FOREVER**  
The protection of Europe's largest wild river

## ESSAY

- > **BRASILIA AS A CERRADO CITY**  
Carlos M Teixeira

## PODCAST

- > **THE EROTIC CITY**  
Life-sized urbanism with Bianca Hermansen

## Urban Forest

Almost by accident, this issue of 'scape is about Urban Forest. As if it came out of the blue. As if we all want to provide our cities with something as exotic as a forest. Looking for shade, for the damp climate of moss and leaves and dark earth. A kind of mysterious protection. What about the parks of yesteryear? Those big grassy plains where people hang out? Spacious steps and long lines of sight across the water?

I am reminded of the grove that impressed me long ago, in a little garden in a village somewhere in the middle of the Netherlands. It was around the house of Nico de Jonge, known for his baroque designs for the delta of the Netherlands. Grand gestures that had to guide the dynamics of urbanisation in the second half of the last century. As a retired landscape architect, he led a reclusive life. In his small garden, there were as many as thirty angelica trees (*aralia elata*) - stacked on top of each other, whimsical stems, where in the dark months, lots of small lights created a fairy-tale atmosphere.

Now there is such a garden on and around the depot of Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam. On top is a *Dakbos* (Roof Forest) - that is how it is called - and it consists of pines, birches and tall grasses. Simple, expressive species that are seemingly strewn about without much pretension. A different kind of aesthetic, more to dream about than to see. It is a statement about biodiversity, but above all it stirs the imagination.

More like a real urban forest can be found in Ahmedabad, India, where the Symphony Park has been created: 30,000 saplings and shrubs have been planted close together. With the help of a few old trees, they manage to grow together into a shady and species-rich forest. A dense network of paths leads you through it, a tropical forest, with a surprise around every bend. I think of the sounds that can be heard there, which push the noise of the city into the background. For a while.

Long ago, on the other side of the world, savannah forest was cut down to make room for the modern idea of functionality in Brasilia. But now - as you can read in the longread in this issue - there are thoughts of bringing that forest back to the city. The cerrado, what is that but more nature? How will it fit into the city? New images are emerging. The world is changing.

Harry Harsema  
Editor in chief



# Urban forest / The Symphony Forest Park in Ahmedabad

by Harry Harsema

The park is designed by  
the landscape architects of  
urbscapes.







The site in the Bodakdev neighbourhood was used as a dumping ground.

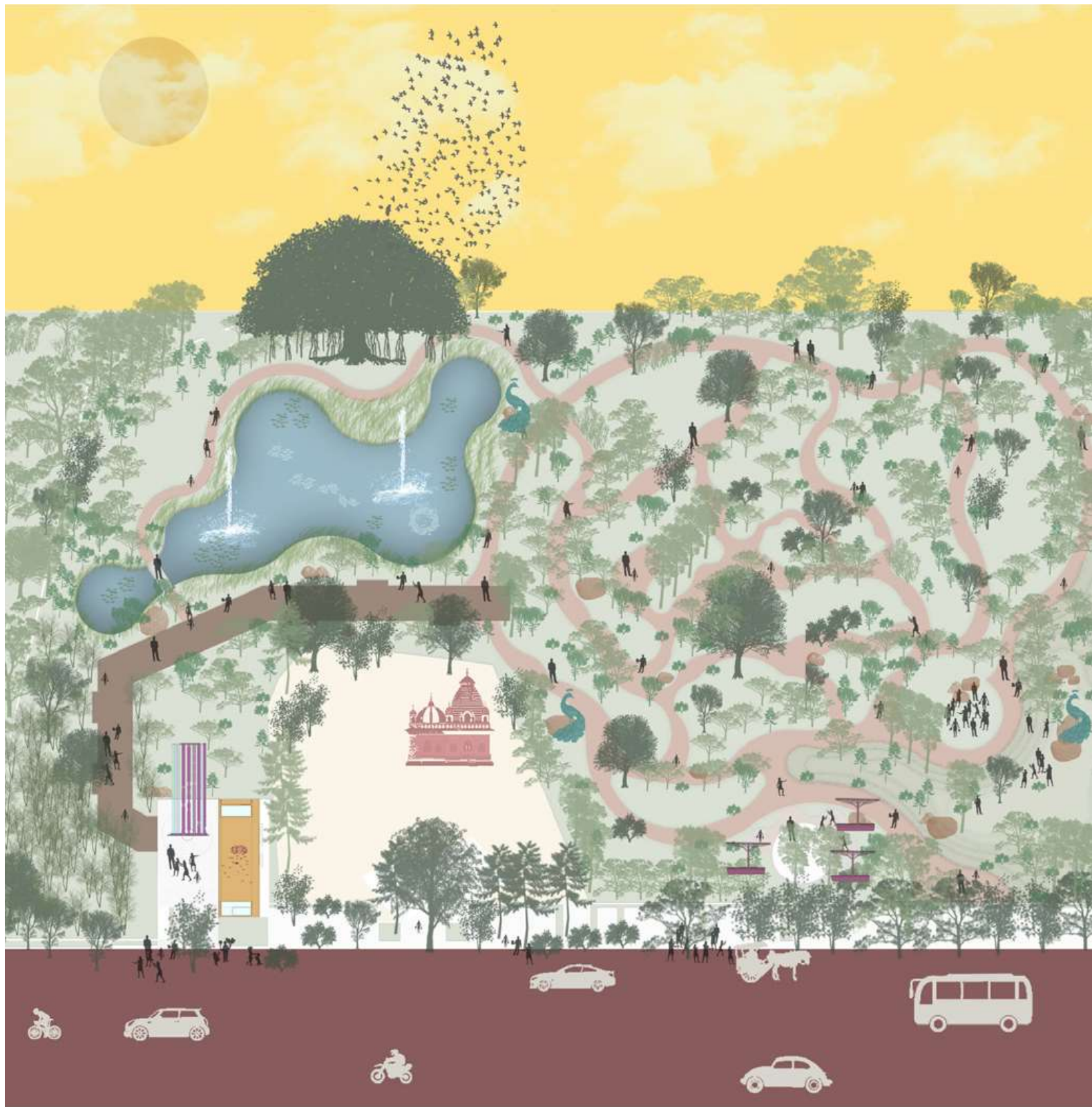
In Ahmedabad, a city in the north west of India, a neglected and barren area with a dried up lake has been transformed into a lush and shady park loaded with trees and shrubs.

Landscape architect [Nidhi Parikh](#) tells us the story behind the concept. 'Not long ago this plot was an abandoned land and a dumping ground for the nearby neighbourhoods, filled with construction debris and garbage, with a dried-up lake. The idea of developing a public park with a forest in mind was brought about by mapping the existing public parks in the vicinity. Surrounded by corporate offices, the park could reduce the open lawn areas and increase its green cover with dense trees. With rising pollution levels the idea of the green lung for the city became stronger.'

As many as possible existing trees remained and offer shadow.







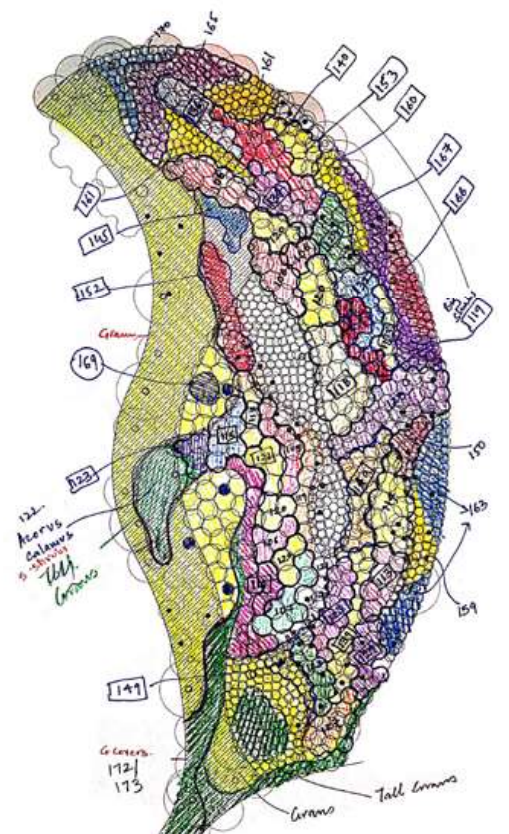
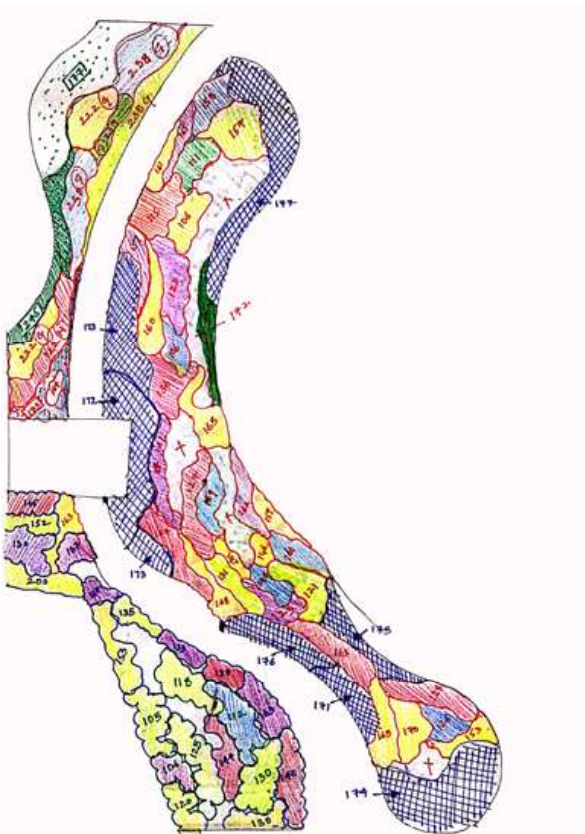
A plan drawing shows the typical features of the urban forest.

*With rising pollution levels the idea of the green lung for the city became stronger*





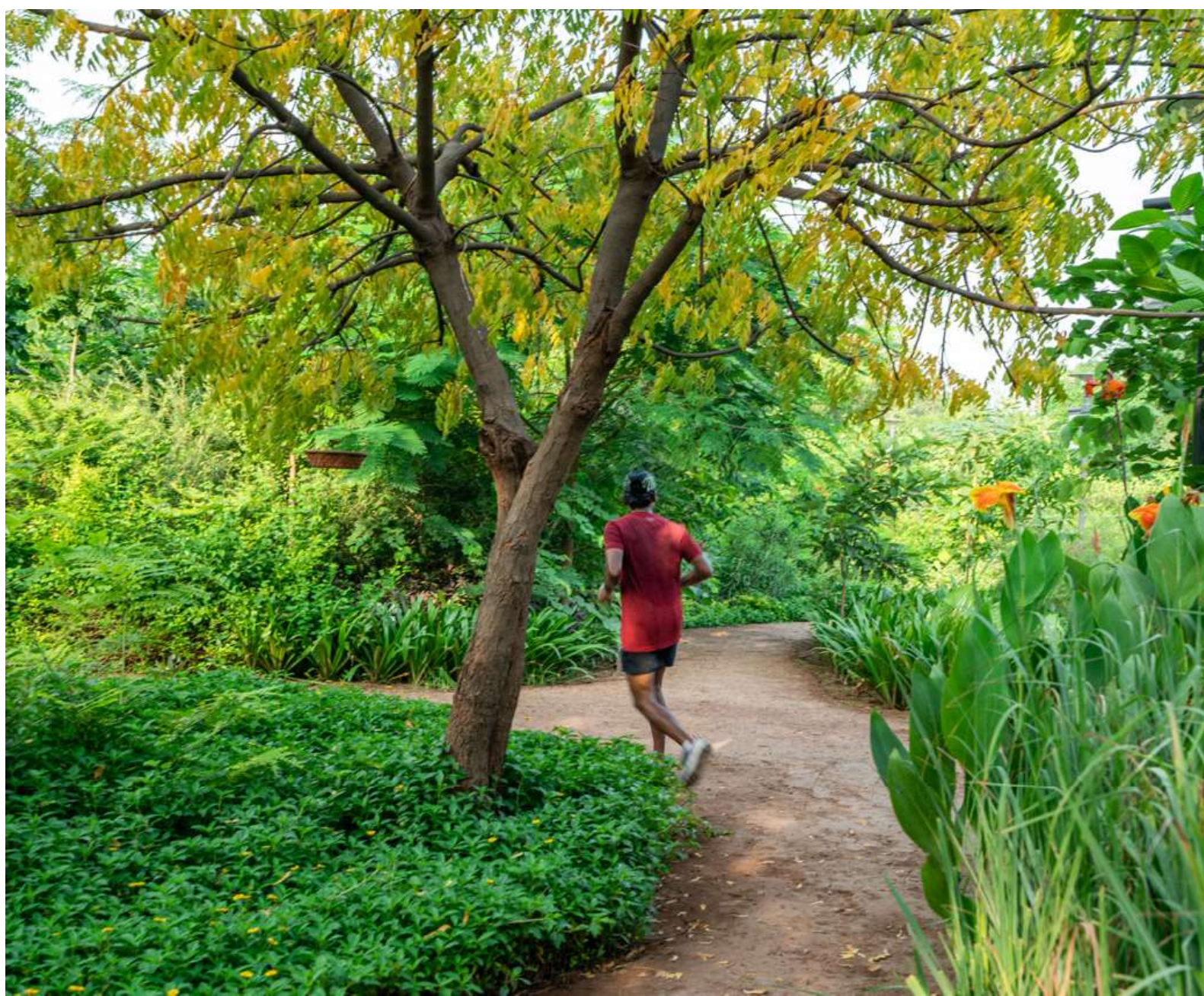
The design drawing, and details of the planting schemes.





The designers used the shade of existing trees when creating the walkways, protecting pedestrians from the hot dry climate of the city. No less than thirty thousand saplings were planted in islands to create the experience of a trail in the forest.

Parikh: 'Each zone is specifically designed to achieve an experience of the jungle. The lake is revived, reshaped to increase its surface area and reduce depth. The topography is altered to ensure the surface rainwater drains in the well which now has been converted into a recharge well.'







*Nearby residents,  
corporate staff, nature  
lovers and photographers  
can indulge in nature*

The entrance of the park,  
developed by Symphony  
limited.



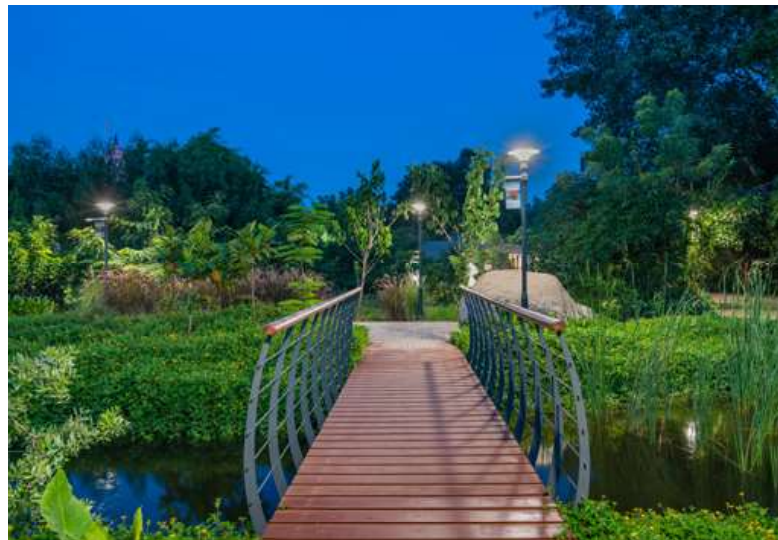
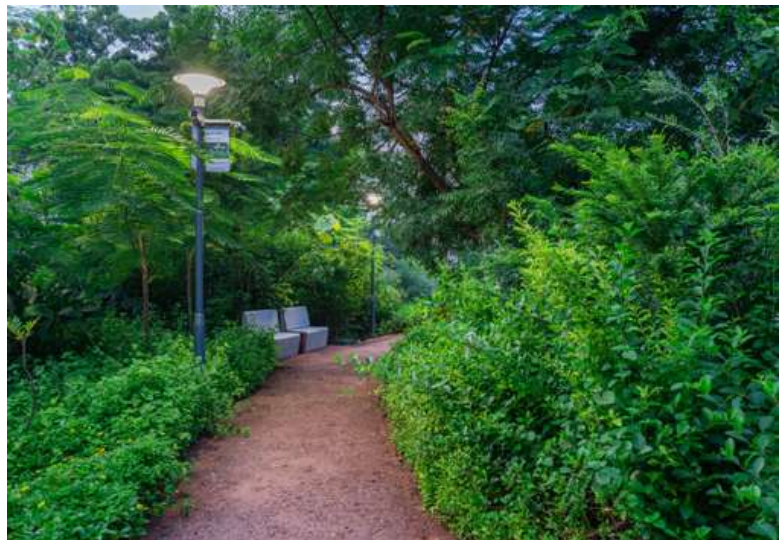




Meandering walkways loop around the park. The lake is reshaped and revived. In one corner of the park the designers created an amphitheatre.

The lake is now home to local fishes and turtles. And the forest has over 250 plant species: rare trees of Ahmedabad, while others have mythological, religious and ecological values. Birds, squirrels, and insects feel at home. The meandering walkways loop around the park and also provide opportunities to go off-track and discover. In one corner the topography is altered to create an amphitheatre for larger groups to gather.





*We try to be ecologically sensitive and culturally and socially appropriate at the same time*





**Project**

Symphony Forest Park

**Developed by**

Symphony Limited

**Landscape Architects**

urbscapes

**Principal Landscape Architect**

Nidhi Parikh

**Architects**

Urbscapes &amp; Modo Design –

Ar. Arpan Shah

**Site area**

11,000 sq mts

**Landscape Team**

Nidhi Parikh, Narendra Mangwani,

Sagar Prajapati, Himen Vasani,

Aakashi Panchal

**Sculpture & Artwork**

Narendra Mangwani, Himen Vasani

**Location**

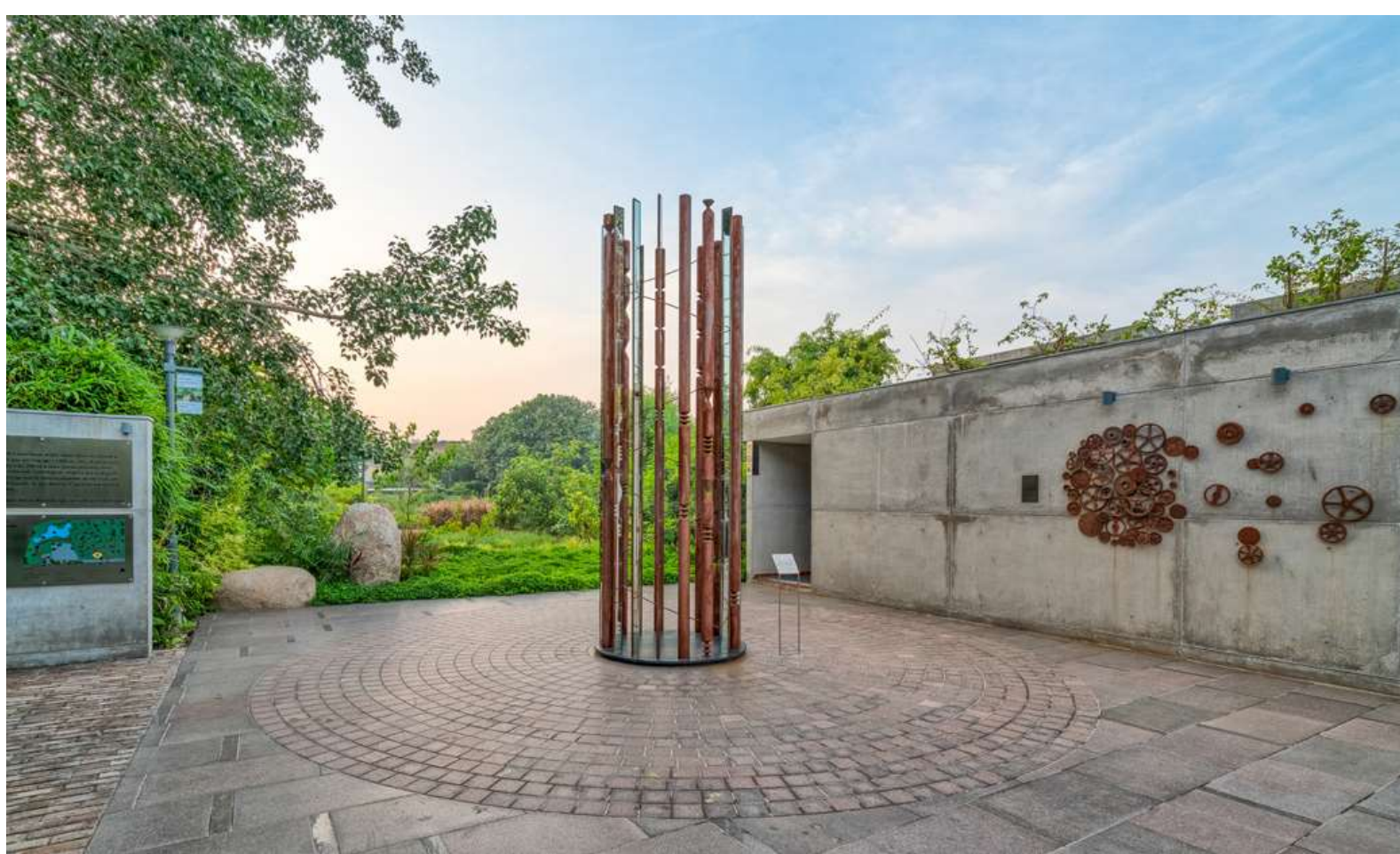
Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

**Photographs**

Inclined Studio, urbscapes

The public facilities were provided at the entrance for easy access and a minimum of buildup in the forest area. The artwork there reflects the name of the park, the Symphony Forest, as it is inspired by Beethoven's Symphony 5, one of the world's most renowned classical compositions of music. Parikh calls it 'a subtle gesture with universal accessibility'. Perhaps because of the artwork, but definitely because of the possibility to indulge in nature, the park is very popular among nearby residents, corporate staff, school groups, nature lovers and photographers.

The artwork at the entrance is inspired by Beethoven's Symphony 5.





'scape magazine asked **Nidhi Parikh** some questions about her work and landscape architecture in general in India.

▮ **Nidhi Parikh:** 'Through our design interventions, we try to be ecologically sensitive, environmentally friendly, timeless in our design, sustainable, and culturally and socially appropriate at the same time to try and bring in bold, radical ideas. Our projects range from small terrace gardens to large institutional campus landscapes as well as public parks. Each project is challenging and opens up new directions of testing our philosophy.'

▮ 'Landscape has always been part of Indian Architecture, from water ecology at Jaaz Mahal in Mandu, to Mughal Gardens at Shalimar Baug in Shrinagar, to Gangaur Ghat in Udaipur.

We can see this in the climate-responsive courtyards, step wells, ghats, and the man-made lakes. Landscape design has always been well-integrated with planning and design as well as lifestyle. Today, landscape design has become a well-known profession in India, demanding design solutions from small terrace gardens to regional planning across the country. New design grammar is emerging, with new challenges of climate change, water scarcity, and land availability.'

▮ 'In India, the cities and towns are developing at a speed where every moment feels like a missed opportunity. Because of this speed at which urban areas are developing, it is a mammoth task for each project to have a sensitive design perspective. India needs sensitive and fast working, practical, sustainable, implementable design solutions which are socially, culturally and economically viable. The geographic variations add on to the complexity wherein design solutions cannot be prototyped hence each project becomes unique.'





*'Because of the speed at which urban areas are developing, it is a mammoth task for each project to have a sensitive design perspective'*