

LCLA
est. 2011

Luis Callejas
Cambridge, USA | Medellin, Colombia
<http://www.luis callejas.com>
info@lclaooffice.com

AQUATIC CENTER

Category: parks / plazas
Location: Medellin, Colombia
Surface: 16,000 sqm
Project Year: 2008

in collaboration with
Edgar Mazo and Sebastián Mejía
as Paisajes Emergentes



dms - 6° 15' 17" N / 75° 35' 28" W

elevation - 1,487 m / 4,878 ft

“The only construction that rises above the gardens is the synchronized swimming pool.”



1.1) north-west view.
central circulation axis and gardens.

A professional swimming facility requires a very specific set of measurements, volumes, and support program in order to fulfil its performance as a sport complex.

Despite the brief suggested a compact building to accommodate four pools—professional swimming, synchronized swimming, two training pools—this project departed from the fact that Medellín is a “tropical city with a constant warm climate

where it is possible to perform open air competitions all year around without the need of a contained atmosphere.” Hence a landscape for swimming instead of a building with pools.

Considering that the new aquatic center would be used for future swimming competitions as well as a public building in all its extent, the project distributes the program through out the site as a garden that connects the four pools. With special

attention to the gradients required to articulate spaces that have clear divisions of public-private, wet-dry, performer-spectator, the garden sets a threshold that articulates the program into one landscape where the multiple spaces either emerge from it. “A flooded landscape planted with species typical of tropical wetlands provides separation of private and public spaces that otherwise would have ended up been vertical partitions.”



The proposal uses an array of strategies that provoke gradients of exposure and experience while enabling a new way of framing public buildings in tropical geographies.

With a strong conviction of geometry as an organizing form, the project connects its various levels through sunken ramps and elevated platforms. In this context, users direct themselves to the changing rooms through slight slopes that conduce the user to an underground where gardens unfold into buried courtyards that bring light and air. “The program required complex system of bathrooms and changing rooms for swimmers and the public, All this areas are beneath the aquatic gardens.

A set of courtyards below ground level give natural

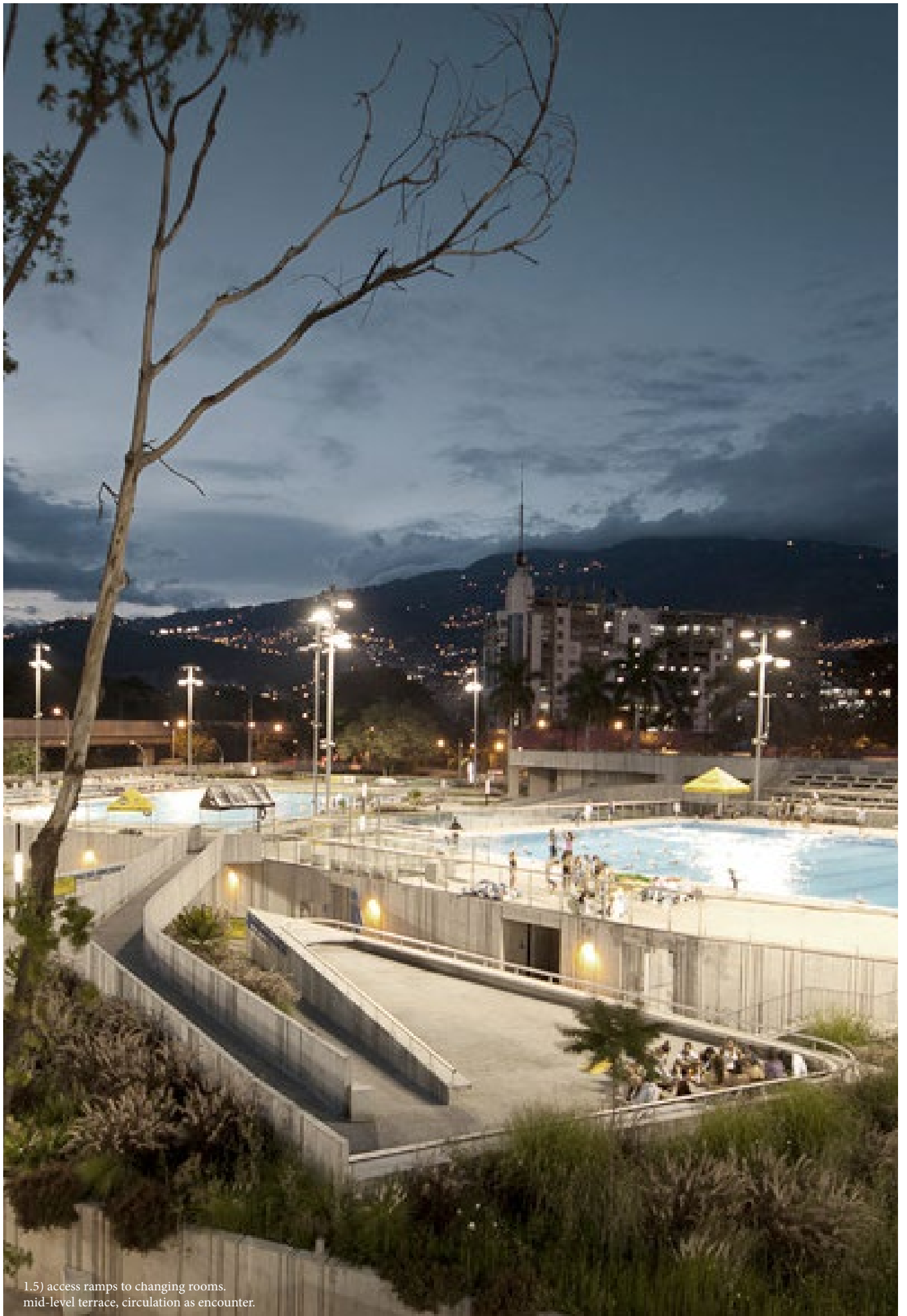
illumination to them and provide a meeting space and warm up area for competitors and swimmers.” The exposed concrete walls that confine the soil for the gardens, use a formwork with alterations in the recess, allowing variations in the concrete to the expose rippled surfaces to the humidity in the air. Consequently the gardens drain down the walls and striate the concrete.



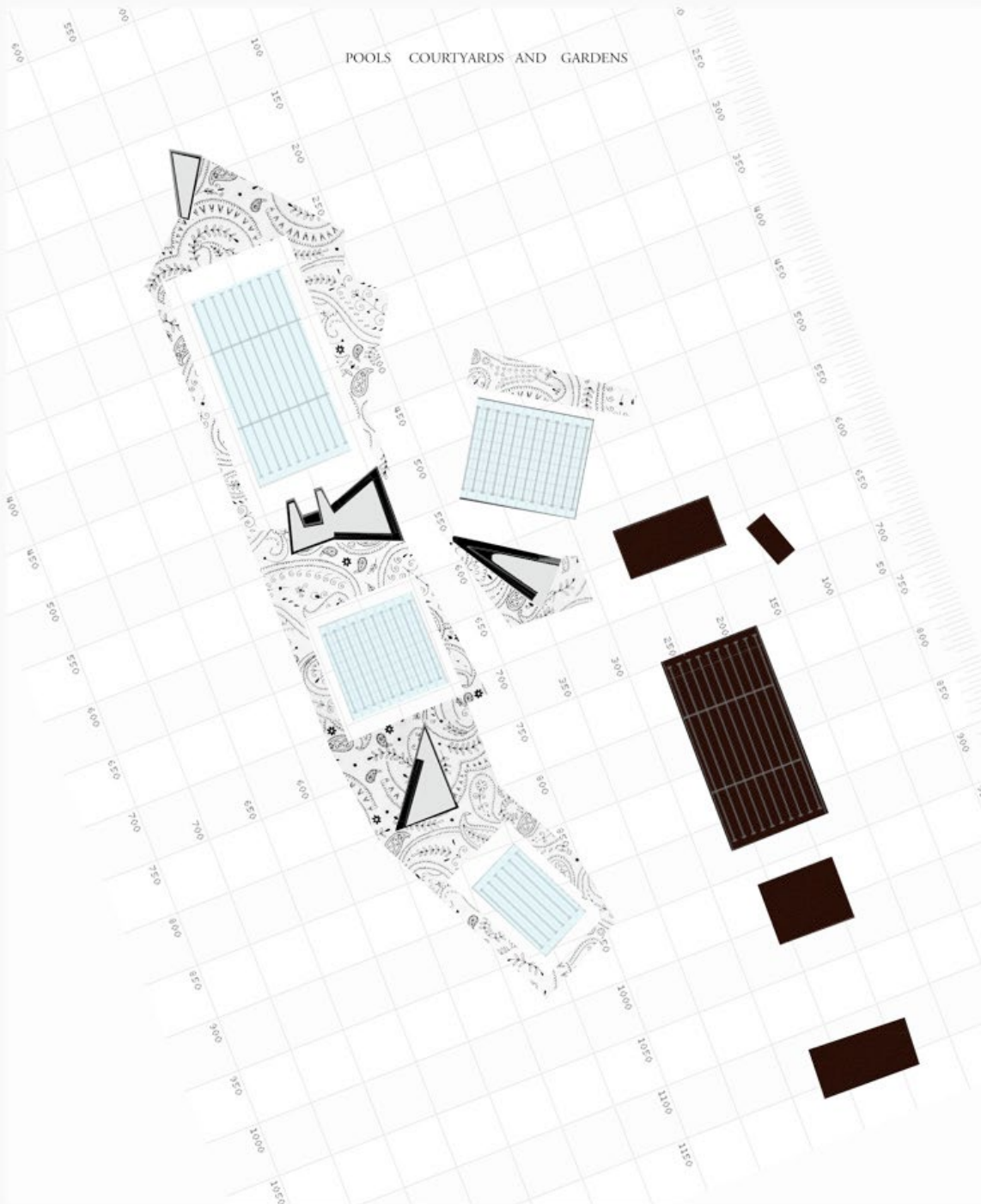
1.3) circulation to changing rooms.



1.4) view of synchronized swimmers.



1.5) access ramps to changing rooms.
mid-level terrace, circulation as encounter.



1.6) planview,
existing swimming pools are depicted black.



1.7) conceptual image.
water and horizon.



1.8) collage.
sequence of water, garden and circulation.