Credits of Public Space

【Credits】

1. Project Name：Kaew Boutique
2. Architects(firm)：MOBIUS STUDIO CO., LTD.
3. Client：Kaew Boutique
4. Photographer : W Workspace
5. Building Area（㎡）：3,500 m^2
6. Site Area（㎡）：20,380 m^2
7. Location：Kanchanaburi, Thailand
8. Cost：50M Baht

Kaew Boutique

"Kaew Boutique" is a sub-brand of Kaew, which was established in 1990 as a souvenir shop in Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand. Over the years, it has become one of the region's well-known destinations for local snacks and souvenirs, frequently visited by travelers passing through Kanchanaburi.

In 2022, following the economic slowdown after the COVID-19 pandemic, the owner recognized the need to transform the existing business. The original store had aged over time and functioned primarily as a conventional souvenir shop, where products were displayed on rows of shelving and visitors typically stopped briefly to purchase goods before continuing their journey. To respond to changing consumer behavior and attract a new generation of travelers, the business was rebranded as Kaew Boutique, a concept store centered on contemporary Thai desserts. The new program expands beyond retail to include a cafe, restaurant, co-working space, and pet-friendly facilities, creating a destination where visitors are encouraged to spend time rather than simply stop to shop.

The architectural concept draws inspiration from the site's natural context, with mountain ranges located at both the front and rear of the project, while the surrounding buildings are predominantly box-shaped. The building mass is therefore divided into separate volumes to form a central courtyard, metaphorically representing "the yolk" of an egg. Acting as the heart of the project, the courtyard connects every function within the building, allowing users to maintain a visual and physical relationship with this shared space regardless of where they are. More than a circulation space, the courtyard serves as a flexible communal area that accommodates events, informal gatherings, and everyday interactions among tourists, local residents, and families, bringing life to the project throughout the day.

The design also carefully responds to Thailand's tropical climate by considering the orientation of sunlight, prevailing winds, and seasonal rainfall. The roof form echoes the silhouette of the surrounding mountains, visually connecting the architecture with its landscape. Its generous overhangs extend the semi-outdoor spaces, allowing them to remain comfortable and functional throughout the year, even under strong sunlight or during rain. Materials were selected to harmonize with the natural surroundings, while the landscape was shaped through gently raised earth mounds and layered planting of varying heights. This approach creates spatial depth and reflects the character of the surrounding terrain, enabling visitors to experience a stronger connection with nature despite a limited landscape budget.

The primary objective of the project is to create a place where people can relax, spend time together, and enjoy the environment in comfort. The building's softened curved form, high roof, and extended eaves help reduce heat gain and provide protection from tropical weather. In addition, the slatted facade filters dust from the adjacent road while promoting natural cross ventilation, improving thermal comfort within the semi-outdoor spaces and reducing reliance on mechanical air conditioning in the shared areas.

Since its completion, Kaew Boutique has evolved from a roadside souvenir shop into a small public gathering place for the local community. In addition to tourists, the project now welcomes local residents who visit the cafe, work remotely, or simply spend time with family and friends. After school hours, parents often use the cafe as a comfortable place to wait for their children. The pet-friendly environment also allows visitors to enjoy the space with their

pets, supported by dedicated facilities, including pet waste disposal stations that help maintain cleanliness throughout the site.

More than a souvenir store, Kaew Boutique demonstrates how architecture can become a catalyst for revitalizing a local business while generating broader value for the community. The project contributes to the local economy by creating employment opportunities, supporting local products, and providing an inclusive place for people from different backgrounds to gather and interact. Through a simple design approach that responds thoughtfully to its context, climate, and users, the project illustrates how architecture can enhance everyday life while fostering environmental, social, and economic sustainability.