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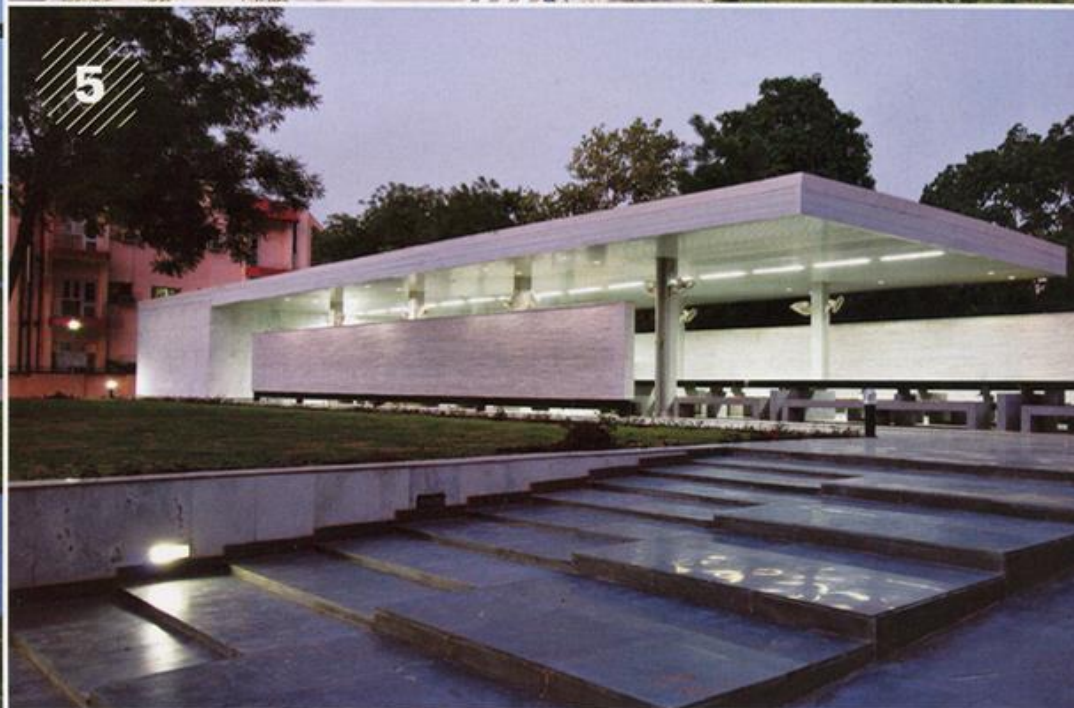
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4. PARQUE LINEAL DE MANZANARES, MADRID, SPAIN

The Manzanares River in Madrid plays host to one of the Spanish capital's largest landscape design makeovers. The riverbank area was, until recently, hidden under the concrete mass of a busy motorway, which is now being transferred underground, leaving the riverside free to be reclaimed by nature and the city. Rotterdam-based architects West 8, along with several local offices, started work on the huge project in 2005. The first element, Avenida de Portugal, running perpendicular to the river, has just been completed. The 6km-long grassy land bridge is covered in abstract flower patterns, inspired by the blossoming cherry trees encountered in an Extremaduran valley along the route from Madrid to Lisbon. 'We wanted to create a symbolic journey to Portugal,' says West 8 project architect Christian Dobrick. The freshly revealed space offers a new, nature-filled backdrop to the city and several much-needed parks for its inhabitants. www.west8.nl

5. CASTRO CAFE, JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA UNIVERSITY, NEW DELHI, INDIA

University canteens are not usually the most inspiring of places, encouragement, perhaps, for students to get back to lectures. But Romi Khosla Design Studio's latest project, part of the Jamia Millia Islamia University campus in New Delhi, is such a success that it is fast becoming a new social and cultural hub. Two years in the making, the Castro Café is a single, smooth rectilinear volume, which gradually opens up into a fully open-air space. The design blurs the boundaries between inside and out and means the building can adapt to the extremes of New Delhi weather. Polished granite and hardwood seating create continuity through the covered and open dining areas. Open six days a week to the public, the steel and marble-clad canteen is increasingly popular as a meeting place and snack stop – its samosas come highly recommended by the architects. Under construction on an adjacent plot is an art gallery, set to be another distraction for students and locals alike. ✪ www.rk-ds.com

through the pavilions that we built, see and feel a new harmony with the landscape.' The results certainly are harmonious: nine open-ended wooden pavilions, each themed and fitted out with individually designed furniture, are perfectly placed for visitors to admire the tranquil setting. Housing a small restaurant, picnic shelters and boat rental facilities, as well as meditation and music kiosks, the pavilions are dotted in strips beside the park's open areas and sports facilities, defining its limits and serving to reconnect the town with its lake, from which it was previously divided by a railway line and an industrial zone. Two load-bearing walls of different heights support each of the nine light structures, which were built according to the basic pine post-and-beam principle. During the day, the impressive pavilions bring a geometric touch to the landscape, while at night, when they are lit from within, they appear to float whimsically on the water's edge. www.localarchitecture.ch