



# វត្តខ្មែរឡូវែល

## VATT KHMER LOWELL

### KHMER AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER

A TEMPLE OF HOPE & A CENTER OF RENEWAL



## Project Description

The Khmer/Cambodian community in Lowell is many years old. As one of the largest diasporas outside of Cambodia, culture and heritage has been a central to the community's identity and an important bond of joining members together.

Lowell, the former Mill City, also known as a birthplace of a planned Industrial City of America, has been home to the second largest of Cambodian Americans in the country since the mid-1980s, with an estimated of 25,000 to 30,000 people; the largest one is Long Beach, California.

For a very long time, the Cambodian American community members, most of whom were survivors from the Killing Fields of Cambodia during the communist Khmer Rouge regime from April 1975 to early 1979, have had a vision of creating a place where we can gather, a



Above: 84,000 Buddha statues (size: 4.5 W x 6.5 H x 3 D inches) that represented 84,000 Buddha's Teaching are made of smooth-cast materials and will be displayed in a Grand Hall of Vatt Khmer Lowell. Each Buddha statue represents One Buddha's Dharma for each donor who contributes \$100. Thus, inspired the 84,000-Buddha Capital Campaign Project is aimed at fundraising \$8.4 million to support the development Vatt Khmer Lowell Khmer American Cultural Center Project.

Below: An artistic rendering of Vatt Khmer Lowell developed by Common Space Agency & KhAmeri Design Consulting, September 2019



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place where we can remember, and a place where we can celebrate our lives and stories of the past, and the possibilities and potential of our future.

In early spring 2019, the Buddhist monks and Board of Directors commissioned a group of architects and graduate students from Harvard University's School of Design to re-designing an existing set of plans on the nearly 12-acre of land located along the Merrimack River, a temple vision left by the late spiritual leader, the late **Venerable Sao Khon Dhammathero**, (AD 1934-2017) who passed away on September 2012. The monk was the care taker and follower of another Cambodian Buddhist spiritual leader, the late **Venerable Preah Maha Ghosananda**, better known to world as the Gandhi of Cambodia (AD 1923 -2012).

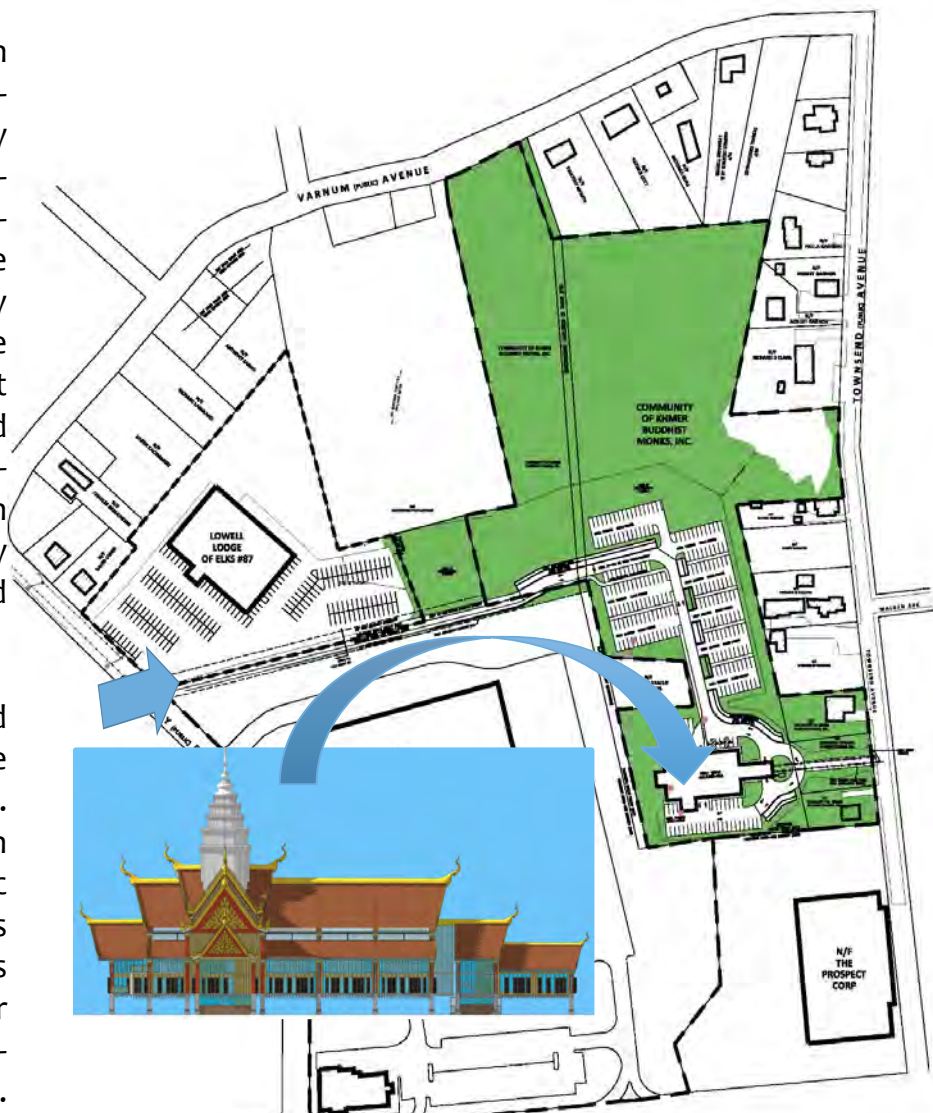


Above L-R: The late **Venerable Maha Ghosananda**, Gandhi of Cambodia (A.D. 1923-2012), and the late **Venerable Sao Khon Dhammathero**, Founding member of the Community of Khmer Buddhist Monks, Inc. and Founder/Abbot of Vatt Khmer Lowell (A.D. 1934-2017)

An open, community engaged design approach was used to develop a new direction for the temple and community center design by bringing a multi-generational community voices into a conversation, we are able to create a space neither one of us could independently conceive. This new design outcome blends together our memories, respect for our Khmer cultural heritage and tradition. And with contemporary details and style, that pair together both a sacred temple and secular community center and museum in a one of a kind Buddhist Temple.

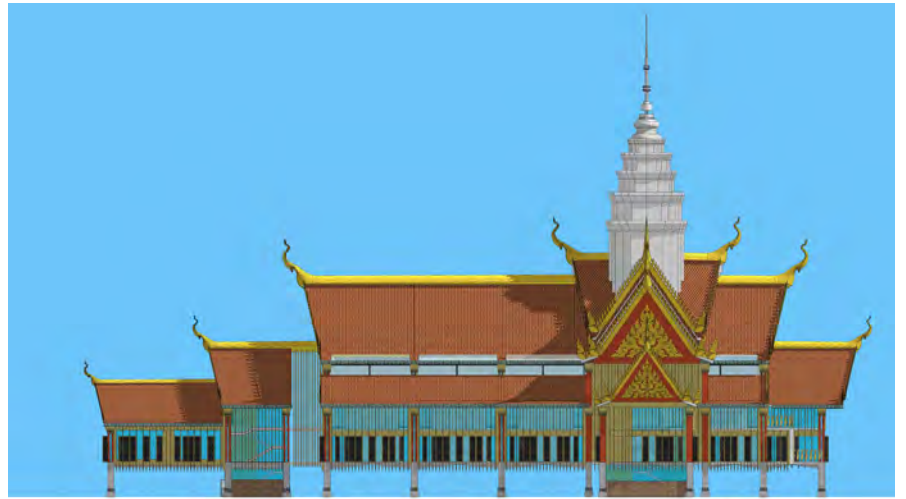
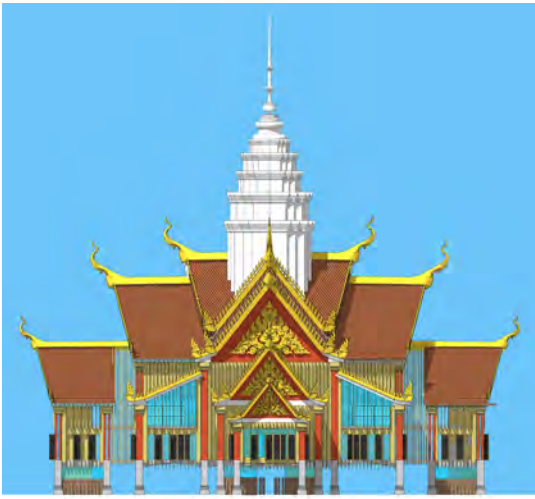
The building comprises an open ground floor that includes the landing of three (3) stairs cases and vertical circulations. This space besides a parking facility can also operate as park; hosting public events if adequate climate conditions are available. The second floor contains a cultural center with a main space for general gatherings and peripheral spaces for specific events and exhibitions. The third floor has the temple surrounded with meditation clusters and facilities for the monks.

The Main Partitions incorporate a set of transparent “light shelves”



Above: The Preliminary Site Plan of Vatt Khmer Lowell laying out partially on the 12-Acre of land located along the Merrimack River in Lowell, Massachusetts. The land consisted of six parcels at 800 & 800.10 Varnum Avenue and 48, 58, 66 and 104 Townsend Avenue in Lowell, Massachusetts, plus two residential buildings that was purchased in December 22, 2011, 2015 and 2017 (second residential property and a small lot of land from the Lowell Elks Lodge).





# Renderings and Floor Plans of Vatt Khmer Lowell Clockwise:

- \* Front View ទិដ្ឋភាពមើលពីខាងមុខ
- \* Right Side View ទិដ្ឋភាពមើលពីជុំហៀងខាងស្តាំ

## SECOND FLOOR ជាន់ទី២

- \* Grand Hall of 84,000 Buddha Statues  
មហាព្រះវិហារព្រះពុទ្ធរូប៨៤.០០០អង្គ
- \* Meditation Center & Dharma Learning Rooms  
មណ្ឌលសមាធិក, បន្ទប់សិក្សាព្រះធម៌
- \* Memorial Hall for Venerable Maha Ghosananda  
សាលកិត្តិយសសម្តេចព្រះមហាយោសានន្ទ
- \* Memorial Hall for Ven. Sao Khon Dhammathero  
សាលកិត្តិយសព្រះសង្ឃធិបតី ធម្មបេរោ សៅ យន
- \* Offices for CKBM and Buddhist Sangha  
ការិយាល័យសហគមន៍ព្រះសង្ឃខ្មែរ
- \* Restrooms (Monks, men and women) បន្ទប់ទឹក (ព្រះសង្ឃ, បុរស, ស្រី)
- \* Conference Room & Service Spaces បន្ទប់ប្រជុំ & កន្លែងផ្តល់សេវាកម្ម
- \* Storage & Utilities Rooms ឃ្លាំង & បន្ទប់គ្រឿងបច្ចេកសេវាកម្ម

## FIRST FLOOR ជាន់ទី១

- \* Library បណ្ណាល័យ
- \* Museum & Gift Shop សារៈមន្ទីរ, ហាងលក់វត្ថុអនុស្សាវរីយ៍
- \* Community Function Hall សាលាបុណ្យ
- \* Offices/Working Area ការិយាល័យ & កន្លែងធ្វើកិច្ចការផ្សេងៗ
- \* Kitchen/Service Space/Utilities ការដ្ឋាន, កន្លែងសេវាកម្ម, គ្រឿងយន្ត
- \* Meeting Rooms & Storage Space បន្ទប់ប្រជុំ សិក្សា & ឃ្លាំង
- \* Restrooms (men, women) បន្ទប់ទឹក (ប្រុស & ស្រី)
- \* Memorial Halls, Panels Display សាលកិត្តិយស

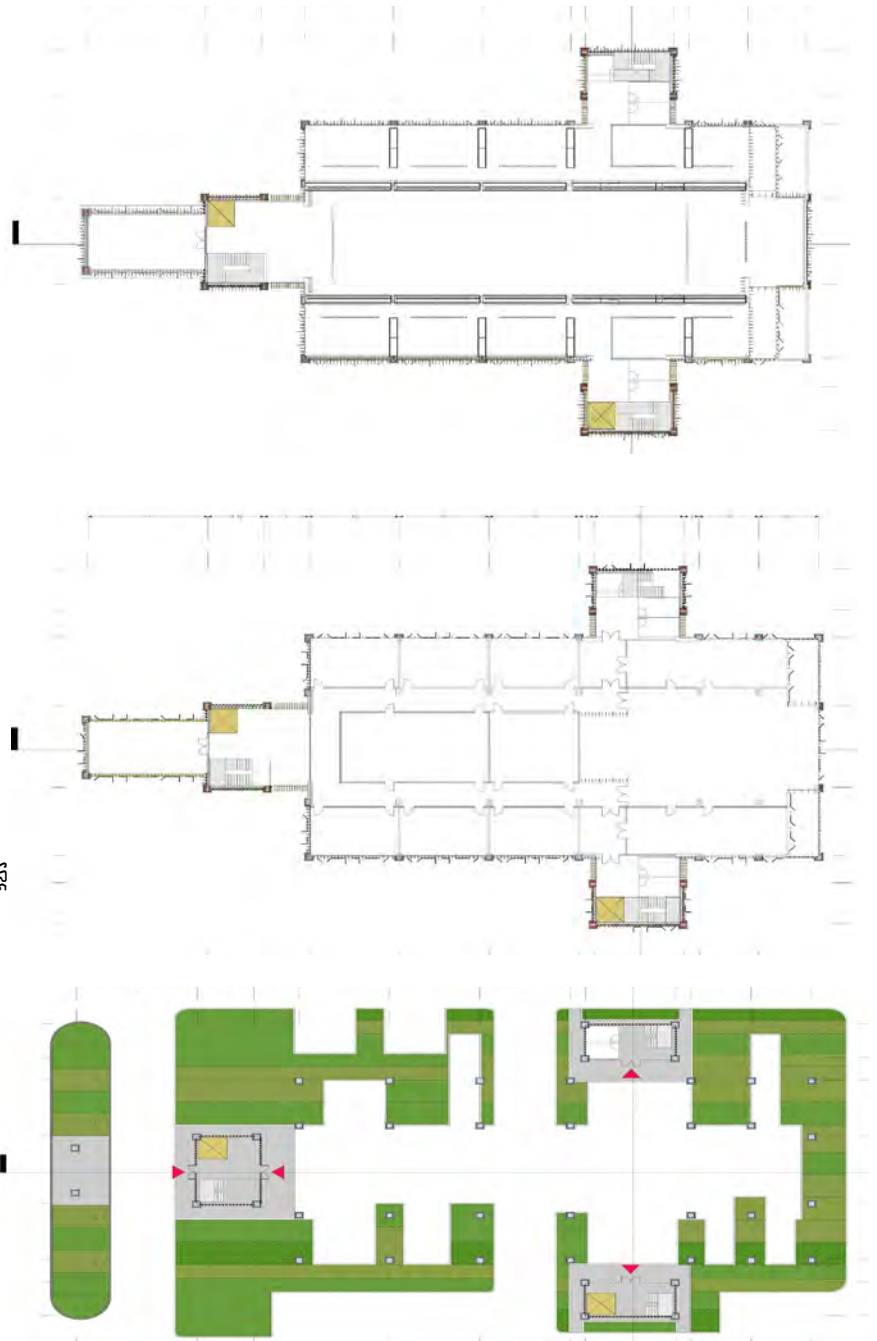
## GROUND FLOOR ជាន់លើដី

- \* Circulation កន្លែងលំហា
- \* Vestibule ជណ្តើរ កន្លែងចេញចូល
- \* Parking space, Garden, Ancillary Landscape  
ចំណតរថយន្ត, សួនច្បារ

Size: 190 ft x 90 ft

Approximate 32,900 sq. ft.; 2.5 story-structure

Parking: 274+ spaces





which hold the 84 thousand Budhas of the fund raise campaign.

Relevant bioclimatic features comprise operable shutters on the envelope with historic engraved moments over the panels. A 'Light-well' strategy is incorporated along the longitudinal axes of the columns to provide visual comfort and a "enlightenment" effect across the "light shelves" and floor slap openings reaching on the first floor.



Finally, a set of transitional spaces, envisioned as "timber bridges" articulate vertical circulations with the building's main body. It is at the end a collective vision to create a special place for Cambodians, Buddhists, Friends and Neighbors the world over to be a part of our story and create a special place for Lowell.

*Above: Traditional Boat Team of Vatt Khmer "Lowell Pride" capturing 2nd place Championship during the 2018 Water Festival, which happened annually on the third weekend of August. The event has been going on for 23 years since its inception in August 1997.*

Please join our campaign to make the Vatt Khmer a reality!



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