Cultural Centre



Los Silencios Reserve

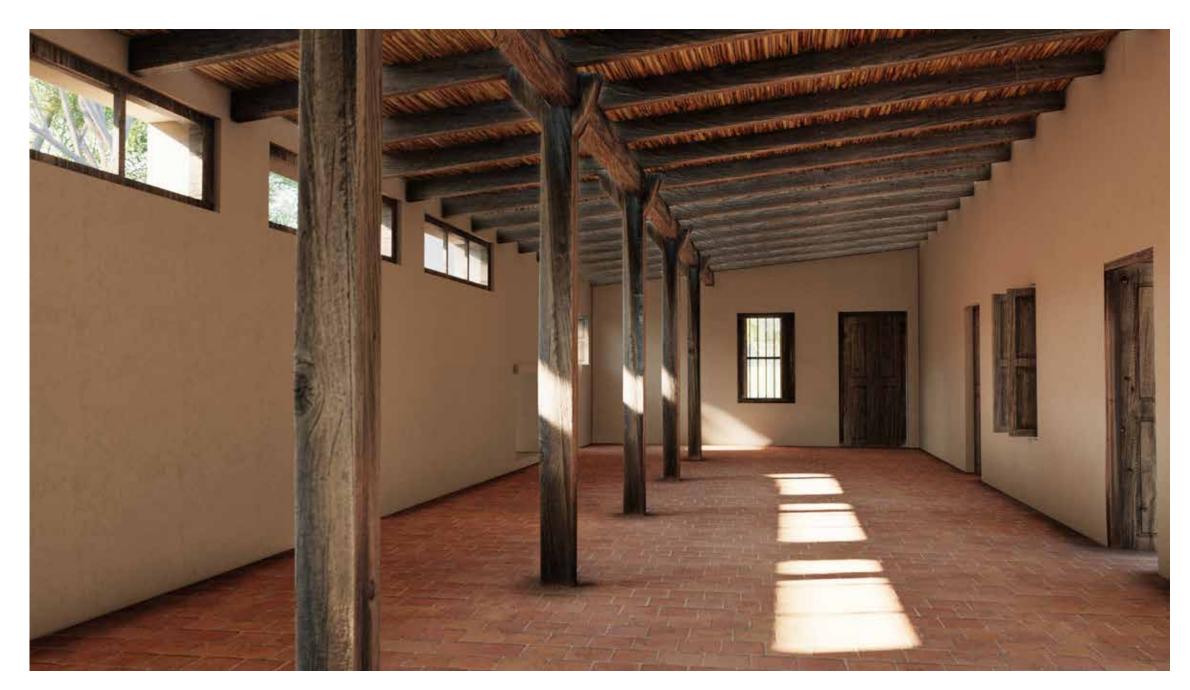


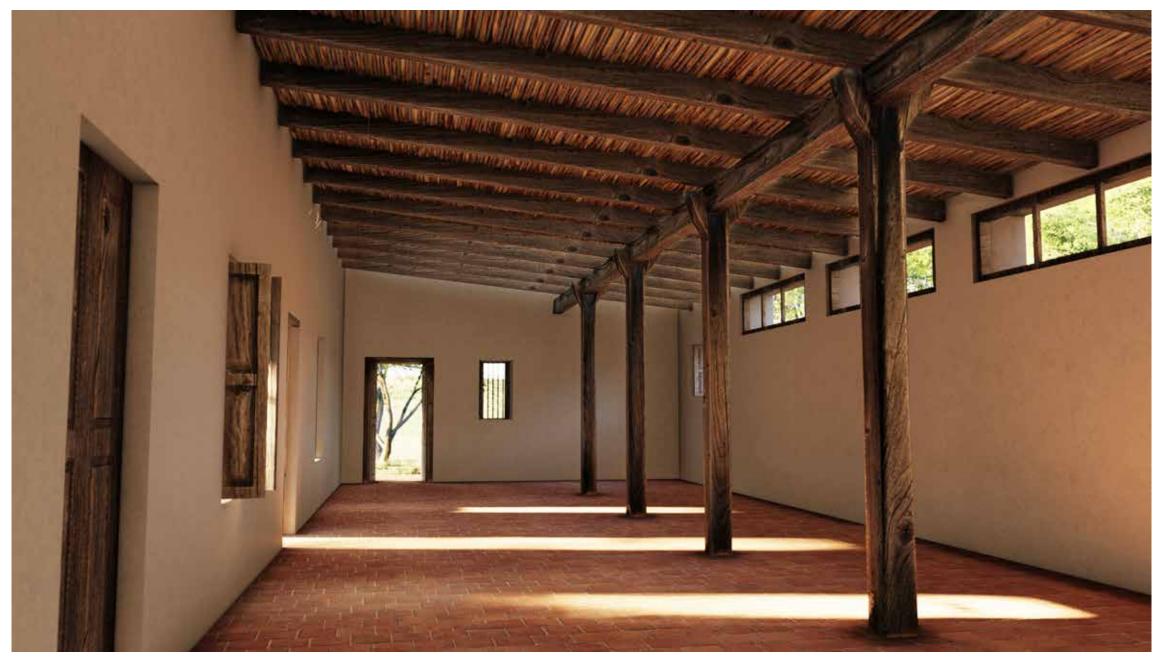
The Centre will be placed in the main terrace, which we call *Plaza*. It is designed to show different aspects of the identity of the *monte*, Argentina's dry forest, and gain a greater knowledge of its culture and natural environment.





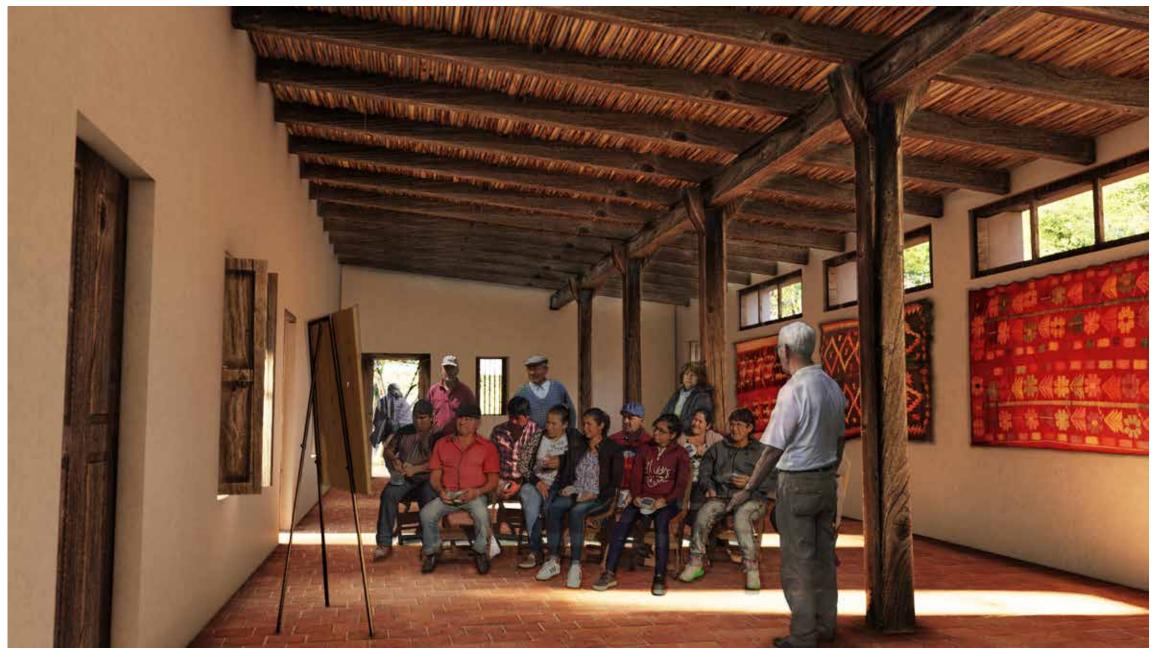




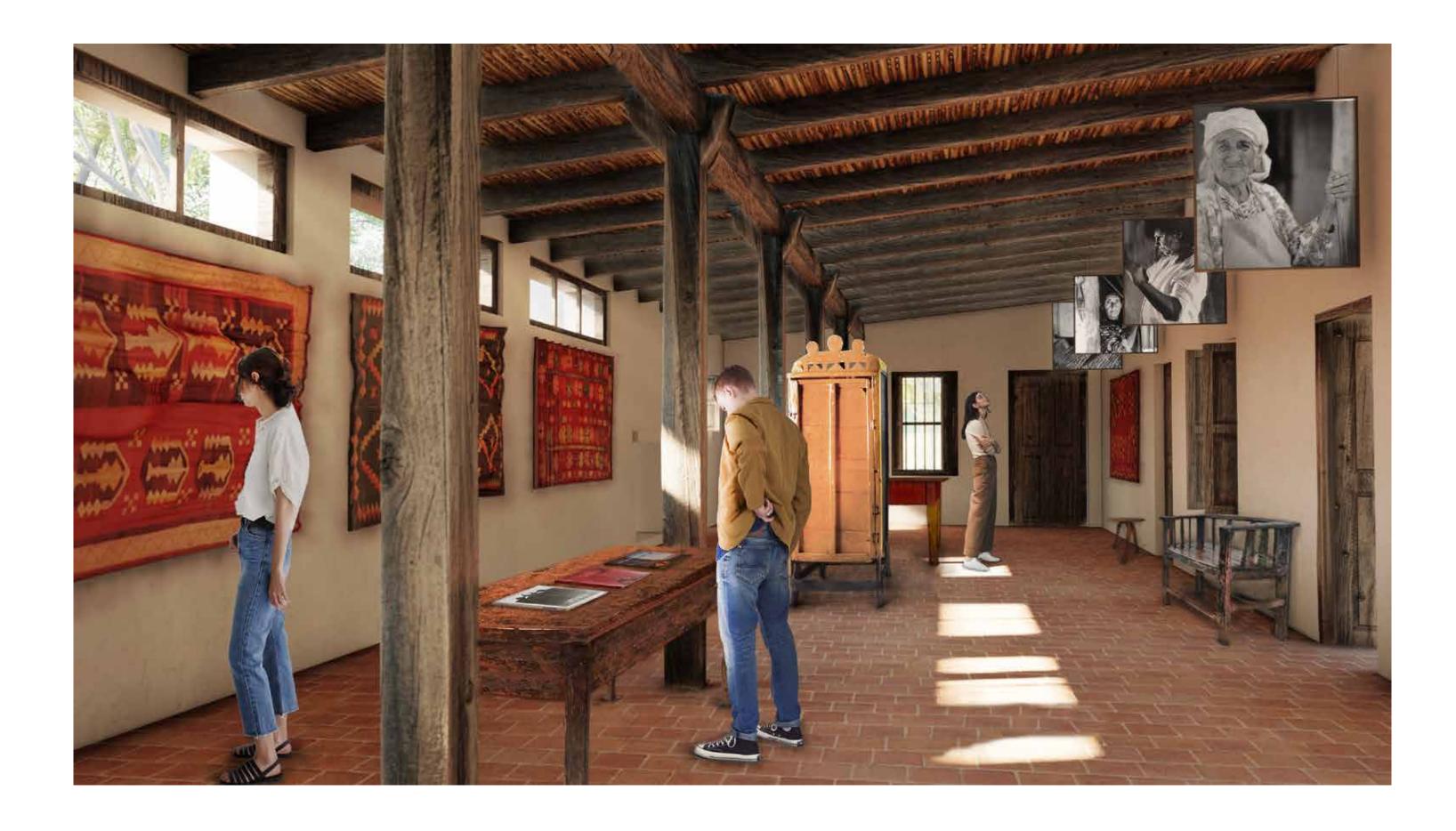


The Centre we plan must be multifunctional. It must be a clear, open and educational area, able to contain different activities by and for the community with its different ages and interests.





A space suitable for workshops on various subjects: conservation and sustainability, agro-ecological system and organic farming, ethno botany, how to take advantage of water, wind and solar resources, crafts production, performing arts (music, theatre, dances), regional cuisine, etc.



The Centre will house an extensive library on subjects related to the area, as well as a textile, object and furniture collection reproduced in the trilogy "A HIDDEN ART, Objects from Argentina's dry forest" "TELERAS, Weavers from Argentina's dry forest" and "MONTE, Rural furniture from Argentina" books. These collections will remain as a permanent collection and cultural heritage of Los Silencios Reserve.

Architectural Memory

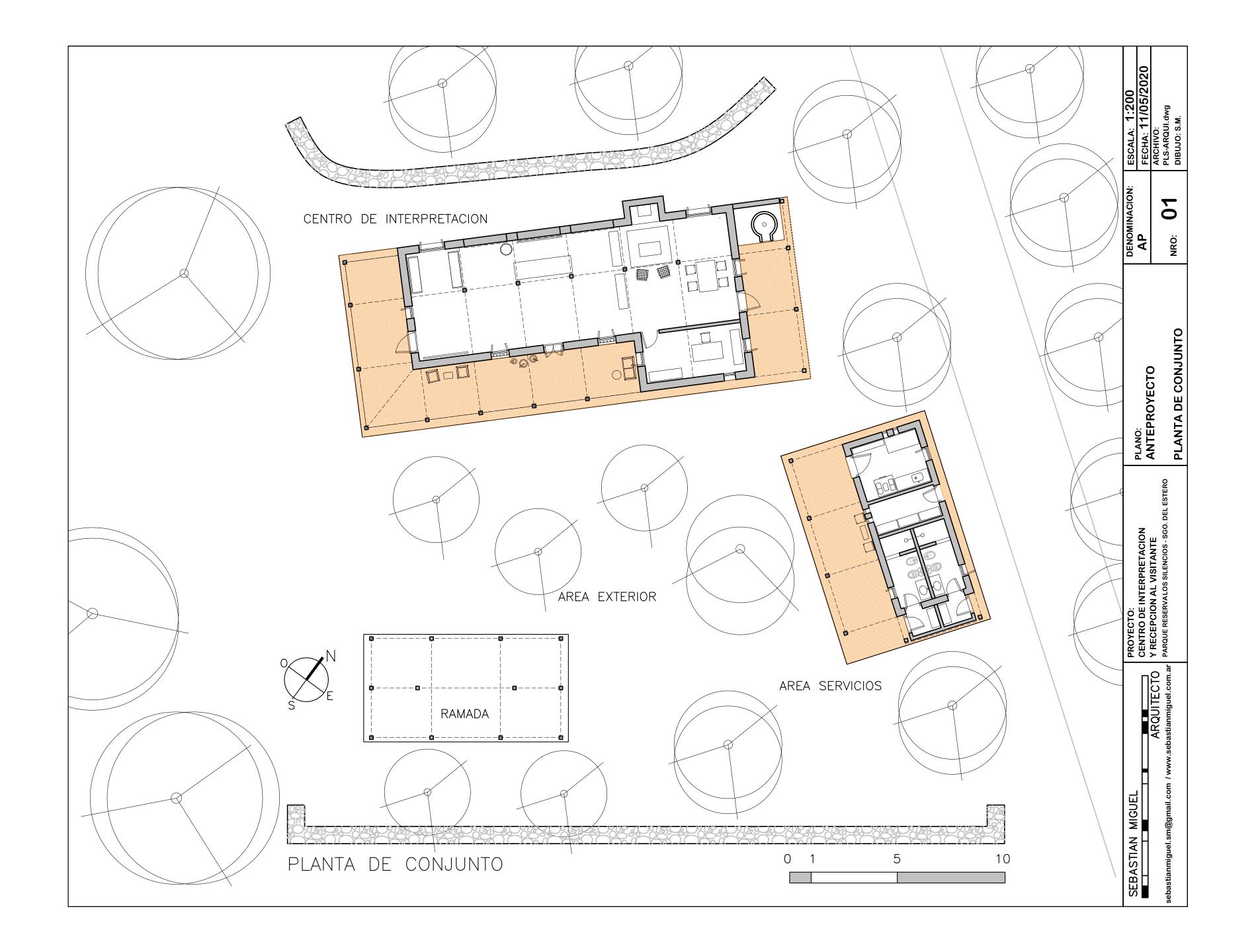


Arq. Sebastián Miguel

The Cultural Centre is situated on one side of the terrace we call *Plaza central*. It is placed so as to preserve the site of pre-Columbian mortars carved in the rocks, and diagonally facing the botanical gardens that, framed by stone walls, are situated on the hill on the other side of the seasonal stream.

In architectural terms the Centre is organized in four well interconnected defined spaces.

- 1) The Main area.
- 2) The Kitchen and Sanitary Facilities.
- 3) The Ramada.
- 4) A central courtyard, (*the Patio*) a natural outdoor space under the trees which is framed by the first three areas.



The Centre was designed in a distinctive architectural style based on typologies and models of local *Monte* dwellings. The special techniques developed in every one of the exterior, interior and middle spaces, are clearly seen in every one of the parts that form this Centre, in accordance with the season of the year, the day or night hours, and the type of activity.

1.- The main room measures 21 x 8.50 m and is a reinterpretation of the classic *Santiagueño* house. It is made up of a large reception area, its size and flexibility are suited for meetings and activities of different disciplines as well as hosting exhibitions to showcase various cultural aspects of the region's daily life.

Spaces are defined in terms of the lengths of the white *quebracho* wood* rods resting on stout pillars of red *quebracho* wood* creating a space usually measuring 2.50 x 2.50 m.

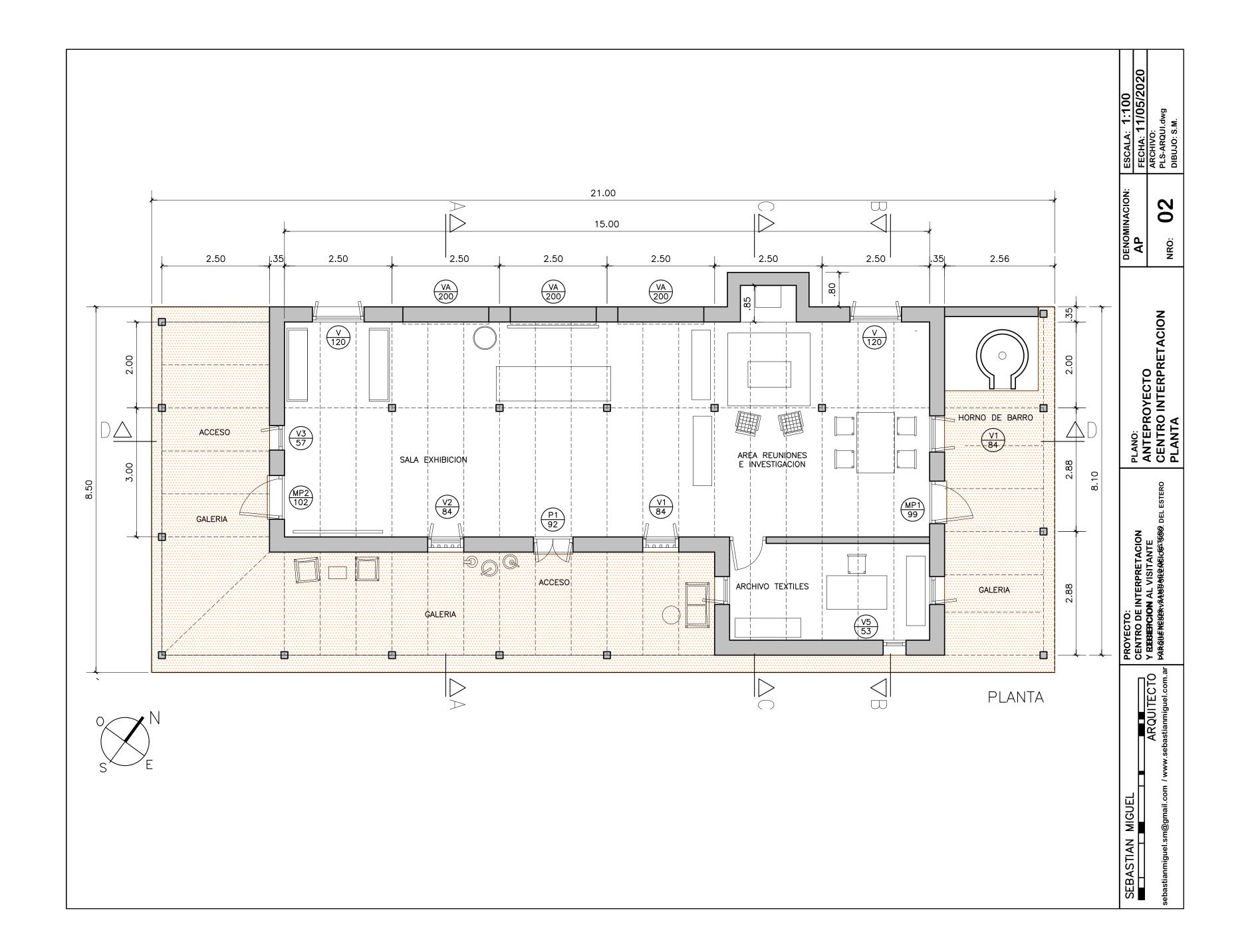
The thick plastered adobe walls and roofs made from straw or twigs baked in mud or clay allow for thermal regulation, a natural protection from the torrid heat in summer and the freezing cold in winter.

This space also has a separate area with less natural light which is designed as a study and conservation room where books, textiles, furniture and objects from the Centre's collection will be stored.

In three sides of the covered area, galleries lead to the activity room. The galleries are transition spaces connecting the outside with the inside, providing shelter from both sun and rain.

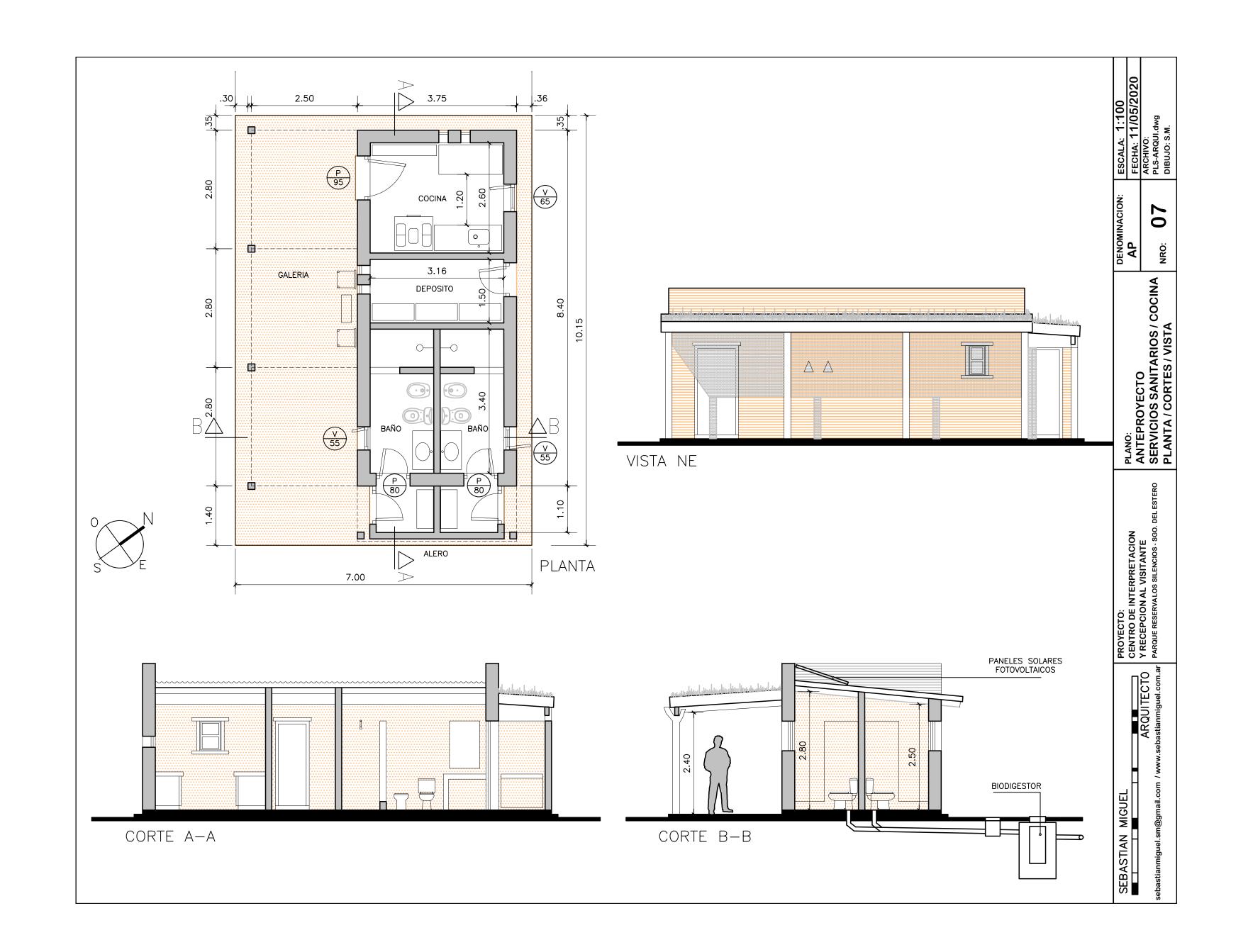
The height of the galleries depend on the length of the red *quebracho* poles which normally measure 2.30 to 2.80 m.

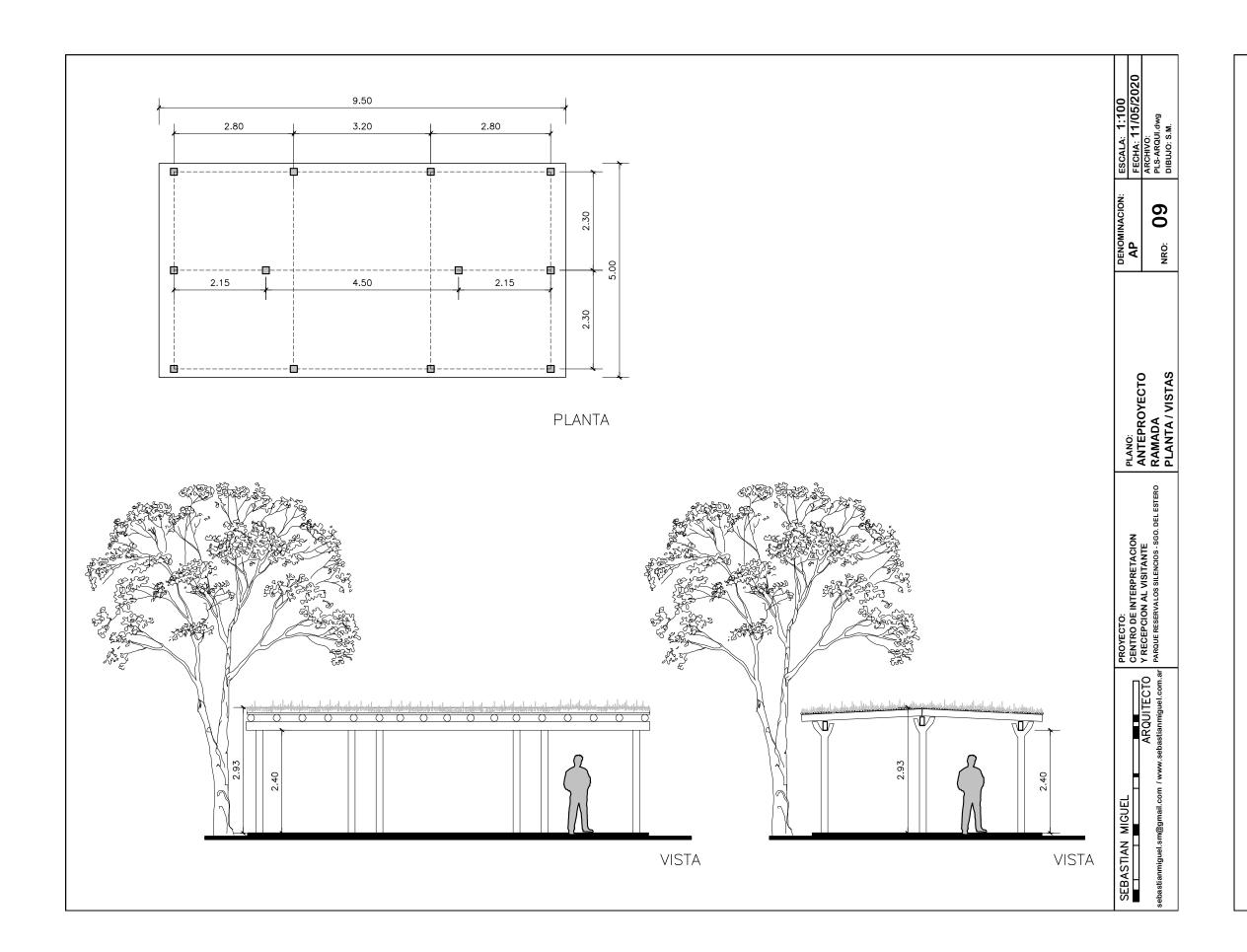
These galleries also serve as intermediate spaces for semi – covered activities and the elements used in their construction endow the building with a unique identity.

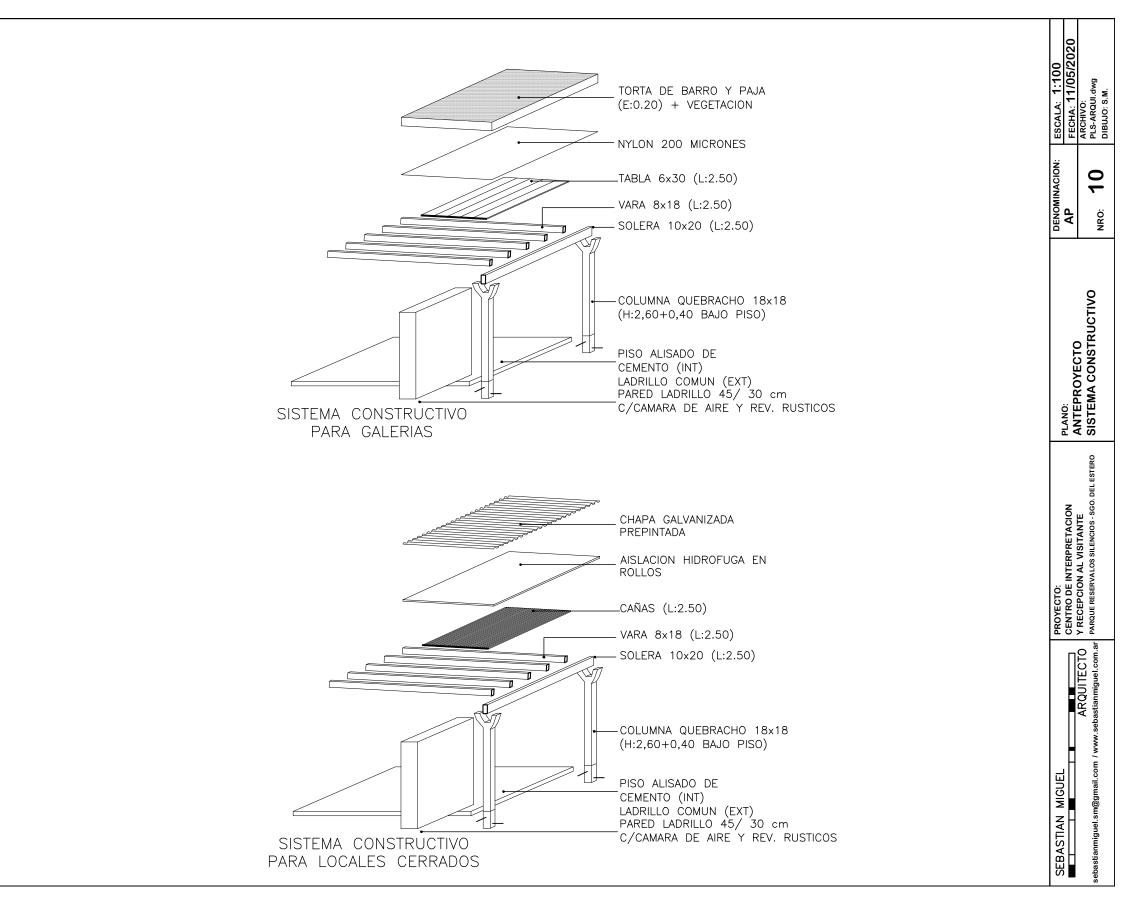




- 2.-Towards one side of the main building, linked to it by the circulation path, there is another building, measuring 8.00×7.00 m, designed to harbour kitchen and bathrooms. This building follows the same aesthetic and modular design as the main building and the ramada. Photovoltaic solar panels will be placed on the roof facing north for maximum exposure. The black and gray waste waters from the service facilities will be treated in a closed bio-digester to be used, once treated, as capillarity irrigation.
- 3.- The *ramada* is a semi-covered rectangular space without walls, measuring 9.50 x 5 m intended for outdoor activities. The technique employed in its construction is based on red *quebracho* pillars ending on a fork on top of which the rods that support the roof, lean. A layer of reeds or twisted *jarilla*, mud and *guano* is then applied to build up the roof.
- 4.- All these buildings form the Cultural Centre and are placed around a courtyard called *patio*. This central courtyard is covered by trees whose branches provide a shelter that offers a cool shade in summer and houses many birds who coexist with the different daily *monte* activities.







We want to fill this educational and cultural void and we are working on it.

All contributions will be most welcome.



Notes

* **Monte:** The creole word for dry forest, which covers the northern region in Argentina.

Also used to name a small cluster of trees or a small forest.

Area in which a specific creole-mestizo culture has developed over the centuries. Inhabited in pre-Columbian times by different native tribes coming from the Andes, the Amazonia and the Pampas. Later, when conquering the Inca Empire, the Spaniards brought with them traces of their Arab culture. In the late XIX century, the British arrived bringing their trains, their industry and the Victorian culture.

* White Quebracho: a tree of the Apocynaceae species

* Red Quebracho: a tree of the Scinopsis Lorentzii species