



The building of Pearl Academy of Fashion designed by renowned architectural firm, Morphogenesis, takes eco-consciousness to a whole new level as it makes fashion fall in step with architecture to drive sustainable development. Text By Kenishka Ramchandani, Photographs Courtesy The Architects.

Staid Victorian structures are passé, so are stern concrete blocks... today schools boast of innovative building designs that encompass creativity, activity and interaction. And when a building had to be designed for something as dynamic as fashion designing, the design approach was naturally unique. When Pearl Academy of Fashion invited Delhi based architecture and interior design firm, Morphogenesis, to design its school in Jaipur, the team of architects knew that the project called for a nonpareil, functional and environmentally responsive design.

The institute is located in a typical hot, dry, desert climate on the outskirts of Jaipur, in the soulless Kukas industrial area, about 20 km from the famous walled city. Pearl Academy is known for its outstanding academic credentials and naturally the institute's building was required to echo this sentiment. Apart

from the functional and aesthetic aspects of the building, it had to be sustainable too. This project had the team of architects at Morphogenesis churning in their creative genius to do justice to the combined concepts of fashion, modern, eco-friendliness and functionality.

A walk through the building is enough to reveal the seamless confluence of architectural styles. The architects have drawn from modern techniques of sustainable construction whilst keeping the basics firmly rooted in Indian architecture. However, it was not as easy as it sounds. For starters, there was the

adverse climate to contend with during the construction stage. Whilst the atmosphere around the site was generally arid and dry, it was necessary to regulate the climate within the institute premises without compromising on resources. The answer to this dilemma was found in the use of screens of

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"jaalis" – an ancient architectural legacy that has enriched the abodes of the Rajputs in the past.

The jaali is in fact a double skin of the façade of the building and acts as a thermal buffer between the building and the surroundings. The architects elaborate, "The architecture of the academy needed to be a confluence of modern adaptations of traditional Indo-Islamic architectural elements and passive cooling strategies prevalent in the hot-dry desert climate of Rajasthan such as open courtyards, water body, a step-well or baoli and jaalis (perforated stone screen). All these elements have been derived from their historic usages, but will manifest themselves through the built form and become an intrinsic part of the daily life of the design student."

Another traditional Indian feature, which is a highlight of this project, is the use of open courtyards. Inner courtyards regulate airflow and aid ventilation within the building. The team at Morphogenesis has fruitfully used this element to navigate airflow and keep the interiors airy. These courtyards also help in maximising the use of daylight thus saving on electrical energy.

Ushering in modern ideas to create a sustainable structure, the architects have successfully drawn the plan for self shading sliver courts. Developed by

THIS PAGE TOP & BOTTOM A walk through the building is enough to reveal the seamless confluence of architectural styles.

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP & BOTTOM Perforated stone screens or "jaalis" not only supply an aesthetic quality but are a prominent passive cooling feature.





royal architects in the past, the system of underground wells and tunnels, was fine tuned by Morphogenesis to suit modern times. Constructed by raising the building above ground level leaving a scooped in belly at the centre with a natural thermal sink. Evaporation from water bodies in the scooped in belly keeps the building cool, whilst the banked space around the thermal sink is utilised by students as recreation and exhibition area.

Charting out a sustainable and coercive design for the building of Pearl Academy of Fashion, was an uphill task for Morphogenesis but the team soon realised the potential of this project via an integrated approach. Naturally with such parameters to work with the use of materials was of utmost importance to the team. "The materials used for construction were chosen keeping in mind the climatic needs of the region while retaining the progressive design intent," reveal the architects.

Morphogenesis' design for Pearl Academy of Fashion is exemplar in many ways: a sustainable structure in the desert, an environment-friendly institute and an energy efficient module that believes in carefully watching its carbon footprint. It has paved way for a greener approach to modern architecture interspersed with traditional elements. And to put it in fashion terminology, it has proved that green is the new black in the design world. ■

