

City Centre, Siliguri morphogenesis.

an illustrated monograph with detailed drawings
photography: andre j fanthome | edmund sumner

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06-10 **morphogenesis.Commercial**

- 06 Foreword:
- 10 Design Ethos
- 12 Timeline

14-101 **Case Study: City Centre**

- 18 Introduction
- 20 Context
- 28 Program Brief
- 30 Morphology
- 60 Materiality
- 74 Performance
- 80 Drawings
- 96 Site Photographs

102 - 109 **Credentials**

- 102 Facts & Figures
- 104 Awards & Publications

contents

“Of the project highlights, the most significant is the bio-climatological approach, the interface between township and city and the break-out spaces in the form of landscaped terraces on each floor. This project is indigenous in the city”

- Buildotech dec 2012



Foreword:

Traditionally, Siliguri had always prided itself as the Gateway to Sikkim, Bhutan, Assam and Nepal and continues to connect Darjeeling and Kalimpong. But now-easily accessed by air and rail- you could get to Gangtok in less than four hours, catch an overnight bus to Patna, Phuntsoling or even to Chitwan or Pokhra. Siliguri has rapidly developed for lucrative business opportunities. Yes, the sleeping princess has woken up at last!

Siliguri is today the passageway through which trade and commerce flourish in the north-east, poised to become a dynamic business hub. The opening of the Nathu-La Pass and the phase wise implementation of SAFTA has contributed immensely to the flourishing business and the speedy development of the city. This is where tourist gather for further travel into the mountains.

Uttorayon, a comprehensive, self contained mini township located on the NH 31 at Siliguri, is a hearting reflection of this change in the entire area. Spread over 400 acres with plots and pre-built houses and apartment, it has been carefully planned as a spanking urban settlement. It is a self sustained township that has completely changed the provincial atmosphere of Siliguri into a vibrant city. Uttorayon lies north of the highway with a panoramic view of the Kanchendzonga and river Chamta that skirts the town. Houses and apartment are arranged in neat clusters with its secure and beautifully landscaped premises. Pedestrian pathways flow through open green and abundant gardens shed their colour and fragrance. The township has planned roads and community activity centers, an exclusive space for schools, hospitals and dispensaries, shopping arcades, club and a thoughtful provision for IT institutions, hotels, theme parks and much more. Planned to be a neighborhood of about 50,000 diverse people from diverse socio-economic classes, through innovative planning Uttorayon offers specific settlement identities, set in the lap of nature.

Phase one was launched in November 2002 and several other phases have been launched since then. Many of the bungalows, group houses, residencies and an educational institution set up by the Birla Group are already in existence. Phase one of the HIG apartments, a complex of 5 towers comprising 9 storied buildings, with a total of 220 flats,

along with a community center, a party lawn, swimming pool, gym, amphitheatre was also handed over to allottees in September 2008. Four more towers, comprising 10 storied building, are coming up in future. Divya Jyoti, a co-educational school on the premises (which is part of the well known M P Birla Group) has already accepted 400 students as a part of its Nursery to Class VII facilities. The amenities will gradually go up to Class XII. Plans are also underway for a super specialty hospital and diagnostic centre. The club, exclusively for members, envisages outdoor activities like lawn tennis, badminton, putting green for golf, and a swimming pool for adults and toddlers. Indoor activities include table tennis, carrom and pool tables. There will also be a leisure and wellness spa boasting a private salon, treatment rooms, steam, sauna and Jacuzzi. Plush rooms for meeting at the business centers, conference-cum-banquet conveniences to cater business need and additional specialty restaurants and lounge bars to suit every appetite has already begun making Uttorayon the most 'happening' place in Siliguri.

To add the excitement, a shopping destination has just been launched on the premises. The City Centre, located at the entrance of Uttorayon, is one of the largest commercial developments in eastern India, with a total built-up area of about 1 million sq. ft. Designed by Morphogenesis Design Studio, Delhi, famous for creating the Metropolitan shopping complex at Gurgaon, the Siliguri shopping centre is one-stop shopping and entertainment extravaganza for the entire family. With office towers and a hotel to add to its attraction, it will have over 6 lakh (6,00,000-) sq. ft. built-up area, include 200 shops, renowned anchor stores, a four-screen 1,000 seater Inox multiplex, a mall mart especially dedicated to local retailers, another addition of Hangout-the well known food court and a massive 30,000 sq. ft. atrium lobby for promotions and events. Also, as icing to the cake, over 75,000 sq. ft. open air entertainment area has been planned. It will parade a variety of kiosks that will include fast foods to add delight to the place, along with fountain courts and landscaped greens an ideal location to hang out and meet. In addition to all this, there will be 3 lakh (300,000,-) sq. ft. dedicated to a state-of-the-art office area. The Business Center will introduce the unique concept



based on 'pay-by-use' and will have a contemporary buzz to its decor and atmosphere. And, of course, there will be 24 hours security with a modern, access control system to take care of eventualities. Also, since Siliguri is an important transit point for traveller's who go up to the hills, City Centre shall have a Unique Travellers Lounge called Club Kanchenjunga that shall allow people to check in, fresh-n-up, get latest flight updates and also use the services at the business centre.

Siliguri certainly takes a dizzy U turn in its history. And we take a bow!

(An extract from Inner Eye, August - September 2009) Courtesy: Inner Eye, all rights reserved.)



Urbanism as a strategic intervention

One of the most worrying issues confronting the developing world, where massive population movements generate disordered growth, is to find a more sustainable model of development for its towns and cities. Much of the present urban planning and architecture continues to be ecologically unviable, culturally unsympathetic, and visibly incapable of sustaining the dynamic processes of life and growth.

On one hand, provision of good Infrastructure is a major issue while on the other, preservation of values, craft, and cultures becomes a challenge. A bold, heroic approach is required to provide space and facilities for decent modern living to millions. A truly successful model of sustainable urbanism for the Indian subcontinent will need to comprehensively address the sensitive relationship between man, his culture and his environment. A good solution will respond to issues unique to Indian economics, sociology, history, diversity and of course, Indianness, within the larger philosophy of environmental protection & rejuvenation. Such a model will enhance our lives by nudging us towards a more sustainable & socio-culturally engaged existence. Architecture will have to lead the way by appropriately re-defining society's aspirations to help transform the society. It should start with passive solutions at its core, to reduce energy and water dependence at the outset without reliance on mechanical equipments.

Mixed use schemes typically constitute residential units, office spaces along with retail units all on the same piece of land. These should not be centered simply around motorized transport, but instead focus on being more inclusive and comprehensive, by addressing other ways of human transport such as walkability, pedestrian movement, cycling, etc. Design of large commercial developments needs to move away from a 'masterplanning' approach, and rethink design as a process for 'strategic intervention' in society, bottom up, inclusive, affecting change by demonstrating success at a local level.

