

# ARCHITECTURE+DESIGN

A N I N D I A N J O U R N A L O F A R C H I T E C T U R E





# CONTENTS

— ARCHITECTURE+DESIGN —

VOL. XL NO. 5 ■ ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL 2023

07 **ABOUT THE ISSUE**

08 **INTERVIEW**

**A Trip Down the Memory Lane**

*Dikshu Kukreja*

10 **EVENT**

**Salone del Mobile 2023**

12 **SPOTLIGHT**

**Up-lift Your Dream Home**

*NIBAV Home Lifts*

14 **INTERVIEW**

**Disha Arora**

*White Ash Studio*

**DESIGN FOR CHANGE**

16 **Making Indian Cities Livable and Productive**

*Bimal Patel*

20 **We Need Grassroots Changes in the Way We Design Our Cities**

*Rahul Kadri*

24 **Architecture Of Restraint: Let Us Decolonise Ourselves**

*Sourabh Gupta*

28 **Circularity: A Viable Future for the Building Industry**

*Amrishi Arora*

32 **Building Less For More**

*Ravi Sarangan*

37 **Social Sustainability: An Inclusive Approach to Building Construction**

*Sonali Rastogi*

40 **Mindful Landscape Designing: A Step Towards Sustainability**

*Kunal Maniar*

44 **Mobilising Architecture in Times of Emergency**

*Akshat Bhatt*



VIEWPOINTS

## Sonali Rastogi

Founding Partner, Morphogenesis



## SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

Empowering rural communities by directly engaging them in  
and beyond the process of construction.



”

COVID-19 revealed several underlying gaps in our country's infrastructure. In India, we witnessed the largest post-partition migration to date—an estimated 139 million migrant workers were compelled to leave the industrial belts surrounding India's major cities to return to their faraway rural homes.

Most of these workers hail from India's green belt. In years past, they would move en masse to densely populated urban cores, where they often resided, working in dismal conditions for minimal pay. The pandemic-induced lockdowns left them with no buffer to deal with an uncertain future and highlighted the underlying trend of uncontrolled urban migration.

The dire circumstances that our labour force was subjected to led us to investigate the potential of architecture in creating a sustainable, self-reliant economic model

OUR PRACTICE'S  
FIRST EXAMPLE  
OF THIS  
APPROACH IS  
THE PEARL  
ACADEMY,  
COMPLETED IN  
JAIPUR IN 2009.  
ITS DESIGN IS  
A CONFLUENCE  
OF MODERN  
ADAPTATIONS  
OF TRADITIONAL  
INDO-ISLAMIC  
ARCHITECTURAL  
ELEMENTS AND  
PASSIVE COOLING  
STRATEGIES  
COMMONLY USED  
IN RAJASTHAN'S  
ARID DESERT  
CLIMATE.

”

for rural communities, thereby disincentivizing internal migration and contributing to the resilient growth of these communities.

Our practice's first example of this approach is The Pearl Academy, completed in Jaipur in 2009. Its design is a confluence of modern adaptations of traditional Indo-Islamic architectural elements and passive cooling strategies commonly used in Rajasthan's arid desert climate. The roof is thermally insulated using inverted matkas (earthen pots), which were laid across the surface. The space between them was filled with sand and broken bricks and then cast over with a thin binding layer of concrete.

The making of these matkas employed 120 potters and jaali makers for over a year. And the success of this project led us to wonder how we could continue to engage local communities and incorporate their skills in our design process. So the construction methods we used, as well as the community approach we favoured, defined our practice from that point onwards.

At one of our more recent projects, the Lodsi Community Project for Forest Essentials, nestled in the Himalayan foothills, our work aims to densify a small rural village. Most people living in this area, which lacked basic infrastructure and amenities such as energy, water and roads, were migrating to urban centres. And so, we developed this facility where the local community could be employed in a 'walk to work' environment where they wouldn't have to trek several kilometres across perilous slopes to reach their workplaces.



ITC Campus, Kolkata





**The Lodi Community Project for Forest Essentials**

To this end, we placed the building site in the centre of a hillside residential area of over 800 people. Working with the community, we designed a building that could be constructed using locally sourced materials and techniques. The building's form draws inspiration from its socio-cultural context: the traditional Garwahli kholi (house).

Glass blocks cover the courtyard, which is inspired by the kholi to provide an illuminated central communal space. The existing gaushala (cow shelter) was incorporated in the planning and augmented with a community gathering space. Providing these large aangans (gathering spaces) promotes the region's culture of close-knit communities. The project employed 65 village-based workers, directly or indirectly supporting 75 per cent of local households.

Another instance where this strategy is explored is at the ITC Campus in Rajarhat, a fast-growing suburb of Kolkata. The campus is spread across 17 acres comprising commercial offices, a hotel, a convention

**ALL OF THESE PROJECTS ARE AIMED AT CREATING MICRO-ECOSYSTEMS FOR NON-URBAN COMMUNITIES. THIS INTENTION, COUPLED WITH A VERNACULAR APPROACH, ALLOWS US TO GENERATE EMPLOYMENT FOR LOCALS AND EMPOWER THEM TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN NATION-BUILDING.**



centre and residential towers. The project aims to create a physical manifestation of the region's rich artisanal culture.

Usually, the artisans of this region are only active during a short period of the year: Durga Puja, an annual Hindu festival paying homage to the Hindu goddess Durga. So we began to ponder how to incorporate these creators and their ideas to bring arts and crafts into the project. We pondered over how to celebrate their culture, display the beauty of their handmade works, and revive their dwindling art form. One answer was to integrate the artists' work directly into the building's design: The soaring stone facades were manifested as vertical canvases in the form of intricately carved murals in the Bengal School tradition.

This artistic integration also becomes an integral place-making tool for a new urban campus that hosts and celebrates the Bengali socio-cultural ethos, which is one of the discourses, deliberations and communal festivities. Taking inspiration from pandals (temporary pavilions), the project includes public spaces scattered along the entire central spine; these function as open-air museums where sculpture and art installations will add to the sense of place.

All of these projects are aimed at creating micro-ecosystems for non-urban communities. This intention, coupled with a vernacular approach, allows us to generate employment for locals and empower them to take an active role in nation-building. ✚