



ISOLA NEWS

ISOLA INDIAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

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Editorial

In this inaugural issue of the ISOLA Newsletter, we begin by presenting two profound essays by eminent international professionals, taking stock of the position of landscape architecture in today's world and suggesting insights and directions for the creative challenges that this century is likely to offer.

Identity - or the specific relationship between place, culture and design - is always a concern wherever artistic expression is involved. Of late, increasing international influences, in a sense, moves towards all-pervading global attitudes and preferences, have attracted increasing attention to the search for regional identity and meaning. This was the theme of the '4th Joint Studio for Landscape Architecture' students held at Ahmedabad recently, covered in detail elsewhere in this news letter.

It is a worthwhile and relevant subject, a topic which we would like to explore extensively with the help of our readers as the newsletter progresses into the next few issues. Here we make a beginning with Dr. Priyaleen Singh's note, gently pointing out that in our country at least, for various very sensible reasons the conventional image of a designed landscape as a manicured and grassy sward need not be as pervasive as it has become.

We welcome your comments, observations and letters, as well as articles and notes, either on this theme or others which are of interest to the profession.

Prof. M. Shaheer - Editor.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

My Dear Colleague,

Here is the first issue of the News Letter of Indian Society of Landscape Architects, a journey, which started almost 30 years ago, and now we are on the threshold of achieving our cherished goal : "Establishing our Professional Society" for which all of us have worked so hard.

Support received from you all and not to forget the contribution of younger generation of Landscape Architects, their faith in the objective of forming a professional body, has made this possible. Looking back over the period of twelve months or so it does not look that difficult. Thanks a lot for your faith, support and understanding.

Fairly large amount of time has been spent on collecting documents for IFLA and in the membership drive. These two works has taken tremendous time and energy. Now that all this is past, we now dedicate our self to progress further. We need your support.

Thanking you,

With warm regards.

Yours Sincerely,

Prof. Prabhakar B. Bhagwat.

25th June 2004.

From a visual to an Experimental aesthetics.

In recent times new technologies and faster communications have shaped the urban landscapes in more ways than one. One facet of this phenomenon has been that of 'universal design' greatly reducing the possibilities for regional adaptations. Supplemented with the publication of professional journals, selling commercial products and architectural fashions alike, planning practices and designs have been increasingly advertised, exported, imported, borrowed, copied and more often than not deliberately designed for international consumption. Architects, Planners, Landscape Architects travel widely, bearing and borrowing designs which in their understanding would work equally well everywhere. Some times this results in virtually identical new bits

of landscape cropping up almost everywhere. And this happens at the expense of more culture specific traditional design forms and vocabularies.

In landscape design the ubiquitous 'lawn', introduced in India in the colonial period, illustrates this phenomenon. The history of the lawn goes back to the eighteenth century. The idea of 'the picturesque', essentially 'scenery's capabilities of being formed into pictures'. 'Nature as scenery' did not simply expand the field of aesthetics, but had an entirely new bearing on the meaning of the environment. 'Scenery' came with museum art and was a product of analytical and detached vision. In place of a natural world replete with human analogy and symbolic meaning and sensitive to human behaviour, was constructed a detached natural scene to be viewed and studied by the observers from the outside, in the process alienating

themselves from it. The lawn was part of this visual aesthetic wherein a wide range of sensory, emotional and symbolic values were sacrificed to the primacy of compositional criteria determined by the act of seeing and landscape came to be perceived merely as an impersonal assemblage of visible rather than a realm of more positive interaction.

The aesthetic of the lawn has time overridden all ecological and cultural specificities and is today found in the arid climates of the middle east and the plains of India as frequently as in the temperate environs of Europe and America. While the social costs of design vocabularies like the 'lawn' in civic and private landscapes may seem invisible, its cost to society in energy depletion, water consumption and pollution of water and soil are more real. The popular turf mixtures require irrigation even in humid climates, sapping dwindling urban water supplies. It is a recorded fact that acre for acre, the American lawn receives four times as much chemical pesticide as any US farmland.

The lawn is indeed a symbol in effect for everything that is wrong with our relationship to the land. As a high cost, high energy floor covering, it produces the least diversity for the most effort. And yet the lawn is all pervasive in the environment, not only in private residences, institutional complexes and hotels but also with in temple precincts, on 'designed' ghats as well as in historic gardens where it has replaced the baghs or orchards which existed traditionally.

In the Indian context, compared to the lawn, a tree or groves of trees make more sense both ecologically and culturally. Lawns, as part of the visual aesthtic have helped create sanitised environments, many a times as a setting to the architecture and to add to its packaging and visual value. Landscape designs come complete

with messages of 'do not sit on lawn' which clearly discourage any active interaction with nature, an attitude in sharp contrast to the participatory relationship with nature seen in the Indian subcontinent in the precolonial times.

This paper is not making claims for the restoration of historicism in Indian landscape design but is a plea for the 'continuity' and 'relevance' of traditional design practices. Much can be learnt from the rich meanings and associations attributed to nature in the past in India when a more participatory relationship was established with nature both at the 'sacred' and the 'profane' levels.

Perhaps the case is part of a larger challenge to provide and promote a theory of landscape design that imbibes the traditional and cultural practices of design with nature, and is based on the local history and tradition of the place, in the process helping to create environments which allow more interaction with nature and which are radically different from the perception of nature as 'scenery' and of ourselves as 'spectators'.

Dr. Priyaleen Singh.

Hopes for the Future

My main hopes for the future of our worldwide profession of landscape architecture are three:

First, I wish that our profession should become truly worldwide. Although we have representatives reaching IFLA World Congresses from all the "imagined corners" of the world. But there remain wide tracts of the earth's land surface and vast numbers of the world's population, which IFLA does not yet represent. This is in spite of great strides forward year by year. For instance the 'Indian Society of Landscape Architects' has recently joined IFLA, a small body for a large population to start with, but this is how many member associations have

have started out. The Chinese Society of Landscape Architects has applied to join; as IFLA is "non-political and non-governmental" (Article I of the Constitution) related problems of this sort must be bypassed to allow this populous and cultured part of the world to be welcomed. Yet there remain three whole parts of the world which we hardly yet represent.

The great dry arid belt encircling our Central and Eastern regions is almost absent, lands with a long and poetic tradition of landscape creation.

"A one-mill stream, having trees on both banks, flows constantly through the middle of the garden; formerly its course was zig-zag and irregular; I have it made straight and orderly; so the place become very beautiful"

(Memoirs of Babur c.1520 describing the creation of a garden at Istalif in Afghanistan). Or in the words if the Quran about the ideal of Paradise. *"And beside there shall be two other gardens: Of a dark green: With gushing fountains in each."* (Both quoted on p42 of the Gardens of Mughul India, by Sylvia Crowe, Sheila Haywood, Susan Jellicoe and Gordon Patterson 1972).

The opening line of Lethaby's book 'Architecture', first published in 1911, reads "Two arts have changed the surface of the world, Agriculture and Architecture"; his book discusses the second. Landscape architecture is concerned with both the practical and artistic endeavours summarised by his first term 'agriculture'. As Sven-Ingvar Andersson stated to IFLA's 50th anniversary celebration in Cambridge in September 1998: "Nature can be protected, imitated, adapted to human survival - as agriculture is and always was. Nature can be transformed for different kinds of recreation for an "urbanised population"

In doing so landscape architecture enters the realm of human artistic endeavour. As Jay Appleton said, also at IFLA's 50th anniversary celebration: "You will find all sorts of ways in which links

appear between elementary survival behaviour and the pleasure we experience in well-designed landscapes." Thus our art (or is it our science?) strives to find practicable ways to modify the living outdoor surface of the world for new environmental conditions and new human perceptions. To do so effectively we need to respect and understand the best of what has been handed down to us by earlier generations. Landscape design never starts anew; it is a process of converting and improving the present landscape for tomorrow or, in relevant cases, careful conservation of excellence from the past which exists today. In this process the smallest task can be as important as the most extensive.

To achieve this hope we need a more explicit theoretical base for our activities. Landscape Architects appear to share a common perception of what they are striving to do and what constitutes excellence of achievement. But my hope is that in the coming decades it will not only be possible to point out some examples of fine landscape architecture from historic and contemporary times, but also to cite lucid theoretical support for our activities.

My third hope is that the potential contribution of landscape architecture will become better known worldwide. "At the round earths imagin'd corners, blow your trumpets, Angels, and arise.. ..." to take the poet John Donne out of context. We have to find means of making our art better known about and understood. In general people who design make things matter. In particular people who design, make and care for landscapes matter. People who use landscapes matter; and their delight in contact with nature and appreciation of the elegant disposition of space out of doors matters.

These things need to be understood beyond our small profession.

By Hal Moggridge

(Courtesy IFLA Newsletter No:50, Jan 2004)

On the Future of Built Environ

Preamble-1: Nature and Science

Nature is the domain of inquiry for science. Since 6th century B.C., the challenging task of scientists has been the discovery of laws of nature. At about 1700, Leibniz invented a method - the *Ars combinatoria* - by which all things with their theorems can be discovered by combinatorics, that is, by ordering and permutation, as by an alphabet. Euler developed the theory further by associating everything with an extremum - a minimum or a maximum. In 1850, Hamilton and others transformed Newton's theory into its energy-scalar form and viewed it as a possible universal theory structure. Hilbert transformed Einstein's vector form of General Relativity into the hamiltonian energy form. In the 1960's, Bellman and Pontryagin converted the hamiltonian model into the form now used in mathematical optimal control theory. Later, Intrilligator appropriated it in econometrics. Cannon and Wiener integrated much of this into Cybernetics.

At the turn of 21 st century, U.S. Scientist Donald Rudin further advanced Science Unification by bringing together all four systems comprising nature, namely (S 1) Physics/Chemistry, (S2) Biology, (S3) Socio-psychology, and (S4) Language/Grammar. A chain of four extremal controlling laws identify them. They respectively include: Action minimization in the closed (non-adaptive) world system of mass/energy, S I, and Survival,

Fulfillment and Information Gain maximization in the open (adaptive) world systems of life, S2-S4. It is expected that Science Unification will be the foundation of Axiomatic General Education and become an effective manifestation of World Theory. It will attempt to advance a "Universal Structure of Knowledge" beyond systems requisite variety and equifinality - the means and ends theory.

Preamble-2: Form and Space

Technology is the embodiment of the way the laws of nature are interpreted in design and articulated in productive action. The tectonics of form and space-making seeks harmony and balance with the forces of nature. The artful utilization of high-tech in tectonics of the built environment has cultural manifestations.

Artistotle, in 4th century B.C., defines a man-made "thing" - a house, garden or city by virtue of its form, structure and organization. He further elaborates form as providing distinct character and succinct qualitative explanation of things on the grounds of material construction, efficiency of usability, identity of shape, and ultimate reason.

In 1975, Canadian Architect Arthur Erickson, articulates that architecture, and by extension urban design, is the art of relating man-made constructions to their environment, by "listening" to what the environment has to "say". For him, the city, the greatest of all man's installations, evolved to become in the West (and globally, indeed) the focus of humanity's "worst" problems. They nullify the social interaction, rendering the urban life stale. He identifies site, rhythm, space and light as generators of form and a means of transforming the built environment into "meaningful, useful and pleasurable" living spaces.

Preamble-3: Value Verification

Nature's law of lawfulness is embodied in the mass/energy conservation assumption, which constitutes science's axiom or value, that is, its first principle from which an entire domain of discourse can be deduced. In nature, rest-mass/propagated-waves constitute the essence of potential/kinetic energy.

Attempting to juxtapose form and space with nature and synergistically synthesizing built and natural environments will bring forth the issue of value in design. When manmade landscape, built-form and space contextually complement, in an "infinite" cyclical way, the natural setting (site/climate), minimizing their energy use for action and generating excess potential for kinetic application, they will anchor the foundation of human survival. The universal principle of dwelling articulated by cadence, the rhythm of life, then will be inclusive of man's interconnectedness, interdependence and interaction with nature. Hence, man's "immortality" will be attained in time-extended functionality, adaptability and sustainability of life in built and natural environments.

Humanity's aspiration for "eternity" is embodied in three-dimensional space-induced sentience for socio-psychological fulfillment. Adding the fourth dimension of time, people, activities and the physical setting stage the spatial behavior for interaction. Whether in open landscapes or enclosed spaces - in and around buildings, cities or countryside - people seek happiness, joy and contentment. Gratifying artful events in horizontal/social engagements will provide cultural security and safety and enhance group satisfaction. Uplifting vertical/spiritual spatial experiences tend to "dematerialize" the space/form continuum, advance intuitive emotional feeling of inner understanding, promote soul-

nourishment of the individual, and ultimately induce ecstasy.

Language and the art of questioning comprise the constructional foundation of a human communications system that advances deductive (analytical, scientific), inductive (synthetic, theoretical) and abductive (analogical, experiential) reasoning.

They articulate ideas and expressions in rational, romantic and poetic modes. Literary culture's narratives based on motive, method and opportunity of story-telling have parallels in builtform's content, container and context manifestation. Content responds to human desires overriding physical limitations. It sets goals for motivation and aspires to fulfill design intentions. It attaches value to the performance criterion and seeks an answer to the question: "Why is it worth initiating the design-idea/storyline?" Container refers to the space/form/materiality triad and seeks an answer to the question: "How to construct the built artifact?" Context refers to building opportunity's constraining conditions and seeks an answer to the question: "What to build, where and for whom?" Eventually, pragmatics, affordability and sensibility define the parameters of selection of the site and the builtform/spatial setting, which in turn recursively modify the methodology of built artifact and its value criterion.

As language and literature have literal and metaphorical expressions in story-telling, light and enlightenment also have manifestations in architecture of the landscape, the built-form and the city. The play or the story-line articulated by presence and absence of natural and artificial light -- expressed in color tones, material textures, and shades and shadows -- creates dynamic moods, to reveal the meaning of spatial condition, challenging the imagination. Intuition leads to reflective enlightenment as feedback for action and forewarning for projection.

Preamble-4: The Future of Digital Era

Civilizations are borne and fade away. They claim to have founders, shapers and shakers, and their influence tends to be continental, if not global. Cultures adapt, enrich and survive in succeeding generations and seem to limit their domain of influence within regional boundaries. There is no authentically verifiable civilizational and cultural identity without their artfully embodied manifestation in the built environment.

At present, a new global phenomenon is taking shape under the banner of digital revolution. Advances in electronic technologies are profoundly impacting the design and production of built environment, from materials manufacturing to construction processes. Digital revolution could advance novel inventions in design and create unique opportunities for dwelling. The integration of Virtual Reality in the architecture of open and enclosed real spaces could provide identity characteristics for the future of built environment. Hybridization, complexity, fluidity and morphogenesis are design concepts making their way into the realm of digitally-enhanced architecture at the turn of 21st century.

However, designers, professional associations and regulatory agencies have a mandate to resist the dictates of the predatory "values" of the marketplace. It would be plausible if they could embrace globalization of practice with "unification of cultures" - scientific, technological, arts and literary. The universal principle of scientific ideology, namely the axiomatic conservation law of mass/energy, could be the shared vision for the design of the new built environment.

Technology mediation could become the mission for the construction of the digital inhabitation. The mission could include the organizational infrastructure of omnipresence for the spatial experience of artful sentience and socio-psychology. This innovative concept could enhance the global networking of ideas and acts, complementing literary communication, thereby advancing "universal culture."

Plato, in 5th century B.C., deems it essential for the intellect to be in control, "governing" passions through the will. He articulates the triumph of logos over mythos, rationality over romanticism, sciences over the arts. Since then, idealism, moralism and realism depict conflicting conditions of mind as it confronts challenging design scenarios. In our present-day high-tech mediated energy-conscious mindset, if "unification of cultures" is adopted as the guiding principle in design and education, then a different priority scenario will emerge as follows:

The art of design in the information age will reflect the humanly sensible way of living. The craft of virtual-imaging and interactive form-making, the science of life-space sustaining and the technology of survivability building, coupled with the advancement of humanist philosophy of dwelling, will all define the digital era.

The primary focus of design education and professional practice will be shifting from exclusivity to inclusiveness. Trans-disciplinary modes of thinking will bring together not only architects, landscape architects, city and regional planners, but scientists, artists, economists and environmentalists, and - eventually - technicians and politicians. The digital dialogue will advance broader discourse and debate on universal issues. Inherently, it will establish a mutually appreciable model of understanding based on respectability, responsibility and rightful

complementarity. Indeed, digitization as a universal system of communication encoding will add meaningful value to the globalization of the design practice. This evolving trend will attempt to construct a civilizational identity of interdependence, enhance a New World order founded on culture of peace, and promote a consciousness of dwelling which accommodates collective aspiration of the global society.

By Professor Greg Andonian

(Courtesy IFLA Newsletter No:50, Jan 2004)

Green Asset Valuation

With the launch of CABE Space's *The Value of Public Space*, those lobbying for improvements to urban green space have a valuable tool. Edward Hobson, head of Research and Commissioning at CABE Space (Commission for Architecture and Built Environment, U.K.), discusses the document and further research in the pipeline.

CABE Space has launched an overview of the research that they hope will be used to build more persuasive arguments for the improvement of urban green space.

The Value of Public Space is a roundup of research in seven key areas, which demonstrates the positive influence of well designed public space.

Edward Hobson, Head of research and commissioning at CABE Space, explains: "The Value of Public Space report was essentially a way of bringing together a host of existing research spread across different fields in one document."

The report takes stock of findings that show improved economic value, mental and physical health benefits, enhanced environments for children and young people, crime reduction, positive social impact, fluid movement and transport links, and greater

biodiversity associated with well-designed urban green space.

"You've got a good evidence base across economic, social environmental research which cumulatively proves the benefits of high-quality public space," says Hobson.

"There's a good argument for improving public space not only because it will look better, but because it helps deliver essential social services in terms of retailing, the attractiveness for inward investment and attracting people into the area."

The research examined is gathered from the past 10 or so years and looks at both the UK situation and at lessons that can be learned from the US and mainland Europe.

The report will be a useful tool for those responsible for persuading local authorities to put their hands in their pockets to fund improvements to urban public space. The weight of evidence across a broad spectrum of fields provides a convincing argument for the local level community benefits that well-designed and maintained public green spaces brings.

"It's really a document that we've aimed at people working across the public sector providing them with facts and figures to prove their own case as to why you should have better quality public space. It will certainly be useful for 'friends of parks' groups who are committed to improving the quality of their park. This provides them with the evidence they can use to back up their arguments to local authorities."

"The evidence will be convincing to people at a number of levels," over continues Hobson. "We're aiming our distribution to local authorities-chief executives, chief offices."

As an overview the report serves to point up some of the areas in which new, relevant research is lacking. CABE Space has commissioned research in these areas and will present the findings later this year.

"What we've got with The value of public space is a compilation of existing material," Hobson says." We are following each of the strands in this document with newly commissioned research.

"A lot of the research that's been done on economic valuations has been done in the US principally because of the way their tax system works. An increase in property value means that the state can recoup more of that increase in value. So there is a good reason for establishing a connection between increased property values and factors such as green space. The research is still persuasive highlighting a 10-15 per cent increase in property values around parks. We want to find out whether it hold true in UK too."

Other areas of research that CABE Space has commissioned include green space management- something that Hobson says the UK doesn't have a great track record on.

The research will highlight the transferable lessons for good practice, educating people about the role of green space that can be adopted in the UK.

Key findings from The Value of Public Space:

Economic value

-Small businesses choosing a new business location rank open space, parks and recreation as a number-one priority.

-In Berlin in 2000, proximity to playgrounds in residential areas was found to increase land values by up to 16 per cent. In the same study, a high number of street trees resulted in an increase of 17 per cent in land values.

Health Benefits

-A Walk in the park reduces the risk of heart attack by 50 per cent.

-In Tokyo, life expectancy is increased by up to five years for people who walked in the park.

Benefits To Children

-85 per cent of green-space activities such as soccer and fishing improve the behaviour of children with Attention Deficit Disorder.

-Significantly higher levels of creative play areas found in green spaces than in barren areas.

-Children playing in forests develop balance and co-ordination skills faster than those playing in traditional playgrounds.

Crime Reduction

-Improved street lighting led to a 70 per cent reduction in theft from shopping bags in Birmingham's street markets.

-Regeneration of derelict site adjacent to housing into a community garden in Ontario, Canada led to a 30 per cent reduction in crime in the area over the following year.

Social Benefits

-In the West Midlands, allotments have been shown to encourage cross-community ties.

-Communities make more use of, and are more satisfied with public spaces if they include 'natural' elements.

-A view of trees and the availability of natural areas nearby is the strongest factor affecting people's satisfaction with their neighbourhood.

Movement and Links

-An increase in high-quality public provision has led to a 65 per cent increase in bicycle use in Copenhagen, Denmark.

-Residents on streets with low levels of traffic flow have three times as many friends as those who live on streets with heavy traffic.

Air Quality

-Areas with 50 per cent vegetation cover show an ambient air temperature 7 degrees C, lower than that in areas with only 15 per cent vegetation cover.

-Parks create airflow. Temperature differences between parks and urban areas cause airflow out of the park into the urban area. This effect can lead to an improved air quality in even small parks bounded by busy roads.

(Courtesy: Vista--News from the World of Landscape Architecture. U.K., April 2004)

Correspondance from IFLA

IFLA was very pleased to receive this year an application from the Indian Society of Landscape Architects to join our organization. Although one of the largest countries by population, India has not previously been represented in IFLA.

We are aware of at least 2 post graduate programs of Landscape Architecture in India* - one located at the School of Planning and Architecture in New Delhi, which commenced in 1972, and the other at the School of Architecture, Centre for Environment Planning and Technology in Ahmedabad, which commenced in 1992. These are 2 year programs designed typically for architecture graduates. Landscape Architects practicing in India have either trained at these schools or at overseas universities.

Under the guidance of Professor Prabhakar B. Bhagwat, who is currently an individual association titled the Indian Society of Landscape Architects has been registered under Indian law.

It is expected that there will be over one hundred members initially in this organization which will represent Landscape Architects spread throughout the various States of India.

One of the first objectives of the new society is the establishment of an undergraduate program of Landscape Architecture in India.

Professor Bhagwat has been elected as the inaugural President of the Society which is constituted under the requirements of the IFLA Constitution and By-Laws and

Procedures, and mindful of the requirements for IFLA membership outlined in the IFLA Policy on Criteria for Membership.

Subject to examination by World Council members and endorsement at the World Council meeting, we look forward to membership of the Indian Society of Landscape Architects into the World Body, and the benefits increased representation can make to the effectiveness and relevance of IFLA as the body representing the landscape architectural profession world wide.

By James HAYTER,
Vice president, Eastern Region, IFLA.
(Courtesy IFLA Newsletter No:50,Jan 2004)

Fourth Joint Studio

Joint Studio was first initiated in year 1999, by the faculty of CEPT and SPA as a workshop, where students and faculty from the two schools of Landscape Architecture in the country could pursue a range of issues related to the profession. Since then the Joint Studios have looked at Urban landscape typologies, Water retaining structures and Art in Landscape Design.

The 4th Joint Studio was conducted at CEPT, Ahmedabad from 15th February to 21st February 2004.

In the last few decades the profession of landscape architecture has evolved greatly, it has explored new paradigms and meanings, and has been given diverse interpretations and expressions all over the world.

In India, after more than three decades, the profession of landscape architecture is still at nascent stage. There is a search for valid meanings in relation to the diversities and complexities existing in the country. At this stage academic institutions have the responsibility to investigate and explore new paradigms and to work towards evolving ways in which landscape grammar in India can develop.

The Joint Studio has opportunity to pursue this issue through

discussions between students, faculty members and professionals.

Intent

"Cities are covered with layers, some sequential, but many seemingly random, which makes most attempts at understanding the fabric in which we live a complex but potentially a very interesting task. The discipline of landscape architecture has explored, traditionally, several facets of nature and ecology on the one hand and aesthetics on the other

Societies are gradually losing the meanings of the land on which they live, its ecological and natural framework having been all but mutilated by the several other networks that rest on it heavily. While this profound connection with the land is eroded, more facile values have seeped in, and manifest themselves in landscapes that seem unconvinced, distracted, and disjointed."

The fourth joint studio focused on aspects of nature and ecology in cities, their disjunctions due to urban processes, and their meanings. The workshop explored the manner in which discipline of landscape architecture could sensitize, communicate, articulate and rectify these.

Participation

For the first time the three schools, SPA, CEPT and SAP were part of the Joint studio and 40 students participated.

The studio faculty included-

Faculty members, SPA

Prof. Dr. Suneja (Head of the Department),
Prof. Dr. Rommel Mehta.

Faculty members, CEPT

Prof. P B Bhagwat (Head of the Department),
Prof. Deepa Maheshwari, Mr. Aniket Bhagwat, Ms. Pragya Shankar.

Invited faculty members

Prof. M. Shaheer, Mr. Jayant Dharap
(Director, Forethought Design Consultants, Pune),

Prof. Neelkanth Chhaya (Professor, CEPT),
Mr. Pratyush Shankar (Lecturer, CEPT), Ms.
Sweta Byahut (Urban and Regional Planner,
EPC), Mr. Anuj Malhotra (Landscape
Architect).

Jury members

Dr. Bimal Patel (Director, EPC, Ahmedabad),
Prof. Yatin Pandya (Director, Vastushilp,
Ahmedabad), Mr. Vijay Arya (Architect,
Ahmedabad).

The participating students

SPA, Delhi Nupur Paliwal, Halbe Kalyani
Minikram, M Vinod, Shilpa Grover, Namrata
Satish Joshi, Ayla Khan, Prajakta Manoj
Sahadeo, Tina Bali, Roopali J Katti, Sharma
Rita Dattatray, Shubhalaxmi S.Indapwar,
Nahar Sweety Roshanlal, Bhavika Mehta,
Sreejith S., Kristin Nicolaus.

CEPT Ahmedabad -Bhakti Kharkanis, Alok
Bajaj, Rita Meshram, Deepa Venkataraman,
Gopal Bajaj, Isha Kamdar, Prachi Chopade,
Pragya Agarwal, Atul Katariya, Dharmi Joshi,
Ambika Chauhan.

SAP, Chennai -Deepak Rao U., Arvind V.,
Sharmili V, Sathish Kumar T., Sangeetha
Indran, Daniel Sudakar, Shilpa Grover,
Ravindhar S, Kannamma. D., Juri J.P., Sam
Ponraj A, Chandramathy. I.

Structure of workshop

The studio was a week long workshop, which included lectures, studio and reviews. A typical day started at 9:am with morning session of lectures, followed by studio or reviews in the afternoon session which ended at 5:00 pm in the evening. The open lectures took place in the evenings after 6:00 pm, to allow maximum participation of other departments and professionals from Ahmedabad.

The workshop consisted of four major components;
Background studies, Lectures, studio and Reviews.

Background studies

The studio was preceded by background studies done by all three schools of their own cities. This study concentrated on understanding the manner in which cities evolve and change, particularly with respect to

attitudes to open space and elements of nature. These studies were presented by the students on the first day, which formed the base work from which various sites could be explored by the students during the studio.

Lectures

The workshop included a number of lectures from the faculty members and invited professionals.

The topics ranged from understanding the language of landscape in cities and the forces that have shaped and given it meaning, to certain issues in relation to landscape in cities.

Prof. Yatin Pandya's very well researched and articulated lecture on open space structure and hierarchies [with the examples from the city of Ahmedabad]. Dr. Bimal Patel's lecture on processes and management of cities with specific examples from cities of Gujarat, gave an overall picture of the Indian cities in relation to urban issues. Prof. Neelkanth Chhaya explored in his lecture the expressions of intangibles in cities through various examples from all over world. Prof. Suneja's lecture stressed on quantitative analysis for landscape planning and design, and its methodologies. Prof. Deepa Maheshwari's lecture concentrated on the concerns of urban ecology and Ms. Pragya Shankar's lecture covered aspects related to attitudes to landscape in cities.

The two open lectures, by Prof. Mohammad Shaheer and Mr. Jayant Dharap were intended to explore the same. Prof. M. Shaheer's lecture attempted to map the landscape in the country and the issues that the profession needs to concern itself in the coming years. Mr. Dharap's lecture elaborated the concerns that the profession could have today and also made a comment on the nature of landscape design in the country today, with his work in the context.

Studio

The students were divided into 6 teams, with each team having students from all schools. Each group was led by 2-3 studio faculty members, who were responsible for the group's work.

1. Understanding components of the city, their character and perception
2. Mediating city and nature towards deriving the language of landscape design in water stressed situations.
3. Understanding the phenomenon of interaction of corridors (natural and manmade) in a city, the articulation of this interaction and its role in the image of the city.
4. Understanding the role that landscape architects can play at various levels in development of the city, to wards integration of natural elements.
5. Exploring the role of plant material in humanizing the city.
6. Exploring ways to manage natural features of the city, which earlier played an important role in shaping the city, but now have lost their direct meaning.

Reviews

The interim reviews, taken by all the participating studio faculty members, were intended to be where the work of students was not evaluated but discussed. The intention at any point was not to guide students into a presumed correct direction, but to explore possible directions and meanings. The study of "humanizing cities" began with a wide topic, which later focused on "movement corridors of city" as a case and "trees", as the element to be explored.

The idea of "city corridors" was explored in its various dimensions, and was brought to a stage where certain examples were explored to carry the understanding further.

The group looking at "the role that landscape architects can have at various levels in development of city towards integration of natural elements", worked basically to wards understanding the various levels at

which one could intervene, from micro to macro, and the character of relationship or interaction with elements of nature at each level. The case of Udaipur was illustrated.

The study of "Mediating city and nature towards deriving a language of landscape design in water stressed situations" a situation which not unforeseen

The group exploring "the ways to manage natural features of the city, which earlier played an important role in shaping the city, but now have lost their direct meanings for the society" could identify a relevant case and demonstrated their understanding of the topic.

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