

NEW ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM

Development of Indian Traditions



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Edited By
Deependra Prashad

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New Architecture and Urbanism: Development of Indian Traditions

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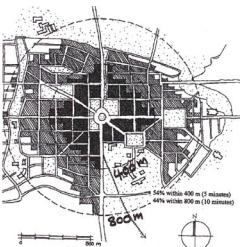
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I · N · T · B · A · U

International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture & Urbanism
PATRON: HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES



The International Network of Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism (INTBAU) is a world wide organisation dedicated to the support of traditional building, maintenance of local character and the creation of better places to live in. It is involved in the creation of an active network of individuals and institutions who design, make, maintain, study or enjoy traditional building, architecture and place making.

The activities of INTBAU are focused on research, professional exchanges, advisory and pilot projects in the field of Urban revitalisation, Traditional planning and Sustainable design. By education, research and the promotion of traditional techniques, it encourages people to maintain traditional buildings and to build new buildings and places which help improve the quality of life in cities and towns around the world. Our “Enquiry by Design” (EbD) workshops bring together all stakeholders on a common ground for tackling various urban issues. These include the government, municipalities, citizen groups, professionals, urban development and heritage related agencies, organisations, developers and any other affected groups. INTBAU also promotes traditional methods and crafts to promote economic sustainability for craftspersons and environmental sustainability in the creation of the built environment.

INTBAU India was formed with its inaugural symposium on “Emerging Urbanisation Trends” at New Delhi in January 2005 which preceded the Mumbai mill land’s Revitalisation Design workshop (EbD) held in Mumbai in March 2005.



THE NABHA FOUNDATION



The Nabha Foundation is building on the philanthropic activities of the Khemka Family and its roots in Nabha, by taking up issues of integrated and sustainable rural development, infrastructure upgradation and heritage conservation in Nabha, Punjab.

With the active engagement of the government and other stakeholders in Punjab, one of the prime initiatives of the Foundation is the adaptive reuse of regional historical buildings in support of community development projects. The foundation aims to create innovative institutions that reflect the local context and vernacular architecture of Nabha. On a broader view, the Nabha Foundation is leading a process change in mainstreaming heritage in the developmental process in Punjab, as part of the Foundation’s strategic vision for urban regeneration in this region



As part of our overall strategy of integrated rural development in Nabha, we are working in the following areas:

Health - Both preventive and curative care

Livelihood - Focusing on sustainable agriculture, includes organic farming and agriculture diversification; micro credit, with special focus on women; and livestock development, for enhancing incomes of small and marginal farmers

Education - For both school going and out-of-school children. Our primary focus is to create model rural schools that will mainstream out-of-school children and demonstrate ways of imparting quality education at the primary level.

SUPPORTERS

UNESCO India:



UNESCO was founded in 1946 in the aftermath of the Second World War “for the purpose of advancing through the educational, scientific and cultural relations of the people of the world, the objectives of international peace and the common welfare of mankind”. UNESCO’s specific mission is to lay the foundations of lasting peace and equitable development. UNESCO New Delhi Office, the Organisation’s first decentralized office in Asia was established in 1948. At its inception, it dealt with science and technology programmes. In time, it incorporated communication programmes, and still later expanded to include education and culture

UN-HABITAT:



The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-HABITAT, is the United Nations agency for human settlements. It is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. The main documents outlining the mandate of the organisation are the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements, the Habitat Agenda, Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, and the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium.

INTACH:



INTACH, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, is a wholly autonomous Non-Governmental Organisation was set up in 1984 for the conservation of our natural and man-made environment. It aims, with the active participation of its members, to create awareness among the public for the preservation of our heritage, by acting as a pressure group whenever any part of it is threatened by damage or destruction arising out of private acts or public policy.

HUDCO:



The Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd. (HUDCO) was incorporated on April 25, 1970 under the Companies Act 1956, as a fully owned enterprise of the Government of India. HUDCO focus on the social aspect of housing and utility infrastructure provision. It also works on the preferential allocation of resources to the socially disadvantaged. Inspite of its commercial orientation, it continues to focus on sectors which are more socially relevant rather than only on commercially viable and profitable sectors. HUDCO's techno-economic focus, its high caliber human resources, and its financial and project re-engineering capabilities has enabled it to continue as an institution par excellence in the field of housing and urban development.

School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi:



The School is a deemed university with a formidable reputation as the nation's leading institution for imparting professional education in town and country planning, architecture and design. It offers programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. With the opening up of Indian economy and onset of globalisation, the school has entered into several bilateral collaborations with foreign universities and research organisations in order to pursue specialised areas of research, organise workshops, seminars, exhibitions, in the new upcoming areas of architecture, planning and design.

Malaviya National Institute of Technology, Jaipur:



The institute offers a five-degree course in architecture, duly recognised by the Council of Architecture, the premier professional body of the country. The course is oriented to develop an understanding of both ancient and contemporary architecture. The department has also taken up MHRD research projects. All the batches that have passed out from the department are well placed in the architectural profession in India and abroad. The department is also a major center for the activities of Indian Institute of Architects, Rajasthan Chapter.

TVB School of Habitat Studies, New Delhi:



The TVB School of Habitat Studies (now the University School of Architecture & Planning) is affiliated to the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi. It offers a 5-year (10 semesters) full time academic programme leading to a Bachelor of Architecture Degree. The School understands that there is a shortfall of appropriately trained architects who can cope with diverse demands and challenges of the developmental process in India. The school derives its uniqueness from a pedagogic framework that inculcates architecture as a value based and ethical inquiry and its practice based on various social factors. The school productively combines research and teaching paradigms for optimum results.

Rachna Sansad School of Architecture, Mumbai:



The Rachna Sansad School of Architecture is a premier institution for architectural education with an excellent reputation in Mumbai and across the country. The School faculty and students are engaged in advocacy, research and activism on various local and national issues. The school is also a centre of various activities related to architecture education and the profession.

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Preface

India's globalised economy is based on the ideals of change and modernism. This evolution into modernism initially came about on the premise of inclusivity, but has, over time, propagated a mass trans-national culture to the ultimate exclusion of local identity. This sense of loss, of identity, and of tradition, permeates art, culture, cuisine and lots more, and has led to a certain endemic cultural loss. All around us, we see symbols of a dislocated rootless global paradigm dominating our skylines. A rapidly growing population and the needs of the globalized economy have led to the symbols of economic development concentrating in urban areas and an appreciation of the urban ideal. Concurrently, rural and urban areas are fast changing with a geometric jump in urbanisation. In this scenario, the built environment has become one of the most visible manifestations of this change. From Metropolitan suburbs like Gurgaon to urban extensions for traditional cities like Jaipur, the challenges of globalisation are now facing India like never before.

Our built environment shapes our sense of self, our sense of place, our reverence of our past and our traditions. Building traditions have modified and evolved with the social, economic and cultural needs of the age. Tradition in building serves us in creating a balance between nature and society, optimal utilisation of natural resources and of local skills and craftsmanship. As strong forces currently drive the creation of new architecture and urban design in India, the time is now or never to instill in this huge process a sense of "appropriateness" to the local context.

This book on "New Architecture and Urbanism: Development of Indian Traditions" builds on the contributions from various architects, planners, educationists, decision-makers & others from across the world who gathered together to create a forum for the promotion of traditional processes and techniques for the creation of the built environment. This forum was initiated by INTBAU India, The International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism in India, which was established 4 years back, and was supported by The Nabha Foundation. The Nabha Foundation is leading a process change in mainstreaming heritage in the developmental process in Punjab, as part of the Foundation's strategic vision for urban and rural regeneration in the region.

The usage of traditional methods is by no means a lost tradition and is very much alive. But to witness the utilisation of its principles in mainstream new work is a task, made much harder than ever, due to the mushrooming alien typologies. Culture, Climate & Cost still dictate building as ever, but only the last seems to be making typological impact. Therefore, this forum is deliberating on this important niche, which forms in between the work areas of preserving traditional architecture and the techniques of current building. INTBAU International's establishment dates back 8 years and its reach and membership now spreads across many countries and continents. The INTBAU India network now includes a no. of individuals & organisations who actively deliberate on the issues of appropriate and local building through their work and professional focus.

This book presents the arguments, axioms and case studies related to Traditional Architecture and Urbanism in a sequential format. Firstly it examines the "New ways of looking at Heritage" by separating it from pure history into a living and evolving process. The book looks at what defines traditional methods and their relevance to the contemporary context. It also examines the aspects of Continuity and Contextual frameworks in the built environment. The following section on "Sustainable Buildings, Places and Communities" explores the many facets of locally driven processes from the viewpoint of tradition and sustainability. These include many community based planning methods and their applications in shaping the built environment, aspects of environmental sustainability and on how appropriateness could be ingrained into current architectural education. Lastly, the book delves into a number of executed examples in architecture seeking to learn from tradition and examples in "place-making urbanism" which in turn promotes humane, walkable and connected neighbourhoods.

The INTBAU-Nabha Declaration, which emerged as an outcome of this forum, very succinctly puts down the aforesaid objectives. It is desired that this publication shall become an important tool and reference for all aspects of the built environment which borrow from tradition. In this respect, INTBAU endeavours to promote and support any related initiatives, besides building an active debate on the pervasive methods of construction today. The organization also promotes debate through design workshops and public participation tools like Enquiry-by-Design workshops, where stakeholders, besides being party to discussions, also participate in creating graphic and clear visions towards urban renewal and revitalisation. These and all other endeavours hope to create a unique agenda for the new built environment of tomorrow, which shall hopefully form a bridge between the past and the future.

Deependra Prashad

Editor

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Message from HRH The Prince of Wales



CLARENCE HOUSE

I am delighted that this publication has resulted from INTBAU India's inaugural conference, which took place earlier this year. As Patron of INTBAU, I am most grateful to the Nabha Foundation for everything they have done to make this event possible.

This forum will, I hope, draw attention to the importance of traditional architecture and urbanism and create greater awareness of their place in India's culture and the valuable role they can play in today's India. I also hope that as a result of both the conference and the book, and indeed, INTBAU India's wider work, it will be possible to demonstrate how traditional architecture and urbanism offer practical solutions to today's requirements and aspirations.

At a time of rapid change in India it is important we do not forget how the built environment shapes our sense of place and self and how it reflects our culture and traditions. If we abandon our traditional understanding and ways of building, we undoubtedly risk losing much of our identity and culture.

Moreover, I am frequently struck by the fact that by harnessing simple, and often forgotten, techniques and technologies, coupled with the enthusiasm and enterprise of local people, it is possible to rediscover solutions which have somehow been abandoned in the march of modernization and globalization. We need to learn from the underlying, and timeless, principles of the ancient built heritage of India and view the traditional built environment as a vital means of inspiring and improving living conditions in today's India.

Equally, if the teeming cities of this century are to have any future sustainability, we must rediscover the subtle principles which underlie the construction of all the great cities of the past. Even huge cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata can be - indeed, I would argue they must be - formed of small neighbourhood units, just as the body (our divinely inspired model for all we build) is comprised of small individual cells. They represent, in a very real way, the fundamental "building block" of civilized - by which I mean settled - human life.

In particular, it is so very important that we recognize the role of traditional architecture and building practices in creating buildings which are environmentally sustainable and which, through the ways in which they have been built, can respond effectively to the challenges of Climate Change. Such considerations are vital if there are to be sustainable improvements in living conditions for our children and grandchildren.

I commend all who have contributed to both the conference and this publication.



Message from Uday Khemka

CEO & Managing Trustee, The Nabha Foundation

At the outset, please let me put forth the origins and focus of the Nabha Foundation. It is really a confluence of two different rivers - the first being the "Khemka Foundation" representing our desire to create a modern strategic philanthropic foundation in India that can leverage limited resources to help change the country through a strategic vision. The foundation is involved in a variety of developmental issues, children's issues, women's issues, health care, education etc.

The other, "The Nabha Foundation" is concerned with heritage. It is a foundation focused on rural development and behind its inception lies a distinguished family's relationship with the town of Nabha. Maharajah Uttam Singh of Nabha, the only one of the Indian Maharajahs to have joined the Indian freedom struggle, inspired the Foundation. He was also an important nationalist leader of Punjab and the longest political prisoner during that period. As a result, the Foundation has an intrinsic idealistic sense of social obligation.

This forum on Traditional Architecture & Urbanism is more important than it first appears, since it is in fact at the heart of the entire civilisation. When India was born as a free democracy in 1947, the underlying set of values did not represent the triumph of power or materialism but a set of ideals. For instance, the symbol of the modern Indian state is the symbol of Emperor Ashoka, the wheel of *dharma*. Of course, the three lions represent the power of a modern nation. But both the pillar and the Indian flag carry the circle of *dharma* representing the fact that this nation is founded on the basis of deep spiritual values.

The father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi is globally known as someone whose vision for India was rooted in ethics and spirituality. It is essential to address the continuity between Ashoka and Gandhi. Our country's heritage is like the rivers that link generations. The simple word '*Ahimsa*' or non-violence transformed Ashoka after the battle of Kalinga. And Gandhiji's '*Ahimsa*', as a great weapon of love in not only liberating our country but also in building the vision for *Poorn Swaraj*, the real freedom. Real freedom is not just about governing ourselves; real freedom is about building a civilisation anchored in spiritual values, anchored in family life, anchored in community, anchored in a harmonious environment. That was Gandhiji's vision; and that vision has long been under threat.

Besides the much talked down status of the vision for the 50's and the 60's, today's liberal capitalism is as much a threat to the Gandhian vision. India is changing dramatically. From the time of independence to now we have gone from roughly 350 million people to 1 billion with an attendant massive urbanisation. The middle class has emerged as a huge strength with 20 million people added every year and today it stands at 253 million. The traditional social structure is transforming, breaking down and to some extent being recreated but in a much more individualistic manner. This is the fundamental problem of the model that emerged over the last 300 years in northern Europe, and then spread to the US and has now come to three billion people in the last 30 years. However there are many benefits of the occurrences over the last thirty years as tremendous growth engines have raised the standards of living around the planet. While the fiscal basis for a welfare state has been created, there is the corollary of imbalances and fundamental problems. There has been a breakdown of communities, social structures, families and spirituality; as well as an increase in loneliness, desolation, destitution, and the collapse of social capital which has lead to crime, violence and intolerance and an environmental breakdown of an unprecedented scale.

Today there is a consensus that global warming is the greatest threat to humanity since the nuclear holocaust. For India it means the potential failure of the monsoons. Just imagine what Nabha would look like if it had no monsoons - wouldn't it look like Jaisalmer, a desert? What would happen to India if Punjab became like Rajasthan? It would mean de-glaciation; it would mean the end of our main rivers, the means of fresh water in our country. These are not individual country issues. What would it mean for Bangladesh, which is very much part of our civilisation, if the Teesta got eroded? 50 million people would be in immediate threat. Sixty six percent of the problem of carbon footprints comes from our cities and the rest from energy production. So it is not an exaggeration to say that the way we build our cities is the battleground of civilisation.

We could have one vision as Gandhi suggested – a humane vision. Human beings, their lives, their roots or those things that make us happy, i.e. family, spirituality etc., have been replaced by an unceasing search for consumer materialism. It is of significance that the Knight Foundation suggests that there is no correlation beyond a certain point, between consumption and human happiness.

I believe that the world needs a new model. A more humane, sustainable and humanitarian model. I have an intuition that perhaps India could provide that model. Of course, we, as every other country in the world today, face the greatest force of transformation that has ever been encountered. On the other hand, we *have* a 5000 years old history, we *are* a billion people, and we *have* powerful spiritual and community traditions. Surely this country, more than any other, can absorb the impact and come up with something transcendent. That is our challenge. It can be a tremendous opportunity to project into the global domain what is still an integrated civilisation value of family, community, spirituality, and of unity and harmony.

Families and individuals seeking material utilities and getting ahead are not incorrect in their pursuits. However, they should not pursue these at the cost of the family values, community, spirituality, environment and the sense of identity rooted in history. It really depends on what we want to project to the world and what India wants to be in 2030. There is little doubt that the economic growth of this country is sustainable, but the issue is what kind of a country will it be? Will it be a country of glass facades where hundreds and thousands of people are ghetto-ised in suburbs or the degraded urbanisation

of crumbling infrastructure? On the other hand will it be an inclusive society where people are interconnected? Will people here be as they are in certain parts of the world - shattered individual islands or will they be part of living communities? Will cities serve human beings or will human beings serve cities? Most importantly what would be our environmental footprint? India is already the “fifth most carbon emitting” contributor to global warming, with China being the second. India is catching up fast. Is that the legacy we want to leave to our children? Is it going to be a country of global cultural modernisation or a country of deep eco-systems of culture and deep traditions?

Before Gandhiji, Indian leaders wore tails and frock coats. He had the courage to assert confidently that this country's civilisation should present itself without insecurities, taking the best from the west but living to its own traditions. According to Gandhiji the way we talk matters and the way we dress matters. The way we build our cities matters very fundamentally and we need to move it from an individualistic, materialistic vision, to a Gandhian vision based on locality, spirituality and community.

I believe there are three solutions to contain the huge relocation of rural masses to the urban areas:

- Provide as much employment as possible in villages- Dr Kurien of Amul has demonstrated the possibility.
- Instead of building cities with millions of people, we should encourage small towns to thrive. This is where Nabha has relevance. It is a small dusty old town of Punjab with a population of 70,000 people. It may not be particularly significant, but it is in towns such as Nabha that the battle of the Indian civilisation will be fought.
- Finally, to not surrender the concept of the city itself. Huge cities that we see rising around us, that are following the Chinese model, should be embedded with Gandhian values. This last dimension may actually be the most important.

Today, India has a fairly poor tradition of modern urban philanthropy. But in every community, every village, every religion, there have been deep traditions of philanthropy. But India lost these, perhaps because people, who come to huge cities, lose their sense of community. How can we create a vision of a social, inclusive city of connection, of communal harmony with social capital? Do we embed it in the few cities that will emerge; and can we, in their energy signature, make them sustainable?

Unfortunately this requires more than just correction at the edges. For instance in Gurgaon, one sees beautiful glass towers in the middle of the city having no link to our culture and traditions. These are surrounded by appalling low cost housing blocks where people are deracinated, infrastructure is disintegrating crime, violence, disconnection and a lack of belonging is all pervasive. Is Gurgaon a model for our cities? There are only twenty million residential units for the middle class overhanging the market in terms of demand. Delhi's population alone has increased by eight million over the last 10 years. We, like China will unfortunately build huge cities to meet these challenges. The way they will be conceived and built is what would determine the heart and the soul of Indian civilisation and our contribution to the world.

I would like to put forward four challenges and opportunities in this context:

1. The Nabha Foundation hopes that this forum will be a call for action, a call for a movement; whether it is in publishing and publicising the issues discussed or the creation of an institution. Many people may have felt marginal compared to the modernistic center of architecture and intellectual interest. But I believe together we can move that margin to the center in a unified way and contribute the concept of new urbanism to the world. The first challenge is it to make this attempt a permanent and a powerful movement underpinned by a declaration or a charter.
2. The opportunity and the challenge exist in small towns such as Nabha. We believe that over the next 10-20 years we can prepare a case study in Nabha, of what other small towns in India may look like. We plan to do it in three ways. Firstly, by adaptively reusing old buildings such as the Nabha Quila to serve the community, and by upholding their traditions and their heritage. This also recognizes that people created the heritage and it should serve them back. Secondly by building new institutions whose architecture is a modern expression of thousands of years of traditions and community concepts. Finally by developing a township with a relevant vocabulary. Nabha town is not just what is visible but a sum total of the potential of the place.
3. People in the large cities may seem capitalistic but at the end of the day, they are Indians and care about their cities. Therefore these cities offer a huge opportunity and resource.
4. Finally, a vision of the cities themselves, so that the *Poorna Swaraj* that Gandhiji talked about could be completed. Let us be ambitious and not think about elements of individual crafts, but about how we can apply whole concepts of craft, community, form, and sociology into cities.

Over the next 20 years, India will see the greatest struggle she has ever had. It wasn't so difficult under the Raj, because the presence of an opposition meant that we maintained our culture but today that culture is being overwhelmed. It is the struggle for the soul of our civilisation. Will it be an inclusive and societal model of urban development or an individualistic and materialistic one? Many people have been struggling and feeling isolated. We hope that all these people will come together in this great battle. According to Gandhiji when one feels that one's forces are small and the armies of the other side are bigger, one should take the example of the Bhagavad Gita, of the five Pandavas looking at the array of army much greater than theirs. But they were protected by a much greater force— TRUTH. Today this truth is that of human beings living and wanting to live in a humane way. I believe that truth can protect us as we challenge the intellectual conception that is dehumanised. We have the opportunity of paraphrasing a much-overused expression of Gandhiji...

“To be the change we would like to see”

...a chance to create a movement of such power, that it can unlock our civilisation and project it to make a fundamental difference to the world.

Message from Robert Adam Chair INTBAU

INTBAU, The International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism, was founded 8 years ago. It had started out as a research program, and demonstrated that there was a specific need for such an organisation's existence. It was founded to bring together people from around the world who value tradition in architecture and urban design, and to counteract, to some extent, a fairly common view that modernity and tradition were polar opposites.

INTBAU is based around the principles of the INTBAU charter which summarizes very aptly the focus of the organization. This charter was written some time ago and I believe that it is quite relevant to the current situation. It is put down as follows:

The International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism is an active network of individuals and institutions dedicated to the creation of humane and harmonious buildings and places that respect local traditions.

Traditions allow us to recognise the lessons of history, enrich our lives and offer our inheritance to the future. Local, regional and national traditions provide the opportunity for communities to retain their individuality with the advance of globalisation. Through tradition we can preserve our sense of identity and counteract social alienation. People must have the freedom to maintain their traditions.

Traditional buildings and places maintain a balance with nature and society that has been developed over many generations. They enhance our quality of life and are a proper reflection of contemporary society. Traditional buildings and places can offer a profound modernity beyond novelty and contribute to a better future.

INTBAU brings together those who design, make, maintain, study or enjoy traditional building, architecture and places. We will gain strength, significance and scholarship by association, action and the dissemination of our principles.

His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales is the patron of the organisation which often works closely with the Prince of Wales's Foundation for the Built Environment. INTBAU is also headquartered at the same premises, with its work coordinated by Aura Neag and Matthew Hardy. INTBAU began its activities as a small network of people with a conference in Bologna. Here the idea of the network was initiated, and like all the best things, didn't get off with a bang. But, it has gradually grown and has now become a burgeoning NGO. The way global governance works presently, the role of NGOs is becoming increasingly important and INTBAU is fulfilling its role in the field of architecture and urbanism.

From those small beginnings, it has now become a network of chapters- Australia, Canada, Cuba, Germany, Ireland, India, Iran, Italy, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, UK and the USA. Any group, any country or region can start a chapter using a fairly simple process, through a group of people who subscribe to the principles of the charter and have sufficient momentum to create an organisation. The point of this is that tradition is always local- it's never international and while this is an international organisation, tradition must be represented by the communities from where they come. INTBAU India has quickly become the most successful amongst all the chapters. All due credit must go to those who established it and worked hard on forwarding its goals. Initiated first by Krupali Uplekar & Jyoti Soni and then taken forward by Deependra Prashad, there is now an additional base in Mumbai directed by Shirish Gupte, besides the headquarters at Delhi.

Interestingly, one of the early things INTBAU realised, with particular credit to Matthew Hardy, is the importance of the internet and the website. It is ironic that a great deal of support for traditions and a great many things to do with localisation in the globalising world are managed through the global aspects of globalisation itself.

INTBAU has been involved with various activities, including publishing essays, partnering in events, organisation of design workshops and conferences, the first one being Tradition Today. A recent conference was in Venice in November 2006 to discuss the current application of the Venice Charter. INTBAU has also established training centres in Romania, partnered for a summer school with the University at Timisoara and University Spiru Haret, Romania. Currently the Folkeuniversitetet, Norway and the head office are working on a new project with the European Union called the European School of Urbanism and Architecture which would create a peripatetic university course. In terms of direct action measures, INTBAU created the very successful Bran Master Plan in Romania, the Fredrikstad Masterplan in Norway and also created a pressure group for the reconstruction of the Neumarkt in Dresden, Germany, to focus on the traditional architecture of Dresden in Germany.

The above is a rough sketch of INTBAU as an international organisation. I must thank the team at INTBAU India for the immense amount of work which has been put in the creation of the organisation and this forum. Of course none of this would be possible without the Nabha Foundation team and the generosity and enormous support of Uday Khemka. I would also like to thank the members on the academic committee including Prof. A.G.K.Menon, Nimish Patel, S.K.Misra and Yaaminey Mubayi, with whom we sat and deliberated on the high quality contributions for this forum. I have made so many friends here and now in a strange way, India is for me a home away from home. I must thank all the supporters of INTBAU and INTBAU India and hope that we can proactively take forward the development of Indian traditions in new architecture and urbanism.

INTBAU Nabha Declaration

Preamble:

A... Rapid development is overtaking and transforming villages, towns, cities and metropolises in India. The urban population is set to treble in the next few decades. Social and economic transformation is producing new aspirations in society. This poses tremendous challenges to professionals and decision-makers to cater to the needs of future growth. In the past these challenges have been met by undertaking development based on transnational paradigms of architecture and urbanism, which have generally excluded local construction practices and processes. The new challenges offer the opportunity to redirect goals and strategies by using new development paradigms which would be more sympathetic to local needs and aspirations. It should foreground local identity, value social ethos and generate a sense of community through greater use of traditional skills and knowledge in architecture and building. New developments must therefore be rooted in local heritage.

B... Evidence of rootless global imagery is beginning to dominate our skylines. This phenomenon is all the more apparent in smaller towns like Nabha, which lie at the cusp of urban transformations. Nabha, in Punjab, is a former princely state with a rich cultural heritage, deeply rooted in community consciousness. Concerns for such towns and their hinterlands need to be brought into the centre of new urbanisation policies and practices. Nabha and other urbanising areas in the country need appropriate templates for development which would be sensitive to their rich cultural past, but using state-of-the-art development models and strategies.

C... The INTBAU Nabha declaration therefore forges the imperatives of heritage and development as an appropriate and sustainable paradigm for mediating future well-being of a transforming society. This belief is underpinned by the knowledge that traditional architecture and urbanism are evolutionary, incremental and self-correcting, and therefore offers the most appropriate design resource for meeting the challenges of the transformation taking place in our society.

We therefore declare that the principles enshrined in traditional architecture and urbanism must mediate future urban and rural development by:

Building on Collective Wisdom

Traditional architecture and urbanism embodies centuries of refined “collective intelligence”. It consists of traditional and local techniques of construction, local building materials and indigenous spatial typologies based on climate, culture and economic issues. The promotion of this knowledge can correct the problems created by the use of transnational paradigms to cater to local exigencies. This strategy is relevant not just in the rural-vernacular settings but also within the urban environment.

Strengthening Local Identity

The promotion of traditional building practices and spatial typologies reinforces local distinctiveness and coherence in a globalising world. This identity has to be derived from local urban morphologies, architectural typologies, local ecology, landscapes, traditional skills and resources, lifestyles, and would thus respond to local concerns and values.

Furthering Social and Economic Sustainability

Living Heritage and Traditions are a vast source of ideas and contextual references. They offer valuable insights to meet the challenges of revitalising inner city areas which are under stress on account of urbanisation. They also enhance possibilities of income generation and employment, utilisation of local skills and resources, and contribute to the creation of a sustainable local economy. Traditional Architecture and Urbanism also encourages high quality construction and built environments.

Turning Stakeholders into Stockholders

Traditional and local methods allow meaningful participation of citizens in all stages of the development process- from decision-making, prioritizing initiatives to construction. It helps create robust social systems by promoting decentralized governance. The Government and Public Sector must therefore actively promote the principles of traditional building practices through appropriate guidelines, policy and incentives in their projects.

Promoting Environmental Sustainability

Traditional building principles are based on reducing embodied energy in buildings. Fossil energy is a depleting resource and the built environment being its largest consumer should adopt traditional building principles. The usage of local materials, building methods and crafts skills would ensure the holistic development of the region and promote growth without compromising environmental sustainability.

Regaining Traditional People-centered Urbanism

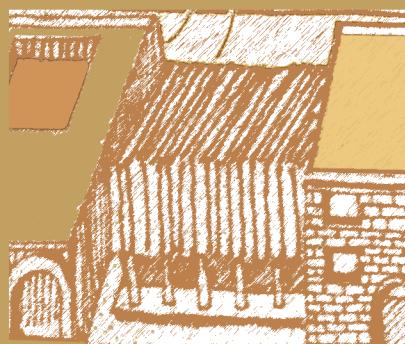
Traditional architecture and urbanism creates social capital and interaction. It produces walkable urban spaces, creating a rich spatial experience and a vibrant public realm.

Changing Educational focus

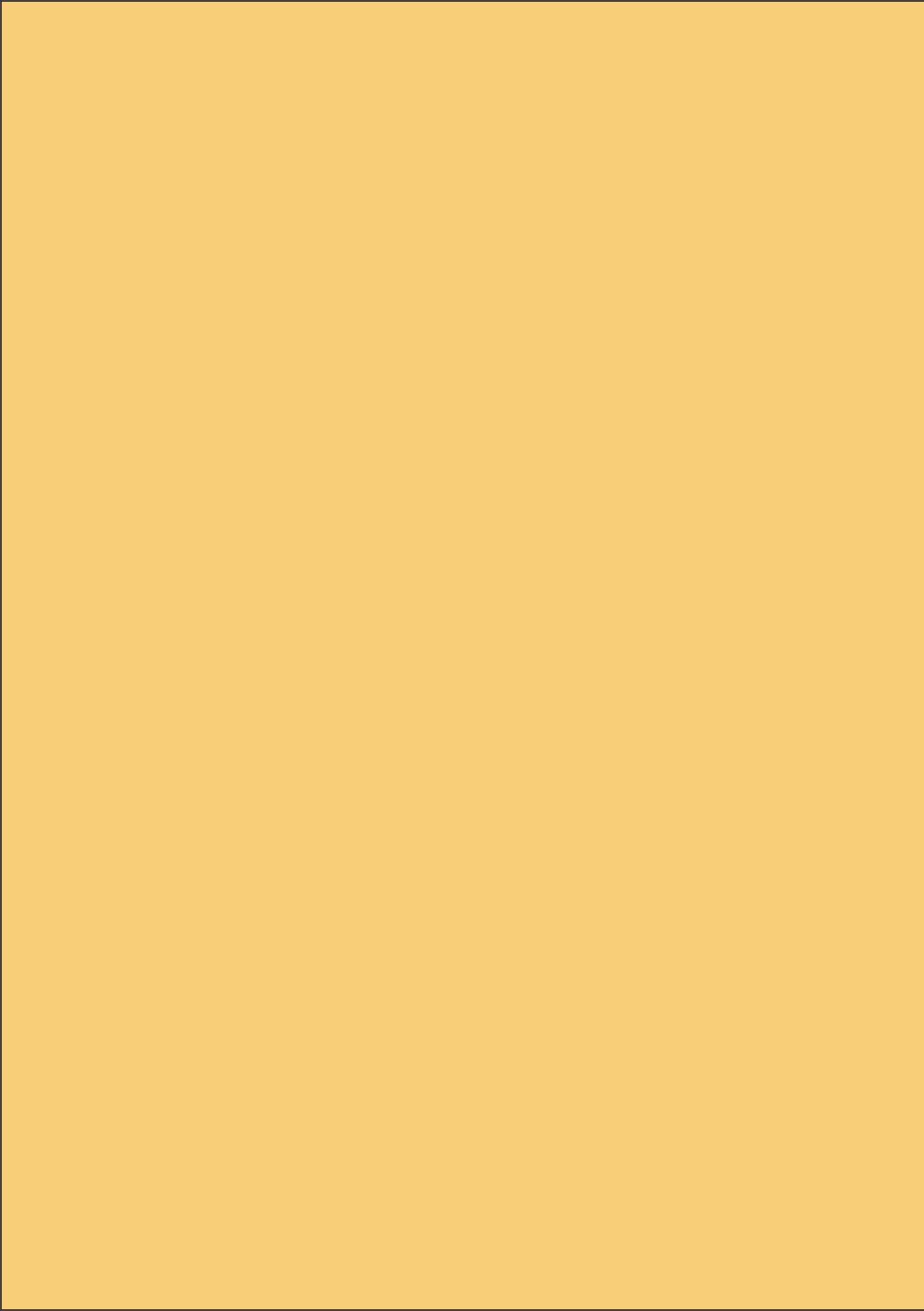
Design education must be re-oriented to inculcate an appreciation of traditional knowledge and construction technologies. Appropriate curricula must be created to respect the “Context” and also encourage adaptations and development of traditional techniques to meet new problems. Local and international institutions must also focus on documenting and disseminating good practices in the field, besides undertaking capacity building in the community and developing both traditional and upgraded skills.

Declaration:

We call upon the architectural and planning community, professionals, decision makers and the government to acknowledge the urgent need to study, protect and revive high quality traditional building, architecture and urbanism as an essential and progressive force to mediate the challenges of future urbanisation.



Introduction



Introduction: Why Tradition Matters

A.G.Krishna Menon
Chair, Academic Committee

The faith in the utopian promises of the modern movement evaporated long ago, but as a strategy of form-making and place-making it continued to dominate the imagination of architects and urban planners the world over. In developing societies it became synonymous with the process of modernization and its products symbolized the achievements of modernity. But in recent years its aura and efficacy as a tool for development has been severely blunted. Its reliance on the economics of unlimited growth and the unsustainable exploitation of resources it entailed, has resulted in the discontents of globalization and environmental problems such as global warming. Simultaneously, the (re)discovery of the intrinsic benefits of traditional architecture and urbanscapes has resulted in the re-examination of the foundational principles of the modern movement. Among the results of this churning has been the birth, 8 years ago, of the International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism (INTBAU), whose Indian affiliate hosted the conference on “New Architecture and Urbanism: Development of Indian Traditions.” INTBAU spawned the ‘new urbanism’ movement in the United States of America (US) and Europe, with which its Indian counterpart, just two years old, is trying to come to terms. The conference forum and this book has therefore twin objectives, namely, facilitating the process of enquiry already initiated by INTBAU internationally and to define its meaning in the Indian context.

The ideology of the modern movement was premised on the cult of ‘newness’ and the purposeful rejection of the past. It equated the avant grade with the production of architecture and urban spaces to be held in critical esteem and relegated any association with traditional architecture and urban spaces to history. In most societies this ‘modernist’ vision raised profound questions, separating the ideals of professionals and the expectation of users, but in developing societies with rich and still fecund building heritage, the situation was particularly poignant because the rejection of the past was detrimental to their well being as well. Thus increasingly, the modern movement was being confronted with reasoned apostasy, promoting the aesthetics of continuity and links with the familiar in the production of new architecture and urban spaces. The new objectives were to heal the rupture created by the modern movement and produce an urban environment more sympathetic to the expectation of society-at-large. This process is gaining ground.

For example, at a conference convened by INTBAU at Venice in November 2006, (www.intbau.org/venicecharter.htm), delegates from all over the world re-evaluated the principles of conservation enunciated in the Venice Charter of 1964. This iconic document had categorically prohibited any attempt at aesthetic continuity in the conservation of historic buildings and urbanscapes. This is not the occasion to examine the debates in the discipline of conservation, but suffice it to say that it reflected the questioning taking place in architecture and urban planning because the principles enunciated in the Venice Charter had roots going back to the beginning of the modern movement. The problem with the Venice Charter was therefore, *pari passu*, similar to

those in the disciplines of architecture and urban planning. INTBAU is at the forefront of both debates, and the issue that confronted INTBAU India in planning this conference was whether it should distinguish its concerns from those of the parent body. I had explored and articulated this difference in the context of conservation in India at the Venice Conference, and therefore felt that the conference in India could be an opportunity to undertake a similar journey in the context of architecture and urban planning in India.

The need for such an exercise is palpable. In the process of globalization it is possible that even reformist agendas can become hegemonic and overwhelm and subvert the formation of local possibilities of form-making and place-making as it happened with the spread of the Modern Movement. Notwithstanding the reality of the nuanced variations of the modern movement (*pace* Kenneth Frampton), the fact was that everywhere it was predicated on a break with the past which established the aesthetics of difference. Benchmarks developed in Europe and the US were routinely adopted and internalized by architects and planners in countries like India, thus foreclosing the possibilities for developing more appropriate practices rooted in local building traditions to meet contemporary needs. The idealization of new urbanism as it developed in Europe and US can already be seen at work in the promotion of INTBAU in India. This is adding a new layer of concern to an otherwise healthy process of questioning the relevance of the modern movement in India. Thus a process of enquiry that is ‘natural’ in the context of Europe and US can become ‘un-natural’ in other parts of the world. It therefore challenges critical local practitioners to deconstruct the efficacy of international movements without losing its valuable message. This conference forum was therefore conceived to redefine and recontextualize the issues of new architecture and urbanism by focusing on a specific cultural region as a field of enquiry.

This Forum and book elicited a strong response from all over the world testifying to the potency and contemporary relevance of the theme. It obviously struck a rich intellectual lode which will take a long time to mine and process. In this essay therefore, rather than go over its contents, I will explicate the underpinning rationale of the theme in order to navigate through the message of the conference.

I will begin by constructing the contours of the imagination of the contemporary Indian architect and urban planner. In the sixty years since Independence, their imagination has failed to engage with the basic problems of the built environment. It is therefore necessary to examine how were the tools of the profession constructed? Even as the professional uses these tools to grapple the problems of the built environment, can an understanding of its genesis provide new insights to develop more effective strategies? The argument I am presenting is that such insights are critical to re-define the characteristics of architecture and urban planning in the Indian context.

The history of the profession reveals the source of at least seven characteristics that define current practice. First, because of the colonial origins of the professions, architects and urban planners in India accepted the ‘universality’ of the British experience and adopted their methods, devices and legal instruments to create the built environment. These instruments have moreover not changed significantly even after Independence, indicating a professional distancing

from the problems of contemporary architecture and urban planning. Thus when we consider the need for new urbanism in the Indian context, can we use this insight to challenge the professional indifference to the issues of the built environment?

Second, professionals in India have shown a marked proclivity in their work to adopt patterns and images rather than policies and programmes associated with the so called universal experience. For example, urban planners reproduce just a few 'patterns' derived from (a) the Garden City concept of Ebenezer Howard, and (b) the baroque city plan of Lutyens' plan for New Delhi to make plans for cities in India. They ignore the social, economic and cultural imperatives that generated those original patterns. A similar obsession with 'image' has defined the narrow world of architectural strategies in India. Can new architecture and urbanism re-engage with real-life issues and complexities of the built environment?

Third, urban planners in India have a preponderant bias towards achieving beauty and order rather than dealing with the complexities of Indian urbanism. This is based on a superficial understanding of the City Beautiful Movement. Consequently they ignore the compelling logic of vernacular urbanism. Old Delhi, or Shahjahanabad, is therefore defined a slum because its morphology contradicts their concept of the 'beautiful' city. This bias creates an intellectual void in the discipline of urban planning. A similar void is at work in the delineation of 'modern' architecture in India, where every international 'ism' is mirrored in local architectural production as a 'style' ignoring the potential of vernacular architectural practices. Focusing on the imperatives of new architecture and urbanism in India could remedy this situation.

Fourth, urban planners easily absorb bold proposals made by foreign experts – these proposals include (a) poly-nodal urban districts containing segregated functional-use zones proposed for the Master Plan of Delhi in 1962, and (b) neighbourhoods in super-blocks with continuous green parks proposed by Le Corbusier in his Master Plan for Chandigarh. Urban Planners propose these typological models throughout the country. This 'one size fits all' strategy also characterizes the narrative of modern architecture in India. The influence of Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn who built in India and the current international stars of the architectural media overwhelm the local architectural imagination. In its current manifestation this genuflection to foreign experts is seen in the practice of engaging foreign architects and urban planners for large projects both in the private and public sector. For example, the government often makes such collaborations mandatory while inviting bids for projects like the Commonwealth Games and other large infrastructure schemes. New architecture and urbanism could contest this gratuitous practice by focusing on indigenous models to meet local needs.

Fifth, more complex ideas such as the one represented by the Structure Plan concept for planning Calcutta in the 70s, even though it was recommended by foreign experts, and of course, the recommendations of the National Commission on Urbanization headed by Charles Correa in 1986, appear to be beyond the grasp of urban planners. Architects too have failed to grapple with the complexities of advanced building technologies and the challenge of housing the economically weaker sections of our society, even though such disciplinary issues are routinely taken up by architects

abroad. Does the avoidance of disciplinary complexity have its roots in the colonial origins of the professions?

Sixth, in the context of larger disciplinary issues, the Indian urban planner may be defined as, 'anti-urban' just as the architect is 'anti-architecture'. Professionals in both disciplines have not considered their practice in a self-reflexive manner and thus have continued to pay obeisance to foreign knowledge and expertise. This is as much a reflection of the larger culture of society as it is the specific characteristic of the professions.

And finally, both architects and urban planners have remained low level functionaries in the decision-making hierarchy in the bureaucracy and society and so they do not feel 'responsible' for failures of their plans or designs. When Delhi went through the trauma of sealings and demolition because of 'illegal' construction last year, architects and planners merely pointed fingers at politicians, bureaucrats and society-at-large. The Indian strategy for new architecture and urbanism should therefore seek to eliminate this debilitating characteristics of professional indifference by making it necessary for architects and urban planners to dialogue and negotiate with the user/society in the development of their designs and become answerable to them for its success or failure.

The causes why these characteristics define professional work are rooted in its history. This is why history matters: it reveals the sources and the depths of the problems afflicting the professions. As in medicine, so in architecture and urban planning, understanding the origins and nature of the 'disease' is the first step to find a cure.

This perspective makes a strong case for changing the way architects and urban planners conceive buildings and the city. Their imagination needs to be realigned to confront the problems at hand and not seek conformity with developments taking place in Europe and US, including the new urbanism movement. This can begin by revamping the education curricula. Academic institutions continue to pass on received knowledge and practical experience for minimally informed and vocational ends. There has been no serious studies of Indian architecture and the conditions of its cities based on conscious hypotheses. The new urbanism movement offers an opportunity to change the colonized mindset of architects and urban planners by forcing professionals to consider ground realities. These ground realities include the culturally plural, socially evolving and economically constrained characteristics of Indian society. Such an academic enterprise has been long overdue – and it was with that expectation that we conceived this conference. We hope it will stimulate research in the concepts of new architecture and urbanism in order to 'de-colonize' architectural and urban planning practice in India.

Our society has widely plural characteristics, temporally, culturally and economically. Such conditions are rarely seen in other societies, old or new, and while we may gain insights through cross-cultural references, it would be futile to adopt models from other contexts. The complexity of the situation can be gauged by the fact that in urban planning terms, not one, but several disparate circumstances need to be reconciled simultaneously: neat suburban developments with homogenous population and the persistence of the heterogeneous 'chaotic' traditional settlements; the city of the 'haves' and the city of the 'have-nots', Lutyens' baroque city and Le Corbusier's 'rational' city on the one hand and the

'qasba' on the other; the automobile and the bicycle; and so on. There are no models to conceptualize such heterogeneity anywhere, so Indian architecture and urban planning will have to become self-referential. This is why the conference forum highlighted 'Development of Indian Traditions'.

This forum sought to deliberately turn the gaze of enquiry from the general/universal to the specific local/regional processes at work. It acknowledged the continued saliency of regional practices. In the interstices of the 'modern' there still exists a vibrant world of 'traditional' practices. Even as architects and urban planners in the West are advocating the virtues of new urbanism to resurrect links with the past severed by the modern movement, issues in countries like India are to reinvigorate what already exists for the same reasons. This is the logic underpinning INTBAU India's initiative on new architecture and urbanism and distinguishes it from those of its international counterparts.

Secondly, the conference identified three related thematic areas to focus on the characteristics of 'Indian Traditions': (a) New Ways of looking at Heritage, (b) Sustainable Places, Buildings and Communities, and (c) Continuing Traditions in New Architecture and Urbanism. This enabled us to disaggregate the diverse issues into relevant components to understand, evaluate and deal with its complexities. Once again, it established the distinction between the international and Indian concerns for new architecture and urbanism.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing that the objective of understanding the historical process is not to recreate or resurrect the architectural styles and spatial patterns of the past, which is what many associate with the new urbanism movement in the US and Europe but to adopt a more pragmatic approach to deal with local issues of architecture and urban planning. It should put to question the cult of 'newness' in design by foregrounding the virtues of continuity. The rediscovery of traditional architectural and planning practices is a world wide phenomena, but it has became associated with the gated communities of the privileged. It is characterized by gratuitous pandering to nostalgia and the creation of pastiche. This is not to say that there are no redeeming qualities – the INTBAU conference on the Venice Charter in November 2006 showcased a variety of compelling examples, like the importance of reviving high quality crafts and craftsmanship in the building trade – but in India the issues are also tied up with creating sustainable futures.

Modern architecture and urban planning in India is creating an unequal society of those who can conform to its imperatives, and those who cannot – and in India the majority cannot. Thus the Indian perspective on new architecture and urbanism seeks to define alternate modernities. Its concerns focus on creating a viable and sustainable future for all. In this manner, new architecture and urbanism offers an opportunity to develop diverse local identities in a globalizing cultural milieu.

Tradition therefore matters; recognizing its importance is an epiphany which can lead to the transformation of architecture and urban planning in India. The conference and the contributions in this publication provide compelling evidence of its possibilities.



Tradition and Our Built Environment

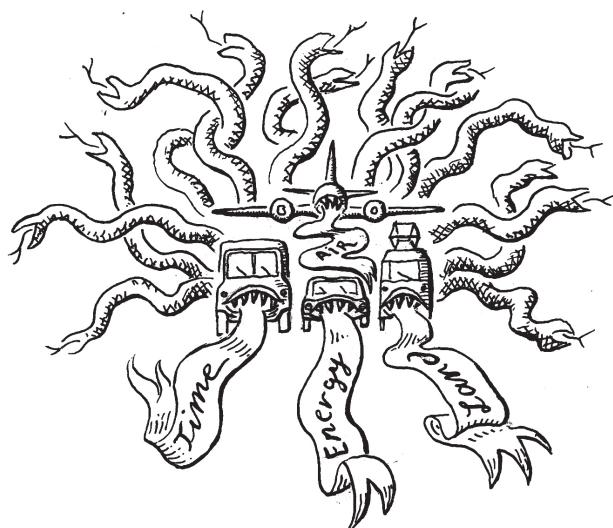
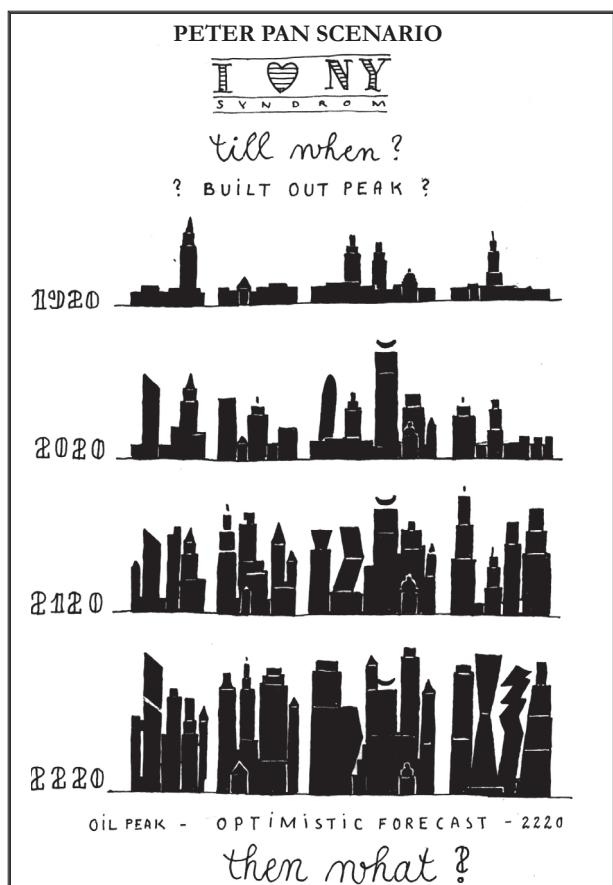


Growth: Maturity Or Over-development ?

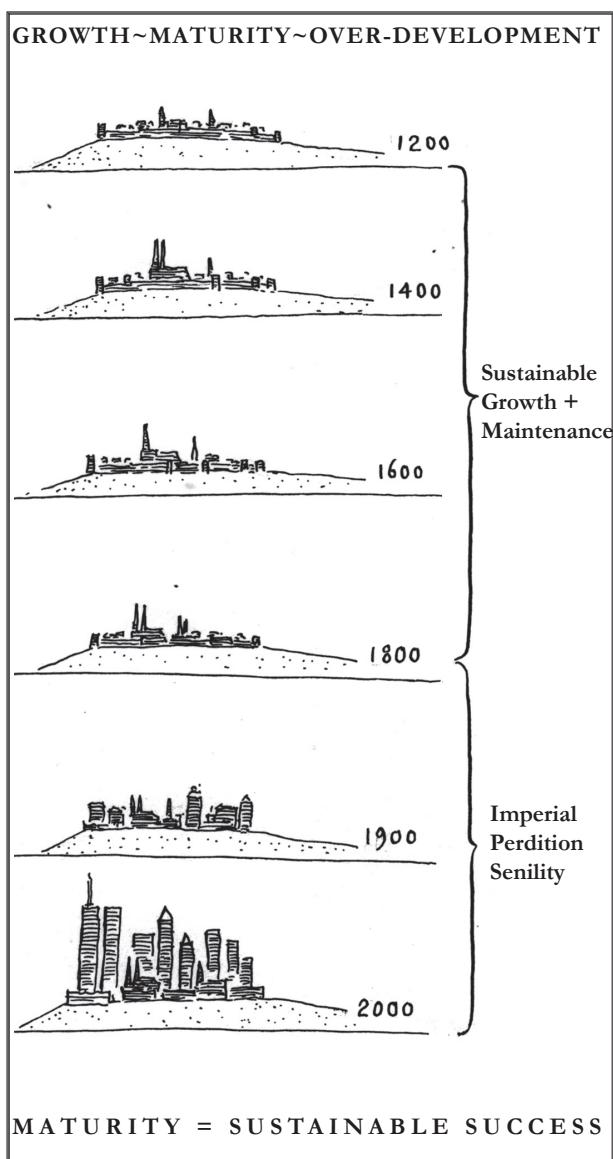
Leon Krier
Architect & Urbanist, France

The front cover of a current affairs magazine in India proudly displays the portraits of four leading businessmen under the title "THE ACCELERATORS." It is my hope that we may endeavour to instead help to slow down certain forms of development, to pause a little, to think about long term development objectives, rather than speeding blindly into a state of exhaustion.

Having for millennia entertained a building culture of superb environment and aesthetic quality, it may be a mystery even to an inquisitive mind, why such an incomparable traditional culture could not resist the triumph of modernism. For an extra terrestrial observer such a cataclysmic break in matters of architecture and urbanism could possibly be explained by a cosmic catastrophe, an alien invasion, by an enforced change, an imposed abandonment, maybe by a lethal virus, or some devastating toxic substance against which there was no inborn resistance.

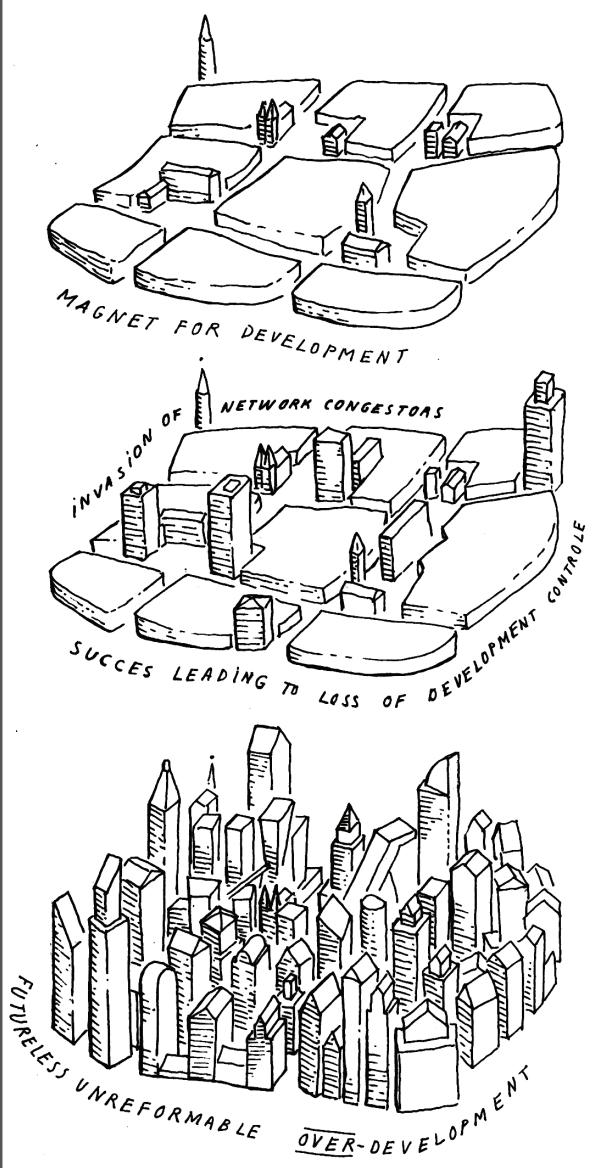


MODERN HYDRA

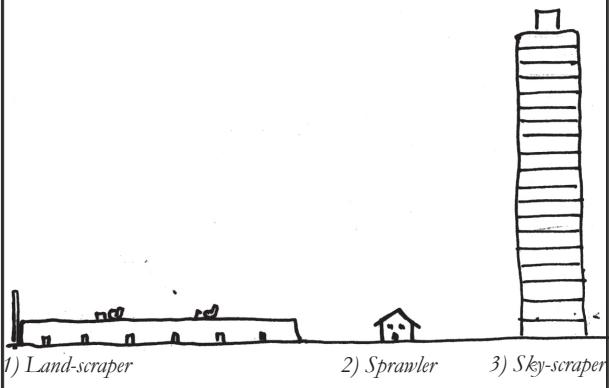


The mechanism of the vanquished adopting the gods, manners, language, styles, technology of a foreign invader are known throughout history and worldwide. The fact the invaders themselves abandon their own best intelligence, manners, practices in environmental and architectural matters, to replace them with inferior surrogates is literally a world shattering event. It explains also why we are ill prepared for the sea change demanded by ecological sustainability.

RISKS OF URBAN SUCCESS

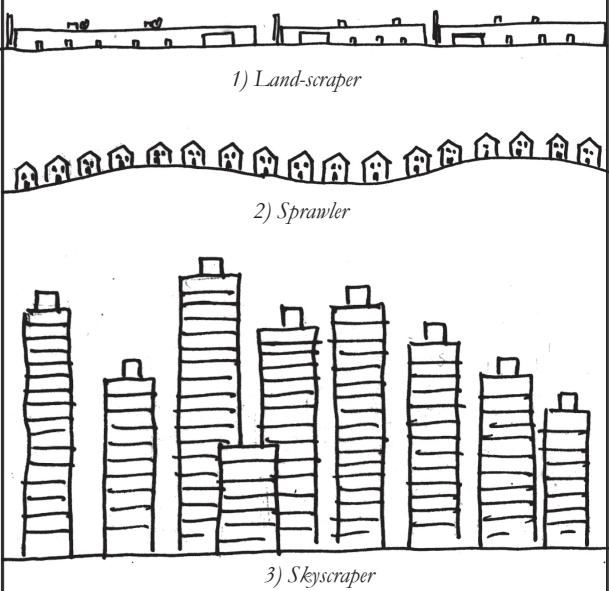


3 BASIC MODERN BUILDING TYPES



3 FORMS OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

Functional Monotony >>> Architectural Pathologies



The Green-Glass-Lipstick-type skyscraper capped by a grotesque caricature of headwear, which dresses itself indecently above the vernacular roofscape of a Gurgaon shanty town is the most poignant symbol of the unsustainability of modernism I have encountered so far.

The massive realisation of fossil fuel depletion, overpopulation, water scarcity and global warming are calling for a dramatic re-evaluation of modernist values and perceptions, in fact for the whole scale abandonment.

Educational institutions, planning agencies, professionals and legislation are lagging decades behind. Fundamental

scientific research has lost itself for 200 years in the extremes of the micro and macro scales, as if only there, salvation and glory were to be found. For too long it has abandoned the tangible environment, the water, the soil, the air and its resources to be processed by barbaric machinery and incredibly crude planning tools.

That is where INTBAU, CNU, The Prince of Wales Foundation play an inestimable role. Even though the question of "ecological development" and of the planet's "carrying capacity" are ultimately issues of science, the global ecological project must of necessity become its central subject, its necessity has so far only been formulated

