DESIGN detail
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ARCHITECTURE IS POETRY
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BUILDING THOUGHTS
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BALANCING TECHNOLOGY AND NATURE
COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE BY ARCHITECT N. MAHESH

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Welcome to Design detail

The launch of any new magazine has excitement about it. I hope the contents of this first edition have something for the academic and industry audience. We genuinely attempt to wrestle with the serious questions being asked of current and future status of architecture. We hope that this will turn into one of the many places to look for clues as to the way out of the dead-end that architecture has backed itself into. We have tried to gather together many strong, intelligent, interesting, and convincing voices in one place. All the projects featured have Innovation, Imagination, Creativity, Identity and Sustainability and we promise to bring you more in the coming issues.

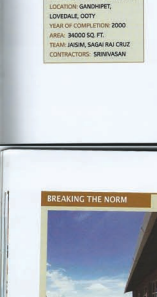
Architect L.Gopakumar
Publisher

RELEASE REWIND

Where nature and design coexist

Text : Tina Garg and Jasminder Manlanker
Photography: Ronika Bansal, Keerthana Devdas, Cheryl Rohit John

When Iqbal K Mohamed approached Jaisim to build Light & Life Academy, he was unfamiliar with Jaisim's philosophy. For Architect Jaisim, this journey would not have been possible without the all-important step in the design process -understanding the reasons behind the client's life choices, their life story. "When clients come with pictures of other villas to replicate, we dissuade them and offer to capture the essence of their personalities, their life values instead."


Architect Jaisim

RESPECTING NATURAL FORCES

About the structure, he says: "Nature and the British pointed the way forward. Insects with an extremely light exoskeleton, such as ants and grasshoppers, navigate most terrains easily. This inspired me to use steel. And the simple structure of the local labourers colony established by the British demonstrated how my building would stand."

His plan was initially rejected by the contractor who felt that the structure couldn't stand on the hilly terrain. Jaisim thought otherwise. "Structure includes not just the physical structure but also the structure of design, space, and time. If this structure respects the physical structure, then the result is a phenomenal example of design."LLA stands today as an example of this ingenuity.

FROM HEIGHT TO HEIGHTS

The structure is deliberately kept light and agile with the use of steel and hollow blocks from Kerala. The roof, in two layers, is kept well insulated and waterproof with corrugated aluminum sheets and Mangalore tiles.

Natural light and breeze are closely integrated into the structural design. The open, simple structure allows the naturally cool air to fan through the academy and move through space without being obstructed. The roof is designed with ample skylights to filter in the natural light.

IN STEP WITH INDIAN SENSIBILITIES

All created space must inherently have a sense of fun, joy, and happiness in it. In Jaisim's opinion it's not enough to pay attention only to building exteriors, the interiors are equally important, maybe even more so. Jaisim says, "We

FACT FILE

PROJECT: LIGHT & LIFE ACADEMY
LOCATION: GANDHIPET, LOVEDALE, OOTY
YEAR OF COMPLETION: 2000
AREA: 34000 SQ. FT.
TEAM: JAISIM, SAGAI RAJ CRUZ
CONTRACTORS: SRINIVASAN

BREAKING THE NORM

LLA is an example where Architect Jaisim truly defies norm in every way. Here's a quick glance at how a bohemian approach gave birth to a place, which has become synonymous with wonder, joy, and creation!

♦ Amidst a terrain with heavy buildings, stone, and concrete structures, LLA was largely built with steel, terracotta blocks, and aluminum sheets.

♦ LLA needs no artificial cooling or heating despite the temperature rising high or falling down to two degrees. The Mangalore tiles on the roof keep it insulated at all times and the ambient temperature is always comfortable – a huge relief on costs!

♦ LLA stands in simple elegance – no plastering on its walls, roughly finished steps; yet it is one of the most appreciated and captivating places to lose yourself in.

♦ LLA allows the space within to move freely. At the topmost level, one can view all the other levels with ease as no enclosures block the view.

Indians are vibrant people; we need colour in our environment. My buildings are dynamic and evolving, with new facets being revealed every day. This adds a sense of sustainability and surprise that keeps the interest in the building alive."

FINDING INSPIRATION IN THE MATERIAL

According to Jaisim, it's the human mind that intervenes to turn sand into glass and iron ore into steel. Man is the catalyst who integrates time and space to make architecture possible.

For Jaisim, the choice of materials should follow the dictates of design and that is what keeps designs timeless and age proof. The material in itself is not as important . At LLA, this is well elucidated in his use of terracotta blocks the same blocks adorn the jali patterns in the photography studio and work wonderfully as columns in the precincts.

However much they resemble each other,no two buildings designed by Jaisim are the same. "Each design is dynamic and includes some elements from the previous along with new ones in the present. My designs evolve as they progress and even I can't predict the end result until I finish it!" he adds in a lighter vein.

STRIKING THE BALANCE

With examples of the classics that he has created, Jaisim wishes that the architects of today take this talent forward. Offering succinct advice for budding architects, he says, "Have a strong belief in yourself; if you don't respect yourself, who will? And develop the perseverance to think, to apply yourself. Most people are happy to cruise along on other people's efforts. If you really want to create something, get into the soul of it. My architecture has to be a culmination of philosophy of objectivism, reinforcement of fundamentals, and a strong belief in myself."

This approach is justified indeed, for it is a moment of pure joy when such imagination inspires creations like Light and Life Academy, which can uplift man over many life times; when nature and man coexist to make space for inspiration, to give birth to poetry in building, and to celebrate life timelessly.