



“Architecture is balance of art and engineering”

- RATHIN GOGHARI



ARCHITECT'S VOICE



Mr. Rathin Goghari

Mr. Rathin Goghari teaches design at CEPT University, Ahmedabad as visiting faculty since 2000 in the School of Architecture and School of Interior Design.

Born in Mumbai in 1960, Mr. Rathin Goghari did his Bachelors of Science (Physics) St.Xaviers College, Ahmedabad. He followed it up with Graduate Studies In Architecture, School Of Architecture, Centre for Environmental Planning And Technology, Ahmedabad.

After graduating from the School of Architecture, he joined as Projects-In-Charge at Stien Doshi and Bhalla where he worked for three years. Thereafter, he established his firm, RATHIN GOGHARI

Amongst his early experience at Stien Doshi And Bhalla are projects like

National Institute Of Fashion Technology, New Delhi.
Bharat Diamond Bourse, Office Complex At Bandra Kurla Complex, Bombay.

Some early works in his individual capacity include, P.K.Kathiawala Vidhyasankul, Surat., Ahmedabad International School, Ahmedabad, Holiday home for Mr. Ayaz memon.

Work in progress IFCI Bhavan, C G Road Ahmedabad.



Ahmedabad International School

ARCHITECTS in Ahmedabad in the year 1990. He undertakes design projects related to Institutional Buildings, Corporate offices, Industrial Buildings & Residential Buildings.

Mr. Goghari divides time between his home in Mumbai, his daughter's tennis coaching in Spain, his son's higher studies in Rhode Island, USA and his work at Ahmedabad.

We met Mr Rathin Goghari at his Ahmedabad office.

Excerpts from the interview:-

Early Years

My childhood was spent in an environment that looked down upon anything to do with art or creativity. My father – who was a company secretary – firmly believed that practicing anything to do with drawing or any other art was a sure fire road to poverty and aimlessness. A few years after my move to Ahmedabad, I happened to visit the CEPT premises because of a garba program. This was followed by more trips and before I knew it, I was enamored with the environment and the work that was being done there.

Thesis

My thesis took longer than usual. The thesis

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was on ancient Indian palace complexes. In the course of writing this thesis I traveled a lot. The thesis was finally published as a book by the college. This along with the internship during the next few years taught me more things about Architecture, especially what I shouldn't be doing rather than what I should be doing. Also, during this phase, I nurtured a stubborn lack of self-

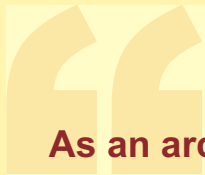


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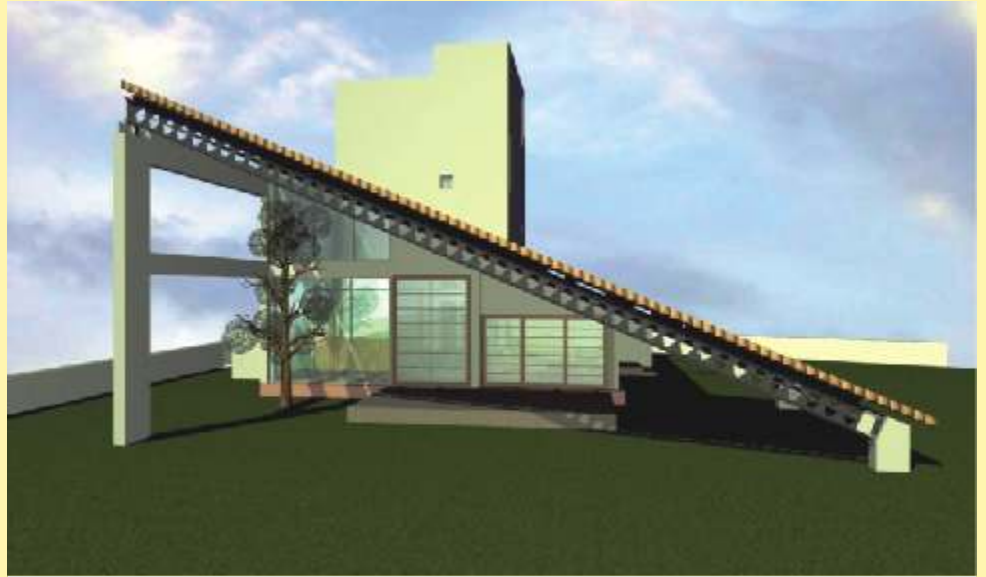
esteem, which I still carry. In retrospect, I can say that this period was the watershed of my life and career.

Architecture

Architects are of two types. The commercially oriented and the not commercially oriented and by this, I am pointing to the obvious trend where



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Residence for Mr. Jatin Shah, Lonavala

architects pocket commissions, incentives and the like They also work hand in glove with politicians, builders, suppliers to grab projects and in covert violation of architectural bye-laws and tenets. Commerce definitely is a reality of life; how much importance one gives to it is a matter of personal choice.

Generally speaking there is less money in Architecture. One has to trade between commerce and socially responsible creative work. My stand on design is that social responsibility and creative relevance are sacrosanct and should not be contaminated with other – mostly hanky panky considerations.

Architecture is balance of art and engineering. A true and genuine tight rope

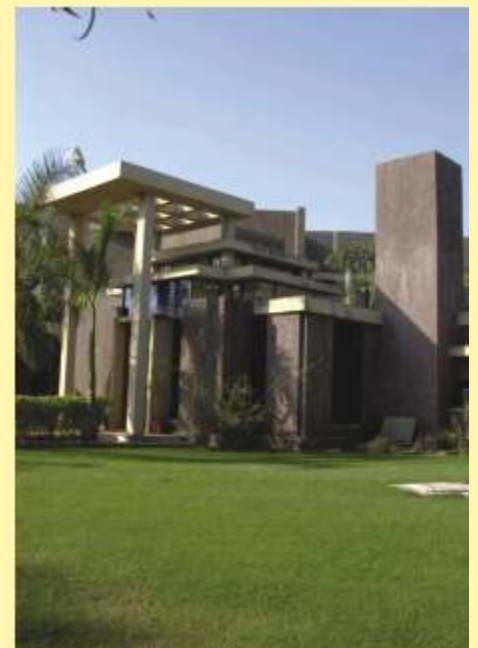
walk wherein the architect is forever working at balance between the right priority and relevant constraints..

Architecture is the mother of all arts. One has to master innumerable things before one can even begin designing built spaces. It is a synthesis of many trades and crafts. It evolves out of a mind boggling concoction of functional necessity and sensory preference.

To arrive at a design solution is the final output of the architect and for this, he has only himself to fall back on. What you are,



P.K.Kathiwala Vidhyasankul, Surat.



Industrial Building at Gandhinagar



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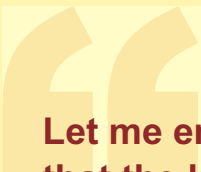
and how you got there is your personal story, absolutely irrelevant to the final product. Corbusier – one among the better architects who have worked in Ahmedabad – was not a trained architect; never went to any architect's school. And yet have the world famous examples of his work. In the Mill- Owner's Association , Sanskar Kendra in Ahmedabad and the city of Chandigarh

Vaastu

While building his office, factory or home, every client has Vaastu on his mind. Some follow it fanatically, others can live with basic Vaastu planning. What I have experienced is that the client himself has little or no knowledge of Vaastu but will absolutely insist on top level understanding of the subject from the architect or – in most cases – by the Vaastu consultant. Because the client himself has little knowledge of the subject, he tends to be a blind follower.

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I am neither threatened by Vaastu nor am I into any position of antagonism with it. I have just one rule, however. I have made peace with Vaastu but I insist that whatever the Vaastu inputs are, they should be given before we start the design. I am totally submissive to all instruction, because I see



Let me emphasize that the kernel of Vaastu is good science and the fact that our ancestors devised it centuries ago, is a matter of pride. My point is that we must move ahead now.

PADHMANABHAM PALACE



Padhmanabham Palace

The Padhmanabham Palace is an excellent example of a perfect Vaastu building,:

Built over four hundred years ago on the traditional technology principles prevalent then.

The Padhmanabham palace has followed traditional technologies faithfully, in the use of building materials, placement of doors and windows; the placement of the main entry and the placement of the armory; the placement of guest rooms etc.

The entire design is unapologetically reverential to Vaastu and traditional building technology of the time. I have studied it and have nothing but amazement and respect for it.

it as a part of my brief which I am to follow. However, once we have designed the building, I have never budged. I refused to be ambushed mid way through the design process. I tell the client he can always break down whatever it is that is troubling him at a later stage, after my exit. Let me tell you that I have still not lost a single client. I have seen that eventually, if the architect sticks to his convictions, even the Vaastu consultant finds a substitute solution, because even he is not looking out for a quarrel. In Vaastu, there is always a substitute solution or some counter strategy that can be put in place.

I call Vaastu Traditional Planning Diagrams. When it must have been conceived, it must have been an enduringly marvelous design solution that was implemented on a mass scale. Having said that, I believe that new social and functional needs have arisen and these are conveniently served by better solutions are available through the advances made by technology. To put it in a nut shell, the architectural relevance of

Vaastu is questionable because somebody put a big full stop on Vaastu evolution more than a thousand years ago. So, while times have changed Vaastu has not.

This brings us to a very important question. Why is it that Vaastu is still sought after? If it was irrelevant as my earlier argument suggested then it should have been rejected, but of course that is not the case. The answer to that question is the fear factor that has taken firm root in the client's mind. The client's fear of his future drives him to the solace that Vaastu provides. So the mood is like this; *"What harm will it do if we follow Vaastu. And if it works, then it's a big bonus. It's a win-win solution"* There are a lot of stories about the magical powers of Vaastu, but I prefer to take them in my stride and move on with the work.

Having said that, let me emphasize that the kernel of Vaastu is good science and the fact that our ancestors devised it centuries ago, is a matter of pride. My point is that we must move ahead now. ■