

Chris Lee/Kapil Gupta

With both its architects working from separate cities, Chris Lee/Kapil Gupta is the face of the increasing number of transnational practices now encompassing India, and evidence of the long-term international associations that architectural education now enables. Chris Lee Architects is an international practice based in London which is informed through research conducted at the Architectural Association, where Lee has taught since 2002. Gupta is design principal at Contemporary Urban India and the Director of Research and Publications at the Urban Design Research Institute, Mumbai. Being fascinated by the evolution and mutation of building types in today's cities, Lee and Gupta explore the issues that lie at the intersection between architecture and urbanism with a particular focus on developing new relevant types for these environments.



Jewel Tech, Mumbai, 2002

In the design of this new diamond-cutting factory, the goal of the architects was to reverse the paranoia-inducing, prison-like conditions of a conventional factory. A 'reverse-panopticon' effect is thus proposed, whereby a glass canyon void works as a surveillance chamber, connecting the different departments and facilities. All circulation within the building is routed through this void. Surveillance is constant and visual rather than physical, removing the need for intrusive body searches, as was the case in older factories. Metal staircases that connect the different production levels are hung with cables so that they bounce with every step a craftsman takes though the void, resonating his movement and heightening his presence. Small openings throughout the whole factory take the form of light slits in the aluminium and glass-panel cladding.

Fort School, Mumbai, 2005–

The challenge for the Fort School, located in the historical district of Kala Goda, was to redefine the organisation and functionality of a school vertically by adapting the core elements of a high-rise. Contrary to the sprawling low-rise block typology of a school surrounded by green fields, here the planning parameters for the district and the economic strategy of the school dictated a high-density, high-rise block. Five cores are distributed evenly across the floor plates to act as structural elements as well as circulation (the main core contains a continuous ramp). The perforated cores are generated as a series of elliptical undulations that thicken to form structural walls with openings for light and visibility. The facade is also conceived as a structural element, made up of a diamond grid to counter the stress along the large cantilevers.



deGustibus, Mumbai, 2007

Here, a group of disused buildings from the colonial past set within the Mumbai Race Course are to be converted to form a series of food and beverage complexes. The conservation guidelines call for the preservation of the roof profile for three-quarters of the buildings, and full conservation for the remaining quarter. The stunning aspect of the site, however, is not the colonial buildings but the open spaces covered by mature rain trees. The proposed design attempts to further the idea of a continuous yet differentiated space with no clear boundary within the envelope of the conservation buildings. Creating a new structure within an old building envelope is achieved by adopting a kind of tree-branch system, whereby the Corten-clad roof is punctured with a series of openings that correspond to the intersection of the branches.

TEAM (Snehansu Mukherjee and AR Ramanathan)

With a practice based in New Delhi since 1985, TEAM has encountered the various swings in the architectural climate of India with a certain restraint and consistency by addressing issues of sustainability and conservation at all scales of design from architecture to settlement planning.



Osho Dham, Najafgarh, bordering Gurgaon and Delhi, 1994–

The design for this commune for the followers of Osho (formerly Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh) takes into account its primary uses as a meditation camp and accommodation for the followers. The goal was to create a self-sustaining commune where vegetables and wheat are grown using organic fertilisers and pesticides. The various buildings, although grouped closely together, are separated through landscape design using groves of trees. The buildings' black exteriors mean they merge with the shadows of the surrounding trees.



Ganguly Bakshi House, Faridabad, Haryana, 1994

One of the first houses to be constructed in a new development area on the border of Delhi, the building was designed, within a very tight budget, to resemble a little keep in a wilderness where herds of Nilgais roamed, and also so that it would eventually fit into a more developed suburban plot.

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Sanjay Puri Architects

The diverse and prodigious work of Sanjay Puri Architects, based in Mumbai since 1992, embodies the new ebullient economy of India in the various townships, housing schemes, malls and new building types.



Aishwarya at Baroda, Baroda, 1999

This group housing project provides affordable high-density accommodation, taking advantage of the openness and views, and large recreational areas, that such developments offer, yet generating the types of space that only individual low-rise houses normally possess. Sociological, physical and climatic factors of the region, and the behavioural patterns of the local people, informed the design. A large internal courtyard allows cross-ventilation and forms a cool area for playing and social gatherings during the harsh heat of summer. In addition, a spacious garden for outdoor activities also facilitates the processional celebration of the region's popular festival, Navratri, within the complex.

Amby Valley Sahara Lake City Leisure Center (AVSLC), Lonavla, Maharashtra, 2003



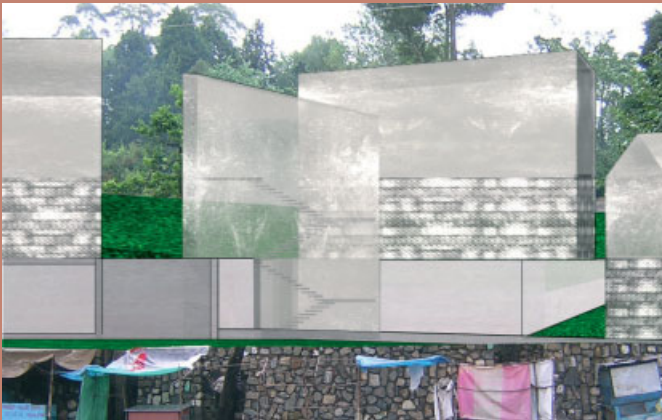
Rather than creating partitioned spaces, the entire internal volume of this leisure centre is delineated into several platforms of varying heights. Since the location enjoys beautiful landscaped surroundings, it was important to ensure uninterrupted views from the interior spaces. Each area, such as the sports facilities, cafeteria, library, office, lounge and Internet café, is separated only by differentiated ground levels, allowing the natural outdoors to be visible from the interior. Each level is bound by low wood partitions that move fluidly within the internal volume, creating an abstract formation. Floating trapezoidal panels in the ceiling, suspended at varying levels, enhance the meandering formation of the low partitions.



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Fabian Ostner

Fabian Ostner represents a new transnational practice triggered by the experimental and international environment at Auroville which attracts architects from all over the world. Trained in Germany, and having worked in Berlin and Mumbai, Ostner now runs his practice from the former French colony of Pondicherry, a city in south India close to both Auroville and Chennai. He cites the reason for his architectural domicile in India as the charter of Auroville, in its striving to represent a bridge between past and present and, ultimately, human unity. Ostner focuses on bridging traditional building culture with a modern approach to architecture that is often conveyed by his compelling projective images.



Kodaikanal Hotel and Spa, Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, 2004

The proposed site for a hotel-cum-spa in the hill station of Kodaikanal in south India, famous for its climate, forests, plantations and the lake in the town centre, is adjacent to the lake and has beautiful old trees growing on its slopes. Any new construction in Kodaikanal must respect strict building bylaws, and in this case new buildings would be permissible only in place of existing ones, must not exceed two storeys, and would have to feature sloped roofs. Keeping in mind these regulations, a large part of the programme (pool, spa, gym, parking, utilities) is placed below ground, partially using the slope to look out on to the green landscape and the lake. Above ground, the new buildings emerge from the outlines of the previous ones and house the hotel rooms and dining facilities.

As delivery of materials to the town is problematic, the design foresees the prefabrication of most elements and a fast assembly on site. The buildings are made of steel frames and clad in glass to achieve a maximum exchange between inside and out.



Midford Garden, Bangalore, 2003

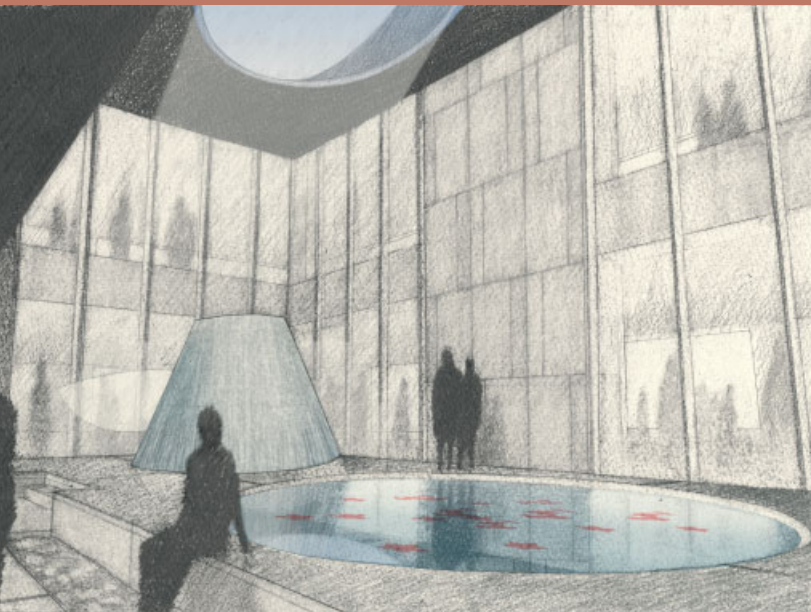
The design team for this corporate head office for a textile manufacturer in Bangalore also included Brand New Day and Dominic Dube. The design wraps around part of the existing buildings on the site, and the architecture is clear and simple, in contrast to the somewhat chaotic development in the area. Ground-floor spaces are open to the public and house boutiques and an auditorium.



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Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects

The work of the New York-based practice of Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects is well known for producing lyrical designs that are materially rich and spatially innovative. The terms 'humanity' and 'poetic quality' have been regularly used in reviewing their numerous residential and institutional projects. The context of an Indian project provides a new opportunity for the finely crafted, tactile architecture the practice is known for.



Banyan Park, Mumbai, 2003–

Among the new buildings and campuses emerging from the economic upswing in India, the Banyan Park campus for Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) explores the grouping and relationship of buildings in the tropical milieu of Mumbai alongside innovations in fabrication. The 9-hectare (23-acre) campus is located on a site near Mumbai's international airport. The project, designed with associate architects Somaya & Kalappa Consultants, comprises 12 separate buildings that are interconnected by shaded passageways that provide shelter from Mumbai's intense heat and seasonal monsoons. Concrete and local stone will be used extensively to give a sense of permanence and mass, and generous windows will let in light and views where needed, avoiding large expanses of glass curtain-wall.

The project is intended to be experienced on foot, and passage between the different buildings of the campus is under cover in the open air. Numerous paths allow pedestrians to either jog or stroll, and the landscape has been designed to create both open areas of grass and trees and quiet contemplative courtyards.

Within the buildings, the hallways are also outdoor spaces, this time connected by generous exterior stairs that encourage people to move from floor to floor on foot; places to sit and talk overlooking the verdant landscape will be incorporated into the walkways – a planning approach that also greatly reduces cooling demands and energy use.

The buildings are also connected by raised passageways, one of which, located at the entrance to the campus, is a pedestrian bridge that will be clad with large stone *jalis* (perforated screens). These reinterpretations of traditional Indian hand-carved panels provide another way to filter light and frame views of the campus.

The offices are configured around a series of central courtyards. Elliptical openings in the roof will provide diffuse light to the centre of each courtyard, bringing a gentle light into the work spaces. Additional light will come from windows with large horizontal stone sunshields. Keenly aware of the problems of glare, the work spaces have thus been designed to allow views to the outside while shielding the inside from direct light.

