Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad.

Client:
Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

Architects, Structural Engineers and Landscape Designers:
National Institute of Design.

Architectural Consultants:
Mr. Louis I. Kahn, Philadelphia, USA.

Shri B. V. Doshi, Ahmedabad.

Structural Engineering Consultant:
Mahendra Raj, Bombay.

Project:
College Campus comprising:
Main Complex, School Buildings, Dormitories, Housing for staff members.

Site development.

Site:
65 acres of land in Ahmedabad.

Budget:
First phase estimates: Rs. 85 lakhs.

(The entire campus is likely to cost about Rs. 100 lakhs).

Requirements:
First phase:

Dormitories for 300 students;
Housing for 110 families;
Main Complex, including class, seminar and faculty rooms, administration, library, kitchen and dining halls for students and faculty.

Site development.

Second phase:
Dormitories for 60 students,
Housing for 65 families,
Site development.

Text from the Yale Architectural Journal; Perspecta 9/10, 1965.

The plan comes from my feelings of monastery. The idea of the seminar classroom and its meaning of "to learn" extended to the dormitories comes from the Harvard Business School.

The unity of the teaching building, dormitories and teachers' houses—each its own nature, yet each near the other—was the problem I gave myself. The lake between student and teacher is one way of distance with little dimension. When I found this way, the dormitories tended, psychologically, to break away from the school, though it has no appreciable distance from it.

A work of art is the making of a life.

The architect chooses and arranges to express in spaces environment and relationships man's institutions. There is art if the desire for and the beauty of the institution is filled.

The first designs of the dormitories were composed as houses for sixty students each with two stories of rooms above open connecting porches on the ground. The end bays of each house toward the lake step ten feet to a level four feet above the water, giving a two-storey house-clubroom facing the lake. This became the space of invitation vested in each house and adding to the interhospitality in spirit embodied in the seminar idea of exchange among students and teachers.

The dormitory rooms, in groups of ten, are arranged around a stairway and tea-room hall. In this way, corridors are avoided, favouring the making of rooms which contribute to the central idea, calling for plan and residual spaces for casual and seminar study.

The tea-room entrance and positioning of the stair and washroom serve to protect the rooms from sun and glare without obstructing the essential through breeze.

The houses are oriented to the wind, all walls parallel with its direction. They are placed diagonally around a court to enclose the court and retain the strictness demanded by orientation. If you have a square in which everything is normally answerable to a square, you find that two sides are oriented improperly. By taking the diagonal you form odd conditions, but you do answer, you can conquer this geometry if you want to. And you must relentlessly look at orientation as something that you give to people because it is desperately needed. That is the basis of these diagonal shapes.

In the school building, you notice I introduced a light well. I think it is somewhat superior to the device I invented for Luanda, because there I put a wall up to shade the sun and modify glare, and here the solution is an integral part. The construction of the building is better as well because you have less span to deal with and the windows are not on the exterior where you do not want them. This is a reverse bay window, you might say. The inner court will be shielded during certain ceremonies by a large canopy spanning eighty feet. What gave me the courage to do this was the architectural provisions made in the courtyards of the Akbar Palace at Lahore for the same purpose.

You know the people in India make wonderful cloth and they have stretched even greater distances with it. This court is different from things I have conceived before. It gives such joy to be the one to discover a beautiful way of life that belonged to another civilization.

You notice I made all these buildings answerable to each other even though the scale of the house and the dormitory and the school is so different.

The material of brick bearing walls and piers with concrete floors is retained throughout the larger spans giving rise to arches and buttresses, the more modest spaces simple slabs on walls. Consistent with the order of brick construction and the introduction of concrete, the concrete combines with the characteristics of brick in the making of the flat arches. In the houses, where there is not sufficient dimensional expanse to use a full arch, concrete restraining tension beams are introduced to counter the thrust of the flat arches.

The fullness of the light, protected, the fullness of air, so welcome, are always present as the basis for architectural shapes. I was impressed with the need for air when I happened, with twenty other people, in the palace in Lahore, where the guide showed us the ingenuity of craftsmen who had covered an entire room with multi-colored mirrored mosaics. To demonstrate the mystery of the reflections, he closed all the doors and lit a match. The light of the single match gave multiple and unpredictable effects but two people fainted for lack of air in the short moment that the room was shut off from the breeze. In that time, in that room, you felt that nothing is more interesting than air.

Louis I. Kahn