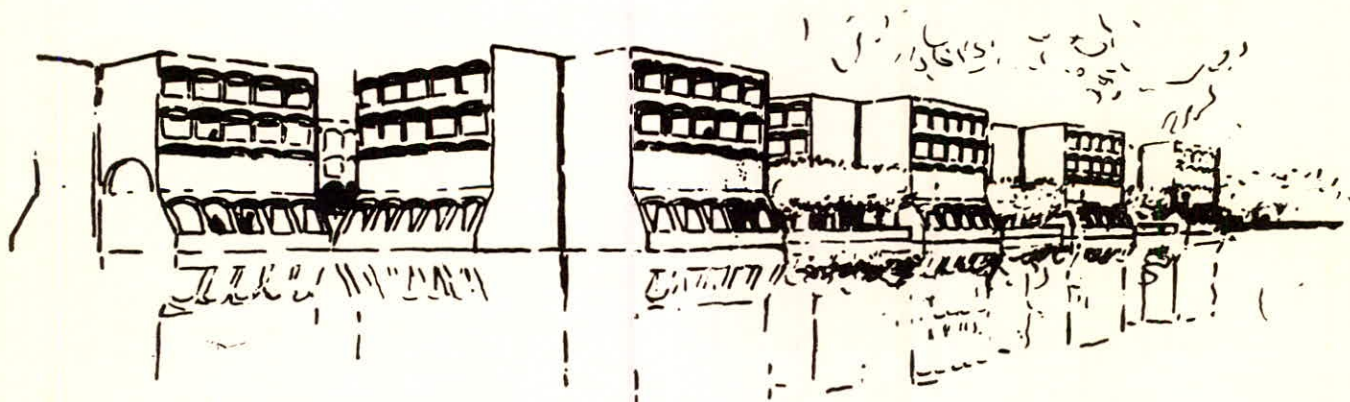


M. K. Subramaniam
Administrative Officer
IIMA

The IIMA Campus



*In us
Inspiration to learn
Inspiration to question
Inspiration to live
Inspiration to express
These bring to man their institutions.
The architect is the maker of their spaces.¹*

SITUATED on the banks of the Sabarmati river, Ahmedabad—famous for its textiles and architectural innovations—is a mixture of modern and medieval. The buildings and monuments, dating back to the 14th and 15th centuries, bear eloquent testimony to the earliest attempts at a synthesis of Indo-Saracenic-Muslim art.

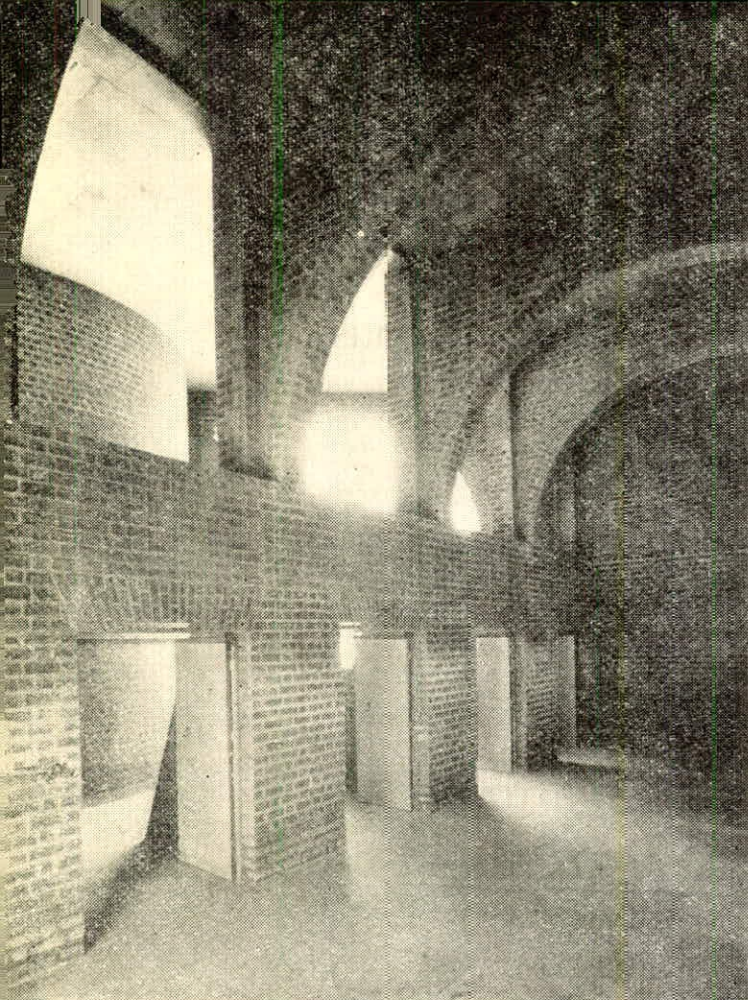
On the way down from Sachivalaya towards Vastrapur, stands a group of curious-shaped, brick buildings reminiscent of the monuments of Nalanda University. But the connoisseur's eye lingers and re-

cognizes that these brick buildings are the inspiration of a modern architect "who chooses and arranges to express in spaces, environment, and relationships, man's institutions,"² and has recaptured, as it were,

Photographs by the courtesy of the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad.

¹ "Louis I. Kahn," *L'architecture d'au Jour d'hui*, Feb.-March 1969, p. 1.

² Louis I. Kahn, "Remarks," *Perspecta* 9/10 (The Yale Architectural Journal), p. 322.



the spirit of Nalanda in the strange brick buildings of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

Kahn's Architecture

A Japanese architectural journal described the Institute's buildings as follows :

Geometry and structure burst free to a degree almost shocking when seen in photography. Kahn's consistent desire to articulate parts absolutely, to distinguish functions one from the other, gives rise to groups of monumental shapes. One almost wonders if ease of design in folded, cardboard models may not eventually constitute a certain threat to Kahn's command of architectural scale. Yet, the structural order is surely present, the tense brick arches with their concrete ties, the joy of true masonry arches sweeping bay by bay and supporting their concrete slabs, the round windows and the outward-battered piers. The whole has a truly Indian fullness, splendour and excess like a troop of elephants head to head. It is all achieved in the cheapest and most available materials, requiring not much maintenance, and,

when all is said and done, through the simplest of architectural forms.³

Louis I. Kahn, Professor of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, was primarily known as an inspiring teacher both to his colleagues and students at Yale and the University of Pennsylvania till the age of almost 50. He shot into fame with a number of projects and buildings which he designed after 1951. Since then, the following buildings and projects designed have brought him international acclaim:

1. Yale Art Gallery.
2. Bath House at Trenton.
3. Alfred Newton Richards Medical Research Building and Biology Building, Philadelphia.
4. First Unitarian Church, Rochester, New York.
5. Eleanor Donnelley Erdman Hall, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.
6. Salk Institute for Biological Studies, San Diego, California.
7. Second Capital of Pakistan, Dacca (under construction).
8. Fort Wayne Fine Arts Center, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
9. Mikveh Israel Synagogue, Philadelphia.
10. Philadelphia College of Art, Philadelphia.

IIMA Buildings

In the designing and execution of the IIMA campus Prof. Kahn is being ably assisted by Mr. B. V. Doshi, Consultant Architect, and the architects and engineers of the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. The construction of buildings is being done by the Gannon Dunkerley & Company Limited, assisted by the Gujarat Electricity Company, and Mahadevia Shah & Company Limited of Ahmedabad. The main responsibility and overall control of the project is exercised by the Building Committee of the Institute under the chairmanship of Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai, a well-known industrialist of Ahmedabad.

The Institute's campus, extending over 64 acres donated by the Government of Gujarat, consists of a number of buildings with different functions: the main school complex, dormitories (hostels), residential

³ "The World of Louis I. Kahn," *The Kokusai-Kentiku*, XXXIV, I (Jan. 1967), p. 56.

buildings for teaching and administrative staff, shopping area, sports club, and service tower containing an underground tank, air-conditioning plant, and over-head tank. Each building, Architect Arun Ogale says, has design speciality, every unit has a function of its own, "but the whole layout has been so arranged as to ensure a harmonious whole, without the units losing their individuality."⁴

School Complex

The main school complex is a superior rectangle with the teaching wing on the southern side, faculty-administration offices on the north, library on the east, and kitchen and dining hall on the west. In the middle of this complex is an open air assembly and a landscaped courtyard—a meeting place for faculty, staff, and students. The school complex is an organization of courts, light wells, and services related to the main body of functions. The teaching wing consists of six class rooms with seats arranged in horseshoe pattern and 10 seminar rooms. The library can accommodate 100,000 volumes of books and periodicals. All the buildings face southwest for the maximum advantage of light and air and are placed diagonally with the exception of the main school complex.

The school complex, which is under construction, will come out with prominence because of its position. "The skyline of the campus," Mr. Ogale says, "gradually rises and attains the highest position with the school building," as if to make it symbolic with the temple of learning.⁵

Dormitories

The planning of the class rooms and seminar rooms and its meaning to learn extended to the dormitories comes from the unique method of teaching at the Institute—the case method of instruction.

Ogale explains :

The spaces created with the class rooms and small-sized seminar rooms give a feeling of closeness, encouraging the spirit of exchange of ideas between the teachers and students. A much wider corridor leading to class rooms is not merely a

passage but is a meeting place which provides possibilities for continued discussion and self-learning. The closeness of the dormitories to the school complex with a series of arched corridors helps the students to carry on with the mood of discussion even when they come to dormitories.⁶

Learning at the Institute takes place not merely in the class room, but also in the corridors and lounges of the dormitories through the process of discussion, cross-fertilization of minds not merely between the students and teachers, but also among the students themselves, who come to the Institute with varied backgrounds and experiences from different parts of India. The whole learning process at the Institute is not teacher-directed, but student-oriented—"an educational process in which the emphasis is not on the student listening to the teacher teach, but rather on the teacher listening to the student learn."⁷ Prof. Kahn has provided in the school building, in the dormitories, in the corridors, in the lounges, and in the courtyards between dormitories enough space for fulfilling this cardinal objective of the Institute.

The dormitories are placed diagonally in rows of three around courtyards with their main walls running towards the main school building. The third dormitory in each row touches the lake and has a club room for the students. This club room facing the lake, according to Prof. Kahn, becomes "the space of invitation vested in each house and adding to the inter-hospitality 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, and instead there are rooms or spaces for casual and seminary study."⁸ The lounge space on each floor of the dormitory is the place where the ten students living on the floor analyse and discuss the cases at night, or prepare a group report for presentation the next day in the class room. Black board and other aids are being provided on each floor. The tea-room entrance, the positioning of the stairway

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

⁴ Arun Ogale, "A campus with a Difference," *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, Mar. 9, 1969, p. 19.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

⁷ Ravi J. Matthai, director of the IIMA, addressing the Third Annual Convocation of the IIMA at Ahmedabad on April 13, 1968.

⁸ *Perspecta* 9/10, *op. cit.*, pp. 322, 324.

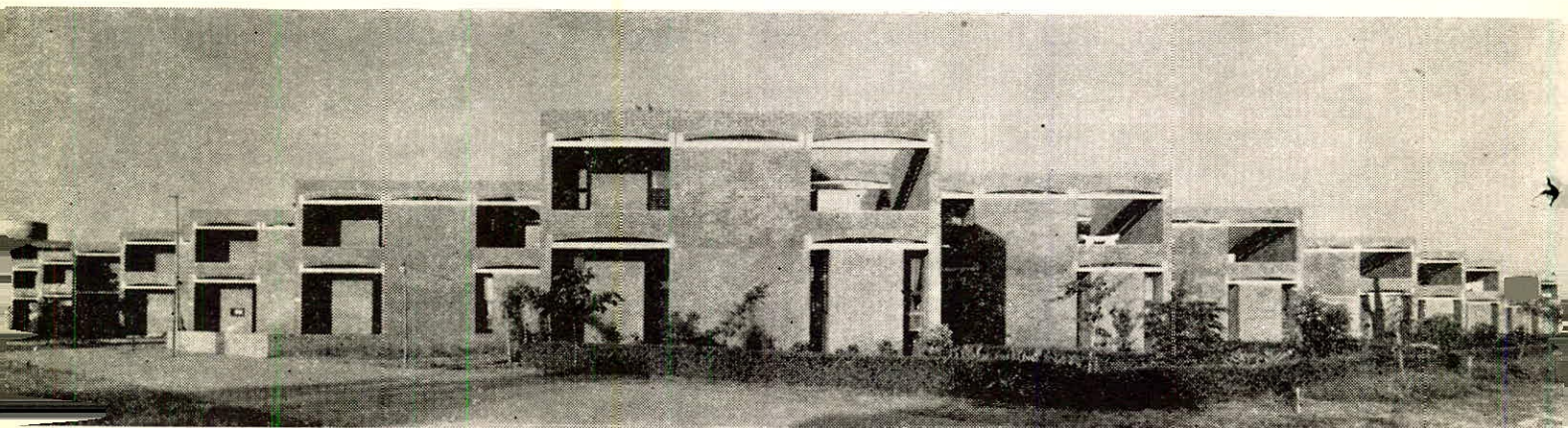
and the wash room, serve to protect the room from the sun and glare without obstructing the essential through-breeze.

Lake

Between the rows of dormitories and the faculty houses, Prof. Kahn has planned a lake, which comes in between student and teacher, "is one way of distance with little dimension."⁹ The work on the lake has already started, and when it is complete, "both the sectors will display their individuality all the more, at the same time not losing their identity."¹⁰ In a warm city like Ahmedabad, where you get a few drops of rain for hardly 15 days in a year, the lake will not only add to the beauty of the campus, but also keep the atmosphere cool.

monsoon have been the main factors which have led to the construction of all the buildings in bricks, unadorned by plaster and paint. Because of the use of other simple materials like Kotah stone for flooring, wooden panels on doors and windows, and with reinforced concrete floor slabs, the resulting effect is of dignity.¹¹

There are sprawling lawns between the rows of faculty houses. Evergreen neem trees on both sides of the main roads and the brick pavements, Ogale says, provide a backdrop to the architecture predominantly of the massive brick walls. They also provide shadow from the glaring sun.¹² The large lawns with cassia and kadam trees in the courtyard of houses, when fully developed, will add to the beauty of the campus giving it shape, form, and purpose, and



Faculty Houses

The faculty houses are all oriented to the wind, all the walls parallel to its direction. They are placed diagonally around a court to enclose the court and retain the strictness demanded by orientation. Ogale explains :

The houses have some system in planning, with services in the centre and living on both sides. The open terraces with their walls stretched upto the first floor, are a feature in every house. Every house has a front and a rear verandah, a drawing room, two bedrooms, kitchen, and a study room. The free availability of good bricks and the mild

the whole landscape is sure to present an architectural mosaic of a great genius.

A children's park in the fourth sector with swings, slides, paddling post, etc., is going to be the centre of attraction for the little tots of the campus. Facilities for various categories of indoor and outdoor games for students, faculty, staff, and their families are also being provided on the campus.

Steps have been initiated to design special dormitories for participants of the executive development programmes, and it is hoped that in five years from now, it will be possible to conduct the executive development programmes on the campus.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

¹⁰ Ogale, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹² *Ibid.*