

Signature of Louis Kahn and other foreign architects on Indian Cities

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In news

Recently, the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad decided to bring down some dormitories built by legendary American architect Louis Kahn on the old campus, and replace them with a new building.

Contributions of foreign architects with respect to Indian cities

In the above context, let us see the signs of foreign architects on Indian Cities

Louis Kahn

- Louis Isadore Kahn was an American architect, based in Philadelphia. After working in various capacities for several firms in Philadelphia, he founded his own atelier in 1935.
- The American architect's only project in India faces bulldozers now.
- In 1962, the IIMA board came to a formal agreement with the National Institute of Design (NID) for the latter to undertake the task of designing the IIM Ahmedabad campus. The National Institute of Design appointed American architect Louis Kahn and B.V. Doshi as architects for the project. Kahn worked on the IIMA project from 1962 until his death in 1974.
- Kahn's architecture is characterized by the use of exposed red bricks, the extensive use of geometric shapes in hostels and academic blocks and vast corridors

outside the classrooms. He combined Indian traditional and vernacular architecture and modern architecture skillfully. A number of tourists and architecture students often visit the campus for its phenomenal architectural impact

- The design for IIM Ahmedabad (1962-1974) carried the essence of learning in the humility of its material, and the way spaces were managed placing the dormitories, the library and classrooms at the same level, or the faculty residences across a waterbody.
- Louis Kahn's work infused the International style with a fastidious, highly personal taste, a poetry of light. His few projects reflect his deep personal involvement with each

Le Corbusier

- Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, known as Le Corbusier, was a Swiss-French architect, designer, painter, urban planner, writer, and one of the pioneers of what is now regarded as modern architecture
- Before Corbusier came on the scene in Chandigarh there was Polish architect Mathew Nowicki, an admirer of Frank Lloyd Wright and American developer Albert Mayer.
- Nowicki's death in a plane crash ended the commission, and Corbusier came on board.
- With English architect Maxwell Fry and his wife Jane Drew, Corbusier with his cousin Pierre Jeanneret would **design many of Chandigarh's civic buildings, from courts to housing.**
- **Corbusier's modernist approach, without decoration, gave India its brutalist, bare concrete buildings.**
- Many architects thereafter, including Pritzker Prize winner B V Doshi and Shivnath Prasad, would be inspired by him.
- According to critic-historian Peter Scriver, Corbusier's contribution was "a new cast of mind, not just shapes".

- He won favour with the Sarabhais of Ahmedabad and built the Sarabhai House, Shodhan House, Mill Owner's Association Building and Sankar Kendra.
- He is often called the "father of modern Indian architecture".

Antonin Raymond & George Nakashima

- Antonin Raymond, born as Antonín Reimann, was a Czech American architect.
- George Katsutoshi Nakashima was an American woodworker, architect, and furniture maker who was one of the leading innovators of 20th century furniture design and a father of the American craft movement.
- **Golconde, one of India's first modernist buildings**, was conceptualised in Puducherry by the founders of the experimental township of Auroville.
- Antonin Raymond was invited to design this space as a universal commune, and Japanese-American woodworker George Nakashima would complete it after Raymond left India.
- **It is possibly India's first reinforced concrete buildings, built between 1937 and 1945.**
- Its façade creates the impression that one could open or shut these concrete blinds, without compromising on privacy, while the ascetic interiors helped provide a meditative atmosphere.

Otto Koenigsberger

- Otto H. Königsberger was a German architect who worked mainly in urban development planning in Africa, Asia and Latin America, with the United Nations
- **Berlin-bred Koenigsberger was already working for the Maharaja of Mysore** in the late 1930s, when he was commissioned by Tata & Sons to develop the **industrial township of Jamshedpur** in the early 1940s.
- He would later design the **masterplan for Bhubhaneswar**

(1948) and Faridabad (1949). Having seen children and women walk punishing distances to reach schools and workplaces, he planned for schools and bazaars in the city centre and for a network of neighbourhoods.

- At a time marked by Partition and rioting, his housing plans included people from different social classes and religions.
- His friends Albert Mayer and Mathew Nowicki would go on to design Chandigarh. However, much before Koenigsberger, there was the **Scottish biologist and geographer Patrick Geddes, who wrote town planning reports, from 1915 to 1919, for 18 Indian cities, including Bombay and Indore.**

Frank Lloyd Wright

- Frank Lloyd Wright was an American architect, designer, writer, and educator. He designed more than 1,000 structures over a creative period of 70 years. Wright believed in designing in harmony with humanity and its environment
- Though the legendary American architect never built a structure in India, his influence was unmistakable.
- **Two of his students, Gautam and Gira Sarabhai, founders of the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, requested him to design the administration building for Sarabhai Calico Mills in 1946.** It would possibly have been the city's first high-rise with terraces and a podium.
- Though the building never got built, Gira remodelled an existing bungalow using Wright's signature cantilever roofs and a strong indoor-outdoor connect.
- Padma Vibhushan Charles Correa, one of India's finest architects and urban planners, was hugely influenced by Wright.

Buckminster Fuller

- Richard Buckminster Fuller was an American architect, systems theorist, author, designer, inventor, and futurist.
- Fuller is **known for his geodesic domes – large-span structures made of a network of triangles.**
- Gautam Sarabhai, inspired by Fuller, designed the Calico Dome in 1962, at the same site that served as a mill shop.
- Since its recent collapse, it has been in disrepair and neglected.

Joseph Allen Stein

- Joseph Stein, was an American architect and a major figure in the establishment of a regional modern architecture in the San Francisco Bay area in the 1940s and 1950s during the early days of the environmental design movement
- He was invited by Vijayalakshmi Pandit in 1952 to come to India and **establish the Department of Architecture and Planning at the West Bengal Engineering College.**
- Though he also practised briefly in Orissa and West Bengal, **it's in New Delhi where Stein left the deepest imprint.**
- **From the Triveni Kala Sangam, with its temple-like repose, the High Commissioner's Residence and Chancery for Australia, where his polygon-shaped masonry with local stone made its first appearance, to 'Steinabad' in Lodhi Estate,** where many of his buildings stand, including the **India International Centre,** Ford Foundation and the India Habitat Centre, **Stein gave Delhi cultural landmarks that blended Indian craft with international modernism.**

Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens

- Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens OM KCIE PRA FRIBA was an English architect known for imaginatively adapting

traditional architectural styles to the requirements of his era.

- He designed many English country houses, war memorials and public buildings.
- In 1912 he was selected to advise on the planning of the new Indian capital at Delhi
- In collaboration with Sir Herbert Baker, he was also the main architect of several monuments in New Delhi such as the India Gate; he also designed Viceroy's House, which is now known as the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Many of his works were inspired by Indian architecture
- Here he added elements of local architectural styles to his classicism, and based his urbanisation scheme on Mughal water gardens.
- He also designed the Hyderabad House for the last Nizam of Hyderabad, as his Delhi palace.
- Lutyens' Delhi is an area in New Delhi, India, named after the British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944), who was responsible for much of the architectural design and building during the period of the British Raj, when India was part of the British Empire in the 1920s and 1930s and 1940s.