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Designs, Materials & Technologies

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AR. ANOJ TEVATIA
Founding Partner,
Design Forum International

Architect Anoj Tevatia is the Founding Partner at Design Forum International. An architect and a visual artist, Anoj's key strength lies in achieving distinctive concepts that form the cornerstone of the practice's architectural works. His distinct style is a blend of tradition and modernity – an amalgamation that respects context and materiality. He is also deeply interested in the integration of technology into building systems, a thread that ties his work together. His ability to examine every nuance of design enables him to provide effective solutions to projects across varying scales and typologies.



Silverglades Hightown - an upcoming landmark of Gurugram, vibrant mixed-use development

Some of his notable and award-winning projects include-AIPL Joy Street tree (Gurugram), Greenburg Housing (Gurugram), BDI Ambaram, an affordable housing scheme at Bhiwadi, and M2K Corporate Park (Gurugram), among others. Currently, he is helping DFI's venture into Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities with upcoming malls in Patna and Jhansi.

Besides architecture, Anoj is a philanthropist and an effective speaker. He has addressed various reformations in the affordable housing sector, both at the construction level, and at the real estate and housing investment front. His ability to listen, perceive, diagnose, and address key project challenges has led him to envision and create healthy and happy human habitats. His commitment towards protecting the environment is highlighted in the proposal designed for the MCG Commercial Complex, sited amidst dense greens in Gurugram, where Anoj created a layout that allowed for the retention of 134 trees and established a seamless flow within the site. In 2021, Anoj and his other co-founders at DFI were named among India's 'Top 30 Architects' by Forbes India.

Ar. Anoj Tevatia, in his interesting conversations with the magazine editor, elaborates on his architectural journey of over 25 years, a few turning points in his design career, his views on architecture, some of his completed, ongoing and most challenging projects, the design process for façades and fenestrations, his insights on sustainability in the construction of façades, and more. Here are the excerpts from the interview:

Face to Face



Cyberwalk - a self-sufficient green building. Aerial day view

Could you tell us about your educational background, career and architectural experience?

I completed my BArch degree from IIT Kharagpur in 1995. In my third year, I started experimenting with professional work outside the academic environment. I would sketch 3D views and perspectives as we didn't have any software tools at our disposal. Over time, I built up the skill of developing realistic 3D views, which I could apply to opportunities outside the college. These opportunities helped me understand people's perceptions of architecture and its impact on reality.

It led to a deeper understanding of the profession, and I was able to find correlations between my experience and the educational curriculum.

Throughout my college life, I actively involved myself in hands-on experiences, which made me realise that ideas are simply ideas until they are executed on-ground and experienced by the intended user. It is through these interactions with

the space, that one learns more about architecture.

What inspired you to pursue a career in Architecture?

Growing up, I picked up sketching from quite early on. Whether it was through crayons on the wall or pencil on paper, I grew up with a fascination for this art form.



BDI Ambaram, an intervention to solve the affordability

When it came to choosing a career path, I had initially set out to pursue engineering but eventually decided to combine my two interests and opt for an architectural course.

Tell us about some turning points in your design career.

Some of my first turning points were in college, including a 3D sketch I made for a small commission and a restaurant renovation project in the campus that I headed.

Another turning point was the first home that we, as TCS Architects, designed in Janakpuri. It was our first professional assignment.

Early on in our journey, we designed a row housing project in Gurgaon. I was involved in the project not only for the architectural scope but also to communicate the image and the impact of the project to the end user. Through the success of this project, we were able to enter the league of architects who were taking on large-format projects.



ITO Skywalk, the longest foot-over bridge

Apart from this, another notable project for us was a resort in Manali. Located on the banks of the Beas river, the project had a fascinating location and allowed us to experiment with the use of stone, glass and wood.

For DFI, designing and executing Select City Walk was what put us on the map with other larger architectural practices. Another major milestone was the Guwahati International Airport. Around 2012, we ventured into the southern region of India, which was a big step for us. We are currently doing the fourth tallest residential tower in Bangalore. We recently also won a competition for a seven million square feet high-rise residential project based in Chennai.

What type of projects does DFI specialise in? What type of services do you offer to your clients?

DFI's portfolio ranges from retail, group housing, townships and master planning, office towers and workplaces, public infrastructure projects, and institutional buildings. DFI is purely an architectural company. We outsource all supporting services such as MEP, landscape, structure, lighting, interior design, etc. However, we offer a single-window solution to our clients by stitching these allied services with an architectural design to offer a holistic solution.

What is your take on sustainable practice in architecture today?

Sustainable practice in architecture means that you have to be a solution

provider. Whether it's public sector buildings or private developer projects, every owner is looking forward to a habitable environment. As architects, we can offer our expertise to transform this intent into a built form. However, if we deviate from that intent, we will be unable to provide a sustainable solution for that project.

For example, in affordable housing, the intent is to come up with a cost-effective yet habitable solution, where people enjoy the space while it also suits their pocket. Architecture is one way to combine various services that add value to the user's life and provide a well-rounded solution.

How would you define your design process for façades and fenestrations in your projects?

Façades and fenestrations are of utmost importance in any built structure, not only for its users but also for the onlookers. The façade of a building belongs to the entire city since they also contribute to the experience of passers-by. Many buildings can sufficiently cater to the functional needs in terms of layout and façade design; however, if they are not at par with aesthetics, it can take away from the value of the project.



A fluid, rhythmic yet continuous iconic identity-Gulf Adiba

In our projects, we aim for good-quality façades, which are determined by three parameters—instant visual appeal, performance and lifespan. In addition, maintenance is an important aspect that can affect the durability of the façade.

Please talk about some most preferred façade materials.

My preferred material is glass, as the interaction of the indoors and outdoors is important to me. Secondly, I avoid the use of plaster and prefer more mechanised cladding materials or any other permanent alternative, as these options render the façade with a uniform, cohesive look.

Could you please brief me on the latest trends in façade and fenestration designs and technologies?

One of the trends in façades is a parametric design which was mastered by Zaha Hadid. Another trend is the ample use of façades using a blend of materials like cotton steel, glass, wood, cladding tiles, etc. Although the scale and materials used for façade design have evolved into newer trends, the concepts have more or less remained the same.

Please throw some light on a few of your favourite projects/signature projects.

One of the recent projects that we completed is AIPL Joy street. We used a Mediterranean architectural grammar for the façade design. We used a collage of materials to create a vivid façade like rubble stone, ashlar stone tiles, travertine marble, and brick cladding tiles. As a result, it is a colourful, vibrant façade creating



Amtron - unique projecting and receding façade



Amritsar railway station - Envisioning a modern world-class infrastructure with traditional Sikh architecture

a euphoric, carnival-like atmosphere for the user, ideal for a retail shopping centre. Clay tiles are used on the roof.

Apart from this, the Patna Mall and Greenburg have been some of our signature projects which have enabled us to try multiple approaches to façade design.

Tell us about some of your most challenging projects.

We did a project in Hyderabad where we had to convert a 15-acre plot of land into a commercial hub. We allocated the central space for retail use, and the office buildings were laid out on the periphery. This was a large-scale project of about 2.2 million square feet, out of which 1 million square feet were retail, and the rest were office spaces, both of which were designed on sloping terrain to complement each other. It was a mixed-use typology with high-end serviced apartments, functional retail spaces and peripheral office spaces. The interfacial street between the office and the retail space is a food street. We also designed a rooftop with leisure and entertainment areas.

Another complex, challenging project that we designed was a seven-million-square-foot residential highrise in Chennai. This project comprised commercial activities like a shopping mall, a luxury club, and a satellite club. It also involved developing the public interface, such as a walking track and landscaped areas on the plot's periphery, as well as the lake located on the southern side of the plot.

What is the future of architecture post-COVID? Has the pandemic affected the design industry?

The pandemic has affected the style of working for the whole world. It has helped in getting various associates on board virtually, at any time. It has also helped in taking internal communication to the next level.

Your advice to young and upcoming architects

Young architects can, at times, be too reliant on computers and software for the generation of design solutions. However, I believe that one's brain is the biggest tool that can help imagine appropriate solutions, which can be detailed with the assistance of new-age technology. A good blend of both is the middle ground one can work on.

In architecture, understanding the project's primary objective is of utmost importance. If the beginning is wrong, then the entire journey will lead you in a direction that may not be the right fit for that project. At the same time, it is necessary to be mindful of the project's cost as it can help guide the creative process right from the beginning.

Face to Face

Case Study - 1

A IPL Joy Street Sector-66, Gurugram

A IPL Joy Street, Gurugram



A IPL Joy Street has established itself as a one-stop entertainment hub for the residents of Gurugram. With a design that steps beyond conventional malls, the open-concept mall enjoys a prime location on a 4-acre acutely angled site in Sector-66, with several residential projects in the vicinity. The planning of Joy Street was a keen design challenge, the main parameters of which were the creation of an experiential shopping destination with greater visibility to all shops and an imageability that aroused interest and excitement in the shopper.



The building resolves the odd geometry of the plot by creating a stepped façade



The staggered design of the built fabric increases the frontage of the retail area

Divided into an assortment of functions on different floors, the building resolves the odd geometry of the plot by creating a stepped façade, thereby resulting in increased opportunities for interaction in the front as well as uniform internal courtyards. This staggered design of the built fabric increases the frontage

of the retail area, which is divided into primary, secondary and tertiary spaces, allowing for a dynamic array of retail spaces. The carefully designed open courts and plazas around the building serve as variously themed streets that bring a strong character to the space and increase the walkability of the visitors.



Night view

Breaking away from the commonly found boxes of glass and steel, this new-age shopping precinct embodies a Disney-meets-Mediterranean flavour in its colour palette and built volume elements. Adding to the dynamism of the façade is the clock tower rising on the West corner of the building, providing shade to Food Street on the ground floor by virtue of its position on the plot. Along with installing strips of humidifiers, this is one of many ways the building creates self-shading and thus thermal comfort against the hot and dry climate typical of its context. The opposite side of the building creates

an entirely different visual environment with an open staircase that runs adjacent to several shop windows. The two ends of the façade come together to combine all the elements into a dynamic composition.

The lower three levels of the tower house the multiplex, whereas the food court spans the entire second floor. The court opens onto an expansive terrace that provides a visual treat and a point of attraction to those driving on the road adjacent to the site, while cozy alcoves provide for a more private setting. Floors five to

eight have dedicated office spaces with flexible areas combined with a wide array of amenities. The top nine floors are dedicated to luxury serviced apartments that are fully furnished and decorated to provide a sophisticated yet comfortable living. The top floor houses a luxury spa, a calming pool offering a breathtaking view, and a rooftop cafe and bar. Joy Street is a complete destination offering work, play, leisure and shopping all at once, under the same roof.

Quick Facts:

- **Project:** AIPL Joy Street
- **Location:** Sector-66, Gurugram
- **Client:** AIPL (Advance India Pvt. Ltd.)
- **Principal Architect:** Design Forum International
- **Design Team:** Team Anoj Tevetia, Goonmeet Singh Chauhan
- **Site Area:** 3.95 acres (16010 Sq m)
- **Built-Up Area:** Approx. 37500 Sq m (superstructure), Approx 22000 Sq m (basement area)
- **Start Date:** June 2017
- **Completion Date:** December 2021



The new-age shopping precinct embodies a Disney-meets-Mediterranean flavour in its colour palette and built volume elements

Case Study - 2

Microtek Greenburg Sector 86, Gurugram



Microtek Greenburg - a state-of-the-art modern apartment towers in Gurugram

Microtek Greenburg is a cluster of state-of-the-art modern apartment towers in Gurugram, Delhi NCR. The design brief called for a mid-segment luxury residential township, in the heart of the city. Multi-story towers sit on the periphery of the block, allowing verdant green spaces to thrive.

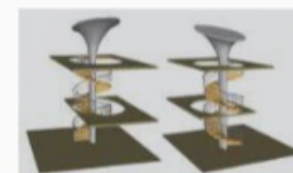
The basement leading to the underground car park comprises broad, strategically located, free-flowing ramps, that run and meet at opposite ends. Natural light is admitted into these ramps, enhancing vision and ventilation, in addition to providing several vantage points that serve as wayfinding nodes.

Nearly a dozen full-grown neem trees that occupied the site were retained, with the basement circumnavigating around them. The sheet piling was carried out in lines with the earth retention around these trees, thereby allowing them to function as effective shading elements. The landscape scheme integrates well with the site planning, enabling physical activity,

recreation, and participation. Light permeates nearly all the interior spaces, designed to be utilitarian, with an emphasis on retaining spatial quality and functionality to a maximum.

Functionality is a hallmark in the design of the façade, which capitalises on a patterned jaali concealing the plumbing shafts. LED lighting arrangement within these shafts gleams through the jaali, creating a delightful visual element. Such an emphasis on night-lighting in residential architecture has seldom been incorporated, and the towers present a striking contrast of light and shadow when illuminated at night.

From the entrance lobby to the interior finishes, the intent has been to craft functional, maintenance-friendly spaces. At the same time, approaching aesthetic solutions through the lens of design ingenuity guides the development of the façade and the overall experience of living



Staircase Inspired by Biomorphism

Quick Facts:

- **Project:** Microtek Greenburg
- **Location:** Sector 86, Gurgaon
- **Client:** Microtek Infrastructures Pvt. Ltd.
- **Principal Architect:** Mr. Anoj Tevetia, DFI
- **Design Team:** Girish Joshi, Smirati Bhatnagar, Shamim Khan
- **Site Area (Sq ft & Sq m):** 14.64 Acre
- **Built-Up Area (Sq ft & Sq m):** 18.94 lac Sq ft
- **Start Date:** Jan-2013
- **Completion Date:** 2017

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