ARCHITECTURAL THESIS – OM SHANTI SPIRITUAL RETREAT CENTRE

OM SHANTI SPIRITUAL RETREAT CENTRE AT SONEPAT

The project is a live project with site in sonepat, haryana.
• A centre to educate and train people in raja yoga as per the philosophy of Brahmakumars.
• Retreat centre for people to release tension and find serenity through yoga practices and interactive sessions with Brahmakumars.
• Brahmakumars are the people who have chosen to practice raja yoga and aim to attain moksha through punctuality by living a yoga life.

SITE

site zoning

USER PROFILE

There are three major user groups of the centers.

FOLLOWERS

The group of users usually stays in the centre for a short period of time to offer their services.

MAJOR COMPONENTS

• A Training Centre consisting of 6 Classrooms
• Conference Halls
• An Auditorium with a Capacity of 500 People
• Residential and Guest House Complex consisting of 100 Rooms
• Kitchen
• Dining Hall
• Meditation Hall
• Admin Block
• Library Cum Video Room
• Gallery for Daily Visitors

CHALLENGES

To produce an emotionally rich architecture to evoke all senses - visual, touch, smell, sound and last spiritual sense.

As such om shanti retreat centres have no common set of architectural features or style common in all centres except for use of domes and chhatris and extensive use of white colour on facades, so the complex can set standard architectural vocabulary unifying all centres achieving spiritual aura in the whole complex.

To integrate landscape as a part of architectural design of the built complex and not a separate entity.

A clever use of symbols of belief of the brahmakumars need to be incorporated in the design concept.

The challenge lies in creating a spiritual environ for the people more than technical aspects yet being a functional design.

SIT PLAN

CONCEPT

COMPONENTS

ABSTRACT

• CONCEPT SHEET 1
• CONCEPT SHEET 2

SITE PLANNING AND COMPONENTS

• DETAIL OF HOSTELS, KITCHEN, DINING AND SPIRITUAL GALLERY

• DETAIL OF AUDITORIUM

• DETAIL OF TRAINING CENTRE

• DETAIL OF CENTRAL MEDITATION HALL

SUBMITTED BY: GARIMA GUPTA
CHITKARA SCHOOL OF PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

GARIMA GUPTA
91812067924
BATCH 2009-2014
SUB-ARCHITECTURAL
DESIGN
CSA
OM SHANTI SPIRITUAL RETREAT CENTRE AT SONEPAT

INTRODUCTION

The project is a live project with site in Sonepat, Haryana. The Brahmakumari is renowned throughout the world for their pacifying services. This project specifically is a spiritual retreat centre like other Om Shanti retreat centres all over the world. It is a part of the Brahma Kumaris Vishva Vedayalaya - a well-known spiritual value-based educational institution which has gained global acceptance.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim is to design simple yet timeless beautiful centre that invokes positivity and spirituality in a person and inspires non-followers to aspire to become a Brahmakumari.

OBJECTIVES:
1. To create humble and soothing spaces
2. Revive connection of man and nature and pay nature due respect
3. Design architecturally in terms of spaces and not just plans and elevations

CONCEPT

Inspiration for landscape design (Golden Era)
The idea is to create a heavenly experience, nature integrated with built up areas. The pious relation of Purusha and Prakriti (Shiva Linga, The Cosmos Mandala)
Use of slopes for smooth transition
Use of water as a revered and pious part of nature

SITE ZONING

FLOW CHARTS OF 3 CATEGORY USERS

1. 1st TIME VISITOR OR WEEKLY VISITOR

ENTRY
RECEPTION
GALLERY
MEDITATION CENTER
DINING HALL
EXIT

2. 2ND TIME WEEK LONG VISITOR / STUDENT

ENTRY
RECEPTION
ADMIN
GALLERY
LIBRARY
CLASSROOMS
OUTSIDE FOR YOGA EXERCISE
DINING HALL
EXIT

3. PERMANENT MEMBERS / INSTRUCTORS

ENTRY
LIBRARY
CLASSROOMS
MEDITATION CENTER
RECEPTION AND DINING
EXIT

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF DESIGN SCHEME

• Auditorium
• Meditation Hall
• Spiritual Gallery
• Training Centre
• Hostels
• Kitchen
• Dining

DESIGN EVOLUTION

Inspiration for meditation hall
Shiva (God) - A metaphysical point a source of energy and light
Form of hall is inspired from egg form - symbol of belief of Brahmakumari
Intake of light is another important aspect of the hall design

CONCEPTUAL SKETCH OF HALL

FLOWER OF LIFE

INSPIRATION FOR MEDITATION SPACE

INNATE OUTSIDE FOR YOGA EXERCISE

FINAL OUTCOME
IMPLICATIONS IN DESIGN

- **Planning along Central Axis with Meditation Hall and Room as the Focal Point**
- **Since Landscape is equally important, there is a very smooth transition between built and open spaces with built spaces being an extension of the outdoors rather than the other way round.**
- **Spiritual yet not traditional and sans any ostentatious ornamentation on building facades.**
- **Artificial earth mound created around to act as a buffer between the internal zone and the peripheral zone.**
- **Central open areas gently sloping towards the central water body over which the meditation hall rests as Purusha rests upon the cosmos.**
- **The meditation space is a built centre where the site’s sacred energy is concentrated.**
- **Hostels and kitchen are all spread in private zones with the meditation room as the focus.**
- **All transition spaces are smooth with ramps and gentle slopes.**
- **Gradual unfolding of spaces creates a sense of curiosity and involvement.**
- **Designed keeping in mind spatial experience.**
- **Colour scheme used throughout orange - sacred white - purity and peace.**

LESIONS LEARNT FROM BACKGROUND STUDIES

- **Study of traditional spaces and transition through spaces how it affects a user's mind really helped me to understand the intangible elements and its use.**
- **For example, a courtyard can bring life to a space and is symbolic of a world within a world.**
- **Play of shadow and light can create drama and surreal experience.**
- **An element like a tree when attached with some spiritual value becomes worshipable and piouss.**
- **The transcendence from worldly to the metaphysical, matter to mind is enhanced through use of elements like scale, size, volume, degrees of enclosure, levels of illumination as well as motifs and can instill and evoke ethos apt to the place.**

**Indian Deciduous Flowering / Sacred Trees Proposed:**
- Queen's Myrtle
- Red Silk Cotton Tree
- Peepal Tree
- Gulmohar
- Amla Tree
- Lotus Flower

**Transition Space**

Each coloured wall with a puncture depicts our state of mind with time and visually creates a frame towards the room.

**Transition Space Towards the Meditation Room**

Meditation Hall visually afloat on a water body takes in sun's reflection through glass floor. The water body as a remembrance to cleanse your mind before entering the hall.

The exterior jali covers the inside shell to give a sense of enclosure and privacy with God yet take in light dramatically.

The hall is an expression of purity, beauty and serenity and the supreme soul.
SITE ZONES AND MAJOR COMPONENTS

1 PUBLIC
   PARKING
   GALLERY AND OFFICE
   AUDITORIUM
2 SEMI PUBLIC
   SPIRITUAL MEDITATION HALL
   TRAINING CENTRE
3 PRIVATE
   RESIDENTIAL ZONE
   MEDITATION ROOM
   KITCHEN AND DINNING

GROUND FLOOR SITE PLAN
1. PARKING
2. AUDITORIUM
3. GALLERY
4. SPIRITUAL MEDITATION HALL
5. TRAINING CENTRE
6 HOSTELS AND KITCHEN

FINAL MODEL
AUDITORIUM
CAPACITY OF 500 SEATS
AUDITORIUM IS PLACED IN PUBLIC ZONE AS IN CASE OF WEEKLY GATHERINGS THE PUBLIC WOULD BE VISITING THE AUDITORIUM

Relation of auditorium with parking and training centre
It consists of the classrooms, library and lecture rooms. The classrooms have been kept staggered so as to allow ample interactive areas for students and better connection with the outdoors.
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