

ATTITUDES AND INFLUENCES OF MODERNISM ON SRI LANKAN ARCHITECTURE

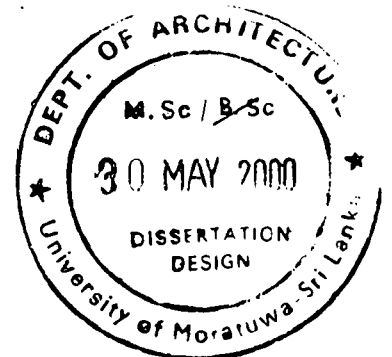


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S. A. SAMPATH KUMARA

FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
UNIVERSITY OF MORATUWA

2000



ATTITUDES AND INFLUENCES OF MODERNISM ON SRI LANKAN ARCHITECTURE

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
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IN M. Sc. (ARCHITECTURE)

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines Modernism in Sri Lanka by the way of what kind of attitudes and how to influences on Sri Lankan architecture as the criteria for evaluating in architecture. It studies the period identified as Modernism in Sri Lanka from independence up to the present day.

The period surrounding independence with the feeling of nationalism had provoked an overt expression in architecture was ignored. This is seen as a mere reaction to colonialism rather than to modernism. The rejection of this overt nationalism by the pioneers and their attempt to create a contextual modernism based on the vernacular is examined. It also analyses to see whether reviving the past in a positive sense could categorise them as 'Modernism'.
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By examining the attitudes and influences on contemporary Sri Lankan architecture and other examples seen as expressing modern identities it suggests the direction taken by the architecture of this period. It projects and examines their attitudes and influences in the architecture of the future for Sri Lanka.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Modern Architecture should be based directly on new means of construction and should be disciplined by the exigencies of function. Its forms should be purged of the paraphernalia of historical reminiscence. Its meaning attuned to specifically modern myths and experiences. Its moralities should imply some vague vision of human betterment and its elements should be capable of broad application to certain unprecedented situations arising from the impact upon human life and culture of the machine.

Modern Architecture, in other words, should proffer a new set of symbolic forms more directly reflecting contemporary realisation than had the rag-bag of historical styles.



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This preoccupation with 'meaning' invokes memories, beliefs, identities that exist within a social framework and which seek expression in the architecture of both civil and political society.

Modern architecture differs from Pre - Modern architecture in its continued obsession with the modernist legacy of expressing civil structures through architecture. Pre-Modern architecture was largely concerned with the expression of political society in monuments and buildings of elite patronage.

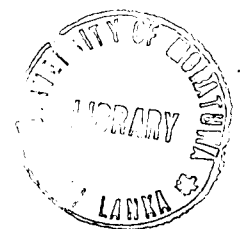
" Throughout history monuments have served to idealise and authenticate institutions by embodying dominant beliefs and invoking ancient pedigrees".

Here the positive aspect of Post - Modern Architecture could be identified as the recognition of the importance of cultural identity and the negative aspect as the preoccupation with overt visual image of such identities.

Post - Modern position holds its greatest value for the self expression of cultures seeking to reclaim and recreate, culturally determined structures that formulate Post - Independent identities. Memory, meaning, symbols, icons become the accumulated images that contribute to the new national / cultural identity.

Closely tied to the socio - political identity is the emergence of these newly independent nations as economically independent (defined as developing or newly industrialised) regions that struggle to legitimize themselves with the western commercial new market world view of their own progress. This world view has been typically expressed through International style architecture provoked by the modern movement.

" as has been emphasised, it was not until the 1940's and 1950's that modern forms had any appreciable impact on the less developed countries', and these forms were usually lacking in the poetry and depth of meaning of the master-works of the International style. The dissemination of this degraded version of modern design occurred in a number of ways: through rapid economic development of a kind which fostered functions, technologies and urban circumstances in which some sort of modern architecture colonisation, in which case images of modernity functioned as emblems of foreign economic or political control; and through the brainwashing of post-colonial elites (native-born but foreign educated) with western images and



ideas which were upheld as ' progressive' counter - agents to an earlier era of ' backwardness and stagnation.

The conflict between historically defined identity and the Westernised International style identity describes the condition of Post Modernity for countries like Sri Lanka. An attempt to reconcile these differences while developing an architecture that is both poses the greatest challenge for the emerging field of Sri Lankan Architecture.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

contemporary Sri Lankan architecture has vacillated between historic and modernist projections of its own identity provoked largely by the need to redefine itself after independence. The architectural profession was fully aware of this dilemma and it was discussed by them as early as the 1960's as seen in the inaugural journal of the Ceylon institute of Architects:

' May we also earnestly suggest that we have, upto the present time, rather conveniently, under an impulse of misguided nationalism, given ourselves upto almost plagiarize the motifs of the past and creating startling incongruities in some of our present day buildings which make them look as if they have been bodily transported for ancient times. It is regrettable that in the national renaissance of our architecture we are apt to look back too much and look forward too little'4.

Traditionalism, Regionalism, Revivalism are architectural movements that address the need for development of modern architecture. However, their preoccupation with symbols and meanings have often superseded the interest in structural integrity or authentic expression. (The functionalist principles of the modern movement).

. This study identifies the different categories of Post Modern architectural expression within the Sri lankan context and examines the attempts made in favour of maintaining cultural continuity and authenticity.

" No serious attempt has been made so far to evolve a style that would reflect our new status as an independent nation; a synthesis of our cultural heritage and what is at our disposal in the way of new techniques in building. A new architectural manner which gives a better vision of our old architecture in our modern which gives a better vision of our old architecture in our modern buildings and not what is now misnamed ' National' by virtue of petty imitation of certain old stylistic details, is needed. We need a new architecture which can be representative of the country, in function, purpose and spirit"5.

The writers premise in approaching this study is that a careful balance of these two attributes must be achieved to formulate a criteria for valid design in architecture.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The one of aims of this study is ,to identify the concept of modernism in the literature; and secondly to identify the problems resulting from the adoption of modern architecture in the Sri Lankan context as well as assess the extent to which precaution can be viable in solving the problems that result from the adoption of modernist architecture.

The objective of this study is to understand the seemingly chaotic manifestations of Sri Lankan Modernism. This architecture should maintain the modernist engagement of civil structure as well as employ the technological and material development that locate it in the contemporary context. An exploration of current trends within this critical framework will indicate the directions and potentials of Sri Lankan 'Modern' Architecture.

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METHODOLOGY

As starting point, the words authenticity and cultural continuity will be defined and then they will be discussed in relation to architecture. These two factors could be associated with buildings throughout the ages from primitive huts to present day buildings. Next, the Modern Movement and Post - Modernism will be explained with their primary theories. In relation to the fundamental theories of Modernism, it will look at Sri Lankan architecture and whether it exists in Sri Lanka. If so, the various types will be identified. The emphasis is on Post - independent architecture of Sri Lanka.



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CHAPTER 1

MODERN ARCHITECTURE

MODERN ARCHITECTURE

This Chapter will emphasise on the Modern Movement, Post - Modernism and Late - Modernism with their attitudes and influences on international Architecture.

1.1 MODERN MOVEMENT

Modern architecture which was an invention of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was conceived in reaction to the supposed chaos and eclecticism of the various 19th century revivals of historical forms. Basic to the ideal of this architecture was the notion that each in the past had possessed its own authentic style, expressive of the true spirit of the time. But a break was supposed to have occurred somewhere in the 18th century when the renaissance tradition had faltered leaving a vacuum into which had flowed numerous ' Unauthentic' adaptations and combinations of the past forms.

Architecture of the modern movement refused to acknowledge this conobational world of meanings and explicitly accepted one of pure denotation. The question arises here whether architecture can be valid if it is based on purely objective principles and ignores the

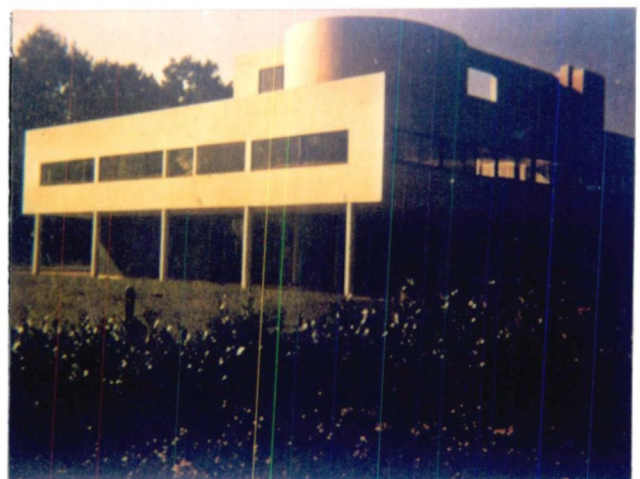


Fig : 01 Villa Savoye, Poissy, France by
Le Corbusier (1928-31)



significance of memory and other subjective criteria. The task then had been to rediscover the true path of architecture, to unearth forms suited to the needs and aspirations of modern societies and to create images

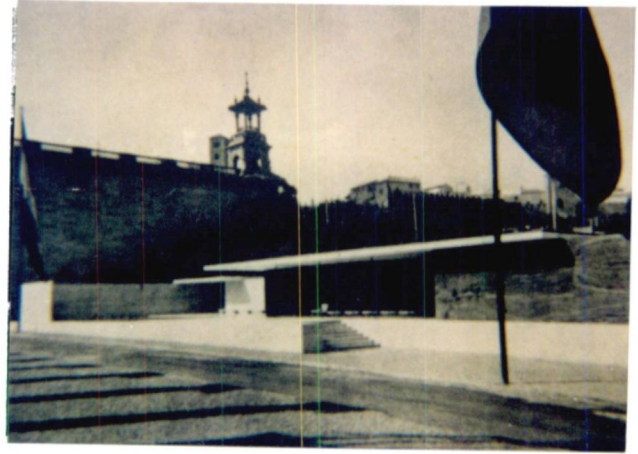


Fig : 02 German Pavilion for Barcelona Exhibition, Mies Van der Roha, 1929

capable of embodying the ideals of a distinct 'modern age'.

Already by the mid - nineteenth century theorists had been discussing the possibility of a modern style with little conception of its form. It was just before the turn of this century that imaginative leaps had been made with considerable stimulus from a variety of intervening structural intentions. It was declared that 'Modern Architecture' should offer a new set of symbolic form more directly reflecting contemporary realities than the rag - bag of

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historical styles.



Fig : 03 Unite' d' Habitation, Berlin by Le Corbusier , 1956

A number of styles had emerged which claimed modernity as a chief attribute during this period. All these styles seemed to be sharing a common characteristic the expressive language of simple

floating volumes and clear - cut geometries. This was followed by architects with diverse styles such as Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Mies Van der Rohe and others. This they claimed was the true architecture of the twentieth century. These architects are known as the pioneers of modern architecture.

By about the 1930's modern architecture had become a major force in the culture of the west and there had emerged a sort of modern academicism, in which cliched usage of pilotis or whitewashed walls had become the in thing.

Briefly defined, modern architecture is a " **Universal international style stemming from the facts of the new constructional means, adequate to a new industrial society, and having as its goal the transformation of society, both in its taste, or perception, and social make up** "1.1.



Modern Movements, of the title, have dropped their ideology of modernism, or modified it in radical ways. The " Tradition of the new ", the belief in technological progress, the role of the avant - garde, the social progressivism inherent in the " Heroic period ", the idea of social engineering through architecture. A major assumption of modernism as a literary and philosophical notion In the nineteenth century, with the break - up of traditional cultures, and ideology of modernism formed which placed central emphasis on the avant - garde.

1.2 THE SIX TRADITIONS OF MODERN MOVEMENT.

In the period between 1920 and 1970, there were six main traditions of modern movement can be seen. These traditions represent in a metaphorical sense in major architectural species. That is mean whatever architectural works imply attitudes and influences of social and political bias in that particular period.

In the outline of the six traditions which follows, the political ideas have been concentrated that form the background of each movement. An architect invariably postulates a society for his buildings. If he is to build anything at all, he will necessarily come up against actual political problems. The major architects have defined their ideal political positions and become involved.

"Architecture is a political art because it crystallizes the public realm, shared social values, and long-term cultural goals. It is very much more involved with explicit social content than the other arts"¹².

These six traditions are discussed in very briefly as follows.

1. THE IDEALIST TRADITION

The idealism was and international affair can be seen in the diffusion of slogans which cut across national borders and professional boundaries. What is known popularly as 'modern architecture' is the idealist tradition. The Architects Le Corbusier, Mies van Der Rohe and Walter Gropius clearly defined a scene of traditions. And recent architects such as Aldo van Eyck, Louis Kahn and James Stirling continue these ideals which spring from

this mainstream tradition. Above mentioned architects see idealism as an obligation to propose alternative visions to the existing social order. Opposed to the Marxist materialists, they do not concentrate on historical agencies for change.

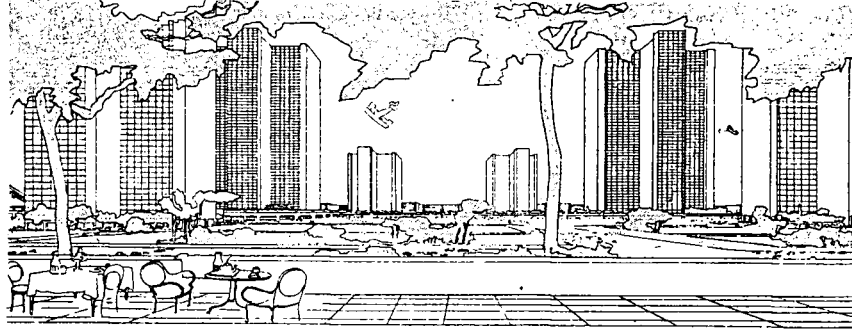


Fig : 04 Contemporary City, Le Corbusier, 1922

Glass Curtain wall skyscrapers in park, interspersed with advanced technical inventions such as the aeroplane, became a common idealistic image by the end of the twenties .

2. THE SELF - CONSCIOUS TRADITION

Another coherent movement of architecture is self conscious tradition . This tradition can be considered as extreme lengths. This tradition has dealt with archetypes of modern thought. The self - conscious tradition of architecture often shows and attention to its own actions.

"A sensual beauty.... Architecture is without purpose. What we build will find its use fullness. Form does not follow function... Today for the first time in the history of mankind, at the moment when immensely developed science and perfected technology offer the means, we are building what we want, making an architecture that is not determined by technique, but that uses technique pure absolute architecture".³

3. THE INTUITIVE TRADITION

This movement was started by exhibitions and books; it concerned the freedom of the architect's imagination as against the conventional building of socially and a sterile rationalism in Architecture. The intuitive tradition was reborn as 'fantastic architecture' in the sixties the political and ideological roots and eroded. It had become merely a rather significant movement in architecture history. Bruce Goff, Juan O Gorman and Amancio Guede can be consider as most significant architects who have amalgamated their works with this movement.

This utopian movement of the early twenties definitely had anarchist ideals to which the major Expressionist architects subscribed. This ideas were, unfortunately, never carried very far in practice, just as very few expressionist buildings were actually constructed. As a result, when Expressionism was reborn as, 'fantastic Architecture' in the sixties the political and ideological roots had eroded, and it had become merely a rather significant movement in architectural history.

Regarding this tradition one of naturalist approach termed 'fantastic' was that of the structural engineers such as Morandi, Nervi and Costiglioni. They pushed structure to its expressive limits.



Fig : 05 Church of the Miraculous Virgin, Mexico city, 1954,
by Felix Candela

Expression of forces in opposition actually makes
instructural sence in a shell



4. THE LOGICAL TRADITION

The recent architectural movements in Japan led by Kenzo Tange fits between many of the traditions and categories adopted herewith systematic planning, continuous, growth and the impact of the cybernetic revolution was so characteristic of the logical tradition. The logical tradition concerned the nature of universal truths and the doctrine of functionalism. A set of attitudes and values in the logical tradition concerns the question of solving complex problems with systematic design methods.

The radical design theory which was being evolved at this time, based on computer analysis and semiology (the theory of signs), was unfortunately fragmented as the teachers left. One of the political ideals of the logical tradition came true; the technical services offered by a team of engineers resulted in a product that increased efficiency and was socially productive.



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5. THE UNSELFCONSCIOUS TRADITION

The unselfconscious tradition emphasis on a simple and unselfconscious expression, it was grow out of group design team. This showed a possible alternative to the inflexible paternalism of centralized systems. The architects like Matthew Johnson, Stirran Johnsons design team has created the significant works in that period.

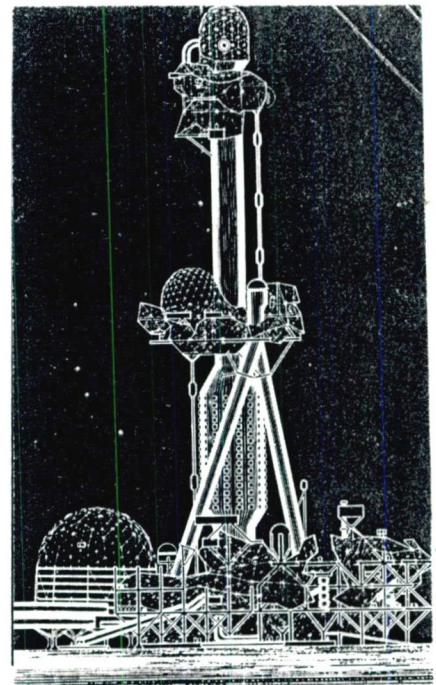


Fig: 06 Montreal Tower projects,
1964 by Peter Cook

" What is needed (they stated) is a team of experts, with the architect responsible for maintaining a balance between all aspects, ensuring that the contribution of each specialist is properly related to the whole This approach and building will lead us to ... new architecture which is a simple and unselfconscious expression of present day requirements !⁴

6. THE ACTIVIST TRADITION

This tradition were carried though by the Bolsheviks after the October revolution of 1917. Although certain of the other traditions the intuitive and idealist recognize that a large part of the environmental problem comes from the nature of society, and seek to transform that society. The activist tradition concentrate on the social means and agencies of clanger.

1.3. POST MODERNISM

Post modernism had arisen out of a general world wide loss of confidence in the modern movement. People were getting bored and alienated by the severe cubic shapes and abstract geometry. It was too uniform and lacked any sort of historical reference which could provide a feeling of cultural continuity. An idea of place, time and above all identity.

Post - Modernism could be said to have two facts. One looks back to find beginnings or origins on which they again find a language of meaningful forms. The other looks forward in to nothingness. It identifies the relationship between pre - modernism and modernism and borrows from both.

It is ironic that the principles which set out to reject cultural subjectively become themselves culturally continuous through use, memory and association

over a period of time. Individuals such as Robert Venturi, Charles Moore, Ricardo Bofill and Hans Hollein recognised the need and unavoidability of cultural criteria in architectural form. However, they could not resolve the differences between authenticity of the structure and the enhancement of a buildings cultural continuity.

Their treatment of the surface ceased to relate or express the structure and spatial qualities of the architecture. It merely became a dressing on the facade Venturi expresses this in the following manner.

**" We shall emphasise image ... image over process or form...
in asserting that architecture depends in its perception
and creating of past experience and emotional association
and that these symbolic and representational elements
may often be contradictory to the form, structure, and
program with which they combine in the same building.¹⁵**



Fig : 07 AT & T building New york by
Philip Johnson, 1978

This post modernist recognition of the need for cultural continuity with elements of historic connotations were unauthentic in the sense that these forms were independent of the buildings structure. Showing a similar attitude in the treatment of decorative elements in Baroque architecture.

Post.-Modern architecture used 3D forms as 2D surface decorations. This blunt admission of fakery is interpreted by architects as a more honest means of revealing the dishonesty of current building techniques."They say we are beautiful like the Acropolis or Parthenon, but we are also based on concrete technology and deceit"

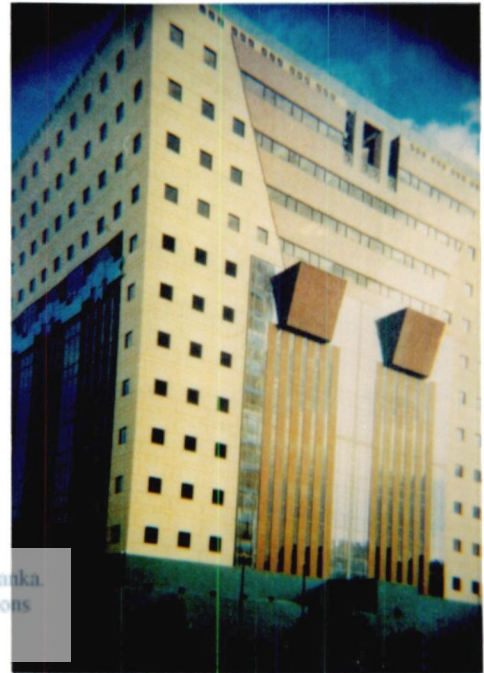


Fig : 08 Public Services building, Portland Oregon by Michal Greves, 1982

One could easily question the validity of this image of architecture for any society.

Does this aesthetic reflect a meaningful cultural continuity ?

" They say we are beautiful like the Acropolis or Parthenon, but we are also based on concrete technology and deceit ".⁶

Post Modernism includes a variety of approaches which depart from the paternalism and utopianism of its predecessor, but they all have double-coded language - one part modern and part something else. The reasons for this double coding are technological and semiotic, the architects seek to use a current technology, but also communicate with a particular public.



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In the late fifties, with the break -up of CIAM (The International Congresses for Modern Architecture), local groups formed which pursued a type of modern regionalism as followed.

- ❑ Neo - liberty in Italy (Gardella, Porboghisi, Albini)
- ❑ The Formalists in America (Saarinen, Barnes, Johnson)
- ❑ The Japan Styles in Japan (Jange, Kurokawa, Kikutake)

First of Robert Venturi, then of Charles Moore, Robert Stern and Michael Graves, these four Americans crystallized post - modernism most effectively and remain its major protagonists.

One of the strongest motivations of post modernism is to design within the tastes of the community while still innovating and keeping control of the result as architecture.



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Two distinguishable trends which belong to the post - modern contribution should be mentioned first, there is the highly metaphorical building, the Sydney opera House, Cesar Pelli's Pacific Design Center in Los Angeles. All these represent an attempt to communicate with poetic images, some of which may have a metaphysical basis, and they should be seen as counter to the abstraction of modernism.

Secondly, there are the amusing and ambiguous spatial games of Robert Venturi, Charles Moore, Michael Graves and even the Late - Modernists Peter Eisenman and Richard Meier.

1.4 LATE - MODERNISM

Modernism and its late - and Post - phases are seen to be dialectically related, both historically and logically. The force of the terms exists in mutual opposition and limitation and, as with any historical terms such as Gothic, Mannerist or Baroque, may be disputed.

Late - Modernists concentrate, quite naturally, on what has been called " High - tech " architecture, a label that might be more accurately rephrased as ' slick tech ' most American skyscrapers follow this Late -

Modern tradition and of course there is much European precedent for the distortions.



Fig 09 - A ; Lloyd building, London
by Richard Rogers

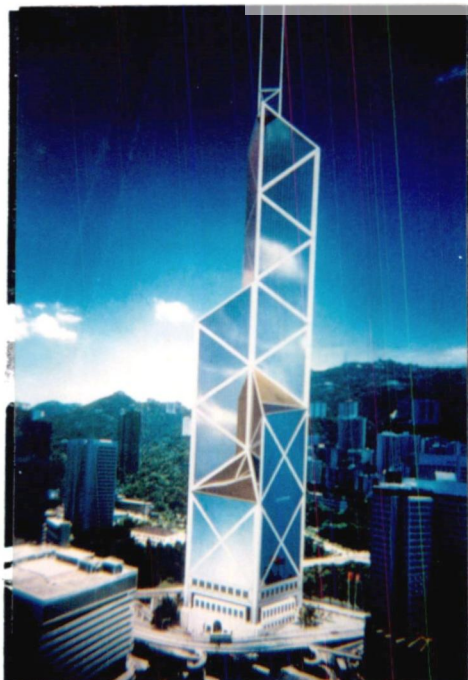


Fig 09 - B ; Hong Kong Bank of China,
by I. M. Pei

The supreme monuments of Late - Modernism are Arata Isozaki's Gunma Museum in 1974, Richard Meier's new Harmony Atheneum, Indiana in 1975 - 80, Norman Foster's Willis Faber, Ipswich in 1972-75, Sainsbury centre, Norwich, 1974-78 and Hongkong & Shanghai bank, 1981 - 85 and Richard Rogers and Kenzo Piano's Pompidou centre, 1972 - 77. In all these the logics of modernism are exaggerated, distorted, made beautiful extreme of witty.



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CHAPTER 2

MODERN ARCHITECTURE AND
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

MODERN ARCHITECTURE AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

Modern architecture was created in industrialized countries where a progressivist world view flourished temporarily. The avant - garde cliques attempted to produce an authentic modern style appropriate to rapidly changing social conditions. The arrival of modern architecture was usually linked to foreign businesses, and while the multi- storey, air -conditioned offices and the expensively clad airports may have served as instant status symbols for those intent on attracting international capital. The results were usually crude and climate.



Fig 10 ; Modern interpretation of the simple life style of east

The wave of opinion against the import of modern architecture in developing countries today, is based on several arguments.

First of all many modern buildings are seen to be climatically inappropriate in the tropical and hot dry climate of the Asian, Middle East North Africa and Lathing America. Modern architecture based on the extensive use of high technology materials, such as reinforced concrete and glass in inappropriate in such a climate. Usually, the

solution adopted to maintain comfortable thermal conditions inside such building is the installation of an artificial cooling system. However, this solution is seen as inappropriate, not only because of the wasteful energy consumption. But also in view of the difficulties for these countries in maintaining and producing the energy intensive systems for cooling, which are at the moment imported from the west.

Secondly, modern architecture seem to contain spatial norms that are derived, inappropriately, from Western culture. Usually these norms vary from one culture to another, and determine the ideal size and shape of spaces. Western designers have very often ignored the social norms of the people of those developing countries. Instead, they introduced principles of purely functional and rational design drawn up in western countries.

Most of these modern standards, whether relating to sanitation, communal living, or assumptions about privacy and comfort, are inapplicable to those countries.

Thirdly, modern architecture in developing countries have apparently failed to take into consideration local resources, whether in terms of materials, labour, technology or finance. Many new projects are still designed in this countries according to modern systems of building and very often their execution necessitates the

importation not only of building material and building equipment, but also of skilled labour. This situation has many implications for building supply. Among these are delays during construction, high costs, problems of maintenance after completion and difficulties in replacing deteriorated parts.

Another major problem of construction is the shortage of building materials. To satisfy demands, for example, no less than millions tons of cement are imported each year. The shortage of skilled labour and of professionals such as architects and engineers is also significant. Only a small percentage of labour of developing countries has the necessary qualifications to use modern construction techniques. In parallel with this situation, the cost of construction has increased rapidly. The total budget allocated for a building is very often consumed before its completion, which leads to long delays while more finance is found.

Finally, modern architecture may be seen as culturally destructive, since it does not seem to make any reference to the regions traditional architectural heritage.

Considering developing and developed countries there were at least two major differences. The advanced nations had themselves invented the industrial revolution. And they had over a century to adjust to the far reaching social and cultural changes it brought with it.

The rapidly developing third world country could find itself passing from a rural and agricultural economy to an urban and industrial one in the course of a single generation.

In the transactions between industrialized and industrializing nations there were also collisions in the ways buildings were designed and put up. Modern Architecture presupposed a division of labour between architects, manufactures engineers and construction workers, but in many 'underdeveloped' countries there were fewer steps in the process between conception and construction. The problems attached to importing foreign technologies were compounded by others related to the imposition of alien social theories. Egypt philosopher / architect Hassan Fathy always attempted, how to convert modern Architecture in local tradition and to blend them with modern languages. In his book, " Architecture for the poor, an Experiment in rural Egypt ", he suggested that labour - intensive construction methods using local materials were the obvious answer. He conducted an experiment at new Gournia. He schooled the local peasantry in Nubian techniques using mud - brick vaults and simple domes. These elements had attuned to the resources and climate of the region. By contrast 'modern' solutions were often unfunctional and ill fitted to the particular environment. Fathy Expressed his scepticism of modern architecture;

" Modernity does not necessarily mean liveliness, and change is not always for the better Tradition is not necessarily old fashioned and is not synonymous with stagnation..... Tradition is the social analogy of personal habit, and in art has the same effect of releasing the artist from distracting and inessential decisions so that he can give his whole attention to the vital ones. "

Most architectural styles were the products of their own societies. Its religious values, climate, technology, social and political structures dictated the need and style of buildings, shapes, proportions and decorations were symbolic and had meaning, often ending up with strict architectural orders.*

The majority of developing countries did not receive modern influences until the post - war period. Therefore adapted not the pure examples of the international style. But the much modified.

Considering about Modern Architecture in Morocco, a satisfactory blend of old and new was also achieved by J.F. Zevaco in his design for courtyard houses in Agadir, Morocco in 1965. Here the social context was positively luxurious compared with that which had confronted Fathy in Egypt. Zevaco's

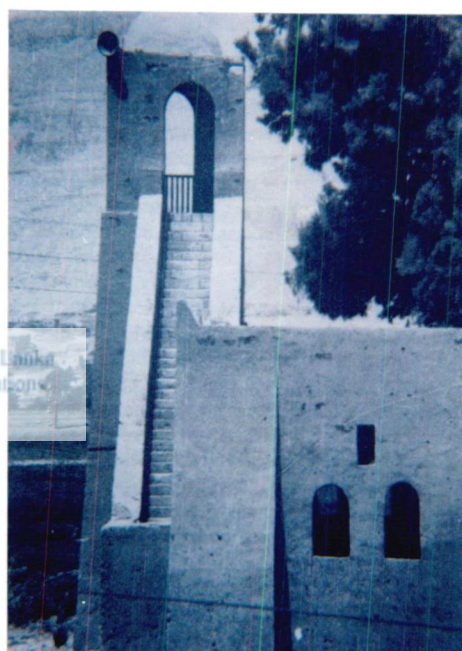


Fig 11 ; The Mosque, New Gourni,
Egypt by Hassan Fathy (1947-70)



solution drew together the concrete technology, planning logic, and simple volumes of a modern architectural vocabulary.

For example India, was heavily influenced by the late work of Le - Corbusier rather than his early ones. Chandigarh was obvious signs of a ' regionalist' adaptation. Lovis Kahn's designs for Dacca had a similar parental role for India and Pakistani Architecture.



Fig 12 ; The House near Luxor, Egypt by Hassan Fathy



Fig 13 ; The Holiday Housing, Agadir, Morocco
by J.F. Zevaco - 1965

an attempt at cross breeding traditional
and modern forms



MODERN ARCHITECTURE ON INDIA

During the past thirty years Indian architects have become increasingly concerned with national architectural traditions and with ways in which these may be translated into a modern expression.

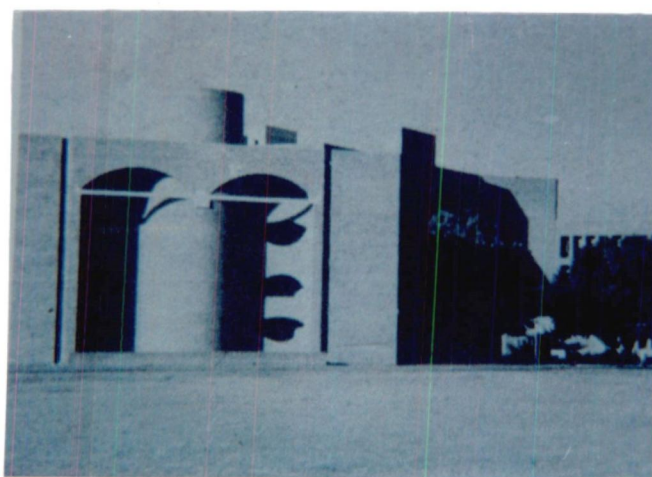


Fig 14 ; Institute of Management, Ahmadabad - India
by Louis I. Kahn - 1964

Most significantly, the world famous French architect Le Corbusier, was called upon within the first five years of independence, to conceive an entirely new administrative city in the Punjab, Chandigarh, as a symbol of Indian's political and cultural theories, but especially his buildings, there and in the city at Ahmedabad, exercised a tremendous influence upon a young generation.



Fig 15 ; mixed income housing, Hyderabad, India
by Balkrishna Doshi - 1976

Corbusean orthodoxy became the guiding principle, and even a trademark for many of India's architects. The new 'Brutalism' of Le Corbusier had incorporated some of the climatic and cultural

elements of Indian architecture, such as the jalis(screens), and the 'pergola'(trellis). Louvres, more pronouncedly, brought in a new romance, born in the tropics, and even repudiated some of his earlier notions concerning appropriate form in machine age.

Another significant influence was Louis Kahn. Invited by a private sector industrial group to design a campus for the newly set up Indian Institute of Management at Ahmedabad in the sixties, he produced his own share of followers and converts. The establishment of a school of architecture at Ahmedabad and its association with the Penn University and Kahn enlarged base of influence and saw the gradual consolidation of Kahnism.

A large number of Indian architects continue to derive their architectural vocabulary from mainstream western modernism and its various stylistic or ideological groupings.

Through these influences were part of the formative stage of Indian modern architecture. It would be a mistake to interpret contemporary Indian architecture as a surrender to pure western modernism. Modern Indian architecture is a synthesis of external influences and internal exploration. And innovations in an attempt to establish a particular identity. The spirit could best be summarized in the words of Nehru;

"I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed ;I want the cultured and all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refused to be blown off my feet by any."

Similarly, contemporary Indian architecture is a result of diverse opportunities and socio - economic constraints. It has begun to reflect the very image of India itself; multiple, diversified, contradictory.

In India both Kahn and Le Corbusier had to use vernacular structures in originating elements for handling the extremes of climate. The Louis Kahn's Ahmadabad Institute of Management in 1964 was built in a rugged, handmade brick vocabulary with ingenious shading and ventilating apertures while the latter's buildings in the same city and in Chandigarh revealed the relevance of the concrete frame. The parasol and the brise - soleil to Indian needs.

Among the Indian architects, Charles Correa and Balkrishna Doshi were the pioneers of continuing national architectural traditions and translated in to a modern expression. Doshi's housing and university schemes of the

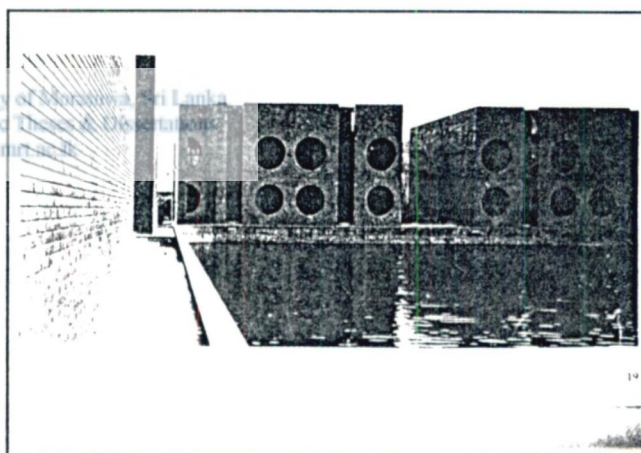


Fig 16 ; Institute of Management, Ahmadabad - India
by Louis I. Kahn - 1964

1960 's , extended the imported language and blended it still further with indigenous realities. He established simple standardized systems of construction and patterns of plan arrangement adapted to climate and use. His housing at Hyderabad of the 1970's employed terraces and overhangs derived from the vernacular of the region;

careful thought was given to orientation, shading, and natural cross - ventilation. As well as to gradations between public and private space.

Doshi tried to avoid the gaping spaces between buildings that had been



Fig 17; Secretarian Building Chandigarh, India.

made at Chandigarh, and to create some thing closer to the tight- knit and dense street pattern of traditional Indian towns.

His buildings were usually constructed for an emergent bourgeoisie and also buildings rigorously designed to meet the demands and habits of a new India where values reflected Western mores forms were needed which crystallized this situation. Much of finest architecture in Indian history had emerged from the cross- breeding of foreign and local influences.

Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn have been adjusted to deal better with the demands of the climate and with the needs of a traditional society. The recent work of Balkrishna Doshi offers an example of this tendency. His own studio 'Sangath' in 1981 on the outskirts of Ahmadabad



Fig 18 ; 'Sangath' Studio, Ahmadabad, India
by Balkrishna V. - 1970-79

is formed from low protective vaults rising from grassy flat forms.

MODERN ARCHITECTURE ON INDIA

The interiors are half buried in the ground; a transversal section suggests a primordial earth shelter. To one side there is a shallow cascade of grass steps making an outdoor theatre for informal gatherings, not unlike the communal place in a village. In the rainy season water swills off the broken white china surfaces of the roofs into gurgling troughs. The vaults are constructed of ceramic tubes covered in concrete; combined with a natural cooling system this insulation helps to reduce temperatures in the summer months.

'Sangath' is certainly a long-range descendant of Le Corbusier's earth-hugging Sarabhai House in 1953 in Ahmadabad, but the type has been transformed to serve a different social vision. In larger institutional schemes such as the Indian institute of management in Bangalore, Doshi has explored similar them, resorting to the analogy of the traditional Indian town with its lattice of streets, squares and courts. *



Fig 19; Gandhi Musuem in Ahmadabad, India
by Charles Correa - 1961

Typical elelemrts to generate the Modern regional Architecture

Charles Correa has also explored the overlaps between new and old, monumental and folk. His Gandhi Ashram Museum in Ahmadabad of 1961 took certain propositions from Le Corbusier and Kahn. He has concentrated different sensibility of humble. But airy pavilions linked by an ambling route.

He has continued to explore akit of parts for Indian conditions which includes platforms, sunken terraces, sections which encourage natural ventilation and shaded overhangs.

In the case of the Kanachanjunga Apartments in Bombay in 1973 a section derived from village architecture has even been reinterpreted in the context of a high - rise building. In BOMBAY a building has to be oriented East - West to catch the prevailing. sea, breezes, and to open up the best views in the city, the Arabian sea on one side and the harbour on the other. But these unfortunately are also the directions of the hot sun and the heavy monsoon rains. The old bungalows solved three problems by wrapping a protective layer of verandahs around. the main living areas. Kanchanjunga, an attempted to apply these principles to a highest building.

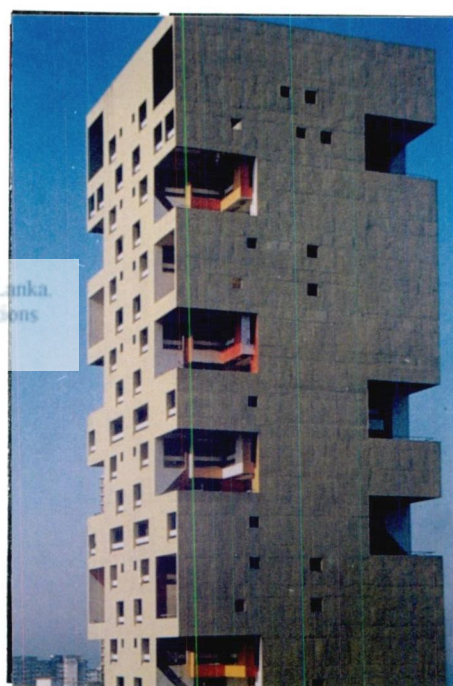


Fig 20 ; kanchinchunga Apartments in Bombay by Charles Correa - 1973

City of Chandigarh can be considered as model city for inspire on Modern Architecture in India. Indian prime minister desire to put the nation on the world map of architecture, so he invited to Le Corbusier for the design of Chandigarh city, the new capital for the state of Punjab (and Haryana). Le Corbusier's arrival marked a significant milestone in the development of modern architecture in independent India.

The parliament building itself was loaded with symbolism and enriched with ancient references. Basically, it was designed as a large box with a grid of columns inside it, with the large "objects" of the main

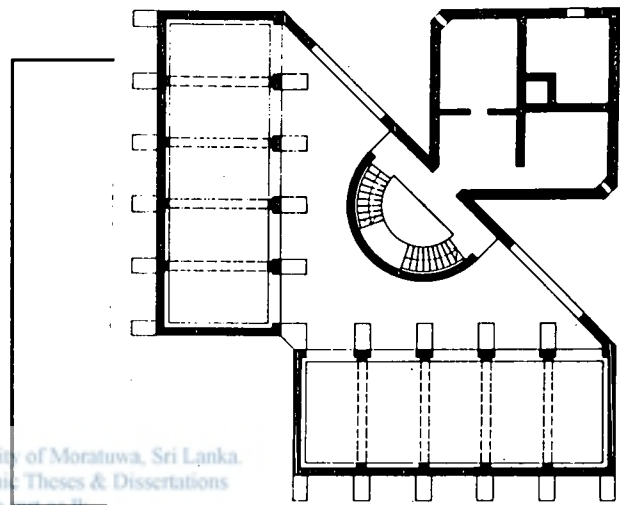


Fig 21 ; Institute of Management, Ahmadabad - India
by Louis I. Kahn - 1964

Assembly and Senate set down into it. There were

made visible on the exterior through the sculptural roofscape forms, a tilted pyramid for the senate and a dynamic funnel - like shape for the main assembly.

Rugged concrete, with all the signs and enrichment of rough handicraft, was used throughout whole scheme. The sides of the box were perforated by the deep - cut, repeated shadows of brise soleil. The light filtered in from the sides of this hovering element to reveal a space the ancient Egyptian.

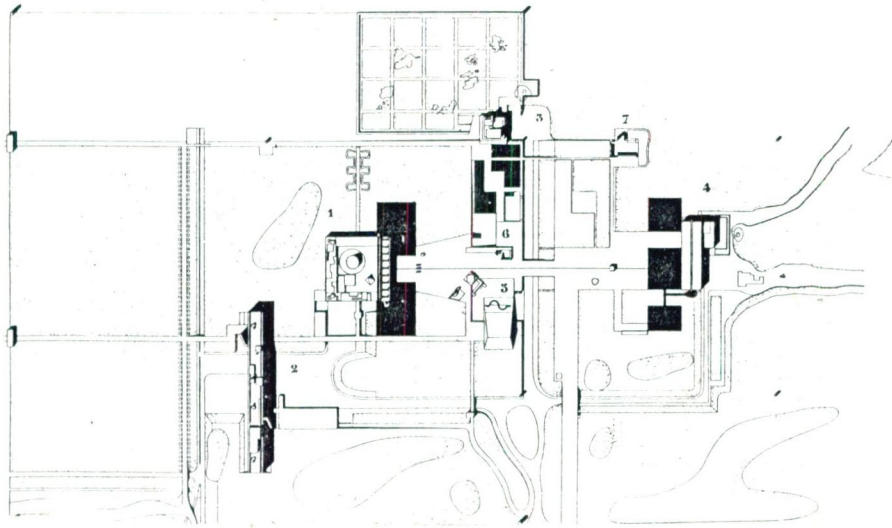


Fig 22 ; plan of Chandigarh - Le Corbusier.

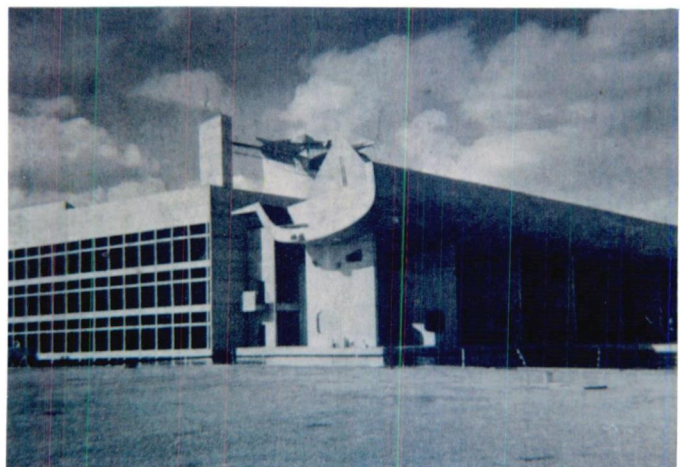
Acropolis planning. The four main public buildings are organized on a series of overlapping diagonal axes.

As Le Corbusier said that

" The whole thing being out of square, provides richly varied vistas of a subtle kind, the different masses of the buildings, being asymmetrically arranged, create an intense rhythm. The whole composition is massive, elastic, living, terribly sharp, keen and dominating " ⁴

Fig 23 ; Chandigarh, south - west facade. Le Corbusier

' compaction composition ' works very well on a semantic level as the major elements are clearly identifiable; assembly room under the tower, council chamber under the pyramid, offices behind the brise - soleil and in - front, the autonomous entry porch. ⁵



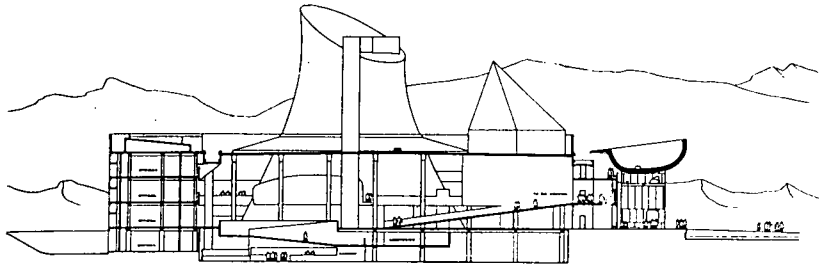


Fig 24 ; Section of Assembly Building, Chandigarh , India

Section showing superimposed elements. The hyperbolic shape of the large assembly was suggested by an industrial, cooling tower;

MODERN ARCHITECTURE ON BANGALADESH



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The architecture in Bangladesh can be divided into four main modes which can be classified as the vernacular, British, Pakistan and Bangladesh styles.

The search for the vernacular, the real Bengali, leads to rural Bangladesh and to the second form termed the 'rural vernacular'. This mode is represented by rural abodes, humble, rustic buildings. The vernacular of Bangladesh is intrinsic, the indigenous.

British buildings are marked by the use of brick, specially in railway buildings and in the government and university housing schemes. It is interesting that the BRITISH should have chosen brick as the most suitable building material for the region, as the use of brick in Bangladesh today has become synonymous with a national architecture.

For Bangladesh, the most interesting British structures are the bungalows. The bungalow does not replicate a British cottage, but incorporates forms, such as the verandah running along the north and south of the building, which is a response to the environment.

The period between 1947 - 1971 can be seen as more significant era regarding about architectural development. During this period, architectural profession is represented, ironically by the import



Fig 25 ; A Bungalow in Mymensingh, Bangladesh

of the services of foreign architects, and the development of the public works department as the main builders of the new nation.

Internationally, in architecture, this is the period that can be seen as the heyday of the International style. It is significant that the purposed of the Pakistani nation - state blended in so beautifully with the requisites of the International style.

The International style was not totally insensitive to the environment in which it was making its mark. In the case of Bangladesh building during Pakistani rule, it had to face the growing Bengali nationalism within the country. A nationalism which was seeking architectural expression. So while there is a host of buildings from the decades of the fifties and the sixties in

the International style, an emergent Bangali style is visible. Perhaps the most prominent symbol of this is the use of brick.

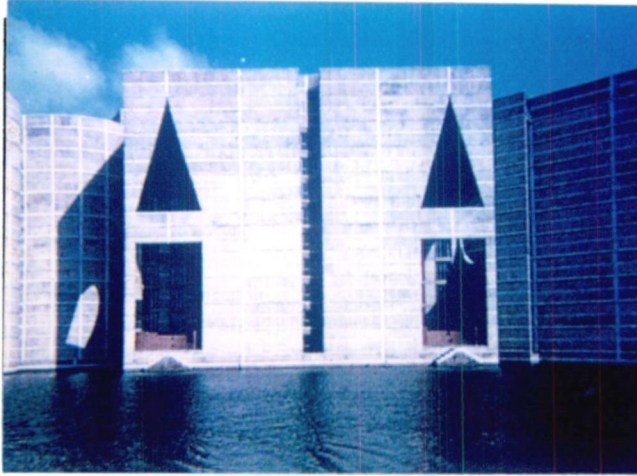


Fig 26 ; Parliament building,
Dacca, Bangladesh by Louis I
Kahn , 1963

Kahn's capacity for effective
monumental expression was
revealed to the full in his this design.

Louis Kahn was brought to design new parliament complex. This buildings are most discussed architectural edifices in the country, and the international accolades it has received. It has provided for the citizens of Dhaka a much-needed open space, and people flock in numbers and congregate along the steps and in the environs of the parliament building.

The question is that needs to be passed here concerns the blending of the international with the regional in this complex. Does this complex speak to a Bengali nationalism ?

The accompanying structures use brick, and along with the landscaping, there is an effort to blend the buildings into the surrounding greenery. The ancillary physical facilities - the residential buildings, the hostels, are built with the popular regional terracotta, in an effort to place the structures within their environment.



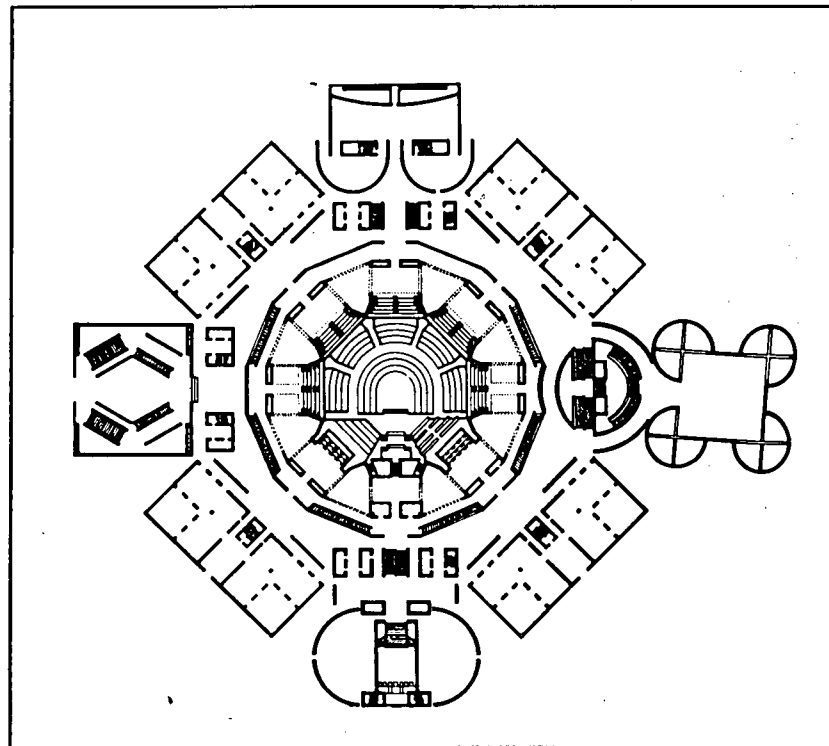


Fig 27; Plan of Paliament Bulding, Dacca by Louis I. Kahn - 1963

Government was one of the deepest and oldest, forms of social order. The form had to reflect the nature of such an institutional contrast.

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MODERN ARCHITECTURE ON HONG - KONG

Hong Kong's modern Architectural environment is furthermore distinguished by a large number of individual buildings by foreign and local architects. The present reality of contemporary architecture is Hong Kong and the changing of the physically articulated by two bank buildings of recent years, both representing the present and future power constellation in Hong Kong.

The Hong - kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation by Foster Associates (1979 - 1985) is one of the most discussed and published buildings internationally. The work is the paradigmatic articulation of an architecture based both on innovative technology and Chinese traditions. The building was also designed inharmony with the old principles of the Japanese Shoji and Chinese Fengshui

The second major building, which is taller than Foster's Bank, is the new bank of China by the Chinese - American architect I. M. Pei. Its 70 storey crystalline structure with its height of 315 metres will be the predominant landmark of the total urban environment. The building

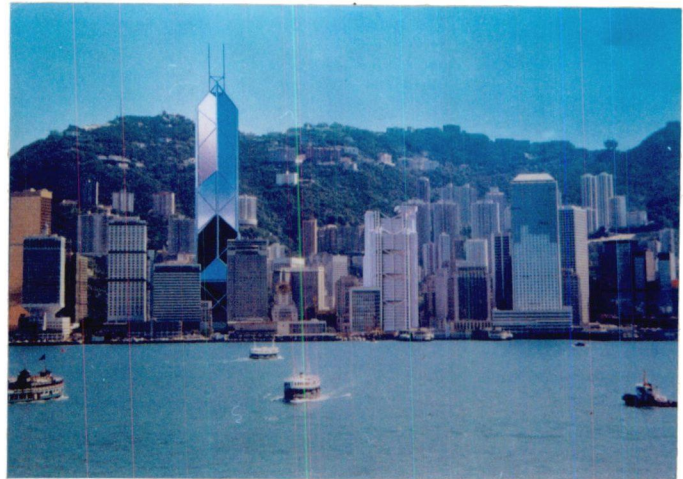


Fig 28 ; Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank by Foster Associates and Bank of China by I.M. Pei

This photomontage of the Bank of China shows the height of the new structure in relations to the landscap and particalary Hog Kong and Shanghai Bank.

is a combination of the most recent international technology and Chinese iconography.

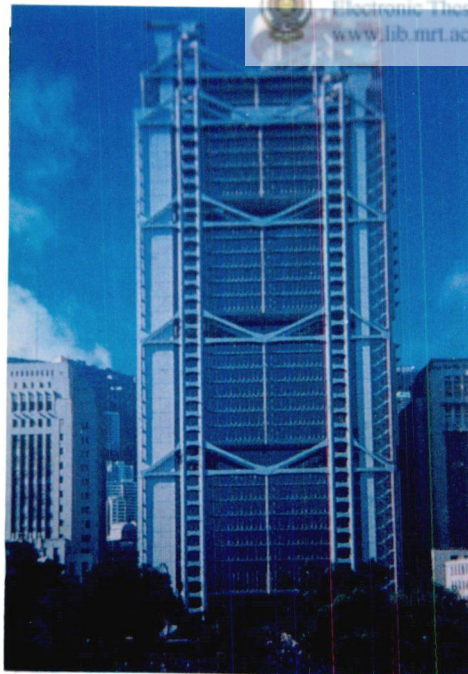


Fig 29 ; Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank by Foster Associates

This building is also in harmony with the chinese tradition and design philosophy. Specifically the symbol of bamboo which is expressed in the thin skin, soaring sections of the tall structure, metaphorically gaining strength by the growth of its sectioned trunk. BAMBOO is a metaphor for the building articulating the symbol of growth and strength in old chinese thinking.

The present reality of architecture in Hong Kong is a hybrid situation; it contains elements from various phase of architecture over the last decades and unites. The lack of a general plan, or the non observance of existing plans, can be seen as a symbol of its architecture. This combination of vulnerability and flexibility and a general *laissez fair* attitude, nevertheless has great potential. Both tradition and modern technology are part of this reality, and steps towards their unification can be recognised. Hong Kong is evidence that a Third world country can be in the centre of international developments in architecture offering solutions.



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CHAPTER 3

ATTITUDES AND INFLUENCES
ON SRI LANKAN ARCHITECTURE.



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CHAPTER 3

**ATTITUDES AND INFLUENCES
ON SRI LANKAN ARCHITECTURE.**

3. ATTITUDE AND INFLUENCES ON SRI LANKAN ARCHITECTURE.

Sri Lanka architecture has an unbroken tradition extending to about 25 centuries. The greatest number of examples in the history of this art are religious, almost entirely Buddhist. Domestic architecture is also fairly well represented, at least for the recent centuries and there are a few examples of public buildings.

" Sri Lanka, being so close to the Indian sub continent is heavily influenced by all its art forms including architecture. In addition to geographical reasons, there are cultural facts which contributed to these common features".¹

In spite of these geographical, religions and cultural contacts, the architecture of the Sinhalese had preserved certain characteristics of its own, and Sri Lanka has made a distinct contribution to this branch of art. Generally Buddhist architecture of the Island in most instances has followed its own course. This architecture is more authentic with a lot of emphasis on structural details like joinery etc, rather than facade treatment. These buildings are less elaborate than most other buildings of the period. The best examples of these Sinhalese architecture can be found in Buddhist monasteries of Anuradhapura.

3.1. EARLY SINHALESE ARCHITECTURE

The earliest inhabitants in ceylon, the veddahs, lived in caves and huts. In 500 B. C.. Aryans came to ceylon from India. In India they had built houses

of wood or mud and when they came to the Island they must have put up such dwelling for themselves. None of them exist today. Due to the lack of architectural remains of the Sinhalese one has to depend on the chronicles.

It is said that the Sinhalese had possessed well developed architecture even before Buddhism and Buddhist architectural edifices were introduced by the Indian invaders. It is also said that this Pre Buddhist architecture would have been of mud and timber which was comparatively primitive but it can be regarded as the origin of Sinhalese architectural tradition.

At the beginning, Sinhalese buildings were made of wood. The simple hut was of strickers and round timber. The walls were of mud, supported for strength by sticks and posts of wood. Even when larger buildings were made with decorations, they were originally of wood. Before long, wooden architecture was translated into stone. The top heavy capital of the stone pillar is a fine example to demonstrate the translation of wooden into stone. So are the plain balustrades and guard stones of edifices of the earliest type. Also in the Vahalkada of Thupa one notices features of earlier decorative work in wood. These examples are similar to those in western architecture discussed earlier where timber details are copied in stone buildings.

3.2 EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

With European invasions, totally new influences were introduced to the architecture of the Island. The Portuguese, the first of the invaders are said to have erected a few commercial and domestic buildings in Colombo, but very little description of them are available. They do not seem to have had any long-standing influence upon the building traditions of this country they do

not seem to have had any long-standing influence upon the building traditions of this country. They do not seem to have had any longstanding influences upon building traditions of this country. They do not seem to have had any longstanding influence upon the building traditions of this country.

On the contrary, the Dutch created an enduring impression. They adopted their own architecture to suit the climate and topography of Sri Lanka and created spaces akin to the indigenous ones so much so that this type of architecture later came to be considered typical Sri Lankan. The half round tiled roofs with long eaves, wide verandahs, trellis panels, stone floors etc, were features of Dutch architecture and all of them were



Fig 30-A ; Dutch building in Sri Lanka

extremely suitable to Sri Lankan traditions. Even religious buildings were influenced by this architecture

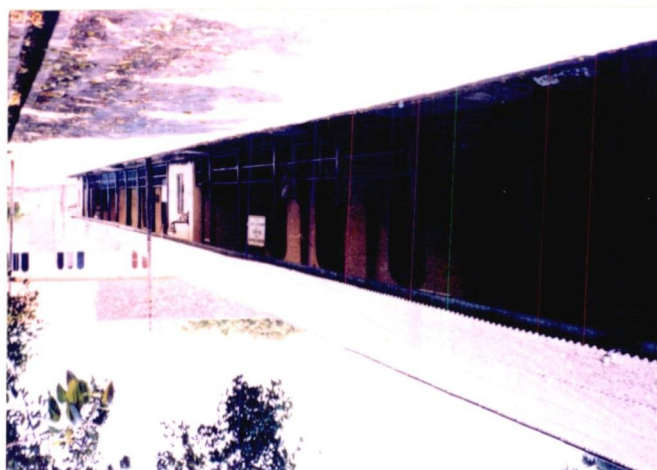
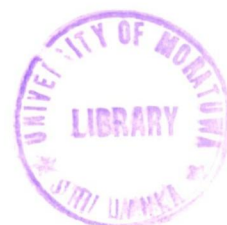


Fig 30-B ; Dutch building in Sri Lanka

A good example is the assembly hall of Mahasaman Devala at Ratnapura. It has a Kandyan roof on round Dutch pillars. There are numerous well preserved examples still existing in domestic architecture.



The architecture of the British who never quite over come their nostalgia and insecurity seemed a decline from the advances made during Dutch times. They retreated from the open nature of dutch buildings to a more insulated one Their massive public and commercial buildings were more duplicates of those that existed in Europe at the time.

This trend was exemplified in the field of art by the 43 Group of artists who established a movement that celebrated the varied and rich heritage of its members.



The work of this Group was the starting point of cultural awareness in architecture where existing styles were to be challenged.

The challenge to prevailing architecture started in the 1930's when the feeling of nationalism was building up against the architecture of the time which



Fig 31 ; The Museum, British building in Colombo.

were western neo classical ones with no context or identity. The excavations that were being done in the ancient cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa triggered an

interest in our ancient architecture and people were working for inspiration from these ruins. This in a way had a negative effect as it provoked superficial cultural references in the form of astered motifs copied from these.

This trend is prevalent in major public and religious buildings of the time. One of the first of this kind was the Trinity Collage chapel Kandy, followed by the university of Peradeniya, Independence hall Colombo, and numerous other public buildings.

3.3 POST INDEPENDENCE TREND

The decades immediately preceding and following independence saw a reawakening of interest in the past fostered by the pride of a newly emancipated country. Like in all other Asian an Africans national expressions in its attire, musics, art and architecture. This was encourage by the western educated elite whose cosmopolitan outlook was tempered by the heightened national awareness.

The 43 Group of artists such as Lionel Wendt ,George Keyt, Ivan peiris and Richard Gabriel were influenced by western art styles and transformations in modern art and translated then into an Eastern context and idiom. The cultural significance of this art was the novelty of using familiar subjects in a modernist or



Fig 32 ; Paintings of Richard Gabriel.
work of 43 group



Fig 33 ; Paintings of George Kit, work of 43 Group

western interpretation. This is exactly what post - modernism later did in architecture.

3.3.1 TRINITY COLLEGE CHAPEL



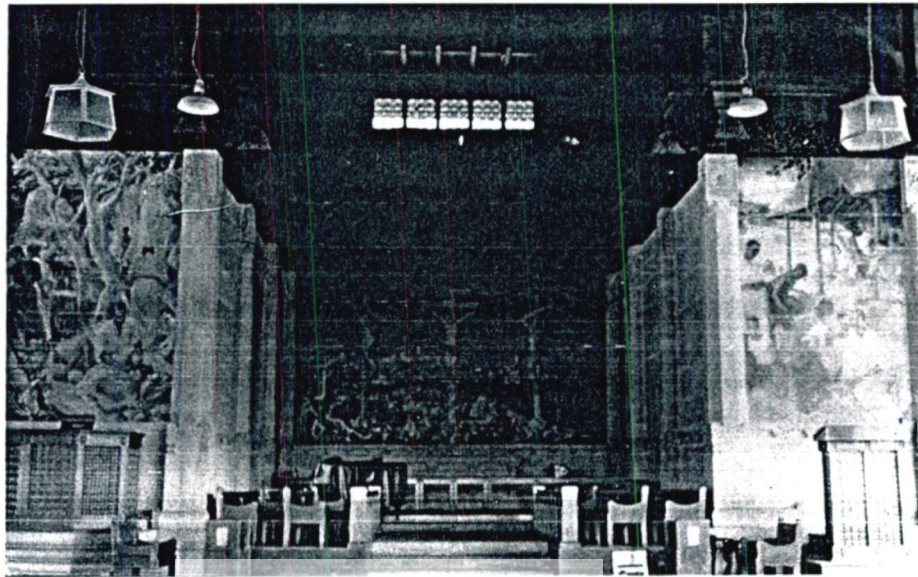
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An early building that was chosen to make this nationalistic statement in architecture was the Trinity college chapel in Kandy. Rev. V. J. Gaster, an architect, who was vice principle of the College from 1916 to 1921 was to be the designer. He professed a deep admiration for the historic artifacts of the ancient cities of Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura and wanted to inculcate this appreciation in the younger generation. The building was constructed in 1935 and had clear allusions to traditional architecture.



Fig 35 ; Trinity College Chaple

In plan and in form a collonaded building on a high podium, it closely resembled the king's audience hall and as such presented a complex signification.²



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Fig 36, Mural of Trinity Chapel by David Paynter .

A mural by the artist David paynter covers one well. He used, in his religious murals a ceyloness context with ceylonese people as its models, In the chapel, his murals are well in tune with the building's own aspirations^{4*} (fig. 36)

3.3.2. THE INDEPENDENCE HALL

A public building built after the same precedents as the Trinity College Chapel but with over nationalistic symbols is the Independence Hall in Colombo. This was built in 1953 designed by Mr. T. N. Wynne Jones, Chief architect Of P. W. D.

This building is a concrete replica of the Audience Hall in Kandy but in a

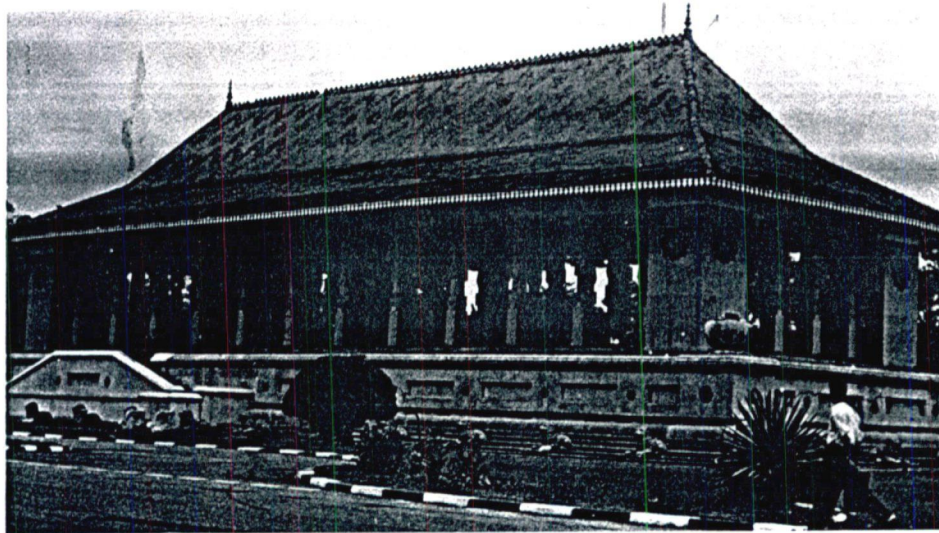


Fig 37 ; Independence Hall, Colombo by T.N. Wymme Jones, 1953

bigger scale. It sits on a high podium, has parapet walls round it and massive reinforced columns decorated with traditional Sinhalese motifs. The Lion, symbol of the Sinhalese is replicated in concrete along the base of the podium. The most prominent feature is the two pitched, hipped Kandyan roof. It is interesting to note that this roof is of reinforced concrete designed for precasting in units and hoisting from the ground level/..

Looking at this building in relation to our notion of authenticity and cultural continuity, the form and function looks very democratic. The pavilion form is accessible to everyone. But in the visual image and details it seems very particular. The Kandyan roof, Lotus columns and Lions are references to Kandyan, Buddhist heraldry or Kingship. There seems to be an attempt to address cultural image or cultural details to express identity of the nation. (Fig. 37) therefore, this is also an over expression of cultural continuity like Trinity College Chapel. This could be identified as a good Post Modern building in its form and function but a bad one in its visual image.

3.3.3 PERADENIYA UNIVERSITY

The Peradeniya University is built on a 3500 acre site near Kandy. It was completed in 1952 and the university of Ceylon shifted there with the Faculties of Arts. Oriental Studies. Agriculture and Law.

In 1940 Sir Patrick Abercombe was invited by the Government of Ceylon to plan this complex. He was assisted by Clifford Holiday and the Sri Lanka architect Shirley de Alwis of the PWD.

Abercombe described the site as " an inspiring one with its mighty rivers. Its highly modelled hills, its varied foliage and its background of stony mountain peaks " 6.

The architecture is heavily influenced by traditional Kandyan design. The overt pseudo - oriental details could be attributed to the prevailing nationalism at the time. (Fig. 24) Unfortunately this nationalism went only as far as the buildings.



Fig 38 ; Peradeniya University by Sir Patrick Abercomber 1940

Though the architecture of this complex was heavily laden with elements and motifs to give a traditional Sri Lankan flavour, the style of administration and the system of education within the university had retained its British Manifestation. Its first Vice Chancellor, Sir Ivory Jennings had formulated these according to the Oxbridge tradition.



"For instance, a dining room in one of the halls of residence with its carved high table and its long low benches would very well be a dining room in Corpus Christi, Cambridge"⁷.

If this complex is looked at in relation to authenticity and cultural continuity. The layout seems very vernacular in the sense that the complex is spread all over the contoured sit without being axial or rigid. (Fig.) But in the overt pseudo oriental details like Kandyan roofs, Lotus columns and punkalastas it looks too suggestive in the Visual Image. Like the earlier examples this is also a good Post - Modern example of form (or Layout) being culturally continuous but too overt in detailing. Also by following a strict British style administration at the time it was built, the form and function has clashed.

Examples of other buildings which followed this trend of pseudo - oriental details are the Art Gallery, Lake House, YMBA fort etc. (Fig. 39)



Fig 39 ; Art Gallery, Colombo.
Buildings with pseudo - oriental details

3.4. ALTERNATIVE STYLES

Whils most public and religious buildings of this period were getting influenced by pre-colonial or ancient architecture, some office and residential buildings had deviated from this to a more simpler, clear cut International style,

which was prevalent throughout the world. This was later slightly modified to suit our conditions and came to be called the public works department style.

The Bours building in Fort, Colombo completed in 1941 by Egner, Muller and Zurich established the International style on the Island. It is perhaps one of the first buildings in the east to incorporate the maisonette type flats after Le - Corbusier's Unite d' Habitation in Marseilles. This building was the trail blazer to all the multi storey buildings like the Ceylinco house and central Bank head office which came up soon after. In place of the bris soleil there are adjustable flats on the



frontage facing the sea, still serviceable after more than forty years of use.

Another proponent of the International style in this country was the



Fig 41 ; Ceylinco House

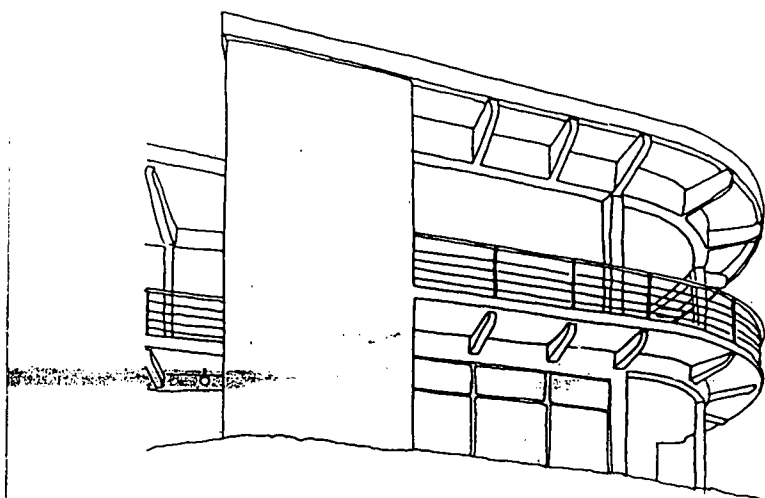
ENGLISHMAN Andrew Boyd. He first came to Sri Lanka as a tea - taster and was soon influenced by Lionel Wendt and others of the 43 Group. He went back to qualify as an architect and returned to Sri Lanka in 1937



to practise. He admired the simple, verandahed, one - or two storeyed dwellings that dot the rural roadsides and often have a shop at ground level with the living quarters behind or above. Until 1939, Andrew Boyd built four houses in the International Style,

Fig 42 ; House in Kandy, 1942, Andrew Boyd.

A straightforward and "aesthetically decent architecture".



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A slightly modified version of the international style to suit our tropical climate which became very popular was the **Public Works Department** style. The building from called the PWD style was a masonry box with a porch and verandah added to it. The roof was a steep hipped tiled roof. The predominance of this style could be attributed to a number of British architect within the public works Department and the construction of quite a lot of government Bungalows during this period. These were built with industrial building materials and concrete was used liberally.

The rapid popularization of this style could be due to the sudden explosion of a middle class and the rapid urbanisation of Colombo and other cities.



Fig 43 ; PWD house Colombo. (8.5 x 6)

Emergence of new materials and technologies, the next generation of residences in the 1950's was to adopt a radically contrasting image. The 'American Style' mainly adopted from Magazines, fully exploited the previously mentioned liberation of individual structural elements. The butterfly roof with is unique to this style was made possible by the introduction of asbestos and corrugated iron sheeting materials.




Fig 44 ; American style house Colombo.

Looking at trends in architecture immediately before and after independence brings to light two important factors. First is that the public and religious architecture tried

to project Nationalism and traditional revivalism. Second, the newly Emerging middle class did not relate themselves immediately with the identity projected by the new nation in their architecture. They were trying to recognise themselves with the newly found westernisation.

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CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCING MODERNISM IN
CONTEMPORARY SRI LANKAN
ARCHITECTURE.

INTRODUCING MODERNISM IN CONTEMPORARY SRI LANKAN ARCHITECTURE.

The different types of architectural styles that were prevalent in the decade after independence and the subsequent search for a national identity accentuated the need for a non political, regional representation. This challenge was embraced by a few individual architects who are known as 'the Pioneers' of modern architecture in Sri Lanka. They were either foreigners or ones who had been educated abroad and returned to the island in the years of independence.

4.1. EMERGENCE OF THE PIONEERS

The common feature among these pioneering efforts seem to be the attempt at Contextual Modernisms and the aversion to symbolic reduction. Each of these architects tried to address the physical and technological climate of the period, yet made concerted effort in incorporate local building traditions.

The early works of these pioneers however show strong affinity to modern movement . Also they reflect western concepts of space and new technology at that time.

Minnette de Silva, Valentine Gunasekara and Geoffrey Bawa, these three architects are known as pioneers of modern architecture of Sri Lanka due to their pioneering effort in different way to revive truly Sri Lankan architecture.

4.2 MINNETTE DE SILVA

Minnette De Silva is an Architectural elder of this country. She is an internationally acknowledged personality; a pioneer of modern architecture in Sri Lanka. Self - employed, her work has included private houses throughout Sri Lanka, Schools, halls, low - cost and middle class housing schemes colonists's cottages using regional structures, open air theatres and research in to low - cost school buildings.

In addition to her architectural training in India and England, she has lived and worked for extended periods in India, lived in Greece and travelled widely in western and Eastern Europa, in Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. During her tenure as a lecturer in the history of Asian architecture at the university of Hong Kong (1975 - 80) she visited the people's Republic of China. Minnette De Silva has keenly studied the architecture of other countries and attended international conferences throughout her professional life. A close friend of Le the Corbusier, Mennette De Silva derived much inspiration from his to speak against imported pastiche magazine reproductions in architecture and to take a look back into our own traditions and craftsmanship for applicable solutions.

The post - independence architectural situation that was prevailing in the country at the time Minnette De Silva started her practice in poignantly described by architect Ulrik plesner :

" Architecturally speaking, the country suffered from post colonial self - denigration. Good things came from England and some people enthusiastically behaved in things like

'American style' and vinyl floors. The country's own excellent building traditions and crafts, unnoticed and unmourned, were slowly disintegrating"¹¹.

Most new buildings were a reflection of western ways climatically unsuitable and visually indifferent. Solutions had to be found. These were found very slowly, step by step. With the help of Co.-operative clients, she experimented with the use of local material mud and water, craftwork integrated into the design of the house, etc. All this led to a modern regional expression.

The split level house Kandy in 1951; pieris house I in 1953; Senanayake flats in 1954 are good examples for Minnette De Silva's experiments in modern Architecture and the pieris house II in 1965, Coomaraswami house in 1970 and Kandyan Art Association building in 1984 are good examples for amalgamation of contemporary and modern regional Architecture. Minnette's work concepts were now clear; finding a real synthesis of traditional and modern architecture.

Early Experiments

Although Minnette De Silva made a conscious effort to present a regional architecture during the 50's, her early buildings do reveal cross - fertilisation of traditional with western vocabulary. (In this regard a parallel can be seen in the early work of Geoffrey Bawa, head office building for the Automobile Association, St. Thomas preparatory school extension, Bishop's college classrooms, AA building, Wijemanne flats, Green path and Galle face court apartments)

This was the first house built by the architect and included reinforced concrete beams and floors, masonry walls and stone retaining walls. The roof is of corrugated asbestos. Situated on one of the southern hills around the town of Kandy, the house is built down the hill in different levels.



Fig 45; Split level house in Kandy, 1951

The house and garden merges into one another at each level. All the rooms are designed as enclosed verandahs with sliding glass doors and each room offers a panoramic view of the town, lakes and surrounding hills.

Minnette De silva has made an attempt to synthesise the life style of the client with indigenous building traditions. This was very good example for real synthesis of traditional and modern architecture; experimenting with local crafts for modern use with their special relation to architecture.

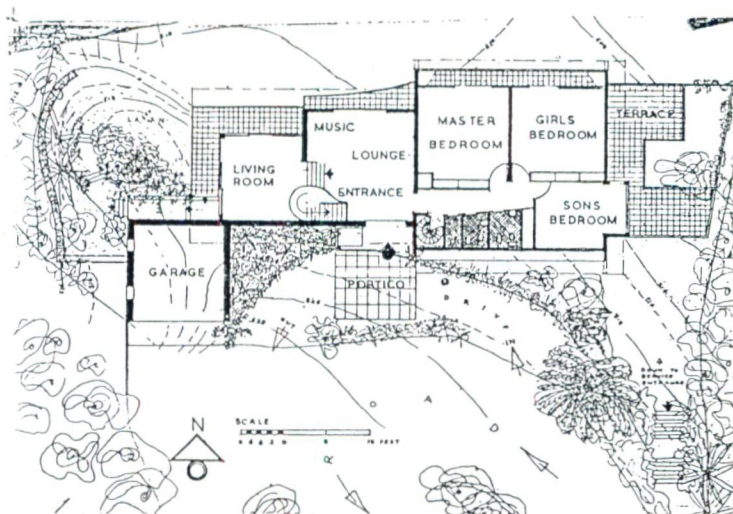


Fig 46; Plans of Split level house



Fig 47 ; Senanayake Flats, 1954

The Senanayake flat, Gregory's road, Colombo, 1954 - 57 these flats were situated in an expensive residential area of Colombo. This flats have drive in carports, roof. Gardens and verandah living rooms. At this stage however, while she has

attempted a blend of the Island's past with the present technological world, the traditional elements and craftsmanship had been unfortunately confined to finishes and details, indicating very strong affinity to modernism where traditional details and elements are used for decoration.



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LATER EXPERIMENTS

In the sixties, the form and functional aspects of her buildings seen to be directly inspired by Asian traditions. (Unlike those in the fifties.) Considering about pieris house II, Alfred House gardens in 1965, Mennette had utilised the traditional Imada Indula or central courtyard to ensure privacy, along with verandals and extended eaves and minimum glass to reduce heat gain.

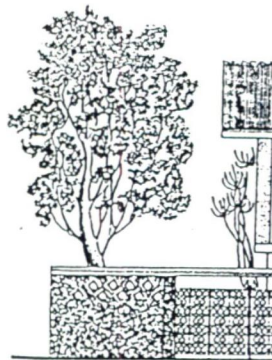


Fig 48 ; Pieris House ii , 1954



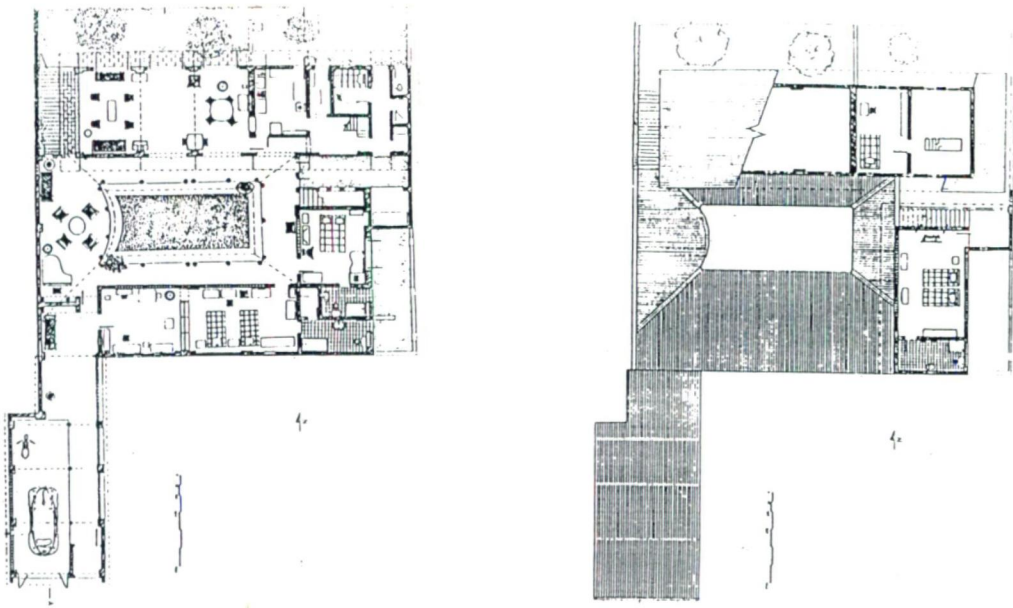


Fig 49 ; Pieris House II

The Coomaswamy Twin Houses, Albert Crescent in (1970) compactly planned, encompassed by a root such as those found in kilns to contain a soldere' or attic for successful use of cross wind currents through stack. Effect.

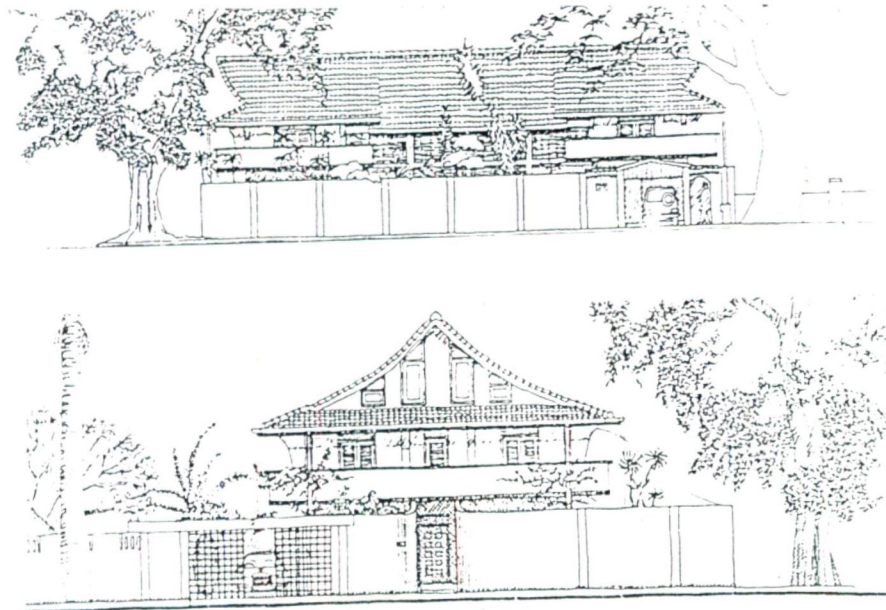


Fig 50 ; Coomaswamy House

The Kandyan art association centenary building was the climax of Minnette De Silvals work. Minnette De Silva was commissioned by the kandyan Arts Association to design a theatre complex to mark their centenary.

The Association wanted their existing building, at least 150 years old, to be demolished and a structure incorporating a theatre, restaurant and craftsmen's work shops built in its place. Minnette De Silva refused to demolish the existing building but came up with a solution that was both brilliant and sensitive.

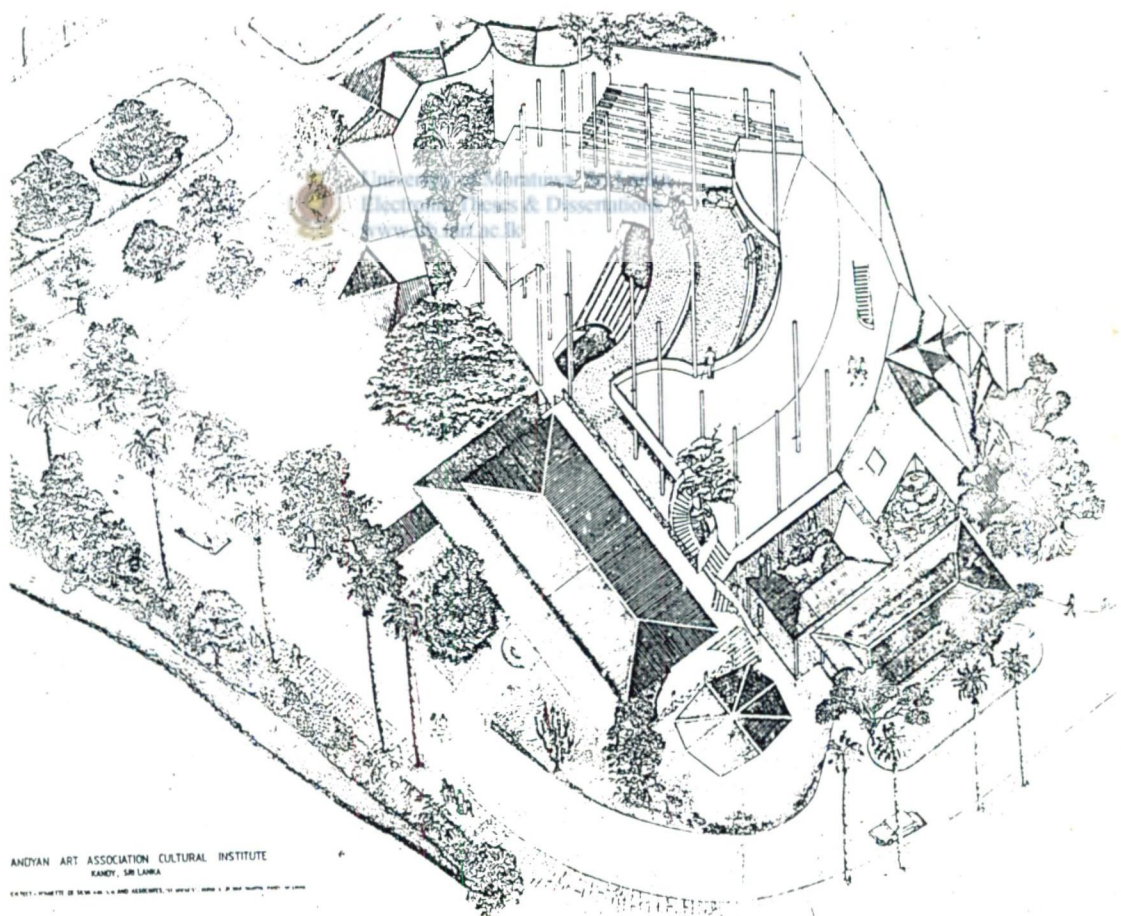


Fig 51; Axonometric view



Fig 52 ; Kandyan Art Association

Minnette de Silva has tried to create new attitudes to the architectural design process, and to the general cultural attitudes as well in our country, and this is what the concept of the new KAACC is about..

A modern 'indigenous' approach implies that the existing natural environment is paramount and should not be destroyed. But be considered carefully and used to the best advantage with economy, not with a garish display. This implies a careful use of the site, and the maximum use of indigenous materials which would also suit the image of the local crafts. Which the KAACC wants and it expected to preserve and promote. For example, the most. Characteristic and beautiful aspect of our architecture is the kandyan flat - tiled roof. It is unique and a living illustration of our craft and culture.

In our tradition there has always been a strong, symbiotic relationship of architecture and environment. No building can be conceived or be complete without this consciousness of landscape and architecture. So, the design includes the landscape setting of the site, which would be very simple and express a kandyan village setting in choice of trees, plants, and so on.

4.2. VALENTINE GUNASEKARA

In the development of architecture to the so called modern movement style of architecture the name of architect Valentine Gunasekara take a prominent place with this new style modern technology and modern materials were used.

Arch: Valentine Gunasekara's architecture to the so called modern movement style of architecture. He takes a prominent place with this new style modern technology and modern materials were used.

Architecture Valentine Gunasekara's architecture included all types of design buildings and construction ranging from private houses nursery schools, notes and churches. Qualities in built environment differ immensely from one place to another due to function it's perform. Public buildings can be manifested his architectural language

St. Anthony's nursery school site is boarded by convent buildings on two sides and rest by a private residence and the main access road, externally this building appears as the cubic type object which has no clue to identify the inner spaces. When examining deeply coloured simple punches or holes in exterior walls show the character and function of the building. (Fig 12)

His architectural language expressed in his work



Fig 53; St. Anthony's nursery school



sought inspiration, in the modern building forms and techniques peculiar to the modernism. Valentine had succeeded in producing number of works in a new style, but a style based on fundamental principles abstracted from tradition. As well as on imaginative responses to contemporary life. He had established an architectural system blending logical, structural and intuitive rules.

Considering plan form, there are curie lines; equilibrium within the simple geometrical 3 - dimentional form. The curved partitions have been arranged within the overall format is like a purist composition, where curies and rectranqles, harmonise into a felt unity within a rectranqular framw.

" Architecture is the masterly, correct and magnificent play of volumes brought together in light. Our eyes are made to see forms in light, and shade reveal these forms; cubes, cones, spheres and cycinders or pyramids are the great primary forms which light reveals to advantage. The image of these is distinct and tangible within us and without ambiguity."²

Nirmala Church of Bambalapitiya is situated away from the main road and placed at side of the minor road, The church is situated within the neighbourhood unit.



Fig 54; Nirmala Church of Bambalapitiya

When person is passing through the that road, they must feel " person who is walking through the desert, they found oasis " there was palm trees the edges of building that symbolised feeling of desert. But now there is temple trees. People come from the outside world they must feel that is the place for get mental satisfaction.



Fig 55 ; Nirmala Church

The nirmala church is rectangular in shape and this shape is in conformity with the shape of the site which is also rectangular. The simple is away of demonstrating the spiritual aspect and freedom of the church. Visiting of three dimensionally the building appears to be combination of a vertical tower and mass object put together. This is also expression of spiritual power and dominance.



Fig 56 ; Tangalle Bay Beach Hotel in 1970

Other notable examples of their work are the Ilangakoon House, Charles Way in combines these elements in a different manner. The high point of their work is the Tangalle Bay Beach Hotel in 1970. This is very convincing example of a modern movement inspired hotels. The hotel proper occupies the crest of a beautiful promontory with the bedrooms draped down the sides of the hill coming

down to the sea. The whole has a form reminiscent of a beached ship and the hotel sign age and naming of spaces attempts to reinforce the impression. Billowing shell concrete roofs and walls and machine age staircases gives this hotel a decidedly nautical air.

4.4. GEOFFREY BAWA

Geoffrey Bawa, born in Ceylon 1919, as a young man he went to Cambridge but, in accordance with a family tradition, to study law. He qualified as barrister and practised for some years in Sri Lanka, gradually realising however that law was not where he wanted to spend his life. He decided to change to architecture of which he had long been an amateur. He therefore returned to England and enrolled at the architectural association school in London, where he gained his diploma. He was then already nearly 40.

Geoffrey Bawa finished his architectural studies in England in the late 1950's. He trained as a lawyer at Cambridge and later as an architect at the AA school in London. After he returned to Sri Lanka, his architectural practice has been established with Edwards, Reid and Begg.

The historical significance of Bawa's work for Asia and Sri Lanka lies in its reflection of the economic, political and cultural climate of emerging nationalism and independence from colonial rule during the fifties and sixties. The formal architectural language expressed in his work sought inspiration in the traditional building forms and techniques peculiar to the Sri Lankan and Asian regions.

European technology, history and modern Architecture - and not indigenous Asian Architecture - informed the architectural education received by those of Bawa's generation who trained in Europe and returned to practise in a national milieu, bringing with them the ideology and technology of 'Modern Tropical Architecture' as part of their European cultural baggage.

There were several examples of Bawa's early career are the AA building, wijemanne flats, Green path and Galle face court apartments. The language of this buildings can be considered as international style.



Fig 57 ; AA building, Galle Face



Fig 58 ; Apartment building, Galle Face

This building was inspired from strong corbusien influence. This is designed in such a way that one could enjoy the tropical climate. Built entirely of concrete frame construction.

The Bawa's house for A.S.H. De silva at Galle in 1960 is curiously modernist and traditional at that time; in plan, it recalls the pin - wheel layout of Mies van der Rohe's brick country house in 1923.*

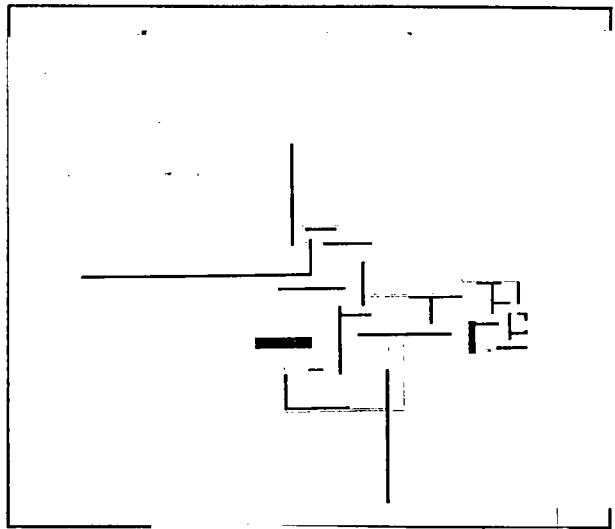


Fig 59 ; Plan of a projected country house. Mies van der Rohe, architect, 1923.

The most significant features are the relationships established with the geography of the terrain and the garden. In the build work of Geoffrey Bawa, there are two essential factors manifest, time and geography.

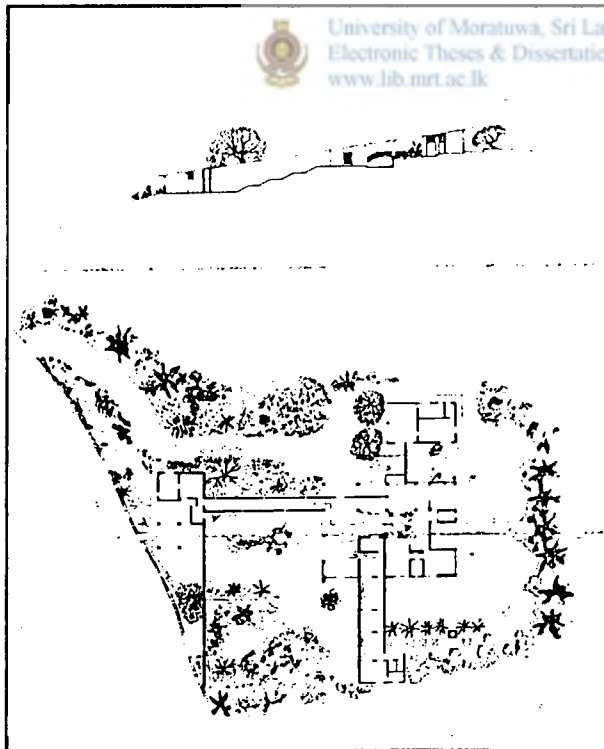


Fig 60 ; Plan and section of A.S.H. De Silve house, 1960

The section of the A.S.H. De Silva (1960) reveals single extended roof that follows the slop, from lower office entrance to hipper living quarters, in the continuous line. The expression of shelter, seems to signal of the architect's tentative search for an appropriate image of dwelling place.

Bawa leads us unconscionably into his very personal world



where distinctions between what is man-made and that produced by nature become used. The best example for above mentioned thing is estate bungalow at polontalawa in 1967. The partnership of Geoffrey Bawa and ulrik plesner created a remarkable estate bungalow at Polontalawa. The site was littered with large boulders amidst which the house was built.

It rose virtually without plans and became an integral part of the land. Steps, walls and even beds are fashioned between and out of rocks on site. While in the living and

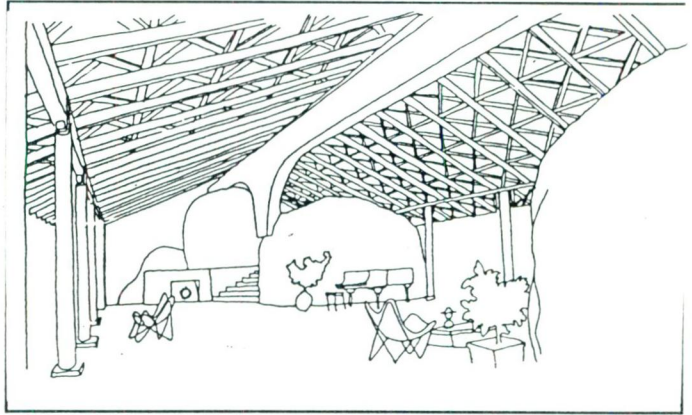


Fig 61; State Bungalow, Plontalawa, 1967

dining pavilion. The central concrete roof ridge dramatically spans two boulders.³



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The impetus was apparently to integrate liveable space and natural setting at the most extreme limits imaginable.



Fig 62; Ames Gate House

This estate Bungalow seems to parallels with American architect H. H. Richardson's Ames gate House, constructed of huge uncut stones taken from the very site comes to mind as do others by weight or even C. N. Ledoux.

Geoffrey Bawa emergence professionally with the break - up of the modern movement in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Geoffrey transposed these concerns, among them a search for new " vitality and validity ", to the Sri Lanka scene.

But the St., Thomas' school extension and the Bishop's collage classrooms employed exposed rein forced concrete in an explicit manner. Cantilevers, Concrete relief decoration, beams in concrete carried forward to the facade, and so forth, testify both to his training and mostly likely to certain client's tastes.

In 1962 Bawa designed remarkable house for Ena de Silva, world renowned for her batik designs. The house is inward looking, with high screen walls and roofs extending to the edge of the site. Within is a central courtyard surrounded by many peripheral ones, all of which were radical and modern features at that time. Ena de Silva was also interested in the reinvention of tradition and contributed a great deal of the design. This building was a turning point in the popularisation of Sri Lankan regionalism.

There were unorthodox details such as a verandah roof pierced to allow a tree trunk to pass through it. And a courtyard within a studio with another tree in it. And a courtyard within a studio with another tree in it. Large



Fig 63 ; Ena de silva House

stone oil presses are used for columns at the entrance, and circular millstones have been placed at the corners of the central courtyard.

This work represented the transcendence of the conflicting ideals of the traditional and the modern, and crystallizes all the thinking - of the period. As well as Bawa has blended of modern sensibilities and traditional elements through this work.



Fig 64 ; Ena De Silva house

Geoffrey Bawa has designed several other notable buildings such as the Montessori school for St. Bridget's in 1964. The significant features are a dominant roof over sculptured plastic forms, scaled down for the benefit of the children.

The farm school at Hanwalla in 1966 is a cost-effective project using a rural based technology and materials from the side. What is significant is not only the use of local material but the use of familiar features of traditional architecture, corkboards, trellis windows, spatial relationship to the outdoors etc. The build form achieved contained familiar symbols of the local vocabulary and had borrowed environment qualities from the vernacular which is easier to relate to than alien vocabulary.

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CHAPTER 5

TRENDS & TRANSITIONS OF PIONEERS

5.1 TRENDS & TRANSITIONS OF PIONEERS IN 1960'S

Architecture of the so called " heroic " period of the modern movement came to an end around 1960; that is to say, the image of the world fostered by the members of CIAM (International Congresses for Modern Architecture) with Le Corbusier at its head, did in turn begin to be criticised. This was also the period of Aldo van Eyck's studies of Dogon settlements in Africa, De carlo's Urbino Campus and the early works of Louis Kahn, Charles Moore and Robert Venturi.

In Sri Lanka, there was a lot of work to do in the sixties - houses, housing schemes, schools, small factories, small hotels etc. Political, social and cultural activities of the period too had a bearing on local innovators. The policies of Mrs. Bandaranaike as leader of the country in the late 1950's expressed independence and self - reliance in all fields, with the result of a considerable amount of intropection on the cultural level. Those with interest and telent in the arts tried new and unprecedented things and had remarkable, far - reaching success in such areas as handloom wearing (Edith Ludowyk and Barbara Sansoni); film making (Lester James peries); batik design (Ena de Silva, Laki Senanayake, Anil Jayasuriya, Jean and I. Arasanayagam), theatre (E.F.C. Ludowyke and Ediriweera Sarathchandra), and architecture (Geoffrey Bawa and Minnette De Silva). Many of these names are internationally know as innovators, as respected artists and as Sri Lankness. Many of them have concentrated modern trand of their fails.

Minnette de Silva invited the young Danish architect Ulrik Plesner to visit Ceylon after seeing his design for a monument to commemorate Buddha Jayanthi which won 2nd prize awarded by Nehru.



Fig 65 ; N.U. Jayawardena House

After having worked with Minnette, he joined Geoffrey Bawa as a partner at Edwards Reid and Begg. He was also influenced by the International style architecture in his early works. But in contrast to the N.U. Jayawardana houses.



Fig 66 ; Ian Pieris House

The Barbara Sansoni annex was the very interesting creation of Plesner in 1960. Ulrik Plesner was also involved in several buildings at this time until

he left Sri Lanka in 1967. Significant among these is the Sansoni Annex in 1960. This was designed for his own use. (The annex contains sophisticated examples of spatial variation under a simple roof.)

The Ian Pieris house in 1963 and Malkanthi Perera house in 1962 were another houses of V. R. Plesner. The striking quality of these houses is the feeling of life in tropical country without having to follow any traditional architectural features.



Fig 67 ; Babara Sansoni Annex

Plesner was also responsible for the design of the Good Shepherd Convent at Bandarawela in 1963. The blank facade in rubble facing the road contrasts and accentuates the unexpected lightness within. The whole building has an

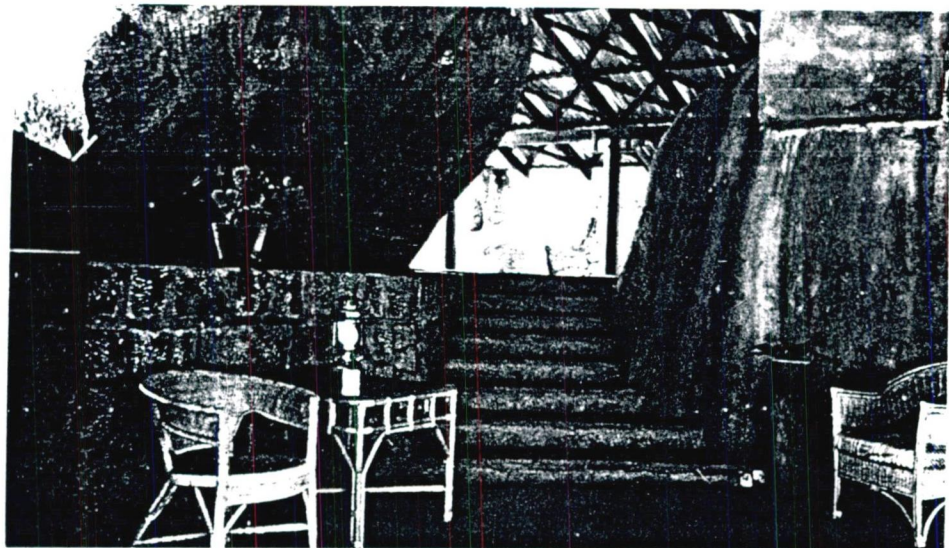


Fig 68 ; Polonthala Estate Bungalow, 1967



in rubble facing the road contrasts and accentuates the unexpected lightness within. The whole building has an atmosphere of serenity and tranquillity and at the same time is awe-inspiring. * In 1967, Geoffrey Bawa planned out in collaboration with architect Ulrik plesner, on the very site itself a projected



Fig 69 ; Mahaweli Town.

bungalow nestled among, around on top of giant boulders at the polontalawa state. This integrated livable space and natural setting at the most extreme limits imaginable.

5 : 2 TRENDS AND TRANSITIONS OF PIONEERS IN 1970'S

The dawn of the seventies saw Mrs. Bandaranayake as prime Minister, again. The economic policies of her government were tougher than before and restriction were imposed on imports. The insurrection held in April 1971 added to political tension. Thousands of youth were reported killed in the government crackdown. All this is history now, but now, did the situation affect local architectural developments ?

In fact, things were ' looking up ' for local architecture. The more towards a modern regional architecture which had gathered momentum in the previous decade was not thwarted by political disturbances and economic restrictions. On the contrary, the restrictions proved to be a blessing in disguise because architecture turned to local resources with zeal. Younger architects were building in local idiom. The country's architectural vocabulary of the period included;

" The large protective tiled roof whose geometry dominates the plan of a building, the internal courtyards, trellises, the long view through alternate rooms and courts, the high sometimes antisocial privacy walls in tight towns, the functional approach, that a building must absolutely and pleasantly serve the purpose for which it was built "¹¹

Fig 70 ; F.C. De saram, 1973 - Staggered facade and are differentiated by painted bands around the doors and windows

The F.C. D.E Saram Terrace Houses on 5th lane colpetty by geoffrey Bawa in 1973 was remarkable example of residential building. He has



designed four Simple austere houses without attractive details. This house have a staggered facade and are differentiated by painted bands around the doors and windows of each house. They seem to be inspired by the vernacular, specially of buildings along the main coastal road down south. Which have verandahs in front as a buffer and open directly onto the road with trellis panels or windows for privacy and to get light and ventilation.

St. Bridget's montessori school was designed by Geoffrey Bawa. This early educational building by Geoffrey Bawa reflects a turning point in Lira development as an architect. Although of reinforced concrete, it nevertheless has greater affinities with traditional buildings in sri Lanka than other previous works by Bawa. It is essentially open on both the ground and first floors, which are protected by a large overhanging roof, three - foot high cupboards and balustrades ensure safety from falling and create intimate space within the overall volume. Wall murals by Barbara sansoni originally decorated the school.

The Agrarian Research and Training Institute in (1975) consists of two - storeyed buildings situated around courtyards, with concrete rafters and railings picked out in yellow.



Fig 71 ; Agrarian Research and Training Institute, 1975

Mahaweli office multi storeyed building can not be considered as typical multi storied. The articulation of form of this building gave a new inspire to modern high rising buildings. The emergence of this building created new experience and new tradition to how articulate form of high rising building in frame of modern trend.

Fig 72 ; Mahaweli Complex, Colombo by Geoffrey Bawa in 1978

'Transitional spaces as naturally ventilated' sky terraces to upper parts of the tower. Thin slab built form configuration for natural lighting to office spaces



Minnette de Silva's - coomaswamy twin Minnette de Silva's coomaswamy twin house Colombo built in 1970 is an example of direct inspiration from the vernacular in a modern context. This house comprised compactly planned, encompassed by a roof such as those found in kilns to contain a 'soldere' or attic for successful use of cross wind currents through stack effect.



Mennette's tourist village in Sigiriya in (1970) was another good example in that period. A tourist complex, complete with a hotel, camping units, shops, caravanserai (ambalams),

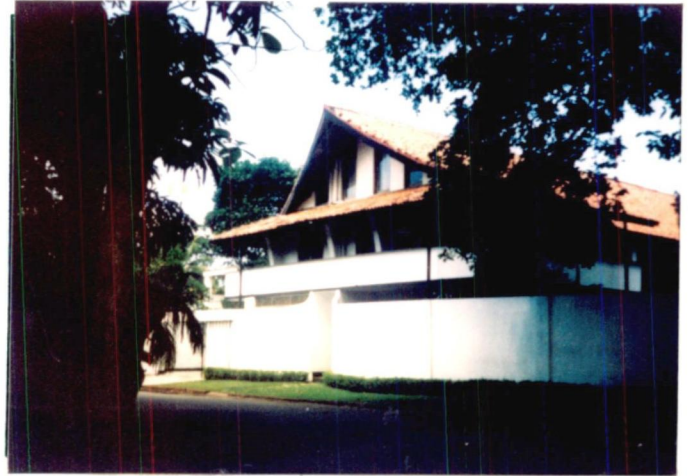


Fig 73; coom. twin house

family drive in units and a national park. The buildings, of wattle and daub are both inconspicuous and inexpensive.

Valentine Gunasekara's visionary architecture can not be ignore in that period. He started experimenting with the usage of modern materials for construction such as concrete, steel and

glass. Specially he has concentrated using the potential freedom of reinforced concrete design. The works of valentine gunasekara included all types of designs buildings



Fig 74; Tangalle bay Beach resort , 1974

and construction ranging from private houses, nursery schools, hotels and churches. Some of which were. Executed during his brief partnership with Chris de Saram. Notable examples of their work are the Jesuit Chapel in

(1969) which has shell roofs. The Illangakoon House, Rosmead place in (1970) in contains free folwing walls enveloped above by timber pergolas. In the Illangakoon house, Charles way in (1974) combines these elements in a different manner.

The climax of their work (Valantine Gunasekara and Chris de Saram) is the Tangalle Bay Beach Hotel in (1970) which has stepped terraced rooms radiating from a sculptured central hall.

Their work was not sustained into the eighties, perhaps due to an emphasis placed on uncompromising pure ideals, which are not flexible enough to accommodate the extremes of a tropical climate or easy going Asian way of life.

5.3 TRENDS AND TRANSITIONS OF PIONEERS IN 80'S

With the election of a new government in 1977 and its policy of open economy led to a boom in the building industry. This was to throw a new challenge in the direction of the pioneers. A challenge to enter the public area of architectural representation. They had to adopt a clear position towards cultural continuity in the fast changing social and economic climate.

An urban Development Authority was established in 1978 with the two prime tasks of providing development guidelines for the inner city at Colombo and the new administrative capital of Sri Jayawardenepura, Kotte.

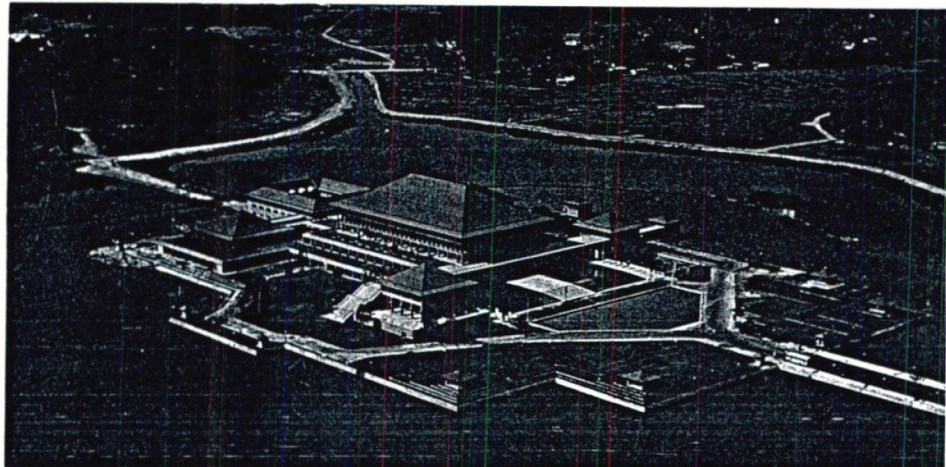


Fig 75 ; Parliament

In recognition of the singular talents of Geoffrey Bawa was inhabited to design the new parliamentary complex at Sri Jayawardenepura, Kotte in 1982. Designed and built within a brief period of three years on a small island in a man - made lake. It consists of interlinked pavilions with a plan reminiscent of ancient monastic complexes.

He was also intited to design the arts and science faculty of the university of Ruhunu at Matara in 1986. Were linked buildings draped over two hills have views of the sea and in land coconut plantations.

Fig 75 ; University of Ruhunu, Matara, arts and science faculties.

Varying profile and surface and veritable collision of pitched roofs attempted to relate to the human scale.



Fig 76 ; The Entrance to trion Coconut trees in a great pool, polished floor, beyond it blue sea, a uniformity between built form and its setting.

The Triton Hotel at Ahungalla in 1982 was other major project of

Geoffrey Bawa. The Triton Hotel at Ahungalla in 1982 was other major project of Geoffrey Bawa. The exception to this is the Triton Hotel, with its now classic entrance. Which provides the grand illusion of the sea sweeping in to the lobby.

In architectural tradition of the country a certain uniformity and so harmony between buildings was inevitable. But the harmony went deeper than just between building and: it setting. It is obvious in the Triton that such a harmony with the environ, is interpreted in completely contemporary form.



The simple bare finishes and its cool ambience has made the Triton a much emulated piece of architecture as it almost effortlessly bridges the gap of modernity and tradition.

The continues eaveline, looks monotonous particular on the sea side more lively it just looks flat. There are beautiful touches like coloured window surrounds, and eaves have a strange, strong detail through out but the general impression is not satisfactory in

heavines of the roof - one of the dominant feature of the architectural tradition.

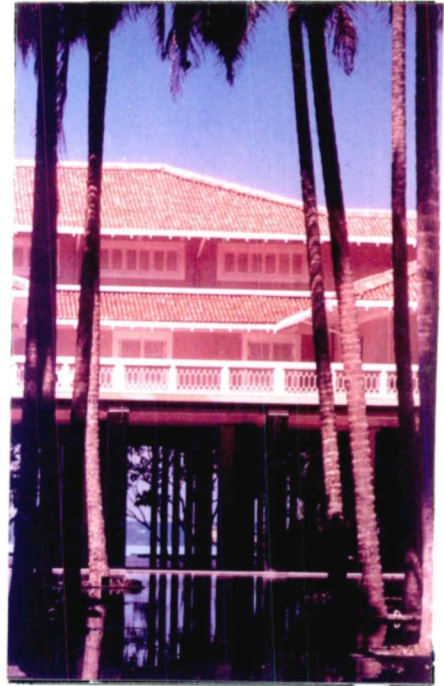


Fig 77; Triton Hotel Ahungalla



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CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

The plurality and eclecticism that mark the Modern age in Sri Lankan architecture is an accumulation of a series of architectural styles spanning a period of about 50 years. They largely represent attempts made to retrieve the national identity while projecting progressive modernistic self images. As such they may be interpreted as describing a conflict between the authenticity of the Modern Movement and the cultural continuity of a particular identity.

During the periods surrounding independence the fervour of nationalism provoked an overt expression of modernist authenticates are often ignored. This however is more a reaction to Colonialism rather than an anti-modern provocation. The rejection of this by the pioneers and their attempt to create a contextual modernism based on vernacular architecture. Its failure in larger programs and subversion in political interpretations however denies such harmony in later architecture of the same inspiration.

Use of the Kandyan roof as a political symbol and a public image may be seen as an attempt at Cultural Continuity which is reduced by its ignorance of the score of its cultural meaning. There is no attempt to create an authentic architecture A situation that is seen to reach epidemic proportions with the introduction of commodified elements of randomly selected cultural content. This is Modernism at its worst. Unauthentic. Cultural - But not continuous. The resulting fragmentation destroys the integrity and identity once created.

The direction of Sri Lankan architecture reflects not a cohesive plurality but an incoherent fragmentation. It does not seem impossible to salvage either the values of cultural continuity from the architectural projections for the future. This is perhaps because they are not recognised as being fundamental to good architecture and are not projected as necessary criteria for the judgement of it. Past historic styles could mean for us more than their aesthetic differences and teach us the validation principles of good design. Modernism could bring about a more positive and substantial form of architecture. We would look to history in order to recognise and express the authentic architectural principles which can be made culturally continuous.

For Sri Lanka it seems that the solution may be to follow the path that first taken by the pioneers. Not in its deployment of the vernacular but in its recognition of contextual values and modernistic principles.

Sri Lanka, as generally in the East, emerged suddenly in the post - second war years from a feudal - cum - Victorian past to Modern technological influences and effects from the west a superficial veneer of 'Modernism' acquired second hand through films, magazines or short trips abroad, ill - digested and bearing no relationship to our traditions and to the region in which we live. There was no attempt to create a real synthesis of Modern and traditional. We must learn what to absorb and what not to from the modern western world, and what to help and what not to from our traditional.

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