

₹400.00 | ISSN 0975-0177

53
2017

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JOURNAL OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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PERFECT**



Krishan C Singal

ENHANCING ECOLOGY OF THE SITE BY DESIGN



A passion for nature and plants brought **Krishan C Singal** from a small town in Haryana to do his post-graduation in Landscape Architecture from the School of Planning and Architecture in 1978. His experience is varied and includes working on projects of Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu, Jubail Industrial City, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and with eminent landscape architect, Ravindra Bhan, on the prestigious Shakti Sthala, memorial of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. He established his own practice in Delhi, *Singal Associates*, in 1990. He is well known for his professional and detailed documentation of pragmatic design ideas and concepts for site interpretations. His landscape practice, now also joined by Chahit Singal, his son is one of the busiest in the country.

SELECTED ONGOING PROJECTS

Forum Rangoli Commercial Complex, Kolkata
Architect: **Agrawal & Agrawal Associates, Kolkata**

Forum Centenary Mall, Jamshedpur
Architect: **Benoy Associates, Singapore**

Galgotia College of Engineering and Technology (GCET), Greater Noida
Architect: **Raj Rewal Associates**

Galgotia University Campus, Greater Noida
Architect: **Architects Arcop Associates, New Delhi**

Ecole Globale International Girls School, Dehradun
Architect: **Architects' Studio, Gurgaon**

NTPC Netra Complex, Greater Noida
Architect: **Raj Rewal Associates**

Jnana Pravah - Centre for Cultural Studies & Research, Varanasi
Architect: **Shri Balakrishna Doshi, Ahmedabad**

Royal Palm Ville Resort, Bhubaneswar
Architect: **Innate, Kolkata**

Hotel Swissotel, Kolkata
Architect: **Kapil Bhalla, Mumbai**

Millennium Hospital and Research Institute, New Delhi
Architect: **Moti Bahri, New Delhi**

Deep Chand Bandhu Hospital, Delhi
Architect: **Benjamin Benjamin and Vats, New Delhi**

Yashoda Hospital & Research Center Ltd. Ghaziabad
Architect: **Space Designers, Ghaziabad**

Tata Medical Centre, Kolkata
Architect: **Cannon Design, USA**

Gulshan Ikebana housing, Noida Expressway
Architect: **Deepak Mehta & Associates, New Delhi**

Ajnara Le-Garden Residential Complex, Greater Noida
Architect: **Deepak Mehta & Associates, New Delhi**

**Design Philosophy**

To create a truly enduring landscape, we must institute a unique collaboration between the desires of the client, the unique features and opportunities of the site and professional landscape skills. We must try and create natural environments to achieve this balance by using less of hard scape and more of soft scape. Conceptualization of robust planting schemes, which is complemented by a sound understanding of hard landscape detailing, is the main idea behind every landscape we design. Other key features of our professional work are advanced planting techniques, automatic irrigation systems, efficient use of water, storm water and subsurface drainage systems and landscape details based on international standards. With these in mind, we aim to design landscapes which are not only sustainable but also enhance the existing ecology of a site. People use these designed landscapes in their everyday lives. Thus, landscape architects play an important role in environmental protection by designing projects that respect both the needs of the people and of the environment. We, therefore, have the responsibility to design in a conscious manner so as to achieve the best outcome for the ecology as well as the end-user. We ensure that our practice is kept up to date with knowledge of the latest construction materials and techniques relevant to the discipline.

Evolution of Profession

In the last few decades, I have observed a sea change in the profession. When I started my practice some thirty years ago, even the most professional architects did not give much importance to landscape architecture, either due to complete lack of knowledge, or due to fee constraints. So, most of the times, they used to conceptualize and design landscapes themselves, utilizing the help of a landscape architect only for preparing the planting plans. The role of landscape architect remained secondary in terms of recognition.

Now the situation is altogether different. The clients themselves have started engaging landscape professionals directly for their projects and, even if this is through architects, they know what they want from us professionally. Today, no project, howsoever small it is, complete without the input of a landscape architect. Now, clients, especially for their commercial ventures, value a good landscape design, which has become the USP of their projects. The challenge in present times is to achieve good quality work keeping in mind the time lines.

Working with Architects and Allied Disciplines

In the 1990s, it was a great challenge to start an independent practice. The wide and varied experience I had of working in India and abroad gave me enough strength to do so. We were engaged by Arvind Gupta, architect for Tata housings and stadiums. Non-availability of qualified landscape contractors in this profession motivated me to form a team of qualified civil engineers to take on projects on a turnkey basis. We found a great sense of fulfillment while executing our own designs. Our clients were also satisfied with this format of getting the work done under one roof which is a challenge in itself nowadays. Now we concentrate on design consultancy only. Working with architects, civil engineers, planners, urban designers and others is a satisfactory experience because they contribute a lot to the project right from the design till the execution stage.

My association with Charles Correa on City Centre, Kolkata and with Trevor Pereira of Cannon Design, Boston, on Tata Medical Centre, Kolkata has been a rich experience, giving us great confidence, satisfaction as well as the pleasure of working with them. We had a great comfort level of working with Sanjay Bhardwaj on City Centre, Siliguri project who was part of Morphogenesis.

Working with architects like Charles Correa and B V Doshi has been inspiring and a great learning experience. Their approach of handling projects is dynamic, creative, holistic and systematic, giving appropriate importance to all the disciplines linked with the project. In the City Centre Salt Lake project, Correa took a lot of interest in landscape design, giving his valuable inputs wherever require. I remember when he sat with me to resolve the front plaza of the Shoppers Stop and proposed to have gulmohar trees with huge canopies covering the entire front plaza. His approach was to create a bold statement which was evident in his architecture as well as in the landscape, which we were able to achieve under his able guidance. Later on, he offered us another prestigious project, Ratan Tata's residential complex in Mumbai.

He had a great sense of humour. I remember once after finishing the meeting at the Tata site, he asked me to accompany him to his office wherein he took my suggestions for his own residence in the presence of his wife Monica, and at the end he said, 'Monica, don't you think that we should pay one side air ticket fare to Mr. Singal against his advice.'

We did many townships, including Condoville and Housings in West Bengal with B V Doshi. His design brief has always been to have large landscaped open spaces with sculptures and works of art. In Udayan, 'The Condoville' in Kolkata, the landscape design is very bold with a large central open space that has been created to allow nature to form the core of the project.

↓ City Centre Salt Lake-Kolkata, Shoppers Stop front plaza covered with canopies of gulmohar trees.

↓↓ Udayan 'The Condoville', Kolkata





Srijan Residential Complex, Kolkata
Architect: **Agrawal & Agrawal Associates, Kolkata**

Ashiana Homes Royal Lagoon, Bhubaneswar
Architect: **Innate, Kolkata**

Saviour Green Arch Housing, Greater Noida
Architect: **Hafeez Contractor, Mumbai**

Utalika Residential Complex, Kolkata
Architect: **Kapil Bhalla, Mumbai**

Arihant Arden Housing, Greater Noida
Architect: **Deepak Mehta & Associates, New Delhi**

Nirala Estate Housing, Greater Noida
Architect: **Deepak Mehta & Associates, New Delhi**

Tata Adwita Housing, Kolkata
Architect: **Innate, Kolkata**

Aarcity Sportcity Housing, Greater Noida
Architect: **Hafeez Contractor, Mumbai**

Samridhi Luxuriya Avenue Housing, Greater Noida
Architect: **Deepak Mehta & Associates, New Delhi**

Ashiana Greens Housing, Jaipur
Architect: **Tushar Sogani Designs Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi**

Gaursons Siddharthum Housing, Siddhartha Vihar
Architect: **Gaursons India Ltd, Noida**

Gaurcity Sports Stadium, Greater Noida
Architect: **RSP Architects, Singapore**

Imperial County Township, Yamuna Expressway Noida
Architect: **Deepak Mehta & Associates, New Delhi**

Gaurcity 1 Township, Greater Noida
Architect: **RSP Architects, Singapore**

Gold Souk Golf Links Township, Gurgaon
Architects: **Swanbury Penglase Architects, Australia & Design Creations, Gurgaon**

Solitaire Valley Township, Allahabad
Architect: **Deepak Mehta & Associates, New Delhi**

Shri Radha Gulmohar Township, Mathura
Architect: **Confluence Architects, New Delhi**

Builder and Real Estate Segment as Patrons

I have always worked with builders extensively, either directly or indirectly through the architects. Here, I feel proud to mention the name of Ambuja Realty's Harshavardhan Neotia who has given us many opportunities to work on many of his projects since 1995. Due to his constant faith in us, I had the opportunity to work with eminent architects like Charles Correa, B V Doshi, Prabir Mitra, RSP Architects, Singapore, Channa Daswatte, Hafeez Contractor and Morphogenesis.

Today, some of the builders have very high aspirations. They hire renowned architects/ landscape architects either from India or abroad to develop the initial landscape concept, and then it is developed in a very insensitive way by their in-house team of architects and engineers. This results in losing the overall essence of the scheme, thereby greatly compromising the end result. A better way would be to involve competent and sensitive architects and landscape architects of national and international fame who would take care of the project right from the its inception stage till its completion.

Landscape Education

Plant selection and horticulture specification are critical to successful landscape schemes. It is always good to enrol students from different disciplines like ecology, botany and horticulture in landscape programs. Students with such backgrounds will contribute immensely in increasing the knowledge of other students with architectural backgrounds. A student with a natural science background will understand the flora and fauna of a place better than an architect, whereas an architect will be able to understand and visualize the spatial aspects of the landscape design. In India, the five-year academic program gives architecture students a very limited exposure to this subject as compared with students with a natural science background. Therefore, to bridge this gap, a mix of students from different and diverse disciplines will give rise to an exchange of their interdisciplinary knowledge, thereby encouraging a holistic development in our profession.

At the post-graduate program at the School of Planning and Architecture, I have been sharing my knowledge of advance landscape engineering and plants and design besides design studios, which I gained from my experience and teachers like professor Hari K Dhar and professor Ravindra Bhan.

It has always been a pleasure to share this knowledge with young students and in return learn a lot from them. In my opinion, we should use a diverse range of teaching and learning approaches in Indian institutes which centre on self-directed projects, supported by formal lectures, small group seminars, group and individual studio exercises and field trips. Although

our institutes follow these to some extent, all design studio problems should lay enough emphasis on applying the landscape engineering and plants and design concepts. Along with the best teaching techniques adopted in the theory classes, the faculty should emphasize the application of theoretical learning by making the students work on the grading and planting plans of their own designs as their studio exercises. This will benefit the students and give them a holistic learning experience that will enable them to flourish in their professional careers after they graduate.



← **TATA MEDICAL CENTER, KOLKATA** →

The site for the hospital, 13.3 acres in area, is located in Rajarhat, Kolkata. It is designed by Cannon Design, USA. Landscape design was developed and conceptualized with the ideas of creating natural setting around the building and conducive outdoor environment for inpatients and outpatients, modifying the microclimate, proposing regionally contextual planting, creating aesthetically pleasing and functional landscape, clean and healthy pollution free environment and low maintenance sustainable landscape.

← Night view of central courtyard the heart of whole campus with Lotus pond designed as visual element with reflection of buildings & trees.

← Vast lawn areas & large tree canopies covering the entire courtyard gives a feel of the building in garden.



→ **LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN**

1. Main Arrival Drop-off
2. Hospital A-Wing
3. Hospital B-Wing
4. Cafeteria & Cafe
5. Administration
6. Children play area
7. Service Building
8. Residential Building
9. Time office
10. Power Plant
11. Courtyard
12. Water Feature
13. 8% of Plot Area
14. 4% of Plot Area
15. Mortuary
16. Future Development
17. Radiation Therapy Arrival
18. On-Grade Oxygen Storage Tank
19. Car Parking
20. LCV Parking
21. Bus Parking

ZONE 7

The meditation and yoga garden comprises of seats and resting platforms for yoga and meditation, under the densely shaded sacred trees like *Ficus benghalensis*, *Ficus religiosa*, *Anthocephalus kadamba*, *Mangifera indica*

ZONE 6

Children play area with conventional play equipment, seating at various places along with a shallow informal pool for the kids with medium and small size flowering trees relate the scale and playful quality of this space.

ZONE 3

Informal garden, designed as an extension to the inside waiting areas for the outpatients is screened from the roads and parking area. Large, medium & small trees have been proposed in curving-linear massing reinforcing the lines of movement expressed in the circulation & landform while deciduous trees in these sitting areas enable people to enjoy the sun during the winter season.

ZONE 2

Parking areas on south-west side has been screened by extensive landforms and dense plantation to create a visual barrier and a buffer zone to cut down the noise levels. Planting has mainly evergreen trees to discourage the leaf litter and improve the microclimate.



ZONE 5

Ecotherapy zone comprises of meandering pathway passing through the rolling landform covered with herbal plants and medicinal trees. The exterior healing garden with lush landscaping, walkways, plants and water feature provides a respite for patients, visitors and the staff.

ZONE 4

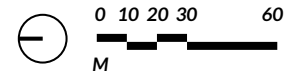
Central courtyard with water features and sitting with gathering spaces facilitates interaction among patients, families, clinicians and researchers. Designed with a water feature with seats and large ornamental flowering & foliage trees like *Samanea saman*, *Spathodea companulata*, *Delonix regia*, *Plumeria alba*, *Mimosops elengi*, it creates a place of multi-seasonal interest. Locating trees in south and west optimizes the energy saving significantly during the warmest afternoons.

ZONE 1

Main arrival Drop-off areas are differentiated with granite sets paving and Central Island with landforms and planting of fragrant, ornamental and flowering trees.

ZONE 8

Conceptualized as a green belt with dense plantation to create an urban forest barrier, it further reduces the surrounding air and noise pollution.





LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN

1. Main Gate - HIG Towers
2. HIG Towers (Luxury: Prathama-Ekadashi)
3. Central Green
4. Surface Car Parking
5. 0.5 km long Jogger's Track
6. Open Air Theatre
7. Splash Pool/ Water Cascade
8. Raised Landforms with Pockets for Tot Lots, Picnic Spots & Wall Surfaces for Paintings & Murals
9. Lily Pool & Fish Pond
10. Stepped Seating for Watching Games
11. Outdoor Sports Area
12. Seating Under Trees
13. Kids Play Area in Sand Pit
14. Tennis Court
15. Club
16. Club Greens
17. Pool Deck with Lap Leisure Pool
18. Banquet Facilities with Private Greens
19. STP/Services
20. Boundary Plantation
21. Main Gate MIG/LIG Towers
22. MIG Towers (Comfort)
23. LIG Towers (Efficiency)
24. Residents' Activity Centre
25. Commercial & Vocational Training Centre
26. Water Body
27. Pond

HIG Towers

- A. Prathama
- B. Dwitiya
- C. Tritiya
- D. Chaturthi
- E. Panchami
- F. Shashthi
- G. Saptami
- H. Ashtami
- I. Nabami
- J. Dashmi
- K. Ekadashi

FACING PAGE

- The outer face of the club—the club greens—is the area where banquets can spill over and hold outdoor functions—while the inner face of the club opens into the club lawns, an area flanked by a verandah and a pool deck with lap leisure pool.
- ➔ View of the art work near each tower amidst the oasis of lush greenery.

← UPOHAR - THE CONDOVILLE, KOLKATA

For the group of apartments designed by B V Doshi and Sohan Nilkanth on a land of 18 acres, the landscape design's emphasis was on creating large central open spaces, allowing nature to form the core of Upohar. The flowing, non-rigid shape of central green provides the sense of relief, contrast and informality to the entire space which accommodates a number of residential blocks. The meandering form lends itself to sub-zones created by variation in treatment while maintaining visual continuity and the possibility of experiencing its expanse. The space also offers enough flexibility to have individual activities as well as small or large group activities to ensure its maximum usage. The outer face of the club near the main gate has a lawn area where banquets can spill over and hold outdoor functions where non-residents can also participate while the inner face of the club opens into club lawns, an area flanked by the verandah and the pool decks. It has a stage on one side and can also work as an outdoor function area in addition to the banquet green. The tennis court marks the end of the club lawn which then merges into the central green.

The area beyond the tennis court, with a water body is designed for the use by the community for larger outdoor gatherings like cultural programs and Durga Puja. The amphitheater can hold outdoor function simultaneously with the club lawns and the banquet green. The park area is bordered by thick plantation including a large variety of trees, shrubs, flowering plants with seats in the shaded areas. It is designed for leisurely stroll, for tiny tots to romp about with seating areas for parents. Playfield, with hardy species of grass spread over large open area is bordered by the several shade giving trees with designated play area for tiny tots with play equipment like swings, slides along with sand pits and splash pools. There are pedestrian links passing under the earth mounds connecting the different zones with each other and the apartment blocks around. All apartment blocks have landscaped podium terraces accessible by lifts. A bridge and a ramp from the podium terraces provide pedestrian access to the central green without having to cross any driveway with vehicular access.



A book on plants entitled 'Banaspati' was published at the time of handing over the towers defining the journey through the landscape mentioning the names, location, sketches, characteristics and a few interesting stories about plants proposed in the complex for familiarizing the residents to the facts about their environment.

Drawings and images courtesy
Singal Associates