



HERITAGE ALERT
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF
MANAGEMENT-AHMEDABAD,
INDIA

ICOMOS INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON
TWENTIETH CENTURY HERITAGE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

0.0	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	01
1.0	IDENTITY OF BUILDING/ARTEFACT/OBJECT/PLACE	05
1.1	Current Name and Original Name	
1.2	Address/Location. Town, Country, Street	
1.3	Classification and Type of Place	
1.4	Current Heritage Protection Status	
2.0	STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND HISTORY	06
2.1	Statement of Significance	
2.2	History of Place	
2.3	Date of Original Project / Date of Completion	
2.4	Architects / Designers	
2.5	If Architects are still Living, Contact Information	
2.6	Original and Current Use of Building / Place	
2.7	Changes, Addkitions to the Original Design	
2.8	Current Condition	
3.0	DESCRIPTION (HISTORY, DESIGN INTENT, TECHNOLOGY)	18
3.1	Context/ Setting; Social and Cultural Context	
3.2	Design Intent; Physical Description; Form / Function	
3.3	Construction System Used; Material / Fabric	
3.4	Aesthetic Value	
4.0	SOURCE OF ALERT	28
4.1	Groups Supporting Alert, Contacts	
4.2	Groups Potentially Against Alert Action	
4.3	Local, Regional, International Significance Citations	
4.4	Letters of Support, Newspaper Articles, etc.	
4.5	Publications that Describe the work, Bibliography, etc.	
4.6	Time Constraints for Advocacy	

5.0	RECOMMENDED ACTION	29
5.1	Heritage alert: International Distribution Via ICOMOS?	
5.2	Letters to? Names and Contact Information	
5.3	ICOMOS National, Scientific Committee, International Website Upload?	
5.4	Affiliated Distribution	
6.0	DESIRED OUTCOME	31
6.1	Impose Legal Protection or Improve Legal Protection	
6.2	Stop Work that will Alter the Heritage?	
6.3	Stop Permits Irretrievable Loss of Heritage / Stop Demolition?	
6.4	Impose Minimum Maintenance to Stop Decay Pending Conservation	
6.5	Conclusive Summary of Desired Action	
ANNEXURES		
Annexure 1:	Section 4.3 (Local, Regional, International Significance Citations)	32
Annexure 2:	Section 4.4 (Letters of Support, Newspaper articles, etc.)	35
Annexure 3:	Section 4.5 (Publications that Describe the Work, Bibliography, etc.)	37
PHOTO CREDITS		40

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Fig. 1: A view of the site during construction. Foundation work for the Classrooms and Faculty Wing is in progress

OBJECTIVE OF THE HERITAGE ALERT

This Heritage Alert is being issued to gather international support for the protection and comprehensive conservation of the iconic 'Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad' (IIM-A) located at Ahmedabad, India. The IIM-A campus and its individual components were designed during 1962-1974 by one of the most influential architects of the twentieth century, Louis I Kahn, who worked in close collaboration with two internationally celebrated Indian architects, Balkrishna V Doshi and Anant D Raje as well as Indian landscape architects and engineers.

INTRODUCING IIM-A

The Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad (IIM-A) was established as part of India's post-independence endeavours at strengthening and modernising its social, economic and cultural infrastructure. The founding of the institute and the philosophy of its being were results of a global collaboration between two Ahmedabad- visionaries, the Governments of India and its Gujarat State, the Ford Foundation and the Harvard Business School. Besides the hot-arid climate of Ahmedabad, the other contextual factors that were to impact the project's design and form include the economic and technological constraints prevalent in India of the 1960s and India's ancient building traditions.

Spread over 65 acres, the Indian Institute of Management at Ahmedabad was conceived as a self-sufficient, residential campus containing the academic core (classrooms, faculty rooms and a library), a dining hall for students and faculty, dormitories for 300 students, and 110 housing units of various categories for the faculty and staff. Louis Kahn's personal

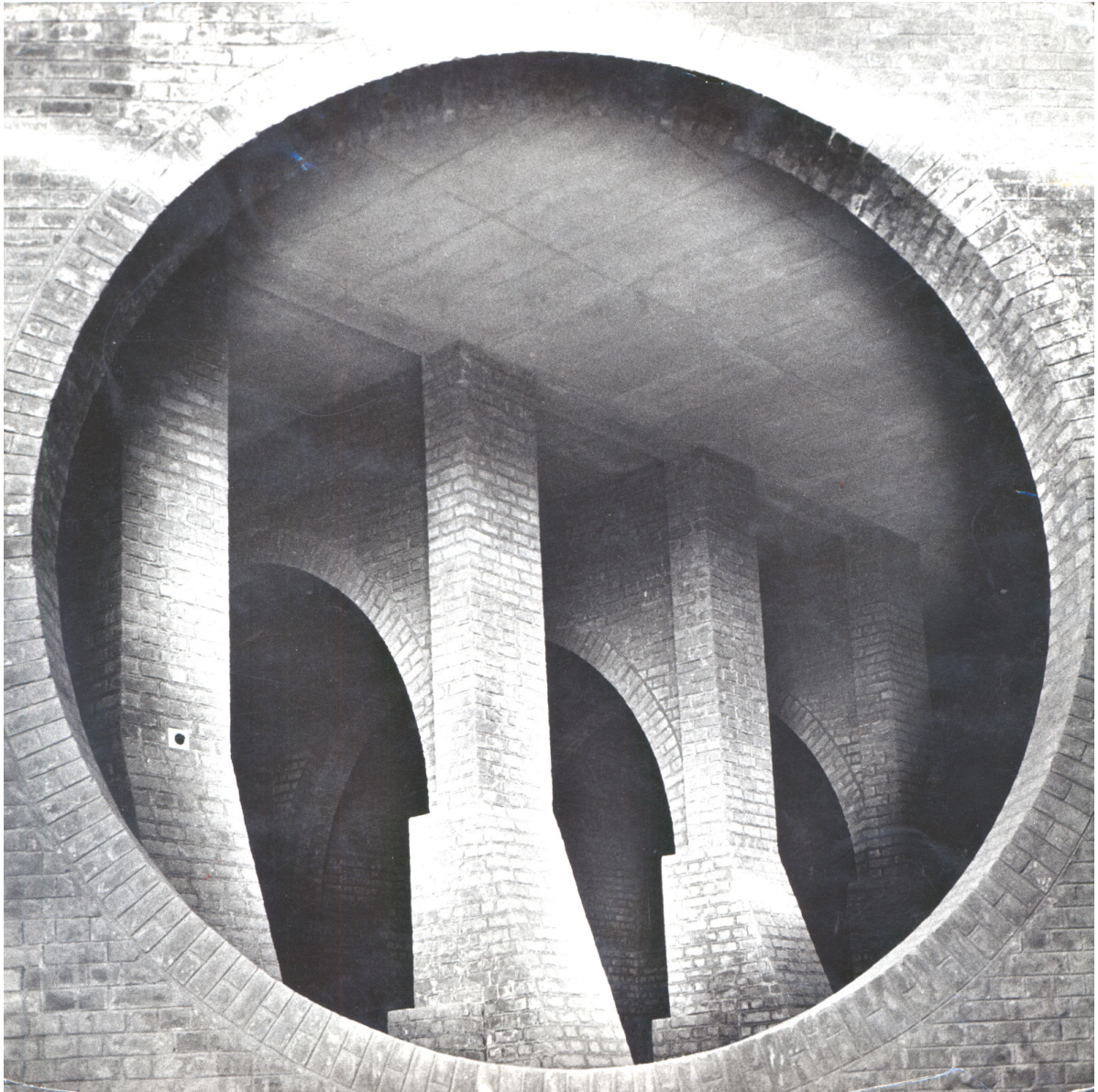


Fig. 2: One of the giant oculi - stretching the bounds of conventional brick masonry technology.

pre-occupation with notions of 'extended learning' and constant 'meetings and interactions' pervades the design of the layout as well as all individual buildings. The campus, therefore, became a harmonious single entity in which the carefully crafted built volumes, the open areas and the interior spaces come together as a highly aesthetic dynamic order of spatial and structural systems (Fig. 1).

The IIM-A is also known for Kahn's highly inventive manner of deploying the traditional local brick and generating a new vocabulary that could re-interpret tradition through technological sophistication. "These buildings stretched the bounds of conventional masonry technology while they re-affirmed the timeless power of massive brick construction. Kahn's experiments helped to promote brick to an almost exalted status in the vocabulary of the Indian architect."¹ The campus is yet another testimony to Louis Kahn's distinctive play of controlled light, achieving a sense of timelessness and spirituality beyond mere human existence (Fig. 2).

¹ Bhatt, V and Scriver, P. (1990) *After the Masters: Contemporary Indian Architecture*. Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd. p. 18



Figs. 3 and 4: The green courts between dormitory units (above) and the shaded links at the ground (below)

CULTURAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

In addition to symbolising the local and national aspirations for modernisation and progress, the Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad is significant for being a part of the mid-twentieth century narrative of de-colonisation in various parts of the world, the emergence of nation states, the consequent changing approaches to governance and widespread progressive efforts. Its cultural value is also a consequence of the close and unusual collaboration between its local, national and international stakeholders, both during the conception and the realisation of its unique education philosophy. Seen in terms of its highly creative architectural form, as well as the innovative construction technology, IIM-A can be considered as a masterpiece of human creative genius, recognised globally as an icon of 20th century architecture, a landmark in the global and South Asian narratives of institutional ensembles (Figs. 3 & 4).

IIM-A's international importance is comparable, for example, to 'Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia Academic Village' (inscribed in the World Heritage List in 1987) and, the 'Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico' in Mexico City (inscribed in 2007).

THE THREAT

In December 2020, the IIM-A authorities floated a tender inviting 'Expression of Interest' for design of new students' housing on the land parcel currently occupied by 14 of the original 18 dormitories. Following widespread protests from various quarters around the world, the authorities withdrew the tender document to hold further deliberations. Though the threat to the dormitory units has been shelved – perhaps, temporarily, the original historic fabric of Louis Kahn's IIM-A continues to be under risk of irreversible alterations, including potential demolition of several Kahn and Raje designed structures and construction of ill-considered multi-storeyed blocks that would adversely impact the unique hierarchical spatial order, functional linkages and visual harmony for which the campus is valued. These alterations have been proposed as part of the ongoing "25-year Master Plan" by HCP Design Planning & Management Pvt. Ltd., IIM-A's appointed architects.

Currently, IIM-A does not figure in the list of heritage structures issued by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, and does not enjoy any legal heritage protection - just as all other post-independence (post-1947) buildings of cultural significance. This Alert is intended to initiate the preparation of a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for the campus, where the significance of the campus as a single entity and each constituent building can be assessed and recommendations made accordingly. There is a need to revisit the basis of HCP's "25-year Master Plan" and adopt a more conservation-sensitive approach to development, including provision of legal heritage protection for the campus.

RECOMMENDED ACTION AND DESIRED OUTCOME

Keeping in view the desired protection and conservation of IIM-A's original design, ICOMOS and the International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage recommend that the Governing Council of IIM-A, as the steward of the unique 'Kahn Old Campus', should initiate action to:

1. Undertake a properly structured and staffed 'Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP)' to address the significance, authenticity and integrity of the Old Campus, define proper treatment and use and, formulate a strategy for implementation of the CCMP's recommendations.
 2. Suspend all action regarding changes proposed to the Old Campus, including demolition and new constructions in the "25-year Master Plan" by HCP Design Planning & Management Pvt. Ltd., until the 'Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan' (CCMP), including an exercise of 'Heritage Impact Assessment' has been undertaken.
 3. Initiate immediate action for minimum maintenance of the all historically significant buildings in the IIMA Old Campus until their appropriate restoration is achieved.
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1.0 IDENTITY OF BUILDING/ARTEFACT/OBJECT/PLACE

1.1 CURRENT NAME AND ORIGINAL NAME

Original Name: Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad (IIMA-A)

Current Name: Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad (Old Campus)

1.2 ADDRESS/LOCATION, TOWN, COUNTRY, STREET

Indian Institute of Management, Vastrapur, Ahmedabad 380015, Gujarat, INDIA (Fig. 5)

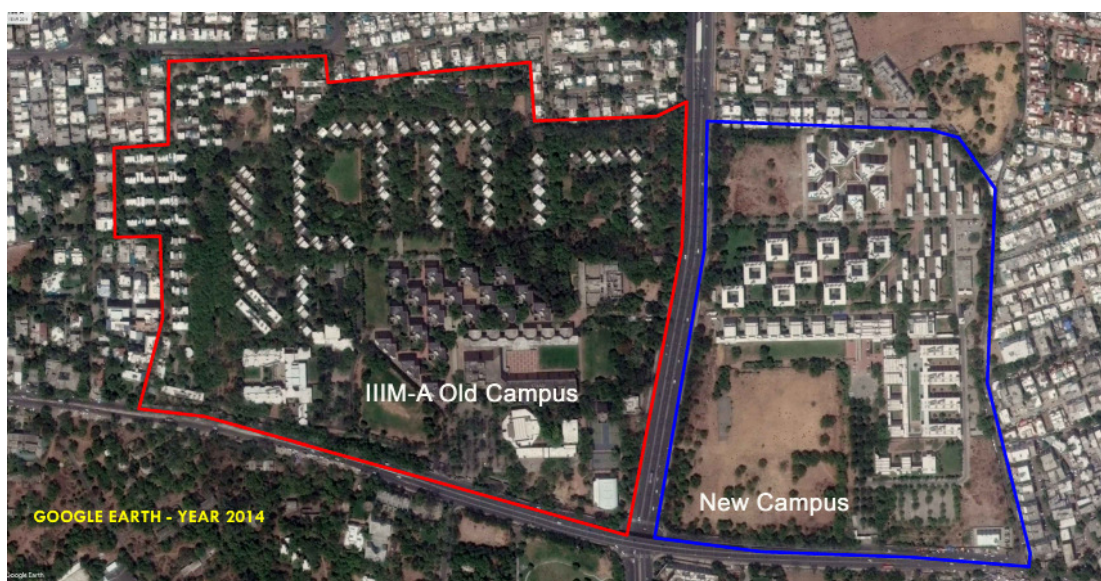


Fig. 5: The original 65 acre site of IIM-A is outlined in red, the 'New Campus' is across the road.

1.3 CLASSIFICATION/ TYPE OF PLACE

Institutional Campus (with academic, administrative, residential, cultural and service components)

1.4 CURRENT HERITAGE PROTECTION STATUS

- a. Not protected.
- b. IIM-A is included in the list of heritage buildings prepared in 2014 by the Gujarat Chapter of INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage). However, none of the post-independence (post-1947) buildings were included in the final list notified by the government authorities / Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

2.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND HISTORY

2.1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- **A Post-colonial Act of Nation-building and Modernisation:** The Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad is a product of the vision and commitment of Ahmedabad's social and political leaders as well as India's post-independence nation-building activities that aimed at developing a modern infrastructure for its social, economic and cultural growth. However, it holds equal significance for being a part of the global narrative of de-colonisation, the emergence of nation states, the consequent changing approaches to governance and similar progressive efforts in various parts of the world.
- **A Product of Global-to-Local Partnership and Cultural Exchange:** The cultural value of IIM-A is also a consequence of the close collaboration between its local, national and international stakeholders, both during the conception and the realisation of its hallmark education philosophy, architectural form and construction technology. The establishment of the institute was made possible due to the coalition of five sets of actors - the two local protagonists Dr. Vikram Sarabhai (Scientist), Kasturbhai Lalbhai (Industrialist and Philanthropist), the State Government of Gujarat through Dr. Jivraj Mehta (the then Chief Minister), the Government of India, the Harvard Business School and, the Ford Foundation.¹ Kahn's influence on the design thinking of various Indian architects who worked with him, either through the Ahmedabad-based National Institute of Industrial Design (NIID)² or at his Philadelphia office, is obvious in many buildings of the 1970s and even later. However, of even more significance are the collaborations that resulted from Kahn's experiments with brick, through which not only the team's architects and engineers but also local masons, with their traditional brick acumen, became partners in design decisions. Here, then, emerged a unique collaborative whose interchange of ideologies and working methods were to have a decisive and long lasting influence on development of 20th century architecture and technology.
- **An Outstanding Architectural Ensemble and Unique Design Approach:** Louis Kahn's IIM-A can be considered as a masterpiece of human creative genius, recognised globally as an icon of 20th century architecture, an important link in the narrative of institutional ensembles developed by Louis Kahn as well as an important milestone in the evolution campus design in post-colonial South Asia.³ IIM-A holds great international importance comparable to, for instance, to the 19th century 'Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia Academic Village' in the USA (inscribed in the World

¹ About IIMA. Available at: <https://www.iima.ac.in/web/about-iima/> (Accessed: 30 December 2020)

² Now known as the National Institute of Design (NID)

³The other institutional buildings designed by Louis Kahn during the same era are Richards Medical Research Laboratories, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1957–1965), The Salk Institute, La Jolla, California (1959–1965), Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, Dhaka, East Pakistan (modern Bangladesh), National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD), Dhaka, Bangladesh (1963).

Heritage List in 1987) and, the 20th century 'Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico' in Mexico City (inscribed in 2007). Besides the poetic sensibilities of the campus spaces, IIM-A became especially significant due to Kahn's creative decision of engaging with the locally produced hand-made brick to invent a unique structural and visual grammar. The introduction of India's rich architectural traditions by Louis Kahn into the modern design of IIM-A was an important inspiration for several Indian architects whose work gave rise to a new trail of buildings in contemporary India.

2.2 HISTORY OF PLACE

The Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad (IIM-A) is the second of the Business Schools established by Government of India as part of its post-independence Nation-building programs. It was set up in 1961 through the vision and efforts of India's leading space scientist, Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, an eminent industrialist-philanthropist, Kasturbhai Lalbhai, and the then Chief Minister of Gujarat, Dr. Jivraj Mehta, who together enlisted the support of the Government of India, the Ford Foundation and the Harvard Business School to realise the concept.

In 1962, after the 65 acre site (Fig. 5) was transferred to IIM-A,¹ the Board of Governors began the hunt for a world-class architect to build a campus that would match its lofty vision as well as the array traditional and modern architectural masterpieces that Ahmedabad is home to. Balkrishna V Doshi, then a young architect, introduced Louis I Kahn to Vikram Sarabhai and Kasturbhai Lalbhai. Through a letter dated June 1, 1962, Vikram Sarabhai invited Louis I Kahn to serve as the consulting architect for the IIM-A project.

Kahn's 12 year long involvement with IIM-A began with his visit to Ahmedabad in November 1962, when he also produced the earliest of his "Concept sketches".² Over the next two years, he was to develop designs from his office in Philadelphia, while the team from the National Institute of Industrial Design in Ahmedabad, led by Balkrishna V. Doshi, assumed the role of executive architects and engineers for the initial phases of construction. The second Indian architect to have a close, long-term association with the project was Anant D Raje, who worked in Kahn's Philadelphia office between 1964 and 1969. Returning to India in 1969, Raje served as Kahn's on-site architect for IIM-A, overseeing design development and construction of the original campus as well as the extensions undertaken after Kahn's death in 1974.

The first and second versions of IIM-A's site layout were developed between March and July 1963.³ The final alteration of the layout came in late 1963.

¹ "The site selected was about 66 acres of almost flat farmland near the village of Vastrapur, approximately 8 kilometers to the west of the city center. It is surrounded by the Gujarat University campus, the Ahmedabad Textile and Industrial Research Association (ATIRA), the Physical Research Laboratories (PRL), the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the Nehru Foundation, the School of Architecture (part of the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology, CEPT) and other institutions."

See Ronner, H. and Jhaveri, S. (1987) Louis I. Kahn: Complete Work 1935-1974. Basel, Boston: Birkhauser, 1987. p. 208.

² Ibid. See images IIM-1to IIM-9. pp. 208-09.

³ Ibid. pp.210-214.



Fig. 6: The Site Model, 1964. The essential features were retained till the end.

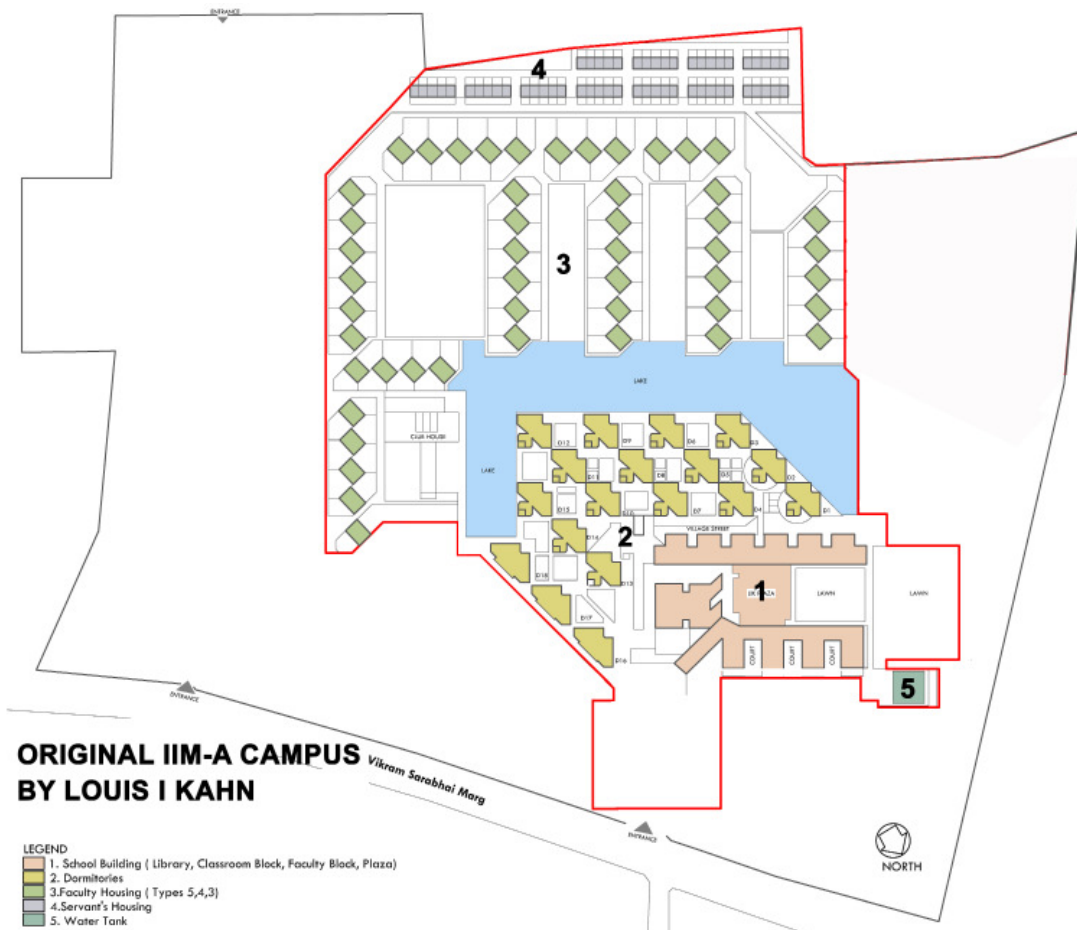


Fig. 7: The Final Layout as built during Kahn's lifetime

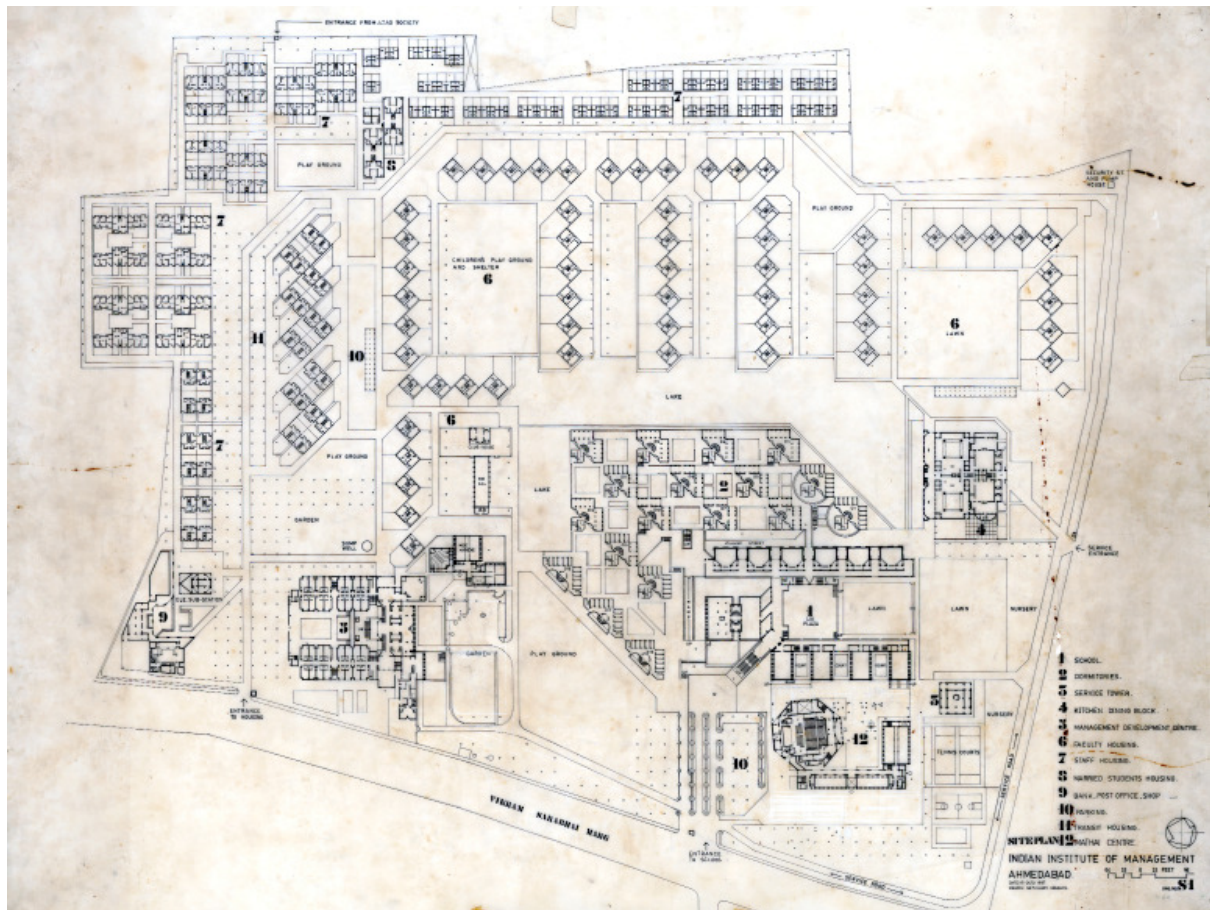


Fig. 8: Site Plan, dated 15 October 1987.

“After this point only the details of the project were further developed” (Figs. 6 & 7). Construction was taken up in phases, beginning in 1964 with accommodation for students, faculty and the staff. The first phase included five student dormitories (D-3, D-6, D-9, D-12 & D-15) and around fifty units of Faculty Houses.¹ Work on two more dormitory units (D-1 & D-2) and the first lot of Servant Houses was underway in 1966. Dormitories D-4, D-5, D-7, D-8, D-10 and D-11 were underway by May 1968. Construction of Dormitories D-16 & D-17 began in 1970 and was completed by February 1972. The remaining dormitories - D-18, D-13 and D-14 - were completed after this, possibly as late as 1978. Foundation work on the Academic Complex began in November 1968 and was largely completed by 1975, after Louis Kahn’s death in March 1974.²

The years 1975-1999 saw the development of the second layer of the IIM-A Old Campus under the stewardship Anant D Raje, both in partnership with Balkrishna V Doshi and his independent practice (Figs. 8 & 9). The work included extension of the faculty and staff housing, the Students’ Dining Halls and Kitchens and the Management Development Centre,³ either following the original Kahn designs in totality or developing his concepts. The Ravi Matthai Centre (1987-89) was Raje’s independent work, continuing the spirit of Louis Kahn’s vision and vocabulary in a sensitive manner (Figs. 10 & 11).

¹ This group comprises 20 units of Type-3, 24 units of Type-4 and 5 units of Type-5 Houses

² Whitaker, W. (2021) IIM-A Chronology (unpublished)

³ Now known as Lalbhai Kasturibhai Management Development Centre, KLMDC

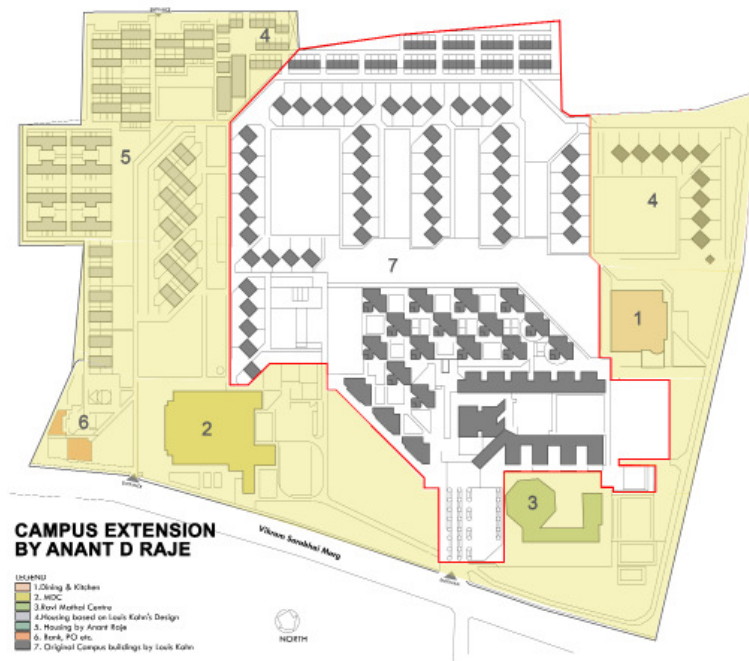


Fig. 9: The yellow-shaded area was developed under Anant D Raje. It includes the following:

1. Dining Halls and Kitchens
2. Management Development Centre
3. Ravi Mathai Centre
4. Faculty and Staff Housing on Kahn's designs
5. New Staff Housing
6. Shopping Centre

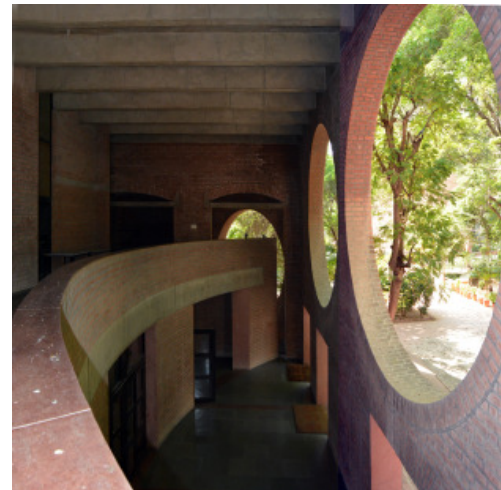


Fig. 10 & 11: The Ravi Mathai Centre by Anant D Raje, following the spirit of Kahn's design philosophy

The next phase begins in 1999 with Anant Raje resigning as the its architect. "For thirty years he had kept an eye on the project, pressed administrators for needed maintenance and repairs, and served as a vital connection to the early development of the site and institution. Raje is not replaced."¹

A competition for design of a new 39-acre campus (across the road forming the NW boundary of the Old Campus) was floated in 2001; the commission was awarded to HCP Design Planning & Management Pvt. Ltd., who also took up responsibility for the future development of the 'Old Campus'. The years 2014-18 witnessed two significant activities. While, on the one hand, conservation action was initiated for some of the Louis Kahn buildings in the Old Campus, on the other, original constructions by Kahn and Doshi-Raje were put at risk of demolition / actually demolished as a result of a "25-year Master Plan" by HCP Design Planning & Management Pvt. Ltd. (Fig. 12). **This Alert is intended to challenge the basis of this "25-year Master Plan", while proposing a more conservation-sensitive approach to development.**

¹ Whitaker, W. (2021) IIM-A Chronology (unpublished)

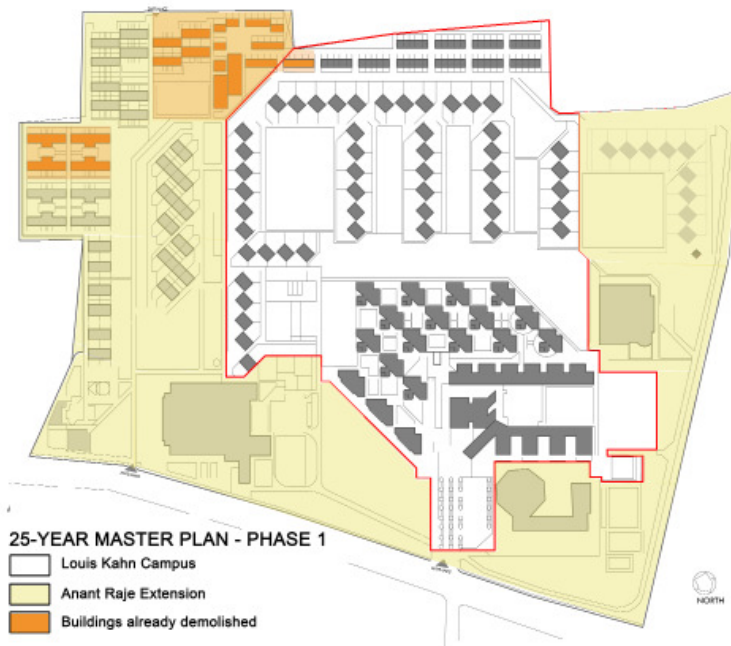


Fig. 12: Implications of the "25-year Master Plan" by HCP Design Planning & Management Pvt. Ltd -- Some units of staff housing has already been demolished to make way for 11-12 storied apartments.

2.3 DATE OF ORIGINAL PROJECT/ DATE OF COMPLETION

- **1962-1978 - Original Campus by Louis I Kahn (with Balkrishna V Doshi and Anant D Raje):** The original layout of the IIM-A Campus and its components were designed between 1962 and 1974 (Fig. 5). Construction was carried out in phases, beginning in October 1964, with a few student dormitories, faculty and staff residences. Construction of the academic block started in 1968 and was largely completed by 1975. Some dormitories were completed as late as 1978.
- **1975-1999 - Extensions by Anant D Raje:** These comprise over one hundred units of staff and married students' housing as well as three substantial independent buildings. Designs for two of these, i.e., the Students' Dining Halls and Kitchens (1970-79) and the Management Development Centre (1974-89) were based on concepts given by Kahn. The Ravi Matthai Centre (1987-89) was Raje's independent work that sensitively continued Kahn's vision as well as his intrinsic order of materials and light (Figs. 9, 10, 11).

2.4 ARCHITECTS / DESIGNERS

- **Architects:** Louis I Kahn, in association with Indian architects, Balkrishna V Doshi, Anant D Raje, and others at the National Institute of Industrial Design (NIID).
- **Landscape Consultant:** Prabhakar B. Bhagwat
- **Structural Engineers:** Mahendra Raj (at NIID) and Sharad R. Shah

2.5 IF ARCHITECT DESIGNERS ARE STILL LIVING PROVIDE ADDRESS, COUNTRY OF BIRTH, AND CONTACT INFORMATION

The following members of the original team are still living:

- **Balkrishna V Doshi**; Country of Birth: India; Address: Vastushilpa Consultants, 'Sangath', Thaltej Road, Ahmedabad 380054, Gujarat, India; Contact Information: Email: vsc@sangath.org; Phone: +91 79 27454537/27454539; Website: www.sangath.org
- **Mahendra Raj**; Country of Birth: India; Address: Mahendra Raj Consultants Private Limited; Q-24, Jangpura Extension, New Delhi-110014; Email: admin@mrc.co.in; Phone: +91 11 24325054 / 24317660 / 24317665; Website: www.mrc.co.in

2.6 ORIGINAL AND CURRENT USE OF BUILDING/PLACE

There is no change in the original use of the campus or its individual components.

2.7 CHANGES, ADDITIONS TO THE ORIGINAL DESIGN

Part One: Changes already implemented:

1975: The following changes / additions to the original layout appear to have been decided by Louis Kahn during his last visit in March 1974:¹

- The Kitchen-Dining Building is detached from the School Complex and placed to the north-western end of the lake, leaving the school court open at the north-eastern end.
- A Management Development Centre has been added near the north-eastern corner of the site instead of the corner market
- A cluster of houses for Married Students is seen in the southern corner of the site; a tree-lined promenade leads down from the main road to this cluster.

1978-99: Extension of the original campus by Anant D Raje, extending Kahn's language of building into new programs. These years saw the addition of over one hundred units of staff and married student housing and three larger buildings, i.e., Students' Halls and Kitchens (1979), Management Development Centre (1989) and Ravi Mathai Centre (1989)² (Figs. 8, 9).

2001: The Gujarat Earthquake (26 January 2001) caused damage to the roof terraces of the Classroom Building, resulting in the removal of enclosing walls

¹ Ronner, H. and Jhaveri, S. (1987) Louis I. Kahn: Complete Work 1935-1974. Basel, Boston: Birkhauser, 1987. p. 232. See Image IIM 146: "Site Plan, January 2, 1975, drawn at the office of the architects B.V. Doshi and A.D. Raje (who worked continuously with Kahn as associates from the beginning of the project)."

² "In the days before his death on March 17, 1974, Kahn made sketches for two buildings for IIM – a management development centre (MDC) and a dining hall. Those sketches were the basis for the work that his close collaborator Anant Raje completed, transforming initial ideas into wonderful structures very much in keeping with Kahn's spirit. There were few people Kahn trusted as much as Raje. The MDC, in particular, is threatened by ignorance of Kahn's role in its design." See Tostões, A. (2018). 'William Whitaker Interviewed by Ana Tostões' DOCOMOMO Journal, 58(01), pp. 63-65.

and large brick arches. The height of stair towers of some Dormitory units was reduced, resulting in the loss of head room, clerestory lighting, as well as visibility from ground level.¹

2001-09: Design and construction for IIM-A's "New Campus" - the New Campus, designed by HCP Design Planning & Management Pvt. Ltd., was developed on a 39-acre site across the road forming northwest periphery of the "Old Campus". The first phase of the New Campus, completed by 2009, included teaching areas for new academic programs, students' accommodation and utility buildings (Fig. 8). Some internal changes have reportedly been carried out on the ground floor of some dormitory units to accommodate additional rooms, a bank and ATM, a dispensary and a few administrative offices.

2013: A road widening and construction of a highway flyover along the approach road (Dr. Vikram Sarabhai Marg) encroached directly on the original main entry to IIM-A. The entrance was shifted to the end of the flyover.²

2014-18: Plans for Growth of IIMA-A and Conservation of its "Heritage Buildings":

- The Master Plan for the Growth of IIM (new and old campuses): The Master Plan, prepared by HCP Design Planning & Management Pvt. Ltd., shows three development phases to be implemented over a 25-year time span. Phase One, besides completing the New Campus, indicates the demolition of two groups of low-rise housing units designed by Doshi / Raje (Fig. 12), replacing these with four 11-12 story buildings. Google Earth images show these sites have already been cleared, the demolition first having been noticed in November 2019.³
- Conservation of "Heritage Buildings": Following a workshop conducted by 'Inskip + Jenkins', Somaya & Kalappa (SNK), Conservation Architects, undertook restoration (including upgrading of interiors) of two of the "heritage buildings" designed by Louis Kahn, i.e., one of the dormitories (D15) and the Vikram Sarabhai Library. The two jobs were completed in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Restoration of the Faculty Block is in progress.

Part Two: Future Changes Planned as part of the '25-year Master Plan':

The publicly available drawings for the Phase Two and Phase Three of HCP's 25-year plan, suggest major changes to IIM-A's Old Campus:⁴

- **Phase 2** - (i) Demolition of twenty Type-3 Houses (#s 301 to 320); Raje's Kitchen and Dining Hall; Doshi -Raje's Transit Housing and additional staff housing; (ii) Addition of two 11/12 story towers and 4-6 story high apartment blocks; (iii) The main campus entrance will be realigned with addition of extensive parking areas (Fig. 13).

1 Somaya, B. (2018) 'Preservation, Restoration & Upgrade of the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad, India', *DOCOMOMO Journal*, 58(01), pp. 66-70.

2 Whitaker, W. (2021) IIM-A Chronology (unpublished)

3 The Times of India (2019) Buildings demolished were not Kahn-designed: IIM-Ahmedabad . Available at: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/buildings-demolished-were-not-kahn-designed-iim-a/> (Accessed: 02 January 2021)

4 IIM-A Master Planning, Ahmedabad 2014. Available at: <https://www.hcp.co.in/project/iim-a-master-planning?list>. (Accessed: 25 December 2020)

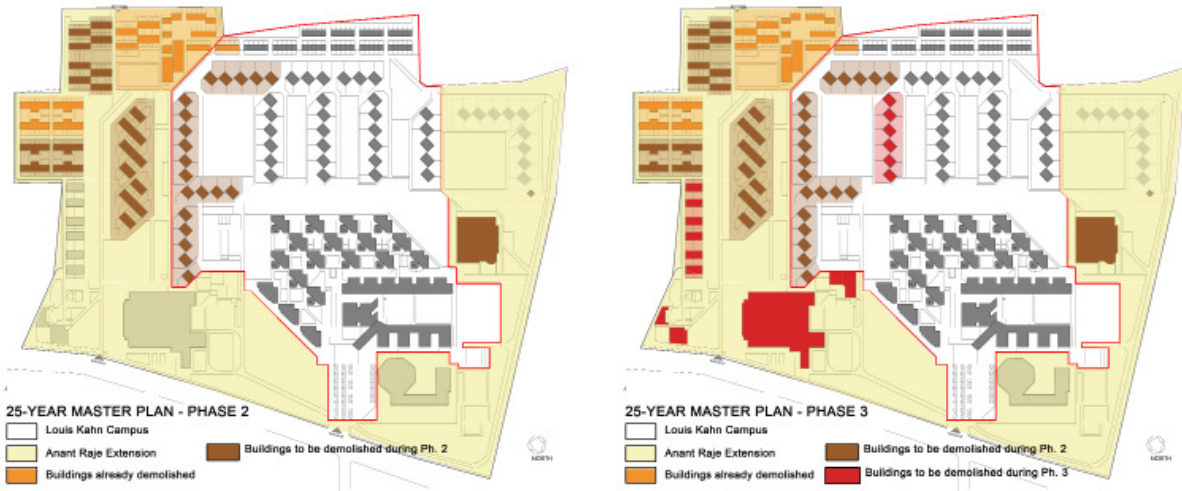


Fig. 13 & 14: Demolitions planned during Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the “25-year MAster Plan” include several units of Type 3, Type 4 and Type 5 of Kahn’s Faculty Housing, and all the housing units, the Dining Halls and MDC by Raje.

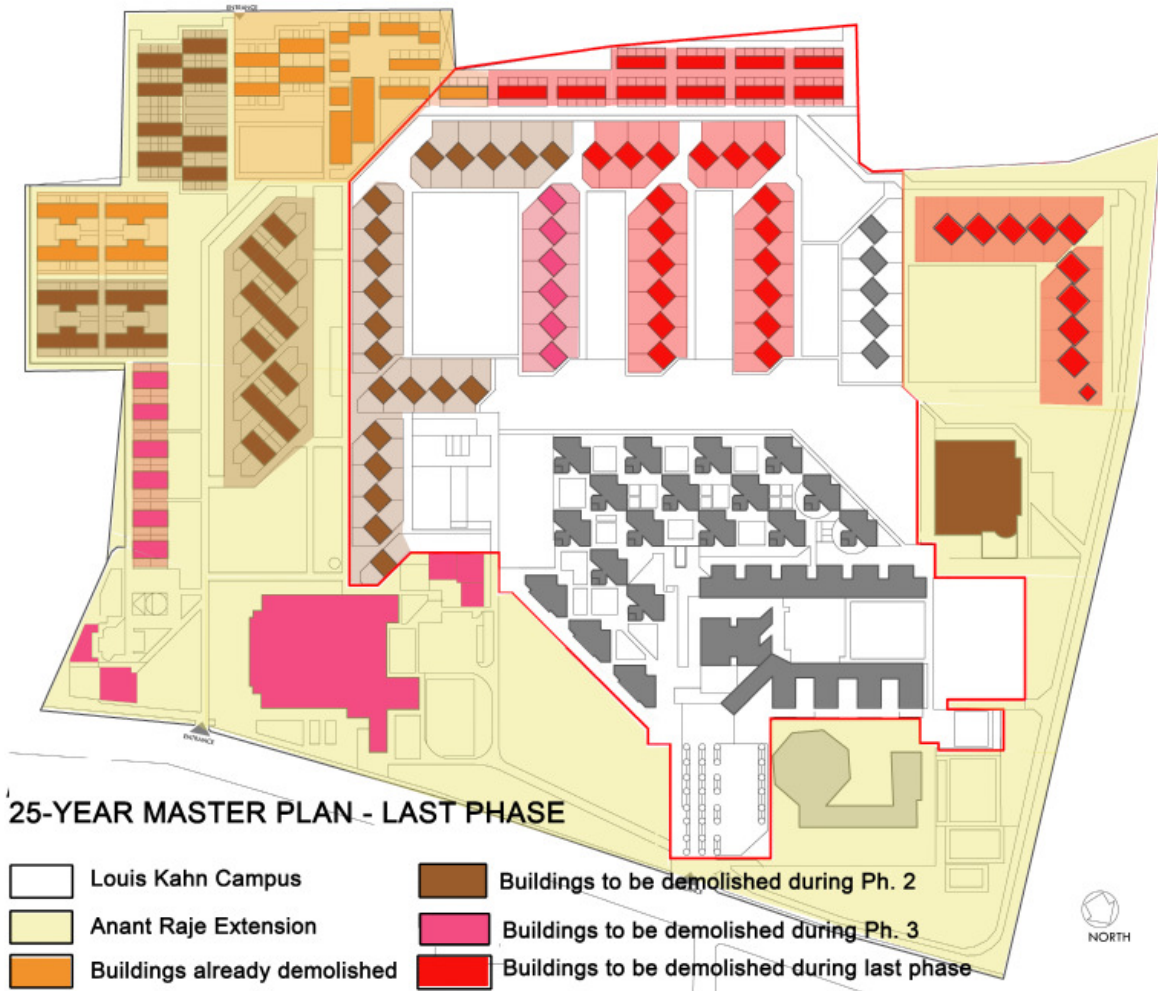


Fig. 15: The Final Phase of the “25-year Master Plan” shows demolition of all Kahn nad Raje buildings, leaving only five units of TYPE 5 Faculty Housing, the School Buildings, the Dormitories and the Ravi Mathai Centre.

- **Phase 3** - (i) Demolition of an additional twelve Kahn designed faculty housing units, Type-4 (#s 407-409, 416-424); Raje's Management Development Centre, and all of Doshi- Raje's staff housing; (ii) Addition of more multi-storied apartments, academic facilities and utilities (Fig. 14).
- **The final drawing, "Proposed Massing at 25 Years"** - (i) Except the five Type-5 units (501-505), demolition of all residential units designed by Louis Kahn (including Nos. 506-514 completed to Kahn's design after his death); (ii) Addition of around 500 apartments for faculty and staff, student dormitories accommodating a similar number of rooms, serviced apartments, as well as some academic and utility blocks (Fig.15).

Part Three: December 2020: Proposal for demolition and redesign of fourteen of the original eighteen dormitory units:

The IIM-A management floated a tender inviting Expression of Interest from architects for design of new students' housing on the land parcel currently occupied by 14 of the original 18 dormitories, announcing plans to begin construction of the first phase of the new design by mid-2021. Following widespread protest from various quarters around the world, the management withdrew the said Expression of Interest to hold further deliberations, the results of which would be announced in due course.¹

2.8 CURRENT CONDITION

All the Louis Kahn buildings of the Old Campus of IIM-A have reportedly deteriorated over the last couple of decades. However, apart from the news regarding demolition of a few blocks of faculty/staff housing, no information is available on the condition of the faculty and staff housing or any of the extension works undertaken by Anant D Raje after Kahn's demise.

- **2014-15 – Conservation Architect's Report:** A scientific and thorough condition assessment of the School Building (the library, classrooms and the faculty rooms) as well as all the 18 dormitories was carried out in 2014-15 by Somaya and Kalappa (SNK), Conservation Architects. As recorded in the two accounts published by the firm,^{2,3} the major causes of deterioration of these structures are (i) inherent defects in the original materials as well as techniques used for construction, (ii) faulty repair methods, and (iii) lack of routine maintenance. The bricks used were of low compressive strength as per present day norms and prone to efflorescence. Other causes of decay of brickwork in walls and arches are rising damp, seepage of water through damaged pointing, and absence of casing of

¹ https://www.iima.ac.in/c/document_library/Statement%20to%20Stakeholders%20regarding%20Dorms%20at%20Main%20Campus.pdf.

² Somaya, B. (2018) 'Preservation, Restoration & Upgrade of the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad, India', *DOCOMOMO Journal*, 58(01), pp. 66-70.

³ Somaya, B. et al (2020) "Managing the Twentieth-Century Modern Heritage: Conservation and Management of Louis I Kahn Buildings at Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad", *Journal of Heritage Management*, 5(1), DOI: 10.1177/2455929620924583



Fig. 16, 17, 18, 19: Instances of deterioration caused by defects of the original materials and construction, patch repair methods, and lack of routine maintenance. One can see damage due to rising damp, seepage of water through damaged roof terracing, and rusting of steel bars embedded in brickwork.

steel bars embedded in reinforced brickwork, leading to rusting of the reinforcement and cracking of brickwork (Figs. 16, 17, 18, 19). Cracked terrace slabs (due to repeated layers of waterproofing without removing the older, damaged ones), and inadequate cover for reinforcement has also resulted in rusting of reinforcement, spalling of concrete and carbonation of the slab to its full depth. Since then, the Library has been successfully conserved and the Faculty Block is undergoing necessary interventions. Only one of the eighteen dormitories (D 15) was taken up as a pilot project and subjected to architectural and structure renovation, seismic retrofit, mechanical, electrical, plumbing upgrade, and, reversal of changes in design.

- **2020 - Statement by Director, IIM-A:** A document issued by the IIM-A on 23 December 2020 in defence of their decision to demolish and rebuild fourteen of the eighteen dormitory units, however, states that “... seepage through ageing and deterioration of the exposed brick walls has resulted in large cracks in the masonry and periodical detachments of it in fragments” and that these buildings are “unsafe for living in without restoration.” It further claims that an independent structural consultant appointed by them to assess the longevity of the restored buildings has also pronounced them as unsafe as the measures adopted by the conservation architect “do not provide any significant increase in compressive strength”.¹ The statement is being contested at various fronts.

¹ Letter dated 23rd December 2020 from Errol D’ Souza, Director, IIM-A to the institute’s Alumni

3.0 DESCRIPTION (HISTORY, DESIGN INTENT, TECHNOLOGY)

3.1 CONTEXT/SETTING; SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

- **Social and Cultural Context:** Conceived in 1961, the Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad is a product of India's post-independence programs for nation-building and modernisation of its social and cultural infrastructure. The city of Ahmedabad, in particular, with several visionary and socially committed industrialists among its citizenry, provided a fertile ground for such progressive schemes. Though endowed with rich cultural traditions and historic architecture, Ahmedabad was also host to the best of Modern architecture first through Le Corbusier, and then Charles Correa and Balkrishna V Doshi. Besides the hot-arid climate of Ahmedabad, the other significant aspects that were to impact the project include the economic and technological constraints prevalent in India of the 1960s and India's ancient building traditions.
- **Physical Setting:** The selected site was located near the village of Vastrapur, approximately 8 km outside the Walled City, the traditional centre of Ahmedabad. It was planned as an integral component of an institutional zone which contains, among others, the Gujarat University campus, the Ahmedabad Textile and Industrial Research Association (ATIRA), the Physical Research Laboratories (PRL), the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the Nehru Foundation, the School of Architecture (part of the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology, CEPT) (Fig. 5).

3.2 DESIGN INTENT; PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION; FORM/FUNCTION

The Program: The IIM-A was conceived as a self-sufficient, residential campus containing all manners of facilities that its users would require. The main components of the program given to Louis Kahn in 1962 were the teaching areas (classrooms, faculty rooms and a library), a dining hall, dormitories for 300 students, and 110 housing units of various categories for the faculty, staff and 'servants' (Figs. 6, 7).

Design Intent: "It is a measure of Kahn's achievement and of his continuing influence today that the 'concept' was exactly where architecture always started for him, even if he was sufficiently flexible to allow the initial 'Form' (Kahn's term for 'type') to be modified by the exigencies of the programme."¹ While the numerous versions of the initial site plan and designs of individual components were developed over the years, a few constants expressed the fundamental determinants of Louis Kahn's 'Concept':

- The first concerns a close relationship and constant exchange between various functional components. In a departure from the then prevailing concepts of sprawling campuses with long distances and vast open spaces segregating various functional components, the IIM-A was conceived as a

¹ Frampton, K. (1994) *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd. p. 245

close-knit, single entity, in which the three main components (Classroom Building, Students' Dormitories and Faculty Housing), though part of an hierarchical order, were brought together through functional and visual linkages (Fig. 7). The underlying principle here is Kahn's preoccupation with notions of 'Extended Learning', which also reflected IIM-A's unique method of teaching. "The plan comes from my feelings of monastery. The idea of the seminar classroom and its meaning of 'To learn' extended to the dormitories comes from the Harvard Business School." ¹ Students' dormitories are, thus, closely connected to the Classroom Building through a series of arched corridors and landscaped courts, helping "students take the academic dialogue into non-academic spaces".² The desired segregation of the faculty housing from the student areas, however, seemed contrary to the concept of a close-knit unit. "The unity of the teaching building, dormitories and teachers' houses – each its own nature, yet each near the other – was the problem I gave myself..." , a problem that was resolved creatively through use of water. "The lake between student and teacher is one way of distance with little dimension." ³

- The second constant seen in Kahn's work on the IIM-A Project concerns design-sensitivity to the local site conditions. The search for the correct orientation as a response to prevailing "sun-heat", "wind", "light", "rain" and "dust" is evident even in the first few sketches of November 1962 and became the basis for the underlying geometry of the site plan as well as designs of individual buildings. "The fullness of air, so welcome, is always present as the basis of architectural shapes" and "Orientation to wind and shade from sun has given architectural elements to the composition."⁴ The second version of the site plan, in fact, was created to attain a better realization of the southwest sea breeze (besides saving many mango trees existing on the site) by turning the whole complex counterclockwise by 135 degrees.⁵
- Ultimately, almost three years after the project had begun; a third design determinant came into play. Kahn's new creative impulse was born out of the desire to engage with the locally produced brick at an elemental level, going beyond a mere adoption of indigenous techniques to invent the unique structural and visual grammar of IIM-A that is now recognised as being of outstanding global value. Throughout the project, Kahn remained committed to "a deconstruction of this historical legacy and to a reassembly of its precepts and components in accordance with the technological capacity of the epoch."⁶

1 Ronner, H. and Jhaveri, S. (1987) Louis I. Kahn: Complete Work 1935-1974. Basel, Boston: Birkhauser, 1987. p. 211

2 Cited from <http://restoration.iima.ac.in/>

3 Ronner, H. and Jhaveri, S. (1987) Louis I. Kahn: Complete Work 1935-1974. Basel, Boston: Birkhauser, 1987. p. 211. Image IIM-27

4 Ibid. p. 209. See Images IIM-4 & IIM-9

5 Ibid. P. 211. See Image IIM-26, pg 212

6 Frampton, K. (1994) Modern Architecture: A Critical History. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd.. pp. 305-6



Fig. 20 (Left): *The Louis Kahn Core*; Fig. 21 (Top Right): *The Ceremonial Entrance - Harvard Steps*;
Fig. 22 (Bottom Right): *Landscaped Courtyards between Dormitory Units*.

Physical description, Form / Function:

- **The Site Layout:** The final layout of IIM-A's original campus retained the key elements of the first plan. The rectangular School Building, the functional, the symbolic and the formal locus of the project, occupies the highest and the most visible point of the site, The eighteen dormitory units are arranged diagonally along its two edges constituted by the library on the south-east and the classrooms on the south-west, radiating out, as it were towards the less public internal reaches of the site. The L-shaped lake separates this zone from faculty/staff houses which are aligned diagonally around a series of green courts (Figs. 20, 22). A tree-shaded entrance court, near the main road, is the point of access to the School Building's central court (now Louis Kahn Plaza), the dormitory walkways and the grand flight of steps (now Harvard Steps) leading directly to the library (Fig. 21). A separate access has been provided to the faculty/staff housing from the main road. As an ensemble, IIM-A has been designed by geometrically aligning different buildings typologies and linking them with numerous courts of varied sizes. These shaded squares sprinkled across the campus evoke a sense of comfort and enable its user to transition through different spaces in a pleasurable manner.¹ The Lake, the digging of which was begun in 1969, was never completed. Though planned to create "distance with little dimension", it would not only "add to the beauty of the campus, but also keep the atmosphere cool."²

¹ Lang, J. (2002) *Concise History of Modern Architecture in India*. Delhi: Permanent Black. pp. 69-70

² Subramaniam, M. K. (1969). "The IIMA Campus". *IIMA Alumnus*. October Issue. Available at: <https://archives.iimaac.in/readinglist.html>. (Accessed on: 18 December 2020)

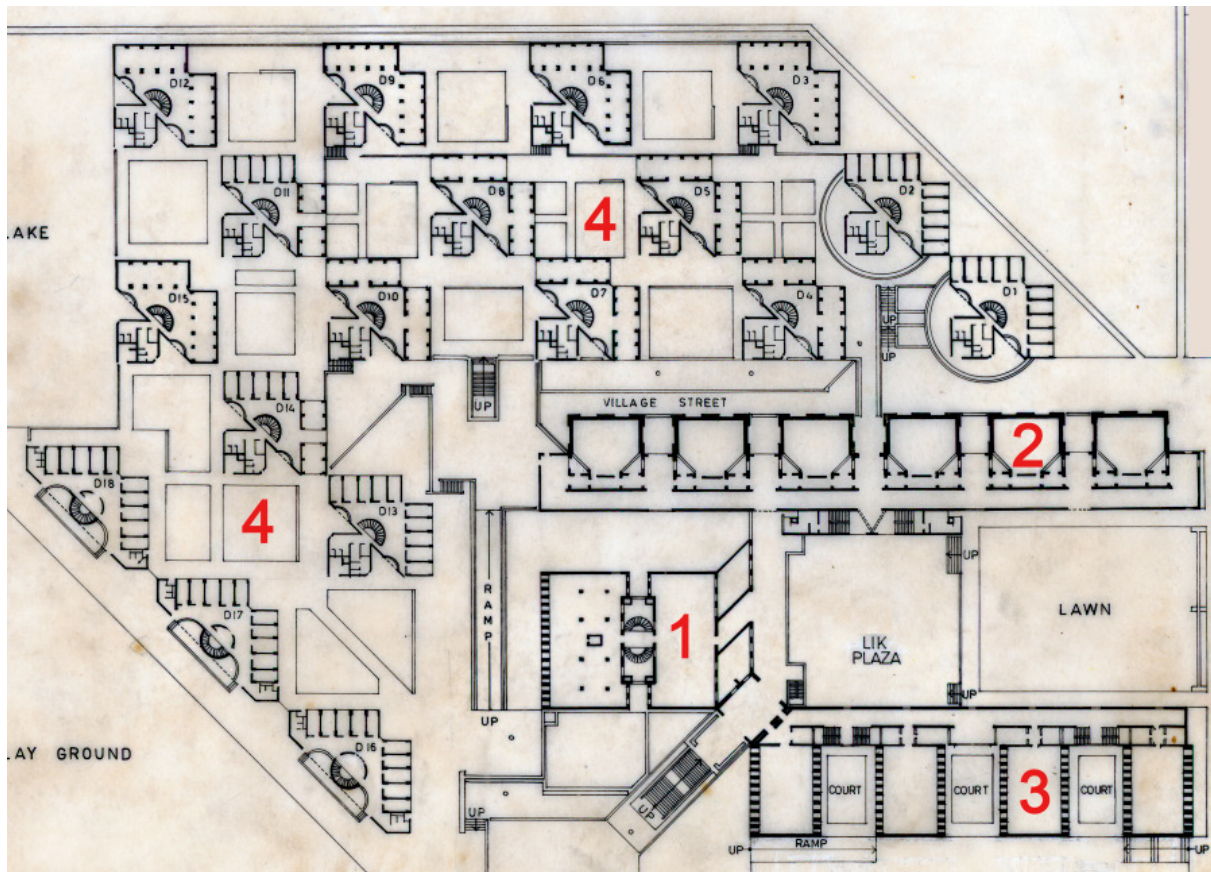


Fig. 23: The closely connected School Building and Students' Dormitories - (1) The Library, (2) Classrooms, (3) Faculty wing, (4) Students' Dormitories



Fig. 24: The Louis I Kahn Plaza, as seen from the northwest. The Library is seen in centre, with the Classroom Block on the right and the Faculty Wing on the left

- The School Building and Plaza: The most prominent element in the skyline of the campus, the School Building is built around a large central court (now the Louis Kahn Plaza, the Library), the Classroom Complex and the Faculty Blocks forming its south-east, south-west and north-east walls. The idea of closing the fourth, north-west edge by the Dining Hall-Kitchen Building was abandoned during Kahn's last visit to Ahmedabad. While the significance of the School Building lies in its totality and the manner in which it connects to the entrance court and the dormitory units, each of three built components are unique in their novel expression of the contained functions as also their structural, formal and aesthetic attributes (Figs. 23, 24).



Figs. 25, 26, 27: Views of the Library

Fig. 28: The interior of a typical Classroom

Figs. 29, 30: Views of the Faculty Wing

- The Library (now Vikram Sarabhai Library) was the most important building in this group and given a place of authority through its monumentality, complex interior spaces and daring constructions that defy all known limits of brick technology (Figs. 25, 26 & 27). Each of the Classrooms is a square with semi-circular rows of seating intended to promote and facilitate exchange between the students and the teacher (Fig. 28). The entrance foyers and the long corridor that connects these to the Library end in porches that too are lit by large oculus. All cross walls are buttressed to support the heavy load of seating, a structural technique that is shared with support systems devised for other similar situations. The Faculty Blocks comprise three large office spaces that are lit by open courts that divide them. A connecting corridor also accommodates staircases and service areas (Figs. 29 & 30). Numerous studies were made by Louis Kahn for integrating an open air performance space in the plaza design, but none could be implemented. The space is now used for large ceremonial and cultural events.
- Students' Dormitories (Fig. 23): The system of clustering of dormitories and the connecting walkways and porches was born out of the desire for "Shade", "Closeness", "Buildings hugging buildings", "a recognition of the seeking after shade".¹ And, consequently, the fundamental component of the system became an open porch. "The exterior is given to the sun and the interior is where you live and work and study. The avoidance of devices like the brise-soleil brought about the deep porch which has in

¹ Ronner, H. and Jhaveri, S. (1987) Louis I. Kahn: Complete Work 1935-1974. Basel, Boston: Birkhauser, 1987. p. 220. See Image IIM-76, pg 220

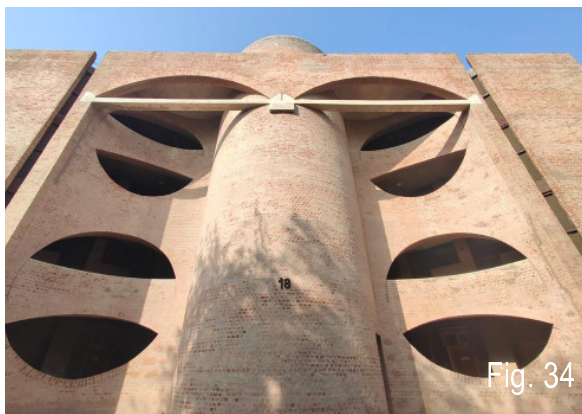
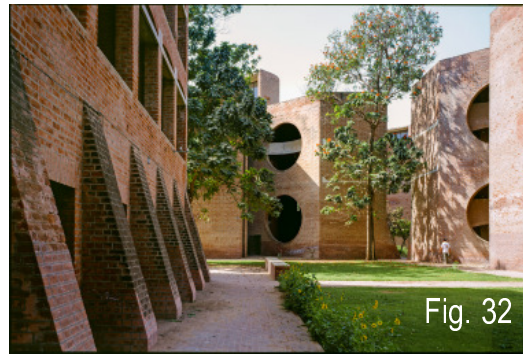


Fig. 31, 32, 33 (Above): The cluster of Dormitories for 'Unmarried Students'. Bearing walls splayed out at lower levels to become buttresses to withstand outward thrust of large span arches. Reinforced concrete ties used for segmental arches became a significant attribute of IIM-A's architectural vocabulary and aesthetic appeal.

Fig. 34 (Left): Originally designed for 'Married Students', the three dormitories at the eastern edge of the cluster have a different plan and form.

it the cool shadow" (Figs. 31, 32, 33). The initial program required two typologies. Fifteen blocks (D1 – D15) were for single students and the remaining three (D16 – D18) for married ones (Fig. 34). All units have an L-shaped arrangement, each limb with five rooms. Common service areas, staircases and a 'tea-room' could be approached from the common lounge at each floor. "In this way, corridors are avoided, and instead there are rooms or spaces for casual and seminary study. The tea-room entrance, the positioning of the stairway and the washroom, serve to protect the room from the sun and glare without obstructing the essential through breeze." Dorms were arranged in rows of three, the third dormitory in each row touching the lake accommodated a clubroom for the students (Fig. 23) - "the space of invitation vested in each house and adding to the inter-hospitality in spirit embodied in the seminar idea of exchange among students and teachers".¹ These have now been converted to rooms.

¹ Ibid. p. 222. See Image IIM-86



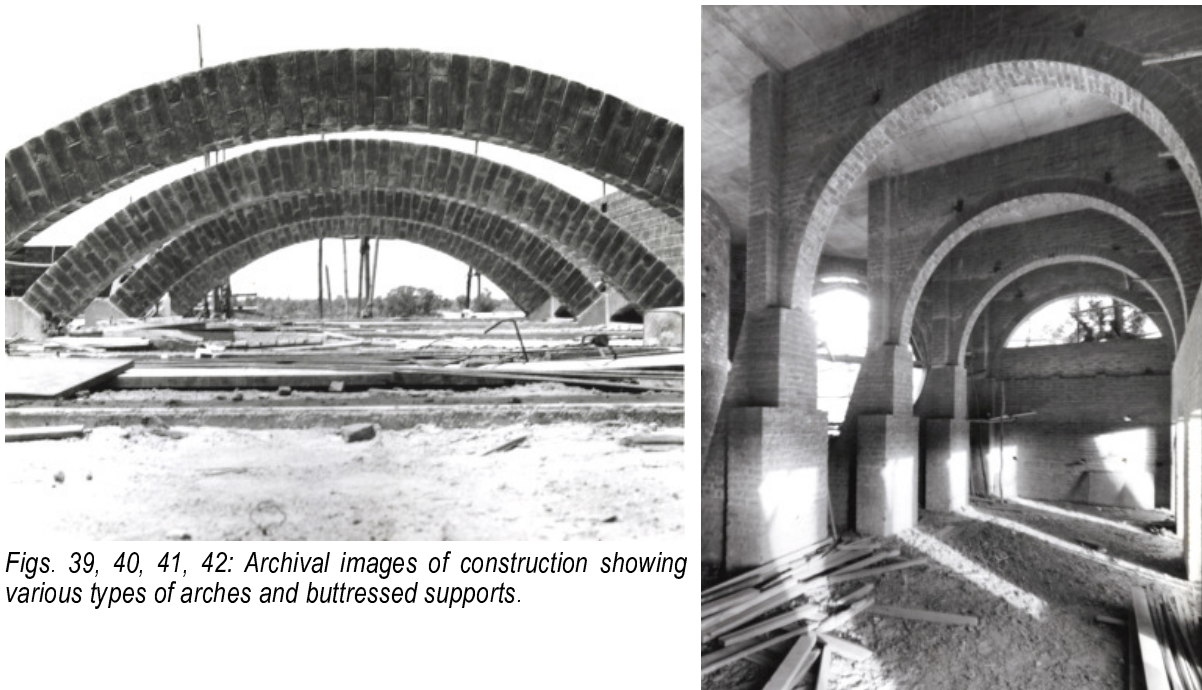
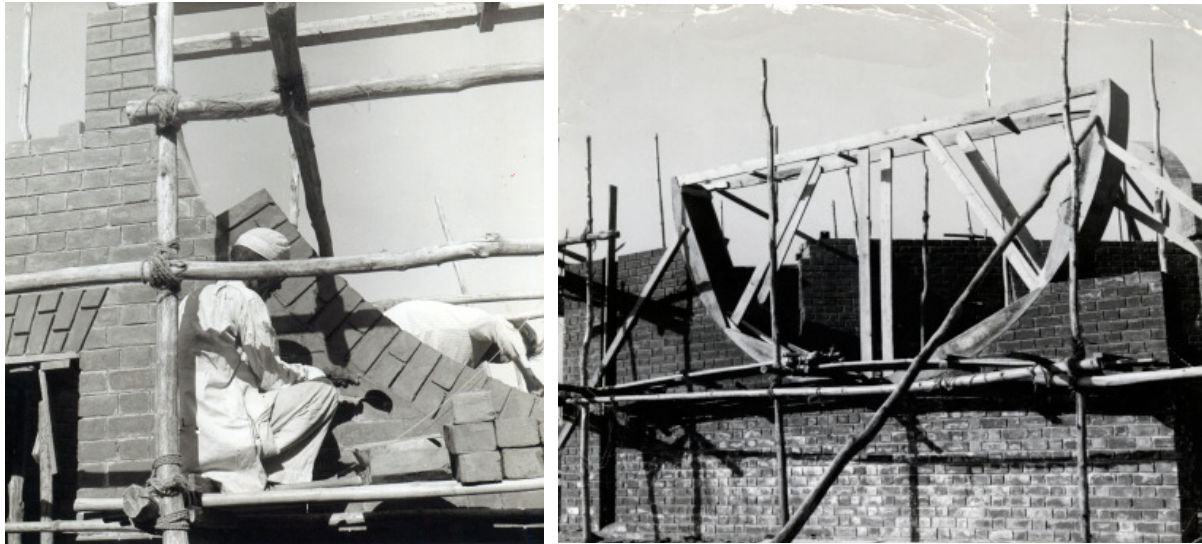
*Houses for Faculty -- Fig. 35 (Top Left): The first Type 5 House : Fig. 36 (Top Right): A row of Type 4 houses
Figs. 37, 38 (Bottom): Type 3 houses*

- Faculty and Staff Housing: Documents indicate the presence of five types of faculty and staff houses, of which four were designed and constructed during Kahn's lifetime. These include Faculty Housing, Type-5, which are two-story three-bedroom units with small open-to-sky terrace, Faculty Housing, Type-4 and Faculty Housing Type-3, both two-story, two-bedroom units with study and large open-to-sky terrace. Occupying large individual plots, the two-story faculty houses are sited diagonally around a series of open spaces (Figs. 35, 36, 37, 38). The significance of these designs lies in the climatic and structural sense embedded in their design. All units are oriented to the wind, with their walls parallel to its direction. A similar plan arrangement, based on three equal structural bays, was followed for all types. The central bay, with service spaces and the staircase, was flanked by living spaces on each side.¹ The fourth category built during this period was the Servant Quarters. Some of these, added after Kahn's death though built on his design, are now partially demolished.

3.3 CONSTRUCTION SYSTEM USED; MATERIAL / FABRIC

The built forms seen in Kahn's early sketches for IIM-A indicate the use of reinforced concrete as the main building material. Some two years later, having made the decision to replace concrete with brick; Kahn revised his design goals to build the campus exclusively in brick, recognizing the link between India's ancient monumental legacies and the realities of the local hand-manufactured bricks and labour-intensive construction.

¹ Ibid, p. 219. See images IIM-69 to IIM-72.



Figs. 39, 40, 41, 42: Archival images of construction showing various types of arches and buttressed supports.

What makes this decision historic is Kahn's vision of going beyond a mere adoption of indigenous aesthetic and generating a new vocabulary that could re-interpret tradition through technological sophistication. The pioneering designs that we see at Kahn's IIM-A, were born out of the desire to address the structural integrity of brick as a load-bearing material, a system that was applied uniformly to all buildings and loading conditions, ranging from the smallest spans of one-room houses to the the monumental form, large span interiors and huge external openings of the Library (Figs. 39 to 45). "I made all these buildings answerable to each other even though the scale of the house and the school is so different. The material of brick load-bearing walls and piers with concrete floors is retained throughout the larger spans giving rise to arches and buttresses, the more modest spaces simple slabs on walls. Consistent with the order of brick construction and the introduction of concrete,



Figs. 43, 44, 45 Archival images of construction showing various types of arches and buttressed supports.

the concrete combines with the characteristics of brick in the making of the flat arch.” “These buildings may look old fashioned. An ancient material, brick, is being used and its order respected. Concrete, a modern material, and its order is being combined with brick, formulating a composite order.”¹

*If you think of Brick, you say to Brick, ‘What do you want, Brick?’ And Brick says to you, ‘I like an Arch.’ And if you say to Brick, ‘Look, arches are expensive, and I can use a concrete lintel over you. What do you think of that, Brick?’ Brick says, ‘I like an Arch.’ And it’s important, you see, that you honor the material that you use. ... You can only do it if you glorify the brick instead of shortchanging it.*²

With the humble hand-made local brick serving as the centre of all designs, a new set of drawings began to be developed where the standard dimensions of brick and its structural characteristics determined design details.³ This motivated the on-site architects and engineers to devise several new details for segmental and flat arches, which have since then come to define the project. “In the houses, where there is not sufficient dimensional expanse to use a full arch, concrete restraining tension beams are introduced to counter the thrust of the flat arches”.⁴

The significance of Kahn’s IIM-A, therefore, can be strongly attributed to highly inventive ways of using brick. The identity of these buildings rests solely on many variations of large circular openings that were held in place through reinforced brick ring beams and the arch forms that coupled with RCC lintels to counteract outward thrust. “These buildings stretched the bounds of conventional masonry technology while they re-affirmed the timeless power of massive brick construction. Kahn’s experiments helped to promote brick to an almost exalted status in the vocabulary of the Indian architect.”⁵

1 Ronner, H. and Jhaveri, S. (1987) Louis I. Kahn: Complete Work 1935-1974. Basel, Boston: Birkhauser, 1987.. p.223. See image IIM-96

2 Kahn, Louis I. (2003). Robert C. Twombly (ed.). Louis Kahn: Essential Texts. W. W. Norton & Company. p.158.

3 Srivastava, A. (2009) Encountering materials in architectural production: the case of Kahn and brick at IIM. Ph.D Thesis. University of Adelaide, School of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Urban Design, Centre for Asian and Middle Eastern Architecture (CAMEA)

4 Ronner, H. and Jhaveri, S. (1987) Louis I. Kahn: Complete Work 1935-1974. Basel, Boston: Birkhauser, 1987. p. 219. Image IIM-74

5 Bhatt, V and Scriver, P. (1990) After the Masters: Contemporary Indian Architecture. Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd. p. 18



Fig. 46, 47: The peculiar aesthetic character of Kahn's IIM-A is derived from the play of light and shadows on its rustic brick masonry surfaces

3.4 AESTHETIC VALUE

Louis Kahn's Indian Institute of Management at Ahmedabad is considered as a highly aesthetic ensemble of spatial and structural systems, the visual significance of which is fundamentally derived from the dynamic manner in which the carefully crafted built volumes, the open areas, the landscape elements and the interior spaces are knit together. What is equally appreciated is the clean architectural expression and detailing of its individual buildings that was made possible only through use of the local humble brick. In contrast to the "heroic gesticulations of Le Corbusier's Chandigarh and Ahmedabad buildings..", the arresting but austere geometry of this urbanistic grouping of hostels and teaching blocks, is considered to offer "a more stoic ideal of monumentality ... an exploration of a universal vein of contemporary architecture that could at the same time, lay claim to region and tradition."¹

The variety of visual experiences offered by the geometrically aligned volumes and the numerous shaded courts with their plantation placed sensitively across the campus evoke "a sense of comfort and enable its user to transition through different spaces in a pleasurable manner."² The Campus also displays Louis Kahn's distinctive style that uses the play of light, achieving a timelessness and spirituality beyond mere human existence. "The appeal of the Indian Institute of Management lies in its austere monumentality... with its particular character being derived from the resolution of the inherent nature of material and construction to its logical conclusion combined with the Kahnian manner of the delineation of activities in plan."³ As William Curtis was to comment, "Kahn's use of brick at IIM was more precise, procuring vast surfaces sensitive to light, sliced in places by gaps of shadow"⁴ (Figs. 46, 47).

¹ Ibid.

² Lang, J. (2002) *Concise History of Modern Architecture in India*. Delhi: Permanent Black, pp. 69-70

³ Frampton, Kenneth and Mehrotra, Rahul (Eds.) (2000), "World Architecture 1900-2000: a Critical Mosaic. Volume 8: South Asia, New York, China Architecture and Building Press, Springer-Verlag/Wien

⁴ Curtis, W.J.R. (2012) 'Modern Architecture and the Excavation of the Past: Louis Kahn and the Indian sub-continent' in Louis Kahn, the Power of Architecture, Rotterdam: Vitra Design Museum and Netherlands Architectural Institute.

4.0 SOURCE OF ALERT

- Mario Santana Quintero, Secretary General of ICOMOS; Email: mario.santana@icomos.org
- Jack Pyburn, President, ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage (ISC20C); Email: pyburnj@gmail.com
- Kiran Joshi, Secretary General, ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage (ISC20C); Email: kiranjoshi2020@gmail.com.

4.1 GROUPS SUPPORTING ALERT AND/OR NOMINATION, CONTACTS

Please see 4.4 (Letters of Support)

4.2 GROUPS POTENTIALLY AGAINST ALERT ACTION

- a. The Director and Governing Council of the Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad
- b. HCP Design Planning & Management Pvt. Ltd.
- c. Some members of the IIMA Alumni Association
- d. Some existing users (Faculty, students, etc.)

4.3 LOCAL, REGIONAL, INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE CITATIONS

See Annex 1

4.4 LETTERS OF SUPPORT, NEWSPAPER ARTICLES, ETC.

See Annex 2

4.5 PUBLICATIONS THAT DESCRIBE THE WORK, BIBLIOGRAPHY, ETC.

See Annexe 3

4.6 TIME CONSTRAINTS FOR ADVOCACY

Immediate action

5.0 RECOMMENDED ACTION

5.1 HERITAGE ALERT: INTERNATIONAL/NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION VIA ICOMOS?

Given below is a list of international and national organizations, along with action requested from each:

A. International Organizations (for further dissemination of the HA):

- DoCoMoMo International
- The Getty Conservation Institute
- ICOMOS US
- International Union of Architects (UIA)
- World Monuments Fund

B. National & Local Organizations (With request for suspending the “25-year Master Plan” and preparing a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for IIA-M Old Campus):

- Ministry of Culture, Government of India, New Delhi
- Ministry of Human Resources Development, New Delhi,
- Chairman, Governing Council, Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad,
- Director, Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad,
- Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation
- Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), New Delhi
- INTACH Ahmedabad Chapter

5.2 LETTER (S) TO? (PROVIDE NAMES AND CONTACT INFORMATION)

A. International Organisations

- **Ms Ana Tostões, Chairperson, DoCoMoMo International**, DECivil – Room 5.0, Instituto Superior Técnico, Av. Rovisco Pais, 11049-001 Lisboa, Portugal. Email: docomomo@tecnico.ulisboa.pt
- **Mr Tim Whalen, Director, The Getty Conservation Institute**, 1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90049-1684, USA. Email: gciweb@getty.edu
- **Mr. Douglas C Comer, Ph.D., President, ICOMOS USA**, 1701 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 200, Washington DC 20006, USA. Email: president@usicomos.org
- **Mr Thomas Vonier, President, UIA**. Email: t.vonier@uia-architectes.org
- **Mr. Jonathan S. Bell, PhD., Vice President of Programs, World Monuments Fund**, Empire State Building, 350 Fifth Avenue Suite 2412, New York NY 10118, USA. Email: info@wmf.org

B. National and Local Organisations:

- **Mr. Raghvendra Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Culture**, Government of India, 502-C, Shastri Bhawan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi-110001, India. Email: secy-culture@nic.in
- **Mr. Ramesh P. Nishank, Hon'ble Education Minister**, Ministry of Human Resources Development, Shastri Bhawan, C-Wing, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi-110001, India. minister.hrd@gov.in
- **Mr. Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman, Governing Council, IIM-A**, Aditya Birla Centre, 3rd Floor, S.K. Ahire Marg, Worli, Mumbai-400 018, India. Email: chairman-iima@iima.ac.in.
- **Prof. Errol D'Souza, Director IIM-A**, Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad, Sargam Marg, Vastrapur, Ahmedabad-380015, India. Email: director@iima.ac.in.
- **Shri Mukesh Kumar, Commissioner, Amdavad Municipal Corporation**, Sardar Patel Bhavan Danapith, Ahmedabad-380001, India. Email: mc@ahmedabadcity.gov.in.
- **Lt. Gen. L K Gupta, Chairman, INTACH, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage**, 71, Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110003 India. Email: intach@intach.org
- **Shri Pavan A Bakeri, Convenor, INTACH Ahmedabad Chapter**, 13, Sadma Society, Opp Xavier's Hostel, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad- 380 009 India. Email: pavan@bakeri.com

5.3 ICOMOS NATIONAL OR SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE OR INTERNATIONAL WEBSITE UPLOAD?

Yes, upload on website of ICOMOS India, ICOMOS International, ISC20C

5.4 AFFILIATED DISTRIBUTION? (SUCH AS UIA/DOCOMOMO/TICCIH)

Yes, as detailed above

6.0 DESIRED OUTCOME

6.1 STOP WORK THAT WILL ALTER THE HERITAGE?

The demolition of the original buildings and insertion of new ones proposed under the “25-year Master Plan” by HCP Design Planning & Management Pvt. Ltd. Should be stopped till a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan, including an exercise of ‘Heritage Impact Assessment’ has been prepared. It is imperative that IIM-A revisits the said Master Plan to ensure protection and conservation of culturally significant components of the Old Campus.

6.2 STOP PERMITS THAT WOULD RESULT IN IRRETRIEVABLE LOSS OF THE HERITAGE/ STOP DEMOLITION?

Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, and/or other concerned authorities, are to be approached for revoking the approvals for the construction of new buildings.

6.3 IMPOSE MINIMUM MAINTENANCE TO STOP FURTHER DECAY PENDING CONSERVATION WORK?

IIM-A authorities to be advised to ensure action for minimum maintenance of the all concerned buildings till their full-scale restoration is taken up.

6.4 IMPOSE LEGAL PROTECTION OR IMPROVE LEGAL PROTECTION?

It is desirable that a recommendation for designating the entire Old Campus of IIM-A as a ‘Heritage Zone’ is included in the CCMP.

6.5 CONCLUSIVE SUMMARY OF DESIRED ACTION:

To sum up, the ISC20C emphasizes the critical importance of the approach adopted during decision making regarding the future of the Old Campus.

The Governing Council of IIM-A, as the steward of the unique ‘Kahn Old Campus’, must place the identification, protection, and conservation of the significant attributes of the ensemble as the fundamental objective when establishing the long-term capacity, as well as the nature of interventions required in the future. We recommend that early action should be initiated for drafting a ‘Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP)’ that while addressing the conservation of the significant attributes of the Old Campus, would take into account the pragmatic issues faced by the IIM-A management.

The CCMP does not rule out the possibility of making changes within the Kahn Old Campus. Rather, it establishes a use and design context and outlines processes for evaluating the scope and impact of desired changes, including repurposing of buildings for contemporary needs, within the historically significant Old Campus boundaries.

ANNEXURE 1

4.3 LOCAL, REGIONAL, INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE CITATIONS

- **Bhatt, V and Scriver, P.** (1990) *After the Masters: Contemporary Indian Architecture*. Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd.: “These buildings stretched the bounds of conventional masonry technology while they re-affirmed the timeless power of massive brick construction. Kahn’s experiments helped to promote brick to an almost exalted status in the vocabulary of the Indian architect.”
- **Frampton, K.** (1994) *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*. London:Thames and Hudson Ltd.: “It is a measure of Kahn’s achievement and of his continuing influence today that the ‘concept’ was exactly where architecture always started for him, even if he was sufficiently flexible to allow the initial ‘Form’ (Kahn’s term for ‘type’) to be modified by the exigencies of the programme.”
- **Curtis, W.J.R.** (1996) *Modern Architecture Since 1900*. (3rd ed.). Oxford: Phaidon Press Ltd.: “At Ahmadabad, in the Indian Institute of Management (1962), the programme was translated into a dense citadel, a weave of streets, squares, and transitional spaces. The dormitories of the Institute were laid out in diagonal flotillas to catch the prevailing winds.”
- **Frampton, K. and Mehrotra, R.** (Eds.) (2000), *World Architecture 1900-2000: A Critical Mosaic - Volume 8: South Asia*. New York: Springer-Verlag/Wien: “The appeal of the Indian Institute of Management lies in its austere monumentality... with its particular character being derived from the resolution of the inherent nature of material and construction to its logical conclusion combined with the Kahnian manner of the delineation of activities in plan.”
- **Lang, J.** (2002) *Concise History of Modern Architecture in India*. Delhi: Permanent Black: “Kahn, like Le Corbusier, had a formal architectural vocabulary that was attractive to and emulated by many architects. His use of scale showed architects that one did not have to be monumental to be seen. What Kahn does is to explore the use of brick, a familiar material to Indian builders, in his South Asian work. His use of load bearing exposed brick construction and the use of arches and circular openings became part of the structural and aesthetic vocabulary of later architects of the subcontinent.”
- **Spanjers, K.** (2009) *US DOCOMOMO Newsletter* (Spring 2009): “The Indian Institute of Management is, or should be, among Louis Kahn’s master works. Designed between 1962 and his death in 1974 the extensive campus complex combines all the characteristic elements that make Kahn’s work unique. Vastly monumental, yet heart-warmingly human in scale the IIM is a feast of light and shade, vistas and views, connections and transitions. The general plan shows a strict order in functional hierarchy with matching façade expression”.
- **Rana, N.** (2011). “At IIM Ahmedabad, Dorms Double as Social Hubs” *DNA India*. Available at: <https://www.dnaindia.com/india/>. (Accessed on 30 December 2020): “A study done by Arvind Shatdal, a doctoral student on “Dorm Spaces and Sociability”. states that dorm residents enter social space the moment they leave

the room. For his study, Shatdal identified dorm 14 in old campus and dorm 20 in new campus to interact with dorm residents and students of IIMA. The paper considers three aspects namely, life in the dorm, physical artifacts and events at the dorms which are used for socializing.”

- **Wainwright, O.** (2013), 'The world's best student housing: the top 10 architecture projects'. The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/artdesign/architectre-design-blog/>. (Accessed: 02 January 2021): “Indian Institute of Management dormitories, Ahmedabad, by Louis Kahn, IIM, Ahmedabad, India, 1962–74: Marching like a line of grain silos along the edge of Louis Kahn’s IIM campus in Ahmedabad, the monumental forms of the student dormitories are characterised by rows of cylindrical stair towers and giant circular openings punched through the walls, braced by big concrete beams. Conceived as a dense weave of open and closed spaces, inspired by traditional Indian urban patterns, the campus follows a monastic plan with individual cells linked by cloisters and walkways, designed to encourage chance encounters. The dormitory organisation reinvents the idea of the Oxbridge staircase, with rooms positioned either side of the silo stair tower at various levels, while generous landings are big enough to allow informal teaching and studying in small groups”.
- **Tostões, A.** (2018). “William Whitaker Interviewed by Ana Tostões” DOCOMOMO Journal (Louis I. Kahn: The Permanence). 58(1). “WW: It is the most complete campus in Kahn’s work: the embodiment of his notion of “school” where places beyond the classroom – where students live and where the informal aspect of education happens – is beautifully expressed in the landscape, in the buildings and in the relationships in between... Kahn integrated an area for faculty housing that encompasses about 2/3 of his site plan. These are modest structures of brick with deep porches, with provisions in the site plan allowing for privacy and garden spaces. There is an attitude that these structures no longer fulfil the expectations faculty and should be replaced by high-rise tower structures. That would be a shame. Positive steps have been taken by the administration at IIM towards heritage conservation. [...] But their approach is has been piecemeal. No assessment has been made of the significance of the whole and their process lacks transparency.[...] Understanding the history, how the buildings have changed over time, and establishing policies that protect heritage values, can be a positive framework for the future.”
- **Curtis, W.J.R.** (2012) ‘Modern Architecture and the Excavation of the Past: Louis Kahn and the Indian sub-continent’ in Louis Kahn, the Power of Architecture, Rotterdam: Vitra Design Museum and Netherlands Architectural Institute. “Several later schools of thought have tried to “claim” Kahn as their chief mentor, from post-modernists to minimalists, but his architecture escapes these easy categories, as it touches much deeper, not to say archetypal, levels in experience. At times he even transcended the limits of Western architectural discourse, as when giving shape to the social and political aspirations of nations newly liberated from imperialism on the Indian sub-continent. With both the National Assembly Complex in Dacca, East Pakistan (now Dhaka, Bangladesh (1962-1983)), and the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad (1962-1974), Kahn penetrated the substructures of the past and transformed them through his usual abstraction into resonant

emblems of modernity. To later architects seeking touchstones in tradition and preoccupied with questions of post-colonial identity, his solutions revealed new ways of synthesizing the new and the old, the local and the universal. [...] Kahn succeeded in reconciling bold modern geometry with local craftsmanship, and in the process contributed to a generic style used by others with varying degrees of intensity. [...] In India and Bangladesh, Kahn opened the way to fresh readings of the past for a post-colonial generation seeking a return to core values in tradition, which they hoped to transform into a modern architecture adapted to local contexts and climates

- **Raje, A.D.** (1987) 'Continuation of a Language' in Raje, S and Raje, A. (2012) *Anant Raje Architect: Works 1971–2009*, New Delhi, Tulika: "Kahn raised the intellectual level to a spiritual level invoking humanistic ideals in pursuit of timeless architectural solutions. His instinct for new technology combined with abstract visual language and learning from the lessons of history gave a new meaning and purpose to architecture. . . . The nature of the material that governed the construction in brick generated arches, pilasters, buttresses. . . . Walls brought about a composite order with concrete for frames and restraining members used for ties—a new architectural language that recognized craftsmanship . . . This language instantly made connection with historical places such as Mandu, Golconda, Bider, Bijapur on the Deccan plateau in central India where the Sultanates built some of the most magnificent buildings in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries
 - **Curtis, W.J.R.** (2021) 'Preserving the Past for the Future'. *The Indian Express* (Online) Available at: <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/iima-dormitories-louis-i-kahn-architectural-heritage-7129215/> (Accessed on: January 05, 2021): "The plan of the campus at IIM reveals Kahn's prodigious skill in weaving together solids and voids, rectangles and triangles, orthogonal and diagonal geometries. It is like a map of human relationships, an idealization of the human interchange of knowledge in an institution of learning."
-

ANNEXURE 2

4.4 LETTERS OF SUPPORT, NEWSPAPER ARTICLES, ETC.

Letters of Support (Attached at the end of this document):

1. Family of Louis I Kahn - Letter 1 (December 22, 2020)
2. Family of Louis I Kahn - Letter 2 (December 30, 2020)
3. Family of Louis I Kahn - Letter 3 (January 23, 2020)
4. Family of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, Founder of IIM-A
5. Balkrishna V Doshi, Kahn's associate for IIM-A Project
6. Family of Anant D Raje, Kahn's associate for IIM-A Project
7. President, ICOMOS India
8. President, ICOMOS Ireland NSC on Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change
9. William J R Curtis - Letter 1 (December 17, 2020)
10. William J R Curtis - Letter 2 (December 20/21, 2020)
11. William J R Curtis - Letter 3 (January 12, 2021)

Newspaper Articles expressing support:

- December 23, 2020, Architectural Record, William J R Curtis, Buildings in Louis Kahn's Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad Set to Be Demolished, https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/14935-buildings-in-louis-kahns-indian-institute-of-management-in-ahmedabad-set-to-be-demolished?oly_enc_id=52121755298917J
- December 24, 2020, Architectural Digest, <https://www.architecturaldigest.in/content/dorms-iconic-iim-ahmedabad-campus-face-demolition/#s-cust0>
- December 25, 2020, Ahmedabad Mirror, William J R Curtis, It's cultural vandalism of an architectural masterpiece. Stop it: <https://ahmedabadmirror.indiatimes.com/ahmedabad/others/its-cultural-vandalism-of-an-architectural-masterpiece-stop-it-/articleshow/79946714.cms>
- December 25, 2020, The Hindustan Times, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/education/iim-ahmedabad-to-raze-14-unsafe-dormitories-designed-by-louis-kahn/story-wLld4DFFz1Rwce3Vj4vZYP.html>
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- December 26, 2020, The Architectural Review, William J R Curtis, Outrage: Louis Kahn's dormitories face demolition, <https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/>

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- January 01, 2021, The Indian Express, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/architecture-body-urges-iim-a-to-reconsider-demolition-plan-7128297/lite/>
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- January 3, 2021, designboom| Kate Barandy| louis kahn's family speaks out following continued plans to demolish historic dorms in india
- January 4, 2021, The New York Times | Matt Shaw| Print Edition Louis Kahn-Designed Dorms in India May Be Razed
- January 4, 2021, Architectural Digest | Tim Nelson| Architecture Community Rallies to Save Louis Kahn–Designed Dorms in India From Demolition
- January 4, 2021, Helsingin Sanomat | Aino Frilander HS| Arkkitehti Louis KahninmerkittävääkampuskohdettaIntianAhmedabadissauhkaapurkutuomio
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- January 6, 2021, Ahmedabad Mirror, Niyati Rana, 'Declare Kahn's Buildings Heritage', Available at: https://www.google.com/amp/s/ahmedabadmirror.indiatimes.com/ahmedabad/others/declare-kahns-buildings-heritage/amp_articleshow/80124650.cms
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ANNEXURE 3

4.5 PUBLICATIONS THAT DESCRIBE THE WORK/PLACE, BIBLIOGRAPHY, ETC.

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 - <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/vs-library-opened-at-iim-a/articleshow/68365911.cms>
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December 22, 2020

Professor Errol D'Souza
Director
Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad

Dear Errol,

We hope this letter finds you well during this difficult period for the world. At this time, we take heart in the values that bring us together and for the good work that continues—despite the pandemic. The Kahn family has been particularly grateful for the restoration you have been doing with Somaya & Kalappa Consultants of our father's architecture at IIM Ahmedabad.

The work completed to date has been exemplary, and we were thrilled to hear that the restoration of the Vikram Sarabhai Library received a well-deserved UNESCO Asia-Pacific Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation in 2019. We were also very encouraged by the successful renovation of dormitory D-15 as a first step in carrying out your stated plan to renovate all 18 dormitory buildings in addition to the Louis Kahn Plaza and the buildings flanking it.

Imagine our shock and dismay upon hearing from multiple sources that this stated conservation plan had been abandoned and an EOI issued for the demolition of the 18 dormitories, to be replaced by new buildings. The buildings in question are the heart of our father's universally acknowledged masterpiece at IIMA. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to reconsider this decision.

Not only would the destruction of the dormitories be a disaster for our father's built legacy and for the preservation of modern architecture in India, but we are convinced that it would also spell serious trouble for IIMA in general. To continue on this course will unleash powerful reactions from many quarters—not just from architects, but also from IIM alumni and leaders of culture, business, and industry.

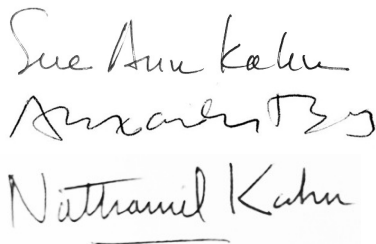
We were pleased to meet you at the University of Pennsylvania in the summer of 2018. We greatly enjoyed the meal we had together and the tour of the newly renovated and repurposed Richards Building. As you recall, the purpose of the visit to Richards was to see firsthand how a great Kahn building could be reimagined to suit changing needs. We might add that the Richards Building was also at one time in peril of demolition. It is now considered a very useful structure and a desirable address on campus.

At the time of your visit, you agreed to keep us apprised of progress at IIMA, and clearly made us all feel that you were interested in our assistance in thinking about the future of the Kahn buildings. You also indicated that you were committed to preserving, at the very *least*, the areas designated by the conservation plan, which included the 18 dormitories. We remain ready to help, and we ask that you please engage with us at this critical time.

The Kahn dormitory buildings are magnificent works of art in their own right. There could be many ways to reimagine their uses if you are open to exploring the possibilities. For example, they might not all have to remain as dormitories. The exterior walls are loadbearing, and interiors could be sensitively reworked to suit alternative needs and uses.

Errol, we feel you are a person of integrity. You agreed to continue a dialogue about our father's great work in Ahmedabad. Please reconsider this precipitous decision. Allow us the opportunity to speak with you and the IIMA Board, so that options can be explored and this impending disaster can be averted.

Respectfully,

The image shows three handwritten signatures in cursive script. The first signature is 'Sue Ann Kahn', the second is 'Alexandra Tyng', and the third is 'Nathaniel Kahn'. Each signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Sue Ann Kahn
Alexandra Tyng
Nathaniel Kahn

December 30, 2020

Professor Errol D'Souza
Director
Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad

Dear Errol,

Thank you for your response to our letter of December 22nd.

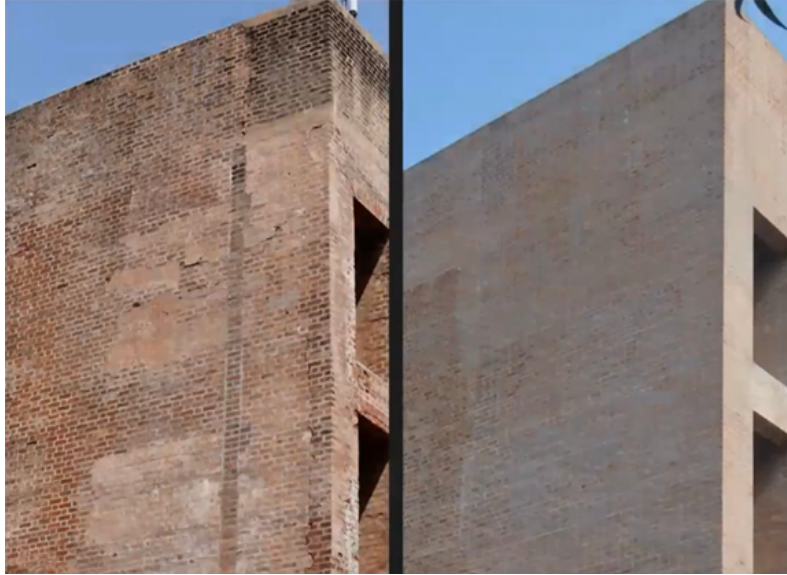
With all due respect, we find the arguments for demolition of the dormitories at IIMA, put forward in your letter to the alumni and in your response to us, to be illogical and misleading. You attempt to make the case that the dormitories are a lost cause, yet you have already restored one of the dorms (D-15) and have announced intentions to restore three more. This is a contradictory position. Additionally, you cite that you had an independent technical assessment done regarding seismic resistance. That report should be made public. Did your excellent restoration team—a team that includes an internationally recognized seismic expert from IIT Madras and that recently won a UNESCO award for their work on IIMA's library—respond to that report? If so, it would be very helpful to make that response public as well.

The photographs you show of the dorms in your letter to the alumni are clearly chosen to highlight problem areas, but these are exactly the kinds of conditions that were encountered and already remedied in D-15 and in the library. In fact, the first photo you show in your letter to the IIMA alumni has the number "16" above the lintel. Dormitory 16 is one of the three additional buildings that you indicate you plan to restore. Therefore, we already know that the problems illustrated can be fixed. You also take issue with the quality of the bricks used in the original construction. **But these are the same bricks used in the library**, and very effective measures have been developed by your restoration team to deal with the various brick-related challenges encountered.

Why not celebrate the clear success of IIMA's conservation efforts to date by sharing photographs of the restored Vikram Sarabhai Library and dormitory D-15? Below are a few screenshots from last month's public lecture at CEPT given by Brinda Somaya, the principal in your restoration team of Somaya & Kalappa Consultants. These before and after shots clearly show the exemplary restoration of both the library and dormitory D-15.



Vikram Sarabhai Library, showing brick restoration. Note: The same bricks are used in the dormitories



Vikram Sarabhai Library corner before and after brick restoration



The completed civic and structural restoration of dormitory D-15

We, and indeed many others worldwide, find it confounding that IIMA would take such a radical course of action to destroy its heritage if the buildings can be restored successfully. If you need more student living spaces, as you indicate in your EOI, you are already building a new campus that can address that. If the problem is money, please just say so. In addition to the many IIM graduates that revere the Kahn buildings, there are organizations and individuals the world over who support the cause of preserving great architecture. If you appeal to them with a clear commitment to conservation and restoration, they can assist you.

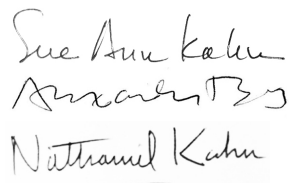
There is one point from our initial letter to you that we must clarify: the option of making sensitive adjustments to the dormitory interiors to suit changing needs is in no way the same as tearing the buildings down and constructing something else on the same footprint. Please do not attempt to twist the meaning of what we wrote to you. You cannot retain the “grammar” of our father’s buildings if you destroy them. Period. In a recent statement to the press you indicate that adjustment of interior spaces in the Kahn dorm buildings is problematic. But has your experienced conservation team actually studied its feasibility? If so, we request that this study be made public.

It is clear to us that the conservation process at IIMA is going well. The library restoration has won a UNESCO Award. The team is continuing their work restoring the Louis Kahn Plaza and the faculty and classroom buildings flanking it. The pilot restoration of dormitory D-15 is nearly completed. There are 17 more dormitories to go, and most of them are in better shape to start with than D-15. If adjustments and refinements need to be made along the way as you restore the dormitories, that is to be expected.

When we met you in Philadelphia in 2018, you promised to keep us apprised of the progress on your plan to conserve and restore our father’s iconic architecture. Yet you have never once reached out to us. You indicate in your letter to the alumni that you had many meetings before making the extremely serious decision to destroy the dormitories, which are the heart of Kahn’s design for your campus. But we—and the entire international community, as well as many connected with IIMA directly—seem to have been kept in the dark about your extremely consequential deliberations.

We implore you to reconsider this calamitous and irreversible decision. There are many people and organizations throughout India and the world ready to help you resolve this in a way that is beneficial to IIMA, and that also preserves the timeless work of architecture in your care. Please make use of the resources available to you. We are eager to speak directly with you and the IIMA Board. Will you please convene a meeting with us as soon as possible?

Respectfully,

Handwritten signatures of Sue Ann Kahn, Alexandra Tyng, and Nathaniel Kahn.

Sue Ann Kahn
Alexandra Tyng
Nathaniel Kahn

January 23, 2021

President
ICOMOS

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to support an ICOMOS Heritage Alert for our father Louis Kahn's "old campus" at the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad, India (IIM-A). It is our hope that this alert will encourage the board of IIM-A and its chairman, Mr. Kumar Birla, to undertake the creation of a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan. This plan would become the basis for all decisions affecting the Kahn campus in the future.

We have been concerned about our father's work at IIM-A for some time. The buildings—which are universally revered icons of modern architecture—have not been well maintained, as all buildings must be to insure longevity and ongoing usefulness. This concern turned to alarm in 2015 when we learned of plans to raze faculty housing units, which form a key element in Kahn's master plan for the original 65-acre site. We expressed these concerns and in 2018 we were visited in Philadelphia by IIM-A's director Professor Errol D'Souza. D'Souza assured us of IIM-A's commitment to preserving the Kahn campus and promised to consult with us on any plans that would affect it. We were encouraged by this, and by the engagement of an excellent Indian conservation firm, SNK Consultants, led by the highly respected architect Brinda Somaya, to oversee conservation work on a phased basis.

By all accounts, the conservation work was going extremely well—even winning a UNESCO award for the restoration of the Vikram Sarabhai Library. However, in December 2020 we were shocked to learn that IIM-A had taken the catastrophic decision to level most of the 18 dormitory buildings—which are the very heart of our father's work—and to replace them with higher density structures. An international outcry swiftly followed and mercifully, IIM-A paused plans for demolition and decided to re-examine the issue. While we are grateful for this pause, we are not at all assured that the stay of demolition will be permanent. If Louis Kahn's great work in Ahmedabad is to survive, steps must be taken immediately to protect it.

Our father worked on planning and building the campus at IIM-A, with associates in India, from 1962 until his death in 1974. He was devoted to the project and proceeded in spite of many challenges, including lack of contracts and insufficient funding. Our father came to Ahmedabad as a teacher, but he also became a student of India—its history, its art and ideas, its architecture, its people. He developed at IIM-A a great "city of learning," in the belief that this new institution would help create a better future for the students who would go there and for India itself. And it has done so: graduates of IIM-A have gone on to great success on the world stage and Kahn's architecture has become a symbol and signature of the institution. The campus is visited by people from around the globe and its forms, spaces, and solutions have inspired many Indian architects working today.

The entire Kahn campus is a functioning work of art. From the faculty housing to the dormitories, to the classroom and faculty office blocks, to the plaza, the library, the landscape elements and the buildings completed after Kahn's death by Anant Raje—all of these components work together to create *a single entity*. To lose any one part is to diminish the whole. It is important to note, that while Kahn designed a number of campuses in his celebrated career, IIM-A is the *only* fully realized Kahn campus existing in the world.

We have recently seen the 25-year master plan for IIM-A developed by HCP Design, Planning and Management. This plan was apparently developed to guide IIM-A as it expands, providing new facilities and amenities. We fully understand the need for IIM-A to grow, however we find this new master plan profoundly lacking in an understanding of the logic and values of the Kahn "old campus": The plan calls for encroachment on Kahn's work from multiple angles. It arbitrarily preserves some buildings while destroying others. It does not take into account Kahn's landscape planning, which gives the work perspective and orchestrates vistas, entrances and approaches. It does not respect the values of the buildings completed after Kahn's death—but following his layouts—by Anant Raje.

Putting aside for a moment the immediate need to save the Kahn dormitories and other structures from the wrecking ball, the HCP plan, if implemented, will do irreparable damage to the overall composition, value and usefulness of the Kahn "old campus." Once part of this composition is lost, or insensitively encroached upon, it will be forever diminished in power—like a broken sculpture, it will remain only as a fragment, rather than a total work of art.

Institutional progress and preservation of heritage do NOT have to be in conflict. They can coexist. Balancing these values is a challenge faced by institutions the world over and with careful planning, great success can be achieved. We have seen examples of this involving Kahn buildings at Yale University and the University of Pennsylvania. At Penn, Kahn's Richards Building was entirely repurposed to suit evolving needs and is now one of the most desirable addresses on the university campus.

In the case of both Yale and Penn, the successful, highly celebrated conservation work was guided by a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan, created in a transparent and thoroughly researched process by an informed group of professionals in consultation with various stakeholders. We sincerely hope IIM-A will follow in the footsteps of other enlightened institutions and will pursue the creation of a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for the Kahn campus.

To be clear, Mr. Birla and his board are to be commended for stepping back from the course of action that would have destroyed irreplaceable works of world and Indian architectural heritage. We urge them now to take the following steps before proceeding with any plans that will affect the Kahn campus further.

- Recognize the Kahn campus as a single entity, not merely a collection of buildings.
- Suspend any changes to the Kahn campus, including demolition indicated on the 25-year HCP master plan.

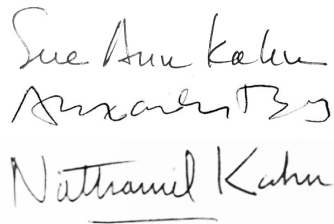
•Stabilize and maintain all buildings on the Kahn campus, so that further degradation does not occur.

• Continue the ongoing and planned conservation work with SNK Consultants.

• Develop a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for the entire Kahn “old campus.” The plan should be developed with full transparency to stakeholders and with meaningful participation of the Kahn Archives at University of Pennsylvania, the current conservation architects (whose extensive on-site experience offers essential insights) and internationally respected individuals and organizations such as the Getty Conservation Institute.

We support all efforts aimed at preserving the Kahn campus at the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad in its entirety. It is not too late to turn this difficult situation around. If Mr. Birla and the board of IIM-A agree to develop and implement a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan, the Kahn campus can be preserved and its timeless magic can continue to serve and inspire students, faculty, staff and visitors long into the future. These steps, if taken by IIM-A, will be celebrated the world over.

Respectfully,

The image shows three handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is 'Sue Ann Kahn', the second is 'Alexandra Tyng', and the third is 'Nathaniel Kahn' with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Sue Ann Kahn
Alexandra Tyng
Nathaniel Kahn

cc: Mr. Kumar Birla

16/01/2021

To ICOMOS

Dear Heritage Conservationists,

My father, Vikram Sarabhai was the founder of the Ahmedabad Indian Institute of Management and the one who invited Louis Kahn to design it. I have childhood memories of their meetings at our home. Many years later I was a student there and the majesty of the architecture was a major factor of our time there.

The news of the demonization of the dormitories is shocking. All of us who have a deep connection to every arch and brick implore you to intervene to help us save and retrofit these magnificent buildings.

Sincerely,



Dr Mallika Sarabhai
Director
Darpana
Ahmedabad

BALKRISHNA V. DOSHI

Architect Planner

December 31, 2020

Mr. Kumar Mangalam Birla
Chairman
Governing Council,
Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad
Ahmedabad

Dear Mr Birla,

Though we have never had occasion to meet, I have heard much about you and am sure that you with your wisdom will lead the IIM Ahmedabad out of the quandary that they have created for themselves.

By way of introduction, I am the person who invited Louis Kahn to take up this project in 1962, which was initially commissioned to me by Vikram Sarabhai and Kasturbhai Lalbhai. I don't know if you are aware that Louis Kahn spent 12 years of his life working on this most significant project, without an agreement, without any payment except his travel, purely on faith. I must also mention that the last visit before Kahn's untimely demise in 1974 was here to the IIM site. As a matter of fact, he had dinner at our home before he left on the fateful flight never to return. As the last person around to keep the conscience of that time I feel, I must share with you the beginnings of this saga for you to fully appreciate the significance of this great campus.

The 1960s was a period in India very similar in spirit to the Renaissance in Europe. Pt Nehru and others planned and commissioned many scientific, cultural and educational institutions, because they wanted India to be in the forefront of the world. Amongst these pioneering stalwarts was my friend the visionary Vikram Sarabhai. He talked to me about an Institute of Management in Ahmedabad like the one at Harvard - "It should not only be world class but historical, it should be the most significant place to study" he said. I recommended Louis Kahn to him. Kahn was persuaded because he was inspired to take up the commission for two reasons. One was the presence of working where Le Corbusier had built four historic buildings and whom he revered as a guru, and the other was to explore a completely unique, new way of making a campus, inspired by many historical precedents. He wanted to demonstrate through the ideals of architecture a way of life for the students much like the University of Virginia campus built by Thomas Jefferson.

With this in mind he invented, conceived and planned the campus. He said in India we must do something unique, that is the time I showed him some photographs of Mandu, he was quite surprised at the many similarities between his conception and Mandu. More so, because he had never been there. What makes the IIM campus

contd...2

BALKRISHNA V. DOSHI

Architect Planner

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unique is the way he has used the local brick and how he developed such a variety of expressions with this very ordinary material. Very rarely do we see such a powerful fusion of architectural presence and excellence in learning and moving through, as in this campus.

It is a well known fact that our environment and our habitat have a significant influence upon our ways of dealing with the world and our behavior. I do not in any way underestimate the role of the faculty that the students benefitted from but I'm sure you appreciate that the many illustrious alumni that IIM has produced have also benefitted from the time that they spent in these hallowed precincts. The scale of the place, the intimacy of its many courts for casual encounters, the silence of the buildings and the contemplation they bring have all influenced their hearts and minds.

A week ago, I was aghast to learn that IIM Ahmedabad had issued an EOI to demolish the 18 dormitories designed by Louis Kahn and replace their footprint with a greater number of rooms and of larger size than the original. As far as I was concerned, the work of renovation and conservation of these dormitories had been entrusted some years ago in the able hands of a very competent architectural practice namely Somaya & Kalappa (SNK).

I have seen the renovation work they have done on the Vikram Sarabhai Library and I had commented upon seeing it that it now "looked as good as new". I was very pleased that the long due renovation work on the Louis Kahn campus was now moving ahead slowly but surely. As you are aware they were honoured by a UNESCO heritage award for their work. They have also successfully renovated one of the most dilapidated dorms which I understand has also been appreciated by many experts.

You will thus understand my shock on hearing about the said EOI which says that renovation on Dorm D15 was not satisfactory. It ascribes no details of why it has failed. Further, it states the "limited life of expensive restoration" as one of the many causes to finally decide the demolition of all the dormitories. There are many reasons vaguely alluding to structural safety, lack of availability of skilled contractors etc. However, without access to the reports by the experts, which I'm sure the IIM has, it is difficult to assess the validity of these statements. Sharing this information transparently with the community would go a long way in informed decision making and assuage many fears and concerns raised. I say this with some authority as I have had a conversation with the internationally renowned structural heritage expert from IIT Chennai who has been involved with the restoration and conservation effort and he assured me that the structural safety issues being raised are unfounded.

I am certain that the technical means to overcome the challenges of safety and usability issues exist as more challenging situations worldwide have been overcome. I am also sure that the present team of architects already on board - SNK if asked,

contd...3

BALKRISHNA V. DOSHI

Architect Planner

-: 3 :-

can address all of these. The EOI reflects very poorly on your very illustrious institution and I believe the historically right direction would be to gather the expertise, technical means and financial means to renew and restore the dormitories in their entirety.

I urge you to reconsider your plans and avert the irreparable harm the demolition of the dormitories would cause, not only to the IIM A's internationally celebrated campus but also to your institution's well deserved reputation as a custodian of modern architecture and the heritage of humanity. In the end I can only say that if the IIM management feels it is beyond their ability to restore these very unique and culturally significant buildings then perhaps they should hand them over to the ASI which has great expertise in managing monuments that are much older.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,



Balkrishna Doshi

CC:

Dr. Errol D'Souza, Director, IIMA, errol@iima.ac.in, director@iima.ac.in
Shri Sanjay Kumar Sinha, Member, Governing Council, sanjayks@iima.ac.in
Smt. Anju Sharma, Member, Governing Council, anjus@iima.ac.in
Shri Sunil Kant Munjal, Member, Governing Council, sunilkm@iima.ac.in
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ShriPankaj Patel, Member, Governing Council, pankajrp@iima.ac.in
Cdr. Manoj Bhatt (Retd.), Secretary, Governing Council, cao@iima.ac.in

Jan 20, 2021

To,
The Director & the Board of Governors
Indian Institute of Management
Ahmedabad

Dear Dr. D'Souza and the Board of Governors,

I write this letter with gratitude for your acknowledgement of the concern voiced by various communities, locally and across the globe, for the proposed demolition of the dormitories. By putting on hold the plans to replace the Kahn dormitories, and to review the current masterplan such that the integrity of the East campus may be maintained, you have created an opportunity to deal with architectural legacies sensitively, yet with a spirit of innovation and imagination. The outpouring of concern - as outrage, certainly, but also as advocacy - shows that you have institutions and expertise ready to help you.

I do hope IIMA embraces its challenges through the lens of leadership towards the responsible custodianship of our patrimony. What you have inherited, as material fabric and its underlying philosophical vision, has the capacity to both endure and transform, hence its significance. It is necessary to be reminded that Kahn imagined the campus as a whole, an integrated environment for student and faculty life. An overall civic space richly interwoven with hierarchies of scale and activity which my father, Anant Raje, further anchored through the MDC, the Dining Halls and the Mathai Complex. The architecture of both Kahn and Raje have a universal humanity to them, and have the generosity to take on new meanings and purposes of use, if met with a will and imagination of engagement.

I wish you the best in your efforts, and remain ready to help.

Respectfully,



Shubhra Raje
Kilcreggan, Scotland

To,
Shri Kumar Mangalam Birla
Chairman, Governing Council,
Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad
Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

27 December 2020

Subject: Concern regarding proposed demolition and redesign of Dormitory buildings of the Old Campus of IIM-A: A landmark group of buildings of national and global significance.

Dear Mr. Birla,

I am writing on behalf of ICOMOS India, and its nationwide membership of some 350+ heritage professionals, to register our deepest concern against the proposed demolition and redesign of the architecturally unique and culturally significant group of dormitory buildings of the Old Campus of Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad (IIM-A).

ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), as you would know, is an advisory body to UNESCO on matters related to World Heritage. It is an interdisciplinary association of experts dedicated to the conservation of the world's cultural heritage. It currently brings together over 10,500 global members and carries out its mandate through 107 National Committees, 271 Institutional Members and 28 International Scientific Committees. ICOMOS India functions as a duly recognized National Committee of ICOMOS in India.

Our major concern is focused on the adoption of a scientifically appropriate and sustainable 'management plan' of this campus of outstanding significance, allowing necessary change and upgradation without undermining its significance, authenticity and integrity.

Having carefully perused the two documents issued by IIMA, i.e.: (1) An official notice dated 04 December 2020, inviting EOIs for 'Selection of Architect/ Design firm for the comprehensive design of student housing at Main Campus IIM Ahmedabad' and, (2) The letter dated 23 December 2020 from IIMA's Director, Mr. Errol D'Souza, to the alumni of the institution, we offer the following observations and recommendations:

A. OBSERVATIONS:

1. It is worth appreciating that the IIM-A has taken cognizance of the significance of Old Campus (created by Louis Kahn in close collaboration with famed Indian architects B V Doshi and Anant Raje), and has made sincere efforts to conserve these buildings. We also acknowledge IIM-A's need to add more accommodation for a growing number of students as well as for upgrading and retrofitting the existing buildings to meet current standards of living and new building codes.
2. IIM-A seems to be grappling with a dilemma of "Conservation vs Redevelopment", choosing between one or the other. Conservation today is understood as being an integral part of all development activity and is

the major driver of future plans for highly significant areas and groups of celebrated buildings such as the IIM-A Campus.

3. While the two documents referred by us mention IIM-A's cognizance of its highly significant value, the above consideration (at A.2) seems to have been given a complete go-by in the notice inviting EOI. Neither does the scope of work make any mention of conservation activity, nor is the selected architect expected to have any knowledge or qualification to handle works of immense architectural and cultural significance. The statement regarding achieving functional excellence "while preserving and enhancing the architectural aesthetics, language, and vocabulary of the campus" is open to numerous subjective and ad-hoc interpretations, whereas what is needed is a systematic and scientific assessment.
4. Unfortunately, the absence of a scientific understanding of conservation theory, scope and procedures is also reflected in the decision to keep the peripheral dormitories while demolishing and redesigning the rest. It is of utmost importance to stress that the entire group of buildings - the Library, Classrooms, Faculty Rooms, the Plaza and the students' dormitories - is a single design entity, a unique campus that needs to be conserved as a whole, maintaining the original relationships between the built masses and the open spaces. Each of the component parts of the ensemble plays a significant role in this composition, and demolishing even one would compromise the integrity and the architectural and cultural value of the entire group. Similarly, the addition of new designs, with a built-up area that (as per the tender document) would be some 160-170% of the existing, would substantially alter the original massing, disturb the human scale, impact the built and nature connect and, impair the authenticity of the ensemble.
5. As regards the safety of the buildings under discussions, to state that the buildings under discussion are structurally inadequate and seismically vulnerable is a misplaced argument. There is adequate documentation to counter such perceptions of threat to life and property. The architectural configuration of the dormitories, showing buttressed masonry walls and a good plan density of structural walls, speaks of an earthquake resistant design. The minimal damage suffered by the said buildings during the earthquake of 2000 is a further testimony that these possess sufficient seismic capacity for collapse prevention.
6. We may also add that conservation of built heritage is now acknowledged as an important pillar of sustainability and that the Sustainable Development Goals as well as concerns for Climate Change recommend the continued use/re-use/upgrading/retrofitting of existing built resources rather than demolition and reconstruction.
7. The situation at IIM-A is not much different from that faced by other remarkable campuses around the world. There are numerous examples of exemplary conservation management of landmark 20th century buildings, including those with experimental, low-cost constructions, which continue to be used for contemporary purposes without losing their cultural significance. **Demolition and redesign is definitely not the preferred, or, the only choice.**

B. RECOMMENDATIONS:

In the interest of upholding the outstanding architectural and cultural significance of the Old Campus of IIM-A in general, and the original dormitories in particular, ICOMOS India thus recommends that:

1. The proposal for demolition and redesign of the dormitories be discarded altogether or, at the very least, put on hold till all conservation-related aspects, including the perceived seismic threat, have been examined by a peer group of national and international experts;
2. An exercise to prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan be undertaken in a scientific manner, by an inter-disciplinary team of experts, to address issues of future development, upgrading infrastructure as well as conservation of IIM-A's unique built fabric and intangible values in an integrated manner. This will pave the way for formulating an appropriate conservation strategy as well as action towards structural retrofitting, including seismic modeling by experts of brick, reinforced brick and concrete restoration.
3. Consultations with all stakeholders are further recommended for ensuring sustainable outcome of the conservation initiative.

We hope that you will appreciate that a Conservation Management-centric Approach, besides sustaining the authenticity and integrity of this site of unquestioned global, national and local significance, will definitely be more in tune with IIM-A own philosophies of best practices of resource management. Conserving the original group of buildings in an integrated manner will not only serve as an example for the other landmark structures of IIM-A Campus, but will also serve as a catalyst for other similarly renowned campuses in India.

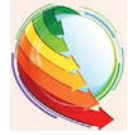
In furtherance of the above, ICOMOS India will be pleased to offer technical guidance and advice through the conservation experts of ICOMOS India's National Scientific Committees of Twentieth Century Heritage (NSC-20C) and Analysis and Restoration of Structures of Architectural Heritage (NSC-ARSAH) among others.

With best regards,

Narain Piplani

President
ICOMOS India

Cc: Members of the Governing Council, IIM-A



29th December 2020

Proposed Demolition of the Louis Kahn IIM Dormitories, Ahmedabad.

The World is in a Climate Emergency with calls from the secretary general of the United Nations calling all countries to sign up and to step up and take decisive climate actions that will have short-, medium- and long-term results.

The demolition of any existing structure is doing absolutely the opposite as it is destroying the embedded carbon within the structures, most likely filling a landfill site with construction and demolition waste and then using carbon intensive materials in the replacement building or buildings. Research has proven this action will take over 60 years to pay back the carbon and that is not a “Climate Action” it is in fact Climate Vandalism.

India ratified the **Paris Agreement** exactly one year after the submission of its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC), **on 2 October 2016**. India committed to a 33 – 35% reduction below 2005 emissions intensity of GDP by 2030.

There is a very strong move across the World to reduce carbon waste by the adaptive reuse of our existing, traditional and heritage building stock. Energy retrofitting our built heritage is not only achievable, but it is determined to be part of our **Mitigation** strategies against climate change as published in the ICOMOS “The Future of our Past” report.

Whilst there are strong arguments to save the Louis Kahn IIM Dormitories from a social, heritage and scientific point of view there is an even stronger argument from a Carbon & Climate one.

This in fact could become one of the key courses of the Indian Institute of Management which hopefully could show that developing countries do not need to copy the mistakes of the ‘developed west’ but can in fact leapfrog over those mistakes to show a new path that shows respect for both the material resources as well as the cultural value that such buildings have.

Peter Cox FRSA

Immediate Past President ICOMOS ISCES+CC

President of the ICOMOS Ireland NSCES+CC

Member of the ICOMOS Climate Change & Heritage Working Group

Member of the Climate Heritage Network.

Dr Errol D'Souza
Director, IIMA
Vastrapur
Ahmedabad
INDIA

William J. R. Curtis
1, Place du Faubourg
46160
Cajarc
FRANCE

17th December, 2020

RE: DESTRUCTION OF 18 DORMITORIES AT IIM, INTEGRAL PART OF ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPIECE BY LOUIS I KAHN

Dear Sir, Dear Director of IIM,

I learned a couple of days ago of the official announcement to abandon restoring Kahn's 18 dormitories and instead to demolish them.

In my view this would constitute an act of cultural vandalism that will hang around the neck of your institution for ever more.

The Library and related areas have been well restored and have even received UNESCO recognition in the form of a major Award in which the citation suggests that this could serve as a model for saving and restoring other major works of modern architecture in India.

So what does it mean to send the opposite message for the buildings next door, the dormitories, thus establishing a dangerous precedent of killing off a masterpiece of Indian, but also universal significance? You are surely aware of the vulnerability of the situation. Raj Rewal's Hall of Nations in New Delhi destroyed in scandalous circumstances quite recently..but there are others...you need to set a good example not a bad one.

You have been working with one of the best restoration teams in the world and they are confident that they can continue and complete the good work. Please follow this path rather than the negative and nihilistic path of demolition followed by the construction of lesser, far lesser, buildings. That would signal that IIM has become a mediocre institution without cultural ambition or values and without reason for international standing...The lesson transmitted? The price of everything and the value of nothing...

I ask you to open the enclosed files. I am an internationally known historian and critic of architecture who has been linked to India and in fact to Ahmedabad for almost forty years.

I have written major books on Le Corbusier and on Modern Architecture which have received many awards and which of course include key examples from Ahmedabad (including IIM !) a city that is unique in the world in having such magisterial works by Kahn, Le Corbusier, Doshi, Correa, Rajee and others.....

I have been well aware of the dangers to modern architectural heritage arising from thoughtless and short term laissez faire development..smash and grab capitalism if you like..maybe the famous 'Gujurati model'?? For some time Le Corbusier's Millowners Association Building in Ahmedabad was under threat.

I invite you to read my enclosed text 'Protecting Modern Masterpieces in India'..as well as several other files. Among these the Golden Global Award I received from India in 2014 in recognition of my services to Indian architectural culture ancient and modern. Yes and a short CV from which you may learn that I was educated and taught at Harvard and have lectured all over the world including Cambridge..and yes CEPT Ahmedabad from time to time in the past.

In fact I consider Ahmedabad one of my spiriritual homes. I wrote the book Balkrishna Doshi An Architecture for India 1988 while staying there. I have a real affection for the place and its people.

I should also mention my long standing links to Anant Raje. His Management Development Centre at IIM is a fine work in continuity with Kahn and should also be preserved.

My dear Professor D'Souza, I am shortly to go to press in several very prominent international outlets on this scandalous situation. But I do wish to let you share your point of view.

By what reasoning or unreasoning is this demolition of a world masterpiece being promoted? Do let me know sooner rather than later. If you need to consult with Mr Bimal Patel on this (who is I believe the campus architect) please do so but without delay. My regards to Mr Patel. I have dined in his house in the past and we have exchanged views.

Curiously enough he gave me a copy of the Spodek book Ahmedabad, *Shock City of the 20th Century* when I was there in 2014...a tale of social disruption, privatisation and erosion of social rights...it would be awful if the destruction of IIM would enter into this register and this trajectory of destruction. I hope that you agree?

The way forward lies in continuing the restoration of these fine buildings and preserving them as the symbolic core of your great institution and as objects of universal quality and pride.

Just because these buildings do not have private bathrooms that is no reason to put the facilities of a two star motel above the claims of a universal masterpiece. And in fact most of your students AND alumni alumnae have very fond memories of these extraordinary spaces and forms...stop thinking just 'dorms' and realise that these buildings can serve many other purposes, for example students with computers in the rooms, but case studies in the spacious landings..then you pop down for a coffee or tea in the shaded and wonderful courts and squares between the buildings...

Part of education derives from casual encounters in what Kahn called 'the spaces between': do not destroy your marvellous miniature city, a city of learning, let it be the centre piece for ever more of your expanding institution. a symbolic heart to the university body, not to be impaled.

Quality architecture is itself a kind of education through uplift and inspiration and this works at a level beyond words. Moreover the idea of keeping just a Heritage part of IIM and knocking the rest down is appalling, a bit like lopping off a huge chunk of Fatehpur Sikri. No, IIM is an entity and a unity and

has to be preserved in its totality. As for the notion of inviting architects to build on Kahn's footprint, this is a bit like inviting someone to stand in a dead man's shoes.

You are the temporary custodians of a work of universal patrimony. Please protect it and hand it on to future generations who will continue to be inspired by it.

Anyway I am waiting here with my pen poised to finish up these articles but I would appreciate a reply from you as soon as possible to express your point of view. It would be a real pity if I had to chose as a motto for my articles a quote from Goethe: **'What is barbarism but an incapacity to distinguish excellence.'**

Over to you with my very best wishes and a message of solidarity to you, your family and your faculty at this very difficult time for all of humanity.

Yours sincerely

William Curtis,

BA First Class Hons, Courtauld Inst of Art, Univ London; PhD Harvard University. Slade Professor of Fine Arts, University of Cambridge etc etc

- Enclosures - IIMA EOI and Tender Announcement, destruction 18 dorms, 15/12/2020
- WJRC Short CV
 - WJRC article 'Louis Kahn and the Indian Sub-Continent',
The Power of Architecture, 2012
 - WJRC article 'Protecting Modern Masterpieces in India', *A+D*, Sept 2014
 - WJRC, Golden Global Award, India, Nov 2014

Shri Kumar Mangalam Birla Esq, Chairman of the
Board of Governors, IIMA
Individual Members of the Board of Governors, IIMA
Professor Errol D'Souza, Director, IIMA , Member,
Board of Governors, IIMA
Indian Institute of Management ,
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William J. R. Curtis
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20th December 2020 / 21st December 2020

MESSAGE TO THE DIRECTOR AND THE GOVERNING BOARD OF IIMA ON THE IMPERATIVE NEED TO FULLY RESTORE LOUIS I KAHN'S ENSEMBLE IN ITS ENTIRETY

Dear Mr Chairman, Board of Governors IIMA, Individual Members of the Board, and Professor D'Souza, Director,

Thank you so much Professor D'Souza for your prompt and carefully considered reply which arrived yesterday morning 19th December 8.35 AM French time by email. This in response to my message sent by email on 17th December 18.59 PM French time entitled: '*Destruction of 18 Dormitories at IIM, Integral Part of Architectural Masterpiece of Louis I. Kahn*'. I extend my best wishes to all members of the Board at this deeply disturbing time for all of humanity on account of the rampant virus. This is among other things a message of solidarity. Believe it or not I am also trying to help you find a way of getting out of a problematic and self defeating corner!

What follows is a list of observations which may help you see the problem of preserving and protecting the project of Louis Kahn in its entirety and in the long term under a different light. With the EOI and Tender Announcement concerning the demolition and replacement of the 18 dormitories (which went public last week), you have put yourselves in a very awkward position where you can easily be accused of a form of cultural irresponsibility or to use a stronger phrase, cultural vandalism. Smashing up a world class building which is in fact part of universal patrimony is scarcely the best way to endear yourselves with the world community. Obviously this would not be good at all for IIMA which surely wishes to preserve its international standing as a high quality and socially responsible institution. I fully appreciate the dilemmas facing IIMA in a period of expansion. I believe that there are ways for IIMA to expand and modernise *while at the same time* preserving the core 'citadel of learning' represented by Louis I. Kahn's ensemble of 18 dormitories and the Library/ Admin. block, the latter so finely restored already. One needs a win/win solution.

Here then is a series of observations taking into account three imperatives outlined by Dr. D'Souza in his letter to me of 19th December 2020 : '1 functional needs. 2 cultural heritage. 3 available resources.'

- The existing IIMA campus is a totality, an artistic whole. You cannot cut off a major part of it without destroying its integrity and its identity altogether. The notion of keeping the Library/ Lecture block without the flotilla of dormitories and pretending that this is somehow being responsible to 'Heritage' is quite simply preposterous. In fact it undermines the very notion of heritage itself. Can you imagine destroying the palace complex of Fatehpur Sikri yet conserving the Mosque (or vice versa) then parading this destruction as an example of how to protect a monument of the past ?
- In fact you should realise that IIMA is a complex of such high architectural quality that it will be among the Fatehpur Sikris of the future. You, the Director and the Board, are temporary custodians of a masterpiece which needs to be fully restored and adapted in sensitive ways for changing uses and occupation, then handed on to future generations. Nothing less will do. It is essential to maintain the long historical view. It is partly a question of cultural memory and Ahmedabad is a city of profound cultural memories.
- I have been visiting IIMA for almost forty years and am of course aware of the wear and tear and gradual deterioration of the fabric in several parts of the campus. In 1999 I visited again with several internationally known architects who were astounded by the architecture but wondered about the lack of maintenance. One

could guess at the reasons for cracking in the brickwork but without scientific analysis not be sure. Then along came the earthquake of 2001 which inflicted further damage. I have to admit I was already worried about the future of Kahn's buildings and about the position of the IIM Administration on the questions of upkeep and restoration.

- Then along came hope. The selection in 2014 of SNK (Somaya and Kalappa Consultants) to oversee the restoration and updating of the entire campus, including the 18 dormitories, was a very positive move. They have done a superb job with the the Library/ Admin. ensemble. As you know they received UNESCO recognition in 2017 for their fine work in the form of a prestigious Award which implied that their work could serve as a model for saving other major works of modern architecture in India.
- In a recent discussion with my dear friend Balkrishna Doshi (the master architect who as you know brought Kahn to the attention of Vikram Sarabhai as designer of IIMA) he declared quite simply that he found that the restoration was superb and that the buildings were 'as good as new'. As you know better than I, SNK have respected Kahn's original intentions while upgrading the technological features in a way that is appropriate to current and future use. This is no mean feat and it indicates that your administration had the good sense to chose the right people for the job.
- When SNK won the contract in 2014 the 18 dormitories were included of course. As I understand it, the restoration architects deliberately selected the worst hit of the dorms so as to grasp the range of techniques required for the remaining 17. Having so successfully handled the more complex job of the Library/ Lecture block and its court they were surely in a strong position to deal with all of the dorms, some of which were a great deal less damaged than the first sample ?
- So then we come to the documents made public a few days ago by the Administration of the IIMA announcing that they now intend to reverse direction and demolish ALL 18 of the dormitories and somehow replace them with new ones ! These murky intentions were revealed in the EOI and Tender documents made available last week. It seems that many were blindsided by this bad news so I quickly spread the announcement far and wide to those concerned with Kahn's legacy, including in Ahmedabad itself, where even people close by had no idea that this was happening.
- The EOI contains the following sentences : 'IIMA did try restoring one dormitory building in 2017 but the results were not satisfactory. In view of this, it has been decided to create student housing using the existing footprints (land, parcel) of these dormitory buildings.' Nowhere is it spelt out what is meant by 'unsatisfactory'. In fact when a top flight restoration expert from the Getty organisation visited IIMA he found the restoration of the difficult dorm block' more than satisfactory' ! So are we dealing with facts or matters of opinion here ?
- Suppose that SNK had instead started work on a far less damaged dorm and revealed the relative ease of a successful restoration. Would the decision have been different ?
- In any event this is a mighty flimsy pretext for suddenly abandoning a project laid in place in 2014 in good faith and under contract I guess ? And a project in which the early stages have been a brilliant success. One begins to wonder if this was not a flash recent decision at all but a premeditated change of direction ? But to what purpose and to whose advantage the destruction of the magnificent dormitory complex of Kahn's masterpiece ? I am sorry to say that this all leaves a very sorry impression on the professional and ethical levels.
- And what about the architectural levels ? IIMA seems to be calmly wrecking a world class architectural ensemble and replacing it with what can only be far inferior, in fact very likely third rate. The new campus at IIMA is nothing to write home about and represents a lack of architectural ambition on the part of the client. People cross the world to visit Le Corbusier's Millowners and your Kahn complex but they do not bother to visit the new campus next door. And now IIMA is calmly proposing that another, inferior architect, step into a dead man's shoes....
- Let us be clear about this: the ensemble of the 18 dorms by Kahn is an astonishing architectural achievement. He has brilliantly woven together space and form, light and shadow, private and public. You cannot cut off half the ensemble of Kahn's IIMA and dismember it. It is a unity of contrasting parts and in fact the flotilla of dorms with the positive and negative spaces and the interplay of orthogonal and diagonal geometries and directions, is an architectural masterpiece. It is one of Kahn's greatest inventions, in fact a great virtuoso piece judged by the criteria of any age. The architects of Mandu and Fatehpur Sikri would have fully understood what Lou was up to and would have saluted it.

- Great architecture has its intangible aspects and touches the mind and the senses of the observer. It is itself a form of education and I am sure that if you consult the alumnae and alumni of IIMA you will discover that Kahn's architecture is one of the features of their time as students that touched them the most and that remains with them in memory. If you as the temporary tenants of this masterpiece would take a more positive view you might realise that the architecture of your institution is in fact one of its key identifiers and international drawing cards. You need to restore the place, rejoice in it, and promote it with pride rather than wreck it and spoil it.
- Furthermore, the destruction of Kahn's dormitory complex would be a terrible example for others who could say, 'If the prestigious IIMA knocks down modern masterpieces, why shouldn't we?' As outlined in my previous letter to you Professor D'Souza, this is a vulnerable time for modern masterpieces in India which are not protected by Indian heritage laws that apply only to buildings more than 100 years old. Here I should add the importance of preserving those parts of IIMA designed by the very fine architect Anant Raje, particularly the MDC, a fine continuity of Kahn's architecture in a subtle and understated manner.

The case for a recasting of the laws is made in the article I sent you 'Protecting Modern Masterpieces in India: a Conversation Between William J.R Curtis and an Unknown Indian'. Remember that Le Corbusier's Millowner's Association Headquarters was under threat several years ago and that Rewal's magnificent Hall of Nations was demolished only recently. Le Corbusier's Chandigarh has at last achieved UNESCO recognition as a World Heritage Site and so should Kahn's architecture at IIMA...

So what is to be done ? How to preserve and restore the 18 dormitories but in a way that makes sense to IIMA's aim of modernisation?

- SNK have already done a brilliant job in achieving exactly that in their award winning work on the Library/ Lecture etc block: a reconciliation of the historical restoration of the fabric with a sensitive adjustment to changing technological and social needs. So why not let them get on with the job of restoring the 18 dorms which in many ways are easier to deal with? That was what was planned and agreed so it would be best to get back on course.
- Then we come to the need for lateral thinking, for thinking outside the box. The structure of Kahn's dorms is such that one can restore and reinforce the external walls and weight bearing elements while opening up different interior arrangements for a variety of functions including seminars, meetings, study spaces etc. Air conditioning is no problem these days with small portable units. As for the exterior spaces, these should of course be restored to the letter.
- There is nothing unusual in this strategy which has been carried out in collegiate buildings over the centuries and which is stock in trade in the restoration of numerous forts and palaces in India which are transformed to become tourist destinations. In fact creative reuse is a mantra of the present in numerous countries of the world. Demolishing and rebuilding involve a spectacular waste of resources. Is this the economic model that IIMA wishes to promote as its 'brand' in the world today ? Third rate architecture and material waste instead of sensitive restoration and first rate architecture ?
- If this work is carried out as it should be then Kahn's complex – the whole thing 'dorms' and all – could well be awarded the same tag as Chandigarh : classification as a World Heritage Site. That would be a superb win/win situation and it certainly would not do IIMA's international profile any harm. Instead of regarding these buildings as some sort of liability you could in fact see them as a great opportunity and a form of wealth ; as a marvellous emblem of intellectual and artistic excellence : as a humanist and universal message at a time of cramped short term and materialist thinking. Kahn always thought of this place as a sort of monastery preserving and encouraging meditation on truths, even on spiritual values. It is the business of architecture to idealise institutions, to present an ideal portrait, so why not try to live up to the promise and vision of the architecture rather than destroy it ?
- In short the entire complex comprising the already restored Library/ Lecture block and the 18 restored dorms can become the symbolic centre of the every growing campus, rather like a traditional walled city with its shaded streets and squares, its havelis and monuments, its platforms, terraces and stairs. At a time of pointless technological antics in architecture it would be good to have this sane and sober urban core to the entire institution ; a repository of architectural thought and excellence, a place of restorative qualities in a world of fast

moving images and information on screens. Kahn's symbolic city defines the *sense of place* in a way that no other architectural intervention could.

- As for new accommodations and hostels, perhaps more imagination is needed in formulating what they are in 2020 and what they may be in the future, than being restricted by an existing footprint? This is a great chance for IIMA to intervene with a reflection on how best to live and study today in a situation of global warming where business has to establish a far greater harmony with nature than hitherto. Ahmedabad and Gujarat have numerous examples from the past of climatically adjusted architecture including of course tanks and stepped wells. Does one begin to imagine very different kinds of 'dorms', in fact multi-purpose places, which are partly situated in valleys below grade, with copious vegetation, natural cooling devices, and social spaces like filters between inside and outside on some other part of the IIMA terrain. An ecological vision for our times as the original IIM was a vision for its times?
- The original IIM resulted from a vision by a great patron, Vikram Sarabhai, who happened to work with a great architect at the peak of his maturity. Louis Kahn reacted profoundly to the possibilities inherent in his two main commissions in the Indian sub continent, the Assembly in Dhaka, and the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad. As usual he drew upon the past and transformed it in modern terms. Part of the richness of the result derives from this meditation on meaning and return to roots.

The architecture of IIM is to some extent a monument to past aspirations in the Nehru period. What is the present day IIM going to leave to posterity? A third rate heap on the footprint of Louis Kahn attached loosely to an orphaned fragment of his original ensemble? Or a resplendantly restored and renewed universal masterpiece in its magisterial totality? That is for you to decide.

Yours sincerely

William Curtis,

BA First Class Hons, Courtauld Inst of Art, Univ London; PhD Harvard University. Slade Professor of Fine Arts, University of Cambridge etc etc

Note: This letter was sent on 20th December 2020 via email of Director Dr. D'Souza ; sent again 21st December via individual emails of all members of the Governing Board, with short cover note addressed to Shri Birla, Chairman of Board. In all cases, without reply or acknowledgement).

IIMA CAMPUS PLAN 08/01/2021 1230 hrs
PROTECTING KAHN'S OVERALL CAMPUS PLAN
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President of ICOMOS

William J.R. Curtis, Cajarc, FRANCE

12th January, 2021

Dear President of ICOMOS

With good reason, recent discussions, polemics and revelations have been focussed upon saving the ensemble of eighteen dormitories in Louis Kahn's masterpiece, the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad, from the bulldozer and the wrecking ball. Under huge international pressure from national and international press, from individuals and cultural institutions world-wide, and from IIMA alumni, the Director and Board have retreated for the moment from their initial intention announced on December 15th of demolishing the whole lot. They stepped back from doing the wrong thing but will they now do the right thing ? It is obvious that they should invite back SNK (Somaya and Kalappa Consultants), who did such a good job on restoring the Library and Administration block, to complete the restoration and consolidation of the dormitories to the same high level. But for the moment there is no sign of this happening as false information continues to circulate about supposed structural weaknesses in the dorms.

The ultimate aim should be the full status and protection of a UNESCO World Heritage Site: all in the international community agree upon this. But what area should be included in this definition? The original Campus plan included staff and faculty housing based upon concepts and sketches provided by Louis Kahn and carried through to design and construction by the very able Anant Raje and his colleagues. The IIMA Campus was conceived as a whole and the diagonal arrays of housing in brick with concrete lintels carry on the major themes at a smaller, more domestic scale. Constructed in the 1960s and 1970s, these supplied secure homes to staff and faculty that were exemplary at the time in terms of layout, materials, hygiene and surrounding green space. Low cost but high quality: were you to transpose this well proportioned and practical terrace housing to a leafy suburb of Mumbai, London or Shanghai today, it would sell for a pretty price in the current housing market.

But it has been clear for years from the Campus Plan of 2014 provided by HCP (Director Bimal Patel) that all of this fine work is to be demolished and replaced by far inferior designs that are hostile to Kahn's architecture and overall planning concept. One sees free standing blocks and even towers, apparently designed by the commercial firm ARCOP. This is run of the mill corporate work, and could be anywhere. There is a lost opportunity here to achieve high density but low level solutions that are ecologically sensitive, integrating sunken courts, greenery and natural cooling. After all we are in Gujurat, the land of tanks, stepped wells and havelis with terraces at all levels: principles that could have been transformed in modern terms. The existing housing should be embedded in a more sympathetic social landscape project: the greening of IIMA.

In any case at least some of the housing, even the most modest, should be preserved as a social document of the time, testifying to an integrated social vision in the Nehru period. The same goes for the 'sample arch' demonstrating the basic structural grammar of Louis Kahn. Then there are two major interventions that were also launched by Kahn in concepts and sketches but interpreted and realised

with great skill by Anant Raje (1930-2009): the Management Design Centre and the Dining and Kitchen Hall, both superb buildings occupying key sites and helping to anchor IIM into its site. In the HCP plan these are replaced by nasty looking red boxes, diabolical oblongs, that are not even sited in an intelligent way.

With its layers of protective structure, its shaded walkways, planted sunken courtyard and bold geometrical arches, the MDC has a timeless air. Recently the Director proposed the idea of replacing Kahn with buildings in a 'Khanian' grammar, a bizarre idea which would have ended up with an inauthentic pastiche. With Raje one has the real thing, a former collaborator who has digested the principles of the master and transformed them. The Dining Hall is a gem, with its skilful massing, fine proportions and twin refectories. It has a ceremonial air and would be ideal for special events such as top international level congresses requiring catering. The buildings on the new campus designed by Patel are bland and soulless when compared with those of the Kahnian legacy They act as a warning concerning the lowered architectural ambitions of IIMA. It is time now to focus upon protecting Kahn's vision for the Campus as a whole from debasing and destructive interference.

Yours Sincerely

William J. R Curtis