

FAST FACT

■ FLEXIBILITY
INCORPORATED IN THE
DESIGN STRATEGY
ENLARGES THE SCOPE OF
PERFORMANCE

ENGINES OF GROWTH

While cities must be designed efficiently and innovatively, they must also create a sense of belonging for all stake-holders, says Architect **VIVEK NANDAN**

Cities are the engines of growth in many an urban milieu and the role of an Architect as far as possible should be of a Facilitator or a Catalyst. Innovation is the need of the hour to generate efficient designs that not only are Iconic (from the business point of view) but also create a sense of belonging for all the stake-holders involved.

The solution to a "Design Problem", be it a large-scale layout development or a building project or Interiors, starts essentially with the collection / pooling of all the relevant data using which the principal designer starts working out a concept for the design solution to start taking shape. What is this nascent stage of "conceptualisation" and how does it come about? It is very obvious that all the relevant data is of due importance. One would normally address the situation purely on the basis of this limited data. The seasoned designer however sees data beyond what is easily available and evaluates the not so obvious but critical variables in the jigsaw puzzle of the design problem all through his own creative parameters.

A good design strategy incorporates various elements in its formulation which combined together create a responsible and efficient landmark one can relate to - one that assumes an aura of its own over a period of time in conjunction with the people inhabiting it.

The quality of planning of the built form be it interiors or a building or a layout has the ability to enhance the quality of perception of the immediate surroundings - thus the quality of life of the people inhabiting the space. A good design is thus backed by excellent planning. A well planned design venture would therefore have excellent circulation patterns that would greatly enhance the user experience as one moves from one point to the other. It goes without saying that these are ergonomic in design and use and treat area and space optimally.

Orientation becomes a very important deciding factor in the quality of light and ventilation that can be achieved. Optimal natural light and wind patterns greatly enhance the feel of the space around or the volume that the space encloses and greatly affects the well-being of the individual.

Open spaces in a layout, building or Interiors bring about a direct interaction of the built form with the un-built and merge the indoors with the outdoors. These not only regulate the surrounding environment (light, wind etc.) but also cater to the sensory perception of the individual - one appreciates a place not just by its impact on our visual sense but also by the way it sounds, smells and feels - the way it induces a more profound impact on the spirit and the mind. These open spaces can be green landscaped

areas, water bodies, play areas etc. or a combination of all which would bring about its own set of positive experiences. Various principles of Vastu applied cohesively contribute towards the well-being of the individual.

The art of building design deals with the creation of a product that would take two years to deliver and is naturally susceptible to the vagaries of time for that period till final delivery even more so in a very volatile market environment. This calls for a certain amount of leeway - maneuvering space to be built-in into the proposed design solution. An amount of flexibility when in built goes a long way in buffering the impact of a dynamic marketplace environment.

In a building design, flexibility could thus entail the ability to combine or divide the mix of products; modify etc. to satisfy the current demands of the market without adversely affecting the viability or aesthetics of the project. One of our projects started off with a mix of 1, 2, and 3 BHK units; the changing market scenario dictated a change of product mix. With inherent flexibility incorporated in the design solution, the project successfully catered to the changed marketplace without any compromises.

In an interior set-up flexibility could come in from the range of uses / functions that a space can cater to.

An open space or terrace in an office environment plays many a role for the enhancement of the daily office experience. On a practical note it can serve as a spill-over space, an open house for brainstorming, an extension of the conference room where one can adjourn for continuing the deliberations in a "more suitable setting" etc.

Flexibility incorporated in the Design Strategy enlarges the scope of performance. It gives the developer the ability to respond in time to meet the needs of the market. To the end user it offers the opportunity of customising the space as per his individual requirements over time - it has been an integral part of the traditional building design in the form of internal courtyards, semi-open spaces etc. that could be put to different uses depending upon the time of the day or the month.

No design strategy can bring about an optimal solution without dwelling deeply upon its impact on the environment - the carbon footprint that it would be responsible for during its complete lifecycle. Buildings deplete multiple resources such as forests, water, power, various materials etc. "Green" envisages the creation of high performance, healthy, durable and environmentally sound buildings thereby addressing the issues of Site sustainability, Water Efficiency, Energy optimisation, Materials and resources, Indoor Environmental Quality etc. Application of the tenets of climatology is



PIC COURTESY: ARCHITECT VIVEK NANDAN

imperative to the design philosophy of a "Green building". Proper orientation of the building and correct positioning of the windows and doors induce natural light and ventilation. It not only creates good air circulation and a better environment but also reduces power consumption and dependence on artificial systems in the long run. Various other measures like STP, Rainwater harvesting, Green landscaped environs, usage of Solar power systems, Glass with low solar heat gain coefficient, lead free paints etc. lead towards a Green building.

A creative amalgamation of all the parameters of a good design strategy will always generate a very aesthetic built form - a design solution that transforms and exceeds expectations - an Icon - a Landmark. An Iconic built environment adds tremendous value to the whole development which thence commands a premium. It creates a visual impact - an enduring image - a high brand recall value akin to a timeless calling card and establishes a much enhanced market image.

A good design is thus not only iconic providing a better user experience but also offers a shared value - a product that bridges the gap between good-for-business and good-for-society at large and is definitely the way to go forward.

The author is Principal Architect,
Vivek Nandan Architects

QUICK BYTES

■ DESIGN STRATEGIES MUST INCORPORATE A VARIETY OF FACTORS, FROM AESTHETICS TO EFFICIENCY AND USER-FRIENDLINESS

■ NO DESIGN STRATEGY CAN BRING ABOUT AN OPTIMAL SOLUTION WITHOUT DWELLING DEEPLY UPON ITS IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

■ AN ARCHITECT PLAYS THE ROLE OF A CATALYST OR FACILITATOR IN THE CREATION OF AN URBAN MILIEU

VIVEK NANDAN

ARCHITECTS

