



GREHA

A society for research on environmental development, habitat design and architecture.

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MAKING HISTORY-MEHRAULI STUDIO

Community and the act of building

Today, more than ever, the symbiotic relationship between architecture and its public appears to be ruptured. Cities are undergoing dramatic growth and often there is conflict between spontaneous developments and markers of the past.

We are aware that we build so that we may inhabit. The buildings we inhabit are not static objects and these undergo continuous change. With the passage of time, the variety and intensity of lived experience embedded in the built environment becomes more and more perceivable; and this is what gives rise to human associations and symbolic meaning. The associational value that we attach to our built environment becomes a precursor to the process of renewal, which is the key to sustainable design, which can produce a built environment that actually improves with age. The studio advocates a changed paradigm for learning of architecture, and its practice. It will be an attempt to understand the internal logic and expressive potential of indigenous realities.

A recently published essay entitled "*The Discovery of Architecture - a contemporary treatise on ancient values and indigenous reality*", by M N Ashish Ganju and Narendra Dengle has presented a four part analytical matrix, which is a departure from the standard model of space, time and architecture, and various extensions of this expounded in the last century. The analytical matrix starts with the understanding of 'self' and is followed by the 'act of building'. This leads to a focus on maintenance and renewal, with the understanding that the core of architectural design rests somehow as a bridge between the act of building and the imperatives of renewal. The fourth part of the matrix follows on to learning by regeneration and the matrix becomes a spiral. We learn from 'history' to better penetrate the reality of self and the native in us. Memory activates learning and becomes the root cause of history.

Working with history on a site

Physical reality is perceived by the individual self and is given meaning by the community. The 'History Studio' would work with the local residents of a settlement to understand the community's priorities and requirements; it would translate this understanding into tasks, which can transform the physical environment for healthy living and ease of maintenance. This community embedded approach of the studio would integrate the skills of various disciplines like, social science, history, anthropology, economics, disciplines from the visual and performing arts, with those of architects, urban planners, engineers and designers. The approach wherein the community is integral to the act of building, and to its maintenance and renewal, would be tested in transformation of a 'public place' in the historic settlement of Mehrauli in south-west Delhi. The settlement of Mehrauli came into prominence at the end of the 12th century and at present is enriched with significant historic monuments and archeological remains. Mehrauli is also a growing urban precinct subjected to all the dynamics of urban growth and these often conflict with the imperatives of preserving our historic legacy. The contradictions created by the seemingly opposing tendencies give rise to physical dysfunction and erosion of heritage values. It is this transient reality of the settlement that the History Studio will engage with.

The studio therefore will integrate 'theory' and 'practice' of the act of building by recognizing three inseparable aspects of the problem: one, the critical approach; two, field experience for observation and application of ideas; and three, the process of making, in this case a public place in Mehrauli.

Participation

Students and professionals of architecture, design, arts, social sciences, history, urban design planning and engineering from across the world are eligible to apply. (Group size: 25-30 members)

Selection Procedure: To apply please send the following to grehadelhi@gmail.com

- i) 300 word note on, 'Why would you like to join this studio?'
- ii) 300 word note about yourself, including experience of working with communities, if any.
- iii) 1 page CV with photo.

Participants will receive a certificate of participation for being part of the History Studio.

Team of mentors

A core team of young professionals and academicians from disciplines of architecture, urban design, conservation, history, sociology and development practice would conduct the studio. The team members include Parul Kiri Roy (Architect, Assistant Prof. SPA Delhi), Henri Fanthome (Architect, founder HFOA), Priyanka Jain (Architect, Planner, cofounder 3x3 Design), Nidhi Batra (Development Practitioner at World Bank and PRIA), Archana Gupta (Architect, founder Indian cities Foundation) and Mohit Verma (Architect, founder Archade Foundation).

Panel of Advisors

The studio will include the engagement of a distinguished panel of academicians from the disciplines of architecture, urban design, conservation architecture, sociology and history. These include Rabindra Vasavada (Conservation Architect), Vishakha Kawathekar (Conservation Architect), Snehanshu Mukherjee (Architect), Narendra Dingle (Architect), Neelkanth Chhaya (Architect), Savyasaachi (Sociologist) and Anirudh Paul (Urban Designer), K.L. Nadir (Sociologist), MN Ashish Ganju (Architect), Shonaleeka Kaul (Historian), Sheuli Mitra (Urban Planner), Tapas Mitra (Architect)

Logistics

PROPOSED SITE: ADAM KHAN'S TOMB/ BHULBHULAIYA, BUS TERMINAL, MEHRAULI, DELHI

13 JUNE- 10 JULY 2016

Duration: 30 days- 2 Sessions of 4 hours, each day.

There will be a registration fee of- Rs.50,000/- per participant (including the cost of the workshop, reading material, stationery and organization of workspace).

[We hope to reduce this figure and are trying to secure additional funding from institutional sources. We welcome your queries and suggestions.]

Participants would have to manage travel to Delhi on their own.

Accommodation and food for participants can be arranged locally within the studio site for which payments would be borne by the participants as per actual expenditure. (would cost an additional Rs 15,000/-)

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

GREHA is a collective of professionals registered in 1986 as a not for profit society in India that works towards growth of knowledge in the field of environmental development, habitat design and architecture. The thrust of the organization's efforts has been towards addressing issues of the majority of the population; the focus is the marginalized people in rural and urban settlements; the vehicle is developing knowledge and methodologies concerning settlement systems more suited to our history and cultural context. GREHA has been actively advocating and executing projects of '*Urban Renewal by Citizens*' in the developing urban context in India. A pilot project to demonstrate the community embedded approach of urban renewal is on-going in the Aya Nagar urban village settlement of Delhi. Building on the ideology of engaging citizens in the development process, GREHA also undertook a study in 2014 initiating a heritage conservation project in Mehrauli, an historic settlement of Delhi, with focus on community involvement such that the heritage assets become the joint responsibility of the local community and the State. The study also advocated a paradigm shift towards addressing urban renewal in historic context by focusing on repair of the urban fabric simultaneously with the repair of historic buildings.

GREHA is actively engaged in pedagogical enquiry of the '*act of building*', making it 'socially responsive', by engagement with its diverse network of people and organizations from different disciplines. In 1990, GREHA instituted the TVB School of Habitat Studies in Delhi with an aim to bridge the gap between socially relevant development and the norms and values of professional practice and behavior. GREHA regularly organizes talks, seminars and workshops in the public domain, and disseminates knowledge through various research publications. The founder members of GREHA are Munishwar Nath Ashish Ganju, Ashok B. Lall, A.G. Krishna Menon, Kanhaiya Lal Nadir, Ramu Katakam, Sheba Chhachhi and B.B. Chaudhuri, who are all pioneering professionals and academicians in the development realm.

The *Making History – Mehrauli Studio* has been initiated under the umbrella of GREHA and builds on earlier research on writing a history of architecture with an indigenous perspective. The studio will include the engagement of a distinguished panel of academicians from the disciplines of architecture, urban design, conservation architecture, sociology and history. These include Rabindra Vasavada (Conservation Architect), Vishakha Kawathekar (Conservation Architect), Snehanshu Mukherjee (Architect), Narendra Dingle (Architect), Neelkanth Chhaya (Architect), Savyasaachi (Sociologist) and Anirudh Paul (Urban Designer), K.L. Nadir (Sociologist), MN Ashish Ganju (Architect), Shonaleeka Kaul (Historian), Sheuli Mitra (Urban Planner), Tapas Mitra (Architect)

The Studio will be conducted within the historic settlement of Mehrauli in New Delhi, organized by a core team of professionals from varied disciplines of architecture, urban design, conservation, history, sociology and development practice. The team will actively engage with all participants and facilitate the sessions of the workshop. Core team members include, Parul Kiri Roy (Architect, Assistant Prof. SPA Delhi), Henri Fanthome (Architect, founder HFOA), Priyanka Jain (Architect, Planner, cofounder 3x3 Design), Nidhi Batra (Development Practitioner at World Bank and PRIA), Archana Gupta (Architect, cofounder Indian cities Foundation) and Mohit Verma (Architect, cofounder Archade Foundation).