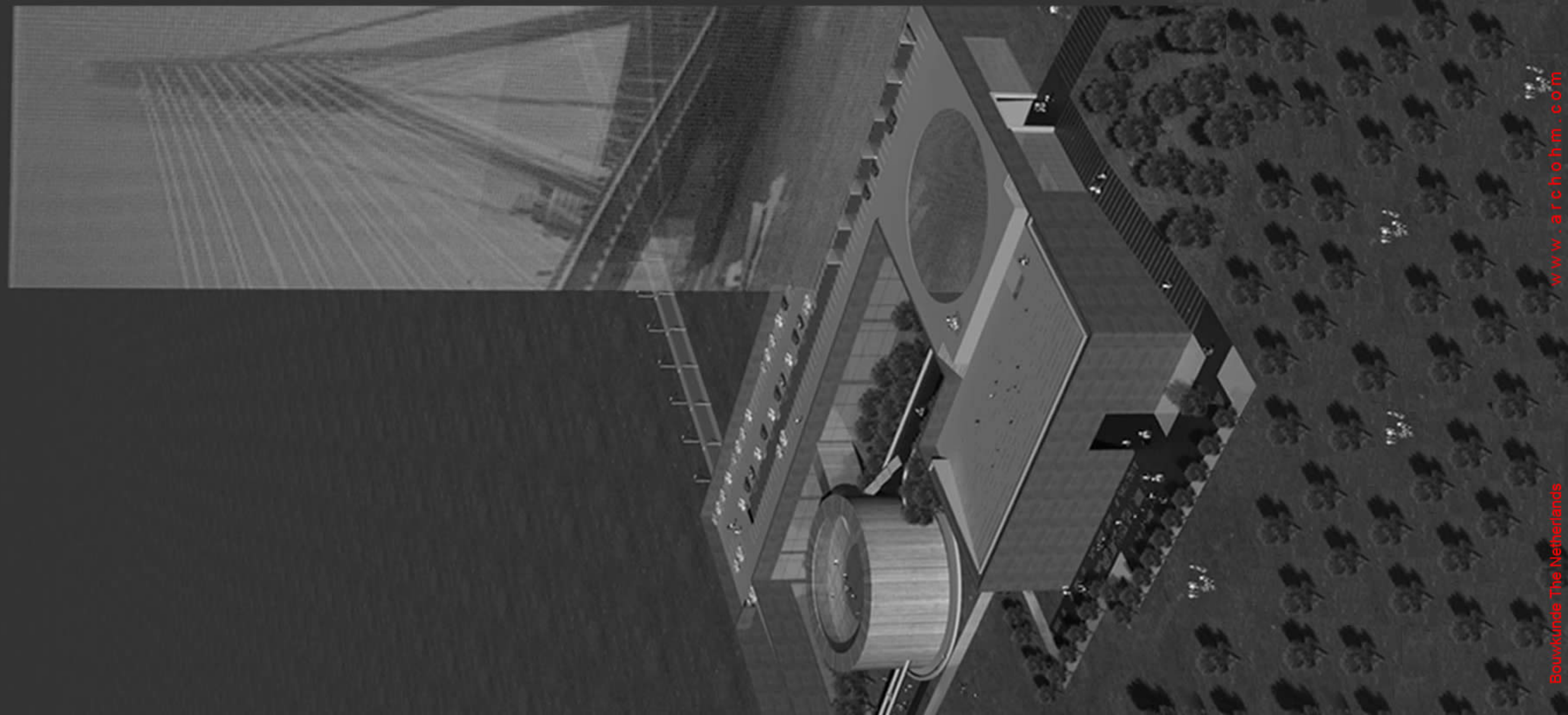


A R C H O M E T E R

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MARCH '09





At a recent meeting, I realised that amongst the various projects Archohm has designed, over the last ten years or so, we have almost lost track of how many toll plazas we have worked on. Whilst an old associate of mine was travelling from x to y, he came across a toll plaza which he found interesting, and immediately called me. I checked with Mohit, and sure enough - it was one of our projects, on last count, we have done our 500 lanes

Toll roads evince different reactions among the populace. Each time one travels from Delhi to Noida and gurgaon, or vice versa, the thrill and comfort of being on an access controlled highway far outweigh the cost of paying less than half a dollar as toll.

Not very well known to most, the Mumbai Port Trust operates a toll road that traverses the city of Mumbai from Chembur (in the Northeast) to the docks (in South Mumbai). The costs of reducing an hour from your journey time is about a dollar each way. When questioned about the cost, Sridhar Iyer, a banker cousin of my wife, asked me a rhetorical question- "If someone asked you to pay a dollar to extend your life by an hour, what would you do?". Touché.

Both Aristotle and Pliny referred to tolls across Asia. The first recorded toll road was that from Susa to Babylon, during the reign of the great King Ashurbanipal. Caravans laden with silks, spices and other precious materials travelled along this road, known as the "King's Highway", paying a toll for using the same. Closer home, Chanakya's Arthashastra speaks of tolls. During Mughal times a tax called 'rahdaari' was charged on those using roads for commercial purposes

An interesting example from Europe dates back to the 14th century, that of the Castle Looevstein in the Netherlands, built at a strategic point where 2 rivers met. The Castle charged tolls to boats sailing up/down the rivers.

The first state-of-the-art tolling facility in India was at the Delhi Noida Direct (DND) expressway. Subsequently and I say this without any immodesty- and definite pride- Archohm has assisted visionary concessionaires in erecting such integrated tolling complexes across the length and breadth of the country. Seen here are some of them:



FEEDBACK: please address all feedback to - Atsi[at]archohmeter[at]archohm.com

I think Archohmeter is a good brochure for Archohm, shows the passion that all involved display at Archohm. -Allen Le Roux.

I think you need to focus more on the great work you are doing for various clients and try to put the actual sites' photos as well. -Rohit Kumar

archohm works



One of the biggest faculties of Architecture, (bouwkunde), of the Delft University of Technology (TU Delft) reduced to ashes on 13th may 2008 by devastating fire. As said nothing is permanent, this sturdy building turned to be so weak (vulnerable) in the hands of fate. With more than 60,000sqm of built area, priceless history, uncountable events, valuable collections, the fire shook the foundation of not only the Dutch community, but the complete architectural community. As well said "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity, an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty". To realize a modern, innovative and refreshing design for the university, the faculty of Architecture decided to organize an open international idea competition. We at Archohm decided to participate as one of the 1400 odd entries worldwide. Reasons for Archohm opting for this were quite natural

- Needed a break from regular job, refresh ideas and concepts.
- Enforce a new lease of enthusiasm within the design team.
- Self motivation to present its design philosophies at a larger platform.
- Personally, I could relate as studied in similar environment (IIT Roorkee campus).
- Sourabh's academic connection with bouwkunde, knowledge base and nostalgia
- Archohm Netherlands branch and various supports available.
- visit by the Archohm team of the burnt remains during archotour.

as a design, the entry came out as a clean, clear idea. To stand out from strong Dutch architectural definition, the team decided to design an architectural school, which inherently represented the era of its construction without being orthodox in terms of vocabulary. Magic words were a portal, a plinth and a plaza.

1. Portal- A screen (200mx100m) that reflects designer image, idea and soul. A toot to test your ideas at 1:1, real time. An infoboard to all
 2. Plinth- Concrete mass (20m high) with landscaped voids. Not a highrise but a fundamental form for an architectural school.
 3. Plaza- "Mini City" Environment and platform to exchange thoughts. A forum for collective debate for a potent design environment.
- With high area requirement and low statutory restrictions, it was not easy to streamline the design process, but with Sourabh's back up and huge design capabilities, it was more "fun" (an Archohm theme). From "Mess" of last 3 days, Krunal's and his friend's last minute support, Ashwini, Rucha, Kuber & Sanjay's long working days, Bhoom's family call. Prema's paperless visits to last minute uploading of sheets (alone), this competition was surely more than just a competition

We all eagerly await the results which might hit the news before this article hits archohmeter!



Archana Anand- Rarely does one see such a mix of dedication, enthusiasm and management skill in one architect. Well that is Archana, Senior Architect at Archohm. When Sourabh came up with the idea of participating in the Buowkunde competition, she took on the leadership role with ease, and motivated her entire team to come up with a quality entry, in the deadline stipulated.



Always being inclined towards creativity, both with fine arts and words, I chose to do English Honours at Lady Shri Ram College in order to satiate my desire to experiment with language and its nuances. However after three years of vigorous literary criticism and analysis I sought to explore my aesthetic capabilities by undertaking an Interior Designing course at South Delhi Polytechnic. One year of dedicated drawing and sketching led me to be a top performer in class until Archohm happened!

Within two days of joining office, I saw myself flying to Mumbai, returning from where I traveled to Chandigarh- all within the span of a week. The place was living up to its reputation of being "fast"! Working here, I have had an amazing exposure to both ideas and projects of varied scale and interest. Not only have I seen a tremendously large palette of construction materials and things which are used in the process of building and designing spaces but having had the privilege of being the (de facto) editor of the monthly newsletter, I got to see an array of other whacky designs and design news from all over the world, owing to the impassioned interest Sourabh sir has in the same.

The national and international brands that I have been exposed to in the last few months have made me confident that I wouldn't run out of ideas for want of using "different" materials or furniture in the future projects for at least a couple of years to come. The process of planning, compiling, designing and then printing the newsletter is as interesting as it sounds (I am consciously omitting the problems, such as the innumerable yellings by sir, the last minute problems with the printer and the printing machines, the incessant reminders that have to be sent to "contributors" for their articles and the constant fear and skepticism as to how the end product will come out, be, to name a few) But the final copy of the Archohmeter at the end of each month and the encouraging feedback from the readers is worth all this and more. Here I would specially like to extend a word of thanks to Sharul, who helps me bring a sense of semblance to this madness by taking responsibility of couriering all 7000 copies, making sure that everyone receives their copy on time.

Looking back to when I joined as a trainee and tracing my growth to the present, I feel more than satisfied. Working in Archohm has contributed towards the growth of my personality as a whole as well. It has helped me to judge and deal with people of varied temperaments and nature in a more effective manner. The vibrancy, enthusiasm and innovation of the firm has made it difficult for me to resist the charm of working with it. Even though I had to - fight my parents to allow me to work while I studied, earn the wrath of my teachers for lack of attendance and become a social outcast among my own friends; I feel it's been worth the effort. The void that studies at college left has been more than fully filled by Archohm. Here's to hoping for a very long and continuing association with the firm!



Atsi Amit: She's been featured here before, and will do so again! Atsi is not only efficient, and a potential spelling-bee winner, her forte lies in words... proof of which is the fact that she compiles our monthly newsletter. Almost an interior designer- completing her training period, she can look forward to longer days at Archohm- once she graduates!

guest thoughts

in focus



Archotour has been a life-changing experience for all involved. We moved from Germany to France, devouring architectural treats with a hungrous appetite, reaching the Netherlands which was a climax to the memorable journey. According to me, Holland is probably one of the best architecture in the world today, with small obscure buildings, daring housing projects and unique facades.

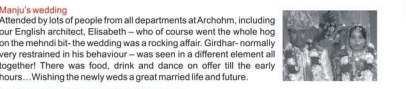
I wish to write about the Educatorium, in Utrecht; designed by Rem Koolhaas. It is a student centre cum education institute. The form itself conveys the function of the building, through the continuous concrete plate curve, like a huge auditorium. Materials like concrete, steel, glass and plywood are used to their optimum efficiency.



The building gives a feeling of movement of purposeful directions through wide steps and long corridors; and pauses in the form of formal classrooms and two auditoria. The large cafeteria on the ground floor with a full length glass is a very inviting, informal space. The space I relished the most in the building was the smoothly polished curved plate that continued from the floor, forming the wall and merging into the ceiling, looking out on the street. The bold curve stands out as a confident stroke of the architect, conveying purposefulness from the outside and playfulness on the inside. My salute to the Dutch architect.



Isha Talsania- Another CEPT enthusiast who was a part of the Archotour. Has been energetic and enthusiastic enough to assist Archohm on ad hoc design competitions and travels. As talented and skillful as you get as architectural students, Isha is an Archohm well-wisher and friend.



Manju's wedding
Attended by lots of people from all departments at Archohm, including our English architect, Elisabeth, both of course went the whole hog on the mehndi bit- the wedding was a rocking affair. Girihar- normally very restrained in his behaviour - was seen in a different element all together! There was food, drink and dance on offer till the early hours...Wishing the newly weds a great married life and future.

Surprise anniversary party on the office terrace
To mark Seema and Kunal's 11th anniversary (on 25th Jan), a surprise (for Seema) party was organized by Kunal and Sourabh, with assistance from the office staff including Monika, Rucha, Elisabeth Triok and Devesh. Sourabh carried out the plan to the T- bringing Seema up the spiral stair at the rear. No sooner than she got over her vertigo- did she see 20 of her close friends, family and associates on the terrace!

UPCOMING PROJECTS
Anand nicketan in line with the hospitality demand in the capital, archohm delhi hospitality projects have a new entrant in the list of guest houses, this time at anand nicketan, a boutique hotel, like the bank of tokyo in gaff links and mitsubishi in jorbagh, this aspires to be a larger facility with wide range of activities like a swimming pool, spa and restaurant. Designer norms with state of the art facilities give the project an international feel, an apt preparation in IITc with rest of delhi for the commonwealth games.
IIT Delhi's prestigious Indian Institute of Technology is currently carrying out a complete retrofitting of the 3 main auditoriums including the Dogra Hall. Archohm is designing these facilities keeping in mind various factors like the existing heritage scheme, new requirements and latest developments in air conditioning and lighting.



Lakshmi Anand's "W wheel Palace"



design news

sourabh's desk



a very typical design field that gets limited to signage vendors. signage design is often confused with graphic art. this is one field that needs incredible evolution in India and globally, no deep studies and long histories exist for this critical component of our environment.

for its sheer function, it loses its strength if not high on its decibels, signage needs to be loud and shouting! short on text and pictorial in style, signage can be very interesting medium of communication in a space.

it can be detrimental to one's image of a building or a city. street signage works at multiple levels. it is the only means of communication by a city to its visitors. for residents, its more a reminder and a warning, a piece of street furniture that owes its graphic to the local language and cultural attributes. A Chinese signage, a malaysian(tamil) signage, a UP signage and an american signage can bring strong references to the localized environment. everything else may move towards a global and equal (read boring) one world, the flavour of language, signage will remain.

for buildings, be it a school, office or a museum, signage sets the benchmark to the style quotient of the building, a clear reflection of order and maintenance of the organization and the design detail of the built environment. great signage can enhance the entire experience of a building as one can naturally flow from one space to the other, to its required destination while poor signage forces one to lookout and worry, missing out on the the experience of enjoying the building in the process!

signage needs to be crisp, clear and chic. Crisp so it is read, clear so it is understood and chic so its design appeals. the colour, the material and the font can all lend to the quality and experience of a space. thus an incredibly important design exercise to ensure a comprehensive scheme, a complete control over the user's perception and behaviour.



editorial